

SAFETY AND PRESERVATION FIRST

The 2021-2045 Cambria County Long-Range Transportation Plan presents 72 approved transportation projects for the planning period. The vast majority of these projects will address structurally deficient bridges on the state highway system and maintain roadway pavement conditions in a “state of good repair.” Other projects will enhance the safety of the transportation system, which may reduce crashes and fatalities, and expand the bicycle/pedestrian network.

Additional suggestions for projects were made through the online survey and outreach meetings, or drawn from Connections, a regional greenways planning document. Some of these suggestions were for projects already programmed on the Transportation Improvement Program or in the Twelve Year Plan. Other suggestions were for minor improvements that may be able to be addressed by PennDOT’s County maintenance department. Finally, several comments addressed broad needs that will entail multiple projects to achieve the desired outcome. In some cases, feasibility or alternative analysis studies will be needed to determine the best course of action. These and other yet-to-be identified transportation needs can be evaluated and potentially added to the approved long-range transportation plan project list at any time.

As part of the project development process, transportation problems and potential projects generated from municipality, agency, other stakeholder input or public comment that may require a local funding match are required to be supported and sponsored by the municipality in which the projects are located or by other agencies or organizations that have the legal authority to provide or receive transportation funding. Documentation in the form of the level 1 and 2 Linking Planning and NEPA forms assures the commitment by the sponsoring entity of the need and support of a proposed project. This process generally excludes potential transportation problems or projects that can be addressed by local or agency jurisdictional actions and funding; are general maintenance improvements; or are not a priority of the municipality. This approach results in a more reasonable representative list of projects and programs that can be advanced within the financial resources available.

Selection Criteria

Projects included on the long-range transportation plan meet at least one of the following transportation objectives, which serve as project selection criteria:

- A. Maintain highway pavement and bridge conditions to state standards.
- B. Maintain facilities to achieve or exceed facility and equipment lifecycles.
- C. Increase connectivity within planned growth areas and among modes.

- D. Modernize regional access of highway, aviation and rail modes to reduce travel time and increase frequency of service.
- E. Reduce crashes and fatalities toward 0.
- F. Minimize recurring congestion.
- G. Increase public transportation ridership.
- H. Increase bicycle and pedestrian trail mileage within and between designated growth areas and to recreation and tourism destinations.
- I. Provide technical assistance and funding to county and municipal planning, when available.
- J. Maintain a general knowledge of environmental resources and access to current GIS data.
- K. Support ongoing resource evaluation and designation.
- L. Avoid impacts to resources, minimize impacts to resources where avoidance is not feasible and mitigate impacts to resources where practical.
- M. Recognize and interpret resources that intersect with transportation project sites.
- N. Finance maintenance and preservation with public funds.
- O. Finance improvements through public-private partnerships.

Project Prioritization

The Cambria County MPO has an established process for ranking multiple candidate highway and bridge projects for available funds on the transportation improvement program and long range transportation plan.

Highway projects are evaluated on eight criteria with two criteria carrying a double weight in the ranking score:

- Current status in the Twelve Year Program
- AADT volume served
- Municipality/County served
- Local request, support and readiness
- Potential to complete a missing link or gap section
- Linkage with major economic centers outside the County
- Relationship to Economic/Conservation Goals (double weighted)

Cambria County has an established process for ranking multiple candidate highway and bridge projects for available transportation funds.

- Crash (accident) history (double weighted)

Bridge projects are also evaluated on eight criteria with two criteria carrying a double weight in the ranking score:

- Current status in the Twelve year Program
- Inclusion on the Bridge Bill Program
- Bridge Sufficiency rating
- Relationship to Economic/Conservation Goals
- Local request, support and readiness
- AADT volume served
- Length of detour, if bridge is posted or closed (double weighted)
- Structural Status (posted weight limit) (double weighted)

Each project is scored using a computation spreadsheet file; space is provided for qualitative comments. Projects are then listed with their scores for approval to the transportation improvement program and the long-range transportation plan. Projects that are not approved to the transportation improvement program or long-range transportation plan may be re-evaluated when additional transportation funds are available, or in a new planning period.

The emphasis on funding highway and bridge preservation is expected to continue—largely as a function of District 9-0’s technical leadership. The selection and prioritization of highway and bridge preservation projects (led by PennDOT District 9-0) received no comment during the outreach meetings. As the Cambria County MPO seeks to support economic development, they may want to review how the priority preservation projects align with the County’s economic development efforts. For example, if public and private efforts are focused on preparing a site for re-use or re-development, a resurfacing project should be scheduled for completion as part of the site preparation, not during the site opening or first years. The Cambria County MPO may want to facilitate sharing of these types of schedules among economic development agencies and District 9-0 when prioritizing preservation projects.

A LOCAL BRIDGE PRESERVATION PROCESS

The Cambria County MPO will prioritize local bridges 20 feet or longer using the PennDOT Bridge Management System 2 Risk Analysis tool supplemented with additional information regarding other factors of condition, function, and performance, such as average daily traffic or average daily truck traffic, length of detour, vehicle weight, etc. It will select the 10 highest risk bridges and contact local bridge owners for local input on need. If the local owner is interested, discussions of programming and

local contribution will begin. If the local owner is not interested, consideration will proceed to the next-highest-risk local bridge owner.

For local bridges less than 20 feet long, the Cambria County MPO will finalize and follow this process to develop a Local Bridge Management database and to identify and prioritize projects in the off years of the transportation improvement program update cycle:

- Prepare and send a letter to counties and municipalities in the region soliciting local bridge projects (less than 20 feet);
 - provide table of recipient's local bridges as identified in the County Bridge Database (a local version of PennDOT's Bridge Management System—much smaller but contains at minimum a listing of bridge name, location, type, size, status, last inspection date, and condition);
 - request that any new bridges be added and that any candidates for removal be identified;
 - notify counties and municipalities that inspection data will be used in County prioritization of local bridge projects;
 - request inspection data, where available; and
 - request readiness to discuss a local funding commitment within 12 months (maximum) or by a specified date in advance of the transportation improvement program update.
- Compile the response of potential local bridge projects and inspection data into the County Local Bridge Management Database; follow up with local bridge owners to request any missing data.
- Rank local bridge projects based on risk methodology.
- Meet with officials (county or local) of high ranking bridges, bridge inspectors and PennDOT District bridge unit to discuss ranked bridges; select the two highest-risk local bridge projects in each county; each pair could include one county bridge and one local bridge, two county bridges, or two local bridges.
- Begin discussions of project programming and local contribution.

Approved Projects

Highway and Bridge Projects

The Cambria County MPO selects the following previously identified highway and bridge projects, including:

- 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- 2021-2032 Twelve Year Plan (TYP)
- All current State poor-condition bridges; costs are conservatively estimated for full replacement using the PennDOT suggested rate of \$650 per square foot of deck area. Some current bridge sufficiency ratings suggest that only rehabilitation may be needed, however, physical conditions could worsen if these bridges are not addressed until later in the plan period.
- All current Local poor-condition bridges > 20 feet; costs are also conservatively estimated for full replacement, as described above. The total cost would be shared: 95 percent federal and state, 5 percent local.

Table 7-1 provides a summary of the estimated 2021-2045 long-range transportation plan project costs.

Table 7-1: 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan Highway and Bridge Project Cost Summary

	Short-term 2021-2024	Mid-term 2025-2032	Long-term 2033-2045	Total 2021-2045
Summary Cost Estimates by Period	\$52,152,060	\$130,070,132	\$224,746,808	\$406,969,000

These projects are listed with their estimated dates of construction and estimated costs in Appendix A.

Transit Projects

The Cambria County MPO affirms the 2021-2044 Public Transit Long Range Plan, as shown in Appendix C.

Cambria County affirms CamTran’s long range plan for transit facilities and service.

As CamTran maintains and considers expansion of its transit service area, it is likely that future transit projects will include the following:

- Continued replacement of gasoline-fueled buses with buses fueled by compressed natural gas.
- Extension of natural gas supply lines to all facilities, including additional compressed natural gas fueling stations.
- Additional vehicles.
- Expanded maintenance facilities.

Such projects have not been cost-estimated but can be foreseen in CamTran's long-range transit planning needs.

Additionally, improvements to PA 711 in Indiana County between PA 56 and PA 403 would be beneficial in moving traffic, particularly trucks, efficiently between Johnstown and US 22.

Large-scale Conceptual and Illustrative Projects

The long-range transportation plan contains three additional projects that were identified during the plan update process and that have regional significance and substantial costs. These projects are listed below as Illustrative Projects due to the fact that their feasibility, scope, costs, or funding sources are not yet clearly defined. Thus, these potential transportation improvements are currently not programmed.

- Completion of the New Germany interchange. This interchange was constructed as a half-interchange more than a decade ago for US 219 northbound traffic to exit and enter the limited access US 219 near New Germany. Local residents and officials opposed the southbound portion of the interchange. As of 2011, the New Germany area is a growth area in the County's Comprehensive Plan. It functions as a small economic center of local businesses, including manufacturers. A full interchange would support economic and community development in this defined growth area.
- Restoration of the Johnstown train station. Amid changes in passenger rail ridership and ticketing technology, the train station building became disconnected from rail operations and has been neglected. The building is significant for its architecture and is occasionally used as a gathering and performance space. Restoration of the building would enable its use as a landmark visitors center, fully integrated with Johnstown's rail history and heritage. As of 2020, funding to perform a comprehensive engineering and cost analysis study had been secured from PennDOT. This study will determine the costs for renovation to the building, after which time funding for construction will need to be identified.