

## **PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

WILMAPCO Conference Room, February 24, 2020

### **ROLL CALL**

#### **Members Present:**

Carlos de los Ramos, AARP  
Bill Dunn, Civic League for New Castle County  
Patricia Folk, Cecil County  
Tom Fruehstorfer, City of Newark (Chair)  
Dick Janney, Southern New Castle County  
Tom Posatko, Delmarva Rail Passenger Association  
Kevin Racine, City of Wilmington  
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance (Vice Chair)  
Vic Singer, Civic League for New Castle County  
Dwight Walters, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce

#### **Absent:**

Mark Blake, GHADA  
Kevin Caneco, SNCC  
Katherine Caudle, Pike Creek Civic League  
Mario Gangemi, Cecil County Chamber of Commerce  
Ken Grant, AAA Mid-Atlantic  
Bill Lower, Committee of 100  
Givvel Marrero, Delaware Hispanic Commission  
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council  
Gail Seitz, City of New Castle  
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance  
Eugene Truono, Centreville Civic Association  
Norman Wehner, Cecil Board of Realtors

#### **Staff Members:**

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

#### **Guests:**

Ken Potts, DRPA  
Roberts Hicks, Salem Woods  
Mike Kaszyski, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce

Minutes prepared by Dawn Voss from recording.

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

#### **1. Approval of the October 28, 2019 and December 16, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

Approval of the October 28, 2019 and December 16, 2019 Minutes was postponed to the April Meeting due to the lack of a quorum.

## **2. Public Comment Period:**

None.

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

Ms. Tigist Zegeye said the WILMAPCO Council meeting was held on January 9, 2020. Council approved a TIP Amendment for the Cecil County Mid-County Transit Hub Project and approved a Public Advisory Committee member replacement, Kevin Racine, who moved from Hartford County, Maryland to Wilmington, Delaware. The City of Wilmington Comprehensive Plan and a Concord Pike (US 202) Corridor Master Plan update were presented.

Ms. Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- On January 15<sup>th</sup>, DTC had a community conversation at WILMAPCO, and staff attended the Resilient and Sustainable Community meeting.
- WILMAPCO joined MPO's from the northeast corridor in Washington D.C. to discuss support of transportation and climate initiatives on January 16<sup>th</sup>.
- WILMAPCO hosted a meeting of the Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee on February 24<sup>th</sup>.
- There was a public visioning session for the Newport Transportation Study on January 27<sup>th</sup> with about 40 attendees. The workshop summary will be available on the project page of the WILMAPCO website.
- There was a Governor Printz Boulevard Workshop on January 29<sup>th</sup> with about 90 attendees. An online survey will be available until the end of February.
- Staff participated in the Delaware Clean Cities Coalition meeting on February 5<sup>th</sup>.
- On February 10<sup>th</sup>, staff attended the Air Quality Partnership of Delaware meeting and the Wilmington Health Planning Council meeting.
- Staff attended UD Safe Kids Health Day on February 21<sup>st</sup>.
- The last Churchman's Crossing plan began in the late 1990s. A monitoring report was created, but it is time to update it. A request for proposal has been issued and five firms submitted proposals. RK&K was chosen as the consultant. A kickoff meeting is scheduled for March 9<sup>th</sup>. A steering committee will be formed and a public workshop will be hosted to begin the update of the plan.
- Staff attended the Safe Kids Delaware Board Meeting.
- The Route 9 Master Plan Monitoring Committee will meet on March 17<sup>th</sup>. Staff is supporting a funding application to Healthy Community Delaware for planning and implementing projects in the corridor including Southbridge.
- The US 202/Concord Pike project team is planning to have the next public workshop on April 1<sup>st</sup>. This workshop will present lane use and transportation scenario results as well as preliminary work recommendations.
- A final public workshop for the Southern New Castle County Master Plan is being planned for May. Staff is currently working on the final traffic analysis.

Mr. Dunn asked for a contact at the engineering firm for the Newport Transportation Study to follow up about a public steering committee that would include businesses. Ms. Zegeye said Dave Gula is best contact for this project.

Mr. Dunn asked who will be participating in the Churchman's Crossing Steering Committee. Ms. Zegeye replied that the Steering Committee will include local business owners, community member, and others. A kickoff meeting will be held on March 9 for

member agencies and then we'll have more information on the Steering Committee. Mr. Dunn said he's be interested in participating.

Mr. Kaszyski, asked if the Southern New Castle County Master Plan is the part of the New Castle County Master Plan. Ms. Zegeye replied that New Castle County Land Use, WILMAPCO, and DeIDOT are working in partnership to create a master plan for Southern New Castle County. Mr. Kaszyski commented that DeIDOT has recently announced that the Southern New Castle County TID will be updated beginning in March to be completed in December and asked how that update will affect this master plan. Ms. Zegeye replied that the agencies are very well coordinated. The DeIDOT folks who are working on the TID are also part of the group who are working on the Southern New Castle County Master Plan. Mr. Kaszyski asked if there will be updates to the master plan based on DeIDOT's TID findings. Ms. Zegeye replied that there is extensive outreach through both the county and WILMAPCO process to have that information available.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

#### **4. Unified Planning Work Program, Public Outreach Section.**

Ms. Randi Novakoff distributed a draft of the Public Outreach section of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and explained that it is WILMAPCO's budget and the outline of tasks WILMAPCO will accomplish for the fiscal year. The Public Outreach sections is divided into the following sections:

- The *Public Outreach and Meetings* section describes the strategies to reach the general public using public workshops, conferences, health events, and other options; and targeted audiences using different strategies depending on the project and audience. The PAC advises the best strategies to reach these audiences. About twenty recommendations from the recently approved Transportation Justice Report have been added to the UPWP.
- *Development of Public Information Documents* includes flyers and brochures that explain the WILMAPCO planning process, how people are involved in that process and why it is important. It is important that these documents are easy to understand. The PAC reviews these documents for clarity and accuracy.
- *Newsletters and E-News* refers to the newsletters and e-newsletters that are sent out. A quarterly printed newsletter is sent to about six-thousand people. These newsletters keep people up to date on what WILMAPCO staff are working on and how to be involved in the process.
- *Development of Multimedia Presentations and Videos* describes the development of presentations used to keep people informed. We encourage civic organizations to invite us to their meetings to keep people up to date on what is happening. New this year, Ms. Novakoff is creating a series of videos explaining WILMAPCO and some of the current projects.
- *Webpage Management* refers to the use of the website for public engagement. The staff share in the responsibility to keep the site up to date. All meeting information and recent plans and studies can be accessed from the home page.
- *School Children Education and Safe Routes to School Program* includes the educational program that was developed for school children. A curriculum that staff developed was integrated into the Delaware statewide curriculum. We offer summer camp sessions and other educational activities and events as well as work with DeIDOT on the Safe Routes to School Program. Staff works with some

schools to find federal funding for crosswalks and sidewalks. Staff does some in-classroom safety education with the kids focusing on bicycle and pedestrian safety in partnership with organizations like Safe Kids Delaware and AAA Delaware.

- *Urban Bike Project*, which is located in Wilmington, has a Build a Bike program, where they give kids parts and teach them how to build bicycles. At the end of the program, the kids keep the bikes that they built. They also take the kids out on the road and practice safe bike riding.
- *Newark Bike Project Youth Program* has a Youth Empowerment Engagement program to train youth to become civically engaged citizens.
- *Coordination with Other Agencies on Public Outreach* includes partnering with other agencies to make the best use of resources.
- *Air Quality Public Outreach* is primarily done through the Air Quality Partnership of Delaware, which is a group of public and private citizens working to educate people on simple measures to improve air quality including encouraging people to use alternate modes of transportation. We coordinate Delaware Air Quality Awareness Week, a social media campaign encouraging the use of different modes of transportation. We name an Air Quality Champion during Wilmington's Earth Day event and award a plaque to a local business who has met certain air quality criteria. We also coordinate Wilmington's Earth Day event.
- *Transportation Justice Outreach* is targeted outreach to communities that have traditionally been disadvantaged by transportation projects to make sure that future transportation projects do not inadvertently impact communities including people of color, seniors, disabled, low literacy, or limited language sufficiency.
- *Social Media* was added to reflect the social media that we already use, such as Facebook and Instagram. We will post videos to YouTube when they are finished.
- *Other* refers to anything else that may be needed.

Mr. de los Ramos asked if we have agreements with other organizations to share our newsletter, for example, on their website. Ms. Novakoff responded that we don't have any formal agreements, but do send the newsletter to a number of organizations. Ms. Zegeye asked for clarification as to whether Mr. de los Ramos was referring to the distribution of the newsletter to partner agencies. Mr. de los Ramos was thinking of outreach partners like Bike Delaware. He recommends looking into adding a link to the newsletter on their websites.

Mr. Dunn asked if there is an air quality calendar that shows the trends in air quality for New Castle and Cecil Counties. Ms. Novakoff replied that there is a link to sign up for an app that provides air quality alerts on the WILMAPCO website, but she is not aware of a calendar. Mr. Dunn said that having a record of how many poor air quality days there were per month with historical context would be very informative. Ms. Novakoff explained that DNREC provides a periodic update of how many days of poor air quality there were compared to previous years during the Air Quality Partnership meetings and she's be happy to share that information when provided.

Mr. Singer asked about the Transportation Justice Outreach section, which mentions acknowledging any past wrongs done by transportation and asked if anything will be done about the bus routing at Rodney Square. Ms. Novakoff replied that would be addressed if there were ever a study of the area, but there is not currently a WILMAPCO study going on. Ms. Zegeye added that the UPWP is put together based on implementing projects and studies, and we do not do studies in areas where we do not have a project. Mr. Singer

continued that this document says, “past harm”. There was a study of Rodney Square long ago and there have been meetings about the current situation. He asked if that was enough to justify addressing it. Ms. Zegeye responded that the study that was put together for Rodney Square was implemented by DTC, so DTC is doing the public outreach. Mr. Singer referred again to Item C where it is written “any past”. Ms. Novakoff responded that means as it relates to current studies that we are working on.

Mr. Kaszyski asked how much input DTC and DART have in shaping the studies that are done. Ms. Zegeye responded that the implementing agency has to be a part of all the projects we work on. For the City of Wilmington, it would be the City of Wilmington, DeIDOT, DTC, and WILMAPCO. DTC is part of DeIDOT, so they are part of the planning process. Mr. Kaszyski asked if they are actually initiating any of the suggestions for study. Ms. Zegeye replied that there is representation on the Technical Advisory Committee and Council so projects can come from the city, the county, and sometimes from DTC, depending on the project.

Mr. Dunn asked if anyone ever goes back and looks at a study and see how the recommendations are performing. Ms. Zegeye replied that is the role of a monitoring committee such as the Route 9 Monitoring Committee. When a master plan is completed, a monitoring committee not only looks at the plan and recommendations created by WILMAPCO, but also other agencies to ensure they are doing their piece. Mr. Dunn asked who is on the Route 9 monitoring committee. Ms. Zegeye listed the community, local civic leaders, the county, DeIDOT, and WILMAPCO. She added that plan in particular has made good progress and has a couple of projects in the CTP because the community has been involved in that plan’s progress.

**ACTION:** On motion by Dwight Walters seconded by Pat Folk the PAC approved the Unified Planning Work Program, Public Outreach Section.

Motion passed (02-24-20-01)

**Approval of the October 28, 2019 and December 16, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

A quorum was reached, so minutes were revisited.

**ACTION:** On motion by Carlos de los Ramos seconded by Barry Shotwell the PAC approved the revised October 28, 2019 meeting minutes.

Motion passed (02-24-20-02)

**ACTION:** On motion by Tom Posako seconded by Dwight Walkters the PAC approved the December 16, 2019 meeting minutes.

Motion passed (02-24-20-03)

**PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**5. Sea Level Rise (SLR) Vulnerability Assessment**

Mr. Bill Swiatek presented the Sea-Level Rise Transportation Vulnerability Assessment. This presentation is an update of a 2011 study and one of a series of reports available on the WILMAPCO website. The 2011 study of sea-level rise was considered trailblazing, because WILMAPCO was one of the first MPOs to look at impacts on transportation and housing with different SLR scenarios. Using this information, projects in the TIP that may be impacted by SLR were monitored. This study influenced the work of Delaware's climate initiative. Amtrak used this data in work done along the northeast corridor. The study can be updated now because SLR projections were updated for Delaware in 2017 and for Maryland in 2018.

A chart of SLR from the year 1000 to the year 2000 shows sea levels rising dramatically in the 1900s, which corresponds with rising global temperatures. Lewes, Delaware, has observed sixteen inches of SLR from 1900 to 2016. Reedy Point, just south of Delaware City, has seen about nine inches of SLR between 1956 and 2016. A chart was shown relating SLR to increased emissions from three scenarios: the Paris Agreement, Stabilized Emissions, and Growing Emissions. Sea levels will rise regardless of the emissions scenario, but SLR will be much less if emissions are limited.

Three projections for sea-level rise in our region were described: two-foot, four-foot and six-foot rise. These projections have 5-87% of happening by the year 2100. A map of the land impacts of these rises indicates that New Castle County is far more impacted by these rises than Cecil County. In New Castle County it is projected that a two-foot rise would impact 4% of land (eighteen square miles), a four-foot rise would impact 6% and a six-foot rise would impact 8%. In Cecil County a two-foot rise would impact 1% of the land (three square miles), four-foot rise impacts 1% (five square miles) and six-foot rise impacts 2% (six square miles).

Impact on population estimates were based on population data from 2010. Across the region, a two-foot scenario impacts approximately 800 people, a four-foot rise impacts over 1,000 people, and a six-foot rise impacts over 5,000 people. Mr. Singer asked if the population impact referred to homes or jobs. Mr. Swiatek responded that this is block-level census data, so population.

The study examined social equity to determine if these impacts are uniform across society or impact some groups more than others. Regionally, the average census block that is impacted by SLR closely mirrors the makeup of the average census block. In the impacted block groups the Black population is 1% higher than in the average block groups. This illustrates that SLR affects everybody across the region including different races and different socio-economic groups. However, in the city of Wilmington, where the Black residents make up 57% of the total population, but Black residents make up 73% of the population impacted by SLR. The city-wide average of those living in poverty is 25%, but 30% of the people impacted by SLR are living in poverty. In many coastal cities it is found those with low-income and minorities tend to live in low-lying areas, so they are more likely to be impacted by SLR.

A map of roadway impacts illustrated impacts in areas around the Brandywine and Christina Rivers, the city of New Castle down into Delaware City, into southern New Castle County and the Route 9 Corridor. Centerline roads are impacted in a range of just over nine miles with a two-foot rise up to eighty-two miles with a six-foot rise. In Cecil County, less than one mile is impacted with a two-foot rise up to seven miles affected within a six-foot scenario. Many of the rail impacts are isolated to the Wilmington region

including commuter and freight lines. Looking at the possible effects of SLR on projects in the long-range plan provides an opportunity to reconsider the project or adapt the project to accommodate SLR. For example, the Christina River Bridge in Wilmington was raised two feet on approach to accommodate SLR.

Adapting to SLR can take several different forms, including man-made structures like seawalls or natural structures like the Southbridge Wetlands Park that can take in stormwater from the community. Raising homes and infrastructure is an option. Another option is retreat, which is abandoning a stretch of highway or rail line or a whole area. Adapting to SLR requires comprehensive localized decision making. Comprehensive decisions that consider the interest of the community and the interest of transportation together are best for the whole system.

In planning for the future, the recommendation is to limit emissions in order to limit SLR. The 2050 RTP includes policies that help lower emissions such as actions to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), support cleaner vehicle infrastructure and fuels. In development, we encourage density, and development for mixed uses so people can walk or bike to destinations. When you look at the mix of funded projects in the 2050 RTP you see that between 2020 and 2030 transport-related CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions decline, but those reductions do not continue between 2030 and 2040 and emissions actually increase between 2040 and 2050, so we need projects that continue to reduce the production of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The next steps are to complete the analysis and write the report, which should be finished in March 2020.

Mr. Singer shared information from an article that described a 97.5% probability of a 2-foot rise in sea level due to the ice cover on Greenland melting, causing the tectonic plate to tilt so Greenland will rise while the other side, including Delaware sinks. Mr. Singer wonders how much sea level would rise without human activity. NOAA has done studies that show over the last 800,000 years there have been approximately eight cycles of extreme glaciation and melt. The most recent glaciation extreme was less than 20,000 years ago. Considering the size of the human population 20,000 years ago, this suggests a cyclic rising and lowering of water level existed before humanity.

Mr. Swiatek responded that we are responding in a way that most climate scientists around the world recommend. Mr. Singer added that most scientists agree that we are on a warming cycle, the question is whether or not it is because of human activity. Mr. Swiatek referenced the data from the last one hundred years which shows a quick spike with the advent of the industrial revolution. The trends prior to that had been more gradual. Mr. Singer said the NOAA data say otherwise. Mr. Swiatek and Mr. Singer agreed to share and discuss the data. Mr. Swiatek said that the projections presented were pulled directly from the State of Delaware's website from a study done by John Callahan at the University of Delaware. Mr. Swiatek also looked at the Maryland State study and those probabilities agree almost exactly.

Mr. Dunn asked if DNREC is using the same data. Mr. Swiatek replied that they should be. Mr. Singer commented on evacuation as an alternative in flooding of a long duration. Mr. Swiatek responded that it has not been seriously considered here, but it is one of the options. Mr. Singer mentioned that retreat has been seen in Pennsylvania over a few miles along Route 61 but looking at the whole coastline of Delaware is a different scale.

## **6. Public Participation Plan Update**

Ms. Randi Novakoff distributed a draft of WILMAPCO's Public Participation Plan. This document describes what WILMAPCO is, what an MPO is, and the purpose of getting involved. It describes the goals for public outreach that have been established for the agency, our public outreach to the transportation and environmental justice communities and includes an evaluation.

On page three, additional information about the importance of public input will be added as well as additional results from the public participation online survey that was conducted to inform this update.

On page six more information on the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the related outreach will be added.

On page seven, outreach recommendations from the RTP were added as a new goal.

On pages eight and nine, bullet points outline a general outreach philosophy of our agency including a new bullet emphasizing transportation justice outreach. We strive for socially equitable, representative involvement by providing extra support to overcome societal barriers of age, gender, language, disability, income and race in public engagement and employing a multi-pronged approach to public outreach. Then, the main goals of the plan are listed. The first goal is to widely disseminate clear, timely information to those who are affected. A new action under the first goal addresses additional emphasis on transportation justice. We are working to identify and encourage the participation of underserved populations, specifically minority, low-income, disabled, female-headed households with children, and those with limited language proficiency.

On page ten, objective four, item one, videos were added to the list of strategies to be used.

Page eleven describes streamlining the plan to make it more readable and easily understood. A new action was added noting WILMAPCO's Public Outreach Manager will oversee all outreach strategies for all studies. An action to document social media use was added.

On page thirteen, objective three, action one is a new action to formalize that we strive to promote all meetings and events for at least thirty days prior to the event.

On page fourteen, action five states we will strive to provide as much information to people as possible prior to meetings to encourage their participation. Action four specifies that we will use the progress report to evaluate the progress of this plan.

Goal four is a new goal reflecting our emphasis on transportation justice communities. Staff will achieve cultural proficiencies and empower local communities to ensure socially equitable and representative involvement in all of WILMAPCO's plans, programs and policies. Many of these goals and objectives are copied and pasted from the Transportation Justice Report. For example, the staff is planning to participate in public outreach training and work to build relationships with African American, Latino and Asian institutions and media outlets. We will work as an organization to develop practices that integrate cultural groups of all ages. Demographic quotas in our public opinion surveys



will ensure they are representative demographically of a region. Self-identification of gender will be allowed in our surveys.

Ms. Novakoff continued with objective three, we are striving to collaborate with and empower communities, particularly those in the minority, in the development and implementation of plans. We plan to do this by investing in relationship building with local leaders, partnering with trusted community-based organizations, and encouraging citizens to participate in decision making and post-study monitoring committees. Trauma-informed practices recommended in the Transportation Justice Report that were added to the plan include acknowledging past harm, promoting safety at events, removing barriers to participation, making sure community growth opportunities are visible and supporting meaningful engagement to communities we are outreaching to. We will do this by empowering community members to conduct surveys and facilitate meetings and framing our plans in a way that is relevant to the local community.

We strive for equitable participation in public meetings and in our plans and studies. We are doing this by holding meetings in trusted community locations, providing child-care at public meetings, and working with local partners who provide incentives to help relieve economic burdens of participation and encourage attendance at events. We will work with local communities to choose venues and times that are not only accessible by public transportation but most convenient and trusted by the community. We will work with local communities to help promote events, but not rely on them solely to do so. We will pursue equitable public feedback by race and class for all of our studies.

A social media policy that acknowledges social media as a tool that will supplement our outreach was added. This policy specifies that information is for informational purposes only, and we are not responsible for its validity. It specifies that we can remove or block posts that violate this policy in terms of profane language, sexual content, or posts that suggest any illegal activity. Our channels are not open for any political promotion in favor or in opposition of any political candidate.

After a few minor corrections, the plan will be released for a comment period of forty-five days. Members are encouraged to share it with their organizations and then the final document will be brought back to the PAC.

## **7. Other Business**

Kevin Racine was introduced as a new member. He used to live in Hartford County and is very familiar with public transportation in the northeast. He can teach anyone how to take public transportation anywhere from Richmond, VA into New York. Since he moved here on November 1<sup>st</sup>, he has made rounds on all the buses. He has experience dealing with the legislature as a Paige in the Maryland General Assembly and he knows how to deal with congress. Kevin is a part of the Rail Use Network. As a former trucker, he is familiar with the trucking industry.

## **8. Adjournment**

**Attachments: (0)**