TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
JULY 17, 2025

A meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was held on Thursday, July 17, 2025, at WILMAPCO, 100 Discovery Boulevard, Suite 800, Newark, DE 19713 and via video conference/conference call.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Cooper Bowers, from New Castle County Department of Land Use, and TAC Chair, brought the TAC meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

2. TAC Members present:
Stephen Bayer, Delaware Department of Transportation
Cooper Bowers, New Castle County Department of Land Use
Samantha Bulkilvish, Delaware Office of State Planning
David Dahlstrom, Maryland Department of Planning
Michael Fortner, City of Newark
Shawn Kiernan, Maryland Department of Transportation
Tina Merrill, Department of Natural Resources and Environment
Catherine Salarano, Maryland Department of the Environment
Catherine Smith, Delaware Transit Corporation
Stephen Weber, City of Wilmington Department of Public Works

TAC Ex-Officio Members present:
Jasmine Champion, U.S. Federal Highway Administration

TAC Members absent:
Cecil County Division of Planning and Zoning
City of Wilmington Planning
Delaware Division of Small Business, Development, and Tourism
Delaware River and Bay Authority
Maryland State Highway Administration
Town of Elkton Planning

TAC Ex-Officio Members absent:
Amtrak
Diamond State Port Corporation
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Federal Transit Administration

Guests and Invitees:
Anne Brown, DelDOT
Tremica Cherry-Wall, DART
Matthew Rogers, NCC Dept. of Land Use
Taylor Stunchula, DelDOT
Hunter Withers, RIPD, MDOT-SHA

Staff:
Dan Blevins, Principal Planner
Leonard Bonarek, Senior Planner
Sharen Elcock, Executive Assistant

Elizabeth Espinal, Administrative Assistant
Bill Swiatek, Principal Planner
Jake Thompson, Senior Planner
Dawn Voss, Outreach Coordinator
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth Espinal.

3. MINUTES
Approval of June 12, 2025, TAC Meeting Minutes.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Shawn Kiernan and seconded by Mr. Mike Fortner, June 12, 2025, TAC Minutes are approved.

4. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES
None.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD
None.

ACTION ITEMS
None.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

6. Connectivity Analysis Report
Mr. Jake Thompson presented the Draft Connectivity Analysis Report, the latest in the WILMAPCO reporting data 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 biking, 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 can 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.

Mr. David Dahlstrom inquired whether the analysis considered the age of neighborhoods specifically, whether subdivisions built before 1952 were examined. He noted that older subdivisions likely account for a higher percentage of walkable areas, while newer subdivisions may show little to no walkability.

Mr. Jake Thompson responded that the analysis did not specifically factor in the year of development for neighborhoods. However, he acknowledged that older, more established areas tended to exhibit stronger connectivity, which correlated with various neighborhood concentration types. Areas with concentrations of zero-car households often overlapped with neighborhoods demonstrating higher walkability and connectivity.

Ms. Samantha Bulkilvish remarked that the analysis was fascinating and raised similar questions about her own neighborhood. She asked whether future steps would include an evaluation of the quality of connectivity, such as infrastructure conditions, e.g., the presence and condition of sidewalks, ADA-compliant ramps, and other accessibility features. She questioned whether the analysis would be validated through on-the-ground assessments.

Mr. Thompson explained that the analysis incorporated data from DelDOT and MDOT on traffic stress levels, which include some aspects of infrastructure quality. However, it does not capture detailed elements such as sidewalk condition. He noted that the dataset is continuously refined, and discrepancies, such as missing or misrepresented connections, are corrected as they are identified. The analysis remains a high-level overview, subject to ongoing updates and improvements.

Ms. Tigist Zegeye added that WILMAPCO currently has a task under the UPWP focused on sidewalk gap analysis for both New Castle and Cecil Counties. This effort will not only identify gaps in sidewalk coverage but will also evaluate the condition of existing sidewalks. Further details will be shared as the study progresses.

7. MD Route 272 Corridor Transportation Plan

Mr. Bill Swiatek provided an update on the Maryland Route 272 Corridor Plan, noting that the project is nearing completion. The study followed a traditional planning process, including a visioning phase, the development of draft recommendations, and is currently in the final stage of identifying preferred recommendations and preparing the final report.

Public engagement was robust throughout the process. The first workshop had 41 attendees and 183 responses to the initial survey. The second round of outreach, focused on preferred recommendations, drew 105 attendees to a second workshop and 225 survey responses. Additional engagement efforts included meetings with downtown stakeholders, youth outreach via the local library, and a third workshop with 52 attendees.

Survey responses indicated broad support for the plan's recommendations. The most supported proposal (76%) was the implementation of a consistent four-lane typical section on MD 272 from I-95 to US 40. The least supported, a proposed roundabout at Shady Beach Road, still received 52% approval.

Mr. Swiatek emphasized other key recommendations include:

- Maintaining two travel lanes along MD 272 from MD 274 to US 40, with the addition of a separated shared-use path to connect with Cecil College.

- Converting Mauldin Avenue to two-way traffic, which received 60% support, along with proposed intersection improvements at Russell Street and Irishtown Road in the form of roundabouts.

- Enhancing pedestrian infrastructure around Cecil College and Lums Road, including sidewalk installation and measures to deter illegal truck parking.

- Improving the US 40/MD 272 intersection with tighter slip lanes, pedestrian refuge islands, and improved sight lines for safety.

The plan also includes a Quick Action Maintenance memo, already submitted to the appropriate agencies, identifying minor infrastructure improvements, such as signage, lighting, and vegetation management. A chapter on traffic signal optimization proposes upgrades to nine signalized intersections in the corridor to improve flow and safety.

Finally, a downtown parking study has been recommended to evaluate opportunities for shared parking arrangements, revised parking requirements, and demand management strategies.

Mr. Swiatek concluded that next steps include releasing the draft plan to the steering committee and the public by August. Presentations to the TAC, the Town of North East, and Cecil County Council are scheduled for August, with WILMAPCO Council endorsement anticipated in September. A monitoring committee will be formed in the fall to support implementation of the plan.

To view this presentation in its entirety, [click here]. [(11min. 47sec.)]

8. Delaware Bill Bond Update
Ms. Anne Brown provided a brief update on DelDOT's FY2026 budget, noting that many figures are still being finalized due to the recent start of the new fiscal year and ongoing system updates.

As of May 31, FY2025 Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) revenues totaled approximately $575 million. FY2026 revenue projections are still being adjusted, particularly considering a newly approved revenue package by the General Assembly that includes scheduled increases in tolls and DMV fees. These increases will be phased in beginning August and October 2025.

The final bond bill authorization for DelDOT's FY2026 Capital Program totals $653.7 million, with key allocations as follows:

- Grants and Allocations: $67.5 million
- Municipal Street Aid Program: $6 million
- Transportation Infrastructure Investment Fund (TIIF): Just under $5 million (TTF-funded)
- Subdivision Street Pavement Management Program: $30 million
- $6 million from TTF
- $23.9 million from the General Fund
- Community Transportation Fund: $21.6 million
- Transit Systems Budget: $45.2 million for vehicle replacement/expansion and facility projects, including Churchman's Crossing, Fairplay Station parking, and maintenance facility upgrades

- Support Systems Budget: $37.6 million for Aeronautics, planning, IT, facilities, and the Transportation Management Center
- Road Systems Budget: $503.3 million for statewide roads, bridges, and related improvements

Notable New Castle County project highlights include:

Design funding for:
- SR1 widening (Road A to US 40)
- SR896/Bethel Church Road Interchange
- US 40 Pulaski Highway to SR7
- Bear-Christiana Road Intersection
- South College Avenue Gateway Project
- SR9 (New Castle Avenue) from Landers Lane to A Street

Construction projects continuing or beginning in FY2026:
- I-95/SR896 Interchange
- US13 paving and pedestrian improvements (Llangollen Blvd. to Boulden Blvd.)
- I-295 Northbound (SR141 to US13)
- US40 (Salem Church Rd. to Walther Rd.)
- I-95 Viaduct substructure repairs

Statewide programs include:
- Bridge Program: $83.5 million
- Pavement Management Program: $86.4 million

Ms. Brown concluded by stating that FY2026 capital expenditures are expected to exceed $590 million statewide, with a continued emphasis on highway safety improvement programs, particularly in New Castle County, where safety remains DelDOT's top priority.

To view this presentation in its entirety, [click here]. [(04min. 57sec.)]

INFORMATION ITEMS

9. Staff Report

Ms. Tigist provided the following update on staff activities since the last TAC meeting:
- On June 12th, Staff attended DelDOT's Adams Street Public workshop at DTC's Offices on Lower Beech Street.
- On June 12th, the Newport Monitoring Committee's Public Workshop was held at the Old Town Hall from 6-8 p.m.
- On June 13th, staff presented to U.S. Congressional staff as part of a panel for the Energy and Environmental Study Institute.
- On June 17th, staff conducted a walking tour of Southbridge with residents to catalogue missing and damaged sidewalk sections.
- On June 18th, staff participated in the Wilmington Initiatives Public Workshop from 4–7 p.m. at the City County Building.
- On June 24th, staff participated in the UD IPA Demographics Forum from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Dover.
- On June 24th, the MD-272 Plan Steering Committee met.

- On June 25th, staff supported an APA Delaware Chapter networking event on Baynard Boulevard centered on transportation, economic development, and historic preservation efforts.
- On June 26th, staff met with members of the Windy Hills Neighborhood Association to begin planning a Walkable Community Workshop.
- On June 28th, staff attended the 4th Street Open Streets event in Wilmington.
- On June 30th, the MD-272 Plan held a public workshop.
- On July 7th, staff attended the United Neighbors meeting to discuss the closure to vehicles of the 7th Street Bridge over I-95.
- On July 7th, the Ardens Transportation Plan Monitoring Committee met.
- On July 12th, WILMAPCO and DVRPC held a public focus group in Wilmington for the MSA Climate Action Plan.
- On July 24th, the Mobility Opportunities Plan Working Group will meet at 10 a.m., and the STBS Management Committee will conduct a meeting at 1 p.m.
- On July 24th the ACO Advisory Committee will meet from 4–6 p.m. at Abessinio Stadium. A public workshop for the project is scheduled for August 12th from 5–7 p.m. at Salesianum School.
- On July 28th, the East Elkton Plan Monitoring Committee will meet.
- On August 5th, WILMAPCO will participate in an AMPO/AASHTO peer exchange in St. Paul, Minnesota to discuss MPO/DOT collaboration on major projects.
- On August 21st, the Route 9 Monitoring Committee will meet.

Ms. Zegeye mentioned that the FY 2026 UPWP was approved by FHWA (Delaware and Maryland divisions) and FTA (Region 3 Delaware and Maryland liaisons).

OTHER BUSINESS:

ADJOURNMENT:

ACTION: Meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Attachments (0)