



PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
BUSINESS MEETING
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
OCTOBER 9, 2014

CALL TO ORDER:

A quarterly business meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was held on October 9, 2014 at the Keystone Building in Harrisburg, PA. Chairman Lou Schultz called the TAC meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS:

Chairman Lou Schultz noted the passing of TAC member Mary Worthington, who passed away in July 2014. With her passing, there are now four existing vacancies and seven members serving past their official terms.

Chairman Schultz stated that the State Transportation Commission adopted the 2015 Twelve Year Program and directed TAC members to view the TYP at www.talkpatransportation.com.

Mr. Bob Taylor has moved on from Gannett Fleming, TACs prime agency for Consulting Services and is now employed by the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission. Mr. Keith Chase will serve as the Project Manager for the remainder of the TAC contract.

MINUTES:

ON A MOTION by Mr. Robert Regola, seconded by Mr. Jack Rutter, and unanimously approved, the minutes of the April 17, 2014 TAC Business Meeting were accepted as presented.

PA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION UPDATE:

Deputy Secretary for Highway Administration

Deputy Secretary Scott Christie gave a brief report on the activities of Highway Administration, stating that Act 89 has been a boon for contractors, to the extent that there are projects that received no bids because there are no available contractors. This is noted in some areas of the state such as Pike County where there are not as many transportation construction services. The highway program will likely let over \$2 billion in 2014, and could potentially let \$3 billion. A possible bottleneck for delivering the program may be the availability of truck drivers for construction projects.

Mr. Ron Wagenmann noted that many jobs received multiple bidders per project. Mr. Christie stated that bids for projects became fewer due to the truck driver issue in a number of locations. Mr. Wagenmann also asked why there are not open-end contracts with the districts for repairing winter damages. Mr. Christie stated that some districts do have open-end contracts for on-demand paving.

Mr. Gus Scheerbaum asked whether data driven analysis relating to crash data was being utilized to identify projects for safety improvement work. Mr. Christie stated that the Department was using data to look at safety issues.

A group discussion noted that, in some areas, tree limbs were not being removed from the roadside. Mr. Christie stated that this was a challenge, depending on whether the tree and its limbs are in the state's right of way, and whether the property owner wants the wood from the trees. The Department typically waits for the landowner to take care of the issue. The Department does not remove trees on private property unless the tree fell from private property onto the Department's right of way, and after the property owner is informed about the fallen tree and asked if the owner wants the wood from the fallen tree. Trees planted in the Department's right of way are often removed, but property owners are informed beforehand.

Deputy Secretary for Planning

Deputy Secretary James Ritzman began his report by highlighting that federal fiscal year 2015 began October 1, 2014. The Department obligated \$1,551,622,893.24 in federal dollars during federal fiscal year 2014.

Mr. Ritzman stated that a stopgap was passed for the Federal Highway Trust Fund through May of 2015. Act 89 has had a significant impact, however, on the Twelve Year Program, with an almost 50% increase from the previous program.

Mr. Ritzman also noted that a reorganization within the Office of Planning has occurred. The Bureau of Municipal Services has been merged with the other two bureaus within the Office of Planning to better deliver services to local governments such as municipalities and counties across the Commonwealth.

Mr. Robert Regola asked about the Department's Green Light Go initiative. Mr. Ritzman stated that an application period was open through mid-November 2014 for the program. The program will enable municipalities to apply for a 50% match for signaled corridors with over 10,000 vehicles per day. Mr. Christie clarified that \$10 million per year is part of Act 89's legislation and it will increase over time to \$40 million per year.

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION'S REMARKS:

Secretary Schoch thanked the TAC for its participation in the Modernization of Advisory Committees initiative, and noted that modernization is occurring across the Department. The Secretary stated that the initiative will make the advisory committees more effective and productive, and that one of the recommendations will be to eliminate the new multimodal commission created by Act 89. The transportation chairs in the House and Senate will likely sunset the newly created multimodal commission. TAC is more of a policy related committee, and the modernization initiative will enable the committee to focus on building policy, in a way that is an effective use of the members' time.

The Secretary remarked on the Green Light Go program and the local bridge bundling program.

PRESENTATIONS:

Modernization of Transportation Committees

Ms. Leanne Doran, McCormick Taylor

Re-Defining TAC Advisory Mission

Ms. Leanne Doran, McCormack Taylor, Mr. Keith Chase, Gannett Fleming, and TAC Members

Ms. Leanne Doran presented a presentation on the Modernization of Transportation Committees initiative, initiated by the Secretary in April of 2014.

Key observations from the advisory committees' summer workshops were:

- Advisory Committees provide an opportunity for communication between stakeholders and the Department
- Overlap exists among the committees
- Overlaps also exists with some committees and professional associations.
- The Department supports more than 30 committee meetings per year (excluding subcommittees and TAGS).

Committees also are not always aware of what the other committees' missions are within the Department.

Mr. Chuck Welker queried where within the committees' structure passenger rail had an opportunity to participate or provide input. Ms. Doran stated that the Rail Freight Advisory Committee group considered the question during its workshop but felt that passenger rail was perhaps not an appropriate focus of theirs. She also noted that public transit does not have the opportunity to provide input through one of these committees

The summer workshops with the committees indicated that:

- Committees believe they can provide value and are willing to make improvements
- The lack of timely membership appointments creates a culture of instability
- Some members actively participate and attend but others are disengaged
- Committees need direction, guidance, and a defined role from the Department
- Meeting structure and format does not promote action
- There is not clearly defined process to identify needs and priorities
- There are limited resources and support to carry out initiatives.

The TAC Workshop developed five top strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths were:

- TAC has a diversity of geography, experience and background among its members
- TAC provides an independent perspective representing a range of stakeholders
- TAC produces quality products that have an impact
- TAC provides a high level look at key issues
- TAC has dedicated members

Weaknesses were:

- There is a lack of diversity of appointments by mode and geography

- The study determination process
- There is a lack of awareness and communication between TAC and the other transportation entities such as the STC, MPO/RPOs, and other committees
- Mission and meeting format needs sharpened
- Member orientation process and active participation

Ms. Doran introduced four areas of consideration for modernization: membership, meetings, communication and collaboration, and performance monitoring. Under membership, an option is the development of an advisory committee appointment process within the Department of Transportation. This will require legislation. In addition, a membership rotation schedule and accountability requirements, along with membership tracking could be established for all committee members. Lastly, diversity goals for all committees could be established.

Under meetings, conducting a joint annual meeting of all advisory committees is a modernization option. This will enable all committees to interact with the Department, with legislative members, and with each other. Modernization also would include investigating legislative opportunities to reduce the number of required Advisory Committee meetings, and investigating whether virtual meetings could be conducted as a means of committee collaboration. Each committee would also have a consistent meeting structure and agenda building process for each committee, including inviting outside speakers.

Mr. Chuck Welker noted that reports from the Department could be provided to the Committee in advance and Chairman Schultz noted that these are already provided in a book format to the State Transportation Commission prior to its quarterly business meetings.

An online presence through the utilization of the STC website for membership collaboration and discussion, along with a process for cross-committee communication is also a consideration. Options could include a members-only website that would enable committee members to collaborate. There will be an opportunity for modal committees to participate at STC Quarterly Business Meetings.

Each committee is encouraged to create a performance monitoring system. Each action item could be tracked via performance monitoring. The proposed Joint Annual Meeting could highlight successes and challenges from all advisory committees.

Next steps are coordination with the Department and the legislature. PennDOT's final strategy will be shared with all advisory committees.

Mr. Jack Rutter asked if TAC would become the central committee in the revised committee structure and whether the other advisory committees would oppose that measure. Ms. Doran stated that the other committees were open to the idea. Chairman Schultz stated that the chairpersons from the advisory committees were comfortable with the concept during the workshop roundup meeting held on September 15, 2014.

Mr. Welker asked why the Planning Partners did not have a notation on the proposed organization chart. Ms. Doran stated that TAC members could be assigned to the Planning Partners during their meetings.

Mr. Scheerbaum noted his participation with FHWA's interactive web-based meeting tools but also noted that face-to-face meetings were still important to the collaborative process. Ms. Doran noted that the modernization effort would not eliminate all meetings or reduce them to just one meeting per year.

Mr. Roy Brant noted that the Governor's Office, the legislature, and the Department were a possible roadblock in creating a diverse geographic cross-section of potential members. Chairman Schultz stated that the Department needed a greater hand in identifying members for the TAC. Ms. Doran indicated that the topic of geographic diversity and the appointment process could become a major meeting topic for a future meeting and that each of the other advisory committees also were tackling this problem. Mr. Welker stated that the legislative appointment process was a sticking point when the TAC advises the Department, and that TAC members had no real way to address the legislature. Chairman Schultz stated that the arrangement made sense when TAC was created in 1970. Mr. Scheerbaum pointed out the appointment process was part of the political process. Chairman Schultz stated that the appointment process and membership identification could be a meeting topic for a future meeting.

Discussion moved toward redefining the TAC's advisory mission. Mr. Scheerbaum stated that he felt that the Department does not ask the TAC for more of a role in the allocation of resources and determination of goals and that the TAC could contribute more input, if requested, but also queried if TAC should have a role in the allocation of resources within the Department. Ms. Doran made note of the Transportation Performance Report as an example, and Chairman Schultz noted that the TPR identified strengths and weaknesses for the Department and the Planning Partners to allocate its resources. Mr. Keith Chase stated that the TAC could create short-term study workgroups to identify needs. Mr. Regola noted that the TAGs of the STIC do a great deal of the STIC's work, and that the TAGs could be a model for short-term study work groups within TAC. Ms. Jessica Clark of PennDOT made note of the STC's modernization process and that it included an action item plan.

Mr. Scheerbaum queried about the TAC Guidebook and Membership Handbook. The group decided that the Handbook should be refreshed.

TAC Study Topic Process

Mr. Keith Chase, Gannett Fleming and TAC Members

Mr. Keith Chase led the TAC Study process discussion, with an interactive session that enabled the members present to brainstorm their ideas for the study process, with three reflection questions:

1. What are the means and the mechanics that would result in an optimal TAC Study Topic Process identification and selection?
2. Does the Flow Chart as drafted get us to "optimal" and if not, why not?
3. In light of the Modernization presentation, what additional steps would improve topic identification and selection?

Membership then presented their best ideas to the group.

The brainstorm results will be presented to the full TAC at its December meeting.

TAC CURRENT STUDIES:

2015 Transportation Performance Report Review **Mr. Keith Chase, Gannett Fleming**

Mr. Keith Chase presented a review of the 2015 Transportation Performance Report. The 2015 Transportation Performance Report will be completed in February 2015, and it will build on the first Transportation Performance Report. TAC and a Department Working Group will collaborate in constructing the next Transportation Performance Group.

The Transportation Performance Report's present focus areas are:

- Safety
- Mobility
- Preservation and Renewal
- Accountability
- Funding

A handout was distributed to obtain TAC input with a due date of October 17, 2014. Handouts will be returned to Jessica Clark. This input will be integrated into the development of the 2015 Transportation Performance Report.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Scheerbaum asked about the specifics of the discussion that occurred about passenger rail and mass-transit, as noted during the modernization presentation. Ms. Doran stated that the discussion occurred during specific advisory committee workshops. Mr. Scheerbaum noted that the lack of passenger rail and mass transit is a major gap.

NEXT MEETING:

The next TAC business meeting is Thursday, December 4, 2014 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania at the Keystone Building.

ADJOURNMENT:

ON A MOTION by Mr. Bob Regola, seconded by Mr. Gus Scheerbaum, and unanimously approved, The TAC meeting adjourned at 12:23 p.m.

Attendance from the TAC Business Meeting
October 9, 2014

1. Mr. Barry Schoch, Secretary of Transportation
2. Mr. Louis C. Schultz, Jr., TAC Chairman
3. Mr. Ron Wagenmann, TAC member
4. Ms. Beth Sickler, alternate for Mr. Dave Hickernell, TAC member
5. Mr. Robert Regola, TAC member
6. Mr. Jack Rutter, TAC member
7. Mr. Joe Mangarella, TAC member
8. Mr. Donald Detwiler, TAC member
9. Mr. Tom Geanopoulos, TAC member
10. Mr. Rodney Bender, TAC member
11. Mr. Gus Scheerbaum, TAC member
12. Mr. Chuck Welker, TAC member
13. Mr. Dan Husted, TAC member
14. Mr. Paul Opiyo, TAC member
15. Ms. Erin Smith, TAC member
16. Mr. Dennis Lebo, Gannett Fleming
17. Mr. Bob Taylor, Gannett Fleming
18. Ms. Leanne Doran, McCormick Taylor
19. Ms. Jennifer Horn, McCormick Taylor
20. Mr. Brad Mallory, PennDOT
21. Mr. Kurt Myers, PennDOT
22. Mr. Scott Christie, PennDOT
23. Mr. Dale Witmer, PennDOT
24. Mr. Jim Arey, PennDOT
25. Mr. Kenneth Druckenmiller, PennDOT
26. Mr. Mark Tobin, PennDOT
27. Mr. Larry Shifflet, PennDOT
28. Ms. Jessica Clark, PennDOT
29. Ms. Julie Harmantzis, PennDOT
30. Mr. Martin Sargent, PennDOT
31. Mr. Terry Pinder, PennDOT
32. Ms. Sarah Copley, Greentree Partners