



Focus of Proposed 2009-2012 TIP is Bridge Repair/Replacement

The proposed 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) has been developed by the Lackawanna/Luzerne MPO.

The TIP comprises the first four years of the 12-year program and the Long Range Transportation Plan. It is a listing of projects and line items for which funding has been designated.

Line items are designated funding sources that can be used for a particular category project, such as rail, highway reserve, transportation enhancement, etc., when needed.

In addition to the line item categories, there are specific project listings.

The primary focus of the TIP is bridge replacement, bridge rehabilitation, and bridge preservation projects.

Other than bridge projects,

most of the listed projects are geared toward system preservation, maintenance, and improvement. These projects include intersection improvements, existing signal improvements, and road resurfacings.

Some of the other projects on the proposed TIP include the following:

Widening: 2 projects -

I-81 between the Central Scranton Expressway and Davis Street Interchanges;

Airport Beltway, Hazle Township

New Roadway: 2 projects - South Valley Parkway which will provide better access to the Luzerne County Community College from PA 29;

Extension of Route 424 to PA Route 924 in Hazle Township which will provide improved, safer access into the Humboldt Industrial Park.

Park-n-Ride: 4 projects -

Butler Twp., intersection of I-80 and PA 309;

White Haven Borough - location undetermined;

Nuangola Borough - SR 2042 at Exit 159 of I-81;

Sugarloaf Twp. - Tomhicken Road, near Exit 145 of I-81

The proposed TIP is slated to be adopted by the MPO at the July meetings, pending the results of the public comment period. It will then be reviewed and adopted at the state and federal levels after which it will become effective as of October 1st.

The public version of the 2009 TIP can be accessed at the MPO web page (see page 4 for web address).

Contact Nancy Snee at 825-1564 for an electronic copy of the TIP.

Long Range Transportation Plan To Be Updated

The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is being updated as part of the Bi-County Comprehensive Plan. At the May 14 MPO meeting, the project consultant gave a brief presentation on the progress of the project.

The purpose of the LRTP is to develop, maintain, and manage an adequate, safe, accessible intermodal transportation system that will provide an efficient movement of people and goods within Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties.

The plan will look at all modes of transportation as they currently operate, and will consider how conditions may change over the next 25 years.

The consultant is close to

completing the data-gathering stage of the plan, and will soon be launching into the visioning phase.

The public will have an opportunity to provide input and feedback about the plan at the public meetings that will be held throughout the duration of the project, and/or via the web site for the project, www.lackawanna-luzerne.com. There will be a survey on the web site in the near future seeking ideas and input.

One of the main intents of the LRTP is to try to find a way to better link land use with transportation projects. With most of the municipalities in Luzerne County, and all the municipi-

palties in Lackawanna County having jurisdiction over land use, linking transportation and land use projects is challenging.

Another challenge in looking ahead 25 years into the future is the current regulation that 80% of the TIP funding must be geared toward system maintenance, and only 20% can be used for new roadway projects. This directive, plus the regulation to maintain fiscal constraint throughout the plan, makes the visioning process all the more difficult.

However, preparing the LRTP as part of the bi-county comprehensive plan, offers an opportunity to resolve these and other issues.

To learn more about the LRTP preparation, or to provide input, contact Nancy Snee at 825-1564 or Steve Pitoniak at 963-6400.

State of the Luzerne County Trail System Outlined

The Wyoming Valley Wellness Trails Partnership has compiled an inventory of all the existing and proposed trails in Luzerne County.

The report outlines the status of 15 trails in the county, and discusses the funding aspects of the projects, as well as the issues that need to be addressed as the organizational sponsors of the trails go through the trail construction process.

Below is a brief outline of the trails described in the report:

Ashley Planes Heritage Park: This 405-acre site, once completed, will be one of the most important historic sites in the county, providing visitors with a glimpse of a former state-of-the-art transportation facility for moving coal over Wilkes-Barre Mountain. The park will include a walking trail with interpretive signage.

Back Mountain Trail: Upon completion, this trail will run for a total of 13 miles along the route of the Lehigh Valley Rail Line, originally developed in the 1880's to assist a local ice manufacturer bring his ice to market. Two miles of this trail are currently open and can be accessed at the Luzerne Borough trail head site near the Knights of Columbus parking lot.

Black Diamond Trail: This trail project is in process and not officially open to the public. It will consist of 16 unimproved rail-trail miles. 1.5 miles are estimated to be completed by late summer of this year. The trail will connect White Haven Borough with Wilkes-Barre City, skirting the east edge of Mountain Top along the way. A trailhead to the trail is located near the Mountain Top Hose Company on PA Route 437, but the public is cautioned to use the trail in groups since it is not officially open.

Wilkes-Barre City Trail/Greenway System: This plan will identify trail/greenway routes in the city that connect to existing and proposed trails, city parks, schools, senior facilities, and health care facilities.

Greater Kingston Area Trail/Greenway: A Master Plan will be prepared for the Greater Kingston Area which includes the boroughs of Edwardsville, Larksville, Luzerne, Kingston, and Swoyersville. The plan will seek ways to connect these boroughs to the Back Mountain Trail, the

Luzerne County Levee Trail System, the Susquehanna Warrior Trail, and the West Side Trail. It will also provide connections to area parks, schools, senior facilities, and health care facilities. Planning for this project will start in 2008/2009.

Greater Hazleton Rails to Trails: A 4-mile section of this trail is open from the City of Hazleton to Ashmore. When completed, the trail will be 16.4 miles long and will act as a spur to the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor. It will also connect the Greater Hazleton Area with Eckley Miners' Village, Lehigh Gorge State Park, and nearby State Game-lands. In addition to providing the usual facilities for walkers, joggers, and bikers, the trail can be used for cross-county skiing and geocaching (treasure hunt involving Global Positioning System units).

Lehigh Gorge Trail: This trail follows over 20 miles of abandoned railroad grade along the Lehigh River and provides opportunities for hiking, biking, cross-county skiing and snowmobiling. Parking areas for access to the trail can be found in White Haven in Luzerne County, and Rockport and Glen Onoko in Carbon County.

Luzerne County Levee Trail: The Levee Trail consists of 12 miles of paved trails in total, divided into four sections or reaches, on both the east and west sides of the Susquehanna River. The trail system connects people to the river that helped create the Wyoming Valley, and offers lessons in the history of the valley on several kiosks located along the trail. The riverside natural area in Kirby Park contains historic features of a park and zoo designed by the Olmstead Brothers which was abandoned after the flood of 1936.

Luzerne County National Recreation Trail: Phase 1 of this 1.8-mile trail is open, and runs from the Pittston Riverfront Park to Port Griffith. When completed, the trail will run for 16 miles connecting Port Griffith to Wilkes-Barre City to the south and connecting to Old Forge to the north. The trail runs by the historic Knox Mine disaster location which cost the lives of many miners and ended anthracite mining in Pennsylvania.

Mocanaqua Loop Trail: This challenging trail consists of a variety of cleared natural paths that feature a 1,000 foot climb up Penobscot Mountain. Hikes along the ridgetops offer panoramic views of the Susquehanna River and the surrounding mountain ranges.

The trail includes four inter-connecting looping trails that lead hikers to low-lying areas, ridgetop overlooks, former coal-mined lands, and natural wooded areas.

Penobscot Ridge Mountain Bike Trail: This introductory bike mountain trail runs about 2 miles, and encompasses large reclaimed mine areas of land to the south of Wanamie and the conservation lands of Penobscot Ridge. There are two trailheads that can be accessed at points along the Kirmar Parkway.

Sugar Notch Trail: Planning for this trail is in process. When completed, this trail will be part of the Sugar Notch Residential Development. It will provide access to the Greater Hanover Area Recreation Park, and will connect the park with the Sugar Notch playground about a mile away. A second trail will run from a trailhead at the lower fields of the Recreation Park to a trailhead adjacent to the Sugar Notch Cemetery for distance of 3 miles.

Susquehanna Warrior Trail: This 18.5-mile trail is situated along the Susquehanna River on the west side of the valley, running parallel to US Route 11 from the PPL Riverlands Park in Salem Township up to Larksville Borough. There are segments of the trail open at this time at the southern end. This nearly-flat trail will have a gravel surface and six trailheads, and will connect to the Mocanaqua loop trails across the river from Shickshinny Borough.

Wapwallopen Creek Greenway/Trail: This planned suburban trail/greenway system will provide about 20 miles of on - and off-road trails in three loops, with connecting segments, throughout Mountain Top. It will connect portions of Wapwallopen Creek, Mountain Top, and the Crestwood Industrial Park with the Delaware Lehigh National Heritage Corridor/Black Diamond Trail.

West Side Trail: This 19-mile trail is an in-town system that includes off-road segments as well as improvements to existing sidewalks and roads for bicyclists and walkers.

State of the Luzerne County Trail System Outlined (continued)

There are a limited number of hard copies of the trail report available. However, in May the report will be available on the web at www.luzernecountyoutdoors.org. People interested in obtaining copies of the trails map can contact Michele Schasberger at michele@mfhs.org, or you can contact her via telephone at 823-7000 to receive a pdf file of the report.

For those who obtain a copy of the re-

port, it is important to remember that the information on the trails represents the status as it was when the report was prepared in the fall/winter of 2007/2008. Continued growth is expected to have occurred in both the planned and developed trails in 2008 including the Black Diamond Trail from White Haven, the Back Mountain Trail through Shavertown, and the completion of the Luzerne County Riverfront Park.

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) was very instrumental in developing, distributing, and compiling the initial surveys that eventually evolved into the trails report.

For more information on this project, contact Michele Schasberger.



**LACKAWANNA/LUZERNE METROPOLITAN
PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

Published by: Luzerne County Planning
Commission

Contact: Nancy Snee
Telephone: 825-1564

E-Mail: Nancy.Snee@luzernecounty.org

MPO Web Page: [www.luzernecounty.org/
county/departments_agencies/
planning_commission/lackawannaluzerne-
metropolitan-planning-organization](http://www.luzernecounty.org/county/departments_agencies/planning_commission/lackawannaluzerne-metropolitan-planning-organization)

**PennDOT District 4-0 web
site: www.neparoads.com**

New Construction on Two Trails Underway

Submitted By Judy Rimple, President of ASTA

The Anthracite Scenic Trails Association (ASTA) has been awarded over \$800,000 to build an additional segment onto the Back Mountain Trail, (BMT) and for construction of the Black Diamond Trail in Mountain Top. The funding was received through the PennDOT Transportation Enhancement program.

Back Mountain Trail: The BMT initially opened with 2.2 miles of trail in 1999 that stretched along SR 0309, from Luzerne Borough to Trucksville in Kingston Township. The new construction will add about 2.8 miles of new trail that will include a creek walk next to Toby Creek in Luzerne Borough, provide safe access from Carverton Road up a series of steps to the railroad bed, and will encompass more than two miles of trail that will wind along the abandoned railroad on Carverton Road to the residential area along Lower Demunds Road in Dallas Township. The new construction will provide views of woodland, waterfalls, and Toby Creek, and will offer opportunities to spot scarlet tanagers, turkeys, hawks,

deer and the occasional bear.

New Trail Guides will be published and available in the summer that will describe various ways to access the trail and provide other local information. Access to the first two miles of the BMT is available on Parry Street in Luzerne near the parking lot of the Knights of Columbus building, or near the fire hall parking lot in Trucksville. The goal of ASTA is to



Caption describing picture or graphic.

eventually continue the BMT through Dallas Borough. ASTA hopes to work with the Dallas School District to help make the trail a Safe Routes to School route for K-8th graders. The ultimate goal of ASTA is to extend the BMT from the Wyoming Valley to Rickett's Glen.

Black Diamond Trail (BDT): This trail will eventually run for 15 miles between White Haven Borough and Laurel Run Borough. Over two miles of the trail have been completed, and a pedestrian bridge that once spanned I-81 is being recycled as part of the trail over a live railroad line. When the trail connects into White Haven, it will merge with the 165-mile Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor.

The BDT will eventually connect with the Luzerne County Levee System Trail and the BMT. Other valley trails, such as the Susquehanna Warrior Trail and the West Side Trail, will join with the mountain trails to provide Luzerne County a vast network of pedestrian/bicycle friendly recreation, with additional possibilities for alternative transportation needs. For more information on both trails, go