

CONNECT | CONGRESS OF NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES
Resolutions adopted at First Congress (June 19, 2009)

Resolution 09-01

CONNECT hereby adopts the following as its official mission statement:

“CONNECT coordinates the collective activities between the city of Pittsburgh and the 35 municipalities that share its border through: Advocating for and voicing the collective interests of the urban core and its 680,000 residents; developing and enhancing ways the 36 municipalities work together to deliver important public services; and maintaining a forum for the discussion, deliberation and implementation of new ways to maximize economic prosperity for Western Pennsylvania.”

Resolution 09-02

Resolved that membership in the Congress shall consist of the city of Pittsburgh and those municipalities that share a common border with the city.

The membership structure of CONNECT and its standing committees is intended to provide all communities with a fair and balanced voice within the organization. This definition is proposed for the sake of clarity and simplicity.

Resolution 09-03

Resolved that CONNECT shall convene as a full congress twice each calendar year.

Resolution 09-04

Resolved that each participating community shall annually appoint three members to the Congress. Two designated members shall be elected municipal officials currently in office, and one designated member shall be an appointed municipal employee.

In appointing representatives to CONNECT, each member municipality should be mindful of the degree to which the entire Congress body will represent the demographic diversity of the urban core community it serves.

Resolution 09-05

Resolved that CONNECT shall initially have three standing committees, subject to future provisions of the bylaws:

- 1) The Executive Committee shall serve as a steering group that provides overall direction for the operations of the organization. This committee will be initially charged with writing an official set of by-laws for CONNECT. Additionally, it is empowered to act on behalf of the Congress between sessions. In all meetings, a simple majority of members present shall constitute quorum.
- 2) The Policy Committee shall deal with broad issues relating to the 36 municipalities as a core community representing 680,000 residents. This group will focus on providing an arena for policy-level discussion; identifying issues of collective concern; developing a unified voice for the urban core; and educating residents on relevant policy issues.

- 3) The Operations Committee shall examine the existing systems of intergovernmental cooperation among member communities to determine how CONNECT might facilitate and expedite shared services between the City and contiguous communities; between sub regions within CONNECT; and with CONNECT and existing intergovernmental organizations, such as councils of governments.

Resolution 09-06

Resolved that membership on the three standing committees shall be determined as follows:

Each community shall select its representative(s) to the standing committees.

Each CONNECT community except for the City of Pittsburgh shall hold one seat on either the Policy Committee or the Operations Committee. The term of assignment is two years, after which a community will serve on the opposite committee. This does not apply to the first year, in which half the communities on each of those two committees will be assigned a one-year term. The purpose of these staggered terms is to ensure that the composition of committees is not the same each year. The chair of each standing committee shall be elected annually by and from the membership of the committee.

Each CONNECT community except for the City of Pittsburgh shall also have a seat on the Executive Committee once every three years. These appointments are for a one-year term, rotated in such a way that six communities from the Policy Committee and six communities from the Operations committee are represented on the Executive Committee each year. For the greatest possible advantage of continuity, it is recommended that communities send the same representative to the Policy/Operations Committee and the Executive Committee.

For practical reasons, the City of Pittsburgh shall have a seat on the Executive Committee, the Policy Committee and the Operations Committee at all times.

In addition to the 12 seats held by members of the Policy and Operations committees, the Executive Committee shall include the five CONNECT officers specified in Resolution 09-08.

Other committee members:

The Executive Committee may include three additional voting members at the discretion of the Executive Committee:

- 1) A representative of Pennsylvania's Department of Community and Economic Development,
- 2) A representative of Allegheny County government, and
- 3) A representative of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission.

The Policy and Operations standing committees shall each include one non-voting ex-officio member who will represent the collective area councils of governments. As a group, the local COGs may designate one COG Executive Director to send to each. In addition, the Policy and Operations standing committees have the authority to add non-voting ex-officio members deemed appropriate in facilitating committee business. These could include representatives of the Port Authority of Allegheny County, PennDOT, the state Department of Environmental Protection, 3 Rivers Wet Weather, or any other relevant agency.

Should a member of the Congress from any municipality need to miss a meeting of the Executive or standing committees, he or she may send another member of the Congress from that municipality.

If a member who has already been appointed to the Executive Committee is elected as an officer, that member's community shall NOT be awarded an extra seat on the executive committee. However, if a member who has NOT been appointed to the Executive Committee is elected as an officer AND his or her community already has a different representative on the Executive Committee, then that community will not be required to give up its existing seat.

This structure establishes two standing committees and an Executive Committee. It is proposed to distribute leadership as democratically as possible, preserving the opportunity for every municipality to serve on both Policy and Operations committees and provide leadership via the Executive Committee within a reasonable time period.

Resolution 09-07

Resolved that CONNECT shall have five officers, including a chair, an immediate past chair, a first vice chair, a second vice chair, and a secretary/treasurer. All officers will serve on the Executive Committee, as further defined in Resolutions 09-06 and 09-07.

The chair, first vice chair, second vice chair and secretary/treasurer shall be elected annually from the membership of the Congress. In the second year and each following year, a rotation will apply to the chairmanship such that the vice chair will become chair and the second vice chair will become vice chair.

Resolution 09-08

The Congress shall elect the organization's officers, who will conduct the remaining business of this first CONNECT meeting. These officers will serve for one year, in a term concluding at the commencement of the Spring 2009 meeting of CONNECT.

Resolution 09-08A

To elect a chair for a term of one year.

The nominating committee recommends Mayor Luke Ravenstahl.

Resolution 09-08B

To elect a vice chair for a term of one year.

The nominating committee recommends Patricia Schaefer.

Resolution 09-08C

To elect a second vice chair for a term of one year.

The nominating committee recommends Daniel DeMarco.

Resolution 09-08D

To elect a secretary/treasurer for a term of one year.

The nominating committee recommends Marcia Taylor.

Submitted by the planning subcommittee on policy:

These resolutions formally recognize the importance of public transit to the status of the region's urban core. All were drafted in light of the following facts:

- *CONNECT's 36 communities represent a commanding majority of ridership for the Port Authority of Allegheny County. The Port Authority estimates that 74 percent of its*

directional service miles are within these communities and 86 percent of all customer boardings take place within that boundary. The Port Authority is the sole provider of public mass transit for those communities, providing transportation via bus, light rail, incline and ACCESS paratransit.

- *CONNECT represents nearly three-quarters of the transit-dependent population of Allegheny County, according to 2000 Census data. While CONNECT has 58 percent of the county's total households, it includes 73 percent of the households without a car. Of the urban core, 14.6 percent of workers commute via public transit, compared to 10.5 percent of all county residents. 50 percent of those who work in Downtown Pittsburgh commute via public transit. This represents a greater percentage than most urban areas.*

Resolution 09-09

The 36 communities represented by CONNECT embrace public transit as a means to maximize economic development and quality of life in the urban core. Therefore, CONNECT hereby commits to a broad policy of using transit as a tool to achieve those ends.

Resolution 09-10

In their municipal comprehensive plans, CONNECT member communities should consider economic development and quality of life initiatives around the important issue of public transit. To enhance continuity within CONNECT and to maximize the ability of CONNECT communities to capture state and federal funding; member communities' plans should be consistent with the relevant transit elements of Allegheny County's comprehensive plan.

Resolution 09-11

Given the public good to the region that is served by a comprehensive public transit system, it is essential that adequate public funding be made available to the Port Authority of Allegheny County. To that end, public transit should command a high priority in regional plans for the allocation of state and federal transportation dollars.

Resolution 09-12

CONNECT will serve as a conduit for communication between its 36 member communities and the Port Authority of Allegheny County. To that end, CONNECT will establish a technical committee on current transit issues that will consult with the Port Authority periodically on issues of importance to member municipalities.

Resolution 09-13

The composition of the Port Authority of Allegheny County's board of directors should reflect the degree to which the Authority serves urban core communities. Additionally, the composition of the board should be demographically representative of the communities it serves.

CONNECT municipalities host an estimated 86 percent of PAT ridership. The board should include members from urban core communities to achieve at least a comparable geographic representation.

Resolution 09-14

CONNECT commits to maintaining active engagement in policy-level transit planning as it occurs in Allegheny County. To that end, CONNECT will initiate conversation with business leaders, economic

development organizations and grassroots community groups to identify and develop “next generation” transit plans for the urban core. Likewise, CONNECT requests that the Port Authority of Allegheny County engage the congress in the early stages of discussions about possible system-wide changes to service delivery.

Submitted by the planning subcommittee on operations:

These resolutions formally recognize clean water as a resource foundationally important to CONNECT member communities. They also recognize the monumental challenge and cost inherent to rehabilitating the region’s sewage collection and treatment systems and the degree to which meaningful cooperation across geographic boundaries will be necessary to minimize the burden on ratepayers in years to come.

Resolution 09-15

The 36 communities represented by CONNECT understand the importance of clean water to public health, recreation, economic development and the quality of life in our region. Therefore, CONNECT commits to the principle of eliminating sewage overflows by rehabilitating the sewage collection and conveyance systems connected through its member municipalities.

Additionally, CONNECT communities recognize the benefits of working collaboratively on this issue and resolve to do so.

Resolution 09-16

CONNECT municipalities agree that it is in their best interest to pursue a joint planning process, specifically the development of a CONNECT-wide feasibility study, to fulfill the requirements of the municipal consent orders relative to ALCOSAN. This process would have both an internal component, as CONNECT municipalities and the city resolve issues concerning the city sewershed, and an external component, as CONNECT municipalities address issues relating to the other borders they share.

Resolution 09-17

CONNECT encourages ALCOSAN to utilize standardized cost calculations so that projects can be more easily compared across jurisdictions and watersheds. These tools should be provided to the communities to assure uniform analysis throughout the development of the regional wet weather plan.

Resolution 09-18

CONNECT encourages ALCOSAN to make all facility planning decisions with emphasis on the lowest possible cost to the ratepayer.

Resolution 09-19

CONNECT encourages ALCOSAN to evaluate and implement green initiatives and source reduction before designing and constructing grey infrastructure. Where new “grey” facilities are required, they should be owned by a regional entity so that the costs and benefits of construction and operation are fairly shared.

Resolution 09-20

CONNECT encourages ALCOSAN to consider environmental justice in its long-term wet weather control plans. This refers to the equitable distribution of environmental burdens and access to resources across all communities and individuals.

Resolution 09-21

The composition of the ALCOSAN board of directors should reflect the degree to which the Authority serves urban core communities. The board should include members from CONNECT communities to achieve at least a comparable geographic representation. Additionally, the composition of the board should be demographically representative of the communities it serves.

Resolution 09-22

To the degree that federal stimulus funding is available, it should be used to support or incentivize regional cooperation and cost-effectiveness on major sanitary infrastructure projects.

Submitted by the planning subcommittee on operations:

The following resolutions clarify the relationship among CONNECT member communities and between CONNECT and local councils of governments.

Resolution 09-23

Each CONNECT member municipality will designate a CONNECT coordinator or expeditor, who will be identified as the point person for contact regarding inter-municipal relations. A record of all expeditors will be maintained and updated by CONNECT staff and will be made available to all member communities.

Additionally, CONNECT encourages local operating authorities with a significant impact on the CONNECT constituency to appoint expeditors to serve as point persons for contact regarding issues related to CONNECT. These expeditors will be added to the expeditor list that will be made available to all member communities.

Resolution 09-24

CONNECT commits to work closely with local councils of governments in order to establish a mutually beneficial relationship wherein CONNECT complements the work of these existing institutions. CONNECT views the system of COG-community relationships as a resource and will emphasize ways to leverage that system for communication and planning whenever possible. Conversely, CONNECT intends to serve as a unique resource for local councils of governments.