

Meeting Summary

Project:	I-80 Nescopeck Creek Bridges Project
Subject:	Public Meeting
Date:	Nov. 15 – Dec. 15, 2021
Location:	Virtual On-Demand Meeting Website, Online In-Person Open House, Luzerne County

Meeting Overview

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) held a public meeting for the I-80 Nescopeck Creek Bridges 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, project design, proposed funding, traffic studies, environmental studies, comment process and next steps. The same information was shared during the in-person public 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 Nov. 15 and ended at 11:59 p.m. on Dec. 15, 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 Tuesday, Dec. 7, 2021, from 4 to 7 p.m. at Nescopeck Social Hall in Nescopeck, Pa. 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/i80Nescopeck.

Meeting Outreach

Prior to and during the public meeting, 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	15,910	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General public• Mailed via Every Door Direct Mail Service• Sent to all postal routes within the direct project area and along the diversion route	Mailed week of 11/8
Legal Ad	Print circulation approx. 12,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General public• Placed in <i>The Times Leader</i>	Ran 11/7

Stakeholder & Public Mailing List Email	236	<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. 	11/15
Knowledgeable Parties Email & Flyer	13	<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 	11/15
News Releases	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sent to area media to distribute via news stories and calendars of events for the general public. 	11/15, 12/7
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 	11/15 at 9:30 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 route improvements included in the public meeting materials. 	11/15 at 10:30 a.m.
Social Media Posts	30,795 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 • 238 engagements across 3 posts 	11/15 12/7 12/13

Meeting Participation

Statistics regarding public participation in the public meeting are below (*data as of close of comment period on Dec. 15*).

Public Meeting Metrics	
Total Virtual Public Meeting Unique Website Visitors (11/15-12/15)	231
Total In-Person Public Open House Attendees	25
Total Meeting Comments (11/15-12/15)	46

Based on the comments received during the public comment period, 18 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 Evaluation environmental document is completed.

Common Comment Themes:

- Several commenters indicated their **opposition to tolling**. Reasons included:
 - State police siphoning funds

- Tolls causing traffic issues
 - Financial
- Several commenters suggested **other means of raising money**. They included:
 - Gas tax
 - Federal infrastructure bill
 - Financial audit
- Several commenters indicated **financial concerns**. These included:
 - Frustration over high gas tax
 - Economic hardship caused by tolls
 - Financial impact on business owners
- Several commenters indicated **concerns about traffic congestion**. Concerns included:
 - Trucks on secondary roads will slow down traffic significantly
 - Toll diversion traffic will deplete secondary roads that don't have funds to fix
- Several commenters shared **general dissatisfaction** with the project. Comments indicated this was due to:
 - Pennsylvania already pays the highest gas tax
 - Economic hardship/fixed income
- Several commenters indicated concern for **toll avoidance** or plans to avoid tolls themselves. Comments included information on:
 - Drivers planning to avoid the bridge if a toll is placed
 - Concern for traffic avoiding the tolls and diverting through local communities
- Other comment themes that appeared in a smaller number of comments included:
 - Supportive of Tolls
 - Against Tax Increases
 - Business Interruptions
 - Tourism/Economy
 - Information Request
 - Bridge Safety
 - EJ Issues
 - Geographic Equity
 - Non-Gas Vehicles Not Paying Share
 - Pandemic Related Hardship Concerns
 - General