‘Restore Pennsylvania’ Initiative Would Reinvest in Infrastructure

Gov. Tom Wolf’s new multi-faceted, statewide “Restore Pennsylvania” proposal would target Pennsylvanians in their own communities by improving transportation access, economic growth, and overall quality of life.

by Leslie S. Richards, Secretary of Transportation

With summer here, PennDOT and municipalities across the state have begun another busy construction season. Pennsylvania has the fifth largest state-maintained transportation system in the nation, and the locally owned network is even larger. Mobility and safety on commonwealth roadways are critical, which is why Gov. Tom Wolf’s new Restore Pennsylvania initiative is focused on improving infrastructure in all Pennsylvania communities.

PennDOT recognizes that each municipality has its own infrastructure needs, yet there are limited mechanisms to provide smaller communities with funding to make improvements such as road upgrades and bridge repairs.

With Restore Pennsylvania, the Wolf Administration would raise $4.5 billion through a commonsense severance tax on natural gas extraction to infuse funding into infrastructure projects determined by local governments. By leveraging the voice of local officials, Restore Pennsylvania can target communities’ greatest needs. PennDOT is proud to support this initiative to repair, revitalize, and enhance Pennsylvania’s infrastructure systems.

Restore Pennsylvania enhances and supports the critical work that PennDOT is already doing to help ensure that a safe and reliable transportation network is available to all Pennsylvanians.

Transportation Capital Projects
Pennsylvania has close to 40,000 state-maintained highway miles, almost as many state-maintained highway miles as New York, New Jersey, and all of New England combined. The maintenance of this system requires continued investment. A safe and reliable transportation network is critical for Pennsylvanians, and investment in transportation capital projects is one of the key focus areas for Restore Pennsylvania.

Our state also has more than 25,000 miles of unpaved roads, 17,500 of which are maintained by municipalities. These roads provide access...
What You Need to Know About Truck Restrictions on Local Roads

Act 31 of 2018 opens more roads to larger commercial vehicles

by Patrick Wright, Traffic Engineer, Pennoni

Accommodating trucks on roads is an important yet difficult task. Because many of our roads were built before the advent of larger vehicles, they may not properly accommodate a truck’s movements. Damage to infrastructure, including roads, road edges, buildings, bridges, and poles, can result.

The size, weight, and loads of vehicles are regulated by the PA Vehicle Code, Title 75, Chapter 49, in concert with federal laws. Last year, the state legislature passed Act 31 of 2018, opening up more state and local roads to use by larger commercial vehicles. Act 31 took effect in December 2018.

Act 31 of 2018 changed the maximum width of vehicles from 8 feet to 8 feet 6 inches (102 inches) and now allows those vehicles to access certain state and local roads that were not previously open to larger trucks.

What is the STAA?

The federal Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA), passed in 1982, allows large vehicles, referred to as STAA trucks, to operate on routes that are part of the national network. This network refers to the interstate system and other designated highways that were a part of the federal-aid primary system as of June 1, 1991, and are listed in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, Part 658, Appendix A. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provides standards for STAA trucks designating the minimum truck sizes that all states must allow on the national network. However, states are encouraged to allow reasonable access for STAA trucks on state highways.

To comply with federal law, PennDOT established a network of state highways on which STAA trucks could operate, as well as a process for carriers to request access from this network to other destinations. Historically, PennDOT has used a map to identify the STAA network, and by state law, STAA trucks are restricted to these routes.

What does Act 31 of 2018 do?

Act 31 of 2018 incorporated some important changes about which STAA vehicles can access which roads. The act amended Section 4921 of the Vehicle Code, which regulates the width, length, and height of vehicles. One of the amendments increased the maximum width of vehicles from 8 feet to 8 feet 6 inches (102 inches). As a result, these vehicles can now access many state roads that were not previously part of the commonwealth’s approved STAA network.

This change does not affect roads and bridges that are already posted for size and weight restrictions. However, many roads that are not posted are now open to the STAA vehicles. This includes both PennDOT- and municipal-owned roads.

Under Title 75, Section 4902(a-b), municipalities have the authority to restrict vehicles by size and weight based on highway or traffic conditions. In particular, these restrictions may be established to prevent damage to pavement or bridges (Section 4902a) or when hazardous traffic conditions or other safety factors require such a prohibition or restriction (Section 4902b).
Typically, a study must be performed to determine if these restrictions are warranted, but Act 31 waives the study requirement for local authorities to restrict STAA vehicles on local roads. PennDOT continues to require an engineering study be conducted before placing a truck restriction on any state road to help ensure any citations issued will be upheld if challenged.

Following the passage of Act 31, PennDOT reviewed certain state routes affected by the legislation to determine if they could safely accommodate these larger vehicles. If warranted, truck restriction signs have been posted, typically restricting trucks with trailers greater than 45 feet. Within the Vehicle Code, exemptions to these restrictions include school buses, emergency vehicles, and construction or maintenance vehicles for government, utilities, and contractors.

3) If there are no existing restrictions, conduct a study to determine if the road should be restricted. Although the law does not require a study to establish restrictions for STAA vehicles, documenting why a restriction was placed is critical if the restriction is ever challenged.

What can municipalities do?

If you are concerned about larger vehicles using some of your local roads, consider the following steps:

1) Identify routes that may be a concern. These could be local roads near manufacturing and shipping facilities or routes that are used as shortcuts to avoid traffic or longer routes.

2) Determine if any of these routes already have restrictions. If the roads are already restricted in some manner (such as weight limits for a road/bridge, height limits, or truck restriction based on traffic conditions), then they will continue to be restricted, and no action is necessary.

Because many of our roads were built before the advent of larger vehicles, they may not properly accommodate a truck’s movements.
A test run with an STAA vehicle can be completed to see if there are any issues with local roads. Some basic factors that could restrict larger vehicles include:

- Lane widths on the road are 10 feet or less.
- Horizontal and vertical curves would require the vehicles to encroach upon the opposing traffic lane.
- The road is a local neighborhood street and has traffic (bicycles and/or pedestrians) not compatible with larger vehicles, and/or there are nearby schools, parks, or other features that generate traffic incompatible with trucks.
- Certain features, such as a narrow bridge, roadside obstructions, or tight curb radii, create safety hazards.
- Steep grades could affect truck speed and stopping distances.

If the restriction affects access to or from a state route, be sure to coordinate the restriction with your PennDOT district.

4) After the study is conducted, adopt the restriction via ordinance. If a restriction is warranted, the municipality’s governing body must pass an ordinance declaring any traffic restrictions on local roads.

5) Post the road. Like with other travel restrictions on local roads, a sign must be posted on any roads restricting larger trucks. The sign must be placed within 25 feet of the intersection on the right side of the restricted road. Supplemental signs can be placed on the left and in advance of the intersection, if needed. If the restriction does not begin at an intersection, then advanced information must be placed at the nearest upstream intersection. Sign posting requirements are described in Title 67, Chapter 212, Section 212.177.

For more information on the study requirements, posting, and other details, please contact LTAP or attend the LTAP Engineering and Traffic Studies course.
2019 Build a Better Mousetrap Winners

Chester County Township Wins With its Innovative Storage Device

East Brandywine Township in Chester County received the top prize and the cities of Easton in Northampton County and Williamsport in Lycoming County were named runners-up in PennDOT LTAP’s 2019 Build a Better Mousetrap Contest.

The annual competition honors innovative inventions, improvements, and projects built and designed by road crews or municipal employees to improve safety, reduce costs, or increase efficiency.

LTAP awarded the first-place honor to East Brandywine’s road department for its innovative solution for storing salt spreaders for trucks. “The spreaders were always on the floor taking up space, and if we needed to move them, we had to hook them up to a chain with the backhoe,” township roadmaster Matthew VanLew says. “We also used a backhoe to mount the spreaders on the trucks, which took two people.”

The road department devised a portable storage rack for the spreaders made of scrap lumber and $50 in wheels and bolts. The rack holds four spreaders and can be moved around the garage and outside to a lift for mounting the spreaders on the trucks.

“This saves time for the department, using one person and no extra equipment to install and remove salt spreaders from the trucks,” VanLew says.

The City of Easton placed as a runner-up in the state contest for an inlet grate puller that employees designed and fabricated to make it easier to remove storm sewer inlet covers for inspection and cleaning. For around $150 in labor costs, the user-friendly tool was made with a stop sign post, a chain with a hook, and a car jack. The puller eliminates the need to use a backhoe to remove difficult grates.

The City of Williamsport also received runner-up honors for an innovative design it calls the “Polish paver.” At a cost of around $600 and 24 hours of labor, staff used steel, a welder, pins, and bolts to create a device that attaches to the back of a dump truck and allows them to repair more potholes with the least amount of manpower and equipment. Two employees operating the Polish paver can lay about 10 tons of blacktop in 10 minutes, thus eliminating the need for a paver.

This is the ninth year that LTAP has sponsored the Build a Better Mousetrap competition, which recognizes municipalities that build innovative gadgets or develop improved ways of doing a transportation-related job.

East Brandywine’s winning entry will be submitted into the national competition, whose winners will be announced at the annual LTAP/TTAP national conference this summer. All entries at the national level will be posted on the LTAP/TTAP website and compiled into an electronic booklet.

Using an old stop sign post, a car jack, and a chain with a hook, two employees at the City of Easton engineered a device that easily removes storm sewer inlet covers for inspection and cleaning. The tool is placed over the inlet grate with the angle iron against the curb. The hook is attached to the grate, and the handle is cranked to lift the cover.

The East Brandywine Township road crew designed and built a portable storage rack for spreaders out of scrap lumber and inexpensive wheels. A hoist lifts the spreaders for mounting on trucks.

The City of Williamsport’s public works department created the Polish paver, which attaches to a truck and more efficiently lays blacktop to repave roads and repair potholes.
for industry, agriculture, and tourism to more than 3.6 million residents. Restore Pennsylvania would provide funding to support the maintenance of these roadways, enabling crucial access for those who live and work in these areas, as well as visitors who want to explore Pennsylvania’s “wilder” side. Restore Pennsylvania would accelerate the progress of projects to resurface, repave, and repair four-digit, lower-traffic roads and provide technical assistance and funding for dirt and gravel roads throughout the state.

Support for transit programs is also critical to Pennsylvania’s transportation network. Public transportation gets people to work and to medical appointments, helps them remain in their homes longer, and connects them to their community while reducing congestion.

Public transportation is available in some form in every county in Pennsylvania: 49 counties have fixed-route service, while all 67 counties have shared-ride service delivered by 44 providers. The state supported nearly 400 million transit trips in the 2017-18 state fiscal year, and an average of 62 percent of transit users have said they have no alternate transportation option. Restore Pennsylvania would support new public transit capital programs statewide to help enhance this crucial service.

Restore Pennsylvania enhances and supports the critical work that PennDOT is already doing to help ensure that a safe and reliable transportation network is available to all Pennsylvanians. It would also create new flexible funding options for businesses that need local infrastructure upgrades to enable development projects and multimodal and large-scale capital projects for transit.

**Green Infrastructure**

Pennsylvania has long recognized the need to protect open space, address maintenance needs in state parks, preserve working farms, clean up abandoned mines and restore watersheds, provide funds for recreational trails and local parks, help communities address land use, and provide new and upgraded water and sewer systems.

PennDOT understands and is fully invested in a multimodal transportation system that supports our residents’ mobility and quality of life. Expanding green infrastructure meets those goals in many ways, but both challenges and untapped opportunities exist.

More than 19,000 miles of streams and rivers do not meet federal and state water quality standards. Nearly 200,000 acres of abandoned mine land exist across 43 counties. More than 2,000 working farms remain on county waiting lists to be preserved. More than 200,000 orphaned and abandoned wells pollute our landscape. There is a significant backlog of needed infrastructure work to fix deteriorating buildings, water and sewer treatment systems, and trails and roads in state parks and forests.

Restore Pennsylvania would provide significant new funding to enable new environmental projects and recreational opportunities across the state, including infrastructure and maintenance in state parks, creation and revitalization of local parks, and funding for hiking, biking, and ATV trail projects. Support is critical: These projects help sustain communities, protect the environment, and enhance quality of life.

Leslie Richards has been Pennsylvania’s Secretary of Transportation since 2015. She previously served as a Montgomery County commissioner and a Whitemarsh Township supervisor.
### Upcoming 2019 Classes

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To Register:  
PHONE: 1-800-FOR-LTAP (367-5827)  
WEBSITE: www.ltap.state.pa.us  
This represents some of our scheduled courses. Look for updates on the website.

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### Congratulations to the following Roads Scholar I recipients  
(Certified between February 1 and April 30, 2019)

- Jeremy N. Garl, Muhlenberg Twp., Berks Co.
- Patrick McVeigh, Washington Twp., Franklin Co.
- Michael W. Eichenlaub, Upper Leacock Twp., Lancaster Co.

### Congratulations to the following Roads Scholar II recipients  
(Certified between February 1 and April 30, 2019)

- Keith McGowan, Caernarvon Twp., Berks Co.
- Tina Enderlein, Hollidaysburg Boro, Blair Co.
- Greg S. Wilsbach, Middletown Boro, Dauphin Co.
- Dennis P. Haggerty Jr., Horsham Twp., Montgomery Co.

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### Roads Scholars, Share the News!  
LTAP has a press release you can modify and use to announce your accomplishment to your local media. To obtain a copy of the release, go to [www.ltap.state.pa.us](http://www.ltap.state.pa.us) and look for the release under “Roads Scholar Program.”

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### Become trained as a Roads Scholar…  
and be a valuable part of your municipality’s team

Through the Roads Scholar Program, municipal employees and officials are trained by LTAP’s professional team in the latest road-related technologies and innovations and receive recognition as a certified Roads Scholar.

The Roads Scholar Program consists of two designations—Roads Scholar I and Roads Scholar II—and provides a professional certification to municipal employees and officials who attend a certain number of LTAP courses within a three-year period (10 courses for Roads Scholar I and 8 for Roads Scholar II). During these courses, participants are educated on up-to-date maintenance and safety topics so that they become even more valuable members of their municipal team.

Courses eligible for Roads Scholar credit are conducted at convenient locations throughout the commonwealth. To learn more, go to [www.ltap.state.pa.us](http://www.ltap.state.pa.us) and click on “Roads Scholar Program.”

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### Use your CPR training as class credit toward your Roads Scholar designation

Successful completion of an approved CPR training course accepted by your employer or the Pennsylvania Department of Health earns you one workshop credit toward Roads Scholar certification. A copy of a completion certificate must be forwarded to the LTAP office in Harrisburg within the three-year training window.
Mark Your Calendar For Upcoming Webinars

Each of the following LTAP webinars will be repeated on two consecutive days. Registration is free and will open 30 days prior to the webinar; email notifications will be sent. Register at www.ltap.state.pa.us (under “Webinars”).

Crosswalks
August 22 or 23, Noon

This webinar will examine crosswalks and the needs of pedestrians through a review of pedestrian safety data, mobility characteristics, and behaviors. It will also look at federal and state guidelines for crosswalks and discuss how FHWA and PennDOT programs can help to improve pedestrian safety and how certain elements at crosswalks can be implemented.

The one-hour webinar will:
- Examine the components of the pedestrian environment, including safety statistics, facilities, behavior, and characteristics.
- Review PennDOT and federal regulations, guidelines, and research for implementation of crosswalks.
- Apply proven safety countermeasures to improve walkability and pedestrian safety.

Municipal Bidding
October 17 or 18, Noon

This webinar will discuss the requirements for municipalities to bid public contracts for procuring material, equipment, and services. It will review limitations on purchases, quotes, and bids and cover current exemptions from municipal bidding, including piggyback contracts with the Department of General Services and Co-Stars. Requirements of the state Prevailing Wage Act, such as what bidding thresholds trigger prevailing wage, will be covered. Advertising and bond requirements will also be reviewed. The webinar will include an electronic download of the Department of Community and Economic Development publication, the Pennsylvania Purchasing Handbook.

Traffic Incident Management Course Now Available Online

Make sure your first responders and road maintenance workers are properly trained in how to manage traffic incidents. Learning how to effectively clear traffic accidents and other incidents helps to improve responder and motorist safety while also reducing congestion delays.

New online training is now available on the best practices of traffic incident management (TIM). This training aims to satisfy the three core goals of the National Unified Goal for Traffic Incident Management: 1) responder safety, 2) safe, quick clearance, and 3) prompt, reliable, interoperable communications.

The training is geared to law enforcement, firefighters, EMS personnel, towing and recovery operators, public works and road maintenance staff, and anyone else whose daily responsibilities place them on the road, regardless of its size or speed limit.

The PA TIM training has been fully vetted by the Federal Highway Administration and has been granted full equivalency status. Multiple credit types have been approved including 4 hours of professional development hours (PDH), continuing law enforcement education (CLEE) of the Municipal Police Officers’ Education & Training Commission, and continuing education units (CEU) of the PA Department of Health Bureau of EMS.

To access the training, go to the TRAIN PA website, www.train.org/pa/welcome, and either log in or create an account. Type “TIM” in the search bar to find the blended learning course.

Missed one of LTAP webinars? Catch up online!

Previously recorded webinars are available on the LTAP website, www.ltap.state.pa.us (under “Webinars”). The following titles can be viewed there:
- ADA Transition Plans – Reviews development of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transition plan (if your municipality has 50 or more employees) or self-evaluation (if you’re a smaller community).
- Curves on Local Roads: Issues and Safety Tools – Provides an overview of the application of horizontal alignment signs for curves.
- Speed Limits on Local Roads – Gives the tools needed to identify speed issues, conduct appropriate speed limit studies, install signs, and determine solutions to manage speed issues.
- Stop Signs and Intersection Traffic Control – Focuses on stop signs at intersections and other strategies, such as pavement markings and additional signs, to enhance visibility.
- PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool – Explores this tool that municipalities can use to research crash data on local roads.
- Truck Restrictions – Explains the recent changes to state law that have opened local roads to more potential truck traffic and how your municipality can respond.

Don’t be a ‘no-show’ at training.

If you registered for a class and can no longer attend, please let LTAP know. Likewise, if you want to attend a class, please register two weeks in advance. This assures that there are enough class materials and that you will receive a certificate of attendance.

Register or cancel through the LTAP website, www.ltap.state.pa.us, or your Planning Partner. Or email LTAP@state.pa.us.