

Phase 2 Alignments Are Now Complete

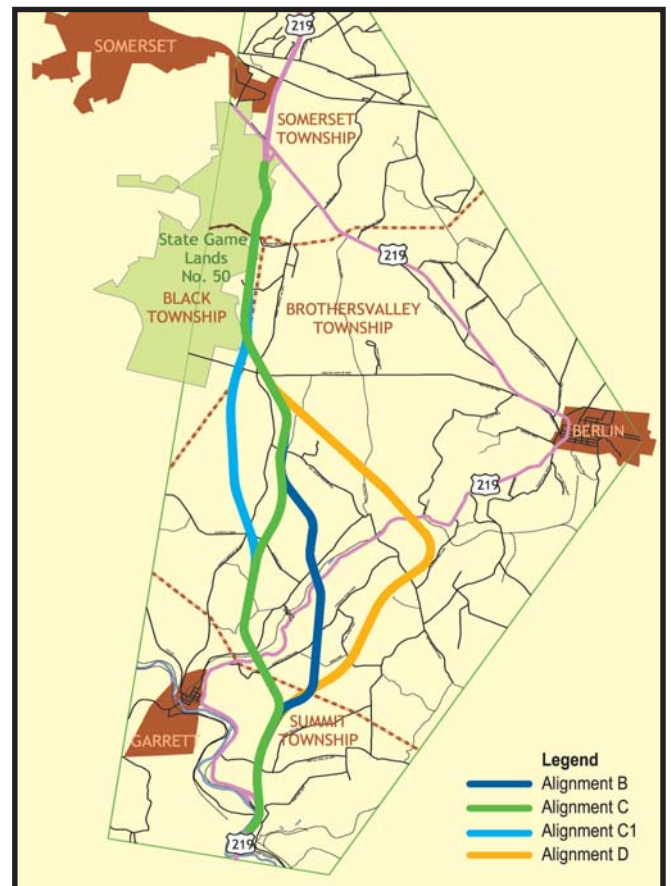
For the past eight months, the U.S. 219 Project Team has been developing Phase 2 alignments for analysis in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). In Phase 1, 1,000-foot wide corridors were developed to assess a variety of alternatives for transportation improvements between the north end of the Meyersdale Bypass and the existing four-lane section of U.S. 219 near the Borough of Somerset. The Phase 1 corridors were displayed at the last public meeting on December 13, 2001 and approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in February of 2002.

In March 2002, engineers from Greenhorne & O'Mara, Inc. (G&O) developed Phase 2 alignments within the four corridors carried forward from Phase 1 (Alignments B, C, C-1 and D). Table 1 on page 2 provides an overview of the Phase 2 alignments.

Alignments were refined using detailed engineering and environmental studies. The Project Team applied PENNDOT and FHWA design criteria to establish a "footprint" of each proposed alignment. The Team also considered access to and from the proposed highway, local access within the study area that might be affected by the proposed highway, height of bridges, amount of excavation and fill required, interchange designs, drainage considerations, utilities, and required right-of-way.

In late March, crews surveyed and staked each alignment in the field. In April, engineers and environmental scientists walked the alignments to gather detailed data and identify potential engineering flaws. The project team also held meetings with Federal and State resource agencies, the public and the involved municipalities to

Continued on page 2



PENNDOT Meets With the Local Farmers

Throughout April, May, and June, PENNDOT and the G&O project team conducted interviews with owners and operators of farming operations that may be affected by the proposed alignments. The interviews were conducted at each farming operation.

Of the 19 farmers interviewed, six were part-time farmers who were either retired or held other occupations, while the

remaining 13 were full-time farmers. Types of operations included dairy, beef cattle, replacement heifers, produce, and hay production.

Information about each farming operation that was obtained through these interviews included:

- Amount of land in agricultural use;
- Description of access to fields and other properties;

Continued on page 2

In this Issue ...

-  Phase 2 Alignments
-  PENNDOT Meets with Local Farmers
-  PENNDOT at the Somerset County Fair
-  What's This I Hear About Noise
-  Project Schedule

PENNDOT is a Hit at the Somerset County Fair

The Somerset County Fair was held from August 18th through the 24th. The U.S. 219 Improvements project team were on hand answering questions and providing information about the two U.S. 219 Improvements projects that stretch from I-68 in Maryland to Meyersdale and from Meyersdale to Somerset. An aerial fly-through was provided showing the current study alternatives in the northern section, so that attendees could get a visual idea of where the proposed road may be placed and the different sizes of bridges and structures that would be constructed. In addition, various photographs depicting before and after visual renderings of the road at different points in the study area were provided.

The Project Team also sponsored two raffles for kids and adults. The winner of the kid's back to-school backpack was Angela Wilford of Meyersdale, and Carol Lehman of Berlin won the adult basket full of gifts. They are shown to the right accepting their prizes with Dave Sherman, PENNDOT Project Manager for both the north and south U.S. 219 Projects; Joel Smith, of Greenhorne & O'Mara, Inc., Project Manager for the Meyersdale to Somerset Project; and Ken Rich, of McCormick, Taylor, and Associates, Public Involvement Specialist for the I-68 in Maryland to Meyersdale Project.



Carol Lehman of Berlin

Angela Wilford of Meyersdale (shown with friend: Whitney Lenhart also of Meyersdale)

Local Farmers

Continued from page 1

- List of agricultural buildings;
- If the operation is part of an Agricultural Security Area (ASA), the Clean and Green Program, the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), or the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), along with other commodity support programs and special tax status programs;
- If the property has ever been mined or has the potential to be mined in the future; and
- How long the farm has been in operation.

The data obtained through the interviews will be analyzed and incorporated into a Farmlands Assessment Report, which will be presented to the Agricultural Lands Condemnation Approval Board (ALCAB). The ALCAB, an independent administrative board, has approval authority over the condemnation of productive agricultural land for highways and waste disposal projects. If required for this project, ALCAB will approve condemnation if it determines that there is no reasonable and prudent alternative to the use of productive agricultural land. The Farmlands Assessment Report should be completed by late spring or early summer 2003.

Phase 2 Alignments

Continued from page 1

gather additional information. Throughout this period, the Project Team used the information gathered to modify the alignments to minimize impacts to farms, residences, businesses, and environmental resources while ensuring that engineering is the highest quality possible to provide a safe and efficient four-lane highway.

The Project Team is now conducting a detailed analysis of each alignment. The results of this analysis will be presented in a Draft EIS, scheduled for completion in spring 2003. The Draft EIS will compare the environmental and socioeconomic impacts, as well as construction costs, of each alternative. The Draft EIS will be distributed to consulting agencies and made available to the public for review and comment. After agency and public comments on the Draft EIS are received, PENNDOT and the FHWA will identify a preferred alignment.

Table 1 - ALIGNMENT CHARACTERISTICS

DESIGN CRITERIA	ALIGNMENT B	ALIGNMENT C	ALIGNMENT C-1	ALIGNMENT D
LENGTH	10.3 miles	10.1 miles	10.0 miles	11.7 miles
BRIDGES ON NEW U.S. 219	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pine Hill Road • Swamp Creek • Ex. US 219/ Buffalo Creek • Owl Hollow Road • Mud Pike • Walters Mill Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pine Hill Road • Swamp Creek • Ex. US 219/ Buffalo Creek • Althouse Road • Owl Hollow Road • Mud Pike • Walters Mill Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pine Hill Road • Swamp Creek • Ex. US 219/ Buffalo Creek • Mud Pike • Walters Mill Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pine Hill Road • Swamp Creek Road • Ex. US 219/ Buffalo Creek • Mud Pike • Walters Mill Road
BRIDGES OVER NEW U.S. 219	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossroad School Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossroad School Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossroad School Road • Garrett Shortcut 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lichety Farm Hill Road • Beachdale Road
INTERCHANGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern terminus • Mud Pike 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern terminus • Mud Pike 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern terminus • Mud Pike 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern terminus • Mud Pike or • Ex. US 219

What's This I Hear About Noise?

Some of you recently met our noise analysts that have been working in your community. Noise complaints are frequently associated with transportation activities (highway, airplanes, and trains), and this analysis is a regular component of PENNDOT planning studies.

By definition, noise is "unwanted sound." But that could create a lot of confusion since what is music to one person can be noise to another. So PENNDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have developed measurable standards to define noise. For residential areas (and related land uses like schools and parks), a highway project would create a noise impact if the predicted level is expected to approach or exceed 67 dBA. In addition, a project would create an impact if the future noise levels are expected to be 10 dBA higher than the existing levels, which PENNDOT considers to be a substantial increase.


So what is a "dBA"? Noise is measured in units called decibels (dB). But the human ear doesn't hear all sounds equally. We don't hear low pitches as well as higher ones, so a weighting system has been developed to correspond to our response. We call this "A-weighting," and levels measured with this system are expressed as dBA.

Loudness can vary based on how close you are to the source. And similar

sources (e.g., trucks) can vary from one to another. That being said, it might be useful to think about common sources, as shown in the table. Another way to think about the noise impact criterion of 67 dBA is to recognize that this is the normal range for conversation. In fact, that impact standard was set based on concerns for interference with communication, such as talking across the picnic table in your back yard. For the other impact standard, a 10-dBA increase would generally be perceived as a doubling of the noise level.

When noise impacts are predicted, the study team must look at the viability of noise abatement. That might mean a noise wall or roadside berm would be included if a new highway is constructed. But these mitigation features are only included if they are shown to be feasible and reasonable. In addition to the noise measurements that were made in August, the analysis uses a computer model developed by FHWA, which permits prediction of noise conditions in the future

and an assessment of the effectiveness of mitigation measures. These analyses will be used in the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement.

For more information on noise you can visit with our noise consultant at the next public meeting. Or you can use the Internet to get background on the policies and procedures from the PENNDOT Traffic Noise Handbook (<ftp://ftp.dot.state.pa.us/public/pdf/pennDOTpub24.pdf>) or visit the FHWA web site (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/index.htm>). Please note that you will need the free Adobe Acrobat Reader (<http://www.adobe.com>) to view the PENNDOT manual. 

SOUND PRESSURE LEVELS FOR COMMON SOURCES

LEVEL (dBA)	SOUND SOURCE
10	Normal Breathing
20	Broadcast Studio
30	Library
40	Refrigerator
50	Clothes Dryer
60	Air Conditioning Unit
70	Pick-up Truck at 50 mph measured at 50 feet
80	Medium Truck at 50 mph measured at 50 feet
90	Motorcycle at 50 mph measured at 50 feet
100	Jet Flyover at 1,000 feet

Come See Us at Our Open House

Public meetings are a great way to stay informed about the U.S. 219 Improvements Project. A Public Meeting will be held on Thursday, October 24, 2002, at the Berlin-Brothersvalley School. PENNDOT will show alternatives for the proposed improvements to U.S. 219, answer questions, and seek comments on the project.

Prior to the Public Meeting, a Public Officials Meeting will be held at 3:30 p.m. at the school.

Meeting Date:
October 24, 2002

Time: 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.*

Location: Berlin-Brothersvalley School
1025 East Main Street
Berlin, PA

* Please note this meeting is an Open House - you may stop by at any time between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.



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	October 24, 2002
Draft Environmental Impact Statement	Spring 2003
Public Meeting on Draft Environmental Impact Statement	Spring 2003
Final Environmental Impact Statement	Summer 2003
Pre-Final Design	Fall 2003

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**Remember: Public Meeting - October 24, 2002
from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**