

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 10, 2022**

The WILMAPCO Council meeting was held at WILMAPCO, 100 Discovery Boulevard, Suite 800, Newark, DE 19713 and virtually via Zoom.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mr. John Sisson, Chair, opened the meeting at 10:02 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Members present:

John Sisson, representing Delaware Transit Corporation
Michael Kline, representing Cecil County Municipalities
Tyson Byrne representing Heather Murphy, Maryland Governor's Appointee
Timothy Lucas, representing City of Wilmington Mayor, Michael S. Purzycki
Stephen O'Connor, representing Cecil County Executive, Danielle Hornberger
Antoni Sekowski, representing New Castle County Executive, Matthew Meyer
Pamela Steinebach, representing DeIDOT Secretary of Transportation, Nicole Majeski

Members absent:

David Edgell, Delaware Governor's Appointee
Eric Thompson, Mayor of Elsmere, representing New Castle County Municipalities

Guests, Observers:

Jacob Higgins, City of Newark
Mike Kaszyski, PAC Chair
Deanna Murphy, Cecil County Board of Realtors
Rashad Pinckney, MDOT
Derrick Sexton, Maryland SHA

Staff members:

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

Minutes prepared by Dawn Voss.

3. MINUTES:

ACTION: On motion by Mayor Michael Kline seconded by Mr. Tyson Byrne the Council approved the September 8, 2022, Council Meeting Minutes.

Motion passed

(11-10-22-01)

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

None.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

5. Chairperson's Report:

Mr. John Sisson said he presented the possibility of replacing the UNICITY with DART Connect micro-transit to Newark City Council last month. It was a good presentation. The council asked many questions and approved DTC beginning the public engagement process. Hopefully, with the public engagement process, the goal will be to begin replacing UNICITY with DART Connect micro-transit services in July. This is a great opportunity. Unicity has not been performing very well, and DART Connect will provide better mobility and options in the area.

Council Member's Reports:

Ms. Pamela Steinebach said a member of the DeIDOT staff is working with the New Castle County and the City of Newport on a MOU to do the planning feasibility work for a Complete Communities Enterprise District (CCED) within Newport. Ms. Sarah Cokeley, who runs the Transportation Improvement District program at DeIDOT, is working with Newark and that is close to being finalized. The city council has to vote. They are very close on the Newark TID and are working on the Churchmen's TID with WILMAPCO, and the county.

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

- Staff participated in a University of Delaware networking event for students and emerging planners on September 28th.
- Staff attended the Delaware APA Conference on October 5th and 6th.
- Staff attended the RAISE grant announcement for the Route 9 Corridor on October 10th.
- Staff conducted the Walkable Community Workshop for the Town of Charlestown with fifteen attendees, on October 12th.
- Staff participated in the Performance Management Peer Exchange in Baltimore on October 13th.
- The Southbridge Transportation Action Plan held their first public workshop in conjunction with the Southbridge Civic Association on October 16th with forty people in attendance.
- Staff attended a health fair on October 15th in Southbridge and promoted the workshop and survey. The next steering committee meeting is scheduled for November 29th.
- Staff attended the Southbridge Wetlands Park dedication on October 18th.
- Staff attended the Delaware Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan public meeting on October 24th. Additional public meetings are scheduled for Monday, November 14th between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. with both having the same presentation.
- The Ardens Transportation Plan's first public workshop was held October 25th, with fifty attendees. The next steering committee will be held on November 15th.
- Staff had the WILMAPCO certification review on November 9th. Then the public meeting was held without WILMAPCO staff between 6:00 and 7:00 p.m.
- The Governor Printz and North Claymont Monitoring Committee will meet virtually on November 10th.
- The final public workshop for the I-95 Cap Feasibility Study will be on November 17th at 6:00 p.m. at Ursuline Academy. The advisory committee will be held virtually at 4:00 p.m. on November 15th.

- The Churchman’s Crossing Monitoring Committee will meet on November 16th.
- The Route 9 Monitoring Committee will meet on November 17th.
- The 202 Corridor Monitoring Committee will meet on November 30th.
- Staff will be presenting WILMAPCO’s Transportation Justice work at the University of Washington Health and Sustainable Transportation class on November 29th.
- Staff and Safe Kids Delaware is working with Downes Elementary School to plan a safety rodeo in January.
- The Air Quality Partnership is working to convert the in-person Tropo Assembly to a digital version.
- Regarding the financial plan report, we have expended about thirty percent of the budget, and are well underway with the work that was approved in the current UPWP.

7. Public Advisory Committee (PAC) Report:

Mr. Mike Kaszyski said the PAC met on October 17th with no action items. There were three presentations. Mr. John Thomas, with Maryland Department of Transportation, provided a summary of the current State Freight Plan and the State Rail Plan. Mr. Jake Thompson presented the Arden Walkability Community Workshop. He shared details on that workshop and on the plan itself. The PAC discussed funding avenues as well as options for specific pedestrian activities, HAWK signals, flashing beacons, scrambles, and other possible controls to facilitate pedestrians, particularly in the in the area of Veale Road and Harvey Road. Mr. Dave Gula presented an update of the I-95 Cap Study. He shared the latest public outreach updates and comments received on the project. There was discussion on how storm water management might be achieved or examined for a cap of that type.

8. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Report:

Ms. Heather Dunigan said the TAC met September 15th, followed by the picnic. It was lightly attended. There were presentations about the Air Quality Partnership, the RTP Update, and the I-95 Cap Feasibility Study. At the October 20th meeting there were a number of action items. The TAC recommended amending the TIP to include the changes to the SR 9 project from Landers Lane to A Street. They recommended amending the TIP to include expedited work for the SR 1 / US 13 Southbound Merge project, and recommended approval of the technical scoring for the TAP program and Delaware Bicycle Pedestrian Pool program.

ACTION ITEMS:

9. To Amend the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Heather Dunigan said this TIP amendment is for the SR 9/New Castle Avenue between Landers Lane and A Street project, which is already in the TIP. They received a RAISE grant that will allow additional funding for planning the project. This results in additional PE funds. The construction funds were pushed back to accommodate the time for the additional planning. It is expected that construction funds may go up. That will be determined by the PE process.

ACTION: On motion by Ms. Pamela Steinebach seconded by Mr. Stephen O’Connor the Council amended the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Motion passed.

(11-10–22-02)

10. To Amend the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Heather Dunigan said the SR 1 and US 13 Southbound Merge project is part of the greater SR 1 widening program and part of the Tybouts Corner interchange area. This will allow faster improvements in the area. This includes \$900,000 in construction money to make lane changes that will alleviate congestion and safety issues in the short term. This was recommended for approval by the TAC and reviewed by the Air Quality Subcommittee.

ACTION: On motion by Mayor Michael Kline seconded by Mr. Tyson Byrne the Council amended the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Motion passed.

(11-10-22-03)

11. To Approve the Technical Scoring for Project Prioritization for the 2023 New Castle County Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and Delaware Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Candidate Projects.

Ms. Heather Dunigan said this process is done periodically. This year, the timing of the Transportation Alternatives Program and the Bicycle Pedestrian Pool program were merged, because from the public and municipal standpoint, there is not a lot of difference between the programs. The Transportation Alternatives Program can fund bicycle and pedestrian improvements up to a maximum of about one million dollars in funding. It can also fund additional improvements like streetscaping projects. The Bicycle Pedestrian Pool is focused on bicycle and pedestrian improvements that expand access to the low stress walking and biking network. Projects can be up to five million dollars. Neither program is very well funded, so in each program one or two projects per year may be added within New Castle County.

The call for projects for both programs was at the same time, and a number of submissions were received, including several from New Castle County. These included the Newport River Trail, the Tri-Park Trail, and Commons Boulevard. All three of these are walking and biking multi-use pathways. The Newport River Trail would connect the Jack Markell Trail to the Town of Newport. Commons Boulevard would connect the Jack Markell Trail to the Corporate Commons. The Tri-Park Trail would connect three parks. More importantly, it would provide an alternative to a busy area on Route 9 where there have been some serious pedestrian crashes. The City of Wilmington submitted the Midtown Brandywine project and Montessori Safe Routes to School project. These are both streetscaping projects with pedestrian improvements. New Castle County also submitted the North DuPont Road project, which has a Safe Routes to School component and pedestrian safety improvements. The City of Newark submitted the Paper Mill Road Project, which would connect the Pomeroy Trail with the new bridge over White Clay Creek. The Town of Townsend submitted a series of improvements, some of which were minor pedestrian spot improvements. Their largest request is the Wiggins Road project, which would connect downtown to a new subdivision which has no pedestrian or bike connections.

These projects went through the project prioritization process that was approved by Council for the TAP program. This process scores projects based on the anticipated walking and biking benefits. The factors include transportation network improvement, such as filling a gap, addressing an area with a documented safety concern, serving a frequent bus stop, or something documented in the bicycle plan. It also looks at land use including if it is close to a community center, library, school, or park; within a municipality or hometown overlay; and if it is providing access to historic elements, which is specific to the TAP program. Demographics are

considered to determine if the area has a high density of jobs and population. Environmental justice, mobility challenged, and the Black-concentration populations are considered.

The top-scoring project was the Tri-Park improvements. This area is dense, has documented safety concerns, is mobility challenged, and is an environmental justice area. The next highest-scoring project was the First State Montessori School in downtown Wilmington, which benefits much more than the school. The next highest was the Midtown Brandywine Streetscape project which benefits a large population due to its location. Then the Newport River Trail Project tied with the Paper Mill Road project, which is estimated to be twenty-million-dollars. That project was scored, but it is unlikely to see funds from either funding category because of the size of the project. The next highest scoring project was the North Dupont Road Pedestrian Safety and Public Landscape project, followed by the Townsend Sidewalk Walkability project. The lowest scoring project was the Commons Boulevard Pathway. The Nonmotorized Subcommittee discussed that this does not serve any K through 12 schools, but there is a community college that would benefit. The scoring system does not give credit for that, and it is a lower density area, so it did not score as well. People were asked to submit for either the TAP, the Bike Ped Pool, or both. None of the projects were submitted for both categories. Staff think it is beneficial any that are eligible for the Bike Ped Pool be considered for it. In addition to the Newport River Trail and Commons Boulevard Pathway projects, staff recommend the Paper Mill Road to Pomeroy Trail Connector, the Tri-Park project, and the Wiggins Mill project from the Townsend project be submitted for the Bike Ped Pool and TAP programs.

Mr. John Sisson said some of the projects have cost estimates, but others do not. Ms. Dunigan said an estimate of cost used to be required, but they were grossly wrong. For the Delaware TAP program and the Bike Ped Pool, once the project gets approved into the program, the DelDOT consultant does the engineering, the planning, the outreach, and the construction. The responsibility of managing federal funds is not burdened to the municipalities. Hence, we do not require a cost estimate, because the cost estimate is probably not right. For instance, the Townsend project included many projects that they estimated for a little under one million dollars. Wiggins Mill Road alone is probably about one million dollars. Mr. Sisson asked for confirmation that Council is just approving the ranking, so Townsend is really six and Commons Boulevard is really seven. Ms. Dunigan confirmed that.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Stephen O'Connor seconded by Mayor Michael Kline the Council approved the Technical Scoring for Project Prioritization for the 2023 New Castle County Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and Delaware Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Candidate Projects.

Motion passed.

(11-10-22-04)

12. To Approve the Proposed Public Advisory Committee (PAC) Member Reappointments

Ms. Randi Novakoff said the three pack members who are up for reappointment are Mr. Vic Singer, who represents New Castle County Civic League, Mr. Bill. Dunn, who serves as an alternate for New Castle County Civic League, and Mr. Dave Tancredi, who represents the Middletown Limestone Civic Alliance. All three have been on the PAC since November of 2013. They are in good standing and have been attending meetings. The staff recommends that they be approved for another three-year term.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Tyson Byrne seconded by Ms. Pamela Steinebach the Council approved the proposed Public Advisory Committee (PAC) member reappointments.

Motion passed.

(11-10-22-05)

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

13. 2050 Regional Transportation Plan 2023 Update

Ms. Tigist Zegeye said the process of updating the long-range plan began in January with the Regional Progress Report and the Public Opinion Survey. The long-range plan is our principal plan that has goals, objectives, and actions as well as performance management as per federal requirements. It has the constrained and aspiration lists of projects. It has been updated every four years since 1996, and this latest update is due in March of 2023. Since August, about twenty civic and municipality presentations of the long-range plan have been scheduled. Staff plan to go to the member agencies to discuss the draft. The Air Quality Conformity Determination has been completed. The goal is to continue to do outreach through February. The draft RTP and the Air Quality Conformity documents must be released for public comment after the January Council meeting. Our Town, the RTP public workshop, is scheduled for February 8th. The goal is to have the TAC and PAC recommend approval of the document in the February timeframe. It will be brought to the March Council meeting for adoption. Then, it will be submitted to the FHWA and FTA for their review.

Mr. Bill Swiatek said an air quality analysis was completed as a requirement of the long-range plan. An analysis was done in New Castle County last year. An analysis in Cecil County was not done since the last long-range plan. The air quality analyses are done to ensure that the lists of projects in the RTP, particularly the expansion projects, meet the fine particulate matter and ozone standards and do not make air quality worse, causing us to be over budget. Both counties are in nonattainment for ozone. New Castle County is in nonattainment for fine particulate matter. We did easily demonstrate conformity and thank DelDOT, for the Delaware portion, for running the air quality emissions model. The ozone results show two pollutants, VOCs and NOx. In each of the years that were tested, New Castle County was well under the budget of record for both pollutants. The results for PM2.5 are similar. Both of the emissions results are under the budget of record. Similarly, Cecil County is under the budgets of record. For the Cecil County portion, we thank MDOT for running this analysis. The results are documented in two different conformity reports, which are being reviewed by the Air Quality Subcommittee. Those reports will be presented to the TAC in December and the Council in January, where Council will be asked to release them for public comment.

Ms. Heather Dunigan said half of the available funds in the Cecil County portion go to operations, then another thirty percent goes to the preservation of existing infrastructure, which is in line with the goals of WILMAPCO which are to make preservation first and keep what we have in good condition. Eighteen percent of the funds are available for new capital projects statewide. Of that, half of one percent goes to Cecil County. Compared with 2019, there are less funds according to the revenue estimates from MDOT. This may be due to the inflation of the cost of the operation component. There is not much available in short-term funding. The medium-term is slightly higher. Long-term is slightly lower than what was in the 2019 plan. In Cecil County, the I-95 projects and the toll facility projects are outside of this plan. In Delaware, toll revenues can be used anywhere in the transportation system, but in Maryland, toll funds are exclusively for use on toll facilities. The I-95 widening project, which is on the constrained list,

would be exclusively through toll funds. In the New Castle County portion, operations is forty-two percent of the available revenue. State of good repair, which is preservation, is eighteen percent. Debt service is at seven percent, which leaves thirty percent for capital projects. Of that, forty-eight percent of those funds go to New Castle County projects. There is a slight increase in the short-term and long-term funding for New Castle County, while medium-term is the same. The cost of projects must be shown in the year of expenditure. These are unprecedented times in terms of the inflation rate. So, for the short-term component of the plan, which are projects that fall within the current CTPs of both states, a five percent inflation rate for year of expenditure is proposed. Beyond that, we think there will be a return to a three percent inflation rate.

Staff met with DeIDOT, who provided an extensive list of projects. MDOT provided some projects from the Strategic Highway Needs Analysis. Most of those were added to the aspirations list, which are projects beyond what we can afford. On the New Castle County side, there were additional funds to add projects as completed projects came off the list. Projects from the Traffic Operations Management Plan were inexpensive, so staff suggest adding them into the short-term component. Two placeholders were added to the project list for New Castle County. A number of projects identified by DeIDOT came from the Transportation Improvement Districts (TID). Each of the TIDs has a local engagement process. It is most appropriate for DeIDOT and the communities to select the project. There is a line item for each of the timeframes for the TID implementation. A sidewalk retrofit program was added to the Maryland side. WILMAPCO regularly gets sidewalk projects forwarded to us from DeIDOT that we really have no way to fund, so a funding category was added for that. Staff would use a process similar to the TAP prioritization process for that. On the Cecil County side, we did not have enough money to cover the list from four years ago, but much of the new federal funding is available in the form of grants. So rather than shift the projects out, staff went through the project list looking at the things that would be strong applicants for a federal grant and added those to a category of aspirations/grants. Things like the Elkton Train Station would be most likely grant funded. When the draft is ready, staff will meet with the member agencies, and share the full project list, but the project list can be shared with anybody who wants to see it.

14. Arden Walkable Community Workshop

Mr. Jake Thompson said walkable community workshops are an opportunity for citizens to become planners as they are experts in their own community. These workshops consist of three parts. They begin with the presentation going over topics such as sidewalk design, crosswalks, traffic calming, and other tools to improve walkability. That gets ideas going for the walking audit, where the participants survey the area and try to identify issues and opportunities to improve walking. Then, the group returns to the meeting location for a mapping exercise where they share their ideas for improving walkability, and those ideas are documented in the report. The Ardens Walkable Community Workshop took place on Monday, September 8th at the Candlelight Theater in Ardentown. There were about thirty-seven people in attendance in addition to staff. The walking audit focused on the intersection of Harvey and Veale Roads, which has been a problem intersection identified by the community. The mapping exercise was very well attended. Many great ideas were shared.

The group came up with a variety of ideas including traffic calming measures, improvements to the path network, sidewalks and crosswalks, intersection improvements, and a recommended bike route. Calming traffic on Harvey Road was the top concern expressed during the workshop, and that has been a goal of the community for over twenty years. Many participants suggested reducing the speed limit on Harvey Road, which currently ranges from twenty-five to forty-five

miles per hour, to twenty-five miles per hour through the whole stretch. Though that may be a deterrent, it would not necessarily force lower traffic speeds, but more frequent and improved crossings could, especially where paths meet Harvey Road. Many paths meet the road but do not have dedicated crosswalks. There were also suggestions to narrow the perceived width of the road, which could calm traffic, such as by placing planters in sections with wider shoulders and adding pedestrian scale lighting. Many intersection improvements were discussed. Mini roundabouts were suggested for the intersections of Sconset Road and The Mall. This is actually two intersections of the same two streets, and there are currently no traffic control devices there. Harvey Road has many signalized intersections, so participants also recommended mini roundabouts at those, as well as many other ideas, such as adding “no turn on red signs”, “yield to pedestrian signs”, all-way stops that would be triggered by the pedestrian push buttons, crosswalks at all legs (there are many missing crosswalks), as well as red light enforcement cameras, and HAWK signals.

A bicycle route was also recommended through the Ardens. For people arriving in the Ardens by bike, Harvey Road would seem to be the most natural and direct route. However, it is considered high stress for biking according to DelDOT’s Bike Level of Traffic Stress analysis. An alternative route would take cyclists entirely on low stress neighborhood streets. Those include Sconset Road, The Mall, Millers Road, Orleans Road, the Highway, and Sherwood Road. This route only adds 0.2 miles compared to biking the same stretch on Harvey Road. This would require signage and sharrows to direct people along this route, and it would be an interim solution, so ideally improving Harvey Road would make it safe and comfortable for everyone to bike on. However, this route would guide cyclists by many historic buildings, destinations, and natural areas that they would not see on Harvey Road. There was also some discussion of sidewalk improvements. The Ardens mostly lack sidewalks as part of maintaining their rustic and historic nature, and most of the neighborhood streets are comfortable to walk on alongside traffic. However, sidewalks were desired in a couple of locations particularly approaching the intersection of Harvey and Veale Roads to make the intersection safer to access and try to provide a place to wait to cross the street, as well as along Veal Road to Marini Produce. Advisory shoulders are a potential alternative solution to sidewalks, especially on roads that may have insufficient right-of-way to add sidewalks while maintaining traffic in both directions. This is just a change in the lane restriping where there is just one center lane that is shared for vehicles in both directions, and shoulders are intended for walking and biking. Drivers would have to yield to anyone using a shoulder and then enter the shoulder to allow oncoming traffic to pass. This design is common in Europe but would require DelDOT to submit a request to experiment. These could be accompanied by HAWK signals or RRFBs, especially where paths cross these roads. Many path improvements were discussed. Each path in the Ardens has a unique name. Most of these paths lack signage, and some paths are not clearly distinguishable from their surroundings. So, there was a suggestion to install signage for all paths, which would improve wayfinding and give each path its own identity. There is also a suggestion to make sure that all path crossings lead to crosswalks and have pedestrian push buttons. There are concerns about drainage issues on paths, as well as improving the connection from an existing path leading to the Harvey and Veale intersection, which was part of our walking audit. This report will tie into the Ardens Transportation Plan, which is now called Connecting with the Ardens: A Transportation Plan. This report serves as public feedback for that plan and will help inform that planning process. This report is on the website, www.wilmapco.org/walkable.

15. Connecting with the Ardens: A Transportation Plan

Mr. Bill Swiatek said a comprehensive transportation plan was requested by the Ardens’ Transportation Committee. The Ardens are located in the northeastern section of New Castle

County, just above Wilmington. There are three different communities, but there is an unincorporated area in the center with twenty-four residents, which is locally called the doughnut hole. Adentown is split into two areas separated by Arden. The goal of this plan is to address the transportation issues that are common to the Ardens, focusing on traffic calming, access, and safety of transportation, but also bus connectivity, and other broader issues. There is a bus line through here, but only a few people ride it. Interest in better bus connection into the Claymont Train Station and into downtown was expressed at the workshop. The steering committee includes representatives from all three Ardens, New Castle County because of that doughnut hole, DeIDOT, and DART. The process is to gather public input and look at some of the existing conditions to set a vision for the study. Then, concepts and potential alternatives to address the issues that have been uncovered will be developed. Staff will work with that committee and the public to determine the preferred alternative. Those projects will be prioritized, and then an implementation plan will be created, likely in the form of a monitoring committee.

There has been a long history of trying to calm traffic through the Ardens. WILMAPCO worked on a plan in 1999 called the Harvey Road Traffic Calming Consensus Plan. Among the points of consensus that that came out of that plan was no vertical calming features, so no features on the road that were raised. Mr. Sisson asked to clarify that they did not want them. Mr. Swiatek said they did not try them. Ms. Dunigan said the consensus was between the communities and the fire department. Mr. Swiatek said additional points of consensus included using horizontal features only, complying with DeIDOT standards, using low-level landscaping, and ensuring features are traversable for emergency vehicles and buses. Over the years there was little movement to try to calm traffic, except for that initial phase after the study was completed.

Many great ideas came out of the Walkable Community Workshop. One resident came up with the ideas to build a park cap on Harvey Road at Veale Road to let people cross. There is a lot of interest and ideas coming out of that report. An existing conditions report for the Ardens that brings in a lot of data is being created. The Bike Level of Traffic Stress shows that most of the streets are very comfortable to walk and bike on even without sidewalks, but there are roads that go through the Ardens, like Marsh, Veale, and Harvey that are more difficult. An online survey with about twenty questions was well received. Postcards were sent to advertise it, and two hundred and twenty-three responses were received. Survey Monkey generates some spam, but it will be close to two hundred responses in the end. For a population of about one thousand, that is a great response. Most of the responses were from Ardens' residents. When asked how well the transportation system meets your needs, most residents replied it does meet their needs well overall, and about twenty percent said it does not. When asked how concerned you are with speeding and safety, about sixty percent are either very or extremely concerned with speeding and safety on Harvey Road. Veale Road comes in second with about half that were very or extremely concerned. Marsh Road was a little bit less. A speed study of the Ardens showed most of the traffic travels faster than the posted speed limits. Looking at eighty-fifth percentile speeds just east of Veale Road the speeds are fifty in one direction and forty-four in the other, though it is signed for twenty-five miles per hour. The speeds on Veale and Marsh Roads were just a few miles above the posted speed limit in the most cases. Looking at crashes in the area show safety concerns at the intersections, particularly Marsh Road with thirty-nine crashes in the last several years, twenty-four at Veale, and twenty at Orleans. The survey has a question asking for ideas to make improvements. Pedestrian crossings are the most requested improvement. Residents want safer ways to get across and enjoy the path networks on either side of the Ardens. They also want lighting, art, pedestrian scale lighting, and bus shelters. A WikiMapping exercise, which allows people to draw on the maps and see specific points, was well received. There were over one hundred responses to the WikiMap. The map reveals key destinations are in the Ardens and where paths and barriers

are. The map shows Sconset and Orleans as key barriers. Right now, the plan is in the phase of developing alternatives. A public meeting was just held where these results were presented and reconfirmed. The plan should be finished by the end of the year. After alternatives are developed, a second survey will be offered to determine which alternatives residents like the best, and that will help with prioritization.

Mr. Sisson asked if they are still opposed to raised crosswalks. Mr. Swiatek said the residents themselves may not be, but the fire department may push back on that. Ms. Dunigan said to offer some history to this, there was some traffic calming installed that had some texture to it shortly after the consensus plan. The community did not like it, because it was too loud for the adjacent residents. So, it was taken out. That would be her concern with a raised traffic calming element. Mr. Swiatek said the team have engaged the fire department, so they are going to be a key stakeholder as this moves forward. We will make sure they are comfortable with the alternatives. We want something to go in, and it does not have to be one thing or the other as long as it accomplishes the goal to slow traffic. Mr. Sisson said traditionally there has been resistance whether it is the fire departments or DelDOT Maintenance Operations, but the Secretary went to the Netherlands and came back with more ideas. Mr. Sisson has seen it in other places. His daughter goes to school in Rochester. It has the second highest amount of snow in the country, and they have raised crosswalks. So, you can plow it. It is just a matter of getting past these perceived issues. They also have some things like an electronic button for pedestrians that made the pedestrian signal flash, which especially at night, helps with visibility. There is a lot of technology out there that can help. Also, if there are specific areas where they are interested in bus shelters, let DTC know. They can look at it. He thinks space is the biggest challenge up there from an ADA standpoint. Mr. Swiatek said yes, even with traffic calming, traditionally you have a wide road, but in this case, it is narrow.

16. Southbridge Transportation Action Plan

Mr. Bill Swiatek said the Southbridge Transportation Action Plan used to be called the Southbridge Circulation Study Update, but the community wanted to rename it to show that it is building on previous work and also action oriented. The core study area is the Southbridge neighborhood in south Wilmington, but work from around Southbridge is also being incorporated. There is a lot of current development to the west of Southbridge, and there is also the port area. The project management committee includes the City of Wilmington, DART, DelDOT, the South Wilmington Planning Network (SWPN), WILMAPCO, the Southbridge Community Development Corporation (CDC), and the Southbridge Civic Association. The SWPN is being used as the Advisory Committee. The study has a couple of community ambassadors that are working directly with the civic association. This is a disadvantaged area, and representation throughout the planning process is a challenge. During the recent update of the neighborhood plan, it was found that having community ambassadors who receive a stipend to come to meetings is a good practice. There are also two local survey takers to support the study with door-to-door outreach.

The project schedule for the Southbridge Transportation Action Plan will look at issues, opportunities, and constraints; go through a period of community visioning, which is not as extensive because last year's neighborhood plan accomplished a lot of the work with mobility. The third phase, which is assumptions and alternative projects, will begin in November. The study will be completed by the end of the fiscal year with a selection of alternatives. Much of the work is already done, especially with visioning from the Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan last year. Also, there are some items from the previous Southbridge Circulation Study that were not implemented that can be added. There is also work around the port, including the Port of

Wilmington Traffic Circulation Study, the Statewide Truck Parking Study, and the Route 9 Master Plan, which are influencing the work in this plan. There is a lot of development in the area. Many active projects have come out of that previous work, so those efforts need to be incorporated into this plan. These include the Riverfront East Street Grid, which was a recipient of a RAISE grant and is building a street network to the west of Southbridge. An A Street path connection was recently built connecting Southbridge with the Riverfront. A bridge replacement is occurring in Southbridge. Sewer separation is occurring there. There is an ongoing streetscape project. Transit improvement projects are coming out of the Areas of Persistent Poverty grant, and also the Route 9 RAISE grant project.

This project is divided into four focus areas, with the idea to do traffic and road diets on US 13 and Route 9 to slow traffic speeds through Southbridge. Previous efforts have tried to do it with streetscaping. Though they supported beautification and some pedestrian crossings, they have been unsuccessful at reducing speeds. The team is looking at ways to slow, reduce, and reroute trucks. The Port Truck Study was mainly focused on the Route 9 area south of Southbridge. This will focus on Southbridge itself and look at potential ways to keep trucks out of Southbridge and on Christiana Avenue. For pedestrian and bike elements, the Southbridge Neighborhood Plan indicated that more and easier connections were needed across the Christina River and to the south to Eden Park. For transit we are trying to partner with the Areas of Persistent Poverty Grant and looking at ways to better connect to jobs, health, food, and so forth. This process began with an existing conditions report. Looking at car crashes in Southbridge over the last three years, there is a cluster of twenty-nine crashes where Heald Street and New Castle Avenue merge. There are other problematic places like the D Street Sweep to the south with eight crashes at high speed coming off the bridge.

A community survey was done to confirm and refine the focus areas. With the survey, the team plugged into the Shoreline Protection Survey from the Wilmington Climate Action Plan. That survey is looking at ways to reduce flooding. When people did the survey for the transportation plan, they were directed to the Shoreline Protection Survey that is being run by the city. That data will inform the transportation study as well. There were forty-three responses online and in person. About fifty percent were residents and about sixty-two percent were done in person. That underlines the need in Southbridge for the second survey to have a door-to-door sample. Thirty-three percent of respondents travel through Southbridge and seventeen percent work there. The Southbridge results were compared to the county average from the WILMAPCO Public Opinion Survey. When asked if transportation limits you from reaching key destinations like healthy and affordable grocery shopping, social activities, your job, or medical care, Southbridge residents have more difficulty reaching these destinations than the county average. Only twenty percent said they were never limited by transportation. Trouble reaching healthy and affordable grocery shopping was indicated by the most people. Social activities were second. The survey asked specifically about bus service, and if better bus service is needed to or from key locations. Grocery stores scored highest with fifty-seven percent. Fifty-two percent indicated better bus service was needed for shopping. Forty-three percent said for their job or school. In the Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan residents were asked how important walking and biking access is. Most people agree that a focus on active transportation is either very important, or at least a little important. In the survey with this Transportation Action Plan, people were asked how important different transportation solutions are. The most important one is reducing traffic speeds, then reducing truck traffic tied with improving the sidewalks and crosswalks. It is important to note that all of the solutions were important to more than half of the people that took the survey. Things like adding street trees and adding bike lanes, which can be controversial in Southbridge, were important to more than half of the people who took the survey. One of the key concepts from the Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan was a lane

reduction on New Castle Avenue and Heald Street to reduce traffic speeds. When asked about that, more than half of the people were in favor of it. Fourteen percent are not sure, and a third of the people said no.

There was a public workshop where more survey results were gathered. The team spoke to people one on one. It was well attended. The team partnered with the civic association, which boosted attendance. With this study, the team is encouraging people to sign up for text messages. On the Public Opinion Survey, it was found that using text messaging as a form of outreach varies by race. When Whites were asked in the Public Opinion Survey, only forty-four percent said that text messaging was an effective way to reach them. When you ask Blacks and Hispanics, it is around seventy percent. So, in the outreach with this, there is a way for people to text and be added to a text messaging service. They can take surveys from there. Information can be sent. The team is experimenting with that to see if it works in Southbridge, which has an eighty-seven percent Black population. The next steps with this will look at youth engagement. The team is working with the community center to run a parallel process to get kids involved. Alternatives development will be done based on these results. A number of immediate issues on some of the side streets were identified and sent to Public Works. A second public workshop will be held and a second survey will be done door-to-door. The report will be finalized by the end of the fiscal year. The website for the study is www.wilmapco.org/Southbridge.

Mr. Sisson asked if they have any truck parking issues there. Mr. Swiatek said yes, we have heard that. We did some research on city code and found that truck parking was illegal on city streets unless they have a permit. Mr. Sisson said he knows we are seeing it throughout the county and the state that they are parking on the shoulders and other places. Mr. Dan Blevins said there is need to park by statute and run hours of service, or are they looking to stage somewhere based upon the business opening and closing. Those are two reasons why they do it. Mr. Swiatek said hopefully a new truck parking or staging area would help with that.

Mr. Dave Gula said the bridge replacement occurring with DeIDOT includes a road diet, and Route 9 also has a proposed road diet. He thinks many residents will worry about traffic congestion there. A point to make as part of the study might be that those two road diets are already programmed and have been studied. If Southbridge moves forward with road diets, it will fit nicely with what is already planned outside of the area. That may help with congestion concerns. The roads coming in are already on a road diet, so congestion might not be an issue. Mr. Swiatek agreed and said that is shown on the map of ongoing projects. That will be incorporated into the discussion. If drivers are coming into the community from a single lane, and then it flares out to two, you may have a speed issue. Mr. Sisson said he remembers that was a concern with the Maryland Avenue road diet, but it has not caused any issues. Mr. Gula said there is also the safety issue that you have to cross two lanes instead of four. Mr. Sisson said eventually it will stop being a pass-through as people find the route they should be taking.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

17. DeIDOT's Administrative Modification Request Letters

Mr. Sisson asked if there was an announcement about upcoming meetings. Ms. Dawn Voss said Council meetings will begin at 2:00 p.m. starting in January. The 2023 Council meeting schedule will be sent next week.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Council adjourned at 11:18 a.m.

ATTACHMENTS: (0)