



US 219 PAVING THE WAY

Volume 3

February 2002

PENNDOT UNVEILS PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES

On December 13, 2001, PENNDOT and the Greenhorne & O'Mara Project Team conducted the second public meeting for the U.S. 219 Improvements Project at the Berlin-Brothersvalley School in Berlin, PA. Approximately 250 residents attended the meeting to observe how the project is progressing.

With the Phase I environmental and engineering studies complete, the Project Team unveiled seven preliminary alternatives for transportation improve-

ments. The main focus of the meeting was to solicit input from the public concerning these alternatives. Alternatives presented included:

- No-Build (Do Nothing);
- Transportation System Management (TSM) (transit, park-and-ride lots, minor roadway improvements, and signage);
- Upgrade of existing U.S. 219 and the Garrett Shortcut; and
- Four alignments for construction of a new four-lane highway: Corridors A, B, C and D.

The Public Meeting was organized as a workshop to ensure that all questions, concerns, and comments could be addressed by PENNDOT and the Project Team.

Stations were placed in the school's cafeteria that provided information on



environmental and engineering resources. These stations used mapping, graphics, and visual techniques to illustrate the preliminary alternatives and

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Phase 2 Detailed Studies Begin - Look for Us in the Area

The Project Team has begun the task of refining the alternatives that are to be studied in detail. In the coming months, PENNDOT and the Greenhorne & O'Mara Project Team will again be in the study area performing various environmental and engineering studies. During the winter months, Keller Engineering will be placing stakes in the field for GeoMechanics, Inc. to conduct geotechnical borings and soil investigations. In early spring, the Project Team will be conducting extensive fieldwork along the corridors. You will see: scientists from Greenhorne & O'Mara

placing orange flags around wetlands; biologists conducting surveys for threatened and endangered species and terrestrial habitat; and Heberling and Associates commencing archaeological investigations. Data collection and investigations will continue through the summer months. The information collected will be evaluated and used to further refine the alternatives. Once the alternatives are refined and environmental impacts are assessed, PENNDOT will conduct the third Public Meeting to present the detailed alternatives for your review and input.

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Public Officials Meet with PENNDOT

Prior to the Public Meeting, PENNDOT and the Project Team held a meeting with the local public officials. The purpose of the meeting was for PENNDOT to present the preliminary alternatives, provide an overview of the project status, and answer questions.

Questions and topics of discussion included:

Q: How much right-of way will be required for the new roadway?

A: Approximately 300-350 feet of right-of-way width will be required for a new four-lane roadway.



Q: How much will this cost?

A: The cost of right-of-way acquisition has not yet been determined. It will be calculated based on a cost per mile, to be estimated by PENNDOT's right-of-way section, during the Phase 2 studies.

Q: How is it decided which alternatives will be carried through the detailed study phase?

A: That decision is based on a comparative analysis of each alternative, and an evaluation of the recommendations received from public officials, public meeting attendees, and environmental resource agencies. These recommendations must be approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Q: It has been recommended that Corridor A not be studied in detail. Can that alternative still be used in the future?

A: If further study results in the need to revisit Corridor A, that will be done.

The majority of the officials concurred with PENNDOT's recommendations to conduct Phase 2 Detailed Alternative Development for Corridors B, C, and D.

Farmers Meetings

Because agriculture is the major industry in the study area, the study team wants to establish an on-going dialogue with the farming community during the study process. We will meet with groups and/or individual farmers in the coming months in order to obtain information on their operations, and to discuss their desires and concerns for the future.

See You at the Maple Festival!

PENNDOT and the Project Team will be hosting a booth at the Maple Festival, March 9-10 and 14-17.

We will present refinements to Corridors B, C, C-1, and D.



We encourage you to visit us at our booth to offer your suggestions and comments on the alternatives.

PENNDOT Helpers

by Erin Lichty and Bradley Ogline
Berlin-Brothersvalley Middle School

On December 13, 2001, PENNDOT held a meeting open to the public about the 219 project. The meeting lasted 3 hours. Some of the 5th grade students from Berlin-Brothersvalley Middle School helped with the event. They helped greet people, serve refreshments, and much more. The names of the students are Derek Bingman, Bradley Ogline, Beth Coddington, Tyler Vought, Cassie Gindlesperger, Monica Lyons, Jackie Kimmel, Michael Eutin, Patrick Black, Kaylan Sturtz, Nick Cooney, Erin Lichty, Sam Popivich, Dillon

Cotter, David Bell, Kaleigh Gontis, Erica Hittie, Karli Heffner, Ethan Myers, & Haley Albright.

Many people saw the preview about some choices for the highway. When the evening was over, they looked at the questionnaires to find out questions about this project. All in all, they had a great turn out and a great meeting!



Your Input Counts - New Corridor

Based on input from the Public Meeting, PENNDOT and the Project Team have developed a new partial corridor that uses the southern half of Corridor C and continues north on a new alignment west of the Garrett Shortcut (see map). This alternative has been named Corridor C-1 and was added to address public concerns that Corridors A, B, C, and D would impact a considerable amount of productive farmland, while a corridor west of the Garrett Shortcut would lessen the impact on farmlands. 🚗

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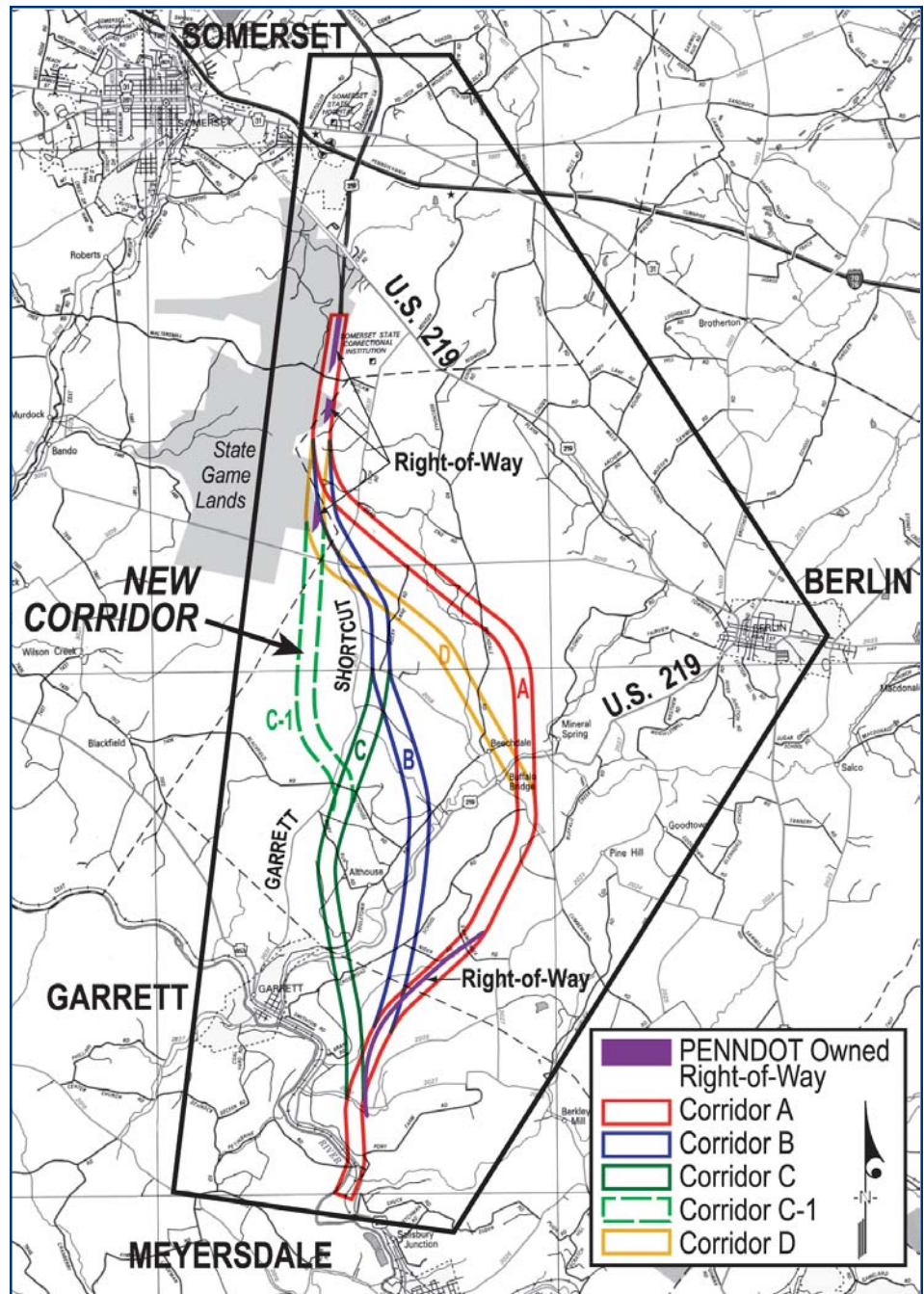
how each affects the local communities and the environment.

Of particular interest to attendees was the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) station. A computer-generated aerial fly-over through the study area was used to illustrate how the corridors traverse the study area. The GIS station also contained a computer kiosk where attendees could "zoom-in" and locate their property or particular sites of interest in the study area.

A computer-automated presentation was set up in a separate room and ran continuously throughout the evening, providing an overview of the project and an update on the current status of the studies.

A Farmers/Right-of-Way station was also set up in a separate room and contained large-scale property and aerial photography maps depicting property boundaries and tax identification numbers. Residents and the farming community were encouraged to locate their properties and discuss with PENNDOT Right-of-Way personnel and Project Team members any concerns they had about the location of the study corridors.

PENNDOT requested the public to comment on which corridors should be



carried forward to detailed studies (Phase 2), which corridors should be dismissed from further consideration, and any concerns they might have.

Based on Phase I environmental studies and impacts, PENNDOT is recommending Corridors B, C, and D be carried forward, while the Upgrade of existing U.S. 219, TSM, and Corridor A be dismissed from further consideration. (see above map.) Corridor A is recommended to be dismissed from detailed studies due to a greater amount of environmental impacts than Corridors B, C, and D. The majority of the people in

attendance were in favor of the Project Team's recommendations.

Comments received from attendees included:

- Consider locating an interchange to provide access to Berlin
- Consider looking at a corridor west of the Garrett Shortcut
- Environmental concerns - farmland, wetlands, water quality
- Provide for the Laurel Highlands Hiking and Biking Trail
- Utilization of existing PENNDOT Right-of-Way is a plus (Corridors A and D).



Project Schedule

✓ Public Meeting to Introduce the Project	April 30, 2001
✓ Preliminary Alternatives Analysis	Fall 2001
✓ Public Meeting to Present Preliminary Alternatives	December 13, 2001
Detailed Alternatives Analysis	Spring/Summer 2002
Public Meeting to Present Detailed Alternatives Analysis	Late Summer/Fall 2002
Draft Environmental Impact Statement	Winter 2002/2003
Public Meeting on Draft Environmental Impact Statement	Winter 2002/2003
Final Environmental Impact Statement	Spring 2003
Pre-Final Design	Fall 2003

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U.S. 219 Improvements, Meyersdale to I-68 in Maryland

Preliminary design work and environmental investigations will begin early this spring on the section of U.S. 219 between the southern end of the Meyersdale Bypass and Interstate 68 in Garrett County, Maryland. McCormick, Taylor and Associates (MTA) has been selected by PENNDOT to complete the preliminary design phase of this 8-mile section of U.S. 219. Information on the project will be available on the U.S. 219 website (www.US219.com) and in the project newsletter. PENNDOT and MTA look forward to working with the Somerset County communities to improve U.S. 219.



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**Don't forget to visit our Website www.US219.com
Information on historic and archaeological resources - let us know!
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