

PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WILMAPCO Hybrid-format Meeting, October 21, 2024

Minutes prepared by Elizabeth Espinal.

Mr. Mike Kaszyski, PAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Members Present: 11

Mark Blake, Greater Hockessin Area Development
Tracy Chamblee, Southern New Castle County Alliance
Bill Dunn, Civic League for New Castle County
Patricia Folk, Cecil County
Mike Kaszyski, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce and PAC Chair
Sarah Lester, Cornerstone West
Bill Lower, Committee of 100
Anna Quisel, League of Women Voters of New Castle County
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance
Josh Solge, City of Newark
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance

Absent: 7

Serene Abiy, University of Delaware
Robin Bullock, Holloway Terrace
Carlos de los Ramos, AARP
Richard Janney, Southern New Castle County
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council
Cecil County Board of Realtors
Vic Singer, Civic League for New Castle County

Staff Members: 5

Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner
Elizabeth Espinal, Administrative Assistant
Dave Gula, Principal Planner
Dawn Voss, Outreach Coordinator
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Guests: 1

Robert Hicks, Public

2. Approval of the June 17, 2024 and the August 12, 2024 Meeting Minutes

ACTION: On Action by Mr. David Tancredi and seconded by Mr. Bill Dunn the Meeting Minutes were approved by the PAC.

3. Public Comment Period:

None.

4. Executive Director's Report:

Ms. Tigist Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- The Council met on September 12, and they addressed several action items that included: Use of Federal STBG, CMAQ, FTA Urbanized Area, FTA 5310, and TAP Funds in FY 2025, endorsement of the East Elkton Traffic Circulation and Safety Plan and approval of proposed PAC member reappointments. Three presentations were presented including the Newark Bicycle Plan Update, the WILMAPCO FY25 UPWP Project Update, and the Claymont Area Master Plan.
- On September 6, the Rocky Run Underpass Feasibility Study kicked off with a Technical Committee meeting. An Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for October 22, with a public outreach meeting planned for January.
- On September 7, Staff attended the Bowers Street Open Streets Event.
- On September 10, the Newark Bicycle Plan hosted an outreach event focused on Newark bicycle safety checkpoints.
- On September 15, Staff tabled at Newark Community Day and conducted public outreach for the Newark Bicycle Plan.
- On September 17, a kickoff meeting with consultants was held for the Augustine Cut-Off Reconfiguration Studies.
- On September 17, the Kirkwood Highway Corridor Master Plan held a public outreach event for the Hispanic community at Holy Angels Church.
- On September 26, Staff participated in a Technical Expert Workshop for the DNREC Climate Action Plan.
- On October 2, Staff participated in Walk to School Day at Downes Elementary School.
- On October 4, 2024, a project briefing for elected officials was held for the Kirkwood Highway Corridor Master Plan.
- On October 9, the Maryland 272 Corridor Plan Steering Committee met to plan for the upcoming open house.
- On October 17, the Route 9 Monitoring Committee convened.
- On October 17, the Claymont Area Master Plan Advisory Committee met. An open house is scheduled for October 28, with presentations at 4:30 PM and 6:00 PM.
- On October 18, the East Elkton Monitoring Committee met.
- On October 23, Staff will host an online public meeting for the Delaware Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan at 4:00 PM and 6:00 PM via Zoom.
- On October 24, Staff will attend Title VI training at DelDOT in Dover.
- On October 28–29, WILMAPCO will host an FHWA Peer Exchange on effective coordination of metropolitan planning processes with state DOTs and transit agencies.
- On November 4, the Ardens Transportation Plan Monitoring Committee will meet.
- On November 14, a public meeting for the Kirkwood Highway Corridor Master Plan is scheduled.
- On November 18, the Concord Pike Monitoring Committee will meet.
- On November 19, a public workshop will be held for the Maryland 272 Corridor Plan at the North East Library.
- On December 10, the Churchman's Crossing Monitoring Committee will meet.

ACTION ITEMS:

None.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

5. Claymont Area Master Plan

Ms. Heather Dunigan provided an update on the Claymont Area Master Plan, sharing that preparations are underway for the third public workshop. She reminded the PAC that the last update was presented in June, when scenario development was just beginning. The study area includes the entire Claymont Hometown Overlay and surrounding regions, ensuring consideration of future land use changes and transportation impacts.

The study aims to develop a walkable community by connecting nodes of development along the corridor, implementing consistent urban design and streetscapes, and prioritizing multimodal connections for walking, biking, and transit use. Ms. Dunigan emphasized the importance of collaboration with community partners, which has been a strength throughout the process. Once finalized, the recommendations will be integrated into a monitoring process that aligns with the North Claymont Area Master Plan and Governor Printz Boulevard projects, ensuring continuity across the region.

At the first public workshop, held in February at Archmere Academy, the community highlighted pedestrian safety, driver behavior, open space, and the need for more community amenities. In May, draft Land Use and Transportation scenarios were introduced, allowing residents to engage directly and shape the alternatives. Land-Use strategies included connecting residential areas to community destinations, establishing strong gateways to create a sense of place and balancing future flexibility with consistent design standards. Strategies to achieve these goals include encouraging mixed-use development, improving pedestrian-friendly streets, leveraging existing programs for housing affordability, and better utilizing open and green spaces. Ms. Dunigan highlighted success stories such as Darley Green and the redevelopment of the Claymont Steak Shop into a mixed-use facility. However, underutilized parcels remain opportunities for continued growth.

Ms. Dunigan explained that three scenarios were presented, maintaining the current Hometown Overlay guidelines with minor updates, expanding the Claymont Center designation and allowing additional stories of development at select nodes, and introducing "Claymont Gateways," permitting four-story development at key entry points like Harvey Road, Darley Road, and I-495, with other nodes supporting two to three stories. Each scenario aims to improve the utilization of underused parcels, enhance mixed-use areas, and increase access to community-serving uses.

Ms. Dunigan shared that participants have consistently emphasized the need for parks and recreational spaces. Potential sites for green space include Darley Green Lawns and areas near the Claymont Community Center. A proposed laundromat at the former Cumberland Farms location was discussed as a possible mixed-use facility, combining business functions with community space.

Ms. Dunigan indicated that transportation scenarios would address issues such as walkability, safety, and access to transit. PAC members raised concerns about Philadelphia Pike's four-lane configuration and pedestrian comfort, which will be factored into the study's ongoing performance analysis. Performance measures for the scenarios include accessibility to pocket parks, with up to 79% of parcels within walking distance, increased proximity to mixed-use centers for households, with scenario three achieving 65%.

Ms. Heather Dunigan continued the presentation showing the preliminary work that led to the current task, including a market analysis that assessed the demand for residential and commercial development. The analysis revealed that the area is nearly at capacity for

commercial development. Scenarios 2 and 3 presented solutions to address the significant need for multifamily housing identified in the study.

Mr. Bill Dunn inquired about the number of additional apartments or living units under Scenarios 2 and 3, Ms. Dunigan acknowledged that the figure was not substantial but promised to provide a precise number later, as she did not have the report on hand. She replied that a link to the relevant report would be shared following the meeting. To view this report, click [here](#). The report from W-ZHA concludes that over the next 10 years, there will be sufficient market to support between 200 and 300 multifamily units, and the market can support 30 to 50 new townhomes in the Plan Area.

Mr. Dunn asked about the availability of supermarkets in the Claymont area. Ms. Dunigan replied that there was only one grocery store, a Food Lion, and it was potentially at risk. Mr. Dunn remarked that significant residential development in the area should be accompanied by the presence of a grocery store. Ms. Dunigan agreed, stating that increased residential density would help sustain the existing supermarket. Mr. Dave Gula added that the current grocery store has struggled for years and is located on a property near the northern gateway being reviewed.

Ms. Dunigan described Philadelphia Pike as serving as a de facto “Main Street” but emphasized its current lack of pedestrian and cyclist safety. Residents had expressed concerns about reckless driving, excessive speeding, and pedestrian comfort, especially for bus riders. She outlined strategies to reduce serious crashes, improve speed compliance, and maintain motor vehicle service while enhancing pedestrian and bicycle comfort.

During this process three scenarios were presented including (1) tactical improvements, (2) extending the road diet, and (3) installing a roundabout at Philadelphia Pike/Governor Printz Blvd. Tactical improvements would be minor changes such as, focus on enhancing pedestrian crosswalks, shortening crossing distances, adding pedestrian lighting, and improving transit amenities. Expanding the existing road diet both north and south was found to have minimal impacts on traffic flow while addressing pedestrian and cyclist concerns. Lastly, the addition of a single roundabout at the Governor Printz Boulevard intersection provided the greatest improvement in safety and traffic efficiency. Public feedback highlighted concerns about navigating roundabouts, their safety for pedestrians and cyclists, and the potential impact on congestion. These concerns will be addressed in an upcoming public workshop.

Mr. Mike Kaszyski inquired about the balance of traffic volumes at intersections, to which Ms. Dunigan affirmed that the proposed roundabout was a suitable solution for the traffic levels and layout.

Finally, Ms. Dunigan discussed secondary recommendations to improve connections between Philadelphia Pike and nearby community destinations. These included adding bicycle boulevards along Rolling Road, addressing speeding issues on Harvey Road with curb extensions and islands, and coordinating with regional trail plans to integrate pedestrian-friendly pathways. No further questions or comments were shared.

6. Rocky Run Underpass Feasibility Study

Mr. Dave Gula provided an in-depth presentation on the Rocky Run Underpass Feasibility Study, which builds on previous efforts, including the 2018 Concord Pike Master Plan. The plan emphasized improving multimodal transportation, particularly enhancing pedestrian and bicycle access along the corridor. Initial public surveys highlighted key concerns such as traffic

congestion, pedestrian and cyclist safety, and improved crosswalks. Public responses indicated strong support for safer, low-stress environments for walking and biking, with 44% of respondents more likely to walk and 38% likely to bike if such conditions were provided.

Mr. Bill Dunn inquired about recent transportation improvements in the Talleyville area. Mr. Gula noted that significant changes dated back many years, including a reconfiguration to a highway style intersection at Silverside Road. Despite these updates, the corridor remains unfriendly for non-vehicular movement, particularly pedestrians and cyclists.

Mr. Gula continued the presentation addressing study focus and challenges, one proposed improvement involves converting one of the three existing culvert cells at Rocky Run into a dedicated pedestrian and bicycle underpass. This location aligns with community priorities identified during the Master Plan's public outreach process. However, several challenges were noted, the culvert cells were designed for stormwater management. Closing one cell would require robust hydrological modeling to ensure no adverse flooding impacts upstream or downstream. The study team is collaborating with the University of Delaware's Water Resources Center to assess current and projected stormwater flows. A potential underpass must be safe, ADA-compliant, and well-lit. Stakeholder feedback emphasized visibility through the underpass as essential for user comfort and security. The value of the underpass depends on integrating it into a broader trail network. Connections to existing and proposed trails are critical to maximize its utility and ensure it aligns with regional plans.

This study involves various stakeholders, including DelDOT, local property owners, and community organizations. Key discussions include that the proposed underpass would connect residents on the east side of Concord Pike to parklands and trail systems on the west side, including Brandywine Valley, Beaver Valley, and First State National Park. Property owners, such as the Woodlawn Trustees and the developers of Brandywine Country Club, have shown initial support but require continued coordination. The club's proposed pathways must be aligned with the underpass to create seamless connections. Early feedback suggested modifying the culvert cell design to include a separate bike and pedestrian lane. Other options, such as building a dedicated underpass from scratch, are also being evaluated.

Mr. Bill Dunn asked whether the Woodlawn Trustees supported connectivity projects. Mr. Gula confirmed their support and highlighted ongoing discussions with other stakeholders like Brandywine Country Club.

Mr. Gula continued the presentation with additional considerations including examining connections to existing and proposed trail networks to maximize the project's value. Lighting, security, and maintenance are critical elements for ensuring user safety in the underpass. Collaborating feedback from monitoring committees and public outreach will inform final recommendations.

Mr. Dunn raised concerns about culvert height, noting it might pose risks for cyclists. Mr. Gula acknowledged the issue and indicated potential solutions such as raising the structure to meet accessibility standards.

Mr. Gula announced upcoming technical committee meetings and a public outreach initiative in early 2025 to gather further input. The project remains in its early stages, with feasibility studies guiding the process. In conclusion he emphasized the importance of addressing safety, connectivity, and environmental concerns to create a viable, high-priority project for the community. Further updates will be provided as the feasibility study progresses.

Mr. Mike Kaszyski asked about the viability of overpasses versus underpasses. Mr. Gula explained the challenges of overpass designs, including complex ramps and switchbacks required to meet ADA standards.

Ms. Anna Quisel commented that the plan for pedestrian and bike access to Brandywine Creek State Park includes provisions for individuals to walk or cycle through the area, with potential connections to nearby businesses, such as restaurants like Olive Garden.

In response, Mr. Gula confirmed that this is indeed the goal. He explained that the plan envisions connections to local hotels and restaurants along Rocky Run Boulevard. He emphasized that the Rocky Run Feasibility Study represents a significant step in improving transportation infrastructure along Concord Pike. With robust stakeholder engagement and thorough technical analysis, the project aims to balance accessibility and safety with environmental and structural considerations, particularly during adverse weather conditions.

7. Other Business

Mr. Dave Gula announced that the next meeting would be held on December 16th and would include the traditional holiday dinner. He extended an invitation to all members to attend in person, noting that the dinner would begin at 5:00 p.m. to allow ample time before the meeting.

Mr. Dave Tancredi added a brief announcement, mentioning that some members might be interested in a special news segment airing the following evening. He explained that WHHY would feature a half-hour program titled "Resurrecting Riverside" at 7:30 p.m., highlighting the redevelopment of the Riverside area in Wilmington. He encouraged those interested to tune in. To view this article, click [here](#).

Mr. Gula thanked Mr. Tancredi and shared that WILMAPCO had participated in the Bowers Open Streets event. This event was connected to Reach Riverside and the Kingswood Community Center, which recently became one of the first new community centers constructed in Wilmington in years. He also noted improvements in the surrounding neighborhood, including new housing developments as part of the area's redevelopment efforts. He described it as a positive and inspiring story.

8. Adjournment

The PAC adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Attachments: (0)