

PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WILMAPCO Zoom Virtual Meeting, June 21, 2021

Minutes prepared by Dawn Voss from recording.

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

1. ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Bill Dunn, Civic League for New Castle County
Kathryn Economou, University of Delaware
Tom Fruehstorfer, City of Newark (Chair)
Ken Grant, AAA Mid-Atlantic
Mike Kaszyski, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce
Bill Lower, Committee of 100
Ken Potts, Delmarva Rail Passenger Association
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance (Vice Chair)
Vic Singer, Civic League for New Castle County
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance

Absent:

Mark Blake, GHADA
Kevin Caneco, SNCC
Katherine Caudle, Pike Creek Civic League
Carlos de los Ramos, AARP
Patricia Folk, Cecil County
Mario Gangemi, Cecil County Chamber of Commerce
Dick Janney, Southern New Castle County
Givvel Marrero, Delaware Hispanic Commission
Kevin Racine, City of Wilmington
Jawann Saunders, Simonds Gardens Civic Association
Gail Seitz, City of New Castle
Norman Wehner, Cecil Board of Realtors

Staff Members:

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner
Dave Gula, Principal Planner
Randi Novakoff, Outreach Manager
Jake Thompson, Senior Planner
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Guests:

Dora Williams, New Castle Prevention Coalition

2. Approval of the April 19, 2021, Meeting Minutes

Mr. Vic Singer has no changes but commented that his daughter made a reservation to take a train from Wilmington to Hudson, NY with a change at Penn Station in New York City. The discussion in the minutes about the connection to Washington D.C. means that you can go from

Washington to Albany and back with several changes along the way, but without having to leave the station where the changes are made.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Vic Singer and seconded by Mr. Mike Kaszyski the PAC approved the April 19, 2021, meeting minutes.

Motion passed

(06-21-21-01)

3. Public Comment Period:

Mr. Bill Dunn commented that Ms. Dora Williams, who is part of the Route 9 group, saw the presentation that is on the agenda, so Mr. Dunn suggests that she be asked for comment after the PAC discussion.

4. Executive Director's Report:

Ms. Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- On May 19th, a Union Street public workshop was held with forty-five people in attendance.
- Staff completed five social justice outreach training sessions which were coordinated in partnership with Delaware APA and the University of Delaware.
- The I-95 Cap Feasibility Study RFP was due on June 15th. Nine proposals were received, and staff hopes to short list and interview by July 1st.
- The Delmarva Freight Summit was on June 16th with fifty people in attendance.
- Staff is working with Red Clay Valley Scenic Byways Alliance to update the Corridor Management Plan. A public meeting will be held on June 22nd.
- On June 22nd staff is presenting our Environmental Justice Technical Analysis at the National MPO GIS Peer Exchange.
- On June 22nd, DTC will be holding a virtual public hearing workshop via Zoom on the proposed changes to statewide bus services, which will be effective September 12th.
- The Churchmans Crossing Plan Update Public Workshop is scheduled on June 23rd.
- Staff has been working with the coalition to plan a series of open street events in the City of Wilmington. The first one was on May 15th on Market Street. The second was on June 19th at Riverside at the Warehouse. The next one is scheduled for July 17th on Union Street.
- Staff will be conducting a Walkable Communities Workshop in Townsend on July 8th.
- Staff is working on pop-up outreach events for the City of New Castle Transportation Plan Update in conjunction with concerts in the Battery Park area on July 28th. August 4th is the rain date.
- The Federal Highway Administration has approved the FY 2022 work program. We are still awaiting approval from Federal Transit Administration.

Mr. Dunn asked what time the Red Clay meeting on the 22nd begins. A portion of it overlaps MLCA so it would be interesting to hear it. Ms. Zegeye replied that she will post it in the chat. Ms. Randi Novakoff posted in the chat, "Red Clay Valley Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan Update – June 22, 6-7pm, <https://14360.blackbaudhosting.com/14360/rcvsba-public-meeting-on-the-corridor-management-plan---virtual>"

Ms. Zegeye said she had an update. DeIDOT plans to have the Passenger Rail Plan completed and funded by DeIDOT Planning most likely in the next fiscal year, which begins on July 1st.

Mr. Barry Shotwell asked if the Churchmans Crossing Study is on Wednesday and asked the time it will start. Ms. Zegeye replied yes, and it will start at 5:30. Ms. Novakoff posted in the chat: “Churchmans Crossing Plan Update Virtual Workshop – June 23, 5:30-7:30 p.m. <https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07ei0rg8fe521a2a92&oseq=&c=&ch=>”

ACTION ITEMS:

5. None

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

6. Union Street Reconfiguration Study

Mr. Dave Gula said Union Street serves the community as a main street area. So, the most important piece of this project is outreach to the public to hear their comments, feeling about the street, and what they would like to see in the future. The team is trying to get the city administration, state elected officials, property owners, neighborhood groups, and residents involved. The advisory committee includes city and state elected officials, the Southern District Neighborhood Council, and business and property owners. The project team is working with West Side Grows on neighborhood outreach; they are located on Lincoln Street. The Advisory Committee represents different groups so they can take the information back to their groups, which helps with outreach and solicits more comments. The Management Committee are the agency partners that are funding this study, who serve as administration to ensure things go smoothly. The consultant team is led by JMT, but also includes Interface Studio who assisted with the City of Wilmington Comp Plan 2028 which was completed last year.

This is a community-driven reconfiguration and streetscape concept study to develop alternatives based on what people want to see. The project team will guide the residents and Advisory Committee through a process to determine the preferred conditions. In 2017, the street was changed from three lanes to two, allowing the addition of the bike lane and back-in parking. Back-in parking received mixed reviews. Some people say the bike lane is not used, but others say it is popular on the weekends. It is part of the City’s Bike Plan, so it is an important, but needs better connectivity and a better layout. The purpose of this study is to take what was done in 2017 and develop a permanent solution for this street, which could include moving curb lines, creating bigger sidewalks, and reconfiguring the bike lanes. The goal is to make this street inviting to all users. The travel lanes are wide and people speed, which is not safe for pedestrians. Some areas do not have enough crosswalks, but there are crosswalks where they are not used. This should be a multimodal improvement. This should be a destination street with improvements that encourage the growth of businesses through residents using it as a shopping and dining street. Each block is unique, but there should be an overall theme, so things look similar as people move down the street.

The project area is from Pennsylvania Avenue to Sycamore Street. It includes both sides of the street within the right of way, which is eighty feet with fifty-five feet of pavement. It is a two-lane, one-way corridor. The direction of traffic is southbound. It is parallel with Lincoln Street which is a northbound two-lane street. There is a bike lane that transitions into sharrows as you approach Sycamore Street and Kirkwood Highway. There are eight bus stops. The sidewalks vary along the length of the corridor. There is parallel parking on the west side. On the east side there is parallel and diagonal, back-in parking which causes confusion and is the subject of many complaints. There are overhead utilities on both sides of the street. There is no plan in

this study to underground the utilities. Transportation funds are not generally used to bury utilities, as it is very expensive. Another option is to condense the overhead utilities to one side of the street. The focus on utilities is very expensive and distracting, so that can be reviewed as the process moves forward into design. There are some street amenities such as planters and benches, but also garbage cans and a lot of signage. The ten-foot parking lane can be narrower. The city does not want twelve-foot driving lanes. The max is eleven feet, but these can be narrowed to ten-and-one-half feet.

The northernmost section, from Pennsylvania Avenue to 9th Street, is auto oriented. There are numerous auto sales businesses on Pennsylvania Avenue that wrap around to Union and an autobody shop just off of Union Street. The offloading of car trailers along this stretch was a problem, so a loading zone that is out of the travel lanes was provided for these dealerships. There are entrances and the sidewalks are mismatched. The first signalized intersection for crossing is at 9th Street. The intersection with Pennsylvania Avenue is very dangerous. A current project is trying to improve that intersection and add a signal to the area. As pedestrians turn onto Union from Pennsylvania Avenue, the sidewalk is three or four feet wide and light poles are in the middle, so, anyone who is mobility challenged will have difficulty. The sidewalk can be expanded to be more comfortable. Residents of the apartment complex in the area want to walk to shops and restaurants, but it is not comfortable. There are many sections of old brick sidewalks in Wilmington. If they are not maintained properly, grass grows through and trees cause brick to heave up, so a more uniform and ADA-safe sidewalk in the area is preferred.

The middle section, from 9th Street to Lancaster, is a more pedestrian-oriented and mixed use. There is some residential on the upper floors. On the west side of the street there are the backs of some residences in some blocks. Commercial businesses are concentrated here. The sidewalks are wider. There are a few entrances to small parking lots for individual businesses. Signalized crosswalks at 7th, 8th, and 4th Streets and Lancaster Avenue do not meet the ADA standard. The fire station on 4th Street will have to be incorporated into the plan including perhaps pavement markings to let people know to be alert. One of the peculiarities of the plan is that fourteen feet of space is needed for back-in parking, then in areas where the number of entrances only allow parallel parking, there is empty space between the bike lane and parking. This space could accommodate curb extension, but for now it confuses people who are parking or using the bike lane. The speed limit is twenty-five miles per hour, but the street is long and straight so we do see speeds up to forty miles per hour, which is uncomfortable for bicyclists. Delivery drivers stop wherever they want, so creating loading zones and working with the city to enforce their use is being considered. On the west side of the street there is some commercial space and landscaping around the parking for residents facing the parkway on the next block.

The final section of the street is mostly residential. There are a few commercial areas, but not as many parking lot entrances so there is more back-in, angled parking on the east side and parallel parking on the west side of the block. Sidewalks become narrower. Union Park Gardens is to the west. This is where the bike lane ends and transitions to sharrows.

The goals for pedestrians it to make it more comfortable. A successful commercial street should have wider sidewalks for café seating. A solid path for pedestrians to walk and be able to push strollers and wheelchairs is needed. Wider sidewalks are needed to accommodate street amenities. It would be nice to have some gathering spaces. Many residences are to the west and being able to safely cross the street is key to these pedestrian zones. Wilmington is in favor of street trees and most projects require them, so the team will coordinate with the city to select the right kind of trees and place them as needed.

For the bike network, the current bike lane is exposed. Wilmington is very much in favor of this street having bike amenities and it is in their bike plan. Though connections to this particular bike lane are lacking, this project should create the best bike lane possible here. A two-way bike facility is possible, but the team needs to design it to be used safely. It is a southbound street and at least one businessperson complained that one person goes up the street the wrong way in the bike lane every day. That is concerning as there is no separation of the bike lane from the travel lane. Bike parking is important if we want to foster people using bikes in the area.

For transit, there are eight transit stops. There are not many amenities at some of them. Stops may have to be reconfigured if the bike lane is moved between the parking and the curb. The people who have attended the workshops have said they are willing to give up a few stops if the remaining stops had more amenities like shelters and benches.

For personal vehicles one challenge is parking, especially at peak times. Speed is the biggest problem. Traffic must be slowed for people to feel comfortable on this street. Drivers who are trying to leave the city quickly can take alternate routes, like Route 141 or I-95. The consultant team mentioned that use of the curb could be more flexible. Business deliveries do not arrive in the evening so a loading zone could be used as an Uber zone or a Door Dash zone in the evening. Then for placemaking and aesthetics, even without the desired space for small gatherings, the street can be greener and more attractive including rain gardens. Not much has been said about flooding, but the intersection at Pennsylvania Avenue and Union Street has flooding issues during heavy rain. There is a long downhill area where Union Street meets Pennsylvania Avenue so maybe rain gardens in that area can stop the run-off.

The visioning started even before the reconfiguration in 2017. The Better Block Group blocked a travel lane two years in a row in 2015-2016 to show what it would look like. DeIDOT was on board, and there have been no backups of any concern. This street has been cited in both the Wilmington Comp Plan and Wilmington Bike Plan. In the Wilmington Comp Plan, when asked to identify a great street in Wilmington, Union Street was repeatedly mentioned as a neighborhood commercial area. There are ways it could be more pedestrian-friendly. People point to Main Street in Newark, where there are many pedestrians so people know that they cannot speed, and restaurants and shops are a product of that factor. Union Street would like to be like that, but we have to fix the traffic first. We asked people what they would like to see for Union Street for the future and “people-oriented” was repeated the most, followed by “being more inviting”.

The Advisory Committee meeting was held first with fifteen or twenty people in attendance. After a quick presentation, the meeting was open to comments. The meeting was recorded, and a lot of good feedback was received. Mr. Dunn asked where the meeting was held. Mr. Gula said it was virtual and held on April 22nd. The format was very similar at the workshop. The people were divided into four breakout rooms and every comment was captured on a color-coded virtual sticky note so everyone could see and discuss the comments. A series of outreach tools were available on the website for two weeks so people who could not attend the workshop could watch it and provide feedback. The schedule began with determining existing conditions and milestones, then there was the Advisory Committee on April 22nd. The Public Workshop was May 19th. Now the team is putting together some concepts to go over with the partners in July. Then they will go back to the public with a second public meeting at the end of August or early September. That feedback will be used to arrive at a preferred concept, which will go back to public before the final report is completed.

Mr. Vic Singer commented that he likes the diagonal parking. He thinks if we were starting fresh it would be better to have the diagonal parking on the right side of the road, so the drivers sight

line is closer to the oncoming traffic. Mr. Gula thanked Mr. Singer for his comment and agreed they need to figure out how to make it work better. Many of the comments have indicated that people do not feel safe. Some people do not like parallel parking, and some say it is less movement to back in than to parallel park, so it has its supporters and its detractors. The problem has become that people are parking on the neighborhood streets to both the east and the west because there is not enough parking. Diagonal parking added nine spaces to the east side of the street. It would be a little easier if it were on the right. The bike lane is in front of the parking so that throws people too. Mr. Singer said the way it is now with the bike lane on the outside of the diagonal parking lane, by the time the driver gets a view of the oncoming traffic, the front of the car is already in the travel lane. Mr. Gula said it was an interim step that needs to be addressed. Another idea is to have a public lot. There are a number of small private lots for different businesses. A larger lot that is city maintained might better, especially for events like St. Anthony's. If this a destination, people need to be able to park.

Mr. Ken Potts said he has lived in Union Park Gardens for twenty-five years and speed is a problem from Lancaster Pike south. Until World War II this was a two-way street with trolley tracks in the middle, which accounts for why it is so wide. If you are going to take from the lane width, he would endorse the sidewalk width. The sidewalks are not wide in most places in Wilmington but along Union Street they become very narrow and inhibit pedestrian traffic. He advises that they be careful on bus stop removal and re-installation because of these narrow sidewalks. The bus stops have to conform to ADA widths so there are some areas where bus stops are needed but impossible and other places where it is superfluous. The one bench on Union at Lancaster is inadequate, but there is a shelter at 3rd and Union, so it is a question of allocation of resources. This really needed to be done and he commends Mr. Gula and the committee for coming up with a plan. Mr. Gula said that if there are any potential changes for bus stops, they will be working with DTC and will have ridership numbers to guide the decisions. The city was looking at making it two-way again, but it would require another traffic study, which is not funded, so the city is no longer pushing to look at two-way traffic.

Mr. Bill Dunn asked if raised crosswalks were considered as part of the traffic calming. Mr. Gula said they considered them, but the city is not in favor due to snow plowing, trash trucks and the fire trucks. Mr. Dunn mentioned that they have them at the Riverfront and with all the people who live in those towers, data could be taken from there. Mr. Dunn said they have been working with DeIDOT and the state representative to get a raised crosswalk on Stanton Road between Kiamensi Gardens and Powell Ford Park and they put out a poll. They got a 25% response and needed 15%. Of the 25% that responded, 87.9% of them supported a raised crosswalk.

In the chat, Mr. Mike Kaszyski suggested, "One thing to consider with Union Street vs City of Newark, the availability of rear parking. Newark has developed over time, with continued redevelopment. How much potential is there on Union behind the buildings, considering the Parkway is on one block?"

7. WILMAPCO Freight Study Updates

Mr. Dan Blevins said the Delaware Truck Parking Study will fulfill federal requirements in response to Jason's Law, but also look specifically at overnight parking to determine if Delaware has an hours-of-service issue in mandating trucks to stop at certain times or a staging issue with truckers looking to be close to the place where they are picking up in the morning or evening. Two focus groups have been held with members of the trucking community including truck drivers, various industries, and Mr. Ken Grant from AAA. Now the team is getting into the strategies and recommendations for this study.

Existing truck parking in Delaware includes three hundred and thirty-seven spaces, of which seventy-six are public and the rest are private. There are two large areas in Elkton and one in New Jersey that have a fair number of spaces, so it is not that Delaware does not have parking nearby, but this study is focusing on parking within the state. In the southern part of the state, Royal Farms and Wawa have some truck parking spaces. In conversations with them, it was said that these spaces are for quick stops like fuel, coffee, and food. These are validated parking spaces and are included in the figures that we have. Part of the study is to look at how spaces are being used at different times of day. The consultant team, CPCS, has access to archive data from Trucker Path, which is an app truckers use to see where parking is available and what the facility is like. The data being used is from 2019 because 2020 was affected by COVID. The overnight hours, 2-3 a.m. is the peak period where a lot of spaces in Delaware are being used. Within Delaware, between 8 and 9 a.m. and midday truck parking is not a problem, but as evening approaches from 8 to 9 p.m. and overnight there are constraints in the system.

Undesignated truck parking is of interested to determine where trucks park during overnight hours when parking is full, or they are too far from a facility. Using 2019 GPS data from INRX over 17 million truck GPS waypoints were analyzed. That was narrowed down to 119,700 stops where trucks were idling more than thirty minutes. It was found that this is happening in a series of locations all over the states including on-ramps, near businesses, and outside of rest stops. Thirty-two undesignated truck parking clusters in Delaware were identified. These were classified as rest area, on/off-ramps, shoulder, last mile, near truck stop, or urban. Once this was determined, the question became one of understanding these areas and why truckers are parking there. The answer to that begins with looking at how long they are there. For each of those locations, there is a lot of data including stop duration, which gives insight into why these clusters are desirable stops. The team developed a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) and it was found is that parking is not at peak capacity throughout the state, even at peak hours. Parking is unevenly distributed. In the southern part of the state, they have capacity issues, where east and north there are open spaces during the overnight hours. Private facilities do not offer a lot of overnight parking, and the areas around the port and Edgemoor do not have sufficient space for staging.

Finding a solution is a private sector issue, but the private sector says the public sector directs them when to stop so they have to be a part of the solution. We are all in this together and COVID brought society's reliance on the trucking industry to the forefront. The study looked at three categories for a solution including capacity expansion, information and technology, and policies and programs. In the report the state is divided into four different areas. Current conditions and possible solutions considering regionally specific conditions are described. For example, in the northern area some state-owned facilities could be part of that solution, or there may be coordination with Salem and Cecil Counties, and Philadelphia. Finally, part of the solution could be looking at Edgemoor to see if some of the staging could be done on their property as they are expanding there.

The focus groups are finished, and the team is working on strategies and recommendations. The report will be completed in July and submitted for adoption in September.

The second project is the Delaware Statewide First/Final Mile Freight Network Development. The first/final mile is the last mile or less that links a truck's origin or destination from the main line route to their place of business. Studies show this accounts for about a quarter of the total freight delivery costs, which are then passed on to the consumer. The objective of this study is to find out where these connections are in Delaware, the needs and issues related to these

connections, and how WILMAPCO and DeIDOT can address those needs and issues while striking a balance between the industry and the residential areas where many of these connections are found.

There was a focus group in January and a second one in June. A Wikimap was set up to collect public comments about what individuals have found in their own experience. This brought in one hundred and twenty entries where people point out mobility, safety, road conditions, and land use conflicts, which will be helpful in the report. The map of the final mile network that was created will be used to generate a GIS file with numerous attributes. That GIS file will help in the prioritization of items and other factors that will make this a living tool to fuel documents like the TIP or other programs. The needs and issues for each one of the focus areas are being looked at in terms of road conditions, geometry, or infrastructure. As land use changes, mobility can become an issue as a result of different trucks moving through the area and how it was designed. Institutions grapple with these connections as more of these industries move to the area and land use changes, which changes the mix of truck movements. There are twenty-six different data sets being used to create the structure of these connections and fifty-three attributes are considered including the infrastructure, social characteristics of the area, information about congestion, volume, and other attributes. Almost half of them are in Office of State Planning Level 4 designation, especially in Kent and Sussex County. A relatively small portion are located in areas potentially affected by sea level rise. Nine percent have little or no shoulder, which is a safety issue. The full analysis can be found on the WILMAPCO website. In the chat, Mr. Bill Dunn asked what level 4 is. Mr. Mike Kaszyski replied it is the growing Sussex County.

The team labeled this a Strategic Lens on Freight Conflicts, because finding a balance between the businesses that are good for the GDP and tax revenue and the quality of life for residents in these areas becomes tricky. So, a strategic framework was developed as a guide for some of these solutions. With these facilities we can look to protect, manage, or accommodate. We can try to protect facilities from conflict through infrastructure and/or roadway design. We can manage what is already available. We can try to find ways to accommodate these facilities such as allowing different access points. So, there are three different approach points you can take in managing these types of facilities. CPCS is going to visit in the next couple of weeks to look at some of these areas in more detail. The project team will go through a prioritization exercise using all of that criteria to see which one of these with the most constraints, rises to the top. Then, hopefully, deliver this data set and report to Council in September.

The third project is the Impacts/Benefits Analysis of Truck Access Improvements around the Port of Wilmington Area. In March, there was a public workshop with fifty-three people in attendance. It went well and feedback was gathered in different breakout groups. Modelling efforts are currently underway. The team is looking to evaluate possible improvements from a few previous documents including the Port of Wilmington Truck Parking Study, The Route 9 Corridor Land Use and Transportation Plan, the Southbridge Circulation Study, and the Wilmington Comp Plan. These include ideas about moving traffic in and around the port more safely. There are three main alternatives being analyzed to determine if they work. The team is also doing some cost assessment to prepare should they get into the CTP anytime soon.

Feedback from the community included looking at better policing, signage, better enforcement, and moving the industries out. A range of comments were received and will be part of the final plan. The three major alternative include extending Pigeon Point Road beyond Lambson Lane to the south and connecting to I-295 to divert traffic off of Route 9. This is going to be an expensive project. There will be environmental impacts which are under review right now.

Another alternative is the continuation of Garasches Lane to make a better east-west connection and keep traffic off of New Castle Avenue. Finally, the purchase of a few homes on Pyles Lane would allow better utilization of that connection around the port area. Right now, these analyses are going on. An Advisory Committee Meeting will be in July or August. The last public workshop for this will be in August. This should be ready for Council by November. The project pages can be found on the WILMAPCO websites. Also, DeIDOT has a Statewide Freight Plan underway which will be adopted by October 2022.

Mr. Dunn asked, with the port expansion, if there is any preconceived notion that they might have more trucks and they might have enough space to accommodate them for overnight stays. Mr. Dunn also said that though he is sure that it is a private property, a huge chunk of Christiana Mall parking is not heavily used ten months a year and maybe the property owner may be open to ten slots there or something where people could stay overnight. Mr. Blevins replied that is brought up a lot. The expansion of the port is going to be strictly a container port, which means they will probably be moving through much more quickly and be more of a staging question and the idea is to ask if there a space on premises to help with that. As far as parking at the mall, he is guessing there is a liability question with that. The whole genesis of why the federal government got involved in truck parking more significantly is because of Jason's Law. Several years ago, a trucker was murdered over seven dollars because he had parked in an isolated parking lot alone, so Mr. Blevins thinks a lot of businesses are fearful of liability.

Mr. Dunn asked how the Pyles Lane negotiations coming along. He knows they were talking to some of the residents that did not want to leave. Mr. Blevins replied that he is not sure. That was the last place they left it, but there were a few others that were still planning on being there. He does not know if anything has changed in those negotiations.

In the chat Mr. Blevins posted links:

Delaware First/Final Mile <http://www.wilmapco.org/finalmile>

Delaware Truck Parking Study <http://wilmapco.org/truckparking>

Impacts/Benefits analysis of Truck Access http://www.wilmapco.org/port_analysis

2022 Statewide Freight Plan underway <http://freight.deldot.gov>

8. Route 9 Paths Plan

Mr. Jake Thompson said the Paths Plan is a new plan that is branching off the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan, which proposed a network of walking and biking paths for the corridor. The Paths Plan will expand and refine those pedestrian and bicycle recommendations as well as develop new recommendations for a network of paths in the Route 9 corridor. The Paths Plan includes an executive summary; background information on the Master Plan, the Route 9 Monitoring Committee, and the purpose of the Paths Plan; existing conditions, data and maps; recommendations from recent plans, which is going over what is in the Master Plan; the technical prioritization process; the public outreach process and results; the recommendations of the Paths Plan; and the next steps for implementation.

The Existing Conditions sections includes a variety of transportation data on the percentage of commuters that walk, bike, or take transit to work; zero car households; walking and biking crashes; bus ridership; DeIDOT's bicycle level of traffic stress (Bike LTS); and based on that, low-stress bicycling islands. This sections also includes information from our Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Data Report; the location of workplaces; and criminal activity.

The Recommendations from Recent Plans section includes a revised map of bicycle/pedestrian routes from the Master Plan. These are not recommendations for the Paths Plan, but rather shown as a starting point as everything will be building off of this past work. This section gets into our missing links analysis which looks at sections of recommendations that could make crucial connections between neighborhoods that are currently divided. The missing links were scored based on the population they connect which was factored into the prioritization. That leads us into our technical prioritization process, which was used to determine which areas of the corridor would benefit the most from bicycle and pedestrian improvements. This uses data from the Existing Conditions section and missing links analysis to give a score to each segment in the study area. In the center of the corridor Dunleith, Oakmont, and Rosegate scored the highest and would benefit most from bicycle and pedestrian improvements though all neighborhoods in the corridor would benefit. We applied the prioritization score of the road segments to past recommendations from the Master Plan. This is followed by a detailed chart of each of the proposed route segments and their score.

Public Outreach Methods include an online public survey that was active from August to February of this year. A drawing for a \$25 Visa gift card was included to encourage participation and that has been awarded. The plan and survey were promoted through Facebook ads, the WILMAPCO newsletter, and Colonial Clippings, which is the school district's newsletter. On the WILMAPCO website there was a link to the survey as well as an overview presentation including all the maps and data that were put together. Spanish translations of everything including the survey were available. In December we had a class session with an AP Human Geography class at William Penn High School and those students took the survey. A paper version of the survey was distributed door to door to reach the quota of at least five responses per neighborhood. The field survey was completed by Ms. Dora Williams of the New Castle Preventions Coalition, who was a great help in getting public feedback. One hundred and eighty-one responses to the public survey were received, the majority of which were from the field survey, and five of those were taken in Spanish. The majority of respondents were ages 18-64. The majority were female, and 77% of respondents live in the corridor.

The first couple of questions of the survey asked how often you walk for transportation and how often you bike for transportation and 44% never walk, a fair amount do walk from time to time. 70% never bike and just a handful of people do bike. For the people who do not walk or bike for transportation, a lot of those reasons have to do with saying they prefer to drive, they are concerned about a lack of infrastructure, and safety, distances to destinations, or they just do not own a bike. The survey then asked if they agree with the statement, "Creating a better network of pathways will result in more people walking and biking." The average agreement level was 73%, which suggests that most people are on board with the Paths Plan. We asked for any destinations you would like to bike or walk to if there was a safer way to do so, and which locations would warrant better connections. Most frequently mentioned was Route 9 itself, followed by neighborhood parks, the Cities of Wilmington and New Castle, local businesses, the Markell Trail, and the Route 9 Library. When asked if walking and biking conditions need to be improved in your neighborhood, 60% said yes, while only 19% said no. So, most people would like to see conditions improve. The survey asked which roads in your neighborhood present the greatest physical safety concerns, and responses could list up to three locations. We counted how many times each of those locations were mentioned and put them on a map. Route 9 was mentioned the most frequently, followed by Route 13, and a few intersections along Route 9, Memorial Drive and Lambson Lane. The survey then asked people to rank the prioritization criteria and also asked in a non-technical manner, which of the following is most important in considering where limited funding should be spent on walking and biking projects. People walking to work came out on top, followed by criminal activity, and indicators of public health concern, which mirrors the priorities

that were identified in the Master Plan from public feedback. Then, seven of the recommendations that scored highly in the draft recommendations were listed, and respondents were asked how beneficial it would be to add walking or biking improvements to the locations, and each of these could be rated individually with their own slider from not beneficial to very beneficial. Looking at the average % beneficial, Route 9, where it crosses I-295 came out on top, followed by Rogers Road, Boulden Boulevard, and Lambson Lane. The survey then asked how those connections should be made and gave a few example of types of infrastructure to get the ideas going. We counted up the number of times they were mentioned for each of them and for all of them, mixed-use paths and off-road trails were mentioned frequently, as well as improving sidewalks. Bike lanes were not as desired. Answers from open-ended questions were captured and factored into our recommendations, particularly the non-mapped general recommendations.

That leads into the Recommendations section of the plan which includes the proposed path network that is followed by a detailed chart of proposed route segments. It gets into the three general path types that are proposed in the plan with examples of those, and general recommendations. Three general types of paths were proposed to give a general idea which types of infrastructure would make the most sense for each route in the proposed path network. The mixed-use paths can be built on or alongside roads, are fully separated from traffic, paved, can accommodate two-way walking or biking traffic, can be built on one or both sides of the road, can take the place of a sidewalk or be built along side of one. Off-road paths do not follow an existing roadway; can be built in parks, on undeveloped land, or between buildings where land and funding are available; this is a great way to close gaps between neighborhoods that do not otherwise have a road connection. As of now they all connect on Route 9. Neighborhood bikeways are low-cost solutions that are upgrades to already low-stress neighborhood streets. They consist of just paint and signage and are a great way to calm traffic and encourage biking on already safe streets. These should be accompanied by sidewalk upgrades as needed to ensure they are safe for people walking as well.

The Proposed Path Network is a refinement of the map of the proposed routes from the Master Plan based on all of our technical analysis and public feedback. The path types for each individual route were determined based on public feedback based on what the public would like to see on each corridor, the existing right of way as wider streets can accommodate mixed-use paths, and Bike LTS analysis as low-stress streets are good candidates for neighborhood bikeways. They were then ranked based on the technical prioritization process. The higher score would lead to a lower rank number. The routes with letter suffixes indicate routes that have multiple sections with different path types. Route 9 ranked first, and this consists of two different sections that were proposed in the Master Plan. The majority of the route from Wilmington to New Castle would consist of mixed-use paths on both sides of Route 9 and other streetscape improvements with the exception of where it crosses over I-295, which would be a single median mixed-use path to avoid conflicts with on and off ramps. These would be connected by roundabouts at Memorial Drive and Cherry Lane so people using the center median path would be able to navigate the roundabouts and get to the outer lanes. Number 11 is Boulden Boulevard, which was the most impactful missing link in our missing link analysis, connecting over 9000 people in the area. This would consist of a mixed-use path from Moores Lane to the Markell Trail so this would connect several neighborhoods as well as the corridor as a whole to the Markell Trail. Number 6 consists of an off-road trail behind the Route 9 Library. This would connect the library to the Rose Hill Community Center, serve as a car-free alternative to Route 9, and connect Lambson Lane to West Avenue. 6c is private land, which is the Superlodge parking lot. It may be possible to extend the path through here through an easement, if the land comes up for sale, or this path could just end at the Route 9 Library. Number 16 consists of connections to Simonds Gardens Park. There are a few subsections here. 16a would be a couple of short paths within the park to connect to

the surrounding paths. 16b would be a neighborhood bike route along Simonds Drive to get people in and out of the park. 16c is an off-road path that is currently goes through private but undeveloped land that may be possible through easement or if that land goes up for sale, and if that is built it could connect to a neighborhood bikeway on Thorn Lane. As we connect to mixed-use paths around this area along Dock View Drive, Rose Lane, and Lambson Lane. Number 42 is a crossing either over or under I-295. Currently the only way to get between neighborhoods there is on Route 9 itself, and right now there is no bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure there which is very unsafe. We could really use another crossover in addition to the proposed mixed-use path in the middle of that line so this would be either an elevated path or a tunnel. It would be a long-term, high-cost project that would require further study. It would be dependent on paths being built on either side, particularly number 40, the off-road path behind McCullough Middle School providing a path for kids to get to school and a mixed-use path on Lander's Lane and Lander's Spur. There are a few general recommendations towards the end of the plan based on public feedback. Those include completing and repairing sidewalks and making sure they are continuous, free of obstructions and meet ADA standards; ensure smooth and safe transitions, enable complete trips; improve lighting, especially pedestrian-scale lighting to light up sidewalks and paths to ensure the safety of all users and deter crime; and name and sign the paths so people are aware of them and where to find them. These names could be based on roads and destinations they connect, or they could be decided through a community outreach process.

The next section is Implementation. The paths should be implemented in order of priority. DeIDOT, the County, and other agencies will design, engineer, and construct each segment. There are a few different funding opportunities to build these paths including the Capital Transportation Program, the Community Transportation Fund, and the Transportation Alternatives Program which includes Safe Routes to School. This section also gives very rough estimates of timeline and costs. Neighborhood bikeways would be the lowest cost solution and could be implemented within five years if funding becomes available. Mixed-use paths and off-road paths would be medium to high-cost and can be implemented within ten years. The elevated path or tunnel under I-295 would be a high-cost project and would require further study, which could be implemented in less than twenty years if funding becomes available.

The Paths Plan has been reviewed by our Route 9 Health Subcommittee as well as the Route 9 Monitoring Committee. We did receive some feedback from them. It is being reviewed by the PAC right now. We will continue to take comments and make edits to the draft. Once we are satisfied with the final draft, we bring it out for endorsement by our TAC and Council.

Mr. Dunn said in the overall effort to address many of the problems that exist on Route 9, if you stretch it out in the timeline, how far down the path are we at this point. Mr. Thompson said he would have to get back to him on that. We just had the plan that was set forth and the Master Plan that was endorsed in 2017 so DeIDOT will be doing further analysis.

In the chat, Mr. Thompson posted the link to the draft of the Plan: <http://bit.ly/pathsplandraft>

9. How an Idea Becomes a Project Video

Ms. Randi Novakoff said WILMAPCO has been working on a series of five videos. These are funded through a federal grant. The idea behind the videos is to explain transportation planning in a simple and easily understood way as well as highlight the importance of participation in transportation planning. This is the third video completed in the series. The first two were on Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning and the Route 9 Master Plan as an example of the master planning process at the community level. This one explains the Regional Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, and how a project works. *The video was shown.* Ms.

Novakoff said that was actually the video on transportation justice, which is still in progress, so the PAC got a sneak preview. Ms. Novakoff will send a link to the other video, which is completed, so members can watch it at their leisure. Any feedback would be appreciated. Spanish translation will be added to this video and the other one as well. English translation will be added to this video for the person who speaks Spanish.

Mr. Bill Dunn suggests where “Black communities” are mentions, he might want to say, “Black, Hispanic and low-income”. It seems too selective to him. Ms. Novakoff replied that Bill was referencing the results from the Transportation Justice Report which did isolate specific communities and problems that those communities face.

Mr. Ken Potts suggested saying, “African American”. Ms. Novakoff replied that what is appropriate to say changes over time. Mr. Freuhstorfer said he understands that Black is the correct term.

In the chat Mr. Tancred posted, “I thought it was great.”

10. Other Business

Mr. Barry Shotwell asked if PAC will be meeting in person by August. Ms. Novakoff replied that WILMAPCO is waiting to see what other agencies do before we are officially back in the office 100% so it is still to be determined.

11. Adjournment

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Vic Singer and seconded by Mr. Barry Shotwell the PAC adjourned.

Motion passed

(06-21-21-02)

Attachments: (0)