The Official Newsletter of the Mid-Atlantic Section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers

MASITE Interconnect

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President's Message:

Summer flew by and Fall has finally arrived. I hope everyone is settling back into the work and school routines. I find this time a year much more of a "new year" feel than the calendar year with my kids both moving into higher schools (one in Middle, and one in High School). But for me, it is also the beginning of an end.

As I write this, I feel nostalgic that my term on the MASITE board is coming to an end. Oh what an experience this has been! Over the past 10 years, I have learned so much from all of you. I have had the benefit of many mentors and exposure to many different people, agencies and projects that without this organization, our paths may not have crossed. I have travelled from through each of our member states, and made many, many lifelong friends. There are so many people to thank for this Journey, too many to mention but I'm sure you all know who you are. But don't worry, I will still be around and still attending meetings so will continue to always catch up with friends at our Annual Meetings.

Speaking of Annual meeting, we are in the 11th hour of preparations for the 2017 meeting which is at Renault Winery in New Jersey this year. Lindsey Klein and Peter O'Halloran, and their committee, have done a phenomenal job in putting together a great agenda of speakers, ethics training for all of those that need it (gotta get those PDH's) and lots of fun activities. I am looking forward to seeing you all and catching up.

And the year is not over yet. Look for information coming out soon for the Annual get together in Penn State in December. You can always find information on upcoming events on our website www.masite.org or in the regular e-mail blasts. If you have any ideas for events, or if you want to get involved, please let us know. The board is currently looking at increasing opportunities to get involved at a board level but in the meantime, we are always looking for volunteers for local events and meetings so drop me an email if you want to get involved. (ohpease@urbanengineers.com)

Thanks!

Orla Pease

2017 MASITE President

In this Edition

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MASITE NEWS

Central Area – Mike Davidson

Since the last edition of Interconnect, we have held three events.

In June, there was a joint networking event at Café 1500. MASITE, ASCE, ASHE, PA Association of Environmental Professionals, Society of Women Environmental Professionals, WTS, Association for Bridge Construction and Design, Society for Marketing Professional Services, and Keystone Contractors Association came together to enjoy some free food and networking opportunities. During the event, we asked for donations to the Greenbelt Association. 127 people attended and $200 was raised and donated to a great cause!

On July 17, Chad Smith and Todd Leiss from the Turnpike, along with Rich Deen from PennDOT District 8-0, gave a presentation on Transportation Management Plans (TMP) and Incident Management in Work Zones. Chad kicked things off by talking about the Turnpike's process for creating a TMP for construction projects that are anticipated to impact traffic. The TMP is a document that contains strategies used to mitigate negative impacts to traffic during the project. Next, Todd and Rich discussed work zone operations and incident management during construction projects. The presentation educated attendees, comprised mostly of traffic and highway engineers, on the issues faced by first responders from all disciplines when responding to incidents within a work zone. The presentation gave attendees a new perspective on incident management principals when developing traffic control plans for work zones.

Finally, in August, Eric Kinard, PennDOT District 8-0, moderated a traffic signal panel discussion, which included the following panelists:

- Mike Centi, PennDOT District 8-0
- Matt Clouser, P.E., PennDOT District 8-0
- Silvia Scheuermann, P.E., Urban Engineers
- Brian Peda, P.E., Urban Engineers

The discussion was very educational and included a great deal of dialogue between the panelists and audience. Topics ranged from lessons learned from installing new hardware in legacy systems to adaptive signals to issues with designing and constructing signals at railroad crossings. The event concluded with a happy hour at Boro Bar & Grill.

As always, thanks to all attendees for taking the time to participate in the events. Most importantly, thank you to all presenters for making the events so successful.

International ITE

Our Section congratulates **Jeff Riegner** of Whitman, Requardt & Associates, LLP for getting ITE's Outstanding Volunteer Award, presented at the Annual Meeting in Vancouver, Canada last August!

Jeff served as the project manager for the ITE Application Supplement to the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Transit Street Design Guide, coordinating contributions from multiple authors, which included personally requesting the participation of many of the most critical authors whose roles were essential to the quality and high profile of the document.

Once assembling all the content, Jeff served as the primary editor and also oversaw full production efforts. This product was collaborative across multiple Councils and Standing Committees, as well as with the NACTO. This project helped to establish a strong partnership with NACTO, which is now leading to other key products including the new curbside management initiative.

2017 LeadershipITE Class

MASITE had a strong presence within the 2017 LeadershipITE (LITE) Class, with Nicole Kline-Elsier, P.E., PTOE of McMahon Associates, Inc., and Jeff Kupko, P.E., PTOE and Sara Patterson, Ph.D., LEED, AP both of Michael Baker International, participating in the program this year. The participants kicked off the class in January with a trip to ITE headquarters in Washington, D.C. ahead of the TRB Annual Meeting, traveled to Jackson, Wyoming to participate in the Intermountain Section Annual Meeting in May, and wrapped up with a trip to the ITE International Annual Meeting in Toronto, Ontario in August. In Toronto, the LITE participants presented their year-long class projects to the ITE Board of Directors, and graduated during the luncheon. Nicole, Jeff and Sara all look forward to participating in a variety of ITE Councils and other volunteer opportunities to apply their leadership training

and further the goals of their class projects to benefit ITE members throughout the Section, District and beyond.

We also want to congratulate Sara and her family on the recent birth of son Lincoln!

2017 ITE Collegiate Traffic Bowl Grand Championship

As the Mid-Colonial District Traffic Bowl Champions, Penn State participated in the Grand Championship at the ITE International Annual Meeting in Toronto, Ontario in August. The Penn State team battled University of Central Florida and University of Texas at Austin in the semi-finals. It came down to a tight match in Final Jeopardy, where the Longhorns squeezed by the Nittany Lions. Congratulations to the Penn State team of Owen Hitchcock, Danielle Berman, and Ali Dastagirzada, they did a great job representing our District. WE ARE PENN STATE!

MASITE SPONSOR NEWS

KMJ Consulting, Inc.

KMJ staff and owner Karen Jehanian congratulate **Bridget Postlewaite, P.E.**, on being promoted to Senior Project Manager.

They all also congratulate **Martin William, P.E.** who was recently promoted to Project Engineer!

Drive Engineering

Mario Toscano of Drive Engineering was recognized as one of the Top 25 Minority Business Leaders in the Greater Philadelphia Area by the Philadelphia Business Journal.

Drive Engineering was recently awarded the Traffic Incident Management & Emergency Management contract for the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission.

Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson, Inc.

Hires:

- **Steve McGinley** joined JMT as the Traffic Section Head in the Harrisburg, PA Office. Steve will lead traffic efforts including but not limited to traffic signal plans, signing and pavement marking plans, roadway lighting and Intelligent Transportation Systems plans for Central PA.
- **James Fiocco** joined JMT's Traffic Team as a Design Engineer in the Trenton Office.

Licensure:

- **Rebecca Biro** earned her PTOE licensure. Congratulations Becky!

Job Postings:

- Traffic Project Engineer, JMT Trenton, NJ Office.

  https://johnsonmirmiranthompson-openhire.silkroad.com/epostings/index.cfm?fuseaction=app.jobinfo&jobid=2662&source=ONLINE&JobOwner=992541&company_id=16357&version=1&byBusinessUnit=NULL&bycountry=0&bystate=0&byRegion=&byLocation=NULL&keywords=&byCat=36355&proximityCountry=&postalCode=&radiusDistance=&isKilometers=&tosearch=yes&city

McMahon Associates, Inc.

McMahon welcomed a few familiar faces associated with MASITE since May…

David C. DiGioia, P.E. is the new Office Lead for the firm's Pittsburgh office. With nearly a quarter century of experience in a full range of traffic engineering services, from traffic studies through Highway Occupancy Permits (HOP) and Plans, Specifications and Estimates (PS&E) plan designs, for both public and private sector clients, DiGioia is charged with expanding McMahon's Western Pennsylvania market presence.

Robert Wright, P.E. is a former Chief Engineer and Surveyor for the City of Philadelphia. In 27 years with the City, Wright managed more than 60 highway projects with the combined construction value of $130 million. Bob will lead the new Philadelphia Office for the firm.

Dean J. Kaiser, P.E., PTOE has managed large and small traffic related projects for public and private sector clients in PA, NJ and FL for nearly 30 years. Dean will continue work in the Exton office on traffic signal design projects for the firm.

McCormick Taylor

…is pleased to introduce our new traffic hires in the MASITE region:

- Eamonn Clements, P.E., PTOE works in our Pittsburgh office and has 10 years of traffic engineering experience specializing in capacity analysis and signal design.
- Tevin Kim works in our in the Philly office and is a recent graduate from Villanova University.
- Ashley Machado works in our Mt. Laurel, NJ office and has 8 years of experience, most recently with NJDOT – where she gained valuable signal, safety, and capacity analysis expertise.

AS ALWAYS, PLEASE GO TO www.masite.org TO VIEW THE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NEWS YOU CAN USE

NJ TRANSIT Installing 360-Degree Cameras to Protect Pedestrians, Riders, Motorists

May 17, 2017 - http://nj.gov

Trenton, NJ – Stressing improved safety as a key goal of the state's Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) projects, Governor Chris Christie today visited a New Jersey Transit (NJ TRANSIT) maintenance facility in Newark to announce new 360-degree cameras on buses that will protect pedestrians, riders and motorists by increasing bus drivers' awareness of their surroundings.

"Public safety improves greatly when bus drivers have a more complete view of what is happening around their buses, lessening the chance of a variety of accidents with pedestrians, cyclists and other vehicles. This new technology will enhance operator awareness and support their defensive and safe driving skills," said Governor Christie. "TTF funding is critical in our efforts to protect the welfare of riders and provide them with a comfortable and carefree travel experience."

Governor Christie signed in October a historic bipartisan, tax-cutting Transportation Trust Fund replenishment, to contribute $2 billion annually into New Jersey's transportation infrastructure and create a $32 billion investment of federal and state funds over eight years. This includes $400 million in supplemental funding this year that the Governor requested for immediate action on multiple projects. That supplemental funding provided $260 million for repairing local roads and bridges in all 21 counties, as well as $140 million to the New Jersey Transit Corporation for implementing safety, technology and system expansion improvements.

The $29.1 million 360-degree camera system will be installed in 2,500 new and existing NJ TRANSIT buses to provide operators with a 360-degree field of vision around the bus that will help to eliminate blind spots and enhance pedestrian safety. Each new bus that is delivered as part of ongoing equipment procurement will already be equipped with this technology, while existing buses will be retrofitted. The project will be implemented starting in Fiscal Year 2018.

Continue reading article at
http://nj.gov/governor/news/news/552017/approved/20170517a.html

E-ZPass 'Feedback' Signals Disappearing From Pa. Turnpike Exchanges

May 17, 2017 - http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com

HARRiSBURG, Pa. (CBS) — Say goodbye to those traffic-light looking signals in Pennsylvania Turnpike E-ZPass lanes that tell you your toll has been paid. At least one in our area has already been turned off and the rest will go in the coming months.

Pennsylvania Turnpike spokesman Carl DeFebo says the so-called "feedback" signal at Street Road in Bensalem has already been shut off. The Turnpike is upgrading its E-ZPass toll technology — and those "feedback" signals – green means your toll has been paid, yellow for low balance — don't fit the new scheme. So they are being decommissioned. DeFebo says it's important that motorists do not hesitate when they encounter the change.

"Customers will have to trust the technology that's in their transponder. Just continue moving through the lane, assuming that if your transponder has been working, there's really no reason for you to suspect that it won't continue to work," DeFebo said. "So you're not going to get that feedback — you'll just have to trust your E-ZPass tag."

Nothing else will change in those E-ZPass lanes, including the speed limits.

N.J. distracted-driver update: More than 1,000 cited by fellow drivers

JUNE 8, 2017 www.philly.com

More than 1,000 calls have been made reporting distracted drivers on New Jersey roads in the two months since the state unveiled a re-branded program designed to combat distracted driving, Attorney General Christopher Porrino and the Division of Highway Traffic Safety announced Thursday.

In April, the state said it was expanding the #77 program to allow motorists to report distracted drivers. Since its inception in 1995, #77 in New Jersey has been used to report aggressive driving, but it now permits motorists to report distracted driving as well.

As of Tuesday, the state had received 1,071 calls about distracted drivers through the program. But Lt. Michael Rizol, a traffic officer with the state police, said Thursday that the average daily number of calls had decreased since the expanded program's inception.

Just after the program was announced, police received about 90 calls a day, Rizol said. Since then, calls have tapered off to fewer than 20 a day. He attributed the dropoff to a reduction in media attention, saying the program received significant coverage when it was introduced.

Rizol also said that "all or the vast majority" of the calls have been related to cellphone usage, which he said was the intent of the program.

The state police's Regional Operations and Intelligence Center in West Trenton receives the calls before referring them to departments in specific locations. From there, Rizol said, police don't track when the calls lead to drivers' being pulled over and issued tickets, but it's possible that has happened on occasion.

"As a trooper, sometimes you hear a call come in about a driver and it's 20 miles away heading in the opposite direction. You don't take any action in that circumstance," Rizol said. "But maybe it's two miles away and it's coming toward you, you're going to take a look and see if you can find that person."

When callers observe the license-plate numbers of distracted drivers, the state sends letters to those drivers. As of Tuesday, the state had mailed 632 letters, which notify drivers that their vehicles have been reported.

“The state police can only send letters when they get a full license-plate number from callers,” said John Schoonejongen, a spokesman for the Attorney General’s Office, in an email.

Those who spot distracted drivers shouldn’t distract themselves by texting while driving to report drivers, the state has cautioned. Announcing the program in April, the Division of Highway Traffic Safety urged drivers to pull over to make the call, use a hands-free device, or have someone else in the vehicle make the call.

Porrino said in a news release Thursday that the calls received through the re-branded program are an indication if its success.

“Now New Jerseyans know firsthand that the entire state is paying attention and will not tolerate those who create dangerous conditions on our roads because they can’t wait to use or can’t put down their cellphones,” he said.

The initiative is the first of its kind nationally, the Division of Highway Traffic Safety said when it was instituted in April. Porrino said in April that New Jersey saw an 8 percent increase in traffic fatalities, to 604, in 2016, many attributed to distracted driving.

PENNDOT TO PHASE IN NEWLY-DESIGNED DRIVER LICENSES, IDENTIFICATION CARDS

06/20/2017 www.penndot.gov

Initiative is part of PennDOT's ongoing security improvements

Harrisburg, PA – As part of ongoing security enhancements, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) has updated the design and enhanced the security features of its driver license and identification card products.

PennDOT entered a new contract with MorphoTrust USA in August of 2015 for the design and issuance of Driver License (DL) and Identification (ID) cards. Over the last 22 months, PennDOT has worked with MorphoTrust USA on planning, design, and deployment of this major new security enhancement initiative. **This update is unrelated to the REAL ID Act.**

"The update is an important component of PennDOT's ongoing work to enhance and protect the integrity of the driver license and identification card issuance process," said PennDOT Secretary Leslie S. Richards.

PennDOT began a pilot of the new products beginning on Monday, June 19, at the Riverfront Office Center location in Harrisburg. All Driver and Photo centers will transition to the new products by the end of October 2017. The new products will be phased in over the next four-year renewal cycle and will replace existing products. Both current and new card designs will be in circulation during the transition period.

The new cards are not REAL ID-compliant. System, building infrastructure, and process changes will be necessary for Pennsylvania to issue REAL ID-compliant products. PennDOT anticipates that REAL ID-compliant driver licenses and identification cards will be available at customer's option in 2019.

The cards look very different, but they also have additional enhanced security features, which improve fraud prevention and protect from counterfeiting and alteration.

Some of the enhanced features include:

- Larger primary portrait and smaller ghost portrait
- 2D barcode, which contain data from the front of the card unique to the cardholder
- Laser perforation — The keystone outline with "PA" is embedded into the cardstock and can be observed by holding the card up to any light source
- Laminate — Each card is laminated with an optically-variable pattern with the state motto, "Virtue, Liberty, Independence;" Keystone outline; and "1787," the year when the U.S. Constitution was ratified by Pennsylvania.

In addition to the above changes, the magnetic strip has been eliminated on the back of the newly designed driver's license and identification cards.

For more information and to see an image of the new card design, please visit www.dmv.pa.gov.

NJDOT and GEICO announce “Safe Phone Zones” at rest areas/scenic overlooks to kickoff the summer driving season

http://news.transportation.org 6/21/2017

Signs encourage safe driving practices as part of innovative public-private partnership

(Hamilton, NJ) – The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) today in a public-private partnership with GEICO, announced a new, statewide sponsorship of Rest Areas and Scenic Overlooks, rebranding them as "Safe Phone Zones." As the summer season begins, with more drivers headed out on the roads, this sponsorship program is aimed at curbing distracted driving on New Jersey's highways.

"We have an obligation to raise awareness about distracted driving as a real safety hazard on our roads," NJDOT Commissioner Richard T. Hammer said. "Programs such as this partnership with GEICO helps get the message out and reminds every driver who gets behind the wheel they must individually share in that responsibility too."

As part of a national effort to encourage drivers to pull into a safe location to use their phones for calling, texting and accessing mobile apps, New Jersey has designated 14 Rest Areas and Scenic Overlooks throughout the state as Safe Phone Zones. New, informative signs sponsored by GEICO have been installed along the highways leading to these facilities. Additional onsite signage discourages distracted driving and informs visitors about the sponsorship. It is another reminder for motorists to use their cell phones and other communication devices in a safe location.

"By working together, we are making New Jersey's roads safer. The Safe Phone Zones are yet another tool to combat distracted driving," said Attorney General Christopher S. Porrino. "Traffic fatalities continue to rise and we know that distracted driving accounts for part of this increase. If you don't have hands–free technology and you want to answer the phone, send a text message or an email, these safe zones are the places to do it."

The Office of the Attorney General recently announced traffic fatalities in New Jersey rose from 562 in 2015 to 604 in 2016, an average of 12 deaths a week. Division of Highway Traffic Safety officials have said the increase is in part because of distracted driving, such as cell phone use behind the wheel. The new GEICO Safe Phone Zone sponsorship is another step in New Jersey's efforts to combat distracted driving, following the recent #77 initiative as well as the state's 2017 distracted driving crackdown, called "U Drive. U Text. U Pay."

"Traffic fatalities in New Jersey took a startling jump last year, making the need to eliminate distracted driving more urgent," said Tim Lamere, GEICO assistant vice president of underwriting for New Jersey and New England. "GEICO is proud to partner with the New Jersey Department of Transportation to provide these Safe Phone Zones throughout the state where drivers can safely pull off to take a break to check their texts, apps and emails."

GEICO provides similar support in five other states: New York, Virginia, Arizona, Illinois and Florida. To learn more, please visit: www.safephonezone.com. To join the conversation on social media use #GEICOSafePhoneZone.

The SEPTA Key and what happened to Philly transit when TransPasses died

Now, let's talk for a hot minute about that Key website.

JUN 30 2017 ANNA ORSO https://billypenn.com

There are officially more than 200,000 SEPTA Key cards in circulation; in the month of June alone, the transit authority tallied some 70,000 new Key card purchases.

SEPTA officials say the transition from the city's old payment system to the new, digital method is ongoing, but the transit agency has now cleared one of the biggest hurdles: Getting city riders off the old weekly and monthly TransPass system.

Here's how things went for the Key this month, and what's next.

Wait so where are we on this Key thing?

On June 1, SEPTA completely phased out the old weekly and monthly pass system — those one-week or one-month "TransPass" cards (unlimited rides on the MFL, the BSL, the NHSL, buses and trolleys) that you could collect and then throw away — and migrated that entire process over onto the new digital fare-payment system, SEPTA Key. It was the largest Key transition to date, and at this point, the only major change left to be made on a city-wide level is the complete phasing-out of tokens. (More on that later.)

How have things gone since?

SEPTA Deputy General Manager Rich Burnfield said numbers are "significantly" up following a June that saw a large spike in the distribution of SEPTA Key cards, largely because the legacy TransPasses were entirely phased out. Specifically:

Between June 1 and June 27, there were 69,451 Key card purchases, bringing the total number of Key cards in circulation to 207,000. For context, there are about 600,000 daily riders who use City Transit — aka the combined ridership of the Broad Street Line, the Market-Frankford Line, buses and trolleys. However, this doesn't mean a third of riders in the city use the Key. Burnfield said SEPTA estimates that people probably bought two, three or more SEPTA Key cards.

Are people using the website to reload?

Although there are 207,000 cards out there, only about 56,000 accounts exist, meaning only about a quarter of SEPTA Key cards are registered online and therefore receive the account protection perks SEPTA offers, like the ability to cancel a lost or stolen card. Leslie Hickman, SEPTA's chief officer for rail transportation (subway/elevated), said ideally that number should be 100 percent, as "everyone should be protected."

What's more popular, weekly passes or the Travel Wallet?

Of the about 69,000 people who purchased Key cards in June, about 45,000 of them — 65 percent — were weekly passes. The next-most popular option was the Travel Wallet, which was purchased around 20,000 times. Burnfield said the average daily usage for those using the Travel Wallet function is about 9,000. There were also about 5,000 one-day convenience passes purchased in June and another 5,000 monthly passes.

So, are people really using their Key cards to reload money for transit payment?

They are, and those numbers are up, too. SEPTA says there were 167,000 reloads in June alone. In the 10 months prior, there were 395,000 — in total. Burnfield said

the Key technology held up well, despite the influx of reloads.

"We had anticipated the increase," he said, "and we had done some test loading on our system to make sure that, as we saw an increase, we'd be prepared for it."

Are people using the online auto reload function?

Some are, but not many. Burnfield said about 7,000 accounts are set to active auto-reload.

Is that because the website is so, uh, bad?

The SEPTA Key website (septakey.org) has gotten plenty of negative feedback. It appears to be straight out of the last decade, and its lack of responsive design means it's difficult to use on mobile. There was some speculation that the website was temporary, and another would be coming to replace it.

Probably not. Burnfield said he wouldn't characterize the current website as "temporary." He relayed, however, that SEPTA is working with vendor Conduent to improve the user experience. There isn't a timeline set when the site and its features might improve.

How long will I get to play with tokens?

SEPTA still hasn't set a timeline for phasing out the sale of tokens. So stock up!

"We really wanted to get through this month in terms of getting folks switched over from legacy passes," Burnfield said. "We know it's going to be a more significant change for customers used to using tokens." He added that the public will get a 60-day notice before SEPTA officially stops selling tokens.

What's the next step?

The agency says it's hyper-focused right now on education and dispatching SEPTA Key "ambassadors" to stations and platforms across the city to assist riders in using the new system. Hickman said that in July, these ambassadors will be working to get as many customers actually registered as possible.

"Sometimes when a person makes a purchase at a kiosk, once it's done, they just want to go and it falls off the radar until the next time they have to purchase," Hickman said. "We're hoping we can assist them to walk through the registration process."

This AI traffic system in Pittsburgh has reduced travel time by 25%

Jackie Snow http://www.smartcitiesdive.com 7/20/2017

Pittsburgh drivers add 81 extra hours to their commutes each year because of traffic, according to a TomTom survey. While there are other U.S. cities that have it worse, Pittsburgh is known for its difficult driving conditions, with hills, bridges and bikers — all on a gridless city where many intersections have "no right on red" signs. But drivers in Pittsburgh could soon get relief.

Varied road conditions make for tough traffic, but also for a reason why companies like Uber are coming to Pittsburgh to test autonomous vehicles. If traffic technology can work in Pittsburgh, it can work almost anywhere. And, along with AV, that traffic technology includes Surtrac, an AI system that allows traffic lights to adapt to traffic conditions instead of relying on pre-programmed cycles.

At the lights where Surtrac is installed, the team behind the system estimates that it has reduced travel time by 25%, braking by 30% and idling by more than 40%. It costs about $20,000 to wire up and install Surtrac at an intersection.

Surtrac works by detecting traffic and through creating predictive models. First, hardware, including a computer, camera or radar device, is installed at the intersection. Surtrac can then see cars that are coming to the intersection from all directions. The computer runs a predictive model and uses it to generate a signal timing plan in real-time. The processing is done in a way that, through communication with downstream models, builds a local plan from multiple data sources.

Each intersection controls its own traffic, but by communicating projected ouflows to neighboring intersections, those intersections can better prepare for incoming traffic.

Surtrac, which started as a project at Carnegie Mellon, piloted at 12 high-volume intersections in 2012. It's now at 50 intersections with another 150 on the way, paid for with a grant from the Federal Highway Administration. In 2015, the project spun out from Carnegie Mellon as a company called Rapid Flow Technologies.

After the pilot, Steve Smith, a robotics professor at Carnegie Mellon and the head of Rapid Flow Technologies, said they could notice a significant difference in traffic flow. But they were quickly informed that they had forgotten about non-motorized traffic.

"We immediately got a lot of feedback from pedestrians, who were feeling left out of the picture," Smith said.

Tweaks to the system made it so there was a maximum wait time for pedestrians at lights. Researchers and students at Carnegie Mellon are working on a side project to make a mobile phone app to communicate with the lights for people with disabilities who need more time to cross the street.

The system is totally automated, but can be pulled up in real time at a central location if desired or necessary. Smith said they don't really expect people to be manually intervening, however.

"In theory it's one of the best," said Aleksander Stevanovic, an associate professor of in the Department of Civil, Environmental and Geomatics Engineering at Florida Atlantic University and director of Lab for Adaptive Traffic Operations & Management (LATOM).

Stevanovic said it's still a "theory" as it needs more testing, namely, at a minimum of a half-dozen more sites that have different traffic patterns, like longer blocks with faster-moving traffic. But he commends Surtrac for looking at

previous technology and collecting as much information as possible.

"There is nothing wrong with needing improvements, these are complex systems," Stevanovic said. "It's been said that solving traffic in urban settings can be harder than sending a rocket to the moon."

Surtrac is expanding beyond Pittsburgh — even beyond Pennsylvania — this year. It's going to 25 intersections in Atlanta and 15 in Beverly Hills. King County outside of Chicago is also in line for Surtrac deployment.

Eventually, Surtrac will work with autonomous vehicles. Smith said they have been working over the last few years for the traffic signal control with connected cars, noting he wanted the system to be prepared "for that eventuality." A recent study found having AVs on the road to be another traffic-improving factor.

Traffic control could get even better when information is passing back and forth between the infrastructure and cars. In a simulation, Smith was able to show if a vehicle is willing to share its route with the intersection, like with dedicated short-range communications radios (DSRC) or a navigation device, vehicles move through the network 20% faster without affecting non-equipped vehicles.

"It sounds like magic," Smith said. "But once the world gets connected, we will know where cars are continuously."

Smith said they are exploring whether Surtrac could one day detect traffic accidents and other real time events, so they can start to use the information to offer rerouting advice to vehicles. They are also exploring different machine learning algorithms to reduce some uncertainty from sensor data.

Even though Surtrac will be at 200 intersections in the near future, there are over 600 intersections in Pittsburgh. Smith said they haven't noticed a plateau in improvements as they've expanded — so traffic could one day be a thing of the past in Pittsburgh.

"I do feel like the more of the network that you can encompass, the smoother you'll get to travel," he said.

PennDOT Secretary Leslie Richards Named First Female PA Turnpike Chair

July 18, 2017 www.paturnpike.com

Bill Lieberman named vice chair; Former Senator John Wozniak attends first meeting.

MIDDLETOWN, PA. (July 18, 2017) — PennDOT Secretary Leslie S. Richards of Whitemarsh Township was named chair of the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) as part of a reorganization commissioners approved today during a bimonthly meeting of the five-member panel. Pittsburgh businessman William K. Lieberman was appointed vice chairman of the PTC, and former Senator John N. Wozniak of Johnstown attended his first meeting as a Turnpike commissioner. In addition, PTC Commissioner Barry Drew of Mechanicsburg was named secretary-treasurer.

"I have had the honor of serving as the commonwealth's first female transportation secretary since I was named to that post by Governor Tom Wolf in January 2015, and becoming the first female PA Turnpike chair is an equally remarkable privilege," Richards said. "The first Turnpike commissioners were appointed in the spring of 1937, and accomplishing a milestone like this in an organization that was started more than 80 years ago is undoubtedly historic. I'd like to thank my fellow commissioners for the faith they have shown in me."

Secretary Richards began her career in civil engineering and project management before being elected to the Whitemarsh Township Board in 2007 and the Montgomery County Board in 2011. A graduate of Brown University, Providence, R.I., and the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, she was vice chair of the Montgomery County Board and chair and vice chair of the Whitemarsh Township Board. In addition, she served on the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) board and was chair of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) board.

Vice Chairman Lieberman was first appointed to the PTC in July 2010. He has been president of The Lieberman Companies, Pittsburgh, an insurance and pension provider, since 2003. He serves on the boards of AMPCO Pittsburgh and GENCO. A graduate of the Pennsylvania State University in State College, he is a University of Pittsburgh trustee and former chairman of the Manchester-Bidwell Corp., Pittsburgh.

Senator Wozniak was nominated by Gov. Tom Wolf to serve on the PTC on March 30 and confirmed by the PA Senate on July 9. He retired from the general assembly last fall after serving 16 years in the PA House of Representatives and 19 years in the PA Senate. During his career, Senator Wozniak sat on several legislative committees, most recently serving as the Democratic Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee. He received a B.A. in Economics from the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown in 1978.

Attorney and United States Air Force veteran Barry Drew became a Turnpike commissioner in December 2015. He had served as deputy secretary of administration at the Department of Revenue from 1995 until 2011. Prior to that, he was solicitor for the City of Erie and director of administration for the County of Erie. Drew holds a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Gannon University in Erie and a Juris Doctor from the Western New England College School of Law.

Bucks County businessman Pasquale T. (Pat) Deon Sr. continues to serve the PTC as commissioner. Deon was originally appointed to the Turnpike Commission in June 2002. He is chairman of the board for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) and a service-industry entrepreneur and restaurateur involved in real-estate development, radio broadcasting, beverage distribution and construction.

Motor Vehicle Deaths Drop Slightly in First Half of 2017 But Remain 8% Higher Than Same Period Two Years Ago

August 15, 2017 http://www.nsc.org

National Safety Council urges Americans not to relax, because the final six months tend to be deadlier.

Itasca, IL – Preliminary estimates from the National Safety Council indicate motor vehicle deaths in the first six months of 2017 are 1% lower than they were during the same six-month period in 2016. However, the country is fresh off the steepest estimated two-year increase in motor vehicle deaths since 1964, and it is too early to conclude whether the upward trend is over. The estimated deaths during the first six months of 2017 still are 8% higher than the 2015 six-month estimates, and the final six months of the calendar year – July to December – tend to be deadlier than the first six.

An estimated 18,680 people have been killed on U.S. roads since January and 2.1 million were seriously injured. The total estimated cost of these deaths and injuries is $191 billion.

"The price of our cultural complacency is more than a hundred fatalities each day," said NSC President and CEO Deborah A.P. Hersman. "Although the numbers may be leveling off, the Road to Zero deaths will require accelerating improvements in technology, engaging drivers and investing in our infrastructure."

NSC has tracked fatality trends and issued estimates for nearly 100 years. Last winter, the Council estimated as many as 40,000 people were killed on the roads in 2016 – a 6% rise over 2015 and the largest two-year percentage increase in deaths in 53 years. Those estimates – as well as the 2017 preliminary estimates – are subject to slight increases and decreases as the data mature.

Factors impacting motor vehicle fatality trends include an improved economy and lower gas prices, both of which have helped fuel a 1.7% increase in miles driven from 2016 to 2017.

To help reduce fatalities on the road, the National Safety Council recommends drivers:

- Make sure every passenger buckles up on every trip
- Designate an alcohol- and drug-free driver or arrange alternate transportation
- Get plenty of sleep and take regular breaks to avoid fatigue
- Never use a cell phone behind the wheel, even hands-free
- Stay engaged in teens' driving habits and visit DriveitHOME.org for resources
- Learn about your vehicle's safety systems and how to use them; MyCarDoesWhat.org can help drivers understand features such as adaptive cruise control, blind spot warning systems and backup cameras.
- Visit ChecktoProtect.org to ensure your vehicle does not have an open recall
- Check the NSC State of Safety report to gauge whether your state's road safety laws are strong enough

Philly becomes first U.S. city to map urban trails on Google Street View

More than 400 miles of green space now navigable on 360-degree platform – August 30, 2017

BY MICHAEL TANENBAUM http://www.phillyvoice.com

You can now go to the park in Philadelphia on your phone — not to skip out on actual nature, but to explore and plan your trip.

After a yearlong process covering more than 400 miles, Philadelphia is officially the first city in the United States to have its urban trail system mapped on Google Street View, the Fairmount Park Conservancy and Parks & Recreation announced Wednesday.

The initiative, first announced in May 2016, marks the start of a nationwide effort to digitalize the off-road experience.

To get the job done, two Parks & Recreation employees spent months carrying a 50-pound Google Trekker backpack, walking around Fairmount Park and several other city trails. They captured about 100 different parks and points of interest in areas including Wissahickon Valley Park, Pennypack Park and along the Schuylkill River Trail.

They even hit up the Philadelphia Zoo.

"One of the last sites we worked on capturing was the Philadelphia Zoo," Conor Michaud, who was joined in the project by Gint Stirbys, said in a blog last December. "We are thankful to our partners at the zoo for opening their gates to us an hour before the zoo officially opened, allowing us to capture unobstructed views of many of the animals and major exhibits."

Once the hi-res images were collected, Michaud and Stirbys sent them to Google to be processed into a 360-degree platform, now accessible on your browser or on Google Street View. Good points to start at include Fairmount Park's Boxers' Trail or Belmont Grove, where you might discover there's a basketball court on the grounds. All you have to do is drop the yellow little Trekker guy onto blue-marked trails or park areas that have clear labels indicating they're navigable.

"What this technology and opportunity provides is an enhanced way for visitors to connect with these special places in the U.S. in a way they may never have before," the Fairmount Park Conservancy said in a release last May. "Google expects many people may never get to explore this place in person, so they are so happy to open it up for the world to enjoy."

With Philadelphia to show as an alluring example for other cities, Google is now inviting any tourism board, nonprofit, government agency, university, research organization or

similar entity to apply to borrow the Street View Trekker and get involved in the mapping process.

Pittsburgh's first bike-only traffic light designed to make Oakland intersection safer

MEGAN GUZA | Aug. 31, 2017 http://triblive.com

An Oakland intersection that was the site of a crash that killed a bicyclist in 2015 is the location of Pittsburgh's first bicycle-only traffic light.

The light – which looks like a normal traffic signal aside from the lit-up bicycle that appears rather than a solid red, yellow or green light – helps direct cyclists through an intersection that previously was not as bicycle-friendly.

Traffic headed inbound on Forbes Avenue must turn right onto Bellefield Avenue, as Forbes turns into a one-way street in the opposite direction, but cyclists headed in the same direction are able to continue straight on Forbes.

"It's not safe for cyclists following the traffic light on Forbes," said Pittsburgh City Councilman Daniel Gilman, city councilman for the neighborhood. "The can continue straight, and that means crossing into the path of cars."

The bicycle signal allows for cyclists to safely continue on in the Forbes bike lane without crossing into the path of traffic.

University of Pittsburgh professor Susan Hicks was killed at the intersection in 2015 as she waiting in traffic. A driver rear-ended the vehicle behind her, pinning her between that car and the one in front of her.

"It operates just like a traffic signal," Gilman said. He noted that Oakland is one of the most heavily traveled neighborhoods by cyclists, but it has lacked bicycle infrastructure. The bike signal is one aspect of planning improvement for the entire Forbes corridor, he said.

Forbes is the site of relatively new bike lanes that are also a first for the city – contra-flow bike lanes, which allow cyclists to safely ride against the flow of traffic on a one-way street.

"If you were coming from Craig Street or (Carnegie Mellon University), it was a really difficult set of turns and maneuvers in fast-moving traffic," said Eric Boerer, advocacy director for BikePGH. "This simplifies things for people."

LIVE THE MADDENING LIFE OF A TRAFFIC ENGINEER WITH A $3 GAME

RIAN MARSHALL 09.20.17 www.wired.com

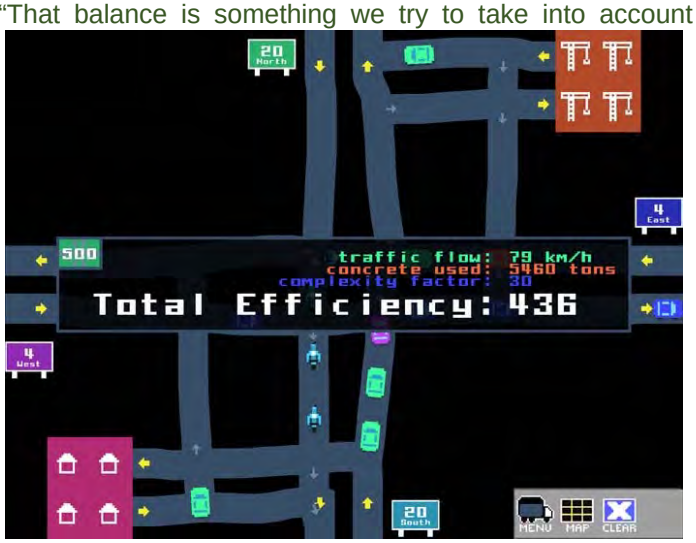
THE AIR SINGS with four-letter words. The iPad sits stoic as fingers poke, jab, and prod at its screen. Traffic engineering, it turns out, is a difficult job, even when you're working in a fantasy "city" made up of nothing but one office building and a solitary tree.

This is the world of Freeways, a new release from independent game maker Justin Smith, who owns Captain Games. The objective is simple enough: build a road network that connects a series of highways and buildings. When you've finished, you'll be scored on three metrics: the average speed of cars on your network, how much concrete you used to build it, and how easy it is for drivers to get from one point to another.

You can make roundabouts, standard intersections, even send one road over another. But plan carefully. Too many merges and you slow everything down. Too many interchanges and you waste money on concrete. Too many intersections and you risk gridlock. Or, as the game puts it when everything grinds to a halt, "Jammed!"

The mercilessly addictive $3 game, available on Windows computers, iPads, and Android devices with large screens, isn't just a brainteaser. It's a pretty good representation of the work done by the pros, and a handy encapsulation of just how complicated modern road networks can be.

"That balance is something we try to take into account



every time we can do a design," says Kevin Heaslip, a civil and environmental engineer with Virginia Tech. He played *Freeways* as he waited for his daughter to emerge from gymnastics practice, and liked it so much, he plans to use it in one of his engineering college courses.

Getting traffic to flow smoothly is not simple at all. “The engineers doing this, it’s like a work of art for them,” says Smith. Entire design handbooks outline the most efficient ways to get vehicles through entrance and exit ramps, and engineers pore over geometric possibilities. A diverging diamond interchange here? A magic roundabout there? Even in Freeways' simplified form, the possibilities are overwhelming.

Freeways can also help explain to aesthetically sensitive drivers why those horrifying looking interchange designs exist in places like Atlanta and Los Angeles. “Spaghetti bowls can be great for traffic flow," says Heaslip. "But people say it’s not the prettiest thing to have around."

The good news for people driving in the real world is that professional engineers have access to more sophisticated software, which accounts for complications like multiple lanes, shifting travel patterns, and traffic signals.

Then there's Freeways' subtler message: What do we lose when we build a transportation network around individual cars, vehicles that require endless swirls of concrete that hog space and public funds? "Maybe this isn’t the transportation mode of the future," Smith says. "Maybe we don’t want to encourage massive interchanges." This game won't provide the answers—but it could keep you occupied the next time you're stuck sitting in traffic.

City plans to expand smart signals to Oakland

https://pittnews.com 9/26/17 Sarah Frumkin

With the dozens of traffic lights and congestion, driving in Oakland can be frustrating and stressful.

But every so often, you can time it perfectly and breeze down Forbes or Fifth Avenue, passing through a string of green lights.

Stephen Smith, director of the Intelligent Coordination and Logistics Laboratory at CMU, developed technology that could make that breezy drive a lot less rare — but some worry it might come at the expense of pedestrian convenience.

The technology — called Scalable Urban Traffic Control, or Surtrac — works by combining traffic light control with predictive traffic technology. It prevents drivers from getting stuck at a light with no traffic passing through from the cross street, easing congestion.

And with its ability to read and adapt to existing traffic conditions, its producers say it will drastically reduce lengthy travel times and vehicle emissions.

The City of Pittsburgh and PennDOT are investing $30 million to install these adaptive traffic signals in 150 intersections around the City, in addition to the 50 signals currently in operation. By 2019 or 2020, nearly 200 intersections — a third of Pittsburgh — will have smart signals installed, Smith said.

Smith played a major role in developing this technology. He and his team received funding in 2009 from the Henry L. Hillman Foundation to brainstorm ways to improve Pittsburgh’s traffic problems and implement solutions.

“I think it’s a tremendous, important problem to work on,” Smith said. “Everyone has an opinion about traffic. You can talk about it to anyone.”

Smith’s team at CMU pilot tested the technology at nine intersections in East Liberty in June 2012, performing physical drive-through experiments using their cell phones to track their travel times before and after they went in. They received additional funding from the Heinz Endowments because of the pilot program’s success, Smith said.

“The pilot test turned out really well,” Smith said. “We got great results — 25 percent reduction in travel time, vehicles were stopping 30 percent less times, and when they were stopping, 40 percent less time.”

Assuming the expansion goes as planned, this technology will expand through Oakland, helping to ease congestions that commonly infect its entering and exiting roads — namely Bates, Forbes and Fifth.

Currently drivers can make every light traveling down Forbes or Fifth if they time it correctly and go at the right speed. But Smith pointed out that when it’s congested “traffic suffers.” The smart light technology would help that, he said.

“It will be adjustable to whatever the actual traffic is on the road, so it should be noticeably better,” he said.

While many are enthusiastic about shorter drives, some are skeptical about its effect on pedestrians and cyclists, and Smith is aware of these concerns.

He said safe intersection-crossing for people with disabilities is the top priority in fixing the traffic problem. He and his colleagues recently contracted with the Federal Highway Administration to build a prototype mobile phone adapted to talk with the intersection and provide these phones to pedestrians with a disability. The team is set to test this technology next June or July.

“The phone will know the speed of the owner, then the signal determines how much green time that person needs,” he said.

Although the team is currently developing a solution to pedestrian concerns, Todd Derr, a member and volunteer for the organization BikePGH, remains skeptical from his personal experience with existing Surtrac traffic lights. He said pressing the walk button doesn’t seem to speed up the light change for pedestrians.

“Sensors aren’t necessarily going to fix [the problem] unless they change something else about their system,” Derr said.

Because the technology works to speed up travel by adjusting to existing traffic, small side streets might get green lights less often, assuming it’s a busy time for a street like Fifth Avenue. Though this would speed up drive times, a pedestrian would have to press a walk button and wait for the system to give them a walk signal.

"I think, from my observation, the practical effect of this just encourages people to jaywalk," Derr said.

Colleen Hutzel, a Pitt junior and social work major, said she thinks the Surtrac system's promise to make travel times faster and reduce emissions will have positive impacts for our health and our environment. But as a student who walks to class, she said she thinks Surtrac could negatively affect pedestrian students.

"From my place, it takes 15 minutes to get to campus, assuming I'm walking fast. Crossing Fifth and Forbes will make my walking commute longer," Hutzel said.

Despite what Hutzel and Derr feel are shortcomings, Surtrac technology has been anticipated by many, including Evan Ivosevic, a communications major who commutes from McKees Rocks.

"I've been waiting on this tech since high school, which was five years ago," Ivosevic said.

Taking into account concerns from different groups, Smith said his team is working to ensure Surtrac meets the needs of everybody.

"Our technology is pretty unique in its ability to do this multi-mode optimization — by mode I just mean pedestrians, bicycles, busses, cars — giving each of them attention and considering them along with the particular constraints that each have," Smith said.

NJ Transit Expects To Meet Deadline For Installing Positive Train Control

By PHIL GREGORY • SEP 26, 2017 http://wbgo.org

Despite some setbacks, New Jersey Transit officials say they have every expectation they'll meet the federal deadline for getting Positive Train Control on its rail system by the end of next year.

The collision avoidance system slows or stops a train if the operator doesn't comply with signals or the speed limit.

A quarterly report filed with the Federal Railroad Administration shows that by the end of June only 13 New Jersey Transit locomotives were fully equipped with antennas and onboard systems to operate Positive Train Control. It's required to be on 440 of them by the deadline.

New Jersey Transit executive director Steven Santoro says the prime contractor, Parsons Transportation Group, fell behind schedule, and he's satisfied its making appropriate efforts to catchup.

"They are taking this very seriously now and we look forward to working with them to get this project complete."

The agency's assistant executive director Eric Daleo says it's up to Parsons to specify the means and methods for accelerating the project.

"What we know is that we have a schedule and that schedule shows full implementation by the federal deadline. And it's up to the contractor to determine how to meet that scheduled milestone. We will hold the contractor accountable to meet the implementation deadline."

Daleo says NJ Transit staff is monitoring the work to get an early warning if the contractor is not making progress in getting the projected completed.

When it's fully implemented, Positive Train Control will be on 326 miles of New Jersey Transit rail routes. So far, it's not in operation on any of them

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INTERCONNECT ENDINGS

Racking my brain this time for some fun transportation related ideas to end this edition…

Still thinking…

Still thinking…

Sti… GOT IT! My love of music intertwined with our profession!! Heard some riffs the other day making me think about cool songs, titles and lyrics noting transportation…

So here are a few:

Ozzy Osborne's 'Crazy Train' *"Mental wounds not healing, Life's a bitter shame, I'm goin' off the rails on a crazy train"*

Queen's 'Bicycle Race' *"Bicycle bicycle bicycle, I want to ride my bicycle bicycle bicycle, I want to ride my bicycle, I want to ride my bike, I want to ride my bicycle, I want to ride it where I like"*

Tom Cochrane's 'Life is a Highway' *"Love's like a road that you travel on, When there's one day here and the next day gone, Sometimes you bend, sometimes you stand, Sometimes you turn your back to the wind"*

Steve Miller Band's 'Jet Airliner' *"Leavin' home, out on the road, I've been down before, Ridin' along in this big ol' jet plane, I've been thinkin' about my home"*

Sammy Hagar's 'I Can't Drive 55' *"One foot on the brake and one on the gas, hey, Well, there's too much traffic, I can't pass, no, So I tried my best illegal move, A big black and white come and crushed my groove again"*

Don McLean's 'American Pie' *"I started singing bye, bye, Miss American Pie, Drove my Chevy to the levee but the levee was dry, Them good ole boys were drinking whiskey 'n rye, Singin' this'll be the day that I die, This'll be the day that I die"*

Peter Gabriel's 'Sledgehammer' *"you could have a steam train, if you'd just lay down your tracks, you could have an aeroplane flying, if you bring your blue sky back"*

AC/DC's 'Highway To Hell' *"No stop signs, Speed limit, Nobody's gonna slow me down, Like a wheel, Gonna spin it, Nobody's gonna mess me around"*

Kenny Loggins' 'Danger Zone' *"Revvin' up your engine, Listen to her howlin' roar, Metal under tension, Beggin' you to touch and go"*

Eagles' 'Take it Easy' *"Well, I'm a standing on a corner, in Winslow, Arizona, and such a fine sight to see, It's a girl, my Lord, in a flatbed Ford, slowin' down to take a look at me"*

War's 'Low Rider' *"Low rider don't use no gas now, The low rider don't drive too fast"*

Jethro Tull's 'Locomotive Breath' *"Oh, he feels the piston scraping, Steam breaking on his brow, Old Charlie stole the handle, And the train—it won't stop going, No way to slow down"*

Doobie Brothers' 'Long Train Runnin'' *"Where pistons keep on churnin', And the wheels go 'round and 'round, And the steel rails are cold and hard, For the mountains that they go down"*

The B-52's 'Love Shack' *"Hop in my Chrysler, it's as big as a whale and it's about to set sail, I got me a car, like, it seats about 20, So come on and bring your jukebox money"*

…hey there, I know I got you humming a few!!! And no harping on my Classic Rock selections!! Till the next edition…

Respectfully submitted,

Dean J. Kaiser, P.E., PTOE
2017 MASITE Newsletter Editor

MASITE Interconnect Info – Please feel free to comment liberally on this and any issue of the Interconnect. All news and noteworthy items are still greatly appreciated in the next couple of months as well as information relating to sponsor companies, organizations, MASITE members and other Section planned activities. The deadline for the Dec 2017 issue will be Dec 22nd.