

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
BUSINESS MEETING  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA  
SEPTEMBER 10, 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 September 10, 2025, in Altoona, PA.

**ROLL CALL:**

**Commissioners Present:**

1. Honorable Michael Carroll
2. Honorable James Kingsborough
3. Honorable Karen Michael

**Commissioners Present on the Phone:**

1. Honorable Sharon Knoll
2. Honorable Judy Ward, Nolan Ritchie, Alternate Present
3. Honorable Paige Willan
4. Honorable Kerry Benninghoff, Layne Heining, Alternate Present

**Commissioners Not Present**

1. Honorable Ed Nielson
2. Honorable Marty Flynn

**MINUTES:**

**ON A MOTION** by Mr. James Kingsborough, seconded by Ms. Karen Michael, and unanimously approved, the June 11, 2025, STC business meeting minutes were accepted.

**CHAIR'S REMARKS:**

Secretary Carroll thanked District 9 for hosting the STC meeting and provided a brief update on the state budget and the request by SEPTA to use capital assistance funding for operations.

Secretary Carroll then recognized that this was the final meeting for Mr. James Kingsborough, and thanked him for his eleven years of service on the STC. Secretary Carroll presented Mr. Kingsborough with a citation and a letter of appreciation from the STC. Mr. Kingsborough said that it was a learning experience, a privilege, and an honor to serve on the STC.

## **12-YEAR TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM:**

Deputy Secretary for Planning, Ms. Kristin Mulkerin, gave an update on the 12-Year Program adjustments.

For the period between May 24, 2025, to August 22, 2025, there were 1,264 program adjustments, consisting of 384 project/phase additions, 751 project/phase changes, and 129 project/phase deletions.

Ms. Mulkerin highlighted two projects that required additional funds due to cost increases:

- I-99 Newry Pulloff to Plank Road Highway and Bridge Preservation
- US 219 Jennerstown to Cambria County pavement improvements

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

## **REPORTS**

### **Executive Secretary**

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

Mr. Shifflet noted that Ms. Kara Templeton was not in attendance today and that her report stands. He said that Ms. Templeton was attending an American Association of Motor Vehicles Administrators (AAMVA) event in Arizona, where she is the new regional president, and was being sworn into the international board of directors.

### **Administrative/Budget**

Deputy Secretary for Administration, Mr. Corey Pellington, gave an overview of his report.

The Bureau of Equal Opportunity is now 1% above their goal for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program, at 11.34%.

The Fort Pitt Squirrel Hill lighting upgrades project proposal due date has been extended to September 30, 2025.

The Workforce and Business Opportunity section continues to engage small businesses. Statistics from Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Small Business Reserve activity can be found on the Department of General Services website. There was a 63% increase from approximately \$25 million to \$40.8 million to small businesses.

The state employee vacancy rate remains below 3%, and ongoing initiatives are aimed at reducing time to hire. There are 906 seasonal winter positions approved for hire and posted online. As of June 30, 2025, there were 294 vacant Temporary Equipment Operator positions, and 41 vacant mechanic positions statewide.

### **Highway and Bridge Program**

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

The number of poor bridges continues to decline due to state and federal funding over the past couple of years. However, according to current financial projections, the number of poor bridges is expected to begin increasing in 2027. Road pavement in excellent condition is expected to decline, and poor International Roughness Index (IRI) miles could double by 2037.

The 5-year average of reported fatalities was 1,175, the second lowest since tracking began in 1928. Fatalities decreased in the three priority areas: lane departure crashes, impaired driving, and pedestrian safety. Areas that experienced an increase in 2024, are now being focused on, include intersection crashes, mature drivers, and speeding.

Paul Miller's Law went into effect on June 5, 2025, making it illegal to use a phone while operating a vehicle. Distracted driving fatalities have totaled 60 a year, but this does not include distractions other than phone usage. This statistic is also underreported, as it is difficult for officers to identify the distraction after the crash.

The department let 161 projects in the second quarter for \$512 million. \$1.7 billion has been let so far in 2025, with a letting goal of \$2.9 billion. Additional projects will be considered if cashflow allows. Bids have been competitive and have been coming in at about the estimated amount. The bid price index has remained stable since 2024.

94% of Q2 2025 construction projects were completed on time, exceeding the goal of 80%. The average cost overrun for the last four quarters was 2.78%, meeting the 3% goal.

### **Office of Planning**

Deputy Secretary for Planning, Ms. Kristin Mulkerin, gave an update from the Office of Planning.

Ms. Mulkerin said that the 12-Year Program update was in full swing. Transportation Improvement Plans (TIPs) from the Metropolitan and Rural Planning Organizations (MPOs and RPOs) are due to Central Office by the end of the year.

The Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) program is accepting applications. A webinar on July 9, 2025, outlined the program for potential project sponsors, and the applications portal opened on July 14. Draft applications were due September 5, with final applications required by October 31, 2025.

The federal authorization for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) continues for another year. It is likely that there will be a continuing resolution to extend the act beyond federal fiscal year 2026.

While safety continues to improve, due to the 5-year rolling average for federally mandated targets, PennDOT was unable to meet the 2022 safety goal, and was subject to penalties that involved funding obligation requirements for the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) in 2025. The 2023 goal was also not met, and so 2026 will also be penalized. PennDOT continues to work with FHWA on safety projects.

Three new videos about LTAP are available on PennDOT's YouTube page.

### **Multimodal Transportation**

Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation, Ms. Meredith Biggica, stated that her report stands.

Ms. Biggica highlighted that the Rail Freight grant application window closed at the end of August, and the applications are under review. Approximately \$45 million is available compared to \$72 million in grant requests.

The Pittsburgh Port Commission will be applying for a United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Maritime Administration (MARAD) Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) grant for the dredging of "No Man's Land" along the Monongahela River. The Army Corps of Engineers dredged the river, which affected the water levels of the river. This has made it challenging for businesses to use the full capacity of the river. PennDOT will match that grant for \$8 million.

Secretary Carroll noted that bridge and pavement conditions will worsen in the absence of other federal funding. He stated that the need is known by the legislature and its representatives, and he remains optimistic that these needs will be met. He noted the good work of PennDOT and Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) Multimodal funds in supporting locally owned bridges.

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

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

Ms. Holton said that she is proud to send the Pennsylvania in Motion Transportation Workforce Study, an extensive study examining every sector of transportation.

The study submission process has changed, and the TAC is now accepting study submissions at any time. She welcomed submissions from the STC and the audience.

Secretary Carroll thanked the group for their reports and acknowledged the good work of the Altoona and Johnstown Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Southern Alleghenies Rural Planning Organization (RPO).

## **WORKING SESSION:**

### **Pennsylvania in Motion – TAC Workforce Study**

Mr. Mark Murawski, Task Force Chair and TAC Vice Chair, stated that his motivation for the study stemmed from a report by the Center for Rural PA, which highlighted alarming trends in demographics, and how these shifts would impact the workforce. He acknowledged the task force and the expert stakeholders involved in the process. He said that this study is unusual in that it has only one consideration. He commended PennDOT on having already taken proactive steps to combat the issue and stressed the importance of transportation to all industries.

Mr. Brian Funkhouser stated that the report is concise, but the appendices contain more in-depth analysis and are equally important as the main report.

The report indicates a significant transportation workforce shortage, which is expected to worsen. This is caused by several factors, including high turnover rates, substantial numbers of upcoming retirements, and projected industry growth.

Trends increasing transportation needs include an aging population, declining car ownership among young people, urbanization, and e-commerce. Trends that lower the supply of workers include an overall workforce shrinkage, many transportation jobs being non-competitive, and barriers such as language, complex screenings, and changing views on work.

Mr. Funkhouser said that Pennsylvania's economy, safety, and communities depend on an efficient transportation system that is adequately staffed and in good repair. A workforce shortage hinders that operation.

The five major study findings were:

- The transportation workforce gap is substantial and expected to increase.
- the shortages will affect nearly every aspect of the economy and daily life.
- Pennsylvania has an established workforce development system.
- there is a need to expand existing public and private workforce programs.
- solutions must be comprehensive and flexible.

The study suggests establishing a Transportation Workforce Collaboration Team that utilizes existing workforce programs to address workforce needs, as well as collaboration among workforce development partners, businesses, educational institutions, and public and private sectors.

**ON A MOTION** by Ms. Michael and seconded by Ms. Kingsborough, the Pennsylvania in Motion Workforce Study was approved.

Secretary Carroll said that the governor and administration are aware of the challenges in the workforce in transportation, among many other sectors, and are taking steps to resolve those problems.

### **District 9-0 Presentation**

District Executive Vince Greenland gave a presentation on District 9.

Mr. Greenland said that District 9 contains six counties, three planning partners, 883 employees, 2,565 bridges, and 4,004 miles of road.

District 9's topography leaves it prone to flash flooding and landslides, typically in spring. In 2025, the district was affected by flooding, and a bridge on US 219 south of Myersdale was damaged beyond repair. The district and its contractors were able to launch a temporary bridge and reopen US 219 within ten days. A permanent solution is currently in the design phase, with construction expected in 2026.

Winter maintenance is a challenge, with the 2024/25 winter season costing \$28 million in salt, well above the 5-year average. District 9 has the highest cost of salt in the state, at \$100.59 per ton.

Mr. Greenland stated that District 9 received \$394 million over four years on the 2025 TIP, and will receive \$403 million on the 2027 TIP, representing a 2.3% increase.

District 9 is ahead of the statewide average in asset conditions, with 15.4% of roads and 5.8% of bridges in poor condition, compared to the state averages of 23.3% and 9.1%, respectively. The system is stable, but as the roads continue to age, more expensive treatments will need to be planned for.

There are 56 state-owned major bridges in District 9, with six reaching their end-of-useful-life within 10 years. One of these bridges is the "Million Dollar Bridge" in Huntington County, US 22 over the Juniata River. The replacement cost is estimated to be \$45 million, which would nearly exhaust the Southern Alleghenies RPO's budget alone.

Other major bridge project studies include: The US 219 over Stonycreek River McNally Bridge, with an estimated replacement cost of \$70-80 million; the 8<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge in Altoona, with a replacement estimate of \$20-25 million; and the Blair County North 8<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge.

Roadway projects include \$65 million in investment on the Interstate 99 Corridor in Bedford and Blair counties; \$47 million on the Interstate 70 Corridor in Fulton and Bedford counties, after which the entirety of I-70 will have been repaved; and the Turnpike's planned Breezewood High-Speed Interchange.

A long-term challenge is that I-70 connects I-99 and I-68 in Maryland, both of which are 70 mph roads, however I-70 is 55mph. To increase the speed limit, curves would need to be flattened and interchanges reconstructed, and the highway would possibly need to be relocated. The estimated cost for these upgrades would be \$590 million.

District 9 is also maintaining other four-lane non-interstate facilities. Six projects are scheduled on US 22 in the next 5 years, with one currently underway, totaling \$52 million. US 219 will undergo a series of rehabilitation projects, totaling \$104 million. US 30 will also see an investment of \$55 million in projects.

Mr. Greenland said that while they are pleased with the major corridors, there is minimal capital funds left over for resurfacing the rest of the system. To repave roads every 15-20 years, they would need to pave 258 miles every year. In 2025, 77 have been repaved.

The US 219 4-lane expansion is the largest project in District 9. Section 050 near Salisbury is the final piece that connects I-68 in Maryland to I-70/76 near Somerset. The section is currently in design, with the Record of Decision received from FHWA in May 2025. Two of the seven miles of proposed roadway would be in Maryland, and both states have agreed to move forward, with each state handling its own project. The final design is expected to run from 2026 to 2029, with construction scheduled from 2029 to 2031. Preconstruction funding has been secured; however, a \$147 million shortfall remains of the \$300 million total needed for construction.

Secretary Carroll stated that considerable attention was devoted to the reopening of I-95 in Philadelphia within twelve days. Still, District 9 reopened US 219 in ten days, and PennDOT pays attention no matter where the crisis may be. He also gave kudos for the assistance that was sent to Erie during the Thanksgiving blizzard in 2024.

#### **COMMISSIONERS REPORT:**

Mr. Kingsborough stated that the Aviation Council is continuing to pursue the jet fuel tax, noting that the tax has not been raised in over 20 years, and inquired about the progress of a proposal.

Secretary Carroll said a proposal is being finalized that includes aviation funding and aviation tax rates, which will likely be introduced in the Senate. He said that even with a modest increase, Pennsylvania would still be one of the lowest in the nation.

Ms. Paige Willan stated that funding for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) is a major discussion point in Philadelphia. As students return to school, conditions have noticeably gotten worse. She said that she understands the debate about funding, but it is important to residents that an appropriate mix of transportation be funded.

Secretary Carroll said that the challenges for SEPTA are real, and they also exist for Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT) and every county in the Commonwealth. PennDOT's transfer of capital funds provides help over the short-term, and he is committed to taking on that challenge for a long-term solution. He noted that major events in the region over the next year, such as the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the US, the MLB All-Star Game, the World Cup, and the NFL Draft would pose significant challenges, and that they would work towards a sustainable solution.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Ms. Sarah Wright requested clarification on Section 1340 of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code pertaining to Antique/Vintage cars. Antique plates allow for "occasional transportation", defined as no more than one day per week. Other states outline weekends and holidays as additional approved use days. Pennsylvania does not have these extra approved days, making it difficult to attend a multi-day car show with an antique vehicle. She noted a lack of clarity on what "one day per week" means. Her partner was issued a ticket for violating the rule for an overnight trip to a

car show, driving the vehicle two days in a row. She said the code goes against the spirit of the activities and use cases for the vehicles.

Secretary Carroll commended her for her attention to the laws. He said that the STC cannot amend laws and recommended that she takes the issue to her local legislators. He said that her points are valid, and that the vehicle code may need to be updated to accommodate appropriate use.

Mr. Jeff Iseman from Pennsylvania Statewide Independent Living Council (PA SILC) and the Transportation Alliance inquired whether the funds allocated to SEPTA by the governor would impact other projects in the region, specifically, if this would be the case for PRT.

Secretary Carroll states that projects currently underway will continue, but a compromise was reached that would have a detrimental effect on future capital fund projects that are not yet programmed. This would be the same for PRT. Other transit agencies do not have specific capital funds, and how those issues are resolved is a question for the House and Senate.

Mr. Iseman asked if projects unrelated to transit agencies would be affected, such as bike lanes or curb cuts. Secretary Carroll said that only transit would be affected.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

None.

**NEXT MEETING:**

The next STC quarterly meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, December 17, 2025.**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**ON A MOTION** by Ms. Michael and seconded by Mr. Kingsborough, the STC quarterly meeting was adjourned at 11:39 a.m.