

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
BUSINESS MEETING
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
JULY 19, 2022



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

CALL TO ORDER:

The business meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was called to order on Microsoft Teams at 10:02 a.m. on July 19, 2022.

CHAIR'S REMARKS:

TAC Vice-chair, Mr. Mark Murawski, gave brief remarks welcoming TAC members to the meeting.

Mr. Murawski reminded attendees that all TAC meetings are recorded for minute-taking purposes.

Mr. Murawski announced the passing of former TAC Chair, Mr. Lou Shultz. The TAC held a moment of silence to honor his memory.

VICE-CHAIR ELECTION

The TAC voted to elect a new Vice-Chair.

Ms. Brenda Sandberg and Mr. John Pocius nominated Mr. Mark Murawski.

ON A MOTION by Ms. Brenda Sandberg seconded by Mr. John Pocius, and unanimously approved, Mr. Mark Murawski was elected TAC Vice-Chair.

NEW MEMBER INTRODUCTION

Vice-Chair Murawski announced the appointment of Mr. Richard Barcaskey to the TAC. Mr. Barcaskey briefly introduced himself.

MINUTES:

ON A MOTION by Mr. Ronald Wagenmann and seconded by Ms. Brenda Sandberg, and unanimously approved, the Minutes of the February 7, 2022, TAC Business Meeting were accepted with changes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

SECRETARY'S REMARKS:

Executive Deputy Secretary, Melissa Batula, P.E., provided brief remarks discussing the Commonwealth's 2022-2023 Budget, which caps the State Police funding from the Motor License Fund at \$500 million.

Ms. Batula noted that the passage of Act 84 reformed the P3 statutes. She said that the new law allows PennDOT's Pathways Major Bridge P3 Initiative to continue but eliminates the user fees. Ms. Batula added that the Department is now considering alternative funding mechanisms for the candidate bridges.

Ms. Batula also discussed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding for Electric Vehicles (EV) infrastructure. She noted that the Department is working on submitting the application to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to get the \$180 million over the next five years in funding for EV infrastructure.

Mr. Wagenmann asked if all the charging stations the Department is planning to install will be fast charging stations?

Ms. Batula answered yes.

Mr. Carroll asked if the user fee option is completely off the table for the Major Bridge P3 Initiative?

Ms. Batula said yes.

Mr. Carroll asked how much is the federal funding for the overall initiative?

Ms. Batula said that the overall initiative requires \$4 billion in federal funding.

Mr. Murawski commented that the Keystone Coalition estimated that the current reduction to the PSP funding is enough to cover the State funding match.

Ms. Batula said that the reduction will likely be enough, but the long term funding issues remain.

Deputy Secretary for Planning, Larry Shifflet noted that the match for federal funding is covered for now but the funding match for the nine candidate bridges is not covered.

Ms. Batula also noted that the Department is exploring other long term funding options including the Mileage Based User Fee. She said that the Department has joined the Road Usage Charge America, which is a coalition of all the western States and Pennsylvania, to learn more about opportunities to generate a more sustainable revenue for transportation.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION UPDATE:

Administration

Executive Deputy Secretary Ms. Melissa Batula gave a brief report about the Administration Deputate. She said that hiring remains a challenge for the Department, especially for maintenance operators.

Ms. Batula said that the Department needs the hiring for operators to improve in order to keep up with winter maintenance operations.

Driver and Vehicle Services

Deputy Secretary Kurt Myers gave a brief update for the Drivers and Vehicles Services (DVS) Deputate. Mr. Myers explained that staffing remains a challenge. He noted that turnovers have been high.

Mr. Myers disused the Real ID enforcement deadline, which he said is still set for May 3, 2023. He added that he expects an uptick in demand as the deadline gets closer.

Mr. Myers talked about the modernization initiatives going on at the DVS, including upgrades to facilities and the vehicle registration system update.

Mr. Pocius commented about his experience getting a Real ID.

Highway and Bridge Program

Acting Deputy Secretary Mr. Michael Keiser, P.E., gave an update about Highway Administration Deputate.

Mr. Keiser discussed the Digital Delivery Initiative, which aims to modernize PennDOT's project delivery processes and contract document media to incorporate digital data. The Initiative will design and bid construction projects using 3-D technology by 2025.

Mr. Keiser explained that the 2021 letting program increased to \$2 billion due to funding provided by the General Assembly and the Wolf Administration. The 2022 letting program increased to \$2.5 billion due to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

Mr. Keiser noted that inflation, workforce, and supply chain issues continue to increase low bids. He said that the Department is working with industry partners to find ways to stabilize bids. Mr. Keiser also said that it is harder now to do construction work at night because the Department is struggling to hire operators.

Mr. Carroll asked if there are previews for the Digital Delivery Initiative pilot?

Mr. Keiser said he can put Mr. Carroll in touch with the right people.

Mr. Carroll asked if municipalities can also be involved in PennDOT's effort to store construction materials?

Mr. Keiser said that PennDOT can educate municipalities on what the effort entails.

Multimodal Transportation

Ms. Jennie Louwerse, AICP, Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation, gave a brief update discussing the groundbreaking event for a new facility in Dubois. Ms. Louwerse said that transit has seen a 20 to 30% funding increase during the IJA. She added that State funding has also increased and allowed the Department to advance projects.

Ms. Louwerse noted that inflation and the rising operating cost have impacted the Department's buying power. She added that the COVID-19 pandemic caused a significant reduction in revenue from the aviation fuel tax. And although the General Assembly has provided funds to keep the Program afloat, there is still a \$5.8 million deficit to fill and a \$1.6 million for projects match for Federal Funding is also needed.

Ms. Louwerse said that the ports of Erie and Philadelphia are working to reduce backlogs.

Ms. Louwerse also discussed the agreement with Norfolk Southern on a plan to upgrade infrastructure between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg, which would allow a second daily Amtrak train between those cities.

Mr. Murawski asked how many trips will be available under the new agreement?

Ms. Louwerse said two round trips daily will be available to start.

Mr. Murawski asked if there is any action to be expected from the General Assembly about the \$5.8 million deficit?

Mr. Ritchie said that there is no indication the General Assembly will consider the issue soon.

Office of Planning

Deputy Secretary for Planning, Mr. Larry Shifflet, gave a brief update about his Deputate.

Mr. Shifflet thanked the four Chairs for their efforts in passing the Capital Budget Bill. Mr. Shifflet noted that the 12-Year Program update is almost completed and will be up for consideration at the STC August meeting.

Mr. Shifflet discussed the IJA discretionary funds. He said that the Department is submitting applications for the opened grants.

Mr. Ritchie asked if the Department is aware of the State Implementation Plan?

Ms. Shifflet said that there has been discussions at the high levels.

Mr. Shifflet explained that the SIP needs to be updated and failure to do so could result in loss of Federal Funding. He added that work is being done to solve the issue.

Mr. Ritchie said that it would be good to hear from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection about what happened.

Ms. Batula said that sanctions would not be a loss of funding rather a limit on the ability to use funds in some areas.

WORKING SESSION:

Demand for Alternate Uses of State-Owned Right-of-Way

Mr. Mike Davidson from Drive Engineering presented the draft report of the Demand for Alternate Uses of the State-Owned Right-of-Way. He said that the primary purpose of highway right-of-way is for transportation purposes, but there are occasions when the right-of-way may be used alternatively as economic generators and to enhance quality of life such as:

- outdoor dining
- parades
- festivals
- races
- temporary bike lanes
- open streets events.

Mr. Davidson explained that alternate uses of right-of-way became more critical during the COVID-19 pandemic because activities normally held indoors were moved outside to comply with public health requirements. He added that municipality officials had to find ways to balance:

- needs of the local economy
- transportation needs for multiple modes
- road safety needs
- public health requirements.

Methodology

Mr. Davidson discussed the study methodology including:

- ad hoc Committee Meetings
- review of PA statutes, regulations, and policies
- review of Federal regulations
- municipality case studies
- interviews with other states – Florida DOT and Maryland State Highway Administration.

About the *Statutes and Regulations*, Mr. Davidson highlighted the 67 PA Code §212.701(b), which established that:

“The Department may issue a permit for a procession, assemblage or special activity on a State-designated highway if a statement that the municipality will agree to fully indemnify, save harmless and, if requested, defend the Commonwealth”

Special Event Permit Process

Mr. Davidson explained that the special event permit process is used to authorize temporary road closures and other event-related uses of PennDOT's right-of-way. He added that to do so, event sponsors must complete an application (Form TE-300)

Municipality Case Studies – Key Themes

Mr. Davidson explained key issues that came out of the municipalities case studies including:

- cost and effort to hold special events
- special event application can be overwhelming
 - In many cases municipal staff take time to help
 - Many sponsors and municipalities do not have the expertise to develop a new detour route and signing plan
- fairly easy process when detours are already established
- concerns with insurance costs
- support across all municipal departments.

Findings and Recommendations

Mr. Davidson highlighted the study findings, which include 22 recommendations grouped into three categories:

- recommendations for PennDOT
- recommendations for Municipalities/Local Organizations
- recommendations for Municipal Organizations.

Recommendations – PennDOT

- Explore the feasibility of authorizing Maintenance offices to coordinate with municipalities to use County Maintenance signs, changeable message signs, and other traffic control devices.

Recommendations - Municipalities

- If a special event must close a portion of a state route, select the route and limits to be used for all future special events.
- Encourage sponsors to hold special events on local roads rather than state routes.

Recommendations – Municipal Organizations

- Coordinate with LTAP to develop a training course to provide instruction on traffic detours.
- Create a central resource for municipalities to pull and share resources, such as detour signage.

Discussion and Next Steps

The report will move to the STC for consideration at the August meeting.

ON A MOTION by Mr. Ronald Wagenmann seconded by Mr. John Pocius, and unanimously approved, the *Demand for Alternate Uses of State-Owned Right-of-Way* study was approved.

Public Transit Demand and Post-Pandemic Mobility Planning and Address Economic Disparities in Rural PA by Increasing Transportation Options

Mr. Aarion Franklin, from Michael Baker International, briefed the TAC on the study progress.

Mr. Franklin noted that the Taskforce held a meeting prior to the TAC meeting to discuss the draft report distributed to taskforce members.

Mr. Franklin said that the Study Team received feedback about the implications and recommendation and will work to address them in the coming days. He also noted that the language in the report about the rural and urban disparities has been updated.

The report is set to be completed in the next weeks.

Pennsylvania Aviation Needs Assessment and Strategic Action Plan

Mr. Brian Funkhouser gave a status update for the PA Aviation Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan study. He noted that study is taking a holistic view on the Commonwealth's aviation needs.

Mr. Funkhouser explained that the final report will include:

- Comprehensive Direction for Aviation
- Executive Summary
 - Two Core Sections:
 - Needs and Funding
 - Issues and Opportunities
- Implementation Approach
- Data and Information:
 - Stakeholder Input – Regional Listening Sessions
 - Topic Papers
 - BOA/Fiscal Data
 - TROC Framework and Tools

Mr. Funkhouser noted that the Study Team has completed the regional listening sessions and is getting started with the options evaluation.

The study is set to be completed by the end of the year.

Deputy Secretary for multimodal transportation said that the TAC and STC should urgently consider this study as soon as it is completed given the dire situation of the Commonwealth's aviation funding.

Mr. Murawski asked if the Senate Aviation Caucus would be a good partner to get involved in the implementation of the recommendations that would come out of the report?

Mr. Ritchie answered certainly; noting that the House Transportation Committee can also be part of the discussion.

Corridor Automated Speed Enforcement (CASE)

Mr. Mike Davidson from Drive Engineering gave a status update on the CASE study. He explained that Mr. Gustave Sheerbaum is chairing the Taskforce.

Mr. Davidson noted that a kickoff meeting was held May 2, 2022. He added that the study will conduct an Independent and objective assessment of the ASE program to:

- evaluate the effectiveness of the program,
- determine if the pilot program merits being extended, and
- evaluate the potential to expand the program to other corridors and municipalities beyond Philadelphia.

Mr. Davidson said that a study on the effects of ASE on reported collisions and traffic fatalities showed a 37% decrease on reported collisions on Roosevelt Boulevard and an estimated annualized safety benefits of \$70 million.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Advisory Committees Discussion

Mr. Murawski talked about the TAC's effort to facilitate a better communication and collaboration between the different Advisory Committees. He noted that the proposal to consolidate all the Committees under TAC would require legislative amendments.

Mr. Murawski said that the TAC Chair has decided to invite the Chairs of the other Committees to TAC meetings so they can discuss the work they are doing.

Mr. Bob Shaffer, Chair of the Aviation Committee, gave a brief report, noting that the Committee has been operational since 1999 and is focused on enhancing the Commonwealth's economic welfare.

Mr. Shaffer said that he looks forward to working with the TAC.

NEXT MEETING:

The next TAC business meeting is scheduled to be held virtually on **Tuesday, October 11, 2022.**

ADJOURNMENT:

ON A MOTION by Mr. Ronald Wagenmann and seconded by Ms. Brenda Sandberg, and unanimously approved, the TAC meeting was adjourned at 12:26 p.m.

Attendance from the TAC Business Meeting
July 17, 2022

1. Ms. Jody Holton, Chair
2. Mr. Mark Murawski, Vice-Chair
3. Ms. Melissa Batula, P.E., alternate for Ms. Yassmin Gramian, P.E., TAC member
4. Mr. Rodney Bender, alternate for Ms. Gladys Brown Dutrieuille, TAC member
5. Mr. John Kashatus, alternate for Mr. Eric Hagarty, TAC Member
6. Mr. Domenic Rocco, alternate for Mr. Patrick McDonnell, TAC member
7. Ms. Jessica Passiment, alternate for Mr. Neil Weaver, TAC Member
8. Mr. Nolan Ritchie, alternate for Senator Wayne Langerholc Jr., TAC member
9. Mr. Sam Arnold, alternate for Senator Tim Kearney, TAC member
10. Mr. Tim Hennessey, TAC member
11. Mr. Michael Carroll, P.E., TAC Member
12. Mr. Alan Blahovec, CCPM, TAC member
13. Ms. Brenda Sandberg, TAC member
14. Mr. Ronald Wagenmann, TAC member
15. Mr. John Pocius, TAC member
16. Mr. Ashley Porter, TAC member
17. Mr. Richard Barcaskey, TAC Member
18. Ms. Michelle Jennings, PennDOT
19. Ms. Jennie Louwerse, AICP, PennDOT
20. Mr. Michael Keiser, P.E., PennDOT
21. Mr. Kurt Myers, PennDOT
22. Mr. Larry Shifflet, PennDOT
23. Ms. Erin Waters-Trasatt, PennDOT
24. Ms. Sarah Clark, PennDOT
25. Mr. Shane Rice, PennDOT
26. Ms. Natasha Fackler, PennDOT
27. Mr. Abdoul Ahmed, PennDOT
28. Mr. Brian Hare, P.E., PennDOT
29. Ms. Karen Heath, PennDOT
30. Mr. Daniel Keane, PennDOT
31. Mr. Mark Tobin, PennDOT
32. Mr. Brian Sharkey, PennDOT
33. Mr. Terry Pinder, PennDOT
34. Mr. Daryl St. Clair, PennDOT
35. Mr. Brian Walter, PennDOT
36. Mr. David Lapadat, PennDOT
37. Ms. Jessica Clark, PennDOT
38. Mr. Nate Walker, PennDOT

39. Mr. Brian Funkhouser, Michael Baker Int'l
40. Mr. Aarion Franklin, Michael Baker Int'l
41. Mr. Troy Truax, Michael Baker Int'l
42. Mr. Mike Davidson, Drive Engineering
43. Mr. Jim Ritzman, P.E., Pennoni
44. Ms. Lugene Keys, McCormick Taylor
45. Mr. Matt Smoker, FHWA
46. Mr. Bob Shaffer, Aviation Committee, Chair
47. Ms. Tracey Vernon, Vernon Land Use
48. Mr. Matt Rucci, office of Mr. Tim Hennessy
49. Ms. Sadie Trout, Legislative Policy Office
50. Mr. Tyler Burke, Milliron and Goodman
51. Ms. Nicki Jacobs, GPI
52. Mr. Kevin O'Boyle, Mericle

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