

February 26, 2020

Ms. Stacey Dahlstrom, AICP
Planning Manager, Comprehensive Planning
New Castle County Department of Land Use
87 Read's Way
New Castle, DE 19720

Ms. Dahlstrom:

The Route 9 Master Plan's Monitoring Committee would like to thank New Castle County's Land Use Department for their good work to incorporate the Route 9 Master Plan into the County's Comprehensive Plan. We also thank you for providing ample time for us to understand and digest the proposed changes.

The Monitoring Committee reviewed these amendments, beginning on November 19, 2019. We discussed our thoughts about them at our meetings on January 21, 2020 and February 18, 2020. Based on those discussions, we offer the following ideas and recommendations:

Page 13-60

- In the Center 3 section, stress not only the addition of new residential but also retail and some office to create a compact, mixed-use/mixed income environment. There is a need for more retail in the area (including personal banking/pharmacy/affordable and healthy grocery) and this is where a retail catalyst could be attracted to spur development.
- In addition, this area also struggles with truck traffic. So, carry forward the Quality of Life (QOL) recommendations from the previous sections here too.

13 – 61

- Center 4 may start feeling increased truck traffic pressures as the Port and port businesses expand south and more trucks begin to roll along the east/west routes. So, carry forward the QOL recommendations from the previous sections here too to stay ahead of the game.

13 – 64

- The interim Memorial Drive Road Diet has been implemented. Change language to reflect the need to pursue the preferred road diet scenario here (with center-turn lane and landscaping elements) that will improve traffic flow through the next two decades.
- The Garasches Lane connection to Terminal Avenue only makes sense if at least part of Eden Park is no longer residential. Otherwise, we may see increased truck traffic along a still residential Terminal Ave. (that already experiences heavy truck traffic) which is counterproductive for QOL. So, stipulate that this concept only proceed when/if all (or potentially just the Terminal Ave. section) of Eden Park is uninhabited, at the community's discretion.

13 – 70

- The interim Memorial Drive Road Diet has been implemented. Change language to reflect the need to pursue the preferred road diet scenario here (with center-turn lane and landscaping elements) that will improve traffic flow through the next two decades.

13 – 77

- Add retail under goal A1. Consider attracting a retail catalyst (see discussion in market analysis).

13 – 30 (should be 13 – 78)

- Strategy 2.2 – work with DNREC and, even better, also the Route 9 Monitoring Committee (we have a Health Subcommittee) and State Division of Public Health – both part of that group.
- Strategy 2.3 – consider leading/supporting a “Mechanisms for Fair Community Relocation” study, as suggested by the Master Plan (page 89, next steps, second bullet <5 years) and in a July 2019 letter from the Monitoring Committee to the County.
- More street sweeping (using appropriate vacuum-style sweepers) to cut down on area dust.
- Under Goal 3 (and really everywhere else) note the need to work with the community during implementation. Here, for example, encourage developers to meet early with the community to ensure consistency with community vision, which may evolve over time.
- Here or somewhere else more prominent: County should continue to support and work alongside Route 9 Monitoring Committee, and any other future vehicles, to ensure community participation and direction as the Plan is implemented.

- Under Goal 3, consider pushing (perhaps even further incentivizing) Opportunity Zone Program funding to help achieve redevelopment goals in the Master Plan. Closely manage the effort as that program has very limited equity guardrails. Consider other appropriate redevelopment programs, such as Economic Empowerment Districts and Downtown Development Districts, as appropriate while keeping with the equitable spirit of the Master Plan.

13 – 79

- The Garasches Lane connection to Terminal Avenue only makes sense if at least part of Eden Park is no longer residential. Otherwise, we may see increased truck traffic along a still residential Terminal Ave. (that already experiences heavy truck traffic) which is counterproductive for QOL. So, stipulate that this concept only proceed when/if all (or potentially just the Terminal Ave. section) of Eden Park is uninhabited, at the community's discretion.
- The TAP is backlogged and has limited capacity for new projects. So, in the second bullet, say, "pursue various funding streams, such as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and CTP, to implement bicycling/walking recommendations."
- Say, "additional" SRTS funding. There are two active and fully funded efforts at McCullough and Eisenberg.
- Other strategy to add: Continue to support the effort to hire/train local labor to construct these projects and to promote workforce development along the corridor, generally.

- Other strategy to add: Support the effort to add landscaping elements, via a maintenance agreement, to the transportation projects associated with the Master Plan.

The mission of the Route 9 Master Plan Monitoring Committee is to help guide and fulfill the recommendations of the Master Plan, which established a shared vision for the transportation and land use redevelopment of the Route 9 corridor. This work will be accomplished through a collaborative dialogue between its membership, which includes implementing agencies, local civic and community leaders, other key stakeholders, and the communities they represent.

Please feel free to reach out to me directly if you have any questions or concerns! I can be reached at: bswiatek@wilmapco.org, or 302-737-6205 x113.

Sincerely,



Bill Swiatek, AICP
Principal Planner, WILMAPCO
Chair, Route 9 Master Plan Monitoring Committee