PROJECT SUMMARY

PROJECT INFORMATION

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is currently performing preliminary engineering and environmental studies for improvements along the Middletown Road corridor. The project is three miles in length between PA 283 and US 322 in Derry and Londonderry Townships and Hummelstown Borough, Dauphin County.

Middletown Road functions as a minor arterial, providing access to and from the residential communities and businesses within and around the corridor. The roadway carries over 16,000 vehicles daily; 5% of the vehicles are trucks. About 50% of the traffic is pass through with origins and destinations outside of the project area.

The purpose of the project is to improve safety and decrease congestion along the Middletown Road corridor. The project needs are the following:

- The crash rate, suspected injury rate, and injury rate in the corridor all exceed the statewide average.
- Congestion occurs at select locations throughout the corridor.
- Four unsignalized intersections have a sight distance that does not meet current criteria.

The goal of this project is to provide connectivity or opportunities to connect to existing bike / pedestrian paths within the neighborhoods adjacent to Middletown Road and the Jonathan Eshenour Memorial Trail

The primary proposed improvement to the corridor is the widening of Middletown Road to provide a continuous center turning lane and widening of shoulders to a uniform width. Adding a continuous center turning lane provides left turning vehicles an area to decelerate and wait for a gap in oncoming traffic while allowing traffic in the same direction to keep moving. This reduces rear-end collisions and safety issues associated with vehicles passing on the shoulder. It also facilitates left turns from driveways through two steps if needed. A uniform shoulder adds safety for bicycle traffic. It also improves safety by giving right turning vehicles an area to decelerate if needed and provides an area for vendor service access to parcels for mail, deliveries, garbage, etc. with no through traffic interruption.

Access management is proposed to improve safety throughout the corridor. Potential access management measures include adding islands, medians, or signage at select locations to limit left turns. It also includes closing and redirecting select access points to provide a more consistent spacing between primary access points along the corridor. These measures will help traffic flow, reduce vehicle conflicts, and improve overall safety.

Intersection improvements are proposed along the corridor. These improvements will consist of adding turning lanes and signals where warranted, modification to signal timings, upgrading pedestrian accommodations, and select side road geometry and approach realignment changes.

Other potential corridor improvements include the following:

- Roadway milling and resurfacing
- Slight alignment shifts and vegetation clearing to enhance intersection sight distance
- Select improvements to current bicycle and pedestrian facilities and incorporating design considerations for future municipal-led connections. This includes extending the Jonathan Eshenour Memorial Trail across Middletown Road to connect with the existing paths on the west side of the road.
- Drainage updates; lengthening / enlarging culverts where necessary
- Signing and pavement marking upgrades

SAFETY

Crashes within the project area between 2013 and 2023 were inventoried. The following is a summary of crashes reported:

- Annual crashes generally increased from 2013 to 2018 and decreased from 2019-2021, likely due to COVID timeframe reduced travel demands
- 2022 had the highest number of crashes in the past 10 years with 39 total crashes
- 26% of the crashes occurred in the months of January and October
- 18% of the crashes occurred during the peak period of 4 PM through 6 PM
- 65% of the crashes occurred at intersections
- 51% of the crashes resulted in personal injuries and 2.5% resulted in suspected serious injury
- 67% of the crashes at the Vine Street Interchange with PA 283 involve a truck
- Six intersections account for 56% of the crashes within the corridor

ENVIRONMENTAL

Middletown Road is located within an area of gently rolling terrain in Dauphin County, connecting US 322 and PA 283 and serving the communities of Hummelstown and Middletown. Land use along the corridor is characterized by a mix of residential, commercial, and agricultural development.

Environmental studies have been conducted to evaluate natural resources, agricultural resources, cultural and archaeological resources, and social resources including neighborhoods and recreational trail networks. Cultural resource investigations have identified several historic properties within the project area. Natural resources include limited wetlands and two streams. Impacts to wetlands are expected to be minimal, while minor impacts to one stream will be necessary to accommodate the lengthening and widening of an existing box culvert. No hazardous waste sites have been identified within the project limits. Minor impacts to active agricultural lands are expected and consist of small strips of right-of-way acquisition for roadway widening and intersection improvements.

Evaluation of historic and recreational resources protected under Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 includes the Stoverdale School House, the Strickler Farm, the Nissley Farm, the Jonathan Eshenour Memorial Trail, and various neighborhood trails. The Strickler Farm, Nissley Farm, and Stoverdale School House are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These historic resources are being reviewed in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Coordination is ongoing with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and other consulting parties to determine potential project effects and necessary mitigation measures. The Jonathan Eshenour Memorial Trail and surrounding neighborhood trail systems serve as important recreational and community assets. Public access and trail connectivity will be maintained throughout construction to the greatest extent practicable.

Project improvements will require earth disturbance and a need for a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit is anticipated. A waterway permit is also anticipated for the culvert replacement.

In summary, steps will be taken to avoid, minimize, and / or mitigate any environmental or cultural impacts whenever possible along the corridor.

UTILITIES

Aerial and underground utilities are present within the Middletown Road project limits. Utility relocations are anticipated in areas where roadway widening and intersection improvements will occur.

RIGHT-OF-WAY

The proposed improvements along Middletown Road will require minor right-of-way acquisitions to support roadway widening, intersection upgrades, and culvert extension work. While most construction will occur within existing PennDOT right-of-way, small strips of permanent right of way may be required in addition to temporary construction easements to provide access for construction activities and staging. Larger acquisitions may be needed in areas of intersection improvements or for stormwater needs, and one potential residential displacement is currently anticipated. All right-of-way needs will be coordinated with affected property owners, and efforts will be made to minimize impacts to private property.

MAINTENANCE AND PROTECTION OF TRAFFIC

Construction activities for the Middletown Road project will be staged to minimize disruptions to traffic and maintain access for residents, businesses, and emergency services. Temporary lane closures and traffic shifts are anticipated during roadway widening, intersection improvements, and culvert extension work. No detours are anticipated for Middletown Road. Detours may be needed for side road realignment. Coordination will be ongoing with local municipalities and emergency responders to ensure continued access and responsiveness throughout all construction phases.

SCHEDULE AND COST

Design is anticipated to continue through the end of 2027 with a contractor bid date in December 2027, subject to all approvals, environmental clearances and funding availability. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2028 and continue through 2029. The current project cost estimate, which includes design, right-of-way, utilities, and construction, is approximately $18 million.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If there are any questions or concerns related to the project following review of the resource materials, please contact **Mark A. Malhenzie,** Senior Project Manager by phone at **(717) 783-5080** or email at **mmalhenzie@pa.gov**.