

CHAPTER 3-STATE OF THE SYSTEM

Roads And Bridges

The regional highway system functions as the primary means of distributing people and goods within and throughout Berks County. 51.9 miles of Interstate and 36.8 miles of expressways accommodate most of the highway traffic.

Our experience and perception of the transportation system is largely based on the condition of the roads and bridges we drive on every day. As stated earlier, the primary focus of this plan is to develop and maintain the county’s road and bridge network to be satisfactory and safe for existing and planned traffic. To aid in this process, the Reading Area Transportation Study Annual Pavement and Bridge Condition Report was created. Through multiple facets of identification and analysis completed, this report helps to guide investment decisions to keep Berks County’s roads and bridges in good order by determining potential projects for inclusion in the RATS TIP and LRTP.

Roads

Historically, Berks County has been served by a radial system of five major arterial highways. U.S. 222 is the principal link between Reading and both Allentown and Lancaster, as well as a connection to the Pennsylvania Turnpike. PA 61 is the principal highway connection between Schuylkill County and Reading.

U.S. 422 provides a direct link to the Delaware Valley market center to the east. To the west, U.S. 422 connects Reading to Lebanon, Harrisburg and the Capitol region. Berks County has no Interstate link that crosses through the core urban area; however, Interstate 78 to the north and the Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-76) to the south bound the county. PA 183 and PA 61 act as connectors to I-78, while I-176 and U.S. 222 South link the urban area with the Turnpike.

In 2024, Berks County had 3,292.54 linear miles of roadway, largely owned by local government entities and PennDOT.

ROAD OWNERSHIP BY AGENCY 2024		
Agency	Linear Miles	%
Local	2,413.18	73.29%
PennDOT	872.60	26.50%
Other State/Federal	2.02	0.01%
Turnpike	4.74	0.14%
Total	3,292.54	100.00%

Source: PennDOT, Pennsylvania Highway Statistics, 2024 Highway Data

Map 21 and the Roads by Functional Class table show the federal functional classifications assigned to roads in Berks County. The functional classification of a roadway may change over time based on changing traffic conditions. Classification of a road is based on an analysis of the volume of traffic using the facility, the type of trip provided, the length of trip, and the speed of the trip.

ROADS BY FUNCTIONAL CLASS 2024		
Road Class	Miles	%
Local	2,388.8	72.55%
Minor Collector	163.3	4.96%
Major Collector	355.7	10.80%
Minor Arterial	202.2	6.14%
Principal Arterial	94.0	2.85%
Interstate	51.9	1.58%
Other Freeway/ Expressway	36.8	1.12%
Total	3,292.7	100.00%

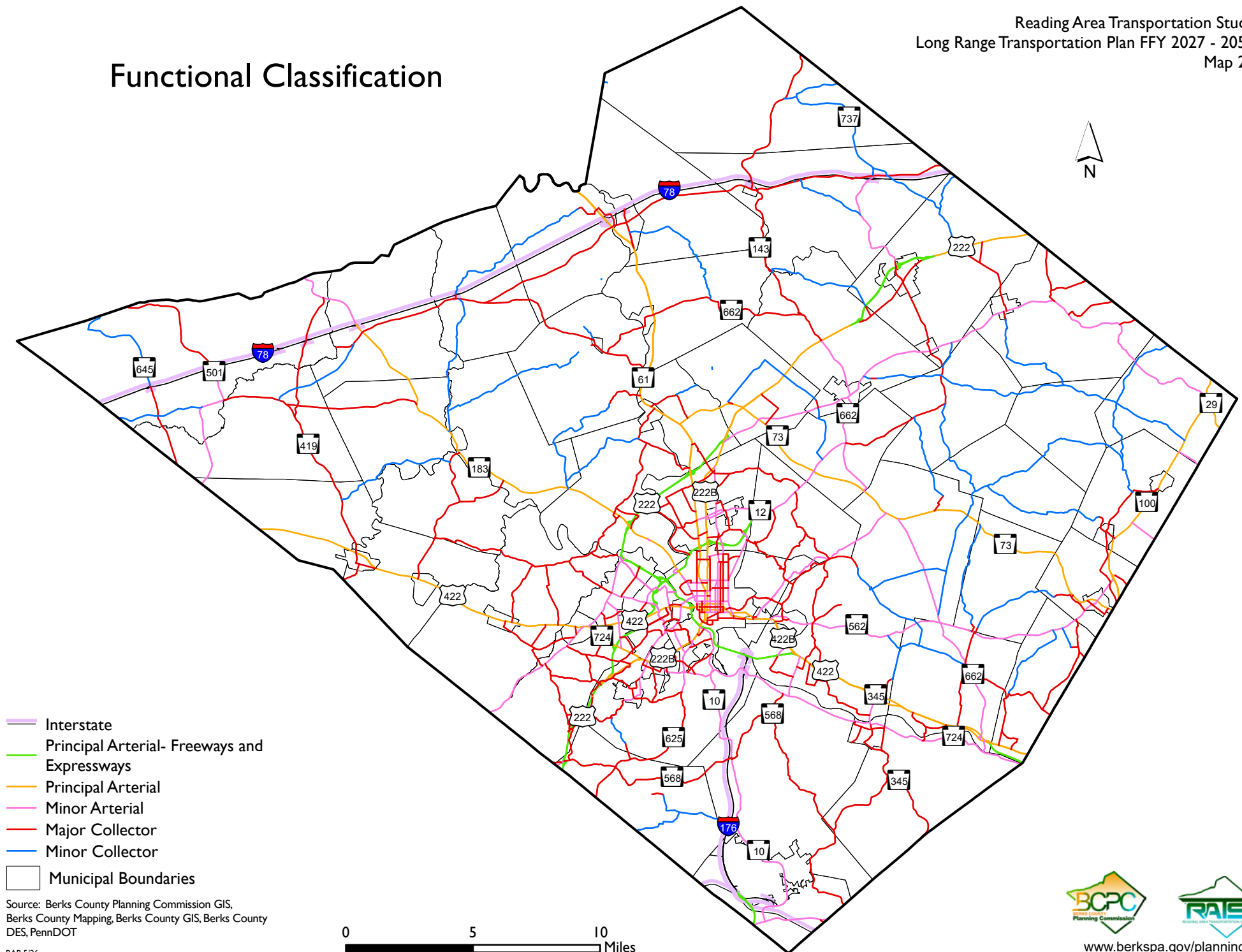
Source: PennDOT, Pennsylvania Highway Statistics, 2024

Arterials provide the highest level of service at the greatest speed for the longest uninterrupted distance, with some degree of access control. These roads are typically classified as principal arterials (sub-grouped by Interstate, Freeway/ Expressway, and other principal arterials) and minor arterials.

Collectors provide a lower level of service at a slower speed. They provide service for shorter distances by collecting traffic from local roads and connecting them with arterials. Collectors are classified as major collectors and minor collectors.

Local roads and streets are, by far, the most numerous of the road types in the county, accounting for 72.55 percent of all road segment miles in Berks County. These roads provide access to individual properties and serve short distance, low speed trips.

Functional Classification



The National Highway System (NHS) consists of roadways important to the nation's economy, defense, and mobility. Principal Arterials are part of the National Highway System. Berks County has 184.4 miles of roads on the National Highway System and two intermodal connectors (see Maps 22 & 23). Currently, the NHS in Berks County is under review. Route mileage will change, and one Intermodal Connector is recommended for elimination.

NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM (NHS) IN BERKS COUNTY 2024	
Agency	Linear Miles
Local	0.5
PennDOT	179.2
Turnpike	4.7
Total	184.4

Source: PennDOT, Pennsylvania Highway Statistics, 2024 Highway Data

The Federal Aid System (with the exception of rural minor collectors and local roads) is a collection of roads in the county that are eligible for federal funds. In 2024, the federal aid system represented 733.5 linear miles or 22.28% of all roadways in Berks County.

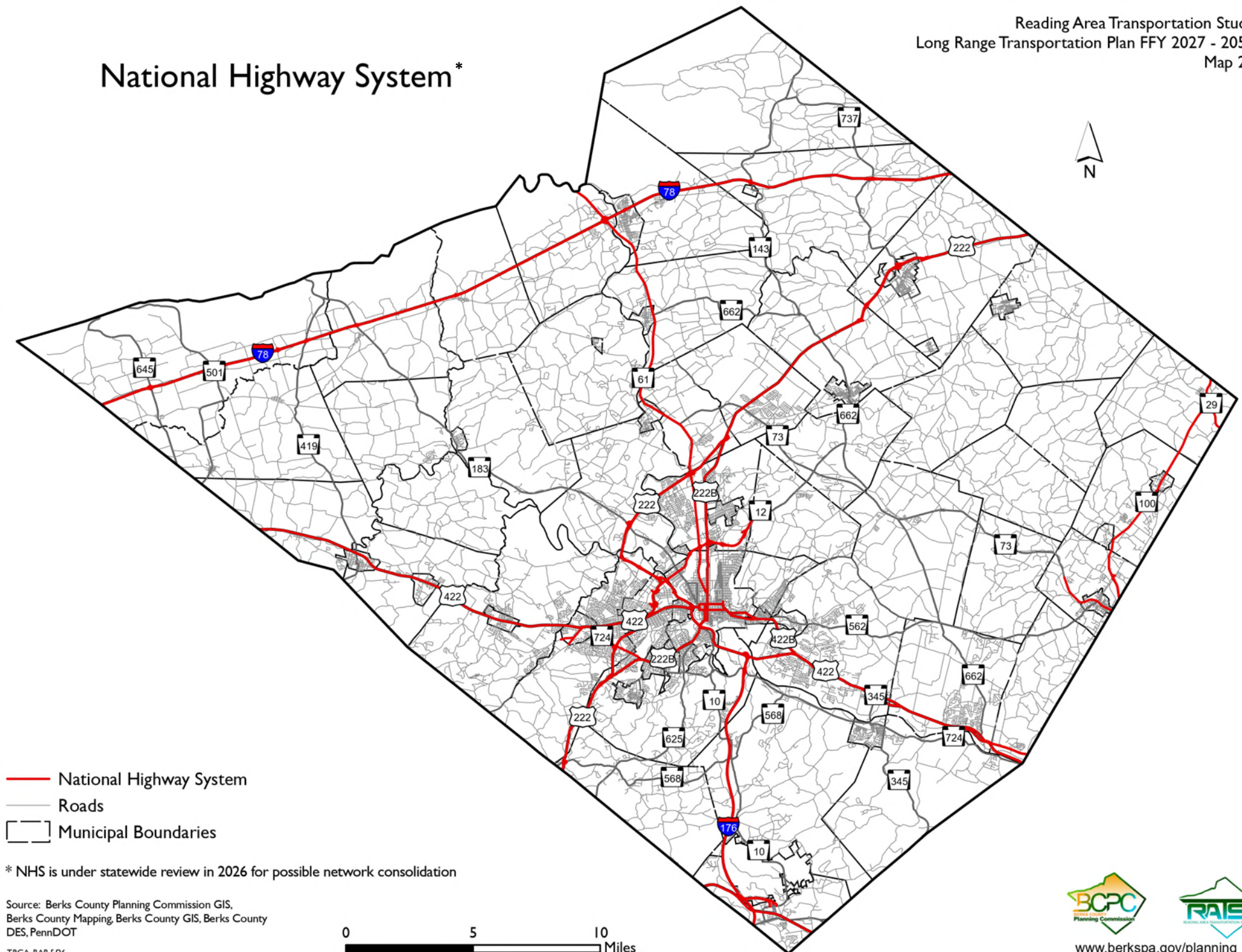
FEDERAL AID SYSTEM IN BERKS COUNTY 2024	
Agency	Linear Miles
Local	140.0
PennDOT	593.5
Total	733.5

Source: PennDOT, Pennsylvania Highway Statistics, 2024

Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) is the total number of vehicles traveling along a roadway segment on an average day. Map 24 illustrates AADT on Berks County roadways.



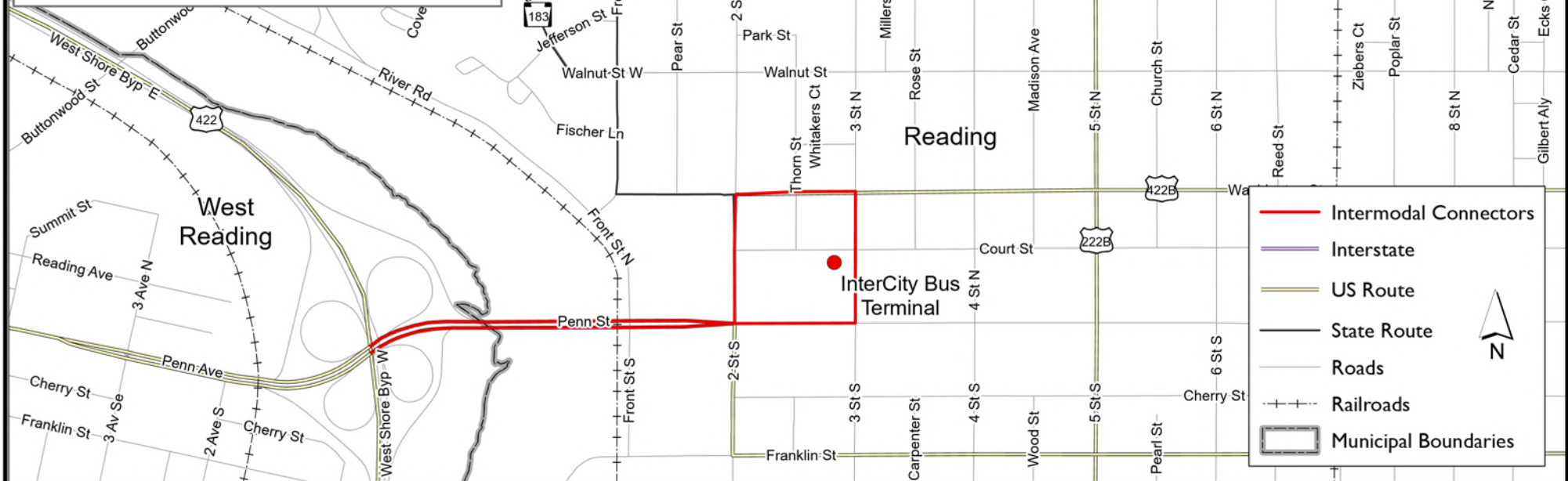
National Highway System*



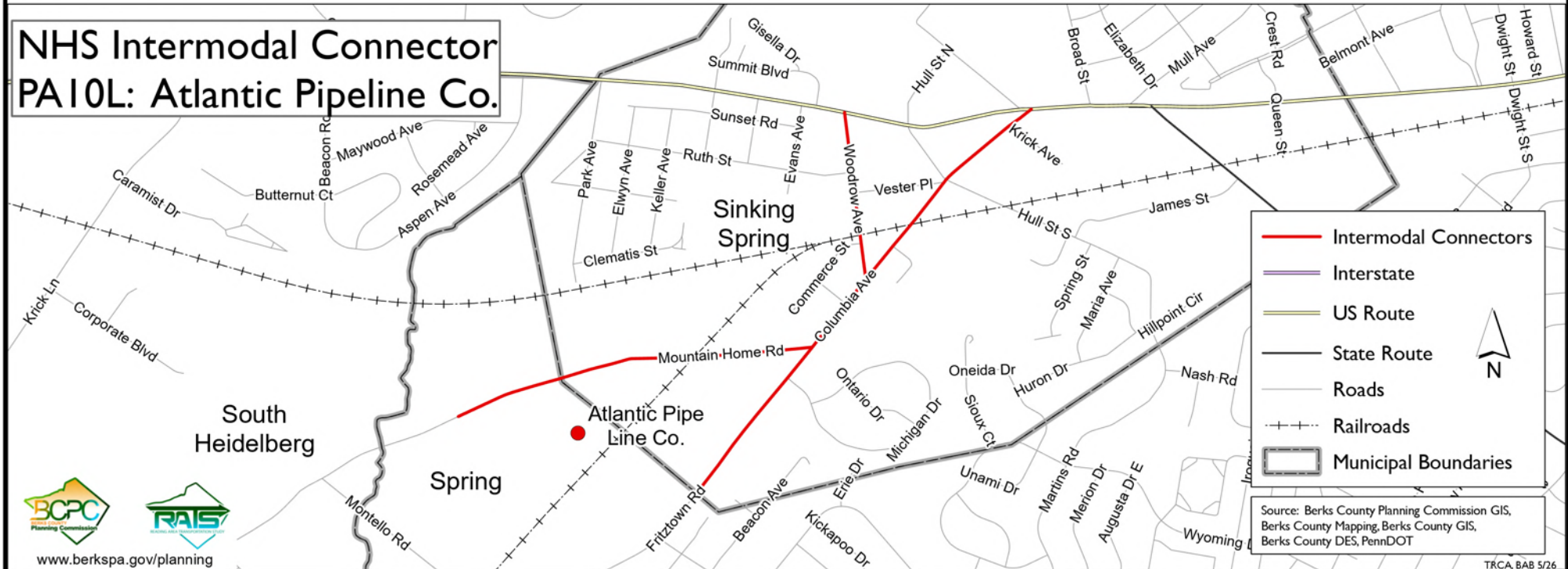
NHS Intermodal Connector PA68B: Bieber Bus Terminal

This Connector will be recommended for elimination in 2026 due to previous closure of intercity bus terminal.

Reading Area Transportation Study
Long Range Transportation Plan FFY 2027 - 2050
Map 23



NHS Intermodal Connector PA10L: Atlantic Pipeline Co.

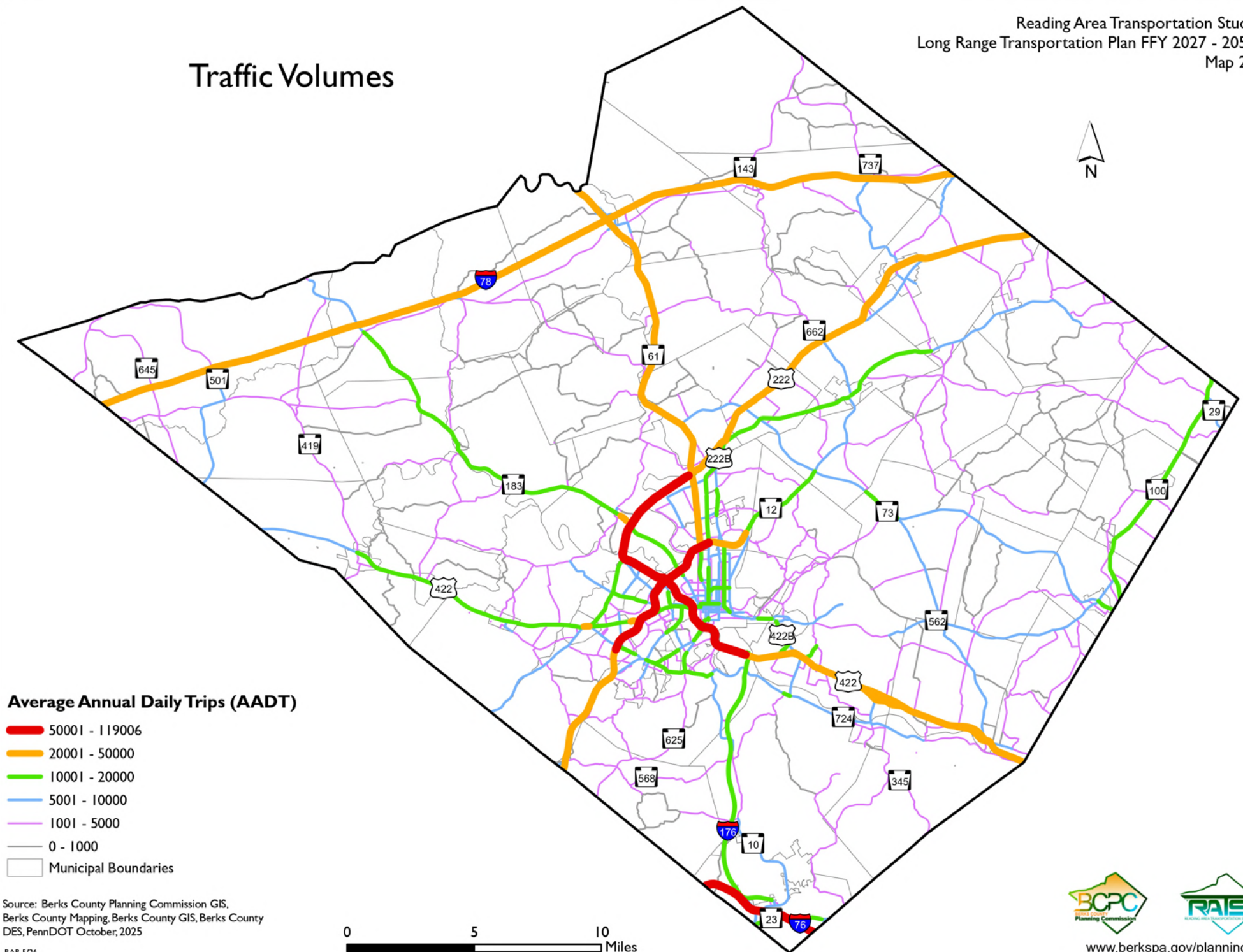


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Source: Berks County Planning Commission GIS,
Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS,
Berks County DES, PennDOT

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Traffic Volumes



Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled (DVMT)

In 2024 the county's roadways accommodated over 9 million miles of travel daily, the majority of which is on PennDOT owned roads. The COVID-19 pandemic decreased travel demand across the state and in Berks County in 2020, which should be kept in mind when viewing the two DVMT tables below. The 2020 Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled decreased to just under 8 million miles of travel daily from a DVMT of approximately 9.55 million in 2019, as less drivers traveled the roads due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This accounted for a 16.9% decrease in total DVMT for the year of 2020 compared to 2019. The DVMT on Berks County roads are still 500,000 less than in 2019.

The adjacent table shows DVMT for Berks County roads by the agency that owns them from 2020 through 2024. In 2024, the county's roadways accommodated over 9 million miles of daily travel, the majority of which is on PennDOT owned roads. The total DVMT for Berks County increased from 2020 to 2024 by 13.80%.

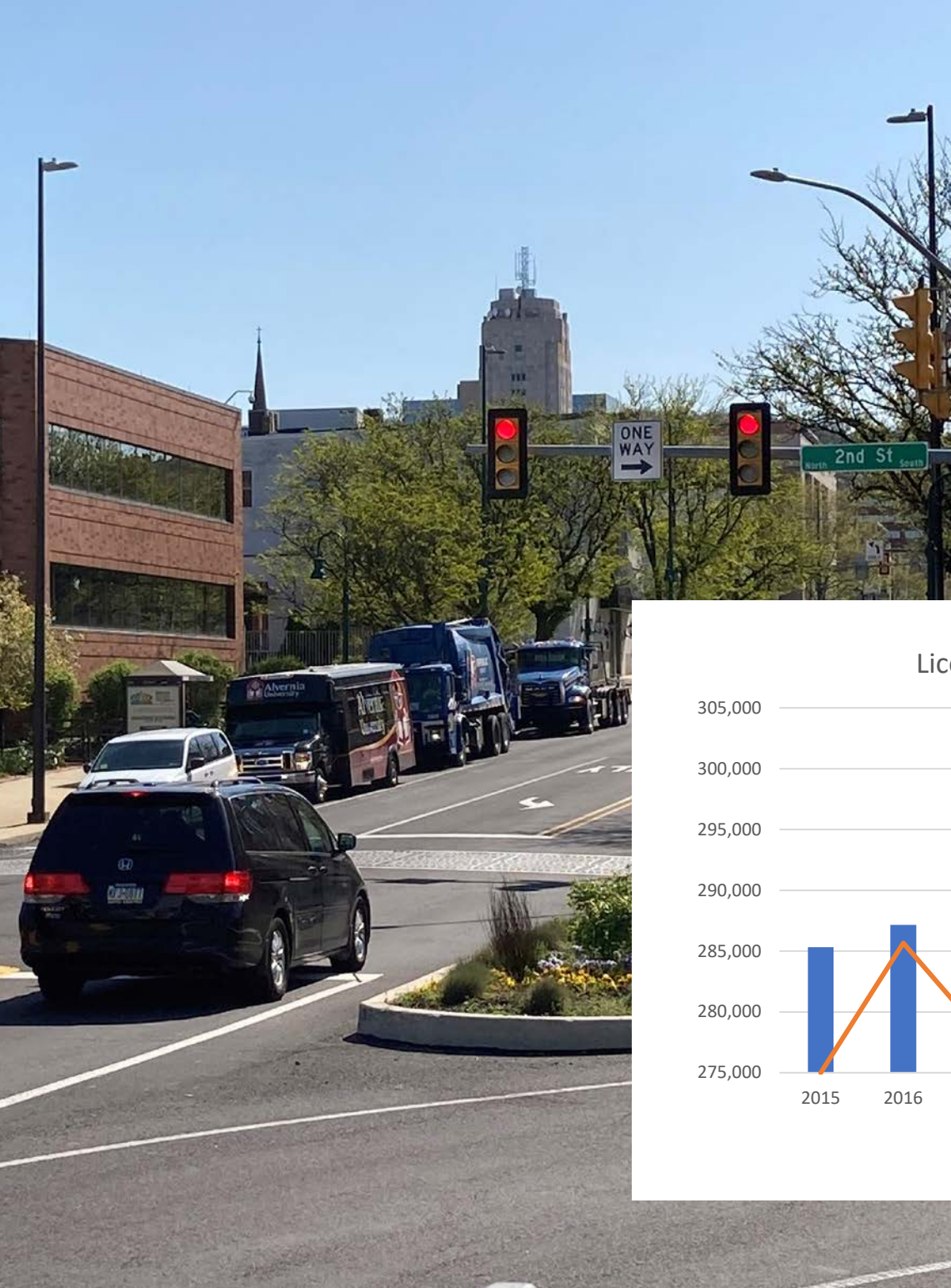
CHANGE IN DVMT BY AGENCY IN BERKS COUNTY FROM 2020-2024							
Agency	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2020-2024 # Change	2020-2024 % Change
Local	1,264,344	1,626,303	1,704,877	1,506,007	1,388,118	123,774	9.79%
PennDOT	6,404,952	7,905,375	7,654,150	7,862,851	7,456,892	1,051,940	16.42%
Other State/Federal	115,953	136,456	16,203	11,535	606	-115,347	-99.48%
Turnpike	166,906	144,808	183,348	190,315	183,348	16,442	9.85%
Total	7,934,155	9,812,942	9,588,578	9,570,708	9,028,964	1,094,809	13.80%

Source: PennDOT, Pennsylvania Highway Statistics, 2020-2024

The DVMT, broken out by functional classification, shows almost all classes of through roads increasing in use while lower capacity local roads decreased in use from 2020-2024. Particularly of note, travel on the freeways/expressways grew 21.23% from 2020-2024. As noted earlier, the COVID-19 pandemic decreased travel demand by 16.9% for 2020 compared to 2019. It should be noted that compared to the 2023 numbers, the only increase was in DVMT of the Interstate.

CHANGE IN DVMT BY ROAD CLASS IN BERKS COUNTY FROM 2020-2024							
Road Class	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2020-2024 # Change	2020-2024 % Change
Local	1,039,823	1,327,886	1,307,074	1,076,916	980,398	-59,425	-5.71%
Minor Collector	196,167	223,363	225,571	237,636	229,873	33,706	17.18%
Major Collector	840,931	1,045,917	1,025,152	1,088,058	1,001,527	160,596	19.10%
Minor Arterial	1,413,606	1,695,536	1,669,323	1,702,402	1,596,009	182,403	12.90%
Principal Arterial	1,435,689	1,804,699	1,836,037	1,927,463	1,718,987	283,298	19.73%
Interstate	1,577,070	1,885,969	1,796,737	1,747,965	1,767,555	190,485	12.08%
Other Freeway/Expressway	1,430,869	1,829,572	1,698,685	1,790,268	1,734,615	303,746	21.23%
Total	7,934,155	9,812,942	9,558,579	9,570,708	9,028,964	1,094,809	13.80%

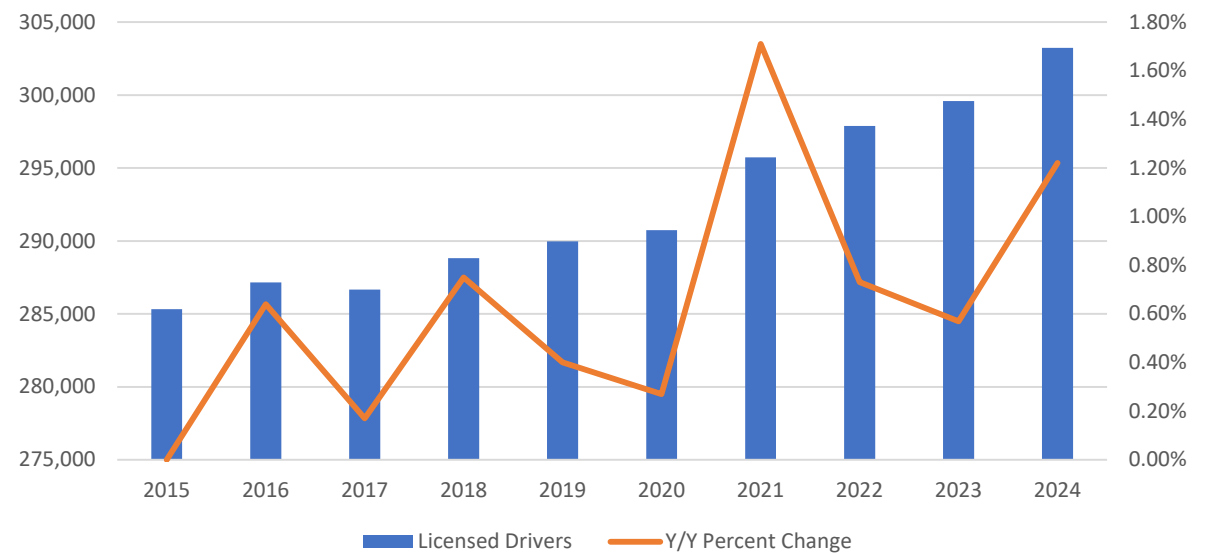
Source: PennDOT, Pennsylvania Highway Statistics, 2020-2024



Driving Population

As of 2024, there were 303,238 licensed drivers in Berks County. The following chart shows the 6.28% growth in licensed drivers since 2015. The largest change in number of licensed drivers from year to year was between 2020 and 2021, which could be attributed to less desire and opportunity to obtain a license during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Licensed Drivers in Berks County 2015-2024



Registered Vehicles

The following chart provides a sample of the types of vehicles that use the Berks County road network. There are 20,541 (5.3%) more vehicles registered in 2024 than in 2014. The Other Vehicle Types class rose significantly, but that was due to including cargo trailers and recreational trailers into this category that were unreported in previous years. Passenger cars have been the predominant vehicle on the road – with a steady rate of around 66% of all vehicles since 2014. With

the addition of motorcycles and pick-up trucks, 84.8% of registered vehicles in the county are largely for passenger use. This chart is not indicative of the predominance of tractor- trailers since such vehicles can be registered in nearly any state. However, the chart below shows 319 more of those vehicles registered overall across weight classes inside the county since 2014.

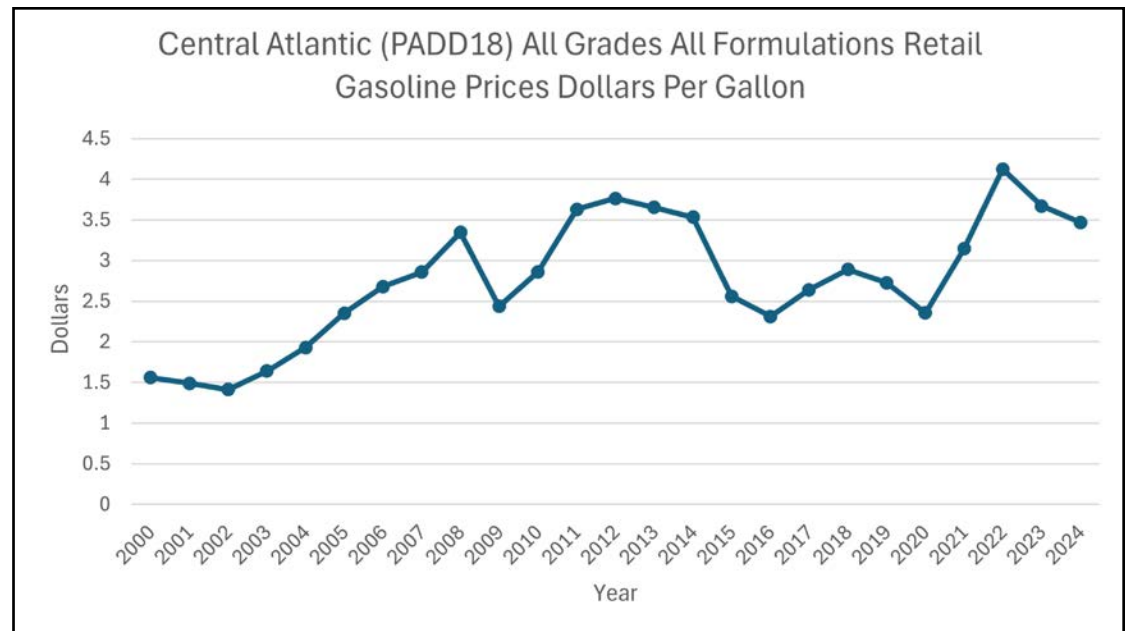
CHANGE IN NUMBER AND TYPE OF REGISTERED VEHICLES IN BERKS COUNTY 2014 TO 2024								
Registered Vehicles	2014	2014 % of Total	2019	2019 % of Total	2024	2024 % of Total	2014 to 2024 # Change	2014 to 2024 % Change
Passenger	259,504	67.1%	264,231	66.5%	268,777	65.9%	9,273	3.6%
Special Mobile Equipment	569	0.1%	591	0.1%	579	0.1%	10	1.8%
Farm Vehicles (no exemption cert.)	5	0.0%	4	0.0%	4	0.0%	-1	-20.0%
Motorhomes	1,248	0.3%	1,224	0.3%	1,148	0.3%	-100	-8.0%
Regular Motorcycle	15,412	4.0%	14,194	3.6%	14,437	3.5%	-975	-6.3%
Motorized Pedalcycle	72	0.0%	52	0.0%	52	0.0%	-20	-27.8%
Motor Drive Vehicle/Motor Driven Cycle	209	0.0%	146	0.0%	131	0.0%	-78	-37.3%
School Bus	1,416	0.4%	1,475	0.4%	939	0.2%	-477	-33.7%
Omni Bus	193	0.0%	161	0.0%	96	0.0%	-97	-50.3%
Bus	316	0.0%	242	0.0%	208	0.0%	-108	-34.2%
Mass Transit Bus	225	0.0%	228	0.0%	112	0.0%	-113	-50.2%
ARP Bus	66	0.0%	46	0.0%	39	0.0%	-27	-40.9%
Taxi	49	0.0%	47	0.0%	1	0.0%	-48	-98.0%
Limousine	55	0.0%	170	0.0%	113	0.0%	58	105.5%
Trailer (3,000 lbs or less)	21,025	5.4%	20,558	5.2%	19,281	4.7%	-1,744	-8.3%
Trailer (3,001 to 10,000 lbs)	11,997	3.1%	13,487	3.4%	13,416	3.3%	1,419	11.8%
Trailer (10,001 lbs or more)	8,658	2.2%	10,888	2.7%	12,645	3.1%	3,987	46.0%
Pickup Trucks (up to 14,000 lbs)	57,204	14.8%	59,651	15.0%	62,498	15.3%	5,294	9.3%
Truck (14,001 to 17,000 lbs)	1,053	0.3%	1,065	0.3%	1,098	0.3%	45	4.3%
Truck (17,001 to 21,000 lbs)	826	0.2%	1,037	0.3%	1,228	0.3%	402	48.7%
Truck (21,001, to 26,000 lbs)	2,325	0.6%	2,711	0.7%	3,136	0.8%	811	34.9%
Truck (26,001 to 30,000 lbs)	186	0.0%	147	0.0%	122	0.0%	-64	-34.4%
Trucks (30,001 to 33,000 lbs)	605	0.2%	510	0.1%	440	0.1%	-165	-27.3%
Truck (33,001+ lbs) Tractor Trailers	3,630	9.4%	3,772	0.9%	3,949	1.0%	319	8.8%
Other Vehicle Types	172	0.0%	512	0.1%	3,112	0.8%	2,940	1,709.3%
Total	387,020	100.0%	397,149	100.0%	407,561	100.0%	20,541	5.3%

Source: PennDOT Driver and Vehicle Services Annual Report of Registrations



Gasoline Prices

Despite gasoline prices remaining relatively low, it is still more expensive to drive around Berks County today than it was in the last 25 years. While gas prices generally do not affect how much we travel, it can affect how far and the mode in which we travel. If gas prices are high, we tend to keep trips closer to home, purchase more gas efficient vehicles, look to carpool, or if possible, take the bus or bike to work.



Source: United States Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration (EIA)
Note: This information is obtained from the EIA PASS 18 Annual Average Table

Roadway And Bridge Maintenance

Analyzing road and bridge conditions allows PennDOT and RATS to focus on setting goals to improve upon those conditions by programming road and bridge improvements. The Reading Area Transportation Study's Pavement and Bridge Condition Report is updated annually and identifies performance based on the trends of each indicator over a 5-year period. The RATS Pavement and Bridge Report is used to help develop the recommendations identified in Chapter 4 of this plan.

Roadway surfaces in Berks County are mostly comprised of paved surface roadways. Of the paved surface roadways, pavements are either asphalt or concrete. PennDOT assesses pavement surface conditions using a variety of metrics that include International Roughness Index (IRI) and Overall Pavement Index (OPI). PennDOT uses OPI to evaluate both the surface and subsurface of the road.

IRI measures pavement roughness in terms of the number of inches per mile that a laser, mounted in a specialized van, jumps as it is driven along a highway – the lower the IRI, the smoother the ride. IRI categories are the main factor PennDOT uses in determining pavement condition. The categories are different for each business plan network. The table below displays ranges assigned to IRI categories for each business plan network. Note, the lower the IRI, the better the IRI category and condition.

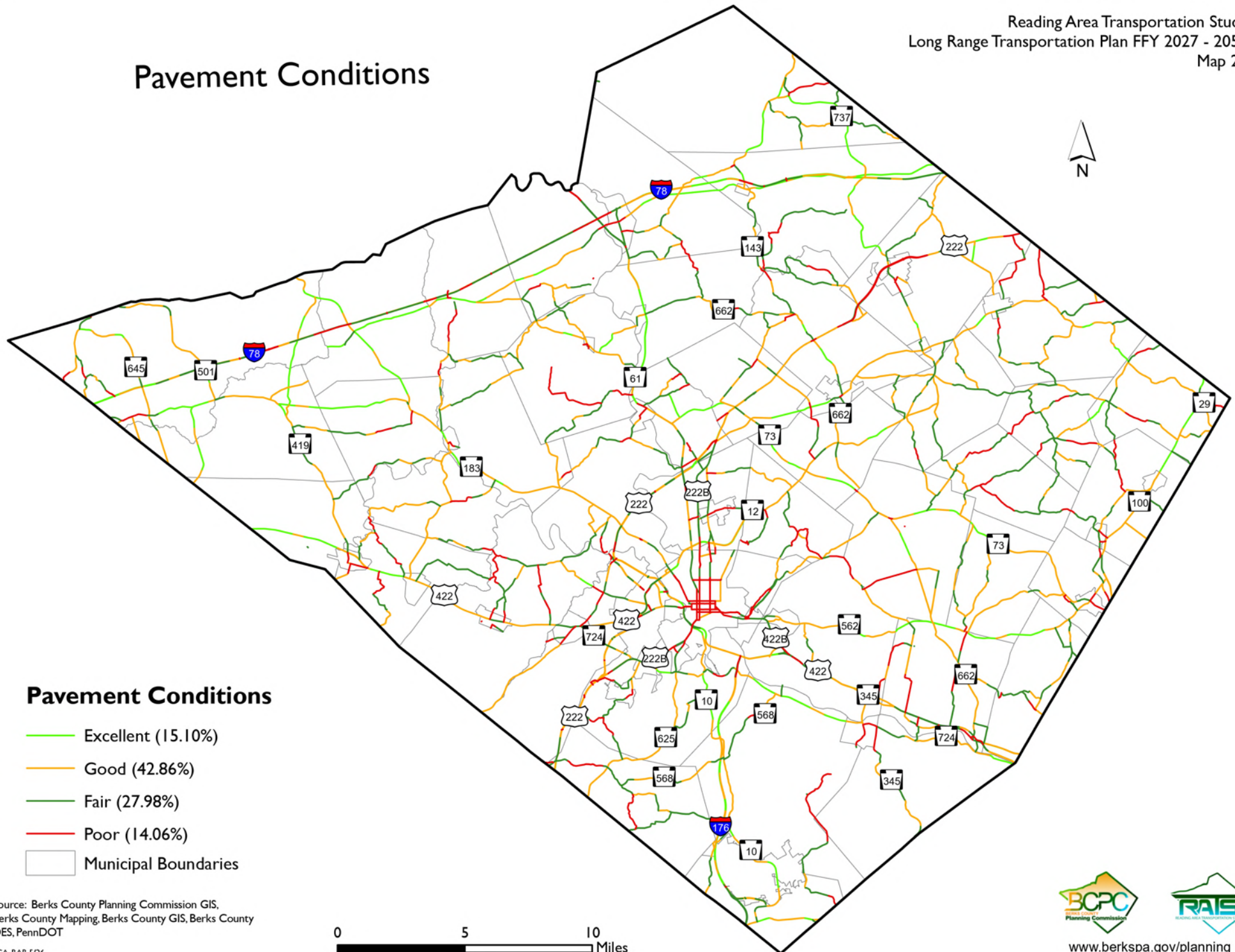
IRI Categories	Interstate	NHS Non-Interstate	Non-NHS ≥ 2,000 ADT	Non-NHS < 2,000 ADT
≤ 70	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
71-75	Good			
76-100		Good		
101-120	Fair		Good	Good
121-150				
151-170	Poor	Poor	Fair	Fair
171-195				
196-220			Poor	Poor
>220				

Source: PennDOT Roadway Management and Testing

The following tables track the number of miles in each IRI category and median IRI based on business plan network for Berks County roads from 2020-2024. The following line charts track the percentage of roadway categorized excellent to poor IRI from 2020-2024 for each business plan network. Map 25 shows the condition of roads based on IRI category in each planning region of the county.



Pavement Conditions



Source: Berks County Planning Commission GIS,
Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS, Berks County
DES, PennDOT

TRCA, BAB 5/26

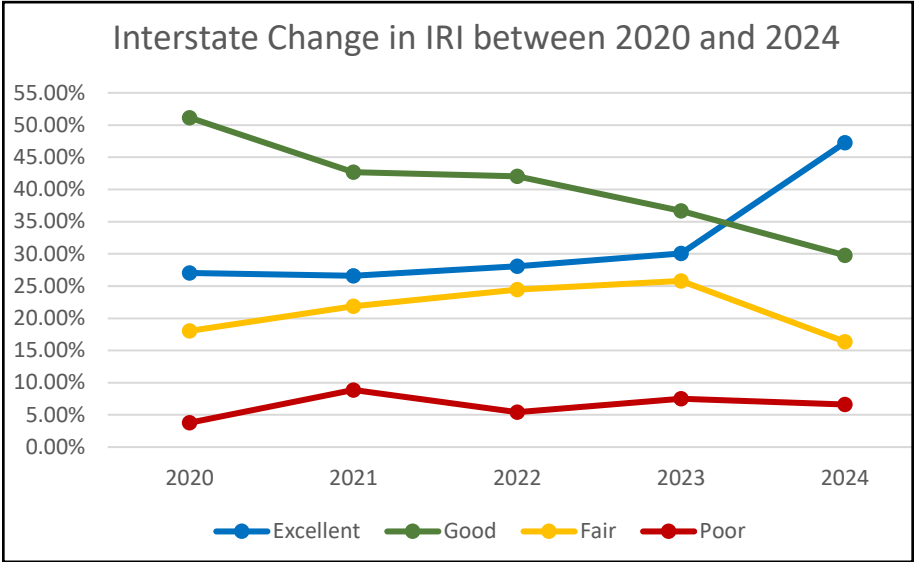


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Overall, since 2020, Interstate roads in Berks County have improved, with the median IRI advancing from 81 to 72. The median IRI of 72 for Berks County interstate roads is considered good and near excellent by the IRI classification. The number of segment miles of poor condition interstate pavements have remained low, however nearly doubled between 2020 and 2024. The significant increase in excellent segment miles in 2024 can be attributed to large resurfacing and bridge maintenance projects on Interstate 78.

CHANGE IN NUMBER OF INTERSTATE SEGMENT MILES BY CONDITION AND MEDIAN IRI BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024							
Condition	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	# Change	% Change
Excellent	22.3	24.8	21.3	27.5	43.6	21.3	95.52%
Good	42.2	39.8	32.0	33.5	27.5	-14.7	-34.83%
Fair	14.9	20.4	18.6	23.6	15.1	0.2	1.34%
Poor	3.1	8.3	4.1	6.8	6.1	3.0	96.77%
Median IRI	81	83	82	85	72	-9	-11.11%

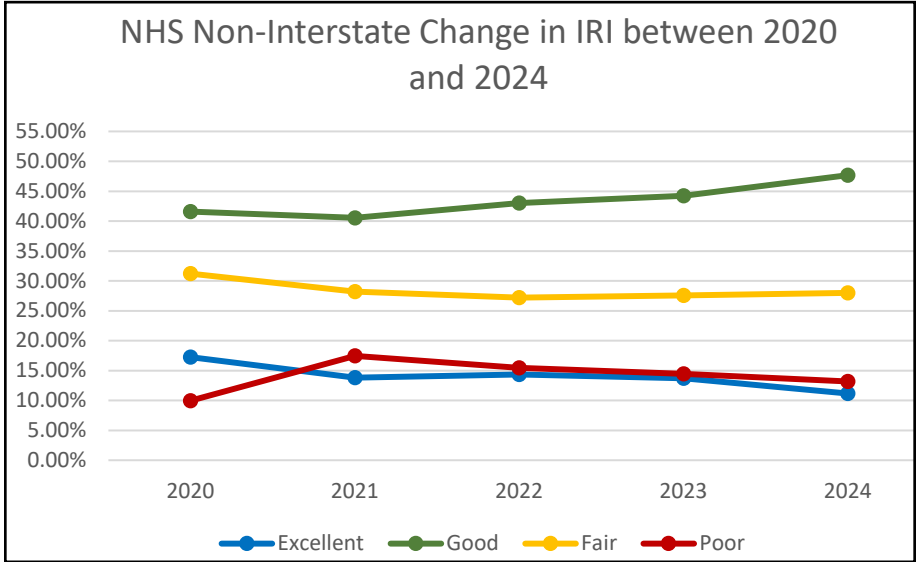
Source: PennDOT Performance Measures Annual Reports, Reading MPO, 2020-2024



Non-interstate miles on the National Highway System (NHS) in Berks County have remained relatively stable, with the median IRI worsening by only one point from 110 to 111. These roads are considered good by the IRI classification.

CHANGE IN NUMBER OF NHS NON-INTERSTATE SEGMENT MILES BY CONDITION AND MEDIAN IRI BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024							
Condition	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	# Change	% Change
Excellent	34.9	28.3	29.4	28.1	22.3	-12.6	-36.10%
Good	84.3	83.1	88.1	90.6	95.1	10.8	12.81%
Fair	63.3	57.8	55.7	56.5	55.8	-7.5	-11.85%
Poor	20.2	35.7	31.6	29.6	26.3	6.1	30.20%
Median IRI	110	114	112	111	111	1	0.91%

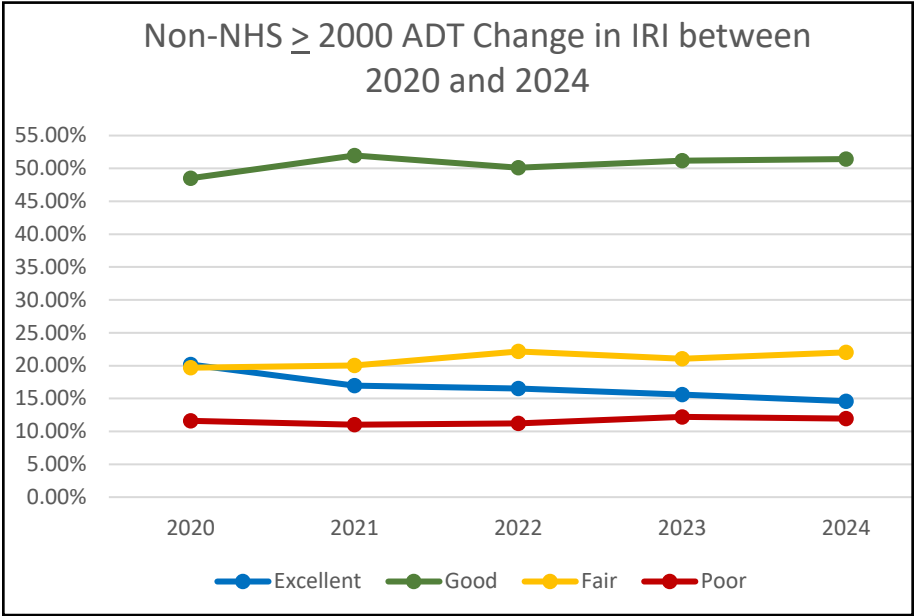
Source: PennDOT Performance Measures Annual Reports, Reading MPO, 2020-2024



Berks County roads that are not on the NHS with 2,000 or more vehicle trips per day have remained relatively stable, despite the decrease in excellent condition segment miles. The median IRI increased from 128 to 134, while not an improvement, this business plan network remains in good condition.

CHANGE IN NUMBER OF NON-NHS ≥2000 ADT SEGMENT MILES BY CONDITION AND MEDIAN IRI BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024							
Condition	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	# Change	% Change
Excellent	71.4	60.5	59.5	59.8	54.7	-16.7	-23.39%
Good	171.8	185.4	180.1	196.4	192.5	20.7	12.05%
Fair	69.7	71.5	79.6	80.8	82.5	12.8	18.36%
Poor	41.2	39.3	40.3	46.9	44.8	3.6	8.74%
Median IRI	128	128	130	131	134	6	4.69%

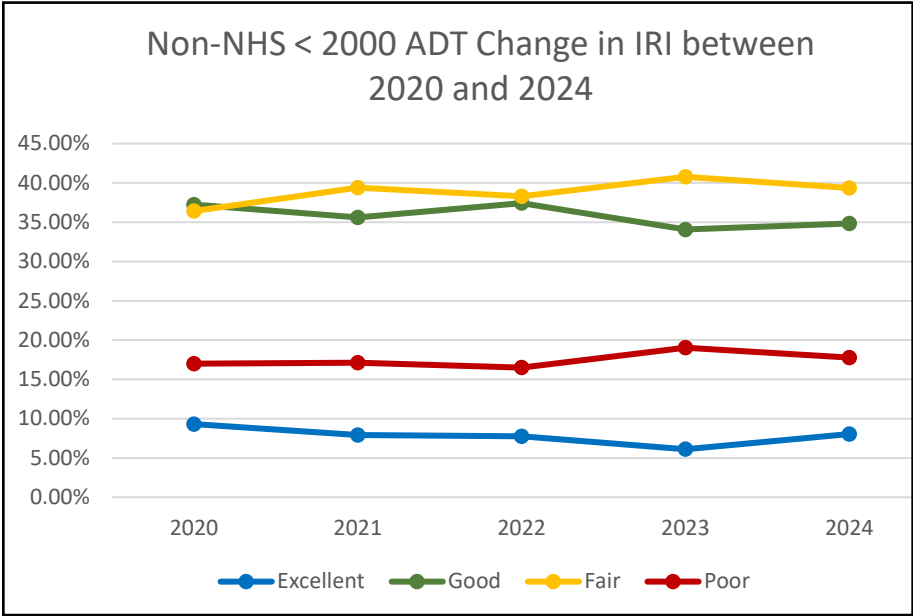
Source: PennDOT Performance Measures Annual Reports, Reading MPO, 2020-2024



Berks County roads that are not on the NHS and see less than 2,000 vehicle trips per day have also declined in condition slightly with the median IRI changing from 173 to 178. This is the only business plan network not classified as good based on median IRI, instead a median IRI rating of 178 classifies this as fair.

CHANGE IN NUMBER OF NON-NHS <2000 ADT SEGMENT MILES BY CONDITION AND MEDIAN IRI BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024							
Condition	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	# Change	% Change
Excellent	31.6	26.7	25.8	19.0	25.7	-5.9	-18.67%
Good	126.3	120.1	124.3	105.9	111.6	-14.7	-11.64%
Fair	123.5	132.8	127.2	126.7	126.2	2.7	2.19%
Poor	57.7	57.7	54.8	59.1	57.0	-0.7	-1.21%
Median IRI	173	175	174	180	178	5	2.89%

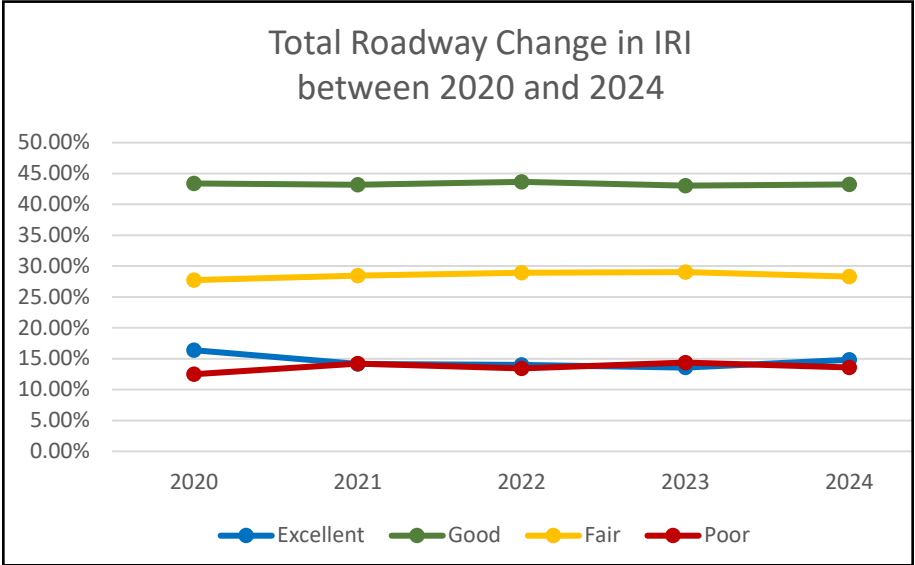
Source: PennDOT Performance Measures Annual Reports, Reading MPO, 2020-2024



The total roadway network of Berks County has slightly declined in condition with a current median IRI of 140, however it has remained at this rating from 2021 through 2024. The largest change was a decrease in excellent condition roadway segment miles from 2020 to 2024.

CHANGE IN NUMBER OF TOTAL ROADWAY SEGMENT MILES BY CONDITION AND MEDIAN IRI BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024							
Condition	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	# Change	% Change
Excellent	160.2	140.3	136.0	134.3	146.3	-13.9	-8.68%
Good	424.6	428.3	424.4	426.3	426.7	2.1	0.49%
Fair	271.4	282.5	281.1	287.6	279.6	8.2	3.02%
Poor	122.2	141.0	130.8	142.4	134.2	12	9.82%
Median IRI	136	140	140	140	140	4	2.94%

Source: PennDOT Performance Measures Annual Reports, Reading MPO, 2020-2024



The following table displays the pavement condition by Business Plan Network for 2024, however, looks at the difference in appropriate Business Plan Networks by analyzing condition based on whether it is state-owned or a Local Federal Aid (LFA).

2024 PAVEMENT IRI SUMMARY BY BUSINESS PLAN NETWORK									
Business Plan Network	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Total
	Seg-Mi	%	Seg Mi	%	Seg Mi	%	Seg Mi	%	Tested Seg Mi
Interstate	43.6	46.78%	27.8	29.83%	15.1	16.20 %	6.7	7.19%	93.2
Total NHS Non-Interstate	27.4	13.05%	96.9	46.14%	56.2	26.76%	29.5	14.05%	210.0
• State-Owned	1.6	5.63%	10.2	35.92%	12.3	43.31%	4.3	15.14%	• 28.4
• LFA	25.8	14.21%	86.7	47.74%	43.9	24.17 %	25.2	13.88%	• 181.6
Total Non-NHS $\geq$ 2,000 ADT	54.7	14.50%	192.6	51.05%	82.8	21.95%	47.2	12.51%	377.3
• State-Owned	37.9	13.12%	137.1	47.46%	70.5	24.40%	43.4	15.02%	• 288.9
• LFA	16.8	19.00%	55.5	62.78%	12.3	13.91%	3.8	4.30%	• 88.4
Total Non-NHS < 2,000 ADT	25.7	7.98%	112.3	34.89 %	126.4	39.27%	57.5	17.86%	321.9
• State-Owned	25.7	8.34%	107.7	34.96%	122.2	39.66%	52.5	17.04%	• 308.1
• LFA	0.0	0.00%	4.6	33.33%	4.2	30.43%	5.0	36.23%	• 13.8
Total – Roadway	151.4	15.10%	429.6	42.86 %	280.5	27.98%	140.9	14.06%	1,002.4

Source: PennDOT's Roadway Management System (RMS) Road Segments RMSSEG: 1/3/2025

Bridges

The Schuylkill River, two lakes and countless streams provide ample recreational activities and commercial activities but create transportation challenges to safely and efficiently move people and freight over them in Berks County. In 2024, there are 880 bridges in Berks County, with the majority owned by PennDOT. These bridges are those that require inspections – state bridges longer than eight feet and local bridges longer than 20 feet. The slight change in the total number of bridges is in part due to PennDOT efforts to improve the classification of bridges. Map 26 shows the approximate location of bridges in the county.

As Berks County's bridges continue to age and deteriorate, it is sometimes necessary to close bridges unexpectedly due to problems revealed during routine inspections. Bridges closed to traffic are those structures deemed unsafe to carry any type of traffic. The number of bridges closed to traffic in the county increased 57.14% since 2020. As of 2024, 11 bridges are closed, with the majority being bridges owned by local municipalities. Map 26 shows the location of the closed and posted bridges.

BRIDGES IN BERKS COUNTY BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024							
Bridge Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	# Change	% Change
State $\geq$ 8' Interstate/Ramps	65	64	60	64	64	-1	-1.53%
State $\geq$ 8' NHS (non-interstate)	150	151	150	150	150	0	0.00%
State $\geq$ 8' non-NHS >2000 ADT	239	236	237	246	243	4	1.67%
State $\geq$ 8' non-NHS <2000 ADT	191	194	194	183	187	-4	-2.09%
Local $\geq$ 20'	236	236	236	236	236	0	0.00%
Total Bridges by Year	881	881	877	879	880	-1	-0.11%

Source: PennDOT Performance Measures Annual Reports, Reading MPO, 2020-2024

CLOSED BRIDGES IN BERKS COUNTY BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024							
Bridge Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	# Change	% Change
State $\geq$ 8' Interstate/Ramps	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
State $\geq$ 8' NHS (non-interstate)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
State $\geq$ 8' non-NHS >2000 ADT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
State $\geq$ 8' non-NHS <2000 ADT	1	2	1	1	3	2	200.00%
Local $\geq$ 20'	6	6	6	7	8	2	33.33%
Total Closed Bridges by Year	7	8	7	8	11	4	57.14%

Source: PennDOT Performance Measures Annual Reports, Reading MPO, 2020-2024

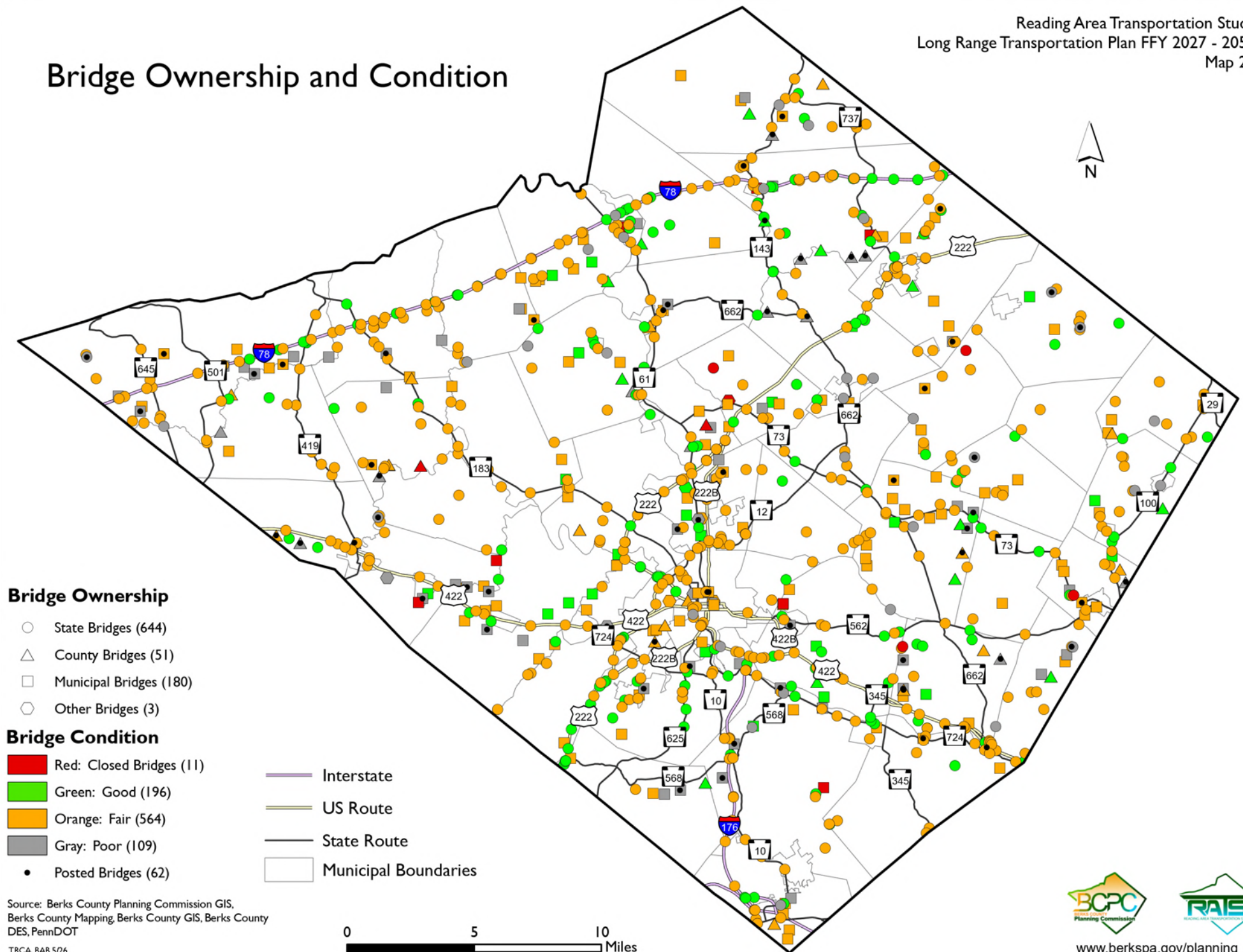
Load posting a bridge is required by the National Bridge Inspection Standards when a bridge is not capable of safely carrying a legal load. If a bridge is deemed deficient, officials will post a maximum load for the bridge. Bridges may also be posted for other load capacity restrictions including speed and number of vehicles permitted on the bridge. Sixty-two (62) bridges are posted in Berks County as of 2024, with the majority of those bridges owned by local municipalities. The number of posted bridges decreased 20.51% since 2020.

POSTED BRIDGES IN BERKS COUNTY BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024							
Bridge Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	# Change	% Change
State ≥8' Interstate/Ramps	2	2	0	0	0	-2	-200.00%
State ≥8' NHS (non-interstate)	1	1	1	1	1	0	0.00%
State ≥8' non-NHS >2000 ADT	6	2	2	2	2	-4	-66.67%
State ≥8' non-NHS <2000 ADT	8	10	8	7	6	-2	-25.00%
Local ≥20'	61	60	56	55	53	-8	-13.11%
Total Posted Bridges by Year	78	75	67	65	62	-16	-20.51%

Source: PennDOT Performance Measures Annual Reports, Reading MPO, 2020-2024



Bridge Ownership and Condition

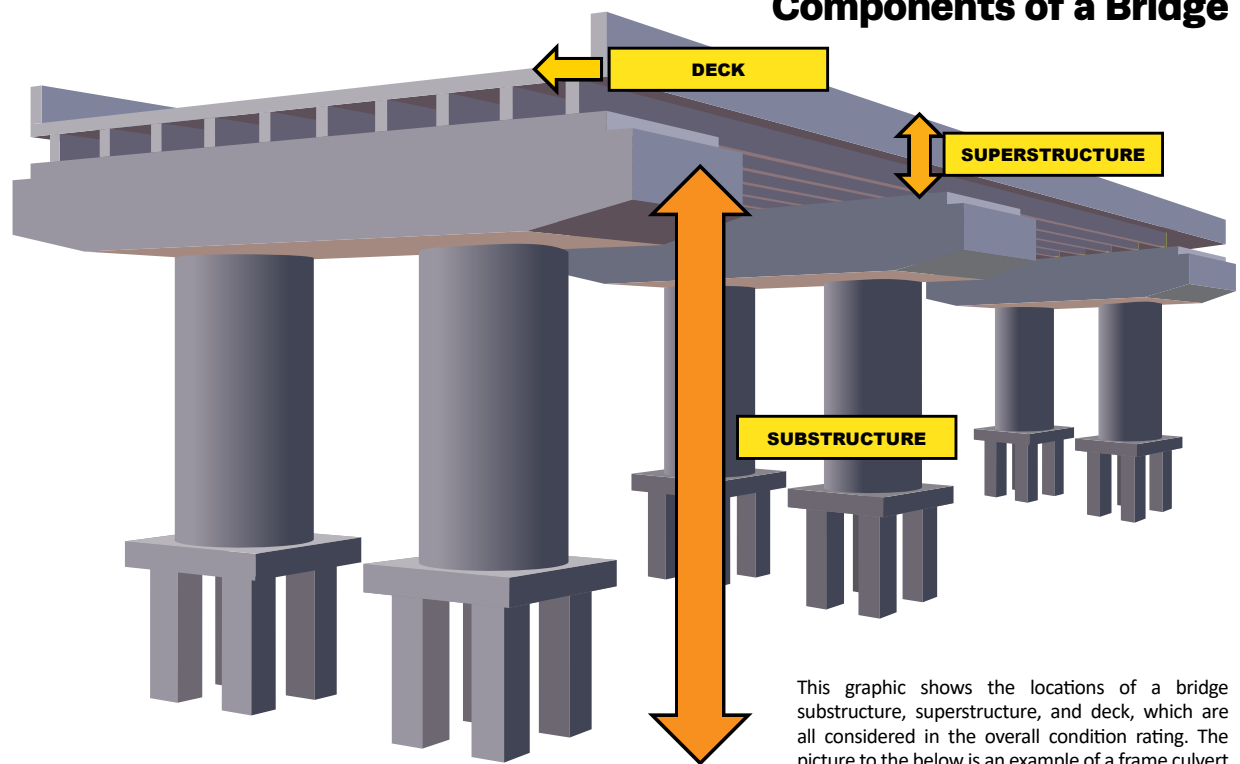


Bridge Inspection Overview

Bridges are characterized by the condition of their major components. State-owned bridges 8 feet in length or more and local-owned bridges over 20 feet in length are inspected on a regular, rotating basis of every two years, unless a higher frequency is determined. These inspections result in condition ratings for the deck, substructure, and superstructure. If the bridge is a culvert, then the one structural piece is given a condition rating. If any one of these structural parts has a condition rating of 4 or less, that bridge is deemed Poor. Bridges and culverts with a condition rating of 5 for any of the structural parts are considered Fair. Bridges and culverts with a condition rating of 6 or higher are considered Good. Each of these components is rated based on the Federal Highway Administration's Pavement and Bridge Condition Report Performance Measures final rule, which became effective in February 2017.

A poor designation does not imply that a bridge is unsafe. However, such bridges typically require significant maintenance and repair to remain in service and would eventually require major rehabilitation or replacement to address the underlying deficiency. Some examples of underlying deficiencies can include inadequate under-clearances, insufficient load-carrying capacity, poor alignment with the roadway, or can no longer adequately service today's traffic.

Components of a Bridge

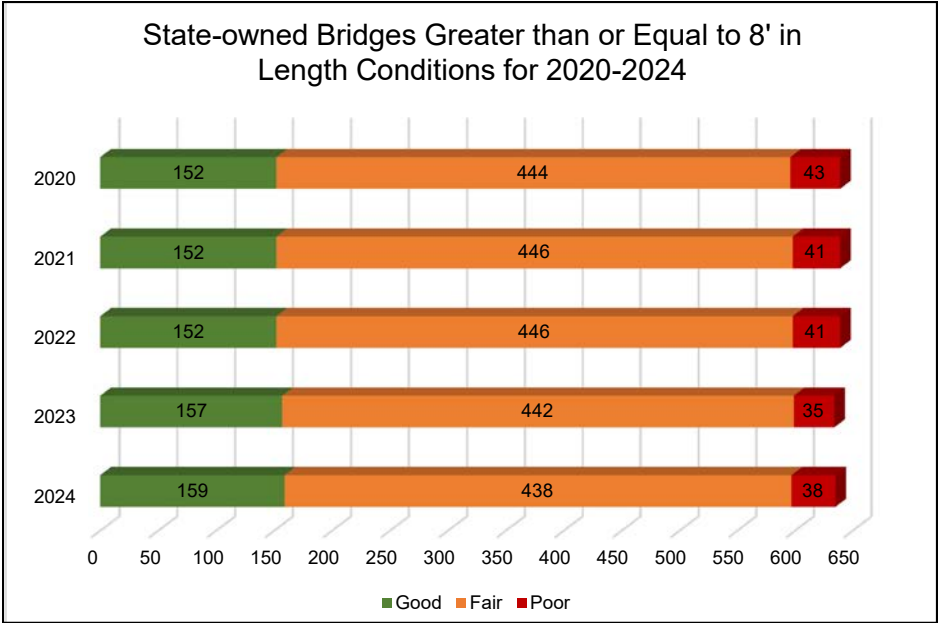


This graphic shows the locations of a bridge substructure, superstructure, and deck, which are all considered in the overall condition rating. The picture to the below is an example of a frame culvert in Muhlenberg Township. Since this type of bridge is one structural piece, it receives one condition rating.



State-owned Bridge Conditions

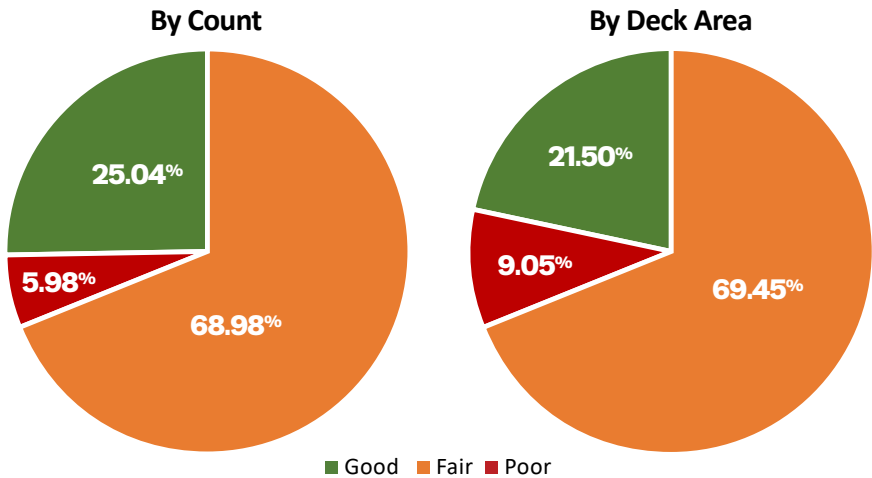
The following tables and charts explore the conditions for inspected state-owned bridges greater than or equal to 8 feet in length.



Source: PennDOT BMS2 Website Berks County State and Local Bridge Condition Report 8/26/2020, 12/08/2022, 1/5/2023, 1/4/2024, 1/3/2025

It is important to consider that bridges may be different lengths and carry different numbers and widths of lanes, although only 5.98% of state-owned bridges were in poor condition in 2024, 9.05% of the state bridge deck area was in poor condition.

2024 State-owned Bridge Conditions ≥ 8' in Length



Source: PennDOT BMS2 Website Berks County State and Local Bridge Condition Report 1/3/2025

Local-owned Bridge Conditions

Local-owned bridges consist of county, township, borough/city, and railroad owned bridges.

2024 LOCAL-OWNED BRIDGES ≥ 20' CONDITIONS BY COUNT BY BUSINESS PLAN NETWORK							
Business Plan Network	Good		Fair		Poor		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Local ≥ 20'	37	15.81%	126	53.85%	71	30.34%	234
• County	14	27.45%	21	41.18%	16	31.37%	51
• Township	20	12.66%	91	57.59%	47	29.75%	158
• Borough/City	2	9.09%	14	63.63%	6	27.27%	22
• Railroad	1	33.33%	0	0.00%	2	66.66%	3

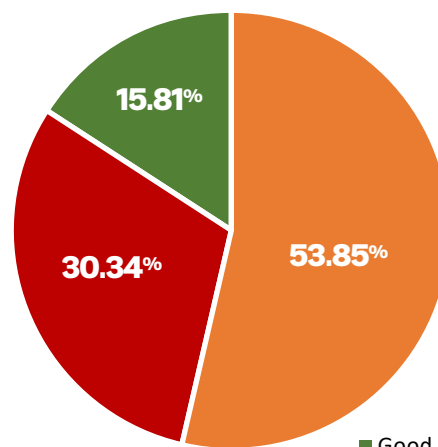
Source: PennDOT BMS2 Website Berks County State and Local Bridge Condition Report 1/3/2025

2024 LOCAL-OWNED BRIDGES > 20' CONDITIONS BY DECK AREA BY BUSINESS PLAN NETWORK							
Business Plan Network	Good		Fair		Poor		Total
	Deck Area SF	%	Deck Area SF	%	Deck Area SF	%	Deck Area SF
Local ≥ 20'	88,402.3	19.52%	239,219.8	52.82%	125,270.9	27.66%	452,893.0
• County	44,427.7	26.64%	89,899.6	53.90%	32,468.8	19.47%	166,796.1
• Township	38,106.5	18.23%	98,005.2	46.90%	72,866.2	34.87%	208,977.9
• Borough/City	3,338.5	4.97%	51,315.0	76.40%	12,512.3	18.63%	67,165.8
• Railroad	2,529.6	25.41%	0.0	0.00%	7,423.6	74.59%	9,953.2

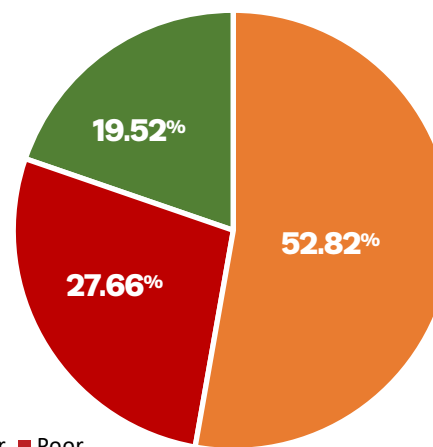
Source: PennDOT BMS2 Website Berks County State and Local Bridge Condition Report 1/3/2025

2024 Local-owned Bridges > 20' in Length

By Count



By Deck Area



■ Good ■ Fair ■ Poor

Source: PennDOT BMS2 Website Berks County State and Local Bridge Condition Report: 1/3/2025

It is important to consider that bridges may be different lengths and carry different numbers and widths of lanes, although 30.34% of local-owned bridges were in poor condition in 2024, this represented 27.66% of local bridge deck area.

State-owned Bridges Versus Local-owned Bridges

The preceding tables and charts highlight the disparities that exist between state-owned bridge conditions compared to local-owned bridge conditions. While state-owned bridges greater than or equal to 8 feet in length are regularly inspected, only local-owned bridges greater than or equal to 20 feet require regular inspection. The majority of state-owned bridges in Berks County are either in Good or Fair condition by both Count (totaling 94.02%) and Deck Area (totaling 90.95%). Comparatively, a greater percentage of the larger local-owned bridges are in Poor condition, with fewer local-owned bridges in Good and Fair condition by both Count (totaling 69.66%) and Deck Area (totaling 72.07%).

CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS

RATS updated the Congestion Management Process (CMP) in November 2025 and this LRTP will include the CMP by reference. Development and maintenance of a CMP is a requirement for all MPOs in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) under federal law. A CMP has great benefit - it provides a systematic and continuous method to pinpoint roadway congestion and to help identify improvements that alleviate it.

The CMP and the included CMP Network addresses the multimodal transportation network, consistent with federal guidelines. The CMP Network was defined by analyzing criteria outlined below which reflect travel times, traffic volumes and speed, and non-recurring factors (crashes), which are sources of congestion that can occur at any time.

The Expanded National Highway System (NHS) serves as the base for the CMP Network. These higher-order roadways (interstates, expressways, principal arterials) serve to move large volumes of traffic over longer distances, while still providing for local and regional travel. Congestion and crashes on the NHS have the potential to disrupt large amounts of regional and long-distance traffic and freight movement. Crashes on limited-access expressways and interstates can result in long delays due to limited exit points and few detour routes. Arterials move regional and local traffic as well, and may have higher volumes, concentrated access points, traffic signals and other factors that contribute to longer delays.

High Volume/Capacity (V/C) Segments show that a road's capacity is approaching (or has approached) the maximum number of vehicles it can carry. Volume-to-Capacity (V/C) ratios examine the number of vehicles on the road in a given period (usually one hour) versus that roadway's physical capacity. When the V/C ratio reaches 1.00, physical capacity has been reached, and congestion begins. V/C ratios greater than 1.00 show worsening congestion. Basically, the higher the V/C ratio, the more congestion on a particular road segment.

Travel Time Index (TTI) is a measure derived from INRIX (International Roadway and Traffic Information Exchange) Road Analytics software XD travel time data and is defined as the ratio of the peak period average travel time to the free-flow travel time (uncongested travel time) for a given roadway segment. Free-flow values were determined for this, and all other INRIX based measures, using reference speeds provided by INRIX for each road segment based on 85th percentile observed speeds for all time periods. The greater the TTI value, the more congestion it indicates. A TTI of 1.00 indicated vehicles are traveling at free-flow speeds, while one at 1.50 indicates a 20-minute free-flow trip takes 30 minutes. Roadways with a TTI between 1.20 and 1.50 are considered moderately congested, and ones greater than 1.50 are considered highly congested. For the CMP, staff analyzed the data for weekdays during peak hours 7:00AM – 9:00AM and 4:00PM – 6:00PM.

Planning Time Index (PTI) is a measure also derived from the INRIX XD travel time data but is defined as the ratio of the peak period 95th percent travel time to the free-flow travel time for a given road segment. The 95th percentile indicates that 95 percent of the travel times are less, and 5 percent more, and measures the variability of reliability of travel. A PTI of 1.00 means the trip time is consistently the same from day to day, while higher values mean more variation and congestion. A PTI of 3.00 indicates a 20-minute free-flow trip will take 60 minutes in the peak period, which is equivalent to one workday a month, where one might expect to leave 40

minutes earlier to arrive on time. Roadways with a PTI between 2.00 and 3.00 are considered moderately unreliable and ones greater than 3.00 are considered highly unreliable. For the CMP, staff analyzed the data for weekdays during peak hours 7:00AM – 9:00AM and 4:00PM – 6:00PM.

High Crash Corridors derived from PennDOT's Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool (PCIT) are used to identify corridors that have high frequency of reportable crashes. Since congestion can cause accidents and accidents can cause congestion, these high crash corridors were included in the network selection process.

Freight and Intermodal Corridors were derived from PennDOT's 2045 Freight Movement Plan (PUB 791 (05-23)). Utilizing the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) established National Highway Freight Network (NHFN) PennDOT developed the statewide plan to examine trends and issues associated with freight throughout the Commonwealth. The NHFN includes the following subsystems of roadways:

- **Primary Highway Freight System (PHFS):** This is a network of highways identified as the most critical highway portions of the U.S. freight transportation system determined by measurable and objective national data. As of the 2022 Congressional re-designation of the PHFS, this network consists of about 41,799 centerline miles, including 38,014 centerline miles of Interstate and 3,785 centerline miles of non-Interstate roads.
- **Other Interstate portions not on the PHFS (non-PHFS):** These highways consist of the remaining portion of Interstate roads not included in the PHFS. These routes provide important continuity and access to freight transportation facilities. These portions amount to an estimated 10,265 centerline miles of Interstate nationwide and will fluctuate with additions and deletions to the Interstate Highway System. The mileage for Non-PHFS Interstate is based on the Interstate Mileage reported in the National Highway System (NHS) as of October 17, 2019.
- **Critical Rural Freight Corridors (CRFCs):** These are public roads not in an urbanized area which provide access and connection to the PHFS and the Interstate with other important ports, public transportation facilities, or other intermodal freight facilities. As of January 2023, there are about 5,390 centerline miles designated as CRFCs.
- **Critical Urban Freight Corridors (CUFCs):** These are public roads in urbanized areas which provide access and connection to the PHFS and the Interstate with other ports, public transportation facilities, or other intermodal transportation facilities. As of January 2023, there were about 2,656 centerline miles designated as CUFCs.

In Berks County the PHFS consists of Interstate 78, Interstate 176, US 222 South and US 422. The County has no non-PHFS designated roadways. PA 61 is designated as a CUFC and U.S. 222 North is considered a CRFC. For purposes of our CMP we identify each corridor as critical.

Bottlenecks are specific physical locations on roadways that routinely and predictably experience congestion because the traffic volumes exceed highway capacity. Surge demand higher than can be accommodated by base capacity brings about bottleneck congestion. Bottlenecks are characterized by queues upstream and freely flowing traffic downstream.

Bottlenecks may be compared to a storm pipe that can carry only so much water – during floods the excess water just backs up behind it, much the same as traffic at bottleneck locations. However, the situation is even worse for traffic. Once the traffic flow breaks down to stop-and-go conditions, capacity is actually reduced – fewer cars can get through the bottle neck because of the extra turbulence.

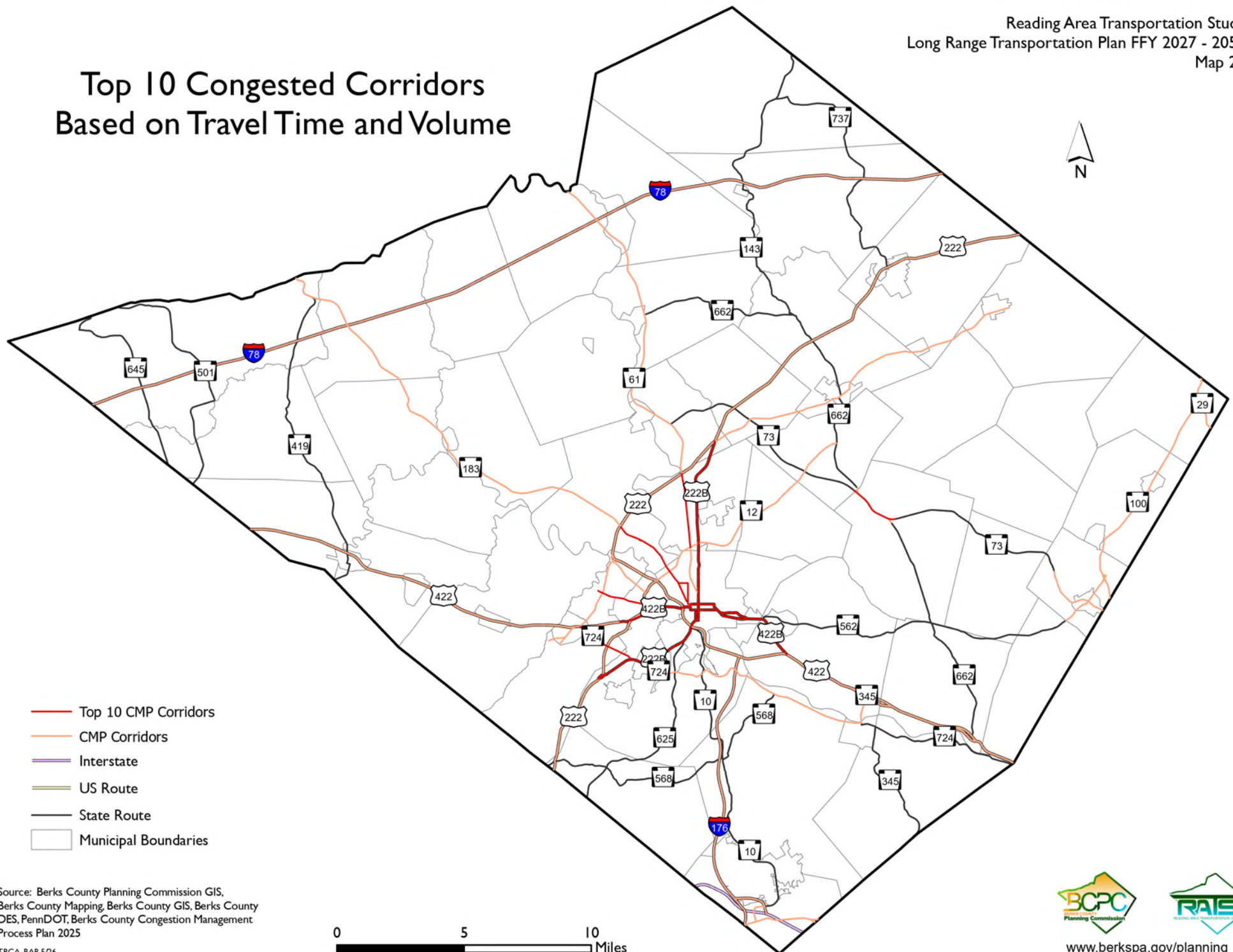
Using the INRIX Roadway Analytics software RATS staff was able to identify the top bottleneck areas in Berks County for 2024 based on the *Total Delay* encountered at that particular site. The *Total Delay* is the speed differential factor, weighted by the volume estimate, considers raw speed drop, weighted by queue lengths for each time interval and queue length.

Transit Routes show BARTA’s fixed-route, scheduled bus transit services in Berks County. Current BARTA fixed-route transit service was examined as part of the network building process. In FFY 2024-2025, BARTA provided 2,163,706 trips on its system of 22 fixed routes. Of those trips, approximately 59 percent were for work purposes, 36 percent were for shopping, and the remaining 5 percent were for personal business, school, medical, social, and other purposes.

The CMP Network is divided into a series of 33 corridors. Each corridor is assessed in detail within the CMP. The most congested corridors in Berks County are shown on the following table and on Map 27. These corridors were ranked using both the peak Travel Time Index (TTI) and the Average Annual Daily Trips (AADT) in that corridor for the year 2024. Please note that these rankings are not a definitive account of congestion along the network or a representation of prioritizing one corridor over another for improvements. Rather, it is an introduction to useful data and highlights the bottlenecks and most congested segments in Berks County. Three corridors are defined as Highly Congested (red) and an additional 19 corridors are defined as Moderately Congested (yellow).

MOST CONGESTED CORRIDORS RANKED BY TRAVEL TIME AND DAILY TRAFFIC			
Rank	Corridor	Average TTI*	Max AADT
1	SR 3023 (State Hill Road)	1.67	23,706
2	PA 724 (Sinking Spring to U.S. 222 Business)	1.59	17,930
3	U.S. 222 Business (U.S. 422 West Shore Bypass to PA 12)	1.55	21,854
4	U.S. 222 Business (PA 12 to U.S. 222 Merge)	1.48	31,531
5	PA 73 (Oley Area)	1.48	18,495
6	U.S. 422 Business (Penn Street Bridge to U.S. 422 Merge)	1.44	51,157
7	PA 61 (PA 12 to U.S. 222)	1.38	29,010
8	U.S. 422 Business (U.S. 222 Merge to U.S. 422 Interchange)	1.36	27,173
9	U.S. 222 Business (U.S. 222 Merge to U.S. 422 West Shore Bypass)	1.35	24,807
10	PA 183 (Washington Street to U.S. 222)	1.34	31,863
11	PA 345 (PA 724 to U.S. 422)	1.33	9,630
12	PA 562 and SR 2067	1.32	18,102
13	PA 10	1.32	7,765
14	SR 1010	1.30	14,184
15	PA 401	1.30	6,419
16	PA 724 (U.S. 222 Business to Interstate 176)	1.29	19,005
17	SR 3021 (Paper Mill Road)	1.29	16,170
18	PA 61 (U.S. 222 Business to PA 12)	1.27	19,640
19	PA 73 (Boyertown Area)	1.27	10,839
20	U.S. 222 (U.S. 222 Business Merge to Lehigh County)	1.25	47,719
21	PA 23	1.23	14,197
22	PA 724 (Interstate 176 to Birdsboro)	1.21	10,608
23	U.S. 422 (West Shore Bypass to Montgomery County)	1.19	35,671
24	PA 61 (U.S. 222 to Schuylkill County)	1.19	29,946
25	SR 3055 (Van Reed Road)	1.18	11,655
26	U.S. 422 (Lebanon County to U.S. 222 Merge)	1.16	43,730
27	PA 183 (US 222 to Schuylkill County)	1.11	31,813
28	PA 100	1.08	24,803
29	SR 2089	1.06	3,810
30	PA 29	1.04	12,899
31	PA 12 (Pricetown Road)	1.03	27,433
32	U.S. 422 (West Shore Bypass)	0.98	84,788
33	Interstate 78	0.97	38,366
34	PA 12 (Warren Street Bypass)	0.94	80,393
35	Interstate 176	0.94	16,749
36	U.S. 222 (Lancaster County to U.S. 422 Merge)	0.88	51,071
37	U.S. 222 (U.S. 422 Merge to U.S. 222 Business Merge)	0.82	113,173

Top 10 Congested Corridors Based on Travel Time and Volume



Source: Berks County Planning Commission GIS,
Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS, Berks County
DES, PennDOT, Berks County Congestion Management
Process Plan 2025

TRCA, BAB 5/26



www.berkspa.gov/planning

Maintaining a safe transportation system is essential to sustaining and enhancing the quality of life for Berks County residents. Deaths and injuries resulting from traffic crashes are a public health concern and impact local communities with medical costs, lost wages, insurance costs, taxes, police, fire, and emergency medical services, legal and court costs, and property damage. In addition, traffic crashes can create travel time delays, congestion, and impact air quality.

As part of its safety program, PennDOT collects traffic crash data for the entire state and reports data at the state, county, and municipal level. For the purposes of this plan, county crash data for Berks County was analyzed using the Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool (PCIT). In addition, the 2022 Pennsylvania Strategic Highway Safety Plan was used in the development of this chapter and the plan's safety performance measures. Motor vehicle crashes generally involve multiple contributing factors that may be related to drivers, the roadway, or the vehicle(s) involved, thus making transportation safety a multidisciplinary concern.

Analyzing crash trends allows PennDOT and RATS to focus on setting goals to improve upon those trends by programming safety improvements to the road system itself or encouraging greater emphasis on education and enforcement. The Reading Area Transportation Study's Traffic Safety Report ([RATS-Safety-Report-2025-FINAL.pdf](#)) is updated annually and analyzes additional crash data, identifies potential countermeasures to address safety, and reviews the MPO's safety performance measures and targets. The RATS Traffic Safety Report is used to help develop the recommendations identified in Chapter 4 of this plan.

Berks County has a significant number of crashes – ranking sixth in the state in the number of overall crashes and fifth in the number of fatal crashes between 2020 and 2024. These are consistent with Berks County's overall ranking with respect to total population (9th in 2024) total linear miles of roadway (8th in 2024), and total Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) (7th in 2024).

TOP 10 COUNTIES IN PA BY CRASHES 2020-2024		TOP 10 COUNTIES IN PA BY FATAL CRASHES 2020-2024	
Allegheny	53,928	Philadelphia	677
Philadelphia	45,578	Allegheny	354
Montgomery	38,407	Lancaster	262
Lancaster	27,180	Bucks	242
Bucks	27,036	Berks	216
Berks	23,740	Montgomery	209
Delaware	23,359	York	173
Lehigh	23,316	Luzerne	158
York	22,124	Westmoreland	155
Chester	20,454	Chester	145

Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2020-2024

Although significant progress has been made, lives are still being lost on Berks County roads. The chart below shows that fatalities have increased 30.6% from 2020 to 2024. Injury and property damage only crashes increased as well and remain the prominent type of crash throughout the years shown.

BERKS COUNTY CRASHES BY SEVERITY BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024								
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	# Change	% Change
Fatal	36	40	46	47	47	216	11	30.6%
Injury	1,762	1,959	1,973	1,965	1,947	9,606	185	10.5%
Property Damage Only	2,371	2,691	2,768	2,542	2,587	12,959	216	9.1%
Total	4,169	4,690	4,787	4,554	4,581	22,781	412	9.9%

Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2020-2024

The toll from those crashes in Berks County is significant. Approximately 51,000 people and nearly 43,000 vehicles have been involved in crashes since 2020.

PERSONS AND VEHICLES INVOLVED IN BERKS COUNTY CRASHES BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024								
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	# Change	% Change
Persons	9,427	10,685	10,600	10,089	10,361	51,162	934	9.9%
Vehicles	7,843	8,947	8,916	8,500	8,509	42,715	666	8.5%

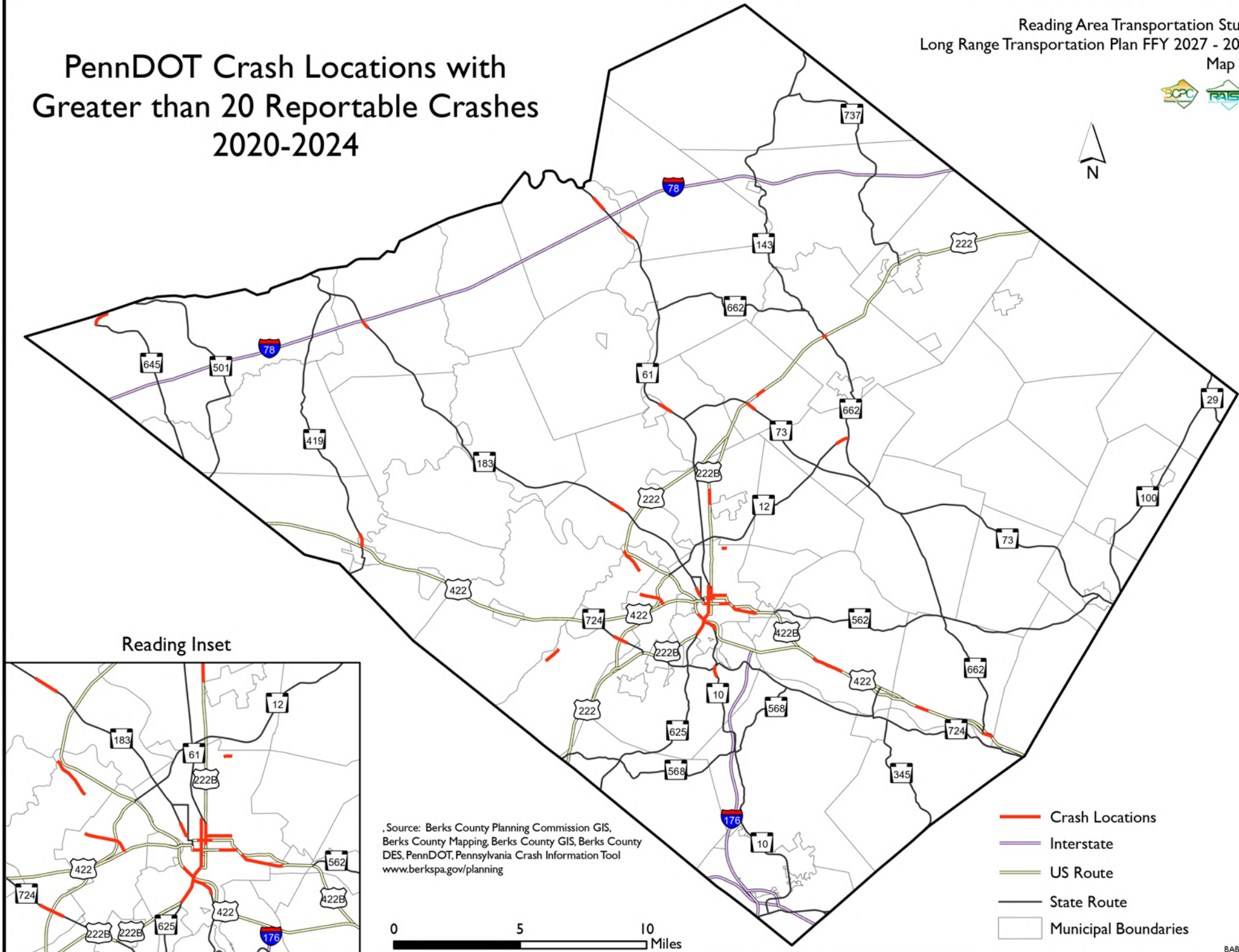
Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2020-2024

Crash Corridors

PennDOT has a variety of crash information available through their website. PennDOT's Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool (PCIT) provides users the ability to search specific criteria related to crashes, persons, and vehicles. Date ranges as well as locations can also be specified. A variety of options are available for the selected data to be displayed including either by point map or heat map, table, or report.

Using PCIT data, the map on the following page identifies roadway segments where more than 20 reportable crashes occurred between 2020 and 2024. Major roadways with higher traffic volumes are the main locations for the larger number of reportable crash incidents in Berks County.

PennDOT Crash Locations with Greater than 20 Reportable Crashes 2020-2024



Reading Inset

Source: Berks County Planning Commission GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS, Berks County DES, PennDOT, Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool www.berkspa.gov/planning

- Crash Locations
- Interstate
- US Route
- State Route
- Municipal Boundaries

0 5 10 Miles

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A Closer Look at Crash Severity

Although fatal crashes increased from 2020 to 2024, over the 20-year period from 2005 to 2024, fatal crashes decreased nearly 30% and suspected serious injury crashes decreased approximately 8%. While fatal crashes and suspected serious injury crashes showed decreases over this 20-year period, the population, total vehicle registrations, and daily VMT for Berks County increased.

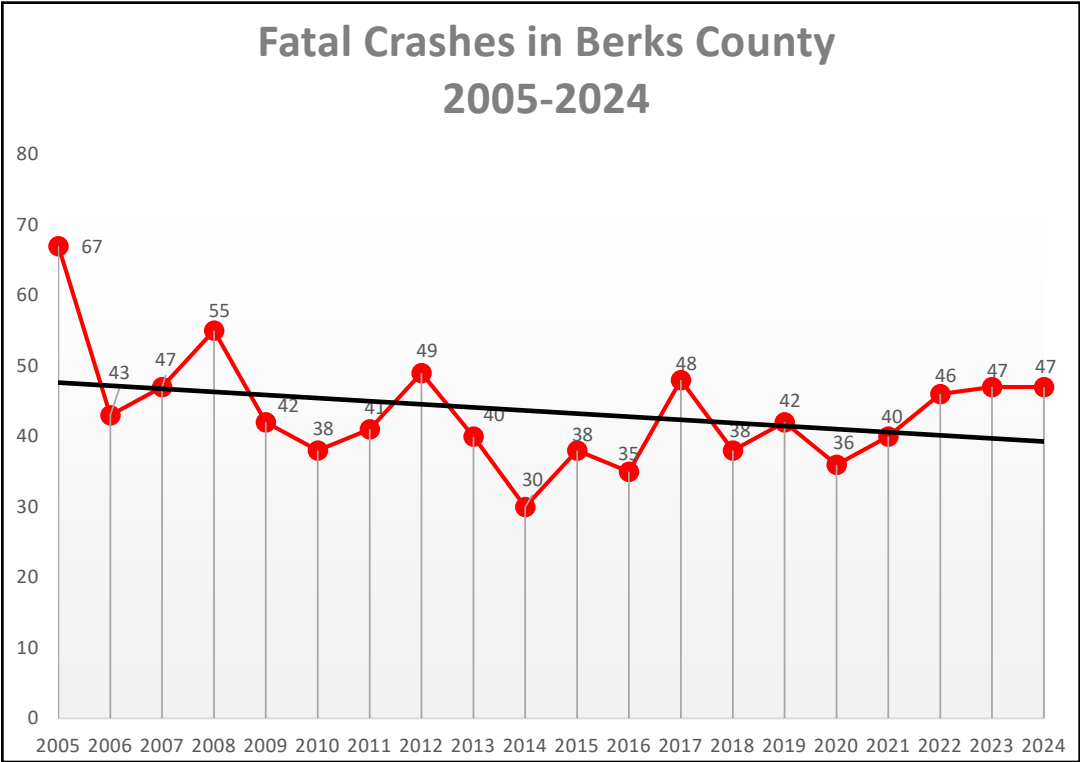
FATAL AND SERIOUS INJURY CRASHES COMPARISON 2005 TO 2024				
	2005	2024	# Change	% Change
Fatal Crashes	67	47	-20	-29.85%
Suspected Serious Injury Crashes	181	166	-15	-8.29%
Population	395,933	439,117	43,184	10.91%
Vehicle Registrations	367,794	407,561	39,767	10.81%
VMT	8,879,040	9,028,867	149,827	1.69%

Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2005-2024; Population (Persons), U.S. Census Bureau; PennDOT Annual Report of Registrations 2005-2024; PennDOT Highway Statistics 2005-2024



Fatal Crashes

Fatal crashes on Berks County roads are attributed to a number of factors. Most fatal crashes are the result of driver behavior, namely aggressive driving. The old description of aggressive driving notes at least one driver’s action was considered aggressive while the new description identifies at least 2 actions of a driver as being aggressive. Both time of day and poor weather conditions do not appear to be an important factor. Less than half of all fatal crashes occurred at night and fewer occurred on wet, icy, or snowy roads.



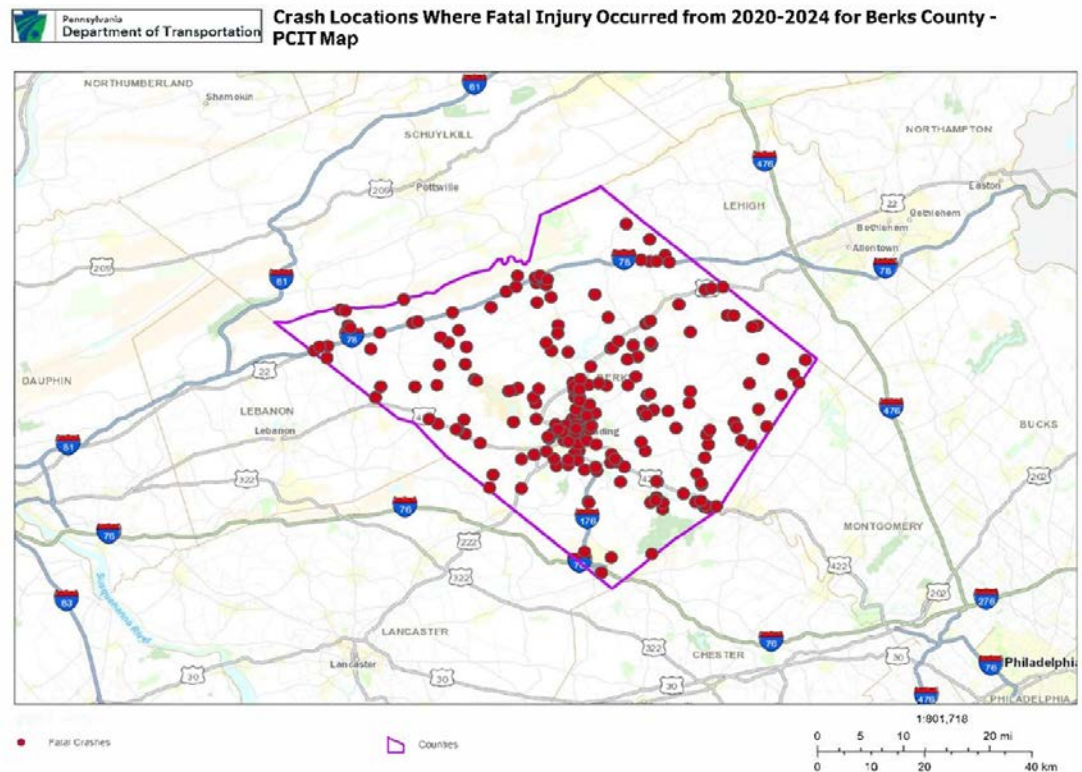
Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2005-2024

Driver error is identified as the predominant reason fatal crashes occurred in Berks County between 2020 and 2024. The main prime factors for this time period relating to driver error include driving too fast for road conditions (total 28), speeding (total 24), and driving on the wrong side of the roadway (total 19). Many unknown factors (total 54) are also identified for the 2020-2024 period.

FATAL CRASHES IN BERKS COUNTY BY PRIME FACTOR TYPE BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024								
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	# Change	% Change
Driver	33	35	42	38	40	188	7	21.2%
Environmental/Roadway	1	2	0	3	3	9	2	200.0%
Pedestrian	1	3	4	4	0	12	-1	-100.0%
Vehicle	1	0	0	1	0	2	-1	-100.0%
Unknown	0	0	0	1	4	5	4	400.0%
Total	36	40	46	47	47	216	11	30.6%

Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2020-2024

Fatal crashes between 2020 and 2024 predominantly occurred in and around the City of Reading, as well as along major corridors throughout Berks County.



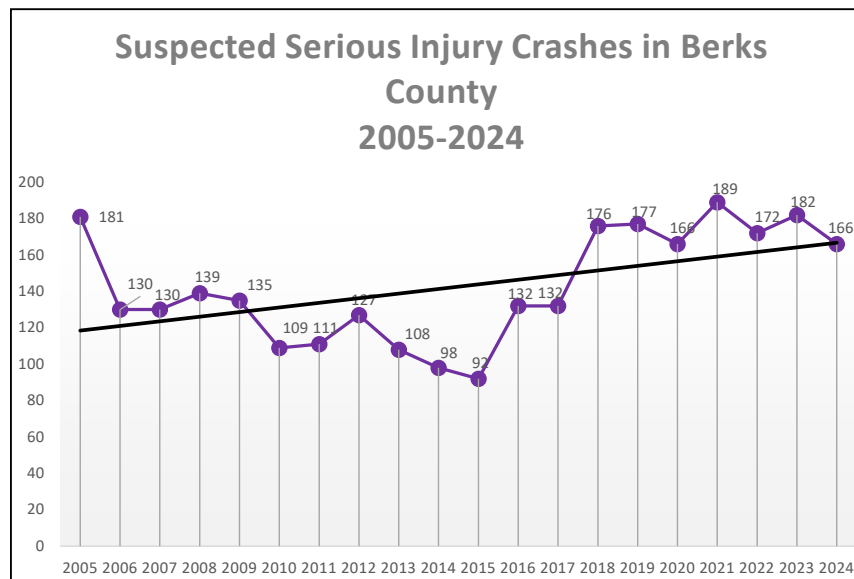
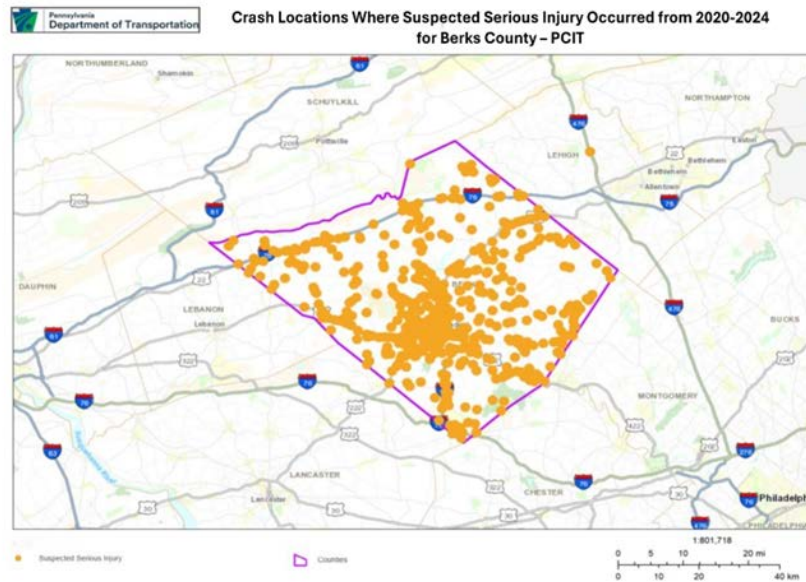
The majority of fatal crashes involved hitting fixed objects and angle crashes between 2020 and 2024.

FATAL CRASHES BY COLLISION TYPE IN BERKS COUNTY BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024								
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	# Change	% Change
Angle	10	11	14	6	15	56	5	50.0%
Head-on	1	3	8	11	3	26	2	200.0%
Hit fixed object	13	10	10	16	17	66	4	30.8%
Hit Non-motorist	5	6	9	6	6	32	1	20.0%
Non collision	3	3	1	0	0	7	-3	-100.0%
Other or unknown	0	0	0	2	1	3	1	100.0%
Rear-end	3	7	2	2	3	17	0	0.0%
Rear-to-rear (Backing)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Sideswipe (Opposite Direction)	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0.0%
Sideswipe (Same Direction)	0	0	2	4	1	7	1	100.0%
Total	36	40	46	47	47	216	11	30.6%



Injury Crashes

According to the United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC), motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death, resulting in 120 deaths per day, across the United States. In Pennsylvania, more than 3 persons were fatally injured each day, resulting in over 1,100 fatalities in 2024. The total fatal injury crashes in Pennsylvania in 2024 caused over \$15 billion in comprehensive loss, including medical bills and work loss costs.



Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2005-2024

Restraint Use

One of the most important actions a motorist can take to save lives and prevent serious injuries while traveling is to use safety belts. While overall seatbelt use has remained near the state average, the number of crashes that involved unbelted occupants in annual crashes in Berks County decreased significantly since 2020 dropping to 7.4% in 2024 from 10.3% in 2020 representing a 21.7% decrease in unbelted occupants involved in crashes.

PERCENT SEATBELT USE IN CRASHES		
Year	Berks	Pennsylvania
2015	80	80
2016	79	80
2017	80	80
2018	79	80
2019	80	81
2020	79	79
2021	79	80
2022	78	81
2023	77	81
2024	78	82

Source: 2019 and 2024 PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Facts and Statistics Booklets



CRASHES INVOLVING UNBELTED OCCUPANTS BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	# Change	% Change
Crashes	451	448	430	372	353	2,054	-98	-21.7%
Percentage of Annual Total Crashes	10.3%	9.1%	8.6%	7.9%	7.4%	8.7%	-2.9%	-28.1%

Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2020-2024

Suspected serious injury crashes involving unbelted occupants showed the largest decrease representing a 58% reduction from 2020 to 2024. Out of the total number of fatal crashes for Berks County from 2020 to 2024, the percentage of fatal crashes that involved unbelted occupants was nearly 30%.

CRASH SEVERITY INVOLVING UNBELTED OCCUPANTS IN BERKS COUNTY BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	# Change	% Change	Total Severi-ty Crashes	% of Total Severity Crashes
Fatal	11	14	13	14	11	63	0	0.0%	216	29.2%
Injury	263	252	239	226	206	1186	-57	-21.7%	9,606	12.3%
Possible Injury	50	47	25	40	38	200	-12	-24.0%	1,881	10.6%
Suspected Minor Injury	135	146	130	127	118	656	-17	-12.6%	5,385	12.2%
Suspected Serious Injury	50	43	38	34	21	186	-29	-58.0%	875	21.3%
Property Damage Only	165	179	175	126	129	774	-36	-21.8%	12,959	6.0%
Total	674	681	620	567	523	3065	-151	-22.4%		

Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2020-2024

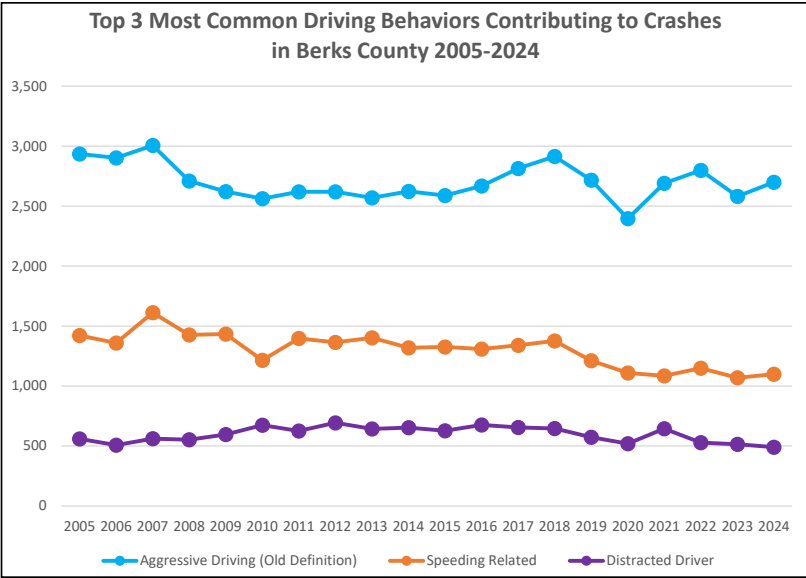
Driving Behaviors

Driving behavior plays a major role in crash trends in Berks County. In many instances, crashes involving driving behaviors could be avoidable. Aggressive driving, speeding, and distracted driving continue to be the largest contributors to crashes in Berks County. Generally, vehicle manufacturers now include hands-free technology for cell phones as part of their standard vehicle package. Additional technology is also becoming standard such as navigation and weather applications. In many cases, the increase in available technology has contributed to distracted driving by providing additional visual distractions and feature adjustments while driving.

Of these three driving behaviors, aggressive driving remains the predominant contributor to crashes and increased almost 13% from 2020 to 2024 while speeding related and distracted driving decreased slightly.

BERKS COUNTY CRASHES BY DRIVING BEHAVIOR 2020-2024								
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	# Change	% Change
Aggressive Driving	245	292	308	317	412	1,574	167	68.2%
Aggressive Driving (Old Definition)	2,396	2,691	2,798	2,581	2,700	13,166	304	12.7%
Speeding Related	1,110	1,086	1,149	1,069	1,100	5,514	-10	-0.9%
Distracted Driving	520	644	529	515	491	2,699	-29	-5.6%
Unbelted	451	448	430	372	353	2,054	-98	-21.7%
Curve Driver Error	124	156	141	158	196	775	72	58.1%
Tailgating	162	195	186	169	226	938	64	39.5%
Running Red Lights	194	203	211	167	186	961	-8	-4.1%
Fatigue or Asleep	117	140	124	154	113	648	-4	-3.4%
Running Stop Sign	125	152	133	138	117	665	-8	-6.4%
Impaired Driver	356	445	402	370	336	1,909	-20	-5.6%
Cell Phone	43	46	82	86	99	356	56	130.2%
Total	5,843	6,498	6,493	6,096	6,329	31,259	486	8.3%

Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2020-2024



Road Conditions

We drive in sometimes challenging road conditions. When road conditions deteriorate, we tend to stay off the roads or drive more carefully. When road conditions are favorable, there are generally more vehicles on the road and drivers tend to drive faster. This means that more crashes occur during dry road conditions during daylight hours with clear weather.

BERKS COUNTY CRASHES BY ROAD CONDITION 2020-2024								
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	# Change	% Change
Dry	3,222	3,964	3,783	3,753	3,666	18,388	444	13.78%
Ice/Frost	73	63	110	28	48	322	-25	-34.25%
Mud, Dirt, Gravel	6	12	8	1	9	36	3	50.00%
Oil	1	1	0	2	1	5	0	0.00%
Other	0	4	6	4	2	16	2	200.00%
Sand	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0.00%
Slush	21	36	61	8	38	164	17	80.95%
Snow	77	111	140	39	173	540	96	124.68%
Unknown	13	12	12	10	8	55	-5	-38.46%
Water (Standing or Moving)	22	15	18	19	8	82	-14	-63.64%
Wet	925	701	851	859	794	4,130	-131	-14.16%
Total	4,360	4,919	4,989	4,724	4,747	23,739	387	8.88%

Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2020-2024

Encounters with wildlife on our roads and bridges can present safety issues for the motoring public. Wildlife movements can be sudden and unpredictable, which causes motorists to react quickly. In some instances, crashes with wildlife are unavoidable. Additionally, roadways and bridges can separate species habitats which creates an increase in the species presence on a roadway or bridge. Sometimes, those species crossing roadways and bridges are species that may be unique to a location or are protected due to low population counts. To address crashes involving wildlife, PennDOT evaluates all projects for potential wildlife crossings and has incorporated this into their Design Manual – 2.

Given the state’s large deer population, crashes involving deer are growing. According to PennDOT and the Pennsylvania Game Commission, deer-vehicle crashes rise dramatically in October and November, mostly because of the “rut”, or deer-mating season, which peaks late October to mid-November.

DEER RELATED CRASHES BY MONTH IN BERKS COUNTY BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024								
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	# Change	% Change
January	12	16	7	16	16	67	4	33.3%
February	11	2	15	11	7	46	-4	-36.4%
March	7	10	6	4	9	36	2	28.6%
April	9	12	9	5	4	39	-5	-55.6%
May	18	11	16	14	18	77	0	0.0%
June	9	14	12	16	21	72	12	133.3%
July	7	10	7	6	17	47	10	142.9%
August	7	5	10	15	4	41	-3	-42.9%
September	9	14	16	13	16	68	7	77.8%
October	26	40	31	48	61	206	35	134.6%
November	37	34	37	54	43	205	6	16.2%
December	11	15	19	29	14	88	3	27.3%
Total	163	183	185	231	230	992	67	41.1%

Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2020-2024

Intersections

Crashes at intersections showed a relatively steady increase from 2020 to 2024 in Berks County with stop controlled intersections increasing 27.4%. Due to the turning movements occurring at intersections, the predominant collision type is generally an angle crash.

BERKS COUNTY CRASHES BY INTERSECTION CONTROL TYPE 2020-2024								
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	# Change	% Change
Signalized Intersection	660	769	780	713	738	3,660	78	11.8%
Stop Controlled	543	704	665	689	692	3,293	149	27.4%
Unsignalized Intersection	1,116	1,271	1,331	1,282	1,259	6,259	143	12.8%
Total	2,319	2,744	2,776	2,684	2,689	13,212	370	16.0%

Source: PennDOT, Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2020-2024



Special Zones

Crashes in work zones are a major concern as the majority of them could be avoided if drivers abide by signage and follow the lower speeds implemented in active work zones. In an effort to combat crashes in active work zones, Pennsylvania implemented the Automated Work Zone Speed Enforcement (AWZSE) program in March 2020. Vehicle mounted systems are used to record drivers that exceed posted work zone speed limits by 11 miles per hour or more. The pilot program aimed at reducing driver speeds in work zones and improving driver behaviors in work zones to save worker and traveler lives, promote work zone safety, and complement existing enforcement by the Pennsylvania State Police. In late 2023, Governor Josh Shapiro signed House Bill 1283, establishing Act 38 of 2023 which made the newly named Work Zone Speed Safety Camera (WZSSC) program a permanent tool to improve work zone safety on appropriate PennDOT and PA Turnpike roadways. The program became effective on February 15, 2024. As part of the program, PennDOT develops an annual report ([2025-WZSSC-Annual-Report.pdf](#)) that analyzes and documents the success of the program.

While crashes in school zones remains low, there continues to be a high number of crashes in work zones especially in 2021 which peaked at 151 crashes. Additional programs and continued driver education on work zone safety have helped reduce the number of crashes in these zones representing a 23.3% decrease in Berks County from 2020 to 2024.

SPECIAL ZONE CRASHES IN BERKS COUNTY BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024								
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	# Change	% Change
Work Zones	86	151	99	81	66	483	-20	-23.3%
School Zones	21	15	23	17	18	94	-3	-14.3%

Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2020-2024

Special Types of Vehicles

Given the increase in online purchasing, warehousing and that the County Interstate system is a major freight corridor, it is not surprising to see more heavy trucks on the road and as a result, involved in more crashes.

CRASHES BY SELECT VEHICLE TYPE IN BERKS COUNTY BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024								
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	# Change	% Change
Heavy Truck Related	276	357	392	301	303	1,629	27	9.8%
Commercial Vehicle	281	377	431	367	366	1,822	85	30.2%
School Buses	3	4	6	10	2	25	-1	-33.3%
Horse and Buggy	0	0	1	2	1	4	1	100.0%
Trains	0	1	0	3	2	6	2	200.0%

Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2020-2024

At-Risk Drivers

At-risk drivers include older drivers (65+) and young drivers (16-20). Older drivers are in crashes at a higher rate due to visual, cognitive and physical skill deterioration. Younger drivers are less experienced and less mature which contributes to the higher crash rate among that age group. A common theme throughout this plan is the rise of elderly drivers on the road. The number of elderly drivers will continue to increase, eventually outnumbering the younger drivers, as the baby boomer generation continues to age. Driver licensing requirements have aided in reducing crashes among age 16 population. However, this age group and the age 17 group shows the greatest increases among these at-risk populations by approximately 30% and 34% respectively from 2020 to 2024. The 50-64 age group continues to have the highest number of total crashes annually across this 5-year time period.

BERKS COUNTY CRASHES BY YOUNG AND MATURE DRIVERS 2020-2024								
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	# Change	% Change
Age 16	66	64	70	84	86	370	20	30.3%
Age 17	159	190	218	198	213	978	54	34.0%
Age 18	234	263	276	248	258	1,279	24	10.3%
Age 19	214	249	255	225	254	1,197	40	18.7%
Age 20	239	258	251	246	240	1,234	1	0.4%
Age 50-64	1,127	1,302	1,300	1,177	1,255	6,161	128	11.4%
Age 65-74	441	487	534	486	511	2,459	70	15.9%
Age 75+	259	300	318	323	313	1,513	54	20.8%
Total	2,739	3,113	3,222	2,987	3,130	15,191	391	14.3%

Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2020-2024



Vulnerable Road Users

Vulnerable road users (VRU) are those individuals that are using the road without a vehicle surrounding them for protection. Most commonly, these are pedestrians, bicyclists, and other persons using non-motorized means of transportation. For comparison purposes of this part of the plan, they are included in the following table.

Fatal crashes involving bicyclists decreased approximately 67% from 2020 to 2024. Additionally, fatal crashes involving pedestrians remained steady from 2020 to 2024 in Berks County with a single peak occurring in 2022.

CRASHES INVOLVING VRUS IN BERKS COUNTY BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024								
Pedestrians	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	# Change	% Change
Crashes	122	124	134	124	153	657	31	25.4%
Suspected Serious Injury	15	22	20	34	25	116	10	66.7%
Fatal Crashes	5	5	8	5	5	28	0	0.0%
Bicycles	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	# Change	% Change
Crashes	25	21	22	37	50	155	25	100.0%
Suspected Serious Injury	1	3	3	4	6	17	5	500.0%
Fatal Crashes	3	1	1	1	1	7	-2	-66.7%

Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2020-2024

Motorcycles

While fatality rates for vulnerable road users are low and declining, the chart below shows that motorcycle fatalities had a high occurrence from 2020 to 2024. Pennsylvania’s motorcycle helmet law requires any person that operates or rides a motorcycle to wear protective headgear unless they are over 21 years of age **and** has either two years of riding experience or has completed a PennDOT approved motorcycle safety course. Since 2020, motorcyclists involved in crashes have increased helmet use 40%.

CRASHES INVOLVING MOTORCYCLES IN BERKS COUNTY BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024								
Motorcycles	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	# Change	% Change
Crashes	146	151	164	193	166	819	20	13.7%
Suspected Serious Injury	34	45	41	39	39	198	5	14.7%
Fatal Crashes	7	8	8	15	14	52	7	100.0%

Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2020-2024

MOTORCYCLE HELMET USE IN BERKS COUNTY CRASHES BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024								
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	# Change	% Change
Helmet Used	55	69	80	83	77	364	22	40.0%
No Helmet Used	68	59	62	68	48	305	-20	-29.4%
Unknown Helmet Use	23	23	22	42	41	151	18	78.3%
Total	146	151	164	193	166	820	20	13.7%

Source: PennDOT, PennDOT Crash Data Downloads, 2020-2024

In addition, motorcyclists involved in crashes and identified as having had motorcycle safety training has increased since 2020 approximately 44 percent.

MOTORCYCLE DRIVERS INVOLVED IN CRASHES WITH SAFETY TRAINING IN BERKS COUNTY BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024								
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	# Change	% Change
With Training	43	49	49	58	62	261	19	44.2%
No Training	31	35	25	41	45	177	14	45.2%
Unknown	72	67	90	94	59	382	-13	-18.1%
Total	146	151	164	193	166	820	20	13.7%

Source: PennDOT, PennDOT Crash Data Downloads, 2020-2024

A Closer Look at Heavy Truck Safety

Berks County experiences a significant amount of truck traffic on its roadway system due to the geographic location and proximity to other major warehousing hubs. Interstate 78 carries a significant amount of truck traffic between regional industrial centers and industrial parks located in Berks County such as Berks Park 78. The data below looks at safety trends for heavy trucks (defined as a truck with gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) greater than 10,000 pounds). The data also shows where Berks County ranks out of 67 counties in Pennsylvania for frequency of crashes shown in the following chart.

Overall Berks County sees many heavy truck crashes and has been ranked in the top ten for crash frequency across Pennsylvania from 2020-2024.

HEAVY TRUCK RELATED CRASHES BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024				
Year	Berks County	Pennsylvania	% of All PA Crashes	County Ranking
2020	276	6,563	4.2%	6
2021	357	7,499	4.8%	6
2022	392	7,769	5.0%	4
2023	301	6,906	4.4%	5
2024	303	6,991	4.3%	5

Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2020-2024

Heavy truck involvement in fatal crashes has fluctuated over the years. The County ranked in the top 10 of all fatal crashes in Pennsylvania for every year since 2021.

HEAVY TRUCK RELATED FATAL CRASHES BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024				
Year	Berks County	Pennsylvania	% of All PA Fatal Crashes	County Ranking
2020	2	115	1.7%	16
2021	9	147	6.1%	2
2022	5	152	3.3%	3
2023	7	143	4.9%	1
2024	6	126	4.8%	3

Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2020-2024

The County is also in the top ten for crashes that involve heavy trucks that result in suspected serious injury.

HEAVY TRUCK RELATED SUSPECTED SERIOUS INJURY CRASHES BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024				
Year	Berks County	Pennsylvania	% of All PA SSI Crashes	County Ranking
2020	12	273	4.4%	6
2021	20	321	6.2%	2
2022	12	278	4.3%	4
2023	8	258	3.1%	8
2024	13	274	4.7%	4

Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2020-2024

SECURITY

Providing a secure transportation system involves the planning and implementation of programs that protect people, freight, and the transportation infrastructure from both natural and manmade disasters. Nationally, the Federal government has instituted several programs to help secure the transportation assets across the country, as well as guide and coordinate emergency management activities. Locally, emergency management programs at both the state and local levels aim to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters that may compromise the transportation infrastructure and be hazardous for the people who use them.

MAP-21 identifies the security of the transportation system as a separate planning factor for consideration in the LRTP. The key agencies involved in the security of the Berks County transportation network include: PennDOT, Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, Berks County Department of Emergency Services and local police and fire departments. RATS does not have primary responsibility for security issues, although some security issues may have an impact on transportation programs at the regional level. The MPO role in security may take many forms including facilitator, participant, or leader in the security-related activities.

When crashes, unexpected incidents, or adverse weather conditions occur, accommodating or detouring traffic quickly becomes a priority focus of managing the incident. Detouring interstate traffic and heavy truck volumes onto lesser state roads, along busy arterials, or through residential areas is a challenge to accomplish safely and efficiently. Although unexpected incidents occur on all levels of roadway, emergency gates have been added at five Interstate-78 interchanges as part of larger construction projects, as shown on Map 39, to restrict traffic from detouring onto local roads, stop additional traffic from entering the interstate, and protect first responders and related personnel during serious incidents created by crashes and/or weather. In response to a serious incident or weather, these gates with active warning lights would be pulled down in addition to flipping signs to inform motorists of ramp closures.

In addition to the contribution of safety provided by the emergency gates, a temporary traffic signal exists at the State Route 737 interchange, and one is proposed for installation at the State Route 143 interchange. These temporary traffic signals provide another layer of protection and traffic control during incidents where Interstate-78 traffic is being detoured due to closure between exits 35 and 45 while better maintaining the flow of traffic on detour routes without the need for flaggers.

PennDOT, PSP and Berks County's public safety agencies plan further for incidents by using and updating detour maps and manuals, holding annual coordination meetings, and installing and maintaining key Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) elements such as cameras, dynamic message signs, highway advisory radios, and emergency sign trailers to aid rapid response. The ITS of Berks County continues to grow as different locations are identified that would benefit from the installation of this equipment. The RATS ITS Camera Gaps, MPMS Project 120991, plans to add four new cameras to various locations across Berks County. The northern extent of the DVRPC PA 100 and Hanover Street, MPMS Project 82124, will include the addition of two cameras and one dynamic message sign along State Route 100 as it extends approximately one and a quarter mile



into Berks County from Montgomery County along this corridor. These projects and investments are an integral part of the state and regional ITS network. Map 39 shows existing and proposed Berks County ITS infrastructure as of the writing of this plan.

PennDOT maintains a traffic management center at PennDOT District 5-0 headquarters in Allentown that provides coordinated regional operations by 24-hour a day monitoring of major state routes in the county and the installed ITS elements. The ITS component of security entails maintaining the control and monitoring capabilities of the transportation infrastructure in the event of crashes, severe weather, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, and other unforeseen events.

The County's ITS system allows PennDOT to share up to the minute data with police, fire, and public works departments of various agencies in the area. PennDOT receives data from the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) from the Berks County 911 center, which provides notifications of incidents without the police having to send updates. This information helps PennDOT respond to incidents more quickly and with the right equipment. These quick response times allow traffic lanes to become unobstructed faster, thus reducing traveler delay and secondary crashes. ITS information is disseminated to the public via a website (www.511pa.com) that shows video images, weather updates, and lane closures caused by incidents and construction.

In March 2019 the Freeway Service Patrol, a program aimed to enhance motorist safety along portions of State Routes 12, 222, and 422 in Berks County, was introduced. This public/private partnership utilizes the existing ITS infrastructure to inform roving tow truck patrol units of incidents occurring on these highways during AM and PM peak traffic hours. The drivers of these patrols are trained to assist police agencies as requested, secure crash scenes, provide first aid, and control traffic. When a vehicle has rendered its driver stranded on the shoulder of the highway, the patrol unit will tow the vehicle and driver to the closest exit. Services included are providing fuel, jump starts, directions, and changing flat tires with no cost to the motorist.

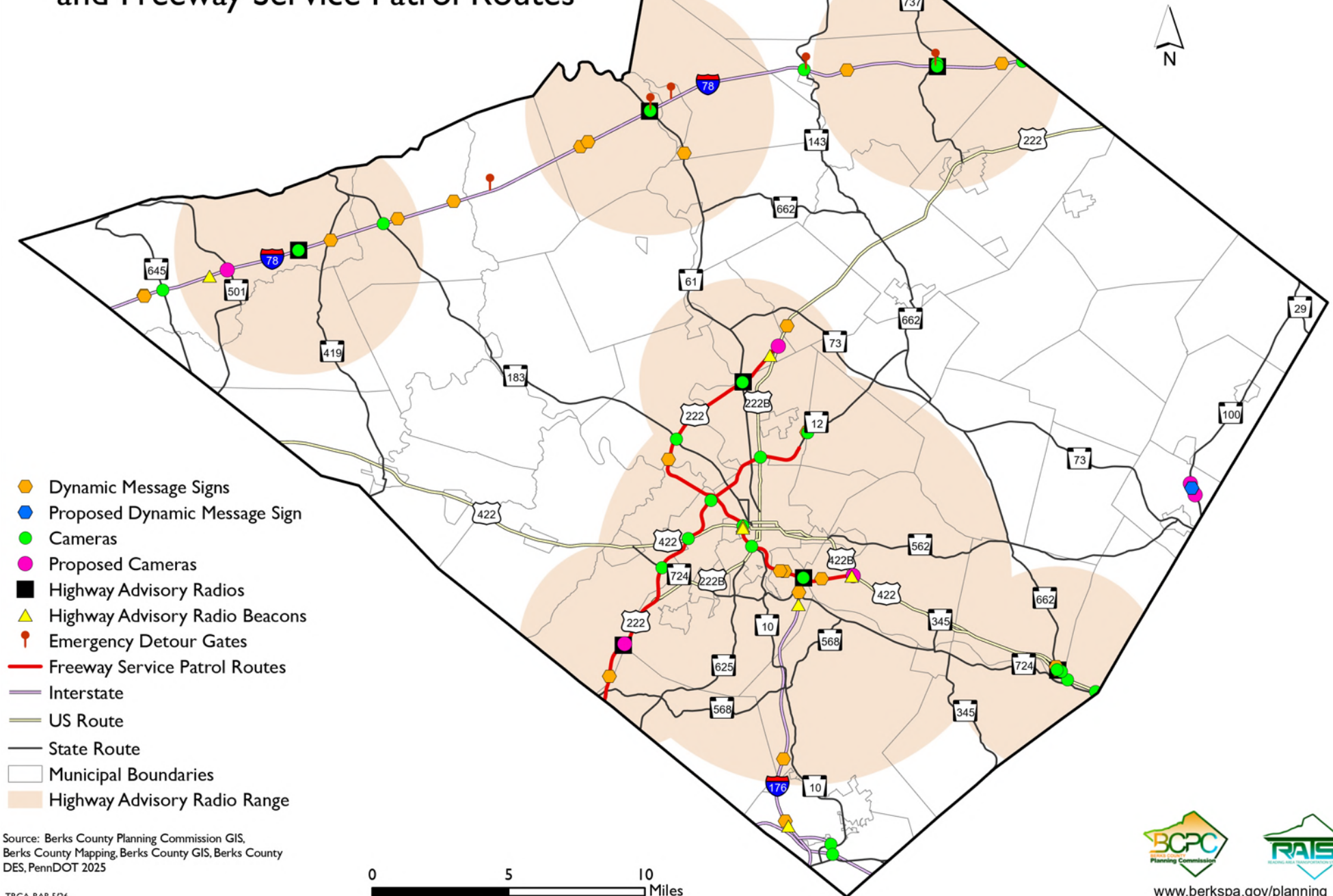
The Berks County Freeway Service Patrol covers 25.1 miles in Zone 1 and 23.6 miles in Zone 2. The response area is an additional 11.2 miles of SR 222 and 4.6 miles of SR 422. Through their added assistance at crash scenes, to clearing disabled vehicles and debris from travel lanes and road shoulders, the Freeway Service Patrol aims to reduce secondary crashes and make these routes safer for motorists in Berks County. The table below shows the number of assists and the number of actions taken broken down annually. Assists refer only to towing abandoned vehicles, checking on drivers, crashes, crashes with injuries, clearing debris, towing disabled vehicles, flooding, assisting pedestrians, assisting police, and managing vehicle fires. Multiple actions may be taken at each assist site and are not defined as assists, but as actions taken. Actions taken include adding coolant and fuel, marking vehicles as abandoned, recharging batteries, changing tires, waking drivers, and traffic control such as setting flares.

BERKS COUNTY FREEWAY SERVICE PATROL ASSISTS						
	2019*	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Zone 1	691	607	546	499	352	383
Zone 2	794	743	537	557	260	287
BERKS COUNTY FREEWAY SERVICE PATROL ACTIONS TAKEN						
Zone 1	1,222	1,001	934	887	615	577
Zone 2	1,359	1,156	962	1,047	478	428

Source: PennDOT District 5 Service Patrol Assists Reports *2019 data is partial (March-December) as this was the inaugural year of the Freeway Service Patrol in Berks County

Other transportation-related security efforts occur at the local level but are primarily mode specific. BARTA has security cameras on its buses that provide a record of any on-board or traffic incidents and serve as a security measure for the vehicles. Local airports have a number of security measures in place, from fencing and lighting to security plans. The Reading Regional Airport complies with guidelines from the Transportation Security Administration for the screening of passengers and freight. Norfolk Southern has a security plan that defines four Alert Levels and three general areas of emphasis: (1) operations (including transportation, engineering, and mechanical); (2) information technology and communications; and (3) railroad police. Norfolk Southern also provides rail incident response training to local police and fire personnel.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and Freeway Service Patrol Routes



TRCA, BAB 5/26

FREIGHT

Eastern Pennsylvania's historical role as an industrial and commercial hub, bolstered by its strategic location near natural resources and robust transportation infrastructure, has made it a key player in the nation's freight handling and logistics. Its proximity to major markets like New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia, along with access to interstate highways, rail networks, international ports, and airports, drives its appeal. Affordable land compared to urban cores further enhances its attractiveness for logistics and warehousing.

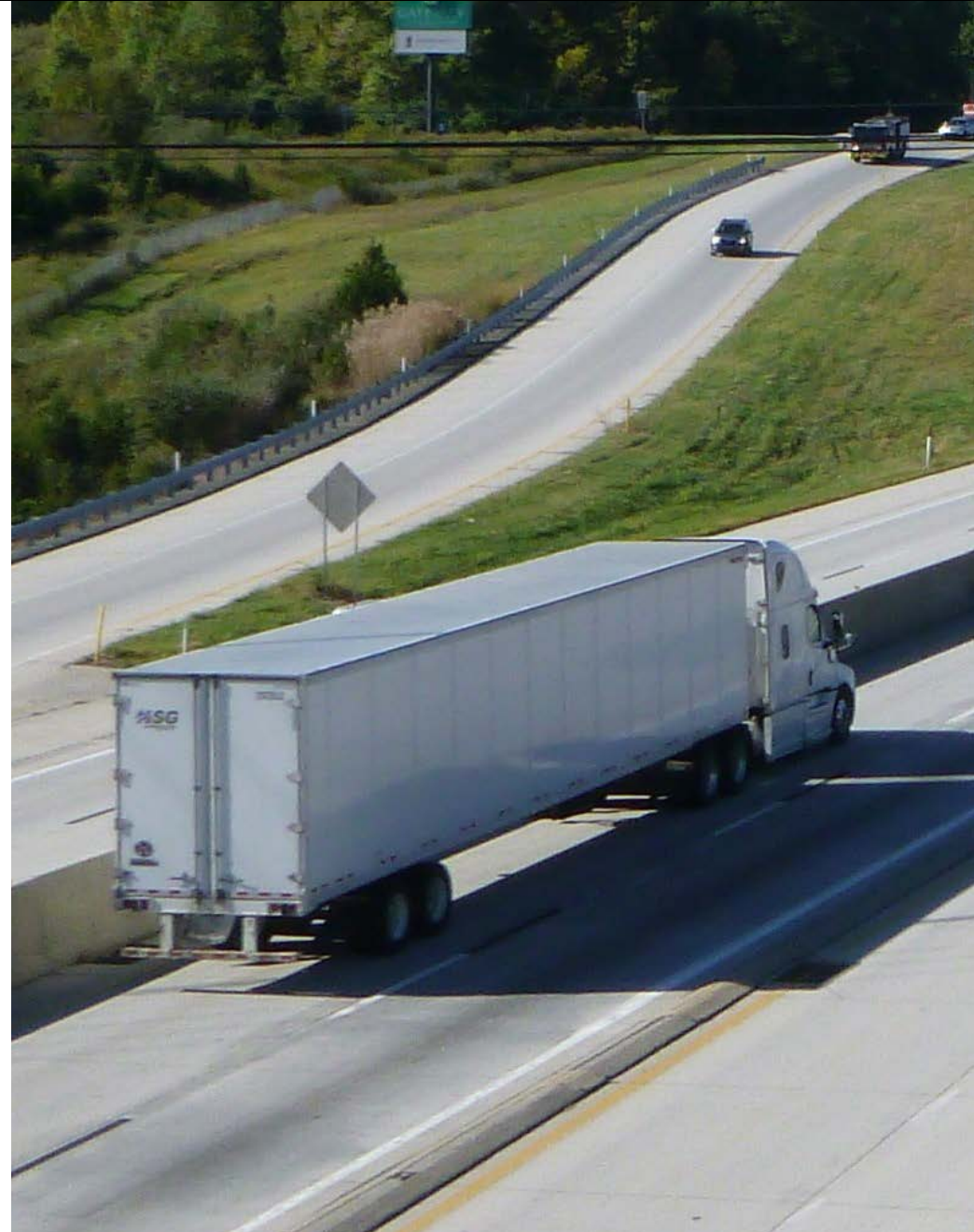
The surge in e-commerce, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and declining brick-and-mortar retail, has fueled rapid growth in warehouse and distribution facilities. This expansion extends beyond metropolitan areas into historically rural parts of Eastern Pennsylvania, driven by the need for multi-stage distribution systems to meet direct-to-consumer demand. However, this growth brings significant community impacts, including:

- **Increased truck traffic:** Higher volumes strain local roads and infrastructure.
- **Reduced land availability:** Development pressures limit space for other uses.
- **Equity issues:** Disparities arise in economic benefits and environmental impacts.
- **Emergency services demand:** Greater need for fire, medical, and safety resources.
- **Housing and workforce stress:** Rising demand exacerbates affordability and labor shortages.

These challenges highlight the need for balanced planning to mitigate impacts while leveraging the region's economic advantages.

The effectiveness and efficiency of freight transportation in Berks County, as well as surrounding counties, is a major factor in manufacturing and retail costs. Manufacturers look for reliability, speed, and quality control in the carriers that deliver their raw materials and finished products. Since the mid-1990s, the retail and wholesale industries use 'just-in-time' logistics management, where retailers assume that the cost of transporting a product will be less than the cost of maintaining large inventories of the product on site. This has prompted the growth of the logistics and warehousing industries, which rely on a network of warehouses and trucks to distribute freight. This change in how retailers manage inventory has had profound transportation and land use impacts in Berks and surrounding counties and, as a result, impacts on Berks County roads.

Freight takes a prominent role in this plan due to federal legislation that emphasizes freight as an integral component of transportation planning. Federal transportation legislation developed a national freight network to help states strategically direct resources to improve highway freight movement. The identification of local freight corridors and preservation of freight mobility is a component of this Long Range Transportation Plan. Freight rail service is secondary to truck freight because trucks are currently the most cost effective and flexible freight transportation mode for businesses and consumers in Berks County. The County does not have a substantial air freight component as of the writing of this plan, however, Quest Diagnostics, who is one of the main commercial operators out of the Reading Regional Airport does support some freight operations. It is the intent of the Reading Regional Airport to continue to facilitate and grow freight operations at the airport.



Berks County Freight Network

Trucks move a great majority of freight (in terms of both tonnage and value) within and through Berks County, illustrating the importance of the County's highway network. From Berks County, businesses can reach nearly 40% of the United States population and 50% of Canadian customers within a one-day drive.

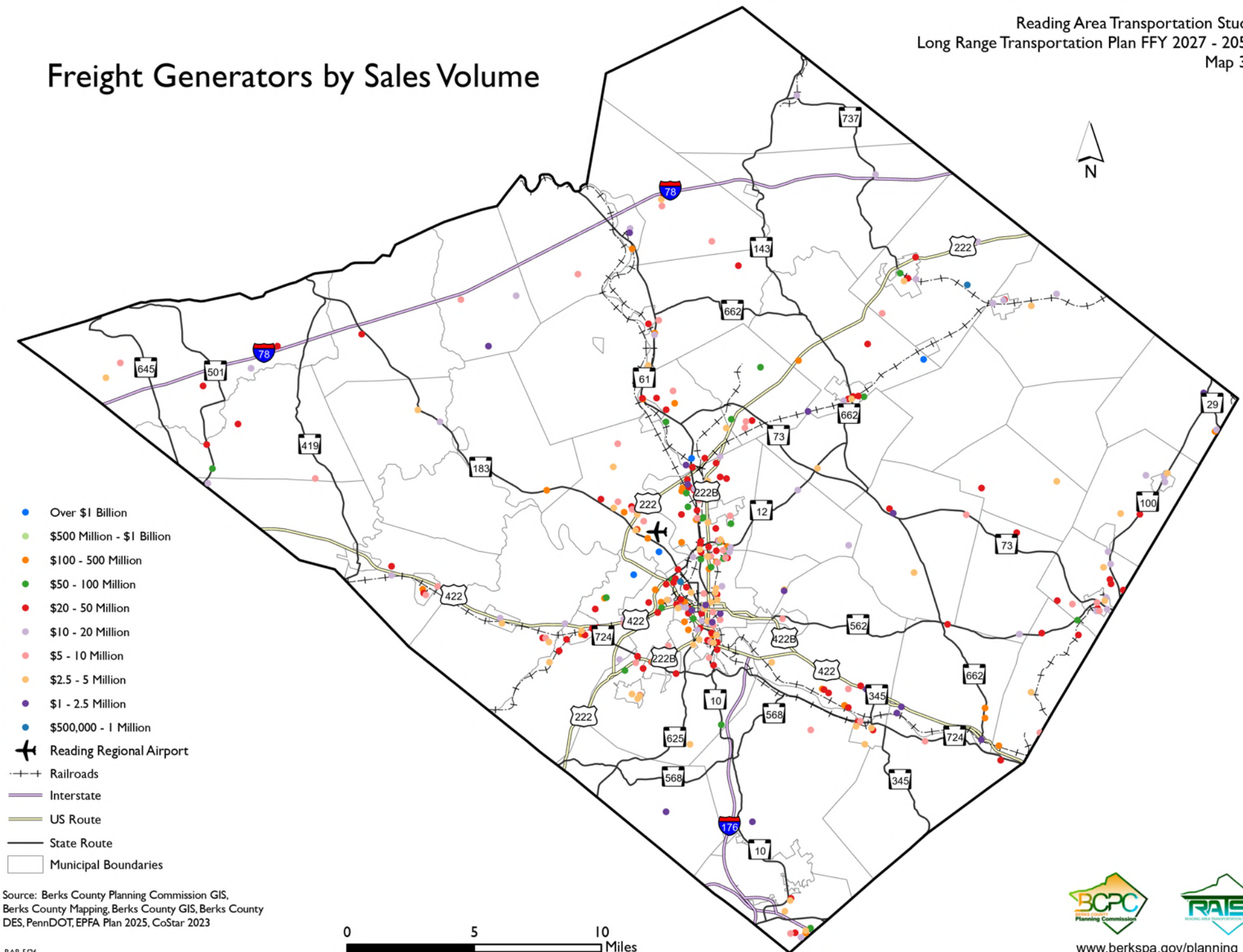
Truck freight is the region's most utilized method of transporting goods. Of note, the sections of Interstates 176 (15 percent truck traffic), 78 (45 percent truck traffic), 76 PA Turnpike (22 percent truck traffic) and portions of US 422, US 222, and PA 724 extending from I-176 to the Sinking Spring Intermodal Facility in Berks County are on the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Primary Freight Network (PFN). In the County, the Interstates are the primary routes transporting goods statewide. Routes 422, 222, and 61 are primary inter-county truck freight corridors. US 422 links the Reading Metropolitan Area with Lebanon and Montgomery Counties while US 222 (22 percent truck traffic) links Reading to Lehigh and Lancaster Counties. The Fogelsville area located in western Lehigh County has seen explosive growth in warehousing in the last decade. State Route 61 provides a north-south route into Schuylkill County and a direct link to I-78 and I-81. As shown on Maps 41 and 42, most of the freight generating businesses are located along these routes.

The County has one of the largest manufacturing concentrations in the region and serves as a major conduit between warehousing hubs elsewhere in Pennsylvania. This warehousing and industrial development is generally located along major freight corridors in eastern Pennsylvania, namely the Interstate system. Interstates 78 and 81 have been recognized as logistics corridors, which stretch from Northeastern Pennsylvania, through the Lehigh Valley (including Berks County as the westernmost county), and into Central Pennsylvania. Berks County is centrally located along this corridor as it is the westernmost county of the Lehigh Valley Region, which borders the southern portion of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Region, and borders Lebanon and Lancaster Counties to the east of the Central Pennsylvania Region. In addition, Berks is centrally located between industrial centers on Interstate 78. This corridor is leading in the growth of larger warehouses compared to major logistics markets in the country. Even with the growth of new larger warehouses, existing warehouses are being utilized creating a historic low of vacant warehouses along the I-78/I-81 corridor. Warehouse and distribution center development along Interstate 78 in Berks County is expected to continue to grow, particularly as properties become less available to the east of Berks County in Lehigh and Northampton Counties and New Jersey.

Truck parking has been an issue affecting drivers in recent times especially since the inception of the Electronic Logging Device (ELD) Mandate in December of 2017. With Interstate 78 being part of the logistics corridor, truck parking is of high demand across northern Berks County. When adequate truck parking is unavailable or full, some truck drivers resort to parking on the shoulders of ramps and interstates. A lack of truck parking has been recognized in Pennsylvania and state officials are searching for solutions for the safety of all drivers. One way of potentially increasing truck parking would be to encourage developers to include an area of safe truck parking within the property they are developing for the drivers that are delivering or picking up goods at their location.

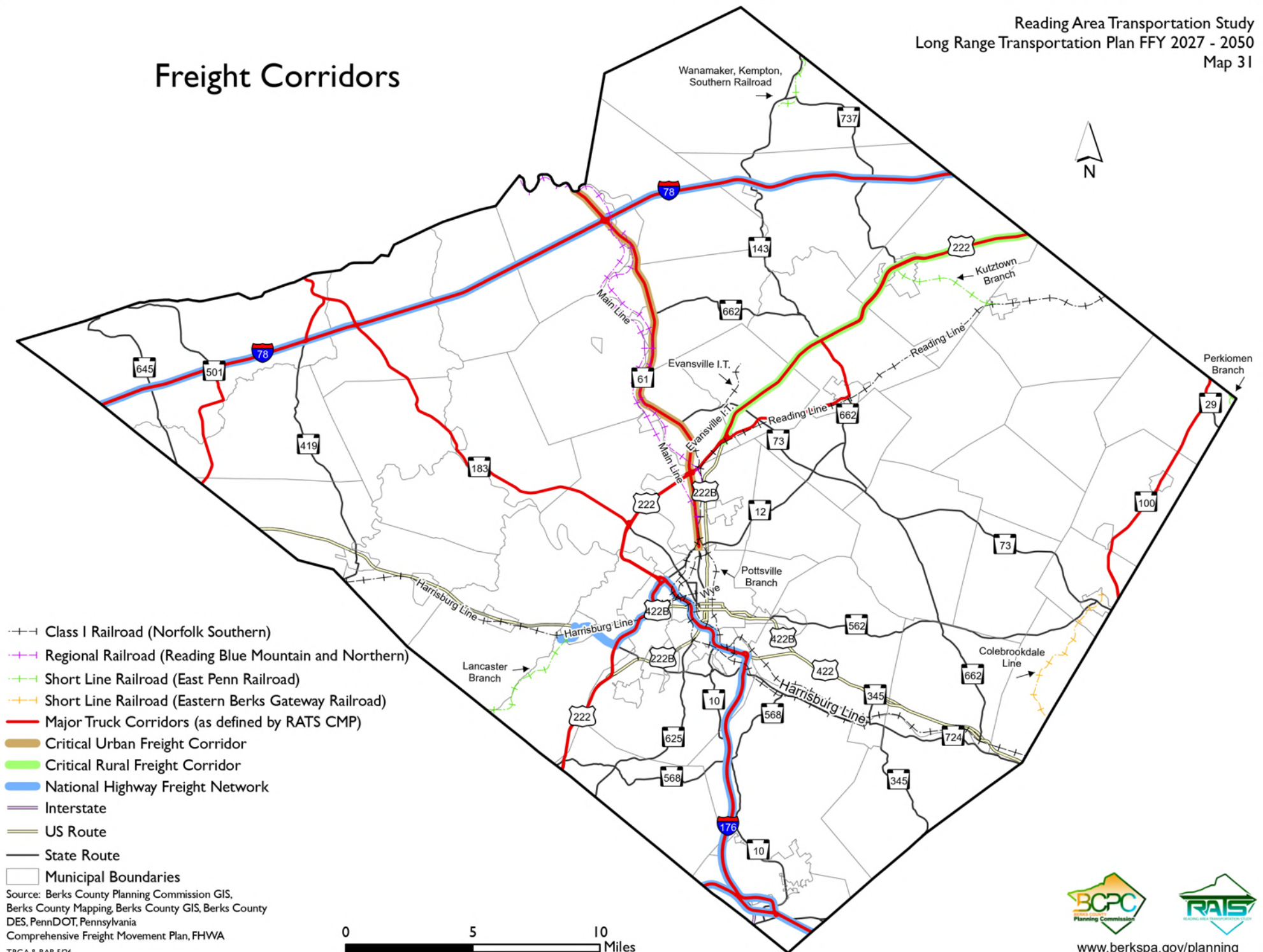


Freight Generators by Sales Volume



BAB 5/26

Freight Corridors



Federal, State, and Local Freight Planning

National Freight Strategic Plan

The National Freight Strategic Plan https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2020-09/NFSP_fullplan_508_0.pdf defines the US DOT's vision and goals for the national multimodal freight system, assesses the conditions and performance of the freight system and barriers to freight system performance, and defines strategies to achieve its vision and goals. The plan was developed through a multi-agency effort involving extensive consultation with freight stakeholders in both the public and private sectors. The plan is used as a guide for developing national freight policy, programs, initiatives, and investments; inform State freight plans; identify freight data and research needs; and provide a framework for increased cross-sector, multijurisdictional, and multimodal coordination and partnerships. At the time of this writing the current 2020 National Freight Strategic Plan is being updated. The new plan is anticipated to be completed by February 2025.

The freight system in the US is critical to the Nation's economic growth and prosperity. American consumers and businesses rely on a safe, efficient, and reliable freight system to sustain their way of life. The National Freight Strategic Plan incorporates stakeholder input from across the freight industry to provide a vision for the Nation's multimodal freight system and a strategy for achieving that vision. The following table outlines the strategic goals and objectives of National Freight Policy:

GOAL	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
Safety Improve the safety, security, and resilience of the national freight system.	• Support the development and adoption of automation, connectivity, and other freight safety technologies • Modernize safety oversight and security procedures • Minimize the effects of fatigue and human error on freight safety • Reduce conflicts between passenger and freight traffic • Protect the freight system from natural and human-caused disasters and improve system resilience and recovery speed
Infrastructure Modernize freight infrastructure and operations to grow the economy, increase competitiveness, and improve quality of life.	• Fund targeted investments in freight capacity and national goals • Improve consideration of freight in transportation planning • Prioritize projects that improve freight intermodal connectivity, and enhance freight flows on first- and last-mile connectors and at major trade gateways • Develop a methodology for identifying freight bottlenecks across modes • Advance freight system management and operation practices • Stimulate job growth and economic competitiveness in rural and urban communities • Mitigate the impacts of freight movement on communities
Innovation Prepare for the future by supporting the development of data, technologies, and workforce capabilities that improve freight system performance.	• Support the development and adoption of automation and connectivity, including V2X (Vehicle to Everything) technologies • Support the safe deployment of UAS technology • Streamline or eliminate regulations to improve governance, efficiency, and economic competitiveness • Improve freight data, modeling, and analytical tools and resources • Strengthen workforce professional capacity • Invest in freight research • Support regulatory frameworks that foster freight innovation

Source: USDOT National Freight Strategic Plan (NFSP)

Pennsylvania 2045 Freight Movement Plan

Pennsylvania's 2045 Freight Movement Plan (FMP) <https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/penndot/documents/public/pubsforms/publications/pub%20791.pdf> was developed in conjunction with the statewide 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) in 2021. The current version is being updated with an anticipated completion of June 2026. The plan provides a comprehensive strategic direction for the movement of people and goods throughout Pennsylvania. The plan highlights two of Pennsylvania's most pressing freight challenges: improving collaboration in the freight transportation/land use planning process and the shortage of truck parking. There is much at stake in addressing land use issues related to freight, particularly with the rapid growth of warehouses and distribution facilities. The access needs and the associated implications for infrastructure and traffic congestion also make the transportation/land use connection particularly important. Truck parking challenges require collaboration between varied stakeholders to address this need. PennDOT and the regional planning agencies can fulfill an important role in handling these multi-faceted issues with both local and private stakeholders. The plan's five goals and objectives for each one of them are listed in the table below:

GOAL	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
Land Use Align freight mobility with economic development and land use	- Establish a core Pennsylvania highway freight network based on a refined methodology for identifying critical urban and rural freight corridors. - Establish statewide standards to measure benefits and costs of freight-oriented industrial development. - Collaborate with other organizations to assemble recommended industrial site development standards/ordinances.
Mobility Advance project investments that enhance freight mobility.	- Continue to identify and improve truck bottlenecks. - Preserve and enhance major freight transportation assets, including waterways, railroads, major truck corridors, and intermodal terminals, with the aim of supporting and promoting energy-efficient modes of freight transportation. - Pursue opportunities with public and private stakeholders to expand truck parking capacity. - Expand and diversify the composition of the Freight Work Group (FWG)
Analytic Tools and Processes Provide planning, data, and analytical tools for improved decision making and collaboration with freight stakeholders.	- Develop analytical tools, data, and forecasting techniques to measure costs and benefits of freight-related transportation initiatives, programs, and projects. - Enhance PennDOT's technical capabilities in freight planning, forecasting, modeling, and data - Expand PennDOT's data repository for Pennsylvania's freight transportation system. - Develop methods to track and evaluate air cargo trends, needs, and intermodal implications. - Examine the key topic areas of the Transportation Advisory Council (TAC) truck weight exemptions study of 2020. - Develop expanded freight performance measures for Pennsylvania's Transportation Performance Report (TPR).
Operations / Safety Improve multimodal freight transportation operations and safety.	- Reduce truck-related crashes, injuries, and fatalities statewide. - Reduce FRA-reportable incidents, injuries, and fatalities statewide. - Reduce non-recurring delays on the National Highway Freight Network. - Adapt to advances in truck automation, electrification, and other technologies. - Enhance interoperability of the highway network with neighboring states.
Environmental Stewardship Reduce, avoid and/or mitigate adverse environmental impacts from Pennsylvania's freight transportation system, and plan for environmental impacts to freight movement.	- Mitigate the severity of impacts of extreme weather and natural disasters on freight mobility. - Reduce freight movement-related emissions and its impact on local air quality. - Reduce freight movement's impact on flooding and stormwater runoff. - Support planning for freight movement's impacts on loss of wildlife and habitat.

Source: PA 2045 Freight Movement Plan

After the completion of Pennsylvania’s previous multimodal long range transportation plan in 2016, also known as PA On Track, federal requirements and parameters for designating Critical Urban Freight Corridors (CUFCs) and Critical Rural Freight Corridors (CRFCs) in each state were established. PennDOT developed a detailed methodology for evaluating roadway segments across the state and prioritizing them for potential certification of CUFCs and CRFCs. This evaluation process included a wide range of criteria, such as freight tonnage, truck volumes, truck vehicle-miles traveled, proximity to major freight generators and intermodal facilities, weight restrictions, truck bottleneck locations, and others. As such, PennDOT designated a listing of proposed CUFCs and CRFCs, which FHWA certified in February 2019. Based on PennDOT’s evaluation criteria State Route 61 is considered a CUFC and US 222 North is considered a CRFC in Berks County. This designation identifies routes critical to freight movement that extend the Primary Highway Freight System and allows eligibility for funding under the National Highway Freight Program (NHFP). PennDOT’s Bureau of Planning and Research continually evaluates the CUFCs and CRFCs when developing the yearly Highway System Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) submittals to the Federal Highway Administration.

Eastern Pennsylvania Freight Alliance and the Eastern Pennsylvania Freight Infrastructure Plan

The Eastern Pennsylvania Freight Alliance (EPFA) is a consortium of five Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) including: the Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS), Lackawanna/Luzerne Transportation Study (LLTS), Lebanon County Metropolitan Planning Organization (LEBCO), Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS), and Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA).

The MPOs referenced above have collaborated to address the unique opportunities and challenges associated with freight industry growth, such as impacts to mobility, safety, land uses, and maintaining a state of good repair of the transportation infrastructure across the region. The 10-County EPFA region (Berks, Carbon, Lackawanna, Lebanon, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Pike, and Schuylkill Counties) is among the largest and fastest-growing freight handling regions in the country, with rapid development and redevelopment for warehouse and distribution functions. One of the first outcomes of this alliance is the region’s freight plan known officially as the Eastern Pennsylvania Freight Infrastructure Plan: <https://epennfa.org/>

It is intent of the Reading MPO to have this plan, by reference, and the recommendations applicable to Berks County as addressed below, serve as the freight planning element of the Long Range Transportation Plan.

The Eastern Pennsylvania Freight Infrastructure Plan identifies challenges and develops opportunities for infrastructure investments and policy guidance that address the challenges of continued expansion of freight in the region, including those focused on mobility and reliability, safety and security, or infrastructure condition. The plan focuses on three key elements:

1. **Infrastructure:** Roads, bridges, pavement, rail facilities, rest areas/parking facilities
2. **Activity:** Truck traffic, bottlenecks, crashes, commodities, truck parking
3. **Land Use:** Freight generators and development areas that are directly linked to infrastructure and activity





In the early stages of plan development, a project specific public survey was deployed to obtain input from local residents and visitors, who were asked to identify and provide known concerns and opinions regarding freight transportation within the EPFA region. One of the questions asked was to list specific locations where your daily travel is impacted by trucks or freight. A review of responses indicated numerous corridors identified by more than 100 individual responses. More than 25% of all respondents highlighted I-78 or US 22 as routes where their daily travel is impacted by freight. Additional routes highlighted include Interstates (80, 81), US 222, State Routes (309, 100, 33, 512, 248, 191, 329, 61) and Airport Road (connecting to Lehigh Valley International Airport). Key locations along these corridors that were identified most frequently as they pertain to Berks County are listed below:

- I-78 – Exit 23 – Shartlesville
- US 222 – Bypass, Kutztown Road to I-78

EPFA Regional Action Plan

Freight, goods movement, and trucks are visible elements of daily life in Berks County, not only serving the needs of local and regional residents, but consumers throughout the northeastern United States and beyond. The County's geographic location uniquely positions it as a critical link in the regional and national freight network, strengthening the region's importance as a hub of freight-focused employment. Continued regional growth in the freight and goods movement sector creates challenges for infrastructure, land use, and the safety of all roadway users. The EPFA regional action plan outlines actions that, when implemented incrementally, will allow for local or regional investments that address existing challenges and the adoption of policies that will better plan for future challenges.

The Regional Action Plan is focused on two elements:

Infrastructure recommendations are physical locations in need of improvements or further study that have been identified based on input from the analysis of the Regional Freight Profile, Stakeholder Input, and results of the Public Survey

Policy recommendations are local or regional policy guidelines identified based on input received from Agency Partners and Stakeholders, as well as those that reflect current regional or statewide planning best practices.

Infrastructure Recommendations: Infrastructure improvement locations were generated from three elements: those identified through the data analyzed as part of the development of the regional freight profile, as well as those identified from stakeholder session feedback, or through the public survey. Many infrastructure improvement locations have been identified based on a review of data included in the EPFA Plan's Regional Freight Profile. The list of locations includes areas where one or more deficiencies were identified. These deficiencies include a history of crashes – particularly truck-involved crash hotspots that include fatalities and/or non-motorized users – identified truck bottlenecks, geometric constraints, substandard bridge conditions, or pavement conditions. The infrastructure recommendations are listed in numerical order. With number one being the highest priority.

1. Allentown Pike, US 222 Business to PA 73 (issues: safety, bottleneck) *
2. US 222 Business at US 422 Interchange (issues: safety, bottleneck) **
3. Downtown City of Reading (issues: safety, bridge condition, pavement condition) **

4. I-78/PA 61 (issues: safety, bottleneck) *
5. PA 12 near US 222/PA 183 and PA 61 (issues: safety, bridge geometry) (* @ 183)
6. US 422 at PA 662 (issues: safety, bridge geometry) ***
7. US 422 at US 222 (issues: safety, bridge geometry) ***
8. US 222 Business (Lancaster Avenue), PA 625 to US 422 (issues: bottleneck, bridge geometry) **
9. US 222 at PA 73 (issue: safety) *
10. US 222/PA 662 (issue: safety) *
11. US 422 at PA 724 (issue: safety) **
12. US 422 at US 422 Business and US 422 at US 222 Business (issue: safety) **
13. US 222 (Allentown Pike), at US 222 Business Interchange (issue: bottleneck) ***
14. US 222, PA 73 to PA 662 (issue: bottleneck) **
15. US 222 Business – South 4th Street, Pine Street to Laurel Street (issue: bottleneck) ***

* Improved prior to plan completion ** Programmed in FFY 25-27 TIP *** Candidate project for future consideration

Policy Recommendations: Policy recommendations have been developed through input received from EPFA members, stakeholder session feedback, and comments received from the public survey. Policy recommendations were developed around different action areas; each is discussed separately below. Timeframes for implementation are Short-Term (less than one year), Mid-Term (1-2 years), and Long-Term (more than 2 years). Key action areas include:

Regional Coordination: Regional coordination is a prerequisite for regional policy. Given that the EPFA region includes 5 MPOs, 10 counties, and 400 municipalities, if coordinated policies are to be developed and advanced, a sustainable mechanism for that coordination must be put in place.

Action Area	Recommendation	Timeframe
Regional Coordination	Develop EPFA common goals and objectives.	Short-Term
Regional Coordination	Standardize formal meetings of the EPFA to advance outcomes of the Plan and support future needs associated with freight development.	Short-Term
Regional Coordination	Proactively track approved or proposed freight or logistics-focused developments to identify roadway connections that may need future investments.	Short-Term
Regional Coordination	Track AADTT annually to identify locations where growth in truck use may warrant a focused study or analysis	Short-Term
Regional Coordination	Track industrial real estate market trends to identify new and emerging industrial clusters, types of facilities being developed, etc.	Mid-Term

Source: Eastern PA Freight Infrastructure Plan

Regional Coordination Actions

- Initial EPFA contacts should coordinate a meeting, workshop, or virtual focus group to identify common goals and objectives that EPFA will aim to achieve.
- EPFA members should initiate the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize the EPFA as an entity focused on the unique transportation and land use needs of freight within the region (the EPFA MOU was approved by each of the five MPO's effective _____2025).
- Establish regular monthly or quarterly EPFA meeting schedules. Ensure each member has an identified responsible point of contact. Appoint secretary to maintain roster of current contacts, and to create and maintain a shared file location (Dropbox, SharePoint, or similar) for EPFA information and materials.
- EPFA membership should prepare a database of approved or proposed developments to identify roadways in need of future investments, particularly those that may not be currently used by freight traffic.
- Additionally, EPFA members should actively track AADTT annually to determine roadways within the region where expanded truck use may need further study. Identify trends and areas where there are significant changes that need further investigation.
- EPFA core members should review industrial real estate data and trends on an annual or triennial basis. This analysis should focus on clusters where development activity is growing or emerging, identify the types of industrial buildings being developed, and consider impacts and needs. This may require the identification of MPO resources to pay for data and analysis.
- In developing a work program, each EPFA member should consider the feasibility of expanding the geographic scopes of transportation or freight-focused studies to include multiple EPFA member geographies.



Land Use: Land use recommendations are primarily centered on a need to advance regional or multi-jurisdictional zoning, or the development of model ordinance support for EPFA municipalities. As a matter of practice, few freight plans – whether modal, statewide, or regional in nature – attempt to address the critical relationships between freight transportation and the freight land uses that generate the underlying demand, primarily because transportation agencies preparing the plans have jurisdiction over transportation assets but not land use decisions, which are made locally.

Action Area	Recommendation	Timeframe
Land Use	Develop regional land use guidance document for EPFA member municipalities, including best practices guidance - especially in rural agricultural areas susceptible to change	Mid-Term
Land Use	Develop public information materials (documents, videos, etc.) to educate the public, elected officials, etc. on land use trends, impacts of certain development types in response to or anticipation of public concerns. Leverage TRB guidance and other existing materials as much as possible.	Mid-Term
Land Use	Perform an assessment of developable land, identifying potential conflicts, more/less desirable areas to focus development, etc.	Mid-Term
Land Use	Advance development of regional zoning guidance for industrial and warehousing uses.	Long-Term
Land Use	Consider opportunities for multi-jurisdictional land use planning, focused on industrial or warehousing uses.	Long-Term
Land Use	Advance development of regional zoning language that support truck parking on-site at industrial, distribution, or warehouse sites.	Long-Term

Source: Eastern PA Freight Infrastructure Plan

Land Use Policy Actions

- The EPFA should establish a standing working group representing interested regional planning agencies, counties, and municipalities, and subsequently charge the working group to implement the following:
 - Create a library of potentially applicable land use and zoning texts from regional, state, and national best practice, tapping resources such as Transportation Research Board (TRB), American Planning Association (APA), and USDOT.
 - Agree on recommended regional ordinance language guidance for use by counties or municipalities.
 - Perform consistency reviews with L RTPs and other governing policies to ensure any guidance documents align with local goals, objectives, or outcomes.
 - Perform outreach to and inform municipalities about the availability of the regional guidance and benefits of their use; promote dialogue and coordination between adjacent or interdependent municipalities.
 - Track and monitor the deployment of language guidance across the region.
 - Additionally, EPFA members should track available or developable land at a regional level to identify where growth in existing or the development of future industrial clusters may be most likely. This may also provide opportunities to focus development in more desirable areas by local or regional stakeholders.

Road Design and Maintenance: Winter weather, storm events, and work zone activities can create temporary disruptions in the availability and use of key truck routes, ranging from reduced capacity and performance to full unavailability for periods of time. Truck routes within the EPFA region should be actively managed to reduce the frequency and severity of disruption to the extent practical.

Action Area	Recommendation	Timeframe
Road Design and Maintenance	Focus on improving winter maintenance along key truck routes.	Short-Term
Road Design and Maintenance	Develop resilient road design guidelines to avoid or mitigate flooding and other risks.	Mid-Term

Source: Eastern PA Freight Infrastructure Plan

Road Design and Maintenance Policy Actions

- County agencies should work with PennDOT district offices to establish or reinforce coordinated plans across responsible jurisdictions for priority snow removal on key truck routes.
- EPFA members should share information and manage work zone activities related to municipal or county projects to minimize impacts to freight operations and particularly to communities where trucks might seek to re-route.
- County officials should collaborate with PennDOT district officials on the investigation of weather vulnerabilities on key truck routes and develop plan to prioritize improvements and actions to reduce those vulnerabilities.
- EPFA members, in partnership with local officials and PennDOT, should identify and adopt resilient road design guidelines. EPFA members should advocate for federal or state funding for resilience projects and apply for grants (or advise applicants in the region) as appropriate.

Truck Operations: Policy recommendations within the truck operations action area include addressing challenging issues associated with safe truck parking and the routing and operations of trucks on highways and in communities.

Action	Recommendation	Timeframe
Truck Operations	Identify local or regional ordinances that allow for or support development of truck parking opportunities within the County.	Mid-Term
Truck Operations	Advance local freight studies for urban areas identified as needing infrastructure improvements, including Allentown, Reading, Scranton, and Lebanon	Mid-Term
Truck Operations	Advance County-wide study to Identify locations that may support truck parking within Berks County.	Mid-Term
Truck Operations	Advance regional Truck Route study.	Mid-Term
Truck Operations	Develop Regional Routing Study focused on need for wayfinding signage to avoid bridge strikes, etc.	Mid-Term
Truck Operations	Anticipate the potential for new technologies (autonomous vehicles, AI routing, alternative delivery technologies) to change how trucks move to, from, through, and within the region. Assess readiness, opportunities to lead demonstration projects, etc.	Long-Term
Truck Operations	Assess corridor-level demand for alternative fuels (e.g., hydrogen) and electric charging	Long-Term

Source: Eastern PA Freight Infrastructure Plan

Truck Operations Policy Actions

- Establish core working group of EPFA representatives to:
 - Compile reports of unauthorized parking activities and related incidents, and regularly develop and update data on authorized and unauthorized truck parking activities;
 - Work in a coordinated manner with state agencies and private sector developers on increasing the inventory of “mainline” (Interstate or highway-based) parking;
 - Research, as part of the Land Use/Transportation coordination, the application of zoning to increase the inventory of on-site parking within-facilities;
 - Perform and support county/subregion feasibility evaluations on the potential for (and acceptability of) managed local truck parking facilities.
- For urban areas identified as infrastructure priorities, individual MPOs should work with the associated municipality to advance city-specific truck studies, including a review of where and how trucks interact with cyclists or pedestrians.
- Advance EPFA regional truck route study. This includes compiling potential routes or restrictions, as appropriate, as well as necessary traffic or infrastructure data to support this effort;
- Develop a coordinated EPFA strategy to develop, distribute, and promote preferred route information to regional truck operators and dispatchers;
- Stay apprised of new and emerging technologies and their applications. These could be topics at future EPFA meetings. EPFA members should collaborate with private companies, and/or academic institutions that may be looking for opportunities to deploy or pilot new technology.
- Collaborate with PennDOT and USDOT partners to advance improvements associated with alternative fuel corridors within the EPFA region.



Rail Policy Recommendations: Rail freight has positive and negative effects in the EPFA region. It offers an alternative to truck transportation over longer distances for regional freight shippers and receivers. But rail service also generates and concentrates truck trips at rail/truck transfer points, creating community impacts as well as development pressures. Increasingly, as the length of trains increase, at-grade crossings experience blockages while trains are switched in and out of railyards and customer facilities. Railroads are a critical part of a balanced freight ecosystem, and while they receive attention and planning through federally mandated state rail plans and other programs, it is also important to address local benefits and impacts.

Action Area	Recommendation	Timeframe
Rail	Coordinate with passenger rail studies in Reading, Wilkes-Barre, Allentown	Short-Term
Rail	Coordinate with the State Rail Plan	Short-Term
Rail	Work with existing rail operators and rail-served businesses to develop strategy aimed at limiting traffic impacts from stalled/idling/slow trains.	Short-Term
Rail	Perform a regional analysis of grade crossing safety aimed at identifying and prioritizing crossings in need of safety improvements.	Mid-term

Source: Eastern PA Freight Infrastructure Plan

Rail Policy Actions:

- Establish core working group of EPFA representatives to:
 - Identify and, to the extent practical, protect rail-adjacent development sites for use by rail-served industries (possibly following the model of NJTPA's Freight Rail Industrial Opportunities study);
 - Perform regional analysis of rail grade crossing safety, blockages, and other impacts;
 - Work with railroads and rail-served facilities to reduce the duration/frequency of grade crossing blockage events;
- Identify an EPFA member to proactively represent the alliance as a steering committee member for the Pennsylvania State Rail Plan
 - Actively coordinate and collaborate with development and deployment of passenger rail studies throughout the region.

Air Cargo Policy Recommendations: Air cargo is important for EPFA shippers and receivers, particularly given the expansion of ABE as a cargo hub. Additional air cargo needs are met by large national and international airports such as Philadelphia and Newark-Liberty/JFK, with air freight being trucked to and from these and other airports. This action area is focused on air-side facility recommendations, with land-side recommendations generally associated with specific infrastructure improvements or those found in the Truck Operations action area.

The airside facilities at ABE lack the capacity to serve existing and future cargo needs associated with the rapid growth of freight within the EPFA region. Investments in air cargo within the region should focus on the development of dedicated airside cargo (including cross-dock) facilities at ABE that increase efficiencies and reduce truck demand within the region.

In January 2024, the Lehigh-Northampton Airport Authority (LNAA) was awarded a \$40.8M federal grant to fund the construction of the Northside Logistics and Cargo Complex (NLCC), a consolidated multimodal cargo facility at Lehigh Valley International Airport (ABE) in Lehigh County, Pennsylvania with connectivity to the National Highway System via designated truck routes and critical urban freight corridors. This initiative continues to utilize the regional freight corridors and utilizes available FHWA and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) funding currently in place to develop additional air cargo capacity for the region.

The Reading Regional Airport is currently poised to offer space for air cargo carriers at its facility and intends to market itself as a potential location for air cargo carriers looking to expand their operations in the region. Through coordination with the Reading Regional Airport Authority, we will continue to monitor the status of air freight in Berks County to ensure adequate planning and implementation in support of future growth in this area.

Freight Workforce Access Recommendations: Freight generating and receiving facilities depend on workers, and those workers depend on reliable transportation options to and from the workplace. For those without a personal automobile or regular shared ride, active transportation and public transit are the primary options for workplace access. However, as freight facilities continue to develop outside of established clusters and regional transportation routes, they become increasingly difficult to reach. Providing workplace access options supports opportunities for the economically disadvantaged, while also expanding the pool of potential workers for freight facility operators and helping fill labor pool shortfalls. In other regions, major employers have established their own van and private transit services to fill gaps in the public transportation system.

Action Area	Recommendation	Timeframe
Freight Workplace Access	Identify underserved transit corridors and consider an expansion of service for major freight generating nodes	Mid-Term

Source: Eastern PA Freight Infrastructure Plan

Freight Workplace Access Policy Actions:

- Establish core working group of EPFA representatives to identify underserved transit corridors
- Partner with transit operators to identify opportunities to expand workforce access options, including: active transportation improvements; public transit service expansion; and private or public-private partnership van services.
- Partner with ridesharing or Transportation Management Associations (such as CommutePA) to link employees in need with industrial activity nodes.

Additional Coordination

In addition to the ongoing coordination between the group of Eastern Pennsylvania Freight Alliance members. The Reading MPO will continually collaborate with PennDOT, Lancaster MPO and DVRPC on freight involved initiatives and planning.



RAIL FREIGHT

Pennsylvania is a rail-intensive state. Railroads play a major role in moving freight within and throughout the state and across the country. The rail network in Berks County consists of Class I, Class II, and short line railroads. Class I railroads are freight railroads with an operating revenue of \$457 million or more. Class II railroads are much smaller than Class I railroads and are often considered regional railroads with an operating revenue between \$37 million and \$457 million. Short line railroads are freight railroads with operating revenues of less than \$475 million. Since 1981, this network has only served freight in the county. Presently, four railroad companies conduct business on 125 linear miles of operational railroad lines inside Berks County. The majority (approximately 101 miles or 81 percent) of the rail line mileage in the county is owned and operated by Norfolk Southern Corporation (NSC). The principal activity center for rail in the county is the Spring Street yard, located in the City of Reading at the junction of the Lebanon Valley Branch Line and the Reading Line. The Reading Line functions as a bridge between the Lehigh Line in Allentown/Bethlehem and the Harrisburg Line in the Dauphin County area. The Reading Line is the most heavily used track in Pennsylvania in terms of both carloads and ton-miles of traffic moved. It is part of the corridor that carries most of the Norfolk Southern rail traffic from the metropolitan New York area to points west and south. At Reading, rail traffic can continue to Philadelphia, South New Jersey, and Harrisburg. This line is also part of the Strategic Rail Corridor Network (STRACNET).

Several short line railroads provide service in the county. Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad (RBM&N) currently provides service on the line previously owned by Conrail along the west side of the Schuylkill River, north of Reading into northeastern Pennsylvania. The RBM&N also controls the Schuylkill Secondary Line that runs between Temple and Hamburg on the east side of the Schuylkill River.

East Penn Railroad owns and operates the Lancaster Line that runs from Sinking Spring to Ephrata, Lancaster County, and the Perkiomen Branch that runs from Allentown through Hereford Township to Pennsburg. East Penn provides additional service in Berks County on the Kutztown Transportation Authority-owned Kutztown Branch Line that runs between Topton and Kutztown. In total, East Penn Railroad, LLC operates 110 miles of track throughout southeastern Pennsylvania and Delaware.

The Eastern Berks Gateway Railroad provides service on the Colebrookdale Branch Line that runs from the Norfolk Southern Line in Pottstown to Boyertown linking Montgomery and Berks Counties.

The Colebrookdale Railroad, also known as the Secret Valley Line is a tourist railroad. The railroad operates between Boyertown and Pottstown in Montgomery County. The Colebrookdale Railroad offers a variety of excursions originating out of Boyertown with plans to eventually have trains originating from Pottstown as well.

The Allentown and Auburn Railroad is another tourist carrier that operates between Topton and Kutztown on tracks owned by the Kutztown Transportation Authority. The railroad is not isolated as it shares an interchange with the Norfolk Southern

Reading line in Topton. The Allentown and Auburn Railroad also offers freight services for local customers along the line.

The Wanamaker, Kempton and Southern Railroad is a third tourist carrier which operates between Wanamaker in Lehigh County and Kempton in Berks County, over tracks formerly part of the Reading Railroad's Schuylkill and Lehigh branch. The Wanamaker, Kempton and Southern is rail isolated. It does not connect to other rail lines or haul freight.

Road–Rail Crossings

A railroad at-grade crossing is an intersection where a roadway crosses railroad tracks at the same level (grade). At-grade crossings can also have significant impacts on the transportation network. The "gate- down delay" creates delays caused when passing trains block the crossing. In addition, grade crossings can reduce road capacity. The uneven surfaces at grade crossings require vehicles to cross at lower speeds and passing trains can preclude coordinating nearby traffic signals as they pass through that area.

There are 110 public at-grade highway-rail intersections in Berks County. Despite the number of crossings, the county has a low number of crashes at them, with 18 between 2020 and 2024. The annual average daily trips (AADT) on roadways with at-grade crossings are typically below 5,000 vehicles in Berks County, with the exception of the crossings shown below:

BERKS COUNTY ROAD/RAIL CROSSINGS WITH > 5,000 AADT			
Railroad	Municipality	Street	2024 AADT
Norfolk Southern Corporation	City of Reading	North Eleventh Street	16,013
Eastern Berks Gateway Railroad	Boyertown Borough	Philadelphia Avenue	12,838
Reading/Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad	Perry Township	SR 61 / Pottsville Pike	10,575
Norfolk Southern Corporation	City of Reading	Philadelphia Avenue	10,331
East Penn Railroad, LLC	Sinking Spring Borough	Fritztown Road	9,065
East Penn Railroad, LLC	Spring Township	Vinemont Road	8,933
Norfolk Southern Corporation	Reading	Kutztown Road	8,676
Norfolk Southern Corporation	Maidencreek Township	Main Street	7,773
Norfolk Southern Corporation	City of Reading	Franklin Street	7,720
East Penn Railroad, LLC	Spring Township	Montello Road	6,934
Norfolk Southern Corporation	Sinking Spring Borough	Columbia Avenue	6,853
East Penn Railroad, LLC	Spring Township	Fritztown Road	6,035
Norfolk Southern Corporation	City of Reading	Chestnut Street	5,661
Norfolk Southern Corporation	Fleetwood Borough	South Richmond Street	5,239

Source: US DOT Federal Railroad Administration, Railroad Crossings – At Grade & GXAPS Report

Note that changes to railroad operations may increase or decrease rail traffic at a crossing, affecting type of capital and safety improvement needs. Demand for rail service can change with the arrival or departure of industrial customers on the line. These and other economic changes can affect the volume, location and timing of rail traffic.

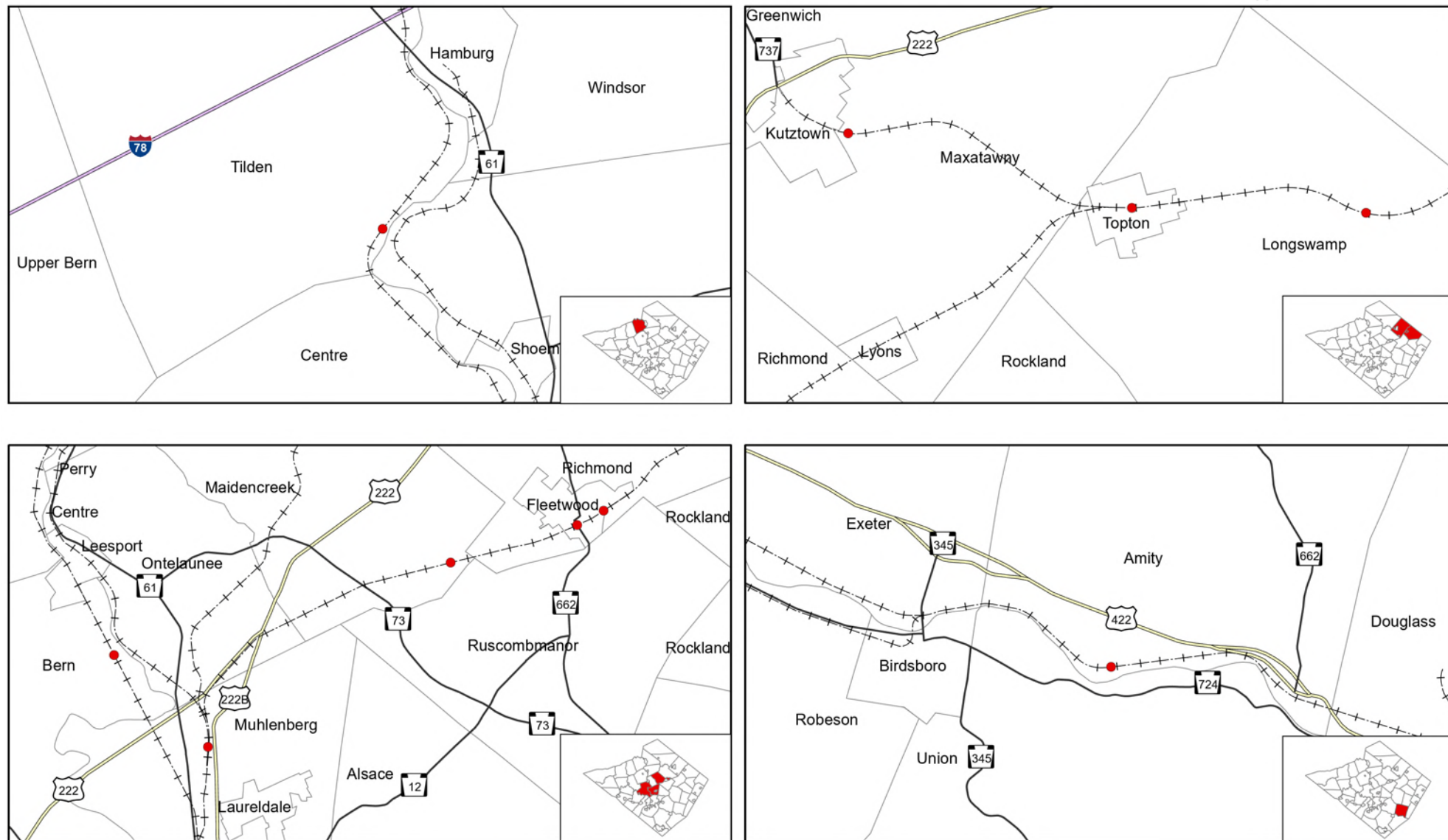
The Federal Railroad Administration's Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Accident Prediction System (GXAPS) provides the chart below. These crossings are not considered dangerous or even the most heavily used crossings in the county. However, the model provides a listing of the crossings considering their physical and operating characteristics and accident history data that may be prone to crashes in the future and warrant additional attention. The table below and Map 43 on the following page identifies and shows the location of these crossings.

TOP TEN BERKS COUNTY ROAD/RAIL CROSSINGS WITH GREATEST POTENTIAL FOR CRASHES			
Railroad	Municipality	Street	2024 AADT
Norfolk Southern Corporation	Fleetwood Borough	Richmond Street	5,239
Reading/Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad	Tilden Township	Fisher Dam Road	N/A
Norfolk Southern Corporation	Maidencreek Township	Hill Road	N/A
Reading/Blue Mountain & Northern Railroad	Bern Township	Cross Keys Road	2,570
Norfolk Southern Corporation	Muhlenberg Township	Tuckerton Road	1,840
Norfolk Southern Corporation	Longswamp Township	Kennedy Avenue	N/A
Norfolk Southern Corporation	Amity Township	Main Street	3,625
Allentown & Auburn Railroad	Maxatawny Township	Kohler Road	N/A
Norfolk Southern Corporation	Fleetwood Borough	Willow Street	N/A
Norfolk Southern Corporation	Topton Borough	Main Street	N/A

Source: Federal Railroad Administration, Office of Safety Analysis, Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Accident Prediction System (GXAPS)

Federal Railroad Administration Office of Safety Analysis Road / Rail Crossings with Greatest Potential for Crashes

Reading Area Transportation Study
Long Range Transportation Plan FFY 2027- 2050
Map 32



Source: Berks County Planning Commission GIS, Berks County Mapping, Berks County GIS, Berks County DES, PennDOT, Federal Railroad Administration, Office of Safety Analysis (April 2025), Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Accident Prediction System (GXAPS)
BAB 5/26

- Top 10 Potential Crash Crossings
- Railroads
- Interstate

- US Route
- State Route
- Municipal Boundaries



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TRANSIT

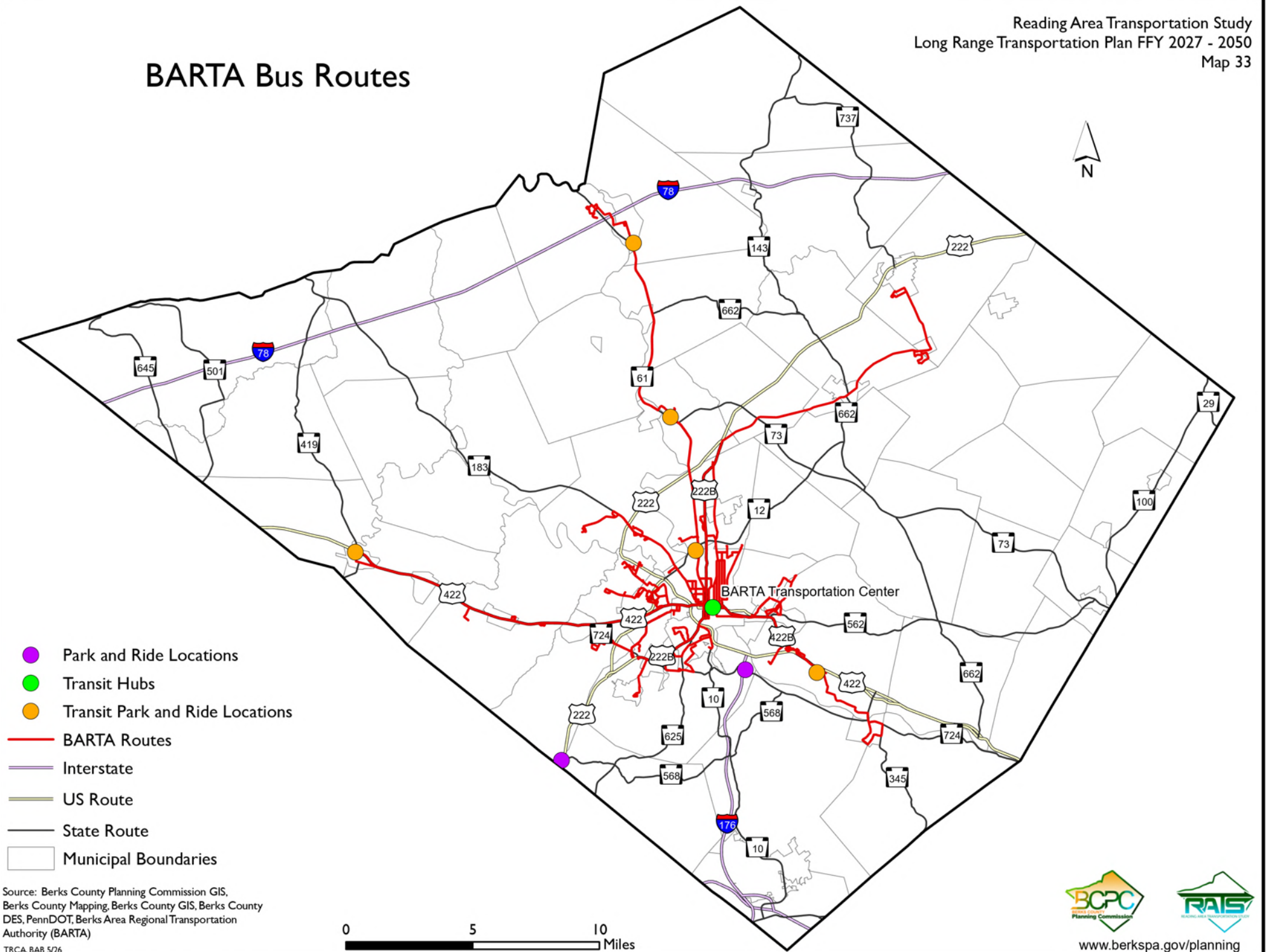
Public transportation forms a key component of the Berks County transportation system. While most travel in the County is by automobile, there is a significant and growing segment of the population that relies on public transportation to fulfill their needs. Public transportation is provided by both non-profit and for-profit organizations, supplying both fixed route and demand response services.

The principal provider of public transportation services in Berks County is the [South Central Transit Authority \(SCTA\)](#). This authority oversees and manages two divisions: the [Berks Area Regional Transportation Authority \(BARTA\)](#) that serves Berks County and the [Red Rose Transit Authority \(RRTA\)](#) that serves Lancaster County.

Headquartered in Lancaster County, the SCTA Board is comprised of five members appointed by Lancaster County Commissioners and five members appointed by Berks County Commissioners. BARTA operates a traditional fixed route bus system operating in the urban area surrounding the City of Reading and a Special Services division that provides demand-response services to elderly and handicapped citizens through the County. BARTA buses continue to be identified with the BARTA colors, name and logo, and all schedule and service information are provided under the BARTA name.



BARTA Bus Routes



Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) established new requirements for transit authorities on asset management and investment strategies. The SCTA is required to meet the provisions of MAP-21 and the guidelines provided by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to prepare a [Transit Asset Management Plan \(TAMP\)](#). This asset management plan is performance based and must include a systematic means of operating, maintaining, and improving public transportation capital assets effectively. The most recent edition of SCTA's Transit Asset Management Plan (TAMP) was adopted in June 2025. This plan is required to be updated as needed, but not less than every four years per FTA regulations. A separate document also required by FTA is the [Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan](#). As taken from the [SCTA website](#), by using the principles of Safety Management Systems (SMS), SCTA examines how organizational factors contribute to incidents, accidents, and near misses. SMS is a formal top-down, data driver, organization-wide approach to managing safety risks and assuring the effectiveness of safety risk mitigations. Through this approach, SCTA ensures that the safety of passengers and employees remains a top priority.

SCTA updated [their Transit Development Plan \(TDP\)](#) in March 2024 which included recommendations for changes to occur over time. Goal 2 identified in the 2024 SCTA Transit Development Plan Final Report is to “...offer a network that links people to the places they need and want to go”. Desired locations for many is their jobs and/or shopping. One way to improve access to these locations would be for developers and planners to consider bus stop location early in the design process. As more businesses and jobs come to an area, planners and developers should work with BARTA early in the design process of a new project, rather than placing stops at later stages of construction, with considerations for pedestrian access, existing bus operations, and potential stop facilities.

An example of this type of coordination has been recently seen along the Route 61 Corridor which is serviced by BARTA's Route 20. As more businesses began development along the Route 61 corridor, planners worked with BARTA to add stops along this route and to accommodate the buses needs such as pull offs and larger turning radius. More stops have been added along the Route 61 corridor, BARTA's Route 20, to provide individuals access to new businesses and potential jobs.

The Pennsylvania Public Transportation Association (PPTA) in partnership with PennDOT published the [Building Better Bus Stops Resource Guide](#) in December 2020. This resource guide promotes safe access to fixed route bus service and provides municipalities, transit agencies, planners, and designers with resources to encourage consideration and incorporation of transit in planning and design. The review and implementation of strategies from this resource guide is encouraged to provide quality and efficient transit service and ensure bus stops meet the needs of all riders, transit agencies, and the community.

Fixed-Route Operations

BARTA provides fixed route services in the City of Reading, 17 Boroughs, and 15 Townships within Berks County and carries approximately 2.2 million passengers annually. Operating seven days a week, with a fleet of 50 buses, it services 39 bus shelters and nearly 1,500 bus stops on 19 routes with nearly 1.6 million revenue miles per year. According to the SCTA TDP [BARTA Onboard Passenger Survey](#), most passengers (84%) walk or use a wheelchair to get to their bus stop. Overall, 63% of trips surveyed were for either work or school purposes, with the vast majority (59%) made up of work trips specifically. More than one third are made to go shopping (36%), and one fourth (25%) are made for a medical visit or to go to a doctor. The average age of BARTA riders is 44 years old, with 19% being between 25 and 34 years of age. Roughly 62% of riders are employed; mostly all use a cell phone, and 52% use the BARTA GoMobile smartphone App. More than four in ten (44%) of riders identify as white, and slightly less (37%) identify as Hispanic or Latino, or Black/African American (21%). Spanish is the most common second language spoken at home, with 24% speaking it. The most heavily traveled route is Route 1-Temple, which services 5th Street between Reading and Muhlenberg Township.

BARTA Fixed Route Ridership was down slightly for the fiscal year ending in June 2025 but up overall from 2021 to 2025. The COVID-19 Pandemic still limited travel early in 2021, but as restrictions eased passenger traffic increased.

BARTA FIXED ROUTE SERVICE							
Customer Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	# Change 2021-2025	% Change
Farepaying	1,166,756	1,362,473	1,571,523	1,666,351	1,630,300	463,544	39.7%
Senior Citizens	313,268	392,571	409,159	434,544	435,497	122,229	39.0%
Transfers	93,619	49,928	56,839	47,440	54,256	-39,363	-42.0%
Specials	248,425	49,047	42,760	50,116	43,653	-204,772	-82.4%
Total Passengers	1,822,068	1,854,059	2,080,281	2,208,451	2,163,706	341,638	18.8%

Source: South Central Transit Authority, Berks Area Regional Transit Authority Fiscal Year Summaries

**BARTA RIDERSHIP
JULY 2024 – JUNE 2025
FISCAL YEAR BY FIXED ROUTE**

Route	Ridership
Route 1 - Temple via 5th	463,711
Route 15 - Berkshire Mall	193,014
Route 4 - 10th St / 11th St	191,969
Route 16 - Broadcasting Square	178,470
Route 18 - Schuylkill Ave	147,707
Route 8 - Reiffton / Birdsboro	116,865
Route 14 - Wernersville via Sinking Spring	117,107
Route 3 - Temple via Kutztown Rd	122,868
Route 19 - Riverside / Cotton St	96,850
Route 10 - Brookline	72,456
Route 17 - Glenside	81,441
Route 5 - Albright College	87,612
Route 11 - Mohnton via Shillington	69,533
Route 20 - Rt 61 Hamburg	76,652
Route 7 - Pennside	51,454
Route 12 - Lincoln Park / Reading Hospital	34,343
Route 9 - Grill via Kenhorst	37,105
Route 22 - Lyon Station	18,852
Route 2 - Fairgrounds Square	3,509

Source: South Central Transit Authority Fixed Route Data Summary

Overall, most major trip origins and destinations (major employers, shopping centers, post-secondary schools) are served by BARTA fixed route bus service in and around the area surrounding the City of Reading. Most of the un-served origins and destinations are in the eastern, northeasters, northwestern, and southern peripheries of Berks County, which includes the boroughs of Boyertown and Kutztown.

BARTA's main vehicle servicing and administration facility is located on North 11th Street in the City of Reading. The main transfer point is the BARTA Transportation Center located at North 8th and Franklin Streets in downtown Reading. BARTA also provides service to five (5) Park and Ride lots in the county.

Special Services Operations

BARTA's Special Services Division is responsible for operating and administering most human service transportation in Berks County. These services include the Shared Ride, ADA, and Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP). They are specialized, demand-responsive paratransit services and provide public transportation to persons with disabilities who are unable to use fixed route transit.

BARTA provided nearly 176,000 trips in FY 2025 between their fleet of 42 paratransit vehicles and a contract with Easton Coach. Like fixed route service, increases in many of the Special Services categories can be attributed to a 'return to normal' after the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the SCTA TDP [BARTA Special Services Customer Survey](#), most trips (95%) were for medical appointments, followed by shopping (6%) and Errands/Personal Business (3%). Unlike Fixed Route ridership with an overall increase, Special Services ridership decreased by 19.9%. The average age of the Special Services customer is 70 years old, with over 70% being aged 65 or older. Slightly more than one-half of customers (53%) identify as white, while roughly one third (35%) identify as Hispanic or Latino, and 9% identify as Black/African American.

BARTA SPECIAL SERVICES

Customer Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	# Change 2021-2025	% Change
Senior Citizens	47,508	55,803	62,965	63,777	63,154	15,646	32.9%
DPW-MATP	63,770	96,364	113,508	111,475	110,343	46,573	73.0%
BH/DS	323	4,527	4,555	6,603	5,071	4,748	1,470.0%
ADA Services	12,904	14,512	13,040	14,962	16,640	3,736	-69.6%
Area Agency on Aging	0	0	672	384	1,550	1,550	n/a
Other Agencies	5,633	41,715	37,725	37,221	43,045	37,412	664.2%
Fixed Route Offset	n/a	-67,086	-79,342	-75,183	-63,875	n/a	n/a
Total	130,138	145,835	153,123	158,839	175,928	45,790	-19.9%

Source: South Central Transit Authority Berks Area Regional Transit Authority Fiscal Year Summaries

Inter-City Bus Service

Prior to 2019, Carl R. Bieber, Inc. headquartered in Kutztown, serviced customers throughout the United States, but primarily in central and eastern Pennsylvania, New York City, and New Jersey. With a fleet of 66 buses, it maintained a scheduled line of daily runs to various locations, between Berks, surrounding counties, Philadelphia, and New York City until February 15, 2019, when Bieber's operations ceased. Subsequently there was no intercity bus service serving Berks County. Starting in August 2023 through March 2025, AMTRAK provided twice-daily bus service between the BARTA Transportation Center (BTC) in downtown Reading and 30th Street Station in Philadelphia. The service was not tied to efforts to reestablish passenger rail between Reading and Philadelphia. Though popular with riders – almost 28,000 passengers used the service from August 2023 through December 2024 - AMTRAK discontinued the service. Recently, several private bus operators have initiated limited services. [OurBus](#) is currently offering trips between Reading and Philadelphia as well as trips from Reading to New York City. [FlixBus](#) started offering new service connecting Reading to Philadelphia, Newark and New York City on May 22, 2025. FlixBus is partnering with SCTA by linking the service with the BARTA Transportation Center, giving riders easy connections between local public transit and long-distance transportation options. FlixBus offers three departures and arrivals per day Thursday through Monday and two departures and arrivals per day Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

CommutePA

Berks County joined [CommutePA](#) (formerly Commuter Services of Pennsylvania), a program of the nonprofit Susquehanna Regional Transportation Partnership in 2009. The program covers nine (9) counties in southcentral Pennsylvania. It is locally sponsored by RATS, BARTA, and Greater Reading Chamber Alliance and offers transportation demand management strategies and assistance to employers and individuals for finding options other than driving alone to work. The program goal is to reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled and to increase the efficiency of the highway system by reducing congestion and improving air quality. Participation in the program is free. Participation in the program has been successful – increasing involvement and reducing VMT since 2009. The program is funded with federal Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) funds through participating MPOs.

As shown below, the CommutePA program continues to thrive in Berks County. The total number of enrollees continues to grow as does the number of employers and organizations that participate. The effects of telework due to/during COVID and subsequent reversal back to in-person work can be seen in the decline of the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) that are removed from the roadway system due to the CommutePA program. It should be noted that, even though VMT reductions are being seen, the 2024 reduction still resulted in 36 Tons of CO₂ that were not emitted by single occupant vehicles.

COMMUTEPA – RIDESHARE PROGRAM							
Berks County	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Change 2020-2024	% Change
Total New Enrollees Per Year	243	57	34	183	76	593	n/a
Total Employer/Organization Participation (#)	48	48	54	67	75	27	56.3%

Source: CommutePA

BERKS COUNTY COMMUTEPA PERFORMANCE MEASURES							
Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	# Change 2020-2024	% Change
Vehicle Miles Traveled Removed	243,437	117,293	78,688	98,137	81,963	-161,474	-66.3%
Commuters Enrolled	2,346	2,403	2,437	2,620	2,696	350	14.9%

Source: CommutePA (2018-2020 VMT Removed numbers are from real time data which was unavailable until 2018)

Taxi Service

There are seven (7) taxicab operators in Berks County as of 2025. All provide 24-hour/7-day service. The importance of the role played by taxi service, for all riders, is likely to grow in the future. Taxicabs operating within Pennsylvania are licensed by the Public Utility Commission but generally are for-profit enterprises. The Public Utility Commission lists the following taxi operators as active in Berks County: Reading Checker Cab Inc, La Mexicana Express Service LLC, Reading Metro Taxicab Inc, Grab A Cab Inc, Dominican Taxi Express LLC, La Economica Limousine and Car Service, and Reading Yellow Cab Inc. There are also several van services that provide door-to-door transportation between Reading and airports & other transportation hubs in surrounding cities.

Ride Sharing

Many ridesharing companies are emerging across the country. Berks County is presently serviced by Uber and Lyft. Uber began operations in 2015 with a limited-service area in and around the City of Reading shortly followed by the emergence of Lyft. Service statistics are not available.

NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

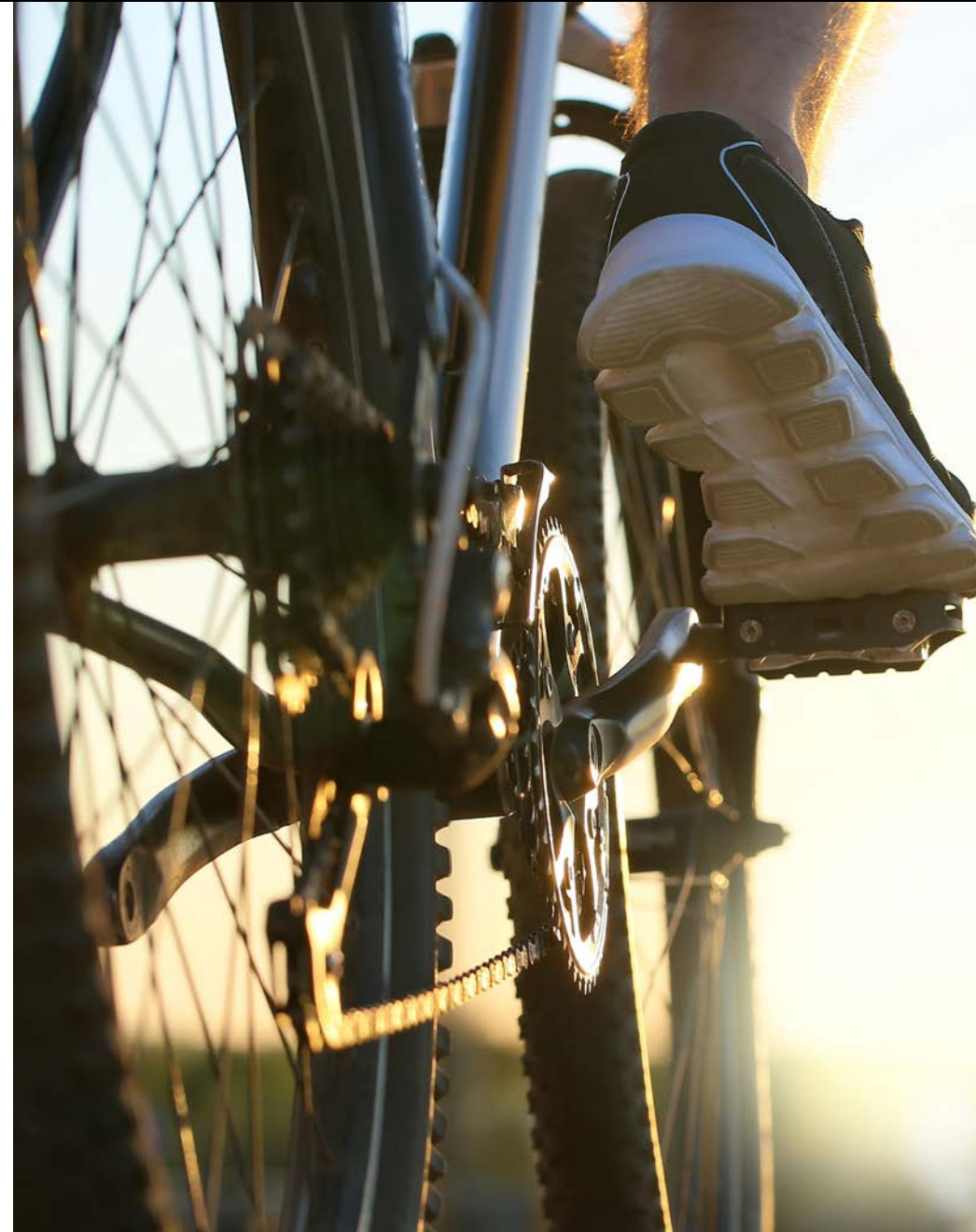
Non-motorized transportation is defined as any transportation other than by use of a motor vehicle including cars, buses, rideshares and motorcycles. In addition, "Active Transportation" or "Human Powered Transportation" is a method of travel that includes walking, bicycling and wheelchair travel as well as less common methods of transportation such as skateboards, scooters or buggies. Facilities serving these users include those built exclusively for non-motorized use such as sidewalks, trails, and shared use paths as well as on-road accommodations such as bicycle lanes, crosswalks and sharrows. Walking and bicycling serve as intermediate steps in the transit network since a person needs to walk or bicycle between the bus stop and the origin/destination. Non-motorized forms of transportation like walking and bicycling are commonly accessible, environmentally friendly and affordable options for transportation among many of Berks County's population and therefore hold an important role in the County's overall transportation system.

Berks County has a diverse mix of urban landscapes and rural villages, new development and historical areas, public transit and country roads, active recreation and laid-back trails. While these qualities make the County a desirable place to live, work and play, they also create challenges to safely and efficiently travel throughout the County without a motor vehicle. Berks County has extensive trail and sidewalk networks, but connectivity from one community to the other can often be lacking. Additionally, Berks County has a unique group of non-motorized travelers that includes an estimated 150 traditional Mennonite households concentrated mostly in the Fleetwood/Kutztown area. Many of these households do not use cars, relying instead on horse and buggy, bicycling and walking as their methods of transportation. Particularly in and around the Fleetwood/Kutztown area, horse-drawn buggies or farm equipment often travel on both rural, sometimes narrow roads and regional, higher-speed roadways alongside cars and trucks as they commute to retail centers, places of worship, schools or between farm fields.

CRASHES INVOLVING HORSE AND BUGGY IN BERKS COUNTY

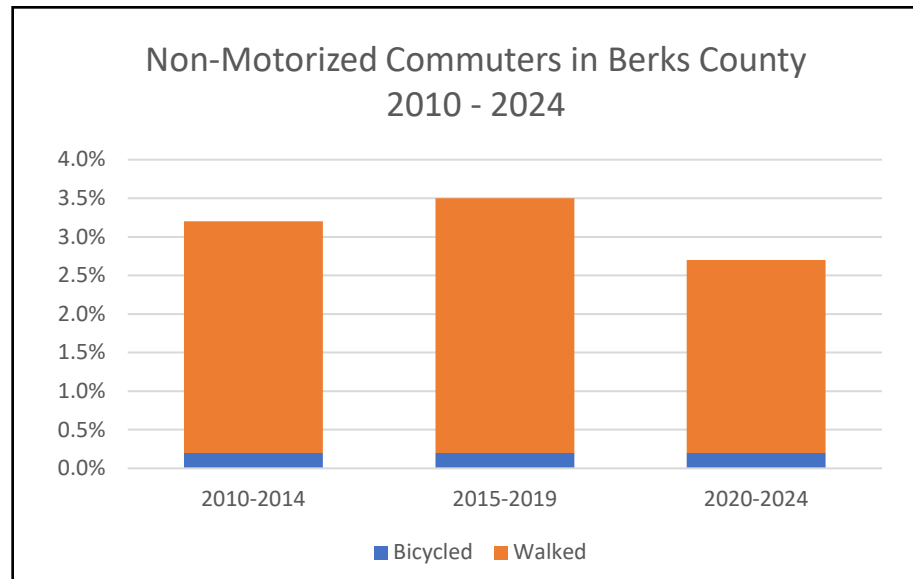
Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Crashes	0	0	1	2	1	4
Injuries	0	0	3	4	1	8
Fatalities	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: PennDOT Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool, 2020-2024



Non-motorized Transportation as a Means of Commuting

Census data shows that non-motorized transportation is not a common means of getting to and from work in Berks County. Arguably, much of the County's transportation infrastructure is designed to accommodate motor vehicles, complicating travel by walking or bicycling in many areas. Of note in the chart below is the increase in non-motorized travel between the 2010-2014 period and the 2015-2019 period, then a sharp decrease in the 2020-2024 period. It needs to be noted that the 2020-2024 period includes the effects of COVID 19 (2020) on both commuting and data collection, so those figures should be examined with caution.



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table S0801: 2010-2014, 2015-2019, 2020-2024

Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Planning

RATS has adopted a regional *Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan*. This plan, adopted in July 2020, and again in March 2022 with mapping amendments, evaluated the status of bicycle and pedestrian planning in Berks County based on level of service, demand and interest, and existing policy. The plan provides goals, recommendations, and implementation strategies along with a prioritized project listing. This plan is both a policy and project-based plan and supplements the LRTP. The plan recommends overarching county-wide concepts such as sidewalk and curb ramp installation and maintenance, preservation and expansion of the Schuylkill River Trail, Union Canal Towpath and other bicycle and pedestrian networks, expansion of non-motorized access to transit stops, schools, recreation areas and other popular destinations, and improved safety and security of all bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. The plan emphasizes intergovernmental cooperation to achieve these goals. The plan also contains a listing of recommended projects throughout the County's five planning regions based on three different surveys that gathered desired improvements from the public, the County's municipalities, and local non-profit groups involved in related transportation efforts. A link to the current *Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation*

Plan can be found here: <https://www.berkspa.gov/departments/planning-commission/transportation-reading-mpo/plans-and-programs/bicycle-and-pedestrian-planning>

Bicycles

There are several active groups and organizations that support and coordinate biking in Berks County. The Berks County Bicycle Club was founded in 1973. This club has created an online ride map database available to all looking for biking opportunities in Berks County and hosts events such as the annual Shoo-Fly Classic, a ride through the Oley Valley, and 'Cranksgiving', where participants ride to selected grocery stores and purchase food for donation during the Thanksgiving season.

Berks Area Mountain Biking Association (BAMBA), another bicycling advocacy group, was established in 2012 as the Berks County chapter of International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA). Today, BAMBA is an independent IMBA affiliate. According to their website, BAMBA "is a non-profit educational trail association whose mission is to create, enhance and preserve great trail experiences for mountain bikers in Berks County, Pennsylvania."

Reading and the surrounding area attained national designation as a "Bronze Level Riding Center" by the International Mountain Bicycling Association in 2015 for its 125 miles of mountain biking trails. With the help of BAMBA, the biking community is pursuing an upgrade for Berks County trails to "Silver Level Riding Center". In 2015 the League of American Bicyclists designated Reading City as a Bronze-level Bicycle Friendly City. That designation was effective for five years after which a new application needed to be submitted but was not.

Smoothly paved shoulders adjacent to travel lanes can significantly improve operating conditions for bicyclists and horse and buggies. The 2012 American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities states "...adding or improving paved shoulders can be the best way to accommodate bicyclists in rural areas and also benefit motor vehicle traffic." RATS will continue efforts to accommodate non-motorized travel with additional emphasis on providing and maintaining road shoulders in appropriate corridors.

Bike Share is a cooperative effort that places publicly available bicycles in locations where users can obtain one, use it as their needs dictate, and return it for others to use. These bicycles are serviced by a vendor; sponsorship can be either public or private; and typically rented for minimal costs via cellphone application. Current systems in Berks County are available in the Wyomissing / West Reading area (WyoWays, sponsored by Wyomissing Borough) and at Tower Health – Reading Hospital and Medical Center (for Tower Health employees). In Hamburg Borough, the Schuylkill River Greenways National Heritage Area manages a system called Bike Schuylkill, while outside of Berks in Pottstown their system is known as Bike Pottstown. Both systems generate access between the Schuylkill River Trail and the related boroughs. Through CommutePA, a group of transportation-minded organizations in the nine-county southcentral PA region meet quarterly to promote bike sharing and the expansion of services.

Micromobility

Bike Share is one segment of the evolving field of Micromobility. Defined by the FHWA as "Any small, low-speed, human or electric-powered transportation device, including

bicycles, scooters, electric-assist bicycles (e-bikes), electric scooters (e-scooters), and other small, lightweight, wheeled conveyances”, the proliferation of these devices have made wheeled transportation readily available to segments of the population that may not have ready-access to a motor vehicle or public transportation. The availability of bike- and e-scooter share systems has been growing throughout the nation. One concern is that this growth is also introducing more vulnerable road users (VRU’s) onto the roadway system and with it the potential for more VRU-related crashes. It should be noted that Pennsylvania law has not yet made scooters of any type legal for use on public roadways in the Commonwealth.

Sidewalks and Pedestrians

Map 34 shows that approximately 1,319 miles of sidewalks in Berks County are limited principally to the boroughs, the City of Reading, and some more urbanized townships. Sidewalks offer a mode of transportation to segments of the population who are less likely to own a vehicle and rely on walking or public transit as their primary mode of transportation. The presence of adequate sidewalks encourages those who use walking as a secondary means of transportation for health or environmental benefits as well. By encouraging the addition of safe, maintained, and well-placed sidewalks, the County hopes to add more non-motorized users to this critical part of the transportation infrastructure.

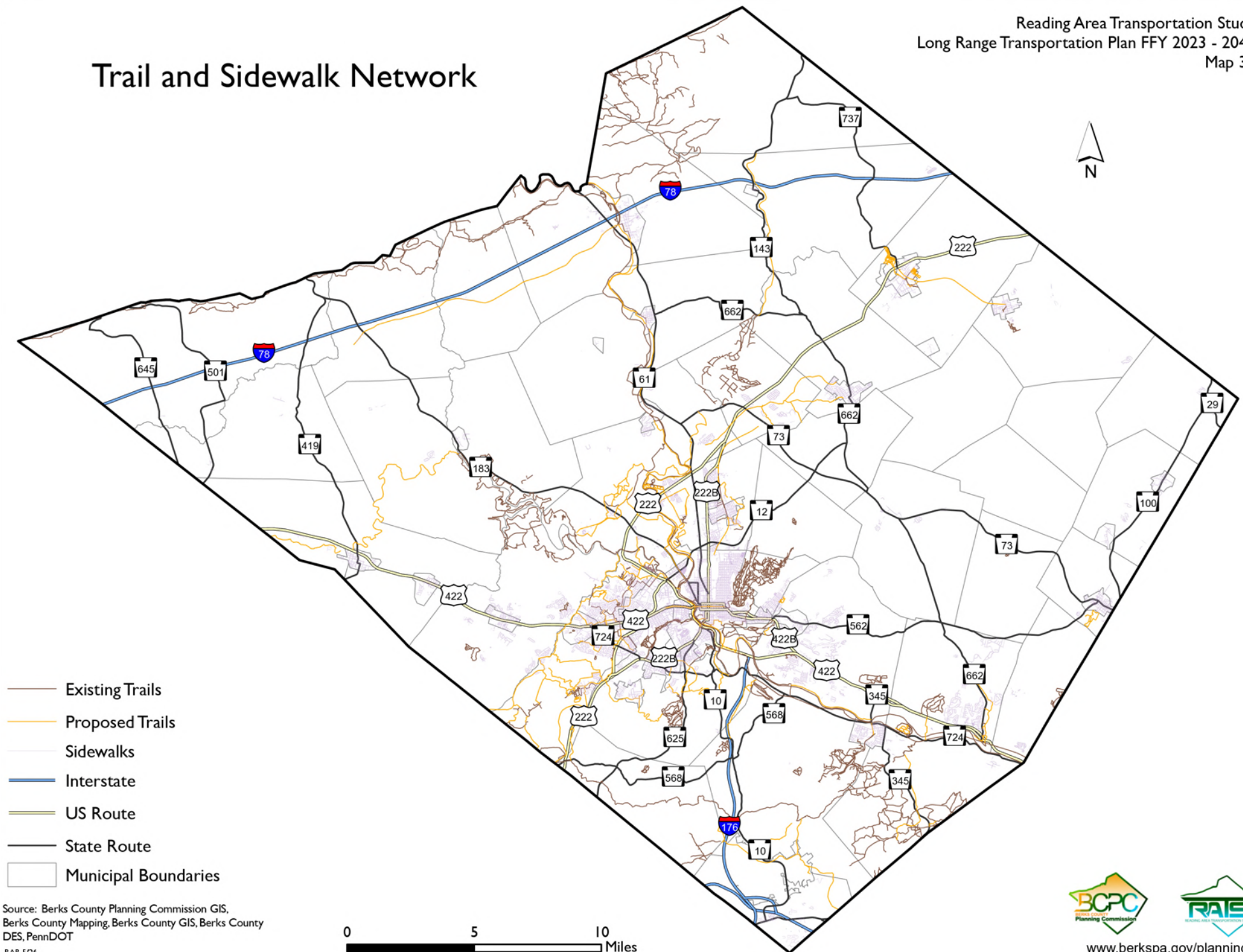
Many existing subdivisions and others that have been under development over the last 20 to 25 years in Berks County have had sidewalks incorporated with infrastructure construction. However, these sidewalks seldom connect to anything outside of the neighborhood. In addition to residential areas, several commercial developments in the region have sidewalks in place but there is little to no connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods. Connecting these commercial developments to the County’s housing subdivisions as well as schools, recreation areas and employment centers is a priority identified in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan referenced above.

One area where sidewalk connectivity suffers is on bridges. When PennDOT repairs or replaces state-owned bridges, sidewalks are added only if the municipality executes a Sidewalk Maintenance Agreement with the Department. PennDOT does not maintain sidewalks; that is the municipality’s or property owner’s responsibility. Without municipal support of sidewalks on bridges, pedestrian connectivity suffers, and safety issues have the potential to increase especially among the very young, the elderly, and those with limited mobility. Municipalities are strongly encouraged to work with PennDOT during the PennDOT Connects process and execute the necessary maintenance agreements to ensure that sidewalks are placed onto new bridges and connectivity is maintained or improved.

Trails and Greenways

Berks County has over 524 miles of extensive trail system ranging from paved multipurpose trails to more rugged trails suitable for hiking or mountain biking. Many trails are often connected to or parts of greenways - corridors of open space that can be a small park in a borough or the city to large areas of forest in the townships. The Schuylkill River Trail (SRT), when completed, will span approximately 124 miles from Philadelphia to Schuylkill County. The largest segments of uncompleted trail are in Berks County where the trail is located on local roads. The SRT serves as the backbone of the offroad network in Berks and is used for both recreation and commuting. The Union Canal Bicycle & Walking Trail is a 4.5-mile-long crushed stone path that follows the Tulpehocken Creek between Stonecliffe Recreation Area and Reber’s Bridge Road. Designated as a National Recreation Trail, the Union Canal Trail provides a link to multiple Berks County parks including Stonecliffe Recreation Area, the Berks Leisure Area, Red Bridge Park, Gring’s Mill Recreation Area, and the Berks County Heritage Center. At Stonecliffe Recreation Area, the Union Canal Trail connects to the [Schuylkill River Trail](#) and at Reber’s Bridge Road, a 1.8 mile connector trail links the Union Canal path to the [Blue Marsh Lake Trail System](#).

Trail and Sidewalk Network



Vulnerable Road Users and Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety

The safety of non-motorized individuals is of great concern since they are the most vulnerable road users as they are not protected by a surrounding vehicle and with it, its safety features. As shown in the Vulnerable Road Users (VRU) chart located on Page 91, the number of crashes and persons involved in VRU crashes has increased between 2020 and 2024, but fatal crashes have remained relatively flat in that same period. It is important to educate all age groups on safe bicycle and pedestrian practices along with promoting the enforcement of the laws pertaining to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians to make safety a top priority in Berks County. Please see the Safety section of this plan for data related to pedestrian and bicycle crashes.

A VRU may be walking, biking, rolling, or using a mobility device such as a wheelchair. VRUs are particularly susceptible to being killed or injured in a crash, and they account for a growing share of all transportation fatalities, both in Pennsylvania and throughout the U.S. In 2024, PennDOT issued [Pennsylvania: A VRU Safety Assessment Report](#) which was a comprehensive statewide examination aimed at understanding the transportation safety challenges faced by VRUs. This report, an addendum to Pennsylvania's [2022 Strategic Highway Safety Plan](#), undertook a quantitative analysis of VRU crashes and associated data. By incorporating an approach to identify areas with a history of VRU crashes along with an analysis of demographic data, the report provides an analysis of high-risk areas as well as a toolkit of extensive systemic and spot-specific infrastructure enhancements and non-infrastructure program approaches to bicycle and pedestrian safety. The toolkit equips PennDOT with a range of solutions to bolster pedestrian and bicyclist safety across diverse settings throughout Pennsylvania including here in Berks County.

Complete Streets

Complete Streets is an approach to planning, designing, building, operating, and maintaining streets that enables safe access for all users including those traveling by active transportation. The design of Complete Streets considers people and place and varies by user need, but safety for all users is always the priority. Some elements of a Complete Street could include sidewalks, bike lanes, curb extensions, and median islands. These elements of a streetscape are especially important for older adults, children, adolescents, those with disabilities and people living in low-income communities as these people are less likely to own a car or drive. Ensuring Complete Streets integration into future projects can be done through the adoption and enforcement of Complete Streets policies. The City of Reading is the only Berks County community to incorporate Complete Streets policies into their plans and programs.

In August of 2015, Mayor Vaughn Spencer of Reading announced Reading's new status as a Complete Streets Community. Complete Streets create multi-modal transportation networks that have been designed for all users, regardless of age and abilities. These users include pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit vehicles. At the time of its unveiling, the Smart Growth America's National Complete Streets Coalition rated the City's policy as the best in the nation, achieving a perfect score of 100. Although supported by successive mayoral administrations, the Policy has not been formally adopted by City Council or implemented in any real fashion. Current City leaders are beginning to implement portions of the Complete Streets Policy by pursuing the completion and implementation of an Active Transportation Plan, adopting traffic calming measures, and implementing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in various portions of the City. While no other municipalities in Berks County have adopted Complete Streets or other similar policies, many are becoming more aware of the need for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

Reading Vision Zero Action Plan

Following up on its Complete Streets initiative, the City of Reading began the process of developing an Active Transportation Plan. This plan looked to improve conditions for bicycling and pedestrians along several key corridors and to improve trail connections between the downtown and regional trails. The plan originally examined 12 corridors for improvements and then, working with a project steering committee, narrowed the focus to six corridors for more detailed studies and suggested improvements. During that work, the City and their consultant elected to transform the plan from an Active Transportation Plan into a Vision Zero Action Plan. Vision Zero is a road safety project that aims to achieve a highway system with no fatalities or serious injuries.

Adopted by City Council in June, 2025, the City's Goals for the Vision Zero Action Plan include improving conditions for bicycling and walking along key downtown corridors and increase trail connections to the reinvigorated downtown and to create "a more integrated and equitable road and sidewalk network that balances local livability with regional connectivity."

The Objectives of the plan are as follows:¹

1. Provide information on the value of connected, walkable, bikeable communities that create health and economic benefits and enhanced quality of life.
2. Identify six (6) high-priority connectivity improvements.
3. Educate the public about opportunities and priorities for improved connectivity in Downtown Reading.
4. Support decision-making by Reading officials on moving high-priority projects forward.
5. Develop a Plan that can support efforts to attract and secure funding for the future implementation of proposed improvements

¹Source Vision Zero Action Plan, Downtown Reading, Berks County, PA June, 2025

Increasing Safe and Accessible Transportation Options (ISATO)

On November 15, 2021, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (Public Law 117-58), also known as the "Bipartisan Infrastructure Law" (BIL), was signed into law. Section 11206 of the BIL, entitled Increasing Safe and Accessible Transportation Options (ISATO), requires certain funds to be used on Complete Streets and similar planning activities as part of the transportation planning processes. RATS staff has been working with Berks County municipalities involved in the Berks County Joint Local Planning Program to identify and prioritize potential projects for local implementation. These lists are incorporated into joint comprehensive plans. A methodology was devised for prioritizing these projects. Some plans also contain representations of potential projects including Complete Streets concepts as a way for local officials to visualize desired outcomes. Berks County Planning Commission staff are presently working these elements into the first round of three (3) Joint Local Comprehensive Plans, with more joint plans under consideration in upcoming years. The three current joint planning efforts include the Draft Eastern Berks Joint Comprehensive Plan (District & Rockland townships and Tipton Borough); the SEAD Joint Comprehensive Plan (St. Lawrence Borough, Exeter, Amity, and Douglass townships); and the Fleetwood/Maidencreek/Richmond Joint Comprehensive Plan. These three plans alone encompass ten (10) municipalities. As more joint plans are created/updated, staff plans in incorporating ISATO concepts into them as well.

PASSENGER RAIL

Berks County is not currently served by passenger rail service. Originally served by both the Reading and Pennsylvania railroads, service was gradually reduced from the 1930s through the 1970s due to the loss of ridership to automobiles and changing land uses along the line along with growing operating costs. The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) provided the last passenger rail service in the County between Reading and Philadelphia. It ended in 1982. Since that time, multiple studies have been undertaken investigating the feasibility of restoring this service.

One of the more recent studies prepared by Transportation Economics and Management Systems, Inc. in July 2020 for Berks Alliance and the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance examined the potential for restoring passenger rail service to Berks County. The Restoring Passenger Rail Service to Berks County, PA plan includes information on service and operations, infrastructure needs and associated capital costs, projected ridership, benefits of reestablishing intercity passenger rail service, and next steps for implementation.

Another study was developed by PennDOT in December 2020. The Reading to Philadelphia Passenger Rail Analysis addresses the feasibility of restoring commuter passenger rail service along the historic rail corridor that connects Norristown to Pottstown and Reading. The analysis includes possible service alternatives, capital improvements, and identifies the next steps that are needed for implementation.

As a result of the PennDOT analysis, The Reading to Philadelphia commuter passenger rail corridor was identified and included in the 2020 Pennsylvania State Rail Plan (<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/penndot/programs-and-doing-business/rail-freight-ports/planning>). The plan provides an assessment of the current rail system, analysis of the role of rail and its integration within the state's transportation system and identifies future rail investments that would help achieve the state's vision for the rail system. The goals in the Pennsylvania State Rail Plan align with the state's LRTP and FMP goals for a multimodal transportation system. The state is currently in the process of updating the plan. The 2025 State Rail Plan will replace the 2020 State Rail Plan and will provide updates on rail development activity and will serve as a practical roadmap for future rail investment and policies.

In early 2021, the Tri-County Passenger Rail Committee was created to assess the potential to establish passenger rail service between Reading and Philadelphia. The Committee was a collaborative effort among Berks, Chester and Montgomery Counties. The Committee recognized the value that reestablishing service could have for economic development, property values, and increased job opportunities as a result of the additional transportation option passenger rail service offers.

The Tri-County Passenger Rail Committee evaluated both studies and mode options. Intercity service has fewer trips over longer distances. Commuter service offers increased frequency and a greater number of stops but at a higher cost. As this analysis was under way, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was approved by the Federal government. It contained significant funds to improve intercity passenger rail service across the country. At this same time, Amtrak released its vision plan for passenger rail expansion that included, among many other possibilities, a proposed extension from its existing Northeast Corridor service in Philadelphia to Reading. Both

Amtrak and SEPTA were contacted regarding their potential interest in serving this corridor. Amtrak indicated its interest in moving forward based on its vision plan. SEPTA was not interested in looking at expanding its services to this corridor at this time based on its current focus of expanding another line into the King of Prussia area and high system maintenance needs.

In 2022, the Tri-County Passenger Rail Committee recommended the establishment of an authority. The Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority (SRPRA), approved by the Berks County Commissioners in April 2022 and incorporated two months later, replaced the Tri-County Passenger Rail Committee and as a formal authority has the power to enter into agreements, own property, receive state and federal funding and work with Amtrak, PennDOT, the Federal Railroad Administration and other necessary partners.

Although the creation of the SRPRA is not a guarantee that passenger rail service will return, it was a crucial next step in continuing the long process of research and planning. The process being undertaken by the SRPRA is building upon the lessons learned from the studies of years past and is primarily focused on partnering with Amtrak as the proposed operator and participating in the Intercity Rail Corridor Identification and Development Program (CIDP) being led by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Other key stakeholders beyond the constituent counties of the Authority and Amtrak include the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), the anticipated host railroads including Norfolk Southern and, CSX, or SEPTA, municipal governments, and sponsor organizations and advocacy groups along the Reading – Philadelphia Corridor segment.

The SRPRA project plan is a three (3) phase approach, focusing on the most viable and realistically attainable service options to restore passenger rail service to the region in the short-term. The long-term possibilities for the service have wide-reaching benefits to expand mobility opportunities and an alternative to driving for adjoining communities. Phase 1 includes the Reading – Philadelphia Segment. It is envisioned that this route will start by offering between four and six round-trips per day. This could grow to approximately eight or more daily round-trips once ridership grows. Part of this phase may involve the addition of Amtrak Thruway Bus Service to complement the passenger rail service. Phase 2 would involve the completion of the Reading – Philadelphia – New York One-Seat Ride. This phase would require the completion of the Gateway Project in New York and delivery of new Amtrak rolling stock. The Gateway Project includes the construction of a new Hudson Tunnel and the rehabilitation of the existing North River Tunnel, with a targeted completion of 2035 for the new tunnel. Once the new tunnel construction and existing tunnel rehabilitation are completed, this project will significantly increase the number of daily passenger trips and trains that can travel through the area. Phase 3 involves the long-term possibilities that could arise with the development of this new service. Long-term possibilities include the potential connection west from Reading to Harrisburg and east to the Lehigh Valley.

Funding from the FRA is integral to the success of SRPRA's objectives and preliminary planning has revolved around submitting a successful application and aligning with partners who can aid the SRPRA in getting to the next phase.

Corridor Identification and Development Program (CIDP)

The FRA CIDP is the pathway for all **intercity** passenger rail corridor projects created as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), aka the Bi-partisan Infrastructure Law, on November 15, 2021. SRPRA submitted an Expression of Interest letter to FRA in July 2022 and CIDP application in March 2023. SRPRA was accepted into the CIDP on December 8, 2023.

The FRA CIDP consists of three (3) steps:

1. Scoping Exercise (CIDP Step 1)

Within this step, the statement of work, schedule, and cost estimate to prepare the Service Development Plan (SDP) are defined. Additionally, project management team roles and responsibilities, processes and procedures for maintenance of schedule and budget, and compliance with federal reporting requirements are addressed. The Scoping Exercise was formally completed in August 2025.

2. Service Development Plan (SDP) (CIDP Step 2)

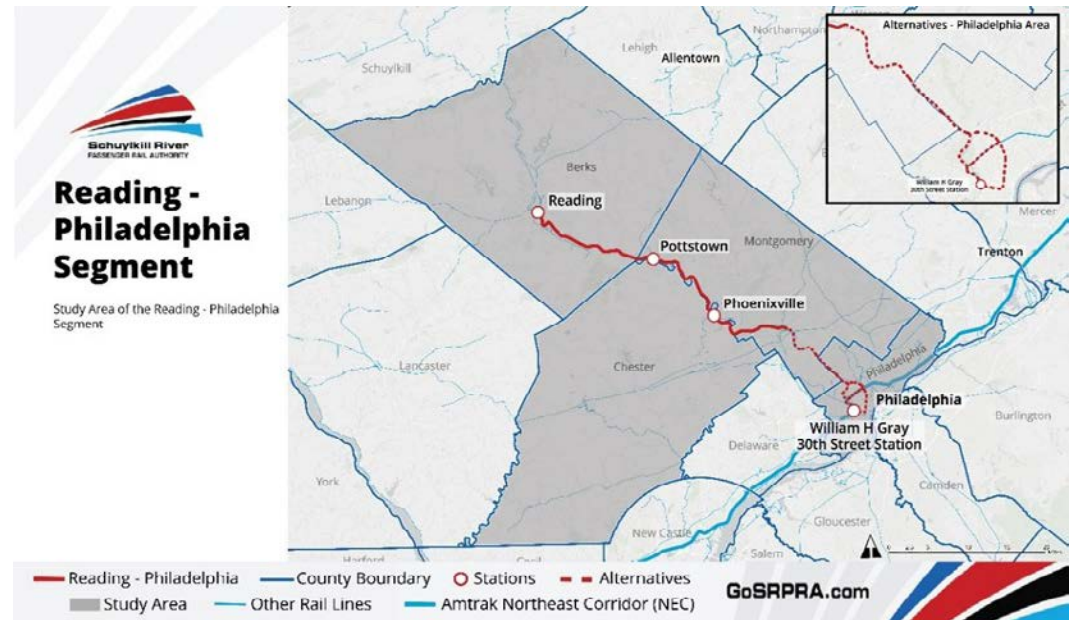
The SDP is a business plan, operating plan and capital plan, that documents the investment case for a proposed passenger rail service. The SDP must demonstrate operational feasibility, financial feasibility, and value and merit of the proposed passenger rail service. The FRA provides a structure within which an SDP must be organized. The structure includes the following components:

- Formal Project Goals and Objectives / Statement of Purpose and Need
- Identification and Evaluation of Alternatives
- Ridership and Revenue Forecasts
- Operational Analysis
- Station and Access Analysis
- Conceptual Engineering and Capital Programming
- Operations and Maintenance Costs and Capital Replacement Forecasts / Financial Plan
- Long-Term Governance Plan
- Public Benefits Analysis

The process of developing the SDP is iterative. As an example, during operations analysis, results may be found that change the infrastructure improvements needed to support the proposed service, which would in-turn affect capital and operations and maintenance costs. The targeted completion of this step is sometime in the year 2027.

3. Preliminary Engineering and Design (CIDP Step 3)

During this step, critical infrastructure needs and improvements such as track, tunnels, stations, signals and positive train controls (PTC) are addressed at the 30% design level. Required NEPA documentation will also be prepared, currently envisioned to consist of categorical exclusion which would include selected analyses such as air quality impacts, traffic impacts, historical resources, and others.



Station Planning

Although the SRPRA has taken a leadership role in the effort to restore rail passenger service in the Reading – Philadelphia Corridor segment, the Authority will not have direct responsibility for some aspects of the project. Among these is the planning and development of passenger rail stations suitable for Amtrak intercity passenger train operations. The role of the Authority regarding stations is the subject of a formal policy, and the Authority has endorsed the use of all applicable Amtrak standards in the station planning and development process.

Station Development Policy

The SRPRA has adopted a policy regarding station development that is consistent with Amtrak's, by which primary responsibility for providing station facilities typically rests with local entities, including the municipalities in which proposed stations are located, as well as local private sector entities and civic organizations. The SRPRA will help coordinate and facilitate station development in a supporting role once the lead entity and its partners have committed to the station project. The Authority plans to take a major role with regard to the portion of station facilities within the host railroad right-of-way, essentially consisting of the station platform(s) and canopies.

Regarding standards, the Authority has shared Amtrak's Station Planning and Development Guidebook and Station Standards Handbook with parties pursuing a potential station in their community. These documents address the planning and development process, along with design standards generally required by Amtrak and specifically required for compatibility with freight trains in a shared-track environment such as is proposed between Reading and Philadelphia. The Authority has also made available Norfolk Southern's General Principles Guiding Norfolk Southern's Evaluation of Passenger Station Proposals, which will apply to stations developed on their property.

Local Station Partners

As station planning and development activities advance in the communities of Reading, Pottstown and Phoenixville, information will be shared on the Authority website: <https://gosrprra.com/> and links will be provided to websites of station project sponsors.

The Reading MPO staff completed a preliminary evaluation of possible train station locations in the City of Reading. Although this evaluation was conducted without any direct contact with staff from either Norfolk Southern or Amtrak this evaluation established several basic operational needs to consider when identifying and evaluating potential passenger rail station locations in the City. To effectively determine the best potential site for the establishment of a passenger rail station location uniform criteria was established. The criteria included:

- The site should be within walking distance (1/3 mile or 10-minute walk) of the BARTA Intermodal connector.
- The site should be within walking distance (1/3 mile or 10-minute walk) of both the Santander Performing Arts Center and Santander Arena.
- The site should have proximity to trip generators and trip destinations, including the County Services Center and Courthouse.
- The site should have potential for adjacent redevelopment and potential Transit Oriented Development (TOD) sites.
- The site should have access to off-street parking
- The site should accommodate a high-level platform.
- Limit disruption to vehicular and pedestrian crossings on Penn, Cherry, Franklin, and Chestnut Streets.

Based on the criteria above, staff was able to identify viable potential train station locations and eliminate other sites from future consideration. On March 17, 2023, the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance was awarded a Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), Local Share Account (LSA) grant of \$142,346 to support station development activities including site identification. The engineering firm Stantec was selected to perform the site analysis, and was provided with the previously developed list of candidate sites. As a result of the Stantec analysis, it was recommended that the existing Franklin Street Station be used as the station, with the space being shared with the current restaurant/brew pub tenant. The possibility of moving in the future to a new facility that would be integrated into the BARTA bus terminal was also identified. In addition to the station planning work performed in Reading, similar efforts are underway in Pottstown and Phoenixville. The Borough of Pottstown benefitted from a rail service and station planning workshop that was funded through a Thriving Communities grant from the United States department of Transportation, and is currently participating in a station area planning study being performed by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. The Borough of Phoenixville is currently working with private developers to explore potential station plans in their community.

Final Design, Engineering and Construction

Once all three steps of the CIDP have been completed, SRPRA will have Preliminary Design and environmental documentation materials and will be poised to enter final design and then construction. Final design and construction will require additional grant funding, applications for which are planned to be prepared during Step 3 of the CIDP effort.

Operation and Start of Service

During Steps 2 and 3 of the CIDP, and potentially into final design, agreements will be negotiated with Amtrak as the proposed operator, and with Norfolk Southern and either CSX or SEPTA as host railroads. These agreements will embody provisions developed collaboratively with Amtrak and the Host Railroads during and after the CIDP effort. Several important issues will remain to be fully addressed at that time. For example, the coordination of timing of the service start-up and delivery of Amtrak's new Aero trainsets, which will dictate whether the service is launched with

existing locomotives and cars or with the new trainsets. Funding for the initial years of operation is anticipated to be provided by the FRA, but long-term funding and governance of the service remains to be agreed and finalized. Pending completion of all engineering, design and construction service could begin as soon as the year 2030.

Interim Bus Services

As a precursor to the availability of passenger rail service, in June 2022 Amtrak started offering the Amtrak Thruway Bus Service between Reading and Philadelphia. This service provided two daily round-trips connecting Reading and Pottstown to Amtrak's network via Philadelphia. However, this service was discontinued in March 2025. The decision to end the service was based primarily on the failure of the bus to generate sufficient connecting rail trips on Amtrak.

AVIATION

The Berks County Aviation network is a vital transportation link consisting of nine airports and seven heliports. They vary in size and function from small general aviation airports to larger facilities with corporate/commercial air service.

There are two public airports in Berks County. The largest is the Reading Regional Airport. This is the County’s primary air connection to national markets. The smaller Grimes Airport is a privately owned, public use airport. The airport is also home to the Golden Age Aviation Museum. The museum focuses on pre-World War II aircraft and the early days of aviation. The Grimes Airport has one turf runway, Runway 11/29, which is 2,720 feet long. The majority of the airport’s activity is recreational flying. In addition to the airports listed above the region has seven additional privately owned, private use airports.

Reading Regional Airport

The Reading Regional Airport, also known as Carl A. Spaatz Field, is a general aviation airport located in Bern Township and operated by the Reading Regional Airport Authority (RRAA). The airport is equipped with a control tower, a passenger terminal building, hangers, maintenance facilities, and crash-fire-rescue facilities. It has two Instrument Landing System (ILS) equipped asphalt runways: Runway 13/31 with a length of 6,350 feet and Runway 18/36 with a length of 5,151 feet. The Reading Regional Airport is the only public use airport in Berks County with asphalt runways. The airport had approximately 46,250 aircraft operations (flights arriving and flights departing) in 2024.

AIRCRAFT BASED AT THE READING REGIONAL AIRPORT - 2024	
Type	#
Single Engine	83
Multi Engine	28
Jet	15
Helicopter	6
Other	1
Total Aircraft	133

Source: Federal Aviation Administration, Airport Data and Information Portal (ADIP)





Regular passenger service ended in 2004. In its current role, the airport concentrates primarily on serving general aviation and corporate aircraft. In the future, the airport sees itself serving more flight training activity, along with more recreational, business, and air taxi operations and continues to build and increase its reputation as a recreational and corporate general aviation facility.

In early 2022, the Commissioners of Berks County took control of the Reading Regional Airport. This was considered a positive step in making sure the airport continues safe, profitable, and efficient operations well into the future. In October 2022, the airport completed its strategic plan for the future of the airport. Part of implementing that plan included the County purchasing the two existing Fixed Base Operators (FBO) at the airport in early 2024. This created one FBO – Reading Aviation. An FBO is a service facility for aircraft and passengers at an airport. The FBO traditionally provides fuel, aircraft servicing, hospitality, and other services. A single FBO reduces the amount of confusion and lower service levels competition between multiple FBOs has historically created at the airport. The County taking over the FBOs allows the RRAA to improve consistency and facilitate future growth at the airport. With developers looking to build hangar space, business development along the Route 183 corridor and at Berks Park 183 industrial site, and any potential consideration of bringing back commercial air service, the airport anticipates significant development around its property. This development would provide ample opportunity for the airport, which in turn will create additional need for a focused plan to capitalize on those opportunities. The RDG Strategic Plan gives the Airport Authority and the County a blueprint as to what areas to focus on and what growth could look like in the future to ensure that the airport remains a leading economic and community development asset for Berks County. The development of the RDG Strategic Plan helps support the performance measures and goals in the Pennsylvania Statewide Airport System Plan (PA SASP) (<https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/penndot/documents/programs-and-doing-business/aviation/planning-and-zoning/documents/2016-sasp/2016%20sasp%20technical%20report%20vol%20i%20and%20ii%20cover-tofc-preface.pdf>).

Berks Park 183 industrial site is directly adjacent to the airport at its northeastern corner. The Berks County Industrial Development Authority purchased the property in 2019 from the Federal Aviation Administration. The site originally served as a military base during World War II. To date the site has been redeveloped to include up to 816,000 square feet of industrial space thus creating new opportunities for business recruitment and job creation in the region. It is foreseen that this site could have a positive impact on the airport as tenants of the industrial site look to utilize the airport to supplement their operations.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the numbers for total enplanements and total operations in 2020 decreased drastically at just over 43% from the previous year (2019). Total operations and based aircraft slowly increased after 2020. The Federal Aviation Administration expects increased interest in the airport due to an increased demand for corporate aircraft operations because of concerns about safety and flight delays at other larger airports. Of note, enplanements for 2024 are low because of some of the changes currently taking place at the airport. Namely, the County taking over operations as the sole FBO. This number is expected to increase as Reading Aviation settles into their role as the FBO at the airport. There was no forecast data available for enplanements.

READING REGIONAL AIRPORT/CARLA SPAATZ FIELD HISTORIC AND FORECAST DATA

Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% Change	2030 FCST	2040 FCST	2050 FCST
Total Enplanements	644	79	1,024	445	3	-99.5	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Operations	30,199	31,833	37,911	40,308	46,250	53.2	51,562	53,364	55,296
Based Aircraft	97	97	115	117	115	18.6	127	147	167

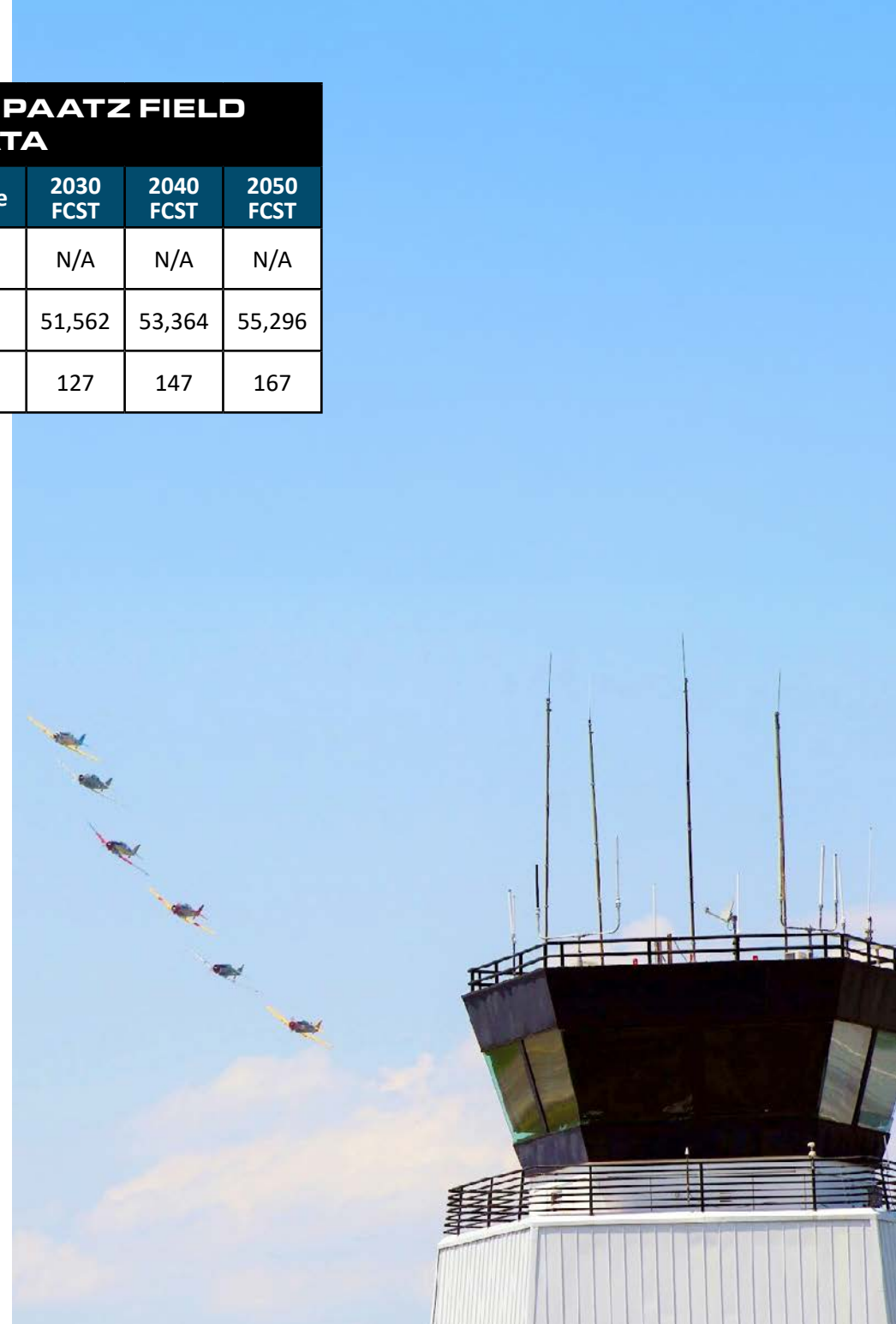
Source: Federal Aviation Administration, APO Terminal Area Forecast Detail Report

The airport is part of Foreign Trade Zone #147 and has become a tourist destination as it is home to the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum. The museum is home to dozens of rare aircraft and hosts a World War II Weekend since 1990 that draws more than 20,000 visitors annually.

The preservation of the airport from the encroachment of incompatible land uses is a priority for the Reading Regional Airport. Land use conditions around the airport are the primary concern. The following are examples of issues that could impact service.

- Tall structures such as buildings, cell towers, power lines, wind turbine towers, trees and other vegetation.
- Visual obstructions such as dust, glare, smoke and steam and equipment that can cause electronic interference such as cell towers and power grids.
- Sites that attract wildlife (especially birds) like surface waters, wetlands, and landfills.
- Developed land. Developed land puts more people on the ground in the path of the aircraft in case of an emergency landing or crash. Keeping land undeveloped around the airport can potentially reduce the amount of aircraft damage and enhance the survivability for the occupants of an aircraft forced to make an emergency landing away from one of the airport's runways.

As we enter 2026, the RRAA continues to implement its Strategic Plan and move forward with its business plan to grow the airport into a world class facility offering flight training, charter operations and aircraft maintenance. The RRAA will work closely with the County of Berks and the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance to further this goal as they proceed into the future. Moving forward, the Reading Regional Airport Authority will continually prepare for the future of aviation. With the prevalence of uncrewed aviation systems such as UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles), VTOL (Vertical Take-Off and Landing), and EVTOL (Electric Vertical Take-Off and Landing) aircraft for both passenger and cargo operations, the Reading Regional Airport is uniquely positioned to support the future of advanced air mobility.



Helicopters serve the Vertical Flight (VF) needs in Berks County. Helicopters operate within a radius of approximately 100 to 150 miles. Since helicopters operate at lower airspeeds and different flight profiles than fixed-wing aircraft, they are assigned to routes away from fixed-wing arrival and departure flows, preventing slow-flying helicopters from delaying faster fixed-wing aircraft. While the County's heliports are largely privately owned, there are three hospital heliports. State and Federal agencies require hospitals to have helipads in order to obtain certification as trauma facilities. These helipads, typically located in close proximity to the respective hospital's emergency room, are a mix of both rooftop and ground level operations.

The following charts and map show the 9 airports and 7 heliports in Berks County and where available, their based aircraft.

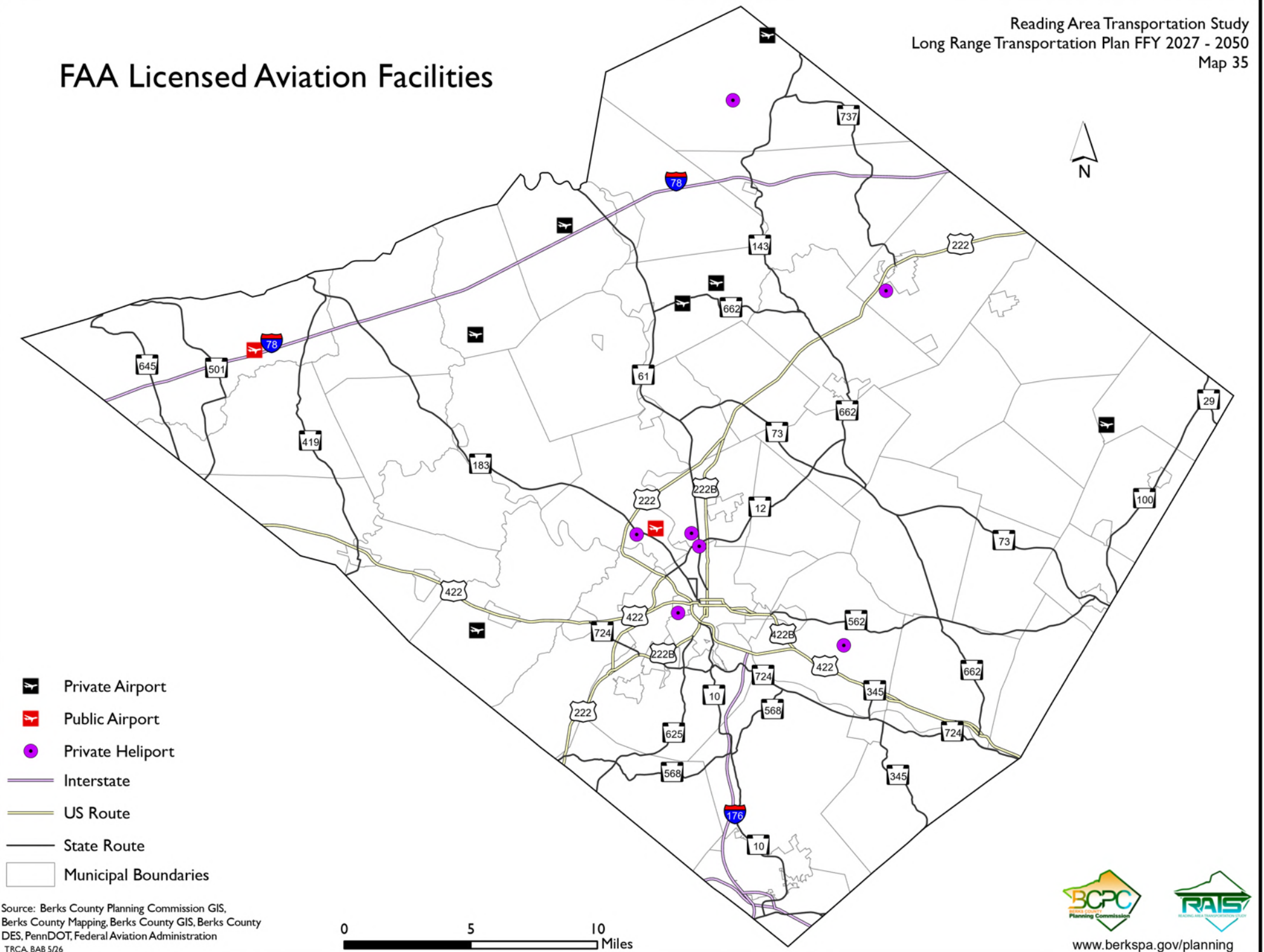
BERKS COUNTY AIRPORTS				
Name	Municipality	Based Aircraft - 2024	Use	Surface Type
Reading Regional Airport (RDG)	Bern	133	Public	Asphalt
Grimes Airport (8N1)	Bethel	32	Public	Grass
Don's Place Airpark	Perry	1	Private	Grass
Cuatro Vientos Airport	Albany	N/A	Private	Grass
The Old Commonwealth Aerodrome	Upper Bern	1	Private	Grass
Skyline Airstrip	Perry	N/A	Private	Grass
Blue Mountain Academy Private Airport	Tilden	3	Private	Grass
Area 52 Airport	Hereford	5	Private	Grass
Boyer Airport	South Heidelberg	1	Private	Grass

Source: Federal Aviation Administration and AirNav.com

BERKS COUNTY HELIPORTS			
Name	Municipality	Based Aircraft - 2024	Use
King Air Heliport	Albany	N/A	Private
Lehigh Valley Health Network Kutztown Heliport	Maxatawny	1	Private
Reading Hospital Heliport	West Reading	N/A	Private
Car Tech Heliport	Muhlenberg	N/A	Private
Metropolitan Edison Heliport	Muhlenberg	N/A	Private
St Joseph Regional Health Network Heliport	Bern	N/A	Private
GED Heliport	Exeter	1	Private

Source: Federal Aviation Administration and AirNav.com

FAA Licensed Aviation Facilities



ISSUES AND NEEDS

Throughout the development of this Plan, various issues and needs were identified related to transportation planning and programming. These came up during our initial data collection / analysis and the first two rounds of public outreach relating to Goals and Objectives and Issues and Needs, respectively. These were then reviewed with our Long Range Transportation Plan Steering Committee prior to being included in the Plan. The results are summarized below.

Planning Today for Tomorrow

The transportation system is constantly changing to try to meet the needs of all users for all modes of transportation. Maintaining and improving the existing transportation system helps address issues related to safety, congestion, and mobility. Funding is a major factor in our ability to address issues identified within the transportation system in Berks County. And, funding is always changing.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), enacted in November 2021, provided \$350 billion nationally for Federal highway programs over the 5-year period from fiscal years 2022 through 2026. Additionally, several new and existing competitive grant programs were provided to help fund other various types of transportation projects and activities. The IIJA provided a slight increase in the Reading MPO's funding allotments for highway, bridge, and transit projects. As of the writing of this plan, there is no new transportation funding bill that has been passed and IIJA has not been reauthorized. Based on statewide guidance, funding for future years is assumed to remain at fiscal year 2026 allotment levels.

Through IIJA and contributions of discretionary grant funding through PennDOT, RATS has continued to pursue major improvements to major corridors such as US 222 and US 422 while, at the same time, addressing some of the needs related to safety, maintenance, and mobility. Despite an increase in funding, RATS continues to have finite resources to invest in transportation and unfortunately cannot build and fix everything desired. RATS, along with PennDOT, has created investment priorities so that we can effectively utilize any and all available resources. This means that for the future, we will continue to not only focus resources on maintaining the existing infrastructure but also making proactive investments to make the transportation system safer and work better for you.

Safety and Modernization

Safety is the highest priority of this plan. Many factors can influence safety including demographics, driving behavior, and driver education. The young and mature driver age groups continue to have increases in crashes. Young drivers have less experience, and mature drivers are impacted by visual, cognitive, and physical skill deterioration. There was a 30 percent increase in crashes involving age 16 drivers, a 34 percent increase in crashes involving age 17 drivers, and a nearly 21 percent increase in crashes involving age 75 and over drivers.

RATS employs a systematic approach to prioritizing projects. Safety related projects are evaluated using current PennDOT crash and safety data, the RATS Annual Traffic Safety Report, comparing crash rates against statewide crash rates for roads with similar characteristics, and against current PennDOT District 5-0 safety concerns and guidelines. Generally, prioritization is given to locations where crash incidents occur most frequently and the number of severe crashes is greater. These locations are evaluated and generally require a multidisciplinary approach to improving traffic safety through engineering, education, and enforcement. As well, RATS will coordinate with municipalities to achieve their safety goals, such as with the City of Reading and their Vision Zero



Action Plan which was adopted in June, 2025. Additional information on project prioritization can be found in Chapter 4 of this plan.

RATS, in coordination with PennDOT, has implemented roundabouts at numerous intersections across Berks County. Roundabouts are a proven safety countermeasure in reducing the severity of crashes as well as providing operational benefits. Construction of the County's first roundabout was at the intersection of Routes 222 and 662 and was completed in 2019. Roundabouts continue to be planned and programmed at appropriate intersections in both the RATS TIP and RATS LRTP to address issues related to safety, congestion, and reliability.

Another area concerning safety includes the lack of available truck parking along major roadways leading into and through Berks County. The issue results from changes in laws that restrict the number of hours that truck drivers may operate as well as the overall increased volume of truck traffic.

The concern is not only a local issue but is a statewide and national issue as well. At the Federal level, FHWA developed a Truck Parking Development Handbook in 2022 (https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/infrastructure/truck_parking/index.htm) to aid in identifying truck parking issues and relevant regulations, factors influencing truck parking demands, and providing a quantitative approach for estimating truck parking demand including a cost-benefit analysis of truck parking developments and practices for siting truck parking facilities.

In 2023, the Pennsylvania Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) developed the Expanding Truck Parking in Pennsylvania study to analyze the need for truck parking across the state of Pennsylvania (<https://talkpatransportation.com/perch/resources/documents/tac-truck-parking-12-14-2023-compressed.pdf>). The study identifies corridors within the state with the greatest need for truck parking. As a result of the TAC study, PennDOT announced in 2025 that additional truck parking locations will be added across Pennsylvania. By the end of 2026, over 1,200 truck parking spots at 133 locations across the Commonwealth will be established along Interstate on-ramps with good sight distance, weigh stations, and various other locations within the highway right-of-way. Additionally, the Pennsylvania Turnpike is evaluating truck parking location opportunities along its' system that could result in an additional 600 truck parking spaces. Finally, the Eastern PA Freight Alliance Infrastructure Plan (EPFA) recommends conducting a County-wide truck parking study to identify locations that may support truck parking in Berks County.

Additional Freight Considerations

With Berks County's location in proximity to major metropolitan areas and the significant growth in warehouse and logistics developments, freight movement by truck has significantly increased. Expansion of these facilities has grown to include not just the I-78 corridor, but other highways in Berks County including but not limited to PA 61, PA 100, PA 183, PA 645, US 422 and US 222. While some highways can accommodate large truck volumes, other roadways may not be suitable for truck traffic. Large trucks using local roads has become an issue during situations involving detours or simply the truck GPS providing inaccurate information to the truck driver seeking the shortest route to their destination regardless of existing road limitations.

The Eastern PA Freight Alliance Infrastructure Plan (EPFA), adopted by RATS in 2024, is a guiding document for future investments and policies aimed at mitigating the impacts of freight traffic within the region and identifies and includes issues and needs related to truck parking. The plan includes regional recommendations and local recommendations that address freight infrastructure and policy guidelines that address existing and future challenges.

State of Good Repair

Most of the modern Berks County transportation system was constructed between 1920 and 1970 with some bridges built before the 20th Century; the majority of the interstate highways in the County were constructed in the 1950s and 1960s. Most roads have been incrementally improved or repaired at one point or another; however, they are continuously subject to increased traffic and heavier loads than they were designed to handle.

As a result, a major priority is to preserve and maintain the existing transportation system and infrastructure with a primary focus on paving and upgrading existing roads. RATS is committed to making investments to preserve, maintain, address safety issues, and maximize the use of the existing transportation system before making investments to expand the capacity of the transportation system. In addition, RATS relies on PennDOT District staff and their expertise to provide informed decisions using Lowest Life Cycle Cost (LLCC) to conduct well-timed preservation activities to extend the life of a transportation asset to help minimize maintenance and infrastructure improvement costs.

System Productivity and Efficiency

Berks County is located at the crossroads of Pennsylvania's transportation system. The County is within one day's drive of numerous major metropolitan areas and major economic centers. Today, Interstate 78 – where 30% to 42% of traffic is trucks and Route 222 into Lehigh County is 10% to 21% trucks – are congested corridors according to RATS' Congestion Management Process (CMP).

Pennsylvania's multimodal freight transportation system carries 1.1 billion tons of freight, valued at \$1.6 trillion, and is projected to grow to nearly 1.9 billion tons at a value of over \$3.7 trillion by 2040. In 2011, trucks handled 76 percent of the tons moved in, out, internally, and through the state and 82% of the value. This is expected to grow to 80 percent and 86 percent, respectively, by 2040. Pennsylvania's Freight Movement Plan (FMP) is currently being updated with an anticipated completion of June 2026.

The potential conflict of competing for capacity, mobility, and accessibility within an aging transportation network must be balanced so that the growing volume of commuter and freight movement within the region can be accommodated without major capacity-adding projects. New road infrastructure is not able to keep up with this increase in travel demand – in fact; it is impractical to build enough roads and infrastructure to accommodate it.

The RATS Congestion Management Process (CMP), updated in 2025, evaluates congestion on 33 key corridors throughout Berks County. Three corridors were defined as Highly Congested and an additional 19 corridors were defined as Moderately Congested. The CMP provides recommended 'management' solutions corridors by targeting financial resources to provide strategies to address the congestion that are faster and less expensive to implement than constructing a new road.

PennDOT and RATS will need to continue and accelerate the expansion of the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) network in the County. The advancement of ITS technologies is expected to bring significant improvement in transportation system performance, including reduced congestion and increased safety and traveler convenience with the provision of real time information to travelers. The use of ITS and the Freeway Service Patrol deployed in Berks County will aid in detecting collisions and other incidents on specific roads in the County, coordinating emergency response, and notifying motorists. These activities will shorten the duration of incidents and minimize congestion that can result.

RATS remains committed to encouraging commuters to use transit through BARTA and ridesharing options through CommutePA. While the number of farepaying passengers has been increasing since 2021, BARTA saw equally increased ridership in senior citizens using BARTA Special Services.

BARTA continues to plan for the expansion of outreach and services to meet the needs of this growing sector of the Berks County population in addition to other populations in Berks County.

Strategic Capacity Improvements

RATS will need to pursue strategic capacity improvements to improve the efficiency of the transportation system. Examples of such projects are the reconstruction of the obsolete West Shore Bypass (Route 422) around Reading and the widening of Route 222 North to the Lehigh County line to handle the increase in vehicle and truck traffic. These projects continue to move through the development process and are anticipated to move into construction in 2028 and late 2026/early 2027 respectively.

Alternative Fuels

A growing issue is the introduction of alternative fueled vehicles, primarily liquid propane gas (LPG) and electric (EV). In the past, these were somewhat of a novelty but over recent years the growth of this sector has had dramatic impacts on both the environment, by lowering emissions, and on tax revenues, by lowering the consumption of gasoline, the tax on which is a primary source of revenue for transportation improvements.

To combat the lower consumption of gasoline by these vehicles which leads to lowered tax revenues, Acts 85 and 149 were signed into law in 2024. These Acts modernize how EV owners support road and bridge maintenance across the state through a yearly Road User Charge (RUC), which replaces the Alternative Fuels Tax that EV owners were previously required to calculate and pay annually. The RUC came into effect for vehicles in April of 2025. PennDOT intends to adjust the fee each year based on the previous years' charge and the change in the consumer price index. The new RUC makes sure every driver pays their fair share to help maintain roads and bridges no matter what type of fuel they use.

The Reading MPO has been working with PennDOT and other stakeholders to designate roadways in Berks County for the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) Alternative Fuel Corridor (AFC) Program. This program was designed to expand the nation's alternative fueling network for electric, propane, and natural gas vehicles. In Berks County, three corridors, I-78, I-76 (the PA Turnpike), and US 422 have been designated. The designated routes are key state focus corridors for alternative fuel infrastructure and support regional and national travel and freight movement within Pennsylvania.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) contains specific funding to support the development of infrastructure to support the expansion of EVs. This statute was signed into law in November of 2021 and makes the most transformative investment in EV charging in United States (U.S.) history that aims to put the U.S. on a path to a nationwide network of 500,000 EV chargers that ensures a convenient, reliable, affordable, and equitable charging experience for all users. The IIJA is set to expire in September of 2026.

Further efforts have been made by PennDOT and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to expand alternative fuel infrastructure throughout the state. The agencies have worked to support collaboration among city, regional and state agencies as well as other advocacy groups; develop partnerships to design, build, finance, operate and maintain alternative fuel stations; administer grant programs that are focused on the development of alternative fuel source infrastructure with an emphasis on the FHWA designated corridors; and educate and communicate the existence of this infrastructure to promote increased alternative vehicle usage.

Towards the end of 2023, PennDOT began tracking EV registrations quarterly by county and zip code. Berks County has consistently experienced .05% growth of electric vehicles quarterly since the initial collection date. Quarter 1 of 2025 shows 424,538 vehicles registered in Berks County. EVs represent 3,225 or 0.76% of all vehicles registered in Berks County. This places Berks County in the top third of Pennsylvania counties for percent of registered EVs. Out of the 6 surrounding counties, only two (Lebanon and Schuylkill) have lower percentages of EVs than Berks County, with neighboring Chester County being the highest in Pennsylvania at 2.69%. The Reading MPO acknowledges this growing market and will continue to support the efforts of state agencies and plan for the addition of alternatively fueled vehicles in Berks County.



Automated Vehicles, Highly Automated Vehicles, and Connected Vehicles

Automated vehicles (AVs) are vehicles capable of performing the functions required to operate a vehicle in traffic through the aid of various sensors and software. To receive this designation, a vehicle must perform driving tasks such as steering, accelerating, and braking without a human driver. Most new vehicles are equipped with some level of automation such as adaptive cruise control and lane-centering technology. Highly automated vehicles (HAVs) are AVs that can operate in high- or full-automation mode, meaning no human is driving the vehicle when the automated driving features are engaged. Connected vehicles (CVs) use technology to communicate with each other, connect to transportation infrastructure, or obtain data through common systems. Many AVs are already connected but can operate without being connected.

Pennsylvania has emerged as a leading location for on-road testing of HAVs as they advance toward practical use. PennDOT has taken action to support Pennsylvania's leadership in HAV research through various initiatives such as installation of technology allowing HAVs to communicate with the infrastructure at select signalized intersections, development of uniform standards and practices for HAVs, and development of a statewide data exchange for Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) communication. PennDOT was involved early in the process and formed the Autonomous Vehicle Policy Task Force in 2016 to provide draft legislative policy recommendations for the testing of automated vehicles in Pennsylvania. Currently PennDOT is involved in the HAV Advisory Committee which identifies recommendations for Pennsylvania with the purpose of enhancing the safe and efficient movement of people and goods by advancing connected and automated vehicle technology.

Through direct involvement and research, PennDOT and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission have prepared documents and plans to better accommodate the rise and integration of these vehicle types. These include the Connected and Autonomous Vehicle 2040 Vision, The Statewide Connected and Automated Vehicles Strategic Plan, AV Testing Guidance, Vehicle Platooning Policy, Connected and Automated Vehicle Business Plan, and the Automated Vehicle Guidebook for Municipalities.

As HAVs become more common within Pennsylvania, they may begin to impact municipal policy and operations in various ways. The Automated Vehicle Guidebook for Municipalities identifies multiple topics of interest for municipalities to consider. Topics covered in this guidebook include safety, traffic enforcement, interacting with emergency service responders, infrastructure and risk management, potential fiscal impacts, planning, land use, zoning, and enhancing mobility.

Partial or complete automation of vehicles has the potential to provide a variety of benefits including but not limited to improved road safety, access for those who cannot drive, increased travel options, reduced driver stress, and reduced emissions. The Reading MPO acknowledges the potential benefits of these emerging vehicle types and will continue to support the efforts of state agencies and plan for the accommodation and integration of AVs, HAVs, CVs, and V2X communications.

Electric Powered Micromobility

A rapidly growing issue throughout Berks County, primarily seen within Boroughs and the City of Reading is the increase of electric powered micromobility vehicles. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is continuing micromobility research regarding safety, access, mobility, data, regulation, and funding. The FHWA defines micromobility as: "Any small, low-speed, human or electric-powered transportation device, including bicycles, scooters, electric assist bicycles (e-bikes), electric scooters (e-scooters), and other small, lightweight, wheeled conveyances."

Planning for small, low-speed, human powered transportation devices has been a continuous process for the Reading MPO with the first Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan being published in 2000 and the vision of the Reading Area Transportation Study to promote a well maintained and balanced multimodal transportation system that will safely and efficiently move people and goods. The electrification of these small, low speed transportation devices however, has created additional concern for the traveling public that shares transportation infrastructure with these vehicles.

A primary advantage to micromobility is the flexibility to solve first and last mile challenges and complete shorter trips than an enclosed, higher speed vehicle would be needed to complete. Electric powered micromobility vehicles can expand the range that human powered micromobility devices would typically travel, are more affordable than enclosed vehicles, reduce emissions, and noise pollution. These electric powered devices can also increase mobility for older adults or individuals with disabilities as they are less strenuous to operate.

Despite the benefits of electric powered micromobility vehicles, as popularity grows, so does the concern amongst the public as well as public officials. A large focus of concern is where these vehicles can ride and how fast. This safety concern is for those that operate these vehicles as well as those that share the travel space these vehicles use. An important aspect of safety in this context is education, regulation, and enforcement. It is important for users, officials, and enforcers to be aware of the incorporation of electric powered micromobility vehicles into the PA Vehicle Code and how electric powered micromobility vehicles are regulated by traffic laws within the state of Pennsylvania. These laws address safety concerns such as maximum allowable speed, where they are allowed to be driven, as well as helmet, light, and passenger regulations. These also set a minimum age to operate and determine need for license, registration, and insurance.

Similar to human powered micromobility devices, their electric powered counterparts rely on safe, connected, and well-designed bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Users also lack the protection of an enclosed vehicle and are considered vulnerable road users. The growing popularity and use of these devices displays the need to continue planning for and adding to the existing active transportation infrastructure of Berks County with an emphasis on safety and connectivity. The Reading MPO acknowledges this growing market and will continue to support the efforts of state agencies and plan for the addition of electric powered micromobility vehicles in Berks County.

Passenger Rail

Berks County does not currently have passenger rail service. Providing passenger rail service to destination hubs such as Philadelphia and New York could help alleviate issues on major roadways related to congestion, provide economic benefits, and increased job opportunities. While the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority (SRPRA) completed the first step in the Corridor Identification and Development Program (CIDP), the Authority is still waiting on approval from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to move into the second step of the program. The second step is where the SRPRA will develop a business plan, capital plan, and operating plan that will document the investment case for proposed passenger rail service. Funding through the CIDP is critical to continue evaluating and developing potential passenger rail service in Berks County.

Aviation

While The Reading Regional Airport (RRA) coordinates with Boscov's Travel to provide charter air service to Orlando, Florida, the airport does not currently offer general passenger air service. With other airports in proximity to Berks County residents, such as Lehigh Valley International Airport and Lancaster Airport that do provide commuter air service, the RRA currently concentrates on serving general aviation for recreational and business needs. Additionally, funding is limited for

commuter air service and obtaining funding requires a need for commuter air service to be defined and demonstrated along with a precise plan for managing the service. The current Strategic Plan for the RRA focuses on establishing the airport as an economic hub and continually preparing for and considering future aviation needs.

Funding for Local Bridges

Bridges provide a means for traffic to cross depressions or obstructions that would otherwise impede the flow of traffic, providing connections across these barriers. Bridges can vary in length and width depending on the type of roadway the bridge is carrying. Fewer than 6% of state-owned bridges by Count are in poor condition and approximately 9% of state-owned bridges by Deck Area are in poor condition. Comparatively, local-owned bridges have significantly higher percentages of poor condition bridges by both Count (30.34%) and Deck Area (27.66%). Funding for local-owned bridges is limited and local-owned bridges must meet various criteria to receive funding for rehabilitation or replacement. In many instances, as part of the funding source requirements, a monetary match may be required. Many local municipalities lack the ability to meet those monetary match requirements for funding bridge maintenance and preservation activities. As part of RATS Transportation Improvement Program development process, every effort is made to incorporate funding for local-owned bridges to help reduce the number of local-owned bridges that are in poor condition.

The Active Transportation Network

As discussed in the non-motorized transportation section, the benefits of active transportation are staggering not only at the individual level but beyond, impacting economic, healthcare, and most importantly for this plan, transportation aspects. When opting for active transportation, vehicle miles traveled are reduced, lessening wear and tear on roadways. Fuel consumption is lowered leading to improved air quality. Safety on the roads is improved, as a result of fewer vehicles on the roadway which aids in reducing crashes and injuries.

The importance of active transportation and the corresponding network is further explored in multiple countywide plans as well as the primary focus of the [PennDOT Pennsylvania Active Transportation Plan, PUB787 \(4-20\)](#), and the [U.S. DOT Guide for Maintaining Active Transportation Infrastructure for Enhanced Safety, FHWA-SA-23-005](#).

Within Berks County there are approximately 1,319 miles of sidewalks and 524 miles of trails. Maintaining, filling in missing gaps, and creating connections to the existing network are some of the main priorities of Berks County plans when considering the active transportation network. Beyond sidewalks and roadway shoulders, the trail network accommodates users for both recreation and commuting. The Schuylkill River Trail is identified in the Berks County Greenway, Park and Recreation Plan, Berks County Comprehensive Plan 2030 Update, and the Berks County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan as a trail of importance and the backbone of the offroad network in Berks County. The completion of this trail as well as providing safe connections to it is noted as a policy, recommendation, and a placemaking strategy in these plans.

RATS recognizes the importance of the active transportation network and the Schuylkill River Trail in Berks County. Also recognized is the need for funding the maintenance, completion, and connections to the existing network. Beyond the allocated funding for this network, RATS aims to continue working alongside key partners and provide assistance where applicable to organizations looking to advance the network throughout the county.

