



PA House Transportation Policy Committee Hearing dated 05/27/10

Lebanon County Metropolitan Planning Organization Testimony provided by Kristopher D. Troup, Director Lebanon County Planning Department and Edward Brensinger, Township Supervisor and Road Master for North Lebanon Township

- 1. Background Information on the Lebanon County Planning Department (LCPD) – Mr. Troup** – We are a planning department, not a planning commission; consequently, we do many things. In addition to general community planning activities, we provide funding and technical assistance to local municipalities related to land use plans and ordinances; we handle zoning, subdivision, land development, access management and environmental / stormwater approvals for municipalities, via the Lebanon County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance; we review and approve building permits and on-lot sewage disposal systems; we are the certified code enforcement officers for construction standards for residential dwellings; and we serve as the staff agency for the Lebanon County Metropolitan Planning Organization (LEBCO MPO).
- 2. Challenges – Mr. Troup** – Lebanon County faces a number of current and future challenges:
 - Revitalizing our communities
 - Preserving open space, agricultural, natural and cultural resources
 - Accommodating growth and redevelopment/development where sustainable and appropriate
 - Creating more jobs with family-sustaining wages and benefits
 - Maintaining the transportation system and keeping our key transportation corridors operating safely and efficiently.

Lebanon County Metropolitan Planning Organization (LEBCO MPO)

VISION: *The transportation system of Lebanon County will safely, efficiently and effectively serve the mobility, access and travel needs of residents, businesses and visitors.*

KEY GOALS & POLICY STATEMENTS:

Planning Approach:

- ✓ *Provide a safe, efficient, interconnected and accessible transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.*
- ✓ *Coordinate transportation improvements with land use, infrastructure and other community development decisions.*
- ✓ *Protect and enhance the environment; support energy conservation; improve the quality of life; and encourage a healthy lifestyle.*
- ✓ *Promote community and neighborhood livability.*

Funding Concepts:

- ✓ *Target transportation investments for maximum local and regional benefit.*
- ✓ *Maintain and improve the existing transportation system ... roads, bridges, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, etc.*
- ✓ *Focus on affordable and sensible operational improvements in key corridors and spot locations.*
- ✓ *Encourage local and private financial support to help to expedite project delivery.*

3. Current Transportation System and Its Condition – Mr. Troup:

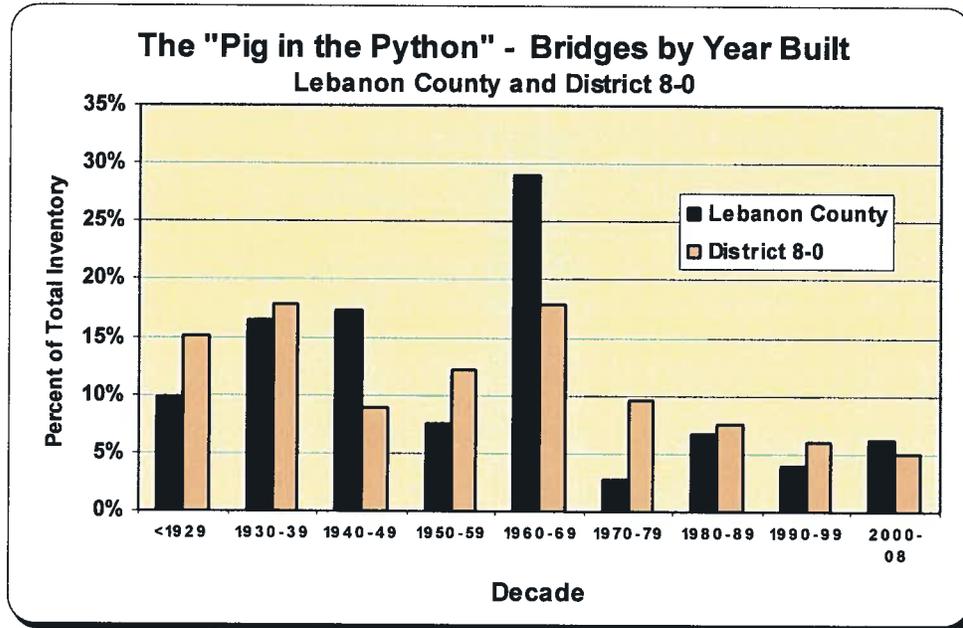
The Lebanon County transportation system consists of roads, bridges, public transit, a rail freight line, airports and bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

LEBANON COUNTY TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AT A GLANCE

Mode	Highlights
Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 US Interstates (I-81, I-78, I-76 (PA Turnpike)) • 3 US Highways (US 22, US 322, US 422) • 422 miles of state-owned roads • 743 miles of locally-owned roads
Bridges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 224 state-owned bridges greater than eight feet in length • 81 municipal and county bridges greater than 20 feet in length • Unknown number of short-span bridges, box culverts, etc. on state and municipal roads
Transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lebanon Transit (formerly COLT) operates local fixed route and demand-responsive service • Capitol Trailways operates fixed route intercity service
Freight Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norfolk Southern's Harrisburg Line parallels US 422
Aviation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 privately-owned public use airports (Air/Deck, Farmer's Pride, Buffalo Springs and Reigle) • 1 privately-owned airport – Lebanon Valley Aviation or Millard Airport • Muir Field at Fort Indiantown Gap
Non-Motorized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicycle-Pedestrian-Equestrian Rail Trail from Lebanon-Lancaster border to the City of Lebanon • The Appalachian Trail and the Horse Shoe Trail run through Lebanon County • Phase 1 of the South Lebanon Township Trail

The below figure demonstrates that most of the county's state-owned bridges were constructed during the Interstate-era of the 1960s, including the bridges of I-78 and I-81. The figure shows a peak during the 1960s, with smaller peaks during the 1930s and 40s. This distribution of bridge ages in Lebanon County will have implications in coming years as the bridges built during the Interstate Era near the end of their useful design life and will need to be rehabilitated or reconstructed altogether.

Figure 1 – Bridge Inventory by Year Built



Source: PennDOT District 8-0, August 2009

Table 8-1 below provides more detail on the extent of the county's substandard, state-owned bridges.

**Table 8-1 Highway Bridges on the State System > 8 Feet
District 8-0 Counties (including Lebanon)**

County	# of Bridges	Structurally Deficient		Functionally Obsolete		Posted	Closed
		#	%	#	%		
Adams	384	88	22.9	52	13.5	6	3
Cumberland	372	62	16.6	67	18.0	2	2
Dauphin	446	62	13.9	64	14.3	5	1
Franklin	325	72	22.1	45	13.8	5	1
Lancaster	738	167	22.6	110	14.9	19	2
Lebanon	224	38	16.9	32	14.2	3	0
Perry	274	73	26.6	35	12.8	10	0
York	657	146	22.2	100	15.2	18	1
District 8-0	3,420	708	20.7	505	14.8	68	10

Source: PennDOT District 8-0, August 2009

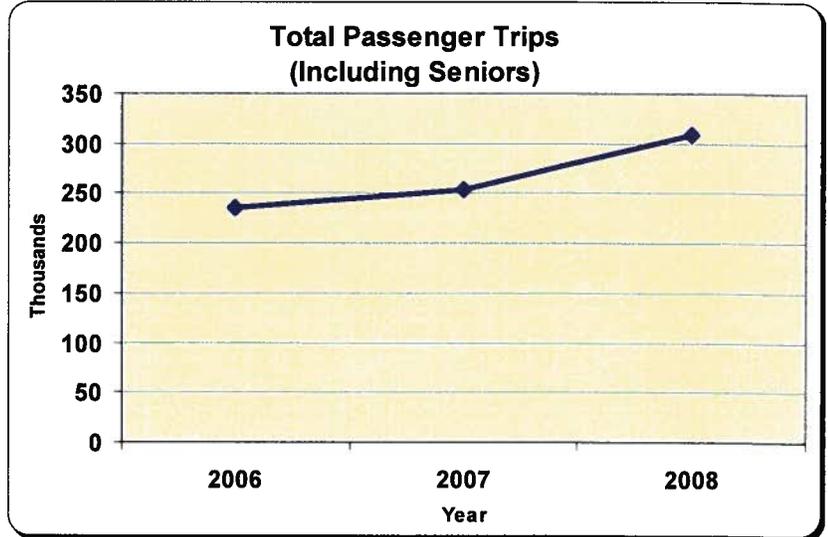
All of the 38 state-owned structurally deficient bridges in Lebanon County were constructed before 1970, as shown in the accompanying graphic.

Public Transportation

Lebanon County is served by two transit providers: Lebanon Transit (formerly County of Lebanon Transit (COLT) bus system and Capitol Trailways. COLT (www.coltbus.org) provides local services and offers connections to other comparable service providers in the region. Capitol Trailways (www.capitoltrailways.com) is a provider of intercity services to destinations such as Reading, Washington, DC and New York City.

- Lebanon Transit operates sixteen fixed route bus routes that serve nineteen of the twenty-six Lebanon County municipalities. Its fleet comprises 10 vehicles for its fixed-route service and 14 vehicles for its demand response services. Lebanon Transit's primary transfer facility is located at 7th and Willow Streets in downtown Lebanon. **The vast majority of the fixed route fleet is very much beyond its useful life and needs to be replaced.**
- Lebanon Transit is managed by a 9-member Board of Directors and served by 50 full-time and 4 part-time staff (including drivers).
- If fully implemented, Act 44 of 2007 will stabilize operating funding for local public transportation systems such as Lebanon Transit by providing an additional \$250 million for operations, statewide. Capital needs still exceed funding availability.

Figure 8-4 Lebanon Transit Total Passenger Trips



Source: PennDOT Bureau of Public Transportation, September 2009

- **Between 2007 and today, Lebanon Transit's ridership has increased by just over 25%.**
- Corridor 2 ... Looking to the future for mass transit in our region, a feasibility study was completed in 2009 that looked at the Route 422/322/83 corridor between Harrisburg, Hershey and Lebanon. This study showed that premium bus service from Harrisburg through Hershey to Lebanon should start as soon as possible, and due to the increase in highway congestion, would be feasible for 10-12 years. Because of the anticipated increases in congestion, the study also showed that premium bus passengers should be converted to commuter rail passengers in the future. At this time we are attempting to establish the premium bus service in the corridor, and anticipate that it will be operational in 18 months. Federal, state, local ad/or private funds will be needed to cover the operating costs for this service.

Aviation

- Table 8-2 below provides a summary overview of the county's airports. The relatively high number of based airplanes, particularly at Reigle, demonstrates the importance of the airports and their value to its many users. Working with local municipalities on **Airport Hazard Zoning (AHZ)** will be a priority for the county in the coming years.

Table 8-2 Airport Facilities in Lebanon County

Airport	Location	Based Airplanes (Single/Multi- Engine)	Runway Length (ft.)	Runway Surface
Deck	Jackson Township	35/2	3,800	Asphalt
Farmer's Pride	Fredericksburg/Bethel Township	41/0	3,410	Turf
Keller Brothers	Schaefferstown/Heidelberg Township		2,700	Turf
Reigle	South Londonderry Township	65/1	1,950	Asphalt
Muir Field	Ft. Indiantown Gap/Union Township		3,967	Asphalt

Source: PennDOT BOA, September 2009

- 4. The Resources Required to Maintain the State Transportation System – Mr. Troup** - The LEBCO MPO would have received about \$13 million to \$14 million per federal fiscal year (including Act 44 Funds) for the implementation of road and bridge projects included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Without Act 44 Funds, that number drops to about \$10 million. We have a tremendous backlog of state bridges that need to be rehabilitated or replaced and we have many state routes that need to be resurfaced. We estimate that if we had full Act 44 funding and this funding was indexed to inflation, over the next ten years we could dramatically improve our state roads and bridges, and we could enhance the system with safety and operational improvements too. For example, right now we have over 20 bridge rehabilitation and replacement projects listed on our new TIP; funding needs for these bridge projects alone will follow us for the next 6 to 8 years, thereby not allowing us to focus on other bridge needs or bridge emergencies.

But what about all of the structures (bridges under 8 feet, box culverts, etc.) that do not get routinely inspected on the state system? None of us have a clear picture on these needs over time, which makes us believe that the May 2010 STC/TAC Transportation Funding Study very much understates the overall funding gap.

Inflation ... PennDOT recently did an analysis for the LEBCO MPO, and what it shows is that in FFY 2003 we had purchasing power of \$5.791 million in state and federal funds for road and bridge projects. In FFY 2011, due to inflation and stagnating resources, we will have only \$5.363 million in purchasing power. We're losing ground!

Because of the Act 44 problems we face, the LEBCO MPO will not be able to do the following projects:

- Safety Improvement – sinkhole repairs on US Route 422 just east of Palmyra (\$1.0 million)
- Resurfacing – PA Route 934 from Palmyra/Bellgrove Road to Jonestown Road (\$1.7 million)
- Resurfacing – PA Route 419 from State Drive to PA Route 897 (\$2.5 million)
- Resurfacing – PA Route 934 from US Route 422 to Palmyra/Bellgrove Road (\$1.8 million)
- Resurfacing – over \$2.0 million for portions of PA Route 241, PA Route 443, ELCO Drive, Hopeland Road, Tunnel Hill Road and Gravel Hill Road
- Replacing the Ono Road Bridge (SR 4007) over Swatara Creek in East Hanover Township for \$1.2 million
- Replacing the Lickdale Road Bridge (SR 1020) over Bethel Run in Swatara Township for \$800,000
- Replacing the local South Spruce Street Bridge in Annville Township for \$1.8 million
- Replacing the North Lincoln Avenue Bridge in the City of Lebanon for \$1.5 million

The LEBCO MPO strongly believes that our priorities must be to maintain what we have and then to focus on operational and safety improvements to the existing system. However, with a diminished state funding stream, we will never be able to adequately address congestion in our key transportation corridors, operational and safety improvements system-wide and/or our transit operating and capital costs.

5. **The Resources Required to Maintain the Local Transportation System – Mr. Brensinger** – The data collection and analysis that was done recently for the LEBCO MPO’s transportation profile clearly indicates a growing trend ... “The greatest change in daily vehicle miles of travel (DVMT) in Lebanon County has occurred on locally-owned roadways. Average DVMT on municipal roads has grown by over 36% between 2003 and 2009. On all other roads in Lebanon County, the travel demand has remained relatively flat.”

Again, we know very little about local bridge needs for structures under 20 feet, so the STC/TAC report again very much understates the local bridge problem.

Clearly, state Liquid Fuels Funds to counties, cities, boroughs and townships has fallen way behind what should be considered “their fair share”. In 1955 when the state Liquid Fuels Fund started, township got about 20% of the funding. Today, townships get 14.6% of the pie.

North Lebanon Township has been trying to set aside money from its annual Liquid Fuels allocation in order to upgrade Kochenderfer Road, which is just under 1 mile in length. This area has seen considerable development over the past 20 years and now requires improvements such as widening, reclamation, stormwater upgrades, and paving at a projected cost of \$375,000. Our annual LFF allocation is \$264,486 and we have a total of 61 road miles (local) that we must maintain. This maintenance includes winter maintenance, traffic control devices (signs, etc), stormwater structures, and routine road maintenance such as crack sealing, pothole repair, and overlay projects. Thus when we have large projects such as Kochenderfer Road, it is a struggle to be able to fund the improvements. In the interim, the road continues to deteriorate causing problems for the traveling public.

These projects can easily be attributed to development, commercial or residential, where according to the Pa Municipalities Planning Code MPC), local governments are unable to burden the developer with the cost of these improvements. Based on previous testimony, Lebanon County has seen an increase in traffic of 36% on local streets.

This increased traffic has also placed safety and operational concerns at many intersections that would warrant traffic signals. These traffic signals are the responsibility of the municipality in which they are located with no shared funding by the State. This is true even if both roads of the intersection are State owned or one is state owned and one is owned by the municipality. Again, we are unable to burden the developer with this improvement because of the Pa MPC regulations. Thus traffic signals which can carry a price tag of \$300,000 to as high as \$1.0 million (if geometric improvements are also needed) become the burden of a municipality and many go unconstructed because of lack of funding.

In addition, the newly adopted MUTCD requires all municipalities to upgrade their street signs, speed limit signs, etc. to the new retroreflective material from the past engineer grade. Local governments like North Lebanon Township have been working towards compliance over the past few years and now before they even finish with that upgrade the rules are changing for street name signs and they will need to start all over.

6. **In Conclusion – Mr. Troup** – Without stable, predictable and inflation-proof state funding mechanism(s) for transportation improvements, all of us will suffer, as will economic growth and development/redevelopment. The LEBCO MPO supports increasing/indexing the state motor fuel tax, tolling I-95 and other eligible Interstate Highways and removing the PA State Police from the Motor License Fund Budget. If the state motor fuel tax isn't increased and indexed, move to increase the ceiling on the Oil Company Franchise Tax. We support some sort of Marcellus Shale extraction fee or tax to help with state and local

road/bridge repairs in that region of the state. Add a local taxing option to provide an alternative to general fund monies being used locally for public transit must be established. We support more use of public/private partnerships. We encourage the legislature and PennDOT to further explore a vehicle miles traveled (VMT) tax for implementation by a date certain, maybe 2020. And we have to be more creative ... using the design/build option when appropriate; letting more projects be managed by local engineers working on behalf of PennDOT; reshaping demand in critical corridors where operational/capacity adding improvements can not be made; and jointly funding projects with PennDOT County Maintenance Offices.