

4 PROJECT OUTREACH

Given the extensive history of this project, significant agency and public outreach has occurred across various stages during the life of this project (see **Figure 4-1**). This chapter presents the history of coordination efforts that have occurred during those different stages:

- Stage 1 of the project extends from the development of the project purpose and need in 1999 (U.S. 219 from Somerset, PA to I-68 in Maryland) to when Section 19 (currently Section 050) of the overall corridor became its own project in 2002.
- Stage 2 covers outreach from 2002 through the initial U.S. 219, Section 19 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) stage, prior to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation/Maryland State Highway Administration (PennDOT/SHA) rescinding the NOI due to funding constraints in 2007.

- Stage 3 begins when the project was restarted as an EIS project in 2014, prior to the project becoming a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study in 2015.
- Stage 4 is the PEL stage from 2015 to 2016.
- Stage 5 includes the design and construction of the 1.4-mile portion of U.S. 219 in Maryland that was broken out from the PEL phase (2016 to 2017).
- The last and current stage, Stage 6, extends from November 9, 2020, when the PA Transportation Secretary announced the commitment of funds for the project, to the present, including this EIS.

4.1 Agency Coordination

Stage 1 (1999-2002 – Purpose and Need Stage)
Coordination with Pennsylvania resource agencies began in the early stages of the U.S. 219 project, specifically during the development of the purpose and need, starting in 1998.

- January 26, 1999 – Presentation to the Pennsylvania resource agencies on the needs study

Stage 2 (2002-2007 – Initial EIS Stage)

Once this specific project (U.S. 219 Section 019 [now Section 050]) was advanced, coordination with both Pennsylvania and Maryland resource agencies was initiated. An introductory meeting was held with both PA and MD agencies and a field view was conducted. In addition, eleven agency meetings and field views were held between 2002 and 2007.

Stage 3 (2014-2015 – Restart of Initial EIS Stage):

Six agency meetings were held during the 2014 update to the former NEPA effort and before the PEL study between 2014 to 2015.

Stage 4 (2015-2016 – PEL Stage):

Eight agency meetings were held between Agency meetings held during the PEL study from 2015 to 2016.

Stage 5 (2016-2017 – 1.4-mile U.S. 219 section in MD from I-68 to Old Salisbury Road):

Five agency meetings were held in Maryland after the PEL study and during the development of the Maryland section of U.S. 219 from I-68 to Old Salisbury Road.

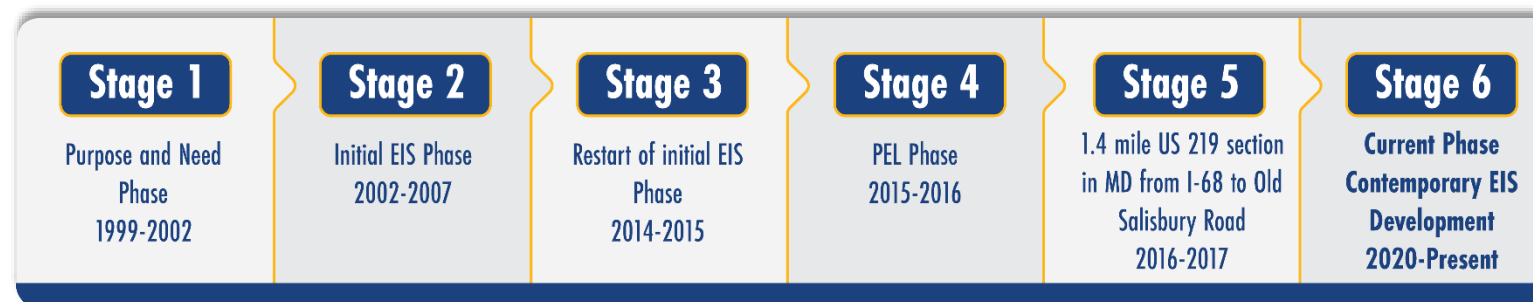


Figure 4-1: Agency and Public Outreach Stages

Stage 6 (2020 to Present – PA Transportation Secretary announced commitment of funds – current stage):

Ten agency coordination/interagency review meetings have been held since the project was re-initiated in 2020. The meeting dates and purpose are documented in **Table 4-1**.

Additionally, the project team had individual agency meetings to discuss issues specific to the agency's purview in more detail, including meetings with:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) regarding potentially affected bat species,
- United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE), PADEP, MDE regarding waterway permitting, and
- Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) regarding the presence of trout species and protected aquatic species in certain streams within the study area.

4.2 Coordination Plan

The *SR 6219, Section 050 Coordination Plan for Agency Involvement* and *SR 6219, Section 050 Coordination Plan for Public Involvement* (PennDOT 2022) were developed for the U.S. 219, Section 050 project as part of the NOI to prepare an EIS, which is included in **Appendix A**. These plans define the process to comply with the public involvement and agency coordination requirements in the

environmental review process, including those outlined in NEPA and related laws and regulations.

The purpose of the coordination plans is to facilitate and document interaction with the public, stakeholders, and federal and state resource agencies. The plans also inform the public and resource agencies of how coordination will be accomplished, and feedback will be received.

The 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) requires that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) establish a plan for coordinating public and agency participation in and comment on the environmental review process within 90 days of publishing the NOI. Per the PennDOT Publication No. 10B, *Design Manual Part 1B: Post-TIP NEPA Procedures* (PennDOT, 2019), the coordination plan must be shared with the public and with participating agencies so that they know what to expect and so that any disputes surface as early as possible. SHA's Transportation Environmental Regulatory Process (TERP) also requires a coordination plan that identifies opportunities for both agency and public involvement.

These plans were prepared in October 2022, and the NOI was published in the Federal Register on June 2, 2023. The description of the previous public involvement and agency coordination that has occurred on the project was broken out by several

different stages, similar to this chapter of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

4.3 Public Outreach

Stage 2 (2002-2007 – Initial EIS Stage):

A very robust public outreach program paralleled agency outreach, beginning with Stage 2 initial EIS activities. Outreach activities included:

- 2002 – Project Website Active
- March and April 2002 - Meyersdale Maple Festival
- August 2002 - Somerset County Fair
- March and April 2003 – Meyersdale Maple Festival
- August 2003 – Somerset County Fair

A Community Advisory Committee (CAC) consisting of a cross-section of interests in the project area was formed early in 2003 and consisted of approximately 25 members. The purpose of the CAC was to provide an additional method of communication between PennDOT, SHA, FHWA, and the local communities, and to provide input into project development. The CAC served as an advisory group to the project team ensuring local interests and concerns are considered in a timely manner. Since 2003, multiple members of the CAC have indicated that they could no longer serve. Replacement members were recommended by both PennDOT and SHA, as necessary.

Table 4-1: Summary of Agency Meetings since November 9, 2020 (Stage 6)

Date	Purpose of the Meeting
April 28, 2021	PennDOT District 9-0 updated the ACM about the Route 219, Section 050 project, including the alignment corridors vetted during the PEL process and anticipated schedule for the project.
June 16, 2021	SHA updated the Interagency Review Meeting (IRM) about the Route 219, Section 050 project, including the alignment corridors vetted during the PEL process and anticipated schedule for the project.
September 22, 2021	Project team presented the following information at the Joint ACM/IRM: process to move from PEL to NEPA, role of the ACM/IRM, anticipated Cooperating and Participating Agencies, review of the project Purpose and Need and logical termini, review of the PEL alternatives studies and how agency comments during PEL would be addressed in NEPA.
November 16, 2021	Agency Scoping meeting with representatives from Pennsylvania and Maryland.
May 25, 2022 June 15, 2022	Project team presented the following information at an ACM, and later at an IRM: review of the project Purpose and Need and logical termini, proposed NEPA study alternatives, review of Public and Agency Coordination Plan, and review of information to be presented at the June public meetings.
August 24, 2022	Project team reviewed the results of the June 2022 Public Meetings with the Joint ACM/IRM participants, reviewed the alternatives to be evaluated in NEPA and the associated impacts using the secondary source impact data, dismissal of Alternative DA from further study.
April 26, 2023	Project team provided the Joint ACM/IRM participants with an update on the status of the project, including the expanded Limit of Disturbance areas for various reasons and updated impact information.
October 17, 2023	Project team presented the following information at the Joint ACM/IRM: information from the June 2022 public meeting on the dismissal of Alternative DA and DA-Shift, detailed field mapping and impacts, local access designs under consideration and a potential for a direct connection with an interchange to existing U.S. 219 in Maryland.
January 24, 2024	Project team presented the following information at the Joint ACM/IRM: results from the November 2023 round of public meetings, modifications to Alternative DU, DU-Shift, E, E-Shift to avoid certain resources and the associated environmental impacts, and the Federal Dashboard Milestone schedule.
May 22, 2024	Project team presented at the Joint ACM/IRM the schedule for the Notice of Availability of the DEIS and the Recommended Preferred Alternative, E-Shift Modified.
March 26, 2025	<i>Project team provided updates on the Preferred Alternative and project schedule at the Joint ACM/IRM, and presented the results of the public hearings and the status of permitting activities.</i>
Note: This table lists all the agency meetings held since the project was reinitiated in 2020.	

Meetings occurred on the following dates throughout the initial EIS Stage:

- January 16, 2003
- June 19, 2003
- October 30, 2003
- June 2, 2004
- May 15, 2005

Public meetings and public officials meetings were also held frequently throughout the initial EIS stage. The public was presented up to date project information and the opportunity to provide comments. Approximately 200 people attended each public meeting. Meeting dates included:

- June 17, 2002 – Both public meeting and public officials meeting
- February 25, 2003 – Both public meeting and public officials meeting
- November 6, 2003 – Both public meeting and public officials meeting
- November 9, 2004 – Both public meeting and public officials meeting

During the initial EIS stage, four newsletters providing project updates were mailed out to a 900-member mailing database. The newsletters were distributed during the following times:

- Summer 2002
- Spring 2003

- Winter (January) 2004
- Fall 2004

Seven special stakeholder meetings were also held during the initial EIS stage. This included discussions with and presentations to residents, community interest groups, municipalities, and county officials.

Stage 3 (2014-2015 – Restart of initial EIS Stage):

Public outreach held during the 2014 update to the former NEPA effort and before the PEL:

- September 23, 2014 - Public informational meeting

Stage 4 (2015-2016 – PEL Stage):

Public outreach held during the 2015 PEL study:

- July 15, 2015 - Findley Spring meeting with Salisbury Borough, PA, and PA DEP
- August 19, 2015 - CAC Meeting
- December 10, 2015 - CAC Meeting
- January 6, 2016 - Public Informational Workshop

Stage 5 (2016-2017 – 1.4-mile U.S. 219 section in MD from I-68 to Old Salisbury Road):

Public outreach held after the PEL and during the development of the Maryland Section of U.S. 219 from I-68 to Old Salisbury Road:

- Summer 2016 – Newsletter
- September 8, 2016 – Public workshop

- September 9, 2016 – Open house
- February 6, 2017 – Joint location/design public hearing

Specific stakeholder meetings were held with private property owners within the Tomlinson Inn and Little Meadows historic property.

Stage 6 (2020 to Present – PA Transportation Secretary announced commitment of funds – current stage):

Seven public outreach meetings have been held since the project was reinitiated in 2020. These meetings are detailed in **Table 4-2** and **Table 4-3** and include the date and purpose of each meeting.

Previous CAC members were contacted in 2021 to gauge their interest in continuing to serve on the CAC. Due to various reasons, some members could no longer serve, so replacement members representing the same interest groups were recommended by both PennDOT and SHA. Four CAC meetings have been held since the project was re-initiated in 2021. The meeting dates and purpose are documented in **Table 4-2**

Current members of the CAC represent the following:

- Somerset Trust Company,
- Beitzel Corporation,
- Meyersdale Area Historical Society,
- Oester Trucking,

- Salisbury-Elk Lick School District,
- Savage River Lodge,
- Garrett County Development Corporation,
- Heritage Coal and Natural Resources,
- Salisbury Volunteer Fire Department,
- Somerset County Chamber of Commerce, Greater Cumberland Committee,
- Salisbury Borough,
- Garrett County,
- Somerset County,
- Maryland General Assembly,
- U.S. Senate,
- Salisbury Volunteer Fire Department,
- Somerset County Chamber of Commerce, Greater Cumberland Committee,
- Salisbury Borough, and
- Garrett County

PennDOT and SHA held three rounds of in-person public officials meetings and public plans displays accompanied by a virtual option. Prior to each public plans display meeting, a public officials meeting was held to preview the same information to be presented to the public later. The meeting dates and purposes are documented in **Table 4-3**.

The Public Plans Display No. 1 (considered the scoping meeting), held on June 23, 2022 (followed by a virtual public meeting on June 27, 2022),

presented the refinement of the alignments since the PEL study. Public Plans Display No. 2, held on November 16, 2023 (followed by a virtual public meeting on November 21, 2023), presented the refinement of the alternatives and the environmental impacts. Public meeting summaries for the June 2022 and November 2023 public meetings are contained within **Appendix AE**. The formal public hearing presented the preferred alternative and is discussed further in **Chapter 4.4**.

4.4 Public Hearings

Two public hearings, one in Pennsylvania and one in Maryland, were held to present the preliminary engineering results, environmental analysis studies, and preferred alternative as documented in the DEIS at least 30 days after the DEIS was available

for public and agency review. *The public hearings were held on December 11 and December 12, 2024, and the DEIS was made available for review on November 8, 2024.* The 30-day public and agency review period reflected the policy of the USACE; FHWA requires a 15-day public and agency review period. The public hearings were held jointly by FHWA and USACE. The public hearing dates were noted in the notice of availability for the DEIS, *which was published on November 8, 2024.* The public hearings followed PennDOT Publication No. 295, *Project Level Public Involvement Handbook* (PennDOT, 2021) and were advertised in the newspaper at least two weeks before the hearings. There were opportunities for both written and oral comments and attendees were able to provide oral comments either publicly or privately.

Table 4-2: Summary of CAC Meetings since November 9, 2020 (Stage 6)

Date	Purpose of the Meeting
November 3, 2021	The project team reviewed the role of the CAC, the process to move from PEL to NEPA, Purpose and Need and Logical Termini and the PEL Alternatives that were studied and those alternatives that are advancing.
June 2, 2022	Presented what the project team has been working on since the last CAC meeting and the information that will be taken to the June 2022 public meetings.
November 2, 2023	Presented the dismissal of Alternatives DA and DA-Shift, detailed field mapping and associated environmental impacts, local access designs under consideration and a potential for a direct connection with an interchange to existing U.S. 219 in Maryland.
April 11, 2024	Presented alternatives being studied in the DEIS and the Recommended Preferred Alternative – E-Shift Modified.
Note: This table lists all the CAC meetings held since the Pennsylvania Transportation Secretary announced the commitment of funds for the EIS on November 9, 2020.	

Stenographers recorded the oral testimony provided. The public hearings were also held virtually for those that could not attend in person. The team made accommodations to ensure all materials could be viewed by those who choose to attend virtually. Instructions on how to provide written comments were made available.

*A summary of the public hearings is included within **Appendix AF**. This appendix also includes transcripts for oral testimony provided at the public hearings. Furthermore, all comments received during the comment period in response to the DEIS are documented in **Appendix AF**, including a response to each comment. **Appendix AF** includes a copy of the letters received from local, state, and federal agencies as well.*

4.5 Other Outreach Tools

In addition to public meetings and hearings, the following outreach tools and strategies were utilized to accomplish the coordination plan's objectives.

Project Website

A study-specific sub-site hosted on PennDOT District 9-0's website is available as a central information hub. The website is updated throughout U.S. 219 project milestones. A link to the website (penndot.pa.gov/us219meyersdalesouth) is also available on SHA's project portal site. Website content included:

- Study fact sheets, updates, and public information materials, including public meeting dates;
- Study photos or videos;
- Meeting announcements;
- Media releases;
- Renderings of projects or concepts (e.g. drawings, maps, photos, videos);
- Study reports, as appropriate;
- Study milestones and schedule;
- Contact information (email address, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Engineering District 9-0 office address);
- Online form(s) to gather contact information and feedback;

Table 4-3: Summary of Public Outreach Meetings since November 9, 2020 (Stage 6)

Date / Type	Location	Purpose
June 23, 2022 / Public Officials Meeting No. 1	Salisbury Volunteer Fire Department: 385 Ord Street, Salisbury, PA.	Scoping Meeting, Process to move from PEL to NEPA, Purpose and Need and Logical Termini, PEL Alternatives studied and dismissed, Alternatives to be studied in detail, potential areas for access and project schedule
June 23, 2022 / Public Plans Display No. 1	Salisbury Volunteer Fire Department: 385 Ord Street, Salisbury, PA.	
June 27, 2022 / Virtual Public Meeting No. 1	Zoom Platform (Online)	
November 16, 2023 / Public Officials Meeting No. 2	Salisbury Volunteer Fire Department: 385 Ord Street, Salisbury, PA.	Refinement to the alternatives presented at the June 2022 meetings, findings from detailed environmental information for key resources, maps of Alternatives DU, DU-Shift, E and E-Shift, environmental impact table, status of potential direct connection in Maryland and project schedule.
November 16, 2023 / Public Plans Display No. 2	Salisbury Volunteer Fire Department: 385 Ord Street, Salisbury, PA.	
November 21, 2023 / Virtual Public Meeting No. 2	Zoom Platform (Online)	
December 11, 2024 / Public Officials Meeting No. 3	Salisbury Volunteer Fire Department: 385 Ord Street, Salisbury, PA.	Formally present the DEIS and FHWA Preferred Alternative and provide an opportunity for public comment on the DEIS, Section 404 permit, and MDE waterway permit application and water quality certification
December 11, 2024 / PA Public Hearing	Salisbury Volunteer Fire Department: 385 Ord Street, Salisbury, PA	
December 12, 2024 / MD Public Hearing	Grantsville Volunteer Fire Department 178 Springs Road, Grantsville, MD	

Note: This table list all the public outreach meetings held since the Pennsylvania Transportation Secretary announced the commitment of funds for the EIS on November 9, 2020.

- Important website links;
- *DEIS and Appendices.*

As appropriate, all comments and responses will be recorded and included in the stakeholder tracking log, technical reports, and project files.

Public Meeting Notifications

Notifications for all planned meetings and hearings included:

- Newspaper advertisements
- Direct mail invitations
- Electronic and social media
- Targeted media relations

Per the USACE requirements, public hearing notifications must be sent to all federal agencies affected by the proposed action, state and local agencies, and other parties having an interest in the subject of the hearing.

Newsletters

The U.S. 219 project team has a database of stakeholders interested in receiving updates about the U.S. 219 project. The database includes residents, businesses, neighborhood groups, elected officials, professional membership organizations, and other interested parties. A newsletter update in summer of 2024 was sent out explaining the modifications made to Alternatives DU, DU-Shift, E and E-Shift. The newsletter also included information about environmental resource

impacts and the notice of availability for the DEIS. This newsletter is included as **Appendix AG**. A similar newsletter is planned for Summer 2025.

Media

PennDOT and SHA promote the widespread dissemination of information by engaging reporters, soliciting media coverage, distributing news releases, and coordinating special events.

Social Media

The U.S. 219 project team coordinated with both PennDOT and SHA to use their existing Facebook and Twitter (now X) accounts to provide up-to-date project information.

Demographic Data

PennDOT and SHA asked meeting participants and survey-takers to voluntarily provide demographic data, including age, race/ethnicity, zip code, etc. This information allowed the project team to assess public involvement compared with overall demographics for the municipalities and counties within the project area to ensure a broad cross-section of people are participating.

4.6 Section 404 Permit

This project utilizes a merged NEPA/Section 404 process in which the final environmental document serves as the NEPA decision-making document and the Section 404 permit application. Therefore, the public hearing requirements for both NEPA and

Section 404 were covered with one joint public hearing at which the public had the opportunity to comment to USACE on the Section 404 permit application and to FHWA on the NEPA documentation. Additionally, Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) utilized the hearing for its determination on the project's Water Quality Certification request.