

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

**Wednesday, April 11, 2007
9:30 a.m.
College Township Municipal Building**

Minutes

Voting Members

Dave Modricker	Ferguson Township
Bill MacMath	Spring Township
Amy Story	State College Borough
Bob Jacobs	Centre County Planning & Community Development Office (CCPCDO)
Chris Price	CCPCDO
Harold Nanovic	PennDOT Central Office
Michele Barbin	Mountaintop Planning Region
Doug Weikel	Benner Township
Ray Hankinson	Penns Valley Planning Region
Xochi Confer	Lower Bald Eagle Planning Region
Paul Weener	Harris Township
Brent Brubaker	Patton Township
John Knowles	Moshannon Valley Planning Region
Bob Crum	Centre Regional Planning Agency

Non-Voting Members

Teresa Davis	Penn State University
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Others Present:

Tom Zilla	Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA)
Trish Meek	CRPA
Lori Shingler	CRPA
Mike Bloom	CCPCDO
Vickie Rusnak	PennDOT District 2-0
Lynn Herman	Citizen
Bert Kisner	Citizen

1. Call to Order

Mr. MacMath, serving as Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Weikel made a motion to approve the March 14, 2007 meeting minutes. Ms. Story seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

3. Citizens' Comments

There were no comments for items not on the agenda.

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

Ms. Meek said that components of the LRTP need to be advertised at the end of the month for the required 30-day public comment period. She reviewed that the final rulemaking was published on February 14, 2007 and there were five issues that needed to be addressed as part of the update. These included environmental mitigation, a consultation with resource agencies, consistency of the LRTP with planned growth areas, evaluation of operational and management strategies and ensure that appropriate visualization techniques are being used in the MPO plans and TIP development.

Related to the environmental mitigation and consultation with resource agencies, Ms. Meek said that staff received direction from Matt Smoker at the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that they should document the known environmental resources within the region, utilizing the Centre County Comprehensive Plan resource mapping. Staff should also look at the adopted project ranking criteria, which already considers some environmental factors. There is also a consultation scheduled with the resource agencies on May 23, 2007.

A sample of the map that will go out for public comment was included with the agenda. This is related to the agricultural security areas and shows the permanent agricultural easements and the ag security areas on a countywide basis. The revised list of projects was overlaid onto the map. Ms. Meek listed the other maps that had been developed. Copies of these maps will be sent with the Coordinating Committee agenda.

Staff also looked at the consistency of the LRTP with growth and development plans. There was a very extensive growth forecasting component to the LRTP project and staff looked at existing mapping that shows the established countywide growth areas in relation to transportation projects.

The way that staff is approaching operational and management strategies is by looking to the project ranking criteria, which addresses these strategies extensively. The legislation regarding visualization techniques calls for maps, displays and pictures. Staff feels that they are already utilizing these techniques and will continue to do so in the future.

Ms. Meek referred to revisions to Chapter 5 and said that staff will draft the actual language and include this in the Coordinating Committee agenda mailing. It is basically an overview of what she has already discussed. Chapter 8 was included in the agenda.

The Coordinating Committee did authorize advertisement of the Public Participation Plan and that is out now for the required 45-day comment period. Staff did a mailing to 63 interested parties. If approved, the LRTP public comment period will run from April 30 to June 4, with the public meeting on May 31. In June, the LRTP will come back to the MPO for adoption.

Mr. Weikel made a motion to recommend to the Coordinating Committee advertisement of the Draft Long Range Transportation Plan 2007 Update for the required 30-day public comment period. Mr. Modricker seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

5. Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

Mr. Zilla reported that the MPO has to have a Coordinated Public Transit- Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan) adopted by May 31, 2007. The purpose is to make sure that sponsors would be eligible for three funding sources covered by this program: Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC), New Freedom and Section 5310.

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In the current Work Program, there are supplemental funds to complete a Coordinated Plan. Although all of this funding will probably not be used due to the accelerated schedule, the opportunity exists to revisit this Plan in the upcoming year. In addition, staff will be working on a related effort – the CATA/County Office of Transportation coordination project.

Some of the required elements include:

- an inventory of public, private and human service transportation providers
- pinpointing gaps in the network that negatively impact the target populations
- identify candidate projects to fill these gaps
- prioritize a list of strategies and solutions

Mr. Zilla reviewed the schedule, saying that three stakeholder meetings are now set up.

Mr. Kausch has developed basic demographic analyses of Centre County for the target populations. He is trying to take into account where the target populations are located, using census and other data. An inventory of the public, private and human service transportation providers include CATA, CCOT, intercity bus, taxi companies, school districts and human service agencies. More information about human service agencies will be learned during the stakeholder meetings.

Mr. Zilla said that candidate projects are being pulled from the LRTP, TIP and agency strategic plans. Examples of candidate projects include vehicle replacements to maintain service, Centre County Office of Transportation service expansion to connect person with disabilities to essential shopping and other services, commuter bus service to several outlying areas and vehicle purchases to expand the RideShare program.

Formation of a stakeholder committee was authorized by the Coordinating Committee last month. There are approximately 50 prospective members and Mr. Kausch is expecting about 25 to participate. Representatives come from throughout the Centre County and from several types of groups. Stakeholder meetings have been set for May 1st at State College Borough, May 10th at the Central PA Institute of Science and Technology and May 17th at Rush Township, each of these meetings will run from 6-9 pm. At the direction of the Coordinating Committee, these meetings were scheduled in different areas of the county.

Mr. Zilla said that in order to have a 30-day comment period, there has to be some type of document. This will involve the foundation data and a list of potential projects. The comment period will begin in the next two weeks, so a document will be mailed separately or with the Coordinating Committee mailing. Any additional comments should be directed to Mr. Kausch as soon as possible because of the short time period before the document has to be adopted. He said that there will be opportunity to revisit this in the upcoming year.

Mr. Price said that he was glad to see that adjacent MPOs and RPOs were included. One concern he has had about transportation mobility, especially in regards to low income populations, is the underserved populations. The Moshannon Valley has about 15, 000 people, but a little less than half of that is in Centre County. When we look at base statistics, we are only looking at Centre County. Mr. Price thought it would be interesting to see if there is an opportunity to participate in a program with Northcentral RPO.

Mr. Zilla said that those MPOs and RPOs are also required to complete a Coordinated Plan by May 31. He said that we are fortunate that Mr. Mose saw a need to have a Coordinated Plan in place a

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year ago and supplemental planning funds were received for that. Some of the other areas are not in as good a shape.

Mr. Weener said that the potential projects involve replacing existing vehicles. He asked if there were any projects that would expand what we are doing rather than just maintaining the service we have. Mr. Zilla said that one of the potential uses would be expansion of the RideShare Program. The County Office of Transportation also has plans to expand service and these funding sources might be able to be used for that. There are other projects on both the LRTP and TIP that could be eligible for these funds. However, the MPO must be careful because if a project is brand new and not on the TIP, it may impact air quality and there would not be funding for that in the current TIP.

6. Air Quality Conformity – State Implementation Plan (SIP)

Mr. Zilla reviewed that an air quality conformity analysis is required in Centre County because of its designation as a non-attainment area for ozone. The purpose of the law is to ensure that we “conform” to the purpose of eliminating or reducing violations of air quality standards. Under that, the MPOs are responsible for making conformity determinations. The Commonwealth, through DEP and PennDOT, is responsible for developing procedures for determining conformity. Those procedures are documented through the State Implementation Plan (SIP).

Mr. Zilla said that the SIP must include procedures that demonstrate to the federal government that Pennsylvania has the legal authority to compel compliance with all the Clean Air Act requirements, including conformity. The Commonwealth does this by having a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) executed between itself and MPOs, RPOs and independent counties to enforce this compliance. The CCMPO is not part of the current MOA because when it was executed, Centre County was not out of attainment.

When SAFETEA-LU was signed into law in 2005, it included a requirement that the state SIP had to be revised to meet the latest requirements within two years (by August, 2007). The CCMPO must sign this new MOA by the end of May. Mr. Zilla said that the Commonwealth also requires the MPO to have a resolution that says that its officers can execute agreements.

Mr. Zilla noted that one of the key focuses of the revised SIP is the Interagency Consultation Process. That process will require staff to coordinate with PennDOT and DEP through these processes. Anything that involves air quality issues associated with the LRTP, TIP or the Work Program needs to be consulted about with the other agencies. Staff has done this in the past, but the Technical Committee will probably be hearing about it more often now.

Mr. Modricker asked if the MPO has a solicitor. Mr. Zilla said that the MPO uses the solicitor of the Council of Governments, John Miller. Mr. Modricker asked if he had reviewed this and Mr. Zilla said that he has not.

Mr. Hankinson asked if non-attainment meant that we are not required to comply with the rating that was established. Mr. Zilla said that we fell below the standards, or exceeded the levels for ozone, for two years. We have been in attainment for a couple of years, so we will go into a “maintenance” period for 20 years. Ms. Meek said that this area is heavily dependent on the weather in regards to ozone level. Centre County only exceeded the standards for ozone after the measure for ozone levels changed from one-hour to eight-hours.

Mr. Weener asked if this was a continuous monitoring. Mr. Zilla said that it was continuous monitoring.

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Mr. Weikel asked what happens if the MPO does not agree with this. Mr. Nanovic said that it is not possible to win with the EPA. Mr. Zilla said that he has talked with Mike Baker at PennDOT and did not see anything that raised red flags, particularly since it is an agreement that was executed with other agencies. He agreed with Mr. Nanovic, saying that without the agreement, air quality non-exempt projects run the risk of stopping.

Ms. Confer said that she did not have any problem with the agreement, but suggested that the resolution not have individual names, but positions instead. Those individuals could change over the time of the resolution since there was no time period included in that. Mr. Zilla asked if including a time period in the resolution would help and Ms. Confer thought that would be acceptable.

Mr. Modricker made a motion recommending that the Coordinating Committee adopt a resolution authorizing officers to execute legal agreements. Mr. Weikel seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Modricker made a motion recommending that the Coordinating Committee approve the MOA for the revised Conformity SIP and consider having the solicitor review the document prior to executing it. Ms. Story seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

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

Mr. Zilla noted that a schedule for the development of the 2009-2012 TIP was included in the agenda. In May, staff anticipates receiving the final guidance documents for the development of the TIP. These include procedural and financial guidance, as well as any guidance about Transportation Enhancements. Along with that, staff should receive information that gives the guidelines for providing testimony to the State Transportation Commission at their hearings. After the guidance is received, staff will send the information about the hearing to all the municipalities, as well as all the MPO members. The hearing is scheduled for August 2 in Altoona.

By September 17, PennDOT needs to work with the MPOs and RPOs to update scopes, schedules and estimated costs for projects. This will be discussed with the MPO in September and November. The goal is to have the MPO approve submission of a Preliminary Draft TIP in January, 2008. What is not typical this year is that a response should be received back from PennDOT by the end of February. Mr. Zilla said this was not received until May in the last TIP update, which backed the MPO into a tight corner with trying to fit a public comment period and review period in before adoption.

After adoption in June, 2008, the State Transportation Commission will adopt the Twelve Year Program (TYP), which incorporates the TIP as the first four years. The Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration need to approve that by September 30 so that by October 1 a new TIP is in place.

Mr. Zilla noted that if there is a new application cycle for the TE program, the schedule will have to be modified to include that. Mr. Nanovic said that the latest information he has is that there will be a small federal Safe Routes to School program, but the TE program is still unknown. Mr. Zilla said that staff will have to wait for the guidance to see if the MPO will continue to receive a TE allocation. Ms. Meek has some ideas about a process of how to allocate funding in the absence of an application cycle.

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Mr. Zilla said that funding for one of the two interchanges that connect I-80 and I-99 is a key issue. If the local access interchange can get construction funding in this TIP and be underway, then we would still be on schedule for getting construction funding for the high speed interchange in the following TIP. Those projects are ready to go and we are just waiting for construction funds. Most of the I-99 sections will be done by that time, so spike funding will hopefully be available for the interchanges.

Mr. Zilla did not think there would be a lot of room to add new projects to the next TIP. The MPO was able to add several new projects to the current Program and those will be coming up for construction during the next TIP period. As money is programmed for construction, there will probably not be money left to add new projects.

Another important issue is the bridge program. As PennDOT goes through their assessment process, there may be associated changes in the TIP. Mr. Zilla said that another item is related to public transportation and that will rely heavily on what the Governor and Legislature decides to do with the state funding situation. If there is not an agreement between those parties, there may be requests to flex funds again and/or a reduction in transit service.

Mr. Weener referred to the process by which potential candidate projects get on the TIP. He said that in September through November, the schedule says that potential candidate projects will be reviewed, but on September 17 PennDOT is supposed to estimate the costs of the projects. He asked who makes up the list and why PennDOT estimates them before the list is developed. Mr. Zilla said that what PennDOT will be estimating is the projects that are on the current TIP. In terms of the process for getting candidate projects on the TIP, Mr. Zilla said that the direction staff has gotten from the Coordinating Committee to date is that the LRTP should identify the projects that may go on the TIP. That is the process that was used for the last TIP.

8. Announcements

Mr. MacMath reviewed upcoming meetings.

Mr. Zilla said that a status report was done for the Coordinating Committee about the MPO Performance Review Committee's work to date. Staff hopes to provide that same report to the Technical Committee in May or June. One of the positive things that has come from these meetings deals with coordination and communication. A lengthy list was developed to improve information-sharing and communication. One of the items that was received favorably was to have member reports added to the agenda, where everyone would have an opportunity to talk about important issues in their areas. That will start for both MPO committees in the next couple of months. The other item that staff will be working on is the inclusion of contact information in correspondence to municipalities. Staff will be gathering that information in the next couple of months as well.

9. Adjourn

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

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Z. Shingler
Recording Secretary