

TGCC

The North/South Appalachian Highway Project

TGCC's ROAD

Regional Opportunities to Advance Development

Priority #1 Project: Advancing economic development in the Laurel Highlands of Southwestern Pennsylvania, the mountains of Western Maryland, and the Potomac Highlands or West Virginia by leading efforts to complete the transportation corridor linking the Pennsylvania Turnpike, I-68 and Corridor H.

Short-Term Goals (2009)

- 1) Reinstate US 220 DEIS funding in Maryland
- 2) Seek support of Governors O'Malley, Rendell and Manchin relative to Federal Reauthorization legislation
- 3) Secure appropriate support of Senator Cardin's earmark request of \$2.408 million in the FFY 2010 to complete Tiers One & Two relative to US 220 South
- 4) Provide support to Pennsylvania to restore funding of US 219 N DEIS
- 5) Create and build the North/South Appalachian Highway Coalition with members representing Maryland, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

Long-Term Goals (2010+)

- 1) Secure funding for Tier Two (FEIS) Study in MD & WV
- 2) Support amendment of Federal SAFE-TEA-LU legislation that provides funding of Route 219 in Pennsylvania.
- 3) Secure a source of funding for design, engineering and construction for the entire North-South Appalachian Corridor

"I'm also pleased that \$10 million is included for the North-South Corridor. These funds will not only improve safety but help promote economic development in Western Maryland"

-Senator Barbara Mikulski, July 2005

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TGCC's N/S Work Group—Core Members

Kim Leonard, Aircon Engineering—TGCC N/S Work Group Chair
 Ken Dyche, Region Eight Planning Council, Executive Director
 Jim Hinebaugh, Garrett County Economic Development, Director
 Kolin Jan, Allegany County Chamber of Commerce, President
 David Moe, Garrett County Development Corporation, Member
 Mona Ridder, Mineral County Development Authority, Executive Director
 Bob Smith, Allegany Aggregates, President

Colleen Peterson & Juli McCoy—TGCC Staff

"Transportation is a great enabler of economic growth, the lifeblood of commerce. It moves people to jobs and goods to the marketplace. Without strong transportation arteries, economies stagnate."

- U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, commenting on President Obama's signing of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, February 17, 2009.

N/S Appalachia Highway Coalition

“The N/S Appalachian Highway represents the most significant economic development infrastructure in the region. Without a N/S highway to intersect and compliment I-68, we simply will not see a rejuvenated economy .”

*-Kim Leonard, TGCC
N/S Appalachian
Highway Work Group
Chair*

The mission of the Northeastern Appalachia Highway Coalition is to advance economic development in the Laurel Highlands of Pennsylvania, Potomac Highlands of West Virginia and Mountain Maryland by leading efforts to complete the transportation corridor linking the Pennsylvania Turnpike, I-68, and Corridor H. Coalition partners will include businesses, civic organizations, elected officials, government entities and media outlets. Our goal is to create an energetic grassroots campaign, culminating in a powerful voice of advocacy with a singular purpose to complete the North South Appalachia Highway.

The Business Case for the Northeastern Appalachian Highway

As a result of the *North South Appalachian Corridor Study*, a multi-state planning effort completed in 2001, a broad spectrum of issues and needs were identified, including inadequate roadway capacity, safety concerns, and economic development constraints. This Study substantiated the fact that growth and economic development have been seriously hindered by the region’s transportation system. While there have been significant improvements in other parts of all states involved in this project, lack of progress on the North South Highway has hampered our ability to increase commercial activity.

The *North South Appalachian Corridor Study* concluded that U.S. Route 220 south from I-68 to Corridor H and U.S. Route 219 north from I-68 to the Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-76) would provide the greatest potential for benefiting Appalachian economic development. This alignment would route north-south traffic along I-68 from 219 north in Grantsville to 220 south in LaVale. US Route 219 north of I-68 is part of the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) and is eligible for Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) transportation funding. Funding is available to upgrade 219 north of I-68 to four lanes and construction should take place within the next 10 years. However, 220 south of I-68 is not part of the ADHS and, therefore, not eligible for ARC funding. Designating 220 south of I-68 as part of ADHS will require congressional action.

Multiple studies, including the previously referenced *North South Appalachian Corridor Study*, have verified an **increase of 19% in jobs in the U.S. 220 section** and **8% in the U.S. 219 section** along with a corresponding tax-base boost. Improvements in north-south travel would serve to link the area’s two most important east-west transportation facilities, I-68 and Corridor H, bringing renewed economic activity. One only needs to look 65 miles east of Cumberland to see the economic development activity, which has occurred in Washington County as a result of the intersection of two major highways, Interstates 81 & 70.

Increasing congestion on the current N/S Route 220, particularly in the towns of Bel Air and Cresaptown in Maryland, underscores the need for an expanded highway. Two of the region’s largest employers, New Page and ATK, depend upon Route 220 for transport of employees and products. New Page alone accounts for 420 trucks using Route 220 on a daily basis . Additionally, an advanced manufacturing park and the region’s newest residential development have recently been located on Route 220, which will transform current congestion to stop-and-go traffic within a few years.

North South Appalachian Highway Coalition Partners

CURRENT PARTNERS

Allegany County Chamber of Commerce
Allegany County Commissioners
City of Cumberland Mayor & Town Council
Cumberland Allegany County Industrial Foundation (CACIF)
Garrett County Chamber of Commerce
Garrett County Commissioners
Garrett County Development Corporation
Grantsville Mayor & Town Council
Mineral County (WV) Commissioners
Mineral County (WV) Chamber of Commerce
Mineral County (WV) Development Authority
Somerset County Commissioners
Tri-County Council of Western Maryland
Western Maryland Building & Construction Trades Council
Western Maryland Delegation

Regional Support for the North South Appalachian Highway

- **Tri County Council for Western Maryland**, representing Washington, Allegany and Garrett Counties, references completion of the North-South Corridor---completion of Route 219 North of I-68 and Route 220 South of I-68—as a key infrastructure development priority in their *2008 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy*.
- The **Cumberland Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**, representing most of Allegany County and a portion of northern Mineral County, called the “*construction of a new U.S. 220 as one of the most significant potential regional highway improvement projects in both Allegany and Mineral counties.*”
- The **Region 8 Planning and Development Council**, representing the West Virginia counties of Mineral, Grant, Hampshire, Hardy and Pendleton, identified U.S. Route 220 as a “*roadway critical to the region’s economic development.*”
- **Allegany, Garrett, Mineral, Hampshire and Hardy counties**, as well as the **City of Cumberland** have recommended major transportation improvements, including U.S. 220, as a high priority in their comprehensive plans.
- **Allegany County’s** plan contains considerable discussion of a new U.S. 220 that will connect Cumberland with Corridor H.
- **Garrett County’s** plan notes the County’s “support of efforts to improve the U.S. 220 corridor and the U.S. 219 north corridor as the primary link between Pennsylvania and Corridor H”.
- **Mineral County’s** Comprehensive Plan also devoted considerable comment on U.S. 220 and “suggested that it be upgraded its entire length to provide competitive access for future industrial sites”.
- **Hampshire County’s** Comprehensive Plan cited U.S. 220 as “an important roadway for north-south access to both I-68 and Corridor H”.
- **Hardy County’s** notes “transportation is the most urgent problem to be addressed within the (comprehensive) plan.”

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TGCC's Mission

The mission of TGCC is to help identify opportunities for collaboration to enhance the quality of life in the region, negotiate broad and sound solutions to community issues and to serve as convener, facilitator and catalyst for regional responsiveness and community improvement.

TGCC's Guiding Principles, Organizational Concepts & Values

Guiding Principles

The following factors are used by TGCC as guiding principles in determining the issues to address and the scope of its work program:

- What is the impact of the issue on our quality of life?
- What are the resources needed to address the issue?
- How much time is required to resolve the issue?
- Does another entity already exist to address the issue or is better equipped to do so?
- Will TGCC's involvement show measurable results?
- Will TGCC's involvement tangibly benefit a significant portion of the community?

Organizational Concepts & Values

- Membership in TGCC is comprised of business and community leaders who can identify problems, needs, resources and opportunities in the community;
- Membership is limited to decision makers who have the authority to take action decisively and quickly;
- TGCC believes in the power of information and involvement. As our members become better informed and more involved in the issues affecting the region, TGCC becomes a catalyst for positive growth;
- TGCC employs a strategic approach in addressing issues and projects;
- TGCC members demonstrate the willingness to take action without intent of personal gain.