

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

**Wednesday, September 12, 2007
9:30 a.m.
College Township Municipal Building**

Minutes

Voting Members

Bill MacMath	Spring Township
Chris Price	CCPCDO
Michele Barbin	Mountaintop Planning Region
Karen Michael	PennDOT District 2-0
Kent Baker, Chair	College Township
Hugh Mose	CATA
Doug Weikel	Benner Township
Josh Collins (for Dave Modricker)	Ferguson Township
Brent Brubaker	Patton Township
Ray Hankinson	Penns Valley Planning Region
Amy Story	State College Borough

Non-Voting Members

Doug Holmes (for Teresa Davis)	Penn State University
Sue Hannegan	Bellefonte Borough

Others Present:

Tom Zilla	Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA)
Trish Meek	CRPA
Mike Bloom	CCPCDO
Greg Kausch	CRPA/CATA
Chris Sokol	PennDOT District 2-0
Keith Mullins	Jacobs, Edwards and Kelcey
Denny Prestash	PennDOT District 2-0
Jeff Walker	PennDOT District 2-0

1. Call to Order

Mr. Baker called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. There was no quorum present at that time, so Mr. Baker asked that the committee discuss Item 5a first, since it was a non-action item and that a quorum was expected shortly. A quorum was reached at 9:40.

5. Transportation Enhancements/Home Town Streets/Safe Routes to School Program

a. South Atherton Street Path Cost Increase

Ms. Meek reviewed that there was a significant change in policy in December 2005. MPOs were no longer to be permitted to carry over unobligated balances on the TIP. There was a lot of staff concern at that time about losing unobligated funds, so they started diligently programming dollars that were available in each funding year. She said that TE funds must be fiscally constrained by TIP year.

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Ms. Meek referred to the South Atherton Street Path project, saying that it was thought that there were sufficient funds for this project in the TIP. This was based on a June 2007 cost estimate. The federal funds totaled \$265,932 and Harris Township had committed an additional \$20,068 to the project. When the project went to bid, the costs came in higher than expected. With the bid and inspection, \$364,600 was the total. This left \$78,600 that was needed. Harris Township was able to contribute an additional \$29,932.

Ms. Meek said that staff had been trying to zero out the line items under the new process and trying to spend the unobligated balances so that funds were not lost. Therefore, there was no money available. Staff talked to the PennDOT Central Office, who said they would provide the additional funds. This money does not impact fiscal constraint because it is above and beyond the funds that were actually available to the MPO.

The MPO has adoptive procedures for TIP modification allowing for email, telephone or fax ballots when the meeting schedule results in a delay in accomplishing a major milestone or a loss in federal funding or obligations authority. Therefore, a Coordinating Committee vote was taken by phone ballot and approved. This will go to the Coordinating Committee at the end of September for review.

2. Approval of Minutes

Due to a lack of quorum, the May 9, 2007 minutes needed action. Mr. MacMath made a motion to approve the May 9, 2007 minutes, seconded by Amy Story. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Weikel made a motion to approve the June 13, 2007 minutes as circulated. Ms. Michael seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Citizens' Comments

There were no comments for items not on the agenda.

4. PennDOT District 2-0 Regional Operations Plan (ROP)

Mr. Zilla noted that the ROP builds on the work that District 2-0 has done in the past on the Intelligent Transportation Systems Strategic Plan and the Transportation Systems Operations Plan (TSOP). Staff has been using these documents through the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process. The North Atherton Street Signal Coordination project and the implementation of a traffic management center at the District 2-0 Office are projects that fall into these types of systems. All MPOs and RPOs have been participating in the ROP process, along with people from the transit and emergency response communities. Staff plans to bring this Plan to the MPO in November for approval.

Mr. Keith Mullins, of Jacobs Edwards and Kelcey, noted that the TSOP is a state-wide plan done by PennDOT Central Office and the ROPs are being done by each District. The goal of the ROP is to prioritize operations and identify projects to meet those needs. These projects can be used by the MPOs as a guide for programming projects on their TIPs.

The ROP process included intensive outreach. A kickoff meeting and smaller workshop meetings were held to develop projects. Three Planning Partners; the Centre County MPO, SEDA-COG and

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the North Central Planning Region participated on the Task Force. One of the ways they used to prioritize projects was to look at the needs, which were then grouped into five categories:

- Traveler information
- Traffic signals
- Incident emergency management
- Institutional coordination
- Maintenance and construction

The ROP project deployments will hopefully be included in the MPO's LRTP and the 2009 TIP Update. These projects are identified as short-term and long-term projects. All the projects were voted upon by the stakeholders.

The first project that affects Centre County is enabling links between operations centers. This will provide an opportunity to connect to some of the other transportation or emergency management facilities in the region. Along with that, the next project is developing inter-agency communications protocols. Mr. Mullins said that a lot of the existing protocols in place work well because of personal relationships between emergency responders. However, many times these procedures are not written down and adopted. The third project includes closure gates for access ramps to I-80 in emergency situations. Other short term projects include:

- I-80 traffic surveillance cameras on two of the exits on I-80
- DMS in Centre County approaching Exit 161.
- High priority traffic signal corridors (West College Avenue)
- Implement recommendations from "Signal Strategic Plan"
- Phase 1 HAR (Highway Advisory Radio) deployment (PA 26, SR 22, SR 220)
- GIS detour route mapping

Mr. Baker asked how many stakeholders voted on the projects. Mr. Mullins said it was approximately 18-20 people. Over the entire process, over 30 stakeholders participated.

Mr. Mose said that the Borough of State College has been working on automatic department signage and he thought some of that was along state highways. He asked if this was part of these ITS projects. Mr. Mullins said that PennDOT worked with them on this project and it will be integrated into the Plan as soon as they get some information back about it.

Mr. Mullins reviewed long term projects. The District has a Traffic Management Center (TMC) that will soon be operational in the Clearfield office. In addition, the region thought it might be a good idea for a regional TMC that works better for the I-80 corridor. Central Office is trying to iron out details about a regional TMC and operations across the state. Ranked number two is small-size dynamic message signs at I-80 ramp approaches in coordination with the Signal Strategic Plan. Ranked fourth are three additional signs in Centre County. Number six is an event management plan for Penn State University, who also participated as a stakeholder. Mr. Mullins identified other long term projects.

In addition to the projects, Mr. Mullins said that the Task Force came up with institutional suggestions. These were included in the Executive Summary and will be forwarded to the Central Office.

Mr. Mullins said that it was up to the MPO to decide how they want to use this ROP. He said that the stakeholders came up with the priority list of projects that meet the needs of the region. He said

that when the MPO is looking for operations projects to put on the TIP, this is the document they should refer to. Everything related to the actual projects is on the web site.

Mr. MacMath asked where the funding would come from for all these projects. Mr. Mullins said that when they went through this process, they did not really worry about funding but just set the priorities. There is a funding source section in the document, but the main source of funding will have to be from the TIP, CMAQ funds and Act 44 funds dedicated to congestion management. These projects would be eligible for federal funds.

Mr. Hankinson said that there was nothing listed for south 322. He said that SCCCTS is not coming back in the foreseeable future and he asked if anything had been considered. Mr. Mullins said that projects are actually in the Plan. They have placed two dynamic message signs for incidences that occur between Routes 45 and 144 and they are going to be putting a highway advisory radio in that particular area. That was not reflected on this document, but it has been discussed. Mr. Mullins added that anything that is already in the process was not included.

Ms. Barbin noted that some radios cannot pick up the frequency for advisory information. Mr. Prestash said that there is a high range frequency and a low range frequency that are permitted. The FCC has mandated that it be between 1610 and 1640. He added that they have to compete with radio stations and not go over 10 watts. They did a survey to see what people are using and it was decided to keep the frequency at 1640. He said that dynamic message signs will help people who cannot pick up that station.

Mr. Zilla said the ROP would be back on the agenda in November and staff will be working with the District to figure out what language to use, whether it be adoption, approval or acceptance. He noted that several staff members participated in the various workshops in this process. He said the emphasis is on incident management and emergency operations in response. He said that this is reflected in the projects that were chosen.

5. Transportation Enhancements/Home Town Streets/Safe Routes to School Program

b. West Beaver Avenue/South Fraser Street Streetscape Project

Ms. Meek said that it was very important to obligate funds for Transportation Enhancements (TE) projects in the year that they appear on the TIP so that all the authority comes with them. The Borough's project appears on the TIP in fiscal year 2008, which means that design needs to be underway in order to obtain the funds.

Ms. Story presented the location of the project and where the new Fraser Center will be located. She said that realigning the intersection is in conjunction with the Home Town Streets Project (HTS). Phase One of the project is going to be the HTS project, with funding totaling \$251,850 in 2004. It includes the pedestrian node on the northeast corner, four textured crosswalks and 35 streetlights.

Because of the timing with the intersection realignment and the increased construction costs, the Borough is looking to only complete the streetlights and two of the textured crosswalks with the existing \$251,850. The other two crosswalks cannot occur until after the intersection is realigned.

Ms. Story said that Phase Two of the project is the West Beaver intersection realignment. This includes additional streetscape and streetlights. This project must be completed by September 2009. The Borough is seeking federal or state earmark funding for this project. It was included in the

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preliminary 2008 appropriations bill, but then it was removed. Therefore, it will not occur in 2008, but the Borough is hopeful that it will appear in 2009.

Next steps for Phase One include executing a design professional contract, obligating TE funds by August 2008 and beginning construction in early 2009. For Phase Two, the next steps include adding preliminary engineering to the current TIP, adding other phases to the 2009-2012 TIP, and adding the project to the Long Range Plan. These steps are all necessary to ensure eligibility for federal funding.

Mr. Baker said that if Phase One is going to be constructed in early 2009 and Phase Two has to be done by September 2009, it should be one project. Ms. Story said that the Phase One funds have to be obligated by August 2008, which is the key issue right now. Ms. Meek said that staff is working with the Borough and FHWA. She said that if the earmark does not come through on time, staff may get the eligibility date for federal funds reimbursement by getting it on the TIP, filing a 4232 to establish the actual date and the Borough will use an alternative funding source to fund the project and be reimbursed when an earmark comes through. She said that the timing was critical on all of this. If we do not obligate the funds by August 2008, then they need to appear on the 2009 TIP and that would be one less project that staff could push in 2009.

Mr. MacMath asked how much additional cost was planned for Phase Two. Ms. Story said that the estimate for the street work is about \$75 million. That is part of the earmark that the Borough is seeking.

c. Proposed Project Selection Process for 2009-2012 TIP

Ms. Meek said that later in the agenda is a discussion of the 2009-2012 TIP and one component of that is the availability of TE and HTS funding. The MPO has been very successful in actually moving and obligating projects, although others across the state have not. There is a backlog of projects statewide so PennDOT has decided that there will not be an open funding TE/HTS funding round, putting the CCMPO in a unique position.

In the 2005-2006 TE/HTS/SR2S application round, the MPO approved project priorities of the three projects that applied for funds. These included:

- Centre Hall Sidewalk Rehabilitation Project (\$441,578)
- Village of Boalsburg Streetscape Improvements (\$172,787)
- W. Beaver Ave./S. Fraser St. Realignment and Pedestrian Improvement Project (\$447,175)

Staff requested statewide discretionary funding for all of the above projects, but those were not provided.

Ms. Meek stated that \$630,000 is being allocated for 2009 and 2010. Staff recommends that the two highest-ranked projects above be funded with the TE line item funds in years 2009 and 2010, which total \$614,365. Knowing that these projects never come in at or lower than estimated, there is a little bit of buffer as well.

It is important to look at projects that are ready for design. If a six-month application process was begun, it would be unlikely that anyone could pull together everything to be ready to spend those funds in 2009. Staff would like to meet with the applicants to make sure they are willing to commit the local funds and amend the existing 2007-2010 to program to include those projects in 2009 and

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2010. This would start the process of executing a reimbursement agreement and design could begin as soon as possible.

Staff is asking the MPO to consider and approve a process to use this funding.

Mr. MacMath asked where additional funding would come from if estimates were higher than expected. Ms. Meek said that she talked informally with Centre Hall and Harris Township and believed that there were ways scope the projects within the sources that are available. She noted that the estimates were from 2005.

Mr. Weikel suggested that a request be made to PennDOT that all TE/HTS projects have local lets. He said that other districts do that. Mr. Baker said that one of the problems with the high cost is the design process that is required.

Mr. Baker referred to the available funding for 2009-2010 and asked where that money was now. Ms. Meek said that it is being shown as line items on the existing TIP, with no projects assigned to it. Mr. Zilla said that the philosophy that staff has tried to push forward is getting the projects done. He said that Ms. Meek has done everything possible to move projects so that the MPO is not sitting on any carry-over projects for this TIP. He said that rather than waiting until June of 2008, when the new TIP is adopted, Ms. Meek wanted to put the projects through now so they could start the work. They will show on the current TIP and carry over to the new TIP, but we will not be losing six or nine months of time. It also allows the MPO to free up 2011-2012 funds, when there will be another application round.

Mr. Mose asked what the alternative was if the staff recommendation was not supported. Ms. Meek said they would look to the MPO to see how they wanted to spend the funds. Mr. Mose asked how others could provide candidate projects. Ms. Meek said that they could not unless there was an open round of applications. Mr. Mose said that if the MPO thinks that these project are the best way to go, then they should support the recommendation. If they think that it would be better to open the process up to new applications, then members should vote against the recommendation. Ms. Meek said this was correct.

Mr. Price asked if PennDOT and staff would check on the issue of local lets. Ms. Meek said that they would.

Mr. Price made a motion recommending to the Coordinating Committee authorization of staff to formally determine if the sponsors of the two highest-ranked TE projects from the 2005-2006 TE application cycle are interested in advancing the projects using the CCMPO's TE funding allocation for the 2009-2012 TIP. Ms. Story seconded the motion.

Mr. MacMath emphasized that estimates should be obtained that would be good in 2009 and 2010. Ms. Meek said that these numbers would be presented in November.

Ms. Story asked when another TE application round would occur. Ms. Meek said that staff has not heard, but thinks it will be concurrent with the next TIP update in two years. The application cycle would kick off in the summer of 2009. Ms. Story said this gives advance notice for people to develop a project for submission.

Mr. Price's motion was approved unanimously.

6. Pennsylvania Act 44 – Transportation Funding Legislation

Mr. Zilla reviewed that in 2005 the Governor created the Transportation Funding Reform Commission (TFRC) to talk about operations, structure and funding for highways, bridges and public transit. Also in 2005, there was a flexing of highway funding over to transit and there was also additional funding that became available for highways and bridges. The TFRC completed its report in 2006, but in 2007 there was no longer any money available from the initial flex of funds. As part of the Governor's budget address in early 2007, he had provided a plan for increasing state transportation funding, which was discussed and debated through the spring. As a result, Act 44 was passed in July.

Mr. Zilla presented what was recommended by the TFRC (\$900 million on the highway side and \$700 million on the transit side). What was eventually authorized in new state funding was \$450 million in transit. This is important because it shows that having adequate amounts of funding is going to be an issue as we move forward. He said that this amount does grow annually and the ten-year average for the first ten years is about \$946 annually in new funding for highways, bridges and transit.

Reviewing the revenue sources, Mr. Zilla said that the legislation does address existing revenue sources for transit. The new funding comes through a 50-year lease with the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission and is a combination of tolling of I-80, increasing tolls on the turnpike, debt financing from the Turnpike Commission and cost savings from maintenance and capital expenditures from I-80 that would now be paid by toll revenues.

For the highway and bridge funding, the total for the 2007-2008 period is \$450 million. Mr. Zilla said that \$415 million of that will go toward state highway and bridge improvement projects. He said that 15% of that is reserved for the Secretary of Transportation's discretionary fund. There is also a set-aside of \$30 million for municipal roads and bridges and \$5 million for county bridges. He said that those numbers for municipal and county projects remain fixed and do not increase over time. The Centre County share in the first year is about \$3.4 million on the highway and bridge side. The remaining portion is going to be distributed to MPOs and RPOs by the same formula that the TIP funds are allocated. Over the next four years, the total is \$15.7 million.

Mr. Zilla reviewed the focus of Act 44, including structurally deficient bridges, ride quality and safety/capacity management. Lists of candidate projects were circulated as Act 44 was being developed and PennDOT is going to have to focus on those lists. Staff has looked at those to determine consistency with the LRTP and TIP, but it will present a unique situation because there will be more emphasis on paving and maintenance projects that will have to come through the TIP process.

Mr. Mose discussed the transit side of the Act 44 legislation. He said that the transit funding portion includes \$300 million in new transit funding statewide. However, it also completely restructures the state transit assistance program and preserves \$778 million from a variety of existing sources.

The Bill intends to create a dedicated, inflation-sensitive revenue source for transit, which has been missing in the past. The new monies are based on transit system needs and performance. The process provides every transit system with a base operating allocation, which is the amount of funding received in fiscal year 2004-2005. That was the last year before the flex funds came into play.

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Mr. Mose said that one of the factors included in the transit funding program is that no system will ever receive less operating assistance than it did in the prior fiscal year. There are also caps in place. The money in the existing program is phased into the base operating allocation, which is then increased by 5.06%, or roughly 2.5% compounded, to make up for the two years between 2004/2005 and the present. The additional money that is being made available is allocated by a formula that includes four factors: riders, hours, miles and senior riders. However, because there is a concern that transit systems might get a windfall, there is a cap placed on the amount of increased funds that a transit company can get. This is 50% in the first year and 20% in future years until each transit system reaches the level of funding that would be equivalent to the formula amount.

There is also a requirement for the first time that operating assistance have a 15% local match. Mr. Mose said that the Centre Region is already at this level. There is also a provision in this bill for formula capital funds. There is a \$75 million set-aside that is allocated solely on passengers, which in CATA's case will be very advantageous. There is also a part of the program called Programs of Statewide Significance, which CATA believes will provide for the first time a state source of funding that could provide much or all of the non-federal match for the Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and other welfare-to-work programs.

Mr. Mose explained what the new legislation means for CATA. First, the operating assistance will go from the base allocation amount up 5.06% and increase by 50% because CATA is one of the systems that the formula says should really get more support than they have gotten in the past. It appears that the operating assistance will be \$2.8 million in the 2007/08 fiscal year, up \$2 million from the past year. Secondly, when CATA gets to the full realization of the formula, Mr. Mose believed that the amount of state operating assistance will be roughly \$4 million. Last, because the formula for capital money is based solely on passengers, CATA would receive about \$1 million per year in formula capital funding. He said the timing for this is good because it provides a way to rebuild and replace the buses that were purchased in 1996.

Mr. Mose added that the base allocations will be locked in forever. The downside of that is that the transit systems that have historically been well funded are now going to benefit into the future and transit systems like CATA will continue to pay the penalty. Eventually, however, that base allocation will become a smaller and smaller piece of the overall funding program.

Mr. Zilla said that with the restructuring of the public transit program, new regulations will need to be developed. Based on media reports, there is some uncertainty about revenue sources. Whether leasing of the turnpike will be revisited as a substitute or a partnering is still in question. Senator Corman has said that we need to be looking at formalizing mechanisms with the Commonwealth to encourage and foster public/private partnerships for public transit funding. Staff has invited him to attend the Coordinating Committee meeting on September 25 to talk about Act 44 and the public/private partnerships.

Upcoming actions related to Act 44 and the TIP process were reviewed. Mr. Zilla said that staff anticipates that the current 2007/2010 TIP will have to be amended to add projects that will come in from the 2007/08 revenue stream from Act 44. PennDOT is investigating which highway and bridge projects may need to be added in order to get them started using funding available in 2008. On the transit side, staff does not anticipate changes in the TIP, but they will be looking to see what the additional revenue will mean to projects that are already on the Program. This includes JARC projects and vehicle replacements. New projects for the 2009-2012 TIP will also have to be added and the LRTP may need to be revised.

One key item is that there will not be a mixing of Act 44 revenue with other funding. Mr. Zilla said that will result in additional projects on the TIP, but not necessarily revenue that can be used for existing projects.

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

Mr. Zilla noted that staff wanted to present the status of the projects on the current program as the MPO is talking about how to develop the next TIP. He said that the Planning Partners meeting in June provided financial guidance for the TIP update.

Mr. Zilla reported that with SAFETEA-LU, the federal authorization is going to expire after federal fiscal year 2009. He said that the last authorization did not come through until a year after the previous bill had expired. The Federal Highway Trust Fund is projected to be operating in a deficit status after 2009, meaning that Congress will have to address not only reauthorization, but also the Highway Trust Fund issue.

The TIP financial guidance assumes that the SAFETEA-LU levels of funding are going to be in place, with a four percent federal increase after fiscal year 2009. This means that three years of the TIP are in limbo in terms of authorization. Mr. Zilla said that the MPO will have to watch the current and new TIPs carefully. He added that the State Act 44 funding will be incorporated into the TIP and LRTP and staff has been told thus far that the funding will come through the TIP process. This will result in the highway paving projects coming through the MPO, which has not been the case in previous years.

Mr. Zilla reviewed the funding levels that Centre County will receive:

- Centre County highway allocation = \$50,241,000
 - \$34,955,000 roadways
 - \$13,975,000 bridges
 - \$1,311,000 TE Program
- Centre County transit allocation = \$18,140,000
- State funding levels will increase based on Act 44

He said that it is assumed that there will be a 4% growth in highways and 2.67% growth in transit funding. However, now there will be a mandated inflation factor for costs of projects, which has not been done in the past. This amounts to 4% annually for both highways and transit. The Interstate Management Program will continue, as will spike funding for highway projects. Mr. Zilla said that one of the highest priorities for the MPO will be to compete for spike funding for the interchanges in Spring and Marion Townships.

Reviewing procedural guidance, Mr. Zilla said there would be additional documentation activities for staff. The MPO will still have to do air quality conformity. He said that the schedule has advanced a bit. He reviewed the schedule of milestones, saying that the MPO has historically approved the Preliminary Draft TIP by the end of January, 2008 and PennDOT is supposed to have their input back by the end of February. In June, 2008 the TIP should be adopted by the MPO, with approval by the FHWA and FTA at the end of September.

Mr. Zilla reported on projects that are in the process currently. He said that the southern section of I-99 is under construction now. The two interchanges have been funded for design and right-of-

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way, but not for construction. The southern section of I-99 could have a partial opening in late 2007 and a full opening in late 2008. This is contingent upon the acid rock mitigation. Staff will be reviewing with PennDOT what additional money for the southern section will be necessary. The priority now is the I-99/I-80 interchanges. The latest estimates are \$40 million for the local access interchange and \$82.5 million for the high-speed interchange. The local access interchange will have to be constructed first. Mr. Zilla reviewed the specific safety and betterment projects. Mr. Zilla reviewed state and local bridges, saying that PennDOT is completing their technical assessment. There is a focus on structurally deficient bridges, with the goal being 85% of the capital bridge funding dedicated to those. Staff will receive more information about high priority bridge projects later in the year. Mr. Zilla reviewed bridges that are on the current TIP, saying that eight out of ten of the state bridges and all three local bridges are structurally deficient.

For public transportation, rebuilding and purchasing rolling stock is one of the goals on the current TIP. Also included are advanced technologies, service restoration/expansion and rideshare efforts. The CATA/CCOT assessment may result in TIP changes either during the development of the 2009 TIP or after that. Mr. Kausch has started work on that and consultant is expected to be hired in the next couple of months. Mr. Zilla reviewed other identified transit projects.

Several TE projects are currently underway. Three candidate projects were previously submitted but not advanced because of funding constraints, as Ms. Meek reported on earlier.

Mr. Zilla explained the next steps in the process. At the top of the list is updating bridge priorities. Highway project schedules and costs also have to be updated. Staff needs to investigate whether any new highway projects can be included on the new TIP, using the LRTP and Act 44 candidate list. Mr. Zilla said he did not anticipate being able to add new projects. After these tasks, the first draft of the TIP will be developed and spike funding will have to be identified. It is hoped that this will be presented at the November MPO meeting.

8. 2007-2010 Centre County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP administrative actions were listed in the agenda. There were no questions or comments.

9. Announcements

Mr. Baker noted that the next meeting would be on November 14, 2007.

10. Adjourn

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Z. Shingler
Recording Secretary