



BETTER COLLABORATION

# TRANSFORM

BETTER COMMUNITIES

## Quality of Life:

### A message from Acting PennDOT Secretary of Transportation Yassmin Gramian, P.E.

Municipal leaders and fellow transportation professionals,

One can argue that the one of the best ways to cope with trying times is to plan for the future. While we continue to deal with unprecedented events brought about by the onset of COVID-19, it is important that we stay connected.

We are committed to staying connected to you and your communities through our continued focus on the PennDOT Connects process. Through PennDOT Connects, we will continue to consider community needs at the beginning of the planning process to ensure the best allocation of our resources.



Yassmin Gramian, P.E., Acting Secretary  
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

Now more than ever, Pennsylvanians look to their government to provide the best quality of life possible. By planning together, it can be accomplished.

In this issue of Transform, you will read about practical ways of enhancing safety and connectivity for bicyclists and pedestrians. One of the best ways to ensure we are meeting the transportation needs of all of our community members is to use the PennDOT Connects process.

As you review these projects and prepare for your own, I'm proud to share that PennDOT has released a draft [Statewide Active Transportation Plan](#).\* The plan supports PennDOT's work to improve biking and walking conditions throughout the state. It also highlights topics

including public health, equity, and climate change.

If you haven't already done so, I also encourage you to familiarize yourself with the [PennDOT Connects Policy](#). It includes collaboration requirements and planning considerations, as well as the implementation timeline and more.

I thank you for choosing public service as your way of life. With leadership comes great responsibility as we work hard to earn the trust of the public we serve. Let PennDOT Connects be a conduit to that trust.

\*Please note that this is a large pdf file that may take some time to load. It is best viewed in a browser other than Internet Explorer.



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## ● Technical Assistance Success Stories: How Four Municipalities Used PennDOT Technical Assistance to Improve Bike/Ped Facilities

PennDOT Connects provides free technical assistance to municipalities to jump-start community planning and address local mobility needs. Several communities have already taken advantage of this service in their efforts to improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

### Crosswalk Considerations in New Cumberland

New Cumberland Borough in Cumberland County has a thoroughly walkable land-use pattern. However, the intersection of Third Street and Geary Avenue didn't fully accommodate pedestrians. Third Street allows free-flow traffic while Geary Avenue has stop signs. Two corners of the intersection have bus stops. Councilman Don Kibler

requested PennDOT's technical assistance for advice on how pedestrian safety could be enhanced.

A PennDOT Connects bike-ped expert met with Mr. Kibler, the borough police chief, and others and assessed the intersection. He explained the criteria relevant to crosswalk markings, including the volume of traffic, number of lanes, vehicle speeds, and number of gaps in the traffic flow. After consulting FHWA guidelines, he recommended installing crosswalk markings across Third Street along with standard pedestrian crossing signs. Following the recommendation documented in the follow-up report, Borough Council implemented the crosswalk markings and also adjusted on-street parking striping to help drivers see pedestrians waiting to cross.

"The experience could not have been better," says Mr. Kibler. "The factual data produced by the study and the recommendations that ensued were accurate, relevant, and executable."

"The experience could not have been better. ...the recommendations were ...relevant and executable."

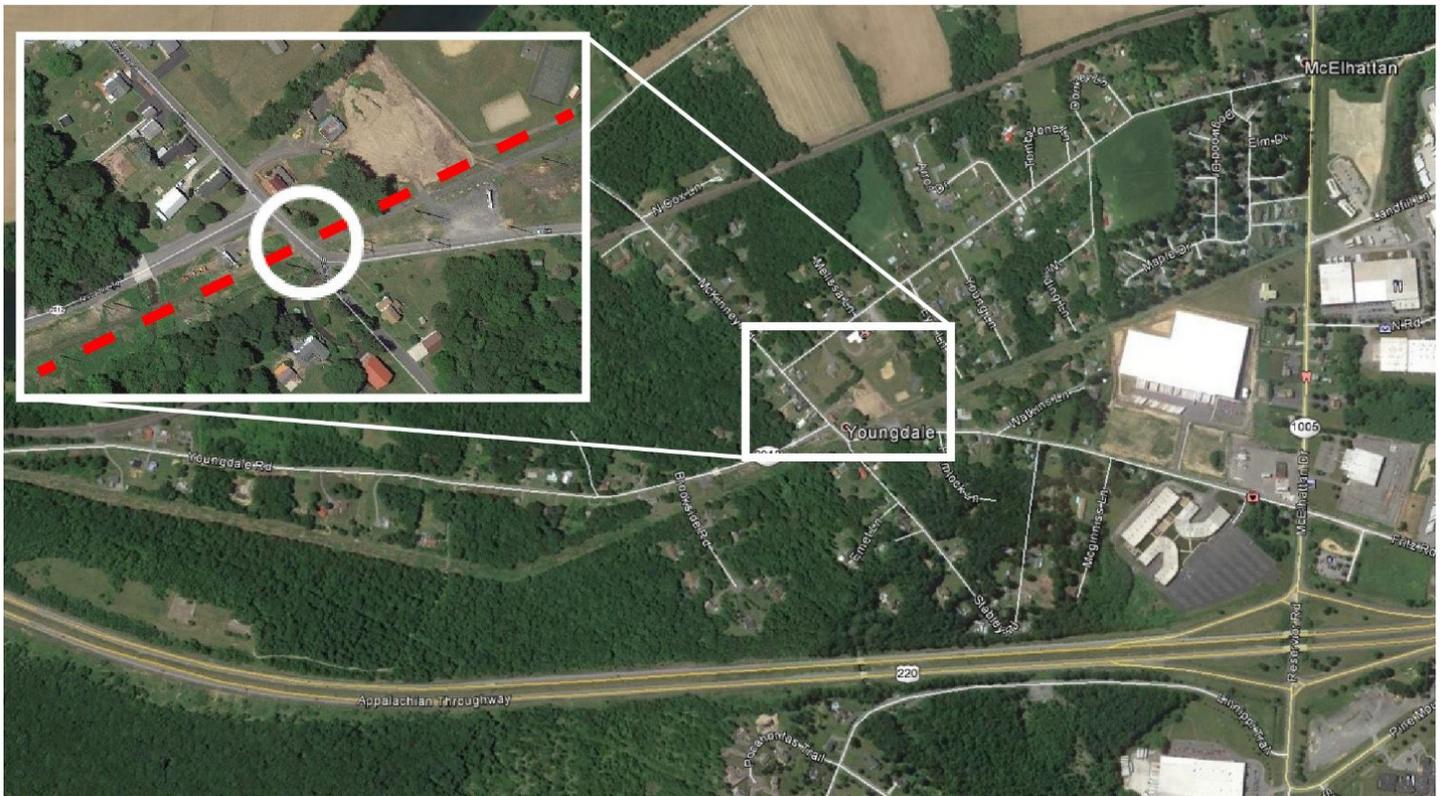
Don Kibler  
New Cumberland Borough Council

**Table 11. Recommendations for installing marked crosswalks and other needed pedestrian improvements at uncontrolled locations.\***

Roadway Type (Number of Travel Lanes and Median Type)	Vehicle ADT ≤ 9,000			Vehicle ADT >9,000 to 12,000			Vehicle ADT >12,000–15,000			Vehicle ADT > 15,000		
	Speed Limit**											
	≤ 48.3 km/h (30 mi/h)	56.4 km/h (35 mi/h)	64.4 km/h (40 mi/h)	≤ 48.3 km/h (30 mi/h)	56.4 km/h (35 mi/h)	64.4 km/h (40 mi/h)	≤ 48.3 km/h (30 mi/h)	56.4 km/h (35 mi/h)	64.4 km/h (40 mi/h)	≤ 48.3 km/h (30 mi/h)	56.4 km/h (35 mi/h)	64.4 km/h (40 mi/h)
Two lanes	C	C	P	C	C	P	C	C	N	C	P	N
Three lanes	C	C	P	C	P	P	P	P	N	P	N	N
Multilane (four or more lanes) with raised median***	C	C	P	C	P	N	P	P	N	N	N	N
Multilane (four or more lanes) without raised median	C	P	N	P	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

Source: "Safety Effects of Marked Versus Unmarked Crosswalks at Uncontrolled Locations," FHWA Pub #HRT-04-100, Sept. 2005.

The FHWA chart above helps planners and engineers evaluate the feasibility of marked crosswalks based on the number of lanes, traffic volumes, and speed limits. The category applied to the intersection of Third Street and Geary Avenue is highlighted above, with "C" indicating the site is a candidate for marked crosswalks.



The trail is highlighted in red on the locator map, with the crossing circled in white. Traffic along Youngdale Road jogs through the proposed crossing area.

### Trail Crossing Near Lock Haven

In Clinton County, three miles east of Lock Haven, a new trail was proposed to connect the communities of Castenea, Youngdale, and McElhattan. However, the unconventional geometry of the intersection of Youngdale Road (SR 1212) with McKinney Road/Stabley Road posed challenges for cyclist and pedestrian crossings—SR 1212 has no traffic controls and vehicles must make near-90-degree turns through the proposed trail crossing in both directions.

Clinton County requested technical assistance to address safety at the crossing. During the on-site visit, the PennDOT Connects bike-ped expert presented a suite of potential treatments, including warning signage for motorists and trail users, pavement markings, and traffic beacons.

“The County was very pleased with the assistance provided through PennDOT Connects. We originally expected to hire an outside engineer but received ample engineering and research resources,” says Katie de Silva, Clinton County Planning Director. With increased awareness of the tools and tactics available, the County will be able to design a safe trail crossing and provide an appealing route for bicyclists and pedestrians.

“We originally expected to hire an outside engineer but received ample engineering and research resources [from PennDOT].”

Katie de Silva  
Clinton County Planning Director

## Ped Safety at Intersections in Eddystone

Eddystone Borough in Delaware County requested PennDOT Connects technical assistance to discuss pedestrian safety at two intersections: Saville Avenue/SR

291 and Chester Pike/Simpson Street. During the on-site visit, Borough staff and the PennDOT Connects bike-ped expert discussed how traffic volumes, traffic speeds, and driveway access affect pedestrian safety.

Using FHWA's Walkability Checklist, the group performed a comprehensive walkability audit at both intersections. Such audits reveal information about the characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses of a site from a pedestrian perspective. Observed deficiencies at the intersections included:

- Missing or inaccessible pedestrian signals;
- Poor signal visibility for pedestrians;
- Lack of sidewalks at some corners; and
- Bus stops not connected to the sidewalk network.

The bike-ped expert recommended that the Borough coordinate with its traffic engineer and PennDOT to develop a near-term plan to improve pedestrian facilities at the signals. Longer-term recommendations include working with the County, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), SEPTA, and PennDOT to enhance connections to bus stops and the local commuter rail station.

**How walkable is your community?**

**Location of walk**      **Rating Scale:** 1 (awful) 2 (many problems) 3 (some problems) 4 (good) 5 (very good) 6 (excellent)

**1. Did you have room to walk?**  
 Yes     Some problems:  
 Sidewalks or paths started and stopped  
 Sidewalks were broken or cracked  
 Sidewalks were blocked with poles, signs, shrubbery, dumpsters, etc.  
 No sidewalks, paths, or shoulders  
 Too much traffic  
 Something else \_\_\_\_\_  
**Rating:** (circle one)    **Locations of problems:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 1 2 3 4 5 6

**2. Was it easy to cross streets?**  
 Yes     Some problems:  
 Road was too wide  
 Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross  
 Needed striped crosswalks or traffic signals  
 Parked cars blocked our view of traffic  
 Trees or plants blocked our view of traffic  
 Needed curb ramps or ramps needed repair  
 Something else \_\_\_\_\_  
**Rating:** (circle one)    **Locations of problems:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 1 2 3 4 5 6

**4. Was it easy to follow safety rules? Could you and your child...**  
 Yes     No     No  
 Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen by drivers?  
 Yes     No     No  
 Stop and look left, right and then left again before crossing streets?  
 Yes     No     No  
 Walk on sidewalks or shoulders facing traffic where there were no sidewalks?  
 Yes     No     No  
 Cross with the light?  
**Rating:** (circle one)    **Locations of problems:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 1 2 3 4 5 6

**5. Was your walk pleasant?**  
 Yes     Some problems:  
 Needed more grass, flowers, or trees  
 Scary dogs  
 Scary people  
 Not well lighted  
 Dirty, lots of litter or trash  
 Dirty air due to automobile exhaust  
 Something else \_\_\_\_\_  
**Rating:** (circle one)    **Locations of problems:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 1 2 3 4 5 6

FHWA's Walkability Checklist:  
[http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/cms/downloads/walkability\\_checklist.pdf](http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/cms/downloads/walkability_checklist.pdf)

## Planning to Close the Trail Gap in Delmont

The Westmoreland Heritage Trail is a planned 21.9-mile trail in Westmoreland, Allegheny, and Indiana counties. Eighteen miles of trail have been completed north and west of the boroughs of Delmont and Export in Westmoreland County. According to Delmont Visionary Committee member Annamarie Stackiewicz, there is ample demand to bike and walk the trail, but presently no safe and comfortable way to access it from Delmont. Along with local transportation and health benefits, extending the trail through Delmont would enhance tourism and business.

To help achieve its bike-ped goals, Delmont Borough requested PennDOT Connects technical assistance to discuss how to plan for local improvements and trail connectivity. A bike-ped expert met with Borough representatives and recommended that the Borough develop an active

transportation plan. The follow-up report provided example plans and resources including the draft Statewide Active Transportation Plan, which outlines six steps to developing such a plan.

**Developing a Local Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**

**Step 1: Organizing and Start-up**

- Identify the purpose and focus:
  - Why create a plan?
  - What areas?
  - Who for?
  - What is the connection to other plans?
  - What is the timing/budget?
- Get a committee together
  - Municipal administration, planners/engineers
  - Residents and bike/hiking/walking groups
  - Schools and Elected officials
  - Maintenance personnel, Police/EMS

**Step 2: Collect Data**

- Crash and safety data
- Existing facilities
- Origins and destinations
- Community input

**Step 3: Develop a Vision and Goals**

- Vision Zero

**Step 4: Create Connections, Policies and Safety Projects**

- Trails, paths, sidewalks, bike facilities
- Roadways
- Amenities
- Ordinances/Policies to foster active transportation
- Safety projects

**Step 5: Identify and Prioritize Projects**

- Project costs
- Project benefits
- Coordination efforts

**Step 6: Implementation Strategies**

- Funding sources
- Collaboration
- Performance measurement

PennDOT Technical Assistance included practical guidance on how to develop an Active Transportation Plan.

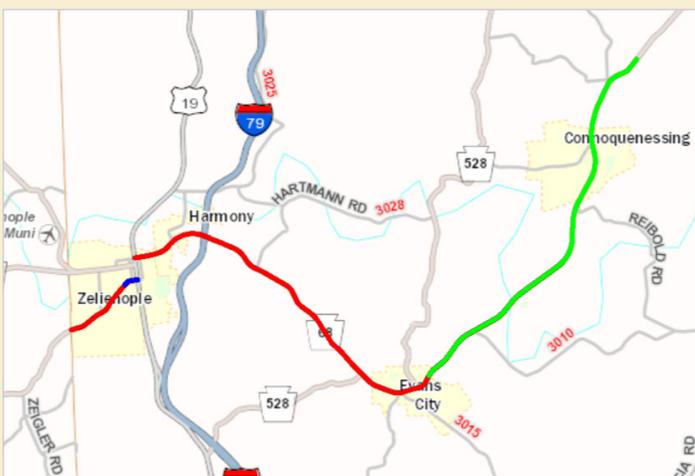
## ● Featured District: PennDOT District 10

### Streamlined PennDOT Connects Outreach for Three Projects and Seven Municipalities

District 10 identified three planned improvements along a 13-mile stretch of SR 68 in southwestern Butler County. Its planning and programming unit might have conducted seven meetings to gather information about each community's use of and vision for "their" segment of the project corridor. But District Planner Justin Ruggles saw a more efficient way. He invited all seven municipalities to one PennDOT Connects meeting for all three projects along the SR 68 corridor.

Connoquenessing, Evans City, Harmony, and Zelenople boroughs and Connoquenessing, Forward, and Jackson townships met at Connoquenessing Borough. District staff introduced the three upcoming projects and discussed municipal questions and concerns that could affect the scope, design, and delivery of the projects.

During this one meeting, the municipalities described use of the corridor for local festivals and initiatives to enhance community life, as well as the shared concerns of roadside vegetation management and shoulder conditions for bicyclists. The exchange gave District staff—particularly the two project managers—a broader and deeper perspective on the project's impact on local communities. In addition, District staff were able to explain the design process and engineering terms, answer questions in person, and alleviate many municipal concerns.



Safety improvements to the PA 68 Zelenople Curve (shown in blue) and two resurfacing projects (shown in red and green) were discussed at a combined PennDOT Connects outreach meeting to discuss how the entire SR 68 corridor serves seven municipalities, from Zelenople to Connoquenessing Township.

“That initial Connects meeting helped build a comprehensive understanding of the corridor and better working relationships with municipalities,” Ruggles says. “The municipalities really appreciate the outreach.”

### Featured District Planner: Justin Ruggles

Justin Ruggles has been the District Planner for PennDOT's District 10 for one year and he's been the perfect fit for the District's PennDOT Connects efforts in that time. “The best decisions are made when you have a full understanding of the situation,” Ruggles says. “If we're going to replace or improve a part of the transportation system, we need to understand who uses the system and how they use it to optimize the design. We need to ask, then listen.”



Justin Ruggles, District Planner, PennDOT Engineering District 10

The listening during PennDOT Connects meetings helps the District understand how projects will impact communities during construction, on opening day, and over the decades to come. From that understanding, the District, the municipality, and the metropolitan or rural planning organization can collectively problem-solve to develop the most efficient solution and implementation.

Prior to working at PennDOT District 10, Justin was a transportation planner with the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission. “I visited every municipality in the four-county region to ask about their transportation needs,” Ruggles says. “That experience showed me how varied the transportation needs among communities really are.”

“We need to ask, then listen.”

Justin Ruggles

## ● District and Municipal Project Collaborations

To carry out PennDOT Connects policy, each of PennDOT's 11 engineering district offices offers to collaborate with municipal and community stakeholders and metropolitan and rural planning organizations. The aim is to identify collaborative ways to design and deliver upcoming projects and advance local goals and priorities. Communities served by District 5 have asked PennDOT to consider urban trails in the two projects highlighted below.

### Shared Goals, One Bridge



The existing bridge over Catasauqua Creek looking north on Lehigh Street toward the intersection with Race Street (SR 1004)

When PennDOT District 5 offered to meet with Catasauqua Borough (Lehigh County) about an upcoming bridge replacement project on Lehigh Street (SR 1007), the Borough included representatives of the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor (D&L) in the meetings. The trail group had been exploring the possibility of

building a pedestrian bridge over the Catasauqua Creek south of the Lehigh Street bridge to close a gap in the trail network. Realizing they had shared goals, the District and D&L determined that widening the existing bridge to accommodate the trail on one side was the most efficient option.

“Incorporating trail passage into the PennDOT bridge saves money and avoids the environmental impacts on the Catasauqua Creek of constructing a separate structure,” says Elissa Garofalo, Executive Director of the D&L. “It also completes a critical link in the connectivity of the D&L Trail in Lehigh County.”

The project is one of many successful examples of collaboration. The Borough and trail organization took advantage of the upcoming bridge project to share another creek-crossing need and together found a feasible solution. The District has committed to building an eight-foot-wide trail on one side of the bridge and a sidewalk on the other as part of the bridge replacement project. The D&L will extend the existing trail approaches to the bridge. The bridge project is currently in final design and scheduled to be advertised for construction in July 2020.

### Maintaining the Schuylkill River Trail During Bypass Reconstruction

Reconstruction and widening of the US 422 bypass along five miles of the Schuylkill Riverfront in Berks County has required significant local engagement. The West Shore Bypass Stakeholders group was formed to spearhead collaboration between the project sponsors and the more than 20 local working groups.

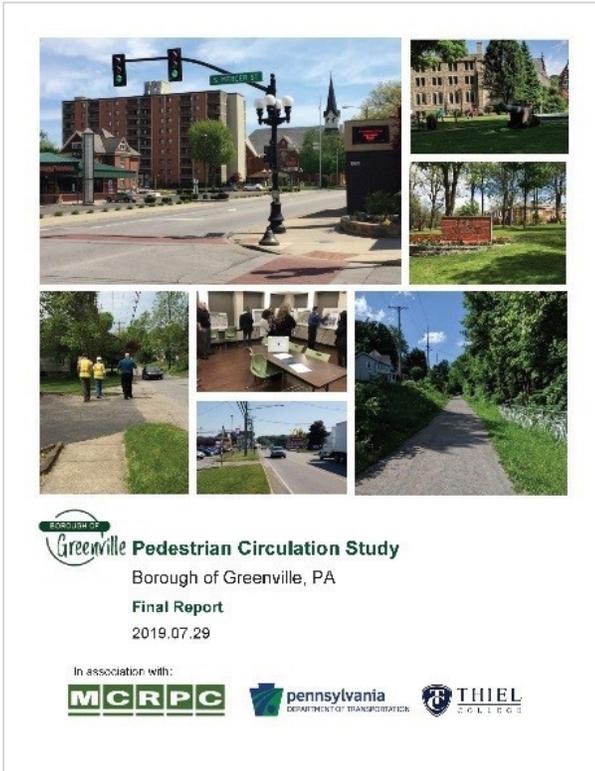
Among local concerns was the proposed removal of the Schuylkill River Trail Bridge and rerouting of the trail. At the request of the stakeholder group, PennDOT District 5 re-evaluated the initial design and agreed to maintain the existing trail bridge in its current location. Collaboration continued as the District and the stakeholder group refined the trail's alignment and reviewed ownership and maintenance responsibilities during design to avoid potential delays or increased costs during project delivery. While design is still

ongoing for this project, early collaboration has ensured that the trail will remain an asset for regional use.



The trail bridge, circled in red above, provides access to recreational, residential, and employment opportunities along both sides of the Schuylkill River.

## ● PennDOT Connects Studies: More than Just a Plan for Greenville



[Greenville's Pedestrian Circulation Study](#) was released in July 2019.

Transportation plans have the potential to lead to significant infrastructure improvements, while also capitalizing on an engaged local community. With the proper focus, a planning study can define local needs and identify a set of prioritized actions that, once implemented, can make a real difference in local mobility.

One such plan was recently completed by the Borough of Greenville, in association with the Mercer County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC), Thiel College, and PennDOT. The study stemmed from a recommendation in Mercer County's 2016 Long-Range Transportation Plan, which identified pedestrian safety and access issues.

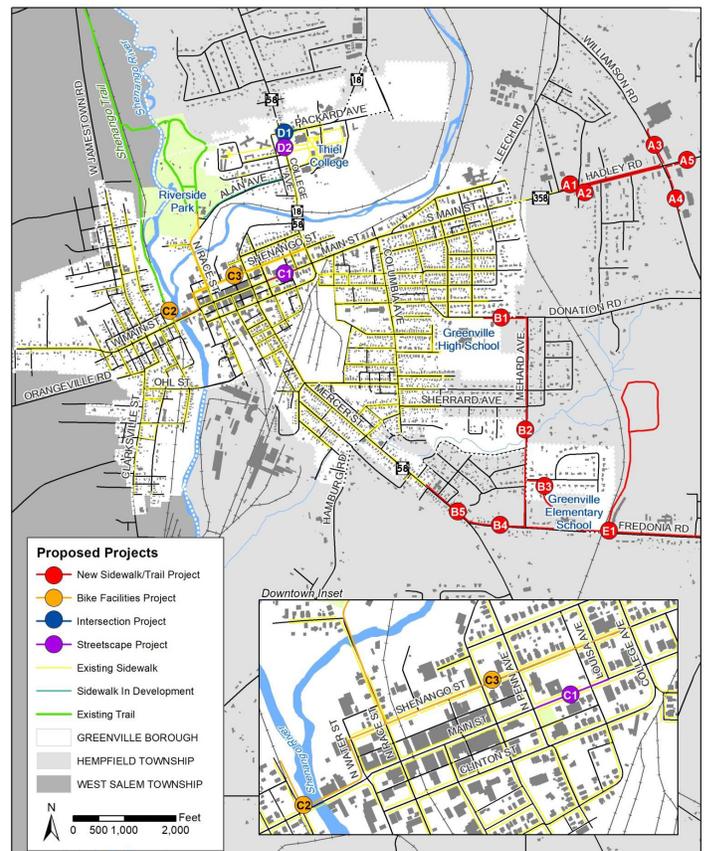
The resulting Borough of Greenville Pedestrian Circulation Study provides a set of implementable action items that aim to:

- Enhance pedestrian connections between residential neighborhoods, Thiel College, and local amenities;
- Advance quality of life through a network of multi-use trails that provide improved access to recreational amenities; and
- Help promote the county as a recreational tourist destination.

The planning process focused on implementable projects rather than “dream” proposals. According to MCRPC Senior Planner Matt Stewart, the MPO has emphasized the value of action plans over visionary plans. “We want to make sure recommendations can be built and cost estimates are realistic,” he says.

Most of the study document focuses on detailed recommendations, each with a description of purpose and need, anticipated environmental impacts, potential funding sources, and overall priority. In addition, conceptual intersection improvements were developed to help stakeholders visualize the proposed outcomes.

According to Stewart, since development of the plan, the MPO and municipality have taken the first implementation steps by obtaining funding and launching design of intersection improvements at SR 58 and SR 18. The goal is to fund and construct phases to align with a larger corridor improvement during the state's next funding cycle.



The study's “Recommended Projects Index Map” organizes recommendations into four geographic areas and four functional categories: New Sidewalk/Trail, Bike Facilities, Intersections, and Streetscape.

## PennDOT Connects Resources

### Technical Assistance

Technical assistance offers local leaders and staff the chance to work one-on-one with a visiting technical expert to define and address local issues. Any question request related to land use planning and transportation projects is fair game. In addition, technical assistance by phone or virtual meeting can be requested for quick guidance and discussions. All technical assistance is offered free to municipalities.

### Online Training

Eight online modules cover a variety of land use and transportation planning topics, such as accommodating growth, enhancing community character, encouraging multimodal travel, identifying funding, improving mobility and efficiency, and improving safety. Each module takes only 15 minutes to complete.

An overview session about PennDOT Connects will be available later this year.

### In-person Training

In-person training takes a deeper dive into one or more planning topics during a half-day session. Each module introduces the planning topic, gives examples, provides resources, and offers next steps. A PennDOT Connects technical expert will deliver the training at your location and facilitate discussions on how these planning concepts can be applied in your community.

### Tech Sheets

Tech sheets are two- to three-page written references about planning topics relevant to local communities. Like the training, they cover principles and practices, resources, benefits, challenges you might encounter, and potential next steps. PennDOT Connects provides a variety of free services and resources for your use at local government and community meetings.

**To request technical assistance or other support, contact PennDOT by phone or e-mail (details below).**

## Collaborate With Your MPO/RPO and PennDOT

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 possible transportation project investments with available resources.

This strategic alliance is now of even greater importance for implementing PennDOT Connects. 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.

Municipalities, MPO/RPO planning partners, and PennDOT must collaborate to ensure that opportunities to improve transportation and communities are realized. MPO/RPO contacts can be found at: [www.penndot.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/Planning/Pages/MPO-and-RPO-Contact-List.aspx](http://www.penndot.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/Planning/Pages/MPO-and-RPO-Contact-List.aspx).



Pennsylvania Department of Transportation  
 Web: [PennDOT Connects](http://PennDOT Connects)  
 E-mail: [PAConnects@pa.gov](mailto:PAConnects@pa.gov)  
 Phone: 717-710-2090



### Transportation Planning: Connecting with Community Priorities



Mobility & Efficiency



Multimodal Transportation



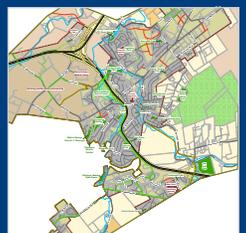
Safety



Community Character



Project Funding



Accommodating Growth