



**PA HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
PennDOT's P3 BRIDGE TOLLING PLAN
SEPTEMBER 30, 2021**

**GALE E. GALLO
PRESIDENT
LEMOYNE BOROUGH COUNCIL**



- ❖ The Borough of Lemoyne recognizes the need for replacement of the John Harris Memorial Bridge aka the South Bridge. Built in 1960, it is at the end of its functional life
- ❖ The Borough of Lemoyne adamantly opposes the tolling of this local commuter bridge as do all our neighboring Cumberland County municipalities (Please refer to attached letter)
 - We believe that it will create a further divide of the Greater Harrisburg region between the East and West shore communities
 - Many families and individuals of modest means traverse this bridge multiple times daily to access direct employers, employment agencies, grocery stores and services such as New Hope Ministries and JFT Recovery. These citizens are unable to accommodate even minimal daily toll expenses in their budgets and will be disparately impacted by tolling
 - Tolling will significantly impact the cost of doing business for many of our local small to mid-size businesses who travel the bridge multiple times daily
 - Tolling will divert thousands of vehicles, attempting to bypass the tolls, onto local roads and bridges
 - Our infrastructure is unable to accommodate this disproportionate increase in traffic, raising ongoing maintenance and enhancement costs. This will, in turn require local tax increases to fund these expenses
- ❖ The Borough of Lemoyne opposes the financing of this project as a Public Private Partnership, partnering with private investors to fund this project
 - As an alternative, we look to the \$1 Trillion Federal Infrastructure bill passed in Congress last week by the Senate, which is to be voted on today in the House of Representatives; \$110 Billion of which has been earmarked for improvements to roads, bridges and other tangible projects
 - We also support utilization of American Rescue Plan Act funds for this project
 - In addition, we support more traditional funding methodologies such as Municipal Bonds, particularly in the current rate environment
- ❖ The Borough of Lemoyne is adamantly opposed to the proposed ramp configuration in our community
 - This will create a significant increase in traffic on Third Street in Lemoyne. Our community swimming pool and Memorial Park, utilized by hundreds of residents, many of them pedestrians and bicyclists, are located on the East end of



Herman Avenue. The proposed exit ramp intersects Third Street less than one block from Herman Avenue, creating a significant safety concern. (Please refer to Map 2 “Proposed South Bridge Project”)

- All traffic must exit the ramp onto Third Street and has no option but to turn left or right. This, combined with increased traffic utilizing the Third Street corridor to bypass the tolls, will play havoc with traffic flow at this and all intersections on Third Street
- This will create an adverse impact on ingress and egress for our Third Street businesses.
- The proposed ramp configuration appears to be inconsistent with the proposed “York Split” per the I-83 Master Plan. We believe that this could result in future re-configuration, adding unnecessary additional expense (Please refer to Map 3 “Proposed York Split per I-83 Master Plan” and Map 4 “Combined I-83 Master Plan with South Bridge Project”)
- We propose an alternate exit ramp onto South Tenth Street via Ayers Avenue (Please refer to Map 5 “Combined I-83 Master Plan with South Bridge Project Reflecting Alternate Lemoyne Off-Ramp (in yellow)”)
 - This is significantly more congruous with the proposed I-83 Master Plan
 - South Tenth Street is a pre-existing Commercial Industrial area
 - Pedestrian safety will be significantly increased by exponentially reducing the volume of traffic in the residential area of South Third Street
 - There already exists an I-83 interchange within a few blocks at Tenth and Lowther Streets
 - Traffic has a much more direct path to other West Shore communities at this exit point.
 - There is direct access for commercial vehicles to distribution centers located on South Tenth Street
 - There will be minimal impact of this ramp location to local businesses

October 1, 2021

Chris Drda, PE
District Executive
PennDOT District 8-0
2140 Herr St,
Harrisburg, PA 17103

Dear Mr. Drda,

On July 29, 2021 PennDOT hosted the I-83 South Bridge Project stakeholder workshop at the Radisson Conference Center in Cumberland County. The meeting convened a variety of public sector stakeholders from the region to discuss the impacts of tolling the I-83 South Bridge, with a focus on the projected traffic diversion that would be created by the toll.

Information from the July 29 meeting showed that the majority of the 125,000 vehicles using the South Bridge daily had an origin or destination within 15 miles of the bridge. The high percentage of local traffic translates into higher levels of diverted traffic, as compared to a tolled bridge serving primarily through traffic. Those diverted trips will have diverse and marked impacts on Cumberland County's West Shore communities.

While the meeting proved informative, the County and its municipalities have major concerns over the tolling project and its impacts on our communities. Follow-up information from the July 29 meeting which may address some but certainly not all of these concerns, was not provided to participants as of the date of this letter. The following issues are of particular concern and require prompt attention before the tolling concept advances any further.

- **Congestion** – Diverted traffic is projected to use already congested state-owned roadways on the West Shore. As the major state routes fill with additional traffic, motorists, acting upon the guidance of their smartphone traffic apps and their own local knowledge, will scatter to secondary, local streets in their quest to avoid tolls and cross the Susquehanna River. Congestion, and in turn traffic safety concerns, will not be confined to state-owned roadways but will infiltrate West Shore neighborhoods that are ill-equipped to deal with cut-through traffic. In addition, the closure of the Lowther Street entry ramp onto the South Bridge will not only increase traffic backlogs on the South Third Street/Bridge Street corridor, but will also divert additional traffic into the residential neighborhoods of northern New Cumberland.
- **Business Impact** – As noted earlier, the South Bridge serves local traffic within 15 miles of the bridge. Local businesses, the foundation of the regional economy, will be disproportionately and negatively impacted by tolling as they pay multiple times crossing the South Bridge on a weekly basis. One local business estimates impacts of nearly \$360,000 per year if current travel routes are maintained during tolling. Businesses may be forced to divert their trips onto local roadways or look to relocate given such dire economic penalties. Similarly, local retail businesses and restaurants report decreased business during periods of congested traffic, which is also a peak time for their walk-in customers.

Additional cut-through traffic means less revenues for those local businesses that have already been unfairly impacted by regulations and restrictions.

- **Ancillary Transportation Investments** – Meeting attendees were provided with a glossy map book that showed numerous intersections throughout the region. Participants were asked to suggest improvements to those intersections to accommodate the high levels of diverted traffic. While some intersections may be equipped to accommodate higher traffic volumes, others would require major, out-of-character reconfigurations that would conflict with the surrounding small-town streets and land uses. Further, these transportation projects, implemented solely to support tolling diversionary traffic would supersede other priority transportation projects. Limited transportation funds would be prioritized to accommodate toll-avoiders while ignoring other legitimate transportation needs of the West Shore. The level of investment in other intersections and the associated community impacts must receive further consideration as part of the tolling proposal.
- **Public Safety** – Travel demand models estimate considerable diversion of traffic if a toll is implemented, especially during peak hours, when accidents and emergencies are likely to occur. Diverted traffic will further clog already congested roadways, thereby slowing first responders and delaying lifesaving assistance to those in need. While tolling provides a convenient fix to a pressing bridge problem, its ancillary impacts inhibit first responders' ability to protect public health, safety, and welfare.
- **Right of Way Impacts** – The proposed design for the South Bridge includes a new off ramp that connects directly to South Third Street in Lemoyne. The new off ramp will bisect an existing mixed community, cutting through existing businesses and residential properties. The new ramp will connect to South Third Street which has limited width and capacity to accommodate new traffic volumes. In addition, the location of the new ramp is near borough park and recreation amenities, further creating additional safety concerns. With the construction of the new ramp, the mural depicting Lemoyne's history on the current I-83 south off ramp will be cast aside, carelessly discarded despite its positive community appeal and aesthetic enhancement to the transportation system.
- **Environmental Justice** – Low to moderate income populations on both sides of the river use the South Bridge to travel to work in Cumberland and Dauphin Counties. Tolls, a regressive tax that is not indexed to a person's ability to pay, will increase the transportation costs for these at-risk populations. Increased transportation costs, coupled with the already surging housing market, will force these populations to avoid using the South Bridge, or worse yet, leave the area in search of a more affordable place to live.
- **Alternative Funding Options** – Governor Wolf released the Pennsylvania Revenue Options Committee (TROC) report on July 30, 2021. The report outlines a host of revenue options that address the Commonwealth's transportation funding deficit. Tolling is one of the 18 options considered in the report. Similarly, the Biden administration is actively developing a federal infrastructure package that could have major, long term impacts on transportation funding. PennDOT, in working with the legislature, should develop a comprehensive, statewide funding solution that addresses our transportation needs in a sustainable manner. Rushing a tolling proposal on the South Bridge for sake

of simplicity and expediency eliminates thoughtful consideration of other revenue sources that would be better suited to the unique circumstances of the South Bridge.

In conclusion and behalf of our residents, the undersigned municipalities wish to express our collective opposition to the I-83 South Bridge tolling project for the reasons enumerated above. While we recognize the need to replace the South Bridge, the undersigned communities object to the proposed design of the project and financing mechanism proposed to fund its replacement, both of which have undesirable and lasting impacts on our communities. We respectfully request PennDOT to schedule a meeting with county and municipal elected officials to further discuss the I-83 South Bridge tolling project before the project continues its fast track to implementation without meaningful input from the impacted communities and stakeholders.

Sincerely,



Gary Eichelberger, Chairman
Cumberland County Board of Commissioners



Leigh Twiford, Council President,
Camp Hill Borough



George Tyson, President,
East Pennsboro Township Board of Commissioners

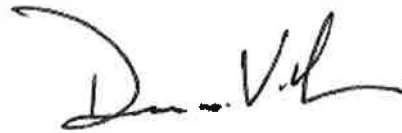


Gale Gallo, Council President,
Lemoyne Borough



Gary Weber, Council President,
Mechanicsburg Borough

John V. Thomas, President,
Hampden Township Board of Commissioners



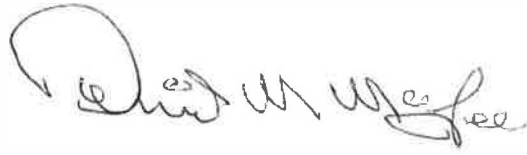
Dean W. Villone, President,
Lower Allen Township Board of Commissioners



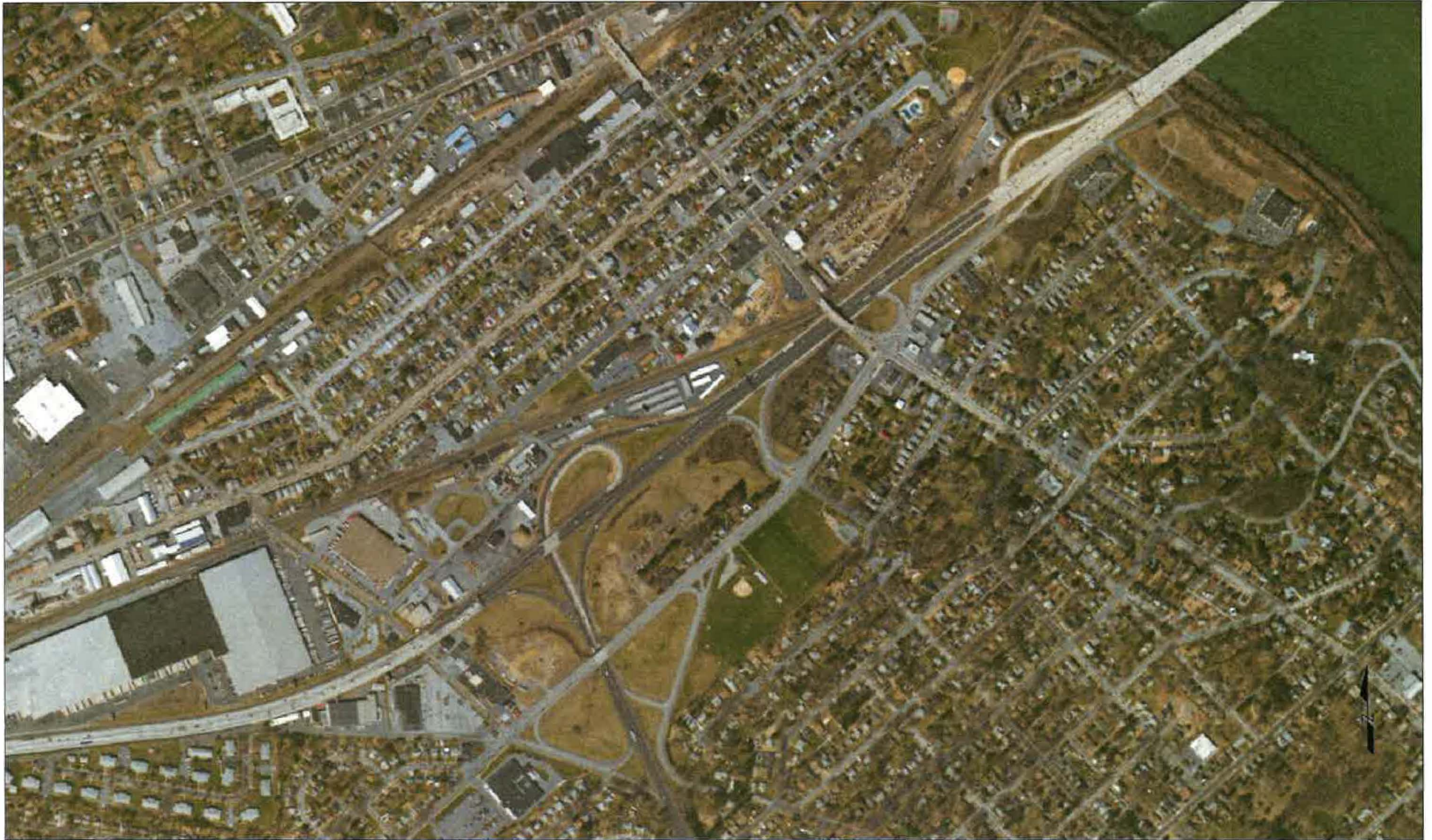
Robert P. Kline, Council President,
New Cumberland Borough

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Thomas Martini".

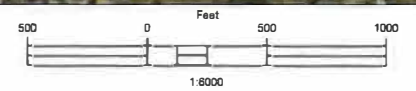
Thomas Martini, Council President,
Wormleysburg Borough

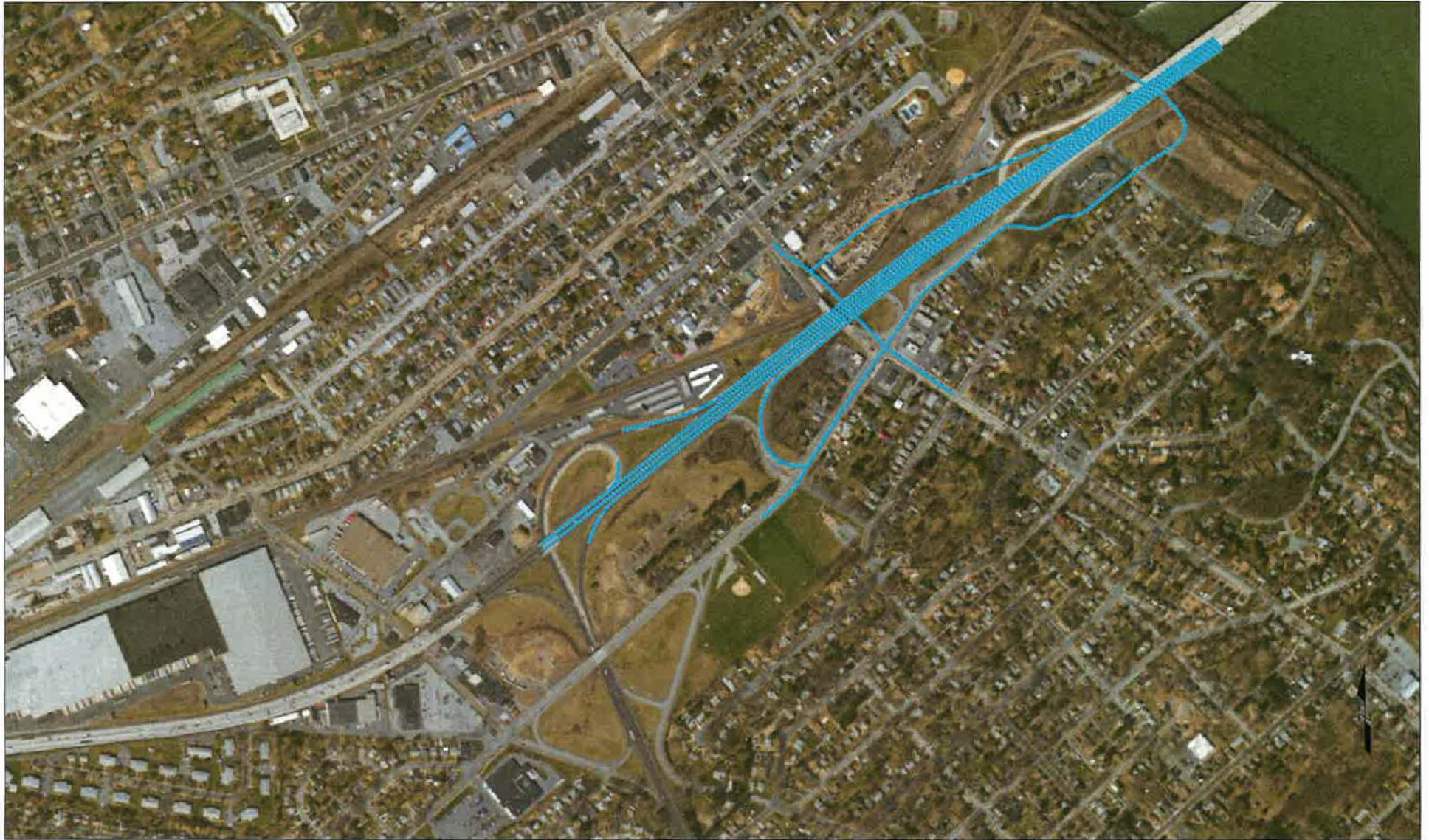
A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dennis McGee".

Dennis McGee, President,
West Shore Bureau of Fire Commission



CURRENT OVERVIEW



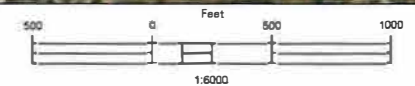


PROPOSED SOUTH BRIDGE PROJECT
PER PENNDOT WEBSITE



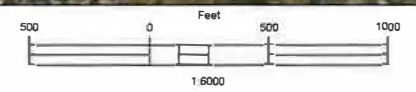


PROPOSED YORK SPLIT
PER I-83 MASTER PLAN





COMBINED I-83 MASTER PLAN
WITH SOUTH BRIDGE PROJECT





COMBINED I-83 MASTER PLAN
WITH SOUTH BRIDGE PROJECT REFLECTING
ALTERNATE LEMOYNE OFF-RAMP

