

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

March 19, 2020

A meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was held on Thursday, March 19, 2020, via video conference/conference call.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Heather Dunigan, WILMAPCO, brought the TAC meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

2. TAC Members present:

Tricia Arndt, Delaware Office of State Planning
Ian Beam, Maryland Department of Transportation
Cooper Bowers, Delaware Department of Transportation
Alex Brun, Maryland Department of the Environment
Marvina Cephas, DNREC
David Dahlstrom, Maryland Department of Planning
Stacey Dahlstrom, New Castle County Department of Land Use
Michael Fortner, City of Newark
Stephen Miller, Maryland State Highway Administration
Brian Mitchell, City of Wilmington Department of Public Works
Steve O'Connor, Cecil County Land Use
Catherine Smith, DTC

TAC Ex-Officio Members present:

TAC Members absent:

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

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:

Kevin Racine
Jolyon Shelton, DNREC
Josh Thomas, DeIDOT

Staff:

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner
Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner
Dave Gula, Principal Planner

Randi Novakoff, Outreach Manager
Bill Swiatek, Principal Planner
Jacob Thompson, Transportation Planner
Dawn Voss, Administrative Assistant
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Minutes prepared by: Dawn Voss

3. MINUTES

The February 20, 2020 TAC minutes were approved.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Michael Fortner and seconded by Mr. Stephen O'Connor, the TAC approved the February 20, 2020 TAC minutes.

Motion passed.

(03-19-20 - 01)

4. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Air Quality Subcommittee

Mr. Bill Swiatek said the Air Quality Subcommittee met on March 5th. The group received a summary of the Transportation and Climate Initiative from DNREC, similar to what was presented at the last TAC meeting. The Clean Air Council presented at the meeting as well. They are seeking support in installing 50 low-cost particulate monitors outside of homes and businesses across Delaware. These would become part of the PurpleAir global air quality monitoring network, which shows particulate readings in real time and, in the end, may support action against polluters.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

6. FY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Ms. Tigist Zegeye presented a draft of the financial aspect of the FY 2021 UPWP (**Attachment A**). The draft resolution is to adopt the state and local cash commitment. State and local funds must match 20% of all federal funding received by WILMAPCO. The agreed upon cash commitments for the member agencies are:

State of Maryland	\$ 13,090
Cecil County	\$ 4,400
State of Delaware	\$412,451
New Castle County	\$ 31,500
City of Wilmington	\$ 11,796

The remainder of the money would be matched in-kind. In the State of Delaware all cost contributions would be made in cash. In the State of Maryland, WILMAPCO has a signed agreement with Cecil County and the Town of Elkton for an in-kind commitment of \$8,690.

The draft FY 2021 UPWP Funding Outline lists the task description, cash activity, in-kind activity and the total.

On the list of Consultant Costs FY 2021 that are included in the cash activity, the first eight projects, Bookkeeping through Regional Transportation Performance Measurement

Development are tasks that have been included in our UPWP for the past several years. The next five projects are new to the FY 2021 UPWP.

The Statewide Truck Parking Study is to provide consultant resources to analyze truck parking locations and utilization throughout the state of Delaware. It will emphasize overnight trucking, truck parking and staging concerns. It will also include an overview of national policy documenting existing conditions, observation of data review/hotspots analysis in addition to estimating future demand and policy and project recommendations. \$140,000 is proposed for this task. This estimate came from consulting closely with MDOT, who have nearly completed their statewide truck parking study.

For the Port Circulation Study, it is proposed that \$85,000 be used for a consultant to perform a technical analysis on the impact and benefits of various possible road improvements in the area around the Port of Wilmington. It is proposed that the project team will work with the Route 9 Master Plan Monitoring Committee and other area stakeholders to develop this study and its recommendations.

The First/Final Mile Freight Network Development Study will be a statewide first/final mile roadway inventory. WILMAPCO performed this task in New Castle County. We are proposing performing this study statewide. Staff will work with a statewide freight committee, including the Dover/Kent MPO as well as Sussex County, to complete this task.

The City of New Castle Transportation Plan Update will update the 1999 plan. The purpose of this plan is to improve the multi-modal transportation network and address flooding and sea level rise impact on lane use and other major transportation corridors. The proposed \$150,000 is for consultant support. The City of New Castle will provide the 20% needed match.

The Union Street Reconfiguration and Streetscape Improvement Study in the City of Wilmington will evaluate the design and operation of the Union Street Corridor between Pennsylvania Avenue and Sycamore Street. The effort is community driven and will go through the Wilmington Initiatives. The project team will be developing a Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL) documentation for this project. The City of Wilmington will contribute the 20% match for this project.

This draft UPWP was presented to the PAC last month and the Council last week. It will be available for public comment from April 1st through May 1st. The final draft will be presented to the TAC and PAC in April and the Council will hopefully approve it at the May 7th meeting. Then it will be sent to DeIDOT and MDOT in May and implemented in July.

7. Maryland, Monroe & MLK Safety Improvement Study

Mr. Dave Gula presented this project which is focused on the five-point intersection at Maryland Avenue, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and South Madison Street in Wilmington. The intersection has level of service challenges due to the volumes of traffic, especially the heavy congestion with the a.m. peak, which causes traffic to back up through the exit ramp onto I-95. This congestion was exacerbated in 2008 when Madison Street became a 2-way street. With studies in 2009 and 2011, some alternatives were created, but we were unable to get this project added to the TIP or CTP. In 2018, the City of Wilmington and DeIDOT asked WILMAPCO, through Wilmington Initiatives, to conduct a study and come to a resolution. Stakeholders were brought in because both DTC and Delmarva Power have critical operations in this location, which is immediately adjacent to the central business district and in the midst of

some neighborhood areas. Some communities' civic groups have been contacted and some feedback was received from people from Browntown, Hedgeville and Hilltop, but less than we had hoped. The project team worked closely with Delmarva Power and DART. DART's central bus operations are located in the area of study, so it is very important that their route structures, and everyday business model function. The area also includes the State Medical Examiner's Office, who recently upgraded their facility. Reybold owns a site that they hope to develop in the area. The project team is attempting to contact a roofing company that recently took over the location of a former tattoo shop. There is also an entrance to the Riverfront. Public access to the Riverfront is important to the RDC.

With this project, alternatives were created, stormwater impacts were examined, and a traffic analysis conducted. Because there may be some reconfiguration of the street network business owners were contacted. Project staff met with DTC to do an operation analysis to anticipate the impacts of reconfiguring the streets. There was discussion with Wilmington parks about a proposed skateboard park near Liberty Street. The project team met with a focus group of stakeholders to gather their feedback, seek comments on alternatives created, and then have a final wrap up meeting. Status reports were made to Wilmington Initiatives, who function as the project management committee. Maryland Avenue is two lanes all the way through this area. Every alternative proposes all inbound traffic on Maryland Avenue to turn left onto Adams Street, which is an underused street, then reconfigure the streets to achieve more flow from the ramp.

- Alternative A proposes reconfiguring the street network to remove Maryland Avenue from one portion and make Monroe Street operation two-way.
- Alternative B proposes creating separation of traffic with inbound traffic heading downtown moving onto Maryland Avenue. Monroe Street remains one-way, but with some reconfiguration. The intersection is still a five-point intersection in this version.
- Alternative C proposes removing Monroe Street, expand Maryland Avenue, have inbound traffic turn onto Adams then turn onto MLK. This option removes one phase by going one way onto S. Madison Street, but the configuration does not remove another phase and the five-point intersection remains.
- Alternative D-3 creates a new ramp connection to I-95 with direct access to Monroe Street. There would be two-way traffic on Monroe Street, and the old ramp and Maryland Avenue are removed. All traffic outbound west flows one-way on Maryland Avenue, and all traffic coming inbound on Maryland Avenue turns onto Adams Street, which will be made wider.

Options for Madison Street and new ways to get to the Riverfront to try to limit the phasing at this five-point intersection were considered. A criteria matrix developed by RK&K was used to grade these alternatives. None of the alternatives solved all the problems. One of the main challenges is DTC's operations. Allowing two-way traffic on Monroe Street is the best solution to remove the five-way intersection, because it allows the removal of Maryland Avenue at the intersection. However, two-way traffic on Monroe Street adversely impacts DTC's operations related to bus parking, bus access to the operations center for maintenance, and buses queuing every day to begin their routes. One idea to solve this challenge is structured parking that connects the different parking lots that DTC uses in the area and provides covered parking for DART buses. DTC already is working toward covered bus parking in the future.

At the end of the study, garage alternatives were considered. In Alternative A, a garage spans the new street allowing vehicles to move above the surface streets. Alternative A or D proposes garage options that span between the current operation center and what would then be bus parking, allowing buses to navigate above ground level, and avoid crossing Monroe Street. Another option that would be useful for multiple alternatives is to use property that is currently

privately owned to create a large structured area that consolidates DTC's operations into one area. However, this would require more analysis than the initial study's budget allows. In January, the project team concluded that no alternative meets the needs of all the stakeholders, but structured parking with a multi-level DART operations center could potentially be a solution. Without a garage feasibility study, Alternative A appears to be the best option. However, currently buses come down Monroe Street, and turn onto Chestnut to enter the operations center, for daily fuel and maintenance, then move to parking areas until they queue in a very confined space to make a right onto Monroe and start their route. With alternative A changing Monroe Street to two-way operations, DTC's operation is completely disrupted. The solution that works for everyone is a garage facility that would incorporate DTC operations center with structured parking and bridging over some of the streets.

DART asked if WILMAPCO could fund a further garage analysis. With the garage feasibility phase, we are assessing the impacts of changing operations on Monroe Street to two-way, and all the staging and other challenges buses have negotiating the new grid around the current structure. Then, we will look at different parcels for operations in the garage facility, including maintenance and dispatch areas, bus parking, and parking for DTC support vehicles and employees. If structured parking in this area impacts other sites, parking will need to be provided for Delmarva and the Medical Examiner's Office. If the private lot is developed, public spaces may be needed in the structured parking. This study is needed to see what is important to all users, how to make it work and to evaluate all the alternatives. The garage feasibility phase includes a site visit that occurred on February 26th. The project team toured the operations building, looked at the space needed, how things are utilized and how things could be better utilized with additional space. The next task is an architectural massing study, which is taking place now. We will use a best practices software developed by HDR to look at how the maintenance facility would operate. The needs of all of the stakeholders need to be considered when a conceptual building program is designed. The third task is to create two or three site models for existing land parcels. The phasing challenge is that it is almost impossible to build on the site of DTC's facility while the facility is still operating, and the facility cannot be abandoned while a new facility is being built. That impacts looking at that particular parcel as part of this complex and may create an opportunity for a land swap with some privately held land that would be more suitable. So far, the landowner has not been interested in a land swap, so that is a challenge.

A session to work with DTC staff was scheduled for next week but was postponed to mid-April due to the COVID-19 social distancing order. It is an important meeting to present the models that have been developed and discuss potential future needs. It is preferred that the workshop be in person because of the limits of the technology to foster discussion. Task five is to take the information from the workshop, revise all the models and prepare the deliverables, then prepare cost estimates.

During this phase, the maintenance design software is useful because it allows the user to enter information and it helps develop the model for the building. For example, the user enters the number and size of the buses and the software calculates how much space is needed for parking. The facility program summary takes different parts of the building and different uses for the building and calculates the space needed. The software creates a 3-D model that can be manipulated in real time. The software also gives the outputs needed to calculate the cost of the building. The cost may change with construction, but it is helpful to have a good estimate. Mr. Gula would like to have someone present a demonstration of the software at a future TAC meeting.

The schedule is going to be delayed due to COVID-19. The team was hoping to have the study completed in May, but now it will more likely be June or July. Cost is also a factor. Replacing the facility is something DART has been planning in the future, but not this soon.

8. Newport Transportation Plan

Dave Gula presented the Newport Transportation Study, which builds on the 2012-2013 Newport Station Study in which we looked at the feasibility of opening a new train station for SEPTA in the Town of Newport along the existing northeast corridor. Since that study, not only did we work with the town to attempt to get funding for that station, we started to examine the impact of that project on the rest of the town. We have a project team put together. The project management committee (PMC) includes WILMAPCO, DelDOT, DTC, Town of Newport, the mayor and commissioners. Century Engineering is the consultant. An advisory committee, including DNREC, the Office of State Planning, Harvey and Hanna, New Castle County Land Use, New Castle County Chamber of Commerce, landowners, businesses, civic entities and elected officials, has already met. After the initial advisory committee meeting, the study area was expanded. It includes the Town of Newport, and to the north, the logistics center that Harvey and Hanna will soon build on the site of the former GM plant. Also included is Banning Park, which is a large park complex. The population of the Town of Newport from the 2010 census is 1055 people. The added groups as the scope of the project expanded have not yet been calculated. The logistics center is expected to bring 2,200 new jobs. There is also the proposed development of 400,000 square-feet of mixed-use residential in the downtown area of Newport in walking distance of the station. The project team is looking at the potential for growth and development. The study is going to focus on multi-modal capacity improvements such as pedestrian and bike connections. This area is already walkable, but improvements are needed to make it safer and more comfortable. Freight has easy access to I-95 through State Route 141 and a CRX rail line comes through, but there may be some impacts in neighborhoods due to truck traffic. The team has a good concept for the re-opening of the Newport train station and will re-evaluate it to ensure that walkability transfers to access to the train station and that enough parking is proposed. Even though it is a downtown site, a regional rail station needs parking. Strong bus transit services Newport. Route 5 and Route 9 are close by. There is a lot of opportunity for a walkable downtown community. This has been touted as potentially a Complete Community Enterprise District (CCED) by New Castle County.

In the project work plan, proposed alternatives based on feedback from the first advisory committee meeting and the visioning workshop are now being developed. The identification of opportunities and constraints is part of the data collection, as well as the community visioning that took place on January 27th. Once the team determines feasibility, alternatives will be taken to the public for input. Finally, a report that documents the study will be created.

Newport has a riverfront along the Christina River. A new bridge is being constructed near the station. BASF is a functioning manufacturing area. There are many historic properties in Newport. Route 141 comes through elevated, dividing the town and providing area for parking underneath. The town might be looking to relocate an existing skate park to find a better use for that land, but it is a very popular recreation area.

For data gathering the team looked for the potential for redevelopment, not just the proposal for 400,000 square feet of mixed-use development downtown, but other opportunities for development. Walking and biking infrastructure and also connection between the town and the areas around the town need to be considered. The new jobs at the Boxwood Road Logistic

Center, and the train station have a lot of potential for walking, so connections to allow people to walk between the train station and the logistics center are needed.

We did have stakeholder meeting and visioning workshop on January 27th with 47 attendees. We presented the slides and then broke into small groups to give all attendees the opportunity to comment. The study area was expanded again to include the First State Shopping Center, one of the major shopping areas in this area, and another, smaller shopping area. The concern was how people will access these shopping areas without driving using multiple modes of transportation. Bus service exists to both shopping areas. We want to make sure that is clean and easy movement. Delaware Military Academy families want better access to walk and bike to school. There are no sidewalks along the main road in and out of the school. Conrad is a school in the area, where there are challenges with pedestrian crossings. There is a manufacturing area with truck traffic coming in and out on McArthur Drive, which is a challenge for that neighborhood. It was suggested that trucks could move along the back of the property along the Amtrak Northeast Corridor tracks to access First State Boulevard, which is a roadway for a business park and more suitable for trucks than the neighborhood.

On a walking tour, it was found that pedestrian signalization is difficult in the area of James Street, Market Street and Justis Street. There is a lot of congestion due to the onramp and offramp for I-95, so pedestrians are waiting 2-3 phasings to cross the street. The team looked at a one-mile walking radius. From the edge of that one-mile radius, between downtown and the logistics center, is an easy bike ride, so connections to allow people to get around on foot or by bicycle should be considered. Smart growth will involve connection to the Boxwood Center and the potential new apartments downtown. A Park and Ride already exists beneath 141. There are some areas that need more connections. Banning Park does not have a neighborhood access, so connections for bikes and trails could be made. Along the Christina River there would be a connection between the Newport riverfront and the Markel Trail. If that connection is made, a strong connection for that trail to come into Newport would be needed. If the trail comes in along the river, the train station is the only way to get around the Amtrak Northeast Corridor. There is already some activity along the river, such as the business park. There is potential for eco-tourism, as there is already a boat ramp. Kayak and bike rentals could be added. A new trail along the Christina River would be hard to build on dry land due to the proximity to the Amtrak Northeast Corridor, but the State is studying that now. How to make those critical intersections between the train station and downtown comfortable to pedestrians is a challenge. The bicycle level-of-stress map shows that many of the green areas become islands because main roads are not as low stress as the neighborhoods. Crossings of concern are located along the Newport Pike, Route 4, routes in and out of town, and Boxwood Road.

DART Route 9 travels on Boxwood Road. Route 5 goes through the center of town. Route 6 is just north of town on Kirkwood Highway. Route 9 connects to Route 6, but Route 9 does not connect with the center of town. The team is reviewing DART connections to see if there is a way to improve these connections. Any multi-modal network should fit all modes. The project team is considering some traffic control devices at some key locations downtown and use highway capacity software to avoid future traffic issues.

There is a connection to move freight from the Boxwood Road facility via Route 141, but it needs to be verified that it is fully acceptable. The freight for the logistics center will be different than the GM plant. Rail may be used for much of this freight.

One of the challenges of the SEPTA train station is adding a section of track to track A adjacent to the parking area for the SEPTA train to stop, because Amtrak and the Norfolk Southern pass

through on the other two tracks. This adds to the cost. The bridge over James Street should be able to accommodate another section of track, but that needs to be verified. James Street underpass is the only way to get from the town to the station. There are raised sidewalks there, because it is a low spot and water accumulates there sometimes. It is poorly lit and not attractive, so it needs improvements. An update of projections for ridership has been completed. Building over the track would be expensive. Since the station is already a \$25-30 million project, adding another \$10 million for an overpass is unlikely. Parking under route 141 is proposed. There will be some parking adjacent to the station, and perhaps some parking a couple of blocks away. It is important to create an easy path from parking to the station.

INFORMATION ITEMS

9. Staff Report

Ms. Dunigan reported the following updates:

- Most staff members are working from home. Email is the best method of contact. Staff will be checking voicemail, but less frequently. If anyone needs anything, please email.
- At the March 12th Council meeting two action items were approved. The first was to Certify the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process for FY 2021. The second was the Approval of Appointments, Re-appointments and Replacements of PAC members.
- The consultant for the Churchman's Crossing Plan Update is RK&K. A kickoff meeting with the consultant and partners was held on March 9th.
- The public workshop for the Concord Pike Master Plan Update, planned for April 1st, has been moved to a virtual online format.
- The Southern New Castle County Master Plan scenarios are being completed and results should be available in April. Staff was hoping to take the results to the public. How that will be accomplished is yet to be determined.
- On February 25th staff participated in the kickoff meeting for the Cecil County FY 2021-2025 Strategic Highway Safety Plan.
- On March 2nd staff participated in the New Castle County All Hazards Mitigation Plan Update Stakeholder Workshop.
- On February 21st staff participated Safe Kids Day at the University of Delaware.
- April 20-24 will be Air Quality Awareness Week. Staff is reconsidering the events for that week. More information will be available at the April TAC meeting.
- Several Safe Routes to School projects will be starting construction this spring including McCullough Middle School, Eisenberg Elementary School, Downes Elementary and Wilmington Montessori. Bayard Elementary School is still planning some outreach via an online survey.
- Staff provided an update on the implementation of the Marshallton Circulation Study at their civic association meeting on March 12th.
- Staff has a conference call with OAHU MPO on March 19th to discuss our project prioritization process.
- The Sea Level Rise report is now available on the WILMAPCO website.
- Route 9 Master Plan Monitoring Committee has a meeting scheduled for April 14th. We will inform you of any changes to that meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

The TAC adjourned at 11:01 AM

Attachments (1)