

## **Major Bridges P3 Initiative Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) November 12, 2020**

### **INITIAL FAQ**

#### **What is a Public-Private Partnership (P3)?**

A public-private partnership is a contractual agreement between public and private entities in which the public entity transfers the responsibility for engineering, construction, operation, financing, and/or maintenance (or any combination) of a transportation project or facility to the private sector for a defined time period.

#### **What is the Major Bridges P3 Initiative?**

The Major Bridges P3 Initiative is part of the PennDOT Pathways Program, which is designed to bolster PennDOT's ongoing effort to address the state's growing backlog of replacement and rehabilitation needs for major bridges that are approaching the end of their useful life. By allowing for the use of a P3 delivery model, PennDOT will be able to replace or rehabilitate major bridges around the state more quickly, achieve significant savings for taxpayers, and minimize the impact on the traveling public.

The initiative was approved by the Public-Private Transportation Partnership Board in November 2020.

#### **What is a "major" bridge?**

Major bridges are structures of significance based on physical size, location, and cost to replace or rehabilitate. These structures are in a condition that warrants timely attention to enhance safety and to avoid disruptions and community impacts if closure or weight restriction were imposed.

#### **Why is PennDOT focused on major bridges?**

PennDOT has been aggressively addressing the thousands of bridges in poor condition throughout the Commonwealth. Even so, because of limited funding and the high cost of replacing or rehabilitating major bridges, investments in a number of critical major bridges have been deferred. By funding these projects through the P3 initiative and implementing user fees, these major bridges' needs can be removed from the PennDOT budget, freeing up funds for other critical projects.

While none of these bridges are unsafe, if left unaddressed they will continue to deteriorate. Frequent inspections and maintenance/repairs will be needed, which can require lane restrictions, inconveniencing commerce and the traveling public. At some point, if repairs are insufficient, these bridges may need to be posted with weight restrictions, or ultimately must be closed, which in some cases may require long detours.

**Why use the P3 approach?**

The P3 law was enacted by the PA General Assembly and signed by Governor Tom Corbett in 2012, providing PennDOT with a much-needed tool to address the state's growing infrastructure needs. By using the P3 approach, PennDOT will be able to replace more bridges more quickly and minimize impacts on the traveling public and economy.

**Would PennDOT be privatizing major bridges that use this initiative?**

No. PennDOT would not be privatizing major bridges through the Major Bridges P3 Initiative. PennDOT would continue to own all bridges included in the initiative as required by the P3 legislation. The Department would contract the design, construction, financing, operations (user fee collection) and potential lifecycle maintenance responsibilities for a period of likely 30 years or longer. The selected Development Entity (the private entity awarded the contract) would be responsible for any defects that might occur during the term of the contract in addition to expected maintenance, similar to an extended warranty.

**Would PennDOT outsource the maintenance of the bridges included in the initiative?**

PennDOT would continue to perform operations and routine maintenance on the bridges. Basic operating services such as line striping, sweeping and snow removal would remain the responsibility of PennDOT. A properly designed and constructed bridge should require only periodic preventative maintenance during the first 25 to 35 years, but the P3 contract serves as a warranty to ensure the bridge is constructed and maintained to minimize lifecycle costs of ownership. Examples would include structural maintenance and addressing any findings from regular bridge inspections. This means that the bridge would ultimately cost less money to repair, while also lasting longer.