

TRANSPORTER

Monitoring Spotlight - Southbridge Transportation Improvements are moving forward



Last fall, the Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) endorsed the Southbridge Transportation Action Plan (STAP). The STAP is a roadmap for making it safer and easier to get around Wilmington's Southbridge neighborhood.

The plan focuses on four main goals:

- Slowing down traffic to make streets safer
- Reducing and rerouting truck traffic out of residential areas
- Improving bus service for better access
- Making it easier to walk and bike

The plan is built from the community's 2021 neighborhood plan, using existing and projected traffic data, engineering best-practices, and ongoing resident input. It includes a wide range of recommendations—some that can be done quickly (like new signs and traffic light changes), and others that will take longer, like major safety upgrades on New Castle Avenue and Heald Street or expanded bus routes.



Community leaders and planners are working together to help implement the recommendations. Here are some early wins:

- **Truck Traffic Study:** WILMAPCO received a grant to explore ways to reduce truck traffic in Southbridge, the biggest mobility concern of residents. This study kicks off in May.
- **Traffic Light Adjustments:** Traffic signals in Southbridge were re-timed late last summer, helping to slow drivers down. Speeds have dropped by about 3–4 mph on average.
- **Safer Streets:** DelDOT included a key recommended street redesign (tightening a wide turn onto D Street from the Heald Street Bridge to help slow excessive speeding) in an upcoming project. They have also set aside funding to carry out more STAP-recommended improvements in several years.
- **Better Bus Service:** DART is looking into the STAP's recommendations to improve local bus routes as part of a local transit plan. Ideas include running buses on Sundays to the local ShopRite and rerouting other lines to better serve Southbridge.
- **Illegal Truck Parking:** A new flyer helps guide residents with how to report trucks that are parked illegally on local streets.

Kirkwood Highway Corridor Master Plan:

Final recommendations are available to review

Kirkwood Highway/SR 2/Capitol Trail, is a 10.8 mile long roadway that runs east-west between Wilmington to the east and Newark to the west. It is generally a 4 to 6 lane roadway that runs through a suburbanized area. With open sections that feel like a road you travel through to another destination and other sections that are congested with many entrances for businesses, Kirkwood Highway can be considered a “strood” (part street and part road).

The roadway was designed largely to serve automobiles. This corridor carries DART bus route 6, which is one of the most well-used bus routes in DART’s system, with consistently high ridership, despite the fact that there are challenges crossing the road and accessing some of the bus stops. Some segments have been retrofitted for improved multi-modal access, with sidewalks and improved crosswalks, but the roadway is best suited for vehicular travel with wider lanes and shoulders that encourage higher speeds. This design results in safety concerns for drivers, pedestrians, bike riders and transit users along many parts of the corridor. There are also many serious automobile crashes on the corridor, with crash clusters at Limestone Road and Dupont Road.

WILMAPCO, DelDOT/DTC and New Castle County began the Kirkwood Highway Land Use and Transportation master plan to better integrate land use and transportation to accommodate future economic growth along the corridor. As our project team has spoken with residents of the corridor at committee meetings and workshops, one of the resounding concerns has been safety for all users.

The goal of the study is to provide an environment for the corridor to evolve as a high-quality and attractive multi-modal corridor with provisions for future mixed-use land development with improved safety, walkability, bikeability, local access management and place-making, while maintaining and enhancing existing neighborhood vitality. Our project team has worked to engage the community in this discussion at five workshops by presenting alternate scenarios for transportation and land use to determine what will work best for the different parts of the corridor while still focusing on overall safety and quality of life for all users. We found that residents were very receptive to safety improvements, like improved intersections for pedestrians, bike riders and transit users, and for traffic calming measures to slow vehicle speeds.

The community’s response allowed our team to develop recommendations for eight different topics that can be applied to the corridor:



Land Use & Economic Development



Road & Street Sections



Major Intersections



Other Key Kirkwood Highway Intersections



Accommodating Churchman’s Road Extended



Other Key Roads in the Study Area

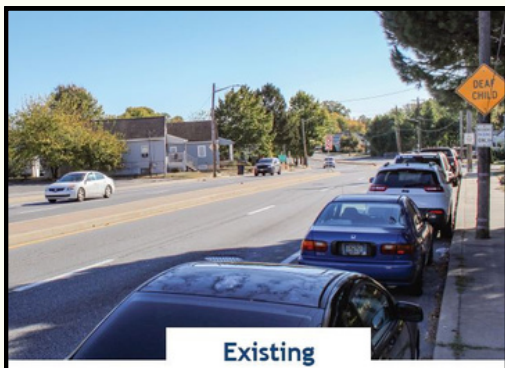


Transit



Pedestrian/Bicycle Network Connections.

Individual recommendations are grouped under eight concepts and are further categorized by timeline for implementation and estimated cost. Smaller, less expensive projects (< \$1m - \$10m) may be completed in the Short-term, within 1-6 years. Larger projects (\$10m - \$25m) are more likely to be completed in the Mid-term, from 7 – 14 years. The largest, most expensive and complicated projects (\$25 - > \$50m) may not be completed for 15 or more years, in the Long-term.



Some recommendations, such as narrower travel lanes, less pavement, and adjacent pedestrian/bike facilities are designed to discourage high traffic speeds. Extensive sidewalks and a shared use path network will provide safer access throughout the study area. The plan adds 46 miles of non-motorized connections to enhance walking, bicycling, and transit. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements will also connect neighborhoods, schools and parks. To manage congestion levels recommended improvements will maintain similar travel times while addressing opportunities for modest redevelopment and setting more consistent travel speeds along the corridor. Community Development Areas will encourage land use designs that support bikeable and walkable places, support mixed use redevelopment, and create opportunities for landscaping and open space.



Once the Plan is finalized, a monitoring committee will be established to help guide and fulfill the recommendations of the Plan. The monitoring committee will facilitate regular communications between decision makers, community stakeholders and the traveling public on progress in implementing the Plan.



These recommendations have been added to the project website so that the community can review them and leave comments. A draft report will be added to the website in May 2025 for another public review period, and will be reviewed by the WILMAPCO Technical Advisory Committee in June, followed by a presentation to WILMAPCO's Council in July seeking their endorsement.

To view the study process and results, please visit the project website, www.wilmapco.org/kirkwood.

The Rocky Run Underpass Feasibility Study - Looking at alternatives

The Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO), DelDOT, and the New Castle County Department of Land Use completed a study to plan for the future of land use development and transportation along the US 202/Concord Pike corridor in 2020. Recommendations from that study include multi-modal improvements to make the corridor more bicycle and pedestrian friendly, which will reduce congestion while connecting neighborhoods with retail and recreational assets along the corridor.

The Concord Pike Monitoring Committee reviewed those recommendations and prioritized the concept of an improvement to the Rocky Run culvert under Concord Pike as a possible underpass/tunnel location. The existing three-cell culvert is being considered due to its proximity to the parkland and trail networks on the west side of Concord Pike. The culvert is located just south of the Widener University Law School campus and just west of the former Brandywine Country Club.

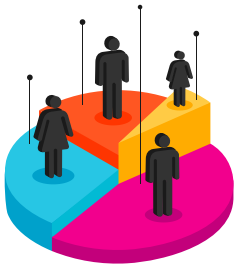
WILMAPCO's Feasibility Study project team has worked with a Technical Committee (TC) consisting of local stakeholders and partner agencies and coordinated with the University of Delaware's Water Resources Center to begin hydraulic analysis of the Rocky Run. Modeling was done to determine how much water the existing culvert structure can accommodate during various storm events and evaluate the impact both at the culvert and upstream if one of the three culvert cells was made into a pedestrian and bicycle underpass. The project team also researched case studies from other states to show how similar projects have been implemented and looked at other options such as improved at-grade crossings, a pedestrian bridge over Concord Pike, and a new, separate tunnel.



The initial results were reviewed by the TC and presented to the public at a workshop on February 10, 2025. The team conducted a more detailed analysis and considered public comments to refine the potential culvert alteration. They compared the effectiveness of the alternatives to create a safer way for pedestrians and bicyclists to access both sides of US 202/Concord Pike in this area. An improved version of the concept utilizes the southernmost culvert cell as a pedestrian and bike underpass with the addition of a four-to-five-foot wall that will divert the Rocky Run to the remaining two culverts in normal conditions. This design allows that culvert to accommodate overflow to avoid upstream flooding impacts during major storm events. The team met with the National Park Service to discuss how the underpass will connect to the existing and planned trail networks and met with Widener University to explain how the project could affect their property. A second public workshop will be held on June 2, 2025 to bring the final results of the study to area residents.

For more information visit: [Rocky Run Underpass](#) | [WILMAPCO](#)

Delaware Population Consortium - Annual Population Projections



On January 16th, the Delaware Population Consortium (DPC) adopted its most recent series of population, household, and employment projections for the State of Delaware and its three counties. These figures are produced on an annual basis to provide policymakers, planners, and the general public with an agreed upon set of numbers that factor into all levels of decision-making.

Overall, the projections show Delaware falls in line with the national trend of a slower growth as birth rates continue to fall. The state will still see an increase of about 181,000 in total population from 2020 through 2050 due to people moving to Delaware.

During the next few decades, Delaware is expected to undergo several demographic changes in the composition of its residents that include:

- New Castle County is expected to peak in population around 2040, then begin a slight decline.
- Sussex County will grow the most in numbers (132,167) and percentage (56%). Net in-migration is driving this growth.
- The 65 and over population will continue to grow statewide by 41% from 2020 to 2050. This population is expected to increase by approximately 45,000 in New Castle County topping out at about 139,000 residents over the age of 65 by 2050. This age group is expected to make up nearly a quarter of the county's population by 2050.
- In 2024, Delaware's natural population growth (births vs. deaths) turned negative, meaning that more deaths than births occur. The only growth expected will be based upon migration into the state.

County Population Projections for Delaware 2020-2050

Population	2020 Census	2030	2040	2050	2020-2050 Population Change
New Castle	570,719	593,944	600,240	589,023	18,304
Kent	181,851	197,729	206,999	213,228	31,377
Sussex	237,378	291,491	327,931	369,545	132,167
DE Total	989,948	1,083,164	1,135,170	1,171,796	181,848

% of State Population	2020 Census	2030	2040	2050
New Castle	58%	55%	53%	50%
Kent	18%	18%	18%	18%
Sussex	24%	27%	29%	32%

Source: Delaware Population Consortium, Version 2024.0 January 2050

For more details, or to view the full set of projections, please visit the Delaware office of State Planning Coordination at: <https://stateplanning.delaware.gov/demography/dpc.shtml>.

The Air Quality Partnership of Delaware

Simple steps to improve air quality and health

The Air Quality Partnership of Delaware is a public/private coalition of businesses, agencies, and individuals whose mission is to raise awareness and inform Delawareans about practices that improve air quality and health. Ground level ozone and particulate matter (PM 2.5) are both caused by pollutants in the air, frequently the result of vehicle or industrial emissions. They can result in health problems, particularly for sensitive groups, such as seniors, children, and people with respiratory problems.

As the weather turns warmer, ground level ozone, or smog, is air pollution that is particularly dangerous. It is caused by emissions from cars and other gasoline engines combining with sunlight and heat. On days when the temperature is high and the air is still, these emissions (NOx and VOCs) create a harmful mix called ground level ozone.

It can affect everyone, but groups especially sensitive to air pollution include children, the elderly, people with heart and lung diseases, and in the summer, adults who exercise or work outside. In the short-term, exposure to high levels of ozone irritates the lung's airways and causes

inflammation, much like a sunburn. Other symptoms include coughing, wheezing, chest pain and headaches. It can aggravate chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma and bronchitis and can lead to increased emergency room visits and hospital admissions. Long-term, prolonged exposure to even low levels of ozone can cause asthma in children and lead to permanent lung damage.

To stay informed about air quality in your area, you can sign up for notifications of Air Quality Action Days, when the ozone or PM2.5 levels are expected to reach unhealthy levels, at www.enviroflash.info.

Join the Partnership! You or your organization can help reduce the impact of poor air quality by working with us to educate Delawareans about simple steps that can be taken to "Do Their Share for Cleaner Air." For more information, please contact Helen at 302-387-6026 or email Helen.Wiles@doverkentmpo.org



10 Simple Steps to Improving Air Quality

Trip chain. It's easy!

Combine your errands into one trip. It helps you get things done faster and helps reduce traffic congestion and air pollution.



Take mass transit, share a ride or car pool

Even if you do it just one or twice a week, you'll reduce traffic congestion and pollution, and save money.



Ride your bike

It's a great way to travel and can help you and the air get in condition. Motor vehicles on the road create more than 25% of all air pollution nationwide.



Take things in stride

Walk or in-line skate instead of driving. They are easy ways to get exercise and they are easy on the air.



Care for your car

Regular maintenance and tune-ups, changing the oil, and checking tire inflation can improve gas mileage, extend your car's life, and reduce your car's emissions by more than half.



Get fuel when it's cool

Refueling during cooler periods of the day or in the evening can prevent gas fumes from heating up and creating ozone.. An that can help reduce ozone alert days.



Don't top off the tank

It releases gas fumes into the air and cancels the benefits of the pump's anti-pollution devices. So stop at the click and help reduce pollution.



Telecommute

Work at home sometimes, if you can. You'll save time and money, and reduce emission and traffic congestion.



Know before you go

If your area has a travel and transit information network, use it to get travel and transit updates before you leave home and you won't get stuck in a jam.



Spread the word

If everyone took just a few of these simple easy steps, it could make a big difference.



DNREC Updating State Climate Action Plan for 2025

The DNREC Division of Climate, Coastal, and Energy is currently in the process of updating Delaware's Climate Action Plan (CAP) for 2025. This plan serves a playbook of strategies to achieve the state's climate goals and greenhouse gas reduction targets as established in the 2023 Climate Change Solutions Act. The CAP will cover two main pathways to climate action: preventing future environmental harm by acting now to reduce emissions, and protecting Delaware's communities, ecosystems, and infrastructure from severe weather hazards.

The first Climate Action Plan, released in 2021, was the result of a year-long participatory process involving state residents, local businesses, scientists, and more. In order to track progress towards climate goals and maintain the plan as a living document, DNREC updates the CAP every five years, and publishes a progress report every two years detailing actions undertaken and milestones achieved.

As part of this update process, DNREC wants to hear from you and your community. The Division of Climate, Coastal, and Energy held a series of community workshops this past October, one in each Delaware county. These informal workshops included interactive activities to learn

more about how climate change will affect Delaware, provide feedback on state programs, and contribute suggestions to the "Wall of Ideas" for consideration by the CAP's team of technical experts. DNREC will host a second round of upcoming community workshops during the summer of 2025, with even more opportunities to get involved. Stay tuned for more information and workshop dates coming soon.

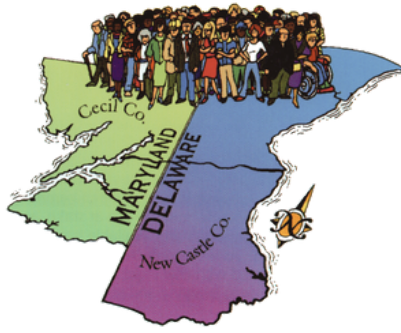


To learn more about the 2025 Climate Action Plan roadmap, download a copy of the 2023 progress report, sign up for our mailing list for updates, and more, visit: de.gov/climateplan

WILMINGTON AREA PLANNING COUNCIL

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- **Transporter Newsletter Editor**
Dawn Voss



Transporter Newsletter Spring 2025

WILMAPCO Public Meetings

For the latest information on meeting location or virtual login, please visit www.wilmapco.org
or email Elizabeth Espinal at espinal@wilmapco.org

MAY	JUNE	JULY
<i>May 1, 2 p.m.</i> <u>WILMAPCO Council</u>	<i>June 3, 3 p.m.</i> <u>Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group</u>	<i>July 3, 10 a.m.</i> <u>Air Quality Subcommittee</u>
<i>May 15, 10 a.m.</i> <u>Technical Advisory Committee</u>	<i>June 5, 10 a.m.</i> <u>Air Quality Subcommittee</u>	<i>July 10, 2 p.m.</i> <u>WILMAPCO Council</u>
	<i>June 12, 10 a.m.</i> <u>Technical Advisory Committee</u>	<i>July 17, 10 a.m.</i> <u>Technical Advisory Committee</u>
	<i>June 16, 6 p.m.</i> <u>Public Advisory Committee</u>	

The Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) is the transportation planning agency for the Cecil County, MD and New Castle County, DE region. As the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), WILMAPCO is responsible for planning, financing, and coordinating the development of the best transportation system for the region. Learn more at www.wilmapco.org.