

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

**Thursday, March 14, 2007
9:30 a.m.
College Township Municipal Building**

Minutes

Voting Members

Kent Baker	College Township
Dave Modricker	Ferguson Township
Bill MacMath	Spring Township
Amy Story	State College Borough
Bob Jacobs	Centre County Planning & Community Development Office (CCPCDO)
Chris Price	CCPCDO
Karen Michael	PennDOT District 2-0
Harold Nanovic	PennDOT Central Office
Hugh Mose	CATA
Michele Barbin	Mountaintop Planning Region
Doug Weikel	Benner Township
Ray Hankinson	Penns Valley Planning Region
Xochi Confer	Lower Bald Eagle Planning Region

Non-Voting Members

Sue Hannegan	Bellefonte Borough
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Others Present:

Tom Zilla	Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA)
Trish Meek	CRPA
Lori Shingler	CRPA
Greg Kausch	CRPA/CATA
Mike Bloom	CCPCDO
Vickie Rusnak	PennDOT District 2-0
Anita Eberhart	PennDOT

1. Call to Order

Mr. Baker called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. MacMath made a motion to approve the February 14, 2007 meeting minutes. Mr. Weikel seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

3. Citizens' Comments

There were no comments for items not on the agenda.

4. Centre County Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2007 Update: Final Draft Public Participation Plan

Ms. Meek said that staff has reviewed the final rulemaking for the SAFETEA-LU legislation. The premise for the Public Participation Plan (PPP) is that the MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines the process for providing for public input from interested parties. Interested parties were specifically identified in the draft PPP. Ms. Meek reviewed the 10 items that the PPP must address.

Comments on the Draft PPP were received from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and a Technical Committee member. Changes were made to this version of the PPP to address those comments.

Ms. Meek reviewed future actions, including an annual report that talks about the public involvement process, an annual review of the PPP, and updating the Interested Parties database. Also mentioned were researching and updating demographics, enhancing mailing lists, recording the meetings, coordination with interested parties, developing information brochures and evaluating the possibility of surveys on the CCMPO website.

A 45-day public comment period is required for the Public Participation Plan, which is different from other plans and programs. Copies of the approved PPP must be provided to FHWA and FTA for information purposes, although they do not approve the Plan. The Plan will also be posted on the CCMPO website.

Ms. Meek reviewed the schedule, saying that staff is expecting the public comment period to run from April 9 to May 24, 2007. The MPO Technical Committee will review any comments received and in June the Coordinating Committee will review comments and adopt the PPP. It must be completed by July 1, 2007.

Mr. MacMath noted that unless municipalities have franchise agreements to broadcast public meetings and service announcements, cable companies are not required to broadcast them and will not provide that service.

Ms. Barbin noted that Snow Shoe Borough is controls what appears on their bulletin board.

Mr. Price said that staff has done a great job on the PPP. However, he was generally uncomfortable with moving toward public participation from citizens through their elected officials to the solicitation of public participation, especially since this is an unfunded mandate. He thought that people had a responsibility to seek out their public elected officials to provide input. He wondered what smaller MPOs, who do not have the luxury of a larger staff, did about this mandate.

Ms. Meek said that staff was already soliciting input from over half of the interested parties through the Environmental Justice legislation. She said that they did not know what they would be getting into with meetings. For example, the limited English proficiency may become an issue if an interpreter cannot be found for a specific meeting.

Mr. Nanovic noted that if staff encounters difficulty accommodating a given population that perhaps PennDOT or FHWA would be able to help. He also noted that staff should document all efforts made to accommodate the population in question.

Mr. Baker made a motion recommending that the Coordinating Committee approve the advertising of the Final Draft Public Participation Plan, with the following comments:

- 1. The Technical Committee recognizes that certain requirements of this Plan are unfunded mandates that may take resources away from our already approved Work Program.*
- 2. The Technical Committee further recognizes that while it is important to make information available to all populations within the County, it is not practical to identify every individual population.*
- 3. The Technical Committee notes that the MPO has an obligation to provide opportunities for public participation and that the public has an obligation to request information through their elected officials.*

Mr. Modricker seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

5. Centre County Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2007 Update

a. Project Ranking for Bridge and Transportation Enhancement Projects

Mr. Bloom reviewed that as part of the adoption of the LRTP, a public comment period was held where additional projects were suggested. All of these candidate projects are air quality exempt. The MPO endorsed the process, saying that any of the projects that came forward needed to receive municipal support before being considered further. Mr. Bloom said that 24 bike/pedestrian projects were received during the comment period and 9 bridge projects were submitted by PennDOT. All of these were referred to the municipalities for review.

The scope of one project was changed based on municipal comment. This was the Whitehall Road/University Drive Extension Bike Facility. Ferguson Township requested that the section from West College Avenue to Tadpole Road be removed from consideration due to right of way constraints, agricultural conservation easements and being outside the Regional Growth Boundary. College Township and State College Borough supported the project without comments.

Another project, the Big Hollow Road Bike Facility, lacked unanimous municipal support. Benner Township officials did not wish to offer support for this project. Per the project description, the Benner Township section would not necessarily be required to make the connection between the Penn Stater and Fox Hollow Road. College Township noted that the project may be redundant, but offered support. Penn State noted the existence of an informal path in this area, but supported the concept of enhancing that path. Ms. Meek noted that the letter should not have gone to Benner Township.

Mr. Baker asked for clarification about the scope of the project. Ms. Meek thought that the intent was to use a section of Big Hollow Road to approach the Penn Stater from the rear. She thought that the access off of Fox Hollow Road was the point and they wanted something closer to Toftrees Avenue. Ms. Meek stated that she would contact the Centre Region Bicycle Coalition for clarification on the intended project scope.

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Mr. Bloom reported that five projects were not included in the ranked list due to lack of municipal support:

- Bellefonte Central Rail Trail Toftrees Section – Patton Township noted that this project will be upgraded by owners/developer as development progresses on Toftrees Planned Community.
- Blue and White Trail Extension – Ferguson Township does not support due to limitations of right-of-way or existence of other options to achieve the same purpose.
- Spring Creek Canyon Trail – Benner Township does not wish to offer support.
- Bellefonte Central Rail Trail Spur from North Atherton Street – Ferguson Township does not support due to limitations of right-of-way or existence of other options to achieve the same purpose.
- Circleville Road Bike Facility -- Ferguson Township does not support due to limitations of right-of-way or existence of other options to achieve the same purpose. Patton Township does not support due to right of way conditions and also noted that the Haugh Open Space conservation easement would have to be amended to permit a bikeway on the property.

Other issues were noted through the project ranking of bike/pedestrian projects. First, the lack of information and data related to these projects makes them difficult to score. Mr. Bloom said that this goes back to a recommendation that was made originally that in future rounds, sponsors provide more information related to project scope and impact. Second, the criteria seem to favor bike/pedestrian projects that are viewed as a primary transportation facility. Recreational trails are not scored as favorably. Also, project costs are based on estimated length of the projects. Lastly, funding is not available for all the ranked projects.

Mr. Price did not think that the second comment – the criteria favoring bike/pedestrian projects viewed as a primary transportation facility – was necessarily a bad thing. TE money should be used for increased mobility without building capacity-adding projects.

Mr. Bloom reviewed the bridge projects that were suggested. One project is still awaiting determination on municipal support. This is SR 3025 Bell Hollow Road Bridge over Sparrow Run. One of the notes that came up during this process was that there appears to be adequate funding for all the requested bridge projects through 2030. Also, PennDOT will discuss potential rank adjustments based on the Bridge Assessment. The Project Ranking Committee recommended that the adopted ranking criteria be used for the 2007 Update, but also recommended that the bridge criteria should be reevaluated beginning in the fall of 2007, based on several issues.

Mr. Bloom said that new information has been received from PennDOT, based on their Bridge Assessment. There appears to be additional bridges that are not part of the LRTP Update. Ms. Michael said that the Bridge Assessment was just done and they are still evaluating the priority order. She thought that using the Structural Deficiency Rating would result in a better indication of what bridges needed work.

Mr. Baker asked about the difference between Sufficiency Ratings and Structural Deficiency Ratings. Ms. Michael said that the Sufficiency Rating is from 0-100 and if it got below 50, the bridge needed to be replaced. It is based on ADT, location of the bridge and what type of route it is. Structural Deficiency actually looks at decking, superstructure, substructure and stream channel. Those are rated on a scale of 1-7 and if any of those hits 4, it goes onto a structural deficiency list. Many different criteria went into PennDOT's Bridge Assessment.

Mr. Bloom reviewed the Project Ranking Committee recommendations:

- Forward the technical ranking of the 2007 LRTP Update: Bike/pedestrian and Bridge project lists to Coordinating Committee
 - Consider rank adjustments based on PennDOT Bridge Assessment
- Forward recommendation regarding reevaluation of bridge criteria to begin in fall 2007.

Mr. Modricker made a motion to forward the technical ranking of the 2007 LRTP Update Bike/pedestrian and Bridge project lists to Coordinating Committee, with a note that they might want to consider rank adjustments based on PennDOT State Bridge Assessment. Ms. Story seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. MacMath made a motion to forward the recommendation regarding reevaluation of bridge criteria to begin in fall 2007. Mr. Weikel seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

b. Status Report – Other LRTP Items

Ms. Meek said that another element of the 2007 LRTP update is related to additional SAFETEA-LU compliance items. Additional issues include environmental mitigation, consultations with Resource Agencies, consistency of Plan with growth and development plans, operational and management strategies and visualization techniques. She briefly reviewed how staff plans to address these issues.

Related to environmental mitigation and consultations with resource agencies, Ms. Meek said that FHWA has said that staff can document the environmental resources within the County. The existing Centre County Comprehensive Plan Resource mapping will be used for that. Staff will prepare a map to show the proposed transportation projects on the resource maps to show the relationship. There will also be a consultation with resource agencies, scheduled for May 23, 2007.

Ms. Meek explained how consistency with planned growth plans would be handled. Staff has already looked at growth forecasts and utilized those to establish project need. There is also existing mapping showing the established countywide growth areas in relation to transportation projects.

The legislation calls for operational and management strategies that will lead to regional approaches, collaborative relationships and funding arrangements for projects. Specific examples include traffic signal coordination, traveler information services and traffic incident management, among others.

Visualization techniques in the LRTP and TIP development are required by SAFETEA-LU. These include maps, displays and pictures. Staff believes that they are already utilizing these and have met that requirement.

Ms. Meek discussed the schedule for the LRTP update. A 30-day public comment period will be held in May for the entire LRTP update, with a public meeting. The Coordinating Committee will adopt the Plan by the end of June, 2007.

6. Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan

Mr. Kausch gave a status report on the Coordinated Plan development. This Plan is required in order to access three federal sources of transit funding – Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC), New Freedom and Section 5310. The preparation of this Plan was approved in the 2006-07 Unified

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Planning Work Program, with supplemental funding set aside for this project. At the January Coordinating Committee, a time extension was approved if it was needed.

The Plan requires four basic elements:

- Inventory of all public, private, and human service transportation providers
- Pinpoint gaps in the network that negatively impact target populations (low income, reverse commuters, persons with disabilities, senior citizens)
- Identify candidate projects to fill these gaps
- Prioritize the list of strategies and solutions

Mr. Kausch said that initially, staff and consultant services were going to be utilized to do a stand-alone plan, with a strong public participation process. However, PennDOT's Bureau of Public Transportation has set a deadline of May 31 for plan adoption and submission. This means that it must go through both MPO committees before that. The Bureau stated that this is a "transitional" year for which an "interim plan" is needed. In addition, comparatively small grant amounts do not justify a complex plan. PennDOT has recommended that staff use lists of candidate projects from the LRTP and TIP and try to draw from the stakeholders and processes that are already in place to develop a suitable list of candidate projects for funding.

Based on the information received, staff has decided on a modified alternative to doing a complex plan. A basic demographic analysis of the Centre County will be established to see where the target populations reside. A list of public, private and human service transportation providers will be compiled. A list will also be developed of potential transit projects from existing planning documents. A stakeholder committee will need to be convened and this committee will recommend projects for consideration. Going forward, lasting transit-human service coordination measures will be integrated into the MPO planning process.

Mr. Kausch reviewed the schedule for developing the Coordinated Plan. He asked the Technical Committee for a recommendation about the formation of a stakeholder committee and also asked for input about who those members might be.

Mr. Baker asked about the size of this stakeholder committee and if the Coordinating Committee would be asked to appoint the membership. Mr. Kausch stated that he expects the committee will have approximately 20 members and that in the past the Coordinating Committee has been asked to establish committees, but that actual membership would be developed by staff.

Ms. Hannigan asked that the Congested Corridor Plan be reviewed with the other plans when determining projects. Mr. Kausch said that would be done.

Ms. Hannigan suggested that Dave Demick from the Faith Center in Bellefonte be considered for the stakeholder committee.

Ms. Story made a motion recommending that the Coordinating Committee form an advisory committee to provide input about the preparation of a Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. Mr. Mose seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

7. Announcements

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Mr. Baker reviewed future meeting dates. It was noted that neither Mr. Baker nor Mr. Mose would be present for the next meeting. It was decided that Mr. MacMath would chair that meeting. In the event of Mr. MacMath's absence, Mr. Price would be asked to chair the meeting.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Z. Shingler
Recording Secretary