

**CENTRE COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (CCMPO)
COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, July 16, 2008
6:00 pm
College Township Municipal Building**

Minutes

Voting Members Present:

Steve Watson (for Ron Buckalew)
Ray Hankinson (for Bob Corman)
Jon Eich
John Elnitski
Elizabeth Goreham, Vice-Chair
Ken Hall
Bob Jacobs (for Rich Rogers)
Dan Klees, Chair
Kevin Kline
Chris Lee
Jeff Luck
Steve Miller
Frank Royer
Jack Shannon (for Mike Savage)
Karen Brown (for Barbara Spencer)
Dean Roberts (for Tom TenEyck)
John Spychalski

Centre Regional Planning Commission (CRPC)
Penns Valley Planning Region
Centre County
Benner Township
State College Borough
Mountaintop Planning Region
Centre County
College Township
PennDOT District 2-0 Office
Harris Township
Patton Township
Ferguson Township
Spring Township
Moshannon Valley Planning Region
Halfmoon Township
PennDOT Central Office
Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA)

Non-Voting Members Present:

Matt Smoker
Frank Halderman
Rob Cooper

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Bellefonte Borough
Penn State University

Others Present:

Tom Zilla
Trish Meek
Greg Kausch
Lori Shingler
Mike Bloom
Michelle Barbin
Hugh Mose
Ann Glaser

Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA)
CRPA
CRPA
CRPA – Recording Secretary
Centre County Planning & Community Development Office
CCMPO Technical Committee - Mountaintop Region
CATA
Citizen

1. Call to Order

Mr. Klees called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Lee made a motion to approve the April 29, 2008 Coordinating Committee minutes. Mr. Elnitski seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

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3. Citizens' Comments

There were no citizen comments.

4. Member Reports

Mountaintop Planning Region – Mr. Hall referred to the initiative to toll I-80, explaining that he thought it was a plan with little merit. He implored the Coordinating Committee members not to endorse the tolling initiative, explaining that such an endorsement would be a bad decision on the MPO's part.

Bellefonte Borough – Mr. Halderman reported that some streets are still disrupted due to the Columbia Gas projects in the Borough. Bellefonte also has streetscape improvement projects planned, and bids for these should go out next week. The intersection at the post office will be congested while streetscape improvements are taking place. Mr. Halderman explained that the Borough talked with PennDOT about the short notice of paving projects that is given to local municipalities. The Borough requested at least six months advance notice be given to these municipalities to allow them to plan for other projects.

Spring Township – Mr. Royer questioned the need for the MPO to address a situation near the Pleasant Gap interchange of future I-99. He referred to a recent tractor trailer rollover that involved a spill of hazardous material, explaining that this was the 10th rollover at that location. He thought better signage was needed to make motorists aware of the sharp curve near the interchange.

Harris Township – Mr. Lee stated that the Township has submitted a Development of Regional Impact (DRI) report for the Rocky Farm. This development would feature traditional neighborhood design, affordable housing, transit accessibility, and a central place. He noted that the Harris Township Fire Company has expressed safety concerns regarding Route 322 following the most recent fatal accident on that road. He explained that though there are interim safety measures included in the TIP, many concerns will likely remain until the South Central Centre County Transportation Study (SCCCTS) project is revisited.

Centre County – In response to Mr. Lee's comments, Mr. Eich reported that the County Commissioners Office has also received a significant number of safety-related calls regarding Route 322. The Commissioners are discussing one potential non-transportation solution. The District Magistrate in Penns Valley has outgrown its office in Old Fort, and one possibility would be to move that facility to Route 322. This would require the State Police to travel Route 322 more in order to visit the District Magistrate's office, thus increasing police visibility to motorists.

5. Centre County Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2008 Update

Ms. Meek explained that the primary reasons for the LRTP update are to:

- Add Act 44 projects
- Adjust for Year of Expenditure (YOE) requirements
- Remove projects to maintain fiscal constraint
- Remove completed projects
- Add line items; and
- Update project cost estimates

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LTRP project lists were included with the agenda packet. Ms. Meek noted that new projects are highlighted in yellow on these lists, with line items considered as new projects. The lists have been revised to show not only the proposed funding period, but also the funding period given on the current version of the LRTP. This allows Coordinating Committee members to see which projects are advancing more quickly than others, as well those projects that must be pushed back to maintain fiscal constraint in each funding period.

On the Highway and ITS project list, line items were added for pavement restoration, safety, CMAQ and Interstate Maintenance. Ms. Meek explained that the Fraser Street Realignment Project was added to the list with 100% local funding. A major difference in this update is that – as a result of the lack of available funding – the two I-80 interchange projects were removed from the project lists and included with projects for future consideration. To achieve fiscal constraint, eight additional projects were removed from the LRTP; this was discussed by the Coordinating Committee at their April meeting. As with the I-80 interchanges, Ms. Meek explained that these projects do not disappear, but rather are listed for future consideration.

Ms. Meek reviewed the bridge list, noting that completed projects have been removed and Structurally Deficient (SD) state bridges – as identified by PennDOT – have been added. Line items were added to the LRTP for SD Bridges during the 2009-2010 and 2011-14 funding periods, bridge preservation and maintenance, box culvert maintenance, and local bridges. Project costs were also adjusted to conform to YOE requirements. Ms. Meek explained that no bridge projects were removed from the list.

Completed projects were also removed from the Bicycle/Pedestrian project list. The only two projects remaining on the list are those that have already been approved, and a copy of the list was included with the agenda packet. Line items were added for the future years because there is a separate selection process for TE projects.

A considerable number of projects were added to the Transit project list, using CATA's five-year major capital plan as a guide. The timing of vehicle rehabilitations and replacements was based on the estimated useful life of each vehicle type, with one round of vehicle rehab/rebuild assumed before a new replacement vehicle is purchased.

Ms. Meek explained that a major element of the LRTP is a required 30-day public comment period. During that period, nine comments were received. A summary of these was included with the agenda packet, including all written comments and staff responses. Ms. Meek reviewed each of these.

Mr. Lee asked if the Fraser Street Realignment project is being funded exclusively by State College Borough. Ms. Meek confirmed that as the current assumption. Although the Borough is attempting to find other funding sources, the project must be listed on the LRTP to be eligible to receive any federal funds that might become available. Ms. Goreham added that the Borough has applied for an infrastructure loan to help complete the project.

Mr. Lee noted that when one looks at the top of the Highway and ITS project list and the priority number on the left, the first ranked project carried over from the current LRTP is #7 – a reconfiguration of Park Avenue from Atherton to Burrowes, which is listed in the 2011-2014 funding period. He explained that most of the newly-added projects are betterment projects or interstate money. Mr. Lee asked how these newly-added projects were ranked, and how and when they were added to the project list. Ms. Meek explained that when LRTP 2030 was adopted in 2006, the MPO decided that any project that currently on the TIP, or in process, would automatically be included in the LRTP. For these projects, PennDOT's Multimodal Project Management System (MPMS) numbers, rather than the ranking numbers, are listed. She explained that some projects already started may have both an MPMS number and an MPO ranking number.

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In addition, revenue was provided through Act 44 for SD bridges. These bridge projects may have moved ahead of other projects due to their urgent condition, and were not identified during the LRTP ranking process. Mr. Lee responded with his feeling that local priorities are sometimes overshadowed by projects that come with dedicated funding streams. He explained that a process was needed to ensure that local priorities are not superseded, and added that this should be developed during the next major Plan update.

Mr. Klees referred to funding available through the Appalachian Highway Development Program (APD) for the I-80/Route 26 local interchange project. He questioned whether the Turnpike Commission would be eligible to tap into that funding source if they ultimately assume responsibility for operating and maintaining I-80. Mr. Roberts stated that, according to his knowledge, the Turnpike Commission would use their own funds to construct the local interchange.

Mr. Klees requested that the description of the Fraser Street Realignment project include a note about local funding. He also asked if there was a way to carry the original project ranking number over to the name field of the project list. Mr. Bloom replied that this could be done.

Mr. Spychalski made a motion to adopt the LRTP 2008 Update. Mr. Eich seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

6. 2009-2012 Centre County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Mr. Zilla summarized the TIP, noting that the MPO has been working on this for approximately one year. The Highway element includes 14 highway projects and 2 Transportation Enhancement (TE) projects. Line items are included for CMAQ, Safety, Rail Crossing, Pavement Restoration and TE. Safety projects include initiatives on Routes 26, 322 and 350. Mr. Zilla explained that the Eastern Inner Loop earmark will be shifted to the North Atherton Street signal priority project, as the President has signed a Technical Corrections Bill to SAFETEA-LU that changes the name, description and amount of the earmark (\$400,000). That change will be made official later this year, after staff discusses specifics with PennDOT District 2-0.

Reviewing the Bridge element, Mr. Zilla noted that 37 state and 2 municipal bridges are programmed. There are line items for SD state and municipal bridges, as well as for bridge preservation/maintenance. The new TIP meets PennDOT District 2-0's targets for improving SD bridges.

The Transit element is unique in that the MPO must include projects that are carrying over from past TIPs, even if they are nearing completion. There are 14 new projects, with the largest amounts programmed for vehicle rebuilds and replacements; Mr. Zilla noted that this approach is consistent with CATA's latest five-year major capital plan. Moreover, several vans will be purchased for the expanding Centre Commute program. He noted that Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC) funding is programmed in the third year of the TIP for vehicles to provide commuter bus service.

Mr. Zilla explained that PennDOT has started preliminary engineering for the Route 26 – Pine Grove Mountain project. The conceptual improvements include a truck pull-off at the top of the mountain, a truck escape ramp above the "S" curve coming down the mountain, and another escape ramp right above the village of Pine Grove Mills. The preliminary cost estimate is higher than the construction amount programmed on the TIP. PennDOT consulted the Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors, who favored advancing all three conceptual improvements, with construction to be phased if necessary. MPO staff recommends adopting the TIP as advertised, and working to identify potential sources of additional funding. Mr. Zilla noted that a project status report is tentatively scheduled for the September MPO meetings.

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The public comment period for the TIP was held at the same time as that for the LRTP. Mr. Zilla reviewed comments specific to the TIP, which related to the potential negative impacts of the Route 350 short-term improvement project, the need for a transit access point in downtown Philipsburg, short-term improvements on Route 322 in Harris and Potter Townships, and concerns about the proposed lower truck escape ramp above Pine Grove Mills.

Mr. Zilla noted that the TIP includes the Fraser Street intersection realignment, programmed with local funds. It also includes \$412,367 in 2009 funding for municipal SD bridges. This TIP does not include the I-80/Route 26 local access interchange.

Mr. Zilla reported that the Technical Committee recommended adoption of the 2009-2012 TIP.

Mr. Lee made a motion to adopt the 2009-2012 Centre County TIP. Mr. Miller seconded.

Ms. Goreham referred to the three elements of the Route 26 – Pine Grove Mountain project. She noted that her understanding of fiscal constraint is that a project that cannot be fully funded cannot be included on the TIP. Mr. Zilla explained that the project funding is included on the TIP, but PennDOT will determine what parts of that project they can complete with the funds available as they move through the design process.

Mr. Lee asked if the Route 322 bridge project referred to the bridge over the bypass. Mr. Zilla explained that this is indeed a painting project for that structure.

Mr. Lee's motion was voted on and passed unanimously.

7. Procedures for TIP Modifications

Mr. Zilla explained that a set of procedures must be in place to guide modifications to the TIP. These procedures must be adopted with each new TIP every two years. He briefly reviewed the procedures, noting that revisions from the current version are minor and include no major policy changes. All changes were highlighted in the document included as part of the agenda packet.

Mr. Zilla further explained two funding codes that he would like to add to current and future TIPs. The first is code SXF, to denote federal discretionary (“earmark”) funds. The second, specific to transit projects, would be Section 3037; these denote funds from the JARC program. In the latter case, Mr. Zilla explained that the addition would provide more flexibility if CATA were to receive JARC funding.

Mr. Lee asked about the source of changes to the procedures, specifically whether they were generated by MPO staff. Mr. Zilla stated that some of the changes – particularly those related to reorganization of the procedures document – were in fact generated by MPO staff. Many of the editorial changes came from the PennDOT Central Office, which has a separate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). PennDOT forwarded that MOU to staff as a source document, so that the TIP Procedures would be consistent with the MOU.

Mr. Lee asked for an explanation of Item J on page 2, which reads:

“Creation of a new reserve line item that is needed in order to maintain financial constraint as a result of other administrative actions, as specified above.”

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Mr. Zilla explained that if a shift in funds needs to be made, and money is left over from that shift, a reserve line item will allow leftover money to rest there until it is reassigned to another project. He further explained that the main reason for this new line item is matching fund percentages for different programs. When funds requiring a match are shifted to a new project, that project may have a different match percentage. Accordingly, there has to be some place for leftover funds to be held.

Mr. Lee then asked about Item 2 on page 2, which reads:

“Administrative actions shall account for Year of Expenditure (YOE) requirements.”

Mr. Zilla explained that YOE requirements have been discussed in MPO meetings dating back to last November. The MPO must show estimated project costs, not in current dollars, but inflated to the year that each project or phase is projected to advance. Mr. Lee subsequently asked for a definition of “administrative action”. Mr. Zilla explained that these are actions that can be taken by the project sponsors, typically PennDOT and CATA, without formal MPO approval.

Mr. Lee asked for an explanation of Item G on page 3, which reads:

“Addition/deletion of a project that involves conversion of greater than \$1,000,000 from a reserve line item, with the exception of Pavement Restoration, Rail-Highway Crossing, Bridge Preservation, State Structurally Deficient (SD) Bridge, or Local SD Bridge line items.”

Mr. Zilla explained that this provision refers to CMAQ and Safety line items. Mr. Lee subsequently asked if the items listed as exceptions could be converted administratively without any dollar limit, and added that he would prefer not to do that. Mr. Luck pointed out that the line items listed as exceptions could only be used for specific types of projects. Mr. Kline added that the exceptions provide PennDOT greater flexibility to undertake emergency projects. Mr. Zilla noted that these line items are generally used to fund Betterment projects, and are narrowly constrained.

Mr. Lee noted the MPO’s role as a body that makes decisions on funding allocations; and such exceptions override that capacity. He further explained that in light of the MPO’s role, he was not comfortable without a dollar limit on administrative actions. Mr. Klees asked if a higher dollar limit could be assigned rather having no limit at all, and Mr. Zilla responded affirmatively. Mr. Klees asked that staff and PennDOT District 2-0 continue the practice of informing the MPO of conversions into and out of the line items listed as exceptions.

Mr. Kline asked that the MPO take care not to unduly restrain PennDOT District 2-0. He explained that these administrative conversions generally involve pavement restoration projects; administrative conversion helps the District respond to needs quickly and keep project costs low. Mr. Lee expressed appreciation for this viewpoint, but noted that such projects are bumping others that are ranked as MPO priorities. He again stated that the MPO has decision-making authority when allocating federal money for transportation projects. Mr. Zilla noted that the role of the MPO, as specified in the law, is a “cooperative” one.

It was decided that the language would stand as written, with close monitoring of administrative conversions until the next scheduled revision of TIP modification procedures.

[Mr. Luck left the meeting at 6:50 p.m.]

Ms. Goreham made a motion to approve the new Procedures for TIP Modifications. Mr. Spsychalski seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

8. Air Quality Conformity Resolution for 2009-2012 Centre County TIP and LRTP 2008 Update

Mr. Hall made a motion to approve the 2008 Centre County Air Quality Conformity Analysis Report and adopt an Air Quality Conformity Resolution. Mr. Lee seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

9. Annual Federal Transportation Planning Process Certification

Mr. Zilla explained that this certification must be adopted with each TIP. This year, the MPO is required to attach documentation to the resolution.

Mr. Lee made a motion to adopt the resolution certifying the CCMPO's compliance with all applicable federal transportation planning regulations. Mr. Elnitski seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

10. Federal Safe Routes to School (FSRTS) Program

Ms. Meek reported that Pennsylvania has rolled out a Federal State Routes to School Program. This differs from the program the MPO is familiar with, which was part of the TE program. The new program was launched on May 5, and staff received training via the web on June 26. Funding applications are due on August 1, 2008. Ms. Meek noted that this was a quick funding round, and staff has not yet heard from any sponsors planning to submit an application.

Reviewing the program basics, Ms. Meek said that projects can be 100% federally funded. There is approximately \$12.6 million available statewide, with a \$1 million cap for each project. Eligible projects must be located within two miles of a K-8 school, and must be infrastructure improvements that enhance student safety and/or promote walking and bicycling to school. Ms. Meek explained that eligible sponsors are school districts, individual schools, municipalities, county government, or MPOs.

Ms. Meek further explained that applications will be reviewed and ranked by a statewide committee. The MPO is being asked to provide rankings and comments to that committee by October 1, 2008. Staff is recommending that a subcommittee be formed to review any applications that are submitted; this would include a representative from PennDOT District Office, PennDOT Central Office, Centre County Planning and Community Development Office and the Centre Region Planning Agency. Applications would be reviewed using statewide criteria, and subcommittee recommendations would be presented to the MPO in September.

Mr. Lee made a motion to approve the process to review and provide comments about the FSRTS applications for projects in Centre County. Ms. Goreham seconded the motion.

Mr. Lee asked what form the application would take. Ms. Meek explained that the application asks for detailed information about certain aspects of each project. They are considering educational attributes as well as physical construction. She noted that this application is much different than the TE applications, with a considerable amount of pre- and post-work required. Mr. Lee asked when the next round of applications would be, and Ms. Meek replied that it is not known when or if another round will be held. She noted that staff did perform outreach to the school districts and municipalities for the current funding round.

Ms. Barbin noted that Snow Shoe looked into this program, but it was impossible to gather the data needed within the time period allotted for applications. She hoped that if another round was held, it would be held during the school year. Ms. Meek explained that staff made that comment to PennDOT as well.

Mr. Lee's above motion was voted upon and passed unanimously.

11. Draft Bylaws for CCMPO

This item was discussed in April and tabled by the MPO at that time. *Mr. Lee made a motion to remove the Bylaws from the table. Mr. Spsychalski seconded and the motion passed unanimously.*

Mr. Klees explained that the MPO previously discussed the draft Bylaws, and changes have been incorporated to reflect those discussions. He referred to page 3, Item F: Representative's Responsibilities, noting that in April, the majority of the MPO was in favor of keeping this item in the document as presented. He recommended that the procedures in the new Bylaws be followed, which require that an issue be presented at two consecutive meetings and a 2/3 majority be required to approve action.

Ms. Goreham suggested that Item F be revised to say "[...] representatives are expected to support the officially adopted views and policy positions [...]" She noted that in State College Borough, representatives are able to use their own knowledge on specific issues, but are bound by officially adopted views. Mr. Klees explained that his concern relates to issues that are never discussed at Board meetings. Mr. Lee explained that members should be able to vote their conscience if there is no official stance. Mr. Miller pointed out that the current language says one is "expected" to support the views, not that one is "bound" to vote that way. Mr. Klees surmised that representatives who do not support their appointing body would be held accountable by that body.

Ms. Barbin referred to page 5, Section 5.D: Absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair. She noted that this language is reiterated in Section 6.E., but missing language referring to the Secretary's voting rights in the second case. Mr. Klees explained that the first instance describes the officer roles, while the second refers to meeting procedures. Mr. Crum noted that the existing language allows for flexibility; typically, the MPO Secretary is the Director of the Centre Regional Planning Agency, but that is by tradition rather than by any firm guidelines. Mr. Klees noted that putting the same language in both places was not harmful. He explained that in the absence of the Chair, the Secretary has signed correspondence on his behalf. He offered that if both officers were not present at a given meeting, the MPO could elect a temporary Chair for that day. Accordingly, he explained that further clarification of Section 5.D. may make sense.

Ms. Barbin suggested that "for administrative duties" be added to Section 5.D. Mr. Zilla suggested that 6.E. be revised to say "absence of Chair and Vice Chair at a meeting."

Mr. Hall made a motion to adopt the Bylaws for the MPO. Mr. Eich seconded.

Mr. Lee referred to the list of specific tasks for the Technical Committee, and asked if there were any new proposals. Mr. Zilla replied that those tasks are the same as the Technical Committee's present tasks.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion to adopt the Bylaws for the MPO was approved unanimously.

12. Announcements

Mr. Klees noted future MPO meeting dates. Mr. Elnitski stated that if another presentation was to be given by the Turnpike Commission, he would like to ask how tolling is working in other parts of the state.

Correspondence from Governor Rendell, Senator Corman and Representative Benninghoff were included with the agenda. A list of pavement improvement projects from District 2-0 was also included.

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13. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Shingler
Recording Secretary

DRAFT