



# Lycoming County Comprehensive Plan Update 2018

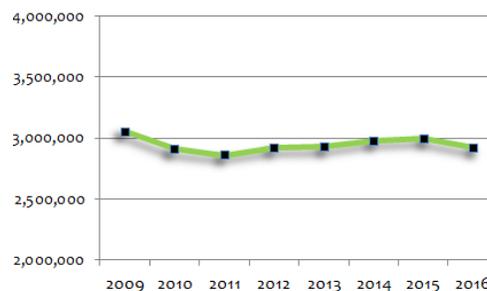
## Transportation and Mobility

### AT A GLANCE

When the current Lycoming County comprehensive plan was adopted in 2006, the Transportation chapter also served as the Long Range Transportation Plan for Lycoming County as a single county metropolitan planning organization. Since that time, the long range transportation plan has been updated separately. In a way, this makes transportation unique from other thematic sections of the comprehensive plan. Since transportation plans for Lycoming County have been updated since 2006 (with another update due to be adopted in 2018), the picture of the transportation system in Lycoming County is well understood and analyzed.

One of the most striking features of the treatment of transportation planning in the 2006 comprehensive plan is a repeated emphasis on expansion of capacity and growth. At the time the plan was prepared, population projections indicated that Lycoming County would be a growth area in need of extra capacity in the transportation system. In hindsight, we now know that the population of Lycoming County has declined since the 2000 census and traffic volumes have not been increasing. Therefore, a new set of priorities has emerged for the transportation system of Lycoming County.

**Lycoming County Traffic Volumes**  
(Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled)



Through the multi-municipal comprehensive planning process, the transportation-centric issues raised by the Planning Advisory Teams for the 6 multi-municipal planning areas fell broadly into three emphasis areas:

- A need to better accommodate non-motorized modes of transportation
- A need to focus on the maintenance needs of transportation infrastructure, in particular local transportation assets such as bridges, and ensure a resilient and robust transportation system
- A need to forecast how future economic development and future transportation infrastructure will influence and stimulate each other

### Walking and Biking

Lycoming County has recognized that all modes of transportation need to be considered in the planning process.



Source: PCD

### Maintenance

The transportation system of Lycoming County, especially locally owned roads and bridges, are subject to both routine wear and stresses from natural hazards like flooding.



Source: PCD

**CURRENT STATUS OF LYCOMING COUNTY'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

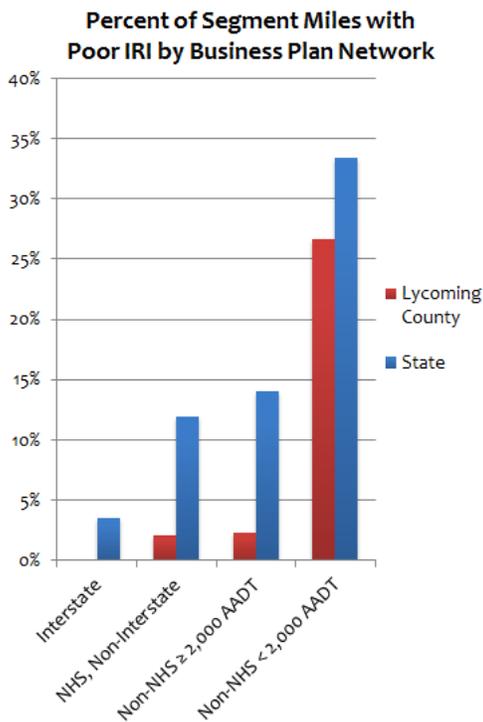
Many economic sectors in Lycoming County, such as freight movement and the mobility of visitors to our arts, culture, and recreation resources, are heavily reliant on the transportation system. Therefore, the multimodal transportation system is maintained to a high state of repair. There are no glaring deficiencies in highways, bridges, transit, rail, or air service that have not already

been addressed or are in the process of being addressed. There are also no obvious needs for additional capacity. However, there is room for improvement in highway safety. Therefore, highway and bridge transportation project priorities are focused on maintaining the current system and improving safety. There is a recognized need for more multiuse trail connections between communities as well as improved access to existing facilities. There is also a need for more and improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Williamsport and the

boroughs to better serve populations 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. As rural populations decrease, there is a need to consider options that decrease the infrastructure maintenance cost burden on rural municipalities while focusing investment on the infrastructure of the parts of the County where delivery of services is most efficient and cost effective.

**HIGHWAY PAVEMENT**

There are 2,098 linear miles of publicly owned roadways throughout Lycoming County. PennDOT owns 903 linear miles, or 43%, of those public roadways. In addition, there are 1,195, (57%) of locally-owned roadways owned by 52 different local municipalities included on the PennDOT Liquid Fuels System.



PennDOT defines its roadway assets by establishing four Business Plan Networks:

1. Business Plan Network 1 – Interstate
2. Business Plan Network 2 – National Highway System (NHS), Non-Interstate
3. Business Plan Network 3 – Non-NHS with Average Daily Traffic
4. Business Plan Network 4 – Non-NHS with Average Daily Traffic, (ADT) less than 2,000

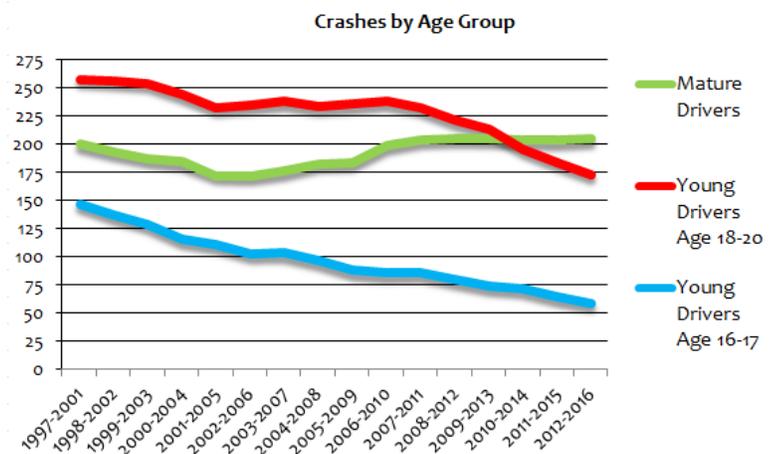
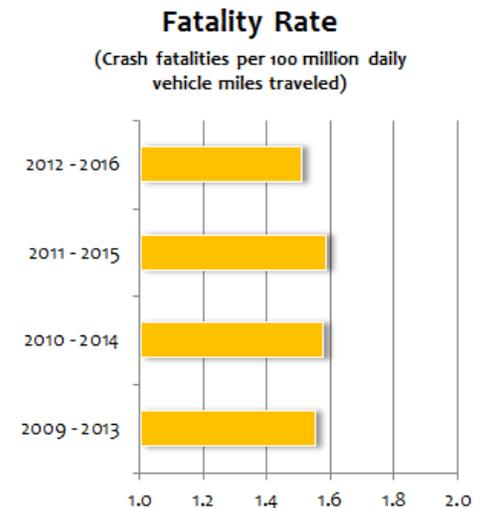
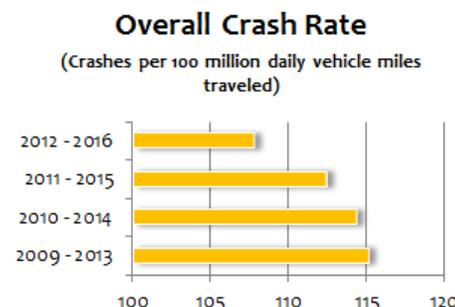
IRI is a worldwide standard for measuring pavement smoothness. IRI by business plan network in Lycoming County is better than statewide. Currently, we have no poor pavement on the interstate system and only 2% of the pavement of the national highway system in Lycoming County is poor (compared to over 10% on the statewide national highway system).

**SAFETY**

In terms of the rate of crashes, the recent trend is a decrease in the overall crash rate in Lycoming County but relatively no change in the rate of major injuries and fatalities. The Pennsylvania Strategic Highway Safety Plan includes focus areas of improving safety for both mature drivers (age 65 and over) and two age classes of “young and inexperienced drivers” aged 16-17 and aged 18-20. Crash data for Lycoming County shows

that we are seeing large decreases in the numbers of crashes involving both age classes of young drivers.

From 1997-2016, Lycoming County has seen a 60% drop in crashes involving a driver age 16-17 and a 33% drop in crashes involving a driver age 18-20. However, in the same time period there has been a 2% overall increase in the number of crashes involving a driver age 65 and over.



**STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TRANSPORTATION PLANNING OBJECTIVES**

Increasingly, transportation planning is guided by federal government performance-based planning objectives. These objectives are tied to specific quantifiable performance measures used to track whether local transportation spending is being directed to the parts of the transportation system in need of better maintenance. The current federal government transportation planning objectives are:

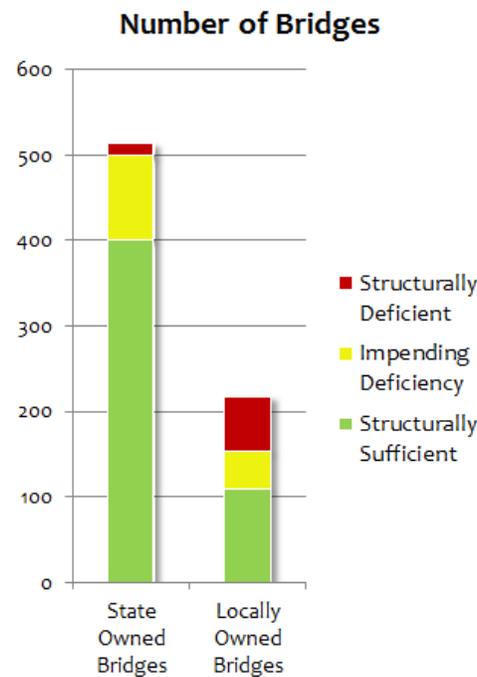
- To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.
- To maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair.
- To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System.
- To improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system.
- To improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development.
- To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.
- To reduce project costs, promote jobs and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods by accelerating project completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process, including reducing regulatory burdens and improving agencies' work practices.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in the statewide Long Range Transportation Plan (PA On Track, 2016) has outlined four planning objectives for the state.

- System preservation by using increasingly good data about the transportation systems in Pennsylvania to develop asset management strategies to maintain the current transportation system at a high level of quality.
- Improvement of safety statewide for all modes and all users.
- To expand and improve personal and freight mobility.
- Emphasize stewardship by increasing efficiency and streamlining processes.

**BRIDGES**

There are 12 state-owned bridges that are structurally deficient, which represents approximately 2% of all state-owned bridges in Lycoming County. This is a remarkable improvement since the 2013 Long Range Transportation Plan when 8.3% of state-owned bridges in Lycoming County were structurally deficient. Approximately 29% of local bridges are structurally deficient. Another 21% will be structurally deficient with any significant degradation in deck, substructure, or superstructure condition.



Major bridge components such as the deck, superstructure, substructure are evaluated using a 0-9 condition ratings scale where a 9 rating is excellent condition and 0 means deterioration is so severe the bridge must be closed to traffic. A condition rating of 4 or less for a major bridge component will classify the bridge as structurally deficient, (SD) and condition rating of 2 or less for waterway opening also triggers the SD designation according to federal criteria.

**AIRPORT**

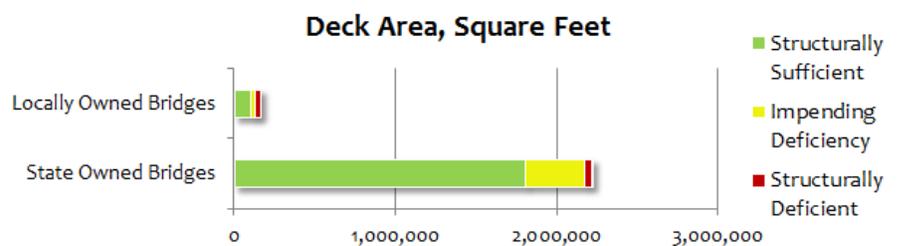
Maintaining and expanding air service was a primary strategy identified in the 2006 Lycoming County Comprehensive Plan to enhance the multimodal transportation system. Upon reviewing how to improve and expand service to the Williamsport Airport, efforts concentrated on replacing the terminal building. Originally built in 1947, the terminal was last substantially renovated in 1971. The terminal no longer meets the security and capacity needs of the 21st century.

Construction has begun on a new terminal building that will expand available space and incorporate major new features and amenities based on extensive input from community leaders, airport customers and tenants. Improvements in the new terminal will include space for up to two additional airlines, a modern baggage claim facility, better vehicular and pedestrian access, larger concession area, and numerous aesthetic enhancements to create a more enjoyable customer experience. The new terminal will be completed in late 2018.

The terminal will be a major component in recruiting additional air service which would promote competitive pricing and provide additional destinations for customers. The Airport Authority has also completed a major runway and approach improvement project first identified in the 2006 comprehensive plan.



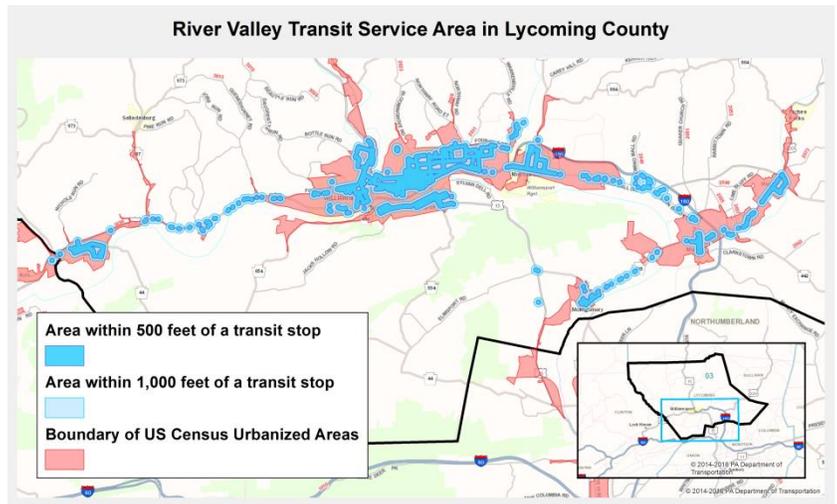
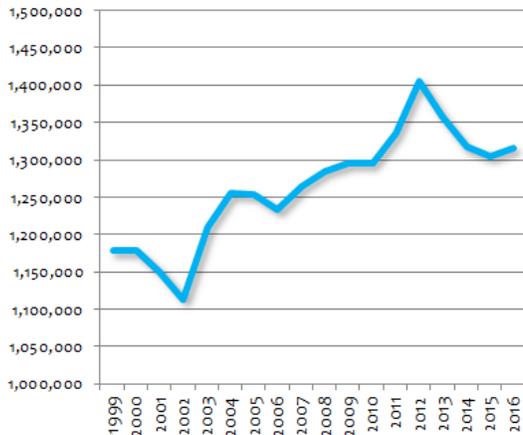
New Airport Terminal Construction, 2017



**TRANSIT**

River Valley Transit (RVT) is the only fixed route bus service provider in Lycoming County. RVT manages a bus network of 19 fixed routes operated in-house by RVT employees. The system is comprised of a fully accessible fleet of 33 buses consisting of standard 35 and 40 foot long transit coaches, including 18 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses.

**Total Passengers**

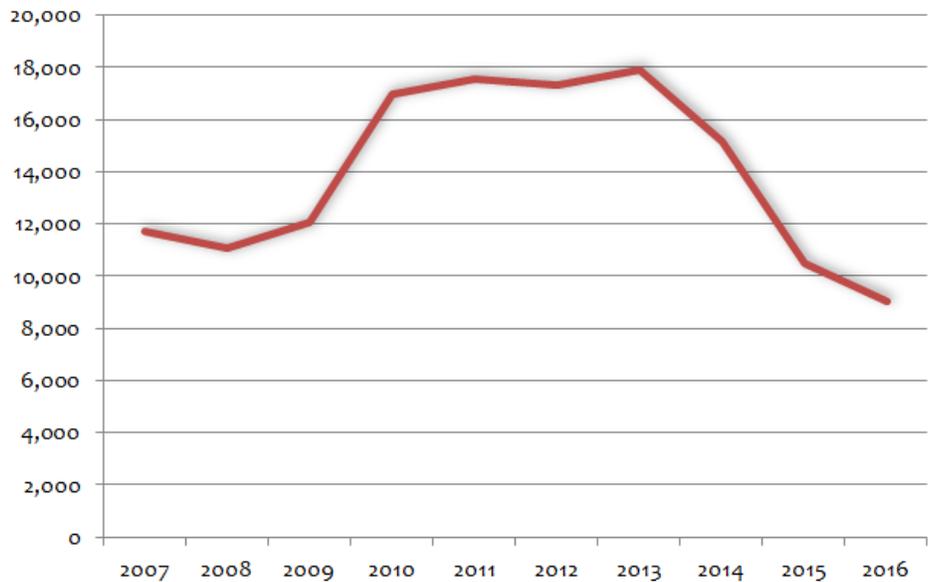


RVT has increased ridership steadily since 1999 with an overall 12% increase in total passengers served and an all-time passenger record in 2012 of 1,406,478 passengers. RVT also provides special transit services to support a wide variety of activities and community events throughout their service area including Lycoming County Fair, Little League World Series, Williamsport Crosscutters minor league baseball games, Penn College Earth Science Center, Lycoming College Homecoming, and other college functions along with charter services using a process that complies with new FTA regulations.

**RAIL**

A major transportation objective contained within the 2006 Lycoming County Comprehensive Plan was to “maintain and expand, where appropriate, the infrastructure for the County’s rail network.” Fortunately, the SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority, (JRA) owns the Lycoming Valley trackage as part of an overall regional shortline rail system. The system encompasses six rail lines with nearly 200 miles of track, land, rights-of way, engine houses, and various bridges and other railroad related structures traversing through a nine county area

**Lycoming Valley Rail Road, Carloads of Freight**



consisting of Lycoming, Union, Northumberland, Montour, Mifflin, Columbia, Clinton, Centre, and Blair Counties.

The entire JRA system provides rail freight service to approximately 85 shippers supporting over 10,000 good paying industrial jobs. The carrier for Lycoming County is the Lycoming Valley Railroad (LVRR). During the peak period of Marcellus Shale gas drilling activity, the carloads of freight moved by LVRR increased by about 80% within a 4 year period and then decreased back to levels before the “boom.” If gas drilling activity increases again, it is expected that freight movement on the rail system will also increase.



*Train Engine for Lycoming Valley Rail Road*

Source: PCD

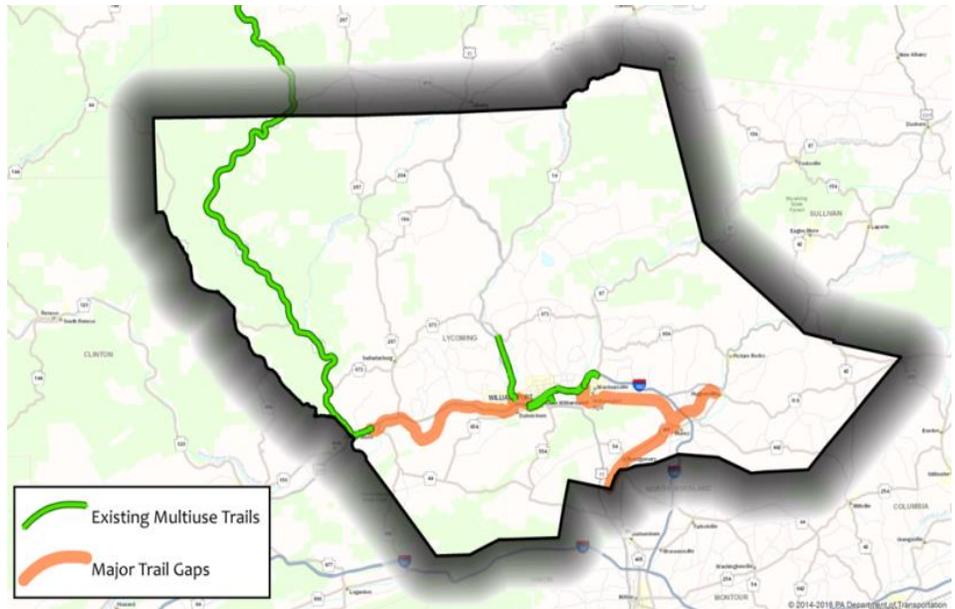
**CURRENT STATUS OF LYCOMING COUNTY’S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

Lycoming County has an outstanding system of multiuse urban and rural trails that are both regionally connected and provide access to key local recreational resources. There are plans underway to further expand upon this network, focused especially on completing “gaps” in the network.

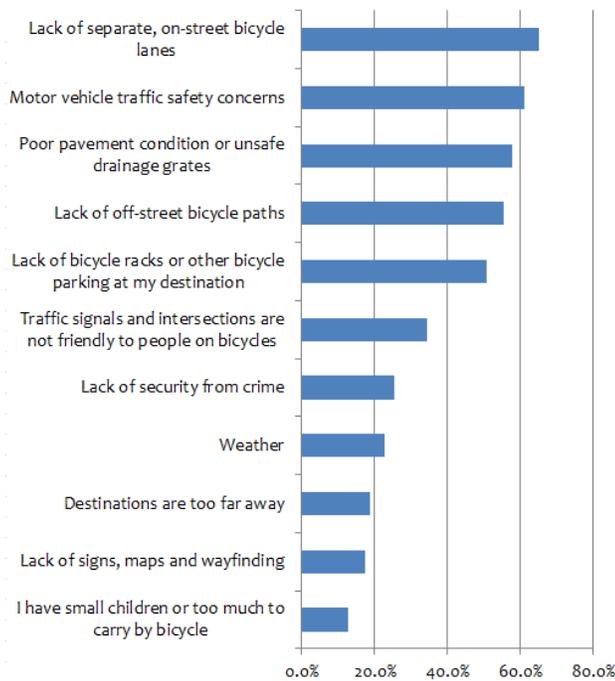
In addition, pedestrian facility enhancements have also been accomplished within many downtown areas throughout the County to improve safety and accessibility, with more initiatives in the planning stages. The primary function of multiuse trails is to provide for safe, comfortable, and convenient non-motorized mobility between communities. Urban multiuse trails are usually paved and rural multiuse trails are usually compacted fine gravel. All multiuse trails also accommodate recreational uses along with transportation use which makes them a vital resource for communities.

Lycoming County has several extensive multiuse trails already in place as well as plans to connect, extend, and improve access to these trails. While multiuse trails primarily provide non-motorized mobility between communities, downtown areas can implement various streetscape improvements to facilitate non-motorized travelers within the community. These improvements are typically grouped together under the umbrella of “Complete Streets.”

The Susquehanna River Walk is a heavily used 6 mile paved bikeway and walkway situated on top of the Williamsport Area Levee System located in the City of Williamsport, Borough of South Williamsport, and Loyalsock Township. Planning is currently underway for a Susquehanna River Walk extension that will be a 2.4-mile, 10-ft wide, paved multi-purpose trail between the existing 6-mile River Walk at Maynard Street and the 20-acre riverfront Susquehanna State Park. The River Walk extension will also link directly to the Lycoming Creek Bikeway and provide for multiple new access points to the existing River Walk.

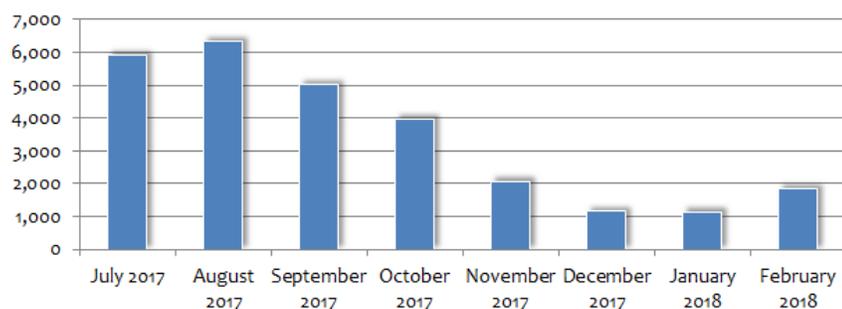


**All factors that prevent you from riding a bicycle more often in the City of Williamsport**



A survey conducted in 2016 by the Lycoming County Planning Department on behalf of the City of Williamsport Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee found that respondents would have more bicycle trips for general transportation reasons if riding a bicycle were to be made “easier” in the City of Williamsport. The number of bicycle commuters would increase by 50% and the number of people riding a bicycle to visit local businesses would increase fivefold. Additionally, the number of people who “never” ride a bicycle would be cut in half. Only 49% of respondents thought that riding a bicycle in the City of Williamsport is currently safe, while 96% of respondents think the City of Williamsport should take action to make riding a bicycle “easier and safer.” The City of Williamsport and the Borough of Jersey Shore are both

**Total Monthly River Walk Users**



very actively pursuing streets enhancements to benefit people walking and people riding bicycles.