

PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

WILMAPCO Conference Room, February 25, 2019

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Tom Fruehstorfer, City of Newark (Chair)
Mario Gangemi, Cecil County Chamber of Commerce
Dick Janney, Southern New Castle County
Tom Posatko, Delmarva Rail Passenger Association
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance (Vice Chair)
Vic Singer, Civic League for New Castle County
Dwight Walters, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce

Absent:

Mark Blake, GHADA
Dave Carter, SNCC
Carlos de los Ramos, AARP
Bill Dunn, Civic League for New Castle County
Pat Folk, Cecil County
Ken Grant, AAA
Bill Lower, Committee of 100
Givvel Marrero, Delaware Hispanic Commission
Gail Seitz, City of New Castle
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance
Eugene Truono, Centreville Civic Association

Staff Members:

Randi Novakoff, Outreach Manager
Bill Swiatek, Principal Planner
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Guests: None.

Minutes prepared by Janet Butler from recording.

Tom Fruehstorfer, PAC Chair, called the meeting to order. **6:00PM**

1. Approval of the December 17, 2018 Meeting Minutes **6:02 PM**

ACTION: On motion by Mario Gangemi, seconded by Vic Singer the PAC approved the December 17, 2018 meeting minutes.

Motion passed **(2/25/19-01)**

2. Public Comment: **6:05 PM**
None.

3. Executive Director's Report: **6:10 PM**

Ms. Zegeye reported that the WILMAPCO Council met on January 10, 2019. The Council amended the WILMAPCO FY 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include the Mechanics Valley Road Bridge CE0042 over CSX Replacement Project in Cecil County; Released the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), FY 2020-2023 TIP and associated Air Quality Conformity Determination for public comment; and endorsed the 2018 Inter-Regional Report. Presentations items included WILMAPCO's 2018 Federal Certification Review preliminary findings, WILMAPCO Transportation Justice (TJ) Analysis Update; and updates on the 7th Street Peninsula Master Plan and 12th Street Connector Alignment Study.

Ms. Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- Staff has completed approximately 30, 2050 RTP presentations and pop-up workshops with civic groups, transportation officials, and community groups.
- The 12th Street Workshop was held on January 7, 2019, where 40 people attended.
- The Union Street and Pennsylvania Avenue Workshop was held on January 22, 2019, where 70 people attended.
- Staff attended the Newark Area Transit Study Management Committee Meeting on January 29, 2019, and the Newark Sustainability Plan Steering Committee meeting.
- The Southern New Castle County (SNCC) Plan Visioning Workshop was held on January 31, 2019, 100 people attended.
- A second SNCC Plan Visioning Session will be held at Middletown Fire Hall, on March 13, 2019.
- On February 6, 2019, the Seventh Street Workshop was held and 55 people attended.
- WILMAPCO's Our Town Event was held on February 7, 2019, and 100 people attended.
- The Route 9 Master Plan Monitoring Committee met on February 19, 2019.
- New Castle County (NCC) Bike Plan Survey is on WILMAPCO's website: www.wilmapco.org/bikenc. A workshop was rescheduled from February 20, 2019 to March 13, 2019.
- The Claymont Regional Transportation Center press event for design-build was held. The total funding is \$54 million, which includes \$10 million from a TIGER grant.
- A DTC Service Change meeting will be held on March 6, 2019, at WILMAPCO.
- A US 202 Concord Pike Corridor Public Workshop will be held On March 20, 2019 to review preliminary land use and intersection concepts.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

7:00 PM

4. 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

Mr. Swiatek said the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) sets the policy goals of the region. The plan includes "objectives" and "actions", as well as a list of transportation projects. The RTP is updated every four years.

Key tasks include a review of the 2017 Regional Progress Report and the Public Opinion Survey. Public agency outreach is conducted with DelDOT, New Castle County, MDOT,

and many other transportation organizations. The document includes project lists that have gone through the Air Quality (AQ) Conformity process, and have had two rounds of public outreach. Staff is looking for adoption of the 2050 RTP by the Council in March 2019.

Staff reviews each RTP action in the Progress Report using red, yellow, and green light indicators. In 2017, 21% of the actions needed a lot more work (red light); 29% needed more work (yellow light); and 50% of actions were going well (green light). Actions not progressing include reducing growth in rural areas, decreasing single occupancy vehicle trips, decreasing Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), and decreasing crashes. WILMAPCO excelled in air quality efforts for transportation, local plan implementation, Transportation Justice (TJ) initiatives, and bike/pedestrian connections.

WILMAPCO surveyed 600 residents in its Public Opinion Survey from Cecil and New Castle Counties. Demographic quotas were used so the survey demographics match those of the two counties as closely as we can. Participants were asked how well the transportation system meets their needs. Eighty-eight percent are satisfied with the system, versus 67% in 2006.

Participants were asked if transportation sometimes keeps them from attending activities such as for medical care, social activities, etc. Forty-seven percent, who earn under \$25 per year, said that transportation “sometimes” keeps them from getting to their activities, versus 9% who make more than 100K per year.

The WILMAPCO 2050 RTP has three main goals: 1) Support Sustainable Economic Development and Goods Movement; 2) Improve Quality of Life; and 3) Efficiently Transport People. Under these goals are objectives, and under the objectives are actions.

Under the first goal, Efficiently Transport People, actions include planning for autonomous vehicles, improving bus performance, funding maintenance projects first, planning for seniors, people with disabilities and households without vehicles, and robust public participation.

Under the second goal, Improve Quality of Life, actions include safer transportation for all modes, improve connectivity to healthy food, employment, and services, promote social equity, fund transportation choices, and protect the environment.

Under the third goal, Support Sustainable Economic Development & Goods Movement, actions include plan for responsible development, use prioritization process to select transportation projects, create and support local plans, manage traffic congestion, streamline freight, and support a greener transportation system.

The Transportation Investment Areas (TIAs) determine which type of transportation is appropriate for each area. They include the following categories: Rural, Developing, Community, Core, and Center. Mr. Swiatek discussed a map that showed the Transportation Investment Areas (TIAs). In this RTP new Centers include Churchman’s Crossing, Claymont, and Newport. Each have infrastructure where heavier investments can go to support transit-oriented development.

Federal requirements dictate that WILMAPCO needs to work to achieve cleaner air quality, realistically reflecting expected funding, and including road, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities in the RTP. In the 2050 RTP, there are 114 financially constrained projects with \$5.4 billion (in year of expenditure); and 87 aspiration projects that are not funded.

Selected regional projects include the I-95 Susquehanna River to Delaware Line that has the most funding (\$1 billion); Transit Expansion/Enhancements (\$544 million); and New Technologies such as Electric Vehicles (EVs) and Autonomous Vehicles (AVs) that have \$392 million. Additional projects include I-95 and SR 896 Interchange (\$211 million); SR1:Tybouts Corner to SR 273 (\$211 million), Christina River Bridge (\$53 million); I-95 and Belvidere Road Interchange in Cecil County (\$54 million); Commuter Rail: Perryville to Newark (\$75 million); Newport Rail Station (\$43 million); and Route 9 Community Pathways (\$1.3 million).

The RTP public outreach includes presentations to more than 30 municipal and civic organizations, member agency briefings, newsletter articles, press releases and radio interviews; the Our Town event, and the public review period. However, new public outreach strategies for this version of the plan include social media, Metroquest surveys; a virtual workshop, and popup workshops.

Six hundred people participated in the Metroquest Survey; however, the results provided an unscientific, biased sample. Staff measured agreement with draft policy objectives. All objectives were met at 3.9/5 agreement or higher. The median rating was 4.3/5.

The next steps are to continue RTP outreach until on March 6, 2019; share the document online using social media, and complete refinements for Council adoption on March 7, 2019.

Mr. Janney said the results of the survey show that public satisfaction has gone up significantly; and asked why it has gotten better. Mr. Swiatek said we did not ask that; however, we could possibly include that question next time and review the comments to try and answer that question.

Mr. Janney commented that most folks are looking for more preservation, which is dependent on the New Castle County government. Mr. Swiatek said yes, that is the push - and - pull between linking land use and transportation. We hope that New Castle County will include and expand upon the TIA concepts in their comprehensive plan. Ms. Zegeye noted that New Castle County is adopting WILMAPCO's recommendations for Claymont and Route 9 in their comprehensive plan.

Mr. Singer said in the last 20 years, New Castle County has been anxious to find ways not to say no to any development proposals. He referred to the project list and said some are feasible and some are not. He asked how that is tested. Mr. Swiatek said we know what the project costs and revenues are. Many projects in the constrained list are developed through WILMAPCO plans and all are scored by the prioritization process.

Mr. Singer asked if there is an indication that the public is being served with "E" and "F" Level of Service (LOS); and is that data extracted. Mr. Swiatek said scenario planning has not been done. Mr. Singer asked if total public cost for Levels of Service (LOS) could be extracted. Ms. Zegeye said LOS is included in the prioritization process, but we

have not done a project-by-project analysis. The overall congestion data and LOS are both included in the Congestion Management Subcommittee (CMS) process.

ACTION ITEMS:

5. Approval of the Public Outreach for the Draft 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) 6:20 PM

Ms. Novakoff reviewed the Metroquest Survey results. Residents rated the goals and objectives of the plan. At least four out of five points were received for each of the goals and objectives. Participants were also able to comment on goals and objectives. There were more than 500 comments received and close to 600 participated in the survey.

Participants ranked Health and Safety as the most important goal. There was agreement that overall safety improvement is needed, particularly for seniors and disabled residents. Some commented that biking should not be done where there are no shoulders, roadways should be improved before walking and biking improvements, and improvements should be made to MLK Boulevard in Wilmington and Delaware Avenue in Elkton. Others felt too much money being spent on biking compared with the percentage of people who actually bike.

Participants recommended creating wildlife preservation corridors, providing better upkeep of parks, providing more buses that run to parks, and preservation of natural resources in general are needed. Regarding social equity, some people said it was a waste of time and others did not understand what we meant by it.

The Metroquest funding priorities' screen revealed that "system maintenance" was the highest priority, and "roadway improvement" was the lowest. Popup workshop funding priorities also matched the online survey.

Popup events were held at Wilmington Train Station, Delaware Decision Makers Forum, Christiana Mall, Perryville Train Station, Wilmington Public Library, LACC, Bear/Glasgow YMCA, and Cecil County YMCA.

Ms. Novakoff summarized the popup comments:

- Pedestrian – better connections and sidewalks are needed
- Roadway – better maintenance (City of Wilmington), too much congestion, congestion in front of Amtrak is dangerous, remove Route 301 toll for locals, and Washington Street needs improvements.
- Communications – better education about destinations, listen better to residents, and look at other countries for good examples.
- Funding - more investment is need in the overall transit system, transportation is not affordable, and people are paying more for transportation than housing.
- Bike – more bike lanes are needed in downtown Wilmington, need walk/bike options between Wilmington Train Station and the new stadium, more paved trails at White Clay Creek, more incentives to walk/bike, pedestrian signals are needed on DuPont Highway, unsafe to bike in Wilmington.
- Buses - improve bus schedules, more weekend/evening buses, run bus #33 until 11:00 p.m., all buses should stop at Rodney Square; Bus #13/15 takes

too long, need shorter routes through Wilmington, need earlier/later buses, with more stops, it is an unjust system, the system is unsafe, need better lighting at stops, service to Dover is needed.

- Rail – more frequent and on time service, more parking at stations, schedules not accommodating to work, MARC Train to Newark is needed.
- Technology – Wi-Fi and outlets are needed on buses/trains.

Mr. Singer asked if a glossary can be added to the survey. Ms. Zegeye said that text space for the survey was very limited, but a glossary is included in the RTP.

Mr. Walters asked why Middletown is not listed as a “Center” on the Transportation Investment Area (TIA) map, while North East is. Mr. Swiatek said that one of the factors of being a center is having a rail line, like those that run along the I-95 Corridor.

Mr. Singer asked if New Castle County is embarking on Transportation Improvement Districts (TIDs) and how they tie into the Transportation Investment Areas (TIAs), Mr. Swiatek said no.

ACTION: On motion by Glen Pusey, seconded by Mario Gangemi the PAC recommended approval of the Public Outreach for the Draft 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

Motion passed

(2/25/19-02)

6. Approval of the Public Outreach for Draft FY2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

6:45 PM

Ms. Novakoff said the outreach for the TIP and RTP was combined. She discussed portions of the TIP Quick Guide. She said the guide indicates the public comment period and advertises the TIP Workshop as part of Our Town, where 100 people attended. The guide also lists all larger new projects and includes an updated map. The back shows the how the funding breaks down and the projects by mode and by category.

There was a comment received regarding new development on Frenchtown Road near Glasgow. The commenter expressed concerns about flooding on Frenchtown and Frazier Roads, and how new development will impact animals in the area and cause additional flooding.

Ms. Novakoff shared website statistics: the RTP had 450 views; The Our Town event had 305 views; and the TIP had 205 views during the public comment period (January-March 2019).

ACTION: On motion by Dwight Walters, seconded by Mario Gamgemi the PAC recommended approval of the Public Outreach for the Draft FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Motion passed

(2/25/19-03)

7. Other Business

7:20 PM

Mr. Walters said he had trouble getting in the front door of the building, which was locked. Ms. Novakoff apologized and said she would look into correcting that situation, because the doors are supposed to be open.

8. Adjournment

7:30 PM