

Project Selection Process

Introduction

Federal law and regulations require that in all urbanized areas with a population of over 50,000 persons, local and state officials work cooperatively to maintain a continuous and comprehensive long-range transportation planning program. Since 1964, the Erie Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), also known as the Erie Area Transportation Study, is the responsible body for fulfilling these federal requirements.

Every two years, the MPO produces a local Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which contains the programmed transportation projects throughout Erie County. This short-range document is developed in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and the Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority (EMTA).

The TIP details the planned expenditure of federal funds and state capital funds for specific programs and projects, within specified limits of fiscal constraint. The TIP years are based on the federal fiscal year, which extends from October 1st to September 30th. The list of projects on the TIP coincides with the first four year segment of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Twelve Year Program (TYP), which is developed by PennDOT and adopted by the State Transportation Commission (STC) every two years, in tandem with the Erie MPO TIP.

Projects are divided into categories:

- Highway and Bridge Program
- Interstate Management Program
- Public Transportation Program

Process Overview

Development of the 2023-2026 TIP project lists began over a year before adoption. Considerations included the availability of total funding (what the needs are vs. the amount of funding available), the availability of different types of funding, and overall goals of the program. The most important consideration in all programs was to make sure all carryover projects from the 2021 TIP were funded to completion (e.g. projects partially funded but not yet fully complete during the current TIP cycle). These carryover projects constituted a very large portion of the total dollars available. Additional considerations included the Long Range Transportation Plan, public and stakeholder input, performance measures, air quality and environmental justice.

During this TIP update cycle two major changes to the project list took place. The first occurred after the August 11th Technical Advisory Committee Meeting when the board voted to fund the gap of the Central Bayfront Parkway Multimodal Project through the TIP base funds. In order to accomplish this, three paving projects were deferred. The second change came with the passage of the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 (IIJA) on November 15th

2021. The base funding of the Erie MPO over the 4-year Highway/Bridge TIP period rose from \$71,719,000 to \$101,552,000, an increase of \$29,833,000. This extra funding allowed the projects previously delayed to be advanced. An additional 11 projects advanced at least a year within the 4-year TIP and 10 projects advanced from the 12-year TYP to the 4-year TIP.

Consideration of the Long Range Transportation Plan

The Erie MPO's most recent LRTP was completed in March 2022, and was used as a tool in TIP project selection. The LRTP was developed collaboratively with direct input from municipal officials, the general public, various agency stakeholders, and PennDOT officials. It provided a clear roadmap that could directly feed the TIP's development by laying out a detailed fiscally constrained listing of prioritized projects. Because it was developed with regular input with PennDOT's District 1-0 staff, it allowed their planning and programming unit to have a thorough understanding of our region's priorities and needs, and enabled them to easily communicate this information to project managers and other staff within the agency.

Consideration of Public and Stakeholder Input

There were several opportunities for Erie MPO voting members, transportation stakeholders, and the general public to provide input before, during, and even toward the end of the TIP development process. The first opportunity was during the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan. During the summer of 2021, outreach was conducted to understand the needs of the public.

During TIP development, MPO committee meetings were open to the public. Also, the draft 2023 TIP project list was posted on the MPO's website and emailed to our stakeholder list in August 2021. This outreach continued as the draft TIP changed and evolved.

Finally, the Erie MPO 2023-2026 TIP was opened for a 30-day public comment period. Public outreach followed the Erie MPO Public Participation Plan. This included placing a legal advertisement in an Erie Times News, placing TIP documents on the Erie County website, Facebook posts and press releases as well as mailings to select groups. Virtual and in-person public hearings were also held during this 30-day public comment period May 12th through June 10th 2022.

During this period, the PennDOT Connects process began. PennDOT District 1-0 reached out to municipalities where new projects would be located. Erie MPO staff and PennDOT staff worked with municipalities to define the scope of each project and take into consideration local planning studies and needs.

Considerations For All Projects

- **Long Range Transportation Plan**
- **Public and Stakeholder Input**
- **Funding eligibility**
- **Air Quality Conformity**
- **Environmental Justice**
- **Performance Measures**

Consideration of Federal/state funding program eligibility requirements

The Erie MPO allocated base funding in five federal categories and two state categories. All projects must meet federal and state guidelines for the funds assigned to them. For example, the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is Federal funding for projects with the purpose of reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries. Funding qualification is verified by PennDOT Center for Program Development and Management.

Performance Management (see Performance Based Planning and Programming Section)

Federal regulations established National Performance Management Measures for the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), pavement and NHS bridge deck condition, various traffic related conditions and transit performance measures. Targets are established by PennDOT and adopted by the Erie MPO. Projects must work to achieve those targets.

Air Quality (see Air Quality Conformity Determination Report)

Erie County was impacted by the February 16th, 2018 D.C. Circuit Decision on the 1997 8-hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards Revocation. All regionally significant projects must be evaluated for ozone. This is done by PennDOT’s Planning and Programming Center.

Environmental Justice (see Environmental Justice Summary)

Proposed projects are evaluated for benefits and burdens to human health and environment on minority and low-income populations.

Statewide Items Program

The Statewide Items Program is managed in PennDOT’s Center for Program Development and Management (CPDM). It is comprised of a variety of statewide and multi-region projects, spending line items for routine transportation related work, and reserve line items that hold funds for a variety of programs and Statewide Managed Programs.

Many of these funds are competitive across the state. When the Erie MPO is eligible to apply for the funds, the board votes on submissions. These projects will appear on the Highway/Bridge Project List.

| Project Categories |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statewide Items Program • Interstate Management Program • Public Transportation Program • Highway and Bridge Program |

These funds include the following:

- Transportation Alternatives Set-aside Program
- Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety Program (RRX)
- Transportation Infrastructure Investment Fund (TIIF)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Set-aside
- Secretary’s Discretionary (Spike) Reserves
- Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) funds

- Automated Red Light Enforcement (ARLE)
- Green Light–Go Programs
- Multimodal Transportation Fund
- Recreational Trails

Interstate Management Program

PennDOT’s Interstate Steering Committee (ISC) manages projects on and around I-90, I-79 and I-86. Projects on the Interstate Management Program include the carryover projects from the 2021 Program. Added projects support statewide transportation Performance Management targets. PennDOT’s Bureau of Maintenance and Operations (BOMO) reviewed all carryover and new project-based Asset Management scoring (High, Medium, Low). These scores were based on outputs from the Bridge Asset Management System (BAMS) and the Pavement Asset Management System (PAMS).

Another important factor in new project selection was PennDOT Districts’ capacity to deliver the projects given their anticipated project schedules, cash-flow, and staff availability. The ISC presented their Interstate needs for discussion with each PennDOT district. The District 1-0 presentation occurred virtually on August 25th 2021. The Erie MPO was invited to join the conversation. More information can be found in the chapter on the Interstate Management Program.

Public Transportation Program

In Erie County, the projects on the Public Transportation Program are created by the Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority (EMTA). As with the other programs, projects being carried forward from the previous 2021 TIP are given priority. In addition, transit projects reflect the priorities established by:

- The project prioritization process for the LRTP
- The recommendations in each Planning Partner’s adopted Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan
- The priorities expressed by fixed route and shared ride transit providers in the Transit Development Plan
- The targets adopted in the Agency Safety Plan
- The targets developed with the Transit Asset Management (TAM) process for asset maintenance

Highway and Bridge Program

The program with the largest amount of projects is the Highway/Bridge Program. PennDOT District 1’s Planning and Programming unit based in Oil City and PennDOT’s County Maintenance office located in Summit Township created a list of fiscally constrained projects for the Highway/Bridge TIP. The list included carryover projects. District 1-0 presented the Highway/Bridge project list to the MPO board in August of 2021 after consulting internal PennDOT divisions. These groups are summarized in the following table.

| PennDOT Department | How Highway/Bridge Projects are Prioritized |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Safety Unit | Priority given to factors prioritized in Performance Management safety targets, such as numbers of fatalities and serious injuries (see Performance Management section). Projects from previous road safety audits are also considered. Set-aside safety funds require a benefit-cost analysis. |
| Maintenance Unit | PennDOT’s County maintenance unit determines their highest priorities, and which projects would be better-utilized with TIP dollars (as opposed to maintenance funds) due to scope and size of project. Quantitative measures such as International Roughness Index (IRI), or “rideability” of the roadway, and Overall Pavement Index (OPI), which is the pavement’s performance, are used to determine which roads need attention. Historical data (i.e. when the road was last resurfaced, and how it has held up historically) is considered as well as observational data, like how pavement is deteriorating. The Pavement Asset Management System (PAMS) is also being used. All are factored in with the use and traffic volume of the roadway to determine a prioritized list. |
| District 1-0 Planning and Programming | Planning and Programming insures that projects previously programmed are funded to completion and that new projects prioritize asset management. Other considerations are projects from the “Decade of Investment,” projects programmed on the 12-Year Transportation Improvement Program and the Western Pennsylvania Regional Operations Plan. |
| Highway Design Unit | Large projects that involve extensive restoration and reconstruction work (including stormwater improvements, pedestrian facilities, or other complex project elements) are called betterments. Betterments are prioritized through the LRTP, studies or condition of the road. District 1-0 engineers determine the road condition, often in close collaboration with the county maintenance engineers using the criteria noted above. |
| Bridge Design Unit | The PennDOT bridge design staff keeps a detailed list of bridge condition based on inspections, which occur at least every two years for bridges over 20 feet. Inspection ratings are applied to determine which bridges not only need imminent attention, but as to what level of attention they need based on lowest lifecycle cost. During this TIP cycle, the Bridge Asset Management System (BAMS) was used. |

Special Line Items in the Highway/Bridge Program

Bridge Off-System (BOF) Line Item

Federal funding is set aside for bridges that are not on the federal aid system. These may be owned by PennDOT, a city, township or borough. PennDOT maintained bridges are programmed using the Bridge Asset Management System (BAMS) to determine the investments needed to extend the service life of the bridge. Bridges owned and maintained by local municipalities will be programmed by the local bridge subcommittee of the MPO.

Economic Development Line Item

This line item is funded with 100% state funds. It does appear on the Erie MPO Highway/Bridge Program project list. Since this line item has no federal funding, it is assigned to projects at PennDOT District 1-0's discretion.

Erie County At-Risk Bridge Program

This program is funded with through the Act 13 Marcellus Shale Legacy Fund. Municipalities apply to Erie County to receive funding to repair poor condition bridges. The County, working closely with the PennDOT bridge unit, approves the applications. These projects are added to the Highway/Bridge TIP once approved.

Local Federal Aid Route Line Item

Municipalities that maintain roads on the federal aid system have the opportunity to apply for these paving funds yearly. PennDOT evaluates the segments based on condition. The segments in the worst condition are ranked in categories based on high traffic and low traffic. Funds are awarded according to condition in each category. These projects are added to the Highway/Bridge Program project list.

Safety Line Item

This line item is a new addition to the 2023 Highway/Bridge TIP. PennDOT District 1-0 safety unit and the MPO will work together to identify low cost improvements to address safety that may not qualify for HSIP funding.

Bridge Investment Program (BRIP)

This line item is a new federal funding source created with the passage of the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 (IIJA). The Erie MPO received \$12,049,000 in BRIP base funds. Bridges owned and maintained by local municipalities will be programmed by the local bridge subcommittee of the MPO.

Specific Projects in the 2023-2026 Highway/Bridge Program

The majority of projects in the last two years of the previous program (2021-2024) moved forward as planned into the first two years of the current program. PennDOT District 1-0 was able to advance 19 bridge projects and 13 pavement projects to the 2023-2026 Highway/Bridge Program.

Bridges

The following list of bridges show where the source of the new project. Each source has its own goals and objectives. BAMS signifies that preservation activities were indicated using outputs from the Bridge Asset Management System with the goal of lowest lifecycle cost. DOI indicates that the project was prioritized during the "Decade of Investment." During that period, PennDOT created a list of projects that would be completed as a direct result of the passage of Pennsylvania's Act 89 transportation funding law in 2013 with the objectives of repairing and

appropriately expanding the Commonwealth’s transportation infrastructure. TYP indicates that the project was programmed on the state’s 12-year Transportation Improvement Program. Transportation projects are listed on the TYP based upon delivery schedules, regional and statewide goals and targets for infrastructure performance and condition, and expected funding availability. LRTP indicates the project was listed in the Erie MPO’s 25-year Long Range Transportation Plan adopted in 2017. The local objectives in the LRTP were safety/security, traffic congestion/maintenance, economic vitality, feasibility, multimodal accessibility/mobility, sustainability, and freight accessibility/mobility.

| New Bridge Projects on the 2023-2026 TIP | | |
|--|--|--|
| MPMS # | Project Name | Source |
| 116741 | SR 5 Bridge on East Lake Road over 6 Mile Creek (Harborcreek Twp) | BAMS |
| 97240 | US 6 Bridge on the Grand Army of the Republic HW over French Creek Tributary (LeBoeuf Twp) | DOI, TYP, LRTP, BAMS |
| 97215 | PA 8 Bridge on Main St over the West Branch of French Creek (Wattsburg Boro) | DOI, TYP, LRTP, BAMS |
| 1172 | US 20 Bridge on Ridge Road over CN Railroad (Girard Twp) | DOI, TYP, LRTP, BAMS |
| 613 | US 20 Bridge on Main St over Twentymile Creek (North East Twp) | Problems with this bridge were brought through a complaint. The PennDOT D 1-0 bridge unit agreed that a repair is necessary. |
| 622 | PA 97 Bridge on Waterford St over French Creek (Le Boeuf Twp) | DOI, TYP, LRTP |
| 97222 | SR 1004 Bridge on Wildman Road over Townley Run (Greenfield Twp) | DOI, TYP, LRTP |
| 97221 | SR 1013 Bridge on Williams Rd over I-90 (North East Twp) | DOI, TYP, LRTP, BAMS, history of collision due to low clearance over the interstate |
| 72410 | SR 3002 Bridge on Cherry Hill Road over Conneaut Creek (Conneaut Twp) | DOI, TYP, LRTP |
| 97132 | SR 4030 Bridge on Norcross Road over BP Railroad & 4 Mile Creek (Harborcreek Twp) | LRTP (advanced from 2029) TYP, DOI |
| 97229 | SR 4104 Bridge on Bargain Rd over I-79 (McKean Twp) | TYP, DOI, BAMS |
| 47501 | SR 4108 Bridge on Jordan Rd over I-90 (Harborcreek Twp) | LRTP, TYP, DOI, history of collision due to low clearance |
| 97157* | SR 5 Bridge on East 12 th Street over CSX Railroad (City of Erie) | LRTP, TYP, DOI, BAMS |
| 995* | SR 6 Bridge on Columbus Ave over Hare Creek (City of Corry) | TYP, DOI, BAMS |
| 97194* | SR 6 Bridge over French Creek (LeBoeuf Twp) | LRTP, TYP, DOI, BAMS |

| | | |
|--------|---|----------------------|
| 47508* | Moorheadville Rd Bridge over I-90 (North East Twp) | LRTP, TYP, DOI, BAMS |
| 1288* | Gay Road over I-90 (North East Twp) | LRTP, TYP, DOI, BAMS |
| 72638* | SR 2018 Bridge on Lovell Rd over the South Branch of French Creek (Concord Twp) | BAMS |
| 72374* | State Route 4103 Bridge (McKean Twp) | BAMS |

*Project added with new IJA funding

Completed projects on the first two years of 2021-2024 Highway/Bridge TIP were removed from the 2023-2026 Highway/Bridge program. However, the new focus on lowest lifecycle cost deferred some bridges. Due to the condition of structures from inspections it was determined by PennDOT District 1-0 Bridge Unit that some work could wait until outer years to prioritize more pressing bridges identified in BAMS. Before bridges were deferred, the Erie MPO evaluated their impact on low income and minority populations to ensure the deferred bridges would have no disparate impact. Three bridge projects were delayed until 2027. All were located in areas of less half the Minority Population Percentage and less than the County's Low Income Population Percentage.

| Removed Bridge Projects from the 2021-2024 TIP | | | | |
|--|--|------------------------|--|---|
| MPMS # | Project Name | Change in program year | Environmental Justice Area | Reason |
| 97150 | SR 1001 Bridge over the North Branch of French Creek (Amity Twp) | 2022 to 2027 | <u>Low Income</u> : ≤ half County low income population % <u>Minority</u> : ≤ half County minority population % | BAMS lowest lifecycle cost |
| 1133 | SR 2003: Main Street over French Creek (Mill Village Boro) | 2023 to 2027 | <u>Low Income</u> : > half and ≤ County low income population % <u>Minority</u> : ≤ half County population % | BAMS lowest lifecycle cost |
| 97241 | SR 3006 Bridge over Conneaut Creek (Springfield Twp) | NA | <u>Low Income</u> : ≤ half County low income population % <u>Minority</u> : ≤ half County minority population % | This bridge project was incorporated into paving project 99753 on SR 3006 |
| 110343 | US 6N Underpass – (Springfield Township) | 2021 to 2027 | <u>Low Income</u> : ≤ half County low income population % <u>Minority</u> : ≤ half County minority population % | BAMS lowest lifecycle cost |

Pavement

Thirteen new pavement projects were added to the 2023-2026 Highway/Bridge TIP. The source of projects was very similar to the bridge list. DOI indicates that the project was prioritized during the “Decade of Investment.” During that period, PennDOT created a list of projects that would be completed as a direct result of the passage of Pennsylvania’s Act 89 transportation funding law in 2013. TYP indicates that the project was programmed on the state’s 12-year Transportation Improvement Program. LRTP indicates the project was listed in the Erie MPO’s 25-year Long Range Transportation Plan adopted in 2017. In addition the Pavement Asset Management System data was used to determine the lowest lifecycle cost treatments. Additional sources are PennDOT’s County Maintenance priorities for TIP funding as well as PennDOT’s Western Regional Operations Plan (ROP).

| New Pavement Projects on the 2023-2026 TIP | | |
|--|--|---|
| MPMS # | Project Name | Source |
| 99049 | Pavement Restoration of PA 8 from mile marker 70 to North of Casler Rd (Amity Twp) | DOI, TYP, LRTP The 6 th priority from PennDOT’s County Maintenance |
| 98308 | Safety improvements on US 19 (Peach Street) between Dorn Rd and Robinson Rd | DOI, TYP, LRTP, PAMS The 8 th priority from PennDOT’s County Maintenance |
| 116639 | I-90 Erie County ITS Addition - SR 19 - TSMO | TSMO funds and match from the Western ROP and voted on by the MPO board. |
| 113882 | Restoration of SR 20 from Schley St in the City of Erie to Harborcreek Township | The 5 th priority from PennDOT’s County Maintenance, PAMS |
| 99000 | Restoration of PA 290 (Bayfront Connector) from SR 5 (East 12 th St) to McClelland Ave | LRTP, TYP, DOI, PAMS The 10 th priority from PennDOT’s County Maintenance |
| 73242 | Restoration of SR 430 (Station Road) from SR 290 to SR 20 (Shannon Rd) | PAMS The 9 th priority from PennDOT’s County Maintenance |
| 116638 | I-79 Erie County ITS Addition - Interchange - TSMO | TSMO funds and match from the Western ROP and voted on by the MPO board. |
| 99023* | Restoration PA 77 (Church Street/Main Street) from Church Street to PA 426 (Center Street) City of Corry | DOI, TYP, The 3 rd priority of County Maintenance |
| 109141* | Restoration of State Route 426 (Main St and Center St) from Warren County Line to State Route 6 and the restoration of State Route 2029 and State Route 2020 (Center St and Washington St) from Airport Rd to Gates Street | TYP, The 1 st priority of County Maintenance |
| 99750* | Resurfacing PA 832 (Peninsula Drive) from US 20 (26 th St) to Presque Isle State Park | DOI, TYP, The 2 nd priority of County Maintenance |

| | | |
|--------|---|---|
| 86499* | Pavement Restoration on SR 5 (Westlake Road) from SR 4009 (Asbury Road) to PA 89 (Avonia Road) | PAMS |
| 99744* | Resurface SR 20 (Main Street) from Hirtzell Rd to the New York State border | DOI, TYP, The 11 th priority of County Maintenance |
| 89218* | Resurface SR 4017 (Pittsburgh Ave) from 8 th Street to SR 4016 (38 th Street) | PAMS |

*Project added with new IJJA funding

Adoption

This document, along with all project lists in the 2023-2026 Erie MPO TIP were approved by the Erie MPO at the June 22nd 2022 Coordinating Committee meeting. After review by PennDOT Center for Program Development and Management the Erie MPO TIP documents were compiled into a Statewide TIP (STIP) and given to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for final approval. After final approval of the STIP by FHWA and FTA, the Erie MPO TIP will take effect at the beginning of the federal fiscal year on October 1, 2022.