

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
BUSINESS MEETING
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
FEBRUARY 5TH, 2024



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 10:03 a.m. on February 5, 2024.

CHAIR'S REMARKS:

TAC Chair, Ms. Jody Holton, AICP, welcomed Mr. Jeffrey Letwin to the TAC.

Mr. Letwin spoke briefly about himself, noting his experience as an attorney, Chair of the Pittsburgh Regional Transit, and Solicitor of the Allegheny County Airport Authority.

Ms. Holton said that the Automated Speed Enforcement had passed, becoming Act 38 of 2023. Transportation did not get the budget funding they had hoped for but is hopeful to find additional funding.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Mr. John Pocius nominated Mr. Mark Murawski to continue serving as TAC Vice-Chair.

ON A MOTION by Mr. Pocius, seconded by Mr. Elam Herr and unanimously approved, Mr. Mark Murawski was elected TAC Vice-Chair.

MINUTES:

ON A MOTION by Mr. Alan Blahovec, seconded by Mr. Pocius and unanimously approved, the Minutes of the December 6, 2023, TAC Business Meeting were accepted without changes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

SECRETARY'S REMARKS:

Transportation Secretary Michael B. Carroll said that the next day, the Governor would be giving the budget address, which is reported to have additional funds for transit. The additional funding was driven by the financial cliff of the Southeast Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), and other transit agencies will also see that challenge in the future. Additionally, another increment of \$125 million will be decoupled from the State Police out of the motor license fund. The general fund will replace the funds for the State Police. He said that the

Governor's budget proposal is good news for transportation overall, and he hoped it would be approved by June 30, 2024.

Secretary Carroll said that in his first year as Secretary, he visited about half of the county offices and has been impressed by the talent and dedication of PennDOT employees everywhere he goes. Pennsylvania has 13 million people, and expectations are high. He said that he is lucky to have a wonderful team around him and looks forward to another successful year.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION UPDATE:

Executive Office

Executive Deputy Secretary Larry Shifflet gave a brief update.

Mr. Shifflet said that after the meeting, he would be heading to Washington D.C. for the annual American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Washington Briefing. He reiterated that transportation funding comes from the federal general fund, and that it is interesting to hear the approaches of the congressional members.

Items to be discussed at the meeting would be the Highway Trust Fund fiscal cliff, August Redistribution, and the Reauthorization of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Mr. Shifflet will report back next TAC meeting.

Ms. Holton said that reminded her of the Risk to Transportation Funding study, which spoke about the gas tax and federal funding, and wondered if it may be worth revisiting in the future.

Administration and Budget

Deputy Secretary Corey Pellington gave a brief update.

Mr. Pellington said that recruitment and retention is a priority. Of the authorized 11,704 positions, there are only 619 vacancies, approximately 95% of positions filled. Of temporary positions, the last reported 280 positions filled had increased to 313, Mr. Pellington credited the on-site testing to the increase.

A space optimization study is being moved forward internally, across central, district, and county offices. The Bureau of Innovation completed the first phase and will be continuing to work with the Office of Administration (OA) and Department of General Services (DGS) on the next steps. The study will look at teleworking staff, facilities, and parking across all facilities.

The Bureau of Equal Opportunity submitted their Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Uniform Report on December 1, 2023. There was an overage of .3% from the goal of 10.69%. The new goal for the 2024-2026 period is 12.56%. BBC Research is conducting a disparity report due to be released in the summer, which will help inform Department diversity and equity initiatives. They will continue to work with DGS's Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion, and Small Business Opportunities to host Road to Opportunities events around the state.

Ms. Holton asked how long it will take to complete the space utilization study for all facilities. Mr. Pellington responded that all data has been collected from county and district offices, and they are working with OA and DGS on next steps as they work on enterprise pieces for telework

and facilities reduction. He hoped to have more information by summer or fall, but they are continuing to reduce their footprint where applicable.

Driver and Vehicle Services

Deputy Secretary Kara Templeton gave an update from Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS).

Real ID has an adoption rate of 20.8%, over 2.1 million customers with a Real ID product.

The Motorcycle Safety Training program will be beginning in March, which is free of charge to residents. Approximately 15,000 motorcyclists were trained in 2023, the highest number in the past five years.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for possible changes to Commercial Driving License (CDL) programs. This will have a public comment period.

Secretary Carroll said that it seems the federal government is making it easier to obtain a CDL. Ms. Templeton agreed, saying that other proposed changes are a decrease in waiting period and a loosening of requirements for a licensed CDL driver to be in the truck with them at some points of training.

Mr. Sam Arnold asked about a refundable registration fee to prevent no-shows for the motorcycle safety trainings. Ms. Templeton said that was referring to proposed legislation, and that they had not yet assessed the proposal. No-shows had been a problem at times, but there are other ways of dealing with it, such as a standby list. The motorcycle training is being provided by five different contracted providers, and there are options from the vendor side as well.

Mr. Arnold thanked Ms. Templeton for the service, as he had taken the motorcycle training himself, and found it very helpful. Ms. Templeton agreed and said that she had taken it as well.

Mr. Pocius also praised DVS for the quick turnaround on registration through the mail.

Secretary Carroll said that the old joke about taking a day off to go to the Driver's License Center isn't true anymore, and that most people are in and out in under a half hour.

Multimodal

Deputy Secretary Meredith Biggica gave updates on rail. In December, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced the Corridor ID winners. Of the 69 announced, three were in Pennsylvania. Two were PennDOT applications, the Pittsburgh-Philadelphia Keystone service, and the Scranton-New York City corridor. The agreement with the FRA is expected to be obligated around March.

PennDOT was also awarded over \$140 million to help run a second Pennsylvanian train, as part of the Federal State Partnership (FSP) National grant program. There are eleven capital projects necessary to have a second Pennsylvanian on the tracks in 2026.

\$42 million rail freight grants were announced in December, funding 25 rail freight projects through the Rail Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) and Rail Freight Assistance Program (RFAP).

Secretary Carroll mentioned that the third Corridor ID winner was the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority who applied on their own for the Reading-Philadelphia line. Reading-Philadelphia and Scranton-New York City projects are still early in their lifecycles, but it is a big win for them. Ms. Biggica said that Multimodal was providing technical support to that application as well.

Highway Administration

Mr. Jon Fleming gave an update from Highway Administration on behalf of Deputy Secretary Mike Rebert.

Mr. Fleming said that all construction projects will have some ability to be modeled in 3D by 2025, as part of the digital delivery directive. Updates are available via the PennDOT website, in the Digital Delivery Directive 2025 area, which contains newsletters and 3D modeling information.

Mr. Fleming said the 2024 Letting program goal is \$2.8 billion. They will continue to work with Mr. Shifflet and Ms. Mulkerin on the process. The program contains 253 bridge-related projects, 189 highway construction projects, and 187 miscellaneous projects. The five largest highway projects in 2024 will be let for approximately \$718 million.

Mr. Fleming said that inflation continues to be an issue, with prices increasing through 2023, and looks to continue into 2024. The bid price index is trending higher than the Consumer Price Index. Adjustments have to be made, and there is still a risk regarding the volatility of the indexes.

Mr. Fleming said that they are still looking to expand their workforce. The temporary work pool also serves as a feeder for full-time permanent employees. They continue to look for both mechanics and operator positions.

Mr. Fleming said that supply chain issues seem to be leveling out. Industries are also having staffing issues, and PennDOT is working with them, especially on consultant inspections. Hiring CDL operators remains an issue across the board.

Mr. Pocius asked if ordering traffic signal steel still has a long drag time. Mr. Fleming said it is still an issue but does not have exact times.

Planning

Deputy Secretary Kristin Mulkerin gave an update from the Planning Office.

The Metropolitan and Rural Planning Organizations (MPOs and RPOs) submitted their draft Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) to the department. They are under review and we anticipate the regional comment periods this spring into summer. Public comment periods will be available on the STC website, talkpatransportation.com. The website will also be used for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) public comment period towards the end of June.

PennDOT was unsuccessful on two submissions for the Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG): Karns Crossing and South Bridge. The South Bridge is still being considered for the Large Bridge Investment Program, and we expect some questions back in February. The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) submitted Eastern Pittsburgh Multimodal Corridor Project, which includes the I-376 “bathtub” area, was successful under MPDG and is still under consideration for the PROTECT grant program. Lehigh Valley International Airport and Philadelphia Port were also successful in the MPDG. A Reconnecting Communities grant is still pending. A grant for the wildlife crossings was also successful and is pending a kickoff meeting with the Federal Highway Administration.

Secretary Carroll welcomed Ms. Mulkerin into her new role, noting that Ms. Cheryl Moon-Sirianni’s retirement caused role changes, with Mr. Shifflet moving into the Executive Deputy Secretary role and Ms. Mulkerin moving into the Planning office role.

Mr. Michael A. Carroll, P.E., asked if PennDOT had pursued a debrief for the rejected grant requests. Ms. Mulkerin responded that they had already been debriefed on Karns Crossing, information from which would be used for a small bridge grant in the near future, and a request has been put in for the South Bridge debrief. Secretary Carroll noted that the Major Bridge fund is larger than the Mega Bridge, and he remained optimistic about success there.

NEVI Program

Mr. Derrick Herrmann, P.E., Highway Administration’s Chief of the Transformational Technology Program, gave an update on the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program.

Contracting and construction are in progress for 56 projects of Round 1. Eight more awardees are yet to reach the contracting phase. Construction is expected to begin in spring through summer.

The first project of round one opened in Pittston on December 21, 2023, in coordination with Pilot and EVgo. The site has since had over 200 charging sessions and good reviews.

Round 1A closed on January 26, 2024. Round 1A is looking for proposals on highways that are Alternative Fuel Corridors and Interstate 180, which were not included in the first round, as well as other gaps from the first round. Round 1A received 86 proposals; the average funding request was approximately \$650,000, totaling \$55 million in requests. They expect to award 25-30 of those projects.

Mr. Herrmann said that they were selected for the EV Charger Reliability and Accessibility Accelerator (RAA), a maintenance program through NEVI to address some non-functioning sites. They were also selected for a Vehicle Technology Office (VTO) grant through the Department of Energy and are working on procuring electric construction vehicles.

Secretary Carroll noted that the team are national leaders in NEVI, and that Pennsylvania's position at the forefront of electric vehicle charging stations is due to their efforts.

Studies Update:

Study Topic Selection

Mr. Brian Funkhouser of Michael Baker gave a presentation on the study topic selection process.

Mr. Funkhouser said that the study selection process began at the October meeting. They took suggestions from TAC members, leadership and the Center for Program Development and Management (CPDM) and added potential projects from the Freight Plan. At the December meeting, topics were discussed, and a survey was sent out. After, reviewing the results with PennDOT staff, topics were recommended.

Study topic candidates included: PA Demographic Trends, Opportunities for Deployment of AI-based Workplace Tools, Equitable Transit-Oriented Development in PA, An Assessment of Parking: impacts, Issues, and Implications, Transportation for an Aging PA, E-Commerce Assessment and Package Convenience Fee Analysis, and Wildlife Crossings. The top Freight Plan topics were Prioritization of Truck Bottleneck Improvements, Identifying a PA Core Freight Network, and Freight Highway Network Gap Analysis.

The top-scoring topics were E-Commerce Assessment and Package Convenience Fee, Transportation for an Aging PA, and Demographic Trends. The chair of the E-Commerce Task Force will be Mr. Sam Arnold, who previously volunteered and submitted the topic. The study will look at the scope of Pennsylvania's E-Commerce economy and its impact on transportation infrastructure.

Mr. Funkhouser said that the TAC decided to hold-off on studying Demographic Trends until the Governor's Office released the Aging our Way, PA plan for its potentially overlapping study.

After the survey and vetting process, the top three topics were E-Commerce Assessment & Package Convenience Fee, Equitable Transit-Oriented Development, and Funding for Intermodal/Multimodal Freight Improvements.

Draft study objectives for the E-Commerce study include: Identify land use changes in Pennsylvania related to the growth of e-commerce and transformation of retail establishments resulting from changes in landscape, evaluate the economic impact of these changes in terms of employment, real estate valuations, etc., identify impacts on the transportation network and implications for future infrastructure needs, and evaluate funding implications related to e-commerce.

Mr. Murawski asked if there are other funding sources beyond the reallocation of police funds, as the e-commerce study may be able to help fill those other gaps.

Secretary Carroll said he suspected there would be conversations involving electric vehicle registration fees, which would help but not solve the Motor License Fund challenges. The study would be important to start talks about delivery fees down the road.

Mr. Murawski said that he had submitted the Demographic Trends study for consideration because of a study by the Center for Rural PA about serious demographic issues in

Pennsylvania's future regarding both aging populations and retaining young people. The upcoming Governor's report on demographics will guide how a TAC study on the subject will operate. He asked if it would be prudent to hold-off on making a decision on the demographics study at the next meeting, after the release of the Aging our Way, PA Plan.

Mr. Funkhouser said the plan is to table that until April, and that the TAC would traditionally stagger studies. Ms. Holton said that they would send a notice once the Governor's study is released, and they would see what they could dig deeper into, such as senior transportation.

Mr. Shifflet said the Aging study would likely be released in February for public comment. On the E-Commerce study, the end date would likely be a December rather than July end date to make sure due diligence is done. A few states have done the study successfully, such as Colorado, Minnesota and Washington State is looking into it, and it would be good to see how they worked with online shopping and delivery companies.

Mr. Arnold agreed but had concerns about the capacity to run another study if e-commerce went to December. He said that more time was always better, but he was unsure if there was a time that it would be best done by for the legislature.

Secretary Carroll said that a study released in June during budget negotiations would gather less attention, and the amount of legislative activity during June-November of this year was limited.

Mr. Murawski asked how long it would take to get a Notice to Proceed, assuming that the TAC approved the study. Mr. Funkhouser claimed two weeks. Mr. Arnold said that the scope lists a February start date, should we approve the study.

Mr. Arnold said that this was one of the ideas that came from the Transportation Revenue Options Commission (TROC) report. As it is a new revenue mechanism there is likely to be increased scrutiny and having a better analysis of post-pandemic commerce is important. They would like to see where packages are coming from, where they're going, and how it affects land use, highways, local roads, freight, and multimodal, as well as potential disparate impacts of a potential fee on both consumer and supplier sides. He said that there is a lot of opportunity to get information and potentially open a new revenue opportunity.

Ms. Felicia Dell said that the study is well timed for the end of 2024, with the potential timing out of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in 2025 bringing heightened awareness on a new revenue source not only for Pennsylvania, but on the federal level as well.

Ms. Rebecca Oyler said that during the pandemic freight and delivery was at an all-time high, and we are now returning to the "new normal". The problem is very complicated and should not be rushed. The transportation between factory, warehouse and home is already paid for by fuel tax. The question that needs to be looked at is what the gap is between the existing fuel tax fees already in supply chains and what is believed to be missing. She noted that the proposed scope has an amount of overlap with the Truck Parking Study from 2023 and hopes that will contribute to this study.

Mr. Dan Keane noted that the scope of work is a draft and was put together to spur conversation about direction. The process to get the Notice to Proceed changed with the 2023 Local Match study, with the task force being assembled and then gave the scope of work to the task force to

provide comment prior to the notice to proceed. The amount of time is more likely to be approximately a month.

Ms. Holton said that they will collect comments from this discussion and assemble task force members and go over any other revisions before notice to proceed. She also added that having multiple studies at once is no issue there is plenty of capacity within the contract.

Mr. Fred Strathmeyer said that much of the warehouse construction is on farmland. The study has to consider those local communities and their impacts, as well as agriculture and farmland. Secretary Carroll said that there had been a legislative effort in Lehigh Valley regarding the placement of warehouses.

Mr. Elam Herr said that at certain times of day, residents cannot get gas due to the overwhelming number of delivery trucks fueling at the same time, as well as traffic concerns with the high numbers of trucks making deliveries.

Mr. Arnold said that he's also heard those complaints, and that the impacts on the transportation network are different from the cases imagined when legislating the fuel tax.

Ms. Holton noted that the existing scope does mention that regions may feel the effects differently, small towns having congestion and traffic issues as noted, and cities it can become a parking issue as well with changing loading zones.

Mr. Kashatus said that porch piracy is also a serious issue in the last mile and wondered if that issue was in scope. Mr. Arnold said that the legislature has passed bills on porch piracy recently, and it is of interest to the General Assembly.

ON A MOTION by Mr. Herr, seconded by Ms. Oyler and unanimously approved, the E-Commerce Assessment & Package Convenience Fee Analysis was advanced to be scoped.

2023 TAC Annual Report

Ms. Holton discussed the Annual Report highlights and the most recent studies the TAC has completed in the preceding calendar year. It provides the study purpose, completion dates, and the findings, and recommendations for the four completed studies.

ON A MOTION by Mr. Pocius, seconded by Mr. Murawski and unanimously approved, the 2023 TAC Annual Report was approved.

Study Implementation Updates

Mr. Murawski said that Mr. Nolan Ritchie analyzed the air service study to determine which recommendations would require legislative action. The Aviation Council, working with the State Aviation Advisory Committee, created a framework paper identifying what action those recommendations entailed. About half of the recommendations required state legislation.

Mr. Murawski said that Mr. Langerholc had a hearing in Johnstown in April about aviation in PA, where he had testified. This made Mr. Langerholc the first stop for the aviation leaders, who had a meeting the previous week. Mr. Langerholc was aware of the TAC report and was interested in aspects of the report.

Mr. Murawski also acknowledged Mr. Flynn, who introduced legislation the previous year regarding aviation funding, specifically the jet fuel tax and the AVGAS tax. Though nothing materialized during the last session, Mr. Arnold was unsure of the legislation's status. He said that he would check with Mr. Flynn's staff.

Mr. Murawski said he would like to get in touch with the task force of the Bridge Study to look at implementation. Lycoming County just finished its first local bridge bundling project of 17 bridges, and many lessons were learned from that. An asset management plan is in the works for the rest of the local bridges. He would like to reconvene the task force to review what was learned and what could apply as prototypes across the state to advance local projects.

Mr. Shifflet said that they would like to carry Mr. Murawski's local bundling efforts forward. Many of those roads are important to e-commerce as well. What they have learned could be used and applied throughout the state. Mr. Murawski said that he would be willing to bring some of his people to a meeting to do a presentation.

Mr. Pocius said that during his tenure in Scranton that entering into a bridge bundle agreement with PennDOT was a much smoother process and recommends it to municipalities.

Ms. Holton noted that the State Transportation Committee approved the Truck Parking and Local Match studies, and that both are available on the website. Mr. Pocius asked if notice about the studies was sent to MPOs and RPOs, as was discussed at a previous meeting. Mr. Shifflet said that it was being worked on.

MEMBER UPDATES:

None.

OTHER BUSINESS:

None.

Adjournment

ON A MOTION by Mr. Arnold, seconded by Mr. Pocius, and unanimously approved, the TAC meeting was adjourned at 11:31 p.m.

Follow-up

Mr. Arnold followed up with Senator Flynn's staff after the meeting regarding their plans to increase funding to Pennsylvania airports. There was no hard timeline for a bill, but it was said to be an active project and they expect to have a bill in 2024. The bill would include increases to jet fuel and the aviation gas taxes.

**Attendance from the TAC Business Meeting
February 5, 2024**

1. Ms. Jody Holton, AICP, Chair
2. Mr. Mark Murawski, Vice-Chair
3. Mr. Michael B. Carroll, Secretary of Transportation
4. Mr. Larry Shifflet, Executive Deputy Secretary
5. Mr. Orlando Almonte, alternate for Mr. Akbar Hossain, TAC Member
6. Mr. Rodney Bender, alternate for Mr. Stephen M DeFrank, TAC Member
7. Mr. John Kashatus, alternate for Mr. Khalid Mumin, TAC Member
8. Ms. Tiffany Landis, alternate for Ms. Jessica Shirley, TAC Member
9. Mr. Fred Strathmeyer, alternate for Mr. Russell Redding, TAC Member
10. Mr. Paul Opiyo, alternate for Mr. Rick Siger, TAC Member
11. Mr. Sam Arnold, alternate for Mr. Timothy Kearney, TAC Member
12. Mr. Kyle Schaeffer, alternate for Mr. Kerry Benninghoff, TAC Member
13. Ms. Jessica Sanders, alternate for Mr. Ed Neilson, TAC Member
14. Mr. Jeffrey Letwin, TAC Member
15. Mr. Richard Barcaskey, TAC Member
16. Mr. John Pocius, TAC Member
17. Mr. Michael A. Carroll, P.E., TAC Member
18. Ms. Tina Mengine, TAC Member
19. Ms. Felicia Dell, TAC Member
20. Mr. Alan Blahovec, CCTM, TAC Member
21. Mr. Larry Nulton, PhD, TAC Member
22. Mr. Elam Herr, TAC Member
23. Ms. Rebecca Oyler, TAC Member
24. Ms. Teresa Wagner, PennDOT
25. Ms. Meredith Biggica, PennDOT
26. Ms. Kara Templeton, PennDOT
27. Ms. Kristin Mulkerin, PennDOT
28. Mr. Nathan Walker, PennDOT
29. Mr. Shane Rice, PennDOT
30. Ms. Erin Waters-Trasatt, PennDOT
31. Ms. Alexis Campbell, PennDOT
32. Mr. Jon Fleming, PennDOT
33. Mr. Corey Pellington, PennDOT
34. Mr. Mark Tobin, PennDOT
35. Mr. Brian Hare, PennDOT
36. Mr. Terry Pinder, PennDOT
37. Mr. Brian Sharkey, PennDOT
38. Mr. Kevin Wray, PennDOT
39. Ms. Lauryn Knuth, PennDOT

40. Mr. Kent Smithmyer, PennDOT
41. Ms. Emily Brenner, PennDOT
42. Ms. Alice Bishop, PennDOT
43. Mr. Derrick Herrmann, P.E., PennDOT
44. Mr. Blade Kline, PennDOT
45. Mr. David Lapadat, PennDOT
46. Mr. Jeffrey Young, PennDOT
47. Mr. Michael Lauer, PennDOT
48. Mr. J Brian Walter, PennDOT
49. Mr. Robert Mulkerin, PennDOT
50. Mr. James Nicastro, PennDOT
51. Ms. Sadie Trout, PennDOT
52. Mr. James Ritzman, PennDOT
53. Ms. Amanda Rutherford, PennDOT
54. Mr. Brian Funkhouser, Michael Baker International
55. Mr. Mario Mellinger, McCormick Taylor
56. Mr. Michael Bononi
57. Mr. Colton Brown
58. Mr. William Courtney
59. Mr. Ron Grutza PSAB
60. Mr. Don Killmeyer
61. Ms. Carol Moulds
62. Ms. Jessica Sander
63. Ms. Melanie Stine
64. Mr. Logan Stover