

Agency Coordination Plan for the State College Area Connector Project



July 2024
Project Identification #: 112784

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	ii
List of Tables	iii
List of Figures	iii
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Purpose of the Coordination Plan	1
1.2 Project Description	1
1.3 Purpose and Need.....	4
1.3.1 Project Purpose	4
1.3.2 Project Need	4
1.3.3 Project History.....	5
1.4 Project Agency Coordination History.....	7
1.4.1 Agency Coordination Meetings	7
1.4.1 Agency Field Views.....	8
2 Lead, Cooperating and Participating Agencies.....	9
2.1 Agency Roles and Responsibilities	9
2.1.1 Lead Agency	9
2.1.2 Cooperating Agencies	9
2.1.3 Participating Agencies	10
2.2 Agency Contact Information	12
3 Agency Coordination Point	15
4 Agency Coordination.....	17
4.1 Agency Coordination	17
4.2 Section 106 Coordination	17
4.3 Agricultural Lands Condemnation Approval Board	18
4.4 Section 4(f) Resources	18
5 NOTICE OF INTENT.....	20

List of Tables

Table 1: Agency Coordination Meeting Summary 7
Table 2: Agency Field View Summary 9
Table 3: Cooperating Agency Status 10
Table 4: Participating Agency Status 11
Table 5: Cooperating and Participating Agency Contact 12
Table 6: Agency Coordination Points 15

List of Figures

Figure 1 – Project Area 2
Figure 2 – Revised Project Area 3

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Coordination Plan

The purpose of the *State College Area Connector Project Agency Coordination Plan* (Coordination Plan) is to define the process for meeting the agency requirements in the environmental review process, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related laws. The purpose of the coordination plan is to facilitate and document structured and meaningful interaction with the federal and state resource agencies, and to inform the agencies of how coordination will be accomplished, and feedback will be received.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) requires that not later than 90 days after the date of publication of a notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) the lead agency shall "establish a plan for coordinating public and agency participation in and comment on the environmental review process for a project."

Per the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Publication 10B (Design Manual Part 1B: Post-TIP NEPA Procedures, April 2022 edition), the coordination plan must be shared with the public and with participating agencies so that they know what to expect and so that any disputes are surfaced as early as possible.

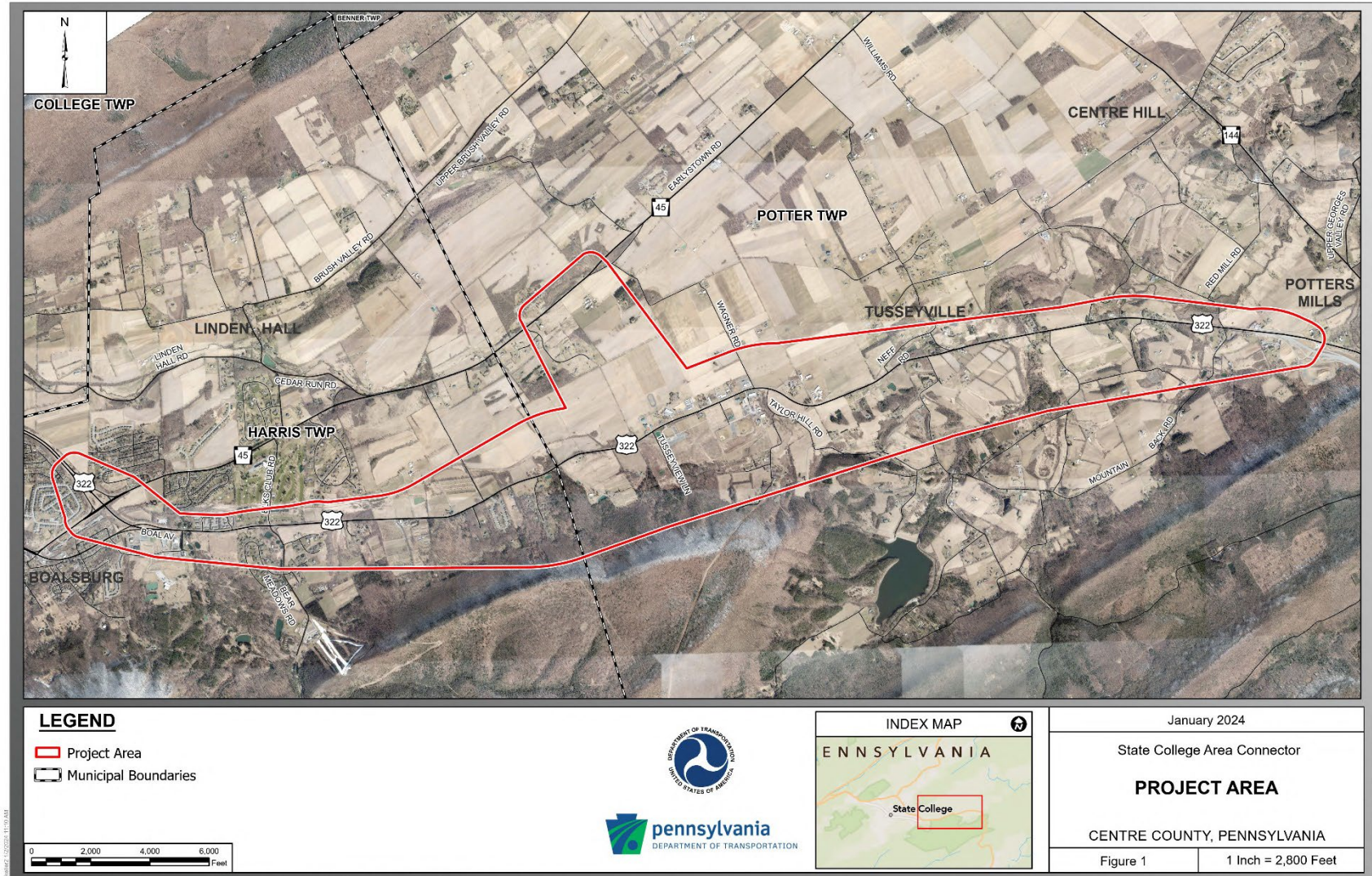
1.2 Project Description

PennDOT, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is initiating NEPA activities as part of an EIS for an 8-mile 4-lane limited-access facility from the end of US 322/Mount Nittany Expressway in Boalsburg to the newly constructed limited access portion of US 322 at Potters Mills in Centre County, Pennsylvania. The intent of this project is to build upon the State College Area Connector Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) document that evaluated a range of alternatives, and through a quantitative and qualitative screening process identified three Build Alternative corridor options for further study in NEPA and established the NEPA project area (**Figure 1**).

Subsequent to the PEL completion, additional traffic investigations and analysis and coordination with local officials for the State College Area Connector project determined that the connector road and interior interchange (included in each of the PEL US 322 Build Alternatives) would provide some localized improvements to PA 45. However, it was determined that the connector road and associated interchange was not necessary to address the project's purpose and need, nor did it address corridor wide issues along PA 45. As a result, the proposed interior interchange and local road connection was removed from this State College Area Connector project and will be considered in the independent PA 45 Corridor Improvements project, as appropriate. The State College Area Connector project will advance independently but will not preclude the inclusion of a future interior interchange and local road connection should the independent safety study along PA 45 determine that it would be beneficial in connection with other proposed PA 45 Corridor Improvements project. **Figure 2** provides the revised project area for the State College Area Connector project that will move forward for alternative development and investigation.

state college area CONNECTOR

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1.3 Purpose and Need

1.3.1 Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to improve roadway congestion by achieving acceptable LOS and to address safety issues by reducing the predicted crash frequency along the US 322 corridor between Potters Mills and Boalsburg. Additionally, the project will aim to provide a transportation network that meets driver expectations.

1.3.2 Project Need

Within the project area, there are transportation issues associated with high levels of congestion, potential safety issues along the roadway network, and a roadway network which presents a driver with irregular travel patterns and unexpected driving conditions. The following provides a summary of the needs statements and supporting documentation.

High peak hour traffic volumes cause congestion and result in unacceptable Level of Service (LOS) (LOS D [rural only], E, or F) on US 322 roadways and intersections.

- US 322 serves as the main travel route for local, regional, and interstate traffic, including trucks, within the project area. Currently during peak hours, US 322, between the US 322 Mount Nittany Expressway and the Mountain Back Road/Red Mill Road intersection (just west of Potters Mills), operates at a LOS D or E. The 2050 peak hour traffic volumes are anticipated to increase 41% which will increase congestion and worsen the LOS along the US 322 corridor. In 2050, LOS E is still anticipated for the entire US 322 corridor from the Mount Nittany Expressway to Potters Mills Gap, and travel speed will be further decreased with an average travel speed 15% less than the posted speed limit.
- Unsignalized intersections along US 322 are anticipated to operate at unacceptable LOS (LOS D, E, or F) due to high volumes of traffic along the uncontrolled main roadway which limit the availability of gaps in the traffic for making turning movements.
- US 322 averages three times more truck traffic within the project area in comparison to other similar roadways statewide, and truck traffic is expected to increase by 27% along the corridor by 2050. The additional truck traffic increases overall congestion and contributes to unacceptable levels of service.

Existing roadway configurations and traffic conditions contribute to safety concerns in the project area.

- Crashes were identified along a majority of the US 322 corridor with some concentrations at unsignalized intersections (e.g., Elks Club Road/Bear Meadows Road, Neff Road, and Red Mill Road/Mountain Back Road). Additionally, between 2017 and 2021, nearly 19% of all crashes along US 322 were caused by a heavy vehicle.
- The Highway Safety Manual (HSM) analysis results indicate the potential for safety improvements along a majority of the US 322 corridor and at unsignalized intersections through the project area. Increasing traffic along US 322 has reduced

the number of gaps available for side street and driveway traffic attempting to enter or exit US 322. This causes drivers to make turning movements outside of their comfort zone which contributes to crashes at side street and driveway intersections. Additionally, the large percentage of through traffic exacerbates the issue as these drivers may be unfamiliar with the roadway characteristics.

The roadway network and configuration in the project area lacks continuity and does not meet driver expectations.

- US 322 is on the National Highway System and is classified as a principal arterial that is intended to provide long-distance connections. US 322, adjacent to the project area (near both Potters Mills and Boalsburg), is a four-lane, limited-access, divided highway facility with exit and entrance ramps to provide access to the local roadway network. This type of roadway is conducive to higher travel speeds and supports regional and interstate travel patterns. These adjacent sections of US 322 feed traffic into the project area, where US 322 is currently a two-lane, non-divided highway with unrestricted access to driveways and intersecting roadways. The abrupt change in roadway configuration and characteristics creates a roadway network that lacks continuity of facility type and function.
- Within the project area, US 322 serves local, regional, and interstate traffic (including truck and commuter traffic). The road also services other travel modes including farm equipment traffic and bicycle traffic. The change in the roadway cross-section at both ends of the corridor creates inconsistencies which may not meet driver expectations particularly for regional and interstate traffic. The potential for additional uncontrolled access points along US 322 would continue to degrade roadway continuity along the corridor and create additional locations for conflicts that could result in crashes.

1.3.3 Project History

Within the State College Area Connector project area, there have been many transportation improvement studies and projects that have influenced travel within and immediately adjacent to the project area dating back to the 1970s. However, in the 1990s, key regional studies occurred which greatly influenced travel and development within the project area. The following provides a high-level summary of the local and regional transportation projects which have provided influence on the State College Area Connector project area.

Interstate 80

- I-80 was completed in Pennsylvania in 1970.
- I-80 through Pennsylvania influenced traffic patterns, particularly an increase in interstate truck traffic. This increase in traffic affected travel conditions within the project area.
- Roadway safety and quality of life in Centre County communities traversed by these roadways were influenced by the I-80 completion.

Interstate 99

- US 220 study west of the State College area led to the development of a major improvement project for a new north-south interstate through Centre County that

culminated with the construction of I-99 extending from Blair County to US 322 (the Mount Nittany Expressway).

- PA 26 corridor study resulted in the construction of I-99 from US 322 (the Mount Nittany Expressway) north towards I-80.
- I-80 Exit 161 (Bellefonte Interchange) is under development to replace the existing interchange with a new high-speed interchange and complete the I-99/I-80 connection. Construction of the interchange improvements will complete the goal for a major north-south interstate (I-99) through the center of the Commonwealth connecting two major east-west interstates, the Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-76) and I-80.

South Central Centre County Transportation Study (SCCCTS)

- SCCCTS was initiated in 1998 to evaluate and address transportation needs along the US 322, PA 144, and PA 45 corridors. The SCCCTS project needs identified specific transportation problems in each of the three corridors and on the local road system, as well as needs associated with regional travel patterns. The regional travel pattern need statement addressed the high percentage of through trips (in particular the high volume of truck traffic), high crash rates (including fatalities), poor Level of Service (LOS) including LOS associated with heavy truck traffic and increases in travel demand associated with local and regional planned development. However, SCCCTS was terminated in 2004 due to funding shortfalls and the NOI rescinded on July 29, 2019.

Safety Improvements

- Following the termination of SCCCTS in 2004, short-term safety improvements along the US 322 corridor were conducted between 2006 and 2015. These improvements included general intersection improvements (e.g., turn lanes), safety improvements (e.g., safety dot warning pavement markings and removal of passing zones), minor roadway realignments, and bridge reconstruction. These improvements were initiated to address some of the safety concerns identified during the SCCCTS study.

Potters Mills Gap (PMG) Transportation Project

- PennDOT and FHWA initiated the PMG Transportation Project to improve a 3.75-mile-long section of US 322 in Potter Township within the area locally known as “Potters Mills Gap”. This project area encompassed the southeastern portion of the SCCCTS study area. It was determined that this project had independent utility and addressed a defined purpose and need. The project included the construction of a new limited access four-lane roadway section that started at the Sand Mountain Road intersection and extended west, tying back into existing US 322 with a new interchange and roundabout, west of the PA 144/US 322 intersection.

SCCCTS Data Refresh

- In 2018, PennDOT collected data to update the traffic and environmental information from the former SCCCTS (2004), to identify changes to travel patterns, the transportation network, and environmental conditions. This information supported the 2019 decision by state officials to restart efforts to address regional transportation needs in the US 322, PA 44, and PA 45 area. Nearly, \$15 million in state funding was allocated to advance the State College Area Connector Study.

State College Area Connector Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study

- In 2020, PennDOT, in cooperation with FHWA and coordination with the Centre County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), initiated the State College Area Connector PEL Study. The PEL process promoted early coordination with the public as well as federal, state, and local agencies in a transparent and collaborative environment that identified and evaluated transportation needs in the area and developed and evaluated alternatives while considering community concerns in transportation decision-making early in the planning process. The PEL study identified a range of alternatives and screened them against the purpose and need and potential for environmental impacts. Three Build Alternatives corridors were recommended for further study. These three recommended Build Alternatives and a refined study area are being advanced for NEPA study with a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS.

1.4 Project Agency Coordination History

During the State College Area Connector PEL Study, a robust agency engagement plan was developed and implemented that included Agency Coordination Meetings and field views. This coordination effort and level will be continued throughout the NEPA/EIS phase of the project.

1.4.1 Agency Coordination Meetings

During the State College Area Connector PEL Study, the study team presented the study and associated results at Agency Coordination Meetings. **Table 1** provides an overview of the PEL meeting dates and information presented as well as the NEPA/EIS meeting dates.

Table 1: Agency Coordination Meeting Summary

Date	Topic Discussed
February 26, 2020	Introduce PEL Study
July 22, 2020	PEL Study Process Environmental Features Purpose and Need Coordination Plan Agency Participation
November 6, 2020	Study Update Coordination Plan Comments Consensus Process Concurrence Process PEL Process and Schedule
December 9, 2020	Study update Purpose and Need Cooperating and Participating Agency Status Draft Coordination Plan and Consensus Virtual Public Meeting Overview Environmental Features

Date	Topic Discussed
May 26, 2021	Environmental Overview Range of Alternatives Alternative Screening Process Methodology
August 25, 2021	PEL Process Recap Environmental WebMap and Technical Memos Range of Alternatives Alternatives Screening Other Potential Future Project Concepts Public Engagement Next steps
December 8, 2021	September Public Meeting Summary Environmental Data Update Technical Memos Update Build Alternative Update Revised Agency Coordination Plan Schedule
March 23, 2022	September Public Meeting Overview Environmental Mapping Updates Traffic Updates Build Alternative Updates Next Steps
May 25, 2022	April 2022 Public Meeting Summary Range of Alternatives and Alternative Screening Process Alternatives Review PEL Process Next Steps
August 24, 2022	Alternative Screening Process Environmental Resources Potential Impacts and Comparative Analysis Traffic, Engineering and Planning Comparative Analysis Next Steps
February 22, 2023	October 2022 Public Meeting Summary Draft PEL Report Build Alternative option recommendations to advance in NEPA
June 28, 2023	Final PEL results EIS Scoping Environmental Methodologies
January 24, 2024	EIS Purpose and Need Draft Agency Coordination Plan

1.4.1 Agency Field Views

Two field views were conducted with the federal and state permitting agencies to review the study area during the PEL Study. **Table 2** provides a summary of the dates and agencies represented.

Table 2: Agency Field View Summary

Date	Agencies
July 19, 2022	US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) PA Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP)
August 1, 2022	US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

2 Lead, Cooperating and Participating Agencies

2.1 Agency Roles and Responsibilities

2.1.1 Lead Agency

The role of the Federal Lead Agency implementing the federal action is to ensure compliance with the requirements in NEPA. For the State College Area Connector Project, FHWA will be the lead Federal agency for the environmental analysis and decision-making. PennDOT will be the lead state agency with responsibility for completing the environmental analysis and preparing the documentation.

2.1.2 Cooperating Agencies

Cooperating agencies are those governmental agencies and/or tribes specifically requested by the lead agency to participate in the environmental evaluation process for the project. FHWA’s NEPA regulations (23 CFR 771.111(d)) requires that those federal agencies with jurisdiction by law (e.g., with permitting or land transfer authority) or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact or resource involved in an environmental review or alternative be invited to be cooperating agencies.

During the State College Area Connector Project, cooperating agencies will be asked to:

- Participate in the NEPA process.
- Participate in the scoping process.
- Assume responsibility for developing information and preparing environmental analyses, including portions of the environmental impact statement for which the cooperating agency has special expertise, upon request by the lead agency.
- Provide available staff support to enhance the lead agency's interdisciplinary capability, upon request by the lead agency.
- Use its own funds. To the extent available funds permit, the lead agency shall fund those major activities or analyses it requests from cooperating agencies. Potential lead agencies shall include such funding requirements in their budget requests.
- Consult with the lead agency in developing the schedule (§40 CFR 1501.7(i)), meet the schedule, and elevate, as soon as practicable, to the senior agency official of the lead agency any issues relating to purpose and need, alternatives, or other issues that may affect any agencies' ability to meet the schedule.
- Meet the schedule for providing comments and limiting its comments to those matters for which it has jurisdiction by law or special expertise concerning any environmental issue.
- Issue joint environmental documents with the lead agency, when practicable.

During the PEL Study, FHWA invited various agencies to be cooperating agencies in the PEL with the intent that the cooperating agency status would continue in the NEPA phase of project development. **Table 3** outlines the cooperating agencies that were invited by FHWA Pennsylvania Division to be cooperating agencies during the PEL and NEPA processes for the State College Area Connector.

Table 3: Cooperating Agency Status

Agency	Status
United States Army Corps of Engineers	Accepted
United States Environmental Protection Agency	Accepted
United States Fish and Wildlife Service	Accepted
National Park Service	Declined
Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection - Northcentral Regional Office	Accepted
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PA PHMC)/Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO)*	Accepted

* Changed from participating to cooperating agency status between PEL and NEPA studies.

2.1.3 Participating Agencies

Participating agencies include any federal, state, tribal, regional, and local public agencies that have an interest in the proposed project and the environmental review process.

During the State College Area Connector Project, participating agencies will be asked to:

- Identify, as early as practicable, any issues of concern regarding potential impacts on the natural, cultural, or human environment.
- Provide meaningful and early input on relevant issues such as the study purpose and needs, the range of alternatives to be considered, and the methodologies and level of detail required in the alternatives analysis.
- Participate in coordination meetings and field reviews with other environmental resource agencies, as appropriate.
- Adhere to timeframes for reviewing and commenting on administrative copies of environmental documentation, including the draft and final EIS.

During the PEL Study, FHWA invited various agencies to be participating agencies in the PEL with the intent that the participating agency status would continue in the NEPA phase of project development. **Table 4** outlines the participating agencies that were invited by FHWA Pennsylvania Division to be cooperating agencies during the PEL and NEPA processes for the State College Area Connector.

Table 4: Participating Agency Status

Agency	Status
Federal and State Agencies	
United States Coast Guard	No response
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission	Accepted
Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR)	Accepted
Pennsylvania Game Commission	Accepted
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture	Accepted
Local Agencies	
Centre County Conservation District (CCCD)	Accepted
Centre County Board of Commissioners	Accepted
Potter Township Board of Supervisors	No response
Spring Township Board of Supervisors	No response
Benner Township Board of Supervisors	No response
Harris Township Board of Supervisors	Accepted
College Township Council	Accepted
Centre Hall Borough Council	No response
Federally Recognized Tribes	
Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma	No response
Delaware Nation	No response
Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma	No response
Oneida Nation	No response
Seneca Nation of Indians	Accepted
Seneca-Cayuga Nation	No response
Shawnee Tribe	No response
Delaware Tribe of Indians	Accepted

2.2 Agency Contact Information

Table 5 provides the agency contact information for cooperating and participating agencies.

Table 5: Cooperating and Participating Agency Contact

Name	Point of Contact Name and Address	Email	Phone
Cooperating Agencies			
PA DEP Northcentral Regional Office	Steven Putt 208 W. Third St., Suite 101 Williamsport, PA 17701	Stputt@pa.gov	570-327-0527
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, Regulatory	Marion Gall (Interim) State College Field Office 1631 South Atherton Street, Suite 101 State College, PA 16801-6260	Marion.gall@usace.army.mil	(814) 235-1761
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	1650 Arch Street (mailcode 3RA12) Philadelphia, PA 19103	Witman.timothy@epa.gov - main contact Davis.jamie@epa.gov - PDOT reviewer	215-814-2775
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Jennifer Kagel 110 Radnor Rd., Suite 101 State College, PA 16803	jennifer_kagel@fws.gov	814-206-7451
PHMC, Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO)	Emma Diehl and Casey Hanson, Historic Preservation Specialists 400 North Street, 2nd Floor Commonwealth Keystone Building Harrisburg PA 17120	ediehl@pa.gov and chanson@pa.gov	717-772-4519
Participating Agencies			
Centre County Conservation District	414 Holmes Street Suite 4 Bellefonte, PA 16823	jrcoslo@centrecountypa.gov	814-355-6817
Centre County Government	420 Holmes Street Bellefonte, PA 16823	Rjstolinas@centrecountypa.gov	814-355-6791

Name	Point of Contact Name and Address	Email	Phone
College Township	Adam Brumbaugh, Township Manager 1481 E. College Ave. State College PA 16801	abrumbaugh@collegetownship.org	814-231-3021
Harris Township	Frank Harden 224 East Main Street PO Box 20 Boalsburg, PA 16827	Fharden@harristownship.org	814-466-7495
PA Department of Agriculture	Douglas Wolfgang Director Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Bureau of Farmland Preservation 2301 North Cameron Street Harrisburg, PA 17110	Dowolfgang@pa.gov	717-783-3167
PA Department Conservation and Natural Resources	Stephanie Seymour Ecological Information Specialist PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry Natural Heritage Section 400 Market Street, PO Box 8552 Harrisburg, PA 17105	c-steseymo@pa.gov	717-705-2819
PA Fish and Boat	Bill Savage PFBC Centre Region Office, 595 East Rolling Ridge Drive, Bellefonte, PA 16823	wisavage@pa.gov	814-359-5145 (office) 814-470-7177 (work cell)
PA Game Commission	Sue Guers 2001 Elmerton Avenue Harrisburg, PA 17110	suguers@pa.gov	717-787-4250 ext. 73412

Name	Point of Contact Name and Address	Email	Phone
Delaware Tribe of Indians	Susan Bachor, M.A. Archaeologist Delaware Tribe Historic Preservation 126 University Circle Stroud Hall, Room 437 East Stroudsburg, PA 18301	Sbachor@delawaretribe.org or Temple@delawaretribe.org	570-422-2023 610-761-7452 (cell – preferred)
Seneca Nation of Indians	Dr. Joe Stahlman 82 W. Hetzel St. Salamanca, NY 14779	joe.stahlman@sni.org	716-277-5580

3 Agency Coordination Point

Table 6 provides the agency coordination points for cooperating and participating agencies.

Table 6: Agency Coordination Points

Coordination Point	Date of/Anticipated Date of Coordination	Information Included for Coordination	Agencies Involved	Input/Consensus Requested	Timeframe for Input
Project Initiation	February 26, 2020	- PEL Process	All ACM participants	NA	
Environmental Analysis Methodologies	July 22, 2020	- PEL Study Process - Environmental Features - Purpose and Need - Coordination Plan - Agency participation	All ACM participants	NA	
PEL Purpose and Need	December 9, 2020	- Study update - Purpose and Need - Cooperating and Participating Agency Status - Draft Coordination Plan and Consensus - Virtual Public Meeting Overview - Environmental Features	All ACM participants	Cooperating Agency Concurrence	35 days post meeting
Range of Alternatives	May 26, 2021	- Environmental Overview - Range of Alternatives - Alternative Screening Process Methodology	All ACM participants	Cooperating Agency Concurrence	35 days post meeting
Project Section 106 Initiation	March 27, 2023	- Project notification distributed via PennDOT's PATH		Determine interest in becoming a consulting party	

Coordination Point	Date of/Anticipated Date of Coordination	Information Included for Coordination	Agencies Involved	Input/Consensus Requested	Timeframe for Input
EIS Scoping Meeting	June 28, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PEL Alternatives to advance - Environmental Analysis Methodologies 	All ACM participants	Cooperating Agency Concurrence on PEL Alternatives to advance for NEPA review	
Project Purpose and Need	January 24, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NEPA/EIS Draft Purpose and Need 		Consensus on Purpose and Need for EIS	
Detailed Alternatives Analysis	July 2024				
Recommended Alternative/Conceptual Mitigation	February 2025				
Draft EIS Circulation	July 2025				
Public Hearing	August 2025				
Preferred Alternative/Mitigation	September 2025				
Jurisdictional Determination (JD) (if required)/ Pre-Application Meeting	September 2025				
Final EIS/ Record of Decision (ROD)/ Conceptual Mitigation	July 2026				

4 Agency Coordination

4.1 Agency Coordination

PennDOT uses Agency Coordination Meetings (ACMs) to regularly inform agencies of the project status and seek input on decisions related to the location of the project alternatives. Throughout the PEL Study, presentations have been made at ACMs. The specific meeting dates of the ACM meetings are mentioned above in Section 1.4 Project Agency Coordination History. During the PEL Study, cooperating agencies were asked to provide concurrence at study milestones to ensure the PEL studies met the agencies expectations and would seamlessly transition to the NEPA process. These concurrence points include purpose and need concurrence at the December 2020 ACM, range of alternatives at the May 2021 ACM, and alternatives to carry forward into NEPA at the June 2023 ACM. The June 2023 ACM also initiated the EIS project scoping and presented the environmental methodologies to be used in the study.

PennDOT will seek input and general consensus from the agencies going forward, as formal concurrence will not be requested for the NEPA phase of the project. This process will be shared with the agencies at the January 2024 ACM. When certain milestones are reached and relevant documents are available for consideration, such as the project purpose and need, the materials will be sent to the agency representatives two weeks in advance of the scheduled ACM meeting, when possible. A particular topic will be discussed at the meeting and the team will facilitate open dialogue about any concerns or issues at the time.

Agencies will have an additional two weeks after the ACM to provide comments. If an agency provides comments that are deemed 'significant', the project team will work directly with that agency to address those comments. Additional project information may also be provided to the agency, when available.

4.2 Section 106 Coordination

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires that agencies that use federal funds consider their projects' effects on historic properties. The National Park Service defines historic properties as "any prehistoric or historic districts, sites, buildings, structures, or objects that are eligible for or already listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Also included are any artifacts, records, and remains (surface or subsurface) that are related to and located within historic properties and any properties of traditional religious and cultural importance to tribes or native Hawaiian organizations."

PennDOT must determine if a proposed action is an undertaking with the potential to affect historic properties and, if so, plan to involve the public and identify consulting parties. Participants in the Section 106 process may include the SHPO, local governments, Indian tribes, interested parties, and the public.

PennDOT has invited parties to participate in consultation and will provide basic information about the undertaking to all parties, as available. The federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) will also be invited to participate.

PennDOT utilizes the Pennsylvania Transportation and Heritage (PATH) website to post all documents produced pursuant to Section 106 and State History Code. All relevant documents will be posted and made available to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) and any additional organization that signs up as a result of receiving the project early notification correspondence.

4.3 Agricultural Lands Condemnation Approval Board

Pennsylvania Act 1979-100 established the Agricultural Lands Condemnation Approval Board (ALCAB), a six-member independent administrative board. For this type of roadway improvement project, ALCAB must approve any Pennsylvania agency's plan to acquire productive agricultural land through condemnation proceedings, but only if an amicable settlement cannot be reached first. ALCAB must consider compliance with the Agricultural Land Preservation Policy (ALPP) (4 PA Code 7.301 et seq.) before granting approval for condemnation of farmland.

ALPP requires agencies of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to adopt measures to mitigate and protect farmland from conversion according to the following five priorities:

1. Permanent agricultural conservation easements or deed restrictions
2. Agricultural security area
3. Farmland enrolled in preferential tax assessments (i.e., Clean and Green); which there are some present within the project area.
4. Agricultural protection zoning
5. Soils determined to be most suitable for agricultural use by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

All five farmland protection priorities are found within the project area. However, the team will work to develop alternatives that avoid impacts to farmlands to the extent possible. The team will reconfirm through interviews with all of the farmers the status of the property to ensure it is still being farmed and within any protection category the land may be associated farm property.

4.4 Section 4(f) Resources

US Department of Transportation Act of 1966 Section 4(f) (codified in 23 CFR 774) stipulates that the US Secretary of Transportation may approve a transportation project requiring the use of publicly owned land of a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or land from a historic site of national, state, or local significance (as determined by the federal, state, or local officials having jurisdiction over the park, recreation area, refuge, or site) only if:

- There is no prudent and feasible alternative to using that land; and
- The project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the public park, recreation area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site resulting from the use; or
- The use, including any measures to minimize harm (such as avoidance, minimization, mitigation, or enhancement measures), will have a de minimis impact on the property.

For parks, recreational areas, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges, the official(s) with jurisdiction is the official(s) of the agency owning or administering the land. For historic properties, the official with jurisdiction is the SHPO.

Coordination with officials with jurisdiction may be on-going through the Section 4(f) process and/or occur during documentation and approval. Section 4(f) documentation requirements are dictated by the type(s) of Section 4(f) use. PennDOT and FHWA Pennsylvania Division Office have developed forms to assist in the documentation of non-applicability/no use, temporary occupancy, de minimis use, and Section 4(f) use that meet the criteria of four nationwide programmatic Section 4(f) evaluations.

Officials with jurisdiction should be contacted to:

- Identify Section 4(f) resources (parks, historic sites, wildlife refuges)
- Confirm 'publicly-owned' status, if a recreational resource, and Section 4(f) use of a property
- Identify current and planned use of a Section 4(f) resource
- Determine which portion of the Section 4(f) resource is significant
- Determine the applicability of Section 4(f) to a resource
- Concur with a de minimis finding by FHWA after notification
- Determine the use of a Section 4(f) resource (e.g., actual use, constructive use, temporary occupancy)

There are no known wildlife or waterfowl refuges located within the project area. There are several parks one of which may have a potential use. Anticipated Section 4(f) uses would also include historic sites, specifically the Penns Valley/Brush Valley Rural Historic District. The historic sites will be identified during the detailed study phase, and the team will attempt to avoid the use of these properties to the extent possible.

5 NOTICE OF INTENT

The EIS process begins with the publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI), stating the intent to prepare an EIS for a particular proposal. The NOI is published in the federal register by the lead federal agency and provides basic information on the proposed action in preparation for the scoping process. The NOI notifies all agencies, tribes, and individuals about the proposed action and identifies the issues that should be analyzed.

Additional project information is also included with the NOI and includes a brief description of the proposed action and possible alternatives. It also describes the agency's proposed scoping process, including meetings and how the public can get involved. The NOI will also contain an agency point of contact who can answer questions about the proposed action and the NEPA process. An NOI to prepare an EIS for the State College Area Connector project is anticipated to be published in the federal register in mid-2024.