

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 13, 2025

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, Council Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Members present:

John Sisson, Delaware Transit Corporation Chief Officer

Stephen O'Connor, Cecil County Land Use and Development Planner, representing Cecil County Executive, Adam Streight

David Culver, New Castle County Department of Land Use General Manager, representing County Executive Marcus Henry

Kenneth Branner, Mayor of the Town of Middletown, New Castle County Municipalities Representative

Jeff Niegoga representing Stephanie Johnson, who represents Delaware Secretary of Transportation, Shanté Hastings

Geoff Anderson, Maryland Department of Transportation Chief and Maryland Governor's Appointee

David Edgell, Office of State Planning and Delaware Governor's Appointee

Kelly Williams, City of Wilmington Department of Public Works Commissioner, representing City of Wilmington Mayor John Carney

Grant Handley, representing Kelly A. Benson, Mayor of North East, Cecil County Municipalities Representative

Members absent:

Guests, Observers:

William Goldman, Cecil County

Julianne Hilton, Maryland Department of Environment

Mike Kaszyski, PAC Chair

Shawn Kiernan, Maryland Department of Transportation

Tina Merrill, DNREC

Clare Quinlan, Delaware Department of Transportation

Staff members:

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner

Leonard Bonarek, Senior Planner

Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner

Sharen Elcock, Executive Assistant

Elizabeth Espinal, Administrative Assistant

Dave Gula, Principal Planner

Dawn Stant, Outreach Coordinator

Colleen Stroud, Transportation Planner

Bill Swiatek, Principal Planner

Jacob Thompson, Senior Planner

Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Minutes prepared by Elizabeth Espinal.

3. MINUTES:

ACTION: On motion by Mr. David Culver seconded by Mr. Stephen O'Connor the Council approved the September 11, 2025, Council Meeting Minutes.

Motion passed.

(11-13-25-01)

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

None.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

5. Chairperson's Report:

Mr. John Sisson provided an update on transit matters. He shared that the Fall Service Change was complete on schedule. He also mentioned that the DART Stuff the Bus was a total success this year excited their goal with 22, 168lbs in canned donations. He thanked all participants and agencies for helping spread the word.

Mr. Grant Handley reported that he participated in the kickoff meeting for the Sidewalk Gap Analysis Committee. He further noted that he attended a Cecil-Harford Maryland Municipal League (MML) chapter meeting several weeks later, where he informed the members there about the Sidewalk Gap Analysis and the platform being used to collect gap analysis survey data. He stated that representatives from other municipalities expressed interest in the effort and were eager to review the results once the data collection is complete.

Mr. Stephen O' Connor shared that Cecil County CTP Tour took place on November 5th, he thanked everyone in attendance and shared that it was a well-attended event with plenty of insightful information and feedback from all neighboring towns.

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

- On September 13th, Staff attended a Hispanic Health Fair at the Route 9 Library.
- On September 16th, Staff discussed the Southbridge Truck Bypass Study at the Southbridge Civic Association's meeting.
- On September 21st, Staff participated in Newark Community Day
- On September 23rd, Staff attended the Lower Brandywine Flood Study/12th Street Connector meeting with city staff and the Mayor. Staff also attended the Newport Station AC kickoff meeting
- On September 24th, Staff attended the MDOT-Cecil Kent Pre Tour for FY 2026-2031 CTP.
- On September 25th, Staff attended DelDOT's Highway Safety Summit.
- On September 26th, Staff met on-site of the Jackson Street Road Diet with DelDOT's Chief Engineer, City staff, elected officials and community members to discuss the implemented bike lanes.
- On September 29th, Staff hosted jointly with DelDOT the CTP/TIP Workshop in the UD Atrium with 23 attendees.
- On October 2nd, the Regional Sidewalk Gap Analysis-Advisory Committee met.
- On October 6th, Staff attended the United Neighbors meeting on the 7th Street Bridge community space.

- On October 7th, Staff participated in Delaware's Quarterly Mobile Sources Planning Group meeting
- On October 8th, Staff participated in the UD LARC 350 student project review jury. Staff also hosted the Windy Hills Neighborhood WCW Night 1 with a Zoom presentation.
- On October 9th, Staff participated in the kickoff meeting for DelDOT's Centerville Rd RR Crossing Advisory Committee. Staff also hosted the Windy Hills Neighborhood WCW Night 2 with a Walkabout - Staff participated in Downes Elementary's Walk to School Day.
- On October 15th, Staff held the CPMC Fall MC meeting and a workshop is scheduled for November 19.
- On October 19th, Staff hosted the 2nd Street/Lancaster Ave WCW.
- On October 20th, Staff attended the Newport Train Station Study workshop.
- On October 22nd, the Philadelphia MSA Climate Action Plan's Steering Committee met.
- On October 23rd, Staff met with UD Environmental Science Students to discuss the Diamond State Rail Line CID Study.
- On October 28th, Southbridge Truck Bypass Study Public Workshop took place at the Neighborhood House, with roughly 20 attendees.
- On October 30th, the East Elkton Plan's Monitoring Committee met.
- On November 3rd, the Ardens Monitoring Committee met.
- On November 5th, Staff attended the MDOT's Cecil County Tour meeting.
- On November 12th, Staff presented the East Elkton Transportation Plan and the MD 272 Plan at a Maryland Planning Commissioners training.
- On November 17th, The SNCC LUTP Information Workshop, Odessa Fire Hall 6-8pm
- CXMC MC meeting is scheduled for November 19 at DelDOT's canal district office.
- On December 3rd, Staff will present on incorporating public health considerations in planning at the APA Delaware State Conference.

Ms. Zegeye concluded by sharing that in the October Financial Report about 19% of the budget was expended.

7. Public Advisory Committee (PAC) Report:

Mr. Mike Kaszyski reported that the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) held its regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, October 20, 2025. Two members attended in person, while five members and two guests participated virtually. The sole action item was the approval of the August meeting minutes, which the Committee approved.

Ms. Tigist Zegeye delivered the Executive Director's report, which included a summary of the September 11 Council meeting. The meeting featured three presentations. The first provided an update on WILMAPCO's FY 2026 projects. Mr. Dan Blevins presented on the Delaware Statewide Freight Plan Update and the Logistics Center Impact Study for New Castle and Cecil Counties. Mr. Leonard Bonarek discussed the Sidewalk Gap Analysis for New Castle and Cecil Counties. Mr. Dave Gula presented the Southern New Castle County Growth Area Land Use and Transportation Plan and reviewed ongoing monitoring efforts. Committee members discussed Transportation Improvement Districts (TIDs) and the availability of developable land in southern New Castle County and Cecil County.

The next PAC meeting is scheduled for December 18, 2025.

8. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Report:

Mr. Dave Gula reported that the September 18, 2025, Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting was held via Zoom. No action items were presented. The meeting included an update from the Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group and three presentations: the Strategies for State Policies and Spending Update, the DART 2025 Fall Service Change, and the New Castle City Walkable Community Workshop.

Mr. Gula further reported that the October 16, 2025, TAC meeting was held in person at Lums Pond following WILMAPCO's annual picnic. The Committee received an update from the October 7 meeting of the Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group, recommended endorsement of the 2025 Mobility Opportunities Plan, and reviewed four presentations: the Newport Station NEPA Study, the Delaware Rail Plan, the Regional Sidewalk Gap Analysis, and the Regional Progress Report.

ACTION ITEMS:

9. To Endorse the Draft 2025 Mobility Opportunity Plan.

Mr. Bill Swiatek presented the Mobility Opportunities Plan (MOP), noting that it identifies strategies to improve mobility and economic opportunity in the region and that its analysis revealed significant transportation disparities related to mobility, safety, and community engagement in historically impacted communities. He explained that the MOP was developed through a collaborative working group that included WILMAPCO staff and members of the PAC, the University of Delaware, state and federal transportation agencies, state and county governments, school districts, residents, and community-based organizations. He thanked staff and partner agencies for their contributions, with particular recognition of Mr. Jake Thompson for leading much of the technical analysis, as well as Ms. Stant for the outreach efforts that informed the report's findings.

Mr. Swiatek further stated that the MOP meets and exceeds federal requirements under the Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, reflects WILMAPCO's commitment to engaging underserved communities in transportation planning, updates the 2019 transportation plan, and aligns with current federal guidance. He noted that the MOP was presented to the Council at its August meeting without action, and that the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) subsequently recommended Council endorsement at its October meeting.

Mr. John Sisson asked whether the survey questions and responses reflected real-world conditions, particularly regarding access to transportation and services. Mr. Swiatek responded that survey results indicated approximately 75 percent of respondents felt their travel needs were being met, and that the MOP is intended to focus attention on the remaining population whose needs are not adequately addressed in order to improve their mobility options.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. David Culver, seconded by Mr. Stephen O'Connor, the Council approved endorsement of the draft 2025 Mobility Opportunity Plan.

Motion passed.

(11-13-25-02)

PRESENTATIONS:

10. Climate Action Plan for Philadelphia MSA

Mr. Swiatek provided an update on the Regional Climate Action Plan, funded by the federal Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG). The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), with support from WILMAPCO, completed the Priority Climate Action Plan in March 2024. Although the required comprehensive climate plan was paused during an

administrative transition, the EPA has reinstated funding, directing its completion by the end of the current year, with a follow-up status report due in 2027.

The plan covers the entire 12-county Philadelphia metropolitan statistical area (PA, NJ, DE, MD) and is led by the DVRPC, supported by WILMAPCO and other regional agencies. Required elements include greenhouse gas inventories, reduction strategies, community benefits analysis, and workforce considerations across eight major sectors, such as transportation, buildings, and industry.

Key transportation strategies focus on vehicle electrification, fleet decarbonization, transit expansion, and active transportation. With these efforts in place, modeling projects an 82% reduction in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 2050 compared to 2005 levels, primarily due to electrification and grid decarbonization. This projection falls short of the net-zero goal in this region, though the goal could be achieved and surpassed elsewhere in the nation.

The plan's development included extensive public engagement, comprising a multi-state steering committee, stakeholder outreach, surveys, and three resident focus groups (including one in Wilmington). Priorities identified by participants included clean air/water, accountability for polluters, improved transit access, and tree preservation.

The comprehensive plan will be finalized this month and submitted to EPA; Council endorsement is not required nor will be sought.

To view this presentation in its entirety please [click here](#). [09m.32s.]

Mr. Stephen O'Connor asked about the future of the plan, noting that it was funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and inquiring how potential changes in federal policy might affect its implementation.

Mr. Bill Swiatek responded that the plan is intended to serve as a long-range blueprint that communities and municipalities can use to support local initiatives, regardless of future federal involvement. He noted that while the federal outlook is uncertain, the plan can still be applied at the local and regional level, and its broader adoption may be revisited in the future.

Ms. Tigist Zegeye added that similar funding also supports state-level efforts and that both Delaware and Maryland have climate action plans, emphasizing the importance of continuing the work at this stage.

Mr. John Sisson commented that reducing carbon emissions cannot rely on transportation solutions alone and asked how the plan addresses transportation-related emissions. Mr. Swiatek replied that the greatest emissions reductions are expected to come from zero-emission vehicles but emphasized that vehicle technology alone is insufficient and must be complemented by land use and transportation strategies that support more localized, connected communities.

Mr. Grant Handley asked about WILMAPCO's collaboration with other metropolitan planning organizations, citing the partnership with the Salisbury-Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization as an example. Ms. Zegeye responded that WILMAPCO regularly coordinates with neighboring MPOs, particularly within the Philadelphia region, and maintains ongoing coordination and reporting relationships with surrounding agencies.

11. WILMAPCO FY 2026 UPWP Project Updates

Mr. Dave Gula provided an overview of the projects included in the upcoming FY 2026 UPWP. He summarized each effort and noted which partner agencies submitted the projects. Additionally, he stated that the Council approved the UPWP on May 1st.

Mr. Dan Blevins briefed the committee on the Delaware Statewide Freight Plan Update, required every four years and scheduled for completion by late 2026. The update will align with federal emphasis areas and include topics such as truck parking and freight flows, with consultant support from Whitman.

Mr. Blevins also summarized the Intersection Control Evaluations and Alternatives Screening for New Castle County, explaining that these studies focused on corridors such as US 40 and Kirkwood Highway and are required by FHWA when considering changes to intersection control or geometry. These evaluations will help identify and compare alternatives that improve safety and operations.

Mr. Blevins then described the Logistics and Fulfillment Center Transportation and Land Use Impact Study, a joint effort between New Castle and Cecil counties. The study will assess transportation impacts, evaluate warehousing site performance, and develop best-practice guidelines for future development. Wallace Montgomery and CPCS are the selected consultants.

Mr. Gula briefly noted that the Sidewalk Gap Analysis for New Castle and Cecil Counties is a collaborative effort led by Ms. Dunigan and Mr. Bonarek. He stated that a more detailed presentation would be provided later in the meeting. The project is currently in the data collection and preliminary gap review phase, with a QR code available for outreach distribution, and this project is expected to continue through mid-2026.

Mr. Gula then summarized the Southern New Castle County Growth Area Land Use and Transportation Plan, an update to a recent study with a new focus on the county's TID area. The study includes land use and transportation modeling, market assessment, and public engagement, beginning with a workshop on November 17. JMT has been selected as the consultant for this 18-month effort.

Mr. Gula concluded with an overview of WILMAPCO's ongoing corridor and plan monitoring responsibilities, including support for Churchmans Crossing, Governor Printz Boulevard, Kirkwood Highway, US 202, Route 40, Claymont, and Maryland 272.

To view the presentation in its entirety, [click here](#) [06m. 36s.]

Mr. Grant Handley asked how many project requests are typically received each year and how decisions are made to prioritize them.

Ms. Tigist Zegeye responded that the number of requests varies annually. Submissions are reviewed to ensure they support implementation of the long-range plan. Staff develop a scoring framework and provide recommendations, after which the Council reviews submissions and provides input. The FY 2026 UPWP project solicitation is expected to be released in January, with submissions due by the end of February.

Mr. John Sisson asked whether recent planning efforts by DART and DelDOT, such as the Route 9 plan, fall under WILMAPCO's monitoring activities.

Mr. Dave Gula explained that such efforts are typically incorporated into WILMAPCO's plan monitoring framework when applicable and aligned with existing studies. He noted that Route 9 is one of the monitoring activities, which helps track progress and advance related subprojects.

Ms. Zegeye added that monitoring has become more structured over time and is supported by improved tracking systems.

Mr. Gula further noted that formalized monitoring helps ensure adequate funding, supports coordination, and advances projects incrementally while larger improvements are pending.

Mr. Dan Blevins added that monitoring can also support smaller, interim improvements while larger-scale projects are being developed.

12. Walkable Community Workshops Update

Ms. Heather Dunigan presented an overview of WILMAPCO's Walkable Community Workshops (WCW) Program, noting that the program has been conducted for approximately 20 years as a staff-led effort to help communities initiate discussions on improving pedestrian infrastructure. She explained that the workshops are designed to equip residents with practical tools to understand walkability concepts, identify local challenges, and explore feasible solutions. Each workshop includes an educational presentation followed by guided walking audits, in-field observations, and the collection of participant feedback, which is later compiled into interactive maps and summary reports.

Ms. Dunigan reported that the City of New Castle hosted the first workshop of the year in August at the New Castle Public Library, with more than 20 participants divided into two walking groups covering northern and southern areas of the city. Key issues identified included traffic speed concerns, cut-through traffic, wide and offset intersections, inconsistent or faded crosswalks, and mixed sidewalk conditions. Particular attention was given to the city's historic brick sidewalks, which present both preservation considerations and maintenance challenges due to tree root damage. Participants suggested traffic-calming measures, curb extensions, gateway treatments, and improved sidewalk maintenance. A draft report has been presented to City Council and will be posted on WILMAPCO's website, and the City has requested an additional workshop in 2026 for southwest New Castle.

Mr. Dave Gula continued the presentation by summarizing two additional 2025 workshops held in Windy Hills (Newark) and along 2nd Street and Lancaster Avenue in Wilmington. He noted that the Windy Hills workshop piloted a hybrid format, with a virtual presentation followed by an in-person walk audit, which improved flexibility and participation. The Wilmington workshop focused on high-crash corridors and documented issues such as excessive vehicle speeds, high traffic volumes, limited sightlines at intersections, and parking conflicts near crosswalks. Participants discussed a range of lower-cost safety improvements, including daylighting, flex-post curb extensions, and potential intersection reconfigurations.

Mr. Gula concluded that draft reports for these workshops are currently in progress and will be shared with the respective communities for review. While funding constraints remain a challenge, particularly given current pauses in some state and federal programs, the workshop reports provide communities with actionable plans that can support grant applications, guide prioritization, and advance cost-effective pedestrian safety improvements at the neighborhood level.

To view this presentation in its entirety please [click here](#). [13m.31s.].

Mr. John Sisson asked whether previous modifications to lighting and intersection treatments along Lancaster Avenue had contributed to increased crashes. Mr. Dave Gula responded that higher crash rates are largely attributable to blocked sightlines at intersections, which limit visibility for drivers on side streets. He noted that the City of Wilmington has discussed intersection reconfigurations and that daylighting treatments could improve safety, citing successful applications in other jurisdictions. He added that the workshop reports are intended to help communities identify and advance such solutions.

Mr. Sisson also inquired about the potential use of AI-based cameras to monitor pedestrian crossings and collect data. Mr. Gula stated that existing studies, including the Wilmington Pedestrian Crash Study, already provide detailed temporal and location-based data on pedestrian activity and crashes. He emphasized that reducing vehicle speeds remains critical to improving pedestrian safety.

Ms. Heather Dunigan added that many effective safety improvements such as signage, pavement striping, signal timing adjustments, and other low-cost measures can be implemented relatively quickly and should be prioritized where feasible. She also referenced a previous pilot project that reduced the roadway to one travel lane and noted that the City of Wilmington is considering revisiting similar treatments, with coordination required to address bus stop operations.

Mr. Sisson commented on the challenges of balancing bus stops, parking, and enforcement. Mr. Gula shared examples of speed management efforts near community facilities, noting that physical design treatments have been effective in reducing speeds and improving safety.

In response to a question from Mr. Geoff Anderson, Mr. Gula clarified that the street in question is not being converted to two-way operation. Ms. Williams concluded by noting that the City of Wilmington is open to exploring the use of AI cameras and emphasized that relatively modest, low-cost interventions identified through the workshops can yield meaningful safety benefits for communities.

13. Regional Sidewalk Gap Analysis

Ms. Heather Dunigan introduced a staff-proposed project within the current UPWP to create a systematic approach for identifying and addressing sidewalk needs across the region. The project was driven by constant requests from elected officials, towns, residents, and civic associations for small, specific sidewalk improvements needed for accessing transit, supermarkets, and other key destinations.

The study aims to provide a systematic approach for managing numerous small-scale projects, focusing on the entire region with an emphasis on Center for Community Transportation Investment areas.

The project features an extensive study team and advisory structures including a collaboration between both counties, both State Departments of Transportation (DelDOT and MDOT), and both transit agencies (Cecil County Transit and DART First State). The Advisory Committee is intentionally large to ensure broad outreach, including representation from all towns, both counties, ADA staff from the DOTs, school district transportation coordinators, and umbrella civic associations. The committee members are expected to act as spokespeople to disseminate information about the project. Renaissance Planning and RK&K were retained for the project. RK&K will assist specifically with Phase Two. Ecopia was selected as the data partner, marking the agency's first use of AI-generated data for this type of analysis.

The project is divided into two phases and is anticipated to take approximately one year in total.

- **Phase One:** This phase focuses on a high-level, region-wide assessment of sidewalk needs. Key deliverables include the initial AI-generated sidewalk inventory and a regional top-tier assessment of gaps. An initial product is expected by Winter for immediate use by partner agencies.
- **Phase Two:** This phase will involve on-the-ground assessment to back-check the AI data, investigate areas highlighted through crowdsourcing outreach, and develop specific recommendations and planning-level cost estimates.

Ms. Dunigan added that Task I, data collection, is complete. The team merged with a variety of data sources including:

1. Locations with high pedestrian activity drivers, such as bus stop usage, commercial properties, community centers, schools, areas with high pedestrian crash rates, and overall population/employment density.
2. AI technology significantly expedited the initial identification of sidewalk presence, generating data in two weeks a task that would have taken human staff months to complete.
3. Technology, including Replica data and streetlight information, is being utilized to analyze actual travel patterns and overall mobility.

The AI inventory uses recent near-map imagery (from the late winter to avoid tree cover issues) and can provide details down to sidewalk width and different crosswalk types. It was noted that while Ecopia is an AI technology partner which is still evolving and can be confused by sidewalk-like structures or by the distinction between public and private property.

A GIS layer of the AI inventory will be available upon request by winter, and an interactive dashboard is currently available for stakeholders to examine the data.

The goal is to focus on filling the worst-of-the-worst existing gaps and those that provide the greatest benefit to the traveling population.

This will involve:

- Assessing the quality and importance of gaps during Phase Two.
- Analyzing land use factors and incorporating big data and outreach results.
- Coordinating with DelDOT's comprehensive pedestrian Level of Comfort analysis to leverage parallel efforts.

A broad crowdsourcing outreach push is underway using flyers and a project website with an interactive map. Residents are encouraged to mark crossing challenges, missing sidewalks, safety concerns, and maintenance issues.

To view this presentation in its entirety please [click here](#). [09m.14s.].

Mr. John Sisson noted challenges in tracking future land use changes and development projects when prioritizing transportation investments, citing examples where transit facilities were

implemented without awareness of nearby planned development. He emphasized the difficulty of maintaining long-term institutional knowledge and coordinating data across agencies.

Ms. Heather Dunigan responded that this challenge was one reason for exploring AI-based and replicable analytical processes, which can help systematically track conditions and changes across the region at a reasonable cost.

Mr. Sisson added that the development of a single, shared database would improve coordination, though he acknowledged the difficulty of achieving consistency given changing standards and programs over time.

Ms. Dunigan explained that while some statewide sidewalk inventories exist, such as previous efforts in Maryland, they are often limited by local jurisdiction capacity and the resource-intensive nature of GIS-based sidewalk mapping. She noted that the current effort is intended to build upon those models.

Mr. Stephen O'Connor commented that periodic data collection methods, such as LiDAR, are already used for other purposes but that resource and timing constraints limit more detailed distinctions in sidewalk data.

Ms. Dunigan concluded that the goal is to establish a repeatable process that can be updated periodically, potentially aligned with long-range plan updates rather than conducted annually.

Mr. Shawn Kiernan asked about the source of trip density data shown in the presentation. Ms. Dunigan explained that the data are provided by Replica, which uses a combination of land use information, anonymized mobile device data, traffic counts, and other sources to model trip demand, particularly for pedestrian-oriented areas. She added that the methodology would be further documented in the final report.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

14. DelDOT's and MDOT's Administrative Modification Request Letters

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 3:59 p.m.

ATTACHMENTS: (0)