

Wayne County Comprehensive Plan Update

Chapter XIV - Transportation Plan

Introduction

This *Transportation Plan* is intended to address unmet infrastructure and service needs of the County and its constituent municipalities. Trends with potential to affect needs may be discerned from the *Transportation Analysis* (Section IV of this *Comprehensive Plan*) as well as other background studies.

Route 6 traffic patterns, as displayed in Figure IV-1 within the Transportation Analysis Section, detail the overall reduction of traffic along Route 6 over the last six years. The only location where traffic increased along this route was between Prompton and Honesdale. Route 6 saw its highest rates of travel, on average, during the 2015 data survey. This leveling out of travel across Route 6 can be expected in years to come, in line with the current population statistics experiencing a plateau County-wide.

Route 191 traffic has leveled out or reduced County-wide as well, running from Hancock, NY in the north to Rt. 447 in the south. One area that could see an increase in traffic is the area from Interstate 84 to Rt. 590 as increased development occurs off the I-84 interchange. Although this traffic count has shown a decline in most segments, this is the main route of travel from north to south through the County. Upgrades, improvements, and repairs should be a high priority.



Route 590 has experienced a slight increase in volume of traffic between Hawley and Rt. 348 with a significant doubling of traffic between Hamlin & Hawley over the last 10 years. Improvements have been made to alleviate congestion at the Hamlin Corners intersection of Routes 191 and 590 by facilitating turning and through traffic. This increase in traffic can be attributed to higher numbers of permanent residents within the communities near Lake Wallenpaupack and an increase in tourism during the summer months. One thing to pay attention to as data is collected in the years to come is whether the data from 2021 is an outlier or a new baseline for the upward trend of traffic utilizing the stretch of road from Hamlin to Hawley.

Planned PennDOT highway projects are heavily oriented toward bridge replacements or rehabilitation. Generally, the highest priorities are improvements to the bridges seeing the highest volume or supporting interstate commerce. In this case the projects gaining the majority of funding are bridges over the Delaware river, connecting to New York.

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The Stourbridge Railroad Company supports a tourist excursion program over the line of railroad between Lackawaxen (Pike County) and Honesdale. The mainline along the Delaware River likewise serves a valuable role with respect to Wayne County agriculture.

Wayne County has two airports: Cherry Ridge Airport in Cherry Ridge Township and Spring Hill Airpark in Sterling Township. Most air transportation needs are met by the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre International Airport (at Avoca). Southern Wayne County is also relatively convenient to Lehigh Valley Airport, while other parts of the County have relatively good access to the Binghamton and Newburgh Airports, all of which are served by major carriers.

The Shortline Bus Company (now part of Coach USA) offers bus transportation to the Port Authority in New York City (one trip per day from Honesdale/Hawley).

Martz Trailways offers 18 daily weekday trips to New York City from various starting points within their service area.



Wayne Tomorrow: Transportation Task Force

This task force was assembled to identify the changing needs and challenges of transportation for residents and visitors of Wayne County. With a specific group tasked to keep a pulse on transportation goals within the County, progress can be tracked regarding access to affordable public transportation, implementation of ride-share programs, transportation's effect on education and employment opportunities, and general oversight of transportation needs County wide.

As noted by Carl Albright, Director of Wayne County Transportation System:

"The Transportation Task Force has been striving to find ways to increase mobility options for Wayne County residents. Through the collection of survey information and the practice of frequent dialog, we have been taking a multimodal approach, investigating possibilities for walking, jogging, hiking, biking, trolley, train, and public transportation. Our aim is to increase awareness of current resources, to build on these resources where feasible, and to work toward increased options overall for cost-effective mobility for the residents of Wayne County."

Public Input

Surveys conducted during the process of developing *Goals and Objectives* (See Chapter XI) for this *Comprehensive Plan* sought public views regarding the five most important needs with respect to making Wayne County "a better place to live." The top 20 items from the list generated are summarized in Table XIII-1 of the preceding chapter.

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Among the list of potential future needs to make Wayne County a “better place to live”, thus, improving the “quality of life” here, maintaining roads & highways came in ranked at number 6, with high-speed internet, cellular phone service, and open space preceding it in rank and overdevelopment/sprawl, economic development, and shopping availability lower on the list.

Similar to the 2010 survey, high-speed internet is high up on this list, suggesting that as our economy has shifted more-so towards a digital platform of communication and working, the need for this service to be expanded upon has increased as well. To this point, 50% of respondents suggested that if they had access to better internet connections, they would work from home rather than travel to work.

While that percentage may be skewed based upon the majority of respondents having access to computers, it is a sharp rise in percentage from the 2010 survey which suggested that 30% of respondents would work from home with better internet connection.

This is supported by the results of another question (#27) within the survey asking residents to weigh how important certain problems within the County are to them. Again, internet/broadband services are atop the list followed closely by health care and then highway maintenance.

Based on the rural nature of much of the County, especially the northern region, it should come as no surprise that highway maintenance is a main concern of local residents. It is important to note that northern and central Wayne County have a high number of dirt & gravel roadways (See Unpaved Roads map within Chapter IV) which need a greater amount of care and maintenance than the paved roadways. While these roads may see less traffic (see Roadway Usage map within Chapter IV), they are no less vital to the daily lives of those that do use them regularly. Public transportation on the other hand, comes in significantly lower on the chart at number 19.

These survey results, while representing a minor portion of the population, further solidify the desire and expectation of the residents to have the County and PennDOT upgrade and maintain the roadway network across the County in good condition.

Recommendations

The following are specific transportation needs requiring attention over the next several years. These include the following:

1. Route 296/196 from Waymart Borough to Route 191 in Salem Township has received increased traffic due to the Federal Prison and SCI Waymart’s location on the northern end. The roadway has been maintained with surface treatments since being repaved in 2008, but continued improvements and maintenance to the winding roadway should be a priority, especially with the Western Wayne School District using the roadway heavily.



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2. Route 191 and Route 670 are the primary routes to and from Northern Wayne County serving some vital industries, including agriculture, mining, and manufacturing (bottled water). They also receive a fair amount of seasonal usage when summer camps are in session and second homes are heavily occupied. These roadways should be given high priority for improvements and upgrades, specifically to facilitate the use by the summer camps which is a vital influx to the local economy during the summer months. Route 670 was repaved in 2014-2015 with additional surface treatments since that time and the northern portion of Route 191 was repaved in 2021 from Hancock to approximately Route 371.
3. Routes 371 and 423 need improvements to accommodate increased traffic including widening and re-alignment in major segments. Route 423 is very narrow and hilly while serving areas of the County that have experienced much second home development and conversion of second homes to primary homes during the COVID 19 pandemic. Route 196 was widened to 24' since the 2010 Comp plan was completed but Route 371 and 423 are still quite narrow having not been widened in a number of years.
4. Route 6 between Honesdale and Indian Orchard is very heavily traveled with more traffic expected. Minor improvements have been made at the Route 652 intersection to facilitate traffic flow, but congestion still occurs during the busier summer months. This highway section is a designated bicycle route, but the highway shoulders have been reduced in width to accommodate increased vehicular traffic, exacerbating the conflicts. This portion of Route 6, as a designated bicycle route, was included in the Wayne County Trail Feasibility study completed in 2019 noting that funding opportunities exist to plan, design, and implement improvements to the corridor. These conditions are present within the section of Route 6 passing through Waymart as well, where walking from the neighborhood of Waymart to the grocery store or nearby shops is a hazard for both the pedestrian and vehicles. These designated bike route improvements should be a priority along this route. Examples of these improvements can be seen on portions of Route 6 in the western part of the state.
5. There are also numerous other bridges and projects in the County (identified in the PennDOT 12 Year Plan, which is updated on a regular basis and continually being revised with County input) that need to be replaced. Chapter IV of this *Comprehensive Plan* (the *Transportation Analysis*) and, specifically, Table IV-4 identify the bridges and projects currently on the PennDOT 12 Year Plan.
6. Still other projects already identified on the PennDOT 12 Year Plan are also important for safety and other reasons and should proceed, depending on funding availability. Again, Table IV-4 from Chapter IV (*Transportation Analysis*) provides the details. All transportation improvements in busy areas of the County should include consideration of pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle transportation needs.
7. The County should likewise look to municipal comprehensive plans that have been developed and updated in recent years for input as to County transportation priorities. The regional plans that exist would have been reflected in the 2010 Comprehensive plan update. This list includes the *Lake Region Comprehensive Plan (2007)*, *Eastern Central Wayne County Comprehensive Plan (2007)*, *North Country Region Comprehensive Plan (2010)*.

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8. It is important to address the need for more public transportation options by building on the County system to provide a broader range of shared ride opportunities along with demand-responsive systems, working with private providers to expand their services, developing park and ride facilities, and identifying low-cost solutions such as shared-ride and other programs. Informal Park and Ride lots have appeared in several areas, reflecting a need that will have to be addressed on a more formal basis in the future as the population grows and commuting expands.
9. The County and associated Municipalities should investigate the opportunity and legal obligations to permit/license side-by-side and ATV use on the dirt and gravel roadway network within the County as a way to promote tourism, connect neighbors, and boost the economy.
10. The County should work with and assist Cherry Ridge Airport, as the only airport within the County, to acquire funding for creation of a masterplan to enhance and expand the facility. This would serve the airport and County, in tandem, as tourism and recreation are growing within the region, giving visitors an alternate route to travel. The creation of the masterplan would open the airport up to additional funding opportunities at the local, county, state, and federal level as well as create additional opportunities for increased infrastructure development.
11. The County should encourage the development of Electric vehicle charging, particularly development of the underlying infrastructure to support fast charging stations.