

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
JULY 9, 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: Ms. Stephanie Johnson, Council Chair, called the meeting to order at 02:04 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Members present:

Stephanie Johnson, Delaware Department of Transportation Planning Director, representing, Delaware Secretary of Transportation, Shanté Hastings
Stephen O'Connor, Cecil County Land Use and Development Planner, representing Cecil County Executive, Adam Streight
Lilia Montoya, Delaware Transit Corporation Chief Executive Officer
Grant Handley, representing Kelly A. Benson, Mayor of North East, Cecil County Municipalities Representative
David Culver, New Castle County Department of Land Use General Manager, representing County Executive, Marcus Henry
Geoff Anderson, Maryland Department of Transportation, Chief and Maryland Governor's Appointee
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
David Edgell, Office of State Planning and Delaware Governor's Appointee

Guests, Observers:

William Goldman, Cecil County
Austin Gray, Delaware Department of Transportation
Mike Kaszyski, Public Advisory Committee
Pamela Keeney, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Control
Shawn Kiernan, Maryland Department of Transportation
Tina Merrill, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Control
William Tardy, Jacobs
Bruce Wyngaard, 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, 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 May 21, 2026, Council Meeting Minutes.

Motion passed.

(07-09-26-01)

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

Mr. Bruce Wyngaard, a resident of southern New Castle County and a member of the New Castle County Alliance for Responsible Land Use, commented on WILMAPCO's First and Last Mile Freight Network Study and the Draft Logistics/Fulfillment Center Land Use and Transportation Study. He emphasized that peer-reviewed research demonstrates the adverse public health impacts of emissions generated by warehouse and distribution facilities, particularly for nearby residential communities.

Mr. Wyngaard acknowledged progress made since his previous comments to Council, including New Castle County's adoption of updated warehouse and fulfillment center definitions, expanded buffer requirements between large warehouse developments and residential areas, and other land use improvements. He expressed appreciation for the leadership and collaborative efforts that contributed to these policy changes.

Regarding the First and Last Mile Freight Network Study, Mr. Wyngaard stated that the report effectively identifies conflicts between freight transportation and residential communities and provides a strong framework for addressing these issues through improved planning. He noted that the study recognizes the close proximity of many freight corridors to residential neighborhoods and encouraged continued collaboration among transportation, land use, and environmental agencies to better address air quality and public health considerations during the planning process.

Mr. Wyngaard also expressed support for the Draft Logistics/Fulfillment Center Land Use and Transportation Study, stating that it provides valuable opportunities to improve warehouse classification methods, analyze truck traffic patterns, evaluate emissions-related impacts, and identify best practices for separating industrial facilities from residential neighborhoods. He encouraged WILMAPCO and its partner agencies to integrate air quality considerations more directly into future land use and transportation decisions.

In closing, Mr. Wyngaard commended both studies as important planning tools and urged WILMAPCO and its stakeholders to implement their recommendations. He emphasized that proactively addressing freight-related land use and environmental concerns would improve public health, reduce future conflicts, and lead to more sustainable transportation and development decisions.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

5. Chairperson's Report:

Ms. Stephanie Johnson shared DelDOT's perspective, expressing her appreciation for the opportunity to serve as Council Chair and to collaborate with WILMAPCO and its partner agencies. She emphasized DelDOT's commitment to strengthening partnerships and leveraging the collective expertise and resources of its partners to advance excellence in transportation planning and delivery.

Ms. Johnson noted that, with the start of the new fiscal year, DelDOT is continuing work on several major statewide planning initiatives. These include updates to the Long-Range Transportation Plan, the development of a Statewide Transportation Master Plan, a Statewide Rail Plan, and a Freight Plan. She also highlighted DelDOT's continued collaboration with Delaware Transit Corporation's new Chief Executive Officer, Lilia Montoya, to strengthen coordination, improve communication, and enhance transportation planning, public engagement, and service delivery across the state.

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

- Staff attended the Delmarva Freight Summit, and the Southbridge Truck Bypass Study held a public meeting on June 16th.
- The Wilmington Initiatives partners continue to have monthly meetings. Staff participated in the Wilmington Initiatives public meeting on June 23rd.
- Staff continue to attend FRA's Step 1 CID meeting for the DSRL.
- Staff attended the Port Terminal Truck Routing Feasibility Study public tours on June 20th.
- Staff attended DelDOT's State Rail Plan briefing for MPOs on June 30th.
- The SNCC LUTP Partners continue to have monthly meetings.
- On July 14th, Staff will be serving on a panel discussing DOT/MPO collaboration at the Northeast Association of State Transportation Officials in Baltimore, MD and Staff will attend the Newport Station Public Workshop.
- On July 15th, the MD-272 Monitoring Committee will meet. Staff will be attending and tabling at New Castle County's State of the County meeting.
- On July 24th, Staff will attend MDOT-MPO Roundtable.
- On July 28th, the SS4A Wilmington Advisory Committee meeting #2 will be held at the Wilmington library.
- On August 3rd, the Ardens Monitoring Committee will meet.
- On August 4th, Staff will attend DelDOT's/DTC's NRTC Planning meeting.
- On August 6th, the Port Terminal Truck Routing Feasibility Study partners will meet.
- On August 11th, Staff will be serving on a panel discussing truck parking at the Mid America Association of State Transportation Officials in Cincinnati, Ohio.
- On August 17th, Staff will attend the Newark Traffic Committee Meeting.
- On August 20th, the Route 9 Monitoring Committee will meet.
- On August 26th, Staff will attend the Safe Kids Delaware meeting.

Lastly, by the end of FY2026, the final bill indicates that approximately 90% of the budget was spent. On a positive note, both the Maryland and Delaware Divisions of the Federal Highway Administration have approved the FY2027 UPWP.

7. Public Advisory Committee (PAC) Report:

Mr. Mike Kaszyski reported that the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) held its regular June meeting on June 15, with four members attending in person, three participating virtually, and one member of the public attending virtually.

During the public comment period, Ms. Jamila Davey requested greater public access to interagency coordination efforts, particularly those associated with the Wilmington Initiatives Program. Executive Director, Ms. Zegeye, explained the history of the initiative and discussed the potential re-establishment of a steering committee to provide broader public participation. PAC members continued the discussion, focusing on public participation in the TIP process, the Augustine Cut-Off study, and challenges community groups face in advancing transportation projects.

Ms. Zegeye also presented the Executive Director's Report, which included a summary of the May 21 Council meeting and an overview of upcoming public engagement activities.

The committee considered one action item. Ms. Dawn Stant presented the 2026 Public Participation Plan Update, summarizing its purpose, development process, and key components. Following the presentation, the PAC unanimously approved a motion recommending that the Council adopt the updated plan.

The meeting also featured a presentation by Ms. Heather Dunigan, who provided an update on the Regional Sidewalk Gap Analysis. She reviewed the study's methodology, data collection, prioritization process, and key findings. Committee members discussed how sidewalk gaps were defined and identified, as well as how the completed study could support future transportation planning and implementation efforts.

Mr. Kaszyski concluded by announcing that the next PAC meeting is scheduled for August.

8. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Report:

Mr. Dave Gula reported that the TAC met on May 21 with a full quorum and strong attendance. No public comments were received. The committee appointed a nominating committee for the TAC Chair election, which was completed at the June meeting. Presentations included the Functional Classification Update by MDOT, Maryland Transportation Performance Measures by Anna Batista (MDOT), the 2026 CMAQ Performance Plan Update by Bill Swiatek, and the 2026 New Castle and Cecil County Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Technical Project Prioritization by Leonard Bonarek.

Mr. Gula further reported that the TAC met again on June 18, during which Cooper Bowers of the New Castle County Department of Land Use was reappointed as Chair, and Cathy Smith of the Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC) was reappointed as Vice Chair. Ms. Smith chaired the meeting in Mr. Bowers' absence. The committee considered several action items that were also on the Council agenda. Presentations included DelDOT Transportation Performance Measures by Colton Phillips, a review of the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) goals, objectives, and performance measures by Bill Swiatek, and an update on the Southern New Castle County Land Use and Transportation Study by Mr. Gula.

ACTION ITEMS:

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

Mr. Jake Thompson announced that MDOT requested an amendment to the FY 2025–2028 TIP for the Cecil County Mid-County Transit Hub project. Previously amended in January 2025 to

include \$1 million in right-of-way funding for FY 2025, the proposed amendment adds \$409,000 in FY 2026 design funds to advance the transit hub's development, bringing the total project allocation to \$1.409 million. The FY 2026 funding increase comprises \$327,000 in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 funds, a \$21,000 state match, and a \$61,000 local match. The TAC recommended endorsement of this amendment at the June 18 meeting. The AQS reviewed this at the same meeting and found that this does not trigger a revised conformity analysis, and WILMAPCO staff recommends this amendment.

Mr. Grant Handley inquired whether an exact location had been identified for the project, suggesting Mr. O'Connor might know. Mr. O'Connor confirmed that a location had been chosen, identifying it as Charlestown Crossing.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Stephen O'Connor, seconded by Mr. David Culver, the Council approved amending the FY 2025-2028 TIP.

Motion passed.

(07-09-26-02)

10. To adopt the Decennial Functional Classification Update for Cecil County.

Mr. Dan Blevins presented the proposed Functional Classification Update for Cecil County, explaining that the review is conducted approximately every ten years following the decennial U.S. Census and the release of updated urbanized area boundaries. He noted that the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) reviewed input from local officials and metropolitan planning organizations, including WILMAPCO, in developing the proposed changes.

The update reclassifies a total of 151 roadway miles, including approximately 94 miles in rural areas and 57 miles in urbanized areas.

Mr. Blevins reported that the TAC recommended adoption of the proposed functional classification changes at its June 18 meeting. WILMAPCO staff also recommended that the Council adopt the proposed updates for Cecil County.

Mr. Stephen O'Connor reflected on the substantial growth achieved over the last ten years, emphasizing the hard work that went into it. He ended his remarks by thanking all of the state partners.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Stephen O'Connor, seconded by Mr. David Culver, the Council adopted the Decennial Functional Classification Update for Cecil County.

Motion passed.

(07-09-26-03)

11. To adopt the Decennial Functional Classification Update for New Castle County.

Mr. Dan Blevins presented the proposed Functional Classification Update for New Castle County, noting that, like the Maryland update, the review is conducted approximately every ten years in conjunction with the decennial U.S. Census and updated urbanized area boundaries. He explained that DelDOT developed the proposed classifications in coordination with local officials and metropolitan planning organizations.

The update includes approximately 53 miles of roadway reclassifications, consisting of both upgrades and downgrades to the existing functional classifications.

Mr. Blevins reported that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommended approval of the proposed changes at its June 18 meeting. WILMAPCO staff also recommended that the Council adopt the proposed functional classification updates for New Castle County.

Mr. Culver noted that although he had only been back in the county for about a year, he recognized the immense work and progress required. He expressed his gratitude to the member agencies, collaborators, and the group for their ongoing support to the County.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. David Culver, seconded by Mr. Stephen O'Connor, the Council approved the Decennial Functional Classification Update for New Castle County.

Motion passed.

(07-09-26-04)

12. To approve the Project Prioritization for the 2026 New Castle and Cecil Counties Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

Ms. Heather Dunigan provided an overview of the TAP project prioritization process, noting that five applications were received from New Castle County and one from Cecil County. She highlighted that, for the first time, the call for projects was coordinated and advertised simultaneously in both counties. Staff evaluated each application using WILMAPCO's adopted project prioritization criteria to develop technical scores, which were reviewed by the Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group (NMTWG) and the TAC. Both committees recommended approval of the technical scoring, with one modification from the NMTWG to award an additional point for the historic element included in the Oregon Road submission. WILMAPCO staff incorporated the change into the final scoring presented to Council.

Ms. Dunigan explained that the technical scoring serves as the basis for Council's project prioritization, while Council may also consider additional factors during its deliberations. Once prioritized, the project rankings will be submitted to DelDOT and MDOT for consideration. She noted that although a portion of TAP funding is suballocated to WILMAPCO, coordination with both state transportation agencies remains necessary because they administer the remaining statewide funds.

The evaluation criteria included land use, transportation, and demographic factors. Land use considerations included proximity to community centers, libraries, schools, parks, and historic resources. Transportation criteria evaluated connections to designated bicycle routes, greenways, bus stops, pedestrian and bicycle crash history, abandoned highway corridors, and the ability to close gaps in the transportation network. Demographic criteria considered whether projects were located within municipalities, areas of high population or employment density, economic opportunity areas, or mobility-challenged communities.

Ms. Dunigan also noted that several applications were submitted by state elected officials, who are not eligible TAP funding recipients. Should those projects ultimately be selected, WILMAPCO would work with an eligible sponsor, such as New Castle County or another qualified agency, to administer the funding and advance the projects.

Mr. Leonard Bonarek then presented the technical evaluation and scoring of each application. He summarized the proposed improvements, highlighted the key criteria contributing to each score, and reviewed the final rankings. The City of New Castle's Delaware River Trail (Petty Path) Extension and Downtown Streetscape Improvements received the highest technical score of 23

points, followed by the Old Newark Road Sidewalk Improvements (17 points), Harvey Road Crossing Improvements in the Ardens (16 points), Auburn Valley State Park Crossing Improvements (11 points), Academy Hill Phase V Sidewalk Connectivity Improvements (4 points), and the Marina Park Reconstruction Project in Port Deposit (4 points). The final technical rankings were presented to Council for consideration in establishing project priorities before submission to DeIDOT and MDOT.

Mr. Handley noted that Council could adopt the technical scoring as the final project rankings but asked whether project costs, particularly for the Ardens (Milky Way Crossing) project, had been considered. Ms. Heather Dunigan explained that DeIDOT no longer requires cost estimates with applications because past estimates were often inconsistent. She added that while a cost estimate was provided for the Port Deposit project, much of the proposed work is not TAP-eligible.

Mr. Handley observed that the Ardens project appeared to offer a high benefit relative to its likely cost and suggested it receive additional consideration. Mr. Stephen O'Connor agreed, noting that the Ardens has consistently advanced pedestrian improvement projects and continues to implement its long-term transportation plan.

Following the discussion, Ms. Stephanie Johnson requested a motion to revise the Delaware project rankings. Council agreed to prioritize the projects in the following order:

- (1) City of New Castle – Delaware River Trail Extension
- (2) Ardens – Milky Way Crossing Improvements
- (3) Old Newark Road Sidewalk Improvements
- (4) Auburn Valley State Park Crossing Improvements
- (5) Academy Hill Phase V Sidewalk Connectivity Improvements

The Port Deposit project remained the sole Maryland project for consideration.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Stephen O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Grant Handley, the Council approved the project prioritization for both counties 2026 TAP program.

Motion passed.

(07-09-26-05)

13. To approve the Draft WILMAPCO 2026 Public Participation Plan.

Ms. Dawn Stant presented the 2026 update to the Public Participation Plan (PPP) for TAC endorsement. Originally mandated by the SAFETEA-LU Act of 2005 and previously updated in 2008, 2012, and 2020, the PPP serves as an administrative guide to ensure timely and full public access to the regional planning process.

The six-month update process involved a national best-practices review of peer MPOs and a mandatory 45-day public comment period. The PAC endorsed the draft on June 15, 2026.

Key revisions to the 2026 PPP include:

- Shorter, simplified formatting with language structured as direct instructions to enhance readability for the public.
- Reorganized topics to place core objectives at the front, verifying full compliance with current federal guidelines while maintaining flexibility to meet Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) goals.

Refined Core Objectives:

1. Utilizing diverse media and clear communication free of jargon and acronyms.

2. Relationship Building: Cultivating community trust and coordinating with agencies, nonprofits, and community representatives.
3. Representative Engagement: Utilizing tailored, non-uniform outreach strategies to reach diverse populations, including youth, while upholding Title VI and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility standards.
4. Two-Way Communication: Facilitating open public comment opportunities, workshops, surveys, and stakeholder coordination as detailed in the plan's updated outreach toolbox.

Ms. Stant stated that the PAC reviewed and approved the plan at its June 15 meeting, the TAC approved it at its June 18 meeting, and the WILMAPCO staff recommends Council approval.

Mr. David Culver commended WILMAPCO staff for their public outreach efforts, stating that the organization demonstrates some of the best outreach practices he has observed. He acknowledged the staff's continued commitment to developing innovative engagement strategies and recognized their extensive experience working with diverse community groups.

Ms. Dawn Stant thanked Mr. Culver for his remarks and noted that staff continually strive to identify new and creative ways to engage the public while building on successful outreach practices.

Mr. Handley, speaking lightheartedly, commented on WILMAPCO's outreach toolbox and jokingly offered to serve as the organization's mascot if needed. Ms. Stant responded that WILMAPCO currently has someone to fill that role but is exploring alternative options and may contact him in the future.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. David Culver, seconded by Mr. Stephen O'Connor, the Council approved the Public Participation Plan 2026 Update.

Motion passed.

(07-09-26-06)

14. To adopt the Regional Sidewalk Gap Analysis and Prioritization.

Ms. Heather Dunigan presented the final Regional Sidewalk Gap Analysis report, noting that it had been reviewed by the PAC, TAC, Non-Motorized Transportation Working Group, and the project Advisory Committee, all of which recommended Council approval.

She explained that the study combined technical analysis and extensive public outreach to identify sidewalk gaps affecting safety, comfort, and equity across the region. The analysis identified approximately 4,300 miles of sidewalk gaps, including 134 miles of high-priority gaps, which were further organized into 16 implementation-ready project groupings to support future funding through the TIP and Capital Transportation Program (CTP).

Ms. Dunigan noted that identifying sidewalk gaps is only the first step and that additional planning and engineering work will be required before implementation. WILMAPCO has included monitoring and implementation activities in the FY27 Unified Planning Work Program to continue refining priority projects. She also highlighted that the study's GIS data, sidewalk inventory, gap scoring, and public comments will be made available to member agencies to support future transportation and land use planning efforts. WILMAPCO staff recommended Council approval of the final report.

Mr. Grant Handley requested clarification regarding a section of the plan that indicates a high-ranking location does not automatically equate GAP.

Ms. Heather Dunigan explained that, in addition to the regionwide technical analysis, WILMAPCO conducted three community charrettes that included extensive field reviews and stakeholder engagement. The additional outreach helped refine the most appropriate improvements for each location, as solutions may vary depending on local conditions. She noted that recommended improvements could include sidewalks, shared-use paths, enhanced crossings, or interim safety measures, rather than a single standardized treatment.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. David Culver, seconded by Mr. Stephen O'Connor, the Council adopted the Regional Sidewalk Gap Analysis and Prioritization.

Motion passed.

(07-09-26-07)

PRESENTATIONS:

15. Draft 2050 RTP: 2027 Update- Review of Goals, Objectives, Actions and Performance Measures.

Mr. Bill Swiatek presented draft policy recommendations for the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update, which is scheduled for adoption in March. He explained that the draft revisions build on WILMAPCO's progress report, public opinion survey findings, updated performance measures, and recent federal guidance. The recommendations are organized by RTP goals, objectives, actions, and performance measures, with proposed edits intended to improve clarity, update terminology, and better align the plan with current federal priorities and reporting practices.

Mr. Swiatek highlighted several proposed changes, including stronger emphasis on safety performance measures, clearer language related to air quality, preservation funding, public engagement, transportation affordability, and multimodal access, as well as updates to climate resilience and economic development policies. He noted that several revisions were also made to reflect current federal language policies while maintaining the intent of the plan's existing goals. He emphasized that the recommendations remain in draft form and invited feedback from Council members as WILMAPCO continues work on the 2050 RTP update over the coming year.

To view this presentation in its entirety please [click here](#). [09m.30s.].

*This recording contains the presentation delivered during the June TAC meeting, provided in lieu of the Council meeting broadcast technical issues.

16. The Southern New Castle County Growth Area Land Use & Transportation Plan Update.

Mr. Dave Gula provided an update on the Southern New Castle County Land Use and Transportation Study, which examines future growth, land use, and transportation needs in the study area. He noted that safety, multimodal mobility, and coordinated growth remain central themes of the study, with residents and stakeholders emphasizing the need for safer walking, biking, and transit options in an area that is currently largely auto-oriented.

Mr. Gula reported that the project team has completed visioning, advisory committee coordination, and multiple public outreach meetings, and is now moving into the modeling phase. This work includes analyzing existing and future land use, development potential, traffic

patterns, and transportation scenarios through 2050. He explained that the study will evaluate both a “business as usual” growth scenario and a higher-density scenario intended to explore whether more compact development could better support transit and improve overall mobility. The next phase will use the modeling results to identify roadway, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements needed to accommodate future growth in southern New Castle County.

To view this presentation in its entirety please [click here](#). [14m.28s.].

Ms. Stephanie Johnson asked whether the modeling inputs incorporated Delaware's State Strategies data or whether it was treated as a separate overlay.

Mr. Dan Blevins responded that the modeling incorporated the Strategies for State Policies and Spending data to the greatest extent possible, while also accounting for areas outside the designated investment areas. Mr. Dave Gula added that the model included both the state strategies data and the surrounding out-of-play areas as part of the overall analysis.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

17. DeIDOT's and MDOT's Administrative Modification Request Letters

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 03:44 p.m.

ATTACHMENTS: (0)