

# PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

WILMAPCO Conference Room, February 13, 2017

## ROLL CALL

### Members Present:

Wes Avera, Centreville Civic League  
Bill Dunn, New Castle County Civic League  
Pat Folk, Cecil County  
Ken Grant, AAA Mid-Atlantic  
Dick Janney, Southern New Castle County  
Joe Mitchell, Cecil County  
Jeff Peters, Pike Creek Valley Civic League  
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council  
Gail Seitz, City of New Castle  
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance (Vice Chair)  
Vic Singer, Civic League of New Castle County  
Javier Torrijos, Delaware Hispanic Commission

### Absent:

Bruce Brunozzi, City of Wilmington  
Robert Cameron, Claymont Renaissance Development Corporation  
Dave Carter, Southern New Castle County Alliance  
Darlene Cole, Elderly and Disabled Transit Advisory Committee  
Bill Lower, Committee of 100  
Tom Posatko, Delmarva Rail Passenger Association  
Peggy Schultz, League of Women Voters  
Francis Swift, GHADA  
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance  
Antonio Valenzuela, City of Wilmington (Chair)  
Frank Vari, Chesapeake City

### Staff Members:

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

**Guests:** Melinda Bertling, Newark Bike Project  
Laura Wilburn, Urban Bike Project

Minutes prepared by Janet Butler

Barry Shotwell, PAC Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order.

**6:30 PM**

### 1. Approval of Meeting Minutes

**6:32 PM**

The December 12, 2016, Meeting Minutes were approved with the following revision:  
In the last paragraph on page 6, there is an extra dollar sign. It should just say 18%.

**ACTION:** On motion by Ms. Folk seconded by Mr. Peters the PAC approved the December 12, 2016, meeting minutes, with revision.

Motion passed

(2/13/17-01)

**2. Public Comment:**

**6:35 PM**

None.

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

**6:40 PM**

Ms. Zegeye said at the Council Meeting on January 12, 2017, the Council released the FY 2018-2021 TIP for Public Comment, endorsed the North Claymont Area Master Plan (NCAMP), and approved the changes to the Cecil County Roadway Functional Classifications. Presentations by staff members included the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan, the Ardentown Paths Plan, and the 2050 Demographics Projections.

Ms. Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- On January 18, 2017, staff participated in the Delaware Statewide Bicycle Policy Plan Working Group. Public meetings will be held on February 27, 2017, at the Middletown High School and on March 1, 2017, at the Wilmington Public Library.
- The WILMAPCO TIP workshop was held jointly with DelDOT on February 1, 2017 at the Newark Public Library.
- Staff met with the City of Wilmington Mayor and his senior staff regarding transportation projects in the city. On February 22, 2017, staff will meet with the New Castle County Land Use General Manager and his staff regarding County transportation projects.
- On February 28, 2017, WILMAPCO will host a joint Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meeting with WILMAPCO, Dover/Kent MPO, and DelDOT Planning staff to review coordinated efforts.
- A DART Public Hearing will be held on February 28, 2017, from 4:00 p.m. -7:00 p.m., in the WILMAPCO Conference Room.
- Staff is attending the Ardentown Village meeting tonight to prioritize the recommendations of the Ardentown Paths Plan. Staff expects to present the plan to PAC in April, 2017 and go to Council for adoption in May, 2017.
- WILMAPCO staff is working on Safe Routes to School (SRTS) transportation planning tasks for Stubbs and Elbert-Palmer Elementary Schools.

Mr. Singer asked what is happening with the perpendicular parking project on Union Street in Wilmington. Ms. Zegeye said it was discussed as part of the briefing with the Mayor, who is in favor of it. WILMAPCO is preparing to hold a public meeting with its partners to gather additional comments. This is a concept plan; however, there is no funding for the project.

Ms. Seitz asked about the timing of the upcoming Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) applications. Ms. Zegeye said normally we send out the letter for requests for new projects about now, but because of the new county and city administrations, we are waiting to meet with them before sending request letters.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

**4. Approval of Public Outreach for FY 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

**6:50 PM**

Ms. Heather Dunigan distributed public comments regarding the draft FY 2018-2021 TIP. The TIP comment period is January 16 through February 28, 2017. Public outreach results included 498 website visitors of which 184 were unique visits. The advertisement

for the TIP public workshop on Facebook reached 2,719 people, and 138 investigated the details. A News Journal e-mail containing the flyer was sent to 10,000 subscribers. A radio commercial on WDEL played regularly, and there were 13 attendees at the joint WILMAPCO/DeIDOT TIP public workshop.

Ms. Dunigan discussed the TIP public comments received to date. Mr. Charles Weymouth commented that services offered by WILMAPCO are already offered by other agencies; New Castle County doesn't fund road infrastructure costs; the TIP should concentrate on port, rail, and cross river improvements; there is a lack of vision toward implementing a long range plan; and lack of concern toward alternate, rapid, yet mini-sized, access with individual mobility to our urban incorporated recreational and living centers—privately financed.

Comments on Facebook from Ms. Cheryl Ann Leonard included parking needs to be accessible to bus stops in safe locations, and parking should be less expensive in the downtown area. She also commented that handicapped parking is too far from the work place.

Ms. Michelle Greene expressed the need for high speed magnetic levitation trains and tracks, and relief from train horn noise at night.

Mr. Terry Pierse commented he and his wife attended the Union Street Reconfiguration Workshop at Woodlawn Library, they were impressed with the plan, and they are in favor of the proposed changes.

Mr. Dave Carter commented Route 299 needs work, crosswalks are needed at New Street, and Noxontown Road is very unsafe for students from St. Andrews. Mr. Dave Carter also commented widening Elkton Road would impact pedestrian safety and cause additional toll evasion.

Ms. Susan Wels suggested putting a red light camera at Route 896. In addition, she suggested better signage for SR1, I-495, and I-295.

Mr. Mike Zimansky commented that speed limit signs are needed, specifically at I-95, at the southern end of the viaduct, and at I-95 northbound, where the flyover lanes bring in traffic from northbound Route 1.

Mr. Mike Logthetis commented he likes the Newark Train Station and Elkton Road projects. He would also like to see multipurpose trails access meaningful locations and interests. Additional projects could include Delmarva Power to allow DeIDOT to build trails in power line rights-of-way; correct trails to form a network; add trail signs to tell people where they are going and include distance/time; and connect Glasgow Park to the community with multipurpose trails.

Mr. Stephen Ottinger commented he likes the continual improvements with suburban corridors, including sidewalk improvements and public transit friendly projects. New projects to consider are improvements in traffic congestion on U.S. 202, Delaware Route 92 at Naaman's Road; Old Baltimore Pike; and Route 141 from Prices Corner through I-95.

The last comment suggested to put more effort towards pedestrian safety and bike lanes that are protected from traffic, to help reduce cars and increase bike transport, and to look into removing dams on rivers that are not needed.

Mr. Singer said regarding using the high-voltage power line corridors for hiking and biking trails, have you spoken to the people who work on the trails. Ms. Dunigan said the project team looked at Delmarva powerlines when they were conducting the feasibility study for the East Coast Greenway; however, at the time Delmarva did not support this alignment. She added it is still a good idea to bring this topic up every couple of years. Mr. Janney asked if they were private or public easements. Ms. Dunigan said she believes they are private easements.

Mr. Dunn said one of the TIP comments expressed a strong emphasis on speed limits. He said signs should be put every couple of miles along Route 1 and I-95. He added there are only two signs between Newark and the beach. Mr. Dunn commented he had a positive experience when he was in Europe on a Sunday afternoon driving from Brussels to Luxemburg. The sign on the Interstate highway said 110 kilometers (70-miles-an hour), and people were passing him by at 200 kilometers, but, he felt safe on those roads. Ms. Dunigan said the drivers are very respectful of each other there. She added she would add his comments to the TIP.

**ACTION:** On motion by Ms. Folk seconded by Mr. Torrijos the PAC recommended approval of the public outreach for the FY 2018-2021 TIP.

Motion passed

**(2/13/17-02)**

## **PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **5. Newark Bike Project Youth Empowerment Program**

**7:10 PM**

Ms. Melinda Bertling, Newark Bike Project, distributed an outline of the Youth Empowerment Program (YEP). In 2016, the free summer program included twelve, two-hour sessions, on Sunday afternoons. Two sessions were cancelled due to inclement weather. Their biggest challenge was getting enough youth to attend the program.

The program had a core of five children who attended most sessions. Sessions included activities to learn bicycle maintenance and repair, road/group riding safety, proper helmet fit, and community service.

Public outreach included advertising to area elementary and middle schools, distributing 1,200 flyers. For 2017, a goal was set to get the word out efficiently, contact more schools, and participate in events such as the Healthy Heart Night at Downes Elementary School.

Each 2016 session had a theme, the first one was knowledge. Students were shown around the bike shop and discussed basic bike safety. The second week's theme was Empowerment, which was the highest attended session (13 students), where students got to know the parts of the bikes and the session concluded with a bike ride to a fix-it station.

Mr. Dunn asked if Newark Bike Project reached out to the Newark Charter School. Ms. Bertling said no, but she would put that school on her list for their upcoming outreach efforts.

## **6. Route 9 Master Plan**

**7:30 PM**

Mr. Bill Swiatek said the Steering Committee for the Route 9 Master Plan includes New Castle County, State of Delaware, civic associations, Rose Hill Community Center, New Castle Prevention Coalition, Colonial School District, Nemours, and DE HEAL. The Route 9 Corridor Master Plan covers a segment of Route 9 from Wilmington to New Castle and from Route 13 to the Delaware River.

Five tasks and the timeline of the plan include: background (December to February), economic assessment (January to June), visioning (January to September), alternatives development (September to November), and final report (December to February). Public outreach methods have included: traditional methods, mobile van presentations, and online elements, such as Facebook.

The outreach resulted in the plan's vision statement and community identified needs and top priorities. The vision states that the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan will identify the best reinvestment and redevelopment strategies for the Route 9 Corridor between the City of Wilmington and the City of New Castle.

Community-identified needs include:

- enhancing existing community amenities
- eliminating chronic crime
- reducing the environmental and health burdens of industry
- maintaining affordable housing and additional owner-occupied housing development
- adding retail development
- supporting education, job access and growth
- providing better bus, walking, and bicycling transportation; a top youth priority
- showcasing the area's rich history, and tying the future port expansions to sustainable economic growth.

The plan recommends adjustments to the underlying zoning, which is the basis of public health and environmental concerns. Industry should remain in the corridor, but only in the north. Existing residential there should be relocated. South, beginning around Rogers Road, industry should be restricted in the area should transition to mixed-use residential and commercial. Changes to specific zoning categories are also recommended to allow for mixed-use development.

Potential growth during the next 20 years is urged to focus around the new innovation center. This area is envisioned to become a suburban center with office, senior housing, and a mix of retail and other housing types.

Transportation concerns and needs include update, expand, and improve the transportation network including sidewalks and ADA compliance, bike lanes and regional connections, roadway crossings, visibility, separation from motor vehicles, bus shelter, lighting, streetscape, and left and right turns.

Road diets and intersection rebuilds are proposed for Route 9 and Memorial Drive. At times, a lane in each direction will be removed to make room for pedestrian, bicycle and bus amenities. Roundabouts are proposed at Terminal Avenue, Memorial Drive, and Cherry Lane. Intersection rebuilds that focus on improving vehicle safety and pedestrian safety are proposed at Rogers Road and Stamm Boulevard. A center lane, multiuse trail is proposed to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle travel across the I-295 interchange, which forms a barrier between communities. Traffic analysis was conducted with a 20-year horizon and liberal growth factor. The analysis showed that these roadways functioned nearly the same with the road diet than without, due to the excess of capacity.

Truck management strategies include establishing overnight parking locations, updating map software, providing better signage and enforcement, establishing commercial loading zones and establishing more direct routes to the port. These routes include an extension of Garasches Lane to Terminal Avenue and an extension of Pigeon Point Rd. south, to join with I-295, as a new interchange to connect to industry and future port expansions.

Seventy people attended a public workshop held in November. Residents viewed a draft of the alternatives, prioritized community needs, and helped craft the project's vision. Feedback was mixed. There was strong support for reducing the impact of industry and the development alternatives. About half of the residents supported the roundabouts and the other half was skeptical of the road diets, though there was strong support for improving pedestrian and bicycle travel. Overall, residents wanted more time to digest the draft plan.

Mr. Singer said with a road diet there it will create longer queues of vehicles, which may delay pedestrian crossing opportunities. Mr. Swiatek said yes, we are expecting the queues to increase. Speeds will also decrease, as will the pedestrian crossing distance. Pedestrians will have to wait longer to jaywalk, but that is illegal anyway, and pedestrian enhancements at the intersections will encourage legal crossings there. From a traffic standpoint, there is currently excess capacity along Route 9. Intersection enhancements coupled with the lane reductions in certain spots will keep the longer traffic queues moving. Mr. Singer added Jersey Barriers would be helpful to test this. Mr. Swiatek agreed.

Mr. Shotwell asked if there are other public outreach methods planned. Mr. Swiatek said he would like to take copies of the draft plan to scheduled community meetings to collect feedback. He will also e-mail the draft plan to community members who participated in the workshops.

Ms. Seitz asked does the county have any plans to connect the area around the library. Mr. Swiatek said yes, some new sidewalk and enhanced crossings were already in place. In addition, the county submitted a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) application, which will fund enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connections.

#### **7. Urban Bike Project and C.O.R.E. Initiative Build-a-Bike Program 8:00 PM**

Ms. Laura Wilburn, Executive Director, Urban Bike Project (UBP), said the non-profit community bike shop supports Wilmington communities by providing access to bicycling as a healthy, affordable, and practical means of transportation and recreation. UBP has worked with 1,000 Wilmington youth and adults.

The Earn-A-Bike (EAB) Program began in 2010 and has served hundreds of youth, and the program is funded through WILMAPCO. Forty students participated in 2016. The program provides hands-on learning opportunities and works with various schools and youth organizations. Students learn about bicycle safety and refurbish used bikes, which they keep upon graduating from the program. Older students go on a bike ride the last day of class, while younger students enjoy a bicycle rodeo.

Program goals include: 1) Youth are able to fix their own bicycles; 2) Youth improve problem solving skills, teamwork, and confidence; 3) Youth are excited to ride bicycles and know how to ride safely; and 4) Youth know about the Urban Bike Project, and visit the youth shop and/or participate in weekend rides.

Metrics of success include enrollment, graduation rates, and number of students that return to the shop and feedback from organizations. UBP staff is developing pre-and post-test evaluations for students to measure problem solving and mechanical skills, knowledge of safe riding practices, and awareness of outdoor recreational opportunities in their communities.

UBP has a partnership with the Cory Wright's C.O.R.E. Initiative Build-a-Bike Program. Cory Wright couldn't make it to the PAC meeting this evening but his program is involved primarily with Stubbs, Elbert-Palmer Elementary Schools, and Thomas Edison Charter School.

The UBP shop is located in the Eastside neighborhood of Wilmington. They also work with the Latin American Community Center, and other locations. Plans for 2017 include working with the Brandywine Community School located in Claymont, which is an alternative school for youth with behavioral difficulties.

Other plans include working with Howard High School, a vocational-technical school located three blocks from the UBP's shop, which is interested in using the program as a launching point for a cycling club. In addition, they will work with Community Education Building Summer Programs, including Kuumba Academy and Great Oaks Charter Schools, located five blocks from the shop; and West End Neighborhood House Life Lines Program, which has expressed interest, but has not yet, scheduled a program.

One youth was really excited about the program, and he said, "This is for real! We're like, for real adventurers!"

Ms. Seitz asked how the donated bikes are utilized. Ms. Wilburn said some bikes are sold and some are given to adults who need transportation, and they also take some bikes apart to use for parts. Ms. Wilburn said she will send information to WILMAPCO for the PAC if anyone who would like to donate a bike or PAC members can send e-mail to [urbanbikeproject@gmail.com](mailto:urbanbikeproject@gmail.com).

## **8. Other Business**

**8:20 PM**

Mr. Singer asked about procedures for reaching out to people to become members of the PAC, because he would like to see Council approve PAC members even if they are or are not representatives of civic groups. Ms. Zegeye explained representation from a group can be more valuable than just one person. Mr. Singer also said summaries of some of the PAC meetings could be published in various civic newsletters Ms. Zegeye

said staff can put together some information, perhaps in the E-News and include highlights from the PAC meetings.

Mr. Dunn asked if WILMAPCO can get data regarding CSX and Norfolk Southern rail because at Newport Gap Pike and Stanton Road the roads are frequently blocked off while drivers are waiting for trains. Ms. Zegeye said it is hard to get that data from Norfolk Southern, but she will ask DeIDOT. She cannot guarantee we will get it.

**10. Adjournment**

**8:30 PM**