

Meeting Summary

Project:	I-80 Over Lehigh River Bridge Project
Subject:	Public Meeting
Date:	Nov. 17 – Dec. 17, 2021
Location:	Virtual On-Demand Meeting Website, Online In-Person Open House, Carbon County

Meeting Overview

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) held a public meeting for the I-80 Over Lehigh River Bridge Project. The public meeting was held both online (virtually) and in-person. The online meeting was comprised of text, graphics and videos that provided a project overview and explained the project purpose and need, project design, proposed funding, traffic studies, environmental studies, comment process and next steps. The same information was shared during the in-person public meeting in an open house format.

The online meeting website provided a comment form that allowed individuals to submit their comments directly within the virtual public meeting. The website also noted other ways in which comments could be submitted, including the comment form on the general project website, project phone number, project email and a physical mailing address. The virtual public meeting and comment period began at noon on Nov. 17 and ended at 11:59 p.m. on Dec. 17, 2021.

At the in-person public open house, comment forms were provided for individuals to submit their comment. The in-person public open house was held on Wednesday, Dec. 8, 2021 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Split Rock Resort in Lake Harmony, Pa. In project outreach and on the virtual public meeting website it was noted that participants could request translation services.

While the comment period for the public meeting has closed, the online meeting materials are available for reference via the project website's resource side bar at the link below.

www.penndot.pa.gov/i80LehighRiverBridge.

Meeting Outreach

Prior to and during the public meeting, the project team executed several outreach strategies to maximize public participation in the official comment period.

Outreach Type	Number of Recipients	Type of Recipients	Date Sent
Postcard	5,567	<ul style="list-style-type: none">General PublicMailed via Every Door Direct Mail ServiceSent to all postal routes within the direct project area and along the diversion route.	Week of 11/8
Legal Ad	Circulation approximately ~1,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">General publicPlaced in <i>The Journal-Herald</i>	11/11

Stakeholder & Public Mailing List Email	118	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key stakeholders, legislators and those who requested to be put on the project's mailing list. Email with information about the virtual public meeting and in-person open house 	11/17
Knowledgeable Parties Email & Flyer	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledgeable parties identified in EJ analysis Email with information about virtual and in-person meetings, along with a flyer to distribute in the community and copies of social media art for sharing 	11/17
News Release	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sent to area media to distribute via news stories and calendars of events for the general public. 	11/17
Public Officials Briefing	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invited public officials to a pre-launch briefing to get a first look at the materials to launch in the virtual public meeting 	11/17
Diversion Route Workshop Follow Up Briefing	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invited diversion route workshop attendees to attend a follow-up briefing to review the proposed route improvements included in the public meeting materials. 	11/17
Social Media Posts	30,733 people reached total from three posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media posts on PennDOT social media regarding how to participate in the public meeting and comment period 104 engagements across 3 posts 	11/17 12/8 12/16

Meeting Participation

Statistics regarding public participation in the public meeting are below (*data as of close of comment period on Dec. 17*).

Public Meeting Metrics	
Total Virtual Public Meeting Unique Website Visitors (11/17-12/17)	199
Total In-Person Public Open House Attendees	28
Total Meeting Comments (11/17-12/17)	32

Based on the comments received during the public comment period, 14 percent of individuals who visited the public meeting website or attended an in-person meeting submitted a comment. The project team is evaluating and considering this feedback as the Categorical Exclusion environmental document is completed.

Common Comment Themes:

- Several commenters expressed **opposition to tolling**. Reasons included:
 - Stimulus package should cover cost of the bridge

- Tolling is an inefficient way of raising funds
- Tolling is double taxation on tax-payers
- Already high gas tax
- Several commenters expressed **traffic congestion concerns**. Reasons included:
 - Increased truck traffic through White Haven
 - Locals feel that the diversion will be noticeable on local roads and will cause heavy congestion
- Several commenters shared information about **toll avoidance**. Reasons included:
 - Trucks avoiding tolls and going through local communities
 - Concern of toll avoidance will lead to more maintenance needed on local roads due to heavier congestion
- Several commenters expressed **financial concerns**. Reasons included:
 - Cost to local residents and drivers
- Several commenters shared their **general dissatisfaction**. Reasons included:
 - Disagree with tolling of the bridge
 - Feel that there will be negative impacts to the local community
- Several commenters expressed concern about **noise**. They included:
 - Concerns for noise in Lehigh Park for recreational users
- Other comment themes that appeared in 3 or less comments included:
 - Bridge Safety
 - Information & Mailing List Requests
 - Other Suggested Means of Raising Money
 - Business Interruptions
 - Air Quality
 - Construction & Related Traffic Detours
 - Against Tax Increases
 - EJ Issues
 - Pandemic
 - Tourism/Economy
 - Trails/Recreation/Parks