

Connecting People and Places Executive Summary

Williamsport Area Transportation Study
Metropolitan Planning Organization

Long Range Transportation Plan 2045

Plan Prepared By:
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For:
Williamsport Area Transportation Study
Metropolitan Planning Organization

December, 2023

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The contents of this report reflect the views of the authors who are responsible for the facts and accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of either the U.S. Department of Transportation or the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania although these entities have provided data, input and advice throughout the plan preparation process. This report does not constitute a standard, specification or regulation.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT STEERING COMMITTEE: WATS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Voting Members:

- PennDOT Center for Program Development and Management Representative
- PennDOT Engineering District 3-0 Representative
- Lycoming County Planning and Community Development Director
- Lycoming County Planning Commission Member
- River Valley Transit General Manager
- Williamsport Regional Airport Executive Director
- City of Williamsport Engineer/Community Development Director

Non-voting Members:

- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Transit Administration
- PA Department of Community and Economic Development

WATS COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Voting Members:

- PennDOT Engineering District 3-0 Executive
- PennDOT Deputy Secretary for Planning
- Two Lycoming County Commissioners
- Mayor, City of Williamsport
- Council Member, City of Williamsport
- River Valley Transit General Manager
- SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority Executive Director
- Williamsport Regional Airport Executive Director
- Lycoming County Association of Township Officials Representative
- Lycoming-Sullivan Boroughs Association Representative

Non-voting Members:

- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Transit Administration
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development
- PA Department of Community and Economic Development

Plan Development Timeline:

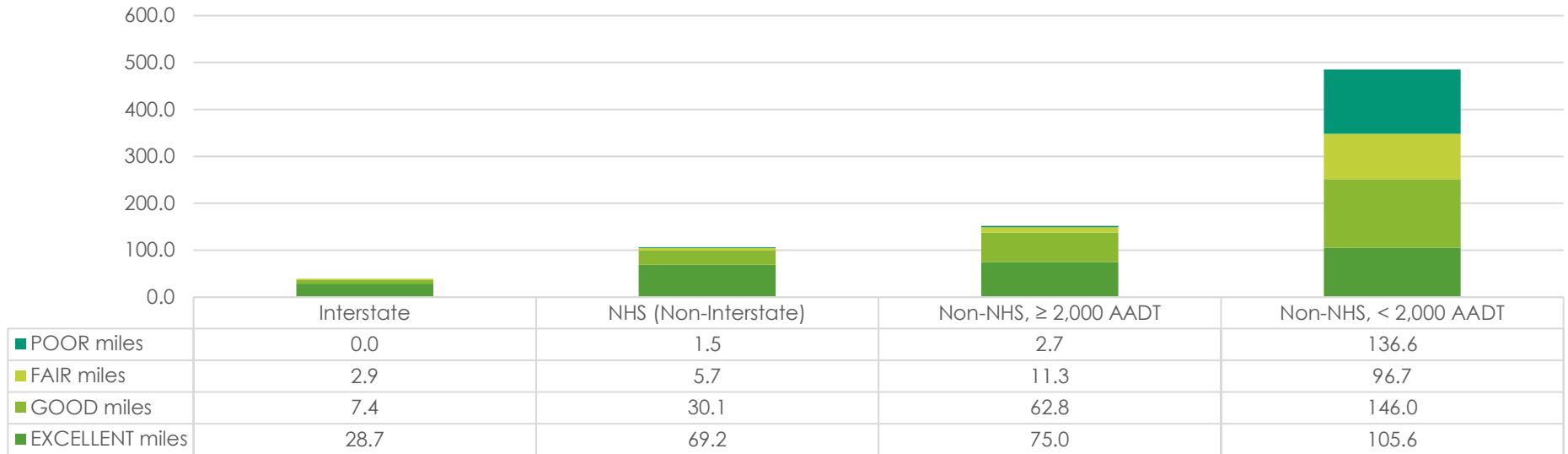
Content	Reviewed and approved in public meeting of WATS Technical Committee L RTP Steering Committee	Reviewed and approved in public meeting of WATS Coordinating Committee	Other Meetings
Plan update kickoff meeting. Proposed plan structure. Description of timeline, roles and responsibilities.	February 28, 2022	March 14, 2022	
WATS MPO overview. Review of federal, state, and local planning priorities and identification of projects in existing plans.	May 23, 2022	June 13, 2022	
Demographic and land use trends and analysis. Presentation of scenario analysis. Transportation System Conditions.	September 26, 2022	October 17, 2022	
Implementation and Capital Improvements Plan	January 30, 2023	February 13, 2023	
Review of full draft plan	April 24, 2023	May 8, 2023	
Agency Coordination Meeting (ACM)			July 26, 2023
<i>Approval to go to public comment period</i>	<i>August 28, 2023</i>	<i>September 11, 2023</i>	
Presentation to Lycoming County Board of Commissioners			TBD
Presentation to Lycoming County Planning Commission			TBD
<i>Plan adoption</i>	<i>November 13, 2023</i>	<i>December 4, 2023</i>	

Priorities for future planning and programming activities were derived from the following

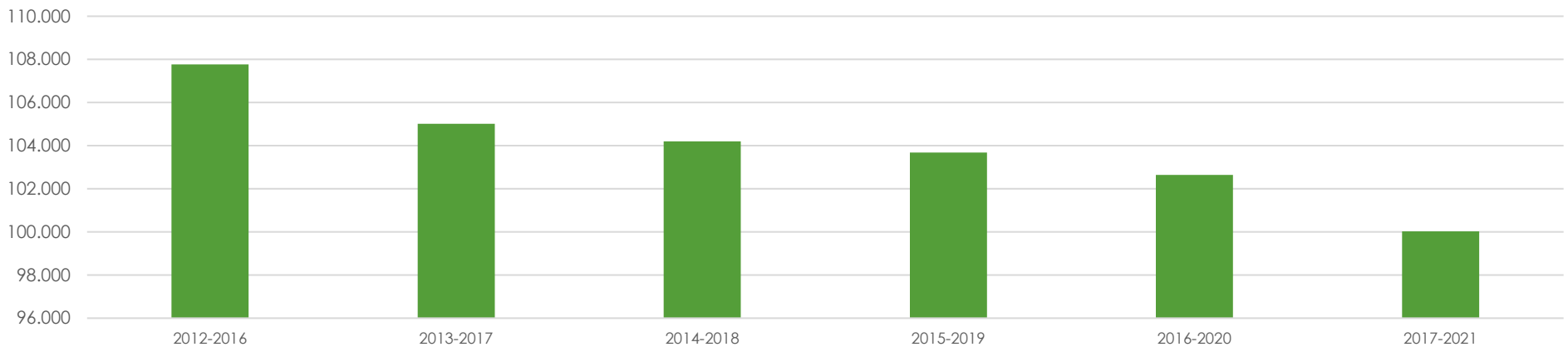
Federal planning factors	Federal performance measures	Statewide long range transportation planning goals	Local planning priorities
<p>Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency</p> <p>Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users</p> <p>Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users</p> <p>Increase the accessibility and mobility for people and for freight</p> <p>Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns</p> <p>Enhance the integration and connectivity across and between modes for people and freight</p> <p>Promote efficient system management and operation</p> <p>Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system</p> <p>Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and</p> <p>Enhance travel and tourism.</p>	<p>PM-1 safety measures: number of fatalities, number of serious injuries, number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries, rate of fatalities per 100 million VMT, rate of serious injuries per 100 million VMT</p> <p>PM-2 asset condition measures: percent poor pavement on interstate system, percent poor pavement on national highway system, percent national highway system bridge deck area in poor condition</p> <p>PM-3 operations measures: interstate travel time reliability, national highway system reliability, interstate truck reliability</p>	<p>Enhance safety and security for both motorized and non-motorized modes throughout Pennsylvania's transportation system.</p> <p>Strengthen transportation mobility to meet the increasingly dynamic needs of Pennsylvania residents, businesses, and visitors.</p> <p>Improve transportation access and equity throughout Pennsylvania.</p> <p>Strengthen Pennsylvania transportation resilience to climate change and other risks and reduce the environmental impacts associated with transportation improvements. Improve the condition and performance of transportation assets.</p> <p>Structure transportation funding and finance approaches that allocate sufficient resources for system safety, maintenance, preservation, and improvement.</p>	<p>Implement projects identified within the county and multimunicipal comprehensive plans</p> <p>Implement projects identified by the CSVT Impact Special Study</p> <p>Implement projects identified in the central region ROP</p> <p>Implement other projects identified through local planning processes</p>

The transportation system of Lycoming County remains in overall excellent condition

IRI by Business Plan Network



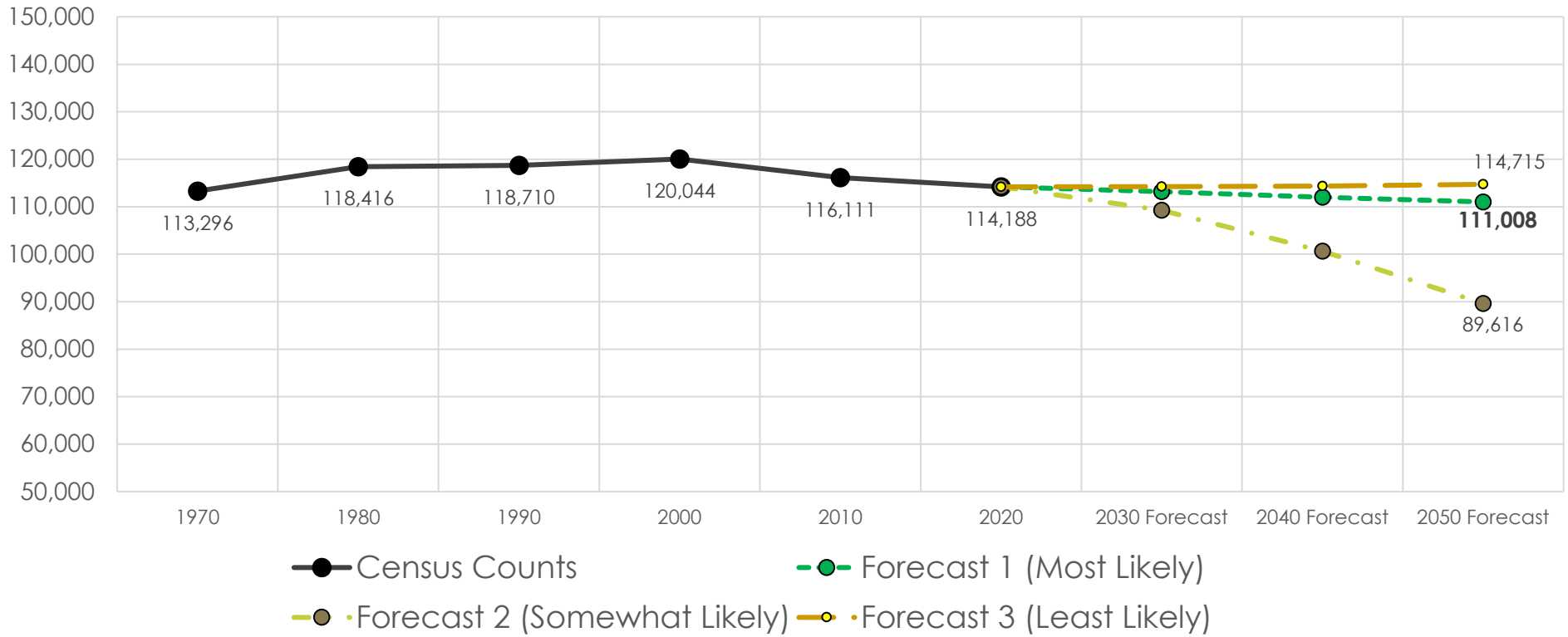
Total Crashes per 100 Million Miles Traveled



Comparing current conditions in Lycoming County to those observed in the last plan update in 2018 reveals a very similar set of conditions, therefore the overall focus areas for future transportation investment will be largely unchanged.

A	Economic development in Lycoming County is dependent on both freight movement and the mobility of visitors to our arts, culture, and recreation resources. Therefore, projects that maintain or expand the ability to move freight or travel to Lycoming County should be a priority.
B	Our multimodal transportation system is in excellent condition. There are no glaring deficiencies in highways, bridges, transit. There are no needs for additional capacity. Therefore, maintenance and safety projects take precedence.
C	We need more multiuse nonmotorized trail and bikeway connections between communities as well as improved access to existing facilities. We need more and improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Williamsport and the boroughs to better serve our population that will age in place, to appeal to young people, to assist low income populations, to support economically vibrant downtowns, and to promote the retention and attraction of population. Therefore, complete streets, walkability, and safety projects located in urbanized areas should be a priority.
D	As rural populations decrease, we need to consider options that decrease the infrastructure maintenance cost burden on rural municipalities while focusing investment on infrastructure where delivery of services is most efficient and cost effective. Therefore, projects that identify and remove costly functionally redundant infrastructure or improve infrastructure in already densely developed areas should be a priority.

Based on demographic and land use trends, WATS is considering three different scenarios as potential future trajectories for Lycoming County.



WATS will monitor changes in population and adjust which of the four focus areas are emphasized based on which of the three scenarios seems to be unfolding. All four focus areas will be pursued, but the relative emphasis will change based on how conditions change.

	Scenario 1 - 2.8% decrease in population by the year 2050	Scenario 2 - 21.5% decrease in population by the year 2050	Scenario 3 - 0.5% increase in population by the year 2050
Higher Emphasis	A	D	C
↑ ↓	B	A	A
Lower Emphasis	C	B	B
	D	C	D

WATS Long Range Plan Implementation Strategies

Long Range Transportation Plans should include elements related to both plan implementation and monitoring. This ensures that the goals and objectives and issues identified throughout the plan can advance from theoretical concepts to action by the WATS MPO and other appropriate parties as well as include techniques that can be used to monitor progress in this regard or to re-evaluate the plan in light of changing circumstances. Many of the implementation strategies listed below will be incorporated into the [WATS Unified Planning Work Program](#) as specific work tasks. All of them align with the four focus areas outlined above. When it comes time to program projects, a set of project selection criteria have been developed following the same guidelines.

Planning and programming process

All WATS planning and programming activities adhere to the following guidelines and processes. All activities of WATS are governed by the [WATS Bylaws](#).

Public Participation Plan

WATS has a detailed and current public participation plan that also describes how planning and programming activities will maximize the ability of the public to have meaningful engagement in WATS processes and also how WATS will incorporate LEP, Title VI and ADA considerations into the planning process.

Environmental Justice

Presidential Executive Order 12898 states that “each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.” Within the transportation field, environmental justice is guided by three core principles:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority or low-income populations.

WATS has conducted extensive analysis of the distribution of low income and minority populations in Lycoming County and developed an analytical framework now deployed statewide for identifying areas of population concentration and assessing benefits and burdens.

Compliance with PA Sunshine Law

All WATS public meetings are publicly advertised in the [Williamsport Sun Gazette](#), the paper of record, at least 7 days prior to the meeting and are open to the general public. Agendas for the meetings are posted to the Lycoming County website prior to the meeting. Public information requests for WATS produced documents are handled directly either by Lycoming County Planning Department Staff or the [Lycoming County Right to Know Public Information Officer](#) in a manner that is in compliance with state law. Minutes of all WATS public meetings are compiled and placed on the Lycoming County website.

Implementation

The implementation and monitoring strategies for this plan are summarized below. These implementation and monitoring strategies will form the core of the tasks included in the next update to the [WATS Unified Planning Work Program](#):

- Monitor trends and performance of the WATS transportation system related to the PM-1, PM-2, and PM-3 performance measures and targets
- Identify ways to implement and support the objectives of the Pennsylvania 2045 statewide LRTP, CFMP, and SHSP
- Maintain updated economic, geographic, and demographic data and trends for Lycoming County
- Identify, develop, and maintain additional transportation related datasets needed for sound decision making
- Support transportation projects that contribute to the improvement of the overall road and bridge system of Lycoming County
- Support evaluation of transit service extensions to growth areas and regionally (beyond Lycoming County) where providing such service is cost effective, meets mobility needs, and promotes economic activity
- Continue to work closely with SEDA-COG MPO to maintain an updated Joint Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan
- Identify and promote ways to increase transit usage, especially targeted to the 65 and older population
- Support restoration and maintenance of competitive commercial air service opportunities at the Williamsport Airport
- Support the development of intermodal freight facilities
- Support projects that further access and interconnections between multiuse nonmotorized trail systems
- Maintain an updated WATS Public Participation Plan to ensure WATS remains in full compliance with federal and state public participation requirements and maximizes opportunities to ensure meaningful public involvement in the WATS transportation planning process
- Seek more inclusion and collaboration with municipal officials, school districts and other stakeholder organizations as part of the PennDOT Connects collaboration process on transportation planning issues and at early stages of project development
- Study (and adjust if necessary) the balance of mobility and access on our downtown road systems, such as advancing transportation improvements needed to support the Old City Revitalization Initiative
- Promote and support data driven transportation asset management especially preventative maintenance, preservation, and “lowest lifecycle cost” approaches by municipal governments
- Identify low volume functionally redundant bridges for removal prior to them becoming structurally deficient
- Identify low volume rural roads for conversion to gravel

- Promote transit-oriented development
- Identify appropriate corridors throughout the county for complete streets improvements
- Identify corridors in need of transportation/land use studies and work with partner organizations to contract for studies
- Support grant applications for projects that support any of the focus areas or implementation and monitoring strategies of this plan
- Support creation of a WATS TIP reserve line item for responding to slide and subsidence impacts to the state road system

Project selection criteria

When the [WATS Transportation Improvement Program](#) is updated every two years, the following project selection criteria will be used to place new projects. These project selection criteria are based on the analysis and conclusions of this long range plan and will guide projects that are responsive to changing conditions.

Future transportation projects in Lycoming County will be described by one or more of the following statements	
✓	is a priority project from the Lycoming County Comprehensive Plan and/or Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan or addresses a transportation issue identified within those plans
✓	is an identified project within another local or regional planning document
✓	addresses one or more of the 10 Federal Planning Factors
✓	contributes substantially towards meeting a Federal performance-based planning target
✓	addresses one or more of the Pennsylvania 2045, Pennsylvania Comprehensive Freight Movement Plan, or Pennsylvania Strategic Highway Safety Plan objectives
✓	maintains or enhances the ability to move freight or travel to Lycoming County
✓	maintains or enhances the ability for agriculture to thrive
✓	maintains or enhances access to outdoor recreation
✓	includes intermodal freight connections
✓	has been screened using the WATS Complete Streets criteria
✓	identifies and removes functionally redundant infrastructure
✓	incorporates a maintenance, preservation, lowest-lifecycle-cost approach to asset management
✓	helps preserve Lycoming County's air quality attainment status
✓	benefits environmental justice population areas

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- ✓ supports designation of US-15 north from Williamsport to the New York state line in Tioga County as Interstate 99.
- ✓ improves mobility to employment, health care, education and supports overall economic development and productivity
- ✓ addresses transportation security issues or provides the ability to better respond to flooding, landslide, or subsidence impacts on transportation system
- ✓ improves nonmotorized travel safety
- ✓ addresses ADA accessibility issues and needs
- ✓ incorporates TSMO strategies to decrease congestion
- ✓ supports good state of repair of transit facilities and modernized fully accessible transit vehicle fleets
- ✓ supports increased usage of transit by Lycoming County's senior population
- ✓ supports expansion of public transportation availability in designated growth areas and serves major land developments
- ✓ fosters public-private partnerships
- ✓ reduces or mitigates stormwater impacts of surface transportation
- ✓ considers context sensitive solutions to ensure compatibility with community character and right sizing of project to address the project defined purpose and need

For more information please visit <https://www.lyco.org/WATS-MPO/LRTP>