

**PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
WILMAPCO Zoom Virtual Meeting, February 22, 2021

Minutes prepared by Dawn Voss from recording.

Tom Fruehstorfer, PAC Chair, called the meeting to order.

**1. ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:**

Carlos de los Ramos, AARP  
Bill Dunn, Civic League for New Castle County  
Tom Fruehstorfer, City of Newark (Chair)  
Ken Grant, AAA Mid-Atlantic  
Mike Kaszyski, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce  
Ken Potts, 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

**Absent:**

Mark Blake, GHADA  
Kevin Caneco, SNCC  
Katherine Caudle, Pike Creek Civic League  
Patricia Folk, Cecil County  
Mario Gangemi, Cecil County Chamber of Commerce  
Dick Janney, Southern New Castle County  
Bill Lower, Committee of 100  
Givvel Marrero, Delaware Hispanic Commission  
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council  
Kevin Racine, City of Wilmington  
Jawann Saunders, Simonds Gardens Civic Association  
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance  
Norman Wehner, Cecil Board of Realtors

**Staff Members:**

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner  
Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner  
Randi Novakoff, Outreach Manager  
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

**Guests:**

Steve Ottinger, Delaware Transit Corporation

**2. Approval of the December 14, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. Vic Singer and seconded by Mr. Ken Potts the PAC approved the December 14, 2020 meeting minutes.

Motion passed

**(02-22-21-01)**

### **3. Public Comment Period:**

None.

### **4. Executive Director's Report:**

Ms. Tigist Zegeye said the WILMAPCO Council meeting was held on January 14<sup>th</sup>. The Council adopted both the Delaware and Maryland Transportation Performance Measure targets; endorsed the Governor Printz Corridor Study, the Newport Transportation Plan, and the 5-Point Intersection Safety and Capacity Improvement Study. There were presentations on the Route 9 Paths Plan, Goods Movement Studies, and a Churchmans Crossing Corridor Update.

Ms. Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- The New Castle County Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) applications were accepted through January 15<sup>th</sup> and six applications have been accepted.
- Staff presented to the New Castle County Youth Planning Board on January 29<sup>th</sup> about WILMAPCO's efforts to plan for environmental sustainability.
- Staff participated in the NCC@2050 Comprehensive Plan Deep Dive session on February 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Staff presented on bicycle planning to the Urban Bike Project on February 9<sup>th</sup>.
- The City of New Castle Transportation Plan Public Workshop was held on February 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Staff is supporting Wilmington's Community Well Being Ambassador Initiative by providing data from our Social Determinants of Health Index. This document is also being used by Delaware Guidance Services in New Castle County.
- The Southbridge Neighborhood Plan had its first virtual public workshop this past Tuesday. A recording of the meeting is available on the Southbridge Facebook page.
- Staff is working with the Red Clay Valley Scenic Byways Alliance to update the Corridor Management Plan.
- Air Quality Partnership will celebrate Wilmington Earth Day virtually the week of April 19<sup>th</sup> through the 23<sup>rd</sup>. April 19<sup>th</sup> will be a transportation-themed day with bike and pedestrian safety education in the morning and interactive activities in the evening.
- Staff is working with Safe Kids Delaware to convert the in-person bike and pedestrian safety information to a video for Earth Day.
- The Route 9 Paths Plan survey is still live and is also available in Spanish.
- As part of the Final/First Mile Freight Network Development, an interactive map exercise via Wikimap is available.
- There will be a Churchmans Crossing Public Workshop on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. This will include an overview of the transportation and land use scenario planning, and staff will be presenting preliminary results for the Churchmans Crossing study area. Registration is available on the WILMAPCO website.
- The Delaware Truck Parking Study Focus Group Meeting will be held on March 11<sup>th</sup>.
- The project team for the Union Street Project in the City of Wilmington is planning the first advisory committee meeting in March then a public workshop in April.

## **ACTION ITEMS:**

### **5. PAC Chair Appointment**

Mr. Carlos de los Ramos said the Nominating Committee met on January 4<sup>th</sup> and would like to make the following recommendations: The Committee recommends Mr. Thomas Fruehstorfer continue to chair the WILMAPCO Public Advisory Committee and to appoint Mr. Mike Kaszyski to serve as the vice chair.

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. Vic Singer seconded by Mr. Ken Potts the PAC approved the appointment of Mr. Tom Fruehstorfer as PAC Chair and Mr. Mike Kaszyski as PAC Vice Chair.

Motion passed

**(02-22-21-02)**

## **PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

### **6. WILMAPCO Freight Studies**

Mr. Dan Blevins said the enactment of the FAST Act put an emphasis on freight throughout the country, dedicated funding for it, and required every state do a statewide freight plan. In 2015, the Delmarva Freight Plan was developed, but about four months later the FAST Act was signed and the plan needed to be adjusted. Using the freight plan to identify what can be done from the strategic freight goals, some of those items were added to the UPWP. There are three studies underway right now.

The first project is an Impacts/Benefits analysis of Truck Access Improvements around the Port of Wilmington Area. In the past few years, there have been good plans in and around the port area such as the Southbridge Circulation Study, the Port Truck Parking Study, Route 9, and the Wilmington Comp Plan. These plans generated good ideas for future study. This plan evaluates some of those ideas on a technical basis to see which ones would make it easier for truck movement in and around the port area and also add a cost estimate. Some of the ideas that are part of this plan include extending Pigeon Point, a couple of additions to Garasches Lane, and work on Pyles Lane. There are a few options here that need to be tested to see which ones help with truck volumes in the area, intersection Level of Service, travel time, and air quality; then estimate the costs to see which ones have the biggest impact. This project is on a nine-month schedule. The project team just had the first project work group with some members of the community. Two public workshops are coming up very soon. The Route 9 Corridor Monitoring Committee and South Wilmington Planning Network are being updated regularly. These are two really good, regularly-meeting groups, so the team has been benefitting from Mr. Bill Swiatek's good work in those areas, using these agencies as a forum to discuss ideas.

The second project is a Delaware Statewide Truck Parking Study. There is a large federal component to this related to laws for hours of service and where trucks can park, which have a cascading effect on our economy, drivers' safety, public safety, infrastructure, and quality of life. The project has a two-part approach. MAP-21 requires states to follow what is called Jason's Law, which addresses truck parking along the interstate system. However, this project will get into more localized truck parking and staging concerns throughout Delaware. Delaware has a diverse economy in different areas, which have different needs and require different travel distances. So, the team wanted to report on that national perspective, but also look at local overnight parking to determine where there are concentrations of it, if it is seasonal, and get a local perspective. Some number crunching was done at the beginning to determine where there are designated parking locations. The larger ones are along I-95, but a few are scattered

throughout the state. Most of them are private, and some smaller ones are emerging. The Wawa and Royal Farms in the southern part of the state are working as satellite parking. The team is working to determine if Delaware has an hours-of-service issue or a staging issue to see if people are trying to park close to their morning destination or looking at short five- to six-hour truck parking. There are new sources of data being used for this project including Truckers Path App, Streetlight, and INRIX. These GPS apps track locations and provide a good footprint of duration, location, time of day, and concentration of vehicles. The data shows more concentration of parking overnight in different parts of the county, so the team is spending time now working with that data to determine why trucks park there. This project is on a twelve- to fourteen-month schedule. On the website there is a technical memo that provides a broad description of some of the items. The first focus group will be in March. Outreach is being done to members of the public and people in the industry. The team partnered with the Delaware Motor Truck Association to meet with some of the drivers to ask why they park where they do.

The third project is the Delaware Statewide First/Final Mile Freight Network Development, which is unique in that only a few places across the country have studied this in detail. This project examines the final mile truck links to truck generating facilities. A lot of them are local collector roads and close to residential areas. Sometimes they do not get much attention from decision-makers and some of the roadway conditions are of the older geometry. As the economy has changed some of the locations experience traffic for which it was not designed. Many of these facilities are near residential areas so they share the road with vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles, which could create conflicts in those areas. A local example is south of Newark, near I-95, where a residential area is on a route that leads to industrial areas. Also, in Newport a business posted paper signs to direct trucks which way to go. This project is part inventory and part seeing how these areas are connected, then determining what provisions can be put in place. Some small-scale projects may ease the conflict with passenger vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. For outreach, a Wikimap exercise has been available online over the last several weeks which allows the public to put a pin on the map and provide comments about a mobility issue, safety, road conditions, or land use conflicts. About one hundred and twenty comments from around the state have been collected ranging from minor roadway issues to reports of trucks making illegal movements or other roadway issues. There have been discussions with the City of Dover, the City of New Castle, Wilmington, and Newark to get some things logged on this map from their planning perspective. Officially, feedback was collected on the map until February 17<sup>th</sup>, but it is still active, and comments can be made.

Mr. Vic Singer said when Route 301 was being planned, the judgement call had to do with how much truck traffic would select a path over the 896 bridge vs. the new toll road and over the Roth Bridge. The expectations expressed at the time affected how the 301 connector was funded. He asked Mr. Blevins if he had any recent information about how the fact is matching the projection. Mr. Blevins replied DelDOT did an analysis of that with basic traffic counts before and after. From what he can recall, 301 is carrying a fair amount of the traffic there. Around Strawberry Lane to the south near Maryland, there is a slight problem as vehicles, mostly cars, but also trucks, trying to access Strawberry Lane for some of the businesses there. Mr. Blevins can make a pdf available showing the before and after. There was a positive difference. He cannot speak to what the most recent traffic and revenue forecast is, but when it opened it was meeting expectations. Mr. Singer said the issue also hinges on COVID. Mr. Blevins agreed, the issue with that is that there has been roughly a 10-15% increase in truck traffic on some routes. These are more national values, but truck traffic has actually gone up in some spots because of COVID.

Mr. Ken Potts asked when the last freight rail plan or rail update on the Port of Wilmington was released. There has been a number of changes and he is aware that there was some concern the present alignment is somewhat obsolete, and the old Edgemoor Plant will eventually be part of the port. So, he was wondering if there has been any direction or study in that regard. Mr. Blevins replied that he thinks 2010 or 2011 was the last update in Delaware dealing with freight rail. He and Mr. Mike DuRoss recently discussed it. Every five years they are supposed to update the Delaware Freight Plan, which is a little more general than rail specifically. However, it is something we probably want to look at this time around, because Federal Highway and Federal Rail Administrations each want their own plan. The Delmarva Freight Plan did have some rail components, but it has been a while. Mr. Potts said he would like the WILMAPCO staff to ask the question because the last state rail plan, passenger and freight, was in 2011 and an update is required every four or five years. Maryland and West Virginia just released draft state rail plans, so Delaware should look at that. Mr. Blevins said it was discussed last Wednesday at the regular monthly Freight Committee meeting, because Maryland is updating their plan now and he and Mr. Dave Gula have been attending focus groups for that.

## **7. City of New Castle Transportation Plan**

Ms. Heather Dunigan said we have been working in partnership with DeIDOT and the City of New Castle on the City of New Castle Transportation Plan for several months now. This is an update on a plan that was done a couple of decades ago. The first public workshop was held on February 10<sup>th</sup>. The first purpose of the plan is to improve the multimodal network, improve connectivity, enhance quality of life and livability, reduce issues with truck traffic, and improve safety. The second purpose is to address some flooding and sea level rise issues within the community. The third is to improve the gateways to the historic center. The fourth is to develop a shared parking analysis.

As with all area and community studies, an analysis of existing conditions was done to determine what is out there on the ground and what the trends are before planning for the future. Nearly half of existing land use is open space, which is a treasure of the community. Looking at the future, the town is in the process of updating their comprehensive plan. The final draft of the plan is working through the final approval process now. The demographics show that it is an extremely diverse community with a range of ages, races, and incomes. It is fairly well served by transit. Dart Routes 15 and 51 travel directly through the heart of town, then on the edge of the community there are several routes that serve US Route 13 as well as bus Route 25 and 14 that serve some of the neighborhoods and industrial areas. The busiest bus stops are on US Route 13. The busiest roadways and intersections with level of service issues are the US 13 corridor and Route 141. Intersections and traffic volumes within the heart of New Castle are relatively good. However, when there is an incident on I-95 or Route 13 there is a substantial amount of cut-through traffic within the community, particularly during the summer when there is beach traffic. Some of the worst freight bottlenecks in the State of Delaware are within the New Castle area. Crashes are highly concentrated on Routes 13 and 141, however Route 273 and Prairie Cutoff through the town have a history of crashes as well, so safety will be one of the themes of the plan. There are some bike lanes and trails in the area including Battery Park and the Jack Markell Trail. Looking at bicycle level of traffic stress, the high-stress roads create walls that block access to destinations for people walking or biking.

There are some transportation projects planned for the area including a safety project on Ferry Cutoff near the railroad tracks that is in the TIP now. There are some flood mitigation improvements planned along River Road. On the north side of town there are some improvements related to the Route 9 Master Plan.

It is important to plan multimodal access to key destinations. Many of the major commercial spaces are along the Route 13 and Route 9 corridors, so it is important to look for to access to these areas. Many recreational centers, parks and historic sites are within the historic center of town. Along with the open space, there are significant amounts of wetlands and forests that are flood zone areas that will be of concern and the team will look to mitigate the flooding where possible and address this in the planning.

The project is in the visioning stage. The existing conditions analysis is complete, and the team hosted the first public workshop. All of the information from the public workshop along with an interactive Wikimap will be posted on the website. The team will take the suggestions from the workshop and the Wikimap and use them to develop an initial set of recommendations which will be assessed. From there, recommendations will be presented to the public at the second public workshop. Then the preferred recommendations will go into the final report. The project team has been working with an advisory committee that has representation from the community as well as organizations that have an interest in the area, but public participation through workshops, and online surveys and activities are very important.

At the workshop, to make it feel as much as possible like everyone was in the same room, we started with a short presentation. There were three breakout rooms intended to make us feel like we were sitting at a roundtable together talking about topics. Then everyone came back to a big room to have Q&A to finish things off. During the breakout sessions, there were maps on the screen and people could actually draw on the maps using the Zoom annotation tool. Moderators took notes and also drew on the maps to capture everyone's comments. The recorded presentations as well as the breakout rooms are available to view on the website.

Some of the main themes were the poor connectivity between some of the outlying areas and the downtown; a disconnection between the Jack Markell Trail and Battery Park; the need for better wayfinding; and in terms of transit, there were some comments about unreliability and slowness in transit between New Castle, Wilmington, and Newark. There is good mobility in the central business district, but better connectivity is needed to the high school and west of town. Traffic issues include some areas of congestion which cause people to cut through town. This comes with some speeding issues as well as some flooding along that route. Then there is some wrong way driving on one-way streets, illegal U-turns, and speeding issues along neighborhood streets. With freight, there are issues with trucks going through the Dobbinsville Road area as well as some major vibrations impacting houses. There are also some issues with vibrations from the Norfolk Southern train. Related to parking, there is a new parking lot, so we are waiting to see the impacts of that. There is a need for more parking planning in general, including the need for electric vehicle parking. Other issues were balancing commercial and residential interests and how to accommodate additional traffic from attractions like the Kalmar Nickel. People do not want to just re-hash studies, they want to see projects that can be implemented. A number of intersections were noted as problems for all modes of travel, particularly along Ferry Cutoff, and affect getting to the center of town.

The public workshop was February 10<sup>th</sup>. A survey, Wikimap, and recordings are on our website. The team will look at the feedback to develop some alternatives that will be available at the next public workshop in late spring or early summer. These alternatives will be refined and developed into a draft report. A third public workshop will probably be in the fall. From there, a final report will be created.

Mr. Mike Kaszyski asked to confirm that he saw level of service C on the intersection of Route 13 and 273, because he knows that is a failing intersection from some of the projects they have. DelDOT had mentioned that they are considering an overpass project there. He asked if they brought that up in the study. Heather replied that they had not. Mr. Kaszyski said DelDOT raised the thought of an overpass at Hares Corner on development projects. Heather said she had heard of the idea, but it would be very difficult to do an overpass there because of the airport. Mr. Kaszyski also asked if the funding was through the TIP or TIF and Ms. Dunigan said it was through the TIP. Mr. Kaszyski said the TIF is through the development side, that there is a \$10 million fund that DelDOT has been running for projects that have a large job benefit and overall level of service.

Mr. Vic Singer said the notion of an overpass at Routes 13 and 273 has been coming up for the last thirty years. The answer has always been that it would interfere with landings. The runway is not very long and making the flight path higher would take away some of the runway length. Ms. Dunigan said that there are some major facilities through there that would also challenge any intersection project at that location. Mr. Singer said the other side of that coin was to explore if there could be an underpass, but there is a gasoline pipeline under there. Ms. Dunigan said a couple of months ago the Bike Delaware Summit brought in some Dutch planners to look at some innovative options for Hares Corner as well as some intersections along Ferry's Cutoff and they had some interesting ideas to help the bicyclists and pedestrians, and motor vehicle traffic also. They were brought on as part of the consultant team to explore some of these concepts.

Mr. Kaszyski asked if the Amazon facility on Route 273 that was mentioned is the facility east of Hares Corner. Ms. Dunigan replied that one and the one further south generate truck traffic in the community. There is an issue of trucks going down Route 9 through Dobbinsville, an area impacted by both flooding and historic houses located close to the street. Mr. Kaszyski said they have a facility down near Blue Diamond Park, which he believes has been approved and another facility near the airport at Routes 58 and 273 that is under consideration as well, and maybe that will take some of the pressure off places in town.

## **8. Route 9 Master Plan Outreach Video**

Ms. Randi Novakoff said for the past year WILMAPCO has been working on creating a series of five videos. The videos are seeking to explain the planning process, in a simple and easily understood way and also to encourage public involvement in transportation planning. The five video topics include: Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning; Transportation Justice; Who is WILMAPCO; How an Idea Becomes a Project; and The Route 9 Master Plan. The videos are funded by the Federal Highway Administration with a grant. Once completed, the videos will be posted on YouTube, shared with local libraries and civic organizations, and pieces of them could be shown at public workshops or shared with local schools. We are still working on most of the videos, but we have a preview of Route 9 video to share with the PAC. The video is six minutes long and includes WILMAPCO staff sharing information about that project and the planning process. The video was shown, then Ms. Novakoff said we are currently working to add Spanish closed captioning to the video and working on the last slide to ensure the necessary websites are listed.

Mr. Singer said he saw Joe Biden on television talking about Route 9 getting some long overdue attention. Mr. Carlos de los Ramos commented that the video was nicely done.

## **7. Other Business**

Mr. Singer said the minutes from the December 14<sup>th</sup> meeting noted discussion about charging developers for transportation system improvements according to the UDC. Mr. Singer asked for a presentation from DelDOT about the fees charged to developers for incremental improvements to the transportation system. Ms. Novakoff said a presentation on that topic may not be particularly relevant to this committee unless other PAC member would like to see it as a presentation. Mr. Singer said underneath it all is an equal treatment issue under the Fourteenth Amendment that says states are obligated to give equal treatment to everybody. The fundamental question is, are the folks that are there already unduly burdened by the cost of providing for growth which results from folks who are not there yet.

## **8. Adjournment**

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. Mike Kaszyski and seconded by Mr. Barry Shotwell the PAC adjourned.

Motion passed

**(02-22-21-03)**

**Attachments: (0)**