

## **TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**July 18, 2024**

A meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was held on Thursday, July 18, 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 10:05 a.m.

**2. TAC Members present:**

Cooper Bowers, Delaware Department of Transportation  
Michael Fortner, City of Newark  
William Goldman, Cecil County Division of Planning and Zoning  
Dan Janousek, Maryland Department of Transportation  
Gwinneth Kaminsky Rivera, City of Wilmington Planning  
Tina Merrill, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environment  
Matthew Rodgers, New Castle County Department of Land Use  
Catherine Salarano, Maryland Department of the Environment  
Catherine Smith, Delaware Transit Corporation

**TAC Ex-Officio Members present:**

**TAC Members absent:**

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

**TAC Ex-Officio Members absent:**

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

**Guests and Invitees:**

Robin Bullock, Holloway Terrace, PAC member  
Sarah Lester, Cornerstone West, PAC member  
Ben Gruswitz, Delaware Greenway, AQS member  
Rachel McGuire, Jacobs Consultant  
Colton Phillips, DeIDOT  
William Tardy, Jacobs Consultant

**Staff:**

Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner  
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 May 16, 2024, and June 20, 2024, TAC Meeting Minutes.

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. Cooper Bowers and seconded by Ms. Gwinneth Kaminsky-Rivera, the May 16th and June 20th, 2024, TAC Minutes are approved.

**4. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

None.

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

None.

**ACTION ITEMS**

NONE

**PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**6. DeIDOT Mid Performance Period Targets and Measures**

Mr. Colton Phillips, DeIDOT, presented on the topic of transportation performance measures. He was joined by Mr. Will Tardy, an environmental planner with Jacobs Engineering. The presentation focused on DeIDOT's mid-performance period activities and provided a comprehensive overview of the Transportation Performance Management (TPM) program.

Mr. Phillips outlined the agenda, which included a program overview, key definitions, an update on the status of performance measures, and a discussion on process updates. Mr. Phillips explained that the current phase is the mid-performance period, which falls between the regular reporting periods to federal highways every two and four years. During this period, targets and measures are reviewed, but significant changes are not anticipated as DeIDOT's metrics are currently well within the established targets.

Mr. Will Tardy elaborated on the three main performance measure categories: PM1 (Safety), PM2 (Asset Condition), and PM3 (Network Operations). The focus of the presentation was on PM3, which includes metrics such as travel time reliability, peak-hour excessive delay, non-single-occupant vehicle travel, and on-road emissions reductions. The presentation also included an analysis of the level of travel time reliability on both Interstate and non-Interstate National Highway Systems (NHS) and truck travel time reliability. The emission reductions achieved through the Congestion Management and Air Quality (CMAQ) program were discussed, highlighting DeIDOT's performance relative to its targets.

Mr. Tardy noted that DelDOT is developing new documentation to enhance transparency and understanding of its TPM program, including standard operating procedures and correlation analyses to identify factors influencing performance measures.

The presentation concluded with an invitation for attendees to reach out with any further questions.

## **7. 2024 Newark Bicycle Plan Update**

Ms. Heather Dunigan provided an update on the ongoing 10-year revision of the 2014 Newark Bicycle Plan. This plan, like its predecessor, is a collaborative effort between the City of Newark, Bike Newark, and WILMAPCO, benefiting significantly from volunteer support within the bicycling community. The updated plan focuses on key areas such as safety, equity, and sustainability.

Ms. Dunigan outlined the current progress, including the ongoing audit of Newark's roadways and bike parking facilities, which is being conducted by volunteers. She mentioned that preliminary data has been collected and will be refined before a larger group of volunteers is engaged. The plan also aims to update actions based on best practices and to develop multiple scenarios for an improved bicycle network, drawing on existing planning efforts, particularly the Newark Transportation Improvement District (TID), which has emphasized bike and pedestrian improvements.

She highlighted the use of data from the New Castle County Safe Streets for All initiative, which has identified high crash networks within Newark, particularly focusing on bicycle and pedestrian incidents. While Newark's bike crashes generally do not result in severe injuries, the area still has a significant number of incidents, underscoring the need for safer facilities. Ms. Dunigan also discussed the importance of addressing equity, particularly for low-income and mobility-challenged areas around Newark that are currently disconnected from key destinations.

In terms of next steps, the project will continue with the completion of the bicycle facility and parking audit over the summer, followed by a new round of outreach in the fall. This outreach will include participation in Newark Community Day and a public workshop, with the goal of finalizing the updated plan by late 2024. Ms. Dunigan concluded by inviting questions from the audience.

Mr. Colin Phillips from DelDOT inquired about how bicycle crashes are logged, particularly questioning whether the data collection relies solely on police reports. Ms. Heather Dunigan explained that crash reports are typically filed by the responding officer, capturing details such as location, contributing factors, and helmet use. She noted that while data is more reliable in cases of fatalities due to thorough investigations, minor crashes often result in less accurate data. Ms. Dunigan acknowledged the challenges in data collection and suggested that expanding the focus to include all bike crashes, not just severe ones, would be beneficial, especially in areas like Newark.

Mr. Phillips shared a personal experience of a minor, unreported bicycle crash during his time at University of Delaware (UD), raising concerns about the number of such incidents that go unrecorded. Ms. Dunigan confirmed that many minor crashes and near misses are not reported, often due to issues like poor roadway maintenance. She emphasized the importance of designing low-stress facilities that provide a sense of safety for all users, as the current infrastructure may discourage bicycling and walking due to safety concerns.

## **8. East Elkton Traffic Circulation and Safety Plan**

Mr. Bill Swiatek presented an update on the East Elkton Traffic Circulation and Safety Plan, which is currently open for public comment. He informed the committee that this presentation serves as the final opportunity for input before the plan is finalized, with the goal of presenting the final version in August.

Mr. Swiatek provided an overview of the plan, which focuses on three key corridors in East Elkton: Belle Hill Road to the north, Muddy Lane in the central area, and Delancy Road to the south. The planning process is nearing completion, following a successful third public workshop where recommendations were reviewed with the community. The public comment period will remain open until July 29th, and Council endorsement of the plan is anticipated in September.

The presentation included a summary of community outreach efforts and participation levels, which increased as the study progressed. The second survey received 188 responses, a higher number than the first, indicating growing community engagement. Additionally, more participants attended the second workshop compared to the first, suggesting generally effective outreach across neighborhoods within the study area. Notably, 78% of survey respondents felt that the plan addressed their safety and traffic concerns, although some expressed a desire for more focus on the US 40 at Delancy Road intersection and speed enforcement.

Mr. Swiatek outlined the plan's recommendations, categorized by their implementation timelines. Short-term recommendations, expected to be completed within two years, include improving pavement markings, vegetation management, and signal timing at key intersections such as Route 279 and Belle Hill Road. These recommendations have already been submitted to the state highway department, and work is underway.

Mid-term recommendations involve administrative actions related to land use and zoning. For instance, the plan suggests better separation of truck-generating uses from residential areas around Belle Hill Road and, separately, addressing mismatches between biodiversity-sensitive areas and future residential uses along Muddy Lane. Additionally, the plan recommends restricting left turns out of Royal Farms on Delancy Road, a high-crash location, and proposes an access road to improve traffic flow.

Long-term recommendations focus on significant infrastructure changes, such as realignments and intersection improvements. A major proposal involves addressing the underpass near the Amtrak line, with two potential solutions: constructing an overpass or improving the existing underpass. The community favors the latter, but further study is needed to determine feasibility and costs.

Overall, Mr. Swiatek emphasized that the plan reflects community preferences and aims to improve traffic safety and circulation in East Elkton. The planning process is nearing completion, and the plan is available for review on the WILMAPCO website.

Mr. Dan Janousek from MDOT said that the report looks great and expressed appreciation for the coordination with MDOT and the State Highway Administration on the short-term improvements. He mentioned that while he was previously involved, he will continue to track the project and offered further support if needed.

Mr. Bill Swiatek responded by thanking Dan, noting that his involvement has been a significant addition to the committee. He expressed gratitude for Dan's assistance in connecting with the

right individuals within the administration and extended his thanks to the entire steering committee for their efforts in developing a strong plan.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **10. Staff Report**

Ms. Heather Dunigan reported the following updates:

- On June 17, the Wilmington Initiatives had their most recent committee meeting, and their annual public workshop on June 20th, which had about 45 attendees.
- On June 27, the East Elkton Traffic Circulation Plan held its third public workshop. This was followed by several presentations: one to County Executives on July 10th and another to the Cecil County Council on July 16th. The public comment period will close on July 29th.
- For the Newport Train Station project, we expect to release the RFP in late summer. This is being developed in partnership with DeIDOT.
- The Augustine Cutoff Reconfiguration Study has the RFP prepared, with proposals due on August 5th. We aim to hold interviews during the week of August 19th.
- The remainder of the new UPWP studies are being released gradually, with a goal to have all of them out by the end of summer.
- On July 16th, staff participated in the New Castle County State of the County event.
- On July 17th, staff participated in the Policy Forum, "Delaware's Changing Landscape: Transportation and Demographic Challenges in the Post-COVID Era." This event was co-hosted by the University of Delaware, DeIDOT, Delaware Population Consortium, and WILMAPCO.
- Staff met with DeIDOT to support improvements in their underlying equity focus areas and met with New Castle County to advance Environmental Justice (EJ) through the Sustainability Plan.
- The Route 9 Master Plan Committee will meet on July 18th.
- Staff continues to coordinate with DVRPC on the Regional Climate Action Plan. We are setting up Subject Matter Expert discussions. If you would like to participate, the transportation session will be on July 22nd, and the land use session on July 24th. Bill Swiatek can provide details on these sessions.
- On August 5th, the Ardens Transportation Plan Monitoring Committee will meet.

### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Mr. Bill Swiatek emphasized the need for subject matter experts in transportation or land use. He encouraged anyone interested in contributing to reach out. With significant input already coming from the Philadelphia region, it would be valuable for WILMAPCO to have strong representation in the Climate Action Plan. Mr. Swiatek expressed appreciation for any support.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

**ACTION:** Meeting adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

**Attachments (0)**