



The latest news and information from PennDOT Connects' network of people and places



PennDOT Connects March 2023 Newsletter



2023 Municipal Outreach Session

Through PennDOT Connects, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and its regional planning partners are strengthening their partnerships with communities by involving local government at the very beginning of the planning process so that land use, development, and transportation are better integrated and more effective.

Register Today to Learn More about Funding Opportunities & Municipal Resources for Transportation Planning

Engage with local transportation planners

Discover funding and resources

Enhance your community

The municipal outreach/peer exchange sessions will consist of an interactive workshop that engages participants in peer exchange and idea-sharing. Municipalities will have the opportunity to interact with PennDOT, their local metropolitan planning organization or rural planning organization (MPO or RPO) staff, and one another. These sessions include:

- an overview of the PennDOT Connects Municipal Resources Program,
- information on the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, or BIL) grant opportunities and available support,
- a presentation on PennDOT's [12-Year Program \(TYP\) survey](#) to begin the process of transportation project development,
- information on the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program, and
- other resources available through the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

Participants will be encouraged to contribute their own experiences and to share their best practices in planning, land use, and project delivery.

PennDOT Connects is an opportunity for communities to make connections, be heard, and improve transportation projects in ways that previously may not have been considered or were recognized too late in the project delivery process. Attend a session near you to learn more about PennDOT Connects and the free resources available to municipalities.

Note: These sessions will focus on the resources available to municipalities through PennDOT Connects and other sources and is not on specific projects on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in PennDOT Districts.

District	Date	Time	Facility, Format, & Registration Link	Address
District 4	March 28, 2023	9-11 a.m.	PennDOT District 4 & Virtual	55 Keystone Industrial Park, Dunmore, PA 18512
District 11	March 30, 2023	9-11 a.m.	Virtual	
District 1	April 11, 2023	1-3 p.m.	Virtual	
District 1	April 11, 2023	5-7 p.m.	Virtual	
District 6	Friday, April 14, 2023	9-11 a.m.	Virtual	
District 10	Wednesday, May 3, 2023	1-3 p.m.	Virtual	
District 2	Thursday, May 4, 2023	9-11 a.m.	PennDOT District 2 & Virtual	70 PennDOT Drive, Clearfield, PA 16830
District 5	Tuesday, May 16, 2023	1-3 p.m.	PennDOT District 5 & Virtual	1002 Hamilton Street, Allentown, PA 18101
District 9	Monday, May 22, 2023	1-3 p.m.	Virtual	
District 8	Tuesday, May 23, 2023	1-3 p.m.	PennDOT District 8 & Virtual	2140 Herr Street, Harrisburg, PA 17103
District 12	Wednesday, May 24, 2023	1-3 p.m.	PennDOT District 12 & Virtual	825 N. Gallatin Ave. Ext. Uniontown, PA 15401
District 3	Thursday, May 25, 2023	9-11 a.m.	Virtual	

Attendance Options noted for each district:

- **In Person at District Office and Virtual:** Go-To-Webinar
- **Virtual:** Go-To-Webinar

Registration: To register click on the **Facility, Format, and Registration Link** above for the session you want to attend. The registration links will also be on the PennDOT Connects webpage soon.

<https://www.penndot.pa.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/Planning/Pages/PennDOT-Connects.aspx>

All sessions held at a district office will have a virtual attendance option through Go-To-Webinar. The sessions noted as virtual will only be available through a virtual connection.

Transportation Impact Study

As a community grows and evolves, so do its challenges and needs. One of those challenges is the safety and efficiency of the roads in and around a new land development. As the planning begins for a new project, the developer and municipality have the same goal – safe and reasonable access to transportation.

Developers or others wanting to build new or expand developments, such as shopping centers, office parks, industrial plants, schools, hospitals, or residential areas, may need to conduct a TIS to identify the potential transportation impacts of the proposed development. Some key aspects of a TIS will be described in this article.

While the traffic impacts of the development are typically related to potential safety or congestion effects on existing traffic facilities, each stakeholder may have a relatively simple need: residents want to know how their community will be affected; developers want to know what road improvements are required; and state and local officials need details of the potential impacts before making the decision on approving a project.

This is where TISs come in. These types of studies, which are required by the state, county, and municipality for certain projects, are prepared by transportation experts to anticipate the additional traffic associated with the new development and to identify possible problem areas.

Many facets go into a TIS in Pennsylvania. One of the key pieces is knowing the details of the Municipality Planning Code (MPC).

MPC Section 503-A(b) – “No municipality shall have the power to require as a condition for approval of a land development or subdivision application the construction, dedication or payment of any offsite improvements or capital expenditures of any nature whatsoever or impose any contribution in lieu thereof, exaction fee, or any connection, tapping or similar fee except as may be specifically authorized under this act.”

The MPC restricts a municipality’s ability to require offsite improvements, but there are still opportunities to work with a developer through out-of-the-box thinking and negotiations to achieve the overarching goal of a safe and efficient transportation system for all road users.



The effects of the development for all road users will be considered in the TIS. Photos: PennDOT LTAP

As a municipal official, you can check your municipality's subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO) to see if there are TIS requirements. If there are no TIS requirements, the municipality may consider adding them. Important questions to ask may be:

- What are the triggers to warrant a transportation summary or transportation study?
- Who can prepare a transportation study?
- Is there a municipal planning meeting?
- How do we establish the transportation study intersections?
- When are the analysis years (base conditions and future conditions)?
- Is there a preferred level of service for the study intersections?
- How do we consider improvement analysis?
- How are vulnerable roadway users (pedestrians, cyclists, and others) affected?

If you are unfamiliar with or have not updated your transportation study requirements in the SALDO, you should review that before the next project is proposed. Work with your county planners, MPO/RPO, and your engineer to review the requirements.

The items PennDOT and a municipality are looking for in that study include but are not limited to:

- Proposed development land use, size and phases;
- Study locations, primarily intersections;
- Existing traffic, including cars, trucks, pedestrians, and cyclist;
- Times of day and days of the week;
- Expected traffic growth without the development;
- Expected nearby developments; and
- Crash history.

As the preparation, planning, and community conversations are happening with the municipality and its residents, developers may be tasked with conducting the TIS (mandatory if the development will be on or will connect to a state road).

This information is vital to the overall safety of the municipality. Asking the right questions early on, with data and statistics to determine the potential impact and success of the proposed development, will ultimately ensure that the community and PennDOT have their concerns addressed.

Transportation Impact Study Process – Drop-In

Attend this virtual drop-in session with other communities from around Pennsylvania to learn more about the Transportation Impact Study (TIS) Process. A PennDOT representative will provide an overview of the PennDOT TIS process for developments that involve state highways. Then a traffic consultant will provide an overview of the process for developments that impact your local roads. After these initial presentations, the session will open for questions from the audience. Learn more about the TIS process, when your community should be involved, what are the key steps in the process, what to look out for in the TIS, and what rights/responsibilities you have per our state laws/regulations.



Municipal Outreach, Training, and Assistance Program

DROP-IN SESSION

TRANSPORTATION IMPACT STUDY PROCESS

APRIL 13, 2023



April 13, 2023, Noon to 1 p.m.
[Register Here](#)

PennDOT's Right-of-Way (ROW) Encroachment and Outdoor Advertising Control

Federal regulation (23 CFR § 1.23) and the Pennsylvania State Highway Law (Section 425) require the area within the highway ROW be devoted exclusively to public highway purposes which generally means only official traffic signs are permitted within the ROW. Any sign or banner placed within the ROW without approval by PennDOT is considered an illegal encroachment. Additionally, the placement of outdoor advertising on land outside the ROW along interstates and highways is governed by the Outdoor Advertising Control Act of 1971 and its corresponding regulations.

PennDOT is responsible for enforcement of these regulations to comply with mandates established under the federal Highway Beautification Act of 1965. Neglecting to meet those mandates could result in Pennsylvania losing a significant portion of funding from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).



These signs are along Route 118 in Columbia County.
Photo: PennDOT

Encroaching signs within highway ROW are subject to removal by PennDOT without notice to the sign owner. For advertising devices outside the highway ROW that do not comply with the requirements, PennDOT will first provide the owner of the outdoor advertising sign a removal notice. If the owner does not remove the outdoor advertising sign, PennDOT will remove the sign. Removed signs will be held for at least 30 days for retrieval.

Per state law, signs placed outside of the ROW along a controlled route on a non-interstate need an outdoor advertising device permit from PennDOT if they are not on the same premises as the advertised activity or are more than 100 feet from the activity. If they are on the same premises as the advertised activity, they still need a permit if they are visible from interstate roads. Along interstates, signs within 100 feet of the activity need an on-premise permit, and any signs further than 100 feet require an off-premise permit. The controlled routes are identified on PennDOT's interactive map at gis.penndot.gov/HBMS.

A federal audit has identified deficiencies with PennDOT's encroachment and outdoor advertising control program. To address this, starting in 2023 PennDOT will increase its focus and resources to identify and remove non-compliant signs both inside and outside of the ROW.

Municipalities are the first line in controlling both encroachments and outdoor signs and have the first say in what is permitted. PennDOT will not approve an outdoor advertising device permit for a sign if the municipality's ordinance prohibits that sign.

PennDOT staff is available to help municipal officials understand all laws, regulations, and policies regarding encroachments and outdoor advertising devices. More information and resources are available at

<https://www.penndot.pa.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/RoadDesignEnvironment/RoadDesign/Right-ofWayandUtilities/Pages/Outdoor-Advertising-and-Junkyard-Control.aspx>. Districts contacts may be found at <https://www.hbms.penndot.gov/HBMSWeb/hbms/viewContactInfo.do>.

DCNR Grants Due April 5, 2023

To learn more about the DCNR grants go to <https://apps.dcnr.pa.gov/grants> and click on “Grant opportunities”.



APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION TO THE GRANT PORTAL

APRIL 5, 2023 @ 4:00PM

New Guide for Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Grant Applications

PennDOT has added a Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) guide for grant applications to the website dedicated to the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) (IIJA), also referred to as the BIL, and specifically the federal discretionary programs. Also, included are Grant Alerts that provide background on these opportunities including eligibility, application deadlines, and federal and Department of Transportation (USDOT) resources and guides to assist in applying for the specific programs.

Resources

[Guide for Developing BIL Grant Proposals \(PDF\)](#)

[Key Notices of Funding](#)

[Opportunity | US Department of Transportation](#) 

[Federal Transportation Funding:](#)

Grants Resources

New USDOT Discretionary Grant Resources

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has developed a discretionary grant preparation checklist for fiscal year 2023 to help applicants prepare and chart a strategic pathway to apply for infrastructure investments. More than \$32 billion is available to the USDOT this fiscal year to provide competitive grant funding to local governments, metropolitan planning organizations, transit agencies, Tribal governments, U.S. Territories and state departments of transportation. The USDOT has published a list of anticipated dates for upcoming Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs) for key programs within the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), as well as adjacent programs that support BIL and IRA objectives. This list is not comprehensive, and the agency will periodically update it with additional programs and revised dates as appropriate. Both resources can be found on PennDOT’s IIJA page at www.penndot.pa.gov/IIJA.

USDOT Navigator: <https://www.transportation.gov/dot-navigator>

PennDOT IJJA/BIL webpage: <https://www.penndot.pa.gov/Doing-Business/Pages/IJJA.aspx>. The webpage has a new [Guide for Developing Grant Proposals](#).

Federal Transit Administration BIL Website: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/BIL>

Key Notices of Funding Opportunity: <https://www.transportation.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/key-notices-funding-opportunity>

FREE Transportation and Land Use Planning – Assistance and Training

PennDOT Connects offers **free** assistance and training to municipalities to better integrate local land use development and transportation goals into the state transportation planning process.

Any municipal staff member, government official or planning partner is eligible to request **free** planning assistance or personalized training. Simply fill out the PennDOT Connects Training/Assistance request form by [clicking here](#).



Do You Know Your MPO or RPO?

PennDOT and its Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Rural Planning Organization (RPO) partners have a long-standing relationship jointly preparing transportation studies, plans, and programs to make the best transportation project investments possible with available resources. This strategic alliance is now of even greater importance for PennDOT Connects implementation. Together, the MPO/RPO planning partners and PennDOT can effectively collaborate and communicate with municipalities — and other community stakeholders (e.g., transit operators, economic development agencies, etc.) — to improve transportation system performance and achieve more livable communities. The collaborative effort of municipalities, MPO/RPO planning partners, and PennDOT is key to ensuring that opportunities to improve transportation and communities are realized.

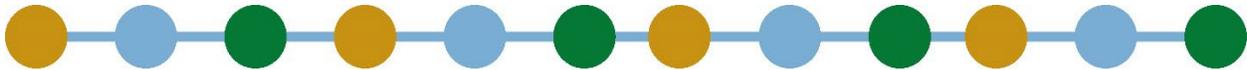
MPO/RPO contacts can be found [here](#).

PennDOT Connects

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is committed to bettering our transportation system and our communities through collaborative planning. We must find creative solutions to sustain and expand mobility throughout the commonwealth. This means improving our planning process to reflect changing demographics and technological innovation. We are broadening the benefits we deliver and taking a more holistic approach to planning. We are tasking PennDOT staff and our planning partners to consider community needs at the beginning of the planning process to ensure the best allocation of our resources. This approach, PennDOT Connects, will make our planning processes more efficient and cost-effective to the benefit of all Pennsylvanians. The full [PennDOT Connects Policy \(PDF\)](#) includes collaboration requirements and planning considerations, as well as the implementation timeline and more.

PennDOT Connects Newsletter

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