

COUNTY HIGHLIGHT:  
**LEBANON**

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Lebanon County  
Commissioner

A sound  
infrastructure  
is the basis  
of a sound  
economy.

# Working Together

to Improve Roads, Bridges and Trails

**L**ebanon County's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is well respected, active, and takes a leadership role in our community. We work to prioritize local road and bridge projects with PennDOT and the Federal Highway Administration. Having served as the chair of the Lebanon County MPO (2012-15), I know how important it is to start a conversation from public structures like roads and bridges, water and sewer, schools, and energy.

A sound infrastructure is the basis of a sound economy, and provides economy boosting jobs to put money into the pockets of people so that they can buy homes, cars, and goods. A transportation plan that makes our roads and bridges safe creates good paying jobs, gets people to these jobs, our goods to market, and children to schools. Today, I'll highlight three ambitious projects: the Clear Spring and Killinger Roads realignment on Route 422, the Wilhelm Ave realignment, and the Lebanon Valley Rail Trail.



**Clear Spring and Killinger Roads** realignment in Lebanon County is managed by our MPO. Recently PennDOT asked Lebanon County to manage this project with \$460,000 in discretionary state funding from the Governor's Office. The project involves two developers along US Route 422 in North and South Annville Townships with a new traffic signal and road improvements. As their match, the developer must install the road on the south side of Route 422 while the County will have oversight and create the Route 422 Intersection. Transportation Planner Jon Fitzkee is the lead contact for Lebanon County. Red-lights and polls from another project will be recycled, and used at this site. The project also has bike lanes and pedestrian components. Penny Supply, the only bidder and a Lebanon County business, was awarded the contract.

**Wilhelm Avenue Realignment** will remove a dogleg and improve safety. Located east of a well-established shopping center and north of a proposed new commercial development, construction is anticipated in 2018. In the interim, Lebanon County purchased a home at a cost of \$165,000—1320 Cornwall Road, Lebanon PA. We rented the house to a good tenant, which provides income for the project. Lebanon School District will forgo a small corner of their athletic fields. Stephen and Patricia Gaidos will turn-over a small area to the rear of their property in exchange for land servicing Wilhelm Avenue. Finally, this project will save precious taxpayer

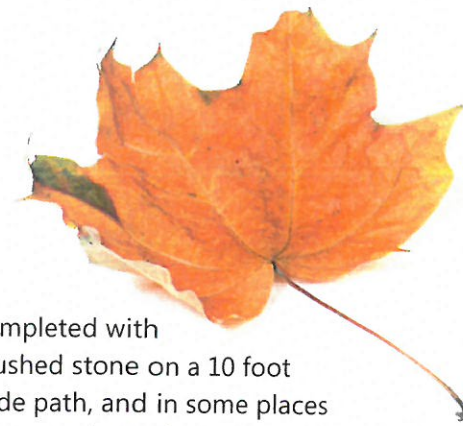
dollars. Rather than installing two red-lights at a cost of \$2.4 million, the home, relocation and one red-light will cost about \$1.4 million.

**Lebanon Valley Rail Trail (LVRT)** is envisioned by Lebanon County to be completed by 2022. Goals include recreation, health, fitness, and wellness amenities, and to relieve roads of additional traffic as schools, businesses, and towns are connected. The Trail connects Lancaster, Lebanon and Schuylkill Counties; the Appalachian Trail, Swatara Water Trail; South Hills Park, Fisher Park, Union Canal Tunnel Park, Swatara State Park, Union Canal Tunnel Park, Coleman Park; schools and villages.

Upon completion, there will be about 33 miles of continuous rail trail within Lebanon County. More than 100,000 users per year travel the 22 completed miles - 15 miles from the Lancaster County Line north to the City of Lebanon, and 7 miles from the Lickdale intersection north to the Schuylkill County line. Another 1.9 miles are under construction in the Jonestown area from the iron bridge over Swatara Creek at Frog's Hollow north to US Route 22, and will open for use in September 2016; a section south of the Railroad Bridge at Frog's Hollow; and another 1.8 miles will be under construction behind Lebanon Valley Mall in 2017.

### PHASES 1 - 5

Starting at Conewago Township, the Lancaster County line ends, and the Lebanon County line begins, Phases 1-5 into the City of Lebanon were

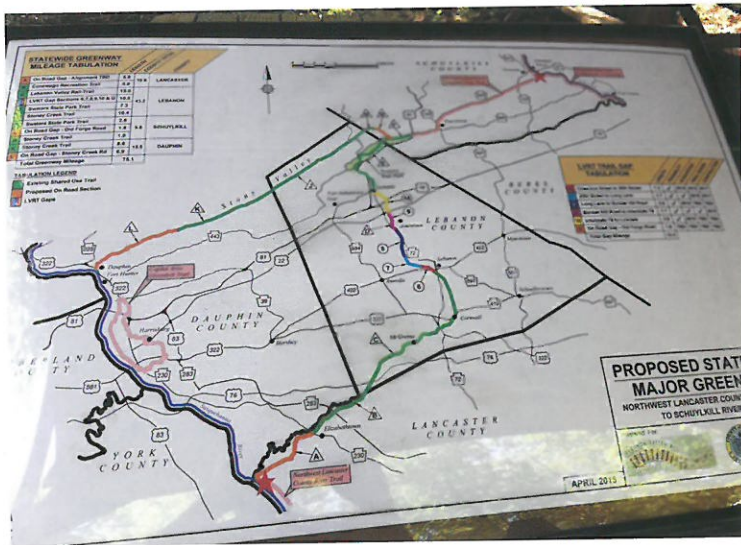


completed with crushed stone on a 10 foot wide path, and in some places has macadam. The trail winds past Cornwall Manor Retirement Community, the Root Beer Barrel, Alden Place, the Lebanon Valley Expo Center, and spurs run to both Cedar Crest High School and to the Jigger Shoppe in Mt. Gretna. At 8th Street, there is access to both the courthouse and Lebanon High School, and the trail runs past both Fisher Park and Jubilee Ministries Thrift Shop. A major rehabilitation project on LVRT from the Lancaster County line to just north of the Lebanon Valley Expo Center will occur in 2017. Informal park-and-ride lots were already expanded at the Cornwall and Alden Place Trailheads.

### PHASES 6 AND 7

An alignment study took place in the City of Lebanon, West Lebanon and North Lebanon Townships. LVRT, Inc. and the county are presently negotiating with the Norfolk Southern Railroad and other property owners for the remaining right-of-way that is needed to complete phase 6 from the Lebanon Valley Mall southeast and across Cumberland Street (Route 422) in the City of Lebanon. Phase 7 will project from behind the Lebanon Valley Mall north to Long Lane in North Lebanon Township and will go to construction in mid-2017.

Lebanon County completed a planning study to determine the preferred route to connect phase



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5 to phase 7 and the Union Canal Tunnel Park. As mentioned, right-of-way negotiations were re-established with the Norfolk Southern Railroad (NS RR) to find common ground, or other more costly alternatives will be explored to cross Cumberland Street and tie into Willow Street. We also developed a vision to connect the Union Canal Tunnel Park with Coleman Memorial Park. The budget is currently \$25,000 for planning and design with \$12,500 coming from Lebanon County, LVRT and Wilson Consulting Group; and \$12,500 from DCNR.

### PHASES 8 – 11

Phase 8 runs north of Union Canal Tunnel to Long Lane, possibly across the Greater Lebanon Refuse Authority property, and will cost around \$850,000. The final design is in the works. Phase

9 in the Jonestown area is now in construction, and runs north to US Route 22 along the old Union Canal Tow Path. Phase 9B will include a viewing platform on the abandoned Lebanon to Tremont Railroad Bridge over Swatara Creek at Frog's Hollow. If funding is approved, redecking and 1,700 feet of trail construction will also occur south of the bridge, possibly in 2017. Phase 10 runs from Jonestown to Lickdale, and will cost about \$450,000. A major trailhead near Pine Tree Road will be an additional expense. Phase 11 is completed, and runs from Lickdale thru Swatara State Park to Schuylkill County. The Appalachian Trail crosses this section of trail, and the Swatara Water Trail parallels both phases 10 & 11.

An active Rail Trail Association lead by John Wengert and numerous volunteers maintains the Rail Trail in cooperation with the County of Lebanon who holds title to and provides insurance for this community gem. Inwood Bridge is at the Gateway to Swatara State Park, and part of an enhancement to phase 11, creating a partnership initiative with PennDOT, DCNR, Lebanon County, and LVRT, Inc.

After three gubernatorial administrations—Rendell, Corbett, and Wolfe—a new vision was proposed by John Kennedy on September 1, 2016 to rehabilitate the historic Inwood Bridge and place it on the Rail Trail. Then to address public safety for paddlers on the Swatara Creek Water Trail, flooding, fire company access, and growth in the area, PennDOT will build a new bridge across the Swatara Creek. PennDOT would take over the construction project and absorb the County's 5% share. In the end, the County would own both bridges. While the 150' long historic iron bridge built in 1899 would be moved for rehabilitation soon, anticipated start date for the new bridge is 2020, with a drive-through date in 2021. The "Z" shaped connections are unique, and two such bridges also are found in Cumberland County.

Located within a day's drive of one-third of the population of the United States, these and many other transportation projects marry Lebanon County's economy, jobs, recreation, and preservation efforts for a bright future. 🍁

