

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

**Thursday, May 28, 2009
6:00 pm
Ferguson Township Building**

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
Elizabeth Goreham, Vice-Chair	State College Borough
Ken Hall	Mountaintop Planning Region
Dan Klees, Chair	College Township
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
Mike Savage	Moshannon Valley Planning Region
Barbara Spencer	Halfmoon Township
John Spychalski	CATA
Frank Hampton (for Larry Shifflet)	PennDOT Central Office

Non-Voting Members Present:

Matt Smoker	Federal Highway Administration
Rob Cooper	Penn State University

Others Present:

Tom Zilla	Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA)
Trish Meek	CRPA
Greg Kausch	CRPA
Bob Jacobs	CCPCDO - Secretary
Mike Bloom	CCPCDO
Michelle Barbin	Mountaintop Planning Region
Jim Eckert	Senator Corman's Office
Doug Erickson	Patton Township
Brian McCauly	Marion Township
Tina McCauly	Marion Township
Ken Roan	Marion Township
Rick Dillon	Citizen
Jim Eckert	Senator Corman's Office
Matthew Brennan	Congressman Thompson's Office
James Canner	Citizen

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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 April 28, 2009 Coordinating Committee minutes. Mr. Corman seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

3. Citizen Comments

There were no citizen comments.

4. Centre County Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

a. Process for Soliciting Candidate Projects

Ms. Meek reported that the MPO discussed a preliminary process for soliciting candidate projects in February. The MPO was able to reach consensus on four issues to serve as guiding principles:

1. Projects on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will be included in the new LRTP and will not be ranked.
2. Project ranking criteria will be distributed to municipalities when projects are solicited.
3. A project data form must be submitted with each project request.
4. Municipal support is required for projects requested by entities other than municipal governing bodies.

Further discussion is needed on other issues. Number 5 of the principles involves projects that might involve two or more municipalities. Staff is recommending that for multi-municipal projects, all affected municipalities will review the project. If all affected municipalities support the project, it will be ranked. If support is not unanimous, the MPO will determine if the project will be considered.

Mr. Hall made a motion that staffs' above recommendation be included as a guiding principle. Mr. Eich seconded.

Ms. Goreham disagreed, saying that until there is so much money that all the projects can be taken care of and there is money beyond that, the MPO should not be going beyond the reach of the municipality. She said support is important and in the past if a municipality had a problem, the MPO tried to work it out.

Mr. Hall said that if both municipalities agree, the project should be submitted. Ms. Goreham agreed. Mr. Hall said if the support is not unanimous, the MPO should decide. This is where Ms. Goreham disagreed. He thought that if there would be a negative impact on a municipality, it would be clear to the MPO when they discussed it. Ms. Goreham thought this would be an unfortunate step. Mr. Luck agreed with Ms. Goreham, but felt the MPO would not push a project onto a municipality.

Mr. Corman said that MPO discussion offers a forum for the other municipality to present their case. If the project has merit, it can move on or at least stay on the list for future consideration. Mr. Klees said that if a project only affected two municipalities, perhaps the MPO should not get involved. If it is a regional-scale project, some group should probably decide whether it goes forward.

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Ms. Goreham suggested amending the wording to convey working out the problem through the MPO forum. Ms. Lee suggested a two-thirds majority to determine if the project should be considered.

Mr. Lee made a motion to amend the above motion to require a two-thirds vote of members present before a project would be considered. Ms. Goreham seconded.

Mr. Hall thought this was a moot point, saying that the MPO decides every other project in the ranking. His motion simply said if two or more municipalities were involved and did not agree the MPO would make a decision at that time. Ms. Goreham clarified that this would be a simple majority. Mr. Hall said he did not have a problem with the amended motion.

The amendment to the motion was voted upon and passed unanimously.

The amended motion was voted upon and passed unanimously.

Principle number 6 involves large scale projects. Ms. Meek said there was a concern that these projects were not making the cut due to fiscal constraint. Staff is suggesting that large scale corridor projects can be considered as either one project or a series of small scale projects. Mr. Zilla said an example would be the Park Avenue widening, where the University has suggested doing a widening from Porter Road out to the interchange as the first phase, then doing from Porter Road into some terminal point, perhaps Bigler Road or University Drive.

Mr. Klees asked if it was possible to do that on a scale where we would be allowed to do engineering in a single phase and construction in two phases. Mr. Smoker said it could be done if it were clear through the environmental process that this is how it was going to proceed.

Mr. Eich made a motion to approve the guiding principle that large scale projects can be considered as either one project or a series of small scale projects. Mr. Luck seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Meek said that the last principle (Number 7) was that the MPO may want to consider limiting the number and type of projects submitted to the MPO for the consideration. When staff brought this up for discussion, members seemed to be in favor of municipalities being able to ask for as many projects as they like.

Mr. Luck did not think it made a difference since there would be criteria that would limit the projects somewhat. Ms. Goreham said the Ranking Committee works hard and the difference between ranking 200 projects or 500 is considerable. In addition, there are limited finances. She suggested putting a high limit on the projects submitted. Mr. Lee suggested letting the municipalities rank or prioritize their own projects.

Mr. Lee made a motion to eliminate guiding principle #7 – limiting the number and type of projects submitted to the MPO for consideration. Mr. Eich seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Bloom noted that the last time projects were ranked; a municipality's number one ranked project was weighted a little heavier than their others. He said this was not in the draft criteria thus far, but was something for the MPO to think about building in. Ms. Reese thought this would serve the rural municipalities well.

Mr. Corman said it was important that the bigger projects do not overbear the smaller ones. Mr. Lee said that another issue is the different funding streams, which will drive what types of projects are on the

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L RTP. Mr. Smoker suggested telling the municipalities which federal roads were within their jurisdiction and what bridges were over 20 feet that could be funded with federal money. This would eliminate a lot of projects that would not even be eligible. Mr. Klees said this could be part of the packet sent out.

Mr. Lee thought growth projections should be sent to the municipalities and staff should ask them where they anticipate growth in their municipality, what areas they would like to protect from travel demand, suggestions they have for non-transportation solutions or alternate modes, and if there are any projects that they do not want to see.

There were two options for a project solicitation process:

Option A:

1. Provide municipality with a list of the LRTP projects in their jurisdiction
2. Municipalities identify which projects from the current list they want considered
3. Municipalities identify additional projects to be considered
4. Municipalities provide a ranked list of projects

Option B:

1. Provide each municipality a list of the current projects in their jurisdiction, for information only
2. Municipalities provide a ranked list of projects

Ms. Meek said that a commitment had been made that projects that were outside of fiscal constraint would never be lost.

Mr. Klees thought the municipalities should have the list in front of them when they are making their submissions.

Mr. Savage made a motion to accept Option A, Mr. Hall seconded the motion.

Mr. Lee made a motion to include providing growth projections, asking where the municipality wants growth and what areas to protect, asking for non-transportation solutions or alternate modes, and if there were projects they don't want to see under Option A.

Mr. Hall said he did not want to give municipalities too much to consider or look at. He was afraid that rural areas would not even bother to send the list back if they thought the MPO was interfering with their zoning. He said that kind of information pertains to land use and planning issues. Mr. Hall said he knew these issues were directly related to transportation, but asked if it was necessary to ask questions about growth when soliciting transportation projects. Mr. Lee said he wanted to send municipalities growth projections and ask them where they anticipated growth, not asking them to change their zoning.

Mr. Corman said that the County Planning Commission talked about this concept. He thought bringing this back to the rural municipalities would be helpful and would help to resolve some of Mr. Hall's issues.

Mr. Savage asked what happened if a smaller municipality only had one project – if it did not get extra priority points because there was only one. He also said that his own municipality would probably submit safety projects instead of projects that would influence growth. He asked how that would be factored in. Mr. Bloom said the way the current criteria is set up, and from the survey that was sent out, safety and security was a resounding priority for the MPO. Right now, a strong safety project that met

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some of the other criteria would fair pretty well. In the last round, if a municipality submitted ten projects, their first priority project would get extra points. Each municipality's highest priority would get a little extra boost.

Ms. Reese said this would be an educational process for the rural municipalities. They do not have the staff to put together a big package to compete with some of the larger municipalities. The Supervisors have to be educated.

Mr. Eich suggested that Mr. Smoker's addition of what is eligible for funding in each municipality be added to Mr. Lee's list of what is included in the packet to municipalities. Mr. Lee agreed with this amendment.

Mr. Eich seconded Mr. Lee's motion to adopt Option A, including in the municipal solicitation packets growth projections, ask them where they anticipate growth in their municipality, what areas they would like to protect from travel demand, suggestions they have for non-transportation solutions or alternate modes, and if there are any projects that they do not want to see, and the eligible projects for funding. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Smoker referred to the overall guiding principles and asked if CATA had equal footing with the municipalities regarding principles 4 and 5. Mr. Klees said CATA has a vote at the table. Ms. Meek said they consider CATA to be an equal partner because CATA can be a sponsor. Mr. Zilla said they usually refer to "member entities of the MPO."

b. Growth Forecasting Project/Travel Demand Model

Ms. Meek reviewed that in the 2008-2009 Unified Planning Work Program there are supplemental planning funds to update the travel demand model and design a socioeconomic forecast database. A request for proposals was put out and included the following:

- Update software
- Update the model network and traffic analysis zone structure
- Calibrate model to 2008 traffic conditions
- Complete model runs
- Design a database for the population and employment forecast data

A review committee consisting of PennDOT, CRPA and Centre County staff received seven proposals and interviewed three of these firms. The consulting firm of Whitman, Requardt and Associates (WRA) was chosen at a cost of \$70,673 for the project. Ms. Meek reviewed the scope of work and timeline.

To date, WRA has evaluated the current model software and staff is currently developing baseline data inputs to year 2008. WRA is working on validating the model. Model runs may be delayed from September to October, but that should still work with the overall LRTP schedule.

Mr. Luck asked if validating the model is based on current traffic counts. Mr. Zilla said it was. WRA will calibrate the model to the most recent counts. The opening of I-99 was an issue, but staff has a strategy to address that. Counts have been taken on I-99 in the southern portion of the county to get a handle on how the traffic has redistributed itself since November. Mr. Zilla noted that the transit module is more robust in this model than it was before. Mr. Kausch thought this was going to be calibrated to actual ridership.

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Mr. Lee asked when the policymakers would have a chance to see the data to help with their decision-making. Ms. Meek answered that the input data requires municipal endorsement and is coming directly from the municipalities. As part of the scope of work, the consultant will be coming in to present results to both MPO committees. Ms. Meek said staff will be acquiring a laptop to run the model software and basic results can be shown by staff.

Mr. Lee asked if staff would be looking at the geographic distribution of travel demand with respect to travel choice and land use with respect to type of trips. Ms. Meek said staff met with the consultant where revisions to the current model were discussed. One of the items discussed was trip type. She said journey to work, employment and residential sites will be tied to that. The model split component will consider not only time, distance and cost to trips, but it works in congestion and an availability of transit.

Mr. Eich asked if staff will be able to plug in the 2010 census data when it becomes available. Mr. Zilla said staff will be trained to do some of the things, but this technology is beyond staff capabilities. Staff will be able to collect that data when it comes in and will know a lot more about how that data is being fed in, but someone else will probably have to plug it in and produce reports from it. Mr. Smoker noted that the other single county MPOs that have their own models all have at least one full time person that does modeling.

Mr. Klees asked if staff was confident with this consultant and software would provide some basis for at least one or more LRTP cycles so that it will not have to be started all over four years from now. Mr. Zilla replied that this is the most confident he has felt about a modeling effort in his tenure.

Ms. Meek reported that staff is also working on a Centre County growth forecasting project. It will run from 2009 to 2040 and is a joint effort between the CRPA and the Centre County Planning and Community Development Office. This forecast will use 2008 as a base year. Ms. Meek explained that 2000 census data would be used, adding in permit data and what is on the ground now to come up with an approximate population for 2008.

The goals of the growth forecasts include:

- Predict the location, type and timing of growth expected to occur within the County to the year 2040
- Provide growth forecasts for the LRTP
- Create a GIS database that will allow the growth forecasts to be used for other community planning efforts (sewer, water, park and school planning)

Ms. Meek reviewed that the forecasting assumes no rezoning and is based on current municipal zoning maps and ordinances. It also does not include full build out of the community. Staff will use development plans, site analysis, zoning ordinances and planning assumptions in the process.

Staff will be out talking to the municipalities through August. Draft forecasts will then be provided to municipal bodies for review and comment.

Mr. Lee suggested that staff see if there are any patterns in the type of developments relative to geographic constraints. The purpose would be to help zoning decisions.

c. Goals and Objectives Survey/Project Ranking Criteria

Mr. Bloom reported that several months ago, the MPO discussed goals and objectives for the new LRTP, which would set the framework for the new project ranking criteria and determine priority. A

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survey was authorized by the Coordinating Committee in February and it was developed by the Project Ranking Committee (PRC) based on federal planning factors, Pennsylvania Mobility Plan goals, and existing project ranking criteria. Mr. Bloom said that 19 of the 23 surveys were returned by Coordinating Committee members.

Mr. Bloom reviewed a list of identified goals, saying they were consistent with the Federal Planning Factors, the existing project ranking criteria, as well as the goals in the Pennsylvania Mobility Plan. Members were asked to rate how important each of the goals is in assessing the priority of transportation projects. Members were asked to identify three goals as the highest priority, three goals as the lowest importance and the remaining two become medium importance.

Mr. Bloom reviewed the results of the survey in detail. Based on these results, the goals were rated in importance as follows:

- Safety and Security
- Preservation of the Existing Transportation System
- Efficient System Management and Operation
- Integration and Connectivity of the Transportation System
- Accessibility and Mobility Options for People and Freight
- Consistency with Planned Growth and Development Areas
- Environment and Air Quality Security
- Economic Vitality

Mr. Bloom explained how sums were weighted. The highest importance goals were given three points, the medium were given two points and the lowest were given one point. The highest possible score was 57 points. The weighted sums did not shift the priority of goals.

The PRC met on April 28 and May 12 to discuss the survey results and start to develop draft criteria. The goals put forth in the survey are represented in the draft criteria. Several revisions were made to the defining objectives based on comments received during the survey.

Mr. Bloom reported that the PRC is recommending a new scoring system. Previously, there was a 10-5-1-0 scoring system. This time, the recommendation is to use a 0-3 system (Likert scale). They believe this will allow for a broader array of scores and a better representation of how the priorities fall out. The PRC also recommended weighting of the factors based on the survey results.

Explaining the Likert Scale scoring system, Mr. Bloom said that points would be assigned to projects based on their importance toward achieving goals. If a project is very important toward achieving a specific goal, it would be given a three points. If it was not important toward achieving the specific goal, it would be given zero points.

Mr. Bloom explained the weighting process, saying that based on the survey results, the goal of Safety and Security would have a weighted value of 100%. If someone gave Safety and Security three points, it would get the whole value of three points. It graduates down slowly, so that if three points were given to the goal of Economic Vitality that weighted value is only 53%, so it would only receive 1.59 points. The maximum weighted score available for all the goals together is 18.09. Ms. Meek said the PRC worked with Paul Weener of Diagnostics Plus and he was very comfortable with this approach.

Mr. Lee thought the results of the survey gave a stronger emphasis to efficiency than to effectiveness. His reaction to this technical process was that the weighting was too leveraged. The Integration of Connectivity in the Transportation System, the Accessibility and Mobility Options and the Consistency

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with Planned Growth Areas are goals that are about effectiveness. It would be hard for them to compete. Mr. Bloom noted that each project will be rated on each of the goals, so they will be receiving scores. Projects that are safety in nature, but also have a strong economic component, will receive scores under both. He said this process is based on what the policymakers said and he was uncomfortable with tampering with the scores because of that.

Mr. Klees thought that efficiency is much more definable and doing things effectively is more subjective. At this point in the process, he said he would rather be less subjective. At the other end of the process, when the results are brought forth, the policymakers may decide to make changes to the priorities. Mr. Lee said that when the data is assembled and presented, the raw data should be available as well as the final results. Mr. Klees thought that was reasonable.

Mr. Bloom noted that there was a significant discussion about how to consider municipal priorities. That is something that this process overlooks. He said that if the policymakers felt that should be incorporated, he could take that back to the PRC.

Ms. Spencer said she was disappointed that Environment and Air Quality came in so low in priority. She said she understood that it was a difficult decision, but while we're doing all this planning we're forgetting about the big picture that should always be considered. Mr. Klees said that he understood the concern, but that environment does have its own part of the process. Any project that is being considered for construction has an entire environmental review.

Mr. Kline said that the first three of the goals does protect the environment, because it involves the existing system rather than adding capacity. Ms. Spencer said that looking at it that way helps.

Mr. Eich thought one of the reasons the goals were ranked as they were was due to the lack of financial support over the years. If there was enough money, all the safety and security projects would have been taken care of and the existing system would have been appropriately maintained.

Mr. Klees said there was a framework for ranking projects up for consideration that should be up for adoption in June. There is consensus among Coordinating Committee members to ask the PRC to add the municipal priorities. There is also consensus to go ahead with the weighting in the process.

Mr. Lee referred to the goal of Efficient System Management and Operation, and suggested that performance should be judged by more than mobility. He suggested adding how it improves the cost of living and the cost of doing business. He also suggested that something about considering non-transportation solutions be added as well.

Mr. Savage asked if highway and non-highway projects would be ranked against each other or all together. Mr. Bloom replied that last time they were lumped all together. There was some significant discussion about how bridge projects are handled. These are much more technical, so the PRC will be relying heavily on PennDOT.

Mr. Savage thought this process was skewed against public transportation. If you improve public transportation service to a given area, it reduces the need for adding capacity. Mr. Bloom said that last time, transit was a strong component. He thought public transportation would rank pretty well because there is a lot of discussion about multi-modal. Ms. Meek added that there are funds that can only be used for transit and cannot be flexed to highway even if there is a policy decision to do that.

Mr. Erickson, Patton Township Manager, referred to the municipal support in the process. He suggested that municipalities rank their own projects separately, using the MPO criteria.

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Mr. Lee referred to the goal of Integration and Connectivity of the Transportation System. He suggested adding a bullet that says “aligning residents with their destination.” An example would be workforce housing. Mr. Lee said the problem is that we are only considering transportation solutions. Mr. Klees said that part of the problem is trying to consider things that we think are great ideas and also considering things that need to be fixed. He did not think we should lose sight of other concepts, but given the realities that we are facing right now, he did not know how to make those things work. Mr. Lee suggested that during the next update, the impact on the community be considered.

Mr. Luck suggested that Mr. Lee propose a project that satisfied the goals that he was laying out, but would also qualify for MPO funding. Mr. Lee said there is federal funding available to buy land around interstates to keep them from being developed around interchanges. He said that daycare centers near transit stops are also eligible for certain funding.

Mr. Bloom said that time was crucial so that the PRC could consider the MPO’s comments and possibly perform a test run of the criteria in advance of the June MPO meeting. He said that if members had any other comments, they could email him those by the end of next week.

5. Announcements

Mr. Zilla said there has been a press release by the Governor about approved projects for the Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative (PCTI). There were 12 projects in Centre County that were submitted and two were approved:

- \$100,000 to study potential Park and Ride lots in the Moshannon Valley
- \$2.97 million to construct the Old Gatesburg Road Extension between Science Park Road and Blue Course Drive.

Mr. Zilla said there was one Federal Safe Routes to School project that was submitted for consideration which was not funded. This was a roundabout in the State College Borough.

Mr. Klees reported that there would be a public meeting on the Whitehall Road/University Drive Extension project on Tuesday, June 2.

The Centre Region Council of Governments has hired James May as Director for the Centre Regional Planning Agency. He will be starting on June 15.

Mr. Klees reviewed upcoming MPO meetings. He noted that the Chair and Vice-Chair would both be absent for the June 23 Coordinating Committee and the Committee should vote on another member to serve as Chair for that meeting. He suggested Bob Corman. The Committee voted in favor of this.

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Shingler
Recording Secretary