RATS FFY 2027 - 2050 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP) PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETING #13 MS TEAMS VIRTUAL COUNTYWIDE MEETING, May 1, 2025

Meeting Attendees:

- Members of the Public
 - Mary Himmelberger
 - Donald Himmelberger
- Berks County Planning Commission Staff
 - Alan Piper, Transportation Planner III
 - o Amana Timochenko, Planner II
 - o Devon Hain, Planner II

Mr. Piper started the presentation at 6:06 PM. He thanked all for attending, noting that this is the second of two virtual countywide meetings scheduled as part of the overall nine-meeting outreach effort in Spring 2025 for the LRTP. He introduced Ms. Timochenko who will give a brief presentation on the results of the Fall Outreach efforts as well as gathering input regarding local transportation issues and needs.

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).

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 scheduled 7 in-person meetings in various municipalities in 2025. As well, staff scheduled two Countywide virtual meetings via Microsoft Teams.

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 and reviewed all five goals which are:

Goal #1: Keep travelers safe and secure for all modes of transportation.

Goal #2: Maintain and improve the existing multimodal transportation system and services within fiscal constraints.

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

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

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

Ms. Timochenko then turned the presentation back to Mr. Piper for a discussion on local transportation issues. Issues were separated into six (6) major types: Bicycle, Pedestrian, Public Transportation, Aviation, Bridge, and Highway. He noted that staff's desire with this LRTP update was to gather public input at the beginning and throughout the Plan development process, not just during the required Public Input period prior to adoption. Later this year or early next year, after updating data and draft Plan sections, and gathering responses to public input, there will be another round of public meetings.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Issues:

- Ms. Himmelberger stated that overall people are using backroads to bike on in the Tulpehocken Region. She thinks those biking on back roads near Shartlesville is dangerous. She realizes the roads are the way they are and cannot be changed.
- Ms. Himmelberger mentioned that there is no regional trail network for transportation throughout the County except for the north-south SRT, which still has a lot of gaps. She realizes the cost of bike lanes is astronomical and does not see a feasible solution.
- Ms. Himmelberger noted that one area of concern for pedestrians is Industrial Drive between Hamburg Borough and Tilden Township. There are many pedestrians on that road, but there are no sidewalks, so they walk on the road, through puddles and mud. She noted that there seems to be a larger population in Hamburg that does not own or drive a car.

- Mr. Himmelberger noted that there is excessive speeding along the section of SR 61 by Leesport, between Wall Street and Bellemans Church Rd. Mr. Piper noted that improvements were made to address congestion in that area. In some instances, improvements made can inadvertently affect safety. Ms. Himmelberger noted that it seemed like cars speed on SR 61 the whole way between Shoemakersville Borough and Muhlenberg Township.
- Ms. Himmelberger asked about the intersections that have a bright blue tinted light and noted how well drivers can see. She recommended that all intersections should have blue lights to see well at night, like the one at Bellemans Church Rd and SR 61.
- Ms. Himmelberger identified an area in Shartlesville needing pedestrian accommodations. She noted that residents of the town of Shartlesville walk along Old Route 22 and up Mountain Road to visit the Love's gas station, McDonald's, Subway, Amazon Locker, and Dunkin Donuts. She has also noted that many truck drivers staying in the Love's parking lot walk south on Mountain Road to patronize the Dollar General located just off Old Route 22 on Roadside Drive.

Transit:

Building off of the comment made by Ms. Himmelberger that there is a lack of driving population in the Borough of Hamburg, Mr. Piper noted an industry there closing and how that could hurt those who work there and live in Hamburg that do not have the ability to drive to a similar job. Ms. Himmelberger stated that if rural warehouses are concentrated then they can supply public transit, but that is hard to provide when those are scattered. Ms. Himmelberger noted that the further the warehouse employment opportunity is from the City of Reading, the harder it is to get that employee base to the warehouse. Developers build along Interstates, which is far away from the City of Reading and the employment base.

Aviation:

 Ms. Himmelberger acknowledged that commercial air is not likely to be provided in large quantities at the Reading Regional Airport but would be happy to have access to nearby air travel even if it were to limited destinations.

Highways and Bridges:

No comments

Mr. Piper next showed a slide showing a Berks County map with all the planned projects in the current FFY 2025-2028 TIP. He gave a brief description of the TIP and where it fits into the planning process. Although it covers a four-year period, it is updated every two years with minor shifts in funding and schedules occurring regularly. Projects on the TIP are mostly drawn from the LRTP; minor additions of bridges and small site safety improvements are added as needed. Mr. Piper went on the describe multiple projects located throughout Berks County.

Several slides detailing major projects were shown and described. These included U.S. 422 West Shore Bypass Phases I and II; the U.S. 222 North Widening (south of Kutztown); and the U.S. 222 North Widening (north of Kutztown, currently only the Long Lane intersection roundabout is programmed). A list of other significant projects anticipated to start on the current TIP was shown. Going back to the countywide map, several planned studies for different sections of PA 183 were also discussed.

- Ms. Himmelberger was very supportive of the improvements included in U.S. 422 West Shore Bypass Phases I and II, especially those involving improvements to merge points.
- Ms. Himmelberger says that many individuals travel from the Lehigh Valley area to Reading to the arena and other events. She stated that in her discussions with these individuals, they absolutely love the roundabouts on US 222! Mr. Piper elaborated on the lack of congestion after the roundabouts were constructed. Ms. Timochenko mentioned the improvement to safety following the installation of the roundabouts. Ms. Himmelberger mentioned an article PennDOT put out on the improvements to safety provided by roundabouts.
- Ms. Himmelberger inquired about the signs that direct drivers not to drive next to a truck in a roundabout. Mr. Piper said that should be policy for most roundabouts. These roundabouts were built so that truck drivers would stay in the inside lane and have the ability to use the skirt along the apron. However, it seems that many truck drivers do not want to stay on the inside lane. Due to this, it is advised that drivers do not enter a roundabout next to a tractor trailer, so that trucks have enough room. Ms. Himmelberger is excited for the Long Lane intersection and other roundabouts in Richmond Township along the US 222 corridor to be completed.
- Ms. Himmelberger asked if the federal money received helps fund short term projects. Mr. Piper confirmed that funds move from federal to state to MPO. For the most part it is federal transportation money that may come from a wide variety of different programs with different rules and regulations for each program. The MPO cannot plan more projects than the funding amount received, so it gets distributed between different projects for different phases. It is a lot of money juggling. Mr. Piper stated that there have been many changes over his tenure with RATS. Following the improvements to US 422, US 222, and Route 12, there should be a lack of major projects that require large sums of funding. That would mean more funding would be available for additional smaller projects that have more local impact as opposed to regional impact.
- Ms. Himmelberger noted that Shartlesville Rd. has now become a speedway and identifies the speeding as an enforcement issue. She questioned if speed humps are pretty much out of the question on rural roads. Mr. Piper confirmed that speed humps can work in residential developments, but they do not work so well on through roads.
- Ms. Himmelberger noted that stormwater on back roads can be excessive sometimes. She asked if there is a program that can be tapped into to address this issue. Mr. Piper stated that PennDOT is spending more time combatting stormwater issues. Drainage improvements along state roads in rural areas are being done by PennDOT.
- Ms. Himmelberger inquired about extra funding for local roads. Mr. Piper stated that liquid fuels money was never meant to be the sole funding for maintaining local roads.

Mr. Piper discussed the PA State Transportation Commission's Public Input survey related to the update of the Twelve-Year Program (TYP). Results from that survey is shared with local regions like RATS and serves as additional input into our LRTP and TIP processes.

• Mr. Piper stated that the survey ended yesterday and went on to explain that the Reading MPO is going to try to duplicate the STC survey. This would involve sending the survey to municipalities to identify issues by putting dots on a map and providing a description or category for the issue. If that works well, the future plan is to leave on the BCPC webpage that anyone can go to anytime to submit roadway concerns. Ms. Himmelberger recognized that is very forward thinking, ambitious, and will be beneficial.

Hearing no other comments, Mr. Piper and Ms. Timochenko thanked all present for attending and providing input. The meeting concluded at 6:58 PM.

Prepared by,

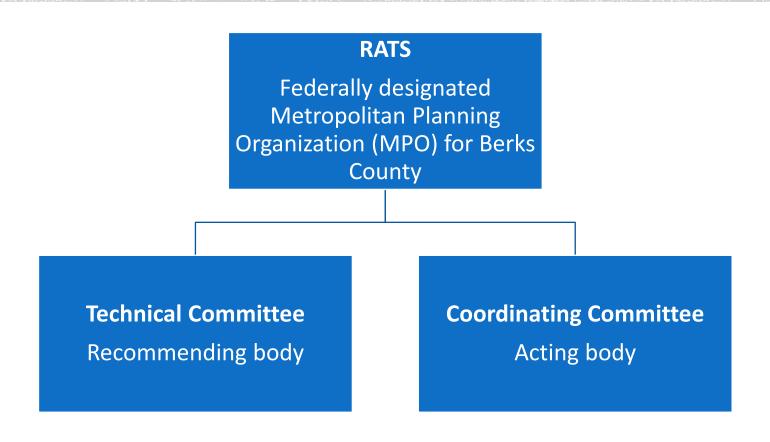
Devon Hain Transportation Planner II BERKS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

READING MPO LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN COUNTYWIDE MEETING

May 1, 2025, Microsoft Teams



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)

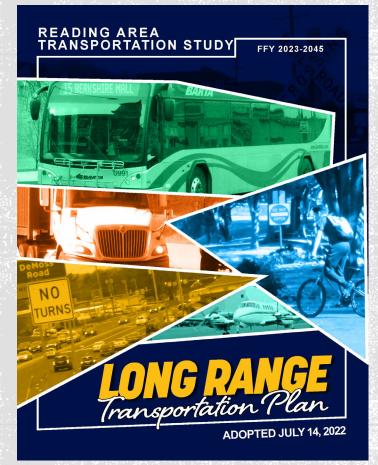
City of Reading (1)

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

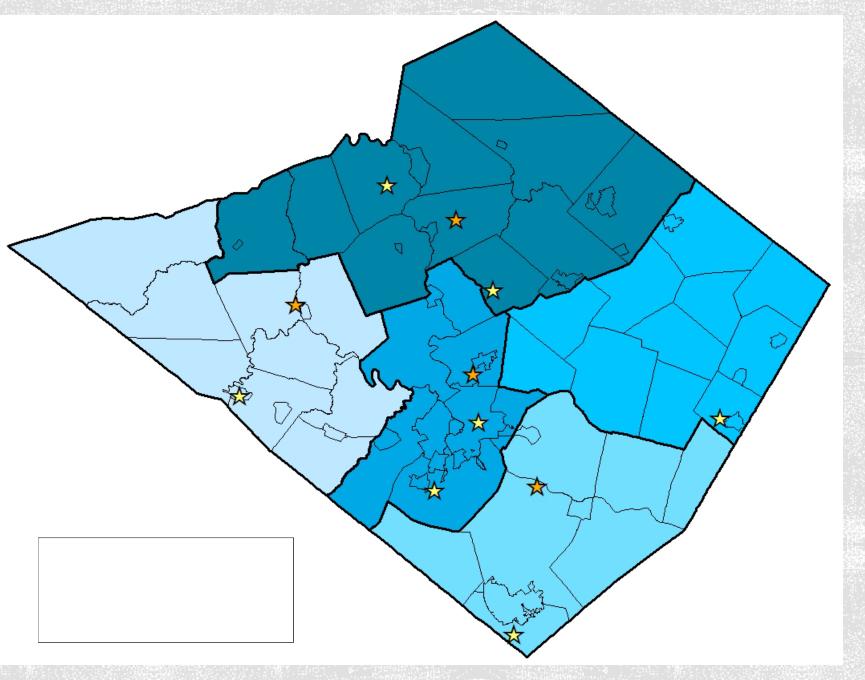
WHAT IS THE LRTP?





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



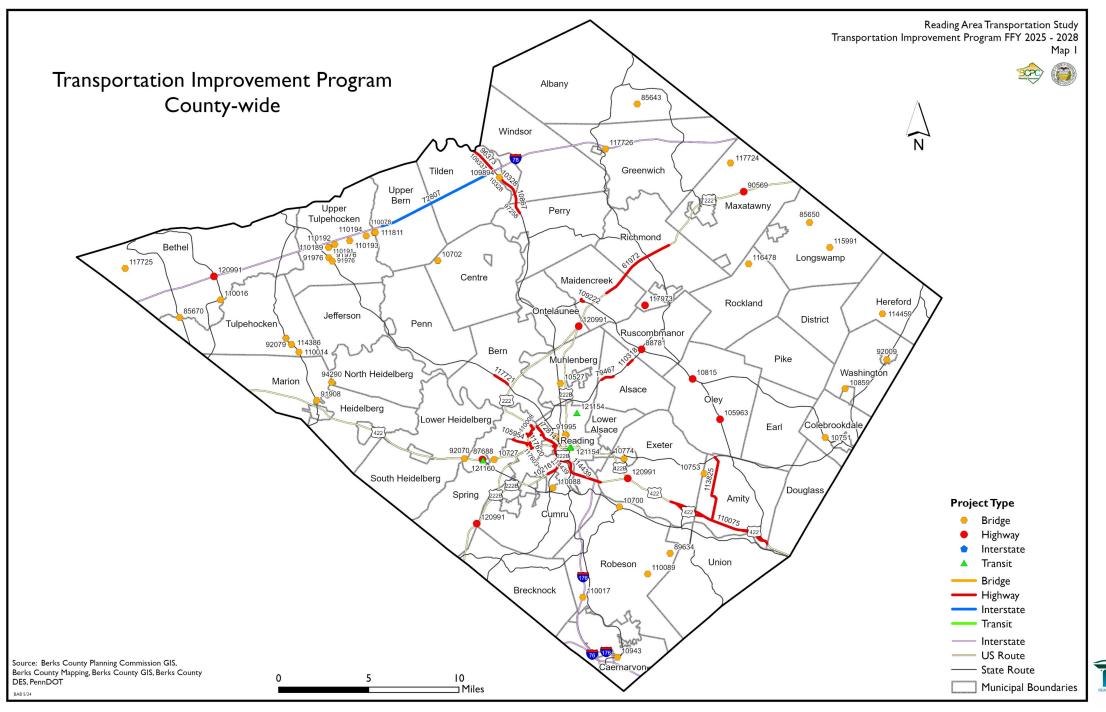
HIGHWAY

WHAT TRANSPORTATION ISSUES DO YOU CURRENTLY EXPERIENCE?

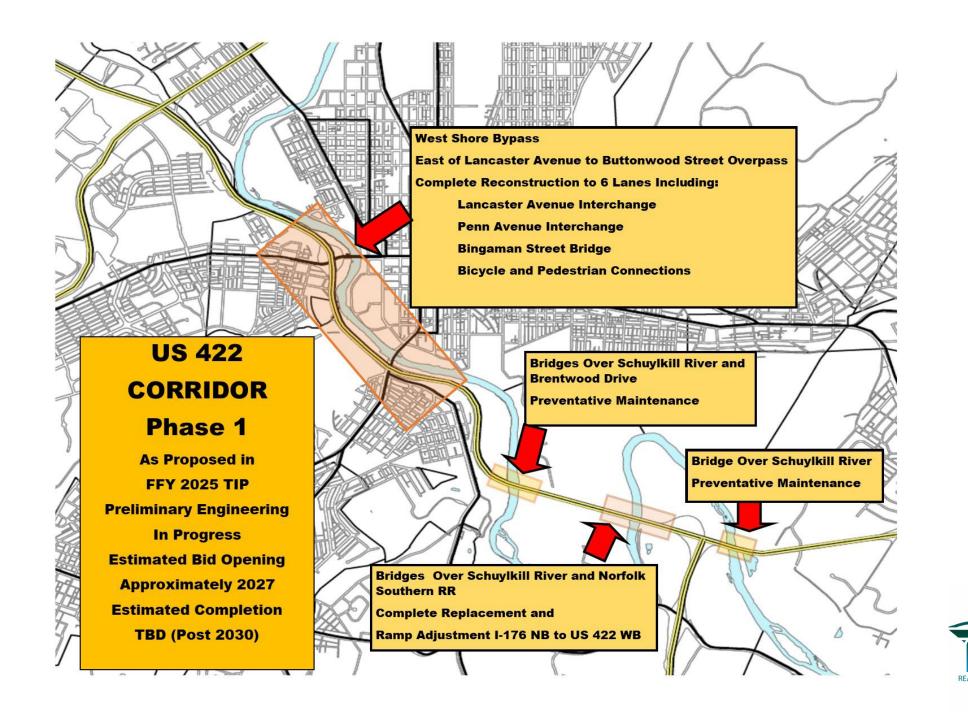


PLANNED PROJECTS

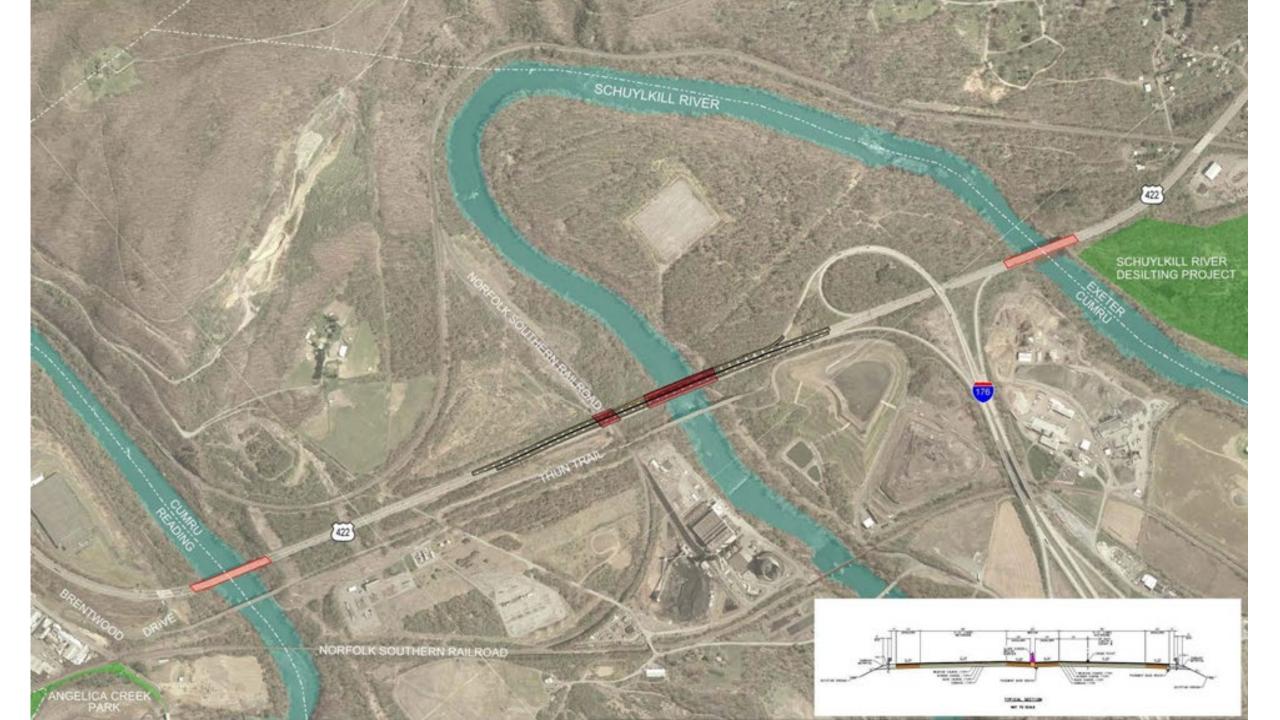
- The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is an agreed upon list of specific priority transportation projects that intend to use federal funds along with non-federally funded projects that are regionally significant.
 - It covers a four-year period and is updated every two years.
 - It shows estimated 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.

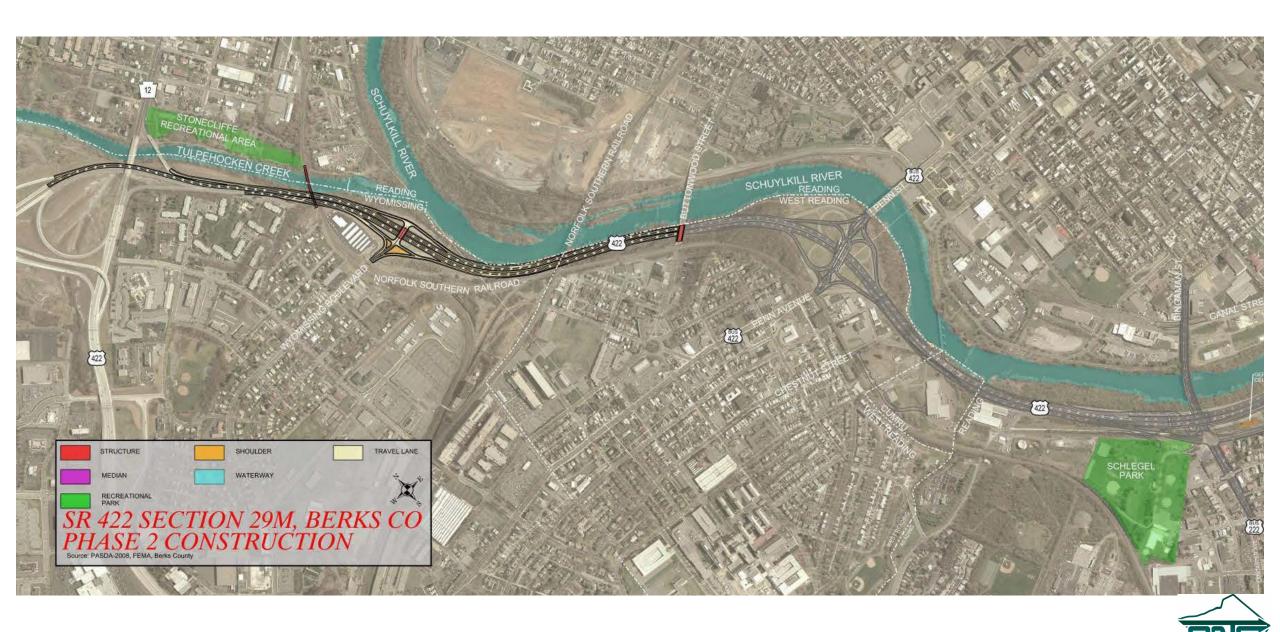


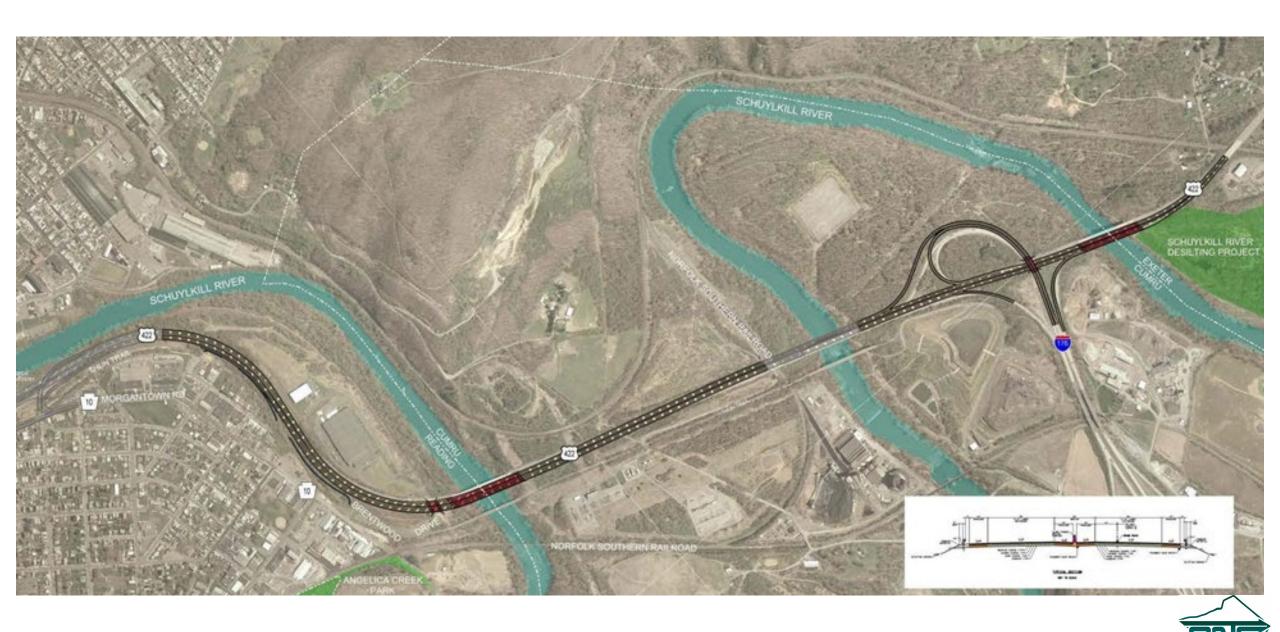


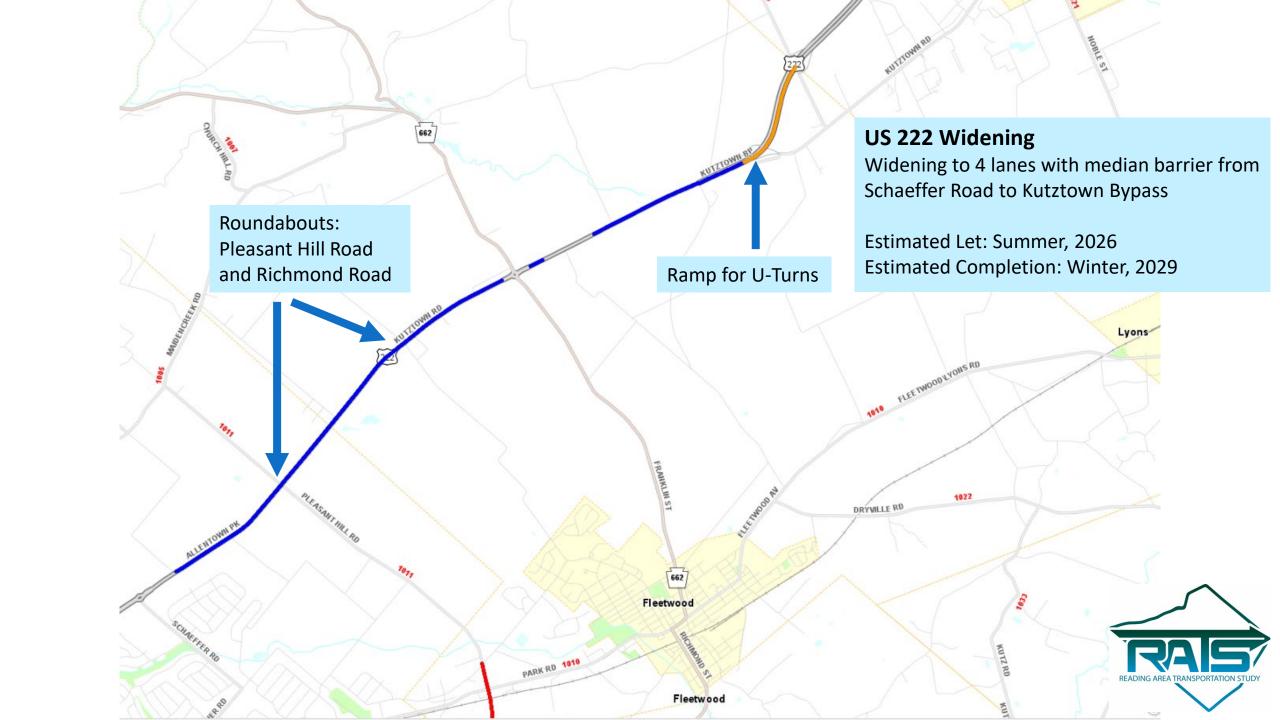


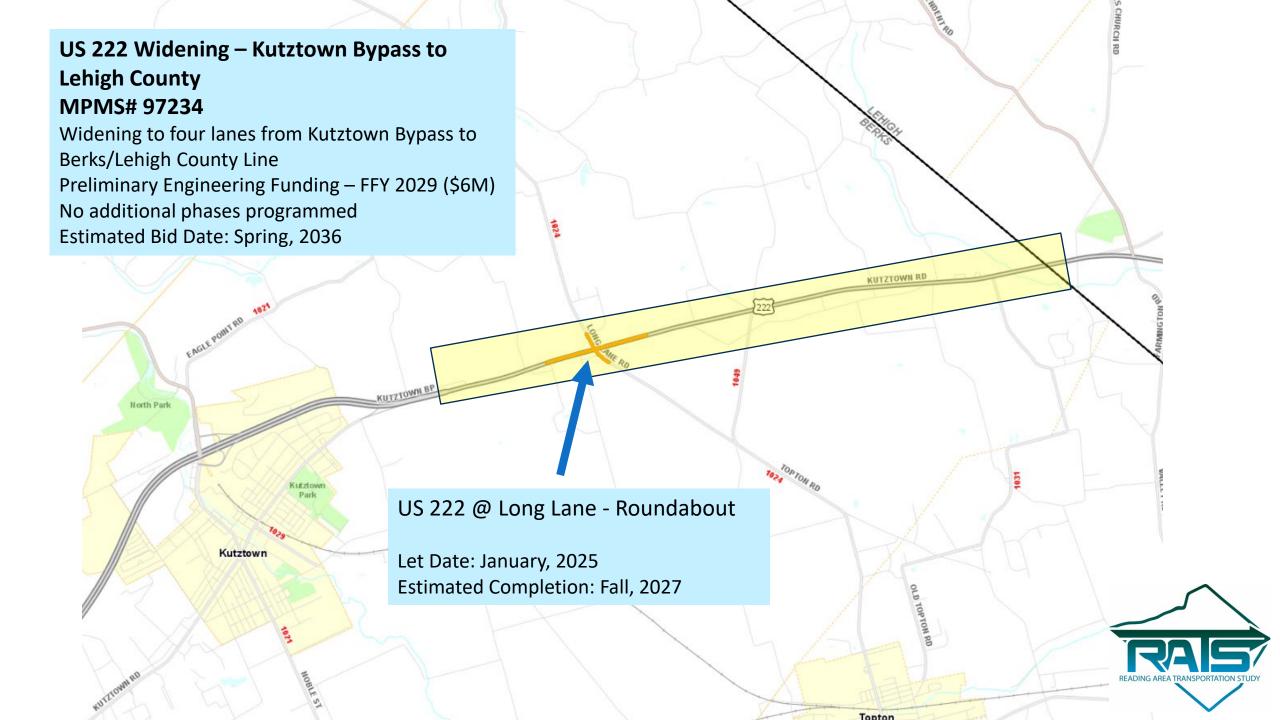












Year	Project Description/Municipality	Project Cost (2023\$)
FFY 2025		
MPMS# 10867	PA 61 Restoration Phase 2B – Perry and Windsor Townships	\$15,883,300
MPMS# 97258	SR 61 Median Barrier – Perry and Windsor Townships	\$500,000
MPMS# 10527	SR 2016 Bellevue Avenue Bridge over RBMN RR – Muhlenberg Township	\$6,984,043
FFY 2026		
MPMS# 110318	SR 12 Alsace Manor – Alsace Township	\$4,887,168
MPMS# 79467	SR 12 Elizabeth Avenue – Alsace Township	\$14,898,900
MPMS# 110008	US 222 Auxiliary Lanes – Wyomissing Borough	\$17,150,000
MPMS# 61972	US 222 Widening – Maidencreek and Richmond Townships	\$92,529,825
MPMS# 91908	PA 419 Bridge over Tulpehocken Creek – Marion and Heidelberg Townships	\$8,807,500
MPMS# 87688	US 422 Intersection – Sinking Spring Borough	\$8,817,153
FFY 2027		
MPMS# 114439	US 422 West Shore Bypass Phase 1 – City of Reading, West Reading Borough, Cumru Township	\$375,550,000
MPMS# 105963	PA 662 @ Oley Turnpike Road – Oley Township	\$5,357,965
MPMS# 105954	SR 3023 State Hill Road – Colony Drive to Mall Drive – Wyomissing Borough	\$12,560,000
FFY 2028		
MPMS# 117603	SR 3023 State Hill Road – Mall Drive to NS RR – Wyomissing Borough	\$12,355,000
MPMS# 91995	SR 2087 Centre Avenue over NS RR – Reading	\$9,998,750
MPMS# 10613	SR 2005 Fifth Street over NS RR – Reading	\$4,594,000

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

COUNTYWIDE





STC 12-YEAR PROGRAM UPDATE SURVEY

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



THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

