

Newark Transportation Plan

Updating the Newark Transportation Plan: Status of Major Issues

The *Newark/Elkton Intermodal Transportation Plan* was completed in 1998. Over the next year, WILMAPCO and Newark will work with an advisory committee of citizens, civic and business groups, and public agencies to develop an updated multimodal transportation circulation plan for the Newark Area. Major issues detailed in the 1998 plan include:

Congestion in Downtown Areas



Downtown traffic congestion in Newark continues to be a concern, resulting in travel delays, safety hazards, and negative impact on quality of life. Conflicts result from the mix of automobile traffic, truck traffic, rail freight traffic, bicycle and pedestrian traffic, and on-street parking. Congestion has not improved since the 1998 Plan was completed.

Impact of Truck and Rail Freight Traffic



Goods movement activities have generated concerns in downtown Newark. The future use of Chrysler future truck trips on S. College Ave. and how use of the Amtrak rail corridor can be used more effectively by commuter rail and freight. The key rail traffic concern is the CSX rail line which passes through downtown Newark. Trains create roadway travel delays especially at the Deer Park intersection, and they also pose safety hazards to motorists and pedestrians crossing the line.

Conflicts for Bicyclists and Pedestrians



High bicycle and pedestrian volumes require safe and convenient facilities for walking and cycling. Many roads lack bike facilities, and the network of bike paths is incomplete. Crashes involving pedestrians and bicycles are concentrated on Main Street, Delaware Avenue, College Avenue, Cleveland Avenue and Elkton Road. Since 1998, new pedestrian signals, Main Street streetscaping, and the completion of the Hall Trail have aided in nonmotorized travel but additional facilities and safety education and enforcement are needed.

Availability of Public Transit



In 1998, it was felt that transit did not adequately serve the Newark area. A remaining concern is with the efficiency of services. Newark is served by DART and UNICITY, with added service for students by the University, but these services are not well-coordinated with each other. Most DART routes are oriented toward Wilmington as a peak hour destination. The UNICITY serves downtown Newark but with only limited service. Since 1998, added DART routes serve Newark, with transfers at the new Transit Hub. There is still a need to upgrade support facilities such as bus stops and shelters, park-rides, and public information locations.

Lack of Convenient Parking in Downtown Areas



The availability and location of parking is an important factor in downtown circulation patterns and business activity. Significant demand exists for on-street parking in downtown Newark – parking along Main Street between Chapel Street and Elkton Road and with increased mixed use development the demand for parking permits far exceeds the availability. A lack of bicycle parking also continues to be an issue. Since 1998, the University has constructed three parking garages and plans have been developed for a downtown municipal garage.

Congestion along Regional Corridors



In addition to downtown congestion, there is congestion at locations along key travel corridors throughout the greater Newark area. Among the more congested roadway segments are DE 896, Old Baltimore Pike, and Red Mill Road. In addition, at the Newark toll plaza along I-95, delays can be lengthy during certain peak periods, e.g., summer weekends, causing some traffic to “divert” from the toll plaza in order to avoid waiting in line and/or paying the toll. Currently, improvements to add highway-speed EZ Pass lanes at the toll plaza are funded.

Plan recommendations: Where are we now?

| 1998 Plan Recommendation | 2009 Status |
|--|---|
| <i>Land Use Planning / Growth Management</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Transit-Friendly Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redevelopment along Elkton Road and Main Street built to be walkable & transit supportive |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Traffic Calming Measures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic calming policy & design guidelines approved |
| <i>Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Regional Greenway/Bike Route System | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Castle County Greenway Plan developed, Hall Trail completed and Pomeroy Train in final design and funded for construction |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Integrated Bike Route System in the Newark Area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newark Bicycle Plan completed, Newark Bicycle Committee formed to provide guidance on implementation of improvements |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance Pedestrian Amenities in Downtown Areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main Street Streetscape project completed, Elkton Road redesign funded to improve pedestrian amenities |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Level of Education and Enforcement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newark Bicycle Committee hopes to work with the City and University to improve safe cycling education and enforcement |
| <i>Public Transit Service & Travel Demand Management</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Transit Center in Downtown | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transit hub complete |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Circulator Services in Newark | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newark Trolley service initiated with limited hours |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Newark-Elkton Local Bus Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Route 65 bus route links Elkton-Newark |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance Bus Stop Facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some shelters added |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement "Bikes on Transit" Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All DART routes have bike racks on buses |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance Connections at Newark Rail Station | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Station improvements will be examined in S. College Ave. station plan, to be done Fall 2009 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate Extension of Commuter Rail Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility Study complete for rail extension, improvements unfunded |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand Scope of TDM Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Delaware has been an active member of TMA Delaware, and promotes carpooling & non-driving commuting |
| <i>Traffic Operations / Systems Management</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to Evaluate Alternatives for Deer Park Intersection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study completed; options found to have limited cost/benefit value |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue Parking Management Initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using shared parking and parking fees to manage parking demand, new garage location selected but unfunded |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modify Intersection Geometries / Signals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signal timing will be re-evaluated as part of Plan update |
| <i>Increased Roadway Connections</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate Feasibility of Northern Connector Route | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No expansion in this corridor is currently planned |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve Pomeroy Branch Corridor for Multi-Use Facility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pomeroy bicycle/pedestrian facility is fully funded for construction |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widen CSX Underpass at Casho Mill Road | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newark opted to work with DelDOT to install a pedestrian tunnel rather than an additional lane |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate Need to Widen Intersections | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intersection needs continue to be evaluated |