

# **PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

WILMAPCO Conference Room, April 17, 2017

## **ROLL CALL**

### **Members Present:**

Bill Dunn, Civic League for New Castle County  
Dave Carter, Southern New Castle County  
Carlos de los Ramos, AARP  
Pat Folk, Cecil County  
Tom Fruehstorfer, City of Newark  
Mario Gangemi, Cecil County Chamber of Commerce  
Ken Grant, AAA Mid-Atlantic  
Dick Janney, Southern New Castle County  
Joe Mitchell, Cecil County  
Barbara Mobarak, League of Women Voters  
Bill Osborne, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce  
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council  
Gail Seitz, City of New Castle  
Vic Singer, Civic League for New Castle County  
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance (Vice Chair)  
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  
Jeff Peters, Pike Creek Valley Civic League  
Tom Posatko, Delmarva Rail Passenger Association  
Francis Swift, GHADA  
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance  
Javier Torrijos, Delaware Hispanic Commission  
Frank Vari, Chesapeake City  
Centreville Civic League (vacant)

### **Staff Members:**

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

**Guests:** Mark Tudor, DeIDOT

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 February 13, 2017, PAC Meeting Minutes were approved with the following revision: Vic Singer's and Bill Dunn's organizational affiliation should be changed to: Civic League for New Castle County.

**ACTION:** On motion by Glenn Pusey seconded by Vic Singer the PAC approved the February 13, 2017 meeting minutes, with revision.

Motion passed

**(4/17/17-01)**

**2. Public Comment:**

**6:35 PM**

None.

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

**6:40 PM**

Ms. Zegeye said at the Council meeting on March 9, 2017, the Council amended the FY 2017-2020 TIP to reflect changes to the Interstate Maintenance Project, which includes lighting enhancements and drainage improvements and reflects an increase in funding to the Christina River Bridge Project. Council also approved the FY 2018-2021 TIP. Presentations included the FY 2018 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Concept Development for Southern Chester County - New Castle County Transit Service, and Wilmington Transit Moving Forward (WTMF).

Ms. Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- On March 16, 2017, staff conducted bike/ped safety education at Elbert-Palmer Elementary School Family Fun Night.
- On March 22, 2017 WILMAPCO staff participated in the Mid-Atlantic Sustainable Network Meeting in Washington, D.C.
- On March 27, 2017, staff attended the Baltimore Downtown Delivery Symposium, hosted by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC).
- On March 30, 2017, staff presented the interlinkages between transportation and housing affordability to the Delaware Community Development Network, in Dover, Delaware.
- On April 6, 2017, staff attended the Maryland MPO Coordination Roundtable.
- The Ardentown Paths Plan was presented to Ardentown. It will be presented for adoption to the WILMAPCO Council in September, 2017.
- Staff continues to work with the Town of Elkton and SHA on a Pedestrian Plan for Elkton. A kickoff public workshop should occur over the summer and the PAC will receive a presentation at a future meeting.
- As indicated in a flyer in the PAC mailing packet the Draft Route 9 Corridor Master Plan is out for public comment. Staff would appreciate PAC's comments, and if any organizations would like to receive a presentation, please let staff know.
- The Union Street Project Public Workshop is scheduled for April 26, 2017.
- Staff will present WILMAPCO's efforts to incorporate livability into WILMAPCO's planning process at the American Planning Association (APA) Regional Division's Livability Forum on May 5, 2017, in New York City.
- Staff will attend the Congestion Management Process (CMP) peer exchange in St. Paul, Minnesota on May 22, 2017.
- Staff is participating in the Delaware Statewide Bicycle Policy Plan working group and will put together a New Castle County Bicycle Plan.

- Staff is participating in North Delaware Trails Coalition organized by Delaware Greenways to promote trail planning coordination and implementation.
- A presentation on Newark Regional Transportation Center (NRTC) will be provided later this evening.
- The Platinum Picnic will be held on June 7, 2017, and if any PAC members would like to help staff the exhibit, please let us know.
- Regarding the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Coordination Final Rule, which would create a Mega MPO, the Senate has repealed it, and the House of Representatives is likely to do the same.

Mr. Singer asked where the Christina River Bridge is located. Mr. Carter said it is near Christiana Towers.

Antonio Valenzuela, Chair, arrived and apologized for being late. He noted the new PAC meeting time is at 6:30 p.m., instead of 7:00 p.m. He added he was going to leave Delaware, but found a new apartment and stayed. He said the WILMAPCO PAC is one of the reasons he wanted to stay in Delaware, and it is an honor to be here.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

**4. Approval of the Public Outreach of the FY 2018 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

**6:50 PM**

Ms. Novakoff distributed the public outreach portion of the Draft FY 2018 UPWP. She said the UPWP is our budget and outlines the tasks that WILMAPCO will carry out and how much funding is allocated for each project. The public outreach portion of the UPWP provides public education and participation in transportation planning decisions in the WILMAPCO region.

Section 18.03.01 Public Meetings and Outreach allows for staff to attend events and reach out to the general public including identifying new stakeholders and identifying broad audiences, which includes general public outreach. It allows for staff to go to festivals and events, give presentations to civic groups, conduct walkable community workshops, and look for new spaces for workshops. Staff also conducts targeted public outreach to individual populations. For instance, some communities may respond better to social media, and others may respond better to presentations.

Section 18.03.02 Development of Public Information Documents includes creating brochures, booklets, pamphlets, and flyers to promote general efforts as well as individual tasks. Supplemental guides may also be created. WILMAPCO tries to convey the importance of transportation planning in all of our documents using jargon-free language that is easy to understand.

Carlos de los Ramos asked if the public outreach is targeted to Hispanics because WILMAPCO's Union Street Corridor has a high percentage of Hispanic population in Wilmington. Ms. Novakoff said yes we reach out to Hispanic populations with different strategies. For Union Street we partnered with the Latin American Community Center and Westside Grows Together to reach out the community. We can also translate documents into Spanish and have a translator available for public meetings when necessary.

Section 18.03.03 Newsletter and E-News refers to the quarterly newsletter WILMAPCO develops on transportation issues, plans, and projects, and the monthly electronic newsletter that is sent out with current meeting information and brief stories of interest.

Section 18.03.04 Development of Multimedia Presentations expands public awareness of WILMAPCO. Staff develops presentations to educate the public on the importance of their involvement in the transportation planning process. Presentations may focus on several topics including the TIP development process, interregional coordination, and possible freight studies.

Section 18.03.05 Webpage Management refers to maintaining and updating the WILMAPCO webpage, which provides information on meeting dates, times, and locations, and agendas for upcoming Council, Committee, and Subcommittee meetings. It also provides access to the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Public Participation Plan (PPP), and all other planning documents.

Section 18.03.06 School Children Education and Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program was developed in early 2000, and adjustments have been made to improve its effectiveness. Staff continues to work with local schools and community centers by participating in cluster sessions, GIS days, summer camps, and other educational activities. SRTS helps create safe, convenient, and fun opportunities for children to bicycle and walk to and from school. Education and encouragement highlights include Walk- and Bike-to-School Days, Park-n-Walk/Bike events, bike and pedestrian rodeos, safety assemblies, art contests, safety fairs, surveys, and other activities and events.

The Newark Bike Project Youth Program uses bicycle education as a means of pursuing sustainability through emphasizing community, education, and empowerment (\$2,500 is budgeted for the program).

Section 18.03.07 Media Relations Coordination and Social Media includes contacting various media outlets (radio, television, newspaper) to promote meetings, events, major policy issues, document changes, and staffing changes relevant to WILMAPCO. It includes writing press releases, coordinating e-blasts, and encouraging radio and TV interviews. It also includes developing several 30-second radio commercials to increase public awareness of WILMAPCO, and social media events through the WILMAPCO Facebook page.

Section 18.03.08 Coordination with Other Agencies on Public Outreach includes public involvement activities with other jurisdictions and agencies focused on transportation. This section may also include participating and arranging local conferences and events, exhibiting at display booths, and conducting seminars and conferences that educate target audiences on furthering WILMAPCO's transportation goals in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

Section 18.03.09 Air Quality Public Outreach provides the oversight of public outreach efforts to the public and legislators on air quality issues, which includes management of the Air Quality Partnership (AQP) of Delaware. The project develops an outreach program for youth and families related to clean air and how it impacts health and increases awareness of their daily activities, which affect their environment, health, and their lives. It also includes outreach and assistance in developing and implementing anti-

idling reduction and air quality awareness programs in partnership with other organizations.

Section 18.03.10 Environmental and Transportation Justice Outreach strategies have been developed and are being implemented to engage minority, low-income, elderly, disabled, households without an automobile, low-literacy, and limited-English speaking communities in the transportation decision-making process. Staff organizes expos, exhibits, and conferences to better engage and understand the evolving needs of these constrained populations.

The Urban Bike Project, Earn-A-Bike program serves the community's needs, provides for transportation choices, and improves quality of life by engaging youth in a safe, practical, and cost-effective form of transportation. The project instills a positive work ethic and occupies the students after-school and during weekend hours with a positive, productive, and self-esteem building program.

Section 18.04.04 Public Opinion Survey provides data on the public perception of transportation facilities and services. The results are used to monitor public concerns and opinions on strategies contained in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The Cecil County Public Opinion Survey and the New Castle County Public Survey will be revised and combined into one survey that will be conducted every four years, in concurrence with RTP updates. A Transportation Justice (TJ) Survey has also been created to provide data specific to the TJ community.

Mr. Singer asked if WILMAPCO keeps track of how much time people spend on WILMAPCO's website. Ms. Novakoff said yes. Mr. Singer asked when they click on a link, do you know how much time they spend on those sites. Ms. Novakoff said we can only see how long people spend on pages, which is between two to three minutes on average, compared to between 15 and 30 seconds for most websites.

Dave Carter asked if we can translate information sharing such as social media into people's involvement in transportation issues. Ms. Novakoff said we don't have the e-mails of the people who visit the sites; therefore, we don't cross reference that information. Mr. Carter also asked how WILMAPCO picks Environmental Justice (EJ) projects and how he can help those people get more public transportation.

Ms. Zegeye said it is best to look at WILMAPCO's reports for EJ and Transportation Justice (TJ). For EJ we analyze both counties and identify areas with low income and minorities. For TJ we analysis and identify zero car households, seniors and people with disabilities. Ms. Zegeye said we can also help you individually with this information.

Bill Dunn said regarding Section 18.03.08 that he is interested in the Red Clay Scenic Byway issue and Ms. Dunigan had sent him a form, which he needs assistance with. Ms. Novakoff said staff can help him fill out the form.

Pat Folk asked has anything changed from a year or two years ago, and are there any areas that you are emphasizing more now. Ms. Novakoff said yes for the Newark and Urban Bike support the social media component was added, and we are doing more with bike and pedestrian safety education for the youth; however, public outreach in the Public Participation Plan (PPP) is still the same.

Bill Osborne asked how much the budget is for public outreach and if he can see a copy it. Ms. Novakoff said yes it is usually about \$230,000, which is allocated for the entire public outreach program. She will send a copy of the budget, which can also be found on the UPWP webpage.

**ACTION:** On motion by Dave Carter seconded by Bill Osborn the PAC recommended approval of the public outreach for the FY 2018 UPWP.

Motion passed

**(4/17/17-02)**

## **PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **5. Newark Regional Transportation Center (NRTC)**

**7:10 PM**

Dave Gula said the NRTC project history has included the following studies: 1) Wilmington to Newark Commuter Rail Improvements (2004); 2) Feasibility Study Phase I (July 2010); 3) Transportation Infrastructure Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) II Planning Grant awarded (December 2010); 4) NRTC Study Phase II (March 2014); and 5) TIGER IV Grant for PE/construction (June 2012).

The existing Newark Train Station is located directly underneath South College Avenue. It shares the track with Norfolk Southern freight trains and their access to the NS Newark Freight Yard. The station has only one platform that accommodates one train at a time. The proposed station will be built at the same site, but the platform will extend to the right (east). The high-level platform will have two sides to serve two Amtrak or SEPTA trains at the same time. It will also have direct pedestrian access from South College Avenue Bridge; a new station building with a waiting area, restrooms, security, ticketing, a pedestrian bridge; and an expanded parking lot with improved access.

The purpose of the Newark Regional Transportation Center (NRTC) project is to accommodate additional SEPTA service; improve commuter safety and comfort. A high-level platform will make boarding and alighting safer and more convenient for all trains and the station will meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards; accommodate future MARC service when/if that occurs; and the design will be integrated with the University of Delaware STAR Campus.

Mr. Osborne said years ago, MARC had pulled back and were reducing their Level of Service (LOS) to Perryville, and asked how that is going now. Mr. Gula said they have actually added some trains. We are working with them on a Ridership and Feasibility Study that examines the idea of extending service north of Perryville.

In addition, a fully functioning train station will be built, instead of just a guard shack with limited amenities. The train station will have increased security, charging stations for electric cars, and it will be fully ADA bike and pedestrian accessible, which will make it a more successful train station.

Mr. Tudor referred to a PowerPoint slide regarding the Recommended Track Approach. He said the pink area shows the platform. In addition, Track A is being re-located (to the right) so that we can put a platform between Track A and Track one. The chart shows tracks two and three, where passenger trains will not be stopping. As part of the project, DelDOT will upgrade rail facilities at the same time that Amtrak will upgrade their facilities to be more functional. For instance, Amtrak's Davis interlocking, which is where

trains can cross from one track to another track, is antiquated. The interlocking tracks are indicated in blue on the chart.

The upcoming key milestones for the TIGER IV Construction Grant improvements include: 1) Construction of site access and parking (existing platform will remain in service) from June 2017 through May 2018; 2) Station building construction will be from September 2017 through December 2018 (existing platform will remain in service); and 3) Platform, pedestrian bridge, and track work is To Be Determined (TBD), dependent on Amtrak work and scheduling.

Mr. Valenzuela asked what would be done about the safety of the railings on the platform at the old station. Mr. Tudor said the old station platform will be off-limits. Mr. Osborne asked if the freight line is moving. Mr. Tudor said Norfolk Southern (NS) will still have to use Track A, which is Amtrak's track. Bill Dunn asked why the freight line had not been moved away from that area first. Mr. Tudor said we needed to get some improvements done first. We had discussions with both NS and Amtrak, but some of this was beyond our control.

## **6. Safe Routes to School (SRTS)**

**7:30 PM**

Ms. Novakoff said SRTS is a Federal program designed to make walking to school easier and safer for students by providing infrastructure and educational improvements.

WILMAPCO kicked-off support for the Claymont Elementary School SRTS program in March 2010 to remedy long lines of vehicles for student drop-offs and pick-ups. Student Tally Surveys revealed that 60% lived within a mile of the school, and 30% were being driven. Parent Surveys showed 40% felt their children were too far away from the school, 10% said there is too much traffic, and 10% preferred to drive their children. In addition, Open House Sticker Surveys revealed that distance and crime were the top concerns.

In 2013 a walking assessment identified projects implemented in Phase 1 with funding for infrastructure improvements, including for the Commonwealth Intersection, which added curb-side ramps, restriped crosswalks, formalized gravel pathway leading to the I-95 Bridge, new signage was put up around the school, and bike racks were installed.

In 2016, the team completed another assessment for Phase 2, and identified more infrastructure improvements. These included improvements included pavement markings for a fire lane, formalizing mid-block crossings, painting some speed tables, and filling in gaps of sidewalk near new developments. Project requests were submitted to DelDOT, and the team held a prioritization meeting. A public meeting will be held and a PTA presentation will be given, with expectations of construction to begin in 2018.

Education/encouragement activities includes school assemblies, Buster the Bus, Safety Skit, SRTS Art Contests, AAA Delaware's Otto the Auto, Nemours/A.I. DuPont Egg and Peggy Giant Storybook, Bike/pedestrian Rodeos, and the Golden Sneaker Award. The Walk-to-School Week program has been held for seven years. In 2017, a new school staff came on board, which slowed down communications and coordination.

The Elbert-Palmer Elementary School SRTS program began in 2009. Phase I began construction in winter 2010, Phase 2 construction began in spring 2015, and a Phase 3 walking assessment was completed in fall 2015. This program has the same schedule

as Claymont Elementary School's program. Education/encouragement activities included art contests, Walk/Bike-to-School Day, Safety Week/Touch-a-Truck/K9 Officers, Safe Haven Program, Bike/Pedestrian Rodeos, Healthy Family Fun Nights, and events with Tropo (the Air Quality Mascot).

The Stubbs Elementary School SRTS program kicked off in spring 2015, in the east side of Wilmington. The core group included Eastside Community Schools, NHPS, UBP/CORE, Parents, DeIDOT, and WILMAPCO. Program activities included Eastside Community Day walking audit; Walk-to-School Day/Tropo, Safety Fair, and art contests. The Stubbs SRTS program has the same timeframe as the Claymont/Elbert-Palmer program.

Since 2006, Downes Elementary School already had an existing SRTS. The Gym teacher was the champion, and held events including Frequent Walker Punch Cards/Prizes, Walk and Bike-to-School days, and Park and Walk events. This year we worked with Bike Newark, City of Newark, Newark Bike Project, and UD Institute for Public Administration (IPA) and UD Engineers without Borders programs. The team held a Walk/Bike-to-School Day in October 2016 and the Mayor of Newark attended, and made a proclamation for the day.

A parent survey was conducted in April 2016. Thirty-five participants responded and 90% said their children live too far from the school, 35% said high speed along the walking route was an issue. A walking audit was completed in May 2016. Currently, plans include Bike-to-School Week, which will include a Popup Bike Lane Demonstration on Casho Mill Road. Downes Elementary is a few months ahead of the other school's programs.

The Wilmington Montessori School has begun a SRTS program, which was recommended as a result of the Ardentown Paths Plan. The program kicked-off in March 2017, the team reviewed SRTS program goals, discussed infrastructure needs, and will submit a request letter in April 2017. The next meeting will be held in June 2017 to discuss education activities for the 2017-2018 school year as well as the surveys.

Ms. Mobarak asked if there are any opportunities for SRTS programs along the Route 9 Corridor. Ms. Novakoff said the team had met with Middle School students, and there are potentially some opportunities there. Mr. Osborne asked if RideShare Delaware is still involved with the SRTS programs. Ms. Novakoff said yes they are attending the upcoming Wilmington Montessori School meeting.

## **7. Other Business**

**8:20 PM**

Mr. Dunn said at the February 2017 PAC meeting, it was noted in the minutes that Mr. Dunn had requested information regarding CSX and Norfolk Southern (NS) rail because at Newport Gap Pike and Stanton Road the roads are frequently blocked off while drivers are waiting for trains. He got a response from WILMAPCO that the data was requested, but is not available because it was from a private company. He suggested that WILMAPCO go back to them, and ask NS to give us whatever information they have. Ms. Novakoff said that we can't force a private company to give us the information.

## **8. Adjournment**

**8:30 PM**