

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
January 19, 2023

A meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was held on Thursday, January 19, 2023, via video conference/conference call.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Matthew Rogers, New Castle County Department of Land Use, and TAC Chair, brought the TAC meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

2. TAC Members present:

Tricia Arndt, Delaware Office of State Planning
Lanie Clymer, Delaware Department of Transportation
Marvina Cephas, DNREC
David Dahlstrom, Maryland Department of Planning
Michael Fortner, City of Newark
Gwinneth Kaminsky, City of Wilmington Planning
Matthew Rogers, New Castle County Department of Land Use
Catherine Salarano, Maryland Department of the Environment
Derrick Sexton, Maryland State Highway Administration
Catherine Smith, Delaware Transit Corporation

TAC Ex-Officio Members present:

TAC Members absent:

Cecil County Division of Planning and Zoning
City of Wilmington Department of Public Works
Delaware Division of Small Business, Development, and Tourism
Delaware River and Bay Authority
Maryland Department of Transportation
Maryland Transit Administration
Town of Elkton Planning

TAC Ex-Officio Members absent:

Amtrak
Diamond State Port Corporation
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Federal Transit Administration

Guests and Invitees:

Timothy DeSchepper, Town of Middletown
Bradley Damtoft, DelDOT
Breanna Kovach, DelDOT
Kevin Racine, Citizen
Matt Vincent, DelDOT

Staff:

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner

Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner
Dave Gula, Principal Planner
Randi Novakoff, Outreach Manager
Jacob Thompson, Senior Planner
Dawn Voss, Administrative Assistant
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Minutes prepared by: Dawn Voss.

3. MINUTES

Approval of the December 15, 2022, TAC Minutes.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Michael Fortner and seconded by Mr. David Dahlstrom TAC approved the December 15, 2022, TAC minutes.

Motion passed.

(01-19-23-01)

4. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Air Quality Subcommittee

Mr. Bill Swiatek said the Air Quality Subcommittee met on January 5th. The group received an update on DNREC's progress updating the Ozone and Fine Particulate Matter State Implementation Plans (SIP). A new mobile vehicle emissions budget, which is what transportation conformity is tested against, is under development for ozone, but not for PM2.5. DNREC will share their draft proposed budget when it becomes available. MDE has also begun work on a revised Ozone SIP in Cecil County. The AQS hopes to receive an update regarding that proposed mobile vehicle emissions budget in the future.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None

ACTION ITEMS

6. To recommend amendment of the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Increase total construction estimate of the I-95 and SR 896 interchange project from \$222 million to \$279.5 million.

Ms. Heather Dunigan said Ms. Lanie Clymer from DeIDOT Finance is here to provide an overview, because this is a very large amendment. Actually, there are two amendments. One is for the I-95/SR 896 interchange, and one is for US 40/SR 896 improvements.

Ms. Lanie Clymer, Director of Finance for DeIDOT, said the recommendation to amend the FY 2023 to 2026 TIP includes two components. The first is to increase funding for the I-95 and SR 896 interchange Improvement project. This particular project was advertised in October of last year. DeIDOT accepted bids on January 10th. They are requesting that the total construction estimate for this project increase from \$222 million to \$279.5 million. This will allow the team to move forward with a recommendation to award this project to the apparent low bidder. For the 2023 to 2026 TIP, in order to remain fiscally constrained as required by code, the second component of this request is to modify the construction schedule for the US 40 and SR 896 improvements project. The first year of construction for this project will shift from fiscal year

2024 to 2027, eliminating the need for construction funding in the 2023 to 2026 TIP. Several members from DelDOT's North Project Development Team, Matt Vincent, Brianna Kovach, and Brad Damtoft are present and available to answer any project-specific questions that the committee may have.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Michael Fortner and seconded by Ms. Tricia Arndt the TAC recommends the amendment of the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Motion passed.

(01-19-23-02)

7. To recommend amendment of the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). – Modify the construction schedule of the US 40/SR 895 improvement project from FY 2024 to FY 2027.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Michael Fortner and seconded by Ms. Catherine Smith the TAC recommends the amendment of the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Motion passed.

(01-19-23-03)

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

8. Demographics 2022 Projection Series Update

Mr. Dan Blevins said most of the 2020 census data has been released. Nationally the population is growing but slowing. The 2010 to 2020 decade was the slowest since the Great Depression. The population continues to gray. Deaths have caught up to births, which was impacted by Covid. For instance, in 2019 (pre-Covid) four states had reached the end of a natural increase, where deaths had exceeded births. Between 2021 and 2022, almost half of the states had more deaths than births. Covid had a lot to do with that, but it underscores how close many states are to the end of natural increase, which means that immigration is a larger part of growth. The problem with that going forward is that it will be uneven. Different policies and economic conditions will cause that number to vary, where births and deaths are more easily trackable and predictable.

With the release of the 2020 census, we can get an idea where things have grown up to this point. That will help when we look at the projections for Delaware from the Population Consortium, which were adopted in early December. The Maryland Department of Planning also just released new information for Cecil County. New Castle and Sussex Counties saw a lot of growth in the 1990s. The Smyrna area in Kent County saw a lot of growth in the 2000s. In the 1990s Delaware experienced the fastest growth in a long time, going back to 1980. Through the 2000s and 2010s, that growth declined. In 1980, New Castle County had two-thirds of the population. That is now trending downward to fifty-eight percent. The percentage in Sussex increased by about the same amount that New Castle County decreased. There are many things happening internally in households that are shaping projections for the future. Looking back on how things are shaping up within households provides insights such as how old the population is getting, the number of single-person households, the number of school-aged children, and the workforce. This information dictates much of our work as planners for the area because it indicates who our customers are that are trying to move around the region.

Since 2000, Delaware's population has increased by 200,000. All three counties saw growth, but Sussex has grown the most in terms of numbers and percentage. MOT has shown more than half of the growth in New Castle County since 2000, but eighty-eight percent of the population currently lives north of the canal. Most of the Sussex County growth has happened in and around the resort areas. Everywhere has seen significant growth in the population of people over the age of sixty-five. This is partially due to residents aging, but also partially due to migration. Delaware has become the place to retire. People from New Jersey and the D.C. Area like to come to Delaware beaches, so they have had a migration trend. Sussex County went from one in five to almost one in three people over the age of sixty-five. It is not just the resort areas that are seeing significant changes. The MOT area has seen almost as much growth in sixty-five and over population as the Lewes area. Most of the counties in the area have seen a doubling of those who are eighty-five and over, which is something that transportation planners need to be concerned about. There are those who age in place. Newer technologies like food services help facilitate that. Some of this number is dictated by where assisted living facilities are built. The Hockessin and Pike Creek area have a fair number of facilities and others are being built. Looking at the population under the age of eighteen, Cecil and New Castle Counties have a net negative number, meaning there are fewer now than in 2000. North of the canal, there was a net loss of 9,000 people under the age of eighteen living in those areas. MOT has doubled in that time period along with the area around Smyrna, although most of that growth happened between 2000 and 2010 during the mid-2000s building boom.

Many houses are being built, but the dynamics and the number of people living in the houses have changed. New Castle County has seen double the number of households with a single person living in them. This is seen throughout the county, but particularly between Brandywine, Wilmington, and the New Castle area, which have fifty-five percent of that growth. The number of those sixty-five and over who are living alone has risen, and they are more spread out into MOT, the Newark area, and Glasgow, but there is a concentration in Brandywine, Wilmington, and the New Castle area. This gets into mobility impacts. The number of zero-car households for each county declined, but the number of houses with three or more vehicles increased. The population is getting older and living alone but also becoming more auto dependent. Family households are two or more people that are related by birth, marriage, or adoption living in a house. Non-family households consist of one person living alone or two or more people who are not related. In Newark, this would not be the university residence halls, but people who rent houses on or off campus are considered non-family households. Two out of three net new households in New Castle County are non-family. The average family household has three or more members, and non-family households have around one and a half members. So, even with houses being built, the dynamic of how many people live in each house has begun to change within the area.

Regarding growth, the data indicates that statewide in Delaware natural increase will likely end by 2034. Post-Covid there will be some differences in the birth rate, but Delaware is getting close to the end of natural increase being a factor in growth. It is actually going to be part of the net decrease. Migration will need to continue to carry any population growth in the state. Sussex already crossed that line in 2012 or 2013. The Consortium determined Delaware's population grew to one million people. The growth in New Castle County is at 590,000 in 2030, goes to 594,000 in 2040, and then starts declining 2024 to 2050. This is due to everything we just discussed about age and the under eighteen population. The net growth within New Castle County went from 36,000 in the 2000s to 32,000 in the 2010s, to 19,000 in the 2020s, to 3,000 in the 2030s, to negative 8,000 in the 2040s. Looking at age structure, zero to four years old all the way to eighty-five and over, shows New Castle County going from 11,000 to 26,000

people who are over eighty-five years old. This should cause decision makers to start thinking about workforce, assisted living demand, and school district sizes. Fifteen percent of people over the age of eighty-five, at some point in a calendar year, would spend some time in either a rehab or assisted living facility, or go in there permanently. We are not alone, especially on the eastern seaboard, with this age make-up that we will be living with for quite some time.

9. Charlestown Walkable Community Workshop

Mr. Jake Thompson said walkable community workshops are an opportunity for citizens to become planners as they are experts in their own community. These workshops consist of three parts. They begin with a presentation going over topics such as sidewalk design, crosswalks, traffic calming, and other tools to improve walkability. That gets ideas going for the walking audit, where the participants survey the area and try to identify issues and opportunities to improve walking. Then, the group returns to the meeting location for a mapping exercise where they share their ideas for improving walkability. Those ideas are documented in the report. Charlestown is located between Perryville and North East, along the Route 40 corridor and Northeast Corridor Railroad in Cecil County. It is home to about one thousand and five hundred people. It is perhaps best known for its many waterfront amenities, such as its public boat ramp, marina, pier, waterfront parks, beaches, and a campground. The Charlestown Walkable Community Workshop took place on Wednesday, October 12th, at the Charlestown Fire Company. There were about fourteen people in attendance in addition to staff.

For the walking audit the group first looked at the intersection of Market and Bladen Streets in the center of town. Then they walked a loop on Market Street, Cecil Street, Baltimore Street, along the waterfront and across the pedestrian bridge in Foot Log Park. The group came up with many walkability ideas, which include, among many other ideas, intersection improvements, sidewalk additions and widening, pedestrian scale lighting, and trail connections. During the walk the group noted a couple of intersections that have a wide, sweeping turning radius that are just designed to move traffic quickly. It is not safe for pedestrians, especially if they need to cross. The group recommended redesigning both of these intersections to meet at a right angle. At Market and Cecil Streets, in addition to the redesign, the group recommended adding stop signs in both directions, removing the guardrail, and adding a direct connection to the Charlestown Athletic Complex. At Cecil and Baltimore, in addition to the redesign, the group recommended adding crosswalks with rectangular rapid flashing beacons, which would be especially helpful for children and parents walking to Charlestown Elementary School. At Market and Bladen Streets, this intersection also has a sweep, which can be confusing for drivers and pedestrians, especially if they need to cross to get to the town hall, the post office, and the park. The group recommended redesigning this intersection at a right angle with a mini roundabout that would include a center island which would be a great opportunity for beautification or placemaking such as a welcome to Charlestown sign. Also at this intersection, the group noted some sign clutter and recommended consolidating these signs onto one pole with wayfinding elements. The group also recommended widening several sidewalks around town, making sure they are at least six feet wide and filling in any sidewalk gaps, particularly on Market, Bladen, Cecil, and Baltimore Streets, and along Old Philadelphia Road, as well as adding pedestrian-scale lighting. Most streets in Charlestown's core lack sidewalks. They are, for the most part, narrow which leads to low traffic speeds and volumes, and they are generally comfortable and safe to walk on alongside traffic. However, sidewalks and pedestrian scale lighting were desired on many of these downtown streets. If that is not feasible or is cost prohibitive, advisory shoulders could be a good alternative solution. The group also recommended a few trail connections which roughly follow the existing street grid on public right-of-way. Those would include a trail connecting Charlestown Elementary School to the athletic complex. That could

connect to a trail along Peddler's Run and also a trail along the waterfront and Foot Log Park. When walking through the park, the line between private and public land was unclear. The group was walking directly behind people's backyards. The trail here would better clarify that you are walking on public land, and it would direct people towards the pedestrian bridge. Many other comments were shared, including ensuring that all curb ramps are ADA compliant; installing bike racks in front of the town hall, public boat ramp, and Avalon Park; widening the paths in the athletic complex to accommodate golf carts with consideration of the safety of people walking and biking on these paths; creating a new boat ramp or dock in Avalon Park, which will be closer to the public parking lot and Louisa Lane. Now, that does not sound like a walkability improvement until you consider that the current boat ramp at the end of Market Street is about four blocks away from the parking lot, so there is a lot of boat traffic moving between those two locations. Avalon Park would be right next to that parking lot, so it could potentially reduce boat traffic from Water Street and make it a little more comfortable to walk there. They also noted a tree that blocks the visibility of the crosswalk at Cecil and Baltimore that could be especially problematic for smaller children walking to school. The intersection design described earlier may require removing the tree or it could be preserved in a new design with improved site lines. The next step section in the report gets into how to bring these ideas into reality and provides information on federal and state funding programs. This report has been reviewed by the Town of Charlestown and has been finalized. It is now on our website, www.wilmapco.org/walkable.

Mr. David Dahlstrom asked if the town currently has golf carts going around town using the streets. Mr. Thompson said according to the town, they have many privately-owned golf carts that are a very popular way to get around town at just the right scale that walking might be too far for some destinations, but the car is not really necessary. So, there was a lot of talk about making sure the paths are wide enough for golf carts. He has some concerns that they may be a little too fast if people are walking and biking on those same paths, so it did include making sure that is a consideration. Mr. Dahlstrom said he has had other communities like Rock Hall talk about using golf carts, but he believes in Maryland, a jurisdiction has to petition MDOT to use golf carts on the state roads, so that might be something to look at. He believes there are a couple of communities in Maryland that have done that. Mr. Thompson said that is good to know.

10. New Castle County Safe Streets for All

Ms. Heather Dunigan said TAC has seen Mr. Scott Flanagan's presentation of Cecil County's Strategic Highway Safety Plan, which is a Vision-Zero Plan or a Safe Streets for All Plan. There is no equivalent in New Castle County yet, but we are coming off a terrible year, both nationwide and locally for traffic fatalities. Additionally, there is some grant money available, so it is a good time to focus on this in New Castle County. Throughout the world, and throughout the country, road users are being lost or injured at unprecedented rates, particularly pedestrians and older adults. In 2022, Delaware tied with its record of fatalities set in 1988. This is unbelievable, because cars in 1988 did not have airbags, electronic stability control, blind spot detection, nor many of the new safety features that are standard in cars now. Cars are becoming safer, but people are not. There are more drivers on the road, but that does not account for this large trending fatality rate. As transportation planners and engineers, we are accustomed to analyzing data points the map, but it is important to remember that each of these people who are killed or injured have tremendous impact on their families and society in general. Every fatal crash that we can make an injury crash or serious injury crash the becomes a minor injury crash, impacts many lives. Of course, preventing a crash is the best-case scenario.

Safe Streets for All or Vision-Zero is a paradigm shift in how we do our planning. It is a Safe Systems Approach where we change the assumption to one where death and serious injury are unacceptable. We accept the fact that we as humans are fallible. We drive too fast, wear dark clothes at night, and we are also vulnerable. We have to be responsible as users of the roadway system, but we need to have redundancy in place, so that when people make mistakes there are many factors in place that will keep us safe, including better designs of the road, roads designed for slower speeds that are appropriate for the surrounding land use, and good emergency response. Then, we need to be responsible individuals. A strong Vision-Zero or Safe Streets for All plan takes all levels to be involved including transportation planners and political leadership. We need an inter-disciplinary team involving school transportation, public transit, the office of public safety, police, and emergency response. Equity also must be considered in our planning. There are greater rates of certain crashes in environmental justice areas. There needs to be a fair approach to the enforcement of laws. We need to collaborate to achieve our goals and need data-driven responses. We know certain things work from national and local experience, so these should be prioritized. We need greater community engagement and transparency about the information involved in making decisions to achieve our goals.

It is a paradigm shift, so commitment from the highest level is needed to set those goals of Vision-Zero. A planning committee for Safe Streets for All needs to be set up with school transportation officials, police departments, municipalities, the County, and DeIDOT. The University of Delaware is assisting with some of the crash analysis and data analysis. Ultimately, the completion and implementation of the plan will require collaboration, not just with government agencies, but with community groups, such as AAA, AARP, and private stakeholders. Prioritizing how transportation dollars are spent should emphasize safe streets with speeds that are appropriate for the surrounding land uses and providing complete streets with options for people so they do not have to drive everywhere. There is a tendency to be overly reliant on enforcement and education as preventive measures. We know from experience these are not very effective. They will still be employed, but electronic speed control or red-light cameras can be used instead of diverting our police from actual crimes.

The Federal Infrastructure law has \$1 billion per year for the next four years for Vision-Zero planning. The first round of grant submissions deadline has passed. Cecil County submitted. State DOTs are not eligible recipients of this, which is unfortunate for Delaware, because DeIDOT would be the most logical recipient as the agency that maintains our roads. Groups may work together as eligible recipients. This includes MPOs and local governments who could jointly apply for funding. Two types of grants are available. One is for action plan grants. We opted not to do this one, because we can do the action plan ourselves without grant funding. The second type is for implementation. Also under the planning grant category, there is supplemental planning, but for this you need to have a Safe Streets Action Plan in place, which is what we are working on now. The Federal Department of Transportation requires the comprehensive safety action plan have a goal of Vision-Zero aiming to reduce and eventually eliminate fatalities and serious injuries. That needs to have a timeline to achieve that goal. They require analysis of the crash causes and locations, a public outreach process, data-driven solutions to the crashes, and a way to measure performance results of the plan.

A draft timeline of the planning process was created. The kickoff meeting for the committee was held earlier this month. The crash analysis and equity analysis will be done through the spring. The public engagement process will begin in February, including an online survey and interactive mapping, as well as in-person events or pop-up events. Supplemental planning projects and implementation projects will be identified and used to set performance measures. The safety analysis needs to be broader than previously done. DeIDOT has already worked on

identifying places where serious injuries occurred. Places where there are clusters of crashes are being identified to look at the contributing factors such as time of day, weather, pedestrian factors, and if certain demographics are more impacted in certain locations. The goal is to determine targeted locations where crashes and the contributing factors in these locations can be addressed. Clear mapping is an important information tool for policymakers to understand the nature of the problem. Beyond mapping, visuals help explain the nature of the problem, which will be an important part of outreach, because there are usually multiple things going wrong that contribute to a crash. We started looking at equity analysis as part of our Transportation Justice Report. Looking at crashes by type among different groups, shows a much higher concentrations of pedestrian crashes and bicycle crashes within Black concentrations of population within the E.J. area. This needs to be addressed in the plan. A map of these crashes shows concentrations in the City of Wilmington, along Routes 13 and 9, and along Route 40. For public outreach, getting people to attend a meeting about traffic safety may be a challenge. TAC members are asked to share ideas for groups or events we can contact.

The next step for the plan will look at policy and process changes that are needed and identify grant ideas for supplemental planning and implementation. These recommendations will need to be prioritized for the committee. Performance measures will be part of the analysis. Making this easy for the public and decision-makers to understand and use will be important in order to implement this. There are many national resources to draw from. Vision-Zero has been a focus area of the USDOT, so they released many reports recently that we will look at. There are also many local resources including DeIDOT reports, comp plans, and area plans that WILMAPCO has worked on with our partners. TAC members are asked to let us know of any other plans or initiatives that can help. It is likely that supplemental planning actions may come out of the initial grant, including quick-build projects, pilot studies, additional equity analysis, or other trial treatments. There is a lot of national research about effective solutions for different types of crashes. We are currently doing the crash analysis which is going to be the foundation of the plan. Ms. Dunigan has been studying best practices nationwide. The announcement of the first round of grants will come out soon, so she will look to see who was awarded the grants and what they applied for to help shape our application.

Mr. David Dahlstrom asked if they have found speed signs with a video display that states your speed to be effective. He was in a town over the Christmas holidays, and when you drove by it would flash either naughty or nice. Sometimes, if the speed limit is twenty-five miles an hour, it says your speed is twenty-eight or twenty-three, or something like that. Ms. Dunigan said they are usually effective when you first put them up. Many places will put them up for a period of time, and just keep them there. They also collect data, so when you first put them up, you can put them up dark, not turned on, and collect before speed data. The problem with any sort of sign is people start to ignore them after a while, so they are effective at first, and then that fades over time. Mr. Dahlstrom said these are permanent, attached to the to the speed sign. Ms. Dunigan said her guess is the residents probably start ignoring it after a while. If it is in a place where you get a lot of visitors, it probably retains a little bit more effectiveness. Mr. Dahlstrom said you only need one person to do the speed limit to keep everyone behind them going the speed limit. Ms. Dunigan agreed and said one nice thing is those signs are cheap. In terms of cost effectiveness, it is something that we would see in our toolbox, and she always considers that a part of a traffic calming strategy, but if the road is designed for people to go fast, people are going to go fast.

INFORMATION ITEMS

11. Staff Report

Ms. Heather Dunigan reported the following updates:

- The Council met on January 17th. They voted to amend the TIP to include funding for the purchase of four hydrogen buses and electric charging infrastructure for New Castle County. Council released both the Air Quality Conformity and the draft RTP for public comment from January 18th through March 6th. That is posted on the WILMAPCO website. The Council voted to adopt the transit safety performance measures that were set by Cecil County Transit and DART. They also endorsed the I-95 cap feasibility study, which can be found on the WILMAPCO website.
- WILMAPCO will be having an Our Town event for our RTP on February 8th from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Embassy Suites Hotel down the street from the office. The feature presentation will be delivered by Todd Litman with the Victoria Transportation Policy Institute, who is a fantastic speaker. He does a lot with the economic analysis of transportation, equity issues, and emerging transportation trends with new technologies. There will also be information about our long-range plan, some exhibits, and other shorter presentations. The TAC is encouraged to attend and spread the word to others.
- The Safe Streets for All kickoff meeting was January 10th.
- Staff participated in a safety rodeo at Downes Elementary School on January 17th.
- Staff will participate in the DelDOT Winter Workshop on February 13th.
- Staff will provide bike and pedestrian safety information at Downes Elementary School Family Fun Night on February 23rd.

OTHER BUSINESS:

ADJOURNMENT:

ACTION: On motion by Mr. David Dahlstrom and seconded by Ms. Gwinneth Kaminsky the TAC adjourned at 10:59 a.m.

Motion passed.

(01-19-23-04)

The TAC adjourned at 10:59 a.m.

Attachments (0)