Transportation Partnership

Keeping Businesses and Communities Safe, Connected and Vibrant

October 21, 2019

Presented by:

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Transportation + Infrastructure Collaboration

- Greater Reading Chamber Alliance's (previously Greater Reading Chamber) engaged Transportation Committee
- Committee included Berks County Planning Commission (MPO) + PennDOT
- Pro-Business Policy Agenda advocating for modern, safe, efficient and reliable infrastructure
- 222N #1 Priority Road Project Strategy - lessons learned

SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE
222 North Project

US 222 WIDENING - Kutztown BP to Lehigh Co.

US 222 @ PA 863

US 222 WIDENING

US 222 @ PA 662

US 222 @ Long Lane

US 222 @ PA 73

US 222 NORTH CORRIDOR
Public-Private Partnership

Greater Reading Chamber Alliance and Berks County Commissioners

Reading Bridges (and West Shore Bypass) Work Group

- Identify priorities and concerns of all stakeholders
- Develop and provide solutions and opportunities
- Inform and educate members and community
- Meet with PennDOT – Speak with ONE VOICE

Previously www.readingbridges.net
New Site https://greaterreading.org/infrastructure-about/
Berks County: Vital Community Connections

Buttonwood St Bridge

Schuylkill Ave Bridge

Penn St Bridge

Bingaman St Bridge

US 422 West Shore Bypass
Vital Connections: Planned Construction

- Buttonwood St Bridge
- Schuylkill Ave Bridge
- Penn St Bridge
- Bingaman St Bridge
- US 422 West Shore Bypass
Vital Connections: Planned Construction

Reading bridge work

**Schuylkill Avenue Bridge**
- **Duration:** Spring 2014 - Spring 2016
- **Scope:** Bridge will be open but some lanes will be closed

**Buttonwood Street Bridge**
- **Duration:** Fall 2014 - Fall 2016
- **Scope:** Bridge will be closed throughout project
- **Alternative:** Use Penn Street Bridge as a detour

**Penn Street Bridge**
- **Duration:** Fall 2016 - Winter 2018
- **Scope:**
  - Bridge will be open but some lanes will be closed
  - Ramp from 422 West to Penn Street will be closed throughout project
- **Alternative(s):**
  - Exit at Bingaman Street Bridge to enter Reading from 422 West
  - To avoid bridge from 422 East: exit at North Wyomissing Boulevard, and take Park Road and Reading Avenue to Buttonwood Street Bridge

**Repair timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schuylkill Avenue</th>
<th>Buttonwood Street</th>
<th>Penn Street</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPROXIMATELY 24 MONTHS</strong></td>
<td><strong>APPROXIMATELY 24 MONTHS</strong></td>
<td><strong>APPROXIMATELY 27 MONTHS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1Q 2Q 3Q 4Q 1Q 2Q 3Q 4Q 1Q 2Q 3Q 4Q 1Q 2Q 3Q 4Q 1Q 2Q 3Q 4Q 1Q 2Q 3Q 4Q</td>
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**Projected costs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schuylkill Avenue</th>
<th>Buttonwood Street</th>
<th>Penn Street</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$13 million</td>
<td>$14 million</td>
<td>$23 million</td>
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**Average daily traffic**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Bingaman Street</th>
<th>19,000</th>
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Source: PennDOT

REDFIELD EAGLE; BOB SCHNEIDER (GRAPHIC); LIAM MIGDALE-SMITH (REPORTING)
Stakeholders

Greater Reading Chamber Alliance [GRCA] (co-chair)
Berks County Commissioners (co-chair)

County of Berks Planning/MPO
PennDOT
City of Reading
Township of Cumru
Borough of Wyomissing
Borough of West Reading
18th Wonder Committee
Met-Ed/First Energy
BARTA/SCTA
Downtown Revitalization
Berks Nature
Schuylkill River Greenway
BAMBA
Berks Alliance

Local Businesses
Education Institutions
Berks Arts Council
Emergency Responders
Commuter Services of PA
PA Americana
Abilities in Motion
Media outlets
Focus

Priority Bridge Projects + 422 West Shore Bypass + 222 North + Passenger Rail reconstruction are key to our economic vibrancy and connecting our communities.

- Businesses & Community Vibrancy
- Local Municipalities Comprehensive Plans
- Pedestrian, Bike & Trail Access, Safety & Connectivity
- Utilities & Infrastructure Alignment
- Arts & Entertainment Access
- Emergency Responders Requirements
- Education Institutions . . . Others
Buttonwood Street Bridge Rehabilitation
Buttonwood Street Bridge Rehabilitation

Complete closure for 2 years
Buttonwood Street Bridge Outreach

- Work Group meetings
- Website (readingbridges.net)
- Media: Newspaper & Local TV
- Major employer outreach
- Penn Ave/Penn St Business owner meetings
- Commute alternatives
  - BARTA Shuttle
- County/Contractor Coordination
Buttonwood Street Bridge Rehabilitation

• Reopened April 7, 2017
Penn Street Bridge Rehabilitation

Closure of US 422 Westbound Ramp & Changing Traffic Patterns for ~2.5 years
Penn Street Bridge Rehabilitation Outreach

Same as Buttonwood Street Outreach +

• Electronic Billboard (partnership with Commuter Services)

• Arts and Entertainment Outreach
  – Detour map/flyer

• Coordination with PennDOT / Contractor
  – Detour Signage
  – Construction Staging/Scheduling
Deconstructing the Penn Street Bridge reconstruction project

Improvements are underway, addressing structural issues and community concerns.

Structural issues and problem areas
Areas identified by PennDOT include the following:
- Chamber repair: The structure supporting the roadway over the railroad tracks is damaged by weather. Construction began in this section to address these issues.
- Surface damage: The north-facing exterior is damaged by weather. Construction began in this section to address these issues.
- Drains/pipe problems: Concrete pipes on the bridge’s north side are damaged. New drain/pipe systems will be installed to this bridge’s north and south sides.
- Electrical repair: Water damage has compromised electrical lines in the roadway under the bridge.
- Superstructure repair: The superstructure on the bridge’s south side will be replaced, along with installation of an additional floor beam under the roadway.
- Parapet replacement: Many of the concrete panels on the parapets are eroding and need to be replaced.
- Outfall restoration: Observation of outfall pipes were used for scenic viewing. They were closed in the 1950s.
- Pier repair: Piers extending into the Schuylkill River are needed for repair, reinforcement, and protection against river damage.
- Road repair: Curb, pavement, and adjacent sidewalks are needed for repair, reinforcement, and protection against river damage.
- Architectural restoration: Spectacular lighting and other historic features have been restored to enhance the appearance of the bridge.
- On-ramp issues: The existing on-ramp will be closed and a new on-ramp will be constructed.
- Shoreline removal: The existing shoreline will be removed to enhance the appearance of the bridge.

Construction zone
The project is taking place in phases over three years. December 2019 is the planned completion date.

Changes planned following repairs
Traffic lanes and sidewalks will be narrowed and a new sidewalk will be added. Measurements of the completed roadway are shown in the following illustrations.

422 west on-ramp
The existing on-ramp will be replaced with a new, historically similar concrete cast in place.

422 west off-ramp
New electrical lines will be installed.

Penn Street Bridge Rehabilitation

Photo Credit: Reading Eagle
Penn Street Bridge Rehabilitation

• Ramp is re-opened and construction to be complete December 2019
422 West Shore Bypass Reconstruction
Bring diverse stakeholders together to efficiently and effectively coordinate with PennDOT during the design (and future construction) phases.
422 West Shore Bypass: Priorities Map

Map of Priorities—Concerns—Opportunities

The West Shore Bypass Working Group requested PennDOT’s attention, consideration, and coordination on the following priority issues related to the preliminary design of the West Shore Bypass reconstruction project.

- Interchange Areas and Transitions
  - Streetscape, Gateways, Traffic Calming, and BMPs
- Penn Street/Penn Avenue
- Divergent Diamond Interchange
- Bike/Ped Facilities and Connections
- Billman Street Bridge and Lancaster Avenue Interchange
- Bike/Ped Facilities and Connections
- West Shore Trail
  - Continues and Connected
- West Shore Communities, Trails, and Recreational Facility Connections
- East Shore Trail
  - Continues and Connected
- Retain RACC Trail Bridge and Utility Crossing
- Access to the Schuylkill River
  - Physical and Visual
- Schlegel Park Enhancements
- West Reading Borough Public Works Facility
- Meted Substation, Transmission Lines, and Streetlights
- North Wyomissing Boulevard Interchange
  - Do not preclude a new bridge over the Schuylkill River

See Corresponding Table for additional details and other priority coordination items not depicted on this map.
422 West Shore Bypass: Priorities

West Shore Bypass Working Group

A Interchange Areas and Transitions
- Streetscapes, Gateways, Traffic Calming, and BMPs
  Incorporate streetscape enhancements, gateways, and other traffic calming treatments, landscaping and green stormwater management facilities/BMPs into the design, particularly for transitions between the interchange ramps and street network within project limits, including:
  - Penn Street/Perenn Avenue
  - Lancaster Avenue
  - Morgantown Road (Route 10)
  - 4th Street/Lancaster Street
  See 18th Wonder Comprehensive Plan.

B Penn Street/Perenn Avenue Divergent Diamond Interchange
Bike/Ped Facilities and Connections
- Provide seamless and separate connections for both bicyclists and pedestrians through the Penn Street Divergent Diamond Interchange (DDI) that are safe, attractive, inviting, comfortable, and convenient. Provide additional design details and opportunities for community input regarding the design of the bike and pedestrian facilities, including the crosswalk treatments and locations, the median facility, bicycle lanes, and connections to the existing and planned facilities on either side of Penn Street/Perenn Avenue. Potential design elements for consideration to make the connection safe and more attractive include pedestrian scale lighting, sitting areas, attractive barriers/fencing (when necessary), and other unique design features to promote the connection between Reading and West Reading. Include direct connections to the West Shore Trail (see D) to provide an alternative route for bicyclists to travel through the interchange area.

C Berningman Street Bridge and Lancaster Avenue Interchange
Bike/Ped Facilities and Connections
- Provide bicycle and pedestrian facilities on the Berningman Street Bridge with direct connections to the Schuylkill River waterfront and trails on both sides of the river. Retain and enhance the bicycle and pedestrian facilities and connections included in the preliminary design for the Berningman Street Bridge and Lancaster Avenue interchange.

D West Shore Trail
- Provide a continuous and connected trail along the west shore of the Schuylkill River, including a seamless connection from the existing Thun Trail south of Lancaster Avenue to both Penn Street and Perenn Avenue. (See map for conceptual trail alignment and revisions to the trail alignment included in the preliminary plan designs. The revised alignment eliminates the need for a sidewalk along the access road to MedEd Substations and R.M. Palmer Company facility.)

E West Shore Communities, Trails, and Recreational Facility
- Connect to the community by maintaining and enhancing connections between the Schuylkill River Trail and Thun Trail and the community on the west side of the Schuylkill River. Connectors between the Trail and other park and recreation facilities and commercial areas should be provided at Chestnut Street, Old Wyoming Road, Schlegel Park, and Lancaster Avenue. See Suburban Berks West Joint Comprehensive Plan and 18th Wonder Comprehensive Plan.

F East Shore Trail
- Provide a separate and continuous trail along the east shore of the Schuylkill River between the existing Schuylkill River Trail and the community on the east side of the Schuylkill River, extending from Pottersville Road to the north of East Shore Trail and incorporate the trail and crossing into the design.

G RACCT Trail Bridge and Utility Crossings
- Consider extending the RACCT Bridge (or another trail bridge at a similar location) and incorporate this trail connection and crossing into the design.

H Access to the Schuylkill River
- Physical and Visual
  - Maintain and enhance visual and physical access to the Schuylkill River, which is a state-designated waterway:
    - Consider view shafts to/from the river, particularly with the design of any noise walls or retention walls.
    - Maintain access to the existing fishing pier on 1st Avenue.
    - Maintain access from the Franklin Street tunnel, under the Penn Street Bridge, to the north side of the Penn Street interchange ramps, particularly for future recreational purposes.
    - Do not preclude future access to the river on the east shore.

I Schlegel Park Enhancements
- Coordinate with the City of Reading and 18th Wonder regarding potential impacts of the Schlegel Park Enhancements on the Schlegel Park. Enhance and maintain access to the park, particularly from the Oakbrook and Millmont neighborhoods and especially for bicyclists and pedestrians. See 18th Wonder Comprehensive Plan.

J West Reading Borough Public Works Facility
- Coordinate with West Reading regarding any potential impacts to the Borough's Public Works facility located at 1st Avenue and Chestnut Street.

K MetEd Substation, Transmission Lines, and Streetlights
- Coordinate with MetEd regarding the potential impacts to the substations and transmission lines, as well as the future ownership and design of street lights along the West Shore Bypass.

L North Wyomissing Boulevard Interchange
- Consider and do not preclude a potential new bridge over the Schuylkill River at the North Wyomissing Blvd interchange to connect Wyomissing and Reading.

Priorities—Concerns—Opportunities Not Included on the Map
- Share the alternatives evaluation for the various interchange designs (specifically at Penn Street/Penn Avenue and Lancaster Avenue) with the community. Share information regarding the environmental clearance documents and Section 4(f) resources and process with the community.
- Coordinate with the West Shore Bypass Working Group regarding design details for the bicycle and pedestrian facilities, trail connections, streetscape enhancements, and waterfront access.
- Coordinate with the West Shore Bypass Working Group and support local efforts to pursue technical and financial resources from other state agencies (i.e., DCEC, DCNR, DEP, etc.) to better integrate the West Shore Bypass with the communities on both sides of the Schuylkill River.
- Coordinate with Emergency Services throughout the design phase regarding potential EMS access to the Bypass, closures, and detours. In particular, the potential closure of the Berningman Street Bridge is a significant concern because the City of Reading's fire, EMS, and police personnel and equipment may be isolated and emergency response times may be impacted.
- Coordinate with the municipalities and Greater Reading Chamber Alliance regarding potential closures and detours, signage for detours, signage for detours for trail facilities, and permanent signage after the project is complete.
- Coordinate with municipalities regarding any project elements that would require the municipality to assume responsibility and/or provide funding for infrastructure or ongoing maintenance, such as streetlights.
- Coordinate with SCA/BARTA regarding the design of bus stops within the project limits, particularly stops on Lancaster Avenue and Penn Avenue.
- Consider and coordinate with the efforts of the Reading and West Reading Main Street Programs.

Recently Completed and Relevant Plans
- 18th Wonder Comprehensive Plan (Draft—November 2017)
- Suburban Berks West Joint Comprehensive Plan (Draft—April 2018)
Priorities & Concerns

Business & Community Priorities

- Modern, Safe and Efficient Transportation and Infrastructure System
- Communication: Economic & Community Vibrancy (during construction)
- Regional Connectivity
- Workforce Mobility

Trail/Connectivity Values

- Connectors to Schuylkill River Trail & Feeder Trails
- Access to Riverfront both the East & West Shore
- Sustainable, Aesthetically Pleasing Storm Water Best Management Practices
- Develop a Seamless, No Conflict Pathway for Bicycle and Pedestrians
Municipal Priorities

• Access to the Waterfront
• Connectivity between the Business District, Trails & Park System
• Maintenance Responsibility
• Impact the Project will have on Municipal Public Work Facilities
• Align Municipal Comprehensive Plans

Additionally:

• Utility Infrastructure Alignment
• Positioning Street Lighting (maintenance/safety/aesthetics)
• Appropriate Signage
Recognition: Governor’s Award
Reflections

- What worked?
- What would we do different?
- What’s next?

readingbridges.net