

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 10, 2020**

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

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Sisson, Chair, opened the meeting at 10:04 a.m.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

**Members present:**

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

**Members absent:**

Dave Warnick representing Cecil County Municipalities

**Guests, Observers:**

Ian Beam, MDOT  
Tom Fruehstorfer, WILMAPCO PAC Chairperson  
Ken Grant, AAA, Mid-Atlantic  
Lisa Nissley, Maryland Department of the Environment  
Joshua Thomas, DelDOT  
Eric Thompson, Mayor of Elsmere

**Staff members:**

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

Minutes prepared by Dawn Voss

**3. MINUTES:**

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. Michael Spencer seconded by Mr. Eric Sennstrom the Council approved the July 9, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes.

Motion passed.

(09-10-20-01)

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:**

None.

## **5. COUNCIL MEMBERS' AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

### **Chairperson's Report:**

Mr. John Sisson reported DTC recently put out press releases and will host community conversations for the public through September and October. Part of these discussions will be the expansion of Sixth Street services on weekends in New Castle County starting on October 25<sup>th</sup>. DTC is looking to start this service earlier and run later on Saturdays and start earlier on Sundays. The public has requested this change for years to help people travel to jobs. DTC will be starting the conversation about re-routing services for I-95 reconstruction. Public input is needed about any routes, re-routing around I-95, or combining with other routes. First, there will be community conversations and then eventually there will be a public hearing. DTC is looking to the February service change to begin diverting traffic around that project. Changes to the fare structure and fare system will also be discussed. This is not a fare increase, but rather discontinuing the use of old store value cards that work on magnetic technology. DTC validators will be coming in pushing to seven and thirty-day cards, offering a twenty-day pass, and changing the fare zones. Now there are five fare zones between New Castle and Sussex County. DTC will be reducing them to three to make it simpler. Someone traveling from Middletown to Wilmington will have a less expensive ride than they have today. There will be a series of conversations then a public hearing about that.

### **Council Member's Reports:**

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

- Staff discussed the Title 6 plan with DVRPC in support of the upcoming update of their plan.
- Staff is working on the video for the Route 9 Master Plan and developing the story boards for four more WILMAPCO videos.
- Staff has been providing feedback for a national cooperative highway research program guidebook for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in transportation. This supports DelDOT in implementing this guidebook in Delaware.
- Staff presented our environmental resilience effort during an August 27<sup>th</sup> peer exchange among MPOs in Florida.
- Staff discussed our demographic projection effort with staff at a Hawaii MPO.
- Staff is presenting an overview of the 2019 Transportation Justice Plan to the AMPO Conference in October.
- We are regrouping and developing strategies for Bayard Safe Routes to School to reach out to parents for feedback on projects. There was a DelDOT Safe Routes to School workshop yesterday, which provided a project review for McCullough and Eisenberg Safe Routes to School.
- For the Air Quality Partnership, staff is developing graphics for the rescheduled Air Quality Awareness Week social media campaign which will be September 21<sup>st</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>.
- The Phase Three Mileage-Based User Fee Pilot is available. A flyer is attached as part of Agenda Item 18.
- The Southern New Castle County Master Plan Transportation Element Workshop was on August 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Yesterday we had the Newport Advisory Committee Meeting, and a public meeting is scheduled for September 30<sup>th</sup>.

- A flier is attached for the New Castle County 2050 Comprehensive Plan Transportation and Economics Workshop which is scheduled for September 14<sup>th</sup>.
- The Churchman's Crossing Public Workshop is scheduled for September 16<sup>th</sup>.
- The Governor Printz Boulevard Public Workshop is scheduled for September 21<sup>st</sup>.
- The Maryland MPO Roundtable is scheduled for September 25<sup>th</sup>.
- The Cecil Pre-Tour Meeting for the CTP is scheduled for September 28<sup>th</sup>, and the tour meeting is scheduled for October 16<sup>th</sup>.
- The Concord Pike/US 202 Public Workshop will be on October 5<sup>th</sup>. We will be briefing Councilwoman Dee Durham on the US 202 project this afternoon.
- We had five new projects in the FY 2021 UPWP. Staff had prepared requests for proposals and completed the consultant selection process. JMT was selected for the Union Street Configuration in the City of Wilmington. CPCS, from Washington DC, was selected for the First and Last Mile Freight Network Study and the Statewide Truck Parking Study. Century Engineering was selected for the Port of Wilmington Circulation Study and the City of New Castle Transportation Plan.
- Agenda Item 18 has member agency and WILMAPCO information and fliers for specific projects or meetings coming up in the next few weeks.

#### **7. Public Advisory Committee (PAC) Report:**

Mr. Tom Fruehstorfer, PAC Chair, said the PAC met on August 17<sup>th</sup>. The one Action Item was the 2020 Public Participation Plan (PPP). Ms. Randi Novakoff described the PPP process and development of the plan as well as the portions of the plan that have been updated. Related to the 2020 PPP Mr. Singer commented that he was unhappy with the outreach being conducted for the Churchman's Study. He did not feel it was consistent with the PPP and was unhappy that a summary of the listening sessions was not made public. The explanation provided to Mr. Singer by the WILMAPCO staff was that the project team wanted to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to share their thoughts freely and many other opportunities for public outreach will also inform the plan. There were two presentation and discussion items. Mr. Dan Blevins and Mr. Dave Gula presented the Southern New Castle County Transportation Element focusing on the public outreach that was conducted and comments received. There was some discussion that comments received were about increasing public transit and about the density to support transit. The final presentation was Air Quality Impacts of COVID-19. Mr. Bill Swiatek presented the third in a series of presentations on the impact of COVID-19 focused on the air quality changes resulting from less driving. There was a question as to why Cecil and New Castle Counties' impacts were different. Mr. Swiatek thought it may be the result of more monitoring in New Castle County.

#### **8. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Report:**

Ms. Heather Dunigan said that at the July 16<sup>th</sup> meeting, there was one Action Item to amend the functional classification for Belvidere Road. This goes with the TIP amendment from the last Council meeting where funding was approved to modernize and widen the Belvidere Road Bridge. There were three presentations. DelDOT presented on the FY 2021-2026 Capital Transportation Program. The second was on the 2020 Delaware State Strategies for Spending. There was also a presentation on the Southern New Castle County Master Plan.

At the August 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, there were a number of Action Items including recommending the Public Participation Plan, which TAC did recommend. TAC also

recommended amending the TIP to increase funding for the Christina River Bridge Approaches Project, which Council subsequently approved via an email vote to allow the project to move forward. The TAC also recommended amending the FY 2020-2023 TIP to align with the Bond Bill. They recommended endorsement of the Southern New Castle County Master Plan Transportation Element. There were presentations on the Governor Printz Boulevard Study and the Newport Transportation Plan.

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

#### **9. To Amend the Functional Classification of Belvidere Road**

Mr. Dan Blevins said Cecil County requested the roadway segment of Belvidere Road between Theodore Road and Route 40 be changed from a local to major collector. It is a 2.6-mile roadway segment that crosses over I-95 near the rest stop interchange in Cecil County. The change stays within the mileage guidelines set by the Federal Highway recommendations with the adjustment to the local systems and actually allows Cecil County to get closer to the recommended mileage for major collectors. In August, the TAC voted in favor of this change.

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. Eric Sennstrom seconded by Mr. Herb Inden the Council approved the Resolution to Amend the Functional Classification of Belvidere Road.

Motion passed.

(09-10-20-02)

#### **10. To Approve the Draft WILMAPCO 2020 Public Participation Plan.**

Ms. Randi Novakoff described the update of the 2020 Public Participation Plan. A telephone public opinion survey that was demographically weighted and statistically valid was conducted in coordination with the RTP. Examples of other plans were reviewed for best practices. WILMAPCO staff participated in a peer exchange with another MPO while they developed their Public Participation Plan. An online survey specifically geared toward public participation was conducted with one hundred and eight-six participants. Eight responses were in Spanish. The draft Plan was prepared and presented to TAC, PAC, and Council. A joint public workshop with DelDOT and CTP was held with about thirty attendees. Necessary revisions were made to incorporate recommendations from the Transportation Justice Report. After being presented to the committees, the Plan was released for public comment from July 10<sup>th</sup> to September 9<sup>th</sup>. Promotion of the public comment period included a press release, newsletter and E-newsletter articles, announcement on the WILMAPCO website and a social media ad.

Revisions in the update include added detail about the planning process and more survey results. The full online survey results are in an appendix. The bulk of goals, objectives, and actions were unchanged, but revisions were made to reduce redundancy and simplify wording. New actions include working to engage youth in planning, ensuring public outreach manager oversight of all outreach strategies, and use of videos. A section was added to list the strategies that we may use, as well as a social media policy allowing posts that violate our policy to be removed or blocked. A new goal was added to incorporate the Transportation Justice recommendations. The goal is to achieve cultural proficiency and ensure social equity and representative involvement in all of our plans and studies. To do this, we will promote cultural diversity and work to improve our relationships with various cultures as a primary strategy. The first step is participation in

cultural competency training which is being scheduled now. Outside agencies in our region will be invited to participate in this training. Demographic quotas are now required to ensure there are representative samples in our public opinion surveys. Self-identification of gender is now allowed in surveys. We are striving to have equitable representation on the Public Advisory Committee. We are striving to collaborate and empower all communities, particularly low-income and minority communities by building relationships with trusted, community-based organizations and working to partner with them. Community members will be empowered to conduct surveys and facilitate meetings. Plans will be framed in a way that is relevant to the local communities. Meetings will be held in trusted locations like community centers, schools and libraries and childcare will be provided when possible. We will work with local partners to provide food or other incentives at public meetings when possible.

Facebook advertising resulted in close to 1,300 people viewing the ad, seven people clicked the link and seven people shared it. Outside of the comment period, one comment was received from a TAC member, Mr. O'Connor commented that the plan was well written, and he offered a few minor corrections which have been made. The Plan was recommended for approval by the TAC and PAC except one PAC member who did not think the Plan was consistent with the outreach being done for the Churchman's Crossing Study.

Ms. Andrea Trabelsi asked how equitable representation will be achieved. Ms. Novakoff replied that we look at demographic data for the study area and try to make sure those participating in workshops, etc. mirror that demographic as closely as possible. It is a very rough estimate. Many people are hesitant to provide their demographic information so it can be difficult to determine. Sometimes it may just be a judgement call based visually on who is participating, but it is a goal we strive for.

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. Eric Sennstrom seconded by Ms. Andrea Trabelsi the Council approved the WILMAPCO 2020 Public Participation Plan.

Motion passed.

(09-10-20-03)

#### **11. To Amend the WILMAPCO FY 2020—2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), New Castle/DE Statewide Elements.**

Ms. Heather Dunigan said that each September we align the TIP with the bond bill. This year the process is abbreviated as we are still in aligning our schedule with the new biannual DeIDOT CTP schedule. The TIP will contain more than \$3 billion for road, transit, rail, multimodal, and bicycle and pedestrian projects. This is 32% more funding than in the TIP that was approved in March of 2019.

In the statewide element there is a new project for a Rail Preservation Maintenance Program. The second project is the Transportation Infrastructure Investment Fund, which is designed to support economic development projects for transportation.

There are several new projects for Wilmington in this TIP proposal, most of which have come out of studies managed by WILMAPCO in partnership with DeIDOT and the City. The new, proposed projects include the 12<sup>th</sup> Street Connector; the East 7<sup>th</sup> Street Study recommendations; the Maryland Avenue, Monroe Street and MLK area project; and the new Wilmington DTC Maintenance Building, which came out of the Maryland Avenue-

Monroe Street study. Additionally, there is a South Wilmington Infrastructure Improvements Project, which is designed to support economic development in the South Wilmington area.

Elsewhere in New Castle County there are several new projects. There is the Millcreek Road at Stoney Batter Road Drainage Project. The South College Avenue Gateway Project came out of the Newark Transportation Plan and will improve multi-modal connections from the Route 4 area into Main Street. There are two projects on US 13. One is a median barrier replacement from SR 1 to Red Lion Road. The other is from the North Claymont Area Master Plan for bike/pedestrian and streetscaping improvements.

The share of funding by mode has not changed much since the March 2019 TIP, but there has been a 43% increase in funding for transit. WILMAPCO continues to support preservation first, with 51% of the funding going toward preservation projects.

As part of this action, Council is being asked to approve specific funding by different federal funding categories. WILMAPCO received a letter from DeIDOT authorizing this funding. We have fully reviewed this with our Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group for the bike and pedestrian projects and the Air Quality Subcommittee for the CMAQ projects and neither had any changes. The Statewide Bike/Ped Program uses CMAQ funding. The only project funded in New Castle County on the list this year is the Miller Road Streetscape project, which is under construction and should be finished in December 2020. There are a variety of TAP projects that have been on the list for a while. Many are multi-phase projects. We hope to have some more projects this fall for the TAP program. The use of the CMAQ and STP money for the ITMS has stayed largely unchanged.

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. Marc Coté seconded by Mr. Eric Sennstrom the Council approved the Resolution to Amend the WILMAPCO FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), New Castle/DE Statewide Elements.

Motion passed.

(09-19-20-04)

## **12. To Endorse the Southern New Castle County Master Plan Transportation Element.**

Mr. Dave Gula said the purpose of this Master Plan is to have a long-term, publicly supported vision for land use and infrastructure in Southern New Castle County. This Plan will also provide recommendations to WILMAPCO's Regional Transportation Plan, the TIP and also to New Castle County's Comprehensive Plan. Key points from three previous studies were incorporated in this Plan. The process began in October 2018 with an information session. WILMAPCO, DeIDOT and New Castle County worked as partners through the process which included a scenario analysis and draft plan released in November 2019, and the traffic analysis in the winter of 2020. A public information session was held in October 2018. The first visioning session was so well attended a second one was scheduled. New Castle County hosted a land use scenario development workshop in June 2019. The last live workshop was in October 2019. A virtual workshop was held on August 26<sup>th</sup> with forty-five attendees.

When the traffic analysis was done, twenty-three intersections were identified as already having projects recommended through a Transportation Improvement District (TID). That

left eight to review and analyze. Of those eight the traffic recommendations included four intersections: at US 13 SB and SR 299, US 13 NB and SR 299, SR 71 and Main Street/Pine Tree Road, and US 13 and SR 71. Other traffic recommendations include regular traffic signal coordination and optimization. This is done regularly, however, a program to look at congestion in Middletown along SR 299 is suggested. We will work with DeIDOT's Traffic Management Center (TMC) to review travel time and any other trends that occur over time. Traffic monitoring is recommended in the Townsend area. There was a lot of feedback from Townsend. In meetings with the County and DeIDOT, periodic traffic monitoring in the town was requested. There are concerns about truck traffic and excessive traffic coming through Townsend.

People suggested bike and pedestrian recommendations at the workshops. At the same time WILMAPCO was managing the New Castle County Bike Plan. Staff incorporated comments into both documents and had multiple meetings in SNNC, some for the bike plan, some jointly for the Southern New Castle County Master Plan. These recommendations are in the Southern New Castle County Master Plan Transportation Element and in the New Castle County Bicycle Plan, which was approved by the WILMAPCO Council in the summer. It is recommended that more low-stress bike routes be designed south of the canal to make safer connections between communities, but also between public destinations such as shopping areas. Connection to the C&D Canal and a trail on the south side were recommended as well. These could link to the lanes on the St. George's Bridge to connect to the bike network north of the canal. The project team is working with DeIDOT on their Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) analysis and looking for levels better than 2 if possible. Other bike/pedestrian recommendations include performing a gap analysis on the current network and looking for broken routes between neighborhoods, but also to connect to destinations like schools, parks, and shopping areas.

A transit analysis was performed based on population and employment forecasts for the entire New Castle County to see the contrast between north and south of the canal. That analysis helps identify the appropriateness for transit improvements and funding. In the study area there are few areas with medium to high suitability. DART hosted workshops and participated in most WILMAPCO workshops for the Master Plan. In the future, DART plans to increase the coverage of the greater Middletown area, improve the frequency and span of service, potentially add Saturday service, and provide better connectivity with routes north of the canal. Some short-term recommendations have been implemented, including splitting Route 43 into two routes. Route 43 will continue to serve Amazon, downtown Middletown, and the Odessa Park and Ride, while the new Route 63 will provide better local coverage in and around Middletown. Route 47x is a new limited-service route connecting Middletown, Christiana Mall, and downtown Wilmington. That will also serve the North Middletown Park & Ride when it opens in late 2021. Further in the future, new service initiatives may be created that would offer all-day express service from Kent County to Wilmington and improve local service from Wilmington to Dover. Route 46 could be expanded from Middletown to Glasgow. Route 302 could be shortened and there could be more service between Middletown and Dover.

Summit Airport, in the northern part of our study area, is an employment center and should have the opportunity to grow and produce more jobs. The first strategy is to review and refine as necessary the New Castle County Unified Development Code (UDC) as it relates to airport uses to promote development around the airport, while mitigating risks to airport operations and the flying public. This could include limiting new residential development on the approaches to Summit Airport. Strategy 2 is to continue

coordination with DelDOT's Office of Aeronautics to promote information about Summit Airport's economic impact, including sharing the Office of Aeronautics report, "The Economic Impacts of Delaware's Airports", with the County Executive, County Council Members, the Delaware Prosperity Partnership, Economic Development Department, and Department of Land Use Staff. Strategy 3 is to work with Summit Airport to understand its future business plans and see what is needed to assist in their expansion. This would also offer the opportunities for public-private partnership.

Poll questions were asked during the workshop on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Twenty people agreed that these bike/ped recommendations will help improve safety in Southern New Castle County and ten did not. Fourteen people agreed that these traffic recommendations will help with safety and traffic and fourteen did not. Comments received during the Q&A process were, for the most part, positive. All comments from public will be in the appendix. Follow up comments received from the public include:

- Do you have committed support from the state/county for the various recommendations in this plan?
- Have various recommendations been priced out where applicable?
- What are you going to do about the toll on 301? People going to Maryland from Middletown pay \$4.00 for a quarter of a mile. There were many comments about the toll.
- What is the practical upper volume limit for use of roundabouts over traffic lights? I personally prefer roundabouts over lights and would like to see greater use where it makes sense. Copies of comments that are more pertinent to other partners, such as DelDOT are provided to them.
- Is the demand for public transportation as high as it was a few years ago? Rideshare services such as Uber and Lyft have served people in other areas.
- Do you ever see a route from Smyrna to Christiana Mall without having to connect buses, meaning a direct route?
- What is the possibility of ditching LOS requirements in favor of limiting VMT...as done in California?
- Do you see any future plans to expand route 1 both north and southbound?

Delmarva Rail Passenger Association submitted a list of comments. They endorse the draft Transportation Element of the Southern New Castle County Master Plan and support recommendations for highway, transit, and nonmotorized transportation improvements in this region, however they do note that it is an area with a lot of single occupancy vehicles and want to see a reduction in that trend. They are "disappointed passenger rail was not mentioned in the draft element of the Southern New Castle County Master Plan." They state that "the draft discussed improvements of DelDOT and DTC. The possibility of private investment should also be discussed as part of the land use considerations. The developers should be required and encouraged to offer improvements that would benefit the public in the use of transit or nonmotorized transportation, but SegRides or microtransit modes should be considered. Operated from public sources such as DTC, New Castle County, towns or communities, small vehicles can be deployed for short range transportation between communities, connecting to DART bus stops and cover the first and last mile to public transportation." They also noted that there is an existing rail line. A freight line runs through the study area. It was twice studied for passenger service, but it was determined to be too expensive to be feasible. Their final recommendation is the mention of this historic rail line that crosses Southern New Castle County and its potential to connect to



destinations with Amtrak or SEPTA. They say the system could be planned now and offered in the near future when funding can be identified.

The PAC reviewed the Plan's public outreach program at the April 28, 2019 and August 17, 2020 meetings. No action was taken. The TAC voted unanimously to endorse the Southern New Castle County Master Plan Transportation Element at the August 20, 2020 meeting. The Plan was presented to the Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group on December 3, 2019 and also at the August 4, 2020 meeting. No action was taken. The WILMAPCO staff recommends the Council endorse the Southern New Castle County Master Plan Transportation Element.

Mr. Mike Spencer asked if the proposed Route 47x is an express from Christiana Mall to Wilmington or if it connects with Route 5. Mr. Gula replied he thinks it stops at the mall, and if so, it connects to Route 5 and other routes. Mr. Spencer asked if the 47x ends at the mall or continues to Wilmington. Mr. Gula replied it goes from downtown to the mall to Middletown. Mr. Sisson added that there is the Route 47 and the 47x. The 47 uses US 13 to come up into Wilmington. These routes were created to support people going to the Amazon facility. The employment agency determined people were coming from Wilmington, Newark, and Dover so DART picks up people on the Route 13 corridor. The 47x is an express version of that, which just goes to the mall. People can also use Route 302 to go from Newark to Middletown. Mr. Spencer asked if people wanted to go to Delaware Park, they could change to Route 5 at the mall. Mr. Sisson confirmed that.

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. Michael Spencer seconded by Mr. Herb Inden the Council approved the Resolution to Endorse the Southern New Castle County Master Plan Transportation Element.

Motion passed.

(09-10-20-05)

### **PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

#### **13. US 202/Concord Pike Master Plan**

Mr. Dave Gula said the goals and objectives of the Plan are:

- Create an attractive, cohesive, and balanced Master Plan.
- Integrate land use and transportation.
- Identify multi-modal improvements and diversify mode share.
- Make corridor more pedestrian & bike friendly.
- Improve access management & connectivity.
- Consider Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Transportation Improvement District (TID) strategies.
- Integrate streetscape, wayfinding, & branding.
- Preserve existing neighborhoods, which communities strongly support.
- Develop implementation strategies.

The Concord Pike Market Study, completed in 2017, included many stakeholder interviews. The first public information session for this project was July 25, 2018, with two hundred people in attendance. A community visioning session was held on November 14, 2018 at Concord High School with one hundred attendees. Stakeholder focus groups met on November 14th, 15th, and 16th, with thirty-six individuals or agencies participating. A Wiki Public Map Engagement allowed people to see maps online and note their ideas. Concepts were brought to the public at the second public

workshop on March 20, 2019. Ninety people attended. The third workshop was December 5, 2019 at Brandywine High School with one hundred and thirty-five attendees. Workshop #4, the first virtual workshop, was April 1, 2020, with one hundred and twenty-five attendees. The team shared the results of the transportation analysis and gave the public an idea of what the recommendations might look like.

Poll questions were asked at the April 1<sup>st</sup> workshop . When asked the level of comfort with the proposed changes to zoning if the impact to motor vehicle delay is similar, 27% were comfortable, 27% were neutral, 30% were somewhat uncomfortable and 16% were uncomfortable. When asked if a small amount of additional delay for motorists is acceptable to provide more safe and comfortable crossings for pedestrians, 13% said no, 80% said yes and 6% were unsure. When asked how likely they were to walk to destinations along Concord Pike and in surrounding neighborhoods if low stress connections were implemented, 44% were likely, 38% were somewhat likely, and 18% were not likely. When asked how likely they were to bike to destinations along Concord Pike and in surrounding neighborhoods if low stress connections and better bicycle parking facilities were implemented, 38% were likely, 29% were somewhat likely, and 34% were not likely.

An online survey was posted after the workshop. When asked which land use scenario was preferred from a list of options, 50% preferred low to medium density with mixed-use zoning. When asked to rank what should be further explored in this Master Plan, the highest ranking were new bicycle and pedestrian pathways and crosswalks, and access management throughout the corridor. The proposed multi-way from Beaver Valley Road to Rocky Run Boulevard ranked third, followed by additional vehicular connections as part of future development. When asked online if a small amount of additional delay for motorists is acceptable to provide more safe and comfortable crossings for pedestrians, 82% said yes, while 13% said no.

The vision for the corridor is consistent in that people want more walkable environments. It is important to connect neighborhoods and businesses on Concord Pike. People want to reduce heavy traffic and speeding and want safer conditions along the corridor, not just for bike and pedestrians, but for the cars. Incorporating additional pedestrian and bike trails and crossings is important so a multi-modal approach will be used.

Creating more walkable environments, both in between developments on Concord Pike as well as connecting to and within the surrounding neighborhoods is recommended. Establishing safe east/west connections at key locations will be key. There are a few key intersections to consider as there are connections in neighborhoods that facilitate crossing at these locations. New shared-use paths along side streets and within neighborhoods with wayfinding signage improvements are recommended. There are extensive trails and parklands on the west side of the corridor so, finding ways to connect to them is recommended. The public asked that the feasibility of a bike/pedestrian overpass or underpass be explored. The project team worked with DeIDOT to create a list of potential changes found in the New Castle County Bike Plan but need to find a way to move them forward. Some of the recommendations will be in the toolkit in the final report including high visibility crosswalks, median refuge islands, signal phasing and timing strategies to make it easier for pedestrians, tighter corner radii and truck aprons to make shorter distances to cross, bus stop access, and pedestrian scale lighting. Some of these will require changes to DeIDOT's design manual, but the team will be working with DeIDOT to see what can be implemented.

The project team has been discussing with DART what can be done. At times buses enter parking areas to drop off and pick up passengers because the facilities along the corridor are not safe to cross, but this diverts buses and slows the routes. To avoid this conflict, improvements such as better east/west connections will allow people to get on the bus on one side of the street and off the other. In the future, there could be service extensions into lower Chester County and Delaware County areas. In some cases, there may be signal improvements so buses can trigger the green signals. Recommended short term improvements are changing Route 2 from hourly to thirty-minute frequency in the later evening and extending the service on Saturday, and on Route 35 eliminate unproductive trips to improve travel times. There was discussion of removing some stops to make trips on and off of the corridor easier.

Moving vehicular traffic should be balanced with providing safe access for other modes of transportation. A network of Complete Streets, with the necessary physical, design, and visual elements, will enable Concord Pike to be safer for all modes. Based on traffic analysis and public comments, capacity increases along the corridor are not needed and expansion would be difficult because not much right of way is available. Localized intersection improvements may be needed depending on land use changes as the corridor evolves. Some large-scale development could occur that would allow additional vehicular connections. The multi-way concept was very popular with the public. The public liked the idea of having streetscape improvements, through traffic in center lanes and local traffic on the side with a barrier and landscaped medians. This would improve access to local businesses and provide some access management. It would help the pedestrians and maybe create some gateways and placemaking along the corridor, but it requires coordination with land re-development, so it needs more study. Roadway recommendations such as regular traffic signal coordination/optimization is important along a corridor that has a lot of congestion during its weekday peak hours and Saturday shopping peak. Regarding intersection improvements, there is not a one size fits all solution, so the team is looking at different locations to make improvements very local. A toolkit that will help us in this is being included as part of the Plan.

For land use, New Castle County and DeIDOT are our partners. We are working closely with Land Use to develop guiding principles to establish criteria that influence and control future development. Strategies were developed to create the cohesive community that people desire along this corridor. Redevelopment focus areas were identified where redevelopment is likely to occur including Naaman's Road/Brandywine Town Center area, around Silverside Road, Fairfax, and potentially Independence Mall. If these areas were to redevelop, there should be some identifiable nodes, some gateways, infill redevelopment, mix of uses, and hopefully recreational amenities.

Land use recommendations for identity and gateways include placement of them at key perimeter locations to announce the entrance to an area, establish an authentic identity, welcome visitors, and build on the history and culture of this corridor. Also, vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian arrivals can be addressed along the corridor. Plantings, directional signage, wayfinding, welcome signs, art, a plaza or two, lighting fixtures, and street furniture are possible suggestions. People want improved streetscape and street frontage. We encourage plans that create strong building frontage along Concord Pike, screen parking from primary streets and public spaces, and locate building entrances along primary streets to provide easy access and wayfinding for all users

To create a mix of uses, amenities that attract the broader community and encourages compact, high-quality development within walking distance would be recommended.

Many workers commute from outside the area which leads to congestion at the peaks. Encouraging more development and more residential to attract people who work in the area to live in the area would help. It also promotes walkability, bicycling, accessibility, and the ability to age in place. Many comments were received about adding recreational amenities and open space including centers or plaza type space. This promotes walking and bicycling, accessibility, and family-friendly outdoor activities. This needs to be a requirement so new development must add to the recreational amenities in the area.

Preliminary land use recommendations include developing a land use policy that encourages context sensitive commercial redevelopment in the identified redevelopment areas. This is a revision of the guiding principles for development provisions within UDC to encourage redevelopment consistent with 202 Master Plan principles such as encourage neighborhood preservation and affirm the conservation of residential neighborhoods adjacent to the corridor. Neighborhoods who seek to integrate adjacent commercial development into their community are empowered to pursue a Neighborhood Preservation Overlay District (NPOD) which can provide residents with opportunity to guide such development and redevelopment. The final recommendation is to identify potential parcels for historic overlay districts.

Corridor monitoring and performance measuring could be effective in implementing these projects. This executes the Master Plan through an ongoing process of conducting periodic or annual monitoring of key metrics and trends like land use, traffic and highway safety, transit service and ridership, project implementation status, effectiveness of completed projects, and regional factors impacting the corridor. This group would be made up of stake holders, decision makers, agencies, and the traveling public and would meet often enough to stay current with information that was gathered about the corridor and share it so the community understands the outcome of investments made. It also helps to prioritize the projects and allows for small mid-course corrections that may be needed as things change. A corridor monitoring committee can consider some things that keep coming up, like a problem at the McDonald's on the northbound lanes where the drive-thru backs up traffic, or a U-turn in Pennsylvania that we were asked to consider. It also helps with regional interagency coordination such as speaking to people over the Pennsylvania boundary.

The final virtual workshop will be on October 5, 2020. This will then go to the WILMAPCO TAC on October 15<sup>th</sup> and will come back to Council on November 12<sup>th</sup>. We will continue to accept public comments. The draft report will be available for the public the week before the workshop.

#### **14. Governor Printz Boulevard Corridor Study Update**

Ms. Heather Dunigan said that the Governor Printz Boulevard Corridor Study is looking at the future and current conditions and land use needs along the corridor. The team is collaborating with the stakeholders to look at future needs along the corridor for all modes of travel. The study area is approximately 6 miles, from the new Claymont train station to the City of Wilmington line. We have been working with DeIDOT, Delaware Transit Corporation, New Castle County, and Delaware Greenways, who helped initiate the project because they are interested in seeing greenway connections implemented along this corridor. Our advisory committee consisted of the various civic associations, property owners and organizations along the corridor. We are midway through the process. The visioning process was completed before COVID. Now concepts are being evaluated to include in the final report.

The public outreach process began with a visioning bus tour on November 6, 2019. This allowed us to get out on the ground and experience the corridor from the perspective of a transit user and a pedestrian, rather than driving through at a high speed.

On January 29, 2020, a visioning workshop was attended by eighty-one people. First, people were allowed to express their own personal priorities and vision for the corridor. Then, small groups shared their priorities and identified their top priorities for each of the different modes. Then, individuals used ballots to vote on their individual priorities. The major priorities that came out of most of the groups were connections to Fox Point State Park for walking and biking, better facilities for walking and biking along Governor Printz Boulevard itself, and an interest in a road diet.

During the month of February, an online survey was posted for people who were not able to participate in the workshop. It had seventy-five participants. Like the workshop, the main priorities are the Fox Point connection and better walking and biking facilities. The online survey showed strong support for maintaining the capacity of the existing road.

From this information different objectives for each user group were developed. For people who walk, the objectives are continuous, separated pathways and sidewalks, pedestrian access to Fox Point, and improved pedestrian access to destinations. There are almost no existing pedestrian facilities. For people who bike, we are looking to reduce the level of traffic stress along the corridor and provide low stress access to Fox Point and access to destinations. There are existing bike lanes on most of the corridor, but because of the speed of traffic and lack of separation it is a high stress corridor for people biking. For people who take transit, the objective was providing additional bus stops and shelters along the corridor. There is not much transit currently along the corridor except to the north near the Claymont Train Station and some transit routes serving the southern end. People have a long walk from a bus stop to destinations in the Merchant Square Shopping Center. For people who drive, there are concerns about speeding traffic and difficulty making left turns into the side streets from Governor Printz due to traffic speeds. People noted that most of the road for is underused for much of the day, so there was an interest in how roadway space can be better allocated. For all users, street lighting is lacking, as is landscaping even though there is a wide green median, and stormwater management is a major issue. After any major storm event Governor Printz Boulevard is usually flooded.

At the advisory committee meeting in June, the committee considered seven different alternatives and provided feedback on how these should be refined. There was a desire to explore more options for a pathway on the west side of the road, closer to the development. Most of the options had the path on the east side, which is the river side of the road. There was a lot of debate at that meeting whether the path should be on the east side or west side of the road. To narrow it down, essentially three different alternatives were developed. The first two are a mirror images showing the pathway on each side.

The existing conditions show a large median in the center, a shoulder bike lane on either side of the road, two eleven-foot lanes on each side of the road, and a 50 miles per hour speed limit. It has virtually no pedestrian facilities and is not a desirable place to bike. There is more capacity than needed for traffic, especially to the north where traffic is extremely light.

Alternative 1a shows the pathway on the eastern, river side and keeps the existing four lanes for traffic. The space for the pathway is created by shrinking the center median. Alternative 1b flips it so the pathway is on the western, more developed side of the road. On the east side, the pathway offers uninterrupted bike access but does require crossing Governor Printz Boulevard to access that pathway. On the west side of the road, access to the path does not require crossing Governor Printz and offers direct access to the major roads and Bellevue State Park. However, there are fifty-seven driveways to cross and bicycling is interrupted eight-five times along the corridor. Alternative 2a is a road diet option that shifts both travel lanes to one side of the road to create space for a pedestrian/bike promenade on the eastern side of the road. Alternative 2b mirrors alternative 2a, showing the promenade on the west side of the road. Alternative 3 is another road diet option that retains the center median area and puts the multi-use pathway on both sides of the road. This gives people the option of crossing over for the uninterrupted use experience or staying on the west side for short trips, or to avoid crossing the street. The space for the bicycle and pedestrian facilities comes from the median or from shifting lanes and the more these elements shift, the more drainage and easement needs to be considered.

To evaluate the alternatives, draft evaluations were broken down by mode. For people who bike, the number of driveway crossings and whether or not there are low stress connections were considered. For people who drive, travel time and intersection delay were evaluated. The cost of impact on property and the ease and cost of implementation and maintenance were also evaluated. None of the options have a particularly bad level of service (LOS) because we began with so much unused capacity. Alternatives 1a and 1b have no level of service impacts because we retain the four travel lanes. The other alternatives create a few seconds of delay. The PM delay at Governor Printz Boulevard and Edgemoor Road, which is currently LOS D would increase by a few seconds to have a LOS E.

A virtual public workshop will be on September 21<sup>st</sup> and an online survey will be posted as well as the recording of the workshop for anyone who cannot attend. The information gathered from that will help select a preferred option. Once the preferred alternative is selected, the project team will start planning how to connect that alternative to the surrounding roadway. Then the final report will be completed.

## **15. Newport Transportation Study**

Mr. Dave Gula said this study goes back to 2012 with the completion of the Newport Station Study. At that time, the community was interested in seeing a connector for a train stop at the old Newport Train station. With that work, it became obvious that much could be done to help the town become more multi-modal. The first public workshop was a visioning session on January 27, 2020. There were thirty-nine participants. Participants were divided into small groups and given maps to walk through questions about the study area boundary, the type of development they would like to see, the kind of bike and pedestrian infrastructure that is important, multi-modal connections, any impacts for freight both existing and anticipating the opening of the Boxwood Road Logistics Center, and what is needed to make the train station work for SEPTA. The initial growth area was pushed a little further west for the study area and a little further east to include the Delaware Military Academy, which is adjacent to Banning Park. This expanded the study area included some additional residential areas. The public feedback emphasized biking and walking, but also smart growth with restaurants and mixed use in the downtown area. There were some requests to look at historic sites within the town. Water access is

related to a potential trail being considered along the waterfront that would connect with the Jack Markell Trail. This is already a really strong town for bus transit so there is the intent to strengthen those connections but also plan for the potential opening of the rail station opens.

Bike and pedestrian connections are being considered between neighborhoods, schools, and parks, as well as between the proposed train station to the center of Newport, and then to Boxwood Road. Also, connecting neighborhoods and downtown to First State Plaza is desired as it is a primary shopping area to the west. Sidewalks should be evaluated to check for gaps or other needed improvements. The list of improvement projects requested by the community are scattered throughout study area. The list includes the truck redirection project; many pedestrian improvements; park/school connectivity for Conrad School, Delaware Military Academy and Richardson Park; and then looking at how the train station would connect to downtown and then on to Boxwood Road; and some gateway signs.

We had conversations with DART to see if they could potentially reroute a bus route to create a bus connection between the center of town and the Boxwood Road logistics center. The Route 1 bus goes up Boxwood Road, but there may be some other options. We will work on that to have potential suggestions to present when we go to the public. There were requests for more direct connection to University of Delaware STAR Campus which requires taking Bus Route 5 to the Christiana Mall, then connect from the mall. Potentially, a shorter connection could be achieved by connecting to the Prices Corner Park & Ride where people can access Route 6, which goes directly into Newark. There is a request for more bus/bike connections between DelCastle High School, Powell Ford Park, and SR 4. To do that, a bus route along Kiamensi Road needs to be considered, which would provide direct access to DelCastle School, but that road may not be suitable for buses. Finally, bus stop amenities like shelters, lighting, and bus stop signage should be considered.

To evaluate where bus shelters are needed, existing ridership was calculated for the bus Route 9 along Boxwood Road from SR 4, where Route 18 passes through on SR 141, and Route 5, which runs along Newport Gap Pike. Four stops were found where ridership approaches but does not meet the warrants for a shelter, so we will talk to DART about improving the amenities at those stops. They are located downtown at Walnut Street, on SR 4 on Market Street, and near First State Plaza there are two locations at Glen Berne Drive and Rothwell Drive.

Our project team reviewed the 2012 train station project report. The demographics have not changed much from the last time this study was done. There is an additional SEPTA train in each direction now for a total of ten trips each weekday. Some improvements were completed between bus Route 5 and the proposed train station, but the James Street underpass needs to be explored. It will be the main connection point between the station and the town. There are some sidewalks, but they need improvement. People would like to see a station building, a couple platforms, and parking, which is already covered for up to two hundred and fifty riders. We are looking at making a multimodal connection to Boxwood Road logistics center. The previous ridership projections that were done in 2012 were updated in 2019, and they emphasize the suitability of this area for a train station.

A virtual public workshop is scheduled for September 30<sup>th</sup>. Recommendations from the workshop and suggestions for the projects that are already detailed will be used to

develop the report, including cost estimates that will help with prioritizing the projects. Then, the public will also help to prioritize the project. Hopefully, before the end of 2020 the final report will be brought back to both the TAC and Council.

## **16. Air Quality Impacts of COVID-19**

Mr. Bill Swiatek said WILMAPCO has been doing a series about the changes to the transportation system and our lives since the lockdown due to COVID-19, so this presentation is about air quality changes as a result of the pandemic. The six criteria pollutants that we look at for air quality have been improving over the past century. It is one of the good stories from regulations that came out of the Clean Air Act. Since 1970, things like ozone, fine particulate matter, CO and the other pollutants have come down, while as a country, our GDP, VMT, and our population have been going up. A trend to keep in mind is that we have been seeing an overall reduction in emissions. One of the major impacts of the COVID lockdown this spring is that half of the people stayed at home and there was a 50% decline in traffic in Delaware, and about a 50% stay at home rate in the Philadelphia Metropolitan Region. There have been some additional benefits from that. When comparing of NO<sub>2</sub> emissions from March of 2020 versus the average for the past five years, there is much less intensity of those emissions in March of this year due to the lack of activity.

There were many news stories ranging from reports that the pandemic has led to huge global drops in emissions to reports that there has not been much of a change in air quality. These conflicting stories inspired a closer look at the data. From those six criteria, we looked at ozone, for which New Castle County and Cecil County are in nonattainment; and PM2.5, which is fine particulate matter, for which New Castle County is in maintenance. PM are basically little particles of dust and soot in the air. They are incredibly small, about one thirteenth of the size of a human hair. They get lodged lungs. Ground level ozone is made up of two different pollutants, nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). They come from the transportation sector and some industries. The health risks from ozone include respiratory issues. PM2.5 can lead to heart disease, stroke, and it has been tied to cancer. Thankfully, in this part of the world, we do not have the excess premature deaths due to these emissions that other parts of the world have, like Asia, which is more industrial in terms of manufacturing.

There is some national-level data showing ozone decline. Comparing 2020 to the five-year average, in Los Angeles has seen a 14% decline in ozone. Houston had about a 12% reduction, and Pittsburgh had about a 9% reduction. In most cases there has been a reduction up to about 22% in different regions in the country. Interestingly, these numbers are from a story that expressed some surprise that these numbers were not larger given the 50% stay at home rate. One of the reasons for these findings is that not a tremendous amount of our emissions comes from the fleet that is on the road. Light duty vehicles make up about a quarter of the emissions that goes into ozone in New Castle County and only about 6% of the PM2.5 emissions. Most of those are from stationary sources so the reduction in traffic would not have a huge impact in those emissions going down. Cecil County was a little bit higher in terms of VOCs and PM2.5 in terms of overall emissions.

The April 2020 air quality index was compared to the last five-year April average. To look at this regionally, April was chosen because that was the one month that all of the states in the Mid-Atlantic region were in lockdown, so it is a control month for looking at air quality improvements. For ozone, the comparison of April 2020 to the five-year average



shows a 15% decline in New Castle County, 10% decline in Cecil County and 16% decline for the Philadelphia Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which is in line with what has been shown nationally in other regions.

Another way to look at this is to look at what our bad ozone days are. In 2020, the data through the end of May suggests that it has been the best year on record compared to the previous twenty years. New Castle County has had only one bad ozone day through May 31<sup>st</sup>. The next best year in the previous twenty years was ten bad ozone days. The figures are similar for the Philadelphia MSA with three bad ozone days through May of 2020 with the previous best year having seventeen.

For PM2.5, the data for April in the Air Quality Index compared with the previous April averages shows some improvements in Cecil County and the Philadelphia MSA. New Castle County was slightly off the five-year average, showing a 4% reduction in terms of the best year for the April average. One of the reasons for this finding might be that Cecil County only has one monitor being considered, which may influence these numbers. Bad PM2.5 air days can be considered as well. Philadelphia MSA had the best year in the previous twenty with the fewest bad PM 2.5 air days. New Castle County was right on target with the best year out of the past twenty.

As this is one of the series of presentations on impacts from the lockdown, we expect to continue to look at this as we continue through the pandemic.

Mr. Mark Cote said that he had no questions, but that was cool.

#### **INFORMATION ITEMS:**

#### **17. DeIDOT's Administrative Modification Request Letters**

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Spencer made a motion to adjourn, Ms. Murphy seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 12:03 a.m.

#### **ATTACHMENTS: (0)**