

Important Information Regarding the Contents of this Document

Please note that the policies and information presented in this document are current through the date given below. The documents made available within the [Center's Conservation Districts web pages](#) are intended to serve as a guide for the policies set by each Conservation District. While these policies may in fact be current at the time of your viewing, it is strongly recommended to contact the relevant Conservation District for the most current version.

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Pike County Conservation District

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Quality Assurance Board Policies for the Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program

*Adopted by the Pike County Conservation District Board of Directors on April 20, 2015
Revised by the Board on May 16, 2016, Revised by Board on May 15, 2017, Revised by Board on
October 21, 2019*

Purpose

The purpose of the Quality Assurance Board (QAB) in Pike County is to establish and recommend to the Pike County Conservation District (District) Board a grant program under Section 9106 Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road Maintenance of the PA Motor Vehicle Code. The QAB will assist the Pike County Conservation District in carrying out the Administrative, Educational and Contractual responsibilities of the Dirt Gravel and Low Volume Road Program. The QAB will establish priorities and requirements for funding through the Dirt Gravel and Low Volume Road Program for Pike County. The QAB responsibilities include reviewing applications submitted for funding, conducting site visits (as necessary and determined by the QAB) and recommending eligible applications to the Pike County Conservation District Board of Directors for funding that addresses non-point source pollution in affected areas.

Board Composition

The QAB shall be comprised of a non-voting Chairman appointed by the Pike County Conservation District Board of Directors and one voting local representative appointed by each of the following entities: the Pike County Conservation District, the Federal Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. No one other than the four QAB members may vote. If circumstances require, the Chairman may vote to decide a tie. To broaden citizen involvement, the QAB may enlist any individual or organization to be advisors (non-voting) to the four member QAB.

Meetings

All QAB meetings will be advertised and open to the general public in accordance with the Sunshine Law (Act 84 of 1986 and any amendments thereafter). Minutes of the QAB meeting will be taken by the Chairperson, or designee, and will be kept on record and available to the public pursuant to the open records policy. The QAB meetings will be conducted according to Roberts Rules of Order.

Equal Access to Funding

All county citizens, through their eligible municipal and agency representatives, shall have equal access to the funding provided through the Pike County Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Program. Decisions on funding allocations will be made on the basis of maximizing the reduction of pollution to county streams in a cost effective manner and targeting the most ecologically sensitive streams first. No discrimination will be made concerning race, religion, gender, economic status or political standing of citizens affected by the

improvements achieved through this program. All potential applicants are eligible to submit project proposals which will be judged solely by a published set of criteria approved at a public meeting of the QAB. The QAB will be bound by the policies established by the State Conservation Commission for the administration of this program statewide.

Pre – Application Site Visit

District Staff and an applicant who has completed the required ESM training must complete a pre-application site visit prior to application submission. The District will review the site with the applicant, provide technical assistance, review potential permitting requirements and review program eligibility requirements. Projects that include the replacement of stream crossing structures and project work that may fall outside the right-of-way will also be evaluated at this time.

Applying for Funds

The QAB will accept applications at any time throughout the year.

The person in charge of work plan development and project implementation for the applying entity must have attended environmentally sensitive maintenance (ESM) training within the past five (5) calendar years to become “ESM Certified”. Individuals not directly involved with the project design and implementation (interns, secretaries, etc.) do not qualify an applicant to be eligible for funding. Engineers on retainer or others who serve multiple municipalities are welcome to attend the ESM training, but their attendance does not count as “ESM Certification” for the municipalities they represent. The Pike County Conservation District also offers an informational meeting regarding the Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road Program on a regular basis. The District highly encourages applicants to attend.

The project should be in compliance with all existing environmental laws as a condition of acceptance. Each application should be for one grant and refer to one contiguous project location or one type of work through an area (e.g. bank seeding on a series of roads in a township.) There is no restriction on the number of applications that can be submitted by one applicant. An applicant does not need to provide an in-kind contribution when applying for funding for this program, but in-kind contributions from the applicant will be a component when the QAB ranks the project.

The applicant can include the cost for Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA) in their application submission as long as the proper procedures as outlined in the DGLV Road Administrative Manual section 7.2 are followed.

The QAB will consider reimbursement of resurfacing costs for Low Volume road projects on a case by case basis.

An Application package must include:

- A Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads grant application
- A 7.5 minute topographic map with the project site identified
- A Traffic Count Validation form, if applying for Low Volume Road funding
- Stream Crossing Evaluation Form, when applicable

Applicants will be notified by letter and proposed contract of their grant application approval. Unfunded grant applications will not be retained for future grant rounds unless notified in writing by the applicant. If funding becomes available, the applicant will be notified by the District.

Project Ranking

All applications will be evaluated, scored and ranked according to the QAB's Dirt Gravel and Low Volume Road Program Evaluation and Prioritization Form. Ranking criteria will be reviewed and amended annually.

Conflict of Interest

No District Director, Quality Assurance Board member, or District Employee shall, as a result of this program, be permitted to obtain financial benefits for himself/herself, a member of his/her immediate family, or a business with which he/she is associated. This shall preclude the payment of normal salary and benefits to employees provided in their normal course of employment.

Non-Pollution Standards

Section 9106 (f)(7) of the PA Motor Vehicle Code requires Quality Assurance Boards to adopt standards that prohibit use of materials or practices that are environmentally harmful. The Statement of Policy 83.613 (1) (b) formalizes that requirement. In response, the QAB has adopted standards prohibiting the use of materials or practices which are environmentally harmful or do not meet the program's "non-pollution" standard. These materials include but are not limited to: noxious weeds, fugitive emissions, and dust control products which may pose a problem if they enter a waterway. Compliance with all existing environmental laws is a condition of purchase under the contracting agreement between the Conservation District and the applicant. An environmentally suitable substitute for dust control, as determined by the State Conservation Commission, may qualify for payment.

Entering Into a Contract

Upon the full execution of the project contract, the district will provide an advance payment to the project participant in an amount up to 50% of the grant; this can be applied to payment of eligible expenses incurred for the project. Any required permits must be obtained by the grant recipient before work can begin on the portion of the project related to the permit. Before working outside the right-of-way, the grant recipient must obtain written permission from the landowner. The project participant is responsible for keeping receipts, weigh slips, in-kind match documentation, etc. to document proper expenditure of the advance payment prior to receiving additional payments under the project contract. The district shall withhold final payment of approved project expenses until the satisfactory completion of the project as determined by the QAB or the District.

For contract overruns totaling 20% or less of the initial contract amount, a Contract Amendment must be completed and signed by both entities. Multiple amendments may be granted but the total cannot exceed the 20% threshold. For cost overruns totaling more than 20% of the initial contract amount, a second separate contract must be signed for the additional funds. (Manual section 3.5.3) Any changes to work in contracts should be mutually agreed upon and confirmed (prior to initiation) in writing by a letter from the contracting entity to the Conservation District or vice versa. All cost overruns go to the District Board of Directors for vote.

Prevailing Wage Documentation

It is the responsibility of the grant recipient to register the project with the PA Department of Labor and Industry and include prevailing wage notification in any proposal to solicit bids for the contract. It is the responsibility of the grant recipient to assure prevailing wage has been paid and to obtain copies of certified payrolls from any contractors where prevailing wage applies. A prevailing wage "Notification letter", attachment H to the DGLVR Contract, must be completed and kept in the project file. For projects where

prevailing wage is required, a notarized “Certified Statement of Compliance”, attachment I to the DGLVR contract, must be completed and kept in the project file.

Traffic Count Policy for Low Volume Road Projects

Background

PA Act 89 of 2013 expanded Pennsylvania’s Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program to include “...maintenance of sections of low volume roads that are sealed or paved with an average daily traffic count of 500 vehicles or less”. The purpose of this document is to outline the policies and guidance regarding verifying traffic counts on paved Low Volume Roads for funding eligibility under the PA Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Program.

Overview

Before a contract can be signed for a Low Volume Road project, the applicant is responsible for validating that the road has 500 vehicles per day or less consistent with State Conservation Commission and any local QAB policy.

- Applicant is responsible for providing traffic counts before a contract can be signed.
- A traffic count is not required in order to submit an application, unless required by local QAB policy. *The Pike County Quality Assurance Board has determined that the Traffic Count Validation Form be submitted with the application.*
- Conservation District is responsible for verifying that a count exists, and that the count meets the criteria established in state and local policy.
- Traffic counts are considered valid for a period of 5 years, provided there are no new significant changes in traffic flow volumes or patterns.
- Documentation of traffic counts using a signed “Traffic Count Validation Form” must be retained with project files according to the State Conservation Commission’s record retention policy.
- Conservation Districts may, at their discretion, use administrative and education funding to facilitate or support traffic counts for applicants. Districts should insure that all potential applicants have equal access to any traffic count facilitation measures they may employ.
- Traffic counts only apply to a segment of road between intersections, not to an entire length of road. Application sites that include intersections may require multiple counts.
- Traffic counts should be done on the proposed project location, or on a road that insures that traffic on the project location can be determined.

OBTAINING TRAFFIC COUNTS

Acceptable documentation of traffic counts for projects to be eligible for LVR funds include:

Option A: Use or extrapolation of existing data.

Option B: Level 1 Count: 2 hour traffic count.

Option C: Level 2 Count: 24 hour automated count.

OPTION A:

Validate with Existing Traffic Count Data, or Extrapolation from Existing Data

Use of Existing Data:

Existing traffic counts can be used to verify road eligibility for LVR funding. Existing Data must have been collected within the previous 5 years and conform to the Program’s Level 2 count protocol at a minimum. “Estimated” traffic counts that exist for many municipal roads cannot be used.

Extrapolation of Existing Data:

It is permissible to use existing data for roads with 500 vehicles per day or less to logically extrapolate to subsidiary roads. (For example, a spur road between two State Roads where both state roads have less than 500 vehicles per day must also have less than 500.) This extrapolation of data can be used to verify that a road has 500 vehicles per day or less without performing a count. This extrapolation of traffic counts must prove the ADT on the road is 500 or less to be eligible for LVR funding.

Potential sources of existing traffic count data:

- State Roads:
<http://www.dot.state.pa.us/Internet/bureaus/pdplanres.nsf/infoBPRTrafficInfoTrafficVolumeMap>
- Local Roads: PennDOT regional offices

OPTION B:

Validate with Level 1 Count: 2 hour count

An applicant may do a Level 1 count to determine the traffic count on a potential project site. This involves counting traffic for a two hour period, either by hand tally, video recording, or an automated traffic counter. A Level 1 traffic count of 500 vehicles per day or less will qualify the road for LVR funding. A Level 1 traffic count must meet the following criteria:

- It must be conducted between March 1 and the week before Thanksgiving.
- It cannot be conducted on a holiday, or the day before or after a holiday.
- It must be conducted on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday
- It must be conducted for a minimum of two consecutive hours between 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm.
- Only the number of vehicle passes is counted, regardless of direction of travel or type of vehicle.
- The traffic count for the time period will be adjusted to a 24 hour period by simply multiplying the 2 hour count volume times twelve (12)
- Applicants may skip the level one count and go straight to a level 2 count if desired

Only licensed motor vehicles should be counted

If a Level 1 Traffic Count produces a count of **500 vehicles per day or less**, the project on the road is considered eligible without a Level 2 Traffic Count. If a Level 1 Traffic Count produces a count of **more than** 500 vehicles per day, it does not disqualify the road, but necessitates a Level 2 Traffic Count because of its increased accuracy. The purpose of a Level 1 count is to provide a reasonably accurate traffic count with minimal time investment.

Level 1 Count Examples:

Example 1: A traffic count for two consecutive hours between 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm produces a count of 25 vehicles. $24\text{hours (per day)} / 2\text{hours (per study)} = 12$

$12 \times 25 = 300$ average daily count.

This worksite would be eligible (no level 2 count needed).

Example 2: A traffic count for two consecutive hours between 3:30 pm and 5:30 pm produces a count of 53 vehicles. $24\text{hours (per day)} / 2\text{hours (per study)} = 12$

$12 \times 53 = 636$ average daily count.

This does not disqualify the road. It simply means that a more accurate Level 2 Count is required if the applicant wants to continue to pursue Program funding.

OPTION C:

Validate with Level 2 count: 24 hour automated count

A level 2 count involves the placement of an automated traffic counter on the road for a minimum period of 24 hours. Note that these are the minimum criteria for a count. More comprehensive or longer counts can be substituted as long as they meet the minimum requirements below for a “level 2 count”. A Level 2 traffic count of 500 vehicles per day or less will qualify the road for LVR funding. Level 2 counts supersede Level 1 counts if there is a discrepancy. A level 2 traffic count must meet the following criteria:

- It must be conducted between March 1 and the week before Thanksgiving.
- It cannot be conducted on a holiday, or the day before or after a holiday.
- It must be conducted between 12 AM Tuesday and 12 AM Friday.
- It must be conducted for a minimum of 24 consecutive hours.
- Only the number of vehicle passes is counted, regardless of direction of travel or type of vehicle.

If a Level 2 Traffic Count produces a count of **500 vehicles per day or less**, the project on the road is considered eligible. If a Level 2 Traffic Count produces a count of **more than 500** vehicles per day, a project on that road is not eligible for LVR funding. 24 hour counts do not have to be broken up by hour or any smaller time unit.

The criteria described in the Level 2 traffic count represent a “minimum acceptable criteria”. Counties may use or adopt more stringent traffic count requirements as long as it meets or exceeds the requirements here. (A more stringent requirement is a count that provides more statistically accurate data. For example: requiring Level 2 counts for all roads; requiring 48 hour counts, or requiring hourly totals on counts to provide information to PennDOT.)

Seasonal activities and special circumstances:

A traffic count survey cannot be conducted in a timeframe or manner that intentionally causes artificially low average daily traffic counts on a particular road segment. This includes conducting a traffic count during summer recess for a school access road, or conducting a traffic count when access to a road segment is temporarily or partially restricted or reduced (i.e. detoured, weight, or size restricted, etc.) or conducting a traffic count in any other timeframe or manner that intentionally causes low average daily traffic counts.