

# **PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

WILMAPCO Conference Room, December 14, 2015

## **ROLL CALL**

### **Members Present:**

Wes Avera, Centreville Civic League  
Bruce Brunoizzi, City of Wilmington  
Dave Carter, Southern New Castle County Alliance  
Darlene Cole, Elderly and Disabled Transit Advisory Committee  
Jane Dilley, League of Women Voters  
Pat Folk, Cecil County  
Bill Lower, Committee of 100  
Tom Posatko, Delmarva Rail Passenger Association  
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council  
Gail Seitz, City of New Castle  
Vic Singer, Civic League of New Castle County  
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance  
Antonio Valenzuela, City of Wilmington (Chair)

### **Absent:**

William Dunn, New Castle County Civic League  
Dick Janney, Southern New Castle County  
Jim Lardear, DE State Chamber of Commerce\*  
Joe Mitchell, Cecil County  
Jeff Peters, Pike Creek Valley Civic League  
Brett Saddler, Claymont Renaissance Development Corporation  
Charles Shaw, AARP  
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance  
Francis Swift, GHADA  
Javier Torrijos, Delaware Hispanic Commission  
Frank Vari, Chesapeake City

### **\* Reserve PAC Members**

### **Guests:**

Frank Dilley, Citizen

### **Staff Members:**

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

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**

**Corrections:**

1. Mr. Singer said page 3 states that staff participated in the Route 141 public workshop on October 20, 2015, and a presentation will be given to the PAC at the next meeting. Ms. Zegeye responded we aren't able to present that information this evening. Mr. Singer suggested that the October 26, 2015 minutes be changed to: a presentation on the Route 141 Workshop will be given at a later date.
2. Mr. Singer said on page 8, the spelling of the PAC Chairperson's name should be changed from Venezuela to Valenzuela.

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. Carter seconded by Mr. Brunozzi the PAC approved the October 26, 2015, minutes with the above corrections.

Motion passed

(12/14/15-01)

**2. Public Comment:**

**7:05 PM**

Mr. Brunozzi asked why DelDOT puts up barricades before they conduct road work and also why after they have completed the road work the barricades are left up for several more days. He also asked why DelDOT doesn't adjust the manholes, catch basins, water boxes, and monument boxes before they resurface the roads, because that would eliminate some of the bumps and pot holes. Ms. Zegeye said she will pass his concerns along to DelDOT.

Mr. Valenzuela asked if Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC) is changing the bus routes at Christiana Mall to accommodate the Fashion Center. Ms. Zegeye said the best way to get this information is go to a DTC Open House or e-mail them during their public comment period.

Dave Carter asked for an update on the finances for the Route 301 project. Ms. Zegeye said she will ask for that information and update him.

**3. Executive Director's Report:**

**7:10 PM**

Tigist Zegeye expressed Happy Holidays to everyone and announced Jacob Thompson is a new WILMAPCO Transportation Planner. He has a master's degree in Environmental Studies from the University of Pennsylvania and a bachelor's degree in Geology from West Chester University. Ms. Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- Staff hosted the DTC public hearing at WILMAPCO on November 10, 2015.
- Staff participated in the Claymont Elementary School Walking Audit on November 30, 2015.
- Staff attended a kick-off meeting to form a network of agencies and coalition involved with community development, which is a statewide initiative.
- Staff will participate in the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) Air Quality Working group.
- Staff will participate in the Southbridge Streetscape Phase II concept planning.
- Staff is coordinating outreach for a Cleveland Avenue multi-modal study with Newark, NAACP, Newark Bike Committee, and City of Newark.
- Staff will attend the Delmarva Freight and Goods Task Force meeting in Dover on December 15, 2015.

- Staff attended the North Claymont Area Master Plan kick-off meeting and will participate in the public workshop on February 3, 2016, at Archmere Academy.
- Staff had sent out RFPs for the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan, and Design Collective from Baltimore was selected as the consultant.
- Staff attended the Wilmington Transit Moving Forward (WTMF) meeting with the Advisory Committee.
- The Walnut Street Improvement Study was completed, and staff is waiting for a final report.
- Regarding the Glasgow Avenue Planning Study, staff is waiting for the modeling results from DelDOT planning and hopes to hold a public workshop in early 2016 to share the results.
- From the Route 141 20-Year Transportation Land Use Plan public comments, citizens voiced specific concerns about the potential of adding retail in the area and staff met with community groups. Staff is now refining the goals and vision for the corridor.
- Staff is working on ridership modeling with DTC and MTA to document the potential ridership between Baltimore and Philadelphia.

Mr. Pusey asked how the Route 141 study impacts New Castle County decisions on land use. Ms. Zegeye said the project matches up with New Castle County's guiding principles and will feed into their decision making process.

Mr. Carter asked what the Southbridge Streetscape Stage II Plan is. Ms. Zegeye said it looks at concept plans for the area. Mr. Carter asked how it integrates with the Route 9 Corridor Study. Mr. Carter said we have a responsibility to press hard to make the jurisdictions work together. Ms. Zegeye said original scope of work included the City of New Castle and the City of Wilmington but due to funding shortfalls the boundary was shortened to only include the unincorporated section of the SR 9 Corridor.

Mr. Singer asked if the statement of work will not be altered for the contract in the RFP. Ms. Zegeye said we have a scope of work in the RFP, the management or steering committee will go over the scope. We are refining the scope, but not changing it.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

**4. Approval of Transportation Improvement Program Outreach 7:20 PM**

Ms. Dunigan distributed the public outreach materials for the FY 2017-2020 TIP; the TIP workshop flyer, and the TIP Quick Guide. The public comment period for the FY 2017-2020 TIP will be held from January 19 - March 2, 2016. A Public Workshop will be held with DelDOT on February 24, 2015, at the Newark Free Library from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Additional public outreach includes information in the E-news, Transporter, Facebook (sponsored advertisement), press releases to local media, legal notices in the News Journal and Cecil Whig, E-news blast with the News Journal, and a radio spot on WDEL and WXCX. WILMAPCO staff has also worked with an intern to improve our interactive web mapping with a more readable format and project descriptions. Ms. Dunigan discussed the draft FY 2017-2020 TIP spreadsheet, and noted that funding hasn't changed very much.

Mr. Singer asked if line 20 (Safety Improvements) includes safety and widening. Ms. Dunigan said it is a safety program with locations identified through the DelDOT Highway Safety Improvement Program, assessed by a multiagency committee, and some improvements include minor widening.

Mr. Carter asked about Southern New Castle County projects that were dropped, and said he would like to be informed about what is happening with those projects. Ms. Dunigan said the timing of these projects is coordinated with development activity. The group discussed the lack of funding for paratransit expansion. Mr. Gula said Sussex County has been discussing finding other alternatives, and the service won't just go away, it will be replaced by something.

Mr. Brunozzi asked about who we talk to about getting roads patched in Wilmington. Ms. Dunigan said DelDOT for state roads and Wilmington Public Works for city maintained streets.

Ms. Folk asked about line 141, the Transportation Enhancements and Alternatives program. Ms. Dunigan said it is a federally funded program for landscaping, bike/pedestrian, sidewalk, and other improvements including Safe Routes to School (SRTS). Ms. Folk also asked if Cecil County has funding for SRTS, but, they just aren't implementing the programs. Ms. Zegeye replied yes that is correct. Ms. Folk asked WILMAPCO to send her more information about the funding and the towns who are applying for the funding via e-mail so that she can follow-up with them.

Mr. Carter asked why the amount of funding for the Riverfront went up. Ms. Dunigan said it is because of project cost increases.

Mr. Valenzuela asked what is the Park and Ride near Christiana Mall (line 65). Ms. Dunigan said it is to replace the former Park and Ride where Cabelas is located, and the temporary relocated Park and Ride. Mr. Valenzuela said he thought it was owned by the mall. Ms. Dunigan said yes it is owned by the mall. Mr. Valenzuela said the shelter is too small. Ms. Dunigan said when the new Park and Ride is constructed they will improve it. The funding is for the design at this time. Mr. Valenzuela asked how he can give more feedback. Mr. Gula said he can call customer service at the Christiana Mall, to have more of an impact on his concerns. Ms. Cole asked where the Park and Ride will be relocated. Mr. Gula said it will be moved closer to where the Cavalier Golf Course was located.

Mr. Singer said that the expenditures of \$91.6K are a lot of planning effort. Christiana Hospital has been working with a jitney system. It may be a good idea for the Christiana Mall to consider the possibility of moving people around in the parking lot similar to the system that Christiana Hospital uses. Mr. Valenzuela agreed.

Mr. Brunozzi asked is there plans for the Christina River Bridge to be upgraded to two lanes each way, if not, the bridge will be obsolete before it is completed, because of the volume of traffic from improvements at the Wilmington Riverfront. Ms. Dunigan said the design includes one lane each way and is not expected to become obsolete.

**ACTION:** On motion by Dave Carter seconded by Pat Folk, the PAC approved FY 2017-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Outreach.

**PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**5. 4<sup>th</sup> Street Walkability Community Workshop**

**7:30 PM**

Ms. Dunigan said the 4<sup>th</sup> Street Walkability Community Workshop (between Scott and Rodney streets) was held during 2015. The three-part workshop includes: 1) Presentation – gives residents a toolbox to develop a walkability workshop; 2) Walkabout – helps residents see things in their community anew; and 3) Plan of Action – residents and planners brainstorm ideas and put them on paper. In addition, elements of livability are presented and discussed including safety, aesthetics, and transportation access.

The benefits of walkable communities include: less traffic, pollution, and noise; less crime; better sense of community; economic benefits; travel choices for kids, seniors, people with disabilities, and people without cars; and healthy communities. Aspects of walkability include the relationship between the streets, the sidewalks, and the buildings. The workshops focus on finding low cost and easy to implement solutions.

For getting along the streets, they observed the cracks and obstacles in the sidewalks, and recommended repairing sidewalks and creating bicycle paths/bike lanes. Issues include missing/damaged sidewalks, no bike route, uneven/sloping walkway and driveways, sidewalk blocked, debris, and little street lighting.

Regarding getting across the street, they observed intersections and crosswalks. Recommendations include adding curb extensions to corners, adding ADA curb ramps to corners for each crossing direction, and evaluate median islands. Specific recommendations in the 4<sup>th</sup> Street area include: adding pedestrian signals to Scott Street crossing; adding pedestrian signals to DuPont Street crossing; adding pedestrian signals and crosswalk to Clayton Street crossing; and evaluate crossing options at Delamore Place.

For broken or missing pedestrian ramps, they recommended construct/restore American with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible ramps; for missing or faded markings, they recommended crosswalks/stopbars; for turning vehicles failing to yield, they recommended improve signs and pavement markings and shorten crossing distance. For wide-street, long-crossing distance, they recommended shortening the crossing distance with bump outs or a median.

Regarding transit and aesthetics, recommendations include adding street trees along 4<sup>th</sup> street, pedestrian scale street lighting, bike racks, and planters. Specific examples include adding children at play signs near the park; since trees block street lights, add pedestrian scale lights; take down low hanging wires, take down corner garage; and build a community garden.

Additional 4<sup>th</sup> Street issues include: no pedestrian lighting; graffiti/debris/broken safety cameras. They recommended murals, fix cameras, and sponsor neighborhood cleanup contests. For empty lots, they recommended planting sunflowers, a community garden, and a land bank. For no bus shelters, they recommended bump outs with transit facilities. For kids without helmets, they recommended providing bike safety/helmet

giveaway programs. And, for lack of signs on businesses and street intersections, add façade improvement programs and provide business education and missing street signs.

Mr. Valenzuela asked about clearing snow from the sidewalks and roads on 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and how to make sure whoever does the clearing also clears the sidewalks. Ms. Dunigan recommended that Mr. Valenzuela look at University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration (IPA) report regarding snow removal that compares Delaware's procedures with other areas and includes best practices.

Mr. Singer asked regarding the issue of costs that may hinder putting up street lighting, has anyone looked into using solar-cell street lights that would be lit for four hours in the evening, since they don't need to be lit all night long. Ms. Dunigan said the trend is toward using LED lights, which are easier to operate; and she agreed with Mr. Singer that the cost should not hinder putting up street lights, especially since they help to reduce crime.

Mr. Valenzuela asked what the Wilmington Renaissance Corporation does. Ms. Dunigan said they are similar to a Chamber of Commerce for the downtown Wilmington business area.

In summary, steps to a walkable community include: 1) Build ways to get along the street; 2) Create ways to get across the street; 3) Have comfortable and accessible transit facilities; 4) Plan good design and places to walk or bike; 5) Slow speeding traffic; 6) Develop safe routes to schools, shops, parks, jobs, libraries, and churches.

Mr. Brunozi commented he feels someone should look into bump outs and the congestion that is caused when buses are parked. Ms. Dunigan said the buses don't park for very long, and bump outs are used because it has been proven they slow down traffic.

## **6. Newark Train Station:**

**8:00 PM**

Mr. Gula said the Newark Regional Transportation Center (NRTC) Plan includes the Newark Train Station. Past project studies have included the Delaware Rail Passenger Engineering Study, 2002; Wilmington to Newark Commuter Rail Improvements, 2004; Newark Train Station Feasibility Study, 2010; and Newark Regional Transportation Center Study (2013).

The previously proposed location was changed due to operational conflicts with Norfolk Southern. The plan was to move the existing train station approximately 1,200 feet to the west. Norfolk Southern (NS) has an important regional freight yard adjacent to that location and the yard is an important gateway to freight movements onto the Delmarva secondary rail line. The Newark Train Station shares that track segment, which is currently a major challenge to operations.

The new proposal is to use the existing Newark Train Station location, and to connect it to the University of Delaware (UD) STAR Campus. This location is good because UD wants to have a multi-modal campus and the train station is very important to them. They also want to see a passenger service connection to the south, and there is an opportunity to connect to the MARC train service, which stops at the Perryville, Maryland station.

The study and grant components have included: 1) A Feasibility Study (Phase I) completed in July 2010; 2) Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) II Planning Grant awarded in December 2010; 3) NRTC Study (Phase III) completed in March 2014; TIGER IV Grant for PE/construction awarded in June 2012; and Preliminary Engineering (PE) currently underway.

Several concepts were created and discarded due to operational challenges. A dual focus was needed to address conflicts between freight and commuter rail and how to accommodate expansion of passenger rail services.

Mr. Valenzuela asked if there will be a dedicated track from Wilmington to Newark. Mr. Gula replied no. He added there are places along the corridor between the two cities with three tracks. The Amtrak station has three tracks that can't be expanded to four tracks; however, when the section that has two tracks just south of Wilmington is expanded there will be three or four tracks between Newark and Wilmington, which will handle more trains.

Mr. Carter asked if the MARC train connection is a real possibility. Mr. Gula said yes, it is a real possibility. At the Perryville station 50% of the parking is from out-of-state, and the State of Maryland knows there is a need.

**7. Other Business:**

**8:50 PM**

None.

**8. Adjournment:**

**9:00 PM**