

Mon-Fayette Transportation Project

A. From I-68 in Monongalia County, West Virginia to SR 6119 in Fayette County, Pennsylvania¹

The Mon/Fayette Transportation Project (MFTP) from I-68 in West Virginia to Pennsylvania Route 43 is a new highway facility, as part of the overall transportation project for the Monongahela Valley. The purpose of the proposed highway is to improve traffic safety and movement in the project area while supporting both local and regional economic growth.

The project consists of a multi-lane limited access highway (tolled in Pennsylvania) extending approximately 12 miles in Monongalia County, West Virginia and Fayette County, Pennsylvania. The project area extends from just east of Morgantown, West Virginia to Fairchance, Pennsylvania.

The Fayette County portion of this section of the expressway opened on March 1, 2000. The 7.8-mile expressway generally parallels PA Route 857 in a north-south direction and connects to the four-mile PA Route 43 (Chadville Demonstration Project), a non-tolled expressway that ties to U.S. Route 119 near Uniontown.

The primary purpose of the project was to address the current and future traffic problems on Route 119 and Route 857. These routes are the primary north-south highways that serve the Morgantown and Uniontown corridor. Safety concerns involved high accident rates for these routes. Accident data indicated 34% of the length of Route 119 and 56% of the length of Route 857 in this area exhibited accident rates higher than the statewide rates for similar highway facilities. Anticipated increases in congestion would also cause travel delays and could increase the potential for accidents. Safety problems on Routes 857 and 119 are compounded by truck traffic. Thirteen percent of the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) on Route 857 and five percent of the ADT along Route 119 consist of trucks. Truck flow is impeded by steep grades and winding roadways.

Several secondary roadways provide east-west access from Route 119 to Route 857 in the Mon-Fayette Expressway area. These include Gans Road (SR 3002), SR 3004, Ruble Mill Road (SR 3007) and Big Six Road (SR 3014) in Pennsylvania. Interchanges are provided at Big Six Road near Fayette Business Park, Ruble Mill Road, and Gans Road. The proposed expressway will increase traffic volumes on the secondary roadways where interchange access is provided. The following is an identification of improvements to these secondary roadways associated with the expressway construction as well as identification of improvements projected as a result of future growth that will need to be addressed as separate projects completed by PennDOT.

The interchange with Gans Road is the initial entry and exit point with completion of the West Virginia Section. This is a diamond interchange with associated safety upgrades of Gans Road. It is projected that traffic volumes will more than double (700 to 1,500 vehicles per day) along Gans Road. Improvements to Gans Road include upgrades to the intersection of Gans Road and Route 857 and horizontal and vertical adjustments from the intersection of Route 857 to the interchange. As volumes increase, future improvements may include both horizontal and vertical adjustments in two or three locations from the expressway to the intersection of Route 119 and could also include minor widening of the roadway.

Minimal traffic volume increases are projected for SR 3004 (from 700 to 800 vehicles per day). There is no interchange proposed at this location. The roadway will remain open from Route 119 to Route 857.

¹ Final Environmental Impact Statement/Section 4(f) Evaluation/Section 404 Permit (July 1994)

A diamond interchange exits at the crossing of Ruble Mill Road. It is projected that traffic will increase from 1,900 to 3,000 vehicles along Ruble Mill Road. The existing Ruble Mill Road was upgraded and partially relocated to manage the traffic flow to and from the highway. Improvements to Ruble Mill Road included an intersection reconnection to the proposed service roadway and an improved intersection with Route 857. As volumes increase, minor widening would likely need to occur. Future improvements to Ruble Mill Road may include both horizontal and vertical adjustment in two locations and an additional vertical adjustment under the existing railroad near Smithfield. The intersection of Ruble Mill Road and Route 119 in Smithfield would also require improvement.

A mainline toll plaza is located north of the interchange with Ruble Mill Road prior to the northernmost interchange which is the connection with the partially constructed diamond interchange with Route 43 at Big Six Road (SR 3014). Big Six Road was previously improved as part of the Route 43 interchange and not additional improvements were completed as part of the expressway project.

B. Uniontown to Brownsville Area, Fayette and Washington Counties, Pennsylvania²

The proposed project is construction of a four lane, limited access toll facility originating at PA Route 88 in Centerville, Washington County, crossing under US Route 40 east of Brownsville, generally paralleling Route 40 to the north and terminating at Route 119 in North Union Township, Fayette County. The purpose of the project is to bring needed traffic and safety improvements to the area at to assist redevelopment efforts for this economically depressed corridor in southwestern Pennsylvania.

The project is currently in the environmental and engineering study phase. The project includes intermediate interchanges at four locations. New bridges are over the Monongahela River and Dunlap Creek. Four 12-foot lanes separated by 60-foot median. There is an extensive amount of side road involvement due to the existing condition of the local roadway network and the need to improve access to the proposed interchanges. A “North Alternative” has been recommended as follows:

Interchange 1 - Western Terminus – Centerville Borough, Washington County

- Alternatives Analysis - Three locations considered – California, West Brownsville and Centerville. Centerville was chosen as it best provides access for the Brownsville area and for Monongahela Rive communities to the south. Also the public and resource agencies supported this over other locations.
- Mitigation (Shown on Plate 1 and 2)
 - PA Route 88 north of interchange is divided four-lane highway constructed with federal funds. PA Route 88 will connect directly to Expressway at Western Terminus.

² Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Section 4(f) Evaluation/Section 404 Permit Application (October 1999)

- East and westbound off-ramps provided from PA Route 88 to Old Route 88 to facilitate traffic flow. Toll plazas will require FHWA and PennDOT approval since federal funds uses to construct Route 88. Turnpike considering transfer of ownership of Route 88 south of Route 40.
- South of interchange, Route 88 is undivided. Ramp access provided to expressway eastbound from Route 88 south of interchange. Noble Road would be relocated approximately 800 feet to the south to form a four-way at-grade intersection with the on-ramp. Turn lanes will be provided on Route 88 for access to interchange ramp.
- Impact - Employment and Population are not projected to increase due to the interchange location. No acreage requirements for future projections since no growth projected. Centerville Borough does not currently have public sewer, but future service is proposed in this area. The land uses in the area of this interchange is agricultural, forest land, and range land.

Mainline Impact

- Bridge constructed over Monongahela River and Labelle Road.

Interchange 2 – Luzerne Township

- Mitigation (Shown on Plate 3-5)
 - Bull Run Road (S.R. 4003) would be closed and relocated through the interchange. A full interchange will be constructed with connection to the relocated Bull Run Road. The mainline will bridge over Bull Run Road. Toll Plazas will be located on the ramps west of the interchange (westbound off-ramp and eastbound on-ramp).
 - Alicia Heights Road (T-603) would be relocated to intersect the relocated Bull Run Road on the north side of the interchange.
 - Telegraph Road (T-601) would be relocated to intersect the relocated Alicia Heights Road.
 - Telegraph Road Extension (T-601) would be closed crossing the interchange area and reconstructed to intersect with Bull Run Road south of the interchange.
 - Shepler Road would be closed to facilitate construction for the interchange. A new connection would be constructed to relocated Bull Run Road.
 - Alicia Heights Road (T-603) will be relocated by other public agency to connect to proposed State Prison. Relocation will provide access to the interchange from relocated Bull Run Road to Alicia Road (S.R. 4022). A left turn lane would be provided on Alicia Road to Alicia Heights Road. Improvement not by Turnpike Commission but by other State or Municipal program.
 - Impact - Employment and population not projected to increase due to interchange location. No acreage requirements since no growth was projected. Any job creation can be absorbed in land on both sides of Monongahela River. Ample sites at the former Hillman Barge Company near southern part of Brownsville and in LaBelle. Interchange will stimulate construction of new housing in Luzerne – recent grant approval for expansion of sewer service in area near proposed interchange (\$4.8 million for 512 homes). Provides a link to

the Brownsville Borough central business district. There is no current sewer service in the area of this interchange, nor is any proposed in the near future. The predominant land uses in the area of the proposed interchange consists of agricultural, forest land, and range land.

Mainline Mitigation – Redstone Township (Shown on plates 6 and 7)

- Simpson Road (T-326) would be closed near the Jacob Zeager Farm and relocated to PA Route 166.
- Davidson Siding Road (T-605) would be bridged by the expressway approximately 1,200 feet south of US Route 40.

National Road (Route 40) Crossover – Redstone Township

- Alternative Analysis - Eight potential sites analyzed. Route 40 is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. To minimize environmental impacts consideration was given to historic environmental and visual resources. North alternative crosses Route 40 East of Brownsville at Allison Road East. Location at two lane section of Route 40 where bowling alley is located. Historic Brownsville Drive-in is just west.
- Mitigation (shown on plates 6 and 7)
 - Proposing an expressway underpass where Route 40 would bridge over, to reduce viewshed impact and avoid the historic Drive-in.
 - Crossing is just west of the proposed Redstone Township interchange.

Interchange 3 – Redstone Township (“Brownsville-Redstone Interchange”)

- Mitigation (Shown on Plates 6-11)
 - Brownsville Connector Road would be built from Route 40, just south of the interchange, through the interchange and follow north of Route 40 (1.5 miles) to the existing Brownsville stub.
 - A full interchange would be constructed with access to the Brownsville Connector Road. Tolls would be placed at the westbound on-ramp and eastbound off-ramp.
 - Turn lanes would be provided on Route 40 for turns onto the Brownsville Connector Road where it intersects Route 40 south of the mainline.
 - Existing half-diamond interchange would be replaced with an at grade intersection.
- Impact – Job opportunities are expected to grow by nearly 200 by the year 2020. This results in the need for approximately eight acres of land (assumed commercial). Businesses are likely to locate near existing development areas because of the lower start-up costs associated with occupant-ready sites and the commercial synergy typically created by such activity areas. There is no existing capacity to handle the limited amount of growth expect and development is more likely to occur at greenfield sites. There are no industrial parks located in the municipality. Future development is dependent upon the provision of public water and sewage

treatment. The predominant land uses in the area of the proposed interchange include forest lands, urban or developed lands, and industrial land.

Mainline Mitigation – Redstone Township (Shown on plates 8-11)

- Davidson Road (T-422) would be upgraded and bridge the mainline east of the interchange.
- Calvin Run Road (T-442) would be closed to construct the mainline expressway and a new access road (2,000 feet) would be built between Davidson Road and Calvin Run Road.
- A bridge would be built on Royal Road (S.R. 4016) to span the expressway mainline
- Patterson Road (T-444) and Old Royal Road (T-446) would be closed where the expressway mainline would bisect them.

Mainline Toll Plaza – Redstone Township

- Mainline Toll Plaza would be located just west of the Searights interchange.

Interchange 4 – Menallen Township (“Searights Interchange”)

- Mitigation (See Plate 13)
 - Upper Middletown Road (S.R. 4010) would be relocated to the west as it crosses the interchange area to facilitate construction of the interchange. A full interchange will connect to the relocated roadway. Toll plazas will be included on the ramps to the east (the westbound off-ramp and eastbound on-ramp). The relocated roadway will bridge the mainline between the ramps. A center left turn lane would be provided to provide left turns to the interchange ramps.
 - Pleasant View-Smock Road (S.R. 4009) will be relocated to the north of the interchange and connect to Upper Middletown Road. Traffic flow in the area will be impacted. The existing portion of Pleasant View-Smock Road to the west of the mainline will be terminated in a cul-de-sac.
- Impact - Job opportunities are expected to grow by 140 by the year 2020. This results in the need for approximately six acres of land (assumed commercial). It is likely that the interchange locations will stimulate economic activity and attract growth adjacent to the facility. Businesses are likely to locate near existing development areas because of the lower start-up costs associated with occupant-ready sites and the commercial synergy typically created by such activity areas. There is not existing capacity to handle the limited amount of growth expected and development is more likely to occur at greenfield sites. There are no industrial parks located in the municipality. Future development is dependent upon the provision of public water and sewage treatment. There is no sewer service currently in place, although service is proposed south of the interchange within Menallen Township. The predominant land uses in the area of the proposed interchange include forest lands, urban or developed lands, and industrial land.

Mainline Mitigation in Menallen Township

- A bridge would be built on Canistra Road (T-553) to span the expressway mainline. (Plate 14)
- Langely Road (T-528) would be closed via cul-de-sacs where the mainline bisects it. (Plate 15)

Mainline Mitigation in North Union Township

- A bridge will be constructed over Jennings Run (Plate 17)

Interchange 5 – North Union Township

- Connector to Route 51 and Connector to Route 40
- Mitigation (Plates 16-19)
 - Altman Hill Road (T-652) will be closed via cul-de-sacs. (Plate 17)
 - Old Pittsburgh Road (T-986) would be relocated to the east and improved through the interchange area. Northeast Ramp (westbound on ramp) connects from Old Pittsburgh Road. Mainline bridge over relocated Old Pittsburgh Road.
 - Connector constructed between Old Pittsburgh Road and PA Route 51.
 - Northwest Ramp (eastbound off-ramp) connects to Fan Hollow Road (T-719). Connection between Old Pittsburgh Road and Fan Hollow Road.
 - Fan Hollow Road would be improved between Old Pittsburgh Road and Route 40. Fan Hollow Road would be relocated to form four-way intersection with Duck Hollow Road (T-584) at Route 40.
 - Left turn lanes on Route 40 approaches.
- Impact – In North Union Township, job opportunities are expected to grow by 695 by the year 2020. This results in the need for approximately 29 acres of land (assumed commercial). In South Union Township the largest growth is expected of 1,459 new jobs with the corresponding need for over 60 acres of land. It is likely that the interchange locations will stimulate economic activity and attract growth adjacent to the facility. Businesses are likely to locate near existing development areas because of the lower start-up costs associated with occupant-ready sites and the commercial synergy typically created by such activity areas. There are already strong economic forces stimulating development in North and South Union Township, there is ample space in existing commercial sites, industrial clusters, proposed business parks, or likely development sites. Sewer service is proposed for the immediate area of this interchange. There is no current service. The current land uses in the area of the proposed interchange consists of agricultural, forest land, and range land.

Interchange 6 – Eastern Terminus

- Alternative Analysis - Considered North Union Township Terminus and South Union Township Terminus. North Union Township chosen as connection to PA Route 51 better service industrial parks, PSAU Campus and travelers to Connellsville/New Stanton/Greensburg without severe economic/land use impacts. Public and political support.

South Union Township experiencing growth already and now land not available. Also South Union Township would have negative impact to Route 21 and 119.

- Mitigation - This interchange connects directly with U.S. Route 119 at the existing Route 51 interchange.
- Impacts – see North Union Interchange