

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
BUSINESS MEETING
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
FEBRUARY 26, 2025



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

CALL TO ORDER:

Transportation Secretary Michael Carroll convened the quarterly business meeting of the State Transportation Commission (STC) at 10:02 a.m. on February 26, 2025, in Harrisburg, PA.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present:

1. Honorable Michael B. Carroll
2. Honorable Kerry Benninghoff, Josiah Shelley, Alternate Present
3. Honorable James Kingsborough
4. Honorable Karen Michael
5. Honorable Marty Flynn, Justin Gensimore, Alternate Present

Commissioners Present on the Phone:

1. Honorable Ed Neilson
2. Honorable Sharon Knoll
3. Honorable Judy Ward
4. Honorable Paige Willan

MINUTES:

ON A MOTION by Mr. Ed Neilson, seconded by Ms. Karen Michael, and unanimously approved, the December 18, 2024, STC business meeting minutes were accepted.

CHAIR'S REMARKS:

Mr. Carroll said that House and Senate appropriation hearings were the previous week and thanked the District and Central Office staff for their support and briefings.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

Mr. James Kingsborough nominated Ms. Sharon Knoll as Vice-Chair. Ms. Knoll nominated Ms. Michael as Secretary.

ON A MOTION by Mr. Kingsborough, seconded by Mr. Neilson, and unanimously approved, Sharon Knoll was elected Vice-Chair, and Karen Michael was elected Secretary.

12-YEAR TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM:

Mr. Mark Tobin, on behalf of Deputy Secretary for Planning Ms. Kristin Mulkerin, gave an update on the 12-Year Program adjustments.

For the period from December 7, 2024, to February 7, 2025, there were 1,086 program adjustments, consisting of 427 additions, 474 changes, and 185 removals. This reflects a \$120,877,733 increase for the reporting period.

Mr. Tobin highlighted two projects in District 10-0. The Karn's Crossing bridge project was let in November 2024 and the bid came in favorably to the estimate, freeing up approximately \$4.5 million for other projects in the region. The Graff Bridge Preservation project estimate came in higher than anticipated, and the Karn's Crossing savings and other funds were moved to cover. Since this action took place, the Graff Bridge letting has occurred, also with savings.

Mr. Tobin also highlighted \$38 million was drawn down from the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Reserve line item for individual projects. These projects include \$6 million for the US30 Sinkhole Remediation project in Chester County and \$9 million for Slide Repairs in Fayette County.

Mr. Carroll asked if the sinkhole on US30 earlier that week in Chester County was the same sinkhole described in the project. Mr. Tobin said that they were separate and distinct sinkholes, approximately a mile apart.

ON A MOTION by Ms. Michael and seconded by Mr. Kingsborough, the 2025 12-Year Program Adjustments were approved.

Bureau of Aviation 2025 Four-Year Plan

Anthony McCloskey gave a presentation on the Bureau of Aviation 2025 Four-Year Plan.

Mr. McCloskey said that there are 73 projects in the program, using \$24 million from the Aviation Restricted Account and \$30.8 from the Multimodal Transportation Aviation Funding.

The listed funds include an additional \$1.6 million in state funds. This allows the program to provide a 10% match instead of a 5% match.

Nine projects were added to the 2025-2027 program that were deemed significant. Nineteen projects are planned for the fourth year, which were previously planned for 2028-2029.

Mr. McCloskey said that Pennsylvania has an aging aviation infrastructure, and 40% is going to supporting facilities, access roads to airports, and fuel farm updates. Pavement and runway preservation is 30% of the program.

Mr. Kingsborough brought up the gears project in Carlisle, costing \$400,000 with the local share being \$100,000, and if that should be a 90/10 local share. Mr. McCloskey said he would look

into it and noted that Carlisle Airport doesn't get federal funds. Mr. Carroll said that they would make sure Carlisle is treated fairly.

ON A MOTION by Mr. Neilson and seconded by Mr. Kingsborough, the Bureau of Aviation 2025 Four-Year Plan was approved.

REPORTS

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

Ms. Jody Holton, Transportation Advisory Committee Chair, gave an update from the TAC.

Ms. Holton said the Transportation Performance Report (TPR) and the Impacts of E-commerce study were scheduled to be approved at this meeting. The Transportation Workforce Demographics study is expected to be approved at the April TAC meeting and forwarded to the STC.

Ms. Holton said the study selection for 2025 is still ongoing and welcomed suggestions from the STC.

Executive Secretary

Executive Deputy Secretary, Mr. Larry Shifflet, gave an update.

Mr. Shifflet indicated that core federal formula programs are not frozen and are still moving forward under the new administration.

Mr. Shifflet also noted the need for Congress to enact full year appropriations legislation due to the end of the continuing resolution on March 14, 2025.

Mr. Shifflet said some discretionary funds have been paused by the new administration. PennDOT is waiting for updates on the Karn's Crossing bridge application and the \$500 million award for the South Bridge project. He said the South Bridge project is not ready to go to construction, so the funds are not needed yet, but will be in the future.

Mr. Carroll said the projects with obligated funds will go on, and the commitments will be honored. He noted the rail line between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh and the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program as having outstanding unobligated funds.

Administrative/Budget

Deputy Secretary for Administration, Mr. Corey Pellington, highlighted items from the report.

Mr. Pellington said that the Mifflin County Maintenance Office advertisement date was extended due to high interest.

The Bureau of Equal Opportunity (BEO) was split into two, creating the Bureau of Workforce and Business Opportunity. BEO will continue to focus on compliance.

BEO is slightly under its Disadvantaged Business (DBE) goal and will continue to monitor and find opportunities where it can.

The 200 On the Job Training (OJT) program trainees represent an 18% increase over 2023.

The new bureau will continue to expand outreach events across the state and has been in every district.

Mr. Pellington said hiring and human resources processes have been improved across the state. There are still areas for improvement, but the salaried staff compliment is just under 97.5%. Temporary winter operator authorizations have been increased by 60, to a total of 293 filled.

Mr. Carroll welcomed Senator Judy Ward, the new chair of the Senate Transportation Committee. Ms. Ward said that she was happy to be a part of the commission. Mr. Carroll noted her background in transportation.

Driver and Vehicle Services

Deputy Secretary for Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS), Ms. Kara Templeton, said that DVS did a lot of safety messaging in the last quarter of the year, especially on school bus safety. This includes the School Bus Safety Poster Contest and Ceremony, as well as partnering with school districts and law enforcement on Operation Safe Stop 2024.

Two service enhancements were made for customers, Online Messenger partners can now process temporary disability placards, and customers now can request a replacement/duplicate camera card online.

Ms. Templeton said that in February 2024, DVS moved the customer helpline in-house. DVS continues to increase staffing and make enhancements, with a focus on automated services.

The REAL ID enforcement date of May 7, 2025, is approaching. PennDOT has provided messaging and additional processing hours at Driver License Centers. There will be another messaging push in March.

April 1, 2025, is the start date of the Electric Vehicle Road User Charge, and preparations are on track to be able to handle the charge by that date.

PennDOT is working with the Governor's Office on the issuance of the new "Liberty Bell" design license plate. The plate is anticipated to be available in the spring. Inventories of the current design will be used before issuance of the new plates.

Mr. Carroll noted that the Road User Fee was legislatively mandated, and PennDOT will work with legislative partners to help their constituents manage the new program.

Ms. Templeton said that there would be a payment plan option, but it would not be effective until July 2026. She said there are 87,000 EVs and 48,000 plug-in hybrid vehicles in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Nielson asked how other states' uptake of REAL ID was compared to Pennsylvania. Ms. Templeton said that many states have made it mandatory, so a comparison is difficult. Estimates were a 25% opt-in rate, currently at 24.4% or 2.5 million people. Individual federal agencies may provide phased enforcement for up to two years.

Mr. Carroll noted that every Pennsylvanian has had an opportunity to get a REAL ID, as all licenses have been renewed since the rollout. The decision to make Pennsylvania an optional state was from the legislature. PennDOT will continue to advise residents to obtain a REAL ID.

Highway and Bridge Program

Deputy Secretary, Ms. Christine Norris, highlighted several Highway and Bridge Program report sections.

Ms. Norris said that PennDOT had spent 92% of its winter budget as of January 31, but due to the amount of snow and freezing events in February, it is approximately 120% expended. This will have an effect on spring and summer operations. About 550,000 tons of salt had been used as of January 31, approximately the previous 5-year average. The estimate as of the meeting is approximately 800,000 tons, with 400,000 more on hand. More orders for salt have been placed. PennDOT continues to work with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) and other partners to assist local municipalities.

Gasoline, crude oil, and asphalt continued to trend slightly down in Q4 2024.

PennDOT had a goal of \$2.8 billion in letting for 2024. The I-95 Betsy Ross Bridge was moved from Q4 2024 to January 2025 at the request of industry partners. This caused PennDOT to fall short of its letting goal, but it was in the best interest of taxpayers and industry partners. 114 projects were let in Q4 2024. The 2025 letting goal is \$2.9 billion, more will be considered if cash flow allows.

98% of Q4 2024 construction projects were completed on time, above the goal of 80%. In 2024, 161 of the 533 projects exceeded the 3% cost overrun. The statewide overrun was 3.96%. Three projects accounted for the majority of the overrun. Without those projects, the statewide overrun would have been just over 1%.

\$70 million has been in NEVI funding across 91 awarded sites. All awards are under contract, 8 are fully operational, and 17 are under construction. If the US Department of Transportation chooses to halt approval of the state annual plans, Pennsylvania could lose \$100 million in federal funding and not be permitted to issue future awards for community charging, which could impact both cities and rural areas.

Mr. Nolan Ritchie asked about PennDOT's plans for the Schuylkill Expressway. Ms. Norris said she would look into it. Mr. Carroll said that it would require a more complete answer from District 6.

Mr. Carroll noted the efforts of the winter maintenance team. He said the budget for maintenance is based on a rolling five-year average, resulting in a lower budget after the previous mild winters, and that the continued decoupling of the state police funds will help support the overrun from the winter costs.

Multimodal Transportation

Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation, Ms. Meredith Biggica, gave an update for her Deputate.

The curing period for the Multimodal Fund has ended, with 15 not making it to the next round, and 160 continuing on. The applications outweigh the \$40 million dollars available. The target date for announcements is August 2025.

Mr. Carroll noted that Commonwealth Financing Authority announced multimodal awards this week, and that those awards may help meet the challenges. Ms. Biggica said that there was an overlap in 26 applications and we will find out if those projects were fully funded.

Following the Philadelphia Eagles Superbowl win, PennDOT partnered with Amtrak to require reserved tickets on the Keystone train to manage the number of riders for the parade. The ridership and revenue from that day doubled the average weekday. Amtrak and PennDOT worked together to add cars and capacity. Before the reserved restriction was put in place, Amtrak had oversold 600 tickets.

Mr. Carroll noted that District 6 had partnered with the local police to create road closures for the safety of parade attendees. He also mentioned the fast action taken after the aviation crash in District 6 to close nearby roads.

Office of Planning

Mr. Mark Tobin, on behalf of the Deputy Secretary for Planning, Ms. Kristin Mulkerin, gave an update from the Office of Planning.

Mr. Tobin said they continue to review the executive orders to see how they affect the current program and program development. PennDOT is working with federal partners.

Two workgroups have begun to start the process of creating guidance for the 2027 12-Year Program (TYP) update. The target to finalize Financial Guidance and General Procedural Guidance updates is the spring. Public outreach for the TYP will begin soon, and the Transportation Performance Report will be discussed later in this meeting.

As for the status of Discretionary grant awards, North Central RPO received an \$8.5 million multimodal grant for a local bridge replacement/rehabilitation bundle. The West Newton Historic Bridge rehabilitation in Westmoreland County was awarded a \$17 million Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) program grant. Five submissions, are still pending, including the Karn's Crossing bridge project, which are under review by the US Department of Transportation.

WORKING SESSION:

2025 Transportation Performance Report (TPR)

Mr. Brian Funkhouser of Michael Baker, Intl, presented the 2025 TPR.

Mr. Funkhouser said that the TPR has been created every two years since 2013 and that this is the seventh iteration of the report. The TPR acts as the kickoff for the 2027 12-Year Program update cycle. Updates on this version include a redesigned look and feel, improved accessibility, and the addition of Equity and Environment sections.

Mr. Funkhouser said only one performance measure was listed as poor, Motorcyclist Fatalities. Each performance measure has qualitative and quantitative information and links to more information. He also noted that the "Steady, Improving, Declining" scale refers to the performance statistic.

Mr. Funkhouser said the TPR is available in many languages through Google Translate. An abbreviated version called the Scorecard is also available for download. An accessibility button in the bottom-left corner allows easy manipulation of the text, colors, and other aspects of the page. A printable PDF file will also be available.

Mr. Carroll said that the TPR is very helpful, and the ability to drill down on a subject is valuable. Transportation is always changing, and this report helps keep everything on track.

ON A MOTION by Ms. Michael and seconded by Mr. Kingsborough, the 2025 Transportation Performance Report was approved.

Transportation and Land Use Implications of E-commerce Study

Mr. Tom Phelan from Michael Baker, Intl, presented the E-Commerce study.

Mr. Phelan said that the main objectives of the study were to identify land use changes, evaluate economic impact, identifying trends, and evaluate transportation implications.

Mr. Phelan said that an e-commerce expert panel was held on August 7, 2024, with over 150 participants. The five panelists had far-ranging experience, from e-commerce and real estate to rural and urban local governments.

Mr. Phelan described the changes to the supply chain, with customers now receiving goods directly from vendors, warehouses, and fulfillment centers, instead of traditional stores, and the transportation implications of many trips to a store as opposed to delivery vans. He noted that most E-Commerce facilities are located near cities and highway corridors.

Some benefits of e-commerce include higher-paying jobs, customer convenience, and economies of scale. Some costs include localized congestion, safety issues, and local infrastructure maintenance costs.

Findings include a determination that e-commerce has had a significant effect on the transportation system and transportation demand, but little has been done regarding a larger-scale study. Some zoning and land use codes are outdated, and there is a lack of reliable broadband internet.

Mr. Phelan gave a list of recommendations from the report, including consideration of the analysis of a package delivery fee, working with partners to develop freight plans, incorporating delivery needs into “Complete Streets” standards, incorporating e-commerce into the statewide emphasis on truck parking, post-development traffic data collection, and amending zoning regulations.

Mr. Carroll said there was a lot to contemplate, and that it is always a challenge for government to keep up with change.

Ms. Ward applauded the work of the committee and the PennDOT team. She does not support the fee but will vote yes on the study.

Mr. Josiah Shelley said that Mr. Benninghoff also does not support the fee but will vote yes on the study.

Mr. Carroll said that any fee implementation must be passed by the legislature, and that the vote today is the acceptance of the e-commerce report.

Mr. Kingsborough asked how a fee would be determined. Mr. Phelan said that the study relied on the TROC report and the Colorado fee. Colorado used a flat per-package delivery fee that started at 25 cents per delivery, indexed to inflation.

Mr. Carroll said that with increased EV usage, a potential decline in federal support for state DOTs, and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law needing to be reauthorized, the realities of transportation funding are stark. This would affect not only state roads, but local roads as well. He said there is no harm in looking at the range of options available to maintain a safe and efficient transportation network.

Mr. Neilson agreed that there is an issue with transportation funding and is in support of gathering information before passing legislation.

ON A MOTION by Mr. Neilson and seconded by Mr. Kingsborough, the Transportation and Land Use Implications of E-commerce Study was accepted.

COMMISSIONERS REPORT:

None

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Brianna January from the Chamber of Progress provided a brief statement and written letter against the implementation of a delivery fee on packages.

OTHER BUSINESS:

None.

NEXT MEETING:

The next STC quarterly meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, June 11, 2025.**

ADJOURNMENT:

ON A MOTION by Mr. Kingsborough and seconded by Ms. Michael, the STC quarterly meeting was adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

FOLLOW-UPS:

During the February 26 STC Meeting, Mr. Kingsborough questioned the local match for Carlisle Airport's "Install RW 10-28 GVPI REILS" for SFY 27-28 in the BOA FYP.

The local match was listed at \$100,000 (25% local match) for the planned project. After further review and since it is a safety-related project, the local match was revised to 10% which is consistent with other safety-related projects.

The sponsor, South Middleton Township, is only responsible for \$40,000 (10% local match) for the planned project.

In addition, there was a total of 11-line items where the incorrect state-local match was applied. In comparison to what was approved on Feb 26, the total local savings was approximately \$481k additionally associated with 9-line items. There were 2-line items where the local match was increased. Different projects require different match percentages. Nonetheless, corrections to the plan were made.

During the meeting, Mr. Ritchie asked about plans for the Schuylkill Expressway. The following is a response from District 6:

“In general, alternatives are always explored as part of the NEPA Process.

As part of the project development process a purpose and need for the I-76 Integrated Corridor Management (ICM) improvements was developed. The purpose and need for the I-76 ICM improvements is to reduce congestion, decrease congestion related crashes and increase travel time reliability along the I-76 corridor. The purpose and need is being utilized to evaluate alternatives during preliminary engineering for each project.

Physical constraints limit many conventional options for the corridor. I-76's width is restricted by the Schuylkill River, railroad facilities, industrial complexes, and the steep slopes alongside the eastbound lanes in Montgomery County. By deploying Smart Corridor technologies, the purpose and need can be achieved. The first phase of improvements installed Variable Speed Limits and Queue Detection Warning signs along the roadway. PennDOT has begun the process of upgrading and assuming operations and maintenance responsibilities for traffic signal systems along key arterial roadways within the I-76 corridor. In upcoming projects more complex, longer term strategies including Flex Lanes (hard shoulder running), will be included.

The alternative options considered during Preliminary Engineering for upcoming projects:

- I-76 Section FL1: Symmetrical widening to the outside shoulders, directional widening to north along I-76 westbound and shifting the median, and inside shoulder flex lane vs. outside shoulder flex lane. Alternatives for the eastern limit of work eastbound direction were considered due to the traffic conditions at the I-476 and Conshohocken interchanges. Ramp meters were also considered.
- I-76 Section FL3: Several options for the eastern and western limits of work. Inside shoulder vs. outside shoulder flex lane was also considered. Several options to eliminate the need for vehicles to jump the queue by taking the left exit to US 1 southbound in advance of this area and then re-entering 76 westbound at the left entrance just prior to the US 1 southbound ramp were considered. Several options for roadway widening and ramp improvements at the Belmont Ave interchange to avoid and minimize impacts to the floodplain.”