

# Smart Transportation **Quarterly**



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- Case studies
- News & upcoming events
- Resources for municipalities
- Ways to get involved
- And much more!



## Have Questions or Ideas about Smart Transportation?

Send them to us at  
[smarttransportation@state.pa.us](mailto:smarttransportation@state.pa.us)

## Improved Transportation Project Delivery Process

The work towards an improved transportation project delivery process is in full swing! In the last Smart Transportation Quarterly, PennDOT Deputy Secretary Jim Ritzman summarized the overall effort to further link transportation planning and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The process is also referred to as Linking Planning and NEPA (LPN). Currently, four collaborative teams comprised of PennDOT's staff, planning partners and FHWA have been preparing and vetting new materials to support the revised process through a number of meetings, events and communication channels.

These LPN Implementation Teams are working toward:

1. **An Improved Project Development & Delivery Process that allows for:**
  - Earlier integration of community and environmental considerations.
  - Earlier involvement of PennDOT Central Office in planning projects to achieve concurrence before projects move forward and resources are expended.
  - Evaluation of a full-range of land use and transportation solutions and understanding of cost, time and environmental impacts before projects are programmed.
  - A process that ensures planning studies meet NEPA requirements to avoid duplication of efforts.
2. **More Efficient Use of Existing Data and Screening Forms that:**
  - Promote collaboration among stakeholders.
  - Ensure that necessary planning elements are considered at the right time.
3. **An Asset Planning Methodology that allows for:**
  - A framework for consistent statewide application.
  - A rationale basis for programming Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs).
  - Asset Management Plans collaboratively developed by PennDOT and its planning partners.
4. **An Interactive Communications Framework that meaningfully involves Stakeholders in Developing the Revised Process.**

## Communicating the Improved Transportation Project Delivery Process

Joe Dubovi, PennDOT District 10-0 Executive

Chuck DiPietro, Transportation Planning Director, Southwest Planning Commission

Chuck DiPietro and Joe Dubovi co-lead the Communications Team for implementing the revised transportation project delivery process. PennDOT, in conjunction with its planning partners, has been working on "Linking Planning and NEPA" (LPN), for the past few years and recognizes that the success of this process is critical to the commonwealth's Smart Transportation initiative.

Outreach and communications among PennDOT and its partners are the key ingredients for overcoming obstacles that could keep the LPN effort from being successful. Continuous communications within and between each LPN working group and setting targets for completion of various tasks are of the utmost importance. In the past few months, the Communications Team has coordinated several efforts to ensure collaboration with the planning partners. These continued efforts include regular implementation team meetings, interactive web seminars, day-long summit meetings, a collaboration website, "The Link" newsletter, and having champions/ambassadors at each district.

As we go forward with implementing the improved transportation project delivery process, on-going communication and sharing of lessons learned among our diverse communities and regions are critical. Maintenance of our existing transportation system and planning our future growth will also require all partners to champion and lead this new project delivery process. We are grateful to our planning and municipal partners for their efforts and contributions so far, and look forward to our continued collaboration to create and implement a more fiscally-realistic, sustainable, and community-supportive transportation project delivery process for all of Pennsylvania.



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### LPN Harrisburg Summit

On April 27, PennDOT, together with its planning partners and Federal Highway Association (FHWA) conducted a day-long summit to share updates, receive input and discuss next steps related to ongoing work on developing the improved transportation project delivery process. Almost 120 participants representing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), FHWA, PennDOT Central and District Offices and 22 regional planning groups, attended the event in Harrisburg.



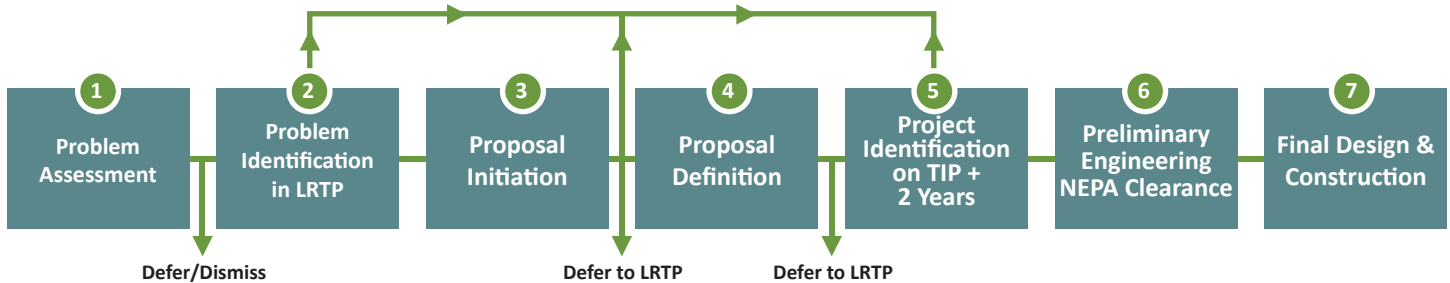
The summit provided an opportunity for all planning partners to learn more about the draft revised process and the LPN Implementation Teams received great feedback. Here are some of the key ideas that came out of the presentations and the following break-out group discussions:

- The improved process will provide a structure for overall project delivery guidance but will also allow for flexibility to adapt to each project's context and nature. For instance, the forms and screening processes will be tailored to the scale and complexity of projects.
- Although many regions' transportation programs currently include mostly maintenance and preservation-oriented projects, the new process looks into the future and provides a framework for both small-scale asset management projects and more complex capacity-adding type projects.
- All the partner entities (PennDOT, planning partners, municipalities, FHWA, and other resource agencies) will continue working together to refine and finalize the new process and to develop shared planning tools.
- The draft process is a work in progress and will continually be tested and vetted. Now is the time for everyone to share their comments and input on the emerging process.
- Even after the process is adopted, continued refinements will occur as lessons are learned through implementation. For instance, enhancements in data management and input for screening forms are currently being considered.

The LPN Implementation Teams will incorporate and address all the input received and will present a progress update at the next LPN Summit scheduled on May 18 in Hollidaysburg.

The LPN Implementation Teams are working hard to arrive at a new project delivery process that is responsive to the needs of all our stakeholders. If you would like to learn more about the ongoing LPN work or would like to participate in future LPN events, please contact Craig Reed at [rcreed@state.pa.us](mailto:rcreed@state.pa.us).

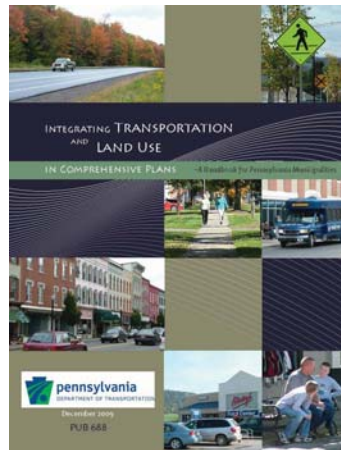
### Draft Improved Project Development & Delivery Process



### Integrating Transportation and Land Use into Comprehensive Plans

PennDOT recognizes its role as a partner in the continuing development of great communities throughout Pennsylvania. As such, the department has been working to ensure that transportation projects are born out of a sound planning process that truly links transportation decisions with community land use decisions.

The handbook was developed in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs, Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors, 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, and the American Planning Association (PA Chapter).



The department recently published a handbook on "Integrating Transportation and Land Use in Comprehensive Plans" to provide guidance for preparing the transportation elements of comprehensive plans and maximizing the linkages between local comprehensive plans and the regional transportation plans.

The handbook is organized to provide step-by-step guidance for preparing transportation elements, includes links to vital resources for developing and implementing the plan, and outlines best practices for addressing transportation in comprehensive planning from more than 30 Pennsylvania communities. This handbook is applicable for all levels of local government contemplating the comprehensive planning process - municipal, multi-municipal or county. The approaches and tools outlined are flexible to adapt to a wide range of budgetary conditions and in all types of municipalities, whether experiencing slow, moderate or rapid growth.

This handbook is one of a series that PennDOT has developed to assist local, county and regional governments to work together to improve the transportation system in the commonwealth. The other handbooks in this series include:

- Sound Land Use Planning for Your Community: Model Ordinance Language for Addressing Traffic Noise
- Access Management - Model Ordinances for Pennsylvania Municipalities Handbook
- Transportation Impact Fees - A Handbook for Pennsylvania Municipalities
- Smart Transportation Guidebook

To get your copy the Comprehensive Plans Handbook and any other documents in the same series, go to the publications list in the resources section of the Smart Transportation website ([www.smart-transportation.com](http://www.smart-transportation.com)). Training is available through PennDOT on the handbooks, and PennDOT and American Planning Association - PA are currently holding training for the Comprehensive Plans Handbook. For more information on training opportunities, please contact Brian Wall at [bwall@state.pa.us](mailto:bwall@state.pa.us).

## Smart Chat

In this feature of Smart Transportation Quarterly, our resident Smart Transportation expert, Natasha, answers your questions regarding Smart Transportation. As always, if you have any questions, send them to [smarttransportation@state.pa.us](mailto:smarttransportation@state.pa.us).

Smart Transportation is an innovative approach to solving our land use and transportation problems. Are we sharing these ideas with any other states?

Yes, PennDOT is consistently promoting the benefits of Smart Transportation. In fact, many state departments of transportation invite PennDOT to present at conferences, attend panel discussions, and communicate best practices on our initiatives. Bill Petit, District 1-0 executive, was invited in April by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to share lessons on our efforts as ODOT starts to implement "Practical Design," an initiative similar to Smart Transportation. ODOT is going through the same challenges we are facing when it comes to implementing the new ideas Practical Design is calling for. Like us, they are looking at increasing knowledge on Smart Transportation concepts and incorporating these in policies and processes within their Department. They have found the Smart Transportation Guidebook to be a great model for incorporating Practical Design concepts into policies.

More recently, Brian Hare, division chief for Design Services at the Bureau of Design, was also asked to present the Department's Smart Transportation approach to the New Jersey Chapter of the American Planning Association (NJAPA). PennDOT partnered with NJDOT and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission to present a four-hour workshop to more than 40 NJAPA participants. The workshop included a detailed discussion on the need to link land use and transportation, tools developed to support this effort, and various case studies to illustrate the principles of Smart Transportation in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

For more information, you can download presentations, articles and publications from the resources section of the Smart Transportation website ([www.smart-transportation.com](http://www.smart-transportation.com)). I look forward to responding to more of your questions in the next issue of Smart Transportation Quarterly!

*Natasha*

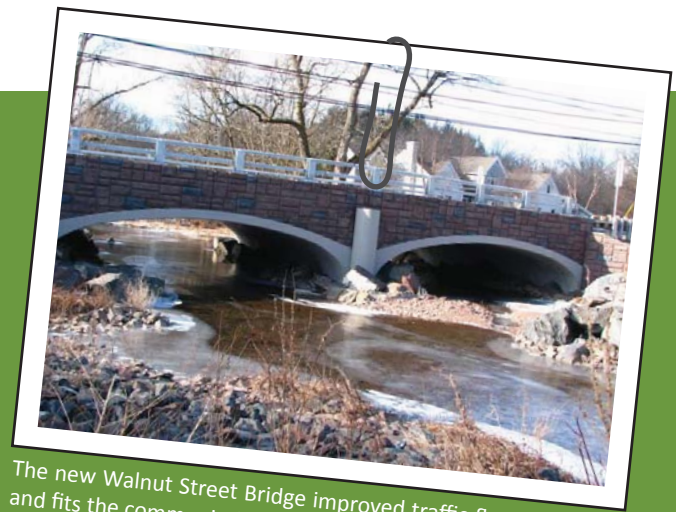
## Smart Transportation in Action

### Walnut Street Bridge in Bucks County

This bridge preservation project involved the replacement of the structurally deficient Walnut Street (SR 0152) stone arch bridge in Hilltown Township, Bucks County. The project was completed in April 2009 and is a great example of how PennDOT and the township worked together to develop a solution that fits the needs and context of a community.

In a coordinated effort with officials and residents of Hilltown Township, the final design incorporated provisions for a 10-foot wide bike path/pedestrian trail. The path serves as a critical link between disjointed trail segments currently in use among four neighboring communities and provides a safe and convenient recreational community resource. PennDOT District 6-0 also worked with local stakeholders to include architectural enhancements such as an upgraded pedestrian railing and simulated stone formwork and finishes that fit the area's character. The final structure significantly improved safety, traffic flow and pedestrian access along Walnut Street, while maintaining the appeal and aesthetics of the bridge.

This bridge preservation project is a great example of Smart Transportation demonstrating a number of themes including leveraging and preserving existing investments, enhancing local network, planning and designing within the context, and developing local governments as partners. Kudos to District 6-0 and Hilltown Township for this great project!



*The new Walnut Street Bridge improved traffic flow and safety and fits the community's context.*