

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 12, 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 10:01 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Members present:

David Edgell, Delaware Governor's Appointee
Antoni Sekowski, representing New Castle County Executive, Matthew Meyer
Michael Kline, representing Cecil County Municipalities
Timothy Lucas, 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
Pamela Steinebach, representing DeIDOT Secretary of Transportation, Nicole Majeski

Members absent:

Eric Thompson, Mayor of Elsmere, representing New Castle County Municipalities

Guests, Observers:

James Coverdale, DNREC
Ben Gruswitz
Dan Janousek, MDOT
Mike Kaszyski, PAC Chair
Stu Markham, Mayor, City of Newark
Kevin Racine
Derrick Sexton, MDOT

Staff members:

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner
Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner
Dave Gula, Principal Planner
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 Mr. Stephen O'Connor seconded by Mr. David Edgell the Council approved the March 10, 2022, Council Meeting Minutes.

Motion passed

(05-12-22-01)

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

None.

5. COUNCIL MEMBERS' AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Nominating Committee Report:

Ms. Pam Steinebach said she, Mr. David Edgell, and Ms. Heather Murphy discussed nominations for the 2022-2023 officers and nominate Mr. John Sisson to continue as chair and Mr. Stephen O'Connor to continue as vice-chair.

ACTION: The Council approved the re-appointment of Mr. John Sisson as chair and Mr. Stephen O'Connor as vice chair of the WILMAPCO Council.

Motion passed.

(05-12-22-02)

Chairperson's Report:

Mr. John Sisson said the DTC is working to get their next Low-No emission grant application into FTA, which is due by the end of the month. DTC is getting four hydrogen buses and two more electric buses. By the end of this calendar year, they will achieve 10% zero-emission. DTC is in the process of upgrading their facility to handle hydrogen busses. Beach bus service starts on May 23rd. Just like all transit providers, DTC is struggling to find drivers, but they are excited for that service.

Council Member's Reports:

None.

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

- Staff hosted the Port Circulation Study workshop March 23rd.
- Staff attended a Newark Planning Charrette from March 21st to 25th.
- Staff hosted a TIP and CTP workshop on April 6th.
- Staff also attended a Cecil County Strategic Highway Safety Plan Executive Committee meeting on April 6th.
- The North East Comprehensive Plan kickoff meeting was on April 19th.
- On April 19th, staff attended the Marshallton public workshop
- Staff presented the Transportation Justice Plan to a class at the Academy of Lifelong Learning on April 19th.
- The second in-person I-95 Cap Feasibility Study Public Workshop was held on April 19th with thirty attendees.
- Staff participated in the AMPO Performance-based Planning and Programming Workgroup meeting from April 20th through the 22nd in New Orleans.
- The Air Quality Partnership and Tropo visited the Wilmington Earth Day Open Streets event on April 23rd.
- Staff attended the APA National Conference from April 29th to May 3rd.
- The 4th Street Improvement workshop was held on May 3rd.
- Staff attended the Downes Elementary School Bike to School Day on May 4th.
- Staff hosted the Concord Pike Monitoring Committee meeting last night. It was a hybrid meeting, with in-person and virtual components at the Talleyville Fire Company.
- Staff will be planning the Ardens' Walkable Community Workshop on May 16th.
- Staff will be hosting the Route 40 Monitoring Committee meeting on May 18th.

- A plan is being developed for the Churchman’s Crossing Monitoring Committee for the next fiscal year.
- Staff submitted a RAISE grant application for the 12th Street Connector.
- For the April financial report, we expended about 70% of our budget. We are under budget and proceeding with several projects.

7. Public Advisory Committee (PAC) Report:

Mr. Mike Kaszyski said the PAC met on April 18th. The meeting was intended to be in a hybrid format, but Mr. Kaszyski was the only member who was able to attend in person, so the meeting was held via Zoom. There were no public comments. Ms. Heather Dunigan presented the Director’s Report on behalf of Ms. Tigist Zegeye. There was discussion about the TIP amendment for the Route 72 project, and as discussion about the RAISE grant for the 12th Street Connection. There were two action items. Ms. Randi Novakoff presented the UPWP, and the PAC voted to approve the public outreach portion for fiscal year 2023. Ms. Dunigan presented the draft FY 2023-2026 TIP. This action normally would have taken place at the February meeting, but it was delayed allowing time to incorporate pieces of the federal Infrastructure and Jobs Act into the TIP and DeIDOT’s components in the CTP. The PAC voted to approve the public outreach for the TIP. Two presentations were on the agenda. The first was the Port Circulation Study which focused on the area around Pigeon Point Road, Cherry Lane, Pyles Lane, and Garasches Lane. Several other studies in the area were mentioned including the Route 9 Master Plan, Southbridge, and how these activities were incorporated into the City Comprehensive Plan. The other presentation was the Health Risks and Conditions Data Report, which is primarily social determinants, vulnerability, and neighborhood locations relative to land use. Other projects were discussed like the I-95 cap project, which has potential to affect some things along the lines of that report for some neighborhoods in that area.

8. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Report:

Ms. Heather Dunigan said the TAC met March 17th. The TAC recommended amending the TIP to include the Safe Routes to School - the Elk Neck Elementary School project, recommended amending the TIP to include the Automated/Dynamic Paratransit Scheduling project, and also the US 13 Bus-Bike-Right-Turn Lane project. The TAC concurred with Council’s recommendation to release the draft TIP for public comment. At the April 21st meeting the TAC recommended adoption of the FY 2023 UPWP and the adoption of the TIP. They also reviewed the Air Quality Conformity and recommended its approval as it was a joint meeting with the Air Quality Subcommittee. The TAC also recommended endorsement of the Union Street Reconfiguration and Streetscape Improvement Study and the Port Circulation Study.

ACTION ITEMS:

9. To Adopt the State/Local Cash Commitment for Fiscal Year 2023

Ms. Tigist Zegeye said WILMAPCO must have a 20% match for all federal dollars that are received. The match can be in-kind or it can be cash. For FY 2023, the UPWP will have all state and local match in cash. For the State of Maryland, the 20% is split equally between MDOT and Cecil County for \$13,069. For the State of Delaware, DeIDOT is providing \$526,450, New Castle County is providing \$31,500, and the City of Wilmington is providing \$11,796. The PAC did not take action on this resolution. The TAC reviewed the resolution at their April meeting. Staff recommends that the Council adopt state and local cash commitments for the FY 2023 UPWP.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. David Edgell seconded by Ms. Heather Murphy the Council adopted the State/Local Cash Commitment for Fiscal Year 2023.

Motion passed.

(05-12-22-03)

10. To Adopt the Draft FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Ms. Tigist Zegeye said the UPWP describes planning activities by WILMAPCO in FY 2023. It begins in July 2022 and ends in June 2023. The total for the year is about \$3 million. Most of the consultant work is continuing from the previous year. The only new projects that require a consultant for this coming fiscal year is the Ardens Transportation Plan for \$70,000 and the Update to the 2008 Southbridge Circulation Study for \$95,000. The WILMAPCO PAC approved the public participation and public education portion of the UPWP at their April meeting. The draft UPWP was available on the WILMAPCO website for public review and comments from April 1st through May 2nd. There were ninety-seven views on the webpage, and it was the sixth most visited page during that time. Comments were received from four individuals and entities. The first comment came from Ms. Lindsay Donnellon from the Federal Highway Administration, and most of her comments are classification. For instance, she wanted to know how we can determine whether the task should go as a regional coordination or subregional coordination. We were able to respond to her questions and she did send an email saying that once the Council approved this, she will be happy to provide approval on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration. A citizen of the Town of Charlestown commented in favor of the Walkable Communities Workshop that WILMAPCO will be conducting for the town. Another citizen from the Town of Charlestown recommended that we look at crosswalks in the town, so that will be addressed as part of the Walkable Communities Workshop. The final comment comes from a PAC member and former DTC employees who is requesting transit ridership data for DTC and Cecil County Transit. Specifically, they are asking if any of the data will be available online. Staff is working with both transit agencies to provide that information. This is not a UPWP request, but we provide the requested information. The TAC recommend that the Council adopt the UPWP, and staff also recommends that the Council adopt the FY 2023 UPWP.

ACTION: On motion by Ms. Pamela Steinebach seconded by Mr. Stephen O'Connor the Council adopted the FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

Motion passed.

(05-12-22-04)

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

Ms. Heather Dunigan said this was submitted by Cecil County, and it is to amend the TIP to include school zone and crosswalk improvements by Elk Neck Elementary School. This is a new project at \$85,000 and they have received a HSIP grant to complete the work.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Stephen O'Connor seconded by Mr. Michael Kline the Council amended the WILMAPCO FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Motion passed.

(05-12-22-05)

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

Ms. Heather Dunigan said this is a request from DelDOT and DTC to amend the TIP with new funding for automated and dynamic paratransit scheduling to help improve the efficiency of the paratransit system. The cost is about \$6.2 million. This, and the previous TIP amendment, were reviewed by WILMAPCO committees, who recommend the amendments.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Antoni Sekowski seconded by Ms. Pamela Steinebach the Council amended the WILMAPCO FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Motion passed.

(05-12-22-06)

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

Ms. Heather Dunigan said this request comes from DelDOT in partnership with DTC to amend the TIP to include a US 13 Bus-Bike-Right-Turn Lane project. It includes \$250,000 for PE funding. This will be part of a larger project to improved pedestrian safety along the US 13 corridor, because there are many pedestrian injury and fatality crashes. This was reviewed by the committees, including the Nonmotorized Transportation Workgroup and all concurred with the amendment.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Stephen O'Connor seconded by Mr. Michael Kline the Council amended the WILMAPCO FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Motion passed.

(05-12-22-07)

14. To Adopt the New Castle County Draft FY 2023-26 TIP Air Quality Conformity Analysis

Mr. Bill Swiatek said a new Air Quality Conformity Determination was made necessary by an adjustment in a project in New Castle County, which changed the project's expected in-service year. A Cecil County Conformity Analysis is not required at this time. WILMAPCO will rely on the previous Cecil County Conformity Analysis, which was adopted in March 2019 to determine conformity with the draft FY 2023-2026 TIP. The New Castle County Conformity Analysis and Determination was developed through the Air Quality Subcommittee with modeling completed by DelDOT. The analysis shows that all required emission budget tests are easily met. This was out for public comment. Some positive comments were received at the public workshops, and just yesterday DNREC found a couple of minor wording adjustments that need to be made within the document and some typos that will be corrected. The PAC did not take action on this agenda item. The TAC and the Air Quality Subcommittee both recommended Council adoption at their meeting on April 21st. WILMAPCO staff also recommends the Council adopt the New Castle County Air Quality Conformity Analysis.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Stephen O'Connor seconded by Mr. Michael Kline the Council adopted the New Castle County FY 2023-26 TIP Air Quality Conformity Analysis with mentioned corrections.

Motion passed.

(05-12-22-08)

15. To Adopt the Draft FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Heather Dunigan said this is our new FY 2023 to 2026 TIP. There were only a few minor adjustments to the document that was released for public comment and reviewed by our committees. The Environmental Justice map included in the introduction was updated. The appendix with the performance measure information was updated to include the latest information, but the projects remain the same. This was out for public comment from March 18th through April 29th. The action also includes the Federal Self-Certification, and there is an appendix in the document that includes details related to that as well as where information on how WILMAPCO meets those requirements can be found. During the public comment period there were two hundred and fifty-seven visitors to the TIP web page, which made it the third most visited web page on the WILMAPCO website following the I-95 Cap and the homepage.

There was a virtual public workshop on April 6th. In the past, the meeting was at the library and MDOT and Cecil County did not attend because there are so few projects in Maryland. Because it was virtual, we had a more collaborative event that included DeIDOT, DART, MDOT, and Cecil County. The workshop began with presentations by the agencies, then people were able to visit any or all of the three breakout rooms to talk with MDOT and Cecil County staff, DeIDOT and DART staff, and WILMAPCO staff. Unfortunately, it was lightly attended. The Facebook event page reached more than 15,000 people, but we had only eleven indicate they were attending and fifty-eight expressing interest in attending. Twenty-eight actually attended the workshop. The breakout room discussion in the Cecil County room included discussion of MARC extension, as well as the process for the county and local priority letters, and the CTP tour. In the Delaware room there was discussion about pedestrian safety and crashes, particularly in the area of Biddle Avenue, where a bridge that is an important pedestrian connection was closed. Visitors in the Delaware room also discussed how you report your safety concerns and use the DeIDOT website to report an issue. In the air quality room, there was discussion about future projections and what to expect in the future.

Two written comments were received through the website. The first expressed support for the East Coast Greenway projects on US 13 from I-495 to the Pennsylvania line, stressed the importance of this connection for East Coast Greenway designation, and said that it should seamlessly connect to adjacent facilities such as the Claymont Station Pathway that is under construction now. The commenter also suggested working with PennDOT and DVRPC to ensure continuity into Marcus Hook. The person also suggested working East Coast Greenway into other projects such as the SR 4/Harmony Road Intersection Improvements, SR 9/River Road Improvements, and US 13 from US 40 to Memorial Drive. The second commenter offered support for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit projects, and noted the high rate of pedestrian fatalities in Delaware. They commented that successful communities need to be interconnected and built for humans not cars. Delaware has much potential for expanding protected bike lanes and adding sidewalks. Specifically, the Pike Creek area needs walkability improvements due to the higher density residential areas around the Pike Creek Shopping Center. This person supported the North Union Street Redevelopment project. They are a proponent of the I-95 Cap project. They commented that high-demand bus routes need more shelters, such as Kirkwood Highway and next to the Wilmington Train Station. They expressed opposition to expanding and widening roads, which leads to induced demand and say that we need more multimodal and dense housing because there is a housing shortage. The committees and staff recommend Council adoption.

Mr. Stephen O'Connor said he thought the breakout rooms worked really well and he thinks Ms. Dunigan should try them again.

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

Motion passed.

(05-12-22-09)

16. To Endorse the Port Circulation Study

Mr. Dan Blevins asked the Council to endorse the Impact Benefit Analysis for Truck Access to the Port of Wilmington area. The Study evaluated and recommended a series of possible improvements in and around the Port of Wilmington in an effort to improve truck circulation in the area. Cost estimates for all the projects were generated where applicable, in keeping with PEL guidelines. The PAC did not take any action but was given a presentation on the 18th. The TAC took action to endorse the study on the 21st.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. David Edgell seconded by Mr. Tim Lucas the Council endorsed the Port Circulation Study

Motion passed.

(05-12-22-10)

17. To Endorse the Union Street Reconfiguration Streetscape Improvement Study

Mr. Dave Gula said this project was a second look at Union Street after a 2017 reconfiguration where it went from three lanes down to two. This project included the Union Street corridor from Pennsylvania Avenue to Sycamore Avenue and explored ways to make improvements based on the two-lane configuration. The report is eleven pages. There are extensive appendices to explain how the team arrived at the solutions. This is a Planning and Environmental Linkage report, so it begins the NEPA process. The final estimate to improve the corridor including reconfiguring parking from back-in diagonal to parallel parking, narrow the travel lanes, widen the sidewalks, and add a protected bike lane on the east side comes to between \$15 million and \$18 million. There was a small push by the public to underground utilities, but that nearly triples the price of the project and has an effect on the construction time. After the final workshop on March 16th, a few comments were received. They were very supportive and included some specific questions about adding a round-about at Pennsylvania Avenue and Union Street, which is not possible. They support the bike lane, although there was a comment to widen the bike lane to nine or ten feet. That was not done because the most important element for the residents was to have wider sidewalks and the chance for outdoor dining, and that (two-way) bike lane would have interfered with that. There was a question about the shortage of parking. About nine spaces were lost, but nine spaces over sixteen blocks is not much. There is a larger concern of finding event lots that could be used for evening parking that may need to be addressed going forward. Another comment was favorable but said sidewalks need to be widened. This person also supports the protected bike lane, and they wanted to underground utilities. Mr. Gula had a meeting with a couple who own a restaurant, who were concerned the initial plans would change the configuration for parking in front of their building. When they saw the revised version, they were happy. This study went before the PAC three times. They took no action. It went to the TAC three times, and they endorsed it at the April 22nd meeting. It went to the Nonmotorized, with no action taken. The study was managed by the Wilmington Initiatives Partners, who supported the report and its findings. Staff recommends that Council endorse the Union Street Configuration and Streetscape Improvement Study.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. David Edgell seconded by Mr. Stephen O'Connor the Council endorsed the Union Street Reconfiguration Streetscape Improvement Study.

Motion passed.

(05-12-22-11)

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

18. Health Risks & Conditions Data Report

Mr. Bill Swiatek presented a new data report from WILMAPCO that is about to come out about health behaviors and risk outcomes as they relate to transportation and land use data. WILMAPCO has been working on this for some time, with the Social Determinants of Health Index developed several years ago. Social Determinants of Health are the social and economic conditions that impact a person's health, and WILMAPCO had a data report in 2019 that identified an index to determine where there are SDOH areas of concern. This came out of the Route 9 work in working with the community and healthcare professionals there. It has become a factor in our project prioritization process. This new study was motivated by the release of new health behavior and outcomes data that are available in PolicyMap. Previously, health data was only available at the zip code level or above, but this data is available at the census tract level. It was not available when the SDOH Index was developed. The new data includes obesity rates, physical activity, asthma, reported health, and so forth. WILMAPCO staff were able to access that data through our partnership with Healthy Communities Delaware. This report looks at SDOH versus those health data to see how good of a predictor the SDOH is with health outcomes data. Staff also wanted to compare SDOH with the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), which is a nationwide index developed by the CDC to look at areas of potential health concern. SVI is being used heavily by FHWA for things like with the RAISE grant. The Delaware Division of Public Health is using it for its grants and some of its COVID work.

This report compares the two and looks at health data versus transportation and land use conditions like access to parks and walkability, bus routes, and things of that nature. SDOH and SVI share many of the same measures including poverty, education, minority segregation, employment, and single parents. They each have unique factors as well. SDOH includes food deserts, home ownership, and time in residence, which is something heard from the Route 9 leaders. They said time residence is important for a community's stability. SVI has a number of unique factors including income, limited English proficiency, seniors, mobile homes, and multi-units. It is a much broader index than SDOH, which may be because they are trying to identify vulnerable communities for man-made and human disaster, not just health conditions. Each of these factors is equally weighted in each index.

When these two indices are mapped, the places of most and least SDOH and SVI concern can be compared. The City of Wilmington and parts of downtown Elkton appear in both indices as being areas of concern. The suburbs north and west of Wilmington are of least concern for both indices. The differences with the two are the SDOH more heavily flags communities in Wilmington along the Route 9 corridor where SVI is more dispersed with communities being flagged in the western inner suburbs and along US 40. Looking at the correlations with both of the indices shows how well the tracts predict different conditions. This is done by looking at how likely increasing points in SDOH or SVI equate to increasing rates of asthma, poor mental health, obesity, and so forth. SDOH is in almost all cases a better predictor of places that have higher rates for asthma, poor mental health, obesity, physical activity, and so forth. Neither index was a good predictor for high blood pressure or poor reported health. The census tracts of highest and lowest concern were viewed side by side with the median percentages of poor reported health, obesity, and asthma in the top tracks versus the bottom scoring tracks. In both indices, there are differences between each. In SDOH, 41% of people in the tracts of most concern are obese, versus only 33% in the areas of least concern. It is similar with SVI, but the ranges are a greater when you look at SDOH versus SVI.

The study included asthma and physical inactivity specifically, because not all health data relate to transportation. Looking at the range of asthma rates for adults in our region in 2018, the census tract with the least amount of asthma is 8.6% and the census tract with the most is 12.7%. On a map, Wilmington and the Route 9 corridor are tracts with the most asthma, and the suburbs to the west of Wilmington has the least. Comparing the data between tracts with the highest and lowest rates of asthma, there are significant differences in SDOH factors like minority segregation, single parent households, and households in poverty. For example, 22% of people that live in high asthma tracts are impoverished versus only 3% of those in areas with the least amount of asthma. Poverty can lead to things like mold and household pest infestation, which are factors in creating and continuing respiratory problems. Some transportation and land use conditions were considered such as housing nearby busy roads, which is the percentage of housing units within a quarter mile of a road with AADTs exceeding 20,000. It was found that 56% of people that live within a high asthma area are nearby a busy road versus 40% of those in a low asthma area. Those ranges are greater with housing near the freight network and housing near industrial sites. 100% of folks within the highest areas of asthma were also near industry or an industrial-zoned property. This does not necessarily mean that industry is the cause of the asthma, but there is certainly a correlation there. Looking at data from DNREC and from MDE for sites that received violations for air pollution, one hundred and fifteen air violation citations were issued near places with high asthma versus only twenty-eight near those with low asthma. Looking at the entire data set tells a story in terms of correlations with some transportation and land use conditions. A scatter plot looking at the percentage of asthma by census tract nearby a busy road illustrates the R^2 , which measures a correlation, and there was no correlation with busy roads and asthma. In high asthma census tracts, some of them are near busy roads, while some of them are not. There is a slight correlation with the freight network of 0.08%. Most of the tracts with high asthma rates do have a number of units nearby the freight network. Near an industrial zone shows a little better correlation. As the percentage of asthma by census tract increases, those places were all nearby industrial land. There is an even better correlation with asthma and nearby air violations.

Physical inactivity is another key health factor, and here there was a wider range between census tracts with the least amount of inactivity and the most physical inactivity, from 24% to 41% of people were inactive over the past thirty days. The most physical inactivity is in Wilmington, including many of the tracts in the western part of Wilmington, eastern part of Wilmington, and then stretching down the Route 9 and Route 13 corridors beyond the City of New Castle. Cecil County from north of US 40 into the City of Newark were the places that had the least amount of people reporting to be physically inactive. In comparing the health data between the least amount of physical inactivity and the most, there are significant differences in those extremes. For example, 22% of folks in the least active places were impoverished versus 7% in the most active. Related to land use and transportation conditions, the least active places were more likely to be nearby a busy road but had better walk connectivity. It is more dense in these areas with better walking conditions than more rural areas. Near parks was also better within the least active places, meaning there are more designated parks nearby. The places with the least activity were better related to being near industrial air violations. An example of a good correlation is physical inactivity versus obesity. The study did not look at obesity, although it could be included in this analysis, because there is such a tight correlation with inactivity and obesity rates by census tract. Looking at physical inactivity versus being near a busy road in the whole dataset did not show a correlation. An inverse correlation is seen with walk connectivity. Places that are more physically inactive tend to have better walking connections. This could be due to safety or lighting reasons, but it suggests that good pedestrian infrastructure, while it supports activity, is not the main driver in making a place more active. That may get into some

of the Social Determinants of Health issues. Similarly, there is a correlation with proximity to parks. Places that are more physically inactive also tend to be nearby more parks.

In the end, the Social Determinants of Health Index is a solid resource for public health and planning. It has been used by a number of groups. Wilmington's COVID response group has been using the SDOH Index to look at places that have low uptake of the vaccines. A map showing the results of the booster uptake as of March 2022 overlaid with areas of SDOH concern shows a tight correlation between that index which was developed a few years ago, and current data. So, SDOH is a good predictor for public health professionals to use. Delaware Guidance Services, which is a mental health group, is using the SDOH Index to find a new location to better serve their clients. After considering all of this data, the index can be further strengthened by tweaking some of the measures in the index to have even better correlations in future versions.

Mr. John Sisson asked if the team looked at age, particularly in respect to inactivity. He asked if some of them are older communities and mentioned that it is odd that you have all the parks and the connectivity, but you are inactive. Mr. Swiatek said he thinks in that it is likely due in part to your socioeconomics. You have time to exercise. You have an exercise bike or something in your house that you use. We looked at age related to high blood pressure and poor reported health, because that was also surprising that there was no correlation with that in either of these indices. There was a better correlation between age and both of those factors. Mr. Sisson said the other one we talked about a lot is food deserts in relation to obesity or something like that. Where is the access to healthy food? Are people going into the mini mart to buy their lunch and dinner? Mr. Swiatek agreed and said interestingly, that was not part of the SVI Index. They have a lot of information in there, but food deserts were not a factor. Mr. Sisson said this was done for the WILMAPCO area and asked if it was done for the rest of the State of Delaware. Mr. Swiatek said SDOH was not, although SVI is done for the whole country, so that data is available. SDOH could be replicated easily in Kent and Sussex or any other county. The health data was pulled from PolicyMap whether it is asthma or obesity. We did pull the data for Kent and Sussex in case somebody wanted to compile it. Mr. Dan Blevins said it is different because the census geography is a lot bigger in those counties. Mr. Sisson said the Secretary has a focus on equity in transportation and this plays a part in how you are analyzing where to invest funding.

19. City of New Castle Transportation Plan Update

Ms. Heather Dunigan said the City New Castle Transportation Plan is nearly complete. The report is currently being reviewed and edited. The final Advisory Committee meeting and workshop will be held soon. The purposes of the plan were largely drawn from the recent City of New Castle Comprehensive Plan Update. The purpose of the plan is to improve the multimodal network/connectivity within the communities and trails, enhance health and livability, reduce illegal truck traffic on local streets, improve safety, address flooding and sea level rise impacts, improve the gateways to the historic center, and look at parking. There has been continuous public outreach throughout the process. The team is working to select final alternatives and develop the report. The work has been guided by the planning partners, which include the City of New Castle, DelDOT and DART, and Century Engineering have assisted. The Advisory Committee is made up of local stakeholders. Because of COVID, a variety of techniques were used for public outreach. The first workshop was an online visioning workshop, which employed the breakout rooms to have smaller, roundtable discussions to mimic what would normally be done in person. An online WikiMap allowed people to add comments at their leisure. There was a pop-up workshop during a concert in Battery Park over the summer. Many of the people there were not the usual attendees of a transportation workshop, but people who were out and gave a

broad representation of what the community wanted. The second online presentation of the alternatives was followed by an in-person meeting with City Council that was well attended. That indicated that this community prefers in-person interaction. The final workshop will probably be an in-person City Council workshop.

Many people commented on speeding on local streets and how that affects pedestrian safety, as well as the overall safety of the community. Reducing speed limits, particularly reducing speeds to fifteen miles per hour on local streets, is recommended. Speed reductions on some of the surrounding streets are also recommended. This was supported by 65% of the in-person workshop and 94% of the survey respondents. The team recommends retaining this recommendation.

People expressed concerns about traffic congestion in the corridor that connects US 13 to Route 9 and Route 273. The team thinks that is largely driven by the intersection at US 13 and Route 273. DelDOT has begun looking at improving that. It was suggested that people support a DelDOT feasibility study, which was supported by 79% of attendees at the in-person workshop. The report is recommending we continue to monitor traffic volumes in this corridor because we might need to dualize 273 through this area. That is not needed yet because ensuring the intersections at both ends of this road work well is preferred.

The intersection of Routes 273 and 141 was recently modified. It is still challenging for pedestrians. There are also concerns about traffic congestion there, which may be a function of the signal timing, as opposed to the intersection itself. It was suggested that the trail that connects to the intersection continue. Pedestrian and bicycle connections are important in this area. This is a wide road, which is uncomfortable to cross. At the first round of workshops, one option was crosswalk improvements to the intersection. The second option was more extensive improvements and stop signal, right-turn control. Both options were presented with closing off 14th Street, which would cause people to access Delaware Street at another location. This was unpopular. People were concerned about accessing the business at that corner. This is no longer recommended. Another option for this location is a protected intersection. This was not popular at the workshop but is being retained as the preferred alternative for this location, because it accomplishes more of the goals of the project. This option was only presented at the last City Council workshop, so there was not much time for people to consider it, and the design can be improved. One of the comments heard about this intersection was the desire to improve the trail connectivity between Delaware Street and Frenchtown Road, and the protected intersection will help with that, as well as help students access the high school on Basin Road.

The intersection at Ferry Cut Off and Delaware Street is designed to direct local traffic onto Delaware Street including trucks that go into the historic district unintentionally because traffic flows straight into the historic district but turns to continue on Route 9. The first option was pedestrian improvements for the area, which was not well supported at either event. The second option is creating a gateway design that causes drivers to turn at a landscaped point to access the historic district. This was well supported at both the virtual and in-person workshops. Retaining this concept is recommended.

Ferry Cut Off at Chestnut Street is an area designed to direct people into the historic district. This is a source of problems because drivers who want to stay on Route 9 have to turn. This area also experiences a lot of flooding. One concept closed off access to 6th Street at this location and forced people to the next street to access the historic district. The other option is called a Dutch left. This was developed through a Bike Delaware summit, where consultants from the Netherlands were invited to promote different designs. Those consultants were brought

onto our planning team to look at this option. It works like a mini round-about, where drivers enter the intersection and make a U-turn to access the historic district. Then, coming out drivers make a U-turn to make a left. This design increases green space to have less impervious surface in that area to address flooding. These options were presented at the workshop and the separated road had mediocre support but a very strong negative response with 31% strongly opposing that option. From the transit perspective, busses would need to be rerouted. It is not a good option and is not recommended. The Dutch left was supported by 68% at the virtual meeting and 53% at the in-person meeting. At a separate focus group with the police chief and fire chief, they had concerns about getting out of the historic district onto Route 9. So, it is recommended that a shoulder be added to give room for traffic to get over for emergency access. We do recommend retaining this.

W 7th Street at Washington Street is designed to lead straight into the historical district and drivers have to turn to stay on the main road. There is not much signage there to instruct drivers to turn. Two options were presented and retaining both is recommended. One option is installing signs, which is inexpensive and can be done quickly to make it very obvious to turn to go to US 13 or I-95. This did not have much support at the meeting. It is not exciting but, but it can be effective. The other option is a Washington Street Sweep, which realigns the intersection to make a smooth, obvious movement onto the main road and a turn to get into the historic district. This was supported by over 75% at both the virtual and in-person meetings. We also recommend retaining this one. It might be more of a long-term option, but the signs could be accomplished quickly.

Nonmotorized pathways are an important part of the community. They have some lovely pathways with the Jack Markell Trail coming into town as well as the Battery Park Trail. This is along the East Coast Greenway, so expanding that network with a few new connections is recommended. Also, DelDOT is currently planning a project near the high school. These network connections were well supported with 93% of the virtual meeting and 73% of the in-person meeting. We recommend retaining all of these. The report breaks this out by priority and recommended term of implementation for each of the segments. All of it ranges in the mid-short to mid-term for implementation and for cost. The recommendations often reiterate what the Route 9 Paths Plan had, because some of the Route 9 Paths Plan extended beyond the county into the City of New Castle.

Parking is a controversial topic in the City of New Castle. A recommendation for parking at Chestnut Street and Second Street was presented and people were unhappy. Only a small percentage of people supported this recommendation at either workshop. Less than 40% support it. We will not be retaining this as a recommendation. The City has considered parking at 4th Street and Chestnut Street in the past. The objection to having parking there is that people feel it is too far away from the sites that people would be visiting. It is only a quarter of a mile distance, so with improved pedestrian facilities on 4th Street such as wayfinding signage and better lighting, parking there could be desirable. This was supported by 59% of the virtual meeting. We recommend retaining this with further evaluation of the design of that parking lot.

There are not a lot of specific recommendations for flooding, but it is recommended that green stormwater management techniques be used as projects are developed. There is a project south of Dobbinsville in the TIP so this is recommended moving forward. Flood mitigation was recommended by 82% of virtual workshop attendees and 88% of the in-person.

Gateway locations were the most popular thing presented, and this is just expanding the image of the City of New Castle to more suburban parts of the community to let people know they have

arrived somewhere. Locations for that gateway signage were suggested. This was supported by 90% of those at the virtual meeting and 94% of the in-person meeting. This is recommended to stay in the report.

The team is currently working on developing more precise cost estimates for planning level purposes, but there are some projected costs for the recommendations that were retained as well as recommended timing and priority levels for them.

Mr. John Sisson asked how anyone can be against flood mitigation. Ms. Dunigan said around forty copies of the survey were received at the City Council workshop, and maybe two people were against it. Mr. Sisson said maybe they do not believe it is actually happening. Ms. Dunigan suggested maybe they felt it was not enough. That Council presentation was not the style of workshop where planners could talk one on one with people and really delve into why people are thinking what they are thinking.

Ms. Pamela Steinebach asked Ms. Dunigan to explain Mobycon and what their role was, and if it was about public input. Ms. Dunigan said Mobycon was the best consultant and thanks to DeIDOT, who gave additional money for the project, because it allowed the team to further develop what they had presented at the Bike Delaware Intersection Summit. Mobycon was a coalition of two different Dutch consultant firms that helped define that Dutch left design. There was a public outreach consultant that mostly helped with the breakout room design for the first public workshop and with the first workshop where a whiteboard-type setup for taking notes was used. Most of the remainder of the public outreach was designed and orchestrated by WILMAPCO. Ms. Steinebach said that Ms. Dunigan mentioned that the event at the park was great. Ms. Steinebach really feels like we should do more of those because you get a larger sampling of people than just the normal people that attend the workshop, so she thinks that is a great thing to do moving forward, being where people are at and use the transportation network. Ms. Dunigan said that was the most fun she had a meeting in a long time.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

20. DeIDOT's Administrative Modification Request Letters

ADJOURNMENT:

ACTION: On motion by Ms. Heather Murphy seconded by Ms. Pamela Steinebach the Council adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

Motion passed.

(05-12-22-12)

ATTACHMENTS: (0)