

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

**Wednesday, February 11, 2009
9:30 a.m.
College Township Building**

Minutes

Voting Members

Bill MacMath	Spring Township
Karen Michael	PennDOT District 2-0
Dave Modricker	Ferguson Township
Amy Story	State College Borough
Sue Hannegan	Centre County Planning and Community Development
Kent Baker	College Township
Frank Hampton	PennDOT Central Office
Ray Hankinson	Penns Valley Planning Region
Paul Weener	Harris Township
Hugh Mose	Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA)
Xochi Confer	Lower Bald Eagle Planning Region
Michele Barbin	Mountaintop Planning Region

Non-Voting Members

Doug Holmes (for Teresa Davis)	Penn State University
Dallas Gallo	Bellefonte Borough

Others Present:

Tom Zilla	Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA)
Trish Meek	CRPA
Greg Kausch	CRPA
Lori Shingler	CRPA
Mike Bloom	CCPCDO
Vickie Rusnak	PennDOT District 2-0
Mike Joseph	Centre Daily Times
Rick Sollman	Congressman Thompson's Office
Ken Roan	Marion Township
Brian McCauley	Marion Township
Mark Czajkowski	PennDOT District 2-0

1. Call to Order

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

2. Election of Officers

Mr. Weener made a motion to retain Kent Baker as Chair and Hugh Mose as Vice-Chair for 2009. Bill MacMath seconded the motion. There were no other nominations. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Story made a motion to approve the January 14, 2009 minutes. Mr. Mose seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Citizens' Comments

There were no citizen comments. Mr. Zilla introduced Mr. Sollman from Congressman Thompson's office.

5. Draft FY 2009-10 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. Zilla reviewed that the UPWP will cover the time period between July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010. It lists staff tasks and important actions the MPO will take throughout the year. The Final Draft does not contain anything different than the one reviewed last month, with the exception of items related to supplemental planning funds. Mr. Zilla reviewed key tasks in the base program.

There were several projects that were looked at for supplemental planning funds. The current UPWP has a supplemental planning funds project for updating the travel demand model and socioeconomic forecast for the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). One of the things that was not anticipated was that new software would need to be purchased for this endeavor, at a cost of about \$15,000. It was suggested that this cost be put in the Final Draft UPWP for supplemental funds. Mr. Zilla said that since this software would have to be purchased before the next UPWP comes into play, he contacted PennDOT with options for how to proceed. The first option would be to include \$15,000 in additional funds in the current 2008-09 UPWP, which would require amending the current UPWP. The second option would be to change the scope that was written into the 2009-10 UPWP to reflect a more general approach, which would permit the software purchase out of the 2008-10 UPWP and the additional funds could be spent on later tasks.

Mr. Modricker asked which consultant would be used for the model update. Ms. Meek said it was Whitman, Requardt, and Associates (WR&A). Mr. Modricker said that typically the consultant has the software. Ms. Meek said that normally the consultant would use their own license to develop and run the model, but since staff will be manipulating the model, they will need a license as well so that they can run it in-house. In addition, an ARC GIS license would need to be purchased for the new laptop computer so that it can be taken out in the field.

Once this issue is resolved, a revision will be made to the Final Draft UPWP. It will go to the Coordinating Committee on February 24, where it will hopefully be adopted. It will go to PennDOT at the beginning of March.

Mr. Modricker made a motion recommending that the Coordinating Committee approve the FY 2009-10 UPWP, contingent upon the identification of a feasible approach for providing \$15,000 in additional supplemental planning funds for software purchases needed to complete the LRTP socioeconomic and travel demand model project, which may involve the inclusion of the funding in the FY 2008-09 UPWP or the FY 2009-10 UPWP. Ms. Story seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

6. UPWP Time Extension for Supplemental Planning Funds

Mr. Zilla reviewed that there are two supplemental planning funds projects in the 2007-08 UPWP that staff is working on:

- Task VII.A. – Coordination of Comprehensive Land Use Planning and Transportation Planning
- Task VII.B. – Assessment of Public Transportation Services in Centre County

Mr. Zilla said that staff has not made progress on the first project, which means there is money committed for this project that has not been used. For the Assessment of Public Transportation Services, a consultant has been retained and the project is underway. In the case of both these projects, funding is committed up to June 30, 2009. Staff is proposing that the termination date be extended for these projects to March 31, 2010. To accomplish this, the MPO has to formally amend the 2007-08 UPWP.

Mr. MacMath made a motion recommending that the Coordinating Committee amend the CCMPO's FY 2007-08 UPWP to extend the termination date for Tasks VII.A. and VII.B. from June 30, 2009 to March 31, 2010. Mr. Hankinson seconded the motion.

Mr. Hankinson questioned whether this action changes the budget for these tasks. Mr. Zilla said it was a no-cost time extension that will simply protect the funding committed so that it is not lost after June 30.

The motion passed unanimously.

7. Centre County Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Mr. Bloom reported on the project ranking criteria. A Project Ranking Committee has been established, consisting of four Technical Committee members, two PennDOT members, and staff from the Centre County Planning and Community Development Office and the Centre Regional Planning Agency.

An independent evaluation was done on the previous ranking criteria and Mr. Bloom reviewed the recommendations to improve reliability. One of these was reevaluation of the process for evaluating bridges, which is what the Project Ranking Committee started to look at during their first meeting.

There are two general classifications of bridges – state and local. The local bridges are broken into categories of 1) those greater than 20 feet, 2) those that are 8 to 20 feet, and 3) less than 8 feet. Bridges that are greater than 20 feet require inspection and are eligible for federal, state and local funding. Bridges that are less than 20 feet do not require inspection and are only eligible for state and local funding.

Mr. Bloom reported that during the first meeting, the Ranking Committee discussed using separate ranking criteria for bridges and perhaps using PennDOT's Bridge Risk Assessment for state bridges. Ms. Michael said that the Bridge Risk Assessment involves putting the state bridges through criteria to show what were the most deteriorated bridges or the highest priority to work on. The data now is from 2007 and the data always changes as improvements are made. The assessment is supposed to occur again in the spring.

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Mr. Bloom said that when the ranking was done for the last update of the LRTP, the sufficiency rating for bridges was the main component used. While that worked at the time, PennDOT's risk assessment produced different results for priority work. The Committee asked if there was some way to use that assessment tool or something similar for local bridges and discussions are taking place with PennDOT to see if that is possible.

The Ranking Committee also discussed the project solicitation process and developing a municipal input process for candidate projects. This would serve as a filter to identify realistic projects and those that the municipality endorses. There was also general discussion about other project ranking criteria. The Coordinating Committee will need to establish goals and objectives for the LRTP, which will serve as the foundation for development of the project ranking criteria.

Mr. Mose asked if there was provision in the process for transit-specific input. The process was not as smooth as it could have been in the last update. Mr. Bloom said this discussion will start at the policy level, where priorities can be established. Ultimately, staff will need to talk with CATA to make sure that what comes from the Ranking Committee works from the transit side.

Ms. Confer said there were county liquid fuel allocations that municipalities can submit projects for. She asked if there was a way to determine if a project has been submitted for those. She questioned that if a project had been denied for liquid fuels, but there is still local support, could those projects be added as candidates. Mr. Bloom said that his office sees the liquid fuels applications as they come through and thought there was a way to determine which were submitted.

Ms. Confer asked if there was a way to separate the bridge ranking and do bridge projects each year to try to maintain them rather than wait until they have to be replaced. Ms. Michael said there has been discussion about this. When you get bridge funding, it is in one pot of money and you have to decide how much goes to state and local bridges. There have not been a lot of local bridge projects coming through the past couple of years. She said the question was how to know which bridges need some work or preservation.

Mr. Modricker said that for bridges over 20 feet, the townships have people doing inspections. He asked if they should be using the same criteria that PennDOT is using for consistency. Mr. MacMath said the Ranking Committee had that discussion.

Ms. Meek said PennDOT looks at all the state bridges, but looking at all the local bridges would overwhelm staff. When the bridges are run through the assessment, it would only be for the bridge projects that were submitted for the LRTP.

Ms. Meek reviewed the travel demand model and socioeconomic forecast database project. She noted that the 2008-09 UPWP includes supplemental planning funds for this project. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was put out and included the following:

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

Ms. Meek said that the RFPs were provided to 23 consultant firms. A pre-proposal meeting was held in December and six firms attended this meeting. Seven proposals were received altogether. A Review Committee was formed that consisted of PennDOT, CRPA and Centre County staff and three evaluation criteria were used to choose a consultant:

- Qualifications/experience (40 points)
- Scope of work (40 points)
- Timeline/schedule (20 points)

Three firms were interviewed and the consultant firm that was selected was Whitman, Requardt and Associates (WR&A). The total cost of the contract is \$70,673.87.

Ms. Meek reviewed the scope of work, by task. She noted that this firm included 30 model runs in their scope of work. She also reviewed the proposed timeline for work.

Mr. Modricker asked if these runs could be used if a large development required travel demand or traffic impact data. Mr. Zilla said the model was too big for that and not fine-tuned enough for a specific development.

Mr. Weener asked how the model output would be used in the ranking process. Mr. Zilla said the model produces values for such things as level of service and projected volumes. He did not know which outputs would be useful until the specific criteria were developed.

8. I-80/Route 26 Section A18 Local Access Interchange

Mr. Zilla reviewed that the I-80/Route 26 Local Access Interchange is one of two necessary to make a new connection between I-99 and I-80 in Spring and Marion Townships. In September, representatives from Marion Township came to the MPO meeting to express concern about the impacts the Local Access Interchange would have on their community. In December, they sent correspondence requesting that the Interchange be reconsidered. This item will be discussed at the February Coordinating Committee.

Ms. Michael provided a status report on the Interchange, saying there were two projects being worked on – the Local Access and the High-Speed interchanges. She said all phases prior to construction are on the current TIP. The goal was to get the Local Access Interchange ready to go to construction if money became available. PennDOT has committed funds for the preliminary engineering phase of a project to improve Route 26 between Exit 161 and the location of the Local Access Interchange, which are needed to get ready for this interchange.

Mr. Zilla reviewed some of the issues involved. Marion Township is a single access community, with one road that provides access, with very little alternate routes through the center. There is an Amish population in the area, it is a narrow road, and school buses use this route. One of the items that has come up is access for emergency vehicles. He thought it was important to have local access somewhere along this road. Traffic on Route 26 is a concern.

Mr. Brian McCauley, Marion Township, said that one of his concerns is the quarry trucks getting off at the new interchange and using Route 26 toward Howard and I-80. There are a lot of road issues on that corridor. He felt the entire Route 26 corridor should be looked at for safety. Mr. Baker said that these problems are existing, but if the Local Access Interchange is opened there will be more traffic on that road. Mr. McCauley said this was correct.

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Ms. Hannegan said traffic counts were done as part of another project in Bald Eagle Valley and there are nearly 1,000 vehicles coming through Howard. Most of those will go up Route 26. The fire company is also concerned about a bridge in the area. There is also a quarry in Jacksonville that still has an active license. This will probably reactivate if the interchange is opened.

Ms. Confer said that on I-80 between Lamar and Bellefonte there is not exit. If there is an accident there, the traffic gets off on either Route 64 or 150. If the Local Access Interchange is there, vehicles will detour off on that and use Route 26. She said the road is incredibly narrow and should be widened to the specifications of Route 150 if the interchange does go in.

Mr. Modricker said he was a resident in that area and agreed with the observations. He knew there was no real alternative for where to put the Local Access Interchange, but thought the three mile section between it and the High Speed Interchange needed to be improved first. He was glad to see that was on the program for improvements. Ms. Michael said that this section was identified as what needed to be done first, but that other sections needed improvement as well. She said the funding is always a problem.

Mr. Ken Roan, Marion Township, referred to the Curtain Gap Quarry, saying that during the peak season there are 125 trucks a day coming out of there. If the Local Access Interchange is closed off, those trucks will be using Route 26. There are also Amish families there and school bus stops. If the Interchange is opened right away, there will be more fatalities on that road than there are on Route 322. If the Interchange is going to be built, there needs to be improvements on Route 26 before it actually opens.

Ms. Confer said that Route 26 goes to Howard and Sayer's Dam, and there are also two campgrounds along the way. She asked if DCNR could provide any funding for improvements. Mr. Zilla said he doubted that would happen, but he would check. He added that one alternative source might be the Scenic Byways funding. However, there is a whole set of criteria that comes with that.

Mr. MacMath made a motion to recommend to the Coordinating Committee to make the improvements to Route 26 (Jacksonville Road) between Exit 161 and the Local Access Interchange a top priority on the Centre County TIP, and give high priority to making improvements to Jacksonville Road between the Local Access Interchange and Howard Borough by including the project on the Centre County LRTP and future TIPs. Ms. Hannegan seconded the motion.

Mr. Weener asked if there was a plan for a traffic impact study for the Local Access Interchange. Ms. Michael said one was done as part of the preliminary engineering, but it is ten years old. The project would have to be started again from scratch to get a new one. She was working with staff to try to use other traffic data to get a more up to date figure.

Ms. Barbin asked if PennDOT had marked out a detour route in case the Interstate is shut down. Ms. Michael said she was not aware of that.

The above motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

Mr. McCauley said that the Marion Township Supervisors are requesting that the Local Access Interchange not be open until improvements are done on Route 26 to Howard.

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9. Announcements

Mr. Zilla said that on the existing MPO meeting schedule, there is a meeting scheduled for November 11, which is Veteran's Day. He suggested that an alternate date be chosen. The Committee agreed to reschedule this meeting for November 18.

Mr. Zilla said a list was included with the agenda for projects that were submitted from Centre County to the Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative (PCTI). He said no decisions have been made as to who might be receiving money from that.

10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Z. Shingler
Recording Secretary

DRAFT