



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



PennDOT Connects June 2024 Newsletter

2025 STIP Public Comment Period

The State Transportation Commission (STC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) invite you to review and comment on the draft 2025 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The Public Comment Period for the draft 2025 STIP is ongoing from June 18 through July 3, 2024.

The draft 2025 STIP consists of a list of prioritized projects and project phases identified for funding by federal fiscal year and includes federal, state, local, and private funding over a four-year period for capital improvements. The draft 2025 STIP can be viewed at <https://talkpatransportation.com/how-it-works/stip>.

The public can comment by filling out the online comment form at [TalkPATransportation.com](https://talkpatransportation.com) or email RA-PennDOTSTC@pa.gov. The public may also call PennDOT and share their comments at 717-783-2262. If you have other questions or challenges, contact PennDOT's Bureau of Equal Opportunity to request help by emailing beodot@pa.gov or calling 717-787-5891; TTY (711).



Planning for Trucks in Your Community

Over the last decade, Pennsylvania has become a hub for many warehousing and distribution centers due to overall population growth in the state and surrounding region, the shift in e-commerce and a demand for faster delivery. Pennsylvania is a transportation gateway for the Mid-Atlantic because of the existing interstate network, land availability, resources, and the close proximity of major metropolitan areas. This change is leaving some Pennsylvania communities caught off-guard and dealing



Parking on local roads has become a challenge for municipalities. Photo: LVPC

with issues related to truck traffic. Previous zoning ordinances did not anticipate the effects truck traffic and concentrated industrial development would have on the roads and environment. Roads are damaged, and communities complain about the trucks on local roads. Furthermore, trucks are facing challenges when carrying goods through Pennsylvania, causing traffic issues on major interstates and local roads. Even the needs for staging and parking trucks have become issues of concern.

The infrastructure development related to shipping, warehousing, and other goods movement activities across Pennsylvania has many economic benefits but also associated impacts. As the economy continues to grow and change, so do the needs of the transportation system. Warehousing and trucks cannot simply be banned, as the law balances the needs of the community with the rights of people to develop their land. Proper multi-municipal planning can alleviate the increase in heavy vehicle traffic, noise, damage to roadways, and environmental impacts at hand. There is no standard when it comes to planning for trucks; however, there are ways townships, boroughs, and cities can plan for freight-intensive development and mitigate the associated impacts of truck traffic.

Zoning is the regulation of land and the best technique municipalities can use to manage development. The growth of e-commerce has brought about unexpected changes for transportation infrastructure and land use. The older zoning ordinances made sense to the economy at that time. Now, zoning ordinances should be updated to include the new facilities used in distributing goods that look different than traditional warehouses. These newer facilities require different land use to better serve the consumer, for instance:

- Distribution centers are complex hubs for large bulk goods that are not delivered to external customers.
- Fulfillment centers fulfill online orders for individuals. These facilities take part in the “pick and pack” phase of logistics.
- High-cube warehouses are used for the consolidation of manufactured goods. These buildings have at least 200,000 gross square feet and a ceiling height of 24 feet or more.
- Trucking company terminals are used for a large variety of materials being transported to a site to be unloaded. These terminals act as a landing space to load from one tractor-trailer to another through a “cross-dock” storage and handling process.
- Large retail stores such as Walmart and Target have increasingly been used as fulfillment centers for some consumer products, enabling these companies to serve their traditional customers and e-commerce customers with the same on-site storage and merchandise handling processes.

Understanding terminology in the logistics processes is crucial when reviewing and updating zoning ordinances. Other things to consider when coordinating zoning ordinances and warehouse locations are:

- Using zoning overlay districts to establish the best locations for warehouses with the least impact.
- Capacity of the roadway network and capability to accommodate trucks.
- Seeking the proper permits for land use (commercial vs. residential).
- Proximity to major transportation areas.
- Sensitive environmental areas.

Multi-municipal planning is a strategic way to collaborate with neighboring communities to work together rather than independently. This strategy not only focuses on the communities but the challenges facing the region as a whole. For example, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) has initiatives with 39 of the 62 Lehigh Valley municipalities, providing them with the resources to plan for a unified future together. The goal of multi-municipal planning is to work across political boundaries and

those of individual jurisdictions. Engaging in multi-municipal planning can ensure a more attractive and environmentally conscious region for businesses and investors.

The power of planning for trucks across Pennsylvania's roadways is crucial for the future of our environment and economy. Townships, boroughs, and cities need to engage in proper planning to overcome the challenges we currently face. Understanding the importance of zoning ordinances, land usage, buffer areas, and new terminology within industrial development is a step in the right direction to making changes in our state.

Resources:

Freight Planning: <https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%20790.pdf>

TAC study: <tac-truck-parking-12-14-2023-compressed.pdf> (talkpatransportation.com)


LVPC annual report: <https://www.flipsnack.com/9A575F88B7A/2023-annual-report/full-view.html>

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.

Stormwater Planning ABCs for Municipal Officials

Municipal officials, especially when newly elected, are faced with learning multitudes of new programs and rules, then making decisions regarding allocation of municipal resources. Stormwater planning is a critical aspect of municipal responsibilities and assists in the protection of both public and private property, as well as public health and safety. Utilizing stormwater planning effectively involves understanding what stormwater is and how stormwater can negatively impact municipalities. This drop-in will discuss what stormwater planning obligations exist for municipalities in Pennsylvania, as well as how effective and integrated stormwater planning can assist in meeting other municipal obligations, such as those related to flooding/flood insurance, permitting requirements and regional planning goals. Additional resources will be introduced, including case studies, cost estimates, and local contacts, that will assist municipal officials with implementing effective stormwater planning programs in their municipalities.



Municipal Outreach, Training, and Assistance Program

DROP-IN SESSION

**STORMWATER PLANNING
ABCs FOR MUNICIPAL
OFFICIALS**

JULY 11, 2024

[Register Here](#)

pennsylvania
Department of Transportation

Recorded Drop-Ins

Did you miss either of the two drop-ins below? Click on the titles to watch the recordings. All drop-ins are on the [PennDOT Connects webpage](#).

[Maximizing Municipal Funding through Grant Best Management Practices](#)

Empower your municipality with advanced grant management skills by watching the drop-in, designed specifically for Pennsylvania local governments. Explore best management practices for grant funding that align with community needs and funding opportunities. Gain insights into evaluating grant

requirements, developing contingency plans, and optimizing resource allocation. Learn through case studies to refine your approach to grant funding and drive sustainable community development.

Planning for Trucks

Is your community worried about increasing truck traffic on local roads? This session explored opportunities to improve land use planning for development to mitigate the impact of trucks on your roads, as well as discussed ongoing truck traffic issues and potential solutions. Learn how to coordinate and work with your planning partners and neighboring communities to tackle tough truck issues.

PennDOT Connects Resources

Go to the [PennDOT Connects webpage](#) to access tech sheets, recorded training, and other resources.

Online Training

Have you listened to PennDOT Connects Online Trainings? PennDOT Connects has a variety of short training modules on transportation planning topics. Click on the links below to learn about a topic.

- [Access Management and Highway Occupancy Permitting](#)
- [Adaptive Reuse of Land and Buildings](#)
- [Capital Improvement Programming](#)
- [Developer Negotiation Training](#)
- [Integrating Transportation and Land Use](#)
- [Loan and Funding](#)
- [Multi-Municipal Zoning and Intergovernmental Implementation Agreements](#)
- [Official Map](#)
- [Parking Considerations](#)
- [PennDOT Connects Overview](#)
- [Site Design and Roadway Standards](#)
- [Traditional Neighborhood Development](#)
- [Traffic Operations](#)
- [Transportation Impact Fees](#)
- [Transportation Partnerships](#)
- [Transit Revitalization Investment District \(TRID\)](#)
- [Urban Growth and Rural Preservation](#)
- [Zoning for Mixed Uses and to Accommodate Higher Densities](#)

Discretionary Grants Spotlight

PennDOT's [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act \(IIJA\) webpage](#) offers the latest news and information on federal grant opportunities available through the IIJA, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Grant opportunities, application guides and other resources on federal grant funding are added as they become available, so please visit often to see if any of these grant funding programs are an opportunity that would benefit your community.

The following is a list of federal grant programs currently accepting applications:

Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation Program

The [Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation \(SMART\)](#) Program offers funding for projects that use advanced smart city technologies to improve transportation efficiency and safety. The program aims to help communities solve real-world challenges and enhance their data and technology capabilities.

It has two stages:

Anyone submitting for a SMART grant is asked to reach out to Derrick Herrmann, PennDOT Transformational Technology Division at deherrmann@pa.gov.

- The deadline for applying is July 12, 2024, 5:00 p.m. EST.

Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)

The [Safe Streets and Roads for All \(SS4A\) Grant Program](#) funds regional, local, and Tribal initiatives through grants to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. Funds for the fiscal year (FY) 2024 SS4A grant program are to be awarded on a competitive basis to support planning, infrastructural, behavioral, and operational initiatives to prevent death and serious injury on roads and streets involving all roadway users, including pedestrians; bicyclists; public transportation, personal conveyance, and micro-mobility users; motorists; and commercial vehicle operators.

The SS4A program provides funding for two types of grants: Planning and Demonstration Grants and Implementation Grants, each having their own deadlines:

- The deadline for requesting PennDOT support is:
 - August 15, 2024 (Round 3)
- [Planning and Demonstration Grant](#) applicants have multiple deadlines for FY24:
 - August 29, 2024, by 5 PM ET.

* Applicants may also reapply if not selected if the application is received by the last Planning and Demonstration Grants deadline of August 29, 2024, 5:00 p.m. EST.

Bridge Investment Program

The goals of the [Bridge Investment Program \(BIP\) - Large Bridge grants](#) are to 1) Improve safety, efficiency and reliability of the movement of people and freight over bridges; 2) Improve the overall condition of bridges in the United States and 3) Provide financial assistance that both leverages and encourages non-federal contributions from sponsors and stakeholders involved in the planning, design and construction of eligible projects that will cost more than \$100 million.

- The deadline for requesting PennDOT support for FY 2025 is July 1, 2024.
- The deadline for applying for FY 2025 funds in this rolling application process* is August 1, 2024, 11:59 p.m. EST.

*Submissions will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis until program funding is expended or the notice of availability is superseded.

BIP – Planning and Bridge Project Grants

The goals of the [BIP - Planning and Bridge Project](#) grants are identical to the above Large Bridge grants, except eligible projects must cost less than \$100 million.

- **Planning** grant deadlines for FY 2025:
 - Requesting PennDOT support – September 17, 2024
 - Applying for funds in rolling application process* - October 1, 2024, 11:59 p.m. EST
- **Bridge Project** grant deadlines for FY 2025:
 - Requesting PennDOT support – October 18, 2024
 - Applying for funds in rolling application process* - November 1, 2024, 11:59 p.m. EST

*Submissions will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis until program funding is expended or the notice of availability is superseded.

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 IIJA, 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.

Grants Resources

USDOT Discretionary Grant Resources

The USDOT has developed a discretionary grant preparation checklist for federal 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 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 <https://www.penndot.pa.gov/Doing-Business/Pages/IIJA.aspx>.

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

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](#).

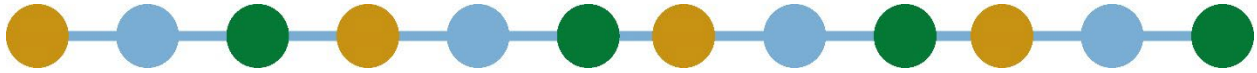
PennDOT Connects

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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**Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
PennDOT Connects Municipal Resources**

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