

Winter

2006



LACKAWANNA / LUZERNE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

# CONNECTIONS

## Major Project Updates

Submitted By Bob Doble, A.D.E. for Design, District 4-0

Work is progressing on 12 major projects in the MPO area, according to Robert Doble, A.D.E. for Design at District 4-0, who provided the following updates:

### Lackawanna County:

**Routes 6 & 347** - This long-awaited project was bid on September 29, 2005 at a cost of \$10,146,000. It will allow Business Route 6 to be widened to 5 lanes between Office Max and Gibbons Toyota. In addition to the widening, there will be a signalized redesign of the intersection of Business Route 6 and PA Route 437. Construction has started and will be completed in 2007.

**I-81 Cemetery Bridges** (south of River Street) - These two bridges, currently in preliminary engineering, are being designed under a design-build concept to expedite project delivery. (The design-build option permits the contractor to do both the design and construction of a project.) The preliminary estimate for the project is \$18 million to build 3 lanes in each direction of the bridges. The estimated let date is 2008.

**I-81 Widening** - The consultant selection process is underway for the widening of I-81 between Davis and River Streets, and should be completed by the end of 2006. This is the only I-81 widening project that can be funded with current resources.

**Ackerly Road Bridge** (Glenburn Township) - This bridge, located near the Glen Oak Country Club, has been closed for 2 years. The project was bid at a cost of \$1.13 million and construction will start in March or April, 2006.

**State & Grove Streets** (Clarks Summit Borough) - Intersection improvements for

this location will be bid in February and construction will be done at night to minimize motorist delays.

### Luzerne County:

**South Valley Parkway** - As a result of input from several sources, modifications to the preliminary plans are being developed. Before being approved, these modifications need to be approved by Central Office and the local Project Advisory Committee. Negotiations with the consultant for the remaining preliminary engineering activities are underway.

**Avoca Interchange and Airport Access Road** - The Point of Access study is almost completed. Once it is, the interchange portion of the project can proceed. The airport access road portion of this project has experienced delays and cost increases due to complications related to the proximity of the proposed road to the runway guidance system. It is possible that the interchange improvement portion of this project may proceed before the connector phase.

**Coal Street** - The next hurdle for this project is environmental clearance. Once that is received, final design and right-of-way activities may begin. The financial hurdles seem to be resolved. The Department anticipates receiving environmental clearance early this year with construction starting in 2008.

**PA Route 115 Connector** - Due to the need to reduce large project costs, the scope of this project has been reduced. Currently being studied is a bridge under Route 115 southbound that will provide 115 northbound

traffic access to I-81 southbound. Even with these project scope reductions, there is a high price tag. Another public meeting will be held in the near future to explain the project.

**Broad Street** (Hazleton City) - A recent public meeting generated significant feedback, and the consultant is working to resolve these issues with an eye toward a final public meeting and movement to final design.

**PA Route 924** (Hazle Township) - Plans for the first section of the project (I-81 to Barletta Road) are complete and will be bid this spring. Difficult right-of-way issues are involved with the second phase (Barletta Road to Scotch Pine Drive). The intention is to bid that section later this year or early next year. The rapid expansion and success of the Humboldt Industrial Park make this project critical to that area.

**Bridge Conditions** - As the bridge system in the MPO region ages, and the bridge replacement rate decreases, it is difficult to foresee an immediate improvement in this situation. Initiatives are underway to repair a large number of bridges which will help improve the deficiency ratings. This process has started on the interstates and will proceed to non-interstate roads once the interstate bridges have been completed. Projects already under design in Lackawanna County include bridges located at Exit 191 (Viewmont Mall), Exit 190 (Main Ave.), the Cemetery Bridges, Rocky Glen Road (northbound), and PA Route 502.

Work has also begun on bridges located at Lidy's Road and PA Route 115 in Luzerne County.



## Hikers Enjoy Mid-January Trail Walk

Thanks to Transportation Enhancement (TE) funding received from the Lackawanna/Luzerne MPO, southern Luzerne County residents and visitors are enjoying the Greater Hazleton Rails-to-Trail. The first 4 miles of the trail opened to the public on May 15, 2005.

The trail experienced continual use during the summer and fall, which prompted the Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership (GHACP) to start planning recreational uses for the trail for winter, including a cross-country skiing event which was scheduled for Sunday, January 22, 2006. Due to the unseasonably warm weather and lack of snow, the cross-country skiing event turned into a hiking event. About 75 people, some accompanied by their pets, enjoyed being outdoors and exercising to improve their health.



Hikers enjoying winter walk on trail.

Part of the 75 hikers included people from the Schuylkill County Nature Club, led by "Porcupine Pat". Several members of the Club described the trail as "spectacular" and let it be known that their group would be using the trail often

in the future. In addition to the walkers, many bikers took advantage of the beautiful weather and enjoyed their first ride of the season.

In the spring, 9 exercise stations will be placed along the first mile of the trail and the parking lot will be paved. Installation of the exercise stations will be done by volunteers and local industries.

The completion of a Master Site Plan, and the construction of a pedestrian bridge over an active Norfolk Southern rail

line are elements of the second phase of the 16-mile trail that will connect Eckley Miners Village with the Delaware Lehigh National Heritage Corridor.

Submitted by Bob Skulsky, GHACP

## Pennsylvania Highway Statistics

Every year PennDOT, with the help of several agencies including local Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), collects highway statistics through the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS). The latest data available is for the year 2004. The implementation of new urbanized boundaries, based on the 2000 census, has caused a shift in mileage and Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled (DVMT) from rural to urbanized areas. Some definitions are in order before the data is presented.

**DVMT:** measures total travel by all vehicles;

**Lane Miles:** The number of miles times the number of lanes;

**Linear Miles:** Length measured along roadway centerline;

**Federal-Aid System:** Roads eligible to receive federal-aid highway funds; the eligibility is determined by functional classification of the road.

**Interstate System:** Highest classification of arterial roads, providing the highest level of mobility at the highest speed for long, uninterrupted distances; Maintenance Functional Class (MFC) - A.

**Other Arterials:** Limited-access freeways, multi-lane highways and other important highways that supplement the interstate system; they connect, as directly as practicable, the nation's principal urbanized areas, serve the national defense, and connect at suitable border points with routes of continental importance; MFC - B and C.

**Collectors:** Provide both land and access service and traffic circulation within neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas, and downtown city centers; collectors connect local roads with arterials and provide less mobility than arterials at lower speeds for a shorter distance; MFC - D.

**Locals:** Provide a high level of access to abutting land, but have limited mobility; MFC - E.

**Pennsylvania: Total Linear Miles:** 120,623

Total State-Owned: 43,615

Non-State-Owned: 77,008

Rural Linear Miles: 76,368

Urban Linear Miles: 44,255

**Lackawanna County:**

Total Linear Miles: 98.2.

**Luzerne County:**

**Total Linear Miles:** 123.3

**Federal Aid System Mileage:**

Lackawanna County: 441.5

State-Owned: 388.4

Locally-Owned: 53.1

Luzerne County: 684.4

State-Owned: 565.8

Locally-Owned: 118.6

**DVMT:**

	Lackawanna	Luzerne
Interstate:	2,067,720	2,761,247
Other Exp:	407,097	340,580
Other Prin. Art.:	812,397	1,217,131
Maj. Arterial	776,622	1,774,009
Maj. Collector:	552,788	755,704
Minor Collector:	81,080	99,997
Local:	599,051	1,023,577
<b>Total:</b>	<b>5,296,755</b>	<b>7,972,245</b>

(continued on page 3)



## Doble Receives PennDOT's Chuck Mattei Award

Robert T. Doble, A.D.E. for Design at District 4 recently received the first ever Charles M. Mattei Award, an honor that will be given annually in memory of the former District Executive of District 4-0.

Doble was chosen by the District's Employee Recognition Committee because he met the high personal and professional standards set by Mattei. Mattei, who died in 2003 at the age of 57, served as the District Engineer for District 4 for 17 years, longer than any other District Engineer in Pennsylvania.

In accepting the award, Doble said three qualities stood out in Mattei's life—his compassion, patience, and sense of humor. "The bottom line is, Chuck was my mentor", Doble said.

"This award is something I'll never forget."

The committee and executive staff chose



*Standing, from left to right are: Steve Shimko, D.E., Janet Mattei, Chuck's mother, Dwaine Mattei, Chuck's wife, Bob Doble, Lois Doble.*

Doble on the basis of several factors including strength of character, outstanding service to employees as well as the public, involvement with community activities, and the required minimum 10 years of service.

A graduate of Lafayette College, Doble has been with PennDOT for 33 years, becoming a professional engineer in 1974. He has served in numerous management positions at PennDOT including Assistant District Executive in all divisions—construction, maintenance, and design. He also served briefly as Acting District Executive.

In his current position, Doble oversees a staff of 95 and a consultant staff of 15 to 20 firms. He has won three PennDOT management awards during his career.

## Transportation Enhancement/Home Town Streets/Safe Routes To School (TE/HTS/SRTS) Project Recommendations Made

The Lackawanna/Luzerne MPO Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) met in November, 2005, to hear presentations of the TE/HTS/SRTS applicants. Each applicant had five minutes to present their project and five minutes to answer questions.

Following the presentations, the TAC evaluated each application with the end result being a ranking of projects based on numerical scores.

The TAC made the following recommendations for funding: Luzerne County -

North & South Washington Street Lighting Project, Wilkes-Barre City, The Engine House Restoration, White Haven Borough, George Avenue, Safe Routes To School Project, Wilkes-Barre City, and Hanover Township Recreational Trail.

Lackawanna County - Carbondale Streetscape Improvements, Jermyn Borough Streetscape Improvements, Lackawanna County Trolley Museum Refurbishing, and Lackawanna College Streetscape Improvements.

Three projects were recommended for statewide consideration: White Haven Streetscape/Delaware & Lehigh Trail, Delaware & Lehigh Trail Section One, and the Delaware & Lehigh Rail Trail Pedestrian Bridge, which is located in Jim Thorpe, Carbon County.

These recommendations will not become official until the State Transportation Commission approves them. Applicants will be contacted once the STC takes action.

## Pennsylvania Highway Statistics (continued from page 2)

### Travel Jurisdiction DVMT:

	Lackawanna	Luzerne
Penndot	4,436,023	6,292,785
Other Agencies	22,813	39,549
Turnpike	118,915	254,948
Local	719,004	1,384,963
Total:	5,296,755	7,972,245

### Pennsylvania:

	Interstate	DVMT	Mean
	Mileage		AADT
I-80	311.1	8.9 million	28,830
I-81	232.6	10.4 million	44,553
I-84	54.9	1.3 million	22,208
I-380	28.7	.5 million	18,668
I-476	129.6	5.6 million	43,278

The complete Highway Statistics Report can be obtained by contacting Mr. Laine Heltebride, PennDOT Central Office at (717) 787-2277 or via e-mail at: lheltebrid@state.pa.us.

In addition to the highway data, the following maps are available: National Highway System, Functional Class, and Traffic Volume. Highway and Truck Traffic Data can be obtained from Chris Allison, Transportation Planning Division, at (717) 783-9972 or via e-mail at: challison@state.pa.us.





**LACKAWANNA/LUZERNE METROPOLITAN  
PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

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Check out the PennDOT District 4-0 web  
site at  
[www.neparoads.com](http://www.neparoads.com)



## Progress Continues on The Scranton Riverfront Greenway Project

The Scranton Riverfront Greenway project serves as the gateway to the Lackawanna River Heritage Trail. It will develop a section of multi-purpose trails along the river adjacent to Scranton's central business district (CBD). Proposed development efforts include a river walk, riverfront amenities, commercial establishments, parking, recreational facilities, outdoor gathering spaces, and ramps with direct access to the water for fishing, canoeing, and kayaking. With convenient public access from a variety of locations, the Greenway will physically connect Scranton High School, the CBD of Scranton, Steamtown National Historic Site, the Electric City Trolley Station & Museum, the State Office Building, the Steamtown Mall, and the proposed Intermodal Transportation Center.

The Greenway project is a long-

term endeavor that will take years to complete. The Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority (LHVA) is a key participant and funding partner for the project along with local property owners, the Lackawanna River Corridor Association, the Rail Trail Council of Northeast Pennsylvania, Scranton Tomorrow, the Scranton

Chamber of Commerce, the City of Scranton, Lackawanna County, Steamtown National Historic Site, and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Over 60 volunteers cleaned up a half-mile section of the Lackawanna River in downtown Scranton in April, 2005, as the signature project for City Pride 2005 and the Great Pennsylvania Clean-Up. In October of 2005, Senator Robert Mellow awarded the LHVA a \$100,000 grant to fund the development of the Scranton Riverfront Greenway Master Plan. This plan will assure appropriate and best use of development for the area surrounding the downtown riverfront, and will highlight the river as an important natural and recreational resource, and as a catalyst for urban development and the on-going revitalization of downtown Scranton.



*Walkers enjoy the Mid-Valley portion of the Scranton Greenway which runs from Mellow Park in Peckville to Laurel Street Park in Archbald.*

Submitted by Colleen Carter, LHVA