

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
BUSINESS MEETING
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
OCTOBER 18TH, 2023



Please note that these minutes are not intended to capture every individual 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 10:02 a.m. on October 18, 2023.

CHAIR'S REMARKS:

TAC Chair, Ms. Jody Holton, AICP, gave brief remarks welcoming TAC members to the meeting. She spoke about the September State Transportation Commission (STC) meeting that was held in Indiana, PA. District 10 gave a presentation covering The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funds, including inflation's impact on them. The presentation also covered safety related to lane departure fatalities and how those numbers are declining. She also spoke about the House Transportation Committee hearing in Philadelphia, PA, that covered the topic of funding for public transportation and the importance of having adequate funding.

MINUTES:

Mr. John Pocius commented that many names needed to be added to the attendance list on the previous minutes. Ms. Jody Holton responded stating the importance of the sign-in sheet to ensure everyone in attendance was accounted for.

ON A MOTION by Mr. John Pocius, P.E., seconded by Mr. Ron Wagenmann and unanimously approved, the Minutes of the July 12, 2023, TAC Business Meeting were accepted without changes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

SECRETARY'S REMARKS:

On behalf of Transportation Secretary Michael B. Carroll, Mike Rebert, Deputy Secretary of Highway Administration, mentioned that Transportation Secretary Michael B. Carroll and Deputy Secretary Larry Shifflet were in Washington D.C. attempting to secure \$500 million of additional discretionary funding to help with repairs for the I-83 South Bridge.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION UPDATE:

Executive Office

On behalf of Executive Deputy Secretary Cheryl Moon-Sirianni, Mike Rebert, Deputy Secretary for Highway Administration, gave an update from the Executive Office.

Mr. Rebert began by speaking about current work being done closely with partners at the Associated Pennsylvania Constructors (APC) and American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) for the I-83 South Bridge. They are looking at a new bidding that would consider a proposal grading in addition to the low-bid system to determine a selected firm.

Mr. Rebert spoke about Pennsylvania's Automated Work Zone Speed Enforcement (AWZSE), which is currently in a pilot phase. Current work zones using AWZSE have seen a positive effect on increasing safety in work zones.

Executive Deputy Secretary Cheryl Moon-Sirianni spoke about workforce development. Modifications to the training program are still being worked on. Colleges and trade schools are invited to the APC conference in November to gain more interest in the transportation industry.

Mr. Mark Murawski asked if there are any issues about the automated work zones causing the back and forth between the Administration and the Legislation? Mr. Rebert responded that most people are for the automated work zones. The back-and-forth comes from the nuances or more minor details of the program.

Mr. Murawski asked how other states are handling the nuances of the program? Mr. Rebert responded that Maryland has been a leader in the automated work zone enforcement but, at this time, is unaware of how they are handling it.

Ms. Holton agreed it would be good to look at how surrounding states handle it. She also asked if Roosevelt Boulevard's automated speed enforcement is a part of the legislation. Mr. Mike Rebert responded that all areas using the program are included.

Administration and Budget

Deputy Secretary Corey Pellington gave an update on Administration and Budget.

Mr. Pellington reported that the District Office projects in Greene and Indiana Counties have been completed.

Mr. Pellington stated that continued work is happening to lower the amount of time it takes to fill PennDOT positions. At the beginning of the year, the average was at about 90 days; it is now down to an average of 63 days.

Mr. Pellington also reported that the labor agreement with American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) has been fully executed as of October 10, 2023. The executive board authorized a singular pay scale increase, which is retroactive back to July 1, 2023. Employees will then receive another increase in January 2024 and again in July of 2024.

Driver and Vehicle Services

Deputy Secretary Kara Templeton gave an update on Driver and Vehicle Services.

Ms. Templeton reported that the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) approved a streamlined version of the commercial driver's license (CDL) modernized test. The new version of the test reduces the redundancies of the previous version and allows applicants to use a checklist when conducting their inspections.

Ms. Templeton also reported that Driver and Vehicle Services has implemented the CDL School Bus Waiver. The plan streamlines the school bus application process by eliminating the under-the-hood inspection process. If someone goes through the process with the waiver, a restriction is placed on their license, limiting them to a school bus commercial vehicle and is limited to intra-state travel. As of October 11, 2023, ten people have used the waiver process.

Ms. Templeton said the Federal compliance date of May 7, 2025, for REAL ID is still in effect. Over 2.1 million Pennsylvanians have obtained a REAL ID, meaning that 20.3% of the customer base has elected to have a REAL ID as their identification card or driver's license.

Mr. Tom Phelan commented that the motor vehicle facility in Enola was one of the best experiences he had at a motor vehicle facility.

Mr. Murawski commented on the airport side of REAL IDs. There is a concern that those trying to utilize airports may need to learn they need REAL IDs to fly. He made the comment that the Latrobe airport uses an eye-catching prop that states that you cannot fly without certain items. This idea is also being pushed for other airports to use, which can help lower confusion for travelers.

Multimodal

No one was present at the time to provide any updates.

Planning

Ms. Kristen Mulkerin, Director of the Strategic Planning and Finance Office, gave an update for Planning on Deputy Secretary Larry Shifflet's behalf.

Ms. Mulkerin reported that Mr. Shifflet was in D.C. at the time to highlight PA's infrastructure needs and discuss the recent grant submission of the I-83 South Bridge project.

Ms. Mulkerin also reported that the P3 Office has its unsolicited proposal window open through November 10, 2023. The 2025 12-Year Program public comment and survey has closed, and the team is currently working on gathering the results. The TAC will continue to be updated on the 12-Year Program progress, until the STC adoption in August 2024.

Ms. Mulkerin noted that the 2022 Highway Statistics book is available online. Highway Statistics: <https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/pubsforms/Publications/PUB%20600.pdf>

Studies Update:

Truck Parking Study

Mr. Tom Phelan of Gannett Fleming gave a presentation on the Truck Parking Study. The study engages with a complex supply chain with many considerations, such as public highways, private industry, government regulations, and shipping. Some other factors that tie into the parking issue are real estate costs, building costs, local community impacts, and economic opportunities of a truck stop.

From a Federal level, there are three main safety priorities that are to be addressed: limiting or restricting hours of service and mandating rest periods to deal with the dangers of drowsy drivers, trucks parked on highway shoulders and interchange ramps, and truck driver safety and cargo security.

The facility preference is to be off-highway with long-term parking. PennDOT's role would be mostly as a facilitator, working with municipal partners and private industry to develop new capacity where needed. Restrictions on commercialization would limit PennDOT's ability to meet driver needs with on-site amenities and services.

As the study comes to an end the analysis portion involves a two-step process. The first step was an analysis to find the highway corridors of highest demand. The next step was to identify locations within those areas where truck parking facilities could be expanded, or new ones developed. The highest demand areas are around Philadelphia, with areas around Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, and east of Allentown scoring very highly.

Part of the study's implementation focus is to find potential locations where a facility may be built or expanded using criteria including available land, distance from residential areas, proximity to travel routes and existing facilities, and availability of amenities.

The next steps include completing framing implementation approaches and drafting the report. The study is expected to be presented to the TAC and STC in December 2023.

Mr. Murawski asked if there would be anything in the way of a Capital improvement plan for any areas that would be expanded or have new facilities or if that is something that MPOs and RPOs would handle in those areas.

Mr. Phelan responded saying his understanding is that it would have to be done by the MPOs and RPOs. There could be different partnerships between the public and private sector partners, but for it to have Capital funds, that would need to be addressed before it shows up on the Capital plan.

Mr. Murawski commented that it is important to define who does what with these projects once the report is issued. This will ensure that MPOs and RPOs are deeply involved and engaged with these decisions. Mr. Phelan responded, that the MPOs were the ones they reached out to once the corridors were picked. Their understanding is that the MPOs would serve as the conduit to the local governments.

Mr. Michael A. Carroll asked if in the document if members can provide guidance in regard to how conversations with local partners could take shape. Mr. Phelan responded that they could absolutely make comments and that it would be extremely beneficial.

Ms. Holton asked if MPOs will be expected to identify funding that they can contribute to the public and private partnerships. Mr. Phelan responded that at this time they are looking for the MPOs to assist in the site selection process, the funding coming afterward. They see the private sector as the main catalyst for the projects, with potential for government grants.

Ms. Holton asked what the timeline of this study is. Mr. Phelan responded that the finished study will be presented at the next meeting in December.

Local Match Challenges Study

Ms. Tracey Vernon from Vernon Land Use gave an update on the Local Match Challenges Study.

Ms. Vernon stated that one of the main things the study would like to do is ensure that local governments in Pennsylvania can take advantage of the expanded federal grant opportunities. She acknowledged that many municipalities face obstacles such as being at a disadvantage when trying to pursue grants as well and the requirements of local funding matches.

Ms. Vernon stated that the objectives of the study are to identify constraints that may limit flexibility toward waiving or reducing local matches, to understand and define the extent of the problem for municipalities with a high share of tax-exempt real estate, to understand trends involving untaxed parcels, and to identify options for assisting municipalities, options for local funding and best practices.

Stakeholder engagement is being collected through three different techniques; national research, stakeholder interviews, and local government input. Ms. Vernon stated that there has been some technical assistance implemented but some states have started separate funds specifically to help municipalities make their local match requirements. They have been in communication with various groups in transportation to get different perspectives on local matches.

A statewide survey was conducted by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania and received a 28% response rate. The survey showed that the municipalities 3 top needs were road and bridge maintenance, stormwater improvements, and road and bridge construction.

The survey also questioned how they are funding their transportation projects. Most are using their liquid fuels allocations. However, municipalities with four or more full-time employees have more capacity to go for the Federal or State competitive grants. The main constraints shown through this survey were limited staff and the inability to match the local match.

The key findings showed many municipalities are limited due to financial constraints, short grant application windows or complex application processes, and real estate tax-exempt properties. Other key findings included stringent match requirements, outdated county assessments, socioeconomic conditions, and a lack of capital improvement plans.

Current draft recommendations include flexible match with guiding policy or waiving the local match if justified. Other potential opportunities include building local capacity, promoting multi-municipal cooperation, modifying property taxes, implementing a state program to match Federal funds, seeking non-profit support, as well as, encouraging county transportation funding initiatives.

The next steps include having a completed study ready for the Task Force Review in November of 2023, TAC approval, and STC adoption in December of 2023.

Mr. Fred Strathmeyer asked if this study is looking at the entire population of Pennsylvania. He also asked about the Allegheny National Forest, as those municipalities rely on their income from lumber commerce in the area. He also made a comment about the age of the population and how those different aspects will still affect local matches.

Ms. Vernon responded by saying that they are in communication with Johnson & Johnson to get results from the survey they conducted regarding PA's population. They are also taking into consideration the changing demographics in PA and what areas are being affected the most by

the local match issues. As for the Allegheny National Forest, it is something that PA can look at from the Federal level with higher taxes.

Mr. Strathmeyer commented that many of the areas in the northwest are impacted by the lack of taxes. Ms. Vernon responded that by doing more multi-municipality cooperation, the points made are what they would discuss between them. As well as that she will follow up with him on the recommendations regarding the taxes in those areas.

Mr. Murawski commented that the commonwealth's side on this should be that they will meet municipalities halfway. Since there are things outside the municipality's control, that the commonwealth may be able to help influence. By creating some way of incentivizing municipalities to handle the things they can but what they can't, the commonwealth may be able to help.

Ms. Vernon responded that it is a great idea and one of the first steps may be to get more people involved so that they have the workforce to work towards it.

Mr. Strathmeyer added that while the municipalities that rely on the Allegheny National Forest have been doing better in the last eight years with their income from contracts. There needs to be more consistency so they can know what to expect in the future.

Ms. Holton made the comment that the Secretary could also take the municipality's individual points into consideration when making a choice about waiving local matches.

Mr. Pocius commented that many of the smaller municipalities may shy away from trying for local match grants due to the lack of management skills. One way to go about that is allowing PennDOT to handle the management side of the projects while the municipalities pay their part for the project. This could be a way to incentivize them to try for more grants.

Mr. Wagenmann added that he agrees that the assessments need to be redone. However, we need to keep in mind that after the assessment, taxes can be increased, and senior citizens could see a large increase. There should be some sort of solution that could help those impacted by the assessments.

Mr. Jeffery Young asked if there would be any sort of flow chart for legislators to follow when going through the choices. Ms. Vernon responded that flow charts are a very good idea, but at this time, they are looking at very high-level actions.

Study Topic Selection

Mr. Brian Funkhouser from Michael Baker gave an update on the upcoming selection process.

Mr. Brian Funkhouser reported that in the days following this meeting, TAC members would receive a TAC study form to gain insight on new topics or ideas from the members. During the December TAC meeting, the results from the study form will be open for discussion. Following that meeting, there will be an online survey for members to rank the candidates. Once the survey is complete, the next step is to coordinate with TAC leadership and PennDOT's Program Center to evaluate the priorities that were shown in the survey. During the February 2024 meeting, there will be time for final recommendations for studies.

Mr. Pocius asked if there are any previous studies still left in the queue. Mr. Funkhouser responded that there are some studies still in the queue and that they can include them as a reference during the December meeting.

Mr. Dan Keane made the comment that if someone who is not a TAC member submits a study topic, they hopefully coordinate with a TAC member who is willing to chair the Task Force.

Ms. Holton agreed to what Mr. Keane said. If someone outside the TAC members has a study to recommend, they should consult with a TAC member. She also stated that any study is good to recommend, whether it is a smaller scale or larger scale study.

Mr. Funkhouser added that was a good point to make. He stated that in the past five years alone, there have been 16 different projects that the TAC has taken on.

Study Implementation Updates

Mr. Murawski reported that once STC and TAC approved the aviation study in December 2022, Senator Langerholc held a hearing in April 2023. Mr. Mark Murawski and Dr. Larry Nulton were present at the hearing to testify for the TACs recommendations.

Following that meeting there have been many discussions with the State Aviation Advisory Committee and the Aviation Council. The next step was to separate aviation recommendations based on whether they needed legislation. With Senator Langerholc's help, it was determined that about half of the recommendations would require legislation.

Mr. Murawski then worked with the Aviation Advisory Committee and the Aviation Council to create a white paper that summarized all of the recommendations that require legislation. The summarization is a way to suggest that the approach taken is a comprehensive aviation bill. The Aviation Advisory and the Aviation Council would form a Taskforce to begin discussion about the recommendations. The aviation organizations would take leadership on four main things in the TAC study that they consider essential to the success of aviation: Funding, Workforce Development, a P3 for hangers, and emerging aviation technology. The process is currently in the works with the Administration and legislative groups to set up preliminary meetings to set up a Taskforce group. Mr. Mark Murawski reported that the tagline for this study is "Pennsylvania Takes Flight".

Additionally, the State Aviation Advisory Committee partnered with the Aviation Council to create five joint subcommittees who will handle the non-legislative items. The subcommittees will fund aviation workforce development, commercial service air freight, technology, and legislation.

MEMBER UPDATES:

None.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. John Pocius asked if, when any study is approved, if they are available to the MPOs. Ms. Holton replied stating that they are available online, but they could be specifically pushed out to the MPOs.

Mr. Pocius stated that certain studies especially should be pushed directly to MPOs so they can be aware of new updates. Mr. Murawski suggested that there should be some sort of communication push to ensure that any updates related to the MPOs will be relayed to them.

Ms. Holton agreed with the comments made and that there are more ways to increase communication between the different groups.

Mr. Strathmeyer added that getting messages out to stakeholders cannot be overstated. There is a great importance to getting information out to the communities so that all of those involved understand what is going on; the more people that understand the report the better. Mr. Murawski stated an idea that if a Taskforce chair adopted a study once it is finished with the TAC, they could work with whoever they see fit to get it moving along.

Ms. Felicia Dell agreed that there is a communication issue. Ms. Dell gave a few ideas on what could be done to improve communication. One possibility could be to see if PennDOT has any communication plans that the TAC members could take up as a way, to get the information out to stakeholders. If there is no specific plan for each stakeholder, there could be some sort of framework to follow. Ms. Dell also gave the suggestion that in future meeting there could be an agenda item to go over finished studies and how they were communicated to the public and stakeholders.

Ms. Holton replied saying the comments given were great ideas. It may be helpful to lean towards PennDOT and other consultants for help on different communication routes. A section to the agenda can be added as a reminder for future meetings to follow up on what has been done for completed studies.

Mr. Phelan commented that freight-related studies will always be looked at, between the efforts of Ms. Oyler and PennDOT's freight workgroup.

Mr. Pocius asked if there is a way to send out some sort of blast email to the MPOs and RPOs about them being completed and included basic information about the study? Mr. Keane responded that there are two email lists that the TYP group uses to update stakeholders, those could be used when studies are completed.

Mr. Hare asked if this would need to be a separate study item or if it could be an additional task for consultant support teams to implement some sort of strategy for communication outreach. Ms. Holton responded, it could be looked at to be done study by study or in general. Mr. Brian Hare replied that both ways could be done depending on the type of study.

Mr. Keane commented that there are many different techniques that the TYP group uses during their TYP outreach campaign that could be used for communication outreach for completed studies.

Mr. Murawski suggested that an executive team have a call with the consultants to generate ideas to respond to the outreach questions. Mr. Strathmeyer reminded the group not to forget about their agencies and stakeholders in the process.

Adjournment

ON A MOTION by Mr. Michael Carrol, P.E., seconded by Mr. Ron Wagenmann, and unanimously approved, the TAC meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Attendance from the TAC Business Meeting October 18, 2023

1. Ms. Jody Holton, AICP, Chair
2. Mr. Mark Murawski, Vice-Chair
3. Ms. Cheryl Moon-Sirianni, Executive Deputy Secretary
4. Mr. Rodney Bender, alternate for Ms. Gladys Brown Dutrieuille, TAC Member
5. Mr. Alison Mosher, alternate for Mr. Khalid Mumin, TAC Member
6. Ms. Laryssa Gaughen, alternate for Representative Kerry Benninghoff, TAC Member
7. Mr. Cameron Allen, alternate for Senator Tim Kearney, TAC Member
8. Mr. Paul Opiyo, alternate for Mr. Rick Siger, TAC Member
9. Mr. Fred Strathmeyer, alternate for Mr. Russell Redding, TAC Member
10. Mr. John Pocius, P.E., TAC Member
11. Mr. Alan Blahovec, CCTM, TAC Member
12. Mr. Michael A. Carroll, P.E., TAC Member
13. Mr. Larry Nulton, PhD, TAC Member
14. Mr. Ron Wagenmann, TAC Member
15. Mr. Richard Barcaskey, TAC Member
16. Mr. L. Ashley Porter, TAC Member
17. Ms. Felicia Dell, TAC Member
18. Mr. Mike Rebert, Highway Administration
19. Ms. Kara Templeton, PennDOT
20. Mr. Brian Hare, PennDOT
21. Mr. Mark Tobin, PennDOT
22. Ms. Kristen Mulkerin, PennDOT
23. Ms. Erin Waters-Trasatt, PennDOT
24. Ms. Michele Tarquino, PennDOT
25. Mr. Corey Pellington, PennDOT
26. Ms. Marisa Balanda, PennDOT
27. Mr. Jeffrey Reed, PennDOT
28. Mr. James Mosca, PennDOT
29. Mr. Dan Keane, PennDOT
30. Mr. Jim Mosca, PennDOT
31. Ms. Lauryn Knuth, PennDOT
32. Mr. Terry Pinder, PennDOT
33. Mr. Brian Sharkey, PennDOT

34. Mr. Kevin Wray, PennDOT
35. Mr. David Lapadat, PennDOT
36. Ms. Jessica Clark, PennDOT
37. Ms. Sadie Trout, PennDOT
38. Mr. Roy Gothie, PennDOT
39. Mr. J. Brian Walter, PennDOT
40. Mr. Nate Walker, PennDOT
41. Ms. Alice Bishop, PennDOT
42. Ms. Nyomi Evans, PennDOT
43. Mr. Michael Lauer, PennDOT
44. Ms. Amanda Rutherford, MARAD, US DOT
45. Ms. Amy Kessler, North Central RPO
46. Mr. Brian Funkhouser, Michael Baker International
47. Mr. Tracey Vernon, Michael Baker International
48. Mr. Casey Bottiger, Michael Baker International
49. Mr. Thomas Phelan, Gannett Fleming
50. Mr. Keith Chase, Gannett Fleming
51. Mr. Mario Mellinger, McCormick Taylor
52. Mr. Dan Dwyer
53. Mr. Ryan Anderson
54. Ms. Nicki Jacobs
55. Ms. Brenda Reigle
56. Mr. Connor Vecellio
57. Mr. Jeffery Young
58. Mr. Anton Rizk
59. Ms. Janelle Lance
60. Mr. Tyler Burke
61. Mr. Andrew Lemon
62. Mr. Sean Walshe
63. Mr. Anthony Panuccio
64. Mr. Ed Troxell
65. Ms. Alizabeth Schmidt
66. Mr. Anthony Hennen
67. Mr. Ron Grutza PSAB
68. Mr. Justin Gensimore, Gmerek Government Relations. Inc