

WILMAPCO Council:

John Sisson, Chair
Delaware Transit Corporation
Chief Executive Officer

Geoff Anderson
Maryland Dept. of Transportation
Chief, Office of Planning,
Programming and Delivery

David L. Edgell
Delaware Office of State Planning
Coordination, Director

Adam Streight
Cecil County Executive

Shanté Hastings
Delaware Dept. of Transportation
Secretary

Marcus Henry
New Castle County Executive

John Carney
Mayor of Wilmington

Kelly A. Benson, Mayor
Cecil County Municipalities
Representative

Vacant
New Castle County Municipalities
Representative

WILMAPCO Executive Director
Tigist Zegeye

DRAFT

RESOLUTION

BY THE WILMINGTON AREA PLANNING COUNCIL (WILMAPCO) TO ENDORSE THE 2025 MOBILITY OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

WHEREAS, the Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) has been designated the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Cecil County, Maryland and New Castle County, Delaware by the Governors of Maryland and Delaware, respectively; and

WHEREAS, the 2025 Mobility Opportunities Plan identifies pressing transportation barriers for economically and mobility challenged communities in the region; and

WHEREAS, the 2025 Mobility Opportunities Plan makes recommendations for improving community mobility and increasing economic opportunity; and

WHEREAS, the 2025 Mobility Opportunities Plan exceeds WILMAPCO's planning requirements under the Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disability Act; and

WHEREAS, the 2025 Mobility Opportunities Plan advances WILMAPCO's efforts to better engage economically and mobility challenged communities in the transportation planning process; and

WHEREAS, the 2025 Mobility Opportunities Plan was developed by a diverse working group comprised of federal, state, and county staff, researchers from the University of Delaware, members of the WILMAPCO Public Advisory Committee, interested residents, and staff from community benefit organizations;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wilmington Area Planning Council does hereby endorse the 2025 Mobility Opportunities Plan.

Date:

John Sisson, Chairperson
Wilmington Area Planning Council



Chapter 1

Background

Some populations benefit less from our transportation system than others. Low-income residents in our region are five times more likely than high-income residents to have transportation difficulties reaching destinations with affordable, healthy foods. Ethnic and racial minorities, meanwhile, are often underrepresented in our planning processes.

This Mobility Opportunities (MO) Plan furthers WILMAPCO's efforts to address these and other community challenges. In so doing it addresses matters Title VI, Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and Americans with Disability Act (ADA) requirements.

Improving the mobility of our communities and making a special effort to reach out to underrepresented groups in the transportation planning process is woven into the fabric of planning at WILMAPCO. It is incorporated into project prioritization processes, performance measurement, our public participation process, consultant contracts, and day-to-day business.



Title VI – federal, non-discrimination statute from 1964’s Civil Rights Act. WILMAPCO must ensure our operations and planning processes are nondiscriminatory. This include contracts with third-party firms, along with hiring and personnel policies, including DBE¹ assurances.

- **Populations**, by legal statute: race, color, and national origin.
- **WILMAPCO actions**: Title VI policy and program; demographic and mobility analyses.

Economic Opportunities – supported by Title VI (race, color, and national origin) a WILMAPCO initiative to support under-resourced populations often challenged by our transportation system and underrepresented in transportation planning processes.

- **Populations**: people living in poverty; under-resourced ethnic and racial minority communities
- **WILMAPCO actions**: examine the transportation challenges these groups encounter and recommend solutions

Limited English Proficient (LEP) –supported by Title VI (under the national origins stipulation) WILMAPCO endeavors to involve those with limited English language skills.

- **Populations**: People with limited English proficiency, people with low literacy, people with limited digital access.
- **WILMAPCO actions**: Provide reasonable access to language translation and interpretation services of WILMAPCO plans and materials.

¹ Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) are state-certified for-profit small business concerns where socially and economically disadvantaged individuals own at least a 51% interest and control management and daily business operations. African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian-Pacific and Subcontinent Asian Americans, and women are presumed to be socially and economically disadvantaged. Other individuals can be characterized as socially and economically disadvantaged on a case-by-case basis.

Mobility Challenged – a WILMAPCO initiative to support improved mobility for populations constrained by our transportation system. Legal statutes, such as 1990’s Americans with Disability Act (ADA), forbid discrimination against those with disabilities, while the Age Discrimination Act (1975) prohibits discrimination based on age.

- **Populations:** people with disabilities, seniors, young people (and those of all ages), and people without vehicles.
- **WILMAPCO actions:** Take affirmative steps to reasonably accommodate the disabled and those of all ages to ensure that their needs are equitably represented.

This plan is divided into the following sections:

Meeting Title VI Requirements

- Basic reporting requirements

Economic Opportunity Communities

- Demographic profile
- Public opinion survey
- Spatial analysis
- Public outreach
- Key recommendations

Language Assistance Plan

- Demographic Profile
- Spatial analysis
- Public outreach
- Key recommendations

ADA Self Evaluation

- Review and recommendations

Mobility Challenged Communities

- Introduction
- ADA implementation
- Demographic profile
- Spatial analysis
- Public outreach
- Key recommendations

Chapter 2

Meeting Title VI Requirements

WILMAPCO exceeds most of its Title VI requirements and is a national leader in incorporating community mobility needs into the transportation planning process.

Title VI: Basic Reporting Requirements

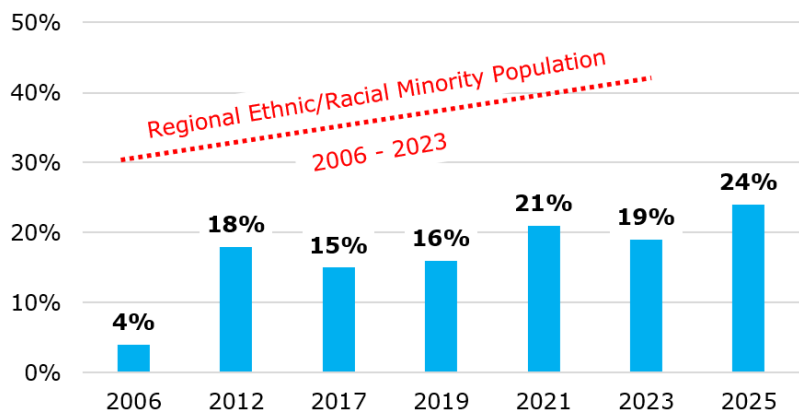
MPOs must provide a variety of documentation to be considered in compliance with Title VI.

1. Title VI Certification and Assurance
This signed document can be found in the appendix.
2. Notice of Nondiscrimination Rights and Protections to Beneficiaries
The WILMAPCO "Title VI Policy Statement," complaint procedures, and complaint form are posted on the WILMAPCO website (<http://www.wilmapco.org/titlevi>) and in the WILMAPCO offices. In keeping with requirements for language assistance, as detailed in Chapter 4, these vital documents have been translated into both Spanish and Chinese.
3. MPO Endorsement
WILMAPCO's Council endorsed the present document on **November 13, 2025**. A copy of a signed Council resolution is in the appendix.
4. Complaint Procedures
The WILMAPCO "Title VI Policy Statement," complaint procedures, and complaint form are posted on the WILMAPCO website (<http://www.wilmapco.org/titlevi>) and within the WILMAPCO offices. In keeping with requirements for language assistance, as detailed in Chapter 4, these vital documents have been translated into both Spanish and Chinese.
5. Title VI Investigations, Complaints, and Lawsuits
WILMAPCO has never been implicated in a Title VI investigation, complaint, or lawsuit.
6. Language Assistance Plan
WILMAPCO's Language Assistance Plan can be found in Chapter 4.
7. Monitoring Subrecipients of MPO funds
Each year, WILMAPCO contracts work out to various private consultants and subconsultants. WILMAPCO collects information regarding their

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) status, and has the consultants agree to abide by all Title VI stipulations through a signed contract. This contract is available in the appendix.

8. Minority Representation on Planning Boards
- Ethnic and racial minorities have long been underrepresented on WILMAPCO’s Public Advisory Committee (PAC²). As shown in the graph below, minority membership on that committee has increased, but still falls below what we expect. WILMAPCO aims to solidify new partnerships with communities and interests that represent our minority populations.

Ethnic/Racial Minority Members of the WILMAPCO PAC



In addition to these eight requirements, WILMAPCO must also document a few others. These requirements include providing demographic profiles of communities covered by Title VI, analyses of the distribution of federal funds, and identification of the “benefits and burdens” carried by Title VI groups. Chapter 3 fulfills these requirements. A final requirement is documentation of the agency’s Public Participation Plan (PPP). WILMAPCO’s PPP was last updated in 2020 and is available at this webpage: www.wilmapco.org/ppp. Chapter 3 updates engagement strategies for communities of color, which will, in turn, be folded into a forthcoming update of the PPP.

WILMAPCO staff participate in Title VI training as needed, with the last training held in 2024 in conjunction with staff from DelDOT.

² The 16-member PAC advises WILMAPCO staff and Council on matters of public involvement during its planning processes. Representatives belong to and represent various civic and community groups across the region. WILMAPCO actively recruits members of the PAC, unlike members of its Council and other committees.

Chapter 3

Economic Opportunity Communities

This chapter begins with a socio-economic profile of our region before turning to more in-depth analyses of how under-resourced communities – low income, Black, and Hispanic communities – fare in the transportation system. Afterwards, we examine ways to strengthen the inclusivity of our public outreach processes.

Demographic Profile

The WILMAPCO region is becoming more ethnically and racially diverse. While non-Hispanic White residents remain in the majority, their numbers are in steady decline. Since 2010, the number of White residents fell by 22,700. This is a proportional drop from 67% of the region's (growing) population in 2010 to 60% today³. In their place are more people of color.



The WILMAPCO region is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse.

The table on the next page details the ethnic/racial composition of the region today, along with other selected demographics of interest to the present plan.

Several minority communities can be found in the region. The non-Hispanic Black population is the largest. About 147,000 call the region home (22% of the total population). Hispanic residents⁴ and non-Hispanic Asian residents are the next two

³ American Community Survey: 2010 sample data vs. 2017 – 2021 sample data.

⁴ While language is constantly evolving, according to a recent national survey, “Hispanic” is the Hispanic/Latino/Latinx community’s most preferred term to describe their pan-ethnicity:

largest groups. Hispanic residents (mainly Mexican or Puerto Rican) number about 65,000 (or 10% of the population), while Asian residents (mainly Asian Indian and Chinese) sit at about 34,000 (or about 5% of the population). 21,000 residents (3%) say they belong to two or more races. Roughly 3,000 residents identify with “some other race,” or are American Indian/Alaskan Native or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

New Castle County is home to most of this diversity. Cecil County, with 84% of its population identifying as non-Hispanic White, remains a much less racially and ethnically diverse.

Demographic Profile of the WILMAPCO Region⁵

	WILMAPCO Region		New Castle County		Cecil County	
RACIAL/ETHNIC BACKGROUND						
White alone	401,645	60%	315,014	55%	86,631	84%
Black or African American alone	146,843	22%	140,317	25%	6,526	6%
Hispanic or Latino	64,607	10%	59,765	11%	4,842	5%
Asian alone	34,079	5%	32,625	6%	1,454	1%
Two or more races	20,900	3%	17,180	3%	3,720	4%
Some other race alone	2,036	0%	1,969	0%	67	0%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	774	0%	680	0%	94	0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	255	0%	219	0%	36	0%
OTHER DEMOGRAPHICS						
Youth (under 18)	146,058	22%	122,616	22%	23,442	23%
Seniors (65+)	105,584	16%	89,247	16%	16,337	16%
People with disabilities	82,318	12%	67,759	12%	14,559	14%
People born outside of the United States	70,394	10%	66,192	12%	4,202	4%
People living in poverty	68,475	10%	58,265	11%	10,210	10%
People with limited English proficiency	14,414	4%	13,492	5%	922	2%
Female-headed households with children	13,336	5%	11,743	5%	1,593	4%
People with low literacy	9,774	2%	8,628	2%	1,146	2%
Households without motor vehicles	8,776	3%	7,986	3%	790	2%

The remainder of this plan will focus only on the three largest ethnic/racial minority communities – Black, Hispanic, and Asian. Each has created an enduring cultural

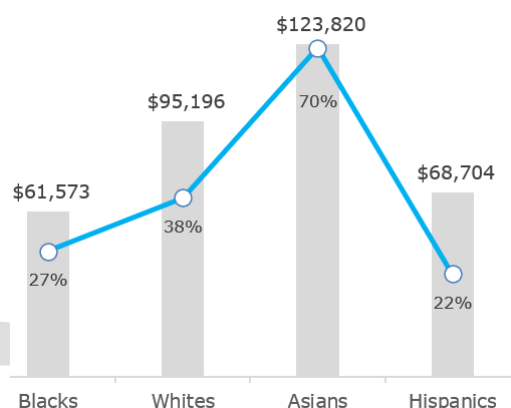
<https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2020/08/11/about-one-in-four-u-s-hispanics-have-heard-of-latinx-but-just-3-use-it/>. WILMAPCO therefore uses the term Hispanic when referring to this community.

⁵ These data are from the American Community Survey, from 2017-2021 sample data. People with limited English proficiency are those, 5 years of age and greater, that report speaking English “less than very well.” People with low literacy are considered those, over age 25, who have not completed the ninth grade.

presence, often settling in specific communities and corridors. These groups, together, are also likely to capture about 9 out of 10 of all foreign-born residents of the region.

Class differences are apparent between our ethnic and racial communities of interest. As shown in the graph below, Black and Hispanic residents have the lowest median household income on average, and their adults have the lowest levels of four-year degrees. Asian residents, meanwhile, have much higher income and rates of advanced education.

**Median Annual Household Income and
% of those >25 Years w/ a Bachelor's Degree or Better
by Ethnic/Racial Group in the WILMAPCO Region, 2018-2022 ACS**



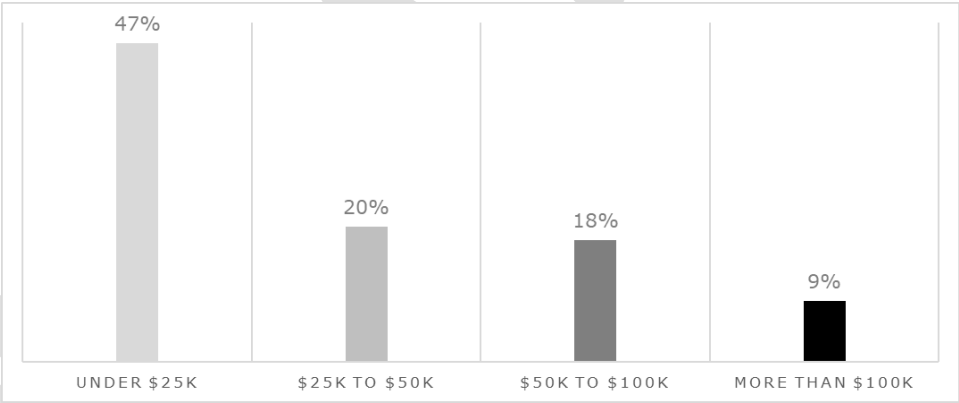
The relative high income of our region's Asian community informs our interpretation of later analyses. For example, we will show that fewer Asian neighborhoods have affordable housing and transportation costs for a lower income household than average. But, given the greater spending power of the typical Asian household (and therefore access to private cars), this should not be viewed as a significant mobility concern in the context of our region. That said, public outreach and language assistance to support the greater inclusion of Asian Indian, Chinese, and other Asian communities in transportation planning processes are warranted.

Most of the other demographic groups presented in this profile are informational. An analysis of the needs of young people, seniors, people with disabilities, and households without vehicles, which we define collectively as "mobility challenged," are presented in Chapter 5. Likewise, the needs of people with limited English proficiency and low literacy are explored later, in Chapter 4.

We consider low-income residents to be those living in poverty⁶, regardless of race or ethnicity. Some 68,500 people (10% of the total regional population) live in poverty. That’s about the same number of residents in the City of Wilmington.

As shown in the graph below, nearly half (47%) of those living in households earning less than \$25,000/year reported being kept from activities “at least some of the time,” in our 2018 Regional Public Opinion Survey, compared to about 20% of those making between \$25,000/year and \$100,000/year and less than 10% of those making \$100,000/year. The minor difference between the two middle cohorts is key. Households with incomes between \$50,000/year and \$100,000/year (essentially the median regional household income grouping) reported only a slight improvement in mobility versus the next lowest income cohort.

Transportation Keeps Me from Activities at least Sometimes
by Annual Household Income
WILMAPCO Region, 2018



⁶ Lower-income households not meeting the poverty threshold can also experience challenges with the transportation system. Some agencies have accounted for this within their analyses by moving beyond the more rigorous poverty threshold to flag lower-middle income communities. Our regional surveys suggest that transportation challenges to be more than twice as prevalent among residents with the lowest incomes, hence our focus on poverty.

Findings from the 2022 Public Opinion Survey

WILMAPCO conducts a telephone-based Public Opinion Survey (POS) every four years. The survey explores ideas from residents about transportation needs and policies. Most importantly, the POS informs the development of the Regional Transportation Plan.



WILMAPCO conducts telephone surveys to understand public opinion.

A sample of 600 completed surveys is compiled to produce the results. This sample meets demographic quotas to ensure an accurate cross-section of our population is represented.

This section presents a series of findings from the public opinion survey where attitudes about the transportation system differ significantly among these populations. Note that Asian residents are not included here because of their small sample size.

Experience with the Transportation System

People with low-incomes and Black residents often have greater transportation challenges than the average resident. This section explores responses to questions of access and need from our 2022 Public Opinion Survey.

When asked to rate the transportation system in general terms, low-income residents were less critical of it than high-income residents. Seventeen percent (17%) said it did not meet their travel needs well, versus 28% of high-income residents. Little variation existed between racial and ethnic groups. However, when deeper questions of access to important destinations, like healthy and affordable grocery shopping and jobs, were put to survey-takers, differences emerged.

In our 2018 survey, we found that low-income households were five times more likely than high-income households to report transportation difficulties. Black

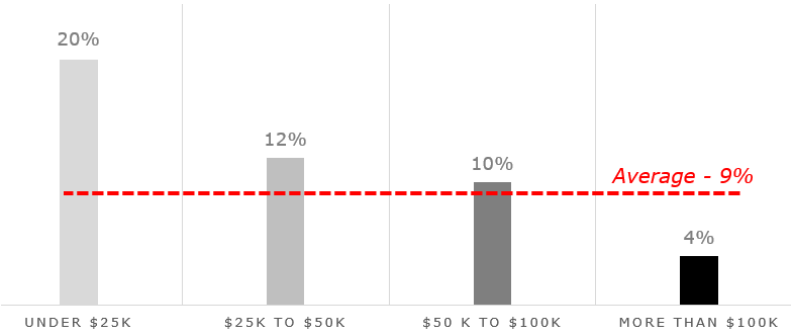
respondents were likewise slightly more likely than White or Hispanic respondents to encounter transportation problems.

We dove deeper into destination accessibility in our 2022 survey, by asking about access to four specific destination types: healthy and affordable grocery shopping, jobs and desired jobs, social activities, and routine medical care. Among income groups, low-income residents had the most difficulties reaching these destinations and high-income residents had the least. When comparing racial and ethnic groups, Black respondents had the most transportation difficulties, and Hispanic respondents the least. Hispanic respondents had the least trouble reaching all the destination types, except jobs or desired jobs.

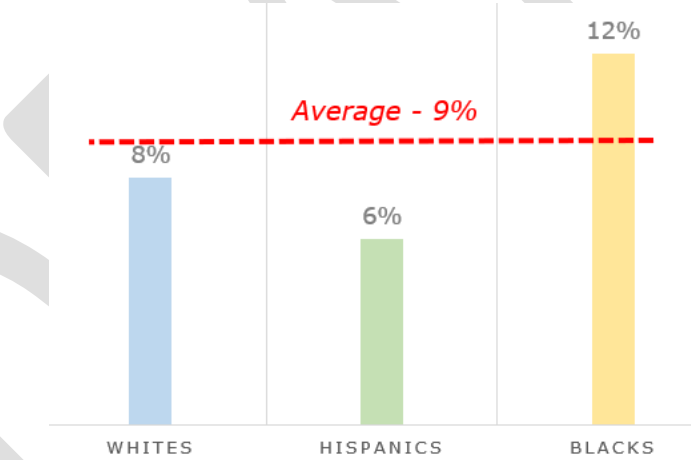
The results, found within the charts on the following pages, can be summarized as:

- **Low-income residents are twice as likely to have difficulty reaching healthy and affordable grocery shopping than the average resident, and five times more likely than high-income residents.** Twenty percent (20%) reported so, compared to an average of 9%, and only 4% for high-income residents. Among racial and ethnic groups, Black respondents are most likely to report difficulty reaching healthy and affordable grocery shopping. Twelve percent (12%) reported so, double the figure for Hispanic respondents (6%), who had the least reported trouble.
- **Black and Hispanic respondents were more than twice as likely to have difficulty reaching jobs or desired jobs than White respondents.** Thirteen percent (13%) of Black respondents and 11% of Hispanic respondents reported trouble doing so, more than double the figure for White respondents (5%). Among income groups, all but high-income residents (4%) also reported slightly higher difficulties reaching jobs (9%-11%) than average (9%).
- **Low-income residents are twice as likely to have difficulty reaching social activities than the average resident, and five times more likely than high-income residents.** Twenty one percent (21%) reported trouble doing so, compared to an average of 12% and 4% for high-income residents.
- **Black respondents are about twice as likely to have difficulty reaching social activities than the average resident, and three times more likely than Hispanic respondents.** Twenty percent (20%) reported trouble, compared to an average of 12%, and only 6% of Hispanic respondents.
- **Low-income and lower-middle income residents are nearly twice as likely to have difficulty reaching routine medical care compared to the average resident and eight times more likely than high-income residents.** Among racial and ethnic groups, Black respondents are most likely to report difficulty reaching routine medical care. Thirteen percent (13%) reported so, outpacing the average resident (9%), and far outpacing Hispanic respondents, of whom only 1% reported difficulty.

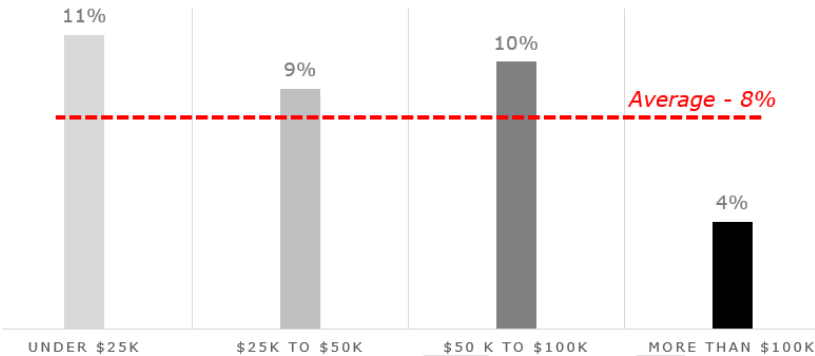
Limited Transportation Access to
Healthy and Affordable Grocery Shopping
by Annual Household Income
WILMAPCO Region, 2022



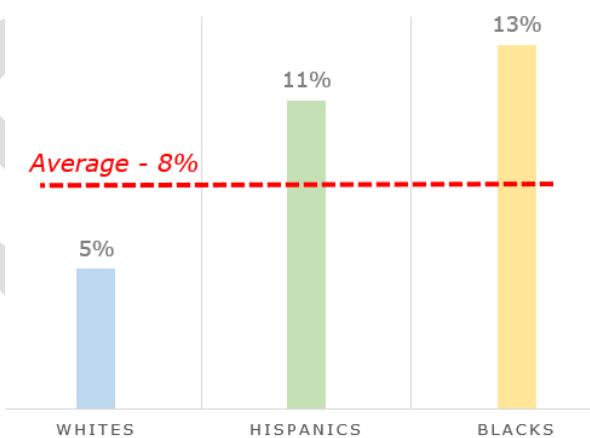
Limited Transportation Access to
Healthy and Affordable Grocery Shopping
by Race and Ethnicity
WILMAPCO Region, 2022



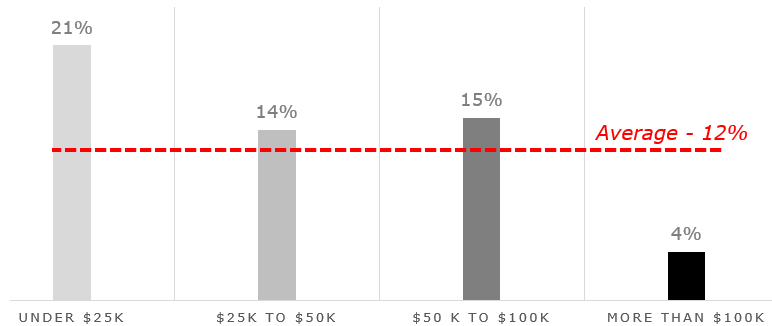
Limited Transportation Access to
My Job or Desired Job
by Annual Household Income
WILMAPCO Region, 2022



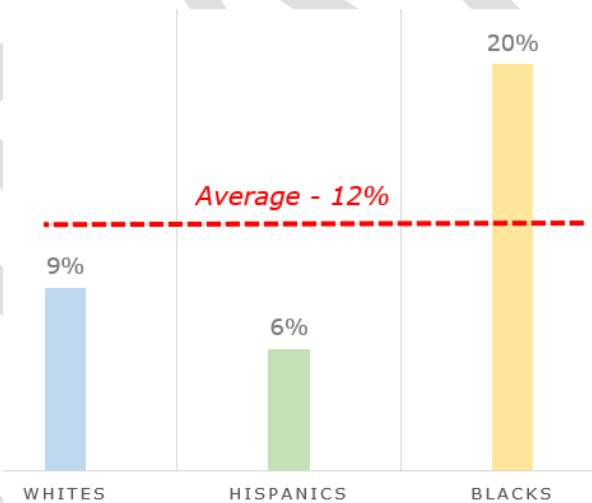
Limited Transportation Access to
My Job or Desired Job
by Race and Ethnicity
WILMAPCO Region, 2022



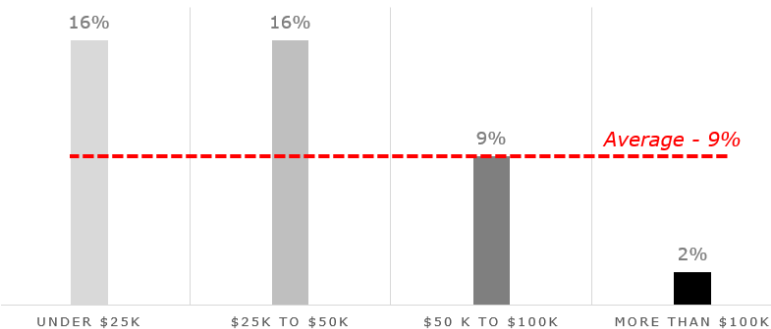
Limited Transportation Access to
Social Activities
by Annual Household Income
WILMAPCO Region, 2022



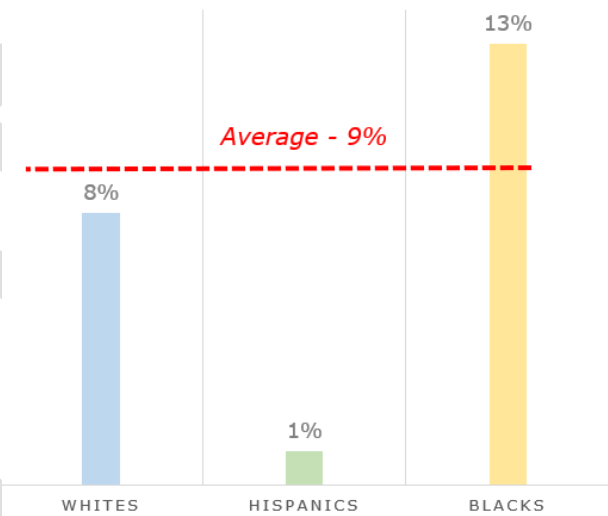
Limited Transportation Access to
Social Activities
by Race and Ethnicity
WILMAPCO Region, 2022



Limited Transportation Access to
Routine Medical Care
by Annual Household Income
WILMAPCO Region, 2022



Limited Transportation Access to
Routine Medical Care
by Race and Ethnicity
WILMAPCO Region, 2022



Residents across the region agree that the transportation system needs improving. A quarter (25%) said it did not meet their personal travel needs well. Key areas for improvement include public transit, walking, and cycling systems. In Cecil County, half of residents said that the travel needs of residents wishing to use trains, buses, bikes, or walking were not well met. New Castle County residents rated these forms of transportation better, but not by much. More than one-third thought travel needs were not well met by those systems.

Janet's Story: Hoping for More Mobility Options in Middletown

When Janet moved to Middletown, Delaware, she carried with her the habits of being a big city transit rider. For 30 years, she had relied on light rail and buses to get around. In her new home, however, she found herself in a community designed for cars, not people.

Though she owns a car, Janet yearns for better public transportation. The heavy traffic and stress of driving to places like Christiana or Dover malls make her long for the ease of hopping on a midday bus—a luxury not currently available. She notes that existing bus routes seem built for workers, not shoppers or moviegoers. “If I wanted to see a movie in the early afternoon,” she said, “I’d have to catch a bus early in the morning—and even then, options are limited.”

Janet imagines a world where getting from Middletown to Wilmington’s Amtrak station is simple and convenient. She could take a train to Boston or D.C. without having to drive or navigate confusing parking. She’d also love to walk to downtown Middletown for festivals, food, or just a pleasant day out—but finds that nearly impossible.

Her apartment complex is near a busy, multi-lane road called Middletown Warwick. While development is booming and more stores are popping up, pedestrian infrastructure hasn’t kept pace. Crosswalks are faded, sidewalks are missing, and cars dominate the landscape. “You have to hustle to cross six lanes,” she said. “And if something goes wrong, your only safety option might be jumping into a ditch.”

Janet has watched people on bikes and scooters struggle to get to work at local restaurants, even navigating concrete medians just to cross the road. She’s never dared cross Middletown Warwick on foot herself, and the lack of safe, complete sidewalks—especially around railroad tracks—makes it daunting.

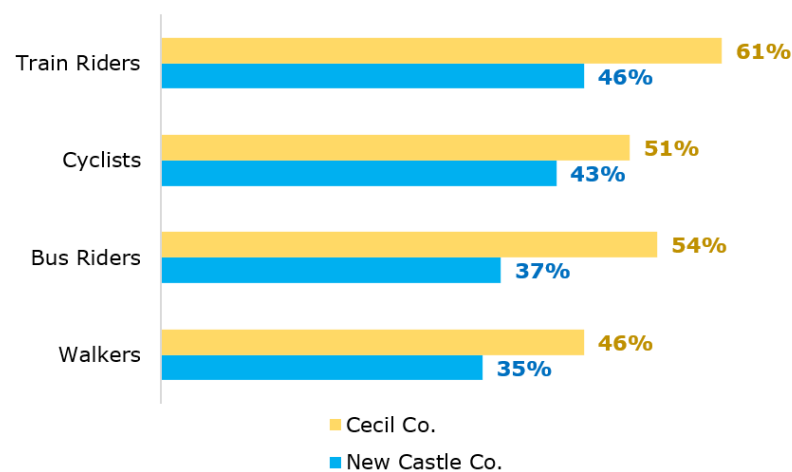
Despite the obstacles, Janet still dreams big. If she could wave a magic wand, she’d bring microtransit services to Middletown. She’d ensure the whole town—not just one shopping center—had access to community shuttles. She’d make the town truly walkable, especially for seniors and renters in all the new developments springing up around town.

She even mused about electric bikes at local parks and the sight of brave scooter riders on the roadside. And if we’re really dreaming? Flying taxis. “Just skip the highways altogether,” she said with a laugh.

For now, Janet remains hopeful. She sees the potential in her community and knows that change is possible. “We just have to think beyond cars,” she said. “Let’s build a town where everyone can get around—no matter how they travel.”

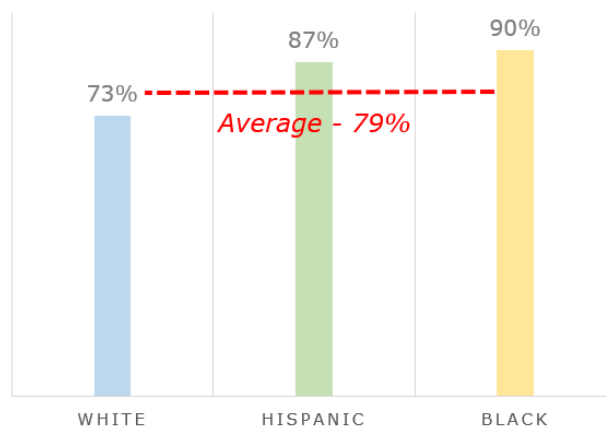
Janet is a resident of Middletown, Delaware. She shared her mobility story with WILMAPCO in 2024.

Travel Needs are Not Well Met by Mode
WILMAPCO Region, 2022

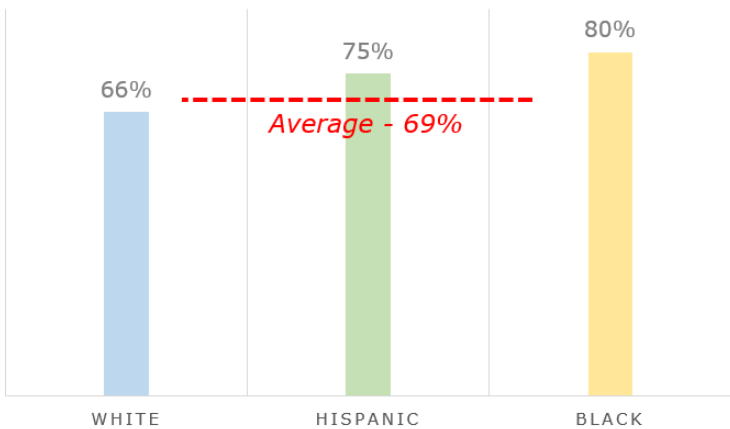


While most residents support improvements to alternative transportation, Black and Hispanic residents are most supportive. As shown in the graphs that follow, about 9 in 10 Black respondents (90%) and Hispanic respondents (87%) said improving bus and train service was important or essential, compared to about 7 in 10 White respondents (73%). Black and Hispanic respondents were also more likely to feel walking and bicycling facility improvements were important or essential than White respondents. Eighty percent (80%) of Black respondents and 75% of Hispanic respondents agreed, compared to 66% of White respondents. Among income groups, low-income residents were more likely to rate walking and bicycling improvements as important or essential (76%) than high-income residents (67%). But they were less likely than high-income residents to view bus and train service improvements as important or essential (73% versus 80%).

Improving Bus and Train Service is Important/Essential
WILMAPCO Region, 2022

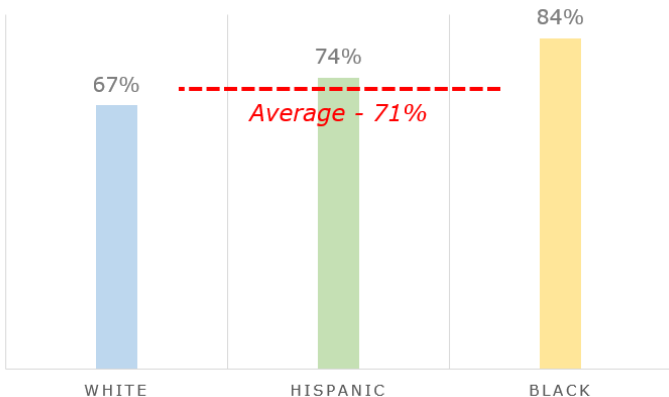


Improving Facilities for Walking and Cycling is Important/Essential
WILMAPCO Region, 2022

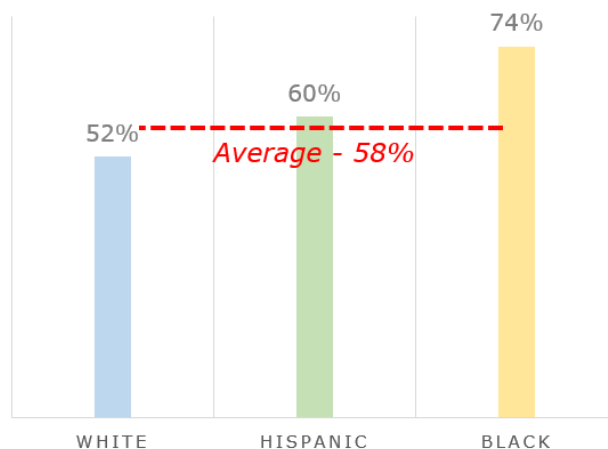


Most residents strongly support efforts to revitalize existing communities and downtowns and to connect neighborhoods with each other and nearby destinations. Black and Hispanic residents are more likely to voice stronger support. Eighty-four percent (84%) of Black respondents rate community revitalization as important or essential, compared to 74% of Hispanic respondents and 67% of White respondents. Similarly, 3 in 4 Black respondents (74%) say connecting neighborhoods to each other and nearby destinations is important or essential, compared to 2 in 4 White respondents (52%) and 60% of Hispanic respondents. Among income groups, low-income residents were less likely than high income residents to rate community revitalization as important or essential (58% vs. 76%). And about the same percentage agreed connecting neighborhoods to each other and nearby destinations was important or essential (58% versus 57%).

Revitalizing Existing Communities and Downtowns is Important/Essential
WILMAPCO Region, 2022



Connecting Neighborhoods to Each Other and Nearby Destinations is Important/Essential WILMAPCO Region, 2022



Spatial Analysis

This section maps where concentrations of racial and ethnic minorities and low-income groups are found in the region. These are later used as a foundation to analyze the transportation planning process and the transportation system.

Concentrations of Black, Hispanic, Asian, White, and People Living in Poverty

This section begins with a series of maps detailing the varying intensities of our racial and ethnic minorities, majority White neighborhoods⁷, and low-income groups^{8,9} in different places. These thematic maps show five levels of population intensity. The two highest include neighborhoods (census blocks or block groups in the case of poverty) with above the regional average and those more than double the regional average.

⁷ Because White residents comprise more than half of the region's population, we instead chosen analysis threshold of 90% to identify places with the largest non-Hispanic White population.

⁸ Ethnic and racial minority data are from the 2020 Census and are presented at the block level. Poverty data, meanwhile, are block group level data from the American Community Survey, 2017-21.

⁹ Uninhabited areas are shown as blank (white) in all maps. Local land use/land cover data were consulted to find these areas. In addition, block groups with double or more the regional percent of college enrollment are given 0% poverty. This corrects a data anomaly in the City of Newark, common to many college towns, which displays a high level of poverty. High levels of university students, not impoverished individuals, account for the poverty signal. Most University of Delaware students are from middle-class families earning well above the state's median income, but currently earn low individual income.

Isolating intense concentrations of these groups is important. As we will show, these neighborhood concentrations allow us to examine where past and planned transportation investments have been made and, objectively, just how well the transportation system itself functions within these places.

Black residents – are concentrated in the City of Wilmington. Predominantly Black neighborhoods can also be found in suburban communities along US 13, SR 9 and US 40 from Claymont to New Castle and west to Bear.

Population Thresholds: Regional percentage – 21.9%; Double regional percentage – 43.8%

Hispanic residents – are concentrated in the Westside neighborhoods of Wilmington and in suburban communities along the I-95 corridors. Hispanic concentrations can be found along SR 2 and SR 4 and along US 13, SR 9, and US 40, linking Wilmington to New Castle and Bear.

Population Thresholds: Regional percentage – 9.6%; Double regional percentage – 19.3%

Asian residents – are concentrated in suburban communities east of US 202 and along the SR 7 corridor. Concentrations are also found in the Newark, Bear, and Glasgow areas along SR 896 and SR 273.

Population Thresholds: Regional percentage – 5.1%; Double regional percentage 10.2%

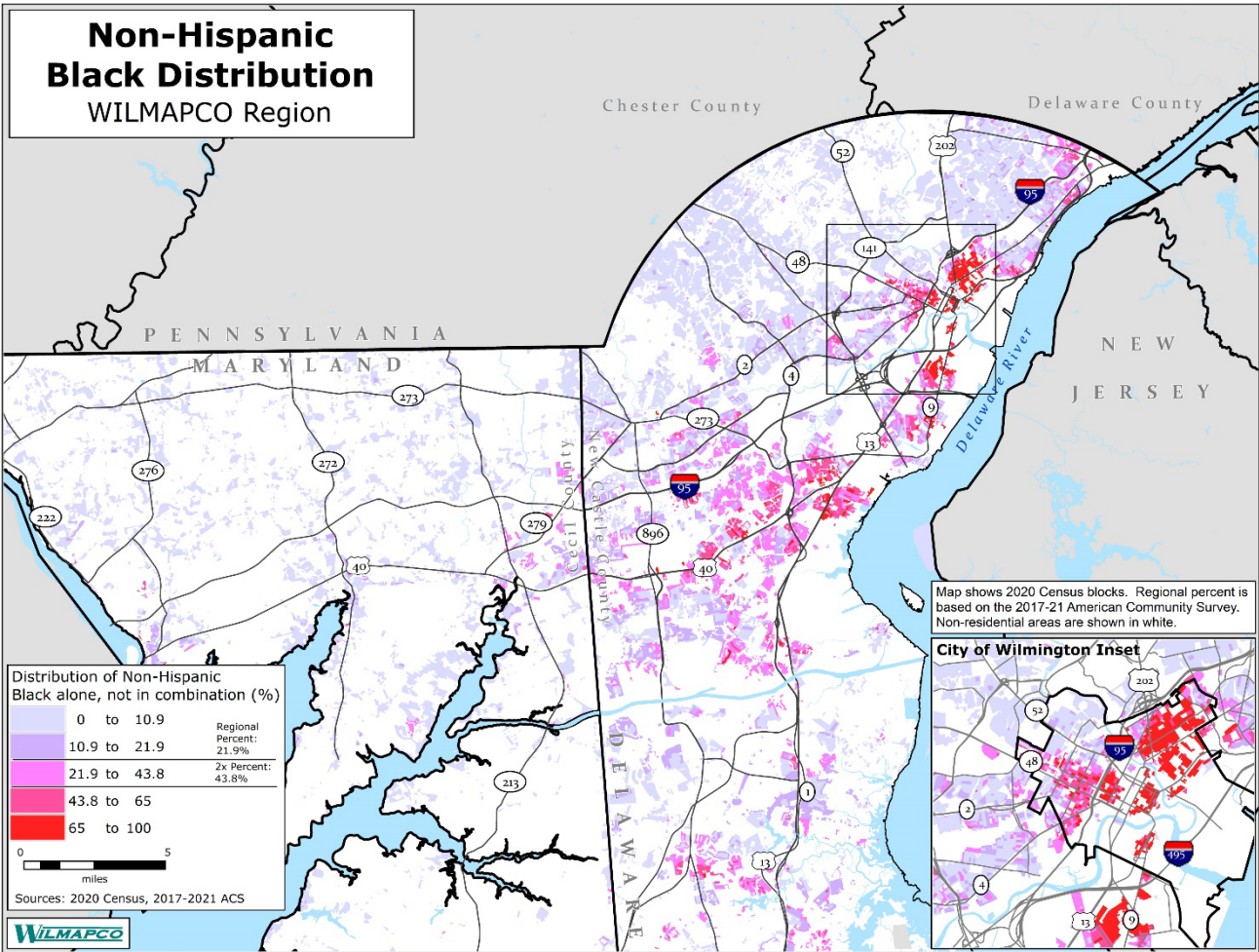
White residents – are concentrated in communities throughout Cecil County and north of SR 4 in New Castle County. White concentrations are also common south of US 40, especially south of the C & D Canal.

Population Thresholds: Regional percentage – 59.8%; Increased regional percentage threshold – 90.0%

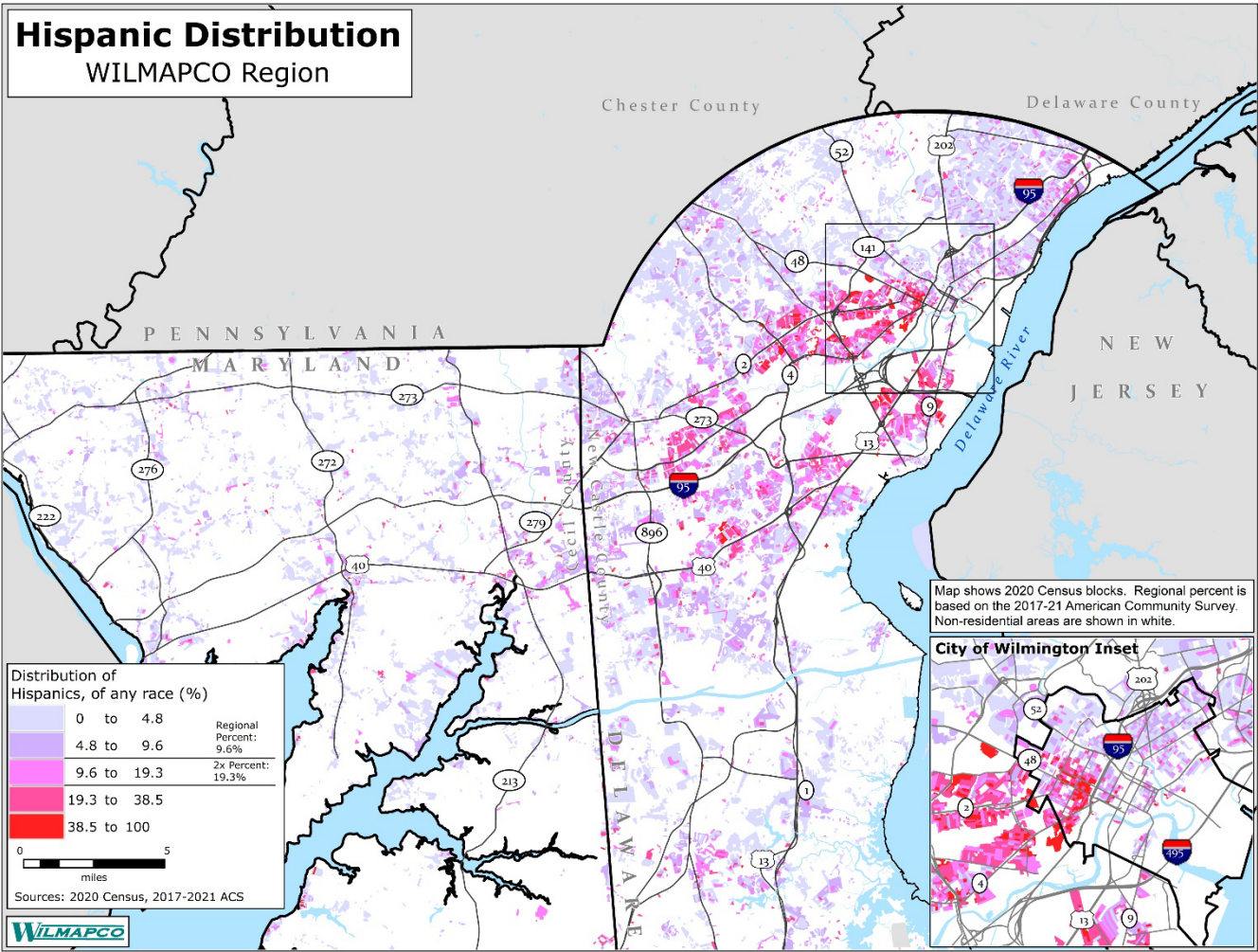
People living in Poverty – are concentrated in the City of Wilmington and within suburban communities along the I-95 corridor, especially from Elkton to Claymont.

Population Thresholds: Regional average – 10.5%; Regional analysis threshold – 21.0%

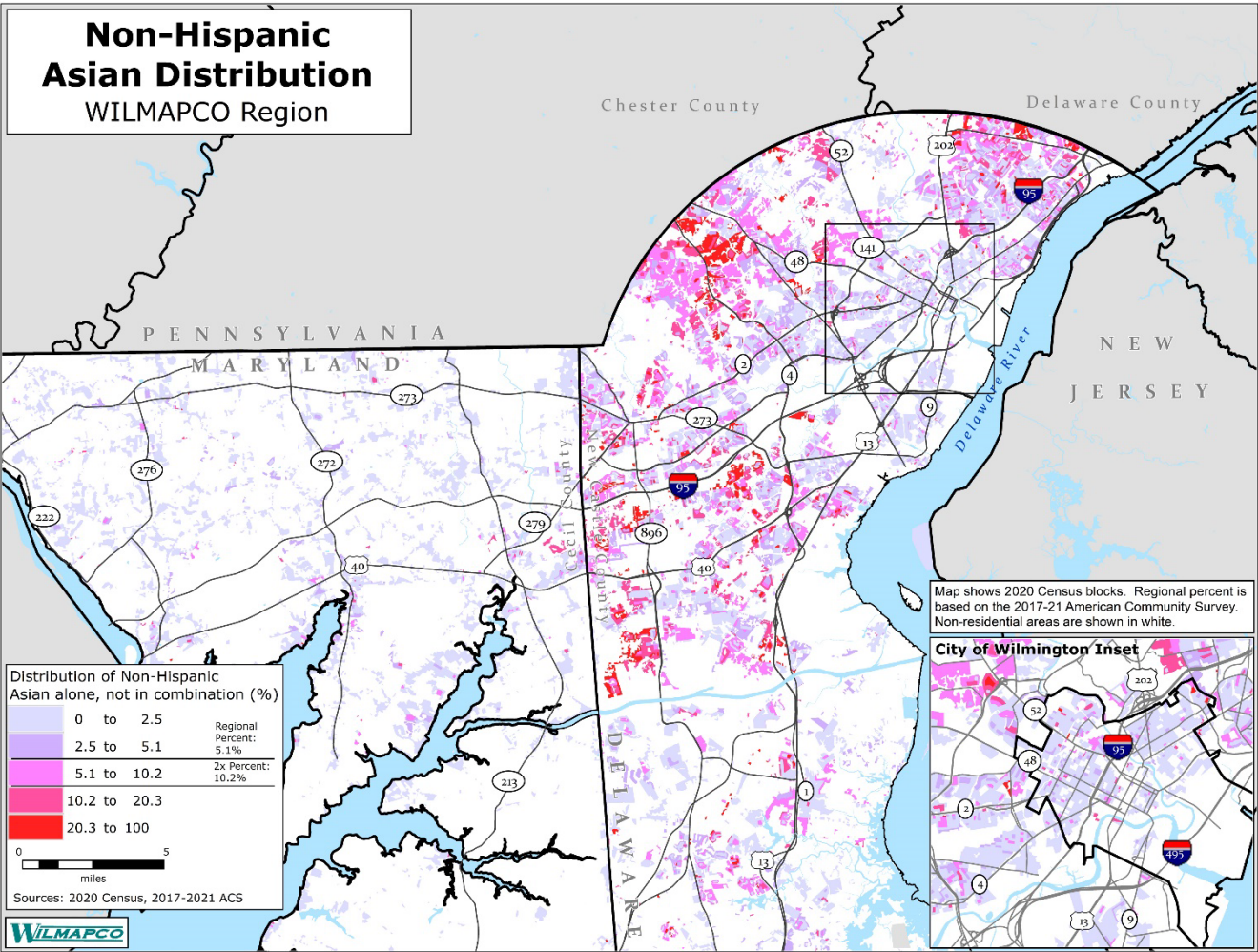
Black Population Distribution in the WILMAPCO Region



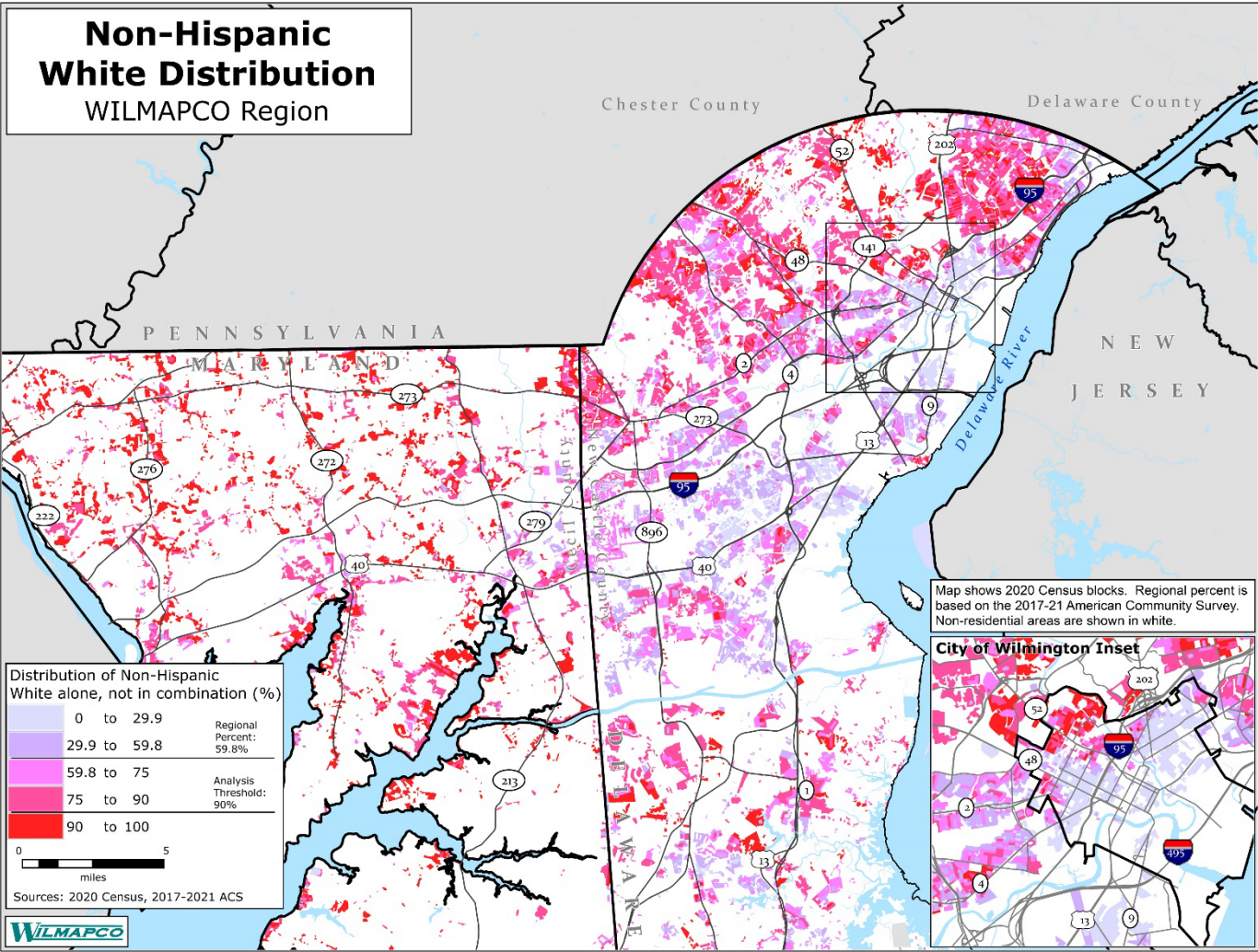
Hispanic Population Distribution in the WILMAPCO Region



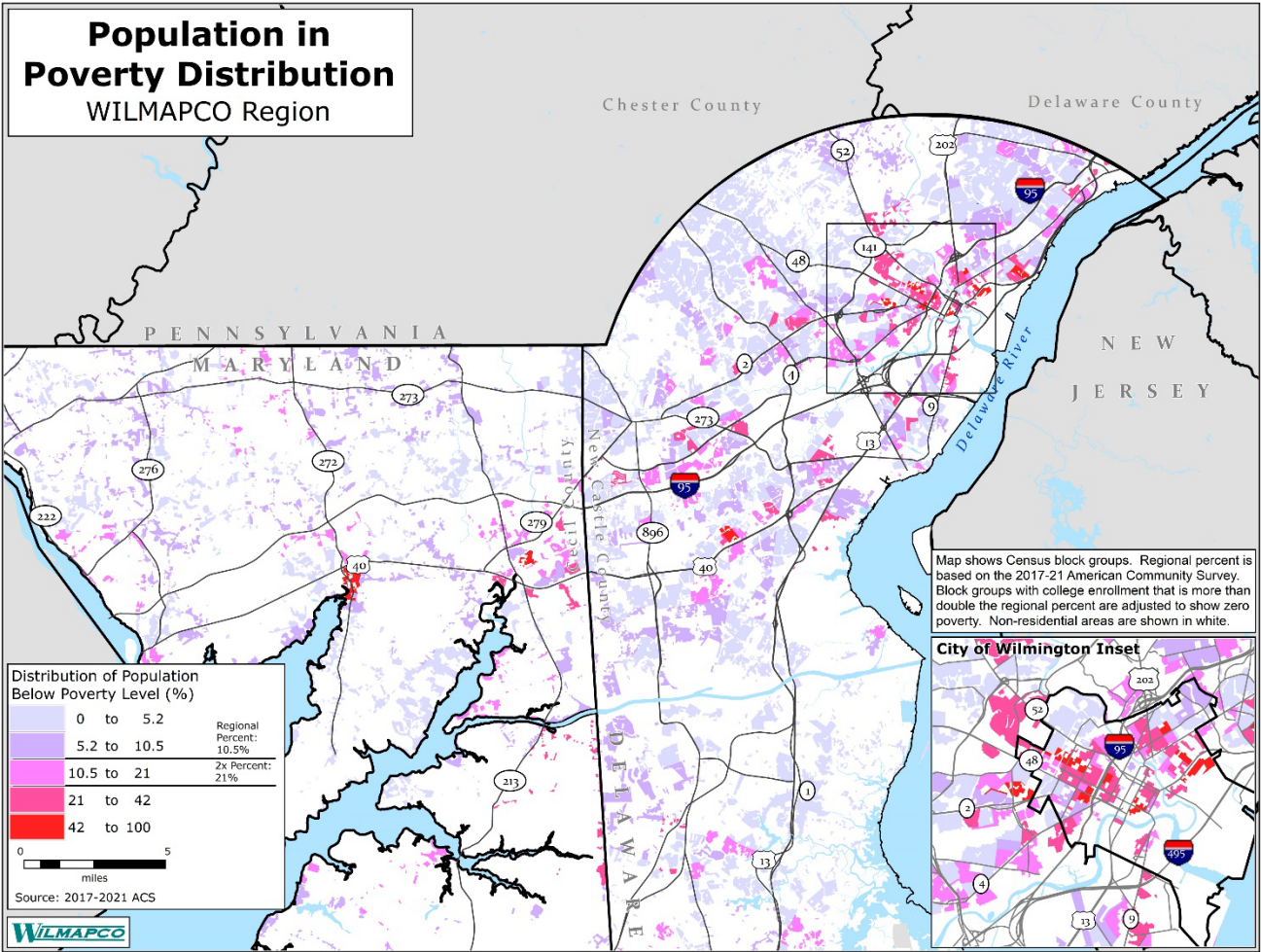
Asian Population Distribution in the WILMAPCO Region



White Population Distribution in the WILMAPCO Region



Population in Poverty Distribution in the WILMAPCO Region



EO Neighborhoods

WILMAPCO identifies Economic Opportunity (EO) neighborhoods (or areas) to help prioritize transportation projects. EO neighborhoods represent concentrations of low-income and under-resourced minority communities. The transportation analyses found later in this Plan do not utilize these EO neighborhoods, but instead the neighborhood concentrations of specific impoverished places and minority clusters identified in the previous section.

Our methodology for identifying EO neighborhoods continues to evolve. Previous efforts supplemented Census data with affordable housing and elementary school demographic data. The present Plan takes an even larger step forward with the incorporation of neighborhood level housing value data.

While Census data are still foundational to our EO neighborhood identification process, these data do not always do well representing the underlying demographic or socio-economic conditions of all neighborhoods, especially at the tract or block group levels^{10, 11}.

Neighborhood Housing Values

Neighborhood housing values were determined through an analysis of assessed housing values by the Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research (CADSR) at the University of Delaware. Tax parcel estimates were derived from sales to tax assessment ratios for New Castle County and as reported on a recent assessment in Cecil County. The parcels were grouped together into neighborhoods, based on their sharing common access to a major road. Each neighborhood was then given its own average estimated housing value based on the data from the tax parcels within that neighborhood. Finally, the neighborhoods were classified based on the average estimated housing value's relation to median housing value, regionally.

In some cases, multiunit developments were included in these neighborhoods and in others they were not. WILMAPCO supplemented these data with closer look at non-institutional, multiunit developments with 25 or more units. Using affordable housing data and publicly available rent data, estimated housing value classifications were provided for these multiunit developments.

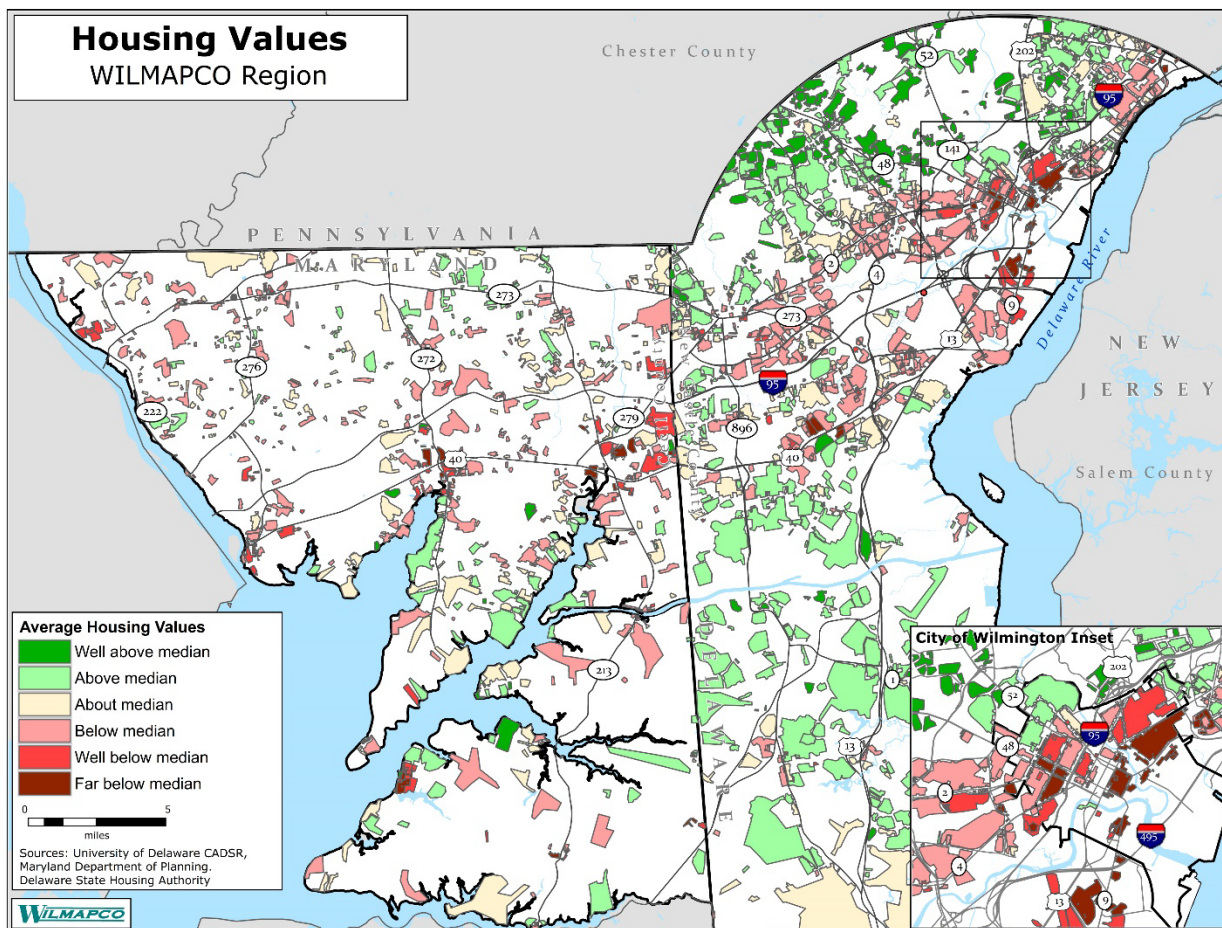
Members of our Mobility Opportunities Working Group carefully reviewed these designations and a handful of corrections were made. This analysis is very much a work in progress and future iterations will improve its quality.

¹⁰ Logan, J. R. (2018). Relying on the Census in Urban Social Science. *City & Community*, 17(3), 540-549. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12331>

¹¹ Gentrified urban communities can share a boundary with impoverished communities, for example. Subsequently, the area's demographic and socio-economic data are not indicative of conditions in either place.

We utilize neighborhoods that *diverged most* from the median in helping to determine our EO neighborhoods. As the map below shows, neighborhoods with well above the median housing value (90th percentile) are concentrated in northern New Castle County, west of US 202 while those with far below the median housing value (5th percentile) are mostly found east of I-95 in Wilmington and along the Route 9 corridor. In some parts of the region, there is a great diversity in values, with higher value communities located near lower value ones. They often share Census tract and block group boundaries.

Neighborhood Housing Values



EO Neighborhood Identification

The tables below list pathways to designation as a moderate or significant EO neighborhood.

Moderate EO Neighborhoods

1. Poverty > Regional Percentage (RP), and
Black or Hispanic population 3x RP, or
Racial/ethnic minorities 2x RP, or
Poverty 2x RP
2. Neighborhood Housing Values with a classification of Well Below Median Value (5th to 10th percentile). This includes multiunit developments of 25+ units with a classification of Well Below Median Value.

Significant EO Neighborhoods

1. Poverty 2x> Regional Percentage (RP), and
Black or Hispanic population 3x RP, or
Racial/ethnic minorities 90% RP, or
Poverty 3x RP
2. Neighborhood Housing Values with a classification of Far Below Median Value (5th percentile). This includes multiunit developments of 25+ units with a classification of Far Below Median Value and it includes government subsidized developments (25+ units) and the New Castle County HOPE Center.

As shown on the previous page, there are two pathways for designating areas as EO neighborhoods. The first pathway uses Census data. Neighborhoods where poverty¹² is twice the regional median are designated as EO neighborhoods. Neighborhoods with above-median poverty and high concentrations of ethnic or racial minorities¹³ are also designated as EO neighborhoods. More stringent benchmarks are applied to distinguish significant from moderate EO neighborhoods.

The second pathway for designating EO neighborhoods involves the Housing Values analysis. Places with “Well Below Median Value” were given moderate EO status. Those with “Far Below Median Value” were given the significant EO designation. These significant EO areas include all government subsidized developments with 25 or more units and the HOPE Center, a large transitional housing development.

We next made spatial “trims” to refine the EO neighborhoods. This process removes uninhabited places, neighborhoods with very small populations, communities with many full-time university students (which falsely signal poverty), and higher end housing developments that share Census boundaries with lower-income areas.

Spatial Trims for EO Neighborhoods

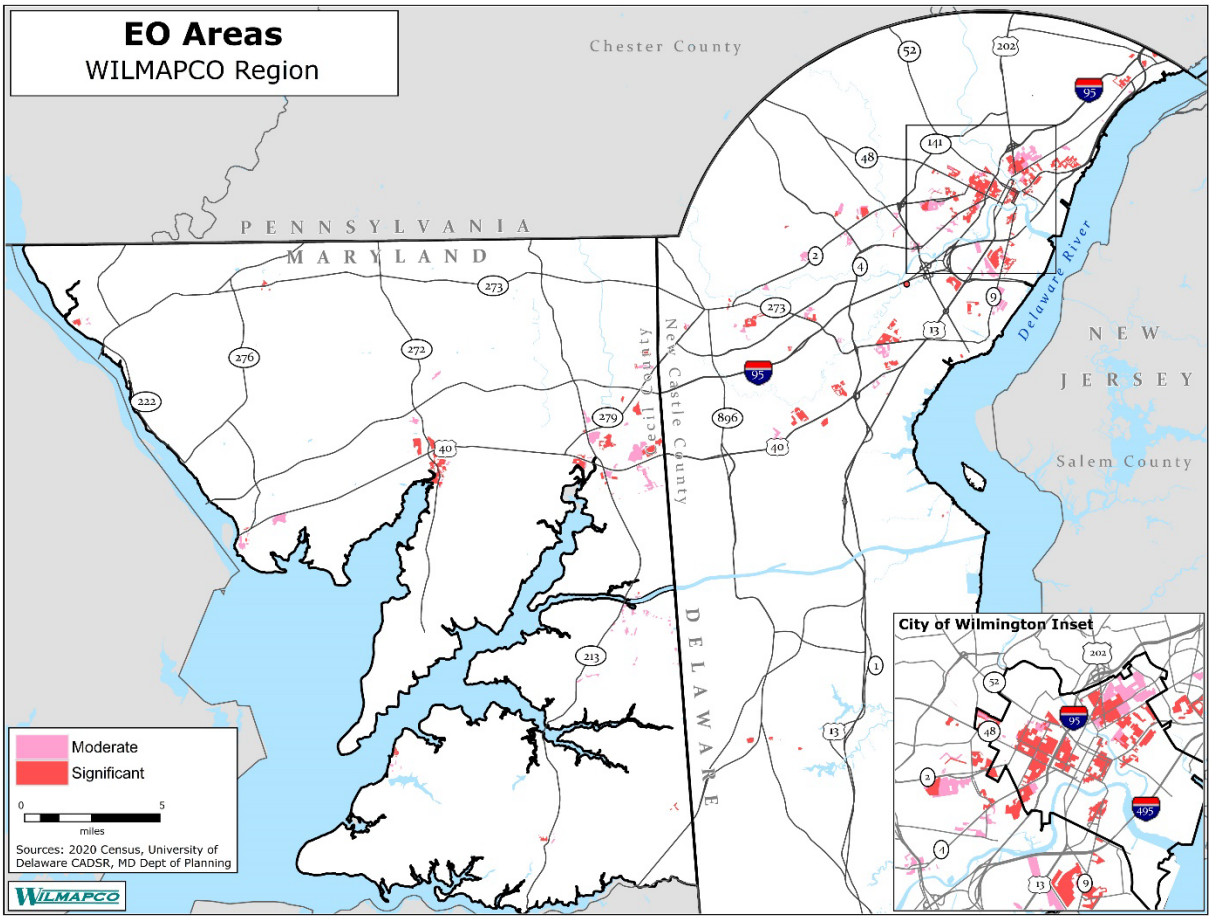
- Non-residential land use/land cover
- Housing groups with fewer than 25 parcels
- Census blocks with fewer than 25 households outside of a municipality or 5 households within a municipality
- Census block groups with more than double the regional percentage enrolled in college or graduate school.
- Housing Values (including working multiunit addendums) with a classification of Above Median Value or Well Above Median Value trimmed out.

¹² American Community Survey, 2017 – 2021, block group level.

¹³ Census 2020, block level.

The map below identifies our region's EO neighborhoods. The heaviest concentrations lie within and around the City of Wilmington, and in pockets along the I-95 corridor from North East to Claymont.

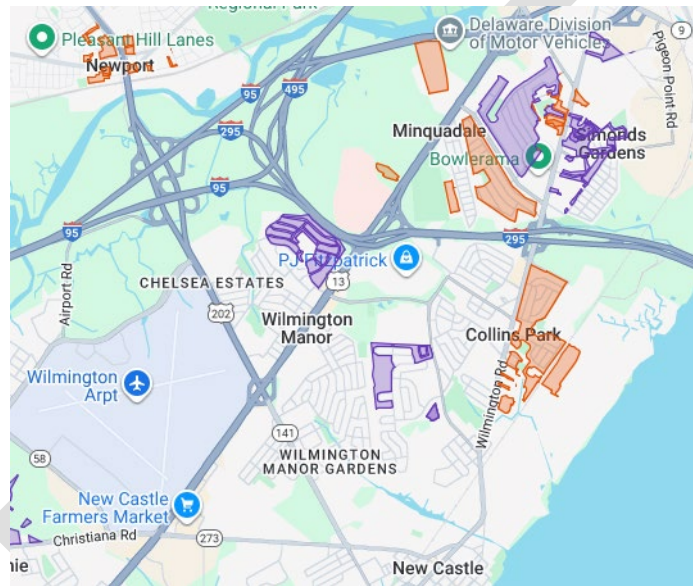
Economic Opportunity Neighborhoods



Interactive Maps

Economic Opportunity Neighborhoods

See all the identified EO areas and neighborhood concentrations and zoom into your neighborhood. Interactive maps are available on the WILMAPCO website. Visit <http://www.wilmapco.org/mop>.



Social Determinants of Health

WILMAPCO's Approach

Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) are the conditions in which people live, work, and age that impact their personal health. People living in communities with lower education, limited healthy food access, high unemployment, high poverty, and high racial minority segregation, for example, have generally poorer health that is independent of genetic predispositions. The Route 9 Master Plan Monitoring Committee developed a methodology for classifying neighborhoods based on their level of SDOH concern. WILMAPCO has taken that methodology and applied it at a regional level.

The methodology examines eight quantitative SDOH indicators: poverty rate, high school graduation rate, minority segregation, employment rate, homeownership rate, householder tenure, percentage of single parent households, and food desert status. Each neighborhood (census block group) receives up to two points for each factor. The sum of these eight scores is a neighborhood's final SDOH score. A higher score indicates a greater public health concern. The map on the following page shows SDOH results at the regional level.

For more information on our SDOH analysis, see the SDOH data report, along with an interactive map at:

<http://www.wilmapco.org/data-reports>

Transportation and Housing Affordability Analysis

Our first analysis looks at how affordable it is to live within concentrated areas of racial/ethnic and poverty clusters.

We first isolated the heaviest concentrations of our racial/ethnic population groups and people living in poverty. We flagged neighborhoods (block groups) that are home to double or more the regional average percentage of Black, Hispanic, Asian residents, people living in poverty, and White residents in the 2017-2021 ACS¹⁴. These are the concentrations of those populations.

Next, we turned to data on file from the Center for Neighborhood Technology to understand the affordability of living in neighborhoods throughout the region¹⁵. The data show, for each neighborhood, what the average lower income household¹⁶ would spend on both housing and transportation (the two biggest line items in typical household budgets of North Americans) in that area. For housing, spending 30% or less of the household budget is considered affordable; for transportation, the figure is 20%. Combining the two, spending 50% or less on transportation and housing is considered affordable.

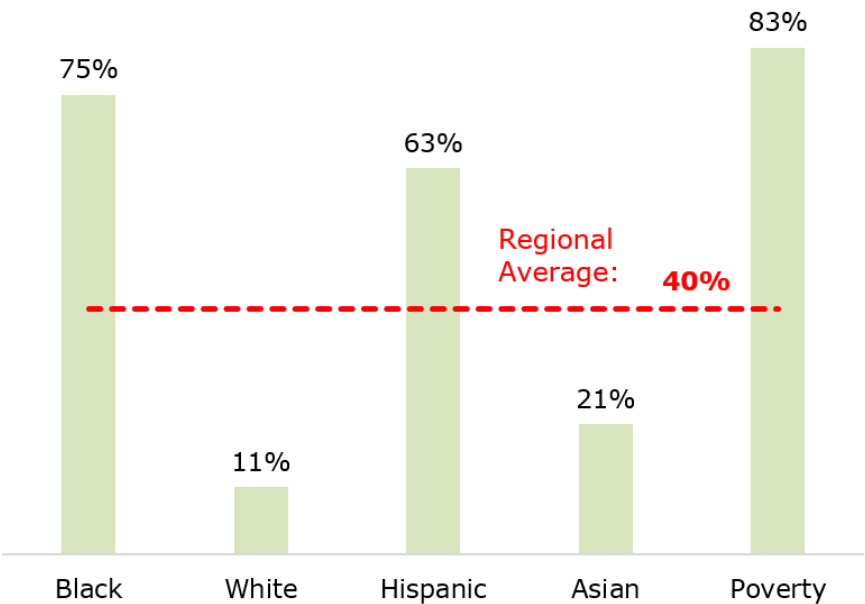


¹⁴ Because non-Hispanic White is the majority racial group regionally, we cannot double their average to identify White concentrations. Instead, we flag block groups home to 90% or more White residents and consider them the concentrated areas. For concentrations below poverty, we use individuals below poverty for analysis years after 2010 and households below poverty for the 2010 analysis year and before. The White, Black, and Asian residents considered in this Plan all identified themselves as non-Hispanic.

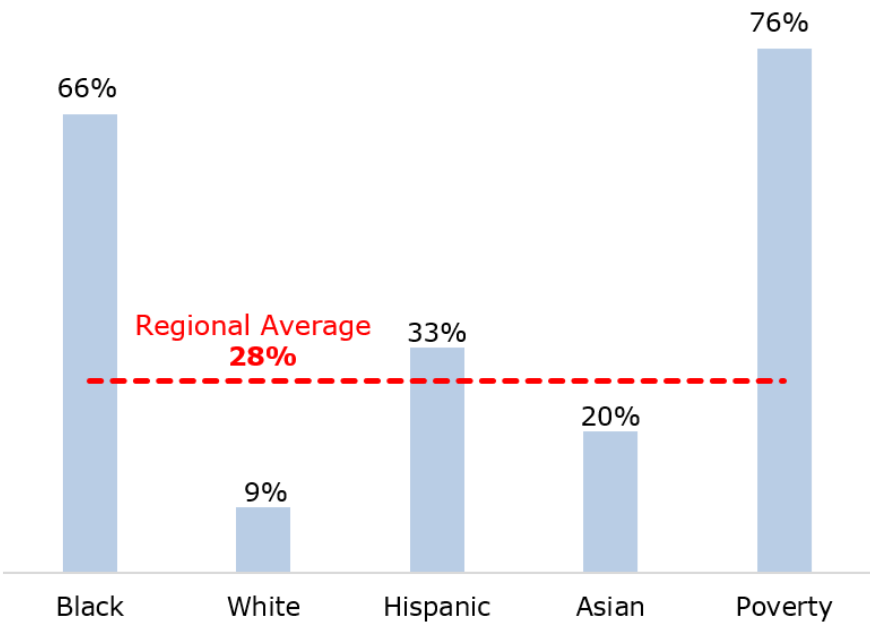
¹⁵ See this data report: http://www.wilmapco.org/data/TranspHousingCosts_DataReport.pdf

¹⁶ Lower income household is defined here as a household earning 80% of the median regional household income.

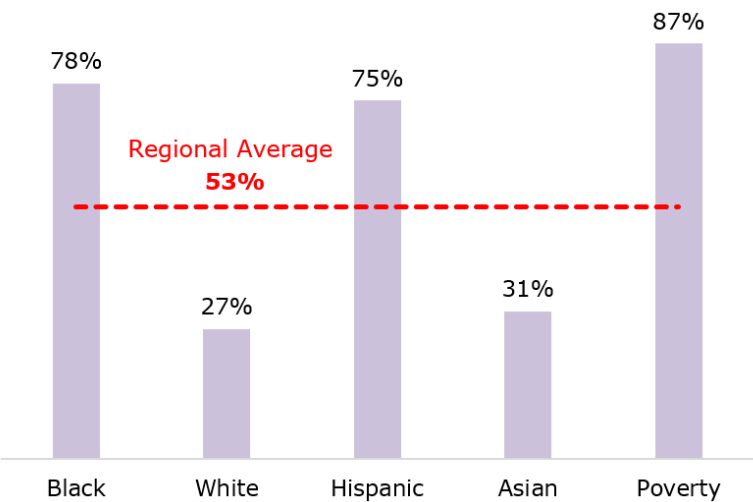
Affordable Transportation + Housing Costs
for Lower Income Households
by Group Concentrations



Affordable Transportation Costs
for Lower Income Households
by Group Concentrations



Affordable Housing Costs
for Lower Income Households
by Group Concentrations



Based on our analysis, 40% of neighborhoods (Census block groups) within the WILMAPCO region are affordable for lower income households. This figure is considered our regional average benchmark. Seventy-five percent (75%) of neighborhoods within Black concentrations, 63% within Hispanic concentrations, and 83% within poverty concentrations are affordable. These three groups easily meet our benchmark. Only 21% of Asian concentrations are affordable, which misses the benchmark. Asian residents, however, generally have higher incomes than the average resident in this region. Therefore, we do not consider this discrepancy a major cause for concern.

Because of our prevailing car dependency, transportation costs are particularly high across the region. Only 28% of neighborhoods have affordable transportation costs for a lower income household. Within Black concentrations, 66% of neighborhoods do; within high poverty areas 76% do. Thirty-three percent (33%) of Hispanic concentrations have affordable transportation costs, just above the regional average. Only 9% of White concentrations and 20% of Asian concentrations have affordable transportation costs for lower income households, both below the regional average.

About half (53%) of neighborhoods have affordable housing costs for lower income households. The variation between our ethnic/racial minority and poverty concentrations is similar to the transportation sector.

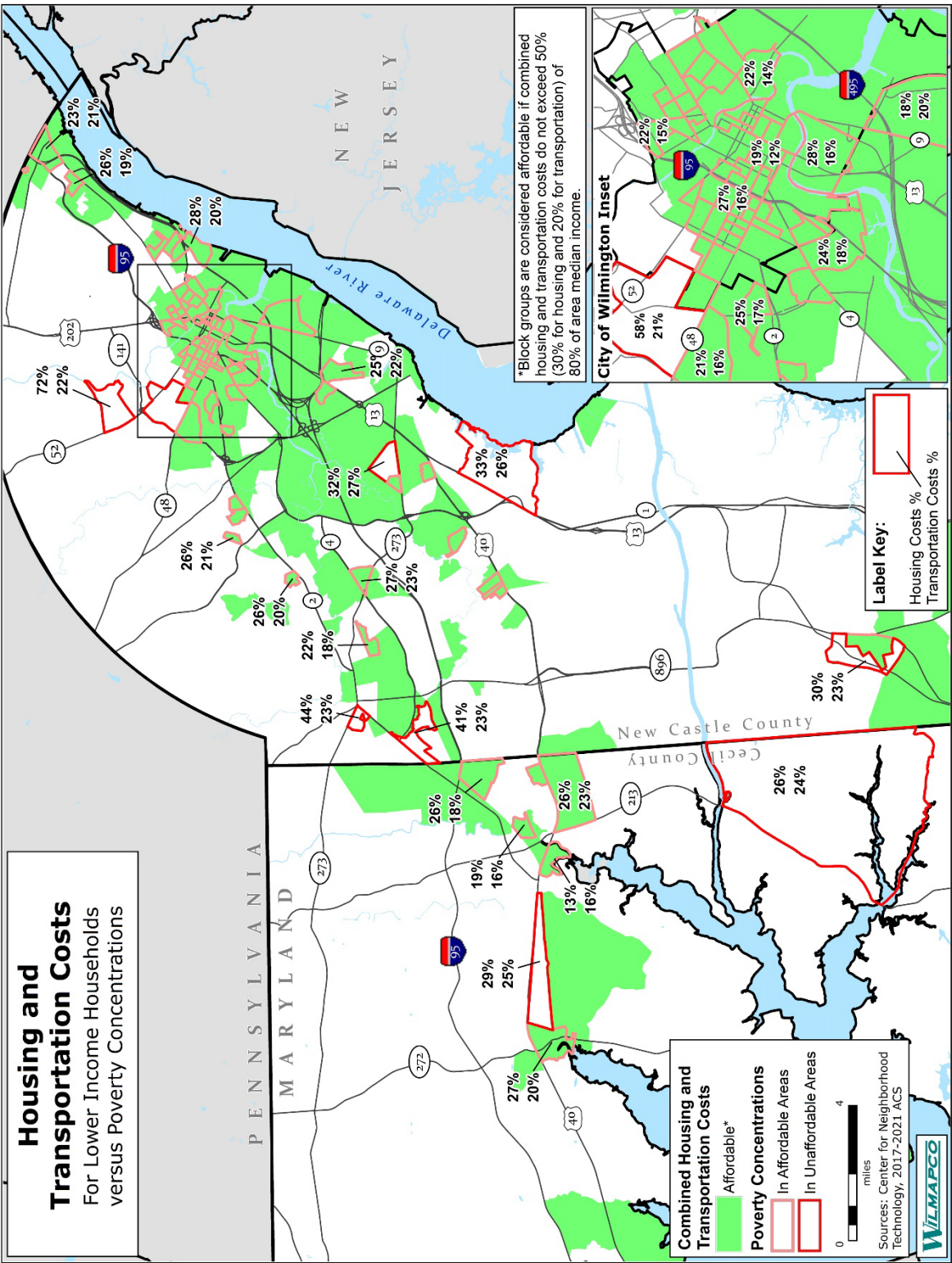
Most (83%) high poverty neighborhoods have affordable combined housing and transportation costs, as shown on the following map. And transportation costs play a bigger role than housing in making these places unaffordable. Twenty-four (24%) of high poverty concentrations have unaffordable transportation costs,

whereas only 13% have unaffordable housing costs. In 13% of high poverty concentrations, transportation costs even exceed housing costs.

Recommendation: Follow up analysis should consider transportation improvements in suburban high poverty areas to help lower transportation costs.



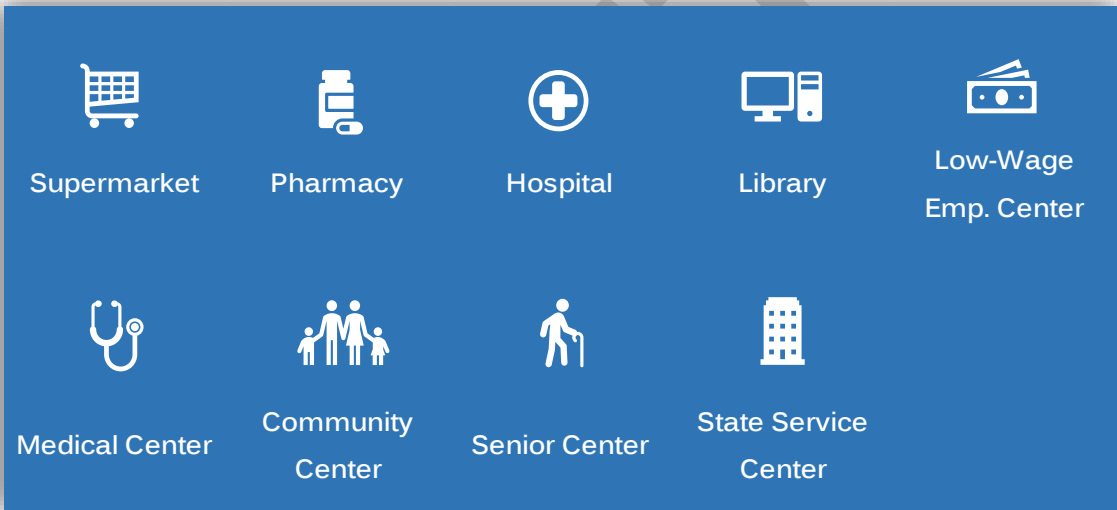
Transportation and Housing Costs for Lower Income Households
within Poverty Concentrations



Connectivity Analysis

Working with the University of Delaware’s Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research (CADSR), we analyzed our region’s transportation connectivity. Connectivity to nine destination types from every housing unit in the region was determined for walking, bicycling, transit, and car trips. Neighborhoods (Census blocks) are classed based on the collective level of housing unit connectivity *to at least one destination within these destination types*. The analysis provides a rich survey of regional connectivity—or, as it more commonly turned out, dis-connectivity. The 2025 Connectivity Analysis Report provides more detail on this analysis.

Key Destinations



Connectivity to these destinations was measured on four travel modes – walking, biking, public transit, and by car. A housing unit was marked “connected” to a destination type by walking or biking when a person could reach at least one of the destinations (in that type) within an easy 10-minute walk or ride. Connected housing units on public transit had to reach destinations on a 30-minute door-to-door (house to destination) peak hour, fixed-route bus trip. No more than 10 minutes of that trip could be spent walking along an easy route. Car connected housing units were those within a 15-minute car ride, along any road, between the housing unit and destination.

Connectivity Definitions, by Mode¹⁷

	Walking 10 minute walk along subdivision streets, trails, or sidewalk
	Biking 10 minute ride along a route with low traffic stress
	Transit 30 minute door-to-door peak trip; no more than 10 minutes walking
	Car 15 minute ride along any road

The final product of our connectivity analysis is the percentage of connected housing units, by mode and destination type, within each block. Because we also know the total number of housing units within each block, we also were able to produce corresponding regional level connectivity statistics.

As detailed in the 2025 Connectivity Analysis Report, homes in Black, Hispanic, or low income neighborhood concentrations had equal or better connectivity to the destinations than average on every mode considered. However, wide gaps still exist from these and other neighborhood concentrations to key destinations by walking, bike, and bus. For example, nine in ten (90%) residents of Hispanic neighborhoods are beyond easy walking distance to a library and seventeen percent of residents of low-income neighborhoods cannot easily reach targeted job clusters by bus.

The tables on the following page show average connectivity for blocks within each neighborhood concentration to each destination type and by each mode.

Recommendation: Follow up analysis should explore ways to fill transportation connectivity gaps from areas of economic opportunity to key destinations.

¹⁷ Additional details about how these accessibilities were calculated are available in the 2025 Connectivity Analysis Report.

Walking and Biking Connectivity, by Homes within Neighborhood Concentrations

		 Supermarket	 Pharmacy	 Hospital	 Library	 Low-Wage Emp. Center	 Medical Center	 Community Center	 Senior Center	 State Service Center
Regional Average		7%	12%	1%	5%	2%	6%	7%	7%	2%
NEIGHBORHOODS										
Black		16%	29%	3%	14%	4%	16%	20%	22%	8%
White		3%	5%	0%	2%	1%	1%	3%	2%	0%
Hispanic		15%	20%	4%	10%	2%	12%	17%	16%	2%
Asian		7%	9%	1%	2%	1%	6%	1%	2%	1%
Low Income		19%	33%	8%	19%	5%	17%	31%	33%	10%

		 Supermarket	 Pharmacy	 Hospital	 Library	 Low-Wage Emp. Center	 Medical Center	 Community Center	 Senior Center	 State Service Center
Regional Average		28%	34%	11%	18%	11%	21%	21%	24%	13%
NEIGHBORHOODS										
Black		54%	55%	27%	30%	18%	47%	46%	50%	38%
White		12%	16%	6%	12%	4%	9%	13%	10%	2%
Hispanic		38%	47%	18%	31%	17%	34%	29%	39%	18%
Asian		21%	27%	4%	10%	9%	12%	9%	11%	5%
Low Income		59%	68%	41%	44%	31%	53%	55%	64%	44%

Transit and Car Connectivity, by Homes within Neighborhood Concentrations

	 Supermarket	 Pharmacy	 Hospital	 Library	 Low-Wage Emp. Center	 Medical Center	 Community Center	 Senior Center	 State Service Center
Regional Average	45%	46%	37%	43%	44%	45%	40%	42%	37%
NEIGHBORHOODS									
Black	75%	75%	64%	73%	74%	74%	68%	71%	67%
White	20%	20%	17%	20%	19%	20%	20%	19%	17%
Hispanic	66%	67%	60%	65%	66%	67%	63%	66%	57%
Asian	39%	39%	29%	38%	38%	38%	30%	36%	33%
Low Income	83%	84%	76%	81%	83%	83%	77%	82%	74%

	 Supermarket	 Pharmacy	 Hospital	 Library	 Low-Wage Emp. Center	 Medical Center	 Community Center	 Senior Center	 State Service Center
Regional Average	96%	97%	85%	98%	86%	96%	97%	93%	85%
NEIGHBORHOODS									
Black	98%	98%	94%	98%	94%	99%	98%	98%	95%
White	93%	95%	59%	96%	69%	91%	97%	78%	60%
Hispanic	98%	99%	96%	99%	96%	99%	99%	99%	95%
Asian	100%	100%	88%	100%	96%	100%	100%	99%	89%
Low Income	97%	97%	95%	97%	95%	98%	97%	98%	96%

WILMAPCO-defined Food Deserts

Our connectivity analysis allows us to take a more nuanced look at another important area of policy – food deserts. Food deserts are defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as a census tract where the poverty rate is at least 20%, and 33% of its residents are more than one mile from a grocery store.

WILMAPCO has developed a separate process for identifying food deserts.¹⁸

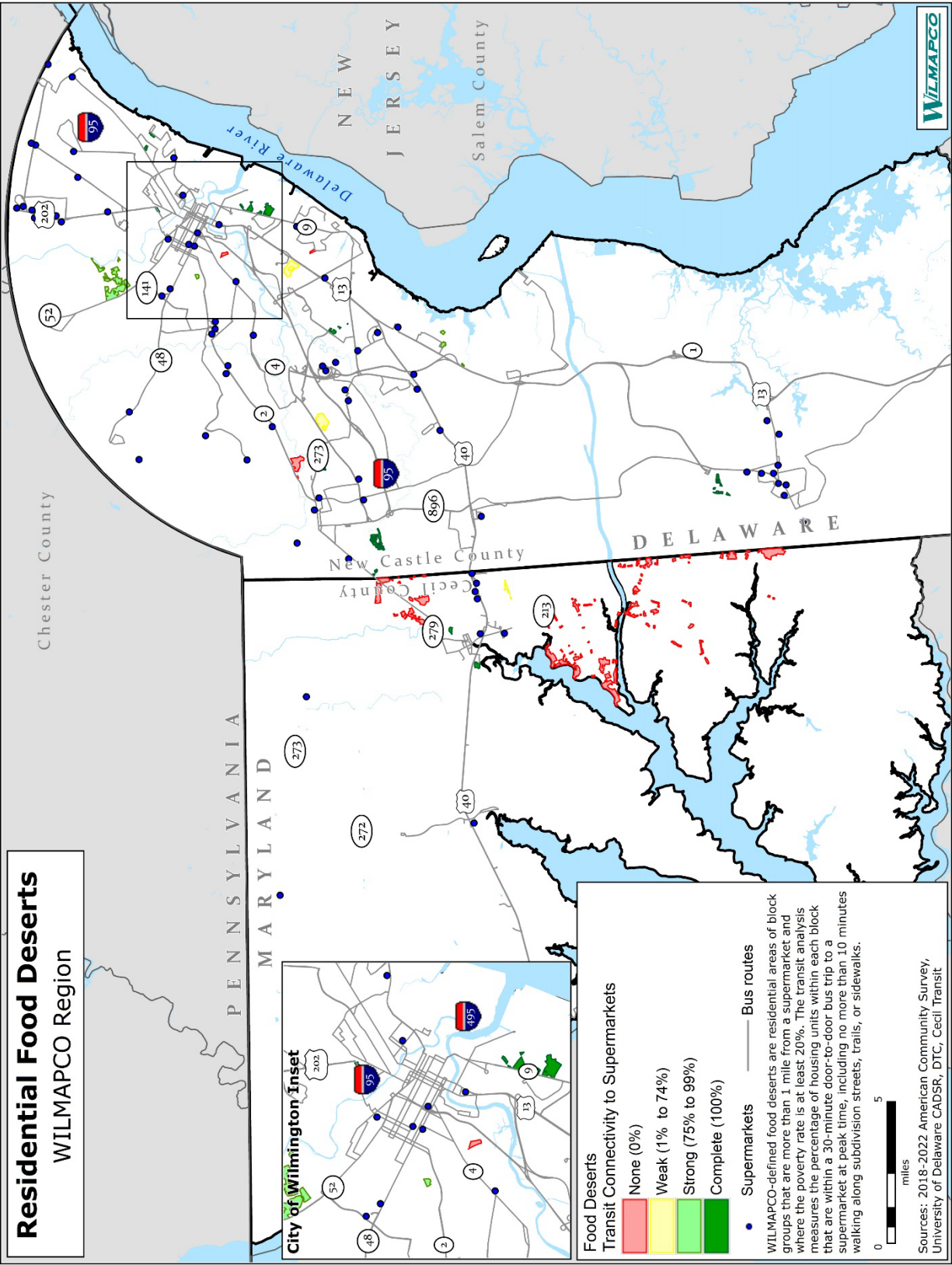
1. We begin by using one of the USDA's food desert criteria – 20% of residents below poverty – but apply it at the smaller block group and not tract level.
2. Next, we trimmed away places where people do not live, using local land use and land cover data. Then, instead of using a percentage of residents within the block group, we trimmed away residential areas that are within one-mile of a supermarket, leaving only those that are one-mile or further.
3. Finally, we classed the identified food deserts based on their transit connectivity to supermarkets.

The map on the following page shows the resulting food deserts. Food deserts are scattered along the I-95 corridor between Wilmington and Elkton, as well as northwest of Wilmington, near Middletown, and along the MD-279 corridor and Eastern Shore in Cecil County. We class these food deserts by their level of connectivity to supermarkets on public transit – using the same analysis from the previous section.

Food deserts with no acceptable transit connectivity to supermarkets include communities on the Eastern Shore of Cecil County, along the MD-279 corridor north of Elkton, on the east end of Newark, and the Alban Park neighborhood in Wilmington. Other food deserts were found to have weak, strong, or complete transit connectivity to supermarkets.

¹⁸ The USDA food desert identification methodology has underlying flaws. Census tracts are too large a demographic boundary to use for food desert designations – and indeed other important federal designations, such as Opportunity Zones. Census tracts are often home to many distinct neighborhoods with varying socio-economic conditions. They also often contain vast areas where people do not live such as industrial parks, agricultural fields, and open spaces. The USDA methodology also does not consider the existence of local bus systems. It assumes that people will only walk or drive to the store.

Residential Food Deserts by Transit Connectivity to Supermarkets

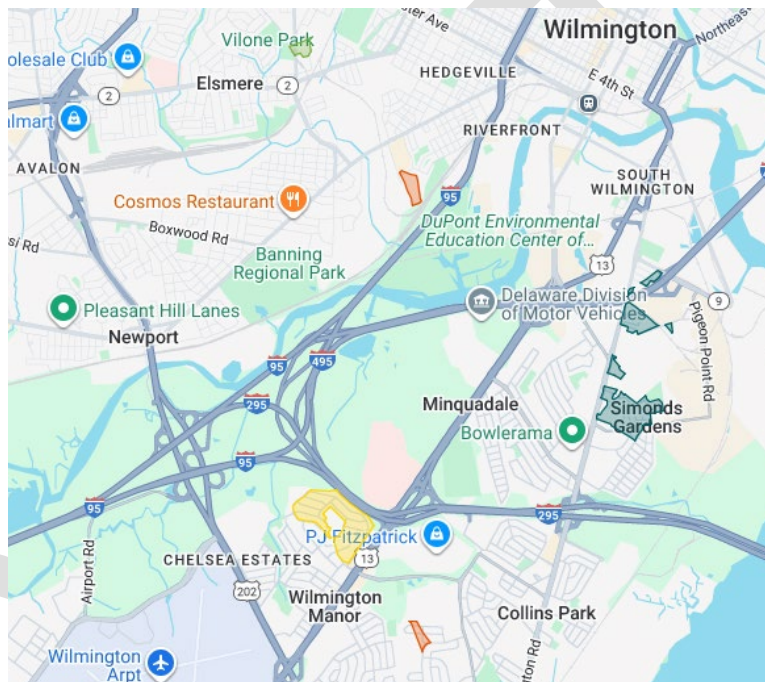


Recommendation: Additional analysis should be undertaken to identify potential improvements to transportation connectivity from these food deserts and/or the opportunities to encourage the placement of accessible supermarkets near them.

Interactive Maps

Food Deserts

See all the WILMAPCO identified food deserts and zoom into your neighborhood in this [interactive map](#).



TIP Spending Analysis

In this analysis we considered whether neighborhoods with heavy concentrations of racial/ethnic minorities and people living below poverty receive an expected level of transportation spending in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a listing of transportation projects maintained by WILMAPCO. For a transportation project to receive federal funding, it must be listed here. The list contains four years of planned project spending.

As with other analyses in this section, we begin by isolating the heaviest concentrations of our racial/ethnic population groups and people living in poverty¹⁹.

Next, we developed a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) dataset of TIP projects for the beginning TIP years of FY 2002, FY 2006, FY 2010, FY 2014, FY 2018, FY 2020, FY 2023, and FY 2025. Several assumptions and caveats must be noted:

- Some projects cannot be associated with a place, such as funding for the Rideshare program or bus replacements. These projects were excluded.
- Projects that occurred on expressways or railways (except train station area improvements) were also excluded. These projects are more regional than local transportation projects. In some cases, they can have a negative effect on the local population and should not be considered an improvement at all. For example, an interstate project located too closely to a community may encourage more traffic and noise and air pollution within that community. Excluding them entirely from the start resolves these issues while avoiding what would be a debatable project-by-project analysis of impacts.
- The costs for individual bridge projects are not always known, though their locations are. Instead, they are shown as a “grouped” project within the TIP. When this is the case, we assumed equal spending across all grouped bridge projects in the region. So, if \$1 million was spent on 10 bridges, we assumed that \$100,000 was spent on each.

With these caveats taken into consideration, we were left with a listing of “community transportation projects” for each of the TIP years.

¹⁹ We flagged block groups that are home to double or more the regional average percentage of Black, Hispanic, Asian residents, people living in poverty, and White residents across five Census and American Community Surveys (ACS): 2000 Census, 2006-2010 ACS, 2012-2016 ACS, 2015-2019 ACS, and the 2018-2022 ACS. Because non-Hispanic White is the majority racial group regionally, we cannot double their average to identify White concentrations. Instead, we flag block groups that are 90% or more White and consider them the concentrated areas. For concentrations below poverty, we use individuals below poverty for analysis years after 2010 and households below poverty for the 2010 analysis year and before. White, Black, and Asian residents are all considered non-Hispanic members of those groups.

Next, we tallied the total population of the concentrations for each of the census years analyzed. We divided this number by the total regional population. The resulting figure became our “expected funding level” for community transportation projects, or benchmark. There was a different benchmark for each of the census years analyzed.

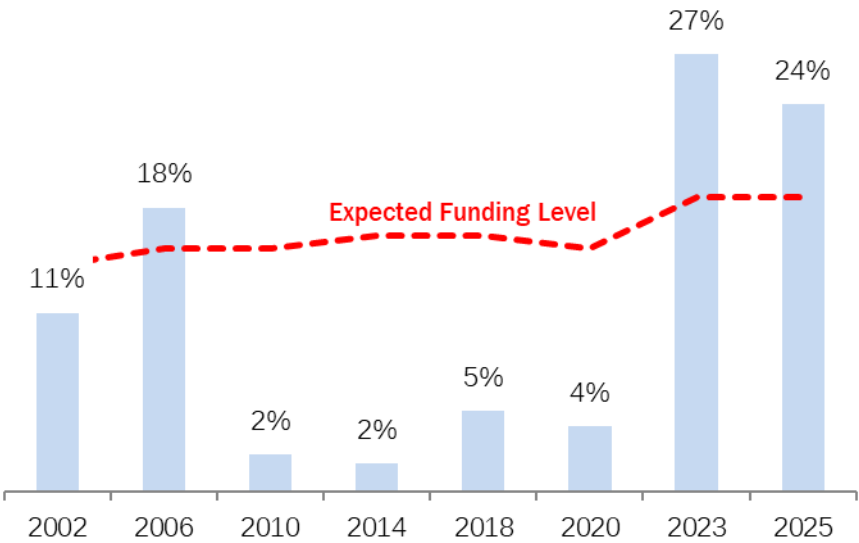
Then, we flagged community transportation projects within the concentrations for each TIP year. We calculated what percentage they represented of total transportation project funding (the community transportation projects plus the mappable projects we excluded at the start – expressways and railways) within a given concentration for that year²⁰. These percentages were then compared to the benchmarks to measure community transportation project funding within the concentrations over time²¹.



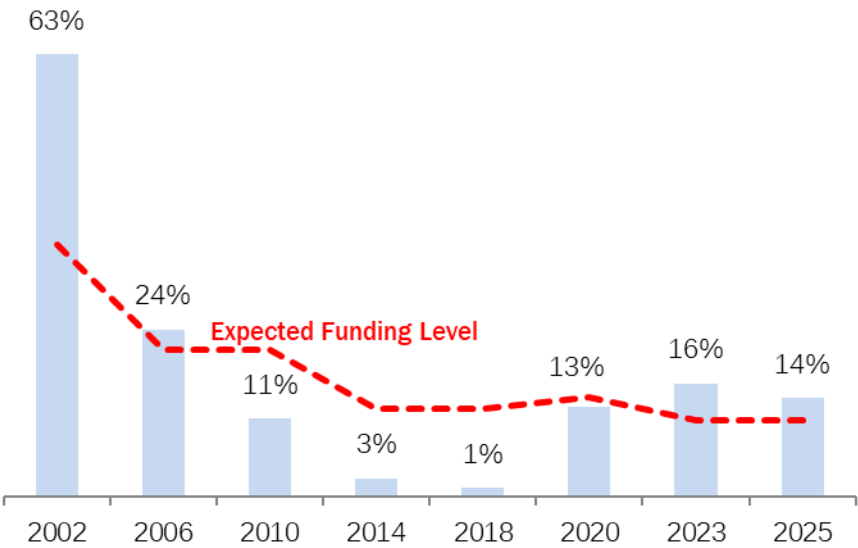
²⁰ We opted against comparing the total spending for community transportation projects within these concentrations against the total spending for all community transportation projects. Instead, the selected approach compared against the total spend for all mappable transportation projects. Although the former is also a logical approach, the impact of heavy funding for regional expressway and railway projects outside concentrations would have been masked.

²¹ Benchmarks from certain Census years were compared to community transportation projects from certain TIP years. The benchmarks from the 2000 Census were compared to the TIP projects in the 2002 analysis year. Meanwhile, benchmarks from the 2006 – 2010 ACS were compared to the TIP projects in the 2006 and 2010 TIP analysis years. Benchmarks from the 2012 – 2016 ACS were compared to the 2014 and 2018 analysis years. Benchmarks from the 2015-2019 ACS were compared to the 2020 analysis year, and benchmarks from the 2018-2022 ACS were compared to the 2023 and 2025 analysis years.

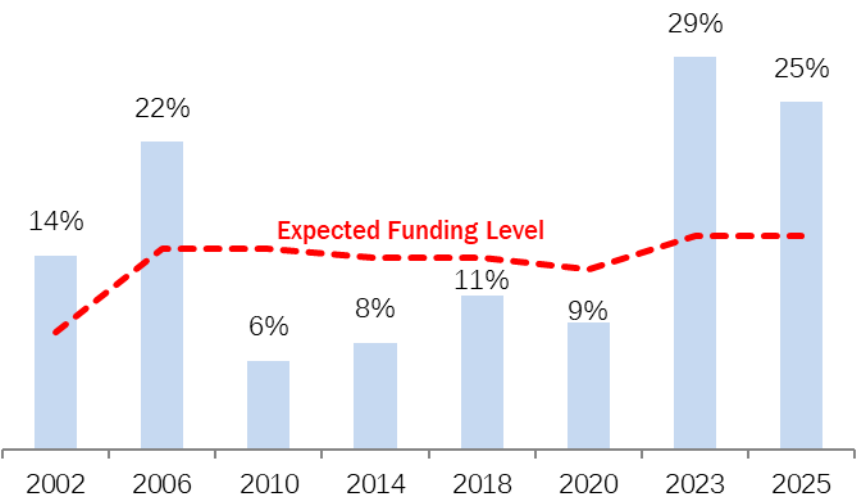
Black Concentrations - TIP Funding



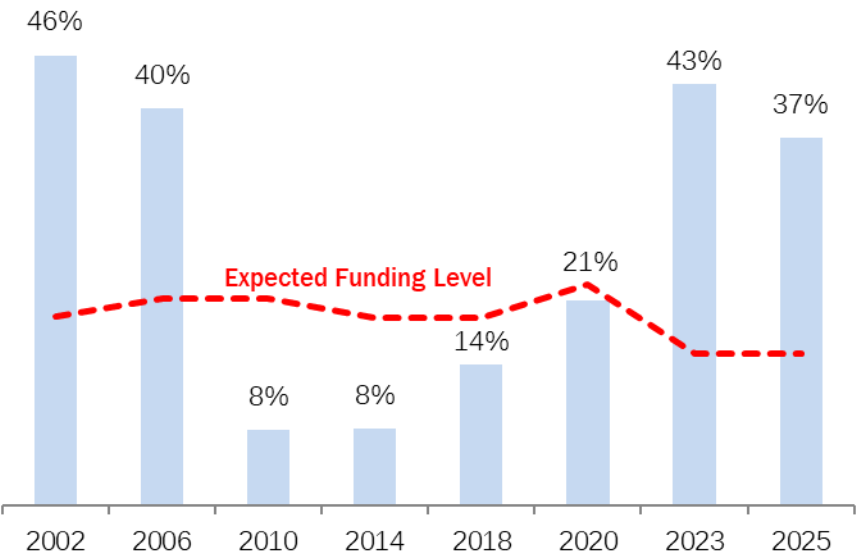
White Concentrations - TIP Funding



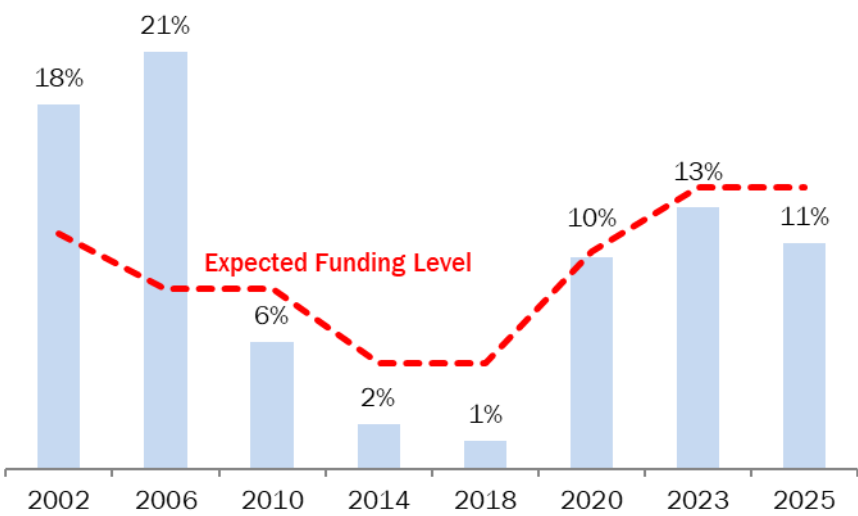
Hispanic Concentrations - TIP Funding



Asian Concentrations - TIP Funding

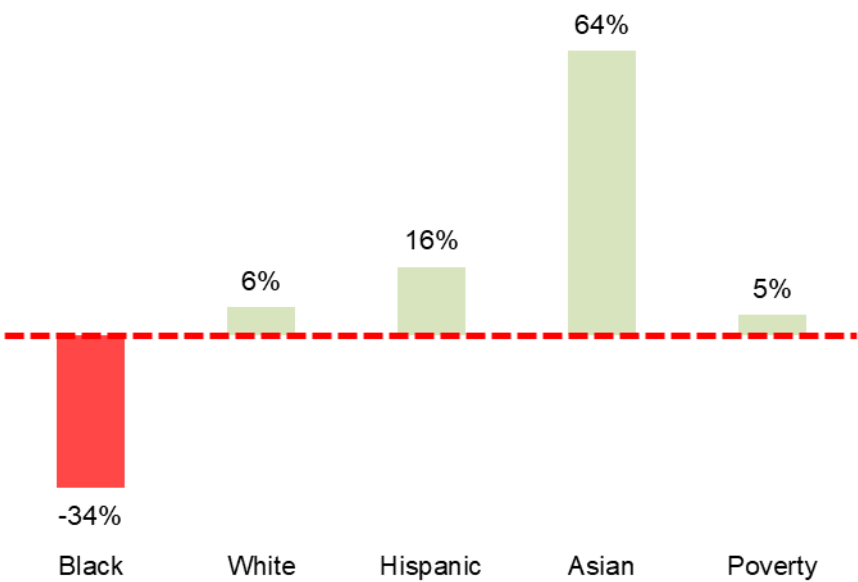


Poverty Concentrations - TIP Funding



The graph below shows the difference between the expected and actual funding levels each concentration received between the TIP years beginning in FY 2002 and FY 2025.

Deviation from Expected TIP Funding – FY 2002 to FY 2025



Concentrations of Black residents have received 34% less funding than expected from community transportation projects, while all other concentrations have received more than expected. White and poverty concentrations have received about 5% more funding than expected, and Hispanic concentrations received 16% more. Asian concentrations received 64% more funding than expected, largely as a result of large-scale transit and multimodal projects being funded in those areas in recent years.

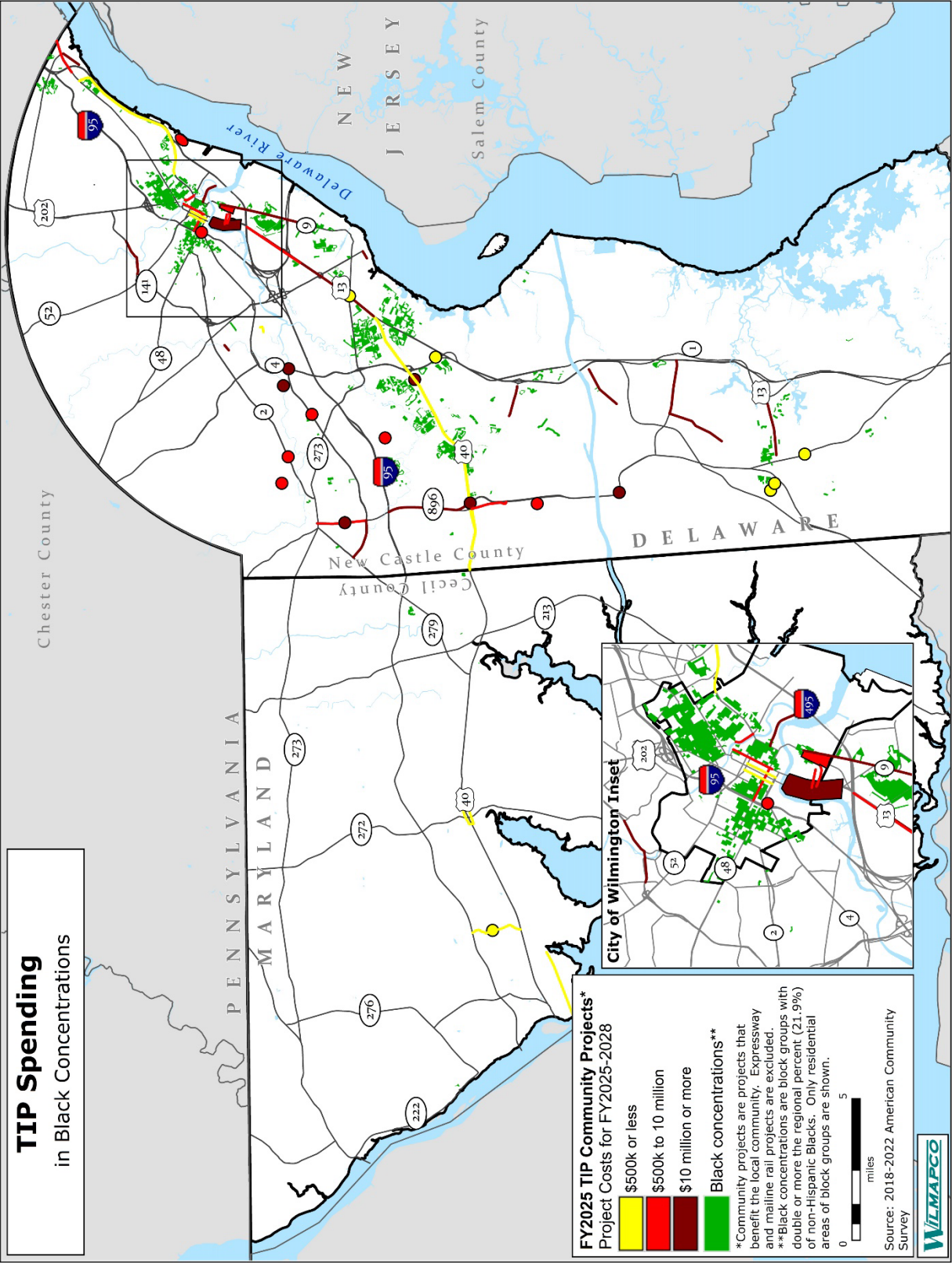
TIP Spending in Black Concentrations was below what was expected – 34% less.

- Spending met expected funding levels in the 2006, 2023, and 2025 analysis years.
- While these concentrations account for about 18% of the total regional population today (up from 14% in 2000), only 2% of community TIP spending occurred there in the years 2010 and 2014 and only about 5% in 2018 and 2020. Large-scale projects in suburban areas pulled funding away from Black concentrations in the 2010s. 27% of spending occurred there in 2023 and 24% in 2025, helping to reverse a funding deficit, but cumulative spending over the past 25 years is still below benchmarks.
- The map on the following page illustrates project spending within Black concentrations in the FY 2025 – 2028 TIP. In recent years, large-scale projects were funded in Black concentrations, including the Claymont and Newark Regional Transportation Centers.

TIP Spending in White Concentrations exceeded expected funding levels – 6% more.

- Heavy project spending occurred in these concentrations in the early 2000s.
- Between 2002 and 2018, project spending fell dramatically, but so too did the benchmark. However, project spending in White concentrations grew in 2020 through 2025. Today, these concentrations account for 11% of the region's population, continuing an ongoing decline from 36% in 2000.

FY 2025 – 2028 TIP Spending in Black Concentrations



TIP Spending in Hispanic Concentrations exceeded expected funding levels – 16% more.

- Spending in Hispanic clusters exceeded expectations in the early 2000s, before dropping in 2010. This reversed in 2023 and 2025, when spending again exceeded expectations.
- Today, these concentrations account for about 16% of the region's population, up from 9% in 2000.

TIP Spending in Asian Concentrations exceeded expected funding levels – 64% more.

- Heavy community project spending occurred in Asian concentrations in the early 2000s, before dropping in 2010. This reversed in 2023 and 2025, when large-scale community projects occurred in these areas, including the Claymont and Newark Regional Transportation Centers, as well as multimodal improvements to SR-4 and SR-299.
- Today, these concentrations account for about 15% of the region's population, down from 19% in 2000.

TIP Spending in Poverty Concentrations met expected funding levels – 5% more.

- Spending in high poverty clusters exceeded expectations in the early 2000s, before dropping in 2010.
- The total population within poverty concentrations fell between 2000 and 2016 but rose again between 2019 and 2022. Today, these concentrations account for about 14% of the region's population, closely matching 12% in 2000.

What is also evident, across all concentrations, is higher levels of funding in the earlier years of the analyses versus the middle years, then a rebound in recent years. Previously, there was a general movement of project funding away from more diverse places in the region (Wilmington and the I-95 corridor) and to New Castle County's southern suburbs (south of US 40) in response to development pressures there. In recent years, large-scale community projects have been funded along the I-95 corridor.

Recommendation: Support planning and project development within our Black neighborhood concentrations to reverse the deficit of spending in those areas between 2010 and 2020.

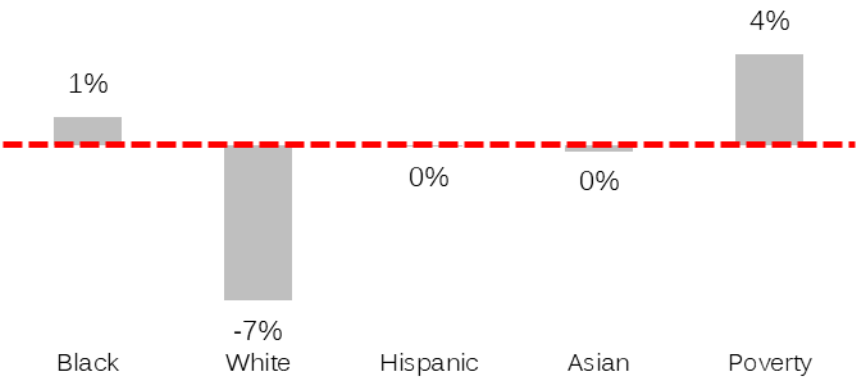
UPWP Studies Equity Analysis

This analysis examines potential differences with where WILMAPCO transportation plans are created. These plans are listed and described in the annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Pulling all the UPWPs between the years 1999 and 2025, we sought to understand how the demographics of the areas studied jibed with regional demographics.

As a first level analysis we opted for broad demographic comparisons. For each UPWP year, we began by flagging all block groups covered by local (non-regional/non-county-level) studies during that year. Next, we calculated the average demographic makeup of studied block groups on that given year. These were compared to the regional averages for applicable census years to measure how well they stacked up to regional demographics.²²

The graph below presents the result of this analysis. No significant concerns are evident. The populations covered by WILMAPCO studies match quite well with the region’s demographics. In the average study area, the average percentage of Black residents were 1% higher than the regional average; White residents 7% lower; Hispanic and Asian residents exactly the regional average; and people living in poverty 4% higher than expected. All told, the average WILMAPCO local study area was slightly more diverse than the region.

Deviation from Regional Demographic Composition in
local WILMAPCO Studies, 1999 – 2025



²² We compared the UPWP years 1999 – 2004 to the 2000 Census; UPWP years 2008 – 2012 to the 2006 – 2010 ACS; UPWP years 2013 – 2019 to the 2012 – 2016 ACS; UPWP years 2020 – 2025 to the 2020 Census and 2018 -2022 ACS. There were no local UPWP studies during the years 2005 – 2007.

Turning to the Black concentrations, the table below lists which UPWP projects occurred within those neighborhoods. WILMAPCO engaged in two dozen studies within these communities since 1999. Most (66%) have occurred relatively recently – in 2017 or after – and should yet produce funded projects.

Local UPWP Studies within Black Concentrations

ID	Title	Year
1	New Castle Transportation Plan	1999
2	Edgemoor TOD	2003
3	Shipley Street Revitalization Plan	2004
4	Southbridge Circulation Study	2008
5	Wilmington Bike Plan	2008
6	Downtown Wilmington Circulation Study	2011
7	Port of Wilmington Truck Parking Study	2013
8	Wilmington Initiatives	2013
9	Route 40 Plan (NCC)	2014
10	Wilmington Transit Moving Forward	2014
11	North Claymont Area Master Plan	2017
12	Route 9 Corridor Master Plan	2017
13	SR 141 Transportation and Land Use Plan	2017
14	12th Street Connectory Study	2019
15	7th Street Peninsula Study	2019
16	Route 9 Paths Plan	2021
17	Churchmans Crossing Plan Update	2022
18	Union Street Reconfiguration & Streetscape Improvement	2022
19	Port of Wilmington Area Truck Access Analysis	2022
20	New Castle Transportation Plan Update	2022
21	Southbridge Transportation Action Plan	2023
22	East Elkton Traffic Circulation and Safety Plan	2024
23	FUTURE - MD Route 272 Corridor Transportation Plan	2025
24	FUTURE - Claymont Area Master Plan	2025

Key:

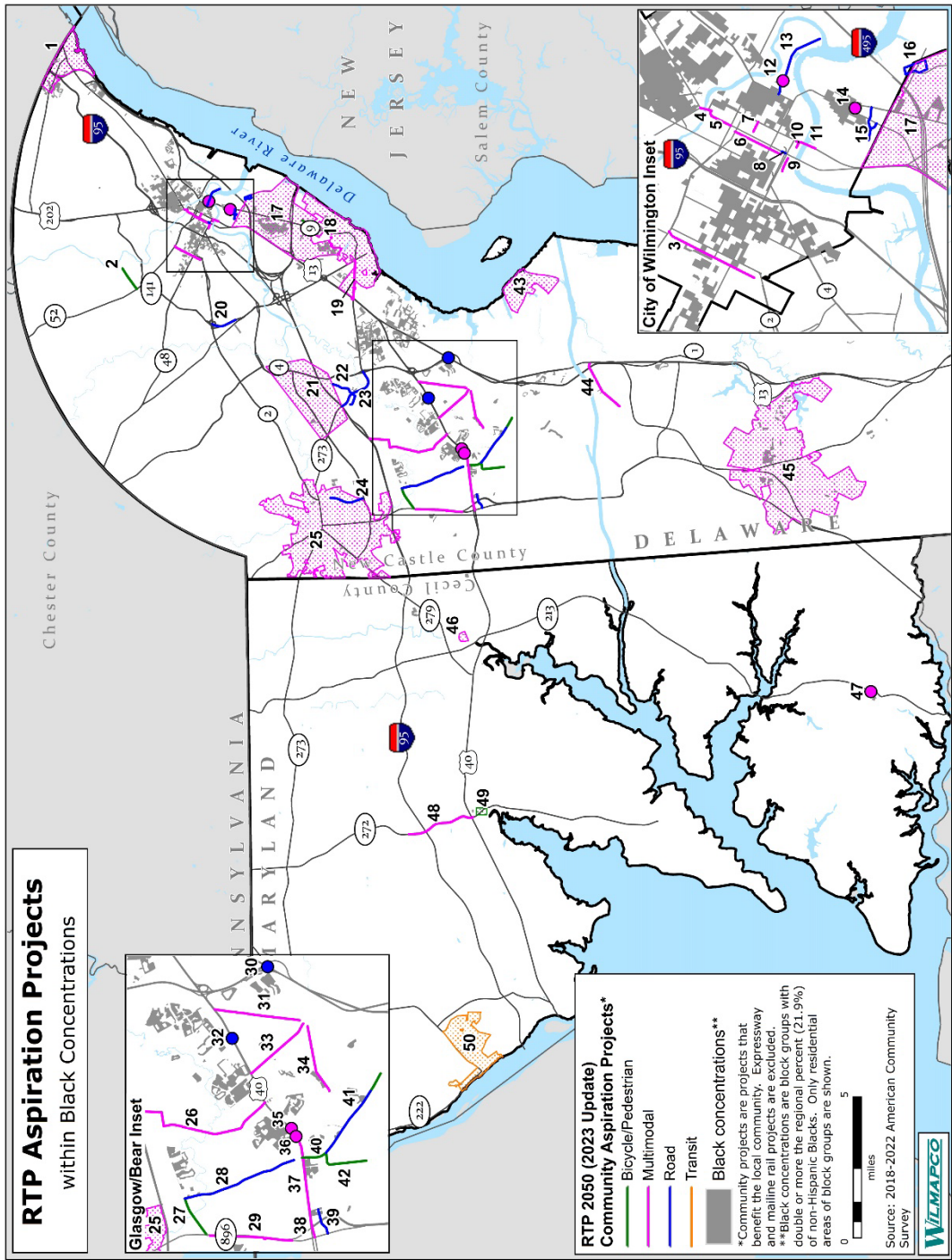
2000 Census Black concentrations match 1999-2004 UPWP projects
 ACS 2006-2010 Black concentrations match 2008-2012 UPWP projects
 ACS 2012-2016 Black concentrations match 2013-2019 UPWP projects
 2020 Census Black concentrations match 2020-2025 UPWP projects

While projects within the UPWP studies are beginning to generate funded projects, others remain in the queue. Many of these unfunded projects have a place in our 2050 Regional Transportation Plan's (RTP) Aspiration List. The map and associated list on the following pages identify aspiration list projects within Black concentrations. Unfortunately, technical priority scores are unavailable for aspiration list projects, but these could be generated.

Recommendation: Aspiration projects with high technical priority scores should be considered strongly for implementation.



Unfunded RTP Aspiration Projects within Black Concentrations

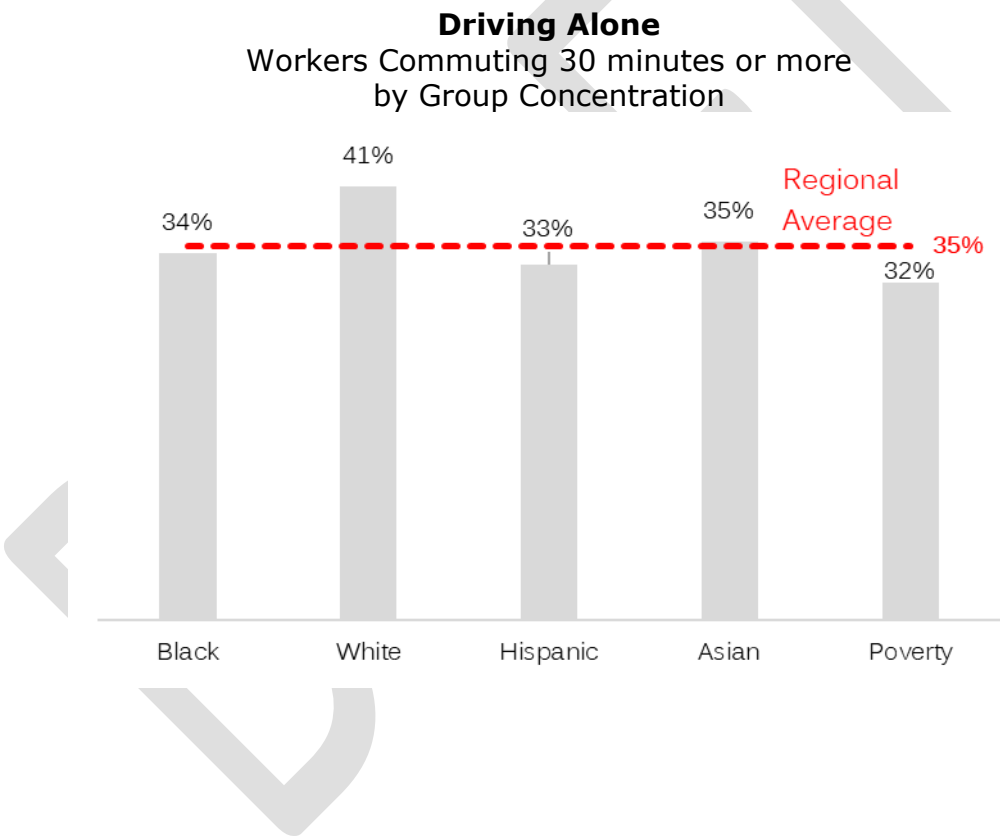


Map ID	Mode	Project
1	Multimodal	North Claymont Area Master Plan (projects grouped for mapping purposes)
2	Bike / Pedestrian	Buck Road Sidewalk
3	Multimodal	Union Street Reconfiguration and Streetscape
4	Multimodal	Convert 1500 block of King St to two-way street
5	Multimodal	Market Street: 11th to 16th Sts.
6	Multimodal	Shipley Street Enhancements: 12th Street to MLK Blvd.
7	Multimodal	Two-way traffic on 8th St between King & Walnut Streets
8	Road	Add Southbound lanes on Market St. between 2nd St and MLK Blvd.
9	Multimodal	Water St. West: Shipley Street to West Street
10	Multimodal	Water St. East Extended (French St. to Front St.)
11	Multimodal	S. Walnut Street Bridge Area
12	Multimodal	Swedes Landing and 7th Street Intersection Improvements
13	Road	7th St Improvements (Wilmington)
14	Multimodal	Southbridge Streetscape Improvements (Future Phases)
15	Road	Garashes Lane Extension
16	Road	Port of Wilmington Truck Staging Area (site location undetermined)
17	Multimodal	Route 9 Corridor Master Plan (projects grouped for mapping purposes)
18	Multimodal	City of New Castle Transportation Plan (grouped for mapping purposes)
19	Multimodal	SR 273 Widening, City of New Castle
20	Road	Route 141 Improvements (through Belvedere Area)
21	Multimodal	Churchmans Crossing Plan Implementation
22	Road	Christiana Bypass: Chapman to Eagle Run
23	Road	SR 273: I-95 to SR 1
24	Road	SR 72 Widening - Wyoming Road to just north of Chestnut Hill Road
25	Multimodal	Newark Transportation Plan Implementation
26	Multimodal	Salem Church Road: I-95 to US 40, Sidewalks
27	Bike / Pedestrian	Cooch's Bridge/Old Baltimore Pike Greenway
28	Road	SR 72 Widening - South of Old Baltimore Pike to Broadleaf Drive
29	Multimodal	Local Glasgow Circulator Roads
30	Road	US 13 and SR 71 Intersection
31	Multimodal	DE 7: US 40 to DE 71
32	Road	Walther Road/Route 40
33	Multimodal	Church Road: Wynnfield to SR 71
34	Multimodal	Old Porter Road: Porter Road to SR 71
35	Multimodal	Scotland Drive/US 40 Intersection
36	Multimodal	US 40 Overpass of Norfolk Southern RR near SR 72
37	Multimodal	US 40, SR 72 to Salem Church Rd
38	Multimodal	US 40: SR 896 to SR72
39	Road	Glasgow/George Williams Way (overpass of SR 896)
40	Bike / Pedestrian	SR 72: US 40 to SR 71, Sidewalks
41	Road	SR 72 Widening - Del Laws Drive to Willamette Drive
42	Bike / Pedestrian	Del Laws Road, Sidewalks
43	Multimodal	Delaware City Plan Implementation
44	Multimodal	Lorewood Grove Road East
45	Multimodal	Middletown (grouped for mapping purposes)
46	Multimodal	Elkton Downtown Connector Streets & Streetscaping
47	Multimodal	MD 213 / MD 282 Intersection
48	Multimodal	MD 272: US 40 - Seahawk Dr
49	Bike / Pedestrian	North East TOD Pedestrian Improvements
50	Transit	Port Deposit Shared Ride Service

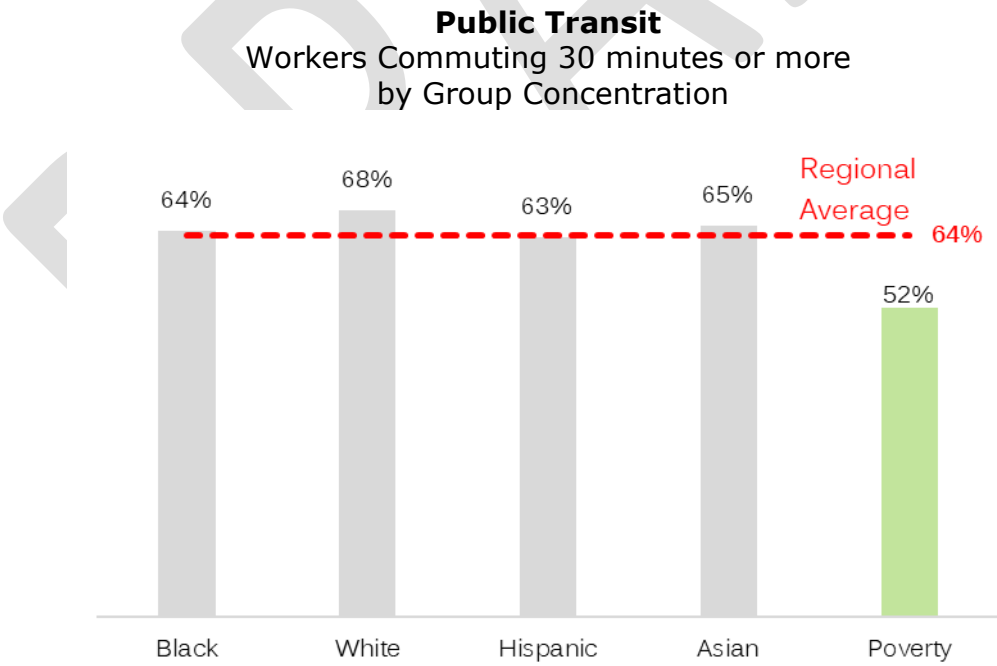
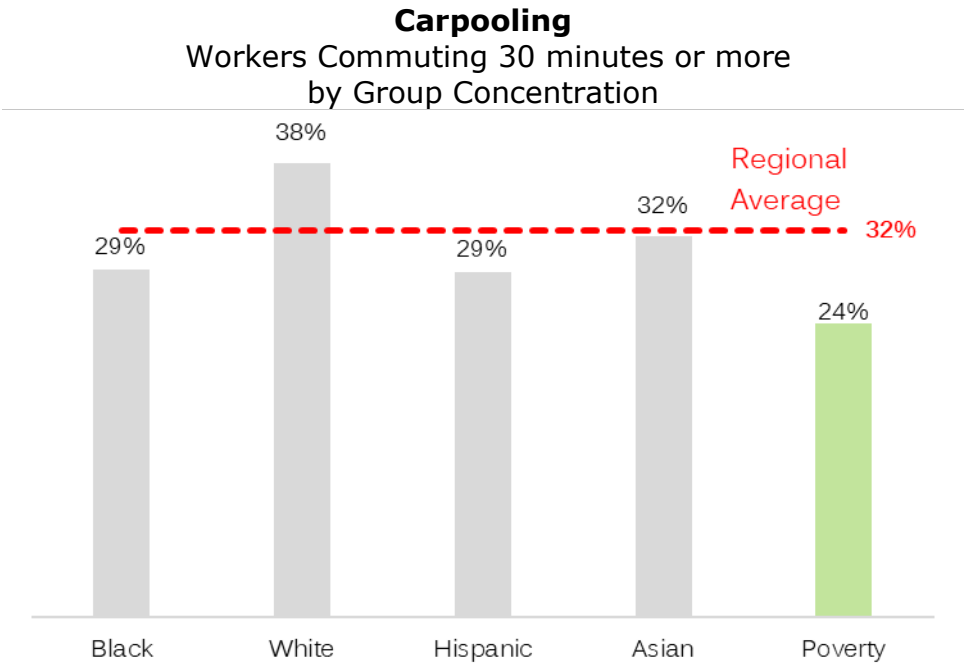
Community Travel Time Analysis

The time spent commuting to work is another dimension of mobility. We examine travel times in two different ways – within the group concentrations by mode and, later, more broadly.

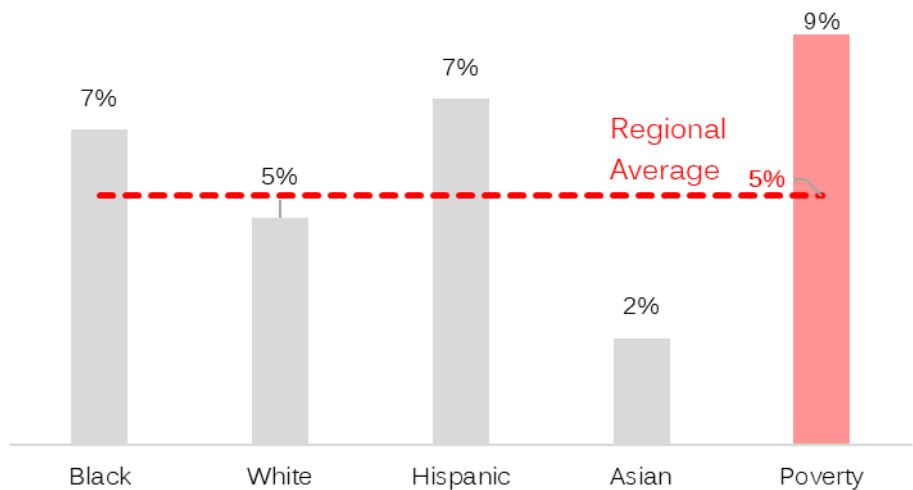
In our first analysis we examined the percentage of workers commuting 30 minutes or more, by individual modes, within our group concentrations²³. The graphs below and on the following pages show the results.



²³ As the number of bicycle commuters is quite small at this level of geography, the ACS combines bicycle commutes with taxis and motorcycles and other modes of transportation. This makes these data unstable and potentially misleading, so we do not present them here. Still, we did examine the bike/other commutes >30 minutes for mobility concerns. Across the region, 25% of these commutes were 30 minutes or more. That figure was lower within Black, Hispanic, Asian and poverty concentrations.



Walking
Workers Commuting 30 minutes or more
by Group Concentration



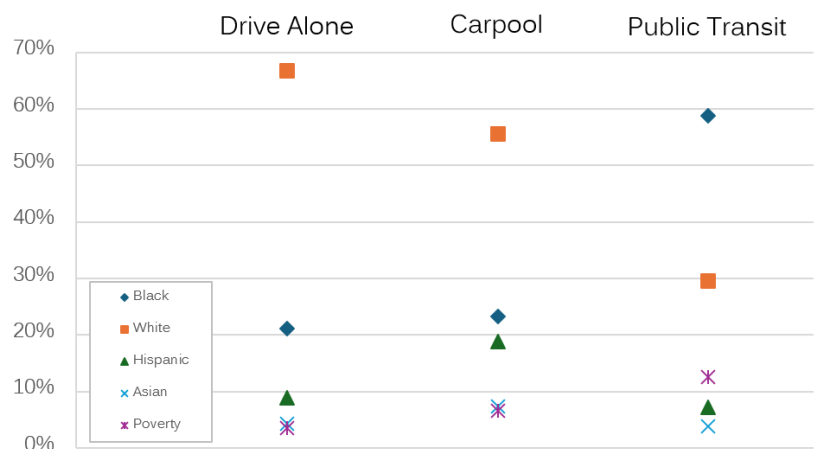
This first analysis did not reveal any mobility concerns between under-resourced concentrations and by modes, except by walking. In nearly all cases, the percent of commuters within ethnic/racial concentrations with commutes longer than 30 minutes was close to the regional average. For poverty concentrations, carpool and transit commuters with commutes longer than 30 minutes was below the regional average. However, commuters in poverty concentrations had a higher rate of walking commutes above 30 minutes (9%) than the regional average (5%).



In a second analysis, we examined the popularity of these different modes of transportation within each of our racial/ethnic and poverty groups against average travel times on those modes.

As shown in the first graph below, Black residents comprise more than half (59%) of all workers commuting via public transit, while White residents comprise less than a third (30%). This is remarkable as Black residents constitute only 22% of the region's population, versus White residents at 57%²⁴. Variations between the other groups were quite minor, comparatively.

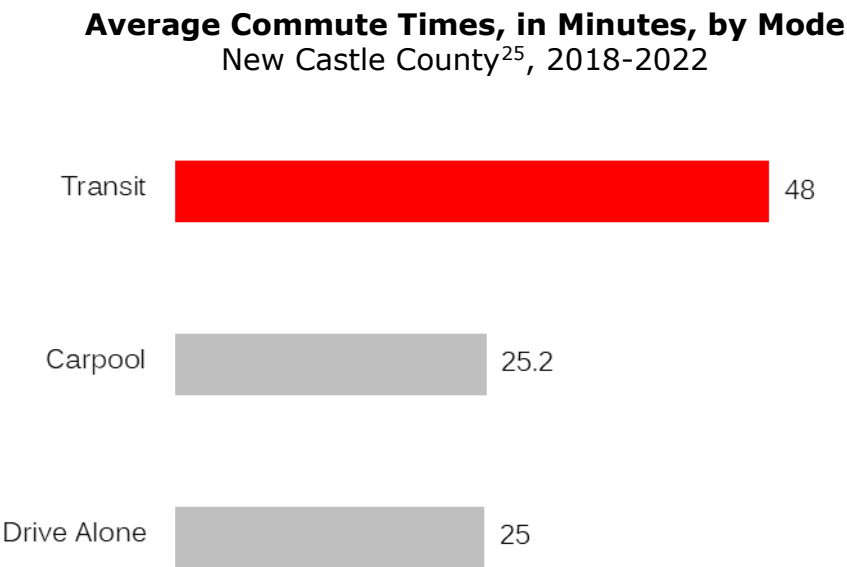
Overall Demographic and Socio-Economic Makeup of Travel Modes to Work
WILMAPCO Region, 2018-2022



²⁴ This discrepancy may help shed light on the earlier cited data from our public opinion survey, which found that nearly ¾ of Black respondents thought improvements to the bus and train service were “very important” compared to only half of White respondents.

While Black residents (along with poverty concentrations) lead all groups in terms of the percentage of workers who take public transit, nearly 8 out of 10 Black residents still travel to work by car.

In the 2018-2022 ACS, the average travel time to work on different modes varied considerably. As shown in the graph below, commuters spend nearly double the amount of time commuting on public transit versus car travel.



Given the demographic makeup of public bus users, Black residents are more greatly impacted by public transit investment and its relative performance in our region. This includes being burdened by its currently high travel times.

Recommendation: Examine walking improvements from impoverished concentrations to nearby job clusters.

Recommendation: Support improvements to bus frequency and expansion improvements, generally.

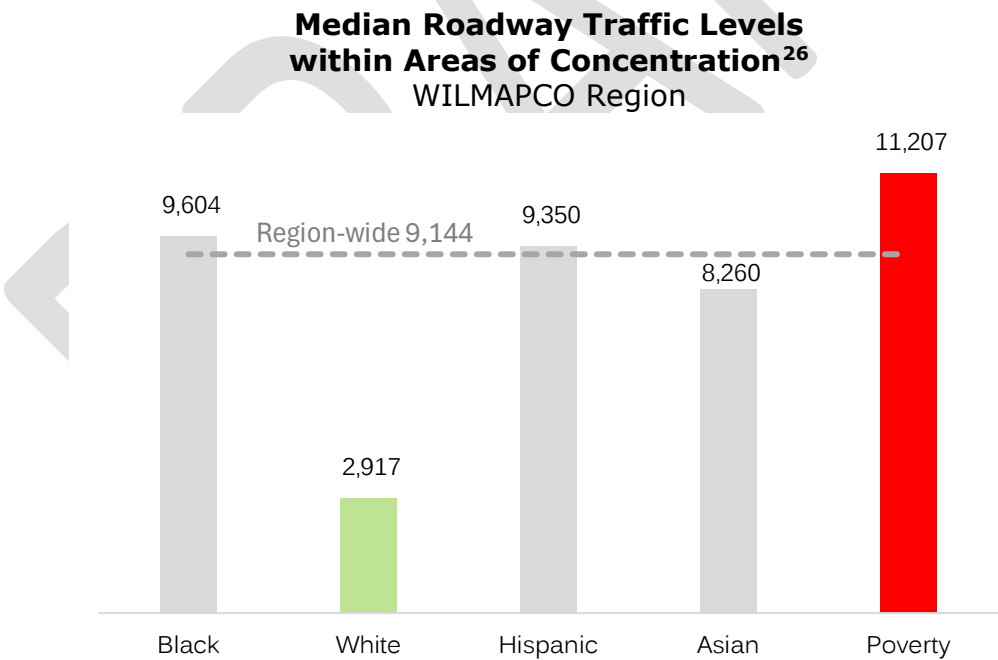
²⁵ These data were not available for Cecil County from any recent ACS years.

Community Traffic Volume Analyses

Driving a car is far and away the most popular mode of travel in our region. Traffic levels, however, vary by place. In this analysis we consider the median Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) in our areas of concentration.

As shown in the graph on the following page, the typical roadway in impoverished neighborhoods carries many more vehicles than the regional average. Meanwhile, the typical roadway within White concentrations sees much less traffic. Other areas of concentration have average traffic levels. More traffic has implications for higher localized pollution, noise, and safety concerns.

Recommendation: Support projects which help reduce vehicle volumes in impoverished communities and reconsider transportation projects which add capacity there.



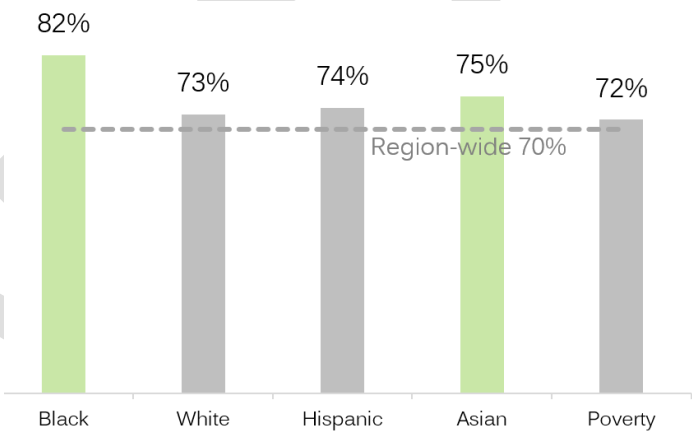
²⁶ We identified the median AADT of roadway segments regionally and within group concentrations in this analysis. Traffic figures are rounded to the hundreds for cosmetic purposes. Data sources: MDOT, DelDOT, ACS.

Community Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress Analysis

The analysis in this section explores what percentage of roads (excluding expressways) are low-stress for biking region-wide and in our group concentrations.

Regionally, we found that 70% of all non-expressway road mileage has low traffic stress. These routes are easy for just about any adolescent or adult to bike along. All areas of concentration have more low-stress mileage than the regional average. More than 80% of mileage in Black concentrations is low-stress for biking, and that figure is 75% in Asian concentrations.

Low Traffic-Stressed Roadways for Biking
within Areas of Concentration²⁷
WILMAPCO Region



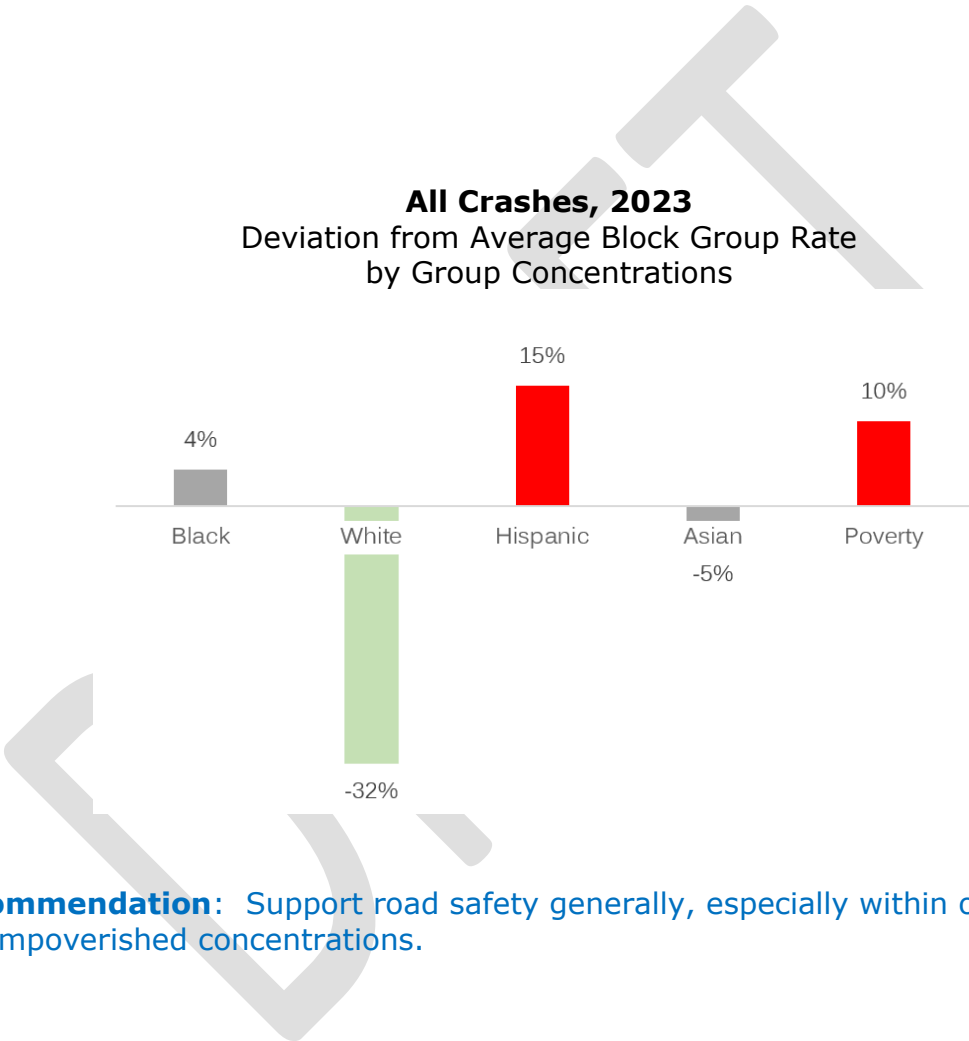
Community Crash Analysis

In this analysis, we considered the number of crashes within our ethnic/racial concentrations against the population-based benchmarks of those concentrations. Only 2023 data were used here, the latest we have on file.

²⁷ This analysis considers the latest data available from DelDOT and MDOT. We use Delaware’s Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) 1 and 2 and Maryland’s Level of Comfort levels 1 and 2 as low traffic stress. Data: DelDOT, MDOT, and ACS.

The graph below shows these results. We consider the “deviation from expected” crash rate here. This is simply a comparison of the crash rate per population in areas of concentration against the regional average rate.

Crash rates were 15% higher than expected in Hispanic neighborhoods and 10% higher than expected in impoverished neighborhoods. Black neighborhoods fared a bit better but still exceeded the regional crash rate by 4%. Crash rates in Asian and White concentrations were 5% and 32% below the regional average, respectively.



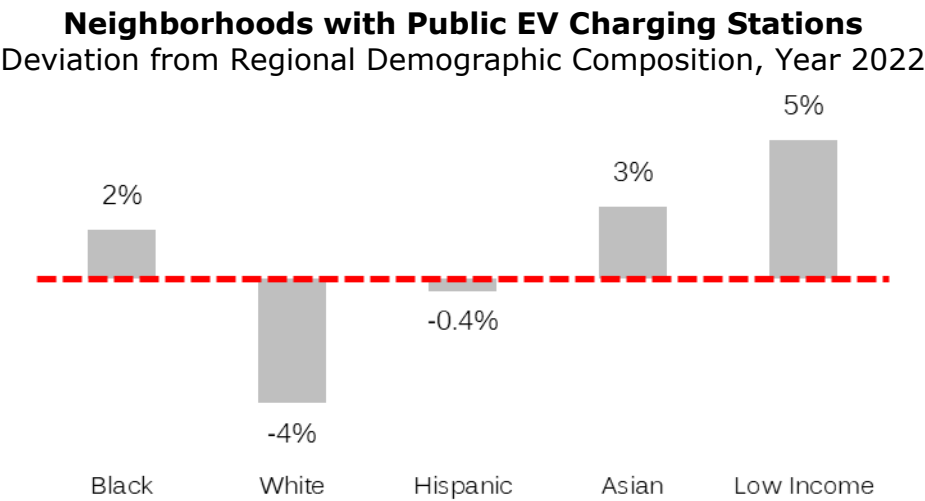
Recommendation: Support road safety generally, especially within our Hispanic and impoverished concentrations.

Electric Vehicle Public Charging Stations

The WILMAPCO region is home to a growing number of public Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations. In this analysis, we show that while the current network of 63 public charging stations is evenly distributed demographically across the region, impoverished neighborhoods have only a handful of public chargers.

We began the analysis by flagging all blocks with an EV charging location, identified by the Alternative Fuels Data Center. Charging stations include level 2 and DC fast

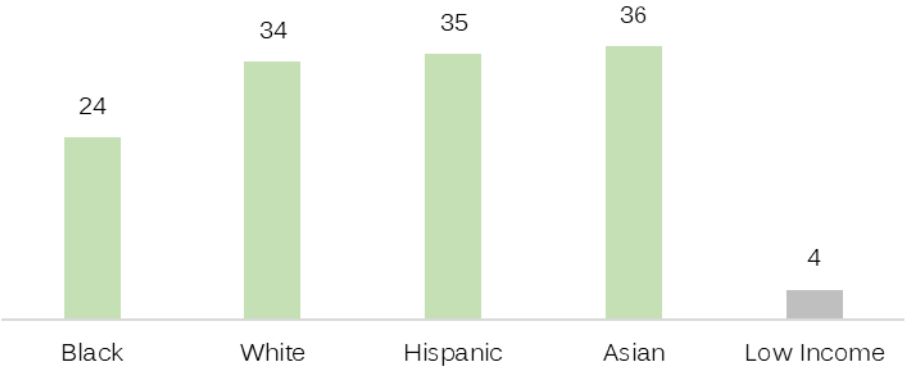
chargers as of October 2022. Next, we calculated the average demographic makeup of the EV blocks with the latest data on file, the 2018-2022 ACS. As shown in the graph below, these were compared to the regional averages to measure how the demographic makeup stacked up to the region.



The average neighborhood (Census block) with a public EV station was more racially diverse than expected. EV neighborhoods had 2% more Black residents, 3% more Asian residents, and 5% more people in poverty than expected. The Hispanic population closely matched the region within these neighborhoods, and they had 4% fewer White residents compared to the region.

Diving deeper, we compared the raw number of public EV locations within our ethnic/racial and impoverished concentrations. White, Hispanic, and Asian neighborhoods each had over 30 charging locations. Black neighborhoods had 24, but impoverished concentrations only had 4 charging locations.

Public EV Charging Locations
within Ethnic/Racial and Poverty Concentrations in 2022



Recommendation: Encourage adding public EV charging stations within impoverished concentrations.



Public Outreach: Review of Engagement for Underrepresented Groups

Black, Hispanic and low-income residents are less likely to be familiar with WILMAPCO than White and higher-income residents. Greater awareness of the agency (and subsequent greater participation in and support for various transportation planning efforts) could lead to more and better transportation projects within minority and low-income communities. Chronic lack of involvement has likely contributed to the reality that less transportation project spending occurs in Black neighborhoods than we would expect, and the overall greater difficulties with mobility Black residents and people with low incomes report.

The tables below review the status of pertinent initiatives from our Public Participation Plan.

AGENCY RECOMMENDATIONS

ID	Recommendation	Progress	Discussion
1a.	Develop organizational practices (i.e., hiring, workshop locations, language assistance, survey techniques) that integrate cultural groups of all ages		Generally good progress has been made. Young people are not engaged in all studies, however, and workshop locations are not consistently optimal.
1b.	Participate in cultural competency and Title VI/EJ training		Cultural competency training was offered to staff in 2021. Half of WILMAPCO staff participated, along with a handful of staff from other local agencies. Four staff participated in a Title VI training in 2024.
1c.	Advocate with, and on behalf of, people of color		WILMAPCO consistently supports the involvement of all residents in the transportation planning process and takes extra steps to better engage underrepresented groups.

REGIONAL-LEVEL STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

ID	Recommendation	Progress	Discussion
2a.	Use diverse outreach methods to incorporate passive (i.e. workshop), active (i.e. street survey), and online engagement (i.e. Facebook) feedback		This three-pronged approach has been generally followed, allowing for local adaptation.
2b.	Strive for equitable public meetings and public participation • Avoid government, university or religious buildings, gendered places, political places, or other venues that could be viewed as exclusionary for meeting venues; schools, libraries, and trusted community centers are better • Provide childcare at all public meetings, especially to support female-headed households with children's participation • Consider providing snacks or food or other incentives to offset economic burdens of meeting attendance • Choose meeting venues that are accessible by public buses • Work with the community to choose the best meeting time		While these approaches have been generally followed, childcare or children's activities are not offered at most public meetings. Meeting locations are also not always ideal. Two recent public meeting locations included the WILMAPCO office (currently located in a University building) and another government office.
2c.	Provide easy-to-understand explanations of the planning and implementation processes		This general practice has been followed.
2d.	Avoid jargon and technical terms without explanation		This general practice has been followed.
2e.	Build relationships with African American, Latino, and Asian cultural institutions and media outlets		Strong local relationships with ethnic and racial minority communities are in place. Relationships with broader cultural and media outlets could be better developed.
2f.	Have equitable representation of minorities on the Public Advisory Committee		Diversity on the PAC has not significantly increased, while the baseline racial and ethnic minority population has.

2g.	Target air quality awareness outreach to low income and minority communities		Our air quality awareness activities are handled by the Air Quality Partnership of Delaware. While the 2022 Public Opinion Survey showed that awareness of the Air Quality Partnership has improved among minority communities, targeted outreach to lower income communities could be pursued by the Partnership.
2h.	Continue to invest in a regional Public Opinion Survey with demographic quotas - Allow self-identification of gender here and in other surveys		These practices are generally followed.
2i.	Pursue equitable demographic public feedback, by race and class, for all regional studies		Without intentional outreach, we have found that survey samples are often overrepresented by White respondents and those with higher incomes. This makes policy or recommendations based off that skewed sample questionable. While the RTP is based on a solid survey sample that accounts for race and class, some other surveys have used convenience sampling and have not accounted for class differences.

SUB-REGIONAL-LEVEL STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

ID	Recommendation	Progress	Discussion
3a.	Invest in continuous relationship building with local leaders and the community		These practices are generally followed.
3b.	Partner with and work through trusted community-based organizations and local civic groups		These practices are generally followed.
3c.	Invite and encourage residents to participate with decision-making on a local study development and a post-study monitoring committee with: • A representative cross-section of views within the community • A clear mission		These practices are generally followed.

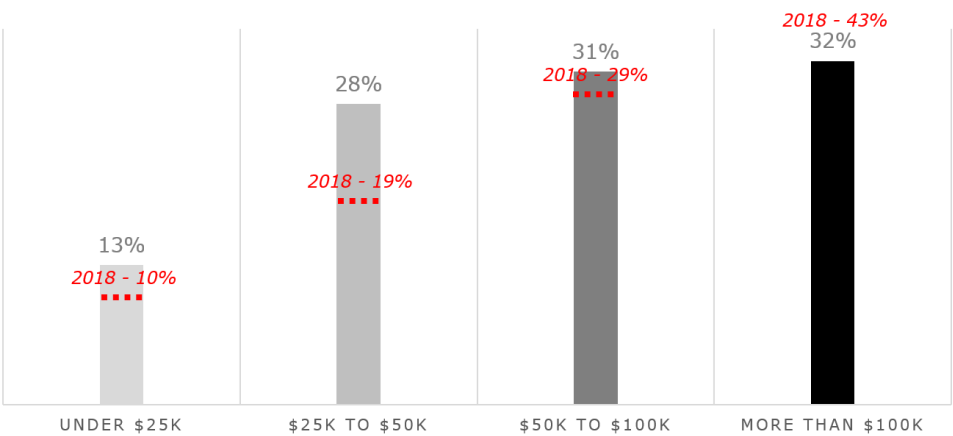
	• Transparency and accountability • A consistent schedule		
3d.	Acknowledge any past harm done by transportation and land use decisions		These practices are generally followed.
3e.	Frame the plan in a way that is relevant to the local community		These practices are generally followed.
3f.	Never overpromise		These practices are generally followed.
3g.	Understand local community needs (such as workforce development and improved public safety) and seek to address those, as possible, through the planning process		These practices are generally followed.
3h.	Provide easy-to-understand explanations of the planning and implementation processes		These practices are generally followed.
3i.	Avoid jargon and technical terms without explanation		These practices are generally followed.
3j.	Celebrate area history and culture, where possible		These practices are generally followed.
3k.	Strive for equitable public meetings and iterative public participation • Avoid government, university or religious buildings, gendered places, political places, or other venues that could be viewed as exclusionary for meeting venues; schools, libraries, and trusted community centers are better • Make a feeling of personal safety at events a priority • Promote community bonding • Work with partners to provide childcare at all public meetings, especially to support female-headed households with children participation • Consider working with partners to provide snacks		While these approaches have been generally followed, childcare or children's activities are not offered at most public meetings. Meeting locations are also not always ideal. Two recent public meeting locations included the WILMAPCO office (currently located in a University building) and another government office

	or food or other incentives to offset economic burdens of meeting attendance • Choose meeting venues that are accessible by public buses • Work with the community to choose the best meeting time • Work with, but do not rely on, the community to help promote the event		
3l.	Employ supplemental comprehensive outreach approaches, such as field and telephone surveys		These practices are generally followed.
3m.	Use, but do not rely entirely on, online or social media-driven outreach		These practices are generally followed.
3n.	Empower community members to conduct surveys, facilitate meetings, and provide explanations		These practices are generally followed.
3o.	Create opportunities for accomplishments to be seen		These practices are generally followed.

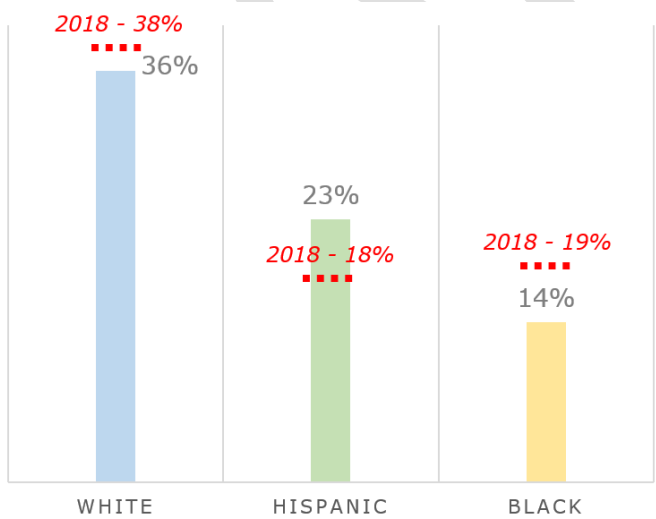
As the tables show, WILMAPCO has made good progress implementing most public outreach recommendations from the Public Participation Plan. More work should be done to address all areas, however, especially in regional-level studies. Workshop locations are not always optimal, for example, young people are not always engaged in planning processes, and stronger relationships with minority-based cultural institutions could be built.

Even so, as the graphs below show, awareness of WILMAPCO has risen among lower-income residents, as well as Hispanic respondents. According to our 2018 Public Opinion Survey, only 10% of those living in households making less than \$25,000/year and 19% of those living in households making between \$25,000/year and \$50,000/year were aware of WILMAPCO. Those figures rose to 13% and 28%, respectively, in the 2022 Public Opinion Survey. Among Hispanic respondents, 23% were familiar with WILMAPCO in 2022, up from 18% in 2018.

I have heard of WILMAPCO
by Annual Household Income, 2022 vs 2018



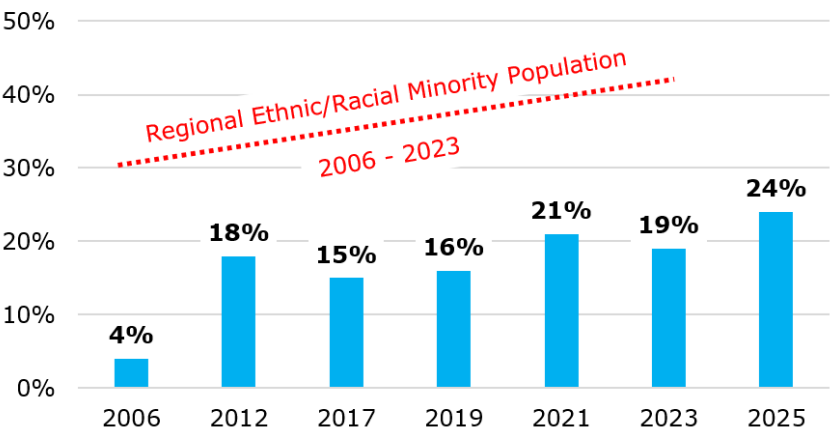
I have heard of WILMAPCO
by Race and Ethnicity, 2022 vs 2018



While positive progress, these data show an awareness gap is still present. About one-third of those making more than \$50,000/year are familiar with WILMAPCO, still significantly higher than the about one in ten of those making less than \$25,000/year. Moreover, awareness of the agency fell among Black respondents – from 19% in 2018 to 14% in 2022. While this drop is within our survey’s margin of error (which was about 5%), it suggests forward progress was not made closing the gap with this important demographic.

Additional work is also needed to increase ethnic and racial minority representation on the WILMAPCO Public Advisory Committee (PAC). The all-volunteer body meets six times a year, either in-person or virtually. The PAC provides feedback on the public outreach components of WILMAPCO plans and takes back information about plans to their respective communities. PAC membership is largely “place-based” in that most members represent a geographically-defined neighborhood or community group. Ethnic and racial minority representation has grown in recent years but has not kept pace with the region’s increasing share of ethnic and racial minorities.

Ethnic/Racial Minority Representation on the WILMAPCO PAC



Overview of Identified Mobility Concerns and Recommendations

We analyzed almost two dozen (20) mobility indicators in this section of the plan. Concerns were identified in nearly half (8) of these indicators for our low-income communities, five for areas of Black community concentration, and two for areas of Hispanic community concentration. The table on the following page lists these concerns.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Follow-up analysis should consider transportation improvements in suburban high-poverty areas to help lower transportation costs.
2. Follow-up analysis should explore ways to fill transportation connectivity gaps from areas of economic opportunity to key destinations.
3. Additional analysis should be undertaken to identify potential improvements to transportation connectivity from these food deserts and/or opportunities to encourage the placement of accessible supermarkets near them.
4. Support planning and project development within our Black neighborhood concentrations to reverse the deficit of spending in those areas between 2010 and 2020.
5. Aspiration projects with high technical priority scores should be considered strongly for implementation.
6. Examine walking improvements from impoverished concentrations to nearby job clusters.
7. Support improvements to bus frequency and expansion improvements, generally.
8. Support projects which help reduce vehicle volumes in impoverished communities and reconsider transportation projects which add capacity there.
9. Support road safety generally, especially within our Hispanic and impoverished concentrations.
10. Encourage adding public EV charging stations within impoverished concentrations.

Summary of Mobility Analyses and Concerns

		Low-income/Poverty (8 concerns)	Blacks (5 concerns)	Hispanics (2 concerns)
	Transportation Access to Healthy & Affordable Groceries	yes		
	Transportation Access to Job or Desired Job		yes	
	Transportation Access to Social Activities	yes	yes	
	Transportation Access to Routine Medical Care	yes		
	Transportation + Housing Costs, Neighborhood Concentrations			
	Transportation Costs, Neighborhood Concentrations			
	Housing Costs, Neighborhood Concentrations			
	Connectivity to Destinations , Neighborhood Concentrations			
	Driving Alone Commute Time, Neighborhood Concentrations			
	Carpooling Commute Time, Neighborhood Concentrations			
	Public Transit Commute Time, Neighborhood Concentrations			
	Walking Commute Time, Neighborhood Concentrations	yes		
	Travel Time on Public Transit (New Castle Co. only)		yes	
	Traffic Volumes, Neighborhood Concentrations	yes		
	All Vehicle Crashes, Neighborhood Concentrations	yes		yes
	Bike Level of Traffic Stress, Neighborhood Concentrations			
	Public Electric Vehicle Stations, Neighborhood Concentrations	yes		
	Community Transportation Project Funding, Neighborhood Concentrations		yes	
	WILMAPCO Community Planning			
	Knowledge of WILMAPCO	yes	yes	yes

Public Outreach Recommendations

WILMAPCO has built a strong outreach program, one that is often sensitive to the needs of all communities. In lieu of recent federal guidance, along with the findings of this Chapter, the following tables recommend adjustments to our outreach that should be considered for implementation in our next Public Participation Plan.

AGENCY RECOMMENDATIONS

ID	2019 Recommendation	2025 Recommendation
1a.	Develop organizational practices (i.e., hiring, workshop locations, language assistance, survey techniques) that integrate cultural groups of all ages	Develop organizational practices (i.e., hiring, workshop locations, language assistance, survey techniques) that welcome cultural groups of all ages
1b.	Participate in cultural competency and Title VI/EJ training	Participate in cultural competency and Title VI training
1c.	Advocate with, and on behalf of, people of color	Highlight the transportation needs of communities and advocate for solutions

REGIONAL-LEVEL STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

ID	Recommendation	2025 Recommendation
2a.	Use diverse outreach methods to incorporate passive (i.e. workshop), active (i.e. street survey), and online engagement (i.e. Facebook) feedback	No change
2b.	Strive for equitable public meetings and public participation • Avoid government, university or religious buildings, gendered places, political places, or other venues that could be viewed as exclusionary for meeting venues; schools, libraries, and trusted community centers are better • Provide childcare at all public meetings, especially to support female-headed households with children's participation • Consider providing snacks or food or other incentives to	Strive for welcoming and community representative public meetings and public participation • Avoid government, university or religious buildings, gendered places, political places, or other venues that could be viewed as exclusionary for meeting venues • Provide children's activities at all public meetings, especially to support female-headed households with children's participation • Providing snacks, drinks, food, or other incentives to offset economic burdens of meeting attendance • Only choose meeting venues that are accessible by public buses • Work with the community to choose the best meeting time

	offset economic burdens of meeting attendance • Choose meeting venues that are accessible by public buses • Work with the community to choose the best meeting time	
2c.	Provide easy-to-understand explanations of the planning and implementation processes	No change
2d.	Avoid jargon and technical terms without explanation	No change
2e.	Build relationships with African American, Latino, and Asian cultural institutions and media outlets	Engage at least one new cultural institution or media outlet each year.
2f.	Have equitable representation of minorities on the Public Advisory Committee	Develop a strategy to increase the representation of minorities on the Public Advisory Committee.
2g.	Target air quality awareness outreach to low income and minority communities	Work with the Air Quality Partnership to provide air quality awareness information at least one public event held in a predominately low income community each year.
2h.	Continue to invest in a regional Public Opinion Survey with demographic quotas • Allow self-identification of gender here and in other surveys	No change
2i.	Pursue equitable demographic public feedback, by race and class, for all regional studies	Ensure the public feedback received through surveys, meeting attendance, etc. aligns with the region's demographic makeup.

SUB-REGIONAL-LEVEL STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

ID	Recommendation	Discussion
3a.	Invest in continuous relationship building with local leaders and the community	No change
3b.	Partner with and work through trusted community-based organizations and local civic groups	No change
3c.	Invite and encourage residents to participate with decision-making on a local study development and a post-study monitoring committee with:	No change

	• A representative cross-section of views within the community • A clear mission • Transparency and accountability • A consistent schedule	
3d.	Acknowledge any past harm done by transportation and land use decisions	No change
3e.	Frame the plan in a way that is relevant to the local community	No change
3f.	Never overpromise	No change
3g.	Understand local community needs (such as workforce development and improved public safety) and seek to address those, as possible, through the planning process	No change
3h.	Provide easy-to-understand explanations of the planning and implementation processes	No change
3i.	Avoid jargon and technical terms without explanation	No change
3j.	Celebrate area history and culture, where possible	No change
3k.	Strive for equitable public meetings and iterative public participation • Avoid government, university or religious buildings, gendered places, political places, or other venues that could be viewed as exclusionary for meeting venues; schools, libraries, and trusted community centers are better • Make a feeling of personal safety at events a priority • Promote community bonding • Work with partners to provide childcare at all public meetings, especially to support female-headed households with children participation • Consider working with partners to provide snacks or food or other incentives to offset economic burdens of meeting attendance	Strive for welcoming and community representative public meetings and public participation • Avoid government, university or religious buildings, gendered places, political places, or other venues that could be viewed as exclusionary for meeting venues • Provide children's activities at all public meetings, especially to support female-headed households with children's participation • Providing snacks, drinks, or food or other incentives to offset economic burdens of meeting attendance • Only choose meeting venues that are accessible by public buses • Work with the community to choose the best meeting time

	• Choose meeting venues that are accessible by public buses • Work with the community to choose the best meeting time • Work with, but do not rely on, the community to help promote the event	
3l.	Employ supplemental comprehensive outreach approaches, such as field and telephone surveys	No change
3m.	Use, but do not rely entirely on, online or social media-driven outreach	No change
3n.	Empower community members to conduct surveys, facilitate meetings, and provide explanations	No change
3o.	Create opportunities for accomplishments to be seen	No change



Chapter 4

Language Assistance Plan

The number of people in the WILMAPCO region who do not speak English very well is increasing. Immigration from abroad has raised the number of individuals (over the age of five) who report speaking English “less than very well” from 20,600 (or 3.8% of the population) at the turn of the century to nearly 30,300 (4.8%) today. WILMAPCO takes reasonable steps to help individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) better participate in the transportation planning process.

WILMAPCO also endeavors to support individuals with low literacy. In the WILMAPCO region, just under 13,000 adults over age 25 (about 3% of the population) have less than a 9th-grade education²⁸. While not ideal, and in the absence of more precise data, WILMAPCO considers this group as having “low literacy” (LL) for the purposes of this plan. This population has been steadily declining for decades.

Beyond individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and low literacy, WILMAPCO also seeks to better involve those living in households without access to computers or the internet, which makes accessing digital information about planning projects more challenging. We class this group as “Limited Digital” (LD). Approximately 11,600 households in the region lack a computer (including smartphones), and about 21,100 do not have an internet subscription. These figures have been sharply declining; as recently as 2017, about 11% of households did not have a computer, compared to less than 5% in 2022. Similarly, households without internet access decreased from 19% to below 9% during the same period.

Safe Harbor

WILMAPCO provides translation, interpretation, and outreach to LEP communities while also balancing the scope of this task. Based on previous federal language support guidance, WILMAPCO considers a LEP language group that makes up either 5% of the total regional population or 1,000 people (whichever is less) as

²⁸ Source: US Census

warranting specific attention. No single language group currently comprises 5% of the total regional population.

However, as shown in the table on the following page, LEP individuals from two language groups exceed the 1,000-person threshold: the more than 17,000 Spanish speakers and approximately 3,400 Chinese speakers who report speaking English "less than very well." Broader language categories, such as "Other Indo-European" and "Other Asian and Pacific Island," also meet the threshold; however, these groups consist of various languages that cannot be accurately identified due to data limitations from the Census. Individuals who speak Arabic or French/Haitian/Cajun and have limited English proficiency are slightly below the threshold, but their numbers are increasing.

Those who Speak English "Less than Very Well," by Language Group²⁹

	New Castle Co.	Cecil Co.	WILMAPCO Region
Spanish	16,059	955	17,014
Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese)	3,245	162	3,407
Other Indo-European	2,729	383	3,112
Other Asian and Pacific Island	1,229	159	1,388
Other and unspecified	926	212	1,138
Arabic	909	43	952
French, Haitian, or Cajun	765	125	890
German or other West Germanic	426	131	557
Vietnamese	427	91	518
Korean	475	23	498
Tagalog (incl. Filipino)	436	14	450
Russian, Polish, or other Slavic	352	13	365

The maps on the following pages display clusters of neighborhoods³⁰ with a significant population of LEP individuals across the region. These clusters consist of Census block groups where at least 5% of the population over the age of 5, or 100 individuals in this age group, speak English less than "very well," by language group. Due to their larger relative size, we also identify "major" Spanish-speaking LEP clusters, where the number of individuals exceeds double the above threshold. Distinctive patterns are evident:

- **Spanish-speaking LEP neighborhoods** mainly line major roads between Wilmington and Newark, such as SR 2, SR 4, SR 9, US 13, and US 40. Major isolated clusters are also found in Claymont and Middletown, and in the

²⁹ Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, population >5 years of age.

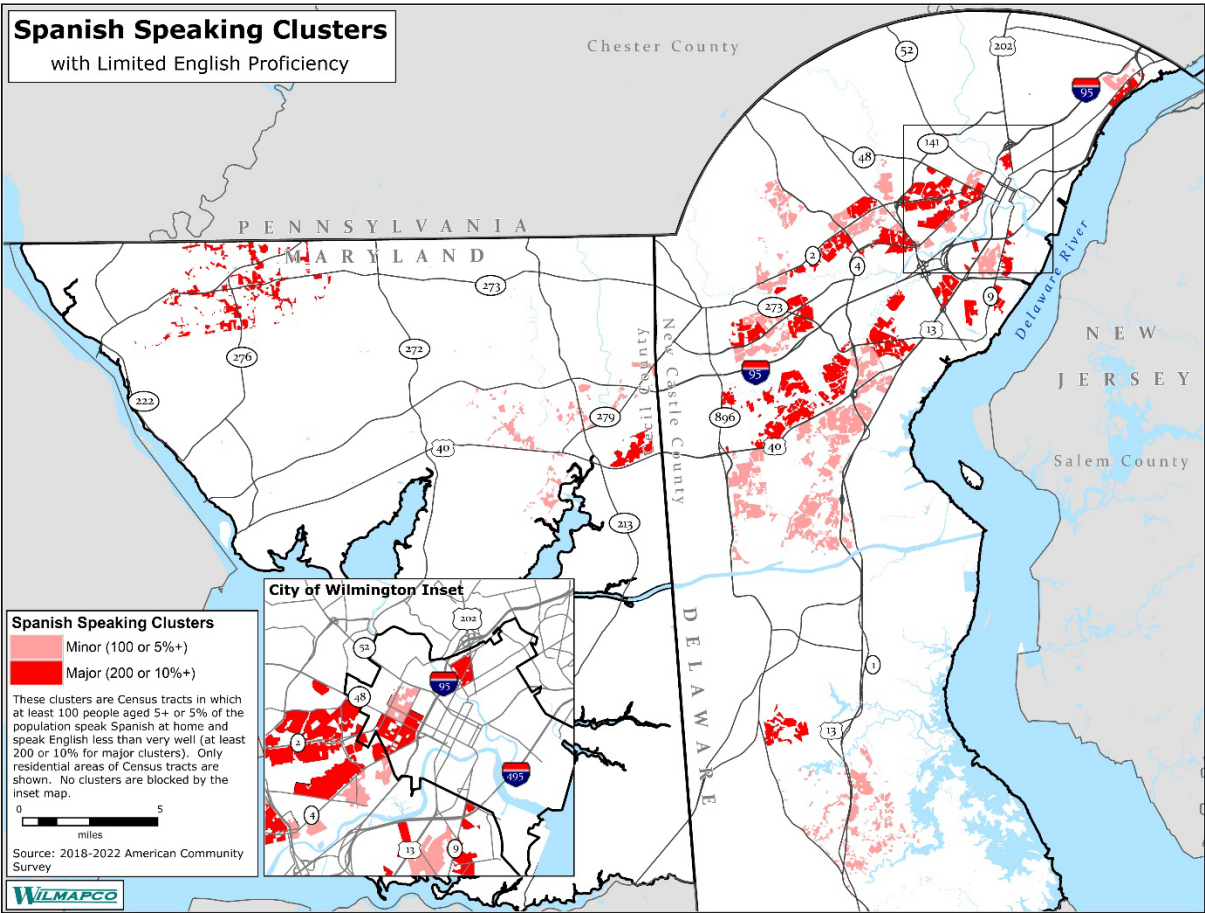
³⁰ LEP neighborhood clusters were identified using data from the 2018 – 2022 American Community Survey.

vicinity of Elkton and Rising Sun.

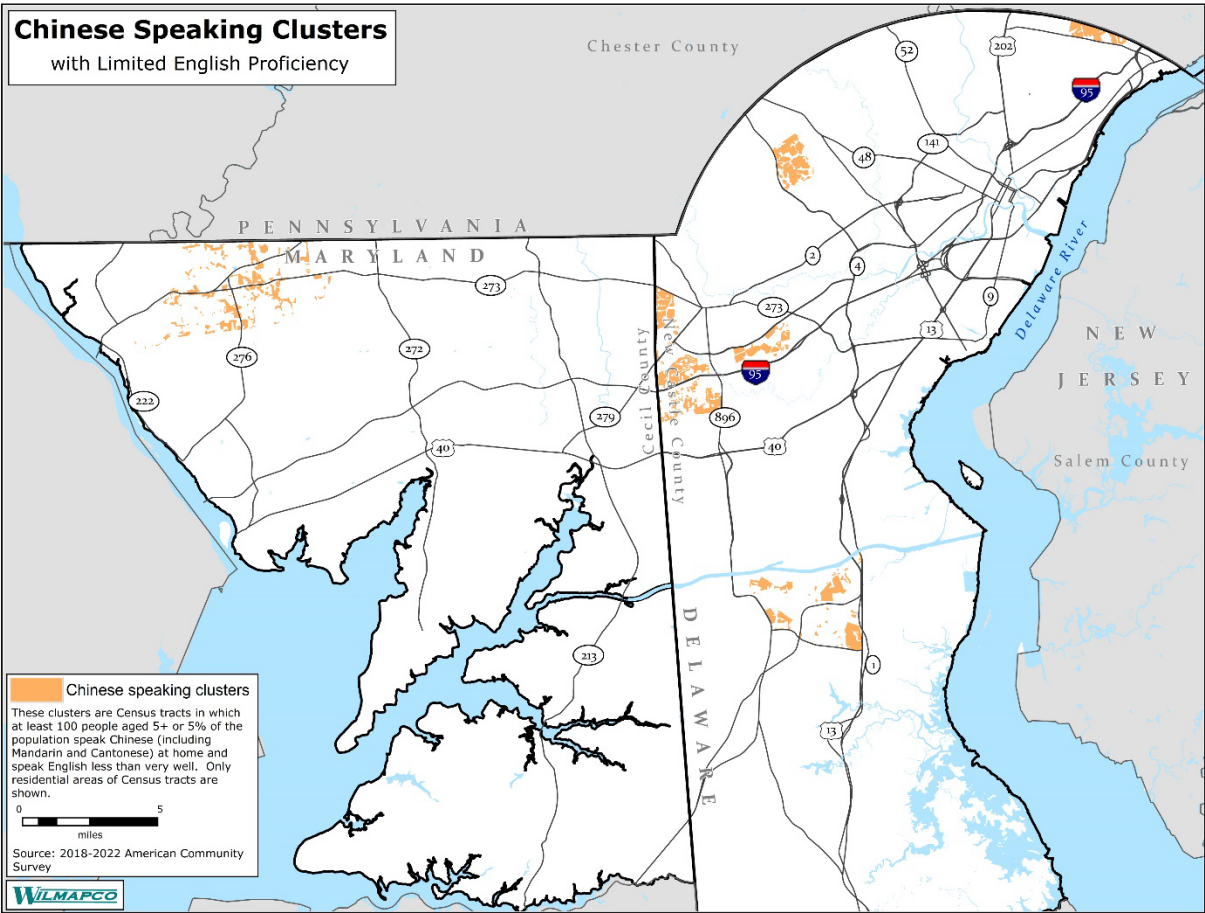
- **Chinese-speaking LEP neighborhoods** are principally found in Newark's western and southern suburbs, in Pike Creek, in Middletown's northern suburbs, along SR 92, and in the vicinity of Rising Sun.
- **French-speaking LEP neighborhoods** are found southeast of Newark along Old Baltimore Pike.
- **Arabic-speaking LEP neighborhoods** exist in Wilmington's Hedgeville neighborhood and Newark's eastern suburbs.
- **Other Indo-European and Other Asian and Pacific Island Language-speaking LEP neighborhoods** dot the region, from the suburbs of Middletown to Churchman's Crossing and Pike Creek to Claymont. Within these neighborhoods, foreign-born residents were primarily born in India, in addition to clusters of Turkish immigrants in Elkton, Pakistani immigrants in Middletown, and Bangladeshi immigrants in Claymont.



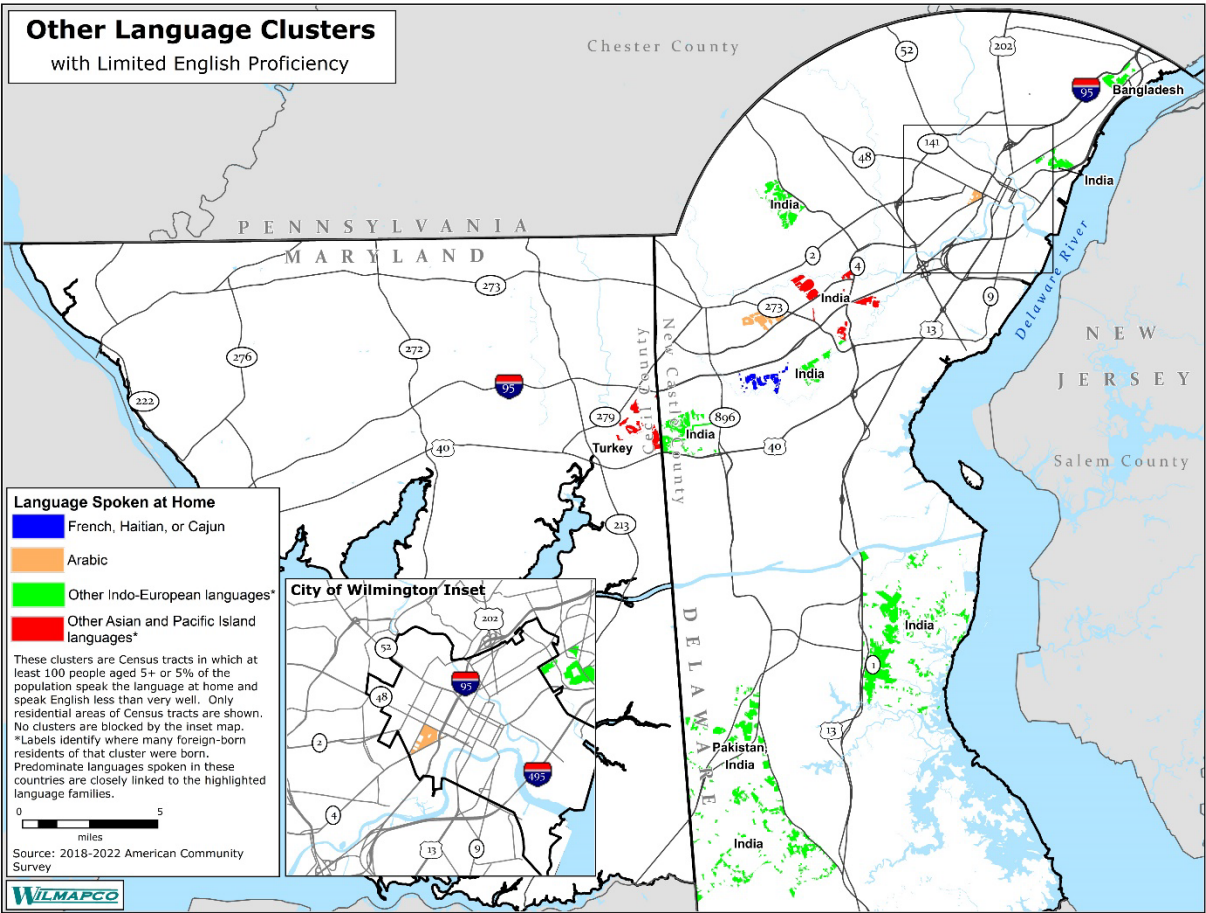
Spanish Speaking Clusters with Limited English Proficiency



Chinese Clusters with Limited English Proficiency

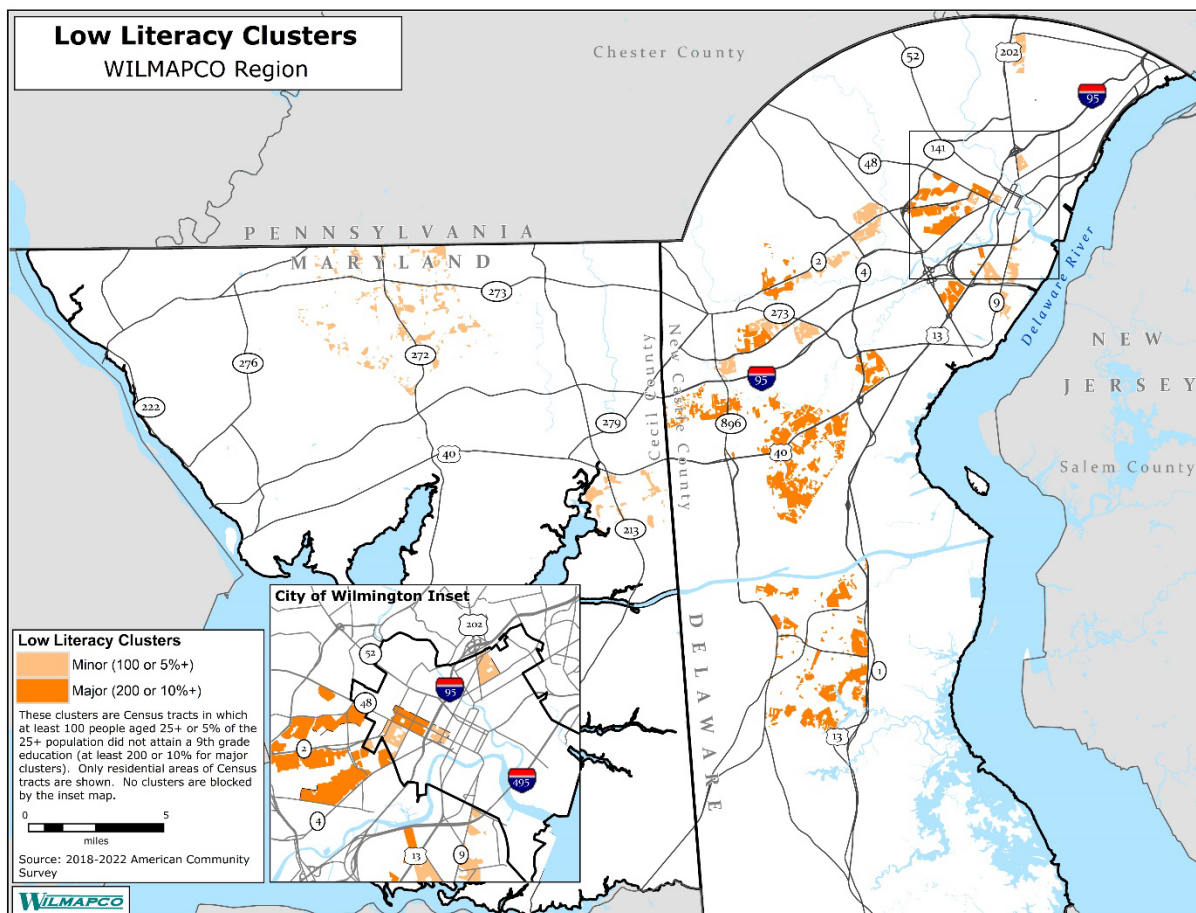


Other Language Speaking Clusters with Limited English Proficiency



Clusters of low literacy neighborhoods are shown in the map below. Minor low literacy (LL) clusters are Census tracts where at least 100 individuals aged 25 or older, or 5% of the population in that age group, have not completed the 9th grade³¹. Major LL clusters, defined as areas with double these thresholds, are found along the I-95 and US 13/US 40 corridors, stretching from Glasgow to Wilmington's West Side, as well as in Middletown and its northern suburbs.

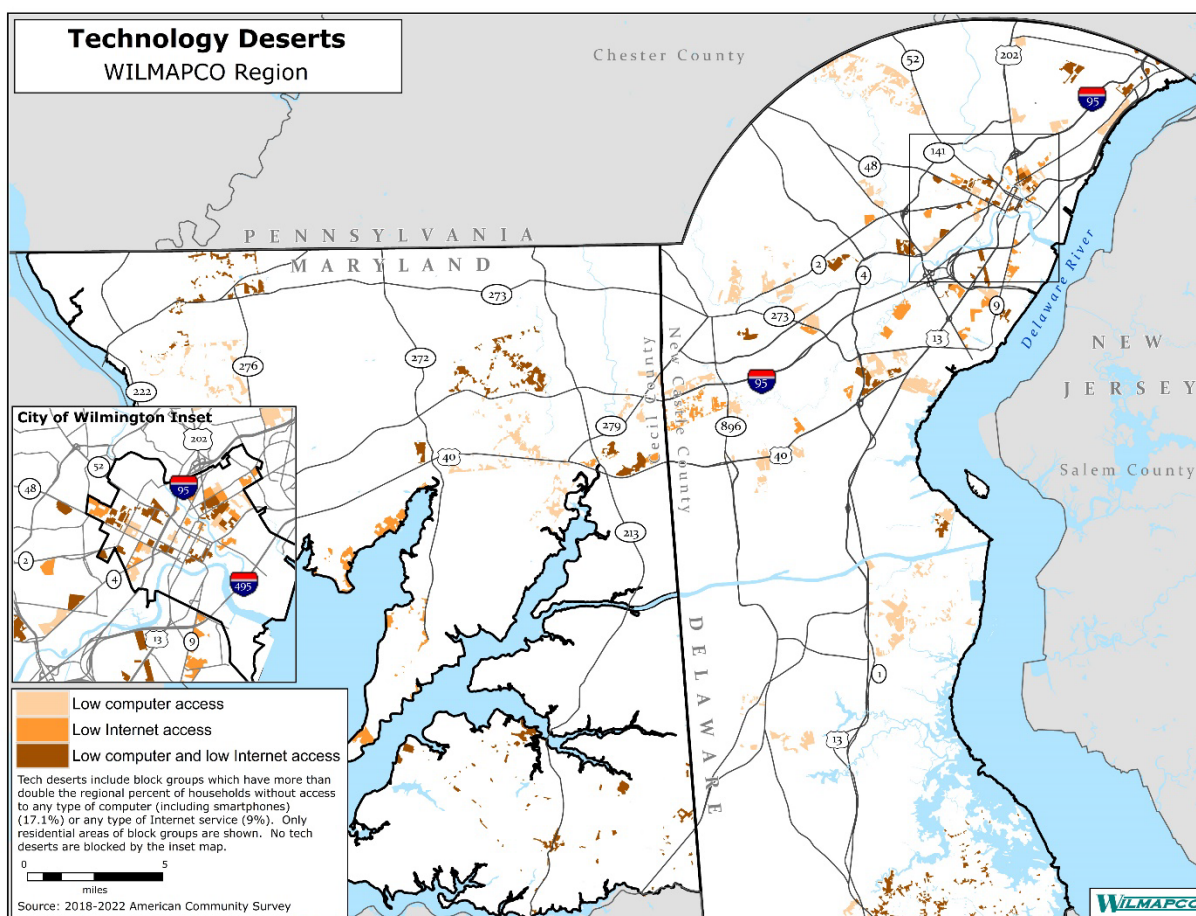
Low Literacy (LL) Clusters



³¹ LL clusters are identified using data from the 2018-2022 American Community Survey.

As shown in the map that follows, Limited Digital (LD) neighborhood clusters are home to many households lacking technology access. These "urban technology deserts" are Census block groups where the percentage of households without access to: 1) any type of computer (including smartphones), or 2) any type of Internet connection, is at least double the regional average³². While LD neighborhoods are spread across the region, they are most concentrated in the City of Wilmington and its southern suburbs.

Limited Digital Clusters (Technology Deserts)



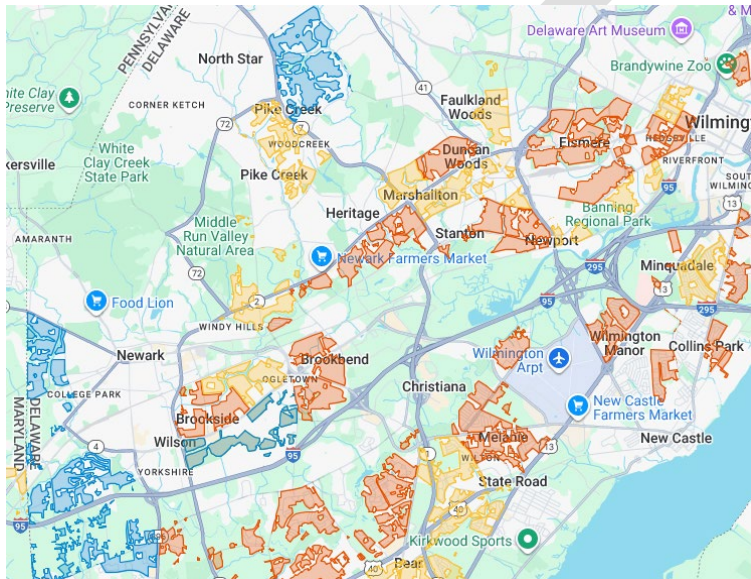
³² LD clusters are identified using data from the 2018-2022 American Community Survey.

Interactive Maps

Limited English Proficiency, Low Literacy, and Limited Digital

See the Limited English Proficiency, Low Literacy, and Limited Digital Neighborhood Clusters and zoom into your neighborhood. Interactive maps are available on the WILMAPCO website. Visit

<http://www.wilmapco.org/mop>.



A four-factor analysis is used to determine appropriate language assistance measures. Below, we apply this analysis, considering the LEP (Limited English Proficiency), LL (Low Literacy), and LD (Limited Digital) communities.

Factor 1: The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program, activity, or service

Our region includes approximately 17,000 Spanish-speaking and 3,400 Chinese-speaking LEP individuals. Both groups meet the safe harbor threshold, and together they represent nearly 80% of the region's LEP population. All LEP individuals are eligible to participate in our transportation planning processes at both regional and local levels.

Additionally, there are nearly 13,000 adults over age 25 with low literacy in the region, who, like LEP groups, are eligible to participate in our planning processes. Furthermore, approximately 11,600 households lack access to a computer (including smartphones), and 21,100 households do not have an internet subscription. Individuals in these limited digital (LD) households are also eligible to participate in our planning processes.

Factor 2: The frequency with which LEP persons using a particular language encounter the MPO

WILMAPCO hosts numerous in-person and virtual workshops and open houses each year. We have proactively and successfully engaged Spanish speakers over the years, primarily through targeted efforts in areas with high Hispanic concentrations or for significant regional studies. Although our website is translatable into Spanish via modern browsers, and we share general planning information with the Latin American Community Center and Hispanic media, no LEP Spanish speakers have engaged with WILMAPCO outside of these proactive efforts.

A decade ago, proactive steps were taken to engage Chinese LEP communities by reaching out to the local Chinese American Community Center and two Chinese churches; however, these groups did not respond. Although the agency's website is translatable into Chinese via modern browsers, no LEP Chinese speakers have engaged with WILMAPCO independently.

Individuals with low literacy are likely to encounter WILMAPCO during public workshops and events, particularly those held in areas with high concentrations of LL individuals. In line with our Public Participation Plan, WILMAPCO strives to

present information in visually compelling ways with limited jargon and offers multiple feedback methods.

Similarly, individuals from LD households may encounter WILMAPCO during public workshops and events, especially those held in or near urban technology deserts. In accordance with our Public Participation Plan, WILMAPCO uses various methods beyond digital engagement to inform and collect feedback from residents, including pop-up workshops, paper surveys, door-to-door surveys, and postcard mailings.

Factor 3: The nature and importance of the MPO's services

Transportation is essential for everyone. The connectivity it provides (or does not) directly affects both livelihood and quality of life. Therefore, the opportunity to participate in transportation planning—whether at regional or local levels—should be available to all residents, including those who are LEP, LL, LD, or otherwise.

Factor 4: The MPO's resources and the cost of providing meaningful access to LEP persons

WILMAPCO is a well-funded MPO with a stable financial standing. Our website is translatable into many languages via modern web browsers. Additionally, one staff member is fluent in Spanish and can provide interpretation when needed. We also have access to on-call, certified translation and interpretation services, which are reasonably priced. However, providing proactive translation and interpretation services beyond those required by the safe harbor policy would be unreasonable.

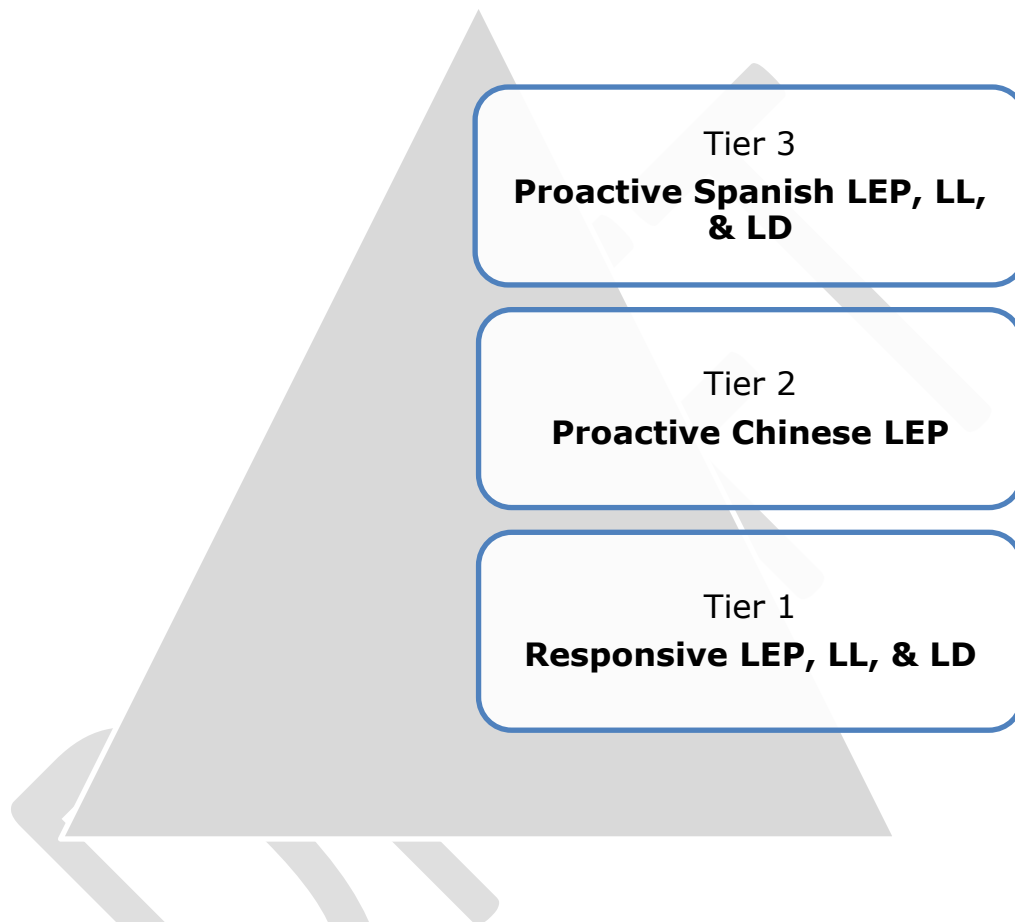
There are no additional costs for providing better engagement opportunities for individuals with low literacy. Public-facing materials should be accessible in multiple formats, including visual and oral-based engagement. While digital-only engagement can be more cost-effective than traditional methods, it is often less inclusive and, indeed, less effective in many contexts. The costs of supplementing digital engagement with low-tech methods are reasonable, given the benefits gained.

Language Assistance Plan

Based on the safe harbor provision and the findings from the four-factor analysis, this language assistance plan aims to enhance engagement with LEP, LL, and LD communities. Many elements of the plan involve continuing current agency practices, along with additional recommendations for improvement.

The plan is organized into three “Tiers,” ranked from 1 to 3, with each tier representing an increasing level of effort, as outlined below.

Tiers of Language Assistance and Engagement



Tier 1

Provide responsive assistance to LEP individuals through language interpretation, offer oral and visual support to LL individuals, and provide non-digital support to LD individuals.

1. Ensure the WILMAPCO website is automatically translatable into as many languages as possible, with a focus on maintaining high translation quality.
2. Upon request, WILMAPCO will provide certified interpretation for any document, presentation, meeting, or survey to LEP speakers of any language.

- a. Notice of this service will be included in WILMAPCO's Title VI policy, which is available on the website and at the WILMAPCO office. The statement will be provided in the five languages that each have more than 700 speakers with limited English proficiency: Spanish, Chinese, Gujarati, Arabic, and French.
- b. The interpreter will gather the thoughts and feedback of the LEP individual and relay them to the staff, either in person or virtually.
 - i. For live events, at least ten days' notice is required to ensure an interpreter is available.
- 3. At all public meetings, staff will identify individuals who may have difficulty understanding English.
 - a. Staff will have language identification flashcards³³ or smartphone apps available to help identify the participant's primary language if needed.
 - b. Staff will utilize a multilingual smartphone app to assist with preliminary communication.
 - c. These individuals will be referred to a certified interpreter on-site.
 - i. If the interpreter does not speak the individual's language, or if no interpreter is present, follow-up arrangements will be made to contact the LEP individual through an appropriate interpreter to convey the meeting's message and gather their feedback.
- 4. While WILMAPCO will strive to proactively accommodate LL individuals throughout all planning processes as described in Tier 3, staff will also identify individuals who may have low literacy at public meetings and events.
 - a. Staff will explain the material being presented through conversation and graphics.
 - b. Staff will offer to collect feedback from LL individuals orally instead of through a written survey.

³³ <https://www.fns.usda.gov/civil-rights/ispeak>

5. Staff will also accommodate the needs of LD individuals involved in all planning processes. In addition to the proactive steps outlined in Tier 3, the following will apply to all studies:
 - a. Upon request, staff will provide print versions of any digital survey, material, activity, or information, or convey it orally.
 - b. Staff will offer to collect feedback from LD individuals in written or oral form instead of requiring digital feedback.

Tier 2

Provide proactive engagement to Chinese-speaking LEP individuals:

1. The WILMAPCO Title VI Policy, Complaint Form, and Complaint Procedures will be posted in professionally translated Chinese on the WILMAPCO website and in the WILMAPCO office.
2. A professionally translated Chinese “About WILMAPCO” webpage will be maintained to provide an overview of the agency’s functions and opportunities for engagement.
3. WILMAPCO plans will be professionally translated into Chinese upon request.
4. Staff will review the LEP Chinese-speaking clusters map before starting any sub-regional study.
 - a. If the study area includes a Chinese-speaking LEP cluster, staff will work with local civic groups and nonprofits to determine if Chinese is a dominant secondary language in the area. If so:
 - i. Key study materials will be provided in Chinese, including human-translated documents such as the study’s purpose, public event flyers, surveys, and contact information.
 - ii. Staff will collaborate with local institutions to encourage participation from Chinese-speaking LEP individuals, ideally through community-based events.

iii. A certified Chinese interpreter will be present at all major public meetings.

5. WILMAPCO will continue to seek partnerships with local Chinese American institutions and explore collaborations with local Chinese media.

Tier 3

Provide proactive engagement to Spanish-speaking LEP individuals, as well as LL and LD individuals. Since Spanish is the region's most common second language and many residents have low literacy or limited access to technology, WILMAPCO will take additional steps to support these communities:

1. The WILMAPCO Title VI Policy, Complaint Form, and Complaint Procedures will be available in professionally translated Spanish on the WILMAPCO website and in the WILMAPCO office.
2. A professionally translated Spanish "About WILMAPCO" webpage will be maintained to provide an overview of the agency's functions and opportunities for engagement.
3. MPO plans will be professionally translated into Spanish upon request.
4. Staff will review the LEP Spanish-speaking clusters map before starting any study.
 - a. If the study is in a Spanish-speaking LEP cluster or has a region-wide scope:
 - i. Key study materials will be provided in Spanish, including human translations of the study's purpose, public event flyers, major social media posts, surveys, and contact information.
 - ii. Staff will collaborate with local institutions to encourage participation from Spanish-speaking LEP individuals, ideally through community-based events.

- iii. A certified Spanish interpreter will be present at all major public meetings.
 - iv. WILMAPCO will continue to strengthen partnerships with the Latin American Community Center (LACC) and the Delaware Hispanic Commission, which can offer guidance and support in reaching the Hispanic community.
5. WILMAPCO will continue to distribute public notices to Spanish-language media and work to get coverage of its stories.
 6. WILMAPCO will consider hiring a Hispanic-focused public relations consultant to provide advice on effective and culturally relevant outreach strategies.
 7. Staff will consult the LL clusters map before starting any study.
 - a. If the study is not within an LL cluster:
 - i. Staff should consider offering supplemental outreach and feedback materials geared towards LL individuals, including visual and oral-based outreach and feedback opportunities.
 - b. If the study is within an LL cluster or has a region-wide scope:
 - i. Visual and/or oral-based outreach and feedback opportunities must be included throughout the public outreach process.
 8. Staff will review the Urban Technology Deserts map before starting any study.
 - a. If the study is not within a Technology Desert:
 - i. Staff will provide print versions of any digital-only surveys, materials, activities, or information upon request, or convey them orally.
 - ii. Staff will offer to collect feedback in written or oral form instead of requiring digital feedback.
 - b. If the study is within a Technology Desert:

- i. Meeting notices, surveys, and information will be widely distributed in both print and digital formats.
- ii. Staff will use a variety of low-tech methods to gather feedback, including door-to-door surveys, telephone and text surveys, direct mailings, popup workshops, and other approaches.

Next Steps

WILMAPCO will periodically review and update these language assistance efforts. In the meantime, staff will participate in training sessions and stay informed of new federal guidance. This information will be shared with all WILMAPCO staff as the MPO continues its efforts to meet the needs of LEP, LL, and LD residents.



Chapter 5

Transportation Analyses of Mobility Challenged Communities & Americans with Disability Act Self Evaluation

Since 2007, WILMAPCO has focused on the transportation needs of seniors, people with disabilities, and individuals living in households without vehicles. Like low-income residents and ethnic/racial minorities, these groups often face significant challenges with travel. In this Plan, WILMAPCO is adding a fourth group: young people. The transportation needs of youth are often overlooked in transportation plans, despite their increased challenges as non-drivers or inexperienced drivers, which is especially problematic in our car-dependent region.

This chapter will start by reviewing our agency's compliance with applicable federal regulatory requirements. We will then assess how well MC groups are served by the current transportation system, providing recommendations along the way.

Section 504/Title II: Basic Reporting Requirements

Two federal laws provide strong protections for people with disabilities in the United States: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. These laws are particularly relevant to WILMAPCO due to its role as a local government agency. As such, our services, policies, and practices must be inclusive of people with disabilities.

Given our small size (fewer than 50 employees), our primary reporting requirement is to complete an ADA self-evaluation, which is detailed below. This self-evaluation was part of a public involvement process, including reviews by WILMAPCO's committees and a public comment period as part of this Plan.

ADA Self-Evaluation

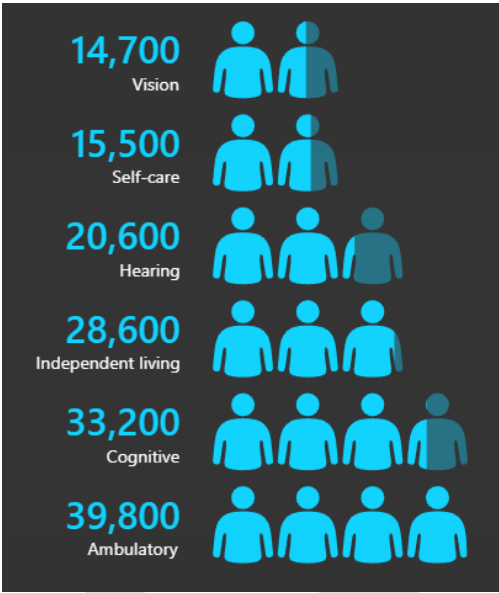
WILMAPCO serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Wilmington, Delaware metropolitan region, which includes New Castle County, Delaware, and Cecil County, Maryland. As the MPO, WILMAPCO is responsible for long-range transportation planning, maintaining a list of federally funded projects,

and leading the congestion management process. Additionally, we oversee several other regional and local planning studies each year.

The WILMAPCO region has a population of about 666,000, with approximately 83,000 people (12%) reporting one or more disabilities. As shown on the next page, ambulatory disabilities, which make walking and climbing stairs difficult or impossible, are the most common. Cognitive disabilities, which affect judgment, are the second most common. Other disability types include independent living, hearing, self-care, and vision disabilities.



Population with Disabilities, by Type
in the WILMAPCO Region, 2018-22 ACS



Vision

- Blind or serious difficulty seeing, even with glasses

Self-care

- Difficulty bathing or dressing

Hearing

- Deaf or serious difficulty hearing

Independent living

- Because of physical, mental, or emotional problems, difficulty doing errands alone

Cognitive

- Because of physical, mental, or emotional problems, difficulty remembering, concentrating, or making decisions

Ambulatory

- Serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs

Each type of disability is protected by federal law. WILMAPCO must afford all people with disabilities equal opportunities to participate in our services, policies, and practices. These will be reviewed below.

Physical barriers

WILMAPCO rents space in the Tower at STAR on the University of Delaware's southern campus in Newark, Delaware. Our suite on the eighth floor of that building is the site of staff offices, conference rooms, and in-person meetings open to the public. A newly constructed building, the Tower at STAR has ample parking for people with disabilities, access to/from local public transit and mostly accessible doors and elevators.

In the main, there are no obvious barriers preventing a person with a disability from reaching our suite through the southern entrance to the Tower, which is our primary access point. As was documented in our 2019 ADA Self-Evaluation, a security door leading from the elevator to the suite was a trouble spot for some people, particularly those with disabilities, given its heavy weight. This issue has since been resolved through the installation of a magnetic device which can keep the non-compliant door open.

WILMAPCO has stated policy to only hold outside public meetings in ADA accessible buildings served by nearby public transit³⁴. This policy is always followed.

Agency policies

Other agency policies that prohibit discrimination based on disability are also documented. Our Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process Self-Certification letter states that our planning processes are completed in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, along with the Older Americans Act, which prohibit discrimination based on disability or age. Our Equal Employment Opportunity policy includes an opening clause which states all employment decisions are made without regard to, among other things, age and "physical or mental handicap which can reasonably be accommodated." Additionally, our agreement with FHWA and FTA to allocate and administer funding, along with our third-party agreements with consultants, all include clauses that stipulate the need to work within federal laws. These include the nondiscrimination of people with disabilities. Finally, and most concretely, our Title VI/Nondiscrimination Assurance Statement stipulates compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. It states:

³⁴ See the Public Participation Plan: www.wilmapco.org/ppp.

WILMAPCO further assures that in accordance with the Acts, the Regulations, and other pertinent directives, circulars, policy, memoranda, and/or guidance, it will promptly take any measures to ensure that:

No person in the United States shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination in any program or activity which is administered by WILMAPCO, regardless of the funding source.

Communication

WILMAPCO communicates its commitment to help people with disabilities participate in planning processes.

Below are general template statements that are used:

Notice for Workshops and Events

WILMAPCO encourages all community members to participate in this event. If, because of a disability, you require special assistance please let us know. Contact our office at: wilmapco@wilmapco.org or 302-737-6205 no later than three business days before the event. We will endeavor to provide a service to help meet your needs.

General Notice

WILMAPCO encourages all community members to participate in our transportation planning processes. If, because of a disability, you require special assistance to participate in our activities, review documentation, or to otherwise get involved, please let us know. Contact our office at: wilmapco@wilmapco.org or 302-737-6205. We will endeavor to provide a service to help meet your needs.

WILMAPCO should always provide reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities. Accommodations should be made on a case-by-case basis, based on the need(s) of the individual making the request. With appropriate notice, having an American Sign Language interpreter at meetings, captioning provided during virtual meetings, or providing readers for the visually impaired, are examples of reasonable accommodations.

In addition, front line communications from WILMAPCO should consider the needs of people with disabilities.

- Visual presentations made in PowerPoint, or maps or posters we may use for a public meeting, should minimize small text and have good color contrast.
- Staff at public meetings should note if a person with disabilities is present (even without advanced notice) and take steps to facilitate their participation, if necessary.
- Additionally, per a recent update to Title II, the WILMAPCO website must be modified to meet *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1, Level AA* standards by 2026. This will require upgrades like screen reader compatibility, keyboard navigation, and alternative text for images to promote inclusive public participation.

Grievance procedures for those who feel their needs were not adequately addressed by WILMAPCO are not currently in place. WILMAPCO should consider developing these in the future, though they are not required given the agency's small size.

Recommendation: Front line communications from WILMAPCO should consider the needs of people with disabilities. This includes meeting updated web content accessibility guidelines by 2026.

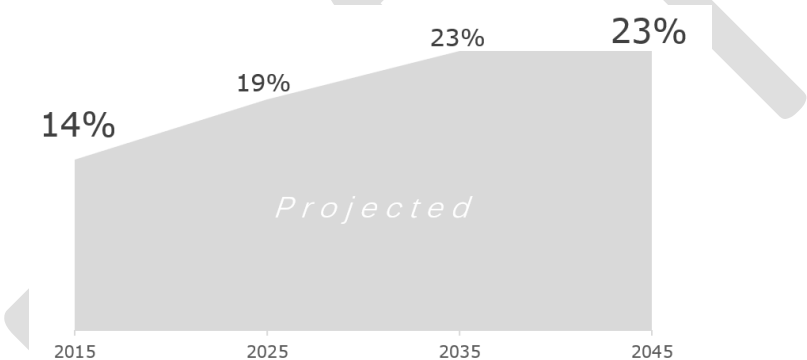
Training

Staff must stay up to date on guidance regarding our implementation of ADA. Staff will attend regular trainings to remain fresh on new legal interpretations and MPO requirements.

Demographic Profile

The senior population, or those aged 65 years or more, continue to grow. Today there are almost 110,000 seniors in the WILMAPCO region – some 16.3% of our population³⁵. That’s up from about 67,000 seniors in 2000 – about 11% of the region's population then. Projections indicate that, by 2035, seniors will account for 23% of our population³⁶.

Percent of Population more than 65 Years
WILMAPCO Region, American Community Survey and Projections³⁷



Many seniors also have disabilities. As shown in the graph below, as a person ages, their chance of becoming disabled too increases. Nearly a quarter (22%) of those between 65 and 74 are disabled; about half (45%) of those over age 75 are disabled. With the projected increasing proportion of seniors during the next couple of decades, it stands to reason, that the proportion of people with disabilities will grow too. And there is some evidence that has been happening. Today, some 83,000 residents (or 12.5% of the population) live with a disability. This can be contrasted against 70,700 (11.6%) in 2015.

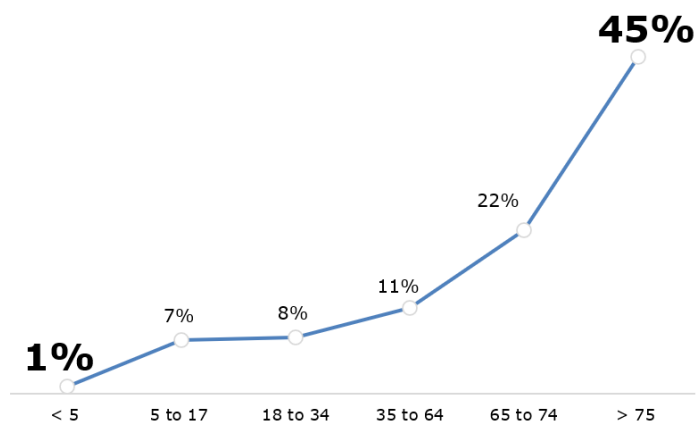
³⁵ These data are from the American Community Survey, 2018 – 2022 estimates.

³⁶ These projections are based on data from the Delaware Population Consortium and the Maryland Planning Department.

³⁷ These projections are based on data from the Delaware Population Consortium and the Maryland Planning Department.

Percent of Age Group with Disabilities

WILMAPCO Region, 2018-2022 ACS



There are some 127,000 or (18.8% of the region's population) youth in the WILMAPCO region. We define youth as falling between the ages of 5 and 19, both to align with Census-based age cohorts and to capture mobile populations with limited independent vehicle access based on age. The young population has been in steady decline across the region. In 2010, 133,000 (21% of the population), were between the ages of 5 and 19. Future projections suggest a continued fall in the number of youths, regionally, through the 2030s with a rebound in the following decade.

In step with the region's increasing suburban sprawl and car dependence, the proportion of households without vehicles has been in steady decline. At the turn-of-the-century, some 18,500 regional households were without cars, or 8% of all households. Today, this is true of 17,400 households, or 6.7% of all households.

Findings from Public Opinion Surveys

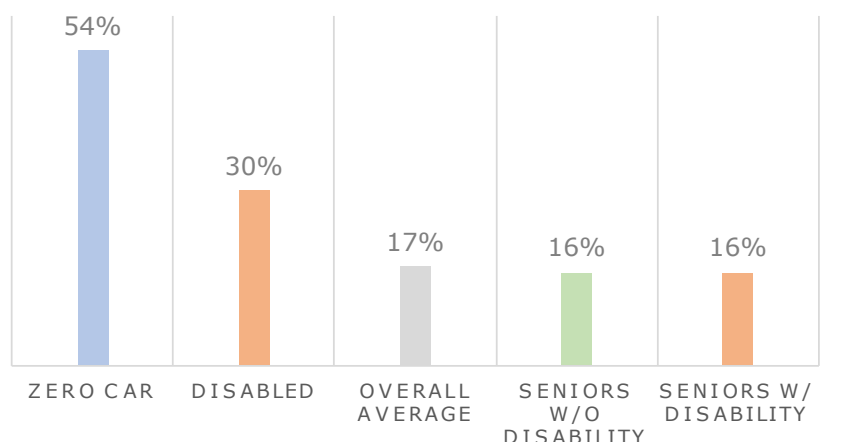
In our 2018 Public Opinion Survey, we found that people living in households without vehicles were significantly more likely to report difficulties with the transportation system than the average. As shown in the graph below, over half (54%) of those without a car said transportation prevented them from participating in activities such as grocery shopping, medical appointments, and family or social events at least some of the time. This rate was more than three times the regional average of 17%.

The survey also indicated that seniors, regardless of disability status, experienced fewer transportation challenges than average. Only 16% of seniors reported

difficulties, slightly below the regional average of 17%, and much lower than the 30% reported by disabled residents overall.

Transportation Keeps me from Activities at Least Sometimes

2018 WILMAPCO Public Opinion Survey



Our 2022 Public Opinion Survey tried to gain a better understanding of this pattern. This section presents these results for our Mobility Challenged groups surveyed³⁸.

Overall, seniors were less critical of the transportation system compared to non-seniors when asked to rate it in general terms. Twenty-three percent of seniors said the system did not meet their travel needs well, compared to 26% of non-seniors. Similarly, disabled residents were less critical than non-disabled residents, with only 17% of disabled residents saying the system did not meet their needs well, compared to 26% of non-disabled residents.

However, when asked about access to important destinations, such as healthy and affordable grocery shopping, significant challenges for disabled residents emerged. The findings also confirmed that seniors without disabilities face fewer transportation constraints than the average resident, while highlighting the transportation difficulties experienced by those in households without vehicles. The results, found within the charts on the following pages, can be summarized as:

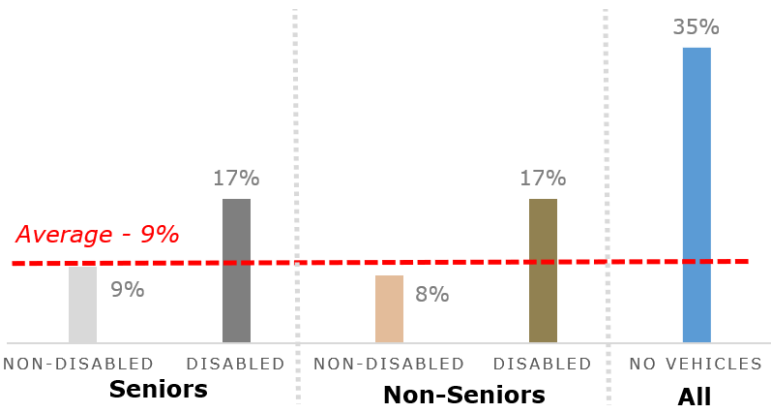
- **More than 1/3 of residents living in households without vehicles report difficulty reaching healthy and affordable grocery shopping than non-disabled residents.** Thirty-five percent (35%) reported difficulty, compared to a regional average of 9%.
- **Residents with disabilities are nearly twice as likely to have difficulty reaching healthy and affordable grocery shopping than non-disabled residents.** Seventeen percent (17%) reported difficulty, compared to an average of 9%.

³⁸ Only adults are surveyed in the Regional Public Opinion survey, so results for youth are unavailable.

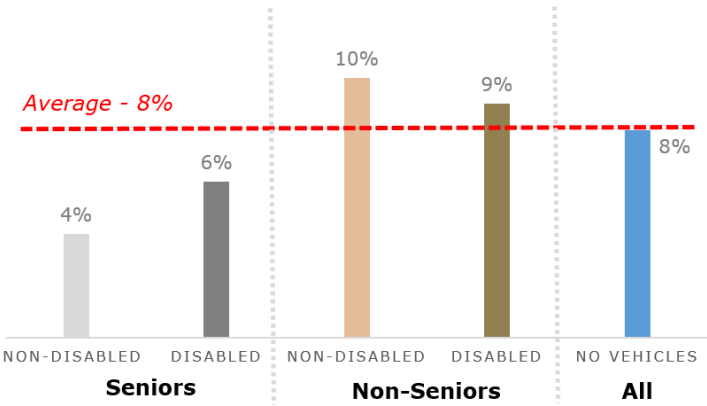
- **Mobility challenged residents do not experience significantly more difficulties reaching *their jobs or desired jobs* than the average resident.** About 8% of residents in the region reported difficulty reaching jobs, double the percent for non-disabled seniors, and on par with figures for disabled residents and residents living in households without vehicles.
- **Disabled non-seniors and residents living in households without vehicles experience twice as much difficulty reaching *social activities* than the average resident.** About 24% of disabled non-seniors and 22% of residents living in households without vehicles reported difficulty reaching social activities, compared to a regional average of 12%. In addition, an elevated 18% of disabled seniors also reported difficulty.
- **Disabled seniors and residents living in households without vehicles experience twice as much difficulty reaching *routine medical care* than the average resident.** About 21% of disabled seniors and 20% of residents living in households without vehicles reported difficulty reaching routine medical care, compared to a regional average of 9%. A slightly elevated 13% of disabled non-seniors also reported difficulty.



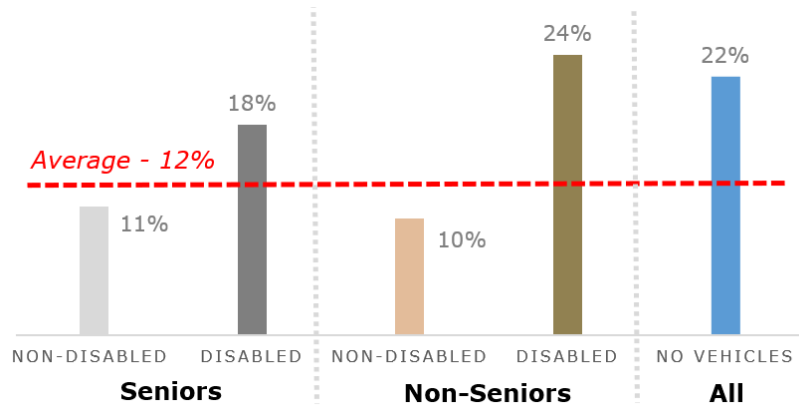
Limited Transportation Access to
Healthy and Affordable Grocery Shopping
WILMAPCO Region, 2022



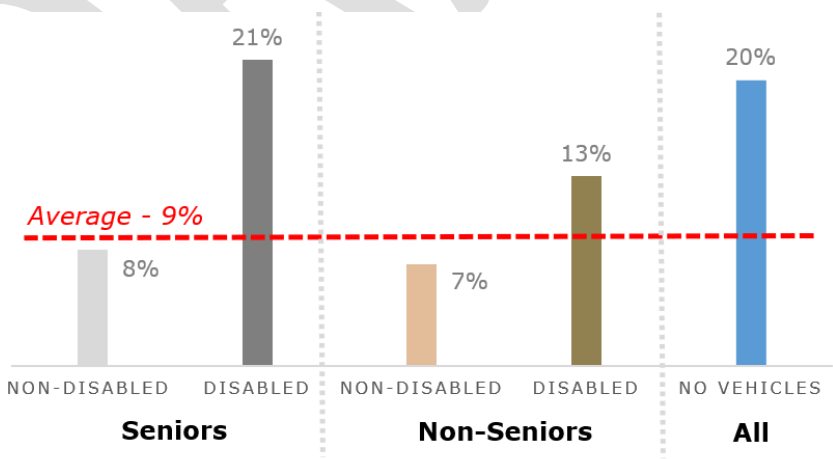
Limited Transportation Access to
My Job or Desired Job
WILMAPCO Region, 2022



Limited Transportation Access to
Social Activities
WILMAPCO Region, 2022



Limited Transportation Access to
Routine Medical Care
WILMAPCO Region, 2022



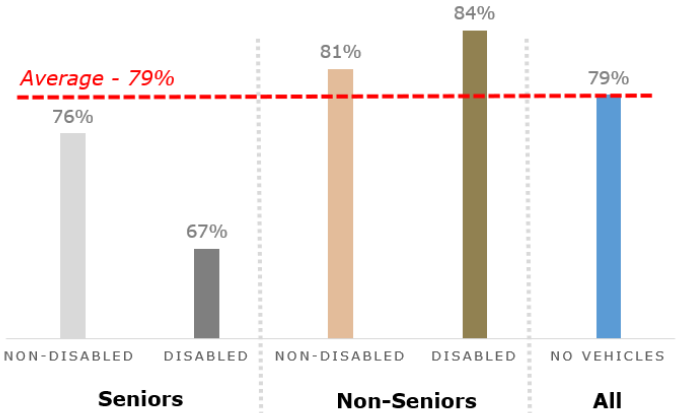
Overall, most mobility-challenged residents support improvements to bus, train, walking, and cycling systems. Non-seniors with disabilities are the most supportive of bus and train service improvements, with 84% considering them important or essential, compared to the regional average of 79%. Meanwhile, residents in households without vehicles and non-disabled non-seniors are the most supportive of improvements to walking and cycling facilities, with 72% rating these upgrades as important or essential, compared to the regional average of 69%.

Mobility-challenged residents also tend to support revitalization efforts and improving connections between neighborhoods and key destinations. Non-disabled non-seniors are the most supportive of revitalizing existing communities and downtown areas, with 75% considering it important or essential, compared to the regional average of 71%. Residents living in households without vehicles show the strongest support for connecting neighborhoods to nearby destinations, with 75% rating these connections as important or essential, well above the regional average of 58%. In contrast, non-seniors with disabilities show more moderate support for these connections, with 39% rating them as important or essential, 36% considering them somewhat important, and 25% saying they are not very important.

Finally, especially as young people are absent as participants in our Regional Public Opinion Survey, it is important to better understand their needs as well as effective youth engagement practices.

Recommendation: Research and incorporate best practices for engaging youth into the next Public Participation Plan.

Improving Bus and Train Service is Important/Essential
WILMAPCO Region, 2022



Annmarie's Story: Impacted by the Loss of Bus Service to Delaware City

Annmarie, a resident of Delaware City, had long relied on Bus Route 44 for essential parts of her life, from frequent medical visits and grocery shopping to socializing with family and friends in Wilmington. The route was far from perfect. Bus stops were poorly designed with minimal shelter, and buses often ran late or didn't show up at all. This unreliability made it difficult for people to depend on public transportation for work or errands. During a job search the route's inconsistency made it difficult for AnnMarie to attend interviews and find employment.

Annmarie, along with others in the community, advocated for improvements, such as weekend service, better bus stops, and more reliable schedules. However, instead of making these improvements, the route was discontinued due to low ridership. Annmarie, along with other concerned residents, spoke out at public meetings and petitioned for the route's reinstatement. Despite these efforts, DART, the local transit authority, remained steadfast in its decision.

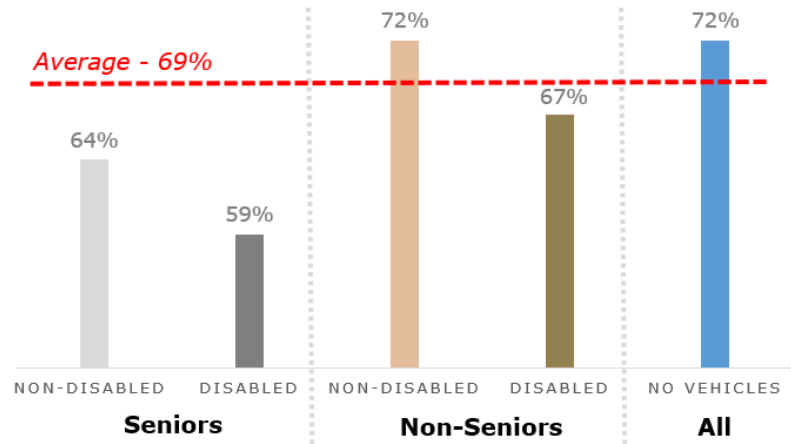
The loss of the Route 44 severely impacted Annmarie's mobility. The closest alternative route was more than four miles away, a distance too far to walk. Like other transit-dependent residents she was left in a difficult situation. Annmarie found herself relying on the kindness of neighbors or friends for rides, but these favors were not always available. She began taking expensive Uber rides costing anywhere from \$15 to \$25 each way. Sometimes she used her bicycle, but winter weather and unsafe road conditions made this a difficult and unreliable option. The financial strain of relying on ride-hailing services like Uber and Lyft added to her stress, particularly as she had been unemployed for several months and was struggling to make ends meet.

The loss of reliable public transportation also limited Annmarie's ability to participate in social activities. She could no longer easily meet friends in Wilmington or go to the movies, and found herself more isolated at home. Even more frustrating was the sight of DART buses passing through her town—used for training but not for passengers—and felt a lack of attention given to her community's needs.

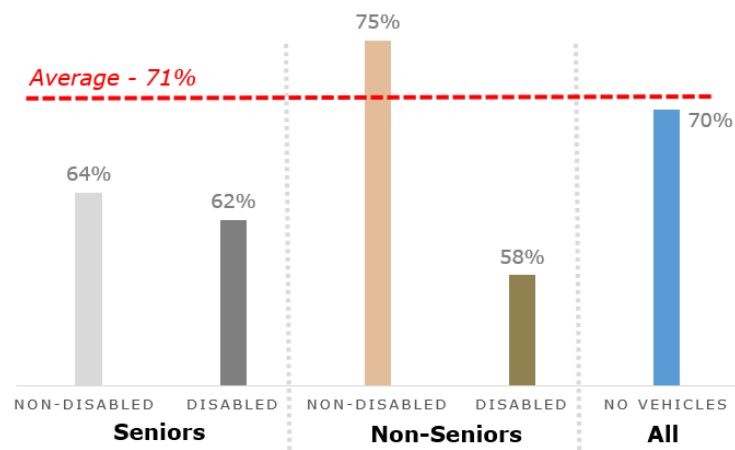
Through it all, Annmarie remains hopeful. She believes that the efforts of the community will eventually challenge authorities to better serve the people who rely on public transit the most.

Annmarie is a resident of Delaware City, Delaware. She shared her mobility story with WILMAPCO in 2024.

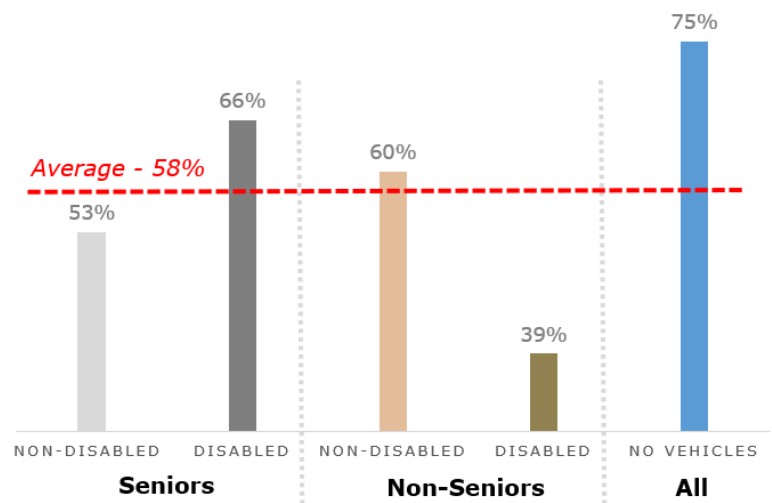
Improving Facilities for Walking and Cycling is Important/Essential
WILMAPCO Region, 2022



Revitalizing Existing Communities and Downtowns is Important/Essential
WILMAPCO Region, 2022



Connecting Neighborhoods to Each Other and Nearby Destinations is
Important/Essential
WILMAPCO Region, 2022



Sophia's Story: Navigating Newark Without a Car

Sophia has lived in Newark her entire life, and unlike many residents, she's made a deliberate choice not to drive. Her relationship with transportation has evolved over the years—from being driven around by family and friends during her youth to becoming a regular user of the local bus system and, more recently, a dedicated cyclist. For Sophia, getting around without a car is a conscious lifestyle choice.

Sophia first started relying on the bus when she got a job outside Newark during college. Over time, she incorporated biking into her routine to reach bus stops more efficiently or to travel around town. Her current commute involves biking about two miles to a bus stop, then riding the bus to work—a trip that usually takes 30 to 35 minutes in the morning, but can stretch to 45 minutes or more in the evening due to bus delays.

When the weather is particularly bad or she's not feeling well, she sometimes uses DART Connect, a new microtransit service. However, she notes that its unpredictability can be a challenge: you never quite know when you'll get picked up or how long the trip will take.

Sophia admits that transit in Newark has other limitations. Many of the places she'd like to go—particularly for leisure or shopping—are either difficult or impossible to reach by bus. She mentions the Newark Arts Alliance, which moved to a location on Paper Mill Road with no bus access, and the Fairfield Shopping Center, which is close to her home but requires an uphill bike ride. Although DART Connect can technically get her to these places, the inconsistency in travel time often makes it a less reliable option.

Winter adds another layer of complexity. Fortunately, Sophia's boss allows her to work from home during snow days, understanding the difficulties of her commute. Still, she recalls one uncomfortable experience biking home in the snow after waiting too long for a bus and deciding it was quicker—and warmer—to ride.

Safety is a recurring concern. Sophia describes feeling vulnerable on roads without bike lanes, especially on high-traffic corridors like Kirkwood Highway. There, she's forced to choose between bumpy sidewalks riddled with driveways or biking next to fast-moving car traffic. Elsewhere in the city, the combination of hills, lack of infrastructure, and inconsistent lighting can make biking challenging. She tends to avoid unlit trails at night but otherwise feels confident thanks to her reflective gear and bike lights.

Sophia says she's not asking for miracles—just more practical and connected public transit. She suggests expanding bus service into Newark's northern and western areas, including places like Pike Creek, North Star, and Hockessin. Currently, the only bus access to some of these areas is via routes originating in Wilmington, which isn't helpful for a Newark-based rider.

Despite the obstacles, Sophia has found empowerment in her transportation choices. As she's become known among friends and coworkers as “the one who bikes everywhere,” she's noticed

how her example subtly challenges assumptions. Some people worry for her safety and offer her rides; others—especially recreational cyclists—are surprised that she relies on biking for everyday travel. Some assume she'll eventually “give in” and get a car.

But Sophia remains firm in her choice. “I just don’t like driving,” she says simply. For her, biking and public transit are not only viable alternatives—they offer a way to move through her city on her own terms, even if that means extra effort, longer commutes, and creative workarounds. As she puts it, “I needed a way to get around,” and she’s found one, even if the system wasn’t built with someone like her in mind.

Sophia is a resident of Newark, Delaware. She shared her story with WILMAPCO in 2025.



Spatial Analysis

Concentrations of seniors, households with at least one person with a disability, people living in households without vehicles, and young people can be identified across the WILMAPCO region. This section first maps these clusters. We then identify our moderate and significant Mobility Challenged (MC) neighborhoods. Mapped concentrations of individual MC groups are analyzed for their transportation connectivity to key destinations, while our MC neighborhoods factor into the project prioritization process.

This section begins with a series of maps detailing the varying intensities of our MC community settlement across the region³⁹.

Seniors – are most heavily concentrated in neighborhoods in northern New Castle County, north of I-95.

Population Thresholds: Regional percentage – 16.3%; Double regional percentage – 32.6%

Households with a person with a disability – are most concentrated in pockets along the I-95 corridor, from Elkton to Wilmington’s northern suburbs.

Population Thresholds: Regional percentage – 25.0 %; Double regional average – 50.0%

Households without vehicles – are concentrated in various neighborhoods along the I-95 corridor, from North East to the Delaware/Pennsylvania border. Wilmington is home to the heaviest clusters.

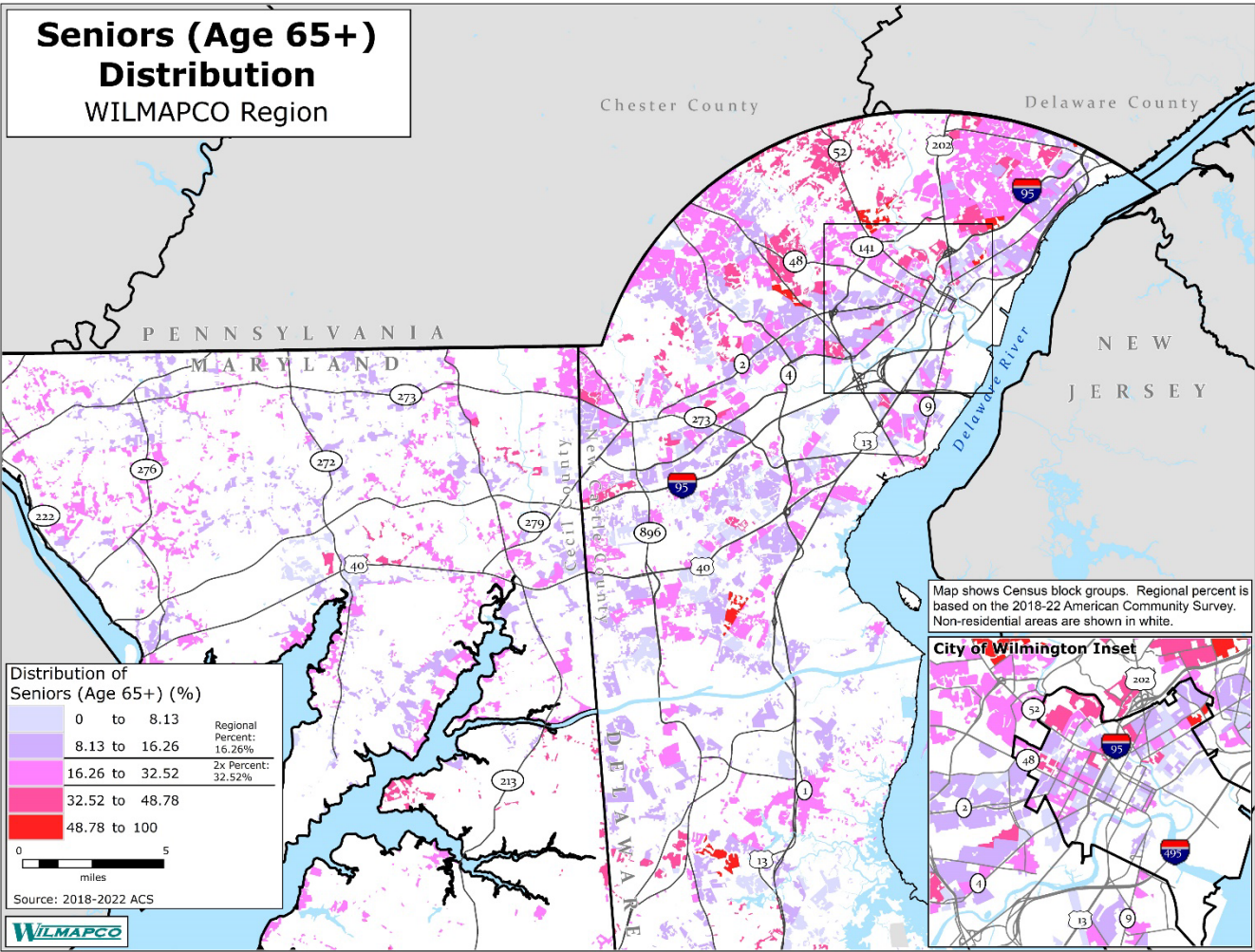
Population Thresholds: Regional percentage – 6.7%; Double regional average – 13.4%

Youth (Ages 5 -19) – are concentrated in neighborhoods across the region, including North East, the City of Newark, Middletown, and Wilmington’s Northeast.

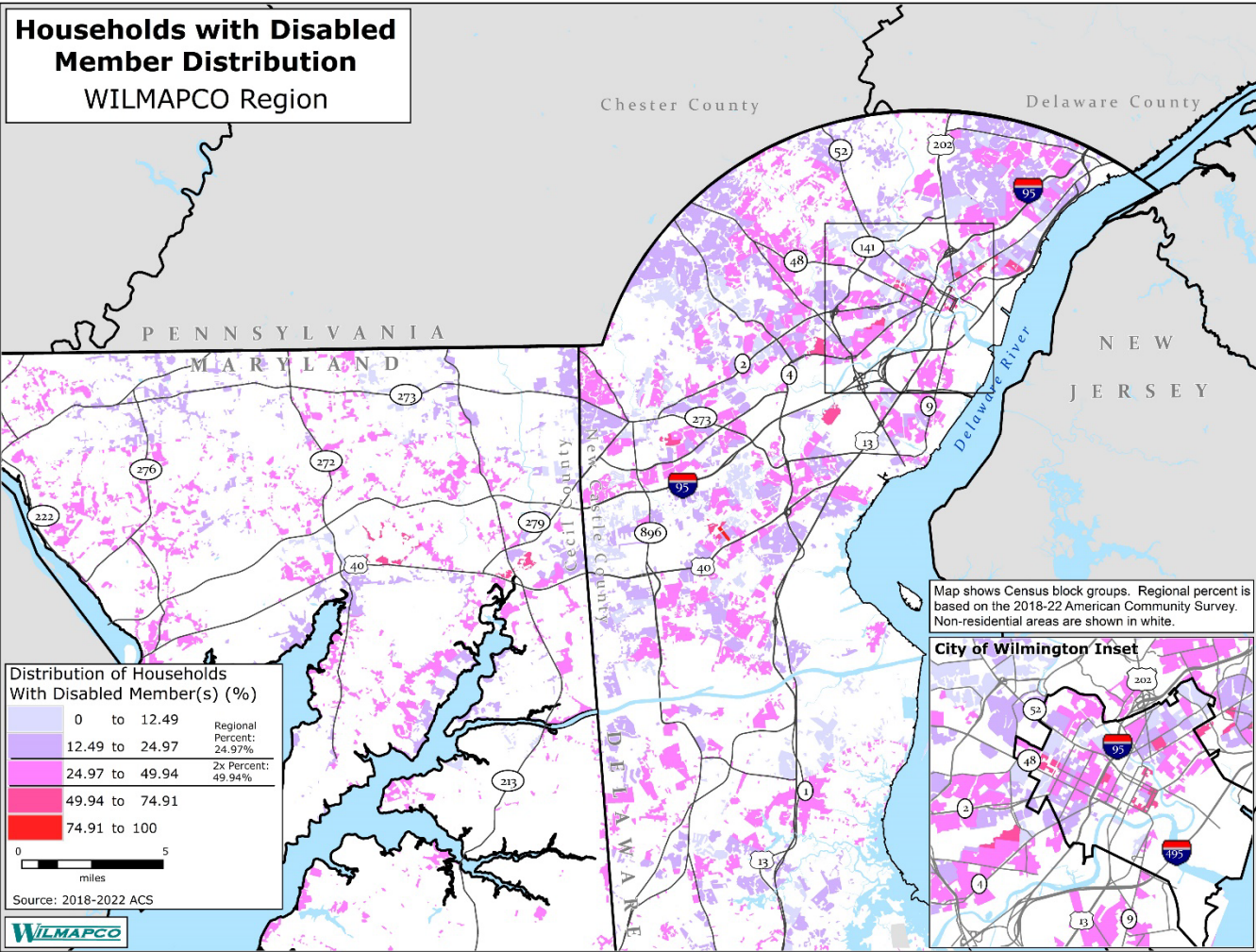
Population Thresholds: Regional percentage – 18.9%; Double regional average – 37.7%

³⁹ All data are from the American Community Survey, 2018 – 2022 sample.

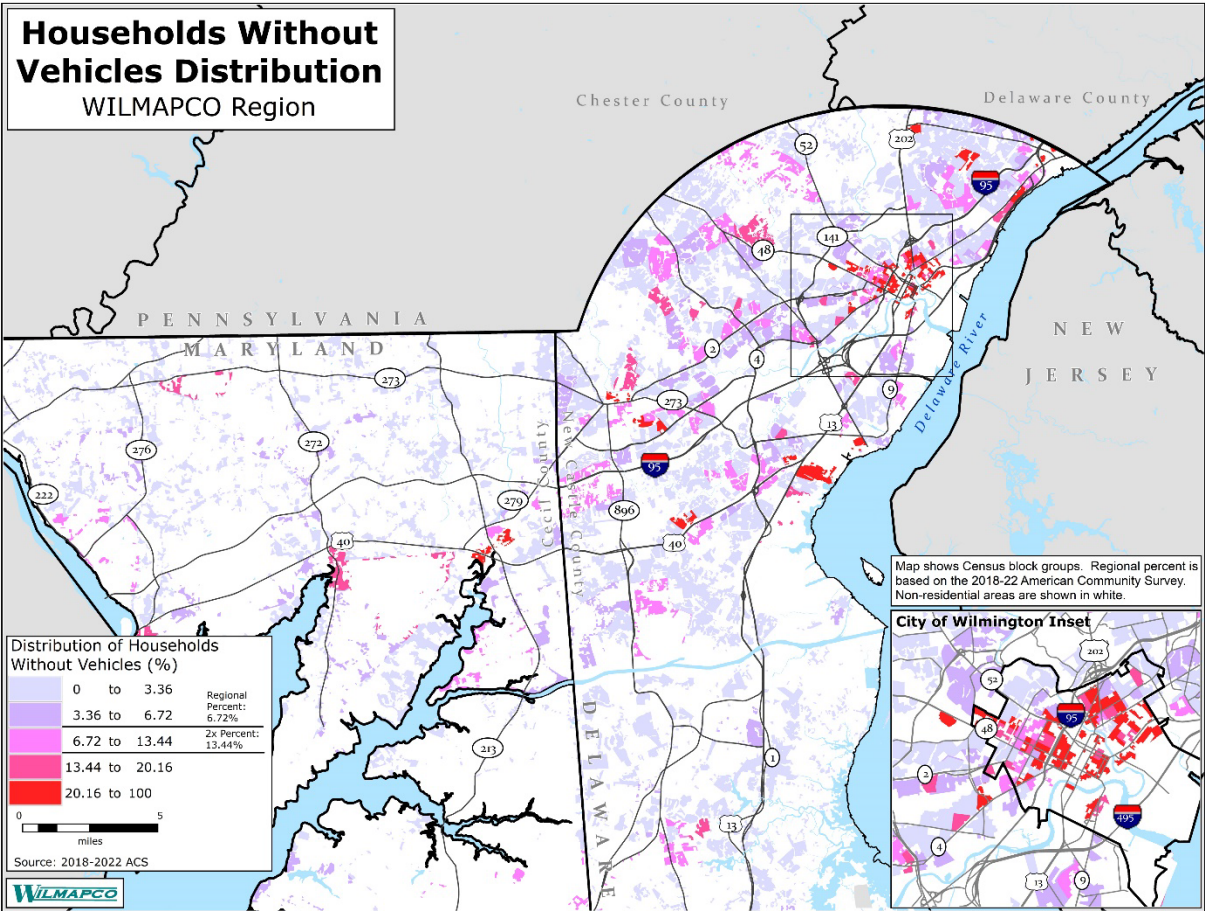
Senior Population Distribution in the WILMAPCO Region



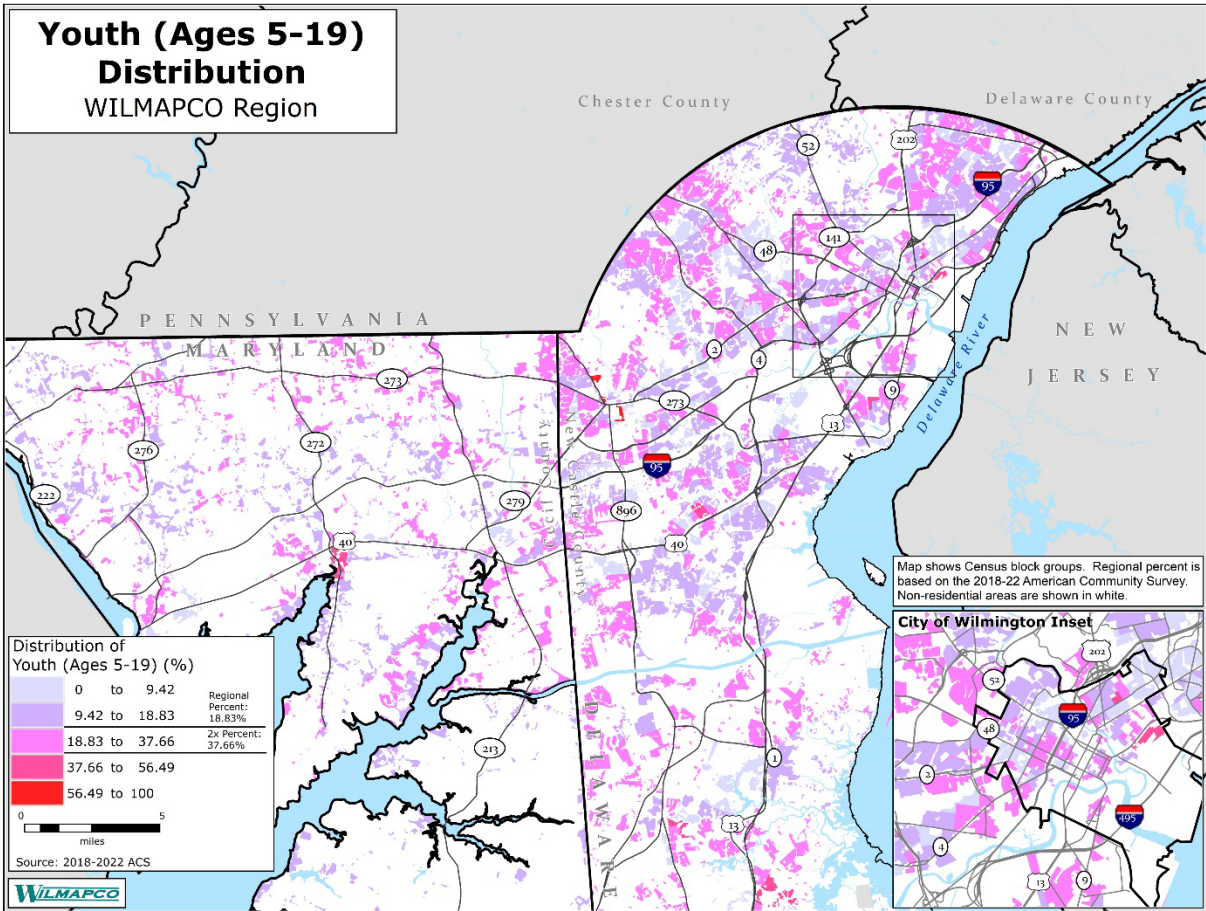
Households with at Least One Disabled Person Distribution in the WILMAPCO Region



Households without Vehicles Distribution in the WILMAPCO Region



Youth (Ages 5-19) Distribution in the WILMAPCO Region



MC Neighborhoods

For nearly two decades, WILMAPCO has identified Mobility Challenged (MC) neighborhoods (or areas) for use in our project prioritization process. MC neighborhoods represent concentrations of seniors, households with people with disabilities, households without vehicles, and youth. Beneficial projects within MC neighborhoods receive extra points in our project prioritization process.

The current plan adjusts the process for identifying MC areas. First, we incorporated neighborhood youth (ages 5-19) into the identification criteria. Second, we now consider households with at least one disabled member, rather than individual locations of people with disabilities, as this data is available at the Census block group level, offering more granularity than Census tract data.

For moderate MC area identification, we reduced the disability threshold from three times the regional percentage to two, as the higher threshold identified very few neighborhoods. We now apply this two-times regional percentage threshold for both disability and youth presence, while retaining the three-times threshold for seniors and households without vehicles. These thresholds adjust based on population concentration levels. Finally, after block groups are flagged as moderate or significant MC areas, formally uninhabited areas are excluded using local land use/land cover data.

MC neighborhoods span across the northern tier of our region. In Cecil County, they are found along the US 40 corridor, with significant concentrations in Elkton. In neighboring New Castle County, they principally stretch along the I-95 corridor with particularly heavy concentrations within the City of Wilmington.



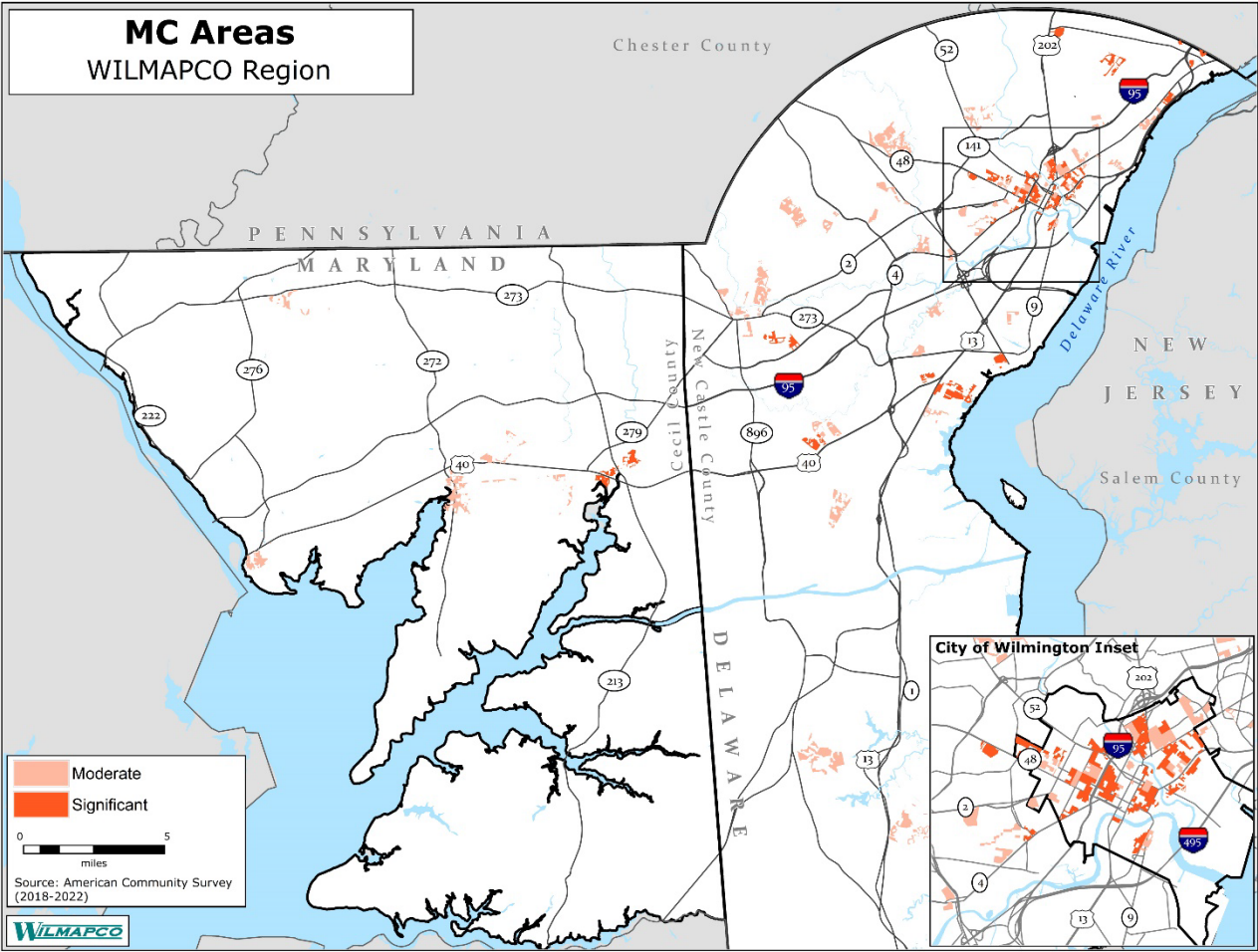
Moderate MC Neighborhoods Identification Path

- HHs without vehicles >2x the regional %, and
 - Seniors >regional %, or
 - HH w/disabled >regional %, or
 - Youth >regional %
- Seniors >3x the regional %, or
- HHs w/Disabled >2x the regional %, or
- HHs w/out vehicles >3x the regional %, or
- Youth >2x the regional %

Significant MC Neighborhoods Identification Path

- HHs w/out vehicles >3x the regional %, and
 - Seniors >regional %, or
 - HH w/Disabled >regional %, or
 - Youth >regional %

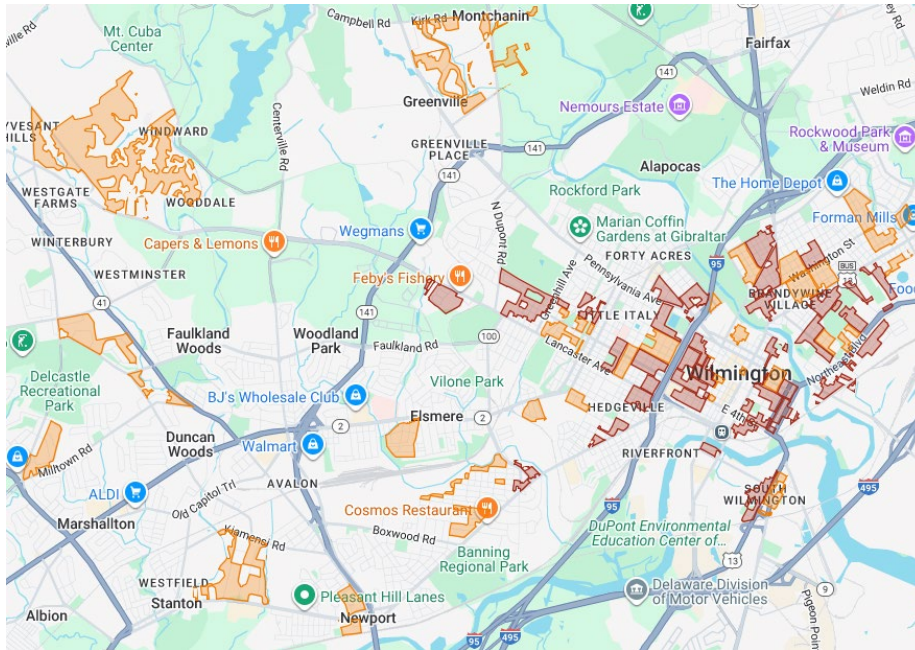
Mobility Challenged (MC) Neighborhoods in the WILMAPCO Region



Interactive Maps

Mobility Challenged Neighborhoods

See all the identified MC areas and neighborhood concentrations and zoom into your neighborhood. Interactive maps are available on the WILMAPCO website. Visit <http://www.wilmapco.org/mop>.

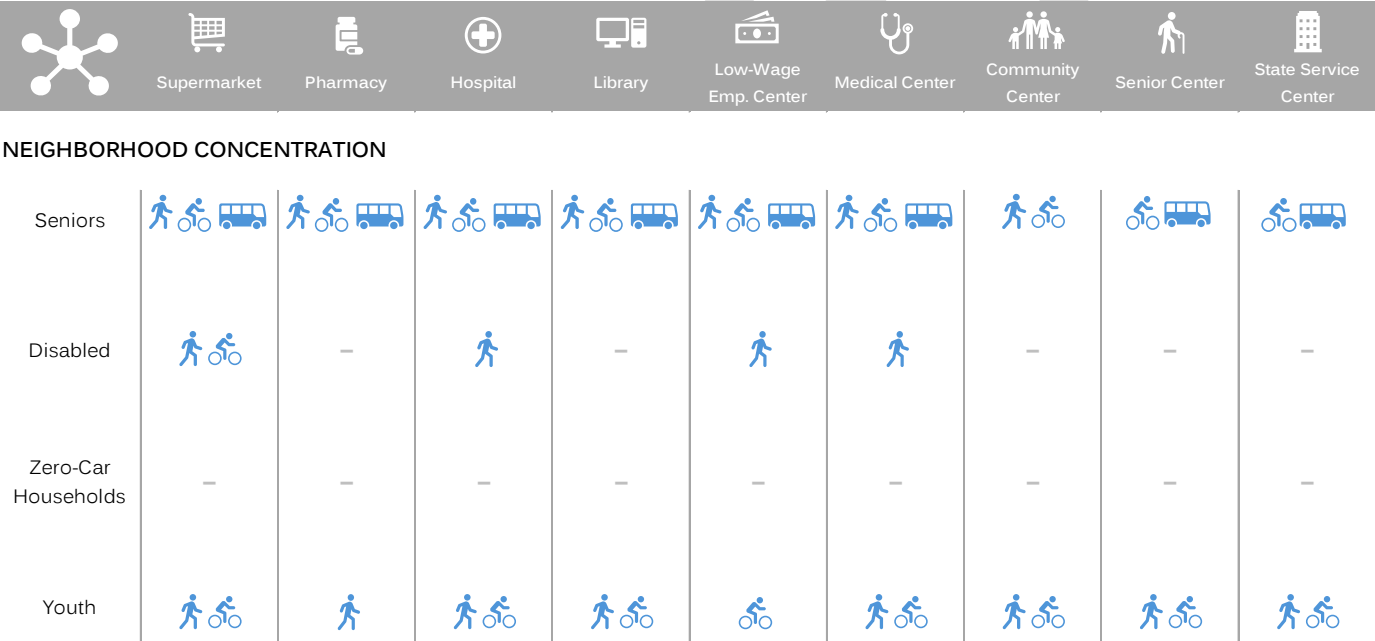


Connectivity Analysis

We examined connectivity from housing units in neighborhoods with heavy concentrations of seniors, households with at least one person with a disability, households without vehicles, and youth to key destinations. The methodology used for this analysis follows that from the previous section. This data is shown in more detail in the 2025 Connectivity Analysis Report.

Unlike our EO communities, we found that people living in senior and youth neighborhood concentrations often had more limited transportation connectivity than average. The graphic below shows the areas of concerns. People living in neighborhood concentrations of zero-car households had better connectivity than average, and people living in all neighborhoods of interest had better-than-average connectivity by car.

Transportation Connectivity Concerns by Neighborhood Concentration



Neighborhoods with a high proportion of seniors had weaker-than-average walking, biking, and transit connections to all destinations (excluding transit connections to community centers and walking connections to senior centers and state service centers).

Neighborhoods with a high proportion of households with at least one disabled member showed weak walking connectivity to supermarkets, hospitals, low-wage employment centers, and medical centers, as well as weak biking connections to supermarkets.

Neighborhoods with high proportions of youth had weak walking and biking connections to all destinations, except for biking connections to pharmacies and walking connections to low-wage employment centers.

The tables below and on the following page show average connectivity for blocks within each neighborhood concentration to each destination type and by each mode.

Recommendation: Follow-up analysis should explore ways to fill the transportation connectivity gaps uncovered from areas with mobility challenges to key destinations.

Walking and Biking Connectivity, by Homes within Neighborhood Concentrations

										
	Supermarket	Pharmacy	Hospital	Library	Low-Wage Emp. Center	Medical Center	Community Center	Senior Center	State Service Center	
Regional Average	7%	12%	1%	5%	2%	6%	7%	7%	2%	
NEIGHBORHOODS										
Seniors	4%	10%	0%	1%	0%	3%	1%	7%	3%	
Disabled	3%	29%	0%	7%	0%	4%	10%	24%	4%	
Zero-Car Households	14%	31%	3%	12%	4%	11%	18%	23%	7%	
Youth	3%	7%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	

									
Regional Average	28%	34%	11%	18%	11%	21%	21%	24%	13%
NEIGHBORHOODS									
Seniors	17%	29%	8%	9%	5%	17%	14%	17%	8%
Disabled	25%	59%	22%	20%	19%	22%	25%	35%	23%
Zero-Car Households	45%	61%	34%	36%	29%	38%	39%	44%	36%
Youth	19%	48%	4%	11%	7%	14%	13%	8%	4%

Transit and Car Connectivity, by Homes within Neighborhood Concentrations

	 Supermarket	 Pharmacy	 Hospital	 Library	 Low-Wage Emp. Center	 Medical Center	 Community Center	 Senior Center	 State Service Center
Regional Average	45%	46%	37%	43%	44%	45%	40%	42%	37%
NEIGHBORHOODS									
Seniors	42%	43%	32%	36%	41%	42%	42%	41%	36%
Disabled	68%	69%	49%	68%	68%	69%	65%	68%	67%
Zero-Car Households	76%	77%	66%	73%	73%	75%	76%	75%	70%
Youth	74%	74%	46%	74%	74%	74%	46%	74%	46%

	 Supermarket	 Pharmacy	 Hospital	 Library	 Low-Wage Emp. Center	 Medical Center	 Community Center	 Senior Center	 State Service Center
Regional Average	96%	97%	85%	98%	86%	96%	97%	93%	85%
NEIGHBORHOODS									
Seniors	99%	99%	90%	100%	78%	99%	100%	96%	95%
Disabled	100%	100%	76%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	96%
Zero-Car Households	97%	100%	89%	100%	95%	100%	100%	98%	94%
Youth	100%	100%	100%	100%	76%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Summary and Review of Recommendations

Several recommendations were made in this chapter. Early on, we identified ways to better comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Later, our spatial analyses highlight the need for both further study and action to improve connectivity from various MC neighborhood concentrations and suburban age-restricted communities.

Major Recommendations

1. Front line communications from WILMAPCO should always consider the needs of people with disabilities. This includes meeting updated web content accessibility guidelines by 2026.
2. Research and incorporate best practices for engaging youth into the next Public Participation Plan.
3. Follow-up analysis should explore ways to fill the transportation connectivity gaps uncovered from areas with mobility challenges to key destinations.



Chapter 6

Summary of Recommendations

The MOP outlines a series of recommendations throughout to address these disparities. Major ones include:

- Conduct additional analyses to address high transportation costs in suburban poverty areas and to identify connectivity gaps between EO/MC neighborhoods and key destinations such as jobs, healthcare, and grocery stores.
- Support planning and project development in historically underfunded Black neighborhoods.
- Advance projects with high technical priority scores, with particular attention to walking access from low-income neighborhoods to nearby job clusters.
- Expand bus frequency and coverage to improve access for underserved communities.
- Support projects that reduce traffic volumes in low-income neighborhoods and reconsider projects that would increase roadway capacity there.
- Enhance road safety within Hispanic and low-income communities.
- Increase the availability of public EV charging stations in underserved areas.
- Ensure all WILMAPCO communications meet updated accessibility standards by 2026.
- Strengthen youth engagement strategies in the next Public Participation Plan.

The MOP also recommends detailed updates to WILMAPCO's Public Participation Plan to keep it in line with new federal guidance and the findings of this study.

Next Steps

Implementation of the MOP will begin immediately. WILMAPCO will:

- Enact policy changes recommended in the plan.

- Undertake follow-up analyses and studies.
- Continue to integrate mobility opportunity analyses into related planning efforts.
- Monitor new federal regulations and guidance related to Title VI, ADA, and related initiatives.

The next major update to the Mobility Opportunities Plan is anticipated around 2030.