

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

June 20, 2024

A meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was held on Thursday, June 20, 2024, at WILMAPCO, 100 Discovery Boulevard, Suite 800, Newark, DE 19713 and via video conference/conference call.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mr. David Dahlstrom, Maryland Department of Planning, and TAC member, brought the TAC meeting to order at 10:13 a.m.

2. TAC Members present:

Samantha Bulkivish, Delaware Office of State Planning
David Dahlstrom, Maryland Department of Planning
Taylor Englert, DNREC
Michael Fortner, City of Newark
William Goldman, Cecil County Division of Planning and Zoning
Dan Janousek, Maryland Department of Transportation

TAC Ex-Officio Members present:

TAC Members absent:

City of Wilmington Planning
City of Wilmington Department of Public Works
Delaware Department of Transportation
Delaware Division of Small Business, Development, and Tourism
Delaware River and Bay Authority
Delaware Transit Corporation
Maryland Department of the Environment
Maryland State Highway Administration
New Castle County Department of Land Use
Town of Elkton Planning

TAC Ex-Officio Members absent:

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

Guests and Invitees:

Staff:

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner
Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner
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 May 16, 2024, TAC Meeting Minutes.

ACTION: A quorum was not met; the action will be on the July meeting agenda.

4. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Air Quality Subcommittee-

Mr. Bill Swiatek reported that the Air Quality Subcommittee met on June 6. During the meeting, the group heard from residents concerned about warehouse developments in Middletown and discussed how air quality is incorporated into WILMAPCO's planning processes. The Subcommittee also reviewed two amendments to the FY2025-2028 TIP and concluded that they did not trigger a revised conformity analysis. These amendments pertained to the Mechanics Valley Road Bridge over CSX and crosswalk improvements at Elk Neck Elementary School. Additionally, the Air Quality Subcommittee recommended Council endorsement of the draft 2024 CMAQ Performance Plan.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None.

6. Nominating Committee for FY 2025 Technical Advisory Committee Chair and Vice Chair

Mr. Michael Fortner from the City of Newark reported that the nominating committee recommends Mr. Cooper Bowers from DelDOT as TAC chair and Mr. Dan Janousek from MDOT as vice chair.

ACTION: A quorum was not met; the TAC approved Mr. Bowers as chair and Mr. Janousek as vice chair via an email vote.

ACTION ITEMS

7. To recommend amendment of the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program.

Ms. Heather Dunigan reported that Cecil County has recommended that the TIP be amended to include revised funding for the Mechanics Valley Road Bridge over CSX Railway project. This amendment will shift construction funds from FY2023 to FY2025 to reflect the updated timeline.

ACTION: A quorum was not met; the TAC recommended amending the TIP via an email vote.

8. To recommend amendment of the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program.

Ms. Heather Dunigan announced this is a request to amend the TIP from Cecil County for a Safe Routes to School project. This project involves installing signage enhancements, crosswalks, and timed beacons at Elk Neck Elementary School. The construction is scheduled for this summer, ensuring it will be completed before the students return to school in the fall. The amendment shifts the construction funds to FY2024, so the project will be completed within this fiscal year.

ACTION: A quorum was not met; the TAC recommended amending the TIP via an email vote.

9. To recommend approval of the 2024 CMAQ Performance Plan

Mr. Bill Swiatek stated that this plan specifically addresses federal requirements to incorporate performance measurement into Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) planning and programming. It satisfies the requirement for the second performance period's mid-period progress report and performance plan in 2024. The CMAQ performance plan was developed through an interagency coordination process involving members of the Air Quality Subcommittee, particularly MDOT and DeIDOT, and the DVRPC and BMC. The Air Quality Subcommittee recommended Council endorsement of the 2024 CMAQ Plan at their last meeting.

ACTION: A quorum was not met; the TAC recommended approval of the 2024 CMAQ Performance Plan via an email vote.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

10. Kirkwood Highway Land Use and Transportation Plan

Mr. Dave Gula made a brief presentation to provide an update on the Kirkwood Highway project. The last discussion regarding this project was in April, and several elements have progressed since then. The main focus of the presentation was the Alternatives Workshop held on June 10th. Mr. Gula aimed to give an overview of the project and what was presented to the public that evening.

One key aspect discussed was the importance of involving all partners throughout the process. Ensuring that everyone hears the same information is crucial for effective collaboration, and Mr. Gula expressed satisfaction with the collaboration of all partners including New Castle County Land Use, DART, and DeIDOT.

When presenting to the public, attendees received a handout upon arrival to orient them. A newcomer corner, equipped with a video screen, provides information to those new to the project. Approximately 55 people attended the June 10th workshop, many of whom were new to the project. Short presentations were given at 5:00 PM and 5:45 PM. The main goal was to direct people to the new boards and gather their comments on the scenarios and alternatives before diving deep into the analysis.

A previous workshop held on February 7th laid the groundwork for the scenarios, focusing on high-level points. The June 10th workshop aimed to gather detailed comments from attendees. A key activity was mapping where attendees live, work, and play, comparing this data to previous workshops to identify any underrepresented areas. Additionally, translation services were available again at this workshop, though its use has been minimal. Efforts are ongoing to improve outreach to the Hispanic community, including potential engagement with church groups.

The project aims to strengthen various transportation modes while ensuring that any changes do not negatively impact existing neighborhoods or businesses. Recognizing the inevitability of change, the goal is to adapt the corridor to future growth and allow residents to comment on how this growth will occur.

The vision for the project includes creating a safer, multimodal corridor with improved amenities for walking, biking, and transit. The Kirkwood Highway currently lacks sufficient facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, making crossing difficult and dangerous. Enhancing these facilities and

discouraging high traffic speeds are priorities to enhance safety. Transit is already strong along the corridor, and improving pedestrian access to bus stops is essential. The corridor is a crucial daily shopping area, and the project aims to ensure the continued success of local businesses while fostering new, sustainable development patterns. Enhancing open spaces and connecting neighborhoods to community centers, parks, and schools are also key goals.

Safety is a significant concern due to the high volume of crashes along the corridor, including some involving cyclists and pedestrians. Major intersections, such as Limestone Road and Kirkwood Highway, are particularly problematic. Addressing these safety issues is a critical part of the scenario planning process. The public was presented with various potential road configurations and asked for their feedback. There was a focus on understanding the difference between streets designed for local shopping and roads designed for moving cars.

The project also considered different transit improvements, such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). However, the analysis suggested that transformative BRT might not be the best fit for the corridor due to the local nature of the traffic and transit patterns. Instead, enhancements to transit facilities and services could be more effective. Potential safety improvements, such as roundabouts, were also discussed. While roundabouts can significantly reduce crashes and fatalities, they may not be feasible in all areas due to high traffic volumes and limited space. The public's feedback on roundabouts was mixed, indicating a need for further education and discussion.

Throughout the workshop, the emphasis was on gathering as many comments as possible. The team set up boards for attendees to provide feedback on various aspects of the project, including grade separations, pedestrian overpasses, access management, and median closures. There was also a focus on continuous sidewalks and shared-use paths to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety.

The project team is working on making the same information and opportunities for feedback available online to reach a broader audience. The goal is to keep the comment period open into the summer to gather as much input as possible. Mr. Gula highlighted the progress made on the project, stating the ultimate goal is to create a safer, more accessible, and vibrant corridor that meets the needs of all users while supporting future growth and development.

INFORMATION ITEMS

10. Staff Report

Ms. Heather Dunigan reported the following updates:

- On May 17th we participated in the Newark Bike to Work Day.
- On May 20th we had very well attended Claymont Area Master Plan Public Workshop.
- On May 21st was the Newport Transportation Plan Monitoring Committee. The Public Workshop had about 15 in attendance.
- On June 10th the East Elkton Steering Committee met, and a final public workshop for that plan is scheduled for June 27th at the Public Library at 6:00 PM. After that workshop staff will be presenting the Draft Plan to Cecil County Council and Elkton County executives in July.
- On June 10th the Kirkwood Highway Land Use and Transportation Plan had an Alternatives Workshop as mentioned about 40 in attendance.
- On June 12th the Concord Pike Monitoring Committee held a Public Workshop with 35 in attendance.

- On June 20th staff will participate in the Wilmington Initiatives Transportation Projects Open House and the Monitoring Committee will meet on June 26.
- On July 16th staff will be participating in the New Castle County State of the county event.
- On July 17th staff will participate in a policy forum titled Delaware's changing landscape transportation and demographic challenges in the post COVID era and this is hosted by University of Delaware IPA and DelDOT planning, Delaware Population Consortium and WILMAPCO and you can find the link to sign up for that on our website.
- Lastly, we started releasing the RFP's for the new UPWP projects: the first RFP for the Maryland Route 272 Corridor Plan has been posted on our website and the others are in the process of being reviewed by our partners and will be coming out soon.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. David Dahlstrom announces that the Office of Planning is hosting a webinar this afternoon at 1:00 PM on complete streets Part 2 starting at 1:00 PM. Interested individuals can visit the website for CM credits on that.

ADJOURNMENT:

ACTION: Meeting adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

Attachments (0)