



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



PennDOT Connects November 2024 Newsletter

Municipal Engineer Shares Her Experience with PennDOT Connects Municipal Outreach

Communities within Pennsylvania's Delaware Valley have a history of industry and manufacturing but are now experiencing renewed interest in redevelopment along the Delaware River. Yet, significant challenges remain on how to improve pedestrian safety and roadway capacity within the corridor.

One of these communities is Eddystone Borough. In 2019, Lisa Catania, then the borough's engineer, reached out to PennDOT Connects Municipal Outreach for technical assistance to address concerns at two intersections within the community. One of these is along SR 291, which bisects Eddystone, creating a barrier between residential sections north and south of the roadway.

Catania, vice president of Catania Engineering Associates, explains, "This is an old roadway, situated in an area that has undergone many changes in industry and businesses along the route. There is a large volume of high-speed automobile and tractor-trailer traffic. Traffic volumes increase exponentially when there is an incident on I-95, which runs parallel to PA 291. But children still have to cross that road to get to school."

For help, the borough contacted PennDOT Connects Municipal Outreach. "Patrick Wright, our representative, was very accommodating, open to our concerns and advising us how to conduct safety and walkability audits. He took us on a comprehensive walking tour of the intersections of Saville Avenue and SR 291 and Chester Pike (SR 13) and Simpson Street," Catania said. As a result of the assistance, the borough improved or updated many of the pedestrian features at the intersections.

"Pat also suggested that the borough consider working with DVRPC, SEPTA, PennDOT, and DCED in developing a plan to enhance walkability within the community and provided us with some of the resources and tools available to assist us with planning," Catania said.

One of these resources was DVRPC's Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI). Through the program, Eddystone acquired a \$47,000 grant for a Route 291 corridor analysis. Delivered in 2022, the analysis outlined a detailed path toward revitalizing the PA 291 corridor and making it safer for all users, while supporting the transportation industry and providing capacity for motor vehicles.

Catania said, "PennDOT Connects Municipal Outreach is an amazing program for municipalities. Based on my experience with this program and its partners, I can confidently tell the communities I work with

that there is a program committed to helping them in planning and funding projects that might otherwise seem out of reach."

Looking for Transportation Planning assistance?

What is assistance and how do I request the service?

Any municipal staff member, government official, or planning partner is eligible to request **free** assistance to help during any stage of the land use and transportation planning or project development process. Assistance can be requested via the PennDOT Connects Municipal Outreach Request [form](#), by email at paconnects@pa.gov, or by calling 717-710-2090.

Types of Assistance: Depending on the nature of a request, municipalities will receive assistance via email or phone to supply technical resources or know-how. In selected cases, an on-site visit may be necessary to facilitate face-to-face discussion and collaboration.

Phone/Email Assistance: Phone and email assistance offers prompt replies to questions about guidance documents; planning tools; best practices; success stories; funding opportunities; PennDOT forms, policies, processes, and standards; and planning partner contacts.

On-Site Assistance: With on-site assistance, municipalities have the opportunity to work with a PennDOT Connects expert on a more detailed request specific to their community and transportation project planning and programming issues.

The technical expert will visit on-site and meet with the municipal officials, associated stakeholders, and planning partners at a half-day workshop-style meeting. Relevant PennDOT District planners and planning partners from the local Metropolitan or Rural Planning Organization are invited to participate in the site visit.

Support for on-site assistance could include guidance and facilitation on addressing planning and safety issues, presentation of research on best planning practices, assistance with specific planning and design-related issues, and/or support in following planning regulations to help begin or move a project forward. After the meeting, the PennDOT Connects Municipal Outreach technical support expert will prepare a report to document the resources and assistance provided.

Assistance

These are some topics that the PennDOT Connects Municipal Outreach can provide assistance for your municipality.



Are you concerned about the safety of pedestrians on your roadways? Reach out to PennDOT Connects and a technical expert will do a Pedestrian Safety Audit and provide a report with proven low-cost safety improvements.

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

Photo: PennDOT Connects Municipal Outreach, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Multimodal Transportation

- How can we better plan for sidewalk and bike path expansions? How do we get started with this process?
- What is the best way to control access to nonconforming uses/businesses and improve safety in our downtown business district when sidewalks are added?

Improving Mobility and Efficiency

- What can be done to better manage access for locally generated traffic along key highway corridors?
- How do we reclaim our Main Street when our current roadway system emphasizes mobility (for cars) over accessibility?

Improving Safety

- How can we incorporate safer pedestrian crossings during the next state or local road paving cycle? Is there funding available to pay for safety enhancements?
- How do we moderate driving behavior and address safe walking to schools to improve safety on state routes within our community?

Funding

- How do we develop a funding strategy to upgrade our curb and sidewalks?
- How do we ensure early coordination of maintenance projects scheduled by PennDOT to address ADA design at the intersections of local and state routes?
- What funding resources are available?



PennDOT Connects Municipal Outreach assisted Dover Township with the development of a Local Road Safety Plan. This plan gives the township a strategic plan to improve safety and helpful to have when applying for grant funding. Photo: PennDOT LTAP

PennDOT Connects Municipal Outreach Resources

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

[Highway Occupancy Permits Tech Sheet](#)

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.

Learn more about the steps in the process by reviewing the Highway Occupancy Permits Tech Sheet. The tech sheet also provides links to resources to assist through the process.

Introduction

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 an 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 right-of-way but also has the responsibility to accommodate land owners, developers, and utility owners who may want to access the public right-of-way and balance those plans with the needs of the traveling public. The Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP), and its review and approval process, is the device used by PennDOT to balance the needs of all stakeholders. The steps below walk through the HOP process.

1 Review the HOP Guidelines: Familiarize yourself with PennDOT's guidelines for Highway Occupancy Permits (HOPs). <https://www.penndot.pa.gov/Doing-Business/Permits/HighwayOccupancyPermits/Pages/default.aspx>

PennDOT Connects Municipal Outreach Educational Opportunities

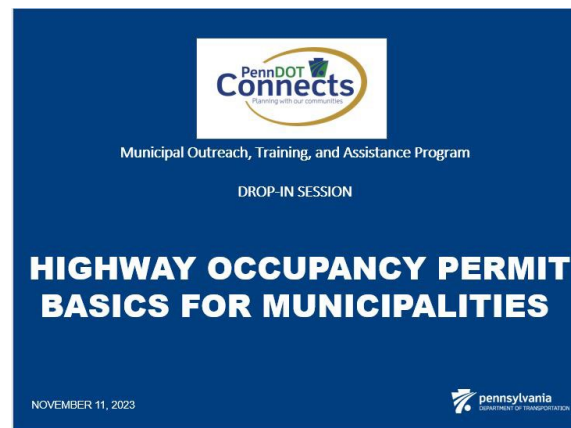
Go to the [PennDOT Connects webpage](#) to learn more about upcoming educational opportunities. Click the down arrows next to the Drop-Ins and Workshops tabs to view the current offering and past recorded sessions.

Recorded Drop-Ins

Did you miss the drop-in below? Click on the title to watch the recording. All drop-ins are on the [PennDOT Connects webpage](#).

[Highway Occupancy Permit Basics for Municipalities](#)

Do you know what “HOP” is? Do you know when one is required from PennDOT? Do you get questions at your municipality about them? If so, this recorded drop-in session covers Highway Occupancy Basics and common questions municipalities may have regarding them. The discussion covered when HOPs are required, the process of obtaining them for the different scenarios that may arise and provides guidance that can be passed along to property owners and/or others working within your municipality.



PennDOT Funding

New Funding for EV Charger Upgrades: Proposal Period Is Open

Round 1A of the Electric Vehicles Charger Reliability and Accessibility Accelerator (EVC-RAA) program opened on Nov. 11, 2024, and will close on Jan. 10, 2025. This initiative aims to upgrade, repair, or replace eligible vehicle (EV) chargers to enhance infrastructure reliability and promote cleaner, safer, and more reliable transportation across Pennsylvania.

In Round 1, PennDOT allocated \$300,000 to projects by Electrify America and Leg Up Farmers Market, upgrading chargers at key locations in Willow Grove and York, PA. With \$4.7 million remaining for future awards, eligible parties can apply for funds to upgrade, repair, or replace eligible chargers to meet Federal Rule requirements. There are 172 remaining locations eligible for funding to bring charging stations up to federal standards. The program is part of a broader effort to strategically deploy EV infrastructure and ensure high reliability across Pennsylvania.

For more details, visit PennDOT's [EVC-RAA program web page](#) or send questions to ra-pdevcorridors@pa.gov.

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:

BIP – Large Bridge

The goals of the [BIP - Large Bridge](#) grants are to:

- Enhance the safety, efficiency, and reliability of transporting people and freight across bridges.
- Upgrade the overall condition of bridges throughout the United States.
- Offer financial support that incentivizes and leverages non-federal contributions from sponsors and stakeholders for planning, designing, and constructing eligible projects that will cost more than \$100 million.

The deadline for applying for FY 2026 funds in this rolling application process* is Friday, Aug. 1, 2025, 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.

Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT)

[The PROTECT program](#) will help build and maintain road, transit, port, and railway infrastructure that can better withstand severe weather events. PROTECT's grant funding provides for the continued operation and quick recovery of these transportation systems after extreme weather and aims to inspire innovation and best practices that other regions can replicate and adopt.

PennDOT will consider providing support for regionally supported grant proposals, as applicable, and may include providing data and subject matter expertise, as available.

The deadline for requesting PennDOT support is Monday, Feb. 10, 2025.

The deadline to apply is Monday, Feb. 24, 2025, 11:59 p.m. EST.

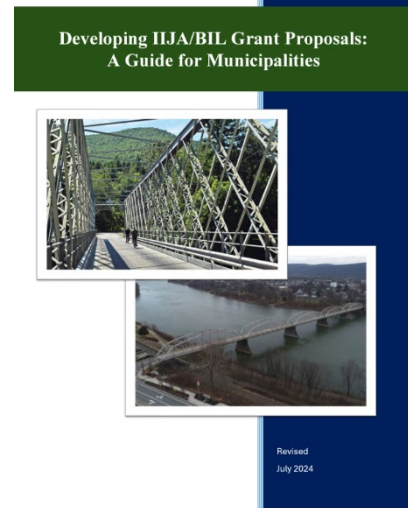
Additional PROTECT Grant Program Information and Resources

The application period for PROTECT's 2024-2025 grants opened in October 2024 and will remain open until Feb. 24, 2025. Virtual meetings are now available to provide guidance and support to applicants.

Webinar slides and recordings will be posted on the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) [PROTECT Discretionary Grant Program Website](#). Recorded webinars include:

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.pa.gov/en/services/pennDOT/apply-for-pennDOT-infrastructure-and-jobs-act--iija--grants.html>.

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 Municipal Outreach 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 Municipal Outreach 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.

PennDOT Connects Newsletter

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