

PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

WILMAPCO Conference Room, June 12, 2017

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Dave Carter, Southern New Castle County
Bill Dunn, Civic League for New Castle County
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
Bill Lower, Committee of 100
Joe Mitchell, Cecil County
Barbara Mobarak, League of Women Voters
Bill Osborne, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce
Jeff Peters, Pike Creek Valley Civic League
Tom Posatko, Delmarva Rail Passenger Association
Gail Seitz, City of New Castle
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance (Vice Chair)
Vic Singer, Civic League for New Castle County
Javier Torrijos, Delaware Hispanic Commission
Antonio Valenzuela, City of Wilmington (Chair)
Frank Vari, Chesapeake City

Absent:

Bruce Brunozzi, City of Wilmington
Robert Cameron, Claymont Renaissance Development Corporation
Darlene Cole, Elderly and Disabled Transit Advisory Committee
Carlos de los Ramos, AARP
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council
Francis Swift, GHADA
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance
Centreville Civic League (vacant)

Staff Members:

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

Guests: Sarah Lester, West Side Grows Together

Minutes prepared by Janet Butler

Antonio Valenzuela, PAC Chair, called the meeting to order.

6:30 PM

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The April 17, PAC Meeting Minutes were approved.

6:32 PM

ACTION: On motion by Tom Fruehstorfer seconded by Dave Carter the PAC approved the April 17 meeting minutes.

Motion passed

(6/12/17-01)

2. Public Comment:

6:35 PM

None.

3. Executive Director's Report:

6:40 PM

Ms. Zegeye said at the Council meeting on May 11, 2017, the Council adopted the State/Local Cash Commitment for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018; the State/Local Funding Formula for FY 2018; and the Draft FY 2018 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). They also endorsed the 2017 Congestion Management System (CMS) Corridor Analysis and the 2050 Demographic Projections by TAZ; approved the Proposed Prioritization of FY 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) submissions; and endorsed the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan. Presentations included Newark Regional Transportation Center (NRTC) by Dave Gula, the North East Corridor (NEC) Future by Amishi Castelli, FRA and Pam Lebeaux, WSP/PB; and DeIDOT Long Range Plan by Mike DuRoss, DeIDOT.

Ms. Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- Staff participated in the Newark Bike Safety Checkpoints.
- Staff attended a Delaware East Coast Greenways meeting and WILMAPCO is co-chairing the Delaware East Coast Greenways Committee.
- Staff attended a meeting with DVRPC to discuss roles and responsibilities regarding the Pennsylvania East Coast Greenway and how to duplicate them in the WILMAPCO region.
- Staff exhibited at the Al DuPont Hospital Asthma Day event on May 2, 2017.
- Staff attended the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) meeting regarding their work on WILMAPCO's mobility and specialized transportation and how it interacts with WILMAPCO's Transportation Justice (TJ) Initiatives.
- May was Bike Month, and staff attended several events including Bike-to-School Week at Downes Elementary School, Elbert-Palmer Safe Routes to School (SRTS); the Southbridge Civic meeting, Wilmington and Newark Bike-to-Work Days; and the Wilmington Grand Prix Bike Race.
- Staff attended the Congestion Management Subcommittee (CMS) Peer Exchange in Minnesota.
- Staff attended the Delaware Climate and Health Conference.
- Staff exhibited at the Platinum Picnic in Hockessin.
- The Elkton Pedestrian Plan will be presented to the Elkton Mayor and Commissioners on June 14, 2017.
- Staff will attend the Delmarva Freight Summit on June 21, 2017.
- Staff will attend the Wilmington Initiatives (WI) Public Workshop at the Wilmington Library on June 21, 2017, 4:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.
- Staff will attend the Delaware Idling Group kick-off event on June 29, 2017.
- Staff will attend the Southbridge Weekend in Wilmington on July 15, 2017.
- Staff continues to participate in Newark Regional Transportation Center (NRTC) conference calls with Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

- The Claymont Regional Transportation Center Plan Steering Committee meeting will be held soon.

Mr. Singer said he has been attending WILMAPCO's CMS meetings and he is impressed by the progress of the subcommittee and the latitudes of understanding. He said at the Minnesota gathering there were many accolades given to WILMAPCO for the CMS work.

Mr. Valenzuela said he would like information on the new Newark Train Station. Ms. Zegeye said she can send the Power Point presentation to him from the last PAC meeting.

ACTION ITEMS:

None.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Ardentown Paths Plan

7:10 PM

Bill Swiatek said Ardentown was founded in 1922, residents are leaseholders and do not own the land. Ardentown is a 0.2 square mile village with a population of 264 (as of 2010). He showed a series of maps that illustrate the various town paths and bridges and how they connect parts of the town, but, also how other parts of the town are disconnected.

In 2013, the Village's Planning Committee developed the Ardentown Paths Report. They identified paths and unofficial path names, and assessed conditions. The paths were categorized into functional and recreational paths, and they found that some paths were impassable or indistinguishable. The goal of our Paths Plan is to update and improve upon the 2013 report. It is being guided by a steering committee comprised of 10 members including the Ardentown Planning Committee members, residents, WILMAPCO, and DeIDOT.

The project scope and schedule includes: October 2016 – The team reviewed previous work and GIS inventory of Ardentown's existing paths; November 2016 – The first public workshop was held and they researched best practices; December 2016 – The team reviewed public feedback from outreach (online and at the workshop) and developed draft recommendations; February 2017 – The second Public Workshop was held and the team got the draft out for public review, which is the current task; and September 2017 – the team will get the final draft completed to submit to the town and WILMAPCO Council for endorsement.

Mr. Swiatek said two public surveys were conducted both online and on paper, which included questions on path usage and suggestions for improvement, including paving, safety, lighting, naming, and signage. The surveys helped identify and prioritize recommendations.

The first recommendation is to clear significant obstructions and prioritize the paths based on a "potential use" map, which is the responsibility of the Village of Ardentown.

The second recommendation includes improving the pedestrian crossing at Sconset and Harvey Roads. Improvements will be done through the Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

Program. A SRTS kickoff meeting will be held at the Wilmington Montessori School in March.

The third recommendation is improving the connection from the Harvey Road Bridge to the Sunnyside Tract trails. The entrance is part of the DeIDOT right-of-way. DeIDOT can provide easement to DNREC to designate the land as a trail. Potential improvements are to create an opening in the railing, add signage, and create a wider opening in the fence. The timeline for tasks is to begin immediately and improvements can be completed within two years.

The fourth recommendation is to name and sign the paths. The unofficial path names were identified in the 2013 Ardentown Paths Report; the community outreach feedback recommended formalizing the path names; and simple wooden signs would be used to maintain the natural feel of the paths.

The fifth recommendation is to open the historic paths. They are disused, overgrown, and no longer accessible. They create missing north-south connections in the path network. Public outreach is needed with neighboring residents, however, before pursuing this. Funding is possible through the Outdoor Recreation, Parks, and Trails (ORPT) program. The timeline for these tasks can be implemented within three to five years.

The sixth recommendation is for improving pedestrian crossings at Millers/Veal Roads and Harvey Road. The timeline for these tasks is for improvements to be implemented within five years as a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) project.

The seventh recommendation is for improving the connection across Naamans Creek and the CSX Railroad. There is a small concrete walkway underneath the railroad bridge, on the north side of the creek. The CSX right-of-way is on the east and west sides, and private land is on the north side. This area is located outside of Ardentown, it is the lowest ranked recommendation, the cost is prohibitive, and the area is prone to flooding. Therefore, this action was not advised to proceed.

The first draft of the Ardentown Paths Plan was released on May 3, 2017, for public review. It was distributed with positive responses at the town meeting on May 8, 2017. The document is available on the WILMAPCO website. The Village and Council endorsements are expected during the month of September 2017.

Mr. Osborne asked if the legal status of Ardentown is incorporated. Mr. Swiatek said yes. Mr. Dunn asked if Ardentown and Arden are separate and if they border each other. Mr. Swiatek replied yes.

2. Union Street Reconfiguration Project

7:30 PM

Dave Gula introduced Sarah Lester, Director, West Side Grows Together Coalition, which is a 27-neighborhood organization. She said the West Side is defined as west of I-95, south of Pennsylvania Avenue, north of Lancaster Avenue, and along the Wilmington railroad tracks. In 2012, a community-wide survey of 400-500 people resulted in five priorities: 1) Parks and open space; 2) Housing choices for all; 3) Youth opportunities; 4) Economic development, and 5) Reduction in crime.

Out of economic development plans and a WILMAPCO Walkable Community Workshop (WCW), the Better Block Union Street event developed. The event was held on Union Street for three consecutive years and attracted more than 1,000 attendees that gathered 600 signatures for a petition to make transportation and streetscape enhancements permanent for a walkable/bikable community.

For the event, three lanes were reduced to two lanes between 4th St and 6th St; a bike lane was painted green; and restaurants provided outdoor dining. This event has also developed a strong partnership and has driven sales up for businesses. The team has also worked with volunteers, participating local businesses, community partners, local artists, WSFS Bank, and City of Wilmington sponsors. The event now covers three blocks and the team has coordinated with various bike groups throughout the State of Delaware. In addition, DeIDOT is now more interested in implementing walkable/bikable improvements including the green-striped bike lane.

Mr. Gula said WILMAPCO has been involved in the planning of the Union Street Better Block area for about three years. The speed limit on Union St is 25 miles per hour and there are limited crosswalks. There are no shoulders or bike lanes. It is a major southbound route that parallels I-95, but it is lined with businesses. It serves a lot of people who leave the city each day, but it is also a local shopping and dining area. The plan is not to change the street completely, but to make it more pedestrian friendly.

The proposed accessible parking has been the biggest challenge of this project. Accessible design includes angled parking. Mr. Gula said accessible parking on Union Street will be similar to parallel parking, but, it is easier to maneuver. The striping project is planned for fall 2017, and has been considered as an experiment, but expects that it will become permanent as part of the overall paving and rehab project within three to five years. DeIDOT also expects to implement the plan in the short-term; however, the DeIDOT 2017 Draft Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) from the United States Access Board requires that the number of accessible parking spaces is based on the block perimeter where on-street parking is marked or metered. Since the parking is only being affected along Union St, there has been much discussion over the final number of accessible spaces for each block.

Upcoming tasks for the reconfiguration include utilizing the standards for American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessible Design Guidelines (ADAAG) 2010, facility-based minimum; establishing six accessible parking spaces (1:6 spaces will be van accessible); providing an eight-foot access aisle; and adding a crosswalk served by ADA compliant curb-ramp.

Mr. Dunn asked how long the Better Block area is. Mr. Gula said it is at least one mile. Mr. Dunn asked will you talk to businesses about what time they will get deliveries. Mr. Gula said yes, the Economic Development Office has communicated that information to business owners.

Ms. Lester said one positive outcome of this process is that there has been more attention paid to Pennsylvania Avenue, and during every public meeting there has been more discussion on improving the intersections there.

Javier Torrijos asked if there has been any consideration for doing this on Fourth Street, which has a lot of poverty and serves a large Hispanic population. Ms. Lester said yes

this plan has included discussions for Fourth Street improvements. Mr. Gula said Fourth Street is becoming a more vibrant transit corridor; however, there is definitely room for discussion regarding connecting those communities.

Mr. Gula invited the PAC to attend the next Wilmington Initiatives (WI) Public Workshop on Wednesday, June 21, 2107, from 3:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at the Wilmington Library to further discuss the Union Street Reconfiguration project. Mr. Osborne suggested asking the St. Patrick's Society to buy the green paint for striping. He also suggested that Transit Oriented Development (TID) be considered for that area because the TID cost could be paid back over time.

3. Glasgow Avenue Planning Study

Mr. Gula said the Glasgow Avenue Planning Study Project Team consists of Rhodeside & Harwell, Wells & Associates, RCLCO, WILMAPCO, DeIDOT, and New Castle County. Two previous public workshops were held in March and June 2015, and the third workshop was held on May 22, 2017, where recommendations were made and street and design standards were established.

The Glasgow Avenue section spans 1.3 miles between US 40 and Porter Road/Route 896 in Glasgow. The purpose of the study is to create a "main street" vision plan to guide transportation improvements and land use along Glasgow Avenue, which encourages more nonmotorized trips; slows existing traffic, creates better connectivity; and creates a vibrant mix of local uses and attractive public gathering places to enhance economic activity.

Mr. Gula said this section of Old Route 896 previously functioned as an arterial roadway with limited access points. With the edition of the bypass, Glasgow Avenue has become more of a main street with mostly local trips to and from businesses, schools, and neighborhoods. Because there is more development planned, this roadway will continue to face mobility and safety challenges.

In addition, Glasgow Avenue is a very wide road, has unprotected bike lanes, excess pavement, and few streetlights, sidewalks, and street trees. The street could become more like a village main street instead of a suburban connector arterial. Other factors are that the buildings are set far back, there are unused and underdeveloped parcels, and there are opportunities for infill development.

Mr. Gula said that there was a Traffic Impact Study (TIS) which examined potential impacts to traffic operations caused by the proposed development at the southeastern corner of Glasgow Avenue and US 40/Pulaski Highway. The TIS was not completed as part of the Glasgow Avenue Planning Study, but it does have important implications for the creation of a main street along Glasgow Avenue. The County's assessment indicates that while the proposed development could affect traffic operations, the developer has identified acceptable improvements. The Traffic Impact Study (TIS) requires changes to intersection operations and supports the addition of Abbey Road. The TIS directs the developer to incorporate recommendations from the Glasgow Ave Study.

There are four character districts based on existing conditions, with a cohesive corridor theme: 1) Village Center; 2) Institutional; 3) Residential; and 4) Southern Gateway. There are links within the corridor for pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and links to

destinations and residential areas outside the corridor. The Glasgow Complete Streets Concept includes buffered bike lanes and sidewalk (north) and multi-use paths (south).

Mr. Gula said changes would happen gradually. The goal is to have the plan in place that describes a clear community vision for development to follow. The next steps include finalizing the Glasgow Avenue Main Street Study recommendations. In addition, the team will review the plan with all project partners; consider incorporation into the County Comprehensive Plan, the Route 40 Corridor 20-Year Transportation Plan, and/or the County's Unified Development Code (UDC); implement transportation improvements as part of proposed developments, or through programming into the six-year Capital Transportation Plan (CTP); and incorporate design guidelines into development plans.

Mr. Dunn asked is there going to be retail facing Route 896. Mr. Gula said yes. He added New Castle County would like to take the standards and apply them across Glasgow Avenue.

4. Other Business

8:20 PM

Mr. Valenzuela asked if President Trump's current plans for monitoring transportation funds would affect WILMAPCO. Ms. Zegeye said no.

5. Adjournment

8:30 PM