

PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

WILMAPCO Conference Room, April 13, 2015

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

David Bird, City of New Castle (Chair)
Dave Carter, Southern New Castle County Alliance
Darlene Cole, Elderly and Disabled Transit Advisory Committee
William Dunn, New Castle County Civic League
Matthew Eskridge, AAA Mid-Atlantic
Pat Folk, Cecil County
Bill Lower, Committee of 100
Joe Mitchell, Cecil County
Jeff Peters, Pike Creek Valley Civic League
Tom Posatko, Delmarva Rail Passenger Association
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council
Francis Swift, GHADA
Antonio Valenzuela, City of Wilmington (Vice Chair)

Absent:

Wes Avera, Centreville Civic League
Bruce Brunoizzi, City of Wilmington
Ken Davis, Neighborhood House, Inc
Dick Janney, Southern New Castle County
Jim Lardear, DE State Chamber of Commerce*
Brett Saddler, Claymont Renaissance Development Corporation
Peggy Schultz, League of Women Voters
Charles Shaw, AARP
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance
Victor Singer, Civic League of New Castle County
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance
Frank Vari, Chesapeake City

** Reserve PAC Members*

Guests:

Dave Blankenship, City of Wilmington

Staff Members:

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

Minutes prepared by Janet Butler

David Bird, Chair, called the meeting to order at **7:03 PM**.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes 7:05 PM

ACTION: On motion by Glen Pusey seconded by David Carter the PAC approved the December 15, 2014 minutes.

Motion passed (4/13/15-01)

ACTION: On motion by Pat Folk seconded by Jeff Peters the PAC approved the February 23, 2015 minutes.

Motion passed (4/13/15-02)

2. Public Comment: 7:05 PM

Bill Dunn said we need to put together a letter endorsed by the PAC recommending New Castle County give greater consideration as to how traffic flows on four-lane highways; and get slower moving traffic to move out of the left lane into the right lane. Mr. Dunn also said the efficiency of his new car at high speeds is much better than his older car.

Dave Carter said he doesn't think that making traffic faster on the road will solve the transportation problems. He would rather see people use more public transportation.

Antonio Valenzuela said the inefficiency of traffic flow is a complete by-product of poor planning for decades. He agreed we need to look into the lanes; however, he said we need to increase the visibility of people using public transportation.

Mr. Dunn agreed with Mr. Valenzuela, and said either add lanes or increase the efficiency of the space you want to utilize. Mr. Valenzuela said in comparison to California, New York, or Washington, DC, where the roads are so congested, it is not as much of a problem here. Mr. Bird said it may be beneficial to find out what the rules of the road are for each lane.

Mr. Dunn said we need to take a Western-European approach for how to do transit. He added, in Europe you are not allowed to pass on the right at all. Pat Folk asked Mr. Dunn what his concern is. Mr. Dunn said it is how to get from point A to point B in an efficient manner.

Francis Swift discussed concerns regarding the Christiana area, where he recently bought a house, and referred to a plan for Cavalier Country Club to convert to commercial properties that will connect the entrance of the club to the Christiana Mall and cause more traffic problems. Mr. Swift would like to hear more about the WILMAPCO Study.

Ms. Zegeye said it is the Churchman's Crossing Study, which is in the implementation and monitoring stage and is part of the UPWP. We expect it to be approved by May, and by July 1st we will look at that area. She added it is a continuation of the Churchman's Crossing Study that started in 1997. Mr. Carter said he would like to know what the impact of the added development will be on the community. Mr. Valenzuela said the area near Christiana Mall can't handle that amount of traffic.

3. Executive Director's Report: 7:10 PM

Tigist Zegeye said the WILMAPCO Council met on March 12, 2015. Action items included adopting the Draft FY2016-19 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and approving a PAC appointment. Presentations included the 2016 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP); 2015 Transportation Justice Report; and 2015 Demographics Update.

Ms. Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- On March 3, 2015, staff participated in the Glasgow Study Public Workshop.
- On March 10, 2015, staff participated in the Harriett Tubman Underground Railroad Byway event.
- On March 10-12, 2015, staff participated in the Brandywine Valley Scenic Byway SR 92 and SR 100 Charrette.
- On May 16, 2015, staff participated in the Latin American Community Coalition Center meeting regarding outreach to Latinos.
- On March 16 & 24, 2015, staff participated in the US 40 Charrettes at Cecil College in North East, Maryland.
- On March 18, 2015, staff participated in a community dinner partnering with New Castle County.
- On March 26, 2015, staff participated in the Elbert Palmer Healthy Family Fun Night.
- Staff is working with South Wilmington Planning Network on health education.
- Staff attended the Statewide Health Promotion Education meeting.
- On April 7 and April 13, 2015, staff is participating in the Newark Bicycle Safety Checkpoints.
- On April 22, 2015, staff will exhibit with the Air Quality Partnership at Wilmington Earth Day.
- On April 23, 2015, staff will participate in the Red Clay Scenic Byway Design Standards Advisory Committee meeting.
- On May 1, 2015, staff will participate in the East Coast Greenway Trail Council and Greenway Summit in Philadelphia.
- On May 5, 2015, staff will participate in the SR9 Walkable Community Workshop from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- On May 14, 2015, staff will participate in the bike safety education meeting at Garfield Park.
- On May 15, 2015, staff will participate in Bike to Work Day in Newark and Wilmington.
- On May 16, 2015, staff will exhibit at the Wilmington Grand Prix event.
- On May 18, staff will participate in the Public Workshop for Red Clay Scenic Byway Design Standards.
- On May 27, 2015, a cycling class will be held at WILMAPCO taught by the White Clay Bicycle Club.
- In June, staff will participate in the Elbert-Palmer Safety Day regarding pedestrian safety.
- On June 3, 2015, staff will participate in the Platinum Picnic at Banning Park.
- Ms. Zegeye circulated a sign-up sheet to PAC members for WILMAPCO's public outreach events.

Ms. Zegeye announced Mr. Bird is resigning as PAC Chair due to other commitments. Mr. Bird said these commitments include his full-time job and working on his PhD. He thanked the PAC for their help and emphasized the importance of their work. Ms. Zegeye presented Mr. Bird with a large cookie to thank him for his work with the PAC. Mr. Antonio Valenzuela, PAC vice Chair, will become the PAC Chair at the next PAC meeting. Ms. Gail Seitz, City of New Castle, will replace Mr. Bird on the PAC.

ACTION ITEMS:

4. Public Outreach Portion of the FY2016 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) 7:20 PM

Ms. Novakoff said the UPWP is the work budget, which specifies how WILMAPCO's funds are spent and what tasks the staff will do. Every year the PAC reviews the public outreach portion of the UPWP for approval. Under the UPWP task of Public Outreach and Public Education are two types of public outreach: 1) General Public – includes attending events and developing relationships with a variety of organizations and partnerships in the community; and 2) Targeted Audiences – includes reaching out to specific groups, and tailoring public outreach approaches to those groups.

The next task, Development of Public Information Documents, includes developing brochures, booklets, pamphlets, and flyers to promote general WILMAPCO efforts as well as individual tasks. Examples include the TIP and Public Guides for Transportation Planning. We also strive to make sure abbreviations and jargon are kept to a minimum in these documents, and the documents are reviewed by the PAC for readability.

Regarding the Newsletter and E-News task, WILMAPCO publishes a quarterly printed newsletter and an electronic monthly newsletter. A special effort is made to include examples of the impact the public has on the transportation planning process. In addition, the Development of Multimedia presentations task includes expanding the awareness of WILMAPCO using various presentations, such as for the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), to educate the public, civic and community groups, and city, town, and county officials at Council meetings. Other topics may include the TIP development process, interregional coordination, and freight studies.

The Webpage Management task includes maintaining and updating the WILMAPCO webpage with meeting dates, times, locations, and agendas for upcoming committee and subcommittee meetings; WILMAPCO's plans and studies; Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Public Participation Plan (PPP) and other planning documents; data and maps; and receiving comments on draft documents.

The School Children Education Program began with a Curriculum in 2001, and includes working with local schools and community centers on educational activities, and coordinating educational components of the Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) program. SRTS activities include organizing meetings, coordinating walk and bike to school events, and partnering with other organizations on other educational events and activities that encourage students to walk and bike to school safely.

The Newark Bike Project Empowerment Program, which is a new project this year, serves youth ages 11 to 15 and includes three main objectives: 1) Educate sustainable riders on developing safe biking habits and basic mechanics of two-wheeled transportation; 2) Bike Safety & Ridership Workshops facilitated by participants at local middle schools and community events; and 3) Character development through community service and leadership training for youth that participate in the entire three month program.

The Media Relations Coordination UPWP task engages various media outlets such as radio, television, and newspapers to promote meetings, events, policy issues, document

changes, and staffing changes relevant to WILMAPCO. Press releases are sent to local newspapers; thirty-second radio commercials are distributed to radio stations such as WDEL (DE) and WXCY (MD); and a radio “jingle” increases public awareness of WILMAPCO that promotes public events. These efforts are generally guided by the advice of the PAC.

Coordination with Other Agencies on Public Outreach includes involvement with agencies that are mostly focused on transportation. Staff participates and arranges local conferences and events, such as display booths focused on specific or general WILMAPCO activities. WILMAPCO also conducts seminars and conferences targeted to audiences on design, development, and technology advances furthering WILMAPCO’s goals.

The Air Quality Public Outreach task involves outreach efforts geared to the public and legislators on air quality issues. The Air Quality Partnership (AQP) of Delaware, a public/private coalition of businesses, agencies, and individuals, works to raise awareness and inform the public about air quality and citizen health in New Castle and Cecil counties and statewide. The AQP developed a mascot, Tropo, and piloted an assembly program that helps raise awareness of air quality issues. They also work with Nemours on an anti-asthma program, and are working on an anti-idling reduction program.

Environmental and Transportation Justice (TJ) Outreach has been developed with the PAC, which includes strategies implemented to engage minority, low-income, elderly, disabled, zero-car households, low-literacy, and limited-English speaking communities in the transportation decision-making process. Participation in expos, exhibits, and conferences help to better engage the populations that educate us about their evolving needs.

The Urban Bike Project conducts the Earn-a-Bike and Trip for Kids Program, educating youth about a safe, practical, and cost-efficient form of transportation. It instills a positive work ethic and occupies students after-school and during weekend hours with positive, productive, and self-esteem-building programs. They become proficient in the use, identification, and maintenance of bicycle parts and tools and learn safe riding skills. The kids build their bikes, and at the end of the program they get to keep them.

The Public Opinion Survey UPWP task provides data on the public perception of transportation facilities and services that helps track trends. The results are used to monitor public concerns and opinions on RTP strategies and awareness of WILMAPCO. A separate survey for Cecil County is conducted annually, and is used in conjunction with the data we receive from DelDOT. The New Castle County Public Opinion Survey is conducted every four years concurrently with Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) updates.

Mr. Bird said the Facebook page looks really good and asked if it comes under Media Relations Coordination. Ms. Novakoff said she will add the Facebook information to that section of the UPWP.

Mr. Carter asked if we can add information about the relationship between transportation, driving, burning fuel, and climate, and suggested that this information should be added under Air Quality and Transportation Justice (TJ). Ms. Zegeye said

under the Data section in the UPWP, we discuss partnering with other agencies, and we put together a technical document that includes population changes, where we could add more information about those issues.

Mr. Vanezuela asked if anyone would like to talk to people at the University of Delaware about bike share programs. The pilot program for the community begins on April 23, 2015. Ms. Zegeye said we have been targeting elementary schools with bike education, and Newark already has a bike share program.

ACTION: On motion by David Carter seconded by Pat Folk the PAC recommended to approve the Public Outreach Portion of the FY2016 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) with suggestions.

Motion passed (4/13/15-03)

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

5. Glasgow Avenue Planning Study 7:30 PM

Dave Gula said Glasgow Avenue used to be part of a main throughway before the SR 896 bypass was constructed. It is a very wide, busy road that now attracts lower volumes of traffic but retains its previous configuration, which encourages higher speeds. The study area is 1.3 miles long.

The project goals include building on recommendations from the Route 40 Plan to create a main street; responding to New Castle County's growing need for non-auto travel options; consistency with New Castle County's goals for walkable development, active living, creating a safe and attractive corridor; and engaging stakeholder groups to build consensus.

The project team includes Rhodeside and Harwell (planning/urban design/community development), Wells and Associates (multi-modal transportation planning/engineering), and RCLCO (market and economic analysis). The first Glasgow Avenue Planning Study Public Workshop was held on March 4, 2015, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., which included a specific program with small group discussions instead of the usual Open House format.

There are significant growth projections for the area due to an increase in the aging community, which has changing needs and interests. There is also new proposed development along the corridor. Main Street design requirements include walkable community centers that have destinations, pedestrian-scale design, mixed-use development, parks, and public spaces.

Pedestrian-scale design often includes wide sidewalks with buffers from travel lanes, buildings closer to the street, and parking lots in the back of structures. A variety of land uses in the same area include housing, shops, schools, parks, and offices. Complete streets are designed to provide safe access for people, where there are plenty of public spaces to meet and gather. In addition, walkable communities include health and economic benefits.

Some of the observations for current conditions on Glasgow Avenue include the prominent power lines; few street lights; not enough places to cross; unprotected bike

lanes; excess pavement; few street trees; parking lots in front of buildings; buildings set back too far from the road; and few sidewalks.

Many of the current residents have lived in the area for a long time, and may not wish to change; therefore, questions posed during the small group discussions were: 1) How would you describe the Glasgow Avenue area to someone who has never been there; 2) What aspects of the area do you like; 3) What aspects of Glasgow Avenue would you like to see improved; 4) What would you like to see in ten years; and 5) What would you not want to see there.

Feedback from the small groups included concerns about congestion, speed, need for buses besides at People's Plaza, and needing a sense of place. However, they weren't in favor of roundabouts. Positive feedback included enjoying shopping, theater, and Glasgow Park. Residents also enjoy not living in a city and they feel positive about the addition of non-chain restaurants, a plaza, and a public library.

The following public meetings and tasks were planned:

- Public Workshop #1 (March) — Collect data and make observations, identify opportunities and constraints (transportation, market, and land use), and develop alternatives and evaluation criteria.
- Public Workshop #2 (May) — Test the alternatives and develop the preferred concept.
- Public Meeting #3 (November) — Make recommendations and establish street and design standards, refine the opportunities and constraints, identify evaluation criteria, develop design alternatives and begin the evaluation, share findings, and hear feedback.

Mr. Valenzuela said the intersection of Route 896 and Route 40 is so large United could fly from one side to another, and it is very dangerous. He rides his bike through there, but, there are no sidewalks or ways to get across. He suggests building a parking garage with levels that go up, which include more space for shops. Mr. Gula agreed that structured parking would be better, the parking area was built in segments, and some of the segments don't fit together. Mr. Gula said the shopping center and parking lot were built in the late 1970s, and we are hoping they will build something now that reflects a different kind of land use; however, the problem is some residents may not be happy about it.

Mr. Carter said when I look at this project there are zoning issues and other issues that need to be addressed; and he asked if the project will be completed without a kink. Mr. Gula said he believes the public is engaged and the project will be moving along very well.

Mr. Dunn said it is a perfect place for multi-use development; however, is it possible to build a foot and bike bridge only over Route 896. Mr. Gula said yes it could be done, but at great cost, and he is not sure who would pay for it.

6. SR 141 Transportation and Land Use Plan 8:00 PM

Mr. Gula said the SR 141 20-Year Transportation & Land Use Plan project partners include RK&K, Kramer & Associates, Renaissance Planning Group, and Rybinski Engineering. Route 141 is a major arterial that links the City of New Castle to U.S. 202/I-95. It functions as a western beltway around Wilmington serving local and regional trips.

The Plan focuses on a section between SR2/Kirkwood Highway and US 202/Concord Pike.

Land uses vary along the corridor with a mix of residential types such as neighborhood shopping centers, large corporate office campuses, and institutions including a regional hospital. Much of the land adjacent to the roadway is developed, but, there is a significant amount of development nearby that is recorded but not built. The SR 141 Corridor has approximately 25,000 jobs within the study area; approximately 5,000 households; and the 5:1 job/housing ratio indicates that 2/3 of the employees commute.

The objectives of the Plan include:

- Identify key issues, challenges, and opportunities for alternative transportation and land use approaches that enhance mobility, safety, quality of life, and economic vitality.
- Develop innovative approaches to manage congestion and growth.
- Address near-term and long-range solutions with an emphasis on strengthening alternative travel modes and options, travel demand management, integration of sustainable transportation, and land use planning.
- Seek options and alternatives to promote more sustainable patterns of development.
- Develop an annual corridor monitoring/plan implementation process.

The goals of the Plan include:

- Develop a vision that results in consensus-based recommendations such as addressing current and future safety and mobility needs.
- Promote alternative travel modes and options; creating a comprehensive public involvement process.
- Develop a sustainable plan to guide transportation and land use policy decisions for the next two decades.

Project tasks involve existing traffic and travel data collection and identifying existing development status; identifying planned transportation improvements; and identifying “by-right” and committed development status. They also include establishing volume network and base conditions; analyzing safety data; calculating LOS at key intersections; and the economic and land use model, which include existing conditions for 2015 and anticipated conditions for 2016.

The SR141 20-Year Land Use & Transportation Plan is the first project to take into account new technology, such as Wavetronix and Bluetooth, which will be counting traffic 24/7. Data analysis of future conditions include economic and land use model; travel forecasting and analysis; updating the volume network with 2035 scenarios; LOS and travel-time data and multiple scenarios; future conditions; and defining potential opportunities.

The public outreach plan will identify and involve key stakeholders to understand key technical and community issues; translate technical information into easily understood language for the public; include public workshop events; and use innovative techniques to inform, involve, and solicit input from residents, including non-English speaking populations. In addition, public workshops and charrettes will be used to effectively

present information and receive maximum feedback. Diverse members of the community will come together to review information and provide feedback in a collaborative manner.

The following public meetings will be held: 1) Public Workshop – to introduce the project and share initial data and listen to concerns; 2) Charrette – to share additional data on existing and future scenarios, listen to concerns, and discuss elements of potential vision and guiding principles; and 3) Public Workshop – to present a draft vision, a set of guiding principles, and obtain feedback. Based on the workshop, they will determine if the community is ready to proceed to Phase 2.

The public outreach process will result in responses to public comments, development of opportunities and a constraints matrix, and development of a project vision and guiding principles. The proposed schedule includes: Task 1 – Data Collection (Feb-May); Task 2 – Data Analysis-Base Conditions (March-Aug); Task 3 – Data Analysis – Future Conditions (May-Nov); and Task 4 – Public Outreach (Feb-Nov).

Mr. Carter said we have to embrace the tension from the public, so that we can get the changes made that we need. It is worth the investment if you want to get something done. He thinks the public outreach approach for the SR 141 Transportation and Land Use Plan is good because it is more direct and engaging for the public.

Mr. Carter also said he just laid out a plan for Councilwoman Diller and Councilwoman Kilpatrick in Kent County, and mapped out some open spaces. He offered to meet with Mr. Gula to give him some suggestions about options and funding. Mr. Gula said it sounds like that would be helpful. He also said this project may be more of a challenge than the Glasgow Avenue project, because there is going to be more uproar and some initial resistance.

Mr. Dunn said that several businesses that have downsized, such as Astra Zeneca; the Experimental Station; and Barley Mill Plaza have vacant, open spaces. In your calculation process you have to clearly attach business/office capacity and what that will bring in terms of traffic. Mr. Gula said the bigger number in the traffic data could cause uproar; however, it will also help people say we need to be part of the process. Mr. Bird asked if a planning group has been identified. Mr. Gula said yes, we have just started reaching out to people we need in the process.

7. Other Business: 8:50 PM

Mr. Carter said he would like an update on the Delaware state budget. Ms. Zegeye said we have submitted the FY 2016 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) after it was approved by the Council. Mr. Carter said he will be there (Delaware legislature) regarding environmental issues. Ms. Zegeye said as an MPO we cannot lobby. He asked if she attends the hearings. She said yes, but to make sure that we have state dollars to match federal dollars. Mr. Carter asked if the budget information could be emailed to him. Ms. Zegeye said yes, we will keep him and the members posted.

8. Adjournment: 8:55 PM