RATS FFY 2027 - 2050 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP) PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETING #10 MS TEAMS VIRTUAL COUNTYWIDE MEETING, APRIL 23, 2025

Meeting Attendees:

Members of the Public

- o Bonnie Coldren, eastern Berks resident
- o Kent Himelright, Trails Director (Schuylkill River Greenways Nat. Heritage Area)
- o Gabriel Hirsch, resident
- Chris Brasler, resident

PennDOT District 5

Scott Vottero

Berks County Planning Commission Staff

- Alan Piper, Transportation Planner III
- o Amana Timochenko, Planner II
- Michael Golembiewski, Transportation Modeler

Mr. Piper started the presentation at 11:02 AM. He thanked all for attending, noting that this is the first of two virtual countywide meetings to be held 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:

Mr. Himelright stated that the Schuylkill River Trail (SRT) is a regional asset connecting Philadelphia with Schuylkill County. One of the goals of the SRT is to connect to communities; not go around them. Trail providers want the trail to connect economic and community 'centers'. His request was that, as roads are improved, make sure that bicycle and pedestrian access is maintained and improved. (Editor's note: There are several trail sections in Berks County that are still signed on-road portions.) He made a similar request related to bridge replacements noting that consideration should be given to bicycle and pedestrian access along bridges in the event that a trail needs to be detoured to maintain access.

Transit:

There were no comments.

Aviation:

Mr. Piper mentioned that, although Berks County owns and operates the Reading Regional Airport, RATS does not have much direct influence on aviation planning or programming. The difficulty in restoring scheduled passenger service was also discussed. There were no comments.

Highways and Bridges:

 Mr. Himelright asked for an update on the U.S. 422 West Shore Bypass project. Mr. Piper responded that we will be discussing that in more detail in a few minutes. There were 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.

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.

- Mr. Himelright mentioned the bridge replacements/improvements as part of the U.S. 422 West Shore Bypass project. In this area, the SRT parallels U.S. 422 and crosses the Schuylkill River on two stone railroad bridges that are both 110-120 years old. He requested that the two new bridges on U.S. 422 directly adjacent to the SRT include bike/ped access. He is aware of the difficulty associated with this request but this could be the only detour option for the trail should either of the two trail bridges over the river be closed. Mr. Piper responded that it was not possible to include access on the eastern bridge (just west of I-176) due to where the bridge is in the design process for Phase I, but it may be possible to consider the western bridge as part of Phase II.
- Mr. Coldren commented on the Public Transportation situation in eastern Berks, specifically in the Birdsboro Borough area. There is only one (1) fixed route that serves the Birdsboro area, however there is a growing elderly population in the area with increasing transit needs. Many of them depend on family or neighbors for their transportation needs. Mr. Piper responded that

the extension of fixed-route service by BARTA could be a possibility. Additionally, the use of existing on-demand Paratransit service is available.

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.

The next steps in the LRTP development process were shared, including continued public outreach, revision of various sections, and creation of final project lists based on financial guidance from PennDOT. In Spring 2026 the final recommendations for both the LRTP and TIP will be presented for review and approval.

Hearing no other comments, Mr. Piper and Ms. Timochenko thanked all present for attending and providing input. The meeting concluded at 11:58 AM.

Prepared by,

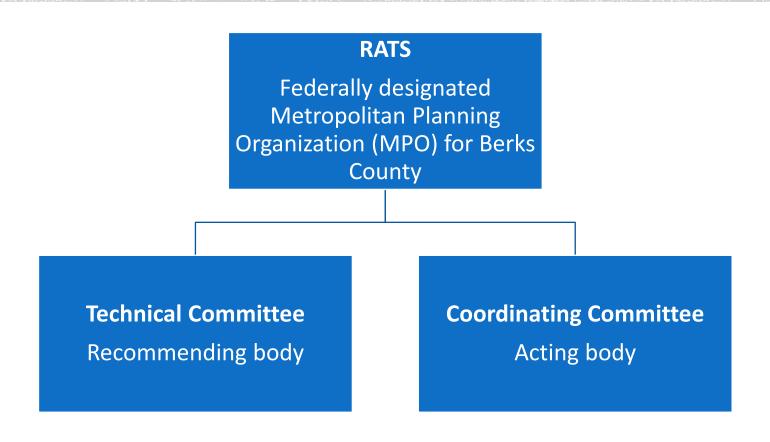
Michael D. Golembiewski Transportation Modeler BERKS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

READING MPO LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN COUNTYWIDE MEETING

April 23, 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)

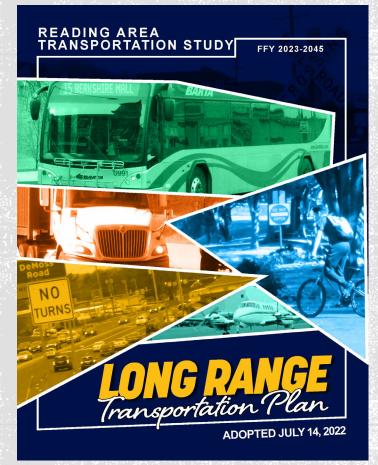
City of Reading (1)

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

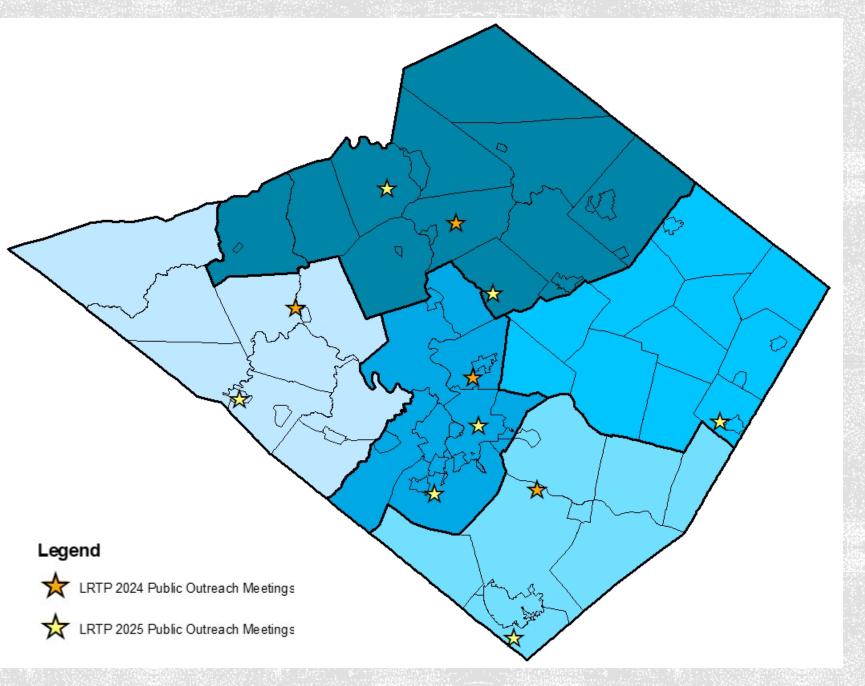
WHAT IS THE LRTP?





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



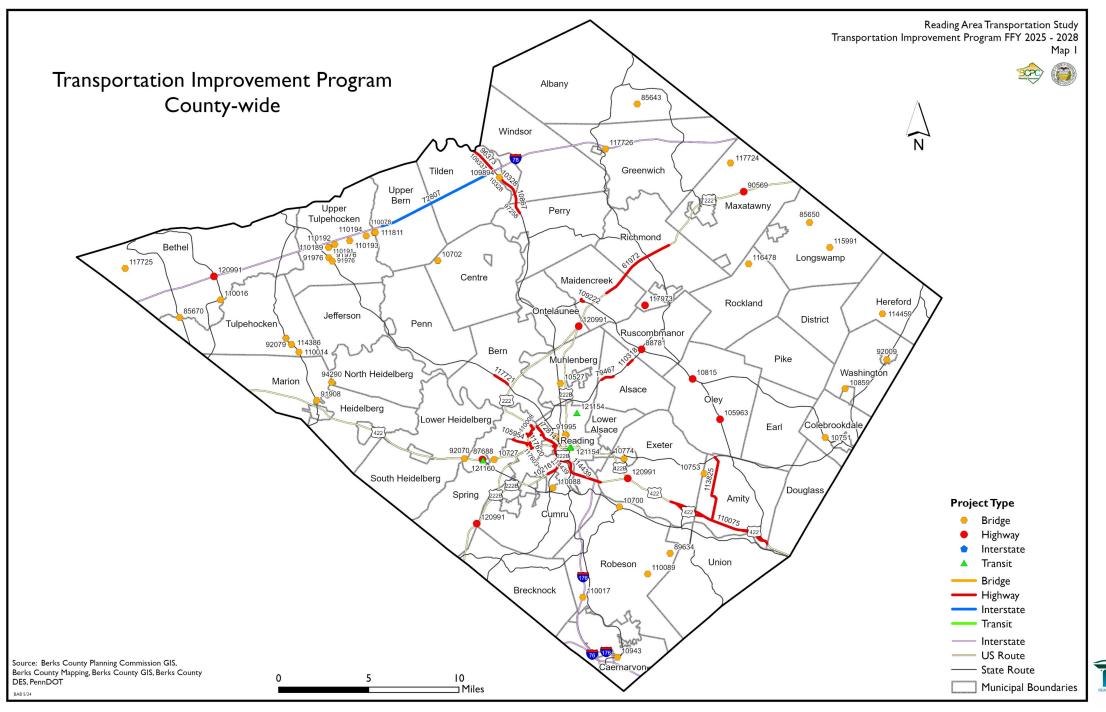
HIGHWAY

WHAT TRANSPORTATION ISSUES DO YOU CURRENTLY EXPERIENCE?

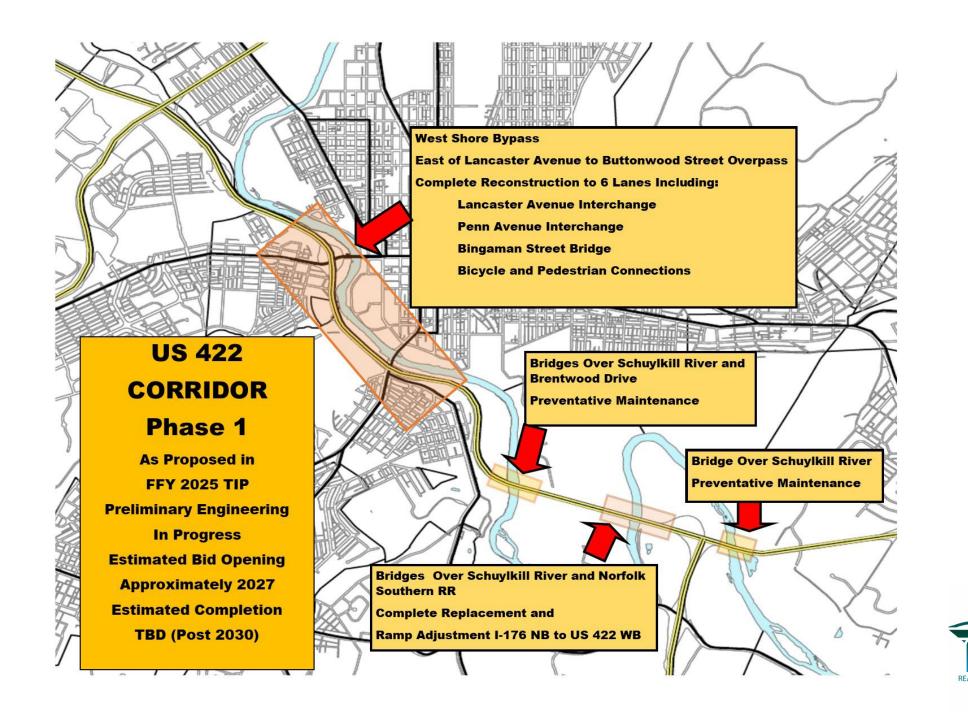


PLANNED PROJECTS

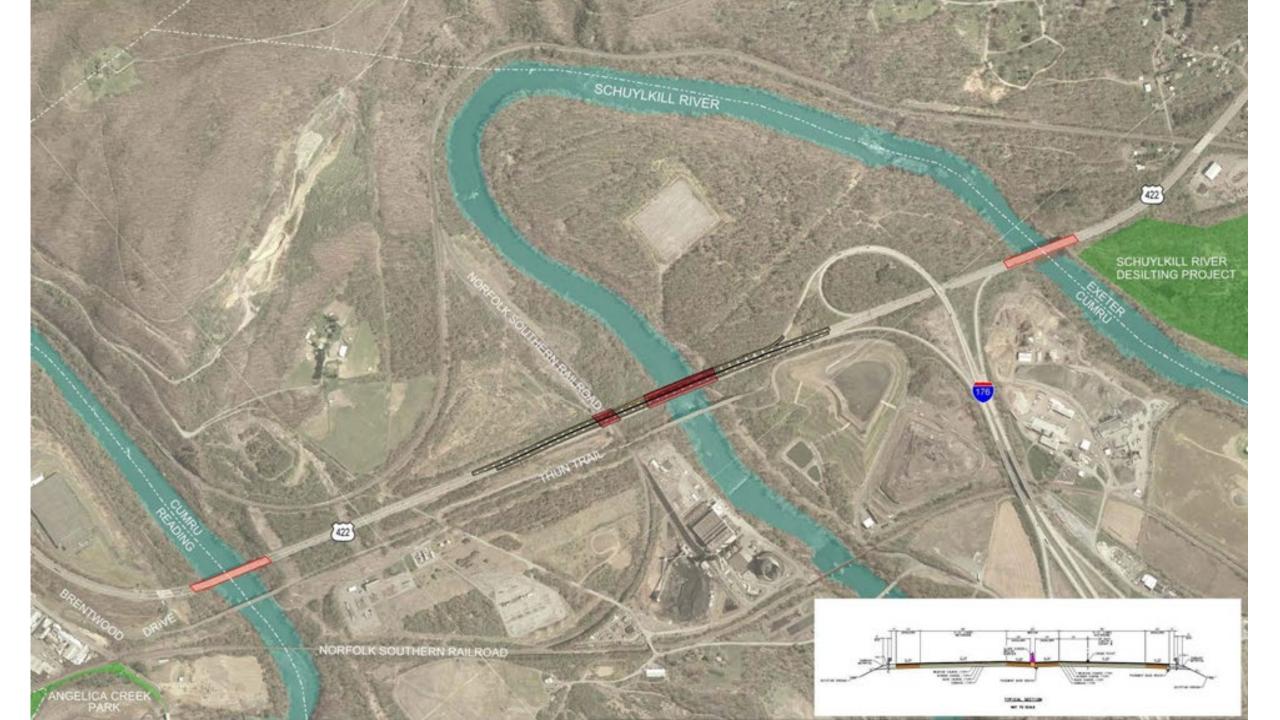
- The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is an agreed upon list of specific priority transportation projects that intend to use federal funds along with non-federally funded projects that are regionally significant.
 - It covers a four-year period and is updated every two years.
 - It shows estimated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

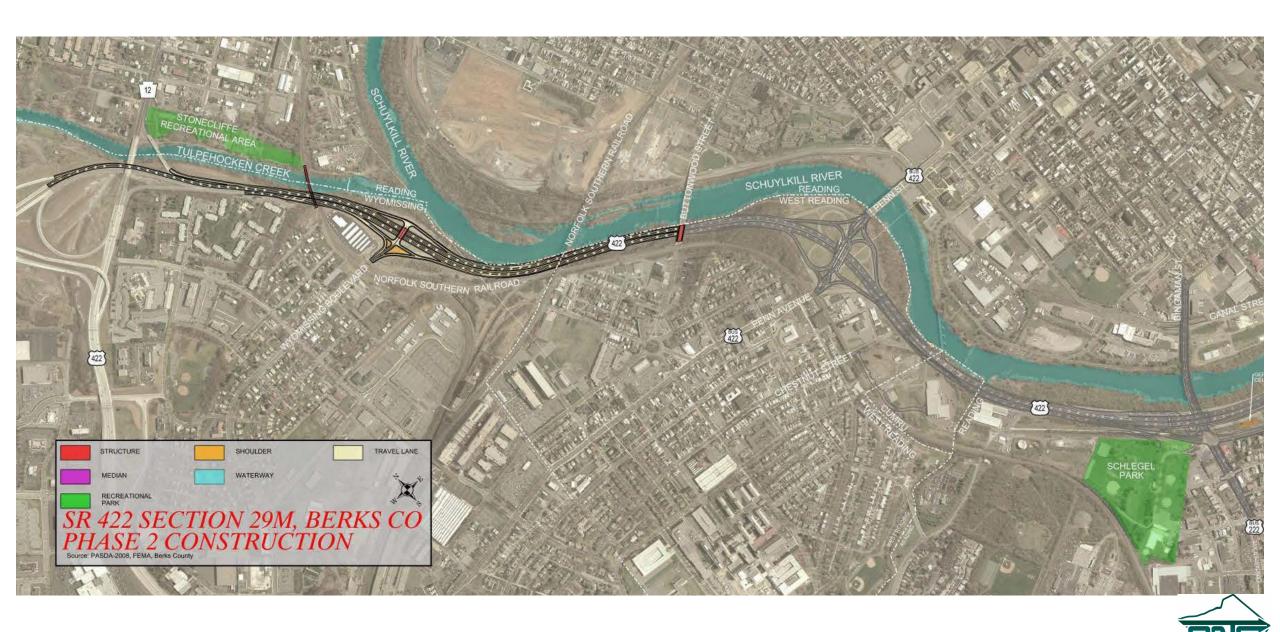


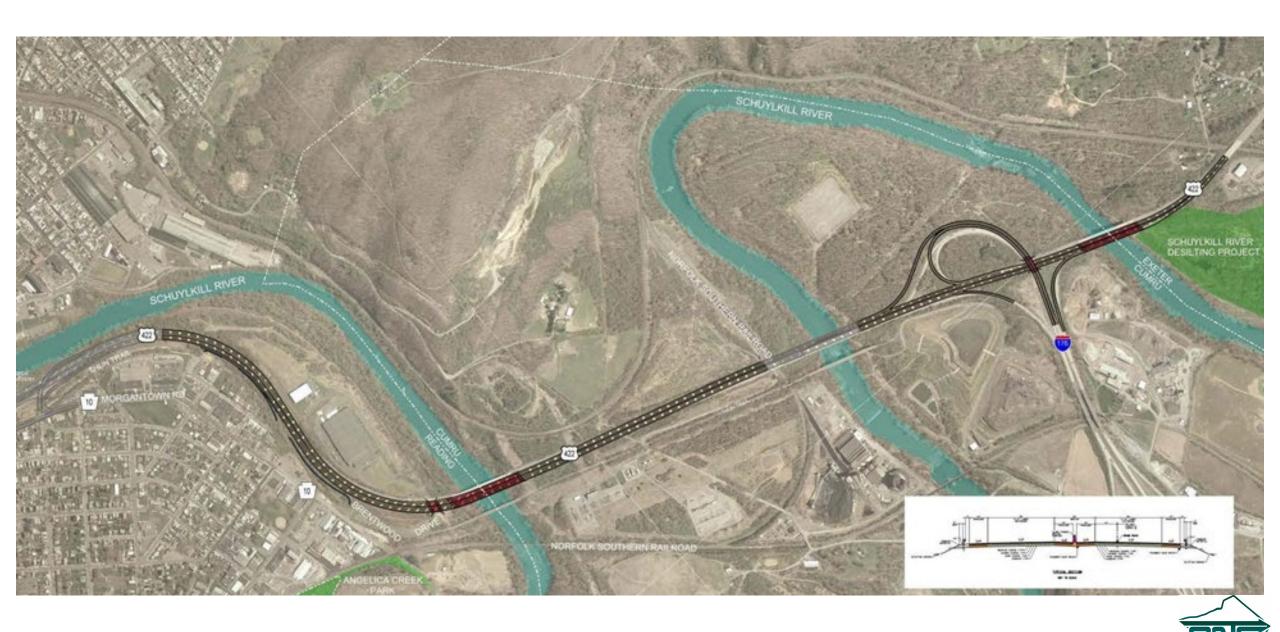


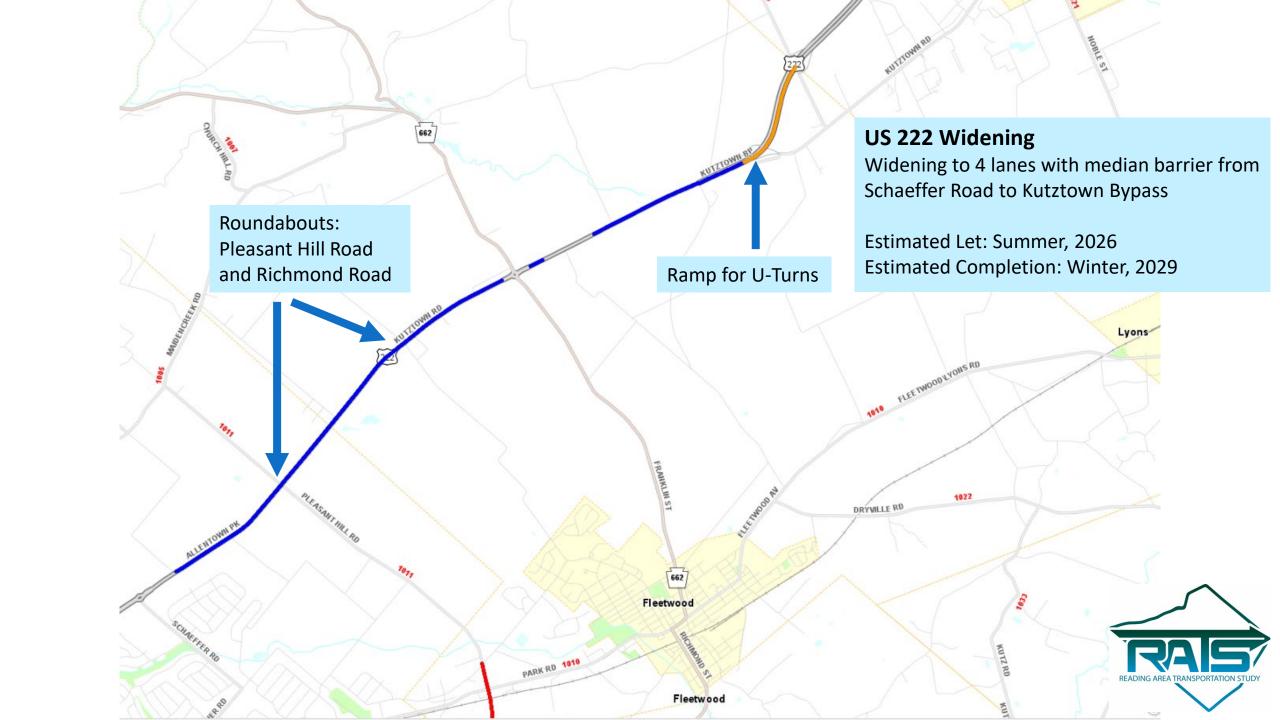


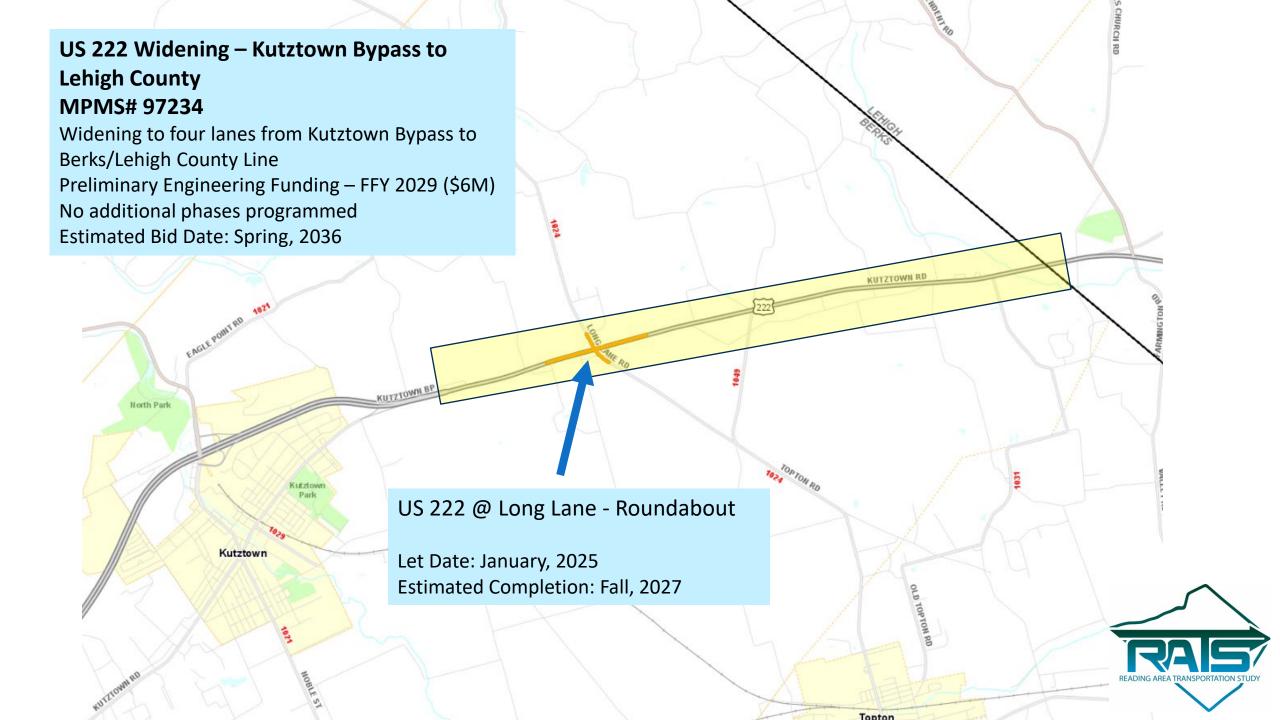












| Year | Project Description/Municipality | Project Cost (2023\$) |
|--------------|--|--------------------------|
| FFY 2025 | | |
| MPMS# 10867 | PA 61 Restoration Phase 2B – Perry and Windsor Townships | \$15,883,300 |
| MPMS# 97258 | SR 61 Median Barrier – Perry and Windsor Townships | \$500,000 |
| 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!

