

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 12, 2024**

The WILMAPCO Council meeting was held at WILMAPCO, 100 Discovery Boulevard, Suite 800, Newark, DE 19713 and virtually via Zoom.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mr. John Sisson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Members present:

John Sisson, representing Delaware Transit Corporation
Geoff Anderson, Maryland Department of Transportation Chief
David Edgell, Office of State Planning and Delaware Governor's Appointee
Stephen O'Connor, representing Cecil County Executive, Danielle Hornberger
Charuni Patibanda, representing New Castle County Executive, Matthew Meyer
Eric Thompson, Mayor of Elsmere, representing New Castle County Municipalities
Kelly Williams, representing City of Wilmington Mayor, Michael S. Purzycki
Jeff Niezgoda, representing Pam Steinebach for DelDOT Secretary of Transportation, Nicole Majeski

Members absent:

Charlestown Commissioner, Cecil County Municipalities

Guests, Observers:

William Goldman, Cecil County Planning Division
Dan Janousek, Maryland Department of Transportation
Mike Kaszyski, PAC Chair
Bruce Wyngard, Public

Staff members:

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner
Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner
Sharen Elcock, Executive Assistant
Elizabeth Espinal, Administrative Assistant
Dave Gula, Principal Planner
Bill Swiatek, Principal Planner
Jacob Thompson, Senior Planner
Dawn Voss, Outreach Coordinator
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Minutes prepared by Elizabeth Espinal.

3. MINUTES:

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Eric Thompson seconded by Ms. Charuni Patibanda the Council approved the July 11, 2024, Council Meeting Minutes.

Motion passed.

(09-12-24-01)

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

Mr. Bruce Wyngard, a resident of the Whitehall Community, addressed the Council to express concerns about the environmental and health impacts of proposed warehouse developments. He noted that three warehouses, totaling 4.2 million square feet, are planned near his residence, one mile from the corner of Jamison Corner Road and Route 301. These warehouses are projected to generate significant traffic, including 4,500 trucks and cars daily, not counting additional traffic from the approved Scott Run facility.

Mr. Wyngard emphasized that the term "warehouse" is misleading, as these logistics centers operate around the clock, with trucks emitting pollutants at rates exceeding federal standards when idling or moving slowly. He cited a 2023 Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) study that highlighted the severe health risks posed by truck emissions, particularly diesel particulate matter, which is linked to conditions such as asthma, cancer, heart disease, and dementia. According to the EDF, communities within two miles of these facilities are affected by this pollution, making the health consequences inevitable for nearby residents.

He pointed out that surrounding communities, including Whitehall, Bayberry, and others, are being developed rapidly, placing thousands of families at risk from pollution. Mr. Wyngard provided visual aids to demonstrate the proximity of these communities to the proposed warehouses, underscoring the concentrated zone of pollution they will generate.

Mr. Wyngard commended WILMAPCO's "First Mile, Final Mile" report, which outlines the need for better understanding of freight transportation's impact on state and national highways. He highlighted the report's identification of institutional disconnects in Delaware's land-use and transportation planning, noting the potential for conflicts between freight and residential developments. He also referenced the report's findings that 70% of final mile connections in Delaware are within 50 feet of residential dwellings, which intensifies the exposure of residents to air pollution from trucks.

Mr. Wyngard expressed frustration that state agencies, such as DNREC, have no authority over mobile sources of pollution like trucks, leaving communities vulnerable to emissions from these logistics' centers. He also noted that air pollution from warehouses is not adequately addressed in WILMAPCO's 2023 Conformity Report, which focuses on macro-level compliance with EPA standards, rather than the localized impact of specific developments.

In conclusion, Mr. Wyngard recommended that WILMAPCO expand its role in addressing the air quality impacts of warehouse developments. He suggested the implementation of a permitting process to measure and mitigate emissions from truck traffic and urged the Council to exercise its approval authority more assertively in matters involving air quality. He thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak and called for greater consideration of public health in planning decisions.

Mr. John Sisson, in response, thanked Mr. Wyngard for his presentation, acknowledging the valuable information and assuring him that the Council would take his comments under advisement.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

5. Chairperson's Report:

Mr. John Sisson shared updates regarding DART's ongoing initiatives. He noted that the Claymont Transportation Center project is one of 12 projects recognized in AASHTO's 2024 America's Transportation Awards. There are two award categories: one project will be selected

by AASHTO as the best project, and another will win the People's Choice Award. Mr. Sisson encouraged everyone to visit AASHTO's website to vote for the People's Choice Award, noting that votes can be cast every 24 hours, and multiple devices can be used for additional votes. He asked Dawn to forward the link to the team. While acknowledging that the I-95 Cottman Road Rebuild project in Philadelphia may be a strong contender for the overall award, he emphasized that DART has a chance to win the People's Choice Award, as the population size is factored into the voting equation.

He expressed excitement over the Claymont Transportation Center project, which originated from WILMAPCO studies, and its progress. On the transit side, Mr. Sisson mentioned that they are finalizing recommendations for service changes and received significant feedback regarding the possible elimination of Route 52 in the Centerville and Greenville areas. He acknowledged a strong letter-writing campaign and advocacy from many individuals who do not currently use the service and stated that DART is working to find a potential solution, with an update expected next week.

Council Member's Reports:

Mr. David Edgell provided an update from the State Planning Office, highlighting two key initiatives with significant impacts on transportation.

First, he mentioned the formation of an Affordable Housing Production Task Force, created by the legislature. The task force began its work this past month, and Mr. Edgell is a member, serving as chair of the Regulatory and Permitting Subcommittee. The task force will meet throughout the fall and submit a report to the General Assembly by March 1st. The report will address a broad range of affordable housing issues, including the crucial link between housing affordability and transportation. He emphasized how transportation costs affect access to employment and public transit and anticipated that the report would be relevant to MPOs, including WILMAPCO.

Second, Mr. Edgell informed attendees about the upcoming update to the Statewide Investment Strategy, specifically the State Strategies for Policies and Spending Plan, which is revised every five years. The update is scheduled for completion and adoption by July 2025, with approval from the Cabinet Committee and an executive order from the Governor. Currently in the data collection and mapping phase, the process will involve stakeholder engagement, and more information will be available in the coming months.

As part of this effort, the Cabinet Committee on State Planning has formed a Data Analysis Workgroup to compile GIS maps and data on land development, population growth, and demographics. The group will host three public stakeholder sessions, one in each county, before the end of the year. Mr. Dan Blevins has been appointed to assist in this project as a member of Delaware's Population Consortium. Mr. Edgell emphasized that the sessions will be open to the public, allowing for comments and participation. He concluded by updating the council on these state-level initiatives.

Ms. Charuni Patibanda expressed her gratitude to Mr. Wyngard for his presentation and acknowledged his continued advocacy on behalf of the community at various land use public meetings over the past several months. She emphasized that the concerns raised by Mr. Wyngard, particularly regarding potential air pollution from new logistics centers and warehouses, are taken very seriously.

Ms. Patibanda elaborated on the Warehouse Protection Ordinance, highlighting its role in addressing these concerns. She noted that while the public may not be fully aware, the ordinance is already proving effective. The ordinance includes not only a distance buffer but also a size threshold that triggers additional requirements for industrial buildings over 200,000 square feet. These requirements include limited use standards, UDP review, and public meetings, providing an opportunity for the community to voice their concerns. This process has led developers to revise or reduce the size of their projects to avoid additional regulatory steps, thus fulfilling the ordinance's goal of both protecting public interests and incentivizing smaller developments.

Ms. Patibanda clarified that the parcels in the graphics presented today have been zoned as BP since the 1950s, a commercial designation that permits various uses, including logistics centers and warehouses. She underscored the county's efforts to target employment opportunities in southern New Castle County, where there are not enough employers, and to reduce commute times. Given the current market trends favoring warehouses, the Warehouse Protection Ordinance, unanimously adopted by the County Council, plays a critical role in guiding development. Additionally, she noted that at least two of the identified projects are still in the land use approval process. She also highlighted the Claymont Transit Center's proximity to a proposed rezoning project, which aims to incentivize transit-oriented development near the train station, an opportunity the county is excited about.

Mr. Stephen O'Connor provided updates on several upcoming events and legislative developments. He mentioned that MDOT upper shore counties are having the Pre-Tour meeting which is scheduled for September 26th and will be held virtually. Additionally, the CTP Tour meeting is set for October 8th at 10:00 AM in the Elk Room in Cecil County.

He also mentioned that the Maryland APA will be holding its annual conference on October 20th, with early bird registration ending on September 20th. Tying into previous discussions about transportation and housing, Mr. O'Connor highlighted Maryland's House Bill 538, passed during the last legislative session. This bill, after considerable negotiation between the counties and the state, mandates an increase in housing density within 0.75 miles of transit centers. Mr. Joe Griffin from MDP will be presenting on the bill's implementation during the conference.

Finally, Mr. O'Connor took a moment to commend Mr. Wyngard for taking the time to speak with the Council and expressed his appreciation for his contributions.

6. Executive Director's Report – Ms. Tigist Zegeye shared the following information:

- On July 11th, Staff met with DeIDOT to support improvements identifying their equity focus areas.
- On July 12th, Staff met with New Castle County to advance EJ through the Sustainability Plan.
- On July 16th, Staff participated in the New Castle County State of the County event.
- On July 17th, Staff attended the Policy Forum, Delaware's Changing Landscape: Transportation and Demographic Challenges in the Post-COVID Era, co-hosted by the University of Delaware, DeIDOT, Delaware Population Consortium, and WILMAPCO.
- On July 22nd through 24th, Staff took part in the DVRPC Regional Climate Action Plan Subject Matter Expert discussions on transportation and land use.
- On August 10th, Staff attended the Union Street Open Streets event, presenting recommendations for the Union Street reconfiguration and streetscape improvement study.

- On August 14th, Staff participated in the 12th Street Connector display at the Brandywine Overflow Study event in Wilmington; a follow-up event is scheduled for August 21 at the same location.
- On August 21st, Staff joined the relaunch of the First State Trails Coalition with a mixer at the Wilmington riverfront.
- On September 4th, Staff led an APA site visit and networking event for the East Elkton Plan.
- On September 6th, The Rocky Run Underpass study began with a Tech Committee meeting; an Advisory Committee meeting is planned for Fall, with public outreach expected in January 2025.
- On September 7th, Staff attended the Bowers Street Open Streets event.
- On September 9th, Wallace Montgomery was selected to lead the MD-272 Corridor Plan, and a kickoff meeting was held.
- On September 10th, The Newark Bicycle Plan outreach will be done at a Newark bicycle safety checkpoint.
- On September 15th, Staff will participate at Newark Community Day and conduct public outreach for the Newark Bicycle Plan.
- On September 19th, The Route 9 Master Plan's Monitoring Committee will meet.
- On September 22nd, Public outreach for the Kirkwood Hwy Corridor Master Plan is scheduled for the Hispanic community at Holy Angels Church.
- On September 26th, Staff will join a technical expert workshop for DNREC's Climate Action Plan.
- On October 2nd, MSA Regional Climate Action Plan Steering Committee meeting and participation in Walk to School Day at Downes Elementary School.
- On October 7th, The Ardens Transportation Plan's Monitoring Committee will meet.
- On October 17th Claymont Area Master Plan Advisory Committee will meet.
- On October 28th Claymont Area Master Plan Open House, with presentations at 4:30 and 6:00 p.m.
- On October 29th WILMAPCO will host an FHWA Peer Exchange on Effective Coordination of Metropolitan Planning Processes with State DOTs and Transit Agencies; registration is due by October 1st.
- Staff continues to assist the September 11th National Memorial Trail organization with implementing signage in Delaware.
- WRA has been selected to develop a comprehensive improvement program for the Augustine Cut-Off, aiming to make it a safe and accessible multimodal corridor, with active resident engagement throughout the process.

Ms. Tigist concluded by sharing that the August financial report, approximately 16% of the budget has been utilized.

7. Public Advisory Committee (PAC) Report:

Mr. Mike Kaszyski reported that the PAC convened on Monday, August 12, but did not meet quorum with only seven members present. Consequently, no votes were taken on meeting minutes. Due to recent quorum challenges, efforts are underway to reach out to members with inconsistent attendance to reestablish full participation.

Ms. Zegeye presented her executive report, noting that the Council's July 11 meeting included two TIP amendments from Cecil County: one for Mechanics Valley Road and the other for the Elk Neck Elementary Safe School project. She added that the Council approved the 2024 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Performance Plan. Additionally, Ms. Zegeye provided an update on PAC activities completed in June and July.

The meeting included two presentations: Bill Swiatek presented on the East Elkton Traffic Circulation and Safety Plan, and staff delivered updates on five 2025 UPWP studies. The highlighted studies included the First/Final Mile Network Update, New Castle County's Comprehensive Action Plan; aimed at aligning regional transportation with the County's Comprehensive Plan, the Phase 2 Augustine Cut-Off Pedestrian Network Improvement Plan by DeIDOT, the Rocky Run Underpass Feasibility Study, also by DeIDOT, and the MD 272 Corridor Study submitted by Cecil County, with Wallace Montgomery selected as the project consultant.

A Q&A session followed the presentations with PAC members and staff, after which no additional notes or business items were recorded.

8. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Report:

Ms. Heather Dunigan reported that the TAC met on July 18 and had no action items. Mr. Colton Phillips from DeIDOT presented mid-term performance targets for federal performance measures. Ms. Dunigan presented an update on the Newark Bicycle Plan, and Mr. Bill Swiatek gave an update on the East Elkton Traffic Circulation and Safety Plan.

During the August 15 meeting, TAC recommended endorsing the East Elkton Traffic Circulation Plan. They also recommended approval of the use of federal funding for several categories, including the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), CMAQ, FTA Urbanized Area, FTA 5310, and TAP funding. Staff presented updates on WILMAPCO's FY2025 UPWP projects as well.

Ms. Dunigan reminded attendees of the upcoming TAC meeting and picnic, scheduled for next week at Lums Pond State Park. The meeting will start at 10:00 AM, followed by lunch around 11:00 AM in Picnic Area #4. All are welcome.

ACTION ITEMS:

9. To Approve Use of Federal STBG, CMAQ, FTA Urbanized Area, FTA 5310, and TAP Funds in FY 2025.

Ms. Heather Dunigan provided an update regarding WILMAPCO's annual process for reviewing and approving the use of federal funds, in accordance with the MOU between WILMAPCO and DeIDOT. Each year, WILMAPCO receives a request from DeIDOT detailing the specific uses for various categories of federal funds. This recommendation was brought to the TAC, which has recommended approval, and it was also reviewed by the AQS and the NMTWG via email.

Ms. Dunigan summarized the details of the funding request. The letter from DeIDOT itemized several grouped and individual projects. For example, the Surface Transportation Block Grant includes a mix of intersection improvements, pedestrian infrastructure, paving, and multimodal roadway projects. The FTA Urbanized Area funding is allocated for preventive maintenance, facility maintenance, bus replacements, and the Claymont Train Station project. The CMAQ funds are designated for the Rideshare Program, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Program, and statewide transportation management improvements to better optimize the transportation system. Additionally, some roadway projects are CMAQ eligible, but only the bicycle and pedestrian elements will receive CMAQ funding. The FTA 5310 funds will be used for transit vehicle replacements, and the Transportation Alternatives Program primarily focuses on bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Mr. Stephen O'Connor raised a process question, noting that some detailed projects appear to be located throughout Delaware and inquiring if there are corresponding items for southern counties that DelDOT is also responsible for. Ms. Dunigan confirmed that the process is comprehensive, and similar documentation will be sent to the other MPOs' directors for their review and approval.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Stephen O'Connor and seconded by Mr. David Edgell the Council approved the use of federal funds.

Motion passed.

(09-12-24-02)

10. To Endorse the East Elkton Traffic Circulation and Safety Plan.

Mr. Bill Swiatek provided an update on the East Elkton Traffic Circulation and Safety Plan, which was requested by the Town of Elkton and Cecil County. The plan focuses on improving transportation connectivity and safety along Delancy Road, Muddy Lane, and Belle Hill Road corridors. Public input played a significant role in shaping the plan, with hundreds of residents and local students participating through in-person workshops, virtual presentations, a pop-up workshop at Elkton High School, and extensive surveying. The project was guided by a steering committee composed of local and state government representatives, including MDOT and MSHA.

Key recommendations of the plan include realigning roads and intersections to reduce crashes, improving connectivity between key destinations, implementing traffic calming measures to reduce speeding, and creating a network of integrated walking and biking pathways to enhance safety and efficiency for pedestrians and cyclists. Two concepts were proposed to address the Muddy Lane railroad underpass, along with traffic safety improvements at the US 40 and Delancy Road intersection, including the Royal Farms location. Enhancements were also recommended for the Belle Hill Road and Maryland Route 279 intersection to address the handling of large trucks, as well as suggestions for better spacing of freight-generating facilities near residential areas, as noted in Mr. Wyngard's presentation regarding Middletown.

The PAC did not take formal action on this item but received presentations and reviewed the draft plan. The TAC recommended Council endorsement of the plan on August 15th, while the Non-Motorized Transportation Working Group (NMTWG) also received presentations but did not take action. Both the Town of Elkton's Mayor and Commissioners, and the Cecil County Council reviewed the plan but did not take formal action. WILMAPCO's staff recommended that the Council endorse the East Elkton Traffic Circulation and Safety Plan.

Ms. Charuni Patibanda inquired about the Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group's involvement with the forum, questioning why they did not take formal action on the plan when the TAC did.

Mr. Bill Swiatek clarified that while the Nonmotorized Group reviewed and was very supportive of the plan, they did not take formal action. Mr. Eric Thompson added that the plan was initially requested by Cecil County and the Town of Elkton, yet neither entity formally approved the plan nor submitted a letter of recommendation. Mr. Swiatek confirmed that both groups were informed throughout the process and had no objections, noting that WILMAPCO typically does not seek formal approval from external entities for its major transportation initiatives.

Ms. Patibanda then asked about the involvement of local high school students. Mr. Swiatek responded that the students provided enthusiastic feedback, emphasizing the need for improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. He highlighted that a pop-up workshop at the high school during lunchtime was particularly effective, and student feedback identifying desired pathways was incorporated into the plan. He mentioned that these insights will likely guide follow-up activities in the monitoring phase.

Ms. Patibanda expressed interest in conducting similar high school workshops in Delaware, noting the effectiveness of this outreach. Mr. Swiatek added, with humor, that the offer of candy contributed to the workshop's success.

Mr. Stephen O'Connor then commended Mr. Swiatek's efforts, noting that this was the first project in a while for Cecil County and the Town of Elkton to advance through the UPWP. He expressed appreciation for WILMAPCO's assistance and was pleased to see the project progress.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Stephen O'Connor and seconded by Ms. Charuni Patibanda the Council approved the East Elkton Plan.

Motion passed.

(09-12-24-03)

11. To approve the proposed Public Advisory Committee (PAC) Member Reappointments.

Mr. Dave Gula addressed the issue of PAC quorum shortages, noting that recent meetings have lacked quorum by just one or two members. He explained that as part of outreach efforts, members up for renewal will be contacted to assess their ongoing commitment. One member, previously unable to attend virtual meetings due to physical limitations, has resumed attendance in person, improving his attendance record. The other renewing members met the requirement of attending at least 50% of meetings throughout the year, though some absences have aligned, impacting quorum. Mr. Gula assured attendees that efforts are underway to address these attendance challenges.

The reappointment of members was recommended as follows:

- Ms. Patricia Folk, representing Cecil County
- Mr. Richard Janney, representing Southern New Castle County
- A new appointee from the Cecil County Board of Realtors, whose previous representative has stepped down.
- Mr. Barry Shotwell from the 7/40 Alliance

These members are all regular attendees and are not among the attendance-related challenges. The PAC did not take action on this item, as it is a subcommittee of the Council, and Mr. Gula recommended the Council approve these reappointments, with the Board of Realtors' seat to be filled as planned.

Mr. John Sisson asked if there were other vacancies and if there was current representation from the Claymont Renaissance. Mr. Gula clarified that the PAC presently has 17 members, requiring eight for a quorum. Claymont Renaissance has been vacant due to the demands on its sole representative, who manages multiple projects. Mr. Gula added that recent additions include representatives from Cornerstone West in Wilmington and Holloway Terrace, providing community-based representation for Wilmington and the Route 9 area.

While certain institutions may not always have active representatives, PAC's geographic and community-based coverage remains balanced. Mr. Gula noted that representation can vary over time, as organizations like the Sierra Club, which was previously represented, may opt out periodically. New Castle County civics are vocally represented, providing ample coverage across the region.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Eric Scott-Thompson and seconded by Ms. Charuni Patibanda the Council approved the PAC members' reappointments.

Motion passed.

(09-12-24-04)

PRESENTATIONS:

12. Newark Bicycle Plan Update

Ms. Heather Dunigan presented an update on the Newark Bicycle Plan, being developed collaboratively in-house by WILMAPCO, the City of Newark, and Bike Newark. Ms. Dunigan highlighted the essential contributions of Bike Newark's volunteers, who are providing on-the-ground insights and extensive support, enabling a thorough in-house assessment. The 2024 plan updates the previous 2014 bicycle plan, addressing the need to reflect recent changes in infrastructure and the evolving expectations of Newark as Delaware's only Silver-level Bicycle-Friendly Community. With the city's aim to reach Gold-level status, the plan focuses on creating low-stress routes, designed for cyclists of all ages and abilities, while emphasizing community-wide safety and accessibility.

Volunteer teams are currently assessing local roads, bicycle facilities, and bicycle parking infrastructure. These in-person audits capture details not visible through virtual tools, such as road debris, challenging intersections, and parking standards. The updated plan will integrate these observations into its policy recommendations, which will include updates to Newark's land use policies to support equity, environmental sustainability, and bicycle safety.

WILMAPCO's draft plan will be showcased at Newark Community Day, where community members will have opportunities to review and provide input. The update also aligns with the city's Vision Zero and Safe Streets for All plans, targeting a reduction in traffic fatalities and injuries for all road users, including cyclists and pedestrians. The plan further examines Newark's high-crash areas for bicycle and pedestrian incidents, incorporating the latest federal guidelines for safe, comfortable cycling infrastructure and identifying routes that support higher-density, short-trip travel patterns. Environmental Justice is a priority, and outreach efforts focus on meeting the needs of underserved populations, such as low-income households and immigrant communities who rely on bicycle transportation. The plan will support equitable and accessible transportation options by identifying key neighborhoods and enhancing connections across town.

Ms. Dunigan also noted Newark's recent adoption of a TID that provides funding for prioritized bicycle projects. Additionally, projects beyond the TID scope, such as the South College Avenue project, I-95 pathway, and Marrows Road, have been identified as critical connectors in need of focused support and funding. Community engagement, data collection, and volunteer participation remain key elements as the plan continues to develop and refine.

Mr. John Sisson noted that the SR 896 and I-95 interchange includes a shared use path, although he was unsure if it was highlighted on the map. Ms. Heather Dunigan confirmed it is included in the Plan. She added that the South College Avenue project is currently in design, with the only design element pending public availability being the section in front of Star Campus, which is still under discussion. The project will include a pathway connecting I-95 to the Route 4 intersection, likely featuring protected bike lanes along South College Avenue. Additionally, the bridge will have narrowed lanes to accommodate a protected bike lane, creating an important connection from Glasgow to Newark.

Mr. Sisson commented on the evolution of the study, which began in 2014 before e-bikes and scooters were prevalent. He observed that traffic fatalities related to these newer modes now have a separate category, as they don't fit traditional classifications and often share pedestrian facilities. Ms. Dunigan noted that e-bikes would be included in the model guidance update, though scooter policies are challenging due to state-level regulations, which currently prohibit scooter use on roads. Mr. Sisson expressed concern about issues with speed and the safety of shared pathways for motorized and non-motorized users.

Ms. Charuni Patibanda observed that cities like Washington, D.C., have adopted shared bike and e-bike docking stations, exemplifying integrated approaches to managing different types of bikes. Ms. Dunigan agreed, noting that e-bikes offer increased accessibility, especially on hilly terrains or for older riders, and should be factored into plans for bike-sharing systems and infrastructure. She emphasized the importance of wider facilities and proper docking solutions to prevent e-bikes from becoming roadside clutter.

Mr. Sisson also noted challenges with e-bikes' size and battery weight, which complicate storage and transport, particularly on standard bike racks. Ms. Dunigan highlighted the design of facilities like the new Newark train station, which includes a stair gutter to facilitate moving e-bikes upstairs.

Ms. Patibanda mentioned that discussions around physical barriers for protected bike lanes have been common, especially in densely populated areas like Philadelphia. Ms. Dunigan clarified that protected lanes often use key rail types, physical barriers, or raised lanes, noting that narrower streets, like some in Newark, may not accommodate full jersey barriers but could implement raised cycle tracks as seen on Delaware Avenue, where a mix of physical barriers and elevated lanes has been effective.

13. WILMAPCO's FY 2025 Project Updates

Mr. Dave Gula introduced the presentation by outlining several projects from the UPWP approved in May. The five newly accepted projects for FY 2025 include:

- First and Final Mile Freight Network: An update in collaboration with DeIDOT and New Castle County.
- New Castle County Strategic Action Plan: Addressing alignment of the county's comprehensive plan with the regional transportation plan.
- Augustine Cut-Off Corridor Improvements Phase 2: A study focusing on pedestrian and bicycle safety enhancements along Augustine Cut-Off, from Route 202 down to Levering Avenue.
- Rocky Run Pathway Feasibility Study: Evaluating potential bike/pedestrian underpasses across Concord Pike for safer crossings.

- Maryland Route 272 Corridor Plan: A project initiated by Cecil County to assess the corridor's different character areas and improve infrastructure, particularly for heavy and varied traffic volumes.

Mr. Dan Blevins elaborated on updates to the freight network, explaining the need to reassess conflict areas post-COVID. He described how the study will aim to mitigate safety risks like those identified on major routes like Newport's Sears Boulevard, emphasizing coordination between local development and transportation plans to minimize land-use conflicts.

In discussing the Augustine Cut-Off Corridor study, Mr. Gula noted ongoing design work for traffic-calming measures, addressing high-speed issues along the corridor, and adding bike lanes in high-demand areas. A comprehensive public outreach campaign is planned to balance feedback from the local community, especially regarding safety and accessibility improvements.

For the Rocky Run Pathway study, Mr. Gula highlighted the complexity of creating grade-separated bike/pedestrian facilities due to Concord Pike's high traffic density. The study will investigate using existing culverts or alternative routes to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility.

Mr. Bill Swiatek reviewed the Maryland Route 272 Corridor study, emphasizing the importance of local feedback to address the varied traffic demands within the corridor. Public workshops and youth outreach initiatives are planned to help refine a vision and prioritize final recommendations.

Mr. Gula also mentioned several ongoing monitoring projects, including the Claymont Master Plan, Governor Printz Boulevard, Kirkwood Highway, Route 40, and US 202, all aimed at long-term, continuous improvement in alignment with regional planning objectives. He concluded by inviting questions, acknowledging the extensive collaboration among the team to address transportation needs across multiple counties

14. Claymont Area Master Plan

Ms. Heather Dunigan presented an overview of the Claymont Area Master Plan's current progress, providing insights into the next steps and upcoming meetings, including a final advisory committee meeting and public workshop. The map presented at the meeting displayed the study area, which includes both the Claymont Hometown Overlay District, approved by New Castle County, and additional surrounding areas for a broader context.

The project has involved public input sessions, notably a second public workshop where three land use and transportation scenarios were proposed. These scenarios sparked significant discussion, with community members expressing varied reactions to potential changes such as the addition of roundabouts and taller building heights. While certain concepts, like enhanced pedestrian infrastructure, were well-received, others prompted cautious optimism.

Starting with a visioning session last year, the project gathered community feedback on land use, transportation issues, affordable housing, housing diversity, and maintaining the small-town feel. Concerns included the potential impacts of data centers and warehouses in North Claymont, the need for open space, and challenges around new development traffic. Open space availability emerged as a priority; many residents felt the community lacks accessible parks and recreational areas.

The transportation needs and strengths were also highlighted. Claymont's well-connected street network and newly upgraded train station provide robust transit options. However, Philadelphia Pike remains a significant barrier due to its wide lanes and fast-moving traffic, making pedestrian safety a top priority. There have been multiple serious accidents, underscoring the need for safer crossings and a pedestrian-oriented design.

In response to community feedback, the plan's goals and objectives include fostering a walkable town center feel with development nodes, potentially modifying the Hometown Overlay District to align with community preferences, enhancing streetscape design, and improving multimodal connections. The project seeks to emphasize strong community partnerships, open space, and green areas, while also considering the lack of available parcels for park development. Potential solutions include better use of existing green spaces, such as the lawn at the community center, and the potential creation of a pocket park at the former Cumberland Farms site near Governor Printz and Philadelphia Pike.

For the land use aspect, the plan identified underutilized commercial zones suitable for mixed-use development, bringing economic vitality and residential space that align with market research findings from phase one. The Claymont Steak Shop's mixed-use redevelopment serves as a model for similar projects, contributing to the town's economy and character.

Three land use scenarios were presented:

- Scenario 1 - Minor Adjustments - Minimal changes.
- Scenario 2 - Allowing for two to three-story developments at corridor nodes and increasing density while preserving a visually appealing design.
- Scenario 3 - Allowing up to four story mixed used development at two gateway nodes. This approach aligns well with market needs by incorporating a mix of housing types, including redeveloped townhomes.

In transportation, three scenarios were also introduced:

- Scenario 1 - Enhancing crosswalks, bus stops, lighting, and walkability.
- Scenario 2 - Making the road diet permanent, with expansion to include more of Philadelphia Pike.
- Scenario 3 - Implementing a roundabout, encouraging traffic flow and safe turning movements.

Ms. Dunigan added that the roundabout option raised concerns, especially from small business owners worried about customer access. The planning team is now considering roundabouts only at Governor Printz Boulevard, where the design would improve traffic flow and safety. Improvements across all scenarios include enhanced crosswalks, landscaping, curb extensions, consolidated driveways, upgraded lighting, and bus stop amenities. Scenario 2 offers protected and buffered bike lanes, accommodating both vehicular and non-motorized traffic. Performance measures for land use and transportation were applied to assess the efficacy of each scenario in terms of pedestrian access, mixed-use proximity, environmental impacts, and overall alignment with the area's market potential. Ms. Dunigan concluded by addressing important dates regarding this project which include the next Advisory Committee meeting on October 17 and a public workshop on October 28.

Mr. John Sisson raised concerns about pedestrian safety and jaywalking within areas containing two-way center turn lanes, specifically noting challenges around compliance near busy business areas where people often cross mid-block. Ms. Heather Dunigan explained that relocated bus

stops are being positioned near established or proposed crosswalks to improve pedestrian safety, especially for those accessing popular locations like neighborhood businesses. She highlighted efforts to strategically add more inviting crosswalks to encourage safer crossing behaviors.

Mr. Sisson asked if there were additional deterrents planned to prevent jaywalking. Ms. Dunigan acknowledged that while medians and fencing could provide some control, these options are limited due to spatial constraints. However, she emphasized that measures to reduce vehicle speeds, like radar speed cameras, along with improved lighting in darker areas could lessen risks for pedestrians, especially those using transit at night.

Ms. Patibanda added that the redevelopment ordinance is set for discussion and voting by the County Council on September 17th and 24th. This ordinance would facilitate development projects that encourage walkable, mixed-use, and community-serving amenities along the corridor. Ms. Dunigan added that property owners' involvement is essential for redevelopment, noting that many long-time owners are resistant to change. She stressed the importance of illustrating the financial and community benefits to these stakeholders to motivate private redevelopment initiatives.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

15. DeIDOT's Administrative Modification Request Letters

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 3:44 p.m.

ATTACHMENTS: (0)