

**CITY OF NEWARK**  
**Newark, Delaware**

**Traffic Committee Meeting**  
**December 18, 2018**  
**3:30 p.m.**

**Members Present:** Lt. Dennis Aniunas, Mark Farrall, Tim Filasky, Marvin Howard, Dave Gula

**Absent:** Tom Parkins

**Guests:** Matt Buckley, DeIDOT  
Mark Luszcz, DeIDOT  
Stu Markham, Councilmember, District 6  
Jennifer Wallace, Councilmember, District 3  
Mary Ellen-Gray, Director of Planning & Development  
Colin Kraucunas, Hillcrest Associates  
Josh Shannon, Newark Post

**1. Cleveland Avenue Task Force Update.**

Mr. Filasky said the Cleveland Avenue Task Force began in 2016. The goal of the task force was to provide recommendations for traffic and signalization upgrades along the Cleveland Avenue corridor. Mr. Filasky said the update will include background, improvements, and short- and long-term project goals over the next couple of years.

Mr. Filasky said Cleveland Avenue was included in a federal program through Delaware Department of Transportation Hazard Elimination Program. Mr. Filasky said the Traffic Committee was asked to lead a community effort by receiving community buy-in and community outreach to ensure compatibility along the Cleveland Avenue corridor. The Cleveland Avenue Task Force committee consisted of the City of Newark, DeIDOT, and community stakeholders (business owners and residents) to review options and make recommendations to city council. Mr. Filasky said city council approved all recommendations except for the "Florida T" option at the intersection of Library Avenue.

Mr. Filasky said late 2017 the implementation process began and in 2018 the "road diet" was installed from Library Avenue to Paper Mill Road and N. College Avenue intersection. The road diet consisted of 4 travel lanes (two in either direction) and reduced to 2 travel lanes (one in either direction) with a center turn lane.

Mr. Filasky said another improvement that has been implemented converted Margaret Street to one-way traffic in. In addition, a traffic light was installed on Creek View Drive at Paper Mill Road.

Mr. Filasky said following implementation of the road diet, several businesses provided valuable feedback of the direct impact associated with the new improvements along the corridor. Mr. Filasky said the City of Newark and DeIDOT met in the field to make some minor modifications and adjustments to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion.

Mr. Filasky said when the road diet was first installed, initially there was confusion with drivers using the center turn lane as a through lane. Mr. Filasky said issue has been corrected with additional signage, police enforcement, and identifying locations where concrete medians and additional signage will be installed in the center lane.

Mr. Filasky said there was some discontent with the delay due to the installation of the traffic signal at Creek View Drive. Mr. Filasky said Christopher Lane has been utilized in lieu of Creek View Road. Mr. Filasky clarified that as this is a private road not maintained by the city, and recommended drivers continue to use Creek View Road. However, Public Works reached out to the owner of Christopher Lane regarding the large potholes.

Mr. Filasky said he is aware that Mr. Markham would like to know a destination and origin of the motorists that use Cleveland Avenue. Mr. Filasky said it's possible WILMPACO could provide a transit study in the future.

Mr. Buckley said he is a consultant with DeIDOT's Traffic Section and has been involved in this project since 2005. Mr. Buckley said in 2015, DeIDOT received two hot spot locations in the federal safety program. One location was N. College Avenue and one location along Cleveland Avenue that generated a safety study. Mr. Buckley said critical ratios/statistics exist along the corridor and will continue to be monitored moving forward.

Mr. Buckley said the intent of his presentation is to provide the improvements that were accomplished over the last 24 months.

#### Short-Term Projects

- Bike lanes along Cleveland Avenue from N. College Avenue to New London Road (will be installed once this portion of the road is paved)
- "Scramble" (exclusive pedestrian phase) to allow pedestrians to cross in all directions. Busiest conventional intersection in the state - completed
- Parking prohibited East of N. College Avenue - completed
- New pedestrian accommodations and geometrics with ADA ramps or pedestrian refuge island at Wilbur Street - construction Summer 2019
- Remove signalized portion at Margaret Street to convert Margaret Street to one-way northbound and signalize Creek View Road at Paper Mill Road - completed

- Unable to move the crosswalk to the west side at Winner Boulevard. Expect new signal phasing for the left turn and include new pedestrian phasing to reduce the queues to make Winner Boulevard more efficient.
- Install refuge island and crosswalk to line up the sidewalk at Alder Creek. Also, install a Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (RFB) for pedestrians. Stairs will be installed from Alder Creek to the sidewalk to access the crosswalk west of McKees Lane.

Long-Term Projects:

- Providing a right turn lane in the northbound direction on N. College Avenue (still needs to be worked out with a feasibility study that would include acquiring property, utilities, environment, infrastructure)

Mr. Buckley said with implementation of the road diet has resulted in getting 150 more cars eastbound and westbound collectively during the evening rush hour. This improvement has proven to be more organized, efficient and safe.

Mr. Buckley said vehicle speeds on Cleveland Avenue turning from Capitol Trail onto Cleveland Avenue to include the merge area have been reduced by 4 mph. Additionally, pedestrian crossings in refuge area vehicles are yielding to pedestrians without a crosswalk and RFB approximately two times more then before the road diet.

Mr. Buckley said making a right turn from Cleveland Avenue heading south to Library Avenue there is a high frequency of crashes with right turners. Also, southbound traffic coming down Capitol Trail or left turners coming out of Woodlawn Avenue. They are continuing to work to mitigate this crash concern.

- Option 1 – Enforce no turn on red. A utilization study was performed to determine the impact. The net impact is approximately 10% of 700 cars an hour. This would equate to 70 cars or add 1-2 cars to the queue.
- Option 2 – Eliminate the signal at Woodlawn Avenue only during evening rush hour. This would be a trial period and would review data for the benefits. This wouldn't eliminate all crashes.

Public Comment:

Ms. Roe said she lives in District 4. Ms. Roe asked for the completion timeframe for the Alder Creek crosswalk. Mr. Buckley said weather permitting the goal is to be completed by the end of winter session.

Mr. Markham said asked for data regarding the crashes along the remainder of the corridor. Mr. Buckley said the crash patterns that existed before was primarily left turning motorists in the through lane getting rear ended or left turning vehicles t-boning a vehicle in the opposing direction.

Mr. Buckley said there haven't been any of these type accidents so since. Mr. Buckley said of the crashes along the corridor there are 8 crashes that occurred over the last 4 months that could be attributed to a change. Mr. Buckley said 5 of the crashes were associated with the Winner Boulevard intersection.

Mr. Markham asked if the corridor is considered safer and if the improvements were successful in making the corridor safer. Mr. Buckley said it is too early to know at this time. Mr. Buckley said it is too early to be included in the Hazard Elimination Program that will be completed within the next 4-5 years.

Mr. Buckley said in reviewing the crash data from 2015-2017.

- Library Avenue at Main Street (# 10 statewide)
- Route 2 at Cleveland Avenue (# 31 statewide)
- Route 72 & Delaware Avenue (# 34 statewide)
- Cleveland Avenue/Paper Mill Road/N. Chapel Street (# 42 statewide)

Mr. Jones said he lives in District 5. Mr. Jones asked with the removal of parking on Cleveland Avenue between North College Avenue and Paper Mill Road the vehicles have gone. Mr. Filasky said they researched and found most were not residents of the houses along Cleveland Avenue. The new developments are fully parked and believe many were parked for the semester and have found other locations to park in another private parking lot or are utilizing public parking.

Mr. Gula said over the years, WILMAPCO has done a lot of work with community groups and small area studies. He said this process was carried out as best as they have seen and received consensus on many of the projects that were implemented. It's not often you see the coordination between the city, state and its residents as was conducted for this project. Mr. Gula said this was an excellent model for future concerns. Mr. Gula said everyone involved should be commended. Mr. Gula said it's not often that DelDOT that owns roads within the state will defer to the municipality for input. This enabled the project to be carried out very successfully. The collaborative process was very strong. Mr. Filasky said the task force has set the bar high and will continue to provide updates on the website as the project continues to move forward.

**2. Request to add a bicycle restriction on the S. College Avenue bridge.**

Mrs. Wallace said this was brought to her from a constituent that is in attendance. Mrs. Wallace said signage existed on the sidewalk to walk your bikes and was removed for an unknown reason. Mrs. Wallace said this is a choke point, used by both pedestrians and bicyclists and make it safer for pedestrians to feel safe using the sidewalk.

Lt. Aniunas said there was a sign to walk your bicycle that existed 8-10 years ago and is unaware as to why it was removed. Lt. Aniunas is unaware of the overall width of the bridge and has measured the fog line to be 2 1/2' wide over the bridge. This conflicts with House Bill 185 that you must have 3' width between bicyclists and cars. Lt. Aniunas said there is no data to report conflicts with pedestrians and bicyclists.

Mr. Filasky confirmed signage did exist and it was painted in yellow on the sidewalk to walk your bike on both sides. However, it was removed a complaint was received it no longer existed and was reinstalled. This didn't go through the proper channels and was removed.

Mr. Gula asked how wide the travel lanes are on the bridge. Mr. Filasky said they didn't measure the travel lanes however the sidewalk is no less 7' wide itself. It is feasible for a multi-modal path.

Mr. Farrall asked if restricting bicycle traffic on the bridge would conflict with HB 185. Lt. Aniunas said his interpretation is it would be due to not having 3' from the fog line to the edge of the roadway.

Mr. Filasky asked if the public could weigh in on state law regarding the use of the bike lane. Lt. Aniunas said state law 4198 (b) states "a person shall not ride a bicycle upon and along a sidewalk, or across a roadway upon and along a crosswalk, where such use of bicycles is prohibited by official traffic-control devices".

Mr. Gula asked if the travel lanes could be narrowed to accommodate a bike lane on the bridge in either direction. Mr. Farrall agreed and stated it could also potentially assist with traffic calming. Mr. Filasky said they will review the existing bike lane dimensions and provide a recommendation.

Mr. Filasky said they don't anticipate less pedestrian traffic with the south campus AG school, UD stadium and STAR campus and keeping in mind the future will bring more traffic on this road.

Public Comment:

Lt. Aniunas shared a letter he received from Ms. Grasso. The letter as it reads, "The benefits of bicycling are numerous clean, equitable, healthy, congestion reducing, and biking is a purposeful transportation is an important component of a sustainable transportation plan. With critical bicycling infrastructure imminent in Newark, the technology construction is booming in the transportation industry (automation, sharing, robotics). The city is at a pivotal point in time regarding the opportunity to reshape how its residents and visitors achieve their transportation within Newark.

This is especially important given the growing multi-district nature of the city which calls for preserving multi-modal transportation options between them in order to promote a sustainable, healthy, and accessible transportation options for the city. For bicycling this means creating infrastructure that is easy to use, comfortable, appealing and safe. If we can't find a way to retrofit our existing infrastructure to do this, it will not be encouraged to changed old habits to new ones even if they are interested. Forcing bicyclists to either walk their bike across the bridge or use the narrow shoulder in the travel lane on the bridge will only hamper bicycle issues. I hope you prioritize this mode of transportation in your decision making given its many benefits and you will search for a creative solution to simultaneously encourage more people to bike and walk to educate users of public rights of way."

Mr. Deshon lives in District 5. He said BikeNewark had requested for the city to request DeIDOT take the lead and form a similar task force to explore the entire corridor of S. College Avenue. Mr. Deshon said BikeNewark recognizes the bridge will continue to be a pinch point if we don't address the whole corridor and find solutions for smart compromises. Mr. Deshon suggested forming a task force made up of the City of Newark, University of Delaware, DeIDOT, stakeholders and city residents and hopes this is taken into consideration. Mr. Deshon would like to see a wholistic view taken on S. College Avenue and would like to see DeIDOT take the lead as this is a state road.

Ms. Stein lives in District 3. Ms. Stein is the resident that spoke with Councilmember Wallace regarding this request. Ms. Stein supports a comprehensive approach on this issue. Ms. Stein said communicated with DeIDOT regarding this issue and they were clear that this is not their jurisdiction. Ms. Stein has lived in the City of Newark a little over three years and walks on the bridge every morning between 6:30 a.m.-8:30 a.m. Ms. Stein said there used to be walk your bike signs and two yield to pedestrian signs placed at a 9' height. Ms. Stein said bicyclists often ride past her very fast and provide no warning. Ms. Stein supports the idea of expanding the bike lane on the road to provide a compromise in the hope to one day coexist.

Ms. Huntley lives in District 1. Ms. Huntley said she doesn't walk her bike on Casho Mill Road, however, is always conscious and yields to pedestrians. Ms. Huntley suggested to educate the bicyclists that are discourteous and enforce yielding to pedestrians.

Ms. Roe lives in District 4. Ms. Roe said this is a problem. Ms. Roe said bicyclists are traveling very fast downhill. Ms. Roe said it is a disaster when there are many pedestrians on the bridge during football games and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Ms. Roe said something needs to be done. Ms. Roe said bicyclists coming off the bridge will continue riding their bikes on the sidewalk all the way to W. Park Place. Ms. Roe said she didn't realize there were changes to the law on how you can or can't ride your bike on the road. Ms. Roe said there is a problem with bicyclists and pedestrians on the bridge coexisting and it continues all the way down to W. Park Place.

Mr. Saunders is a member of BikeNewark. Mr. Saunders said dismounting for a bicyclist is difficult. Mr. Saunders said bikes can travel slow under control and courtesy of pedestrians is very important. BikeNewark is dedicated to the education of bicyclists in matters that include interaction with pedestrians. Mr. Saunders is confident that the interaction with bicyclists and pedestrians can be improved with education.

Mr. Filasky would ask BikeNewark to target this location to make sure they are being safe. Mr. Filasky said signage and education is no problem. Mr. Filasky said there have been several preliminary discussions with University of Delaware. The University of Delaware owns most of the property on the East side and there is potential to provide a wider bike lane heading toward Park Place.

Mr. Farrall said it is important to work with the City of Newark communications team, Newark Police Department PIO, University of Delaware, BikeNewark with to provide education through social media.

**Motion by Lt. Aniunas, seconded by DC Farrall, to mandate bikes be walked over the S. College Avenue bridge.**

**Motion Failed:**

**Vote: 0 to 4**

Mr. Filasky said the Public Works Department will follow up on some of the items mentioned and continue to work with BikeNewark and University of Delaware on outreach and education. Mr. Filasky said they will review some of the physical constraints that currently exist. Mr. Gula asked if the "Yield to Pedestrians" signs could be lowered. Mr. Filasky said Public Works will make sure the signs are at 7' height.

Mr. Gula asked if there was an action required to request a task force for S. College Avenue and where it would be initiated from. Mr. Farrall said the Traffic Committee is responsible to bring items to city council that require an ordinance change. Mr. Farrall said he is not sure whether this would be initiated by the Traffic Committee.

**3. Request to restrict parking in front of 209, 213, and 217 Haines Street on the East side.**

Ms. Gray said this plan was reviewed by the Planning Commission recommended approval and is on its way to going to city council. Ms. Gray said the applicant in meeting fire code had indicated that there needed to be no parking on Haines Street where the building fronts the street. The applicant was under the assumption since there were "No Parking" signs on Haines Street that would suffice. Ms. Gray said there is no parking on Haines Street, however it is a special residential parking district.

Mr. Kraucunas said he works for Hillcrest Associates and is the engineer for this project. Mr. Kraucunas said the fire marshal has requested to eliminate parking in front of 209, 213 and 217 Haines Street as those three houses exist where the new building is proposed. Mr. Kraucunas said to establish free access from the street to the building it would be necessary to eliminate parking to install a fire lane, no parking anytime signs and paint the curb yellow.

Mr. Howard said from the Parking Division perspective, they don't anticipate an impact with removing five (5) parking spaces in front of 209, 213 and 217 Haines Street.

Mr. Farrall said in the past, the procedure was to provide a letter to property owners within the parking zone to allow the opportunity for comment or opposition.

Mr. Farrall asked if there is a way to know who parked there. Mr. Watts said he owns the five houses is aware of one car that was his tenant that parked there. Mr. Howard confirmed not many cars park there.

Ms. Gray concurred with following the process. Ms. Gray said she doesn't see this holding up this project moving forward to city council and that it would become part of the subdivision agreement to be fulfilled at the CIP stage. Ms. Gray said her thought is to move forward with the process and bring before city council at a later date.

**Motion by Mr. Gula seconded by Mr. Filasky, to table this item to the January 15, 2019 meeting and send notices to property owners to provide the opportunity to attend the meeting and express their concerns.**

**Motion Passed:**

**Vote: 4 to 0**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



Dennis Anunas, Acting Chairman

Any supporting documents pertaining to this meeting will be held on file at the police department.