



# Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization

P.O. Box 383, Dover, Delaware 19903  
<http://www.doverkentmpo.org>

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## DATA and DEMOGRAPHICS SUBCOMMITTEE (Traffic Analysis Zone "TAZ" Subcommittee)

### MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 9, 2010

#### Members Attending:

Mary Ellen Gray, Kent County Planning, Chair  
Theon Callender, Cheswold  
Janelle Cornwell, City of Dover Planning  
Ben Johnson, MPO Staff

Michael DuRoss, DelDOT  
Gary Norris, Milford  
James Galvin, MPO Staff

#### Invited members not attending:

David Hugg, Smyrna  
David Edgell, Office of State Planning Coordination

John Schatzschneider, Harrington

#### Non-Members Attending:

Dan Blevins, WILMAPCO  
Catherine Samardza, MPO Staff

The meeting was held in the Council Chambers at Camden Town Hall and was called to order at approximately 10:00 AM.

### 1. INTRODUCTIONS

### 2. PURPOSE OF TAZ SUBCOMMITTEE

The Subcommittee will be working to construct more accurate small area numbers for the Dover/Kent County MPO area. These numbers are based on the Population Consortiums estimates from Census data and are allocated to Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs), which then go to DelDOT to model for air quality purposes.

Mr. DuRoss gave an overview of the history of the process. He noted that the travel model can move around information to give an idea of what will happen in different hypothetical scenarios. This is a federal requirement. He also noted that most MPOs have an in-house modeling person, but in the 1960s DelDOT took on this task. Mr. DuRoss also said that while the MPO subcommittee was new, the function is not. He felt that the subcommittee was a good idea, but it had to continue to meet to develop the process.

Mr. Blevins reported that since 2002 WILMAPCO has done this work for New Castle County, developing TAZ allocations every year. Mr. Galvin noted that this was ultimately the goal for the Dover/Kent County MPO to produce the numbers for Kent County.

Ms. Gray stated that there is both art and science to the process, and it needs to be articulated and written



down.

### **3. REVIEW SCENARIO MAPS AND SPREADSHEETS**

Mr. Johnson explained that the basic process is to look at subdivision growth, where population growth is projected. Most, but not all, subdivisions are outside municipal boundaries. Household figures are allocated to subdivisions based on block group data. The number of lots multiplied by the household size equal the population figure.

Mr. Johnson and Mr. Galvin explained that the next step in the process had been to actually visit subdivision sites, to see which ones were completed, in process or not yet started. These figures were then taken into account and made into a spreadsheet. Mr. DuRoss noted that DelDOT does traffic studies for developers, and keeps track of proposed developments as well as planned.

There was discussion concerning whether or not the process should work from the “top down” or the “bottom up,” and that historical trends vary from census projections. There was no preferred method acted upon.

The four scenario maps represent:

1. Uniform growth;
2. Build what’s available now
3. Complete areas in progress
4. Preferred scenario

The preferred scenario is based on existing policies and practices and historical trends, as well as the County growth zone.

Mr. DuRoss suggested using a trend-based scenario and pivoting off from there. It was noted that Delaware is required to use the Population Consortium figures. The plans should be developed to keep air quality stable.

Mr. Galvin noted that there would be a fifth scenario, a “peak oil” scenario that anticipates concentrated growth around Dover, Milford and Smyrna and non-car dependent transportation corridors.

There was discussion on each of the scenarios and how they differ. There was discussion on how the Small Area calculations aggregate to TAZ population figures. Mr. Johnson surmised the calculations for the TAZs will change from past estimates.

Ms. Gray reported that there will be a major policy change at the County regarding the waste water ordinance outside the growth zone.

Mr. DuRoss suggested running all the scenarios to see the effects before using any in a Long Range Plan, to see what pops up on traffic density and air quality.



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Mr. Blevins asked about factoring in employment. Mr. Johnson said that this was a problem. There was further discussion concerning employment factors – types of job, location, etc. It was noted that Kent County has a commuting population. There was discussion concerning the Consortium’s economic projections.

Mr. Blevins said that there were some other fields to add to employment – number of workers per household, for example. He felt a template was need to drop into the model. He suggested establishing a base, and thought the MPO may be starting from scratch o this. There was discussion concerning available material to develop a base.

There was discussion on putting people in subdivisions in a reasonable manner, while at the same time keeping the Consortium control numbers in mind.

Ms. Gray suggested using the number of Certificates of Occupancy recorded. She thought it might be easier than visiting every subdivision.

## 4. RECOMMENDATION FOR PREFERRED SCENARIO

Mr. DuRoss asked if there was a modified grid level for scenario 4. Mr. Johnson said yes, there was. Around 600 modified grids feed up into 200 TAZs. Mr. DuRoss said he was okay with that. Mr. Johnson also noted that the grids break down to general area, but not exact locations. Mr. DuRoss felt that the model should be pushed to more detail for decision makers. The TAZs were necessary for federal regulations, but detailed models to show potential scenarios, while more than the feds require, is very helpful.

Mr. Norris was asked about development in the Milford area. There was discussion concerning how long a subdivision could stay viable once recorded. Ms. Cornwell said that for Dover there are deadlines to record a final plan, but once filed it does not “die.” Mr. Norris said that Milford is revising this code – 2 years to construction after final recording. Ms. Gray said the County is five years to construction. The County notifies developers 18 months before expiration. Unfortunately, legislators often intercede before expiration.

## 5. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Discussion was ongoing.

## 6. NEXT STEPS/MEETING

Mr. Galvin reviewed the next steps in the process.

1. Get subdivision information for Milford, including the Sussex County portion
2. Look at Kent County and confirm information

Ms. Gray said that the map is current, but Mr. Galvin should talk to Jason Berry to see if there is anything new.



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Mr. Galvin asked if the MPO was headed in the right direction. Mr. Norris noted that federal policy influences decisions. Ms. Gray said that was where the “art” comes in.

There was some discussion concerning momentum vs. trend estimates. It was thought that “trend” was the best guess.

Ms. Callender asked what was needed from Cheswold; Mr. Galvin said he needed her to verify subdivisions.

Mr. Norris asked about air quality. Mr. Blevins said that it was cleaner than 1995-96. Mr. DuRoss reported that every three years the bar comes down; Kent County has lapsed twice. Mr. Norris asked if Kent County had an environmental control officer. Mr. Blevins said that DNREC handled that. Mr. Galvin asked if WILMAPCO staff handled this; Mr. Blevins said it was Bill Swiatek. Mr. DuRoss said that at DelDOT, it was part of the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) process. DNREC gives DelDOT information, which is taken into consideration in planning and modeling. It was noted that with the new federal model, the MPO may not be able to conform. Mr. Norris asked if that meant a loss in funding. The answer was yes, only maintenance projects could continue, no projects could move out of phase, and no federal permits would be issued.

Mr. DuRoss said that the value of the subcommittee would be having people get together to check on the Consortium numbers to see if they fit. He felt the subcommittee should continue to meet. Scenario 4 should be projected out to 2040 numbers to be sure there were no surprises. The numbers would affect roads, sewer and air quality. He said he would like to run the model before the spring.

Mr. Galvin noted that the subcommittee would identify the allocation process, and make a recommendation to the TAC. The TAC would then make a recommendation to Council.

Mr. Galvin asked if the the next step would be to develop numbers:

- Send out population projections for TAZs
- Then households

Mr. Blevins felt that it should be from the top down:

- County Planning districts – what is potential build out
- Then TAZ
- Then Household
- Then population
- Then jobs

Mr. Blevins said that WILMAPCO’s subcommittee meets once a month. January – review County planning districts; February – review TAZs; March – review population and employment. Council adopts in May. Mr. Galvin said he would like a similar calendar.

Ms. Callender and Mr. Norris asked for the information available for Cheswold and Milford. Mr. Galvin said he had a detailed map.



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Mr. Galvin asked the members if a meeting in mid-December would work; Mr. Johnson felt it might be too quick for him to pull the data together. It was agreed that the members would be notified two weeks out for the meeting, after Mr. Johnson had time to assemble his data.

## 7. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned without a formal motion.