

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
BUSINESS MEETING  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA  
DECEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup>, 2020



**CALL TO ORDER:**

The business meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was called to order on Skype at 10:02 a.m. on December 3, 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. Ronald Wagenmann, and unanimously approved, the Minutes of October 15, 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 reminded all attendees that all TAC meetings are recorded for minute taking purposes.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None.

**SECRETARY'S REMARKS:**

Executive Deputy Secretary George McAuley, P.E. welcomed Commissioners and guests to the TAC meeting. Mr. McAuley explained that PennDOT is facing dire funding issues due to a significant COVID-19 related revenue loss.

Executive Deputy Secretary McAuley noted that PennDOT's request for bonding authority was not included in the State's budget. He explained that although the Governor has approved a short-term funding mechanism to continue active projects through February 2021, new projects are on hold until there is a more definitive funding solution available to replace the revenue loss.

Executive Deputy Secretary McAuley said that communications in the media paint an incomplete picture of the situation. He noted that the Department's overall construction program is roughly 60% to 65% federal funding. Federal funding operates as a reimbursement program and the Department needs State funds upfront to make the payments to get the reimbursement from the Federal government. He added that most of the Department's projects are split funded

80% federal funds and 20% state funds and noted that, as we pay contractors, only part of that comes back as federal reimbursement.

Executive Deputy Secretary McAuley said that the short-term solution is complex and not typically within department authority to do. Unless there is a long-term solution, the 2021 construction program will be decimated.

Executive Deputy Secretary McAuley also explained that PennDOT is considering various alternative funding sources to support and enhance transportation in Pennsylvania into the future. He added that the Department has launched the PennDOT Pathways Program to evaluate other long-term funding solutions.

Mr. Murawski asked about the duration of the short-term solution and if municipalities will be able get their reimbursements on time.

Mr. McAuley said that the short-term solution will carry through February and the Spring payments to municipalities will go out soon. He added that the municipalities have been briefed to expect the payments based on standard proportion of actual revenue soon.

Mr. Ritchie commented that there is no indication the next stimulus package will include funding for Highway and Bridge Programs.

### **WORKING SESSION:**

#### **STATEWIDE LOCAL SMALL BRIDGES STUDY: By Troy Truax**

Mr. Troy Truax presented the Statewide Small Bridge Investment Plan Study draft report. Mr. Truax explained that an extensive outreach work was conducted. The study group received all data collected by the local communities and conducted its own surveys.

Mr. Truax gave an overview of the study background, the objectives, the stakeholders engagement, the major findings and actions being recommended.

The four major findings and actions include:

#### *Standardized Approach*

- Finding: A standardized approach based on the National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS) for assessing the condition of local small bridge structures is needed to ensure consistency and accuracy of the data collected and maintained.
- Action: PennDOT, in collaboration with the Planning Partners, counties, and municipalities, should communicate the methodology and requirements for the ongoing inventory, condition assessment, and management of local small bridges.

#### *Capacity Building*

- Finding: Technical assistance, training programs and tools are needed to increase local knowledge and proficiencies in asset management.

- Action: PennDOT’s Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) should be used to develop and deliver a new, day-long training course on the standardized approach.

#### *Incentivization*

- Finding: Financial incentives are needed to increase and achieve statewide participation in a standardized asset management approach for local small bridge structures.
- Action: The General Assembly or PennDOT should utilize its various grant programs to incentivize counties and municipalities to inventory, assess, and help maintain local small bridges.
- Action: The General Assembly or PennDOT should consider instituting a phase-in of reporting requirements/standards associated with liquid fuels funds with incentives offered for having a local bridge asset management plan.
- Action: Planning Partners should consider including local small bridge inventory assessment, redundancy studies in their respective Unified Planning Work Programs and work with counties and various municipal associations to advocate for alternate financing and technical approaches.

#### *Implementation*

- Finding: A dedicated team of subject matter experts is needed to serve as the lead champion for developing the technical details of the Standardized Approach and associated training curriculum.
- Action: PennDOT in conjunction with the TAC should organize a “Local Small Bridge Action Team” (Action Team) to lead the implementation of the findings and actions specified by this study.

Mr. Murawski commented about the next steps for the study. He explained that an Action Team will be created to work on the implementation of the findings.

Mr. Wagenmann asked how many municipalities are relying on PennDOT to do for the inspection of the over 20 feet bridges. He noted that the reason for the question is that we could offer this service to municipalities for bridges under 20 feet.

Mr. Truax answered that the study has only focused on bridges under 20 feet.

Mr. McAuley said that PennDOT should be able to provide data for that.

As a follow up, Mr. Richard W. Runyen, P.E from PennDOT’s Bureau of Maintenance Operation provided the following answer:

For Fiscal Year 2019-2020, there were 729 municipalities and 41 counties that relied on PennDOT for the inspection of the over 20 feet bridges.

PennDOT utilizes consultant agreements to have municipality and county owned bridges over 20 feet in length inspected. The inspection cost is paid 80/20 Federal/State. PennDOT withholds the 20% from the municipality or County Liquid Fuels funds. Each year, a list of these bridges and the 20% cost for each bridge is compiled and sent to PennDOT’s Center for Program

Development and Management to have each municipality or county Liquid Fuels funds withheld. To be clear, these inspections are not performed with PennDOT inspectors.

Mr. Herr commented there is a need to clarify why some municipalities are collecting the \$5 fee and what the money is being used for. He added that additional funding is needed to incentivize counties to undertake the work needed.

Mr. Shifflet commented that the \$5 fee funds are not exclusively for bridges and Counties can work with municipalities to spend the funds on roadways.

Mr. Truax noted that some of the case studies in the report detailed the specific use of the \$5 fee in different counties. He added that TAC members can contact the study team for further questions.

**ON A MOTION** by Ms. Felicia Dell, AICP, and seconded by Mr. John Pocius, and unanimously approved, the *Statewide Small Local Bridge Investment Plan Study* was approved with changes.

### **TAC STUDY UPDATES:**

The TAC continues to work on two other study topics. Mr. Dale Witmer, AICP, and Mr. Brian Funkhouser gave an update about the TAC studies and the Transportation Performance Report.

### **Utilities in the State Right-of-Way**

Mr. John Pocius, Chair of the Taskforce, provided remarks in which he thanked the Study Team and all stakeholders who contributed to the outreach.

Mr. Dale Witmer highlighted outreach efforts. He noted that two surveys were conducted to gather input from a very extended stakeholder group.

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

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

Mr. Brian Link, from Michael Baker Int'l discussed the draft report recommendations including:

### ***Process Improvements***

- Require utilization of URMS and Coordinate PA on all projects administered by PennDOT.
- Provide integration of Coordinate PA and PA OneMap to inform utility owners of programmed work.

- Ensure that Districts are utilizing Best Practices outlined by PennDOT Next Generation (PNG) and update Design Manual Part 5 Subsurface Utility Engineering (SUE) Form to align with Section 6.1 of the PA One Call Law.
  - Risks-Based SUE Process utilizing the SUE Utility Impact Form in DM5.
  - Accommodate Prior Work or Incorporate Work into Project.

### ***Regulatory Improvements***

- Require utilities in the state right-of-way to perform predetermined relocations within a defined timeframe or be responsible for delay costs incurred for non-compliance to the relocation timeframe.
- Provide new legislation or regulations to define responsibility for tracking and identification of aerial utilities (utility pole attachments).
- Increase the amount of ticketing required to go through Coordinate PA for utility owners, professional designers, and professional excavators.

The consulting Team will finalize the draft report for upcoming TAC meetings.

### **2021 Transportation Performance Report (TPR)**

Mr. Brian Funkhouser discussed the current and next steps for the TPR including:

- Completion of interviews with PennDOT leadership: deputy secretaries, bureau directors, division managers
- Finalizing report charts
- Developing supporting narrative
- Developing introductory video
- Providing a weblink for advance review
- Planned adoption at February meeting.
- Kicks off the update of the 2023 Twelve Year Program

Mr. Ritchie commented that the TPR will be instrumental to the General Assembly working on a long-term transportation funding solution.

### **TRANSFORMATIONAL TECHNOLOGY: By Mark Kopko**

Mr. Mark Kopko gave a presentation about the Office of Transformational Technology's activities.

He explained the office's role saying that it:

- Serves as a subject matter expert on all transformational technologies and support integration into the Department's existing business areas.
- Identify and investigate emerging technologies that may have cross-cutting impacts to Pennsylvania's transportation network.
- Coordinate with all stakeholders to ensure consistency and interoperability as technology is deployed.

Mr. Kopko listed some of the activities his Office has been working on including:

*Automated Vehicles (AV):*

- AV Testing Guidance 2.0 released.
- Advisory Committee worked on:
  - Communications and Engagement Plan
  - Platooning Transit Vehicle Feasibility Study
  - Fully Automated Vehicle Guiding Principles
- Automated Driving Systems (ADS) Demonstration Grant – Work Zones
- AV Incident Response Plan

*Truck Platooning:*

- Act 117 of 2018
- Platooning Vehicle Policy
- Multi-State Demonstration
  - Evaluate administrative procedures vs. policy

*Personal Delivery Devices:*

- Act 106 of 2020
- Developing a Policy and Application Process
  - Coordinating with locals
  - Feedback from advocacy groups
  - Outreach to other states
  - Effective January 30, 2021

*Fiber and Broadband:*

- Created internal working group
- Developing a fiber deployment plan
  - Identifying uses cases/needs
  - Designating statewide fiber ring for added redundancy
  - Expansion recommendations
  - Integration into existing initiatives

*Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Taskforce:*

- Coordination with key public and private stakeholders
- 10-year strategic plan
  - UAS mobility corridor network
  - UAS management center
- Various use cases
  - Supplemental
  - First-/Last-Mile
  - Personal Mobility

## **TAC NEXT STUDY TOPIC**

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

Mr. Funkhouser discussed previously submitted study topics and the selection process.

Ms. Holton gave a brief overview of the new study topics submitted by TAC members and PennDOT Staff.

The topics will go through an internal review and ranking. The study selection will be staggered, selecting one study at the February TAC meeting and the next study at a following meeting.

## **PA Department of Transportation Update:**

### **PennDOT Pathways Program**

Mr. Ken McClain, the Alternative Funding Program Director, gave an update about the PennDOT Pathways program.

Mr. McClain explained that PennDOT Pathways is a program to address a significant and sustained funding gap that PennDOT has had for years. He added that PennDOT Pathways is looking at both near- and long-term funding sources to address a systemic funding gap, not just the pandemic caused financial emergency.

Mr. McClain said that PennDOT is responsible for maintaining, restoring and expanding nearly 40,000 miles of highway and roughly 25,000 bridges. He added that Pennsylvania needs sustainable infrastructure funding; And while traffic and freight travel have grown, the funds available to maintain the system have not kept pace with the need.

Mr. McClain said that PennDOT is embarking on an extensive program that will examine possible near and long-term strategies for sustainable and dedicated funding because it has an annual highway and bridge funding gap of \$8.1 billion.

Mr. McClain explained that PennDOT's largest source of revenue, 74%, comes from State and Federal gas taxes, which makes Pennsylvania very dependent on gas tax. Mr. McClain noted that the Federal gas tax has not increased since 1993 and the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted travel demand and reduced gas tax revenue compounding the funding crisis.

Mr. McClain also said that PennDOT is responsible, not only for the maintenance of its highways and bridges, but to improve mobility and contribute to a high-quality of life by reducing congestion and improving safety on the transportation system. He added that PennDOT Pathways program will help:

- Maintain a state of good repair of our facilities
- Expand our system to manage congestion
- Improve our transportation network – the backbone of our economy.

Mr. McClain noted that the PennDOT Pathways includes a Planning and Environmental Linkages study or "PEL" and the Major Bridge P3 Initiatives. The PEL will develop and evaluate options for funding our transportation system, with both near and long-term solutions.

Mr. McClain also said that other funding strategies, such as Bridge Tolling, Managed Lanes, Congestion Pricing, Corridor Tolling, and Road User Charging are being studied too.

Mr. McClain said that Pennsylvania's Public Private Transportation Partnership (P3) Board recently approved a new transportation initiative that will help accelerate the reconstruction and rehabilitation of major bridges in partnership with the private sector. He discussed the benefits of bridge tolling and the use of a Public Private Partnership procurement method including:

- Accelerated delivery
- Secure funding for long term maintenance
- Advances local and regional projects
- Leverages private industry for innovation and financing
- Continued stewardship supporting economic vitality and development

Mr. McClain discussed the PEL schedule, which is set to be completed in early 2021.

Mr. Murawski asked if the Program is looking at any solutions that will phase the State Police funding out of transportation revenue.

Mr. McClain answered that's not part of the immediate work of the Pathway Program but his office will interact with the General Assembly on the subject in the coming months.

### **Administration and Budget**

Mr. Robert Chiappelli, Deputy Secretary for Administration, gave a brief report about his Deputate. Mr. Chiappelli said that the majority of the Department's workforce is working on site and the rest is teleworking. He added that the temporary telework order has been extended.

Mr. Chiappelli explained that the Office of Administration is still establishing the foundations for a permanent telework policy to include a management directive.

Mr. Chiappelli said that winter temporary work hiring has started but the Department is behind compared to last year. He noted that temporary hiring stands at 39% compared to 49% at the same time last year.

Mr. Chiappelli mentioned that the Bureau of Innovation held a virtual innovation week in November.

Mr. Chiappelli concluded his update noting the fact that the Bureau of Office Services continues to work on COVID-19 mitigation in welcome Centers and other PennDOT facilities.

### **Driver and Vehicle Services**

Deputy Secretary for Driver and Vehicle Services, Mr. Kurt Myers, gave a brief update stating that COVID-19 mitigation efforts continue.

Mr. Myers explained that DVS has addressed all of the backlogs expect for personalized license plates because the prison where they are produced has been on lockdown.



Mr. Myers also noted that DVS has eliminated 1.1 million customers from having to go on site for driver's license by implementing the photo on file. He also added that the skills testing with examiner out of the vehicle continues.

Mr. Myers concluded his update noting that the DVS resumed issuing Real IDs in September. He added that the demand is relatively low for now.

### **Highway and Bridge Program**

Deputy Secretary Ms. Melissa Batula, P.E., gave an update for the Highway Administration Deputate.

Ms. Batula also announced that winter maintenance is underway, but staffing remains an issue. She added that several strategies to keep employees safe and contingency plans, including using contracted labor, are in place.

Ms. Batula said that the Department is moving projects to address the long-term funding issues.

Ms. Batula noted innovations within the Deputate:

- Digital delivery directive – Using 3D models from design as our contractual design.
- Pilot programs for the use of e-ticketing on the job site for material certifications.
- The use of drones for construction and bridge inspection activities.
- Pilot program for using augmented reality displaying construction plans through safety goggles on the job site.
- Smart work zones - Work zones that communicate with autonomous vehicles.

Mr. Ritchie commented about the enactment of Act 131 to allow local municipalities to have a waiver for people with no CDL plow snow.

Ms. Batula said that it is part of the tools that can be used but requires an emergency declaration.

### **Office of Planning**

Deputy Secretary for Planning, Mr. Larry Shifflet, gave a brief update about his Deputate. Mr. Shifflet noted that the municipal payments for 2021 have started going out. He added that some smaller payments of \$12 Million for Liquid Fuels, \$19 Million for \$5 Local Fee, and \$3 Million for Vehicle Code have already gone out.

### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

#### **NEXT MEETING:**

The next TAC business meeting is scheduled for **Monday, February 1, 2021**, 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**  
**December 3, 2020**

1. Ms. Jody Holton, AICP, Chair
2. Ms. Brenda Sandberg, TAC member
3. Mr. Joseph Butzer, TAC member
4. Dr. Larry Nulton, TAC member
5. Mr. Donald Detwiler, TAC member
6. Mr. John Pocius, P.E., PLS, TAC member
7. Mr. Mark Murawski, TAC member
8. Mr. Elam Herr, TAC member
9. Mr. Alan Blahovec, CCPM, TAC member
10. Mr. Ronald Wagenmann, TAC member
11. Ms. Felicia Dell, TAC member
12. Ms. Karina Ricks, TAC Member
13. Senator Tim Kearney, TAC member
14. Mr. Nolan Ritchie, Alternate for Senator Kim Ward, TAC Member
15. Representative Mike Carroll
16. Matthew Rucci, Alternate for Representative Tim Hennessey, TAC Member
17. Mr. John Kashatus, alternate for Mr. Noe Ortega, 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. Rodney Bender, alternate for Ms. Gladys Brown, TAC member
21. Ms. Meredith Biggica, alternate for Representative Mike Carroll, TAC member
22. Mr. Sam Arnold, alternate for Senator Tim Kearney, 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. Mr. Roger Cohen, PennDOT
30. Mr. Robert Chiappelli, PennDOT
31. Ms. Erin Waters-Trasatt, PennDOT
32. Ms. Alexis Campbell, PennDOT
33. Ms. Leanne Doran, Michael Baker Int'l
34. Mr. Brian Funkhouser, Michael Baker Int'l
35. Mr. Troy Truax, AICP, Michael Baker Int'l
36. Mr. Brian Link, Michael Baker Int'l
37. Ms. Audrey Corrado, Michael Baker Int'l
38. Mr. Dale Witmer, AICP, Michael Baker Int'l
39. Ms. Nicki Jacobs, GPI

40. Ms. Allie Slizofski, Drive Engineering
41. Ms. Melody Tsao, Drive Engineering
42. Mr. Ronald Grutza, Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs
43. Ms. Christi Sabb, McCormick Taylor
44. Ms. Lugene Keys, McCormick Taylor
45. Ms. Amanda Shafer, McCormick Taylor
46. Ms. Samatha Heigel, McCormick Taylor
47. Mr. Jason Wagner, Associated Pennsylvania Contractors
48. Mr. Brian Hare, P.E., PennDOT
49. Mr. Mark Tobin, PennDOT
50. Ms. Jessica Clark, PennDOT
51. Mr. Abdoul Ahmed, PennDOT
52. Mr. Terry Pinder, PennDOT
53. Mr. Brian Sharkey, PennDOT
54. Ms. Karen Heath, PennDOT
55. Mr. Dan Keane, PennDOT
56. Mr. David Alas, PennDOT
57. Mr. Ethan Baldwin, PennDOT

*\*Attendance includes members present via conference call.*