

Old Landing Road (OLR) Coalition (OLRC) Meeting Minutes

Date: 2/27/2023, 5:00PM – 6:00 PM, Sawgrass Clubhouse

Purpose: The purpose of this meeting was to get an update from DeIDOT regarding the planned Old Landing Road (OLR) improvements, in terms of schedule, ability and consideration of public input, and address of some ongoing community concerns. The key desired outcome is a common understanding of the process, current status, next steps and community involvement.

Attendees: Speaker Pete Schwartzkopf, Senator Russell Huxtable, Councilman Mark Schaffer, Deputy Secretary (DeIDOT) Shanté Hastings, and Wilmer Nauman (DeIDOT project Manager), OLRC members, Sawgrass Residents

Questions were provided in advance to our speaker panel, based upon concerns and inputs echoed from residents and OLRC members. Given the focus of this meeting was focused upon DeIDOT OLR Improvements, Ms. Hastings went through the questions provided, added some background and process information along the way, and set our expectations of the next steps. There are 2 improvement projects on OLR: OLR/Warrington Road 4-Way Stop and Airport Road improvements and extension to the Beebe Medical Center on Rt. 24. These projects are part of the Henlopen Transportation Improvement District (TID). Here is the link to the Henlopen TID on DeIDOT's website: [Transportation Improvement Districts - Delaware Department of Transportation \(deldot.gov\)](https://deldot.gov/transportation-improvement-districts). It will be at the bottom of the page. Included are several links which show all the proposed projects within the study. Note that any concepts for intersections are subject to change based on engineering need.

Both of these projects have been accelerated by nearly 2 years due to Federal Infrastructure Funds allocated to these projects. Both projects are currently in the "Engineering/Design" phase and considered a "Highway Safety" project.

High-Level overview of DeIDOT's Roadway Improvement Process

Once projects are approved and prioritized, they are put onto the Capital Transportation Plan (CTP), and a forecasted time frame for funding allocation and work is forecasted. For more information on this process and latest updates please check this link: [Capital Transportation Program \(CTP\) - Delaware Department of Transportation \(deldot.gov\)](https://deldot.gov/capital-transportation-program).

Projects start with an Engineering/Design phase where site features (edge of roadway, utilities, wetlands, etc.) are identified, data (traffic, safety, public input, right of way needs, etc.) analyzed, and alternative solutions proposed and evaluated. Once alternatives have been fleshed out, a public workshop will be conducted. Ms. Hastings emphasized DeIDOT develops solutions that forecasts roadway needs 20 to 30 years out based upon future state of land use, current and future roadway projects and the impacts these pose to the OLR improvements. This phase ends with a DeIDOT Design and updated plan. DeIDOT plans to share design alternatives this Spring, and select an alternative and have a final selected alternative early 2024.

The next phase is the “Right of Way” (ROW) acquisition. At this phase, DeIDOT negotiates with landowners to purchase land or ROW needed to build the improvement. The Engineering/Design phase through ROW usually takes a couple of years.

The last phase is Construction. Ms. Hastings noted this will be tricky as those residents south of the OLR/Warrington Road have one-way in and one-way out, so they cannot close down road to construct the new intersection. Night work may be required, but again DeIDOT will work with residents to negotiate a solution that meets everyone’s needs as best as possible. Best Case start of construction will start in July 2025 (add 1 year if delays are incurred.)

Specific questions posed to DeIDOT:

- 1) Has a decision been made about using a roundabout at the OLR/Warrington Road 4-Way Stop? Response: No, alternatives are being evaluated. Roundabouts are not suitable for all cases, but have been proven effective at reducing accidents and keeping traffic moving. However, the leg with the highest traffic volume do get priority in the circle via a continuous stream of traffic. When a traffic light is utilized, the roadway with the longest queue of traffic also gets a longer green light than the leg with less traffic. All of the data will be carefully analyzed and considered what will work today and 20 to 30 years out. DeIDOT will consider keeping the intersection a 4-Way stop and just add turn lanes, if that turns out to be a viable long-term solution.
- 2) Has ROW required been determined? If so, how does this impact property adjacent to the 4-Way Stop? Response: No ROW has been determined. That cannot happen until an engineering design has been selected. DeIDOT will work with communities and homeowners to try to come up with a solution that works best for everyone.
- 3) Is it possible to close down Strawberry Way, permanently? Response: It’s possible but not part of the plan at this point. This would require discussion and agreement with the community to make this happen,
- 4) Can traffic be diverted at Postal Road with only local traffic travelling down Warrington to the 4-Way Stop? Response: No. DeIDOT has to keep traffic moving across the region and this would not be acceptable. It is always hard to enforce “local traffic only” designations.
- 5) What will be done during construction to prevent damage to adjacent property? Steps are taken to prevent damage, such as using temporary construction fencing. If damage occurs, the contractor will be required to fix it.
- 6) How close can the roadway be to someone’s property? Response: There is no hard rule regarding the distance, and this is something that needs to be negotiated with landowners.
- 7) Will curbs and sidewalks be added along OLR? Response: Yes. But that’s from the 4-Way Stop to Rt 1 (separate project). There are no plans as of now for the area south of that intersection. A third project is noted in the TID, but not currently funded in the CTP, for improvements on Old Landing between Warrington and SR 1. These improvements would include curb and shared use

paths along this part of the corridor.

- 8) Will traffic added from nearby new developments be considered in alternative designs?
Response: Yes
- 9) Is the 1D designation on Plantation Road (starts at 5 Points) used by Navigation systems to divert traffic down Plantation and Warrington to avoid Rt 1 Traffic? Response: Unknown, but probably not a factor in drivers using this route to avoid Rt 1 traffic.
- 10) Future roadway improvements planned nearby the OLR area. Response: There are a number of improvements planned for this area which are in the Henlopen Transportation Improvement District (see: [Microsoft PowerPoint - Henlopendslide.pptx \(delDOT.gov\)](#) for a map of projects) includes:
- a. Rt 24 - Phase 2 widening and adding 2 lanes
 - b. Rt 1 South Intersection at OLR – extending queue for Rt 1 S traffic making a U-Turn at the light
 - c. Left turn from Rt 1 to Holland Glade (provides access to Royal Farms and Iron Hill)
 - d. Mulberry extension to Rt 9 (note design/engineering will not start until 2028)
 - e. Postal Lane at Shady Lane Improvements
 - f. Malfunction Junction (5 Points) construction starting now, expected to take 2 years.
- 11) The overhead Rt 1 North at OLR sign now directs traffic down OLR to get to Rt 24, and there is no signage for OLR. Shanté will look into this. Post meeting update: Will Nauman (DelDOT) took a look at the sign and states: “It is a new one as the previous overhead configuration had a separate sign for Old Landing. The new sign directs users to turn left in ½ a mile for SR 24, not to use Old Landing. We can continue to look into this.”
- 12) Improving pedestrian and bike safety along OLR. As noted in item 7, There is a separate project in the Henlopen TID to add Curbs/sidewalks/bike lanes from Rt 1 to the 4-Way Stop. There are no plans, at this time, to extend a pedestrian/bike path south to the bay from Warrington Road at this time. Shanté will connect us with another group within DelDOT that is separately funded for these types of paths. (Post meeting note: Contacts have been provided.)

Speaker Schwartzkopf and then Senator Lopez, graciously provided discretionary state funding to DelDOT to complete a section of the multi-modal path along OLR adjacent to Sawgrass South and a conservation area – this is a highly utilized path, and it was a tremendous service to the south end communities that enjoy the path.

Questions from the floor:

Will latest technology be utilized when designing and implementing improvements? Response: Shanti said that she is on multiple Highway Transportation Boards where information is shared regarding technology and solutions to improve traffic movement, the use of technology, and safety, and they use the information and data to make informed decisions on Delaware highway projects. They are always

looking for improvements.

Why is Delaware pushing roundabouts? Response: The data shows that in many cases roundabouts are the best and safest method to keep traffic flowing and reduce accidents and death. Each situation is different, and the engineering/design team considers multiple alternatives when designing improvements. Roundabouts are not always the best option. You have to do the analysis and look at the data and site features to make that determination.

Public Workshop and Information on Projects in Our Area

Will Nauman will reach out directly when a date and time is scheduled for the Airport Road and Old Landing at Warrington Road Workshop. A full list of projects DeIDOT is actively working on can be found at: [DeIDOT Projects Portal - Delaware Department of Transportation](#). Zoom into the map on the right to see all the projects in our vicinity and click the icon to be directed to the project websites. This page will have workshop dates, schedules, resources, contact information and concepts (which will be posted after the workshop for anyone who cannot attend in person), as we move through the design process.

Next Steps

- 1) Monitor schedule for Public Workshop on the OLR Improvements
- 2) Work with the Bike/Pedestrian Path group within DeIDOT
- 3) Work with our elected officials to get the funding for bike/pedestrian safety needs along OLR from Warrington Road to the Bay.
- 4) Consider planning some community meetings to make sure residents have an understanding of the process, CTP, TID, current plans and how to stay informed and participate.

Many thanks to our guests speakers, OLRC members and Sawgrass Residents that participated in this meeting.

Donna Voigt and Bobby Mills
Co-Directors, OLRC