

Public Meetings Yielding Engagement, Feedback



The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) has hosted online/virtual meetings and in-person open houses for seven of the candidate bridge projects of the Major Bridge Public-Private Partnership Initiative, part of PennDOT's Pathways Program to identify and evaluate alternative funding solutions for Pennsylvania's transportation system.

Meetings were held from October through December for the I-83 South Bridge Project, I-78 Lenhartsville Bridge Replacement Project, I-81 Susquehanna Project and the four bridge projects at Canoe Creek, North Fork, Lehigh River and Nescopeck Creek. The remaining two candidate bridges — the I-79 Widening, Bridges and Bridgeville Interchange Project and the I-95 Girard Point Bridge Improvement Project — will have their public meetings in the spring of 2022.

We had great turnout both online and in-person and the project teams are now reviewing, evaluating, considering and summarizing the comments, which came by way of in-person hand-written forms, online submissions, emails, hotline messages and mailed-in letters.

While the official comment period under the National Environmental Policy Act on the first seven projects has closed, you're welcome to visit all the projects' websites. You can learn more about the projects' design plans, environmental studies, tolling implementation, potential impacts and proposed improvements and overall schedules, and provide comment on the program. Visit the MBP3 Initiative webpage or visit www.penndot.gov/funding.



Low-Income Program

We understand that implementation of a toll would affect all bridge users regardless of income; however, tolls would have a greater effect on low-income bridge users, particularly if they depend on the bridge for daily travel to work or other destinations. Low-income is defined as a person whose median household income is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services federal poverty guidelines (\$26,500 for a household of four).

To help alleviate these impacts, PennDOT is proposing to offer bridge access without tolls to low-income persons qualifying for one or more state Department of Human Services (DHS) financial assistance programs offered in Pennsylvania, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, and the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

The DHS financial assistance programs use a progressive income limit based on the number of people in a household (equivalent to about \$35,000 for a family of four — but it varies slightly by DHS program). Individuals who qualify for toll-free bridge access would select one bridge from the Major Bridge Public Private Partnership initiative to apply these benefits. On I-80, the Lehigh, Nescopeck, Canoe Creek and North Fork bridges would each be tolled in one direction only. Both the Low-Income Program and the one-way tolling regarding I-80 bridge projects were the result of feedback PennDOT solicited and received from community stakeholders and the public, and all of this information was included in the online/virtual and in-person public meetings for each bridge project.



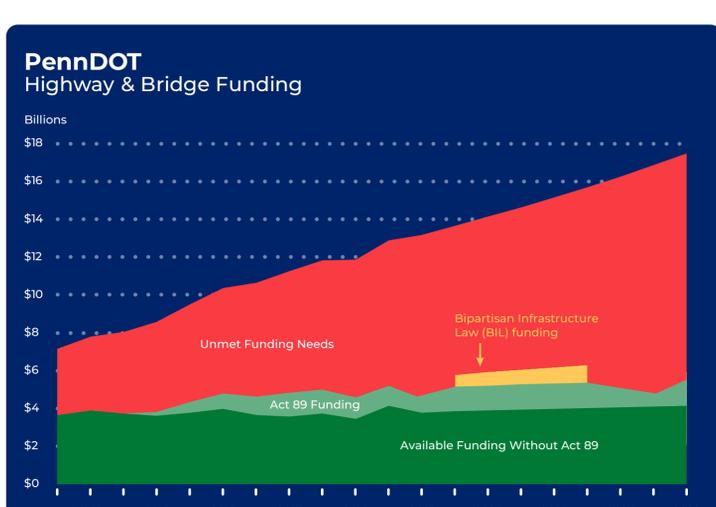
FAQs: Answering Questions from the Community

Q Why is tolling still being considered when the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will bring additional funding to Pennsylvania?

A The passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) is the largest federal infrastructure investment in decades, and PennDOT is grateful for the Biden Administration's leadership on this meaningful, historical action. This investment will allow Pennsylvania to invest billions of dollars to modernize our infrastructure like roads, bridges, ports and rail, while creating sustainable, good-paying jobs that will be transformative for our transportation system and our local economy.

The BIL is expected to bring \$4 billion in new federal highway and bridge funds to Pennsylvania. Federally funded projects usually require a 20 percent state match. With that in mind, we expect we would need approximately \$1 billion in **additional state funds** just to be able to fully leverage the new federal funds. With roughly \$2.2 billion in construction value, if federal funds were committed to the nine candidate bridge projects in the Major Bridge P3 initiative, those projects would take up more than half of the new federal funding. This means that these much-needed funds will only benefit a handful of projects, minimizing the bill's overall impact.

Pennsylvania's funding challenges are complex, and there is no simple, one-size-fits-all solution. The federal investment is a huge step in the right direction but does not address all of our challenges. We need to modernize our approach to transportation funding in Pennsylvania. That's the reason we developed the Pathways program, to identify, assess and implement alternative funding solutions like the Major Bridge P3 initiative. By leveraging this initiative, we can maximize what we have and build for the future.



For more information about PennDOT Pathways, visit our website at penndot.gov/funding.

Want to share information on your social or digital platforms? Find image, video and other resources in the **Funding Media Center**.

CONTACT US

Website Comment Form: [Click Here](#)



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