

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

**Thursday, June 23, 2009  
6:00 pm  
J.K. Yearick Center, Howard Fire Hall**

**Minutes**

**Voting Members Present:**

Ron Buckalew	Centre Regional Planning Commission
Bob Corman	Penns Valley Planning Region
Jim Swartzell (for John Elnitski)	Benner Township
Jon Eich	Centre County
Jim Rosenberger (for Elizabeth Goreham)	State College Borough
Ken Hall	Mountaintop Planning Region
Dave Koll (for Dan Klees)	College Township
Kevin Kline	PennDOT District 2-0 Office
Chris Lee	Harris Township
Jeff Luck	Patton Township
Steve Miller	Ferguson Township
Sue Hannegan (for Rich Rogers)	Centre County
Frank Royer	Spring Township
Mike Savage	Moshannon Valley Planning Region
Barbara Spencer	Halfmoon Township
John Spychalski	CATA
Larry Shifflet	PennDOT Central Office
Richard Watters (for Tom Poorman)	Lower Bald Eagle Planning Region

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

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

**Others Present:**

Tom Zilla	Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA)
Jim May	CRPA
Trish Meek	CRPA
Greg Kausch	CRPA
Bob Jacobs	CCPCDO - Secretary
Mike Bloom	CCPCDO
Pete Nanov	FHWA
Karen Michael	PennDOT District 2-0
Frank Hampton	PennDOT Central Office
Michelle Barbin	Mountaintop Planning Region

(List of additional citizens and local officials in attendance is attached)

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### 1. Call to Order

Mr. Corman, acting as Chair, 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 May 28, 2009 Coordinating Committee minutes. Mr. Hall seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.*

### 3. Citizen Comments

There were no citizen comments.

### 4. Centre County Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Mr. Bloom presented the draft project ranking criteria, which were discussed at the May 23 meeting. The current draft of the criteria reflects comments received from the Coordinating Committee at that meeting.

Mr. Bloom explained that a Goals and Objectives survey was sent to members in April, the results of which set the framework for the project ranking criteria. He reviewed the prioritized goals resulting from that survey. The project ranking committee (PRC) has recommended a new scoring system, on a Likert Scale from 0-3, replacing the previous 0-1-5-10 system. They have also recommended a weighting of factors based on the prioritized goals and objectives.

At its May 23 meeting, the Coordinating Committee suggested adding a local priority goal. Mr. Bloom said the PRC is still working through statistical analysis to determine how to best achieve this. There will be either .5 or 1 point bonus given for the requesting entity's top priority project.

A suggestion was made to add two components to Criterion #3 (Efficient System Management and Operations):

- Reduces our cost of living in the county
- Reduces the cost of doing business in the county

The PRC did not recommend adding these components because they are very difficult to quantify.

Further, it was proposed to add the component "aligns residents with their destination" to Criterion #4 (Integration and Connectivity). The PRC recommended adding this component, and this recommendation is reflected in the draft criteria.

Last, a suggestion was made to add the component "avoids negative impacts on communities and the environment" to Criterion #6 (Consistency with Planned Growth and Development Areas). The PRC recommended adding this component as well.

Mr. Eich referred to the local priority bonus, and asked if this bonus would be added to the raw or weighted score. Mr. Bloom replied that the bonus would be an increase to the weighted score. He added that a half-point bonus is probably more statistically viable than the full point.

Mr. Lee asked if, prior to the project ranking, growth forecasts were being sent to municipalities, along with questions about where they want growth. Mr. Bloom replied that the forecasts and questions are being sent to municipalities. Mr. Lee asked about the refinement of the priority order relative to funding sources, noting that this is another way to weight projects. Mr. Bloom replied with the example of a bridge, which is only eligible for bridge funding. That bridge may be ranked number 50 overall, but it may be the number one priority for that type of bridge funding.

Mr. Lee explained that block transportation funding is important to Centre County, because without it, policy decisions are being made outside the county by those who control individual funding sources.

Mr. Buckalew noted a wide distribution of the criteria as far as which ones were close and which were far apart, asking whether this could put too much weight on small differences. Mr. Bloom replied that the Coordinating Committee asked for the raw scores in addition to the weighted scores at their last meeting. He further noted that policymakers would still have an opportunity to make changes to the overall ranking.

*Mr. Miller made a motion to approve the project ranking criteria, including the weighting component, to be used for the LRTP. Mr. Spsychalski seconded and the motion passed unanimously.*

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

Ms. Michael explained that last October, Marion Township officials expressed concern about the location of the Local Access Interchange at a Coordinating Committee meeting. The MPO received additional correspondence from Marion Township in December. PennDOT and MPO staff attended the Nittany Valley Planning Commission meeting in January, and the MPO Technical and Coordinating Committees discussed the issue in January and February.

Ms. Michael identified the both the Local Access and High Speed Interchange projects on a map, along with environmental features in the area. When the Local Access Interchange project was initiated, PennDOT first looked at geographical constraints in the project area. These constraints include Bald Eagle Mountain, the Nittany Creek in the median of Interstate 80, nearby quarries, the Lyonstown residential area, historic features, agricultural security areas, and wetlands.

Ms. Michael then reviewed the project timeline, starting in 1996 with an environmental inventory. Several public meetings were held starting in September, 1999. Two-thirds of participants at these meetings stated that a local access interchange between I-80 and Route 26 was needed, and 80% of these were in favor of an access just east of Walnut Ridge Road. In July 2002, the Environmental Evaluation Report was completed for the project.

Further, Ms. Michael identified area crash locations and presented average daily traffic on area roads from 1999 and 2003.

Ms. Michael explained that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process – which PennDOT is required to follow – is based on federal guidelines, and mandates that the agency follow all applicable federal environmental laws. This process is not completed in a vacuum; rather, PennDOT is required to solicit public input at each step, so the decision is made with the best and most complete information available. She also noted that the MPO approved a Route 26 betterment project from existing Exit 161 to the proposed local access interchange, and PennDOT also plans to solicit public input before these improvements commence.

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Reviewing the current status of the interchange projects, Ms. Michael noted the Local Access Interchange is fully ready to go to construction, and the High Speed Interchange is about 80% ready for construction.

Ms. Michael explained contingency plans in the event of an emergency I-80 closure. Jacksonville Road is not permitted for oversize loads at all, and that will continue. PennDOT's plan is to use the current Lamar and Milesburg exits as detour points.

Mr. Zilla explained the MPO's role in the project, noting that the body approves the expenditure of federal funds for surface transportation projects. If the Local Access and High Speed Interchanges are to move forward, the next action by the MPO will be to secure funding for the each project. If funding is secured, the MPO must then add the projects to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Mr. Zilla explained that the MPO has considered several potential funding sources for the projects.

Mr. Zilla explained that there are two options for the MPO to consider:

- Option 1: Proceed with the High Speed and Local Access Interchange projects as planned
- Option 2: Stop the current projects, reopen the environmental clearance documents for both projects, and evaluate alternatives.

These options were presented to the Technical Committee at the beginning of June. That Committee made the following motions:

- Motion #1 – The Technical Committee recommended that the Coordinating Committee approve Policy Option 1 and proceed with the Local Access Interchange project as planned.
- Motion #2 – The Technical Committee recommended that the Coordinating Committee give priority to making improvements on Route 26 between the High Speed and Local Access Interchanges, and from the Local Access Interchange to Route 150 near Howard Borough.

Mr. Ray Gutshall, Marion Township Supervisor, thanked the MPO for holding this month's meeting in Howard. He spoke first to the desires of the overwhelming majority of the local community. He further explained that he had nothing personal to gain from the construction of the Local Access Interchange, as opposed to others who have represented this same constituency at previous times. The Marion Township Comprehensive Plan captures the essence of what the people want from the Supervisors, and that is to maintain a safe, rural community.

Mr. Gutshall explained that by "overwhelming majority", he is referring to a recent petition of 384 signatures. This is a large proportion of the local residents. He noted that 95% of these signatures are against the construction of the Local Interchange Access Interchange at its currently planned location near Shay Lane. He committed to provide the CCMPO and PennDOT with copies of this petition. He further explained that this petition featured a direct question, with a direct yes or no answer. He stated that a previous petition contained a hidden question, which is now the source of dispute. Mr. Gutshall further noted that the Supervisors and a majority of local residents are not against the High Speed Interchange – this will reduce the presence of extra local traffic – but they are opposed to the Local Access Interchange at Shay Lane for a variety of reasons. One of these issues is emergency vehicle traffic.

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Mr. Bose, President of the Howard Fire Company, referred to a letter drafted by the organization regarding the concerns they have about Route 26 access. Since the opening of I-99, the incidents of emergency rescue and response on Route 26 have skyrocketed. The increasing crash frequency in the vicinity of existing Exit 161 is duplicated further along Route 26 into Marion Township and Howard. Mr. Bose explained that for those who had the opportunity to drive Route 26 on the way to this meeting, it is easy to see the inability of that road to handle increased traffic with the opening of local access at Shay Lane. This deficiency is compounded by the impending opening of the quarry in Jacksonville, which has already been permitted and is awaiting the construction of the Local Access Interchange. According to Mr. Bose, the original plan was for the quarry owner to construct the Local Access Interchange near the Hubler Ridge; this plan was rejected by the FHWA.

Mr. Bose explained that there has already been somewhat of a delay in emergency response time due to traffic concerns on Jacksonville Road. There are no berms or shoulders on which to pull off, and emergency vehicles have a difficult time accessing those in need. This is a great concern. The project the MPO proposed is the improvement of Route 26 from Shay Lane to the I-99 interchange at Route 26. He said the worst part is actually from Shay Lane through the narrows and into Howard. The Fire Company's concern is the increased traffic with school buses, the opening of the quarry and the Amish community on Route 26. Another item of concern is the increased traffic and the speed of traffic on Route 26 through Main Street in Howard Borough. There are children who have to cross this road to get to the elementary school. With increased traffic, the Fire Company fears the possibility of more pedestrian-vehicle accidents. Mr. Bose noted that if the MPO is going to consider upgrading Route 26, they should not forget the Howard Borough end. Mr. Bose further noted that neighboring emergency response companies have the same concerns.

Mr. Gutshall stated that Marion, Walker, and Howard Townships, along with Howard Borough, are going to be the areas most impacted by this interchange. They do not have any representation or a vote on the MPO. Those who are designated to represent these municipalities have already stated their positions in favor of the Local Access Interchange. He asked why Marion, Walker and Howard should have to accept this position. Since they do not have proper representation, Mr. Gutshall requested that those who are assigned to represent them refrain from voting. The safety issue is one of the foremost issues regarding this project. He noted that local elected officials and residents also have the following issues:

- 1) Additional traffic placed on Route 26, which is ill-equipped to handle it;
- 2) School buses;
- 3) Amish families and their buggies;
- 4) Farm traffic with implements, hay, and salvage wagons; and
- 5) Cattle crossing which will require additional people to cross cattle into pasture safely if Route 26 is improved.

Mr. Gutshall explained that decision-makers on the CCMPO would be responsible for placing people in jeopardy. The CCMPO is currently considering safety and security as their number one priority in ranking projects for the new LRTP. This local interchange, Mr. Gutshall explained, certainly does not increase safety. Moreover, PennDOT has launched a new method of integrating Smart Transportation principles into projects. One of the primary factors is coordinating projects with local governments and communities. Mr. Gutshall explained that 95% of local residents opposed to this project should merit some sort of consideration. The local constituents ask the CCMPO to approve the High Speed Interchange, but to eliminate the Local Access Interchange at Shay Lane and maintain the present local access interchanges of Milesburg for westbound traffic, Lamar for eastbound traffic and Bellefonte/Zion interchanges for immediate traffic to that area. Mr. Gutshall also noted that lives and money could be saved by eliminating the Local Access Interchange at Shay Lane, cautioning MPO members that if there

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is a horrific accident related to local access, this will be on their collective conscience. He fears Route 26 becoming the same accident-prone deathtrap that Route 322 Potters Mills to State College is at this time. Mr. Gutshall further noted that he has already had local residents tell him that if the Local Access Interchange is constructed at Shay Lane, they will divert to Route 64 because of the high risk.

If the "lesser of two evils" takes place, as stated at previous meetings, and the Shay Lane interchange moves forward, Marion Township's request would be that Route 26 be upgraded for the proper volume of traffic from the Local Access Interchange to Route 150, and that this be completed previous to any funds being designated to the I-99/I-80 High Speed Interchange. The upgrade of Route 26 between current I-80 Exit 161 and the Local Access Interchange, with the promise of upgrading Route 26 to Route 150 toward Howard in the future, would not be acceptable. Mr. Gutshall noted that at the June Technical Committee meeting, there was a comment that this project should move forward because of the money already spent. He explained that Marion Township disagrees with that sentiment. If we, in good conscience, make the correct decision to save lives and property, that should be considered progress. Spending money just because one can doesn't make it the right decision. Mr. Gutshall questioned how much more money will be spent when local decisionmakers and residents realize the Local Access Interchange was a bad decision that puts lives and property in jeopardy. He strongly urged each and every one attending the meeting to voice their opinions. Only a few officials have represented the people for the last eight months, and now is the time for the people to be heard.

Mr. Richard Watters, Howard Borough Council, noted that a letter from the Council was included with the agenda. Council is not in favor of the Shay Lane interchange. He said the only thing he wanted to emphasize was the hazard of truck traffic in the school zone, where some children walk home for lunch. Council members did not see how the roads in the Borough could possibly be widened to accommodate the changes that would be required for a large increase in traffic. Therefore, Howard Borough Council highly recommends an alternative to the Shay Lane interchange.

Mr. Lee asked what the impact elsewhere would be if there was no Local Access interchange. He asked where the traffic would go. Mr. Kline replied that traffic would use local roads such as Musser Lane. The Local Access Interchange was located to minimize impacts to these other local roads.

Mr. Lee asked if the existing I-80 Exit 161 would no longer be a local interchange. Mr. Kline replied in the affirmative, that it would be the High Speed Interchange.

Mr. Kline noted that the recent traffic counts on Jacksonville Road have shown a decrease in traffic in recent years.

Mr. Halderman said that if the cattle crossing and farm implement issues are taken out, what is left is the same reasons that Bellefonte does not want the extra traffic pushed down to their local streets. Bellefonte cannot and will not support the construction of the High Speed Interchange without the new Local Access Interchange. He added that it was unfair of Mr. Gutshall to blame the CCMPO for any future accidents that might occur.

Mr. Miller noted that there has been a lot of discussion about increased traffic through Howard Borough and adjacent areas. He asked if traffic would increase or decrease without any local access. Mr. Watters replied that a great deal of local traffic is traveling up the valley, from Lock Haven, to Beech Creek, and on to the State College area. Howard Borough is seeing much more traffic through town, especially on weekends. Local residents see Howard and the Route 26 narrows as a shortcut to State College. Right now, a 16-room hotel is being built in the Bald Eagle State Park, and he is witnessing increased activity at the park. The elimination of the Local Access Interchange, in his opinion, would force people traveling to State College via I-99 to the Lamar or Milesburg exits of I-80. In the latter case, Route 150

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is a wider road and does not need such substantial improvement. He saw virtually no difference in distance between taking Route 150 as opposed to taking Route 26. Mr. Watters also pointed out that Howard Borough does not have a police force, and relies on the State Police for speed control.

Mr. Steve Dahm, Boggs Township, explained that he had no vested interest in how things are decided, but hoped that decisions are made in a sensible and safe way. When he heard about the progress made on planning for the Local Access Interchange, it did not make sense to him. He showed a map, and explained that there did not seem to be a particular need for a Local Access Interchange in any location. Mr. Dahm showed a line on the map that makes more sense to him as a solution. He explained that if in is traveling on Route 26 southbound, the road travels right underneath the existing I-80, toward the I-99 Zion Road Interchange. If another two-lane road was built to parallel to I-99 and connected to Zion Road near the existing interchange, that would mitigate the problem of increased traffic, including trucks. He showed other possibilities on the map, but explained that he did not think they would be as feasible.

Mr. Duane Gardner, Howard, reiterated that the Local Access Interchange would be a detriment to the area due to increased traffic and safety issues. He explained that the improvements necessary to bring Route 26 into compliance with the anticipated volume of traffic would create a financial obstacle that is beyond what has been committed to the interchanges so far. Mr. Gardner explained that, in his view, the situation would be simpler if the High Speed Interchange was constructed without the Local Access Interchange.

Ms. Barb Saulsbury, Jacksonville Road resident, explained that, in her opinion, a Local Access Interchange is necessary. She noted that one of the reasons people use Jacksonville Road from the Howard area is because the existing I-99/I-80 interchange is so dangerous. If one tries to exit at Bellefonte, one must wait for cross traffic to clear, so people are taking the back roads down Route 26 to travel straight through the area without waiting. One of these problems may be eliminated when the High Speed Interchange is built. Ms. Saulsbury further noted that Marion Township has three stone quarries permitted, so they are going to have increased truck traffic, and must figure out the safest way to get them wherever they want to go. She also explained that Jacksonville Road is the safest option compared to Forest Avenue, Musser Lane, Sandy Ridge or Hublersburg Roads. In her opinion, if we step back and look at what is best for the whole community and not just our own yard, we'll find that the Local Access Interchange is necessary.

Ms. Amy Shawver, Howard, explained that she was a resident of Marion Township for 51 years, and was around when I-80 was constructed. One thing she was sorry to see was when Nittany Ridge was closed off by the Interstate, because local farmers used that a lot. It would be a big help to the Amish Community if Nittany Ridge would reopen. Ms. Shawver noted that she was not initially against the Local Access Interchange on Hublersburg Road. In her opinion, the traffic could more easily be dealt with in that location, and it would have been the shortest and cheapest route. However, she has long considered how to mitigate the traffic, especially trucks, using the Shay Lane location. Given that the Lamar and Milesburg exits are already in place, she explained that it would be safer and cheaper to just eliminate the Local Access Interchange entirely.

Mr. David Sandy, resident along Jacksonville Road, said his concern was safety. He did not feel that the Local Access Interchange will do anything to improve safety, but might make things much worse. He noted that his house is very close to the road, and that he is opposed to the Interchange.

Mr. John Dillon, Jacksonville Road, explained his understanding that PennDOT was going to eliminate oversized vehicles on Route 26 northbound into Howard. He thanked PennDOT for this action. He further noted that he had already sent a letter to the CCMPO expressing his concerns. Mr. Dillon said

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that I-99 has been constructed up the Route 220 valley, gone under the mountain along Route 322, and has affected Route 26 in Pleasant Gap. He questioned whether traffic has actually increased or decreased on those other roads. His opinion is that the Local Access Interchange might do what similar facilities have done in the other communities, and actually alleviate traffic on local roads. Mr. Dillon noted that he has talked to three School Board members in Bellefonte, and he is concerned about school bus routes relative to ingress and egress at the quarries. The quarry trucks and school buses move at about the same times. At existing I-80 Exit 161, the latest traffic counts indicate that approximately 8.5% of all traffic is truck traffic. Mr. Dillon said he counted trucks on Route 26 from his yard. In one period, he counted 75 vehicles on Route 26, and only two of these were tri-axle trucks. He did note a recent influx in truck traffic due to some agricultural activities in the area. Moreover, HRI trucks have been using the road more frequently due to work in Grove, which is further up the road. Mr. Dillon explained that, in his opinion, a lot of the traffic is local.

Mr. Brian McCauley, Marion Township, explained that he has talked to HRI to better gauge the level of truck traffic in the area. According to HRI, 80 trucks make five trips a day in and out of the quarries – that is a total of 800 trips. HRI has already assumed that, as part of interchange construction, Forest Avenue will be shut off, they will not be allowed to use Musser Lane, and they will not be allowed to use Jacksonville Road toward Bellefonte. Mr. McCauley asked if there was a way to provide truck access at the present location, where the quarry is and close to existing I-80 Exit 161. He explained that when he talked to HRI superintendants today, they indicated that 75 loads are sent every day into Clinton County. That is 150 HRI trucks on Route 26 every day right now, and the trucks travel that road because it yields the shortest distance. In summary, Mr. McCauley indicated that of 800 truck trips per day, 150 travel through Howard on Route 26.

Moreover, Hanson put 133 trucks across their scales today. If those trucks are not given access right at their current location, we know for sure that today there would have been 266 truck trips, plus the 800 traveling on the three-mile road to the local access. There would have been 1,066 trips today on that road. Mr. McCauley noted that the situation worsens in the fall. HRI has 120 trucks and they do ten trips a day. Hanson, if they looked at doing three times the volume, would account for 798 trips. That three-mile stretch of Route 26 would have to carry 3,198 trucks a day.

Mr. McCauley noted that the CCMPO should find a way to give the quarry trucks access near the current interchange so that they do not have to utilize local roads. At the alignment meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup>, members witnessed the volume of truck traffic beneath the current interchange. Trucks had to travel 200 feet to get on I-80, travel west, exit at Milesburg and use Route 150. But every single truck continued down Route 26. Mr. McCauley challenged the Coordinating Committee to respect Marion Township's zoning and the Comprehensive Plan. He noted that the Township joined the Nittany Valley Joint Planning Commission to insulate themselves against problems like this.

Ms. Debra Herman, Howard Borough, asked about the homes that are very close to the road. She did not see how Route 26 could be widened without taking out those homes.

Mr. Gutshall expressed interest in Steve Dahm's presentation and alternative to the Local Access Interchange. He noted that others have come up with the same idea. In his opinion, a frontage road to access I-80 Exit 161 at its present location would be an ideal solution.

Ms. Michael responded to Ms. Herman's question, explaining that PennDOT was aware of a lot of concern about the Betterment project planned for the three miles of Route 26 between the existing interchange and Shay Lane. She noted that as PennDOT progresses in the design of the improvements, they propose to visit Marion Township with several options, with the goal of minimizing impact to local residents. The current proposal is to widen that portion of Route 26 to include two 12-foot lanes and

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two 6-foot shoulders. Design standards do not require the facility to be that wide. Mr. McCauley asked what such a facility would look like, noting that it would be wider than Route 64. Ms. Michael replied that it depends on the area. There would be 36 feet of pavement. She further explained that this was just an initial proposal, and PennDOT would hold a public meeting so that local residents could actually look at the plans. When asked about the current width of Route 26, Ms. Michael replied that the current facility consists of two 10-foot lanes.

Mr. Eich referred to the entire section of Route 26 between Route 150 and I-99. He asked what would happen if the Route 26 designation were taken off the section from Route 150 to where the proposed Local Access Interchange would be; specifically, would that take any of the trucks off the road, or would drivers use it anyway based on local knowledge. Ms. Michael noted that she was unsure of the answer, but speculated that since the quarry and businesses are located along Route 26, drivers already have local knowledge of the road.

Mr. Kline noted that if a portion of the road were no longer designated as Route 26, the possibility exists for turning that portion back to the Marion Township, and the road would therefore be under the jurisdiction of the Township.

Mr. Kline also addressed Mr. Dahm's proposal for a frontage road, noting that as presented, it would cut through the Curtin ore banks and the James Hoy farmstead. These are two areas PennDOT is required to avoid under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) because of historic and agricultural designations.

Mr. Duane Gardner, Howard, referred to the planned improvements on Route 26 between the current interchange and Shay Lane. His opinion is that none of the traffic would be alleviated within that three mile stretch. He further explained that any planned improvements should cover all of Route 26 from I-99 to Route 150.

Mr. Corman ended the public comment period of the meeting, and asked members for discussion.

Ms. Spencer explained that, driving through the area tonight, she noted that the I-80/I-99 area was very busy and confusing, with not a lot of room to move around. Jacksonville Road is very pristine and rural. She expressed interest in some sort of access near the current I-80 Exit 161, because it would be much less expensive than an interchange at Shay Lane. Moreover, once any road is widened, the traffic problem can get worse because traffic is able to move faster. Ms. Spencer noted that truck traffic was a serious issue, and asked if Marion had considered that when they approved the quarries at that level of activity. She further noted that truck traffic would be an issue whether or not a Local Access Interchange was constructed. Nevertheless, she explained that there seems to be more cons associated with the interchange than there are pros. It is very expensive, and Lamar and Milesburg are viable alternate routes. In her opinion, a Local Access Interchange would not make conditions safer.

Mr. Savage summarized the status of the interchanges, noting that the Local Access Interchange is finished in terms of design, and that the High Speed Interchange is 60% complete in its design. His understanding of the spacing requirements of the interchanges is that they have changed from two miles to three miles apart. If there were to be a reconsideration of the design of the High Speed Interchange, the new requirements would be applied. Mr. Nanov of FHWA explained that the spacing requirement was three miles when the design work was done. He further noted that FHWA's primary interest is in completing the interchange. When FHWA approved signing I-99, it was with the understanding and commitment that the High Speed Interchange will be constructed. Mr. Nanov also noted that environmental studies demonstrate the need for local access, and he has not seen any new issues that would be sufficient to change that finding. He did ask where truck traffic would go without the Local

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Access Interchange, and if local officials think that eliminating local access will alleviate truck traffic. Mr. Nanov further explained that he understood Marion Township's concerns, but also noted that there are other communities with an interest in local access as well. He questioned whether the Township had traffic numbers to support the assumption of an increase in traffic, and noted that FHWA's numbers do not point to an increase.

Mr. Watters stated that Marion Township does not have the financial resources to complete a traffic impact study. He acknowledged that PennDOT has said there has been a decrease in traffic on Jacksonville Road, but he has yet to see when that study was conducted, and does not know the duration of the study. Howard Borough is sensitive to the concerns of Bellefonte Borough, and those of other similar municipalities, but Mr. Watters also noted that those municipalities have the ability to put weight limits on their roads and govern traffic; Route 26 is a state highway. Howard Borough has never been contacted by PennDOT about the Local Access Interchange, and to his knowledge, they have never conducted a traffic study through Howard Borough. When the Borough asked PennDOT for help to control speed limits along Route 26, they were told that this was not in the Borough's best interest. The average speed would become the posted speed limit, and might actually be higher than current posted speed limits. Mr. Watters further expressed concern with PennDOT's treatment of small municipalities; PennDOT tells them what they can and cannot do with relative to state roads, and yet the municipalities do not get any substantial support.

Mr. Halderman noted that all the main roads in Bellefonte (Allegheny Street, Bishop Street, Howard Street) are state roads. The residential streets are the only ones on which the Borough can set weight limits. Mr. Royer explained that the main roads in Spring Township are also state roads.

Mr. Eich referred to the mobile speed limit signs that were put on Route 322, and asked if these could be placed on the section of Route 26 in question. Mr. McCauley replied that one is being placed on July 13.

Mr. Eich then asked, if the environmental documents were re-opened, the money expended up to this point would have to be paid back to FHWA, and how much money this was. Mr. Kline replied that \$5.5 million has been spent to date on the Local Access Interchange and \$28 million has been spent to date on the High Speed Interchange. Mr. Nanov further explained that a regulatory provision applies as part of the agreement when FHWA funds projects for the preliminary engineering phase. If the project does not move to a right-of-way acquisition or construction within ten years, FHWA requests a payback of funds. As both of these projects have progressed to right-of-way acquisition, the applicable regulatory provisions stipulate 20 years from the time right-of-way is acquired until construction, or else repayment is required. He further explained that if the project is withdrawn, FHWA would request repayment now. This would be a repayment of the state funds, not the federal funds.

Mr. Miller commented that a lot of the discussion has focused on safety issues. There has been a suggestion that the Local Access Interchange could be eliminated and the High Speed Interchange could be kept. He stated that, in his opinion, this was not an option. The options are to either go with the projects as they are now, or to start over completely. He stated that he could not think of anything less safe than having two interstates and three quarries worth of trucks funneling traffic into the facility that exists now. Mr. Miller said that if nothing is done with the interchanges, this situation would continue for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Royer noted that he could identify with traffic volume and safety concerns. In Spring Township, Route 144 over Centre Hall Mountain was subject to a great deal of truck traffic until it was closed to trucks. There were major problems with this action. He explained that Route 26 in Spring Township was heavily congested until I-99 opened, then there was a dramatic reduction in traffic. Spring Township

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also has an I-99 interchange. He asked how many more people had to be injured or killed before this project is completed.

*Mr. Royer made a motion to proceed with the Section A18 Local Access Interchange and the I-99/I-80 Section B18 High Speed Interchange as planned, and to give high priority to making safety improvements on Route 26. Mr. Koll seconded the motion.*

Mr. Savage referred to the Technical Committee's second motion, which was to give priority to making Route 26 improvements. Marion Township has stated that they would like the improvements to be made before the Local Access Interchange is constructed. He explained that it would only be fair to provide more specific commitments. Mr. Corman replied that specific improvements would come back through the MPO as part of the normal process.

Mr. Zilla reviewed that any commitment of funds to the interchange projects will be made through the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Right now the only funding on the TIP is for the preliminary engineering phase of Route 26 improvements between the two proposed interchanges. He explained that it will take some time for PennDOT to get through this work. Until preliminary engineering is completed, and the project comes through the CCMPO, there is no estimate for how much the improvements will cost. Mr. Zilla added that the CCMPO can indicate their preferences at any time, but actual financial commitments cannot be made until a specific proposal is presented. There are implications in terms of the TIP, what types of funding are utilized, and how both affect the timing of the projects.

Mr. Rosenberger asked if the aforementioned improvements on Route 26 would be completed after the Local Access Interchange. Mr. Zilla replied that this is unknown at the current time, because cost and schedule information has not been completed for the Route 26 project. This information depends on the outcome of the preliminary engineering phase.

Mr. Kline explained that PennDOT has already looked at Route 26 improvements. Before the project is advance, PennDOT will present these options, and work with Marion Township on the specific configuration. He further noted that this type of project takes two or three years. He reiterated that there is currently no funding to complete either of the interchange projects. They may be eligible for economic stimulus money, and PennDOT could work with the MPO to complete funding applications. If funding is awarded, the High Speed Interchange still needs to be built. Mr. Kline added that the improvements to Route 26 are really a separate project, independent of the interchange projects.

Mr. Rosenberger asked if truck traffic was driving the desire for the Local Access Interchange. Mr. Kline replied that the local truck traffic is an issue regardless of access; the question is where to put that traffic. NEPA requires that, through the environmental process, PennDOT look at all options, and strive to put highway projects in the least objectionable spot. Mr. Nanov added that the environmental process identified many needs in the area, not all of them related to truck traffic. Members of the local business community, for example, demonstrated that a local access was desired and supported the project.

Mr. Eich expressed a need to ensure that the improvements to Route 26 between the two interchanges are underway and completed concurrently with Local Access Interchange construction, or at a minimum, before roads are closed to construct the High Speed Interchange. Mr. Hall asked how the CCMPO could accomplish that. If the money was currently available for each of these projects, they still need to go through the MPO process. He noted the public had a chance to provide input during the environmental process for both interchanges over 10 years ago. Although different people may be taking an interest in the projects now, PennDOT and the MPO performed due diligence in terms of soliciting input. In his opinion, the choices are to stop both interchanges, or proceed as planned. But to link Route 26

improvements to the interchange projects is not possible. Mr. Eich stressed that the MPO could do its best to make sure that Route 26 improvements are completed before, or concurrently with, the interchanges.

Mr. Savage noted that earlier in the meeting, members approved a process by which the MPO is going to entertain proposals for improvements to Route 26. Safety is the number one criteria. The CCMPO cannot commit priority to the Route 26 improvements, because that process does not permit that. Marion Township must involve themselves in the process that will start in about two months, state what specific improvements are desired, and if it is possible, these improvements could be funded before the interchanges. He explained that this was the best the MPO could do.

*A vote was taken on the above motion. The motion passed by a vote of 16 in favor and 2 against (J. Luck, B. Spencer).*

**6. Route 322 Corridor Safety Improvements (Harris and Potter Townships)**

Ms. Michael reported that PennDOT came to the Coordinating Committee last November, and had many meetings with the municipal entities involved in the Route 322 improvements. She explained that the information included with the agenda package was essentially the same information provided to the MPO in the past, but with a few small changes. For example, she referred to Item I on the Proposed Project Summary, noting that this project was changed to the “possible closure of Church Hill Road.”

Ms. Michael explained that the CCMPO voted in January to have PennDOT proceed with the vicinity of Church Hill and Dogtown Roads first. However, the information circulating through the public was that PennDOT was going to close Dogtown Road; this is not the case. PennDOT is looking to improve the Dogtown Road intersection, and at the possible closure of Church Hill Road. She wanted to clarify this point for the MPO.

Ms. Michael noted that her intent was to provide an update on the Route 322 Corridor between Boalsburg and Potters Mills. Projects shown on the Summary in blue have already been completed, and projects designated as high priority are already programmed on the TIP. The safety study is completed, and this information comes from the final report.

Mr. Lee asked if construction funds were programmed in 2011-2012. Ms. Michael replied that the TIP does not yet reflect the total amount needed. Her understanding is that there is currently only \$2 million on the TIP. After preliminary design is finished, a total estimate will be established, and any additional amounts can be programmed through a TIP update.

Mr. Eich explained that his perception is that the number and severity of accidents in the Route 322 Corridor are down this year. Ms. Michael added that PennDOT believes all the improvements made in the corridor over the past year have made a positive difference. The biggest difference noted is in terms of vehicle speed. Whether the final numbers will bear this out remains to be seen.

**7. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) TIGER Discretionary Grant Program**

Mr. Zilla reported that the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) discretionary grant program is a potential source of funding for regional projects. \$1.5 billion is allocated nationwide for this program, and will be distributed through a competitive grant process. Projects are subject to a \$20 million minimum and a \$200 million maximum, although the minimum may be waived. TIGER grant funds must be obligated by September 30, 2011. Mr. Zilla explained that

## CCMPO COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

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project selection criteria are extremely rigorous, and applications must be submitted by September 15, 2009. He then reviewed the selection criteria.

Potential candidate projects were initially identified by staff. These projects are in the design phase, can meet the September 2011 deadline, and do not currently have sufficient funding for construction. The projects include:

- I-80/Route 26 Local Access Interchange (\$43 million)
- I-99/I-80 High Speed Interchange (\$69 million needed)
- Route 322 Safety Improvement (\$10,952,500)
- CATA Maintenance Facility Improvements (\$5,000,000)
- Whitehall Road/University Drive Extension Widening (\$8,500,000)

Mr. Zilla explained that the deadline for applications is short, and the applications are the most detailed that he has ever worked with. He noted that one of the issues is determining the lead entity for some of these candidate projects. Staff has been told that this responsibility would fall to the MPO. The level of support from PennDOT is a concern, given the amount of technical support that may be needed. Due to the application requirements and deadline, Mr. Zilla explained that his preference would be to apply only for the two interchanges.

Mr. Luck asked if it was possible for the MPO to commit money to hire consultants to prepare additional applications. Mr. Corman replied that the question is whether PennDOT would have the resources to assist in preparing these applications. Mr. Kline committed District 2-0 resources to help the MPO in any way they can.

Mr. Corman agreed with Mr. Zilla's point on staff and PennDOT effort and time. He asked about Mr. Luck's suggestion of bringing in a consultant to prepare applications. Mr. Zilla replied that if money exists in the current budget, that is an option. If there is no money, the process of securing money in time would probably be too lengthy. Mr. Zilla added that he could check on the availability of funds to hire a consultant.

*Mr. Eich made a motion to authorize MPO staff to work with PennDOT to determine the feasibility of submitting an application through the TIGER program and if feasible, to submit an application to fund the construction of both the Local Access and High Speed interchanges with either the state or the MPO as the project sponsor. Mr. Hall seconded and the motion passed unanimously.*

### **8. Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative (PCTI)**

#### **a. Moshannon Valley Park and Ride Study**

Mr. Zilla explained that the PCTI Program was announced in October 2008 as an initiative of the Pennsylvania Secretary of Transportation. The CCMPO discussed the program in November 2008, and applications were submitted in December 2008. He noted that two Centre County projects were approved for funding:

- CCMPO/North Central RPO – Moshannon Valley Park and Ride Study (\$100,000)
- Ferguson Township – Old Gatesburg Road Extension (\$2,970,000)

Mr. Zilla explained the Moshannon Valley Park and Ride Study, which has been a priority for several years. Mr. Kausch added that this project would complement the work being done to establish a

**CCMPO COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

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commuter bus line between the Moshannon Valley and State College. It would also fit nicely with CATA's Rideshare Program in that area. The study will identify potential sites for Park and Ride lots, evaluate those sites, and prioritize them, with input from local stakeholders. Mr. Zilla explained that in order to make this funding available, the MPO must amend the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

*Mr. Hall made a motion to amend the CCMPO FY 2009-10 UPWP to include \$100,000 from the PCTI for the project. Mr. Buckalew seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**b. Old Gatesburg Road Extension**

Mr. Zilla explained that the award for funding will finance the construction phase of the Old Gatesburg Road project, and Ferguson Township will fund the pre-construction phases with local and private money. This project, because it involves a new road on a new alignment, will require an Air Quality Conformity Analysis. Moreover, the extension will have to be added to the Federal Aid/Functional Classification System. In addition, the project will have to be included on the LRTP and TIP.

Mr. Kunkle explained that this project is will cost \$3.7 million. The PCTI funding will be used for construction, with the balance of the project being funded through a partnership between Ferguson Township and a developer. He expressed confidence that funds could be obligated by September 2010.

*Mr. Spychalski made a motion to authorize MPO staff to complete an Air Quality Conformity Analysis and public input efforts for the project, and include the project on the LRTP and TIP. Mr. Buckalew seconded and motion passed unanimously.*

**9. Announcements**

Mr. Zilla introduced the new Planning Director, Mr. Jim May.

Mr. Corman reviewed upcoming the dates, times, and locations of upcoming meetings.

**10. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Shingler  
Recording Secretary



## SIGN IN SHEET

### Centre County MPO Coordinating Committee Meeting

The J.K. Yearick Center at the Howard Fire Hall - June 23, 2009 - 6:00 PM

**PLEASE PRINT YOUR FULL NAME**

NAME	ORGANIZATION or ADDRESS
R. BRIAN McCALLEY	MARION TWP
Kes Roan	Marion Twp
Ray Gutschall	Marion Twp
Joy Gutschall	Marion Twp
Donald Miller	Marion Twp
Kitty Miller	Marion Twp
Michelle Farbin	Snow Shoe Boro / MPO Tech Com
Prof Snyder	Walker Township
Joni Miller	Marion Twp
Dancy Lohr	Marion Twp
Emogene Snyder	Marion Twp
MARK KUNICK	Fergusson Twp
Tim Hoy	Howard Boro
Garl Sherlock	Ct Co
Tatty Bowes	Howard Boro.
Sharon C. Boland	" "
DENNIS BITNER	HOWARD BORO
David Lietter	Howard Township
Susan Wende	Marion Twp.
Tim Wende	Marion Twp
Scott Johns	Erpny
Egal Thompson	Howard Boro
John Miller	Self
Krystn Madrine	Marion Twp Business
STEFANIE ENGLISH	HOWARD BORO - RESIDENT

## SIGN IN SHEET

### Centre County MPO Coordinating Committee Meeting

The J.K. Yearick Center at the Howard Fire Hall - June 23, 2009 - 6:00 PM

**PLEASE PRINT YOUR FULL NAME**

NAME	ORGANIZATION or ADDRESS
George Demchak	
Jon Crum	
Ralph R. FRAVEL	
RUSSELL E. DOLAN	
Ken Zimmerman	
Scott Bous	
Shari Dreibelbis	
DIANA Goodyear	
DUANE GARDNER	
SEB DEGRECORIO	155 WENNER LN. HOWARD
Rick Soluman	Congressman GT Thompson
IRENE LEE	521 BLACK ST.
Barb Saulsbury	
Jonathan Stoltzfus	2871-2 Jacksonville Rd
Alvin L. Stoltzfus	2871-1 Jacksonville Rd
Amy R. Shaver	Huber Ridge Rd
Evelyn Hamilton	Fort Belknap Campground 2023 Jacksonville Rd
Don Hamilton	" " "
Ivy Woomer	
Archie Gettig	V-Charmin MARION Twp Supervisor
Patrick Kim	Howard Resident
Danise Bechtel	Howard Resident
JINA SATCOR	HOWARD RESIDENT
Jammy Ammerman	Rep Hanna's office
Kelsey Ammerman	

## SIGN IN SHEET

### Centre County MPO Coordinating Committee Meeting

The J.K. Yearick Center at the Howard Fire Hall - June 23, 2009 - 6:00 PM

**PLEASE PRINT YOUR FULL NAME**

NAME	ORGANIZATION or ADDRESS
Eleanor Young	148 Hillcrest, Howard, PA
M. A. Young Jr.	148 Hillcrest St. Howard Pa. 16841
Amy Marshall	127 Main St Howard PA 16841
Dan Crote	127 Main St Howard PA 16841
Josh Collins	FERGUSON TOWNSHIP
Rich Nye	143 Heights Lane Bellefonte PA 16823
John R Dixon	2481 JACKSONVILLE RD Bellefonte Pa
Jennifer Lee	160 Black St/Po box 521 Howard
Ken J. Hiltner	3796 Jacksonville Rd Bellefonte
Sara Eckert	2423 Jacksonville Rd Bellefonte
David J. Sandy	2423 Jacksonville Rd Bellefonte
Debra A. Herman	PO Box 564 Howard PA 16841
Janet Patterson	470 Walnut St., Howard, PA 16841
Shirley Olson	4995 Jacksonville Rd Howard Pa 16841
Laura Gardner	2284 Jacksonville Rd Bift PA
Thomas Gardner	" " " "
Cindy J. Jorgensen	593 Walnut St Howard Pa 16841
TERRY ROGER	593 WALNUT ST HOWARD PA 16841
Christian	
Christian Vinton-Johansen	1287 Hubler Ridge Rd, Bellefonte PA 16823
Hedy Martin	119 Rabbit Hill Rd Bellefonte PA 16823
Jim Moulton	2253 Jacksonville Rd. Bellefonte
Donald W. Byerly	2393 Jacksonville Rd Bellefonte Pa
Karen Gardner	2253 Jacksonville Rd Bift PA
Beth Whitman	107 Coner Dr BIF 16823

