

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
BUSINESS MEETING
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
FEBRUARY 17, 2021



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

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Yassmin Gramian, P.E. convened the quarterly business meeting of the State Transportation Commission (STC) at 10:04 am on February 17, 2021.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present on the Phone:

1. Honorable Yassmin Gramian, Chair
2. Honorable Chad M. Amond
3. Honorable Ronald J. Drnevich
4. Honorable George M. Khoury
5. Honorable Tim Hennessey
 Mr. Josiah Shelly, Alternate Present
6. Honorable Michael Carroll
7. Honorable Wayne Langerholc, Jr.
8. Honorable John P. Sabatina
 Mr. Jason Gerard, Alternate Present
9. Honorable Sharon L. Knoll, Vice-Chair
10. Honorable James D. Kingsborough
11. Honorable Frank E. Paczewski
12. Honorable Paige Willan

Commissioners Not Present

None.

MINUTES:

ON A MOTION by Mr. Ronald Drnevich and seconded by Mr. Chad Amond, and unanimously approved, the December 10, 2020, STC business meeting minutes were accepted.

MINUTES:

ON A MOTION by Mr. George Khoury and seconded by Mr. James Kingsborough, and unanimously approved, the January 12, 2021, STC business meeting minutes were accepted.

CHAIR'S REMARKS:

Secretary Gramian welcomed Commissioners and guests to the STC meeting. Secretary Gramian also welcomed Senator Wayne Langerholc to the STC.

ELECTION OF STC VICE-CHAIR AND SECRETARY:

The STC voted to elect a Vice-Chair and a Secretary.

Mr. Ronald Drnevich nominated Ms. Sharon Knoll for Vice Chair.

ON A MOTION by Mr. Frank Paczewski and seconded by Mr. George Khoury, and unanimously approved, Ms. Sharon Knoll was elected STC Vice Chair.

Mr. George Khoury nominated Mr. Ronald Drnevich for Secretary.

ON A MOTION by Mr. James Kingsborough and seconded by Mr. George Khoury, and unanimously approved, Mr. Ronald Drnevich was elected STC Secretary.

2021 TWELVE YEAR TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM: By Larry Shifflet

Deputy Secretary Larry Shifflet presented the 2021 Twelve Year Transportation Program (TYP) adjustments stating that between November 20, 2020 and January 29, 2021, there were 731 program adjustments including:

- 385 Project/Phase Additions
- 301 Project/Phase Changes
- 45 Project/Phase Deletions

Mr. Shifflet said that the overall changes represent a \$110,605,865 increase for the reporting period.

Mr. Shifflet highlighted two projects in the Centre County MPO.

ON A MOTION by Ms. Sharon Knoll and seconded by Mr. Frank Paczewski the 2021 Twelve Year Program Adjustments were unanimously approved.

WORKING SESSION:

2021 TRANSPORTATION PERFORMANCE REPORT(TPR): By Brian Funkhouser

Mr. Brian Funkhouser presented the 2021 iteration of the TPR. Mr. Funkhouser gave an overview of the report noting that it started with the passage of MAP 21 and the FAST Act elevating performance measurement in transportation planning. The first ever Transportation Performance Report started in 2013 and is issued bi-annually. He explained that the report documents the Commonwealth's transportation performance against key measures including: Safety, Mobility, Preservation, Accountability, and Funding.

Mr. Funkhouser said that this year's version of the TPR, includes a new logo and the report is available in multiple languages. He added that an informational graphic was added to the report to explain the connection between the TPR, Pennsylvania's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and the 12-Year Transportation Program. He also noted that the update to Pennsylvania's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is underway and should be issued later this year.

Mr. Funkhouser discussed the performance and trend indicators of the TPR. He explained that color indicates the performance of a specific measure while the text in the icon indicates the trend of the measure.

Mr. Funkhouser highlighted the performance of the key measures including:

- Safety: Fatalities are the lowest they have ever been.
- Mobility: Data for Public Transportation Ridership in Fiscal Year 2019-20 is not yet available, therefore the pandemic impact on public transportation is not reflected in the TPR.
- Preservation: Poor condition bridges numbers are trending lower.
- Accountability: Drivers and Vehicle Services customer service has remained good.
- Funding: New initiatives to secure long term revenue are ongoing and the impacts of COVID-19 on travel demand and revenue projections remain top priorities.

Mr. Keane explained that the 12-Year Program public comment period will begin March 1 through April 14, 2021. He added that an Online Public Forum will be held on March 23, 2021 and will feature Secretary Gramian, Executive Deputy Secretary George McAuley, Deputy Secretary for Planning Larry Shifflet, and STC Commissioner Ronald Drnevich.

Mr. Keane also noted that an email will be sent out with more information.

ON A MOTION by Mr. James Kingsborough and seconded by Mr. George Khoury the 2021 Transportation Performance Report was unanimously approved.

**PENNSYLVANIA LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND
COMPREHENSIVE FREIGHT MOVEMENT PLAN: By Brian Funkhouser**

Mr. Brian Funkhouser briefed the STC on the update underway for Pennsylvania's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Comprehensive Freight Movement Plan (CFMP). He discussed stakeholder engagement efforts and explained that the plan is organized around goals and objectives. He highlighted some goals and objectives:

LRTP Goals and Objectives include:

Safety and Security

- *Expand behavioral change initiatives with partners and stakeholders to enhance safety for all modes (drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, etc.)*

Mobility and Access

- *Improve system efficiency and reliability.*

Stewardship and Sustainability

- *Improve transportation equity throughout the Commonwealth.*

System Performance and Technology

- *Leverage technology and operations enhancements to improve transportation system efficiency.*

Resources and Investment

- *Advance a funding strategy including new mechanisms to ensure resource levels that are sufficient to meet transportation system needs.*

CFMP goals and objectives include:

Economic Development/Land Use

- *Develop updated approach for Critical Urban and Rural Freight Corridor (CUFC/CRFC) identification and mapping, tying truck volumes on highway network to current and future freight-intensive land uses.*

Project Investments

- *Preserve and enhance major freight transportation assets, including waterways, railroads, major truck corridors, and intermodal terminals. Maintain and enhance accessibility to these assets.*

Planning, Data, Analytical Tools

- *Develop analytical tools, data, and forecasting techniques to measure costs and benefits of freight-related initiatives, programs, and projects.*

Operations and Safety

- *Reduce truck-related crashes, injuries, and fatalities statewide.*

Mr. Funkhouser discussed the next steps for the plans including:

- Partner in the STC Online Survey
 - Launches March 1st
 - Open for 45 days
- Finalization of Goals and Objectives
 - Catalyst Team and Freight Plan Advisory Group Review
- Drafting of Plans
 - Late April/Early May

Mr. Kingsborough asked if the I-81 Improvement Strategy Group is engaged in the process of developing the plans.

Mr. Funkhouser said that the Interstate Steering Committee is involved in the process of the developing the plans.

STATEWIDE LOCAL SMALL BRIDGES STUDY: By Mark Murawski

TAC member and Study Chair Mr. Mark Murawski presented the Statewide Small Bridge Investment Plan Study draft report. Mr. Murawski explained the objective of the study is to provide a clear understanding on the conditions of the local bridges under 20 feet and provide recommendations to change the status quo.

Mr. Murawski noted that because the Federal Government doesn't require inspections for the locally owned bridges under 20 feet, there are over 7,000 local small bridges for which there is no inspection data to determine their condition. He added that PennDOT performs inspection for State owned bridges including bridges under 20 feet.

Mr. Murawski explained that extensive outreach work was conducted, and the study group received all data collected by the local communities and conducted its own surveys.

Mr. Murawski 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 concluded his presentation noting that an Action Team was created to work on implementing some of the recommendations.

Mr. Khoury asked if the study includes an estimate of the cost for implementing the recommendations.

Mr. Murawski answered that the Action Team does not have an estimated cost for implementation and the Action Team will look at different implementation options.

ON A MOTION by Mr. George Khoury, and seconded by Mr. Ronald Drnevich, and unanimously approved, the *Statewide Small Local Bridge Investment Plan* Study was approved.

PA Department of Transportation Update: **Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

Mr. Murawski gave an update about the TAC activities. He said that the TAC continues to work on the Utilities in the State Right-of-Way study. The Draft Report will be presented to the TAC at its next meeting.

Mr. Murawski also said that the TAC has started the study topic identification process for the next TAC study; and that two study topics were approved for scoping.

Administration and Budget

Mr. Robert Chiappelli, Deputy Secretary for Administration, gave a brief report about his Deputate. Mr. Chiappelli said that over two thirds of the Department’s workforce is working on-site and the rest is teleworking.

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 as of February 16, 2021, 53% of operator positions are filled

compared to last year's 58%. Nonoperator positions are filled at 58% compared to last year's 58%.

Mr. Chiappelli mentioned that the Department has received approval to hire 700 college students this summer. He noted that the program usually hires 1600 each summer.

Mr. Chiappelli also discussed the Grantville Rest Area opening, which is set to happen on February 22, 2021.

Driver and Vehicle Services

Deputy Secretary for Driver and Vehicle Services, Mr. Kurt Myers, gave an update on Driver and Vehicle Services.

Mr. Myers explained that HB 2296 was signed by Governor Wolf on November 25, 2020 becoming Act 131 of 2020. This new law makes it possible for Pennsylvanians experiencing homelessness to be issued a free initial photo ID or renewal beginning January 25, 2021.

Mr. Myers noted that the Real ID demand remains relatively low but will likely increase as the vaccine rollout continues to expand. He added an extension of the Real ID deadline will be discussed with the new Administration.

Mr. Myers also discussed the Real ID Modernization ACT included in the Appropriation Bill. Mr. Myers explained that use of mobile driver's licenses is also included in the bill. And he expects that a pilot program will be deployed in the summer.

Mr. Drnevich asked what a mobile driver's license meant.

Mr. Myers said that it would allow an individual to have a digital driver's license on a smart phone.

Mr. Myers also mentioned the opening of a new Real ID center in Jeannette, PA.

Mr. Myers concluded his update noting that Lawrence County recently passed an ordinance to implement the \$5 County fee beginning 4/1/2021; and Luzerne County has passed an ordinance to repeal the County fee effective 12/31/2021.

Highway and Bridge Program

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

Ms. Batula mentioned that the Rapid Bridge Replacement Program has completed all 558 bridges.

Ms. Batula noted that the number of poor bridges has been reduced from 6,049 in 2008 to 2,518 in 2020. She also noted that Pavement conditions have worsened a little.

Ms. Batula also announced that 2020 fatalities numbers will increase. She explained that reckless driving behaviors have increased and caused the uptick.

Ms. Batula said that winter maintenance continues but the month of February has been challenging because of back to back winter storms. She added that expenditures will increase, and she doesn't expect any savings throughout the season.

Ms. Batula said that UPS requested and was granted exemptions to continue to transport COVID-19 vaccine while restrictions were ongoing on the highway.

Ms. Batula also discussed the Federal Relief Fund. She said there is an ongoing conversation with the Federal Highway Administration to get a clear picture on what the funds can be used for.

Mr. Drnevich asked if there have been any changes in the gas tax revenue projections.

Ms. Batula said that since truck traffic is back to normal, diesel fuel revenue is also back to normal. She added that the regular gas tax revenue is still down to 85% because normal travel is not back to 100% yet.

Mr. Drnevich asked if revenue projections are done based on gas tax or traffic volume.

Ms. Batula said that the Department of Revenue tracks gas sales, the PennDOT tracks traffic volume.

Mr. Khoury commented about the projection that 21% of bridges will be in good condition if funding issues are not addressed by 2031.

Ms. Batula confirmed that would be the case.

Mr. Khoury asked if the same applies to pavement.

Ms. Batula said that not to the same extent.

Multimodal Transportation

Sitting in for Deputy Secretary Ms. Jennie Granger, AICP, Ms. Danielle Spila, gave a brief update. Ms. Spila said that Transit agencies are working with municipalities to drive people to vaccination sites for free.

Office of Planning

Deputy Secretary for Planning, Mr. Larry Shifflet gave a brief update about his Deputate. Mr. Shifflet explained that the FAST Act has expired but Congress has passed a 1-year extension, which gives some certainty for planning purposes.

Mr. Shifflet said the full year appropriations legislation sets Pennsylvania's obligation limitation at just under \$1.6 billion for Federal Fiscal Year 2021.

Mr. Shifflet also noted that the Department has successfully transitioned to virtual municipal meeting sessions since the beginning of the Pandemic.

Mr. Drnevich asked if the FAST Act extension was for 1 or 4 years.
Mr. Shifflet answered 1 year.

Mr. Ritchie asked for more information on how much the local municipalities can expect for liquid fuels payments.

Mr. Shifflet explained that the initial estimate was a 12% reduction compared to March 2020 payments, but the latest estimates anticipate a 7% reduction.

COMMISSIONERS REPORT:

Ms. Sharon Knoll explained that transit agencies in the Erie area are struggling to provide local matches for projects.

OTHER BUSINESS:

The Commission thanked Mr. George Khoury, who was attending his last STC meeting, for his valuable service.

NEXT MEETING:

The next STC quarterly meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, June 9, 2021.**

ADJOURNMENT:

ON A MOTION by Mr. Ronald Drnevich and seconded by Mr. Chad Amond, the STC quarterly meeting was adjourned at 11:51 AM.