



**DOVER/KENT COUNTY MPO PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES OF DECEMBER 14, 2010**

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

Dwight Meyer, Chair	Michael Gumrot, Vice Chair
James Brown	Phyllis B. Collins
Horace Cook	Dr. Daniel Houghtaling
Prameela Kaza	James Webster

**MEMBERS NOT ATTENDING:**

Dr. Carlton Cannon	Arley Cooper, Jr.
David Fry	

**NON-MEMBERS ATTENDING:**

David Campbell, DTC	Debbie Pfeil, URS/City of Harrington
Juanita Wieczoreck, MPO Staff	Mollie Raley, DelDOT
Kate Layton, MPO Staff	Jim Galvin, MPO Staff
Catherine Samardza, MPO Staff	

The meeting was called to order in the Fenwick Room, DelDOT Administration Building.

**1. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS & GUESTS**

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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

MOTION By Mr. Gumrot to approve the agenda. Seconded by Ms. Kaza. Motion carried.

**4. ACTION ITEM: Approval of Minutes Oct.26, 2010**

MOTION By Dr. Houghtaling to approve the minutes. Seconded by Ms. Kaza. Motion carried.

**5. ACTION ITEM: Proposed Revision to Transportation Improvement Program Priority Process - MPO Staff**

Mr. Galvin distributed materials and reviewed the program and proposed changes. Two criteria were added – “Supports Complete Streets” and “Supports growth management plans in the region.” The materials distributed included four test projects ranked with the new criteria. The PAC members were asked for comments. Staff explained that members might want to delay action, as the TAC had appointed an ad hoc committee to look at this in more detail. It was suggested that a member of the PAC be on the committee, and Mr. Gumrot volunteered.

Mr. Galvin said that he would give 3 weeks advance notice for the meeting, which would be held mid-January.



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There was further discussion of the criteria and scoring. Ms. Wiczoreck noted that Ralph Reeb of DelDOT planning asked that the MPO rank problems, not projects. DelDOT and the MPO are required to integrate the metropolitan planning process and NEPA. The environmental issues can have serious impacts on a project. In the past, DelDOT has had to go back and redo projects to comply with NEPA. She reported that DelDOT is also looking at the priority process.

After further discussion, the PAC took no action on this item pending information from DelDOT and the ad hoc committee on the technical aspects.

### **6. *DISCUSSION ITEM: Proposed Delmarva Rail Study — D. Campbell, DTC***

Mr. Campbell explained the history behind the study, noting that public response to the possibility of rail service was very positive. He also explained the physical aspects of rail in Delaware. He also reported that in 2002 Delaware had restored the Shellpot Swing Bridge in exchange for access to rail lines for passenger service in the next 20 years. The service now being studied would be one or two round-trips a day on the Northeast corridor – Washington, DC and New York City, to Ocean City/Berlin Maryland.

PAC members questioned Mr. Campbell on the amount of money Delaware is putting in to match the federal grant in comparison to Maryland (\$405,000 from DE; \$45,000 from MD). Mr. Cook felt that if there was more demand in Maryland, they should be paying more money. Mr. Campbell explained that there is more rail line in Delaware than Maryland, which is why Delaware has the larger share of the match. Members asked where the intermediary stops would be in Delaware, and where the market for the service would be. Mr. Campbell said that these questions are what the study hoped to answer.

Mr. Cook reminded the PAC that at a previous meeting Norfolk Southern stated that the tracks would not handle passenger rail. Mr. Campbell agreed, and said that upgrades would be required to allow the rails to handle traffic at 60-80 MPH; they now handle trains at 40 MPH. Grade crossing signals would also be upgraded.

There were questions concerning which rail line would handle this service; Mr. Campbell said it would be Amtrak or NJ transit. Ms. Collins noted that more people from lower Delaware travel north to work; Mr. Campbell reiterated that this would only be 1 or 2 trains a day, not convenient for commuting.

PAC members had concerns that this would be a subsidized service, that the potential market would be too small to cover the cost of the service. Ms. Wiczoreck reminded the PAC members that this was a study, that the service may not happen.

PAC members questioned where the funding would come from if the study proved that service was feasible; Mr. Campbell explained that rail is usually a 50/50 match with federal funds.

Mr. Cook felt that \$900,000, the total amount for this project, was a lot of money for a study. Mr. Campbell said that the study would include preliminary planning and environmental reviews. Mr. Gumrot asked if this was approved, and how long it was expected to take. The project has been approved and will take two years. Delaware Transit Corporation is in the bid process now for selecting a consultant.



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Mr. Cook felt this was a very expensive proposition for the State, and he did not see how it was benefitting Delaware. Ms. Wiczoreck asked how many alignments were being looked at in the study; Mr. Campbell said that they would not be looking at spurs. Ms. Wiczoreck then noted that the service would not service Lewes or Rehoboth. Mr. Campbell agreed, said that it would service Milford and Georgetown, but not the beaches.

There was further discussion and questions concerning possible connections to Delaware Beaches. There were also still questions about commuter rail. Mr. Campbell said that commuter rail was not proceeding, the numbers are not right. Delaware is looking at a different type of service. There was discussion concerning who owned the tracks, and the premium charged to use them. Mr. Cook felt the consultant needed to be instructed to consider everything in the study. Mr. Campbell assured him that was the plan.

Ms. Kaza noted that Delaware owns the Delaware Coastal Line and provides maintenance, and the operators pay a percentage of the profit.

Ms. Raley asked if Mr. Campbell was saying that the Right-of-Way was in place for a second, upgraded track. Mr. Campbell said yes, and the State would cooperate with municipalities to build stations.

Ms. Wiczoreck said that, since the study was moving forward, what kind of public input would be solicited? Mr. Campbell said that there would be Public Hearings or workshops in Phase II. Phase I was all "number crunching."

There was also discussion concerning the time frame of the project and who was driving the project. Mr. Campbell said that they expected the project to be finished in twelve months. He also noted that DTC is often asked about passenger rail and several town plans recommend rail. Ms. Raley asked who would run the rail service if implemented; Mr. Campbell said that Norfolk Southern would be the dispatching entity, and Amtrak would run the service.

PAC members asked that Mr. Campbell return on a regular basis to report on this study.

### **7. DISCUSSION ITEM: Proposed 2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Program – MPO Staff**

- a) Schedule**
- b) Priorities**

Mr. Galvin distributed the list of projects to the PAC members. Staff explained that there was one new project for Kent County. This was the only project in the MPO region requiring additional funding. All projects previously in the program are still there and have funding authorized. Mr. Gumrot and Dr. Houghtaling expressed their dissatisfaction with only one new project. Dr. Houghtaling asked if the legislators were involved in these choices; staff explained that the list goes from DelDOT to the Governor, then from the Governor to the legislators. There was further discussion concerning the reasons why DelDOT was only submitting one new Kent County project. Staff explained that Kent County is a small county with a small population. Population and money is in New Castle County. The beaches are congested in the summer time, but Kent County is not congested in the same way. Staff also noted that



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safety projects always get done. PAC members were still unhappy with the lack of new projects for Kent County. Ms. Wiczoreck reminded members that now was the time to submit new projects for the next TIP. She suggested they call Mr. Galvin if they needed assistance in submitting a project.

### **8. PRESENTATION: Delaware Population Consortium Estimate Summary – J. Galvin, MPO Staff**

Mr. Galvin reported that the Population Consortium has published the approved projections through 2040 for the State and counties. He reviewed some of the projections with regard to Kent County and Dover and offered to send the summary to those who would like a copy. Mr. Cook asked they be e-mailed the summary and the link to the website.

### **9. PRESENTATION: Draft FY 2012 Unified Planning Work Program – J. Wiczoreck**

Ms. Wiczoreck distributed a summary of the draft UPWP and reviewed the projects planned for FY2012 and the estimated total cost. She explained that she did not yet have a total figure for the budget, as she was waiting to hear from DelDOT on how much money was being carried forward from previous years. She reported that the Regional Transportation Plan update was being done early due to coordination problems between when the Plan is required, the model to be used and the emissions budget available. She also noted that the financial process was changed as the result of a determination by FHWA ruled that DelDOT could not provide in-kind services for the match. DelDOT would be billed for cash, and she would be asking Kent County and the City of Dover for cash as well.

### **10. Staff Report –**

**10.1 UPWP Progress & Financial Reports – J. Wiczoreck**

**10.2 Other Project Updates/Activities – J. Wiczoreck**

**10.3 Correspondence, Publications/Reports/Outreach – K. Layton**

Staff announced that the TIP Tour would be held on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

**Next meeting: February 22, 2011**

**MOTION** By Mr. Gumrot to adjourn. Seconded by Ms. Kaza. Motion carried.