

Public Hearing

SR 15 SECTION 088
CSVT PROJECT - ASH BASIN FOCUS AREA
Shikellamy High School
June 21, 2018



Welcome!

Purpose Of This Hearing

Welcome to the Public Hearing for the Central Susquehanna Valley Transportation (CSVT) Project being held by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE). Tonight's Public Hearing gives interested parties an opportunity to provide formal comments on the location and major design features of the proposed highway within the Ash Basin Focus Area in the CSVT Project's Southern Section.

A Supplemental Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Ash Basin Focus Area has been made available for public review and formal comment during a 30-day period beginning on June 6, 2018. Your comments on that document are welcomed as part of this Public Hearing.

The testimony received today, as well as all other comments received during the 30-day period ending on July 6, 2018, will be reviewed and addressed by PennDOT. Based on the results of the Supplemental EA, the comments received from the public, and PennDOT's responses to those comments, FHWA will decide on the issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), which represents environmental clearance for the Ash Basin Focus Area. When issued, the FONSI will designate the alternative selected to advance into final design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction.

This Public Hearing is held in compliance with Title 23, United States Code, Section 128; Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 771; and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Act 120 of 1970. The legal notice for this hearing appeared in The Daily Item on May 22 and June 10, 2018, as well as in The Snyder County Times on June 15, 2018. It was also posted on the project website (csvt.com) on May 29, 2018 and was mailed to area residents on June 1, 2018.

Today's Public Hearing Agenda

4:00 – 5:00 PM – PLANS DISPLAY (LOBBY)

During this time, plans and other information will be displayed related to the topics listed below, and project team members will be available to answer questions.

- **Ash Basins**
- **Alternatives**
- **Environmental Features**
- **Eastern Alternative**
- **PA 61 Connector**
- **Noise**
- **Right-of-Way**
- **CSVT Southern Section with Eastern Alternative**

5:00 PM – PUBLIC HEARING BEGINS (AUDITORIUM)

The Public Hearing will begin with PennDOT presenting an official statement of project information. PennDOT and USACE will also explain the purpose and format of the Public Hearing. Immediately following those opening remarks, the following three options will be available for the public to provide testimony:

PUBLIC TESTIMONY (AUDITORIUM)

Persons who register in the lobby to present public testimony will be called upon to speak from the podium at the front of the auditorium. Public officials will be called upon first, followed by other members of the public in the order in which they registered. Each speaker's testimony will be limited to five minutes or less, and notice of the time remaining will be provided. All testimony will be recorded by a stenographer. There will be no responses to questions raised during testimony and no follow-up questions. Audience members are asked to be courteous and refrain from commenting during the public testimony.

PRIVATE TESTIMONY (CONFERENCE ROOM ADJACENT TO LOBBY)

The opportunity to present private testimony will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. All testimony will be limited to five minutes or less and will be recorded by a stenographer.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY (LOBBY)

Written testimony may be submitted by completing a comment form and placing it in the designated box in the lobby.

Outside of the Public Hearing, written comments on the Supplemental EA may be submitted in hard copy to Matthew Beck, P.E., Assistant Plans Engineer, PennDOT Engineering District 3-0, 715 Jordan Avenue, Montoursville, PA 17754 or via email to CSVT_SupplementalEA@skellyloy.com. Comments will not be accepted via the project website.

Written comments specifically expressing concerns for aquatic resources may be submitted in hard copy to Mike Dombroskie, USACE Baltimore District, 1631 South Ather-ton Street, Suite 101, State College, PA 16801.

To be considered by PennDOT, FHWA, and/or USACE, comments must be post-marked by July 6, 2018 and must include the name and mailing address of the commenter.

Supplemental Environmental Assessment on the Ash Basin Focus Area

I. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Central Susquehanna Valley Transportation (CSVT) Project entails the construction of approximately 12.4 miles of new, limited-access, four-lane highway extending from the existing U.S. Routes 11/15 interchange in Monroe Township (north of Selinsgrove) in Snyder County to PA Route 147 in West Chillisquaque Township (just south of the PA Route 45 interchange near Montandon) in Northumberland County. The new highway includes a connector to PA Route 61 in Shamokin Dam and a new bridge crossing over the West Branch Susquehanna River extending from Union Township, Union County, to Point Township, Northumberland County.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), and Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP), completed a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the project to fulfill the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. A Record of Decision (ROD) was prepared and issued by FHWA in October 2003. As final design has progressed, PennDOT has prepared FEIS/ROD Reevaluations to document design changes and assess associated environmental impact differences. FEIS/ROD Reevaluations were approved by FHWA in 2006, 2015, and 2016.

II. ASH BASINS

The previously proposed alignment for the project's Southern Section (the No Change DAM Alternative) crossed two inactive fly ash waste basins that were previously utilized by PPL and are currently owned by Talen Energy (which merged with Riverstone Holdings in late 2016). The ash basins are disposal facilities for fly ash that was generated from the burning of coal at the former coal power plant along the Susquehanna River in Monroe Township.

the Northern Ash Basin. During the development of the FEIS, preliminary engineering studies had indicated that construction on the ash basins would be feasible. At that time, the basins had been closed fairly recently and it was expected that the water level in the basins would fall, allowing construction to be performed on top of mostly dry ash.

1980s and the Southern Ash Basin was closed in the late 1990s, as saturated fly ash was encountered within ten feet below the surface in both basins. The saturated fly ash is a soft, weak, and compressible material that cannot support the weight of a highway without excessive and potentially detrimental settlement and deformation. In addition, construction on the ash basins would present a risk of groundwater contamination in nearby wells and aquifers, both during and after construction. Given these findings, PA DEP strongly recommended that PennDOT realign the Southern Section, noting major concerns regarding construction within the basins which included potential impacts to groundwater and private water supplies, substantial stormwater manage-

ment challenges, and potential adverse impacts to the regulated basin dams. Finally, construction of the CSVT Project on the ash basins would cause the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and its citizens to assume perpetual liability for the basins and their dams.

III. ASH BASIN AVOIDANCE

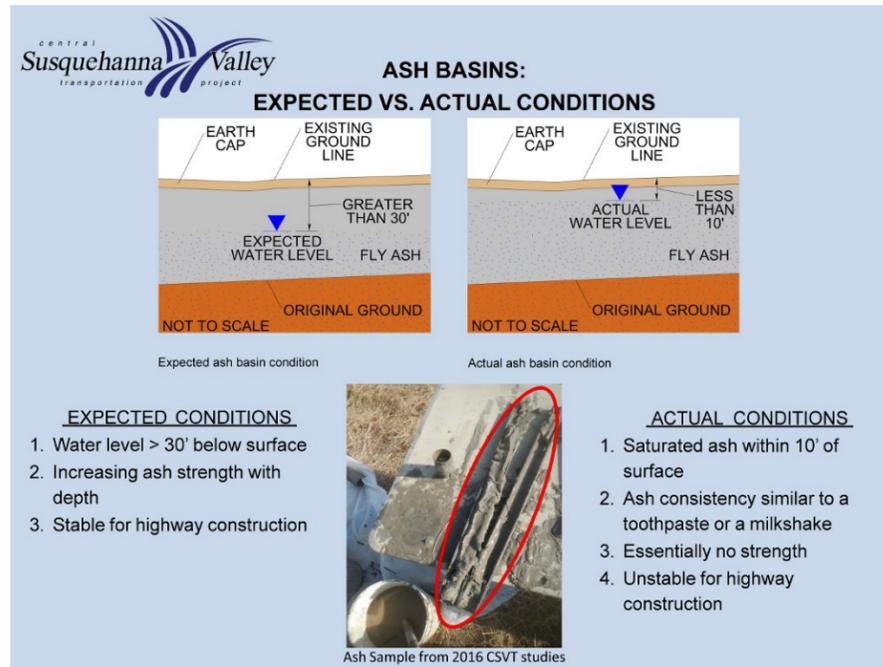
To avoid construction within the ash basins and the associated engineering and environmental risks, PennDOT developed three alternatives within the Ash Basin Focus Area, including:

- **Western Alternative,**
- **Central Alternative, and**
- **Eastern Alternative.**

All three alternatives require the realignment of about two miles of the No Change DAM Alternative's mainline

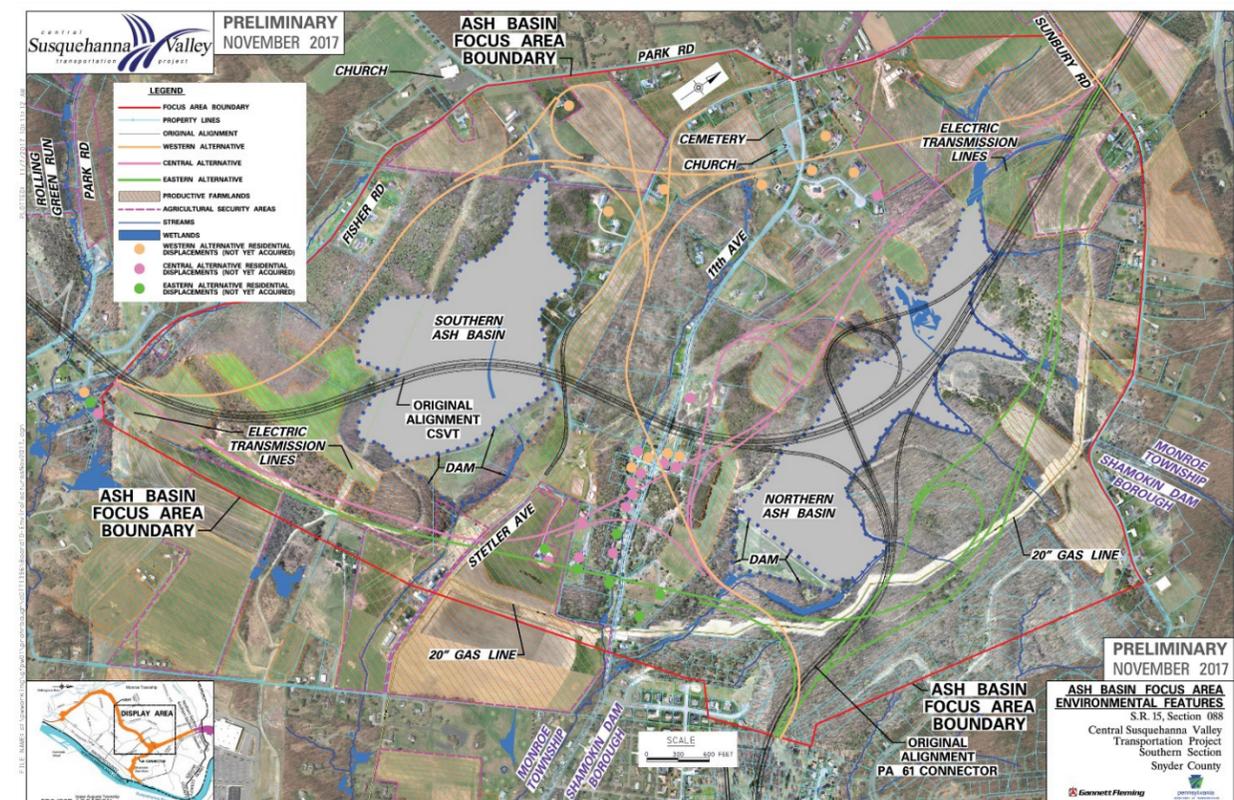
highway as well as the PA Route 61 Connector.

Since these alternatives were not assessed in the approved FEIS/ROD, a supplemental NEPA document was required. A Supplemental Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared pursuant to 23 CFR §771.130(c) and was made available for public review and formal comment during a 30-day period beginning June 6, 2018. The EA outlines the alternatives analyses, identifies the Preferred Alternative, and documents the environmental impacts and mitigation for the preferred realignment within the Ash Basin Focus Area. The EA also includes documentation in support of a permit application for impacts to streams and wetlands under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.



The basins were created decades ago by constructing dams across existing valleys, and the fly ash was mixed at the plant with water and pumped to the basins. The basins are not lined. The maximum depth of the fly ash (along the No Change DAM Alternative) is approximately 100 feet in the Southern Ash Basin and approximately 75 feet in

Following the start of final design for the Southern Section, geotechnical studies performed in 2016 identified unexpected conditions in the two ash basins. Specifically, testing indicated that the fly ash has very little strength and the water levels within the basins have not dropped substantially since the Northern Ash Basin was closed in the late



Identification of the Preferred Alternative

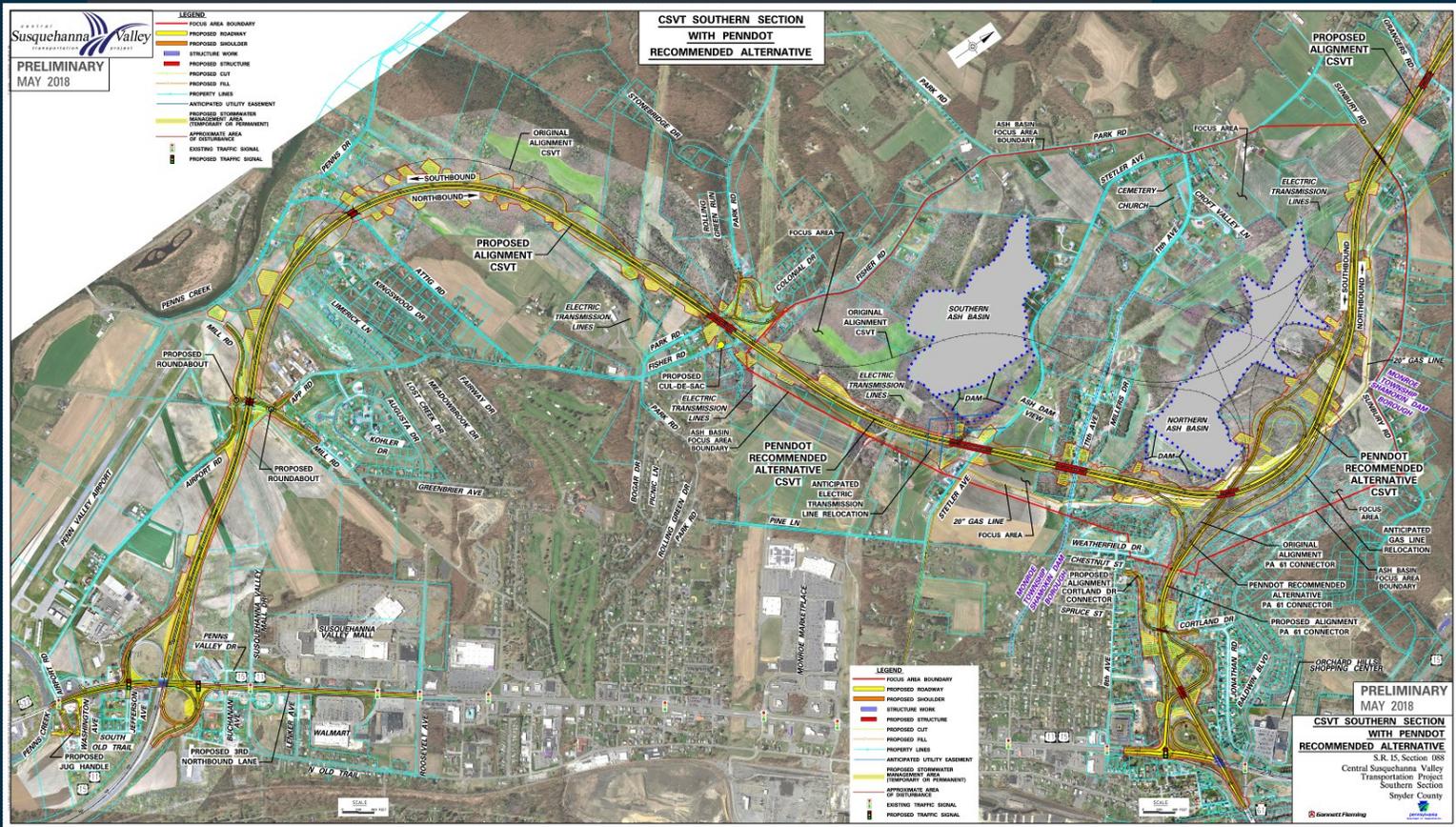
Through the development and analysis of the alternatives described earlier, the project team, the public, local officials, and environmental agencies collaborated to develop the best solution to avoid the ash basins while minimizing impacts. The Eastern Alternative was identified as the Preferred Alternative because it:

- better meets the traffic needs of the project through increased usage of the PA Route 61 Connector and the associated removal of more traffic from the existing road network;
- has the least impact to residences;
- has the least impact to farmlands;
- has the least impacts to wetlands; and
- has noise impacts that are less than the Western Alternative and similar to the Central Alternative.

Preferred Alternative

Overall, the Preferred Eastern Alternative avoids the ash basins and the associated engineering and environmental risks while providing transportation benefits for the region.

Construction of the Preferred Eastern Alternative will result in either a reduction in resource impacts compared to the No Change DAM Alternative or will have only minor increases in impacts for some resources.



Project Contact Information



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Further information related to the project, including the Supplemental Environmental Assessment and additional maps, is available at www.csvt.com.