

PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

WILMAPCO Conference Room, June 15, 2015

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Wes Avera, Centreville Civic League
David Bird, City of New Castle
Bruce Brunozzi, City of Wilmington
Dave Carter, Southern New Castle County Alliance
William Dunn, New Castle County Civic League
Pat Folk, Cecil County
Dick Janney, Southern New Castle County
Joe Mitchell, Cecil County
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council
Gail Seitz, City of New Castle
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance
Javier Torrijos, Delaware Hispanic Commission
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance
Victor Singer, Civic League of New Castle County
Antonio Valenzuela, City of Wilmington (Chair)
Frank Vari, Chesapeake City

Absent:

Darlene Cole, Elderly and Disabled Transit Advisory Committee Jeff
Ken Davis, Neighborhood House, Inc
Matthew Eskridge, AAA Mid-Atlantic
Jim Lardear, DE State Chamber of Commerce*
Bill Lower, Committee of 100
Jeff Peters, Pike Creek Valley Civic League
Tom Posatko, Delmarva Rail Passenger Association
Brett Saddler, Claymont Renaissance Development Corporation
Peggy Schultz, League of Women Voters
Charles Shaw, AARP
Francis Swift, GHADA

*** Reserve PAC Members**

Guests:

Deborah Torrijos

Staff Members:

Tamika Graham, Senior Planner
Randi Novakoff, Outreach Manager
Bill Swiatek, Senior Planner
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Minutes prepared by Janet Butler

David Bird, previous PAC Chair, co-chaired the meeting with Antonio Valenzuela, current PAC Chair, and called the meeting to order at **7:03 PM**.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes 7:05 PM

The following changes and corrections were requested for the April 13, 2015 Minutes: 1) Public Comments section, last sentence, third paragraph, delete the sentence: "Mr. Dunn said the efficiency of his new car at high speeds is much better than his older car."; 2) On page 9, change to "New Castle County" (not Kent County); and delete specific names and change to "working with members of County Council."

ACTION: On motion by David Carter seconded by Pat Folk the PAC approved the April 13, 2015 minutes with changes and corrections.

Motion passed **(6/15/15-01)**

2. Public Comment: 7:05 PM

Frank Vari invited PAC members to the 7th Annual Chesapeake City Canal Race 5K Run/Walk, and the opening of a new trail, in North Chesapeake City on June 27, 2015.

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

Tigist Zegeye said the WILMAPCO Council met on May 14, 2015. From July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016, John Sisson, DTC, will serve as Council Chair, and Bill Miners, Chesapeake City, will serve as Vice Chair. In addition, Gwinn Kaminsky, City of Wilmington, will serve as TAC Chair, and David Dahlstrom, Maryland Department of Planning, will serve as TAC Vice Chair.

Action items included adopting the state and local cash commitment for FY 2016 and the state and local funding formula for FY 2016; approving the FY2016 UPWP and the Proposed Prioritization of FY2017-2020 TIP; endorsing the 2015 Delmarva Freight Plan and the 2015 Transportation Justice (TJ) Study. Presentations included the Locust Lane Sidewalk Feasibility Study; SR141 20-Year Transportation & Land Use Plan; and the Glasgow Avenue Planning Study.

Ms. Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- Staff participated in the SR9 Walkable Community Workshop.
- Staff participated in the Locust Lane Sidewalk Feasibility Study public workshop.
- Staff exhibited at the Healthy Kids Delaware Community Dinner.
- Staff participated in the Claymont Elementary School Bike Rodeo and Walk to School Week.
- Staff exhibited at the Garfield Park Health Fair.
- Staff participated in the Newark and Wilmington Bike-to-Work Day events.
- Staff held the Red Clay Scenic Byway Design Standards Workshop.
- WILMAPCO hosted the White Clay Bike Club Class for beginners.
- Staff participated in Elbert-Palmer Elementary School Safety Day.
- Staff participated in the Latin American Community Center staff meeting.
- Staff attended the North Claymont Area Master Plan project management meeting in June, 2015.
- Staff exhibited at the Wilmington Platinum Picnic on June 3, 2015.
- Staff exhibited at the Southbridge Farmer's Market Grand Opening on June 5, 2015.
- Staff held the Glasgow Avenue Planning Study Workshop on June 10, 2015.

- Staff will present the Route 141 20-Year Transportation & Land Use Plan public information session on June 17, 2015 (flyers were distributed). Ms. Zegeye invited PAC members to distribute the flyers.
- Staff will present the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to the Delaware Association of Public Administration on June 18, 2015.
- The Delmarva Freight Summit will be held on June 24, 2015, at Dover Downs, from 8:30 a.m. to noon. Registration is still open.
- Staff will participate in the Fourth Street Walkable Community Workshop on June 24, 2015, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- A Unified Development Code (UDC) Public Workshop will be held from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., on June 24, 2015, at Christiana Fire Hall.
- The WILMAPCO TIP Public Workshop will be held on August 24, 2015, prior to the next PAC meeting. More information will be sent to the PAC members.

Mr. Carter asked if WILMAPCO is tracking any of the legislation on anti-idling pollution for freight trains, which has implications for air quality. Ms. Zegeye said WILMAPCO Council and Staff cannot track (lobby) state legislation as stated by both Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Mr. Dunn asked if the Route 141 Land Use & Transportation Plan were reviewed and what Council comments were. Ms. Zegeye said yes, most of the Council members are partners and are familiar with the project. City of Wilmington is very interested in the process and would like to get involved in the development of the Plan.

ACTION ITEMS:

None.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

4. Public Opinion Survey: Responses by Race, Ethnicity, and Income: 7:20 PM

Bill Swiatek said WILMAPCO conducts a telephone transportation survey in Cecil County each year and in New Castle County every four years. The sample size is 600, including 400 -- New Castle County and 200 -- Cecil County. The survey results are used in the WILMAPCO Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

Mr. Swiatek said through our Title VI work, we found that minorities are unrepresented in the survey, with 13% Blacks, which should be about 21%, and Hispanics at 1%, which should be about 8%. Some income ranges did not match the Census, and in response to this, we established response quotas for the 2014 Survey for the different minority groups. This gave us the ability to do cross tabulation, which helps with awareness of specific issues for Environmental Justice (EJ) groups in the future.

Vic Singer asked how WILMAPCO increases the proportion of responses of Blacks and Hispanics. Mr. Swiatek said we just keep calling to get the target number. Mr. Carter said low-income citizens don't always have a phone line, switch cell phones often, and are harder to reach. Mr. Swiatek said it is important that we have a base line that is accurate. We need to make sure we match up with the demographics in the region.

Mr. Singer suggested that we screen total responses of a few things first, and explore the other answers, then, discard on that basis. Mr. Swiatek said we try to get the quota first before we discard.

Mr. Carter said you ask two slightly different questions and from a design perspective your survey is done as if it is two different surveys, which are valid. There is some overlap; however, it is scientifically sound. The only thing that isn't here is if there is a geographical influence on it.

Mr. Valenzuela said he believes that the percentage of Blacks is more like 60%. Mr. Swiatek said in some Wilmington neighborhoods the percentages of Blacks are very high; however, overall, New Castle County is 21% Black.

Mr. Dunn asked do you make similar adjustments for socio-economic distribution and age distribution. Mr. Swiatek said for income and age we do match up with the Census figures. We do not have to have a quota for those two.

Mr. Valenzeula said he came to WILMAPCO on the bus this evening, and 95% were Black or Hispanic. Understanding their feelings about transportation is important. Mr. Carter said we had to add the survey quotas to get at this information, which is exactly what Mr. Swiatek is doing. Mr. Valenzuela said the reason he wants to be part of the PAC is because there is a large population that is being under-represented who use public transit.

Mr. Torrijos asked if there are translators for Spanish. Ms. Novakoff said yes. Mr. Bird asked if cost is a factor in why the Survey is done once every four years in New Castle County. Ms. Novakoff said yes, cost is a factor; however, several other surveys are done in New Castle County, which ask some of the same questions.

Mr. Swiatek continued the four racial/ethnic categories included: 1) White = non-Hispanic white alone; 2) Black = Non-Hispanic Black alone; 3) Asian = Non-Hispanic Asian alone; and 4) Hispanic = Hispanic of any race. The WILMAPCO region is made up of 21% Black, 65% White, 8% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and 2% other. We consider high income earners those with annual income is greater than \$100,000; while low income is less than \$25,000. The median household income is about \$65,000 per year.

Mr. Swiatek said overall, 24% of respondents say that the transportation system does not meet their needs well. Those with lower incomes were more likely to agree with this statement. For example, 35% for those with incomes less than \$25,000; 31% for incomes between \$25,000 and \$50,000; 23% for incomes between \$50,000 and \$100,000; and only 20% for incomes greater than \$100,000 per year.

Overall, 19% of respondents support raising the gas tax; 32% support raising tolls (less popular among Blacks and Hispanics and low-income); 72% feel development should occur in growth areas (80% of Whites versus 50% of Blacks and Hispanics agree); 49% don't want new development (59% Whites versus 25% Blacks).

Mr. Bird asked if there was a breakdown in geographic responses. Mr. Swiatek said we did not pull that out yet.

Mr. Swiatek said overall, 40% think that revitalizing existing places and downtowns is a critical issue (not much variance between ethnicity, but, bigger between income groups- 54% high-income versus 23% low-income); and 31% say improving the bus system is a critical issue (50% of low-income versus 30% high-income say it is critical); while 40% think buses are very effective at reducing congestion (73% low income versus 23% high income).

Mr. Torrijos asked if the Hispanic percentage is higher regarding the question about improving the bus system because they are un-documented. Mr. Swiatek said maybe because they are more likely to use the bus.

Overall, 13% don't walk in their area because they don't feel safe (4% of high-income don't feel safe versus 31% of low income); 20% would bike more if they felt safer with more bike routes and lanes (high-income are more in favor); and 12% say bicycle travel is desired, but, not available to them (a lot of agreement between groups).

Mr. Torrijos said you could get the same answer from different purposes or motives on the question about bike travel because some may use bikes for recreation and some may be using bikes to get to work. Mr. Swiatek said we could do a better job on some questions by rewording them.

In addition, 33% are familiar with WILMAPCO (40% high-income versus 20% low-income; whites twice as likely as minorities to be familiar); 50% have knowledge of ozone action days (low-income is half the high-income percentage); and 26% have knowledge of fine particulate matter (PM2.5). (Asians have the highest percentage of knowledge of PM2.5, and Blacks and Hispanics have less awareness).

Mr. Singer said he sees the bigger difference in low-income versus high-income, rather than between the ethnic groups. Mr. Carter said if you have a high-income you are used to contacting the legislature to make changes. Mr. Valenzuela agreed many of the higher-income groups have more influence; however, low-income groups just complain to try to get what they want.

Mr. Valenzuela also said most low-income groups aren't familiar with the terminology for particulate matter. Mr. Carter said there has been a lot of research done on air quality terminology and he agreed that the question on particulate matter wouldn't be understood by many people. Mr. Torrijos agreed that particulate matter is a language barrier; and there is a vast difference in the educational system. Mr. Carter said instead of asking if they have knowledge of fine particulate matter (PM2.5), perhaps it may be better to ask questions such as do you have health issues from bad air quality or air pollution.

Ms. Torrijos said that the terminology is very specific, unless you are educated on the specific terminology of particulate matter, PM2.5. You need to take into consideration the cultural aspect. Perhaps there is another way to ask the question so that the general public will understand it.

Mr. Swiatek agreed the terminology can be confusing. He said it is important for people to understand air quality, ozone, and their impact on health. This survey shows where we have some gaps between groups, and areas we can focus on for improved outreach.

Mr. Singer said the answer, “I don’t understand,” is an opportunity. You can count the percentage who answer “I don’t understand,” and that could change the results.

Mr. Swiatek said next steps include creating a Data Report; continue reaching out to the Environmental Justice (EJ) communities; revising the questions; considering an education quota; and digging more into the Public Opinion Survey results and incorporating them into the next EJ Report.

Mr. Swiatek said if anyone would like to volunteer to be on a committee to look at the questions, they are most welcome. Mr. Carter volunteered if he has time.

5. Locust Lane Sidewalk Feasibility Study: 7:30 PM

Tamika Graham said Locust Lane is a ½ mile road segment, surrounded by residential, commercial, and institutional uses, located in Elkton, Maryland near the intersection of Main Street and Delaware Avenue. The study scope included data collection; reviewing design standards and guidelines; developing and assessing alternatives; providing preliminary cost estimates; and developing a technical report.

The purpose of Locust Lane Sidewalk Feasibility Study is to uncover the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal; identify opportunities and threats presented by the environment; identify resources required to carry out the project; and determine prospects for success. Goals of the study include: accommodate pedestrian activity; expand sidewalk network; improve safety; and enhance connectivity. Related plans/reports that were developed include: 1) Comprehensive Plan (2010); Walkable Community Workshop Report (2008); Locust Lane One-Way Traffic Study (2003); and Elkton Downtown Plan (2003). Ms. Graham noted that there is a Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) project funded and underway adjacent to the study area to enhance sidewalks and crosswalks on a portion of Locust Lane and E. High Street. The current study is looking to build on these pedestrian improvements.

Mr. Valenzuela asked for clarification if this project includes putting a sidewalk on one side of the street. Ms. Graham said it includes upgrading the sidewalk on one side because it is not ADA compliant and adding additional sidewalk where it is missing. Ms. Folk asked for clarification about the location of Locust Lane and if it crosses Route 40. Ms. Graham said no. Mr. Singer said the intersection goes out to Route 40. Ms. Graham said Delaware Avenue is near the project segment, but, the project does not go out to Route 40.

Ms. Graham said pedestrian needs were paramount for getting this feasibility study started. Due to the lack of pedestrian counts, pedestrian generators were identified to gain an understanding of where walking activity is taking place. Pedestrian generators include: Elkton Methodist Church; Northern Chesapeake Hospice; Elkton Presbyterian Church; Elkton Senior Apartments; Elkton Housing Authority Complex; Elkton Town Hall; Cecil College; Union Hospital; Main Street Offices & Retail; and parks.

Four sidewalk improvement measures were discussed: 1) Upgrades to sidewalk restricted by existing walls; 2) Upgrades to sidewalk restricted by utilities—provide a 60-inch sidewalk behind the utility poles or relocate utility poles beyond the new sidewalk; 3) Upgrades to sidewalk restricted by existing walls and utilities—relocate utilities underground, to provide a 40-inch sidewalk at this location, or relocate a concrete wall at least 12 inches away from the current location, provide a 36-inch minimum sidewalk

beyond a utility pole, or relocate the utility pole and concrete wall to extend the sidewalk to 60 inches; and 4) Provide passing zones.

In addition, the following five alternatives were developed and evaluated with cost estimates: 1) Narrow Roadway (\$139,000); 2) Accommodate Utilities (\$57,000); 3) Relocate Utilities (\$57,000); 4) Sidewalk Extension North of High Street (\$102,000); and 5) Additional Sidewalk on Westside of Locust Lane (N/A). Ms. Graham said evaluation criteria were also considered. The evaluation criteria determined if the project satisfied project goals; had adequate constructability; included financial considerations; considered neighborhood support or opposition; considered easements; and considered environmental/cultural impacts.

Option #2 (Accommodate Utilities) and 2A Extension (sidewalk extension north of High Street) were recommended, which includes upgrades to sidewalk restricted by utilities by providing a 60-inch sidewalk behind the utility poles. If the Town of Elkton decides to move forward, the next step is to pursue funding for the improvements.

Mr. Valenzuela asked if this project could be moved to another street. Ms. Graham said there are a number of challenges on Locust Lane, and this street needs improvements to connect the neighborhoods to the downtown.

Mr. Singer suggested Locust Lane be made a one-way street, which had been done previously. Ms. Graham noted that option was discussed, but it was not pursued because that option was widely unsupported by residents many years ago under a different project at the same location.

Ms. Graham said regarding public outreach, postcards were mailed directly to more than 450 addresses in the immediate surrounding area. A public workshop was held in June, and five people attended. At the public meetings, residents were asked if they were inconvenienced by walkability challenges. Attendees were in favor of the project, and provided general project support with feedback on desired additional improvements.

Ms. Folk asked if another public workshop was scheduled. Ms. Graham said no, because it is a small project. Mr. Brunozzi asked if there is more information that justifies why this work should be done, for instance, if there are frequent accidents there. Mr. Tancredi said he can understand why the feasibility study was needed because there is clearly a gap in the sidewalk. Mr. Singer said WILMAPCO has come to a rational conclusion, but he feels the one-way option should be included.

Mr. Bird asked if the project was done by staff or by a consultant. Ms. Zegeye said the work was done mostly by staff and a consultant was used for a small portion of the work.

Mr. Valenzuela said generally we need to be more forward looking when we build sidewalks. Ms. Graham said the Town of Elkton requires any new subdivision to build five-foot wide sidewalks, and they are looking toward the future, but the challenge is retrofitting the older neighborhoods.

Ms. Graham said the following tasks were done: In 2014, a project meeting was held (December); in 2015, a project meeting was held and a presentation was made to TAC (March); an Elkton Mayor & Commissioners workshop was held and a presentation was made to NMTWG (April); a public workshop, a presentation to Council, and a project

meeting to finalize the draft report were held (May); the Elkton Mayor & Commissioners adopted the study; and the study has been presented to WILMAPCO PAC, TAC, and Council for endorsement (June/July).

6. Other Business: 8:50 PM

Mr. Carter said the General Assembly just found some more funding, so call your legislators to ask them to fund transportation.

7. Adjournment: 9:00 PM