

BETTER COLLABORATION
Municipal Resources
BETTER COMMUNITIES

The latest news and information from PennDOT Municipal Resources network of people and places

March 2026 Newsletter

2026 Municipal Outreach Sessions

Through PennDOT Municipal Resources, 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 for a 2026 PennDOT Municipal Outreach Session

Free Resources & Municipal Support!

Empower your municipality and its voice in local transportation: Join us for an interactive workshop where you can engage with PennDOT, collaborate with peers, and discover valuable resources to enhance your community.

Learn about:

- **What is Happening in Your District:** The Districts will provide contacts and share projects successes and projects in planning.
- **PennDOT's One Map GIS Platform:** The demo will provide practical uses for the mapping data.
- **Free Transportation Planning Resources:** The PennDOT Municipal Resources program has **free** one-on-one support, one-hour drop ins (webinars), newsletters, and tech sheets to support municipal transportation planning.

This workshop is intended for:

- Municipal officials, planners, and engineers.
- Community leaders and advocates.
- Anyone interested in improving their local transportation systems.

Don't miss out on this chance to:

- Network with other municipalities, learn from their successes, and find areas for collaboration.
- Network with PennDOT, MPO & RPOs, and county planning staff.
- Ask questions about PennDOT projects in your area.

- Access free resources and expert support to achieve your goals.

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

Find your PennDOT District: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/penndot/regional-offices.html>

District	Date	Time	Facility, Format, Registration Link	City
District 1	April 30	9-11 a.m.	District 1 & Virtual	Oil City, PA
District 2	April 28	1-3 p.m.	District 2 & Virtual	Clearfield, PA
District 3	May 5	9-11 a.m.	All Virtual	
District 4	April 2	1-3 p.m.	District 4 & virtual	Dunmore, PA
District 5	March 26	1-3 p.m.	Recording Link	
District 6	April 7	9-11 a.m.	All Virtual	
District 8	March 25	9-11 a.m.	Recording Link	
District 9	April 9	1-3 p.m.	All Virtual	
District 10	April 29	1-3 p.m.	District 10 & Virtual	Indiana, PA
District 11	March 18	1-3 p.m.	Recording Link	
District 12	April 15	1-3 p.m.	District 12 & Virtual	Uniontown, PA

Attendance options noted for each district:

- In Person at District Office or 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.

Recordings Available: Did you miss the session in your area? Recordings of the sessions that have been held are available on the table above.

Driving Smart Growth

Lessons from the I-81 Exit 12 / Exit 44 Land Use –Transportation Study

By: Toby Fauver, FAICP

Across Pennsylvania, communities continue to face a familiar challenge: development pressure arrives first, and transportation improvements follow later — often at far greater cost and complexity. Once land is developed, right-of-way becomes limited, the number of access points increases, the congestion and safety problems become much harder to fix.

Being proactive is a more effective approach. Coordinating land use and transportation planning before development is locked in allows for studies to take place and flexibility to make changes. An early and successful example of this approach in Pennsylvania is the I-81 Exit 12 (now Exit 44) Land Use and Transportation Study in Cumberland County.

Planning Ahead to Protect Transportation Capacity

Protecting transportation capacity through land use planning means directing growth to locations and forms that align with infrastructure capabilities. Historically, municipal zoning focused on accommodating all land uses while avoiding conflicts, often without fully considering long-term transportation impacts. When large-scale development followed, municipalities and PennDOT were left to react — adding turn lanes, signals, or interchange improvements under constrained conditions.

Recognizing these risks in the late 1990s, five municipalities surrounding the I-81 Exit 12 interchange partnered with Cumberland County and PennDOT to proactively follow a different path. With warehousing and logistics demand accelerating in the Carlisle area, local leaders chose to study future build-out scenarios before full development occurred and modify zoning while advancing a new transportation infrastructure plan.

The Exit 12 / Exit 44 Study: Purpose and Approach

Completed in December 1999, the Exit 12 / Exit 44 Land Use and Transportation Study set out to answer a fundamental question: How can economic development be supported while maintaining safe and efficient transportation operations?

The study examined:

- Future land use allocation around the interchange
- Zoning and development policies affecting build-out intensity
- Projected traffic volumes from background growth and new development
- Access management and interchange improvement needs

Using planning-level analysis, the study modeled multiple development scenarios and their associated transportation impacts. Importantly, the process included public and stakeholder input.

Key Findings: Aligning Freight Related Development Growth with Infrastructure

The study concluded that land adjacent to the interchange was well suited for industrial and logistics uses, given its direct access to I-81 and regional freight markets. However, it also recognized that without careful controls, this development could overwhelm local roads.

From Study to Implementation

Perhaps the most compelling aspect of the Exit 12 / Exit 44 study is what followed. Based on the study's findings:

- MPO and PennDOT funding was programmed to advance between \$40 and \$50 million in transportation improvements.
- Municipalities adopted zoning and land use policy changes consistent with the plan.
- Interchange and roadway improvements were constructed, including a new interstate interchange.

Today, the results are clear. Within a one-mile radius of the interchange, there is now more than 42 million square feet of warehouse space, supporting the regional economy. While truck volumes are substantial, congestion has remained relatively minimal due to smart planning, access management, and coordinated investment.

The historical mapping data in the photo below was in black and white then, but it shows the interstate interchange and PA 465 Allen Road Corridor prior to the land use transportation study being conducted. The color image is from 2023 showing the land use development that had taken place around the interchange post study and also the new interchange and roadway that supports the development as a result of the land use transportation study and the municipal actions that took place to implement the study.

This historical map shows the interstate interchange and PA 465 Allen Road Corridor prior to the land use and transportation study being conducted. Photo: PASDA Pennsylvania Imagery Navigator



This historical map shows the interstate interchange and PA 465 Allen Road Corridor in 2023 after the development occurred and transportation upgrades completed. Photo: PASDA Pennsylvania Imagery Navigator



Motorized Trails Grant Opportunity

Pennsylvania Recreational Trails (PRT) motorized projects include the development, rehabilitation, or maintenance of designated routes on land for all types of motorized recreation activities, as well as the purchase or lease of equipment to be used exclusively for the maintenance or construction of land and water trails and trail-related facilities. Funding for projects in this category comes from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and DCNR is the designated state agency to administer this federal program in Pennsylvania. ONLY motorized trail projects applying for PRT funding should be submitted in this category. Match requirements are established at a minimum of 20%.

Go to DCNR's website to learn more: [DCNR Grants](#)

Charging Up Pennsylvania—New Stations Coming Statewide

Pennsylvania is taking another major step toward cleaner, more convenient travel with [\\$9 million in new federal funding](#) to build electric vehicle (EV) charging stations along key roads across the Commonwealth. These twelve new projects will strengthen long-distance travel options and connect highway fast charging with the network of local chargers in communities statewide.

This announcement builds on the state's \$54 million investment in EV infrastructure. Pennsylvania now leads the nation in EV stations built with [National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure \(NEVI\)](#) funds, with 30 stations open and 53 more on the way. Since the first NEVI site opened in December 2023, Pennsylvania's public fast chargers have supported over 80,000 charging sessions, powering more than 9.6 million miles of travel, and preventing over 2,000 metric tons of carbon emissions.

To help drivers better understand EV ownership, PennDOT has launched [EVs In Focus, a new video series](#) that breaks down common questions in a clear, accessible way. Additional videos are in development, all focused on delivering straightforward, evidence-based information rather than speculation.

[Community Charging funding is also now available](#), beginning in southeastern Pennsylvania and expanding to other regions on a rolling basis. Any publicly accessible site within an eligible region may apply. [A short survey is available](#) to help organizations connect with EV charging station builders and operators, and Community Charging grants are designed to bring chargers directly into neighborhoods, towns, and business districts. Full program details and timelines are available on [PennDOT's Community Charging Funding Rounds website](#).

New Grants Strengthen School Bus Safety and Driver Training Statewide

[Nearly \\$250,000 in state funding](#) will help train about 90 new school bus drivers across Pennsylvania. This investment supports CDL training, permits, testing fees, and trainee wages to support safer, more reliable transportation for students.

This funding is part of the School Bus Safety Program, supported by the state law that fines drivers \$300 for illegally passing a stopped school bus. Twenty-five dollars of each fine goes directly to support this safety program. Seven school districts and transportation companies received grants, including:

- Training 12 new drivers in an Allegheny County district
- Supporting 25 new drivers through a central Pennsylvania bus company
- Preparing 32 new drivers through a multi-county transportation provider

Eligible organizations, including school bus contractors, schools, and municipalities, [can apply for these grants online now through 12:00 AM on April 30, 2026](#). Questions can be emailed to ra-pdasbegp@pa.gov, and all program information can be found at [PennDOT's School Bus Safety website](#).

A reminder for all drivers: **If a school bus has flashing red lights and an extended stop arm, you must stop. Children's safety depends on it.** For all pertinent program information, [visit PennDOT's School Bus Safety website](#). PennDOT's website also offers [Media Resources](#) for creating safety campaign materials.

Looking for Help with a Grant?

Are you working on a transportation grant and want to strategize with experts?

Or have you completed a grant application and would like a thorough review with feedback to strengthen it?

If you answered yes to either question, the PennDOT Municipal Resources team is available to provide free assistance.

Reach out today to get expert support for planning, developing, or improving your transportation grant applications. **This includes the SS4A grants.** Contact the program by completing the form, [PennDOT Municipal Resources Assistance](#) and you will be connected with a technical expert.



PennDOT Municipal Resources can help you get started with a grant. Photo: Microsoft stock photos

FREE Transportation and Land Use Planning – One-on-One Assistance and Training

PennDOT Municipal Resources offers **free** one-on-one 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 Municipal Resources Transportation Planning Assistance request form by [clicking here](#).

If you answer yes to any of the questions below, reach out to [PennDOT Municipal Resources](#) for assistance.

- Are you involved with municipal land use and transportation planning activities?
- Could your municipality use assistance to help shape future land use or transportation projects?
- Would you like to learn how to advance your community's planning and transportation-related goals?
- Have you heard about PennDOT Municipal Resources, but would like to know more about the free training and assistance available to your municipality?



A map of the roads being reviewed during a technical assistance field visit. Photo: PennDOT Municipal Resources

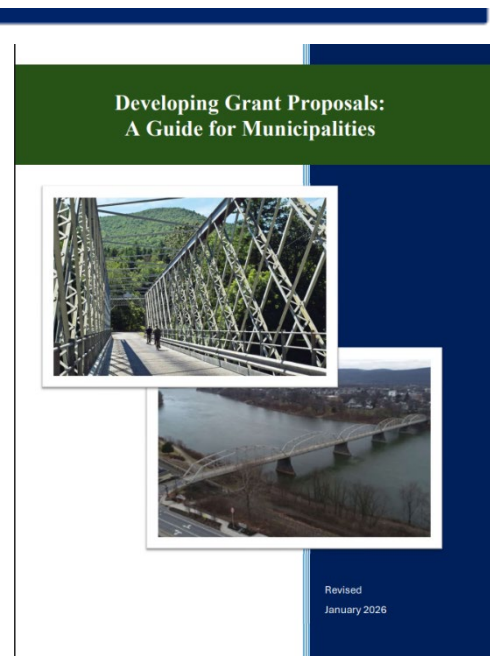
PennDOT Municipal Resources helps local governments and regional/municipal planning organizations consider community needs during the planning process. Examples include:

- Safety issues/concerns,
- Grant, preparation, development, and/or review,
- Bicycle/pedestrian accommodations,
- Transit/multimodal considerations,
- Stormwater management,
- Presence of/impacts from (current/future) freight-generating land uses
- Utility issues,
- Transportation operations considerations,
- Emergency services accommodations,
- Planned development,
- Long-range transportation plans,
- Regional planning studies (e.g., corridor studies, resource management studies, watershed studies, etc.),
- Consistency with current community comprehensive or other plans,
- Consistency with current and/or proposed zoning,
- Other proposed transportation improvements,
- Impacts on the natural, cultural, or social environment,
- Right-of-way considerations,
- Anticipated public opinion,
- Community or cultural events in the candidate project area, and
- Maintenance Agreement requirements.

This list provides only a sample of the types of support available. If your municipality needs assistance related to transportation planning, please contact the Municipal Resources program to discuss how the program can help.

Guide for Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Grant Applications

PennDOT has added a [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 the upcoming Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs) for key programs within the IIJA and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), as well as adjacent programs that support IIJA 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.pa.gov/en/services/pennidot/apply-for-pennidot-infrastructure-and-jobs-act--iija--grants.html>.

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

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

DOT Competitive Grants Dashboard: <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dashboard>

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. 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](#). Use the “Sort & Filter” button to find your contact(s).

PennDOT Municipal Outreach Newsletter

Was this newsletter forwarded to you? If yes, [click here](#) to subscribe to receive a copy directly to your inbox.



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