H A R R I S T O W N S H I P

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The Harris Township Board of Supervisors agrees in principle to the Draft Purpose and Needs analysis in the PEL Study. We do however have several points we would like to add to the draft to ensure our position is understood.

First, we believe that the name of the project should be changed from the State College Area Connector Project to the Route 80 Connector Project, as this better reflects where the majority of the traffic is going. Continuing to refer to it as the State College Area Connector Project sends the message that PennDOT intends to not consider any direct routes that would facilitate travel for trucks from Seven Mountains to I-80.

Second, in 2017, the Board of Supervisors adopted an official statement on this project. It reads as follows: “The Harris Township Board of Supervisors recognizes the need for the Route 322/45/144 project. They understand that this is a heavily traveled corridor with significant safety challenges. They support the work that PennDOT is presently doing to address some of these concerns.

The Board, however, does not support any alignment of the Route 322/45/144 project that would bring the new road through Harris Township. They feel that there is significant truck traffic on this roadway and that this traffic desires to reach I-80. They urge PennDOT to consider an alignment that would allow truck traffic the most direct route to the interstate.

The Board also feels very strongly that the safety improvements that were started by PennDOT on Route 322 should be completed in a timely fashion. Doing nothing or waiting for full funding is not an option, as this is one of the most unsafe roads in the state.”

The purpose behind this project is the need to find a safe route to get the heavy truck traffic from Seven Mountains to the I-80/I-99 corridor. The Township is actively involved in climate change efforts with the Centre Region Council of Governments. We urge PennDOT to consider the direct route to the I-80/I-99 corridor, as this will greatly reduce the overall carbon footprint of this project.

Once the truck traffic has been rerouted, Route 322 could be renamed as Business 322 to provide local access to businesses and residences along the road. That section of road could also be widened and upgraded to improve safety and provide more tools to deal with increased volume due to special events being held in the Centre Region.

Harris Township has been the fastest growing municipality in Centre County for the last 6 years. We worked cooperatively with our residents on several planning initiatives to ensure that this growth has not sacrificed what makes Harris Township unique. We value our open spaces, our historic character and our agricultural areas.

In 2016, we adopted a Small Area Plan that outlines plans for a Road Diet on Boal Avenue/Business Route 322. This proposal would shrink the travel lanes from four to two and provide bicycle lanes. It addresses a desire by our community to make Boal Avenue less aggressive for bicyclists. You can access the Boalsburg Small Area Plan here: <https://www.harristownship.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Boalsburg-Small-Area-Plan-June-2016-.pdf>

In 2012, we started work on a comprehensive rewrite of our rural zoning districts. That project sought to ensure our open space and prime farm land were being protected, while also providing for appropriate use of the land. That project is slated to be completed in early 2021, when the new ordinances are adopted.

We urge PennDOT to include our thoughts in the Draft Purpose and Needs. We feel it is very important that we speak for our residents and that their voices are heard through this document.