



## Transportation Operations Task Force (TOTF)

### *Highlights from the January 20th, 2021 Transportation Operations Task Force Meeting (Held via Zoom)*

#### 1. Welcome & Introductions

Chris King, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), thanked everyone for attending.

#### 2. Two Minute Agency Report

**New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT):** There have been a number of recent retirements at the DOT. Though the expertise and institutional knowledge of those retirees will be missed, those filling the positions are beyond capable. NJDOT also in the process of reviewing its TIM Strategic Plan, as well as implementing several adaptive design projects throughout the state.

**Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT):** Variable Speed Limits (VSL) will soon be operational on I-76, as the Integrated Corridor Management Project continues to move forward, with improvements to arterials going to construction this year. Additionally, a Hard Shoulder Running (HSR) project is in preliminary design phase for I-476 from Route 3 to I-95. A similar project is underway on US 422, with a major push being made to integrate transit along the corridor. Also adding ITS and signal improvements to Business 30 in Chester County. US 202 from Norristown to Montgomeryville is being equipped with ITS to identify travel times. Construction on the new Regional Transportation Management Center in King of Prussia is underway, and the parking garage is already complete.

**Montgomery County Planning Commission:** Montgomery County is in the process of conducting a detailed analysis of six significant corridors in the county. This study, MontCo Pikes, will examine each roadway's readiness for 21<sup>st</sup> century transportation, such as connected and autonomous vehicles. The county is interested in receiving feedback from residents and agencies.

**TRANSCOM:** T-REX data entry platform was recently released. This system is much more map-based, as opposed to the previous system, allowing more accurate incident location data.

**Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission:** Turnpike recently began its ITS Gap Analysis and is anticipating construction to be complete by 2024. Contracts for fiber installation along the eastern portion of I-276 and the Northeast Extension are underway. In addition, a fiber



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commercialization project is in the works, which allows private business to utilize the fiber that runs along the turnpike. There are two traffic operations positions advertised.

**Federal Highway Administration (FHWA):** Arc-IT, the software used to maintain the regional ITS architecture has been released and includes ten separate service packages.

**Delaware River Port Authority (DRPA):** DRPA is in the process of updating the camera system on all four bridges and PATCO. Also been installing solar panels on its bridges.

**PATCO:** Will soon have all stations be fully ADA compliant. Ridership is currently at 22% of pre-COVID numbers. Despite the pandemic, Franklin Square Station still slated to reopen in either 2022 or 2023.

### 3. Weather Savvy Roads: NJDOT Pilot Program

Sal Cowan, Senior Director of Transportation Mobility, offered an overview of a pilot project NJDOT is undertaking to use real-time weather information from DOT's fleet to accurately assess roadway conditions during adverse weather. The goal of the project was to improve NJDOT's ability to manage weather events by getting information from field sources as well as various weather applications and weather feeds.

Traditionally NJDOT has used contract services to get the RWIS (Road Weather Information System) data from equipment installed along the NJ roadways. Through this project NJDOT compared the value of mobile RWIS vs fixed RWIS and to test cellular strength (FirstNet signal strength vs commercial cellular strength) on NJDOT's Interstate road network.

Mobile RWIS devices as well as dash cameras were deployed on a variety of NJDOT fleet vehicles, such as its Safety Service Patrols, Incident Management Response trucks, plow trucks, and dump trucks. The equipment on the vehicles will report air temperature, surface temperature, grip, relative humidity, and roadway condition (wet/dry), showing 'tracings' of where the vehicle traveled in the past 30 minutes, giving the advantage of extended coverage area compared to the fixed RWIS equipment.

They system also provides web interface dashboard and video wall for operators to view the weather data in the traffic management center. Installation of mobile RWIS was completed during the pandemic to get ready for the winter.

This pilot project is slated to remain on the docket until June 2022, though based on preliminary feedback, the DOT hopes to make this a permanent fixture in its situational awareness toolbox.



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#### 4. Interactive Detour Route Mapping (IDRuM) Update

Katie Nash, DVRPC, provided an overview of the recently unveiled IDRuM reboot. Whereas the previous version required Flash, the new iteration is completely web-based. All detours found within the IDRuM system are DOT and State Police approved for vehicle and commercial truck traffic. Though not necessarily for real-time use, the detours are intended for planners, operators, and responders, when faced with a long-term closure. Presently, detours for the five Pennsylvania counties within the DVRPC region are in IDRuM, and the New Jersey detours are currently under review.

#### 5. COVID Updates

**Delaware River Port Authority:** Traffic volume down 23%; revenue down 20%. Moving forward, DRPA anticipating decreased ridership on PATCO, as well as volume on its bridges.

**New Jersey Department of Transportation:** TOCs and Call Centers have remained opened throughout the pandemic. Safety Service Patrols have remained active. Travel volume down significantly for the holiday season, though it was near normal at times over the summer. Directly, NJDOT recently lost a staff member to COVID.

**Pennsylvania Department of Transportation:** Has begun to staff the TMC with two operators, on alternating schedules. Some support staff starting to return, though restrictions and guidelines are in place.

**Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission:** TOCs remained open throughout, though the night and day shift worked out of separate facilities. There were some issues with transporting stranded customers; plastic liners were placed in the SSP vehicles to separate drivers from passengers, as well as increasing ventilation in the trucks.

Enhanced Move Over Law in Pennsylvania goes into effect in April. To promote this new law, PennTIME is producing a Move Over PSA in Manheim, PA on March 27<sup>th</sup>. All responders are welcome to attend. Also looking to improve overall awareness of Incident Command at major incidents.

**PATCO:** Staff must follow strict guideline when at the workplace. On the trains, riders must wear masks and no trains can exceed 50% capacity. and Call Centers have remained opened throughout.

**Burlington County Bridge Commission:** BCBC extremely appreciative of the work done by NJDOT, as well as various Burlington County response agencies, regarding a recent fatal crash on



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the Tacony-Palmyra Bridge in December. The nine-hour incident required detours and significant scene maintenance, but the coordination allowed the event to move smoothly.

**Burlington County:** 1,500 police and fire personnel have been vaccinated throughout the county. Move Over, Slow Down initiative is a focal point for responders and DOT.

### 6. New Business

- a. DVRPC will be reaching out to update the contact list for regional operating agencies
- b. Next meeting dates
  - April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021
  - July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021
  - October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021