

# **LEHIGH VALLEY HIGHWAY AND BRIDGE NEEDS**

**June 3, 2010  
DeSales University  
Center Valley, PA**

**Presented by:  
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Good afternoon. My name is Joe Gurinko and I am the Chief Transportation Planner for the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, the regional planning agency for Lehigh and Northampton counties. Today I am here on behalf of the Planning Commission and the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS), the metropolitan planning organization for Lehigh and Northampton counties. LVTS has representatives from Lehigh County, Northampton County, the cities of Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton, the LVPC, the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA), the Lehigh-Northampton Airport Authority, and PennDOT. LVTS is responsible for setting transportation priorities for the region. My purpose is to give you an overview of the highway and bridge needs for the region. You've already heard from Armand Greco, Executive Director for LANTA, on the Lehigh Valley's transit needs.

Through LVTS, we work closely with the counties of Lehigh and Northampton, PennDOT and the Lehigh Valley's 62 municipalities in developing the program of projects. Projects are prioritized using investment policies contained in the long range transportation plan. That plan is consistent and coordinated with the regional comprehensive plan, which covers a wide range of topics in addition to transportation, including land use, natural resource protection, agricultural preservation and economic development.

The Lehigh Valley is now going through a period of extraordinary population growth due to migration from New Jersey and, to a lesser degree, Philadelphia. From 1990 to 2000, the Lehigh Valley grew by 7.6%. According to 2009 U.S. Census estimates, the Lehigh Valley has grown by 10.9% since 2000. LVPC forecasts predict the Lehigh Valley will be home to nearly 650,000 by 2010. Increased congestion and

safety problems are a byproduct of that growth. We are trying to resolve traffic problems in our plan. But, just as important, we are trying to use elements of our transportation plan to renew the region's three cities. These are just some of the issues that help define our transportation needs.

Recently, two reports were released that made an assessment of the Commonwealth's transportation needs at the state level. The Pennsylvania State Transportation Advisory Committee's *Transportation Funding Study* and the American Society of Civil Engineers' *2010 Report Card for Pennsylvania Infrastructure* both documented significant investments that must be made in order to protect the State's transportation network. The situation in the Lehigh Valley parallels the story in those documents. Working closely with PennDOT to develop future revenues and information for the maintenance of highways and bridges, I have attached a handout which attempts to quantify highway and bridge needs over the next twenty years and compare that to anticipated revenues. The handout separates highway projects by the problem they fix, i.e. maintenance, mobility, safety or transportation enhancement (which often address non-motorized transportation issues).

Mike Rebert, District 5 Executive for PennDOT, will present details of highway and bridge maintenance in the six-county area of District 5 so I'll leave the details to him. However, even with local (non-state) network needs that I am sure are underestimated, more than \$1.64 billion will be needed to address highway and bridge maintenance needs in Lehigh and Northampton counties over the next 20 years. Maintenance alone exhausts the \$1.535 billion expected in transportation funding to the Lehigh Valley over that time period. Unfortunately, our needs go well beyond maintenance.

We identify more than \$1.2 billion in mobility projects in the Lehigh Valley. This list includes the Lehigh Valley's "Main Street," US Rt. 22. In 2001 the LVPC studied the long term needs for the Rt. 22 corridor and concluded that widening the corridor was necessary to meet future safety, mobility and maintenance needs. Currently, the highest priority section from Airport Road to 15<sup>th</sup> Street was the subject of downscoping efforts by PennDOT because the funding for the original scope of the project is just not available. As you know, funding unavailability does not make the need go away; it just makes the project more expensive due to the impacts of inflation. So this portion of Rt. 22 will now be segmented into 3 phases. The remainder of Rt. 22 from Rt. 33 to I-78 must still be addressed at a rough cost of \$900 million in 2010 dollars. Not included in the overall shortfall of transportation dollars are the 11 corridors listed at the bottom of the handout. These corridors have been identified through the planning process as having insufficient capacity at some point over the next 20 years. However, since these corridors must undergo additional study, we cannot estimate the improvement costs at this time.

Safety is a high priority for the region and \$171 million worth of needs have been identified for the 20 year period. Lehigh Valley fatality rates have been trending downward since 2005 and that is one trend that we want to see continued. Safety needs range from new interchange configurations down to low cost improvements such as improving signage and cutting back foliage to increase sight distance. These projects have small costs but save lives. The transportation enhancement, or non-motorized, projects often have a safety component attached to them, whether it be providing crosswalks at busy intersections, providing trails that are separate from streets or providing sidewalks in areas that are used by schoolchildren.

The sum of the highway and bridge needs I described is \$3 billion. Once the expected revenue over the 20 year time frame is subtracted out, we are left with an approximate shortfall of more than \$1.5 billion. Like all other areas in the Commonwealth, the Lehigh Valley has a much longer list of transportation needs than financial resources. LVTS will continue working closely with PennDOT to prioritize and resolve the most critical Lehigh Valley transportation problems. However, the funding gap is too wide to even maintain the status quo. Additional sources of revenue must be found in order to keep the Commonwealth economically viable.

**COMPARISON OF LEHIGH VALLEY HIGHWAY AND BRIDGE NEEDS AND ESTIMATED FUNDING: 2011 TO 2030**

<b>LEHIGH VALLEY HIGHWAY NEEDS</b>	Estimated 2011 to	
Needs	2030 Costs (2010 \$s)	Comments
<b>Maintenance</b>	\$ 359,449,000	
TIP Maintenance projects	\$ 17,164,000	
State identified needs	\$ 331,600,000	Source: PennDOT
Local identified needs	\$ 10,685,000	Source: ARRA projects
<b>Mobility (see congested corridors box at bottom of page)</b>	\$ 1,214,390,000	
TIP Mobility Projects	\$ 102,512,000	8 projects in the draft TIP
Rt. 22 Phase II Completion	\$ 40,278,000	2015
Rt. 22 Section 400 Widening	\$ 150,000,000	
Rt. 22 Tomorrow Remainder	\$ 900,000,000	(2001 cost estimate-Section 400 cost)*10 yrs inflation @ 4%/year
ITS Deployment	\$ 16,000,000	\$1,000,000/year
Freeway Service Patrol	\$ 5,600,000	\$350,000/year
<b>Safety</b>	\$ 171,335,000	
TIP Safety Projects	\$ 84,105,000	13 projects in the draft TIP
Low Cost Safety Improvements	\$ 8,000,000	Assume \$500,000/year
Mauch Chunk Road	\$ 12,000,000	
Bath Connector	\$ 2,550,000	
Bike/Ped Safety Program	\$ 4,000,000	
Safety engineering improvements	\$ 60,680,000	LV HSIP & Rail Xing \$s 4%/year growth
<b>Transportation Enhancements</b>	\$ 28,435,000	
TIP TE Projects	\$ 5,217,000	
LRTP TE Projects	\$ 23,218,000	4%/year growth
<b>TOTAL COST OF HIGHWAY NEEDS*</b>	\$ 1,773,609,000	
<b>ESTIMATE OF HIGHWAY FUNDING</b>	\$ 944,818,000	53.3% of need
<b>20 YEAR SHORTFALL</b>	\$ (828,791,000)	

<b>LEHIGH VALLEY BRIDGE NEEDS</b>	Estimated 2011 to	
Needs	2030 Costs (2010 \$s)	Comments
TIP Bridge Projects	\$ 116,302,000	
State Bridge Needs	\$ 1,049,100,000	Source: PennDOT
Local Bridge Needs	\$ 120,175,000	Addresses only current structurally deficient bridges
<b>TOTAL COST OF BRIDGE NEEDS</b>	\$ 1,285,577,000	
<b>ESTIMATE OF BRIDGE FUNDING</b>	\$ 590,124,000	45.9% of need
<b>20 YEAR SHORTFALL</b>	\$ (695,453,000)	

**TOTAL HIGHWAY/BRIDGE 20 YEAR SHORTFALL \$ (1,524,244,000)**

**\*CONGESTED CORRIDORS** - The Lehigh Valley long range transportation plan identifies 13 corridors as being congested and in need of further study. 2 of those corridors have been studied and improvements identified. The remaining 11 corridors are in need of improvements yet to be determined. These 11 corridors have a demonstrated need for improvement but are not included in the "Highway Needs" section above.

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| 1. I-78 from Rt. 22 to Rt. 100                         | 7. Rt. 378 from Seidersville Rd. to Center Valley Parkway                           |
| 2. I-78 from Rt. 309 to Rt. 33                         | 8. Rt. 100 from Lowhill Twp. Line to Schantz Rd.                                    |
| 3. Rt. 309 from Shankweilers Rd. to Walbert Ave.       | 9. American Prkwy/S.4th St./Basin St. from Gordon St. to I-78                       |
| 4. Lehigh St./E. Harrison St. from 31st St. to 5th St. | 10. Broadway/E. 4th St. from Susquehanna St. to Fillmore St.                        |
| 5. 25th St. from Newburg Rd. to Freemansburg Ave.      | 11. Morgan Hill Rd./Old Philadelphia Rd./St. John St./Rt. 611 from I-78 to Park Rd. |
| 6. Rt. 191 from Rt. 22 to Newburg Rd.                  |   |