

PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WILMAPCO Hybrid-format Meeting, October 20, 2025

Minutes prepared by Elizabeth Espinal.

Mr. Josh Solge, City of Newark representative, called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Members Present: 7

Tracy Chamblee, Southern New Castle County Alliance
Carlos de los Ramos, AARP
Bill Dunn, Civic League for New Castle County
Patricia Folk, Cecil County
Sarah Lester, Cornerstone West
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance
Joshua Solge, City of Newark

Members Absent: 7

Mark Blake, Greater Hockessin Area Development
Robin Bullock, Holloway Terrace
Richard Janney, Southern New Castle County
Mike Kaszyski, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce and PAC Chair
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council
Peggy Schultz, League of Women Voters of Delaware
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance

Staff Members: 7

Leonard Bonarek, Senior Planner
Dan Blevins, Principal Planner
Elizabeth Espinal, Administrative Assistant
Dave Gula, Principal Planner
Dawn Stant, Outreach Coordinator
Colleen Stroud, Regional Planner
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Guests: 2

Robert Hicks, Public
Clare Quinlan, DelDOT

2. Approval of the August 18, 2025, Meeting Minutes

ACTION: On Action by Mr. Tracy Chamblee and seconded by Mr. Carlos de los Ramos, the meeting minutes were approved by the PAC.

Motion Passed.

(10-20-25-01).

3. Public Comment Period:
None.

4. Executive Director's Report:

Ms. Tigist Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- Starting with September 11th, Council: Under action items, the Council endorsed the Maryland Route 272 Corridor Transportation Plan, the Rocky Run Feasibility Study, the Augustine Cut-Off Corridor Bike/Ped Improvement Study, the Newark Bicycle Plan Update, and the First Final Mile Freight Network Plan Update. The Council also approved the annual federal funds letters submitted to DelDOT, amended the Transportation Improvement Program to include a Cecil County project, and approved the proposed Public Advisory Committee appointments.

Four presentations were provided: Priorities for State Policy and Spending by Dave Edgell; a Delaware Bond Bill Update by Anne Brown (DelDOT); the 2025 Mobility Opportunities Plan by Bill Swiatek; and the FY 2026 Project Update, which was on the agenda but was not presented due to time constraints.

- At the end of August, WILMAPCO launched its new website, and members were encouraged to visit and review the updated platform.
- On September 13th, Staff attended a Hispanic Health Fair at the Route 9 Library.
- On September 16th, Staff discussed the Southbridge Truck Bypass Study at the Southbridge Civic Associations' meeting.
- On September 21st, Staff participated in Newark Community Day.
- On September 23rd, the Southbridge Truck Bypass Study's Advisory Committee met.
- On September 24th, the State Strategies Policy were released and Staff participated in NCC Public Workshop at the Route 9 Innovation Center in New Castle City.
- On September 25th, Staff participated in the 2025 Delaware Highway Safety Summit.
- On September 26th, Staff attended the Jackson Street Road diet with residents, elected officials, city, state, and DelDOT.
- On September 29th, Staff participated in the CTP/TIP Public Workshop along with DelDOT, with about 23 people in attendance.
- On October 1st, we had interviews for the Wilmington Safe Street for All (SSFA) Safety Action Plan, Toole Design was selected as the consulting team.
- On October 2nd, the first Advisory Committee of the WILMAPCO Sidewalk Gap Analysis project was held. The project seeks to identify sidewalk gaps in both counties.
- On October 6th, Staff attended the United Neighbors meeting in Wilmington.
- On October 7th, Staff participated in Delaware's Quarterly Mobile Sources Planning Group meeting, which addresses Air quality issues statewide.
- On October 8th, Staff participated in Downes Elementary School's Walk to School Day.
- On October 9th, Staff held the Windy Hills Walkable Community Workshop.
- On October 14th, Staff hosted the Wilmington Initiatives Partners meeting.
- On October 15th, Staff attended the CPMC Fall meeting at the Talleyville Fire Hall.
- On October 18th, the Lancaster Avenue Walkable Community Workshop was held.
- On October 20th, Staff attended the Newport Station Public Workshop.
- On October 28th, the Southbridge Truck Bypass Study Public Workshop will be held from 6-7:30 p.m. at the Neighborhood House.
- On October 30th, the East Elkton Plan's Monitoring Committee will meet.
- On November 3rd, the Ardens Transportation Plan's Monitoring Committee will meet.
- On November 5th, the MDOT CTP Tour meeting in Cecil County will take place.
- On November 17th, the Southern New Castle County Land Use and Transportation Plan Public Workshop will be held at the Odessa Fire Hall.

Ms. Patricia Folk inquired about the date of the upcoming Cecil County meeting, and Ms. Zegeye confirmed it will be held on November 5th at 10:00 a.m. in the Administration Building.

Mr. Bill Dunn asked whether the November 19th CXMC meeting was still scheduled. Ms. Zegeye affirmed that the CXMC Fall Meeting will take place on November 19th at the DelDOT Canal District Office.

Mr. Tracy Chamblee requested clarification on the date of the SNCC meeting. Ms. Zegeye stated that the meeting is scheduled for November 17th at 6:00 p.m. at the Odessa Fire Hall.

ACTION ITEMS:

None.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

5. FY 2026 UPWP Project Updates

Mr. Dave Gula provided an overview of the projects included in the upcoming FY 2026 UPWP. He summarized each effort and noted which partner agencies submitted the projects.

Mr. Dan Blevins briefed the committee on the Delaware Statewide Freight Plan Update, required every four years and scheduled for completion by late 2026. The update will align with federal emphasis areas and include topics such as truck parking and freight flows, with consultant support from Whitman, Requardt & Associates.

Mr. Blevins also summarized the Intersection Control Evaluations and Alternatives Screening for New Castle County, explaining that these studies focused on corridors such as US 40 and Kirkwood Highway which are required by FHWA when considering changes to intersection control or geometry. These evaluations will help identify and compare alternatives that improve safety and operations.

Mr. Blevins then described the Logistics and Fulfillment Center Transportation and Land Use Impact Study, a joint effort between New Castle and Cecil counties. The study will assess transportation impacts, evaluate warehousing site performance, and develop best-practice guidelines for future development. Wallace Montgomery and CPCS are the selected consultants.

Mr. Leonard Bonarek presented the Sidewalk Gap Analysis for New Castle and Cecil Counties. The project was initiated to create a systematic and data-driven method for identifying and prioritizing sidewalk gaps. Data collection and preliminary gap review are underway, with the project expected to run through mid-2026.

Mr. Gula then summarized the Southern New Castle County Growth Area Land Use and Transportation Plan, an update to a recent study with a new focus on the county's TID area. The study includes land use and transportation modeling, market assessment, and public engagement, beginning with a workshop on November 17. JMT has been selected as the consultant for this 18-month effort.

Mr. Gula concluded with an overview of WILMAPCO's ongoing corridor and plan monitoring responsibilities, including support for Churchman's Crossing, Governor Printz Boulevard, Kirkwood Highway, US 202, Route 40, Claymont, and Maryland 272.

To view the presentation in its entirety, [\[click here\]](#) (11m. 03s.).

Mr. Chamblee requested clarification on the acronym “TID” Mr. Gula explained that TID stands for Transportation Improvement District. Mr. Blevins added that a TID is an agreement between New Castle County and DeIDOT outlining cost-sharing and impact fees based on transportation and land-use expectations.

Mr. Gula noted that the Southern New Castle County TID dates back to approximately 2008. He emphasized that WILMAPCO is not updating the TID itself; rather, the current study provides the foundational analysis needed should New Castle County or DeIDOT decide to amend the TID in the future.

Mr. Dunn asked for an explanation of the TID boundaries, particularly near the Delaware River. Mr. Blevins responded that the green area represents the county’s designated growth area, purple reflects the broader study area, and yellow identifies the Middletown municipal boundaries. He noted that older developments outside the designated growth area may still fall within TID considerations.

Mr. Dunn asked whether areas beyond the purple boundary contain developments of relevance. Mr. Blevins replied that while he did not have the maps available, there are historical industrial sites that may factor in future planning.

Mr. Dunn commented on past work along major corridors such as Kirkwood Highway and Concord Pike. Mr. Blevins clarified that those improvements stem from the region’s congestion management process, which intersects with but is separate from the TID framework.

Mr. Dunn asked whether similar TID-related work has been conducted in Cecil County. Mr. Blevins stated that only limited efforts have occurred there, primarily related to previous corridor studies such as East Elkton and MD 272, with recommendations often focused on signal coordination as a cost-effective improvement.

6. City of New Castle Walkable Community Workshop

Mr. Leonard Bonarek provided an overview of the Walkable Community Workshop held on August 6 in the City of New Castle. The workshop, conducted in partnership with City staff, elected officials, police and fire representatives, and engaged residents, included an introductory presentation followed by a guided walking assessment of key locations in the historic district.

The presentation reviewed the elements of walkable and “complete” streets, universal design considerations, pedestrian safety treatments, street-crossing improvements, and examples of temporary or “quick-build” interventions. Particular attention was given to New Castle’s brick sidewalks and associated accessibility and maintenance challenges. Participants also reviewed examples of landscaping, curb extensions, and intersection treatments that can enhance visibility and reduce crossing distances.

Mr. Bonarek emphasized that during the walking assessment, attendees identified several issues, including inconsistent sidewalk materials, uneven brick surfaces, missing crosswalks, and wide intersections that encourage high vehicle speeds. The group also noted positive features, such as areas where historic materials successfully coexist with ADA-compliant elements.

Participants recorded their observations and recommendations on annotated maps, which staff later compiled into a consolidated digital map for inclusion in the final report. Preliminary recommendations focus on three areas: intersection improvements and traffic calming (including curb extensions), sidewalk repairs and accessibility upgrades, and other community-identified needs such as formalizing an informal path connecting the Battery Park parking area to the riverfront trail.

To view the presentation in its entirety, [click here](#) (09m. 02s.).

Following the presentation, Mr. Solge asked whether concerns about wheelchair accessibility were raised by WILMAPCO staff or by residents. Mr. Bonarek responded that several residents noted accessibility challenges, though their strongest feedback centered on maintaining the historic brick sidewalks. He added that some participants expressed concern for community members who may struggle with mobility on uneven brick surfaces.

Mr. Dunn commented on the condition and age of the brick sidewalks and asked whether they were full-depth brick or brick veneer. Mr. Bonarek explained that most sidewalks appear to be full-depth, older brick installations that naturally settle over time and require significantly more labor and cost to maintain than concrete. He emphasized that recommendations will aim to balance historic preservation with accessibility needs by supporting proper maintenance rather than replacing brick sidewalks.

Mr. Dunn shared his personal experience installing brickwork and emphasized the substantial preparation and compaction required to ensure long-term stability. Mr. Bonarek agreed, noting the extensive effort involved in properly maintaining brick sidewalks and emphasizing that recommendations should balance preservation of historic character with the need for safe, accessible pedestrian infrastructure.

7. Regional Sidewalk Gap Analysis and Prioritization

Mr. Leonard Bonarek presented an update on the Regional Sidewalk Gap Analysis, noting that the project was initiated in response to a growing volume of individual requests for sidewalk improvements. The study aims to create a systematic, affordable, and efficient approach to identifying and prioritizing sidewalk gaps across the region.

Mr. Bonarek explained that the consultant team selected was RK&K with Renaissance, the team has begun Phase I of the project, utilizing Ecopia which uses high-resolution satellite imagery analyzed by artificial intelligence to map existing sidewalks, crosswalks, and missing links. Preliminary AI outputs show strong accuracy on suburban arterial roads and internal office park sidewalks, though additional verification is needed in more complex urban environments. Staff and partners are now reviewing this data and conducting quality control to confirm actual sidewalk conditions.

Additionally, a public Wiki-Mapping tool has been launched to collect community input on missing sidewalks, unsafe crossings, small gaps, and other pedestrian concerns. This input will be cross-referenced with AI findings to ensure accuracy and local relevance.

Mr. Bonarek noted that once data validation is complete, the study will move into Phase II, which includes selective field audits and development of a prioritization framework. This framework will consider factors such as pedestrian activity, adjacent land use density, safety

needs, and opportunities to reduce vehicle trips through improved connectivity. Advisory committee meetings will continue into early 2026, followed by more detailed engagement with communities exhibiting significant sidewalk gaps or mobility challenges.

To view the presentation in its entirety, [click here](#) (10m. 31s.).

Mr. Dunn asked whether the AI used in the sidewalk gap analysis could distinguish brick sidewalks from standard sidewalks. Mr. Bonarek replied that the system performed better than expected in identifying brick sidewalks in New Castle, though it struggled in Southbridge due to more complex and uneven sidewalk conditions. He noted that the AI is highly accurate on newer concrete sidewalks but requires additional quality control in older urban areas.

Mr. Dunn then asked about the ultimate objective of the study. Mr. Bonarek stated that the goal is to develop a comprehensive, regionwide inventory of sidewalk gaps and an objective prioritization framework. This would allow decision-makers to weigh factors such as project cost, pedestrian demand, and safety needs, and to bundle smaller fixes into more efficient, fundable projects.

Mr. Blevins added that coordinated planning could improve cost efficiency compared to the current incremental approach often funded through legislators' Community Transportation Funds. He also noted that bundling gaps into larger projects provides clearer benefits and visibility to constituents.

Mr. Gula emphasized that the tool will also help staff respond more effectively to public inquiries about missing sidewalks by identifying whether a location is already scored and prioritized within the system.

Mr. Solge asked whether the dataset would be maintained over time. Mr. Blevins responded that while updates would require rerunning the analysis, regular refreshes could be beneficial if the tool proves valuable to agencies and elected officials. Mr. Bonarek added that improvements in AI will likely make future updates more efficient.

Ms. Zegeye noted that the dataset will also be useful to land-use agencies and developers, who increasingly request sidewalk and access information during project reviews. She added that the analysis may assist in identifying locations eligible for DeIDOT pedestrian and bicycle funding.

Mr. Dunn commented on past development patterns that led to missing sidewalks in older neighborhoods. Mr. Blevins acknowledged the issue and noted that the new inventory will better support long-term planning and coordination with local jurisdictions.

8. Other Business

Ms. Stant reminded attendees that the next meeting is scheduled for December 15th and will also serve as the holiday dinner for PAC members.

9. Adjournment

The PAC adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

Attachments: (0)