

PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WILMAPCO Hybrid-format Meeting, December 15, 2025

Minutes prepared by Elizabeth Espinal.

Mr. Mike Kaszyski, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce representative and PAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Members Present: 6

Tracy Chamblee, Southern New Castle County Alliance
Patricia Folk, Cecil County
Mike Kaszyski, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce and PAC Chair
Peggy Schultz, League of Women Voters of Delaware
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance
Joshua Solge, City of Newark

Members Absent: 8

Mark Blake, Greater Hockessin Area Development
Robin Bullock, Holloway Terrace
Carlos de los Ramos, AARP
Bill Dunn, Civic League for New Castle County
Richard Janney, Southern New Castle County
Sarah Lester, Cornerstone West
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance

Staff Members: 8

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

Guests: 1

Clare Quinlan, DelDOT

2. Approval of the October 20, 2025, Meeting Minutes

ACTION: As a quorum was not present at the meeting, approval of the PAC meeting minutes is postponed until the February meeting.

3. Public Comment Period:

None.

4. Executive Director's Report:

Ms. Tigist Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- Starting with November 13th, Council: Under action items, the Council endorsed the 2025 Mobility Opportunities Plan and reviewed four presentations: WILMAPCO's FY2026 UPWP Project Updates, Walkable Communities Workshops Updates, Regional Sidewalk GAP Analysis and Prioritization, and the Regional Climate Action Plan for the Philadelphia MSA.
- On October 23rd, Staff met with UD Environmental Science Students to discuss the Diamond State Rail Line CID Study.
- On October 28th, Staff held the Southbridge Truck Bypass Study Public Workshop from 6-7:30 p.m. at the Neighborhood House.
- On November 3rd, Staff attended the Cecil Transit Coordination meeting; Staff also attended the United Neighbors meeting.
- On November 12th, Staff presented the East Elkton Transportation Plan and the MD-272 Plan at a Maryland Planning Commissioners training.
- On November 17th, the SNCC Growth Area Land Use and Transportation Open House was held.
- On November 18th, the Churchman's Crossing MC Fall meeting was held.
- On November 20th, the Route 9 Monitoring Committee met.
- Staff finalized the City of New Castle Walkable Community Workshop report.
- On November 25th, Staff presented the Mobility Opportunities Plan at a University of Washington class.
- On December 1st, the Ardens Transportation Plan Monitoring Committee met.
- On December 3rd, Staff presented on incorporating public health considerations in planning at the APA Delaware State Conference.
- On December 8th, Staff attended the 5th District Neighborhood Planning Council meeting in Wilmington.
- On December 9th, the Southbridge Truck Bypass Study's Management Committee met.
- On December 11th, the MD-272 Monitoring Committee held their kickoff meeting. Staff also attended the North East Rising Community meeting.
- On December 17th, Staff will attend the Delmarva Winter Freight meeting.
- On December 18th, the Route 9 Monitoring Committee will meet.
- On January 5th, the Ardens Transportation Plan Monitoring Committee will meet.
- On January 7th, Staff will present the Route 9 Master Plan to the Rt. 9 / 13 Civic Alliance.
- On January 12th, the SNCC Growth Area LUTP Advisory Committee will meet.
- On January 23rd, Staff will make a presentation for WHA at Compton Towers.

ACTION ITEMS:

None.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

5. Southern New Castle County Growth Area Land Use and Transportation Plan.

Mr. Dave Gula presented an overview of the Southern New Castle County Growth Area Land Use and Transportation Study, a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) initiative that began in September of the current fiscal year. The study focuses on unincorporated areas of southern New Castle County, excluding the Towns of Middletown and Odessa, though the study area borders both municipalities. The effort was requested by New Castle County and DelDOT to evaluate remaining developable land, anticipated growth patterns, and the transportation

network needed to support future development. JMT was selected as the lead consultant due to its experience in the region south of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal.

Mr. Gula explained that while the study's primary focus is transportation, it is being coordinated with parallel County-led efforts addressing stormwater management and sewer planning. These related infrastructure studies will be conducted by separate consultant teams, with coordination intended to ensure consistency while allowing the transportation study to proceed independently through WILMAPCO's established process. Public workshops will incorporate information from these parallel efforts where feasible.

The study is organized into four major tasks: an assessment of existing conditions, trends, opportunities, and constraints; a market assessment to evaluate development patterns and economic activity; transportation and land use modeling; and an evaluation of future system performance to identify potential gaps and concerns. The project is expected to span approximately 18 months and conclude with a final report. Four public workshops and three advisory committee meetings are planned. The first public information session was held on November 17 at the Odessa Fire Hall and was attended by approximately 50 participants.

The initial workshop presented data on current traffic operations, safety conditions, crash patterns, travel speeds, land use trends, demographics, and development activity. Participants provided input on desired land uses, transportation needs, and community concerns through interactive activities and an online comment form accessed primarily via QR code. Common themes raised included speeding and aggressive driving, requests for improved roadway lighting, concerns related to truck traffic, particularly on Jamison's Corner Road. Additionally, there is an interest in roundabouts, traffic signals, and other traffic management measures. Participants also emphasized the need for improvements along Shallcross Lake Road, including flood mitigation at the low-lying bridge and a shared-use path connection to Middletown and nearby recreational areas.

Mr. Gula noted that the project website serves as the primary outreach platform and includes workshop materials, interactive maps, and survey tools. Public input is available both online and in paper form, and comments are being displayed through a digital mapping application. The advisory committee is scheduled to meet on January 12 at the Appoquinimink Library, with meetings open to the public for observation.

Mr. Dan Blevins presented a summary of Task 1 findings, highlighting demographic trends, travel behavior, development patterns, and market conditions. Data shows that the study area is heavily auto oriented, with limited transit use and minimal non-motorized infrastructure. The population includes a significant and growing cohort of residents aged 65 and older, raising considerations for future mobility and transit services. Residential growth has been substantial, with the area functioning largely as a bedroom community; approximately 96 percent of employed residents commute outside the study area for work.

Market analysis indicates strong residential growth, high homeownership rates, and above-average household incomes, with limited office or industrial development. Retail development, however, is significant, accounting for a large share of retail construction countywide. Mapping of potential development areas shows that remaining undeveloped land is limited and increasingly subject to approved or pending development applications.

Travel pattern analysis illustrated how vehicles enter, exit, and circulate within the study area via major corridors such as Route 896, Route 1, and U.S. 301. Crash data indicate relatively stable

total crash trends since pre-COVID years, though speeding remains a significant concern, with elevated 85th-percentile speeds observed on several local roadways. All datasets, including crash and speed information, are available through interactive tools on the project website to allow residents and stakeholders to explore conditions within specific locations.

Mr. Blevins concluded with an overview of how the collected data and public input will inform upcoming modeling efforts and subsequent phases of the study, with continued emphasis on coordination, transparency, and public engagement throughout the process.

To view the presentation in its entirety, [\[click here\]](#) (20m. 31s.).

Following the presentation, Mr. Mike Kaszyski asked how much of the traffic distribution and demographic analysis presented was derived from DelDOT's Transportation Improvement District (TID) modeling.

Mr. Blevins explained that the study team has not yet fully incorporated TID modeling, noting that the study area does not align exactly with the existing TID boundary. While the boundaries are similar, meaningful integration would require additional analysis over a broader geographic area. He stated that this effort would be informed by the ongoing market assessment and a more detailed regional transportation model, particularly if New Castle County were to consider revisiting the TID boundary in the future.

Mr. Kaszyski referenced his prior experience reviewing the Southern New Castle County TID and noted specific traffic patterns near Route 1 ramps, including projected traffic volumes comparable to Route 72. Mr. Blevins acknowledged these observations and explained that the team reviewed weekday traffic patterns (6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.) to capture typical conditions, noting that more granular AM/PM analyses could yield different results.

The discussion also addressed land use changes in the study area. Mr. Blevins clarified that several parcels originally planned for office development near Jamison Corner Road and Scott Run have transitioned to industrial and distribution uses based on market conditions. He further noted that most development in the area remains residential, with limited remaining land available for multifamily housing.

Mr. Kaszyski commented that the TID process tends to focus narrowly on traffic impacts rather than comprehensive land use planning. Mr. Blevins agreed, explaining that while this study is transportation-focused, New Castle County is conducting parallel efforts to address other infrastructure needs, including utilities and public services. He added that updated modeling will incorporate approved developments and unit counts to better reflect current conditions, acknowledging that much of the existing TID framework is based on outdated assumptions predating the opening of Route 301.

Mr. Blevins concluded that the findings from this study may help to provide a future update or refinement of the TID, providing a more current and comprehensive planning foundation.

6. Regional Climate Action Plan

Mr. Swiatek provided an update on the Regional Climate Action Plan, funded by the federal Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG). The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), with support from WILMAPCO, completed the Priority Climate Action Plan in March 2024. Although the required comprehensive climate plan was paused during an

administrative transition, the EPA has reinstated funding, directing its completion by the end of the current year, with a follow-up status report due in 2027.

The plan covers a 12-county Philadelphia metropolitan area (PA, NJ, DE, MD) and is led by the DVRPC, supported by WILMAPCO and other agencies. Required elements include greenhouse gas inventories, reduction strategies, community benefits analysis, and workforce considerations across eight major sectors, such as transportation, buildings, and industry.

Key transportation strategies focus on vehicle electrification, fleet decarbonization, transit expansion, and active transportation. With these efforts in place, modeling projects an 82% reduction in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 2050 compared to 2005 levels, primarily due to electrification and grid decarbonization. This projection falls short of the net-zero goal in this region, though the goal could be achieved and surpassed elsewhere in the nation.

The plan's development included extensive public engagement, comprising a multi-state steering committee, stakeholder outreach, surveys, and three resident focus groups (including one in Wilmington). Priorities identified by participants included clean air/water, accountability for polluters, improved transit access, and tree preservation.

The comprehensive plan will be finalized this month and submitted to EPA; Council endorsement is not required, nor will it be sought.

To view the presentation in its entirety, [\[click here\]](#) (09m. 43s.).

Following the presentation, Ms. Clare Quinlan asked about the difference between the Priority Climate Action Plan and the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan. Mr. Bill Swiatek explained that the priority plan was developed under a very short, required timeframe. It contained many of the same measures, but without the level of detail, analysis, and robustness reflected in the comprehensive plan.

Ms. Peggy Schultz asked whether the plan accounted for recent changes in federal administration policies. Mr. Swiatek responded that the plan is apolitical and designed as a long-range framework. Aspects of the plan will be implemented by states and local governments regardless of federal policy shifts. He noted that, even under favorable conditions, the region did not achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 in the modeling, and that the plan should be viewed as adaptable over time.

Ms. Schultz raised concerns about offshore wind policy and its impact on meeting emissions goals. Mr. Swiatek acknowledged the uncertainty but emphasized that long-range planning must focus on long-term trends rather than current political conditions. The plan was developed at the federal government's request to provide a strategic foundation for future action.

In response to questions from Mr. Josh Solge regarding electric power generation, Mr. Swiatek stated that the plan was agnostic about specific generation sources, but that grid decarbonization would be necessary to achieve meaningful emissions reductions. Mr. Mike Kazyski asked about increased electricity demand from vehicle electrification and potential reliance on carbon-based power. Mr. Swiatek noted that electric vehicles provide emissions benefits even on a carbon-intensive grid, while emphasizing that grid decarbonization remains critical to maximizing benefits.

Mr. Solge also inquired about land use strategies included in the plan. Mr. Swiatek explained that the plan promotes smarter land use practices, such as infilling with mixed-use residential and commercial developments. The document remains at a high level, with limited case examples rather than prescriptive local policies.

7. Other Business

8. Adjournment

The PAC adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Attachments: (0)