

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

**Tuesday, April 28, 2009
6:00 pm
Centre Region COG Building**

Minutes

Voting Members Present:

Ron Buckalew	Centre Regional Planning Commission
Bob Corman	Penns Valley Planning Region
Jon Eich	Centre County
Elizabeth Goreham, Vice-Chair	State College Borough
Ken Hall	Mountaintop Planning Region
Dan Klees, Chair	College Township
Karen Michael (for Kevin Kline)	PennDOT District 2-0 Office
Chris Lee	Harris Township
Jeff Luck	Patton Township
Steve Miller	Ferguson Township
Jadine Reese	Upper Bald Eagle Planning Region
Sue Hannegan (for Rich Rogers)	Centre County
Jack Shannon (for Mike Savage)	Moshannon Valley Planning Region
Barbara Spencer	Halfmoon Township
John Spychalski	CATA
Larry Shifflet	PennDOT Central Office

Non-Voting Members Present:

Frank Halderman	Bellefonte Borough
Matt Smoker	Federal Highway Administration

Others Present:

Trish Meek	Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA)
Greg Kausch	CRPA
Bob Jacobs	CCPCDO – Secretary
Mike Bloom	CCPCDO
Mike Joseph	Centre Daily Times
Hugh Mose	CATA
Michelle Barbin	Mountaintop Planning Region
Michael Rose	Kerry Benninghoff's Office
Jim Eckert	Senator Corman's Office
Rick Sollman	Congressman Thompson's Office
Tammy Ammerman	Representative Mike Hanna's Office
Ray Gutshall	Marion Township Supervisor
Ken Roan	Marion Township Planning Commission
Irv Hoy	Howard Borough Council
Richard Watters	Howard Borough Council
Ann Glaser	Citizen
George Khoury	Citizen
Stan Wallace	Citizen
Walt Cherwony	Abrams-Cherwony Group of Gannett-Fleming, Inc.
Rick Dillon	Citizen

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Doug Erickson	Patton Township Manager
Marla Fannin	PennDOT
Steve Fantechi	PennDOT
Daryl Kerns	PennDOT
Nathan Garman	Delta Development Group
Teresa Sparacino	Delta Development Group

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. Spychalski made a motion to approve the February 24, 2009 Coordinating Committee minutes, with one edit. Mr. Luck seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

3. Citizen Comments

There were no citizen comments.

4. Assessment of Public Transportation Services in Centre County

Mr. Kausch explained that Centre County is served by two transit agencies: the Centre Area Transit Authority (CATA) and the Centre County Office of Transportation (CCOT). The 2007-08 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) includes funding for a study of how these agencies might be better coordinated. The Abrams-Cherwony Group, part of Gannett Fleming Inc., was selected as the consultant to perform this evaluation.

Mr. Cherwony, Abrams-Cherwony Group, explained that CATA provides Centre Line bus service, and some demand-response paratransit service for people who meet certain eligibility requirements. CCOT provides demand-response services for people who meet similar requirements, and also provides Meals-On-Wheels service in the County and oversees maintenance for the County's motor pool.

Mr. Cherwony further noted that there are five steps involved in the scope of work for this study. The Baseline Conditions Report completes the first step and the second step, public participation, is now underway. Subsequent steps include identification of alternatives, evaluation of alternatives and recommending an operating plan.

Service delivery alternatives that might come from the assessment include no action, coordination between the agencies, partial or full consolidation, or a broker arrangement. Mr. Cherwony explained that the consultant team will be looking at whether the total system can be made more economical and efficient, and how a combined organization might fit within federal and state regulations.

Mr. Cherwony described each agency in regards to the services they offer, staffing levels, physical resources, ridership and funding. He also presented charts with a breakdown of people using each service, including senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

Reviewing the cost of operations, Mr. Cherwony reported that last year CATA's costs were \$10.3 million, but only about \$500,000 of that is associated with demand-responsive service. The majority is to operate the fixed route bus system. On the other hand, CCOT is a \$2 million enterprise, with about

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\$1.7 million of that used to provide transportation services to people. The remainder is for the motor pool activities. He displayed a breakdown of where the funding comes from for each agency.

The Coordinating Committee received the presentation, and had no comments or questions.

5. I-80/Route 26 Section A18 Local Access Interchange

Ms. Meek explained that there are two interchanges between I-99, I-80, and Route 26 proposed in Marion and Walker Townships, the High-Speed Interchange and the Local Access Interchange. In September 2008, Marion Township officials expressed concern about the location of the Local Access Interchange. Currently, both interchanges are designed, but there is no funding available for construction at this time. In July 2008, both projects were removed from the LRTP based on fiscal constraint requirements.

In December 2008, Marion Township sent correspondence requesting that the Local Access Interchange be reconsidered because of impacts to traffic on Route 26. They would like the interchanges to be combined at the location of the existing I-80 Exit 161. In February, the Coordinating Committee discussed this correspondence, and requested additional information from PennDOT and MPO staff.

Ms. Meek noted that formal action is not being sought at this meeting. The next formal action would likely be to secure construction funding for the projects. She explained that if this funding is committed, the projects would need to be added to the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). These actions would require a full public process.

Ms. Karen Michael, PennDOT District 2-0, noted that all the information that she was about to present is available at the PennDOT District offices. She identified the current planned sites for both interchanges on a map. She explained that PennDOT reviewed the environmental features of the area in the mid-1990s. Again using the map, she pointed out residential areas, quarries, the Bald Eagle mountain ridge, historic properties, and agricultural securities areas. Ms. Michael noted that former I-80 Exit 24 (now Exit 161) was built in the 1960s to accommodate local traffic. That interchange still exists in its current form, and the short ramps become problematic when trucks use them. Construction of the Bellefonte Bypass and the growth of the State College area over the years resulted in increased traffic. In the 1970s, planning began to extend a four-lane route from State College all the way to I-80. In the 1990s, PennDOT widened the Bellefonte Bypass and started work on the I-99 corridor. At that time, planning for the interstate-to-interstate link was initiated because of the safety issues that would result from completion of I-99.

Ms. Michael explained the geometry of the area, providing further detail about the environmental features where the interchanges are to be located. Mr. Eich noted that there are approximately 2,000 acres of state game lands that were not shown on the map.

Ms. Michael reviewed the project timeline, which was included in the agenda. The project started in 1996 with an environmental evaluation. When PennDOT considered putting the High Speed and Local Access interchanges together, they discovered numerous adverse impacts and inadequate space. Therefore, they started discussions with local municipalities and the MPO about alternative sites. The first public meeting was held in 1999, where local access was proposed at Sand Ridge/Snydertown Road. After that public meeting, it became clear that local residents wanted this new interchange as close to the existing interchange as possible. PennDOT also reviewed Marion Township's Comprehensive Plan (completed in 1992) and talked to the MPO. Two months later, at a second public meeting, two-thirds of the participants said that a local access was needed, and 80% preferred access just east of Walnut Ridge Road. Ms. Michael explained that the type of interchange, as well as the project

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schedule, was discussed at the third public meeting in January 2000. By July of 2002, the Environmental Evaluation Report was signed for the Local Access Interchange at its current planned location.

Ms. Michael reviewed crash data for the area around Jacksonville Road, using a map to show crash rates. She also reviewed average daily traffic (ADT) for the area, which showed that traffic has increased between 1999 and 2003. She also displayed a map with projections for what the traffic would be with both interchanges built; these projections were completed in 2003.

In summary, Ms. Michael explained that the project was developed using all applicable federal and state requirements, and all decisions were made in conjunction with input from the general public, municipal officials, the MPO, FHWA and PennDOT Central Office. She noted that a betterment project is planned for Route 26 between the interchange sites, and PennDOT would like to work with Marion Township to talk about alignments.

Mr. Lee asked if origin and destination studies were completed during the design phase of the Local Access Interchange. Ms. Michael replied that they were not, although multiple traffic counts were conducted.

Mr. Luck noted that at the November 1999 public meeting, two-thirds of participants favored a local access interchange. He asked what the reaction from PennDOT would have been if the majority had not been in favor of that. Ms. Michael replied that the reason the question was asked was because it became obvious that the two interchanges could not be located together. At that point, PennDOT started asking if a local access was even desired, or if it would cause more negative impacts.

Mr. Dillon, Marion Township business owner, explained that he did not think the Committee members were aware of all the existing conditions. In Jacksonville, there is a quarry that is not operational per se, but stone is still extracted out of it. There has been a permit offered to quarry additional areas. Currently, the Curtain Gap quarry has a permit to expand their quarry operations as well. He noted that there are weight restrictions on some of the local roads that must be considered. School buses also use local roads across the area. Ms. Michael added that most of the roads are limited to 10 tons and have narrow turning radii.

Mr. Eich explained that in addition to the truck traffic that would be rerouted to those local roads, there are about 400 homes in Marion Township right now. Single family homes tend to generate about 10 trips per day, so without the Local Access Interchange, there would be about 4,000 trips per day that would be routed to local roads in Walker and Spring Townships and Bellefonte Borough.

Ms. Goreham asked how long environmental documents were valid, and if they need to be revised at all. Ms. Michael explained that they must be re-evaluated every three years. It was already done once and PennDOT is considering an additional re-evaluation in the near future.

Ms. Meek said that when the MPO decides how the project will be pursued, identification of funding is the next significant step. There are four pools of funding that have been considered:

- I-80 toll conversion project
- "Spike" funding committed by the Pennsylvania Secretary of Transportation
- Earmark
- Discretionary capital funding program (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act)

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Mr. Ray Gutshall, Marion Township Supervisor, thanked Mr. Zilla for speaking with him extensively about this project. He asked the news media to be fair and balanced: Marion Township is not against the total interchange project, only the Local Access Interchange. He quoted from the Centre Daily Times (CDT), “issues worrying Marion Township officials,” and “Transportation leaders who work to bring Marion Township opposition to thinking the project is needed for safety reasons.” He said that “thinking” instead of “needing” was a controversial choice of words for him. This is the reason that Marion Township officials do not want the Local Access Interchange at any place other than the current location of I-80 Exit 161. The reason that Marion Township officials did not oppose the currently planned location in the early stages was because two of the Supervisors at the time owned campgrounds near Shay Lane. They should have recused themselves from this issue.

Marion Township officials have brought to the attention of the MPO and others the dangers of the currently planned location of the Local Access Interchange. Another accident occurred Friday morning at 9:00 am in this area. Mr. Gutshall explained that officials continue to feel like Marion is a minority township.

Mr. Gutshall said his feeling is that there is a big push to advance this Interchange by exploiting accidents just to secure a part of the stimulus package and to make hay for political reasons. But Marion Township stands in the way, per the CDT quote. Mr. Gutshall explained that local officials assume that the Local Access Interchange is considered a missing link, as was Route 322 between Potters Mills and State College. He asked why, then, officials would want to make Route 26 (Jacksonville Road) a hazard like Route 322 is now. He explained that this is what will happen if the interchange is constructed in its currently planned location.

Mr. Gutshall explained that he was truly concerned about the situation, not only for Marion Township, but also on behalf of Howard Borough and Howard Township. There will be a big influx of traffic in these municipalities if this interchange is constructed in the area. He then asked if it was correct that Marion Township did not have any representation on the MPO. Mr. Klees replied that they do not have formal representation, but there is implied representation by the Nittany Valley Planning Commission. Mr. Gutshall noted that if the MPO were to vote today, that vote would likely not be in line with the concerns of Marion Township. Mr. Klees replied that he could not make any member represent anyone they did not feel comfortable representing. Mr. Gutshall then replied that the MPO has not been able to make a decision in regards to Marion or Walker Township representation since 2006. Mr. Klees noted that the issue of representation for Marion and Walker Townships goes back to the origin of the MPO, and he would be glad to discuss this issue with Mr. Gutshall at another time. He also noted that there are many municipalities throughout the county that are not directly represented on the MPO. Mr. Gutshall expressed that it was a shame that decisions of this magnitude were being made by people not even living in Marion Township.

Mr. Klees said the decision of record for the Local Access Interchange was made prior to the MPO expanding to a county-wide entity. The MPO now represents all planning regions in Centre County, as defined by the Centre County Planning and Community Development Office. The previous iteration of the MPO had its origins in the Centre Region. He explained that the people on the MPO prior to expansion tried to do their best to represent the county as a whole in their decisions. Mr. Gutshall explained that the growth of the area needs to include everybody, and all the municipalities are not being represented. Mr. Klees noted that this item was on the agenda in February, tonight, and likely on future agendas in an effort to hear Marion Township’s point of view and to determine if there is anything that can be done to change a previous decision that was made by several agencies. He stressed that the MPO was trying to include Marion Township in this process.

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Mr. Lee noted that it was his understanding that Marion Township would not like to see the Local Access Interchange built, and the disadvantage of building it would be that it would increase traffic and safety problems. Mr. Gutshall replied that this understanding was correct.

Mr. Eich noted that two area Planning Commissioners were members of the CCMPO and represent countywide interests. He explained that as soon as safety issues on Route 26 were raised, a response from the MPO, staff and PennDOT came forward. The first results from that response are that PennDOT has committed to do what needs to be done to increase safety on the section of Route 26 between the proposed interchanges.

Mr. Luck asked if there was any opposition on the part of Marion Township to the High Speed Interchange. Mr. Gutshall replied that there was not.

Mr. Ken Roan, Marion Township Planning Commission, asked PennDOT if I-99 would become a 65 mile-per-hour road after the High Speed Interchange is constructed. Ms. Michael replied that there have been several discussions about that issue. Typically when an interstate cuts through a residential area, the speed limit remains 55 mph, but a final decision has not been made. She further explained that the design for the High Speed Interchange was based on a 55 mph speed. Mr. Roan replied that there are already signs posted around the existing interchange for 50 mph, specifically around the turn and under the bridges at Pleasant Gap. He noted that the speed issue needs to be researched before anything can move forward.

Mr. Roan further noted that there are two cattle crossings on Route 26, and it now takes two people to move cattle across the road. He asked Ms. Michael if she knew how many people it would take to get the cattle across the road if it were widened to 25 feet. He said it would take four people. He also stressed that there were currently tractor trailer trucks coming off the interstate onto Route 26 that cannot turn around. They end up in the Waddle Ridge development.

Mr. Stan Wallace, Marion Township resident, referred to the projected 3,550 ADT figure on Route 26 when the new interchange opens, and explained that he thought the traffic count strips that were put on the road today would show that traffic is already exceeding that. When I-99 was connected from Route 26 into State College, the traffic on that road tripled within hours. He explained that the traffic would increase substantially with the interchanges in place. Widening Route 26 will be a benefit and is very much needed.

Mr. Wallace explained that the current I-80 Exit 161 was not built for the people of Marion Township; it was built for the people in Bellefonte Borough and Walker Township. In 1970, there were only 500 residents in Marion Township. Today there are approximately 1100. He questioned the logic of building a \$25 million interchange for 1100 people. He explained that he was not opposed to growth, but he was opposed to an interchange that would put more pressure on Marion Township to rezone to allow for commercial development. This will add more traffic and change the complexion of the township.

Mr. Richard Watters, Howard Borough, noted that the construction of a Local Access Interchange in its currently planned location would substantially increase traffic on Route 26 and through Howard Borough. Howard is already experiencing increased traffic, is a very old town, and is not designed for an increase in high-speed traffic. There have been three or four fatal accidents already at the intersection of Routes 26 and 150. He asked that, whether or not the Local Access Interchange is ultimately constructed, that PennDOT and the MPO please consider the traffic impacts on his community. He explained that the scope of the environmental documents needed to be expanded from what it was in 1999, and that growth in Walker Township needs to be considered.

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Mr. Watters noted that emergency access was used as a justification for the Local Access Interchange. There are four service providers in the area, including Bellefonte and Lamar. The other two are located in Howard Borough and in Hublersburg. Accordingly, he explained that emergency access would not be compromised without the Local Access Interchange.

Mr. Lee asked what the advantages of the Local Access Interchange were. Ms. Michael replied that one major consideration was the truck traffic from the quarries. Others included access for emergency vehicles, local business access, recreational vehicles going to the campgrounds or Bald Eagle State Park, and school bus traffic. Mr. Lee asked if diversion of traffic from Route 150 was one of the goals. Ms. Michael replied that it was not. That is one of the issues that the township citizens had raised.

Mr. Dillon explained that he was one of the former Supervisors referenced earlier by Mr. Gutshall. He noted the agricultural preservation areas on Ms. Michael's maps, and explained that one of the concerns the previous Supervisors had, and one that was discussed with PennDOT, was that agricultural areas limit the areas where a Local Access Interchange can be placed. His opinion is that the Local Access Interchange was vital for growth and economic prosperity for the community and county. His campground hosts 12,000 RV units per year, and he explained that was a boost to the community.

Ms. Spencer asked how far the current planned location of the interchange was from Lamar. Ms. Michael replied that it was about nine miles. Ms. Spencer then asked for clarification that the current I-80 Exit 161 would be closed to local access once the High Speed Interchange was constructed. Ms. Michael replied that this was correct. The I-80 Milesburg interchange would be five to six miles from the new interchange. Ms. Spencer expressed that the issues discussed did not justify the cost of the Local Access Interchange. She further explained that there were already local access points on either side that are not that far away. If there is that much opposition, and no money for construction, she did not feel the new Local Access Interchange was worth the cost.

Mr. Miller explained that his main concern is access for emergency services to an accident along I-80 or along the High Speed Interchange. He asked if the Local Access Interchange will make a difference as far as access to these situations.

Mr. Jacobs replied that there were two fire companies in the Borough of Bellefonte. Their main access would be the Route 550 interchange to access I-99 and I-80 once the High Speed Interchange is in. If there is an accident along I-80 in Marion Township, the responsibility would be split between Bellefonte and Lamar's Nittany Fire Company, who would have access at Lamar. For other fire companies, the local road access would be from Walker Township using Forest Avenue and Zion Road. The Howard Fire Company would access through the gap and Route 26. Mr. Jacobs explained that without a Local Access Interchange, the fire coverage would be from Lamar and Bellefonte.

Ms. Reese referred to the 2003 no-build map, which showed neither interchange. She asked if there was a model for just a High Speed Interchange. Ms. Michael replied that there was, and she thought it showed the level of traffic decreasing on Jacksonville Road because people were using other routes.

Ms. Spencer noted that on major interstates, there are access points just for emergency vehicles. She asked if a similar setup was possible in this case. PennDOT responded that a point of access analysis would have to be done to justify this, and they would need to show that there were no safety issues associated with it. Ms. Spencer explained that emergency access seemed to be the most important reason for having this interchange. Other than that, Milesburg and Lamar were close enough.

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Mr. Halderman explained that if there was no Local Access Interchange, Bellefonte Borough could not support the High Speed Interchange because all local traffic would come into Bellefonte. Mr. Klees further noted that there is a constituency in Bellefonte that Marion and Walker Townships may not be taking into consideration. There are negatives associated with having the Local Access Interchange, but when one looks at alternatives for moving traffic back and forth through the valley on the local roads, there are very few other good alternatives.

Ms. Michael explained that while the High Speed Interchange was being constructed, PennDOT had planned to use Jacksonville Road up to the Local Access Interchange to get people onto I-80. If it is not possible to do that, all the traffic would be diverted along Route 64 to Lamar, or to Bellefonte.

Mr. Luck explained that he was skeptical that the High Speed Interchange could not be built without the Local Access Interchange. He asked whether construction of the High Speed Interchange might be the primary purpose for the Local Access Interchange. Ms. Michael responded that area residents wanted the Local Access Interchange at the time. Mr. Luck noted that it is difficult to know what the people want today.

Mr. Smoker noted that Marion Township's Comprehensive Plan at the time showed the interchanges, and that this was taken into account by PennDOT. He further stated that considerable public money has been spent on the design of the Local Access Interchange. If the decision is made not to move forward, there is the possibility that the federal funds spent would need to be paid back. Ms. Meek explained that the Marion Township Comprehensive Plan map was dated 1992, and she believed that the schematic for the Interchange was added after the fact for a visual in the study.

Mr. Lee asked if the agricultural security zones can be dissolved by agreement. Mr. Jacobs responded that easements have not been bought. People have volunteered their properties for the program. These areas can theoretically be developed, but the zoning is not in place to accommodate that. Once easements are bought, the properties are preserved into perpetuity.

Ms. Goreham explained that she was concerned about development and change of the area once Jacksonville Road is widened and the interchanges are built. She noted that it would then be easy to start developing north of I-80. She stressed that if this is not what the residents want, it should not be done.

Mr. Klees explained that the MPO was considering something at the end of a long chain of decisions that went back decades. At this point, there are two designed interchanges that were based on previous decisions of the MPO, PennDOT and FHWA. There are several decisions to be made, primarily whether to move forward with what is designed, or to change direction. If the direction is going to change, that will not be completed at an MPO meeting.

Mr. Klees further noted that many other groups and agencies will have to get involved, and the process will essentially go back to square one. He admitted that he did not like the fact that the MPO is faced with decisions that were all made years ago and he did not see a good alternative for the local traffic.

Mr. Klees asked if it was less likely today that FHWA would consider co-located interchanges. Ms. Michael replied that FHWA is insistent that the Local and High Speed Interchanges must be located at least two miles apart.

Mr. Eich explained that the MPO was faced with a location for the Local Access Interchange that is far from ideal, but still better than the rest of the alternatives, which would be shifting traffic into Zion or Bellefonte where there is much more residential development.

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Mr. Lee suggested a future agenda item to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the Local Access Interchange so that members could think the matter through. He noted that highways shape communities, and Marion Township is saying that they do not like the shape they are being put into. There are, however, other opinions and trade-offs to consider.

Ms. Reese pointed out that PennDOT and staff had agreed to meet with Marion Township officials. She suggested a forum where all of Marion Township could be invited to review the project and provide the MPO with input. She asked if Marion Township was interested. Mr. Eich expressed support for that idea, and also suggested that a presentation be made to the Nittany Valley Regional Planning Commission. Ms. Michael noted that a presentation was already given to the Planning Commission last fall. She asked about the most economical way to get information out, and whether a newsletter or a survey might be effective.

Mr. Klees suggested tabling this issue and waiting for the discussion to occur with Marion Township. Ms. Goreham noted that Howard Borough needs to be included as well. Mr. Eich suggested that the issue be kept as an ongoing agenda item until a resolution is reached, even if the agenda item just consists of short updates. In addition, the Lower Bald Eagle Valley should consider appointing a permanent MPO member for their region.

Mr. Dillon explained that the four people who addressed this meeting do not necessarily represent the voice of all of the Marion Township residents. There must be an unbiased way to survey those people.

Mr. Gutshall asked if the most recent Comprehensive Plan was being referred to. Mr. Klees explained that the presentation tonight was based on what was in place when the decisions were made in 1999 to 2002. A newer version should be presented if there is a community meeting so people can realize what may have changed.

6. Centre County Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Mr. Luck made a motion to schedule a special CCMPO Coordinating Committee meeting at 6:00 p.m., Thursday, May 28, 2009 to discuss the LRTP. Ms. Reese seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

7. 2009-2012 Centre County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Meek explained that in December 1994, the Waddle Road project was added to the LRTP. In July 2008, this project was one of several that had to be removed from the Plan due to fiscal constraint. It was subsequently not included on the 2009-2012 TIP.

Patton Township has requested that the Preliminary Engineering (PE) phase of this project be added to the 2009-12 TIP in the amount of \$3 million. Funding would be 100% local. This is similar to what was done with the State College Borough Fraser Street Realignment project. Putting the Waddle Road project on the TIP allows it to become "federalized." Ms. Meek explained that Patton Township's intent is to have the local funding for the PE phase count toward the non-federal share of the overall project. It must be included on the Centre County TIP prior to any work being completed.

Mr. Hall made a motion to amend the Highway Element of the 2009-2012 Centre County TIP to include the Preliminary Engineering Phase of the Waddle Road Interchange project with 100% local funds, contingent upon the completion of an Air Quality Conformity Analysis, if required. Mr. Spychalski seconded the motion.

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Mr. Erickson noted that the \$3 million would come from an even split of funds between the developer of Toftrees and Patton Township. Funds will be advanced through a Pennsylvania Infrastructure Bank (PIB) loan. This project is designated as Patton Township's top transportation priority, so the Township partnered with the Toftrees developer to begin work. A consultant has been hired by the Township to help secure funding for the rest of the project. Several sources are being considered.

Mr. Shifflet asked what the estimate was for construction of this project. Mr. Erickson replied that it was \$16.8 million. Mr. Shifflet asked the MPO to keep in mind that at some point in the future they may be asked to come up with the remainder of this funding. Mr. Erickson replied that Patton Township is considering several other options for funding, and he did not expect to come back to the MPO.

Ms. Reese asked if this was a new interchange. Mr. Erickson replied that it was not. The existing interchange and bridge will be expanded from three lanes to possibly six lanes.

The above motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Meek noted that staff is unclear at this point whether an Air Quality Analysis needs to be completed for this project prior to it being added to the TIP. Staff is working with PennDOT to determine the answer. If the project does need to go through Air Quality Analysis, the MPO must start the process for the 30-day public comment period and hold a public meeting. She clarified that the motion is not actually putting the project on the TIP, but starting this process.

8. Federal Transportation Authorization Legislation

Mr. Klees reported that federal transportation authorization legislation is moving through Congress. Congressman Thompson has asked Centre County for projects to submit. The deadline is May 1, 2009.

Mr. Rick Sollman, Congressman Thompson's Office, explained that Matthew Brennan met with CRPA staff to discuss potential candidate projects for the upcoming Federal Surface Transportation Reauthorization bill. He noted that the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has adopted principles for member designated high-priority projects. Mr. Sollman's comments are attached to the minutes.

Ms. Meek noted that the MPO has had several discussions about earmarks from a policy perspective. There are two types of earmark legislative action:

- Authorization bill (typically 5-6 year period)
- Appropriations bill (annual)

Congress is currently preparing the appropriations legislation for Fiscal Year 2010. Centre County Government has submitted a request for safety improvements on Route 322 between Boalsburg and Seven Mountains. Ms. Meek added that Penn State University has also submitted requests for Park Avenue widening and the Intermodal Transportation Center.

Ms. Meek reviewed the Authorization legislation, adding that members of Congress have established a new earmark request process. Detailed information regarding this process, and a letter from Congressman Thompson, were included in the agenda packet. In February 2009, the MPO voted to support an earmark request for CATA's maintenance facility expansion. The MPO has until May 1 to submit any additional earmark requests.

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Staff is recommending that the MPO either submit the Route 322 safety improvements, or support resubmission of this project by Centre County, and also continue to support CATA's request for their maintenance facility. Ms. Meek noted that there are other projects that the MPO may want to consider supporting. Staff recommends projects on the 2009-2012 TIP or LRTP, improvements on the existing transportation system, projects that include a strong safety element, and projects that are of reasonable cost. Possible projects include:

- SR 3018 Whitehall Road/University Drive Extension project
- Route 350 Safety Improvements project
- Route 550 Bishop Street turn lane (betterment) project

Mr. Spychalski made a motion to approve support for Centre County and CATA's earmark requests and to submit earmark requests for the three projects listed above. Mr. Buckalew seconded the motion.

Mr. Luck moved to amend Mr. Spychalski's motion to include MPO support for Patton Township's earmark request for construction of the Waddle Road Interchange project. Ms. Goreham seconded. The motion passed by majority (Mr. Shifflet and Ms. Michael abstained).

Mr. Spychalski's motion, as amended, was for the MPO to:

- *Support Centre County's request for Route 322 Safety project*
- *Support CATA's request for their maintenance facility expansion*
- *Support Patton Township's request for the Waddle Road Interchange project*
- *Submit a request for the SR 3018 Whitehall Road/University Drive Extension project*
- *Submit a request for the Route 350 Safety Improvements project*
- *Submit a request for the Route 550 Bishop Street turn lane (Betterment) project*

The motion passed by majority (Mr. Shifflet and Ms. Michael abstained).

9. Announcements

Mr. Klees reviewed the schedule of upcoming meetings.

Staff is still awaiting a decision from PennDOT on the requests made for the Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative (PCTI).

Mr. Klees noted that a public presentation for the Whitehall Road/University Drive Extension project will be held in Ferguson Township on June 2, 2009.

10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Shingler
Recording Secretary

Mr. Sollman's Comments Regarding Federal Transportation Authorization Legislation:

"Several weeks ago, Matthew Brennan, Legislative Director for Congressman Thompson, met with the Centre Regional Planning Agency staff to discuss potential candidates for projects in the upcoming Federal Surface Transportation Reauthorization bill that Congress will be brought up later this year -the current measure expires September 30th, 2009.

The new legislation will include a strong focus on performance accountability that will result in tangible transportation and safety benefits. The Committee has adopted the following principles for member designated high-priority projects:

- All projects must meet eligibility criteria under Title 23 (Highways) or Chapter 53 of Title 49 (Public Transit) of the United States Code;
- Specific identification of funding to finance 80 percent of the total cost of the phase or segment of the project request must be identified;
- At least one letter of support for the project from the state department of transportation for each project or affected local government or governmental agency;
- The requesting entity will provide an opportunity for public comment on the project;
- The requesting entity will also include other Federal, state, local or private funding sources that may be used in conjunction to advance the project.

Many of the projects that have been discussed between the Congressman's staff and the planning staff are worth while ventures and the Congressman has made a point to only support projects that are on the Transportation Infrastructure Plan and have received overwhelming support from the local officials. One requirement put forth by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is that each project will have a formulated plan for public input. Those projects that do not have a plan for adequate public input will not be considered.

The Congressman has expressed support for an ongoing project along the 322 corridor in Potter's Mills during the most recent House appropriations cycle. Similarly, the Congressman will be supporting efforts to continue with this project during the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization.

I appreciate the opportunity to address the MPO today and look forward to working with you in the future. Should you have any questions, please contact Matthew Brennan in the Congressman's Washington office."