

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
MARCH 12, 2026**

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 Executive 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  
Dan Janousek, Maryland Department of Transportation Regional Planner, representing Geoff Anderson Chief, and Maryland Governor's Appointee  
David Edgell, Office of State Planning and Delaware Governor's Appointee  
Grant Handley, representing Kelly A. Benson, Mayor of North East, Cecil County Municipalities Representative  
Stephanie Johnson, Delaware Department of Transportation, representing Delaware Secretary of Transportation, Shanté Hastings  
Kelly Williams, City of Wilmington Department of Public Works Commissioner, representing City of Wilmington Mayor John Carney

**Members absent:**

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

**Guests, Observers:**

Alex Brun, Maryland State Highway Administration  
Gena Eleias, Delaware Department of Transportation  
William Goldman, Cecil County  
Austin Gray, Delaware Department of Transportation  
Sibtay Haider, Jacobs  
Mike Kaszyski, Public Advisory Committee  
Sierra Martinez, DelDOT Peer Program  
Rachel McGuire, Jacobs  
Tina Merrill, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Control  
Clare Quinlan, Delaware Department of Transportation  
Cameron Turner, DTC Peer Program  
Bill Williamson, Delaware Transit Corporation  
Gavin Yocum, Public

**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, Regional 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. David Edgell the Council approved the January 15, 2026, Council Meeting Minutes.

**Motion passed.**

**(03-12-26-01)**

### **4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:**

None.

### **COUNCIL MEMBERS' AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

#### **5. Chairperson's Report:**

Mr. John Sisson reported that the DART May service changes are scheduled to take effect on May 18. These updates include minor revisions within New Castle County, specifically: Routes 10 and 15; service to Reads Way will be discontinued after 6:00 PM. Various other routes will undergo minor timing adjustments. Overall, these modifications are characterized as minor service changes.

Mr. Sisson also announced the members of the Nominating Committee for the 2026-2027 officers. The committee consists of: John Sisson, Geoff Anderson, and Dave Edgell. Individuals interested in officer positions are invited to submit their names to the committee for consideration.

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

- The Diamond State Rail partners met on January 16. The DSRL team is scheduled to meet with the FRA on March 19 to provide updates on the CID Step 2A grant phase.
- Regarding the Southbridge Truck Bypass Study, the Advisory Committee met on January 27, followed by a management committee meeting on February 3. A Public Workshop, originally set for February 24, was rescheduled and held on March 2 due to severe weather.
- The Regional Sidewalk Gap Analysis Advisory Committee convened on January 29. Staff will host a charrette for the Sidewalk Gap Study in Elkton on March 17. Additional charrettes are scheduled for N. Dupont Road on April 6 and Dupont Highway on April 13.
- The SNCC-LUTP partners have maintained monthly meetings. An advisory committee meeting is slated for March 23, with a secondary public workshop to follow on April 27.
- Staff participated in a Clean Corridor Coalition (C3) Community Advisory Group meeting on February 4. Additionally, CPMC partners met on February 5 to discuss the Transit Accessibility spotlight topic for Concord Pike. On March 10, the team held a partners meeting followed by an "Office Hour" for committee members.

- Staff presented the Clubhouse Crossing project from the Ardens Transportation Plan at an Ardentown Assembly meeting on February 9. On February 19, the Ardens Monitoring Committee held a joint meeting with Claymont civic leaders to discuss the Harvey Road Lane Reduction over I-95 concept. The Monitoring Committee will meet again on April 6.
- Community engagement continued at Downes Elementary School, where staff participated in Family Night on February 19. Staff will also support the school's Safety Stations on March 26 and 27.
- The KMIC partners met on February 12, with a subsequent monitoring and implementation committee meeting scheduled for March 16.
- Staff attended the DE State Rail Plan update advisory committee meeting on March 2 and will attend DeIDOT's State Rail Plan MPO update on April 7.
- Staff also attended the DeIDOT Route 9 Redefined Public Workshop on March 10.
- On March 18th, Wilmington Initiatives and the CPMC Spring meeting will take place.
- On March 19th, the Rt. 9 Monitoring Committee will meet (with a follow-up on April 16).
- On March 25th, the MD-272 Monitoring Committee will meet.
- On March 26th, staff will attend the 12th Street Bike Lane workshop, and the East Elkton Monitoring Committee meeting.
- On April 15th, the CXMC Spring meeting will be held.
- On April 20th, staff will host a TIP Public Workshop with DeIDOT staff.
- On April 30th, a youth outreach pop-up for the East Elkton Paths Plan will be held at Elkton High School.
- Staff will present the Mobility Opportunities Plan at the National APA Conference on April 30th.
- Lastly, the 2025 Single Audit Report has been completed and officially filed. According to the February financial report, approximately 60% of the budget has been expended, with four months remaining in the fiscal year.

## **7. Public Advisory Committee (PAC) Report:**

Mr. Mike Kaszyski reported that the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) held its regular meeting on February 9, 2026. Mr. Dunn served as chair in his absence. The meeting did not reach a quorum, with two members attending in person, three attending virtually, and four guests present.

Director Tigist Zegeye provided the Executive Director's Report, including a summary of the January 15 Council meeting, updates on ongoing studies, and an overview of upcoming public engagement activities and events.

Two presentations were delivered. Mr. Bill Swiatek presented the Regional Progress Report, explaining that the report tracks the progress of actions identified in the Regional Transportation Plan. He noted that the percentage of actions showing good progress is higher than in the 2022 and 2018 updates. He also reviewed actions categorized as showing poor, partial, and good progress, and outlined the next steps for report adoption. PAC members discussed the definition of greenways, the scope of subregional studies, the classifications of core communities and developing areas, and transit costs and the role of federal subsidies.

Mr. Bill Williamson of the Delaware Transit Corporation presented the Route 9 Transit Service Plan, summarizing the public outreach process, key recommendations, and the prioritization

process for implementing improvements. Discussion included how the proposed projects may benefit adjacent neighborhoods, how the study relates to DART Reimagined, and opportunities for public participation in prioritization.

In other business, Ms. Dawn Stant invited PAC members to participate in a subcommittee for the upcoming update of the Public Participation Plan. The next PAC meeting is scheduled for April 13.

#### **8. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Report:**

Mr. Dave Gula reported that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) held one meeting at the previous Council meeting, as the January TAC meeting occurred on the morning of the last Council meeting. The February TAC meeting was held on February 19 and achieved a quorum, with strong attendance continuing over the past several meetings.

The TAC considered one action item, the 2026 Regional Progress Report, and recommended its endorsement. Presentation items included the Route 9 Service Plan presented by Mr. Bill Williamson, an update on the Regional Sidewalk Gap Analysis outcomes presented by Ms. Heather Dunigan, and a Walkable Community Workshop Data Report presented by Mr. Bonarek which summarized findings from the Walkable Community Workshops.

Mr. Gula noted that the next TAC meeting is scheduled for March 19.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

#### **9. To release the Draft FY 2027-2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Public Comment.**

Mr. Jake Thompson reported that the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a federally required document that lists transportation projects expected to receive funding within the region over the next four fiscal years and is updated every two years. The draft FY27–30 TIP includes 33 Delaware statewide projects, 45 projects in New Castle County, and 14 projects in Cecil County. Of the total funding, 79% is allocated to Delaware statewide projects, 14% to New Castle County projects, and 7% to Cecil County projects.

By mode, 56% of funding supports multimodal projects, 3% bicycle and pedestrian projects, 8% transit projects, and 12% roadway projects. By category, 54% of funding is dedicated to preserving the existing transportation system, 24% to system management and operational improvements, and 5% to system expansion. Compared with the adopted FY25–28 TIP, the draft FY27–30 TIP includes no new projects and reflects \$318 million less in overall funding, although funding for Cecil County is \$41 million higher.

Mr. Thompson stated that staff recommends Council endorse the release of the draft FY27–30 TIP for public comment. The public comment period will run from March 19 through April 30, with presentations scheduled for the PAC on April 13 and the Council on April 16. A public workshop will be held on April 20 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the University of Delaware Health Sciences Complex Atrium, and Council action on the TIP is scheduled for May 7.

Mr. Grant Handley, Town Administrator for the Town of North East, asked about Item 43 shown on the project map, which appeared as a looping feature. Ms. Heather Dunigan clarified that the item represents the Mid-County Transit Center in Cecil County. Mr. O'Connor added that it appears as a loop because the project includes a looped transit circulation design on Route MD-222.

**ACTION:** On a motion by Mr. David Culver, seconded by Mr. Grant Handley, the Council approved the release of the Draft FY 2027-2030 TIP for Public Comment.

**Motion passed.**

**(03-12-26-02)**

### **10. To approve the 2026 Regional Progress Report**

Mr. Bill Swiatek explained that the Regional Progress Report evaluates implementation of policy actions in the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), with each action assessed using both quantitative and qualitative performance measures identified in the plan. Progress is categorized using a “traffic light” system: red indicates little to no progress, yellow indicates partial or mixed progress, and green indicates the action is on track.

Overall, the report indicates that 63% of actions received green ratings, 22% received yellow ratings, and 16% received red ratings, reflecting a modest improvement from prior reporting cycles. Noted areas of success include air quality compliance, subregional planning and implementation, congestion mitigation, and advancement of active transportation initiatives. Areas identified for further improvement include roadway safety, limiting expansion in rural and environmentally sensitive areas, increasing public transit funding, and promoting growth within designated Center Transportation Investment Areas (TIAs).

Mr. Swiatek emphasized that the report incorporates more than 100 data indicators with an increase from previous years and reflects collaboration among staff and partner agencies, including state departments of transportation and transit providers. He acknowledged staff contributions, particularly those of Jake Thompson and Colleen Stroud, in compiling and analyzing the data.

The report was available for public comment from February 26 to March 11, during which no comments were received. The Technical Advisory Committee recommended Council approval at its February 19 meeting, while the Public Advisory Committee received a presentation but did not take action. Staff recommends Council approval of the 2026 Regional Progress Report.

**ACTION:** On a motion by Mr. Stephen O’Connor, seconded by Mr. David Culver, the Council approved the 2026 Regional Progress Report.

**Motion passed.**

**(03-12-26-03)**

### **PRESENTATIONS:**

#### **11. FY 2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).**

Ms. Tigist Zegeye presented the draft FY2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), totaling approximately \$6.3 million in funding from federal, state, and local partners in Delaware and Maryland. She summarized five project submissions from member agencies and staff recommendations, including studies for the SR 7 (Limestone Road) corridor, the Northern New Castle County Bicycle and Pedestrian Network, and concept planning for pedestrian improvements in Bellefonte and along Susquehanna River Road in Port Deposit.

Ms. Zegeye explained that the Maryland 222 Corridor Study submitted by Cecil County will not be included in the UPWP because the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) has agreed to lead and fund the effort in coordination with Cecil County and WILMAPCO. Ms. Zegeye concluded by outlining the project schedule. The proposed UPWP was presented to the Council the previous

week, and a 30-day public comment period will run from March 31 through May 1. The PAC is expected to review the document in April, with anticipated Council adoption on May 7, followed by submission to DelDOT, MDOT, FHWA, and FTA for final approval prior to the start of the fiscal year on July 1.

**To view this presentation in its entirety please [click here](#). [10m.06s.].**

Mr. John Sisson requested clarification regarding the public comment period for the UPWP. Ms. Tigist Zegeye responded that the comment period runs from March 31 through May 1.

Mr. David Culver expressed New Castle County's support for the inclusion of its projects and noted the potential for expanded coordination with Cecil County, particularly related to bicycle planning and connected trail studies. He emphasized the importance of advancing cross-jurisdictional trail connections, including links to existing and planned facilities in northeastern Maryland, and highlighted long-term opportunities to connect regional trail systems along the Susquehanna River. Mr. Sisson remarked on the challenges of crossing state lines by bicycle in a lighthearted manner.

Mr. Stephen O'Connor acknowledged the strong advocacy for trail development within the region, referencing ongoing stakeholder engagement and support from regional partners, including Anne Canby and Grant Handley.

Mr. Culver further noted that enhancing trail connectivity could help attract visitors to both New Castle and Cecil Counties, contributing to local economic activity. He also expressed support for continued coordination on the Churchmans Crossing studies.

## **12. Route 9 Service Plan.**

Mr. Bill Williamson presented a comprehensive overview of the Route 9 Corridor Transit Improvement Plan, which focuses on enhancing transit service and infrastructure along New Castle Avenue. This plan follows a final report that identified key investment needs and was developed in coordination with the Route 9 RAISE grant project. The presentation detailed the results of a public outreach campaign conducted in the spring of 2025, which gathered feedback from 70 participants, including fixed-route riders, paratransit users, and non-riders. Survey results highlighted that current barriers to transit use include infrequent service, inconvenient schedules, and bus stops located too far from key destinations.

To address these concerns, the report proposes several service realignments that will undergo future public hearings. Key recommendations include realigning Route 8 to better serve Terminal Avenue and the Port of Wilmington with new Sunday service and adjusting the schedules of Routes 15 and 51 to provide more consistent timing between buses. Additionally, the plan suggests introducing DART Connect, a curb-to-curb microtransit service. This on-demand shuttle would replace traditional fixed-route service in lower-ridership areas like the Dunleith community, providing more flexible access to industrial zones such as the FedEx and recycling plants.

Infrastructure improvements are a major component of the plan, centered on a new five-tier classification system for bus stops. The goal is to ensure all stops are ADA-accessible, moving away from "Tier 5" stops (simple signposts) toward higher-amenity locations. High-ridership areas such as the Route 9 Library and the Henrietta Johnson Medical Center are slated for "Super Stops," which feature large shelters, real-time passenger information, and bike racks. Supporting these transit hubs, the plan recommends pedestrian safety enhancements like curb

extensions to shorten crossing distances and new sidewalk installations along Rogers Road and Lambson Lane.

The presentation concluded with a phased implementation strategy that prioritizes improvements based on urgency and ridership. Priority 1 projects, focusing on immediate ADA compliance and high impact stop upgrades, are recommended for early construction. Lower priority items are scheduled to be integrated into broader capital projects over the next five to six years. Following the summary of these findings, the floor was opened for committee questions regarding the timeline and coordination of these transit enhancements.

**To view the presentation in its entirety, [click here](#) [16m. 24s.].**

Mr. David Culver asked about the proposed discontinuation of a route segment near Dunleith and whether the decision was based primarily on ridership or route efficiency.

Mr. Bill Williamson explained that ridership within the Dunleith development has historically been very low, while higher ridership is concentrated at nearby stops along Route 9, particularly near the intersections at Moorehouse Drive and Rogers Road. He noted that although the plan seeks to streamline service, it also proposes implementing DART Connect microtransit in the area to ensure continued transit access, even if fixed-route service is reduced.

Mr. Culver acknowledged the explanation and emphasized the importance of maintaining transit access in the Route 9 corridor, particularly in light of ongoing redevelopment and investment initiatives. He noted that coordination will be important to ensure transit services continue to support underserved communities.

Mr. John Sisson added that maintaining reliable, frequent service along the main Route 9 corridor is a priority and noted the challenges of providing fixed-route service within residential neighborhoods, including ADA compliance and operational constraints. Mr. Dave Gula further explained that similar route deviations in low-density areas have long presented operational challenges and that microtransit offers a more flexible and cost-effective alternative while still maintaining connectivity to mainline routes.

Mr. Culver also noted the importance of clear communication with local officials and community members, given strong interest in the area. Mr. Williamson added that outreach efforts have already begun, including discussions with local representatives, and emphasized that continued engagement will be critical to ensuring community understanding and support for any proposed changes.

### **13. Delaware Rail Plan.**

Ms. Gena Eleias, Intermodal Planner at DeIDOT, introduced the consulting team from Jacobs. Sibtay Haider and Rachel McGuire will present updates regarding the Delaware State Rail Plan (SRP). Ms. Eleias mentioned the presentation includes an analysis of the recent public survey conducted to gather feedback on passenger and freight rail services. Additionally, the session will cover meeting notes from the Delaware SRP Advisory Committee meeting held on March 2.

Mr. Haider explained that the update reflects significant changes in federal guidance and conditions over the past decade. The project team has conducted extensive outreach with state agencies, MPOs, local jurisdictions, neighboring states, and other stakeholders, and has analyzed existing conditions and trends affecting both passenger and freight rail. The plan will invent Delaware's rail system, evaluate performance, assess needs and opportunities, and

develop a 10- to 20-year investment strategy integrated with other state and regional transportation plans.

Key passenger rail priorities identified include preserving SEPTA service between Delaware and Philadelphia, advancing a commuter rail connection between Delaware and Maryland via MARC, better integrating rail into multimodal planning, and leveraging recent station investments to improve ridership along the Northeast Corridor. Freight rail priorities include improving highway-rail grade crossing safety, enhancing system resilience to flooding and climate-related impacts, preserving land near rail corridors for industrial uses, improving freight network efficiency, and strengthening partnerships with local, regional, and interstate entities.

The presenters highlighted that Delaware's freight rail network includes Class I and short-line railroads serving major corridors and supporting agricultural and industrial activity, particularly in southern Delaware. Analysis shows a high share of commodities currently moved by truck that could potentially shift to rail, presenting opportunities to reduce highway congestion and improve system efficiency.

Mr. Haider emphasized the importance of public participation through the online survey, which will inform priorities and investment decisions, particularly in historically underserved communities. The team has completed the Existing Conditions Report and will next develop passenger and freight improvement alternatives and an investment framework, incorporating stakeholder feedback to produce a cohesive, implementable State Rail Plan for Delaware.

**To view the presentation in its entirety, [click here](#) [10m. 42s.].**

Mr. John Sisson inquired about the total number of survey responses received. Mr. Haider noted that approximately 50 to 70 responses had been collected.

**INFORMATION ITEMS:**

**14. DeIDOT's and MDOT's Administrative Modification Request Letters**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

**ATTACHMENTS: (0)**