

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
BUSINESS MEETING  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA  
JUNE 9, 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 STC business meetings.*

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Yassmin Gramian, P.E. convened the quarterly business meeting of the State Transportation Commission (STC) at 10:05 am on June 9, 2021.

**ROLL CALL:**

**Commissioners Present on the Phone:**

1. Honorable Yassmin Gramian, Chair
2. Honorable Chad M. Amond
3. Honorable Ronald J. Drnevich
4. Honorable Frank E. Paczewski
5. Honorable James D. Kingsborough
6. Honorable Paige Willan
7. Honorable Tim Hennessey
8. Honorable Michael Carroll
9. Honorable Wayne Langerholc, Jr.  
Mr. Nolan Ritchie, Alternate Present

**Commissioners Not Present**

1. Honorable John Sabatina

**MINUTES:**

**ON A MOTION** by Mr. Jimmy Kingsborough and seconded by Mr. Frank Paczewski, and unanimously approved, the February 17, 2021, STC business meeting minutes were accepted.

**CHAIR'S REMARKS:**

Secretary Gramian welcomed Commissioners and guests to the STC meeting. Secretary Gramian honored the late Executive Deputy Secretary George McAuley, who passed away on February 28, 2021. She said that the *PennDOT Family* mourns the loss of an amazing colleague and a dedicated public servant.

Secretary Gramian announced the appointment of Ms. Melissa Batula, PE, as the Acting Executive Deputy Secretary and the appointment of Mr. Michael Keiser, PE, as the Acting Deputy Secretary for Highway Administration.

Secretary Gramian noted that she is encouraged that President Biden has made infrastructure investment a priority for his administration. Adding that equitable access across all modes is centered in these conversations. Unfortunately, as of today there is nothing to report on President Biden's American Jobs Plan as negotiations have slowed.

Secretary Gramian also noted that both the Senate and House are moving forward with a FAST Act reauthorization bill.

Secretary Gramian mentioned the Transportation Revenue Options Commission (TROC), which was established in March 2021 through an Executive Order signed by Governor Tom Wolf. She noted that this commission will develop comprehensive funding recommendations for Pennsylvania's vast transportation network. Secretary Gramian said that the commission is comprised of transportation, economic, and community stakeholders from both the public and private sectors, including majority and minority leaders from the House and Senate Transportation and Appropriations committees. A report of commission activities and funding options will be submitted to the Governor before August 1, 2021. Secretary Gramian added the TROC has held five meetings to date which included presentations from the American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA), the Eastern Transportation Coalition, and various PennDOT Executives laying out the overall funding needs and discussion of the funding options that are being considered nationally including Mileage-Based User Fees (MBUF).

Secretary Gramian asked Kenneth McClain the Alternative Funding Program Director for PennDOT to provide an update on the PennDOT Pathways Program.

Mr. McClain described the PennDOT Pathways Program, which includes two initiatives: the Planning and Environmental Linkages study or "PEL" and the Major Bridge P3 Initiatives. The PEL will develop and evaluate options for funding our transportation system, with both near and long-term solutions.

Mr. McClain noted that the department held a thirty-day public comment period on the draft PEL from April 29th to June 1<sup>st</sup>. He said that this comment period also included a town hall meeting that was conducted on May 25<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. McClain said that PennDOT is compiling input received from stakeholder through the public comment period and will share the draft with the FHWA for their concurrence by late July. Mr. McClain also said that funding strategies, such as Bridge Tolling, Managed Lanes, Congestion Pricing, Corridor Tolling, and Road user charges (vehicle miles traveled tax) and Fee/Tax increases are being studied.

For the Major Bridge P3 Initiative, Mr. McClain explained that an environmental study will be conducted along with a toll diversion analysis to mitigate potential impacts of tolling on the local communities.

Mr. Hennessey asked about the attendance at the public comment meeting on May 25.  
Mr. McClain answered that there were 137 participants, with over a dozen questions.

Mr. Hennessey asked about the difference between Congestion pricing and corridor tolling.  
Mr. McClain answered that Congestion pricing happens on a stretch of highly congested urban corridors and is geared toward changing drivers' behavior, while corridor tolling can happen anywhere.

Mr. Kingsborough asked how much per mile did the Mileage Based User Fee study charged?  
Mr. McClain answered that he doesn't have the exact numbers but will follow up.

Mr. McClain provided an update saying that the study charged 3.18 cents per mile.

**2021 TWELVE YEAR TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM: By Larry Shifflet**

Deputy Secretary Larry Shifflet presented the 2021 Twelve Year Transportation Program (TYP) adjustments stating that between January 30, 2021 and May 21, there were 1,287 program adjustments including:

- 604 Project/Phase Additions
- 604 Project/Phase Changes
- 79 Project/Phase Deletions

Mr. Shifflet said that the overall changes represent a \$318,894,793 increase for the reporting period.

Mr. Shifflet highlighted highway and bridge and transit TIP changes in DVRPC.

**ON A MOTION** by Mr. Chad Amond and seconded by Mr. Ronald Drnevich the 2021 Twelve Year Program Adjustments were unanimously approved.

**WORKING SESSION:**

**2021 FOUR YEAR AVIATION PLAN: By Anthony McCloskey**

Mr. Anthony McCloskey, P.E. Director of the Bureau of Aviation for PennDOT presented the 2021 Aviation Four Year Plan. Mr. McCloskey explained that the year-to-year discrepancies are due to the fact that the Federal Aviation Administrative (FAA) is providing 100% funding for Federal Airport Improvement Program (AIP) projects. As a result, very minimal state match to federal funding may be required for pre-2020 federally funded projects. He added that the program anticipates a return to state match requirements for federally funded projects in SFY 2022-23 through SFY 2024-25, thereby reducing the number of planned state-local projects in the program.

Mr. Kingsborough asked if there is any discussion on increasing taxes on Jet A fuel?  
Mr. McCloskey said that there are discussions in the Aviation Sub-Committee at the TROC about different options. Mr. McCloskey added that the current tax is 1.6 cents per gallon, our cap is at 2 cents per gallon, and that we are one of the lower Jet A Fuel Tax in our 50 states.

**ON A MOTION** by Mr. James Kingsborough and seconded by Mr. Frank Paczewski the 2021 Aviation Four Year Plan was unanimously approved.

**UTILITIES IN THE STATE RIGHT-OF-WAY STUDY: By Dale Witmer and Brian Link**

Mr. Dale Witmer and Mr. Brian Link from Michael Baker International presented the TAC Utilities in the State Right-of-Way study. Mr. Witmer noted that Mr. John Pocius, P.E., PLS was the study Task Force Chair. His experience and leadership having dealt with these issues in the field and in design was instrumental to the success of the study, he added.

Mr. Witmer also noted that the study focus emphasis is really placed on utility projects in State owned Right-of-Way, further explaining that these improvements and recommendations are to address those types of projects. He also underscored that the study does not dictate what happens outside of state right-of-way.

Mr. Witmer highlighted that the study outreach efforts included two surveys to gather input from a very extended stakeholder group.

Mr. Witmer discussed some key takeaways from the outreach surveys:

- Schedule has emerged as the biggest challenge
- Improved coordination tools would offer the greatest benefit
- Utility relocation timelines are needed
- Aerial utility identification inefficiencies exist
- Coordinate PA and Utility Relocation Management System (URMS) database systems – Industry would benefit from continued awareness efforts.

Mr. Brian Link, from discussed the draft report recommendations including:

***Process Improvements***

- Require utilization of URMS and Coordinate PA on all projects administered by PennDOT.
- Provide integration of Coordinate PA and PA OneMap to inform utility owners of programmed work.
- Ensure that Districts are utilizing Best Practices outlined by PennDOT Next Generation (PNG) and update Design Manual Part 5 Subsurface Utility Engineering (SUE) Form to align with Section 6.1 of the PA One Call Law.

***Regulatory Improvements***

- Require utilities in the state right-of-way to perform predetermined relocations within a defined timeframe or be responsible for delay costs incurred for non-compliance to the relocation timeframe.

- Provide new legislation or regulations to define responsibility for tracking and identification of aerial utilities (utility pole attachments).
- Increase the amount of ticketing required to go through Coordinate PA for utility owners, professional designers, and professional excavators.

Secretary Gramian thanked the study team. She asked if the Team has had any talks with District 6 about their proposal to improve coordination in the utility relocation process.

Mr. Witmer answered that there hasn't been a specific discussion about the interest, but the broader coordination includes that.

Ms. Batula asked if the current legislation allows for the Department to require Utility Companies to provide the list of their projects they plan to complete.

Mr. Witmer said that it is possible within the current legislation to do that.

Mr. Keiser commented about the difficulty to determine the locations of existing sub-surface utilities infrastructures.

Ms. Willan asked for more explanation about the recommendation proposing to impose cost on a utility company if it is responsible for delays.

Mr. Witmer explained that the recommendation applies to a case in which a utility company doesn't respond to a request to complete a work in time and that results in a delay for PennDOT.

Mr. John Pocius, chair of the study taskforce, thanked the study Team for a job well done.

**ON A MOTION** by Ms. Page Willan and seconded by Mr. James Kingsborough, and unanimously approved, the *Utilities in the State Right-of-Way* study was approved.

**2023 12-YEAR PROGRAM OUTREACH UPDATE: By Dan Keane and Christi Sabb**

Mr. Dan Keane from the PennDOT TAC management Team and Ms. Christi Sabb of McCormick Taylor presented the 2023 12-Year program outreach update.

Mr. Keane explained the 12-Year Update Process saying that the release of the Transportation Performance Report serves as a soft-launch for the outreach campaign. He added that the official kick-off of the public outreach and public comment period follows and includes the transportation survey and public forum.

Mr. Keane noted that at the conclusion of this 45-day outreach and public comment period, feedback received is compiled and analyzed. The results are prepared in a format that is easy to read, understand and compared to previous cycles. The feedback will also be shared directly with the regional planning partners for their update of the TIPs and the STIP. The updates will then be available for public review and comment next spring (TIPs and STIP). The updated 2023 TYP will be prepared and presented to the STC for adoption in the summer of 2022.

### ***2021 Outreach Campaign Goals***

Mr. Keane explained that the goal of the outreach campaign is to increase participation, more importantly, to increase the diversity of the audience the campaign reaches. He said that the outreach campaign also aims to increase the public's understanding of transportation planning and thereby increase their engagement experience in the process. He added that the most recent cycle targeted the 18-24 years age group because they have a very unique perspective to offer on transportation.

### ***2021 Outreach Techniques***

Ms. Christi Sabb discussed the outreach techniques. She explained the Talk PA Transportation website was frequently updated with information about the public comment period and the current number of survey participants. She noted that stakeholder organizations and previous participants were solicited through multiple email blasts encouraging them to take the survey, attend the online public forum, and spread the word.

Ms. Sabb said that the Team also developed weekly social media posts to promote the comment period. She added that in response to the 2019 MPO/RPO focus group recommendations, social media posts were developed in English, Spanish, and Mandarin. A targeted social media advertisement campaign focused on reaching underrepresented groups such as 18-24-year-olds, Spanish speakers, and Mandarin speakers was also implemented.

Traditional print and broadcast media including a press release, the PA Bulletin, and PennDOT newsletters were also used to spread the word, Ms. Sabb added.

Ms. Sabb discussed the online toolkit, which she said is hosted on the Talk PA Transportation website. The toolkit offered downloadable promotional, informational, and educational resources to help promote the Public Comment Period. The page included links to the Transportation Survey and the registration page for the Online Public Forum, as well as a printable version of the survey to share with those who may not have internet access. It also contained social graphics and animations, as well as a factsheet about the Public Comment Period in English, Spanish, and Mandarin. Ms. Sabb noted that the toolkit was visited 720 times by 436 different users in 2021 compared to 356 times by 228 users in 2019.

### ***Online Public Forum***

Ms. Sabb explained that the Online Public Forum was held on March 23 at 6:30 p.m. and had over 1,900 live participants. 188 participants used the PAcast platform, and 1,717 participants viewed it from Facebook Live with a 10 second view or longer. She said closed captioning was available in English and for the first time was also available in Spanish on the PAcast platform and a call-in option for audio participation was also available.

Ms. Sabb said the Forum included a presentation by keynote speaker, PennDOT Secretary Ms. Yassmin Gramian, as well as STC commissioner Mr. Ronald Drnevich and PennDOT Deputy Secretary for Planning, Mr. Larry Shifflet. She added that the Forum was followed by a Q&A session; participants submitted questions for the Q&A session through the registration form, by email, or phone and during the forum through the PAcast platform. A total of 71 questions were received. Ten (10) questions were answered to during the forum, the remaining questions are posted on the Talk PA Transportation website along with the responses. A recording of the Forum with closed captioning is also available on the website for the public to view.

Ms. Sabb discussed the survey results including:

**Modes:** 75% of respondents indicated they drive alone often or every day while 35% walk, 12% bicycle, 9% use Public Transit, 4% carpool, 3% travel by air, 2% ride passenger rail, and 2% ride a motorcycle often or every day.

**Priorities:** For the open-ended question where participants could suggest other priorities, the most common suggestions were electric vehicle infrastructure, funding initiatives, and environmental sustainability.

**Alternative Funding Suggestions:** To the questions *Do you want to increase the budget; Suggest how Pennsylvania can increase transportation funding*, 958 survey respondents provided feedback for this question. Many of them included multiple ideas for a total of 1,365 comments. The most suggested funding source was vehicle miles traveled (VMT), followed by reallocation of money, and tolling.

All the categories listed on the screen were provided by the public and not prepopulated.

Ms. Sabb concluded her presentation saying that the Comment Period results are now available on [www.TalkPATransportation.com](http://www.TalkPATransportation.com).

## **PENNSYLVANIA LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND COMPREHENSIVE FREIGHT MOVEMENT PLAN: By Brian Funkhouser**

Mr. Brian Funkhouser briefed the STC on the update underway for Pennsylvania's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Freight Movement Plan (FMP). He discussed the TAC and STC roles in the different plans.

Mr. Funkhouser explained the strategic directions for both plans. For the FMP, he listed:

- Economic development and land use
- Project investments
- Transportation operations and safety
- Data analytical tools

For the LRTP, Mr. Funkhouser listed:

- Safety and security
- Transportation mobility
- Access and equity

- Resiliency
- Conditions and performance
- Funding and finance

Mr. Funkhouser discussed the Public and stakeholder engagement efforts. He noted that an in-reach with PennDOT executives will be held in the coming weeks. Other outreach efforts include:

- Statewide Freight Forum
- State Planning Board
- Municipal Associations
- Affinity Focus Groups
- STC Public Forum
- STC Public Survey

Mr. Funkhouser also discussed the Transportation Data Repository, which will serve as resource toolbox for planning and programing. He listed some important topic areas based on a Planning Partners survey including:

- Infrastructure (Pavements and Bridges)
- Safety
- Freight
- Traffic Demand
- Travel Origins and Destinations
- Travel Time
- Land Use
- Active Transportation
- Transit
- Environmental Justice

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

- Continue Department In-reach
- Development of Draft Final Products
- Launch 30-day Review and Comment Period
- Adoption process with Program Management Committee (PMC)
- Implementation and Tracking

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

#### **Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

TAC Chair, Ms. Jody Holton, gave an update about the TAC activities. Ms. Holton said that the TAC is working to identify the next study topic. She added that a first topic, the Post-Pandemic and Rural Disparities Study, has been approved for scoping and a second topic will be voted on at the July 17<sup>th</sup> TAC meeting.



### **Executive Deputy Secretary**

Ms. Melissa Batula, PE, Executive Deputy Secretary, gave a brief report noting that the PennDOT Pathways program, the Transportation Revenue Options Commission, and the P3 Major Bridge Project are all progressing.

### **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 is teleworking.

Mr. Chiappelli explained that the Office of Administration has a permanent telework plan in place and negotiations with unions are continuing to finalize the agreements. Mr. Chiappelli added that plans to return to office are going to begin with the facilities in Dauphin County. The anticipated dates are July 20th thru the 23<sup>rd</sup>. This phased approach is to ensure that any potential IT needs are met.

Mr. Chiappelli mentioned that the Department has received approval to fill up to 265 temporary positions to supplement the summer maintenance program. Positions primarily include Highway Maintenance Workers and Government Service Interns.

### **Driver and Vehicle Services**

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

Mr. Myers explained that all programs suspended because of COVID-19 have restarted. He noted that the Riverfront Office will open on June 21<sup>st</sup>, but skills testing will remain as modified until mask mandate is lifted.

Mr. Myers noted that from March 1, 2019 through May 24, 2021, out of the approximate 10.1M current DL/ID holders, PennDOT has processed nearly 5.9M of these customers and over 1.2M have opted to get a REAL ID compliant product – an opt-in rate of 20%. The remaining 4.7M chose not to get a REAL ID and received a Driver's license or ID card marked "NOT FOR REAL ID PURPOSES". Mr. Myers stated that the Department of Homeland Security has extended the effective date until May 3, 2023.

### **Highway and Bridge Program**

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

Mr. Keiser said that the 2021 letting program is set at \$1.9 billion, and the 2022 program will be in the same range as well.

Mr. Keiser said that winter maintenance expenditures were higher than expected; and cost \$88 million more than the past five year on average.

Mr. Keiser announced that traffic volume for trucks is back to 100% compared to 2019. He added that numbers for motorist traffic fluctuate but still below 2019 levels.

Mr. Keiser also discussed the Rapid Bridge Replacement program, which he said is almost completed and the Department is taking back maintenance responsibilities of the approach roadway of completed bridges.

Mr. Keiser concluded his update noting that concerns about construction materials prices and availability exist.

**Multimodal Transportation**

Ms. Jennie Granger, AICP, Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation, gave a brief update saying that material availability (particularly steel for trusses) is a big concern, effecting project schedules by six to seven months, but the Department is working through it.

Ms. Granger also noted that the Department continues to work with Norfolk Southern on an Operational Feasibility Study to investigate, identify the impacts and capacity improvements, and the associated costs with extending service (addition of a second round-trip Pennsylvanian) to Western PA.

**Office of Planning**

Deputy Secretary for Planning, Mr. Larry Shifflet gave a brief update about his Deputate. Mr. Shifflet explained that the Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee marked up re-authorization legislation on May 26th. The legislation includes \$303.5 billion over five years for highway and bridge programs, a 34% increase over the FAST Act.

Mr. Shifflet also noted that the next TROC meeting will be held on June 14, from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM.

**COMMISSIONERS REPORT:**

None

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

None

**NEXT MEETING:**

The next STC quarterly meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, September 15, 2021.**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**ON A MOTION** by Mr. Frank Paczewski and seconded by Mr. Ronald Drnevich, the STC quarterly meeting was adjourned at 12:05 PM.

### **Follow up Items**

The Eastern Transportation Coalition Mileage Based User Fee Study Report can be found at this link:

<https://tetcoalitionmbuf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/TETC-2019-Passenger-Vehicle-Pilot-Report-1.pdf>