



**DOVER/KENT COUNTY MPO PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 22, 2011**

**PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS & ALTERNATES ATTENDING:**

Dwight Meyer, Chair	James Brown	Horace Cook
Arley Cooper, Jr.	David Fry	Dr. Daniel Houghtaling
James Webster		

**MEMBERS NOT ATTENDING:**

Prameela Kaza	Dr. Carlton Cannon	Michael Gumrot, Vice Chair
Phyllis B. Collins		

**NON-MEMBERS ATTENDING:**

State Representative Lincoln Willis	State Senator Brian Bushweller
Juanita Wiczoreck, MPO Staff	James Galvin, MPO Staff
Kate Layton, MPO Staff	Catherine Samardza, MPO Staff

**1. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS & GUESTS**

Mr. Willis and Mr. Bushweller were introduced to the PAC members. Mr. Meyer gave an overview of the MPO and committees for their information. There was also some discussion concerning municipal street projects and those that qualify for federal monies.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**3. ACTION ITEM: Approval of Agenda**

Ms. Wiczoreck asked that Item #5, the draft FY2012 Unified Planning Work Program, be removed. The document is not yet ready for review.

MOTION By Dr. Houghtaling to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Mr. Webster.  
Motion carried.

**4. ACTION ITEM: Approval of Minutes Dec. 14, 2010**

Mr. Fry asked why there was no action noted in the minutes regarding the Delmarva Rail Study. Staff explained that the PAC had deferred action on the study pending further information. Council was notified of their concerns, and had taken action without further input from the PAC.

MOTION By Dr. Houghtaling to approve the minutes. Seconded by Mr. Cooper. Motion carried.

**5. ACTION ITEM: Draft FY 2012 Unified Planning Work Program — MPO Staff**

**REMOVED**



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### 6. **ACTION (DISCUSSION) ITEM: Dover Transit Center Neighborhood Plan Final Report – MPO Staff**

Mr. Galvin reviewed the Dover Transit Center Neighborhood Plan, describing how the sponsors (MPO and Downtown Dover Partnership) and the consultants (Becker Morgan Group and Renaissance Planning) came together to produce the plan. He also explained how the plan looks at what might happen in the area 30 years from now, and how the study area was delineated. Mr. Galvin then reviewed the plan, noting some of the specific suggestions at various locations.

There was discussion about the Transit Center, and the proposed building that would eventually be the MPO home.

Mr. Fry expressed dismay that the MPO had spent money printing and mailing such a large document. MPO staff explained that the document was printed in-house and that the MPO PAC bylaws require that agenda materials be sent out in advance for review. Mr. Meyer said he appreciated the chance to review the design book before the meeting.

Ms. Wiczoreck informed the PAC members that if they approve of the Plan, a recommendation that the Council adopt it as part of the Regional Transportation Plan would be needed.

Mr. Meyer noted that this should be an Action Item.

**MOTION** By Mr. Cook to recommend that Council adopt the plan as presented. Seconded by Mr. Cooper. Motion carried with one opposed.

### 7. **DISCUSSION ITEM: Upcoming Legislation and Transportation Projects in Delaware, with Sen. Brian Bushweller and Rep. Lincoln Willis.**

The discussion began with the Secretary Wicks announcement resigning from DelDOT. Mr. Bushweller said that Governor Markell is looking for an outsider to take a fresh look at the agency, including processes and projects, with particular oversight to property acquisitions. Mr. Bushweller felt more public scrutiny would get better results. PAC members noted the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) shortfall, commenting that there were two issues: 1) is the money spent correctly and 2) future revenue. PAC members commented on the fact that the TTF was originally meant for transportation projects only, not operating expenses. Mr. Bushweller reported that at a recent Bond Bill meeting, Secretary Wicks produced a chart that showed the State had enough money for 1.5 years of projects, and would then be broke. He said that more money or tougher decisions on projects were going to be needed.

Mr. Cook brought the conversation back to the Delmarva Rail Study. He said “We don’t need to spend half a million dollars on this kind of study.” Mr. Meyer concurred, saying that the last study said there was not enough ridership available to make rail service feasible. Mr. Cook felt there was no due diligence on the part of DART. Mr. Bushweller said that he knew that even people in support of commuter rail service were not in favor of the study; they felt it had been studied enough, the State should make a decision.



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There was further talk of the constraints on rail service in Delaware due to the types of railroad tracks and speed limitations.

There was further discussion concerning the changes at DelDOT. Mr. Bushweller said that although the new secretary would have problems, he felt that Governor Markell was on the right track.

Dr. Houghtaling said that for years the PAC members have seen Kent County shortchanged in the CTP; he noted that there was money for projects in New Castle and Sussex counties, but not here. He asked where the representation for Dover and Kent County were in the legislature.

Mr. Willis said that the concerns about DelDOT were not falling on deaf ears, and admitted that Kent County has to fight for "our fair share."

Mr. Fry brought the conversation back to DelDOT's restructuring, and said he felt there were two groups – the legislature and the "kingdom of DelDOT." He felt the agency had a lot of power but answered to no one. He said that the chain of command should be tightened up. Mr. Willis and Mr. Bushweller agreed, but said that things have already started to change.

Dr. Houghtaling noted that the TTF was sound for years, then the General Assembly put the operating budget into it, and now it keeps falling behind. Mr. Bushweller concurred, saying that government looks for an easy way out, and added the Dept. of Motor Vehicles into Transportation in 2006. They felt it would save money, and at that time the TTF was okay. However, to take out the operating expenses now would create a \$90K shortfall in the general budget. Mr. Willis agreed that it was not fair to DelDOT. Mr. Cook said that it wasn't fair to Secretary Wicks, either. He wondered if she even knew about everything that has happened at DelDOT. Mr. Fry said there were too many fiefdoms at DelDOT.

Mr. Willis said that the Governor is proposing an infrastructure trust fund.

There was some discussion concerning economic development and the recession. Mr. Meyer noted that the Delaware City refinery was up and running again. He felt this was good for Delaware – residents benefit by cheaper freight expenses on our petroleum.

Dr. Houghtaling mentioned the Indian River Inlet bridge and the Route 301 project. He asked if they would be brought to a halt until a new Secretary was in place. Mr. Bushweller said that Secretary Wicks would be staying on until March 18<sup>th</sup>, and these issues would be addressed. He said that no one would be ready to go on March 19<sup>th</sup>; he expected a continuing resolution to deal with some projects. He said that the Route 301 project was postponed.

Mr. Cook asked why there weren't tolls on the St. Georges Bridge; Mr. Bushweller reminded the PAC that the St. Georges bridge cannot have tolls because of Delaware's agreement with the federal government. Mr. Cook felt that Delaware should be exempted from the agreement because the State needs the revenue. Ms. Wiczoreck reminded the PAC that the bridge also connects the town of St. Georges. She also noted that the Central DE Chamber of Commerce (CDCC) recommended an Indian River Inlet Bridge toll. Mr. Bushweller said that it's really only Delawareans to pay tolls from Kent to New Castle County.



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Dr. Houghtaling brought up the Civil Air Terminal (CAT) and air service to Florida. Discussion ensued, with Mr. Cook and Mr. Bushweller being skeptical about the project based on prior proposals for service at the CAT. Mr. Bushweller noted that \$350K in improvements were needed for the service. Dr. Houghtaling noted that it was less than the rail study. There was further discussion as to whether or not the Dept. of Defense (DOD) should make the improvements when they also use the CAT. It was noted that Allegiant, the private service contractor, doesn't want to put any money into the improvements. Dr. Houghtaling said they would assume the operating costs. Mr. Bushweller said they would be using TSA employees at the Base; he would be more comfortable if the airline was willing to put some money into the project. He said he had a hard time finding any real money that the State of Delaware would make out of this project.

Dr. Houghtaling brought up the proposed Kent County soccer fields, admitting that it was not an MPO issue. Both Mr. Bushweller and Mr. Willis said they would like to see more details on the project. Mr. Cook said that the business plan seems good – allowing 2-3 years to get going, and then do well. It was also noted that the biggest expense was the property, which Kent County is donating.

Mr. Bushweller asked how the PAC felt about the Civic Center. Mr. Cook said it was a dead issue. Dr. Houghtaling said he thought it was a good idea at first, but just got bigger and bigger. Further discussion noted that Dover Downs couldn't sell out a rock concert with big names, and the Wicomico Civic Center in Salisbury has only been half full when a PAC member attends events there. Some felt that the time hasn't come for this, and with the current economic conditions, it should be on hold. Mr. Cook felt that a Civic Center could be successful if handled correctly. A tie-in with Delaware State University could be a good thing, but there was no general support for an ice rink. Dr. Houghtaling felt there was no local facility for a large gathering and Mr. Cook felt the Civic Center and Dover Downs would "feed off each other." He also noted the Wicomico Civic Center took awhile to get going.

Ms. Wiczorek noted that Delaware spent millions on the waterfront in Wilmington; Kent County was not getting a fair share. The State should have stepped in to do something good for economic development.

Mr. Galvin said that having the Civic Center on the books puts it in line for the next opportunity. Mr. Webster felt that it would have to work WITH Dover Downs, not compete with it, and he would like to know their opinion. Ms. Layton said she had talked to Ed Sutor at Dover Downs about why they don't book large stadium acts; he said that with the cost of talent, lights, and parking, they lose money.

There was no general consensus about the Civic Center; some felt it would draw attendees from both north and south of Dover, others disagreed.

Mr. Meyer said that he agreed with Governor Markell's decision to cut funding to farmland preservation. Since developers not flocking to Delaware, it doesn't make sense to spend money preserving the land.



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### 8. Staff Report –

#### 8.1 UPWP Progress & Financial Reports – J. Wieczoreck

#### 8.2 Other Project Updates/Activities – J. Wieczoreck, J. Galvin

Ms. Wieczoreck reported that the Regional Bicycle Plan work group would meet on March 1<sup>st</sup>. The group is working on policy recommendations, proposed projects and performance measures.

Mr. Galvin announced that the MPO sponsored two Webinars, at WILMAPCO and the Kent County Administration Building, on Retrofitting Corridors. The next MPO-sponsored project is a short course on form-based codes. The workshop will be held at the Kent County Administration Building and will be taught by Clarence Eng from Renaissance Planning. This workshop came out of the Dover Transit Center Plan, which recommended that Dover should look at form-based codes. Form-based codes consider looks and function of a building, not simply the use.

#### 8.3 Correspondence, Publications/Reports/Outreach – K. Layton

Ms. Layton announced that the TIP Tour would take place on Saturday, April 9, 2011. She reported that the tour was moved to the spring due to weather considerations. Staff felt it would also be easier to see the project locations without snow covering the area.

She also announced that the Air Quality Partnership would kick off the ozone season on April 16<sup>th</sup> at Earth Day, held at Killens Pond and sponsored by the Delaware Solid Waste Authority.

The DE Bicycle Summit would be held at the Virdin Center in Lewes this year.

The Data Book was recently mailed out, and the newsletter would soon be sent as well.

DE Office of Information Technology is assisting the MPO in switching the MPO website to a web-based program that would be easier to manage in-house. There is no cost to the MPO for this assistance; OIT also works with the smaller municipalities in developing their websites.

Ms. Wieczoreck announced that she would be retiring as of June 30, 2011. She met with the Council's Executive Committee, and has been instructed to conduct a local search first, and a national search if no suitable candidate is found.

Mr. Meyer thanked Mr. Bushweller and Mr. Willis for attending the meeting. Mr. Willis invited the attendees to contact either legislator if needed.

**Next meeting: April 26, 2011, Milford Parks and Recreation building, 207 Franklin St., Milford.**

MOTION By Mr. Fry to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Webster. Motion carried.