



PENNSYLVANIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

**TESTIMONY BY
THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS**

**BEFORE THE
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION, HOUSE DEMOCRATIC POLICY,
AND HOUSE REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEES**

**CONCERNING
TRANSPORTATION FUNDING**

**PRESENTED BY
JACK HINES, MANAGER
WEST BRADFORD TOWNSHIP, CHESTER COUNTY**

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Chairman Markosek and members of the House Transportation Committee and the House Democratic and Republican Policy Committees:

Good morning. My name is Jack Hines, manager for West Bradford Township, Chester County. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. With me is David M. Sanko, executive director for the Association.

West Bradford Township is currently completing a project with PennDOT. Due to a detour in our township caused by bridge closings, we designed a new intersection that PennDOT constructed as part of a larger project. This resulted in a greatly enhanced intersection with new signalization that the township will maintain. We currently have a \$2 million project under review by PennDOT that would improve the streetscape and add traffic calming in the village of Marshallton.

Please note that we provided a statewide perspective at the May 27 hearing and would be happy to provide that testimony upon request.

Pennsylvania has more than 117,000 total road miles, with 66 percent, or 77,325 miles, maintained by local government and more than 6,400 municipal bridges. The Association believes that local government is an essential partner with the state in maintaining our transportation system and that local roads, state highways, and mass transit comprise a single transportation network for the Commonwealth's traveling public. As you will see in the following examples from District 6, townships take this partnership to heart and work to ensure the safety and efficiency of all roadways and intersections within their jurisdictions that are essential to the community.

PennDOT District 6

In 2008, municipalities in District 6 spent \$259 million on local roads and bridges, yet only received \$77.2 million in liquid fuels funds.

Lower Southampton Township, Bucks County has been unable to obtain funding for needed improvements to the Brownsville Road (SR 2043) corridor. This project would upgrade Brownsville Road from a roadway that serves primarily vehicular traffic to a roadway that encourages safe multi-modal travel and better serves the adjacent land uses. This road provides access to adjacent residential neighborhoods, retail uses, and the Trevoise Regional Rail station and the proposed project would widen the roadway and add sidewalks, curbed shoulders for bike use, lighting, crosswalks, and pedestrian pushbuttons. This project would cost \$3.1 million and is also supported by Bensalem Township.

The township also is pursuing the Bridgetown Pike project, which originally called for widening Bristol Road at the intersection of Bridgetown Pike. However, this component of the project was dropped and the project reworked due to the cost of obtaining the right of way. This was a very meaningful improvement that would dramatically improve the traffic delays at this location.

The Bristol Road Extension has been a priority project for **New Britain Township, Bucks County**, as well as New Britain and Chalfont Boroughs, as far back as the late 1960s, when it was proposed as part of the Route 202 Bypass. It continues to be vitally needed for the region and would enhance the 202 Parkway project.

New Britain is virtually bisected by Lake Galena and the SEPTA railroad, which provides few choices for motorists traveling northeast-southwest through the community, as most of the local roads funnel towards the heavily congested Route 202 and Route 152 intersections in Chalfont Borough. These routes are completely gridlocked everyday from 7am to 10am and again from 2:30pm to 7pm and during the noon hours, which hampers the township's ability to provide essential emergency services in a timely manner and potentially endangers residents and motorists alike.

The Bristol Road Extension would give the New Britain Police Department direct access to the existing Route 202, the proposed 202 Parkway, and the entire southeastern portion of the municipality, without having to traverse the congestion at the Route 202 and 152 intersections. The Chal-Brit Regional Emergency Medical Services Building is located at the terminus of the proposed extension and, when completed, ambulance and EMT response time to Route 202 and the new Parkway will be significantly reduced, as will response times to Chalfont Borough, New Britain Borough, and the township.

This project will reduce the congestion within the boroughs, benefitting motorists and reducing air pollution in the community caused by the current congestion and would enhance the local network of roadways by providing an additional throughway to ease traffic along Routes 202 and 152. Bristol Road Extension would also permit easier access to the Chalfont SEPTA rail station and provide a direct pedestrian and bicycle route, interconnecting the three municipalities with the nearby SEPTA stations and recreational facilities.

While this project is currently on the DVRPC 2011-14 TIP, there is no funding available for this \$15 million proposal. Rights of way acquisition has been completed and SEPTA is relocating the link siding, simplifying the required work. In addition, the North Wales Water Authority is looking to expand operations by linking into the Forrest Park Water Plant, located at the terminus of the proposed Extension, which would ensure water delivery to over seven municipalities in central Bucks and Montgomery Counties. Coordinated efforts between NWWA and PennDOT would benefit both entities.

Doylestown Township, Bucks County would benefit from having additional funding available for transportation improvements. The township has a project with Delaware Valley College that would benefit the community, but is out of the township's reach. Because of current economic conditions, the township can't get the project added to the TIP. This project is estimated at about \$840,000 and entails the realignment of Farm Lane, widening, safety improvements, and signalization of Lower State Road and Wells Road. The township believes that the anticipated opening of the new 202 Parkway in November 2011 will increase the need for the improvement more than ever since it is expected that Lower State Road will become the new main entrance to the college.

Doylestown wants to see several PennDOT funded projects completed through 2011 that would impact Buckingham Township and Doylestown Borough as well. This includes a significant safety project at Pools Corner and Lower State Road Bridge.

Newtown Township, Bucks County has two projects that would benefit from increased transportation funding. The Newtown/Yardley Road Improvement Project would widen and add pavement markings to provide one through lane in each direction, along with protected left-turn lanes, at the intersection of Newtown-Yardley Road and Terry Drive/Lower Dolington Road. This project would install a traffic signal at the intersection of Newtown-Yardley Road and Friends Lane/Headley Drive, upgrade an existing traffic signal on Newtown-Yardley Road, and add a closed loop system to interconnect traffic signals on Newtown-Yardley Road at Terry Drive/Lower Dolington Road, Friends Lane, and Penns Trail, which would also be connected to the closed loop system along the Newtown Bypass (SR 0332). This project is estimated to cost \$900,000.

Also, Newtown is engineering the Terry Drive Extension project, which includes construction of turn lanes at the Newtown Bypass to allow easier access to and from the Newtown Bypass and Route 95 at the Newtown Business Commons, the heart of Newtown's business district, which employs nearly 14,000 people. This will allow for future growth within the business commons without negatively impacting the surrounding residential neighborhoods and is estimated to cost \$600,000.

Nockamixon Township, Bucks County is a small township in Upper Bucks with a population of 3,500, 38 miles of roadway, and five township bridges. Two of these older bridges are in serious disrepair and must be repaired, replace, or closed in the near future. Closing these bridges would be a major blow to the community, since both are located on roads that are alternate bus routes for the local schools and would hinder emergency vehicle access to certain portions of the township. The cost to replace these bridges is \$500,000 to \$1 million for both and \$200,000 each to blast clean and paint the existing structures. This is more than a small township like Nockamixon can afford, which only received \$135,700 in liquid fuels funds in 2008.

A large part of Nockamixon's road improvement and maintenance projects are funded by the liquid fuels allocation, which has decreased over the last several years. To stay within their budget, the township has increased the length of time between applications of tar and chip, going from a five to a seven-year rotating schedule and now uses a 3 to 1 aggregate to salt mixture rather than 100 percent salt.

The township has extended the life of its bridges by lowering the weight limit and having the township's 3-man road department reinforce the bridges with additional supports.

Solebury Township, Bucks County has two projects that they have been trying to fund for years. The SR202/SR179 intersection needs improvements and the township has design plans for a roundabout. PennDOT acknowledges that improvement is needed and that the roundabout may be the best approach. This project would cost \$10 million.

The township needs to replace a bridge on a heavily used local road. The township has lowered the weight limit to 3 tons and has completed preliminary engineering work. The expected cost for replacement is \$700,000 and would include the replacement of a concrete box culvert that is eight feet wide, five feet tall, and 45 feet long.

East Vincent Township, Chester County has several projects that are in need of funding. Adding pedestrian and handicap access at Route 724, realigning Bridge Street, and adding a streetlight at Stony Run, which includes streetscape and stormwater management, is estimated to cost \$3.5 million. A bridge replacement on Seven Stars Road would cost \$750,000; culvert replacement and shoulder improvements on Quarry Road would cost \$350,000; traffic calming on Pughtown Road would cost \$500,000; and improved drainage on Park Road would cost \$200,000. East Vincent only received \$166,600 in liquid fuels funds 2008.

Lower Oxford Township, Chester County has a project that is currently underfunded. Scott's Hyponex has a facility in the township located on both sides of Reedville Road (T318) at Baltimore Pike (SR3026) that carries 200 tractor trailers per day at the peak of composting season. This causes the road to become virtually impassible and the dirt and mud cause driving conditions to become hazardous.

The township plans to relocate Reedville Road about 1,800 feet at a cost of \$400,000. This project cost is equal to five years worth of liquid fuels allocations for the township, which cannot afford to neglect its other roads for that long. The community would benefit from this project, which would make this intersection much safer.

Newlin Township, Chester County has under \$60,000 in its liquid fuels budget and following the past winter, needed road repairs will use a large chunk of these funds. The township has two projects on one township road that will drain most of its funds.

The first project involves repairing a small bridge with a wooden deck covered with layers of asphalt. The township has no knowledge of when this bridge was built. This \$20,000 project would include removal of the asphalt and wooden deck and replacement with a 20 foot cantilevered concrete deck with sidewalls.

The township's other project is the replacement of a rusted corrugated metal pipe that carries water from a nearby spring with a concrete pipe. This project will cost \$15,000.

Penn Township, Chester County has a bridge that is closed and needs replaced on Sunnyside Road. The township is attempting to raise money for this project.

Warwick Township, Chester County sees a need for improved snow and ice removal on state roads in their community. The township stepped in and took care of several state roads during storms that took place during this past winter, but received no reimbursement from the state. While the township believes this was an important step to take, this assistance strained the township's budget.

Edgmont Township, Delaware County has a very old intersection that consists of two state roadways that intersect at an awkward angle and cause great safety concerns, particularly for larger vehicles. Edgmont has obtained the land adjacent to the intersection for creation of a new roadbed and realignment of the intersection to a 90 degree angle. The project would also address a stormwater issue that is causing severe erosion to township property. Edgmont has permission from PennDOT to complete the realignment, but only has enough funding to engineer the project. Actual construction is estimated to cost \$350,000 and the township does not have this amount available.

Lower Providence Township, Montgomery County and its surrounding neighbors have grown steadily in population and traffic flow. While this is positive for the region, it makes additional funding necessary to maintain the transportation infrastructure.

Development in the Valley Forge Corporate Center has benefitted the township and its residents and Lower Providence is working to retain the businesses currently located at this park, as well as to attract new development. This involves improving local road conditions for businesses and their employees, however, township revenues have fallen recently, leaving little funding available for these vital improvements.

The park would greatly benefit from the following projects to state roadways that carry incoming traffic from Route 422 to the many communities surrounding Lower Providence: improving Adams Avenue Connector and Egypt Road at a cost of \$5.26 million; widening Trooper Roadway and installing and modernizing the traffic signals at five intersections along this road at a cost of \$10.1 million, which would also assist West Norriton Township; and widening Audubon Road and installing and modernizing traffic signals at two intersections at a cost of \$5.2 million.

Towamencin Township, Montgomery County has several important projects that it has been attempting to fund. These include elimination of the chokepoint on Forty Foot Road, improvements to the Valley Forge Road and Sumneytown Pike intersection, and the Bustard Road Bridge replacement. Towamencin received about \$370,000 in liquid fuels funds in 2008.

In order to reduce congestion, improve safety, and move traffic more efficiently along Forty Foot Road, it is necessary to widen the section of this road between Morgandale Drive and Tomlinson Road. In this section, the current road goes from five lanes down to three lanes, then back to five lanes again at Tomlinson Road. This currently requires traffic traveling in both directions to merge down to one lane for about 1100 feet. Eliminating this "chokepoint" would cost about \$500,000.

The township is seeking support for the intersection improvement project of Valley Forge Road (SR 0363) and Sumneytown Pike (County Highway) that is located in Towamencin and Upper Gwynedd Townships in Montgomery County. This is considered a local match project between Towamencin, the county, and PennDOT. Towamencin is responsible for engineering the project, acquiring the rights of way and easements, as well as any utility relocations within the township's capabilities. Montgomery County has agreed to assist the township with the engineering costs associated with the design in Upper Gwynedd, as well as to assist with any

rights of way and easement acquisitions in Upper Gwynedd. PennDOT would be responsible for funding the project's construction.

The project consists of the widening and reconstruction of Valley Forge Road and Sumneytown Pike from the existing two-lane section to a five-lane section, with the addition of turning lanes as necessary. The corridor improvements along Valley Forge Road are 1.14 miles and 2 miles along Sumneytown Pike. This project includes the replacement of a structurally deficient and functionally obsolete bridge and the existing traffic signal at the intersection. The township has committed over \$1 million for engineering costs and rights of way acquisition for this \$15 million project.

The township is pursuing a \$5.27 million project, which would realign the intersections of Bustard Road and Kriebel Road and Bustard Road and Morris Road to eliminate awkward angles and replace, relocate, and widen the structurally deficient and functionally obsolete bridge on Bustard Road near Kriebel Road to increase site distance. In addition, turn lanes would be added at the intersection of Bustard and Morris and the intersection would be signalized. Turn lanes and signalization would also be added at the intersection of Bustard and Old Morris Roads.

Upper Providence, Montgomery County has three high priority transportation projects that have regional benefits, but have been dormant due to lack of funding. All of these are state highways that connect to the US 422 Expressway and serve regional as well as local traffic.

The Egypt Road-Oaks Area project would involve widening Egypt and Black Rock Roads, adding turn lanes at several intersections, and upgrading traffic signals along this corridor. These upgrades are currently under design and will be implemented once funding is available.

The Route 29 (Bridge Street) at Walnut Street/Jacobs Street project involves a realignment of Jacobs Street to intersect opposite Walnut Street, which will improve traffic flow and allow for improved signal timings. A complimentary recommendation is the relocation of the Produce Junction Store and conversion of the property into a neighborhood parking lot that could also serve public use of the adjacent Schuylkill Canal and River Trail.

Township Line Road at Linfield-Trappe Road is a five lane cross section that is the long-term recommendation of the Township Line Road Corridor Study that was completed by Montgomery County in 2001. While lack of funding has prevented this project from proceeding, it is recognized as a key regional improvement for Upper Providence Township, Limerick Township, and Montgomery County. The provision of separate turn lanes on all approaches and upgraded signalization are also potential interim improvements for this intersection.

These are high priority projects in the township's comprehensive plan update and are recognized as important projects in the county's comprehensive plan. However, funding constraints have prevented these projects from advancing through the regional TIP process.

Local share of transportation funding

The Association believes that local roads, state highways, and mass transit comprise a single transportation network for the Commonwealth's traveling public. As such, the commonwealth must maintain a predictable and reliable funding method for our surface transportation system. PSATS supports a blend of revenue enhancements, including realigning the cap on the oil franchise tax, tying Pennsylvania's registration fee structure to the consumer price index, adjusting the gas tax, and increased use of public private partnerships, to fund the state and local highway and bridge systems. We urge that any and all solutions include the following components: a at least a 20 percent local share, depositing all proceeds into a restricted use account, and linking any tax or fees to the consumer price index.

Decrease mandates

There are several actions that the General Assembly can take that would significantly decrease the cost of maintaining their transportation infrastructure. These actions include:

- ♦ Provide relief from the Prevailing Wage Act by revising the act's criteria to return to the historical exemption for paving and similar maintenance activities while retaining coverage for new construction if state dollars are used.
- ♦ Require PennDOT to increase the maximum amounts for road bonding.
- ♦ Increase the required advertising and bidding amounts from \$10,000 to at least \$25,000, with an annual cost of living increase.
- ♦ Require PennDOT to maintain all storm drainage facilities on state highways.

In closing, transportation funding for highways and mass transit needs to be carefully examined and acted on now. Unless action is taken soon, our transportation system will crumble, driving economic opportunities away.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before the committee today. We will now attempt to answer any questions that you may have.