

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
BUSINESS MEETING
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
OCTOBER 15TH, 2020



CALL TO ORDER:

The business meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was called to order on Skype at 10:03 a.m. on October 15, 2020.

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.

MINUTES:

ON A MOTION by Mr. John Pocius and seconded by Mr. Ashley Porter, and unanimously approved, the Minutes of July 17, 2020, TAC Business Meeting were accepted.

CHAIR'S REMARKS:

TAC Chair, Ms. Jody Holton, AICP, gave brief remarks welcoming TAC members to the Skype meeting. Ms. Holton provided some updates including:

- The appointment of a new TAC member, Mr. Joseph Butzer to the TAC. Mr. Butzer briefly introduced himself.
- The appointment of Mr. Daniel Keane as the new 12-Year Program Section manager. Mr. Keane briefly introduced himself.

SECRETARY'S REMARKS:

Secretary Yassmin Gramian, P.E., provided remarks in which she welcomed new members to the TAC.

Secretary Gramian explained that the COVID-19 pandemic remains an issue and the Department continues to implement safety measures to operate as safe as possible.

Secretary Gramian noted that seasonal hiring operations continue as the Department is gearing up for winter maintenance operations.

Secretary Gramian also noted that funding continues to be a major issue; and the Department is working on various short-term solutions but the future of operations remains uncertain. Secretary Gramian added that Federal Funding is also operating under a one-year continuing resolution of the FAST Act and an extension of the fiscal appropriation thru December 11. Secretary Gramian also discussed the Smart Belt Coalition Initiative, the Intelligent Transportation System Conference, and the Automated Vehicles guidelines.

TAC STUDY UPDATES:

The TAC continues to work on three other study topics. Mr. Mark Murawski, Mr. Dale Witmer, AICP, Michael Baker International, and Mr. Conor McAliney, Drive Engineering, gave an update about the TAC studies and the Transportation Performance Report.

Statewide Small Local Bridge Investment Plan

Mr. Mark Murawski gave an update on the Statewide Small Bridge Investment Plan Study. Mr. Murawski explained that extensive outreach work was conducted. The study group received all data collected by the local communities and conducted its own surveys. He added that one of the findings is that inspection data for the small bridges is not being included in PennDOT's Bridge Management System.

Mr. Murawski highlighted the draft report, which was submitted to the Task Force for review. He said that the Task Force will discuss the comments received after the TAC meeting.

Mr. Murawski said that the report will have four major recommendations that will be discussed at the TAC December meeting. He added that the draft report will be sent to the TAC prior to the meeting.

Mr. Ashley Porter asked if a copy of the summary results from the survey can be made available for TAC members.

Mr. Murawski said that it will be part of the report.

Utilities in the State Right-of-Way

Mr. Witmer gave an update about the Utilities in the State Right-of-Way Study. Mr. Witmer highlighted outreach efforts. He noted that two surveys were conducted to gather input from a very extended stakeholder group.

Mr. Witmer also discussed some key takeaways from the outreach surveys including:

- Schedule has emerged as the biggest challenge
- Improved coordination tools would offer greatest benefit
- Utility relocation timelines are needed
- Aerial utility identification inefficiencies exist
- Coordinate PA and URMS database systems – Industry would benefit from continued awareness efforts.

Mr. Witmer noted that a Task Force meeting will be held from 1-3PM after the TAC meeting to discuss the input received. He added that recommendations will then be drafted and sent out to the Task Force for review.

2021 Transportation Performance Report

Mr. Conor McAliney gave an update on the 2021 Transportation Performance Report (TPR). He explained that the TPR was first launched in 2013 and evaluates five performance areas including: Safety, Mobility, Preservation, Accountability, and Funding. Mr. McAliney said that the data will be presented in an interactive digital format and the document will feature an introductory video.

Mr. McAliney indicated that preliminary meetings with PennDOT Staff have taken place and performance metrics and report formats were discussed.

Mr. McAliney explained that most of the data needed have been received and some trend analysis for metrics is already being done.

Mr. McAliney highlighted some congestion and freight movement trends and the next steps.

The next steps for the TPR include:

- Finalize TPR charts
- Develop themes from TPR data
- Develop introductory video
- Draft TPR Report to be sent out in December-January.

STATEWIDE LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION AND COMPREHENSIVE FREIGHT MOVEMENT PLAN UPDATE: By Brian Funkhouser, AICP.

Mr. Brian Funkhouser from Michael Baker Int'l gave a presentation about the LRTP and the CFMP. Mr. Funkhouser highlighted planning process mapping, technical memos and cross cutting analyses, transportation planning data repository, and statewide freight forum.

Mr. Funkhouser detailed the LRTP process, which includes:

- Develop profiles and analysis
- Draft goals, objectives, and measures
- Educate and obtain feedback
- Identify initial strategies and analyze alternatives
- Develop initiatives, investment priorities and actions
- Educate and obtain feedback
- Draft LRTP implementation approach
- Educate and obtain feedback
- Adopt LRTP, implement and track.

Mr. Funkhouser discussed the transportation planning data repository, which aims to understand how end users use different data sources in their transportation planning processes, and create a user-friendly platform for data access.

For the Virtual Statewide Freight Forum, Mr. Funkhouser explained that the objectives are to:

- validate draft freight plan directions, explore plan strategies and identify paths to action;
- build partnerships and stakeholder concurrence of proposed implementation approach;

- inform, engage and educate attendees on data-driven freight planning resources.

Mr. Funkhouser gave an overview of the forum's agenda and some featured speakers.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING NEEDS: By Larry Shifflet

Deputy Secretary for Planning, Mr. Larry Shifflet discussed transportation funding sources, needs, and threats.

Mr. Shifflet explained that the Department of Transportation receives approximately 75% of its funding from state sources and 25% of its funding from federal sources for a total of approximately \$9.1 billion in annual funding.

Mr. Shifflet also discussed funding threats facing transportation in the Commonwealth including:

- The potential reduction of federal funding
- The potential repeal of Act 89 vehicle sales tax transfer

Mr. Shifflet talked about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the transportation funding, which caused an estimated \$842 million in lost revenue. Mr. Shifflet noted that the Department is continuing to work to refine the numbers to have a clearer picture of the extent of losses.

Mr. Ritchie asked if airports and ports revenue losses are included in the report.

Mr. Shifflet answered no. He noted that the report focuses mainly on highways and bridges.

Mr. Ritchie asked for more details about what is included in the multimodal category.

Mr. Shifflet said that he will follow up.

Mr. Pocius commented about the status of the Green Light Go projects.

Ms. Batula said that the Department is just trying to give the municipalities a heads-up to resume activities soon.

TAC NEXT STUDY TOPIC:

Ms. Holton explained that the TAC is taking application for new study topics.

Mr. Funkhouser discussed previously submitted study topics

Ms. Ricks asked about the process to submit new topics.

Ms. Holton answered that there is an online portal being worked on, but for now TAC members can use a form to submit their ideas. She added the consulting team will send out a request form for new topics and the previously submitted topics will be discussed at the next TAC meeting.

PA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION UPDATE:

Executive Deputy Secretary

Executive Secretary, Mr. George McAuley, P.E. provided brief remarks praising the efforts of the of TAC in adjusting to conducting business during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Policy Advisor

Mr. Roger Cohen gave a brief update about a special project to assess the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on transportation and travel behavior.

Mr. Cohen explained that the project will look at how the Department can adapt to changes induced by the pandemic.

Mr. Cohen said that the work group will survey the State's transportation planning community and assess new tools to modernize transportation planning in the Commonwealth in the wake of COVID-19 related changes.

Mr. Cohen mentioned the work group members and said he hoped to get a report ready by early next year. He added that the group will report back to the TAC.

Mr. Murawski asked if it would make sense to use TAC resources to study any potential recommendations that would come out of the report.

Mr. Cohen answered that there is an opportunity for that, and the group would welcome it.

Administration and Budget

Mr. Robert Chiappelli, Deputy Secretary for Administration, gave a brief report. Mr. Chiappelli said that the majority of the Department's workforce is working on site and the rest is teleworking.

Mr. Chiappelli explained that the Department is having some difficulties hiring seasonal operators. He added that the Department is implementing different tactics to reach as many candidates as possible.

Mr. Chiappelli noted that permanent hiring is going well, and facilities are being updated to install safety equipment, especially in high traffic areas.

Mr. Chiappelli concluded his update noting the Virtual Innovation week is coming up. He added that the five days event will be highlighted by 60 speakers and showcase innovation in transportation.

Driver and Vehicle Services

Deputy Secretary for Driver and Vehicle Services, Mr. Kurt Myers, gave an update about his Deputate. Mr. Myers said that almost all of the backlog for skills and knowledge tests has been eliminated.

Mr. Myers explained that PennDOT has implemented the use of photo on file for customers renewing a driver license or an identification card, which has allowed products renewed from May 10 and forward to be completed online or through the mail and the product mailed to the customer.

Mr. Myers said that personalized license plate demand remains slow to fill. He added that the Real ID issuance also resumed but the demand has slowed down.

Mr. Myers concluded his update noting that the safety of the employees and customers remains a high priority and the Department continues work on ways to operate as safely as possible.

Highway and Bridge Program

Deputy Secretary Ms. Melissa Batula, P.E., gave an update about Highway Administration highlighting the *Green Light Go* Program. Ms. Batula explained that all previously awarded projects will continue and there is no need to reapply again.

Ms. Batula noted that funding issues continue to be discussed and there are ongoing initiatives to explore avenues to generate alternative revenue. She added that Mr. Ken McClain will brief the TAC in the near future.

Ms. Batula announced that the *Be Safe PA* program won an award. She added that there was a fatal accident on a construction site and the Department had a full safety stop, stopping all work to reflect on a better way to keep workers safe.

Ms. Batula also noted that winter maintenance operations are gearing up but there are some concerns about being able to hire enough operators and keeping them safe. She added that the Department has a plan in place to address any issues.

Ms. Batula concluded her update noting that the Department is working on a digital delivery program for all projects by 2025.

Multimodal Transportation

Deputy Secretary Ms. Jennie Granger, AICP, gave a brief update in which she announced that the Reading Passenger Rail study report is progressing. She explained that virtual interviews will be conducted soon.

Ms. Granger noted that Middletown Train Station construction project is progressing and extended an invitation to TAC members to go on a tour of the construction site.

Ms. Granger also discussed the 2020 Multimodal Grant, which she said is taking application through November.

Office of Planning

Deputy Secretary for Planning, Mr. Larry Shifflet gave a brief update in which he said that Congress has approved a one-year Continuing Resolution for transportation funding.

Mr. Shifflet also announced that the STC has approved 2021 Twelve Year Program and the Program has successfully gone through the federal approval process as well.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. John Kashatus reminded TAC members that October 19th is the School Bus Safety week.

NEXT MEETING:

The next TAC business meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, December 3, 2020**, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

ADJOURNMENT:

ON A MOTION by Mr. Ronald Wagenmann and seconded by Mr. John Pocius, the TAC meeting was adjourned at 12:02 P.M.

DRAFT

Attendance* from the TAC Business Meeting
October 15, 2020

1. Ms. Jody Holton, AICP, Chair
2. Ms. Yassmin Gramian, P.E., TAC member
3. Ms. Brenda Sandberg, TAC member
4. Mr. Ashley Porter, P.E., TAC member
5. Ms. Karina Ricks, TAC member
6. Mr. Joseph Butzer, TAC member
7. Dr. Larry Nulton, TAC member
8. Mr. John Pocius, P.E., PLS, TAC member
9. Mr. Mark Murawski, TAC member
10. Mr. Elam Herr, TAC member
11. Mr. Alan Blahovec, CCPM, TAC member
12. Mr. Ronald Wagenmann, TAC member
13. Mr. Tom Geanopulos, TAC member
14. Ms. Meredith Biggica, alternate for Rep. Mike Carroll, TAC member
15. Mr. Tim Kearney, TAC member
16. Mr. Nolan Ritchie, Alternate for Senator Kim Ward
17. Mr. John Kashatus, alternate for Mr. Pedro Rivera, TAC member
18. Mr. Paul Opiyo, alternate for Mr. Dennis Davin, TAC member
19. Ms. Tiffany Landis, P.E., alternate for Mr. Patrick McDonnell, TAC member
20. Mr. Fred Strathmeyer, alternate for Mr. Russell Redding, TAC member
21. Mr. Rodney Bender, alternate for Ms. Gladys Brown Dutrieuille, TAC member
22. Mr. Josiah Shelley, alternate for Rep. Tim Hennessey, TAC Member
23. Mr. George McAuley, Jr., P.E., PennDOT
24. Ms. Melissa Batula, P.E., PennDOT
25. Ms. Sarah Clark, PennDOT
26. Ms. Natasha Fackler, PennDOT
27. Mr. Larry Shifflet, PennDOT
28. Mr. Kurt Myers, PennDOT
29. Ms. Jennie Granger, AICP, PennDOT
30. Mr. Roger Cohen, PennDOT
31. Mr. Robert Chiappelli, PennDOT
32. Mr. Shane Rice, PennDOT
33. Ms. Lugene Keys, McCormick Taylor
34. Ms. Leanne Doran, Michael Baker Int'l
35. Mr. Brian Funkhouser, Michael Baker Int'l
36. Mr. Troy Truex, AICP, Michael Baker Int'l
37. Mr. Bradley Duda, Michael Baker Int'l
38. Mr. Brian Link, Michael Baker Int'l

39. Ms. Audrey Corrado, Michael Baker Int'l
40. Mr. Dale Witmer, Michael Baker Int'l
41. Mr. Tim Smith, Gannett Fleming
42. Ms. Nicki Jacobs, GPI
43. Mr. Thomas Phelan, Michael Baker Int'l
44. Mr. Dan Cessna, Michael Baker Int'l
45. Ms. Allie Slizofski, Drive Engineering
46. Mr. Conor McAliney, Drive Engineering
47. Mr. Brian Hare, P.E., PennDOT
48. Mr. Mark Tobin, PennDOT
49. Ms. Jessica Clark, PennDOT
50. Mr. Abdoul Ahmed, PennDOT
51. Mr. Terry Pinder, PennDOT
52. Mr. Brian Sharkey, PennDOT
53. Ms. Karen Heath, PennDOT
54. Mr. Daniel Keane, PennDOT

**Attendance includes members present via conference call.*