

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

April 16, 2020

A meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was held on Thursday, April 16, 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:

Cooper Bowers, Delaware Department of Transportation
Alex Brun, Maryland Department of the Environment
Tyson Byrne, Maryland Department of Transportation
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
Steve O'Connor, Cecil County Land Use & Development Services
Catherine Smith, DTC

TAC Ex-Officio Members present:

Lindsay Donnellon, U.S. Federal Highway Administration

TAC Members absent:

Delaware Office of State Planning
City of Wilmington Planning
City of Wilmington Department of Public Works
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 Transit Administration

Guests and Invitees:

Marlee Baucom, Norfolk Southern Railway
Ian Beam, Maryland Department of Transportation
Ken Potts, Delmarva Rail Passengers Association
Jolyon Shelton, DNREC
Josh Thomas, DeIDOT

Staff:

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner

Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner
Sharen Elcock, Executive Assistant
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 March 19, 2020 TAC minutes were approved.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. David Dahlstrom and seconded by Mr. Stephen O'Connor, the TAC approved the March 19, 2020 TAC minutes.

Motion passed.

(04-16-20 - 01)

4. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group

Ms. Dunigan reported that the NMTWG met on April 7 to review the draft New Castle County Bicycle Plan. The group was overall supportive of the draft and gave valuable feedback, most of which has been incorporated in the draft distributed to the TAC. Ms. Dunigan commented that the working group had until April 14 to submit comments and that she would review their feedback as part of the New Castle County Bicycle Plan agenda item.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None.

ACTION ITEMS:

6. To Recommend Approval of the FY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program

Ms. Tigist Zegeye said the financial numbers in the UPWP have not changed since the last time it was presented. The new projects for FY 2021 that require consultants are Statewide Truck Parking Study, Port of Wilmington Circulation Study, First/Final Mile Freight Network Development study, City of New Castle Transportation Plan Update, and the Union Street Reconfiguration and Streetscape Improvements Study in the City of Wilmington. The FY 2020 UPWP approval letter from FTA has four recommendations to incorporate into the FY2021 UPWP:

1. Incorporate more specifically the ten Planning Factors presented for consideration in the FAST ACT. This recommendation is addressed in the updated MPO 21.07; New Federal Regulation Compliance with the 10 planning factors presented for consideration in the FAST Act, Page IV-17.
2. Include the status table under Section V for Prior Year's Work Tasks Carried Over. This section will be developed in the August/September time frame after closing out the current FY (2020) and amending tasks carried over into the FY 2021 UPWP.

3. Include tasks supporting a transition to Performance-based Planning and Programming. Performance-based planning and programming are included in:
 - MPO 21.04 – Data collection, management and distribution
 - MPO 21.05 - Regional Planning and Technical Analysis under CMS and Regional Progress Report
 - MPO 21.11 – Subregional Studies and Coordination where performance measures are included as part of plans and studies
 - MPO 21.12 – TIP where we house our Performance Measure Targets under Appendix H
4. Reference tasks that address access to essential services. In response, access to essential services are referenced in MPO 21.05, Regional Planning and Technical Analysis, specifically under Title VI Plan and Transportation Justice Analysis (page IV-13) as well as on region-wide Connectivity Analysis.

The UPWP is out for public comment March 25th through May 1st. The PAC approved the public outreach portion at their March 24th meeting. With the TAC endorsement, it will go to Council on May 7th. Then it will be submitted to DeIDOT and MDOT to be implemented in July.

Mr. Dahlstrom asked if the sections related to Cecil County, page 36 of UPWP, are projects for this year. Ms. Zegeye replied that these sections are related to monitoring the projects. Ms. Dunigan said that the mobility-friendly sections were implemented years ago and progress on implementation is tracked through the regional progress report. They are existing plans and are on the WILMAPCO website.

Mr. Dahlstrom asked if the section about Perryville on page 39 also refers to ongoing work. Mr. Dahlstrom mentioned that North East just finished a plan for sidewalks. Ms. Dunigan replied that she had worked with them in the past and there are various degrees of implementation of that plan. Ms. Dunigan suggest that perhaps next year links to the plans can be included to make them easier to find.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Byrne and seconded by Mr. Fortner, the TAC recommended approval of the FY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program.

Motion passed.

(04-16-20-02)

7. To Recommend Endorsement of the New Castle County Bicycle Plan

Ms. Dunigan said that the draft was reviewed by the NMTWG and is available for public review through May 1. She noted that the document is structured with an introduction and recommendations for each objective. She reviewed feedback from the NMTWG for each section.

Introduction:

- Language has been added to the description about the plan's target audience to clarify that the plan addresses e-bikes and similar options, subject to local restrictions.

Identify Bicycle Transportation Network:

- Maps are now shown by County Planning District rather than Council District.
- Recommendations have been modified in the Mill Creek area based on recent planning by Millcreek Neighbors for Safer Pathways.

- A connection from the Charlie Emerson Bridge to the Pomeroy Trail has been added in Newark.
- Several connections have been added to Wilmington based on their 2019 Bicycle Plan.
- The map, Future Trails of Northern Delaware, has been updated with the newest version from Delaware Greenways.

Improve Safety through Design, Maintenance and Enforcement:

- Wayfinding recommendations will be added.
- The description of Bicycle Boulevards has been expanded to note that traffic diversions may be used.

Include Bicycle Elements into Land Use Planning:

- Alternative terms have been added to the term smart growth. These include Complete Communities and Pathway-oriented Development.
- Recommendation was added for local governments to add the Bicycle Plan to their Comp Plans.

Provide Bicycle Access to Transit:

- The recommendation to have bicycle access on future MARC service was added.
- A reference to Amtrak bicycle access information was added.

The TAC provided the following comments:

Expand Equitable Access:

- Update the recommended bike routes shown on the Mobility Challenge and Environmental Justice Area maps.

Incorporate Bicycle Elements into Land Use Planning:

- Clarify that this section addresses land use planning, zoning, and development.
- New Castle County has submitted a draft of other potential recommended edits, but was not yet ready to discuss these.

Encourage Bicycle Parking and Other End of Trip Facilities

- Clarify that the recommendation about zoning for parking also includes land use planning and development.

Mr. Dahlstrom said the text box covers a portion of the title of the map on page 14. Mr. Dahlstrom suggested changing wording of "land use zoning code" on page 71, because zoning code and land use planning are separate things. Ms. Dunigan said the plan should refer to both. Comprehensive plans and zoning recommendations. After some discussion, Ms. Dunigan suggested that it read "and use plans and zoning".

Ms. Dahlstrom stated that New Castle County votes opposed, as it is still early in process and not finalized yet.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Fortner and seconded by Mr. Bowers, the TAC recommended endorsement of the New Castle County Bicycle Plan with one NCC no vote.

Motion passed.

(04-16-20-03)

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

8. Concord Pike Master Plan

Mr. Dave Gula and Mr. Dan Blevins presented on the Concord Pike Master Plan project update. Mr. Gula said a virtual workshop was held on April 1st. Attendees were given a thirty-minute log in period to provide adequate time for attendees to verify video and audio were working. The moderator was Mr. Andrew Bing of Kramer & Associates, and Mr. Rich Hall of New Castle County provided a few words of welcome. There were one-hundred and twenty-five attendee logins. Presentations included project background, outreach and feedback, land use, results of the traffic analysis, what's next, and moderated Q&A via chat box. The majority of the feedback was positive.

At intervals during the workshop, poll questions were asked. Responses are to be included in the final report. The first questions included:

- What is your favorite way to pass time at home?
- How many people are watching meeting?
- What are the ages of those watching?
- Do you live/work/play in the Corridor?
- How do you regularly get around in the Corridor?

The goals and objectives of the plan were reviewed to reinforce what was previously determined in past workshops, then progress on plan was presented. There had been some push back of the visuals for potential development along Concord Pike, so a public outreach overview was presented, which reviewed the public input from past meetings and online survey results. More than two hundred people took the survey. The top eight concerns for the future of the corridor according to the survey were shared. Traffic and congestion are the top concerns with 49% of respondents citing it. Overdevelopment and overcrowding were the second most cited concerns with 20%. When asked what could improve the quality of life in the corridor, the number one answer, with 29%, was reduced traffic/congestion. There were two-hundred and eighteen responses to the poll, but there were multiple opportunities to comment. When asked if they strongly agree or disagree with elements of the December 5th workshop, one-hundred and sixty-four people responded. 14% of respondents had no strong feelings either way, and 13% need more information.

The guiding principles were explained and areas that are already centers on the corridor were discussed. Preliminary land use recommendations were reviewed and the NCC Councilwoman offered some additional recommendations on potential historic properties after the workshop. There is some misunderstanding in the community that the team is planning to redevelop the area. An effort has been made by the project team to reinforce that the local agencies are not redeveloping, but identifying centers along the corridor that are likely to be redeveloped in the future.

For the transportation overview, Mr. Blevins presented the vision for the corridor. The vision is to make a more walkable environment, reduce speeding and heavy traffic, and create pedestrian and bike trails and crossings. The approach is to plan not just for vehicles on the corridor, but for multimodal transportation. The final plan will include a toolkit for potential treatments at signalized intersections to make pedestrians and bicyclists more comfortable by minimizing their interaction with motor vehicles. The plan will also make recommendations for additional roadway connections and bicycle and pedestrian connections.

The team spent time with DART looking ahead and addressing the bus route on 202. DART has plans to improve the service. Improvement in access to transit stops for pedestrians and bicyclists is needed. Better east-west pedestrian connections are needed especially around the mall and restaurants.

A motor vehicle analysis was presented looking ahead thirty years. With this analysis approach, all signalized intersections on the corridor were evaluated using DelDOT's Level of Service (LOS) rating system. The analysis focused on three questions:

1. *How will intersections along the corridor operate for motor vehicles with redevelopment?* Proposed additional volumes of traffic were analyzed using land use scenarios including a baseline with no proposed development on Concord Pike, development permitted under by-right zoning and proposed zoning at both lower level and higher levels of development to put perspective on how much land use impacts driver experience. Level of Service changes at intersections shows how many intersections will have a LOS score of E or F with each land use scenario.
2. *How will the addition of roadway connections and pedestrian/bicycle connections reduce delay for motor vehicles?* Using transportation scenarios: do nothing, enhanced vehicle network, enhance pedestrian/bicycle network, and multimodal improvements, results show improving roadway and pedestrian/bicycle connections improves LOS at more intersections than doing nothing or just improving roadway connections.
3. *How can we improve intersections for all modes of transportation?* Changes to turn lanes and signalization changes were considered. Multimodal improvements may increase delay for motorists. There is a trade-off that in providing benefits for pedestrians, there is increased delay for motorists, and the increase in delay is similar regardless of the area redevelopment. There are opportunities to improve connections and options for people biking around and across Concord Pike. A large menu of treatments is available to improve signalized intersections for pedestrians. Bus service improvements will be made in coming months. The implementation of these recommendations will come from existing programs as well as new programs and policies.

The poll questions following this section were:

6. What is your level of comfort with the proposed changes to zoning if the impact to motor vehicle delay is similar?
7. Do you think more delay is okay to make crossing safer and more comfortable for pedestrians?
8. Would you walk to destination if low stress connections were implemented?
9. Would you bike to destinations if the connections were low stress and bike parking was available?

Preliminary transportation recommendations were made based on traffic analysis, work with DTC and DelDOT and feedback from previous workshops. Interactive maps are available on the WILMAPCO website showing projects, including some that, in the end, were considered not feasible. The projects are sorted into categories and include cost estimates.

Mr. Gula presented how these projects will be implemented. The high-cost projects are generally considered long term, with a phasing timeframe of eight or more years. Medium-cost projects could be implemented in three to eight years. The low-cost projects may only take one to three years to implement. DelDOT may consider the small projects for inclusion in their regular budget. Some of the public think of a 30-year plan and say they will not be here in 30 years, so it is important to show that some projects will be completed in the short term. Some of

the smaller projects that are too small to be considered a capital project, could be funded through programs that have their own annual budgets such as Traffic Operations, Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements, Recreational Trails, Transportation Alternatives Program, Community Transportation Fund and Pedestrian Access Routes Program. To prioritize the projects DeIDOT's Bicycle Mobility Tool will be used to evaluate proposed bikeway projects. This tool will help determine the best way to connect people to destinations, separate pedestrians and bikes from traffic, and create low-stress routes. Medium and long-range projects will move through our normal prioritization process, which measure criteria based on the long-range plan.

Corridor monitoring and performance measuring should be put in place to create an ongoing process of monitoring key metrics with a committee including people from transit, land development and stakeholders. The plan is to go back to the community every year to talk about the updated metrics and the projects that have been selected and how they will move forward. Annual updates will also help us to build a better rapport with the public.

A survey of 12 questions will be available on the WILMAPCO webpage from April 6 to the end of May. The results will be posted on the website. The video of the April 1st presentation is on the website as well. The next workshop will be the final meeting, which should be in person, so it is not possible to schedule a meeting date right now. Mr. Gula's email is listed and some comments have already been received.

Mr. Dahlstrom asked if autonomous vehicles were considered, since we are looking 30 years into the future. Mr. Blevins replied that we have not yet. Increased traffic, whether the vehicles are driven by a person or not, was analyzed. There are two trains of thought on how autonomous vehicles will be used. People may own their own individual autonomous car or call for a car service much like Uber, so it is difficult to anticipate the impact of autonomous cars in plans.

9 Traffic Impacts of COVID-19

Mr. Dan Blevins presented early comparisons of COVID-19 restrictions on travel times. NPMRDS data, which is available on a daily basis, was used to make year-to-year comparisons to see how much the pandemic affected travel times. The analysis compared late February through March morning peak (7-9am) and evening peak (4-6 pm) periods for 2019 and 2020. The corridors reviewed were:

- All Interstates and US routes (collectively)
- Kirkwood Highway
- US 40
- I-95
- US 202
- US 9 (Sussex)

On average, the daily annual average daily traffic was down 40-50% Statewide.

The first COVID-19 death in the U.S. was February 29th and the State of Emergency in DE was called on March 13th, so the year-to-year comparison of the PM peak includes the last week of February through the end of March. All US routes in New Castle County in the PM peak show downward trends with around a 20% decrease in travel times.

- Kirkwood Highway between Wilmington and Newark normally takes twenty-five minutes. That time is down to around 20 minutes, though there was a slight increase in travel

times on March 14th reflecting “panic buying” after the state of emergency was declared on March 13th.

- US 202, PA 491 to I-95, showed an overall 15% reduction in travel time for the end of February and early March.
- I-95 saw a decrease earlier than the other routes with a 20-25% decrease since major shutdowns began in other States earlier than Delaware.
- US 40, Maryland line to I-295, was down on March 9th due to an accident. The overall decline for the time period had been 15-25%.
- US 9 in Sussex County, US 13 to DE 1, showed little change until March 23-24. Now travel time is down 19%.

Once April data becomes available on May 5th, it will be added to the report. February data will be examined further to look for some greater trend information. There will be more comparison to AADT data, and once things get back to normal, there will be analysis of the data over time. This will be the subject of reports in the near future, particularly to see if we ever get back to normal. After this pandemic more people may continue stay at home.

Mr. Steve O'Connor asked if Cecil County data was not available. Mr. Blevins said that it is available, but in order to prepare for this meeting, there was not time to compile it. Mr. Blevins can add Cecil County data. Mr. O'Connor expressed that it's good data to share locally.

INFORMATION ITEMS

9. Staff Report

Ms. Dunigan reported on the following plans and events:

- DTC and DelDOT have finalized the proposal for the Two-way Orange St Transit Corridor, however Wilmington is no longer in support of the project. DTC is working on related bus stop improvements within the King and Orange St corridors.
- WILMAPCO has funded a feasibility study to explore options for the necessary garage/Operations center recommended in the Maryland Ave., Monroe St., and MLK Blvd Safety Study. Three alternatives have been developed and were presented to DTC at a work session on April 15.
- The Concord Pike (virtual) Workshop held on April 1 was attended by 125 people. The survey currently available on the website.
- A final Southern NCC Master Plan workshop will be held at a later date to present the results of the traffic analysis and project recommendations.
- Staff has been working with DART to examine current fixed-route bus accessibility from food deserts and areas of Social Determinants of Health concern.
- Staff provided a presentation on the interplay between public health and planning at a University of Delaware health equity symposium on April 7.
- Staff will participate in an April 28 kickoff meeting with DelDOT and members of the Marshallton community on a project to help implement the Marshallton Circulation Study.
- Wilmington Earth Day and the Air Quality Awareness Week events have been canceled.
- The call for projects for the Maryland Transportation Alternatives Program will be from April 15 to May 29. A Delaware call for projects will be open this fall.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Ms. Cathy Smith said transit ridership declined 70-75%, decline which was expect. Buses are running on the Saturday schedule, which is about a third of regular service. Since April 2nd

DART instituted rear boarding and social distancing to restrict how many people are on the busses to around 16 passengers on 40' bus. DART is running some trippers to handle the overload, mainly on Philadelphia Pike, the Route 40 corridor and Kirkwood Highway corridor. Rail was suspended on April 9. Rail ridership was down 90%. Ms. Dunigan said she is trying to get some trail data. There is anecdotal evidence of an increase in trail use.

ADJOURNMENT:

The TAC adjourned at 11:23 AM

Attachments (0)