



PASSAGES

News About the PA Route 23 Environmental Impact Statement

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PA Route 23 EIS Moving Forward with Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in partnership with Lancaster County, are currently in the process of preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for the PA Route 23 Project. The Draft EIS is an official document required by the National Environmental Policy Act that provides a "full and fair discussion of significant environmental impacts and informs decision-makers and the public of the reasonable alternatives which would avoid or minimize adverse impacts or enhance the quality of the human environment." Following the release of the Draft EIS, a formal public hearing will be held at which time the public is able to provide oral and written testimony for or against the project and raise any issues or concerns they may have with the project.

The PA 23 EIS project team has completed the evaluation of each of the seven alternatives presented at the April 2006 public

meeting. The Draft EIS will fully evaluate three of those alternatives, including the No-Build Alternative, Two-Lane Bareville Alternative and the Two-Lane Southern Alternative. [See below, *Alternatives Being Evaluated in the Draft EIS* for additional information.] Environmental issues to be analyzed include the social, natural and cultural resources within the area. The social resources include residential and commercial displacements, community impacts, public opinions and economic impacts. The natural resources include farmlands, threatened and endangered species, wetlands and streams. The cultural resources include historical and archaeological resources. The term "historical resource" refers to any aboveground building, structure, district or object that relates to our cultural past.

During the next several months while the Draft EIS is being prepared, the project team will also be meeting with municipalities, the Community Advisory Committee and stakeholder groups.

Alternatives Being Evaluated in the Draft EIS

PennDOT's study team has been evaluating three basic concepts to address the transportation problems along Route 23 between US 30 and US 322. These concepts include 1) the Widening Alternative which would widen the existing roadway to three lanes; 2) the Bareville Connector Alternative, which would provide a new road on PennDOT's existing right-of-way from US 30 to just east of PA Route 772 (known locally as the "Goat Path"), tie in to existing Route 23 at Bareville, widen existing Route 23 from Bareville east to US 322, and also build an Industrial Connector south of New Holland Borough; and 3) the Southern Alternative, which would provide a new road on PennDOT's existing "Goat Path" right-of-way and on a new location south of PA 23 and New Holland Borough to US 322. Each of these basic concepts has variations - including a slightly narrower Widening Alternative, and Two-Lane (on two lanes of right-of-way) and Four-Lane (on four lanes of right-of-way) options for the Bareville Connector and Southern Alternatives. The study team has evaluated the transportation benefits, environmental impacts, preliminary construction cost estimates, and community opinions of each of these concepts. At this time, the study team has made the following general findings:

1) At the western end of the study area (US 30 to Bareville), widening Route 23 would have more impacts to homes (approximately 21 to 32, depending on the Widening Alternative concept), businesses (approximately 4 to 6), and historic resources (approximately 25) than using PennDOT's existing "Goat Path" right-of-way for a new road. The transportation benefits of a new roadway on the "Goat Path" are greater than widening existing Route 23. In the future, a trip between US 30 and the New Holland area is projected to take approximately 34 minutes on the existing Route 23; whereas this same trip on a new Route 23 would take approximately 20-23 minutes, a savings of approximately 11-14 minutes.

2) As noted above, a new roadway on PennDOT's existing "Goat Path" right-of way would save approximately one-third of the travel time for a trip between US 30 and New Holland. However, a four-lane roadway on the "Goat Path" would only reduce travel times by 1 to 3 minutes as compared to a two-lane roadway, but would impact between approximately 44 percent (Bareville Connector Alternative) and 74 percent (Southern Alternative) more farmland. (con't.)

Alternatives Being Evaluated in the Draft EIS (continued from previous page)

3) A new roadway would reduce traffic volumes on existing Route 23 and local roads parallel to a new roadway, reducing congestion and improving safety for motorized and non-motorized traffic.

4) PennDOT is facing severe budget constraints statewide which must be considered when evaluating build options.

5) At this time, there is no consensus among the public on a preferred alternative. Opinions regarding what to do range from doing nothing to building a Four-Lane Southern Alternative.

Based on these general findings, the following options will not be carried into detailed study in the Draft EIS: All Widening Alternatives; and All Four-Lane Options.

The following alternatives will be fully evaluated in the Draft EIS: Two-Lane Bareville Connector Alternative; the Two-Lane Southern Alternative; and the No-Build Alternative

The alternatives are shown on the map included in this newsletter. Both of the remaining build alternatives would include Transportation Systems Management (TSM) and Transit components. The alternatives to be fully evaluated in the Draft EIS are further summarized below.

Two-Lane Bareville Connector Alternative

This alternative would consist of one travel lane in each direction, posted speed limits ranging from 45 to 55 miles per hour, and within PennDOT's existing "Goat Path" right-of-way, a pedestrian/bicycle trail and parking facility near Route 772. This alternative would be limited access between US 30 and Bareville, with access points currently provided at US 30, Greenfield Road, Horseshoe Road, Route 772, and existing Route 23. From Bareville to US 322 and existing Route 23 would be widened and existing posted speeds would be maintained. A two-lane Industrial Connector extending from the Bareville Connector roadway east to Diller Avenue is included in this alternative. The Two-Lane Bareville Connector Alternative would have traffic operating conditions nearly as good as the Four-Lane Bareville Connector Alternative, would cost approximately 25 percent less, and would have fewer environmental impacts, especially to farmlands.

Two-Lane Southern Alternative

This alternative would consist of one travel lane per direction, posted speeds ranging from 35 to 55 miles per hour, and within PennDOT's existing "Goat Path" right-of-way, a pedestrian/bicycle trail and a parking facility near Route 772. The Two-Lane Southern Alternative would be limited access between US 30 and US 322, and currently includes nine access points: Route 30, Greenfield Road, Horseshoe Road, Route 772, Diller Avenue, New Holland Road, Ranck Road, Rancks Church Road, and US 322. Additionally, to address public concern regarding residential displacements and impacts to farmlands, numerous alignment options were evaluated between Kinzer Avenue and Ranck Road in Earl and East Earl townships. Three alignment options are being considered with the Southern Alternative south of New Holland. See North, Middle, and South options on the adjacent map:

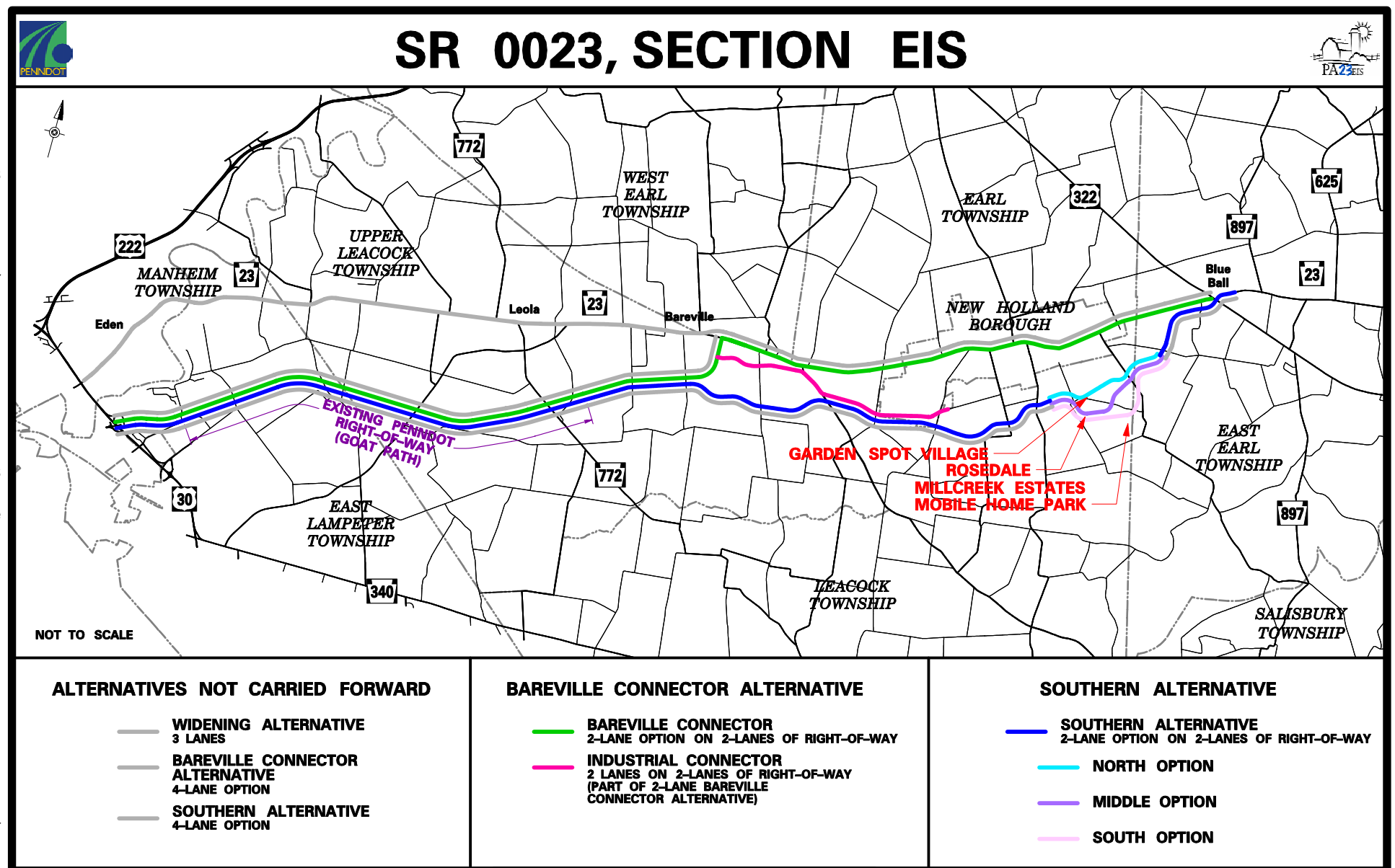
- The North Option would extend just north of Runway Avenue, south of the Garden Spot Village community.
- The Middle Option would parallel Kinzer Avenue before swinging to the east, crossing Airport Road, and connecting to the remainder of the Southern Alternative near Ranck Road.
- The South Option shares the same alignment as the Middle Option along Kinzer Avenue, before turning south towards the Millcreek Estates Mobile Home Park, crossing Airport Road, and paralleling the boundary of Earl and East Earl townships, before connecting to the remainder of the Southern Alternative.

The Two-Lane Southern Alternative would have traffic operating conditions nearly as good as the Four-Lane Southern Alternative, would have fewer environmental impacts, especially to farmlands, and would cost approximately 47 percent less than the Four-Lane Southern Alternative.

No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative would retain the existing Route 23 roadway and includes current projects such as the Route 23 traffic signal coordination, and Glenola Drive and Groffdale Road intersection improvements. Routine maintenance would occur, but no major improvements would be made to the transportation system. This alternative is carried forward as a benchmark to compare against other alternatives.

After the Draft EIS has been prepared, it will be available in the project area for review by the public, and a public hearing will be held to receive oral and written testimony on the project. Another newsletter will be published at that time to inform the public when and where the Draft EIS will be available and the public hearing will be held, as well describe in detail the process for submitting comments on the project.



Land Use Planning/Agricultural Preservation Efforts

The County Planning Commission, in cooperation with municipalities and other partners, has turned its attention to implementing the updated Growth Management Element of the County's Comprehensive Plan. The updated policies will serve as an overarching guide to planning and implementation efforts throughout the county. In particular, they will guide the land use and transportation planning efforts associated with the PA 23 EIS and the Eastern Lancaster County Land Use Study (ELCLUS). www.co.lancaster.pa.us/planning/

Locally, municipalities, the county and agricultural preservation organizations are working together to implement policies and ordinances that will advance the growth management goals identified in the ELCLUS draft report (Fall 2003), the PA 23 EIS land use planning initiatives, and the Lancaster County Growth Management Element of its comprehensive plan (Spring 2006). Recent activities include the following multi-municipal and county efforts:

- The ELANCO planning group (Terre Hill Borough, Brecknock, Caernarvon, East Earl, and Earl Townships), will soon begin an update of their 1996 multi municipal comprehensive plan. The update will pay particular attention to the land use and transportation planning ground work done for the PA 23 EIS and ELCLUS projects. It will be a key component of the land use and transportation strategies needed to support the PA 23 EIS transportation alternatives and the vision for the future of this area.

• The Conestoga Valley Area Comprehensive Plan (East Lampeter, Upper Leacock and West Earl Townships) was adopted in 2003. An important outcome of the plan is the development of cooperative zoning (adoption in near future) among the three municipalities. This zoning will allow the participating municipalities to provide locations for all types of land uses within a larger multi-municipal area so that they can be located where it fits better into a community.

• The Lancaster Intermunicipal Committee's multi-municipal Comprehensive Plan *Growing Together* is expected to be adopted in early 2007. It includes 11 municipalities around Lancaster City (including the City), and two of the PA 23 EIS area municipalities (East Lampeter and Manheim Townships). This plan includes innovative strategies to target future growth in specified urban areas.

• The County Planning Commission staff has been evaluating the agricultural zoning in the Route 23 study area in order to identify how to apply effective agricultural zoning around potential access points to a new Route 23. County staff will be working with municipalities to have ordinances evaluated and updated prior to a decision about the PA 23 transportation project.

• County Planning Commission staff is working with its consultant, municipalities, and agricultural preservation organizations to develop a package of land use and agricultural preservation strategies that will support and be compatible with the preferred transportation alternative, while meeting the community's land use vision for northeastern Lancaster County.

Anticipated PA Route 23 EIS Schedule

Winter 2006/2007

Continue Preparation of Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Spring 2007

Draft EIS Available for Public Review/Comment

Summer 2007

Public Hearing on the Draft EIS

Summer 2007

Comment Period Closes for Draft EIS

Fall 2007

Address Comments on Draft EIS

And another thing...PA 23 Signal Coordination Update

In the July 2006 newsletter, we provided a feature article on 'Some Facts About Traffic Signal Coordination' and indicated that a planned traffic signal coordination project was under design for various sections of Route 23, progressing independently from the EIS project. The design work has now been completed and is currently scheduled for contractor bid opening on January 11, 2007 with construction shortly thereafter. Because of corridor constraints, more standardized traffic signal interconnect designs could not be used and were determined to be cost prohibitive to some municipalities. Therefore, sections of the project were designed using the somewhat innovative technology of Global Position Satellite(GPS) receivers for the timing of the signals, resolving both design and cost issues. Other sections of Route 23 did not require using GPS, and instead have been designed for an adjustment to the existing systems for optimization.

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