

PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

WILMAPCO Conference Room, August 26, 2019

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Mark Blake, GHADA
Katherine Caudle, Pike Creek Civic League
Bill Dunn, Civic League for New Castle County
Pat Folk, Cecil County
Tom Fruehstorfer, City of Newark (Chair)
Givvel Marrero, Delaware Hispanic Commission
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council
Vic Singer, Civic League for New Castle County
Dwight Walters, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce
Norman Wehner, Cecil Board of Realtors

Absent:

Kevin Caneco, SNCC
Carlos de los Ramos, AARP
Mario Gangemi, Cecil County Chamber of Commerce
Ken Grant, AAA
Dick Janney, Southern New Castle County
Bill Lower, Committee of 100
Tom Posatko, Delmarva Rail Passenger Association
Gail Seitz, City of New Castle
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance (Vice Chair)
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance
Eugene Truono, Centreville Civic Association

Staff Members:

Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner
Randi Novakoff, Outreach Manager
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Guests: None.

Minutes prepared by Janet Butler from recording.

Tom Fruehstorfer, PAC Chair, called the meeting to order.

6:00 PM

1. Approval of the June 17, 2019 Meeting Minutes

6:02 PM

ACTION: On motion by Normal Wehner seconded by Glenn Pusey the PAC approved the June 17, 2019 meeting minutes.

Motion passed

(8/26/19-01)

2. Public Comment:**6:05 PM**

None.

Executive Director's Report:**6:10 PM**

Ms. Zegeye said the WILMAPCO Council meeting was held on July 11, 2019. The Council amended the FY 2019-2022 TIP to increase funding for the SR 299: SR1-Catherine Street project and the SR2, Elkton Road: Maryland Line-Casho Mill Road project. The Council approved the proposed Project Prioritization for the FY 2021-2026 DelDOT Capital Transportation Plan (CTP) Submissions. The Council endorsed the East 7th Street Peninsula Study; the 12th Street Connector Transportation Improvement Study; and the Newark-Area Transit Study. Staff presentations included Social Determinants of Health Data Report and the Transportation Justice (TJ) Analysis Update.

Ms. Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- On July 9 staff participated in the Senate Resolution 10 Safety Audit meeting, regarding truck traffic on Routes 41, 48, and 7.
- Staff presented the Transportation Justice (TJ) Plan to Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC), which is out for public comment until September 9. Public outreach has included three published articles and radio interviews.
- On July 27 staff participated in New Castle Unity Day.
- Staff participated in a panel discussion with FHWA and FTA regarding the Transportation Performance Management in Washington, DC.
- Staff exhibited at the 55 Plus Healthy Lifestyle Expo at the Elkton High School.
- Staff conducted pedestrian safety education at Claymont Safe Kids event on August 10.
- Staff will participate in Wilmington Wellness Day on September 14 (flyers were distributed in English and Spanish).
- Staff will exhibit on September 15 at Newark Community Day.
- The joint WILMAPCO/DelDOT CTP Public Workshop will be held on September 16 at Newark Library.
- Staff is helping RideShare DE to plan Car Free Day on September 20 (flyers were distributed).
- Staff will provide an update to the community on the Marshallton Circulation Study.
- Staff will participate in the Rose Hill Community Center Safety Day.
- On October 11 staff will attend the Cecil County CTP Tour at the Cecil County Administration Building.
- WILMAPCO received grants to implement Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program and conduct safety education events in the fall.
- WILMAPCO received grants from FHWA to produce a series of videos to highlight WILMAPCO's projects and plans.
- Staff has been participating in the City of Newark Transportation Improvement District (TID) Committee meetings.
- Whitman, Requardt, and Associates (WRA) were selected as consultants for the Governor Printz Boulevard Corridor Study.
- Century Engineering was selected as consultants for the Newport Transportation Study.
- The Delaware American Planning Association (APA) Annual Conference will be held on November 7 at Embassy Suites in Newark.

ACTION ITEMS:

4. Release of Public Participation Plan (PPP) for Public Comment 6:20 PM

Ms. Novakoff distributed a copy of the Draft 2019 WILMAPCO Public Participation Plan (PPP) (**Attachment A**). She said the PPP guides how WILMAPCO reaches out to the community. The document has not changed greatly since the last version; however, it was streamlined and made more user-friendly.

Page 1 includes what is a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and who is WILMAPCO. On Page 2 the descriptions have not changed much since the last version, but this section explains the importance of public input. The purpose of the plan is found on Page 3, and Page 4 indicates the Public Participation Plan development process. Comments and survey data were used to change the document. The document also reflects the Federal FAST Act requirements.

Page 6 describes the major WILMAPCO planning documents, such as the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The public process for each document is also described. Page 7 shows the number of days required for the public review and comment periods. Page 8 includes that the Advisory Committees have been helping more than other committees with the review process for the documents.

Page 9-14 includes the Public Participation Plan (PPP) Goals, Objectives, and Actions. Page 12 shows that social media is now part of the PPP. Giveaway items were taken out of the PPP because of Federal guidelines. Page 14 states that WILMAPCO uses social media and does not always hand out flyers.

Pages 15, 16, and 17 include public outreach recommendations from the Transportation Justice (TJ) report that will be integrated into the Goals and Objectives section. Staff will provide more details regarding the evaluation of the plan on Page 17. In addition, the Appendix and Glossary will be on Page 18; and Page 20 is a new section that includes the social media policy. The web survey results will also be added. Ms. Novakoff distributed the results of the 2019 WILMAPCO Public Participation Web Survey (**Attachment B**) to PAC members.

Ms. Zegeye said that the Public Participation Plan (PPP) would be reviewed by the WILMAPCO Council on September 12 and released for public comment. Therefore, staff is asking PAC to release the document for public comment tonight. The PPP will come to the PAC for review again and for approval at their October 2019 meeting.

ACTION: On motion by Mark Blake seconded by Katherine Caudle the PAC approved the release of the Public Participation Plan (PPP) for Public Comment.

Motion passed

(8/26/19-02)

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

5. New Castle County Bicycle Plan

6:40 PM

Ms. Dunigan said work on the New Castle County Bicycle Plan began last summer. Public outreach has been a critical part of the plan because the community needs regarding bicycle facilities and routes are what drives it. The team adopted the same vision as the Delaware Statewide Plan, which states, “Everyone in Delaware has front-door access to a bicycle network that is safe, comfortable, and conveniently connected to places people want to go. A seamlessly integrated transportation and land use decision-making process, with many partners working together, encourages a culture where people choose bicycling in their daily lives for transportation, recreation, and improved health.”

The Advisory Committee helped develop the following objectives: 1) Identify a bicycle transportation network; 2) Provide equitable bicycle access including to transit; 3) Encourage bicycle parking and other end-of-trip facilities; 4) Improve safety through design, maintenance, and enforcement; 5) Incorporate bicycle elements into land use planning; and 6) Develop an implementation and evaluation plan.

Various workshops and public outreach presentations were completed. In-depth, quality feedback was received from the Metroquest Survey that was conducted from January 30 through April 30. There were 286 respondents and 9,017 data points.

Regarding preferred facility types, participant rated a variety of options. Shared Streets were one of the less popular options, except for Bicycle Boulevards, which were very popular, and are defined as slow streets that give priority to walking, biking, and local traffic using traffic calming, biking/walking directions (wayfinding), and sometimes bicycle-only connectors and green infrastructure.

Programs and policies to support bicycling included Bicycle Friendly Land Use (highest popularity); followed by Sweeping Maintenance; Enforcement; Youth Programs; and Community Rides. Ms. Dunigan discussed a chart that reinforced that Buffered Bike Lanes, Bike Friendly Land Use, Pathway Connectors, and Green Bike Lanes were rated as highest strategies; and Contraflow Lanes and Shared Streets were rated as lowest strategies.

The Metroquest Mapping section revealed 381 challenges, 231 ideas, 53 other comments, and 131 popular destinations. Project priorities from the survey included: Addressing a Safety Issue (19%); Serves Community Destinations (15%) Connects to Shopping and Jobs (14%); Safe Routes to School (SRTS) (13%); Comfort for All Ages and Abilities (12%); Fills a Gap (11%); Promotes Greater Equity (8%); and Close to Bus/Rail (8%). The suggested scoring categories included Safety; Proximity to Major Attractions; Population Affected; and Fills a Gap. Ms. Dunigan discussed the draft Base Scoring Map, which indicated highest scores in blue and lowest scores in red and yellow.

The survey questions included, what type of transportation do you use most, and 87% responded automobile; 10% bicycling; 2% walking; and 1% public transit. In addition, when asked, how often do you bicycle, 44% responded a couple of times per week; 14% responded a couple of times a month; 15% said less than once per month; 14% said once a week; 11% said every day; and 10% said once a week. And, when asked how do you feel about bicycling in your community, 36% were somewhat cautious; 31% were

somewhat comfortable; 17% were not comfortable at all; 15% were very comfortable; and 1% were not interested.

Next steps for the Bicycle Plan are to apply priority scoring, conduct an additional GIS analysis for top projects, and release a draft report and recommendations for comment.

Mr. Singer suggested that the slide on the percentage of responses for different kinds of usage include how many people use the bicycle for shopping or going to and from work; and it should be monitored for how often there is fall-off in that usage. Ms. Dunigan said we did not ask that question because we wanted to keep our survey short. However, DelDOT has an ongoing travel survey that asks destination questions. That survey has a larger sample size.

6. Newark Transit Coordination Study

7:00 PM

Ms. Dunigan said the goals of Newark Transit Coordination Study include: 1) Improve mobility options to meet demands and needs of Newark residents, employees, students, and visitors. 2) Provide quality passenger amenities to enhance bus service and attract discretionary riders. 3) Make transit services easier to understand and use. 4) Promote transit system efficiency for all providers.

Technical analysis and public outreach provided recommendations to better meet the needs of Newark residents, employees, students, and visitors; provide amenities to enhance bus service and attract riders, make transit services easier to understand and use, and promote transit system efficiency for all providers.

The Newark transit operators included in the Newark Transit Coordination Study are 1) Cecil Transit, which provides inter-state service to Elkton; 2) DART, which provides inter-city service to Wilmington, Crisiana, and Glasgow; 3) UNICITY, which provides Newark area circulator routes; and 4) University of Delaware Transportation, which provides circulator service around the campus and surrounding areas with off-campus housing. Additional transit that serves the area includes Amtrak and SEPTA (Wilmington/Newark Line Regional Rail).

Currently, DART service is lacking in areas in the north and west of the city, which are places where University of Delaware service is strong. Cooperation between all of the transit service providers in the city would be a cost-effective solution to improving transit access in Newark.

Work has included data collection and analysis, public outreach, initial recommendations, and a final report. Public outreach methods have included a survey of bus riders, drivers, residents, and employers. The online survey on Newark and WILMAPCO websites had 204 responses, a public open house was held in November 2018, and a Newark City/County presentation was completed in April 2019.

The rider survey was provided to 142 bus riders. Results included that 67% ride to work; 36% use the bus for shopping and errands; and 27% use it for medical appointments. The most requested changes reported from the surveys included more frequent bus service, longer service hours on weekdays, more weekend service, and improved on-time performance. In addition, 88% of riders said they were completely or fairly satisfied with the bus service.

The most popular service recommendations were as follows: 1) A Smartphone App with schedule times; 2) Add extra weekday train trips from Newark and 3) Better bus connections to SEPTA regional rail. On the other hand, the least popular service recommendations were: 1) Run Sunday service; 2) Increase safety while on buses, and 3) Add enhancements to transit shelters/stations.

Overall recommendations include: 1) Work towards a comprehensive network that can be used by all; 2) Minimize overlaps and poor-performing service, and 3) Consider restructuring routes using best practices.

The goals of a comprehensive agency coordination effort include increased ridership, expanded service reach, seamless and cost-effective travel between service providers, consistent and easily accessible information, and cost-effectiveness. Opportunities for coordination include marketing and technology, branding, fare policies and media, transit infrastructure, schedules, and route alignments/service area.

Initial recommendations for DART are to explore implementation of a clock-faced system to facilitate timely transfers; consider rerouting Route 46 in Newark and combine it with Route 34; examine improving service on Route 53; and discontinue Route 59, dependent on the outcome of public hearings. In addition, recommendations included to add trips on Route 33 to support this loss of service.

Initial recommendations for Cecil Transit are to adjust the large loop to eliminate entering Newark Train Station; continue efforts to better coordinate service along the 896 corridor with DART; and explore the fare reciprocity agreement with the launch of Cecil Transit's mobile payment application until fall 2019.

Initial recommendations for UNICITY are to get N1 realigned as a bi-directional service on New London Road, Cleveland Avenue, Main Street, Delaware Avenue, and Marrows Road.

Initial recommendations for the University of Delaware are to reduce the peak time overcrowding, make changes to benefit students, create a new STAR Campus bus route, and initiate on-demand types of services for late and early hours. Changes would require University of Delaware policy changes, which would require resources for added vehicles, drivers, maintenance, and facilities.

Next steps for the study are to continue the working group; Finalize daily fare card coordination/fare reciprocity discussions between Cecil Transit and DART; consider short-term route changes; incorporate connections between various systems into the DART App; continue discussions on coordinating bus stops, add better amenities where possible, and undertake future comprehensive bus network redesign with a future horizon year, e.g., 2030, and seek additional funding/grants.

Mr. Singer asked if WILMAPCO knows what the current situation of bus racks is on DART buses. Ms. Dunigan responded that all of the DART, UNICITY, and University of Delaware buses have bus racks. WILMAPCO does not have data regarding the use of bike racks.

Mr. Singer said he would like to see month-long experiments done by DART to determine if and where it is appropriate to introduce free transit. Mr. Singer asked if

WILMAPCO has any inclination to do any price elasticity studies regarding free transit for the general public.

Ms. Zegeye said that WILMAPCO had done some work on this including research by DVRPC that was presented at WILMAPCO's "Our Town" event; however, DTC is not in favor of free transit because they don't want to lose revenue.

Norman Wehner asked if the Delaware buses are making a profit now. Ms. Dunigan said she did not believe they make a profit. Mr. Fruehstorfer added that the State of Delaware pays for the Unicity buses. The city does the maintenance and decides where the buses go; however, the University of Delaware provides the drivers. Ms. Dunigan said she believes the students pay a transportation fee as part of their registration that covers riding the buses.

7. Other Business

7:20 PM

Mr. Singer said that on Union Street in Wilmington diagonal parking works beautifully. He asked if DelDOT has plans to standardize it for places where traffic justifies it. Ms. Zegeye said WILMAPCO is looking into how to make the diagonal parking more permanent on Union Street. She said we have not been hearing positive feedback at meetings. Mr. Singer asked to be informed of upcoming meetings.

8. Adjournment

7:30 PM

Attachments: (2)