

PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

WILMAPCO Conference Room, October 17, 2016

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Wes Avera, Centreville Civic League
Dave Carter, Southern New Castle County Alliance
Pat Folk, Cecil County
Dick Janney, Southern New Castle County
Joe Mitchell, Cecil County
Jeff Peters, Pike Creek Valley Civic League
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council
Peggy Schultz, League of Women Voters
Gail Seitz, City of New Castle
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance
Vic Singer, Civic League of New Castle County
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance
Antonio Valenzuela, City of Wilmington (Chair)

Absent:

Bruce Brunozzi, City of Wilmington
Robert Cameron, Claymont Renaissance Development Corporation
Darlene Cole, Elderly and Disabled Transit Advisory Committee
Bill Lower, Committee of 100
Tom Posatko, Delmarva Rail Passenger Association
Francis Swift, GHADA
Javier Torrijos, Delaware Hispanic Commission
Frank Vari, Chesapeake City

Staff Members:

Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner
Dave Gula, Principal Planner
Randi Novakoff, Outreach Manager
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Guests: Mark Deshon, Newark Bike Committee

Minutes prepared by Janet Butler

Antonio Valenzuela, PAC Chair, called the meeting to order at

7:00 PM

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes

7:02 PM

Mr. Singer presented the following revisions to the June 12 and August 22 Minutes:

June 13th Minutes:

- 1) Mr. Singer said on page 3 in the middle of the page the last sentence should say, Route 141 from Rte. 2 to 202 has seen a 15% improvement in travel time, which resulted from expenditures that were less than snow plowing.”

2) Referring to the top of page 6, Mr. Singer asked for clarification regarding the sentence: "Ms. Dunigan said assuming coastal zoning will stay as it is." Mr. Carter clarified this sentence relates to the Claymont Plan and he was asking about the Sunoco Plant that was not being considered and the Act will not change.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Tancredi seconded by Ms. Folk the PAC approved the June 12, 2016, meeting minutes, with revisions.

Motion passed **(10/17/16-01)**

August 22 Minutes:

Mr. Singer asked for the following sentence to be removed from the record, "Mr. Singer said he attended the WILMAPCO TAC/AQS Picnic at Lums Pond State Park in July" because it is not relevant.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Singer seconded by Mr. Tancredi the PAC approved the August 22, 2016, meeting minutes, with revisions.

Motion passed **(10/17/16-02)**

2. Public Comment: **7:05 PM**
None.

3. Executive Director's Report: **7:12 PM**

Ms. Zegeye said at the Council Meeting on September 8, 2016, the following actions were passed: Amend the FY 2017 UPWP with carryover tasks; Amend the FY 2017 UPWP with WILMAPCO and Member Agency Tasks; Adopt the Air Quality Conformity Determination for the FY 2017-2020 TIP and 2040 Regional Transportation Plan; Amend the FY 2017-2020 TIP, New Castle County/DE Statewide Elements; Endorse the SR 141 20-Year Transportation and Land Use Plan; and Approve the Proposed PAC Reappointments. Presentations included: City of Wilmington Comprehensive Plan Update; National Highway Freight Network; and 2016 Demographics Update.

Ms. Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- A joint WILMAPCO TIP/DeIDOT CTP Workshop was presented on August 31, 2016 at the Newark Library with 40 people attending.
- Staff attended the Cecil County CTP tour meeting on September 30, 2016.
- Staff exhibited at Newark Community Day on September 18, 2016.
- Safe Routes to School (SRTS) activities are continuing throughout the region.
- Staff presented the South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan at the APA MD/DE Regional Conference held on October 15-16, 2016.
- The Transportation Justice (TJ) Report will be presented at the IPA mobility conference tomorrow in Dover.
- The North Claymont Area Master Plan public meeting will be held on October 24, 2016 at Archmere Academy.
- The WILMAPCO "Our Town" event will be held on November 2, 2016 on "The Future of Transportation," at the Chase Center, Wilmington Riverfront.

- The Annual APA Delaware Meeting will be held on November 3, 2016 in Wilmington.
- The Route 9 Master Plan Public Meeting will be held on November 15, 2016.
- Walnut Street Public Workshop will be held on November 15, 2016.
- The Newark Regional Transportation Center (NRTC) project team is continuing with weekly conference calls with FTA Region III to keep the project on schedule.
- The Claymont Regional Transportation Center coordinated work with DTC will present a portion of the plan during the Claymont Master Plan public outreach.

ACTION ITEMS:

4. PAC Chair Nominating Committee Appointment

7:20 PM

Mr. Valenzuela asked for volunteers for the committee. Mr. Singer, Mr. Valenzuela and Ms. Shultz volunteered.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

5. Newark Bicycle Committee Outreach

7:40 PM

Heather Dunigan said the Newark Bicycle Committee is a partnership of interested cyclists and agencies working to improve bicycling in Newark, Delaware, including the City of Newark, University of Delaware, Newark Bike Project, and WILMAPCO.

Mark Deshon, Chair of the Newark Bicycle Committee, said the Delaware Avenue Cycle Track is one of the committee's major initiatives. In addition, in the past six months, four subcommittees were formed because of the high volume of activity, including communication, education, encouragement, safety and enforcement, and engineering.

The Communication Subcommittee's purpose is to get the word out to more people in more ways. They recently ramped up their Facebook page. It is kept fresh with frequent updates, and they have started a new Twitter feed. One member is drafting a bi-monthly newsletter entitled, "Messenger Bag." The fourth issue is coming out soon and it is a good vehicle to let people know what is happening regarding bicycling in Newark. The website was housed at WILMAPCO, but it is now transitioning to its own site. The new website is not live yet.

Ms. Dunigan said the Bicycle Committee does a lot of marketing and the information mainly focuses on safety. They have developed a "Civility" bicycle campaign, which fuels creative ideas from Visual Communications Program students at the University of Delaware on how to get the word out. Mr. Deshon also created a commuter brochure on bicycling tips, safety brochures, and hand-outs. Bike-to-Work Day is a major event, which is becoming well-known and is well-attended, including presentations by local dignitaries and local businesses who are participating. They also hold bicycle trains where people meet in different places in Newark and bicycle as a group, which helps people become more comfortable with bicycling.

Regarding Safe Routes to School (SRTS), the Newark Bicycle Committee, WILMAPCO, and the City of Newark, partnered last spring to conduct a walking/biking audit, where they walked with parents, teachers, and local officials around Downes Elementary School and plotted infrastructure improvements to make it easier for students to walk to school. They also presented a proposal to DeIDOT, and received some SRTS funding to implement the improvements.

Last spring the Newark Bicycle Committee held a Bike-to-School Day and the Mayor of Newark Fun Ride. They also started working with the Engineers without Borders group from the University of Delaware, where the students review the existing infrastructure in a one-mile radius around the school for future SRTS improvements.

Other committee activities have included First Friday Rides, an extension of the Mayor's Fun Ride, which recently attracted more than 60 people. They are slow-paced rides that make families feel comfortable. In addition, the Bike Safety Checkpoints program, a partnership with DeIDOT, University of Delaware (UD), and the Newark Bike Project, distribute free bike lights, bike tune-ups, and helmets. The program expanded and last spring, they held a Bicycle Rodeo with college students.

The Newark Bicycle Committee has been helping with public outreach for the DeIDOT Delaware Avenue Cycle Track Feasibility Study, which included a mock-up of the facility on Delaware Avenue to be tested by area cyclists, who provided survey feedback. This feedback resulted in changing the facility from the south to the north side of the road.

Ms. Schultz said she had seen a poster that said you can't go against the traffic on a bicycle. She asked will there be pavement markings in the middle. Ms. Dunigan said yes. Going the wrong way is dangerous when drivers aren't looking for you and you also don't know what the signals are doing when you're facing the wrong way. This program will add bicycle phases to the signals and work to educate motorists to look for cyclists. DeIDOT is spending a lot of time and attention to make sure it is safe and the mock up helps to accomplish that.

Mr. Pusey asked the extent of the projects. Ms. Dunigan said from Orchard Road to Library Avenue. Ms. Seitz asked if it will connect to bike lanes. Ms. Dunigan said yes, a project is planned for the Orchard end for a Bicycle Boulevard which is 'low-stress' facility with quiet streets that connect destinations, discourage cut through driving, and create safe and convenient bicycle routes. Bicycle boulevards use a mix of signs, pavement markings, and traffic-calming measures. It also intersects with the Pomeroy Trail and University Green. At Library Avenue, a multiuse pathway is planned to Delaware Avenue.

Mr. Valenzuela asked if there are plans for more bike racks to accommodate the additional bike riders. Ms. Dunigan said yes Newark has installed more on Main Street, but, more are needed in shopping centers and businesses. He also asked if artistic groups could help create more creative designs on bike racks. Ms. Dunigan said we are working on a grant application to take the bike activities to the next level, and also are interested in partnering with the Newark Art Alliance and Downtown Newark Partnership to bring public art into the transportation infrastructure.

Mr. Janney asked if the Newark Bicycle Committee is using any data to show whether or not bicycling is remaining static. Ms. Dunigan said yes, if you look at the Census Data only two or three percent of the population bicycle to work. DeIDOT surveys to collect trip diary data that also includes other kinds of trips. State Parks data we found that bicycling is the third most popular recreational activity for Newark residents.

Another public outreach effort involves Cleveland Avenue, which has been the site of many bike crashes. The Newark Bicycle Committee has requested a Cleveland Avenue

Task Force be formed to implement more bike lanes and road diet options, and help make bicycling safer and more appealing.

Mr. Valenzuela commented that he had ridden his bike around Manhattan in New York City, where there are no rules, but nobody gets hurt. However, here there are rules but, people still get hurt. Ms. Dunigan agreed that they still have a long way to go to make bicycling safer in Newark.

Next steps are to reach out to the public to refine “bicycle boulevard” concepts and amend the Newark Bicycle Plan; apply for a “Big Jump Grant,” including a strategic three-year-effort to show that quickly connecting good biking networks and encouraging use can result in a big jump in biking; and they will also offer a leadership support program, technical design support, and community outreach and communication assistance. For questions and comments, please visit www.wilmapco.org/bikenewark; Facebook.com/BikeNewark; or Twitter@BikeNewark.

6. Wilmington Transit Moving Forward (WTMF)

8:00 PM

Mr. Gula said the final report for Phase I of Wilmington Transit Moving Forward (WTMF) defined the project vision with a series of 19 principles, opportunities, and examples, prioritized into four time frames for implementation: short-term, mid-term, long-term, and future. Phase II was meant to develop tangible projects that could then move forward for construction. The Project Management Committee (PMC) is made up of DeIDOT, DTC, City of Wilmington, Wilmington City Council, WILMAPCO, and consultants RKK (amenity improvements) and WRA (bus improvements), which have met 12 times. The Advisory Group is a much larger group that includes the PMC members and had up to 40 members.

The list of Phase II projects include: 1) Rodney Square, 2) Operational Analysis, 3) Fourth Street Transit Corridor, 4) Bus Stop Prototype, 5) Traffic Analysis, 6) Orange Street conversions, 7) Tatnall Street site (transfer area), and 8) Wilmington Transit Center (Porter Site).

One of the key concerns that initiated the study is that there were too many buses at Rodney Square and safety and rider comfort became a challenge. Since the study began the number of buses was significantly reduced. The data regarding Rodney Square trips during the service period from May 2014 to June 2016 indicated a 33% reduction (1,078 trips reduced to 722 trips). In addition, the Rodney Square improvements design includes visitor information and news kiosk, a café terrace, and bus shelters.

Typical bus stop improvement goals are: 1) Provide amenities; 2) Provide area for buses to stop in travel lanes; 3) Avoid conflicts with existing features; and 4) Improve pedestrian accessibility and safety. The new shelter design will be transparent, won't have four walls, which allow more people to get into the shelter; will have LED up-lighting, which radiates more light and the riders can be seen by the bus driver; and in some high-ridership stops will include real-time bus route information in the kiosk.

When the analysis was undertaken for 4th Street in Wilmington, Mr. Gula said it was noted that there were bus stops on nearly every block. On the map, the transfer stops are indicated in yellow, those in green are major stops, and those in blue are minor stops. There is no parking allowed at the bus stops. Prototype bus bulbs will be created

by extending sidewalk to create a safe boarding area. For larger transfer stops, full block bus bulbs can be added to streets with four lanes, such as on 4th Street. The new bus stop amenities accommodate one bus in most cases. They also improve pedestrian crossings and travel times, and help to minimize parking impacts.

The Two-way Traffic Analysis looked at the following roads: 1) Walnut Street, one-way north; 2) King Street, one-way south, which is not as wide in some spots but wider in others; 3) Orange Street, one-way north, which currently has a lot of bus use; and 4) 12th street, which is four lanes, is wider than it needs to be, and potentially is a two-way street.

The Phase II public process, which is ongoing, engages and informs stakeholders and the public with WILMAPCO's eNews and Transporter newsletter; Wilmington Initiatives (WI) eMail blasts; WI Joint Technical/Steering Committee meetings; City of Wilmington Mayor's Office Briefing by PMC; Wilmington City Council Briefing by PMC; WILMAPCO TAC and PAC presentations; Wilmington City Council Public Works and Transportation Committee briefings; WI Public Workshop; and Updates to state representatives and senators representing the City of Wilmington.

Next steps are to implement the WTMF Phase II recommendations and prioritize into short-and – mid-term improvements. The mid-term recommendations will then become separate projects for the next phase, DTC will encourage public private partnerships (P3) for funding support, and WTMF project oversight will transition to WI.

Mr. Valenzuela said the bus stops near his home become "skating rinks" in the winter because of the lack of maintenance and some are unclean. Mr. Gula replied he is sorry that his bus stop areas are not very well-maintained, DART is trying to clean up the bus stop areas, and he will pass this information along to them.

Mr. Janney asked what the transit ridership has been travelling into Wilmington. Mr. Gula said DART has recently seen a five-year growth spurt and had steady growth going back fifteen years. In addition, DART raised their fares from \$1.25 to \$2.00 over a two-year span. One half of the bus trips in New Castle County start and/or stop in Wilmington and the city is still the number one destination; therefore, DART is trying to manage some of the bus traffic through the WTMF projects.

7. Cecil County Public Opinion Survey

8:50 PM

Ms. Novakoff distributed the WILMAPCO Public Opinion Survey of Cecil County. She said this is the seventh time we have conducted the survey. It is a telephone survey conducted with a random sampling of 600 residents in Cecil County, Maryland, which includes making calls to 6,000 residents. The purpose of the survey is to gather information on the transportation choices made by residents and to gauge their perceptions and thoughts regarding transportation.

When asked how well the current transportation system meets their travel needs, three-quarters of respondents reported their transportation needs were "somewhat" or "very" well met. In addition, when asked to rate the condition of the roads and highways in Cecil County, about one half of respondents (51%) thought they were "excellent" or "good", which is about the same as last year.

However, more than half of respondents said they had noticed improvements made by the state to the transportation system. The portion of respondents who felt that the condition of the country roads and highways had gotten better (33%) was the highest that it has been since surveying began in 2007. About 2 in 10 felt that road conditions had gotten worse.

In general, Cecil residents feel they do not have very many transportation options. In 2016, 80% reported they have “few” options. As in the past, 8 in 10 (80%) residents feel that government agencies are doing a “fair” or “poor” job. In addition, as in previous years, the majority of respondents reported they “always” or “usually” drove alone. Among employed respondents, 83% reported they usually drive alone for the work commute.

When asked about familiarity with WILMAPCO and preferred methods of feedback, about 2 in 10 (20%) said they were familiar with WILMAPCO, and 8 in 10 (80%) considered their opportunities to participate to be just “fair” or poor.”

There was no clear consensus on the preferred way to communicate with planners. About a quarter preferred using the website, and another quarter preferred public meetings. Surveys as a form of feedback were also preferred by nearly a quarter of the respondents. Although the ratings of opportunities to participate in transportation planning were low, about 3 in 10 (30%) said they were interested in receiving free newsletters or public meeting announcements from WILMAPCO.

The Cecil County Survey is conducted once a year and the New Castle County Survey is conducted every four years. Since both the Cecil County Survey and New Castle County Survey need to be updated, staff will conduct both surveys every four years, when the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is updated.

Ms. Folk asked how WILMAPCO shares the information from the Cecil County Survey. Ms. Novakoff said the information is put up on the website and we give presentations to the TAC, PAC and Council. Ms. Zegeye added we use the data for all the WILMAPCO documents we work on including the Long Range Plan to show what the public is concerned about.

8. Other Business

8:50 PM

Mr. Singer asked if Mr. Valenzuela would be considering serving as PAC Chair for another year. Mr. Valenzuela said he has some professional issues to take care of, so it is probably not a good idea.

Mr. Tancredi said he has brought up the issue previously of the traffic and the intersection at the main entrance to the Christiana Mall. He reported that the rumble strips were put in, which has improved safety in that area, and give the public more awareness that a turn is coming up.

Mr. Carter suggested discussing at a PAC meeting what is working well in transportation planning in New Castle County and what the wish list is for DeIDOT and WILMAPCO during the transition (of elected officials). Ms. Zegeye added WILMAPCO staff can't say what the Governor of Delaware or the City of Wilmington should do. However, staff will talk to them about what WILMAPCO does and how we can help, but we do not try to shape their agendas.

Ms. Schultz said budget hearings are coming up and the League of Women Voters are concerned that multi-modal improvements are underfunded. Can WILMAPCO help in making a better case to get more money. Ms. Zegeye said we analyze what has been spent in the TIP for the past five years on transit and multi-modal projects and we can provide a comparison. Ms. Schultz also asked if the Delaware transit system is organized differently than other states, and can you give us a way to compare the apples to oranges. Ms. Zegeye said we can look at the size of the state, and compare Delaware to other states. At the federal level, transit funds are always smaller than the federal highway funding based on population.

Mr. Janney provided an update on Route 301. He said a lot of dirt is being moved. First the budget was predicted to cost \$100 million, but now it is up to \$750 million. The good news is that the project is on schedule. It is expected that there will be vehicles on it by 2018.

9. Adjournment

9:00 PM