

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
BUSINESS MEETING  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA  
FEBRUARY 1, 2021



**CALL TO ORDER:**

The business meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was called to order on Skype for Business at 10:04 a.m. on February 1, 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.*

**MINUTES:**

**ON A MOTION** by Mr. Ronald Wagenmann and seconded by Mr. Ashley Porter, and unanimously approved, the Minutes of the December 3, 2020 TAC Business Meeting were accepted.

**CHAIR'S REMARKS:**

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

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

Ms. Holton announced that Mr. Joel McNeil submitted his notice of resignation from the PA Transportation Advisory Committee. Ms. Holton added that Mr. McNeil has been a committee member for 10 years and he thanks the rest of the committee members for all their hard work and dedication.

Ms. Holton announced that Senator Wayne Langerholc has been appointed to the TAC and is filling Senator Kim Ward's vacancy.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None.

**SECRETARY'S REMARKS:**

Secretary Yassmin Gramian, P.E. welcomed TAC members and guests to the meeting. Secretary Gramian noted that she is pleased with the top two ranked TAC study ideas (Public Transit Demand and Post Pandemic Mobility Planning, Addressing Economic Disparities in Rural Pennsylvania by Increasing Transportation Options). She explained that COVID-19 has severely impacted transit agencies with ridership down across the board.

Secretary Gramian said that even with the funding from the CARES Act, the revenue loss has continued. She emphasized the importance of the transit system for essential workers who, in some areas, depend on it to get to work. Secretary Gramian also noted that the recommendations from this study will be extremely important as we plan for the upcoming budget.

Secretary Gramian also noted that the second ranked TAC study topic is equally important. She believes that equity should be centered at the core of our business, we need to build our new initiatives with purpose, and we need to focus on creating equity in communities through transportation.

Secretary Gramian discussed the funding issues the Department is facing. She explained that due to COVID-19 the Department has lost \$450 million through December 2020. She added that this loss compounds an already existing issue of \$100 million per year decrease in buying power and loss in revenue due to increased vehicle fuel efficiency.

Secretary Gramian added that changes to travel patterns due to COVID-19 had a direct impact on our letting program which was as high as \$2.6 billion in 2017 to \$2.2 billion in 2019. The impacts ultimately resulted in the 2020 letting program at \$1.6 billion.

Secretary Gramian said PennDOT's request for bonding authority was not included in the State's budget. She explained that although the Governor has approved a short-term funding mechanism to continue operations through February 2021, the Department has been working to reduce the construction budget.

Secretary Gramian announced that \$10 billion of federal relief funding will be distributed to States, and PennDOT is expecting to receive \$407 million. She added that the Department is still waiting for more information on how to use to funds.

Secretary Gramian also discussed the Pathways Program, which is looking at various long-term funding solutions. The department will analyze new future-focused sources of funding for our transportation system that could better serve our communities and all Pennsylvanians for the next generation. We are looking into the feasibility of congestion pricing, managed lane concepts, road user charges, corridor tolling and fee tax increases to start to fill in the gap for the highway and bridge program.

Secretary Gramian also stated that the Department started with the major bridge public private partnership initiative. We received approval from the Public Private Partnership (P3) board to initiate this major initiative. This initiative is a design-build-finance, operator maintained, and project delivery program for the replacement of bridges throughout the state that considers user fees as permitted under federal and state laws.

Mr. Murawski asked about the likelihood of Congress passing an infrastructure bill and if so, do you foresee any problems supplying the appropriate state match to capture these federal funds? Secretary Gramian answered that it is unlikely there will be an infrastructure bill soon. She added that conversations about States' struggles to provide matches have occurred, but the CARES Act provided some flexibility on how to use the funds. Mr. Wagenmann asked if the Department is

considering working with local municipalities to bundle bridge projects to save money? Secretary Gramian pointed out that Counties can do that through the \$5 Local Fee, but there is not any specific discussion going on right now about bundling bridge projects.

Mr. Donald Detwiler asked when the Department is going to get some direction from FHWA on how we can spend the COVID Relief Funding. Secretary Gramian stated that FHWA will give us direction within the next two weeks. She noted that the money is here, but we are still waiting for clarification on spending flexibility.

**WORKING SESSION:**

**2021 TRANSPORTATION PERFORMANCE REPORT(TPR): By Brian Funkhouser**

Mr. Brian Funkhouser presented the 2021 iteration of the TPR. Mr. Funkhouser gave an overview of the report noting that it started with the passage of MAP 21 and the FAST Act elevating performance measurement in transportation planning. The first ever Transportation Performance Report started in 2013 and is issued bi-annually. He explained that the report documents the Commonwealth's transportation performance against key measures including: *Safety, Mobility, Preservation, Accountability, and Funding.*

Mr. Funkhouser said that for this year's version of the TPR, a new logo was created, and the report is available in multiple languages. He added that an informational graphic was added to the report to explain the connection between the TPR, Pennsylvania's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and the 12-Year Transportation Program. He also noted that the update to Pennsylvania's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is underway and should be issued later this year.

Mr. Funkhouser discussed the performance and trend indicators of the TPR. He explained that color indicates the performance of a specific measure while the text in the icon indicates the trend of the measure.

Mr. Funkhouser highlighted the performance of the key measures including:

- Safety: Fatalities are the lowest they have ever been.
- Mobility: Data for Public Transportation Ridership in Fiscal Year 2019-20 is not yet available, therefore the pandemic impact on public transportation is not reflected in the TPR.
- Preservation: Poor condition bridge numbers are trending lower.
- Accountability: Drivers and Vehicle Services customer service has remained good.
- Funding: New initiatives to secure long term revenue are ongoing and the impacts of COVID-19 on travel demand and revenue projections remain top priorities.

Mr. Detweiler asked if the TPR is already available to the public.

Mr. Funkhouser said that it will be after the STC's approval.

Mr. Michael Carroll commented that it would be very beneficial to synchronize the release of the TPR with the release of the previous year crash/safety data.

Mr. Funkhouser said that he is not aware of any statutory requirement related to the release of the TPR but he will relay the comment to the Department.

Mr. Nolan Ritchie commented about the funding projections for the 2021-2024 State Transportation Budget.

Mr. Funkhouser said that those were the numbers received from the Bureau of Fiscal Management.

Mr. George McAuley said that the numbers are pre-COVID-19 and will be reevaluated.

Ms. Holton commented that the TPR should be available to a wider audience. She asked if there will be press releases and updates with lawmakers?

Mr. Funkhouser answered yes.

**ON A MOTION** by Mr. John Pocius and seconded by Mr. Ronald Wagenmann the 2021 Transportation Performance Report was unanimously approved.

### **TAC STUDY UPDATES:**

The TAC continues to work on the Utilities in the State Right-of-Way study. Mr. Daniel Keane explained that the draft report will be presented to the TAC at the April meeting. Mr. Keane said that the consulting team received an additional recommendation to include the X-Y-Z information from As-Builts; will incorporate the recommendation and finalize the draft report for review before TAC's next meeting. He also added that the consulting team continues their outreach efforts with various committees including the Municipal Advisory Committee.

### **2021 Study Topic Identification**

The TAC continues to work on identifying the next study topics. Mr. Brian Funkhouser discussed previously submitted study topics.

Mr. Funkhouser presented the results of the survey sent out to rank the study ideas. He noted that the top ranked topics were shared with PennDOT Executives and recommendations were made to the Secretary. The top three ranked topics includes:

- *Public Transit Demand and Post-Pandemic Mobility Planning.*
- *Address Economic Disparities in Rural PA by Increasing Transportation Options.*
- *Demand for Alternate Uses of Right-of-Way (ROW).*

Mr. Alan Blahovec, Dr. Larry Nulton, and Brian Hare briefly discussed the three study topics they submitted.

Ms. Holton announced that Mr. Blahovec and Mr. Nulton will chair the taskforces for the top two study topics.

Mr. Murawski commented that the two studies are linked and would be better if consolidated to address a bigger scope.

The TAC discussed the idea of combining the Public Transit Demand and Post-Pandemic Mobility Planning study topic with the Address Economic Disparities in Rural PA by increasing Transportation Options study topic.

Secretary Gramian commented that combining the two topics would address overlapping issues and allow the consideration of more topics.

Ms. Holton proposed to advance the two first topics with the consideration of combining them in the scoping process.

The TAC voted to move the first two topics to the scoping process. The option to combine the two topics will be discussed at the next TAC meeting in April. Furthermore, the TAC will discuss scoping the 'Demand for Alternative uses of Right-of-Way' with the potential inclusion of the 'Importance of and Funding for Pedestrian Networks' at the April meeting.

**ON A MOTION** by Mr. Mark Murawski and seconded by Mr. Ronald Wagenmann, and unanimously approved, the *Public Transit Demand and Post-Pandemic Mobility Planning* and the *Address Economic Disparities in Rural PA by Increasing Transportation Options* study topics were approved for scoping.

#### **TAC Bylaws and Standard Operating Procedures**

The TAC continues to implement the recommendations and proposed ideas from the Enhanced Communication and Collaboration (ECC) Initiative. Ms. Christi Sabb, from McCormick Taylor presented the Standard Operating Procedures.

Ms. Sabb discussed:

- Organizational Structure
- TAC and PennDOT Management Team Roles and Responsibilities
- Committee Communication
- STC/TAC Portal
- TAC Study Process

Mr. Ritchie commented about adding pictures of actual TAC meeting to the SOP document.

**Follow up: No current pictures were available to address Mr. Ritchie's comment.**

Mr. Ritchie also asked about the type of documents that will be available to the public.

Ms. Sabb answered that meeting minutes are posted on the website ([www.talkpatransportation.com](http://www.talkpatransportation.com)) after they are approved, draft Agendas are not available, however we list the topics to be discussed for each meeting. The TPR, studies, and anything official that has been approved is also available on the website.

Mr. Murawski asked how are meetings advertised?

Ms. Karen Heath answered that meetings are sunshined and published in the PA Bulletin.

Mr. Mark Tobin noted that study taskforce meetings are not advertised.

Ms. Sabb also presented the members portal being developed to improve communication between members and PennDOT staff.

Ms. Holton noted that the portal will be helpful in tracking TAC activities.

**ON A MOTION** by Mr. Elam Herr, and seconded by Ms. Brenda Sandberg, and unanimously approved, the TAC Bylaws and Standard Operating Procedures were approved.

### **PA Department of Transportation Update:**

#### **Executive Deputy Secretary**

Mr. George McAuley, Executive Deputy Secretary, gave a brief report noting that the Department will work with Mr. Funkhouser to revise the funding projections for the TPR.

Mr. McAuley also discussed the PennDOT Pathways program, which he noted is set to provide more sustainable funding solution for the Department.

Mr. McAuley noted that equitable mobility is important to the Department and PennDOT is working to include that in the planning process. He added that PennDOT Connects is a good example of that effort.

#### **Administration and Budget**

Mr. Robert Chiappelli, Deputy Secretary for Administration, gave a brief report about his Deputate. Mr. Chiappelli said that over two-thirds of the Department's workforce is working on-site and the rest are teleworking.

Mr. Chiappelli explained that the Office of Administration is still establishing the foundations for a permanent telework policy to include a management directive.

Mr. Chiappelli said that winter temporary work hiring has started but the Department is behind compared to last year. He noted that as of January 4, 2021, 50% of operator positions are filled compared to last year's 60%. Non-operator positions are filled at 56% compared to last year's 59%.

Mr. Chiappelli also discussed the Grantville Rest Area opening, which is set to happen on February 22, 2021.

Mr. Chiappelli concluded his update noting the fact that the Bureau of Office Services continues to work on COVID-19 mitigation in welcome Centers and other PennDOT facilities.

#### **Driver and Vehicle Services**

Deputy Secretary for Driver and Vehicle Services, Mr. Kurt Myers, gave an update about the DVS Deputate.

Mr. Myers explained that HB 2296 was signed by Governor Wolf on November 25, 2020, becoming Act 131 of 2020. This new law makes it possible for Pennsylvanians experiencing homelessness to be issued a free initial photo ID or renewal beginning January 25, 2021.

Mr. Myers noted that the Real ID demand remains relatively low, but will likely increase as the vaccine rollout continues to expand. He added the deadline is October 1, 2021, and an advertisement campaign will start in spring 2021.

Mr. Myers also discussed the ongoing COVID-19 mitigation efforts, which include the photo on file initiative and the skills test modification.

Mr. Myers concluded his update noting that Lawrence County recently passed an ordinance to implement the \$5 County fee beginning 4/1/2021; and Luzerne County has passed an ordinance to repeal the County fee effective 12/31/2021.

Mr. Ritchie asked if PennDOT is planning on creating more Real ID centers.

Mr. Myers said yes. He added that some drivers' license centers will be turned into Real ID center but ultimately all centers will be able to deliver Real IDs.

### **Multimodal Transportation**

Deputy Secretary Ms. Jennie Granger, AICP, gave a brief update for the Multimodal Deputate.

Ms. Granger noted her Deputate is still working with transit agencies and aviation while awaiting more guidance from the FTA on how to distribute federal funds.

Ms. Granger also discussed the progression of the Middletown train station project. She said that the ribbon cutting is set to occur in early fall 2021 and TAC and STC members will be invited to join.

### **Highway and Bridge Program**

Mr. Brian Thompson, P.E. gave an update for the Highway Administration Deputate on behalf of Deputy Secretary Ms. Melissa Batula, P.E.

Mr. Thompson said that winter maintenance continues and the Deputate has had virtual meetings with Counties to coordinate winter weather response. He noted that there have been multiple closures on the Interstate due to accidents and speed restrictions have been in place. Mr. Thompson also added that Mobile Urgency Teams have been deployed across the State.

Mr. Thompson noted that UPS requested and was granted exemptions to continue to transport COVID-19 vaccine while restrictions were ongoing on the highway. It will also be extended to FedEx if they request an exemption.

Mr. Thompson announced that 116 people have tested positive for the COVID-19 virus on construction sites since the beginning of the pandemic. He added that no new cases have been detected in the last two weeks.

Mr. Thompson also discussed the 2020 letting program, which was reduced from \$2.2 billion to \$1.6 billion. He added that \$400 million worth of projects have been moved to 2021.

**Office of Planning**

Deputy Secretary for Planning, Mr. Larry Shifflet, gave a brief update about his Deputate. Mr. Shifflet noted that FAST Act was extended through September 30, 2021. Mr. Shifflet explained that the extension includes a \$13.6 billion transfer from the General Fund to the Highway Trust Fund. He added there is still no long term funding for the Highway Trust Fund.

Mr. Shifflet discussed the \$407 million the Department is set to receive from the COVID Relief Funding. He said that fund will not be used for new projects but will certainly help shore up the revenue gap.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**2021 TAC MEETING DATES:**

- Thursday, April 8, 2021, 1:00-3:00 pm
- Thursday, July 15, 2021, 1:00-3:00 pm
- Thursday, October 7, 2021, 1:00-3:00 pm
- Thursday, December 2, 2021, 1:00-3:00 pm

**ON A MOTION** by Mr. Ronald Wagenmann, and seconded by Mr. John Pocius, and unanimously approved, the 2021 TAC business meeting dates were approved.

**NEXT MEETING:**

The next TAC business meeting is scheduled to be held virtually on **Thursday, April 8, 2021.**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**ON A MOTION** by Mr. Donald Detweiler and seconded by Mr. Ronald Wagenmann, the TAC meeting was adjourned at 12:04 P.M.



**Attendance from the TAC Business Meeting**  
**February 1, 2021**

1. Ms. Jody Holton, AICP, Chair
2. Ms. Yassmin Gramian, P.E., TAC member
3. Ms. Brenda Sandberg, TAC member
4. Mr. Joseph Butzer, TAC member
5. Dr. Larry Nulton, TAC member
6. Mr. Donald Detwiler, TAC member
7. Mr. John Pocius, P.E., PLS, TAC member
8. Mr. Mark Murawski, TAC member
9. Mr. Elam Herr, TAC member
10. Mr. Alan Blahovec, CCPM, TAC member
11. Mr. Ronald Wagenmann, TAC member
12. Ms. Felicia Dell, TAC member
13. Ms. Karina Ricks, TAC member
14. Mr. Ashley Porter, TAC member
15. Mr. Michael Carroll, TAC member
16. Senator Tim Kearney, TAC member
17. Senator Wayne Langerholc, TAC member
18. Representative Mike Carroll
19. Mr. Josiah Shelly, Alternate for Representative Tim Hennessey, TAC member
20. Mr. John Kashatus, alternate for Mr. Noe Ortega, TAC member
21. Mr. Paul Opiyo, alternate for Mr. Dennis Davin, TAC member
22. Ms. Tiffany Landis, P.E., alternate for Mr. Patrick McDonnell, TAC member
23. Mr. Rodney Bender, alternate for Ms. Gladys Brown, TAC member
24. Mr. George McAuley, Jr., P.E., PennDOT
25. Mr. Brian Thompson, PennDOT
26. Ms. Sarah Clark, PennDOT
27. Ms. Natasha Fackler, PennDOT
28. Mr. Larry Shifflet, PennDOT
29. Mr. Kurt Myers, PennDOT
30. Mr. Shane Rice, PennDOT
31. Mr. Robert Chiappelli, PennDOT
32. Ms. Leanne Doran, Michael Baker Int'l
33. Mr. Brian Funkhouser, Michael Baker Int'l
34. Mr. Troy Truax, AICP, Michael Baker Int'l
35. Ms. Margaret Durkin, Bravo Group
36. Ms. Christi Sabb, McCormick Taylor
37. Ms. Lugene Keys, McCormick Taylor
38. Ms. Samantha Heigel, McCormick Taylor
39. Mr. Brian Hare, P.E., PennDOT

40. Mr. Mark Tobin, PennDOT
41. Ms. Jessica Clark, PennDOT
42. Mr. Abdoul Ahmed, PennDOT
43. Mr. Terry Pinder, PennDOT
44. Mr. Brian Sharkey, PennDOT
45. Ms. Karen Heath, PennDOT
46. Mr. Daniel Keane, PennDOT
47. Mr. Daryl St. Clair, PennDOT
48. Mr. Brian Walters, PennDOT
49. Meredith Biggica, alternate for Representative Mike Carroll, TAC member
50. Sam Arnold, alternate for Senator Tim Kearney, TAC member
51. Nolan Ritchie, alternate for Senator Wayne Langerholc, TAC member
52. Jennie Granger, AICP, PennDOT
53. Danyel Patrick, Michael Baker Int'l
54. Lindy Music, Pugliese
55. Jim Ritzman, Pennoni
56. Morgan Ruziecki, Michael Baker Int'l
57. Will Dando, Allegheny Strategy Partners
58. Tim Smith, Gannett Fleming