

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

VALERIE A. ARKOOSH, MD, MPH, CHAIR  
KENNETH E. LAWRENCE, JR., VICE CHAIR  
JOSEPH C. GALE



**ASSETS AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COURTHOUSE • PO Box 311  
NORRISTOWN, PA 19404-0311

610-278-3029  
WWW.MONTCOPA.ORG

TOM BONNER  
DIRECTOR

**Butler Pike Road Closure  
(between Flourtown/Plymouth Roads and Germantown Pike)**  
*Update 4/18/2019*

Additional sinkholes have developed recently near where a previous sinkhole caused the closure of Butler Pike. The new sinkholes, combined with a widespread issue with sinkholes in the general vicinity, has made it unsafe to reopen the road anytime in the immediate future.

Montgomery County, in consultation with Whitemarsh and Plymouth townships, and representatives of Norfolk Southern, Texas Eastern Gas Pipeline, PECO, Verizon and the Whitemarsh Authority, has determined that reopening the roadway without conducting a full design plan and performing permanent repairs could compromise public safety.

Butler Pike was closed in August 2018 after a large sinkhole developed between Flourtown/Plymouth Roads and Germantown Pike near an active Norfolk Southern railroad bridge that crosses over the road.

Emergency repairs were undertaken immediately to stabilize the ground beneath the roadway and succeeded in stabilizing the washout area. Natural gas, electric, and telecommunication utilities that run underground through the area were also stabilized, preventing further hazardous damage to the utility pathways.

As soon as emergency repairs were complete, Montgomery County hired GZA GeoEnvironmental Inc., a geotechnical engineering firm, to perform an analysis and determine whether the roadway could be safely reopened to traffic while plans for a permanent solution were developed and implemented.

GZA GeoEnvironmental determined that with additional work to stabilize the area, it would be possible to safely reopen Butler Pike while design and implementation of permanent repairs was underway.

Those temporary repairs to stabilize the immediate area were undertaken and near completion when a new sinkhole appeared nearby on April 12<sup>th</sup>. There has also been other, smaller sinkhole activity in the vicinity.

In addition to the Norfolk Southern rail bridge, Texas Eastern Gas Pipeline operates high pressure natural gas transmission lines, PECO has power lines, Verizon has telecommunications lines and the Whitemarsh Authority has a sanitary sewer line that all cross the roadway at that location.

Officials from Montgomery County, Whitemarsh and Plymouth townships met Wednesday with representatives of Texas Eastern, Norfolk Southern, PECO and Verizon. The procedures necessary to maintain the safety of those utilities while excavation and construction are underway are extensive.

Based on those discussions, county and the townships officials concluded that given all of the complicating factors, the need to protect public safety precludes temporarily reopening Butler Pike to traffic.

The overall design process is expected to take eighteen months before work on the permanent road reconstruction can begin.

We will continue to provide status updates to Whitemarsh and Plymouth townships and residents as we work to re-open the road and make the permanent repairs.