

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
JULY 17, 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 10:04a.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Members present:

John Sisson, Delaware Transit Corporation Chief Officer
Stephanie Johnson, representing Delaware Secretary of Transportation, Shanté Hastings
Geoff Anderson, Maryland Department of Transportation Chief and Maryland Governor's Appointee
Samantha Bulkilvish, representing David Edgell, Office of State Planning and Delaware Governor's Appointee
Antoni Sekowski, representing David Culver, New Castle County Department of Land Use General Manager, representing County Executive Marcus Henry
Grant Handley, representing Kelley A. Benson, Mayor of North East, Cecil County Municipalities Representative

Members absent:

Cecil County Executive
City of Wilmington
New Castle County Municipalities

Guests, Observers:

Cooper Bowers, New Castle County
William Goldman, Cecil County
Mike Kaszyski, PAC Chair
Shawn Kiernan, Maryland Department of Transportation
Bob Ragler, MDOT, RIPD

Staff members:

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner
Leonard Bonarek, Senior Planner
Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner
Sharen Elcock, Executive Assistant
Elizabeth Espinal, Administrative Assistant
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. Antoni Sekowski seconded by Ms. Samantha Bulkilvish the Council approved the May 1, 2025, Council Meeting Minutes.

Motion passed.

(07-17-25-01)

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

None.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

5. Chairperson's Report:

Mr. John Sisson reported that DTC has already begun preparing for the November service change, which will include several proposed adjustments. Staff are currently conducting community conversations in the affected areas to gather feedback prior to holding a formal public hearing in September.

Council Member's Reports:

Mr. Grant Handley, Assistant Town Administrator for the Town of North East, introduced himself to the Council. He explained that he is new to the Council and will serve as the Town of North East's representative on the WILMAPCO Council, a role he was asked to assume by Mayor Kelly Benson.

Mr. Handley shared that he earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees in public policy from the University of Maryland, College Park. He has worked for the Town of North East for the past two years and has been a resident of Cecil County since 2009. He noted that he has long held a strong interest in infrastructure policy, a subject he focused on throughout his academic studies.

As a personal note, Mr. Handley mentioned that he has served as a mascot for the Wilmington Blue Rocks, performing as both "Rocky" and "Mr. Celery."

As Council Chair, Mr. Sisson welcomed Mr. Handley and remarked that DART also has a mascot, "Dartly," suggesting he might be able to fit into the costume. Ms. Zegeye added that WILMAPCO has, "TROPO," through the Air Quality Partnership.

Mr. Handley graciously acknowledged them, saying he loves the sport.

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

- On May 5th, Staff attended the 2025 Cecil Transit Coordination Council.
- On May 5th, Staff attended the United Neighbors meeting in Wilmington.
- On May 6th, the final meeting was held for the Rocky Run Underpass Feasibility Study Tech Committee.
- On May 8th, Staff presented at the Mid-Atlantic and UD Student Chapter ITE forum at UD.
- On May 9th, a legislative briefing was held for the Augustine Cut Off Multimodal Improvement Study, Phase 2.
- On May 14th, Claymont Area Master Plan held its final workshop at the Waterfall with more than 70 attendees.
- On May 15th, the Augustine Cut Off Multimodal Improvement Study held the second AC meeting at Abessinio Stadium.
- On May 16th, Staff participated in Bike to Work Day Newark to collect feedback on Newark Bicycle Plan.
- On May 20th, a Churchman's Monitoring Public Workshop was held.

- On May 22nd, the Newark Bicycle Plan Public Workshop was held.
- On May 27th, the MD Route 272 Corridor Plan hosted a youth pop up workshop at the North East Library w/over 20 participants.
- On May 31st, Staff discussed the Southbridge Truck Bypass Feasibility Study and progress implementing the Southbridge Transportation Action Plan at Open Streets: New Castle Ave.
- On June 2nd, the Concord Pike Master Plan annual public meeting was held at the Talleyville Fire Company Station 25, and the MD-272 Corridor Plan held a public meeting for Downtown North East stakeholders.
- On June 4th, the Ardens Transportation Plan Monitoring Committee held a public informational session. Staff also attended the Brandywine Conservancy meeting and the Safe Kids Delaware Meeting.
- On Jun 4th, an RFP request for the Sidewalk GAP Analysis for both NCC, DE and CC, MD was posted. 13 proposals were received, 3 were shortlisted and interviewed. Renaissance Planning has been awarded to do the analysis.
- On June 10th, the second Augustine Cut Off Public Workshop was held at Salesianum School.
- On June 11th, Staff attended the Delmarva Freight Summit
- On June 12th, Staff attended DelDOT's Adams Street Public workshop at DTC's Offices on Lower Beech Street
- On June 12th, the Newport Monitoring Committee's Public Workshop was held at the Old Town Hall from 6-8 p.m.
- On June 13th an RFP was released for Southern NCC Land Use and Transportation Plan (SNCC-LUTP) proposals are due 7/21.
- On June 13th, Staff presented to US Congressional Staff as part of a panel for the Energy and Environmental Study Institute.
- On Jun 17th, Staff had a walking tour of Southbridge with residents to catalogue missing and damaged sidewalk sections.
- On June 18th, Staff participated in the Wilmington Initiatives public Workshop from 4-7 p.m. at the City County Building.
- On June 23rd, Staff attended the Air Quality Partnership of Delaware meeting.
- On June 24th, Staff participated in the UD IPA Demographics Forum in Dover and the MD-272 Plan's Steering Committee met.
- On June 25th, Staff supported an APA Delaware Chapter networking event on Baynard Blvd. centered around transportation, economic development, and historic preservation efforts.
- On June 26th, Staff met with members of the Windy Hills Neighborhood Association to begin planning a Walkable Community Workshop.
- On June 28th, Staff attended the 4th Street Open Streets event in Wilmington.
- On June 30th, the MD-272 Plan had a public workshop.
- On July 7th, the Ardens Transportation Plan's Monitoring Committee met.
- On July 7th, Staff attended the United Neighbors meeting to discuss the closure to vehicles of the 7th Street Bridge over I-95.
- On July 8th, Staff in collaboration with the City of Wilmington are working on SS4A grant agreement for their Action Plan.
- On July 12th, WILMAPCO and the DVRPC held a public focus group in Wilmington for the MSA Climate Action Plan.

- On July 24th, the Mobility Opportunities Plan Working Group is scheduled to meet at 10AM; the STBS Management Committee is scheduled to meet at 1 PM, and the ACO AC meeting will be held from 4-6 PM at Abessinio Stadium.
- On July 27th, the East Elkton Plan's Monitoring Committee is scheduled to meet.
- On August 5th, WILMAPCO has been invited to participate in an AMPO/AASHTO peer exchange in St. Paul, MN to discuss MPO/DOT collaboration on major projects.
- On August 12th, the ACO public workshop will be held at Salesianum School from 5-7 PM.
- On August 21st, the Route 9 Monitoring Committee is scheduled to meet.

Ms. Zegeye concluded by sharing that the final financial report for FY 2025 shows that about 90 percent of the budget has been expended. Additionally, the FY 2026 UPWP has been approved by FHWA (DE & MD divisions) as well as FTA (Region 3 DE & MD liaisons).

7. Public Advisory Committee (PAC) Report:

Mr. Mike Kaszyski reported that the PAC met on Monday, June 16th, for its regular meeting with seven members in attendance, two in person and five online. As a result, the committee did not meet quorum.

Ms. Zegeye delivered her executive report, beginning with a summary of the May 1st Council meeting. She noted that the Council had reviewed and approved the FY2026 UPWP. Her report also included updates on ongoing studies, as well as a comprehensive overview of upcoming workshops and public engagement events scheduled throughout the summer.

The PAC then reviewed the draft public opinion survey presented by Ms. Dawn Voss. She invited committee feedback to ensure the survey would be clear, accessible, and effective in engaging the public. Several PAC members expressed concerns that certain questions were vague and lacked sufficient context. Ms. Voss explained that, since the survey will be conducted by phone, the questions were intentionally kept short, and the overall length would be limited.

Specific feedback from members included the need to clarify definitions, such as “inefficient vehicles”; to specify which taxes might increase and who would be impacted; and to provide examples or details regarding transportation improvement fees and how they could affect developers. Ms. Schultz emphasized the importance of the question on connecting neighborhoods and asked about WILMAPCO's role in such efforts. Staff responded that neighborhood connectivity is a recurring theme in many recent WILMAPCO studies and is considered an essential component of regional planning. Ms. Voss reiterated that the survey is still under development and encouraged members to contact her directly by phone or email with additional questions.

The meeting also featured two additional presentations. The first was on the Maryland 272 Corridor Plan, which provided an overview of ongoing efforts and anticipated improvements. The second was an update on the Newark Bike Plan, which outlined proposed infrastructure improvements in the Newark area. No further questions were raised regarding these presentations.

8. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Report:

Ms. Tigist Zegeye reported that the TAC met on May 15th and considered two action items. The committee recommended amending the FY2025–2028 TIP to replace the Belvidere Road Bridge and to include funding for the Deaver Road Bridge. The meeting also featured

presentations on the Rocky Road Feasibility Study, the Strategic Action Plan, and the Maryland 272 Corridor Plan.

At its June 12th meeting, the TAC elected new officers, appointing Mr. Cooper Bowers from New Castle County as Chair and Ms. Cathy Smith from DTC as Vice Chair. Action items included recommending TIP amendments from Cecil County for the Belvidere Road Bridge replacement and the Mechanics Valley Road Bridge replacement. The committee also endorsed the Strategic Action Plan, the Kirkwood Highway Land Use and Transportation Plan, and the Claymont Area Master Plan. In addition, the meeting included a presentation on the Newark Bicycle Plan.

ACTION ITEMS:

9. To amend FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Jake Thompson reported that two amendment requests were received for the FY 2025–2028 TIP regarding the Belvidere Road Bridge replacement projects. The first request, submitted by MDOT and adopted in May 2024, concerns a project listed in the TIP but not funded within the current fiscal years. The proposed amendment would add \$214,000 in design funds in FY 2026. He noted that the TAC recommended endorsement of this amendment at its June 12th meeting. The AQS reviewed the request via email and determined that it does not trigger a conformity analysis. WILMAPCO staff recommend approval of this amendment.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Geoff Anderson and seconded by Mr. Antoni Sekowski the Council approved the request to amend the TIP.

Motion passed.

(07-17-25–02)

10. To amend FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Jake Thompson reported that Cecil County has requested an amendment to the FY 2025–2028 TIP for the Belvidere Road Bridge replacement project. As adopted in May 2024, the project is listed in the TIP but is not funded within the current fiscal years. The proposed amendment would add \$24.988 million in construction funds in FY 2026. The justification for this amendment is increased construction costs. He noted that the TAC recommended endorsement of this amendment at its May 15th meeting. The AQS reviewed the request via email and determined that it does not trigger a conformity analysis. WILMAPCO staff recommend approval of this amendment.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Geoff Anderson and seconded by Mr. Grant Handley the Council approved the request to amend the TIP.

Motion passed.

(07-17-25–03)

11. To amend FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Jake Thompson reported that Cecil County has requested an amendment to the FY 2025–2028 TIP to add a new project for the replacement of Deaver Road bridge over the CSX railroad.

The proposed amendment would allocate \$11.49 million across FY 2025 through FY 2027. The justification for this project is the anticipated deterioration of the bridge, which could accelerate and result in posted weight restrictions and, ultimately, closure if not addressed. In addition, due to its current narrow width, the bridge is considered functionally obsolete. The new structure will be designed to carry two 12-foot lanes and maximize shoulder widths.

Mr. Thompson noted that the TAC recommended endorsement of this amendment at its May 15th meeting. The AQS reviewed the request via email and determined that it does not trigger a conformity analysis. WILMAPCO staff recommend approval of this amendment.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Antoni Sekowski and seconded by Mr. Grant Handley the Council approved the request to amend the TIP.

Motion passed.

(07-17-25-04)

12. To amend FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Jake Thompson reported that Cecil County has requested an amendment to the FY 2025–2028 TIP for the Mechanics Valley Road Bridge replacement project. As amended in July 2024, the project included \$2.6 million in construction funds in FY 2025.

The proposed amendment would shift construction funding to FY 2026 and increase it to \$14.805 million, a net increase of \$12.205 million. The application noted that construction is planned for FY 2026, with \$2.27 million already expended on land acquisition from all funding sources. The TAC recommended endorsement of this amendment at its June 12th meeting. The AQS reviewed the request via email and determined that it does not trigger a conformity analysis. WILMAPCO staff recommend approval of this amendment.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Antoni Sekowski and seconded by Mr. Grant Handley the Council approved the request to amend the TIP.

Motion passed.

(07-17-25-05)

13. To endorse the Draft Strategic Action Plan.

Mr. Dan Blevins reported on the Strategic Action Plan, which is intended to improve the implementation of transportation improvements through the land use process in New Castle County. The plan focuses on two main areas: promoting redevelopment by rightsizing development contributions and facilitating private sector investment and implementation of transportation projects. The effort was led by a consultant. The PAC did not take action on the plan. The TAC recommended that the Council endorse it.

ACTION: On motion by Ms. Samantha Bulkilvish and seconded by Mr. Antoni Sekowski the Council endorsed the Strategic Action Plan.

Motion passed.

(07-17-25-06)

14. To endorse the Draft Kirkwood Highway Land Use and Transportation Plan.

Mr. Dan Blevins reported that the plan was an 18-month effort that established recommendations for transportation improvements and land use strategies along the corridor. Initiated in the fall of 2023, the plan includes both short- and long-term recommendations across all travel modes, guided by community input to achieve a shared vision for the corridor. The process involved five public workshops, and the plan was presented to the Council on four separate occasions. The PAC did not take action but received four presentations throughout the process, while the TAC received a similar number of presentations and endorsed the plan on June 12th. WILMAPCO staff request Council endorsement.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Antoni Sekowski and seconded by Ms. Samantha Bulkilvish the Council endorsed the Kirkwood Highway Land Use and Transportation Plan.

Motion passed.

(07-17-25-07)

15. To endorse the Claymont Area Master Plan.

Ms. Heather Dunigan presented the draft report for Claymont Area Master Plan, requested by New Castle County to refresh the 2004 redevelopment plan. The study area was expanded beyond the existing TID overlay and included four public workshops; the final was held on May 14, 2025.

For land use, the Plan recommends scenario 3, the Gateway Scenario, which provides a modest increase in density to encourage redevelopment and create walkable nodes within the community. For transportation, none of the three proposed scenarios gained community consensus. Therefore, Plan does not recommend selecting any of the three alternatives assessed. Recommended transportation improvements include smaller projects which received greater consensus including traffic calming, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements along Darley and Harvey Roads, and sidewalk gap closures.

The plan will be supported by a monitoring committee to track progress and on-the-ground conditions, while New Castle County will advance the Hometown Overlay District updates through the land use planning process. Staff requested Council endorsement of the plan.

ACTION: On motion by Ms. Samantha Bulkilvish and seconded by Mr. Antoni Sekowski the Council endorsed the Claymont Area Master Plan.

Motion passed.

(07-17-25-08)

PRESENTATIONS:

16. Newark Bicycle Plan Update

Ms. Heather Dunigan provided an update on the Newark Bicycle Plan following the May 22nd public workshop. She noted that while much of the work has been completed in-house, the project has relied heavily on volunteer support, including assistance from BikeNewark and an extensive on-the-ground inventory of bicycle parking and road conditions.

The study builds on Newark's 2014 Bicycle Plan and incorporates more recent planning efforts, with new emphasis areas including stronger integration of land use and bicycle transportation, comprehensive bicycle parking assessment, incorporation of Vision Zero principles, sustainability, equity, and priority-setting given limited funding. Public outreach included workshops, community events, surveys, and interactive mapping, which highlighted safety concerns as the top issue.

Draft recommendations focus on expanding protected bike lanes, filling connectivity gaps, improving intersections, and addressing bicycle parking needs. The plan also emphasizes reducing barriers for less experienced riders, improving safety for vulnerable users, and supporting broader community sustainability goals. A final report is expected later this summer.

To view this presentation in its entirety please [click here](#). [12m.05s.]

Mr. Sisson asked whether the inventory of bicycle parking also included bike repair stations. Ms. Dunigan responded that it did not but agreed this was a useful suggestion for inclusion.

Mr. Sisson observed increasing bicycle use on transit, noting that existing capacity on buses is often insufficient. He also highlighted the importance of public education on bicycle safety, suggesting that driver training should include awareness of bicycle rules. Ms. Dunigan agreed, adding that there is also a growing need for adult education programs for those wishing to relearn or improve their bicycling skills.

Mr. Sekowski asked whether bicycle parking data from the City of Newark and the University of Delaware could be combined. Ms. Dunigan explained that she had attempted to obtain the university's data but was unsuccessful. She suggested that a better approach might be to share WILMAPCO's data first and invite the university to integrate it into their system. Mr. Sisson emphasized that bicycle parking resources should be coordinated and accessible, and Ms. Dunigan committed to revisiting the discussion with the university.

Mr. Sisson further noted the importance of highlighting progress since Newark's 2014 Bicycle Plan. Ms. Dunigan reported that new tools, such as Replica and StreetLight, now allow for improved modeling of bicycle use, which shows an upward trend not fully captured in census data due to changes in commuting patterns.

Mr. Sekowski asked whether Newark had considered electric bicycle or scooter programs. Ms. Dunigan replied that both the City and the University have been approached by vendors in the past, but plans stalled following a fatal accident several years ago. She noted that the updated plan will include recommendations on e-bikes and scooters, reflecting recent changes in Delaware state code.

Mr. Sisson remarked on the confusion between e-bikes and motorcycles. Ms. Dunigan explained that there are three classes of e-bikes with different rules and helmet requirements, and that additional public education will be needed to address this complexity.

17. MD Route 272 Corridor Transportation Plan

Mr. Bill Swiatek presented an update on the MD Route 272 Corridor Study. He explained that the study area extends from Cecil College in the north, through downtown North East, and south to Shady Beach Road. A steering committee composed of local officials, consultants, state and local agencies, and emergency services has guided the process.

The planning effort included an assessment of existing conditions, projections of future development, a visioning phase, and multiple rounds of public engagement. Outreach activities featured three public workshops, two community surveys, youth engagement events, downtown stakeholder meetings, and targeted outreach through the local library. Participation was strong, with several hundred survey responses and workshop attendees.

Key recommendations include maintaining a consistent four-lane profile along the northern corridor with a separated shared-use path, studying further the potential conversion of Mauldin Avenue to two-way traffic with supporting roundabouts at Russell Street and Irishtown Road, and pursuing traffic calming south of town through lane delineation and a potential roundabout at Shady Beach Road. Additional proposals address pedestrian and bicycle connections to Cecil College, safety improvements at Lums Road, intersection enhancements at US 40, and quick-action items such as signage, vegetation clearance, lighting, and traffic signal optimization. Downtown parking management and shared-use strategies are also recommended for further study.

Mr. Swiatek concluded by noting that a draft of the plan will be released for public comment in August. The study will be reviewed by TAC and the Town of North East Council later that month, with presentation to the WILMAPCO Council anticipated in September. A monitoring committee will then be established in the fall to oversee implementation of recommendations.

To view this presentation in its entirety please [click here](#). [11m.47s.].

Mr. Grant Handley commended Mr. Swiatek and the WILMAPCO team for their flexibility and responsiveness throughout the process. He noted that when the business community expressed concern about limited participation, a special session was organized for them. Similarly, when residents of Mauldin Avenue felt their voices were not being heard, a dedicated meeting was held for that neighborhood. Mayor Kelly Benson also emphasized the importance of light synchronization and parking improvements, and WILMAPCO committed to addressing these issues during the monitoring phase.

Mr. Handley further referenced concerns raised by the VFW post, which stemmed largely from miscommunication and political tensions, and praised WILMAPCO and its partners for addressing the matter constructively. He described the process as transparent and collaborative, emphasizing that the town's main concern was ensuring consultant deliverables met expectations. After extensive discussions and feedback, he expressed confidence that the final products would do so. Mr. Handley concluded by stressing the town's appreciation for the effort and flexibility demonstrated, noting that such adaptability is uncommon in today's political and fiscal climate.

Mr. Sekowski inquired whether directing traffic away from Main Street would include an economic analysis, noting that traffic flow through Main Street had been intentionally reversed about 20 years ago to attract activity.

Mr. Swiatek responded that such analysis could be incorporated into further study. He noted differing views within the business community on whether increased traffic benefits or harms shops. He added that another recommendation under consideration is improved multimodal connectivity away from Main Street, as the interconnected street network in North East will require attention as the town grows.

Mr. Sisson asked whether freight movement was a factor. Mr. Swiatek explained that most freight issues identified in the survey were north of town, particularly truck traffic accessing I-95, some of which will be alleviated by the Belvidere Road Interchange opening. Within town, freight considerations were primarily addressed through roundabout design to accommodate large trucks, recreational vehicles, and boats. Freight movement concerns through Downtown was not found to be a major issue.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

18. DeIDOT's Administrative Modification Request Letters

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 11:13 a.m.

ATTACHMENTS: (0)