



STATE OF DELAWARE  
**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
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SHANTÉ A. HASTINGS  
 SECRETARY

**Delaware Task Force on  
 Sustainable Transportation Funding  
 Meeting #2 Minutes**

Monday, December 1, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.  
 250 Bear Christiana Rd, Bear, DE – Thousand Acre Marsh Conference Room and Zoom

MEMBERS	PRESENT	OTHER ATTENDEES
Shanté Hastings, Chair	Yes	Meaghan Barna, DelDOT*
Chris Baker	Yes*	Anne Brown, DelDOT
Kendall Barbour	Yes*	Mark Buckalew, DelDOT
Paul Bauer	Yes	Cora Castle*
Ken Branner	Yes	Lanie Clymer, DelDOT
Robin Christiansen	Yes*	Darnell Gittens*
Rep. Rich Collins	Yes	Stephanie Johnson, DelDOT*
Chris Duke	Yes	Joey Jung*
John Gooden	Yes	Maureen Kelley, DelDOT
Sean Matthews	Yes	Mark Luszcz, DelDOT
Brian Maxwell	Yes*	Alan Marteney, Kleinfelder*
Alex Meitzler	Yes*	Rob McCleary, GPI*
Rep. Ed Osienski	Yes	C.R. McLeod, DelDOT
Sen. Brian Pettyjohn	No	Spencer Price*
Nicole Pilchard	Yes*	Jordan Seemans, Harvey Hanna & Assoc*
Michael Smith	Yes*	John Sisson, DTC
Sen. David Sokola	Yes	Pam Steinebach, DelDOT
Chris Ware	Yes*	Geoff Stewart, PFM*
Ted Williams	No	Andrea Wales*
		Brittany (no last name)*

\* Attended Virtually

## **I. Introduction**

Sec. Hastings opened the meeting with a welcome. All task force members introduced themselves and confirmed quorum.

## **II. DelDOT 101**

Sec. Hastings continued the Department overview from Task Force Meeting #1.

- Safety/Safe System Approach (slides 3-4) – An update was provided on fatal crashes for 2025 as compared to 2024 and 2023. Fatalities are down roughly 13% from this time last year and down roughly 17% from 2023. However, the slide is a bit out of date since there were two fatalities over the weekend, totaling 107 fatal crashes. The Department will continue to work on all safety initiatives to drive the fatal crash number to zero. The Safe System Approach was discussed last time but wanted to note that many other states have adopted this national transportation safety initiative initiated by the Federal Highway Administration.
- Priorities (slide 5) – Noted the four main priorities for DelDOT: Safety, State of Good Repair, Multimodal, and Resiliency.
- Assets (slides 6) – DelDOT’s assets were reviewed, noting a one-billion-dollar budget, with a significant portion used to maintain all assets.
- Key Performance Measures (slide 7) – These measures are just a few of the indicators we use, including road and bridge condition ratings, financial stability, transit delivery, DMV customer service, and the Community Transportation Fund.
- Customers Served (slide 8) – Overview of DMV and toll transactions, fixed route and paratransit ridership, as well as SEPTA users.

**III. Overview of Agenda** (slide 9) – As a group there will be further discussion on the 2011 Task Force report, including the 95 recommendations, noting what has been implemented and what is remaining. John Sisson, CEO of DTC, will provide an overview of revenue and costs for DART. There will also be discussion on DelDOT’s revenue, operating cost, history, and include high-level capital cost items. Following that will be determining action items, along with public comment. The next meeting will be on 1/5/26 at 11:00 am at the Dover Administration Building.

**IV. Approval of Meeting #1 Minutes** – Sec. Hastings asked if everyone reviewed the minutes and solicited any corrections or questions; none were voiced. Sec. Hastings then asked for a motion to approve, provided by Brian Maxwell, and seconded by Robin Christiansen. All members in attendance were in favor. Minutes were approved.

**V. 2011 TTF Task Force Report Discussion** – Reports were handed out to in-person members and will send on-line members via email. Opened the floor to any questions or comments members had regarding the report.

Questions/Comments:

**Alex Meitzler:** Noted that many things like technology have changed post-COVID. He also commented on RT 301 opening. He will compile his comments and email them to Sec. Hastings.

**Sec. Hastings:** Responded that she and John Sisson will go over how transit has changed since COVID, and that DelDOT can provide some additional information on RT 301. RT 301 revenue and expenditures are tracked separately to ensure it is paying for itself and not negatively impacting the TTF.

**Sean Matthews:** Asked if different revenue options will be covered later, as well as borrowing, various federal requirements, and the fare box policy for DTC.

**Dep. Sec. Lanie Clymer:** Briefly reviewed list of recommendations, located in Appendix G of the report. She explained that DelDOT identified which ones have been implemented or revised, noting that some recommendations have multiple items. Approximately 40 have been completed, and on the last column there is an updated status for each one.

**Sean Matthews:** Inquired about #65, Installation fee for residential pipe installment in driveways.

**Sec. Hastings:** Explained that if there is a lot that fronts a state-maintained road and the owner wants to install a driveway, the owner must pay for the drainage pipe, but DelDOT in-house forces install the pipe at our cost. This is done to ensure that the drainage system is not negatively impacted. Also discussed the process from how things on the 2011 list were implemented, which was done by identifying things that were actionable and justified. Sec. Hastings mentioned that in the last five or so years there wasn't as much of a push as opposed to when the report was originally finalized. That is why we wanted to revisit the list. It is extremely important for this task force to identify recommendations that can be implemented.

**Rep. Collins:** Noted that he thought the purpose of this committee might be to not just look at DelDOT funding, but the bigger picture for Delaware residents. Everyone in Delaware benefits from using the roadways, and even though he hardly pays a toll, there are a lot of people that do, especially on the weekend. He feels that working people are discouraged, and that residents making about \$65k per year have less spendable money than many lower-income Delawareans, due to not having access to state benefits once you hit a certain income level. He hopes that this task force can look at what can be done for DelDOT revenue as well as all Delawareans.

**Sec. Hastings:** Agreed that the task force should be looking at all facets of DelDOT's business and funding and hoped that the task force will come up with a comprehensive set of recommendations and will have discussions on all of them. She noted that there is a cost to use the transportation system, and the balance between use and costs will be a good discussion. To assist in that, we will be looking at what the revenues, operating, and capital costs look like now and 20 years into the future.

**Sen. Sokola:** Questioned if lightering oil tankers like they may do in Louisiana might be another option.

**Rep. Osienski:** Commented that he investigated it during the Markell Administration and received a lot of push back from the Governor's office. He does have a lot of information he collected on the subject. He is going to see what he can find.

**Paul Bauer:** Asked what other states are doing to fund transportation.

**Sec. Hastings:** Responded that there are a few slides that will go over that, but it is a wide range of solutions like a portion of sales taxes funding transportation, raising certain revenues, and the like. Either AASHTO or NCHRP did the research project and we will send the link out to the group.

**Dep. Sec. Clymer:** Noted that we have also asked PFM to review as well, and either in January or February they could present their findings. Some DOTs receive contributions from the general fund, some have transportation funds similar to ours, some believe in borrowing, some do not issue debt at all. We will have the data to present in Jan or Feb.

**Sean Matthews:** Asked if the cost containment survey has been redone, listed on Appendix I.

**Alex Meitzler:** Commented that other states are having the same issues and challenges as Delaware, both in our neighboring states and nationally.

**Kendall Barbour:** Shared that New Jersey a few years ago came up with a corporate transit fee of 2.5%.

**John Gooden:** Inquired as to the scope of funding coming in from the new EV registration fees.

**Sec. Hastings:** Noted that we did projections out for the next several years and can provide that to everyone.

## **VI. DTC Revenue and Cost Review**

CEO of DTC John Sisson presented.

- Review of DART's Mission and Vision (slide 13) – Similar to that of DelDOT, and focused on connecting people to what matters, every ride, every customer, every day. DART is one of the few statewide transit agencies, joining NJ and RI.
- Service Overview (slide 14) – Reviewed the statewide services, including 54 fixed routes, microtransit services in Sussex and New Castle, beach bus, paratransit service, and SEPTA. DTC employs approximately 1100 people (operators, maintenance, and administrative staff).
- Paratransit Service Area (slide 15) – As mandated by the federal government, transit agencies are required to provide complimentary paratransit service within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of a fixed bus route (ADA service area). Delaware was the 1<sup>st</sup> in the nation to create paratransit approximately 51 years ago and decided to provide this service door-to-door, regardless of the proximity of a fixed bus route. This statewide service is well-used but is a large stress on the system. As for fees, we charge \$4 inside the ADA service area ( $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from fixed route) and \$6 outside of that area. We are capped at charging no more than double the fixed bus rate within the ADA service area.
- Fleet & Facilities (slide 16) – DTC owns 535 revenue vehicles, 4 SEPTA rail cars (we lease them to SEPTA), and 109 support vehicles. In addition, DTC facilities include 2 admin buildings, 6 ops/maintenance buildings, 2 garages, 8 passenger facilities, and various park and rides.
- Revenue Mile History (slide 17) – Review of the 10-year look-back at revenue income. Fixed route has slightly grown, and paratransit dipped during COVID but has rebounded.

- Operating Expenses (slide 18) – Have continued to grow due to inflation, fuel, and other factors. Projecting nearly \$160M for FY26.
- Ridership & Passenger Revenue (slides 19-20) – Passenger revenue approximately \$18M before COVID, \$8M in during the height of COVID, and for FY26 projected at \$16M.
- Recovery Ratio by Modes (slide 21): Fixed, Paratransit, and Rail. Captured about 20% of our costs at the fare box revenue for fixed route in FY16 and has slowly gone down. Paratransit has hovered in the 6-7% range throughout the years. SEPTA used to be great at just under 50% but has struggled to come back from COVID. Some of that is land use and policy change. Used to capture about 40% of our fixed route for our choice rider. These riders chose public transit as their preferred mode of travel. During and after COVID, more parking was being built in places like the City of Wilmington. In addition, land use changes stunted transit ridership since more residential units were being built outside of urban areas. There are several companies that now offer free parking in Wilmington as a perk to their employees. Also, the option of an alternative work schedule has changed the uses of transit. We used to have routes just for DuPont employees working in Wilmington.
- Cost Per Trip (slide 22) – Paratransit had a spike during COVID. DART didn't have to lay anyone off since federal funding was provided during that time to support our employees.
- Paratransit (slide 23-25) – Examples of the challenges of paratransit trips in the three counties. For instance, over 100 customers per day go to the same location (Chimes Newark) and they all leave at the same time each day. The stressor is large on trying to deliver this service, which essentially is on the spectrum of a social service.
- Cost Analysis (slide 26) – Fixed route has the largest ridership (about 80%) with about 50% of revenue and 45% of the cost. Paratransit on the other hand has 10% of ridership and about 45% of our cost. Labor and benefits comprise of most of DTC's costs, approximately 60%.
- Capital Expenditures (slide 27) – Federal funding is based on the amount of passenger miles delivered each year, which is submitted to FTA. Some expenditures go to facilities, but the majority purchases buses. A traditional 40-foot, fixed route bus, since 2019, have gone up 40%, from about \$500k to now \$700k, and these costs continue to increase. With DART Reimagined, we are trying to right-size the fleet to deliver the optimal service needed for our customers. DTC will need to make large replacement bus purchases in the coming years since many of the current buses are 12-13 years old. Will also need to plan to address inefficiencies with the Wilmington maintenance facility that opened in 1976. The current facility is too small, and parking under the I-95 ramps is not ideal.
- Personnel Statistics (slide 28) – Labor force is challenging with trying to recruit skilled mechanics, as well as the ever-constant turnover in drivers.
- DART Reimagined Overview (slide 29) – Commissioned a study and published in 2024. We wanted to dive deep into how COVID affected transit, and pivot to a new perspective on how riders in the future want to use transit. For example, 7 routes service nearly 50% of our ridership. We now can look at the other routes and see if modifications to our service, like microtransit, can better serve our customers. Over the next 2-3 years, we are focused on moving from servicing about 1/3 of Delawareans

today to about ½ of residents being able to be serviced by DART (within a ¼ mi). This effort will help bridge and connect more communities throughout Delaware.

### Questions & Comments:

**Rep. Collins:** Understanding employee challenges, is there an option for using private medical transport? Would there be a cost savings to that? You don't need to buy vehicles and are only paying them for the time they are working.

**John Sisson:** There are some opportunities. DHSS has a Medicaid-eligible transport, and we are trying to modify regulations to get them more involved in doing those types of trips. Managing cost is always a struggle. Even at \$6 a trip, it's difficult for some customers. There is also a balance with the union obligations. In Rehoboth we have a private contractor that does 6-8 runs for us.

**Rep. Osienki:** Regarding ridership, assume you have done some fixed route reductions in the stops/routes in the 10-year period? How many? DART Connect is popular in Newark and is being used.

**John Sisson:** Up until the last 1-2 years, we haven't done a lot of reductions. Recently we have been looking at the fringes and modifying/reducing routes and stops. We are also looking at hours of service. DART Connect should be more cost-effective way to still provide a high level of service at a cost savings, which may mean an extra bus transfer or the like.

**Sec. Hastings:** Asked John to highlight the Middletown route as an example.

**John Sisson:** When US301 was built, we thought a park and ride with an express bus into Wilmington was a great option for commuters, but there has been extremely low ridership due to the pandemic. Travel habits have really changed, and we are seeing the same thing on SEPTA. The Claymont train station had 500+ riders per day before COVID, and it is much lower now. The commuter base in Delaware has never recovered from COVID with the options of work from home, flex schedules, etc.

**Chris Duke:** Has Uber and Lyft taken away from the recovery ratio?

**John Sisson:** I am not sure how many riders can afford a \$10-12 Uber ride each way. Don't see any issues at the beach. The beach bus, Rt 201 (Lewes Transit Center to Rehoboth boardwalk) is doing great and has seen the largest average ridership per week. Don't think that Uber and Lyft play a huge part, but those services do fill in the gaps.

**Sec. Hastings:** Highlighted her experience with Try Transit Day, took the bus down to the outlets and it was great, easy and straightforward. We are going to promote it during the national days next year.

**John Sisson:** Done a lot with technology, screens on the buses and shelters, 35% of riders are paying with an app on the fixed routes.

**Kendall Barbour:** Does on-time service play a part?

**John Sisson:** Plays a huge part and wants to match what we publish on arrival times. We are hovering in NCC with 70% on-time (challenges with construction, etc.). Adding more bus lanes (US13 NB open, US13 SB next year) is another way to keep up our performance goals.

**Rep. Collins:** Uber is in 70 countries, and they have partnered with the military for drivers. Would they be interested in taking over some services?

**John Sisson:** Our microtransit is essentially equivalent to Uber and Lyft.

**Sen. Sokola:** How are other transit agencies funded?

**John Sisson:** Will gather information on other transit agencies.

**Paul Bauer:** Commented on affordable housing and transportation issues with that, the need to get workers into the hotels and restaurants in safely. Any plans for Sussex County on the East/West routes?

**John Sisson:** Very challenging. We run Rt. 206 from Georgetown to Lewes on SR 9. Problem is, we can't deviate that far to be productive. Trying to streamline. Bethany and Fenwick corridors do not seem to pull a ton of people. Microtransit should help with that.

**Brian Maxwell:** How many other states provide the door-to-door paratransit service outside of the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mi federal mandate?

**John Sisson:** Not aware of any state or transit entity that provides service outside of the mandate.

**Sec. Hastings:** At a recent conference, FTA Administrator mentioned a new focus to get people where they need to go regardless of boundaries.

**Ken Branner:** Senior centers have their own vans, maybe can partner with municipalities for more options.

**John Sisson:** Have a federal 5310 program where we provide buses to senior centers for their transport needs. Easter Seals, during and after COVID, stopped providing the transport service to pick up/drop off their customers. We ended up taking back the vans. Newark was the last municipality that was running their own bus service, and that has since ended with having microtransit serving those riders. Lewes tried a bus line as well. Jolly Trolley is running for Sussex to get to the airport. American Airlines is running buses from Wilmington Airport to Philadelphia International.

**Sec. Hastings:** A variety of partnerships should be looked at.

**Chris Duke:** Conflict with more transit, less money in gas tax.

**Sec. Hastings:** Balancing is key, for some people transit is their only option for transportation. With our graying population, need opportunities for them to travel around that doesn't include driving.

**Rep. Collins:** Not really a DeIDOT issue, a social health issue. Switching some costs to the general fund, where corporations, income taxes, etc. are funding these services and not just using toll and transportation fees. May need to spend less on non-vital areas.

**Sen. Sokola:** Trailing registrations are being done in other states (e.g. Maine) because the fees are so low compared to Delaware.

**Sean Matthews:** Have done some research into this and the lost revenue costs are about \$1M. He will share what information he has.

**Rep. Collins:** Should look at reforming the trailing regulations. Massive benefit to registering in places like Maine, with very low registration fees and self-inspections.

**Sec. Hastings:** Will have Amy Anthony investigate this as well.

**John Gooden:** Any registration with electric bikes? Any options to register them?

**George Lees:** The way the statute is written, if below a certain horsepower it's not classified as a motor vehicle.

**Alex Meitzler:** Can override the system and can get up to 40-50mph. Many safety concerns.

## **VII. Review Action Items**

Sec. Hastings noted that we are keeping a running list of ideas that could make it to recommendations, as well as keeping a list of information requests. The website is up and running and we have created a file share site to keep all the data centrally located. If you want any additional information on a particular item, please reach out.

## VIII. Revenue Data Overview

Dep. Sec. Lanie Clymer (with Sec. Hastings) presented:

- Revenue History/Forecast FY20-32 (slide 31) – Review of the three main revenue categories (motor fuel tax, tolling, and DMV fees) for the TTF. FY20-25 are actual, and FY 26-32 are forecasted approved by DEFAC. Sec. Hastings mentioned that the jump from FY 25-27 was from our revenue package.
- State & Local Funding Update (slide 32) – Received from the AASHTO Committee on Funding and Finance, created this presentation from Feb 2025 to outline what other states and local governments are doing to address funding concerns.
- Takeaways from the study (slides 33-48):
  - 34 states adjusted their motor fuel tax since 2013. Delaware has remained unchanged since 1995.
  - Motor tax rates by state; Delaware is the 41<sup>st</sup> lowest motor fuel tax state (23 cents). California is the highest at 71 cents and Alaska is the lowest at 9 cents. Surrounding states were asked about at the last meeting. Pennsylvania is at 59 cents, Maryland at 46 cents, and New Jersey is 42 cents.
  - Several states do have a variable rate set regarding their motor fuel tax. Some states do a consumer price indexing, some are indexed to meet their transportation needs, population, general sales tax, or highway/construction costs.
  - 24 states do have a variable rate set.
  - EV registration fees – Delaware is the 40<sup>th</sup> state to have an EV fee. Range of fees, sliding scales, plug-in fees, base amount of fees, etc.
  - 4 states have a road usage charge program based on mileage. Example of Virginia being that they are unique where residents pay a flat fee or opt-in to the mileage-based fee. The mileage-based programs do come at a cost because a consultant company is needed to run the program. That is why Delaware went with a flat fee to start out. Utah did a presentation at the AASHTO National Conference two weeks ago, and they shared that their mileage-based program has been up and running for a few years and they are not yet profitable. The costs have exceeded the revenues to date.
  - 8 states have an EV charging station tax or fee. Sen. Pettyjohn had a question about this at the last meeting.
  - Recurring revenues: Uber/Lyft fees, retail delivery fees, tolling, local/regional taxes, vehicle sales taxes, sin taxes directed towards transportation.
  - 2025 trend predictions: Cleaning up tax/fee language, diversifying revenue streams, long-term recurring revenue, EV taxes/fees.
  - As of February 2025, 55 bills were introduced in 24 states regarding funding.
  - Trends from the last 5 years regarding transportation funding bills nationally.

Questions/Comments:

**Paul Bauer:** EV charging fees, are there projections on revenue? Taxing residents rather than taxing drivers going through Delaware.

**Sec. Hastings:** Have not done that analysis yet but would need to look at other states.

**Ken Branner:** Regarding Amazon on Boxwood Rd (4000 employees), had charging stations as part of the site plan and those stations have been deleted for the two Middletown sites. The utilization and profitability were not conducive to building them in Middletown.

**IX. Public Comment**

No public comment was given.

**X. Adjournment**

Sec. Hastings commented that if it would be helpful, we can try to get the slides out before the meeting to come with questions and follow up items. Next time we will review the operating and capital costs. Sec. Hastings asked for a motion to adjourn, provided by Paul Bauer, and seconded by Rep. Osienski. All members in attendance were in favor.

*The next meeting will be held at the DelDOT Dover Administration Building located at 800 Bay Road, Dover, DE 19901 on January 5th from 11:00 am -12:30 p.m.*