

**TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**July 20, 2023**

A meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was held on Thursday, July 20, 2023, at WILMAPCO, 100 Discovery Boulevard, Suite 800, Newark, DE 19713 and via video conference/conference call.

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Tricia Arndt, Delaware Office of State Planning, and TAC Vice Chair, brought the TAC meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

**2. TAC Members present:**

Tricia Arndt, Delaware Office of State Planning  
Cooper Bowers, Delaware Department of Transportation  
Michael Fortner, City of Newark  
Gwinneth Kaminsky, City of Wilmington Planning  
Catherine Salarano, Maryland Department of Environment  
Derrick Sexton, Maryland State Highway Administration  
Catherine Smith, Delaware Transit Corporation  
Rashad Pinckney, Maryland Department of Transportation  
Steven Weber, City of Wilmington Public Works

**TAC Ex-Officio Members present:**

**TAC Members absent:**

Cecil County Division of Planning and Zoning  
Delaware Division of Small Business, Development, and Tourism  
Delaware River and Bay Authority  
DNREC  
Maryland Department of Planning  
Maryland Transit Administration  
New Castle County Department of Land Use  
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:**

Deanna Murphy, Cecil County Board of Realtors  
Richard Mahan, Cecil County Municipality

**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  
Jacob Thompson, Senior Planner  
Dawn Voss, Outreach Coordinator  
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth Espinal.

### **3. MINUTES**

Approval of the May 18, 2023, TAC Minutes

**ACTION:** On motion by Ms. Gwinneth Kaminsky and seconded by Ms. Cathy Smith TAC approved the May 18, 2023, TAC minutes.

Motion passed.

**(07-20-23-01)**

Approval of the June 15, 2023, TAC Minutes

On motion by Ms. Gwinneth Kaminsky and seconded by Mr. Cooper Bowers TAC approved the June 15, 2023, TAC minutes.

Motion passed.

**(07-20-23-02)**

### **4. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

#### **a. Air Quality Subcommittee**

Mr. Bill Swiatek said the Air Quality Subcommittee met July 6th. They reviewed the proposed amendment to the FY 2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Mid-County Driver Training Facility and the committee found it did not trigger a revised conformity analysis.

The AQS also received a presentation from DNREC about New Castle County's Ozone State Implementation Plan (SIP) update. As part of that update, the old 2009 Mobile Vehicle Emissions Budgets are being revised. Bill showed a table with the new ozone proposed emission budgets for the New Council County: VOC =4.57 and NOx =8.53. Included in those figures is a safety margin of +10% from modeled 2023 results to account for uncertainty. DNREC continues to draft the Ozone SIP document. A public hearing is tentatively scheduled for Fall 2023.

Ms. Tricia Arndt questioned whether the added 10% margin is something new for this year or has DNREC done it in the past. Mr. Bill Swiatek responded that he believes it has not been done in the past, but it is allowed by the EPA as a safety margin due to the uncertainties of modeling.

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

None.

### **6. TAC Nominating Committee:**

TAC members discussed the past protocol of two-year terms for the Chair and Vice Chair. In accordance to this practice, the members concurred that Mr. Matt Rogers from New Castle County Department of Land Use should serve an addition year as Chairperson and Ms. Tricia Arndt from Delaware Office of State Planning should continue as Vice Chairperson.

**ACTION:** On motion by Ms. Gwinneth Kaminsky and seconded by Mr. Michael Fortner, the TAC elected Mr. Rogers as Chairperson and Ms. Arndt as Vice Chairperson for FY 2024.

Motion passed.

(07-20-23-03)

### **ACTION ITEMS**

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

Ms. Heather Dunigan said DTC and DeIDOT are requesting that the TIP be amended to add a \$2.2 million dollars funding for the Mid-County Driver Training Facility Project to implement training classrooms and expand offices.

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. Michael Fortner and seconded by Ms. Gwinneth Kaminsky, TAC recommends amendment of the TIP.

Motion passed.

(07-20-23-04)

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

#### **8. DART Reimagined Update**

Ms. Cathy Smith presented an overview of the DART Reimagined planning. DART is the public transit provider for the state of Delaware and has 960 employees, 529 vehicles, and an operating budget of around \$128 million. Ms. Smith mentioned that the pandemic caused a significant decline in ridership, especially in the commuter market due to the rise of remote work. DART, like many transit agencies, decided to conduct a reevaluation to identify its markets and determine where services are needed.

DART conducted extensive evaluation, literature research, and peer transit agency analysis. They produced a "State of the System Report," accessible on their website. Demographics, land use density, and traffic patterns were considered to identify markets and needs. They found that ridership is recovering, with fixed route ridership at around 80% of pre-pandemic levels, rail ridership is at 46-50%, and paratransit at nearly 90%.

DART initiated a three-step process called "DART Reimagined," involving evaluation, identification, and achievement phases. A digital survey with over 2,440 responses helped capture customer needs and preferences. The survey aimed to gather feedback from both customers and infrequent or non-transit riders for system improvements.

The project is currently in the "Identify" phase, where they are developing initial draft networks. The next phase involves developing a reimagined network design, with considerations for frequency, coverage, accessibility, and equity. DART has sought extensive collaboration with stakeholders, including Executive and Technical Advisory Committees, community workshops, and online engagement.

Internally, DART is exploring two network design concepts, one focused on efficiency and the other on innovation, including on-demand micro-transit. The goal is to create a hybrid of these concepts, which will be presented to the public for feedback in September. The project will continue with public engagement over the summer and will hold community workshops to gather public feedback on the proposed network designs. After revisions, the final draft for the reimagined network will be presented for implementation consideration. Implementation will likely take several years, involving regular service changes and an education and marketing

campaign, particularly to inform the public about the new services and address misconceptions about micro-transit. DART will consider introducing micro-transit and on-demand services to address first or last-mile challenges and improve access in difficult-to-serve areas. Lastly, Cathy encourages everyone to visit the project website, [www.dartreimagined.com](http://www.dartreimagined.com) and provide feedback to shape the future of DART's transit services.

Ms. Tricia Arndt shared with Cathy that she has one of the poster flyers of the Reimagined campaign and it is beautiful with well-presented graphics. The poster was shared on the chat room for all participants.

## **9. Newport Train Station Project Update**

Mr. Dave Gula presented the Newport Train Station Plan completed as part of the Newport Transportation Study Monitoring Committee. The focus of the Monitoring Committee was on updating the 2012 station study to prepare the community for a potential train station and address other initiatives aimed at making Newport a more walkable and bike-friendly town. The committee reviewed the initial study conducted in 2012, and then gathered new information from Amtrak, Delaware Transit Corp, and DeIDOT to prepare for presenting the potential plan to the community.

The proposed site for the train station is in the center of Newport, which would serve as a convenient 10-minute walk for the surrounding neighborhoods. The area is characterized by being compact and walkable, though some concerns remain about walking and biking due to the disjointed sidewalk network and lack bicycling amenities.

A SWOT analysis was presented, highlighting the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the project. Strengths included the presence of businesses, new restaurants, and retail, as well as existing strong bus transit in the area. Weaknesses included the need to rebuild the station and challenges with sidewalk connections and biking routes. Opportunities were found in the town's walkability and regional location. Threats included the need for approvals from Amtrak, and uncertain ridership in the post-COVID era.

The committee had productive discussions with Amtrak and DeIDOT, with Amtrak expressing support for the station and offering a phased plan for implementation. Phases were proposed for the construction of platforms and additional tracks. Phase I would include building a platform on existing track 1 and a crossover. Phase II would focus on a platform on the north side of track 3 for Newport (also at Churchman's Crossing), then Phase III would be the construction of track A and movement of the platform from track 1. The station costs are estimated at Phase I: \$25m; Phase II: \$45m; Phase III: \$45m. Improvements connecting the station to parking areas and Newport's downtown will cost \$3m. Parking remains a critical concern, with an estimated need for up to 200 spaces initially. Negotiations with businesses leasing state-owned lots and potential alternative parking areas were discussed. A preliminary design for the station was presented, featuring a high-level platform meeting ADA regulations and various access points for pedestrians. Improvements to pedestrian and cycling connections, particularly at the James Street underpass and Water Street, were highlighted, with a local development group expressing interest in supporting these enhancements.

The committee's next steps include planning a public workshop to engage the community, updating ridership estimates, and conducting follow-up discussions with Amtrak, MARC, and SEPTA. A meeting in the fall may take place for both the monitoring committee and the public workshop.

## **10. Southbridge Transportation Action Plan**

Mr. Bill Swiatek presented the Southbridge Transportation Action Plan. The plan focuses on South Wilmington, specifically the Southbridge neighborhood and nearby areas to the West and East. It builds on various studies, including the Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan adopted in October 2021. The plan has four main focus areas: traffic and road diets, truck and freight movements, bike and pedestrian enhancements, and bus enhancements.

Community engagement played a significant role in the development of the plan, with surveys, workshops, and a youth engagement effort to gather input and create a vision for the study. A Quick Action Memo was submitted earlier in the study, suggesting short-term solutions such as speed limit signage and stop signs at locations with speeding issues.

Medium and long-term recommendations include signage enhancements to reroute trucks, road reconfigurations, and raised intersections to slow down traffic in Southbridge. The plan also addresses bus connectivity, proposing Sunday service to a grocery store, frequency improvements on existing routes, and potential route deviations to provide better access to supermarkets and entry-level jobs.

Next steps involve a review of the draft plan, with the TAC next month and final Council endorsement in September.

Ms. Tricia Arndt asked to what degree was the truck parking an issue for residents in the area and are the trucks primarily commuting to and from the port, or is it related to truck drivers needing rest breaks? Mr. Bill Swiatek answered, he wasn't sure which one it is exactly, but during the study it was discovered trucks parking is not allowed in residential areas in most circumstances. However, the main concern is the number of trucks passing through each day, some at high speed.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **11. Staff Report**

Ms. Heather Dunigan reported the following updates:

- Introduction of new Administrative Assistant for WILMAPCO, Ms. Elizabeth Espinal.
- Council met July 13<sup>th</sup> and had several action items. They approved the two Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments for the US 13 Pedestrian Improvement Project and the I-295 Project. Council also approved Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) application for Port Deposit Marina Park which Maryland SHA (State Highway Administration) is currently reviewing. Council endorsed the 2023 Transportation Justice Bus connectivity analysis and the Ardens Transportation Plan.
- Staff continue to coordinate with DVRPC on a climate pollution reduction grant for the region. An RFQ has been posted for consultant support on the effort on the DVRPC's website.
- Southbridge Transportation Action Plan held a final public workshop, July 18<sup>th</sup>. Public comment submission on our website is available until August 6<sup>th</sup>. The report will go to the council for endorsement in September.
- Ardens Transportation Plan was endorsed by WILMAPCO Council on July 13<sup>th</sup>, contingent on a final vote from the Ardentown residents which will be held September 11<sup>th</sup>.
- WILMAPCO held interviews for consultants shortlisted for the East Elkton Traffic Circulation and Safety Plan on July 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Three proposals were received for the Kirkwood Highway Corridor Master Plan and interviews will be conducted on August 4<sup>th</sup>.

- South Claymont and Philadelphia Pike Corridor Master Plan proposals are being accepted until July 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Wilmington Initiatives Open House Workshop was held on June 15<sup>th</sup> with twelve projects on display. Staff received excellent feedback from the public.
- The Wilmington Initiatives Committee held a meeting on July 19 recent updates included: South Wilmington Shared Use Path, Two-way King Street TAP project, Lovering Ave/Dupont Street TAP project, and discussing solutions for double parking issues on Market Street.
- The Newport Transportation Study, the project team presented the final project plan to the Management Committee on June 13<sup>th</sup>.
- A community meeting for the Glasgow Avenue Study was held on May 23<sup>rd</sup> at Hodgson Vo-Tech High School. DelDOT spoke about implementation, which was delayed to FY 2027.
- Staff presented to the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce Infrastructure Committee on June 13<sup>th</sup> to talk about the MPO process.
- On June 17<sup>th</sup>, staff participated in the Newark Family Bike Festival, doing a helmet fit check for the children.
- The Safe Streets for All in New Castle County had their advisory committee meeting on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. A draft report will be available for public review through August, and it will be up for action in the next TAC meeting.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. Michael Fortner and seconded by Ms. Cathy Smith the TAC adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

Motion passed.

**(07-20-23-05)**

**Attachments (0)**