

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 14, 2021**

The WILMAPCO Council meeting was held virtually via Zoom.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mr. John Sisson, Chair, opened the meeting at 10:01 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Members present:

Marc Coté, representing DeIDOT Secretary of Transportation, Nicole Majeski
Rich Hall, representing New Castle County Executive, Matthew Meyer
Connie Holland, Delaware Governor's Appointee
Herb Inden, representing City of Wilmington Mayor, Michael S. Purzycki
Heather Murphy, Maryland Governor's Appointee
Stephen O'Connor, representing Cecil County Executive, Danielle Hornberger
John Sisson, representing Delaware Transit Corporation
Michael Spencer, representing New Castle County Municipalities

Members absent:

Dave Warnick representing Cecil County Municipalities

Guests, Observers:

Marlee Baucom
Ian Beam, MDOT
Tyson Byrne, MDOT
Robert Hicks

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, Senior Planner
Dawn Voss, Administrative Assistant
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Minutes prepared by Dawn Voss.

3. MINUTES:

Mr. Marc Coté identified a typographical error in the roll. The name "Cohan" was inadvertently left on the list and should be deleted. Mr. Rich Hall asked if Ms. Nicole Majeski was confirmed. Mr. Coté said she was confirmed yesterday and the minutes for today can reflect that she is Secretary Nicole Majeski.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Michael Spencer seconded by Mr. Rich Hall the Council approved the November 12, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes with the correction.

Motion passed.

(01-14-21-01)

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

None.

5. COUNCIL MEMBERS' AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Chairperson's Report:

Mr. John Sisson said on Monday January 25th, SEPTA service will return in limited capacity to Fairplay Newark Station in preparation for the I-95 project that will begin mid-February. This will provide people better options to mitigate the traffic congestion that is anticipated with the construction project. Changes to bus routes will be made with a statewide service change on February 14th. Some significant changes in New Castle County went through the public hearing process and will be posted to the website soon. Route 40 will no longer go to the mall but will come up US 40 and use the new bus lane on US 13. Other changes will mitigate the congestion on I-95. The DTC got early notification yesterday that they received a \$450,000 grant from the FTA to install barriers for drivers on the buses and study their effectiveness in mitigating the spread of coronavirus or any future viruses. They have already begun installing barriers but are happy to study their effectiveness as a protective measure for their drivers.

Council Member's Reports:

Mr. Michael Spencer said they received an email from the new site manager for BASF and he is scheduling a meeting with Brian and Peter from BASF to bring them up to speed as the site manager was a little disjointed on his comments and questions. BASF is a major player in the town and the relationship has always been good, so Mr. Spencer told him he would bring them a little more up to speed on what is going on with the transportation study and all things Newport.

Mr. Herb Inden said he is happy to report that Mayor Mike Purzycki, after triple bypass, is doing quite well and is back on job.

Mr. Marc Côté said Secretary Majeski was confirmed. The I-95 project is starting in thirty days. In the latest round of stimulus funding, DelDOT is receiving approximately \$42 million with \$36 million for transit to help defray their revenue shortfalls.

Mr. Rich Hall said New Castle County is roughly six months into updating their Comprehensive Plan. They have been having a number of workshops, surveys, and using other methods to get input and engagement. The new year coincides with another phase. Most of the fall was spent listening, in engagement, and getting input in a multitude of ways. They are now trying to assemble and organize what they have been hearing to build a vision document, which is a short document that captures some key themes from what they have heard. Then, their next workshops are being called deep dive workshops that will zero in on the topics. On February 3rd via Zoom at 5 or 6 p.m. the broad topic is going to be conservation and the environment. They will be looking at some things they heard in that category and discussing what the goals and actions under that category might be. There will be three more workshops like that through the winter and spring. Then there will be another culminating event late May or June to pull it all together. They will keep the Council posted as it goes along. Mr. Sisson mentioned that Council members are always happy to share information on our social media to help get participation.

Mr. Steve O'Connor from Cecil County Department of Land Use and Development Services said Mr. Eric Sennstrom retired after 30 years of service. On December 7th County Executive Danielle Hornberger became County Executive.

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

- Staff attended the annual conference for AMPO, which is the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations.
- Staff participated in the New Castle County Comprehensive Plan 2050 workshop and will participate in the future workshop.
- Staff presented at the 2020 Northern Transportation and Air Quality Summit.
- Staff attended the DART virtual hearing.
- The Churchmans Crossing Advisory Committee met on December 2nd. A second public workshop is planned for February 24th.
- Staff participated in the Maryland Transit Plan Round Table. There were two meetings. The Eastern Regional Round Table was on September 18th and December 7th.
- Staff participated in the Maryland State Rail Plan Advisory Committee in December.
- The City of New Castle Transportation Plan Steering Committee met in December. A presentation was made to the Town Council on January 12th. The project team is working on scheduling a public workshop on February 10th.
- The Air Quality Partnership is beginning to plan Wilmington Virtual Earth Day for 2021.
- The public outreach video for the Route 9 Master Plan is available.
- Staff is working with the William Penn High School AP Human Geography Class to get input on the Route 9 Paths Plan.
- Staff will be presenting on the Intersection of Health and Planning at the Mid-Atlantic Public Health Partnership Conference later today.
- Staff is serving on an advisory committee for Wilmington Open Streets Initiatives from the West Side Grows Together and the Urban Bike Project.
- Staff will be speaking at New Castle County's Youth Planning Board on the topic of sustainability in the planning policy analysis on January 27th.
- New Castle County Transportation Alternatives Program Applications will be accepted until January 15th.
- Staff is working with Red Clay Valley Scenic Byway Alliance to update the corridor management plan.
- The draft of the Cecil County Strategic Safety Plan is posted on the County's website. There was a public meeting on January 20th. Details are available on the website.
- The project team is planning to have the first advisory committee meeting for the Union Street UPWP Project later this month and a public workshop in February.
- The planning agreement for the FY2022 UPWP was signed by DeIDOT and WILMAPCO and we are developing a draft UPWP which will be presented at the next Council meeting. With regards to the current UPWP, we expended about 43% of the budget and are expected to complete all tasks under budget and by the end of the fiscal year.

7. Public Advisory Committee (PAC) Report:

Mr. Tom Fruehstorfer said the PAC met on December 14th. There was one action item, which was the appointment of the PAC chair nominating committee. Mr. Carlos de los Ramos, Mr. Mike Kaszinski and Mr. Fruehstorfer volunteered to be on the committee. There were three presentation/discussion items. Mr. Jake Thompson presented the Route 9 Paths Plan and there was discussion on how costs are factored into the analysis and about the number of survey responses compared to non-COVID times. Mr. Dave Gula presented the Churchmans Crossing Plan, explaining the plan and public outreach results to date. There was discussion about proposed plans for a new parking garage and retail at Delaware Park and the Churchmans Rail Station. There was discussion about the possibility of a TID being implemented in this area, and

discussion about flooding in the area. The 5-Points Intersection Safety Improvement Study was presented by Mr. Gula. The only PAC comment was about whether a roundabout could work at that location.

8. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Report:

Ms. Heather Dunigan reported that the TAC met on November 19th. The action items included the TAC recommending the adoption of the Delaware Performance Measure Targets and the Maryland Performance Measure Targets with some technical presentations. Mr. Dave Gula presented the Newport Transportation Plan and the 5-Point Intersection Safety and Capacity Improvement Study. Ms. Dunigan presented on the Governor Printz Boulevard Study.

At the December 17th meeting the TAC recommended endorsement of the Governor Printz Corridor Study, the Newport Transportation Plan, and the 5-Points Intersection Study. There were presentations on the Route 9 Paths Plan and the Churchmans Crossing Corridor Study.

ACTION ITEMS:

9. To Adopt the Delaware Transportation Performance Measure Targets.

Mr. Dan Blevins said this is to reaffirm the Delaware Statewide Performance Targets that are set as part of the FAST Act for States and MPOs, which include safety, pavement and bridge conditions, and system condition related to congestion. In 2018, Council adopted the statewide targets that DelDOT had set for these three performance areas. 2020 allows us the opportunity to adjust those targets with the submission of the required mid-period report. DelDOT had left them as is and as an MPO, we are choosing to do the same.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Michael Spencer seconded by Mr. Marc Coté the Council approved the Resolution to Adopt the Delaware Transportation Performance Measure Targets.

Motion passed.

(01-14–21-02)

10. Adopt the Maryland Transportation Performance Measure Targets.

Mr. Dan Blevins said Maryland and Delaware follow the same process. Maryland made a few minor four-year target adjustments to pavement and bridge conditions, percent miles on non-interstate NHS routes, and percent of interstate paving in good condition.

Mr. Coté asked with the two- and four-year targets, how the congestion will be affected by the reduction from COVID in terms of creating a new baseline and maybe having an artificially low target for congestion that will increase once traffic returns. Mr. Blevins said that was discussed and he is sure they will start to see that in the 2020 data. It usually takes one month, so in February they will start to look at 2020 data as a whole. There has not been much guidance on that as far as what will transpire from the FHWA on how those targets are going to be reset. On the Delaware side, for interstate congestion, the I-95 shut down was anticipated, so the targets are rather generous. In 2022 another 4-year cycle will begin, as written in the current FAST Act. There will be another four-year cycle with the same type of mid-period performance in 2024 and 2026 so we will see how the targets will be affected.

ACTION: On motion by Ms. Heather Murphy seconded by Mr. Marc Coté the Council approved the Resolution to Adopt the Maryland Transportation Performance Measure Targets.

Motion passed.

(01-14-21-03)

11. To Endorse the Governor Printz Boulevard Corridor Study

Ms. Heather Dunigan said as she presented at last meeting, the selected recommendation for the Governor Printz Boulevard Study is alternative 3, which is a road diet that retains the existing median with multi-use pathways on both sides of the road. The report was out for public comment from December 11th through January 7th during which time the website had one hundred and fifty-nine visits that resulted in four comments. One person commented that the condition of the roadways between Governor Printz and Philadelphia Pike should be better maintained. One person incorrectly interpreted that the plan did not include a multi-use path, which it does. One person commented on the need for stormwater control. Another person commented on the desire to coordinate with the Reach Riverside process. There was one comment after the public comment period ended asking that more description of the Northern Delaware Greenways be added. Ms. Dunigan added information for both the Northern Delaware and East Coast Greenway, because neither project was well defined in the report. In the appendix, there is a Planning and Environmental Linkages checklist that shows where to find PEL elements in the report, which will be helpful in expediting implementation of the project as things are prioritized and move forward with design. There are also draft plan sheets, to illustrate the transition from the alternative 3 cross section to other designs on the approach to the City of Wilmington, Edgemoor Road and the I-495 interchange, which are needed for the additional capacity needs of the road. In that area the road diet is not in place, so they show where the pathway would be in that section as well as where crosswalks are proposed.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Michael Spencer seconded by Mr. Rich Hall the Council approved the Resolution to Endorse the Governor Printz Boulevard Corridor Study.

Motion passed.

(01-14-21-04)

12. To Endorse the Newport Transportation Plan.

Mr. Dave Gula said since this was presented at the last meeting, there was a public workshop held on December 16 with forty-four attendees, twenty-five of which were not representing agencies. There were positive comments and many detailed questions. The next day there was a meeting in the Town of Newport to speak to the mayor and commissioners. The mayor has been very active in the plan, but the commissioners were not as familiar with it. There are twenty recommendations throughout study area and more detailed estimated costs. Though the Town Council did not formally endorse the plan, they are happy with it. They were sent copies of the report for review and had no comments. The report was posted on the website, and two comments were received from Advisory Board members. DTC commented regarding the cost of the two proposed DART route changes. They are higher than the listed \$50,000, and thanks to the DTC staff, there is now a more accurate and higher cost estimate to re-route those two bus routes. Comments were also received from Mr. Brian Kirtley of BASF with concerns about the safety of people and trucks at the intersection of James and Water Streets. That is where the new train station will be constructed, and the Newport River Trail will come into town. Mr. Kirtley is concerned that it is as safe as possible for pedestrians mixing with trucks exiting BASF. There

is also a concern that changes to the transportation network does not infringe on their ability to function. Mr. Dan Blevins is working on a study for first/last mile for freight movements, so a link to the interactive Wikimap on the WILMAPCO website was sent to allow Mr. Kirtley to participate in that. The twenty-first recommendation is to have a monitoring committee that works on the Newport Plan as it moves forward. The monitoring committee is where stakeholders can come together with agency personnel to work through recommendations and make sure there is a no negative impact on the businesses and residents already in Newport. BASF leases the proposed station site for parking and wants to know when construction will begin so they can find parking for employees. There is an interactive map on the website that shows all recommendations and provides a brief description of each. The plan was presented to the Non-Motorized Transportation Working Group in October, the TAC on October 6th, and Council in November. The TAC endorsed this plan at their December 17th meeting.

Mr. Rich Hall said even though the vast majority of the study area is the municipality of Newport, the County has been working with them and are certainly interested in this project. One of the items he would highlight is that one of the vehicles to help implement the plan is the Complete Community Enterprise District (CCED) program. That is a legislation that passed in 2016. There are some practical difficulties for how those areas are mapped. They are supporting some legislation right now. Mr. Hall testified yesterday in the House Transportation Land Use Committee for changes that would alter the legislation to make it easier to apply on the ground, and so Newport is one of the areas where they would like to try and work with the town to try and make use of that program, hopefully once this legislation passes. The plan makes mention of CCED as one of the tools for implementation.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Rich Hall seconded by Mr. Michael Spencer the Council approved the Resolution to Endorse the Newport Transportation Plan.

Motion passed.

(01-14-21-05)

13. To Endorse the Five Point Intersection Safety & Capacity Improvement Study

Mr. Dave Gula said at the time this study was presented to Council in November, Alternative A was recommended and is still the preferred alternative. There are still a few mitigating circumstances with this study. One of which is the need to have a comprehensive new plan for DART's operations and maintenance facility that is located in the study area to ensure there are no negative impacts to DTC as this project moves forward. In the appendix there is a separate study that shows an alternative that could work and four alternatives that were tested, but with fairly high costs. So, DART is not in a position at this time to move forward with one of those facility changes. The second mitigating factor is that that the congestion that was being addressed and the related safety issues may have changed. The opening of the Margaret Rose Henry Bridge as an alternative access point to the Riverfront may reduce the congestion in the area. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, traffic is not at normal levels of congestion so it is not clear how much this will affect conditions at the 5-point intersection. The third mitigating factor is that I-95 is closing for rehabilitation in February, which will change the traffic patterns in and out of the city. The findings of the study are that there are recommendations that can be used, but there are mitigating factors that need to be worked through, and also traffic will need to be evaluated after the I-95 project. This was brought to the PAC on December 14th, and the TAC endorsed it on December 17th. Since then, one comment offered a minor correction to report that the study was presented at a Wilmington Initiatives public workshop in 2018 as well as in 2019. Wilmington Initiatives has served as the Project Management Committee for this project,

and they endorsed this study at their December 17th meeting. WILMAPCO staff is recommending endorsement of this study.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Herb Inden seconded by Mr. Marc Coté the Council approved the Resolution to Endorse the Five Point Intersection Safety & Capacity Improvement Study.

Motion passed.

(01-14-21-06)

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

14. Route 9 Paths Plan

Mr. Jake Thompson said the Route 9 Paths Plan is a new plan that is branching off of the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan. That plan proposes a network of walking and biking paths through the corridor. The Paths Plan will expand and refine those recommendations as well as develop new recommendations for a network of paths in the Route 9 corridor.

A map of bicycle and pedestrian recommendations from recent plans in the corridor has been completed. A variety of background data has been collected on demographics, transportation facilities, socioeconomic and health factors. That background data was used to prioritize road segments in the area. That prioritization was applied to the draft recommendations and a missing link analysis was completed to identify missing connections between neighborhoods. The team is currently working on public outreach. The primary method of which is an online public survey. A paper version of that survey is being distributed with the goal of hearing from all neighborhoods and demographics.

A map showing all of the bike and pedestrian recommendations in the corridor from recent plans including the Route 9 Master Plan will serve as the basis for the plan and will be revised based on public feedback. The final version of this map will propose a network of neighborhood paths for the Route 9 corridor. Next, a prioritization of road segments was created. This is a technical scoring process which uses a series of transportation and demographic data to give a score to each road segment in the study area. This uses data points that indicate the need for biking and walking improvements such as the percentage of people who walk, bike, or take transit to work; the number of workplaces nearby; and the number of bus stops nearby. Each segment receives a score. A higher score indicates that area will benefit more from improvements. This process helps ensure the communities most in need of improvements will have their needs addressed. The higher-scored areas are concentrated in the center of the corridor including Dunleith, Oakmont, and Rosegate. These neighborhoods would benefit most from these improvements, though all areas would benefit. Those scores were then applied to the draft recommendations. After these recommendations are finalized this will help guide implementation in order of priority.

One of the measures that went into the prioritization is Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (Bike LTS). This is an analysis that measures the amount of stress people experience while biking on each road based on traffic and infrastructure conditions. The scores range from 1 being the least stressful to 4 being the most stressful. Using this measure helps identify which areas can be improved to make biking and walking safer. Most of the neighborhoods in the Route 9 area are low stress. These are residential streets with low traffic and are comfortable for everyone to ride a bike. Most of these neighborhoods are surrounded by higher stress roads which limits how far people can comfortably walk or bike outside of their neighborhoods. Another way to visualize

this is through low-stress biking islands. These islands are comfortable for everyone but divided by higher stress roads. The goal of the Paths Plan is to connect as many of these islands as possible, reducing the total number of islands and making walking and biking feasible modes of transportation for more people. A missing links analysis was done to look at specific sections of the draft recommendations that could make crucial connections between the neighborhoods and islands. Each missing link is scored by population, then that score is factored into the prioritization.

Now that all of that data is together, the team is working on public outreach. There is an ongoing public survey which includes a drawing for a \$25 Visa gift card. The plan and the survey are being promoted via Facebook ads, the WILMAPCO newsletter, and the Colonial Clippings, which is the school district's newsletter. On the WILMAPCO website, in addition to the survey, there is also an overview presentation of the project in lieu of a public workshop. Spanish translations of all materials are available. Last month the team had a class session with an AP Human Geography class at William Penn High School. These students have coursework in GIS and civic engagement, so it was a great opportunity for them to learn about planning in the real world and for the team to get feedback from young people. A community member is helping to distribute the survey door to door. The New Castle Prevention Coalition helped with this. They are helping to meet a quota of at least five survey responses per neighborhood. This is especially helpful in an area where many people do not have access to the internet. We now have over one hundred responses. The survey has questions like how often do you bike/walk for transportation? Would you bike/walk more often if there were more car-free pathways? Where would you like bike/walk to if you had a safe and convenient path to get there? Respondents are asked which neighborhood they live in to make sure all the neighborhoods in the corridor are represented and to ask follow-up questions about biking/walking conditions in their neighborhood.

Next, the reach of the survey will be analyzed to make sure all neighborhoods and demographics have been heard. Once the team is confident with that the survey will be closed and the results will be analyzed. Then the recommendations will be refined based on public feedback and a draft report will be developed.

Mr. Rich Hall referenced that the bigger the road and higher the speed limit, the higher the level of bicycle stress. He then asked if anything counterintuitive to that was found through this work. Also, in connecting the islands for cycling and walking, he asked if there are connections that the residents may want that need to be improved but might not show up in the data. Finally, Mr. Hall asked if this is related to or if it will inform the tax grant for the area. Mr. Thompson replied that he needs to get updated information about the tax grant. The bike level of traffic stress has been pretty intuitive. Having taken a preliminary look at the feedback from the survey, most of the major concerns are with the higher-stress roads like Memorial Drive and Route 9, so it is a really good analysis that highlights where the biggest issues are. Regarding the draft recommendations, no new recommendations have been made yet. The draft recommendations are straight out of the Master Plan. As we start to analyze the survey feedback, other pathway recommendations may be proposed and could be considered for inclusion in the plan. Mr. Bill Swiatek said the TAP project is focused on Morehouse Drive, which is in an area that is very high priority for connections and the proposed off-road route link would be addressed with that TAP project. They are proposing a bike lane on Morehouse Drive, and future phases of the TAP could be informed by this work, particularly looking at connections into the library. With these TAP projects there is not much money so it went into addressing an immediate need that we already knew about and future work can address some of the things in this plan.

15. Goods Movement Studies Update

Mr. Dan Blevins said three freight-related projects in the UPWP for this fiscal year have begun. The most recent FAST Act put more emphasis on freight and dedicated some funding to it. Also, COVID has shown freight's importance to the country and all the goods that we receive from it. Part of the FAST Act required that a Delmarva then a Delaware Freight Study be done. Out of that a number of ideas were developed. Through the analysis that was done areas of concern and opportunity were identified.

The first project examines the impacts and benefits of truck access improvements around the Port of Wilmington area. This is not specific to the Port of Wilmington but looks at the area as a whole. Previous studies including Southbridge, Route 9 Corridor and the Port of Wilmington Study generated many ideas about moving trucks in and out of this area. This is a more technical approach that evaluates possible improvements in and around the port and along the SR 9 corridor to determine which have the better benefit for truck movement while maintaining the vision and goals from the Wilmington Comp Plan and the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan. This study will also provide cost estimates. For example, the SR 9 Plan suggests the extension of Pigeon Point. So, this study runs modeling scenarios looking at Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs), truck volumes on Route 9, intersection improvements, travel time changes, and the cost. There are many new tools available to look at the air quality and environmental impacts as well as stormwater, railroad, and utility impacts. The study has a nine- to eleven-month schedule. The Route 9 Monitoring Committee and the South Wilmington Planning Network will be kept up to speed on this. Soon the team will have their first project working group made up of community members, elected officials, and the City of Wilmington to get input, then do some analysis, and get back to everyone in an April or May time period.

The Delaware Statewide Truck Parking Study has a two-part approach and will address all the requirements set by MAP-21 and Jason's Law. There are some requirements that are just for the interstate system and the other part will get to more localized short-term staging issues within the State of Delaware. There is a wide-ranging job base including agricultural, seasonal, food processing, chemicals, and the port. This study will also look at existing parking conditions. There is an overnight parking analysis of where trucks are congregating in designated and undesignated areas to look at localized strategies and recommendations. The bulk of truck parking currently is in the north near I-95. Most parking is private. Some of the Wawa's and Royal Farms have become little short-term parking locations. The team is also exploring if there is an Hours of Service (HOS) issue with new Electronic Logging Device (ELD) standards or a staging issue to determine why trucks park at various locations. A lot of data is available from Streetlight, INRIX with its GPS tracking, and Truckers Path App. These sources are being used to look at duration, location, frequency, time of day, and concentration of vehicles throughout the State overnight to provide a blueprint of what is really happening with truck parking. There is a twelve- to fifteen-month schedule for this project. Technical memos will be used as there is so much information in the study. The first focus group meeting was last week. The team is working with the Delaware Motor Truck Association to get information from people in the industry about their experience to understand why they park in certain spots and what would help them.

The third project is the Delaware Statewide First/Final Mile Freight Network Development Study. It has come up in various projects related to trucks driving in and out of various communities. The first/final mile is the last link into a truck generating facility or property. It is usually a collector or local road and sometimes close to residential areas. Sometimes they are not well maintained and not fully recognized for their importance to the region and the nation as a whole. Final mile expenses are about 28% of all shipping. This project is looking to identify these

segments. These segments support multiple users including passenger vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. For example, off of SR 896 is a final mile. In Newport, Twinco posted paper signs to advise the drivers how they think trucks should be moving through the local streets. The project goal is to get a better understanding of what these roads actually mean, discussion with stakeholders about what can be done to maintain these final miles while balancing the needs of other transportation users of that system. The team is looking to define the first/final mile facilities, determine how to improve them, and see what tools are available. This project has an eleven- to thirteen-month schedule. For the next five weeks, there is a Wikimap exercise, where the freight community, shippers, and residents are invited to put points on a map to indicate where they are experiencing some of these final mile conflicts dealing with mobility, safety, and road condition. This and the information for all of these projects can be found on the WILMAPCO website.

16. Churchmans Crossing Corridor Plan Update

Mr. Dan Blevins said since this was presented in November there was an Advisory Committee meeting, and modeling efforts have begun that will evaluate various transportation and land use options. The New Castle County Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee was briefed at their meeting on November 18th. They had very few comments. On December 2nd, the Advisory Committee met for the first time with twenty-nine stakeholders in attendance. The group included several elected officials and a variety of local businesses and civic groups to get a wide range of input. The discussion was about modeling and scenario analyses for transportation improvement projects. There are many projects from 1997 that were not constructed so they went through them to see if they are still viable. They also went over land use considerations to look at what alternatives make sense and the screening metrics to see if they are meaningful.

The team is working on modeling which takes various transportation projects with various land use scenarios to see the different metrics that come out and determine the traffic changes and congestion levels. Layer 1 is what is currently in the RTP for the Churchmans area like Road A improvements, the transit center, and Fairplay Train Station parking. Layer 2 is looking at the aspirations list. These projects are in the RTP but not funded, such as the Churchmans Road Extension, an access ramp from I-95 to Churchmans, some I-95 widening, and some improvements along SR 273. Layer 3 is everything that was left over from the plan and a few other ideas such as opening Continental Drive, completing the Churchmans bypass, direct access to I-95 from Churchmans, and several others in a circulation group around the hospital and Christiana Mall area.

With land use, there are two scenarios. One is expected land use, which is looking at the land use projects that are already approved and what they generate, which is roughly 1,100 households, 2,900 in population, and 1,600 jobs. The other is a balanced scenario, which is more robust, looking at intensification of mixed-use centers and creating more of an increase in households, population, and jobs in the area. This is focused in a few areas of the study area. This scenario is called balanced because Churchmans is a jobs center where many people come into the area for work, but few live and work in the area. The idea is to balance that by increasing residential development to determine what fostering that live near work paradigm would do and what changes in the traffic would be.

The tools being used for modeling are the traditional DelDOT travel demand model, but also a few additional, more detailed items like the EPA's MXD model that shows site level improvements looking at density, design, and diversity at a very local level. In addition, the team is using multimodal tools that have been developed through TRB, that examine what has been

called the speed and proximity metrics of growth. Mobility and speed versus proximity change with your land use development. If you are more rural, speed is the way to be mobile, but as you get into a more urban core, proximity makes more sense. We are bringing that into the equation to consider what happens if Churchmans has more proximity growth as opposed to simply speed. The questions they are trying to answer are, "Can mobility in Churchmans be improved through better proximity-based growth patterns?" and "How much can they 'move the needle' in the area?" There is a lot of existing development there. With the patterns in the area, will more mixed use change the conditions that are there now? With single use, there are morning and evening peaks, but mixed use spreads out those peaks. So, they are trying to bring that educational piece into this project as they discuss speed versus proximity. Some initial modeling indicate traffic conditions will get worse, but generally dropping at some of the peak periods. Some of the arterials like Churchmans Extension and Eagle Run are showing up as highly valued, so the results are showing which of those transportation projects means the most to the Churchmans Crossing area by relieving some of the congestion throughout the study area.

The next virtual public meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 24th to show what has been done with scenario planning and get some public feedback, before moving on.

Mr. Hall said they appreciate the analysis being done with the consultants. The County Land Use Department is doing a fair amount of analysis itself. It is linked up with what the broader team is doing for land use, so they see this project really trying to get a more intense look at the relationship between land use and transportation, which is a poignant area. Historically a lot of the effort has been focused on congestion management. Mr. Hall is interested if Mr. Blevins has any thoughts about it so far; when we are talking about improvements, what we are seeing in this early-stage transportation improvements as it relates to mobility, interior circulation and a little more of that helping to serve on that continuum. If proximity is going to be more important and there can always be debate about that, what kind of improvements will realize that in this early stage to augment that, as opposed to historically speed is where things tend to go. Mr. Hall asked where Mr. Blevins sees this going while still in this early stage for improvements and the likelihood to try to better serve the proximity dynamic versus speed. Mr. Blevins replied that yesterday they had a call discussing some of the details of what is being done with modeling. They talked about it at length and the one piece that they are pushing for that this area does lack is collector connectivity. It is all arterial with driveways into shopping centers. The circulation and the ability to have additional mobility through here, just even at the collector road stage, is something that we want to get out of this because it impacts everything. In looking at transit mobility and how it can move in and out of some areas and drop the numbers on the level of traffic stress, it allows for better mobility through here. They discussed yesterday trying to use modeling to answer what a better circulation network in the area provides for all modes, but there are no definitive answers because they have not seen the results yet. Mr. Hall said he knows it is a different growth dynamic and a different build, but some of the kind of analysis that is being done on Route 9 on connectivity and the stress for biking and/or walking, elements of that applied here at this scale would be interesting. Is that something that is anticipated? Mr. Blevins replied that the LTS and the islands analysis is already done and available on the website. The team has done that part but could go a little bit further because in theory you could add those connector roads and see what that changes. Mr. Paul Moser has a tool that as you add connections, they would have complete streets elements to them, so anything additional to create better bike/pedestrian connections changes the numbers. That is something we have not quite built into this, doing that LTS analysis. The team could ask Mr. Moser if that is something he could do once it is determined which part of that circulation network might have that happen. It is surprising how adding one link connects neighborhoods, then two changes that LTS value

to make it easier to have better mobility throughout an area. Mr. Hall said that could be a big pivot point in what we hope to see in this area so having some of that analysis would help.

Mr. Robert Hicks asked if living near work is still a valid consideration as more and more people are working from home and that trend is probably going to continue. Also given that you have households with multiple adults, people typically do not live close to work. They choose a location to live that is equidistant for all of the working adults. He used to work in Philadelphia and his wife used to work in Baltimore, so they both had an hour commute going in different directions. He asked if this is a big driver in the analysis. Mr. Blevins replied that as this started COVID was just getting started so it is a bit of a new normal. He does not think it is a huge piece of this now, but it is beginning to be a trend. The team looks at it and wonders why we do not have more people living and working here with JP Morgan, the hospital, and the college in this area. Market conditions certainly drive a lot of it, but in looking at the area as a whole to determine what the problem is, and right now the current level of congestion is quite high. That is before even considering anything in the future. The idea is to look at the number of people who come in and determine if it is possible, and if there is a benefit to fostering having more people live and work there and determine what that does to the daily traffic dynamics. Mr. Hicks brings up a good point. If you can work from home, you are able to move around to different areas. We will see if that stays the new normal as we reach a post-COVID world. Mr. Hicks said the company from which he just retired looks at it as a talent acquisition opportunity. They have marketing people who work in multiple states, but the headquarters is in Charleston. His former boss works from home, but the corporate headquarters is in Chicago. Everybody works from home, then meets two times per month face to face. It is getting to the point that his former employer is looking at the possibility that they may have to pay people more to come into the office more than once a week. He encourages the project team to take a close look at this new normal, because you may always have some places where there is nothing but traffic during the times that people have to come in and otherwise there is no traffic and there is nothing you can do to get people to live in those areas. Mr. Blevins replied these are good points, this is something that still needs to bear itself out. For this area there are really two dynamics. JP Morgan is a place where a lot of those jobs may go remote and just do not come back. The hospital will require working on site and the college may keep some remote and some in person. Some of the industries in this area may or may not be as big as they were in terms of the traffic again, but there is the mall and JP Morgan and what they will become. The mall may have some changes over time. We may not be able to have all those answers as part of this plan. Mr. John Sisson added the mall, Delaware Park and the hospital are probably different from most locations. The mall this past Christmas season, even with COVID, was full every weekend according to the reports from DeIDOT. Mr. Hall said he remembers when the internet was getting more popular and people thought it was going to empty out the cities and everyone was going to work from home. It will be a new normal but there is no denying some of the things Mr. Blevins was talking about in terms of the hospital, and just human nature. One thing we do know is there is intense employment in this area and relatively little housing. That term "balance" is trying to get a better job-housing balance in the area. That is very important. Of course, we have to do that in the realms of reality. It is important to try to make it a place where people live, work, and play rather than a place where people can shop and work and leave. So that is the goal behind this effort from the planning perspective.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

17. DeIDOT's Administrative Modification Request Letters

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Rich Hall made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Michael Spencer seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

ATTACHMENTS: (0)