

**JOINT TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND  
AIR QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING  
October 15, 2020**

A joint meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Air Quality Subcommittee (AQS) was held on Thursday, October 15, 2020, via video conference/conference call.

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Mike Fortner, City of Newark, brought the TAC meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

**2. TAC Members present:**

Tricia Arndt, Delaware Office of State Planning  
Ian Beam, Maryland Department of Transportation  
Cooper Bowers, Delaware Department of Transportation  
Virginia Burke, Maryland Department of Transportation  
Nick Cannistraci, Town of Elkton  
David Dahlstrom, Maryland Department of Planning  
Stacey Dahlstrom, New Castle County Department of Land Use  
Michael Fortner, City of Newark  
Gwineth Kaminsky, City of Wilmington Planning  
Brian Mitchell, City of Wilmington Department of Public Works  
Lisa Nissley for Alexandra Brun, Maryland Department of the Environment  
Steve O'Connor, Cecil County Land Use  
Derrick Sexton, Maryland State Highway Administration  
Jolyon Shelton, DNREC  
Catherine Smith, DTC

**TAC Ex-Officio Members present:**

Lindsay Donnellon, U.S. Federal Highway Administration

**TAC Members absent:**

Delaware Division of Small Business, Development, and Tourism  
Delaware River and Bay Authority  
Maryland Department of the Environment  
Maryland Transit Administration

**TAC Ex-Officio Members absent:**

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

**Air Quality Subcommittee Members present:**

Cooper Bowers, Delaware Department of Transportation  
Virginia Burke, MDOT  
Marvina Cephas, DNREC  
Steve O'Connor, Cecil County Land Use  
Jolyon Shelton, DNREC  
Catherine Smith, DTC

**Guests and Invitees:**

Carl Chamberlain, Maryland Transportation Authority  
Jade Clayton, Maryland Transit Administration  
Jane Dilley, League of Women Voters  
Dee Durham, New Castle County Council  
Jaime McKay, Maryland Transit Administration  
Joshua Thomas, DelDOT

**Staff:**

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner  
Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner  
Sharen Elcock, Executive Assistant  
Dave Gula, Principal Planner  
Randi Novakoff, Outreach Manager  
Bill Swiatek, Principal Planner  
Jacob Thompson, Transportation Planner  
Dawn Voss, Administrative Assistant  
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Minutes prepared by: Dawn Voss

**3. MINUTES**

The September 17, 2020 TAC Minutes were approved.

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. Steve O’Connor and seconded by Mr. Jolyon Shelton the TAC approved the September 17, 2020 TAC minutes.

Motion passed.

**(10-15-20 - 01)**

**4. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

**a. Air Quality Subcommittee**

Mr. Bill Swiatek said the Air Quality Subcommittee meeting on October 1<sup>st</sup> was a joint session with Delaware’s Transportation Conformity Interagency Consultation Working Group. The group reviewed an amendment to Cecil County’s FY 2020 – FY 2023 TIP, the I-95/Belvidere Road Interchange, and found it did not trigger a revised conformity determination. The AQS also reviewed the last version of CMAQ Mid-Period Performance Report and had no changes. This will be discussed later on the agenda. Finally, the group reviewed a Draft Air Quality Conformity Analysis for the Dover/Kent County MPO FY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program and 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. A few edits and suggestions were made.

**b. Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group**

Ms. Heather Dunigan said the Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group met on October 6<sup>th</sup>. The group discussed the bicycle and pedestrian planning video that WILMAPCO is creating with King Creative and provided feedback to the video development team. There was a presentation by Mr. Ryan Hollingshead who was accepted into the America Walks’ Walking College Fellowship Program, which is a year-long training program for professional and citizen advocates who are interested in promoting better walking within their communities. He is working on a pedestrian justice database to target equity in how crashes are reported in the

media as well as looking into increasing the equity of reducing crashes within low-income and minority communities. Mr. Dave Gula presented about the Newport Transportation Plan. Ms. Dunigan presented draft recommendations for the Governor Printz Corridor Study.

## **5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

None.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **6. To recommend amending the WILMAPCO FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Cecil County Element**

Ms. Dunigan said MDOT requested the WILMAPCO TIP be amended to make changes to the Belvidere Road/I-95 Interchange Project. It is in the TIP as a study, but it is now completing the NEPA process, so it is being renamed "I-95 at Belvidere Road Interchange". The description was updated to reflect the move from a study to the implementation phase. The funding was adjusted based on the current engineering estimates for the project. Project Manager, Mr. Carl Chamberlain, was available to answer questions.

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. Steve O'Connor and seconded by Ms. Cathy Smith the TAC recommended amendment of the WILMAPCO FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Cecil County Element.

Motion passed.

**(10-15-20 - 02)**

### **7. To recommend amending the WILMAPCO FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Cecil County Element**

Ms. Dunigan said MDOT received a grant for the Enhanced Mobility Pilot Program Project. This amendment will add money to reflect the grant that was awarded.

**ACTION:** On motion by Ms. Tricia Arndt and seconded by Mr. Ian Beam the TAC recommended amendment of the WILMAPCO FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Cecil County Element.

Motion passed.

**(10-15-20 - 03)**

### **8. To recommend approving the WILMAPCO CMAQ Mid-Period Performance Report**

Mr. Bill Swiatek said this action item is to approve our MPO Mid-Period Performance Progress Report for CMAQ, which is part of the requirements for our federal performance measurements. In this document the two-year emission reductions in Cecil County related to CMAQ were delayed. There was some debate between FHWA and MDOT regarding what the two-year reductions should be. The result may be that one figure, on page seven of the document, would be adjusted to show reductions of 0.03 kg of VOC per day and 0.11 for NOx. Cecil County will have come very close to meeting the two-year target for VOCs and will have exceeded the two-year target for NOx. We propose to confirm that this change is made next week, then take this document to Council for an email vote. Then it would be submitted to the DOTs ahead of a November 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline.

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. David Dahlstrom and seconded by Ms. Tricia Arndt the TAC recommended approval of the WILMAPCO CMAQ Mid-Period Performance Report.

Motion passed.

(10-15-20 – 04)

### **9. To recommend endorsement of the Concord Pike Master Plan**

Mr. Dave Gula said the goals and objectives are to create an attractive, cohesive, and balanced Master Plan, integrate land use and transportation, focus on multi-modal improvements, and make the corridor more pedestrian and bike friendly. Many business entrances are spaced closely together to create an access management challenge. Transportation Demand Management and Transportation Improvement District strategies are being considered. Other goals and objectives include wayfinding and branding; preserving the neighborhoods; integrating the streetscape; and developing an implementation strategy.

Public outreach began with a market study and stakeholder interviews in 2017. The project formally began on July 25, 2018 with an information session attended by two hundred people. A community visioning workshop was held on November 14, 2018, concurrently with stakeholder focus groups on November 14, 15, and 16. A Wiki Map was available for Public Engagement from November to January. The next public workshop was March 20, 2019. The third public workshop was on December 5<sup>th</sup>. The 4<sup>th</sup> workshop was hosted virtually on April 1<sup>st</sup>. The final virtual workshop was held October 5, 2020.

The roadway is six to eight lanes with few places for pedestrians to safely cross. There is heavy congestion a few times during the day and very high speeds at other times when traffic is light. Amenities are not well connected. An effort will be made to connect trails and encourage all modes of transportation, but cars now dominate. The recommendations focus on walking and biking along Concord Pike and between the neighborhoods. East/west connections are key, and six intersections were identified that could be improved for pedestrian crossing. Other recommendations are shared-use paths along the side streets and within neighborhoods; connections to the existing park trail system; and exploring the feasibility of an overpass or underpass. DeIDOT 's Level of Traffic Stress analysis will be valuable to prioritize bike and pedestrian improvements. The report includes a toolkit for improving intersections for pedestrians with suggestions such as high visibility crosswalks, median refuge islands, signal phasing and timing strategies, tighter turning radii at intersections, bus stop access in intersection improvements, and pedestrian scale lighting.

In working with DART, key principles identified include improving bus stops so buses do not have to leave Route 202 to travel through parking areas; creating better east/west connections; perhaps future connections with SEPTA; and potential signal improvements for buses. Short-term improvements include increasing service frequency from hourly to thirty-minutes, extend daily service hours later and on weekends on bus Route 2 for retail and restaurant workers; and eliminate unproductive trips on bus Route 35. Longer-term concepts may include extending bus service to connect with SEPTA; using vanpool service, first mile/last mile improvements to improve ridership; improve service around "restaurant row"; and transit signal prioritization.

To balance vehicular traffic with safe and easy access to other modes of transportation, recommendations include a network of complete streets; using physical, design, and visual elements to make Concord Pike safer and more livable. Based on traffic analysis and public comments, capacity increases are unnecessary. There are some localized intersection improvements that will continue to be studied. As land use changes, a more connected street

network could be developed. There were many comments about creating a multiway at different areas along the corridor. This would delineate local and through traffic, make it easier to cross, help with access management, be safer for pedestrians, and create social settings, but they need to be coordinated with land redevelopment. There are no current recommendations for this, but it may be considered in the future. Also recommended is a regular traffic signal coordination plan to optimize how traffic flows through the corridor while controlling the speed and reducing bottlenecks. There are physical intersection improvements needed to balance traffic flow with pedestrian safety.

Guiding principles are established in the land use section of the report. Early on, the community objected to concepts including redevelopment focus areas, so those concepts were moved to the appendices for reference if redevelopment projects occur. The guiding principles used to establish the criteria to influence future redevelopment include identifiable centers (focus areas); using gateway treatments to identify these areas; asking for responsible redevelopment using a mix of uses; and adding recreational amenities. Gateway treatments can be organized to address different modes. Treatments can include plantings, signage, wayfinding, amenities, services, art, plazas, and lighting. Those focus areas are most likely to be redeveloped, so responsible redevelopment would be encouraged, including screening parking from the primary streets and public spaces, and making the entranceways easy to find along primary streets. Mixed use is also preferred as it helps make a more walkable environment and may help with congestion. Approximately twenty-two thousand people commute into the area every day for work. If some of those people transferred to live in the area, that could reduce commuter traffic. Adding new pathways and connecting to existing recreational amenities for walking and biking would help with land use as well. The preliminary land use recommendations would need land use policy that encourages context sensitive commercial redevelopment in the identified redevelopment areas (TRA) which means the revision of Guiding Principles for Development within the UDC to encourage redevelopment consistent with 202 Master Plan principles. These recommendations also encourage neighborhood preservation through land use policy that affirms the preservation of residential neighborhoods adjacent to the corridor. If neighborhoods want to integrate commercial development into their community, they can pursue a Neighborhood Preservation Overlay District (NPOD), which provides opportunity to guide such development. The final land use recommendation is to identify historic properties. There are historically significant properties that should be considered for advanced planning and protection through the Historic Overlay Zoning District (H-Overlay).

Much of the area needs more study before specific recommendations are made. A Corridor Monitoring Committee is recommended to monitor the corridor and keep track of performance measurements. This committee will help execute the master plan through an ongoing process of meetings that monitor key metrics and trends like land use, traffic and congestion, safety, transit, project implementation status, effectiveness of completed projects, and other regional factors that affect the corridor. The committee can facilitate communication between the community, DeIDOT, the County, and WILMAPCO, which will keep things moving and build trust. The monitoring will help the community understand the consequences of transportation improvements and help with discussion about mid-course corrections. A monitoring committee encourages everyone to work on problems together and facilitates ongoing interagency coordination.

The TAC is being asked for endorsement as it is a Council Action Item for November 12<sup>th</sup>. Once it is passed, the projects will go into the WILMAPCO RTP, DeIDOT's Capital Transportation Program, or the New Castle County Comp Plan. The public can still comment on website until November 5<sup>th</sup> or email Mr. Gula directly at [dgula@wilmmapco.org](mailto:dgula@wilmmapco.org).

County Councilperson Dee Durham said she has been working with DeIDOT and NCC Land Use. This has been a long time in the works, and it is exciting to finally get to this point, so thank you to everyone. She is looking forward to next step, to have it approved by Council in November, and to move forward with the formation of a monitoring committee.

Ms. Stacy Dahlstrom made a motion to endorse the Plan with one provision. Since the public comment period is still open, New Castle County needs to be notified of any updates per comments. She expressed gratitude for the partnership on this project.

Ms. Gwinn Kaminsky asked if everyone can be notified if there are any changes. Mr. Gula replied that he does not foresee any changes as the comments being received now have been for the purpose of clarification. If there are any major changes they would need to be discussed at Council and at then brought back to the TAC. Most of the comments from the community have been very supportive.

**ACTION:** On motion by Ms. Stacy Dahlstrom and seconded by Mr. Steve O'Connor the TAC recommended endorsement of the WILMAPCO Concord Pike Master Plan with stated provision.

Motion passed.

**(10-15-20 - 05**

## **PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

### **10. Maryland Statewide Transit Plan**

Ms. Jade Clayton, MTA, said the project is in the outreach phase. The proposed approach is to address the 50-year vision of transit statewide. A 25-year Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan was just completed. The plan for the first twenty-five years, out to 2045 will be modeled with specific strategies, while the last twenty-five years will be more visionary. The vision should be ambitious but achievable. The plan is to connect transit operated locally and regionally across the state. The team began by internally looking at previous plans including state transit plans. In June there were internal visioning sessions with MDOT and MTA. Peer state plans and existing regional and local plans across the state were reviewed. Demographic, jobs, and housing data was collected to see where transit propensity might exist. Draft vision and goals were presented at all five public roundtables and reflected in the public survey draft. There will be a regional roundtable in November or December to share feedback from the surveys and to show a more specific gap analysis. Then they will draft the plan, release it to the public later next year, get feedback, and then finalize the plan.

Fifty years ago, MTA was just taking over the Baltimore Transit Company. Amtrak was just being established and MDOT just started subsidizing commuter rail. Considering the expansion and changes in transit over fifty years, one can imagine how much can change in the next fifty years. There is a connection between transit and land use. Development has spread to more suburban areas. There is the question of whether or not that trend will continue.

The draft vision and goals reflect much of what is found in other statewide plans such as the Maryland Transportation Plan and the vision at MTA. The goals relate to a transit system that is safe, inclusive, reliable, environmentally sustainable, and support economic opportunity. Key challenges heard at the roundtables include connections between rural and urban systems; reliability and frequency; walkability; improving options in rural areas; serving aging and vulnerable populations, the state of good repair; and facilitating transfers. Future trends include

automated vehicles; vehicle technology to limit emissions; rapid transit, transit-oriented development; increased walkability and cycling; transit schedules that help people make connections; contactless fares; and on-demand transit options like Uber.

Cecil County was grouped with Eastern Shore counties and the Baltimore region to show destinations and the public feedback confirmed transit connecting to eastern Maryland was missing. The project team would like to hear from members of the TAC. They have heard the eastern region has some transit challenges connecting to central Maryland; D.C. to the Eastern Shore and into Delaware; closing the gap between Perryville and Newark; service to medical care; and connectivity between rural areas and growth centers.

Ms. Clayton would like a dialog about what the priority in this plan should be for the eastern region concerning the areas that need more transit; infrastructure to support transit; policy and technology upgrades; and the outcomes that transit should achieve. There will be opportunities for further outreach including additional Regional Roundtables and virtual presentations in fall of 2020 and spring of 2021. MTA is seeking community and business groups to contact directly if anyone has any suggestions. The survey is open until October 25<sup>th</sup> on the MTA website.

#### **11. COVID Technology Deserts - *Bill Swiatek***

Mr. Bill Swiatek said this work is important related to the pandemic, but also as an addition to the Transportation Justice Study that was adopted last year. For the Census, there are areas of hard to reach populations for self-response and this year there is internet self-response data being collected. These data emphasize this digital divide. For example, in the Highlands neighborhood, of the people who took the census, 94% responded by internet. In the Lower Eastside, only 44% replied by internet with other responses being completed on paper or other methods. This has implications for how we do outreach and how we reach people in those places.

A technology desert is a place with limited computer or internet access. Traditionally, this is thought to be due to lack of infrastructure, as seen in rural Delaware and other parts of the country. However, socio-economic factors can also put communities into this category, creating something one might call urban technology deserts. To examine some of the socio-economic factors that are behind this, national data indicates different demographics are likely to have a smartphone or home broadband. One takeaway is that people over sixty-five years old are less likely to have a smartphone or broadband. Then, the other major factors are limited education and income. Only 56% of people making less than \$30,000 per year have at home broadband, compared to 92% of those making over \$75,000 per year.

Mr. Swiatek looked at the five-year ACS census data to look at tracts that have double the regional average of households without a computer, which would be 19% or more, and households without internet access, which would be about a third of the households. An area would be considered a technology desert under either of those categories. In this data, the Census considers a smartphone a computer. In eastern Wilmington, such as the Brandywine Hills area, Union Park Gardens, the Flats area, and Cool Spring, are low computer access technology deserts. Much of the City of Wilmington is a no computer or internet access technology desert, except some sections downtown and Riverfront areas. In Cecil County, North East and downtown Elkton are technology deserts. When all the technology deserts are grouped together and the averages are calculated, 40% of the households in the technology deserts have no internet access, compared with 16% for the region. Broadband averages are the same, indicating that most households with internet have broadband within our region. In

technology deserts, 26% of households do not have a computer, compared to the regional average of 10%. In technology deserts 16% of households' only access to a computer is a smartphone compared to 6% for the region. In Wilmington's Lower Eastside, for example, 1,000 households (65%) have no internet or broadband, 680 households (45%) have no computer, and 300 households (20%) only have a smartphone.

National data suggests that age and socio economics are major factors. When we overlay concentrations of senior populations over the technology deserts in Wilmington, there is no significant relationship. Where impoverished communities are concentrated as well as affordable housing, however, there is a strong correlation to the technology deserts. This plays out in the overall data. Within these technology deserts, 23% of the people live in poverty compared to 7% in the region. Within these technology deserts 12% of the population is over sixty-five years old, which is less than the 15% average for the region. There are also equity concerns, as 53% of the population in technology deserts is Black, compared to 22% of the population in the region. The white population is just 31% of the population of the technology deserts, compared to 62% of the region's population.

This impacts participation in the Census. The states have promoted the Census and have tried to get the word out. There are implications for education as these technology deserts impact remote learning during this pandemic. Some school districts had low remote participation rates, creating pressure to get kids back into school at least in a hybrid model. Job access is another concern as jobs and applications move online. For agencies like WILMAPCO, public engagement becomes a concern. Many agencies are moving to virtual only meetings, which is convenient, but we need to be careful that folks are not being left out of planning processes, especially in those technology deserts. This analysis is already supporting education and health. Mr. Swiatek met with Delaware's Department of Education and has worked with the United Way. They are very interested in using this work to support grant funding to get better coverage in some of those areas. It is also supporting COVID-19 outreach in New Castle County and the City of Wilmington in terms of knowing what type of outreach to do in those areas.

A data report is being created to solidify and take a closer look at this work. Different low-tech methods of outreach need to be considered when work is being done within technology deserts. Perhaps telephone only meetings can be used. For example, one civic association in the Route 9 area are meeting but only over the phone. Virtual meetings are not used in this area because 30% of the people there do not have access. Hosting events in outdoors venues, like parks, is another idea. Text messaging surveys is another option that may be used.

This fits in well with some of our Transportation Justice work. Some of the planners use an interactive map to see some areas of concern when they do studies. Technology deserts would fit into that, particularly during the next several months as we continue through the pandemic.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **12. Staff Report**

Ms. Dunigan reported the following updates:

- The TAC will be using Zoom for future meetings. If anyone wants to test a Zoom meeting, contact Ms. Dunigan.
- Staff discussed recent efforts at WILMAPCO at the IPA First State Insights Podcast this month.



- The APA Delaware Conference is scheduled for October 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. The theme is COVID Impacts on our Communities and Planning. To register visit the Delaware APA website.
- Staff will be participating virtually in the National AMPO Conferences October 27-29.
- The week of September 21<sup>st</sup> was the Air Quality Partnership's Air Quality Awareness social media campaign.
- A draft of the Route 9 video is being reviewed and work is being done on draft scripts.
- Staff is finalizing a scope of work for a week-long social justice outreach training course to be held in March.
- The Governor Printz Boulevard Study had a public workshop on September 21<sup>st</sup>. A link to the video recording of the workshop is available on the WILMAPCO website as well as a survey that will be available until October 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Staff participated in the Cecil County Pre-tour on September 28<sup>th</sup> and staff will be participating in the Cecil County Tour meeting to be held on October 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Staff attended the Newark Transportation Investment District (TID) Workshop on October 14<sup>th</sup>.
- The City of New Castle Transportation Plan Management Committee will have their kickoff meeting on October 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Staff will participate in the New Castle County Comprehensive Plan Workshop on October 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Staff will participate in the University of Maryland Urban Design Class on October 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- The Churchman's Crossing Plan had two project team meetings to discuss land use scenarios to be modeled and will be working on the transportation scenarios soon.
- The Concord Pike Master Plan final workshop was October 5<sup>th</sup>. Comments will be accepted through November 5<sup>th</sup>.
- The Newport Transportation Study Workshop was on September 30<sup>th</sup>. The project team will continue to work on the recommendations and will have a follow up meeting with the Advisory Committee.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

Mr. Ian Beam said if anyone wishes to observe the Cecil County Tour, there is a public participation option available on the Cecil County website.

Mr. Steve O'Connor said APA Maryland will be having their annual meeting at 10 AM on October 16<sup>th</sup>.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

No objections.

The TAC adjourned at 11:24 AM

**Attachments (0)**