

Meeting Summary

Project:	Lenhartsville
Subject:	Public Meeting
Date:	Oct. 25, 2021 – Nov. 24, 2021
Location:	Virtual On-Demand Meeting Website In-Person Open House

Meeting Overview

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) held a public meeting for the I-78 Lenhartsville Bridge Replacement Project. The public meeting was held both online (virtually) and in-person. The online meeting was comprised of text, graphics, and videos that provided a project overview and explained the project purpose and need, design, funding, traffic studies, environmental studies, comment process and next steps. The same information was shared during the in-person meeting in an open house format.

The online meeting website provided a comment form that allowed individuals to submit their comments directly within the virtual public meeting. The website also noted other ways in which comments could be submitted, including the comment form on the general project website, project phone number, project email and a physical mailing address. The virtual public meeting and comment period began at noon on Oct. 25 and ended at 11:59 p.m. on Nov. 24, 2021.

At the in-person public open house, comment forms were provided for individuals to submit their comment. The in-person public open house was held on Monday, Nov. 1, 2021 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Kempton Community Center. In project outreach and on the virtual public meeting website it was noted that participants could request translation services.

While the comment period for the public meeting has closed, the online meeting materials are available for reference via the project website's resource side bar at the link below.

www.penndot.pa.gov/i78Lenhartsville.

Meeting Outreach

Prior to and during the public meeting time period, the project team executed several outreach strategies to maximize public participation during the official comment period.

Outreach Type	Number of Recipients	Type of Recipients	Date Sent
Postcard	5,591	<ul style="list-style-type: none">General PublicMailed via Every Door Direct Mail ServiceSent to all postal routes within the direct project area and along the diversion route.	Mailed week of 10/18
Legal Ad	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">General publicPlaced in the Reading Eagle	10/12

Stakeholder & Public Mailing List Email	172	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key stakeholders, legislators and those who requested to be put on the project's mailing list. Email with information about the virtual public meeting and in-person open house. 	10/25
Knowledgeable Parties Stakeholder Email	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledgeable parties identified in EJ analysis Email with information about virtual and in-person meetings, along with a flyer to be distributed in the community and copies of social media art for sharing 	10/25
News Release	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sent to area media to distribute via news stories for the general public. 	10/25
Public Officials Briefing	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invited public officials to a pre-launch briefing to get a first look at the materials to launch in the virtual public meeting 	10/25 at 9 a.m.
Diversion Route Workshop Follow Up Briefing	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invited diversion route workshop attendees to attend a follow-up briefing to review the proposed diversion route improvements included in the public meeting materials. 	10/25 at 10 a.m.
Social Media Posts As of 11/24	22,571 people reached	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media posts on PennDOT social media regarding how to participate in the public meeting and comment period 147 engagements across 3 posts 	10/27 11/1 11/22

Meeting Participation

Statistics regarding public participation in the public meeting are below (*data as of close of comment period on Nov. 24*).

Virtual Public Information Meeting Results	
Total Virtual Public Meeting Unique Website Visitors (10/25-11/24)	460
Total In-Person Public Open House Attendees	69
Total Meeting Comments	155

Based on the comments received during the comment period, 29 percent of individuals who visited the public meeting website or attended an in-person meeting submitted a comment. The project team is evaluating and considering this feedback as the Categorical Exclusion environmental document is completed.

Common Comment Themes:

- Several commenters indicated their **opposition to tolling**. Reasons included:
 - Existing Turnpike frustration

- Tolls causing traffic issues
- Financial
- Against tolling in rural areas
- Several commenters indicated **concerns for traffic congestion**. Concerns included:
 - Existing traffic, collision, and maintenance issues in the area
 - Toll diversion traffic causing heavier congestion on secondary roads
- Several commenters indicated concern for **toll avoidance** or plans to avoid tolls themselves. Comments included info on:
 - Drivers planning to avoid the bridge if a toll is placed
 - Concern for traffic avoiding the tolls and diverting through local communities
- Several commenters shared **general dissatisfaction** with the project. This dissatisfaction was due to reasons including:
 - Pennsylvania already pays the highest gas tax
 - Opposition to paying additional fees for road usage
 - Economic hardship
- Several commenters suggested **other means of raising money**. They included:
 - Trim overhead budget
 - Federal infrastructure bill
 - Only charging tractor trailers/large trucks
 - Change state police funding
 - Support user fees, managed lanes, tax increases or registration fee increases
- Several commenters indicated **financial concerns**. These included:
 - Frustration over high gas tax
 - Economic hardship caused by tolls
- Several commenters indicated that they were **against tax increases**. They included:
 - There are too many road-related taxes between tolls and the gas tax
 - Frustrated by additional taxes on roads built with taxpayer money
- Other themes that appeared in a smaller number of comments included:
 - Supportive of Tolls
 - General Support
 - Construction & Traffic Detours
 - Business Interruptions
 - Technical Issues
 - Bridge Safety
 - Information or Mailing List Request
 - Noise & Air Quality
 - Tourism/Economy
 - Non-Gas Vehicles Not Paying Share
 - EJ Issues
 - Historic Properties
 - Mitigation/Toll Discount
 - Pandemic Related Hardship Concerns
 - Geographic Equity
 - Opposed to Managed Lanes
 - Website Criticism