FEBRUARY 2026

SR 2003-033: Middletown Road Congestion and Safety Improvement Project Items Being Changed or will be Further Considered in the Final Design phase as a Result of the Public Meeting Feedback

Numerous valuable comments were received by the public and officials during the public meeting comment period that enhanced the Design Team's observations and understanding of corridor needs. All comments were reviewed and considered, and if appropriate, were factored into the design to date in some manner. Some minor items that were suggested (e.g. cutting back vegetation or adding specific signs at select locations, signal adjustments, requesting speed enforcement, etc.), were passed on to the respective Municipalities or PennDOT's District Traffic/Maintenance Units, dependent on jurisdictional responsibility. The intent was to provide opportunity to assess and if warranted, consider for the short-term implementation and benefit of the corridor, versus waiting for the construction project several years away. Other comments that were more substantive in nature were also weighed, and the additionally provided insight in some instances resulted in the Design Team making reasonable adjustments of the corridor design, which will be incorporated into the project construction phase. A list of the primary changes being made include:

- Constructing Alternative 2 (right-in/right-out) at JoAnn Avenue in lieu of constructing Alternative 1 (cul-de-sac).
- Adding an eastbound left turn lane on Locust Lane at the signalized intersection of Middletown Road and adding an eastbound protective left turn signal phase.
- Left turns out of Apple Blossom Lane will continue to be allowed in the future; they will not be restricted as initially proposed.
- The design will incorporate removing a short section of the center median island on Colonial Way, located between Middletown Road and Kings Way. This will allow residents within the first block of Colonial Way circulation to turn left in and out of their driveways that would otherwise be affected by the proposed right in/right out only access at the Middletown Road /Colonial Way intersection,
- Investigating additional bicycle signage and pavement markings to be installed throughout the corridor.
- Assessing the reduction of the island sizes through the two PA 283 Ramp intersections along Middletown Road in order to provide minimum 5' shoulders for bike safety.
- Investigating additional signing to discourage trucks from using Wood Road.
- Coordinating with the Municipalities on consideration for constructing additional pedestrian paths along Middletown Road as part of the project.
- Consideration and coordination of other safety enhancements within proximity of the US 322 WB interchange and Lower Dauphin High School complex.

Details on some of the above referenced items are further explained below in the **Commonly Asked Questions** section of this document, which was assembled from questions asked during the public comment period, along with providing respective responses as follows:

Commonly Asked Questions

Why not construct Alternative 2 (right-in/right-out) instead of Alternative 1 (cul-de-sac) at Jo Ann Avenue?

Due to many comments received indicating concerns with fully closing JoAnn Avenue, inclusive of EMS efficient access and the additional traffic burden it will place at the Locust Lane traffic signal, the Design Team reevaluated both alternatives further, and will be advancing Alternative 2 (right-in/right-out) into final design as a more balanced solution that addresses safety while still maintaining necessary access. The decision on which alternative to construct is made based on many factors including but not limited to the degree to which the alternative meets the needs, safety, engineering criteria, public opinion, environmental impacts, right-of-way impacts, utility impacts, constructability, and cost.

Locust Lane is narrow, and traffic backs up at the signal. Why isn't it proposed to be improved with this project?

Due to many comments received indicating concern for the current width of Locust Lane and the inability of the single lane approach to the signal to handle traffic, minor widening of Locust Lane is proposed near the Middletown Road signal to have a dedicated left turn lane and a shared through/right turn lane egress to Middletown Road. This will better align with the Kaylor Road approach lane configuration. The added Locust Lane turn lane capacity combined with signal phasing adjustments will allow for increased operational efficiency from the side road. Additionally, a protected signal phase (solid arrow) will be added to the intersections northbound, eastbound, and westbound left turn lanes to match the existing southbound left turn movement to improve safety and efficiency.

Why not construct a roundabout at Southpoint Drive?

While a roundabout at the Middletown Road / Southpoint Drive intersection would safely allow vehicles from Southpoint Drive to access Middletown Road and calm traffic on Middletown Road, there are tradeoffs that make the overall alternative undesirable.

1. Queuing – The roundabout would regularly cause traffic queuing on Middletown Road and would cause extensive queuing during peak periods where queueing may not currently exist. Queuing is a safety concern as it could lead to rear end crashes.
2. Proximity to Adjacent Signals – Southpoint Road is about ¼ mile from the signalized intersection at Locust Lane / Kaylor Road and less than $^{2}/_{10}$ mile from the signalized intersection at Deer Run Drive / Stoverdale Road. The two signals are connected and coordinated. A roundabout between them would interrupt the platooning/progression of traffic on Middletown Road and would make the signals less efficient.

Overall, the benefits for the comparatively small volume of traffic from this side road would be far outweighed by the negative impacts that the roundabout would have on Middletown Road traffic which has a much higher volume.

Why not install a signal at Southpoint Drive?

The unsignalized intersection does not currently meet warrants for installing a signal. Signal warrants as a matter of standard engineering practice are established to ensure that traffic signals are only installed where necessary based on engineering criteria and to prevent the unnecessary expense. As traffic volumes increase or if future development occurs on the east side of Middletown Road, the warrants may be met and at that time, a signal installation could be considered.

Comments received indicated during busy periods, it is difficult to make a left turn from Southpoint Drive. The proposed design will provide improvements to this condition by increasing intersection sight distance. This will be accomplished by a minor shift of the intersection and by adding a southbound right turn lane and bike lane that will visually improve sight lines and allow vehicles on Southpoint Drive to stop further beyond the embankment and other features that currently limit sight distance. However, during busy periods, it may be ideal to turn left onto Middletown Road from the nearby traffic signal at Locust Lane which will receive its own proposed improvements.

Why not construct a roundabout at Wood Road?

While a roundabout at Wood Road would safely allow vehicles from Wood Road to access Middletown Road, there are tradeoffs that make the overall alternative undesirable.

1. Operations – With Wood Road traffic volumes considerably higher than the side roads of Southpoint Drive and Gramercy Place (North) where roundabouts were also considered, traffic operations software and traffic simulation software both indicated that a single lane roundabout will not be able to function effectively with future volumes. Future volumes overwhelm the single lane roundabout and cause long queues on Middletown Road and Wood Road.
2. Impacts – While a single lane roundabout could not operative effectively in the future, a dual lane roundabout could operate effectively. However, the dual lane roundabout would require Middletown Road to be further widened to at least four lanes (two in each direction) from south of Stoverdale Road to north of Wood Road. This would cause extensive impacts to the businesses, residences, and multiple historic resources which are immediately adjacent to Middletown Road. The signalized intersection concept which is operationally more effective also has the least impact to the historically eligible parcels than the footprint of any roundabout.

Proximity to Signal at Stoverdale Road / Deer Run Road – Given Wood Road is located $^{2}/_{10}$ mile from the signal at Stoverdale Road / Deer Run Road, the traffic queues for a roundabout during peak times could interrupt the Stoverdale/Deer Roads signalized intersection, whereby if Wood Road becomes signalized, the two intersections can be coordinated through timing for increased operational efficiency.

The prior temporary signal at Wood Road did not perform well, so why install a signal at the intersection with this project?

The proposed signalized intersection at Wood Road has several important differences from the condition at the time the temporary signal was installed as part of the detour for the Waltonville Road construction. The proposed signalized intersection will include a dedicated southbound left turn lane, a dedicated northbound right turn lane and two westbound lanes on Wood Road (one for left turns and one for right turns). The additional lanes will allow storage for turning vehicles and allow the signal to perform much more efficiently than the prior temporary signal. Another difference is the new signal at Wood Road will have its timings coordinated with the signal at the Stoverdale/Deer Run Road intersection. The proposed signal will include video detection that will allow for the signal to stay green for Middletown Road when no vehicles are on the Wood Road approach. The signal will not be programmed on a set schedule but rather will be adaptive to the traffic conditions.

Why not construct a roundabout at Gramercy Place (North)?

While a roundabout at the Middletown Road / Gramercy Place (North) intersection would safely allow vehicles from Gramercy Place (North) to access Middletown Road and calm traffic on Middletown Road, it would regularly cause queuing on Middletown Road and would cause extensive queuing during peak periods where queuing currently doesn't exist. Queuing is a safety concern as it could lead to rear-end crashes.

Overall, the benefits for the comparatively small volume of traffic from the side road are far outweighed by the impacts that the roundabout would have on Middletown Road, which has a much higher volume. Gramercy Place (North) will include a southbound right turn lane and bike lane that will visually improve sight lines and allow vehicles on Gramercy Place (North) to stop further beyond the embankment and other features that currently limit sight distance. Trees and shrubs obscuring sight lines will be trimmed.

Can more sidewalks / trails be constructed with this project?

This project currently includes the following proposed enhancements to the existing walking path/trail network:

- Updating existing pedestrian road crossings along the Middletown Road corridor to meet current ADA and other criteria. This includes evaluating appropriate lighting.
- Connecting the path along the east side of Middletown Road in front of the Sheetz and Stoverdale Commons with the path running along the west side of Middletown Road in front of the Hershey Heights Apartments.
- Connecting the path along the west side of Middletown Road at Matthews Way with the Jonathan Eshenour Memorial Trail including the installation of a rapid flashing beacon and raised center island at the proposed bicycle/pedestrian crossing of Middletown Road. The island will encourage traffic calming and the beacons will improve the visibility of the crossing for drivers to reduce speed.

The project also includes consistent 8' shoulders (minimum 5' shoulders in tightly constrained areas) with the intention of better accommodating pedestrians corridor-wide, among other functional reasons. Accommodative shoulders are particularly factored into the design for constrained areas when separated

paths are not as optionally viable. This is a balanced approach of accommodating project needs and goals, but without generating excessive impacts and cost. Finally, the project proposes as a goal, path/sidewalk network connections along the corridor at select locations to close some gaps, or design considerations will at a minimum factor in and not preclude future strategic enhancements to reasonably be constructed at a later date "by others" (e.g. municipalities, existing developments (HOA's), or future developers).

Due to many comments received desiring a greater connection of the path network along the corridor, the Design Team will coordinate with the municipalities and further evaluate the cost and impacts of additional select connections as either part of the project or through a municipal-led approach.

Can more bicycle accommodations be incorporated into the project?

The project currently includes the following proposed accommodations for bicycles:

- Consistent 8' shoulders (minimum 5' shoulders in tightly constrained areas) with the intention of better accommodating bicycles corridor-wide, among other functional reasons. Rumble strips will not be installed.
- 5' bicycle through lanes at select locations that include right turn lanes
- Connecting the path along the east side of Middletown Road in front of the Sheetz and Stoverdale Commons with the path running along the west side of Middletown Road in front of the Hershey Heights Apartments.
- Connecting the path along the west side of Middletown Road at Matthews Way with the Jonathan Eshenour Memorial Trail including the installation of a rapid flashing beacon and raised center island at the pedestrian crossing of Middletown Road.
- Bicycle pavement markings and signage as appropriate.

Additionally, in response to comments received:

- Bicycle box pavement markings will be considered as appropriate at intersections along Middletown Road.
- The project team will evaluate Vine Street through the PA 283 Interchange area from a bicycle safety standpoint. This includes assessing reduction of island sizes to effectively widen the narrow shoulders to provide a minimum of 5' through the two intersections within the interchange area.

Finally, constructing off alignment protected bike lanes are beyond the scope and budget of this project. The project design does not preclude additional paths being constructed in the future "by others" (e.g. municipalities, existing developments (HOA's), or future developers). However, in striking a balance, substantive considerations and improvements for bikes are being proposed as referenced above.

Were future development and its associated traffic considered in the design?

Traffic flow efficiency was determined using projected year 2050 traffic volumes that account for the growth of the local area as well as growth from planned and potential development along the corridor.

Specifically, traffic generation and trip distribution/assignment for potential future developable parcels followed the assumptions outlined in the Greater Hershey Regional Transportation Study (Nov. 2020) completed by the Borough of Hummelstown, Township of Derry, and Londonderry Township for Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC). Coordination also occurred with each municipality seeking any updates on any potential land development plans.

This project also performed its own set of more recent morning and afternoon peak hour traffic counts for numerous intersections along the Middletown Road corridor. These volumes were used in analyzing the existing condition and design year (2050) traffic operations. The design year traffic volumes took the existing traffic volumes, increased them for normal growth, and then added in volume for future development of the undeveloped land.

These current volumes will also be used to evaluate possible signal timing adjustments. Refinements and considerations to the intersections as design continues to evolve will be performed in a manner that best manages intersections to collectively work in concert with each other, striking a balance to best achieve the overall corridor project goals, while also minimizing impacts.

Traffic volume growth as a result of local development is a municipal jurisdiction responsibility. PennDOT does not have the authority to prevent municipalities from approving developments. As parcels may or may not be developed in future years, developers must first secure initial plan approval by the municipality. The developer will then be required to address traffic and safety and to obtain a highway occupancy permit (HOP) from PennDOT “if” access will directly connect onto a state-owned roadway, such as Middletown Road. The application for a HOP will allow PennDOT opportunity to review the request to ensure that an appropriate access point will be designed for construction. The developer may be required to install a signal, turning lanes, roundabout, or other measures at that time.

Why are you proposing a 3-lane roadway versus 4 or 5 lanes?

Widening Middletown Road to four or five lanes would cause extensive impacts to residential properties, businesses, cultural resources, and the environment. Through the addition of a center turn lane, intersection improvements and access management, traffic volumes through the design year (2050) can be accommodated by a single northbound and southbound through lane.

The addition of a continuous center turn lane on Middletown Road will separate left turning vehicles from through movements and will improve prediction of gaps. The center lane is being installed for safety to reduce crashes. It removes left turning vehicles from the through lane and adds an additional buffer between northbound and southbound traffic. With the removal of turning vehicles from the existing through lanes and maintaining a freer traffic flow, congestion will be reduced.

Providing uniform shoulder widths for additional functional use of turn movements, bicycle comfort, and vendor service access to parcels making frequent stops (e.g. mail, package deliveries, garbage, etc.) will be beneficial towards minimizing through traffic interruption.

Prior 2016 and 2020 local and regional studies considered 4 and 5 lane alternatives and generated significant controversy due to the potential impacts. The current proposed design of a more context sensitive 3-lane alternative has generated favorable public response.

How will traffic be maintained during construction and what disruptions can be expected?

Consideration of maintaining traffic along Middletown Road during construction was already a contributing factor in the current design by minimizing full roadway reconstruction in favor of a less impactful widening and overlay concept. Careful consideration will be given to minimizing disruptions as much as possible during construction, which includes maintaining residential and business driveways and intersections along the main corridor. Detours of the main roadway are not envisioned, with traffic expected to be maintained via staged construction, flagging, and/or potential temporary signals. Short-term detours may be required on select side roads with a substantive realignment (e.g. weekend closure of Wood Road) to allow for final construction tie in.

Is there a way to eliminate trucks and reduce speeds?

Middletown Road is a key arterial roadway connection between the US 322 and PA 283 interchanges, serving access needs to both the corridor's parcels and through movements. Providing safer and more efficient travel within the corridor for all roadway users is a key design consideration to meet the project's purpose and needs. Given the higher functional roadway classification as an arterial and considering it leads to freeway interchanges at both ends, trucks have a legal right to its use and is not an obvious candidate for truck restriction. A 5% truck volume is comparatively low to other similar corridors throughout the state.

Constructing a truck bypass is not a reasonable alternative. Regardless of the route, a bypass will have extensive environmental and right-of-way impacts, and costs that are far greater than the current Middletown Road Project, which would still likely require improvements to Middletown Road that a bypass could still not fully cure. A bypass is well beyond the project's scope of work and purpose and need.

Each municipality along the corridor has jurisdictional responsibility for speed law enforcement. Often, the issue rests with a municipality not having sufficient resources available to provide a continual speed enforcement program, when considering time dedication of other high priority services the police provide.

Adding traffic calming devices such as speed tables are not appropriate nor permitted on Middletown Road. Speed tables are allowed on local roadways, roadways with under 3000 vehicles or more per day, and roadways with speed limit of less than 35-mph. Middletown Road is a state-owned arterial with 16,000 vehicles per day and a speed limit ranging from 35-mph to 45-mph.

Reducing the speed limit is not an effective method of controlling speeds. Traffic tends to move at the speed in which the roadway is comfortable to drive regardless of the posted speed limit.