

PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WILMAPCO Hybrid-format Meeting, June 16, 2025

Minutes prepared by Elizabeth Espinal.

Mr. Mike Kaszyski, PAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Members Present: 7

Patricia Folk, Cecil County
Mike Kaszyski, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce and PAC Chair
Bill Lower, Committee of 100
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council
Peggy Schultz, League of Women Voters of Delaware
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance
Joshua Solge, City of Newark

Absent: 11

Serene Abiy, University of Delaware
Mark Blake, Greater Hockessin Area Development
Robin Bullock, Holloway Terrace
Tracy Chamblee, Southern New Castle County Alliance
Cecil County Board of Realtors
Carlos de los Ramos, AARP
Bill Dunn, Civic League for New Castle County
Richard Janney, Southern New Castle County
Sarah Lester, Cornerstone West
Vic Singer, Civic League for New Castle County
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance

Staff Members: 7

Leonard Bonarek, Senior Planner
Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner
Elizabeth Espinal, Administrative Assistant
Dave Gula, Principal Planner
Bill Swiatek, Principal Planner
Dawn Voss, Outreach Coordinator
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Guests: 1

Rose Zappacosta, Office of State Planning, State of Delaware

2. Approval of the April 14, 2025, Meeting Minutes

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

3. Public Comment Period:

None.

4. Executive Director's Report:

Ms. Tigist Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- On May 1st, the Council met and reviewed the following action items: Mr. John Sisson was re-elected as Council Chair, and Mr. Stephen O'Connor was re-elected as Vice Chair, representing Cecil County. The Council adopted the FY 2026 UPWP. They approved the Self-Certification of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process for FY 2026. The Project Prioritization for the FY 2027–2030 TIP was approved. A TIP Amendment requested by MDOT to include funding for the Belvidere Road Improvement Project was approved. Additionally, the Council received presentations and held discussions on the following studies: The Rocky Run Underpass Feasibility Study, the First and Final Mile Freight Network Plan Update and the Kirkwood Highway Land Use and Transportation Plan.
- On May 16th, Staff participated in Bike Newark Day, collecting public feedback for the Newark Bicycle Plan.
- On May 20th, the Churchman's Crossing Monitoring Public Workshop was held.
- On May 22nd, the Newark Bicycle Plan Public Workshop took place.
- On May 27th, the MD Route 272 Corridor Plan hosted a Youth Pop-Up Workshop at the North East Library, with approximately 20 attendees.
- On May 31st, Staff participated in the Southbridge Truck Bypass Feasibility Study and provided updates on the Southbridge Transportation Action Plan during an Open Streets event on New Castle Avenue.
- On June 2nd, the Concord Pike Master Plan Monitoring Committee Meeting was held at Talleyville Fire Company, with approximately 40 attendees.
- On June 2nd, the MD 272 Corridor Plan held a Public Meeting in downtown North East.
- On June 4th, Staff participated in the Ardens Transportation Plan Monitoring Committee Public Information Session, the Brandywine Conservancy Meeting, and The Safe Kids Delaware Meeting.
- On June 5th, an RFP was posted for the Sidewalk Gap Analysis, covering both New Castle and Cecil Counties. The proposals are due June 30th.
- On June 10th, the Second Augustine Cut-Off Public Workshop was held.
- On June 11th, Staff attended the Delmarva Freight Summit.
- On June 12th, the Newport Monitoring Committee Public Workshop was conducted.
- On June 13th, a second RFP was released for the Southern New Castle County Land Use and Transportation Plan, with proposals due on July 21st.
- On June 18th, Staff will attend and support the Wilmington Initiatives Public Workshop, to be held from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the City Building.
- On June 24th, Staff will participate in the University of Delaware Institute for Public Administration (IPA) Demographics Forum in Dover.
- On June 24th, the MD 272 Steering Committee will meet.
- On June 25th, Staff will support an APA Delaware Chapter Networking Event on Baynard Blvd. Event details and registration are available on the APA Delaware website.
- On July 7th, the Ardens Transportation Plan Monitoring Committee will reconvene.
- On July 28th, the East Elkton Plan Monitoring Committee is scheduled to meet.
- Lastly, The FY 2026 UPWP has been approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Delaware Division Office. WILMAPCO is currently awaiting approval from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

ACTION ITEMS:

None.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

5. WILMAPCO's Draft Public Opinion Survey

Ms. Dawn Voss introduced the 2026 Draft Public Opinion Survey, which WILMAPCO has conducted every four years since 2006. The most recent iteration was completed in 2022, requiring over 38,000 phone calls to gather 600 statistically valid responses—400 from New Castle County and 200 from Cecil County. Ms. Voss explained that, to align with the upcoming Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Regional Progress Report, survey implementation must begin by the end of summer.

Due to the prior survey vendor going out of business, a new vendor will be used. This transition will naturally introduce some changes to methodology. Ms. Voss noted that the previous survey took approximately 20 minutes to complete and included 72 questions. The revised 2026 version has been shortened to 51 questions to improve respondent retention and usability.

(Questions 1–4)

Ms. Voss explained that these initial questions are designed to identify whether the respondent lives in New Castle or Cecil County. Demographic targets are critical, so this information is collected up front. She mentioned that Questions 1 and 2 may be consolidated if ZIP codes can be used to determine county of residence, especially since some respondents may not know their home county.

(Questions 5–20)

Ms. Voss explained that this section collects opinions on transportation satisfaction and support for funding mechanisms. These data support the RTP and Mobility Opportunities Report.

- Several PAC members expressed concern that terms like “inefficient vehicle” lack clarity. They recommended including specific examples or definitions (e.g., vehicles getting less than 15 mpg or older vehicles).
- Mr. Dave Gula agreed and provided clarification that such vehicles may be older, larger, or have lower fuel efficiency standards.
- Ms. Heather Dunigan and Mr. Barry Shotwell highlighted that the term “vehicle miles traveled” (VMT) may be unfamiliar to the general public, suggesting additional context or simpler phrasing.
- Mr. Leonard Bonarek suggested simplifying complex questions by restructuring them for clarity and accessibility, particularly regarding EVs and gas tax alternatives.
- Ms. Voss acknowledged these comments and confirmed that such feedback would help refine question wording with the new vendor.
- Mr. Barry Shotwell discussed the fairness and feasibility of applying fees to out-of-state drivers, as Delaware is heavily used as a pass-through state.
- Mr. Gula emphasized that while equitable funding mechanisms are essential, the purpose of the survey is to gauge public sentiment rather than resolve detailed policy mechanisms.
- Ms. Voss proposed changing the phrasing of question 18, about delaying transportation projects, to include local context (e.g., “in your area”) to better reflect potential personal impact.
- Mr. Barry Shotwell and Ms. Pat Folk raised concerns about vague wording and lack of clarity regarding who would be affected by such decisions.
- Mr. Mike Kazyski discussed TIDs and how developers are typically required to fund limited on-site infrastructure improvements.

- Ms. Peggy Schultz and Ms. Voss reiterated the need to clearly define who benefits from new fees or infrastructure changes, especially in areas affected by new development.

(Questions 21–33)

Ms. Voss explained this section is related to transportation priorities and reported that question 29, regarding alternative fuel vehicle infrastructure, had been revised to specifically ask about support for public electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, a simpler and more relatable term.

- Mr. Glenn Pusey affirmed the question remains relevant since many older neighborhoods lack EV charging infrastructure.
- Ms. Pat Folk raised concerns about the sustainability of EV-related tax incentives, but Ms. Voss and Mr. Kazsyski clarified that federal credits were recently renewed, albeit at a lower rate.
- The group agreed that gauging public support for expanded EV infrastructure remains important.

(Questions 34–44)

Ms. Voss shared that this section evaluates public familiarity with WILMAPCO, preferred communication platforms, and awareness of environmental efforts like the Air Quality Index (AQI).

- Ms. Voss inquired about adding a question to assess awareness of the AQI, a key focus of the Air Quality Partnership of Delaware.
- Ms. Peggy Schultz inquired about WILMAPCO's role in promoting connectivity between neighborhoods and destinations like shopping centers.
- Mr. Gula explained that while WILMAPCO cannot enforce land use changes, they regularly recommend pedestrian connectivity and access in corridor studies, such as along Kirkwood Highway and Concord Pike.

Mr. Kazsyski asked about survey delivery, Ms. Voss confirmed that previous surveys were conducted by phone and that this format would likely continue, though new vendor capabilities may offer online options. Ms. Voss reiterated that the public opinion survey will be brought back to PAC at future meetings. Feedback from this meeting will be used to refine the draft script in collaboration with the new vendor.

In conclusion, the PAC provided extensive and thoughtful input, with consensus around simplifying technical language, clarifying funding mechanisms, and ensuring that questions are accessible to a general audience. Ms. Voss thanked members for their contributions and encouraged additional feedback via email or phone as the survey is finalized.

The survey results will inform multiple WILMAPCO planning documents, including the RTP and Regional Progress Report. The next draft will reflect PAC recommendations, while final formatting and methodology will be completed in partnership with the selected vendor.

To view the presentation in its entirety, [\[click here\]](#) (42m. 22s.).

6. MD Route 272 Corridor Transportation Plan

Mr. Bill Swiatek provided an update on the ongoing MD 272 Corridor Plan, which focuses on the section of the corridor in North East, Maryland stretching from Cecil College in the north, through downtown North East, and extending further south. The project has been guided by a diverse and collaborative steering committee composed of representatives from the Town of

North East, Cecil County, local businesses, the Tourism Department, the State Highway Administration, local police and fire departments, and other stakeholders.

Mr. Swiatek explained that the study is nearing the end of its planning phase, which began earlier in the year. The project has followed a structured process beginning with an assessment of existing conditions, followed by community visioning, development of draft recommendations, and the current phase of selecting preferred alternatives for public review and feedback.

A robust public engagement process has been central to the study. The first round of engagement included a visioning workshop attended by 41 participants and a survey completed by 183 community members. The second round focused on selecting preferred alternatives, which received increased participation with over 100 individuals in attendance and the second public workshop had over 200 survey responses submitted.

Additional outreach included two teen “pop-ups” in collaboration with the local library, which provided access to youth who regularly participate in monthly events. Unfortunately, efforts to engage students at North East middle and high schools were not successful. Stakeholder-specific workshops were also held with downtown business owners along Main Street and residents of Mauldin Avenue, where significant changes have been proposed. Mr. Swiatek informed that a third and final public workshop is scheduled for June 30, where final recommendations will be presented.

Although not statistically representative, a teen-focused survey revealed that most teens currently rely on car travel within and around North East. When asked how they would prefer to travel, teens expressed interest in a wider range of modes, including biking and walking, options currently limited by the corridor’s infrastructure.

A set of over two dozen “quick action” maintenance recommendations has already been submitted to local and state agencies. These include addressing signage issues, poor crosswalk visibility, inadequate lighting, and overgrown vegetation.

Northern Segment – Cecil College to US 40:

Public feedback indicated significant congestion, truck traffic, and lack of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. The preferred concept involves:

- Replacing existing on-road bike lanes with a shared-use path along the corridor.
- Creating a consistent roadway profile with one lane in each direction and a center turn lane, improving clarity and traffic flow.

Survey results for this proposal showed strong support, with 76% in favor, 15% unsure, and 9% opposed.

Downtown North East – Mauldin Avenue:

Mauldin Avenue currently has two northbound lanes with a sidewalk and shoulder. In contrast, parallel Main Street has one southbound lane. Several options were presented:

- Reducing Mauldin to one lane and adding parking or a bike lane.
- Reconfiguring Mauldin Avenue to support two-way traffic, allowing travelers to bypass Main Street.

The two-way configuration received the most support, with 59% in favor, 10% unsure, and 30% opposed.

New Road Connections East of Mauldin Avenue:

Exploratory discussions about creating new road connections east of Mauldin Avenue revealed mixed opinions. Concepts to examine bypass options east of town received 44% support, while 43% were unsure and 12% were opposed.

Southern Segment – South of Irishtown Road to Shady Beach Road:

This section currently consists of two travel lanes. Key concerns include speeding and tourist traffic. Two options were presented:

- Adding a buffered bike lane.
- Installing a wider rumble strip-style shoulder.

Support for the buffered bike lane narrowly exceeded the alternative, with 51% favoring it over 49%.

Main Street and Russell Street Intersection:

The intersection currently experiences complex traffic movements. A roundabout is proposed to streamline circulation and enhance safety. Two versions were developed (supporting both one-way and two-way traffic on Mauldin Avenue). A conceptual rendering showed the roundabout functioning as a gateway feature, improving truck access and calming traffic.

Survey results: 51% support, 15% unsure, 34% opposed.

Irishtown Road and Mauldin Avenue:

A second roundabout is proposed at this intersection, also modeled under both traffic flow scenarios. The rendering showed the design functioning as a gateway into the community.

Survey results: 61% support, 10% unsure, 29% opposed.

Hance Point/Shady Beach Road and MD 272:

A third roundabout was proposed at this southern intersection. The design includes closing a nearby slip lane to slow down speeding vehicles transitioning into the residential area. A local resident recently expressed support for eliminating the slip lane due to speeding concerns.

Survey results: 52% support, 17% unsure, 31% opposed.

Mr. Swiatek concluded by reminding attendees of the upcoming public workshop scheduled for June 30 and encouraged PAC members to help share information. Additional project details and updates are available at www.wilmapco.org/272.

To view the presentation in its entirety, [\[click here\]](#) (12m. 14s.).

7. Newark Bike Plan

Ms. Heather Dunigan provided an overview of the ongoing update to the Newark Bicycle Plan, marking its 10-year revision since the original 2014 plan. She noted that this type of update is unusual for WILMAPCO outside of the Long-Range Transportation Plan (RTP) but warranted in this case due to the significant progress Newark has made in implementing previous recommendations.

The updated plan is being developed in close partnership with the City of Newark and BikeNewark, a local coalition of cyclists and partner organizations. The planning process began in 2023 with a listening tour, where WILMAPCO staff met with Newark City Council and key committees to gather input. Outreach also included participation in major community events such as the Newark Family Bike Fest and Newark Community Day. Common themes that emerged included the need for improved safety and more inclusive, equitable infrastructure for all types of cyclists.

Throughout 2024, volunteers conducted a detailed inventory of Newark's bicycle network and parking infrastructure. Using geotagged photos and field observations, they assessed existing facilities and identified areas for improvement. Their findings helped inform new ideas for the updated plan, with particular attention paid to recommendations from the League of American Bicyclists related to equity, sustainability, and safety.

Ms. Dunigan highlighted several infrastructure achievements from the past decade, including the implementation of the Delaware Avenue protected bike lane, the city's first green bike facility on South Chapel Street, and the construction of a new bicycle/pedestrian bridge over I-95. A community-wide wayfinding system and multiple regional connectivity studies were also completed.

The plan's emphasis areas include Vision Zero strategies, crash data analysis, and integration with the 2023 Safe Streets for All Plan. Ms. Dunigan pointed out that although only 2% of Newark-area crashes involve bicyclists or pedestrians, these users account for 44% of fatal crashes, underscoring their vulnerability and the need for infrastructure changes.

Equity is a central theme in the update. The plan recognizes the diverse needs of cyclists, from families and occasional riders to commuters. Special attention was given to underserved communities and mobility challenged areas, many of which are disconnected from key destinations due to major road barriers like Route 896. The plan emphasizes improving access for these communities through safe, low-cost connections.

Land-use and connectivity are also core considerations. The Newark Transportation Improvement District (TID) has identified several bicycle infrastructure projects eligible for funding through developer contributions. Many of these projects are incorporated into the updated plan. Ms. Dunigan cited DelDOT's analysis of connectivity improvements, particularly the South College Avenue corridor, as examples of impactful investments. However, some high-benefit projects, such as the proposed Marrows Road Pathway, remain unfunded.

Obstacles like fencing between parcels were discussed as physical barriers to connectivity. Ms. Dunigan gave an example near WILMAPCO's office where a fence forces a detour of nearly a mile for what could otherwise be a 1/3-mile trip.

Bike parking was another topic of focus, with an online interactive inventory developed to assess rack quality and coverage. Red-marked locations on the map indicate either non-compliant or missing parking infrastructure, requiring future improvements. Ms. Dunigan also addressed the importance of integrating green infrastructure such as street trees and

stormwater management into bikeway design, especially considering rising temperatures and climate resilience goals.

The updated plan is geared toward "interested but concerned" riders, which represent over half the population that are willing to bike if safer, low-stress facilities are available. Federal guidance is used to identify suitable infrastructure types based on speed and traffic volumes. Public input overwhelmingly favored protected bike lanes over simple painted lines, with many participants expressing discomfort with the latter.

Intersection design, data-driven speed analysis, and best practices for safe crossings are also being incorporated into the recommendations. Outreach efforts included a public workshop on May 22nd, where participants provided input via marked maps and written feedback. Online public comment remains open through June 22nd.

Ms. Peggy Schultz asked a question regarding implementation, Ms. Dunigan explained that feasibility studies have been completed for several projects, including Chrysler Avenue and Wyoming Road. Improvements such as protected bike lanes along South College Avenue from I-95 to Main Street are included in the TIP and expected to advance in the coming years. Final approval of the updated Newark Bicycle Plan is anticipated by September.

To view the presentation in its entirety, [\[click here\]](#) (20m. 09s.).

8. Other Business
None.

9. Adjournment

The PAC adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Attachments: (0)