



PUBLIC MEETINGS AND COMMENT PERIOD SUMMARY

Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project

City of Scranton, Boroughs of Dunmore,
Moosic, Duryea, and Avoca in
Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties

Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Prepared for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
District 4-0



by AECOM Technical Services
Greater Pennsylvania Area

AECOM

May 22, 2023

Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

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Public Meetings

Public Officials Meeting and Public Open House Overview

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) District 4-0 hosted a public officials meeting on Wednesday, February 4, 2023, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., and a public open house on Wednesday, February 15, 2023, from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. to provide information about the Interstate 81 Reconstruction Project (Avoca to Scranton) to local and elected officials and the project area community. The public officials meeting was originally scheduled for Wednesday, January 25, 2023, but was rescheduled due to inclement weather.

Both meetings were held at Dunmore Elementary Center and were structured in a similar manner with twenty printed display boards showing preliminary traffic and environmental study findings, roadway plans, and project information. The team also provided a video rendering of the preferred alternative, live PowerPoint presentation delivered by the design-consultant project manager, live question and answer session, and hard copy comment forms. Copies of the display boards, PowerPoint presentation slides, a still frame of the project video with the Vimeo weblink, and the meeting wayfinding signage are included in the **APPENDIX**.

PennDOT and design-consultant staff were available to answer questions and collect valuable feedback from attendees. Technical support was provided by Dunmore School District facilities staff. Translation services were available upon request for both events and noted on the meeting invitation and virtual plans display webpage.

Virtual Public Meeting Overview

PennDOT hosted on their website a virtual online plans display that included PDF versions of the display boards showing preliminary traffic and environmental study findings, roadway plans, and project information, a video rendering of the preferred alternative, a project summary, Title VI description, project contact information, and a link to an online comment webform. The virtual public meeting materials were available online throughout the comment period, from February 15 to March 15, 2023. A copy of the webpage contents can be found in the **APPENDIX**.

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(Left) Meeting attendees receive information from Neil Shemo, PE, Design Consultant Project Manager, at the public plans display. (February 2023)



(Right) A news reporter and meeting attendees watch the project rendering video at the public plans display. (February 2023)

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Meeting Attendance

Meeting/Engagement	Location	Attendee Type	Attendance
Public Officials	Dunmore Elementary Center	Local and elected officials, emergency responders, PennDOT, and design consultants	41
Public Open House	Dunmore Elementary Center	Public, local and elected officials, press, PennDOT, and design consultants	119
Virtual Plans Display	SR 81 (Interstate 81) Section D46 (Avoca to Scranton) Reconstruction Project (pa.gov)	Public	Website traffic unknown
Video Rendering	Embedded Vimeo link on virtual plans display webpage	Public	190 unique views (February 1 – March 16, 2023)

Outreach Strategy

Public Officials Meeting

Local and elected officials were mailed personalized and signed invitations to the public officials meeting. Additional e-mail and phone correspondence was necessary to communicate the new meeting date (snow date) to elected and local officials, police and emergency response personnel, and local planning organizations. A sample meeting invitation letter has been included in the report **APPENDIX**.

Public Open House and Virtual Plans Display

Residents and businesses in the project area were notified of the in-person open house and virtual plans display meetings by mail. A postcard was designed to include a project and meeting overview, PennDOT and design-consultant contact information, and details about the comment period. Newspaper ads were posted in the Times-Tribune, Citizens Voice, and Times Leader about two weeks prior to the public meeting. A press release was issued through PennDOT and news of the upcoming meeting was covered by reporters at several local news stations and publications. Copies of the postcard, newspaper ad, and press release are included in the **APPENDIX**.

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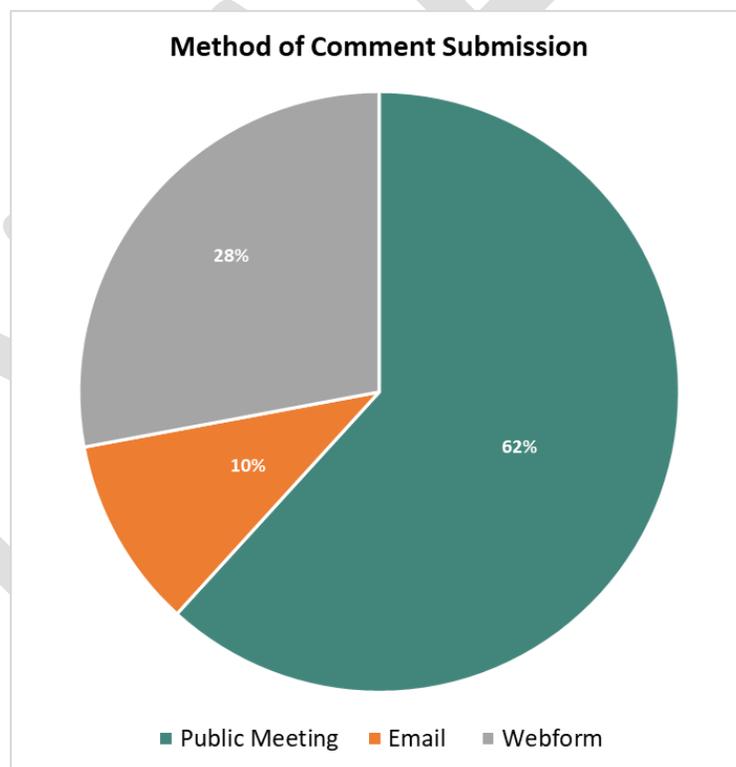
Summary of Outreach Activities

Outreach Type	Meeting	Number of Recipients	Recipient Type	Date (Sent or Published)
Mailed Letter	Public Officials	22	Local officials, legislators, elected officials	January 6, 2023
Email	Public Officials	12	Fire, police, emergency services, municipal and county staff	January 18, 2023
Postcard	Public Open House and Virtual Plans Display	12,000	Residents, businesses, and property owners in the project area	February 1, 2023
Times-Tribune	Public Open House and Virtual Plans Display	Current reach unknown; Scranton circulation	Subscribers and public	January 30, 2023
Citizens Voice	Public Open House and Virtual Plans Display	Current reach unknown; Wilkes-Barre circulation	Subscribers and public	January 31, 2023
Times Leader	Public Open House and Virtual Plans Display	Current reach unknown; Wilkes-Barre circulation	Subscribers and public	January 29, 2023
Press Release	Public Open House and Virtual Plans Display	Webpage reach unknown	Public, press, PennDOT website visitors	February 15, 2023

Public Comment Period

The virtual project plans were posted online and shared with the public on February 15, 2023. This marked the start of a thirty-day comment period, during which the public was invited to provide their comments and questions regarding the proposed roadway improvements via email, phone, or the comment form provided at the public meeting or on the website as a webform. Comments were accepted through March 15, 2023.

The project received 68 comments during this comment period. More than half of all comments received (62%) were submitted on the comment form provided at the public meeting. The comment form solicited identifying information about the respondent, including their contact information, demographics, and interest in the project.



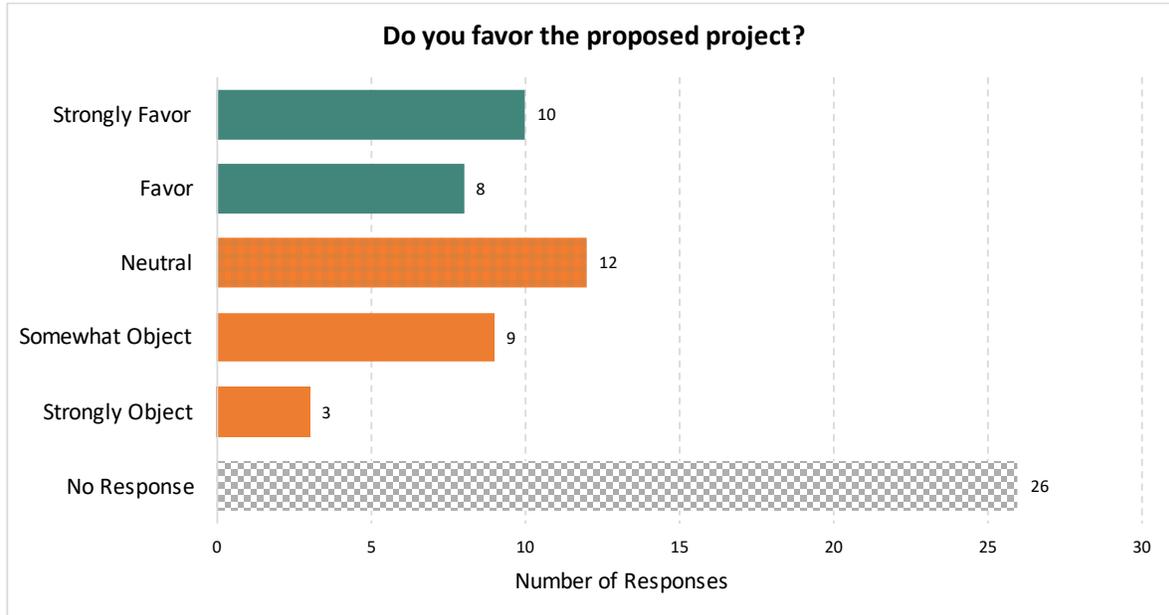
Multiple Choice Question Summary

Respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of the plans display materials, selected design method(s), and overall impression of the project For those that provided an answer to

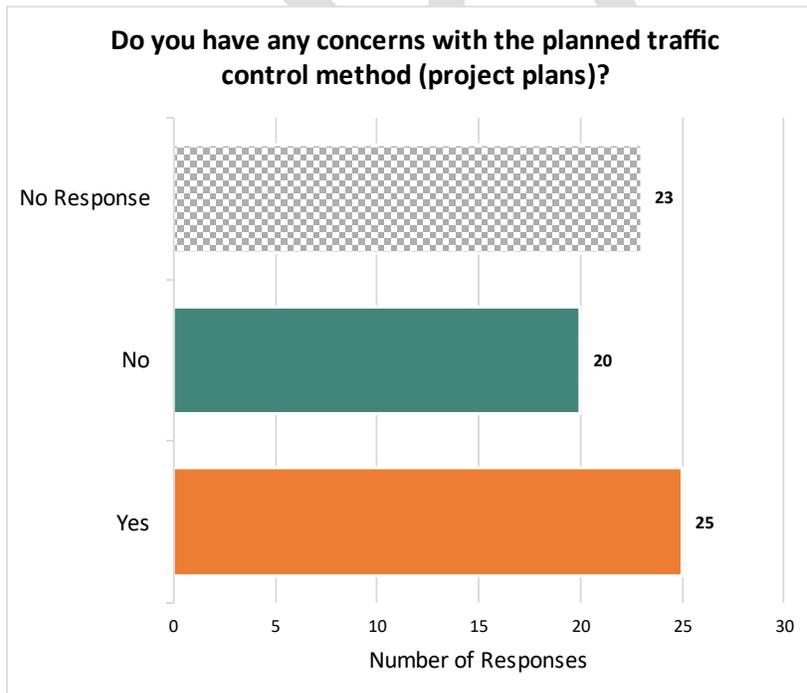
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the three multiple choice questions, most respondents felt that the proposed project was favorable and that the plans displays were informative.

Question 1. Do you favor the proposed project?

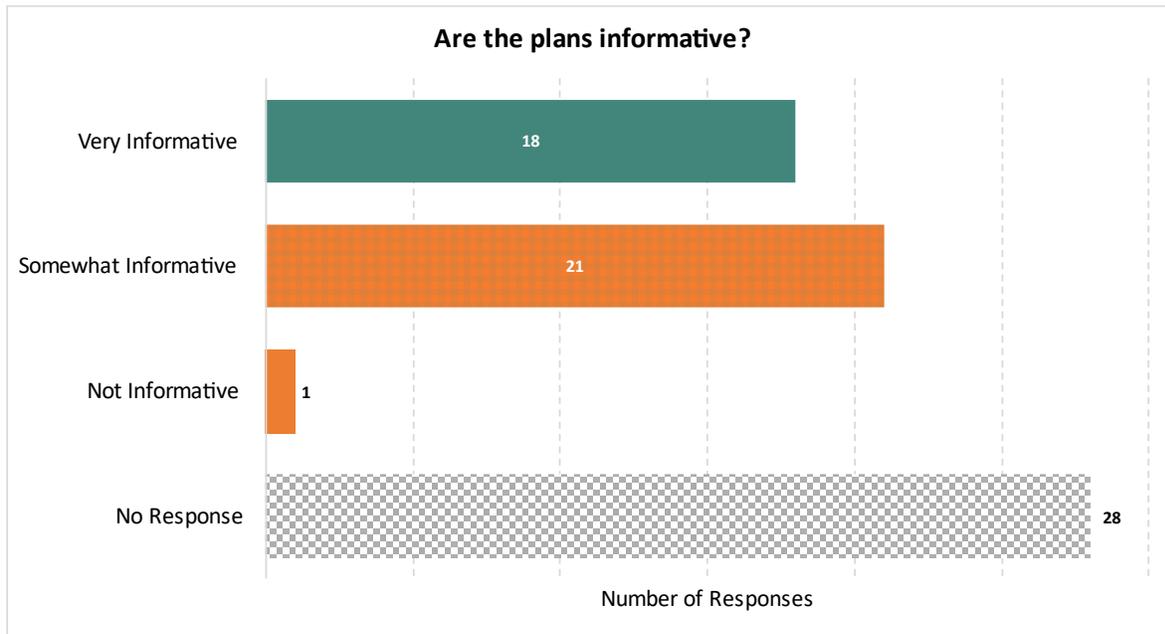


Question 2. Do you have any concerns with the planned traffic control method (project plans)



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Question 3. Are the plans informative?



Open Ended Public Comments

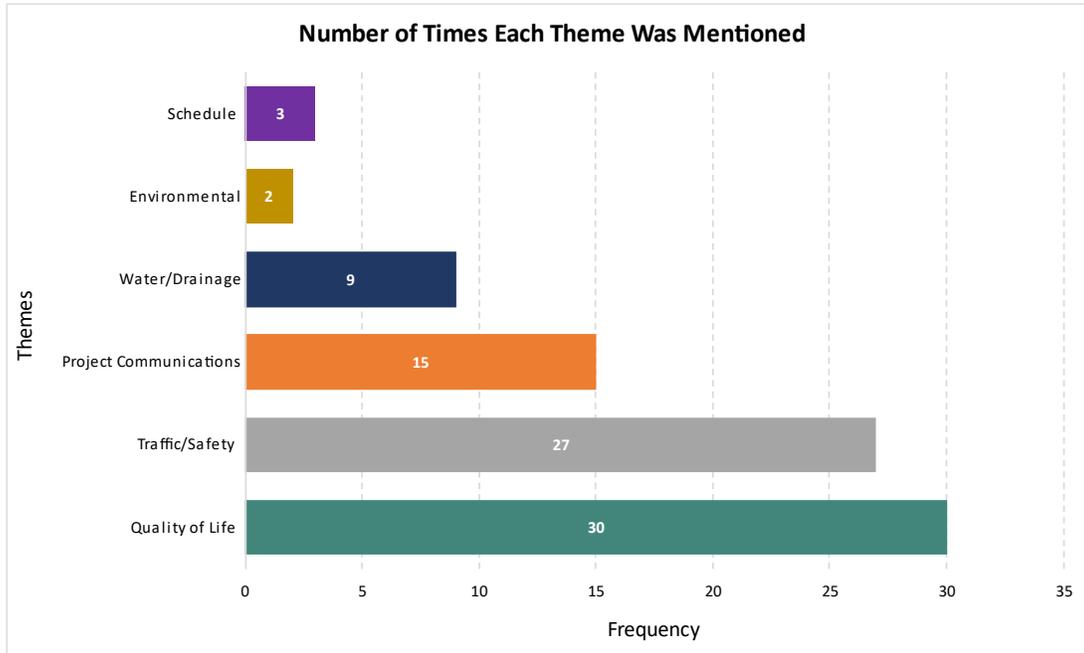
Each multiple choice question included a blank space for the respondent to elaborate on their response or ask additional questions about the project for the design team to respond to and/or consider. Respondent questions have been summarized in the next section, [PENNDOT COMMENT RESPONSE](#).

The most frequently mentioned topics, or themes, in the public comments included:

- Traffic and safety
- Quality of life (noise and property concerns)
- Schedule and cost
- Project communications
- Water and drainage (stormwater runoff and management), and
- Environmental concerns.

The graph on page 10 summarizes how frequently each of these topics were mentioned in the public comment submissions.

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Specific project questions submitted during the comment period and at the public meeting have been recorded and documented in the table below with PennDOT’s response. Questions may have been edited for clarity or content but have not been wholly altered.

In the near future, PennDOT will develop a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document to memorialize and answer a broad range of questions and concerns raised by the public and stakeholders during the comment period. This document will be posted to the project webpage and will be updated as needed and throughout the design process.

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PennDOT Comment Response

Public Comment Themes and Questions	PennDOT Response
TRAFFIC/SAFETY	
<i>Were traffic circles explored [...] in place of all of the proposed intersections?</i>	The proposed intersections have been designed to accommodate future roadway usage and traffic movements. Roundabouts were explored during the preliminary design process. This topic will continue to be evaluated during the preliminary design phase and as additional traffic data is collected.
<i>Will the grade on southbound 81 from St. Mary's Cemetery to Davis St. be lowered? I believe it exceeds +4.0%.</i>	The grade on southbound I-81 from St. Mary's Cemetery to Davis Street will be reconstructed to current safety and design standards. The maximum grade in the final condition will be approximately 2.6%, which closely follows the existing grade.
<i>Where does construction start?</i> <i>Will there be continued access [to ramps during construction] or will it be closed?</i> <i>How will the construction traffic affect Route 11 traffic in Avoca?</i>	<p>Construction will begin in the southernmost section of the project area (Avoca).</p> <p>Most ramps are expected to remain open during construction. Certain ramps may be closed for limited periods of time during construction and detours will be provided. Two lanes of traffic will be maintained on the highway mainline in both directions during the construction phase.</p> <p>PennDOT will develop a plan for managing traffic during construction, including detours and lane changes, in advance of the start of construction activity. This plan will be developed with the input of project stakeholders and will be presented for public review prior to the start of construction activities.</p>
<i>What speed limits will be imposed?</i>	Speed limits on the highway mainline are currently posted for 55 miles-per-hour. Future speed limits for the highway mainline in the final condition have not yet been determined.
<i>Does the new design [...] help us solve the problem of [the intersection] 5th Street and Birney Ave in the Doug Hill section of Moosic?</i>	PennDOT is aware of the issues with the intersection of 5 th Street and Birney Avenue. Potential solutions for this intersection will be investigated during the preliminary design phase and the selected improvements will be incorporated into the final design.
<i>Why a light on Birney Avenue?</i>	As part of the alternatives analysis, PennDOT studies the number and types of vehicles and how they move through the project area. At this point in the design process, a signalized intersection at Birney Avenue is found to improve

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Public Comment Themes and Questions	PennDOT Response
TRAFFIC/SAFETY	the future traffic flow and safety at the new intersection. Additional future traffic activities include looking at the proposed traffic control for all improved intersections prior to finalizing the design.
<i>Are there plans to install a traffic light at Route 11 and Rocky Glen Road to control traffic and allow access in and out of that intersection?</i>	This area is outside of the limits of the project area. There are not currently plans to install a traffic light at this intersection.
<i>Will city traffic touch heavy equipment traffic (industry truck traffic on Route 11)?</i>	PennDOT has contacted the respondent to collect more information in order to provide an appropriate response.
<i>I would like to know how much traffic, particularly large trucks, could be diverted to the PA turnpike from Dupont to Clarks Summit.</i>	With the Scranton Beltway project, the AADT (Annual Average Daily Traffic) along I-81 between the Wyoming Valley and Clarks Summit Interchanges is projected to reduce by an average of 14% (3850 total vehicles) in the northbound and southbound directions in the opening year conditions. Daily truck volumes are also projected to reduce by an average of 14% (700 trucks) in the northbound and southbound directions in the opening year conditions. Based on the project travel demand modeling data, it is anticipated that although traffic on I-81 will disperse to I-476 with the proposed direct connections, travel patterns on adjacent/adjoining roadways will shift to utilize freed capacity on I-81 following construction of the project. As a result of this “latent demand” as well as the impact of toll rates, the projected volume decrease on I-81 is not a one-to-one relationship to the projected volume increase on I-476.
<i>Why do we have 2 projects to solve the same problem?</i>	The goal of this reconstruction project, which covers I-81 from Avoca to Scranton, is to address the crash frequency on the corridor, resolve roadway and structure geometric deficiencies, reduce future congestion improve safety, and enhance mobility such that normal roadway upkeep can continue without significant traffic impacts.
<i>Why are we not expanding the highway to FOUR lanes in each direction, including the portion to Wilkes Barre?</i>	As part of the preliminary design phase, PennDOT studied the number and types of vehicles and how they move through the project area. Three lanes are sufficient to resolve the identified issues related to congestion and mobility. However, the city of Wilkes-Barre is not within the limits of this project area.
<i>My understanding is that widening highways does not alleviate</i>	The evaluation of future traffic demands extended beyond the interstate and included adjacent local roads and traffic movements in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties. In

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Public Comment Themes and Questions		PennDOT Response
	<p><i>congestion, rather it is more effective to add alternative routes. Why aren't you considering those studies and past experience?</i></p> <p><i>The presentation shows expected congestions on 2055 with the improvements, but studies have shown that lane widenings last about 5-10 years before new traffic fills into the extra lanes. Have you accounted for this in your forecast?</i></p>	<p>developing future traffic volumes, PennDOT considered potential diversions of local traffic to less congested routes. Results of the traffic analyses for this project indicate that the interstate should operate within acceptable traffic tolerances given the roadway types, according to the North American Highway Level of Service (LOS) Standards as outlined in the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) and AASHTO Geometric Design of Highways and Streets (Green Book).</p>
<p>WATER/ DRAINAGE</p>	<p><i>Concerned about storm water management at Moosic Street and River Street. How will this be managed?</i></p> <p><i>What steps will PennDOT take to eliminate risk of water runoff and damage to Borough of Avoca?</i></p> <p><i>Will improvement help with water runoff on 81 south?</i></p> <p><i>Recreational areas are flooded due to poor drainage, will that be addressed?</i></p>	<p>Plans for managing stormwater have not been prepared for this project yet. Plans for managing stormwater on I-81 will comply with current design standards and environmental regulations. There may be additional coordination with neighbors and stakeholder groups in the next design phase to investigate and discuss specific stormwater management concerns.</p>
<p>QUALITY OF LIFE (NOISE/ PROPERTY)</p>	<p><i>Parking in the 100 block of Meadow Avenue currently allows for perpendicular parking to the building. Will this parking be permitted?</i></p> <p><i>Will highway lighting be proposed at any points</i></p>	<p>Currently, there is perpendicular parking on both sides of the 100 block of Meadow Avenue. The preliminary plans show that the parking on the east side of Meadow Avenue will be impacted by the proposed widening and replaced with parallel parking spaces. The current parking conditions on both sides of Meadow Avenue will be further evaluated during the preliminary design phase.</p> <p>Utility and lighting plans will be finalized during the next design phase, which includes the development of</p>

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Public Comment Themes and Questions	PennDOT Response
<p><i>between the existing Moosic Exits and the existing Davis Street Exit? [...] what will be done to prevent light pollution for residents living adjacent to the highway?</i></p>	<p>information needed to prepare the lighting construction plans. Generally, roadway lighting will be provided in accordance with current design standards and regulations.</p>
<p><i>What is the impact to the Gravity Railroad?</i></p>	<p>PennDOT is aware of the Gravity Railroad and does not anticipate any impacts at this time. Additional historical impact studies are planned for the next phase of this project. Any impacts to historical resources that may be identified will be made publicly available during the final design phase.</p>
<p><i>Is it going to affect [...] any residential properties on Rocky Glen Road or residents in Moosic?</i></p> <p><i>What is the expected impact to residential sections of River Street?</i></p> <p><i>What is the impact to our neighborhood? (11xx Stafford Avenue)</i></p> <p><i>Will we be notified in the future of any land taking [...]?</i></p>	<p>Early studies for this project did not identify any residential properties or structures that will be displaced. Final steps to identify any displaced properties or land acquisitions will take place at the completion of the environmental clearance and preliminary engineering phase of the project in 2024. If/when necessary, PennDOT will work with any affected property owners to discuss the right-of-way acquisition process as well as fair market value for each impacted property. For additional information regarding the right-of-way acquisition and relocation processes, please contact refer to Publications 2047 and 2083 on our website: https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%2047.pdf -and- https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%2083.pdf</p>
<p><i>What is the noise increase level going to be?</i></p> <p><i>Are there sound barriers with this project?</i> [Regarding sound concerns, many commenters noted specific neighborhoods or streets. These included, but are not limited to: <i>Doug Hill, East Mountain, near the "long bridge" from Doug Hill to the other</i></p>	<p>A preliminary noise analysis will be completed in the next step of the design work. If Federal and State noise abatement criteria are met, noise walls will be recommended as part of the project to mitigate traffic noise. In those areas that satisfy the criteria, local residents and businesses will be contacted for input, coordination, and desires for noise walls. For general information about PennDOT's noise study process and abatement criteria, please visit our website: PennDOT Noise Publication.pub (pa.gov)</p>

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	<i>side of the Springbrook River/Creek, Moltke Avenue, Meadow Avenue, River Street, south of Avoca and at airports, and Dutch Hollow.]</i>	
	<i>Can truck braking be prohibited or restricted on I-81?</i>	In order to prohibit engine brake retarders, the roadway must not be a limited access facility or a ramp exiting from a highway with a posted speed or 85th percentile speed of 55 mph or greater. I-81 is a limited access facility with exit ramps. Therefore, an engine-brake retarder prohibition is not allowed.
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	<i>Are there plans for wildlife bridges to protect diversity?</i>	There are no anticipated impacts to sensitive wildlife resources at this time. Therefore, a wildlife bridge has not been considered. Additional environmental studies and agency coordination are planned for the next phase of this project. Any impacts to sensitive environmental resources that may be identified will be made publicly available during the final design phase. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and PennDOT must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other environmental regulations, which require that PennDOT investigate the effects that the project will have on the natural environment, balanced with both present and future transportation needs
PROJECT COMMUNICATIONS	<i>As an older resident, the traffic lanes look very confusing, but I was told all exits would be on the right going north or south?</i>	All of the exits on I-81 in the proposed plans will be on the right side of the highway mainline in both the northbound and southbound directions.
	<i>Will there be any further public meetings regarding the environment and drainage</i>	PennDOT will continue to meet with the public and stakeholder groups, such as emergency service providers, local officials, municipalities, and neighbors, as necessary during final design to keep them informed of the project's progress and address their concerns.
SCHEDULE/COST	<i>Why is the project management so unknown? What are the deliverables per year end?</i>	A tentative project schedule was provided at the public meeting and virtual plans display in February 2023. At this time, PennDOT anticipates preliminary engineering to continue to the end of 2024. This will include refining the project designs, coordinating with agencies, and obtaining NEPA clearance for the project. Final design is anticipated to be completed by late 2027 and includes the development of final plans, right of way coordination, and obtaining necessary permits.

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Public Comment Themes and Questions		PennDOT Response
	<i>Can this project be fast-tracked like the Casey expressway (1988-96')?</i>	Many of the tasks that are covered in the later design phase may take place at the same time, which may improve the project delivery schedule. PennDOT will make every effort to advance the design through to construction in a timely manner.
	<i>Why can't the toll plaza from Clark Summit to Pittston be free?</i>	This toll plaza is located on the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) highway near the Northeast Extension and is part of the Scranton Beltway Project. Although the PTC is PennDOT's partner in providing reliable and efficient transportation to motorists throughout the region, this project and the toll plaza is managed by PTC. We recommend reaching out to PTC with your comment: https://www.paturndot.com/traveling/construction/site/scranton-beltway Mark Raup, PE, PTC Project Manager mraup@paturndot.com or (717) 831-7249
	<i>How much of the project cost is for the additional lanes versus the interchange improvements?</i>	The current total estimated cost of this project is between \$500 million to \$600 million. The interchange improvements account for almost 85% of the total cost. The interchange costs include the additional lanes on I-81 through the interchange areas and improvements to the adjacent side roads. The improvements to the I-81 mainline beyond the interchange areas make up about 15% of the total cost. These improvements include reconstruction of the existing pavement and widening for additional lanes.

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Appendix
Display Boards

WELCOME!
Please sign in and take a handout.

Visit the displays around the room to view project plans and information on traffic and environmental studies.

A project video is available to view.

There will be a formal presentation and Q&A session with the project team in the gym at 6:00 p.m.

Don't forget to submit a comment form before you leave!

CONTACT
SUSAN WILLIAMS, PENNDOT PROJECT MANAGER
NEIL SHEMO, CONSULTANT PROJECT MANAGER
I81RECONSTRUCTION@AECOM.COM

Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Regional Interstate Projects

Scranton Beltway Project
Clark's Summit Connection
Anticipated Schedule:
• Preliminary Engineering/Environmental Assessment, Road Design (Preliminary) ends Summer 2023
• Public Meeting/Design in Summer 2023
• Final Engineering Design between 2023 to 2026
• Construction starts 2026
Contact Information:
• Mark Kemp, SR 81, Complete Construction Project Manager, at mark.kemp@penndot.pa.gov or (717) 851-2649
Website:
• www.penndot.pa.gov/interstate/reconstruction/scranton-beltway

I-81 Reconstruction
Avoca to Scranton
Anticipated Schedule:
• Preliminary Engineering/Design ends Fall 2024
• Right of Way and public hearings will take place Fall 2024 to Fall 2025
• Final Design ends Fall 2027
• Construction starts Spring 2028
Contact Information:
• Susan Williams, Penndot Project Manager, at s.williams@penndot.pa.gov

Partnership 61
Anticipated Schedule:
• Preliminary Design ends Spring/Summer 2024
• Public Hearing/Partnership Contract ends in May/June 2024
• Final Design and Right of Way acquisition ends Summer 2023
• Construction starts 2024
Contact Information:
• Orville Sartin, P.E., Penndot Consultant Project Manager, at osartin@pge.com or (717) 256-2644

I-81 Bypass Project
Anticipated Schedule:
• Currently under construction
• Construction ends Fall 2023
Contact Information:
• Carlos Sposito, Penndot Project Manager, at csposito@pa.gov or (717) 261-4737

SR 81 Section 230 Pavement Replacement Project
Anticipated Schedule:
• Final Design Summer 2023
• Construction starts Summer 2023
• Construction ends Fall 2027
Contact Information:
• Don Tran, Penndot Project Manager, at tran@penndot.pa.gov or (717) 851-2649

Scranton Beltway Project
Wyoming Valley Gateway Bypass
See above information.

SR 84-282 Twin Bridge Replacement Project
Anticipated Schedule:
• Currently under construction
• Opening of SR 433 southbound bridge from May 2024 to April 2025
• Construction ends Spring 2024
Contact Information:
• Carlos Sposito, Penndot Project Manager, at csposito@pa.gov or (717) 261-4737

For additional project information see Penndot District 4-0 Website: www.penndot.pa.gov/RegionalOffice/district-4/RegionalDefault.aspx

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I-81 Reconstruction Avoca to Scranton: Purpose and Need

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Interstate 81 (I-81) reconstruction project from Avoca to Moosic is to provide a safe and efficient transportation system for both local and regional traffic by addressing deteriorating roadway and structure components, resolving roadway and structure geometric deficiencies, reducing future congestion in the 2055 design year to operate at level of service (LOS) D or better during peak times, improving safety, and enhancing mobility.

NEEDS

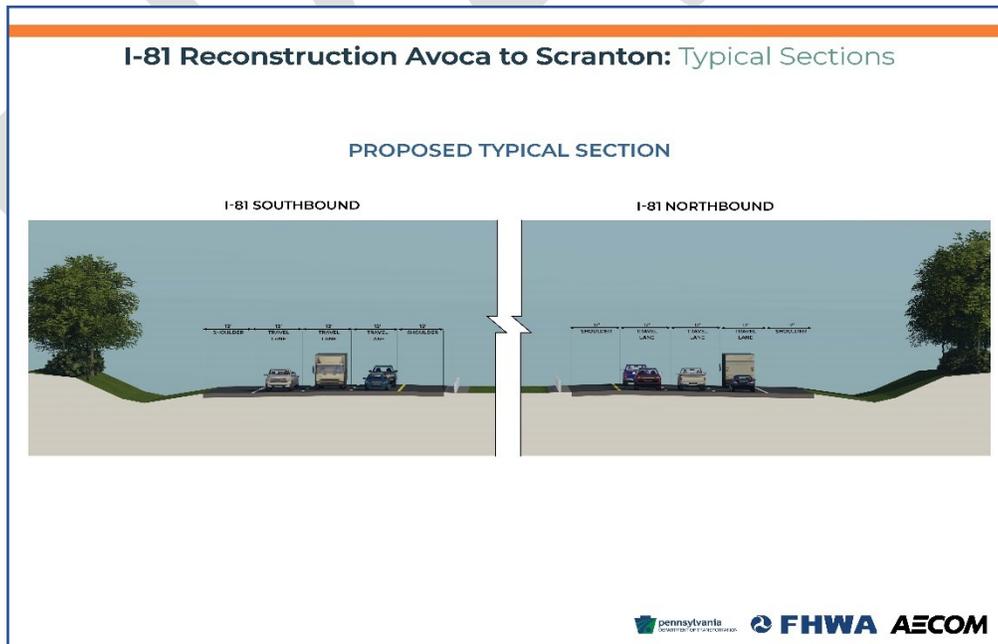
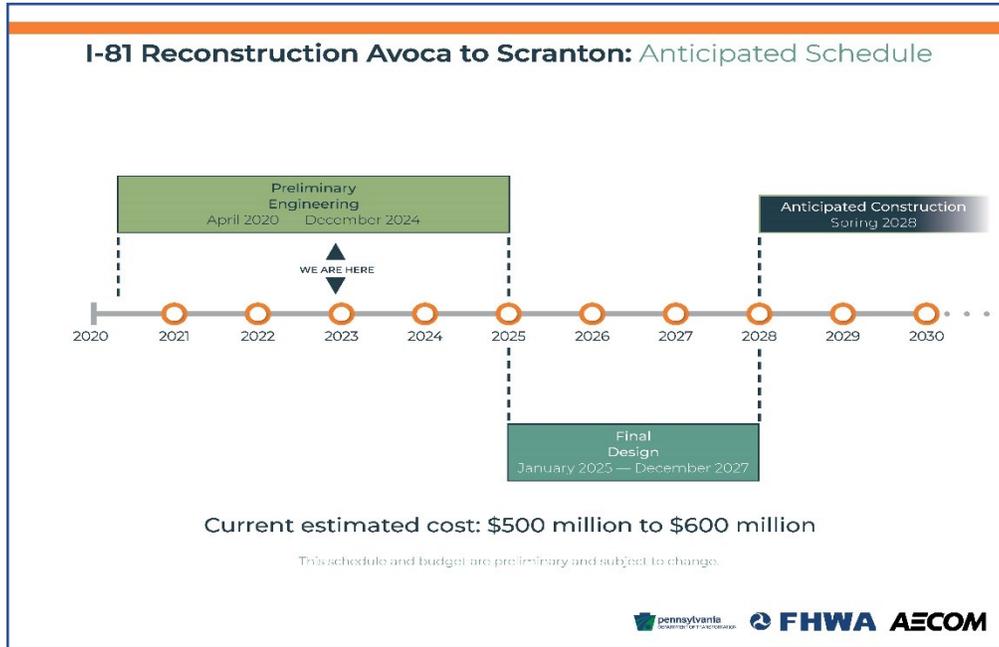
1. Expected crashes on I-81 sections within the project area exceed predicted crashes. Overall, the crashes and high frequency crash locations present along the I-81 corridor indicate design deficiencies and congestion.
2. Elements of the project roadway do not meet the geometric design criteria.
3. Multiple structures have poor condition ratings, are beyond their useful service lives, do not provide the required vertical or lateral clearances, or have insufficient width.
4. Current and projected future traffic volumes exceed the capacity of sections of the interstate, resulting in congestion and delays.
5. Mobility is hindered through a mix of short-range and long-range travel patterns and lane restrictions during maintenance activities.



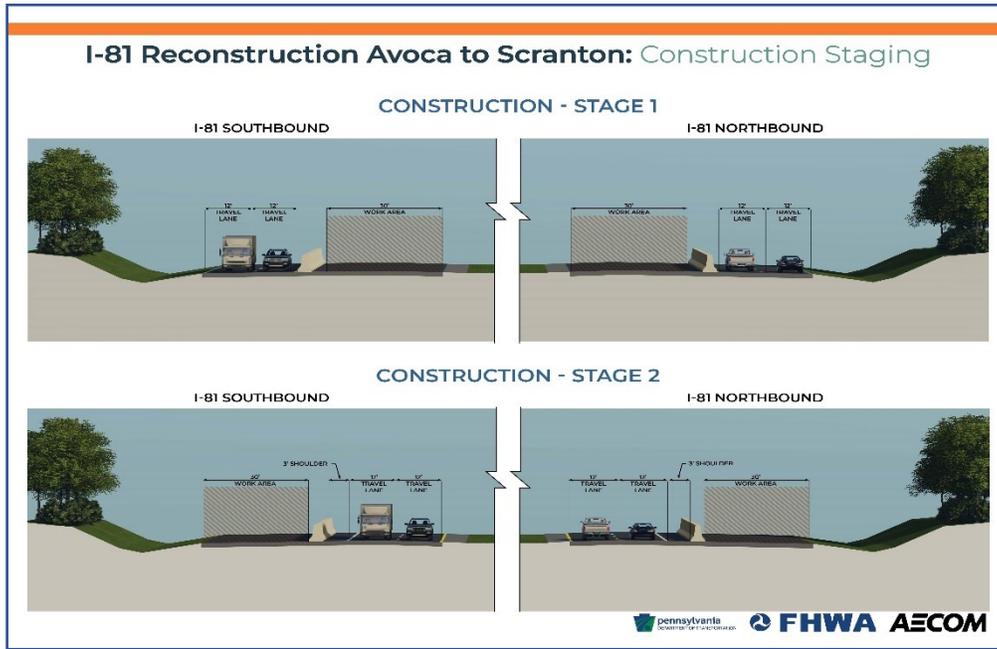
I-81 Reconstruction Avoca to Scranton: Project Area Map



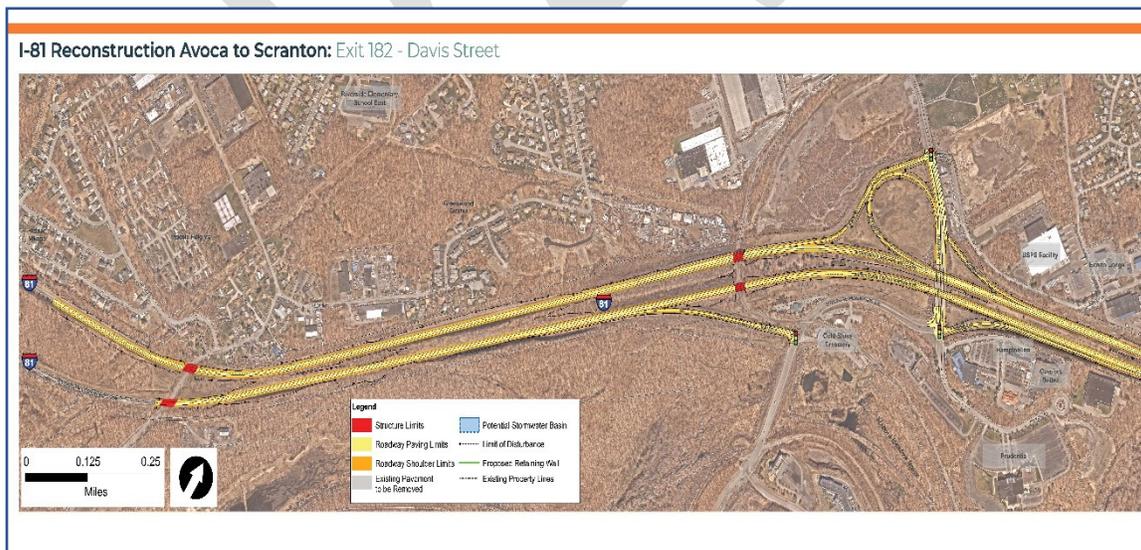
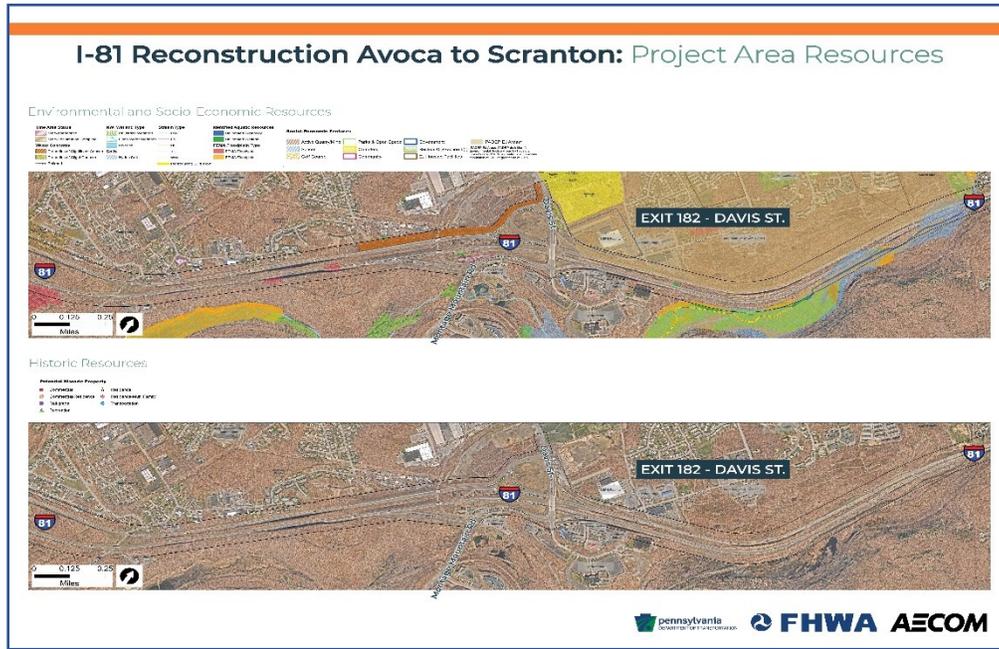
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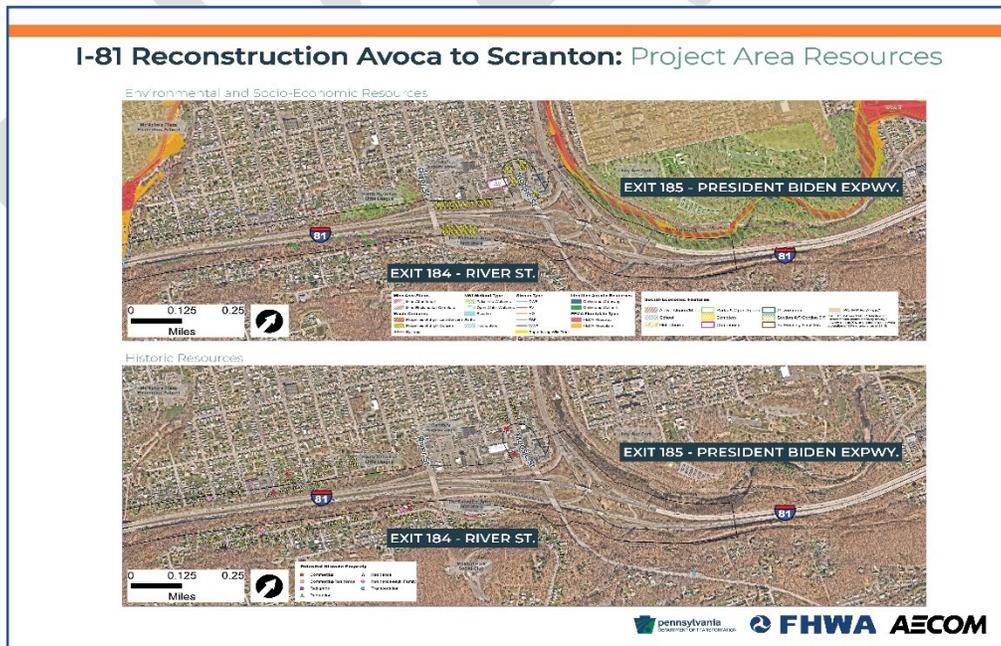
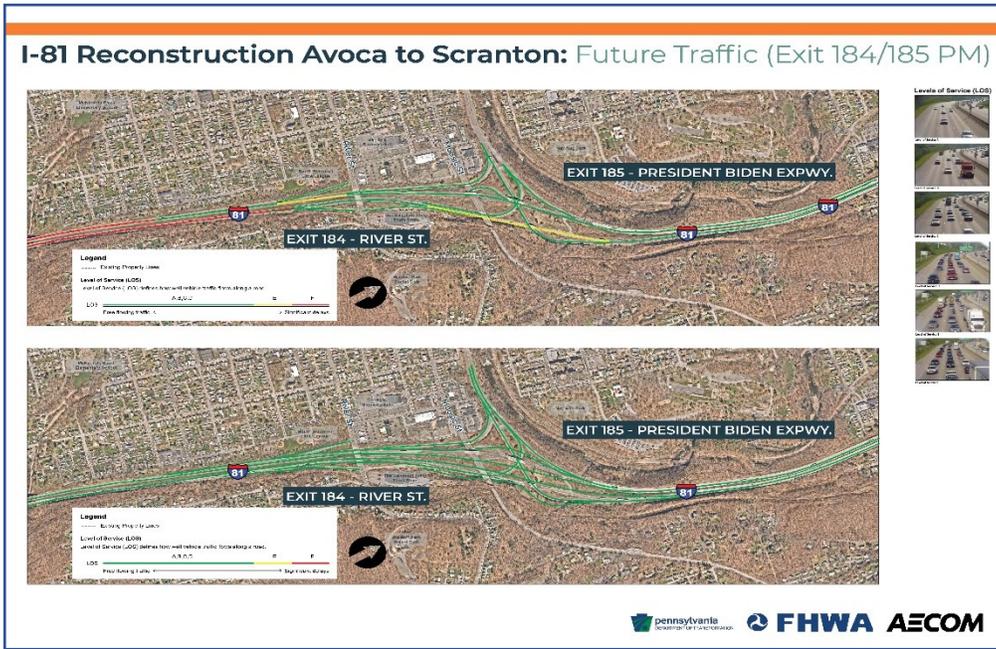
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I-81 Reconstruction Avoca to Scranton: Future Traffic (Exit 182 AM)



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Video

<https://vimeo.com/user193147717/i81reconstruction>



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Lawn Sign



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Virtual Meeting Webpage

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SR 81 (Interstate 81) Section D46 (Avoca to Scranton) Reconstruction Project



Project Information
County: Lackawanna, Luzerne
State Route: Interstate 81
Project Type: Roadway & Interchange Improvements
Proposed Start: Spring 2028
Proposed End: 5 Years
Designer: AECOM
Project Contact:
Susan Williams, PennDOT Project Manager
i81reconstruction@aecom.com

Resources

[Plan Display 1 \(PDF\)](#)
[Plan Display 2 \(PDF\)](#)

Project Overview

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) held a plans display regarding the SR 81 (Interstate 81) Section D46 reconstruction project, which includes improvements to the Interstate 81 (I-81) mainline and interchanges between Avoca (Exit 178) in the south to Scranton (Exit 185) in the north. The proposed improvements to this seven-mile segment of I-81 will address deteriorating roadway and structure components and design deficiencies and reduce future traffic congestion during peak travel times.

The purpose of the plans display was to introduce the local community to the project and collect their input and questions.

A virtual plans display was held online from February 15 to March 15, 2023, with digital versions (PDF) of the proposed plans, traffic and environmental studies, and purpose and need statements available in the "Resources" panel of this web page.

An in-person plans display meeting was held on February 15, 2023, at Dunmore Elementary Center, 300 W. Warren Street, Dunmore, PA 18512, from 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM. The meeting was an open-house format with a formal presentation and question and answer session at 6:00 PM. The meeting location was accessible to persons with disabilities.

The virtual project documents and comment form may be made available in alternative languages or hardcopy format upon request. If you need translation/interpretation services or have special needs or concerns that require individual attention, please **contact the PennDOT Project Manager**, Susan Williams, at i81reconstruction@aecom.com.

Virtual Rendering



Title VI

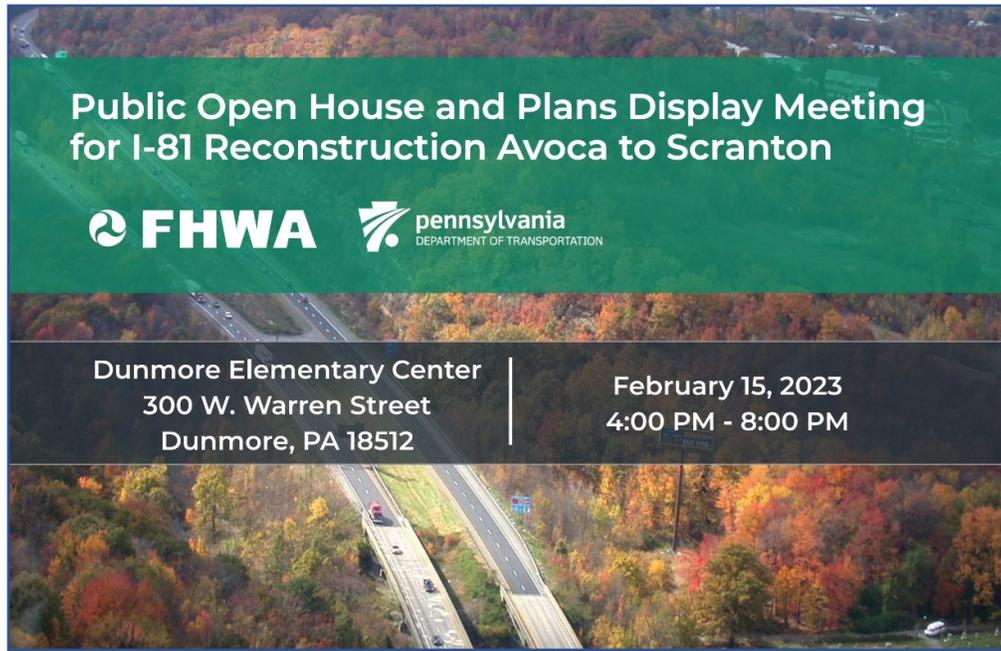
Pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, PennDOT does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. If you feel that you have been denied the benefits of, or participation in a PennDOT program or activity, you may contact the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Bureau of Equal Opportunity, DBE/Title VI Division at (717) 787-5891.

Detour

There is no detour planned for this project.

Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Postcard



<p>The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation District 4-0 and the Federal Highway Administration invite you to attend a public plans display meeting to learn about the planned I-81 Reconstruction Avoca to Scranton project. View the proposed plans and meet members of the design team, who will be available to answer questions and collect feedback from the community. The public meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. Any persons needing special accommodations are asked to contact Neil Shemo (see contact information below) prior to the meeting.</p>	<p>Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Engineering District 4-0 55 Keystone Industrial Park Dunmore, PA 18512</p>	<p>PRSR STD ECRWSS U.S.POSTAGE PAID EDDM Retail</p>
<p>Date: February 15, 2023 Time: 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM* Location: Dunmore Elementary Center 300 W. Warren Street Dunmore, PA 18512</p>	<p>Local Postal Customer</p>	
<p>*Formal presentation and Q&A at 6:00 PM</p>		
<p>Project Contact Susan Williams, PennDOT District 4-0 Project Manager Neil Shemo, Consultant Project Manager I81RECONSTRUCTION@AECOM.COM</p>		

Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Public Officials Letter

05-2 (2-22)



January 6, 2023

Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties
City of Scranton and Boroughs of Dunmore, Moosic, Duryea and Avoca
State Route 81, Section D46
Interstate 81 Reconstruction Project
Notice of Public Meeting with In-Person Plans Display

<First Name and Last Name>, <Title>
<Affiliation>
Address 1
Address 2

Dear <Title> <Last Name>:

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Engineering District 4-0 invites you to attend a public officials meeting to discuss the State Route 81, Section D46 Interstate 81 Reconstruction Project located in the City of Scranton, Boroughs of Dunmore, Moosic, Duryea and Avoca, Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties.

Date: January 25, 2023

Time: 5:00 p.m.

Location: Dunmore Elementary Center, 300 W. Warren Street, Dunmore, PA 18512

The purpose of this meeting is to provide PennDOT staff and their design consultant an opportunity to explain the project and answer questions on an informal basis. Preliminary design plans will be available for review. Your participation will be appreciated.

A public in-person plans display will be held at the same location on February 15, 2023 from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The meeting materials and a comment form will also be available to the public online in digital format from February 15, 2023 until March 15, 2023, and can be accessed by visiting the PennDOT District 4-0 website www.penndot.gov/RegionalOffices/district-4 and by clicking on Public Meetings under District Links, selecting the tile for Lackawanna County, and then selecting the tile for SR 81 Section D46 MPMS 87736.

If you are unable to attend the public meeting and wish to arrange a meeting to discuss the project, please notify the PennDOT Project Manager, Susan Williams, at 570.963.4253 or susawillia@pa.gov.

We appreciate your cooperation and assistance in our task of planning and designing better transportation facilities for the citizens of Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

Susan E. Hazelton, P.E.
Assistant District Executive – Design

PennDOT Engineering District 4-0
55 Keystone Industrial Park Road | Dunmore, PA 18512 | 570.963.4081 | www.penndot.pa.gov

Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Elected Officials Letter

05-2 (2-22)



January 6, 2023

Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties
City of Scranton and Boroughs of Dunmore, Moosic, Duryea and Avoca
State Route 81, Section D46
Interstate 81 Reconstruction Project
Notice of Public Meeting with In-Person Plans Display

ES# - #221001f

The Honorable <First Name and Last Name>

<Affiliation>

Address 1

Address 2

Dear <Title> <Last Name>:

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Engineering District 4-0 invites you to attend a public officials meeting to discuss the State Route 81, Section D46 Interstate 81 Reconstruction Project located in the City of Scranton, Boroughs of Dunmore, Moosic, Duryea and Avoca, Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties.

Date: January 25, 2023

Time: 5:00 p.m.

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If you are unable to attend the public officials meeting or public meeting and wish to arrange a meeting to discuss the project, please notify the PennDOT Project Manager, Susan Williams, at 570.963.4253 or susawillia@pa.gov.

We appreciate your cooperation and assistance in our task of planning and designing better transportation facilities for the citizens of Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

Richard N. Roman, P.E.
District Executive

PennDOT Engineering District 4-0
55 Keystone Industrial Park Road | Dunmore, PA 18512 | 570.963.4081 | www.penndot.pa.gov

Newspaper Ad

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC
MEETING WITH
VIRTUAL AND IN-
PERSON PLANS
DISPLAY**

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT



OF TRANSPORTATION

LACKAWANNA AND LUZERNE COUNTIES
CITY OF SCRANTON AND BOROUGH OF
DUNMORE, MOOSIC, DURVEA AND AVOCA
STATE ROUTE 81 SECTION D46
MPMS 87736

PLACE: DUNMORE ELEMENTARY CENTER
300 W. WARREN STREET
DUNMORE, PA 185212

DATE: FEBRUARY 15, 2023

TIME: 4:00 P.M. TO 8:00 P.M.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PUBLIC MEETING AND PLANS DISPLAY IS TO INTRODUCE THE PROJECT AND RECEIVE PUBLIC INPUT REGARDING ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS WITH THE PROJECT.

ROADWAY DESIGN ALTERNATIVES ANALYSES, TRAFFIC STUDIES, AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS MAPPING HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED FOR THE PROJECT AREA AND PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING THE PROJECT ACTIVITIES IS BEING SOLICITED.

INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE ON PENNDOT'S WEBSITE FOR REVIEW, WWW.PENNDOT.GOV/REGIONALOFFICES/DISTRICT-4 AND BY CLICKING ON PUBLIC MEETINGS UNDER DISTRICT LINKS, SELECTING TILE FOR LUZERNE COUNTY, AND THEN SELECTING THE TILE FOR SR 81 SECTION D46 RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT.

THE PUBLIC MEETING LOCATION IS ACCESSIBLE TO PERSONS HAVING DISABILITIES. ANY PERSONS HAVING SPECIAL NEEDS OR REQUIRING SPECIAL AIDS ARE REQUESTED TO CONTACT NEIL SHEMO AT IS1RECONSTRUCTION@AECOM.COM PRIOR TO THE MEETING EVENT IN ORDER THAT SPECIAL DISABILITY NEEDS MAY BE ACCOMMODATED.

Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Press Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 7, 2023

Contact: Jessica Ruddy, jeruddy@pa.gov

**Proposed Improvements and Public Comment Period Announced for
I-81 Reconstruction Project from Avoca to Scranton**

*PennDOT Releases Project Plans In-Person and Online for the State Route 81, Section D46,
Interstate 81 Reconstruction Project from Avoca to Scranton in Lackawanna and Luzerne
Counties*

Dunmore, PA - The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), District 4-0, will present preliminary plans to the public for the Interstate 81 (I-81) Reconstruction Project at an plans display meeting on February 15, 2023, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Dunmore Elementary Center gym at 300 W. Warren Street in Dunmore. Attendees can learn about the planned improvements to roadway surfaces, structures, interchanges, and future traffic flow on the seven-mile stretch of I-81 between Exit 178 in Avoca and Exit 185 in Scranton. The public is invited to submit their feedback and questions at the meeting, by mail or online throughout the comment period, which extends from February 15 to March 15, 2023.

PennDOT will deliver a formal presentation and host a question-and-answer session during the meeting at 6 p.m. An informational video illustrating the final condition of the highway will also be available. During the comment period, digital copies of the project plans, the project video, and a comment form will be available for the public to view on the project webpage, which can be found on the PennDOT District 4-0 website at <https://www.penndot.gov/RegionalOffices/district-4/PublicMeetings/Pages/default.aspx>. Click on the Lackawanna County box, then choose the file marked "SR 81 (Interstate 81) Section D46 (Avoca to Scranton) Reconstruction Project".

The project area begins at the northern end of the existing Avoca Interchange (Exit 178) and includes the Moosic Interchange (Exit 180), Davis Street Interchange (Exit 182), and River Street and President Biden Expressway Interchange (Exit 184 and 185).

"Our main goal is to reduce the frequency of crashes and traffic congestion along this corridor," said Rich Roman, District Executive for PennDOT District 4-0. "We're planning to widen the highway from two lanes to three lanes and improve the location of exits, as well as correct issues with roadway curves and lanes. These upgrades will really change the driving experience once the project is complete."

The proposed design calls for the removal of left-hand exits and standardizes roadway curves and lane widths. The new roadway will widen into the existing median and, upon completion, will include three 12-foot travel lanes and two 12-foot shoulders in both directions. Traffic along the new highway should flow freely based on predicted vehicle usage data for the year 2055 (or about twenty years post-construction) developed for traffic studies.

Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Press Release

PennDOT also studied various environmental and historic factors while developing the preliminary roadway designs. These factors included (but are not limited to) socio-economic features, waterways

and wetlands, historic properties, and waste concerns. Overall, the design avoids impacts to most of the identified environmental and historic resources in the project area.

The I-81 Reconstruction Project (Avoca to Scranton) is just one of six highway improvement projects in the region that are advancing through design or construction under the direction of PennDOT and/or the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission. In-depth planning and design work for the SR81 D46 project is still underway and will continue through the end of 2027.

"Due to the complex nature of the project, construction isn't expected to start until at least Spring 2028," Roman said. During construction, PennDOT will maintain two lanes of traffic in both directions.

In total, the planned improvements are estimated at \$500 million.

The project documents can be made available in alternative languages or formats if requested. If you need translation/interpretation services, have special needs or concerns that require individual attention, or would like to submit a general question or comment, please contact the project team at I81Reconstruction@aecom.com.

Pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, PennDOT does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. If you feel that you have been denied the benefits of, or participation in a PennDOT program or activity, you may contact the PennDOT, Bureau of Equal Opportunity, DBE/Title VI Division at 717-787-5891.

Motorists can check conditions on major roadway miles by visiting www.511PA.com. 511PA, which is free and available 24 hours a day, provides traffic delay warnings, weather forecasts, traffic speed information, and access to more than 1,000 traffic cameras.

511PA is also available through a smartphone application for iPhone and Android devices, by calling 5-1-1, or by following regional Twitter alerts accessible on the 511PA website.

Subscribe to PennDOT news and traffic alerts in Lackawanna, Luzerne, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming counties at www.penndot.gov/District4.

Information about infrastructure in District 4, including completed work and significant projects, is available at www.penndot.gov/D4Results.

Follow local PennDOT news on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/PennDOT) and like the department on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/PennDOT) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/PennDOT).

###

Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Comment Form

District 4 Public Display Comment Form

Lackawanna and Luzerne County
City of Scranton, Boroughs of Dunmore, Moosic,
Duryea, and Avoca
SR 81 (Interstate 81) Section D46 Reconstruction Project



Feedback
Please take a few minutes to fill out the comment form so we may better understand your concerns.

PennDOT plans to make improvements to the Interstate 81 (I-81) mainline and interchanges between Avoca (Exit 178) in the south to Scranton (Exit 185) in the north. The proposed improvements will address deteriorating roadway and structure components and design deficiencies and reduce future traffic congestion during peak travel times.

1. Do you favor the proposed project?
 Strongly Favor Favor Neutral Somewhat Object Strongly Object

2. Do you have questions about the project? Yes No
If yes, please list your questions and the project team will get back to you. (Please be sure to fill out your contact information below.)

3. Do you have any concerns with the planned Traffic Control Method? Yes No
If yes, please list your concerns and the project team will get back to you. (Please be sure to fill out your contact information below.)

4. Are the plans informative?
 Very Informative Somewhat Informative Not Informative
Please provide comments:

5. What can be done to improve the presentation?

6. Do you have other specific comments or concerns? Please list them and the project team will get back to you. (Please be sure to fill out your contact information below.)

Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

7. What is your interest in the project?

- Property Owner Business Owner Resident Commuter Stakeholder Other

If other, please explain:

.....
Contact Information:

Please provide the following information in the event we wish to contact you for follow up information.

Name _____

Phone Number _____ Email: _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Thank you for taking the time to give us your comments and suggestions.

.....
Voluntary Information Survey (Optional)

As a recipient of federal funds, PennDOT strives to involve all groups relevant to its projects in its public involvement activities. The following information will assist PennDOT in planning outreach to communities during the course of the project. Thank you for your participation.

Zip Code: _____ County: _____

Gender:
 Male Female Non-Binary

Race/Ethnicity:
 Hispanic or Latino Asian
 Black or African American White
 American Indian or Alaskan Native Other
 Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander

Disability
 Yes No

Household Income
 \$0-\$12,000 \$13,000-\$24,000
 \$25,000-\$36,000 \$37,000-\$48,000
 \$49,000-\$60,000 \$61,000+

First Language
 English Spanish
 French German
 Vietnamese Korean
 Chinese Russian
 Tagalog Other

Second Language
 English Spanish
 French German
 Vietnamese Korean
 Chinese Russian
 Tagalog Other

.....
Please return your comments by mail or email to:

Sue Williams, Project Manager
PennDOT District 4
55 Keystone Industrial Park Road, Dunmore, PA 18512
I81Reconstruction@aecom.com

Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

PowerPoint



PennDOT District 4-0

Interstate 81 Reconstruction Project Avoca to Scranton

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

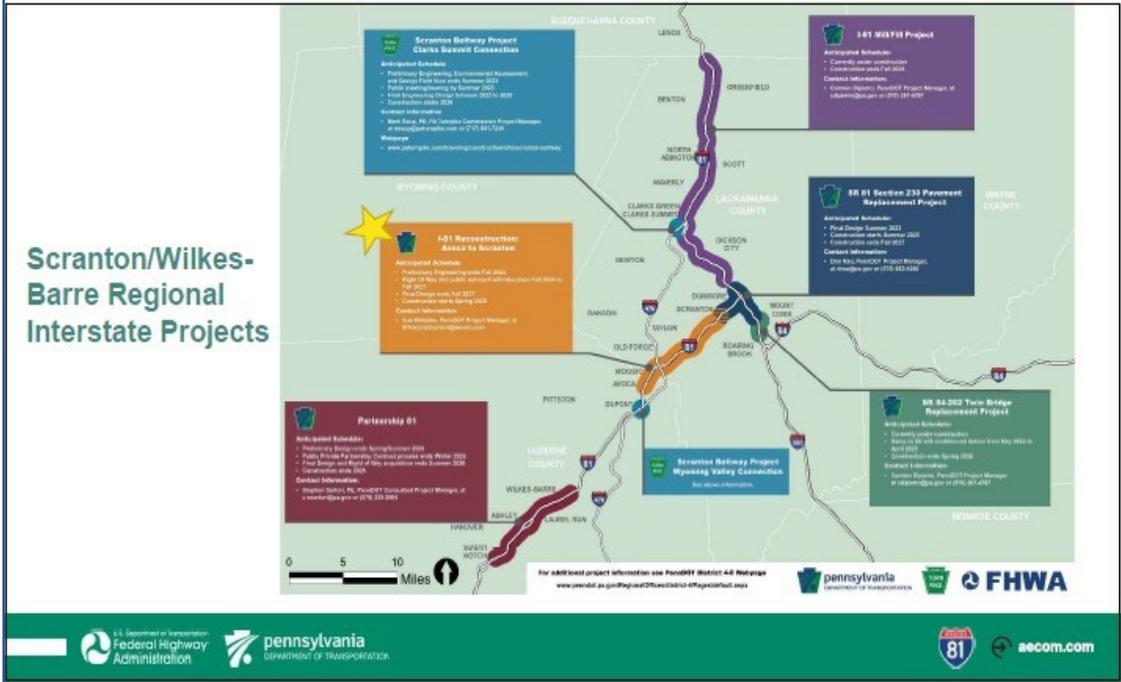
pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Agreement E04265
SR 81 Section D46
MPMS 87736

Public Meeting
February 15, 2023

1

Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Regional Interstate Projects



**Scranton Beltway Project
Clerks Summit Connection**

**I-81 Reconstruction
Avoca to Scranton**

**SR 81 Section 231 Pavement
Reconstruction Project**

**SR 84-202 Twin Bridge
Reconstruction Project**

**Scranton Beltway Project
Wyoming Valley Connection**

Partnership 81

For more project information see PennDOT District 4-0 Website
www.penndot.gov/Pages/274.html#id=40ProjectList.aspx

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FHWA

81 aecom.com

Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary



3

Project Purpose and Need - Purpose

The purpose of the Interstate 81 (I-81) reconstruction project from Avoca to Scranton is to provide a **safe and efficient** transportation system for both local and regional traffic by addressing deteriorating roadway and structure components, resolving roadway and structure geometric deficiencies, **reducing future congestion** in the 2055 design year to operate at level of service (LOS) D or better¹ during peak times, improving safety, and enhancing mobility.

Five project needs and related goals have been identified.

¹ The recommended LOS design guideline for urban freeways is LOS C or D according to A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, 6th Edition (AASHTO 2011).

Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Project Purpose and Need – Need 1

Expected crashes on I-81 sections within the project area exceed predicted crashes. Overall, the crashes and high frequency crash locations present along the I-81 corridor indicate design deficiencies and congestion¹.



Vehicle congestion on I-81.
(Times - Tribune Stock Photo)

¹Analysis of the expected and predicted crashes was conducted using Highway Safety Manual methodologies calibrated for Pennsylvania crash frequencies.



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Project Purpose and Need – Need 2

Elements of the project roadway do not meet the geometric design criteria.



Substandard deceleration lane on I-81 southbound.



Left-hand exit on I-81 northbound.



Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Project Purpose and Need – Need 3

Multiple structures have poor condition ratings, are beyond their useful service lives, do not provide the required vertical or lateral clearances¹, or have insufficient width.



¹ Most of the structures were built when the transportation corridor was constructed between 1955 and 1966. The original structures are now beyond their useful service life, which is 50 years for major bridge elements, per PennDOT, 2019, Publication 15M, Design Manual Part 4, December 2019 Edition.



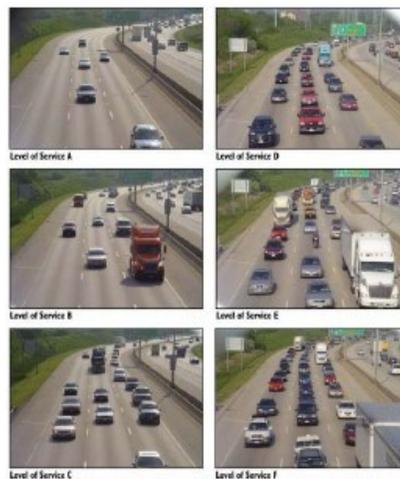
7

Project Purpose and Need – Need 4

Current and projected future traffic volumes exceed the capacity of sections of the interstate, resulting in congestion and delays.

Level of Service (LOS)

Level of Service (LOS) defines how well vehicle traffic flows along a road.



Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Project Purpose and Need – Need 5

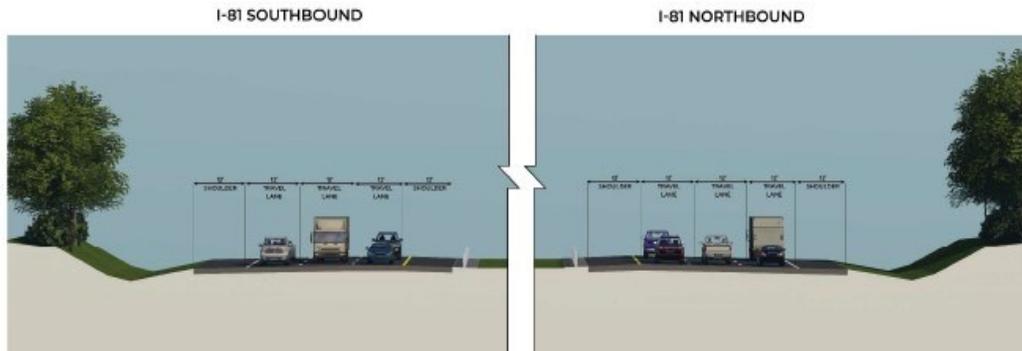
Mobility is hindered through a mix of short-range and long-range travel patterns and lane restrictions during maintenance activities.



U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration | pennsylvania DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | I-81 | aecom.com

9

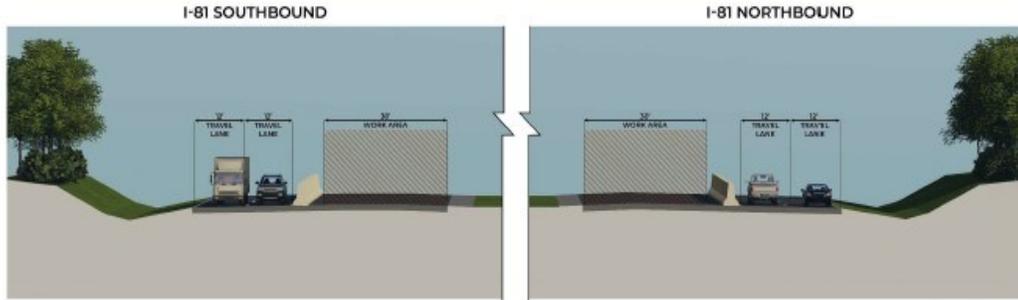
Proposed Typical Section – Future Roadway Condition



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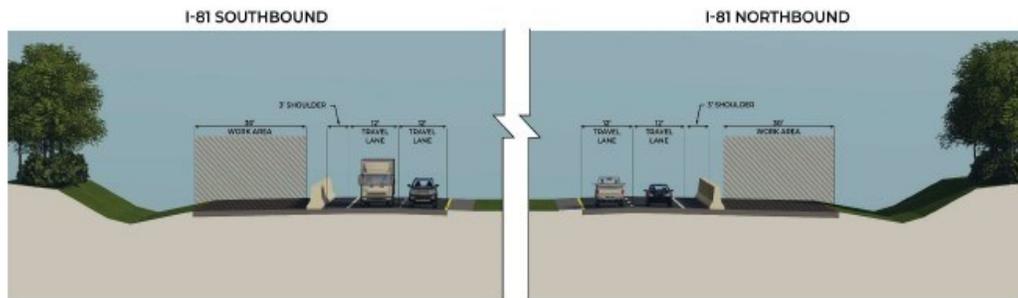
Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Construction Staging – Phase 1



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Construction Staging – Phase 2



Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Current Alignment – Exit 180 / Moosic Interchange



U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration | pennsylvania DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION |  | 

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Proposed Alignment – Exit 180 / Moosic Interchange



U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration | pennsylvania DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION |  | 

Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Proposed Alignment – Exit 180 / Moosic Interchange



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Planned Improvements – Exit 180 / Moosic Interchange



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Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Future Traffic – Exit 180 / No Proposed Improvements (AM)



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Future Traffic – Exit 180 / Proposed Improvements (AM)



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Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Future Traffic – Exit 180 / No Proposed Improvements (PM)



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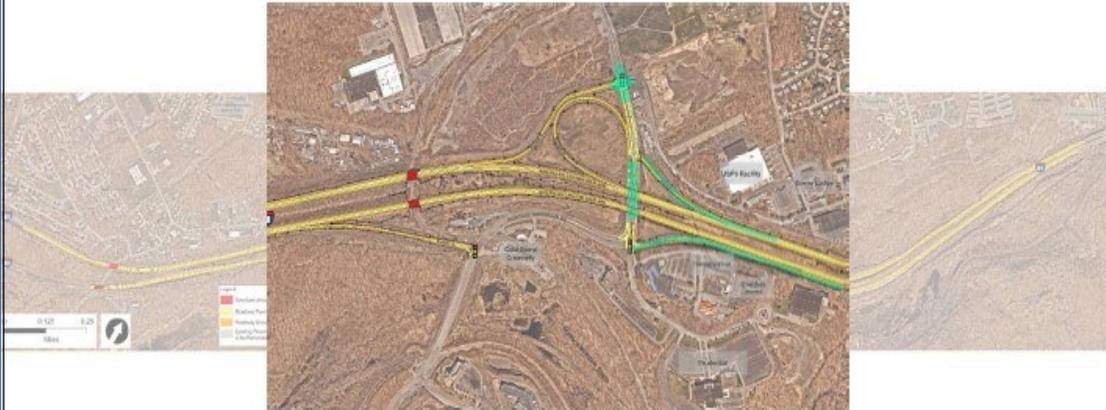
Future Traffic – Exit 180 / Proposed Improvements (PM)



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Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Proposed Alignment – Exit 182 / Davis Street Interchange



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Planned Improvements – Exit 182 / Davis Street Interchange



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Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

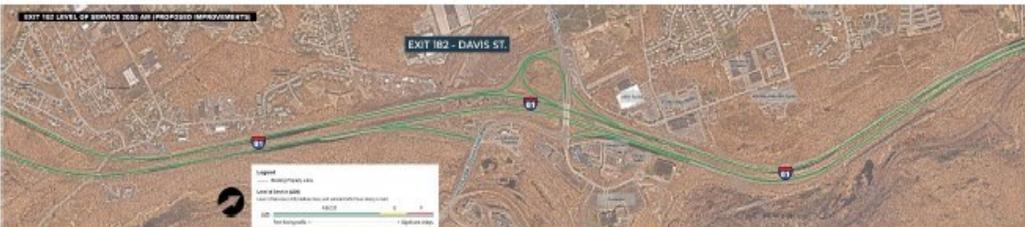
Future Traffic – Exit 182 / No Proposed Improvements (AM)



U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration | pennsylvania DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | I-81 | aecom.com

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Future Traffic – Exit 182 / Proposed Improvements (AM)



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Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Future Traffic – Exit 182 / No Proposed Improvements (PM)



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Future Traffic – Exit 182 / Proposed Improvements (PM)



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Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

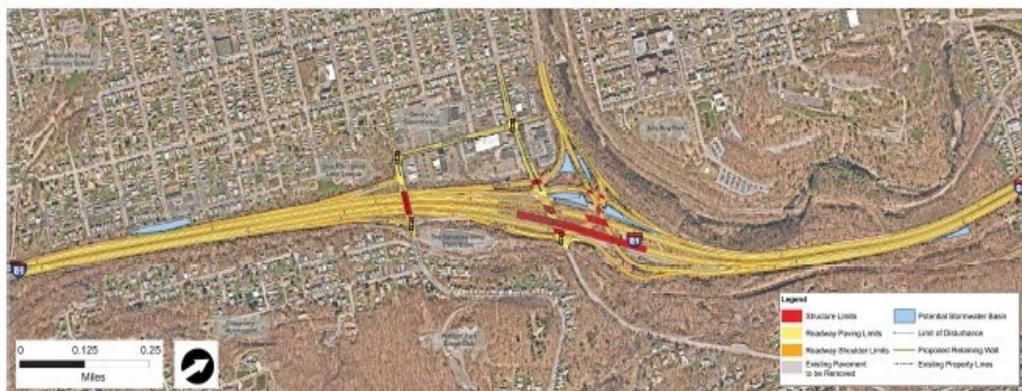
Current Alignment– Exit 184 & 185 / River Street, Route 307, and the President Biden Expressway



U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration | pennsylvania DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION |  aecom.com

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Proposed Alignment – Exit 184 & 185



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Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Proposed Alignment – Exit 184 & 185



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**Planned Improvements – Exit 184 & 185 / River Street, Route 307,
and the President Biden Expressway**



Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

**Planned Improvements – Exit 184 & 185 / River Street, Route 307,
and the President Biden Expressway**



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Future Traffic – Exit 184 & 185 / No Proposed Improvements (AM)



Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

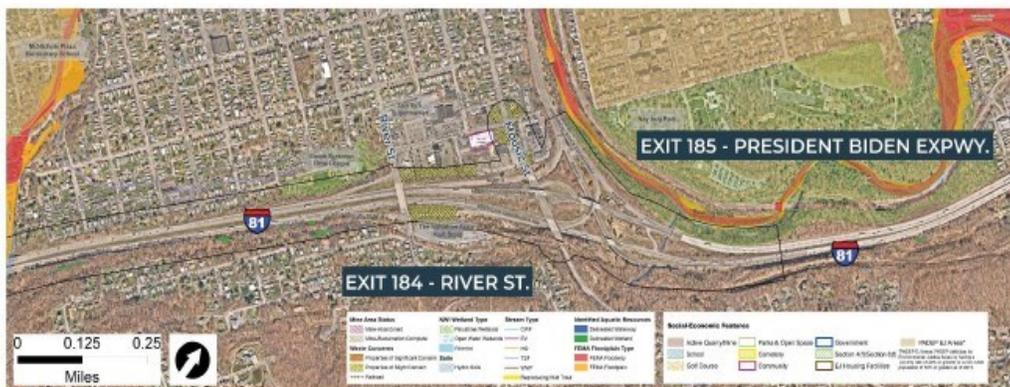
Future Traffic – Exit 184 & 185 / Proposed Improvements (PM)



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Environmental and Socio-Economic Resources – Exit 184 & 185



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Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Historic Resources – Exit 184 & 185



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Project Schedule and Cost



Current estimated cost: \$500 million to \$600 million

This schedule and budget are preliminary and subject to change.



Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

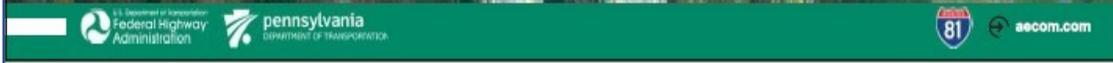
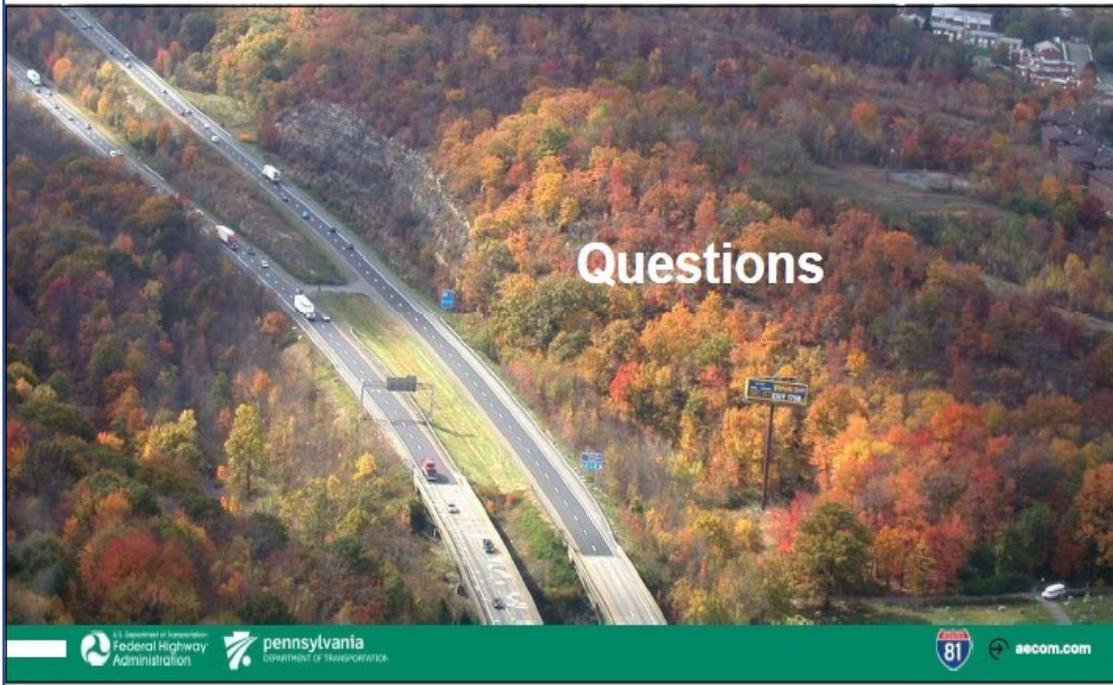
Next Steps

Develop Preliminary Engineering for
the proposed alternatives

- ↳ Conduct additional geotechnical and environmental studies
- ↳ Begin coordination with environmental agencies
- ↳ Develop roadway and structure designs, traffic engineering, and drainage and stormwater management plans
- ↳ Begin Right-of-Way (ROW) plans. ROW outreach to property owners will take place when the project enters Final Design



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Interstate 81 Avoca to Scranton Reconstruction Project
Public Meetings and Comment Period Summary

Thank You!

Contact

Susan Williams, PennDOT Project Manager

Neil Shemo, Consultant Project Manager

I81Reconstruction@aecom.com

This presentation and the meeting materials will be available to view on PennDOT's website between February 15 to March 15, 2023. For more information, visit the meeting page online at www.penndot.pa.gov/RegionalOffices and selecting **District 4, Public Meetings, Lackawanna County**, and choosing the tile for **SR 81 (Interstate 81) Section D46**.



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