

WILLIAMSPORT AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
2013-2033 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN



***MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION***



Prepared By Lycoming County Planning and Community Development

Adopted by WATS Coordinating Committee

December 19, 2013

**WILLIAMSPORT AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

**LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN  
COUNTY OF LYCOMING**

**2013-2033**

Plan Prepared By:

Lycoming County Department of Planning and Community Development  
48 West Third Street  
Williamsport, PA 17701  
Phone: (570) 320-2130  
[www.lyco.org](http://www.lyco.org)

For:

Williamsport Area Transportation Study  
Metropolitan Planning Organization

December, 2013

*The preparation of this report has been financed in part by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation with local assistance from the County of Lycoming.*

*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.*

**LYCOMING COUNTY LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN  
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>CHAPTER</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<p><b>I. INTRODUCTION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purpose of Long Range Transportation Plan</li> <li>- Overview of WATS Transportation Planning Process</li> </ul>	<p><b>5</b></p>
<p><b>II. FEDERAL/STATE PLANNING REGULATIONS AND POLICIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SAFETEA- LU / TEA-21 Planning Factors / MAP-21</li> <li>- Land Use / Transportation and Economic Development</li> <li>- Keystone Principles</li> <li>- Smart Transportation / Livability</li> <li>- PA Mobility Plan</li> </ul>	<p><b>14</b></p>
<p><b>III. COUNTY AND MULTI-MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overview of County / Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plans</li> <li>- Transportation Vision Statement / Goals and Objectives</li> <li>- Population / Housing / Journey to Work Trend Analysis</li> <li>- Employment Data Summary</li> <li>- Existing and Future Land Use Patterns</li> <li>- Marcellus Shale Natural Gas Exploration</li> </ul>	<p><b>28</b></p>
<p><b>IV. EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM INVENTORY WITH NEEDS ASSESSMENT ANALYSUS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highway System               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Road Functional Classification System</li> <li>ii. Enhanced National Highway System</li> <li>iii. Scenic Byways Program Designations</li> <li>iv. Roadway Pavement Condition Assessment</li> <li>v. Highway Safety</li> <li>vi. Congestion and Access Management</li> <li>vii. Regional Operations Plan, (ROP)</li> <li>viii. Freight Movement</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Bridges               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Bridge Inspection Process</li> <li>ii. Bridge Condition Assessment</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>82</b></p>

<b>CHAPTER</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
- Public Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Fixed Route Bus Service (River Valley Transit)</li> <li>ii. Taxi Service (Billtown Cab Company)</li> <li>iii. Community Shared Ride Program (STEP)</li> <li>iv. Intercity Bus (Susquehanna Transit Company)</li> <li>v. Regional Transit Coordination</li> </ul>	
- Air Service (Williamsport Regional Airport) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Overview</li> <li>ii. Inventory of Airport Facilities</li> <li>iii. Airport Hazard Zoning</li> <li>iv. Commercial Air Service Description and Trends</li> <li>v. Air Freight</li> <li>vi. Major Airport Facility Planned Improvements</li> <li>vii. Economic Impact of Airport</li> <li>viii. Jersey Shore Airport</li> </ul>	
- Rail Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Norfolk Southern Railways</li> <li>ii. Lycoming Valley Railroad</li> </ul>	
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities	
- Transportation Hazard Mitigation / Security	
<b>V. TRANSPORTATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>186</b>
- Environmental Overview	
- Linking Planning and NEPA	
- Environmental Mitigation Strategies	
<b>VI. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT</b>	<b>223</b>
- Overview of Federal and State Requirements	
- WATS Public Participation Plan Approach	
<b>VII. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>238</b>
- Project Selection Criteria	
- Transportation Funding Overview	
- WATS Phased Capital Transportation Projects	
- Environmental Justice Analysis	
- Plan Implementation Strategies	

**APPENDIX:**

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### *Purpose of a Long Range Transportation Plan*

Transportation affects people’s lives on a daily basis. Whether it is a need to use a form of transportation for accessing work, home, shopping, medical services, recreation and social networking or relying on others to provide goods and services, the transportation system provides a vital link to our modern society. Transportation investments can produce significant impacts on community and economic development patterns, public safety and security and the availability of travel choices offered to the public. Overall transportation needs can be complex and ever changing so the planning process needs to provide accurate and updated data driven information along with a flexible approach toward addressing various problems and formulating sustainable and cost effective solutions. This plan shall serve as a framework for guiding a transportation planning process that yields positive community results when formulating and assessing transportation options and making the best possible choices.

### **Lycoming County Location Map**



In the County of Lycoming, a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the transportation system is a critical infrastructure component that supports the County’s economic activity base. The County of Lycoming encompasses a land mass that is geographically larger (1,246 square miles; 796,387 acres) than any other county in Pennsylvania and is even larger than the State of Rhode Island. The multi-modal transportation network connects a small urbanized area, outlying growth areas and a large rural area consisting of highways and bridges, public fixed route transit, shared ride van service, freight railroads, a commercial service airport and general aviation public use airport along with bicycle / pedestrian facilities.

The Federal Highway Administration, (FHWA) describes the purpose of transportation planning as “to identify broad goals to meet transportation needs.” Federal law and regulations require the development of Long Range Transportation Plans as part of statewide and metropolitan planning programs that documents transportation investment needs and outlines a strategy regarding how best to address the needs. The plan serves as the official plan for a metropolitan area and federal funding for certain types of transportation capital project improvements (i.e., highways, bridges and public transit) cannot be approved unless these projects are identified in the Long Range Transportation Plan adopted by a Metropolitan Planning Organization. This plan will fulfill the federal requirement for the development of a Long Range Transportation Plan for the County of Lycoming and WATS MPO.

**Federal regulations require that the Long Range Transportation Plan:**

- *Consider all transportation modes*
- *Cover at least a 20 year time period*
- *Consider eight key planning factors*
- *Be fiscally constrained*
- *Provide for public participation*
- *Be updated at least every five years in air quality attainment areas such as Lycoming County*

In addition, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, (PennDOT) provides guidance “Developing Long Range Transportation Plans” that notes this process is a tool to help planning agencies influence development by guiding transportation and economic investment in a manner that supports transportation goals. PennDOT identifies numerous characteristics that are found in successful long range transportation plans which include:

- Create local / regional ownership
- Emphasize planning, not programming
- Collaborate with other stakeholders
- Support other relevant plans
- Articulate clear goals and objectives
- Address quality of life issues
- Maintain and open and transparent process
- Capitalize on the experiences of others
- Consider multiple futures (Scenario planning)
- Develop an evaluation framework
- Employ strong technical analyses
- Link solutions prioritization to goals, objectives and policies
- Support multi-modal and intermodal future
- Integrate land use and transportation
- Distribute investments equitably (Environmental Justice)
- Organize solutions in a relevant format
- Structure the plan to be relevant to local issues
- Include an implementation plan
- Be creative

Therefore, it is our intent that this WATS Long Range Transportation Plan consider the above characteristics to foster efficient mobility and access for people and goods throughout the county, promote regional intermodal connectivity, ensure efficient system performance and adequate preservation, promote economic development and public safety as well as maintain the County’s outstanding quality of life.

More specifically, this plan will provide an overview of the transportation planning and programming process, establish a plan vision with goals and objectives regarding the role transportation should play in overall comprehensive planning to help guide the current and future development consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan adopted by the County Board of Commissioners along with the six Multi-municipal comprehensive plans adopted by 26 different municipalities.

Further, this plan will provide an inventory of existing transportation facility assets and services, assess the overall condition and adequacy of these transportation assets and services and begin to explore performance measures and

overall system improvement needs to adequately maintain transportation facilities and services in light of ever changing demographic and economic trends forecasted to occur over the next 20 years.

Transportation improvement needs will also undergo a preliminary analysis to help identify impacts to environmental resources as part of the Linking Planning and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

Other primary focus areas to be evaluated in this plan include freight movement, safety, congestion and access management, Intelligent Transportation Systems, (ITS) technology, air quality, hazard mitigation and energy impacts such as Marcellus Shale gas exploration.

A staged 20 year transportation capital improvements program will be developed in a manner that is fiscally constrained.

The plan's public involvement process and Title VI environmental justice outreach efforts will be documented.

This Long Range Plan is critical toward achieving Lycoming County's comprehensive plan vision during a 20 year planning horizon by realizing managed and well planned growth and development through the adoption of sound public policies that target strategic infrastructure investments consistent with federal, state and local planning factors. Given scarce transportation funding resources at all governmental levels, the plan will enable transportation decision-makers to prioritize competing needs and make the best use of available funding to address the most important transportation needs.

This plan will be updated at least every five years in accordance with Federal regulations or more frequently if determined necessary to respond to changing circumstances that may affect the transportation system planning and decision-making process.

### ***Overview of the WATS Transportation Planning Process***

Federal law and regulations require the establishment of a Metropolitan Planning Organization, (MPO) to oversee the transportation planning process in all urbanized areas of the nation having a population of 50,000 or more persons as documented by the U.S. Bureau of the Census as part of the decennial census. The Williamsport Area Transportation Study, (WATS) serves as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Williamsport Urbanized area established under a legal Agreement with PennDOT approved in 1968. The WATS jurisdictional boundary was further extended in 1991 to encompass the entire geographic area of Lycoming County. Therefore, the federal transportation planning and programming process within Lycoming County is undertaken by



WATS, including the development and approval of this Long Range Transportation Plan.

***In addition to development and adoption of the Long Range Transportation Plan, WATS other core functions include:***

*Establish and manage a fair and impartial setting for effective regional decision-making in the planning area.*

*Identify and evaluate alternative transportation improvement options: Use data and planning methods to generate and evaluate alternatives. Planning studies and evaluations are included in the MPO Unified Planning Work Program, (UPWP).*

*Develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): Develop a short-range (four year) program of transportation improvements based on the long range transportation plan. The TIP should be designated to achieve the area's goals, using spending, regulating, operating, management and financial tools.*

*Involve the public: Continually involve the general public and other affected constituencies in the essential functions listed above.*

The WATS MPO is organizationally structured with two Committees; a Technical Committee and a Coordinating Committee with defined functions and membership composition as follows:

## WATS COMMITTEE STRUCTURE



## **Technical Committee**

The purpose of the Technical Committee is to oversee the development of detailed transportation planning documents, special studies and other technical analysis that documents multi-modal transportation issues and needs and provide advice and recommendations to the Coordinating Committee. The Technical Committee consists of seven (7) voting members, as follows:

- 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 Transit General Manager
- Williamsport Regional Airport Executive Director
- City of Williamsport Engineer/Community Development Director

The PennDOT Center for Program Development and Management Representative serves as Chairman of the Technical Committee.

The Technical Committee voting members are designated by their respective member organizations and serve without term limits at the discretion of their member organizations. Each member organization designates the individual serving on the Technical Committee as their voting member at the beginning of each calendar year and provides written documentation to the WATS MPO Chairman for WATS MPO files maintained by the Lycoming County Planning and Community Development Department. Member organizations designate an alternate voting member that may vote on behalf of the designated member in the case where the designated voting member is unable to attend a specific meeting.

In addition to the seven voting members, the Technical Committee includes four (4) non-voting members, as follows:

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

Non-voting members of the Technical Committee receive WATS reports and meeting notices and agendas and participate in WATS discussions, but serve without a vote.

## **Coordinating Committee**

The purpose of the Coordinating Committee is to review and act upon the recommendations of the Technical Committee and serve as the official policy decision-making body of the WATS MPO.

The Coordinating Committee consist of eleven (11) voting members, comprising elected and appointed officials as follows:

- PennDOT Engineering District 3-0 Executive
- PennDOT Deputy Secretary for Planning
- Lycoming County Commissioner
- Lycoming County Commissioner
- 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

The PennDOT Engineering District 3-0 Executive serves as Chairman of the Coordinating Committee.

Again, the Coordinating Committee voting members shall be designated by their respective member organizations and serve without term limits at the discretion of their member organizations. Each member organization designates the individual(s) serving on the Coordinating Committee as their voting member(s) at the beginning of each calendar year and provide written documentation to the WATS MPO Chairman for WATS MPO files maintained by the Lycoming County Planning and Community Development Department. Member organizations also designate an alternate voting member that may vote on behalf of the designated voting member in the case where the designated voting member is unable to attend a specific meeting.

In addition to the 11 voting members, the Coordinating Committee includes four (4) non-voting members, as follows:

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

Non-voting members of the Coordinating Committee receive WATS MPO reports and meeting notices and agendas and participate in WATS MPO discussions, but serve without vote.

The WATS MPO Coordinating Committee may establish advisory committees, ad hoc work groups, special purpose task forces or steering committees to gather specialized experience, technical advice and input that may be needed to help carry forth transportation planning related activities under the jurisdiction of the WATS MPO transportation planning process. The WATS MPO has established a Transit Advisory Committee that is comprised of WATS members, transit providers and various social

service organizations to provide input and recommendations to the WATS MPO on public transit issues and needs in Lycoming County.

### **WATS ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES**



The administrative duties of the WATS MPO are conducted by the Lycoming County Planning and Community Development Department. The primary staff contact for the Department on WATS MPO administrative matters is the Lycoming County Transportation Planner who acts as WATS Secretary.

The Lycoming County Planning and Community Development Department is responsible for the following primary WATS MPO administrative duties.

- Develop and conduct all transportation planning work tasks contained in the WATS MPO approved Unified Planning Work Program contract that is executed between the County of Lycoming and PennDOT. The County of Lycoming subcontracts with the City of Williamsport to perform the Federal Transit Administration funded UPWP transit planning work tasks undertaken by River Valley Transit.
- Schedule, publicly advertise and convene all WATS MPO public meetings, as needed, in accordance with the PA Open Records Law and WATS MPO approved Public Participation Plan. All official business of the WATS MPO takes place at publicly advertised meetings to ensure opportunity for public comment.
- Prepare and distribute meeting agendas and related materials.
- Ensure that all WATS MPO adopted plans, programs and policies are implemented.



- The WATS MPO website is maintained at <http://www.lyco.org/Home/PlanningandCommunityDevelopment/TransportationPlanning/WilliamsportAreaTransportationStudy.aspx>
  
- All WATS MPO administrative records and files are maintained at the Lycoming County Planning and Community Development Department, 48 West Third Street, Williamsport, PA 17701.
  
- WATS MPO administrative related costs borne by the County of Lycoming and the City of Williamsport are reimbursable in accordance with the WATS MPO approved UPWP related contract terms and conditions executed between the County of Lycoming, PennDOT and City of Williamsport.

Refer to Exhibit A in the Appendix to review the WATS MPO adopted bylaws for a more complete description of the WATS MPO roles and responsibilities, governance structure and administrative duties and processes.