

STATEWIDE FREIGHT FORUM FEEDBACK REPORT

NOVEMBER 5, 2020



What
moves
OUR economy?



Contents

A summary of what we heard during the virtual event.

2-17-2021



Feedback Report

Foreword

Yassmin Gramian, P.E.
Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

I am pleased to share with you this report of PennDOT's 2020 Statewide Freight Forum, a milestone in the update of our statewide freight movement plan. Pennsylvania's freight industry is a cornerstone of the Commonwealth's economy and during this past year of pandemic, the critical importance of our freight networks in moving essential goods and supplies has never been clearer.

The Forum presented an opportunity for us to engage with public and private sector freight stakeholders, discuss key issues, collaborate, and plan for the future of our freight transportation system. The discussion highlighted needed policy changes, economic impacts, safety, and freight mobility – all of which are vital to the safe and efficient movement of goods.

As the Forum underscored, issues like truck parking will only grow more significant as our reliance on goods movement grows. Emerging issues like automation, the explosive growth of ecommerce and changing supply-chain patterns are poised to affect our planning. And of course, all of our decision-making will need to be informed by the imperative to reduce the impact of transportation on our changing climate, and to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all our communities and citizens equitably and justly.

This report provides an overview of the event and perspectives on different topics from the 170-plus stakeholders who attended the event. We will use it as an important point of reference as we continue our work in updating our statewide freight movement plan and other initiatives affecting freight transportation in Pennsylvania. It is one more example of PennDOT's commitment to fully engage our partners, stakeholders and citizens as we plan and develop a transportation network to serve Pennsylvania in the future.





Feedback Report

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Feedback Report

Event Overview

On November 5, 2020, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) held its first ever Virtual Statewide Freight Forum. This event was designed to engage public and private sector stakeholders in a virtual workshop to collect feedback that informs strategic directions and implementation of the Pennsylvania Freight Movement Plan (FMP), which will be completed in June 2021.

More than 225 stakeholders registered to attend with 177 participating in sessions throughout day. The number of people attending each session is included in the feedback summary below.

The event was held through a central conference platform, Whova, and live-virtual sessions were held using Cisco WebEx. Attendees were provided with several ways to participate, provide feedback and ask questions including:

- WebEx Chat Box
- WebEx Polling
- Whova Community Discussion Forums
- Post-Session and Post-Event Surveys

The following sections summarize the feedback received within each respective session of the agenda.

| Morning Plenary Sessions | |
|---|---|
| Welcome and Opening Remarks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brian Hare, P.E., Bureau Director, PennDOT Program Center • Larry S. Shifflet, Deputy Secretary for Planning, PennDOT |
| Keynote Presentation: International Connections through the Great Lakes and Landside Connections | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brenda A. Sandberg, Executive Director, Erie-Western PA Port Authority |
| Building the Freight Movement Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tom Phelan, P.E., P.Eng., President, BHX Engineering • Michael D. Rimer, AICP, Transportation Planning Specialist Supervisor, PennDOT Program Center • Brian Funkhouser, AICP, Project Manager, Michael Baker International |
| Policy Matters – National and State Landscapes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ryan Endorf, Economist, USDOT Office of the Secretary • Nicole Katsikides, PhD., Research Scientist, Texas Transportation Institute • Anne Strauss-Wieder, Director of Freight Planning, North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority |
| Freight Plan Implementation and Feedback Sessions | |
| Align Freight Mobility with Economic Development and Land Use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becky Bradley, AICP, Executive Director, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission |
| Improve Multimodal Freight Transportation Operations and Safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doug Tomlinson, P.E., Chief of Traffic Operations, PennDOT Bureau of Maintenance and Operations |
| Advance Project Investments that Enhance Freight Mobility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angela Watson, AICP, Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation, PennDOT |
| Provide Planning, Data, and Analytical Tools for Improved Decision Making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dan Szekeres, Technical Manager, Michael Baker International |

Videos and downloadable presentations from each session can be accessed here:

https://whova.com/web/pvfs_202011/Agenda?view=preview



Feedback Report

Welcome and Keynote Session

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Moderator | Brian Hare, P.E., Bureau Director, PennDOT Program Center |
| Speakers | Larry S. Shifflet, Deputy Secretary for Planning, PennDOT Brenda A. Sandberg, Executive Director, Erie-Western PA Port Authority |
| Facilitator | Leanne Doran, Director of Public Engagement, Michael Baker International |
| Session Attendance | 126 attendees |

Session Overview

- i. Welcome and Acknowledgements - Brian Hare, P.E.
- ii. Opening Remarks - Deputy Secretary Larry S. Shifflet
- iii. Keynote Presentation: International Connections through the Great Lakes & Landside Connections - Brenda A. Sandberg

What We Heard

Through use of the participation tools provided, session attendees offered the following feedback:

- Pennsylvania must increase supply chain resilience to drive new supply chain patterns and shift transportation demand.
- The impact of the Jones Act on Great Lakes maritime shipping potential should not be ignored. The international borders with Canada, in the middle of the Great Lakes, complicates freight movement and shipping patterns under this act.



Feedback Report

General Session 1: Building the Freight Movement Plan

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Moderator | Jessica Clark, Division Manager - Planning and Contract Management, PennDOT Program Center |
| Speakers | Thomas Phelan, P.E., P.Eng., President, BHX Engineering Brian Funkhouser, AICP, Project Manager, Michael Baker International Michael Rimer, AICP, Transportation Planning Specialist Supervisor, PennDOT |
| Facilitator | Casey Bottiger, Transportation Planner, Michael Baker International |
| Session Attendance | 120 attendees |

Session Overview

- i. Freight Movement Plan Overview – Tom Phelan, P.E., P.Eng.
- ii. Freight Focus Group Results – Michael Rimer, AICP
- iii. Transportation Planning Data Resource – Brian Funkhouser, AICP

What We Heard

Through use of the participation tools provided, session attendees offered the following feedback:

- Ton-miles can be a better indicator than tonnage by volume when it comes to haulage metrics (Bureau of Transportation Statistics Data: <https://www.bts.gov/us-ton-miles-freight>.)
- Aging multimodal infrastructure is a primary concern – it is not just limited to highways and bridges.
- Pennsylvania is on track in light of the goals of the National Freight Strategic Plan – safety, infrastructure, and innovation.
- The plan could recommend that municipalities provide local opportunities for truck parking through zoning; however, there is a need to address the environmental impacts as well (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System impacts, etc.).
- Incorporate current research efforts of note:
 - National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) research regarding state and local impacts of automated freight systems began last year and is expected to be completed by Summer 2021.
 - PennDOT and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission completed an automated truck platooning demonstration with Ohio and Michigan: <https://www.penndot.gov/pages/all-news-details.aspx?newsid=778>
 - The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission is administering an Advanced Truck Parking Notification project.



Feedback Report

General Session 2: Policy Matters: National & State Landscape

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Moderator | Kristin Mulkerin, Division Chief – Transportation Program Development, PennDOT |
| Speakers | Ryan Endorf, Economist, US Department of Transportation – Office of the Secretary Nicole Katsikides, PhD., Research Scientist, Texas A&M Transportation Institute Anne Strauss-Wieder, Director of Freight Planning, NJTPA |
| Facilitator | Brian Funkhouser, AICP, Project Manager, Michael Baker International |
| Session Attendance | 127 attendees |

Session Overview

- i. National Freight Strategic Plan - Ryan Endorf
- ii. Freight Fluidity: Telling the Freight Story - Nicole Katsikides, PhD.
- iii. Long-Term Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Freight - Anne Strauss-Wieder

What We Heard

Through use of the participation tools provided, session attendees offered the following feedback:

- The Statewide Freight Plan should consider the following:
 - The economics of freight movement
 - Assisting the private sector with the changing needs of supply chains including workforce needs within supply chains and workforce accessibility to jobs
 - There is a critical shortage of truck drivers which has worsened since the pandemic. To address this challenge, shippers are looking to use capacity and optimize every mode of freight movement.
 - Companies like TransFix have been making progress in linking freight with truck capacity.
 - Better deployment of data tools and technologies that can increase the efficiency of Pennsylvania's freight network
 - Freight data analyses across freight networks, functional classification, and intermodal connectors, and data visualization could lead to breakthroughs in both analyses as well planning/action
 - Establishing partnerships with neighboring states to understand freight challenges "beyond our borders"
 - Downtown and suburban deliveries and automation/technology
 - Development of a state freight advisory committee and other freight-related work groups (Freight CAV, etc)
 - Impacts of Senate Bill 1199 permitting use of robotic last mile deliveries
- Freight Data:
 - Availability of new data options allow the opportunity to put more context to freight analyses, which is important to freight planning
 - The ability to visualize freight data and trends can really help change the way investments are made in projects or operations. This can also allow PennDOT to work closely with various industries to illuminate the transportation components of the supply chain by discussing data analysis results with them (e.g., freight bottlenecks).



Feedback Report

Session A: Align Freight Mobility with Economic Development and Land Use

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|---------------------------|---|
| Moderator | Brian Hare, P.E., Bureau Director, PennDOT Program Center |
| Speakers | Yassmin Gramian, P.E., Secretary of Transportation, PennDOT Becky Bradley, AICP, Executive Director, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission |
| Facilitator | Thomas Phelan, P.E., P.Eng., President, BHX Engineering |
| Session Attendance | 137 attendees |

Session Overview

- i. Afternoon Welcome and Remarks – Secretary Yassmin Gramian, P.E.
- ii. Align Freight Mobility with Economic Development and Land Use – Becky Bradley, AICP

What We Heard

Through use of the participation tools provided, session attendees offered the following feedback:

- Trends and Impacts of Private Development
 - Developers would like to locate near highways in order to meet their needs. If land near a highway is unavailable, they are building “up” in order to capture and expand the value of their existing footprints.
 - Sometimes, developers do not want to pay for water and/or sewer infrastructure. If water or sewer capacity is limited, there are limitations on some industrial land uses such as manufacturing (square footage, etc.).
- State Law Limitations/Modifications
 - State laws limit what local governments and PennDOT can ask developers to do and can pose challenges in assessing transportation system impacts of new development. Infrastructure located a few miles from the new industrial sites need investment since trucks and workers use local roads to access new facilities.
 - Modifications to Act 209 (Transportation Impact Fees) could provide PennDOT, MPOs/RPOs, or counties the opportunity to implement traffic impact fees on new development:
 - Act 209 procedures are cumbersome for local governments to implement
 - Only 50% of these fees can be used on state roadway improvements, and
 - Local municipalities that have adopted the Act 209 fees agree it is a vastly underutilized tool.
 - Truck size and weight laws have posed challenges in maintenance of roads and bridges that weren’t built to accommodate high frequency, high weight vehicles.
- Traffic and Trip Generation:
 - Traffic generation for fulfillment centers may be worth a re-look. Amazon has moved to a tiered fulfillment building system with more loading docks and a larger workforce than other distribution/fulfillment systems.
 - Automated warehousing will double truck trips from warehousing and logistics facilities; PennDOT must plan for these additional impacts (e.g., off-hour shipping patterns to lessen traffic congestion).
 - PennDOT Bureau of Planning and Research owns, maintains, and analyzes data from permanent traffic counting devices (imbedded loop sensors) that collect truck classification information.
- Land Use:
 - Manage land use at the regional level
 - Freight considerations should be included as part of project development and delivery, purpose and need (National Environmental Policy Act), design (geometrics, vertical clearance, etc.) and construction.
- Truck Parking Challenges:
 - PennDOT owns significant right-of-way that could be redeveloped for truck parking. The PA Turnpike Commission is currently making investments to provide additional truck parking.



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- The public sector could require that new freight generating developments, which produce significant freight traffic, provide truck parking/staging (not a truck stop, just parking). Parking areas could be collectively shared, and areas could be free to use, or operated by a third party to collect revenue from reservations for parking.
- Consider "pooled truck parking" or a "truck parking bank", a similar concept to wetland banking, that could be expanded as the need for parking grows (the Lehigh Valley serves as an example of where this concept could be implemented).
- Truck parking, land use, and zoning are statewide issues of concern.

Session A Polling Results

Based on the responses to the poll questions during this session, attendees identified the following priorities and considerations for the Statewide Freight Plan:

- Land use and zoning for greater freight compatibility and designated areas for truck parking/staging should be **Freight Plan priorities**.
- Greater promotion of existing freight assets and investments and public-private strategies for integrated transportation and land use **should be considered** in Freight Plan development.



Feedback Report

Session B: Improve Multimodal Freight Transportation Operations and Safety

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Moderator | Brian Hare, P.E., Bureau Director, PennDOT Program Center |
| Speakers | Doug Tomlinson, P.E., Chief of Highway Safety and Traffic Operations, PennDOT Todd Trautz, P.E., PTOE, Traffic Department Manager, Michael Baker International |
| Facilitator | Todd Trautz, P.E., PTOE, Traffic Department Manager, Michael Baker International |
| Session Attendance | 107 attendees |

What We Heard

Through use of the participation tools provided, session attendees offered the following feedback (questions and comments):

- Enforcement:
 - The Statewide Freight Plan should include linkages to the Statewide Enforcement Plan
 - Use Weigh-In-Motion data and Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) scale data from waste facilities to locate overweight commercial vehicles and identifying strategic enforcement locations
- Data, Resources, and Guidance:
 - PennDOT should provide regular guidance on commercial vehicle restrictions during winter seasons.
 - The Eastern Transportation Coalition has been working closely with Waze.
 - Pennsylvania currently does not have a good database for capturing bridge strikes; however, NCHRP is currently conducting a study on this issue which should be considered
 - PennDOT's new Publication 790 addresses some challenges with freight mobility and establishing regional networks. This includes Transportation System Management and Operations (TSMO) impacts
- The Statewide Freight Plan should strongly link to or utilize:
 - Safety and freight performance measures (PM 1 and PM 3)
 - Regional Operations Plans (ROPs)
 - MPO Operations Task Forces and Traffic Incident Management Teams for stakeholder input (i.e., Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission)

Session B Polling Results

Based on the responses to the five poll questions during this session, attendees identified the following for inclusion in the plan:

- Pennsylvania's transportation system is "somewhat accommodating" to freight mobility.
- Commerce, highway safety, and infrastructure preservation should be top priorities relating to operations and safety.
- Trucking routes (both Interstate and non-Interstate) have the greatest need for freight investment followed by rail freight facilities.
- Pennsylvania is deficient in accounting for freight aspects of candidate projects in the planning and design phases of project delivery.
- Recurring congestion has the greatest impact on freight mobility, followed by crashes.



Feedback Report

Session C1: Advance Project Investments that Enhance Freight Mobility

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Moderator | Brian Hare, P.E., Bureau Director, PennDOT Program Center |
| Speakers | Angela Watson, AICP, Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary for Multimodal, PennDOT |
| Facilitator | Keith Chase, Planning and Management Consultant, Gannett Fleming, Inc. |
| Session Attendance | 56 attendees (Concurrent with Session C2) |

What We Heard

Through use of the participation tools provided, session attendees offered the following feedback:

- Funding and Revenue
 - Rail system needs exceed available funds from rail grant funding programs
 - The improvement needs-revenue gap makes it essential to prioritize transportation investments and partner for collaboration to improve freight mobility and access.
- Opportunities to Better Leverage/Complement Investments in Freight Mobility
 - Freight project prioritization tends to focus on the needs of trucking and the highway system. The FMP should plan for innovative multimodal solutions and non-highway projects
 - Better landside linkages to rail and aviation facilities are needed
 - PennDOT does a great job at keeping local communities informed on multimodal grant opportunities/applications; but the state Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)'s processes could be improved.
 - There needs to be a more open process for vetting Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) and Multimodal Transportation Fund (MTF) grant applications so there can be true consistency with local community needs
 - Financing for creative partnerships and innovative approaches to freight implementation:
 - Emergency truck parking options along Interstate corridors
 - Public-Private Partnerships with developers
 - Public-Public Partnerships for areas such as promotion of cargo operations at airports
 - Consider and seek non-traditional funding sources for freight investments (e.g., companies that rely on freight movement should offer more to fund their infrastructure)
- Other Considerations:
 - Integrated, periodic scenario planning approach that would help the public sector keep up with the rapid pace of the private sector
 - Identify local regions that should consider facilitation of freight planning implementation

Session C1 Polling Results

Based on the responses to the poll questions asked during this session:

- There are specific to targeted opportunities to enhance freight mobility investments between public and private sectors as well as across modes.
- The best actions to increase project investments that enhance freight mobility are:
 - Place greater weight on freight issues in the prioritizing and decision-making processes for funding, loan programs, and/or other mechanisms for investment
 - Establish new processes to ensure freight needs are considered consistently as part of public sector planning, programming, and project development
- The Freight Plan should give greatest priority to projects that improve freight access and mobility followed by projects that reduce freight bottlenecks.
- Attendees believed that there are opportunities for new innovative financing approaches for funding freight improvements.



Feedback Report

Session C2: Provide Planning, Data, and Analytical Tools for Improved Freight Decision Making

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Moderator | Michael Rimer, AICP, Transportation Planning Specialist Supervisor, PennDOT |
| Speakers | Dan Szekeres, Technical Manager, Michael Baker International |
| Facilitator | Brian Funkhouser, AICP, Project Manager, Michael Baker International |
| Session Attendance | 60 attendees (Concurrent with Session C1) |

What We Heard

Through use of the participation tools provided, session attendees offered the following feedback:

- Data Availability, Needs, and Sources
 - Make data available to planning partners
 - Even though it is expensive, INRIX data seems to be the most reasonable data source for truck movements and origin and destination information since it provides the most real-time data for use.
 - Regional Integrated Transportation Information System data has helped Planning Partners understand traffic changes throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Having older data available is not a bad thing – it can help planners look at changes over time.
 - It is important to establish measures that can be easily tracked.
 - Planning Partners are interested in the distinction between truck bottlenecks and all traffic bottlenecks to better inform the project prioritization process.
- Role of freight modeling in decision making
 - Immediate needs for modeling include: employment in warehouses and distribution facilities, truck generation from those facilities, and ensuring regional models will accurately forecast the truck traffic into the future
- Questions that freight data could answer:
 - How changes in working shifts (first, second, third) at freight facilities have caused traffic patterns to change, especially during standard peak periods
 - How many trucks are moving on regional roadway networks, where they are coming from, and where they are going
 - Future truck volume forecasts
 - What autonomous trucks might do to our future network capacity
 - Changes in delivery frequency in an autonomous environment (where trucks are not limited by operating time restrictions)
 - How bottleneck locations could change if we are operating in a fully autonomous environment

Session C2 Polling Results

Based on majority responses to the two poll questions asked during this session, attendees felt the following:

- Attendees indicated they were able to identify some key regional and local freight issues in their area.
- Freight data categories most important to session participants:
 1. Freight Generators and Land Use
 2. Future Trends
 3. Freight Corridors and Last Mile Connections



Feedback Report

Session Ratings and Post-Event Surveys

Session Ratings

Following each session, a survey was available with six questions for participants to rate session quality.

All respondents indicated that they would recommend each session to a colleague. Other questions asked of participants are listed below. Each of the following questions was asked of participants to evaluate on a scale of 1 through 5, with 5 being the best possible rating.

- How well did the session meet your expectations?
- How would you rate the speaker's presentation skills?
- How would you rate the speaker's command of the topic?
- Did the topic description match the session content?
- Overall, how would you rate this session?

**All sessions
received ratings
of 4 or 5.**

Post-Event Survey Results

At the conclusion of the Statewide Virtual Freight Forum, a post-event survey was distributed to attendees and remained open one week after the conclusion of the event. A total of 15 attendees completed the 11-question survey which focused on various event aspects, the virtual platform, and freight plan suggestions. Results of the survey provided the following insights:

- **Agenda and Overall Event** - 67% of respondents rated them as "Excellent" while 33% rated them as "Good".
- **Whova Conference Platform** - 53% of respondents rated it as "easy to navigate", with the remaining 47% rating it as "moderately easy to navigate."
- **Biggest Freight Issues Over the Next 5 Years** - Respondents stated that aging infrastructure and the growth of e-commerce will be the biggest freight issues.
- **Freight Plan Implementation** - Most respondents voiced a desire to see collaborative regional approaches through different jurisdictions and public-private partnerships in order to develop a more impactful Freight Plan.
- **Priority Freight Plan Topics** - Respondents indicated they would like to see the following topics considered as part of the Statewide Freight Plan development:
 - Logistic centers
 - CAV technology and the overall use of new technologies
 - Advancing the Critical Urban and Rural Freight Corridor process
 - Improving public/private relationships
 - Driver shortages
 - Truck parking