The Sumneytown Pike / PA 309 Connector

Spring 2002

The Sumneytown Pike/PA 309 Connector project team is busy identifying and evaluating resources in the project study area. The team's goal is to design a roadway to solve the area's transportation problem, yet minimize the impact to local resources.

Township Line Road will be improved and used as part of the Connector.

Environmental Studies Update

Environmental studies for the Sumneytown Pike/PA 309 Connector (the Connector) are following the process defined in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 to gain clearance for this federally funded project. In designing the new roadway, the project team is making every effort to maximize the benefits while minimizing any potential impacts.

Here is a summary of the environmental studies undertaken to date:

Farmland operations within the project area are being studied to identify potential impacts and mitigation measures.

- PENNDOT's project team has evaluated 46 historic structures over the last few months. Two properties have been recommended as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places: the Souder House on Schoolhouse Road and the Kriebel House on Fretz Road. Additional resources are still being evaluated on Sumneytown Pike north of Wambold Road. The project team has also identified public resources that may potentially be eligible for Section 4(f) designation. This designation stipulates that a transportation improvement project must make every effort to avoid publicly-owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, or lands of a historic site of national, state, or local significance.

- The Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry has identified a Pennsylvania endangered shrub, Beach plum (*Prunus maritima*) in the project area; however, the current preliminary design will not affect the shrub.

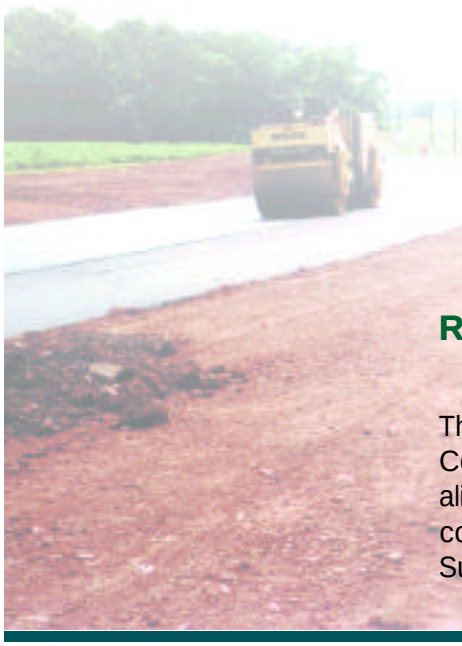
- Archaeologists have uncovered three prehistoric sites and one historic site. Ongoing studies will determine how old the prehistoric sites are and in what activities resident Native Americans may have been involved. The historic site may date to the 19th century, and archaeologists are searching for evidence to learn how people lived during that era.

- Preliminary studies were completed on wetland, waterway and groundwater wells. PENNDOT expects the project to have no direct impact on area wells, and a moderate impact to waterways and wetlands.

- Farmland studies are ongoing in compliance with state and federal regulations. The project team is meeting and speaking with farm owners and/or operators throughout the project area.

- Preliminary research for hazardous waste sites within the study area identified only the Alderfer Landfill as a constraint. The project team will avoid this location in their design.

- The project team will conduct noise monitoring at various locations throughout the study area to determine the expected noise impact from the new roadway. ■



Roadway Design Update

The Sumneytown Pike/PA 309 Connector's (the Connector) preliminary alignment provides the most direct connection between PA 309 and Sumneytown Pike. It avoids engineering obstacles, such as the PECO and PPL power lines and towers. It also improves travel through intersections, balances impacts to residences, and minimizes wetland and farmland impacts.

Most of the roadway will have 12-foot-wide travel lanes, 10-foot-wide paved shoulders and two-foot-wide unpaved shoulders. Bicycle lanes will be signed on both sides of the road as part of the 10-foot-wide paved shoulder. In sections where significant obstacles exist alongside the road, concrete curb will define the new roadway. Here it will have 12-foot travel lanes and five-foot paved shoulders. Curbed sections require less property and enhance rainwater collection through a series of pipes. The preliminary design also requires widening the Sumneytown Pike bridge over Skippack Creek.

Wherever possible, the Connector will use existing roads in the corridor. These roads include Wambold Road and Township Line Road. PENNDOT will also improve intersections using existing crossroads along the corridor.

The Connector calls for widening Wambold Road from Sumneytown Pike to Allentown Road. It is being designed to intersect with Allentown Road north of Wambold Road's existing intersection. This new alignment will provide better sight distance and geometry. It will also allow traffic to use the existing road while crews build the Connector. The roadway will then traverse on a new alignment from Allentown Road to Cowpath Road. The plan includes a new four-leg intersection at Cowpath Road and existing Township Line Road. Souderton Pike will be realigned with Township Line Road to improve intersection geometry and safety.

The Connector project will help reduce heavy truck traffic on surrounding local roads.

The final section of the Connector includes widening existing Township Line Road to just west of County Line Road, where a new interchange will be created with Route 309. Several design options are under consideration for the Connector's intersection with Route 309. However, the option that appears most feasible involves building a new structure for County Line Road that would run under Route 309, north of the existing underpass. Shifting this crossing would enable the project team to design an intersection with improved geometry over the present connection. ■

Traffic Update

Current traffic studies indicate that the Sumneytown Pike/PA 309 Connector (the Connector) will be a two-lane facility with additional turn lanes at several intersections. These studies have determined the need for traffic signals at the road's intersections with Fretz Road, Allentown Road, Elroy Road, Cowpath Road, Souderton Pike south and Souderton Pike north. Further preliminary analysis showed that a signal at Detwiler Road may also be required in the year 2026.

Furthermore, a cul-de-sac is being proposed for Township Line Road approximately 1,000 feet in from County Line Road. Restricting Township Line Road to only local traffic will reduce required property needs. Also under consideration are cul-de-sacs on Elroy Road on both sides of the Connector.

Analysis is also continuing to:

- Determine the need for a traffic signal at Township Line Road and County Line Road.
- Determine how best to manage development along the Sumneytown Pike/PA 309 Connector so it remains a free-flowing, viable roadway.
- Coordinate with local emergency providers to determine the project's potential impacts on their operations. ■

As part of the Connector project, many intersections will be improved to increase safety.

Connector Web Site and Upcoming Public Meeting

Interested citizens discuss the conceptual plans at the October 25, 2001 public meeting.

PENNDOT's Sumneytown Pike/PA 309 Connector web site (**www.pa309connector.com**) contains valuable project information, including frequently asked questions (FAQ) and their answers.

PENNDOT plans to hold a second public meeting this summer. The purpose of the meeting is to update residents about the ongoing studies within the project area, to show the proposed roadway alignment that will be carried through the environmental study, and to gather additional public feedback. A postcard will be sent out to residents prior to the meeting with information on its date, time and location. ■

Contact Information

For additional project information, contact PENNDOT Project Manager **Joseph Capella** at (610) 205-6857.

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Engineering District 6-0

7000 Geerdes Boulevard
King of Prussia, PA 19406

Sumneytown Pike/PA 309 Connector