

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
BUSINESS MEETING
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
DECEMBER 7, 2017



CALL TO ORDER:

A quarterly business meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was called to order at 10:04 on December 7, 2017, in Harrisburg, PA.

MINUTES:

ON A MOTION by Mr. Wagenmann and seconded by Mr. Pocius, and unanimously approved, the Minutes of July 27, 2017, TAC Business Meeting were accepted.

CHAIR'S REMARKS:

Ms. Holton introduced two new TAC members. Mr. John Pocius and Mr. Michael Carroll were appointed by Governor Tom Wolf's Office. Ms. Holton also announced Mr. Joe Mangarella's resignation for medical reasons.

SECRETARY'S REMARKS:

Secretary Richards highlighted the importance the Transportation Advisory Committee's studies in her remarks. She noted that there is a need for TAC studies that address Act 44 and the Transit Funds issues, the financial stresses on the PA Turnpike, and other challenges that the Department is facing. Secretary Richards briefly addressed the Autonomous Vehicles Legislation, which she said represents a major shift in the transportation field in the Commonwealth.

Secretary Richards concluded her remarks by discussing the Innovation Challenge which gives high school students the opportunity to give their take on transportation-related issues. She added that the underlining idea is to get the youth more involved in solving the challenges our transportation is facing. This year's challenge is *Driving and Texting*. It encourages high school students to propose ideas to eradicate driving and texting. Secretary Richards mentioned that she would like TAC members to spread the word in school districts.

Deputy Secretary Itzko commented that all school districts in the Commonwealth have received invitations to participate and social media campaigns promoting the Innovation Challenge are in progress.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER PROFILE WEB PAGE UPDATE: Jessica Clark and Lugene Keys

Ms. Jessica Clark presented the changes to the STC website, which include TAC webpage. Ms. Clark explained that the webpage will feature TAC members profile, a brief description of TAC duties, meeting schedules, and previous studies. The changes will give the Committee more visibility, what it does, and who the members are.

Ms. Clark also announced that the STC website has been redesigned to become mobile-friendly. She added that this change will make the website easy to navigate on smartphones and tablets and ultimately attract more users, especially younger users.

WORKING SESSION **STUDY EVALUATION DISCUSSION**

Ms. Holton introduced the different TAC study topic proposed by TAC members. She discussed her proposed idea: ***Intercity Passenger Rail and Connectivity between Mid-size cities and Major Metropolitan Areas in Pennsylvania.*** Ms. Holton explained that the study would look at best practices in other states and funding possibilities for a passenger rail. She added that the focus of the study would revolve around the following:

- Operational Rate
- Forecast of Passengers
- Direct and Indirect Impacts
- Connectivity benefits

Secretary Richards asked if Senator Rafferty's proposal for passenger rail overlaps with Ms. Holton's proposal and if the two topics be combined. Mr. Ritchie indicated that the two study topics could be combined.

Ms. Ricks asked if the study would focus on light rail, commuter rail, or passenger rail? Ms. Holton answered that her thinking was about light rail. Mr. Carroll clarified the distinctions between light, commuter, and passenger rails. He added that there is an overlap between the different types.

Ms. Ricks asked about the core objectives of the study. Ms. Holton answered that the idea is to look at ways to restore rail service between mid-size cities that had this service in the past.

Mr. Murawski commented that the study should also focus on determining what has been the MPOs thinking about intercity passenger rail and how the Committee can incorporate this thinking into this study. Mr. Strathmeyer stated that, with congestion occurring around metropolitan areas, this study could be a mitigation solution but added there would have to be enough connections for people to park their cars and ride the passenger rail to make the project viable.

Mr. Detwiler proposed that the study looks at the overall cost, funding sources, and conducts an analysis of similar projects in other states to determine feasibility.

Mr. Pocius indicated the issue with past rail projects is the high operation cost, which is typically due to low ridership.

Secretary Richards proposed to invite Multimodal, Freight, and Railroad executives to the next meeting to get insight on potential ridership, previous setbacks, and other states experience with passenger rail and how all those issues impact the study.

Ms. Holton proposed to move the idea as the next TAC study topic and come up with a more refined scope for the next TAC meeting.

ON A MOTION by Ms. Ricks and seconded by Mr. Ritchie and unambitiously approved, the *Intercity Passenger Rail and Connectivity between Mid-size cities and Major Metropolitan Areas in Pennsylvania* was accepted as the next TAC study Topic.

Mr. Wagenmann discussed his proposed study topic: *State Police funding by communities with no local police department*. Mr. Wagenmann explained that the proposed study would look at the Governor's proposal for fees from communities with no local police department that uses state police. It will also provide a shopping list of other alternative sources regarding State Police funding. He emphasized that some of the alternatives could include alternative fuels tax collection. Mr. Wagenmann added that *Post-Act 44 Public Transportation Funding* submitted by Senator Rafferty also needs to be looked at in conjunction with the State Police Funding issue.

Post-Act 44 Public Transportation Funding study proposes an assessment of financial alternatives, including the feasibility of the sales tax transfer from the General Fund to the Public Transportation Trust Fund. Because of Act 44 of 2007, public transit authorities in the Commonwealth receive approximately \$450 million in transfer payments from the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. However, these transfer payments are set to be reduced from \$450 million to \$50 as stipulated by Act 89 starting in Fiscal Year 2021-22. This creates an important revenue loss that needs to be addressed.

Secretary Richards indicated that she will be testifying with Deputy Secretary Fauver before the Senate Transportation Committee to explain to lawmakers the importance of the Transit and the Multimodal Funds to the Department.

Mr. Ritchie discussed Senator Rafferty's proposed TAC study idea: *Collection of Taxes from Alternative Fuel Vehicles*. Mr. Ritchie explained that with the increased purchase and driving of alternative fuel vehicles, an analysis needs to be conducted on how Pennsylvania collects the alternative fuels tax on these vehicles. This study should focus on the collection of taxes from passenger vehicles as well as commercial vehicles.

Secretary Richards commented that the I-95 Corridor States are exploring a mileage-based gas tax system. She added that they are still figuring out the pilot project and though there is not any clear proposal yet or what will the final product look like, there are encouraging signs.

Mr. Cohen explained that Oregon has led the way in developing an alternative to the gas tax, with a program that levies a fee on vehicle miles traveled. While the Oregon Department of Transportation has spent years developing the mileage-based program on their own, they are now working with Pennsylvania and Delaware on a multi-state pilot project in which revenues will not be charged. The purpose is to study the operability of the pilot.

ON A MOTION by Mr. Wagenmann and seconded by Mr. Carroll and unambiguously approved, The ***Collection of Taxes from Alternative Fuel Vehicles*** was accepted as the next TAC study Topic.

Ms. Holton asked how does the Committee want the studies carried out? Mr. Wagenmann answered that in the past the chairperson received regular updates about how the study is being conducted. Ms. Holton asked TAC members who would like to receive regular updates to let her know.

Ms. Ricks proposed that a clear scope for both studies be drafted for the next TAC meeting.

Mr. Murawski discussed his study idea proposal: ***PA Motor Vehicles Emissions Testing Re-Evaluation Initiative***. Mr. Murawski explained that non-exempt motorized vehicles registered in 25 of 67 Pennsylvania counties are required to pass an annual emissions inspection test. The emissions inspection process, according to Mr. Murawski, stems from a May 2003 PennDOT/PA DEP settlement of two lawsuits over the Commonwealth's slow progress in implementing the State Implementation Plan (SIP) as mandated by the US EPA to perform an auto emissions inspection program in compliance with federal clean air quality standards.

Mr. Murawski also noted that on July 14, 2017, Senator Langerholc introduced the Senate Resolution 168, which calls for the Joint State Government Commission to establish an advisory committee, consisting of PennDOT, PA DEP and others who possess knowledge of the vehicle emission inspection program and the SIP to facilitate the work of the Commission and to conduct a thorough and comprehensive analysis of issues relating to the potential impact to the Commonwealth of removing Cambria County from the emissions testing program.

Additionally, Mr. Murawski indicated that there is a general lack of public understanding about why vehicles registered in certain counties must have emissions inspections while other counties have no requirement. He added that planning partner organizations have mentioned this concern at public meetings especially when the Act 89 \$5 vehicle fee has been discussed and the rationale given for testing requirement has been confusing. Mr. Murawski concluded that all these issues and confusion call for a study that would clearly evaluate the PA Motor Vehicles Emissions Testing Initiative. He acknowledged that TAC doesn't have the resources to do a full study on this topic right now. He therefore proposed to have a meeting with Deputy Secretary Myers to discuss what can be done about the issue before reaching out to Senator Vogel.

Ms. Holton proposed that TAC invites staff from Deputy Secretary Myers office to the next meeting to discuss the issue. Mr. Cohen also added that PADEP plays an important role in the evaluation of the SIPs and should be part of the discussion too.

PA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION UPDATE:

Deputy Secretary for Administration

Deputy Secretary Suzanne Itzko gave a brief update about the Administration Deputate. She discussed the diversity in workplace program. She explained that the department is implementing several strategic directives to promote diversity. She noted that three open house sessions have been held so far and over 300 hundred people have participated. Ms. Itzko noted that the meetings have generated very useful feedback. Mrs. Itzko also discussed the open house session to reach out to high school students to familiarize them with the Department.

Deputy Secretary for Highway Administration

Deputy Secretary George McAuley delivered a brief update highlighting winter maintenance preparations. He noted that temporary workers have been hired to help with winter maintenance operations. He also mentioned that as part of the Secretary's Business Accreditation Initiative, they only have one district left to go through for the business models. The Initiative will help counties save money on maintenance operations. Mr. McAuley also gave an update about the status of roundabouts in the Commonwealth. He noted that a report will be issued by the end of December 2017 and shared with the TAC.

Deputy Secretary for Planning

Deputy Secretary Jim Ritzman delivered an update highlighting construction lettings, which he said are well ahead of schedule. Mr. Ritzman mentioned that the Office of Planning has obligated \$1.757 billion for the last fiscal year, which expired on September 30th. He noted that the Office of Planning is in the mist of the 2019 Twelve Year Program update and that his office will soon start working with the Planning Partners to look at their regional priority projects and get the process started. Mr. Ritzman also discussed local outreach sessions for PennDOT Connects, the Rapid Bridge Replacement Program, which has so far replaced 372 structurally deficient bridges, and the \$5 County Registration Fee, which is now being collected for 20 counties. Mr. Ritzman concluded his update with the uncertainties related to the federal gas tax increase that needs to happen to maintain federal programs' funds leveled.

Mr. Murawski asked what will happen after the construction of the bridges is completed. Mr. Ritzman answered that it depends on funding availability. The program will continue to pay \$65 million a year for the program but the uncertainties about federal funding make it hard to know for sure what will happen in the future.

Mr. Rutter commented about the speed limit on Interstate 83, which doesn't take into account the work zone speed limit on the Interstate. Mr. McAuley said that the issue will be corrected.

OTHER BUSINESS

TAC members discussed the 2018 Meeting Schedule. A proposal to do a conference call rather than a full on-site meeting on February 5, 2018 and a longer meeting in March 2018 was also discussed.

NEXT MEETING:

The next TAC business meeting is Monday, February 5, 2018, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania at the Keystone Building.

ADJOURNMENT:

ON A MOTION by Mr. Wagenmann and seconded by Mr. Geanopulos, the TAC meeting was adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

Attendance* from the TAC Business Meeting
December 7, 2017

1. Mr. Karina Ricks, TAC member
2. Mr. Paul Opiyo, alternate for Mr. Dennis Davin, TAC member
3. Ms. Eric Bugaile, House Transportation Committee
4. Mr. Mark Murawski, TAC member
5. Mr. Jack Rutter, TAC member
6. Mr. Donald Detwiler, TAC member
7. Mr. Ron Wagenmann, TAC member
8. Mr. Joel McNeil, TAC member
9. Mr. Jody Holton, AICP, TAC Chair
10. Mr. Michael Carroll, TAC member
11. Mr. Fred Strathmeyer, Jr, TAC member
12. Mr. Rodney Bender, TAC member
13. Mr. John Pocius, TAC member
14. Mr. Tom Geanopoulos, TAC member
15. Ms. Brenda Sandberg, TAC member
16. Ms. George DiCarlantonio, Alternate
17. Mr. John Kashatus, Alternate Sec. of Education
18. Mr. Nolan Ritchie, Alternate for Senator John Rafferty, TAC member
19. Mr. Keith Chase, Gannett Fleming
20. Mr. Tim Smith, Gannett Fleming
21. Ms. Leanne Doran, McCormick Taylor
22. Ms. Lugene Keys, McCormick Taylor
23. Ms. Amanda Shaffer, McCormick Taylor
24. Mr. Jim Ritzman, PennDOT
25. Mr. Kurt Myers, PennDOT
26. Mr. Mark Tobin, PennDOT
27. Mr. Larry Shifflet, PennDOT
28. Ms. Jessica Clark, PennDOT
29. Ms. Ellen Sweeney, PennDOT
30. Mr. Martin Sargent, PennDOT
31. Mr. Terry Pinder, PennDOT
32. Mr. Abdoul Ahmed, PennDOT

*Attendance includes members present via conference call.