

Highway Transfer “Turnback” Program

Handbook for Turnback Coordinators

1.1 Purpose of the Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to provide Turnback Coordinators with a framework when working with local municipalities who have an interest in participating in the Highway Transfer “Turnback“ Program.

1.2 Guiding Principles of the Handbook

The intent of this handbook is to provide:

1. **A clear program process** – to establish a clear process that can be followed by Turnback Coordinators and can be administered consistently throughout each District of the Commonwealth.

2. **Detailed information** – to ensure that all participants of the Highway Transfer “Turnback” Program are provided the same opportunity to improve the Pennsylvania transportation system.

1.3 Contents

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1.4 Use of this Handbook

- This handbook should be used as a reference by Turnback Coordinators when working with municipalities.

Checklist for Turnback Coordinators

1. **Discuss potential Turnback with District Executive and Traffic, Bridge, and Maintenance Units and develop a scope of work while identifying any concerns.**

2. **Set up an initial meeting with the Municipality**

- Before setting up the initial meeting with the municipality, ensure you are meeting with the proper decision making representatives within the municipality – manager, supervisors, roadmaster, solicitor, or the municipal engineer, for example.

3. **Determine municipality interest**

- During the first meeting with the municipality, it is important to determine the **intent** and **level of interest** from the municipality to take back the state route.
- There may be legitimate reasons for denying a Turnback project. A list of these items can be found on page 6.

4. **Visit the proposed Turnback area**

Before executing a Turnback agreement, it is important to participate in site visit.

During the visit:

- Document existing conditions associated with the roadway or bridge including safety concerns, liability issues, maintenance, and pre-existing conditions.
- Ensure that the Turnback does not interfere with winter maintenance snow removal routes.
- Develop a scope of work for the rehabilitation funds.
- Review traffic flow levels, traffic flow interruptions, signal needs, truck traffic, parking and parking restrictions, ordinances, permits and permitting that are both and in place.
- Document at grade rail crossings that may require a change in responsibility on the public Utilities Commission order or exclusion from the Turnback Agreement.
- Address drainage concerns. National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System MS4 authorized discharges and storm water conveyances.

- Take note of existing traffic control devices – it is responsibility of the municipality to maintain these devices once road is turned back.

5. Determine the condition of the roadway

Be sure to focus on the type of rehabilitation that will need to be done on the roadway.

- Guide the municipality toward proper construction, cost saving processes and new practices.

6. Discuss the turnback of local bridges located on the state route

Consider and/or discuss the Turnback of local bridges located on the state route that may affect local economic development. Some bridges have weight and width restrictions.

- If possible, try to incorporate low-cost safety improvements in rehabilitation work.

7. Establish the beginning and ending points of the proposed turnback segment

- Review the beginning and ending points of the turnback segment proposed.
- Ensure that the adjoining municipality has been contacted and asked to participate with their portion of the turnback roadway.

Contacting the adjoining municipality presents a good opportunity to set up a meeting and explain the new turnback program to another group of municipal partners.

8. Provide municipal officials with low cost safety improvement information

- Provide municipalities with available low cost safety improvements to help reduce these incidents on state and local highways.
 - PennDOT upholds a strong effort to reduce the percentage of facilities on state and local highways.

9. Determine the amount of rehabilitation funding needed

- The Turnback Coordinator and the municipal official will produce an estimate that will determine the amount of funding needed for rehabilitation purposes.

10. Discuss the time frame for the work

- Discuss the two-year timeframe of work from start to completion. Supplemental time extensions are granted for certain exceptions.

- Explain the basis for rehabilitation and annual maintenance payments.
- Explain the need for Turnback completion report.
- Guide the municipality to use the proper bidding requirements for Turnback rehabilitation work.

11. Provide assistance with Resolution

- Assist the municipality with the preparation of an official municipal resolution (PR-997) stating that the municipality authorizes a representative to enter the municipality into a highway transfer agreement.

Highway Transfer Activities Check List

Reasons for PennDOT not to turnback a state owned road to local ownership:

- Turnback project could interfere with construction and maintenance projects within the District and detour routes.
- Ownership of the roadway is divided between two municipalities – in this case, it is important to secure the support and participation of both municipalities.
- Transfer of roadway would create a fragmented roadway.
- Turnback project may interfere with District winter maintenance.
- Municipality's intent for restricting traffic is not supportive of the area transportation system.
- Roadway relocation construction requires an abandonment.
- Costs for roadway or bridge rehabilitation are unjustifiable.