

**SCOPING OUT DELAWARE'S ROLE IN
FACILITATING BUSINESS TRAVEL AS IT RELATES TO
THE WILMINGTON REDEVELOPMENT AREA,
WILMINGTON TRAIN STATION,
AND NEW CASTLE COUNTY AIRPORT
A WORKING PAPER - SEPTEMBER 2009**



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IN COOPERATION WITH THE DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

PREFACE

As the director of the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) at the University of Delaware, I am pleased to provide this working paper on facilitating Wilmington business travel. IPA completed this working paper in cooperation with the Delaware Department of Transportation as part of the "State Support for Infrastructure Policy Forum and Research FY2009" program. The primary task of this working paper was to produce recommendations on how to best facilitate business travel access to and from the Wilmington Redevelopment area, specifically via the Wilmington Train Station and the New Castle County Airport. In addition, the project aimed to identify how to facilitate travel within the Wilmington Redevelopment area and to/from the area travel modes. To obtain background information for the project, IPA conducted interviews with area businesses, developers, and organizations to better understand the needs for improvement. In addition to the interviews, a working group meeting was held in July 2009 to discuss the draft working paper and allow for additional feedback. This working paper is based on feedback from the interviews and the working group briefing session.

Edward J. O'Donnell, AICP, IPA Policy Scientist, was the Project Manager. Sebastian Anderka, IPA Graduate Research Assistant, conducted the project interviews along with O'Donnell and did background research for the project. Todd Franzen, University Transportation Center (UTC) Graduate Fellow, wrote the working paper and organized the briefing session. Special thanks go to Assistant Policy Specialist Mark Deshon who provided editorial support for the project and designed the cover.

Jerome R. Lewis, Ph.D.
Director, Institute for Public Administration

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

According to an economic-impact study released in June 2007 by the University of Delaware's Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research (CADSR), the Wilmington Riverfront has generated \$67 million in fiscal revenues for the state, New Castle County, and City of Wilmington since 1996. The report cites projects such as Christina Landing, AAA Mid-Atlantic, the Barclays buildings, Chase Center on the Riverfront, Shipyard Shops, Riverfront Market, Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts, and the ING Direct buildings for transforming the Riverfront into a thriving center of employment, recreation, and residential life. If the Wilmington Redevelopment Area is to continue as an economic engine for job growth, a growing source of tax revenue, and a marketable residential area, travel access is critical. The Institute for Public Administration (IPA) is completing a project to study how to best facilitate travel access to the Wilmington Redevelopment Area by regional rail and air. Specifically, the project is studying how to maximize business travel to the Wilmington Redevelopment Area via the New Castle County Airport and Wilmington Train Station—via north/south Amtrak trains and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) R2 train route from Newark to Philadelphia).

To obtain background for the needs assessment section of the study, IPA focused on nine contacts in the Wilmington Riverfront area. The nine targeted businesses and agencies are AAA, Barclays, Buccini/Pollin Group, Chase Card Services, ING Direct, Pettinaro Company, the Wilmington Riverfront Development Corporation, the Wilmington Renaissance Corporation, and the Wilmington Train Station. Each of the nine organizations was contacted to attempt to schedule in-person interviews to discuss the business travel project and receive background information in order to understand how best to facilitate travel within the Wilmington Redevelopment Area and to/from the area via the New Castle County Airport and the Wilmington Train Station. The interviews were conducted in the spring of 2009 by IPA Policy Scientist Ed O'Donnell and IPA Research Assistant Sebastian Anderka. In order to provide consistency, the following prescribed list of questions was asked during each interview:

1. Do you or your guests/clients/customers use the Train Station to come to Wilmington? If applicable, how often do you use it?
2. Which modes of transportation do you or your guest/clients/customers use to travel from the Train Station to your/their final destination?
3. Do you or your guests/clients/customers use the New Castle County Airport to come to Wilmington? If so, how often do you use it?
4. Which modes of transportation do you or your guest/clients/customers use to travel from the New Castle County Airport to your/their final destination?

5. How convenient and accessible is the Wilmington Train Station? How could the current situation be improved?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very convenient | <input type="checkbox"/> Very accessible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Convenient | <input type="checkbox"/> Accessible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inconvenient | <input type="checkbox"/> Inaccessible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very inconvenient | <input type="checkbox"/> Very inaccessible |

6. How convenient and accessible is the New Castle County Airport? How could the current situation be improved?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very convenient | <input type="checkbox"/> Very accessible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Convenient | <input type="checkbox"/> Accessible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inconvenient | <input type="checkbox"/> Inaccessible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very inconvenient | <input type="checkbox"/> Very inaccessible |

Content of each of the interviews is summarized in the following section. The complete results of each of the interviews can be found in the appendix to this working paper.



SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS AND INTERACTIONS

AAA

AAA Mid-Atlantic declined to participate in the project. Due to the decentralized approach the company uses for travel arrangements, IPA was told that it was not feasible for the business to participate in the study. In addition, AAA's public affairs department stated that it doesn't know how visitors get to the business and that visitors typically make their own reservations. Although the business was supportive of the purpose of the study, it was not willing to provide any specific information.

Barclays

IPA received information in writing from Barclays based on the written survey questions but was unable to meet with the organization in person.

- The train station is frequently used for travel. Between November 2008 and January 2009, 200 people used the train for business.
- Most people travel from the train station by foot.
- The train station is very convenient and very accessible.
- The airport is convenient and accessible, but is not frequently used for travel; the issue with the airport is a lack of flight offerings.

Buccini/Pollin Group

Interview with Beth Matkins on April 9, 2009

- The business uses the train station three days a week on average, especially for travel to or from New York City, Washington D.C., or Harrisburg.
- Clients either walk from the train station or get picked up in a company car.
- The airport is not used, in part because of the train station's convenience.
- An improved taxi service would be helpful to the area.
- Updated online and GPS maps are necessary to help visitors to the area as current maps online maps are outdated.
- A large train station sign would be helpful.
- The biggest positive impact on accessibility to the Riverfront would be direct access to I-95 via an on/off-ramp.

Chase Bank

Meeting on April 16, 2009

- Chase Bank uses the train station often and advertised for 20 employees from NY to commute to Wilmington to work either daily or every few days.
- Some employees travel daily to New York City via the train.
- Those arriving by train usually walk to the Chase Bank building.
- The train station is very convenient and very accessible.
- Some people feel insecure around the bus terminal due to the homeless; however, there have been no known incidents.
- The area around the station is not pleasant for pedestrians in general and misses a "sense of place," though employees still walk around the area to go out for lunch.
- The airport is very inconvenient and very inaccessible due to a lack of service.
- Security issues are a concern between Chase Bank buildings, not necessarily between its buildings and the train station.
- Parking has been subsidized because of security issues.

Due in part to its interest in the business travel study, Chase Bank did a survey on their own of their employees to determine additional information for the study. The survey was administered between April 30 and May 6, with 11 people responding. A summary of the results is below; the complete survey with all the results is in the appendix of this working paper.

- The train restrooms need upgrading and frequent cleaning.
- There should be additional seating on the loading platforms.
- A better sound system would help the clarity of announcements in the train station.
- A cover for the outside waiting area would be helpful.
- Ramps leading to the street from the station would better accommodate passengers with luggage.
- SEPTA should add additional routes to from Wilmington to North Wilmington, West Chester, Media/Swarthmore, etc., without the need to travel through 30th Street Station first.
- Additional trains are necessary from Wilmington to Newark in the afternoons.
- Information signage would be helpful for visitors.
- A deal with Amtrak to provide a reduced fare from Philadelphia to Wilmington during certain hours would be a big draw.
- The escalator is often out of service, and the elevator is hard to find.
- Signage is necessary for one-way streets around the train station to reduce confusion.
- Security is a major issue around the station especially late at night; the outdoor lighting is poor, walkways are not maintained, and there are homeless asking for money.
- There should be rail service from Wilmington to the Philadelphia airport.

ING Direct

IPA spoke with Cathy MacFarland of ING Direct by phone, and she said that their travel needs are "well in hand." ING Direct communicates with people outside of the area primarily by video conference. When they bring in outside vendors, who are mostly local, the vendors either drive or take the train. When ING Direct employees travel, they either take the train or drive to the airport, but there is very little travel by employees. Cathy does not think it is hard to travel at all, and it is a non-issue for ING Direct. There is adequate parking at ING Direct, the train station is very close by, and the airport is easy to access. People from out of town think the ING Direct location is "the best place they've been as far as travel." Therefore, she saw no need for ING Direct to participate in the study.

Pettinaro Company

Meeting with Andrea Finerosky, Land Development Manager, on April 16, 2009

- The business uses the train station, but only infrequently.
- People are not comfortable walking under the overpasses.
- The business usually uses cars or taxis to move people to and from the Riverfront area.
- Safety issues exist going north from the station because of the homeless people.
- The Riverfront "basically shuts down at night" after 5:00 p.m., which contributes to pedestrian insecurity.
- Better signage in the area would be helpful, especially when new streets open.
- Parking in the area is sufficient.
- The airport is very inconvenient and very inaccessible.
- The business markets the accessibility of the Riverfront by train.

The Wilmington Renaissance Corporation

Meeting with Carrie Gray, Managing Director, and Christine Serio, Marketing/Public Relations Director, on April 23, 2009

- The train station is used daily by visitors to the area.
- The Chancery Court frequently uses the train to come in from big cases.
- Visitors usually leave the train station by taxi or company car.
- The train station is very accessible and very convenient.
- A direct train from Wilmington to the Philadelphia airport could be attractive for both the city and the airport.
- Planned train-station renovations will be helpful, especially retail space, a café, etc., in the station and lighting around the station, particularly at the French Street underpass.
- When the airport had regular service, it was convenient and accessible.
- There is/was a marketing problem with the airport, since many were unaware of existing service.
- A charter service would be enough at the airport.
- Intersections on MLK Jr. Blvd. need to be improved for pedestrians; e.g., adding crossing signal countdowns.

- People hanging out around the train station can be intimidating, but no physical incidents have happened so far.
- Improved taxi service would be helpful; two additional taxi stands and more convenient service for those traveling to or from areas outside of Wilmington would help.

In addition to the information provided in the interview, the Wilmington Renaissance Corporation shared results from a public-transportation survey that the organization completed in January 2009, to which 324 responded. In the following table are some pertinent results from the survey.

Wilmington Renaissance Corporation: Public Transportation Survey Summary of Results, 2009

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Response Count
I feel safe at the Wilmington Train Station.	10.2% (27)	43.9% (116)	17.8% (47)	7.6% (20)	2.7% (7)	17.8% (47)	264
The Wilmington Train Station is kept clean.	8.3% (22)	47.2% (125)	18.5% (49)	7.5% (20)	0.8% (2)	17.7% (47)	265
The Rodney Square bus hub is kept clean.	1.5% (4)	21.1% (55)	34.9% (91)	16.9% (44)	6.5% (17)	19.2% (50)	261
I feel safe at the Rodney Square bus hub.	1.5% (4)	18.8% (49)	21.8% (57)	28.4% (74)	12.3% (32)	17.2% (45)	260
The DART bus schedule is easy to use and understand.	13.6% (25)	54.9% (101)	14.1% (26)	14.7% (27)	1.1% (2)	1.6% (3)	184
The DART bus time schedule meets my needs.	7.0% (13)	40.0% (74)	26.5% (49)	17.8% (33)	7.6% (14)	1.1% (2)	185
I feel safe when riding DART buses.	15.1% (28)	52.4% (97)	23.8% (44)	5.9% (11)	1.6% (3)	1.1% (2)	185
My overall experience with DART buses is positive.	13.5% (25)	56.2% (104)	20.0% (37)	4.9% (9)	4.3% (8)	1.1% (2)	185
The Amtrak fare is reasonable and affordable.	8.6% (15)	24.0% (42)	20.0% (35)	31.4% (55)	15.4% (27)	0.6% (1)	175
My overall experience with riding Amtrak is positive.	14.3% (25)	72.0% (126)	10.9% (19)	2.3% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.6% (1)	175

Source: Wilmington Renaissance Corporation

Wilmington Riverfront Development Corporation

Meeting with Kerrie van Horn on April 9, 2009

- The close proximity of the train station is used as a marketing tool.
- From the train station, clients either use taxis or are picked up by company cars.
- The train station is convenient but, due to the surrounding traffic flow, the station is rather inaccessible.
- The area around the train station can be confusing for those unfamiliar with the area.
- A larger "kiss-and-ride" area around the train station would be helpful.
- The first level of the train station is not very attractive.
- The greyhound bus station is seen as a safety risk.
- Since all cabs wait near the train station, it is difficult to get a cab in the downtown area.
- The trolley is only used by locals.
- The Riverfront area is served by streets that terminate in cul-de-sacs, so accessibility can be difficult.
- GPS street maps need to be updated for the area.
- Although the area is visible from I-95, it can be difficult to figure out how to reach the area.
- The I-95 ramp is no longer a consideration due to a lack of funding.

Wilmington Train Station

IPA was unsuccessful in making contact with the manager of the Wilmington Train Station to schedule a meeting.

Note: Some of the issues raised in the interviews in regards to the Wilmington Train Station will be addressed by upcoming restoration and upgrades. The Wilmington train station will be upgraded through \$20 million in federal stimulus funds. The expected upgrades will include installation of new concrete curbing, glass stairwell enclosures, canopies, and an ADA-compliant raised platform on Track 1. In addition, restoration will be completed on the exterior of the building, brick sidewalks will be repaired, and the platform's underside will be restored. The track-bed waterproofing will also be replaced.



COMMON THEMES FROM THE INTERVIEWS

Analyzing the results of the interviews and feedback, there are several common themes that emerge and should be further analyzed. Of particular interest:

- The train station is frequently used by businesses in the area.
- The airport is not used as a travel mode, primarily due to the proximity to the Philadelphia airport and the lack of available service options.
- Online and GPS maps for the Wilmington Riverfront area need to be updated.
- Safety around the train station is a concern.
- Signage around the train station needs to be improved.
- The train station needs some improvements, including signage, cleanliness, lighting, announcement quality, seating, and accessibility.
- Aside from security concerns, the area around the train station is not pleasant for pedestrians due to poor lighting, unkempt walkways, and insufficient or lack of pedestrian signals at intersections.
- The Riverfront area is clearly visible from I-95, but it is not entirely clear how to access the area due to poor signage at one-way streets and no direct access ramp from I-95.
- Taxi service in Wilmington needs to be improved.



PROJECT WORKING-GROUP BRIEFING SESSION

On Tuesday, July 28, 2009, IPA hosted a briefing session for project stakeholders. The purpose of the briefing session was to bring together stakeholders to scope out Delaware's role in facilitating business travel to the Wilmington redevelopment area, using discussion gathered through the interviews as a guide.

In attendance at the briefing session were the following individuals:

Ken Potts, Director of Development, Delaware Transit Corporation
Ron Edwards, District Manager of Stations, Amtrak
Carrie Gray, Managing Director, Wilmington Renaissance Corporation
Andrea Finerosky, Land Development Manager, Pettinaro Company
Terri Tripi, Finance Manager, Chase
Peter Besecker, Director, Wilmington Planning Department
Megan McGlinchey, Director of Operations, Riverfront Development Corporation
Stephen Williams, Director of Airports, Delaware River and Bay Authority
Jerome Lewis, Director, Institute for Public Administration
Ed O'Donnell, Policy Scientist, Institute for Public Administration
Todd Franzen, Graduate Fellow, University Transportation Center

In the section that follows is a summary of the discussion during the meeting, broken down by the main topics.

Taxi Service

The working paper needs to have a heavier message with the Wilmington taxi service. The current taxi service creates the wrong perception of Wilmington. The taxi vehicles are not clean, there is no general uniformity of vehicles, and taxi drivers look shady and are often on their cell phones throughout the trips. Regulations to establish uniformity are necessary. There is currently no passenger bill of rights, no standardization of rates, and no standardization of taxi dispatch for taxis in Wilmington.

The examples of poor taxi service are numerous.

- Sometimes if you call for a taxi, it can be a two-hour wait.
- Someone recently requested a taxi to take them to Trolley Square but was refused. They had to walk instead.
- Harry's Seafood Grill can't get taxis to cross Market Street.
- Currently, it can cost \$50-75 to travel by taxi from Wilmington to Newark.
- Why is cab service available only at certain signs? Their current practice is that the drivers are not allowed to pick anyone up that hails for a taxi.
- The poor taxi service is why many hotels now run shuttles.
- There is also substandard cab service at the airport. Many of the corporations that use the airport use their own rental cars; they have no problem with the taxis.

DelDOT now has the ability to change the regulations. Legislation recently passed that allows DelDOT to change some of the regulations regarding taxi service. DelDOT is too large to regulate the taxi service in Delaware, especially since it is largely an urban problem. There could be a statewide taxi dispatch. Maybe a better idea than a state-run taxi dispatch would be to impose Wilmington overlay regulations. A more appropriate approach would be to institute an overlay that is enforceable.

Two taxi companies own most all of the existing medallions. A medallion can be leased from one of the two taxi companies for \$750 per week or purchased for \$5,000. In order for a new operator to get a taxi medallion, they have to show a need in the community. The existing operators testify against such applications.

Train Station Signage

Big train station signs already exist. There are signs on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., French Street, and Walnut Street. Maybe there could be some pathfinders added to direct people to the train station, something like an iconic graphic of the clock tower and train station. The pathfinders could be put on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and Walnut Street. This type of project could be developed through a public-private partnership.

Pedestrian Walkability around Riverfront area

Areas around the Federal Building and Courthouse are less walkable than at the Riverfront.

The Walnut and Front Sts. intersection is dangerous. The designated walkway in that area is not bad, but people don't follow the marked route. Instead, people cross where they shouldn't.

There is a good walkway between the Chase buildings. There is a tree-lined walkway along King St. The Market St. bridge was cleaned up nicely. The Walnut St. side needs lots of attention, such as including murals and improving the sidewalks.

There were plans for a second or third walkway to the train station. Then one could take the elevator up to the walkway and go get rental cars.

One thing that is missing from this working paper is discussion of the area south of the Christina River. There is an issue there with walkability and accessibility to the train station.

Security around the Train Station

If one drives one block from the train station to the Sunday Breakfast Mission, there are homeless people all over. The homeless lie in the park and panhandle all over, which is a problem. They try to keep the homeless out of the train station the best that they can; however, there is nowhere for the homeless to go during the day. The Breakfast Mission should have been moved a long time ago, since it is only one block from the train station hub.

Utilization of Train Service

The problem is that there is not enough space to for SEPTA and MARC to function with expanded service. The plan to move the Newark train station to the Route 72 concrete plant is on hold in part pending what will happen with the Chrysler plant. SEPTA shares tracks with Norfolk Southern, so it would be difficult to expand service.

Amtrak had offered reduced fares in the past, but now there are regulations stating that no Amtrak fare can be any less than 50 percent of the regular fare. There is now a federal law that Amtrak can't offer a commuter rate. The SEPTA fare is under-marketed. It is an unbelievable deal and is much less than parking would cost in Philadelphia.

Amtrak sells reduced-price tickets to large groups/businesses. Accessibility to the train station is used as a marketing tool for businesses and clients. Astra Zeneca and JP Morgan both run shuttles to the train station for their employees. Chase employees use both the R2 SEPTA train and Amtrak. The N.Y. clientele all use Amtrak.

Congestion Around the Train Station

There is insufficient room for the intercity and DART buses around the train station. The buses could be moved to relieve some of the congestion along French St.

Rental cars need to be made more easily accessible. What about moving the rental car agencies off of Walnut St.? Could they be moved to the municipal lot? Right now where they are is a safety issue.

Accessibility to the Riverfront

A bridge is more likely to come off of U.S. Rt. 13 and I-495 than a new off ramp from I-95. Coming off of I-95 is not likely in the near future due to land and money.

The intersection of Front and Walnut Sts. needs to be better utilized and improved. The Gateway house is an impediment to developing the parcel and should get more discussion.

New Castle County Airport

The airport is more geared to business travel. The proximity to the Philadelphia airport is why it is difficult to get service out of Wilmington. There are plans to grow the commercial offerings at the New Castle County Airport (NCCA) but first they have to establish demand. NCCA forecasting shows that it can accommodate a 600,000-passenger demand. The airport is completing facility improvements and focusing on quality service to build demand.

The current airport facility is a problem; the airport lacks parking and a modern terminal. The terminal is a 1950s vintage terminal. The airport has preserved land for a new terminal at U.S. Rt. 13 and Churchmans Road. Airport authorities recently met with WILMAPCO to talk about needs such as rail, transit, parking, and ground access.

Another problem is consumer behavior. Delawareans are used to traveling to the Philadelphia airport. NCCA is modeling its approach more on the Lehigh Valley airport instead of the Philadelphia airport.

The airport is working on a corporate-shuttle program. By this fall, the airport is hoping to introduce a corporate shuttle from Wilmington to Boston. Through a third-party relationship with a business, Boston was established as the #1 travel destination. If that route proves successful, NCCA hopes to attract a name carrier for other service. NCCA is going to target carriers that are not currently at either the Philadelphia or Baltimore airports. Hopefully, there will be a second corporate shuttle offering to Charlotte.

The delays that occur at Philadelphia would not impact NCCA as much because airspace patterns are such that the planes leaving NCCA could travel at a lower altitude to avoid delayed areas. Currently, corporate aircraft get delayed by the Philadelphia airspace. Right now NCCA has no priority over airspace, but the airport could get some priority back with a new carrier.

The ground connection is pivotal to the success of the airport. A problem for customers who are trying to get to downtown Wilmington from the airport is that the DART bus at the terminal is going southbound. People have to cross a six-lane highway to get the northbound DART bus. This problem could be easily remedied if an area for the buses to turn around is added. In addition, it is important to have accessible and available taxis at the airport. There are plans to limit airport taxi service to drivers who have passed a test. The airport controls access to the area, so it can place restrictions on taxi service.

Parking in the Riverfront Area

The Penn lot is available for additional parking, but that would block the view of the Penn building. There are surface lots attached to the Penn building. There is a surface lot at 110 S. French St. There is an underused lot at 2nd and King Sts. Also, the Renaissance garage could be a possibility.

Other Riverfront Needs

The Wilmington Central Business District (CBD) is the only place with a hotel. There is a proposed hotel facility at the Riverfront to serve the Chase Center. The biggest challenge to attracting business travelers to the Riverfront is the lack of a hotel. Without a hotel and good taxi service, there will be no true business travel to the Riverfront.

Train Station Improvements

The train station improvements funded by the stimulus will be done in March 2011. They are basically taking everything out; the front street lighting will be improved, and the outside lighting will be better. The safety perception around the train station will be better with the improvements.

PROJECT FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS

- The train station is frequently used for travel. Businesses often use the train station for travel and find it very convenient. Many businesses send cars to pick up clients from the train station instead of asking them to walk or use the taxi service.
- The area around the train station is not pleasant for pedestrians. Security issues are a concern for pedestrians, especially because the Riverfront basically shuts down at night. Outdoor lighting is poor, walkways are not well maintained, and there are many homeless asking for money. In addition, people are uncomfortable walking under the overpasses around the train station. Intersections in the area should also be improved for pedestrians, including adding crossing-signal countdowns. Part of the problem may be that pedestrians do not follow the current street markings for crosswalks. Something needs to be done to address the preponderance of homeless people in the vicinity of the train station. This would help improve pedestrian security.
- Pathfinders around the train station would be helpful to direct pedestrians around the train station. A public-private partnership could fund such a project.
- Areas within the train station need to be improved, including the restrooms, signage, seating areas, sound system, ramps, and escalators.
- Rental cars need to be more accessible at the train station. Could the rental-car location be moved somewhere or could accessibility to the current location be improved?
- DART and commercial buses contribute to congestion around the train station. The buses could be moved to reduce congestion issues.
- SEPTA should look at additional routes from Wilmington, including service from the train station to the Philadelphia airport. Another area that could use additional service is the route from Wilmington to Newark in the afternoons. SEPTA shares tracks with Norfolk Southern, so it would be difficult to expand service, but this issue should be considered in the future. The current service provided by SEPTA is not well marketed, though the service provides excellent value. Better marketing might improve ridership figures.
- Amtrak sells reduced-price tickets to large groups/businesses, but it is unclear if all area businesses are aware this deal. Amtrak cannot provide reduced fares during commuting hours due to federal regulations.

- The New Castle County Airport currently is geared more to business travel but is looking to expand its service offerings in the future. Currently, the airport is not frequently used for travel due to a lack of flight offerings and, in part, due to the convenience of the train station. The airport is focusing on facility improvements and is trying to create demand for expanded service. An important factor for the airport is the ground connection. The airport also experiences poor taxi service but is planning to impose regulations on taxis that serve the airport. In addition, the DART buses that currently serve the airport are not convenient for passenger pick-up.
- Updated online and GPS maps are necessary to reflect the changed street grid in the Riverfront area. Accessibility to the Riverfront also needs to be improved. Better signage is necessary to inform visitors to the area. The Riverfront is clearly visible from I-95, but it can be difficult to know how to reach the area.
- Taxi service serving the Riverfront area needs to be improved. The current taxi service creates the wrong perception of Wilmington. The taxi vehicles are not clean, there is no general uniformity of vehicles and taxi drivers look shady and are often on their cell phones throughout the trips. Regulations to establish uniformity are necessary. There is currently no passenger bill of rights, no standardization of rates, and no standardization of taxi dispatch for taxis in Wilmington. Poor taxi service is a problem for the New Castle County Airport as well. The state of Delaware should create either a statewide taxi dispatch or statewide regulations with an overlay specific to Wilmington. The current poor taxi service in Wilmington has forced many hotels in the area to offer shuttles for their guests.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE STUDY

During the course of the project, several issues came up that merit additional study and consideration. Addressing these additional topics would strengthen the understanding on how to further facilitate travel to and within the Wilmington Riverfront Redevelopment Area. The additional pertinent issues that should be studied are as follows:

1. Consider another phase to this project, studying the area north of the Riverfront area to determine travel needs to and from Wilmington's central business district.
2. Provide greater emphasis on how to improve the quality and quantity of taxi service in the Wilmington area.
3. Talk to the Wilmington legal community to determine their travel needs, since many of the bigger law firms are frequently bringing people in for bankruptcy cases.
4. Contact other big businesses in the area such as Astra Zeneca. Astra Zeneca currently runs a contract bus service to Great Valley and would be a good business to interview for the project.



APPENDIX

Interview 1

04/09/2009

Beth Matkins, Buccini/Pollin Group

Question 1:

- Buccini/Pollin uses the train station three days a week on average; clients, employees and owners use trains, especially when coming from New York, Washington, D.C., or Harrisburg; trains are also used to travel to meetings in Washington, D.C.

Question 2:

- Clients and guests usually walk to the office on days with nice weather. Otherwise, they get picked up by a company car, especially if they have much baggage, such as large plans or architectural models.

Question 3:

- The airport is not used because it is too easy to travel by train, also the company is Northeast-based, so all branches are accessible via train.
- The only interesting airborne service would be helicopter flights, and this service is actually already available nearby.

Question 4:

- Not applicable

Question 5:

- The train station was rated "very convenient" and "very accessible" (especially picking up and dropping off passengers is easy, there are always enough parking spaces, and the area around the station is easy to navigate).
- Ms. Matkins offered to ask her co-workers, who are more frequent train riders, how the train station's service could be further improved.

Question 6:

- The airport is currently "useless" and only interesting for freight flights and people owning private jets.
- The former connections offered by Delta Airlines were too expensive, with domestic flights costing \$400 upwards.

Additional Information:

- The train station was not explicitly used as a marketing point, because all the townhouses were sold within two weeks, but it must be a strong attraction because there is always a lot of pedestrian traffic coming to and from the station.
- The Wilmington Transportation Group is currently working on several projects to improve Wilmington's downtown traffic system. One of the things they try to improve is the taxi service, because almost all taxi cabs wait at the train station while it is very difficult to get a taxi elsewhere. An improved taxi service could be very interesting for

the establishments opening in the riverfront area (restaurants, bars, Amtrak training facility, etc.).

- The biggest and best impact on the success of the Riverfront would come from the construction of an off-ramp from I-95 and a bridge across the Christina River.
- The online and GPS maps of the Riverfront area are outdated and don't show the existing street network, making it difficult for clients and guests to find their way.
- It was impossible to construct a set of steps to connect the riverwalk with the Market Street Bridge because it would "destroy the bridge's historic character."
- Buccini/Pollin is already looking at ways to better connect the Riverfront with the neighboring Browntown area, especially focusing on the barrier effect caused by the rail viaduct.
- There is no big sign directly outside the train station.
- It could be helpful to contact some of the attorneys at the Court of Chancery, because they sometimes stay for months in Wilmington (possible questions: How easy is everything to find? Would they use plane service if it was available? Do they even know that there is an airport nearby?).

Interview 2

04/09/2009

Kerrie van Horn, Riverfront Redevelopment Corporation (RRDC)/Chase Center

Question 1:

- The Corporation has clients and guests coming in from the train station, but they don't track the numbers.
- The nearby train station was used as a marketing device because of Wilmington's location on the northeast-corridor in the middle between N.Y. and Washington, D.C.

Question 2:

- Guests and clients usually use taxis or sometimes get picked up by company cars or hotel shuttles (especially if they stay overnight and have a meeting in the morning).

Question 3:

- not applicable

Question 4:

- not applicable

Question 5:

- The train station is "very convenient" but rather "inaccessible" because of the traffic flow surrounding the building; clients/guests often get lost in the area around Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.; also the direct connection through the small streets is too complicated for people not familiar with Wilmington.
- A larger "kiss-and-ride" facility in front of the station and clearer traffic-flow patterns could improve the situation; the waiting buses often hide in the 15-minute parking spots under the rail bridge.
- The train station itself is not very attractive on the 1st level; there are no benches and also some problems with panhandling.
- The nearby Greyhound bus station is seen to be a safety risk.
- All cabs wait next to the train station, and it can be difficult to get a cab in the downtown area, so events/hotels often have their own shuttle services; the trolley system is only used by locals.

Question 6:

- Not applicable, because there is no service currently available.
- Theoretically, the airport would be rather "accessible."
- Previous Delta Airlines service went only to "the wrong places."
- The airport is interesting for CEOs with private jets/helicopters, but the RRDC/Chase Center instead advertises its proximity to the Philadelphia airport (only 24 miles away), which might even be quicker to reach than the New Castle County Airport (NCCA).
- RRDC/Chase Center doesn't promote NCCA at all, especially not since Delta left (formerly offering a connection to Atlanta).

Additional Information:

- The big challenge is that the Shipyard Shops, the stadium, and the convention center are all at the end of what is essentially a cul-de-sac.
- As already mentioned, people tend to get lost on their way to the convention center; the center is clearly visible from I-95, but it is hard to figure out how to get there. There is always confusion caused by the similarity between the "Chase Center" and the "Chase Building."
- The GPS companies haven't updated their street maps yet.
- The convention center would need a full-service hotel nearby, but the current projects are in a holding pattern right now (financing problems).
- A new hotel might even increase the train station's attractiveness.
- There are new hotel shuttles available in Wilmington, but there are many other competing hotels with much room for events or even convention centers with attached hotels.
- Turning Wilmington into a "meeting city" with all the local corporations could have a hugely positive economic impact, existing corporations often go elsewhere for their training sessions; but this would again require a full-service hotel.
- There are congestion and parking problems when two events happen at the same time in the Riverfront area.
- I-95 ramp is off the table because of a lack of funding.

Interview 3

04/16/2009

Andrea Finerowski, Pettinaro Company

Question 1:

- Pettinaro uses the train station sometimes during the year but only infrequently; because they are not a investor-based company, their guests arriving at the train station are mostly national clients and tenants for their shopping centers.
- The overpasses are a real problem, because people hang out there, especially from the Sunday Breakfast Mission. Most pedestrians are bothered to walk there; it lies exactly between the Riverfront and Central Business District.

Question 2:

- Pettinaro doesn't have many residential units at the Riverfront, just commercial developments, so it usually uses cars and taxis/shuttles to move people to that area.

Question 3:

- Not applicable

Question 4:

- Not applicable

Question 5:

- The station was rated very convenient and very accessible, because it is nice and easy to find.
- Some safety issues exist when going north from the station, especially because of the homeless people; the "Riverfront basically shuts down" at night.
- Better signage in the area would be helpful, particularly when new streets are opened.

Question 6:

- Very inconvenient/very inaccessible

Additional Information:

- Riverfront Shops are used as office spaces with free parking today (is seen as a big plus in marketing them); they do very well.
- Parking in general is sufficient in front of Shipyard Shops, so spillovers to other lots probably wouldn't bother anybody; many of the local parking areas are owned by a variety of people, but there is informal cooperation.
- The Riverwalk is owned by the RRDC, with responsibility split over several plots.
- Generally, there is a security problem, because from 5 p.m. on nobody is around in the Riverfront area, presumably because Wilmington can't compete with more attractive nearby cities like Philadelphia or Baltimore (with more fun and nightlife just 20 minutes away).
- Pettinaro does market the accessibility of the Riverfront by train.

Interview 4

04/16/2009

Chase Card Services Finance, Chase Building

Question 1:

- Chase Bank uses train station and hired/advertised for 20 employees from N.Y. who would commute to Wilmington either daily or stay in Wilmington a couple of days before they return to N.Y.
- Some employees go to daily meetings in New York City.

Question 2:

- Employees and guests usually walk to the Chase Building.

Question 3:

- Not applicable

Question 4:

- Not applicable

Question 5:

- The train station was rated very convenient and very accessible.
- Some people have problems with the bus terminal because it and the park across the street are places where homeless gather; due to a lack of incidents, the problem probably is largely a lacking sense of security.
- The area around the train station is not a pleasant place to walk around, a missing sense of place exists; one (and especially visitors from other countries) doesn't literally feel fearful but is uncomfortable to be looked at by people just hanging out on the streets. But this doesn't stop Chase's employees from going out for lunch, etc.

Question 6:

- The airport was rated very inconvenient and very inaccessible due to the lacking service.

Additional Information:

- Security issues exist between the buildings (because people work late) rather than between buildings and train station; there has been an incident last year so now security escorts are available.
- The last SEPTA train to Newark leaves at 7 p.m., which is too early for safety concerns in the area.
- Parking has been subsidized because of these security issues.
- Chase employees from other countries were scared by Wilmington's urban environment.

Interview 5

04/23/2009

Carrie Gray/Christine Serio, Wilmington Renaissance Corporation (WRC)

Question 1:

- WRC sees all visitors of Wilmington as "their guests/clients," therefore, the train station is used daily, e.g., for trips to and from Philadelphia.
- Also, the Chancery Court lawyers regularly use the train to come in for big law suits.

Question 2:

- Most visitors either take a taxi or get picked up by a private or company car.

Question 3:

- Not applicable, because at the moment no service exists.
- Airport could have potential, but didn't manage to keep business; former users were from all over the nation, and all agreed that the airport service itself was very convenient.

Question 4:

- Not applicable

Question 5:

- The station was rated very accessible (even by foot) and very convenient.
- The possibility of taking a direct train from Wilmington to Philadelphia Airport could be attractive for both the city and the airport.
- There are no issues when walking to the station.
- Possible improvements:
 - The upcoming renovation of the building
 - Adding amenities like retail space, a café, etc. to the station
 - Improved lighting everywhere around the station, especially at the French Street underpass.

Question 6:

- The airport was rated convenient and accessible.
- There definitely was and is a marketing problem; many people didn't even know air service was there until it was almost gone.
- Probably a new carrier is coming soon.
- A charter-service would be enough, no need for a full jet-service.

Additional Information:

- Walkability to Central Business District:
 - All viaducts should be improved.
 - There is the problem that the viaducts are mostly registered landmarks, too; they are not easy to improve because they lie within Amtrak's responsibility.
 - All viaducts will probably be improved, with a focus on Walnut, Market and Orange Street.

- A survey of transportation-mode choices was conducted by WRC (Transportation Study).
- The intersections on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard have to be improved for pedestrians; for example, there are no countdowns, so it is unpredictable when the lights change.
- DelDOT granted funds to improve 25 intersections (oversight also by DelDOT); the budget will probably be expanded to \$1 million to get more problems solved, e.g., ADA requirements, lighting, striping, pedestrian lights, etc. (exact area of improvement will be submitted).
- No physical incidents between panhandlers/homeless persons and other citizens have happened so far.
- People hanging out in front of train station and transit hub are intimidating for average pedestrians.
- Taxi regulations are updated right now to make the taxi service more reliable and trustworthy.
- Only two taxi stops exist so far—in front of Hotel du Pont (only two taxis can wait there) and next to train station. It was recommended to add two more taxi stops.
- Case study Chicago O'Hare: regulated taxi service at airport, each one of the taxi companies is only allowed to wait at the airport on certain days.
- There are two main taxi companies, Seacoast and Yellowcoast. The first one closed its dispatch service, and the latter one is trying to sell the company right now. It often takes taxis up to 60 minutes to come to a location outside of Wilmington and to pick up customers. This issue needs to be addressed to improve service to the area.

Results of Chase Card Services Employee Survey

Survey Range: Apr 30 – May 6th

Number of Respondents: 11

1. What improvements could be made to the train station?
 - Restrooms
 - Repair and upgrade the restrooms. They generally have a dingy, unclean look and frequently have non-functioning equipment.
 - Bathrooms also need to be updated.
 - Cleanliness. The bathrooms are really dirty, disgusting.
 - Seating
 - More seating on the loading platforms.
 - Sound Systems
 - A sound system better suited to the size and configuration of the waiting area and platforms. It may be an equipment or staff training issue but announcements tend to be garbled, especially in some parts of the waiting area and especially on the loading platforms. Repeating of arrival announcements would be helpful. When only one announcement is made and it happens to be garbled or drowned out it causes unnecessary confusion or frustration.
 - Ramps
 - Ramps on stairways to street for people with luggage. Also, hard to carry luggage down stairs from platform - elevator is inconveniently located and in poor physical condition.
 - Outside Areas
 - The outside waiting area for transit buses has no cover. Makes waiting for buses uncomfortable in inclement weather.
 - Additional Routes
 - Improvements could be to have SEPTA add additional routes to North Wilmington, West Chester, Media/Swarthmore and other areas with train service, but without the need to first travel to 30th Street. A 25 to 35 minute train ride to these areas would improve traffic congestion.
 - Extra trains traveling from Wilmington to Newark in the afternoon. The first train starts running at 4 p.m. from Wilmington to Newark.
 - Signs/Info
 - Clean it up, paint, more signage / information on train status, directional signs for "Where do I go from here?" once you arrive in Wilmington.
 - Other
 - Add wi-fi (maybe already has it).
 - Lack of Retail.

2. Do you use the train station as a recruiting tool to get employees who would travel on the train to Wilmington?
 - Yes--the train, and our proximity to the station, make living in Center City a feasible situation for many. An improvement would be to cut a deal with Amtrak to allow a reduced fare for PHL-WIL on weekdays at a certain hour to turn a 45 minute trip into a 19 minute trip. That would be good for both cities.
 - The value of the train station is the proximity to our building.
 - Yes - if hiring from Baltimore, Philadelphia, Central N.J. and N.Y.
3. Any access issues with the train station?
 - All entrances to the waiting area from the street have steps. At least one ramp should be available and clearly marked.
 - The escalator does not always work and if you have luggage it is a real hassle. Hard to figure out where the elevator is.
 - Early morning and evening, there are a number of "shady characters" that hang around the station, the bus station and the park across the street. Area needs to be secured better, preventing these folks from disrupting the traffic flow (and asking for money).
4. Signage issues?
 - Good signage on I-95, but not as good around the station due to the one-way streets. Better sign the location of the parking areas.
 - More visible electronic signs on the loading platforms.
 - Need more signs.
5. Lighting issues?
 - Could use more light.
 - Too Dark.
6. Security and safety issues?
 - Walking to adjacent parking structures does not feel safe and Downtown Wilmington escorts do not operate south of MLK Jr. Blvd. Security could be improved.
 - Area between Chase and station is not well lit and does not feel safe when returning late at night.
 - The security and safety around the train station is a MAJOR ISSUE. Once you get into the train station it is fine.
 - Walking to the station at night, I fear for my personal safety. There are many people just hanging around the park and the bus station. The outside lighting around the park is terrible.
 - In bad weather (snow/ice) the walk ways around the station and the park are not maintained. I have seen people falling, slipping etc. It is quite dangerous.
 - Walking up for the train station to the building there are a few homeless people asking for money.
 - Safety concerns, both inside and near the train station (bus station, public areas with boats).

7. Any other general observations about the train station that you would like to pass on?
 - The Philadelphia airport has rail lines running right through the terminal areas and does have rail service into Philadelphia. Why is there no rail service from Wilmington to the Philadelphia airport?
 - Bathrooms need more frequent cleaning and sinks all need to work on a regular basis.
 - Amtrak Travel is too expensive on a monthly basis to use as a recruiting tool. Perhaps SEPTA.
 - Escalator is frequently not working.
 - People tend to congregate at the top of the escalator which makes for trouble as trains release passengers.
 - Back track has poor exit flooring (wood) in spots, which is very slippery when wet.
 - Have seen on more than one occasion people driving the wrong way on a one-way street right in front of the station, so more signage is necessary.
 - The only comment I'd make is that more attention needs to be paid to the outside perimeters of the station from a security perspective.
 - The area around the station is really bad, especially in the winter when it is dark. Hopefully they can do something about that.
 - The station generally needs a cleaning and facelift. Peeling paint, leaking roofs, dirty conditions, HIGH AMTRAK PRICES and delays really make it a hard sell to be a regular rider / user of the station (although I am...call me crazy!).
 - Make sure the surrounding area is well lighted and that there are no people that loiter around, especially after hours.
 - Cleanliness issues.

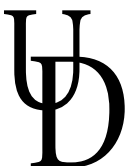


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