

Winter  
2016



LACKAWANNA / LUZERNE METROPOLITAN  
PLANNING ORGANIZATION

# Connections

## Lackawanna Transit Center Opens

Scranton, Pa. – The County of Lackawanna Transit System (COLTS) held a ribbon-cutting ceremony Friday, November 20th for the Lackawanna Transit Center, located at 30 Lackawanna Ave, next to the state building.

“Today marks a momentous day for COLTS and Northeastern Pennsylvania,” said Bob Fiume, executive director of COLTS. “Many people have worked very hard for many years on this important project. This project would not have been possible without support from the Feder-

al Transit Administration, PennDOT, and our federal, state and local public officials.”

The 6,020 square foot building cost \$12.4 million. Construction began in Fall 2014 and COLTS buses will begin using the transit center on Monday, Jan. 4. The building is a modern, climate-controlled, cost-effective and environmentally friendly facility. Passengers will have access to real-time arrival and departure information, as well as indoor seating, vending machines and public restrooms.

The roof features a 18,700 square foot vegetative roofing system that will prevent stormwater from immediately draining into the city’s storm system. The roof will also reduce heat transfer, keeping cooling costs down during warm weather.

The Transit Center has 13 bus berths and 72 parking spaces (along with two ADA accessible spaces and a van-accessible space).

(continued on page 2).

Photo From Left to right: Jake Thomas (Rep. Mike Carroll's office); Katie Fricchione (Sen. Bob Casey's office); Dave Valvano (Rep. Frank Farina's office); Scranton Mayor Bill Courtright; John Palumbo, The Palumbo Group; Congressman Matt Cartwright (back row); Rep. Marty Flynn; Lackawanna County Commissioner Pat O'Malley; State Senator John P. Blake; COLTS Executive Director Bob Fiume; Scott Henry, Martz; Mark Gifford, ATU Local 168 (back row); Dave Kaczmarek, ATU Local 168 (back row); Frank Runco, SEIU Local Representative (back row); Carmen Libassi, COLTS Board Chair with his grandson; Tim Hinton, COLTS Solicitor; Joseph DeNaples, COLTS Solicitor (back row); Martha Dougher, COLTS Board member; County Commissioner Jim Wansacz; Gregg Nieto and Michael Dougherty, COLTS Board members, Larry Malski, Northeast Regional Railroad Authority; Kelly Freeman, Sowinski Sullivan (back row); Tom Bashore, Michael Baker Jr. Inc.; Shawn Elliott, Gannett Fleming



# Lackawanna-Luzerne MPO Long Range Transportation Plan Update

The Lackawanna Luzerne MPO is nearing completion of its update to the 2015-2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The process was part of a collaborative effort between multiple agencies throughout 2015.

McCormick Taylor served as the consultant for LRTP update. Throughout the process, representatives from the MPO, PennDOT and other stakeholders from the two counties contributed to the approximately 300 page document.

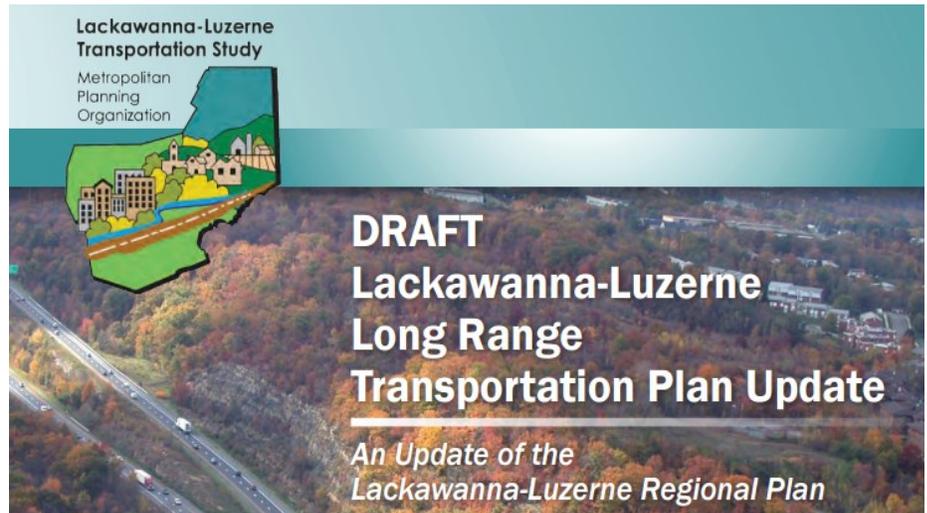
This plan serves as the vision for the 2 counties and their transportation network moving forward. Projects that are a part of the plan include those that strive for preservation, safety and economic vitality among others within the transportation

network.

The plan is moving along as scheduled. In November, the public had their opportunity to review and comment on the proposed plan. The informational meetings were held at the Luzerne County

Courthouse and the Lackawanna Center for Public Safety.

Currently, the plan is in its final review stage. All signs point to the Lackawanna Luzerne Long Range Transportation Plan to be adopted in early 2016.



## Lackawanna Heritage Valley Update

Lackawanna Heritage Valley (LHV) plans to develop a new section of the Lackawanna River Heritage Trail (LRHT) in Dickson City. In 2015, LHV acquired an easement to a tract of land between Railroad Street and Lackawanna Avenue in the borough. It has applied to DCNR for partial funding to develop this property into a 1.1 mile trail that will connect Dickson City to Olyphant. This project will remediate a large brownfield that was the site of a former colliery and coal mining fields, and it will repurpose it into a convenient multi-purpose trail to

provide safe recreational, fitness, transportation and socialization opportunities for the community.

The dual purpose trail will accommodate a variety of users. Walkers and runners can choose between a 6' wide packed stone dust path or a contiguous 10' paved pathway that will provide a smooth surface that is more suitable for bicycles, strollers, wheelchairs or walkers. The new section also will provide direct access to the Lackawanna River for fishing. The project will be fully ADA compliant,

and accessible parking will be available at the trailhead entrance.

This connection would close a critical gap in the Lackawanna River Heritage Trail, enabling LHV to take an important step toward its goal of developing a contiguous 70+ mile trail system that will extend from the New York state border to Pittston.

~Article provided by LVHA

## Lackawanna Transit Center Opens (continued from page 1)

Eight bus berths will be used by COLTS, and the other five by Martz Trailways, which is leasing space in the transit center. COLTS' administrative offices will remain at 800 North South Road in Scranton, but there is a drivers' break room, a conference/training room, and an office for COLTS staff.

The Lackawanna Transit Center is a true multi-modal center, with public transit, inter-city buses and future passenger rail

converging in one location. COLTS will be poised to begin the next phase of the project — construction of two platforms — when passenger rail service comes to Scranton. The space was reserved to have covered sidewalks for boarding and alighting, as well as a passenger ticketing area, so that there will be a seamless transition to integration of passenger rail service.

The Lackawanna Transit Center will be

open from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m.

~Article courtesy of COLTS.



## Congress Passes 5-Year Transportation Bill

Both chambers of Congress agreed Thursday to provide \$305 billion to repair and expand highways, bridges and transit during the next five years.

The House vote of 359 to 65 and the Senate vote of 83 to 16 provided a rare show of bipartisanship in the often polarized chambers.

The legislation represents a significant accomplishment to provide state and local governments greater certainty about transportation funding so they can plan major projects. There have been three dozen short-term extensions since the last four-year bill expired in 2009.

"It will certainly help fix America's

surface transportation infrastructure," said Rep. Bill Shuster, R-Pa. and chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. "All states and communities have significant infrastructure needs and they all need a

*"This will be the biggest jobs bill approved in this Congress," said Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore.*

long term certainty to address them."

Despite broad bipartisan support for fixing and expanding roads and bridges, lawmakers struggled to patch together funding to supplement the gas

tax that finances the bulk highway trust fund. The next Congress and president will have to decide how to permanently fund the bill's priorities.

The bill increases highway spending 15% by its final year and transit spending 18% during that period, according to lawmakers. The appropriations, if approved, would provide \$12 billion for mass transit, \$10 billion for Amtrak and \$1 billion for National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) programs.

"This will be the biggest jobs bill approved in this Congress," said Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore.

-Article from Bart Jansen, USA Today

## Lackawanna County Planning and the City of Scranton Team Up

Lackawanna County Planning and the City of Scranton recently worked together as part of the Green Light-GO Grant Program. The funding allowed for asset management of the City's 120+ traffic signals. This covered all signals including those on state and local roadways.

The inventory captured roadway widths, travel and turning lanes. It also addressed signals that are outdated, those that don't have enough overhead lights and overall

condition of the signal. The status of the crosswalks, mast arms, signal control boxes and roadway paint were also identified. The inventory also lets the City know which signals are lacking newer technologies such as camera detection and emergency preemption for emergency services.

The Green Light-GO program is a 50-50 reimbursable grant program offered by the state. It is anticipated that round 3 of

the program will open up in 2016. With the data, the City can prioritize its signal network while making use of available grant opportunities.

~by Chris Chapman



## Nancy Snee Retirement

After many years of faithful service to the residents of Luzerne County on the staff of the Luzerne County Planning Commission and to the travelling public through her work for over twenty-five years on the Lackawanna Luzerne Transportation Study Metropolitan Planning Organization, Nancy Snee retired on December 4th.

Nancy was named interim Director of the Luzerne County Planning Commission on the retirement of Executive Director Adrian

Merolli in 2013. On the MPO Nancy served as Vice-Chair of the Technical Committee for many years and acted as the secretary for the MPO making sure all documents such as the self-certification reviews and modifications and amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program were entered into the PENNDOT system. With Adrian's retirement, Nancy also held a seat on the MPO Coordinating Committee.

Her work was instrumental in preparation

of the first bi-county Comprehensive Plan, Long Range Transportation Plan and Hazard Mitigation Plan that was completed with Lackawanna County as well as the recent updates to those documents. Her work and experience serving on the MPO will be missed.

Lee Puskar has been named acting Director to replace her.

~by Steve Pitoniak



**LACKAWANNA/LUZERNE  
TRANSPORTATION STUDY  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING  
ORGANIZATION**

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**PENNDOT District 4-0**  
**[www.neparoads.com](http://www.neparoads.com)**

**UPCOMING MEETING DATES:**  
COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2016 10AM  
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2016 10AM  
**HELD AT PENNDOT DISTRICT 4-0 55**  
**KEYSTONE INDUSTRIAL PARK**  
**DUNMORE, PA 18512**

## Road Project Not Done, But Already Attracting Business

Officials from the Greater Pittston Chamber of Commerce saw an immediate economic impact from a \$43 million road improvement project under way.

The road project is credited as the key factor that led FedEx Ground to choose to build a massive distribution center in the Grimes Industrial Park in Pittston Twp., said Rosemary Dessoye, executive vice president of the Greater Pittston Chamber of Commerce, and Charlie Adonizio, a broker with Atlas Realty and member of the chamber board.

And, economic development and real estate officials expect the project will continue to spur economic impacts. The project will go a “long way to ensuring that highway access stays excellent long into the future, which will no doubt lead to the creation of thousands of additional jobs,” said Jim Cummings, spokesman for Mericle Commercial Real Estate Services.

The road project also improves access to the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport and surrounding communities.

More than half of the project is completed and is slated to be finished in summer 2016, said Michael Taluto, spokesman for Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

The project calls for changes in traffic patterns, an access road that connects to the industrial park and roundabouts that lead drivers to the airport, Route 315 and Dupont. Work is under way that involves building a bridge over the turnpike that leads into Commerce Road.

Mr. Adonizio said FedEx Ground showed interest in the Pittston Twp. location immediately after PennDOT announced a contract was approved for the redevelopment of the Interstate 81 interchange at the airport. A roadway extending Navy Way through the Grimes Industrial Park will provide direct access to the land for the FedEx Ground project, he said.

FedEx Ground officials would not yet say how many jobs the project will create. FedEx Ground currently leases a 116,977-square-foot facility in CenterPoint Commerce and Trade Park in Jenkins Town-

ship from Mericle Commercial Real Estate Services. Its main parking lot can accommodate about 180 vehicles, Mr. Cummings said.

The new FedEx distribution center planned would be nearly three times the size: 312,356 square feet with a parking lot for 600 cars. FedEx officials would not yet reveal plans for its existing location. Mr. Cummings said having a wide variety of real estate offerings is critical to recruiting companies and creating and retaining jobs.

“Companies often call us because they’ve found an available property within our portfolio that they think will work for them,” Mr. Cummings said. “In most cases however, they need to be convinced of two things before they’re willing to move into a Mericle building — how quickly can they access the interstate system and can they attract quality workers there.”

~Article by Denise Allabaugh, Citizens Voice