

BETTER COLLABORATION

# TRANSFORM

BETTER COMMUNITIES

The latest news and information from PennDOT Connects' network of people and places



SUMMER 2018

## Tech Assists Shine Light on Streets as Multimodal, Public Spaces

Four municipalities recently took advantage of the PennDOT Connects on-site technical assistance program on the use of streets as public spaces and multimodal assets. The PennDOT Connects tech assists facilitate education by planning professionals, the exchange of creative ideas, and the opportunity to meet collaboratively about a local transportation planning project or issue.

### Corridor Safety Improvements: City of Lancaster

The City of Lancaster requested assistance in exploring ways to improve safety along the Orange Street corridor for pedestrians and bicyclists while accommodating vehicular traffic. PennDOT Connects staff constructed a half-day workshop that provided education on the concept of streets as public spaces and involved participants in an idea exchange about changes they would like to see along the corridor.

“Streets are our most fundamental shared public spaces,” explains Sally Holbert, PennDOT Connects team member, “but they are also one of the most contested and overlooked. When streets function well on the level of everyday experience, they provide opportunities for people to connect in a way that no other public space can. This workshop was about getting the street space to function well for all modes.”

With a map of the corridor streets and intersections in hand, stakeholders shared what they like and do not like about the corridor space from multiple perspectives: car, pedestrian, bicycle, and truck or bus. They then sketched or commented on suggested short- and long-term improvements. Ideas included changes to turning lanes, the addition of traffic calming devices (e.g., bulb-outs, bollards), converting one-way streets to two-way streets, parking changes, limits on truck deliveries, and raised crosswalks.

The workshop also presented information on understanding crosswalks, Pennsylvania pedestrian laws, the importance of creating awareness about streets as public spaces, and education and enforcement strategies.

(continued on page 2)



A City of Lancaster police representative provides valuable perspective on safety improvements along the Orange Street corridor. Other participants included two local restaurants, MPO planning staff, PennDOT staff, and local representatives from city planning and the mayor's office.

### IN THIS ISSUE

Tech Assists Shine Light on Streets as Multimodal, Public Spaces

Planning & Research Funds Available

Understanding the TIP

PennDOT District 8 Feature: Planner Helps Municipalities Navigate TIP Process / Project Highlight

Featured Resources: Finding Funding

(continued from page 1)

## Municipal Workshops

“The workshop was well received,” says City Engineer and Deputy Director of Public Works Cindy McCormick. “It succeeded in getting other people’s perspectives. Overall, there was good interaction.”

According to McCormick, the input received during the workshop will be shared with the city’s MPO — the Lancaster County Planning Commission — with the hope that some of the ideas championed at the workshop will be incorporated into projects slated under the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in Lancaster.

## Walkable Communities: Macungie, Indiana and Hummelstown Boroughs

At the request of the Walkable Communities Collaborative Committee (WCCC), PennDOT Connects staff assisted with walkable community workshops in Macungie Borough (Lehigh County), Hummelstown Borough (Dauphin County), and Indiana Borough (Indiana County).

The workshop, which provided information on how to plan for, design, and successfully implement more walkable communities, contained four major sections:

- Planning for walkable communities
- Proper marking and signing of crosswalks
- ADA compliance and transition plans/self-evaluations
- A walking audit field tour



PennDOT Connects staff Patrick Wright answers questions about sidewalk design in Macungie Borough.

PennDOT Connects team member Patrick Wright presented information on crosswalks, ADA compliance, and transition plans and led the walking audit tour.

Presentations shared information on the benefits of complete streets policies and addressed the unique opportunities and challenges of implementing complete streets in Pennsylvania. Complete streets are designed to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders.

Overall, workshop participants responded that their knowledge of “complete streets” concepts improved significantly and that they believed such a policy could help improve their communities.

The full-day workshops were coordinated by the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs and the WCCC, a state-level organization.

PennDOT and its Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Rural Planning Organization (RPO) partners have a long-standing relationship jointly preparing transportation studies, plans, and programs to make the best possible transportation project investments with available resources.

This strategic alliance is now of even greater importance for implementing PennDOT Connects. Together, the MPO/RPO planning partners and PennDOT can effectively collaborate and communicate with municipalities — and other community stakeholders (e.g., transit operators, economic development agencies, etc.) — to improve transportation system performance and achieve more livable communities.

Municipalities, MPO/RPO planning partners, and PennDOT must collaborate to ensure that opportunities to improve transportation and communities are realized. MPO/RPO contacts can be found at:

[www.penndot.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/Planning/Pages/MPO-and-RPO-Contact-List.aspx](http://www.penndot.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/Planning/Pages/MPO-and-RPO-Contact-List.aspx).

## Planning and Research Funds Available to Support Local Studies

Do your municipal plans or studies address multimodal transport, safety improvements, bike/ped connections, walkability, or impacts related to new infrastructure or development?

Under PennDOT Connects, enhanced collaboration throughout the planning phase of project development increases the opportunity to incorporate local governments' visions for their communities into project scopes of work, budgets, and schedules before placing a project on a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Having updated plans and specialized studies can greatly assist the department in making decisions in project planning that are consistent with local priorities.

To support better decision-making under PennDOT Connects, the department dedicates approximately \$3 million a year in Statewide Planning and Research funds to transportation planning studies. Proposed planning studies will be selected for funding based on the following criteria:

- Planning studies should be focused on a specific transportation problem, such as corridor congestion, land use continuity with existing transportation infrastructure, freight accessibility/compatibility with surrounding land use, limited pedestrian and/or bicycle accommodations, stormwater management problems, or lack of transit access.
- Planning studies should consider the leveraging of other funding sources to implement findings, such as Transportation Alternatives funding, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources funding, and other local funding opportunities.
- Local participation in funding transportation planning studies will be given priority consideration.
- Planning studies should support the prioritization of any problems that relate to other problems within the community.

If your municipality has a specific planning need that meets these criteria, contact your MPO/RPO to discuss the issue and request its consideration for planning and research funding support. MPOs/RPOs are responsible for coordinating and submitting proposals to PennDOT's Center for Program Development and Management. (See box below for examples of recently awarded projects.)

"There is no hard cap on the funding," explains Brian Hare, chief of Planning and Contract Management Division at the Center for Program Development and Management. "We are focusing on well-thought-out problem statements with scopes that identify good opportunities to improve the connection between land use and transportation mobility within the region. Once that is established, we need to see cost estimates commensurate with the proposed work."

### Examples of studies recently approved by PennDOT for local planning and research

Evaluation of a proposed lane reduction on 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Altoona and construction of a shared-use path to improve opportunities for recreation and train spotting in the downtown (recommended in Altoona's 2015 housing strategy and downtown investment plan);

Analysis of impacts on the region's transportation network related to Geisinger Medical Center's operations and future growth;

Development of a bike and pedestrian improvement plan for the City of Erie;

Assessment of transportation improvements for non-motorized transportation in Greenville Borough;

Development of a regional sidewalk inventory and an online engagement platform to assist community walkability planning efforts; and

Study to align land use with freight movement and potential improvements for the area surrounding the Lehigh Valley International Airport.



## Understanding the TIP

What is the Transportation Improvement Program or TIP? Simply put, the TIP is the first four years of a 20-year transportation improvement program that each Metropolitan or Rural Planning Organization (MPO/RPO) develops for its county or region in cooperation with PennDOT. Because each TIP proposes where projected funding will be spent, it's a good idea to understand what's on your respective TIP and how your municipal transportation needs can be heard.

There are a number of ways to communicate local transportation priorities to regional and state transportation decision makers.

Most importantly, share your idea with your MPO/RPO. Attend its community meetings or call your MPO/RPO directly to discuss a local need. Get to know your MPO/RPO representatives. You can also contact the PennDOT planner in your PennDOT district who can then direct you to the appropriate MPO/RPO contact. Go to [www.paconnects.org](http://www.paconnects.org) for contact information for district planners and regional planning partners.

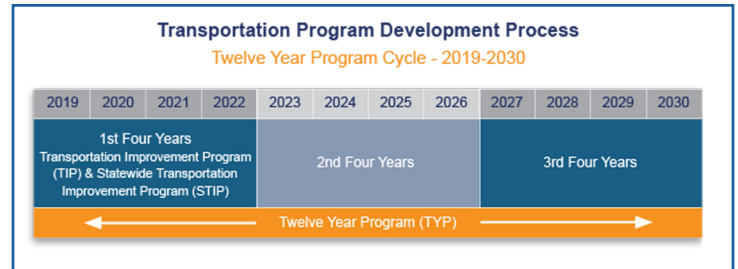
Although MPO/RPOs operate in unique ways, each one has a technical review committee that works to ensure that the highest priorities of the region are being addressed within the limits of available resources. The voting boards of each MPO/RPO then determine the final list of projects to be included in draft TIPs, which are reviewed by PennDOT. During a typical year, the opportunity for public comment on draft TIPs occurs in late spring/early summer within each regional planning partner's process.

### STIP and the TYP

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) covers the entire state and includes the 24 individual TIPs. The TIPs are adopted as the first four years of the state's Twelve-Year Program (TYP), its official transportation program. The TYP is a collaborative mid-range planning tool that is reviewed and updated every two years. Fiscal constraints mean that not every sound transportation project makes the cut, but the projects do include all types of travel modes: highways, bridges, public transit, aviation, rail, freight, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. All projects must pass state and federal approvals: PennDOT (via the State Transportation Commission) and the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

Learn more about the priorities and needs in your region identified during the last update in spring 2017 at [www.talkpatransportation.com/tell-us](http://www.talkpatransportation.com/tell-us). The next opportunity to weigh in on the TYP will be spring 2019. During the six-week public comment period, look for online public meetings and online surveys to submit your ideas.

### From TIP to Reality



Once a project is on the TIP, considerable work remains. The designated lead agency must move the project forward; in most cases, the lead is PennDOT or the transit operator, and in some cases, it's a county or municipality.

Projects typically proceed in phases: preliminary engineering, final design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction. During the early stages of project development, municipalities have the opportunity to provide local input.

Under the PennDOT Connects initiative, PennDOT will ask for community input at the outset of project scoping. Municipalities may be asked to attend a project meeting or participate in a conference call. Regardless of the format, municipal representatives should be prepared to contribute feedback on a project's design, particularly if it relates to a local land use and transportation objective. Weighing in early on project design is key to increasing the probability that local goals can be incorporated into a project design.

Whether projects advance and new projects are added to the TIP depends on a continual review of project costs, schedules, and a multitude of unforeseen circumstances that surround each project. Updates are made each year to align the entire multi-billion-dollar program with regional priorities and available funding.

If you are uncertain whether a local project is on the TIP, the web-based tool PennDOT One Map can be easily queried to produce a list and map of projects in your municipality. Go to [www.dot7.state.pa.us/OneMap](http://www.dot7.state.pa.us/OneMap). Stay informed and let your local priorities be heard.

## FEATURED DISTRICT: DISTRICT 8

## Planner Helps Municipalities Navigate TIP Process



Michelle Tarquino, PennDOT District 8 planner, has a challenge not felt elsewhere in the state. Her responsibility to work with local and regional planning partners involves communicating with six different planning organizations (MPOs) across eight counties.

“We are unique in that way,” says Tarquino. But having to work with six MPOs doesn’t faze Tarquino, who says that the new role of district planner is clear — to keep the line of communication open with municipalities and to work with all planning partners to see projects through as they are put on the TIP.

“When a municipality sees a project need, I would refer them to a planning partner — give them a contact name, etc. — and recommend that they first engage with their MPO,” explains Tarquino. “I would then touch base with the planning partner and discuss whether to move the project forward for funding. If that’s the case, we can schedule a meeting with the municipality and planning partner even before it gets on the TIP.”

Whether a project finds its way to the TIP really depends on the project. Does the need require a study, or does it involve another type of improvement, such as a resurfacing or streetscape project?

“An individual may or may not be aware of the TIP process or funding options available to them,” says Tarquino. “Although it may take some time, we can lay the groundwork and foundation for them on the timeline and the process.

“If it’s on the TIP, it’s scheduled for funding. It can just take some time,” she emphasizes. “It’s important to set the right level of expectations and understanding.”

Always start with your MPO, advises Tarquino. “We can always direct them to the right MPO contact and get a meeting scheduled if the need arises. A really good best practice is not being afraid to pick up the phone and ask questions.”

## FEATURED PROJECT: DISTRICT 8

## Bridge Replacement Preserves History and Meets Travel Needs

Strong collaboration and a dose of patience is paying off for the replacement of a historic bridge in Lebanon County. After years of discussing alternatives for rehabilitation, relocation and/or replacement of the Inwood Iron Bridge, PennDOT’s Project Manager worked directly with the County of Lebanon to help partner and advance the latest alternative.

The Inwood Iron Bridge is owned by the County of Lebanon and spans the Swatara Creek on a short connector road (T-575) between S.R. 72 and Old State Road in Swatara State Park near the small village of Inwood.

The existing single-span, historic, truss bridge will be removed and replaced with a new single-span, concrete structure. The new bridge will consist of two 10-foot lanes with 6-foot shoulders. The state park manager and the County of Lebanon will coordinate the selection of the stone pattern for the outside architectural surface treatments.

Both the County of Lebanon and District 8 are currently working on securing a county-owned tract of land for the new home of the rehabilitated truss. The Lebanon County and PennDOT partnership has been actively coordinating with multiple state agencies and local townships. The current proposed let date is in February 2020, and the estimated construction and rehabilitation/relocation cost is approximately \$7 million.



The existing historic truss will be preserved and relocated to a new location outside of Swatara State Park where it will serve as a pedestrian facility.

## FINDING FUNDING: RESOURCES TO GET STARTED

Municipalities often do not have adequate resources to address local highway, bridge, and multimodal transportation needs. The following table lists a few key funding sources offered through PennDOT that support stronger collaboration between local planning and transportation needs.



RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION	PENNDOT CONTACT
<b>PennDOT Multimodal Transportation Fund</b>	Funds ports and rail freight, aviation investments, and bicycle/pedestrian improvements.	Dave Bratina <a href="mailto:djbratina@pa.gov">djbratina@pa.gov</a> (717) 787-8065
<b>Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside</b>	Funds projects and activities defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, environmental mitigation, trails that serve a transportation purpose, and safe routes to school projects.	Chris Metka <a href="mailto:cmetka@pa.gov">cmetka@pa.gov</a> (717) 787-8065
<b>Automated Red Light Enforcement Program (ARLE)</b>	Provides opportunities to improve safety and reduce congestion. ARLE intends to reduce the number and type of violations and crashes, provide additional safety benefits to highway users, and improve pedestrian safety. The types of eligible projects are very wide ranging when considering highway safety or mobility.	Dan Farley <a href="mailto:dfarley@pa.gov">dfarley@pa.gov</a> (717) 783-0333
<b>Green Light-Go Program</b>	Funds improvements to traffic signals, such as LED replacement, traffic signal timing, study of unwarranted signals, and innovative technologies.	Dan Farley <a href="mailto:dfarley@pa.gov">dfarley@pa.gov</a> (717) 783-0333

For a more comprehensive listing of funding sources for transportation-related improvements, see the PennDOT [Community and Local Government Assistance](#) brochure at the PennDOT Connects Support Hub.

A PennDOT Connects Resource • For more information, go to [paconnects.org](http://paconnects.org).



Pennsylvania Department of Transportation  
 Web: [paconnects.org](http://paconnects.org)  
 Email: [PAConnects@pa.gov](mailto:PAConnects@pa.gov)  
 Phone: 717-710-2090



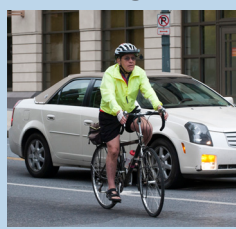
### Transportation Planning: Connecting with Community Priorities



Mobility & Efficiency



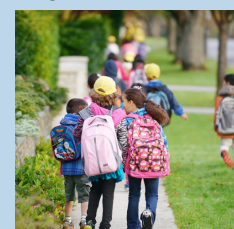
Multimodal Transportation



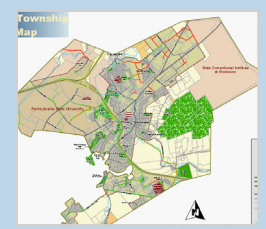
Safety



Community Character



Project Funding



Accommodating Growth