

# FY 2018-2019 LTAP Annual Report SEDA-COG MPO

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## **SEDA-COG MPO LTAP Annual Report**

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### **Mission Statement**

SEDA-COG will partner with PennDOT to identify municipal training needs and expand and promote LTAP services within its 9-county LTAP region.

### **Program Overview**

The LTAP program has become a fixture in the SEDA-COG Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) region over the past 14 years. SEDA-COG focuses on adding value to the training and technology transfer process for municipalities and strives to integrate LTAP with other regional transportation planning activities for maximum effectiveness. Our regular coordination with county and municipal officials on transportation program and project development has benefited from closer relationships and trust forged by LTAP involvement. The feedback received during individual trainings, marketing events, and direct conversations reveals that LTAP is having a positive impact and satisfying needs unmet through other programs, all at no cost to local government. Continuous improvements to LTAP delivery and stronger relationships between all the LTAP partners (PennDOT, MPOs/RPOs, PSATS, instructors, and municipalities) make SEDA-COG's role in the program more successful and rewarding.

### **Program Accomplishments**

Below is a compilation of some significant accomplishments during FY 2018-2019:

1. SEDA-COG effectively marketed LTAP classes to non-typical students, extending the reach of training and diversifying the LTAP registrants. In particular, the ADA Transition Plans, Local Road Safety Plans, Managing Utility Cuts, Road Safety Audit, Speed Limits & Speed Management, and Work Zone (Temporary) Traffic Control classes were targeted to county/municipal planners, managers, engineers, law enforcement, zoning officials, code administrators, and planning commission members. This resulted in the creation of several new LTAP accounts/students. (During FY 18-19, a total of 87 new user accounts were created for individuals from the SEDA-COG LTAP region.) Direct correspondence with county planners recruited these officials to engage municipalities about the training and target announcements toward communities based on local needs.

- Organized hands-on Equipment Operator Training workshop, in partnership with Pennsylvania College of Technology, that was held on April 26, 2019. SEDA-COG used its UPWP allocation to offer this class. Participants greatly benefitted from the classroom instruction led by a Penn College faculty member and the actual practice time operating a skid steer, backhoe, wheel loader, and road grader. All 10 municipal attendees (the max allowed) rated the class as highly useful, noting that they would recommend it to others. See below evaluation summary based on trainee input:

Equipment Operator Training - April 26, 2019  
 Training Evaluation Summary

	Course Content			Instructor (Erich Doeblner)				Facility	Overall				
	Usefulness of course content for performing job	Overall organization of course content	Usefulness of course materials for reference in the field	Knowledge of subject	Quality of presentation	Responsiveness to needs of learners	Clarity of explanations	Appropriateness of training facilities for this course	Length of course			Recommend class to others	
									Too short	About right	Too long	Yes	No
4/26/2019, Erich Doeblner, PCT River Property Training Site, Montgomery	4.9	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	1	9	0	10	0
Average Rating (on a scale of 1 to 5; 1=low, 5=high)									Response Totals				

Participant Comments:

Great course - I want to do it again  
 Great training, great facility, and good equipment to get practice on  
 Very good class and very helpful to me

Recommendations:

Spend more time grading (e.g., ditch grade lines to accomplish typical field objective)  
 Dig swales  
 Do a trench box  
 Teach how to use transit for elevation grades  
 Instructor suggestion: Divide into two-day course (day 1 for overview, day 2 for applications: add GPS technology, actually cut, grade and build a road from what they learned the day before)

SEDA-COG is interested in cooperating with Penn College to offer future equipment operator training. Other classes, demonstrations, or showcases that feature demonstrations or hands-on training will also be considered.



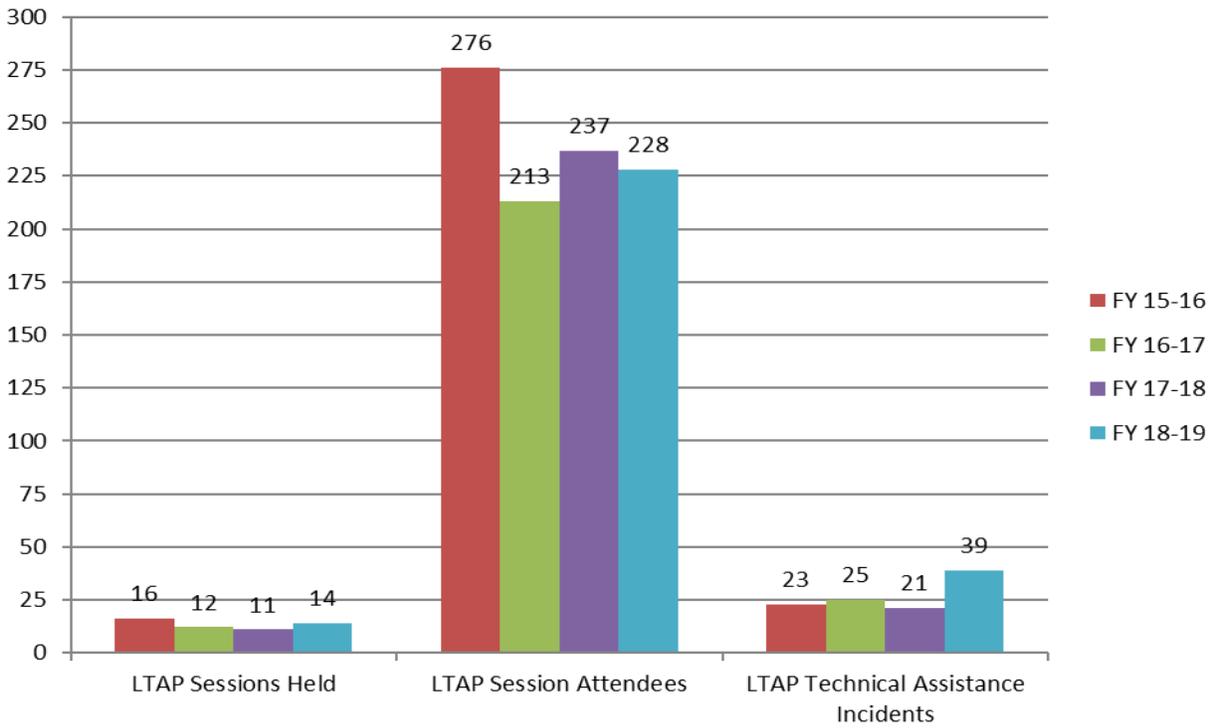
3. LTAP Technical Assistance services were promoted heavily by SEDA-COG through newsletters, class time, phone calls, conventions, social media, and networking with local officials. Staff routinely receives inquiries from municipalities regarding traffic studies, publication standards, or transportation funding programs, and inquirers are advised to take advantage of the LTAP technical assistance. During CY 2018, a total of 39 Tech Assists were completed in the SEDA-COG LTAP region – this represented an **86%** increase over CY 2017 Tech Assists totals. Through the first half of CY 2019, a total of 7 Tech Assists have already been completed in the SEDA-COG region.
  
4. SEDA-COG achieved a balance in holding LTAP maintenance & safety-oriented classes during FY 18-19, with 6 maintenance and 8 safety classes being held. Popular and essential courses like Salt & Snow Management, Work Zone (Temporary) Traffic Control, and Equipment & Worker Safety were scheduled during FY 18-19, which helped avoid any class cancellations. Recently revamped courses like Drainage and Managing Utility Cuts were scheduled to offer current information. Crucial training needs of experienced and new municipal employees were met throughout FY 18-19, and sessions of the brand-new Project Oversight, Local Road Safety Plans, Road Safety Audit, and Speed Limits & Speed Management classes helped draw out considerable interest in more advanced topics. It is clear that the training continues to have a meaningful impact for municipalities in the region during challenging budget environments. SEDA-COG will continue to sponsor standard classes and respond to emerging training needs by arranging or proposing new courses. Staff regularly recommends new courses, PennDOT LTAP newsletter article ideas, and Tech Sheet concepts.

**SEDA-COG MPO LTAP Training Sessions  
Summary for FY 2018-2019**

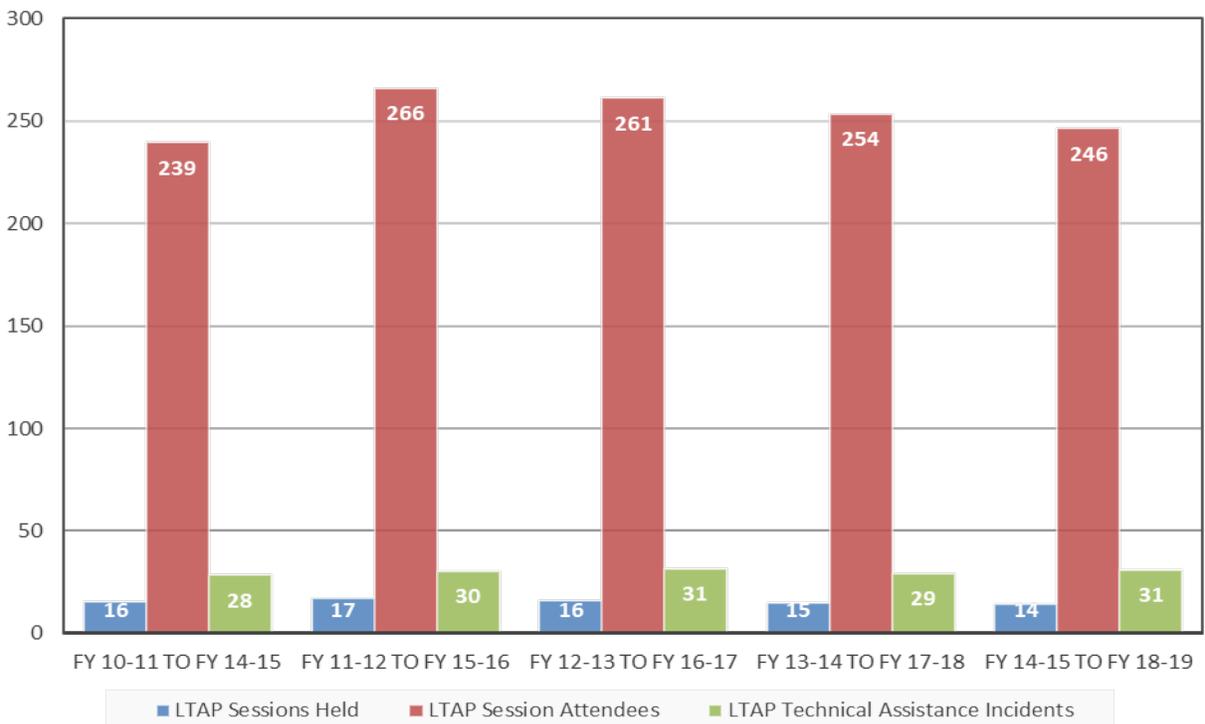
<b>Program Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Number of LTAP Classes Held</b>	<b>Number of Attendees</b>	<b>Average Number of Attendees Per Course</b>
2018-2019	14	228	16.3

In the first figure on page 4, the SEDA-COG LTAP class numbers cover each of the four most recent State Fiscal Years, while the Technical Assistance numbers reflect the calendar year totals for the beginning year of the SFY. In order to better present trend-based information, the second figure on page 4 shows 5-year running averages since SFY 2010-11. The historic performance reveals a stable and strong program of LTAP activity in the SEDA-COG region, and staff is optimistic that this trend will continue. Still, it is important to regularly examine the LTAP evaluation forms to see how municipalities are actually applying the training and technical assistance received, and to learn more about their views toward the program’s value.

## Local Technical Assistance Program Activity



## Five-Year Average LTAP Performance



In scheduling and participating in LTAP training sessions, SEDA-COG staff recommended that public works employees pursue the Roads Scholar certification through LTAP. This helped increase regular registrations, especially as larger boroughs committed to taking several new public works crew members through the Roads Scholar regimen and having its veterans go through refreshers. Now that the Roads Scholar II designation is available, more experienced municipal road workers might have renewed interest to attend LTAP training. The greater recognition of LTAP training among municipalities, along with strong partnering of staff from SEDA-COG/PennDOT/PSATS, should promise participation successes long into the future.

In addition, SEDA-COG staff also promoted other PSATS-orchestrated educational sessions applicable for roadway safety and maintenance. These included Flagger Training certification. Municipalities were encouraged to attend such sessions and assistance was offered with hosting or registering for these workshops.

### **Program Highlights**

This section provides a summary of the key outreach activities that SEDA-COG staff undertook to better administer LTAP for municipalities.

- **LTAP Survey**

Although the survey approach to data collection did not produce desired results in early years of LTAP involvement, SEDA-COG is pleased with the response it currently receives. Direct requests from municipalities for courses or road shows occur throughout the year. SEDA-COG staff’s attendance at class sessions and marketing events generates requests and identifies municipal training needs. Staff takes copies of a 1-page survey sheet to scheduled LTAP classes, county conventions, and equipment shows in the region. This survey contains checkboxes next to currently available courses, blank spaces for recommended courses, SEDA-COG and LTAP contact information, and questions regarding: tech assists, training topics, road show interest, suggested program improvements, and additional recommendations.

Municipal officials are notified when new courses are offered through LTAP, and e-mails with survey and course descriptions are sent to solicit top training requests for the year, often leading to class scheduling. Staff sent an email to all municipalities in September 2018 to request class recommendations for 2019. The link to an online survey option, through SurveyMonkey, was included in the body of the email. The convenient online surveying process led to easy analysis of results, successful class scheduling, and learning about new training needs or class sites. Staff also includes questions to learn about distances that officials are willing to travel for LTAP training and whether municipalities have ADA Transition Plans. A PDF of the traditional survey form was also offered up to municipalities to complete and return. If municipalities responded by faxing or mailing in their survey responses, they were entered manually into SurveyMonkey to load the information into the same system and instantaneously identify trends.

- **LTAP Classes**

As identified above, a total of 14 LTAP classes were offered in the SEDA-COG LTAP region during FY 2018-2019. These classes were conducted in Centre, Columbia, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union Counties – effectively spreading the classes throughout the expansive 9-county SEDA-COG LTAP region. Other LTAP course highlights from FY 18-19 are included below:

- 283 people registered for classes.
- 228 people (81% of registrants) attended classes and received training. Other individuals present at the training (instructors, SEDA-COG staff, and PennDOT municipal services specialists) are often not counted in the attendance.
- On average, there were 16.3 attendees per class session.
- SEDA-COG staff secured training facilities and handled logistics for most of the classes conducted in the region. Staff attended nearly all classes held in the region and assisted with the registration and preparations for those that could not be attended. SEDA-COG ensured that morning refreshments were available for all classes.
- A few municipalities (Boggs Township, Patton Township, Bellefonte Borough, State College Borough, and the City of Lock Haven) requested LTAP Road Shows.
- Zero scheduled LTAP classes ended up being cancelled.

The following classes were offered in the SEDA-COG LTAP region in FY 2018-2019:

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Course Name</u></b>	<b><u>County</u></b>	<b><u># of Attendees</u></b>
09/12/18	Work Zone (Temporary) Traffic Control	Snyder	12
09/17/18	Salt & Snow Management	Centre	30
10/11/18	Project Oversight	Northumberland	10
11/06/18	Drainage: The Key to Roads That Last	Columbia	14
11/14/18	Road Safety Audit	Union	14
11/15/18	Speed Limits and Speed Management	Union	11
12/11/18	Equipment & Worker Safety	Columbia	10
02/14/19	Speed Limits and Speed Management	Centre	13
04/02/19	Work Zone (Temporary) Traffic Control	Centre	23
04/03/19	Work Zone (Temporary) Traffic Control	Centre	27
04/10/19	Roadside Vegetation Control	Centre	15
04/24/19	Managing Utility Cuts	Columbia	20
05/29/19	ADA Transition Plans and Self Evaluations	Union	14
06/19/19	Local Road Safety Plans	Northumberland	15

### **Communication / Marketing**

This section summarizes the communication and marketing techniques used by SEDA-COG to promote awareness of LTAP courses offered in the region. Staff attempts to take advantage of every available opportunity to adequately spread the message about LTAP services and benefits.

The marketing events and communication methods are essential for achieving healthy class attendance, and to encourage municipalities to make use of other available LTAP services. Contact information for municipal officials is constantly updated by coordinating with PennDOT Districts, individual municipalities, county township associations, and PSATS to ensure that municipalities are easily accessing LTAP news.

- **County Conventions**

SEDA-COG staff attended six (6) County Conventions of Township Officials Associations during FY 2018-2019. A table display containing LTAP information, brochures, course descriptions, upcoming class listings, newsletter articles, pencils, pens, laptop with PowerPoint presentation loop, mapping, surveys, Local Safe Roads/Walkable Communities information, and business cards was manned by staff in the exhibitor areas of the meeting spaces. Other miscellaneous and timely handouts were also included, such as PennDOT ePermitting System flyers, Green Light-Go Program summaries, Multimodal Fund summaries, travel needs survey postcards, land use training workshop flyers, Local Government Bridge Funding Handbooks, and PA One Call fall workshop listings. Staff spoke with individuals touring the exhibit area, before and after the business meeting, about municipal needs, the benefits of LTAP, future classes, and SEDA-COG's role in partnering with PennDOT on LTAP. An LTAP advertisement with SEDA-COG contact information was placed in the program booklets for the Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union County Conventions. An LTAP hat was donated as a door prize at conventions attended.

- **LTAP Update Newsletter**

SEDA-COG sent its LTAP Update newsletter to all municipalities in August 2018 and February 2019. Copies were also distributed at county conventions, individual courses, equipment shows, and through displays in SEDA-COG's office lobby. An electronic PDF version was posted to SEDA-COG's website. The newsletter covered LTAP topics such as course schedules, course descriptions, LTAP website use, technical assistance, library materials, local government competitions, new FHWA/PennDOT publications, online tools/applications, and key upcoming events (county conventions, equipment shows, flagger training, webinars, dirt & gravel road workshops, Roadway Management Conference, and PSATS' conference). Internal SEDA-COG staff and an outside vendor were used for the newsletters to create professional looking pieces, automatically print labels, take advantage of bulk mailing rates, and export high-quality PDFs that could be posted to the SEDA-COG website. An electronic newsletter version, prepared using Constant Contact, was also distributed to municipalities for which email addresses were known; this version allowed staff to track addressee email openings (35%) and clicks within newsletter links. Staff also included LTAP news articles and class schedules in SEDA-COG's general agency newsletters, and state legislators often run the SEDA-COG LTAP training notices in their newsletters.



- **Courses**

The primary means of communication with municipalities involved hardcopy and e-newsletter transmittal of the course listings in the LTAP Update newsletters, along with regular e-mailing of the individual course announcement flyers and class reminders to over 300 contacts. The course names, descriptions, intended audience, training dates, and locations were included in this correspondence. The initial class notifications were made approximately one month in advance of the training dates, with reminder notices sent approximately two weeks ahead of class dates, depending on the registration numbers. Staff uses Microsoft Word email message mail merge capabilities in order to personalize course notification emails to municipalities, to avoid revealing email addresses to other parties, to improve formatting, and to make email correspondence more efficient and reliable.



Targeted telephone calls were made to certain municipalities based on staff's familiarity with conditions in those municipalities or past interest expressed about specific courses. Staff also relied on postcards and other handouts to spread the word about LTAP classes. In addition, course listings were placed on the SEDA-COG transportation website, along with other updates or LTAP-related events. Staff worked with the SEDA-COG Communications Manager to issue LTAP class news releases and place information on the agency's main website, Facebook, and Twitter pages. An LTAP 2018 Year-in-Review press release highlighted class/tech assist totals for the area and recognized the municipality that sent the largest number of attendees to LTAP training; this press release also included dates for early 2019 classes and was published by area newspapers. Finally, the Centre County MPO placed area LTAP training events on its main webpage and promoted them on its Facebook site.

- **Equipment Shows**

SEDA-COG staff attended the West Branch Council of Governments' Equipment Show held on May 22, 2019, at the Lycoming County Fairgrounds in Hughesville. Several hundred attendees from throughout the SEDA-COG, Lycoming County, and Northern Tier areas participated in this event. SEDA-COG staffed an LTAP table display throughout the entire show, sharing LTAP information and answering questions that municipal officials had on various transportation issues. The tabletop display's Velcro foam board pieces included recent Tech Sheet cover pages, LTAP newsletter cover pages, Roads Scholar info, LTAP website screenshot, etc. Several items were given away at the booth, including course descriptions, class flyers, survey forms, LTAP Tech Assist brochures, Roads Scholar brochures, Walkable Communities brochures, newsletter articles, recent Tech Sheet excerpts, pens, pencils, notepads, SEDA-COG brochures, PennDOT Community & Local Government Assistance flyer, Local



Government Bridge Funding Handbook, grant program solicitations, and more. An LTAP hat was donated as a door prize. To better market LTAP for regional participants, staff exhibited along with the Lycoming County Transportation Planner at the LTAP booth.

- **PennDOT Communication**

SEDA-COG staff communicated with PennDOT Central Office, District 2-0 and 3-0 Municipal Services, PSATS, and local LTAP Advisory Committee members, as needed, to review and discuss key LTAP issues: training, outreach, administration, and expansion of services. Staff regularly interacted with the PennDOT LTAP Program Director via phone and e-mail to provide updates and seek information. Coordination with the District Municipal Services Supervisors and Specialists was used to increase municipalities' exposure to LTAP, increase class registrations, request data, and learn more about local transportation concerns. Consistent with prior SEDA-COG requests, the LTAP Moving Forward newsletter and Tech Sheets are now distributed to all Planning Partners, keeping the MPOs/RPOs up-to-date without having to look for this on the website. Staff also requested and reviewed the LTAP Contract Year Evaluation Reports to gauge how well the program meets the needs of participants statewide.

- **Reaching Non-Responders**

Staff prepared region-wide mapping that represented municipal participation in LTAP training and Tech Assists between 2015 and 2018. This mapping was displayed at the fall County Conventions in order to target outreach efforts with those municipalities that haven't participated over the prior three years. Conversations during County Conventions were used to determine why non-responders haven't utilized LTAP services and trumpet the advantages of getting involved. Story maps may be developed in the future to promote LTAP benefits.

- **Build a Better Mousetrap Competition**

Staff promoted the 2019 PennDOT LTAP Build a Better Mousetrap Competition (part of a national contest that looks for innovative public works solutions) to area municipalities and added PennDOT LTAP guidelines/entry forms to the SEDA-COG LTAP website. Zero municipalities from the SEDA-COG region submitted entries during 2018, but staff made use of Constant Contact to track activity related to the Mousetrap promotional email sent to municipalities (29% of the 343 addressees opened the email). More outreach will occur during 2020 to encourage innovative gadgets or improved ways to do transportation jobs as submissions from area municipalities.

- **Partnerships and Cross-Promotion**

SEDA-COG staff continued and expanded working partnerships with many organizations to more widely promote LTAP during 2018-2019, including:

- PennDOT Central Office
- PennDOT Engineering Districts 2-0 and 3-0
- Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS)

- Instructors from Pennoni Associates and other firms
- SEDA-COG Municipalities
- Other MPOs/RPOs: Williamsport, Centre County, Northern Tier, NEPA, etc.
- County Associations of Township Officials
- LTAP Advisory Committee
- County Planning Directors
- Councils of Government
- Pennsylvania Governor’s Center for Local Government Services
- Penn State Cooperative Extension Offices
- Pennsylvania Division of the Federal Highway Administration
- Pennsylvania State Transportation Innovation Council (STIC)
- Regional News Media
- National LTAP Association
- National Safety Training Providers
- Equipment Vendors and Consulting Engineers
- Educational Institutions
- County Conservation Districts
- Governor’s Regional Offices
- Pennsylvania Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies
- Pennsylvania State Police
- Pennsylvania One Call System

• **Other Events & Activities**

1. LTAP Planning Partners Meeting – Staff attended the meeting of statewide LTAP Planning Partners on September 19, 2018. This event provided the partners an opportunity to receive a variety of LTAP updates, learn about best practices in other areas, and propose recommendations to improve training and communication.
2. Planning Partners Meetings – Staff attended various meetings throughout the year with other PennDOT Planning Partners. These meetings provide an opportunity to also learn about LTAP activities, experiences, and suggestions from other planning regions.
3. PSATS’ Educational Conference & Trade Show – Staff attended the annual PSATS Conference held at the Hershey Lodge in April 2019. As usual, there were numerous chances to interact with municipalities from the region and establish new contacts with local officials and training providers. Staff volunteered to help man the LTAP booth in the exhibit hall. Staff also moderated conference workshops called “ABCs of Liquid Fuels Tax Funds” and “Pavement Management for Local Government.”
4. SEDA-COG MPO Meetings – Staff regularly shared LTAP updates during SEDA-COG MPO meetings, which are held 6 times per year. LTAP services are also mentioned during updates at SEDA-COG Board of Directors meetings.
5. LTAP Advisory Committee – Since 2011, the SEDA-COG LTAP Coordinator has been attending LTAP Advisory Committee meetings to help direct LTAP activities and to

relay pertinent information to the other Planning Partners. During FY 2018-19, staff attended the October 2018 and March 2019 Advisory Committee meetings. Participation in the Advisory Committee results in key LTAP updates, valuable input from committee members located across the state, and tours of innovative project sites or technology demonstrations. SEDA-COG staff also served on the Build a Better Mousetrap Selection Subcommittee and helped reach consensus on the winners at the March 2019 Advisory Committee meeting.

6. Councils of Government Meetings – Staff contacted the Central Susquehanna COG to get on the agenda and delivered a presentation about LTAP at the CSCOG’s October 2018 meeting. The presentation to the Central Susquehanna COG covered the wide range of services available through LTAP. Various handouts (class flyers, class survey forms, LTAP brochures) were distributed to the municipal attendees. Verbal announcements on related programs and training were also provided to the local government representatives. Staff will attempt to market LTAP at future meetings of area COGs.

### **Program Success Stories**

Municipal officials are predominantly aware of LTAP services and continue to take advantage of LTAP training in sizable numbers. They look to SEDA-COG staff for assistance in meeting their roadway maintenance and safety needs. SEDA-COG again sponsored a substantial number of LTAP class offerings in 2018-2019. This produced acceptable attendance figures, and transferred sound maintenance and safety practices. SEDA-COG was successful in recruiting non-responding municipalities by offering LTAP courses in convenient locations, using new venues across the region, and promoting related workshops or webinars to accommodate clients in efficient ways. We had great success in keeping other officials coming back to classes, drawing interest in newly available courses, and attracting non-typical LTAP students (e.g., those from the planning profession, law enforcement, municipal administration, and academia). SEDA-COG effectively responded to municipal training needs by arranging requested courses in a timely manner.

Throughout 2018-2019, SEDA-COG also actively promoted LTAP training held in Lycoming County. These classes were included in SEDA-COG’s LTAP Update newsletter, flyers sent to municipalities, and on SEDA-COG’s website. As a result, municipalities from the SEDA-COG region (particularly in Clinton County) participated in training held in Lycoming County. This ensured a wider reach for Lycoming County classes and convenience for municipalities in adjacent counties. SEDA-COG also included other MPOs/RPOs (Southern Alleghenies, Northern Tier, and NEPA) on its hard copy LTAP newsletter mailings in FY 2018-19. Likewise, when SEDA-COG received training needs surveys or interest from municipalities abutting other Planning Partners, other LTAP Coordinators were notified for consideration when scheduling their courses.

The Tech Assists totals for 2018-2019 were much higher than during the prior fiscal year, and several of the completed Tech Assists were more complex and time-intensive than mere phone assists or sharing of library resources. These included performing a traffic study necessary for establishing speed limits in Beech Creek Borough, analyzing possible rectangular rapid flashing

beacons at pedestrian crossings in Selinsgrove Borough, studying crosswalk locations for illuminated pedestrian warning signs in Walker Township, evaluating several intersections for proper sight distance and possible multiway stop installation in Bald Eagle Township, reviewing an existing undersized bridge as a candidate replacement using GRS or aluminum plate arch bridge design in Turbot Township, conducting traffic counts in Boggs Township to support grant applications, recommending pavement management treatments for multiple roads in Union Township, and evaluating traffic calming options in Unionville Borough. Beyond the marketing of Tech Assist services, staff played a more integral role in several visits or assistance, helping officials to log requests or having LTAP experts enter them and respond to the inquirers.

Staff continued to recommend municipal officials consider requesting LTAP Tech Assists to aid potential applications for various transportation grant programs. For instance, municipalities were encouraged to get LTAP expert advice and safety recommendations for problems being considered for ARLE Transportation Enhancements Grant funding. In particular, the ranking criteria benefit and list of low-cost improvement options to draw upon from Local Safe Road/Walkable Communities Program assessments were highlighted. Likewise, municipalities were notified that LTAP Tech Assists could benefit applications for Transportation Alternatives, Multimodal Transportation Fund, Green Light-Go Program, and Dirt, Gravel, Low Volume Road Program funding rounds.

Related to other technical assistance and resources, staff continued promoting LTAP's role in educating municipal officials via online videos and webinars, forwarding announcements and flyers to municipalities in the region. Municipalities were encouraged to consider how they might take advantage of these webinars and a variety of other PennDOT/FHWA resources throughout FY 18-19, including:

- PennDOT LTAP Speed Limits on Local Roads Webinar.
- PennDOT LTAP Stop Signs and Intersection Traffic Control Webinar.
- PennDOT LTAP Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool Webinar.
- PennDOT LTAP Safe Transportation for Every Pedestrian Webinar.
- PennDOT LTAP Truck Restrictions Webinar.
- 2019 Municipal Road Maintenance and Safety Symposium during PSATS Conference.
- PennDOT Automated Red Light Enforcement Transportation Enhancements Grants.
- PennDOT's PA Posted Roads website.
- PennDOT's online Flagger Training modules.
- PennDOT's online Intro to Traffic Signals in Pennsylvania Course modules.
- PennDOT's Local Scour Critical Bridges website.
- PennDOT Community & Local Government Assistance brochure.
- FHWA guidance document on Maintaining Traffic Sign Retroreflectivity.
- FHWA Roadway Safety Data and Analysis Toolbox.

### **Opportunities for 2019 and beyond**

The SEDA-COG MPO covers an extensive area with many, diverse municipalities, and it is difficult to hold classes close to every county. The biggest challenge is getting the non-responding municipalities in the region to attend classes. New venues and training needs will be

investigated to increase participation by the non-responders. For those with travel limitations in getting to routinely used LTAP class sites, the road show option will be highlighted. To be more efficient with municipal employees dedicating time away from maintenance activities, consideration will be given to combining ½ day classes and running them back-to-back on the same day instead of spreading them across multiple days. However, it seems that municipalities favor ½ day classes to limit time away from daily workloads, and instructors note that student attention and dialogue often wane during the afternoon hours of full day classes.

If road shows cannot secure enough attendees, staff will consider working to facilitate multi-municipal Tech Assists or more personalized training sessions. Staff will also strive to avoid months when municipalities seem to be more constrained for training time allowance. Because many municipal employees are frequent users of LTAP training, SEDA-COG will work to encourage these individuals to pursue Roads Scholar certification. Since many road crew employees are nearing retirement and turnover is a constant, SEDA-COG staff will continue to focus on creating new LTAP user accounts. SEDA-COG will also investigate holding evening classes for elected officials with daytime jobs.

Another area of opportunity is technical assistance. SEDA-COG staff will continue to periodically monitor Tech Assist requests via the LTAP website, but we are interested in an announcement being generated through the website or by the assigned LTAP expert to get notified when municipalities in our planning region request Tech Assists, primarily for ones involving site visits. Where feasible, we'd strive to participate in the Tech Assist field visits and add value to the process. Likewise, some of the Tech Assists might reveal issues that we should be aware of due to our regional transportation planning and programming role. Our participation in, or review of, the Tech Assist recommendations could improve our coordination with local officials, spur implementation, provide funding assistance, or identify training needs to be met through LTAP or other transportation programs.



Staff will continue to extensively promote the technical assistance available through LTAP at upcoming county conventions and in future municipal mailings. We will also encourage municipalities to request field visit technical assistance services during the days that instructors are teaching, where feasible, to maximize the time of all parties involved.

Some disengaged municipalities will be hard to reach or attract to LTAP services, but fresh ideas should be pursued and incorporated into the program. Examples may include recognizing local officials that use LTAP services in marketing pieces and newsletters, identifying time and cost savings realized through LTAP participation, developing core curriculum for educating new municipal secretaries on a range of issues, etc. With more focus on time and travel savings, the trend toward online government training modules and videos deserves even more attention. Short demonstration videos could be downloaded by municipalities and reviewed at their leisure, with Tech Assists still provided for clarity and more comprehensive attention than is practical for online videos.

To supplement the normal LTAP class offerings, SEDA-COG remains interested in helping to coordinate Equipment Operator Training during future years. It is anticipated that an Equipment Operator Training (EOT) class would be hosted at Pennsylvania College of Technology's River Property Training Site. Staff will work closely with the Penn College faculty to design future courses and consider recommendations from students that attended the session held in April 2019. Due to the successes of the session that SEDA-COG sponsored for local government employees, adjacent planning partners are also looking to contract with Penn College for Equipment Operator Training. Although the hands-on EOT can only accommodate a limited number of individuals (10 people), the benefits for new and less experienced employees are significant.



Since local governments continue to contact staff about flagger training options, SEDA-COG will comprehensively market the PSATS classroom flagger training and web-based flagger training modules developed by PennDOT, along with free flagger training available through the Moshannon Valley COG Equipment Show. In addition, SEDA-COG would like to continue widening the reach of LTAP training by attracting nontraditional users (i.e., planners, law enforcement, managers, and engineers). SEDA-COG is always interested in new LTAP and MOU class offerings to help engage new LTAP students and bring back students that have already taken the majority of existing LTAP maintenance & safety classes.

To draw out more students and fill some local government training voids, SEDA-COG proposes that the following be considered for future PennDOT LTAP or MOU class offerings:

- Crash Investigation & Reporting
- Complete Streets
- Construction Inspection (basic understanding of process and legal issues)
- Green Infrastructure
- Local Project Delivery
- Access Management/Traffic Impact Studies/Highway Occupancy Permits
- Proper Streetlight Maintenance and LED Streetlight Options
- Understanding the Bidding Process
- Dealing with the Public

In terms of ideas for new PennDOT LTAP Tech Sheets to address local government road safety and maintenance education needs, SEDA-COG proposes the following:

- Performing Manual Traffic Counts
- Capital Plans for Roads & Bridges
- Joint Equipment Purchasing
- Utility Lines & Gas Pipe Boring

Staff continues to receive municipal interest in PA One Call training and cooperates with the PA One Call System, Inc. to schedule and market the Locator and Excavator workshops. As PA One Call information is only briefly touched on in LTAP training, staff will continue to coordinate with the PA One Call System to request holding future Excavator/Locator training sessions at appropriate venues in the SEDA-COG region. Staff is also interested in seeing PennDOT/PSATS/STIC analyze possibilities for future culvert installation workshops through LTAP or other means. Training and actual hands-on installation of culverts might be organized, whereby adjacent municipal officials are recruited as free labor and trained for installing their own structures. The municipal participants could, for example, bolt together CMP arch culverts, which may require a couple of days and numerous helping hands. This is an interesting concept that could elicit savings for municipalities similar to what PennDOT realizes through Department Force culvert work. SEDA-COG is interested in seeing this type of training/demo come together in our region, and would be willing to discuss it with PennDOT/PSATS/instructors. It might also be something for the State Transportation Innovation Council to consider for future Local Government Innovation Days.

Staff will continue to monitor Marcellus Shale and other issues confronting the region's municipalities in order to offer training and solutions before major problems occur. Staff will further coordinate with local officials on posting & bonding classes, sample ordinances or agreements, revised publications and training modules, and new websites. Staff will strive to update mapping of municipalities that have adopted posting & bonding ordinances and compare this to Marcellus Shale well permits, so that municipalities can be targeted for LTAP classes and the most appropriate training venues are used. Staff may also reach out to municipalities about pursuing consolidated (multi-municipal) administration of posting and bonding procedures to lessen burdens for municipalities with limited capacities to perform these duties.



As Federal legislation continues to emphasize performance measures and cost-benefit analysis for transportation programs, SEDA-COG is very interested in the steps that PennDOT/PSATS are taking to evaluate the effectiveness of LTAP services. Staff would like to regularly receive the LTAP Quarterly or Contract Year Evaluation Reports. This will allow staff to better grasp how municipalities are applying training class principles, and to determine what positive changes have resulted from their participation in training or Tech Assists. Receiving the evaluation reports will enable staff to assess the benefits from training/tech assists, monitor regional LTAP performance measures, and consider changes for strategies in SEDA-COG's Long Range Transportation Plan. Having the evaluation details will also support efforts to better communicate the value of LTAP, especially to new local elected officials and employees. In spreading this message, municipalities will be encouraged to develop their own local asset management systems or local road safety improvement plans. Staff is interested in receiving photographs from LTAP Tech Assist site visits to build a photo library and use these visuals in future regional marketing materials that highlight the benefits of using these services.

SEDA-COG sees an opportunity to advance the implementation of transportation system technology and multi-modal planning in the municipal arena. Management systems are critical for understanding assets, preserving information during high employee turnover, meeting

legislative goals, and justifying funding requests. Staff has been partnering and contracting with PennDOT recently to collect local bridge and roadway data. Staff looks forward to cooperating with the municipalities and generating valuable data that they will be able to access through Internet applications or freeware. Other transportation inventory or assessment templates could possibly be generated through LTAP and made available for free to municipalities. Perhaps PennDOT LTAP could also acquire additional equipment for loaning out to local governments and training them in proper usage: more automated traffic recorders, retroreflectometers, ball-bank indicators, safety edge plates, etc.

Staff may research some additional GIS tools for possible transportation asset management workshops, or seek to arrange other technology or product demonstration showcases for municipalities in the region. These demonstrations could include prefabricated or structural plate bridge systems, vehicle-mounted pavement management equipment, adaptive traffic signals, Safety Edge, high friction surfaces, etc. Staff will also work to further promote the Geosynthetic Reinforced Soil-Integrated Bridge System option to local governments. Other innovations such as timber slab span bridges, dust palliatives, and trenchless pipe rehabilitation will be marketed, as appropriate. Staff encourages PennDOT LTAP to consider offering webinars or video tech sheets for new innovations that are added to PennDOT Pub 447 – Approved Products for Lower Volume Local Roads.



Finally, SEDA-COG will continue to partner with PennDOT and other affiliates on pedestrian and bicycling audits, as feasible. SEDA-COG, like PennDOT, regularly hears from area residents about bicycling and pedestrian facility needs, so staff will encourage consideration of Walkable Communities Program audits or other Tech Assists through LTAP to identify issues and recommend improvements. SEDA-COG supports the continuation and expansion of using highway safety program set aside funds for physical improvements recommended in completed Walkable Communities/Local Safe Roads Program reports. Staff will seek ways to have more municipalities get involved to better address safety for pedestrians and bicyclists living in or traveling through the region, plus benefit public, economic, and environmental well-being. Similarly, staff will participate in PennDOT Connects meetings, training, and technical assistance to integrate municipal concerns related to bike/ped, safety, stormwater and other issues. These concerns will be routed through the TIP project development process to enhance local engagement and improve transportation-project planning, design, and delivery.