

September 29, 2015

# MEETING NOTES – Management Committee

## *Route 9 Corridor Master Plan*

### Attending

Christy Bazemore, New Castle County  
Marco Boyce, New Castle County  
Diane Brown, New Castle County  
Carey Casey, New Castle County  
Susan Eggert, New Castle County  
Mike Hahn, DelDOT  
Herb Inden, OSPC  
Eric Pugliano, DTC  
Tim Snow, DelDOT  
Bill Swiatek, WILMAPCO  
Tigist Zegeye, WILMAPCO

### Review of Draft RFP

Mr. Swiatek reviewed the contents of the meeting packet. Included is memo he sent to Heather Dunigan on September 10, 2015 regarding transportation needs on the Route 9 corridor from the New Castle Prevention Coalition. The Coalition feels that additional reinvestment and redevelopment are needed along Route 9, including transportation improvements. Also included in the packet is a draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for consultant services to complete the corridor plan, along with two maps of the Route 9 corridor, from the City of New Castle to the City of Wilmington. Mr. Swiatek also noted that copies of the Route 9 Walkable Community Workshop Report ([http://www.wilmapco.org/Walkable/SR9\\_WCW.pdf](http://www.wilmapco.org/Walkable/SR9_WCW.pdf)) were available.

Ms. Zegeye provided background on this plan. She said that this was one of the many projects that Eileen Fogarty submitted during her time with New Castle County. The initial request was for \$150,000 in UPWP funding to complete a land use and transportation plan for the Route 9 corridor. WILMAPCO has set aside \$75,000 to begin this work, with the understanding that additional dollars will be added to the project in the January to February 2016 time frame. We will be asking consultants to develop a project cost with their proposals.

Mr. Swiatek went through the draft RFP. He said that, while transportation is key a component, the study would be much broader than a transportation study. It will include strong economic development and land-use components to help guide the redevelopment of the corridor. The study will include not just the highway itself, but surrounding communities (such as Garfield Park and Dunleith) and their collector roads.

Mr. Swiatek noted that the management committee consists of those agencies represented today at the meeting, with the exception of the Delaware Economic Development Office (DEDO). He noted that we will add the City of New Castle and/or City of Wilmington, if it is decided to include portions of those municipalities in the study. An advisory committee will also be formed. This will consist of key area stakeholders.

Mr. Swiatek reviewed the tasks outlined in the RFP. Task one, to be completed by WILMAPCO, will be a map series showing base infrastructure, demographic, and socioeconomic information. Mr. Hahn asked about the series of maps outlined in task one. Mr. Hahn suggested identifying blighted areas with the series, along with water and sewer capacity. It was agreed to look at sewer coverage, as well as vacant properties and poverty with the series. Mr. Boyce said that vacant properties and sewer GIS layers were available from New Castle County.

## Defining the study corridor

Task two involves delineating the study area. Mr. Swiatek noted that New Castle County's original submission only included the non-municipal section of the corridor between Wilmington and New Castle. Logically, however, corridors do not always abide by political boundaries. He proposed considering a 5 mile stretch of the corridor from the Christina River in the north to SR 273 in the South.

Due to funding limitations, however, Ms. Zegeye suggested breaking this 5 mile corridor into two or three segments to begin the work. Mr. Swiatek felt the corridor could be broken into two parts – initially beginning with the Christiana River to I-295, then, when additional funding is found, from I-295 to SR 273.

After some discussion, it was decided to break the corridor into threes – by political boundaries. Because of the activity and interest by New Castle County in the New Castle County portion of the corridor, it was decided to begin the study there. Additionally, Ms. Zegeye stated that plans have been developed for both the New Castle and Wilmington sections of the corridor (1999 in New Castle; 2006 in Wilmington). Attention was most needed in the New Castle County section. It was agreed that additional phases of the work may extend north or south into the municipalities.

## Review of Draft RFP (continued)

Mr. Swiatek said that task three involves a study of the real estate/ economic development potential of the corridor. Ms. Zegeye asked if the County's Economic Development Plan could fit into this. Mr. Boyce and Ms. Eggert noted that the plan could provide overall guidance and identifies Route 9 as an opportunity area, and that the Route 9 Downtown Development District Plan could also be a resource here.

The group discussed the scope of the real estate/economic development task. It was decided to generally keep the scope to the initial study area, with the understanding that where logical and necessary, it should be expanded to include municipal areas – such as considering activity at the Port of Wilmington.

Mr. Swiatek said that task four is community visioning. This would involve working with the advisory committee and community members on defining the vision for the corridor, challenges and opportunities, along with breakouts for specific needs, such as transportation and housing.

Mr. Swiatek said that task five would be the development of a draft corridor vision based on the feedback and technical analyses, along with development alternatives. Development alternatives would include items such as the preferred layout of Route 9, along with the types of land use activity along the corridor. The final task, task six, would select preferred redevelopment/development alternatives, and place them in report form. While we progressed to selecting the preferred alternatives, Mr. Swiatek noted that we will communicate frequently with members of the advisory committee and the community.

Mr. Boyce discussed a pair of proposals under consideration by County Council. The Economic Empowerment Districts would function as an overlay district and would help speed redevelopment by reducing red tape. The Neighborhood Preservation Overlay Districts would allow communities to define what their neighborhoods look like – both within and along the perimeter. It was agreed to mention these proposals in the RFP. Mr. Inden said that the plan should prepare the groundwork for applications for these designations in the corridor. The group agreed.

Mr. Swiatek reviewed the rest of the RFP. This included discussing the anticipated near-term schedule, which seeks a complete report by September 2016. Mr. Swiatek said the RFP would be revised based on the feedback today and put out during the next week.