

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

Tuesday, June 28, 2022

6:00 p.m.

Hybrid Meeting

Minutes

Voting Members

Eric Bernier	College Township
Deanna Behring	State College Borough
Frank Harden	Harris Township
Lisa Strickland	Ferguson Township
Barbara Spencer	Halfmoon Township
Michael Pipe	Centre County Board of Commissioners
Doug Johnson	Nittany Valley Planning Region
Dick Decker	Penns Valley Planning Region
David Veneziano	Lower Bald Eagle Valley Planning Region
Tim Ryder	Moshannon Valley Planning Region
John Spychalski	Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA)
Tom Zurat	PennDOT District 2-0
Larry Shifflet	PennDOT Central Office

Non-Voting Members

Matt Smoker	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Charima Young	Penn State University (PSU)

Others Present

Jim Saylor	Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA)
Jim May	CRPA
Greg Kausch	CRPA
Marcella Hoffman	CRPA
Anne Messner	Centre County Planning and Community Development Office (CCPCDO)
Louwana Oliva	CATA
Mark Schultz	PennDOT District 2-0
Dean Ball	PennDOT District 2-0
Frank Hampton	PennDOT Central Office
Mark Long	Representative Benninghoff's Office
Kevin James	Michael Baker International
Cindy Kunes	Congressman Thompson's Office
Tom Zilla	CCMPO stakeholder

1. Call to Order

Mr. Bernier called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Dr. Spychalski and seconded by Ms. Behring to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2022 Coordinating Committee meeting, as presented. The motion carried 10-0 (Mr. Decker, Mr. Ryder, and Mr. Veneziano were not in attendance for this vote).

3. Public Comments

There were no comments from the public.

4. New Agenda Items

No new agenda items were requested.

5. Special Announcement

Mr. Bernier stated that in May 2022, PennDOT announced that Trish Meek, AICP, had been appointed as the new Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, effective June 13, 2022. In this role, Trish will advocate within PennDOT and with external partners across Pennsylvania to implement policies, legislation, engineering solutions, and educational and funding programs supporting people who walk and bike, with a focus on those who do so out of necessity rather than choice.

This appointment reflects the great success of bike and pedestrian planning efforts Trish led in her 27.5 years serving as a Senior Transportation Planner for the CRPA. Trish helped municipalities secure funding for numerous projects, including streetscape, sidewalk, and shared use path projects in Bellefonte, Centre Hall, Howard, and Philipsburg Boroughs; Benner Township; and all six Centre Region municipalities. Trish has also been a guiding force in developing an active transportation community in the Centre Region, assisting the municipalities in completing plans and official maps focused on bicycles and recreation, and working with several external bike advocacy groups and organizations to promote bicycling activities. Building relationships between PennDOT, municipalities, and many external partners has been a particular strength that Trish has exhibited throughout her career at the CRPA.

Trish's last day with the CRPA and CCMPO was June 8, 2022. On behalf of the CCMPO staff and Committee members, congratulations to Trish! We thank her for the positive impact she has had on communities across Centre County and look forward to working with her as she continues to serve as an advocate for people-powered transportation at the statewide level!

Motion was made by Dr. Spychalski and seconded by Mr. Hampton to direct MPO staff to create a resolution affirming the Coordinating Committee's appreciation for Ms. Meek's efforts for the CCMPO, the County, and the Centre Region over the past 27 years. The motion carried 12-0 (Mr. Ryder was not in attendance for this vote).

6. CCMPO Title VI Program

The Coordinating Committee received a presentation from Mr. Kausch regarding the CCMPO's Title VI Program, which is required for all entities receiving federal assistance to provide equal access to programs and projects. Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity that receives federal funds or other federal financial assistance. In September 2019, a Title VI compliance review was conducted by the PennDOT Bureau of Equal Opportunity. This review resulted in several proposed enhancements to the CCMPO Title VI program, including the expansion of the list of protected classes, enhanced tracking of requests for accommodation, reworking of the LEP plan and four-factor analysis, and removal of language referring to "EJ" tracts and populations, in favor of more specific language.

With no discussion, *motion was made by Mr. Shifflet and seconded by Mr. Harden to adopt the updated CCMPO Title VI Program. The motion carried 13-0.*

7. State College Area Connector (SCAC) Project

The Coordinating Committee received a report from Mr. Ball regarding the status of the State College Area Connector (SCAC) Project and the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study. Mr. Ball reported that the SCAC team is continuing to work on responses to the comments received at the April public meetings, which should be soon completed and posted to the SCAC website. In addition, the SCAC team is continuing work on the alternatives analysis, specifically with several permitting agencies to provide them with adequate information regarding each alternative. The SCAC team hopes to have the draft PEL ready for public review during the August/September timeframe.

Ms. Messner then presented a proposed process for the CCMPO's review of the draft PEL Study Report. Ms. Messner stated that the anticipated public comment period could fall between MPO meetings, so staff is proposing to develop comments representative of the MPO with oversight from the Committee chairs and report on the submission of the comments at the following MPO meeting. She went on to say that if requested by the Committee chairs, the MPO staff could conduct a special joint meeting of the Committees to collect input and develop comments for submission.

There was a brief discussion of the timeline over the summer. Mr. Zurat communicated that the SCAC team will conduct a field view with the cooperating agencies in July for formal comments. The SCAC team will incorporate those comments into the report, which will then be available for the municipalities and the CCMPO for comments. Mr. James clarified that August 24 is the next Agency Coordination Meeting (ACM), and the agencies will have the PEL report materials two weeks before and two weeks after the meeting to provide concurrence or to issue comments or concerns. A specific time period for a public meeting is hard to plan because the SCAC team may need to respond to comments provided by the ACM and then work towards concurrence to move forward for a public meeting. Ms. Messner explained that this may put the public meeting and comment period right before the September MPO meeting, which may not be enough time for staff to provide the materials to the Committee, or the public meeting could fall after the September MPO meeting. In either case, a special joint meeting would need to be held to provide comments.

There was a consensus from Committee members to take the approach that staff has proposed; however, there was a strong suggestion from members to hold a joint meeting of the Technical and Coordinating Committees to collect input and develop comments for the draft PEL Study Report.

8. 2021-2024 Centre County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Revisions

a. Additional Funding from the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program

Mr. Saylor provided a brief report regarding additional funds awarded to several Centre County municipalities from the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside program on April 20, 2022. PennDOT proposes to add funding for a Preliminary Engineering phase for each of these projects to the TIP. This funding will allow PennDOT to assign a project manager to each project to assist the sponsors in completing their reimbursement agreements, selection processes, and obtain the required clearances for the projects. Construction phase funding for the projects will be added to the TIP in a future action. The three new projects and associated funds are as follows:

- Streetscape and safety improvements along Spring Street and Bishop Street - Bellefonte Borough, \$15,000
- Addition of 1.6 miles of shared use path along Easterly and Westerly Parkway and Blue Course Drive, connecting with the existing Orchard Park Bikeway and several other existing paths and trails - State College Borough, \$20,000
- Sidewalk, roadway shoulder widening, addition of rectangular rapid flashing beacon and signage to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists in the Village of Pine Grove Mills - Ferguson Township, \$15,000

With no discussion, *motion was made by Ms. Strickland and seconded by Mr. Shifflet to approve the proposed revisions to the 2021-2024 Centre County TIP. The motion carried 13-0.*

b. Additional Funding for the Atherton Street Phase III Project

Mr. Zurat provided a detailed presentation regarding additional funding needed for the Atherton Street Phase III project. He stated that PennDOT has encountered bid costs significantly higher than previous cost estimates for the Atherton Street Project. Cost drivers include increases in material costs and maintenance and protection of traffic. The increases reflect trends PennDOT personnel have noted in many project lets this spring, and the increases were reflected uniformly in all bids received. The magnitude of the increase (approximately \$12 million), the already large size of the project, and the necessity of coordinating with other

stakeholders present additional difficulties in this case. PennDOT proposes to allocate funding from line items, statewide programs, and projects from the CCMPO TIP where the movement of funds will not have a negative effect on the project timeline. Mr. Zurat then went line-by-line and reviewed the funding changes by funding source. For each funding change, Mr. Zurat explained the source of funding and how moving funds impacted the project it was coming from. Overall, none of the projects that funding is being shifted away from are impacted in terms of bid letting and start and finish dates. In addition, all of these projects in question are funded in the new Centre County 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Harden stated that Coordinating Committee members should be prepared to make decisions on project funding in the future due to the current high inflation and cost increases. He went on to say that this may be the new normal and members should be aware that this may happen again in the future.

Motion was made by Dr. Spychalski and seconded by Ms. Spencer to approve the revision to the 2021-2024 Centre County TIP to include additional funding for the Atherton Street Phase III project. The motion carried 13-0.

c. 2025 and 2026 Bridge Preservation Projects

Mr. Saylor communicated that the 2021-2024 TIP includes a line item with \$719,000 in funding from the Bridge Improvement Program unallocated to any particular project. Based on a review of current bridge needs, PennDOT personnel propose allocating \$319,000 to add a Preliminary Engineering phase for the 2025 College Avenue over Spring Creek Bridge Preservation project to the TIP. PennDOT personnel also propose reallocating the remaining \$400,000 in federal bridge funds to advance the Preliminary Engineering Phase for the 2026 Walnut Street over Bald Eagle Creek Bridge Preservation project. The state funds previously allocated to these projects will be reallocated to the Poor Bridge/Betterment line item.

With no discussion, motion was made by Mr. Shifflet and seconded by Mr. Harden to approve the revision to the 2021-2024 Centre County TIP to allocate funds to the preliminary engineering phases of the two bridge projects. The motion carried 13-0.

9. Public Comment Period Summary for the 2022 Centre County Air Quality Conformity Determination Report and the 2023-2026 Centre County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Coordinating Committee received a brief presentation from Anne Messner, Centre County Planning and Community Development Office (CCPCDO) Senior Transportation Planner, regarding the public comment period summary for the 2022 Centre County Air Quality Conformity Determination Report and the 2023-2026 Centre County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Mrs. Messner communicated that the press release for the TIP public comment period was released on April 29, 2022 and sent to 25 news outlets. Advertisements for the public comment period and public meeting were sent to the Centre Daily Times, the Lock Haven Express, and the Clearfield Progress on April 29, 2022. Also on April 29, direct notifications were sent to interested parties (99 organizations), CCMPO Committees, the CCMPO contact list (223 persons), 35 municipalities, and 9 Native American Tribes. In addition, CNET hosted a short commercial on its public access cable television program regarding the public comment period and the public meeting for 30 days. Lastly, an informational post was made to the CCMPO Facebook page nine times and reached over 900 people. The public comment period ended at 5:00 PM on May 30, 2022.

The hybrid public meeting was held on May 10, 2022 at the Centre Region COG building from 6:00 – 7:00 PM. The meeting included a staff presentation regarding the Draft Air Quality Conformity Report and Draft 2023-2026 TIP. Staff members from the CRPA, the CCPCDO, CATA, and the PennDOT District 2-0 Office were present to respond to questions and receive comments. One citizen and several officials attended the session. A total of three comments were received during the comment period: two comments regarding project priority and funding for the Route 150/Phoenix Avenue intersection in Bellefonte Borough and the other comment regarding consideration for funding a traffic safety audit on Route 64 in Walker Township. Mrs. Messner stated that based on the comments provided MPO staff do not believe any changes to the TIP are required.

With no discussion, *motion was made by Ms. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Shifflet to approve staff responses to the public comments provided for the 2023-2026 Centre County TIP and 2022 Air Quality Conformity Determination Report. The motion carried 13-0.*

10. 2022 Centre County Air Quality Conformity and Determination Report and Resolution

Mr. Kausch communicated that in 2018, the U.S. Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals vacated major portions of a rule impacting air quality conformity requirements for the 1997 8-hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The ruling requires previous air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas to meet conformity requirements for the 1997 8-hour ozone NAAQS.

This court decision designated Centre County as an “orphan” maintenance area since the County was in maintenance status for the 1997 NAAQS and was subsequently designated as an attainment area for the 2008 NAAQS. Although official attainment designations have yet to be made by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding the 2015 NAAQS, Centre County is also in attainment with the 2015 standards. In November 2018, EPA issued guidance for how transportation conformity determinations can be made in the orphan maintenance areas. An Air Quality Conformity Determination Report that meets the EPA’s guidance was completed for the Draft 2023-2026 Centre County TIP. The process ensures that the TIP meets federal transportation conformity requirements and is consistent with Pennsylvania’s State Implementation Plan (SIP).

With no discussion, *motion was made by Mr. Shifflet and seconded by Ms. Strickland to approve both the AQ Conformity Report and Conformity Resolution. The motion carried 13-0.*

11. 2023-2026 Centre County Transportation Improvement Program

The Coordinating Committee received a presentation from Mr. Kausch and Ms. Messner regarding the final draft 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Mr. Kausch provided a brief overview of what the TIP is, how it is updated, and the different agencies that work in cooperation to develop the TIP.

Mr. Kausch then reviewed the timeline of the development of the TIP and the public comment period timeline.

Regarding the transit element of the TIP, \$82,363,033 is allocated for the program mainly using state funds with federal and local components. Regarding the highway element of the TIP, there is \$63,771,517 in base funding that is provided mainly using federal funds with state and local components. In addition, there is nearly \$18 million additional funding for the SCAC project, Road MaP projects, and high friction surface projects. Mr. Kausch communicated that no changes have been made to the TIP since the Coordinating Committee approved the 30-day public comment period and staff does not recommend any changes to the TIP based on comments received.

With no discussion, *motion was made by Ms. Spencer and seconded by Ms. Behring to adopt the 2023-2026 Centre County Transportation Improvement Program. The motion carried 13-0.*

12. Federal Transportation Planning Process Self-Certification

Mr. Kausch communicated that the CCMPO is required to self-certify that its planning process is in compliance with all applicable Federal regulations. The self-certification is accomplished by approval of a resolution as part of adoption of the TIP. Attached to the agenda is a draft resolution certifying the CCMPO’s compliance.

Motion was made by Mr. Johnson and seconded by Mr. Veneziano to approve the Self-Certification Resolution. The motion carried 13-0.

13. Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Subcommittee Report.

The Coordinating Committee received a presentation from Ms. Messner regarding the progress of the BIL Subcommittee that was formed in February 2022 to identify projects and prioritize discretionary funding

opportunities made available through the BIL. Since February, the Subcommittee has met three times and the following information summarizes the three meetings.

After the first meeting, staff was directed to continue to assess programs and opportunities and develop staffing and support options for preparing competitive applications. After the second meeting, staff was directed to research programs that had reasonable chances of success with low investment and review the LRTP and other plans for project needs that should be considered for more complex programs. Two BIL programs were brought forward during the second meeting that the CCMPO should support with low-investment staff efforts – the Bridge Investment Program and the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program. Lastly, the result of the third meeting directed staff to draft a purpose statement for the committee and develop a draft ranking for projects identified for Subcommittee review. In addition, the Subcommittee directed staff to begin framing recommendations of resources for the Subcommittee to review.

Mr. Harden communicated that at the last Subcommittee meeting, there was a robust discussion regarding a need for more staff to pursue discretionary funds. He went on to say that funding for more staff needs to be put into this year's budget so that staff can pursue funding before it is gone. Mr. Harden stressed the fact that the ability to research and pursue these funding programs is dependent on the size of the MPO staff, so it is important for the Coordinating Committee to provide funding for additional staff. Mr. Harden went on to say that if the Coordinating Committee waits until September to agree to fund additional MPO staff, it will be too late because the COG budget will have been mostly wrapped up at that point.

Mr. Bernier noted that while the MPO staff is not currently fully staffed, even if it was, there would not be enough staff resources to go after the funds that would make a large impact on the County.

Ms. Messner stated that the Subcommittee will meet at least four more times before the September MPO meetings and staff will provide additional updates at the September meeting.

14. Member Reports

Mr. Harden communicated that the Harris Township Board of Supervisors authorized a study of the safety of Boal Avenue. The Township has committed \$70,000 to conduct an engineering study for additional and enhanced crosswalks as well as additional possible safety improvements along that corridor.

15. Announcements

The next Technical Committee meeting is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, September 14, 2022 using hybrid meeting technology at the COG building. The next Coordinating Committee meeting is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 27, 2022 using hybrid meeting technology at the COG building.

16. Adjournment

There being no further business, the June 28, 2022 CCMPO Coordinating Committee meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcella Hoffman
Recording Secretary