

## Portland

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Mayor Fischer and I wanted to hear the business perspective on this ongoing issue, and we aim to work with state and local municipalities to sustain these businesses during this time in order to help and build more growth in the future for them in what is, again, a time of uncertainty. Alexandra and Nicolay's chocolates, once the official chocolatier to the czar and whose confections have been enjoyed by British Royalty. Janet's Jems won Business of the Year award last year and this year, she may have to close her doors. Janet's thrift shoppe has been a staple to those in the community and would be a hardship should her doors shutter. These are unique businesses that are rooted in our local community and I am committed to helping the local municipalities who are being impacted once again by the rock fall.



## PennDOT

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Coordination with NJDOT: There has not been any PennDOT coordination with NJDOT.

Coordination with Monroe, Northampton, and Warren County: PennDOT is the process of co-ordinating a meeting with the three counties, so they, and all area EMS, know what the best route is to use for emergency services.

611 Emergency Services Route: Until 611 is safe, it cannot be used as an EMS Route. Departments will not put their people or apparatus in harm's way. PennDOT is going to work with municipalities on plan to be in place for when 611 can be used for emergency services. For example, once they scale/chip and remove the loose rock, it is possible it can be deemed safe for emergency services. Then perhaps barrier for one lane, an EMS only locked gate, and all are EMS know what the plan is for use can be executed. However, this will not be when they are drilling bolts into the rock and hanging mesh because they will need all the room for this equipment. Very complicated, but they are thinking it.

Larry Freshcorn, DWG Mayor, brought PennDOT in today to hear ground zero community concerns and answer more project questions.

What a breath of fresh air it is working with PennDOT reps! On hand: PennDOT Project Construction Manager, Project Designer, PennDOT Spokesperson, and others - open, transparent, relaxed and NORMAL - no smoke and mirrors.

Although the horrible business, safety, and lifestyle impacts were discussed, and reps are working on short term help for these, the below are focused on the project – where we are now, where things are going, and what to expect.

Again, what is the timeline?

Once permits are secure and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed, PennDOT will have everything ready to start immediately. The construction phase will likely take 6 months. Ugh – while they had hoped to move fast (within 2 weeks) with permission to proceed under an Emergency Declaration, that is not happening. Because the entire slope is on Federal NPS land, the project is required to go through a required federal environmental permit process. This will take a bit of time – no estimate. We will get updates.

What will the work look like?

This goal: to reasonably mitigate existing rockfall hazards along the entire 1+ mile section currently closed. To do it once and to do it right! Preliminary design (based on recent drone survey): First the specialized crews will scale the slope and remove all loose rocks – think climbers and workers in bucket trucks with shale bars. While they will do this the entire length of the project, there

are three sections they know right now that need mesh. To do this they will drill holes to grout in long rock bolts to hold up mesh. Least amount of tree & brush clearing as possible. Needed is drilling equipment, cranes, loaders, and dumps. When done, it will not look like the Route 46 Jurassic Fence. No posts holding up fences.

Could it get more involved?

Yup – once the workers get on and into the slope, they could discover areas in need of more work.

Can it be open for emergency services?

This is complicated and not good. No engineer will sign off on the roadway being safe, even for emergency vehicles. Not even to put up barrier and make it a one way. Due to the cliff being so close, rocks can bounce off the ledge and reach the river side lane. While there is a PennDOT meeting on Monday, with all NJ and PA OEM, EMS Fire and Rescue and Counties and Municipalities, it is more likely they will be discussion a detour route, so all know the fastest way around. This is not good news. Not for the residents on the Portland side, and not good news for when 80 is backed up on the Jersey side. Hoping this changes!!

Where is the funding coming from?

PennDOT gave credit to Senator Rosemary Brown and Representative Tarah Prost for doing a great job both pushing PennDOT and helping to secure \$3.5M in emergency state funding. Because of the obvious impacts of the closure, everyone is moving quickly. Normally this funding process takes a long time and it the reason for delays. Only because everyone is taking this as serious as it is, did they secure it quickly and during and administration change.

There is a 611 retaining wall rebuild in design scheduled for construction in a few years. Can they do this now, while the road is closed?

Unfortunately, no – not possible. That project is not advanced enough. There are federally required environmental review and funding steps that must take place before that project can move to Final Design.

Will we need to deal with road closures for the 611 Retaining Wall Rebuild in a few years?

The hope is No. Unlike this project, which is over 1 mile long, has rockfall risks now and will require significant space for drills, cranes and other equipment, the hope is the retaining wall can be reconstructed with, at worst, a single lane open in small areas.

In attendance:

Kristine Bush – Senator Rosemary Brown, Representative Tarah Probst, DWG Borough: Larry Freshcorn, Jack Schoemaker, Allison Trotter, Chris Chmielnicki; Smithfield Township: Robert Lovenheim, Julie Heika; Portland Borough: Stephanie Steele, UMBT: Ed Nelson; Monroe County Planning: Christine Meinhart; Monroe County Transit Authority: Peggy Howart, Rich Schlameus, Walt Quadrella.

## Regional Diversion Routes

