

# PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

WILMAPCO Conference Room, June 13, 2016

## ROLL CALL

### Members Present:

Wes Avera, Centreville Civic League  
Dave Carter, Southern New Castle County Alliance  
Darlene Cole, Elderly and Disabled Transit Advisory Committee  
William Dunn, New Castle County Civic League  
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  
Peggy Schultz, League of Women Voters  
Gail Seitz, City of New Castle  
Vic Singer, Civic League of New Castle County  
Francis Swift, GHADA  
Javier Torrijos, Delaware Hispanic Commission

### Absent:

Bruce Brunozzi, City of Wilmington  
Robert Cameron, Claymont Renaissance Development Corporation  
Dick Janney, Southern New Castle County  
Jim Lardear, DE State Chamber of Commerce\*  
Charles Shaw, AARP  
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance  
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance  
Antonio Valenzuela, City of Wilmington (Chair)  
Frank Vari, Chesapeake City

### \* Reserve PAC Members

### Staff Members:

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

Minutes prepared by Janet Butler

Vic Singer, PAC Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at **7:00 PM**

### 1. Approval of Meeting Minutes **7:02 PM**

The following revisions to the minutes were presented:

- 1) On page 4 Mr. Singer requested to revise the fourth initiative to state, "the recommendation is not WILMAPCO's general land use policy, but a specific recommendation for the Route 9 Corridor."
- 2) On page 5, change "includes" to "include."

- 3) Mr. Singer said on page 5, under Task 2, “Expanding market realities and identifying opportunities for redevelopment,” reflects land use regulatory information. He requested to revise the minutes to say it is not statewide.
- 4) On page 7, under Other Business, in the last sentence of the first paragraph, “Mr. Singer requested to revise it to say, “whether the public is served best by the current split between spending for transit and spending for pavement.”

Dave Carter said he believes the Coastal Zoning Act issues are being pushed out of this study, and he warned the PAC attendees to be cautious of the motivations of one of the funding groups.

Bill Dunn asked if expanding market realities are based on market viability of surrounding properties, or based on present zoning, or comprehensive development planning. Tigist Zegeye said New Castle County looks at what is in the current zoning, and they look at what has happened over the years. Ms. Zegeye said at the next PAC meeting WILMAPCO staff will present the results from the public outreach process and the analysis of the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan.

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. Carter seconded by Mr. Torrijos the PAC approved the April 18, 2016, meeting minutes, with revisions.  
Motion passed **(6/13/16-01)**

**2. Public Comment:**  
None.

**7:05 PM**

**3. Executive Director’s Report:**

**7:12 PM**

Ms. Zegeye said the WILMAPCO Council met on May 12, 2016. The Council elected John Sisson, Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC), to continue as Chair, and Bill Miners, Chesapeake City, to continue as Vice Chair. The Council also adopted the FY 2017 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). In addition, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approved the FY 2017 UPWP. The Council amended the project prioritization process and approved the proposed prioritization of FY 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) submissions. Presentations were given on Air Quality Public Outreach and the South Wilmington Planning Network (SWPN).

Ms. Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- Staff coordinated with the City of Newark on activities for Bike Month in May.
- Staff is coordinating with the Newark Bike Project on the youth empowerment program.
- Staff held a visioning workshop for the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan on May 24, and 75 people attended. The Steering Committee met on June 9, 2016. Public outreach during the summer will include a community festival, a farmer’s market, and targeted outreach to seniors and youth.
- Staff coordinated Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Walk- and Bike-to-School Days and safety events for Stubbs, Downes, Claymont, and Elbert-Palmer Elementary Schools.
- Staff held a Public Workshop for the North Claymont Area Master Plan on June 6, and 130 people attended.
- Staff exhibited at the Platinum Picnic and 500 people attended.

- Staff will hold a Red Clay Scenic Byway Design Standards public workshop on June 16, 2016.
- Staff will participate in the Safe Kids Day event on July 13, 2016.
- The WILMAPCO Air Quality Subcommittee and Technical Advisory Committee meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m., and WILMAPCO's Summer Picnic will be held at noon, at Lums Pond State Park on July 21, 2016.
- The Newark Regional Transportation Center (NRTC) Study is on schedule.
- The Claymont Regional Transportation Center (NRTC) TIGER grant was submitted, and staff is waiting to hear about the application. The funding will be for final design and construction of the train station.
- A public workshop was held on the Route 141 Twenty-Year Land Use and Transportation Plan, the public comment period is open through June 25, 2016, and a final report will be prepared.
- Staff will coordinate with New Castle County Land Use and DeIDOT on a US 202 Master Plan. Improvements will probably focus on non-motorized transportation.
- Staff is waiting for the results to be circulated to member agencies regarding the Ridership Study from Baltimore to Philadelphia, coordinated with DTC, MTA, and SEPTA. The focus is on closing the rail gap between Perryville and Newark.

Mr. Singer said the scope of work for the Route 202 Master Plan should expand the application to include WILMAPCO's Congestion Management Subcommittee (CMS) work. For instance, on Route 141, the lesser expenditures for snow plowing enabled a savings of 15% improvement in travel time.

Pat Folk asked when the 55+ Lifestyles Expo in Cecil County is being held. Ms. Novakoff said the event is being held on Thursday, August 4 at Elkton High School and she will email additional details.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

None.

**7:20 PM**

**PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**4. South Wilmington Planning Network**

**7:30 PM**

Mr. Swiatek said the South Wilmington Planning Network (SWPN) was formed in 2009, and has about 40 members including government, nonprofit, and private organizations, residents, and two university interns. Rysheema Dixon, Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, serves as chair and Bill Swiatek, WILMAPCO, serves as vice-chair.

The mission of SWPN is to serve as a vehicle to exchange information and leverage resources on collaborative projects to improve the quality of life for the South Wilmington community. The vision of SWPN is to be a place where ideas and information are shared and partnerships are created with the purpose of positively impacting South Wilmington and its communities. A recent survey showed that sixty-three percent of respondents strongly agree that life is better today than it was one year ago, while 22% agree and 11% are neutral.

Mr. Swiatek said the South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan needs to be updated, because the majority of the objectives have either been completed or are no longer applicable.

Various SWPN projects this past year have included the Southbridge Farmer's Market; community and youth gardens; and Southbridge Weekend. Flooding and wetlands project support and a commercial district affiliate have also been spearheaded by the Network.

Key transportation projects led or supported by WILMAPCO and the SWPN include a streetscape/repaving project at New Castle Avenue and Heald Street; Safe Routes to School (SRTS) events; Southbridge Signage Survey; and Riverfront connections, including the A Street Bike Lane. Most of these projects came out of the 2008 Southbridge Circulation Study. Phases one and two of the streetscape/repaving project involves improving pedestrian crossings, adding pedestrian scaled lighting, and adding a bicycle lane on New Castle Avenue.

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program at Elbert-Palmer Elementary School is considered a national best practice in a low resource community. Pedestrian crossings have been improved; sidewalks have been rebuilt and extended to reach surrounding homes, bus stops, community centers, and parks; stop signs and other signage has been placed to improve safety; and bike parking has been added at the school. Additionally, the school has implemented an annual Safety Day. Children are engaged regarding safe walking/biking safety by various organizations including: the Wilmington Police and Fire Departments, AAA Delaware, Al Dupont Hospital, DeIDOT, and Delmarva Power.

The SWPN also successfully petitioned DART to re-align the Route 8 bus, a recommendation of the 2008 Southbridge Circulation Study. The Route 8 bus provides access to the Port of Wilmington, downtown, and the Westside. DART has rerouted the Route 8 bus into Southbridge at the SWPN's request. There are now about 20 people boarding from Southbridge each day, making it one of the most successful bus stops on the route. This is an example of a ladder of opportunity project, because it provides low income residents with better access to jobs.

The SWPN also has supported flooding mitigation work. It encouraged action, supported city and state efforts, and empowered residents through awareness of the wetland redevelopment project. For more information regarding SWPN, please visit: [www.SWPN.org](http://www.SWPN.org).

Gail Seitz asked is Shoprite the main grocery store and do the residents have access to it. Mr. Swiatek said it was contentious when it was first built because there wasn't any bus access; however, now there is bus access, but it is at the far end of the parking lot. A SWPN project to place a bicycle lane along A Street will also improve connectivity to the supermarket.

## **5. North Claymont Area Master Plan**

**8:00 PM**

Ms. Dunigan said the North Claymont Area Master Plan has a broad scope that considers land use and design, community and economic development, transportation, environment, and open space. The planning partners include WILMAPCO, New Castle County, Claymont Renaissance Development Corporation (CRDC), DeIDOT, Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination (OSPC), Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), DART, and the Delaware Economic Development Office (DEDO).

The study area is located up to the Pennsylvania line and includes 1.5 square miles. It is dominated by industrial and former industrial uses. The project team is mainly focused on the area of the former Claymont Steel site and the Tri-State Mall, which is mostly vacant. The area also includes Northtowne Plaza and several residential areas.

The project team has met with a project management committee, advisory committee, and several stakeholder focus groups. Key issues included the need for more job access, protection of the historical resources, housing, business, and recreation including a destination for entertainment. Transportation concerns including highway access and considerations for the environment were also highlighted.

Two public workshops have been held with more than 100 attendees. At the first public meeting the team established the following goals: 1) Promote economic and business development; 2) Create a safe and welcoming community; 3) Improve transportation connections for all; 4) Increase the network of open space and recreation facilities; 5) Encourage design that enhances the existing community context; 6) Include development of housing for a variety of incomes; and 7) Plan for residential areas with views of the waterfront; and protect and restore the environment.

Concerns from citizens have centered on crime and safety, lack of visually appealing areas, and pedestrian connections. Other concerns include pedestrian access to the train station, public access to the Delaware River, and the condition of housing.

At the second public meeting, draft scenarios were evaluated. These include:

- Scenario 1: Base Case (Existing Land Use) includes relocating the train station with a path from the old station. This would be used as point of comparison for other scenarios.
- Scenario 2: Mixed Use Nodes includes a mix of uses in distinct nodes.
- Scenario 3: Waterfront Industrial includes intense industrial uses on the waterfront, with large retail and office areas.
- Scenario 4: Mixed Use & Industrial includes some industrial uses near the railway, with a mix of uses in other areas.

In addition, for each of the planning areas the team is conducting a data analysis to compare different scenarios. The team also looks at availability of jobs, the environment, and access to the Delaware River, the trail network, the East Coast Greenway, parks and recreation, housing and new development, traffic volumes and congestion, bicycling and walking, and driving access.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is a major consideration because relocation of the Claymont Train Station presents a major economic development opportunity. The train station project seeks to improve passenger mobility through expanded service and reduced dwell times, provide multi-modal access to the station, improve safety and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility, and address parking needs. Three draft conceptual designs have been developed by DTC and were presented for feedback at the second public workshop.

Next steps for the North Claymont Master Plan consist of selecting a preferred scenario and a final public workshop during the fall of 2016.

Mr. Carter asked about the impact of the project on the coastal zone and if there will be changes. Ms. Dunigan said that the recommendations are assuming coastal zone will stay as it is, and are considering manufacturing and light industrial since these uses are permitted. Mr. Carter reiterated we have a responsibility to pay attention to the Coastal Zone Act issues, and not to suppress the information from the public. Ms. Dunigan said she will try to find out more information about the Coastal Zone Act as it relates to the project.

Mr. Singer said his perception is that it is not a priority for the owner of the steel site to develop the Port of Wilmington. Ms. Dunigan said that in the short-and medium-term the Port of Wilmington is not interested in expansion of the port in Claymont; however, the owner of the Claymont site is interested in port expansion. She added if they want to have a port facility there, they will need to dredge. Mr. Singer said it would also be good to look at other uses of the site besides the port.

Ms. Schultz asked if residential is included in the discussion of mixed use. Ms. Dunigan said yes. Ms. Schultz asked the size of the entire space. Ms. Dunigan said it is about 1,000 acres or 1.5 square miles.

## **6. Red Clay Valley Scenic Byway Design Standards Overlay**

Ms. Dunigan said the guiding principle of the Red Clay Valley Scenic Byway Design Standards Overlay project is to protect and enhance the intrinsic qualities of the byway. The project partners include New Castle County, Alliance for the Red Clay Valley Scenic Byway, DelDOT, and WILMAPCO. Implementation will include design guidance, zoning options, regulatory tools, and monitoring and management programs.

The project scope encompasses public outreach throughout the process, develops menu tools and techniques, researches best practices, reviews the Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP), develops a menu of strategies, identifies implementation techniques, and authors a report and recommendations for the Unified Development Code (UDC).

The first public workshop was held on February 12, which was a roundtable format, including discussions on special places, hopes and fears, and what is appropriate for the area. The second workshop, held on May 18, included a presentation of tools and techniques, a hypothetical parcel, and a sticker survey.

The third workshop is being held on June 16, at Ashland Nature Center, where the team is presenting the draft Scenic Byway Overlay Design Guidelines for public review.

Ms. Dunigan said the Scenic Byway Overlay Design Guidelines not only helps to preserve and enhance scenic features and resources, but minimize grading, tree removal, signage, and changes to the character of roadways; reduce visual intrusions that are not compatible with the byway; design improvements to preserve, complement, and enhance views; and assure that development and other changes are compatible with the byway.

The design team looked at best practices from all of the states and narrowed the list down to include:

- Preserving scenic viewsheds
- Regulating scenic roadways using the Design Review Advisory Committee (DRAC)

- Linking view preservation with environmental protection and signage regulations.
- Implementing overlay zoning with protective easements

Mr. Dunn asked why historic road classification is not included. Ms. Dunigan said we left that aspect to the future, because there is no official classification within the New Castle County Code. We thought it was more appropriate to apply it to byways rather than develop a new definition for historic roads.

Ms. Dunigan continued the scenic viewshed includes all land and existing improvements visible from the scenic byway roadway network, as measured from multiple observation points along the roadway. As you go back further from the road, the design guidelines become less strict.

Ms. Dunigan said the design team divided roads and buffers into sub-districts within the viewshed including sub-district 1, which is the right-of-way; sub-district 2, which is up to 200 feet from the road (inner corridor); sub-district 3, which extends out to 1,000 feet from the road (outer corridor), and sub-district 4, which are all areas of the overlay district that do not fall into districts 1, 2, or 3.

Next steps for the design guidelines are to incorporate input from the third public workshop, finalize the Overlay District Standards and Design Guidelines, and prepare the Final Report. Proposed changes to the UDC would then go through the county public process.

Mr. Dunn said there are many historic properties that are not being considered for registration as historic properties. The only citizen interests that were considered during the 2008 Scenic Byway Study were for the Ashland and Greenville areas. Ms. Dunigan said she doesn't know why those boundaries were selected. She suggested that he contact the Alliance for the Red Clay Scenic Byway and attend their meetings.

Mr. Singer asked if the strategy is to make the roadway invisible by hiding it with plantings. He asked if you build something in the green area and plant trees around it would it be acceptable. Ms. Dunigan said yes, that is the strategy, and yes, building in the green area and planting trees around it would be acceptable.

Mr. Peters asked beyond protecting the existing vistas, what else the study does. Ms. Dunigan said the primary purpose is to protect and enhance the intrinsic qualities of the byway. Mr. Peters asked what makes that historic. Ms. Dunigan said it is not an overall conservation plan, but rather, it is a conservation plan for the scenic byway. Ms. Dunigan encouraged the PAC members to attend the upcoming public workshop at the Ashland Nature Center.

**7. Other Business: 8:50 PM**

Mr. Carter said the bike trail in Delaware City is officially opening on June 15, 2016.

**8. Adjournment: 9:00 PM**