

**PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
WILMAPCO Hybrid-format Meeting, April 17, 2023

Minutes prepared by Dawn Voss.

Mr. Mike Kaszyski, PAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

**1. ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:**

Mark Blake, GHADA  
Tracy Chamblee, Southern New Castle County Alliance  
Bill Dunn, Civic League for New Castle County  
Patricia Folk, Cecil County  
Richard Janney, Southern New Castle County  
Mike Kaszyski, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce and PAC Chair  
Bill Lower, Committee of 100  
Deanna Murphy, Cecil County Board of Realtors  
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council  
Anna Quisel, League of Women Voters of New Castle County  
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance  
Joshua Solge, City of Newark

**Absent:**

Serene Abiy, University of Delaware  
Carlos de los Ramos, AARP  
Mario Gangemi, Cecil County Chamber of Commerce  
Ken Grant, AAA Mid-Atlantic  
Gail Seitz, City of New Castle  
Vic Singer, Civic League for New Castle County  
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance

**Staff Members:**

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner  
Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner  
Dave Gula, Principal Planner  
Bill Swiatek, Principal Planner  
Dawn Voss, Administrative Assistant

**Guests:**

**2. Approval of the February 13, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

**ACTION:** On a motion by Mr. Glenn Pusey and seconded by Mr. Richard Janney the PAC approved the February 13, 2023 meeting minutes.

Motion passed

**(04-17-23-01)**

**3. Public Comment Period:**

None.

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

Ms. Heather Dunigan shared the following public outreach information:

- Ms. Randi Novakoff retired on March 31<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Dawn Voss, our Administrative Assistant will be our new Outreach Coordinator.
- Council met on March 9<sup>th</sup> with several action items including the adoption of the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan. Staff is still compiling the appendices including the Public Outreach Appendix, where responses to comments are captured. Council also approved amending the Transportation Improvement Program to include the replacement project for the Mechanics Valley Road Bridge in Cecil County.
- The second Churchman's Crossing Monitoring Committee meeting was on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, with updates from agency partners and a review of the project privatization process. They will meet again on May 24<sup>th</sup> and have a Public Workshop on April 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Wilmington Initiatives met on March 15<sup>th</sup> where they discussed the Broom Street reconfiguration and the King Street TAP project. The next meeting will be April 19<sup>th</sup>.
- WILMAPCO, with the City of Wilmington and DeIDOT, resubmitted for a RAISE Grant for the 12<sup>th</sup> Street Connector. This was previously submitted in 2022, but not awarded funds.
- A public workshop for the Newport Transportation Monitoring process was held March 7<sup>th</sup> with sixteen attendees.
- Concord Pike Monitoring Committee had a second meeting on April 5<sup>th</sup> and will have a public workshop on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, which will be in person with an online option.
- WILMAPCO worked with the Delaware Governor's office, DeIDOT, and Dover-Kent MPO to submit a grant application for a Delmarva Rail Corridor to the NRA Funding Proposal for the Rail Corridor Identification and Development Program. This was submitted on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- The Ardens Transportation Steering Committee met on March 21<sup>st</sup>.
- The Transportation Justice Working Group has been reconvened and met on March 29<sup>th</sup>.
- The Southbridge Transportation Action Plan second public workshop was held March 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Staff serve on the advisory committee for the Wilmington Open Streets and will participate in the Open Streets event in Southbridge on April 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Staff hosted a mobile workshop at the National APA Conference on April 3<sup>rd</sup> to present work done in Southbridge and along the Route 9 Corridor.
- Staff was a guest lecturer presenting the work on Route 9 at a University of Delaware class on April 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Staff joined other planners from Delaware APA to speak about the profession of planning at a University of Delaware class on April 12<sup>th</sup> and at a Del Tech class on April 19<sup>th</sup>.
- The first phase of public outreach for New Castle County Safe Streets for All will go through April 30<sup>th</sup> and include a survey and interactive map at [www.wilmapco.org/safestreets](http://www.wilmapco.org/safestreets). Sixty-three surveys and two hundred and twenty-four comments have been received so far. Staff presented the project at Safe Kids Delaware on February 21<sup>st</sup>.
- The monitoring committees for the North Claymont Area Master Plan and Governor Printz had an agency coordination meeting on March 1<sup>st</sup>. An in-person, open-house style public workshop will be held May 4<sup>th</sup> from 4 30 to 6 30 PM at the Claymont Library.

Mr. Bill Dunn asked if the 202 Study meeting of last week will be covered. Ms. Dunigan said that is on the agenda.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

None

## **PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

### **5. FY 2024 UPWP Outreach**

Ms. Heather Dunigan said the draft Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is out for public comment from April 3<sup>rd</sup> through May 2<sup>nd</sup>. So far, no comments have been received. The UPWP describes how federal planning funds will be used, the studies the staff will be doing in the next fiscal year, and the studies with consultant support. The following projects have been added to the draft document and will begin after July 1<sup>st</sup>, provided Council approves it. New Castle County submitted a South Claymont/Philadelphia Pike Master Plan. Cecil County submitted a Muddy Lane/Delancey Road Corridor Study. The Town of Elkton submitted a Belle Hill Road Safety Audit. The Town of Rising Sun submitted a project for the Rising Sun Mobility Friendly Development Guidelines. WILMAPCO staff submitted a Kirkwood Highway Corridor Land Use and Transportation Plan and an update to the Newark Bicycle Plan.

Components of the public outreach portion of the UPWP included public workshops; walkable community workshops; safety events; educational events such as Our Town; and work with targeted audiences, particularly those identified in our Transportation Justice practices such as people with low English proficiency, female households, low-income and minority households. The other public outreach area is the development of public information documents including working with the PAC to ensure outreach materials are easily understood. Also included is the newsletter and e-news; development of multi-media presentations and videos; children's education with Safe Routes to School, Safe Kids Delaware, Urban Bike Project, and the Newark Bike Project; coordination with other public agencies including the Air Quality Partnership; and social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. Our webpage is a major component of outreach as it houses studies, surveys, and interactive mapping. Staff continue to make projects web-friendly and are moving to a web-based dashboard format for projects. As we are in a transition period this year, we will not plan to take on any major, new outreach initiative, but we will continue to learn and improve.

Mr. Bill Dunn asked when the Kirkwood Highway Corridor Plan will begin and what portion of Kirkwood Highway will be in the study area. Ms. Dunigan said pending Council approval, these projects will start July 1<sup>st</sup>. The public portion will not be visible right away as we need time to hire a consultant. The study area will probably be from the City of Wilmington line to the Newark line. This will be a multi-year process, where the first year is spent doing an existing conditions analysis and seeking public feedback, then break that into smaller pieces for more in-depth study. Mr. Dunn suggested the first thing be light timing and sequencing from Wilmington to Newark. He said that studying the capacity of Kirkwood Highway from St. James Church Road to Harmony Road with the possibility of the Churchman's Road Extension will probably come into the study. Ms. Dunigan said the next step is to get Council approval, and then staff will come out with their schedule of work looking at congestion, safety issues, pedestrian and bicycle travel, and transit. Mr. Dunn said safety is a huge issue with 2 deaths on Kirkwood Hwy in the past few months. It is long overdue for study.

### **6. Southbridge Transportation Action Plan**

Ms. Bill Swiatek said the core study area of the Southbridge Transportation Action Plan study is the Southbridge neighborhood, which is a community of about 1,300 people. The greater study area includes the Riverfront East to the west and stretches east toward the port. The foundation of this document is the 2021 Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan, the update of a 2008 circulation study, and takes into consideration other projects in this area, including the Route 9

Master Plan and the Port of Wilmington's Traffic Circulation Study. The study in Southbridge is nearly complete. The steps included examining existing conditions, community visioning, defining alternatives, and selecting preferred alternatives. The Management Committee includes representatives from the city, DART, DeIDOT, Southbridge CDC, and the Southbridge Civic Association. These groups all sit on the South Wilmington Planning Network, so the Advisory Committee was run through that planning network. Related to innovative outreach, particularly with transportation justice groups, this study has two dedicated representatives from the Southbridge Civic Association that are following the study and attending meetings. They receive small stipends for their participation. This community is a tech desert and online outreach does not work well in Southbridge, so a local person was hired to take door-to-door surveys.

The four focus areas in the study are traffic issues, trucks and freight, bike and pedestrian, and transit. The study is about connectivity outside of Southbridge and making quality-of-life improvements within the community by slowing cars down, getting trucks out of the community, improving bike and pedestrian connectivity, and transit connectivity. In the first survey, residents ranked possible improvements. The top answers were reducing traffic speeds, reducing truck traffic, improving sidewalks and crosswalks, stormwater management, and lighting. At the first public workshop, participants listed needs that were similar to the survey. The team hosted two youth engagement events after-school at a community center, and the concerns that the youth raised are similar to the adults, but also added things like more trees and grass, and bike infrastructure. A Quick Action Memo was sent to the City to try to get some of the obvious fixes done quickly such as replacing signs, signal timing to slow traffic, and no truck parking signs.

Longer-term recommendations include a road diet of lane reduction on New Castle Avenue and Heald Street. In the Southridge Neighborhood Action Plan, there was a concept to reduce the two lanes to one. The modeling determined that this is feasible from Terminal Avenue to Apple Street. Another concept looks at speeding on Claymont Street. The immediate action recommends putting a stop sign at C Street, but the long-term concept removes that section of Claymont Street, adds greenery, and moves the parking from Claymont Street to New Castle Avenue. Another recommended improvement deters illegal left turns onto Pearl Street. The northbound approach into the community is a wide sweep on D Street, where speed is an issue. There is a concept to narrow this road to slow traffic before it enters the community. Raised intersections are being considered, particularly at Lobdell Street. According to community feedback, raised intersections could go in a number of places in the community. The team is looking at potential routes that trucks could take to remove them from New Castle Avenue and keep them on Christiana Avenue. The consultants are looking at a concept that would put a road to the north near the rail line to connect with Christiana Avenue. A project on Terminal Avenue is designed to better delineate for trucks coming northbound to keep trucks on Terminal Avenue. The Route 9 Master Plan has a roundabout concept for this intersection, which may be the preferred alternative. Some of the other general concepts look at park access including improvements for signage and a sidewalk extension to connect the community center to a local park. A pathway is being considered that will enter Eden Park from the sidewalk and be an internal pathway through the park, and then further south towards Terminal Avenue.

The next steps are taking these concepts to the community through a door-to-door survey that will launch during the Open Streets Event on Saturday. We will be there to answer questions and get feedback. There will be an online component to that survey as well. We are also looking at bus connectivity as many residents have said it is an issue. Southbridge has three or four routes that go through it, but they lack Sunday service to ShopRite, which is a nearby grocery store. Our next step is to do an action plan in the May timeframe and have this completed by the end of June.

Mr. Richard Janney suggested the use of speed bumps and roundabouts. Mr. Swiatek said there is a concept for a roundabout on Terminal Avenue that is being pursued by DeIDOT through a project called Route 9 Redefined. We did not look at speed bumps so much as raised intersections, which are a similar concept.

Ms. Anna Quisel said in reviewing the Wilmington Climate Resiliency Report, it looks like much of Southbridge will be under water by 2050 and asked how this figures into the current planning. Mr. Swiatek said the main project in South Wilmington now is the Wetland Park project, where they took an underutilized wetland and created a proper wetland area which can also act as stormwater storage. Right now, the City is pulling the combined sewer system from Southbridge out into two separate systems, so the storm water will be draining into the wetland, which will relieve a lot of the flooding in Southbridge. That park starts to fail at two feet of sea level rise, however, which is expected by 2100. If we get more than that, additional work is going to have to be done. The City is bouncing from that resilience study into another study called the South Wilmington Shoreline Protection Plan in which they are looking at ways to protect the shoreline. In a transportation study, all the green space is a nod towards flood mitigation. We are still gathering feedback from the community to see if that is the preferred use of space saved from the roadways. One of the other things that we did with the study is note where it floods directly from residents. We put together a map showing direct flooding areas and shared that with the shoreline protection team.

Mr. Bill Dunn asked if the team has looked at what has already been covered in Route 9 Corridor Master Plan and how one study will coincide with the other. Mr. Swiatek said yes, just as the Port Truck Parking Study, and the Port Access Study built off the Route 9 Master Plan. Pyles Lane was one of the projects that was found to be one of the more ineffective projects, so it was not recommended to continue. We did look at that study to see how well the recommendations from that study help Southbridge. The Garasches Lane Project helps Southbridge a little, but none of them reduce truck traffic meaningfully in Southbridge. That is why this study is looking at alternatives to reduce the truck traffic in Southbridge. The study is tied to the Route 9 Plan in the sense that we are looking at a road diet along Route 9 towards Terminal Avenue, and this work proposes an extension of that. It ties in at that intersection, which is where the two studies meet. We have been coordinating with the people at DeIDOT that are advancing the Route 9 Study. Mr. Dunn asked if the Pyles Lane possibility is not going to happen. Mr. Dan Blevins said part of the goals of that study were to reduce truck traffic on New Castle Avenue from A Street down, and the Pyles Lane alternative did not do that. Garasches Lane and Pigeon Point Road to Cherry Lane were more helpful. Mr. Dunn asked if there was an advantage in the one-road-in, one-road-out approach to what will likely be an increase in truck traffic. Mr. Blevins said after looking at all angles of that, it was the only recommendation that did not move forward, because where their origin and destinations are, it was not getting the job done. Mr. Dunn asked if it would be more successful with the modifications to Terminal Avenue. Mr. Blevins said that is a new addition that will have continued evaluation. Mr. Swiatek said these are new connections that were not in the port study, which largely looked at the benefits along New Castle Avenue from Terminal Ave. and areas to the south. The recommendations pulled trucks off Route 9 south of Terminal well, but they did not pull trucks out of Southbridge.

## **7. Churchman's Crossing and Concord Pike Monitoring Report and Public Outreach**

Mr. Dan Blevins said there has been a significant investment in the monitoring efforts for Churchman's Crossing and Concord Pike as they are large areas with large populations. Monitoring

Committees are established to allow regular communication to continue with the decision makers and the community, and to bring people up to speed as they come into the area. Monitoring efforts provide the opportunity for subject matter experts to share technical information, give people a chance to have input on prioritization, allow mid-course corrections as a plan evolves, allow for regional coordination, and allow people to communicate with implementing agencies. Both of these committees have similar structures and expectations. The committees consist of elected officials, community leaders, business interests, and advocacy groups. Each group has three meetings per year, and one workshop budgeted. All meetings include a public comment period prior to the conclusion of a meeting. Both have similar annual work task schedules. Summer is data collection season. We have a monitoring committee meeting in the fall. Over the winter, work is done with the data, a newsletter is released for each project, and the Monitoring Report is assembled. In the spring, there are two meetings with a public workshop in between. Bringing in new data shows trends along the corridor, how traffic is changing, and how things that were implemented are working. This information is presented at the public workshop.

Concord Pike had one hundred and seventy-seven projects, and eighty percent of them were bike/pedestrian related. Mr. Paul Moser, a subject matter expert, was brought in to present his bicycle level of traffic stress. We also explored the funding opportunities. From the first meeting, we heard the community wants more transit amenities. DART was available to address that. There is an active residential group there, so meetings are well attended. Churchman's is more project heavy with more CTP projects. The stakeholders are more of a commercial business community because there is an active TID developing in the area. The TID is between DeIDOT and the County, but there will be updates to inform the group. There is no binding prioritization on the CTP or TIP, however the implementing agencies will hear which projects the community thinks are most important. The annual monitoring is being done in a more digital format than the static paper document used in the past. Each of these projects has a GIS-based StoryMap, that allows the team to enter monitoring information into a living document, where users can choose by topic or place and dive more deeply into the data available. The workshops will be April 19<sup>th</sup> for Churchman's Crossing and May 3<sup>rd</sup> for Concord Pike. They will be more in-person than hybrid. Remote attendees will not be seeing the same thing as there will be a number of tables in person, but the boards will be available online. There will be a check function available for remote attendees to reply. Representatives from Transit, Land Use, and other agencies will be available to answer questions.

Mr. Bill Dunn said he is the point person from the Civic League for Churchman's Crossing and Ms. Nancy Willing is point person for Concord Pike. The Civic League has apprehensions about the TID in Churchman's Crossing and the potential for one in the Concord Pike corridor. The proposed improvements and expansion for roads, pedestrian, bike, and transit look good and are needed. The concern is that there is a twenty-year window to accomplish the goals in the TID, but there is a large amount of acreage that will be developed short of that window. On Concord Pike there is concern about the proposal to use storm channels under Concord Pike as a pedestrian crossing. In the past, Brandywine Country Club was going to be open space and now it is under potential development, which will mean much more run off. There is a safety concern. Mr. Blevins said the plan we created is the first step to having a TID. The ordinance states that you must have a master plan before a TID can be formed. It is already starting to evolve. They say a twenty-year timeframe, but that is dependent on how quickly things are built when a developer has to make their contribution. That schedule comes out of the agreement. Using a drainage tunnel under US 202 as a pedestrian pathway was not from the project team. Somebody thought it was a good idea, but Mr. Blevins does not think it will be allowed.

Mr. Blevins shared the StoryMap for Churchman's, which is very similar in format to Concord Pike. There are clickable boxes to navigate to topics such as traffic or bike and pedestrian. Scrolling through will show you a summary of the plan. If you have a certain topic of interest, you can click through to see more data. There are only a few years of data right now, but as more data points are added, trends will appear. There is some text to explain the data and overall summaries for the area. There are maps that allow users to click on specific locations to see data for that specific place. There is data related to safety, transit usage, land development, and more. The idea is that instead of static information like the boards used at the workshop, users can dig more deeply into the information. These StoryMaps are available on the project pages.

Mr. Mike Kascyski asked what the land development tab links to. Mr. Blevins said that shows what things are labeled as part of the 2050 Comp Plan and some information about the TID. At some point the land development activity may be added. We were wary about putting up information that would be out of date quickly, so right now it is just those two things. It is a place that people can regularly check back to see where things are transpiring with some of these other projects.

## **8. Other Business**

## **9. Adjournment**

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. Glenn Pusey and seconded by Mr. Bill Lower the PAC adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Motion passed

**(04-17-23-02)**

**Attachments: (0)**