

**PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
WILMAPCO Zoom Virtual Meeting, August 15, 2022

Minutes prepared by Dawn Voss from recording.

Mr. Mike Kaszyski, PAC Chair, called the meeting to order.

**1. ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:**

Mark Blake, GHADA  
Tracy Chamblee, Southern New Castle County Alliance  
Carlos de los Ramos, AARP  
Richard Janney, Southern New Castle County  
Mike Kaszyski, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce and PAC Chair  
Bill Lower, Committee of 100  
Ken Potts, Delmarva Rail Passenger Association  
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council  
Anna Quisel, League of Women Voters of New Castle County  
Vic Singer, Civic League for New Castle County

**Absent:**

Serene Abiy, University of Delaware  
Bill Dunn, Civic League for New Castle County  
Patricia Folk, Cecil County  
Mario Gangemi, Cecil County Chamber of Commerce  
Ken Grant, AAA Mid-Atlantic  
Deanna Murphy, Cecil County Board of Realtors  
Gail Seitz, City of New Castle  
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance  
Joshua Solge, City of Newark  
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance

**Staff Members:**

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner  
Randi Novakoff, Outreach Manager  
Bill Swiatek, Principal Planner  
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

**Guests:**

**2. Approval of the April 18, 2022 and June 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

**ACTION:** On a motion by Mr. Vic Singer and seconded by Mr. Ken Potts the PAC approved the April 18, 2022 meeting minutes.

Motion passed

**(08-15-22-01)**

**ACTION:** On a motion by Mr. Ken Potts and seconded by Mr. Mike Kaszyski the PAC approved the June 13, 2022 meeting minutes.

Motion passed with Mr. Vic Singer abstaining

(08-15-22-02)

**3. Public Comment Period:**

None.

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

Ms. Tigist Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- Staff attended the West Center City Community Meeting on July 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Staff attended the Churchmans TID Information Session on July 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Staff participated in the kickoff for the Delaware Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan meeting on June 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Staff exhibited at the William Hicks Anderson Open House on August 6<sup>th</sup>.
- The Ardens Walkable Community Workshop was on August 8<sup>th</sup> with forty attendees.
- Staff presented the Regional Transportation Plan and the Transportation Justice Plan at the DTC Elderly and Disabled Transit Advisory Committee on August 10<sup>th</sup>.
- The Ardens Transportation Plan Steering Committee kickoff meeting will be August 16<sup>th</sup>.
- The Route 9 Monitoring Committee will meet on August 18<sup>th</sup>.
- The Southbridge Circulation Study Steering Committee kickoff meeting is scheduled for August 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Staff will be participating in the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations MPO Leadership Forum on August 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- The North Claymont and Governor Printz Monitoring Committee will meet August 29<sup>th</sup>.
- The I-95 Cap Feasibility Study Advisory Committee and Public Workshop will be held on September 6<sup>th</sup>. The Advisory Committee will meet at 4:30 PM. The Public Workshop will begin at 6:30 PM.
- Staff will attend the Southbridge Wetlands Park Grand Opening on September 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Staff will be exhibiting at Newark Community Days on September 17<sup>th</sup>.
- The deadline for New Castle County TAP and Bike/Ped Pool submission is September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Mr. Mike Kaszyski asked if the Churchmans TID is moving ahead. Ms. Zegeye said it is the intention to move forward with a TID for Churchmans Crossing. He asked if the TID is about a year from implementation. Ms. Zegeye replied at least a year.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

None.

**PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**5. Delaware Statewide Freight Plan**

Mr. Dan Blevins said the state freight plans are required by the State DOTs. The IIJA requires them to be done every four years. The Freight Plan assesses the transportation system, summarizes needs and opportunities, and looks at key projects, strategies, and tasks. The plan draws from elements of other plans like the Delaware Long Range Transportation Plan and national efforts like the National Freight Strategic Plan. The current update began in July 2021.

Delmarva Freight Summits have been used as Advisory Committee meetings. The draft is available now and will go to Federal Highway Administration for approval. This plan must address sixteen federal requirements. Nine of the requirements carried over from old plan. The rest are new under the IIJA. The first five chapters describe background and current conditions covering how freight moves in and out of the Delmarva area. The final two chapters cover proposed actions, which are described in the Freight Investment Plan and Freight Strategic Plan. There are also appendices with more information.

Chapter one (Introduction) lays out the plan's purpose, context, and requirements. Starting with the 2017 plan and taking from the Statewide Long Range Plan, five plan goals were set, which are Safety and Security; Economic Vitality; System Management, Operations, and Maintenance; Freight Connectivity, Accessibility, and Mobility; and Resilience, Sustainability, and Environmental Stewardship.

Chapters two (Freight and the Economy) and three (Freight Network) describe how freight and the economy interact, but also how freight moves using available data like how much moves by what mode, and the impact of freight on Delaware's economy. Pulling data from the freight analysis framework, 90% of all of Delaware's freight moves within five hundred miles of Delaware. The most tonnage includes agricultural commodities and petroleum, but the most value is pharmaceuticals. Maps in the plan show Freight Intensive Sectors where industries have a higher proportion of truck trip generation. Each of the modes is laid out to show the inventory in Delaware. Rail and waterway routes, airports, pipelines, and energy were identified. Information was drawn from federal sources, but also from WILMAPCO studies like the Truck Parking Study, the First/Final Mile Study, and the Port Alternatives Study as well as Dover/Kent MPO's East/West Truck Studies.

Chapters four (Performance and Trends) and five (Needs and Opportunities) examine the performance of the freight network looking ahead and looking for gaps in the system. Points were taken from the IIJA to look at trends like performance measurement, innovative technologies, and asset preservation. Much information was found in recent studies including information about truck parking facilities in the 2021 Delaware Statewide Truck Parking Study and commercial ports in the 2022 Port of Wilmington Area Alternatives Study. WikiMap was already being used to identify areas of concern and opportunity. Some of the concerns are related to the infrastructure, like the condition or capacity, or access to an area. In areas of opportunity the goal is to position Delaware to benefit the economy, make existing conditions better, and perhaps change modes being used. Concerns identified by people at various meetings are being tied back to plans and active studies. The team considered how to support growth, how technology and innovation affects freight and the economy, and how climate and global disruption impact freight. The team looked at different scenarios to determine the driving forces, freight implications, action plans, and projects. There are many projects in the plan, some of which may move up or down on the list depending on which scenario occurs.

Chapters six (Freight Investment Plan) and seven (Freight Strategic Plan) look ahead at project strategies and what planning tasks will be done over the next four years. First, there is the candidate project list. From the CTP and the MPO's long-range plans, there are one hundred and twenty projects with potential freight relevance. A screening criteria was developed to determine the relevance of the projects and if they link back to the IIJA emphasis areas, which sets these projects up for potential grants. The Freight Investment Plan began in 2018. Delaware gets an apportionment of \$6 million per year and applies that funding to various Freight Plan activities. The allocations through 2025 include SR 72/Advanced Utilities Work, SR 72/McCoy Road to SR 1, US 13/Lochmeath Way to Puncheon Road Connector, and US

40/Salem Church Road to Walther Road. This part of the plan explains what kinds of funding packages are available with the new IIJA law. The five main goals of the Strategic Plan are explored to address work zone management, environmental impact, and multi-jurisdictional coordination. This section has a list of tasks to identify gaps in the work that was already done, some ongoing activities, and procedural tasks that need to be done for the Federal Highway Administration. Short-term tasks for the next one to four years include truck parking information systems, truck parking data update, supply chain studies, land use agency coordination, freight planning support, truck parking facilities, first/final mile network refinements, and system resilience planning. Long-term tasks include energy supply chain trends and feasibility studies.

Mr. Ken Potts asked if there is any place in the process in which public comments and comments from shippers were invited. Mr. Blevins said he defers the public comment period to DelDOT. The freight forums were used to share information and get feedback. There is no particular site to collect comments. They were working on one to view this plan. The draft needs to be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration by September 15<sup>th</sup>, because they would like sixty days to review it. The current plan expires on November 19<sup>th</sup> of this year. Mr. Blevin believes they are working on a public meeting at the end of this month, but most of the comments and interactions have come from those freight forums.

Mr. Vic Singer asked for information on SR 896 and a Senate Resolution 10. Mr. Blevins said Senate Resolution 10 set up a special committee in 2017 to look at making recommendations regarding truck traffic along SR 48, 41 and 7 in New Castle County. After several months of discussion, we came up with twenty-four recommendations that through additional engineering or additional study improve truck traffic along those three corridors. Many of those are done, but there are five feasibility studies to be completed. Part of that is needing some guidance from the general assembly to get them started. These five are ideas that came out of that special working group. All would be expensive to study, let alone to implement, hence the reason they have yet to be completed. More importantly, we probably would not get them done in a five-year span.

Ms. Anna Quisel asked if there is any consideration for climate impact and planning for electrification. Mr. Blevins said one appendix is based on that, and it is embedded in the strategies. It is also in the screening process.

Mr. Ken Potts said he would be interested to find out what if anything it says about the Newark Freight Line that is now closed. DelDOT made a considerable effort to redesign the Newark Station to separate the freight and passenger conflict. They are going to move track around. There is going to be a gauntlet track on track A at Newark. Then, we wake up one day and Newark Freight Yard is closed because it is part of the railroad philosophy at Norfolk Southern about closing a lot of the yards and lengthening the trains, which of course has an impact on the road intersections. We saw the impact of that with the oil trains shipments from North Dakota several years back. He has not seen this plan but would like to learn what if anything they are saying about the Newark Freight Yard that is simply dormant. Mr. Blevins said the word dormant is accurate, as he would not say that it is closed. It is used much less, and he knows they were moving things further to the north and bringing them down to the Delaware City area. It is still used sporadically. There are still trains that will sit there but nowhere near the level that it was before. He does not believe Norfolk Southern has sold that or anything. Nothing specific about that is addressed in this plan, but DelDOT is looking at beginning another rail plan which is overdue. That would get deeper into that particular mode.

## **6. Regional Transportation Plan Update**

Mr. Bill Swiatek said the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is being updated. The RTP is the principal plan at WILMAPCO. It sets strategic policy including goals, objectives, actions, and performance measures. It includes a list of major transportation projects that are expected to move forward in the next several decades. These projects are listed as constrained, which means they funded, or aspirational projects. The RTP is updated every four years and this update is due in March. Staff completed the review of our Progress Report and the Public Opinion Survey, which are foundational documents for the RTP. Staff is developing draft goals, objectives, and actions. The outreach process began including presenting the RTP to agencies, municipalities, and civic groups and collecting feedback. The project list is being developed, which involves collecting the projects that have come out in the last few years, determining a year when the project could be completed, and the cost as adjusted for inflation. An Air Quality Conformity Analysis is required in our region to ensure the projects will not create a transportation system that exceeds our emissions budget. There will then be another phase of public outreach after the first of the year in 2023. Then this goes through a process of refinement and finally, adoption.

The Progress Report grades the actions in the RTP. It is a performance-based document with both qualitative and quantitative measures. In the last Progress Report, sixty percent of the actions made good progress. Twenty-three percent of the action had partial progress. Seventeen percent of the actions made poor progress. Some of the challenges include growth outside of our Center and Core, which will add pressure to our transportation grid in the future; the rise of single-occupancy vehicle trips; the rise of VMT; and road safety. Successes include air quality improvement and local plan implementation.

The Public Opinion Surveys is a statistically valid survey of six hundred residents. Demographic quotas ensure racial groups reflect regional demographics. The survey gathers opinions of the transportation system and policies, so the policies and actions proposed in the RTP are in line with public opinion. For example, one question asks if the transportation system meets your needs. The answer can be tracked over time to see that three out of four people agree with that in 2022, which is down from 2018. We can do cross tabulation of the data. One questions asks if transportation limits access to healthy and affordable grocery shopping. For households earning under \$25,000 per year, one in five answer that they experience this, but only four percent for those earning over \$100,000 experience this. Another question asked if web-based public meetings are effective. Most people agree that they are, but for those earning under \$25,000, only thirty-seven percent agreed. This emphasizes the need for low-tech outreach options, particularly in communities that have a number of low-income residents. We identified technology deserts where additional low tech outreach methods would be appropriate.

Under the goal to Improve Quality of Life, the objectives are protect public health and safety, promote active transportation, ensure transportation choice and equity, and preserve natural and cultural resources. These are unchanged from the last update. In the action for safer transportation systems, we propose adding a Vision Zero plan for New Castle County to reduce car crashes. Cecil County already has one. Another action was added for national defense preparedness to be in line with federal objectives.

Another goal is to Support Sustainable Economic Development and Goods Movement. The objectives under this are to maximize our investments, develop effective transportation networks, and plan for energy security and resilience. The actions under this goal are to use our prioritization process as a transparent way to accept projects, create and support local plans, manage traffic congestion, and streamline freight. One action being added is ensure public

accessibility of data. WILMAPCO does this, but it is being added to be in line with federal initiatives. Supporting a greener transportation system is another objective that we have, but a performance measure is being added for VMT targets. Delaware's Climate Action Plan has a 10% VMT reduction target between now and 2030. That is the proposed performance measure.

Under the goal to Efficiently Transport People, the objectives are improve system performance, promote accessibility and connectivity, and engage the public via an open involvement process. Actions include improve bus performance, plan for autonomous and connected vehicles, robust public participation, and fund preservation first, which includes a new performance measure to set a target for preservation spending.

We will look at policy regarding Transportation Investment Areas, which relates to the area of concern with growth outside of our Center and Core. We want to discourage investment in the Rural areas to prevent expansion projects there that encourage sprawl. We will review land use sites especially the Growth Area Policy Map, compare it to our TIA, and perhaps adjust our TIA to be in line with county land use.

The next steps will be to prioritize and refine the project listing, begin the air quality conformity analysis, continue agency coordination, and public outreach.

Anna Quisel said this is a great plan. Glad to see attention to VMT.

## **7. WILMAPCO Public Opinion Survey**

Ms. Randi Novakoff said the Public Opinion Survey is conducted every four years to inform the Regional Transportation Plan update and ensure that it is in line with what public opinion. The survey is a random sampling of six-hundred residents, with four hundred in New Castle County and two hundred in Cecil County. With a 95% confidence level, it is a statistically valid survey that has been conducted since the late 1990s. Demographic quotas for race are included to make sure the racial makeup of the survey is as close to both counties as possible.

Results show three-quarters of residents are satisfied with the effectiveness of the transportation system. However, if you break that down into the different users, some groups are much less satisfied. For the most effective long-term solutions to improve traffic congestion, improving public transportation was the most popular solution. Neither encouraging walking and biking, nor building new roads were considered effective solutions. The survey asked the importance of a variety of issues. Nearly everyone agreed that ensuring access to public transportation, especially for those who do not own a car, is an important issue. Regarding how transportation funds should be spent, people thought those funds could be used for technology to improve the transportation system. Building more roads and highways; increasing safety; and providing more options for transit, walking or biking were the least popular options. Among various funding methods for the transportation system, creating new fees paid by developers was most supported, followed by delaying or eliminating some projects, and additional fees to license and register inefficient vehicles. For mode choice, most people drive alone. A high percentage of people say they sometimes walk. About fifty percent ride with other people in their vehicles.

Close to thirty percent of respondents are familiar with WILMAPCO. Sixty-five percent are not interested in receiving WILMAPCO newsletters. Ninety percent do not want to receive texts from WILMAPCO. A variety of other outreach strategies were supported as effective, but direct communication with staff was the most supported strategy. The number of those who thought

web-based meetings were effective increased. Mail or telephone surveys were perceived as effective. There was a decrease in those who think Facebook, social media, and online surveys are effective. Twenty-three percent are aware of how projects are selected in the transportation process, which is more than previous years. About double the percentage of respondents said they are aware of the long-range plan. About twenty percent are familiar with the Transportation Improvement Program.

Looking at the demographics of our survey compared to the demographics of the census, the racial demographics for both New Castle County and Cecil County match the survey closely. Demographic quotas for age or income cannot be added, because we would run out of survey sample. As it is, it takes about seventy-six thousand phone calls to get to six hundred completed interviews. The lower age category is underrepresented, and the older age and middle age categories are overrepresented. The lower income category is underrepresented, while the upper income category is overrepresented.

Mr. Richard Janney asked if we are in compliance with our carbon footprint or not. He is very concerned with air quality. Ms. Novakoff said we are working to set what the limits are, what they should be, and how we are going to meet those targets. Mr. Janney said it has been a concern for many years. There are some people that prefer to complain about people driving in cars then they drive around in their private jets.

Mr. Glenn Pusey said the survey results underrepresent younger people and overrepresent older people and asked if there are any techniques to rectify that in the future or if it is because younger people will not take the survey and some of the older people have more the time. Ms. Novakoff said that demographic is just more willing to take a survey. For the next iteration of the survey, we will have think of other methods we can use. We will look at more online methods or offer the surveys when staff are out in communities, or use some plan surveys or community day surveys, to get some of these answers. Mr. Pusey asked when you get to six hundred people to talk to you if that is the end of the survey. Ms. Novakoff said we keep calling until we meet the quotas, but yes, when we reach 600 and our quotas are full, we stop calling.

Mr. Janney said whenever he is in a public meeting, which happens frequently, he always asks if they are familiar with WILMAPCO, what we do and who we are. Out of about ninety-five people in the room, maybe four understood. It is not very good. He is trying to improve that. Ms. Novakoff said we appreciate that he lets folks know and we hope the PAC members take our information out to the groups that they represent.

Mr. Vic Singer said in the last five years a major new influence has come on the scene and that is COVID. He asked if any effort was made to determine if changes from the prior results reflect COVID in some fashion. Ms. Novakoff said it is very difficult to determine why people answer as they do and why it differs from previous versions of the survey. Every time we do it, we tweak it slightly to make sure we are getting the information that we need. Something as simple as changing the order of questions can give you a very different result. We do not ask follow-up questions as to why they may or may not be answering the way that they are.

## **8. Other Business**

## **9. Adjournment**

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. Mark Blake and seconded by Mr. Dick Janey the PAC adjourned.

Motion passed

**(08-15-22-03)**

**Attachments: (0)**