

**TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**December 21, 2023**

A meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was held on Thursday, December 21, 2023, at WILMAPCO, 100 Discovery Boulevard, Suite 800, Newark, DE 19713 and via video conference/conference call.

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Matt 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  
Cooper Bowers, Delaware Department of Transportation  
Taylor Englert, DNREC  
Michael Fortner, City of Newark  
Rashad Pinkett, Maryland Department of Transportation  
Matt Rogers, New Castle County Department of Land Use  
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  
City of Wilmington Planning  
Delaware Division of Small Business, Development, and Tourism  
Delaware River and Bay Authority  
Maryland Department of the Environment  
Maryland Department of Planning  
Maryland SHA Regional and Intermodal Planning Division  
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:**

Bruce Allen, DelDOT  
Sophia Cortazzo, MDOT  
Jay Gerner, DelDOT  
Deanna Murphy, Cecil County Board of Realtors  
Colton Phillips, DelDOT

**Staff:**

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner  
Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner

Sharen Elcock, Executive Assistant  
Elizabeth Espinal, Administrative Assistant  
Dave Gula, Principal Planner  
Bill Swiatek, Principal Planner  
Jake Thompson, Principal Planner  
Dawn Voss, Outreach Coordinator  
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth Espinal.

### **3. MINUTES**

Approval of the November 16, 2023, TAC Minutes was postponed until the next meeting due to lack of a quorum.

### **4. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

None.

### **5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

None.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

None.

### **PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

#### **6. Urban Area Adjustments**

Mr. Bruce Allen announced that the Delaware Department of Transportation (DeIDOT) is working in cooperation with its Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) partners to adjust the 2020 urbanized area boundaries. He explained that the U.S. Census releases new urban areas every 10 years, impacting the allotment of transportation funds. DeIDOT, with input from MPOs, adjusts these urban area boundaries for administrative purposes. The adjustments aim to create a more contiguous and coherent functional classification system, avoiding a disjointed effect. These adjustments don't affect population numbers or funding streams but help DeIDOT refine its roadway functional classification system. Mr. Allen emphasized that the data to be presented is used for transportation purposes only and does not intervene with any other projects.

Mr. Colton Phillips took over the presentation, sharing the methodology used for adjustments. They utilized census blocks, satellite imagery, municipal boundaries, traffic separators, and major projects. The goal was to reduce inconsistencies within urban area boundaries and align them with municipal boundaries and physical features. Coordination involved internal meetings and external discussions with MPOs and FHWA.

Mr. Phillips showed a draft map, during the presentation, illustrating the proposed adjustments, emphasizing the smoothing of boundaries, and capturing areas missed in the 2020 Census. Mr. Phillips explained specific adjustments, highlighting challenges with GIS data compatibility and the need to work with different GIS datasets.

Mr. Phillips shared the timeline of this project, a December 2023 presentation to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), approval from the governor, and submission to FHWA. Mr. Phillips also shared that this interactive map is available for detailed exploration and to provide

feedback. He emphasized these adjustments aim to enhance the accuracy of DeIDOT's functional classification system and, ultimately, contribute to updates by the end of 2025.

Ms. Tigist Zegeye inquired about the adjustments in Sussex County. Mr. Colton Phillips explained that the urban area in Sussex County had shrunk from the 2010 census due to a methodology change. He discussed the hop, skip, and jump approach used in 2010, connecting separated urban areas, which was eliminated in 2020. Mr. Phillips emphasized that despite changes, the urban area of Sussex County had overall shrunk. He illustrated adjustments in Delmar, Millsboro, Georgetown, Long Neck, Lewes, and Rehoboth areas, aligning with municipal boundaries and existing or planned development.

Mr. Bruce Allen added that adjustments were conservative, focusing on existing and completed developments, avoiding speculation about future growth. Mr. Phillips further explained adjustments related to protective lands around Lewes, emphasizing that these changes would not affect official population figures but were vital for transportation planning purposes.

## **7. East Elkton Traffic Circulation and Safety Plan**

Mr. Bill Swiatek provided an update on the East Elkton Traffic Circulation and Safety Plan. Mr. Swiatek recollected that the plan was initiated in response to planning requests received from Cecil County and the town of Elkton, focusing on projects in the East Elkton area. Mr. Swiatek informed that the lead consultant for the project is Wallace Montgomery, and a diverse steering committee guides the work, including local participants, schools, Chamber of Commerce, fire, and police departments, and more.

The goals of the plan encompass understanding existing traffic patterns, evaluating potential roadway realignments, addressing land use conflicts, improving road safety, and enhancing walking and cycling connectivity. The planning process involves assessing existing conditions, conducting visioning sessions, gathering survey feedback, and developing draft recommendations.

Mr. Swiatek highlighted proposed developments in East Elkton, including business parks and residential complexes. He discussed traffic concerns, crash hotspots, and issues related to truck traffic, residential areas, and intersections. Survey results indicated significant concerns about traffic safety along Delancey Road, Muddy Lane, and Belle Hill Road.

Mr. Swiatek emphasized ongoing community engagement, including surveys, workshops, and stakeholder involvement. He reviewed the results of the first public survey.

The planning process is currently in the draft recommendation phase, where realignments and proposed solutions are being evaluated. Further public workshops and surveys are planned to gather feedback and select a preferred alternative. The plan's recommendations are expected to influence upcoming comp plan updates for Cecil County and Elkton. Mr. Swiatek concluded the presentation by encouraging members to visit the project's website ([www.wilmapco.org/east-elkton](http://www.wilmapco.org/east-elkton)) for more information and engagement opportunities.

Ms. Tricia Arndt raised a question regarding the crash trends at the Muddy Lane roundabout. Mr. Swiatek stated that they did not have historic crash data readily available before the installation of the roundabout. Tricia expressed interest in local examples showcasing the effectiveness of roundabouts. Mr. Swiatek acknowledged the value of providing a visual comparison of crash data before and after the installation to emphasize the positive impact of roundabouts, highlighting their lower crash injury rates compared to traditional intersections.

No further questions were asked.

### **8. Kirkwood Highway Land Use and Transportation Plan**

Mr. Dan Blevins began this presentation with an update on the Kirkwood Highway Land Use and Transportation Plan. He focused the presentation on the corridor's characteristics, including demographics, land use patterns, and transportation issues. The presentation outlines the five tasks involved in the study, including identifying issues, community visioning, exploring potential land use scenarios, analyzing growth and development implications, and presenting alternatives.

Mr. Blevins shared demographic changes in the corridor, as revealed by recent census data, emphasizing shifts in age groups and the Hispanic population. He further explained data analysis, particularly the use of data to understand corridor users' behaviors. Topics such as traffic patterns, safety, non-motorized facilities, and the importance of interactive maps for detailed information were discussed. Additionally, Mr. Blevins emphasized the need to consider different perspectives when planning for the corridor's future and debunked the common misconception of Kirkwood Highway as a major through corridor.

Mr. Dave Gula took over the presentation, discussing the market analysis and visioning workshop outcomes. He pointed out the challenges related to traffic, safety concerns, and the need for pedestrian and bicycle amenities. The lack of affordable housing, issues with transit access, and the importance of green spaces were also highlighted as comments provided by the public. Mr. Gula emphasized the importance of public outreach and shared statistics from the first workshop, indicating a positive response from the community where approximately 100 people were in attendance. Mr. Gula added that the goal is to contribute valuable insights to inform decision-making and potential improvements to Kirkwood Highway.

The presentation concluded with an overview of upcoming tasks, including further workshops, data analysis, and community engagement. Mr. Gula expressed enthusiasm for collaboration and encouraged public participation through their website and social media channels.

Ms. Tricia Arndt raised a question inquiring about the percentage of people living and working in the corridor, emphasizing the lack of affordable housing. Mr. Blevins responded, indicating a low percentage of residents working within the corridor based on the scatterplot analysis.

Mr. Gula further supported this observation, expressing the goal of encouraging people to live and work in the corridor. He highlighted the corridor's economic performance, particularly in retail, with some impact from the hospital. Ms. Arndt suggested the need for affordable housing within the corridor.

Mr. Blevins explained that a market study addressed this issue, focusing on the age and viability of existing housing areas. He emphasized the importance of assessing the conditions of apartment complexes and the potential need for replacement. He explained the challenge of envisioning what residents want when certain options are not available. Mr. Blevins delved into downsizing options, walkable communities, and the potential impact of developments like Wegmans.

Ms. Arndt pointed out the unaffordability of associated housing and the need to consider the average person's preferences as they age or retire.

Mr. Gula reiterated that the market analysis identified opportunities in smaller shopping centers for housing development. He concluded with considerations of existing land use such as underutilized parking spaces in Prices Corner, suggesting potential transformations. Overall, the conversation highlighted the complex interplay of factors in urban planning, including transportation, housing, and community preferences.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **9. Staff Report**

Ms. Heather Dunigan reported the following updates:

- The release of the draft FY 2025-2028 TIP will be delayed until March 2024.
- On November 17<sup>th</sup> South Claymont Area Master Plan had their kick-off meeting.
- On the Newark Bicycle Plan Update committee members, Bike Newark and WILMAPACO, continue their work on outreach through a listening tour. City of Newark held a meeting on Diversity and Inclusion Commission on November 28<sup>th</sup> where concerns on safety and equity were discussed.
- On December 4<sup>th</sup>, Staff presented to the National Cooperative Highway Research Program Peer Exchange on assessing equity impacts of e-commerce.
- On December 7<sup>th</sup>, Newport Transportation Study Monitoring Committee held a meeting. Topics discussed included an update on DART Reimagined, Newport River Trail, and other projects like the Newport Train Station.
- On December 11<sup>th</sup>, Kirkwood Highway Transportation Plan held their first Visioning Workshop with approximately 100 attendees.
- On December 14<sup>th</sup>, East Elkton Steering Committee held a meeting.
- On December 21<sup>st</sup>, the Route 9 Monitoring Committee will have a meeting.
- On January 5<sup>th</sup>, the Ardens Monitoring Committee will have a meeting.
- Staff continues to collaborate with DVRPC on climate pollution reduction grant with the Philadelphia MSA.
- The Concord Pike Project continues to work on updating and expanding the monitoring committee.

### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

None.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

**ACTION:** Meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

**Attachments (0)**