

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

April 18, 2024

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was held on Thursday, April 18, 2024, at WILMAPCO, 100 Discovery Boulevard, Suite 800, Newark, DE 19713 and via video conference/conference call.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Matt Rogers, New Castle County Department of Land Use, and TAC Chair, brought the TAC meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

2. TAC Members present:

Cooper Bowers, Delaware Department of Transportation
Samantha Bulkivish, Delaware Office of State Planning
David Dahlstrom, Maryland Department of Planning
Taylor Englert, DNREC
Dan Janousek, Maryland Department of Transportation
Gwinneth Kaminsky Rivera, City of Wilmington Planning
Matt Rogers, New Castle County Department of Land Use
Catherine Salarano, Maryland Department of the Environment
Catherine Smith, Delaware Transit Corporation

TAC Ex-Officio Members present:

Enos Han, FHWA Delaware Division

TAC Members absent:

Cecil County
City of Newark
City of Wilmington Department of Public Works
Delaware Division of Small Business, Development, and Tourism
Delaware River and Bay Authority
Maryland State Highway Administration
Town of Elkton Planning

TAC Ex-Officio Members absent:

Amtrak
Diamond State Port Corporation
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Federal Transit Administration

Guests and Invitees:

Kristie Arlotta, NCC
James Coverdale, DNREC
Jane Dilley, Public
Tina Merrill, DNREC
Deanna Murphy, Board of Realtors

Staff:

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

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

Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth Espinal.

3. MINUTES

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

ACTION: On motion by Ms. Catherine Smith and seconded by Mr. David Dahlstrom, the March 21, 2024, TAC Minutes are approved.

Motion passed.

(04-18-24-01)

4. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

- a) **Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group-** Ms. Heather Dunigan said that the Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group met on April 2nd. The group reviewed non-motorized projects outlined in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), endorsing those included in both programs for approval. Additionally, they examined the draft concepts for the East Elkton Plan, expressing satisfaction with the integration of many bicycle and pedestrian improvements and engaging in constructive discussions on the matter. The group also discussed the monitoring of the Churchman's Crossing project, particularly focusing on the process aimed at prioritizing bicycle and pedestrian enhancements.
- b) **Air Quality Subcommittee-** Ms. Heather Dunigan provided an update on the recent meeting of the Air Quality Subcommittee, which convened on April 4. During the meeting, they examined two proposed amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) listed on today's agenda: the Beech Street Maintenance Building and the section of US 40 from Salem Church Rd. to Walther Road. The subcommittee determined that neither of these amendments would necessitate a revision of air quality conformity. Additionally, the subcommittee reviewed the draft FY2025 TIP and found no triggers for air quality conformity adjustments. Lastly, they discussed the project schedule for the upcoming Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) performance plan, which is due for submission in October.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None.

ACTION ITEMS

6. To Recommend Amendment of the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

DelDOT has requested that the TIP be amended to include revised funding for the DART Beech Street Maintenance Building. This project funds enhanced operations at the facility through centralization and improving the paratransit process.

ACTION: On motion by Ms. Gwinneth Kaminsky, seconded by Mr. Cooper Bowers, TAC approved the TIP amendment for the Beech Street Maintenance Building.

Motion passed.

(04-18-24-02)

7. To Recommend Amendment of the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

DelDOT has requested that the TIP be amended to include revised funding for the US 40 between Salem Church Road and Walther Road. This project entails the addition of lanes in each direction and enhancements for pedestrians and cyclists, such as a multi-use path spanning the length of the project.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Dan Janousek, seconded by Ms. Gwinneth Kaminsky, TAC approved the TIP amendment for revised funding of the US40, Salem Church Road to Walther Road project.

Motion passed.

(04-18-24-03)

8. To Recommend adoption of the FY2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

Ms. Tigist Zegeye introduced a proposal for the adoption of the FY25 UPWP. She emphasized the requirement for a 20% local or state match for every dollar obtained from the Federal government. The cash commitments outlined include contributions from DelDOT, New Castle County, the City of Wilmington, MDOT, and Cecil County, totaling \$3.7 million for the fiscal year.

Ms. Zegeye outlined the allocation of funds, with a significant portion dedicated to sub-regional studies and coordination, as well as monitoring and implementation. She highlighted new additions to the FY25 UPWP, including the Final Mile Freight Network Update, the New Castle County Strategic Action Plan, the Augustine Cutoff Corridor Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Improvement Phase Two, the Rocky Run Pathway Underpass Feasibility Study, and the Maryland Route 272 Corridor Study.

The presentation noted that the program is currently up for a public comment period until May 13th, with recommendations from the Public Advisory Committee already made. Two public comments have been received, one anonymous comment supporting the allocation of funds for the Maryland Route 272 Corridor Study, and the other expressing concern about the absence of sidewalk discussions in the Kirkwood Highway Plan. Ms. Zegeye assured stakeholders that projects will include a multimodal aspect.

The UPWP is set for Council approval in May, with submission to DelDOT, MDOT, SHA, and FHWA also planned for May, and implementation scheduled for July 1st.

ACTION: On motion by Ms. Gwinneth Kaminsky, seconded by Ms. Samantha Bulkivish, TAC approved adoption of the FY2025 Unified Planning Work Program.

Motion passed.

(04-18-24-04)

9. To recommend adoption of the FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Ms. Heather Dunigan explained that there are two parts to this action item: adoption of the TIP and self-certification of the WILMAPCO planning process. She recommended that the motion

for adopting the FY2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) be contingent upon no significant public comments altering the documents, considering the public comment period is still open. Ms. Dunigan reported on the recent public workshop held at the WILMAPCO offices in Newark, noting that while attendance was moderate, the engagement level was high, with attendees engaging in detailed discussions. She mentioned various topics of interest to the attendees, such as regional developments, bike and pedestrian projects, and freight studies, for which she provided contact information for further inquiries. She acknowledged receiving only one written comment requesting additional public outreach via Zoom or online platforms, however, due to the unique interactive format of in-person workshops with staff this method is preferred. Ms. Dunigan announced plans for a second public workshop scheduled for May 1st at the Middletown Town Hall, extending the public comment period accordingly.

Regarding the second part resolution, Ms. Dunigan discussed the self-certification resolution, which outlines how we are meeting federal MPO requirements.

ACTION: On motion by Ms. Catherine Smith, seconded by Ms. Gwineth Kaminsky, TAC approved adoption of the FY2025-2028 TIP including adoption for Self-Certification for FY 2025.

Motion passed.

(04-18-24-05)

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

10. New Castle County Pathway to Sustainability Plan

Ms. Kristie Arlotta addressed the audience, acknowledging the imminent release of the draft sustainability plan for the upcoming Monday. She emphasized that it was an early draft, compiled from various sustainability goals and planning efforts. Ms. Arlotta highlighted the collaborative nature of the endeavor, involving input from various departments within New Castle County and external stakeholders including public comments.

Ms. Kristie Arlotta explained the plan's focus on environment, equity, and economy, aiming for a comprehensive approach to problem-solving. Arlotta outlined the plan's structure, divided into six topic areas: complete clean communities, energy, climate resilience, natural resources, waste, and environmental justice.

Ms. Arlotta provided a timeline of the planning process, starting in December, with ongoing research and stakeholder engagement. She mentioned upcoming public workshops starting April 22nd through September 1st and she emphasized opportunities for feedback, both online and in-person. Ms. Arlotta shared the importance of public input, citing previous engagement for the comprehensive plan. Ms. Arlotta encouraged attendees to provide feedback through public meetings, surveys, or direct communication.

The presentation included a preview of the plan's structure, with main goals, sub-goals, targets, and implementation tasks. Ms. Arlotta explained the concept of county spheres of influence, focusing on control, influence, and education. She concluded by inviting questions and feedback, either during the session or via email. Ms. Arlotta expressed her willingness to engage with stakeholders and address any queries or concerns.

Before fielding any questions, Mr. Matthew Rogers expressed his gratitude for the diligent effort put forth by Ms. Kristie Arlotta in compiling the sustainability plan. He underscored the significance of such an endeavor, particularly in the context of land-use within the county. Mr.

Rogers highlighted the extensive nature of the document, spanning 563 pages, and emphasized the importance of consolidating various elements into a coherent and accessible format for both staff and the public. He stressed the relevance of the plan to ongoing planning initiatives, permit reviews, and plan assessments, urging everyone to participate in the upcoming public or virtual workshops.

11. Kirkwood Highway Land Use and Transportation Plan

Mr. Dave Gula began his presentation by providing an update on the progress of the Kirkwood Highway and Transportation Plan. The project commenced in the fall, and significant strides have been made in its first year. The study area encompasses approximately 8 miles of Kirkwood Highway Capital Trail, stretching from Elsmere to the Wilmington boundary on the east side, stopping just short of Newark near the Newark TID boundary to the west. Mr. Gula explained that the decision to halt the study at the Newark TID boundary was due to the formal nature of projects within the TID, involving legal agreements with developers. He outlined the study parameters, emphasizing the aim to enhance alternative travel modes while preserving and promoting the vitality of existing neighborhoods. Economic growth and sustainability are also key objectives. Mr. Gula highlighted the importance of collaboration with partners like New Castle County and DeIDOT to ensure coordinated land-use planning and infrastructure improvements.

The presentation delved into the community engagement process, including a listening tour, the establishment of an advisory committee, and workshops aimed at gathering input from residents and stakeholders. Mr. Gula emphasized that all workshops thus far have been in the same location, Cranston Heights Fire Hall, which is at the heart of the corridor and is very convenient for those that live within the project boundaries. Mr. Gula shared feedback from these sessions informed the development of a vision statement, which was shared and discussed at subsequent workshops. A market analysis conducted at the project's outset revealed a diverse housing stock and a solid job market along the corridor, with potential for further growth. Mr. Gula stressed the importance of transportation investments in maintaining property values and increasing mobility options for residents.

Moving forward, the project will explore various scenarios, including business as usual, transit-focused improvements, and a multimodal corridor approach. Community feedback gathered through workshops and surveys will guide the selection and refinement of these scenarios. Mr. Gula shared results from the recent workshop, noting that a variety of questions were collected both on paper and online. In total, 45 comments were received, including 17 from the workshop, 18 submitted afterward, and one via email. One of the questions concerned the vision statement, with 17 out of 22 respondents agreeing with it, while six disagreed. Additionally, some respondents opted not to provide an answer.

Mr. Dave Gula concluded by inviting questions from the audience, reiterating the project's commitment to transparency and stakeholder engagement. He encouraged continued participation through the project website and upcoming workshop scheduled for June 10th. Mr. Gula emphasized the importance of collective input from all stakeholders in shaping the future of the Kirkwood Highway corridor.

INFORMATION ITEMS

12. Staff Report

Ms. Heather Dunigan reported the following updates:

- On March 20th Wilmington Initiatives held a meeting and will be hosting a public workshop on June 20th at the City County building lobby.
- On March 27th the East Elkton Safety Traffic Circulation Plan held their public survey workshop. The survey is available through April 27th.
- On March 28th the Claymont Master Plan had a kind of a planning partner charette.
- On April 10th the Churchman's Crossing Monitoring Committee met. They have been working on prioritizing the bike ped projects and analysis. A public workshop will be held May 15th.
- On April 16th a TIP workshop was held in WILMAPCO offices. A secondary TIP workshop is scheduled for May 1st at the Middletown Town Hall from 5-7PM.
- On April 17th staff participated in Dover Safety Summit presentations held regarding MPO's and the planning processes completed at WILMAPCO.
- On April 18th-19th staff are attending the Equity Action Summit in Wilmington staff will be presenting work on Southbridge and Route 9.
- On April 18th the Kirkwood Highway Steering Committee met, the next Monitoring Committee Meeting is scheduled for May 20th and the third public workshop on June 10th.
- On April 19th staff will be attending Wilmington Earth Day with TROPO as part of the Air Quality Partnership.
- On April 24th the Concord Pike Monitoring Committee will meet. They have scheduled a public Workshop for June 5th.
- On April 26th the Route 9 Monitoring Committee will conduct a meeting.
- Staff have also provided support to the team working on the New Castle County Pathway to Sustainability Plan.
- On April 29th the Newport Transportation Study Monitoring Committee will have a meeting and a public workshop will be held in May in collaboration with DeIDOT and DTC.
- On May 6th the Ardens Transportation Monitoring Committee will have their next meeting.
- Staff continues to coordinate with DVRPC on the Climate Action Plan
- On May 9th the Advisory and Monitoring Committees for North Claymont and Governor Prince will meet. The Committees are gauging a public workshop event for late May regarding this project.
- On May 11th staff will be participating in the Wilmington Open Streets event. The kickoff for the summer at Southbridge.

OTHER BUSINESS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

ACTION: Meeting adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

Attachments (0)