

The Rocky Run Underpass Feasibility Study is underway

The Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO), DelDOT, and the New Castle County Department of Land Use completed a study to plan for the future of land use development and transportation along the US 202/Concord Pike corridor in 2020. The purpose of the study was to create a master plan for the corridor that would encourage future economic growth along the corridor to be competitive and adaptable to changes in retail business models. A key outcome was a program for the necessary multi-modal improvements to reduce congestion and make the corridor more bicycle and pedestrian friendly while connecting the neighborhoods with retail and recreational assets along the corridor.

One of the concepts considered for this type of improvement is the culvert for the Rocky Run, located just south of

the southern entrance to the Widener University Law School campus. This location was identified as a possible underpass or tunnel location due to the existing culvert, and the proximity to parkland and trail networks on the west side of Concord Pike.

WILMAPCO's Feasibility Study started in September, and we have worked with a Technical Committee made up of local stakeholders and partner agencies to complete some initial analyses. Our project team has worked with the University of Delaware's Water Resources Center to begin the hydraulic analysis of the Rocky Run to determine how much water the existing culvert structure can accommodate during different storm events and what would be the impact of altering the culvert to include a pedestrian and bicycle underpass in place of one of the existing three



culvert cells. The team has also surveyed the existing culvert and the Rocky Run streambed to evaluate the potential flooding scenarios in the upstream area if these changes are implemented.

The initial results have been reviewed by the Technical Committee and will be shared with the public at a workshop on February 10, 2025. The workshop will also feature case studies from other states to illustrate how similar projects have been successfully implemented. The study will then proceed with more detailed analyses and the development of alternative solutions to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety when crossing US 202/Concord Pike in this area. A second public workshop will be held in the spring of 2025 to present the final study results to area residents.

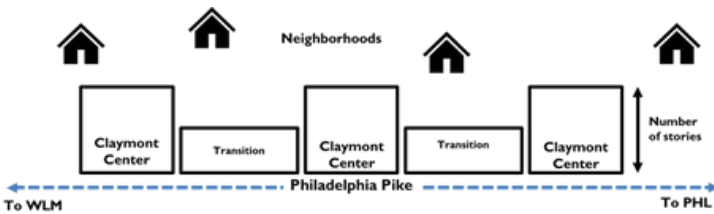
For more information about this study, please visit the project website at: www.wilmapco.org/rockyrun.



Claymont Area Master Plan: Draft Recommendations Unveiled

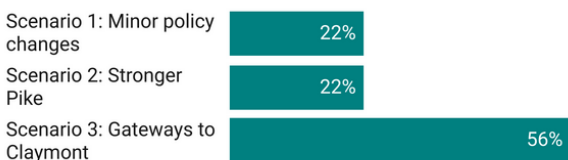
The Claymont Area Master Plan (CAMP), led by WILMAPCO, the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT), New Castle County, and local partners, proposes a series of land use and transportation improvements aimed at transforming Claymont into a more walkable, attractive, and connected community. These draft recommendations were developed based on input gathered from the community during three public meetings. A fourth public meeting is scheduled for this spring to provide additional information on the transportation recommendations.

Land Use Scenario: Gateways to Claymont

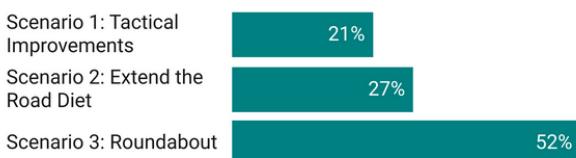


Three land use scenarios were presented for community input: Minor Policy Changes, Stronger Pike, and Gateways to Claymont. The Gateways to Claymont scenario received the most support from the community and aligns best with the goals identified by residents. This scenario focuses on enhancing the entrances to Claymont to create a stronger sense of place. It identifies underutilized areas, or "nodes," particularly commercial spaces that are at risk of becoming blighted and attracting crime. By allowing taller buildings (up to four stories), this scenario aims to create a distinctive appearance and provide incentives for future developments that meet community needs, such as affordable housing, shops, and restaurants.

Which LAND USE scenario do you prefer?



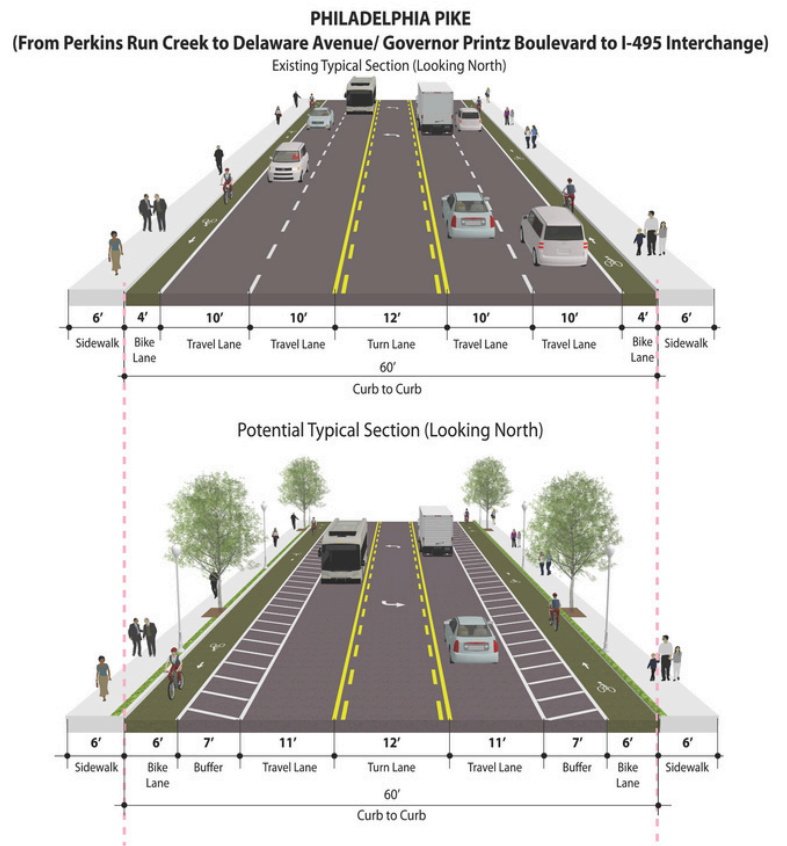
Which TRANSPORTATION scenario do you prefer?



Transportation Scenario: Tactical Improvements with Road Diet and Roundabout

Three transportation scenarios were presented for input: Tactical Complete Street Improvements, Extending the Road Diet, and a Roundabout at the intersection of Philadelphia Pike and Governor Printz Boulevards. Each scenario aims to improve safety and connectivity for all users—whether they are on foot, biking, taking the bus, or driving. Tactical improvements are included in all three scenarios, and the road diet may be featured in the roundabout scenario.

The Roundabout scenario garnered the strongest community support, although it did raise significant concerns among some residents. This option is considered the most effective in achieving the plan's goals, particularly regarding the potential to reduce serious injuries and fatalities in crashes. The "Road Diet and Roundabout Myths and Truths" section on the next page addresses many of the major concerns raised by residents.



Claymont Area Master Plan: Road Diet and Roundabout Myths and Truths

Myth: Road Diet made Philly Pike worse

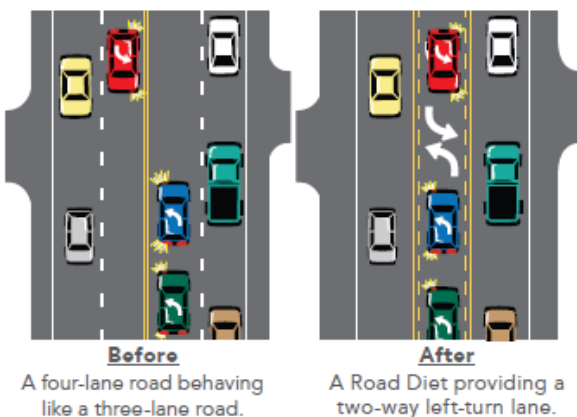
In 2012, DelDOT completed a road diet on Philadelphia Pike between Governor Printz Boulevard and Rolling Road. A before/after study found that crashes decreased and speed limit compliance improved:

- 13% decrease in 3-year crash total
- 2 fatal pedestrian crashes occurred in the transition area south of the road diet
- Speeding still a problem but 40% obey speed limit within road diet area compared with only 15% beyond the area
- Volumes increased by 10% after the road diet while levels of delay and maximum queue lengths showed little change, including better level of service (LOS) at Governor Printz

Myth: Road Diets are unsafe and cause congestion

On streets with daily traffic volumes of 8,000 to 20,000 vehicles, road diets have a proven track record of better performance, efficiency, and safety for all users. This may sound counterintuitive, but in fact:

- 4-lane roadways operate like a three-lane road due left-turning vehicles stopping in travel lane
- Road diets can improve emergency response times with space for cars to pull over
- Road diets reduce crashes, typically by 19-47%
- Road diets improve safety for pedestrians and transit users by reducing crossing distance



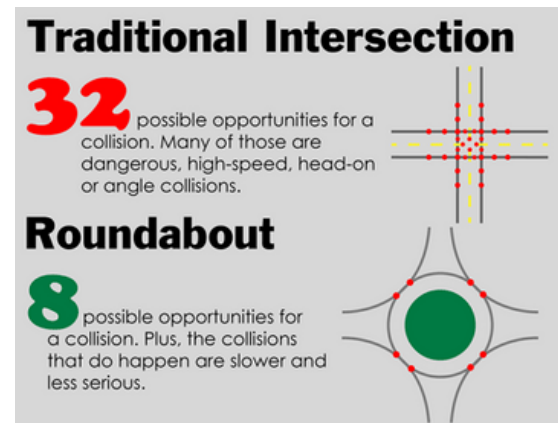
MYTH: "Roundabouts," "traffic circles" and "rotaries" are all essentially the same and State DOTs are removing them

Roundabouts and the New Jersey style circles function very differently. Indeed, the old-style circles are being removed, but the number of roundabouts is growing.

Circles are designed for higher speeds, have larger diameters, and force entering and exiting drivers to weave. Roundabouts are designed for safer speeds and have smaller diameter. Drivers enter by yielding making them more efficient than traffic signals.

MYTH: Roundabouts are dangerous

When used correctly, roundabouts are now considered the safest intersection design. According to the FHWA, converting a signalized intersection to a roundabout reduces fatal and injury crashes by an average of 78%. This is due to slower speeds and fewer possible types of conflicts. When crashes do happen in roundabouts, they are typically minor.



In a national survey, two-thirds of police and fire departments noted that roundabouts made intersections safer, with less congestion and fewer collisions.

MYTH: Roundabouts are difficult to use

Driving a roundabout is as simple as turning right at a yield sign! Large vehicles use the mountable inner circle for more space. Pedestrians benefit by only crossing one lane of traffic at a time.

What's Next: A Path to Implementation

To learn more and sign up for updates, visit www.wilmapco.org/claymont. In addition to the fourth public meeting, an ongoing monitoring committee will be established. Representatives from community groups and civic associations are encouraged to sign up on our website to participate. Once the plan is adopted, transportation projects will go through the project prioritization processes of WILMAPCO and DelDOT, while land use recommendations will be subject to New Castle County processes.

For more information, visit www.wilmapco.org/claymont.

The Maryland Route 272 Corridor Transportation Plan kicks off with a public workshop and survey

The Maryland Route 272 Corridor Transportation Plan is officially underway! This initiative focuses on MD-272, spanning from Joseph Biggs Memorial Highway (MD-274) in the north to Shady Beach Road and Hance Point Road in the south. With expected growth, the area faces increasing transportation challenges that need proactive solutions.

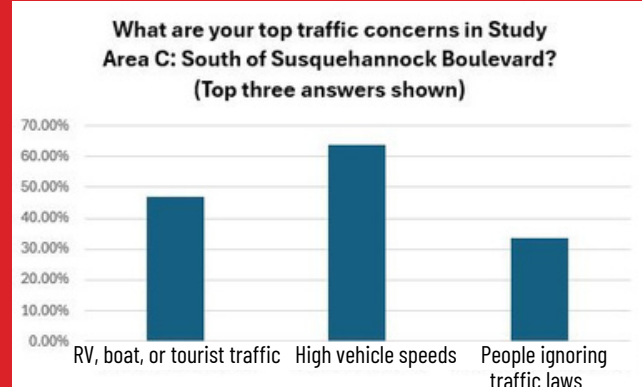
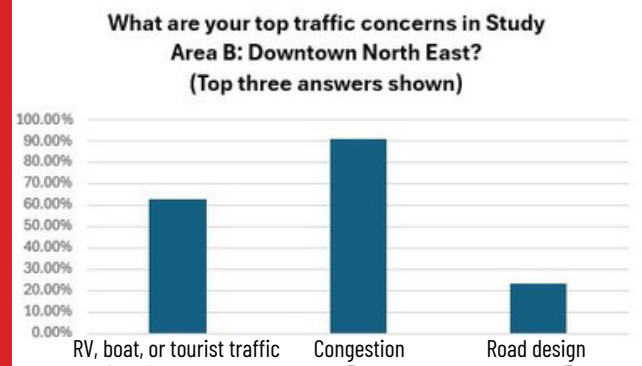
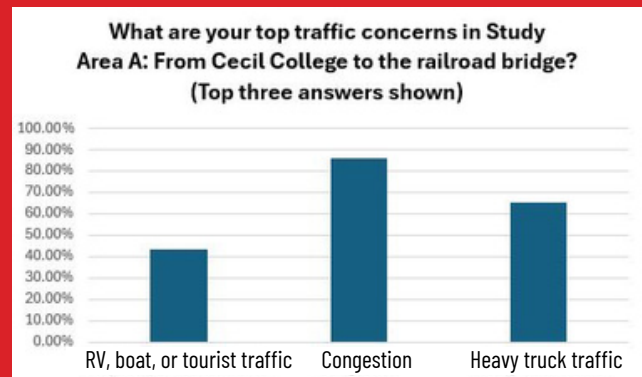
The plan is being developed in coordination with the Town of North East's Comprehensive Plan Update and incorporates insights from the community and a Steering Committee of agency partners and local leaders. It will evaluate current and future transportation and land use conditions, ultimately recommending ways to make travel in the corridor safer, more connected, and accessible for everyone.

The project launched with a public survey and workshop at the North East Library on November 19, 2024. Residents shared their top transportation concerns and suggested improvements. For the section from MD-274 into Downtown North East, over 80% of respondents highlighted congestion as a significant issue. South of Susquehannock Boulevard, high vehicle speeds emerged as the top concern, identified by more than 60% of participants.



WILMAPCO is now analyzing traffic data and public feedback to draft potential solutions to these challenges. These preliminary recommendations will be shared in the spring, giving the public another chance to provide input and shape the final plan.

Don't miss your chance to be part of this important planning process! Visit www.wilmapco.org/272 to sign up for updates. Have questions or comments? Send them to MD272@wallacemontgomery.com.



For more information visit www.wilmapco.org/272.

Monitoring Spotlight - Efforts to implement the Ardens Transportation Plan have begun

In the summer of 2023, the villages of Arden, Ardencroft, and Ardentown—collectively known as "the Ardens"—endorsed Connecting with the Ardens: A Transportation Plan. This community-driven Plan will enhance safety and mobility in and around the villages. The Plan focuses on four key goals:

- Managing vehicular speeds.
- Improving pedestrian crossings.
- Developing a bicycle and pedestrian network.
- Enhancing transit and school bus stops.

Using traffic data, engineering best practices, and continuous feedback from residents, the Plan offers dozens of conceptual recommendations. These range from traffic-calming measures on Harvey and Veale Roads to upgrades to the village pathway networks to additional studies. All involved recognize that ongoing community involvement will be essential for its successful implementation.



The Monitoring Committee, which includes representatives from the villages, state, and county, is helping to kickstart and guide the implementation effort. Over the past year their work included:

- **Prioritizing projects using data:** The committee evaluated the Plan's recommendations based on factors like crash data, speeding, and walking connectivity. Projects near the intersection of Harvey and Veale Roads emerged as top priorities.



- **Reducing speed limits and improving signage:** The Village of Ardencroft, supported by other local governments, businesses, and associations, was granted approval by DelDOT to lower the speed limit on Veale Road from 35 mph to 25 mph. New speed limit signs are expected this winter, along with new signage noting the actual start of the 25 mph speed limit on Harvey Rd in the Ardens, as one enters crossing the CSX railroad tracks. Both these items were Plan recommendations.
- **Conducting a traffic study for Harvey Road at the I-95 Interchange:** Results showed that a single northbound and southbound lane would handle peak traffic effectively, creating space for a wider walking and cycling path linking the Ardens to Claymont called for in the Plan.

The Monitoring Committee has also begun:

- Drafting sketches to better visualize key concepts in the Plan.
- Conducting a more detailed analysis of proposed pedestrian crossings to further concepts.
- Exploring grant opportunities to implement the Plan.

For more information about the Ardens Transportation Plan or the Monitoring Committee's work, visit www.wilmapco.org/ardens.

The Diamond State Rail Line - Looking at passenger rail service to the Delmarva Peninsula

The State of Delaware has received a Federal Rail Administration (FRA) Corridor Identification and Development (CID) Grant to determine the feasibility of extending passenger rail service from Newark (or Wilmington) south through Kent and Sussex Counties in Delaware to Salisbury (or Berlin) in Maryland.

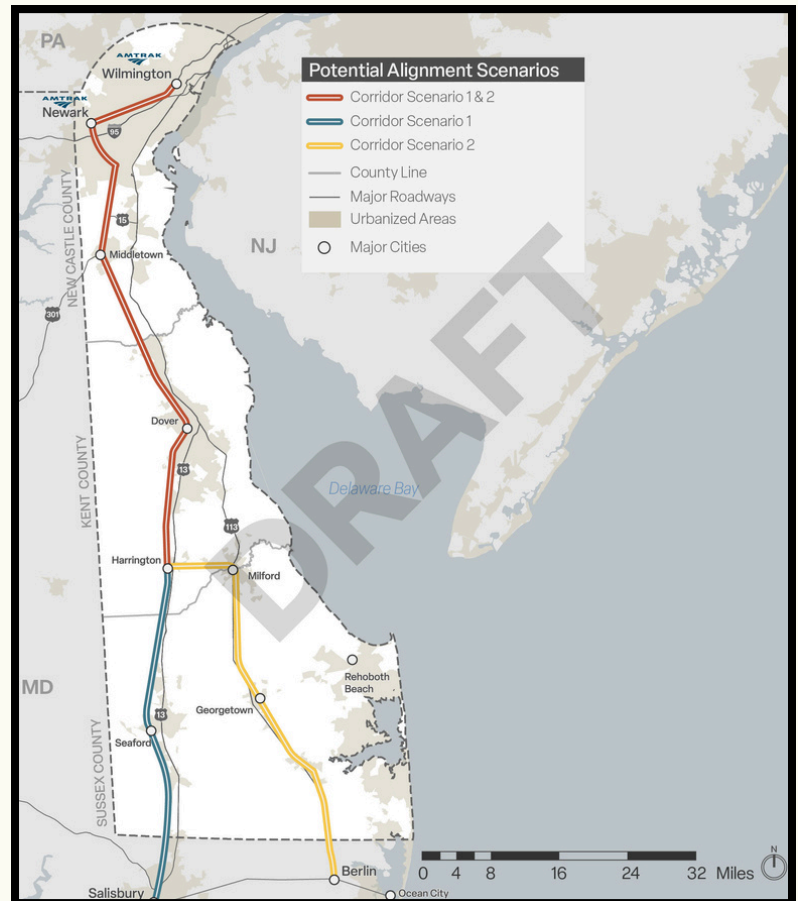
The Delmarva Peninsula first had passenger rail service in 1856, when the Delaware Railroad extended service from New Castle to Seaford. That service was extended south to the Maryland border in 1859, and all the way to Cape Charles, Virginia, in 1884. Connections were made from the main line to Georgetown, Delaware, in 1868, Lewes in 1869 and Rehoboth in 1870 when connections were also made to Eastern Shore towns in Maryland. As the automobile became a more prevalent transportation choice in the 1940s, passenger rail fell out of favor and services were dropped. Passenger rail service to Georgetown ended in 1949, and to any part of the peninsula in 1965.

The Diamond State Line seeks to address the acute shortage of viable transportation options in a corridor shed that lacks both a direct interstate highway connection and the passenger rail option that other Northeast states and regions enjoy. It will also connect rural and environmental justice communities on the Delmarva peninsula, providing enhanced access and mobility to activity centers such as housing, educational institutions, medical facilities, and retail and commercial services. It will study restored passenger rail access for the southern part of the Delmarva Peninsula to and from Delaware's largest cities and provide opportunities for multimodal connections to the communities that swell in numbers during the summer. This project will support DOT's goals of enhancing equity by serving historically underserved communities with inadequate access to life's opportunities.

The population in the Delmarva peninsula has been growing, particularly in Sussex County, with a 21% increase since 2010. Growth within the region is projected to continue. The increasing population compounded with seasonal resort traffic, has led to an increase in traffic congestion. Transportation is a significant source of the state's greenhouse gas emissions – and the proposed Diamond State Line passenger rail service will offer a clean, green, and

efficient transportation mobility option, supporting Delaware's climate goals. The Study will determine the feasibility to begin passenger rail service south from Wilmington or Newark through Dover, to Harrington, and then continue southbound along one of two potential routes to either Salisbury or Berlin, Maryland. Station stops between Wilmington and Salisbury or Berlin are tentatively envisioned at towns and activity centers along the corridors, but specific station locations will be identified in Step 1 once the route alternatives are determined.

DTC/DeIDOT is managing this Step 1 feasibility study which will determine if the Diamond State Line (DSL) Study will continue into the additional phases of the CID Grant, which include service planning, preliminary engineering, and environmental work in Steps 2 and 3. The project team has submitted the necessary documents to the FRA to complete Step 1, which will be reviewed by FRA staff to determine if the Diamond State Line Study will continue to the CID Step 2.



For more information, visit www.wilmapco.org/diamond-state-rail.

Progress on The Newport River Trail

New Castle County is planning a trail that will make it safer and easier for people to bike or walk between the Town of Newport and the City of Wilmington. The Newport River Trail is a proposed two-mile shared-use path designed to connect the Town of Newport at St. James Street to downtown Wilmington via the James A. Markell Trail. This trail aims to provide a safe, low-stress route for pedestrians and bicyclists, addressing the high-stress conditions currently experienced along Maryland Avenue, the main corridor linking Newport to Wilmington.

Discussions about a pedestrian and bicycle connection between Newport and Wilmington began over a decade ago. In 2014, alternatives were explored, and the Newport River Trail was identified as the most direct and impactful route. In 2018, DelDOT's Blueprint for a Bicycle-Friendly Delaware and New Castle County's Connecting Communities Initiative reinforced the importance of this project as a key component of the regional trail network. The trail's alignment crosses sensitive environmental areas, including tidal and non-tidal



wetlands, migratory fish habitats, and the Christina River. It must also navigate around critical infrastructure such as New Castle County's primary sewer line and the Amtrak Northeast Corridor. Coordination with property owners has been crucial. The design includes narrowing Water Street's travel lanes to accommodate a shared-use path, and elevated boardwalk structures to address floodplain challenges. The public had the opportunity to provide input at a public meeting held in May, 2023. While there were concerns about environmental impacts, attendees

expressed support for amenities such as wayfinding signage, interpretive displays, and gateway treatments.

Final design and permitting is expected to be completed in 2025. Once it begins, construction is expected to take eighteen to twenty-four months to complete.

Project updates and recordings of public meetings can be found on the project website at

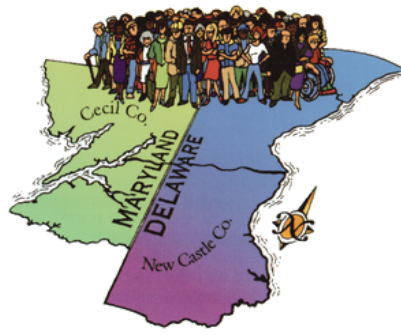
www.newcastlede.gov/2366/Newport-River-Trail.



Map of the Newport River Trail

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Dawn Voss



Transporter Newsletter Winter 2025

WILMAPCO Public Meetings

For the latest information on meeting location or virtual login, please visit www.wilmapco.org
or email Elizabeth Espinal at espinal@wilmapco.org

FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
<i>February 4, 3 p.m.</i> <u>Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group</u>	<i>March 6, 10 a.m.</i> <u>Air Quality Subcommittee</u>	<i>April 1, 3 p.m.</i> <u>Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group</u>
<i>February 20, 10 a.m.</i> <u>Technical Advisory Committee</u>	<i>March 13, 2 p.m.</i> <u>WILMAPCO Council</u>	<i>April 3, 10 a.m.</i> <u>Air Quality Subcommittee</u>
	<i>March 20, 10 a.m.</i> <u>Technical Advisory Committee</u>	<i>April 14, 6 p.m.</i> <u>Public Advisory Committee</u>
		<i>April 17, 10 a.m.</i> <u>Technical Advisory Committee</u>

The Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) is the transportation planning agency for the Cecil County, MD and New Castle County, DE region. As the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), WILMAPCO is responsible for planning, financing, and coordinating the development of the best transportation system for the region. Learn more at www.wilmapco.org.