

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
JULY 9, 2020**

The WILMAPCO Council meeting was held virtually via WebEx and conference call.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Sisson, Chair, opened the meeting at 10:06 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Members present:

Marc Coté, representing DelDOT Secretary of Transportation, Jennifer L. Cohan
Connie Holland, Delaware Governor's Appointee
Herb Inden, representing City of Wilmington Mayor, Michael S. Purzycki
Heather Murphy, Maryland Governor's Appointee
Eric Sennstrom, representing Cecil County Executive, Alan McCarthy
John Sisson, representing Delaware Transit Corporation
Michael Spencer, representing New Castle County Municipalities
Andrea Trabelsi, representing New Castle County Executive, Matthew Meyer

Members absent:

Dave Warnick representing Cecil County Municipalities

Guests, Observers:

Marlee Baucom
Ian Beam, MDOT
Tyson Byrne, MDOT
Marvina Cephas, DNREC
Dave Edgell, OSPC
Tom Fruehstorfer, WILMAPCO PAC Chairperson
Derrick Sexton, MDOT
Lanie Thornton, DelDOT

Staff members:

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner
Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner
Sharen T. Elcock, Executive Assistant
Dave Gula, Principal Planner
Randi Novakoff, Outreach Manager
Bill Swiatek, Principal Planner
Jacob Thompson, Transportation Planner
Dawn Voss, Administrative Assistant
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Minutes prepared by Dawn Voss

3. MINUTES:

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Sennstrom seconded by Mr. Inden the Council approved the May 7, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes.

Mr. Spencer abstained from voting because he was absent from the May 7, 2020 meeting.

Motion passed.

(07-09-20-01)

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

None.

5. COUNCIL MEMBERS' AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Chairperson's Report:

Mr. John Sisson reported that DTC has restored transit almost fully since the pandemic. There had been a 60% reduction in ridership. Paratransit had a 70% reduction, and rail experienced an even greater reduction. The new Wilmington Transit Center is very successful. A lot of positive feedback has been received. There will be a fall service change announced, then a service change in March to accommodate the I-95 project. Public meetings will be held in the fall related to the service change.

Council Member's Reports:

Ms. Andrea Trabelsi said they kicked off New Castle County Comprehensive Plan Update and she hopes to see a lot of information about the update in social media. Ms. Trabelsi is hoping to see a lot of engagement in the process.

Mr. Marc Coté said the Council of Transportation met on June 22nd to go over updates on construction projects and how transportation is dealing with COVID-19 and its financial impacts. The next meeting will be August 24th.

Mr. Herb Inden said the City implemented the Comprehensive Plan with zoning updates including mixed used areas consistent with the plan. The new bridge over the Christina River is open. This bridge connects east and west near the Frawley Stadium. Mr. Sisson commented that the bridge makes it easier to get in and out of the city.

6. Executive Director's Report – Ms. Zegeye shared the following information:

- WILMAPCO continues to have meetings virtually.
- The Route 40 Monitoring Committee met on May 13th.
- The Route 9 Master Plan Monitoring Committee met on May 19th.
- The Governor Printz Management/Advisory Committee met virtually on June 1st to review draft scenarios.
- Staff presented the New Castle County Bicycle Plan to the Delaware Bicycle Council on June 3rd.
- Staff continue to support the planning of the APA Delaware Annual Meeting in October featuring lessons learned from COVID-19.
- Staff is supporting Healthy Community Delaware projects in Southbridge and the Route 9 corridor to support the planning and implementation of the Route 9 Master Plan Monitoring Committee and the South Wilmington Planning Network.
- Staff attended the virtual National Association of Regional Councils' Conference on June 8th and 9th.
- For the Newport Transportation Study, a package of multi-modal recommendations was shared with the Project Management Committee on June 25th. We hope to get comments back by July 15th and hold an Advisory Committee meeting in late July.
- Staff participated in the Maryland MPO roundtable on June 26th.
- Churchman's Crossing Management Committee met June 24th.

- In June, staff participated in Freight Friday sessions sponsored by the IPA, and the Delmarva Freight Working Group which includes DelDOT, the Dover/Kent MPO, the Salisbury-Wicomico MPO and WILMAPCO.
- Staff is working on scheduling interviews and deciding on locations to film outreach videos.
- Air Quality Partnerships is planning to move Air Quality Awareness week to the week of September 12th to correspond with Bike to Work Week.
- Public comments were received for the US 202/Concord Pike Master Plan and staff is working to complete the draft document.
- For the Southern New Castle County Master Plan, a draft land use report was received, and staff submitted comments. A final workshop is being planned for late August to present the results of the traffic analysis and project recommendations. A draft Transportation Element of the report is under development.
- The FY 2021 UPWP was approved by both FHWA and FTA. There are five new projects including the Union Street Reconfiguration and Streetscape Improvement Study, the City of New Castle Transportation Plan update, Statewide Truck Parking Study, Port of Wilmington Circulation Study, and First/Last Mile Freight Network Analysis. RFPs for these projects are out. Interviews will take place late July and early August.
- The FY 2019 Single Audit Report was submitted to and completed by the Federal Audit Clearinghouse. The report was sent to Council members and member agencies' finance departments.

7. Public Advisory Committee (PAC) Report:

Tom Fruehstorfer, PAC Chair, said the PAC met on June 15th with no action items. There were three presentations; Traffic Impacts of COVID-19 presented by Mr. Dan Blevins, Transit Impacts of COVID-19 presented by Mr. Bill Swiatek, and Nonmotorized Transportation Impacts of COVID-19 presented by Ms. Heather Dunigan. There was very little discussion, though one member suggested releasing a press release to share the data from the presentations.

8. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Report:

Ms. Heather Dunigan said the TAC met on May 21st with no action items. Members discussed the Prioritization Process and Transit Impacts of COVID-19 and staff presented updates on the Churchman's Crossing project. The TAC met on June 18th and voted for Mr. Michael Fortner to be chair and Mr. Steve O'Connor to be vice chair. The TAC voted on action items including three TIP amendments: funding to replace the Belvidere Road Bridge over CSX Railroad, funding for Cecil County's Small Urban Transit System, and change in funding for HSIP project at SR 273 and I-95 interchange. The TAC recommended approval of the Project Prioritization Process and the release of the Public Participation Plan for public comment. There was also a presentation of the Nonmotorized Transportation Impacts of COVID-19.

ACTION ITEMS:

9. To Amend the FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Heather Dunigan said Cecil County has requested that the TIP be amended to include funding for the Replacement of Belvidere Road Bridge CE0055 over CSX Railroad. This project will provide space to eventually widen the bridge to four lanes. The Air Quality Subcommittee concluded the bridge alone did not trigger a conformity analysis. This \$8.6 million dollar project will be funded by FHWA and Cecil County.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Sennstrom seconded by Mr. Spencer the Council approved the Resolution to Amend the FY 2020-2023 TIP.

Motion passed. (07-09-20-02)

10. To Amend the FY 2020—2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Heather Dunigan said MDOT and the Maryland Transit Administration has requested that the TIP be amended to include revised funding for the Small Urban Transit System for capital and operating assistance. This would amount to a 33% increase in their budget. The TAC recommended this amendment. The AQS concluded there are no related conformity issues.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Sennstrom seconded by Mr. Coté the Council approved the Resolution to Amend the FY 2020-2023 TIP.

Motion passed. (07-09-20-03)

11. To Amend the FY 2020—2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Heather Dunigan said DeIDOT has requested that the TIP be amended to include revised funding for HSIP, SR 273 and I-95 Intersection Improvements. This represents a substantial funding increase.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Inden seconded by Mr. Coté the Council approved the Resolution to Amend the FY 2020-2023 TIP.

Motion passed. (07-09-20-04)

12. To Amend the WILMAPCO Prioritization Process

Ms. Heather Dunigan explained that the Project Prioritization Process is periodically updated. The last update was in May 2016 and the current update is recommended to align the process with the RTP and recent documents including the Environmental Justice and Transportation Justice Report. Language was added to make a clear connection between transportation investment areas and project eligibility. The proposed changes, found in the three goals listed in the Process, are:

Improve Quality of Life

- In the Air Quality criteria “Non-recreational Nonmotorized System” was changed to “Nonmotorized Transportation System”.
- The Environmental Justice criteria was changes to be more in line with the Environmental and Transportation Justice Report that was just released. Project

scoring was adjusted for environmental justice and mobility-challenged populations as well as areas where the demographic concentration of the population are underserved.

- Criteria was added for areas with Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) concerns using methodology taken from the Route 9 Study.

Efficiently Transport People

- The criteria titled, “Transportation Justice” was changed to “Mobility Challenged” to match wording in the Transportation Justice Report.

Support Sustainable Economic Development

- Minor changes were made to the scoring system. Delaware State Strategies had been used in Maryland and Cecil County priority funding areas and Cecil County certified areas. It was recommended that Center and Core Transportation Investment Areas (TIA) from the long-range plan be used to tie this back to a WILMAPCO document.

Ms. Andrea Trabelsi asked about the differences between Core and Center TIAs, how they were developed, and if the State Strategy Level 1 was the equivalent of the Core or Center. Ms. Dunigan replied that for New Castle County, staff used the Delaware State Strategies, comprehensive plans, and demographics. The State Strategies Map boundaries more granular, while the TIA boundaries are more simplified. Both Core and Center reflect areas where land use has greater density of population and jobs that multimodal transportation investment will support. Centers, unlike Core areas, have current or planned regional rail service.

Ms. Trabelsi said she was glad to see Social Determinates of Health added and generally the County wants to see further integration of investment in smart growth. Ms. Trabelsi recommends considering stronger language, not just “consistent with” but “in support of” comprehensive plans.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Coté seconded by Ms. Trabelsi the Council approved the Resolution to Amend the WILMAPCO Prioritization Process.

Motion passed.

(07-09-20-05)

13. To Release the Draft WILMAPCO Public Participation Plan (PPP) for Public Comment

Ms. Randi Novakoff said that staff proposes the release of the draft Public Participation Plan (PPP) for public period. Focusing on the changes since the last time this document was reviewed, the beginning describes who WILMAPCO is, why public outreach is important, the purpose of the Public Participation Plan, and the results of an online survey that was completed. There is some information on federal requirements, and some added details about the public process for the RTP, including a new graphic on how an idea becomes a project.

The Transportation Equity section was updated based on recommendations from the Transportation Justice Report. The three main goals for the transportation equity section are to work toward more inclusive involvement, work to diversify outreach techniques, and build relationships within the communities we are trying to reach.

Under the goals and objectives of the PPP, the first three goals have not changed but were edited to reduce redundancy. The fourth goal was added from recommendations in the Transportation Justice Report. This goal is to work to achieve cultural proficiency and empower local communities to ensure social equity and representative involvement in the planning process. To achieve this goal, proactive strategies in cultural diversity must be employed including staff training. We are working on funding this training, and member agencies will be invited to attend. Additional strategies include practices that integrate cultural proficiency including the use of demographic quotas for public opinion surveys and allowing self-identification of gender on surveys. We are working to increase diversity on the Public Advisory Committee, striving to build relationships to partner with civic groups, and making sure we acknowledge past harms that have been done that cultivated distrust of planners. Equitable participation will be encouraged by hosting meetings in trusted locations like schools and libraries instead of government buildings. We will work with local communities to choose venues and times for meetings and work with communities to promote events but not rely solely on them to do so.

A social media policy has been added that allows us to block content and delete posts that are violent, political, or profane. A list of outreach strategies has been added to the plan as well as a list some techniques. The full results of the online survey will be included in the appendix. We propose the document be released from July 9th to September 9th.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Coté seconded by Ms. Holland the Council approved Release of the Draft WILMAPCO 2020 Public Participation Plan (PPP) for Public Comment.

Motion passed.

(07-09-20-06)

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

14. 2020 Delaware Strategies for State Policies and Spending Update

Ms. Connie Holland, Office of State Planning Coordination, presented the update on the 2020 Delaware Strategies for State Policies and Spending. State Strategies for Spending are required under Delaware Code Title 29, Chapter 91, Section 9101. These Strategies are the primary guide for the State's land use goals and must be updated every five years and certified by the governor.

The purpose of the Strategies is to coordinate land use decision-making with the provision of infrastructure and services. Land use decisions are local while provision of infrastructure and services is a State responsibility, so coordination is needed to avoid waste and inefficiency.

The State pays for State roads, the State police force, paramedics, and public-school transportation, construction, and operations. Many State agencies use these Spending Strategies for purposes such as capital budget requests, siting schools, local public facilities and infrastructure. Local governments rely on these Strategies for developing comprehensive plans. Comprehensive plans are weighed against these Strategies and the governor certifies plans that are consistent with State Strategies.

The State Strategies are updated to comply with Delaware Code; to reflect current local comprehensive plans; to use current data and technical tools; to add new data,

programs, and policies; and to reevaluate state policies. The process to update the Strategies begins with data collection and consultation with state agencies, MPOs, counties, and local governments. Then, a GIS analysis is run using the data to create appropriate map overlays including comprehensive plan maps. The process includes workshops for public review and comment. Then it is submitted to the cabinet committee for approval and finally, to the governor for approval. State agency staff provided content, comments, and edits to the document. Data used to generate the GIS map overlays include school sites, transit routes, social service centers, police/fire/EMS facilities, corridor capacity preservation areas, agricultural preservation districts, green infrastructure, parklands, and certified comprehensive plans. On the GIS map certified municipal comprehensive plans are considered first, then county plans and growth areas are added. Then, using data sets from State agencies including such things as water, sewer, transit, and proximity to emergency services, data sets considered favoring development are grouped together. Data sets that favor preservation, such as wetlands, floodplains, and agricultural preservation are grouped together. Then lands that are “out of play” due to purchase, easement, or legal impediment are considered. When all the data layers are combined, the GIS program creates the Strategies Map, which identifies Investment Levels 1 through 4 and “Out of Play”. Levels 1, 2, and 3 are considered Urban/Urbanizing Growth areas. Level 4 areas are preservation and rural areas. Investment Level 1 areas are mature and established with infrastructure and services in place. Level 2 is similar to Level 1, but with newer infrastructure and planned infrastructure investments. Level 3 areas are less established, longer range growth areas. Level 4 are rural areas that include natural resources and agricultural economic activities. Out of play lands are not available for private development, but some State investment is still expected for the purposes for which they were preserved.

Moving forward, policy priorities are based on the review of the performance of these Strategies over the past twenty years. The UD IPA report contributed to this section. Then recommendations to implementation of the Strategies are considered. Policy Priorities looking at the next twenty years include: water and wastewater infrastructure improvements; funding for agriculture, open space and rural Growth Management; affordable housing; health economic equity; and collaborative planning.

These maps are not parcel based. Local government must be consulted for information about use and development of specific parcels. Even in growth-oriented Investment Levels, not all parcels can or should be developed. Also, in preservation-oriented areas circumstances may exist where investment may be warranted to address circumstances involving public health, safety, or welfare.

The public online comment period was March 30 through April 30, 2020. An online public meeting was held April 7, 2020. The document was redrafted based on comments in May of 2020. It was approved by CCSPI and is currently going to the governor for approval. After approval, it will be posted to the website. Visit the State Strategies hub at <https://strategies.stateplanning.delaware.gov> .

Mr. Herb Inden said that he is looking forward to seeing that new section and complimented the work done on the update. Ms. Holland thanked Mr. Inden for all the data and help with the update. Mr. Coté commented that they use this information. Mr. Dave Edgell said that with the interactive map one can see what layers promote growth. The data layers are something he is really proud of this year.

15. FY 2021 Capital Transportation Program (CTP) Update–

Lanie Thornton, DeIDOT Finance, presented the overall Delaware Department of Transportation Budget for FY 2021 and bond bill. COVID-19 has had an impact on DeIDOT's finances. The department incurred additional operating expenses due to the virus. These expenses were charged to the Storm/Emergency Fund and the department is applying to FEMA. Also, the department expects revenue losses for FY20 to be \$63.1 million and anticipated losses for FY21 are \$24.7 million. Decreases in traffic leading to decreases in toll revenue, and fuel tax revenue contributed to these losses. The C.A.R.E.S. Act will provide funds to offset operating expenses in the amount of \$61.2 million for transit and a one-time budget credit of \$50.4 million. What to expect for FY22 remains uncertain.

For FY21, the sources of revenue have been adjusted to reflect the impact of COVID. The total from all sources is \$1,051.3 million and includes just under \$200 million in tolls, \$215.4 million in DMV revenues, \$147.7 million in motor fuel taxes, that \$50.4 million from the C.A.R.E.S. Act, and \$285.3 million in Federal Funds to be used to support capital programs.

The department tries to keep debt service to about 20%, but FY21 debt service is estimated to be 29%. The FY21 Operating budget is approved for \$331.2 million. The DTC Subsidy will be offset by the C.A.R.E.S. Act. A little over \$100 million is budgeted for personnel costs, OpEX has \$59.2 million budgeted. Debt Service has \$95.2 million budgeted. State Capital expenditures for FY21 is expected to be \$375.1 million. Road systems account for 65%, Transit accounts for 15%, 11% goes to support systems, and 9% for grants and allocations. Grants and allocations were reduced. The transit system remains consistent. Support systems were reduced \$17 million.

Road systems include funding for paving, bridge preservation, and New Castle County road projects. State capital program funding in the amount of \$112 million was spent in New Castle County capital projects including continued construction of the Route 141, I-95 interchange, the Newark regional transit center, and the Claymont regional transit center.

16. Nonmotorized Impacts of COVID-19

Heather Dunigan said that during lockdown the public was encouraged to go out to walk and bike to stay active. As transportation became limited during lockdown, walking and biking remained an affordable method of transportation and with gyms closed it is a form of physical activity and recreation. During the flu pandemic in 1918, people were encouraged to stay active to boost their immune system. In 2020, we are still encouraged to stay active, but also to wear masks and stay physically distanced.

Driving declined during the pandemic, but it has begun to increase. Walking and biking instead of driving improved air quality. Transit service use declined, which made walking and biking necessary for essential jobs and services. In local food deserts 80% of households are in walking distance of a bus with direct access to a supermarket. Many people are paying premium to use curbside pick-up and delivery services, but for many walking and biking was essential to access jobs, goods, and services.

The National Association of City Transit Officials (NACTO) identified strategies for active transportation with physical distancing. Recommendations include maintaining transportation systems for essential workers and goods, the creation of pop up bike

lanes, keeping bike shops open, converting signals to non-touch signals, and creating clear messaging and policies. Crowding on sidewalk has increased as shoppers wait outside stores and restaurants to pick up orders or wait to get inside due to limited capacity. Messaging to communities on how to behave is important.

Bike shops were declared essential businesses in Delaware and Maryland and bike sales are up nationally and locally. Shops have been selling out of affordable bikes. The Urban Bike Project distributed two hundred and nine bikes in May alone. Newark Bike Project has seen a 70% increase in bikes delivered to the community in the months March through May.

Automated pedestrian push buttons have been installed, but locally there are no signs to indicate they are no-touch, which is important because these buttons are high touch surfaces and people do not want to hand sanitize every time they cross the street. Clear messaging of what is expected is important on trails. Some trails, like the Newark Reservoir Trail were made one-way to minimize contact with people walking toward you, some, like Battery Park in New Castle were restricted to local use only.

Around the country streets have been closed to local traffic or to create pop-up bike lanes to make more space for recreation. Community groups in the City of Wilmington have shown substantial interest in creating similar slow street space but have been unable to move forward. Though it is on hold, if there is desire in the future WILMAPCO is here to help with that in Wilmington. Newark and Wilmington have both closed streets at least some of the time for dining and curbside pick-up.

A national survey found that 21% of people who own bikes have been riding them more during the pandemic. Data from state parks show increased use during the pandemic. Ms. Dunigan has found that our counters are not working well so there are some gaps in the data. Trail use is up, except in two areas in Newark where large gathering races were canceled. Markell Trail experienced substantial increases at the bridge. More than two thousand users were counted on the bridge in one day.

No one can be sure what is next, but physical distancing will probably be with us a while. Motor vehicle volumes are increasing, but there is also continued interest in biking and walking as people have found they enjoy it. Community interest in slow streets continues.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

17. DeIDOT's Administrative Modification Request Letters

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Coté made a motion to adjourn, Ms. Trabelsi seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:24 a.m.

ATTACHMENTS: (0)