

March 2022 Newsletter



Future-Focused Investments Growing Along with Reliable Funding Needs

The alternative funding solutions identified through [PennDOT Pathways](#) focus on Pennsylvania's future, when increased use of electric vehicles (EVs) and shifting travel patterns make fuel taxes an even more unsustainable source of revenue for our bridges and highways.

Over the past three years, the number of EVs registered in Pennsylvania has increased 137 percent to more than 23,000, a number that is expected to increase sharply as more automakers shift to electric fleets.

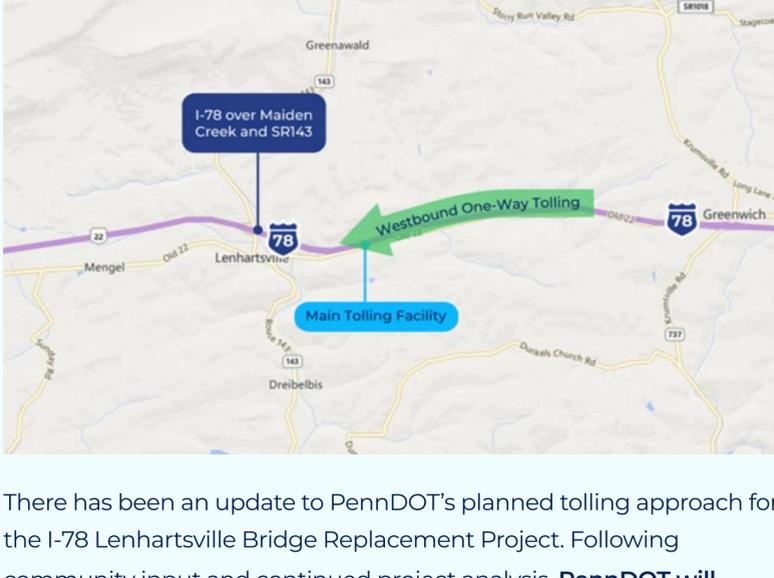
The federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) will allow Pennsylvania to invest in updating our highway network to accommodate more EVs and hybrids. Officials from PennDOT and the state Department of Environmental Protection [recently outlined those investments](#) in the continued buildout of EV charging infrastructure along federally designated [Alternative Fuel Corridors \(AFC\)](#), which include 15 Pennsylvania interstate highways plus U.S. Route 30. The BIL and recently updated AFC criteria will provide:

- **\$171.5 million** for EV charging infrastructure in PA
- **\$2.5 billion** in discretionary funding for alternative fueling infrastructure and community grants nationwide
- Charging stations within **1 mile** of interstate exits or highway intersections in AFCs
- **50-mile** maximum distances between charging stations in AFCs
- Opportunities to add more than **1,700 AFC miles** in PA

As more EVs, hybrids, alternative-fuel and fuel-efficient vehicles use our highways, less revenue will be collected from fuel taxes, which currently provides three quarters of our highway and bridge funding. Pennsylvania is more reliant on fuel taxes than many other states.

That's why PennDOT, through the Pathways Program, continues to pursue future-focused alternative funding solutions such as the [Major Bridge Public-Private Partnership \(MBP3\) Initiative](#) and others identified in an alternative funding [Planning and Environmental Linkages](#) study as well as a report by Governor Wolf's [Transportation Revenue Options Commission](#). Stewardship of our transportation assets demands no less.

Major Bridge P3 Initiative Updates



There has been an update to PennDOT's planned tolling approach for the I-78 Lenhartsville Bridge Replacement Project. Following community input and continued project analysis, **PennDOT will pursue only westbound tolling at this bridge.**

Ongoing financial and traffic reviews for this bridge have shown this change can be made while keeping the toll rate in the \$1 to \$2 range for passenger vehicles using E-ZPass. One-way tolling will reduce overall traffic diversion on local roads.

More information on this project is available at www.penndot.pa.gov/i78Lenhartsville.

Environmental Assessments

PennDOT, in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is preparing Environmental Assessments (EAs) for the Major Bridge P3 Initiative candidate bridges in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). These EAs, which examine the significance of potential impacts to natural, social, economic and cultural resources from alternatives under consideration, will be prepared instead of the Categorical Exclusions (CEs) or CE Reevaluations initially proposed for these projects. The results of the EAs will determine whether an Environmental Impact Statement would be prepared, or a Finding of No Significant Impacts would be issued.

In addition to the public involvement and stakeholder outreach efforts conducted to date for these projects, the public will have opportunities to review and comment on each candidate bridge's EA during a 30-day public comment period and at a formal public hearing to be scheduled in the project's community this spring. The EAs will include, but not be limited to, project overviews with information on the low-income tolling program, diversion route improvements and approaches to tolling. Details on where and how to review the EA both online and in person, as well as scheduling of the public hearing, will be provided soon.

More information will be available on each candidate bridge project website – which are listed on the [Major Bridge P3 initiative](#) page – as it becomes available.

Featured Funding Alternative: Managed Lanes



The [Major Bridge P3 Initiative](#) is the first, near-term alternative funding option that PennDOT is pursuing under the Pathways Program. But it's not the only option.

PennDOT Pathways identified [six future-focused sources of transportation system funding](#) as potential alternatives to safely serve our communities as gas tax revenue declines and inflation reduces buying power.

We're featuring those funding alternatives in PennDOT Pathways newsletters in 2022, with additional details this month on Managed Lanes, which are added lanes on a highway where the traffic is managed for faster travel.

Managed lanes are added lanes on a highway on which congestion is reduced through charging a toll and/or encouraging carpooling. Drivers are offered a choice to pay a toll for a reliable travel time on the new lane(s) with little to no congestion, or to use the existing lanes without charge. This is referred to as an Express Lane. A High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lane offers the additional option to carpool and use the managed lane free of tolls, while single occupancy vehicles using them are charged.

Whether it is an Express Lane or HOT Lane, tolls would only be charged on the newly added lane(s) giving drivers the option to travel on the general purpose (existing) lanes free of tolls.

The alternative funding [Planning and Environmental Linkages](#) (PEL) study has additional information on this potential funding source. More planning and studies are needed to identify candidate corridors where managed lanes would be appropriate.

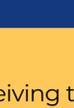
For more information about PennDOT Pathways, visit our website at penndot.gov/funding.

Want to share information on your social or digital platforms?

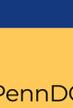
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