



Setting Directions

Priorities from Regional Outreach I

May 2005



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May 2005

Dear Fellow Pennsylvanian,

During March and April 2005, 800 transportation stakeholders—primarily those who work in a field heavily dependent upon transportation—took time from their busy lives to talk about a serious and exciting subject: the future of Pennsylvania transportation. I greatly appreciate their commitment to the Regional Outreach I (RO1) process and the extensive range of ideas and perspectives shared at the 36 meetings held throughout the state.

Just prior to RO1 we issued *Transportation Choices for Pennsylvania* (available at www.pamobilityplan.com) to introduce RO1 participants to some of the decisions we need to make as a state. The document's title appropriately recognizes that transportation planning and programming is a matter of choices—extremely challenging choices given the major gap between transportation needs and available resources. Our team carefully listened to what RO1 participants had to say. The results and analysis of the *Choices* dialogue are contained in this *Setting Directions* document.

The Pennsylvania Mobility Plan will establish strategic long-term direction for effective and efficient investment of resources. This report represents a major milestone in developing the Mobility Plan. We now eagerly shift from plan definition and data collection to plan drafting. That is no small task. We will frequently refer to this report and all the public involvement feedback received to date as we draft the plan's direction based on the priorities of Pennsylvanians.

As we move forward, we will strive to establish a long-term direction that effectively and strategically addresses our mobility and access requirements. The Mobility Plan will require an unusually high degree of ownership that extends beyond PennDOT. We look to the many partners who contributed to *Setting Directions* to stay involved through plan completion and implementation.

Looking ahead, we are excited about Regional Outreach II—the intensive phase of stakeholder and public review of the draft plan slated for early 2006. RO2 will further enhance the spirit of partnership and ownership in the plan's direction.

I hope you will find *Setting Directions* useful in moving the Mobility Plan development process forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allen D. Biehler".

Allen D. Biehler, P.E.
Secretary of Transportation
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

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Executive Summary: What is the big picture?

Upon completion of this public involvement phase, the task is now to develop the Mobility Plan.

This report on Regional Outreach I (RO1) is a culmination of an extensive public involvement effort carried out as a first phase of preparing Pennsylvania's long-range transportation plan – the Pennsylvania Mobility Plan. The public involvement effort included large statewide surveys and focus groups with a broad range of citizens; in-depth interviews with stakeholders, business leaders, and government representatives; and Internet surveys of the business community.



Overriding messages from all Mobility Plan public involvement efforts:

- Maintain and preserve the existing infrastructure, and when improvements are made, build them to last.
- Integrate transportation and land use solutions for smart development/growth.
- Improve the quality of public transportation and expand services and facilities.
- Use the transportation system to stimulate economic development.
- Improve the transportation system and its management/operations through performance-based decision-making.
- Streamline the process of completing transportation projects.
- Safety is not a debatable issue; it must be a continuous priority and way of doing business in the design and management of the transportation system.
- Have the transportation system contribute to "energy independence."
- More money is essential to effectively maintain and improve Pennsylvania's multi-modal transportation system.
- Have users pay their "fair share" for using transportation resources.
- Innovate boldly to meet changing needs and opportunities.

Priorities from Regional Outreach I

The intent of RO1—an important component of the overall public involvement effort—was to travel to eight geographic areas of the state in March/April 2005 and hold 36 workshops with 800 transportation “stakeholders” from the public, private, and non-profit sectors to gather input on:

- The goals of the Mobility Plan.
- The attractiveness of different scenarios that could be developed into the full plan.

- Their preferences for allocating transportation funds among a wide array of transportation services.

This document contains the summary results of RO1. The RO1 findings reflect the overall trends identified in the general public involvement effort, adding more detail and contributing some new perspectives.

Implications drawn from RO1:

- Present transportation funding is insufficient.
- Decision-making should be more performance-based, less politicized, and better coordinated.
- Pennsylvania’s first investment priority should be maintaining the current transportation system.
- Land use and transportation must be linked in real ways.
- The Mobility Plan should pursue the best elements of the System Preservation and Intermodal scenarios.
- Public transportation is ripe for bold solutions and breakthroughs.
- Better driver safety education, regulations, and enforcement are needed, both for freight and passenger traffic.
- Reevaluate the state approach to supporting aviation.
- Better linkages between freight modes are needed.
- Innovative solutions are needed for expanding transportation capacity.
- Statewide goals and directions must be widely supported for the Mobility Plan to be successfully implemented.
- Regarding the environment, PennDOT and its partners are encouraged to prioritize based on overall quality of life, not just impact mitigation.
- Investment in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure can be a cost-effective strategy.
- Encourage organizational change and remove institutional barriers.
- Develop a generation of 21st century transportation leaders.
- Phased Mobility Plan implementation will be a key to success.



Methodology: What was Regional Outreach I?

Throughout March and April 2005, 36 Regional Outreach I (RO1) workshops were held across Pennsylvania involving 800 “stakeholders.” Stakeholders are individuals from the public, private, or quasi-public sectors who work in the transportation industry or in a field heavily dependent upon transportation. Although the general public was welcome to attend the workshops, they were not actively solicited for RO1 because previous public involvement initiatives had already gathered substantial input from the general public. Future public participation is also

planned in relation to Regional Outreach II to review the plan’s draft directions.

The two-and-a-half-hour RO1 workshops were designed to obtain feedback on:

- Five proposed goals for the Mobility Plan.
- Four potential scenarios that could characterize or shape the Mobility Plan.
- Transportation resource allocation.

The workshops captured both quantitative and qualitative input by using a combination of electronic vote-taking and group discussion, the results of which form the basis of this report. In addition, participants were asked to recommend projects of statewide significance. That information will be considered in the next stage of plan development.

The feedback received from Pennsylvania stakeholders during RO1 will influence policies and decision-making at the state and regional levels as the Mobility Plan is drafted, refined, and implemented.



Meetings were held in eight locations representing different geographic areas of the state.

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SECTOR/CATEGORY	REPRESENTATIVE ORGANIZATIONS INVITED TO RO1
Businesses (non-transportation)	Retail, commercial, manufacturing, service businesses (e.g., health care, law, finance), agriculture, tourism, development and real estate
Businesses (transportation)	Shipping, trucking, rail freight, airlines, intercity and charter bus, highway construction, transportation consulting, transportation facilities (e.g., ports, bus terminals)
Modal Associations	American Automobile Association; PA Motor Truck; PA Mass Transit; car, motorcycle, bicycle, walking/hiking, and rail clubs
Economic Development	Chambers of commerce, economic development authorities, downtown improvement districts, housing authorities, workforce investment boards
Federal and State Agencies	PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development, PA Department of Environmental Protection, PA Dept. of Labor & Industry, U.S. Fish & Wildlife, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Dept. of Transportation Modal Agencies, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Academic Organizations	Public and private schools, community colleges, universities
Public Safety and Law Enforcement	Local police, State Police, Homeland Security
Environmental Groups	Greenways, Sierra Club, land preservation trusts
Elected and Appointed Officials	City councils, county commissions, city/regional/county planning commissions, State Legislature, U.S. Congress
Local and Regional Planning Staff	City planning entities, regional/county planning entities, metropolitan planning organizations, rural planning organizations, housing authorities
Service and Philanthropic Agencies	United Way, area agencies for aging, disability agencies
Under-represented Groups	Racial minorities, disability groups (hearing, sight, mobility), economically disadvantaged



Goals:

What's most important to Pennsylvania's stakeholders to achieve the Mobility Plan vision?

“Who will create the efficient transportation system—public, private, or government institutions?”

—Mifflin County participant (Area 5)



The Mobility Plan draft vision and goal statements as shown on the next page were derived from earlier public involvement and the Mobility Plan Development Team (a 75-person team representing a wide range of transportation, economic, government, environmental, and other entities). The Mobility Plan draft vision and goal statements are a critical foundation of plan development.

RO1 served to validate the goal statements. Participants discussed the goals and commented on the way each goal theme was expressed in its corresponding goal statement.

Participants agreed that each goal is important. They are interrelated—in many cases dependent upon one another—and are all necessary to some degree in realizing the Mobility Plan vision.

For purposes of RO1, the study team requested that participants prioritize the goals and discuss their relevance to the future of Pennsylvania's transportation system. Responses follow, summarized by goal.



For detailed results cross-tabulated by area, mode representation, type of organization, and other categories, please refer to *Regional Outreach I Quantitative Graphs*, available at www.pamobilityplan.com.

Mobility Plan Vision:

To provide the best-performing transportation system for people, business, and places.



Theme

Goal Statement

Safety & Security

Provide for a safe and secure transportation system.

Coordinated Decision-making

Balance transportation, land use, economic development, and the environment.

Maximum Benefits

Target investments for maximum statewide benefits.

Efficient Operations

Create an efficient, interconnected, and multi-modal transportation system.

Collaboration

Ensure collaborative planning, funding, and implementation.

First choice goal**Balance transportation, land use, economic development, and the environment.**

Overall, 36.8% of participants consider this the most important goal to be supported by the Mobility Plan. This ranking reflects, in part, a strong belief among many participants that improvements must be made in meshing transportation, land use, and economic development decisions. A balanced approach to environmental issues was also noted as important to the future of Pennsylvania.

**Second choice goal****Create an efficient, interconnected, and multi-modal transportation system.**

Although this goal was ranked second overall, representatives of for-profit businesses selected it as the most important goal, suggesting its importance to the movement of people, goods, and services, as well as the overall economy. The relationships among modes is very important as well as the technologies for transferring people, goods, and services from one mode to another. This goal was also rated highest by rail freight interests and representatives of aviation and public transportation agencies.

“Perception exists that targeting statewide benefits means targeting Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, leaving out the rural areas.”

*—Southwestern PA, North Central PA, and Mifflin County participants
(Areas 2, 3, and 5)*

Third choice goal**Provide for a safe and secure transportation system.**

Although safety and security are important to all participants, comments suggest that safety is perceived as a given—it is expected as part of facility design and operation. Participants also suggested that safety and security may need to be better defined, and are very different concerns. For example, participants generally consider drunk and/or reckless drivers (safety) to be more of a threat to Pennsylvania’s transportation system than terrorists (security).

Fourth choice goal**Ensure collaborative planning, funding, and implementation.**

Although this goal was rated fourth overall, it was rated second most important by rail freight interests and many participants who support an intermodal approach as most important. Comments suggest that successful intermodal solutions will be closely linked to collaborative planning, funding, and implementation.

Fifth choice goal**Target investments for maximum statewide benefits.**

Participants support maximizing investments and benefits, especially given the shortage of resources. However, several suggested that the word “statewide” may have skewed the results because many perceive statewide to mean that investments are targeted to urban areas like

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Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Other comments suggested that it is difficult to determine what a statewide benefit would be and that regional benefits are more tangible.

Goal Validation

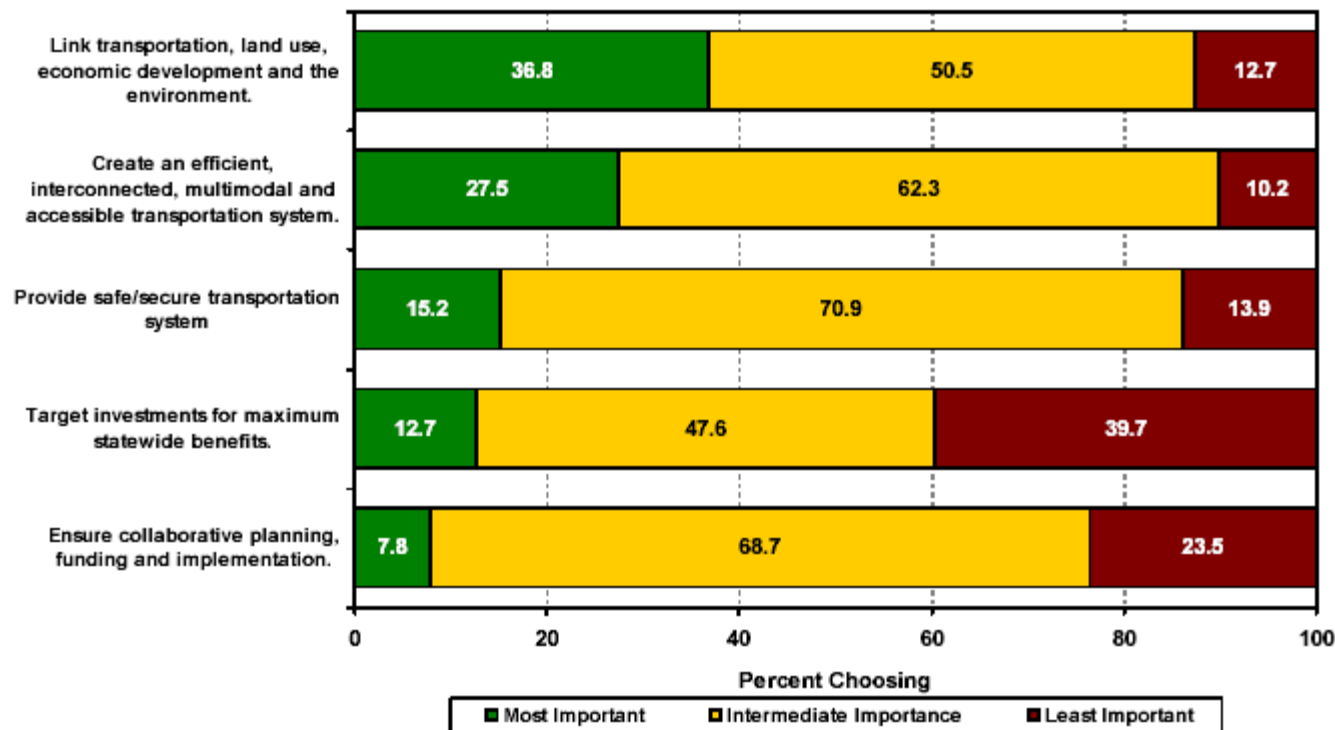
RO1 successfully validated the draft goal statements. The issues and questions raised during the goals discussion will be addressed in the process of further developing the goals into specific Mobility Plan objectives.



Goals For the Mobility Plan

What is the most important goal? Least Important?

Statewide Results (n=732)



“Coordinated decision-making is the only goal that incorporates quality of life.”
—Oil City participant (Area 1)

“I think safety is inherent, so everyone focused on the other more imperative issues.”
—Southwestern PA participant (Area 2)

Scenarios:

What type of transportation investments are consistent with the Mobility Plan vision and goals?

After discussing Mobility Plan goals, four potential future transportation scenarios, or “alternative transportation futures,” were presented to RO1 participants. A Mobility Scenario, or preferred transportation direction, will be developed that best links and supports the Mobility Plan’s vision, goals, and objectives. The four preliminary scenarios are:

- **PennPlan (Baseline) Scenario** – continues implementation of Pennsylvania’s current long-range transportation plan.
- **Capacity Expansion Scenario** – expands the current system to add capacity across all modes and targets investments to support strategic economic growth.
- **System Preservation and Enhanced Operations Scenario** – improves system operations and condition of existing infrastructure while limiting investment in new capacity-adding projects in any mode.
- **Intermodal Scenario** – invests to improve overall connectivity and performance of a multi-modal transportation network and uses intelligent

transportation systems (ITS) to enhance modal connectivity.

RO1 participants were asked to select the scenario that would best achieve the goals, as well as their least-preferred scenario. Results follow summarized by scenario.

For detailed results cross-tabulated by area, mode representation, type of organization, and other categories, please refer to *Regional Outreach I Quantitative Graphs*, available at www.pamobilityplan.com.

“The current system just needs to be kept up to its potential.”

—Mifflin County participant
(Area 5)



Priorities from Regional Outreach I

First choice scenario**System Preservation and Enhanced Operations**

41% of participants prefer this scenario. Of the 254 respondents who selected the goal of linking transportation, land use, economic development, and the environment as most important, 39% favor this scenario. It is also a favorite with 38% of the 189 respondents who chose creating an efficient, interconnected, multi-modal, and accessible transportation system as the most important goal.

Second choice scenario**Intermodal**

31% of participants chose this scenario as the best basis for the Mobility Plan. It is favored by quasi-public/private and economic development agencies and freight/rail, marine, aviation, and bicycle/pedestrian mode representatives. Those representing more urban areas ranked the Intermodal Scenario equally with the System Preservation and Enhanced Operations Scenario, each receiving 43% of the vote. Highway interests rated the Intermodal scenario lowest. Comments suggested this scenario needs to be closely integrated with land use decision-making and that this scenario is the most global approach. To be successful, intermodal solutions need to be supported by both the private and public sectors.

Third choice scenario**Capacity Expansion**

Although it was ranked third overall, Areas 7 and 8 (southeastern and northeastern Pennsylvania) ranked this scenario lowest. In general the feeling is that capacity expansion alone is inadequate to solve today's transportation problems—whether considering urban congestion, rural accessibility, or other issues. The marine, intercity passenger transit, and bicycle and pedestrian modal interests also favor the Capacity Expansion Scenario least. Comments suggested that this scenario may have been associated strongly with the highway system only, not other modes.

Fourth choice scenario**PennPlan (Baseline)**

A clear majority voted this as their least favorite scenario. In general, there is a sense that Pennsylvania can always do better. Discussion indicated that the current approach is not achieving the vision and goals, so changes need to be made. Comments also suggested that there was a lack of familiarity with PennPlan, which may have reduced its popularity.



“If intermodal is the preferred and capacity expansion is the least preferred, how can one expect to get to the other mode unless they expand capacity in certain areas?”

—Middletown participant (Area 6)



The Mobility Scenario

The Mobility Scenario will likely be a hybrid scenario rather than a pure version of one of the four preliminary scenarios evaluated at RO1. Blending the best elements of each scenario is strongly supported by RO1 participants. Comments

suggested, for example, that combining elements of the System Preservation and Enhanced Operations Scenario with the Intermodal Scenario might be a favorable direction. Such a blended approach appears promising recognizing the limits of resources, the need for modal connectivity for moving people and goods, and

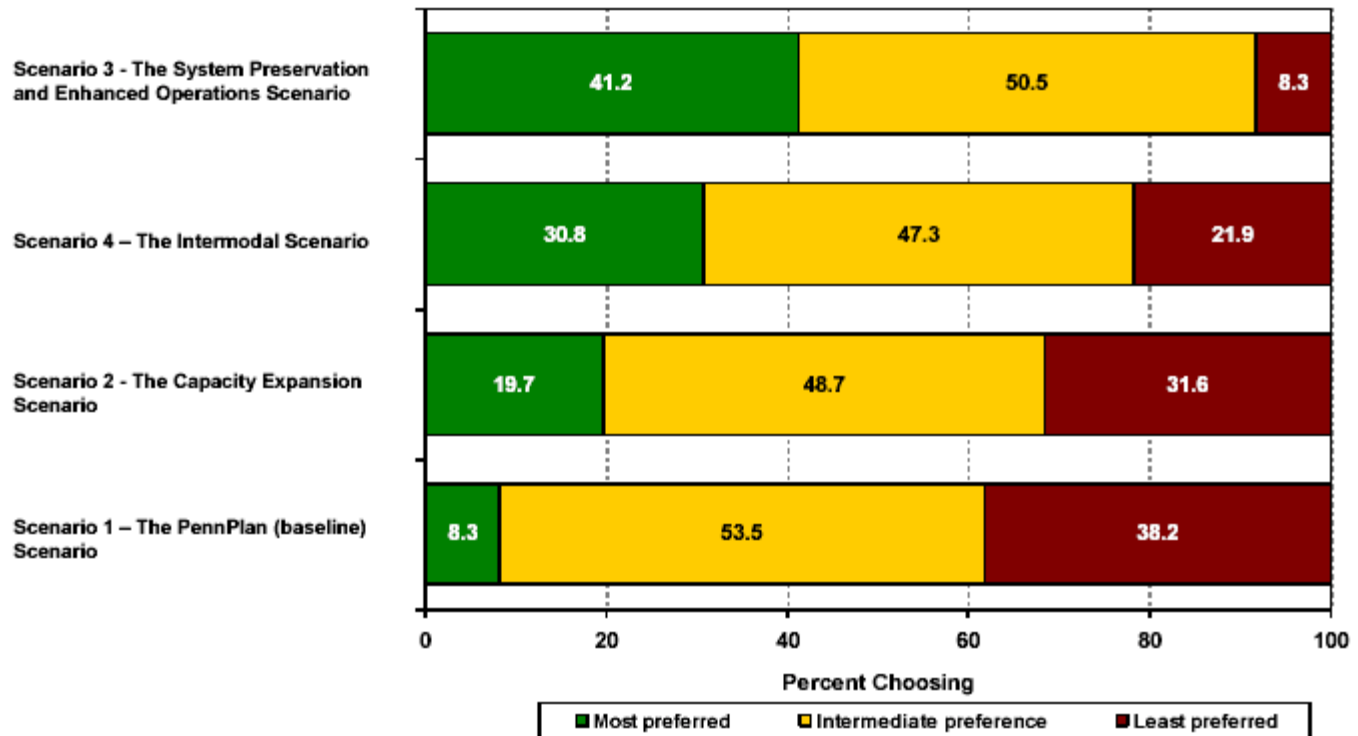
“One of the dangers with the Intermodal Scenario is that you could force relationships that don’t necessarily make sense.”

—Southwestern PA participant (Area 2)

Mobility Plan Scenarios

Which is your favorite scenario? Least favorite? (n=714)

State-wide Results



emerging technology. Whatever its final composition, the Mobility Scenario will need to closely examine and be integrated with land use and economic impacts to be consistent with RO1 feedback. Strategic capacity expansion will also be needed, especially to link modes and to support key economic development opportunities.



Scenarios For the Mobility Plan by Mode

Which is your favorite scenario? Least favorite?

Scenarios	No particular mode (n=357)	Highway/Auto/Motorcycle/Small truck (n=113)	Freight Trucking (n=18)	Freight Rail (n=23)	Marine (n=6)	Aviation (n=27)	Local Public Transportation (n=111)	Intercity Passenger (n=14)	Bicycle/Pedestrian (n=40)
Scenario 3 - The System Preservation and Enhanced Operations Scenario	43%	52%	50%				44%	50%	
Scenario 4 - The Intermodal Scenario		39%		46%	50%	41%			66%
Scenario 2 - The Capacity Expansion Scenario					50%			57%	45%
Scenario 1 - The PennPlan (baseline) Scenario	37%		56%	56%	50%	40%	51%		



Trade-Offs: What is the best use of limited transportation funding?



“You need to take care of what you own. Otherwise it’s going to cost a lot more down the road.”

–Danville participant (Area 5)



Transportation Spending Priorities and Trade-Offs

Typically in public outreach for transportation planning, participants are encouraged to communicate their desires, but they are rarely asked to evaluate which programs they are willing to sacrifice for the benefit of their highest priorities.

RO1 took an entirely different approach. The study team asked stakeholders to communicate their priorities among peers via a trade-off evaluation. Within the context of a limited budget, participants were permitted to devote more budget dollars to certain categories, but only at the expense of investment in one or more other categories.

The next page presents the worksheet that RO1 participants used for this “trade-off” exercise. It pairs qualitative changes in service with hypothetical changes in costs for 11 categories of transportation investment. Simple whole-dollar increments characterize costs, ranging from +/- \$15 for the most expensive category of road and bridge maintenance and preservation to +/- \$3 for the least costly category of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Cost ranges generally reflect the relative magnitude of total transportation

investment by state and local governments combined.

Results show that overall, participants recommend a significant shift in spending priority toward three main categories:

- Road and bridge maintenance and preservation (+\$4.8)
- Road and bridge reconstruction (+\$2.9)
- Public transportation (+\$1.6)

Participants meanwhile reduced spending on all other categories, most dramatically on:

- Road and bridge capacity expansion (-\$2.3)
- Aviation (-\$1.6)
- Demand management (-\$1.6)



Transportation Spending Trade-Offs

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

OPTION FINDER CHOICE

7 = Major Increase in Services

6 = Moderate Increase in Services

5 = Minor Increase in Services

4 = No Change in Services

3 = Minor Decrease in Services

2 = Moderate Decrease in Services

1 = Major Decrease in Services

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
	Road and Bridge Maintenance and Preservation	Road and Bridge Reconstruction	Road and Bridge Capacity Expansion	Public Transportation	Safety & Security	Demand Management Efforts	Freight	Operations Strategies	Aviation	Environmental & Energy Management Programs	Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities
	Your vote	Your vote	Your vote	Your vote	Your vote	Your vote	Your vote	Your vote	Your vote	Your vote	Your vote
	7 +\$15	7 +\$12	7 +\$12	7 +\$12	7 +\$9	7 +\$6	7 +\$6	7 +\$6	7 +\$6	7 +\$6	7 +\$3
	6 +\$10	6 +\$8	6 +\$8	6 +\$8	6 +\$6	6 +\$4	6 +\$4	6 +\$4	6 +\$4	6 +\$4	6 +\$2
	5 +\$5	5 +\$4	5 +\$4	5 +\$4	5 +\$3	5 +\$2	5 +\$2	5 +\$2	5 +\$2	5 +\$2	5 +\$1
	4 \$0	4 \$0	4 \$0	4 \$0	4 \$0	4 \$0	4 \$0	4 \$0	4 \$0	4 \$0	4 \$0
	3 -\$5	3 -\$4	3 -\$4	3 -\$4	3 -\$3	3 -\$2	3 -\$2	3 -\$2	3 -\$2	3 -\$2	3 -\$1
	2 -\$10	2 -\$8	2 -\$8	2 -\$8	2 -\$6	2 -\$4	2 -\$4	2 -\$4	2 -\$4	2 -\$4	2 -\$2
	1 -\$15	1 -\$12	1 -\$12	1 -\$12	1 -\$9	1 -\$6	1 -\$6	1 -\$6	1 -\$6	1 -\$6	1 -\$3

Spending Increase = \$ _____

Sum = \$ 0 (+/- \$2)

Spending Decrease = \$ _____

Note: The values represent a relative increase or decrease in transportation spending over current allocations.

Priorities for New Money

After the first trade-off exercise, the study team gave participants ten additional or “new” dollars, above and beyond the budget, and asked where they would invest the new money. Interestingly, participants expressed a similar set of priorities

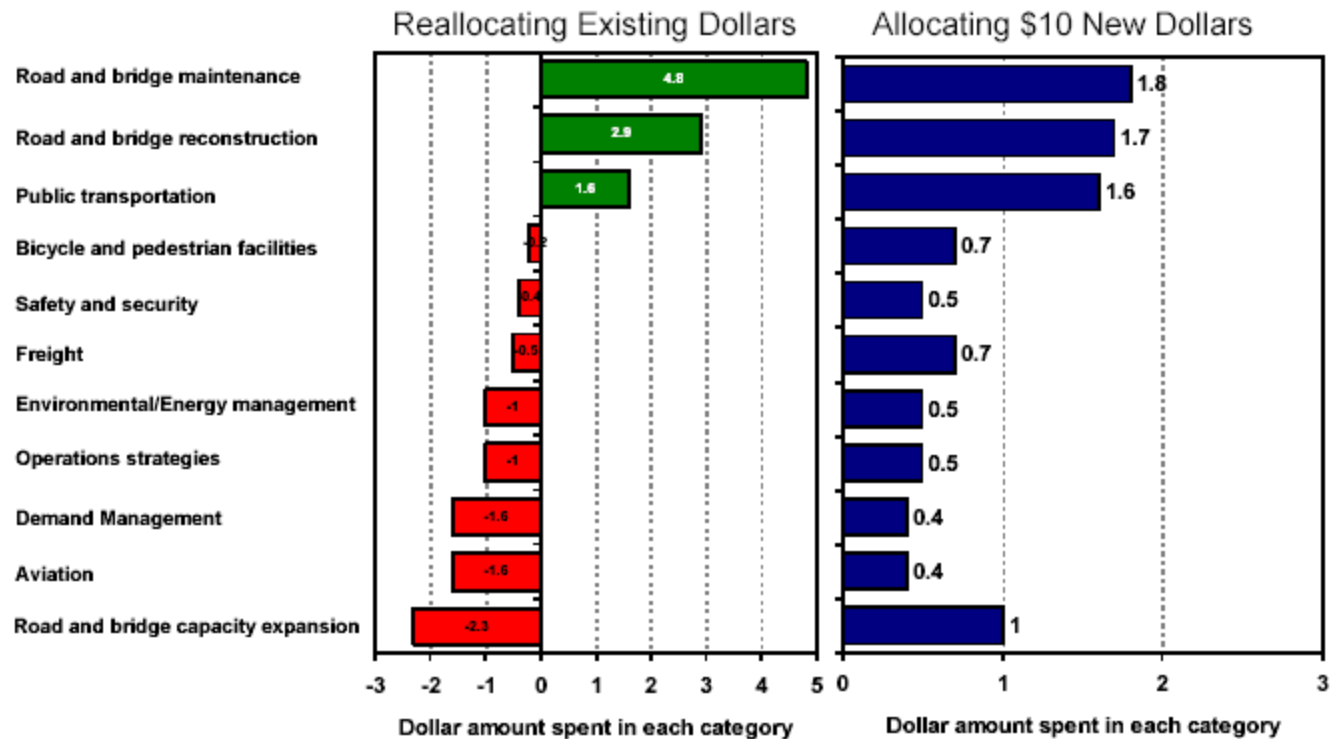
with new money, though with some notable differences.

First, participants on average would choose to invest more than half of the new money (51%) in the same three categories they prioritized for additional investment in the trade-off exercise:

“I voted for pricing transport. Studies indicate that when people can more purely perceive the cost of their transportation, they drive less. There is no marginal cost of using my vehicle. If I have a price each time I turn the key, I may think more carefully about taking my bike or public transportation.”
 –Philadelphia participant (Area 8)

Trade-Off vs. New Money Spending

To what PennDOT transportation services would you allocate more or less resources? How would you spend new money? (n=554)



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highway maintenance, highway reconstruction, and public transportation. Participants would designate roughly even amounts of new money to each of those three categories.

Road and bridge capacity expansion shows the biggest turn-around. Participants dedicated 10% of all new money to this category, fourth highest among all categories, even after dramatically decreasing funding for this category in the existing budget. The result seems to indicate a perception among some participants that a trade-off exists between maintaining the existing highway system and expanding it. Many stakeholders were willing to expand capacity (with new money) only after the system is maintained well (with existing money).

In short, when presented with new money, some participants who most highly prioritized highway maintenance within a constrained budget then shifted some priority toward highway capacity expansion and public transit.

Transportation Category Drill-Downs

The study team also asked participants to evaluate priorities and issues *within* each transportation category, prompting attendees to choose among three possible “highest priorities” for each category. The primary purpose of these questions was simply to stimulate focused discussion and prompt participants to identify key issues and explain *why* they chose the funding priorities described above.

The trade-off, new-money, and drill-down exercises garnered a wealth of qualitative feedback and expressions of priority from stakeholders. This feedback is summarized by transportation category in the following sections.

Road and Bridge Maintenance and Preservation

**+\$4.8 current money
plus 18% of new money**

With regard to highways, many participants favored a policy of “build it to last,” followed by “maintenance first.” Participants strongly prioritized extending the life of roads and bridges as a wise, economical investment, acknowledging that poor construction quality and deferred maintenance both require more money in the long term.

Road and Bridge Reconstruction

**+\$2.9 current money
plus 17% of new money**

Participants generally provided many good reasons to support the types of roadways that predominate in their particular part of the state, though some attempted to take a broader perspective. Participants also perceived that other regions receive more attention and resources than theirs does and that politics, not benefits, often drives the investments. Nevertheless, participants from different areas said many of the same things regarding priorities.

“If you think about the Ben Franklin Bridge—if something happened and access was limited, that would have a huge impact on the region and the state. I think it is important to prioritize the [key links] that have the most impact on the economic engines for the state.”
—Philadelphia participant
(Area 8)



“Economic development seems to be the only legitimate reason to expand capacity.”

–Lewistown participant (Area 5)



Road and Bridge Capacity Expansion

**–\$2.3 current money
plus 10% of new money**

In urban areas, several participants expressed skepticism that capacity expansion could mitigate congestion, and many suggested that alternative strategies such as better land uses (long-term), better signal timing, public transit, or peak-period pricing could be more effective. Several participants also expressed concern that additional highway capacity would further promote sprawl.

In rural areas, many participants highlighted that congestion simply is not a problem, or acknowledged that highway capacity expansion would not adequately relieve congestion. Those who advocated capacity expansion generally cited specific projects on key links and commonly expressed frustration that their portion of the state does not receive high enough priority, or that key projects that were promised decades ago have not been completed. Some also cited economic development as a worthy objective of targeted capacity expansion, and some suggested that private/public partnerships may be the best way to finance new infrastructure.

Public Transportation

**+\$1.6 current money
plus 16% of new money**

Participants who voted to increase funding for public transit provided a wide variety of reasons. Many participants stressed the importance of accommodating an aging population, especially in rural areas. Some view transit as key to

“sustainability.” Some believe that transit is crucial for the vitality of cities, which act as economic engines for the state. Many rural participants said that inter-regional transit mobility needs much improvement. Others believe transit will become a necessary alternative for many drivers due to rising gas prices. Many participants feel strongly that the lack of coordination between transportation and land use planning is a major problem, with important adverse implications for transit. That said, some participants from rural areas, including those who support transit, expressed reluctance to subsidize transit more because the vast majority of dollars goes to Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

Safety and Security

**–\$0.4 current money
plus 5% of new money**

Participants generally believe that driver error is the biggest threat to transportation safety, and they suggested that better driver education, tougher enforcement, and to a lesser extent safer regulations (e.g., lower speed limits) would most improve safety. Participants agreed unanimously that terrorist threats (security issues) are of far secondary importance to roadway safety. Many expressed that safety is perceived as a “given” because of strict design criteria.

Demand Management Efforts

**–\$1.6 current money
plus 4% of new money**

Participants expressed a mix of strong support and frustration with regard to the demand management strategies of peak pricing and improved land uses. Some stakeholders in rural

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areas view demand management as irrelevant to them, mostly because they lack other transportation options. Most demand management comments came from participants in urban areas.

Freight

–\$0.5 current money
plus 7% of new money

Stakeholders from the freight industry and some other participants generally promoted better linkages between freight modes to save time and reduce costs. A few participants felt surprised or upset by proposed decreases in freight funding. Others noted that because freight is operated primarily by private companies, it is therefore less deserving of state subsidy. Many participants expressed a desire to increase funding for rail but not trucking, and to better link the modes as a way to encourage a shift from trucking to rail (the public benefits of private rail infrastructure are becoming more widely recognized).

Operations Strategies

–\$1.0 current money
plus 5% of new money

Several participants said that improved signal timing would provide the biggest bang for the buck. Participants have mixed views about variable message signs, some saying that the information comes too late or that the signs too often carry old information. One participant expressed concern that if a variable message sign announced congestion on I-80, motorists undesirably would divert to local roads through small towns. Automated toll collection systems

received high marks from many attendees. Indirectly, the popularity of EZ Pass may help future tolling initiatives.

Aviation

–\$1.6 current money
plus 4% of new money

Perceptions of aviation priorities appear to be directly related to geographic location and the perceived benefit from aviation investment. Participants in rural areas often complained of how inconvenient air travel is, because of the limited service from their nearest airport, which itself can be quite distant. Participants also expressed the need for compatible zoning adjacent to airports. Some participants in Philadelphia noted that airport demand exceeds capacity, resulting in delays or limited flight options. Participants in Pittsburgh are particularly interested in better landside connections. Further losses of commercial air service in rural areas may necessitate better intercity bus/rail services to connect to larger air hubs.

Environmental and Energy Management Programs

–\$1.0 current money
plus 5% of new money

Many participants favor reducing vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) because doing so would also reduce demand for environmentally unfriendly infrastructure and reduce congestion. Others expressed skepticism regarding any initiative's potential to reduce VMT or car ownership. Some participants said they have no choice but to drive long distances because employment



“I think they are equal [improve quality, expand service, strengthen relationship to land use]. One promotes the other. In order to induce more participation in public transit you have to do all three.”

*–Philadelphia participant
(Area 8)*

"I'd like to have voted for reducing VMT. But I'm not sure how you do that with some employers. I drive over 90 miles per day round trip. It would be nice to work from home if there is a way."

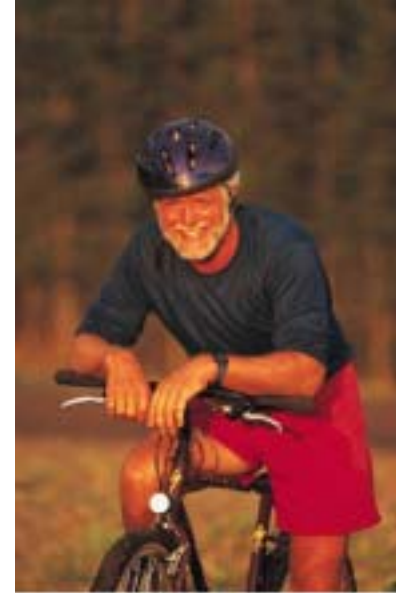
—Southwestern Pennsylvania participant (Area 2)

opportunities and other destinations are so dispersed in rural settings. Some participants who voted for "cleaner vehicles" simply did not have any strong opinion, and the option seemed least intrusive.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

–\$0.2 current money
plus 7% of new money

The bicycle/pedestrian mode seemed to be a favorite across regions, for a variety of reasons. Those who voted for more bike/ped funding highlighted that the category required little investment for improvements, while promoting recreational activities, tourism, and healthier living. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are also important beyond recreation to enhance mobility and expand transportation options. Nevertheless, participants overall preferred to slightly decrease bike/ped funding in the context of current budgetary constraints. They recognized that bike/ped can be effectively mainstreamed with other programs and projects.



What-If Analysis: What other circumstances could affect the Mobility Plan?

Transportation planning must consider not only today's conditions, but also the challenges that will face us years and even decades into the future. Although many challenges follow somewhat predictable trends—such as increased congestion in urban areas—other aspects of life are not so predictable. Fuel costs, for example, cannot be easily forecasted and are outside of the influence of transportation agencies, but sudden changes in fuel costs can impact transportation in dramatic ways.

During RO1, the study team discussed such issues with participants and captured input for a subsequent "What-If Analysis." Participants identified potential circumstances or events that could significantly influence transportation in Pennsylvania.

Some of the topics discussed include:

Changes in the Cost or Types of Fuel

Fuel costs have already skyrocketed—what happens if they continue to rise dramatically? With much of PennDOT's funding derived from the fuel tax, what happens if motorists greatly reduce vehicle-miles traveled? Hybrid cars are becoming increasingly popular—what will a growth in alternative fuels mean?

Changes in Population

Issues such as Pennsylvania's aging population are somewhat predictable, but has Pennsylvania thoroughly examined the potential consequences of an aging population on transportation? Population shifts within the state to different regions or sprawl from metropolitan areas into the suburbs changes the mix of transportation needs. Immigration-related changes in Pennsylvania's population composition could also shift transportation demand.

Changes in the Economy

What happens if Pennsylvania's industry mix shifts significantly, changing freight and commuter needs? If industries leave the state, taking jobs with them and reducing the tax base, what will happen to transportation budgets? What about interest rates—sharp changes affect development and land use. What would happen without tax and toll increases? How will the federal deficit affect Pennsylvania's economy and transportation funding? How will Pennsylvania pay for the explosion of international freight traffic that uses its infrastructure, often just to pass through?



Changes in Transportation Services

What if air travel becomes very affordable and efficient? How would cuts in Greyhound or Amtrak service affect rural and intercity/interstate transportation?

Changes in the Environment

What happens if global warming accelerates, and environmental regulations are substantially stiffened for vehicle exhaust and industrial emissions? What are the economic and related transportation repercussions? What if natural and geological events such as landslides or sinkholes increase, further straining transportation resources/solutions?

Changes in Technology

What if telecommuting becomes substantially more common? What if alternative materials are developed for bridges or other transportation infrastructure, reducing the cost and/or extending the life span of such facilities?

Changes in Funding Strategies

What if the gas tax is raised substantially? What if more routes are tolled? What if the tax structure encourages people to move to metropolitan areas? What if State Police costs were removed from the PennDOT budget? What if highways had corporate sponsors? What if the state—rather than municipalities—paid the costs for emergency services for pass-through traffic?



Changes in Safety and Security

What if the U.S. or Pennsylvania suffers another terrorist attack? What if tourism diminishes?

Changes in Land Use Regulations

What happens if Pennsylvania decides to give greater authority for land use decisions to counties or regional governments? What if the same authorities/governing bodies are responsible for land use decisions, transportation decisions, and economic development decisions? Will this allow for broader coordination and consistency in the transportation, economic development, and land use planning realm?

What other issues must be addressed?

RO1 participants identified the following issues as being important to transportation and the future of Pennsylvania, but not being adequately addressed by the Mobility Plan process to date:

- Funding sources
- All-terrain vehicles
- Waterways
- Linking the Mobility Plan with other modal and operations plans
- Other enhancement projects besides bicycle/pedestrian
- Economic development

Implications: What does all this mean?

Stakeholders want the Mobility Plan to work, and recognize the many challenges to implementing the plan's vision and goals. The following are major implications drawn from participants' feedback about key issues and transportation spending priorities.

1. Present transportation funding is insufficient.

RO1 participants experienced firsthand the challenge and frustration of funding choices and trade-offs and the limits of current resource levels. Pennsylvania's development and mobility challenges and opportunities are extensive, requiring various strategic investments in new capacity, operations, and technology to ensure the long-term performance of the system. Future increases in resources must be linked to a compelling, long-term strategic direction through the Mobility Plan.

2. Decision-making should be more performance-based, less politicized, and better coordinated.

Politics will, and should, always be a part of the decision-making process. Pennsylvania's future investment strategy, however, will require a greater balance of performance and politics. Strategies for measuring and monitoring project and system performance to support investment decisions will address this challenge and help achieve the Mobility Plan vision.

3. Pennsylvania's first investment priority should be maintaining the current transportation system.

PennDOT should pursue an investment policy of "build it to last," followed by "maintenance first." Commitment to keeping the current system in a state of good repair should come first—even if doing so must come at some expense of nearly any other type of investment.

4. Land use and transportation must be linked in real ways.

Stakeholders view the land use/transportation disconnect as cutting across numerous issues, including basic mobility for the elderly, public transit performance, highway congestion, potential for demand management, and sprawl. Coordinating land use policies at the regional, county, and local levels with future transportation and economic development efforts is imperative.

5. The Mobility Plan should include the best elements of the System Preservation and Intermodal scenarios.

Such a new direction recognizes present realities yet leaves flexibility for future innovation. Strategic capacity expansion still will be needed, especially to link modes or for high priority economic development initiatives.

Stakeholders want the Mobility Plan to work.





6. Public transportation is ripe for bold solutions and breakthroughs.

Stakeholders across the state seem willing to invest in transit. PennDOT with its transit agency, public, and private partners should facilitate a permanent fix for adequate transit funding and take a leadership role in initiating changes, including a consistent message, prioritized investments, improved performance, and accountability. The downward cycles of funding, service quality, and ridership decline must be reversed.

7. Better driver safety education, regulations, and enforcement are needed, both for freight and passenger traffic.

The state has designed infrastructure well enough to minimize safety risks; better driving habits are now needed. Proactive strategies should focus on improving driver behavior.

8. Reevaluate the state approach to supporting aviation.

The fate of commercial airports is largely beyond state government control. PennDOT still must find ways to target airport investments to those facilities—commercial and general aviation—that can be reasonably expected to be part of a core transportation system for the foreseeable future. Intercity transportation should be promoted for passenger markets not served by regional airports.



9. Better linkages between freight modes are needed to promote the use of rail, reduce highway congestion, save time, and reduce transport costs.

Pennsylvania's three water ports must be central to any initiative for improving freight connectivity and efficiency. Pennsylvania also should focus on bona fide opportunities to promote air cargo growth through improved airport access and aviation-related funding programs.

10. Innovative solutions are needed for expanding transportation capacity, to achieve a better cost-benefit and long-term economic return. Increasingly, the use of new technology, operations strategies, and demand management to retrofit existing infrastructure will be more cost effective than building new facilities on new rights-of-way.

11. Statewide goals and directions must be widely supported for the Mobility Plan to be successfully implemented.

To achieve buy-in, the Mobility Plan must demonstrate the added value that a consistent message and clear priorities provide to the decisions made at all levels, and how these translate into widespread, long-term economic development and quality of life benefits statewide.

Priorities from Regional Outreach I

12. Regarding the environment, PennDOT and its partners are encouraged to prioritize based on overall quality of life, not just impact mitigation. Environmental impacts of transportation projects must be weighed beyond the traditional air, noise, water, and wetlands impact assessments. For example, over the long term, reducing the number of vehicles on the road is as important as mitigating project impacts.

13. Investment in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure can be a cost-effective strategy to promote recreational tourism in rural areas, provide a wider array of travel options, better link health and transportation across the state, improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians, and improve mobility for non-drivers (including the elderly, those with certain disabilities, and young people). Bike-ped can be “mainstreamed” through better planning, design, and operation of highway and other facilities.

14. Encourage organizational change and remove institutional barriers.

Barriers to creative, flexible, collaborative problem-solving across organizations (state, regional/local, and private sector) must be minimized. The Mobility Plan should set an implementation direction that addresses organizational and institutional issues.

15. Develop a generation of 21st century transportation leaders.

The next generation of transportation leaders will need new skills, expansive vision, team building capacity, and the ability to translate vision into action and results. The new leaders will require a broader range of analytical and managerial skills. State government staffing levels will likely never expand—transportation leaders therefore will have to lead and motivate virtual organizations that include DOT staff, regional planners, modal operators, local officials, and the private sector.

16. Phased Mobility Plan implementation will be a key to success.

RO1 participants recognize that a long-range transportation plan addresses both short-term and long-term issues through phased strategies that achieve steady progress toward a state’s vision and goals.



We have to think outside the box every time we build a mile of new highway.



Moving Forward: Where do we go from here?



The Mobility Plan Development Team will meet on May 11, 2005, in Harrisburg—a pivotal meeting transitioning from data collection to plan development. Moving forward entails several major areas of attention:

1. Defining strategies and actions that translate the Mobility Plan's broad and compelling vision into a clear implementation road map.
2. Defining statewide investments and finance strategies.
3. Evaluating the benefits of alternative directions using quantitative and other analytical tools.
4. Developing and fine-tuning an early Mobility Plan draft for extensive review by a wide range of transportation stakeholders and the general public.
5. Achieving broad-based involvement and ownership of the Mobility Plan.
6. Mainstreaming the Mobility Plan into existing planning, programming, and other processes for robust implementation.
7. Establishing effective monitoring and measurement systems for the Mobility Plan's implementation.



