

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

**Wednesday, January 9, 2008
9:30 a.m.
College Township Municipal Building**

Minutes

Voting Members

Bill MacMath	Spring Township
Michele Barbin	Mountaintop Planning Region
Karen Michael	PennDOT District 2-0
Kent Baker, Chair	College Township
Dave Modricker	Ferguson Township
Brent Brubaker	Patton Township
Amy Story	State College Borough
Paul Weener	Harris Township
John Knowles	Moshannon Valley Planning Region
Harold Nanovic	PennDOT Central Office
Bob Crum	Centre Regional Planning Commission
Hugh Mose	CATA
Xochi Confer	Lower Bald Eagle Planning Region

Non-Voting Members

Teresa Davis	Penn State University
Matt Smoker	FHWA

Others Present:

Tom Zilla	Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA)
Trish Meek	CRPA
Greg Kausch	CRPA
Lori Shingler	CRPA
Mike Bloom	CCPCDO
Vicki Rusnak	PennDOT District 2-0
Mike Savage	Moshannon Valley Planning Region
Roger Dunlap	State College Borough
Andrew Moser	Representative Scott Conklin's Office
Emily Gette-Doyle	Moshannon Valley Economic Development Partnership

1. Call to Order

Mr. Baker called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Story made a motion to approve the November 14, 2007 minutes, seconded by Mr. MacMath. The motion carried unanimously.

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3. Citizens' Comments

There were no comments for items not on the agenda.

4. Member Reports

State College Borough – Ms. Story reported on the Beaver Avenue/Fraser Street projects, saying that a consultant has been hired and design for the realignment of Fraser Street has begun. Ms. Story also introduced Roger Dunlap, Assistant Borough Manager

Harris Township – Mr. Weener reported that the South Atherton Street bike path is complete.

Centre Regional Planning Commission – Mr. Crum noted that staff continues working on a joint land use plan for Halfmoon and Patton Townships. One of the big issues in that area is the Grays Woods Development and intermunicipal transportation connections. Mr. Crum added that College, Harris and Ferguson Townships have all advanced work on their Official Maps, which include transportation connections.

Ferguson Township – PennDOT informed the Township that the State Route 45 bridge near Deibler Road will be replaced. There will be an open house next week to present Ferguson Township transportation projects and PennDOT will be there to discuss this project.

Penn State University – Ms. Davis reported that the Law School is still under construction, as well as the practice soccer fields along Park Avenue. The designs have gone out for approval for Phase One of the Arboretum. The University is also working on revising the Bike Plan for inclusion in the Master Plan.

Federal Highway Administration – Mr. Smoker said that Congress and the Administration passed the budget in December. CATA will be receiving two earmarks for vehicle replacements. He noted that the Division Administrator in Harrisburg took a promotion to headquarters. A replacement has been announced, but has not started yet. She comes from Idaho, with a background in environmental issues and planning.

PennDOT Central Office – Mr. Nanovic thanked staff and the MPO for working cooperatively with PennDOT on issues with Act 44 and the TIP update.

PennDOT District 2 – Ms. Michael stated that MPO and district staff met last week to work through the Draft TIP. This was the first time this was done and she thought it worked well.

Moshannon Valley Planning Region – Mr. Knowles said that the streetscape project was complete and it turned out very well. He thanked the MPO for approving funds for that project.

Patton Township – Mr. Brubaker reported that staff continues to work on two commercial sites in the Township: the former Lowes site and the former Mellott's site. The signal coordination between Douglas Drive and Vairo Boulevard is complete. In 2008, the Township will be developing a capital budget. Projects that were recommended included possible improvements to Waddle Road and Valley Vista Drive. Currently, staff is reviewing a major revision to the Grays Woods Master Plan and there are discussions with FHWA and PennDOT on the Toftrees Master Plan.

Mountaintop Planning Region – Ms. Barbin said that the area is keeping an eye on how the proposed projects on I-80 will impact the only local road access on and off the mountain.

5. Preliminary Draft 2009-2012 Centre County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Mr. Zilla reviewed the schedule for the 2009-2012 TIP, saying that the Coordinating Committee would be asked to approve the Preliminary Draft TIP at the end of January. In past years, PennDOT Central Office responded to the Draft TIP sometime in March. This year, they have committed to responding by the end of February, which gives the MPO more time to work on the Final Draft TIP and public comment period. In March, the Coordinating Committee will be asked to approve a Final Draft TIP to go out for public comment and air quality conformity.

Mr. Zilla reviewed the financial guidance:

- Traditional federal and state funding allocation for highways and bridges:
 - \$34,723,000 roadways
 - \$13,975,000 bridges
 - \$1,311,000 TE Program
- Act 44 new highway and bridge funding: \$15,713,000
- Total Centre County highway allocation = \$65,722,000
- Total Centre County transit allocation = \$25,372,000 (does not include earmark funds)

The biggest issue for this TIP is the construction of the I-99/I-80 interchanges in Spring and Marion Townships. In order to construct the high-speed interchange, the local access interchange has to be constructed first for traffic control. It will be ready for bid in December, 2008, if funds are available. The latest estimate for that interchange is a little over \$43 million. In November, the Coordinating Committee approved submission of a formal request to PennDOT for spike funds to complete this construction. Staff has not received a formal response, but was told informally that Central Office will not be granting that request. Comments included approaching the Turnpike Commission about including this interchange with their improvements that will come about with the toll conversion plan.

Mr. Zilla said that there are several Safety and Congestion Mitigation Projects on the current TIP that will be carried forward to the new TIP:

- Route 26 Pine Grove Mountain
- Route 322 Potter Township
- Route 350 Sandy Ridge Mountain
- Whitehall Road/University Drive turning lane
- North Atherton Street signal improvements
- Route 150 Congested Corridor Improvement Program

There are three Betterment projects on the current TIP that will carry forward, along with two new Betterment projects:

- Route 26 Beaver Avenue
- Route 45 Old Fort
- Route 550 Bishop Street
- Route 26/64 Pleasant Gap to Zion repaving (new)
- Pavement Restoration Line Item (\$7,929,847) (new)

Mr. Zilla noted that the Pavement Restoration Line Item is funded primarily with Act 44 funds. This does not take the place of the Betterment Line Item, but there was a commitment from PennDOT that Act 44 projects are shown on the TIP, even though they are 100% state funds.

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PennDOT also paves roads with the 711 Program, which does not come through the MPO. The primary focus of Act 44 was to improve pavement quality and to address structurally deficient bridges.

Mr. Baker asked if the 711 funding was still available. Ms. Michael said it was, but the amount was less each year.

Mr. Weener referred to pavement restoration, asking if there were guidelines about shoulder width. Ms. Michael said there are guidelines when federal funding is used, but not when state funds are used.

Mr. Zilla reviewed issues that need to be dealt with before the TIP is adopted. Since PennDOT has said that they will not be granting spike funds for the local access interchange, staff brought up the possibility of converting some of its base allocation funding to put toward the project. If that was done, would PennDOT consider contributing the remaining amount? Mr. Zilla said he did not know if the Coordinating Committee would be willing to do that because it would delay other projects on the TIP. Another option is funding from the I-80 toll conversion project. Staff also discussed requesting spike funding for some of the SD bridges on the TIP since this seems to be the focus spike funding this year. That would free up those funds to be put toward the interchange project.

Mr. Modricker asked who was pushing the interchange projects. Mr. MacMath said that Spring Township is pushing this project, but it was included as part of the completion of I-99. The bridges currently over Jacksonville Road are not in the best of shape. He added that it is also difficult to turn onto Jacksonville Road from Route 26 due to the traffic. Mr. Zilla noted that the MPO's policy position has been to complete the mainline of I-99, then do the two interchanges before starting on Corridor O1 or SCCCTS.

The status of State College Borough's West Beaver Avenue/South Fraser Street realignment project is also unknown at this point. The Borough has looked for other sources of funds to help with the project and the MPO did approve adding the preliminary engineering phase to the TIP, which preserves the Borough's eligibility to use federal funds if they come through. However, it is not in the current Appropriations Bills and they were also unsuccessful in trying to obtain state economic development funds. That project will need to remain on the new TIP if the Borough is still seeking funding. Ms. Story noted that a copy of a letter from Jake Corman was sent to her, recommending that the appropriations be given. No other word has been received.

Other issues that need to be worked through include the Old Fort Park and Ride Project, where there are currently environmental clearance issues. A CMAQ line item needs to be created. Mr. Zilla said that the Pavement Restoration line item needs to have projects identified. Also, there is a significant amount of funding in that item and staff has asked if this could be used as a reserve for other projects. Another issue is that PennDOT is updating their crash database and may identify new safety projects that are not on the current TIP. Also, the Coordinating Committee accepted the Regional Operations Plan developed for District 2-0 and there may be projects in there that need to move forward.

Mr. Zilla referred to adding new projects to the TIP. He said that when the current TIP was adopted, a lot of new projects were added, but the construction phases will come up at the same time so it is unlikely that new projects can be added to the next TIP. However, he did review the next projects in priority order on the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

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Mr. Zilla noted that the big focus for the next TIP is on bridges. He said there are 29 bridges on the Preliminary Draft, all of which are structurally deficient (SD). The goal statewide is to spend 85% of the capital bridge funding on SD bridges. There is also a box culvert line item and a maintenance /preservation line item included.

Issues on the bridge side include the possibility of obtaining spike funds for the bridges and freeing up funds for other projects. Mr. Zilla noted that the SR 2009 bridge shown will be coming off the Program, and being replaced with the SR 2011 bridge in Penn Township. Staff will also need to identify municipal SD bridges to include on the TIP. Of the 29 bridges on the Draft TIP, only 19 are shown on the LRTP. The remaining 10 must be added during the 2008 update. Staff has also discussed with the MPO changes that may need to be made to the ranking process for state and municipal bridges.

Mr. Baker asked if the projects on the list were funded through the phases shown. Mr. Zilla said that they were, unless otherwise noted.

Mr. Baker referred to the bridge on Branch Road in College Township over Slab Cabin and asked which bridge that was. Mr. Zilla replied that it was between Hills Plaza and Sandpiper Drive. He said that the second bridge near the golf course was not structurally deficient, but was close. Mr. Baker said that if Branch Road would have to be closed to do the SD bridge, it might make sense to do both bridges at the same time.

Mr. Modricker referred to the bridge on Route 45 in Ferguson Township, saying that he thought construction would take place in 2008. Ms. Michael clarified that it would be bid let in late 2008, but constructed during the summer of 2009. Mr. Zilla noted that not all the SD bridges were complete replacements and this bridge would not be replaced.

Mr. Zilla reviewed the public transportation side of the TIP, which is focused on vehicle replacement and rebuilds. Also included is advanced technology projects, service restoration and expansion and the rideshare/vanpool efforts. One of the issues with the transit element is how to address the Year of Expenditure (YOE) regulations. Staff will work on that and costs may change on the Draft TIP.

Mr. Weener stated that the sums and fiscal years did not add up. Mr. Zilla noted the mistake and said it would be fixed.

Mr. Mose said that if there was any way to take some of the transit projects that are in the process but not complete off the TIP, it would make it easier to understand. He said many of the projects have been on the TIP for a number of years, are in the process, but the money has not all been spent. It is not easy to see what the more important, current projects are. Mr. Zilla said that staff could ask the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) if that can be done. Mr. Nanovic noted that even though there may only be a portion of the money left, it must be shown on the TIP so that CATA can apply for the remaining funds.

Mr. Mose noted that work has been going on with a transportation center on West Campus, but it is not showing on the Draft TIP. Mr. Zilla said that if the University sends correspondence saying that they will assume sponsorship, it can be put on the TIP. He said that he has been told that University administration is willing to do that, but no correspondence has been received.

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Mr. Zilla reviewed the next steps in the TIP process:

- Submission of a Preliminary Draft TIP, with fiscal constraints, to PennDOT at the end of January
- Confirm status of spike funding request
- Receive PennDOT Central Office comments in February
- Address issues prior to preparation of Final Draft TIP
- Present Final Draft TIP at March 2008 CCMPO meetings

Mr. Zilla said that Technical Committee comments would be taken to the Coordinating Committee at the end of the month. He was particularly looking for how members felt about taking base allocation funds for the local interchange if PennDOT was willing to fund the bulk of it, knowing that it has implications for other projects currently on the TIP.

Mr. MacMath asked which projects would be recommended for taking off. Mr. Zilla said that it would likely be some of the Safety/Congestion Mitigation projects and perhaps some of the Betterment projects because they use sources of funds that could be used toward the interchange. It would have to come out of projects that are funded in the first couple years of the TIP in order to meet the December 2008 bid let date.

Mr. MacMath thought that coming up with 25 percent of the interchange project cost would be difficult. He thought 10-15 percent would be more reasonable. He said he would like to see which projects would come off and how far back they would have to be pushed. Mr. Zilla said PennDOT advised staff to wait to see if this option would be considered before identifying specific projects to move off the TIP. Mr. MacMath thought this made sense.

Mr. Weener clarified that this only involves the local access interchange. He asked what the estimate was for that project. Mr. Zilla said that it was approximately \$43.5 million.

Mr. Zilla noted that this option would probably involve taking money from the Pavement Restoration line item, if there is even a funding source within the first two years that could be shifted to the interchange. Mr. MacMath said that some of the conditions are very poor where Betterment projects are programmed.

Members agreed to wait until an answer was received from PennDOT about whether they would consider putting funding into the interchange if the MPO used some of their base allocation funds. Mr. Zilla thought he would have more answers in February.

Ms. Story said that the other option is requesting spike funds for bridges and using those freed-up funds for the interchange. Ms. Rusnak said that Central Office is targeting SD bridges for spike funds, so the District is going to see how many can be submitted for those funds.

Mr. Mose asked how the decision process would work if the Turnpike Commission becomes a player. He asked if they would determine if an interchange is built or not built and how will they interact with the MPO and PennDOT. Mr. Zilla said that if the Turnpike Commission becomes the sponsor of the project, they will decide if and how it is built. He said that this MPO does not have experience working with the Turnpike Commission and staff will be talking with other MPOs to see how that works. By law, the MPO's role is to deal with federal funds and these would be state funds. He did not know how the Turnpike Commission would react to that, although the idea was that all Act 44 funds would come through MPOs and RPOs for approval.

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Ms. Barbin said that in reading through the correspondence online about the I-80 project, there was no list of improvements that needed to be made. Perhaps these interchanges need to be part of the proposal. Mr. Zilla said the consultant team is aware of the interchange projects. The challenge was the status of the local access, because if the MPO was able to fund it and get it moving before the Turnpike Commission takes over, that only left the high-speed interchange. He said the status of the interchanges would be part of their technical comments to the consultants.

Mr. Weener said that a \$4 million earmark is still being shown for the Eastern Inner Loop. Staff has stated that it would be reprogrammed for \$400,000 for the North Atherton corridor. He asked if that would reduce the total or free up that difference in funds. Mr. Zilla said it would reduce the total by \$3.6 million. He said that change is in a Technical Corrections Bill that is not going forward right now. Currently, there is still \$4 million showing for the Eastern Inner Loop.

6. Draft FY 2008-09 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. Zilla said that candidate projects for supplemental funding were discussed in November. The Coordinating Committee requested narrative for each for their January meeting. These are included in the agenda.

Currently, there are two supplemental planning funding projects. The first is Coordinating Land Use and Transportation Planning. This has been focused on the Halfmoon/Patton Area Plan and the Route 64/550 area in Bellefonte Borough/Spring/Walker Townships. The second project is the assessment of public transportation services in Centre County. Mr. Kausch will be starting this effort soon.

The three possible supplemental planning projects for the FY 2008-09 UPWP include the following:

- Update socioeconomic forecasts and travel demand model for the major update of the Centre County LRTP (*highest staff priority*)
- Continue coordination of land use and transportation plans, by completing studies for Routes 64/550 corridors, and Halfmoon/Patton Area Plan; and possibly initiating study in the Route 150 corridor between I-99 and Bellefonte
- Prepare detailed inventory of municipal bridges to assist in prioritization of municipal bridge projects for LRTP and TIP and educational efforts

Mr. Weener referred to updating the forecasts and demand model. He asked if this would enable staff to do forecasting which had previously been done by consultants. Mr. Zilla noted that this was done in-house the last two times it was done. It would require a small amount of consultant support.

Mr. Weener asked if staff had the software and equipment to do this and Mr. Zilla said that the CRPA was working on that. Ms. Meek added that a consultant is needed to set up and run the database. Mr. Crum noted that growth forecasts are important because they are also used for the school districts, sewage facilities planning, growth forecast assumptions and water authorities. It provides consistent information for Centre County.

Mr. Zilla referred to coordinating land use and transportation planning and said that this goes beyond the review of Traffic Impact studies. This is focused on a 20-25 year horizon and looks at how it will affect the LRTP, if there are projects that will be needed to accommodate growth and if there are projects that are already programmed that will be affected by proposed development.

The municipal bridge inventory focuses on a comprehensive database of all municipal bridge information and educating local officials about the bridge programming process.

Mr. Nanovic suggested that the MPO prioritize their second and third projects in order of preference. He added that phasing those projects would also help secure funding. Mr. Zilla said that he was not assuming that all three projects would be funded. He added that the two current projects will continue into the next UPWP and staff cannot manage four or five projects at once.

Mr. Baker asked if the projects were listed in staff's priority order. Mr. Zilla said that the first one is staff's highest priority, but the other two are not prioritized. He said that coordinating land use and transportation planning needs to continue, but there may be other funding within the existing Work Program for that.

Mr. Baker thought that perhaps staff was the most knowledgeable about which projects might have other funding sources or which need to be done first. Mr. Modricker and Mr. Weener agreed.

Mr. Modricker made a motion to allow staff to decide the priority order of the projects to submit to PennDOT Central Office. Mr. MacMath seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

7. Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

Mr. Kausch reviewed that the Coordinated Plan is required by FTA and PennDOT for CATA to be eligible for three federal transit programs:

- Job Access/Reverse Commute
- New Freedom
- Section 5310

Preparation of the Plan was approved under the 2006-07 UPWP, completed with supplemental planning funds. The Plan required four elements:

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

Guidance was given by PennDOT last year to prepare an "interim" Plan, but this year staff is required to bring that into compliance with the final FTA guidance. Staff feels that the Plan that was prepared last year is largely compliant with these regulations. It addresses each of the four elements of the Plan, it integrates well with other planning documents and it was formed with extensive public involvement. The Coordinated Plan was adopted by the MPO in May, 2007.

Mr. Kausch reviewed some of the recommendations that came from this plan:

- Range of transit service expansion, primarily centered around direct-line commuter runs between the Centre Region and areas of the County that do not currently have service
- Enhance current operations, including better-located stops and redrawing existing routes
- Training for both customers and providers

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- Participate in the Coordinated Planning process of neighboring jurisdictions such as Clearfield County and SEDA-COG
- Study CATA/CCOT integration
- Intersection and other pedestrian improvements

This Plan was submitted at the end of May 2007. Mr. Kausch said that for the Section 5310 Program, the Stakeholder Committee reviewed and ranked individual applications from both CATA and CCOT. The CATA application was approved, but the CCOT application was denied. However, PennDOT will be funding their application. For JARC and New Freedom, the Stakeholder Committee also ranked a range of projects, but no projects were funded in rural and small urban areas. They did continue to fund these projects in the Pittsburgh and Philadelphia areas. Staff anticipates a full round of competitive funding this year.

Mr. Kausch said that the Plan will require minor updates this year. First, the new Section 5310 application information will need to be incorporated. These projects are generally year-to-year and tend to be submitted on an annual basis. The section on CATA's ridesharing program needs to be expanded to include the recently absorbed Penn State vanpool program. The Plan should also be updated to include narrative about Act 44 and some editorial revisions may be needed.

Mr. Kausch hopes to have the Coordinated Plan re-adopted by the Coordinating Committee in February. It will then be submitted to PennDOT and any deficiencies that they identify will need to be corrected. Applications for New Freedom and JARC are due by May 1 and applications for Section 5310 are due by June 1, 2008. Staff is charged with reviewing the applications for completeness and forwarding them to PennDOT.

8. Announcements

Mr. Baker reviewed upcoming meeting dates. He suggested that an email be sent to members about their preference for continuing to meet on the second Wednesday of the month.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Z. Shingler
Recording Secretary