



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



PennDOT Connects July 2022 Newsletter

PennDOT Connects In Action Success Story Milford Borough

Nestled in Pike County, Milford Borough has been experiencing high traffic volumes, congestion and parking issues in the downtown area over the past several years. As a year-round, four-season destination, the borough also has been experiencing a growing number of conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles around Route 209. Route 209 serves as an access point to the McDade Trail, a popular recreation site.

Understanding the congestion and number of conflicts were not going to resolve themselves, due in large part to the increased interest in outdoor activities such as hiking and biking, Milford Borough worked with Pike County and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA) to conduct a traffic study and parking analysis of downtown Milford Borough. The study would address traffic circulation and congestion issues, traffic signals and signage, turning movements, pedestrian safety, and parking shortages in the area.



Once the decision to conduct a study was made, NEPA, Milford Borough and Pike County submitted their initial plan to PennDOT and utilized the resources available to them through PennDOT Connects. PennDOT Connects helped secure funding for the project, which was ultimately provided from PennDOT. Michael Baker International was selected as the consultant for the plan development. The borough and its partners engaged the right municipal and county officials for a steering committee that worked with Michael Baker International to refine the scope of the traffic study and parking analysis.

Through the work of PennDOT Connects, Milford Borough, Pike County and NEPA were able to find funding for the much-needed study, work through the multimodal plan and see where they fit in the region's long-range transportation plan.

While the development of the study was delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions, completion of the study is expected by the end of the summer with next steps to follow shortly thereafter.

Visit the PennDOT [Connects page](#) on [PennDOT's](#) website to see how PennDOT Connects can work for you.

Planning and Research Funds Available to Support Local Studies

Do your municipal plans or studies address multimodal transportation, safety improvements, bike/ped connections, walkability, or impacts related to new infrastructure or land use and 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 PennDOT in making decisions in project planning that are consistent with local priorities. To support better decision-making under PennDOT Connects, the department dedicates approximately \$2 million - \$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. "There is no hard cap on the funding," explains Brian Hare, Director 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 approved by PennDOT for local planning and research

- Evaluation of a proposed lane reduction on 10th 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 nonmotorized 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.



Geisinger Medical Center

Online Training Transportation Partnerships

Through PennDOT Connects, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and its regional planning partners are strengthening their partnerships with communities by involving local government at the very beginning of the planning process so that land use, development, and transportation are better integrated and more effective.

One of the many resources PennDOT Connects offers municipalities is a series of interactive training modules on transportation and land use planning. These self-guided 15-minute online trainings cover key principles and practices, examples, key resources, benefits and challenges, and potential next steps.

Do you know how your municipality could benefit from the Transportation Partnership Act? This act enables municipalities to cooperate with one another and the private sector to provide funding for transportation projects in areas where economic growth and development has made the transportation facilities and services inadequate.

Listen to the “Transportation Partnerships” PennDOT Connects online training at your convenience to learn how to combine relevant topics, recognize funding opportunities, identify potential partnerships, and conceptualize a transportation development district within your municipality.



Visit the PennDOT [Connects page](#) on [PennDOT's](#) website to view the online training.

Go to the [PennDOT Connects](#) page on the [PennDOT website](#) for a full listing on online training.

FREE Transportation and Land Use Planning – Assistance and Training

PennDOT Connects offers **free** assistance and training to municipalities to better integrate local land use development and transportation goals into the state transportation planning process.

Any municipal staff member, government official or planning partner is eligible to request **free** planning assistance or personalized training. Simply fill out the PennDOT Connects Training/Assistance request form by [clicking here](#).



Do You Know Your MPO or RPO?

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 transportation project investments possible with available resources. This strategic alliance is now of even greater importance for PennDOT Connects implementation. 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. The collaborative effort of municipalities, MPO/RPO planning partners, and PennDOT is key to ensuring that opportunities to improve transportation and communities are realized.

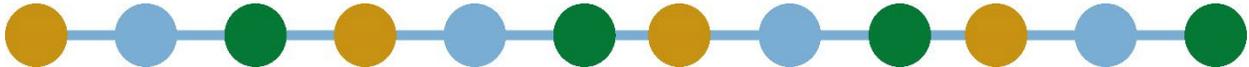
MPO/RPO contacts can be found [here](#).

PennDOT Connects

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is committed to bettering our transportation system and our communities through collaborative planning. We must find creative solutions to sustain and expand mobility throughout the commonwealth. This means improving our planning process to reflect changing demographics and technological innovation. We are broadening the benefits we deliver and taking a more holistic approach to planning. We are tasking PennDOT staff and our planning partners to consider community needs at the beginning of the planning process to ensure the best allocation of our resources. This approach, PennDOT Connects, will make our planning processes more efficient and cost-effective to the benefit of all Pennsylvanians. The full [PennDOT Connects Policy \(PDF\)](#) includes collaboration requirements and planning considerations, as well as the implementation timeline and more.

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