

**CITY OF NEWARK  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**Steering Committee for the Newark Community  
Sustainability Plan – Planning Subcommittee**

**February 22, 2019  
Brewed Awakenings**

**Summary Minutes**

**In attendance:**

Michael Fortner, City Planner  
Mary Ellen Gray, Planning and Development Director  
Susan Grasso, Committee Member  
Shelia Smith, Committee Member  
Bill Swiatek, Committee Member/WILMAPCO

The Subcommittee started their meeting at 4 PM and began reviewing text from the AECOM plan. The Committee developed the following recommendation based on their discussion:

**Objective:**

- To address the environmental, economic, health, and social consequences of “sprawl,” characterized as low-density, fragmented, and inefficient single-use land development that contributes to wasteful use of land, water, energy, infrastructure, and traffic congestion and air pollution, by guiding development to “complete communities” through policy and design interventions, to emphasize mixed-use, compact development, which is structured to promote multi-modal transportation choices such as walking, bicycling, and transit.
- To encourage a community that offers its residents opportunities for a healthy lifestyle and housing choices and affordability options.
- To prepare for emerging transportation trends including Electric Vehicles (EV), ride-sharing programs such as Uber and Lyft, and self-driving vehicles (autonomous vehicles).
- To create connectivity among multiple modes of transportation, prioritize modes of transport by sustainability (walking, bike riding, EV’s, etc.) in planning and by resolution, and prioritizes transportation modes by road segment.

**Issues:**

- Public resistances to “density” conflicts with commonly accepted community goals such as encouraging walking, bicycling, and transit use.
- There is been extensive research that shows that suburban-style development such as strip malls, office parks, and large lot single-family developments has a detrimental cost to
- Emerging demographic shift – particularly among the generations of Baby-Boomers (born between 1946-1964) and Millennials (born between 1976 and 2000) – looking for housing options that allow

a more environmentally friendly life-style (smaller units, walkable and bikeable, access to transit) which are compatible with compact, diverse, urban development.

- Compact, urban design allows greater opportunities for preservation of contiguous natural and environmental resources.
- The City's excessive requirements for on-site, off-street parking requirements in the its Zoning Code reduces the potential for density, limiting building types, and promoting the use of single-use automobiles, and undercutting walking, bicycling, and transit-use.
- Emerging transportation trends such as ride-sharing, electric vehicles, and autonomous vehicles are providing new options for transportation with the potential to have an overall positive impact on our environmental quality. However, City planning policies need to anticipate and incorporating their needs to maximize their potential.

### • **Where we are (current activities):**

- City bike lanes and 17 miles of off-road trails (half paved) with connectivity to other trails in and out of City. The trail around the Newark Reservoir is the most popular trail in the State followed by the Hall and Pomeroy Trails which are second. Future plans include construction of the Emerson Bridge across the White Clay Creek and connecting Fairfield Crest to the Pomeroy Trail.
- Active citizen group (Bike Newark) / designation as Bronze Bicycle-Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists in 2010, 2014, and 2018.
- New bike lanes coming on line (Cleveland Avenue, Casho Mill Road, Delaware Avenue, South College Avenue, plus a low stress bike route designation and larger "sharrows" on both lanes of Main Street).
- Coordination of four mass transit services available to Newark residents (DART, UniCity, University, and Cecil Transit).
- City employees use bicycles in lieu of cars when possible.
- The City of Newark's floodplain protection and mitigation program is ranked highest in the State of Delaware, as a Class 7, by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Community Rating Service (CRS) program. As a result, Newark residents can buy flood insurance at a substantial discount.
- Safe Routes to School program has been active at Downes Elementary and will be improved by significant bicycle and walking improvements to Casho Mill Road.
- Strong State agency support for active transport and state bicycle friendliness rating.
- Developers are including EV charging stations with their plans.
- LEED-like requirements and other sustainable infrastructure components in City Code. A Subcommittee of Newark's Planning Commission are currently reviewing updates to our Code to establish a higher standard for new buildings.

**Goal 2.1 The City of Newark requires sustainable development planning and community design and applies sustainability standards for all development to minimize development "footprint" and protect natural resources.**

*NEED intro paragraph*

Action items:

- Target areas appropriate for retrofitting or redeveloping from older suburban design with a more urban-like design with greater residential densities, mixed-use, and multimodal transportation options to amend the Comprehensive Development Plan V by 2021.
- Anticipate population growth and trends through Census and State data.
- Periodically evaluate parking management practices to best utilize existing resources, as well as

Zoning Code requirements to reduce the oversupply of private parking lots.

**Goal 2.2: The City of Newark supports the transition to fossil fuel-free transportation.**

Action items (some of following involve non-City entities):

- Shift away from diesel-powered public buses.
- Reduce the number of diesel-powered vehicles in the city fleet (more discussion needed – experiences to date not favorable) and transition to electric vehicles with charging network, as well as Increase electric vehicle charging network for private vehicles by requiring EV charging for new residential developments and targeting locations citywide for charging stations at municipal lots. Work with DNREC’s Division of Climate, Coastal, & Energy or other state programs with funding to increase the infrastructure for electric vehicles in Newark.

**Goal 2.3: The City of Newark supports a car-free lifestyle.**

*NEED intro paragraph*

Action items:

- Implement the recommendations of Newark Bicycle Plan and seek designation as Silver Bicycle-Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists by 2022.
- Provide bike share and related programs that provide convenient transportation options.
- Adopt a Complete Streets program (cross reference with Goal 3 in Theme 4).
- Set a goal for bike and pedestrian commuting or trip rates.
- Provide incentives and additional routes for mass transit and ride and bike sharing.
- Develop / build low stress bike routes and bike facilities. (8-80 yrs).
- Hire a bike / pedestrian coordinator – share the position with UD. The position, among other things, would implement K-12 bike education program and other programs to incentivize active and transportation for daily living, and coordinate bike / pedestrian programs, including bike network design and bike sharing plan, with UD because pedestrians and cyclists cross these boundaries.
- Set a target for percent trips by bike, percent trips by walking based on Census and WILMAPCO data.
- Better coordination among the four Newark bus systems through the completion of the Newark TriP study.
- Create a user guide “Car Free Newark”, and update annually, with contains comprehensive and coordinated information for residents on all bus and train services, as well as information on bicycling (low stress bike routes, off-road trails, road safety), walking, and ride sharing options. Periodically assess impacts of new technologies such as self-driving cars and ride applications such as Uber and Lyft and their impacts on number of vehicles on the road to update the guide.

**Where we’re going (action items and potential obstacles for implementation):**

- Residents – use less fossil fuels for heating and driving through conversion to electricity, bicycle more, make use of City’s trail network, encourage additional trails.
- Businesses and Institutions – EV360, EVs Are For Everyone program (reference Austin TX), consider use of EV network that ties to electrical grid, use of EV batteries to help make the system more resilient?

**Benefits:**

- Economic – Residents, students, and employees can have more opportunity to thrive in a well-planned, sustainable city. More efficient multi-modal transportation lowers overall transportation costs for society.

- Environmental – Land development and planning implemented with a lens of long-range sustainability can reduce environmental impacts and improve the urban environment. Less reliance on gas-fueled transportation will decrease air pollution levels.
- Health – A city designed for mobility without single driver vehicles supports active transportation. Walking and biking are great ways to exercise.

Equity – Mixed-use development and multi-modal forms of transportation can help provide access to jobs, schools, shopping, etc., for all.

Action items:

- Implement “universal design” practices
- Provide sufficient housing options for all population groups.
- Integrate demographics across age and ethnic groups.

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