

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
BUSINESS MEETING
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
DECEMBER 6TH, 2023



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 10:04 a.m. on December 6, 2023.

CHAIR'S REMARKS:

TAC Chair, Ms. Jody Holton, AICP, gave brief remarks welcoming TAC members to the meeting. She then introduced two new members of the TAC: Mr. Jeffrey Lewin and Ms. Tina Mengine. Ms. Mengine, CEO of the Erie County Redevelopment Authority, introduced herself and noted she looks forward to participating.

MINUTES:

ON A MOTION by Mr. John Pocius, P.E., seconded by Mr. Alan Blahovec and unanimously approved, the Minutes of the October 18, 2023, TAC Business Meeting were accepted without changes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

SECRETARY'S REMARKS:

Transportation Secretary Michael B. Carroll said he was excited to have the winners of the STIC Innovation Challenge from Lenape Technical School presenting their truck parking idea. He highlighted that there had been a lot of press in the Scranton and Reading areas about the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) announcement of The Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) Program. Scranton, Reading, and Pittsburgh (second Pennsylvanian) were awarded up to \$500,000 each for a study to develop passenger rail. He expects a second announcement regarding the Pennsylvanian rail line to help offset some of the costs for the operation of that line, though the details still need to be made available.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION UPDATE:

Executive Office

Executive Deputy Secretary Cheryl Moon-Sirianni began her update by praising the Lenape Technical School and the talents and knowledge of its students.

Ms. Moon-Sirianni said she hopes several bills that affect PennDOT's workforce safety and other initiatives are passed. PennDOT was also awarded several grants for projects across the State, and she wants to get those projects moving as soon as possible.

Secretary Carroll thanked Cheryl for all her work, mentioning that she is retiring after 37 years of service.

Administration and Budget

Deputy Secretary Corey Pellington gave an update on Administration and Budget. The Bureau of Equal Opportunity submitted its Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) methodology to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for the tri-annual period of 2024 to 2026. The new overall goal is 12.56%. The market goal for professional services is 29.19%, and the goal for construction is 9.62%.

Winter and temporary operator hiring continues, with 181 positions filled. This week, mobile onsite testing at all recruitment events began to increase the hiring pace for winter. This is the first time for this initiative, and they are excited to have it on the ground.

Ms. Rebecca Oyler asked how many total vacancies there are for winter operators. Mr. Pellington responded that there are 956 authorized positions.

Driver and Vehicle Services

Mr. Steve Madrak, Director of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, gave an update on Driver and Vehicle Services on behalf of Deputy Secretary Kara Templeton.

Mr. Madrak announced that Real ID adoption is 20.6%, with about 2.1 million customers. He projects hitting the 25% mark at the federally mandated deadline of 2025. The Selinsgrove Drivers License Center reopened after a project that provided significant environmental upgrades to the center was completed. This joint PennDOT and Department of General Services (DGS) project is estimated to save \$5,000 annually.

Multimodal

Mr. David Bratina, Director of Multimodal Transportation Fund Program, gave an update on the MTF State Discretionary Program on behalf of Deputy Secretary Meredith Biggica. Applications closed on November 13th, having received 182 applications, totaling \$216 million dollars of requests. 163 of those were new applications, and 19 resubmittals.

Ms. Holton asked when they expect to award the applications. Mr. Bratina stated that they are going through the evaluation process, including evaluation from the Districts and Planning Partners, and will hopefully award by the spring.

Secretary Carroll noted that Ms. Biggica is in Philadelphia, in support of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) analysis. SEPTA has been challenged with operational and safety concerns, and Ms. Biggica has been there for that process.

Highway Administration

Deputy Secretary Mike Rebert gave an update from Highway Administration. He said that Highway Administration is ready for winter. He noted that the 181 hires number is a work in progress, and they are streamlining the process and interviewing every day to fill those positions. They coordinate across the state and share resources, so while the number of hires is down slightly, they are not concerned about winter readiness.

Mr. Rebert spoke about the let schedule, as the year is almost over. The goal for 2023 was \$2.7 billion. They have let all the projects they had intended, and the total cost is just over \$2.8 billion, due to inflation. The 2024 estimate is \$2.8 billion. They have regularly worked with their fiscal office and are comfortable with that number. They will be able to cover any potential project increases.

Mr. Mark Murawski asked about design build best value for upcoming projects. Mr. Rebert responded that the I-83 South Bridge project is the priority. After the new year, the District and Central Office will work on the specifications and procedures for best value design. Mr. Murawski asked if they were looking more at the major projects before applying the procedures to more intermediate projects, and Mr. Rebert confirmed. Secretary Carroll added that the law may prescribe what can or cannot be used.

Mr. Murawski asked if the local government could be the owner of the project, or if it is exclusively PennDOT. Mr. Rebert said that he believed it was only PennDOT. Ms. Moon-Sirianni added that the Turnpike is also able to own.

Mr. Pocius offered kudos to the Highway Maintenance teams. There was an unexpected heavy snow shower, but Districts 4 and 5 maintenance crews were out keeping the roads clear.

Planning

Deputy Secretary Mr. Larry Shifflet gave an update. The 12-Year Program update is in full swing. MPOs and RPOs have until the end of the year to provide their Transportation Improvement Plans (TIPs) for review, which will eventually be adopted in August by the STC.

The grant submissions for the I-83 South Bridge through the MPDG and Large Bridge Infrastructure Program are still pending. Each submission is a request for \$500 million. A response is expected in early 2024.

PennDOT has received a federal grant of \$840,000 for the Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program.

The Federal DOT is starting a pilot program to expedite discretionary grant projects through the Federal FMIS system, rather than the long regular process for agreements. Pennsylvania has two projects in this pilot: the Central Susquehanna Valley Transportation (CSVTV) Project and Pittsburgh's Pathways to Equity program.

Secretary Carroll added that Mr. Shifflet, himself, and others were in Washington, D.C. to meet with the lawmakers representing Pennsylvania, and they have given unanimous support for the MPDG and Large Bridge Infrastructure grants.

NEVI Program

Ms. Natasha Fackler, Infrastructure Implementation Coordinator, gave an update on the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program. In August, conditional awards were given out to 56 projects across 37 counties totaling approximately \$35 million. One project is already nearing completion, with several others given notice to proceed. Most projects are still in the contracting phase, which requires a lot of time.

The NEVI Round 1A Program has opened, which continues to build out the Alternative Fuel Corridor Network. The round will be approximately \$22 million and would open to eGrants on December 11, 2023, and closing on January 26, 2024.

Ms. Oyler asked if there are any grants specifically for truck charging stations. Ms. Fackler responded that the initial round is focused mainly on passenger vehicles, but there are points awarded for larger truck considerations, such as pull-through spaces. Two cross-state East Coast projects have started specifically focusing on truck charging.

Mr. Carroll added that Pennsylvania and Ohio will likely have the first charging stations in the nation, the Pennsylvania location being in Luzerne County on I-81. This is due to the efforts of Ms. Fackler and her team.

Studies Update:

Truck Parking Study

Ms. Oyler, the Chair of the Truck Parking Task Force, gave an introduction to the study. She thanked the TAC for taking on the study, the task force, and the project team for the report. Truck parking is an issue that goes beyond the trucking industry and affects everyone. There were two primary goals of the study: to create a framework that identifies and prioritizes the corridors most in need and that the framework can be reusable in the future. There are 19 actionable steps listed in the study that can be acted upon quickly. The study also identifies and educates stakeholders establishing truck parking as an ongoing priority.

Mr. Tom Phelan of Gannett Fleming gave a presentation on the *Expanding Truck Parking in Pennsylvania* study. He opened with the statistic that the average truck driver loses approximately \$5,900 per year in lost time and productivity when looking for parking. Drivers are commonly paid by the mile, and every minute spent looking for parking counts against their hours-of-service limit.

Mr. Phelan gave a short recap of the corridor grading and identified corridors in need. Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, some segments of the Turnpike, I-78 near the New Jersey line, and Harrisburg area segments of I-83 are the highest priority areas.

The study also looked at finding specific locations to create or enhance parking facilities. The evaluation criteria included parcel size, distance to designated networks, compatible zoning, and whether the parcel is a brownfield redevelopment opportunity.

The study focuses on two types of facility: truck stops and pooled parking within industrial parks, as they are suited to handle long and short-term parking, as well as staging and emergency operations.

Mr. Phelan listed a few potential locations, specifically the Bellwether District redevelopment in Philadelphia and the Fairless Hills site north of Philadelphia; both are large parcels currently undergoing redevelopment but still need to be built. There is an opportunity to connect with the developer, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and county officials to get parcels carved out for truck parking facilities.

The study contains 19 recommendations, split into six areas: Cost of Real Estate, Availability of Appropriate Sites, State and Federal Policy, Community/Quality of Life Concerns, Municipal/Regulatory, and Institutional Initiatives.

Mr. Carroll asked what conversations had been had with Bellwether, as the District and City of Philadelphia have been working with them. Mr. Phelan clarified that they had yet to begin discussions with Bellwether, but the areas were identified as in need, and they would contact District 6.

Mr. Murawski mentioned that the legislature-approved Joint State Government Commission also approved a truck parking study and asked if there's any relationship between this study and the newly approved one. Mr. Phelan was unsure of the scope but believed it to focus more on the importance of truck parking in the supply chain. Mr. Murawski suggested that if the legislature moves forward with the study, the TAC study could be used as the basis for a new scope of work. Ms. Oyler noted that her group's perspective was that it was a good thing that the House was treating truck parking as an issue and would be happy to help that effort, but it has not yet passed the House.

Mr. Murawski asked if a potential partner is nearby but not in a tier 1 corridor, if would it still be valuable to pursue a potential deal. Mr. Phelan emphatically indicated that it could be, and stated that if it weren't a tier 1, it would likely be a tier 2 corridor. He then gave an example of a temporary weigh station near Shartlesville, a tier 2 corridor, where there are already ramps that could have additional parking space added.

Mr. Strathmeyer noted tier 1 corridors leading into New Jersey and Maryland and asked if this study was being shared with other states. Mr. Phelan stated that this was one of the recommendations, noting that Pennsylvania was dealing with New Jersey's overflow, and in turn, New Jersey is dealing with New York's overflow, and this escalates the issue beyond a simple state issue to a national issue where interstate coordination is paramount. Ms. Oyler said that her group would be happy to share the study with her membership.

Mr. Kashatus asked how much input was taken from the Student Innovation Challenge. Mr. Phelan said that the students had focused more on the design of the facilities rather than the site selection process. Ms. Oyler noted that an idea of the task force moving forward would be as a repository of information, and things like the students' work could be stored and shared.

Mr. Carroll, P.E., asked who would "own" the truck parking problem. He gave the example of Philadelphia being in very high need but unable to find even two acres of land, much less ten. The answer may be using areas in the surrounding counties, requiring a lot of communication and coordination. Mr. Phelan agreed, stating that the problem is owned by either nobody or everybody. PennDOT doesn't see itself as the sole owner but as an invested stakeholder, especially due to the safety concerns of trucks parked on the side of the road.

ON A MOTION by Mr. Mark Murawski, P.E., seconded by Mr. Michael A. Carroll and unanimously approved, the *Expanding Truck Parking in Pennsylvania Study* was approved.

The winners of the STIC Innovation Challenge from Lenape Technical School gave a brief presentation of their winning truck parking idea. Mr. Robert John and Mr. Elijah Mumau presented for their team, including Ms. Olyvia Burns, Leia Ziembicki-Lewis, and their instructor, Mr. Jason Zimmerman.

Mr. John said the team's initial truck stop design includes recycled asphalt, 3D printed restroom facilities, solar panels, and HVAC "umbilical cords." The students worked with people from PennDOT and Kimley-Horn, that helped refine their designs from initial sketches.

Mr. Mumau said that over the past few weeks, they have learned about zoning regulations, best management practices, and improved driver site circulation. The team designed two new sites, 13-acre and 4-acre variants, that could theoretically function for any parcel of land. The new sites feature a multipurpose building, herringbone-style parking, and improved lighting and rainwater management.

Mr. John reiterated how much the team has learned in the past 15 weeks. The team found unexpected challenges with new technologies and would likely have to partner with private companies. The team also learned about zoning, right-of-way, and trying to avoid affecting the environment.

Ms. Holton thanked the team for presenting and noted that their design showed a solid understanding of the material. Mr. Kashatus congratulated the students on behalf of the Department of Education. Ms. Oyler thanked PennDOT for holding the challenge and selecting a timely topic.

Local Match Challenges Study

Ms. Tracey Vernon from Vernon Land Use gave a presentation on the *Addressing Municipal Concerns to Participating in Competitive Transportation Grant Programs Study*. She began by saying that the State cannot fix this problem alone. Local match is not the only issue, as local government capacity also plays a significant role.

The study's objectives were to identify state constraints limiting flexibility in waiving or reducing local match, understand challenges with tax-exempt real estate, understand municipal capacity limiting grant funding, identify best practices, and develop recommendations to assist municipalities.

The study's twelve main findings can be grouped under three categories: Grant Requirements, Municipal Financial Constraints, and Municipal Capacity Constraints.

Grant requirement issues found were as follows: Match requirements are stringent. Application processes are complex. Grant application windows are short, and Grant notices are easy to miss.

Municipal Financial Constraints found were: Many municipalities have large amounts of tax-exempt/discounted real estate. Many county tax assessments need to be updated. Revenue from some funding sources is limited by population density. Industrial/Commercial tax bases are declining in many areas. Socioeconomic trends diminish the fiscal capacity of local governments. Municipal expenses are increasing.

Municipal capacity constraints found were a need for in-house technical capacity and multi-municipal cooperation, which must be strengthened. Local governments often need more capital improvement planning.

The study had ten recommendations: Adopt a flexible match policy for state grants and modify program guidelines, Consider local match waiver options, Establish a State program to match federal grants, Seek public-sector/non-profit match support, Establish a local match loan fund, Promote and incentivize multi-municipal coordination, Build local capacity through technical assistance, Consider property tax modifications, Adopt additional municipal taxes/fees, Encourage county-implemented transportation funding initiatives.

Mr. Ritchie asked for more information on flexible match policy, noting that legislation may have to divide municipalities into affluent and nonaffluent groups. Ms. Vernon said that the full study has examples from two other states, but criteria could be population size, number of municipal staff, percentage of tax-exempt property, municipal budget, millage rates, poverty rates, or unemployment rates.

Mr. Ritchie mentioned the benefits of the Green Light-Go Program when the General Assembly passed Act 101 of 2016 to lower its local match (from 50% to 20%). If the match requirements were lowered for more programs, there would be an increase in applications submitted. Ms. Vernon said that as of the 2017 State Fiscal Code (Act 44 of 2017) not requiring municipalities to pay local match, Multimodal has had a sharp increase in submissions. Only 5% of municipal applicants pay the 30% local match.

Mr. Ritchie said that while that does exist, he hasn't seen that described in PennDOT's Multimodal guidelines., so there may be an educational aspect that needs to be provided to municipalities. Ms. Vernon said that for PennDOT, the Secretary can waive match requirements.

Secretary Carroll stated that most municipalities in the northeast are aware of the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) Multimodal no-match requirement, which is why they almost exclusively apply through the CFA process, rather than the PennDOT process.

Mr. Murawski asked how many of the recommendations would require state-enabling legislation. Ms. Vernon said that items requiring legislation would be flagged in the full report.

Ms. Vernon moved on to implementation section, recommending a task force that included transportation planning, local government, and economic development. The recommended first step was establishing a strategic action plan for promoting local payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT) programs.

Study Chair Mr. Elam Herr said that it is important to remember that these distressed municipalities have very limited funds. Funds from tax-exempt land are minimal and have to be used for many municipal functions, and municipalities do not have another revenue source.

Ms. Vernon ended the presentation by stating that the State cannot be the only partner at the table. Adjusting grant funding and increasing local capacity are significant challenges, and executive and legislative leadership are required.

Mr. Strathmeyer said there is a lack of knowledge that some of these grants and programs even exist. Additionally, 20-25% of the rural population is leaving rural areas, affecting the ability to fund necessary services.

Secretary Carroll said that state elected officials are responsible for helping educate their municipalities, helping them navigate the programs, and highlighting opportunities. This is made difficult by the high turnover of local officials. Mr. Strathmeyer commented that the Department of Agriculture is looking to educate townships at the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS); it would be a good opportunity for the TAC or PennDOT to do outreach there.

Ms. Holton said that there had been a discussion of implementation of studies at the last meeting, and that partnering with the State Planning Board and PSATS outreach to grow the task force are good ideas.

ON A MOTION by Mr. Blahovec, seconded by Ms. Felicia Dell and unanimously approved, the *Addressing Municipal Challenges to Participating in Competitive Transportation Grant Programs* study was approved.

Study Topic Selection

Mr. Brian Funkhouser from Michael Baker International, gave an update on the upcoming selection process. He stated that several topics have already been suggested for next year, including PA Demographic Trends, Opportunities for Deployment of AI-Based Workplace Tools, Equitable Transit-Oriented Development in PA, and An Assessment of Parking: Impacts, Issues & Implications. Several topics from the Freight Movement Plan will also be included as well.

A survey would be sent out on the same day to gather input from the TAC members, with responses due on December 20, 2023. These responses would be reviewed through January 20, 2024, with the selection at the February 5, 2024, TAC meeting.

Mr. Ritchie mentioned that the PennDOT innovation challenge had been announced and asked if there was any overlap. Ms. Fackler said that the subject for this year is reconnecting neighborhoods bisected by interstates.

Mr. Murawski suggested that with the recent release of the Center for Rural PA's demographic study, combining his suggested demographics topic with the Governor's executive order proposal may be wise. Ms. Holton said that could also be used in support of the Department of Aging's Master Plan for older adults. Mr. Funkhouser added that we would need to know the timeframe for the Governor's effort, and if the TAC would be able to provide results in time. Ms. Holton suggested that we may take recommendations from that study and using it in for the TAC study. Mr. Keane said that they would note that scopes may be combined on the TAC Study Topic survey but would not delay sending it out.

Ms. Holton suggested that they should consider adding a Reconnecting Communities topic to the form. Mr. Keane responded that there is an open field for comment after each topic, including topics that may already be in progress.

Ms. Holton said that the topics will be reviewed during January and will start to select and further scope the study topics at the February 5th meeting.

Study Communication Plan

Mr. Dan Keane gave a presentation on a TAC Study Communication Plan. He said it was suggested at the last TAC meeting to create a communication plan for studies, to get stakeholders more involved in the process. He and his team coordinated with the consultant teams and the PennDOT Communications Office to find different communication methods, such as press releases, blog posts, talkpatransportation.com banners, social media, etc.

The consensus was that because every study has a different stakeholder group, each study would need to have a unique plan. The current two studies will be used as a pilot program to develop a communication plan further, and Mr. Keane will report back to the TAC.

Mr. Strathmeyer asked if the studies would be going out to different agencies within the State, as the departments are often siloed from one another. The Department of Agriculture, for example, is very interested in things affecting rural communities. Mr. Keane agreed and said he would add it to the plan.

Ms. Oyler asked about what points in the study this would be done. Mr. Keane responded that it would be on study selection, and at the end of the process after STC approval. Ms. Oyler said that she had wondered about communication at the beginning of the Truck Parking study process, and that stakeholder groups could do a lot of outreach for the studies. Ms. Erin Waters-Trasatt said that outreach from stakeholder groups is able to reach groups that would not be able to be reached by a press release.

Study Implementation Updates

Mr. Ritchie said that the Roosevelt Boulevard Automated Speed Enforcement Study has been beneficial for the proposed automated speed enforcement legislation and the TAC's original study in 2012 on cameras in work zones was instrumental for getting Act 86 of 2018 passed (ASE enabling legislation) and signed into law. They are looking at more studies from the TAC, as the sunset dates are approaching for active work zones and Roosevelt Boulevard. Ms. Holton asked if there was an extension of the sunset dates. Mr. Ritchie said that there is not, which is why legislation was introduced. Without reauthorization, Roosevelt Boulevard will expire December 18th, and the active work zones program expires February 16th. He said that the TAC studies make a big difference in how policymakers evaluate proposals and ideas.

MEMBER UPDATES:

None.

OTHER BUSINESS:

None.

Adjournment

ON A MOTION by Mr. Pocius, P.E., seconded by Mr. Blahovec, and unanimously approved, the TAC meeting was adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

**Attendance from the TAC Business Meeting
December 6, 2023**

1. Ms. Jody Holton, AICP, Chair
2. Mr. Mark Murawski, Vice-Chair
3. Mr. Michael B. Carroll, Secretary of Transportation
4. Ms. Cheryl Moon-Sirianni, Executive Deputy Secretary
5. Mr. Rodney Bender, alternate for Mr. Stephen M DeFrank, TAC Member
6. Mr. Paul Opiyo, alternate for Mr. Rick Siger, TAC Member
7. Mr. Fred Strathmeyer, alternate for Mr. Russell Redding, TAC Member
8. Mr. Nolan Ritchie, alternate for Mr. Wayne Langerholc, Jr., TAC Member
9. Mr. John Kashatus, alternate for Mr. Khalid Mumin, 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. Ms. Tina Mengine, TAC Member
14. Mr. Larry Nulton, PhD, TAC Member
15. Mr. Richard Barcaskey, TAC Member
16. Ms. Felicia Dell, TAC Member
17. Mr. Elam Herr, TAC Member
18. Ms. Rebecca Oyler, TAC Member
19. Mr. Mike Rebert, Highway Administration
20. Mr. Steve Madrak, PennDOT
21. Mr. Larry Shifflet, PennDOT
22. Mr. Mark Tobin, PennDOT
23. Ms. Kristin Mulkerin, PennDOT
24. Ms. Natasha Fackler, PennDOT
25. Ms. Erin Waters-Trasatt, PennDOT
26. Ms. Michele Tarquino, PennDOT
27. Ms. Alexis Campbell, PennDOT
28. Mr. Corey Pellington, PennDOT
29. Mr. Dan Keane, PennDOT
30. Ms. Lauryn Knuth, PennDOT
31. Mr. Terry Pinder, PennDOT
32. Mr. Brian Sharkey, PennDOT
33. Mr. Kevin Wray, PennDOT
34. Mr. David Lapadat, PennDOT
35. Ms. Jessica Clark, PennDOT
36. Mr. Nate Walker, PennDOT
37. Ms. Alice Bishop, PennDOT
38. Mr. David Bratina, PennDOT
39. Mr. Brian Funkhouser, Michael Baker International
40. Mr. Tracey Vernon, Michael Baker International
41. Mr. Casey Bottiger, Michael Baker International

42. Mr. Thomas Phelan, Gannett Fleming
43. Mr. Keith Chase, Gannett Fleming
44. Mr. Mario Mellinger, McCormick Taylor
45. Ms. Nicki Jacobs
46. Mr. Jeffery Young
47. Mr. Anton Rizk
48. Ms. Janelle Lance
49. Mr. Tyler Burke
50. Mr. Ed Troxell
51. Mr. Anthony Hennen
52. Mr. Ron Grutza PSAB
53. Mr. Zachary Appleby
54. Mr. Samuel Arnold
55. Ms. Lyssa Cromell
56. Mr. Jayden Demmy
57. Mr. Mathew Goldstein
58. Mr. Dan Green
59. Mr. Christopher Henry (FMCSA)
60. Mr. Blade Kline
61. Ms. Tiffany Landis
62. Mr. Shane Rice
63. Mr. James Ritzman
64. Mr. Kyle Schaeffer
65. Mr. Logan Stover
66. Mr. Robert John
67. Mr. Elijah Mumau
68. Ms. Olyvia Burns
69. Ms. Leia Ziembicki-Lewis
70. Mr. Jason Zimmerman