

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
BUSINESS MEETING
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
APRIL 9TH, 2020



CALL TO ORDER:

The business meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was called to order on Skype at 10:03 a.m. on April 9, 2020.

Please note that these minutes are not intended to capture every individual comment, but rather to identify critical discussion points and highlights of the TAC business meetings.

CHAIR'S REMARKS:

TAC Chair, Jody Holton gave brief remarks welcoming TAC members to the Skype meeting. Ms. Holton noted that given the difficult circumstances created by the COVID-19, the decision has been made to hold off on several items for this meeting.

Ms. Holton said that the election of a Vice Chair and updates to the Enhanced Communication and Coordination initiative are being postponed until in-person meetings resume.

Ms. Holton also explained that transportation is already facing immense challenges, and the pandemic will likely compound those challenges. She noted that TAC has always been important in providing critical input in solving transportation issues and now more than ever, that role is heightened.

SECRETARY'S REMARKS:

Acting Secretary Yassmin Gramian, P.E. provided brief remarks on how the Department is adjusting to conducting business during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Gramian said that she has been getting questions about how to move forward. And although she doesn't have all the answers, she is very proud of how the PennDOT Team has responded and continued to work through the pandemic.

Ms. Gramian explained that PennDOT is working with all of the Regional Partners to balance the need to serve the Commonwealth without compromising the public health. She noted that the measures taken to slow the spread of the virus have and continue to have economic impacts. There will be a loss of revenue, but her office is working with the Office of Planning, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Congressional delegates to tailor adequate measures to continue to serve the transportation needs of the communities.

TAC STUDY UPDATES

The TAC continues to work on three study topics. Mr. Troy Truax, Mr. Dale Witmer, AICP, and Mr. Brian Funkhouser gave an update about the TAC studies.

Statewide Small Local Bridge Investment Plan

Mr. Truax reiterated that the *Statewide Small Local Bridge Investment Plan* study aims to:

- Examine and understand the ability of local municipalities to adequately maintain these structures and advance bridge projects to bid and construction.
- Highlight the plight of the state's locally-owned bridge inventory and to evaluate the pros and cons of a variety of potential approaches related to their improvement.

Mr. Truax said the official kickoff meeting with the Task Force was held on February 3, 2020. The second taskforce meeting is scheduled after today's TAC meeting.

Mr. Truax gave a snapshot of the current conditions and listed case studies that will be reviewed by the study.

Some PA case studies include:

- Mercer County Bridge Removal and Closure Study
- Lycoming County Bridge Bundle Program
- Centre County Bridge Inventory

Other states case studies include:

- Indiana – Local Bridge Inventory Report
- Michigan – Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) Culvert Inventory Pilot
- Maine – State Inspections and Cost Sharing Policy

Mr. Truax also gave an overview of the stakeholders' outreach survey, which was developed and administered through SurveyMonkey. The survey was disseminated to counties, municipalities and other stakeholders through help from the following:

- County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania
- County Planning Directors Association of Pennsylvania
- Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs
- Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors
- Pennsylvania Municipal League / Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners
- Pennsylvania State Mayors' Association
- MPOs/RPOs (Planning Partners) via the Program Center

Mr. Truax noted that 409 survey responses have been received as of April 6th.

Mr. Murawski, who chairs the study taskforce, expressed his appreciation to the Consulting Team for their efforts.

Mr. Ashley Porter asked if it is possible to get a report on which stakeholders have already responded to the survey and which have not, along with the link to share with the municipalities.

Mr. Elam Herr asked if a link can be sent to stakeholders to remind them of the survey and the deadline.

Utilities in State Right-of-Way

Mr. Dale Witmer explained that the *Utilities in State Right-of-Way* study aims to:

- Identify the existing systems and processes related to utilities in the state and other public rights-of-way.
- Evaluate the Commonwealth's utility maintenance and replacement management system(s).
- Develop a series of recommendations for better coordination and collaboration between utility and transportation facility owners and agencies.

Mr. Witmer noted that the Task Force held an official kickoff meeting after the December 5, 2019, TAC business meeting.

Mr. Witmer discussed the review of prior recommendations from initiatives such as:

- PA Next Generation (PNG) Team (Summer 2015)
- PA Senate Transportation Committee Hearing – Delay and Delivery of Transportation Projects (February 2016)
- FHWA – National Utility Review (September 2018)
- Transportation Research Board – Strategic Research Needs in the Area of Utilities (September 2019)
- Coordination with Existing Programs
- Utility Relocation Management System (URMS), set to be rolled out in May 2020.

Mr. Witmer mentioned the next steps to be undertaken, which include the URMS roll out coordination meeting and the Taskforce meeting scheduled for July 16th, 2020.

Truck Weight Statutory Exemptions

Mr. Brian Funkhouser gave an update on the Truck Weight Exemptions study. He reiterated that the purpose of the study is to understand the impacts of various truck weight exemptions enacted over the past decades.

Mr. Funkhouser explained that the Impact Analysis Framework tries to answer the following questions:

- What truck weight laws and exemptions are in place?
- Why were they enacted?
- What are the benefits?

- What are the costs and negative consequences?

Mr. Funkhouser discussed the Louisiana Shale Gas and Sugarcane truck weight exemptions case studies.

For the Shale Gas case study, the research identified:

- 9.7 million shale-gas-related overweight miles from 2008–2016
- Calculated roadway damage cost of \$17 million
- \$14.5 million recovered through permit fees

For the Sugarcane case study, it was found that:

- \$2,072 per year estimated pavement damage per overweight sugarcane truck
- \$3,500 per year bridge damage per overweight sugar cane truck
- \$100 per year permit fee

Mr. Funkhouser also discussed the Stakeholder Engagement, which includes:

- Rail freight operator interviews – impact analysis
- Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association
- PA Department of Agriculture
- Industry associations
- Other states
- PennDOT Special Hauling Permits Manager

The study is scheduled to be completed in July 2020.

Mr. Stewart asked if the environmental impacts of the truck weight exemptions will also be assessed.

Mr. Keith Chase answered that the environmental impacts will be assessed in the cost/benefit analysis.

Mr. Stewart asked if the analysis will consider the different type of permits or just generalize them.

Mr. Chase answered that the analysis will consider all aspects of the permits.

Mr. Ritchie asked if there will be a review of how PennDOT determines the permit fees?

Mr. Chase answered yes.

PA Department of Transportation Update

Executive Deputy Secretary

Executive Deputy Secretary Mr. George McAuley, P.E., gave a brief report in which he expressed his pride in the way the Department has adapted to conducting business differently amid the pandemic. He explained that as soon as the closure was ordered, the Department started working on a strategic plan to define the best way to continue to operate safely.

Administration and Budget

Mr. Robert Chiappelli, Deputy Secretary for Administration, gave a brief report about his Deputate's activities through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Chiappelli said that the biggest focus has been on the Commonwealth's employee safety, therefore, teleworking has been extended. He added that the Department is working on purchasing Personal Protective Equipment for essential personnel.

Mr. Chiappelli explained that the Paid Office Closure is available for employees not able to telework, but this pay mechanism will soon end. The employees affected can either file for unemployment benefits or use their paid or unpaid leaves.

Mr. Chiappelli said that the Administration Deputate is working with other Commonwealth Agencies for a workforce transfer.

Driver and Vehicle Services

Deputy Secretary for Driver and Vehicle Services, Mr. Kurt Myers, gave an update about his Deputate. He explained that the Real ID deadline has been extended to October 31, 2021.

Mr. Myers noted that a few days after the March 16, 2020 closure, some employees were brought back to continue to process service requests received online and through mail.

Mr. Myers explained that the expiration dates for some products such as registrations, driver licenses, etc. have been extended.

Mr. Myers also noted that 20,000 skills tests have so far been cancelled. He said that the DVS is looking at innovative ways to streamline the processes when operations resume in order to keep up with the demand.

Highway Administration

Deputy Secretary Ms. Melissa Batula, P.E., gave an update about Highway Administration's activities through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Batula said that within two business days, the Department had closed all offices statewide and shifted to essential functions operations and implemented full telework.

Ms. Batula explained that shortly after the closure, the Highway Administration focused on three items including: Emergency repairs, critical maintenance work, and defining ways to safely resume normal operations.

Ms. Batula said that small maintenance teams have been performing emergency pothole repairs in all counties. She added that though construction has been temporarily halted, guidance on how and when to safely resume has been put in place. As a result, 30 emergency and 30 critical projects will resume first.

Ms. Batula noted that the Department continues to bid projects and design activities are continuing through teleworking.

Ms. Batula also noted that the Automated Workzone Enforcement pilot project has been postponed due to COVID-19.

Mr. Michael Carroll asked if there has been a lot of feedback from contractors about COVID-19 safety protocols.

Ms. Batula answered that she is very satisfied with the feedback she received from contractors.

Mr. Carroll asked if it is possible to have access to some of the safety protocols developed by contractors.

Ms. Batula answered that she will have to check with contractors to make sure that they don't have any objections.

Mr. Carroll asked if the Department has had to restructure software licenses because the staff is teleworking now.

Ms. Batula answered no. She added that the Department has been working on updating some software on the laptops, but it is challenging because of the social distancing rules.

Multimodal Transportation

Deputy Secretary Ms. Jennie Granger, AICP, gave an update about her Deputate's activities.

Ms. Granger explained that transit agencies and Railroads are working hard to maintain critical operations through the COVID-19 pandemic. She noted that it's been a very challenging process, but she is very proud of all the work that is being done.

Office of Planning

Deputy Secretary for Planning, Mr. Larry Shifflet gave a report highlighting the Office of Planning's activities throughout the COVID-19 related office closure. Mr. Shifflet noted that teleworking has been successful, and the staff has done a great job transitioning.

Mr. Shifflet explained that the Department is continuing to work with the Regional Partners through video conference.

Mr. Shifflet also discussed the Federal Stimulus package and the FAST ACT reauthorization at the federal level.

Mr. Shifflet explained that AASHTO has sent a proposal to the leadership in the House and the Senate requesting \$50 billion backstop for states to cover revenue losses for 2020 and 2021.

Ms. Holton asked about the extent of revenue shortfall for transportation.

Mr. Shifflet said that the Motor License Fund will see an estimated \$300 million decrease.

OTHER BUSINESS

NEXT MEETING:

The next TAC business meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, July 16, 2020**, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

ADJOURNMENT:

ON A MOTION by Mr. John Pocius and seconded by Mr. Donald Detwiler, the TAC meeting was adjourned at 11:44 a.m.

Attendance* from the TAC Business Meeting
April 09, 2020

1. Ms. Jody Holton, AICP, Chair
2. Ms. Yassmin Gramian, P.E., TAC member
3. Mr. Michael Carroll, P.E., TAC member
4. Ms. Brenda Sandberg, TAC member
5. Mr. Ashley Porter, P.E., TAC member
6. Ms. Karina Ricks, TAC member
7. Mr. Donald Detwiler, TAC Member
8. Mr. John Pocius, P.E., PLS, TAC member
9. Mr. Mark Murawski, TAC member
10. Mr. Elam Herr, TAC member
11. Mr. Alan Blahovec, CCPM, TAC member
12. Mr. Kevin Stewart, TAC member
13. Mr. Ronald Wagenmann, TAC member
14. Mr. Joel McNeal, TAC member
15. Mr. Jeffrey Stroehmann, TAC member
16. Mr. Rodney Bender, alternate for Ms. Gladys Brown Dutrieuille, TAC member
17. Mr. Nolan Ritchie, M.P.A., alternate for Ms. Kim Ward, TAC member
18. Ms. Meredith Biggica, alternate for Mr. Mike Carroll, TAC member
19. Mr. Sam Arnold, alternate for Mr. Tim Kearney, TAC member
20. Mr. Tim Hennessey, TAC member
21. Mr. Josiah Shelly, alternate for Mr. Tim Hennessey, TAC member
22. Mr. John Kashatus, alternate for Mr. Pedro Rivera, TAC member
23. Mr. Paul Opiyo, alternate for Mr. Dennis Davin, TAC member
24. Ms. Tiffany Landis, P.E., alternate for Mr. Patrick McDonnell, TAC member
25. Mr. Fred Strathmeyer, alternate for Mr. Russell Redding, TAC member
26. Mr. George McAuley, Jr., P.E., PennDOT
27. Ms. Melissa Batula, P.E., PennDOT
28. Ms. Sarah Clark, PennDOT
29. Ms. Natasha Fackler, PennDOT
30. Mr. Larry Shifflet, PennDOT
31. Mr. Kurt Myers, PennDOT
32. Mr. Roger Cohen, PennDOT
33. Mr. Robert Chiappelli, PennDOT
34. Mr. Shane Rice, PennDOT
35. Ms. Christi Sabb, McCormick Taylor
36. Ms. Lugene Keys, McCormick Taylor
37. Ms. Leanne Doran, Michael Baker Int'l
38. Mr. Brian Funkhouser, Michael Baker Int'l
39. Mr. Troy Truex, AICP, Michael Baker Int'l

40. Mr. Bradley Duda, Michael Baker Int'l
41. Mr. Brian Link, Michael Baker Int'l
42. Ms. Audrey Corrado, Michael Baker Int'l
43. Mr. Dale Witmer, Michael Baker Int'l
44. Mr. Tim Smith, Gannett Fleming
45. Ms. Nicki Jacobs, GPI
46. Mr. Brian Hare, P.E., PennDOT
47. Mr. Mark Tobin, PennDOT
48. Ms. Jessica Clark, PennDOT
49. Mr. Abdoul Ahmed, PennDOT
50. Mr. Terry Pinder, PennDOT
51. Mr. Brian Sharkey, PennDOT
52. Ms. Karen Heath, PennDOT

**Attendance includes members present via conference call.*