

PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WILMAPCO Hybrid-format Meeting, February 9, 2026.

Minutes prepared by Elizabeth Espinal.

Mr. Bill Dunn, Civic League for New Castle County, called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Members Present: 5

Tracy Chamblee, Southern New Castle County Alliance
Bill Dunn, Civic League for New Castle County
Patricia Folk, Cecil County
William Lower, Committee of 100
Peggy Schultz, League of Women Voters of Delaware

Absent: 10

Mark Blake, Greater Hockessin Area Development
Robin Bullock, Holloway Terrace
Carlos de los Ramos, AARP
Richard Janney, Southern New Castle County
Mike Kaszyski, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce and PAC Chair
Sarah Lester, Cornerstone West
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance
Josh Solge, City of Newark
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance

Staff Members: 6

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

Guests: 4

Tremica Cherry-Wall, Delaware Transit Corporation
Robert Hicks, Public
Clare Quinlan, Delaware Department of Transportation
Bill Williamson, Delaware Transit Corporation

2. Approval of the October 20, 2025, and December 15, 2025, Meeting Minutes

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

3. Public Comment Period:

Mr. Bill Dunn provided a public comment regarding traffic operations on Route 1. He noted that several years ago, "Slower Traffic Keep Right" signs along the corridor were installed. However,

he stated that more signage is still needed, as the existing signs are spaced several miles apart and located primarily in the median.

Mr. Dunn explained that the purpose of the signage is to encourage slower-moving vehicles to remain in the right lane so that faster-moving traffic can pass safely. While he acknowledged that expanding the roadway to three lanes in each direction would be beneficial, he recognized that such improvements would require significant funding. He therefore recommended that transportation agencies place greater emphasis on installing additional signage to improve traffic flow and driver awareness.

4. Executive Director's Report:

Ms. Tigist Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- On January 15th, Council met and approved a total of seven TIP amendments. These included a request from MDOT for Areawide Congestion Management, as well as six amendments from DelDOT requesting funding adjustments for hydrogen and hybrid transit vehicle replacements. Additionally, Council viewed two presentations: the SNCC Growth Area Land Use and Transportation Plan and the Regional Progress Report.
- On December 16th, the KMIC Partners met. The next scheduled meeting is Feb. 12th.
- On December 17th, Staff participated in the Delmarva Winter Freight Meeting. Staff also attended the 4th St/West Side joint community meeting.
- On January 5th, Staff met with Delaware's Advancing Healthy Lifestyles Policy Committee to discuss supporting better access to food and parks. The Ardens Transportation Plan Monitoring Committee met.
- On January 5th, Staff met with Delaware's Mobile Sources Air Quality Planning Group.
- On January 7th, Staff presented the Route 9 Master Plan to the Rt. 9 / 13 Civic Alliance.
- On January 8th, the East Elkton Monitoring Committee met.
- Regarding SNCC-LUTP staff held a briefing for elected officials on January 9th, on January 12th the AC met, on January 30th the project partners met to discuss Scenario Planning. The next partners meeting is scheduled for February 11th.
- On January 14th, the MD-272 Monitoring Committee met.
- On January 16th, the Diamond State Rail partners met.
- On January 23rd, Staff had a presentation for WHA at the Herlihy Tower.
- On January 27th, the Southbridge Truck Bypass Study's Advisory Committee met, the Management Committee met on February 3rd, and a Public Workshop is scheduled for February 24th at 6 p.m. at the Neighborhood House.
- On February 4th, Staff participated in a Clean Corridor Coalition (C3) Community Advisory Group meeting.
- On February 5th, the CPMC partners met to discuss the Transit Accessibility spotlight topic for Concord Pike.
- On February 9th, Staff will present on the Clubhouse Crossing project from the Ardens Transportation Plan at a rescheduled Arden Town Assembly meeting.
- On February 19th, the Ardens Monitoring Committee will have a joint meeting with Claymont civic leaders on the Harvey Road Lane Reduction over I-95 concept. Staff will participate in Downes Elementary School's Family Safety Night.
- On February 19th, the Rt. 9 Monitoring Committee will meet, the next meeting being March 19th.
- On February 26th and 27th, Staff will participate in Downes Elementary School's Safety Stations.
- On March 2nd, the Ardens Monitoring Committee will meet.

ACTION ITEMS:

None.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:**5. 2026 Regional Progress Report**

Mr. Bill Swiatek presented an update on the Regional Progress Report, which is prepared every four years to evaluate implementation of the region's long-range transportation plan and to inform the upcoming update of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The report reviews core regional trends and assesses progress on individual policy actions using both qualitative and quantitative performance measures, with results categorized as poor, partial, or good progress.

Mr. Swiatek reported that 63% of actions demonstrated good progress, 22% showed partial progress, and 16% indicated poor progress. The share of actions achieving good progress represents an improvement from previous reports, increasing from 50% in 2018 and 60% in 2022.

Despite overall positive results, several areas require additional attention. These include promoting growth within Transportation Investment Area (TIA) centers, supporting shared mobility and carpooling, expanding and managing transit funding, improving access to public transit, enhancing safety for all travel modes; such as pedestrians, and avoiding projects in rural and ecologically sensitive areas. Data presented showed that household growth in center TIAs has declined, with approximately 300 households lost in these areas and additional declines projected through 2050. Spending trends were also shown to exceed projected household growth in developing and rural areas.

Mr. Swiatek also highlighted the long-term decline in carpooling, which has dropped from roughly 20% of commute trips in 1980 to approximately 7.5% in New Castle County and 9.6% in Cecil County. Discussion noted that increased single-occupant driving, changes in commuting patterns, and greater geographic dispersion of jobs and housing may contribute to this trend.

Mr. Swiatek also addressed transit funding trends, noting that funding for transit management and expansion projects has remained around 9–10% of total transportation funding and has recently declined after a period of increase between 2015 and 2018.

Areas identified as showing partial progress included the project prioritization process, where 15 projects in the most recent TIP scored below the median technical score, while 25 higher-scoring projects remain unfunded. Mr. Swiatek suggested prioritizing projects with stronger technical scores when selecting future investments would align better with the RTP.

Mr. Swiatek emphasized progress on trails development, particularly the East Coast Greenway. In New Castle County, completion or funding of trail segments has increased from 68% in 2011 to approximately 90%. However, progress in Cecil County remains limited, with only about 8% completed or funded.

Mr. Swiatek also noted improvements in public engagement. Subscribers to the agency's e-newsletter have increased from approximately 1,400 in 2013 to more than 6,300 in 2025, and social media engagement has grown significantly. However, public awareness of WILMAPCO has remained relatively stable at approximately 32% since 2006.

Several other areas of strong progress were highlighted, including improvements to freight movement at key bottlenecks, rapid expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure from only two stations in 2012 to nearly 150 today. He also remarked on the successful implementation of subregional (i.e., community, corridor) planning efforts. Since 1996, approximately 20% have been fully implemented and 60% have seen partial implementation.

Mr. Swiatek also reported improvements in public engagement practices in planning studies, noting that 82% of recent projects met key public participation criteria outlined in the agency's Public Participation Plan. This is an increase from 75% in the previous reporting period.

Mr. Swiatek concluded by noting that the Council is expected to consider approval of the Regional Progress Report in March, after which work will continue toward the next update of the RTP, scheduled for adoption in March 2027.

To view the presentation in its entirety, [click here](#) (12m. 08s.).

Ms. Peggy Schultz requested clarification on the definition of "greenways." Mr. Swiatek explained that greenways refer to multi-use pathways, such as the East Coast Greenway, designed to support walking and bicycling. Ms. Schultz also asked about the meaning of "sub-regional," to which Mr. Swiatek responded that it refers to planning efforts below the regional level, such as corridor or community-based studies (e.g., Concord Pike or Kirkwood Highway).

Ms. Schultz inquired about the cost and usage of paratransit services compared to fixed-route transit. Mr. Swiatek indicated he did not have specific figures readily available but noted the information is included in the report. Ms. Schultz expressed concern about funding priorities, particularly the balance between services for transit-dependent workers and paratransit services for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Mr. Dunn responded by emphasizing the importance of maintaining support for older adults and individuals with disabilities, noting their longstanding contributions to the workforce. Ms. Schultz reiterated her view that, if expanded services are deemed necessary, funding should be more broadly distributed.

Ms. Tremica Cherry-Wall from DTC clarified that paratransit services cost approximately \$7 or more per trip and are federally required as a complementary service to fixed-route transit. She noted that Delaware exceeds minimum federal requirements but is also advancing microtransit initiatives, including DART Connect, to improve access in underserved areas using smaller vehicles. These services are expected to expand over the next several years.

Ms. Schultz replied that smaller buses do not necessarily result in cost savings due to maintenance and operational considerations. Mr. Dunn encouraged sharing additional information with interested members for follow-up.

Mr. Tracy Chamblee asked for clarification on TIA classifications. Mr. Swiatek explained that centers include municipalities and key rail hubs such as Churchmans Crossing; the core generally follows the remainder of I-95 corridor; community areas extend beyond the core; developing areas include rapidly growing areas such as north of Middletown; and rural areas comprise the outer edges of the region.

Mr. Dunn asked for clarification on long-term growth projections and spending patterns. Mr. Swiatek explained that recent spending has been outsized relative to projected population on

development and rural areas. Mr. Dunn questioned ongoing residential development in mature areas such as the Kirkwood Highway corridor considering these projections. Mr. Swiatek responded that such development may still trigger investment needs in core areas. But the wider investment trend reflects a continued pattern of suburban expansion.

Ms. Schultz concluded by expressing concern regarding continued development in rural areas.

6. Route 9 Corridor Communities Transit Improvement Plan

Mr. Bill Williamson, Planner with DTC, presented an overview of the Route 9 Corridor Communities Transit Improvement Plan, which identifies potential transit service and infrastructure improvements along the Newcastle Avenue (Route 9) corridor. The study area extends from the Christina River to the north, the Delaware River to the east, I-295 to the south, and DuPont Highway to the west. The presentation summarized the study's public outreach process, survey findings, and recommended transit and pedestrian improvements. The material had previously been presented to the Route 9 Monitoring Committee and the South Wilmington Planning Network Monitoring Committee.

Mr. Williamson described the public outreach process conducted in coordination with the RK&K consultant team. An online survey, along with hard copies, was distributed between April 23 and June 6, 2025. Outreach materials, including posters with QR codes linking to the survey, were placed at high-ridership bus stops and community locations such as the Rose Hill Community Center, Route 9 Library, Neighborhood House, and the Henrietta Johnson Medical Center. Information was also shared through stakeholder email lists and at community events, including the Southbridge Open Streets event. The survey received 70 responses, including 35 fixed-route riders, six paratransit users, and 29 individuals who do not currently use DART service. Key barriers identified included bus stops being too far away, routes not serving desired destinations, inconvenient service times, and insufficient service frequency.

Based on survey feedback and technical analysis, the study developed several potential service recommendations. These include possible stop consolidation and route realignments on Route 8 to improve service to Terminal Avenue and the Port of Wilmington area, consideration of Sunday service for Route 8, and schedule adjustments to Routes 15 and 51 to provide more consistent service along Newcastle Avenue. Additional concepts include potential route modifications for Routes 28 and 48 to expand service within Southbridge and along Newcastle Avenue. The study also examined the potential use of DART Connect microtransit service to provide flexible, on-demand transit within the corridor and to serve areas that may no longer be covered by fixed routes, particularly within the Dunleith and Oakmont communities. Mr. Williamson emphasized that these concepts are recommendations for consideration and would require further public engagement and approval before implementation.

The presentation also summarized bus stop infrastructure recommendations developed through a five-tier evaluation system assessing amenities and accessibility. Existing stops were classified based on conditions ranging from shelters with full amenities to stops lacking ADA accessibility. Proposed improvements prioritize upgrading stops to meet ADA standards and adding amenities such as shelters, benches, and trash receptacles. The plan also proposes several "super stops" at high-ridership locations, including near the Route 9 Library, Bowlerama, and key locations in the Southbridge community near C Street and Heald Street.

Mr. Williamson further discussed pedestrian safety and accessibility improvements identified in the study. These include new crosswalks, ADA curb ramps, pedestrian signals, curb extensions, and gateway treatments at selected intersections along the corridor. Additional

recommendations address sidewalk gaps and pedestrian access issues, particularly near bus stops and employment centers such as the FedEx facility and recycling center along Lambson Lane.

Finally, the study developed a prioritization framework for implementing improvements. Bus stops and related infrastructure were categorized into priority levels based on need, ridership, and potential coordination with other capital projects. Higher-priority locations include stops requiring ADA upgrades or those serving high ridership areas, while lower-priority locations may be addressed in conjunction with future roadway or capital improvement projects. Mr. Williamson noted that the final report includes additional details and conceptual renderings of proposed improvements before opening the floor for questions.

To view the presentation in its entirety, [click here](#) (28m. 10s.).

Mr. Dunn referenced the Route 9 Corridor evaluation previously conducted by WILMAPCO and asked how the proposed improvements would benefit nearby communities located along the Route 9 corridor but outside the study area, such as neighborhoods near Collins Park and Jefferson Farms.

Mr. Williamson responded that the study primarily focused on improvements within the defined study boundary. However, the project team coordinated with the Route 9 RAISE Grant project, which overlaps portions of the corridor to the south, to ensure efforts are aligned and not duplicative. He noted that while the recommendations are focused within the study area, potential impacts on surrounding areas and related projects will be considered as planning and implementation progress.

Mr. Dunn also asked whether any existing DeIDOT projects would support or overlap with the priority bus stop improvements identified in the study. Mr. Williamson stated that he was not aware of specific projects at that time but explained that improvement priorities were based largely on factors such as ridership and need. Lower-ridership locations were assigned lower priority to avoid significant infrastructure investment where demand is limited. Mr. Dunn suggested that coordination with DeIDOT roadway or sidewalk projects could allow transit-related improvements to be incorporated where possible.

Mr. Bill Lower thanked the presenters for the study and asked whether the effort was part of the DART Reimagined initiative or if it preceded that effort. Mr. Williamson explained that the DART Reimagined study was completed earlier and that this study reviewed its recommendations while examining conditions specifically within the Route 9 corridor to identify additional improvements.

Mr. Lower also asked whether Priority 1 improvements could proceed directly to implementation or if additional public outreach would be required. Mr. Williamson responded that pedestrian safety and bus stop infrastructure improvements could generally move forward if funding becomes available and coordination with DeIDOT occurs. However, any changes involving route modifications or bus stop removals would require a formal public hearing process.

8. Other Business

Ms. Dawn Stant announced that WILMAPCO is currently updating its Public Participation Plan, which outlines the goals, objectives, and strategies for engaging the public and encouraging two-way communication on regional planning activities. She invited PAC members to participate in a subcommittee to review the plan in greater detail and provide feedback before it returns to

the full PAC for consideration, noting that a follow-up email would be sent with additional information.

Ms. Peggy Schultz suggested exploring potential new PAC members, mentioning organizations such as Rethinking Delaware and the Sierra Club due to their interest in transportation and planning issues.

9. Adjournment

The PAC adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Attachments: (0)