

PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WILMAPCO Hybrid-format Meeting, August 18, 2025

Minutes prepared by Elizabeth Espinal.

Mr. Mike Kaszyski, PAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Members Present: 9

Mark Blake, Greater Hockessin Area Development
Tracy Chamblee, Southern New Castle County Alliance
Carlos de los Ramos, AARP
Patricia Folk, Cecil County
Richard Janney, Southern New Castle County
Mike Kaszyski, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce and PAC Chair
Sarah Lester, Cornerstone West
Barry Shotwell, 7/40 Alliance
Dave Tancredi, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance

Members Absent: 9

Serene Abiy, University of Delaware
Robin Bullock, Holloway Terrace
Cecil County Board of Realtors
Committee 100
Bill Dunn, Civic League for New Castle County
Glenn Pusey, Bear Glasgow Council
Peggy Schultz, League of Women Voters of Delaware
Vic Singer, Civic League for New Castle County
Joshua Solge, City of Newark

Staff Members: 6

Elizabeth Espinal, Administrative Assistant
Dave Gula, Principal Planner
Dawn Stant, Outreach Coordinator
Bill Swiatek, Principal Planner
Jacob Thompson, Senior Planner
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Guests: 1

Robert Hicks, Public

2. Approval of the April 14, and June 16, 2025, Meeting Minutes

ACTION: On Action by Mr. David Tancredi and seconded by Mr. Richard Janney, the meeting minutes were approved by the PAC.

3. Public Comment Period:

None.

4. Executive Director's Report:

Ms. Tigist Zegeye shared the following public outreach information:

- On June 12th, Staff attended the DelDOT's Adams Street Improvements public workshop and hosted the Newport Multimodal Connector public workshop.
- On June 13th, Staff presented the I-95 Cap Study virtually to Congressional staff in conjunction with the Environmental & Energy Study Institute.
- On June 18th, Staff held the Wilmington Initiatives Public Workshop.
- On June 24th, Staff presented at the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration Demographics Forum.
- On June 30th, a public workshop for the Maryland Route 272 Corridor Plan was held with over 50 people in attendance.
- On July 7th, Staff attended the United Neighbors meeting in Wilmington.
- On July 17th, The Council convened and approved four TIP amendments for FY25-28, as requested by Cecil County and MDOT. The Council also endorsed three WILMAPCO projects: the Strategic Action Plan, the Kirkwood Highway Transportation Plan, and the Claymont Area Master Plan.
- On July 22nd, Staff presented the Maryland Route 272 Plan to the Cecil County Strategic Highway Safety Plan Steering Committee.
- On July 24th, the Mobility Opportunities Plan Working Group met, and the Southbridge Truck Bypass Study's Management Committee also convened. Staff hosted the third Augustine Cut Off Advisory Committee meeting.
- On July 28th, the East Elkton Plan's Monitoring Committee met.
- On July 29th, WILMAPCO submitted an RFP for a Safety Action Plan for the City of Wilmington. The plan is funded by a \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation's "Safe Streets and Roads for All" grant program, supplemented by a \$50,000 match from the City. Responses to the RFP are due on August 29.
- On August 4th, Staff attended the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) and AASHTO Peer Exchange in Minnesota and attended the United Neighbors meeting in Wilmington.
- On August 6th, Staff led a Walkable Communities Workshop for the City of New Castle, with approximately 20 people in attendance.
- On August 8th, WILMAPCO conducted interviews for the Southern New Castle County Growth Area Land Use and Transportation Plan (LUTP), with JMT selected for the project.
- On August 11th, Staff attended the Cecil County Transit Coordination meeting.
- On August 12th, the final public workshop for the Augustine Cut Off Multimodal Improvements Study, Phase 2, was held, with approximately 35 people in attendance.
- On August 16th, Staff will participate in the Open Streets Wilmington - N. Market Street event.
- On August 21st, Route 9 Master Plan's Monitoring Committee will meet.
- On August 27th, Staff will present the Maryland Route 272 Plan to the Town of North East's Council.
- On September 21st, Staff will participate in Newark Community Day.
- On September 24th, the Strategies for State Policies and Spending will be released, and a public workshop for New Castle County is scheduled at the Route 9 Innovation Center in New Castle.
- On September 25th, Staff will participate in the 2025 Delaware Highway Safety Summit.
- On September 29th, a joint DelDOT and WILMAPCO TIP/CTP Public Hearing will be held at the UD Atrium all are welcome to attend.

Mr. Carlos de los Ramos asked whether staff had brought back any lessons from the recent conference referenced in the report.

Mr. Dave Tancredi clarified that the question referred to the conference mentioned by Ms. Tigist Zegeye, asking if there were any key takeaways from the event in Minnesota.

Ms. Zegeye explained that the invitation came from AMPO (the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations) and AASHTO (the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials). WILMAPCO had been selected, among 400 MPOs nationwide, to present on coordination between MPOs and state departments of transportation. She noted that much of WILMAPCO's role at the conference was to share their experience rather than to gather lessons.

However, Ms. Zegeye observed that in Minnesota, the governor appoints all council members, making the council an extension of the state. She emphasized that such an arrangement would not work in most parts of the country, as MPOs are designed to serve as voices for local communities. She stressed the importance of including the urbanized area in MPO planning and ensuring strong coordination between MPOs and state DOTs.

Mr. Carlos de los Ramos acknowledged the explanation, stating that it was helpful to know WILMAPCO had been invited to present at a national level.

ACTION ITEMS:

None.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

5. 2025 Mobility Opportunities Plan

Mr. Bill Swiatek presented an update on the Mobility Opportunities Plan. Formerly titled the Transportation Justice Plan, the effort was rebranded to reflect updated federal equity guidance from USDOT while continuing to analyze community transportation needs. The plan is subtitled Overcoming Transportation Barriers, Increasing Economic Opportunities in Mobility-Challenged Communities, which includes strengthened data analysis, expanded connectivity assessments, and updated terminology.

The plan identifies disparities in access to jobs, groceries, medical care, and transit across economic opportunity areas, minority communities, and mobility-challenged groups such as seniors, disabled residents, zero-car households, and youth. Key findings highlight inequities in housing and transportation costs, commute times, crash rates, and transit access, particularly for low-income, Black, and Hispanic neighborhoods.

Recommendations focus on improving transit access in high-poverty suburban areas, closing connectivity gaps, boosting walkability to job centers, enhancing transit service to food deserts, addressing historic underfunding in Black communities, and ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities. The plan also outlines expanded public engagement efforts and continued monitoring of equity in transportation investments. Mr. Swiatek concluded that the draft plan is being refined for committee and public review, with Council endorsement anticipated in fall 2025.

To view the presentation in its entirety, [\[click here\]](#) (18m. 12s.).

Mr. Janney asked how poverty is defined. Mr. Swiatek responded that the federal government sets a sliding scale that varies by household size and economic conditions. He added that in New Castle County, poverty analysis often ties into housing affordability measures such as MPDU's (Moderately Priced Dwelling Units).

Mr. Tancredi asked whether recent investment increases in African American neighborhoods were related to the Inflation Reduction Act. Mr. Swiatek replied that while some funding may apply in 2025, most of the difference reflects the location of large highway projects in prior decades, with recent investments helping to rebalance funding.

Mr. Tancredi also raised the link between disability and poverty, asking how the data will be applied. Mr. Swiatek noted that disability and no-vehicle households are weighed in mobility-challenge analysis, which informs project prioritization. He emphasized that complete streets and food access connections are examples of targeted improvements.

Mr. Tancredi referenced a DNREC chart, noting that in New Castle County a four-person household earning below approximately \$91,750 may qualify as low income under federal thresholds.

Mr. Gula added that WILMAPCO has directed more planning toward low-income and minority communities, recognizing historical disparities. Mr. Kaszyski noted that planning often precedes implementation by 5–10 years, creating delays between identified needs and funded projects.

Mr. Gula acknowledged the challenge of securing sufficient funds for construction, despite grants and incremental improvements. He cited ongoing work in Southbridge as an example of long-term effort, while noting that rising costs complicate project delivery.

6. Draft Connectivity Analysis Report

Mr. Jake Thompson presented the Draft Connectivity Analysis Report, the latest in the WILMAPCO data report series. Developed in collaboration with the University of Delaware's Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research (CADSR), the report evaluates transportation connectivity in the WILMAPCO region.

The analysis assesses each housing unit's access to nine essential destination types, such as: supermarkets, pharmacies, hospitals, and other state service centers, by four travel modes: walking, biking, transit, and driving. Connectivity is determined based on mode-specific thresholds and aggregated to the census block level.

While 93% of homes are well connected by car, access by other modes remains limited: 42% for transit, 20% for cycling, and only 6% for walking. Even in areas where connectivity is relatively better such as Black, Hispanic, and low-income neighborhoods, serious service and infrastructure gaps persist. Senior, youth, and disabled concentrations face challenges. The report also highlights geographic disparities, with stronger connectivity in Wilmington and Newark and weaker access in suburban and rural areas.

Mr. Thompson emphasized that this data could serve as a valuable tool for identifying and prioritizing subregional connectivity gaps, supporting region-wide planning efforts, and informing the development of walking, biking, and transit infrastructure.

The report is currently in draft form and has not yet been endorsed by the WILMAPCO Council.

To view the presentation in its entirety, [\[click here\]](#) (05m. 44s.).

Following the presentation, Mr. Kaszyski asked about the maximum distance considered walkable to pharmacies and grocery stores, and whether the data was broken by geography.

Mr. Thompson responded that the working group defined walkability as a 10-minute walk along subdivision streets, trails, or sidewalks, excluding high-stress roads. He noted that data is available at the Census block level, with most mobility-challenged neighborhoods located in urban areas, and that interactive maps will allow further analysis by location.

7. Other Business

Ms. Dawn Stant announced that the Maryland Route 272 Plan is available for public comment until September 7, 2025, and encouraged PAC members to review the draft and provide feedback.

Mr. Gula informed the committee that staffing responsibilities for PAC meetings will transition to Ms. Stant, as he shifts focus to the TAC. Members also discussed the importance of maintaining active participation to ensure quorum and effective PAC operations.

9. Adjournment

The PAC adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Attachments: (0)