

**JOINT TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND
AIR QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
December 16, 2021**

A joint meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Air Quality Subcommittee (AQS) was held on Thursday, December 16, 2021, via video conference/conference call.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Michael Fortner, TAC Chair, brought the joint TAC and AQS meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

2. TAC Members present:

Cooper Bowers, Delaware Department of Transportation
Nick Cannistraci, Town of Elkton
Marvina Cephas, DNREC
David Dahlstrom, Maryland Department of Planning
Michael Fortner, City of Newark
Dan Janousek, Maryland Department of Transportation
Gwinneth Kaminsky, City of Wilmington Planning
Matthew Littlejohn, Cecil County Division of Planning and Zoning
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:

Lindsay Donnellon, U.S. Federal Highway Administration

TAC Members absent:

City of Wilmington Department of Public Works
Delaware Division of Small Business, Development, and Tourism
Delaware Office of State Planning
Delaware River and Bay Authority
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:

Ben Allen, Maryland State Highway Administration
Cooper Bowers, Delaware Department of Transportation
Marvina Cephas, DNREC
Lindsay Donnellon, U.S. Federal Highway Administration
Matthew Rogers, New Castle County Department of Land Use
Catherine Salarano, Maryland Department of the Environment
Jolyon Shelton, DNREC
Catherine Smith, Delaware Transit Corporation
Marilyn Smith, Dover/Kent MPO

Guests and Invitees:

James Coverdale, DNREC
Josh Solge, City of Newark Planning and Development Department

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, Senior Planner
Dawn Voss, Administrative Assistant
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Minutes prepared by: Dawn Voss

3. MINUTES

The November 18, 2021, TAC Minutes and Air Quality Subcommittee Notes were approved.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Matt Rogers and seconded by Ms. Gwinn Kaminsky the TAC approved the November 18, 2021, TAC Minutes and Air Quality Subcommittee Notes.

Motion passed.

(12-16-21-01)

4. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group

Ms. Heather Dunigan said the Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group met on December 7th. Mr. Jake Thompson presented on the Middletown Walkable Community Workshop. Mr. Bill Swiatek gave an update on the Regional Progress Report and presented on the Southbridge Neighborhood Plan. There was also a presentation on the Union Street project.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None.

ACTION ITEMS

6. To recommend amendment of the FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Heather Dunigan said that Cecil County has requested that the FY 2020 TIP be amended to add funds to the Belvedere Road Bridge over CSX Railroad project. This project was added to the TIP last year and it connects into the planned I-95/Belvedere Road interchange. The new interchange project and the industrial park will add traffic on Belvedere Road, and so this will replace the bridge that goes over the CSX railroad to better handle the additional traffic. The cost has about doubled from \$8.7 million to \$17.8 million. We do not believe this will have an air quality impact.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Matthew Littlejohn and seconded by Mr. Dan Janousek the TAC recommends amendment of the FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Motion passed.

(12-16-21-02)

7. To recommend amendment of the FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Heather Dunigan said that DelDOT has requested that the FY 2020-23 TIP be amended to include new funding for Paratransit Validators. This new project would improve the ticketing process on paratransit buses, to help speed up the boarding process. The cost is about \$1.4 million. We do not believe there is any air quality impact.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Matt Rogers and seconded by Mr. David Dahlstrom the TAC recommends amendment of the FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Motion passed.

(12-16-21-03)

8. To recommend release of the New Castle County Draft FY 2023-26 TIP Air Quality Conformity Analysis for Public Comment

Mr. Bill Swiatek said the Air Quality Conformity Analysis was completed over the summer. The document was created and a link to that document was sent to TAC and AQS members within the meeting agenda so members can click on the link to review the document. Today, we ask the Air Quality Subcommittee to consent that you approve the document. Then, the document will be released for public comment. The time for the air quality document to go out to public comment was changed. We want it to be in step with the TIP, and the 2023 TIP is not going to go out to public comment until March, so we made the change within the document that will release it today, but not officially begin the public comment period until March 18th.

Subsequently, Council adoption of this will be pushed back to May 12th rather than March, which is when it was originally expected. Again, we went through the conformity document last month, and not much has since changed, except for the dates for public comments.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. David Dahlstrom and seconded by Ms. Gwinn Kaminsky the TAC recommends the release of the New Castle County Draft FY 2023-26 TIP Air Quality Conformity Analysis for Public Comment

Motion passed.

(12-16-21-04)

9. To recommend endorsement of the Churchmans Crossing Plan Update

Mr. Dan Blevins said we are here to seek endorsement of the Churchmans Crossing Plan Update. According to our records, the plan was brought in front of the TAC in May of 2020, December of 2020, and July of 2021. The plan serves as an update to the 1997 plan and is consistent with PEL requirements. The plan establishes new or reaffirms recommendations from the 1997 plan on transportation in land use throughout the Churchmans Crossing area. Several outreach events were held throughout the course of the plan including four public workshops,

three advisory committee meetings, and one listening tour, so ample outreach was done even though the process was virtual.

Mr. Matt Rogers said this has been a really good experience for the County from a land use perspective and with regard to the Churchmans Crossing area. A lot of important information is in the plan, but he thinks, and he believes Mr. Blevins would agree with him, that the next steps are the most important as far as making a real impact. One step being the monitoring committee, and another one being future efforts with regards to DeIDOT and New Castle County putting together a Land Use Transportation Plan, which would support the TID. Mr. Rogers continued by asking whether WILMAPCO specifically has intentions outside of the monitoring committee, that they are looking at as far as continued planning efforts in the area; and also if there will be the opportunity, while they are doing the Land Use Transportation Plan, to continue the type of relationship that we have had as far as developing this plan, looking for support, not necessarily not monetarily but expertise in putting it together.

Mr. Blevins replied that the plan's appendices are a great start for that, particularly regarding the implementation, which is the next step once this gets approved. Within the plan itself, Appendix E and G to some extent gets everything started in the right direction. Appendix E is the scenario planning summary, which was an early effort working with Land Use on future scenarios and options to come up with transportation solutions. Appendix G is the TID Strategic Plan, which lays out where the similarities are within the plan that would help foster and eliminate repeating those steps when and if DeIDOT and the County enter into a TID. For the second part of the question, many people here are familiar with WILMAPCO's monitoring efforts, such as US 40, Concord Pike which is just getting underway, and SR 9. Our intentions are to do something very similar to this. They all have their own little quirks to them, so we are not sure exactly how it will work, but in the end, they are there to guide the implementation of the plan and for continued, regular, and predictable communications with implementing agencies and the stakeholders. We have formed good relationships with people developing this plan and will certainly keep them going, but also those planning have limitations, regardless of whether a TID ever is developed in this area between DeIDOT and the County. So yes, we are certainly not going anywhere.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Matt Rogers and seconded by Ms. Cathy Smith the TAC recommends endorsement of the Churchman's Crossing Plan Update

Motion passed.

(12-16-21-05)

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

10. 2022 Regional Progress Report

Mr. Bill Swiatek said this is an update of our Regional Progress Report. TAC was updated on this very early in the progress, but there is additional data to share. In the next month or so a full draft report will be ready to review. The progress report is a performance measurement document to track the progress of our RTP. It sets up the RTP update, which WILMAPCO will be starting next year. It also helps staff to look at some core trends and see the progress made with each action. In the report, red, yellow, and green light indicators show the progress with meeting that action, whether it is poor progress, some progress, or really good progress. The national performance measures that FHWA requires of MPOs are included in the report as well. In terms of some core trends, Transportation Investment Areas that are identified within the RTP are reviewed. Centers and cores are where the most concentrated transportation investment should be, and these are the cities and towns along the I-95 corridor and municipalities in the southern parts of the region. Then there are developing, community, and rural TIAs. Rural areas

should have the least intensive transportation investment and focus mainly on preservation of the existing system to discourage more growth and sprawl outside of the urban core.

Looking at household growth and employment growth within the TIAs provides a snapshot of the household growth over the past twenty years by TIA. In New Castle County, the growth within our developing TIA is 26% in rural areas and 206% in the developing area just north of Middletown. Then, there are smaller growth rates but still large numbers of people within community, core, and center. In Cecil County it is much more evenly spread between a rural, community, and center. Core has the highest rate of growth in Cecil County. This is the projection as well, so taking the projections that are developed and putting them out by traffic analysis zone, reveals projected household growth. In New Castle County, that trend over the past two decades is expected to continue. Rural shows 31% growth between 2020 and 2050. Developing slows but is still pretty high at 70%. Cecil County's highest rates would be within the community and core TIAs, but again it is not as skewed as New Castle County. One analysis looked at projected household growth versus the share of population within these TIAs looking at the median spend by TIA over the past twenty years of our TIPs. Overall, a quick growth rate within developing and rural is seen and the continued growth rate has spurred an outsized portion of TIP spending over the past two decades. They are getting a lot of transportation investment to keep up with and to anticipate the growth within developing and rural TIAs.

Looking at mode of transportation to work since 1980, there was an increase in the number of people that are driving alone. It is at the highest levels it has been over the past forty years, with 80% of people driving alone to work. These are pre-COVID numbers, so it will be interesting to see if there is a spike in working from home, which, with the last census numbers, was at 4% regionally. Carpooling and all the other modes are less than 10%, but it will be interesting to see if those numbers change when the new data for ACS is available. Looking at daily vehicle miles traveled per household since 1996 shows that it had started to go down. There was a lot of press about VMT dropping about ten years ago nationally, but it has started to increase. Over the past few years VMT has either steadied or it has increased. Delaware's Climate Action Plan just set a target for VMT. They are looking at raw VMT, but they are looking at a 10% reduction between 2020 and 2030 in that plan, so that will be one to watch.

Looking at the actions from the 2018 progress report, 21% of the actions were red lights that needed support because they had poor progress, 29% had yellow lights, and only 50% were really positive. This time, there are more green lights, which indicates we are doing a better job of accomplishing the actions in the RTP. We are at 62% now, but these numbers may change slightly as one or two pieces of data are missing within the report. One positive trend in the report is the creation and the support of implementation of subregional plans, such as the work being done in Churchmans Crossing, the monitoring committee support for Concord Pike, and the work that was done on Route 40 and Route 9. WILMAPCO has put together about fifty subregional plans since 1996. They were categorized based on their level of implementation from P-0, which is no implementation to P-5, which indicates the plan is implemented. Most plans have had some level of implementation, whether it is policy or hard infrastructure. Most plans still have more work that could be done, but it is a good trend, because it means WILMAPCO plans do get implemented.

Another action that shows good progress is funding transportation choices. This action looks at the type of spend in the past twenty TIPs. Roadway only, for example, has been slowly declining over the past ten years, while additional funding is going to multimodal projects. Transit saw a slight increase, and bike/ped started to go down in the past couple of years. One of the actions in the RTP was to set a target for preservation spending. WILMAPCO focused

TIP funding on projects that preserve the infrastructure first and in the last RTP set a target. In the analysis, we took the top three preservation spends over the past twenty TIPs, the average of which was 48% of the entire TIP spend to preservation projects. That became the target. In the last TIP that target spend of a 48% was exceeded. There are several other measures that show whether we are meeting preservation spends or not.

There is a national performance measure that looks at the pavement in good condition statewide, so data is taken from Delaware and Maryland. Delaware met the targets of 50% for pavement in good condition, both on the interstates and the non-interstate system. Maryland did not meet its target in 2019 for either the interstate or the non-interstate system, but the targets have dropped in terms of what percentage of pavement is good condition so when the data comes out this year we will see if the targets were met.

Another measure looks at the population near bus stops, which relates to the action to ensure access to public transportation. The number of people who are near bus stops has declined in New Castle County. The population within a quarter of a mile of a bus stop dropped from 55% to 45% since 2000. This is reflective of continued sprawl in the region where people live in houses that are far away from the bus lines. Cecil County saw a moderate increase from 3% in 2000 to 8% by 2020. There was a decline in fixed-route ridership in New Castle County beginning in 2012, then a sharper decline in 2020 with the pandemic. Cecil County saw growth during that period, in its smaller service, but then a sharp decline in 2020 with the pandemic. A positive with the bus ridership was the on-time performance. Both counties have seen increases in the percentage of buses that are on time. In New Castle County, the paratransit system is meeting the target that DART set with about 92% of buses getting to their stops on time. There still some way to go with fixed route, but that is improving. Cecil County met its target of 80% of buses being on time for the first time in 2021.

Managing congestion is another positive trend in the report. This is the percent of the non-interstate system providing reliable travel times. The influence of the pandemic is seen in 2020 with the increase from 91% in Delaware to 94% of reliable travel times. Cecil County increased from 82% to 92%. Both should easily meet the targets that are set.

One of the troubling trends, is looking at nonmotorized injuries and fatalities. This is statewide data, but increases are seen in the rolling averages over the past several years with total nonmotorized fatalities, and both states might struggle to meet the targets that they have set this year. A new measure in the report is the median trail count, which applies to developing a complete, low stress, nonmotorized system. This is looking at the average number of people using the trails in New Castle County in May. There were some moderate increases between 2017 and 2019, then it spiked during the lockdown in May 2020. It has fallen this year, but the numbers using trails are still higher than in the recent past. Related to commutes, there were moderate increases in New Castle County in the percentage of people walking or biking to work. There were very small increases between the first half of the last decade and the second. There were actual decreases in Cecil County in those total percentages, from 2% walking in the 2011 to 2015 period down to 1.2% walking, for example.

Another action that that we continue to monitor is increasing the ethnic and racial diversity on the PAC compared to the ethnic and racial minority population total in the region. We still are not meeting the goal, but there was some modest progress since 2017 with increasing the diversity of our PAC membership to be more reflective of the regional demographics. We still have to acquire some missing data, so we are going to wait until the end of the year to get our

website hits and include that as one of the measures with public outreach. We are looking for Council adoption of this report in March.

11. Middletown Walkable Community Workshop

Mr. Jake Thompson said walkable community workshops are an opportunity for citizens to become planners as they are experts in their community and can come up with the best possible ideas for improvement. These workshops consist of three parts. They begin with a presentation going over topics like sidewalk design, crosswalks, traffic calming, and other tools to improve walkability. That gets ideas going for the walking audit, where participants survey the area and try to identify issues and opportunities to improve walking. Then, there is a mapping exercise where the group shares their ideas for improving walkability and those ideas go into the report.

The Middletown Walkable Community Workshop took place on September 29th at Middletown Town Hall. There were thirteen people in attendance, including residents, town officials, and WILMAPCO staff. The walking audit started at the town hall and looped around downtown Middletown on Broad Street, Lake Street, Cox Street, and Main Street. During the mapping exercise the group split into two smaller groups and shared their ideas on maps. Those ideas were formalized into a map of recommendations for the report going over all the ideas that group proposed, including a mixed-use walking and biking path network, improving several sidewalks and crossings, creating new open spaces, and making several improvements to Main Street. The proposed walking and biking path network suggested by the group includes connections between several destinations in town, as well as a potential connection down to Townsend just a few miles to the south. These would enhance the safety, convenience, and accessibility for people walking and biking.

In particular, the group took a closer look at Lake Street, which was part of our walking audit. This street is wide and underutilized, and sidewalks are narrow, incomplete, and in disrepair. The group recommended a road diet on Lake Street, which can include things like sidewalk upgrades and a mixed-use path. The town does have a planned extension to Lake Street, which should incorporate these improvements as well. Next, we turned down Cox Street, which is a narrow street that lacks sidewalks and functions like an alley. Due to low traffic speed and volumes, it is generally comfortable and safe to walk in the street, as we did during our walking audit. The group recommended making improvements to upgrade this into a shared street which would function as part of the proposed mixed-use path network. This could include features like textured pavement, benches, and planters to make a more inviting walking atmosphere. They also recommended creating new public open space on the east side of Cox Street which may require property acquisition, but the town could work within the existing right-of-way to make these improvements. Sidewalk improvements were discussed, particularly on Lake Street, Catherine Street, and Broad Street, where there is one section that has been uplifted by tree roots, and repairs should always be done without displacing trees. At a minimum, sidewalks should be continuous, free of obstructions, and meet ADA standards, but they can be further enhanced by greenery and benches.

The group also recommended several crossing improvements, including adding crosswalks on Main Street at Cox Street, the railroad crossing, and Haveg Road, as well as a Broad Street and Shallcross Place. The group recommended some raised crosswalks in the center of town at Broad and Main, one block south at Broad and Green, as well as on Main Street at the Everett Theatre, which would be a mid-block, raised crosswalk. These would help fill in long gaps between safe crossings on Main Street.

The group also recommended creating a new public park, which would be located at the vacant lot at the corner of Main and Catherine Streets. This is at the east end of the Main Street business district and across from the Southern New Castle County Library, which is currently under construction. This lot is owned by Bayhealth Medical Center. Their building is next door so this would require property acquisition or coordination with Bay Health to develop the park there. This could include features that would be mutually beneficial to patrons of mainstream businesses, the library, and the medical center including things like benches, tables, a plaza, and paths connecting through the park. The group also recommended several improvements to Main Street, including things like adding flowerpots and lane markings, standardizing signage for downtown businesses, improving lighting in alleys, improving facades, and supporting redevelopment. This could bring a lot of benefits to the corridor including improving the comfort and safety of walking, helping to calm traffic, enhancing the sense of place, and helping to support for local businesses.

The next steps section of the report gets into how to bring these ideas into reality. First, the town should ensure that the planned extension to Lake Street and improvements to Cox Street incorporate the recommendations in this report. The town should also seek acquisition of the lot at Main and Catherine Streets or coordinate with Bayhealth to develop a park there. The report ends with information on funding and implementation resources. This is a first draft, so there may be changes. It is currently being reviewed by the mayor, the town council, and Middletown Main Street.

12. Draft FY 2023-26 Transportation Improvement Program

Ms. Heather Dunigan said the schedule for the TIP update for the FY 2023 to 2026 TIP is being revisited. It would normally be presented to the TAC to release for public comment in January, but the Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act was signed on November 15th, bringing more money to transportation projects. To give the State DOTs time to incorporate additional funds we will delay the release of the draft TIP. Hopefully, updates on funding for our region from both MDOT and DeIDOT will be provided in the January-February timeframe, and then the TIP update can be released for public comment following the March TAC meeting. It would then go to the March Council meeting and TAC meeting to be released for public comment, which will extend to the end of April, during which time a virtual workshop for public comment might be held. Then it will be brought to the TAC at the April meeting for recommendation on adoption, and Council will see it in May. DeIDOT released an initial draft at the last Council on Transportation meeting earlier this month, but since those numbers are changing, we do not want to have the TIP change midway through the cycle.

The initial draft that DeIDOT presented earlier this month has three new projects shown. One is an Edgemoor Road bicycle and pedestrian improvements project from Governor Printz Boulevard to Hay Road. This will help implement the Governor Printz Boulevard Corridor Plan and provide access to the Newport area. There is also a port area truck parking facility as well as a shared path in the Southbridge area between South Church Street and South Walnut Street. The draft that was presented to the Council on Transportation actually has 13% less funding than we wanted to show in our amended TIP from last year, so we expect that decrease in funding to vanish with the new numbers. We are working with DeIDOT and MDOT to update the numbers. A huge addition of new projects is not expected, but the additional money will likely be going towards expediting projects in the existing TIP. Things that have the construction years out in the future might move up, so we will be watching that from an air quality perspective to make sure that the in-service years do not shift since we completed the conformity.

The Infrastructure and Jobs Act contains \$1.2 trillion in spending, which is \$550 billion more than what is currently budgeted. Slightly more than half of that will go towards transportation. The non-transportation funding will address climate change, environmental issues, and broadband. A large portion of the transportation funding is going towards roads and bridges. Rail will also receive funding, as well as transit and safety. Smaller categories include modernizing electric VIT for the electric vehicles, improving ports and airports, and connecting communities with projects like the I-95 Cap. Immediately, there is a 21% increase in the highway trust fund going to the states, so that is probably what will be in the draft numbers coming out in this TIP from the State DOTs. It may take a little longer to figure out exactly how much transit money will go to the states. Rail was a huge beneficiary with an increase that is more than eleven times historic funding levels. There is emphasis on safety and support for vulnerable users, including bicycle-pedestrian crash reduction. There is also emphasis on electric vehicles including electric school buses. The apportionments for the States of Delaware and Maryland were released by the U.S. DOT yesterday. This shows a 21% increase across the overall Federal Aid Highway Program. A couple of new programs were added. A lot of money is going towards state of good repair for transit. We are still waiting for more details on how this breaks out on a state-by-state basis, year by year.

Mr. Dan Janousek said MDOT has sent that spreadsheet that was sent over with project updates to their TVUs so they are actually working on them, and they should be able to meet the deadline. Ms. Dunigan replied that she did hear from Mr. Derrick Sexton from the SHA, and they are working on it.

INFORMATION ITEMS

13. Staff Report

Ms. Dunigan reported the following updates:

- The I-95 Cap Study Community Visioning Workshop was held in-person on November 17th with about sixty attendees. There is an online survey available on the WILMAPCO website, and a follow up Zoom workshop will be held on January 12th.
- The Concord Pike Master Plan Management Committee's first meeting was a legislative briefing held on December 3rd. A full Management Committee meeting held on December 8th was well attended with Advisory Committee members, agency members and twenty-three members of the public in attendance.
- Staff are working on the City of Wilmington Earth Day for 2022 and had a kickoff meeting on December 9th.
- FHWA's GIS Transportation newsletter will feature an article about WILMAPCO's Transportation Justice Plan.
- University of Delaware CADS continues to work with staff to analyze bus connectivity for transportation justice areas as part of follow-up analysis from the 2019 plan. Hopefully, a working group meeting with the TJ group will be held early in 2022.
- Staff is also assisting the Collaborate Northeast Coalition in Wilmington on local transportation project prioritization.

OTHER BUSINESS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

ACTION: On motion by Ms. Gwinn Kaminsky and seconded by Mr. Matt Rogers the TAC adjourned at 10:50 AM.

Motion passed.

(12-16-21-06)

The TAC adjourned at 10:50 AM

Attachments (0)