

BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

22/Tomorrow is the successor to *22/Renew*, which was Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's (PennDOT) successful reconstruction of sections of U.S. Route 22, completed in November 1999. *22/Renew* reconstructed parts of the U.S. Route 22 mainline, improved median barriers, extended interchange ramps, and rebuilt bridges from the east side of the Lehigh River Bridge to Route 191 in Northampton County.

22/Tomorrow will plan and design traffic solutions for the year 2020. Funds have been budgeted to determine needs, study alternatives, evaluate environmental implications, and do preliminary design for measures that will provide congestion relief and improve safety in the future. The U.S. Route 22 Needs Report is complete. This follow-up report documents the study scenarios and identifies potentially impacted environmental resources.

U.S. Route 22 is the major east-west arterial in the center of the Lehigh Valley. It connects I-78 and I-476 to the west and Route 33 to the east, extending across the Delaware River into New Jersey where it again intersects with I-78. U.S. Route 22 is located in the urban core area and is characterized by short commuter trips to and from the many businesses adjacent to the corridor.

The corridor study area shown in Map 1 covers the section from the I-78/U.S. Route 22 split in western Lehigh County to the 25th Street exit in Palmer Township, Northampton County. These limits were carefully considered. Forecasts of major traffic and congestion problems on U.S. Route 22 are well within the study area boundaries. Traffic volumes on U.S. Route 22 peak between the interchanges with 15th Street and Route 378 and gradually diminish both to the eastern and western limits of the study area. West of the U.S. Route 22/I-78 interchange, I-78 is

functionally and operationally different than the U.S. Route 22 Study corridor. I-78 carries a high percentage of long distance through traffic and a greater volume of trucks. U.S. Route 22 traffic is predominantly local in nature. East of 25th Street, traffic is affected by major changes in road geometry, reduced speeds, and the presence of the Delaware River toll bridge.

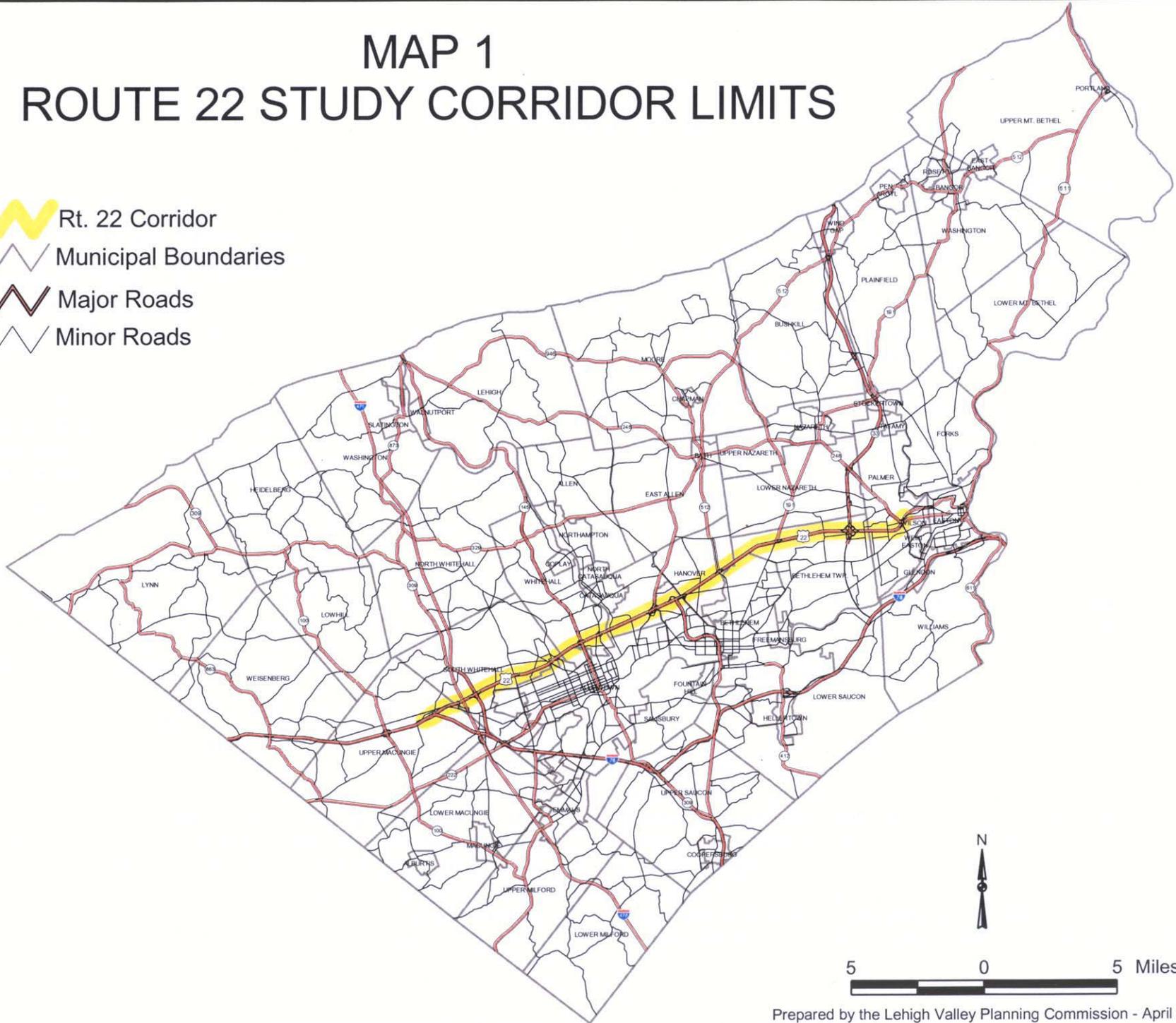
In addition to the corridor study limits, the study area for this analysis extends from I-78 to the south and a corridor that roughly parallels Route 329 to the north. Given the breadth of potential solutions for addressing the purpose and needs of the U.S. Route 22 planning study, the project sponsors felt that the study area outlined in Map 2 would be comprehensive when evaluating impacts.

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) is managing the corridor planning studies. At the beginning of the project, the LVPC hired Urbitran-Garmen Associates to build a new regional traffic model. Orth-Rodgers Associates, Inc. was assigned the task of developing the U.S. Route 22 Needs Report. Other agencies involved in the planning study include PennDOT, the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The purpose of this report is to identify a range of potential solutions to future traffic problems on Route 22 and to assess those that best meet the project purpose and needs. This report lists the preliminary environmental scope for each scenario. Upon completion of the planning phases, FHWA and PennDOT will be responsible for conducting detailed environmental studies, preliminary engineering and final design for the sections of the U.S. Route 22 corridor which will be programmed from the planning studies.

MAP 1

ROUTE 22 STUDY CORRIDOR LIMITS

-  Rt. 22 Corridor
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Major Roads
-  Minor Roads



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