

Date: November 18, 2008

Location: Chase Center on the Wilmington Riverfront, Christina Ballroom

Time: 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Attendees

Victor Ayala, *representing Michael Szczerba*, (Wilmington Police)

Dave Blankenship (Department of Public Works/Transportation, City of Wilmington)

George F. Cunningham, Jr. (Fire Marshal, City of Wilmington)

Suzan Doordan, *representing Bill Osborne*, (Transportation Management Assoc. of Delaware)

Angie Dixon (Hurley~Franks & Associates)

Jeff Flynn (Department of Economic Development, City of Wilmington)

Carrie Gray (Wilmington Renaissance Corporation)

Dave Gula (WILMAPCO)

Marty Hageman (Downtown Visions)

Julia Han (Downtown Business Association/Sports Connection)

Dave Hunt, *representing Clarence Wright*, (Main Street Wilmington)

Alfred Lance (Department of Economic Development, City of Wilmington)

Tom Meyer (DeIDOT Traffic)

Todd Oliver (Whitman, Requardt & Associates)

Megan McGlinchey (Riverfront Development Corporation)

Mike Purzycki (Riverfront Development Corporation)

Jeff Riegner (Whitman, Requardt & Associates)

Pamela Sapko (Delaware Center for Horticulture)

Cathy Smith (Delaware Transit Corporation)

Stan Soja (Wilmington Parking Authority)

Bill Swiatek (WILMAPCO)

Barbara Washam (Public)

Sarah Willoughby (Greater Wilmington Convention and Visitors Bureau)

Total Attendance: 23

- Mr. Gula, the project manager, welcomed the committee and provided an overview of the *Downtown Wilmington Circulation Study*. He noted the last full traffic study of the Downtown occurred in 1997 and stressed that the present study would have a heavy transit component, missing in the 1997 study. It will also revisit proposals in the previous study. Mr. Gula then introduced Jeff Riegner, the lead consultant.
- Mr. Riegner went through a PowerPoint presentation (available here: http://www.wilmapco.org/Downtown/files/DCS_presentation_2008-11-18.pdf) which detailed the study's progress. He particularly emphasized seven common themes (available here: http://www.wilmapco.org/Downtown/files/Common_themes_DRAFT_2.pdf) which developed between the Advisory Committee and Downtown stakeholders who have been interviewed. He said that other comments which did not fit into one of these themes have not been discarded, but most comments received did fall into particular themes. These are found below, presented roughly in order based on the number of comments received so far:
 1. Ensure that Downtown streets balance all modes of travel (walking, bicycling, transit, and driving) and include buildings and streetscape that enhance street life.
 2. Provide convenient, frequent transit service throughout the City, especially to the train station.
 3. Promote a vibrant, healthy Downtown, with a mix of 24-hour uses, through transportation improvements.
 4. Make Downtown more walkable.
 5. Improve the existing street system for all modes of travel by timing traffic signals, evaluating street direction changes, and managing on-street parking and loading.
 6. Match parking demand with supply.
 7. Reclaim Rodney Square as Downtown's premier public space.
- Mr. Riegner asked the Committee if these themes made sense. A discussion, led by Mr. Riegner and Mr. Gula followed.
- Mr. Meyer asked if safety came up in interviews with stakeholders, with particular regard to pedestrians and lighting conditions downtown. Mr. Riegner said that it had on numerous occasions. Most of the comments did center on pedestrian lighting and intersection issues. A few stakeholders also identified motorized safety problems.
- Mr. Soja mentioned that parking is often too expensive or completely lacking. Mr. Riegner said parking issues were raised by several stakeholders, as were comments for making the Downtown better for those without cars. He noted that expensive parking may lead to increased transit use. At the same time,

- providing reasonable parking pricing and availability is important for the city's economic development.
- Mr. Gula brought up parking issues at the Riverfront. Mr. Purzycki said the Riverfront should not act as the Downtown's parking lot. Mr. Gula agreed and noted that, ideally, transit users would begin their transit trip to Wilmington from outside the City.
 - Ms. Willoughby said that much of the discussion thus far involves City residents or workers. It is important not to forget the transportation challenges faced by visitors to Wilmington. Mr. Gula agreed. He said that transit is not friendly for outsiders and that a City-circulator route would be a welcomed improvement to transit mobility. Ms. Smith said that a number of creative circulator route proposals have been put forth over the years, such as a "Museum Shuttle." However, funding is in short supply for DTC and this prevents their realization. Mr. Lance said that the seven themes were good. Instead of new routes, however, simply educating residents about the existing service, along with improved signage and maps for visitors would go a long way in improving transit use. Mr. Riegner agreed.
 - Mr. Riegner noted that two transit hubs are located in Wilmington—the train station and Rodney Square. Certainly, it is important for a continued strong transit presence at the station. The study will consider alternatives to the current Rodney Square hub, including reconfiguration or possibly relocation. Mr. Gula stressed these explorations will take place with DTC.
 - Mr. Gula asked the group when and where they did not want to walk in the Downtown. The following locations were mentioned:
 - MLK Boulevard
 - The entire length of Walnut Street (Train Station to 16th)
 - Around the train station, including the sweeps
 - 11th at Orange
 - Transition from 12th St. to Del. Ave. (sidewalk ends on north side of 12th)
 - 4th Street
 - Pennsylvania Ave. (Van Buren to Union) – *outside study area*
 - 4th at Walnut, West & King Streets
 - 2nd at King
 - 12th at Walnut

- Mr. Gula asked about driving conditions, along with difficult parking garage entrances and exits. The following locations were mentioned:
 - The system of sweeps near the train station on MLK Blvd., King, Walnut St.
 - Blue Cross garage on 11th and Madison: numerous vehicle and pedestrian conflicts
 - Front Street conflicts near the train station
 - Lane and signage confusion at Delaware Ave. and Penn. Ave. split
 - Garage along 12th Street; police stop traffic to let people traffic. It is sometimes difficult to see them.
 - Community Services Building garage on 12th Street: Vehicle conflict making the turn on 12th. Making the turn on 12th, you are cut off by people in the middle lane making the turn. Signage is there, but drivers do not heed.
 - Inbound on Delaware Ave. (between Jefferson and Washington) there is a six-point intersection. There is difficult movement around the YMCA due to child care drop-off and pick-up during peaks.
- Mr. Gula said that lack of parking enforcement contributes to vehicle conflicts. He noted that parking enforcement ends at 4:00 p.m. Those who park along King Street, for example, after this time not only take up a travel lane but receive no penalty for doing so.
- Ms. Washam said that not enough parking is provided at the Post Office.
- Mr. Gula noted that there is talk of again bringing transportation operations under one roof in the City. This could help to streamline operations.
- Ms. Sapko mentioned that the Downtown is not dog-friendly. Ms. Willoughby agrees and noted that dog waste bags should be posted at key locations around the Downtown, such as along the Riverfront.
- Ms. Sapko asked if there was a plan to bring back Philly Car Share. Mr. Gula said that WILMAPCO is hoping to attract a car-sharing company for the region, with particular focus on the University. That Philly Car Share left Wilmington should not be viewed as a reflection on the City, it was due to an internal problem with the company.
- Ms. Willoughby said a need exists for shuttle service (not DART-related) from Downtown hotels to the convention center on the Riverfront. At times there are between 600 and 1,000 people who need transportation. Without this service, the City has lost many opportunities to host conventions and conferences.

- Mr. Gula thanked the Advisory Committee for their participation in the meeting. He invited them to the upcoming Public Workshop to formally introduce the Circulation Study on December 2nd.