

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

**Wednesday, November 18, 2009  
9:30 a.m.  
Centre Region COG Building**

**Minutes**

**Voting Members**

Brent Brubaker	Patton Township
Sue Hannegan	Centre County Planning and Community Development Office (CCPCDO)
Kent Baker	College Township
Vickie Rusnak for Karen Michael	PennDOT District 2-0
Jim May	Centre Regional Planning Agency
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)
Frank Hampton	PennDOT Central Office
Paul Weener	Harris Township
Bill MacMath	Spring Township

**Non-Voting Members**

Doug Holmes	Penn State University (PSU)
Dallas Gallo	Bellefonte Borough

**Others Present:**

Tom Zilla	Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA)
Trish Meek	CRPA
Greg Kausch	CRPA
Mike Bloom	CCPCDO
Amy Dugan	CRPA
Brian McCauley	Marion Township
Ken Roan	Marion Township
Mike Joseph	Centre Daily Times

**1. Call to Order**

Mr. Baker called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

*Ms. Story made a motion to approve the April 8, 2009 CCMPO Technical Committee meeting minutes.  
Ms. Barbin seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.*

In the September 9, 2009 Technical Committee meeting minutes which pertain to the Old Gatesburg Road Extension Project, the minutes state "The cost is estimated at \$400,000." Mr. Modricker requested that the sentence read "The engineering cost is estimated at \$400,000."

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*Mr. Hankinson made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2009 CCMPO Technical Committee meeting as amended. Ms. Story seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.*

### 3. Citizens' Comments

Mr. McCauley asked how vacant positions on the MPO are filled. Mr. Zilla explained that there are currently three open seats on the MPO; two on the Technical Committee and one vacancy on the Coordinating Committee. These vacancies are for the rural planning regions. The MPO will send a notice in early December to the rural planning regions to request appointments to the coordinating and technical committees. Names must be submitted to the MPO by mid to late January. The MPO bylaws approved in 2008 state that an appointment to the coordinating committee is two years. Because the rural planning regions are comprised of several municipalities, the municipalities are encouraged to work together to identify one person to represent the region. The MPO asks that each municipality endorse a candidate. The individual who has the most support will be selected as the regional planning area representative. Mr. Zilla clarified that the planning regions can also name an alternate representative.

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

Mr. Zilla reminded the committee that PennDOT provided guidance for preparing the highway element of the 2011-2014 TIP. This information was presented to the committee in September. To review, SAFETEA-LU expired after Federal Fiscal Year 2009. Funds are now authorized by a continuing resolution which expires December 18, 2009. The Federal Highway Trust Fund is in a deficit status, so Congress must address both the Highway Trust Fund issue *and* reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU. Currently, there is not a consensus between the members of Congress and the two Houses regarding how the new authorization bill will be approached.

As a result of the funding issues, the MPO has assumed SAFETEA-LU funding levels with a 1% increase in FFY 2011 and 2012 for both the highway and transit elements. Beyond that, the MPO is to assume a four percent increase in highway funding and a 2.67 percent increase in transit funding.

In terms of state funding, the ACT 44 funds have been reduced significantly because the I-80 tolling plan has not been approved. Other highway and bridge funding has also been reduced due to decreasing revenue estimates and debt service for bonds. Transit funding has, however, stayed at a guaranteed level, at least for now.

The key unknowns will be the federal action on the new authorization bill and the state's action to provide a revenue source for Act 44. Mr. Zilla stated that we do know that Centre County has a highway allocation of \$53.4 million and a transit allocation of \$26.1 million for the 2011-2014 TIP. Centre County is losing almost \$18 million in funding for its roads and bridges when the 2009-2012 TIP is compared to the 2011-2014 TIP.

Due to the funding limitations, there are no new projects scheduled for Centre County, but the Preliminary draft of the 2011- 2014 TIP does include full funding for the following projects:

- Route 350 Sandy Ridge S-curve
- Route 550 Bishop Street Betterment
- Route 150 Congested Corridors Program Improvements
- SR 3014 North Atherton Street Signal Improvements
- SR 3018 Whitehall Road/University Drive Extension
- Old Fort Park and Ride

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Currently, PennDOT and Bellefonte Borough are discussing improvements that need to be made to a wall on Linn Street. Until that issue is resolved, the Route 150 Congested Corridors Project is on hold.

Funding is needed for the following projects:

- Route 322 corridor safety improvements
- Route 26 (Jacksonville Road) Betterment

Design funding for the Route 26 Pine Grove Mountain Lower Escape Ramp has been included on the preliminary TIP.

Mr. Zilla displayed maps which showed highway projects on the 2009-2012 Centre County TIP and the Preliminary Draft 2011-2014 Centre County TIP. These maps emphasized that there are no new projects being planned.

There are 19 state bridges in Centre County, and the preliminary TIP includes full funding for 16 of those. Locally, there is full funding for one bridge which is the Gregg Township T-468 Penns Creek Bridge. Mr. Zilla is working with PennDOT to include a local bridge line item in the new TIP. Mr. Zilla again displayed two maps. These maps compared the bridge projects on the 2009-2012 Centre County TIP and the Preliminary Draft 2011-2014 Centre County TIP. As was the case with the highway projects, there are no new projects.

In reviewing the schedule for the preparation of the 2011-2014 TIP, during the month of November the committees are reviewing the potential candidate projects. In December, the Coordinating Committee must approve the submission of the preliminary draft 2011-2014 TIP to PennDOT. In February, the Coordinating Committee will receive PennDOT's comments and revisions to the preliminary draft TIP. In March, the committee will approve a final draft TIP and advertise for public comment.

Mr. Zilla has scheduled a Technical Committee meeting to be held at Patton Township on December 9. This meeting, which will begin at 8:30 am, will allow the committee to review the updated highway element of the TIP, discuss the transit element of the TIP, and recommend the submission of the preliminary draft TIP to the Coordinating Committee. Mr. Kausch will also present information on the Public Transit Assessment.

Mr. Zilla cautioned the committee that if additional funding becomes available, the TIP will need to be revised. Those projects currently on the TIP will likely receive priority.

### **5. Transportation Enhancements (TE) Program**

Ms. Meek explained that there is a separate selection process for TE projects to be included in the TIP. Traditionally, it is done statewide. The guidance that Centre County has received is based on historical estimates. Actual dollar amounts will not be known until reauthorization occurs. The funding is similar to past years with the allocation for the 2011-2014 TIP to be approximately \$1.3 million. One significant difference from previous years is there will be no statewide TE/Home Town Streets application cycle to solicit new projects.

The state has established guidelines for the use of TE funds. TE allocation is to be utilized for previously approved TE projects that have not yet advanced to construction. In MPOs which have already advanced all previously approved projects, TE funds may be utilized for additional projects as determined by the MPO. All previously approved TE projects in Centre County have either advanced

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or are anticipated to advance to construction before the new 2011-2014 TIP is adopted in July 2010. Therefore, the MPO needs to consider a process to solicit candidates and program additional TE projects.

The TE review committee met on November 5. It considered two items: the disposition of the balance of funds in the fiscal year 2010 TE line item and the TE project solicitation for the 2011-2014 TIP. The 2010 TE line item contains approximately \$66,643, and it is obligated to be used by September 30, 2010. The review committee recommends that these funds be held in the line item to be used for the Boalsburg Streetscape project. This will provide a buffer in the event of cost overruns or high bids. If the funding is not necessary to complete the Streetscape project, non-construction projects should be considered.

The CCMPO must work with PennDOT Central Office to determine a solicitation process and TE project ranking criteria for the 2011-2014 TE line items. Ms. Meek proposed that we complete a TE funding application cycle in the summer of 2010. To ensure funding does not lapse, the TE review committee recommends that the fiscal year funds of \$315,000 be used for the completion of the Centre Hall Streetscape project. This project was not constructed in its entirety due to funding constraints, but the design for the entire project is complete. The original project was designed for Wilson Street to Church Street/Route 192. The obligation deadline for this funding is September 30, 2011.

TE projects for the remaining years of the TIP would be selected through the application cycle. In previous years, TE projects have only been programmed for two years at a time, but Ms. Meek advocates programming projects for four years knowing that without this planning, we will not be able to advance the projects before funding lapses.

Mr. Mose asked if reauthorization does not occur will the program remain the same. Ms. Meek stated that she had spoken to Matt Smoker of FHWA. Mr. Smoker had said that if TE as a program does not continue, these projects would be eligible under another funding source, but Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality or Surface Transportation Program funds may need to be applied to complete these projects.

*Mr. Modricker made a motion to recommend to the coordinating committee to approve the disposition of the 2010 TE line item funds for the Boalsburg Streetscape project and the disposition of funds for the 2011-2014 TIP as recommended by the TE Review Committee. Mr. Mose seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.*

### **6. I-80 Toll Conversion Project**

Mr. Zilla reported that at the end of October 2009, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) and PennDOT submitted supplemental materials to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regarding the conversion of Interstate 80 to a toll road. The original Phase 1 application was submitted to FHWA in October 2007. Approval of a phase one application would allow the project be included in one of the federal programs that authorizes the study of tolling an existing roadway. In July 2008, an amended application was sent to FHWA and in August 2008, an addendum to the application was sent to FHWA. In September 2008, the FWHA responded that the application could not move forward because the proposed lease payment “does not meet statutory requirements.” Mr. Zilla noted that FHWA did not say no to the conversion of I-80 to a toll road. They simply requested additional information. No indication has been provided as to when a decision by the FHWA may occur regarding PennDOT’s latest submission.

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The key points in the tolling of I-80 include an open road tolling approach which would utilize electronic collection, an incentive program for passenger vehicles where tolls would begin at the second gantry, and a volume discount for commercial vehicles. The toll rate structure would be the same between I-80 and the existing PA turnpike. There would be nine potential toll locations constructed across I-80, two of those would fall within Centre County. These would be in Zones E and F. Mr. Zilla displayed maps showing these zones. According to the PTC website, location E2 would be more favorable for a gantry location because traffic diversions onto Routes 53, 144, 322, and I-99 would be less than the amount of traffic diverted onto roads located near E1. In Zone F, the PTC identified F2 as being the more favorable location for a gantry. Mr. Zilla explained that the MPO had been extremely concerned about traffic being diverted onto Route 64 if F1 had been selected as the gantry location.

A capital improvement plan had been prepared which called for an average investment in I-80 of \$250 million annually. Currently, PennDOT invests between \$60 and \$80 million per year. The proposed capital improvement plan called for \$412 million to be invested in Centre County over the first ten years. This money would be used for an I-99/I-80 high speed interchange, an I-80/Route 26 local access interchange, funding for rebuilding of mainline pavement and bridges, and a diversion route to be identified.

If FHWA issues a full blown decision regarding the Phase 1 application and the project is added to the pilot program in late 2009, then in early 2010, briefings would begin with planning partners. Public meetings would also be held to gather input. Preparation of an environmental clearance document would also begin. This would include assessing the direct effects of facility improvements and the indirect effects on diversion route improvements. In mid to late 2010, the MPO would have to amend its LRTP and TIP. In late 2010, the Phase 2 approval of the environmental clearance document by FHWA would be anticipated. Tolls would be implemented beginning in late 2011.

Mr. Zilla stated that most RPO's and MPOs along the I-80 corridor, including Centre County, have voiced their opposition to the tolling of I-80.

Mr. Weener asked about diversion roads. Mr. Zilla explained that potentially some travelers will divert from I-80 onto nearby roads to avoid paying tolls. He used the example of Route 64. If a gantry would be placed between the Lamar and Bellefonte exits on I-80, some individuals would exit I-80 and travel on Route 64. To avoid this situation, the PTC has suggested that tolls would only be collected after a motorist travels through a second gantry.

Mr. Weener asked when improvements to diversion roads would be made. Mr. Zilla explained that the intent is to identify the potential impacts on diversion roads in the environmental clearance document before the action is approved. Mr. Zilla thought the improvements may be minor such as the installation of traffic signals or turning lanes. Mr. Zilla mentioned that some MPOs have suggested that the funds generated from the tolling of I-80 should be limited to just the planning partners along the I-80 corridor. Currently, that is not part of the plan that was submitted to FHWA.

Mr. Weener asked how the tolls will be collected using license plate readers. Mr. Zilla said that the toll collection would be completely electronic and based upon a motorist's vehicle registration.

Mr. Mose asked if anyone has studied how tolling I-80 would affect the traffic over Seven Mountains. He explained that many commercial truckers have chosen to travel on I-80 because it's not currently tolled, but if tolling takes place, could the commercial traffic potentially be reduced? Mr. Zilla said the consultant team hasn't focused on reduction. He is not aware of any conclusions regarding this issue. Mr. Weener thought that many truck drivers choose Route 322 from Harrisburg because it's a shorter distance, and there is less congestion than traveling to Carlisle to get onto I-80.

Mr. Mose asked what the decision making process would be to reduce the toll from a second gantry approach to a single one if it was decided in the future that additional revenue needs to be generated. Mr. Zilla believed the PTC would make that decision. Mr. Mose asked how the MPOs are represented on the PTC. Mr. Zilla said that they are not represented on the PTC.

Mr. Hankinson asked if privatizing the turnpike was still being considered. Mr. Zilla believes it is no longer being considered as an option.

Mr. Baker asked how the funds generated would be allocated. Mr. Zilla said that the funds would go into a statewide pot which would then be divided. Mr. Zilla clarified that the \$412 million in tolling revenue in the proposed capital investment plan would be used to maintain, preserve, and upgrade the I-80 corridor.

**7. FY 2010-2011 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

Mr. Zilla explained that every February, the MPO must adopt a Unified Planning Work Program that lists the work tasks for the CRPA and CCPCDO staff to complete on behalf of the MPO during the upcoming fiscal year. When creating the new work program, several items must be considered. Financially, the base federal and state funding will remain the same as the current fiscal year. Efforts should include participation in Smart Transportation, and Linking Planning and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) initiatives. NEPA is what drives the environmental review of projects. The intent is to have planners do more of the assessment work of the potential impacts of projects upfront as part of the long range plan and TIP development process. This approach is supposed to streamline the process, so projects can be completed more quickly. This will likely culminate in a new project development process.

Mr. Zilla pointed out that FHWA wants more time to be spent on performance measures and documenting justification for action.

Funding levels for supplemental planning funds projects have not yet been established. PennDOT has encouraged MPOs to complete projects that are already underway before new ones are submitted. Mr. Zilla stated that we currently have one that is nearing completion, which is the Public Transit Assessment. We are midway through the Long Range Transportation Plan project. The Halfmoon Patton Area Plan project is currently stalled. We have a potential new project, updating CATA's Public Transportation Plan. Mr. Zilla requested MPO members to submit their project ideas so they may be included in a draft that will be reviewed at the January meeting.

In the past year, Mr. Zilla stated that the MPO staff has focused on the following: LRTP goals and ranking criteria, growth forecasting, the travel demand model, and the project solicitation process. Transit projects have included the Public Transit Assessment project and PCTI funding for the Moshannon Valley Park and Ride Lot. Efforts have also been made to get public transit service to the Moshannon Valley. Time has also been spent on monitoring the current TIP, preparing the draft TIP, and responding to requests made by Marion Township.

Mr. Zilla is concerned that although funding will remain the same, the new program requires staff to complete its current requirements in addition to the new requirements of NEPA, performance measures, and justification for action. He also emphasized how fortunate Centre County is to have the support of the local officials. This allows Centre County to function at its current staffing levels, which are much greater than many areas in the state.

**8. Member Reports**

*Ms. Hannegan*-Last year at this time, the County had sixteen Marcellus shale well sites. Today, there are thirty four drilling sites. Each drilling pad may have at least six wells. Also, gas well drillers have begun to use propane gas instead of water during the fracing process. If this is successful, the amount of water necessary on-site will be decreased. This would reduce the volume of trucks on the roads. For more information, individuals can visit the County's planning website.

*Mr. May*-The CRPA has initiated the update to the Comprehensive Plan. The last update to the plan was approved in 2000. It is estimated to take eighteen months from start to finish. A presentation regarding this update will be made to the General Forum on Monday, November 23. The CRPC and TLU committees will be providing input during the updating process.

*Mr. Baker*-Council has approved the replacement of Trout Road Bridge, which is a wooden bridge in Houserville. Work will start in early spring. Work is expected to be complete by the end of June and will cost approximately \$300,000. Also, Council will act on a new zoning district by the Mount Nittany Medical Center. A new land development plan was submitted to College Township for the Centre and Medical Sciences Building. It calls for the widening of Park Avenue.

*Mr. Holmes*-No report given.

*Mr. MacMath*-No report given.

*Mr. Brubaker*-Following the Technical Committee meeting on December 9, Jacobs Engineering will hold an ITS Coordination meeting regarding the traffic signals on North Atherton Street. Two projects are underway in Patton Township that will generate traffic: the Chick-fil-A restaurant and Woodycrest Center. It is anticipated that Chick-fil-A will have all of its necessary approvals in January 2010. Woodycrest Center is just a few weeks away from having its Highway Occupancy Permits completed. Plans call for a traffic signal across from the current location of Denny's. It would be installed in the early summer of 2010. Also, due to financial constraints, the Township has reduced funding for roadway improvements in its 2010 budget.

*Mr. Modricker*-Design work continues on West College Avenue west to Whitehall Road. Trans Associates is the consultant. Design work is also continuing on Gatesburg Road, from Science Park Road to Blue Course Drive. Keller Engineers is the design engineer. This project has received PCTI funding. A traffic signal will be constructed on Science Park Road at the entrance to Raytheon.

*Ms. Rusnak*-PennDOT is working with the MPO on the draft TIP. Work is also being done with Ms. Meek on the possibility of using retroactive reimbursement funding for local bridges. In Ms. Rusnak's other area RPOs, there have been eight projects using the retroactive reimbursement funding, which totaled approximately \$1.2 million.

*Mr. Hampton*-No report given.

*Mr. Mose*-SAFETEA-LU has provided for a fifty cent per gasoline gallon equivalent tax credit for the use of natural gas. That provision expires at the end of December. It will have a \$250,000 to \$280,000 annual impact on CATA's budget. CATA is working with natural gas and public transit interests to extend that credit, but CATA may also approach the Coordinating Committee for support. Ridership continues to increase in the community. CATA is finding it difficult to accommodate all of the riders, especially in the North Atherton corridor. The VanPool program continues to grow, there are currently 18 vanpools operating, but more are planned.

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*Mr. Weener*-The Boalsburg Streetscape project has been designed and submitted to PennDOT. It is anticipated to begin in spring. The Planning Commission has forwarded the Rocky Ridge Development plan to the Board of Supervisors. This development calls for the creation of turning lanes and two new traffic signals on Route 45.

*Ms. Story*-The traffic signal at Allen and Atherton Streets is under construction. The Beaver Avenue street light TE project has been completed. It took approximately six years for the project to be completed since the grant application was submitted. The Calder Way corridor is going to be reviewed to determine if there is a way it can be used to enhance the downtown area for pedestrians and bicyclists.

*Mr. Hankinson*- Centre Hall has about 150 yards of new sidewalk in place. He expressed thanks to the MPO for their support of the project. Recently, 165 acres was purchased by Potter Township, Gregg Township, and Centre Hall Borough for the creation of a regional park. Currently, it would be accessed off Upper Brush Valley Road. There are three roads which can be used to access Upper Valley Brush Road; however, all of these roads are narrow and old. There is hope that a new stretch of road can be created that would connect Route 45 to Upper Brush Valley Road.

*Ms. Barbin*-No report given.

*Mr. Gallo*-The Borough is continuing discussions with PennDOT regarding East Bishop Street as Mr. Zilla mentioned.

**9. Announcements**

There will be a Technical Committee meeting on December 9 at 8:30 am at the Patton Township Municipal Building.

Mr. Zilla pointed out that the Coordinating Committee packets that will be mailed to all members will contain the 2010 meeting schedule. Meetings are tentatively scheduled for January, February, March, April, June, September, and November. An additional meeting may be scheduled for July or August.

**10. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 10:54 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Dugan  
Recording Secretary