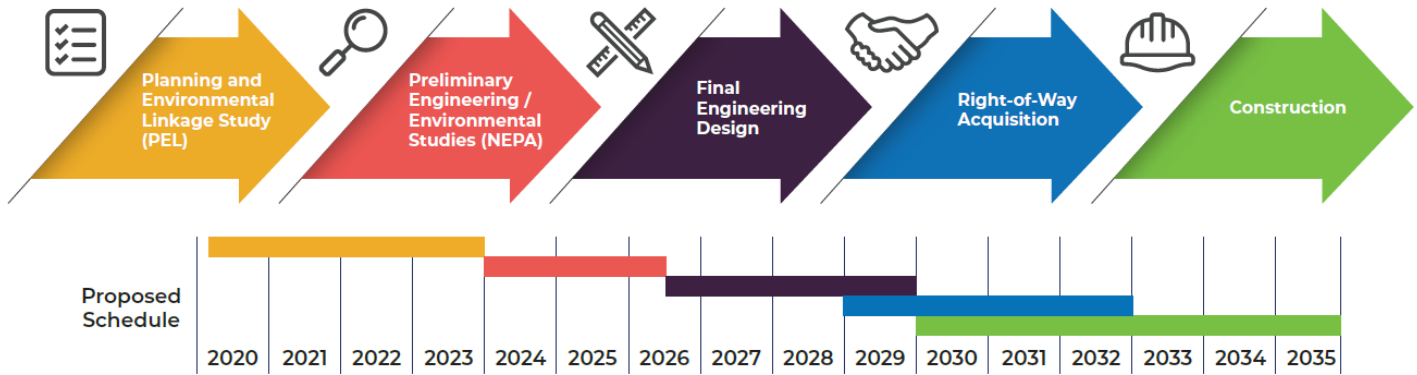


What is the Process for Advancing Transportation Projects and the Proposed Schedule?



Planning and Environmental Linkage Study – A PEL Study is a high-level, early-planning process used for transportation decision making that considers environmental, community, and economic goals early in the planning stage, resulting in projects that can be carried through design and construction. Public and agency involvement is conducted throughout this phase. Overall, the PEL Study helps to inform planning decisions, streamline the project delivery process, and can serve as a public platform to discuss and prioritize transportation issues.

Preliminary Engineering/Environmental Studies (NEPA) – Preliminary engineering includes focused studies about traffic, safety, the environment, and the development of project specific alternatives. The information allows Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and PennDOT to make decisions about necessary transportation network improvements. Assessments also determine the benefits and effects the alternatives would have on natural, cultural, and socio-economic environments. Public and agency involvement is conducted through this phase. The preliminary engineering/environmental studies phase ends with the selection of an alternative to advance into final design. Approval from FHWA must be received to advance into final engineering design.

Final Engineering Design – During final engineering design, the selected project alternative design plans are refined to identify right-of-way requirements and are detailed enough to construct the project. During Final engineering design commitments made during the NEPA phase, to mitigate proposed environmental effects, will be fulfilled. Environmental permitting and detailed utility coordination occur during this phase.



Right-of-Way Acquisition – When project impacts to private property, including homes and businesses, are unavoidable, PennDOT will work with the owners to determine the property’s Fair Market Value and negotiate the acquisition of the property. When the acquisition of property results in the need for a property owner to relocate, PennDOT provides relocation assistance to those whose property is acquired (see the FAQ page on the study website for information on right-of-way acquisition).



Construction – Once final engineering design is complete and the right-of-way has been acquired, PennDOT will solicit bids and award construction contracts. Depending on the scale of the proposed improvements, multiple construction contracts may be developed to complete the overall project. Often, the first contracts awarded are smaller “early action” contracts that involve improvements that will help better accommodate traffic during subsequent construction projects. Staging of the subsequent contracts will also be developed to safely convey traffic through the work zone and minimize travel time delays through and around the project area. The newly constructed improvements to the transportation system will address the purpose and needs which were identified in the early stages of the process.