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Proposed Improvements and Public Comment Period Announced for I-81 Reconstruction Project from Avoca to Scranton

PennDOT Releases Project Plans In-Person and Online for the State Route 81, Section D46, Interstate 81 Reconstruction Project from Avoca to Scranton in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties

Dunmore, PA - The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), District 4-0, will present preliminary plans to the public for the Interstate 81 (I-81) Reconstruction Project at an plans display meeting on February 15, 2023, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Dunmore Elementary Center gym at 300 W. Warren Street in Dunmore. Attendees can learn about the planned improvements to roadway surfaces, structures, interchanges, and future traffic flow on the seven-mile stretch of I-81 between Exit 178 in Avoca and Exit 185 in Scranton. The public is invited to submit their feedback and questions at the meeting, by mail or online throughout the comment period, which extends from February 15 to March 15, 2023.

PennDOT will deliver a formal presentation and host a question-and-answer session during the meeting at 6 p.m. An informational video illustrating the final condition of the highway will also be available. During the comment period, digital copies of the project plans, the project video, and a comment form will be available for the public to view on the project webpage, which can be found on the PennDOT District 4-0 website at <https://www.penndot.gov/RegionalOffices/district-4/PublicMeetings/Pages/default.aspx>. Click on the Lackawanna County box, then choose the tile marked "SR 81 (Interstate 81) Section D46 (Avoca to Scranton) Reconstruction Project".

The project area begins at the northern end of the existing Avoca Interchange (Exit 178) and includes the Moosic Interchange (Exit 180), Davis Street Interchange (Exit 182), and River Street and President Biden Expressway Interchange (Exit 184 and 185).

"Our main goal is to reduce the frequency of crashes and traffic congestion along this corridor," said Rich Roman, District Executive for PennDOT District 4-0. "We're planning to widen the highway from two lanes to three lanes and improve the location of exits, as well as correct issues with roadway curves and lanes. These upgrades will really change the driving experience once the project is complete."

The proposed design calls for the removal of left-hand exits and standardizes roadway curves and lane widths. The new roadway will widen into the existing median and, upon completion, will include three 12-foot travel lanes and two 12-foot shoulders in both directions. Traffic along the new highway should flow freely based on predicted vehicle usage data for the year 2055 (or about twenty years post-construction) developed for traffic studies.

PennDOT also studied various environmental and historic factors while developing the preliminary roadway designs. These factors included (but are not limited to) socio-economic features, waterways

and wetlands, historic properties, and waste concerns. Overall, the design avoids impacts to most of the identified environmental and historic resources in the project area.

The I-81 Reconstruction Project (Avoca to Scranton) is just one of six highway improvement projects in the region that are advancing through design or construction under the direction of PennDOT and/or the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission. In-depth planning and design work for the SR81 D46 project is still underway and will continue through the end of 2027.

“Due to the complex nature of the project, construction isn’t expected to start until at least Spring 2028,” Roman said. During construction, PennDOT will maintain two lanes of traffic in both directions.

In total, the planned improvements are estimated at \$500 million.

The project documents can be made available in alternative languages or formats if requested. If you need translation/interpretation services, have special needs or concerns that require individual attention, or would like to submit a general question or comment, please contact the project team at I81Reconstruction@aecom.com.

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Motorists can check conditions on major roadway miles by visiting www.511PA.com. 511PA, which is free and available 24 hours a day, provides traffic delay warnings, weather forecasts, traffic speed information, and access to more than 1,000 traffic cameras.

511PA is also available through a smartphone application for iPhone and Android devices, by calling 5-1-1, or by following regional Twitter alerts accessible on the 511PA website.

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Information about infrastructure in District 4, including completed work and significant projects, is available at www.penndot.gov/D4Results.

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