

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

**Tuesday, September 22, 2009
6:00 pm
Ferguson Township Municipal Building**

Minutes

Voting Members Present:

Ron Buckalew	Centre Regional Planning Commission (CRPC)
Bob Corman	Penns Valley Planning Region
John Elnitski	Benner Township
Jon Eich	Centre County
Elizabeth Goreham	State College Borough
Michelle Barbin (for Ken Hall)	Mountaintop Planning Region
Dan Klees	College Township
Kevin Kline	PennDOT District 2-0
Chris Lee	Harris Township
Jeff Luck	Patton Township
Steve Miller	Ferguson Township
Rich Rogers	Centre County
Mike Savage	Moshannon Valley Planning Region
Barbara Spencer	Halfmoon Township
John Spsychalski	Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA)
Larry Shifflet	PennDOT Central Office

Non-Voting Members Present:

Matt Smoker	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Rob Cooper	Penn State University
Dallas Gallo (for Frank Halderman)	Bellefonte Borough

Others Present:

Tom Zilla	Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA)
Jim May	CRPA
Trish Meek	CRPA
Greg Kausch	CRPA
Bob Jacobs	Centre County Planning / Community Development Office (CCPCDO)
Ray Gutshall	Marion Township
Frank Hampton	PennDOT Central Office
Mark Kunkle	Ferguson Township
George Khoury	Citizen
Hugh Mose	CATA

1. Call to Order

Mr. Klees called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Jacobs requested that the minutes be amended to reflect that he was not present at the June 23, 2009 Coordinating Committee meeting.

Mr. Spychalski made a motion to approve the June 23, 2009 Coordinating Committee minutes with Mr. Jacobs' suggested revision. Mr. Buckalew seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. Mr. Klees abstained from voting as he was not present at the June meeting.

3. Citizen Comments

Mr. May introduced Amy Dugan, new CRPA Office Manager and MPO Recording Secretary. Ms. Dugan replaces Lori Shingler, who left CRPA in early September to take a new position with Penn State University.

4. Old Gatesburg Road Extension Project

Mr. Zilla explained that the Old Gatesburg Road Extension project must be included on the CCMPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) in order for Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative (PCTI) funds to be accessed and environmental clearances to be granted. Because this project includes an addition of new road capacity, the CCMPO's Air Quality Conformity Analysis must also be amended and approved.

Mr. Zilla further noted that the revised Air Quality Conformity Analysis shows that, even with the addition of this new road capacity, forecasted emissions levels will remain below the thresholds established for Centre County. Thus, the LRTP and TIP remain in conformity with air quality standards. During the 30-day public comment period, the only correspondence received was a letter of support provided by Ferguson Township.

Mr. Zilla then explained that federal regulations require the Old Gatesburg Road Extension be added to the Centre County Federal Aid / Functional Classification System as an Urban Collector. To accomplish this, the CCMPO must make a formal request to PennDOT to revise the Federal Aid System. PennDOT then forwards this request to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). It should be noted that all existing roads intersecting with the planned Old Gatesburg Road Extension are currently on the Federal Aid System.

Mr. Lee asked whether the funding for this project would affect the funding available for any other TIP or LRTP projects. Mr. Zilla replied that it would not.

Mr. Lee made a motion to approve the following actions:

- *Approve the amended Centre County Air Quality Conformity Analysis;*
- *Amend the CCMPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) to include the Old Gatesburg Road Extension project;*

- *Amend the 2009-2012 Centre County TIP to also include the project; and*
- *Approve a request to add the project to the Federal Aid/Functional Classification System as an Urban Collector facility.*

Mr. Savage seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

5. Moshannon Valley Park and Ride Lot Study

Mr. Kausch explained that The Moshannon Valley Park and Ride Lot Study is a joint project of the CCMPO and the North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission, with the CCMPO making formal application to the PCTI program for project funding. A total of \$100,000 was approved for the study.

At their June 2009 meeting, the Coordinating Committee amended the fiscal year 2009-2010 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to include this project. Mr. Kausch further noted that, as with the Old Gatesburg Road Extension project, this study must be added to the 2009-2012 Centre County TIP in order for PCTI funds to be accessed.

Mr. Luck made a motion to amend the 2009-2012 Centre County TIP to include \$100,000 from the PCTI for completion of the Moshannon Valley Park and Ride Study project. Mr. Eich seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

6. Marion Township Correspondence – July and August 2009

At their June 2009 meeting, the Coordinating Committee approved a motion to continue advancing the I-99/I-80 High Speed Interchange and I-80/Route 26 Local Access Interchange projects as planned. Following that meeting, during July and August, Marion Township provided further correspondence to the CCMPO and PennDOT requesting additional information related to the Local Access Interchange, proposed improvements to Route 26/Jacksonville Road, the Lick Run Bridge, and other items. At the direction of the CCMPO Chair, staff has prepared draft responses to the Township's correspondence.

Mr. Zilla presented photographs of locations along Route 26 where turning lanes have been requested, as well as pictures of the Lick Run Bridge. He explained that a project to replace this bridge is on the LRTP, but not until the 2019-2022 time frame. The bridge has been declared functionally obsolete as a result of its narrow width, but has not been deemed structurally deficient. Mr. Lee asked if the Lick Run Bridge was classified as a one- or two-lane bridge. Mr. Zilla replied that this facility is a narrow two-lane bridge.

Ms. Spencer asked if warning lights were currently in place at the bridge. Mr. Zilla replied that no warning lights are currently installed at that location.

Mr. Gutshall, Marion Township Supervisor and Head Roadmaster, noted that his understanding is that the implementation of tolls on I-80 is once again under consideration. He asked if, as part of this process, any impact studies had been completed with respect to the I-80/Route 26 Local Access Interchange. Mr. Zilla replied that the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission had completed some analysis of the interchange projects, but the initial application to establish tolls on I-80 was rejected before this information was made public. Mr. Zilla further noted that, much like the interchange projects, the I-80 tolling initiative raised some concerns about diversion of traffic to local roads. He explained that nothing in the Turnpike Commission's studies suggested that the interchange projects should not be completed,

and that both the High Speed and Local Access Interchanges were deemed high-priority projects as part of the Turnpike Commission's I-80 Capital Improvement Program.

The draft letter to Marion Township from the CCMPO was discussed item by item:

- Item 1 explained that the CCMPO Coordinating Committee approved a motion to proceed with the High Speed and Local Access Interchanges as planned, and to give high priority to safety improvements on adjacent portions of Route 26/Jacksonville Road, at their June 2009 meeting. The CCMPO further encourages Marion Township officials to continue to attend Coordinating and Technical Committee meetings, and communicate with policy makers and staff.
- Item 2 stated that the Coordinating Committee would give high priority to making safety improvements on Route 26/Jacksonville Road, but also recommends against incorporating the entire length of the facility as one project due to concerns over obtaining environmental clearances and the amount of funding necessary to complete a single large project.

Mr. Luck asked if the Local Access Interchange would carry all of the traffic between I-99 and I-80 during construction of the High Speed Interchange. Mr. Kline replied that his understanding is that there would be a temporary link between the two facilities, but promised to verify that information. In any event, the current ramps would be kept open as long as possible and all reasonable attempts would be made to minimize the level of traffic utilizing the Local Access Interchange to move between I-99 and I-80. Mr. Luck asked if the level of traffic on Local Access Interchange during the construction of the High Speed Interchange would be the highest that could be expected. Mr. Kline responded affirmatively.

Ms. Spencer expressed concern that a safety issue is being created by moving forward as planned. Mr. Klees replied that work on the interchanges, as well as on adjacent sections of Route 26/Jacksonville Road must be completed in phases based on the availability of funding. He noted that other transportation projects in Centre County also must be addressed. He expressed his opinion that even though the interchange projects are very visible, to deem them as the highest priority would diminish the importance of other needed projects.

Mr. Lee asked if safety improvements to the portion of Route 26 between existing I-80 Exit 161 and Shay Lane could be considered as part of the interchange projects. Mr. Zilla replied that because there a design for Route 26 has not yet been completed, project costs are unknown. Moreover, because the interchange projects received environmental clearance without the inclusion of Route 26 improvements, incorporating the improvements now would trigger the need for new environmental studies.

Mr. Klees noted that, with a major LRTP update currently underway, it would be irresponsible for the MPO to prioritize the projects at this time. His own personal belief is that the Local Access Interchange should not be completed without some concurrent improvements to adjacent portions of Route 26/Jacksonville Road. Mr. Luck agreed. Mr. Savage pointed out that the MPO has committed to making improvements to Route 26/Jacksonville Road, but the residents of that area must still present rationale to the MPO as to why the project should be a high priority. Mr. Eich noted that the \$160 million in funding needed to complete the interchanges must first be secured, before the MPO can determine how to best allocate it.

Mr. Kline suggested continuing the development of the Route 26 improvement project, and again reminded the MPO that currently no construction funding has been identified for the interchange projects.

Mr. Gutshall expressed his concern that once construction of the Local Access Interchange is completed, safety improvements to Route 26 will be forgotten. Mr. Lee explained that the inclusion of these improvements on the LRTP will ensure that they remain under consideration. Mr. Klees further noted that the new LRTP will extend through 2040 and will assign priority to the project, but the amount of funding available will ultimately determine which projects can be completed.

- Item 3 states that the MPO concurs with the Township's desire to install turning lanes at select locations along Route 26/Jacksonville Road, but cautions that these lanes must meet the required warrants in PennDOT's Design Manual.
- Item 4 explains that the CCMPO Performance Review Committee, as part of its charge, will ultimately determine how Marion and Walker Townships will be represented on the Technical and Coordinating Committees.
- Item 5 explains that the MPO has requested that PennDOT consider committing funds to the Preliminary Engineering phase of the Lick Run Bridge replacement. Ms. Spencer recommended that lights and signage be installed at that location in the short term.
- Item 6 states that the CCMPO will request that PennDOT consider the Marion Township's request to prohibit oversize vehicles from traveling on Route 26 over the Lick Run Bridge.

Mr. Savage made a motion to approve the MPO's response to Marion Township's correspondence from July and August 2009. Mr. Corman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

7. 2009-2012 Centre County TIP

Mr. Zilla explained that the CCMPO's *Procedures for TIP Modifications* permit staff and project sponsors to complete certain administrative actions without the formal approval of the Coordinating Committee. He presented significant administrative actions that have recently been completed:

- Because an influx of funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) has supplanted the need for other funding sources to complete certain paving restoration and bridge projects, these non-ARRA funds have been moved to other projects;
- \$84,000 in the CMAQ line item was shifted to CATA so that the funding would not lapse. CATA will use these funds for a bus rehabilitation project. Although the agency was awarded ARRA funds for this project, the amount of ARRA funding is not quite sufficient to complete the project.
- Approximately \$400,000 allocated for CMAQ projects that have not advanced in 2009 will also be shifted to CATA for its bus rehabilitation project.
- The Old Fort Park and Ride Lot has been delayed because of environmental and stormwater concerns, as well as the necessity for a new lease between the American Legion and Potter

Township. Construction funds have therefore been shifted from 2009 to 2011. Design work will continue in the interim.

- The Route 150 Congested Corridor Improvement Program has been delayed until issues with a retaining wall along Route 144/Linn Street have been resolved, as reconstruction of that wall may result in the permanent rerouting of traffic to Route 150. Funds for this project will be restored in 2010. Mr. Elnitski noted that the traffic study for a new prison to be constructed on the grounds of State Correctional Institution (SCI) – Rockview calls for a new red light and turning lane along Route 150.
- Design work for improvements to Whitehall Road between South Atherton Street and West College Avenue has progressed rapidly, so construction may begin sooner than originally anticipated. Therefore, funding for the Final Design and Right-of-Way phases will be shifted from other projects that are not advancing. Construction funds will still be needed, and will be discussed as part of the 2011-2014 TIP.
- Funds were shifted from the Pavement Restoration Line Item to a new Betterment Project on Route 26 near the current I-99/I-80 interchange. This project will include guide rail and drainage improvements, enhanced signage, and lane demarcation changes. Mr. Eich asked if sight distance concerns near the current westbound I-80 on- and off-ramps would be addressed during this project. Mr. Kline replied that PennDOT will indeed be examining these concerns, and enhanced signage may be implemented. He added that from a technical standpoint, large trucks in this area seem to impede the visibility of other vehicles.

8. 2011-2014 Centre County TIP

Procedural guidance for preparation of the 2011-2014 TIP had been delayed due to uncertainty about the level of state and federal transportation funding in coming years. Mr. Zilla explained that this guidance has recently been released, and specifies that 90% of resources should be committed for system preservation, 85% of bridge resources should be committed to structurally deficient bridges, and a 3% factor should be used for inflation.

Moreover, Mr. Zilla noted that the “spike” funding program for highway projects will continue, and will provide about \$490 million statewide for the four-year TIP period. He further noted that individual MPOs and RPOs will prepare the narrative for projects that extend beyond the TIP. Mr. Lee expressed concern about any process in which decisions are made outside of the MPO. Mr. Zilla replied that the MPO process is intended to be a cooperative one. Mr. Klees noted that the MPO would still determine the priority projects.

Mr. Shifflet commented that should one look across the United States, one would be hard-pressed to find a more cooperative process than the one that occurs between PennDOT and Pennsylvania’s MPOs and RPOs. He also noted that the total amount of statewide funding for the four-year TIP period, including spike funds, is about \$8-9 billion.

Mr. Zilla expressed agreement with Mr. Lee, noting that it would be desirable to receive transportation funding in blocks to provide the MPO with more discretion, but this is unlikely to happen. Mr. Shifflet explained that the MPO will likely play an increased role in the distribution of funds going forward. Mr. Lee expressed his opinion that the MPO is looking for a process that best integrates transportation and land use needs. He further noted that local people know best the needs of the area, but state officials

provide a more broad perspective. He stated that we the MPO should advocate block grant funding to our representatives in Congress.

Mr. Zilla explained that the key unknowns for the TIP are whether, and when, there will be a new federal transportation authorization bill, and whether the state will develop a new revenue source for Act 44. It appears that the application to establish tolls along I-80 will be resubmitted.

Mr. Smoker confirmed that the Federal Highway Trust Fund is running in a deficit status. Mr. Zilla explained that the TIP guidance directs planning partners to assume SAFETEA-LU funding levels with a 1% increase in 2011 and 2012 for both highway and transit projects, a 4% increase in 2013 and 2014 for highway projects, and a 2.67% increase in 2013 and 2014 for transit projects.

Mr. Zilla noted that funds coming from Act 44 will be reduced considerably as a result of the failure to approve tolls along I-80. Transit funding will remain at a guaranteed level, but highway and bridge funding is being reduced due to decreasing revenue estimates and debt service for bonds issued under Act 44.

Centre County allocations over the four-year period of the new TIP are as follows:

- \$53,401,000 total for highway projects
 - \$34,586,000 of this for road projects;
 - \$17,506,000 of this for bridge projects; and
 - \$1,308,000 of this for transportation enhancement programs; and
- \$26,187,000 total for transit projects.

Mr. Zilla noted that compared to the current TIP, the 2011-2014 TIP reflects a reduction of nearly \$18 million for road and bridge projects. Funding for transportation enhancement projects remains approximately the same, and there will be an increase of \$816,000 for transit projects.

Transportation enhancement funds will be allocated by formula in 2011 and 2012. Mr. Zilla noted that there will not be another statewide application cycle for transportation enhancement projects; rather, a local application process can be developed.

The TIP preparation schedule requires the CCMPO to approve the submission of the Preliminary Draft 2011-2014 TIP to PennDOT in December 2009. Therefore, the MPO may be required to meet in December. On the other hand, Mr. Zilla explained, given the shortage of funds and the number of projects that require funding, the new TIP may not be difficult to prepare.

The key elements of the upcoming TIP will be:

- The reduction of Act 44 funds for highways and bridges;
- The commitment of funds for local bridges;
- Restoring construction funds for the Old Fort Park and Ride Lot and Route 150 Congested Corridor project;
- Construction funds for highway projects along Route 26 at Pine Grove Mountain, improvements to Whitehall Road/University Drive Extension, the Route 322 Safety project, and the Route 26 Betterment project; and
- A local process for distributing transportation enhancement funds.

Mr. Eich asked whether any funds obtained for the Route 322 Safety Improvements would be in addition to the \$52 million already budgeted in the 2011-2014 TIP for roads and bridge projects. Mr. Zilla replied that these funds would be in addition to what is already included in the TIP.

The November MPO meetings will include discussions regarding carryover projects for the new TIP, transportation enhancement project selection, and other key issues that require policy decisions.

Mr. Lee asked about the criteria for the transportation enhancement projects. Ms. Meek replied that federal guidelines prescribe how the funds may be used, but the MPO must decide which criteria should be used to rank and select projects.

Mr. Shifflet explained that the reduction of Act 44 funding equates to a loss over about \$1 billion in transportation projects statewide. Mr. Eich asked if the ARRA Transportation Improvements Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) applications for the I-99/I-80/Route 26 interchanges would be rejected because the projects are not on the TIP. Messrs. Shifflet and Smoker replied that the projects would not be disqualified on this basis alone. Mr. Shifflet further noted that the fair majority of projects submitted under the TIGER program do not have TIP status. If Centre County's projects are selected, then the TIP must be amended. Mr. Shifflet explained that by law, TIGER applications must be processed by February 17, 2010. He estimated that over 1,500 applications were submitted nationwide.

Mr. Klees thanked Mr. Kline, Mr. May, and Mr. Jacobs and their staffs for their work on the MPO's TIGER applications.

9. CCMPO Draft Calendar Year 2010 Budget

Mr. Zilla provided an overview of the draft 2010 calendar year budget for the MPO. Federal and state funding is expected to remain at the same level, but county, municipal, and CATA funding shares are anticipated to increase by 5%. Operating expenses are expected to be slightly lower in the coming year. Special project expenditures are anticipated to be substantially lower. Several projects this year have utilized consultant assistance, and that has increased the special project expenditures for this year. Next year, the Moshannon Valley Park and Ride Lot study will represent a substantial special project expense.

Mr. Shifflet noted that it has been a challenge just to keep the budget flat. At the state level, budgets are being reduced by as much as 4.5%.

Mr. Lee questioned the revenues based on the modified COG formula. Mr. Zilla explained that the Centre County share accounts for areas outside of the Centre Region and Bellefonte areas. The County provides cash and an employee dedicated to MPO as its share.

10. Member Reports

Mr. Lee – Harris Township is considering a Workforce Housing policy that will certainly have implications on transportation needs and patterns within the Township.

Mr. Savage – The Moshannon Valley Planning Regions is very pleased that the Park and Ride Lot Study has been approved for funding and added to the TIP. He is hopeful that commuter bus service will be implemented.

Ms. Barbin – No report given.

Mr. Gallo – There is a workforce housing project coming before the Bellefonte Borough Planning Commission. It is called Beaver Farms – Phase Two. Like the efforts in Harris Township, this development will almost certainly have traffic impacts in the project area.

Mr. Corman – A sewer plant project is ongoing at Country Club Park. A new bridge on Penns Creek Road has been opened for traffic.

Mr. Cooper – No report given.

Mr. Kline – Contracts for all projects in District 2-0 ready to go to construction have been awarded, with one exception.

Mr. Elnitski – A new prison slated for construction on the property of SCI-Rockview will increase traffic levels on Route 150.

Mr. Shifflet – Thanked the Coordinating Committee, MPO staff, and PennDOT for their quick action on applications for funding under the TIGER program. Bids have been received on 260 of 290 ARRA projects statewide.

Mr. Smoker – There is a resolution in the House of Representatives to reauthorize SAFETEA-LU provisions and funding levels for a period of three months.

Mr. Spychalski – Six of the ten compressed natural gas (CNG) buses that CATA acquired from the transit system in Orlando, FL have been completely restored, and are now in service. Moreover, two of these 35-foot buses were traded to the Indiana County Transit Authority in exchange for two 40-foot buses which will better meet CATA's needs.

Mr. Buckalew – CRPC continues to work with the COG Transportation and Land Use Committee to better define the relationship between the two bodies. A joint meeting will be held in November.

Mr. Rogers – No report given.

Ms. Goreham – A two-year project to replace water lines along Beaver Avenue is now complete. As a result of another water line replacement project, another section of South Allen Street has recently been resurfaced.

Mr. Jacobs – No report given.

Mr. May – Recognized Tom Zilla for his efforts to complete the TIGER applications. The growth forecasting project is nearly complete, and Mr. May also complimented Ms. Meek for her work on this task.

Mr. Eich – Centre County is preparing to distribute roughly \$200,000 from the Liquid Fuel Tax Fund, so municipalities should expect additional information soon.

Mr. Miller – The project to improve Whitehall Road between West College Avenue and Fairbrook is currently in the engineering and design phases.

Mr. Luck – Thanked CATA for extending hourly bus service to new portions of Patton Township, including the area around the Geisinger Gray’s Woods facility.

Mr. Klees – Two road realignment and intersection improvement projects in College Township are close to being announced. An effort is underway to add a potential pedestrian/bicycle link to the official map.

11. Announcements

Mr. Klees thanked former CRPA Office Manager Lori Shingler for her dedication and service to the MPO. Ms. Shingler recently accepted a new position at Penn State University.

The next meeting of the Technical Committee will be held Wednesday, November 18, 2009 at 9:30 am. The location of this meeting has not yet been determined.

The next meeting of the Coordinating Committee will be held Tuesday, November 24, 2009 at 6:00 pm. The location of this meeting has not yet been determined.

The Affordable Housing Coalition is sponsoring the Second Annual Housing Workshop. This event will be held on Thursday, October 29, 2009, from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, at the Foxdale Village Auditorium.

State Transportation Commission hearings will be held on Thursday, October 8, 2009 at the Hilton Garden Inn in State College. A time for this event has not yet been determined.

12. Adjourn

Mr. Corman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Savage seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Dugan
Recording Secretary