Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program (DGLVRP)
Traffic Count Policy
SCC approved 9/9/2014

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 <u>applicant</u> is responsible for validating that the road has 500 vehicles per day or less consistent with 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.
- 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 Commission's record retention policy. Districts may opt to include the completed traffic count validation form as an attachment to the project Contract.
- 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 or County Planning Commissions.

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.

Level1 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.   24hours (per day) / 2hours (per study) = 12
12 x 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.   24hours (per day) / 2hours (per study) = 12
12 x 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 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.

Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program (DGLVRP)
Traffic Count Validation Form

TRAFFIC COUNT LOCATION

Road Name and #:_____   Road Owner:_____

County: _____   Township: _____

GPS Location (if available):_____W, _____N

If GPS location not available, describe count location here: _____

_____

(for example: Traffic count on Smith road, ½ mile north of intersection with SR180, Maple road.)

Traffic Counts can be validated by use of existing data, a level 1 two-hour count, or a level 2 twenty-four-hour counts. Select the method used below and complete that section of the form.

Select method used

☐ **Existing Data or Extrapolation:** For existing traffic data, or extrapolation of existing data, describe the data used and extrapolation method on the back of this page. If necessary, attach a description of the data and extrapolation methodology, source and date of traffic counts used, and maps.

☐ **LEVEL 1 TRAFFIC COUNT DETAILS** (2 hour count)

Count Performed From __/__/____, _____ to __/__/____, _____

    Date   *Time*   *Date*   *Time*

Describe Count Method: (hand/camera/counter/etc.)_____

Count Performed by: _____ of _____

        (name)   *(organization)*

Total Count = _____ vehicles x 12 = _____ ADT

☐ **LEVEL 2 TRAFFIC COUNT DETAILS** (24 hour (minimum) automatic count)

Count Length: **24hr** 48hr 72 hour other: _____

Count Performed From __/__/____, _____ to __/__/____, _____

        Date   *Time*   *Date*   *Time*

Counter Used: air tube radar other:_____   Counter Make/Model:_____

Count Performed by: _____ of _____

        (name)   *(organization)*

Total Count = _____   24 hour count = _____ ADT

Applicant Validation: I hereby swear that this count is accurate as reported here and done in accordance with State Conservation Commission specifications.

_____,_____   _____, _____

print name   *position (with applicant)*   *signature*   *date*

Conservation District Validation: The traffic count data supplied by the applicant is acceptable to the Conservation District in accordance with SCC and county policy.

_____,_____   _____, _____

print name   *position*   *signature*   *date*

This form verifies eligibility of a sealed road for LVR funding as having a traffic count of 500 vehicles per day or less. It must be signed and retained in the project files.

Details for use of existing data or extrapolation from existing data:

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.

It is possible to use existing data for roads with 500 vehicles per day or less to extrapolate logically 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 the satisfaction of the Conservation District.

Describe existing data used and extrapolation methodology below. Attach additional material and maps if needed.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____