# PennDOT Connects
## Planning with our communities
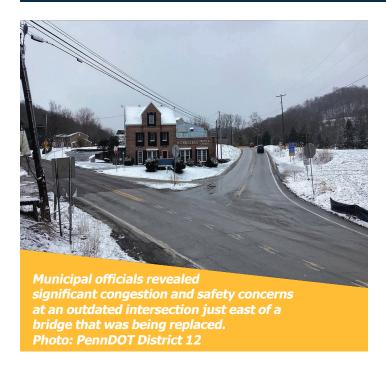
## Transportation Project Development
### #22

# Introduction

Project development can be defined as the process of formulating a solution to an identified problem and putting the pieces in place to ensure a funding solution and successful implementation. Moving a project through the project development process can be thought of as a multi-step collaborative process that involves a variety of stakeholders.



**Transportation Program Development and Project Delivery Process**

**Transportation Issues Potential Sources:** LRTP, Asset Management, Public, MPO/RPO, Districts, STC Comments, State and/or Regional Priorities and Goals, County/Municipal Comprehensive Plans, Corridor Studies, Planning Products, Discretionary, Financial Guidance

COLLABORATION

Problem Assessment → Proposal² Identification → Proposal² Evaluation → Project addition to TIP/STIP → PE/NEPA Decision → Final Design and Construction

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



*Municipal officials revealed significant congestion and safety concerns at an outdated intersection just east of a bridge that was being replaced.*
*Photo: PennDOT District 12*

## Step 1. Identify the Problem

Projects are most often developed in response to a problem – recognition that an issue exists related to safety, mobility, capacity, connectivity, or asset deterioration, for example. Identifying the problem can be anecdotal, in that it can be identified in the field, driven by resident or stakeholder input, possibly stemming from a "near miss." Identifying the problem may also result from more formal means, such as an inspection report, accident history, or tragedy.

## Step 2. Problem Assessment

After recognizing that a problem exists, further investigation is needed to fully analyze the situation contributing to the problem. The assessment can help to determine the root cause of the issue,

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identify contributing factors, and consider the desired outcome. It may involve data collection and stakeholder engagement to clearly define the problem and contributing factors, as well as desired results. Sometimes the assessment is performed in conjunction with identifying the problem through required inspections such as a bridge inspection. In other cases, it is more organic. PennDOT Connects Municipal Outreach provides free assistance to municipalities to help with problem assessment through onsite analysis, technical assistance, stakeholder identification and engagement, and tools such as a road safety audit or sidewalk gap analysis. In addition, engaging the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) at this stage may provide an opportunity for the project to be considered in a regional plan or initiative, such as the Long Range Transportation Plan.



*Stakeholder identification and engagement is an important part of the problem assessment step and stakeholder engagement in the planning and feasibility analysis step of the project development process.*

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**PennDOT Connects Municipal Assistance Technical Assistance Examples**

- Road Safety Audit
- Safety Assessment
- Walking Audit
- Sidewalk Gap Analysis
- Preliminary Condition Assessment



Request Free Planning Assistance

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stakeholders may include impacted property owners, the community at large, emergency services providers, major employers, institutions such as a school district, PennDOT, neighboring municipalities, and the regional MPO/RPO. Engaging stakeholders at this stage will help to vet and test solutions and help to identify potential unintended consequences.

## Step 3. Planning and Feasibility Analysis

In many situations, there may be multiple solutions to a problem. It is important to consider all aspects of a solution, including the costs, benefits, ease of implementation, and impacts. These considerations may be reviewed through some type of planning and feasibility analysis. Municipalities also may look to PennDOT Connects Municipal Outreach to provide technical assistance for some aspects of planning and feasibility analysis; however, many communities will choose to engage an engineer or transportation planning consultant at this stage. Throughout the process of evaluating potential solutions, it will be important to continue to provide opportunities for stakeholder engagement. These
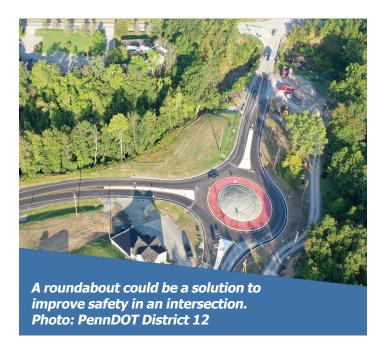
**Stakeholder Engagement**

Stakeholder engagement may come from various methods and occurs throughout the project development process. Types of engagement may include:

- On-site analysis and discussion
- Key stakeholder interviews
- Targeted outreach to future partners
- Public meetings
- Community surveys
- Sharing project concepts on a website or through social media
- Flyers or mailers to impacted property owners

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PennDOT Connects Municipal Resources

PennDOT Connects Web Request Assistance

Email: PAConnects@pa.gov
Phone: 717-710-2090

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*A roundabout could be a solution to improve safety in an intersection. Photo: PennDOT District 12*

## Step 4. Sharing the Selected Alternative

The planning and feasibility analysis will identify and evaluate several alternative solutions. The selected alternative will represent the most feasible and cost-effective solution that will achieve the greatest benefit or provide the most ideal solution to the problem. The selected alternative may not be the least costly solution.

Sharing the selected alternative will be critical to advancing the project beyond preliminary planning and feasibility. This should include further discussion with the MPO/RPO, additional community engagement, and partner awareness and support. Sharing the story and making the case for the project are key to rallying support and finding a funding solution.

## Step 5. MPO/RPO Coordination for Project Placement on the TIP.

Ongoing coordination with the MPO/RPO will be required to get a project considered for placement on the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). While each MPO/RPO may have slightly different processes for securing TIP placement, ensuring good communication and collaboration will be critical. While placement on the TIP identifies a funding solution or partial funding solution based on the funding source, the timeframe for design and implementation may be more fluid.

For these reasons, the community may want to consider alternative or supplemental funding to help meet local matching funds requirements or to progress the schedule. Many programs exist at the regional, state, and federal levels that will fund different types of transportation projects. The community also may consider formal agreements with project partners as a supplemental source of funding.



*Communication with your MPO/RPO is a important step to finding funding solutions for the transportation project.*