

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

**Wednesday, December 9, 2009
8:30 a.m.
Patton Township Municipal Building**

Minutes

Voting Members

Brent Brubaker	Patton Township
Bob Jacobs	Centre County Planning and Community Development Office (CCPCDO)
Sue Hannegan	CCPCDO
Kent Baker, Chair	College Township
Jim May	Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA)
Amy Story	State College Borough
Dave Modricker	Ferguson Township
Ray Hankinson	Penns Valley Planning Region
Michele Barbin	Mountaintop Planning Region
Hugh Mose	Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA)
Paul Weener	Harris Township
Bill MacMath	Spring Township

Non-Voting Members

None Present

Others Present:

Tom Zilla	CRPA
Trish Meek	CRPA
Greg Kausch	CRPA
Mike Bloom	CCPCDO
Amy Dugan	CRPA

1. Call to Order

Mr. Baker called the meeting to order at 8:47 a.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Baker stated that the cost of the replacement of the Trout Road Bridge in College Township was \$300,000, not \$30,000 as was recorded in the minutes of the November 18 meeting.

Mr. Mose made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2009 CCMPO Technical Committee meeting as amended. Mr. MacMath seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

3. Citizens' Comments

There were no citizens' comments.

4. 2011-2014 Centre County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Mr. Zilla reminded the committee that the highway element of the 2011-2014 TIP is almost \$18 million less than the 2009-2012 TIP. The proposed TIP does not include the full state funding allocation that was authorized by Act 44, nor does it include any federal stimulus funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. If the proposal to toll Interstate 80 is accepted by the Federal Highway Administration, the MPO will need to amend the TIP to add additional projects.

Since the preliminary draft TIP was presented at the November meeting, there have been several revisions to the highway element, Mr. Zilla explained. Those revisions include:

- Funding for the Preliminary Engineering (PE) phase of the Route 26 Pine Grove Mountain-Phase II project (lower escape ramp). This TIP does not include funding for the remaining phases of the project. The environmental clearance for this project will be more difficult to obtain than that of the upper escape ramp project because of a residential right of way take and stream relocation issues.
- A Local Bridge –Retroactive Reimbursement Line Item to help finance local bridge projects. Currently, there is only one local bridge, located in Gregg Township, included on the TIP. Karen Michael and Vickie Rusnak from PennDOT will be asked to attend the January meeting to discuss how this funding works. Basically, a municipality will expend necessary funds to repair a bridge and then the municipality will be reimbursed for a portion of the expense. This program has been used successfully in rural areas of District 2.
- Funding for the pavement restoration line item.
- Federal earmarked funds and local funds for the W. Beaver Ave/S. Fraser Street intersection project.
- Local funds for the PE phase of the Waddle Road Interchange project.

Mr. Modricker noted that retroactive reimbursement funding was used once in Ferguson Township. He emphasized that bridges must meet PennDOT standards in order to receive the reimbursement.

Mr. Kausch reviewed the Transit Element of the TIP. He began by explaining that the transit portion of the TIP is different than the Highway Element of the TIP, because the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires that *all* transit projects be included on the TIP, regardless of how much of the project has already been completed. The Transit Element of the TIP focuses on the rehabilitation of CATA's rolling stock and includes additional phases of CATA's advanced technology initiative. CATA has requested \$200,000 from the state for software and hardware upgrades. The TIP also includes funding for new and replacement vanpool vans and the expansion of CATA's operations and maintenance facility. CATA has requested \$468,000 for facility improvements, eighty percent of which would be federal funding. As part of its efforts to better integrate the Centre County Office of Transportation (CCOT) and the MPO planning process, the TIP also includes funding for paratransit vehicles for the CCOT.

Mr. Zilla emphasized that many of the projects that appear on the Transit Element of the TIP are projects that are being carried over from previous years, because they haven't yet been completed. This creates what appears to be an imbalance. Mr. Zilla also stated that in the past, projects from agencies other than CATA only appeared on the TIP when those agencies received grant money. Because the state is now reviewing the TIP when grant applications are filed, projects for the CCOT have been included. Mr. Mose stated that CATA receives in excess of \$5 million in operating assistance, and all of those funds must be recorded on the TIP. Mr. Mose also stated that the carryover projects appear on the TIP at their original cost. Mr. Kausch stated that the final draft of the TIP usually includes information as to whether the project is underway or not yet underway.

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In response to a question from Mr. Baker, Mr. Zilla explained that in regards to the Highway Element of the TIP, the first page includes information as to the amount and source of funding that is received. Mr. Baker also asked if the Trout Road Bridge replacement in College Township would be eligible for retroactive reimbursement funding. Mr. Zilla replied that PennDOT District 2.0 staff is looking for funding for that bridge project. If no money can be found, College Township will be competing for the funding in 2012.

Mr. Modricker asked what year construction would begin on the Whitehall Road/University Drive Corridor project. Mr. Zilla stated that it is scheduled to begin in March 2011. Ms. Meek stated that construction funds for the project can be advanced. Mr. Modricker asked about the Phase One Truck Pull Off on Pine Grove Mountain. Mr. Zilla explained that construction is scheduled to begin in 2010, so that project does not appear on the 2011-2014 TIP. He also stated that the project must be completed as scheduled, since the funding is obligated to the project on the current TIP. Currently, there is a delay in the project as a result of a right-of-way issue between two state agencies.

Mr. Zilla also discussed spike funding. So far, the guidance that he has received indicates that spike funds should be used for bridges, but Mr. Zilla recently spoke to the Secretary of Transportation, and as a result of that conversation, he believes that it may be possible to request spike funding for construction of safety improvements to Route 322. Mr. Baker asked if there was a cost estimate for the project. Mr. Zilla said that it is over \$10 million for all phases, with construction costs estimated at \$8.8 million. Mr. Zilla stated that the project is currently in the first phase of preliminary engineering. Mr. Baker asked if the project would be deferred until 2014 if spike funding was not received. Mr. Zilla said that was the earliest date that construction could begin, but there would be another TIP prior to that.

Mr. Mose made a motion to recommend to the Coordinating Committee to approve the Preliminary Draft of the 2011-2014 Centre County TIP and submit the TIP to the PennDOT Central Office. Ms. Story seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Mr. MacMath made a motion to recommend that the Coordinating Committee request \$8.8 million in "spike" funds from PennDOT to be used for the construction phase of the Route 322 Safety Improvements Project. Mr. Hankinson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

5. Assessment of Public Transportation Services (CATA/Centre County)

The CCMPO's 2007-2008 Unified Planning Work Program included supplemental planning funds for an assessment of the public transportation services provided by CATA and the CCOT. The purpose of the assessment was to examine the operations of both agencies and recommend a practical approach to integrate the services they provide. Since the assessment began, the consultant has analyzed the baseline operating conditions of CATA and CCOT, and a round of public outreach has been held. Operating alternatives were also identified. In this portion of the assessment, Mr. Kausch explained, the consultant has prepared a report that evaluates the possible options for coordination.

The consultant analyzed the types of transportation services that CATA and CCOT provide. CATA offers the Shared Ride program, which is a program that provides transportation for individuals who are sixty five or older. It is subsidized by state lottery funds. CATA is also required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to provide transportation within its fixed bus route to individuals who are disabled. The CCOT also participates in the Shared Ride program, but it is responsible for providing transportation to individuals on Medical Assistance and to people who have disabilities who live in rural areas as well. The CCOT also delivers Meals on Wheels and provides a fee for service for the County's Mentally Handicap/Mentally Retarded individuals. Finally, the CCOT coordinates

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maintenance for all of the county's motor vehicles. In fiscal year 2008-2009, CATA provided 41,000 paratransit trips, while the County provided over 135,000 paratransit trips and Meals on Wheels deliveries.

Approximately 48% of the CCOT's daily trips have an origin or destination within CATA's service area.

When looking at the budgets of each agency, one will note that CATA's total budget is five times that of the CCOT's budget. Most of CATA's budget is comprised of its fixed route service, approximately \$9.9 million of \$10.3 million. One major expense for the CCOT is the Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP), because clients can choose a provider regardless of the provider's location. Many of the costs of operating this program are reimbursed by the State Department of Welfare. Mr. Hankinson asked if the cost indicated for the Meals on Wheels program was only for transportation. Mr. Kausch stated that it was. Because the demand for Meals on Wheels is stable, the routes can be optimized for efficiency. Mr. Modricker asked about the ADA requirements for CATA. Mr. Mose said that CATA is required to provide transportation to those with impairments at a fare no greater than twice the regular rate. He explained that CATA has four vehicles to provide transportation to those individuals with disabilities, and they have contracted with Handy Delivery, a local taxi service, to supplement their ADA service.

Mr. Baker asked how an individual knows who to call when he or she requires transportation. Mr. Kausch explained the key differences between the two agencies. CATA offers curb-to-curb service, while the CCOT offers door-to-door service. For those over 65 who utilize the Shared Ride Program offered by CATA, PennDOT reimburses CATA for 85% of the fare; the rider is responsible for 15% of the fare. Those who are over 65 and choose the CCOT's Shared Ride program pay nothing, since PennDOT reimburses CCOT for 85% of the fare and the County's Area Agency on Aging (AAA) pays the remaining 15%. For those ages 60-64, the rider pays 100% of the fare of CATA's Shared Ride Program, but the rider pays nothing if he uses the CCOT's Shared Ride Program; the fare is paid by the AAA. In both agencies, those under age 60 must pay the full rate for transportation service.

Mr. Kausch also explained that CATA offers its Shared Ride services for more hours a day than CCOT's Shared Ride Service. The CCOT's hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CCOT only provides transportation on weekdays, whereas CATA offers service seven days a week. Because CATA contracts with the cab service, individuals often have a direct ride to their destinations, whereas individuals using the CCOT must often share a vehicle, so there may be multiple stops.

Ms. Hannegan asked if there were any restrictions placed on riders by the AAA. Mr. Kausch said that there were not. Mr. Weener asked if an individual can ride for free on transportation provided by the CCOT if he is sixty years of age or older,. Mr. Kausch said that was correct. Mr. Mose stated that the county has practical limitations, so it tends to focus on human services and medical appointments.

Based upon the consultant's analysis, there are five alternatives for future service delivery:

- No action
- Coordination Committee
- Complete consolidation under CATA
- Complete consolidation under CCOT
- Broker

The consultant reviewed each of the alternatives based upon the following criteria: efficiency/effectiveness, cost savings, responsiveness to the market, flexibility, quality of service,

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funding opportunities, compatibility, program coordination, governance, institutional, staged/modular, and timeliness. A brief description of each alternative, as well as some of the strengths and weaknesses of each, was presented by Mr. Kausch.

No Action

Because the agencies are already integrated, Mr. Kausch explained, this is not a viable alternative. Although this option would be inexpensive and easy to implement, it doesn't address the issues.

Coordination Committee

In this option, both CATA and CCOT would continue to provide the services that they currently do, but a decision making body would be formed to coordinate specific activities, such as procurement and public information. This alternative would require the active participation of both CATA and CCOT.

Complete Consolidation under CATA

Under this alternative, all demand services in Centre County would be administered by CATA, with CCOT no longer having responsibilities for human service transportation in Centre County. With the exception of maintaining county vehicles, CCOT would cease to exist. CATA staff would administer all transportation programs, but as is currently the practice, a private contractor would take reservations, schedule trips, and operate the service. A single set of transportation policies would be followed, with all residents being treated the same. One issue that would have to be addressed if this alternative is selected, according to Mr. Kausch, is how transportation in outlying areas would be affected.

Complete Consolidation under CCOT

Under this alternative, all demand services in Centre County would be administered by CCOT, with CATA no longer having responsibilities for demand response services in Centre County. The primary difference in this option is that service would be provided using County employees, similar to CCOT's current operation. In addition to in-house personnel, some services could be operated under contract in order to fill gaps and/or improve cost efficiency. A single set of transportation policies would be followed, with all residents being treated the same. CATA would reimburse CCOT for persons transported as part of the ADA mandate service.

Broker

In this option, a third party would be responsible for scheduling all trips and assigning them to the CCOT or a contractor. According to Mr. Kausch, an additional agency would add to the complexity of the current situation.

Based upon the criteria, it was determined by the consultant that a full consolidation, either under CATA or CCOT, would be the most beneficial option. Total consolidation under CATA has a slight edge over the consolidation under CCOT. The consultant is aware that the final decision may not be one that is based on numbers. CATA feels very strongly that their CATA Ride service is an important part of their overall brand.

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Mr. Weener asked if this was a decision that the MPO should be making. Mr. Kausch replied that the decision rests with CATA and the County Commissioners. Mr. Zilla noted that the study was one that was originally requested by the County Commissioners. Mr. May asked about the alternative which establishes a coordination committee. Mr. Kausch explained that this committee could serve as a fallback if one or both of the agencies decides it is not in its best interest to consolidate, or the formation of a coordination committee can provide a mid-way step between the current situation and total consolidation. Mr. May said that it appeared to him that most of the overlap is in the service area, and it may be more expensive to consolidate.

Ms. Barbin asked if total consolidation were to occur under CATA, would CATA be required to provide service to rural areas outside of the hours of 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Mr. Kausch said that was an issue that would have to be determined. Mr. Mose added that there is a requirement by the ADA to provide paratransit service during the same hours of operation that the fixed bus route service operates. Mr. Mose said that if CATA were to provide paratransit service to the rural areas outside normal business hours, it would be a local policy decision. Mr. Mose noted that currently, there is a vast difference in the level of service that an individual receives, depending on the location of a person's residence. Those people who live in the Centre Region currently receive a much higher level of service than those who live in rural areas. Ms. Barbin said that there are a large number of people who depend upon the service in her area, and she wants to ensure that they continue to receive at least the same level of service.

The consultant will now provide a blueprint for the preferred alternatives.

6. Announcements

There will be a Technical Committee meeting on January 13, 2010 at 9:30 a.m. at the Patton Township Municipal Building.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Dugan
Recording Secretary