

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
BUSINESS MEETING
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
OCTOBER 7, 2021



CALL TO ORDER:

The business meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was called to order on Microsoft Teams at 1:02 p.m. on October 7, 2021.

Please note that these minutes are not intended to capture every individual comment, but rather to identify critical discussion points and highlights of the TAC business meetings.

CHAIR'S REMARKS:

TAC Chair, Ms. Jody Holton, AICP, gave brief remarks welcoming TAC members to the meeting.

Ms. Holton reminded attendees that all TAC meetings are recorded for minute taking purposes.

Ms. Holton congratulated Ms. Karina Ricks on her new position with the Federal Transit Administration.

MINUTES:

ON A MOTION by Ms. Brenda Sandberg and seconded by Mr. Ashley Porter, and unanimously approved, the Minutes of the July 15, 2021 TAC Business Meeting were accepted.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

SECRETARY'S REMARKS:

Secretary Yassmin Gramian was unable to attend the meeting.

WORKING SESSION:

2021 Study Update:

Public Transit Demand and Post-Pandemic Mobility Planning and Address Economic Disparities in Rural PA by Increasing Transportation Options

Mr. Aarion Franklin from Michael Baker International briefed the TAC on the study progress. He highlighted the literature review task, which focused on:

- Pennsylvania COVID-19 Impacts

- Previous Public Health Crises Impacts
- Public Transportation Demand Influences
- Pandemic Related Demographic and Commuting Trends
- Thoughts about how to Regain Ridership
- Economic Impacts from Shocks to the Transportation System
- Planning for Mobility Best Practices
- Fare Policies
- Other Recent and Concurrent Research Efforts

Mr. Franklin discussed the gaps in the literature that the study team will address. Some gaps include:

- What does the future of workplace commutes look like for the next 5 to 10 years?
- How has the pandemic impacted traditional thoughts on transit fare elasticity / how much are customers willing to pay?
- Do the existing FTA formula grants work at lower ridership levels? What impacts will this have on the existing services offered by transit agencies?
- Do the current transit funding opportunities fund the level of service necessary for rural areas?
- Will rural areas receive the necessary level of investment to support the workplace of the future?
- How do the existing FTA formula grants influence transit agencies to balance ridership over equity?

Mr. Franklin explained that the study team will start working on developing a survey that will go out to stakeholders. He added that the questionnaire will be tailored to address the gaps in the literature.

Mr. Ritchie asked about the estimated completion date of the study.

Mr. Franklin answered that the study should be completed by July 2022.

2021 Study Topic Identification

The TAC continues to work on identifying the next study topics. Mr. Brian Funkhouser of Michael Baker International discussed the proposed scopes of work for the two topics previously approved by the TAC:

Demand for Alternate Uses of State Right-of-Way and Importance of and Funding for Pedestrian Networks

Mr. Brian Funkhouser explained that TAC had previously voted to combine the two topics into one study but throughout the scoping process, it became clear that the two topics would be better served as standalone studies.

Mr. Funkhouser gave brief backgrounds for both topics and the proposed options to move the *Alternate Use of the ROW* topic forward, including:

1. Address as part of TAC's current Post-pandemic study.
2. Form an ad hoc committee to address the issue.
3. Address outside of TAC.
4. Defer to 2022 for TAC action.

The TAC discussed the options.

Mr. Murawski commented that the option to form an ad hoc committee to address the issue would be the best option.

Mr. Wagenmann and Mr. Pocius commented that TAC members should be part of the ad hoc committee.

Ms. Holton asked if anyone from the TAC would like to chair the committee.

Mr. Wagenmann volunteered to chair the committee.

Ms. Holton said that TAC will continue to add members who want to participate in the ad hoc committee.

Mr. Funkhouser said that the study team will also continue scoping work for the standalone Pedestrian Network Funding study.

ON A MOTION by Mr. Mark Murawski and seconded by Mr. John Kashatus, and unanimously approved, the Ad hoc committee to address the Alternate Use of ROW was created.

Ad Hoc Transportation Impact Fees Committee

Mr. Brian Funkhouser briefed the TAC on the progress of the Transportation Impact Fees Committee. Mr. Funkhouser gave a brief background about the Committee's creation and the specific topics it is addressing including:

- Act 209 of 1990 – Transportation Impact Fees
- Official Maps
- Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP) process
- Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) provisions
- Roles of MPOs, Counties, and PennDOT District Planners

Mr. Funkhouser noted that a kick-off meeting was held on September 22, 2021. The remaining steps of the study include:

- Issue Identification
- Interviews with Subject Matter Experts
- Committee review of findings
- Recommendation to full TAC December 2, 2021

- Presentation to STC December 15, 2021

Mr. Murawski commented about the Transportation Impacts Fees map and the need to amend Act 209 or the Municipal Planning Code to address the current issues.

Mr. Wagenmann commented that as part of the Highway Occupancy Permit process PennDOT requires other improvements to be made, and then the developers try to take those improvements and use them as credits to utilize the fees. He added that they're supposed to be paying based on the projects that are within the study that was done.

Ms. Holton commented about the Highway Occupancy Permit process and the transportation impact fee districts.

PENNSYLVANIA LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND FREIGHT MOVEMENT PLAN: By Brian Funkhouser and Keith Chase.

Mr. Brian Funkhouser from Michael Baker International and Mr. Keith Chase from Gannett Fleming briefed the TAC on the update for Pennsylvania's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Freight Movement Plan (FMP).

Mr. Funkhouser highlighted the core themes of Leadership Interviews:

- Land Use: Achieving major advances to improve the land use-transportation connection.
- Implementation and Performance: Producing a plan that is implementable with accountability and value-adding for decision-making and strengthen linkage between planning, programming, and performance measurement.
- State Transportation Commission: Increasing STC involvement in guiding program development.
- Districts and Regional Organizations: Enhancing involvement of PennDOT Districts in plan development and implementation and better integration of statewide and regional planning efforts.
- Technology: Preparing for future impacts of emerging technologies on our transportation system.
- User Friendly: Ensuring the full suite of plan products is user friendly, accessible, and value-adding for both internal and external purposes.
- Asset Management: Asset management is a major focus and key principle in plan development.
- Stakeholder Engagement: Developing and implementing Plans with an interagency and intergovernmental focus, as well as involvement with other varied stakeholders

Mr. Funkhouser reiterated the emphasis on integrating transportation planning, programming, and performance measurement throughout the development of the two Plans. He explained how both the LRTP, and the FMP relate to the 12-Year Program and the Transportation Performance Report (TPR).

Mr. Funkhouser discussed the LRTP and the FMP goals including:

LRTP Goals

- Safety: Enhance safety and security throughout Pennsylvania’s transportation system
- Mobility: Strengthen transportation mobility to meet the increasingly dynamic needs of Pennsylvania residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Equity: Improve transportation access and equity throughout the Commonwealth.
- Resilience: Promote Pennsylvania transportation’s resilience to climate change and other risks and reduce transportation’s environmental impacts.
- Performance: Improve the condition and performance of transportation assets.
- Resources: Structure transportation funding and finance approaches that allocate sufficient resources for system improvement, maintenance, and preservation.

FMP Goals

- Align freight mobility with economic development and land use.
- Advance project investments that enhance freight mobility.
- Provide planning, data and analytical tools for improved decision making.
- Improve multimodal freight transportation operations and safety.

Mr. Funkhouser discussed the Transportation Data Repository, which will serve as a resource toolbox for planning and programming.

Mr. Funkhouser explained the different stakeholder engagement for both Plans including:

LRTP

- Leadership: STC, TAC, PTC, and FHWA
- Department In-Reach
- Planning Catalyst Team
- Local Government Associations
- State Planning Board
- Governor’s Affinity Groups
- PA Public Transportation Association

FMP

- Statewide Virtual Freight Forum
- Freight Focus Groups
- Freight Work Group (FWG)
- Freight Plan Advisory Group (FPAG)
- Department In-Reach
- DVRPC and SPC Freight Committees
- Motor Carrier Safety Advisory Committee

Mr. Keith Chase discussed the implementation approach to the Plans. He noted that the new iterations of the Plans have focused on making the Plans easy to implement.

Mr. Chase also discussed the Strategic Actions and Initiatives, which were initiated by the Department in-reach and continued through the stakeholder reviews, the refinement of gap closure, the internal communication, and the implementation process.

For the implementation reporting, Mr. Chase highlighted:

- Performance Measurement through the Transportation Performance Report (TPR)
- Program Management Committee (PMC) Progress Reporting (2x per year)
- STC Update (Annually)
- Periodic External Updates

Mr. Chase mentioned the draft Action Plan Tracker, which will track the status of key action plans throughout the implementation process.

Mr. Funkhouser concluded the update discussing the next steps, which include:

- Public Comment Period Opened (September 20)
- Public Comment Period Closes (October 19)
- Plan Refinement and Finalization (November)
- Strategic Actions and Initiatives Completion, Plan Adoption and Rollout, STC Presentation (December)
- Implementation Begins (January 2022)

Mr. Ritchie asked what PennDOT is planning for alternative fuel corridors; and if PennDOT is receiving comments from the public in regard to alternative fuel corridors.

Mr. Ritchie also asked if the study team is receiving feedback or will receive feedback on whether EV charging stations are allowed along the Interstate at rest areas.

Ms. Batula answered that EV charging stations are allowed in rest areas but PennDOT can't charge a fee for them because of the restrictions on commercial activities in rest areas. This will have to be at no cost to the user due to these restrictions, which comes at a cost to the Department.

Ms. Batula also said that PennDOT fully expects the federal bills to be supportive of the alternative fuel corridors. She noted that she is not sure that the Department has done any specific public outreach, but it has been working with different stakeholders.

PA Department of Transportation Update:

Executive Deputy Secretary

Ms. Melissa Batula, PE, Executive Deputy Secretary, gave an update about the PennDOT Pathways program, the Transportation Revenue Options Commission, and the P3 Major Bridge Project.

Ms. Batula noted that the Planning and Environmental Linkage document for the Pathways program is in final review status with the Federal Highway administration. She added that the review is expected to be completed by the end of the month.

Ms. Batula explained that one of the main components of the Pathways Program is the Major Bridge P3 initiative. She said that the Department is wrapping up the diversion study workshops.

Ms. Batula said that through the workshops, the Department is meeting with those that live and work in those communities near the proposed projects to understand, from their perspective, traffic movements so that they can be captured accurately in the model.

Ms. Batula explained that part of the modeling process is to assess the impact that toll rates can have on disadvantaged groups or communities and how to remedy them.

Ms. Batula said that the Public outreach with communities for each of the bridges will start in October and run through January which will include one in person public meeting for each bridge.

Ms. Batula added that the Department is currently working thru a Concepts of Operations plan with the PA Turnpike. This is an agreement between the agencies that would allow the Department to use the Turnpike vendors to collect the tolls.

Ms. Batula also discussed the Request for Qualifications that was issued on June 28. She said that Statements of Qualifications were received from four development entity teams and the Department is currently evaluating the information to develop a shortlist of candidate teams to respond to the project Request for Proposal (RFP), scheduled for final issue in January 2022. The team chosen as the Development Entity will then work collaboratively with PennDOT to develop the optimum number of bridge packages.

Ms. Batula also discussed the TROC report released in August. Ms. Batula explained that the Department is considering how to move forward with some the recommendations. She added that a pilot program based on Senator Langerhole's Drive Smart Plan, an EV mileage-based user fee pilot, would be an opportunity to have a fee structure put in place for electric vehicles and to be able to implement a charge per mile.

Mr. Murawski commented about the outlook on the construction lettings moving forward in 2022 and beyond. He noted that after Act 89 was passed, lettings have increased significantly. He asked if it is possible to reach that level again without the additional revenue.

Ms. Batula answered that without additional revenue, it is not possible.

Mr. Murawski commented that one way to increase lettings program would be a bipartisan agreement to implement some of the revenue generation mechanisms from the TROC recommendations.

Administration and Budget

Ms. Michelle Jennings, Deputy Secretary for Administration, gave a brief report about her Deputate. Ms. Jennings announced that PennDOT employees returned to the office in a phased approach from the COVID-19 pandemic telework status. She explained that the Keystone Building and Riverfront Office Center returned between July 20-22, 2021, and the Engineering District Offices returned to work August 2, 2021. Ms. Jennings said that PennDOT has evaluated all positions for telework eligibility and individual employee suitability. Employees interested in teleworking were able to apply online via Employee Self Service and arrange ad hoc or part-time telework schedules with their supervisors.

Ms. Jennings noted that the Commonwealth has followed suit with the federal government's COVID-19 mitigation mandates. She said that employees working on site are required to be masked indoors. She added that there no mandate for vaccination, instead, the Commonwealth has chosen to pursue employee incentives. An incentive of a day of administrative leave for vaccinated employees has been rolled out but it requires the union representatives to sign off on an agreement.

Ms. Jennings noted that this year, PennDOT needs to fill just under 700 equipment operator positions; about 12% of those positions are filled right now. She said that County maintenance offices and the Engineering Districts are hosting open house events and inviting walk-ins.

Ms. Jennings noted that PennDOT received permission this year to do on-spot interviews for those walk-ins and driving tests for the CDL license holders.

Ms. Jennings also announced that PennDOT is in the final stages of announcing a new executive level position, reporting directly to secretary Gramian to direct the diversity, equity, and inclusion program for the Department. This position will be responsible for identifying internal strategies to impact policies, programs, procedures and educate employees as well as the public and increasing PennDOT's efforts on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Mr. Ritchie asked if there is there still a Director of the Bureau of Equal Opportunity (BEO).

Ms. Jennings answered yes. She added that the new position will work in synergy with the existing Director of the BEO.

Driver and Vehicle Services

Mr. Kurt Myers, Deputy Secretary for Driver and Vehicle Services, provided updates about the Deputate. Mr. Myers explained that Driver and Vehicle Services has played an important support

role in areas that were impacted by Hurricane Ida and are making brochures available for customers who may have experienced a loss of a driver's license, a title, or registration card to assist them in replacing those documents.

Mr. Myers also noted that the DVS is working with the Governor's Office and the Department of Education to help with school bus driver recruitment efforts. He said that as part of that initiative, a letter from the Secretary of Education was mailed to approximately 376,000 CDL holders in the Commonwealth to encourage those who would be seeking employment or a supplemental employment to consider becoming a school bus driver.

Mr. Myers explained that the letter directs interested CDL holders to a survey. The information from the survey would go to the school district, which can contact the individual. He added that in addition to the letter, CDL testing for the 23 sites across the Commonwealth will be expanded for four weeks, starting October 18, 2021.

Mr. Myers discussed Act 131, signed into law by Governor Wolf in December, which took effect September 27, 2021, and established a safe program for eligible individuals to use bi-optic telescope lenses that can help them meet visual acuity standards to qualify for and obtain a driver's license. These bi-optic telescope lenses, with authorized use in at least 46 other states, are designed to help certain individuals who otherwise wouldn't be able to obtain a restricted license. PennDOT has developed the program's training and licensing process and has now implemented the program.

Mr. Myers also discussed the Real ID, which is now set for May 3, 2023, for full implementation by the Department of Homeland Security. Mr. Myers explained the DVS continue to issue 1,500 to 2,000 real IDs every day. He added that approximately 68% of all of customers have made a conscious decision either to opt in for a real ID or to continue with the standard issued driver's license. Another 3.2 million customers are yet to make that decision.

Highway and Bridge Program

Acting Deputy Secretary Mr. Michael Keiser, P.E., gave an update about Highway Administration Deputate.

Mr. Keiser also acknowledged the General Assembly and the Wolf Administration for the additional \$279,000,000 in funding that PennDOT received. The additional funding allows the Department to increase the letting program by \$100,000,000, to about 2 billion dollars, for both the 2021 and 2022 programs.

Mr. Keiser said that the overall Traffic volume has plateaued to 96% compared to 2019, which still represents a \$10 million a month shortfall in revenues for the Motor License Fund.

Mr. Kaiser discussed the Department's efforts to hire CDL operators for winter maintenance.

Mr. Murawski commented about the need to have a bipartisan agreement to implement TROC revenue generation recommendations in order to increase lettings.

Multimodal Transportation

Ms. Jennie Louwerson, AICP, Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation, gave a brief update announcing that the groundbreaking for the Coatesville train station. Ms. Louwerson explained that invitation letters and notifications are going out today. She added that on Friday, October 22, 2021, the TAC chair and STC members will be getting an official notification.

Ms. Louwerson noted that the Middletown train station is almost complete, and she hopes to get it opened next month. She added that there is an extensive list of transit projects that are underway, in construction, or will be going to construction.

Ms. Louwerson also said that there is a lot of anticipation about what the federal infrastructure package will look like and how that ties to the transit agencies, the federal programs, Amtrak service, and all other modes. She added that the Department is slowly working through developing different scenarios.

Ms. Louwerson said that Norfolk Southern completed their study for improving service on the Pennsylvanian from Pittsburgh to New York. The study looked at what it would take to make that happen from a capital perspective. She added that the Department is working with the Governor's Office and the General Assembly to identify potential funding streams to make this happen.

Mr. Strathmeyer asked if the Port of Philadelphia or any other port on the East Coast is experiencing the same long freight wait times as the West Coast.

Ms. Louwerson said that the Commonwealth's ports are not experiencing the same backups that are happening in other ports, but some delays are occurring in the Port of Philadelphia and the Department is working with the Ports to help in any capacity it can.

Ms. Holton commented that the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) is going to hold its in-person conference for intercity passenger rail March 30 through April 2, 2022, in Philadelphia. She said that it was delayed from the prior year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Office of Planning

Deputy Secretary for Planning, Mr. Larry Shifflet, gave a brief update about his Deputate. Mr. Shifflet explained that the one-year extension of the FAST act expired on September 30th at midnight. At that point Congress did not act upon the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) but there was action taken for a short-term continuing resolution over the weekend.

Mr. Shifflet explained that the Senate approved the IIJA, which then moved the legislation to the House of Representatives. Talks continue in the House regarding an agreement on passage of the IIJA.

Mr. Shifflet explained that Pennsylvania currently receives roughly \$1.8 billion in transportation funding under the FAST Act. If the IIJA were to pass, estimates for additional highway and bridge funding for Pennsylvania for the five years include:

- 2022: \$378,000,000.
- 2023: \$421,000,000.
- 2024: \$465,000,000.
- 2025: \$511,000,000.
- 2026: \$557,000,000.

Mr. Shifflet noted that the IIJA has a provision for an Electric Vehicle Charging program and PA could receive approximately \$171.5 million over 5 years.

Mr. Shifflet clarified that not all of the funding PA could receive is new funding. He added that if all the Federal funding is to materialize, the state would also need additional state funding to match those new federal funds.

Mr. Shifflet concluded his update noting that the IIJA does not permanently address the Federal Highway Trust Fund insolvency issue. He added that there is a proposal to transfer funds once again from the General Fund to keep the Highway Trust Fund afloat.

Mr. Hennessey asked about the total of federal funding PA would get from the American Job ACT bill.

Mr. Shifflet explained the totals by year.

Ms. Holton asked for the potential match the State would have to provide.

Mr. Shifflet answered that for a worst-case scenario, it would be 20% of the overall federal funds.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Murawski asked when the 2022 TAC new study identification process will kick off.

Ms. Holton said that may be worth putting it on the agenda for next meeting.

NEXT MEETING:

The next TAC business meeting is scheduled to be held virtually on **Thursday, December 2, 2021.**

ADJOURNMENT:

ON A MOTION by Mr. John Pocius and seconded by Mr. Ronald Wagenmann, and unanimously approved, the TAC meeting was adjourned at 3:08 P.M.

Attendance from the TAC Business Meeting
October 7, 2021

1. Ms. Jody Holton, AICP, Chair
2. Mr. Rodney Bender, alternate for Ms. Gladys Brown Dutrieuille, TAC member
3. Mr. Paul Opiyo, alternate for Mr. Dennis Davin, TAC member
4. Mr. John Kashatus, alternate for Mr. Noe Ortega, TAC member
5. Mr. Fred Strathmeyer, alternate for Mr. Russel Redding, TAC member
6. Mr. Nolan Ritchie, alternate for Senator Wayne Langerholc, TAC member
7. Representative Tim Hennessey, TAC member
8. Mr. Alan Blahovec, CCPM, TAC member
9. Mr. Donald Detwiler, TAC member
10. Mr. Elam Herr, TAC member
11. Mr. Mark Murawski, TAC member
12. Dr. Larry Nulton, TAC member
13. Ms. Brenda Sandberg, TAC member
14. Mr. Ronald Wagenmann, TAC member
15. Mr. Ashley Porter, TAC member
16. Mr. John Pocius, TAC member
17. Ms. Melissa Batula, P.E., PennDOT
18. Ms. Michelle Jennings, PennDOT
19. Ms. Jennie Louwerse, AICP, PennDOT
20. Mr. Michael Keiser, P.E., PennDOT
21. Mr. Kurt Myers, PennDOT
22. Mr. Larry Shifflet, PennDOT
23. Mr. Shane Rice, PennDOT
24. Mr. Abdoul Ahmed, PennDOT
25. Mr. Brian Hare, P.E., PennDOT
26. Ms. Karen Heath, PennDOT
27. Mr. Daniel Keane, PennDOT
28. Mr. Mark Tobin, PennDOT
29. Ms. Jessica Clark, PennDOT
30. Mr. Michael Rimer, PennDOT
31. Mr. Matthew Crea, PennDOT
32. Mr. David Lapadat, PennDOT
33. Ms. Rebecca Oyler, Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association
34. Mr. Ronald Grutza, PA State Association of Boroughs
35. Ms. Samantha Heigel, McCormick Taylor
36. Mr. Brian Funkhouser, Michael Baker Int'l
37. Mr. Aarion Franklin, Michael Baker Int'l
38. Mr. Tyler Burke, Milliron Goodman

39. Mr. Jim Ritzman, Pennoni
40. Mr. Thomas Phelan, P.E., BHX Engineering