

Chapter 5 Transportation Plan

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Like most communities in the northeast, Delaware Township faces increasing congestion on its roads, which exacerbates safety and road maintenance issues. Employment and commuting patterns indicate that the vast majority of residents work outside of the township and commute 50 minutes on average. Delaware Township also experiences high traffic volumes as commuters from surrounding areas travel the township's roads enroute to New Jersey and New York via the Dingmans Ferry Bridge.



Dingmans Ferry Bridge

The high rate of growth in the area in recent years translates into more vehicles and more time spent on the road. This places demands on the township's roads, which were not designed for such a high level of use. As a result, maintenance costs rise and the quality of life of township residents diminishes.

Transportation planning can have a significant impact on land use and on a community's quality of life. A balance must be reached to allow for the safe flow of traffic and to plan for appropriate improvements in conjunction with future development. It is the intent of this plan to emphasize needed circulation system improvements that will enhance the safety and efficiency of the township's road network while avoiding increased capacity and accessibility to lands in the township's undeveloped areas. This approach is consistent with the goal of preserving the township's rural character and sensitive natural features.

This chapter describes Delaware Township's existing circulation system and provides recommendations for future circulation system improvements. It focuses on current road conditions, the functional classification of roads, scenic roads, regional transportation system initiatives, and recommendations for future transportation system improvements.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Overview

The goals and objectives pertaining to the township's transportation system focus on road safety and efficiency, and emergency access.

Goal #1

Develop a safe and efficient road transportation system.

Objectives:

- Identify and address maintenance and safety concerns with the existing road system.
- Develop Route 739 as the primary connection from the Township to the regional and interstate highway system.
- Improve Milford Road (Route SR2001).
- Ensure that Route 739 provides safe access to highway-oriented businesses.
- Evaluate the adequacy of bridges.
- Upgrade unsafe intersections.

Goal #2

Protect the Township with effective emergency access.

Objectives:

- Develop an adequate system of emergency vehicular access for isolated and flood-prone areas in the community.
- Coordinate emergency access and communication with the National Park Service.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Overview

Delaware Township's road network is entirely comprised of two-lane rural roads. The township's major roads are under federal and state jurisdiction; local roads are either under the jurisdiction of the township or community association.

Despite the rural designation, as a primary access point to New Jersey and New York, many of the roads in Delaware Township carry heavy

volumes of traffic. Much of this traffic originates from interstate highways outside of the township, namely I-84, which runs East-West from I-380, near Scranton, to New York; and I-80 located to the south near Stroudsburg. Traffic volumes also increase substantially in the summer when seasonal residents and vacationers travel to the area.

Functional Classification

Functional classification is a system developed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) and used by state transportation agencies to group federal and state roads according to the character of service they are intended to provide. It defines the function of each road in channeling the flow of trips through a road network. Due to differences in road networks and densities, urban and rural functional systems are classified separately.

All of Delaware Township's roads are classified under the rural functional system, which consists of principal arterials, minor arterial roads, major and minor collector roads, and local roads. Roads in Delaware Township and their functional classifications are as follows:

- US-209 is classified as a rural minor arterial road. Rural minor arterial roads are designed to link cities, larger towns, and traffic generators such as resort areas, and to provide interstate and inter-county service. They are expected to provide for relatively high travel speeds with minimum interference.
- PA-739 and SR-2001 (Milford Road) are rural major collectors. Rural major collectors serve primarily intra-county travel and trips of shorter travel distances than arterial roads. Speeds are typically moderate. They are designed to: (1) Provide service to any county seat not on an arterial route, to the larger towns not directly served by the higher systems, and to other traffic generators of equivalent intra-county importance; (2) link these places with nearby larger towns or cities, or with routes of higher classification; and (3) serve the more important intra-county travel corridors. (citation)
- SR-2004 (Silver Lake Road) is classified as a rural minor collector. Like major collectors, rural minor collectors also serve primarily intra-county travel constituting shorter trips and more moderate speeds. However, minor collectors are designed to: (1) Collect traffic from local roads and bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of a collector road; (2) provide service to the remaining smaller communities; and (3) link the locally important traffic generators with their rural hinterland. (Source: PennDOT)
- SR-2002 (Wilson Hill Road) is a rural local road. Rural local roads are designed to provide access to adjacent land and to collector roads, and serve travel over short distances.
- All other roads in Delaware Township, although not classified by the FHA or PennDOT, are designated as rural local roads.



SR-2001 (Milford Road)

Road Conditions

Issues of concern to the township are as follows:

- Congestion occurs on Route 739. PA 739 connects I-84 in Blooming Grove Township to Route 2019 and the Dingmans Ferry Bridge in Delaware Township. Traffic volumes on Route 739 are the highest in

the township, averaging approximately 5,800 vehicles per day. Much of this volume is presumably pass-through traffic originating from the north and west and traveling southbound on Route 739 to the bridge.



Truck traffic on SR-2001

- Dingmans Ferry Bridge is congested during peak travel times. Dingmans Ferry Bridge is a privately owned, two-lane, iron toll bridge that opened to traffic in 1900. Tolls are collected by a toll taker that stands between the two lanes. For two weeks in June every year, the bridge is reduced to one lane to all for inspection and maintenance. The bridge is reportedly in excellent condition. One of only three bridges in the area (including the Milford bridge to the north, and the I-80 bridge to the south), the Dingmans Ferry Bridge serves as a major access to New Jersey and New York City. According to PennDOT traffic volume data, the bridge handles approximately 5,000 vehicles per day.
- Congestion and safety issues occur at the intersection of Route 739 and Silver Lake Road. Like Route 739, Silver Lake Road carries a large volume of traffic enroute to Dingmans Ferry Bridge. These two roads intersect just east of Milford Road. On a typical weekday, approximately 6,000 vehicles pass through the intersection. At peak times, traffic stacks up on Silver Lake Road. There are no traffic signals or other devices at the intersection, and sight distance is very limited. Congestion and safety are major concerns.
- Dangerous conditions exist on SR-2001 (Milford Road) south of Route 739 into Lehman Township. SR-2001 is a very windy and hilly two-lane road with no shoulder. It is extremely difficult to navigate in a car, and compounding the problem, it receives a high volume of truck traffic (due to truck restrictions on US-209).
- Flooding occurs on Silver Lake Road. The segment of Silver Lake Road between Whitaker Road and Woodpecker Road becomes inundated during rain storms to the point that it is impassable. With no alternative routes, residents of Marcel Lakes and neighborhoods to the west become stranded. Furthermore, emergency access is cut off.
- The Wild Acres community has poor access. There is only one access to the Wild Acres community: Wild Acres Drive via Park Road. This is insufficient for a community the size of Wild Acres. It is not only a major inconvenience for residents of the community, but it severely impedes the township's ability to provide emergency services to that community.
- There is a lack of local road connections throughout the township, specifically between local roads and individual neighborhoods. Providing no alternative routes, this forces traffic onto the major roads and isolates some communities increasing their risk in the event of an emergency.
- Road connections across the western portion of the township are inadequate. There is no access across the western portion of the township between Route 739, Silver Lake Road, and Wild Acres. As a result, residents of Wild Acres and Marcel Lakes have no direct access to destinations and services within the township and

surrounding areas. Residents of Wild Acres can only access the northern part of the Township via Milford Road. Residents of Marcel Lakes only have access to other parts of the township via Silver Lake Road.



Hazardous parking conditions on Silver Lake and Milford Rds.

- Road conditions within community association developments are deteriorating. Many roads within community association developments are in extremely poor condition. This compromises road safety and presents a severe impediment to emergency vehicles. In some cases, emergency access is nearly impossible.
- There is limited emergency access. A lack of road connections deprives emergency vehicles of a direct route to an incident, thus increasing response times. In addition, poor road conditions within community association developments make safe passage of emergency vehicles extremely difficult.
- Limited sight distance at the intersection of Route 739 and Doolan Road presents a safety concern. Doolan Road provides access to Route 739 for residents of the Birchwood Lakes community. Vehicles entering Route 739 from Doolan Road encounter difficulty as views along Route 739 are obstructed.
- Vehicles entering and exiting the parking lot located at the intersection of Silver Lake Road and Milford Road present a safety hazard. Vehicles frequently back into the roadway or make U-turns in the roadway in order to enter or exit the parking lot. This might be caused by size, design or position of the parking lot in relation to the two roads.
- Vehicles traveling at excessively high speeds along the township's major roads—Route 739, Route 2001, and Silver Lake Road—present a safety hazard.
- Delaware Township's roads contain many scenic views and vantage points revealing the townships natural qualities. This is especially true along Route 739, Route 2001, Route 209 and Silver Lake Road where the scenery is enjoyed by the most travelers.

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Summary

Current township ordinances contain provisions for the construction and dedication of roads, and for parking and loading. However, these regulations are only applicable to roads under the township's jurisdiction. The township does not have the authority to initiate action on roads owned by the community associations or those under federal and state jurisdictions. It must lobby PennDOT, the FHA, and community associations for improvements to these roads.

FUTURE PLANNING POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

Future planning and policy recommendations are intended to address the problems specified above and achieve the goals set forth by Delaware Township. Specific recommended improvements are shown on the Transportation Plan (Map A-4).

Recommendations

Policy and planning recommendations are as follows:

- Pursue road improvements to Route 739 through PennDOT reconstruction plan scheduled to begin in 2009.
- Pursue intersection improvements at Route 739 and Silver Lake Road through PennDOT reconstruction plan scheduled to begin in 2009.
- Pursue intersection improvements at Route 739 and Doolan Road through PennDOT reconstruction plan scheduled to begin in 2009.
- Pursue improvements to Route 739 north of Milford Road to Dingman Township.
- Pursue improvements to Milford Road through PennDOT reconstruction plan scheduled to begin in 2009.
- Upgrade Silver Lake Road between Whitaker Road and Woodpecker Lane to mitigate flooding conditions.
- Establish road connections across the northern and western portions of the township.
- Upgrade and utilize existing unimproved roads and jeep trails to establish road connections and improve emergency access.
- Establish a road connection in the northern part of the township by upgrading and utilizing the existing unimproved road that connects Nichecronk Road and Marcel Lake Estates, or connect Nichecronk Road to North Shore Drive).
- Provide additional access to residents of Wild Acres by upgrading and utilizing the unimproved road that runs north from High Ridge Road into Delaware State Forest. Extend this road to Wilderness Trail. This road would also provide access across the western portion of the township.
- Establish a road connection between Lakewood Drive and Park Road to provide a third access for residents of Wild Acres.
- Establish a road connection between Whispering Pines Way and Park Road (to provide access to the south along Park Road and Milford Road, and to bypass flooding on Silver Lake Road).
- Recognize the potential future need for public transportation and plan accordingly (i.e., locate residential development along main roads where transit stops are most likely to be located).

- Provide additional emergency access roads.
 - o Upgrade the unimproved road connecting Nichecronk Road and Marcel Lake Estates (as stated above).
 - o Upgrade and extend the unimproved road connecting High Ridge Road (in Wild Acres) to Wilderness Trail (as stated above).
 - o Connect Lancet Circle and Spencer Road.
 - o Connect Kinsale Lane and Chippewa Trail.
 - o Establish connections from Pocono Circle Drive.
 - o Connect Lakeview Drive and Mountain Top Drive (in Wild Acres).
- Work with community associations to institute a road maintenance program.
- Reduce speeding.
- Maintain operation of Dingman's Ferry Bridge at its current capacity.
- Preserve road rights-of-way to enable future road improvements and road connections.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Overview

The following strategies are intended to implement the policies and recommendations pertaining to transportation:

Zoning Ordinance

Zoning Ordinance amendments intended to implement the planning policies and recommendations pertaining to transportation are as follows:

- Establish a Scenic Road Overlay District along Routes 739, 2001, 209, and Silver Lake Road to regulate uses and establish setbacks.
- Create an ordinance that provides supplemental regulations for signs and billboards.
- Amend the parking and loading regulations to ensure safe and adequate parking facilities.

SLDO

SLDO amendments intended to implement the planning policies and recommendations pertaining to historic resource protection are as follows:

- Amend the road construction regulations to provide for context sensitive road design standards.
- Amend SLDO to provide rights-of-way for emergency access and road connections through dedication of land and easements.

- Amend SLDO to require a Traffic Impact Study.

Additional Measures

Additional measures intended to implement the planning policies and recommendations pertaining to historic resource protection are as follows:

- Organize ongoing efforts (e.g. create a township transportation task force) to communicate with PennDOT on pending improvements to Route 739 and Route 2001. Lobby PennDOT to include in their plans intersection improvements at Route 739 and Silver Lake Road, and Route 739 and Doolan Road. Lobby PennDOT to include installation of road centerline illumination devices and rumble strips.
- Consider an Official Map to facilitate needed road improvements and connections.
- Partner with community associations to address road maintenance issues (outreach to community associations could perhaps be undertaken by a township transportation task force).
- Prepare and adopt an Act 209 Traffic Impact Fee Ordinance, which allows municipalities to assess developers for a portion of the transportation capital improvements costs necessitated by, and attributed to their development.
- Establish a ride-share (carpool) system utilizing the existing park and ride lot on Route 739. A ride-share program could be coordinated by a township transportation task force or ride-share participant volunteers. Information regarding the program could be posted on a township website.
- Work with PennDOT to establish appropriate speed limits on state roads and coordinate enforcement with the Pennsylvania State Police.
- Identify areas on local roads where speeding is a problem and post limits accordingly.