RATS FFY 2027 - 2050 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP) PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETING #7 WOMELSDORF BOROUGH HALL, TULPEHOCKEN REGION MEETING, APRIL 14, 2025

Mr. Piper started the meeting at 6:07 PM. He welcomed everyone and gave a brief overview of the purpose of tonight's meeting which was to review and gather public input during the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update development process. He mentioned that specific projects will be discussed in the second half of the meeting.

Ms. Timochenko next shared a PowerPoint presentation (see attachment at the end of these notes).

Ms. Timochenko described the Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS) and the Committee structure.

Ms. Timochenko then explained what the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is along with some of the necessary items to be included under federal requirements; planning horizon and update process (every four years minimum); performance measures; and serving as the foundation for the development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

- Mayor Melissa Dean asked for clarification regarding updates. Does that mean we complete 5
 LRTP updates every 20 years. Ms. Timochenko confirmed that we do.
- Mayor Melissa Dean asked if federal funding is the same as was planned. Mr. Piper explained that the current legislation ends in a year. Either they will write new legislation or extend current legislation, but at this time it is unknown what the current administration will decide. Changes in administration almost always result in changes to program funding and priorities.
- Mr. Scott Wilson acknowledged that transportation infrastructure is important for all and quality of life. All agreed.

Ms. Timochenko summarized the ten (10) Federal Planning Factors that must be incorporated into the LRTP:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight.
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvement and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
- Promote efficient system management and operation.
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.
- Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation.
- Enhance travel and tourism.

The LRTP must be consistent with state and local transportation plans and programs.

Ms. Timochenko then summarized the public outreach staff has done to date and plans on doing in the future. Ms. Timochenko informed the audience that in 2024 staff held 4 in-person meetings in multiple municipalities throughout Berks County. Staff also held one virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams and distributed a survey for public input.

Ms. Timochenko informed the audience that staff has 7 in-person meetings scheduled in various municipalities in 2025. As well as two scheduled virtual meetings via Microsoft Teams. The meetings schedule is as follows:

- 1. April 2, 2025 City of Reading
- 2. April 14, 2025 Womelsdorf Borough
- 3. April 16, 2025 Tilden Township
- 4. April 22, 2025 Colebrookdale Township
- 5. April 23, 2025 Virtual Meeting
- 6. April 24, 2025 Cumru Township
- 7. April 29, 2025 = Maidencreek Township
- 8. May 1, 2025 Virtual Meeting
- 9. May 13, 2025 Caernarvon Township

Ms. Timochenko then presented the vision statement for the plan. This provides the context for why the plan is done and its relationship with other federal, state, and local plans. The **Vision Statement** is: *The Reading Area Transportation Study will promote a well maintained and balanced multimodal transportation system that will safely and efficiently move people and goods*.

Ms. Timochenko introduced Goal #1: Keep Travelers safe and secure for all modes of transportation. The six (6) Objectives attached to Goal #1 were also read.

Ms. Timochenko reviewed Goal #2: <u>Maintain and improve the existing multimodal transportation</u> <u>system and services within fiscal constraints</u>, then read the associated five (5) Objectives.

- Mayor Melissa Dean asked if we rip up roads or look for ways to improve them without a total overhaul. Mr. Piper explained that there are many roadway and bridge projects where repairs are made to in an effort to extend the lifespan of a roadway or bridge in a cost-effective process.
- Mayor Melissa Dean asked if the area of flooding on Spring Street under the railroad has been considered for improvements. Mr. Piper explained that it has been mentioned and considered, however ownership is an issue as the railroad owns the bridge and PennDOT owns the roadway underneath. We are currently looking for proper funding to address this issue.

Ms. Timochenko reviewed Goal #3: <u>Invest in projects that strengthen and enhance economic</u> development and tourism opportunities., then read the associated eight (8) Objectives.

Ms. Timochenko reviewed Goal #4: <u>Give travelers a variety of well-designed transportation choices that are in good condition.</u>, then read the associated three (3) Objectives.

Ms. Timochenko reviewed Goal #5: Enhance the County transportation system to address environmental impacts, then read the associated six (6) Objectives.

Ms. Timochenko reviewed Slide #14 and asked the question: "What transportation issues do you currently experience?" Responses included:

Bicycle and Pedestrian Issues:

- Mayor Melissa Dean mentioned that there are no regulations for E bikes. They are not licensed or registered, but people are using them to drive in roadways.
- Mr. Scott Wilson mentioned that a lot of cyclists are on the back roads in the Tulpehocken Region, however, there are some on roads such as Lincoln Rd and Old 22. Also mentioned is that Penn Ave through Wernersville is not as wide as Penn Ave in Womelsdorf or Robesonia. This places Wernersville into a situation where there is not room for bike lanes. All agreed.
- Mayor Melissa Dean stated that Wernersville is pursuing crosswalks across Penn Avenue themselves despite PennDOT saying they would take care of this for free.
- Mayor Melissa Dean stated that the paint on the roadways needs to be retroreflective and have a longer useful life. All agreed.
- Mayor Melissa Dean stated that without a bridge over the RR tracks in Wernersville it can take a bit to drive around to find another road to get to the other side of the tracks if trains are stopped at the at-grade crossings. Mr. Piper stated that a faster route would be Furnace Road. He also mentioned that South Heidelberg Township has desired a bridge over the railroad tracks on Krick Lane for years and it is a project we would support.
- Speaking of Krick Lane Mr. Scott Wilson added that there is a plan for a new warehouse on this road. Mr. Piper stated that the Berks County Planning Commission was aware of that plan and potential for additional traffic.

Transit:

Mayor Melissa Dean noted that BARTA will no longer drop off/pick up riders at both shopping centers on Penn Ave in Sinking Spring as Tractor Supply threatened to sue BARTA due to access. This forces transit riders to cross Krick Lane. This is dangerous. She stated that a crosswalk is needed here. She also feels that public transportation is not utilized as much as it should be, even by those with limited mobility. Mr. Piper was unaware of the BARTA issue at the shopping centers on either side of Krick Lane, and noted that the majority of BARTA's ridership is centered around the City of Reading.

Aviation:

Mayor Melissa Dean stated that there were no aviation issues that she is aware of.

Ms. Timochenko and Mr. Piper presented planned projects that are currently on the County's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Mr. Piper explained the TIP and presented a visual (slide 15) describing the relationship between the TIP and the LRTP.

Ms. Timochenko shared a Countywide map depicting the locations of current TIP projects throughout the County. The TIP map was further reduced to show only projects located within the Tulpehocken region of the County. Mr. Piper went on the describe the projects that were located within the confines of the Tulpehocken region.

 Mayor Melissa Dean wanted to know about the multiple projects on Interstate 78. Mr. Piper explained that the majority of those projects consists of repaving. There is also work at the

- 78/61 interchange. Mr. Piper explained the funding split and how certain money has been dedicated to maintaining and repairing the Interstate.
- Mayor Melissa Dean asked if there is a project that is not planned during this current TIP, can it be planned in the future? Mr. Piper replied, yes, RATS coordinates with PennDOT and other partners to identify projects to add if funds are available. RATS maintains a list of candidate projects for consideration for inclusion when updating the Reading MPO LRTP and TIP. The TIP covers 4 years, and we update it every 2 years.
- Mayor Melissa Dean wanted to know what the projects were along Old Route 22. Mr. Piper explained that those are bridge projects as PennDOT has taken back control of Old Route 22 along the corridor due primarily to its use as a detour when accidents occur on Interstate 78.
- Mayor Melissa Dean stated that there are issues with utilities tearing up and patching roads after PennDOT resurfaces. Mr. Piper acknowledged this issue. He stated that contact with utilities is one of the 1st in the design process. In that way utilities can make any necessary improvements prior to roadway construction. There are limits, though, to what can be done to address emergency repairs or new service hookups that were not anticipated.
- Mayor Melissa Dean acknowledged the multiple bridge projects in the Tulpehocken region including those along Route 419. The cost of the bridge project over Tulpehocken Creek (MPMS# 91908) surprised her. Mr. Piper stated that this is bridge is approximately 200 feet long and cost also goes up when keeping it open to the flow of traffic during reconstruction. Mr. Scott Wilson inquired if the improvements to this bridge included shoulders. Mr. Piper acknowledged that there would be shoulders on both sides. Mr. Scott Wilson agreed the improvements and keeping the bridge open to traffic would raise costs and discussed rises in material pricing.
- Mr. Piper elaborated on the future projects in other regions of the County that will be occurring along the Route 222 corridor, the Route 183 corridor, the 78/61 interchange, the Route 422 corridor, and Route 12 (Pricetown Rd).
- Mayor Melissa Dean stated that she is in favor of the roundabouts, however, is concerned that not everyone knows how to use them and recommended more education. Mr. Piper stated that there is a multitude of educational material which can be found on the Berks County Planning Commission website, the PennDOT website, and brochures are given to the municipalities that explain how to drive through a roundabout. Ms. Timochenko stated that part of the overall objective of roundabouts is to prevent suspected serious injuries and fatalities and that the roundabouts in Berks County have reduced the level of crash severity at intersections where roundabouts exist.
- Mr. Scott Wilson was curious about the taking of properties and buildings along Route 222. Mr. Piper stated that only a few total property takes are needed for the Route 222 improvements but there are sliver takes to most properties along the corridor. Mayor Melissa Dean asked if the homeowners were aware. Mr. Piper stated that this is already in progress and PennDOT is working with the owners. He went on to explain PennDOT's process when land is needed for a roadway improvement which includes gathering various estimates and addressing any disputes if additional issues arise. It was noted the AADT along this section is between 25,000 to 30,000 vehicles.

Mr. Piper described the US 422 Corridor (West Shore Bypass) project to the attendees. Some of the key takeaways from this presentation included:

- Project includes the complete reconstruction to 6 lanes including: Lancaster Avenue interchange, Penn Avenue interchange, Bingaman Street Bridge, and bike and pedestrian connections.
- Preventative maintenance on the bridges over the Schuylkill River and Brentwood Drive
- Complete replacement and ramp adjustment at I-176 NB to US 422 WB
- Preliminary engineering is currently in progress
- Estimated bid opening in approximately 2027
- Estimated completion date post 2030

Mr. Piper reviewed a list of additional projects anticipated to start during the Reading MPO's FFY 2025-2028 TIP in the Tulpehocken Region. Mr. Piper provided more detailed information on the projects presented on slide 19 of the presentation.

Ms. Timochenko presented slide 21 regarding the State Transportation Commission's Twelve-Year Program Update and the availability of a survey. Ms. Timochenko explained how results from the survey are shared with the MPOs across the state. Any information relating to Berks County will be reviewed and considered for inclusion onto one of the programs (LRTP / TIP) for potential implementation. Ms. Timochenko presented the link to the survey: https://survey.talkpatransportation.com/#/survey

Ms. Timochenko asked for any final questions or comments.

Hearing no other comments, Ms. Timochenko and Mr. Piper thanked the attendees for coming. The meeting concluded at 7:30 PM.

Prepared by,
Devon Hain
Transportation Planner
BERKS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

FFY 2027-2050 Long Range Transportation Plan Public Outreach Meeting Monday, April 14, 2025 Womelsdorf Borough

Name	Email Address	Municipality
Molassa Dean		Wernersville
Melissa Dean Scott Wilson		Weynersville
2011 101 501		
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Aran Pipin		BCPC/RATS
Amanda Timorhenko		BCPC/RATS
		BCPC/RATS
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READING MPO

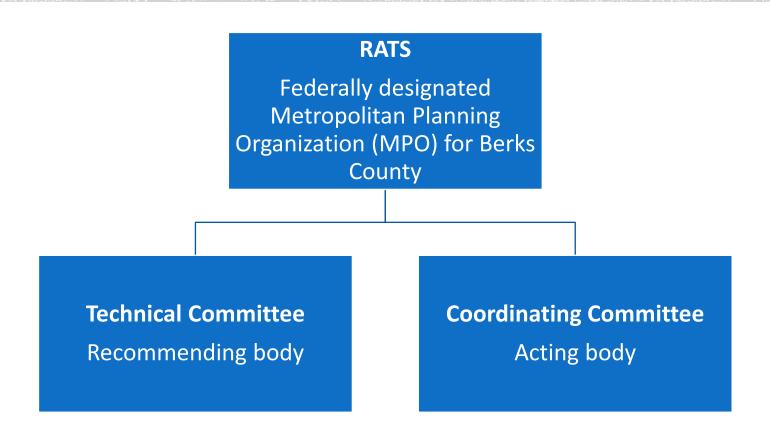
LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

TULPEHOCKEN REGION

April 14, 2025, Womelsdorf Borough



READING AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (RATS)





TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

PENNDOT DISTRICT 5-0 (1)

PENNDOT
CENTRAL OFFICE
(1)

BERKS COUNTY
PLANNING
COMMISSION (2)

CITY OF READING (2)

SOUTH CENTRAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY (1) READING
REGIONAL
AIRPORT
AUTHORITY (1)



COORDINATING COMMITTEE

PennDOT
District 5-0 (1)

PennDOT
Central Office
(1)

Berks County Commissioners (1) Berks County
Planning
Commission (1)

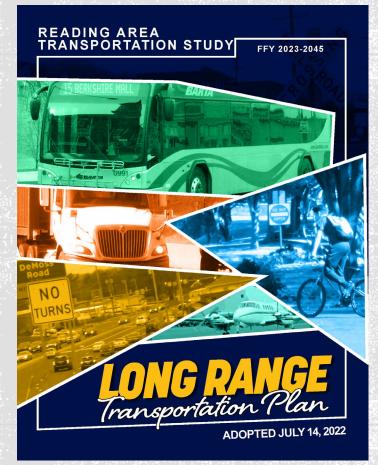
City of Reading (1)

Berks County Boroughs (1) Berks County 1st Class Townships (1) Berks County 2nd Class Townships (1) South Central Transit Authority (1) Reading Regional Airport Authority (1)



- Required by federal transportation regulations
- Has a minimum 20-year planning horizon reflecting program goals and their application to project prioritization
- Identifies transportation system assets and their conditions, sensitive environments and the evolving needs of the users of that system
- Reflects needs related to safety, maintenance, congestion, and climate change
- Includes Performance Measures for achieving plan goals
- Must be fiscally constrained and identify funding sources
- Must be updated every four years through cooperative process that includes federal, state, local agencies and the public
- Serves as the foundation for the development of the Transportation Improvement Program
 - Projects must be identified in the LRTP prior to programming phases for construction on the TIP

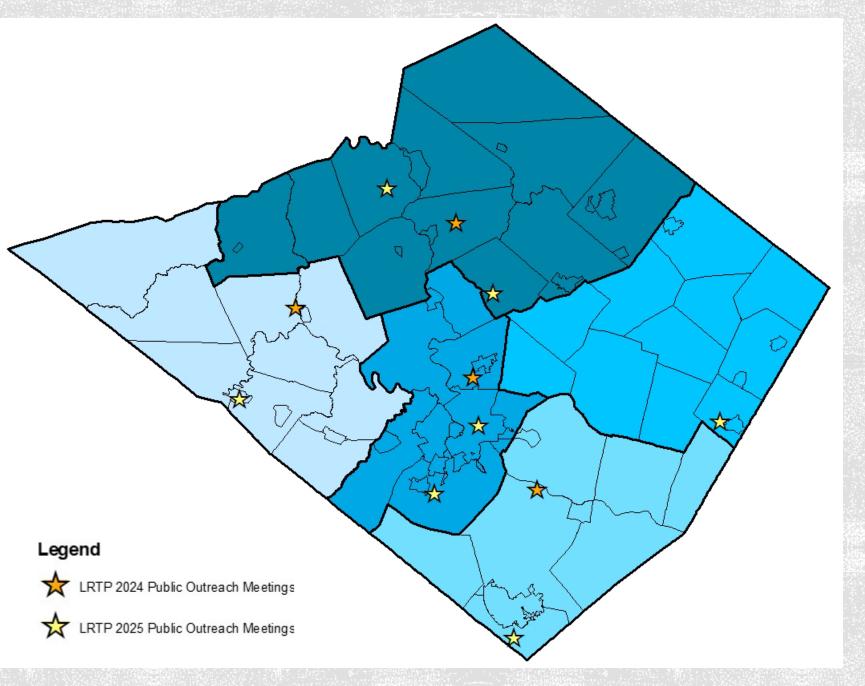
WHAT IS THE LRTP?





FEDERAL PLANNING FACTORS

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight.
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvement and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
- Promote efficient system management and operation.
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.
- Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation.
- Enhance travel and tourism.



SUMMARY OF PUBLIC OUTREACH

- **2024**
 - 4 In Person Meetings
 - Robeson, Jefferson, Muhlenberg, Perry
 - 1 Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams
 - Survey
- **2025**
 - 7 In Person Meetings
 - City of Reading, Womelsdorf, Tilden, Colebrookdale, Cumru, Maidencreek, Caernarvon
 - 2 Virtual Meetings via Microsoft Teams



The Reading Area
Transportation Study will
promote a well maintained
and balanced multimodal
transportation system that
will safely and efficiently
move people and goods.



Goal 1

Keep travelers safe and secure for all modes of transportation.

Reduce the number, frequency, and severity of crashes on our highway system by implementing projects to address safety issues for all users.

Work closely with municipalities, PennDOT, and SCTA/BARTA to ensure the safe interaction between all transportation modes and users.

Increase public awareness of construction zone safety for workers and users.

Evaluate proposed land development plans to identify potential transportation safety issues during local and PennDOT review processes.

Educate the public on future transportation projects and changes to increase safety awareness.

Coordinate with appropriate agencies to identify and provide efficient emergency vehicle access to the transportation system where feasible.

Goal 2

Maintain and improve the existing multimodal transportation system and services within fiscal constraints.

Minimize maintenance costs of roadways, bridges, and public transportation through proper routine maintenance using Transportation Asset Management planning.

Improve the efficiency of the existing transportation system and services.

Major roadway widening or relocation should only be considered if efforts to improve capacity and safety of existing roadways can not meet desired service levels.

Reduce congestion, improve air quality, and increase the reliability of the transportation system.

Develop a full range of public transportation options using available funding.

Goal 3
Invest in projects
that strengthen and
enhance economic
development and
tourism
opportunities.

Implement best practices that will enable the efficient movement of people and freight.

Ensure that major activity centers are designed to accommodate a range of transportation modes.

Increase the region's global and national competitiveness by improving and enhancing regional freight infrastructure.

Support the Reading Regional Airport Authority in strengthening the use of the airport for both business and commercial aviation activities.

Support the efforts of the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority to reestablish passenger rail service between Reading and Philadelphia.

Provide multiple modes of convenient transportation to tourist destinations.

Coordinate with the agricultural community to identify and address obstructions to the movement of equipment and products.

Coordinate with appropriate agencies to review, update as needed, and implement recommendations identified in the EPFA Regional Freight Plan.

Goal 4
Give travelers a variety of well-designed transportation choices that are in good condition.

Promote coordinated regional bicycle and pedestrian facilities, transit, and rail routes.

When designing roadways, include bicycle and pedestrian accommodations and transit stops where applicable and feasible.

Support Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs such as ridesharing, using public transportation, walking, biking, or working from home.



Goal 5
Enhance the County
transportation
system to address
environmental
impacts.

Identify transportation system assets that are vulnerable to natural hazards and continue coordination with appropriate agencies to develop protection and recovery strategies through hazard mitigation planning.

Maintain the County's Air Quality attainment status for fine particulates and improve the marginal nonattainment status for Ozone.

Work closely with federal, state, municipal, and private entities to implement alternative fuels use (i.e. electric, natural gas) throughout our region.

Collaborate with local, regional, state and federal organizations and agencies to prevent, minimize, or mitigate potential negative environmental and social impacts from planned projects.

Assist in identification of potential environmental issues by maintaining and providing geographic information system data layers in a readily accessible format.

Work with PennDOT to implement stormwater best management practices and mitigation strategies on transportation projects.







PEDESTRIAN



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION



AVIATION



BRIDGE



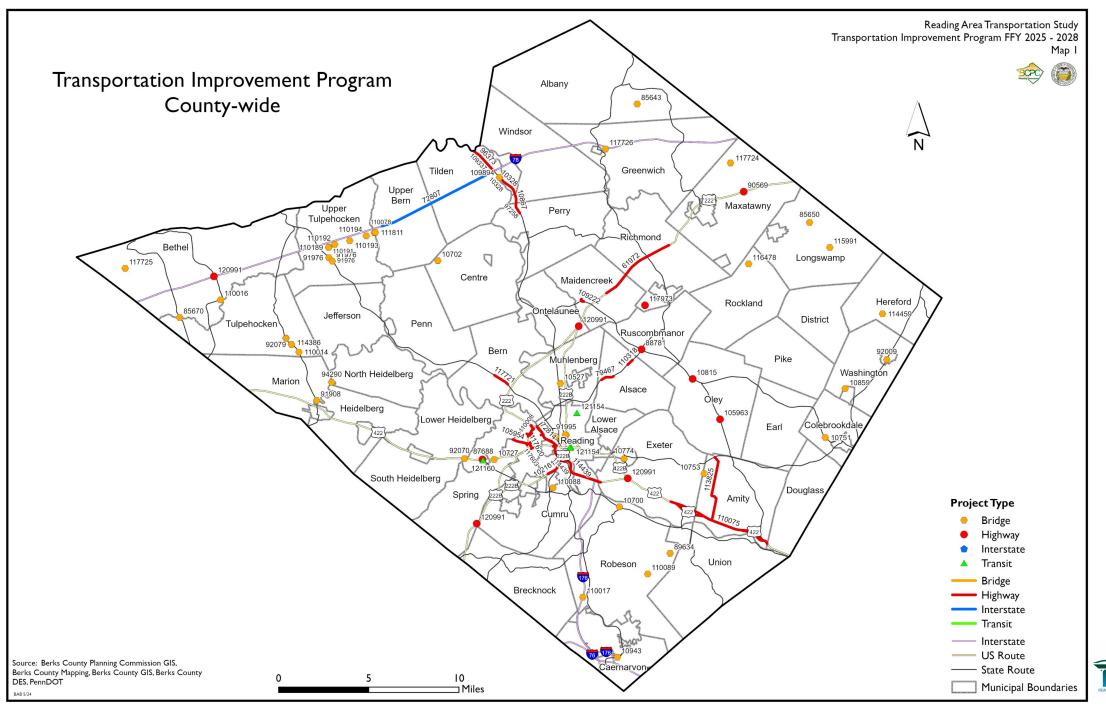
HIGHWAY

WHAT TRANSPORTATION ISSUES DO YOU CURRENTLY EXPERIENCE?

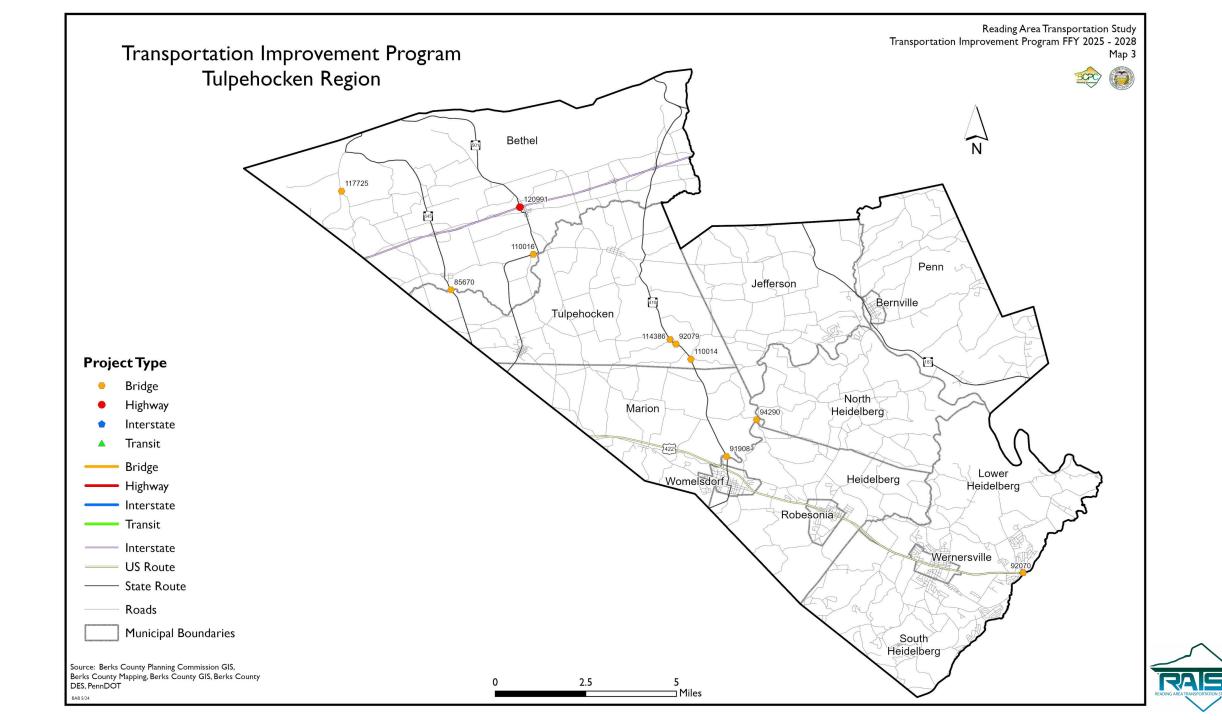


PLANNED PROJECTS

- The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is an agreed upon list of specific priority transportation projects that intend to use federal funds along with non-federally funded projects that are regionally significant.
 - It covers a four-year period and is updated every two years.
 - It shows estimated costs and funding sources and documents the anticipated schedule for each project and project phase.
 - It must be fiscally constrained to the amount of funding available.
 - It is NOT a final schedule of project implementation or guarantee of implementation.
 - Projects are drawn from the Long Range Transportation Plan and must help meet the goals of the LRTP.







Federal Fiscal Year

Project Description/Municipality

Estimated Total Project Cost (2023\$)

FFY 2027

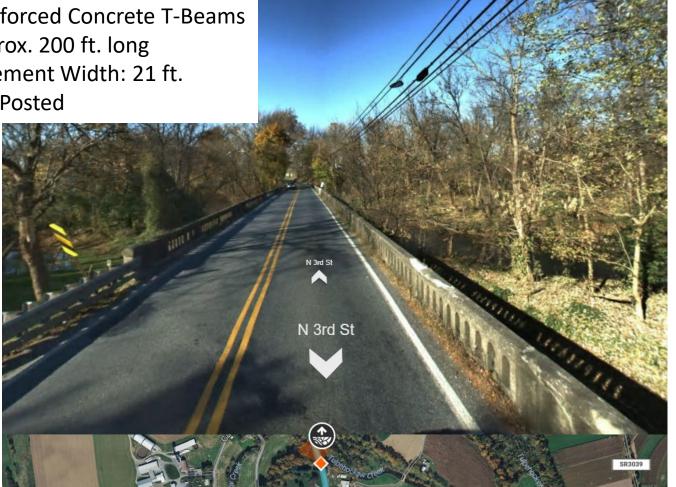
MPMS# 91908

PA 419 Bridge over Tulpehocken Creek - Marion and Heidelberg Townships (Replacement)

\$8,807,500

Built: 1926 Reinforced Concrete T-Beams Approx. 200 ft. long Pavement Width: 21 ft.

Not Posted



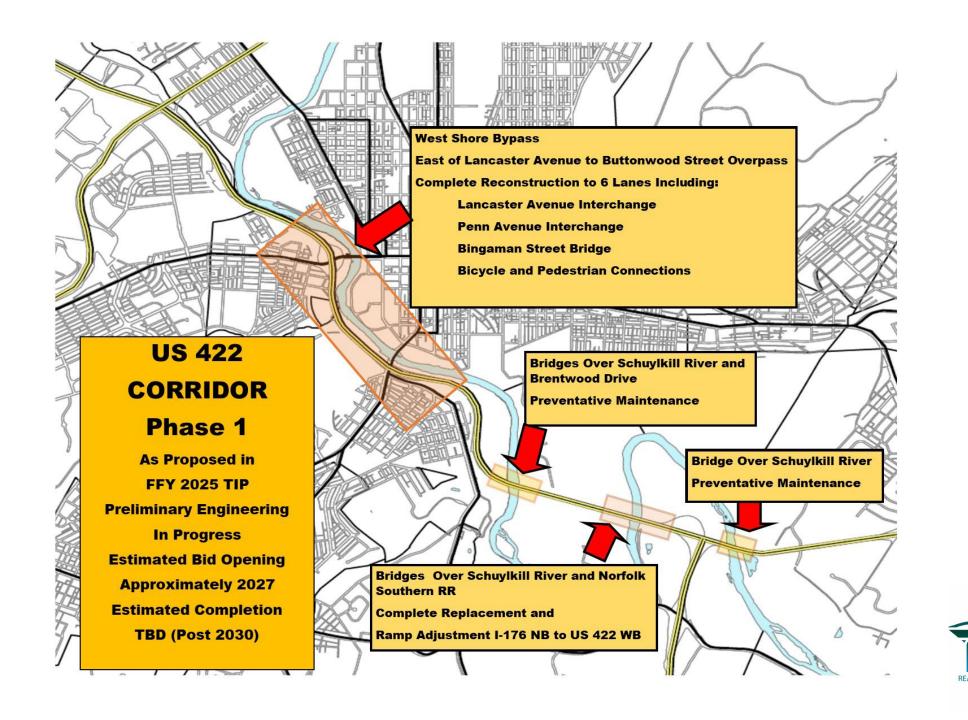
SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS ANTICIPATED TO START **DURING READING MPO** FFY 2025-2028 TIP

TULPEHOCKEN REGION

Est. Let Year	Project Description/Municipality	Estimated Total Project Cost (2023\$)
2025		
MPMS# 85670	SR 645 (Camp Swatara Road) over Little Swatara Creek – Bethel and Tulpehocken Townships (replacement)	\$5,237,000
MPMS# 92079	PA 419 over Mill Creek – Tulpehocken Township (rehabilitation/replacement)	\$1,032,000
2026		
MPMS# 92070	SR 422 (Penn Ave.) over Cacoosing Creek – Sinking Spring Borough (rehabilitation/replacement)	\$1,294,00
MPMS# 110014	SR 419 (Rehrersburg Rd) over Tributary to Mill Creek – Tulpehocken Township (rehabilitation/replacement)	\$2,033,000
MPMS# 110016	SR 501 over Swatara Creek – Bethel Township (replacement)	\$1,762,000
Undetermined		
MPMS# 114386	Route 419 Culvert Replacement over Tributary to Mill Creek – Tulpehocken Township (replacement)	\$28,000

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS ANTICIPATED **TO START DURING READING MPO** FFY 2025-2028 TIP

TULPEHOCKEN REGION RAIS





STC 12-YEAR PROGRAM UPDATE SURVEY

https://survey.talk patransportation. com/#/Survey



THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!





