



## PennDOT Connects Program

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

Top: The Little Muncy Creek Bridge replaced a rural creek crossing while maintaining the aesthetic of the old bridge. Photo by PennDOT. Bottom: Lancaster, PA successfully implemented Complete Streets design elements into their streetscape. Photo by City of Lancaster.

The PennDOT Connects Program seeks to increase multimodal transportation options and modernize planning efforts across Pennsylvania.

### CONTEXT

- Urban, rural, and suburban settings.
- Northeast.
- Program started in 2016.



### STATE PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM

- PennDOT Connects enhances community engagement efforts for projects through new collaboration requirements, funding for studies, and a technical assistance program.
- PennDOT has performed outreach to over 750 municipalities and assisted approximately 1,850 projects statewide.

### WHAT WAS THE PROJECT DRIVER?

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) initiated the PennDOT Connects program to focus the State's transportation planning process on holistic, multimodal projects for all communities. The program's goal is to meet the growing demand for modern transportation infrastructure while involving the public as much as possible. PennDOT Connects builds partnerships among government agencies, communities, and private investors to improve access to economic opportunity and overall livability of Pennsylvania communities. In support of this program, PennDOT created the role of District Planner to lead collaboration efforts in each of PennDOT's 11 engineering districts. This position serves as the primary administrator of planning functions within the

District and acts as a liaison between PennDOT and its regional planning partners.

### HOW DID THIS CONNECT THE COMMUNITY?



A bicycle and pedestrian path was added in Elizabethtown under PennDOT Connects. Photo by PennDOT.

PennDOT Connects ensures **stakeholder engagement, Context Sensitive Solutions, and Environmental Justice assessments** are integrated into the project planning process. PennDOT staff and their respective regional planning partners hold meetings with planners and local government agencies, to discuss every project funded in the regional Transportation Improvement Programs early in the planning and project development processes. Additionally, PennDOT Connects provides free technical assistance to any participating government or partnering staff upon request. PennDOT Connects emphasizes community choice rather than inflexible rules and regulations, allowing communities to use **Context Sensitive Solutions** that work best for them. PennDOT awards \$3 million annually to planning studies for projects that exemplify the collaboration goals and multimodal projects the Department aims to promote. The program also assists project teams in finding other funding sources. The program evaluates each project based on preservation of a location's character, multimodal options, accommodation of growth,

mobility and efficiency, and safety. Examples projects include:

- The *South Street Bridge Reconstruction* project was a bridge demolition and reconstruction project that used a **road diet** to balance multimodal travel demand in Philadelphia, PA. The new bridge reduced the number of travel lanes from five to four to allow for widened bike lanes and sidewalks. Furthermore, pedestrians now enjoy priority signals at both ends of the bridge.
- The *Little Muncy Creek Bridge* is a new replica steel-truss bridge that replaced a 114-year-old functionally obsolete metal truss bridge. The new bridge retains the aesthetics of the old bridge and reused the original bridge's foundation and lattice work.
- The *Multimodal Comprehensive Plan for Cameron, McKean, and Potter Counties* is a planning study that seeks to implement a community-driven transportation system that prioritizes key community issues, such as **expanded access to transit**.

### WHAT WERE THE BENEFITS?



INVEST

The PennDOT Connects program has institutionalized **stakeholder engagement** strategies for all State projects. To date, PennDOT has performed outreach to over 750 municipalities. The free technical assistance program continues to support the type of multimodal, transit oriented development PennDOT is encouraging. As part of this technical assistance program, a course called "Planning and Engineering 360° for Municipalities" familiarizes local government officials with their roles and responsibilities in developing and delivering transportation projects.

For more information:

<https://www.penndot.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/Planning/Pages/PennDOT-Connects.aspx>