

## Chapter 9      Transportation Plan

### Introduction

The transportation plan is a critical element of a comprehensive plan because the transportation network of an area helps to determine development patterns, land use, and economic prosperity. Municipal and individual land use decisions are strongly influenced by existing or proposed transportation systems, while at the same time these decisions affect the circulation systems and the functions that the system elements are expected to perform. Existing and proposed development areas should be considered when transportation system improvements are programmed. In turn, future growth should not result in development patterns that will adversely affect the transportation system.

### Transportation Planning

Transportation planning in the planning region occurs within the context of transportation planning for Washington County. The county's transportation planning, in turn, occurs as part of the regional transportation planning process, which incorporates transportation needs for the ten-county region of southwestern Pennsylvania. The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) guides this process. SPC is charged with ensuring that existing and future funding of transportation projects are based on a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing process. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) is also an active planning partner.

The main outcome of this process is the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Due to limited resources, not all transportation projects can be funded. Creation of the TIP involves prioritizing the many projects in the region for implementation. The TIP covers a four-year period and identifies all projects slated for advancement during that period. TIP projects advanced include both highway and transit projects for the ten-county region. Washington County participates in the TIP process by submitting funding requests to SPC's technical committees that are charged with developing the TIP.

Listing a project on the TIP is an important first step in working towards implementation. However, a project's presence on the TIP does not guarantee a commitment or obligation to fund the project. Indeed, TIP project listings are always subject to change. Table 9-1 lists the current TIP projects within the planning region. These projects are keyed to the map on the following page.

**Table 9-1**  
**Transportation Improvement Program Projects in the Planning Region**

Map No.	Project Location & Type	Municipality	Completion Date	Project Status
35	SR 88 @ SR 837 - add turn lane and signal improvements	Carroll Township	2007	2
115	Ginger Hill Intersection Improvements - Pre-engineering	Carroll Township	2007	3
37	SR 136 Curve Improvement - Restoration	Carroll Township	2005	2
38	SR 481 Pigeon Creek Bridge - Bridge replacement (Pre-engineering through construction)	Carroll Township	2008	2
40	SR 837 @ Cemetery Road - Replace retaining wall	Carroll Township	2005	2
53	Crookham Bridge - Bridge replacement	Carroll Township	2008	2
34	SR 88 @ SR 1006 Intersection improvements	Finleyville Borough	2006	2
48	Linden Road @ SR 1053 - Intersection reconstruction	Nottingham Township	2007	2
54	Mingo Bridge #2 - Bridge replacement	Union Township	2008	2
6	SR 837 Slide repair	Union Township	2004	1

**Project Status**

1. Budgeted on the TIP in 2003 or 2004.
2. Fully budgeted on the 2005-2008 TIP
3. Partially budgeted on the 2005-2008

Source: Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission



## **Transportation System**

An efficient transportation system moves people and goods within and across an area safely and efficiently through a variety of modes. The planning region's transportation network includes roads, rail lines, bridges, an airport, waterways, bicycle trails, and pedestrian paths. Modes of transportation include motor vehicles, trains, boats, airplanes, bicycles, and walking. Addressing the planning region's future transportation needs begins with a sound understanding of the region's existing and proposed transportation system.

### **Roads**

The planning region's primary roads are those that traverse the area from north to south. Because of the region's geographic location and its historical connections and links to established trade routes (Pittsburgh to the north and Brownsville and other points to the south), its north/south road connections predominate. These roads include PA Routes 43, 88, and 837. The region's primary east/west roads, e.g., PA Route 136, Venetia Road, and Finleyville-Elrama Road, carry lesser traffic volumes, but the Mon Fayette Expressway (PA Route 43) may significantly increase traffic volumes on these roads.

The planning region's road system is a vital element in its overall transportation network. Since vehicular traffic is the main existing and projected mode of transport, the road system will continue to be the basis of transportation through and within the region.

The roadway system in the planning region is comprised of a variety of roads. These roads are defined as a hierarchy, identifying both the function and level of demand for each road. Functional classification reflects how a roadway fits into the larger transportation network. This includes whether a roadway serves residents traveling within the region, or serves motorists traveling through the region. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) has defined the following road classifications:

- **Arterials:**

Arterials primarily serve through and regional traffic on roads designed for mobility. They are subdivided into roads that are part of the Interstate System, and Other Arterials.

- **Interstate Highways, Other Freeways, and Expressways:**

This classification consists of all presently designated freeway routes meeting the Interstate geometric and construction standards for future traffic. It is the highest classification of arterial roads and streets and provides the highest level of mobility, at the highest speed, for a long uninterrupted distance.

- **Other Arterials:**

These consist of limited-access freeways, multi-lane highways, and other important highways supplementing the interstate system. Other Arterials connect, as directly as practicable, the

nation's principal urbanized areas, cities, and industrial centers; serve the national defense; and connect at suitable border points with routes of continental importance.

- **Connectors**

Collectors provide land access service and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas, and downtown city centers. Collectors connect local roads and streets with arterials and provide less mobility than arterials at lower speed and for a shorter distance.

- **Locals**

Local roads and streets provide a high level of access to abutting land but offer limited mobility.

Table 9-2 below lists the arterials and collectors within the planning region. All other roads within the planning region are local roads and streets.

**Table 9-2**  
**Arterials and Collectors in the Planning Region**

Road	Classification
Toll PA Route 43	Interstate Highways, Other Freeways and Expressways
PA Route 88	Other Arterials - Principal Arterial Roadway
PA Route 837	Other Arterials - Principal Arterial Roadway
PA Route 481	Other Arterials - Minor Arterial Roadway

*Source: PA Department of Transportation*

### Existing and Projected Traffic Volumes

The following table lists traffic volumes for main roads in the planning region. Maps 9-2 to 9-5 illustrate traffic volumes on state routes in the four municipalities.

**Table 9-3**  
**Annual Average Daily Traffic (ADT) 2003**

Main Road	Traffic Count
Toll Road 43/Mon Fayette Expressway (border of Allegheny County to I-70)	5,800 - 11,000
PA Route 88 (from Allegheny County border to Finleyville)	7,900 - 11,000
PA Route 88 (from Finleyville to SR 837)	6,500 - 5,800
PA Route 88 (from City of Monongahela to Charleroi)	9,300 - 13,000
PA Route 136 (from SR 88 to City of Washington)	3,500 - 6,600
PA Route 837 (from Allegheny County border to SR 88)	7,800 - 10,00
PA Route 837 (from SR 88 to Donora)	3,800 - 9,400

*Source: Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, 2004*



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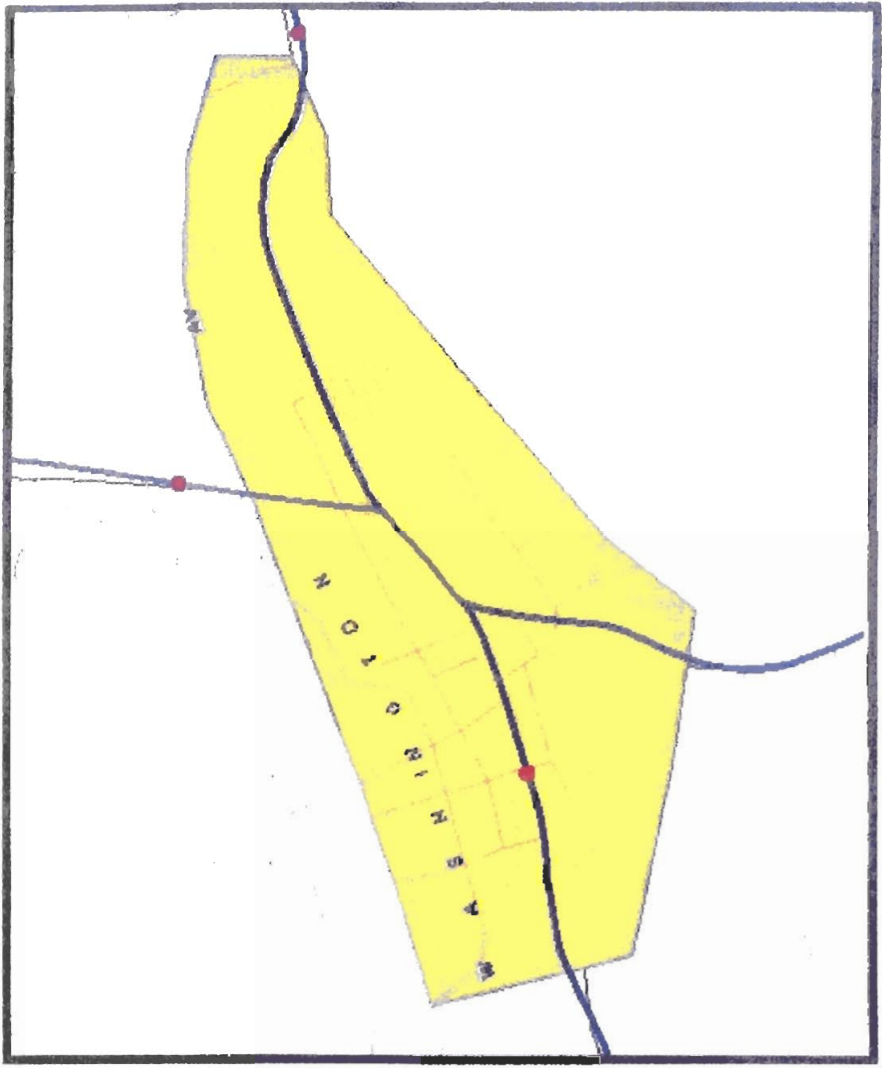
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PA Route 136 (from SR 88 to City of Washington)	3,500 - 6,600
PA Route 837 (from Allegheny County border to SR 88)	7,800 - 10,00
PA Route 837 (from SR 88 to Donora)	3,800 - 9,400

*Source: Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, 2004*

Map 9-3  
 Existing Traffic Volumes on State Routes in Finleyville Borough

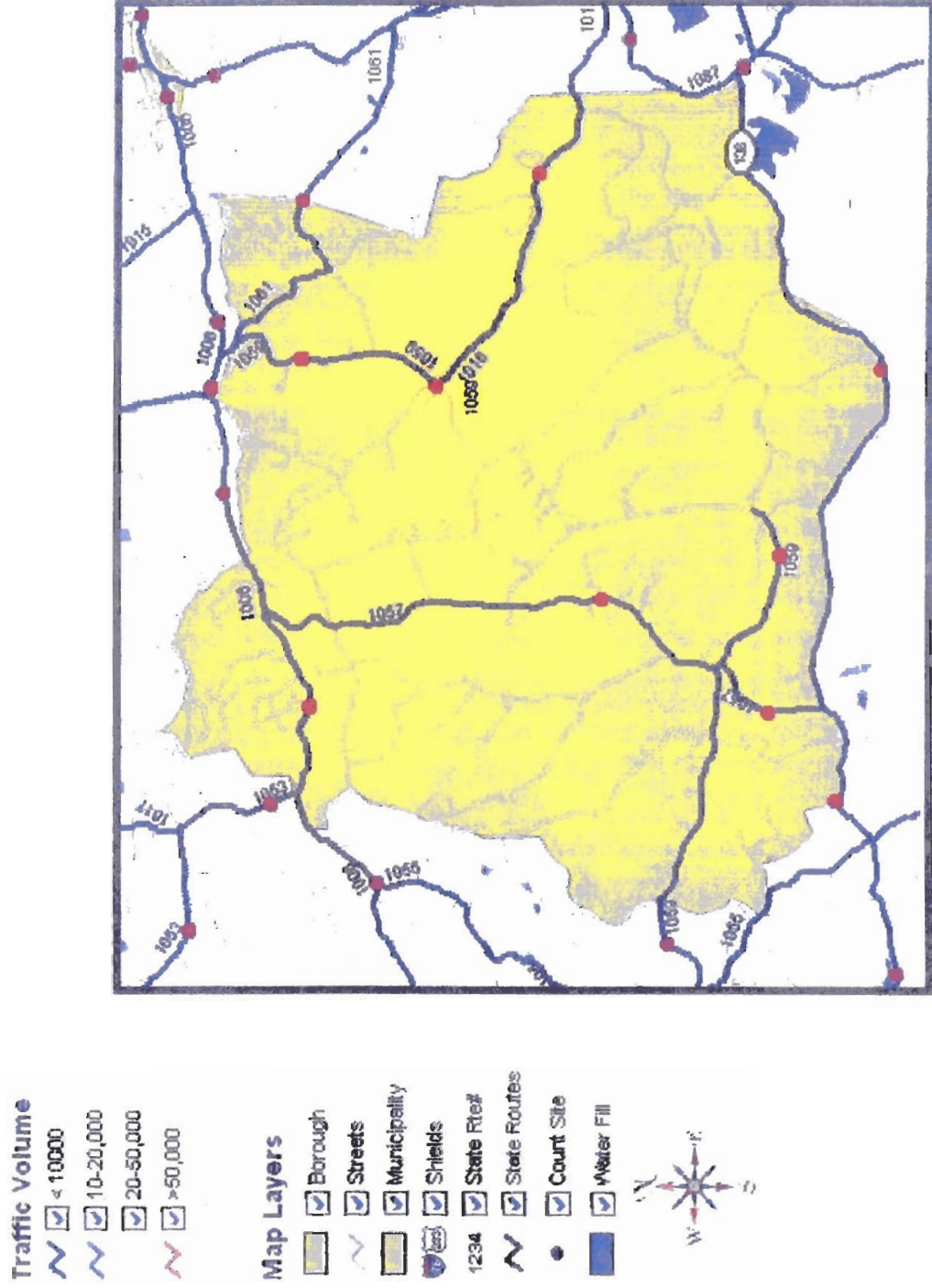
- Traffic Volume**
-   ≤ 10,000
  -   10-20,000
  -   20-50,000
  -   ≥ 50,000

- Map Layers**
- Borough
  - Street Name
  - Streets
  - Municipality
  - State Routes
  - Count Site

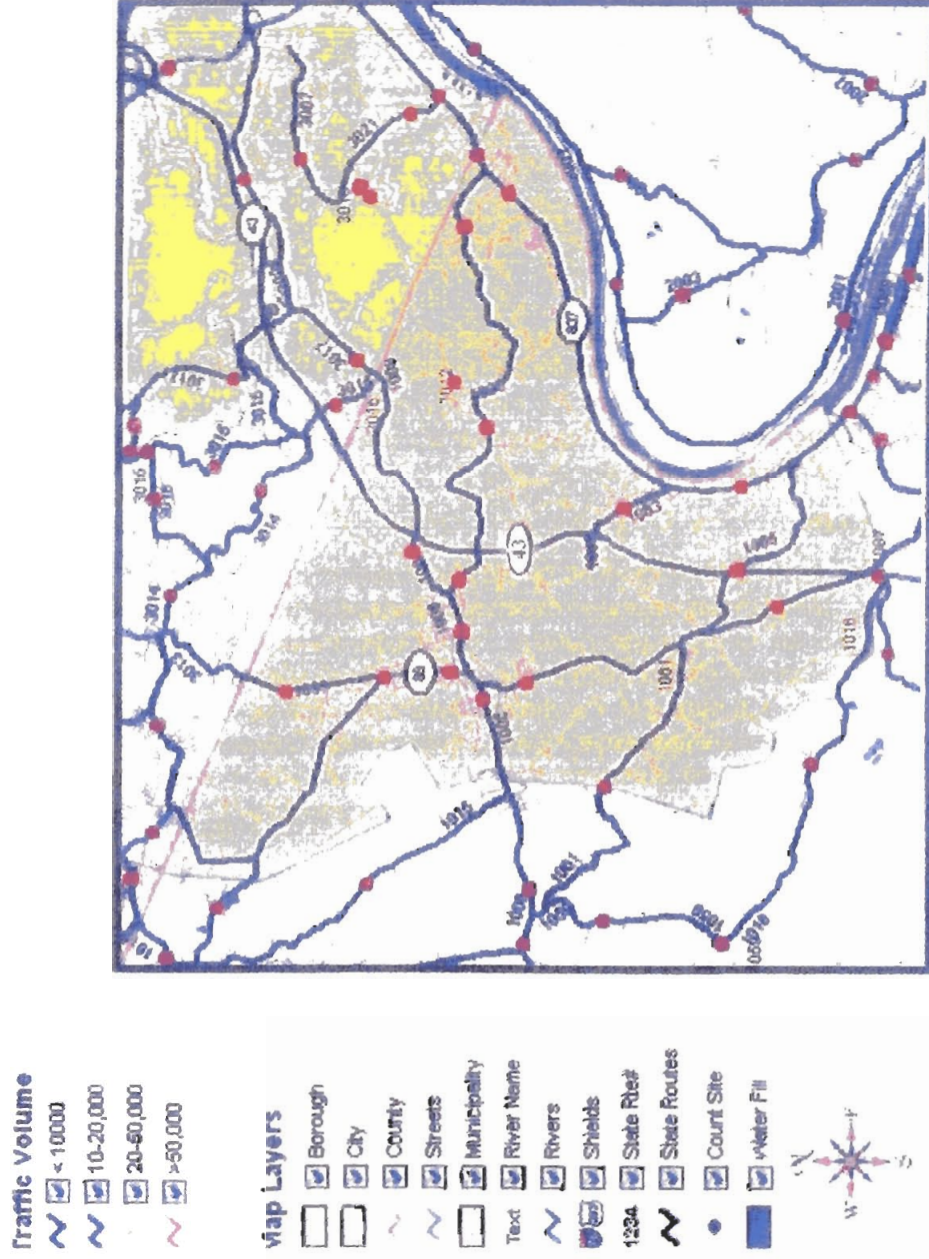


Source: PennDOT 2004

Map 9-4  
 Existing Traffic Volumes on State Routes in Nottingham Township



Map 9-5  
Existing Traffic Volumes on State Routes in Union Township



Source: PennDOT 2004

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) has projected expected traffic growth on major roads within the planning region. SPC's projected linear annual growth rates for these roads are as follows:

**Table 9-4**  
**Linear Annual Growth**

PA Route 43	0.5% to 0.9%
PA Route 88	0.2% to 0.7%
PA Route 837	0.2% to 0.7%
PA Route 136	0.0% to 1.8%
PA Route 481	0.4% to 1.2%

*Source: Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission*

PA Route 136 is a rural minor arterial road. SPC's projected linear annual growth rate for PA Route 136 (0.0% - 1.8%) exceeds PennDot's statewide average growth rate for rural minor arterials (1.3%). All other projected growth rates fall within the statewide average growth rates for the applicable road classifications.

### **Congestion Issues:**

As area residents who attended comprehensive plan public meetings noted, the planning region is experiencing steadily increasing traffic congestion on some of its major roads. Traffic congestion can be due to a number of factors including high traffic volumes, road alignment and conditions, traffic signal timing and synchronization, etc. The current TIP includes several small-scale projects (i.e., intersection improvements, turning lanes, signalization improvements, etc.) that will relieve congestion and facilitate the flow of traffic on roads in the planning region. These projects include the following:

- SR 88 at SR 837 in Carroll Township – add turn lane and signal improvements
- SR 88 at SR 1006 in Finleyville Borough – intersection improvements
- Linden Road at SR 1053 in Nottingham Township – intersection reconstruction

Additional improvements will be needed in the future to accommodate traffic generated by development within the planning region and the surrounding area, especially traffic resulting from the Mon Fayette Expressway and the Southern Beltway.

Traffic studies performed in connection with a proposed shopping center on Rt. 88 in Union Township determined that the proposed development would have a major impact on area traffic. Among the adverse impacts of the proposed development were increased traffic volumes, diminished traffic flow, and reduced or unacceptable levels of service at the following intersections on Rt. 88:

- Trax Road and Route 88
- Shady Avenue/Gayle Drive and Route 88
- Cordox Road and Route 88
- Brownsville Road/Jason Drive and Route 88

The proposed development would thus require substantial improvements to Route 88 to maintain acceptable levels of services on this road.

Even without the proposed development, growth in the Route 88 corridor and the resulting increase in traffic volumes will produce drops in the levels of service at some of Route 88 intersections during peak hours. In fact, existing traffic volumes at the Trax Road/Route 88 intersection warrant the installation of a traffic signal, even without any additional development.

### **Mon Fayette Expressway and Southern Beltway**

Two major factors affecting the transportation needs of the planning region are the Mon Fayette Expressway (PA Route 43) and the proposed Southern Beltway. These roads are PA Turnpike Commission projects. Both of these highways will result in increased land development and traffic volumes in the region.

When completed, the Mon Fayette Expressway will be over 70 miles long and will connect I-68 in West Virginia with I-376 in Pittsburgh via Fayette, Washington, and Allegheny Counties. The completed portion of the Mon Fayette Expressway includes 17 miles of toll road between PA Route 51 in Allegheny County and I-70 in Washington County. This stretch includes about 10 miles and two interchanges in the planning region – one in Union Township (Finleyville-Elrama Road) and one in Carroll Township (PA Route 136). (Another interchange – with Coyle Curtain Road – is located in Fallowfield Township, just south of the Carroll Township-Fallowfield Township border.) The Mon Fayette Expressway is expected to relieve traffic congestion on PA Routes 88 and 837, but it is also expected to generate additional traffic on other area roads. This is especially true for roads that have an interchange with the Mon Fayette Expressway, e.g., PA Route 136.

The Southern Beltway will run between PA Route 60 in Allegheny County and the Mon Fayette Expressway in Union Township. The alignment of this road between the North Strabane Township-Nottingham Township border and the Mon Fayette Expressway is still uncertain, but it will include one interchange with Sugar Run Road in Nottingham Township.

The impact of the Mon Fayette Expressway and the Southern Beltway on regional road traffic volumes may be significant, especially near the interchanges. The four municipalities will need to work with Washington County and PennDOT to monitor traffic volumes on regional roads to help identify improvements needed to accommodate increased traffic due to the Expressway and Beltway.

## Condition of Local Roads

Planning region roads that are not under federal, state, or county jurisdiction are maintained by the four municipalities. Each of the municipalities prepares and annually updates a street maintenance and improvement program. The condition of planning roads varies, but most roads are in good condition and are well maintained.

Since vehicular traffic is the primary present and anticipated future mode of transportation in the planning region, the four municipalities must continue to work with the state and county to maintain and improve the road network.

## Bridges

Bridges are an essential element of a transportation system, especially in areas with numerous waterways to be spanned. The planning region contains 51 state-maintained bridges, nine county-maintained bridges and three locally maintained bridges.

The following chart shows the number and type of bridges (by jurisdiction) in the planning region.

	State Bridges	County Bridges	Local Bridges
Carroll Township	25	2	2
Finley Borough	2	0	0
Nottingham Township	9	6	1
Union Township	<u>15</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	51	9	3

Maintaining bridges in a structurally sound condition prevents the need to close them or post them with weight limits. Posted and closed bridges limit access and/or necessitate detours, resulting in inconveniences for motorists traveling within and through an area. Posted and closed bridges also pose public safety concerns by increasing the amount of time that emergency vehicles take to reach their destinations. Regular maintenance, rehabilitation, and replacement are needed to insure that bridges continue to serve their vital function in a transportation system.

The current TIP includes the following bridge replacement projects in the planning region:

- SR 481 Pigeon Creek Bridge in Carroll Township
- Crookham Bridge in Carroll Township
- Mingo Bridge #2 in Union Township

In order to keep the planning region's bridges functioning as essential elements of the area's transportation system, the four municipalities should continue to collaborate with PennDOT and Washington County to identify needed bridge maintenance, rehabilitation, and replacement, and to secure federal, state, and county funding for such work.

**Public Transit**

The Mid Mon Valley Transit Authority and the Washington County Transit Authority provide public transportation to planning region residents. These services include transportation programs that serve the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Through the Route 88 Transit Lines, the Mid Mon Valley Transit Authority (MMVTA) provides fixed route public transportation within the Mon Valley and between the Mon Valley and the City of Pittsburgh. Three planning region communities are serviced by MMVTA's bus routes – Carroll Township, Finleyville Borough, and Union Township. Nottingham Township has no fixed route public transportation service.

MMVTA routes that service the planning region are listed in the following table.

**Table 9-5**  
**Planning Region Service from**  
**Mid Mon Valley Transit Authority Routes**

Route	Municipalities Served			Frequency
	Carroll Twp.	Finleyville	Union Twp.	
<b>Route A</b> (Charleroi-Pittsburgh commuter)	X	X	X	every 1/2 hour peak, hourly off peak weekdays; hourly Saturdays; 2 inbound, 2 outbound trips Sundays/holidays
<b>Route B</b> (California to New Eagle)	X			3 inbound and 3 outbound trips every 2-3 hours between 9:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. on weekdays
<b>Blue Line</b> (Donora to Mon Valley Hospital)	X			hourly service between 9:30 A.M. and 3:30 P.M. Monday - Friday

Source: Mid Mon Valley Transit Authority

MMVTA's Transit Center on McKean Avenue in Charleroi includes a Park-n-Ride lot.

MMVTA offers free rides to senior citizens (persons age 65 or older) except during peak hours (7:00 A.M. – 7:59 A.M. and 4:30 P.M. – 5:29 P.M., Monday – Friday). Persons with disabilities ride for one-half fare, except during peak hours. Persons with disabilities may qualify for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) UPLIFT Paratransit Service directly to and from their destination. ADA Paratransit riders pay double the normal fare.

The Washington County Transit Authority (WCTA) offers Monday through Friday door-to-door transportation services for medical appointments, shopping, work, visiting, church, or recreational trips. Eligible residents who participate in one of the following subsidized transportation programs receive either free or reduced fares: Medical Assistance, Welfare to Work, Senior

Citizens Shared Ride, Persons with Disabilities, and Veterans. Services are also available to the general public.

WCTA's transportation services are provided via Tri-County Access, which also provides taxi service to the general public in the planning region.

**Rail**

Railroads have an important role in an area's transportation system. They provide a means for transporting both people and goods. Railroads are especially suited for the movement of freight (e.g., motorized vehicles, coal, lumber, etc.) that is difficult or inefficient to transport by highways, waterways, or air.

**Freight Railroads**

Three railroads operate within the planning region – CSX Transportation, Norfolk Southern, and the Wheeling and Lake Erie Railway Company. They connect the area with regional, national, and international markets. Table 9-6 indicates the railroad markets that each of these railroads serves, and Map 9-6 indicates the location of their tracks in the planning region.

**Table 9-6**  
**Railroad Markets Served by Planning Region Railroads**

Railroad Markets Served	Regional	Northeastern States	Southern States	Midwestern States	Western States	Domestic (Entire U.S.)	Canada
CSX Transportation	X		X	X		X	X
Norfolk Southern Corporation	X	X	X	X			X
The Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway Company	X			X			

*Source: Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission*



Rail service is vital to many businesses, especially industrial firms whose shipments cannot be made via other modes of transportation. Maintaining rail service in the planning region is therefore a vital economic development tool for attracting and accommodating businesses that rely on rail access.

#### **Passenger Railroads**

None of the railroads operating in the planning region provide passenger services, and there is no reason to anticipate that they will offer passenger service in the near future. However, circumstances such as high gasoline prices may make passenger rail service an economically feasible alternative to pursue in the future.

#### **Unused Rights-of-Way**

All rail lines in the planning region are actively used by the railroads listed above. As previously noted, maintaining the region's rail infrastructure is important to the economic health of the area. Therefore, if any portion of the existing rail network becomes inactive, its right-of-way should be maintained for railroad or other transportation-related reuse to support future economic development goals. Abandoned rights-of-way may lend themselves to recreational reuses (rails-to-trails projects) or other uses.

### **Airports**

There is one airport in the planning region – Finleyville Airpark in Union Township, one mile southwest of Finleyville Borough. Finleyville Airpark is a general service facility with a 2,505 foot paved runway, 42 based aircraft, and approximately 5,400 annual aircraft operations (PA Bureau of Aviation, 2004). The airpark does not provide scheduled passenger or cargo services.

Finleyville Airpark's short-term development plans include adding hangars and taxiways. The airpark's long-term plans include potential acquisition of property to permit the lengthening of its runway.

### **Waterways**

Washington County is one of 11 counties served by the waterways that make up the Port of Pittsburgh. The Monongahela River, which forms the eastern boundaries of Carroll Township and Union Township, is one of the Port's primary waterways. It serves as a commercial waterway for the transportation of minerals, petroleum products, chemicals, and other materials.

To maintain navigability, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates and maintains a series of locks and dams on the Monongahela River. None of the locks and dams is located in the planning region, but Lock and Dam 4 near Charleroi controls the navigability of the river in the planning region.

As with other modes of transportation, maintaining and improving waterway infrastructure is critical to the vitality and viability of the area's transportation system. The Army Corps of Engineers is planning to increase Lock 4's capacity by replacing it with a wider chamber. The Corps' planned

improvements to other locks and dams will improve the efficiency of navigation along the entire length of the Monongahela River in Washington County.

There is one river terminal along the planning region's Monongahela River frontage. In the Shire Oaks section of Union Township, the Norfolk Southern Railroad operates a fuel unloading facility involving rail, trucks and barges.

There are two river terminals in adjacent Donora. The Mon Valley Intermodal, Inc. terminal on SR 837 handles steel, lumber, and bulk materials. It provides various loading and unloading services between barges and trucks or rail. The Norfolk Southern Railroad maintains an 18-car capacity siding at the terminal, and the terminal is eight miles from I-70.

The McGrew Welding and Fabrication Company located in the Mid-Mon (Donora) Industrial Park handles steel, steel products, coal, and bulk materials. It has a Norfolk Southern Railroad siding and is accessible to I-70 via SR 837.

Another nearby river terminal, Dillner Storage and Transfer Company, is located on SR 837 in West Elizabeth Borough in Allegheny County, just north of Union Township. This facility, a truck/river/rail terminal that provides complete distribution services, also has a Norfolk Southern Railroad siding.

## **Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation**

The planning region's limited bicycle and pedestrian transportation infrastructure consists chiefly of sidewalks, paved berms, and bicycle and walking trails.

### **Bicycle**

There are two areas with designated bicycle trails in the planning region – Route 136 and Mingo Creek Park.

Bicycle PA is a statewide bicycle routing system that serves long distance bicyclists' needs. Bicycle PA Route S traverses Pennsylvania from Washington County to Bucks County and includes Route 136 in Carroll and Nottingham Townships.

Mingo Creek Park in Nottingham Township has five trails that are geared to meeting the needs of local recreational hikers and bikers.

### **Pedestrians**

The pedestrian circulation system in the planning region is very limited. With the exception of Finleyville Borough, Mingo Creek Park, and a few areas in the townships, the planning region's vehicular roadway network also serves as the pedestrian circulation network. Due to high traffic volumes on some planning region roads, there are conflicts and safety concerns that stem from having these roads serve the dual function of vehicular and pedestrian circulation systems.

A properly designed bicycle and pedestrian circulation system consisting of sidewalks, paths, and improved road shoulders, is important for the safety

and convenience of planning region residents. Such a system facilitates walking and bicycling, thereby promoting individual health through exercise. It also lessens the practice of using cars for local trips, thereby reducing traffic congestion and energy usage. Therefore, future development in the planning region should include bicycle and pedestrian circulation system elements whenever feasible.

## **Conclusions**

Transportation plays a critical role in the development of an area. Therefore, the maintenance and improvements made to the planning region's transportation system must accommodate the current and future needs of the region.

The planning region's transportation system is composed of roads, rail lines, bridges, an airport, waterways, bicycle routes, and pedestrian paths. This network meets most of the transportation needs of today's residents, workers, and visitors. However, some current unmet needs and the area's future transportation needs will require additions, improvements, and expansions to the current transportation network.

Since vehicular traffic is the primary present and anticipated future mode of transportation in the region, the planning region municipalities must maintain and upgrade the local elements of the transportation network. For the larger elements of the transportation network, the municipalities must collaborate with Washington County, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to maintain and improve the road network, including the upkeep of bridges.

## **Implementation**

The following goals and objectives are proposed to develop and maintain an integrated transportation system to meet the planning region's present and future needs:

**Goal:** Maintain, improve, and upgrade the existing transportation network.

**Objectives:**

1. Maintain existing municipal systems for identifying, prioritizing, and implementing road and bridge improvements.
2. Maintain cooperation and collaboration with Washington County, PennDOT, the PA Turnpike Commission, and other agencies to identify and implement needed improvements to roads, bridges, waterways, railroads, and other elements of the existing transportation system.
3. Develop support and consensus among local, county, state, and federal officials and legislators to lobby for additional funding for planning region transportation projects and to insure prompt completion of local Transportation Improvement Program projects.

4. Encourage the prompt completion of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' replacement of Lock and Dam No. 4 on the Monongahela River to enhance waterway transportation.
5. Maintain and improve the existing public transit system.

**Goal:** Improve transportation safety.

**Objectives:**

1. Work with Washington County, PennDOT, and other transportation partners to develop safer alternatives for roads with high accident rates.
2. Identify and complete safety-related projects, including improvements that minimize pedestrian/vehicular conflicts.
3. Discourage highway strip commercial development, support clustered developments, and encourage connecting service roads between commercial developments.

**Goal:** Develop a transportation network to meet the region's future needs.

**Objectives:**

1. Continue to work with Washington County, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, PennDOT, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Port of Pittsburgh, the Mid Mon Valley Transit Authority, railroad companies, and others to identify, prioritize, and implement improvements to and expansion of the transportation network.
2. Encourage the prompt completion of the Southern Beltway in the planning region.
3. Monitor the impact of the Mon Fayette Expressway and the Southern Beltway on planning region local roads and work with county, state, and federal agencies to implement improvements that address the increased traffic that these roads generate, thereby reducing traffic congestion and improving traffic flow.
4. Encourage alternative transportation systems, including bicycle and pedestrian circulation systems, in existing and new developments to link residential and commercial areas.
5. Investigate the feasibility of an enhanced public transit system via additional bus routes, commuter rail service, additional park-and-ride lots, extended "T" service from

Allegheny County into Union Township and beyond, etc.

6. Acquire abandoned railroad rights-of-way and convert them to trails for recreation and transportation use.
7. Encourage a multi-modal approach to regional transportation issues to help produce an integrated transportation network.