

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

Wednesday, June 7, 2023

9:30 a.m.

Hybrid Meeting

Minutes

Voting Members

Ray Stolinas	Centre County Planning and Community Development Office (CCPCDO)
Ron Seybert	Ferguson Township
Don Franson	College Township
George Harrigan	Harris Township
Alexandra Castrechini	Patton Township
RoseAnn Hoover	Halfmoon Township
Sam Robbins	State College Borough
Mark Lively	Upper Bald Eagle Valley Planning Region
Michele Mellow	Moshannon Valley Planning Region
Rick Dillon	Nittany Valley Planning Region
Frank Hampton	PennDOT Central Office
Dean Ball	PennDOT District 2-0

Non-Voting Members

Gene Porochniak	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Rick Ward	Penn State University

Others Present

Jim Saylor	Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA)
Anne Messner	CRPA
Greg Kausch	CRPA
Marcella Hoffman	CRPA
Xochi Confer	Centre County Planning and Community Development Office (CCPCDO)
Mark Schultz	PennDOT District 2-0
Kevin James	Michael Baker International
Juliet Harshbarger	Senator Langerholc's Office
Nick Shaefer	Trans Associates Engineering Consultants
Brad Stewart	Michael Baker International
Brian Funkhouser	Michael Baker International

1. Call to Order

Mr. Seybert called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m. Mrs. Hoffman conducted a roll call to ensure the members could hear and be heard.

2. Approval of Minutes – April 5, 2023 Technical Committee Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Lively and seconded by Mr. Hampton to approve the April 5, 2023 Technical Committee minutes. The motion carried 12-0 (Mr. Lomison, Mr. Gribble, Ms. Barbin, and Ms. Miller 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 report from Mr. James regarding the status of the State College Area Connector (SCAC) project draft Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study. He explained that the PEL Report was finalized and submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for their concurrence. The FHWA provided a conditional concurrence with minor comments for PennDOT and its consultant to address before final acceptance. An agency coordination meeting is scheduled for June 28, where PennDOT will present the final PEL Report to seek concurrence from the agencies. After concurrence is provided, the final PEL Report will be published to the State College Area Connector webpage for public viewing.

Mr. James reported that the design team continues to perform their environmental field work to verify the existing environmental features and resources within the study area. The team is also continuing to meet with the farm owners and operators to confirm their operations. In addition, traffic counts in the study area that were discussed at the previous meeting were completed in April while Penn State University and the local schools were still in session. This data was used to update the traffic operations for each of the alternatives. PennDOT is also reaching out to consulting parties and any individuals or groups who have demonstrated an interest in the potential effects of any future project on any historic properties within the study area.

Mr. James communicated that in the near future, PennDOT will be working on a notice of intent to move forward into the Environmental Impact Statement phase that will be submitted to FHWA for review and concurrence.

6. State College Urban Area Boundary Update

The Technical Committee received a presentation from Ms. Messner regarding the proposed fixing of the boundaries of the 2020 Census Urban Area. Ms. Messner explained that the Urban Area is a statistical geographic entity defined by the Census Bureau, consisting of a central core and adjacent densely settled territory that together contain at least 50,000 people, generally with an overall population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile. After each decennial Census, MPOs receive an updated Urban Area for review, and this is used as an opportunity to make adjustments as needed, which is known as "fixing" or "smoothing" of the Urban Area. The State College Urban Area is used for transportation purposes such as determining roadway design standards and thresholds for levels of service.

Staff proposed several changes including returning much of the 2010 Urban Area to the draft 2020 Urban Area. The significant additions based on the fixing of boundaries guidelines are the University Park Airport, the SR 322 and I -99 Interchange, and several areas indicated by the change in census block shapes. In addition, a few census blocks expanded in size compared to the 2010 Census and no longer contain a prevalence of development or transportation facilities.

Several Committee members had clarifying questions that were addressed by staff but had no specific comments related to the fixing of the boundaries.

Motion was made by Mr. Lively and seconded by Mr. Hampton for the Technical Committee to recommend that the Coordinating Committee approve the smoothed or fixed boundary of the State College Urban Area. The motion carried 12-0.

7. 2023-2026 Centre County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Revisions.

a. Funding for Paratransit vehicle replacement for the Centre County Office of Transportation (CCOT)

The Technical Committee received a brief report regarding a proposed revision to the 2023-2026 CCMPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include additional funding for paratransit vehicle replacement. The total project amount will increase and change from state and local funds to federal and state funds. Federal funds include an addition of \$432,000, state funds include a decrease of \$229,750 for a total amount of \$108,000, and local funds decrease from \$12,250 to \$0. Because federal funds are being added to this project, the MPO must formally approve the revision.

With no discussion, *motion was made by Mr. Harrigan and seconded by Mr. Lively to recommend that the Coordinating Committee approve the revision to the 2023-2026 Centre County TIP. The motion carried 12-0.*

b. Funding for Paratransit Vehicle Replacement (CATA)

The Technical Committee received a brief report regarding a proposed revision to the 2023-2026 CCMPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include a new project for 2023, and because there is federal funding being used for a new project, the MPO must formally approve the revision. Federal funds include an addition of \$608,000 and an addition of \$152,000 in state funds.

With no discussion, *motion was made by Mr. Hampton and seconded by Mr. Lively to recommend that the Coordinating Committee approve the revision to the 2023-2026 Centre County TIP. The motion carried 12-0.*

c. Funding for Concrete Pavement Preservation

The Technical Committee received a presentation regarding additional funding based on a review of pavement and bridge conditions throughout the county. In total, 31 locations have been identified that appear to have concrete and pavement conditions that will compromise the pavement or nearby structures if left unattended, including 9 related to bridges and 22 related to general highway locations.

The TIP includes a Poor Bridge and Betterment Line Item with \$714,801 in funding from the Surface Transportation Program (STP) unallocated to any particular project. PennDOT personnel propose allocating \$400,000 from the Poor Bridge and Betterment line item to add a project to preserve the concrete pavement at these selected locations. The CCMPO must formally approve revisions that add a project to the TIP using federal funds.

With no discussion, *motion was made by Mr. Lively and seconded by Mr. Harrigan to recommend that the Coordinating Committee approve the revision to the 2023-2026 Centre County TIP. The motion carried 12-0.*

8. CCMPO Strategic Plan

The Technical Committee received a detailed presentation from Mr. Funkhouser, Michael Baker International consultant, regarding an update to the CCMPO Strategic Plan. Mr. Funkhouser reviewed the draft plan and outlined changes that had been made to the plan since the April meeting. These changes included:

- A major item for consideration by the Technical Committee involve a proposal to reconstitute the Technical Committee so that its composition would be oriented more toward technical experience as opposed to geography.
- A revised Technical Committee structure would entail a “core group” of eight voting members, to be supplemented by four to six additional Subject Matter Experts who would not have voting authority.
- The Technical Committee would offer a proposal to the Coordinating Committee on a biennial basis to determine what type of subject matter experts would be needed over the ensuing two years of the MPO’s work program.

After a lengthy discussion, the Technical Committee offered the following comments for staff, the consultant, and the Coordinating Committee to consider:

- Members noted that on page 20 of the Strategic Plan, voting members from Centre County would entail County officials.
- There was some concern expressed over reducing the number of voting members from municipalities (from 12 overall, to 2). The draft plan as proposed showed 1 seat each for “Centre Region Municipalities” as well as “Other Planning Regions.” Some cited it as a “slippery slope” if certain municipalities had an outsized influence on the Technical Committee’s deliberations.

- Mr. Hampton suggested that the Centre Region Municipalities and Other Planning Regions seats could rotate so that one municipality does not have an outsized influence on the Technical Committee.
- Mr. Harrigan recommended maintaining the proposal but dropping the proposed seats for “Centre Region Municipalities” and “Other Planning Regions” from “1” to “0” to remove the possibility of any one municipality having too much influence. It was noted that this approach was originally proposed during the May subcommittee meeting.
- Mr. Ward expressed an interest for the Pennsylvania State University to have some form of participation or involvement on the Technical Committee.
- If the proposed plan moves forward with one Centre Region Municipalities seat and one Other Planning Regions seat, the CCMPO will need to develop a process for choosing which candidate would represent each seat.
- The CCMPO will need to develop a process for polling and vetting candidates to serve as Subject Matter Experts (e.g., what constitutes an “expert,” etc.).

Motion was made by Mr. Hampton and seconded by Mr. Harrigan to recommend that the Coordinating Committee adopt the Centre County MPO Strategic Plan and also include a summary of the Technical Committee’s discussion in the Coordinating Committee’s June agenda packet. The motion carried 11-1.

9. Centre County Active Transportation Plan (ATP)

The Technical Committee members received a brief update on the status of the county-wide Active Transportation Plan. Mrs. Messner communicated that staff continues to work on creating a steering committee for the ATP effort and requested that a member from the Technical Committee be a part of the steering committee. There will be up to four meetings for the steering committee over the course of a year.

10. 2025-2028 Centre County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Technical Committee received a presentation regarding the upcoming preparation of the new 2025-2028 Centre County TIP that will be presented to the Committees at its November meeting for review and comment. A final draft TIP will be presented to the Committees in February 2024, with the required 30-day public comment period held in April and May, and consideration of adoption of the new TIP at the Committees’ June meetings. Staff provided a brief overview of the highway and bridge financial guidance of the new TIP, with an overall funding increase of approximately \$7.5 million, or an 11.8% increase. Staff also reviewed the transit allocation, which includes a 38% increase in funding, or approximately \$22.3 million.

Staff then reviewed the highway and bridge and transit project priorities, which include:

Highway/Bridge Project Priorities

- SCAC Preliminary Engineering
- SR 4005 Bridge over Interstate 80
- Route 150/Phoenix Avenue Intersection improvement
- Atherton Street Drainage/Repaving Section 154 (Westerly Parkway to vicinity of Scenery Drive)
- State bridge projects
- Local bridge projects, including retroactive reimbursement and preservation candidates
- Carbon Reduction Program Candidates

Transit Project Priorities

- Operating assistance to support CATA service integrity
- Vehicle replacement to maintain a state of good repair
- Fleet expansion to address new and emerging markets
- Advance public transportation systems (APTS)
- CATA facility upkeep and modernization
- Revenue and non-revenue vehicle maintenance

Other Potential Projects include:

- SR 3007 Park Avenue Widening
- SR 150 in the Benner Pike area
- Independent projects identified in the SCAC PEL study

Technical Committee members had a few clarifying questions that were answered by MPO staff but offered no substantial comments on the project priorities.

11. Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The Technical Committee received a presentation from MPO staff regarding the upcoming 2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). In Pennsylvania, the UPWP typically covers a two-year period based on the state fiscal year (July 1 - June 30), beginning and ending on even numbered years. The CCMPO's current FY 2022-24 UPWP was adopted in November 2021, took effect on July 1, 2022, and will terminate on June 30, 2024. For the coming UPWP cycle, PennDOT and FHWA have proposed that MPOs and RPOs in Pennsylvania develop a one-year work program covering the time period from FY 2024-25, and then resume a two-year cycle beginning and ending in odd numbered years. The current even-numbered cycle creates conflicts with review of the TIP and related transportation planning products at the statewide level, and shifting the cycle will alleviate some of workload leading to the conflict. Staff has begun preparation of the next FY 2024-2025 UPWP, with adoption expected in late 2023, and will take effect on July 1, 2024. Staff then reviewed the proposed task priorities for the next UPWP outside of the key federally mandated responsibilities. The priorities include PennDOT Connects, the State College Area Connector project, the MPO Strategic Plan, the LRTP 2055 update, the CARBON program, funding discussions, transit planning, pedestrian and bicycle planning, and grant support.

Mr. Saylor then reviewed the guidelines that surround funding for special studies through the UPWP. The projects must be listed in the UPWP and be completed within the current UPWP timeframe. In addition, projects are typically funded through a statewide competitive program with 80% federal funding and a 20% local match; local matches can be difficult to obtain through the local entity or the MPO budget. Special studies also typically require consultant help. Mr. Saylor stated that MPO staff is likely to include a task for LRTP 2055 Technical Analysis and Production.

In response to a question from Mr. Seybert regarding funding for the implementation of the MPO Strategic Plan, Mr. Saylor explained that if the Coordinating Committee adopts the plan later this month, the next step will be to prioritize actions to implement parts of the plan. Mr. Saylor stated that he believes there will be high priority action items that the MPO will want to implement by the end of the year, so supplemental funding for implementation of the Strategic Plan would not be viable.

12. CCMPO Long Range Transportation Plan 2055

Mr. Saylor provided a brief report regarding the CCMPO Long Range Transportation Plan 2055. He communicated that MPO staff held its 30-month coordination meeting with PennDOT and FHWA. Staff is working on the follow up items from that meeting, along with the work plan as well as the plan for the steering committee, and staff will bring these items to a future MPO Committee meeting. As Mr. Saylor mentioned under the UPWP agenda item, MPO staff plans to submit for supplemental planning funds to assist staff with the technical side of the LRTP update. Staff will continue to work on the schedule and the outreach plan to present at future meetings as well.

13. Member Reports

Mr. Seybert communicated that Ferguson Township is resurfacing Blue Course Drive between Martin Street and Circleville Road in the next few months. In addition, Ferguson Township will be microsurfacing Park Center Boulevard. The public should expect travel delays for both projects.

14. Announcements

The next Technical Committee meeting is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, September 6, 2023 at the Centre Region COG building via hybrid meeting technology.

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Ms. Messner communicated that PennDOT's Transportation Alternatives Set Aside program is open for application submission. Draft applications are due by July 17, 2023 and are required to be submitted prior to the final application submission. The final application is due September 15, 2023.

Mr. Saylor reminded members that PennDOT's 2023 Automated Red Light Enforcement (ARLE) funding program is open from June 1 through July 1.

Mr. Hampton reminded members that the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) funding program is open and applications are due June 13, 2023.

15. Adjournment

There being no further business, the June 7, 2023 CCMPO Technical Committee meeting was adjourned at 11:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcella Hoffman
Recording Secretary