

Meeting 14

Via Zoom

September 16, 2021

9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Vision: Improved transportation opportunities, operations, and safety along West Chester Pike.

Mission: Increased coordination among stakeholders (municipalities, agencies, businesses, etc.) to implement strategies that will achieve the shared vision for West Chester Pike.

Attendance

Voting Members Present

- West Goshen Township
 - **Casey LaLonde** (Township Manager)
- Willistown Township
 - **Robert Smiley** (Director of Planning and Zoning)
- Westtown Township
 - **Maggie Dobbs** (Director of Planning and Zoning)
- Newtown Township:
 - **Stephen Nease** (Township Manager)
- Upper Darby Township
 - **Rose Rice** (Special Assistant)
- Chester County Planning Commission
 - **Brian Styche** (Environment & Infrastructure Director)
 - **Brian Donovan** (Transportation Planner)
- Delaware County Planning Department:
 - **Tom Shaffer** (Transportation Planning Manager)
 - **Cathy Spahr** (Senior Planner)

Non-Voting Members Present

- DVRPC
 - **Amy Bernknopf** (Associate Manager, Office of Transit, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Planning)
 - **Logan Axelson** (Senior Transportation Planner)
- SEPTA
 - **Mark Cassel** (Director, Suburban Service Planning)
 - **Kenneth Rankins** (Operations Planner)
- Transportation Management Association of Chester County

- **John Meisel** (Manager of Transportation Operations and Planning)
- Delaware County Transportation Management Association
 - **Tracy Barusevicius** (Executive Director)
- PennDOT
 - **Paul Lutz** (Sr. Civil Engineer)

Agenda

I. West Chester Pike (WCP) Coalition Business

I.1. Introductions and Municipal Updates

- I.1.1.B. Donovan and T. Shaffer introduced C. Spahr, who joined the Delaware County Planning Department in April and will be working with B. Donovan as staff for the West Chester Pike Coalition.
- I.1.2.C. LaLonde noted that the adaptive signal system on West Chester Pike in West Goshen is up and running and working well.
- I.1.3.S. Nease noted that Phase 3 of the expansion of West Chester Pike in Newtown Township has recently been completed, with Phases 4 and 5 remaining to be done. He also updated that construction continues on the Ellis Preserve development, with apartments and townhomes underway, to be followed by commercial developments.
- I.1.3.I.P. Lutz complimented Newtown Township on the West Chester Pike expansion project, noting that traffic has been much improved in that area.
- I.1.4.R. Smiley provided an update on the Willistown Point development which has recently begun construction, located on the south side of West Chester Pike to the west of Dutton Mill Road. He also noted a sketch plan has been received by the township for a single use development on West Chester Pike and Delchester Road. This project is in very early stages.
- I.1.5.M. Dobbs noted that there is a new buyer of the Giant shopping center on the Pike. Westtown is working with the new owner on the agreement with the traffic light at that location.

2. Direct Bus Feasibility Study

2.1. Presenters

2.1.1. Amy Bernknopf and Logan Axelson (DVRPC)

- 2.1.1.1.A. Bernknopf began the presentation by providing some background on the process by which several corridors in the region were assessed for their suitability for direct bus service, with a first phase using quantitative data and a second phase being a series of meetings to discuss qualitative aims and how municipalities can prepare themselves for direct bus.
- 2.1.1.1.L. Axelson provided details on how the corridors were chosen and on the three weighting schemes that were used to assess each corridor.
 - 2.1.1.1.1. The analysis found that the corridors that scored the best included very dense housing and commercial development as well as having multiple lanes to allow for direct bus service to pass local service. West Chester Pike scored relatively low on these quantitative metrics.
 - 2.1.1.1.2. He also shared DVRPC's Transit Screening platform, which maps the DVRPC region and allows users to locate, via demographic data and analysis, where there is likely the most demand for transit service, which includes areas not currently served by any transit.

2.1.1.1.2.A. Bernknopf discussed how corridors like West Chester Pike were hurt in the scoring from the fact that they travel through some low-density areas, even while serving some higher density areas.

2.1.1.1.2.1. She discussed how DVRPC gathered interested stakeholders to go over some of the quantitative inputs for direct bus and how municipalities can prepare for the service.

2.1.1.1.2.2. The draft memo on their work will reflect that corridors need to have all three of the following elements to be best suited for direct bus: (1) dense commercial and residential development at the stops; (2) long haul trips with destinations of each end; (3) local stakeholder-driven interest and investment on the corridor.

2.2. Discussion

2.2.1.M. Cassel gave some background information on how this process will impact SEPTA's Bus Revolution project, which is the ongoing comprehensive redesign of the bus network.

2.2.1.1. In developing their route profiles as part of this project, he said that SEPTA and their consultant have discussed options for services that might not have all of the elements of direct bus but would have some and would offer speed advantages over local service. The West Chester Pike corridor may be a candidate for this type of service.

2.2.1.2.M. Cassel also urged those in the meeting to go the SEPTA Bus Revolution website as there are opportunities to weigh in on this project and provide ideas. Group members shared that they will push this out to the public as well through their websites, newsletters, and social media.

2.2.1.3. He also noted that as part of SEPTA's Strategic Plan, all elements of the system are being examined in an effort to create a better unified transit network. This includes regional rail and trolley lines as well as the bus network.

3. Adjourn

3.1. Meeting was adjourned

The West Chester Pike Coalition website (see the link below) hosts Coalition resources, including future meeting dates and presentations from previous meetings.

Coalition Website: <http://www.chescoplanning.org/transportation/WestChesterPike.cfm>