

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

**Wednesday, November 8, 2023**

**9:30 a.m.**

**Hybrid Meeting**

**Minutes**

**Voting Members**

Ray Stolinas	Centre County Planning and Community Development Office (CCPCDO)
David Lomison	Centre County Office of Transportation (CCOT)
Ron Seybert	Ferguson Township
Doug Erickson	Patton Township
Mark Boeckel	Harris Township
Mark Lively	Upper Bald Eagle Valley Planning Region
Michelle Merrow	Moshannon Valley Planning Region
Joel Myers	Penns Valley Planning Region
Rick Dillon	Nittany Valley Planning Region
Jim May	Centre Regional Planning Agency
Lori Miller	Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA)
Frank Hampton	PennDOT Central Office
Mark Schultz	PennDOT District 2-0

**Others Present**

Jim Saylor	Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA)
Anne Messner	CRPA
Greg Kausch	CRPA
Pam Adams	CRPA
Marcella Hoffman	CRPA
Xochi Confer	CCPCDO
Kevin James	Michael Baker International
Lyssa Cromell	CATA
Eric Bernier	Coordinating Committee Chair

**1. Call to Order**

Mr. Seybert called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Mrs. Hoffman conducted a roll call to ensure the members could hear and be heard.

**2. Approval of Minutes – September 6, 2023 Technical Committee Minutes**

*Motion was made by Mr. Lively and seconded by Mr. Dillon to approve the September 6, 2023 Technical Committee minutes. The motion carried 13-0 (Messrs. Piper, Robbins, and Franson and Ms. Barbin were not in attendance).*

**3. Public Comments**

There were no comments from the public.

**4. New Agenda Items**

There were no new agenda items requested.

**5. State College Area Connector (SCAC) Project Status Report**

The Technical Committee received a brief report from Mr. Schultz. He communicated that the report in the agenda packet summarizes the status of the SCAC project, and PennDOT has received the letters referenced in the report and are working to address them.

## 6. Transportation Alternatives (SA) Set-Aside Program

The Technical Committee received a report from Ms. Messner regarding the TA Set-Aside program candidate applications. Two municipalities submitted applications: Bellefonte Borough and College Township. Bellefonte Borough applied for pedestrian safety improvements that include a solar upgrade for school speed limit signs on SR 550 at the intersection of Penn Street and between McAllister Street and Airport Road. College Township submitted an application for the East College Avenue Shared Use Path to construct a multi-use path between Puddintown Road connecting the Penn State University path.

Staff answered a clarifying question about the location of the East College Avenue Shared Use path, but the Committee did not offer any comments for staff to consider.

*Motion was made by Mr. Lively and seconded by Mr. Seybert for the Technical Committee to recommend that the Coordinating Committee approve the review and comments on the TA Set-Aside applications in Centre County. The motion carried 13-0.*

## 7. CCMPO Strategic Plan

The Technical Committee received a presentation from Mr. Saylor regarding the draft Strategic Implementation Plan and the draft Bylaws that have been developed as a result of several CCMPO Strategic Plan Implementation Subcommittee meetings over the summer. Per the current Bylaws, the Technical Committee must have an opportunity to review the proposed Bylaw changes at two separate meetings prior to taking action. The Technical Committee reviewed the first draft of the proposed Bylaws at its September meeting.

Mr. Saylor communicated that the proposed Bylaw revisions include revising the member appointments from a two-year appointment to a four-year appointment, with the appointments being staggered to help retain institutional knowledge and to help lessen the workload of staff when the reappointments are made. In addition, the Bylaws include the revision of the Technical Committee structure from an 18-member body to a 6-member body to help with Committee representation and to help the Technical Committee focus on technical aspects instead of reviewing everything that the Coordinating Committee reviews. Mr. Saylor then reviewed the proposed assignments of tasks between the Technical and Coordinating Committees. Lastly, the Bylaws propose the addition of a Projects Committee; however, this proposal is conditional on whether the Transportation Grants Specialist position is approved through the COG and County budget process.

In response to a comment from Mr. Dillon regarding the proposed Technical Committee structure, Mr. Saylor replied that the Walker Township letter expressed the same concerns of losing representation in the outlying municipalities. He went on to say that staff is concerned about not being able to fill seats in certain planning regions that have been consistently empty, the Mountaintop Planning Region for the Coordinating Committee and the Lower Bald Eagle Valley Planning Region for the Technical Committee, for example. Mr. Saylor communicated that to be more inclusive, people have to be willing to attend and participate in the MPO meetings and because that is not happening, the structure of the Technical Committee is not working.

Mr. Saylor explained that if the MPO does not find a better way of appointing representatives to the seats, there will likely be issues with meeting quorum requirements and the two-thirds requirement to vote on Bylaws.

Ms. Merrow communicated that she has concerns about the proposed changes to the Technical Committee structure and the creation of the Projects Committee. She stated that the MPO has a functionality problem, and the efficiency of the organization needs to be improved. She agreed that there are attendance issues for the outlying regions but explained that it is because the outlying regions do not feel heard in the MPO.

Ms. Merrow specified that the proposed Technical Committee structure looks as if the outlying region's voices are being stripped away. She went on to surmise that the Centre Region municipalities receive more in funding than the outlying regions. Ms. Merrow concluded that Moshannon Valley agrees with Walker Township's letter, but the MPO staff response of visiting all 35 municipalities every two years as a replacement for the 18-member Technical Committee is not a solution.

Mr. Seybert reminded the Committee members that the Coordinating Committee is not changing and that all municipalities, planning regions, and agency partners will still be represented on that Committee.

In response to a question from Mr. Lively regarding the elimination of the Centre Region and the outlying regions representatives in the proposed Technical Committee structure, Mr. Saylor clarified that those two representatives were removed from the proposal during a previous Technical Committee meeting. Mr. Seybert added that it was a Technical Committee member that suggested the change. At the time, the Technical Committee agreed that there should not be any municipal representation from either the Centre Region or any of the outlying planning regions.

Mr. Bernier spoke to the point regarding the equity of funding between the Centre Region and the outlying regions and explained that years ago, he worked with Mr. Tom Zilla, Mr. Saylor's predecessor, on this same perception issue. At that time, calculations were completed for number of projects and the amount of funding spent in the Centre Region versus the outlying regions, and the conclusion was that the funding and number projects was split almost evenly between the two areas. Mr. Bernier observed that there is still an issue with perception in this regard, and it may be time to perform those calculations again.

*Motion was made by Mr. Lively and seconded by Mr. May to recommend that the Coordinating Committee amend the CCMPO Bylaws to change the length of member terms from two years to four years and to adopt a staggered appointment schedule so that all members are not appointed in the same year. The motion failed with 10 in favor, 1 against, and 2 abstentions by a roll call vote.*

*Motion was made by Mr. May and seconded by Mr. Seybert to recommend that the Coordinating Committee amend the CCMPO Bylaws to change the Technical Committee structure from an 18-member voting body to a 6-member voting body, with subject matter experts as non-voting members. The motion failed with four in favor, seven against, and two abstentions by a roll call vote.*

*Motion was made by Mr. Lively and seconded by Mr. May to recommend that the Coordinating Committee amend the CCMPO Bylaws to support the future empanelment of a Projects Committee. The motion failed with nine in favor, one against, and three abstentions by a roll call vote.*

## **8. Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

The Technical Committee received a presentation from Mr. Saylor regarding the final draft of the FY 2024-25 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) that is one of the core federally mandated responsibilities of the CCMPO. The UPWP lists certain policy actions that must be taken by the CCMPO and lists the work tasks to be completed by the CRPA, CATA, and the CCPCDO on behalf of the MPO. Mr. Saylor stated that the Technical Committee reviewed the draft UPWP in September, but staff had not yet received the financial guidance at that time. Since then, it has been determined that the guidance includes a 5% increase in funds, instead of staff's estimation of a 3% increase in funds. In addition, staff included a request for supplemental planning funds for consulting support for the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update. The revised UPWP has been reshared with FHWA, PennDOT Central Office, and the Federal Transit Administration for their continuing review. Mr. Saylor then reviewed additional candidate supplemental studies that will be considered in the development of future UPWPs.

*Motion was made by Mr. Hampton and seconded by Mr. Lively to recommend that the Coordinating Committee adopt the FY 2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program. The motion carried 13-0.*

## **9. Performance Based Planning and Programming**

### **a. Annual Report about Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plans for CATA and Centre County Office of Transportation (CCOT)**

The Technical Committee received a presentation from Mr. Kausch regarding the Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plans for CATA and the CCOT, which are performance measurements required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to support safety and reliability of service, while moderating purchase and maintenance costs. The TAM Plan requirements cover three primary asset categories: rolling stock, equipment, and facilities. The basis for measuring performance and setting targets includes estimated useful life (age and mileage) and PennDOT's capital planning tool which rates assets on a scale of asset past useful life (replacement or rehabilitation required) to new or nearly new asset with no defects.

Mr. Kausch explained that the CCOT participates in the statewide TAM plan and in 2023, the CCOT is performing less than favorably compared to the statewide average (70.5% of cutaways and 100% of vans); however, measures are improving, and the TIP and the LRTP are structured to provide support. For the upcoming year, statewide targets are that no more than 59% of cutaways and no more than 62% of vans exceed their estimated useful life. Supply chain issues have delayed CCOT vehicle purchases.

He went on to state that CATA maintains its own individual TAM Plan and targets will remain the same for the upcoming year, with no more than 25% of rolling stock, no more than 40% of equipment exceeds its estimated useful life, and no more than 20% of facilities are rated below a “3” in the capital planning tool. For 2023, the revenue vehicles exceeding their estimated useful life fell from about 23% to about 12%, the percentage of equipment exceeding its estimated useful life fell from a little over 32% to a little over 30%, and 1.27% of facilities are rated below a “3” in the capital planning tool.

#### 10. 2023-2026 Centre County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Technical Committee members received a presentation regarding opportunities to use CARBON reduction funds. As part of the TIP, Centre County is receiving a total of \$3,003,235 in CARBON funds for carbon reduction efforts from 2023 to 2026. Planning is needed now for the 2023-2026 TIP with an amount of \$693,954 to be programmed for 2024. During the September Technical Committee meeting, several possible CARBON projects were discussed, and through the CARBON funds guidance, MPO staff determined that the projects are eligible for those funds. MPO staff suggested the following projects for consideration by the Technical Committee in order of preference:

- South Atherton and East Branch Road signal/intersection upgrade
- Projects awarded TA Set-Aside funds but do not have enough funds to finish the project
- Eligible TA Set-Aside projects that had been submitted but were not funded
- TA Set-Aside projects currently in the review phase by PennDOT and awaiting award
- Call for new projects that meet the CARBON eligible project list

A project that was not on the list but had been discussed by the Safety Subcommittee in April 2023, is a safety concern and a signal/intersection upgrade at the intersection of South Atherton and East Branch Road intersection. This may necessitate additional work at the intersection of South Atherton and University Drive. A study would need to be completed to determine any update to the signal system.

Ms. Messner went onto explain that the call for new projects would be the most difficult to complete in a short period of time. The announcement to solicit projects does not provide sufficient time for municipalities to submit a project idea and funding match for a quick turnaround. Therefore, the call for new projects would rely more on CARBON funds available in 2025, totaling \$712,693, and 2026, totaling \$731,527.

Mr. Lively requested that the Philipsburg Pine Street project be considered for these funds as the application from two years ago was not approved to receive TA Set-Aside funds. Mr. Porochniak cautioned that there would need to be a discussion to make the connection that the project will reduce carbon emissions.

Discussion ensued regarding staff’s methodology for choosing this particular process to be able to spend out the funding provided from 2023 to 2026.

In response to a question from Mr. Dillion, Mr. Saylor explained that in PennDOT’s Regional Operations Plan, the South Atherton Street and East Branch Road intersection was listed as the third highest traffic back up in Centre County. Mr. Seybert confirmed that this project could help reduce idle engine time and delays.

Mr. Saylor communicated that CATA staff is reviewing the type of projects they could complete using these funds, and he expects them to bring projects forward to the MPO for consideration in the near future.

Ms. Mellow requested that the Mountaintop Region be considered for future project funding for assistance for electric vehicle charging stations because of its location near I-80 and because of commuters from that area traveling into the Centre Region. In addition, Snow Shoe Township is considering adding electric vehicles to its fleet.

Staff thanked the Technical Committee members for their comments and will bring this item back to the February meeting after refining the project list for more discussion.

### **11. 2025-2028 Centre County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

The Technical Committee received a presentation from MPO staff regarding the draft 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). In June, the MPO committees received information about the financial guidance, schedule for preparing the new TIP, and preliminary project priorities. Staff reviewed the preliminary project priorities for the 2025-2028 TIP. Key inclusions of state bridge projects include 18 carryover projects, 14 new bridge projects, with 7 bridge preservation projects in 4 years. Highway project priorities include:

- Centre County Concrete Preservation Project – construction phase – \$3,000,000
- Route 150/Phoenix Avenue Intersection Improvements – all phases - \$5,734,535
- Atherton Street Drainage/Repaving Section 154 – prelim engineering/final design/Utility/ROW - \$2,630,450
- Allen Street Improvements TIIIF – construction phase - \$3,000,000
- Route 26 Jacksonville Road Betterment - construction phase - \$1,033,418
- State College Area Connector – preliminary engineering - \$1,000,000

Key inclusions of the local bridge project include the Potter Township T-633 Lower Georges Valley Road bridge, which will be funded through Road MaP funds. In addition, other bridge projects may be funded through the retroactive reimbursement program line item.

Lastly, transit projects priorities include operating assistance for both CATA and the CCOT, replacement of vehicles for both agencies, and modest recurring line items for facilities and equipment. It was noted that transit projects are primarily funded with state funds with federal and local components.

MPO staff will provide a final draft TIP to the Committees in February for consideration of approving the public comment period for April or May. In June, the Committees will consider adoption of the 2025-2028 TIP.

### **12. Member Reports**

Mr. Dillon invited the MPO members to visit the new local interchange on Route 26/Jacksonville Road and I-80 to look at the sight lines for this area. He informed the members that the sight lines for this intersection are not great and could cause future issues.

Ms. Merrow announced that the Casanova Road project has been completed in Rush Township. The project included the installation of over a mile of guide rail and nine miles of paving in hopes that it will improve safety for travelers on this corridor. She thanked all of the partners that were part of this project for their assistance in helping move this project to completion.

Ms. Miller communicated that CATA is still experiencing a severe driver shortage and stated that CATA is actively recruiting applicants.

Mr. Seybert reported that Ferguson Township's TA Set-Aside project is in design and progressing and the Township should have project estimates by the beginning of year.

Mr. Hampton announced that the Green Light Go application period is now open and scoping forms will be accepted until December 15, 2023. Full applications should be submitted to the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) by February 29, 2024.

### **13. Announcements**

The next Technical Committee meeting is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, February 14, 2024 at the Centre Region COG building via hybrid meeting technology.

Mr. Saylor announced that Michael Tylka has been selected as the CRPA's next Planning Director and will start on November 20, 2023. He went on to state that FHWA has provided updated guidance on how MPOs handle ADA compliance. Mr. Saylor stated that staff will be working to administratively update this item in several MPO plans such as the Public Participation Plan and the Title VI Plan.

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Ms. Messner reported that CentreBike hosted the fifth annual Cranksgiving food drive, which took place on November 4 at Videon Central.

**14. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the November 8, 2023 CCMPO Technical Committee meeting was adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcella Hoffman  
Recording Secretary