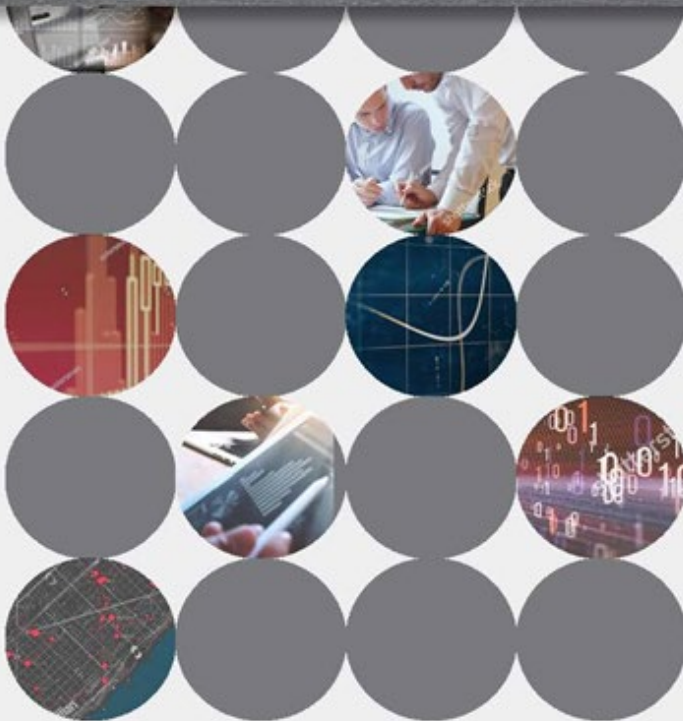


A Partnership Among Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, Johnson College, Keystone College, Lackawanna College, Luzerne County Community College, Marywood University, Misericordia University, Penn State Scranton, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education, University of Scranton, Wilkes University, and the business community



THE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Community Impacts of Investing in Transportation and Infrastructure

May 2023

The Institute

Turning Information into Insight

The Institute is a non-profit research organization dedicated to empowering business and community leaders with researched based strategies for informed decision making. We conduct independent, empirical research to identify the opportunities, issues, and challenges unique to the region and find innovative ways to solve the problems facing our communities. The Institute offers a wide array of research, consulting, and support services to help organizations boost productivity, increase profitability and be successful in their missions.

Planning, Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure (PLUTI) Task Force

Dr. Marleen Troy, Professor, Wilkes University, Chair
Carl Beardsley, Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport
Ron Daniels, The Wright Center
Joe Glynn, WVIA
Scott Koerwer, The Wright Center
Robert Luciani, Empower
Lawrence Malski, Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority
Lexie Langan, The Milnes Co., Inc.
Jill Murray, Ph.D., Lackawanna College
Vivian Williams, NEPA Moves

The Institute Team

Teri Ooms, President & CEO
Andrew Chew, Chief Research Officer
Jill Avery-Stoss, Chief Operating Officer
Dr. Jolene Carey-Pace, Research Analyst
Mark Shaffer, Research Analyst
Sarah Bender, Research Assistant
Ethan Van Gorden, Research Assistant

© All Rights Reserved. The Institute

Academic Partners

Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine
Johnson College
Keystone College
King's College
Lackawanna College
Luzerne County Community College
Marywood University
Misericordia University
Penn State Scranton
Penn State Wilkes-Barre
The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education
University of Scranton
Wilkes University

Signature Underwriters -

Andrew J. Sordoni Foundation
Luzerne County
PPL Electric Utilities
Sordoni Family Foundation

Contributing Underwriters

Altitude Philanthropies
Borton-Lawson
Geisinger College of Health Science
Geisinger Health Foundation
The Luzerne Foundation
UGI Utilities
Villaume Foundation
Wayne County Community Foundation

Supporting Underwriters

BlackOut Design
FNCB
Greater Hazleton CANDO
Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield
KMLA Group
M&T Bank
Navient
PNC
The Wright Center for Community Health

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Executive Summary.....	4
Current Funding and Policy Landscape.....	5
Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.....	6
Passenger Rail Service Restoration	7
Matrix of Major Funding Programs.....	9
Transportation and Infrastructure Economic and Social Impacts	10
Regional Economic Impacts	10
Tourism	10
Education and Workforce	11
Community Health	11
Social Equity and Economic Mobility	12
Environment.....	12
Other Impacts	12
Conclusions and Recommendations	13
Endnotes	15

Introduction

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, was enacted in 2021. This bill provides for a considerable expansion of funds for transportation infrastructure, and therefore presents a significant opportunity for Northeastern Pennsylvania. The purpose of this report is twofold. First, it will provide an overview of funding sources and programs, including those created or expanded with the new federal legislation. The report includes a matrix summarizing the nature and eligibility requirements of selected funding programs most likely to align with regional transportation needs identified in prior research by The Institute and others.

Second, this report will outline existing economic impact research to show how these investments in transportation infrastructure can yield economic and social benefits, quantifying them where possible, to illustrate the relationship between capital investments and regional well-being. This analysis demonstrates that capitalizing on the funding opportunities offered by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law can help enhance the region's economic competitiveness.

Executive Summary

President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), otherwise known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, on November 15, 2021. This action designates \$550 billion in federal investment to improve infrastructure and economy from fiscal years 2022 to 2026. The U.S Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration has stated that this law includes the largest funding source in public transit and passenger rail since Amtrak was founded in 1971. The region's economic competitiveness and quality of life will be enhanced by ensuring that these funds can be used to their maximum impact in Northeastern Pennsylvania. While many project funding decisions are being made by Metropolitan Planning Organizations and PennDOT, other organizations and stakeholders should be aware of funding streams that may be available to support local projects. Many funding opportunities available fit projects consistent with existing comprehensive plans, economic development strategies, and other guiding documents.

Pennsylvania is expected to receive \$13.2 billion over the next five years which may be used for highways and bridges. Currently 3,353 bridges and 7,540 miles of highway are deteriorating, and commute times have increased by 7.6 percent since 2011, with drivers paying \$620 in taxes each year to fix road conditions. Not only can this money be allocated for construction and structural maintenance, but it may also be used to enhance roadway safety, reduce motor vehicle-related crashes that cause deaths and injuries, and improve sustainable travel options. Within the five years of the IIJA, the state will also receive \$66 million to help improve driving behaviors, compete for \$6 billion for the Safe Streets for All program, and potentially acquire \$85.1 to increase commercial motor vehicle (CMV) safety through the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP) grant.

As of early 2023, updates from the Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority (PNRRA) indicated that construction of the federal Scranton to New York City Rail Restoration project is in its beginning stages. The goal of this project is to replace 21 miles of rail on the Lackawanna Cutoff in New Jersey and eventually connect to existing rail lines in Pennsylvania, which begin at the Delaware Water Gap and end in Scranton. Studies for the feasibility, environmental, and preliminary engineering approvals have progressed due to more than \$10 million in state and federal funding.

Investment in transportation infrastructure brings about many types of positive impacts. The American Public Transit Association (APTA) estimates that for every one dollar invested in public transportation, there is an economic return of four dollars. The benefits of investment in passenger rail in NEPA are also numerous. Amtrak has projected \$2.9 billion in initial economic activity from jobs created by the construction phase of the project. Workers in a variety of occupations will be needed for the construction, as well as support services from local vendors, suppliers, and subcontractors. After the service is operational, Amtrak estimates \$84 million annually in economic impact.

Strategic transportation projects can advance community education by providing safer routes for children and youth to walk and cycle to school. A study in Springfield, Massachusetts found that students participating in a “walking school bus” program, in which students walk to school together, had two percent better attendance than their peers. Findings also included some evidence that walking or cycling to school leads to improved academic performance.

Investment in transportation connections with neighboring regions, as passenger rail service would, also supports economic impact through tourism. Travel is already an important economic driver for NEPA. In addition to making the region more attractive for businesses investment, rail service could be helpful in developing and retaining a talented workforce, as well as supporting higher education institutions along the rail corridor.

There are also positive effects on community health and wellness from infrastructure investment. Research shows that alleviating transportation barriers makes medical care safer and more accessible. Infrastructure improvements that promote active transportation (i.e., walking and cycling) can have positive impacts on population health. According to the American Public Health Association, poor transportation systems can result in higher incidences of asthma, cardiovascular disease, and obesity – particularly impacting vulnerable populations such as older adults, children, and low-income communities.

Strategic investments in transportation infrastructure are associated with improved economic mobility and social equity. Lower-income residents are less likely than middle-income and upper-income residents to own reliable personal vehicles. Therefore, they benefit greatly from investments in public transit.

Other, less tangible impacts also result from investment in transportation and infrastructure projects. Increased connectivity of transportation networks can improve quality of life and community connectedness and contribute to an overall vibrancy and sense of place. By maximizing investment of federal and state funds on transportation in Northeastern Pennsylvania, and allocating those funds to projects most likely to create broad regional benefit, the region will become stronger in many ways.

Many funding opportunities are available to applicants besides those who typically build or operate transportation infrastructure. Nonprofit organizations and institutions like universities can play larger roles in identifying needs and pursuing funding to address them. Finally, it is recommended that municipalities, counties, and regional planning and development organizations explore new ways to collaborate. Some funding formulas prioritize or exclude projects based on population size; a collective effort could result in new opportunities for resources.

Current Funding and Policy Landscape

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), otherwise known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, on November 15, 2021. This action designates \$550 billion in federal investment to improve infrastructure and economy from fiscal years 2022 to 2026. Funds may be used to repair or improve roads, bridges, mass transit, water infrastructure, and broadband connection. They may also be used to reduce damages from disruptive events, while creating jobs and fostering economic competitiveness in the region. The U.S Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration stated that this law includes the largest funding source in public transit and passenger rail since Amtrak was founded in 1971. Additionally, these finances have potential to protect some of the nation's greatest resources through their impact on drinking water, wastewater systems, clean energy transmission, and electric vehicle infrastructure.¹

Government and transportation planning officials in Pennsylvania outlined 32 projects for bidding in 2022 (using IIJA funds for roads and bridges). The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Engineering District 4 region in Lackawanna, Luzerne, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming Counties can pave and repair 245 miles of roads and replace 88 bridges. Other investments include \$12.1 million for Northeastern PA Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) efforts, \$21.8 million for a Lackawanna Luzerne Transportation Study (LLTS), and at least \$1.8 million for Wayne County to improve structures.² As outlined by the Federal Highway Administration, the nine categories within the Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) from the General Fund (GF) that can assist with the developments include (in billions):

- Bridge Formula Program - \$27.5
- Bridge Investment Program (discretionary) - \$9.2
- National Electric Vehicle Formula Program - \$5.0
- Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA) Program - \$3.2
- Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) - \$1.3
- Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program - \$0.5
- University Transportation Centers (UTCs) - \$0.1

It is anticipated that Pennsylvania will receive \$13.2 billion over the next five years, which may be used for highways and bridges. Currently 3,353 bridges and 7,540 miles of highway are deteriorating, and commute times have increased by 7.6 percent since 2011, with drivers paying \$620 in taxes each year to fix road conditions. Not only can this money be allocated for construction and structural maintenance, but it may also be used to enhance roadway safety, reduce motor vehicle-related crashes that cause deaths and injuries, and improve sustainable travel options. Within the five years of the IIJA, the state will also receive \$66 million to help improve driving behaviors, compete for \$6 billion for the Safe Streets for All program, and potentially acquire \$85.1 to increase commercial motor vehicle (CMV) safety through the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP) grant.

The U.S. Department of Transportation reports that Pennsylvania commuters spend 68.8 percent extra time using public transportation, with non-White households five times likelier than White households to commute via mass transit, and that 21.9 percent of transit vehicles are outdated. Efforts to improve public transit in the state may be supported through \$41 billion in grants for Amtrak maintenance and

\$43.5 billion from the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grants. Additionally, the state has the option to compete for \$10 billion for rail and safety grants and \$5.5 billion to reduce grade crossing accidents.

Air travel is another mode of transportation that will benefit from the money included in the infrastructure law. Airports could collect \$355 million for noise reduction projects or development of runways, taxiways, airport-owned towers, and terminals. Projects focused on terminal improvement, such as making the structures accessible for persons with disabilities and impoverished communities, enhancing their energy efficiency, and improving airfield safety, can use the \$5 billion of available funding. Emphasis on modernizing airports as well as passenger and freight rail can help efficiency and safety overall.³ It is possible funds could also be leveraged to increase economic development related to air cargo.

Passenger Rail Service Restoration

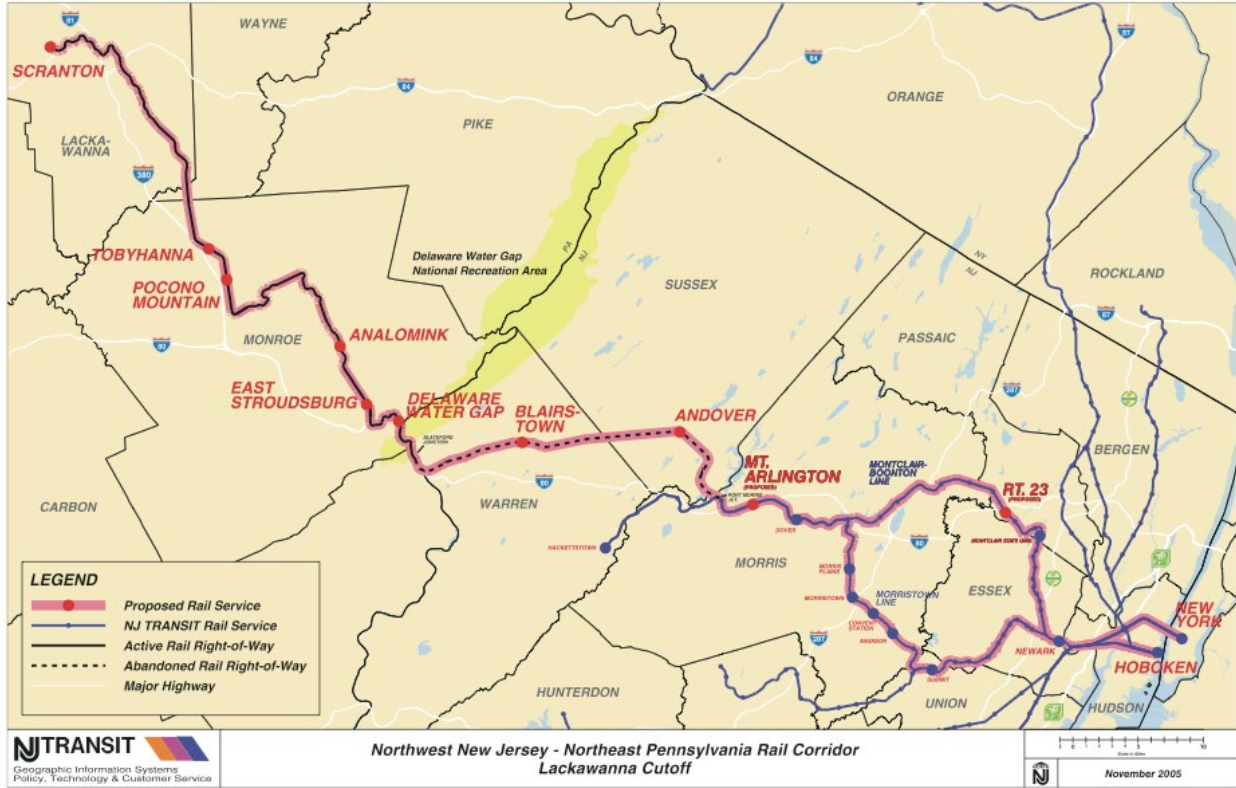
Recent updates from the Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority (PNRRA) indicated that construction of the federal Scranton to New York City Rail Restoration project is in its beginning stages. The goal of this project is to replace 21 miles of rail on the Lackawanna Cutoff in New Jersey and eventually connect to existing rail lines in Pennsylvania, which begin at the Delaware Water Gap and end in Scranton. Studies for the feasibility, environmental, and preliminary engineering approvals have progressed due to more than \$10 million in state and federal funding.

The Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA) region is the primary travel destination for about one million individuals from New York and New Jersey, and 15 percent of statewide tourism dollars are spent in NEPA. By opening the Scranton Intermodal Terminal, which offers coach bus transportation to New Jersey and New York, Lackawanna County has demonstrated demand for transportation in this corridor. This opening took place in 2016.

Building this railroad to connect prominent cities will re-establish economic vibrancy and create more jobs for future generations in NEPA. Modern rail passenger services in the area will also ease roadway traffic, which is otherwise expected to double in the next 10 years due to the 20,000 Pennsylvania commuters taking I-80 from NEPA to their jobs in New York City and northern New Jersey.

The map below displays the path of the proposed rail service compared to the NJ Transit Rail Service, Active Rail Right-of-Way, and the Abandoned Rail Right-of-Way major highways. About 133 miles separate the New York station to the Scranton terminal, with seven miles of track around the Lackawanna Cutoff and first station in Andover (New Jersey) being constructed.⁴

Scranton to New York City Rail Restoration Project



Data Source: Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority

Matrix of Major Funding Programs

Program/Source	Agency	Eligible Recipients/Activities
Municipal Liquid Fuels (Gasoline Tax)	PennDOT	Municipalities and counties, for construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and repair of public roads, streets, or bridges
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ)	PennDOT/ Metropolitan Planning Organizations	Public agencies, private firms, municipalities, nonprofit entities, for pedestrian and bicycle projects, transit improvement, congestion reduction and traffic flow improvements, transportation demand management
State Highway Safety Program – Safety Grants (Section 402)	PennDOT	Local governments, public universities, and nonprofit organizations to reduce injuries and deaths due to crashes. Activities include community traffic safety programs, police enforcement, DUI court programs.
Local Share Account (gambling revenue share)	PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development	Local governments, EDAs, Redevelopment Authorities, for projects that improve quality of life. Activities may include acquisition, construction/demolition, infrastructure, planning and design. Some guidelines vary by county.
IIJA Bridge Investment Program	FHWA	MPOs and local governments, for projects that reduce the overall number of bridges in poor condition
INFRA Grants (Multimodal freight)	US DOT	States, MPOs, local governments for projects that improve critical freight movement
Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)	PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development	Municipalities, median income eligibility guidelines apply. Eligible activities include housing rehabilitation, planning activities, construction or reconstruction of streets, water and sewage facilities, neighborhood centers, and other public works, and acquisition of property for public purposes.
Recreational Trails Funding	PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources	Municipalities, for planning, land acquisition, development, rehab, and maintenance of motorized and non-motorized trails
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	PennDOT/ Metropolitan Planning Organizations	Local governments, nonprofits, transit agencies, and certain other eligible organizations for smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, safe routes to school projects, and community improvements
Discretionary Multimodal Transportation Funding (MTF)	PennDOT	Municipalities, councils of governments, businesses, economic development organizations, public transportation agencies, rail/freight, and ports, to improve transportation assets. Includes public transportation, passenger rail, rail freight, ports and waterways, aviation and airports, and active transportation.

Transportation and Infrastructure Economic and Social Impacts

Regional Economic Impacts

The American Public Transit Association (APTA) estimates that for every one dollar invested in public transportation, there is an economic return of four dollars. An impact analysis prepared by Economic Development Research Group on behalf of APTA found:

- cost savings for public transit passengers over other forms of transportation such as private vehicles, taxis, and rideshare apps.
- reduced traffic congestion for those who travel by car and truck. Business operating cost savings resulting from reduced congestion is estimated at \$800 million annually nationwide.
- spending impacts, or the economic ripple effect of capital projects and day-to-day operations of public transit. Nationwide, it is estimated that per \$1 billion of spending on public transit operations, 20,000 jobs are supported for a year, and per \$1 billion of spending on public transportation and capital projects, 13,000 jobs are supported for a year.⁵

The benefits of investment in passenger rail in NEPA are also numerous. Amtrak has projected \$2.9 billion in initial economic activity from jobs created by the construction phase of the project. Workers in a variety of occupations will be needed for the construction, as well as support services from local vendors, suppliers, and subcontractors. After the service is operational, Amtrak estimates \$84 million annually in economic impact, assuming three daily round trips between New York City and Scranton.⁶ These impacts include jobs created to operate the railroads in the area, jobs created in tourism and from new business development that results from the service, as well as ripple effects from those workers spending their money locally.

Economic impacts of funds used for road and bridge projects can be considered in one of two categories – impacts of projects that increase road capacity and impacts of projects that add no new capacity. Both types of projects yield significant impacts from construction activities alone. A 1996 analysis by the Federal Highway Administration calculated the labor hours per million dollars of expenditure for various types of improvements. At that time, every \$1 million spent on construction of new routes was associated with 13,275 labor hours, every \$1 million spent on road widening was associated with 12,237 to 12,931 labor hours, every \$1 million spent on resurfacing was associated with 11,076 labor hours, every \$1 million spent on bridge replacement was associated with 13,030 labor hours, and every \$1 million spent on road reconstruction was associated with 12,681 to 13,535 labor hours.

Projects that increase capacity of roads or bridges yield other types of impacts. As noted in the discussion of mass transit above, for instance, reduction of traffic congestion can result in significant cost savings for businesses and residents while fueling economic development.

Tourism

Investment in transportation connections with neighboring regions, as passenger rail service would, also supports economic impact through tourism. Visitors from the Greater New York City area could take advantage of outdoor recreation in Northeastern Pennsylvania, bringing big opportunities for economic development in hospitality, dining, entertainment, outdoor recreation, retail, and more. Travel is already an important economic driver for NEPA. The Pocono Mountains area and the Upstate PA region (the latter includes Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties) are already the fourth and fifth largest tourism

markets in Pennsylvania, after PA Dutch Country, Greater Philadelphia, and Greater Pittsburgh. Even in 2020, amid a pandemic-induced dip in travel, travel and tourism supported 21,630 jobs in the Poconos region and 13,660 jobs in the Upstate PA region. Tourism spending exceeds \$1 billion annually in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties.⁷ Opening the region to new visitors sets the stage for these travel impact numbers to sustain and grow.

Education and Workforce

Strategic transportation projects can advance community education by providing safer routes for children and youth to walk and cycle to school. The nationwide Safe Routes to School initiative encompasses varied funding opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle safety infrastructure including sidewalk and crosswalk improvements, bike racks and bike parking, traffic realignment, lighting, and shared use paths.⁸ A study in Springfield, Massachusetts found that students participating in a “walking school bus” program, in which students walk to school together, had two percent better attendance than their peers. Findings also included some evidence that walking or cycling to school leads to improved academic performance.⁹

In addition to making the region more attractive for businesses investment, rail service could be helpful in developing and retaining a talented workforce. According to The Institute’s past research on regional talent needs, Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties are experiencing a structural deficit of workers, including those for key skilled professions in health care, manufacturing, logistics, and more. Rail service could serve as a selling point to market the region as an attractive place to live, work, and raise a family.

Amtrak’s impact analysis also noted the numerous connections to higher education institutions along the route. The route could help these institutions recruit students from outside the area with a convenient transportation link between home and campus, bolstering the region’s already strong higher education community.¹⁰

Community Health

A study completed by the Department of Health and Human Services examined successful evidence-based strategies and described current federal efforts addressing the social determinants of health, which include public transportation. Researchers stated that transportation barriers cause 3.6 million people in the nation to miss important medical appointments each year. Advancing this kind of travel will reduce barriers to attaining medical care, making access safer and more equitable.¹¹

Infrastructure improvements that promote active transportation (i.e., walking and cycling) can have positive impacts on population health. According to the American Public Health Association, poor transportation systems can result in higher incidences of asthma, cardiovascular disease, and obesity – particularly impacting vulnerable populations such as older adults, children, and low-income communities. The organization has advocated the following principles:¹²

- active transportation options that are accessible and affordable for all users
- transportation and land-use policies that provide opportunities for all people to be active and engaged in their communities
- the Complete Streets approach, where streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users

- expansion of Safe Routes to School programs, which encourage children – including those with disabilities – to walk and bike to school safely
- development of healthy communities and incentives for transportation and transit projects that promote health

Active transportation infrastructure and investment in traffic calming could also result in a reduction in pedestrian and cyclist deaths. Traffic calming refers to physical design measures to reduce vehicle speeds; examples include speed humps, raised intersections, and roadway narrowing. In recent Regional Indicators reports, The Institute has found that while the total number of vehicle crash deaths has been declining in the region, this trend has not appeared to extend to pedestrian crash deaths.

Social Equity and Economic Mobility

Strategic investments in transportation infrastructure are associated with improved economic mobility and social equity. Lower-income residents are less likely than middle-income and upper-income residents to own reliable personal vehicles. Therefore, they benefit greatly from investments in public transit. A 2017 study conducted as a partnership between The Institute, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, and the Scranton Area Community Foundation found the following:¹³

- Many lower-income residents feel that their transportation choices are limited or nonexistent.
- Drivers enjoy greater mobility and face fewer transportation barriers than those who do not drive.
- Lack of transportation can be a barrier to employment.
- While cost is not a significant barrier to using existing mass transit in the region, bus frequency, hours of operation, and limited weekend service were concerns.
- Accessibility transit options, such as shared rider services that provide curb-to-curb service for older adults and those with disabilities, play an important role

Environment

Transportation projects can create several types of positive environmental impact. Several transportation funding sources, most notably Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Funds, emphasize air quality improvement through reduced congestion and/or shifting transportation modes. While data from the EPA has typically shown that the region’s air quality consistently meets health standards, reduced vehicle emissions also mean reduced output greenhouse gases (GHGs). This is a critically important issue given the challenges posed by global climate change.

Other Impacts

Other, less tangible impacts also result from investment in transportation and infrastructure projects. Increased connectivity of transportation networks can improve quality of life and community connectedness and contribute to an overall vibrancy and sense of place. A former mayor of Salt Lake City, Utah, described the effect of a new light rail project – according to the mayor, Salt Lake City life “changed the day after rail opened.” Ridership levels exceeded expectations, and it was noted that transit riders interacted with each other, tying the community together.¹⁴

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act designates \$550 billion in federal funding to improve infrastructure and the economy from fiscal years 2022 to 2026. This represents a significant opportunity for Northeastern Pennsylvania to improve its infrastructure. Many funding opportunities available fit projects consistent with existing comprehensive plans, economic development strategies, and other guiding documents.

Research shows that these investments yield significant returns across several areas. The American Public Transit Association (APTA) estimates that for \$1 invested in public transportation, there is an economic return of \$4. These economic impacts come from several sources: cost savings for riders compared with car ownership, reduced traffic congestion increasing efficiency of businesses, and the economic ripple effect of capital projects and day-to-day operations, in which transit workers spend their money in the local economy. Investment in public transit is also associated with improved economic mobility and social equity, as those without cars, older adults, and other vulnerable groups can better access jobs, services, and health care.

Investing in roads and bridges also brings economic benefits. Significant shares of funds spent on construction and wages paid to workers are reinvested locally. The benefits compound when road and bridge improvements are combined with alternative modes of transportation, in a “complete street” model. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, complete streets are defined as “streets designed and operated to enable safe use and support mobility for all users. Those include people of all ages and abilities, regardless of whether they are travelling as drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, or public transportation riders.” Complete streets may include bicycle lanes, bus lanes, sidewalks, traffic calming infrastructure, pedestrian crossing opportunities, landscaping, and other elements. Although the specifics of complete street implementations can vary across community contexts, it is recommended that planners and local government leaders favor such approaches to take advantage of the economic benefits of new funding streams as well as positive health, social, and quality-of-life outcomes.

Furthermore, infrastructure improvements that promote active transportation (i.e., walking and cycling) positively influence community health. According to the American Public Health Association, poor transportation systems can result in higher incidences of asthma, cardiovascular disease, and obesity. Active transportation infrastructure and investments in traffic calming could also help reduce pedestrian and cyclist traffic deaths, while advancing air quality and environmental sustainability goals.

The potential benefit of reestablishing passenger rail between Scranton and New York City is of particular interest. Amtrak has projected \$2.9 billion in initial economic activity from jobs created by the construction phase of the project. Workers in a variety of occupations will be needed for construction, as well as support services from local vendors, suppliers, and subcontractors. After the service is operational, Amtrak estimates \$87 million annually in economic impact, assuming three daily round trips between New York City and Scranton. In addition, the project could grow economic activity in the tourism sector and expand the workforce pipeline.

Many funding opportunities are available to applicants besides those who typically build or operate transportation infrastructure. Nonprofit organizations and institutions like universities can play larger roles in identifying needs and pursuing funding to address them.

Finally, it is recommended that municipalities, counties, and regional planning and development organizations explore new ways to collaborate. Some funding formulas prioritize or exclude projects based on population size; a collective effort could result in new opportunities for resources.

Endnotes

- ¹ *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law* (U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration)
- ² *Wolf Administration, Sen. Casey Preview Impact of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funding in Northeast Region's 2022 Construction Season* (Governor Tom Wolf, 2022)
- ³ *The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Will Deliver for Pennsylvania* (U.S. Department of Transportation, 2022)
- ⁴ *An Update* (Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority)
- ⁵ <https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/APTA-Economic-Impact-Public-Transit-2020.pdf>
- ⁶ <https://www.amtrakconnectsus.com/maps/new-york-scranton/>
- ⁷ https://www.visitpa.com/sites/default/files/pdfs/Economic%20Impact%20of%20Tourism%20in%20PA%202020_FINAL.pdf
- ⁸ <https://www.penndot.pa.gov/TravelInPA/Safety/SchoolResourcesAndPrograms/SafeRoutesToSchool/Pages/Funding.aspx>
- ⁹ <https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/safe-routes-school/101/benefits>
- ¹⁰ <https://www.amtrakconnectsus.com/maps/new-york-scranton/>
- ¹¹ <https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/e2b650cd64cf84aae8ff0fae7474af82/SDOH-Evidence-Review.pdf>
- ¹² https://www.apha.org/-/media/files/pdf/topics/transport/apha_active_transportation_fact_sheet_2010.ashx
- ¹³ <https://www.philadelphiafed.org/-/media/frbp/assets/community-development/reports/1017-northeastern-pennsylvania-equitable-transit-study.pdf>
- ¹⁴ <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/051514transit>