

## Key Findings

The preceding chapters presented a snapshot of the users of Centre County's transportation system, the modes of travel that are available, the conditions of those modes, and how the overall system is impacted by certain travel patterns, including the transport of freight. The information also provided a glimpse of potential changes to the system in the next 30 years.

Based upon the information within the chapters, the following key findings were derived. The findings will guide the CCMPO's efforts to develop and update its long range plan for addressing Centre County's transportation needs.

### Highway and Bridges

- The federal transportation authorization legislation, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21), allocated a significant portion of federal transportation funds toward the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) system, which expanded the National Highway System (NHS). The mileage of NHPP-designated roadways in Centre County is relatively high compared to other counties in Central Pennsylvania, because of the location of Interstates 80 and 99, and Route 322 crossing the County, and the designation of Business Route 322 (Atherton Street) and portions of Route 26 (College and Beaver Avenues) as Principal Arterial routes. Improvements on these roadways are eligible for NHPP funding.
- In the 2014 Annual Performance Measures Report prepared by PennDOT, various indicators show that the pavement on the majority of road segment miles in Centre County has an Excellent, Good or Fair International Roughness Index (IRI) rating.
- The 2014 Annual Performance Measures Report indicates that of the road segment miles with out-of-cycle pavement in Centre County, the majority of Interstate miles exhibit Excellent or Good Overall Pavement Index (ORI) ratings. However, on non-Interstate roads, there is a significant amount of segment miles with pavement that exhibits Fair or Poor ORI ratings, which will require investments to return the pavement condition to acceptable ratings and bring the roadways back into a preferred paving cycle.
- Although the number of fatalities and serious injury crashes is trending downward, Centre County needs to continue its focus on addressing the Top 25 crash locations/corridors identified in PennDOT's annual Highway Safety Guidance Report.
- Focus should be given to reducing crashes that involve bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Certain key corridors identified as having recurrent congestion issues, and there are limited possibilities for adding roadway capacity. In these corridors, there should be a focus given to implementing operational improvements and travel demand management strategies, including strategic investments in alternative modes of travel.
- PennDOT has been successful in managing bridge conditions in Centre County, with the number of structurally deficient (SD) bridges trending downward on most types of roadways. However, resources will need to be focused on all bridges, particularly those on NHS (NHPP) roadways, bridges on non-NHS roadways > 2,000 Average Daily Traffic (ADT), and locally-owned bridges in order to continue making progress toward meeting regional goals for the number of SD bridges and the percent of bridges with SD bridge deck area.

- There is no federal or state-mandated system for periodically inspecting and rating the condition of municipal bridges under 20' in length. Many of the municipal bridges under 20' in length that were inventoried by the CCMPO were observed to be in a deteriorated condition, and are over 40 years old.
- Asset management strategies are critical to maintaining and improving the condition of roadway pavements and bridges.
- Pennsylvania Act 89 of 2014 authorizes counties to consider adoption of an optional \$5 fee on vehicle registration for use on locally designated transportation projects. Should this fee be applied in Centre County, it could generate about \$600,000 a year.

### **Public Transportation**

- There is a growing demand for public transportation services that are outside the current CATA service area and also beyond the capacity of the CCOT to meet under current financial conditions.
- CATA and CCOT must adapt to a growing service area population and increasing demand for service in the face of financial and equipment challenges.
- Opportunities exist for CATA and CCOT to find additional efficiencies in route planning and elimination of service duplication.
- Funding uncertainties and programmatic changes at the federal, state, and local levels will require both CATA and CCOT to think strategically in terms of reserve funding and operational capacity for the future.
- Changes in technology and business models could result in changes to how public transportation is provided in the future. CATA and CCOT will need to “stay ahead of the curve” to ensure they are delivering services demanded by consumers.

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian**

- The interest in expanding the inventory of pedestrian and bicycle trails and other facilities is evidenced by the number of bicycle, rail-trail, and greenway plans that have been completed in recent years.
- The League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly Community designation for the Centre Region municipalities. and the League's Bicycle Friendly University designation of Penn State University has focused attention on the desire for additional bicycle facilities and programs.
- Focus should be given to connecting people and destinations and ensuring that the bicycle and pedestrian system is seamlessly interconnected.
- Particular focus should be given to reducing crashes involving bicyclist and pedestrians. Beyond crashes where a vehicle is involved, attention should be given to improving overall safety of the bicycle and pedestrian network.
- Opportunities exist to incorporate Complete Streets principles into roadway projects and land

development proposals. The CCMPO should assist municipalities in developing Complete Streets approaches, policies and plans.

## **Air and Rail**

- The CCMPO does not have a formal role in the planning and provision of air and rail services, but is responsible for planning and programming funds for roadways that provide access to air and rail facilities.
- The University Park Airport is an important transportation resource for a wide area of Central Pennsylvania, providing Penn State University employees, residents and businesses with a steadily increasing amount of services, including scheduled commercial passenger air flights and general aviation operations.
- There is no regularly-scheduled passenger rail service directly into Centre County. Passenger rail service available at the Tyrone and Lewistown rail stations must be accessed via ground transportation routes.
- Centre County does not currently meet the population thresholds required to support light rail/street car operations.

## **Freight**

- Freight movements are subject to evolving influences such as changes in fuel costs, infrastructure (ports, removal of barriers), technology, business models and socioeconomic characteristics.
- Centre County is primarily a “through” county for truck freight movements. Although Centre County does generate and receive freight shipments, these freight flows are not currently as high as some neighboring counties.
- Two key trucking corridors (portions of Routes 322 and 350) are two lane roadways and do not meet modern design standards desirable to accommodate the high truck volumes present on these roadways. Efforts to identify other barriers to freight movement and develop solutions should be undertaken.
- Within Centre County, the primary concerns related to freight movements involve safety and the impact to road and bridge conditions. Congestion concerns related to freight movements are limited to a few roadway segments within the County.
- Rail freight service is an important component in the movement of goods, supporting several businesses and industries in the County, and reducing the amount of trucks on roadways that would otherwise be transporting raw materials and goods.
- Air freight is a small, but important component of Centre County’s freight movement system. Air cargo is typically low tonnage and high value. Air cargo movement at the University Park Airport is anticipated to grow at a slow, but steady rate.

- The CCMPO needs to access expertise within the transportation logistics community to improve freight movement planning efforts.

## **Community and Economic Development**

- Centre County's strategic location at the intersection of Interstates 80 and 99 and Route 322 has fostered a partnership between economic development entities in Bedford, Blair and Centre Counties, and Penn State University. The marketing of business opportunities in the I-99 corridor through the three counties may spur business and industry development that affects travel demand in Centre County and adjacent counties.
- Centre County has a unique mix of rural, suburban and urban characteristics. It is important to understand and be sensitive to the context of specific areas where transportation improvement projects are being advanced.
- The CCMPO must continue to advance its knowledge and understanding of constantly evolving factors that play a role in transportation planning and decision making, particularly relative to investments that provide additional balance in the availability of multiple modes of transportation.
- The CCMPO must continue to monitor socioeconomic trends, with particular attention being paid to population shifts and employment centers, to ensure that investments are being made proactively and in appropriate locations.
- Opportunities exist to improve outreach to traditionally transportation-underserved populations
- The CCMPO's transportation planning staff should remain involved in land use planning and site development plan reviews.
- The CCMPO must stay informed and understand the rapid advances in transportation technologies, in order to understand implications and needs associated with these technologies.

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Based on the findings, five core questions were developed for the CCMPO to consider in the future when working with PennDOT, CATA, the CCOT and other stakeholders to make programmatic and policy decisions regarding transportation planning and funding:

- 1. Is the Centre County transportation system getting safer?*
- 2. Is the Centre County transportation system in a state of good repair?*
- 3. Does the Centre County transportation system have adequate capacity?*
- 4. Does the Centre County transportation system have an adequate mix of modes?*
- 5. Does Centre County's transportation system support existing and future community and economic development needs?*

These five core questions appear as a recurring theme in the remaining chapters of the LRTP 2044. The LRTP Goals and Objectives, Project Prioritization Process, Implementation Strategies and Performance Measures are all focused on providing answers to the five core questions.