

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
BUSINESS MEETING
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
APRIL 10TH, 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:

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) business meeting was called to order in the Keystone Building, Room 8N1, and on Microsoft Teams at 10:02 AM on April 10, 2024.

CHAIR'S REMARKS:

TAC Chair, Ms. Jody Holton, AICP, gave brief remarks welcoming the TAC to the meeting.

MINUTES:

ON A MOTION by Mr. John Pocius, seconded by Mr. Jeffrey Letwin and unanimously approved, the Minutes of the February 5, 2024, TAC Business Meeting were accepted without changes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

SECRETARY'S REMARKS:

Mr. Larry Shifflet spoke on behalf of Transportation Secretary Michael B. Carroll.

Mr. Shifflet said that the Governor's proposed budget came out and includes an increase to state transit funding, approximately \$283 million. All 67 counties have shared ride and transit services. He said they are in good shape to have a budget by the June deadline.

Ms. Holton said that the Secretary has been speaking across the Commonwealth on the importance of transit. Mr. Shifflet noted that Act 89 was almost ten years ago.

Mr. Sam Arnold added that grassroots transit supporters will rally at the Capitol on April 30th to support the budget proposal.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION UPDATE:

Executive Office

Executive Deputy Secretary Mr. Shifflet yielded his time.

Driver and Vehicle Services

Deputy Secretary Kara Templeton gave an update on Driver and Vehicle Services.

Over 21% of Pennsylvanians have gotten a RealID product, well ahead of the May 7, 2025, federal compliance date.

May is Motorcycle Safety Month, and PennDOT will begin campaigns to remind people to watch out for motorcyclists, and offer motorcycle safety training for all skill levels.

April is National Donate Life Month. Over 48% of ID Card and Driver's License holders are organ donors. April 12th is National Blue and Green Day, in which PennDOT partners with the Department of Health to remind citizens of tissue and organ donation.

Ms. Templeton said that the Wellsboro Driver License Center underwent upgrades. The center was closed on April 5 and 6, and it now has a refreshed facility with many enhancements to better serve its customers.

Mr. Shifflet said that the updates were significant in both looks and services, and the team had done a great job.

Multimodal

Deputy Secretary Meredith Biggica gave two minor updates from Multimodal.

Ms. Biggica said we are evaluating the current round of multimodal applications and are still on target for a summer announcement. This round of grants allowed applicants to "cure" or fix applications and over 100 needed corrections. There were 182 applications, totaling \$177 million in requests, with \$40 million of funds available.

On Monday, April 8, 2024, AMTRAK started a total track replacement project between Harrisburg and Lancaster on the Keystone line. Between 8 and 4 on Monday through Thursday, all trains will be stopped at Lancaster, with a bus bridge to the stations on the way to Harrisburg. The truncation will last until November 21st, 2024. The Keystone line had returned to 80% of pre-pandemic ridership. The Pennsylvanian will continue to run normally.

Mr. Murawski said that airports were concerned about the grant execution process and if there was any update. Ms. Biggica said that they were preparing to respond to a formal letter they received from the Aviation Advisory Committee and Aviation Council. They have transitioned to e-grants and, as part of that process, are working on grant templates. They are close on the federal grant template and will work on the state grant afterward. They are aware that letters to proceed are helpful, but what is needed is the ability to draw on those funds. Multimodal is working on the issue internally and seeing how they can be helpful to their airport partners.

Highway Administration

Mr. Gavin Gray, on behalf of Deputy Secretary Mike Rebert, gave an update from Highway Administration.

The construction program announced a goal of \$2.8 billion in lettings for 2024, of which \$545 million had been let thus far. We are on track to meet the goal for the year. Incoming bids are 1.7% lower than expected, and this is hoped to be a sign of price normalization. Inflation remains an issue and is closely monitored.

Winter operations are being closed out. 85% of the winter expenditure budget has been used., However, contractual obligations remain with salt purchases and other materials. We are not anticipating much cost savings from this year's winter operations.

A series of pilots using digital delivery and other Technologies has been ongoing in six categorical areas. We are working with district staff to adjust and improve those methods.

Three teams are looking at improving components of the Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP) process, including streamlining the process and implementing best practices developed with partners.

Mr. John Pocius asked if a municipality contracts for salt based on projections and if they must take that salt. Mr. Gray said that PennDOT contracts require a certain threshold of salt. Some municipalities use the PennDOT contracts and would also be required to buy salt to a certain threshold.

Mr. Shifflet noted that the recent rain event caused millions of dollars of damage across the state, including roadway damage and slide cleanup.

Ms. Holton asked if Highway Administration had been looking at land development needs and coordinating with municipalities in the HOP process. Mr. Gray said land use is more tied to the typical project delivery process, not necessarily the HOP process outside driveway access points and zoning issues. Mr. Murawski noted that access to lots has been a constant issue in Pennsylvania and often needs to be dealt with locally.

Planning

Deputy Secretary Kristin Mulkerin gave updates from the Planning deputate.

Ms. Mulkerin began by announcing the retirement of Mr. Brian Hare, who was replaced by Mr. Mark Tobin as the Bureau Director of the Center for Program Development and Management.

The 12-Year Program (TYP) update is underway, with draft Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) entering their public comment periods between April and June. Information on this process and links to the TIPs are available on TalkPATransportation.com. The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is expected to have its 15-day public comment period from June 18 to July 3, 2024.

Ms. Mulkerin announced that one grant application had been submitted since the last meeting: Karns Crossing in Butler County under the Bridge Investment Program (BIP). PennDOT's Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods application for Erie was not awarded. However, others in Pennsylvania were, such as the award for Chinatown in Philadelphia. PennDOT was also awarded an application via the Strengthening Mobility and Revitalizing Transportation (SMART).

Several applications, such as the South Bridge under the BIP Large fund, are still pending. PennDOT plans to submit the South Bridge under the Multimodal Program Discretionary Grant pending a response from the BIP Large fund, along with several other projects.

The Wildlife Crossing Work Group had its kickoff meeting; more information will be available at the next meeting.

Ms. Holton asked if there was any update on the reauthorization of IIJA. Mr. Shifflet said things are moving, but movement can take a long time, especially with a presidential election in the near future. IIJA was a bipartisan bill, and he does not expect hiccups in that regard, but it is possible that the bill may not be ready by 2026 and there may be continuing resolutions.

Ms. Holton noted the importance of the IIJA funds to infrastructure in Pennsylvania. Mr. Shifflet mentioned that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA) was the largest grant award that Pennsylvania has received. Ms. Holton said that as a large older transit system, SEPTA had greatly benefitted from the Rail Vehicle Replacement Program grant of \$317 million to replace the Market-Frankford Line cars. However, that amount is only about a third of the cost of replacing the Broad Street line, cars, signal system, and facility upgrades to receive the new cars.

Mr. Murawski asked if the funds received would be eligible for operating and capital assistance. Ms. Holton said that they use it for operating assistance and that she believes it is a requirement. The funds allow SEPTA not to raise fares extraordinarily. House Bill 902 explains local funding options to improve capital funding support from counties. She said that SEPTA is underfunded by half of what their peers get in capital. Mr. Murawski noted that many assume that if there is a large infusion of funds, the problem will be solved, and operating costs do not necessarily offset capital needs.

Mr. Letwin asked if PennDOT usually gets their capital funding federally. Mr. Shifflet said that over a billion dollars of federal funds have come to Pennsylvania from discretionary opportunities. Usually, they are given 90 days to respond, but now it is about half. Grants are extremely competitive; only about 10% of applications are approved. PennDOT is being aggressive to obtain those grants.

Studies Update:

Study Topic Selection

Mr. Shane Rice, Policy Director at PennDOT, gave an overview of the draft of the Department of Aging's (PDA) Master Plan on Aging, *Aging Our Way, PA*.

Aging Our Way, PA, is a 10-year strategic plan designed to help transform the infrastructure and coordination of services for Pennsylvania's older adults. PDA received nearly 20,000 responses from community members across the state to recommend improvements to services and infrastructure. At the time of the meeting, the second draft's public comment period had concluded, and the plan was being revised before final publication.

The plan is structured around five high-level Priorities: Unlocking Access, Aging in the Community, Gateways to Independence, Caregiver Support, and Education and Navigation. Each priority has several mid-level Strategies, and specific, measurable initiatives called Tactics. Transportation issues were under the Gateways to Independence priority. Those strategies were ensuring driver safety for older adults, improving transportation systems to serve older adults and people with disabilities better, increasing coordination between transportation stakeholders, using alternatives to public transportation to reduce gaps in access, and utilizing funding opportunities to maximize the efficiency and efficacy of public transit.

Mr. John Pocius asked about crosswalks requirements, giving the example of an older adult crossing a 4-way stop with no signal. Mr. Rice said that there are strategies for that sort of situation.

Ms. Holton asked if there were best practices for controlled intersections, beyond the Green Book. Mr. Gray said that there are supplementary manuals that deal with the characteristics of 4-way stops, design considerations, and guidance for aging populations.

Ms. Felicia Dell asked how the plans would be implemented as many groups would need to be involved and coordinated. Mr. Rice said that the goal is after finalization and publication, PennDOT would look into what opportunities are available and reconvene to determine a scope. Ms. Dell asked if that would involve an action plan. Mr. Rice said he was unsure and reiterated that the plan was a 10-year plan and is meant to be adaptable.

Ms. Dell asked if data was being collected to determine whether the project is successful. Mr. Rice said he was unsure if that is defined at this stage but will take that question back to the group if it is not.

Mr. Murawski said Mr. Rice was brought in to discuss whether the TAC should move forward with the demographic study. The scope of the potential study is not just older people, but also younger people, the workforce, and transportation.

Demographic Study Scope of Work

Mr. Brian Funkhouser of Michael Baker International discussed the demographic study topic and the proposed scope of work. He said the demographics study was one of the highest-ranking projects on the study topic survey from the end of 2023.

Mr. Funkhouser proposed two scopes: a Demographics/Workforce part, which was the original intent of the proposal, and an expanded scope that incorporates the transportation aspects of the Aging Our Way PA report.

The Demographics/Workforce aspect was touched on in the previous Aviation study, noting the lack of pilots, mechanics, and other vital workforce members. This study would expand that to all modes of transportation as well as internally at PennDOT. This will be coordinated with stakeholders such as Labor and Industry, Education, and Economic Development.

The Aging Our Way, PA section of the scope, would assess the report and tie it into the greater report. This would occur later in the process, as the report's release date is unknown but expected during the summer.

Ms. Holton said that the draft aging plan recommends more shared ride and paratransit services, and that it is a workforce issue. Almost all costs were labor, and the costs are tied to the scarcity of those workers. She said that this is a good example of how the two scopes are linked together.

Mr. Alan Blahovec noted a shared ride sustainability study that the department had done recently that could be used to inform the study. Mr. Shifflet agreed, and said it was still in the approval process.

Mr. Murawski agreed with the study's Part A/Part B structure of the study, as it allows the study to begin while waiting for the full release of the Aging report. When the report is released, Part B will review what recommendations require TAC involvement. Mr. Pocius agreed and said that TAC was well-placed to put the governor's study into action, and that it was the time to move.

Ms. Oyler asked if this study would focus on the lack of younger workers, or look further into the implications of that demographic change. She gave the example of the aging workforce,

which would likely result in more home delivery demand, which changes freight demand. Mr. Murawski said that both will be considered in the study.

Mr. Strathmeyer said that rural communities have different needs, and the rural workforce differs significantly than larger municipalities. He noted that he didn't see rural areas mentioned in the plan, which have struggled with fulfilling healthcare needs.

Mr. Rice said it is important to be mindful of the rural aspect and plan accordingly to a larger vision of what the small rural community should look like. A shift could bring more economic opportunity to those areas.

Mr. Strathmeyer said he wanted to ensure that rural concerns were included in the conversation. Mr. Rice responded that the outreach from Aging was across the state and included feedback from older rural adults.

Mr. Shifflet noted that the shared ride study will conclude soon and will help with those concerns as well, as it reaches all 67 counties. Mr. Funkhouser suggested including the Center for Rural PA or the Regional Planning Organizations on the task force.

Mr. Dan Keane said the scope was set up this way, because the survey suggested merging the two topics together. Additionally, Multimodal had requested time to digest the recommendations after the report was released. This solution works for everyone and can be rescoped to remove or refine Part B if needed.

ON A MOTION by Mr. Wagenmann, seconded by Mr. Blahovec and unanimously approved, the TAC adopted the Demographics study.

E-Commerce Study

Mr. Funkhouser gave an update on the E-Commerce Study that was begun at the February meeting. The study, which was the highest-rated on the survey, is chaired by Mr. Arnold.

Mr. Funkhouser noted that transportation planning is gaining increasing public awareness and interest, with recent truck parking, supply chain, and warehousing issues. Additionally, the pandemic accelerated significant shifts in consumer trends. The task force has been composed and is scheduled to meet the week after the meeting.

The study objectives are to identify land use changes related to the growth of e-commerce, evaluate the economic impacts of these changes, determine how these trends impact Pennsylvania's transportation network, and evaluate the transportation funding implications related to e-commerce.

The scope elements are Project Kickoff and Problem Definition, Project Task Force, research and stakeholder engagement, moderated panel discussion, address issues and opportunities, draft study report, report review and finalization, and project communications. Mr. Funkhouser makes special note of the moderated panel discussion scope element.

The task force will meet on April 24, 2024, the moderated panel is expected to happen on July 24, and the draft report is expected to be ready in October, with presentations to the State Transportation Committee (STC) and TAC in December.

Transportation Performance Report

Mr. Funkhouser gave an update on the Transportation Performance (TPR) report. The TPR is a report released biannually since 2013, typically in February of odd-numbered years. Updates generally begin in July of the previous year but will start early this year.

The themes of the TPR will be Safety, Mobility, Preservation, Accountability, Funding, and Freight. Freight was added in 2023 with the Freight Movement Plan and will continue to be a focused part of the TPR.

For the first time, the TPR will include a task force. Previously, it had been a joint effort between the Program Center and the consulting team.

The TPR kickoff will be in either April or May, and Mr. Funkhouser will provide the TAC updates throughout the year. A final version will be presented at the February 2025 meeting.

Micro-mobility

Mr. Roy Gothie, Executive Policy Specialist at PennDOT, gave a presentation on micro-mobility policy.

Mr. Gothie said that 52% of trips are under 3 miles, so it may not be practical or economical for one person to take a minivan. Vehicles are also expensive purchases, that can be aspirational for some. Micro-mobility is increasingly an option that people are choosing.

Mr. Gothie said that micro-mobility is a broad landscape of small, lightweight vehicles with a variety of form factors weighing less than 1000kg, including bicycles and skateboards, e-scooters and micro-cars.

The micro-mobility landscape can be separated into groupings such as Active, Passive, Powered Light Mobility, and Car-like Mobility. Active mobility includes walking, bikes and e-bikes, scooters, and other rideables. Passive mobility includes e-scooters, e-skateboards, and hoverboards. Powered light mobility includes throttled e-bikes, mopeds, rickshaws, and micro-vehicles. Car-like mobility is primarily microcars.

Regarding regulating micro-mobility, both state and federal law is inconsistent. This causes confusion among elected officials, law enforcement, and the general public. Researchers are producing some work on laws and the previous classifications,

Mr. Gothie gives an example by asking which of a Motorized Pedalcycle, Motor Scooter and Pedalcycle with Electric Assist is considered a motor-driven cycle under Title 75, and then provided the definitions. The Moped definitions were written in the 1970s concerning bicycles with gas motors. The electric assist pedalcycle is the only one of the three that discusses weight.

The national model has been proposed in Pennsylvania, that classifies e-bikes into three classes that does not distinguish on weight, engine power, power source, or transmission.

- Class 1 is pedal-assist only, with no throttle, and a maximum assisted speed of 20mph.
- Class 2 is throttle-assisted and has a maximum assisted speed of 20mph.
- Class 3 is pedal-assist only, with no throttle, and a maximum assisted speed of 28mph.

Micro-mobility devices are not just recreational but are essential for living to some. He noted that the median income in Pennsylvania is \$72,672, and the cost of a new car is \$12,182 yearly over five years, 16% of the yearly household income. Comparatively, an e-bike would cost \$530

yearly over five years, or 0.73% of the yearly household income. The poverty level for a family of three in Pennsylvania is \$25,820.

Housing and transportation should account for roughly 30% of a household's income. The Fair Market Rent of a 1-bedroom home is \$1,002/month, and \$1,228/month for a two-bedroom. To afford a 1-bedroom rental home in Pennsylvania at Fair Market Rent, you must have a yearly take-home of ~\$40,000.

Combining the housing and automotive costs comes to \$26,918 yearly, 37% of the median income but over 100% of the poverty level's income.

Mr. Gothie said micro-mobility offers access to jobs, schools, health care, and community resources, reduces ambient air pollution, improves public health outcomes, supports multiple federal and state plans/policies, and costs far less in per mile infrastructure.

Ms. Oyler asked about safety, and if there had been any research done. Mr. Gothie said that safety is PennDOT's top priority. He noted a study named "Four Types of Cyclists," which identified that the majority of people are interested in cycling but are concerned about cycling in and with traffic. The key is to have a place where they would feel safe riding with their children. He noted new roadway guidelines and parking-separated bike lane legislation. There are hurdles at the federal classification level, such as bicycles and mopeds being governed by two different agencies, and some e-bikes straddling the line. These agencies will provide guidance in the future. He said that a transition to safer transportation spaces involves a reduction in kinetic energy, according to FHWA.

Mr. Elam Herr appreciated the attention to safety concerns, having recently been in the Boston area where e-bikes are increasingly popular. He noted the need for both riders and drivers to be educated on safety in traffic. Mr. Gothie agreed that education is important, especially as many users are under 16 years old, and mentioned that licensure is a possibility. He stressed that this is a user issue, not a technology issue. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) struggles with this as well on their trails.

PennDOT's Lane Reservation System

Mr. Ryan McNary, Highway Administration Program Manager at PennDOT, spoke on PennDOT's Lane Reservation System.

In 2017, PennDOT was awarded a grant to develop a Lane Reservation System in conjunction with the Turnpike and Ohio DOT. Due to complications from COVID-19, it became an exclusively PennDOT project.

The project's goals are to reduce work zone conflicts and congestion, improve safety, share work zones and incident data effectively, improve operations and standardize scheduling and tracking on roadways.

There are 16,781 events a year on just the core network and 38,988 on all routes, with most of the work being done between 6 AM and 10 AM. Operators currently manage calls from the field conflict, and data entry.

Mr. McNary gave the example of the I-81 George Wade Bridge. A directive was made to do road work, and multiple teams went out at the same time. This caused 70 minutes of delay on the

southbound lane, and 3.5 hours of delay on the northbound lane. This would have been avoided if better scheduling would had been available.

Currently, this is done in a non-standard process across the state causing duplication of efforts, and a lack of central data. There is no automated conflict identification, and there is often incomplete information and a lack of communication.

PennDOT has a tool named FREEVAL-PA, which uses the highway capacity value calculations to determine expected congestion and delays should capacity be removed. The new system will use this tool to prevent situations like the I-78 bridge.

The new system will also be the first statewide database of road work, allowing for real-time data sharing, smart work zones, and improved performance analysis. This will be the first data exchange PennDOT has entered, allowing mapping partners like Google and research partners like Carnegie Mellon University and Penn State University to access data, as well as connected vehicles.

The current status of the project is at the finalization of clearance transmittals. Policies are expected at the end of Q1 or the beginning of Q2. The first phase is hoped to be ready in Q3 of 2024. A power user testing phase will occur in 2024, and the system is expected to go live at the beginning of the 2025 construction season.

PennDOT has held many working group meetings with multi-faceted technical teams and went to peer exchanges with the Departments of Transportation of Florida, Virginia, and Wisconsin. PennDOT is partnering with Florida on the data exchange, using the code and best practices that FDOT developed.

Ms. Oyler asked what information would be used and provided to connected vehicles. Mr. McNary said that is in development. He has had scoping design discussions with General Motors to provide non-identifying vehicle information about issues such as dangerous slowdowns or disabled vehicles. There are currently partnerships with Audi and Volkswagen that provide vehicle information.

Ms. Holton asked if the Florida or Virginia DOTs recommended the ramp-up training time. Mr. McNary said that Virginia did, and that they were a leader in the area, having had a similar system since the early 2000s. Virginia had an issue around Norfolk where all their bridges and tunnels were closed at the same time, causing them to develop their lane closure system.

Study Implementation Updates

None.

MEMBER UPDATES:

None.

OTHER BUSINESS:

None.

Adjournment

ON A MOTION by Mr. Arnold, seconded by Mr. Wagenmann, and unanimously approved, the TAC meeting was adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

**Attendance from the TAC Business Meeting
April 10, 2024**

1. Ms. Jody Holton, AICP, Chair
2. Mr. Mark Murawski, Vice-Chair
3. Mr. Orlando Almonte, alternate for Mr. Akbar Hossain, TAC Member
4. Mr. Rodney Bender, alternate for Mr. Stephen M DeFrank, TAC Member
5. Mr. John Kashatus, alternate for Mr. Khalid Mumin, TAC Member
6. Mr. Domenic Rocco, alternate for Ms. Jessica Shirley, TAC Member
7. Mr. Fred Strathmeyer, alternate for Mr. Russell Redding, TAC Member
8. Mr. Paul Opiyo, alternate for Mr. Rick Siger, TAC Member
9. Mr. Sam Arnold, alternate for Mr. Timothy Kearney, TAC Member
10. Mr. Blade Kline, alternate for Mr. Ed Neilson, TAC Member
11. Mr. Jeffrey Letwin, TAC Member
12. Mr. Richard Barcaskey, TAC Member
13. Mr. John Pocius, P.E., TAC Member
14. Ms. Felicia Dell, AICP, TAC Member
15. Mr. Alan Blahovec, CCTM, TAC Member
16. Mr. Ron Wagenmann, TAC Member
17. Mr. Elam Herr, TAC Member
18. Ms. Rebecca Oyler, TAC Member
19. Mr. Larry Shifflet, PennDOT
20. Ms. Kristin Mulkerin, PennDOT
21. Ms. Kara Templeton, PennDOT
22. Ms. Meredith Biggica, PennDOT
23. Mr. Shane Rice, PennDOT
24. Mr. Ryan McNary, PennDOT
25. Ms. Jessica Clark, PennDOT
26. Mr. Robert Mulkerin, PennDOT
27. Ms. Marisa Balanda, PennDOT
28. Mr. Mark Tobin, PennDOT
29. Mr. Brandon Leach, PennDOT
30. Mr. Jim Mosca, PennDOT
31. Mr. Nathan Walker, PennDOT
32. Mr. Dan Keane, PennDOT
33. Ms. Lauryn Knuth, PennDOT
34. Mr. Terry Pinder, PennDOT
35. Mr. Brian Sharkey, PennDOT
36. Mr. Kevin Wray, PennDOT
37. Ms. Codi Lucidi, PennDOT
38. Mr. Jim Mosca, PennDOT
39. Ms. Alice Bishop, PennDOT
40. Mr. Matthew Crea, PennDOT
41. Ms. Julia Cornell, PennDOT
42. Mr. Hugh McGowan, PennDOT

43. Ms. Ngani Ndimbie, PennDOT
44. Mr. Jeffrey Young, PennDOT
45. Ms. Sadie Trout, PennDOT
46. Mr. David Lapadat, PennDOT
47. Mr. Casey Markey, PennDOT
48. Mr. J Brian Walter, PennDOT
49. Mr. Brian Funkhouser, Michael Baker International
50. Mr. Casey Bottiger, Michael Baker International
51. Mr. Mario Mellinger, McCormick Taylor
52. Mr. Tom Phelan, , Michael Baker International
53. Ms. Leanne Doran, KCI Technologies, Inc.
54. Ms. Angie Armbrust, McNees-Winter Group
55. Ms. Natalie Cook, McNees-Winter Group
56. Mr. Don Killmeyer, ms consultants, inc.
57. Ms. Nicki Jacobs