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Impact Report

Office of
Transformation
& Opportunity



Fellow Pennsylvanians,

Over the past three years, the Office of Transformation and Opportunity (OTO) has grown from an idea and Executive Order into a driving force for how Pennsylvania does business. When Governor Shapiro established OTO in 2023, he challenged us to build a government that works at the speed of business – one that solves problems, responds quickly, and gives companies the confidence to invest and grow in Pennsylvania.

Today, that vision is no longer aspirational. It is operational.

From day one, our mission has been clear: build trust, break down barriers, cut red tape, and deliver a customer-centric approach to government. Since then, we have worked closely with public and private sector partners to streamline permitting, strengthen cross-agency collaboration, and create a one-stop shop for navigating complex projects. We've also built a team to support this work, bringing on the talent and expertise needed to drive change through collaboration.



Our progress is real and measurable. Since 2023, OTO has supported nearly 600 companies doing business in the Commonwealth, resolving permitting challenges and helping advance economic development projects in communities across Pennsylvania. We stood up the PA Permit Fast Track program to accelerate high-impact projects and delivered significant improvements in permit timelines, transparency, and agency coordination. Together, with agency partners, we have strengthened the foundation for faster, smarter, and more predictable government processes.

Equally important is the trust and transparency we've built along the way. Our team built the PLC (Permits, Licenses, and Certifications) Catalog, the first comprehensive system to benchmark permit, license, and certification performance across the Commonwealth. We've built real-time permitting dashboards to inform data-driven decision-making. We contributed to and continue to support the Commonwealth's first economic development strategy in two decades, championing initiatives that build on Pennsylvania's strengths and drive long-term competitiveness.

Looking to 2026 and beyond, we will continue to scale the tools and systems driving our competitive advantage: expanding the PA Permit Fast Track program, growing opportunities like the Permit Accelerator, strengthening agency insights through data, and driving customer-centric improvements across government. Working with agency partners, we can help ensure Pennsylvania competes, and wins, ensuring it remains a place where companies not only choose to invest, but choose to stay.

We are proud of the progress we've made, energized by the work ahead, and confident that the Commonwealth's best economic opportunities are ahead of us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end of the "n" to the right.

Ben Kirshner
Chief Transformation Officer

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Looking to 2026

Providing High-Touch Economic Development Project Support

PA Permit Fast Track Program

The PA Permit Fast Track Program is a coordinated, high-touch permitting process designed to accelerate large, complex, and high-impact economic development projects across the Commonwealth. Fast Track brings project sponsors and all relevant permitting agencies together at the earliest stages of development to align expectations, coordinate review timelines, and increase transparency for businesses and communities alike.

Fast Track does not alter regulatory requirements or lower environmental or safety standards. Instead, it ensures that agencies work in a more efficient, predictable, and collaborative way. Through early communication, unified permitting schedules, and continuous OTO-led project management, the program provides companies with the clarity and speed they need to make major investment decisions in Pennsylvania, strengthening the Commonwealth's competitiveness and speed-to-market.

2025 marks the first full year of Fast Track implementation, and the program has demonstrated meaningful progress and strong uptake from both developers and permitting agencies. Now fully operational, Fast Track is serving as a model for how coordinated permitting can support strategic investments and expand economic opportunities across the Commonwealth.

Today, the Fast Track portfolio includes 7 major projects, representing billions in potential private investment across the Commonwealth, including:

- 1 innovation center
- 1 community energy project
- 2 commercial development projects
- 3 data centers

OTO is actively engaged with additional projects and expects to expand the Fast Track program's impact throughout 2026.

The expansion of Fast Track during its first full year of implementation highlights the demand for coordinated permitting and underscores the impact of early, cross-agency alignment. Fast Track continues to strengthen transparency, improve timelines, and provide a competitive advantage for companies choosing to grow in Pennsylvania.

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/oto/fasttrack>

SUCCESS STORY: Century Development

When Century Development Associates set out to redevelop a long-idled 230-acre former coal mine in Lackawanna County into a modern industrial hub, the company faced major challenges: extensive reclamation needs, significant utility extensions, and a complex permitting path involving multiple agencies. To keep the project moving and ensure the site could become shovel-ready in a timely manner, Century sought support through the PA Fast Track Program.

Since joining Fast Track in April 2025, OTO coordinated with DEP, PennDOT, and other partners to align reviews, resolve issues early, and run critical permits concurrently. This streamlined approach allowed five required permits to be completed ahead of schedule and helped Century Development save an estimated 18 months of development time, complementing earlier DEP reclamation work and a \$6 million PA SITES investment for grading and utility extensions.

With permitting on track, construction is underway on two large-scale manufacturing and logistics facilities that will support up to 150 construction jobs and 500 permanent jobs. Century Development's progress shows how Fast Track brings agencies together to accelerate complex projects, unlock underutilized sites, and deliver economic opportunities to communities across Pennsylvania.



"I'll tell you – the Office of Transformation and Opportunity – can't say enough good things about them. Speed matters. This has been an excellent program – we're moving dirt, getting a lot of inquiries about the site, and now that work is underway, we've got the community's attention and we're on our way."

Mark Powell, President, Century Land Development

SUCCESS STORY: PennSTART

As construction gets underway on [PennSTART](#) at the Westmoreland Innovation Center, Pennsylvania is moving closer to opening one of the nation's most advanced testing and training centers for emerging transportation technologies. Designed through a partnership among RIDC, WCIDC, PennDOT, the Turnpike Commission, and Carnegie Mellon University's Safety21, the facility will support autonomous vehicle testing, smarter traffic management, first responder training, and the growth of the region's mobility innovation economy. With multiple partners and a complex buildout, the project required close coordination to keep permitting aligned with construction.

To support this effort, PennSTART joined the PA Permit Fast Track Program in 2025, bringing agency partners together early to clarify requirements, coordinate reviews, and prevent

delays. Thanks to this proactive approach, all environmental permits have been granted ahead of schedule, and the project will continue working with OTO as it enters its transportation permitting phases.

The first phase of PennSTART includes a two-mile test track and represents a \$30 million investment from public and private partners. As Pennsylvania builds this new statewide hub for transportation safety and innovation, PennSTART is another example of how Fast Track strengthens major projects by aligning agency efforts and accelerating progress on complex, multi-partner initiatives.

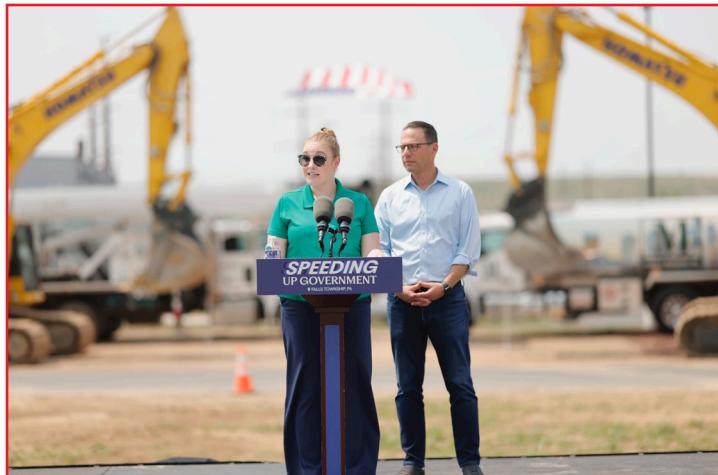
SUCCESS STORY: Amazon

Amazon plans to invest at least \$20 billion in new cloud computing and AI campuses is a major Pennsylvania success story and is a true testament to the Administration's commitment to working at the speed of business.

Both Amazon sites – Salem Township and Falls Township – are enrolled in PA Permit Fast Track Program, giving Amazon the certainty and speed required to build high-tech data centers on aggressive timelines. The program's coordinated reviews and predictable processes helped Pennsylvania win this project in a highly competitive national environment.

This is the largest private-sector investment in Pennsylvania history, creating at least 1,250 high-paying tech jobs and thousands of construction jobs.

This investment builds on Amazon's long-standing presence – over \$26 billion invested in PA since 2010 – and reinforces that with modernized permitting and strong state-local collaboration, Pennsylvania is competing and winning in the high-tech economy.



Project Support & Business Engagement

OTO serves as a clear point of entry for businesses navigating Pennsylvania's regulatory, permitting, and programmatic landscape. Many companies evaluating relocation, expansion, or new investment need guidance even when they are not seeking financial incentives. OTO fills this gap by engaging directly with businesses and their consultants, connecting them with agency partners, and providing timely answers to questions essential for operational and investment decisions.

As a single point of contact, OTO helps companies overcome complex bureaucratic challenges and ensures that agency processes work together rather than in silos. Whether a project requires permitting support, due diligence guidance, or connections to subject-matter experts across the Commonwealth, OTO provides the coordination and project management needed to keep work moving. This hands-on approach has positioned OTO as a key partner in business attraction, retention, and statewide economic competitiveness.

SUCCESS STORY: Super Natural & Fresh Produce III

In 2025, OTO supported the expansion of Super Natural & Fresh Produce III, a full-service supermarket and community food hub that anchors the revitalization of downtown Reading. OTO provided permitting navigation support with PennDOT, helping the developer clarify right-of-way requirements and streamline communication during a critical construction phase, ensuring smoother coordination with the Commonwealth as the project advanced.

Super Natural & Fresh Produce III is now one of Reading's most significant community investments – a 43,000-square-foot facility serving 5,900 weekly customers with fresh, healthy, and culturally relevant groceries. The project delivers substantial economic benefits, including 120 full-time and 30 part-time jobs, a 2,000% increase in new tax revenue, and new wholesale



and future manufacturing capacity that will strengthen grocery retail opportunities across the region. Transforming a long-abandoned city garage into a vibrant commercial anchor, this project exemplifies the power of public-private collaboration and underscores OTO's role in helping businesses – of all sizes – navigate state processes to accelerate community-centered economic growth.

"I want to express my heartfelt appreciation for the invaluable assistance and support provided by Governor Shapiro and his administration for the supermarket and warehouse project at the intersection of 4th and Elm in Reading, PA. I have been profoundly grateful for OTO's unwavering support throughout the development process. The office played a pivotal role in facilitating approvals, providing guidance, and addressing challenges that arose during construction. Their dedication and commitment were instrumental in bringing this project to fruition, and this development will be a significant asset to the community. We are so grateful for the outstanding support and partnership in making this project a reality."

Leopoldo Sanchez, Owner, Super Natural & Fresh Produce III

SUCCESS STORY: Kulp Dairy Farm

Earlier this year, the Kulp Dairy Farm, a third-generation family farm in Blair County, reached out to OTO when they became concerned about potential permitting delays for their new expansion. OTO worked closely with the farm and the Department of Environmental Protection to elevate the project's needs. As a result, the Kulp family received their permit more than four months ahead of schedule.

Today, the Kulp's expansion is well underway, adding new barns and other infrastructure improvements that will allow the farm to add nearly 1,000 dairy cows, increasing its milking capacity while sustaining and creating local jobs.



"Over the last 26 years, our business has grown to 2,900 milking cows across three locations with 47 full-time employees. As my generation steps into leadership, we're excited to make the next large investment on our farm – for the benefit of our cows, our employees, our community, and Pennsylvania agriculture. We're very appreciative of the strong communication and timeliness of the permitting process. From our initial submission to final approval, the review was remarkably quick compared to historical norms – a strong testament to the Governor and his team."

Kyle Kulp, Owner, Kulp Dairy Farm.



SUCCESS STORY: Lower South Infrastructure and Resiliency Collaborative

In October 2022, the Lower South Infrastructure and Resiliency Collaborative (LSIRC) took shape to discuss and manage regional infrastructure needs alongside various partners that included the City of Philadelphia, Bellwether District, PIDC/Navy Yard, Ensemble, DRPA, Comcast Spectacor, PhilaPort, FDR Park, Philly Port, SEPTA, and PennDOT.

OTO was brought into the fold during the fall of 2025, resulting from mutual consultation with the City of Philadelphia, to assist in facilitating the Collaborative, manage expectations, consider creative solutions for short- and long-term infrastructure needs, and funding opportunities, while supporting economic growth and sustainability. Quarterly meetings have been established to discuss infrastructure improvements for the LSIRC region, including a funding mechanism and timeline for implementation.

“The City is pleased to be working with the team at OTO, realizing the significant economic opportunities emerging in this part of the city. OTO’s approach to facilitation and problem solving will be a huge support to effective coordination among the range of private and public sector stakeholders the City and the Commonwealth must bring together to establish and implement a common vision for investment and job creation.”

Mike Carroll, P.E., Deputy Managing Director of Philadelphia’s Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems

“The Office of Transformation and Opportunity is doing incredible work accelerating Pennsylvania’s economy. In housing and commercial development, even with an experienced team, we often encounter challenging and unpredictable issues that require coordination between state, local, and federal stakeholders to resolve. Time and time again, OTO’s expert and dedicated staff were an invaluable resource to guide us through these challenges. They helped us understand the best course of action and quickly spearheaded coordination between many different levels and departments of government. In development, where schedule is critical, their impact has been exceptional.

Working with OTO, we feel like we have an advocate who wants to see us succeed. They are an outstanding example of how good governance can move things forward for all Pennsylvanians.”

Ryan Lohbauer, Development and Design Project Manager, Hightop Development

“The National Realty Corporation team has had a positive experience working with OTO and their Commonwealth agency partners to find creative solutions for a broad range of complexities that are inherent to residential and commercial development projects. Time kills deals, so having direct access to OTO for liaison support and guidance has been an invaluable asset.”

Nicole de Botton Robinson, Vice President, National Realty Corporation

Reducing Permitting Timelines & Increasing Transparency

PLC Catalog

The PLC Catalog is an annual internal effort to collect permitting data to measure impact, find opportunities for improvement, and tell compelling narratives about permitting across the Commonwealth. The Catalog is also the mechanism to maintain the accuracy of PAyback, the Governor's permitting money-back guarantee for delayed permits. The Catalog has three main components: data collection, data analysis, and agency coordination. In the data collection phase, agencies submit information about every permit, license, and certification they issue, including but not limited to application volume, average processing time, submission method, and whether a third party is involved in the review. During the analysis phase, OTO reviews the data and builds a dashboard to report out findings in easy-to-understand ways and, perhaps most importantly, shows comparisons between year-over-year data. Finally, in the agency coordination phase, OTO engages with each agency to review permit areas where performance improved and declined, helping them prioritize future efforts and communicate accurately about the agency's permitting, licensing and certification work.

Improvements from 2023 to 2024

65.33% DECREASE
in DEP Chapter 102 General Permit processing time
31.58% DECREASE
in Highway Occupancy Permits review cycle time
88.92% DECREASE
in processing time across the Department of Labor & Industry

PA Permit Accelerator

In 2025, OTO completed the second cohort of its now annual Permit Accelerator, a first-of-its-kind program that provides Commonwealth employees with the skills and aptitudes necessary to identify, innovate, and launch improvement strategies to solve challenges in their agency's permitting processes and policies. The Accelerator is comprised of two parts. First, participants complete a ten-week professional development course designed and facilitated in partnership with faculty and staff at Penn State University Harrisburg. The course covers topics like customer discovery, human-centered design, product market fit, public speaking and stakeholder engagement. Purposefully designed to be a collaborative, transparent

"The Permit Accelerator course gave me and my colleagues a shared foundation to understand our challenges and move forward with a solution, together. It created space for honest conversations, which helped us align our priorities and uncover new ways to collaborate. The empathy interviews helped us see our work from different perspectives and I'm excited to apply this in work moving forward. This experience strengthened our ability to work across bureaus as a unified team and has positioned us to make meaningful progress on our collective goals."

Cindy Thomas, Director of Operational Excellence, Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

and authentic experience, participants build relationships with colleagues from across Commonwealth agencies to uncover shared challenges and opportunities, ultimately designing pilot projects that address a specific pain point in their workflows. The second part of the Accelerator gives participants the chance to pitch those pilots to agency and Commonwealth leadership, earning seed funding in the amount of \$20,000 and implementing their project with the support of OTO.

This year's cohort included:

- 13 participants from 6 agencies: DEP, DCNR, PennDOT, L&I, PDA, OTO
- 11 pilot projects

Agency Collaboration & Process Improvement Support

In addition to initiatives like the PLC Tracker and Permit Accelerator, OTO partners with agencies in ongoing, systematic efforts to ensure permit reform remains a priority across the Commonwealth. Given PennDOT and DEP's central roles in permitting and economic development, OTO has been a partner in improving high impact permits through process improvements, technological advancements, and data analysis. Collaborative efforts have led to increased reviewer consistency, shorter timelines, and a greater emphasis on customer satisfaction and user experience.

As part of this work, OTO supported DEP's launch and expansion of the Streamlining Permits for Economic Expansion and Development (SPEED) Program, as well as DEP's continued implementation of the Chapter 102 and 105 Pilot Program initiatives. The Office has also contributed to PennDOT's Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP) ClearPath Pilot Program, helping streamline the HOP process to better support timely economic development.

SUCCESS STORY: ClearPath Pilot Program

The PennDOT [HOP ClearPath Pilot Program](#) is a new initiative developed by PennDOT in partnership with OTO. Designed to streamline the Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP) process, this pilot aims to reduce review timelines and clarify expectations.

The program supports the Governor's Executive Order 2023-07, which seeks to eliminate regulatory barriers and promote economic development throughout the Commonwealth. The PennDOT HOP ClearPath Pilot Program introduces structured timelines, accountability, and enhanced communication opportunities to the HOP process.

The program includes several enhancements to ensure faster, more predictable HOP application reviews and decisions:

- Three-Cycle Limit
- Completeness Check
- Cycle 2 Resolution Focus
- Traffic Signal Applications

The PennDOT Pilot launched in August 2025, with new applications in PennDOT Districts 4-0, 6-0, and 8-0, and will be extended to all districts in 2026.

PAyBack

Launched in 2023, Pennsylvania's PAyback program is a first-in-the-nation online money-back guarantee that strengthens accountability and transparency across the Commonwealth's permitting, licensing, and certification processes. By clearly publishing standard processing times and offering fee refunds when timelines are not met, PAyback sets clear service expectations for residents and businesses while reinforcing a culture of timely, reliable government service delivery.

OTO plays a central role in the program's success by managing the PAyback data dashboard, which provides real-time tracking of inquiries, request frequency, agency performance, and other key metrics to inform continuous improvement and decision-making. Since its establishment more than two years ago, only five claims have resulted in refunds, an outcome that reflects strong agency compliance with established timelines and the effectiveness of PAyback as a performance management and transparency tool rather than a reactive enforcement mechanism.

Agency KPI Dashboards

OTO continues to work with agencies to strengthen the Commonwealth's ability to track internal permitting key performance indicators (KPIs) and use data to improve consistency, predictability, and speed. By creating agency KPI dashboards, OTO provides real-time visibility into turnaround times for the permits, licenses, and certifications, supporting informed decisions on staffing, budgeting, and process improvement.

In 2025, the Department of Transportation (PennDOT) dashboard became fully operational and is actively used by agency leadership and program staff. Following this model, OTO has partnered with the Department of Revenue (DOR) to develop its own permitting and processing dashboard. This new dashboard is currently in development, expanding the Commonwealth's capacity to monitor and manage key processes.

These tools also support OTO's broader work, strengthening transparency and giving agencies consistent, actionable data to advance customer-centered permitting across the Commonwealth.

Bipartisan Federal Permit Reform Working Group

Governor Shapiro joined with Oklahoma Governor Stitt to co-lead a bipartisan Working Group of 13 Governors focused on permit reform. OTO, in collaboration with the Governor's Policy Office, worked with staff from NGA and the other Working Group states to develop a package of reforms focused on speeding up permitting for all types of energy projects. While not every Governor agreed with every recommendation, the working group states ultimately agreed to support a package of reforms, which focused on source-neutral changes aimed at speeding up and ensuring certainty in Federal permitting processes. The Working Group shared its recommendations with Congress and other leaders across the Federal government and is helping to shape ongoing debates around permit reform legislation.

Coordinating Across Agencies to Speed Broadband Deployment & Supporting the Office of Enterprise Wireless Management (OEWM)

OTO has been a partner in streamlining broadband deployment across the Commonwealth. Working with agency partners, OTO helped establish a more efficient path for broadband providers, including the creation of a Commonwealth categorical exclusion process that removes major SHPO-related approval barriers. OTO also convened regular coordination meetings with agencies and program partners to improve communication, align timelines, and reduce bottlenecks in broadband implementation.

In parallel with this work, OTO partnered with the OEWM to develop a custom digital platform that modernizes the agency's application process. The new system includes a streamlined online form for new builds and colocation requests, an asset map centralizing information on Commonwealth poles, and an internal portal for OEWM staff to manage and track applications. Built in close collaboration with OEWM and delivered in under three months, the platform represents a major advancement in OEWM's ability to receive, review, and process applications.

Championing Economic Growth

Fostering Cross-Agency Collaboration through the Economic Development Strategy Group

Governor Shapiro's Executive Order 2023-05 established the Economic Development Strategy Group – Secretaries and other key staff from the agencies that drive economic development across the Commonwealth – to advise him on “economic development projects and processes to attract and retain employers, recruit leaders of innovation, and create quality jobs in Pennsylvania.”

OTO has taken an active role in convening this group, and it has become an increasingly effective tool for cross-agency coordination. Through regular meetings, the group shares information about priority projects and projects in the pipeline, to ensure all agencies are aware and ready to actively respond to opportunities. These convenings have also served as a forum to identify challenges and barriers across agencies, provide strategic direction and share information across agencies that historically operated within silos.

SUCCESS STORY: Governance Structure for Cross-Agency Workforce Development Opportunities

Access to skilled workers is a key factor for every project across Pennsylvania. However, the Commonwealth's tools to support worker training are spread across a number of state agencies. Specifically, the Department of Labor & Industry, the Department of Education, the State Board of Higher Education and the Department of Community and Economic Development all have important roles to play in helping businesses and regions respond to emerging workforce needs.

In addition to the challenge of inter-agency coordination, most of Pennsylvania's workforce development support is delivered by local training partners. Similarly, most workforce funding is allocated by regional Workforce Investment Boards, so finding a way to align across all of these stakeholders is critical.

In response to these challenges and to ensure that the Commonwealth is well-positioned to act strategically to support company and regional workforce development needs, the Economic Development Strategy Group established a workforce sub-group. This group ultimately developed a new resource support delivery model that defines roles and responsibilities across a Statewide Leadership Team to determine priorities, a State-Level Implementation Team that executes priorities across Commonwealth agencies and works with a defined Regional Response Team to ensure connectivity and collaboration with the right local and regional partners. The Commonwealth is now using this model to support workforce needs in Northeastern Pennsylvania to ensure there is a robust pipeline of workers for the growth of data centers in the region.



Agriculture Strategic Plan

OTO partnered with the PA Department of Agriculture to lead the Commonwealth's first-ever Pennsylvania Food and Agriculture 10-Year Strategic Plan. Building on the Commonwealth's Economic Development Strategy, which identifies agriculture as a core sector for growth, OTO helped design and execute a comprehensive planning process that brought together farmers, agribusiness leaders, educators, lenders, industry associations, and government partners to shape a shared roadmap for the industry's future.

Throughout the effort, OTO worked closely with Fourth Economy, a Pittsburgh-based consulting firm, to analyze data, industry trends, and synthesize stakeholder. To ground the plan in industry expertise, this process convened a series of industry-led workgroups representing the full food and agriculture value chain. These groups provided critical insight, practical strategies, and ensured the plan reflected the realities facing producers and agribusinesses.

OTO and the Department also partnered with the House and Senate Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committees to host four regional listening sessions. Nearly 200 participants from more than 40 counties contributed feedback, supplemented by insights gathered through an online survey. This broad-based engagement helped refine priorities and strengthen alignment among stakeholders across the Commonwealth.



"The Shapiro Administration recognizes agriculture as a valued, critical sector of our Commonwealth; it impacts our economy, environment, workforce, and quality of life. It's at the center of some of the most important issues of our time, and as a strategic industry, it's important to develop a strategic plan.

Partnering with PA Department of Agriculture, the Office of Transformation is leading work to develop the 10-year Pennsylvania Food and Agriculture Strategic Plan. This whole-of-government approach is helping to ensure our stakeholders – public and private – are at the table as we chart a course for agriculture's future."

Russell Redding, Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture

Thanks to the shared leadership of all involved, the resulting plan – currently in draft form with an anticipated 2026 release – reflects the shared vision, expertise, and commitment of Pennsylvania's agriculture community. It provides a roadmap to help guide growth, innovation, and resilience for one of the Commonwealth's largest and most connected industries for the decade ahead.

"We are grateful for the chance to collaborate on shaping a strong future for Pennsylvania's agricultural sector. This effort will enable us to focus our resources where they can make the greatest difference, creating practical approaches that strengthen the industry and support economic growth. The leadership and coordination provided by OTO have been instrumental in bringing diverse voices together to turn shared priorities into actionable outcomes, and we have appreciated the opportunity to contribute to it."

Gretta Twitch Roman, Director of Research Development and Initiatives,
Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences

2025 Regional Forums

In 2025, OTO launched a new initiative to better understand the local challenges shaping economic development across Pennsylvania. OTO held 12 forums across 10 regions, engaging Local Development Districts, Industrial Development Corporations, county planners, and other partners who work directly on community and economic growth. These discussions provided a candid look at the barriers communities face and offered valuable insight into how OTO can more effectively support projects moving forward.

Four themes emerged consistently across each region:

- **Municipal Capacity and Coordination:** Many municipalities, especially in rural areas, lack the staff and resources needed to plan, manage development, or pursue public funding.

- **Cost and Funding Requirements:** Excessive compliance obligations and delays in reimbursement were cited as barriers to project viability.
- **Process Consistency:** Stakeholders noted inconsistent permitting and compliance decisions across regions and agencies, including PennDOT, DEP, and L&I.
- **Insufficient Infrastructure:** Electricity, transportation, water, and wastewater limitations continue to restrict both small and large-scale economic development.

The forums underscore the need for both statewide and region-specific approaches. In 2026, OTO will use these insights to:

- Advance statewide improvements in permitting consistency, municipal support, and agency coordination.
- Tailor assistance to regional needs, ensuring communities receive the right level of technical support, problem-solving, and guidance to move projects forward.

A final report detailing regional findings and recommended actions is in development.

Modernizing the Surplus Property System

The Shapiro Administration has aimed to improve the Commonwealth's real estate portfolio by strengthening the process for identifying and disposing of surplus state property. To tackle this, OTO and Department of General Services (DGS) partnered with a third-party consulting expert to assess surplus-property practices across all major real estate-holding agencies. The review included stakeholder interviews, analysis of current systems, and benchmarking against peer states.

The assessment delivered a clear modernization plan, including:

- A Commonwealth-wide surplus-property strategy led by DGS
- A Real Estate Strategy Team to strengthen analytics, planning, and public-private partnerships
- A dedicated, continuously funded pre-development and demolition program
- A Commonwealth Real Estate Council to coordinate agencies
- Modernized statutory authority to allow routine transactions through streamlined administrative processes

These reforms aim to reduce holding times, cut maintenance costs, and more effectively position state assets for redevelopment and economic growth.

Next steps include finalizing the statewide strategy, identifying early-action sites, establishing the Real Estate Strategy Team, and working with partners to explore statutory updates. Together, these efforts will shift the Commonwealth toward a proactive, market-aligned real estate platform that delivers meaningful fiscal and community impact.

Automating Small & Diverse Business Procurement Reporting

Over the past year, OTO has made significant progress in modernizing and streamlining critical reporting functions across the Commonwealth. One of the most impactful advancements was the full automation of eight major annual reports that had historically been produced manually by the Department of General Services' Bureau of Business Inclusion and Supplier Development (BISD). This collaboration has reduced administrative workload, improved accuracy, and enhanced consistency across all reporting outputs.

OTO developed, tested, and validated automation code for the reports. As part of this effort, OTO and BISD aligned vendor-classification methodologies for clarity and consistency. Vendor-scrubbing processes were also refined with keyword-based logic to produce more precise datasets. Additional file naming standardization, directory structures, and code architecture will be implemented with cloud migration in 2026.

Together, these improvements reflect OTO's commitment to modernizing government operations, reducing manual effort, and building a more efficient, standardized, and data-driven reporting infrastructure for the Commonwealth.

"The partnership between OTO and BISD has transformed how we deliver critical data for the Commonwealth. By fully automating eight major reports that were previously produced manually, we have significantly reduced administrative burden while improving accuracy, consistency, and transparency. This collaboration with OTO demonstrates the power of cross-agency partnerships and the work represents a meaningful step forward in modernizing our reporting infrastructure and strengthening data-driven decision-making across government."

Dr. Erica Patterson, DM, Deputy Secretary, BISD, Department of General Services

Looking to 2026

As OTO enters its fourth year, the Office is prepared to build on its progress and scale the systems, partnerships, and tools that have strengthened Pennsylvania's competitiveness. The foundation established over the past two years – from improved agency coordination to permitting efficiencies and expanded business engagement – now positions OTO to grow its impact in 2026.

In the year ahead, OTO will focus on expanding its support for businesses and advancing high-impact projects. This includes scaling the PA Fast Track Program, deepening case-by-case project assistance, and strengthening the connections that help companies navigate permitting, regulatory requirements, and agency processes. At the same time, the Office will continue to enhance Pennsylvania's permitting ecosystem by advancing data transparency and refining internal processes to ensure consistent, predictable, and data-driven decision-making. OTO will continue to build on its foundation, driving cross-sector and cross-agency collaboration through the Economic Development Strategy Group, deploying the Commonwealth's Food and Agriculture Strategic Plan, and continue to update the Commonwealth's systems to make Pennsylvania more competitive. Through this work, the Office will continue to be a key partner in the business attraction and retention ecosystem, bolstering impactful projects and modernizing how businesses access and navigate government services.

By scaling its tools, strengthening partnerships, and expanding its role as a connector, OTO is poised to further enhance the Commonwealth's competitiveness and help position Pennsylvania as a national leader in business investment and innovation.



Office of Transformation & Opportunity