

Memorandum

To	David Gula, WILMAPCO Project Manager	Page	1 of 9
CC			
Subject	Chesapeake Connector Freight and Passenger Rail Benefits Study Notes from March 16, 2011 WILMAPCO Advisory Committee Kick-Off Meeting		
From	Toni Horst, AECOM Project Manager		
Date	March 23, 2011		

Introduction of the Project

Dave Gula, WILMAPCO PM welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided a brief summary of the project's history to date. The team also handed out a listing of documents that have been identified concerning the project. The list has Steve Weller's (AECOM) contact information so if there are other items that we should review, the link or reference can be emailed to Stephen.Weller@aecom.com.

Many things are changing in the communities surrounding the project so the question for the group remains: **Do we need the third track? Is grade separation needed?**

Mr. Gula then introduced the AECOM team and Toni Horst, the consultant project manager.

Meeting Participants

Name	Affiliation
WILMAPCO	
Dave Gula	WILMAPCO Project Manager (PM)
Tigist Zegeye	WILMAPCO
Dan Bleuins	WILMAPCO
Consultant Team	
Toni Horst	AECOM Project Manager (PM)
Stephen Weller	AECOM
Stephen Kley	AECOM
Laura Riegel	AECOM
Advisory Committee	
Jeff Gerlach	AMTRAK
Stan Slater	AMTRAK
Vernon Thompson	Cecil County Economic Development
Tony DiGiamo	Cecil County Planning & Zoning
Eric Sennstrom	Cecil County Planning & Zoning
Jim Mullin	Cecil County Commissioners
David Campbell	DeIDOT-DTC
Gregory Oliver	DeIDOT-Planning
Bobbie Geier	DeIDOT-Planning
Joe Fisona	Mayor of Elkton
Jeanne Minnir	Town of Elkton
Harold Lee	Retired Conrail Engineer
Walker Allen	DVRPC
Rick Johnson	MDOT-OFM
Betsy Vennell	The Town of North East
Bonnie Wu	Senator Tom Carper's Office
Gail Seitz	Congressman John Carney's Office
Andrew Dinsmore	Senator Coons Delaware
Rick Armitage	U of D
Karen Holt	Chesapeake Science and Security Corridor (CSSC)
Karl Kalbacher	New Castle County Economic Development
Laura Hoag	Norfolk Southern Corporation (NS)
Sharon Daboin	CSX
John Haroldson	Port of Wilmington

Presentation

The following is a brief summary of the slides and comments from the group.

Slide 2 – The Do Nothing Scenario (Toni Horst, AECOM PM)

- What are the core questions? What have we missed in terms of past studies? What else should be added to that list?

Slide 3 – What is the Best Use of the Investment? (Toni Horst, AECOM PM)

Slide 4 – Economic Benefits (Toni Horst, AECOM PM)

- Who is benefiting? Are the benefits local or broad?
 - Understanding the nature of the project
 - Funding

Slide 5 – Project Location (Steve Kley, AECOM)

- Description of track schematics
 - The AECOM team understood that an operating window existed which limited times for which freight trains can operate on the Northeast Corridor, and that this condition had been in place for about 20 years. This window allowed freight trains to operate on the Northeast Corridor between the hours of 10 pm and 6 am. In performing recent surveys of traffic along the corridor, AECOM noted that freight operations have been occurring outside of the established 10 pm to 6 am window. AECOM assumed that the curfew had either been abolished, or temporarily suspended.
 - **Comment from the audience**
 - **Stan Slater, Amtrak & Laura Hoag, NS - The 10 pm – 6 am window has not expired. Traffic volume has increased, putting a strain on existing capacity, which is requiring NS to operate some trains outside of the established window.**
 - There is an operational challenge for NS to maintain flow in both directions around Perryville.
 - The physical conditions of the connection between the Northeast Corridor and the NS Port Road Branch at Perryville limits trains making the connection to slow speeds.

Slide 6 – Grade Separation (Steve Kley, AECOM)

- **Comment from the audience**
 - **Mr. Lee, Retired Conrail Engineer - When I retired we had a window from 10 pm – 6 am. Does that still apply? (Asking in relation to commuter service to Elkton).**
 - **Steve Kley & Toni Horst, AECOM - Yes, the window is still in place (Steve Kley, AECOM), we will talk about passenger service in more detail later in the presentation (Toni Horst, AECOM PM)**

Slide 7 – Design Issues (Steve Kley, AECOM)

- There are three options for adding a third track and creating capacity in the project area.
 - An overhead grade separated option which would entail a new track crossing over the top of the Northeast Corridor.

- An undergrade grade separated option which would entail a new track crossing under the Northeast Corridor.
- An at grade option which would include installing a new track adjacent to the existing Northeast Corridor tracks,
- All options would include either new interlockings or improvements to the existing Bacon and Prince interlocking for purposes of connecting the proposed track.
- Design Issues for each of these options creates its own set of issues:
 - Overhead option: An “up and over” approach would require long approaches in an effort to minimize the vertical grade for freight train operation. Considerations for existing overhead obstructions, as well as the sub-structure requirements (bridge abutments and piers) of the structure over the Northeast Corridor would need to be made to keep the cost of the structure down, as well as not impact existing roadway facilities of the Northeast Corridor.
 - Undergrade option: Early on, AECOM reviewed the old Perryville Yard lead extension, which crossed under the Northeast Corridor just south of the existing Perryville station. This alignment diverged from the Port Road Branch about 2 miles west of Perryville, and paralleled the Port Road Branch on the south side. The alignment decreased elevation, crossed Broad Street in Perryville at grade, crossed the Northeast Corridor undergrade, then turned north, paralleling the Northeast Corridor. The alignment tied into the Northeast Corridor at about the location of the existing Prince Interlocking, or about 1.5 miles north of Perryville. It is believed that this alignment existed up to the early 1980’s. AECOM ruled this option out for three reasons. The first reason being that the area in the southwest corner of the Perryville Interlocking has been heavily developed residentially. Re-establishing the old alignment would impact those residents. Secondly, the alignment would need to cross Broad Street at grade. Typically railroads do not accept new railroad / roadway at grade crossings. The final reason was that the old undergrade crossing does not appear to provide sufficient vertical clearance for current railroad operations. Further discussion during the meeting indicated that the stakeholder group wished AECOM to include this option in the study, and identify the concerns as such.
 - At grade option: This option would include establishing a new track adjacent to the existing Northeast Corridor between Prince and Bacon Interlockings. This option appears to present the fewest challenges from a physical constraint and right of way perspective. However, it would still require NS trains to cross the Northeast Corridor from west to east, at grade. While this option would still limit crossing time for NS trains, the increased alignment length would increase capacity of the corridor, which would presumably increase capacity on the NS Port Road Branch.

Slide 8 – Freight Impacts (Steve Kley, AECOM)

- Overhead catenary system for Amtrak presents a clearance challenge to double stacking.
- The Susquehanna Bridge presents a speed challenge, as well as a capacity challenge as it is only double tracked.
 - **Comment from the audience**
 - **Part of the efforts taking place to secure the high speed rail money given up by Florida includes the replacement of the Susquehanna River Bridge. Do these efforts include any of the improvements along with it?**

- **Steve Kley, AECOM - This is something we can research.**

Slide 9 – Sources of Uncertainty (Toni Horst, AECOM PM)

- We are looking for feedback on whether there are other risks that we've not yet identified.

Slide 10 – Number of Weekday Passengers Boarding MARC Services (Steve Weller, AECOM)

- **Comment from audience**
 - **Cecil County - The numbers used are so old that they are almost irrelevant, particularly when looking at BRAC. If you only look at households, you only get part of the picture. We don't want to miss the opportunity quotient to access jobs. The big driver that we've looked at over the last 4-5 years is the ability to open and free the movement of the labor force up and down the corridor. People in Wilmington and Philadelphia want to access jobs at Maryland Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) and South. The impact of not having the 3rd rail is a depressing economic factor.**
 - **Karen Holt, CSSC – As they relocate, the APG personnel are concentrating in the NEC. Hartford got about half, and there are more coming into Cecil and New Castle County, DE.**
 - **Dave Gula, WILMAPCO PM - The update in 2006 was right at the beginning of BRAC impacts and added 200 to the ridership estimate. The BRAC numbers change constantly.**
 - **Karl Kalbacher, New Castle County Economic Development - APG reported that during rush hour the wait time to get on base is 48 minutes. This creates a large demand for train service from Perryville to APG. If you can get a bus to pick people up at the train station the train will be packed.**
 - **Mayor Joe Fisona, Mayor of Elkton - Will you revisit the numbers again? We just received the 2010 census results. Elkton is the 17th largest community in the state. We're growing and we will have the ridership (up from 14k to 15k).**
 - **Dave Gula, WIMPACO PM - WILMAPCO just completed a study of how to develop around stations and how to promote transit oriented development (TOD) in Elkton.**
 - **BRAC - The competition among contractors for labor is going to be intense in the Baltimore Metro area because of the increase at MEADE, NSA and beyond. "To avoid eating our young" those contractors have to look to the NEC as they look for additional labor.**
 - **Karen Holt, CSSC - The Susquehanna workforce network needs jobs in the NEC to give access to the workforce center.**
 - **Rick Johnson, MDOT-OFM - We need to make sure the 6.3 mile stretch and capacity would make a relevant difference from a commuter perspective.**

Slide 12 – Project Schedule (Toni Horst, AECOM PM)

- We are in the data collection phase now

Questions from the audience

1. Karen Holt, CSSC - From anecdotal information, only about half of the people at APG are slated to move. New state highway administration data analyzed a 5 mile radius to see traffic delays and determined that what takes 4.1 minutes today is slated to become 46 minutes [by

2015]. As this becomes more apparent in the region you will see a shift from the road commuter rail.

- a. Toni Horst, AECOM PM – What is the forecast year for that projection?
- b. Karen Holt, CSSC – Current data, pre-BRAC (2006) looking at 2015 with no intersection improvements
- c. Steve Weller, AECOM – Are local improvements (gate, road) ongoing?
- d. Karen Holt, CSSC – DoD is very aware of the needs. PA, DE, MD agree that a 5 mile radius is the top priority for a region. Out of 8 intersections, only 1 is funded. FY13 is the earliest that we will see the next opportunity to seek funding. Collectively there is a memorandum of understanding between MDDOT to address low hanging fruit like ride share and vanpool options.
- e. Were the numbers used in the study civilian or military, and did they include contractors?
 - i. 8,100 inside the gate
 - ii. There is a concentration of contractors because of the enhanced use lease and they should be assumed as APG.
 - iii. Three gates go into APG. #1 and 3 are open. #1 you can only go in with a card and #3 is the visitors gate. #2 (next to train station MD BLVD) is closed to entry and estimated at \$1m/year to fully staff. #2 is open for 1.5 hours in the afternoon to exit (there are no security issues to exit).

2. List of Documents

- a. A CSSC report in 2007 (on the CSSC Website) documented direct, indirect and induced job creation as 28,000. This number has gone up.
 - i. The residential report is slightly off.
 - ii. Baltimore County had a surplus of office space. The government jobs and defense contractors came, but the local area did not see the influx they expected.
 - iii. BRAC has to be implemented by September 15, 2011 (8,500 – 10,000 jobs).
 1. Inside they are done
 2. Outside it is just starting
 3. Post BRAC is when the most jobs will come
 4. People are moving from South to North. Half of Cecil county's eligible work force works in New Castle County. With transformation of Chrysler site (Newark, DE), we will see commuting to Newcastle Area.
- b. Tony DiGiacomo, Cecil County Planning & Zoning - Look at the 2005 PB study. The region is not ready for commuter rail service right now. MARC service to Wilmington to help reduce the operating deficit in the Baltimore Washington area could be implemented. Some grade separation from Port Road to NEC currently exists, but a spur was abandoned because the Cost Benefit Analysis looked only at short term and direct cost and benefits.
 - i. Steve Kley, AECOM – We could reopen, but there is a lot of residential build up around there.
 - ii. Dave Gula, WILMAPCO PM – For this study we need to look at the long-term goal. This isn't a rail project looking for justification. We want to know if it is a

rail project at all. Grade separation will have a huge impact on the town of Perryville.

3. Dave Gula, WILMAPCO PM
 - a. There are 27 agreements with the military for the large (health services, technology) developments at the university of Delaware. There are connections to Philadelphia for healthcare jobs.
 - b. Newark, DE station - How can MARC get up to Newark more quickly? Train storage is a large concern. The first and last trains deadhead today.
 - c. MTA's Ira Silverman couldn't be here but reported that he's done the calculations, and MARC could be extended to Newark with the current operating slots on the NEC. Any additional service (more trains) would not be accommodated. It is still a possibility to get MARC service up here if we don't build anything. Do we want to look long term?
4. Sharon Daboin, CSX - Protect the corridors for future use – is land use part of your study?
 - a. Dave Gula, WILMAPCO PM– We have to keep that in mind
 - b. Laura Hoag, NS – Perryville & grade separation – We have to consider the safety of the people around those locations. HAZMAT and high and wide equipment are being shipped in this area, and a lot of people in the community don't understand the potential safety hazards. From the freight rail perspective, we want to help the businesses in Baltimore and Wilmington and along the eastern shore develop. We have customers come to us with projects, and our freight is close to being at capacity, even prior to the city refinery coming on line. If you look at carload volumes on NS heading in one direction to Delmarva, not even including Baltimore, it means 10-12,000 trucks/day could come back on the highway (Route 1 and Route 95) if we couldn't serve them. We want to work with Amtrak to share rail where we can, but without choking off major economic development for the area. We want rail infrastructure to support the volumes today. Customers are already frustrated with the frequency and volume of how they can ship.
 - c. Rick Armitage, U of D – 2,000-3,000/year designated at the poultry industry. Anything to enhance NS efficiency for the Delmarva area would be a benefit to the region.
 - d. Laura Hoag, NS – Whenever you help one rail segment, you help the others connected at the same time.
 - e. Jeff Gerlach, Amtrak – The engineering department is saying there is a major difficulty and expense of maintaining track when you have high speed trains and you have to maintain the track to a higher class standard. Running heavy freight over that high speed track is becoming very costly and difficult to maintain.
5. Tony DiGiacomo, Cecil County Planning & Zoning – assume HSR occurs in MD – it's a lot of money. Is that a separate rail? Does it accommodate encroachments?
 - a. There is an initiative for a dedicated facility that is longer term.
 - b. Steve Kley, AECOM– what is the long term NEC alignment? There are many options, but no decisions.
 - c. One key decision to watch for is the configuration of the Susquehanna Bridge Replacement (new facility). If that was to be installed in the Perryville facility it may lift an alignment and facilitate a lot of what we are trying to do in terms of freight movement through Perryville.

- d. Mr. Lee, Retired Conrail Engineer – commuter issues- why can't trains go from Perryville up Route 1 to Newark, and reverse track back? All tracks are 261.
 - i. Amtrak – Commuter trains are stopping in the path of HSR and there are overtake problems.
 - ii. Mr. Lee, Retired Conrail Engineer – We ran trains to Philadelphia and never had any problems. We scheduled to avoid conflicts.
 - iii. Amtrak – As you increase traffic levels it becomes difficult and there is a bigger speed differential now that eats up capacity.
 - iv. Mr. Lee, Retired Conrail Engineer – We had more trains and ran freight all day long.
 - v. Amtrak – If we entertain allowing freight trains during the day, you can't run that on two tracks. The port roads are basically single track with sidings.
 - vi. Dave Gula, WILMAPCO PM – We won't tackle policy with Amtrak, but we will make recommendations for long term management of increased traffic.
- 6. Rick Johnson, MDOT-OFM - Is there an algorithm that shows when the price of gas hits a number you will see a lot more people wanting to get on trains?
 - a. Dave Gula, WILMAPCO PM – State level DARTs bus ridership increased at the \$4 level.
 - b. Jeff Gerlach, Amtrak – We've seen month over month growth for the past 16th months on the NEC.
- 7. Double stacking at Port of Wilmington
 - a. John Haroldson, Port of Wilmington – In the short run it is not a necessity. Two container lines run with their current ships into Canada, Midwest, and Carolinas. I don't see them going to rail because of the perishable nature of the project. We're not a container terminal like Philadelphia and Baltimore. We have been approached to build a container terminal on the Delaware and do some expansion. Generally with the canal, dredging, and larger ships, the ships aren't going to come to Wilmington container services. Baltimore has container cranes and the depth of water needed. There is potential for the ability to handle oversized cargo. We are competing for project cargo related to off-shore wind projects. There is a company who wants to build tower sections where the width and height are both restricted. The ability to handle over-dimensional products would be beneficial.
 - b. Laura Hoag, NS – We handle the dimensions he's talking about in other areas. Trucks on the highways would need 2-3 trucks driving around the truck to protect the oversize shipments. They would not be able to keep trucks loaded on on-ramps to the highway. Traffic tie ups around those locations are obvious. The double stack opportunity isn't there now, but the ports are required to have contingency plans in the event of a major storm hitting another port on the east coast. There would be whole segments that we wouldn't be able to move in if we don't have double stack capacity (decades down the road). I don't know if homeland security is still requiring those plans.
 - c. John Haroldson, Port of Wilmington - In the event of hurricane in the Gulf, we would need extra capacity to transport banana paper.
 - d. Laura Hoag, NS – Even without port traffic you have high and wide shipments in the area. There is a desire to move more of it more frequently. You take the 8 hour window and it is choked down to a 4-5 hour window. You don't want to have a high

and wide conflict with a passenger train. If you have freight moving under/over Amtrak, you have to look at the capacity with an overpass.

- e. John Haroldson, Port of Wilmington - The Port of Wilmington is behind the curve. There are no land, cranes or infrastructure to get into the container game. The future here is as a niche port.
- f. Dave Gula, WILMAPCO PM – The NEC has catenary and bridge clearances and we need to consider the long term when spending money.
- g. Sharon Daboin, CSX presented this question after the meeting - “Does the state of Maryland currently have any programs in place which promote locating rail freight oriented customers adjacent to railroad right of ways, and if so, how could such a program compliment this project?”

Wrap up and Next Steps

We will give two months advance notice for the next meeting. The next meeting will be to present some initial thoughts and scenarios. We may create a technical committee separate from the advisory committee since it may be necessary to have more regular contact in smaller groups.

Thanks to everyone for a productive session.

Adjourn.