

PARTNERSHIP 81

Wilkes-Barre Township, Hanover Township,
and Ashley Borough, Luzerne County

PUBLIC MEETINGS & COMMENT PERIOD SUMMARY



Prepared by:

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INTERNATIONAL

Submitted to:



DISTRICT 4-0

SEPTEMBER 2022



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Highway
Administration**

Partnership 81 – Public Meeting Summary

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Partnership 81 – Public Meeting Summary

DATE: September 13, 2022

SUBJECT: Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Public Officials and Public Open House Overview

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) hosted a public officials meeting on Tuesday, July 12, 2022, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., and a public open house on July 26, 2022, from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. to provide information to the community on the Partnership 81 Project in Luzerne County. Both meetings were held at the Wilkes-Barre High School and were structured in the same manner with display boards, a project overview video, handouts, a live presentation, and comment forms. PennDOT, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and consultant staff were on-hand to answer project-related questions. Technical support and security (at the public open house only) were provided by Wilkes-Barre High School. Translation services were available upon request for both events and noted on the display board and public open house invitation.

Virtual Public Meeting Overview

PennDOT created a virtual online plans display for Partnership 81, penndot.pa.gov/Partnership81, to share information about the project and allow the public to submit their comments online. The webpage consisted of PDF versions of the display boards, a project overview, details about the environmental review process, a recommended alternative, Title VI description, traffic control options, contact information, and a digital and PDF public comment form. The virtual public meeting and comment period were available from July 22 to September 7, 2022.

Outreach Strategy

Hard copy letter invitations (Figure 1) were sent to public officials, police, and EMS personnel for the July 13th meeting.

The public was notified of the open house via postcard mailer (Figure 2) and newspaper display ads (Figure 3) in the Citizens Voice and Times Leader; both were sent or published two weeks prior to the meeting. The mailer was sent to residents and businesses throughout the project area, including disadvantaged communities within the project limits.

A press release (Figure 4) was issued by PennDOT District 4-0. A summary of all communication is shown below.

Partnership 81 – Public Meeting Summary

Outreach Type	Meeting Name	Number of Recipients	Recipient Type	Date Sent/Published
Letter	Public officials	55	Elected officials, Police, and EMS	June 26
Post Card	Open House/Virtual Plans Display	7,838	Stakeholders, residents, and businesses	July 7
Citizens Voice Ad	Open House	N/A	Subscribers, residents, and businesses	July 12
Times Leader Ad	Open House	N/A	Subscribers, residents, and businesses	July 12
Press Release	Open House/Virtual Plans Display	N/A	Residents and businesses	July 21

Meeting Participation

Public participation in the public officials meeting, public open house, and website visitors during the online display plans are shown below.

Meeting Type	Number of Attendees/Visitors
Public Officials	10
Public Open House	44
Comment Form Submissions	29
Virtual Public Meeting Website	need # of visitors

Partnership 81 – Public Meeting Summary

Display Boards

There were nine Display Boards (Figures 5-13) presented at the public officials meeting and the open house, that outlined the planned work for I-81. These maps and other visual aids help the public better understand the project and encourage their feedback.

- Environmental Features (Figure 5)
- Area Map (Figure 6)
- Noise Analysis (Figure 7)
- Purpose & Needs (Figure 8)
- Schedule & Cost (Figure 9)
- Section 4(f) (Figure 10)
- Traffic Volumes (Figure 11)
- Typical Sections (Figure 12)
- Non-Discrimination Statements (Figure 13)

Summary of Comments

During both meetings and the online plans display, a comment form was available for stakeholder feedback on the proposed project details. No comment forms were collected from the public officials meeting. The public open house and website online plans display yielded a combined 29 comment forms. A summary of these comments can be found in the Appendix on the following pages.

Partnership 81 – Public Meeting Summary

Figure 1 – Public Officials Invitation

OS-2 (2-22)



June 27, 2022

Prefix
Full Name
Title
Organization/Legislature
Address

Luzerne County
Wilkes-Barre Township
I-81 Luzerne Corridor Reconstruction for P3
Notice of Public Officials Meeting

Dear INSERT Full Name:

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Engineering District 4-0 invites you to attend a Public Officials meeting and plans presentation to discuss the Partnership 81 project located in Wilkes-Barre Township and Luzerne County.

Date: Tuesday, July 12, 2022
Time: 2pm – 4pm
Location: Wilkes-Barre High School, 2021 Wolfpack Way, Plains, PA 18705

The Partnership 81 project is a 7.5-mile reconstruction of I-81 from mile marker 161.2 in Hanover Township to mile marker 169 in Wilkes-Barre Township focused on improving regional as well as local transportation needs. The project study area spans from two miles north of the Nuangola exit to approximately one mile north of the Highland Park Boulevard exit. The project is currently in the design phase. Construction is not expected to begin before 2025. The purpose of this meeting is to provide PennDOT staff and their design consultant an opportunity to explain the project and answer questions on an informal basis. Preliminary design plans will be available for review. Your participation will be appreciated.

Constituents in the project area will have an opportunity to review the Partnership 81 plans during the Public Comment Period from July 26 through August 26, 2022. Project details and online comment form can be accessed by visiting the PennDOT District 4-0 website penndot.pa.gov/District4, and by clicking on Public Meetings under District Links, selecting the tile for Luzerne County, and then selecting the tile for Partnership 81.

If you are unable to attend the public meeting and wish to arrange a meeting to discuss the project, please notify the PennDOT Project Manager, Stephen Sartori, at (570) 235-2964, or email at c-ssartori@pa.gov.

We appreciate your cooperation and assistance in our task of planning and designing better transportation facilities for the citizens of Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

NAME
District Executive

PennDOT Engineering District 4-0
55 Keystone Industrial Park Road | Dunmore, PA 18512 | 570.963.4061 | www.penndot.pa.gov



Partnership 81 – Public Meeting Summary

Figure 2 – Postcard Mailer



LEARN ABOUT PARTNERSHIP 81

The Partnership 81 Project is a 7.5-mile reconstruction of Interstate 81 near Wilkes-Barre, PA. The project study corridor spans from just north of the Exit 159, Nuangola, through Exit 168, Highland Park Boulevard. The project is currently in the design phase. When complete, the modernized highway will provide more capacity leading to reduced congestion and improved interstate travel mobility on this Primary Highway Freight System corridor.



PennDOT is completing the preliminary design and environmental clearance. Once complete, the project will be advertised as a Public Private Partnership (P3) for the final design, construction, and financing phase of work. This long-term funding approach allows the private sector to assume a share of the risk in terms of financing and construction. There is no tolling anticipated as part of this P3 project.

PENNDOT WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU! Submit your Comments:



penndot.pa.gov/Partnership81
(Scan the QR Code with the camera on your cell phone and follow the link)



On-Demand Virtual Public Meeting –
Available 7/26/2022 to 8/26/2022



Partnership 81 Project
Stephen Sartori, P.E.
Engineering District 4-0
55 Keystone Industrial Park Road | Dunmore, PA 18512



Join us on **Tuesday, July 26 from 4 pm to 8 pm** at **Wilkes-Barre High School** (2021 Wolfpack Way, Plains, PA 18705) to learn more about the Partnership 81 project and provide feedback to the project team. This meeting will be an open house with various stations to learn more about the project and will feature a 30-minute presentation beginning at 6 pm.



PARTNERSHIP 81

PARTNERSHIP 81
Engineering District 4-0
55 Keystone Industrial Park Road
Dunmore, PA 18512



VIEW THE VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING!

Available July 26, 2022 to
August 26, 2022 for review
and comment.

If you would like to request translation services for the Partnership 81 Project, please contact Stephen Sartori via email at c-ssartori@pa.gov or by phone at (570) 235-2964.

Si necesita servicios de traducción para el proyecto de Partnership 81, por favor comuníquese con Stephen Sartori por correo electrónico a c-ssartori@pa.gov o por teléfono a (570) 235-2964.

PRSR STD
ECRWSS
U.S.POSTAGE
PAID
EDDM Retail

LOCAL
POSTAL CUSTOMER

Partnership 81 – Public Meeting Summary

Figure 3 – Newspaper Ad

Partnership 81 Project
MPMS#115097



The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) invites the public to an Open House plan display regarding the Partnership 81 project, which extends from Hanover Township to Wilkes-Barre Township in Luzerne County, to evaluate improvements along the 7.5-mile corridor of Interstate 81 (I-81). The project will encompass work between milepost 161.2 north of Nuangola exit and exit 168, Highland Park Boulevard. Once the preliminary design is completed, the project will be advertised as a Public Private Partnership (P3) for the final design, construction, and financing phase of work. There is no tolling anticipated to be included as part of this project. This long-term funding approach allows the private sector to assume a share of the project responsibilities in terms of financing and construction. All interested are invited to attend the meeting:

DATE: July 26, 2022
PLACE: Wilkes-Barre High School
2021 Wolfpack Way
Plains, PA 18705
TIME: 4PM to 8PM; 6PM Presentation

The facility where this meeting is being held is accessible to persons with disabilities.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, OR TO COMMENT ON THIS IMPORTANT COMMUNITY PROJECT, PLEASE CONTACT:

Stephen Sartori, PE
Consultant Project Manager
PA Department of Transportation, Engineering District 4-0
55 Keystone Industrial Park Road
Dunmore, PA 18512
Phone: (570) 235-2964
Email: c-ssartori@pa.gov

Partnership 81 – Public Meeting Summary

Figure 4 – Press Release



For Immediate Release
July 19, 2022

PennDOT Announces Public Open House and Comment Period for Partnership 81 Project in Luzerne County

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) today announced the launch of a public comment period from July 26 through August 26, 2022, for the Partnership 81 Project in Luzerne County. An in-person public open house will be held on Wednesday, July 26 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. with formal presentation at 6 p.m. at Wilkes-Barre High School, 2021 Wolfpack Way, Plains, PA 18705, to introduce the project and answer questions from the community.

The Partnership 81 project is a 7.5-mile reconstruction of I-81 from mile marker 161.2 in Hanover Township to mile marker 169 in Wilkes-Barre Township focused on improving regional as well as local transportation needs. The project study area spans from two miles north of the Nuangola exit to approximately one mile north of the Highland Park Boulevard exit. Partnership 81 is currently in the design phase. Once the design is set, the project will be procured as a Public-Private Partnership (P3). There is no tolling anticipated to be included as part of this project. Construction is not expected to begin before 2025.

The Partnership 81 public comment period will provide the community with an opportunity to share feedback and comments based on the preliminary design plans and environmental impacts. Information about the project including a project overview, project displays, and methods to provide comments, will be available to be viewed online beginning July 26, 2022 on the PennDOT District 4 Luzerne County public meeting website at <https://www.penndot.pa.gov/RegionalOffices/district-4/PublicMeetings/Luzerne%20County/Pages/default.aspx>. Click on "Partnership 81" in the blue box to review project details and provide feedback via the online comment form. PennDOT staff and design consultants will be available to answer questions at the open house on July 26. Feedback received during the comment period and at the public meeting will be reviewed and taken into consideration by PennDOT.

The project documents can be made available in alternative languages or formats if requested. If you need translation/interpretation services, have special needs, or concerns that require individual attention, please contact Stephen Sartori, Project Manager, at (570) 235-2964, or email at c-ssartori@pa.gov.

Pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, PennDOT does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. If you feel that you have been denied the benefits of, or participation in a PennDOT program or activity, you may contact the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Bureau of Equal Opportunity, DBE/Title VI Division at 717-787-5891 or 800-468-4201.

Subscribe to PennDOT District 4 news for Lackawanna, Luzerne, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming counties at [penndot.pa.gov/District4](https://www.penndot.pa.gov/District4).

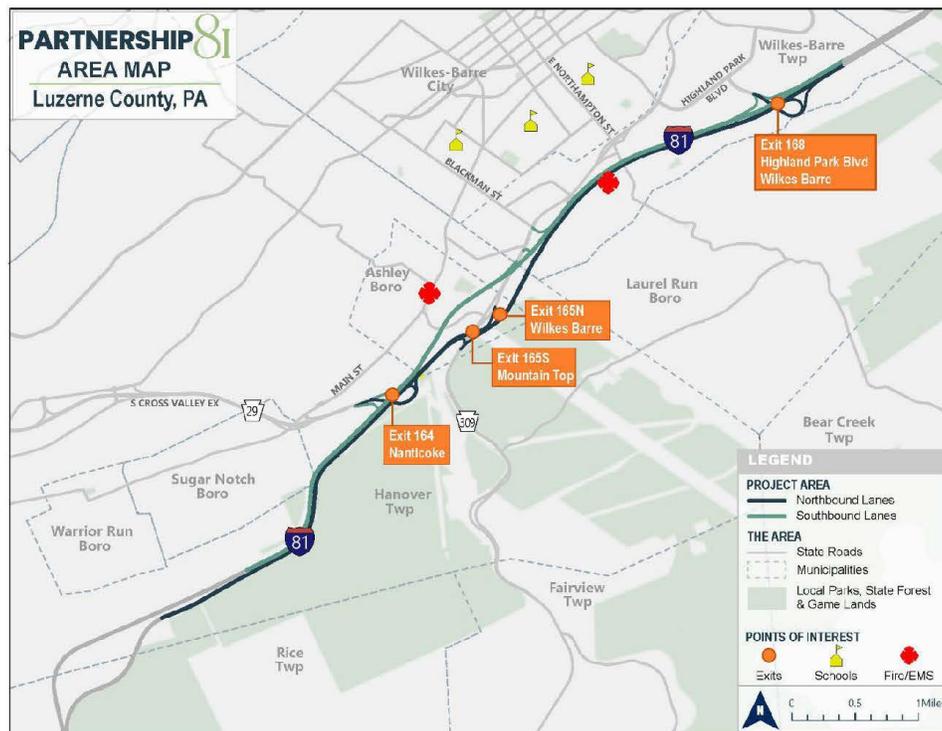
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Follow local PennDOT information on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/511PAHarrisburg> or at <http://www.facebook.com/PennsylvaniaDepartmentofTransportation/>.

Media Contact: Jessica Ruddy, (570) 963-4044

Source: PennDOT Engineering District 4

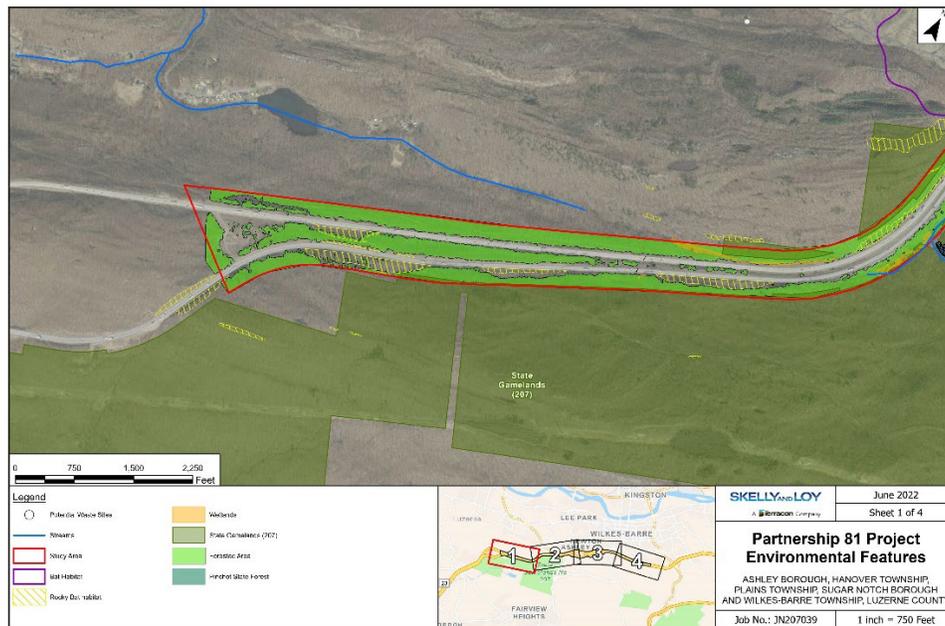
Editor's Note: Please refer to the accompanying project location map.



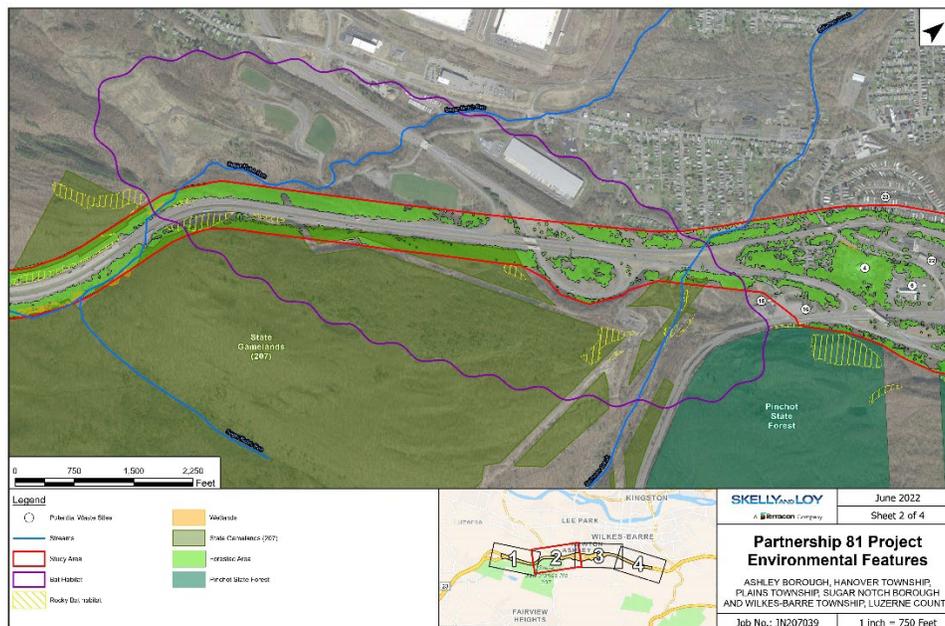
Partnership 81 – Public Meeting Summary

Figure 5 – Environmental Features

PARTNERSHIP 81: Environmental Features

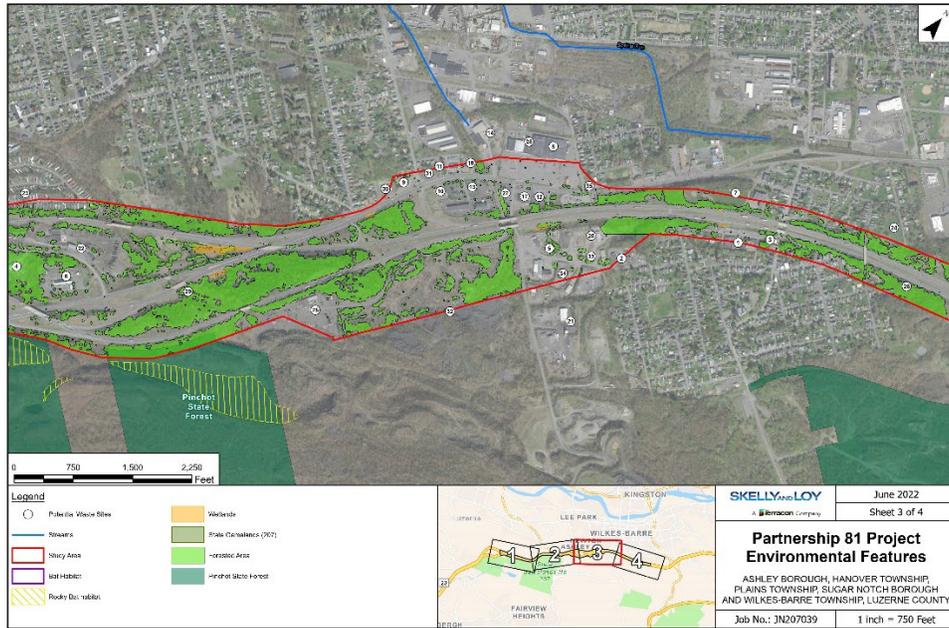


PARTNERSHIP 81: Environmental Features

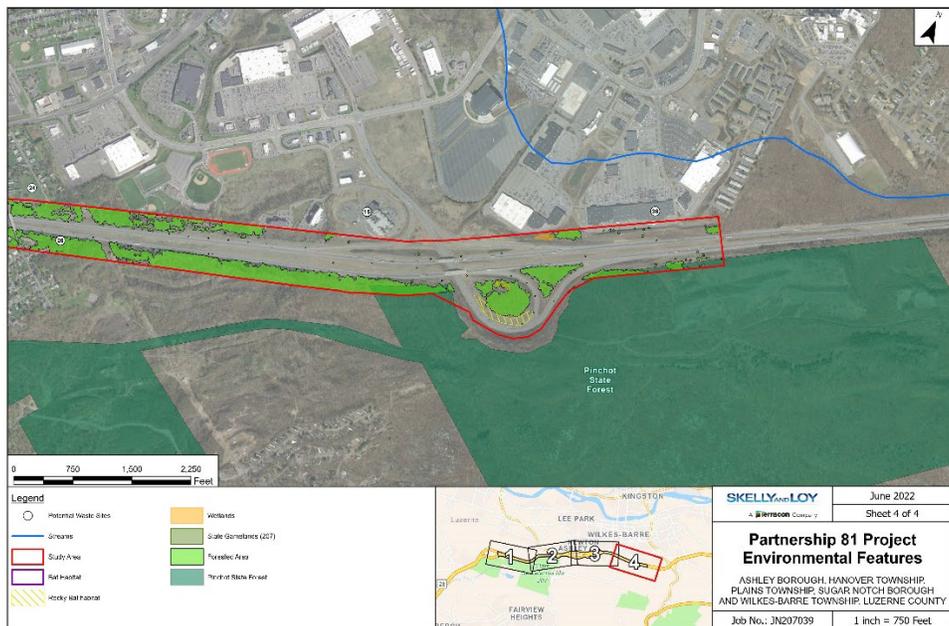


Partnership 81 – Public Meeting Summary

PARTNERSHIP 81: Environmental Features



PARTNERSHIP 81: Environmental Features



Partnership 81 – Public Meeting Summary

Figure 6 – Area Map

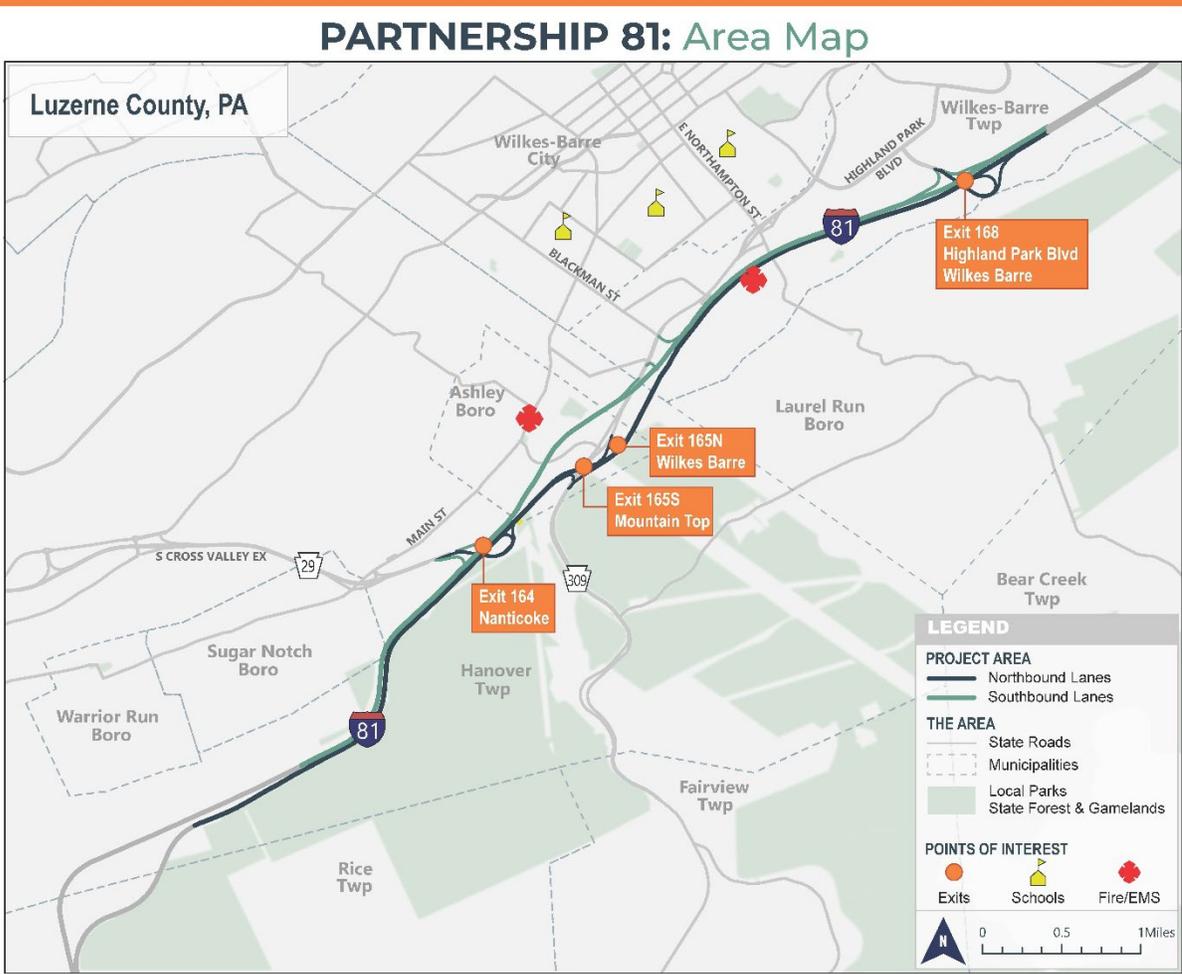


Figure 7 – Noise Analysis

PARTNERSHIP 81: Noise Analysis

The project was divided
into Noise Sensitive Areas (NSAs)

Based on land use, geography, and traffic volumes

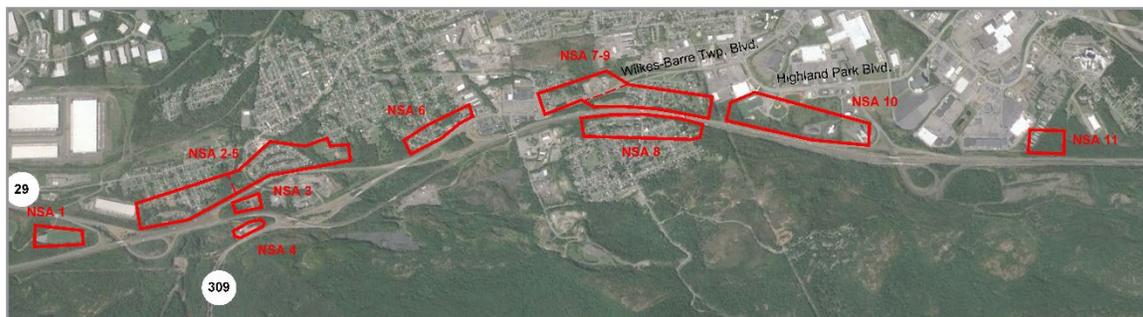


Figure 8 – Purpose & Needs

PARTNERSHIP 81: Purpose & Needs

The purpose of the project is to improve Interstate 81 (I-81) from milepost 161.2 to Exit 168 (Highland Park Boulevard) to meet regional traffic and local needs, as well as support the Primary Highway Freight System (PHFS) and interstate travel within the northeastern United States, by providing a transportation facility that:

- 1 Reduces congestion
- 2 Improves highway geometry
- 3 Addresses mobility issues

- **NEED 1**
As part of the critical Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Primary Highway Freight System (PHFS), the I-81 corridor from milepost 161.2 to Exit 168 (Highland Park Boulevard) **does not have the vehicular capacity to accommodate the projected future traffic volume and composition at an acceptable level-of-service (LOS).**
- **NEED 2**
The acceleration or deceleration lengths and curvature provided at **multiple ramps in the project corridor contribute to operational issues.**
- **NEED 3**
On northbound I-81 between Exits 164 (PA 29 - Nanticoke) and 165B (PA 309 Bus - Wilkes-Barre), the arrangement and distance between highway ramps contribute to **operational issues.**
- **NEED 4**
Mobility is hindered when **less than two lanes of traffic** are maintained.
- **NEED 5**
The existing pavement and bridges on the Partnership 81 Project corridor were constructed in the 1960s and have **reached the end of their serviceable life span.**

Figure 9 – Schedule & Cost



**Current estimated cost range
is \$250 to \$350 Million**

Cost will be refined during the completion of the preliminary engineering phase.

Partnership 81 – Public Meeting Summary

Figure 10 – Section 4(f)

PARTNERSHIP 81: Section 4(f) Resources

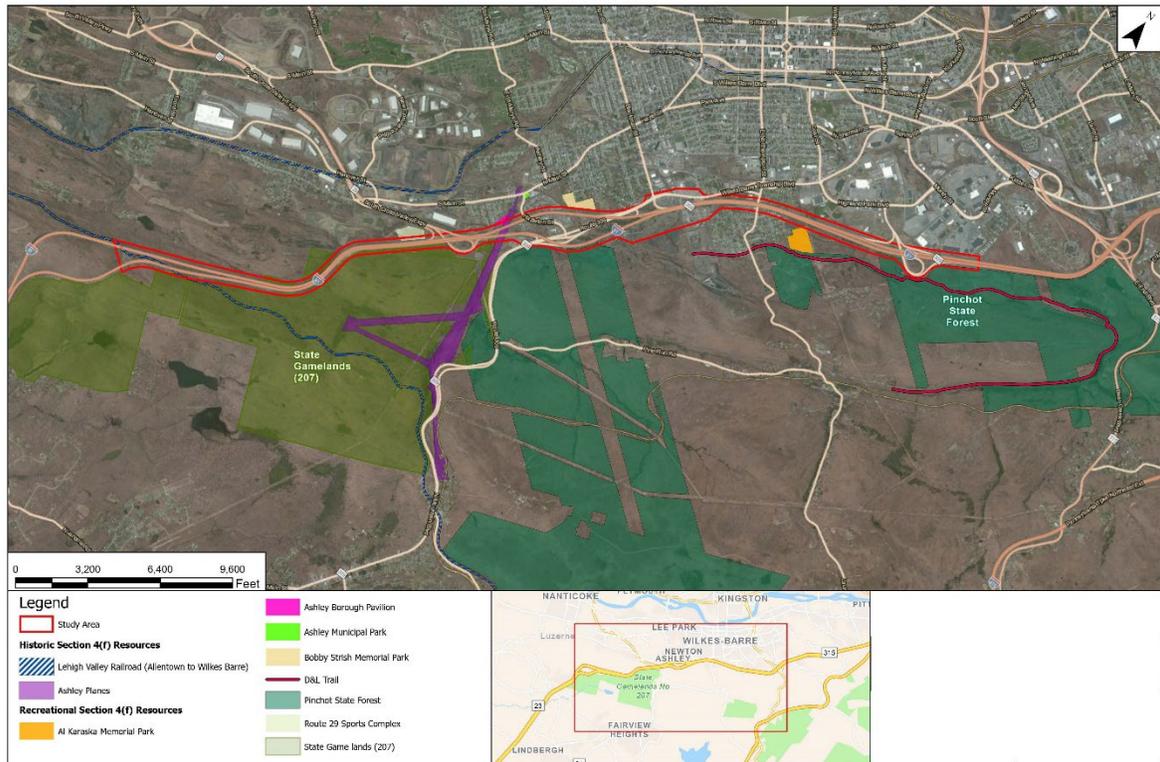
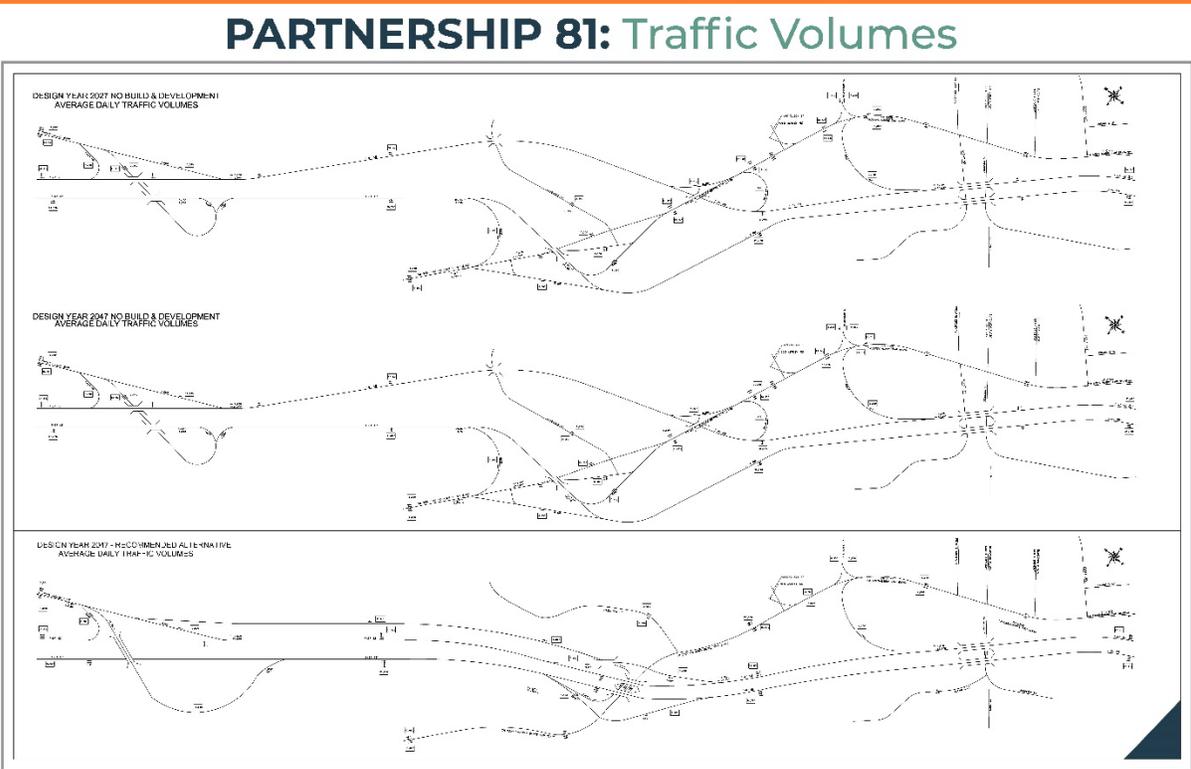


Figure 11 – Traffic Volumes



Partnership 81 – Public Meeting Summary

Figure 12 – Typical Sections

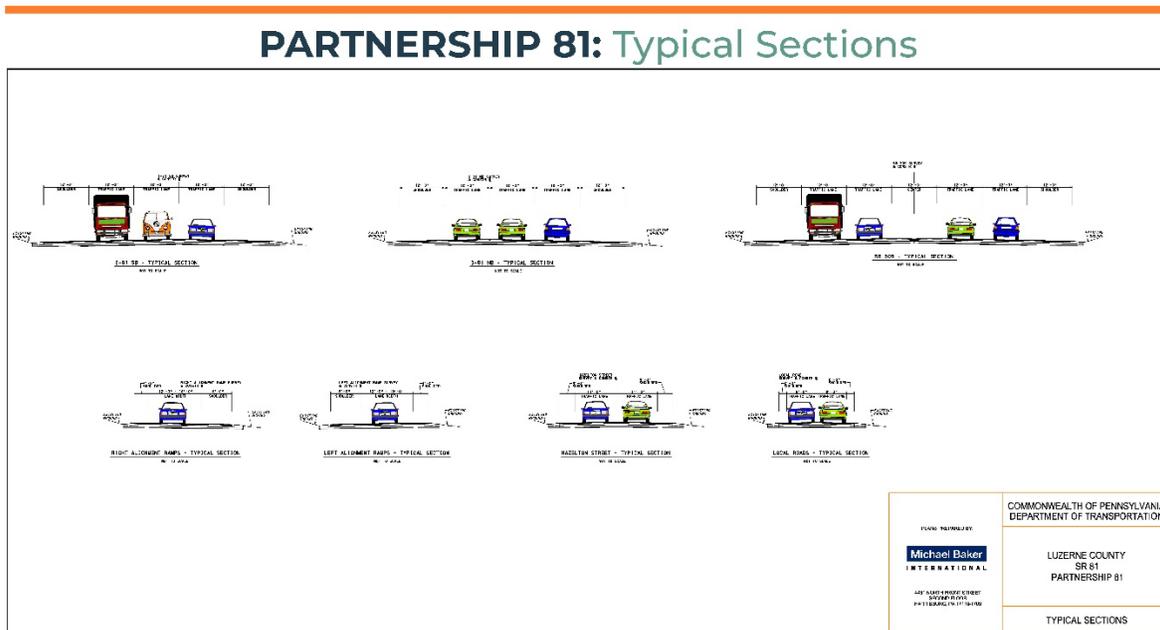


Figure 13 – Non-Discrimination Statements

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENTS

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) does not discriminate based on age, sex, race, color, national origin, religious creed, disability, family status, English proficiency, or income.

PennDOT does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operations of its programs, services, activities and has established a grievance procedure to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

For further information on Title VI Programs or to make a complaint, you can contact the Bureau of Equal Opportunity located on the fifth floor of the Commonwealth Keystone Building, Harrisburg, PA, by telephone at (717) 787-5891.

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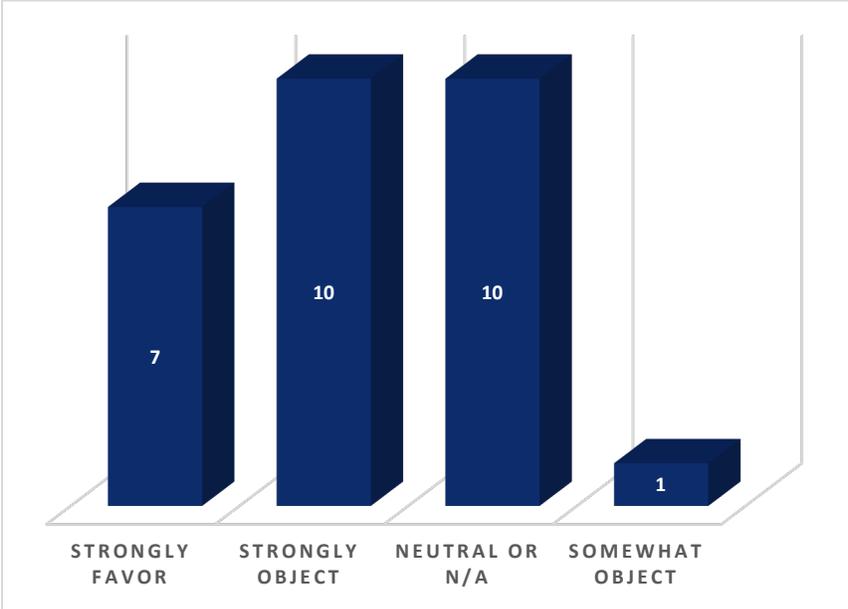
Appendix

Appendix documents to follow.

Comment Form Feedback

The Partnership 81 Comment Form was provided at the in-person Open House on July 26, 2022, and was posted online for comment from July 22, 2022, to September 7, 2022. PennDOT received 29 responses during this time from project stakeholders. Below is a summary of questions and comments generated from these responses.

Question: Do you favor the proposed improvements and replacement?



Project Questions	PennDOT Response
RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION	
Has any consideration been given to extend the 3-lanes section north to exit 170? Traffic volumes at the exit 170 ramps are likely much higher than the exit 168 ramps, and the SR 115/SR 309 interchange seems to be a more logical place to end the widening. Additionally, the 170 interchange is currently in design, accommodating 3 future lanes on I-81, and the bridges over Jumper Rd to the north have already been widened to accept a lane drop north of the interchange. An extension north would only add 1-1.5 miles of additional widening and would also improve the LOS concerns at the 170 interchange that were mentioned during the presentation tonight.	The additional travel lanes to the north of the Partnership 81 project will be considered for future project(s).

Partnership 81 – Public Meeting Summary Appendix

Project Questions	PennDOT Response
<p>I live at [redacted] in Ashley. I-81 is one of my property boundaries. How is my property going to be affected by this project? I was unable to attend the public meeting on 7/26/2022.</p>	<p>Currently, the property [redacted] in Ashley appears to be outside of the impacted area for the Partnership 81 project.</p>
<p>Can you have another public meeting like July 26 one because I wasn't notified and would like to see a presentation? I have lived in house 45 years and it is paid off. Whatever money you offer to buy me out will not be enough to buy a new house and relocate. I am 70 years old, family of 4, and can't afford a mortgage. What can I do? This project is only 7.5 miles. How can that small section help the rest of I81? I suggest you consider taking 1/2 the width of left and right berms on I81 to create the third lane you want. You could do a lot more length of highway that will make more of a difference than just 7.5 miles. And no homeowners or businesses will suffer.</p>	<p>We apologize that you were not able to attend the public meeting held in July 2022. Meeting invitations and project mailers were sent to nearly 8,000 residents and property owners within the project area in advance of the meeting. Future public meetings will be held to discuss the project as it progresses through the environmental clearance and preliminary engineering process.</p> <p>Traffic is anticipated to grow by nearly 40% by the year 2047. The improvements to I-81 and the surrounding roadway network are necessary to accommodate this growth.</p>
<p>Have questions about Ashley and the loss of businesses and homes. Small town and you are taking away the only businesses and the tax money they pay. You are also taking away a whole street of houses with the majority of the people living there are senior citizens that lived there their whole life. The houses are old and not worth much in today's market, you will give fair market value but what are these people going to do. They cannot afford to buy another house with today's prices and the limited income and than move all their lifelong belongings. Are you going to make the senior citizens homeless?</p>	<p>PennDOT will work with any affected property owners to discuss the right-of-way acquisition process. The final identification of properties to be impacted will be known at the completion of the environmental clearance and preliminary engineering phase of the project. The right-of-way acquisition process is not likely to begin until 2024.</p> <p>Please also refer to the following documents that provide additional information regarding the right-of-way acquisition and relocation processes.</p> <p>https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%2047.pdf https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%2083.pdf</p>
<p>What / where will homes need to be removed for this??? Because this is going to be a problem!!!!</p>	<p>As noted during the public meeting presentation, properties located along Hazleton Street between I-81 southbound and Route 309 may be impacted as well as properties along Old Hazleton Street and Hill Street.</p>
<p>How do I get information about my property being taken for the project?</p>	<p>Please refer to the plans provided on the project webpage at the link below or contact the PennDOT Project Manager, Stephen Sartori (570) 235-2964 or c-ssartori@pa.gov</p> <p>https://www.penndot.pa.gov/RegionalOffices/district-4/PublicMeetings/Luzerne%20County/Pages/Partnership81.aspx</p>

Partnership 81 – Public Meeting Summary Appendix

Project Questions	PennDOT Response
<p>I understand my home and business will be taken for project. What is the time line and procedure once the project gets the go ahead. I am a senior citizen, like 80% of the home owners on the street. Will moving expenses be paid, will you help in finding another property. My home is 160 years old, my family has lived in this house for 100 years. I was born and raised here, never lived anywhere else. I need answers, a lot of sleepless nights since the meeting.</p>	<p>PennDOT will work with any affected property owners to discuss the right-of-way acquisition process. The final identification of properties to be impacted will be known at the completion of the environmental clearance and preliminary engineering phase of the project. The right-of-way acquisition process is not likely to begin until 2024.</p> <p>Please also refer to the following documents that provide additional information regarding the right-of-way acquisition and relocation processes.</p> <p>https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%2047.pdf https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%2083.pdf</p>
<p>What would PennDOT consider a fair market price for buying the hill street home, is it enough for these businesses and families to find an equal property nearby or will they be forced to just settle for decent?</p>	<p>PennDOT will work with any affected property owners to discuss the right-of-way acquisition process as well as fair market value for each affected property.</p> <p>Please also refer to the following documents that provide additional information regarding the right-of-way acquisition and relocation processes.</p> <p>https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%2047.pdf https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%2083.pdf</p>
<p>I'm one of the property owners that will be displaced by the project. As I study the drawings it seems to me that I'm far enough away from the new roads to not have to be displaced. How do I discuss this with one of your team?</p>	<p>PennDOT will work with any affected property owners to discuss the right-of-way acquisition process as well as fair market value for each affected property.</p> <p>Please also refer to the following documents that provide additional information regarding the right-of-way acquisition and relocation processes.</p> <p>https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%2047.pdf https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%2083.pdf</p>
NOISE	
<p>We live in the Mill Creek development near the 81 north side of the interstate. The truck noise has become unbearable. Will that area have a sound wall installed to lessen the highway noise?</p>	<p>The preliminary noise analysis will be completed as part of the preliminary engineering phase of the project. Additional meetings will be held with properties that have been identified as noise sensitive areas to discuss the anticipated options for noise abatement.</p>
<p>I would like to know if a sound barrier will be put up. This should be a priority as the noise is unbelievable now without a third lane.</p>	<p>The preliminary noise analysis will be completed as part of the preliminary engineering phase of the project. Additional meetings will be held with properties that have been identified as noise sensitive areas to discuss the anticipated options for noise abatement.</p>
<p>Will they build a sound barrier wall? I am all for it. Remove the dying trees between my property and I-81 and build wall.</p>	<p>The preliminary noise analysis will be completed as part of the preliminary engineering phase of the project. Additional meetings will be held with properties that have been identified as noise sensitive areas to discuss the anticipated options for noise abatement.</p>

Partnership 81 – Public Meeting Summary Appendix

Project Questions	PennDOT Response
<p>Will there be a sound barrier built? Will the stormwater system be improved? Will there be a Jake Brake ban in this area?</p>	<p>The preliminary noise analysis will be completed as part of the preliminary engineering phase of the project. Additional meetings will be held with properties that have been identified as noise sensitive areas to discuss the anticipated options for noise abatement.</p> <p>The stormwater management system will be updated as appropriate to accommodate the roadway improvements.</p> <p>Requests for an engine-brake retarder prohibition must be submitted in writing by the municipality. Once received, the Department will conduct an Engineering and Traffic Study.</p> <p>In order to prohibit engine brake retarders, the following items must be satisfied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roadway is not a limited access facility or a ramp exiting from a highway with a posted speed or 85th percentile speed of 55 mph or greater (Please note that I-81 is a limited access facility with exit ramps). • The average downhill grade does not exceed 4 percent within any 500 foot section of highway. • A reduced speed limit or reduced gear zone does not exist for trucks due to a hazardous grade determination. • The posted speed limit of 85th percentile speed is less than 55 mph. • There is no history of runaway truck crashes in the past 3 years. • There is no discernable pattern of rear-end crashes in the past 3 years where a truck was striking a vehicle. <p>If approved, the municipality must subsequently enact an ordinance and would be responsible for procuring, erecting and maintaining the required signing. Enforcement of the prohibition shall be the responsibility of the policy agency that provides enforcement services for the municipality.</p>
OTHER / MISCELLANEOUS	
<p>What kind of strain will this place on emergency services in the affected and neighboring communities? Ashley, Hanover Twp, Wilkes-Barre Twp, Sugar Notch, Laurel Run, Mountain Top are all volunteer based and have dwindling numbers of volunteers (due to age of members and lack of interest in volunteers) to handle the current accidents, fires, and medical emergencies. This would put a huge strain on services in the area, increases in response time which can and will lead to loss of life especially in the event of mass casualty incidents and everyday medical events in the</p>	<p>The emergency services personnel were invited and participated in the public officials’ meeting which was held July 12, 2022. The EMS personnel were in favor of the improvements as they will improve the overall safety to the traveling public as well as provide safe passage for the EMS personnel during responses to any incidents.</p>

Partnership 81 – Public Meeting Summary Appendix

Project Questions	PennDOT Response
community caused by the increase in traffic and congestion.	

Question: Do you have other specific comments or concerns?	PennDOT Response
Further pedestrian/bicycle over/underpass improvements would be nice along the I-81 corridor, but my main concern is easing congestion along I-81 and improving commute times and safety.	PennDOT is working with the D&L Trail staff on a potential future extension of the existing trail through the Partnership 81 project area.
How will this impact the recreation fields and playgrounds built near the highway that are currently used for baseball, softball, and soccer? Children need safe outdoor spaces to participate in activities. The Hazleton St, Ashley area is also used by families to reach Main St. in Ashley for pedestrian access for shopping, exercise, and reaching mass transit buses. How will the increase in traffic be accommodated on Route 309 and Main St in Ashley? Route 309 & local residential roads cannot handle detours of traffic when 81 has backups now, how will it handle increases in the future if not expanded as well? This would eventually lead to more disruptions to commutes and the environment and not to mention possible more loss of property and homes to more families. This would not only affect the larger business areas but the smaller communities (Ashley, Sugar Notch) that already are dwindling in size and being threatened by warehouses & trailer traffic. These areas will become all commercial & will not be able to support residential areas safely as families will be pushed out of the safe areas they now call home.	The project should not have a direct impact to the recreation fields near the Route 29 interchange with I-81. Route 309 will be realigned and improved as part of the Partnership 81 project.
[REDACTED] I am the president/CEO of Earth Conservancy. Although I was unable to attend the public meeting held on	Thank you for providing this information. It has been noted and documented as part of the preliminary engineering process.

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Question: Do you have other specific comments or concerns?	PennDOT Response
<p>July 26, 2022, I have reviewed the information provided online regarding the project extents and specifically the noise sensitive areas.</p> <p>As you may be aware, Earth Conservancy currently owns over 6,000 acres of former Blue Coal corporation land in the Wyoming Valley. One of our properties lies near the eastern limits of your project area in Plains Township, and may be impacted by this proposed project. This land is approximately 32 acres of mostly wooded area and directly abuts the I-81 corridor, as shown in the screenshot below. Earth Conservancy currently has this land for sale and has promoted this land for multi-family residential development, as shown in the attached schematic layout, as the land is currently zoned for multi-family use. Should this come to fruition, a noise barrier may be warranted so I wanted to bring these future plans to your attention and ask if this area has been considered in your evaluation. As noted, a developer has not yet been identified, but the proposed I-81 project may directly impact our ability to promote this land for multi-family use, so your consideration is appreciated. If you need any further information, please feel free to call me at the number below.</p>	
<p>Sewers crossing E. Hampton St. cave-in (past)</p> <p>N Walnut St mine subsidence</p> <p>Vibrations for trucks, sounds - really wants sound barriers</p> <p>*Mine subsidence major issue - maps not up to date</p>	<p>Coordination with existing utilities will be completed as part of the preliminary engineering process.</p> <p>PennDOT is currently performing an extensive drilling program throughout the project area to gain a better understanding of the geologic conditions.</p>
<p>more noise than already exists</p>	<p>The preliminary noise analysis will be completed as part of the preliminary engineering phase of the project. Additional meetings will be held with properties that have been identified as noise sensitive areas to discuss the anticipated options for noise abatement.</p>

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Question: Do you have other specific comments or concerns?	PennDOT Response
<p>Mine subsidence at my property and any seismic activity involving such. Land slides from the side of mountain etc. Also maybe build wall first then do 3rd lane. Sound from traffic is horrible. Will get worse with 3rd lane. Vibrations from traffic. Give me results from studies.</p>	<p>PennDOT is currently performing an extensive drilling program throughout the project area to gain a better understanding of the geologic conditions.</p> <p>The preliminary noise analysis will be completed as part of the preliminary engineering phase of the project. Additional meetings will be held with properties that have been identified as noise sensitive areas to discuss the anticipated options for noise abatement.</p>
<p>Alternative transportation options. I'd prefer a direct, public option be improved from downtown Scranton (with a stop north in Clarks Summit) to downtown Wilkes Barre (with a stop in Pittston). I think this would, with targeting and streamlining for young professionals, ease most commuting issues along that stretch of 81. There's obviously money ready to assist this problem, and adding lanes has historically done little to ease traffic concerns.</p>	<p>Thank you for your input. This will be documented during the preliminary engineering process.</p>
<p>My specific concerns are with the loss of property & relocation of homes that have been occupied for decades. There are people who would potentially lose their homes/property and may not be financially able to start over especially in the current economy no matter the "just compensation" provided. Some are trying to retire after working for the majority of their lives (50+ years!) while others currently cannot retire due to the economy & need a close and safe place to live. These families have worked extremely hard over the years to own their homes and build their lives but will be unable to continue to have an acceptable quality of life if they are losing their property & being forced to leave. This impacts the remainder of their years alive greatly! My other concerns are with the environmental impacts in the area of the Ashley Planes, Earth Conservancy Land, & the game lands/wet lands displacing animals/habitats/trails that are already threatened by climate</p>	<p>PennDOT will work with any affected property owners to discuss the right-of-way acquisition process as well as fair market value for each affected property.</p> <p>Please also refer to the following documents that provide additional information regarding the right-of-way acquisition and relocation processes.</p> <p>https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%2047.pdf</p> <p>https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%2083.pdf</p>

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Question: Do you have other specific comments or concerns?	PennDOT Response
<p>change and other environmental factors. It may be a drop in the bucket for PennDot to buy out all this property and reconstruct a highway but these plans are disrupting lives (environment and businesses) and placing huge economic , emotional, and physical strain on all those involved. Even if only a portion of homes/land are bought out, the families left behind would be disadvantaged by the increase in noise, construction, dust, detours, congestions, and the quality of life would be extremely impacted as well as loss in property value in any future transactions. And this is all if the project even moves forward as planned after property is acquired. With climate change, impacts will be increased over the years with runoff, drainage, erosion, and ruin if the infrastructure is disturbed and not properly planned around especially with the coal mines in this area. Is it really worth disrupting lives and changing the landscape just to straighten a highway that seems to function just fine at the current position?</p>	
<p>1.Post speed limits at the 85th percentile speed of the road, measured with a REAL traffic study.</p> <p>2.Absolutely NO speed cameras should be used during the road work. Hopefully by then the assembly with make the cameras go away anyway.</p>	<p>Thank you for your input.</p>
<p>My residence borders the 81 south lane. I've lived here for the last 33 years. I have lived within 2 blocks of the interstate for 57 years. Will there be a sound barrier built? The interstate noise is loud and disturbing. I welcome you to visit my back yard and try to hold a conversation. Will there be a Jake brake ban in this section? The noise from them is unreal!!</p>	<p>The preliminary noise analysis will be completed as part of the preliminary engineering phase of the project. Additional meetings will be held with properties that have been identified as noise sensitive areas to discuss the anticipated options for noise abatement.</p>

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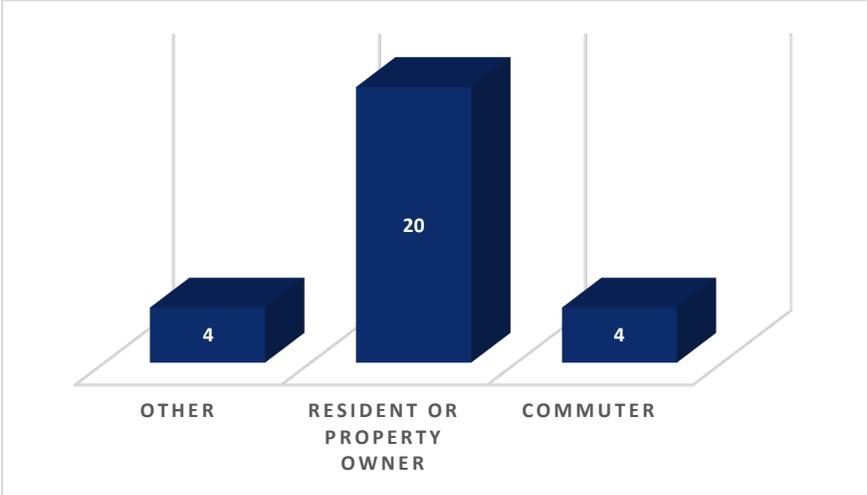
Question: Do you have other specific comments or concerns?	PennDOT Response
<p>Would like to be informed sooner rather than later if our family will be displaced. There has been no solid information sent out to the public or any surrounding property owners.</p>	<p>Information is available on the project website at the link below. https://www.pennidot.pa.gov/RegionalOffices/district-4/PublicMeetings/Luzerne%20County/Pages/Partnership81.aspx Also, please contact the PennDOT Project Manager, Stephen Sartori (570) 235-2964 or c-ssartori@pa.gov with any direct questions.</p>
<p>My family [REDACTED] have grown up in the same house. This house was built in 1864 which is older than the Ashley town. In the backyard many of my family worked the coal mines. My own family raises bees, gardens, and raises show poultry. My father has a photography studio here. A "fair price" to buy this all out is no where what is actually fair in today's economic situation. A "fair price" for a house that in reality should stay just for the fact it's more than 150 years old, would leave my father and family struggling to find something within NEPA that could be sufficient enough for my poultry, his business, bees, and garden. Let alone that almost all my family work full time and are nearly retirement age. To have to move someone at that age is disgraceful and down right wrong. Furthermore, to be building a road project through Ashley's three major businesses is economically stupid. This will cause these businesses to open elsewhere and leave Ashley with less economic growth.</p>	<p>PennDOT will work with any affected property owners to discuss the right-of-way acquisition process as well as fair market value for each affected property.</p> <p>Please also refer to the following documents that provide additional information regarding the right-of-way acquisition and relocation processes. https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%2047.pdf https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%2083.pdf</p>
<p>I have concerns with you kicking my neighbors out of their homes. I have concerns with this project taking 4-5 years to complete. Illinois only took two years and did 90 miles of I90 between Hoffman Estates (Chicago) and IL20 Bypass (Rockford) I also have concerns that this project falls really short of having any affect on traffic.. You should be focusing on the section starting in Wilkes-barre and ending in Scranton.</p>	<p>PennDOT will work with any affected property owners to discuss the right-of-way acquisition process as well as fair market value for each affected property.</p>
<p>POORER QUALITY OF LIFE FOR</p>	<p>The preliminary noise analysis will be completed as part of the preliminary</p>

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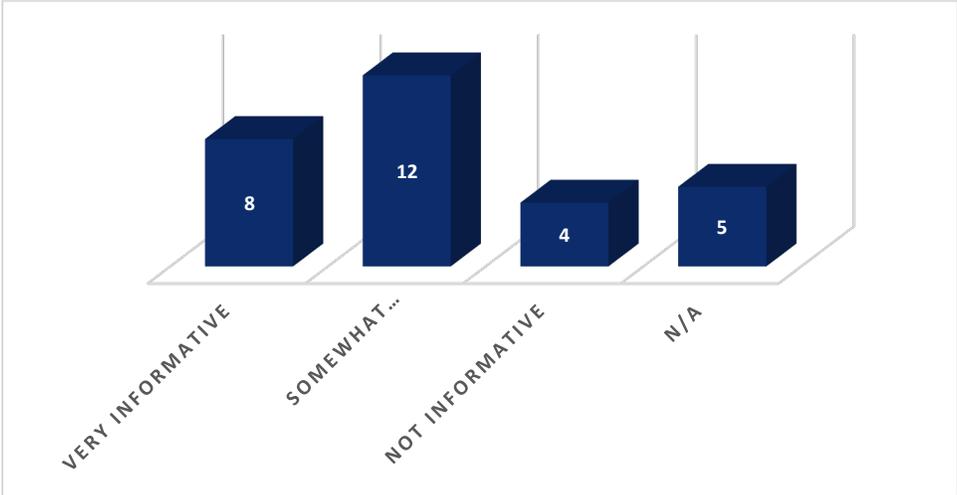
Question: Do you have other specific comments or concerns?	PennDOT Response
<p>RESIDENTS IN AREA</p> <p>1. added noise, project itself, increased traffic.</p> <p>2. added pollution (poorer air quality) additional traffic, construction, loss of trees, natural barriers.</p> <p>3. put in an area that has houses really close in proximity, construction will cause damage to nearby homes , in a mine subsidence area . The project could impact homes, roads.</p> <p>4, want bore hole testing of existing mine fires in the area (wilkes barre twp.) want those findings made public. also bore hole testing done by a firm that has no tie in to state. (independent testing)</p> <p>5 make sure no trees are removed in the township especially. trees are a great resource to absorb pollution from diesel trucks, emissions etc.</p> <p>I tried to navigate your website for public comment, but could not find area to file concerns.</p> <p>I already attended a meeting at the new high school in plains, pa, and voiced some of my concerns.</p>	<p>engineering phase of the project. Additional meetings will be held with properties that have been identified as noise sensitive areas to discuss the anticipated options for noise abatement.</p> <p>Air and noise quality will be documented in the environmental clearance process.</p> <p>PennDOT is currently performing an extensive drilling program throughout the project area to gain a better understanding of the geologic conditions.</p> <p>Removal of trees will be reviewed and minimized to the greatest extent that is practical.</p> <p>The link to the online public questionnaire was provided at the project webpage and link shown below and was active through August 26, 2022.</p> <p>https://paiedprod.powerappsportals.us/district-4-public-meeting-comment/</p> <p>Thank you for your participation at the public meeting.</p>

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Question: What is your interest in the project?



Question: Are the plans informative?



Question: What could be done to improve the presentation?	PennDOT Response
Great Job!	Thank you for your participation.
Project is long overdue and I'm happy to see it being worked on. The 309 exit will be much better when it's closer together. I found the 81 north loop to 29 to be creative and will eliminate all the ramp closures we've seen on the existing ramp due to trucks rolling over. Hoping the speed limit gets increased once complete.	Thank you for your participation.
schedule another presentation in near	We apologize that you were not able to attend the public meeting held in

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Question: What could be done to improve the presentation?	PennDOT Response
<p>future for residents effected like me that were not notified of July 26 meeting so we can understand.</p>	<p>July 2022. Meeting invitations and project mailers were sent to nearly 8,000 residents and property owners within the project area in advance of the meeting. Future public meetings will be held to discuss the project as it progresses through the environmental clearance and preliminary engineering process.</p>
<p>Have it in an area close to the people it effects. Brought this up to the greeters, I traveled 10 miles from my home to attend. They said they picked the area in case someone needed to take public bus, buses don't run at that time and do not go to the school.</p>	<p>Thank you for your input. We will review other venue options for future meetings as appropriate.</p>
<p>There isn't much explanation behind the documents on the website unless you were at the meeting in person to ask questions or hear remarks. The meeting could have also been held closer to the affected area (like at Hanover Area High School or Ashley Municipal Building) and at multiple times to allow for more people to attend outside their work schedules. Not everyone works a typical day job or are able to work around their families and some work multiple jobs to make ends meet. Video technology (Zoom, Skype, etc.) could also be used to livestream meetings to those who physically cannot attend.</p>	<p>Thank you for your input. We will review other venue options for future meetings as appropriate.</p>
<p>present what homes will be affective !!!!!</p>	<p>PennDOT will work with any affected property owners to discuss the right-of-way acquisition process. The final identification of properties to be impacted will be known at the completion of the environmental clearance and preliminary engineering phase of the project. The right-of-way acquisition process is not likely to begin until 2024.</p> <p>Please also refer to the following documents that provide additional information regarding the right-of-way acquisition and relocation processes.</p> <p>https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%2047.pdf</p> <p>https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%2083.pdf</p>
<p>Look and step in the shoes of the businesses and families going to be affected by this. It is not always about business and money investment.</p>	<p>Thank you for your input.</p>