PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
BUSINESS MEETING
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
JULY 16TH, 2025

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

CALL TO ORDER:

A business meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was called to order in the Keystone Building, Room 8N1, and on Microsoft Teams at 10:01 a.m. on July 16, 2025.

ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

1. Ms. Jody Holton
2. Honorable Michael B. Carroll
3. Honorable Stephen DeFrank, George DiCarlantonio, alternate
4. Honorable Akbar Hossain, Orlando Almonte, alternate
5. Honorable Rick Siger, Tree Zuzzio, alternate
6. Honorable Carrie Rowe, John Kashatus, alternate
7. Honorable Wayne Langerholc, Nolan Ritchie, alternate
8. Honorable Ed Nielson, Kyle Wagonseller, alternate
9. Mr. John Pocius
10. Mr. Jeff Mercadante
11. Mr. Alan Blahovec
12. Mr. Mark Murawski
13. Mr. Martin Malone
14. Mr. Robert Previdi
15. Ms. Cathy Farrell
16. Mr. Ryan Mulvey
17. Mr. David Heath

Members Present on the Phone:

1. Honorable Jessica Shirley, Nathan Crawford, alternate
2. Honorable Russell Reading, Lisa Graybeal, alternate
3. Honorable Tim Kearney, Sam Arnold, alternate
4. Mr. Jeffrey Letwin
5. Mr. Richard Barcaskey
6. Dr. Larry Nulton

Members Not Present

1. Honorable Kerry Benninghoff
2. Ms. Rebecca Oyler
3. Mr. Michael A. Carroll
4. Mr. Ashley Porter
5. Mr. Ron Wagenmann
6. Mr. Elam Herr

CHAIR'S REMARKS:

TAC Chair, Ms. Jody Holton, AICP, gave brief remarks welcoming the five new members of the TAC. She said that the Speaker of the House appointed four public members and asked them to introduce themselves.

Ms. Cathy Ferrell said that she is a volunteer and member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and led an effort to create a report card on Pennsylvania's infrastructure. She said that she works as a designer of limited-access facilities such as roundabouts and group bridges.

Mr. David Heath stated that he is a partner at BBP Solutions and previously served as a station manager at Delta Airlines for ten years. Clients of BBP include the Aviation Council of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Drone Association, and Aerium, a workforce and emerging tech nonprofit.

Mr. Robert Previdi said that he spent 14 years at New York City Transit during the rebuilding years. He said that investment in infrastructure pays off; NYC went from 2.2 to 5.5 million riders, and its population increased from 7 million to 9 million.

Mr. Ryan Mulvey stated that he is the Director of Government and Public Affairs at PhilaPort, the port of Philadelphia, and that he worked under the former State Transportation Committee chair, Senator John Sabatina.

Ms. Holton added that the Senate President Pro-Tempore also appointed a public member to the TAC.

Mr. Martin Malone said that he works for the consulting firm HECS, out of the Altoona office.

Ms. Holton thanked departing TAC members Felicia Dell, Charles Welker, Donald Detwiler, and Jeffrey Stroehmann for their services on the TAC.

Ms. Holton said that study submissions are now being accepted year-round, rather than once per year, to be more flexible when ideas come in.

MINUTES:

ON A MOTION by John Pocius, seconded by Alan Blahovec and unanimously approved, the Minutes of the February 3, 2025, TAC Business Meeting were accepted without changes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Andrea Rutherford from the US Department of Transportation Maritime Administration (USDOT MARAD) said that the Secretary of Transportation had published a Request For Information for input on the updated National Freight Strategic Plan, due August 14, 2025. Additionally, the Port Infrastructure Development Project grant applications are due by September 10, 2025.

Mr. Mark Murawski asked what the TAC's role would be if they were to make a comment.

Mr. Larry Shifflet said that PennDOT has a process for submitting comments. TAC members are encouraged to submit their comments separately. Secretary Michael Carroll noted to not present themselves as a TAC representative in a separate comment.

SECRETARY'S REMARKS:

Transportation Secretary Michael B. Carroll welcomed the new members to the TAC and thanked them for their participation.

Secretary Carroll said that the Senate is back in session and looks forward to a productive budget. He noted the challenges of governing a large and diverse state.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION UPDATE:

Executive Office

Executive Deputy Secretary Larry Shifflet gave an update.

Mr. Shifflet stated that discussions continue at the federal level regarding the reauthorization of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The IIJA expires on September 30, 2026, and Mr. Shifflet expects that there will be an extension until an agreement can be reached. PennDOT is well-represented in the reauthorization discussions, with Secretary Carroll traveling to Washington D.C. later that day.

Mr. Murawski inquired about how PennDOT was budgeting for the upcoming Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amid federal uncertainty. Mr. Shifflet stated that PennDOT assumes the federal funding will be equal to the amount from the last year of the current agreement. This has been a successful plan for several decades.

Mr. Carroll said that the $500 million grant for the I-83 South Bridge is still a substantial question. The prior federal administration awarded the grant, but it had not yet been obligated. If the new administration decides to rescind the grant, the South Bridge project must still proceed, and the funds will be allocated from across the program and state. He said that this is not the only awarded grant that remains unobligated, noting the second *Pennsylvanian* train and the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program as examples.

Ms. Holton asked if they were aware of any large projects that had been rescinded. Secretary Carroll said no, that the USDOT has kept them in an undeclared category pending further review. Mr. Shifflet said that letting for the I-83 South Bridge project will be summer 2026, and PennDOT will need an agreement by late summer.

Ms. Holton asked what they were hearing on the IIJA reauthorization, and what PennDOT's asks would be. Secretary Carroll said that all fifty states unanimously desired reauthorization, at least at the current levels. The dispute among the states is whether money should be allocated through discretionary grants as opposed to being handled through the formula program. He noted the president's budget had modest increases for transportation.

Administration and Budget

Ms. Marcie Carr, on behalf of Deputy Secretary Corey Pellington, gave an update.

Ms. Carr said that the Bureau of Strategic Business Operations (BSBO) has been reorganized from the Bureau of Innovations to focus on long-term initiatives for the Department. She noted that tourism continues to fall under BSBO.

The Bureau of Equal Opportunity is above its Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goal.

There was a previously announced extension of an advertisement for the renovation of the Mifflin County Maintenance Office. Bids have closed, and the anticipated start of construction is July 2025.

The overall vacancy rate is under 3% and Human Resources seeks to further reduce the time to hire. The Summer Employment program is on track to add 1,500 positions for the summer. A pilot program for re-entry with the Department of Corrections is currently underway for select skilled positions at PennDOT.

Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS)

Deputy Secretary Kara Templeton gave an update.

Ms. Templeton stated that DVS experienced a substantial increase in business following the May 7, 2025, Real ID enforcement deadline. She praised the DVS staff for their efforts, and for working six days a week to accommodate customer demand. To date, nearly 3.2 million IDs have been issued, accounting for about 31% of Pennsylvania driver's license and ID card holders.

During the lead-up to the May 7 deadline, Pennsylvania went through the Department of Homeland Security's recertification review process. This happens every three years, and Pennsylvania successfully passed inspection.

DVS also worked to implement Acts 85 and 149, the Road User Charge, which began on April 1, 2025. The rollout is three-phased: Phase one, which has been implemented, required new and soon-to-expire registrations to pay the fee. Phase two will allow the charge to be paid through the website. Phase three, scheduled for July 2026, will integrate the charge into the registration renewal process and offer an option for monthly charges.

A new license plate was released in Spring 2025 to replace the standard license plate design. The newest plate has been issued over 20,000 times. DVS will continue to issue the old design plate until its stock is depleted.

Wayne County has opted into the Vehicle Registration Fee for Local Use, beginning in Fall 2025.

Secretary Carroll commended and thanked the DVS and Driver License Center (DLC) staff for their exceptional work on Real ID. He noted that lines were out the door from opening to closing, six days a week.

Mr. Pocius asked how many DLC could issue a Real ID on the spot. Ms. Templeton replied fifteen, the rest would send your ID via the mail. Pennsylvania is unique, many states only issue centrally, via the mail.

Mr. Heath noted the Secretary traveled to every airport in the state to get the message out. He said that the efforts were a resounding success.

Mr. Pocius asked if access to airports was being denied to those without a Real ID. Mr. Heath said that an alternate screening process was offered. He noted that the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) was working more with biometrics, and that your ID is serving as your boarding pass for security checks.

Multimodal
Deputy Secretary Meredith Biggica gave an update.

PennDOT is still waiting on obligations for the Federal State Partnership Grant, $143 million that will go towards projects necessary to deliver the second *Pennsylvanian* train. The goal date remains October 26, 2026.

The Scranton to New York City Corridor ID project is one of five Corridor ID projects that have moved into step 2. The current administration has not moved any projects into step 2 and are still reviewing applications. One corridor moved into step 3 during the previous administration. The Reading to Philadelphia line is not a PennDOT sponsored corridor and is still in step 1.

The annual Rail Freight Grant will open in August, with the goal of announcements at the December STC meeting, pending approval.

The PennDOT multimodal grants are being reviewed, with a target date of the end of August. The next round of applications is expected to be opened after Labor Day.

Secretary Carroll said that Rob Gleeson of Johnstown has been nominated to the Amtrak board. He said that he had spoken to Mr. Gleeson and stressed the importance of the $142 million grant for the second *Pennsylvanian*.

Highway Administration

Mr. Jonathan Eboli, on behalf of Deputy Secretary Christine Norris, gave an update.

Mr. Eboli said that 163 projects were let in the second quarter of 2025. The 2025 goal remains $2.9 billion; more will be considered if cash flow allows. Bids are coming in near the estimate.

Notable projects yet to be let in 2025 include paving of the south section of the Central Susquehanna Valley Thruway, I-83 Harrisburg East Shore, and the Girard Point Bridge rehabilitation.

IIJA awarded PennDOT $172 million over five years for the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program buildout. Approximately $135 million has been obligated. Eighteen sites are currently operational, nine are under construction, 33 are in design review, and 30 are contracted but in the predesign phase. The most recent site is at a Sheetz store in York County. Pennsylvania is second in the nation, but three sites coming online by the end of the summer would push Pennsylvania past Ohio.

Secretary Carroll acknowledged maintenance crews that have been working extra hard due to the recent storms, through nights, weekends, and holidays, calling them unsung heroes.

Mr. Murawski asked if the design-build legislation would be able to pass the legislature. Secretary Carroll said that it is a policy he supports but will leave that to the legislature and remains optimistic.

Mr. Nolan Ritchie asked how roads were improved if only 42% were repaved, regarding PennDOT's performance so far in 2025. Mr. Carroll said tar-and-chip and crack sealing were used. He said PennDOT does not have the resources to repave every road, and those are worthy options for preservation of low-volume roads.

Planning

Deputy Secretary Kristin Mulkerin gave an update.

The 2027 program update is in full swing. Draft Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) are due by the end of 2025.

The Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) applications are now open. Draft applications are due by September 5, with final applications due by October 31, 2025. Some larger Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are running concurrently with the statewide program.

There has been movement on some grants, such as the Wildlife Crossing grant template. Ms. Mulkerin is hopeful that they will be able to begin the study in the fall.

Studies Update:

Pennsylvania In Motion – Transportation Workforce Study

Mr. Brian Funkhouser of Michael Baker, Intl. and Mr. Keith Chase of Gannett Fleming presented the Transportation Workforce Study.

The chair of the task force, Mr. Murawski, said that this was his fourth TAC study, and this was the most intriguing. He says that transportation problems are not just transportation problems but become the problems of everyone. Transportation requires specialization, and it becomes challenging to find individuals to fill these roles. He said there may be a crisis in as little as five years, and that the answer may lie in schools. He noted that this is not a PennDOT workforce study, it is a Commonwealth workforce study, and stressed the importance of industry collaboration.

Mr. Keith Chase noted that the appendices of the study were important, noting PennDOT's well-established workforce programs, and summaries from the three stakeholder meetings.

Mr. Chase stated that there is a transportation workforce gap, characterized by increased demand for workers against a diminishing supply. Reasons for the increasing demand include rising numbers of seniors, decreasing car ownership among the young, population growth in urban areas, and the expansion of e-commerce.

Reasons for the reducing supply include Pennsylvania's overall workforce shrinking, transportation jobs not always being competitive, and a lack of knowledge about opportunities. Barriers such as language, screening, licensing, and changing views on work reduce applicants and increase turnover.

Employment, education, emergency services, and economic factors all depend on an efficient and properly staffed transportation system. A workforce shortage hinders the smooth operation of services.

The study's findings revealed a substantial and expanding workforce gap, which affects nearly every aspect of the economy and daily life. Pennsylvania has an established workforce development system, highlighting the need to utilize and expand existing workforce programs, and that solutions must be comprehensive yet flexible.

The study provided a single consideration: to establish a transportation workforce collaboration team to maximize existing programs and enhance collaboration among workforce development partners, businesses, education, and public and private sectors. This would be an active team, not a study team.

Mr. Funkhouser acknowledged the efforts of the task force, as well as those of PennDOT, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), and the stakeholders who participated in the workshops.

Mr. John Kashatus asked how the Department of Education (DOE) could assist, and inquiring about the biggest needs, and how to make those positions more desirable.

Mr. Jeff Mercadante said that there are numerous career paths in the industry, and transportation is often presented as a non-college pathway. The industry meets with guidance counsellors and technical schools and speaks to graduating classes.

Mr. Murawski said that DOE would be part of the transformation team and noted that the best approach for transit might not be the best approach for aviation. The approach may depend on what job they're trying to fill. This is the start of the conversation, not the end. Ms. Holton said that similarly classified jobs may require different skillsets across industries.

Mr. Letwin asked if the task force had looked at the Pittsburgh International Airport's Pitt to Work program, a 5-week program for construction apprenticeship, that provided hands-on training. Mr. Chase said that the report lists programs and best practices but was unsure if that one was listed.

Mr. Funkhouser introduced testimonials from stakeholders.

Mr. Mercadante said that the trucking industry is short 80,000 drivers. This number is increasing partially due to retirement, as the average age is 50. There are 362,000 that support trucking, 1 in 15 positions. Very few students are being told about opportunities in trucking. To drive a truck on the interstate, you must be 21 years old, making the industry job less lucrative for young people starting out. The legalization of marijuana is restricting new applicants as well, due to federal drug testing mandates. English proficiency poses a barrier for some immigrants as well.

Ms. Caroline Haeffner of the Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems in the City of Philadelphia said that they were happy to share some of their initiatives being implemented for the study. One initiative is Geographic and Economic Hiring Preferences, which requires contractors to hire apprentices from designated zip codes on public city infrastructure projects. There are 15 identified projects for this pilot program. They are also piloting a 45-person apprenticeship program for electric vehicle supply and equipment. There is a high need, and they hope to create a municipal and regional workforce. Philadelphia also holds an Infrastructure Workforce Development Roundtable quarterly, with members from city government, utilities, and school district, that try to find opportunities for education, as well as the City College for Municipal Employment that finds gaps and in the municipal workforce and works with the Community College of Philadelphia to fill those roles.

Mr. Murawski said that in small organizations, a loss on a small team can lead to shutdowns if that person cannot be replaced. He provided an example from his time in Lycoming County, where the planning office staff were offered more lucrative jobs, resulting in the loss of the entire MPO team. The County was unable to offer what they desired in pay due to how the County structures jobs.

Ms. Holton said SEPTA has innovative programs outlined in the study, including those that bring in people with military backgrounds. They work with West Philadelphia Skills Initiative, a community resource. The management staff draws from local colleges, offering an internship program, and a partnership with Drexel University. She noted that bus operators are hard to come by, and it is a demanding job, and they are working to make the job more appealing.

Mr. Heath noted the importance of defining workplace pathways at a statewide level and reducing barriers. He said that his client, Aerium, is working with high schools and colleges, and that collaboration is key. He gave the example of HVAC technicians getting a drone license.

Mr. Pocius stressed the continued importance of working with kids, especially those in technical schools. He said that the outgoing military may be an untapped resource. Mr. Mercadante stated that the military lacks an effective program for contacting outgoing soldiers, and that he has been attempting to establish a good contact within the military for twenty years.

Mr. Ritchie suggested contacting the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. Mr. Shifflet said that PennDOT had recently gotten in contact with Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA), and talks are ongoing.

Mr. Murawski said that the task force hopes to have the team active by the end of the year.

ON A MOTION by Ms. Farrell, seconded by Mr. Pocius and unanimously approved, the Pennsylvania in Motion Transportation Workforce Study was approved for consideration at the next State Transportation Committee meeting.

Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) Retail Delivery Fee

Mr. Matthew Knittel from the Independent Fiscal Office gave a presentation on the IFO Pennsylvania Retail Delivery Fee briefing paper.

Mr. Knittel stated that the IFO undertook the study at the request of the legislature. The study examined a potential delivery fee based on the Colorado model, at four fee levels: $0.25, $0.50, $0.75, and $1.00 per taxable delivery (at least one item in the delivery is subject to sales tax). The study also included an incidence analysis, to determine what demographics would be most affected.

The study found that this would be a viable option that generates significant revenue. It would be a somewhat regressive fee, likely to be borne more by urban residents. It would have minimal administrative costs, Colorado estimating 3.5 full-time staff annually.

Two states have enacted delivery fees: Colorado and Minnesota. Colorado has a fee of $0.29, with the average person receiving 6.2 taxable monthly deliveries, with an annual estimate of $102 million. Minnesota has a fee of $0.50, but has 2.2 taxable deliveries, for a total of $59 million. Minnesota has exemptions for deliveries under $100, and for retailers with under $1 million in annual sales. Nine other states have proposed delivery fees.

Using the Colorado data, the IFO estimated 5.6 taxable deliveries per month for Pennsylvania, due to the higher numbers of rural and elderly residents. He noted that revenues do not double if the fee doubles, due to the extra cost changing consumer activities by either reducing or combining orders.

Mr. Kyle Wagonseller asked if they had seen any data about using a percentage instead of a flat fee. Mr. Knittel said that he had not, but that could be something the IFO looks at if there is interest.

Ms. Holton asked if Mr. Knittel thought a percentage would be less regressive. Mr. Knittel said no, but exempting restaurant deliveries would make the fee less regressive.

Mr. Arnold said that he was pleased with the results. They were aware of the potential for the tax being regressive due to it being like a sales tax. He said the question was if this fee would be more regressive than a sales tax increase.

Mr. Heath asked if there is an anticipated plateau. Mr. Knittel said not that he could see. Other studies have not yet built that in.

Work Zone New Driver Training

Dan Farley from PennDOT - Bureau of Maintenance and Operations gave a presentation on Work Zone New Driver Training.

Mr. Farley said that the training had been a highly successful effort, with extensive public outreach already completed. The training is a joint effort between PennDOT and the Turnpike Commission. There are 1400 work zone crashes a year, causing 600 injuries and 15 fatalities of both workers and motorists.

The intent is to take the work zone safety materials from the Drivers Manual and make them more interactive and engaging, using animations, videos, infographics, and knowledge checks. Testimonials and a promotional video are also available.

The course is available at http://www.PennDOT.pa.gov/WorkZoneSafety. The course is approximately 30-40 minutes long.

Mr. Kashatus said that he attended the launch in March and sent the link to high schools and driving schools, receiving positive feedback. He stressed the need for Drivers Ed to be a requirement for licensure in Pennsylvania, one of only nine states where it is not a requirement.

Ms. Holton said that a TAC study in 2013 found the high importance of Drivers Ed classes and suggested that this might be something to revisit.

Mr. Heath asked if Mr. Farley had engaged with the insurance federation to provide incentives. Mr. Farley said that he did not believe it had happened yet, but said it was a potential path. The initial focus was on outreach, to distribute the training to schools.

Mr. Kashatus said that the discounts were individual to each company, including what type of training is required.

Mr. Wagonseller noted that Chairman Neilson introduced HB257, which would require new drivers under 18 to review work zone safety materials before they can test for their license. The bill passed the House unanimously and awaits consideration in the Senate.

Study Implementation Updates

Ms. Holton reiterated that study consideration will now be on a rolling basis, so new ideas can be introduced at any time.

Ms. Farrell suggested a review of the impact that utility coordination has on transportation projects. Utility company response time can lag, which causes delays for consultants, communities, and PennDOT.

Mr. Dan Keane said that a Utilities in state-owned Right-of-Way study was done in 2021, which may cover some of those concerns. Mr. Murawski recommended that all members of the TAC review the website, to not just to remind themselves of what has been done, but also to see if there is room for follow-up on a study.

Mr. Chase said that PennDOT is doing an excellent job of implementing the Truck Parking study, noting the Truck Parking Work Group, and the involvement of the Federal Highway Administration and the Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association. Mr. Shifflet pointed out that Mr. Eboli has been heavily involved in both interim and long-term solutions to the parking issues.

MEMBER UPDATES:

Mr. Heath noted that through a USDOT SMART Grant that The Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Committee is soon to start rural medical deliveries in response to 911 via drone. Testing is actively underway today, with live use scheduled the following week.

OTHER BUSINESS:

None.

Adjournment

ON A MOTION by Mr. Heath, seconded by Mr. Pocius, and unanimously approved, the TAC meeting was adjourned at 12:13 p.m.