

**TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**December 19, 2024**

A meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was held on Thursday, December 19, 2024, at WILMAPCO, 100 Discovery Boulevard, Suite 800, Newark, DE 19713 and via video conference/conference call.

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Cooper Bowers, from Delaware Department of Transportation, and TAC Chair, brought the TAC meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

**2. TAC Members present:**

Cooper Bowers, Delaware Department of Transportation  
Samantha Bulkilvish, Delaware Office of State Planning  
David Dahlstrom, Maryland Department of Planning  
William Goldman, Cecil County Division of Planning and Zoning  
Julianne Hilton, Maryland Department of the Environment  
Shawn Kiernan, Maryland Department of Transportation  
Quinn Krenzel, Town of Elkton Planning  
Tina Merrill, Department of Natural Resources and Environment  
Matthew Rodgers, New Castle County Department of Land Use  
Derrick Sexton, Maryland State Highway Administration  
Catherine Smith, Delaware Transit Corporation

**TAC Ex-Officio Members present:**

**TAC Members absent:**

City of Newark  
City of Wilmington Planning  
City of Wilmington Department of Public Works  
Delaware Division of Small Business, Development, and Tourism  
Delaware River and Bay Authority

**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:**

Geoff Anderson, MDOT  
Rob Bullock, Holloway Terrace President  
Anson Gock, DelDOT Planning  
Dan Janousek, MDOT  
Pam Keeney, DNREC, AQS member

**Staff:**

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner  
Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner  
Sharen Elcock, Executive Assistant

Elizabeth Espinal, Administrative Assistant  
Dave Gula, Principal Planner  
Bill Swiatek, Principal Planner  
Jake Thompson, Principal Planner  
Dawn Voss, Outreach Coordinator  
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth Espinal.

### **3. MINUTES**

Approval of the November 21, 2024, TAC Meeting Minutes.

**ACTION:** On motion by Ms. Samantha Bulkilvish and seconded by Mr. Matt Rogers, the November 21st, 2024, TAC Minutes are approved.

### **4. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

The Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group convened on December 3rd. During the meeting, Mr. Bill Swiatek provided an update on the environmental and transportation justice work related to the bike and pedestrian (Bike/Ped) component, emphasizing opportunities for the committee to contribute ideas for better integrating and supporting Bike/Ped initiatives within WILMAPCO's plans. Ms. Dunigan presented draft recommendations from the Claymont Area Master Plan, highlighting proposed changes aimed at improving the community's walkability. It was also noted that the group's membership has declined. Anyone interested in joining is encouraged to reach out or share their contact information with WILMAPCO staff, who are eager to provide support and engagement opportunities.

### **5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

None.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

**6. To recommend amendment of the FY 2025- 2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)-** Ms. Heather Dunigan reported on an amendment request submitted to WILMAPCO by MDOT regarding an existing project in the Cecil County TIP, the Cecil County Mid-County Transit Hub.

This project has been part of the TIP for several years and aims to establish a centralized hub to facilitate efficient transfers and utilities for Cecil County's Office of Transit operations. The amendment proposes an addition of \$1 million in right-of-way funding. The project has progressed through the design phase, and the final location has been determined, enabling Cecil County to proceed with transferring the necessary property. This funding would utilize federal 5307 funds with a local match to advance the project.

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. Matthew Rogers and seconded by Ms. Samantha Bulkilvish, the TAC recommends amendment of the FY 2025-2028 TIP.

### **PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

## **7. Maryland CTP Project Prioritization Process**

Mr. Geoff Anderson provided an overview of the ongoing effort to update the Chapter 30 process, which has been in place since 2017. He explained that the revisions aim to address recommendations from the Maryland Transportation Commission and align with Governor Moore's directive to adopt a "data-driven and heart-led" approach. This strategy seeks to prioritize projects based on state goals and ensure that funding decisions are guided by robust data analysis.

Mr. Anderson noted that the original Chapter 30 process, as established by the legislature in 2017, was highly prescriptive, specifying exact measures and methodologies for project selection. This rigidity has resulted in limited flexibility and transparency, making it difficult for stakeholders to understand how projects are ranked and funded. Furthermore, the process has undergone minimal updates over the past two decades, highlighting the need for modernization. The proposed revisions aim to prioritize transportation projects that align with state objectives, maximize value, and promote transparency. The updated process also seeks to enhance accessibility for stakeholders and better integrate with broader state planning efforts.

Mr. Anderson emphasized the importance of aligning transportation investments with the values outlined in the Maryland Long-Range Transportation Plan. Projects will be evaluated based on measurable outcomes, such as improvements in safety (e.g., reductions in fatalities and serious injuries), ensuring that criteria are both data-driven and aligned with state goals.

A recent \$2 million federal grant, which required no state match, will be used to enhance public access to the process. This funding will support the development of a dynamic user interface, allowing the public to access project information, view maps, track progress, and provide feedback. The revised process will apply to surface transportation projects, including roads, public transit, and biking, but will exclude projects related to ports, airports, or maintenance activities such as road resurfacing or bridge redecking. Eligible projects must increase capacity and have a minimum budget of \$5 million.

Under the updated process, MPOs and locally operated transit systems will join county governments, municipalities, and state agencies as eligible entities for project submissions. Application limits will be based on the size of the entity or the population served to ensure feasibility and alignment with available funding.

Mr. Anderson explained that the prioritization process will transition from an annual to a biennial cycle. This shift allows for the pooling of funds across two years, enabling consideration of larger, more impactful projects. During the off years, MDOT will evaluate the process, incorporating stakeholder feedback, new data, and improved analytical techniques. Additionally, a new portal will be developed to standardize the submission of local priority letters. This portal will ensure consistency in format while allowing for freeform narratives to address broader issues. The revised process will apply to discretionary funding sources such as CMAQ and LOTS funding, while programs governed by specific legislative or federal allocation methods will remain unchanged.

Mr. Anderson underscored that the updated Chapter 30 process is designed to enhance transparency, improve public engagement, and ensure that project evaluations are data-driven and aligned with state goals.

Mr. Geoff Anderson outlined a three-step process for transitioning a submitted project from prioritization to funding within CTP. He mentioned that projects are submitted and scored based

on measures aligned with key values such as safety, accessibility, mobility, climate impact, social equity, and economic competitiveness. The score reflects a project's benefits relative to its cost. Once scored, projects are ranked, and a preliminary list of fundable projects is generated based on available funding. The ranked list is published for public review during the CTP tour and other forums. Input gathered during this phase may lead to adjustments to project rankings, which are made by the MDOT Secretary. Adjustments consider factors like public feedback, geographic equity, and specific priorities such as safety. The adjusted rankings are finalized and presented at a public forum, with rationales provided for any changes. The list of projects slated for funding is then included in the CTP submitted to the General Assembly.

Mr. Anderson provided an in-depth overview of the scoring measures used such as safety which evaluates reductions in fatalities and serious injuries before and after project implementation. This measure accounts for crash modification factors and roadway usage to normalize results. Accessibility and mobility adding improved access to jobs and increased use of non-single-occupant vehicles. Climate Environmental changes measures reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and criteria pollutants. The latter is applied only in areas of non-attainment or maintenance. Social equity focuses on increased job access and safety improvements for disadvantaged communities within the project study area. Economic competitiveness includes reductions in person-hours of delay and increases in land productivity. It also evaluates how projects support sustainable development patterns to reduce stress on the transportation system. Lastly, all projects are ranked by their overall scores, which are normalized by cost to prioritize cost-effective solutions.

Mr. Anderson emphasized that the process relies on robust data analysis. For instance, safety measures incorporate historical data on crashes, fatalities, and injuries, and estimate reductions based on proposed design interventions or shifts in travel modes (e.g., transit projects reducing roadway travel).

Mr. Anderson shared a yearly timeline which MDOT is launching this process as a pilot initiative in the current fiscal year. In January, the electronic portal for project submissions opens. Guidance materials, including a user manual, are provided online. By February, the portal closes mid-month. Scoring and review of submitted projects begin giving MDOT a few months to evaluate. In May, local priority letters are integrated with project scores to finalize a draft ranked list. From September through November, public input is gathered during the CTP tour, and adjustments are made if necessary. In December, any adjustments are announced in preparation for the next application cycle. Lastly, in January the portal reopens for new submissions.

Mr. Anderson concluded that although no funding is currently allocated for new capacity projects, the pilot year aims to refine the process and prepare for future funding opportunities. MDOT encourages stakeholders to submit projects, providing an opportunity to test the system, ensure data readiness, and receive valuable feedback.

Ms. Heather Dunigan shared her enthusiasm, stating that WILMAPCO is excited to see how the process unfolds. She mentioned that the timing aligns well with the timeframe of the prioritizations on the Delaware side. She expressed hope that any portal applications from Cecil County would be shared with WILMAPCO to allow for coordination and parallel review. Mr. Geoff Anderson responded affirmatively, expressing willingness to collaborate with WILMAPCO.

Ms. Zegeye inquired about the Transportation Commission referenced earlier. Mr. Anderson explained that while Chapter 30 is legislated, the proposed updates could potentially proceed

without additional legislation. However, the department is considering the possibility of introducing related legislation in the upcoming session. He clarified that the aim is to ensure transparency and public discussion regarding any changes. The concept of the Transportation Commission is currently a placeholder, intended as a forum for open discourse, though its exact structure remains undecided. Ms. Zegeye noted that DeIDOT has a similar public forum through its Council on Transportation, which might serve as a comparable model. Mr. Anderson acknowledged the utility of such forums, adding that other states have adopted similar structures, which could provide a beneficial solution in this case.

Mr. Bowers thanked Mr. Anderson and raised a question about the measures discussed, specifically regarding increasing non-single-occupancy vehicle travel and how such shifts would be evaluated. Mr. Anderson elaborated that transportation models would be used to assess these shifts. For instance, a proposed transit project would likely redirect single-occupant vehicle trips to transit, though some displacement from walking, biking, or carpooling trips might also occur. The measure focuses on mode shifts and aims to maximize the efficient use of existing infrastructure by serving more people through shared travel modes.

Ms. Samantha Bulkilvish asked whether the new portal being developed could enhance public outreach or potentially replace some public meetings. Mr. Anderson clarified that the portal is intended as an enhancement to public engagement, not a replacement for public meetings. He explained that the portal would provide detailed information about submitted projects, including locations and design proposals. Additionally, it would allow users to offer feedback directly within the portal, creating more opportunities for informed input and improved transparency.

## **8. Delaware CTP Project Prioritization Process**

Mr. Anson Gock, representing DeIDOT Planning, presented the latest proposed version of Delaware's CTP project prioritization process. As customary with DeIDOT presentations, he began with the department's motto, emphasizing their guiding principle: "Transportation excellence, every trip, every mile, every dollar, everyone."

Mr. Gock provided an overview of Delaware's safety performance, highlighting areas for improvement despite some positive trends in recent years. Motorcyclist accidents remain a significant concern, and he underscored the need for continued efforts to enhance safety across the state's transportation network.

Mr. Gock introduced the updates to the project prioritization process, noting that the revisions have been under development throughout 2024 and are planned for implementation in 2025. He acknowledged similarities between Delaware's and Maryland's approaches, as state DOTs often adopt similar methodologies, though Delaware's processes incorporate unique adjustments.

DeIDOT has collaborated closely with the Council on Transportation (COT) over a series of meetings since February to refine project submissions and review proposed adjustments. The updates reflect modifications to categories such as safety, system operations, multimodal accessibility, economic development, equity, and environmental justice.

### **Key Changes to Prioritization Categories:**

- Safety measures have been revised to include both the crash index and critical crash ratio, which normalize crash data based on roadway classifications. DeIDOT's safety group has also incorporated rankings from the Highway Safety Improvement Program

(HSIP), with projects receiving points based on their placement in this rigorous annual assessment.

- System operations now factor in recent congestion studies, intersection analyses, and TIS. These evaluations consider household growth, building permits, and census data over a three-to-four-year period, with findings integrated using GIS tools.
- Multimodal evaluation has transitioned from qualitative to fully quantitative measures. DelDOT has refined tools for active transportation and accessibility projects, including the incorporation of EPA's construction inspection application for ADA-related deficiencies. Bicycle, pedestrian, and bridge access are now key components of the evaluation.
- Economic impacts are assessed using the TREDIS/REMI model, with considerations varying by county due to differing population and economic conditions. TIDs are also integrated into evaluations, factoring in contributions from private developers.
- Projects located in approved freight corridors receive additional weight. This category, informed by the state's freight plan, reflects the growing importance of freight transportation in national and state infrastructure planning.
- DelDOT has established equity focus areas, prioritizing projects in regions with high percentages of disadvantaged populations or significant social and health-related challenges. Environmental considerations include flood risk assessments based on statewide resiliency maps.
- Projects are evaluated against Delaware's State Strategies for Policies and Spending, with higher scores assigned to those in levels 1 or 2 investment areas. Local MPO priorities are also incorporated.

Mr. Gock highlighted efforts to enhance the transparency and effectiveness of the CTP process, including transitioning to fully quantitative data evaluations. Utilizing updated tools and methodologies, including GIS and economic models. Securing a federal grant to improve public engagement through an enhanced user interface for accessing project information and providing feedback.

Mr. Gock explained that the updated prioritization process will follow a biannual cycle. In January, the portal for project submissions will open, accompanied by the distribution of guidance materials. By mid-February, the portal will close, and the scoring and review of projects will begin. In May, local priority letters will be integrated with project scores, and potential changes may be implemented. Between September and November, public outreach efforts, including TIP/CTP workshops, will gather feedback and inform necessary adjustments. By December, final adjustments will be announced in preparation for the next application cycle. Additionally, the COT will review and approve the updated process by February, facilitating its implementation in the 2025 CTP cycle. Mr. Gock emphasized DelDOT's commitment to making data-driven and transparent decisions that align with state goals. While no new funding is currently allocated for capacity projects, the pilot year will allow for testing and refining the updated process. Stakeholders are encouraged to submit projects to ensure data readiness and gather valuable feedback.

Ms. Bulkilvish inquired whether Delaware considers project costs during prioritization, like how Maryland normalizes projects by cost, particularly in reference to the year 2000. Mr. Gock acknowledged the challenge, stating that he personally struggles with this issue. He noted that project costs often vary significantly between planning estimates and actual expenditures. He explained that while some states factor costs into their processes, Delaware prefers not to do so unless planning cost estimates improve in accuracy. Mr. Gock also referenced other states,

such as California and Massachusetts, where discrepancies between planning and construction costs have been observed, sometimes exceeding 20%. He expressed hesitation about incorporating cost factors due to these inconsistencies.

Ms. Dunigan added that WILMAPCO does not include project costs in its calculations for similar reasons, as the scale of individual projects can skew comparisons. Mr. Bowers commented that while the concept is valid, assigning a precise dollar value to benefits remains challenging due to financial complexities and the lack of a universal formula.

Ms. Cathy Smith requested the inclusion of multimodal data sources to reflect contributions from DTC and transit agencies in reports. She noted that transit and pedestrian contributions had slightly decreased but emphasized the importance of their inclusion. Mr. Gock agreed and assured her that the updates would be made.

Ms. Tigist Zegeye asked about the timeline for prioritizing new projects, specifically for the 2027 cycle. Mr. Gock explained that assuming approval of the updated methodology, the focus would shift to CTP projects in 2027. He clarified that projects submitted under previous methodologies are color-coded differently and will proceed through the established process unless withdrawn by local authorities. Ms. Zegeye reiterated her question about prioritizing new submissions, to which Mr. Gock confirmed that these would follow the new methodology.

Mr. Blevins suggested improvements to model analysis, emphasizing the need for better data, particularly in rural areas. He highlighted the limitations of current tools and the necessity of updates. Mr. Gock acknowledged these concerns and noted that model updates are part of an ongoing process. He explained that urbanized areas like New Castle County have more comprehensive networks due to their long-standing development, whereas rural areas require additional updates.

Ms. Smith inquired whether algorithm-based measurements were used to abandon projects. Mr. Gock clarified that the process involves both planning and financial considerations but does not solely rely on algorithms. He highlighted the challenges of integrating newer tools with older methodologies.

Ms. Dunigan asked how the updated process would relate to funding programs in the Delaware Statewide Element of the CTP. Mr. Gock explained that planning handles prioritization, while finance oversees funding distribution. Each program, such as HSIP, has its ranking criteria, creating challenges in balancing federal, local, and other funding sources.

Mr. Bullock asked if the updated plan would be made available for public review before finalization. Mr. Gock confirmed that the February COT meeting, a public forum, would provide an opportunity for further input. Mr. Bullock suggested holding additional public displays of the plan at community centers, such as the Route 9 library, to engage with local residents, particularly under the new administration. Ms. Zegeye supported this idea, emphasizing the importance of using federal funding to enhance public outreach and transparency. Mr. Swiatek mentioned the existence of a renewed monitoring committee and suggested including updates and presentations on their agenda.

Mr. Bowers noted that after the first year of applying the updated county process, rankings would be shared with monitoring committees for further evaluation. Mr. Gock concluded by reiterating that decisions on submissions ultimately lie with the respective counties, particularly for New Castle County.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **9. Staff Report**

Ms. Heather Dunigan reported the following updates:

- On December 2nd, the Augustine Cut-Off Reconfiguration study had an Advisory Committee meeting and held a tour. Special thanks to DTC for providing a bus and a driver, it helped with safety and good dialogue arose regarding the old Stanford Stadium.
- On December 3rd, Staff participated in the Maryland's Greenway Committee meeting. Discussions focused on various projects moving through different phases, ensuring alignment on the planner processing analysis and a path forward.
- On December 10th the Churchman's Crossing Monitoring Committee meeting was held.
- On December 11th, the Maryland 272 Steering Committee convened to discuss updates.
- On December 12th, a public workshop was held for the 12th Street Connector project in coordination with the Lower Brandywine Study.
- On January 6th, the Arden Transportation Plan Monitoring Committee is scheduled to meet.
- On January 9th, a meeting with Claymont business leaders and the fire department will take place to discuss transportation recommendations for the Claymont Area Master Plan.
- On January 15th, the online survey for the Kirkwood Highway Corridor and Master Plan remains open until this date. Final advisory committee meetings and workshops for this project are planned for this winter.
- On January 24th, Staff will participate in an AMPO focus group on institutionalizing a Safe Systems approach in transportation planning and programming. This will be the second round of focus groups for the project.
- Staff continue to collaborate with DVRPC on the Regional Comprehensive Plan and Climate Action Plan for the Philadelphia MSA.

### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Ms. Cathy Smith from DTC announced that an additional service change will be implemented, primarily focused on addressing on-time performance adjustments in New Castle County. She noted that the ongoing shifts in commuter patterns, partially due to remote work, construction, and changing population dynamics; have influenced service needs.

Ms. Smith emphasized that performance metrics are currently strong but require continuous improvement. The team has been conducting extensive ride-along and traffic monitoring at various times and days to gather comprehensive data. She also highlighted the challenges faced by drivers and coworkers, including labor shortages. The extra service change is scheduled to take effect on February 23rd, with adjustments to the schedule finalized and announced in advance.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

**ACTION:** Meeting adjourned at 11:34 a.m.

**Attachments (0)**