



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 4, 2022

Wolf Administration Highlights Interstate 70, Route 51 Interchange Improvements and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Investments

Uniontown, PA – Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) officials provided a project update of the I-70 and Route 51 Interchange Improvement Project and discussed the benefits of the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) in Pennsylvania and the southwestern region.

Statewide, the BIL invests \$4 billion in Pennsylvania over the next five years through new federal highway and bridge funds, including \$560 million in new funds for 2022 federal fiscal year alone. Over the next five years, PennDOT District 12's Fayette, Greene, Washington, and Westmoreland counties will see at least \$134 million investments from the BIL.

"Thanks to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Pennsylvanians are seeing more roadway and bridge improvements than would have been possible without it," said PennDOT Acting Executive Deputy Secretary Melissa Batula. "We have no shortage of needs, and we have many meaningful projects that will modernize our infrastructure while creating sustainable, good-paying jobs."

Over the next five years, PennDOT District 12, along with its business partners, will carry out construction of the I-70 and Route 51 Interchange Improvement Project. The project is included in District 12's I-70 Modernization strategy that includes investment the I-70 corridor from Washington to the New Stanton Interchange. It will involve the widening and reconstruction of over two miles of I-70, modernization of Route 51 through reconstruction of one mile of roadway, relocation of Finley Road and Route 981, and work to improve nine structures, in addition to other associated improvements.

A Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) will be constructed to replace the current substandard cloverleaf interchange at Route 51. This will be District 12's second DDI project, the other constructed at the Route 19 and I-70 interchange in South Strabane Township, Washington County, which was the first DDI constructed in Pennsylvania.

With an original contract value of over \$120 million, the project is the largest project by dollar value in District 12's history. The project is also supported by the BIL through a \$20 million cashflow adjustment using dedicated bridge funding. The adjustment has allowed additional roadway work to be completed on the interstate.

A few examples of PennDOT District 12 projects that will benefit from the BIL include:

- Laurel Valley Transportation Improvement Project (Route 819 to Norvelt) in Westmoreland County, with a total project cost of \$55.2 million and a BIL cashflow adjustment of approximately \$4 million.
- Route 2027 over I-70 in Washington County, with a total project cost of \$5.6 million and a BIL investment of \$4.3 million, which allowed the project to advance.
- Route 21 over Route 166 in Fayette County, with a total project cost of \$8.2 million and a BIL cashflow adjustment of \$3.9 million.
- Three local bridge projects in Washington County with project costs totaling \$6 million through BIL investments.

“We are thankful for this funding as it will continue to help southwestern Pennsylvania move forward in safety, mobility, and improved infrastructure,” said District 12 Executive Bill Kovach.”

Work began this construction season and has included utility relocations, exploration of geotechnical data, clearing and grubbing, erosion, and sedimentation control measures, as well as excavation for the relocation of Finley Road. In addition, the contractor has begun demolishing buildings, performing embankment work, excavating for stormwater basins, and performing structure work. Nighttime milling and paving operations on westbound and eastbound I-70 are occurring with single-lane restrictions. Jack and bore pipe operations have started west of the interchange while additional clearing and grubbing and erosion and sedimentation control measures are ongoing.

Moving into winter, work to install geotechnical treatments, demolish buildings, install additional culvert extension excavation shorings, relocate sewers, and initiate standard drainage will continue. Motorists will experience minor traffic impacts with work occurring on the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad bridge over Route 51, the Route 51 bridge over I-70, and the Matthew Smelser Memorial Bridge. Overnight single-lane restrictions on I-70 will continue with the potential for daylight single-lane restrictions on Route 51 and I-70. While variability occurs in construction schedules, the 2023 construction season is anticipated to involve reconstruction work primarily on the western end of the project to facilitate the adjacent, upcoming I-70 Arnold City Project.

As construction projects continue throughout the region, the traveling public is urged to keep in mind their safety and the safety of highway workers. When encountering a work zone, please drive the posted speed limit, turn on your headlights, pay close attention to signs and flaggers and avoid all distractions. In high traffic locations, motorists are encouraged to use both lanes of travel to the merge point and to take turns merging into the open lane.

To help keep motorists informed as work progresses, the [I-70 Projects website](#) was created to alert the public of upcoming restrictions. Motorists can also subscribe to PennDOT news in Fayette, Greene, Washington, and Westmoreland counties at www.penndot.pa.gov/District12.

Motorists can check conditions on more than 40,000 roadway miles, including color-coded winter conditions on 2,900 miles by visiting www.511PA.com. 511PA, which is free and available 24 hours a day, provides traffic delay warnings, weather forecasts, traffic speed information, and access to more than 1,000 traffic cameras.

511PA is also available through a smartphone application for iPhone and Android devices, by calling 5-1-1, or by [following regional Twitter alerts](#).

Information about infrastructure in District 12, including completed work and significant projects, is available at www.penndot.pa.gov/D12Results. Find PennDOT’s planned and active construction projects at www.projects.penndot.pa.gov.

Follow local PennDOT news on [Twitter](#) and like the department on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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