

I-78 Lenhartsville Bridge Replacement Video

Transcript

While Lenhartsville's early settlers no doubt had to cross Maiden Creek on a regular basis, traffic was considerably less than the 51,000 vehicles – including over 15,000 commercial trucks – that use the I-78 Lenhartsville Bridge every day to cross the creek and Route 143 in Berks County.

The I-78 Lenhartsville Bridge Replacement Project will replace the existing bridge, which was built in 1955, and widen it to accommodate the addition of auxiliary lanes and full inside- and outside-shoulders on I-78 in each direction.

However, as you may have heard, PennDOT faces an \$8.1 billion annual deficit in highway and bridge funding. The agency receives 74 percent of its funding from federal and state gas taxes, but due to better fuel efficiency of today's cars and the increased popularity of electric vehicles, this funding continues to decline as drivers buy less fuel, a trend that shows no signs of stopping.

One immediate funding solution is PennDOT's Major Bridge P3 Initiative, which is designed to raise revenue for the replacement or rehabilitation of nine major bridges across the state through tolling. Tolling means that those who use the bridge pay for the bridge and revenue from the tolls goes back into the project for maintenance and operations, allowing other important transportation projects in the region to move forward.

In Pennsylvania, every \$1 billion invested in bridge replacement or rehabilitation creates 10,493 jobs and generates \$2.2 billion for our state's economy. In fact, paying for all these projects through tolling could free up enough funds to either build 730 miles of new interstate lanes, replace 6,600 miles of guide rail or repave 1,900 miles of highways. To put that into perspective, 1,900 miles is the distance between Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The bottom line is the I-78 Lenhartsville Bridge Replacement Project is critical and needs to be completed. Funding this necessary replacement with bridge tolling will allow money that would have been used to pay for it to instead be spent on other important transportation projects in the region.