



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



PennDOT Connects January 2024 Newsletter



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.

Learn More about Your PennDOT District & 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:

- Welcome and Introductions
- PennDOT Connects Process
 - What is PennDOT Connects?
 - Common misconceptions or misunderstandings
 - The value of municipal participation in PennDOT Connects Project meeting(s)
- District Spotlight
 - PennDOT district staff that help support municipal projects, transportation planning, and land use development
 - Case studies and examples highlighting the PennDOT Connects process and its benefits to municipalities
- Visioning Activity
- PennDOT Connects Municipal Resources Overview
- Update Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act/Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (IIJA/BIL) Grant Opportunities and Available Support

- Guide for Developing IIJA/BIL Grant Proposals
- State Agencies that Partner with PennDOT
 - Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH)
 - Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)
 - Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)
- Open Discussion
- Program Summary and Open Forum

PennDOT Connects is an **opportunity for communities to make connections, be heard, and improve transportation projects** through early collaboration. Attend a session near you to learn more about PennDOT Connects and the free resources available to municipalities.

Note: This session 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.

Date	District	Time	Facility, Format, Registration Link	Address
March 25, 2024	District 2	1-3 p.m.	PennDOT District 2 & Virtual	70 PennDOT Drive Clearfield, PA 16830
March 27, 2024	District 12	1-3 p.m.	PennDOT District 12 & Virtual	825 N. Gallatin Ave. Ext. Uniontown, PA 15401
March 28, 2024	District 11	1-3 p.m.	All Virtual	
April 22, 2024	District 6	1-3 p.m.	All Virtual	
April 24, 2024	District 1	9-11 a.m.	All Virtual	
May 7, 2024	District 4	9-11 a.m.	PennDOT District 4 & Virtual	55 Keystone Industrial Park Dunmore, PA 18512
May 14, 2024	District 8	9-11 a.m.	PennDOT District 8 & Virtual	2140 Herr Street Harrisburg, PA 17103
May 15, 2024	District 9	9-11 a.m.	All Virtual	
May 16, 2024	District 5	1-3 p.m.	PennDOT District 5 & Virtual	1002 Hamilton Street Allentown, PA 18101
May 28, 2024	District 10	1-3 p.m.	PennDOT District 10 & Virtual	2550 Oakland Avenue Indiana, PA 15701
May 29, 2024	District 3	1-3 p.m.	All Virtual	

[District Map](#)

Attendance Options noted for each district:

- **In Person at District Office and Virtual** (Go-To-Webinar)
- **All 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.

Highway Occupancy Permits

In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the issuance of Highway Occupancy Permits (HOPs) plays a critical role in regulating access to and occupancy of the state's highways. Through PennDOT, HOPs are required for any activity or construction that would impact the use of a state road. Whether it's the construction of a driveway to a new development or the installation of a new utility (water, gas, electric, communication, sewer, etc.) facility, obtaining a HOP is a key step to ensuring the safe and efficient flow of traffic while maintaining the road's infrastructure.

PennDOT has the right to regulate access to its highway right-of-way, but also has the responsibility to accommodate homeowners, developers and utility companies that may want to access and occupy the right-of-way and balance those plans with the needs of the public.

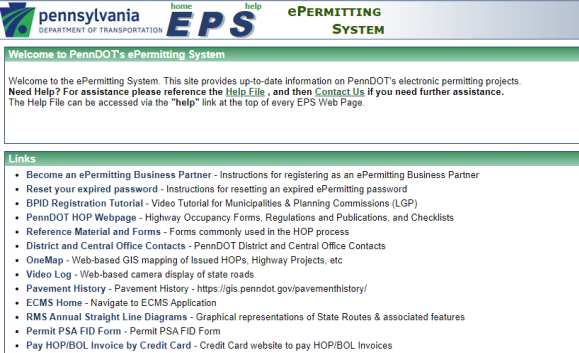
The HOP, through its review and approval process, is the mechanism used by PennDOT to balance the needs of those involved.

There are many reasons why a HOP needs to be obtained. For example, when a homeowner, who lives on a state road, would like to install a driveway, they need to apply for and obtain a HOP prior to constructing their driveway. The HOP is necessary to ensure the proposed driveway will meet PennDOT's design and safety standards and won't adversely impact the flow of traffic. By obtaining the permit, the homeowner agrees to the overall safety and management of the driveway. When a homeowner or a developer is planning work on a state road, it is critical they start by contacting either the local municipality that can connect them with PennDOT or by contacting PennDOT's applicable [engineering district office](#) directly. Once PennDOT is involved, they're able to provide the proper forms, guidelines and requirements needed for the project. The application process, via PennDOT's [Electronic Permitting System](#) (ePermitting System or EPS), involves submitting detailed plans, reports such as a traffic impact study (if applicable) and other project-specific documentation. PennDOT encourages municipalities to get involved in the HOP review process. Certain local governing bodies wish to review driveway applications within their jurisdictions. If so, the municipality should work with PennDOT to create a [local government partner](#) profile within PennDOT's ePermitting System.

Something to keep in mind is that all work authorized by the HOP is subject to ordinances enacted by municipalities, which contain more stringent minimum safety requirements than PennDOT's regulation that governs access to highways by driveways and local roads.

Similar to obtaining a HOP for something like a driveway, utility companies must also go through the HOP process when they propose to occupy a state road with their facilities. While the process is similar, utility companies need to provide information on traffic control measures during construction, the type of utility, location and highway restoration, which are identified on their prepared construction plans.

In Pennsylvania, municipalities are required to be the HOP applicant for access to state highways by local roads they maintain and for the occupancy of drainage facilities connecting to highway stormwater facilities. Additionally, HOPs for the construction or modification of curb and sidewalk along state highways will typically be issued to the municipality. By doing this, PennDOT and the municipality are able to facilitate the oversight of public roads and drainage projects without impacting traffic patterns and drainage systems.



pennsylvania DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION home help EPS ePERMITTING SYSTEM

Welcome to PennDOT's ePermitting System

Welcome to the ePermitting System. This site provides up-to-date information on PennDOT's electronic permitting projects. Need Help? For assistance please reference the [Help File](#), and then [Contact Us](#) if you need further assistance. The Help File can be accessed via the "help" link at the top of every EPS Web Page.

Links

- Become an ePermitting Business Partner - Instructions for registering as an ePermitting Business Partner
- Reset your expired password - Instructions for resetting an expired ePermitting password
- BPID Registration Tutorial - Video Tutorial for Municipalities & Planning Commissions (LGP)
- PennDOT HOP Webpage - Highway Occupancy Forms, Regulations and Publications, and Checklists
- Reference Material and Forms - Forms commonly used in the HOP process
- District and Central Office Contacts - PennDOT District and Central Office Contacts
- OneMap - Web-based GIS mapping of Issued HOPs, Highway Projects, etc
- Video Log - Web-based camera display of state roads
- Pavement History - Pavement History - <https://gis.penndot.gov/pavementhistory/>
- ECMS Home - Navigate to ECMS Application
- RMS Annual Straight Line Diagrams - Graphical representations of State Routes & associated features
- Permit PSA FID Form - Permit PSA FID Form
- Pay HOP/BOL Invoice by Credit Card - Credit Card website to pay HOP/BOL Invoices

Without a HOP, projects such as driveways, turn lanes or utility work could adversely affect traffic and the environment, causing significant safety and infrastructure problems within a municipality.

When thinking about a HOP, keep these things in mind:

- Early planning.
- Contact PennDOT.
- Detailed documentation.
- Adhere to PennDOT's standards.
- Outline traffic control measures.
- Address environmental concerns.
- Engage with the municipality.
- Reference PA Code, Title 67, Chapters [441](#) and [459](#).

In closing, navigating the HOP process requires extensive planning, adhering to standards and collaboration with the local government. Whether it involves a new driveway, turn lane or utility project, receiving a HOP is an important step to making sure Pennsylvania's state roads are being used safely and efficiently.

A proactive approach through early engagement with key partners and a commitment to following the rules and regulations set forth by PennDOT will no doubt allow for the successful completion of the project and Pennsylvania's roads.

Shapiro Administration Announces Grant Opportunities to Make Communities More Pedestrian-Friendly

The **Shapiro Administration** announced in January that grant applications are now being accepted for the WalkWorks program to help communities develop Active Transportation Plans and increase physical activity by connecting local destinations with improved pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks.

"I encourage municipal leaders to learn about and apply for WalkWorks funding to increase opportunities for physical activities for their residents," said **Acting Secretary of Health Dr. Debra Bogen**. "Moving our bodies is a great way we can improve our overall health, helping to prevent stress and diseases, such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Walking is one of the easiest and most accessible ways to do that and WalkWorks supports healthy communities by providing funding to expand options for walking, biking, or rolling to places people want to go."



Eligible Commonwealth municipalities can [apply for funding](#) to create more pedestrian-friendly spaces for residents. Living in, working in, or visiting communities with safe, beautiful, functional, and accessible public spaces and streets means people will be able to use activity-friendly routes to get to destinations.

Creating improved pedestrian-friendly spaces increases physical activity and reduces obesity and chronic disease, which simultaneously improves individual health, expands economic vitality, and reduces health care costs.

Additionally, many people suffering from anxiety, depression, and mood swings find walking has a calming effect. One of the goals of Pennsylvania's [State Health Improvement Plan \(SHIP\)](#), created by the Department of Health in collaboration with numerous stakeholders, is to increase the population's healthy weight by increasing the availability and accessibility of physical activity.

Funding for the awards is made possible by the Department of Health through the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and is administered by the [Pennsylvania Downtown Center](#). Applications must be received by 5:00 PM on March 22. There will be an optional one-hour webinar to review the goals of this funding opportunity, the application process, expectations of grantees, and questions from interested parties on Wednesday, Feb. 7, at 12:00 PM. Zoom will be used to administer the web conference. Applicants can register for the informational session [online in advance](#).

The number of awards is dependent on how many applications are received, the amounts requested, and each applicant's documented ability to meet the required criteria. The Pennsylvania Downtown Center will provide selected applicants notice of award in June 2024. The anticipated term of the award is July 2024 through June 2025.

More information about the 2024 WalkWorks application process is available on the [Department of Health's website](#).

PennDOT Connects Educational Opportunities

Go to the [PennDOT Connects webpage](#) to learn more about upcoming educational opportunities. Click the down arrows next to the Drop-Ins and Workshops tabs to view the current offering and past recorded sessions.

Coordination with Utilities—We're All in the Right-of-Way Together

This practical drop-in session will cover the keys to effective coordination between communities and the utilities that serve them. It will include some of the common causes of breakdown, and how to prevent such communication and coordination mishaps (and avoid the consequences). Participants will also have an opportunity to share their experiences and lessons learned.



Municipal Outreach, Training, and Assistance Program

DROP-IN SESSION

COORDINATION WITH UTILITIES—WE'RE ALL IN THE RIGHT-OF-WAY TOGETHER

FEBRUARY 8, 2024 


February 8, 2024, Noon to 1 p.m.
[Register Here](#)

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 IJJA, 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

USDOT Discretionary Grant Resources

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has developed a discretionary grant preparation checklist for fiscal year 2024 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 IJJA page at <https://www.penndot.pa.gov/Doing-Business/Pages/IJJA.aspx>.

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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