

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
BUSINESS MEETING
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
SEPTEMBER 15, 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 September 15, 2021.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present on the Phone:

1. Honorable Yassmin Gramian, Chair
2. Honorable Chad Amond
3. Honorable Michael Carroll
 Ms. Meredith Biggica, Alternate Present
4. Honorable Ronald J. Drnevich
5. Honorable Frank E. Paczewski
6. Honorable James D. Kingsborough
7. Honorable Paige Willan
8. Honorable Tim Hennessey
 Mr. James Bowes, Alternate Present
9. Honorable John Sabatina
 Mr. Jason Gerard, Alternate Present
10. Honorable Wayne Langerholc, Jr.
 Mr. Nolan Ritchie, Alternate Present

Commissioners Not Present

None

MINUTES:

ON A MOTION by Mr. Jimmy Kingsborough and seconded by Mr. Ronald Drnevich, and unanimously approved, the June 9, 2021, STC business meeting minutes were accepted.

CHAIR'S REMARKS:

Secretary Gramian welcomed Commissioners and guests to the STC meeting. Secretary Gramian gave updates including:

- The Transportation Revenue Options Commission (TROC) Final Report, which was submitted to Governor Tom Wolf on 7/30/21.
 - The 'Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act' (IIJA), which includes a five-year reauthorization of the FAST Act and \$110 billion in new spending for roads and bridges.
- A few key points:

- New Highway Trust Fund formula programs for Carbon Reduction and Resiliency are in addition to increases in funding for existing programs.
- New formula programs are established via General Fund appropriations for bridges and electrical vehicle charging infrastructure.
- Several new discretionary grant programs are established while funding is increased for existing programs.
- Initial estimates indicate Pennsylvania could receive approximately several hundred million each year in additional funds for roads and bridges. Transit and Passenger Rail will also see substantial increases.
- The legislation relies again on General Fund transfers to ensure the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund.
- The Senate passed the IIJA on August 10. The House is expected to address the legislation in some form before the end of September.

2021 TWELVE YEAR TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM: By Larry Shifflet

Deputy Secretary Larry Shifflet presented the 2021 Twelve Year Transportation Program (TYP) adjustments stating that between May 22, 2021 and August 27, 2021, there were 1,213 program adjustments including:

- 390 Project/Phase Additions
- 709 Project/Phase Changes
- 114 Project/Phase Deletions

Mr. Shifflet said that the overall changes represent a \$141,762,872 increase for the reporting period.

Mr. Shifflet highlighted six highway and bridge construction projects in Erie County. Mr. Shifflet discussed a \$2,870,000 increase to the construction phase of the 12th Street Corridor Signal project, which is funded by the Highway Safety Improvement Program statewide reserve line item.

ON A MOTION by Mr. Frank Paczewski and seconded by Mr. Ronald Drnevich the 2021 Twelve Year Program Adjustments were unanimously approved.

WORKING SESSION:

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

Mr. Brian Funkhouser from Michael Baker International and Mr. Keith Chase from Gannett Fleming briefed the STC on the update underway for Pennsylvania's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Freight Movement Plan (FMP).

Mr. Funkhouser highlighted the core themes of Leadership Interviews:

- Land Use: Achieving major advances to improve the land use-transportation connection.
- Implementation and Performance: Producing a plan that is implementable with accountability and value-adding for decision-making. Strengthen linkage between planning, programming, and performance measurement.
- State Transportation Commission: Increasing STC involvement in guiding program development.
- Districts and Regional Organizations: Enhancing involvement of PennDOT Districts in plan development and implementation. Better integration of statewide and regional planning efforts.
- Technology: Preparing for future impacts of emerging technologies on our transportation system.
- User Friendly: Ensuring the full suite of plan products is user friendly, accessible, and value-adding for both internal and external purposes.
- Asset Management: Asset management is a major focus and key principle in plan development.
- Stakeholder Engagement: Developing and implementing Plans with an interagency and intergovernmental focus, as well as involvement with other varied stakeholders

Mr. Funkhouser reiterated the emphasis on integrating transportation planning, programming and performance measurement throughout the development of the two Plans. He explained how both the LRTP, and the FMP relate to the 12-Year Program and the Transportation Performance Report (TPR).

Mr. Funkhouser discussed the LRTP and the FMP goals including:

LRTP Goals

- Safety: Enhance safety and security throughout Pennsylvania's transportation system
- Mobility: Strengthen transportation mobility to meet the increasingly dynamic needs of Pennsylvania residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Equity: Improve transportation access and equity throughout the Commonwealth.
- Resilience: Promote Pennsylvania transportation's resilience to climate change and other risks and reduce transportation's environmental impacts.

- Performance: Improve the condition and performance of transportation assets.
- Resources: Structure transportation funding and finance approaches that allocate sufficient resources for system improvement, maintenance, and preservation.

FMP Goals

- Align freight mobility with economic development and land use.
- Advance project investments that enhance freight mobility.
- Provide planning, data and analytical tools for improved decision making.
- Improve multimodal freight transportation operations and safety.

Mr. Funkhouser discussed the Transportation Data Repository, which will serve as resource toolbox for planning and programing.

Mr. Funkhouser explained the different stakeholder engagement for both Plans including:

L RTP

- Leadership: STC, TAC, PTC, and FHWA
- Department In-Reach
- Planning Catalyst Team
- Local Government Associations
- State Planning Board
- Governor's Affinity Groups
- PA Public Transportation Association

FMP

- Statewide Virtual Freight Forum
- Freight Focus Groups
- Freight Work Group (FWG)
- Freight Plan Advisory Group (FPAG)
- Department In-Reach
- DVRPC and SPC Freight Committees
- Motor Carrier Safety Advisory Committee

Mr. Keith Chase discussed the implementation approach to the Plans. He noted that the new iterations of the Plans have focused on making the Plans easy to implement.

Mr. Chase also discussed the Strategic Actions and Initiatives, which were initiated by the Department in-reach and continue through the stakeholder reviews, the refinement and gap closure, the internal communication, and the implementation process.

For the implementation reporting, Mr. Chase highlighted:

- Performance Measurement through the TPR

- PMC Progress Reporting (2x per year)
- STC Update (Annually)
- Periodic External Updates

Mr. Chase mentioned the draft Action Plan Tracker, which will track the status of key action plans throughout the implementation process.

Mr. Funkhouser concluded the update discussing the next steps, which include:

- Public Comment Period Opens (September 20)
- Public Comment Period Closes (October 20), and Plan Refinement.
- Plan Refinement and Finalization (November).
- Strategic Actions and Initiatives Completion, Plan Adoption and Rollout, STC Presentation (December).
- Implementation Begins (January 2022).

Mr. Keane commented that the TAC/STC management team with the assistance of the McCormick Taylor consultant team are supporting the LRTP and FMP public comment period through the talkpatransportation.com website.

Transportation Advisory Committee

TAC Chair, Ms. Jody Holton gave a brief update announcing the creation of an ad hoc committee to evaluate transportation impact fees. Ms. Holton noted that the Committee is scheduled to meet in the coming weeks.

Ms. Holton also discussed the Demand for Alternate Uses of the Right-of-Way and Funding for Pedestrian Network study, which is in the scoping process.

Executive Deputy Secretary

Ms. Melissa Batula, PE, Executive Deputy Secretary, gave an update about the PennDOT Pathways program, the Transportation Revenue Options Commission, and the P3 Major Bridge Project.

Ms. Batula noted that the Planning and Environmental Linkage document for the Pathways program is in final review status with the Federal Highway administration. She added that the review is expected to be completed by the end of the month.

Ms. Batula explained that one of the main components of the Pathways Program is the major bridge P3 initiative. She said that the Department is wrapping up the diversion study workshops.

Ms. Batula said that through the workshops, the Department is meeting with those that live and work in those communities near the proposed projects to understand, from their perspective, traffic movements so that they can be captured accurately in the model.

Ms. Batula explained that part of the modeling process is to assess the impact that toll rates can have on disadvantaged groups or communities and how to remedy them.

Ms. Batula said that 8 of the 9 studies have been completed. Public outreach with communities for each of the bridges will start in October and run through January.

Ms. Batula also discussed the Request for Qualifications that was issued on June 28. She said that Statements of Qualifications were received from four development entity teams and the Department is currently evaluating the information to develop a shortlist of candidate teams to respond to the project Request for Proposal (RFP), scheduled for final issue in January 2022. The team chosen as the Development Entity will then work collaboratively with PennDOT to develop the optimum number of bridge packages.

Mr. Hennessey asked when the shortlist announcement will occur.
Ms. Batula answered that we expect the announcement next week.

Administration and Budget

Ms. Michelle Jennings, Acting Deputy Secretary for Administration, announced that PennDOT employees returned to the office in a phased approach from the COVID-19 pandemic telework. She explained that the Keystone Building and Riverfront Office Center returned between July 20-22, 2021, and the Engineering District Offices returned to work August 2, 2021. Ms. Jennings said that PennDOT has evaluated all positions for telework eligibility and individual employee suitability. Employees interested in teleworking were able to apply online via Employee Self Service and arrange ad hoc or part-time telework schedules with their supervisors.

Ms. Jennings said that in July, the Bureau of Innovation facilitated the State Transportation Innovation Council's (STIC) virtual business meeting. She noted that subject matter experts provided updates on the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Every Day Counts Round 5 innovation, Unmanned Aerial Systems, as well as several STIC innovations that are moving through the Development Process.

Ms. Jennings also mentioned that the bureau continues to work with agency leadership on our strategic plan and our vision and mission statements to ensure alignment with current customer and employee needs. Ms. Jennings added that goals are in development that are specific, measurable, actual, realistic, and timely to accomplish the department's mission.

Ms. Jennings said that from May through July 2021, PennDOT's Welcome Centers served 765,353 customers, making 1,616 reservations for 3,024 travelers, generating \$198,744.32 in tourism revenue for the Commonwealth.

Ms. Jennings also discussed Bureau of Office Services eleven ongoing construction projects, the Bureau of Equal Opportunity Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program, and Infrastructure & Economic Development IT Delivery Center updates.

Driver and Vehicle Services

Mr. Kurt Myers, Deputy Secretary for Driver and Vehicle Services, gave an update about the Driver and Vehicle Services Deputate.

Mr. Myers recognized the General Assembly for passing HB 2296 related to human trafficking. HB 2296 requires PennDOT to impose a lifetime disqualification from operating a commercial motor vehicle for any person convicted of using a commercial motor vehicle in commission of a felony involving an act or practice of a severe form of trafficking in persons, as defined under section 103 of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000.

Mr. Myers announced, in the late summer of 2020, the Department solicited and subsequently awarded emergency procurements to five businesses, which included Total Control, American Motorcycle Training, Motorcycle Safety Academy, Schaeffer's Harley Davidson and Appalachian Harley Davidson to operate motorcycle training programs in the Commonwealth. Contract terms are for two years with the option for three, one-year renewals.

Mr. Myers highlight the County Re-Entry program. He said that PennDOT has been working with the Department of Corrections since 2006 to issue Photo Identification cards and / or a driver's license (if the individual had a driver's license before they were incarcerated) to assist re-entrants acquiring identification prior to their release. In 2018, the Department expanded the Re-Entry program to County Prisons. Through these Re-Entry programs, individuals can apply for a Pennsylvania non-driver photo identification card or renew / obtain a duplicate of an existing photo identification card in anticipation of their release.

Mr. Myers also discussed Qmatic Mobile Ticketing and Concierge initiatives. The mobile ticketing feature allows customers upon entering a Driver License Centers the opportunity to select a mobile ticket, giving them the flexibility to wait wherever they desire while still being able to monitor their place in line in real-time.

Mr. Myers noted that in addition to mobile ticketing, PennDOT will begin piloting a Concierge Service at the Riverfront Office Complex and the Summerdale REAL ID Center in mid-September. This service will allow for staff to issue a mobile ticket from a remote device via text which will allow the customer to follow their visit from their phone.

Mr. Myers concluded his update noting that PennDOT resumed issuing REAL IDs in September 2020 and has seen steady REAL ID issuance since that date. The milestone of issuing 1.3M REAL IDs was reached on August 2, 2021. He added that PennDOT continues to encourage residents interested in applying for a REAL ID to start the process now and be aware of all the proper documentation needed to ensure they have their REAL ID product in advance of the new federal deadline.

Highway and Bridge Program

Acting Deputy Secretary Mr. Michael Keiser, P.E., gave an update about the Highway Administration Deputate.

Mr. Keiser discussed flooding issues as a result of Hurricane Ida. Mr. Keiser explained that the most significant rainfall and flooding occurred in Central and Eastern PA, specifically the Philadelphia area. He added that an Emergency declaration has been issued for the District 6 area; and the Department is doing an extensive evaluation of the damage on the transportation infrastructure.

Mr. Keiser discussed the Department litter efforts. He noted that PennDOT crews across the state have expanded their routine litter pickup operations and these enhanced cleanups will continue through Labor Day. Cleanups are occurring on higher-traffic roadways where volunteer groups cannot safely pick up litter.

Mr. Keiser discussed winter maintenance saying that Department is gearing up for the upcoming winter. He explained that salt price remains high; temporary operators hiring is ongoing but CDL availability continues to be a challenge.

Mr. Keiser also acknowledged the General Assembly and the Wolf Administration for the additional \$279,000,000 in funding that PennDOT received. The additional funding allows the Department to increase the letting program by \$100,000,000, to about 2 billion dollars, for both the 2021 and 2022 programs.

Mr. Keiser announced that traffic volume for trucks is back to 100% compared to 2019. He added that traffic volume numbers for motorist fluctuate but are still below 2019 levels.

Mr. Hennessey asked about the timeline for increased lettings.
Mr. Keiser answered by the end of the year.

Multimodal Transportation

Ms. Jennie Louwerse, AICP, Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation, gave an update announcing that the Coatesville train station construction project bid period has been extended to September 30th.

Ms. Granger explained that the Department is anticipating a groundbreaking in late October, and she will be in touch with STC and the four transportation chairs once a definitive date has been determined.

Mr. Hennessey asked for more details on the about Amtrak's timeline for a passenger rail between Reading and Norristown.

Ms. Granger answered that she can follow up with the STC in greater detail, but she respectfully disagrees with Amtrak's timeline. She added that the expansion services along with the frequency increases on the Keystone and the Pennsylvanian, and the enhancement of existing services are all dependent upon available funding.

Ms. Granger said that Norfolk Southern completed their study for improving service on the Pennsylvanian from Pittsburgh to New York. The study looked at what it would take to make that happen from a capital perspective. She added that the report came in last Friday afternoon; and her staff is going over it in detail. An internal meeting is scheduled this Friday to review those findings. The four transportation chairs will be briefed on the details in the upcoming weeks.

Office of Planning

Deputy Secretary for Planning, Mr. Larry Shifflet gave a brief update about his Deputate.

Mr. Shifflet explained that there has been action on the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The Senate approved the bill, which then moved to the House. Talks continue in the House regarding an agreement on passage of the IIJA along with a \$3.5 trillion budget resolution.

Mr. Shifflet explained that Pennsylvania currently receives roughly \$1.8 billion in transportation funding under the FAST Act. If the IIJA were to pass, estimates for additional highway and bridge funding for Pennsylvania for the five years include:

- 2022: \$377,000,000.
- 2023: \$421,000,000.
- 2024: \$465,000,000.
- 2025: \$510,000,000.
- 2026: \$557,000,000.

Mr. Shifflet noted that there is also a special bridge program for which Pennsylvania is in line to receive about 1.6 billion over the 5 years.

Mr. Shifflet clarified that not all the funding PA would receive is new funding. He added that if all the Federal funding is to materialize, the state would also need additional state funding to match those new federal funds.

Mr. Shifflet discussed efforts with MPOs and RPOs to put together regional priority projects in anticipation of the additional funding. He said conversations started in mid-August.

Mr. Shifflet concluded his update noting that the IIJA does not permanently address the Federal Highway Trust Fund insolvency issue. He added that there is a proposal to transfer funds once again from the general fund to keep the Highway Trust Fund afloat.

COMMISSIONERS REPORT:

None

OTHER BUSINESS:

None

NEXT MEETING:

The next STC quarterly meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, December 15, 2021.**

ADJOURNMENT:

ON A MOTION by Mr. James Kingsborough and seconded by Mr. Chad Amond, the STC quarterly meeting was adjourned at 11:50 AM.

None

Follow up Items