

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
January 17, 2019

A meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was held on Thursday, January 17, 2019, at WILMAPCO, The Tower at STAR Campus, 100 Discovery Boulevard, Suite 800, Newark, DE 19713.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Gwinn Kaminsky, City of Wilmington Planning and Development, brought the TAC meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

2. TAC Members present:

Benjamin Allen, MDOT SHA
Tricia Arndt, Delaware Office of State Planning
Ian Beam, Maryland Department of Transportation
Marco Boyce, New Castle County Department of Land Use
Alex Brun, Maryland Department of the Environment (via conference call)
Tony Di Giacomo, Cecil County Land Use and Development Services
Mike Fortner, City of Newark Planning and Development Department
Gwineth Kaminsky, City of Wilmington Planning and Development
Brian Mitchell, City of Wilmington Department of Public Works
Jolyon Shelton, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
Catherine Smith, Delaware Transit Corporation
Joshua Thomas, Delaware Department of Transportation

TAC Ex-Officio Members present:

Lindsay Donnellon, U.S. Federal Highway Administration (via conference call)

TAC Members absent:

Delaware Division of Small Business, Development, and Tourism
Delaware River and Bay Authority
Maryland Department of Planning
Maryland Transit Administration
Town of Elkton

TAC Ex-Officio Members absent:

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

Guests and Invitees:

Carl Chamberlin, MDTA
Kevin Racine, Citizen

Staff:

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner
Janet Butler, Administrative Assistant
Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner
Sharen Elcock, Executive Assistant
Dave Gula, Principal Planner
Randi Novakoff, Outreach Manager

Bill Swiatek, Principal Planner
Jacob Thompson, Transportation Planner
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Minutes prepared by: Janet Butler

3. MINUTES

The December 20, 2018 TAC/AQS minutes were approved.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. DiGiacomo and seconded by Mr. Fortner, the TAC approved the December 20, 2018 TAC/AQS minutes.

Motion passed.

(1-17-19 - 01)

4. Subcommittee Updates - None

5. Public Comments - None

ACTION ITEMS:

None.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

6. I-95 at Belvidere Road Transportation Improvement Study

Mr. Carl Chamberlin, MDTA, discussed the I-95 at Belvidere Road project including the status of the NEPA process.

The project goals include: 1) Accommodate the increased traffic demand and operations associated with the proposed development. 2) Address safety concerns related to additional traffic, including truck traffic associated with the proposed development. 3) Ensure the ability of the roadway network near Belvidere Road to support economic development and job opportunities within the Cecil County Principio Enterprise Zone (CCPEZ).

The timeline of project activities are: Initial Purpose and Need presentation (July 18, 2018), Purpose and Need distributed announcement that MDTA is entering the Transportation Emergency Response Plan (TERP) process, (October 26, 2018), Interagency Purpose and Need/Preliminary Alternatives Meeting, (November 27, 2018), formal Concurrence Request Form distributed, (December 6, 2018), and Formal Concurrence Requested, (December 28, 2018). The second public workshop for the I-95 at Belvidere Road Transportation Improvement Study is January 17 at the Perryville Community Fire Station.

Four alternative project designs are:

1. No-Build, which is part of the NEPA process, and is the benchmark against which the impacts of the other alternatives are compared.
2. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) that includes redistributing trips, especially during peak hours.
3. Transportation System Management (TSM); and Interchange at Belvidere Road, which includes making upgrades within the existing system for traffic operations such as widening Routes 222 and 272, with additional turn lanes and signals.
4. I-95 Interchange including the following sub-alternatives: A) Diamond, where all turn movements would be signal-controlled. B) Diverging Diamond, which eliminates the need for left-turn lanes and sign phases at ramps and it removes conflict points. C) Partial

Cloverleaf where on/off ramps would be provided in southwest and northwest quadrants.
D) Partial Cloverleaf where on/off ramps would be provided in northwest and southeast quadrants.

At the July 31, 2018, Information Open House Meeting, 33% favored a new I-95 Interchange at Belvidere Road with the ability to alleviate congestion; 31% sited increased truck traffic; 16% people favored the economic benefits to Cecil County; 12% sited impact to environmental resources and residences; and 8% expressed concern for driver safety on roads in the study area.

At the November 27, 2018, Interagency Field Review comments suggested a ramp alignment to minimize impacts to the wetland system in the southwest quadrant. Swamp Pink that is located in both the southwest and southeast quadrants could be impacted by the interchange options. A fish-spawning cove is located in Principio Furnace Bay and Indiana bats is considered one of the greatest conservation needs. The habitat impact threshold of concern is regarding deforestation of 17 acres or greater.

The expected timeline for NEPA completion is a draft document is in spring 2019, a Public Hearing in summer 2019, and the final document in winter 2020.

Ms. Zegeye asked Mr. Chamberlin to explain the slide regarding the Existing Socioeconomic Resources. Mr. Chamberlin replied that it is an inventory from various existing resources. Ms. Zegeye also asked if any Environmental Justice (EJ) areas were identified. Mr. Chamberlin said that will be part of the next step. Ms. Dunigan asked if any bike/pedestrian components were included. Mr. DiGiacomo responded there is potential for intermodal and multimodal activities as the property develops. Mr. Jolyon asked the total cost. Mr. Chamberlin responded the total funding is \$54 million.

7. 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Public Outreach Update

Ms. Novakoff said the 2050 RTP Outreach Goals include to test the public support for the RTP objectives, gain greater understanding of any needed changes to objectives, and fine-tune the plan policy; develop better understanding of which types of projects are most desired; develop better understanding of preferred public outreach methodologies; and educate people about the current state of transportation.

Typical public outreach strategies for the RTP include the Public Opinion Survey, presentations to municipal and civic organizations, member agency briefings, and newsletter articles, press releases, radio interviews, the WILMAPCO Our Town event, and the public comment review period. New public outreach strategies include Metroquest, which is a highly interactive survey that have included 591 participants and garnered 497 comments; virtual workshops that have included 125 registrants, 75 people attended; popup exhibits; and a social media campaign.

Metroquest results showed “repair existing infrastructure” as the top priority, followed closely behind by “establish more train and bus projects.” Roadways investment was least favored. The demographics of the Metroquest participants are predominantly white; 45-54 years old, and drive a car as their primary mode of transportation.

A Virtual Workshop was held on Friday November 2, 2018, from 12-1 p.m., which included an overview of the RTP, poll questions, a white board activity, and Q&A. Poll results showed 63% viewed the event from work and 26% viewed it from home. Thirty percent were government employees and 18% were the public; and 74% drive alone. The popular objective was “develop

effective transportation networks, to provide accessibility and connectivity, and ensure transportation choice and equity.

Pop-up events have been held at the Wilmington Train Station, Delaware Decision Makers Forum, Christiana Mall, and the Wilmington Library, since November 2018. Upcoming scheduled locations include Perryville Train Station and the Latin Community Center. Staff is also working to schedule YMCAs and various Community Centers.

Pop-up participants said that transit funding was their highest priority and biking funding was their lowest priority. Pop-up comments have included the need for more sidewalks, better connections to roadways, better maintenance of potholes, and management of I-95 and DuPont Highway congestion. In addition, there is a need for better education about Wilmington destinations, more investment in the overall transportation system, more bike lanes in downtown Wilmington and Middletown, more bus routes, and more frequent, on-time trains, requests to reopen the Elkton Train Station, and requests to provide more parking at train stations.

Social media has included 155 event responses, 10,900 who have seen the ads, and 49 individuals who liked, commented, or shared the ad. The 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update public comment period is from January 14 through March 6, 2019. The WILMAPCO Council will review the RTP for adoption at their next Council meeting on March 7, 2019.

8. Concord Pike (US 202) Corridor Master Plan

Mr. Gula said the Concord Pike Corridor Master Plan is coordinated with New Castle County, DeIDOT and WILMAPCO. Area characteristics include diverse stakeholders, including businesses, residents, and institutions. Route 202 is a major employment area with shopping centers/retail and hotels. There are residential communities with churches, schools, hotels, and the YMCA. Heavy peak traffic includes commuter, local, freight, and truck traffic that traverses the “Strode,” a term which describes a hybrid of a local street and a commuter road.

Goals and objectives include creating an attractive, cohesive master plan, integrating land use and transportation, identifying multi-modal improvements, diversifying mode share, organize vehicular traffic, making the corridor more pedestrian and bike friendly, and, building upon the Market Assessment. Additional goals and objectives include creating a vision, building multi-family housing, promoting high quality mixed-use development, improving access-management and connectivity, considering Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Transportation Investment District (TID) strategies, integrating streetscape, wayfinding and branding, protecting existing neighborhoods, and developing implementation strategies.

Route 202 is predominantly a six-lane, heavily commercialized arterial. Between 45,000 and 55,000 vehicles, traverse it daily with morning and afternoon peaks. There are 4-8 travel lanes, left and right, turn lanes at most intersections, driveway access for individual businesses, abundance of parking, and a limited street network. The study area encompasses a six-mile stretch from the City of Wilmington to the Delaware/Pennsylvania State Line.

Off-street pedestrian and bicycle facilities are located within the open space network along the western side and southern end of the study area. There are usable pedestrian and bicycle facilities that are limited and disconnected.

The Market Analysis revealed there are 400 to 875 residential units including 400 to 700 multi-family rentals and 100 to 175 multi-family units that could be added to the corridor. Mixed-use

development opportunity areas include the Astra Zeneca site and adjacent to the Wilmington University's future campus site.

Regarding the economic framework, most of New Castle County's forecasted population growth is due to immigration from surrounding communities. The cost of living and doing business is lower than neighboring states. New Castle County is a job hub with more jobs than employed residents and a high percentage of the County's jobs are in professional and business services, health care, and financial activities. Jobs in the County are projected to increase over the next ten years. Residents of New Castle County enjoy a relatively low unemployment rate. New Castle County residents are well educated and have incomes above the national average. The U.S. 202 Corridor is convenient to a large market that is best characterized as high-income and well educated.

Retail, office, and institutional uses are along Route 202. Residential development is primarily east of Concord Pike with a few neighborhoods to the west. Large, undeveloped land areas consisting of parks, agriculture, and various recreational amenities are along the west side and at the south end of the study area.

A Concord Pike Information Session on July 25, 2018, at the Talleyville Fire Hall had nearly 200 attendees. Participants reviewed the current conditions such as existing travel conditions, crash trends, transit facilities, non-motorized facilities, Level of Traffic Stress (LTS), employment totals and types, worker flows, future land use, zoning, and land use activity. They looked for input on issues and concerns, and the study area now has five large-scale maps of redevelopment opportunities: 1) Wilmington University; 2) Brandywine Country Club; 3) Concord Plaza; 4) Astra Zeneca; and 5) Route 141 Connection.

Public comments from participants included concerns over increased development that will exacerbate traffic, school overcrowding, and crime. Comments included that roads are heavily traveled and intersections are dangerous, and some retail areas are declining and underutilized. Visions included creating more walkable, shopping environments; consider senior living and 55+ communities; establish strategies to reduce speeding and relieve heavy traffic. Visions also included incorporating additional pedestrian and bicycle trails, protecting natural amenities and wildlife, and integrating stormwater management systems.

The Concord Pike Visioning Workshop that was held on November 14, 2018, at the Brandywine High School attracted 100 attendees. At the workshop, the project team gave an overview presentation and included table discussions. Subjects included mixed-use development, streetscape, parking, amenities and activities, and parks and open space.

Continuing public outreach includes a Wiki Map public engagement tool to provide information to help craft the Concord Pike Master Plan, share ideas on how to improve community connections and amenities, describe where citizens go and how often, and "view" to agree or disagree with other user's comments.

Three days of Stakeholder Focus Groups were held in November 2018. Thirty-six stakeholders were interviewed separately and in groups, to give detailed feedback regarding strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for the Concord Pike Corridor. After all comments have been considered from our outreach, three Focus Areas have been drafted - Segment 1: Naamans Road to Silverside Road; Segment 2: Silverside Road to Murphy Road; Segment 3: Murphy Road to I-95. The Concord Pike (US 202) Master Plan schedule also includes an upcoming

public workshop to model scenarios and compare results and a public workshop to finalize the preferred alternative and assess results.

Mr. DiGiacomo asked if there has been consideration for transit to connect Wilmington, DE to West Chester, PA. Mr. Gula responded yes. DVRPC has conducted a study regarding this; and SEPTA and DART have discussed it. Ms. Smith said she had thought it was more of a Vanpool possibility. Mr. Gula expressed that some stakeholders believe there are sufficient ridership numbers between West Chester and Wilmington, and vanpools could lead to transit service.

Ms. Kaminsky asked why the Fairfax Shopping area would become functionally obsolete. Mr. Gula replied because there is so much new development around it, and that area was originally developed during the 1950s era. It may be one of the next centers to be redeveloped. Ms. Kaminsky also asked if there had been a discussion with consultants about the parking issues. Mr. Gula said we have not gotten to that point yet. Mr. Boyce responded that New Castle County (NCC) would reduce parking requirements. NCC would like to have better design, and would like to see a multi-way boulevard that would go up and down the corridor, which allows for shared parking. He added this could be a solution along with a master-share agreement for parking.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

12. Staff Report

Ms. Dunigan reported on the following plans and events:

- At the WILMAPCO Council Meeting on January 10, 2019, the Council amended the FY2019-2022 TIP to include the Mechanics Valley Road Bridge over CSX; released the 2050 RTP and FY20120-2023 TIP AQ Conformity Determination for public comment; released the 2050 RTP for public review and comment; released the 2020-2023 TIP for public comment; and endorsed the 2018 Interregional Report.
- The 2050 RTP public outreach is continuing with presentations and popup events through March 2019 to municipalities and community groups. TAC members are welcome to submit any suggestions for additional community groups for 2050 RTP Update presentations or for additional popup locations.
- The WILMAPCO “Our Town” event will be held on Thursday, February 7, 2019, at the Atrium of the STAR Campus from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Registration is open and we encourage the TAC members to attend. The Our Town Save the Date Flyer was distributed.
- The Wilmington Initiatives (WI) meetings are ongoing, which includes the Marilyn Monroe MLK Stakeholder Meeting on January 16, 2019.
- The 12th Street Corridor Connector Open House was held on January 7, 2019.
- The Seventh Street Peninsula Roadway Master Plan Public Open House will be held on February 6, 2019.
- The Southern New Castle County (SNCC) Master Plan Visioning Workshop will be held on January 31, 2019, at the Odessa Fire Hall.
- The Union Street Reconfiguration Project has a spin-off project that is reviewing Pennsylvania Avenue and North Union Street concepts that will be available to the public for review on January 22, 2019.
- Staff will participate in the Maryland MPO Roundtable event on January 18, 2019.
- The Air Quality Partnership, as part of the Delaware Estuary with City of Wilmington, will be planning 2019 Earth Day Events, with possible Parklets along Market Street.
- Staff supported the Re-certification of the Clean Cities Coalition, and WILMAPCO has joined the group as a member.

- Staff is supporting the Delaware Division of Public Health in connecting civic leader outreach that supports the communities around the City of Wilmington.
- Staff will attend the next City of Newark Sustainability Plan Steering Committee meeting on January 29, 2019.
- The Route 9 Master Plan Monitoring Committee will meet on February 19, 2019.
- On January 22, 2019, WILMAPCO staff will attend a meeting with DVRPC, Penn DOT, and DelDOT regarding the East Coast Greenway implementation at the Pennsylvania/Delaware Line. This project includes paving Route 13 in 2020.
- Staff attended the Management Meeting for the Newark Area Transit Study on January 29, 2019.
- Staff has been helping to coordinate The Mid-Atlantic Greenways and Trail Summit, and registration is open through February 15, 2019. This event will be held in Philadelphia from April 4-6, 2019.

OTHER BUSINESS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Attachments (0)