



# MPO To Update Congestion Management Program

The Lackawanna Luzerne MPO is in the process of updating its Congestion Management Program (CMP) Phase I Report which was originally done in 1995.

The 1995 Phase I Report identified baseline criteria by which congestion would be determined in urban and rural areas measured by Volume/Capacity ratios, average speeds, and amount of delay experienced at intersections.

At a recent meeting with the consultant, MPO and PennDOT District 4-0 and Central Office personnel reviewed the corridors and intersections in the original plan to see if they should remain in the new plan, or be deleted. Many of the sites on the original list have had improvements done that have corrected the congestion-causing problems.

One of the main goals of the new plan is to update the criteria by which congestion is measured. In the original



Recent CMP Project Location

plan, a Volume/Capacity ration of 1.0 or higher was the threshold for rating a corridor as being congested. (Volume/Capacity ratios determine the demand measured in the number of vehicles traveling on any given roadway versus the carrying capacity of the roadway).

In the new plan, corridors with V/C ratios between .60 - .80, .81-1.0, and those greater than 1.0 will be analyzed.

In addition to identifying

roadways and intersections that can be improved, the CMP will also look at other measures, such as increased biking/walking planning, increased transit ridership, and greater investment in Intelligent Transportation Study facilities, to help reduce congestion.

The CMP is meant to be a living document that will see projects added and removed over time. The intersections and corridors determined to be congested will evolve into projects that will make it onto

the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and, eventually, onto the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).

The project consultant developed a list of congested corridor candidates, some from the original plan, and others based on V/C ratios derived from PennDOT's Roadway Management System AADT data. The MPO staff will analyze the data and determine which roadways need further study.

## Increased Liquid Fuels Funds for Municipalities

The Municipal Liquid Fuels Program funds are allotted to municipalities to be used for construction, re-construction, maintenance and repair of public roads or streets.

The allocation a municipality receives is based on its population and miles of roads on their approved Liquid Fuels Inventory. To be placed on the list, the road must have a minimum Right-Of-Way (ROW) 33 feet in width in a township, and 16 feet in a borough. The cartway, or drive-able surface, must be

at least 16 feet wide and 250 feet long. If the road is a dead end, it must have a cul-de-sac at the end with a minimum radius of 40 feet.

Roads must be maintained in such a condition that it can be safely driven at 15 mph.

For the 2014 program, payments will be distributed on March 1 - a month earlier than usual. PennDOT has completed its annual update of municipal roadway mileage, and the Department of Revenue re-certified the FY

2013-2014 Motor License Fund estimate, which includes revised motor fuel rates beginning in January, versus December, as assumed in estimates prior to the final version of H.B. 1060.

Lackawanna County will receive a total of \$5,315,135 for FY 2013-2014, an increase of about \$400,000.

Luzerne County will receive a total of \$8,187,541, an increase of about \$600,000 from the previous fiscal year.

## Four Projects Awarded Multi-Modal Transportation Funds

The Multi-Modal Fund (MTF) provides grants to municipalities and eligible organizations for projects that increase safety and contribute to a reliable transportation system.

The program provides financial assistance to municipalities, councils of government, economic development organizations, public transportation agencies, rail/freight and ports.

Projects must meet the following four basic criteria to qualify for MTF monies:

- Coordinates local land use with transportation assets to enhance existing communities;

- Relates to streetscape, lighting, sidewalk enhancement and pedestrian safety;

- Improves connectivity or use of existing transportation assets; and



*Site of future Wilkes University Gateway Project*

- Relates to transit-oriented development; that is, development concentrated around bus or train stations that promotes transit and/or passenger rail options.

- A local share of matching funds, not less than 30 percent of the non-federal share of the project costs, is required.

The following four projects received approval for MTF funds:

- Humboldt Industrial Park Transportation Improvement Project - \$1 million (Sponsor - Greater Hazleton Community Area New Development);

- Northeast Cartage Improvement Project - \$300,000 (Sponsor - Northeast Cartage LLC);

- Pittston Streetscape Phases III and IV - \$704,000 (Sponsor - City of Pittston); and;

- South Main Street Gateway - \$600,000 (Sponsor - Wilkes University)

(See article on Page 4 for further details on the Wilkes Gateway project).

## 2015 State Rail-Highway Grade Crossing Safety Program

The State Rail-Highway Grade Crossing Safety Program was developed via the project selection process that is consistent with the Grade Crossing Manual (Pub 371) and the 2015 Transportation Program Financial Guidance.

The program will be managed as a statewide program according to the Memorandum of Understanding for the 2015-2018 STIP revisions.

On October 1st, PennDOT submitted an E

-STIP request to the Federal Highway Administration to add the list of projects receiving funding under this program to the statewide TIP.

The following two Luzerne County projects were funded under this program:

**Pittston/Dupont Corridor:** Existing antiquated flashing lights and gates will be replaced with new flashing lights and gates at three crossings in Dupont Borough. Operated by the Delaware & Hud-

son Railroad, the project amount is \$480,000.

**Middleburgh Road:** Existing antiquated flashing lights and gates will be replaced with new lights and gates at the grade crossing at Middleburgh Road in Dennison Township. The site is adjacent to the Delaware & Lehigh Trail. The operator is Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad Company and the amount allotted for the project is \$150,000.

## Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport Receives Funds For Taxiway B Extension

The Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport recently received \$4.12 million from the Department of Transportation for a taxiway extension project.

The extension of Taxiway B, a path connecting the runway with the airport facilities, has been on the airport's Long Range Plan for many years. The project will

help save fuel, and promote safety. In announcing the funding grant, U.S. Senator Bob Casey said, "Safe, reliable transportation is critical to Northeastern Pennsylvania's economy. Extending this runway will help keep the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport an attractive location for flights from across the country."

U.S. Congressman Matt Cartwright announced the grant in a separate press release stating that the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport serves as an economic gateway for Northeastern Pennsylvania and the taxiway extension will help improve the airport's facilities and passenger service.



*Overview of Airport Layout*

# PennDOT Announces Green Light-Go Traffic Signal Program

The Green Light-Go Traffic Signal Program is designed to improve safety and mobility by reducing traffic congestion and improving traffic flow on state roadways with existing traffic signals. This is a Signal Partnership Program which contains two elements - a Local Grant Element and a PennDOT Project Element.

The Local Grant Element is designated for corridors with an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) of less than 10,000, funded by Act 89 of 2013, while the PennDOT Project Element is designated for Critical Corridors - those corridors with an AADT greater than 10,000 and/or traffic signals at the end of a Limited Access Ramp.

A fifty percent local match is required. There are several acceptable forms of providing the local match including the following:

- Municipal General Funds;
- Liquid Fuels Funds;
- Pennsylvania Infrastructure Bank Loan;

- Municipal Private Loans;
- Developer Contributions;
- Act 209 (Transportation Impact Fees);
- In-Kind Services; and
- Act 89 Funding (Title 75, County \$5 Fee)

Projects eligible for the program are replacement of incandescent bulbs with LED traffic signal modules, and the upgrade from an earlier generation to a new-



er generation of LED traffic signal modules. Street lighting upgrades are considered only for lights on traffic signal structural supports.

Applications will be evaluated based on how they improve safety and mobility and reduce congestion and greenhouse gases, whether they support the regional transportation system and are cost effective, the amount of local match funds available, the quality of a municipality's Operations & Maintenance of the signal network, and whether the projects meet the goals and priorities of the local PennDOT District and MPO planning partners.

A map showing the traffic signals in Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties can be found by going to the PennDOT web site, clicking on the "Green Light Go" icon at the bottom of the page (left side), and then clicking on "Traffic Signal Corridor Identification List" under "Resources" (right side) or go to the following link:

<http://www.dot.state.pa.us/Portal%20Information/Traffic%20Signal%20Portal/FUNDGLG.html>

# Student Volunteers Help Maintain Back Mountain Trail

Every August, freshmen students from Misericordia University, as part of their New Student Orientation weekend, participate in community service projects. For the past several years, the students have contributed to the maintenance work on the Back Mountain Trail. (BMT)

On August 23rd, two groups of 40 students were bussed from the university to the



BMT and were divided into three groups to deal with 3 types of maintenance work.

One group was assigned to cut down an invasive plant, Japanese Knotwood, which grows all along the trail.

Another group dug out drainage ditches, removing sediment and leaves to keep the water that flows down the hillsides from crossing the trail, and eroding its surface.

The third group was responsible for installing a bench that was donated in memory of a loved one. All of the benches along the trail have been donated and have been installed by volunteers.

The students were very enthusiastic about the community service work they performed, and spent about three hours at the trail on a rainy day.







**LACKAWANNA/LUZERNE METROPOLITAN  
PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

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## Safety the Primary Objective of Wilkes' Gateway Project

In recent years, Wilkes University has extended its campus in downtown Wilkes-Barre onto S. Main Street. The former high-rise at 10 E. South has been converted into a dormitory, and the former Call Center on the corner of S. Main and South Streets has been converted into the Jay S. Sidhu Business School. With the recent purchase of the Bartikowsky building, Wilkes has created a cluster of student activity focal points in this part of campus.

In order to provide a safe and welcoming route for students to move from the dorms at 10 East South St, the parking garage behind it, the Sidhu School of Business and the offices and classrooms that will occupy the Bartikowsky Building to the main part of campus, the university will use the \$600,000 of Multi-Modal funds they received to expand the current walkway (seen on page 2), and remove a portion of the Bartikowsky Building to eliminate a potentially dangerous blind spot. Better lighting and other aesthetic amenities such as trees and greenery will also be added. When completed, the walkway will extend from

S. Main Street, pass through the area near Weckesser Hall, cross S. Franklin St. and end at the courtyard area behind Stark Learning Center

The complete project will also include sidewalk replacements in front of the Sidhu Business School and Bartikowsky Buildings, as well as pedestrian crossings on S. Main and S. Franklin Streets. How-

ever, additional funding is needed to complete this phase of the project.

The TAP funds the university received will be used to install light posts along S. Franklin Street from E. Northampton St. to Ross Street. The lights will match the design of the existing ones in the downtown area.

The enhanced pedestrian amenities, sidewalk replacements, and facade improvements on the Sidhu and Bartikowsky buildings will act as incentives for new investments in this part of the City. If people feel safe walking around an area, the potential for private investment increases, thus expanding the tax base. The Gateway and Lighting projects have the strong support of Wilkes-Barre City as well as other downtown business alliances.

The project is shovel-ready. Construction will begin in the spring of 2015, and be completed by the time students return to school at the end of summer.



*Artist's Rendering of Proposed Gateway Project*