

WILMAPCO Council

Action Item Summary Sheet

Meeting Date: September 10, 2026

Action Item #11: To Amend the Project Prioritization Process for Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

Description/Summary of Item:

Minor adjustments to the Project Prioritization Process for Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) are proposed to better align with the current federal administration's position on social equity. Principally, this involves removing explicitly race/ethnicity-based factors in the analysis. Those points are reassigned to the safety criteria. Minor wording and process changes are also proposed.

Summary of Action Taken by PAC:

The PAC did not take action on this item.

Summary of Action Taken by TAC:

TAC Recommendation: At its August 20 meeting, the TAC recommended approval of the proposed amendment. The Maryland Department of Planning voted against the amendment.

Summary of Action Taken by Subcommittee/Task Force (if applicable):

The Air Quality Subcommittee reviewed the proposal at their August 20 meeting.

WILMAPCO Staff Recommendations:

The WILMAPCO staff recommends that Council amend the Project Prioritization Process for Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

Wilmington Area Planning Council

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DRAFT **RESOLUTION**

BY THE WILMINGTON AREA PLANNING COUNCIL (WILMAPCO) AMENDING THE PROJECT PRIORITIZATION PROCESS FOR THE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) has been designated the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Cecil County, Maryland and New Castle County, Delaware by the Governors of Maryland and Delaware, respectively; and

WHEREAS, Federal surface transportation legislation states that the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) shall include a priority listing of projects; and

WHEREAS, Federal surface transportation legislation states that projects within the TIP must reflect investment priorities established in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP); and

WHEREAS, WILMAPCO has a long-established, transparent, and data-driven project prioritization process for the TIP/RTP (established in 2006 and last amended in 2020); and

WHEREAS, Federal guidance and priorities have changed; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment to the TIP/RTP project prioritization process better aligns WILMAPCO's evaluation criteria with this new guidance;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that WILMAPCO amends its project prioritization process for the Transportation Improvement Program/Regional Transportation Plan.

Date:

Stephanie Johnson, Chairperson
Wilmington Area Planning Council



Partners with you in transportation planning

PROJECT PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

WILMAPCO's prioritization process evaluates transportation projects using measurable criteria based on the goals of our Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). It provides a quantitative method to compare projects proposed for our Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and RTP.

STEP 1: STAFF APPLIES SCREENING CRITERIA

Is the proposed project consistent with the [Regional Transportation Plan](#), including [Transportation Investment Areas](#), and local, county and state transportation and land use plans? If not, the project should not be ranked, or plan amendments should be made prior to ranking.

STEP 2: STAFF CALCULATES TECHNICAL SCORE

Using available data, WILMAPCO Staff calculates a technical score for each project based on the goals of the RTP. Each goal has a similar point value, with the maximum for each project of 45 points.

STEP 3: WILMAPCO'S TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) REVIEW

WILMAPCO's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) reviews the technical scoring for accuracy, and considers:

- ~~Technical score developed by staff~~
- ~~Urgency of project~~
- ~~Cost effectiveness/ life cycle costs~~
- ~~Private/local funding match provided~~
- ~~Project recommended in adopted transportation plan~~
- ~~Submitting agency rankings by ensuring that top local priorities receive higher WILMAPCO ranking than lower local priorities~~
- ~~Other issues not included in ranking~~
- ~~Additional "special considerations" to break ties and serve as a reality check~~

STEP 4: WILMAPCO COUNCIL RANKS PROJECTS

Council ranks the projects considering:

- Technical score developed by staff and reviewed by TAC
- Urgency of project
- Cost effectiveness/ life cycle costs
- Private/local funding match provided
- Project recommended in adopted transportation plan
- Submitting agency rankings by ensuring that top local priorities receive higher WILMAPCO ranking than lower local priorities
- Other issues not included in ranking
- Additional "special considerations" to break ties and serve as a reality check

GOAL: IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE

- 6 – 15 points

Criteria:

- Protect public health and safety
- Promote active transportation
- Preserve **Protect and enhance** natural and cultural resources
- Ensure transportation ~~choice and equity~~ **affordability and opportunity**

AIR QUALITY: Expected to impact air quality, based on project types:

3	Project expected to moderately or significantly improve air quality. Project types include: a. fixed-route bus and train service expansions b. public transit technology improvements c. major nonmotorized transportation system expansion (not tied to a roadway project which would increase vehicle capacity) d. diesel engine replacements e. alternative fueling stations f. park-and-ride lot expansions g. carpooling schemes
1	Project expected to slightly improve air quality. Project types include: a. fixed-route bus and train service replacements b. minor nonmotorized transportation system expansions (not tied to a roadway project which would increase vehicle capacity) c. major nonmotorized transportation system maintenance (not tied to a roadway project which would increase vehicle capacity)
0	Project not expected to impact air quality. Project types include: a. roadway projects which do not add capacity b. park-and-ride lot maintenance c. rail preservation d. paratransit expansion and maintenance e. recreational nonmotorized system expansion/maintenance f. minor nonmotorized system maintenance (not tied to a roadway project which would increase vehicle capacity)
-1	Project expected to slightly worsen air quality. Project types include: a. roadway projects which add capacity but are non-regionally significant, including those with a nonmotorized transportation system expansion component
-3	Project expected to moderately or significantly worsen air quality. Project types include: a. roadway projects which add capacity and are regionally significant, including those with a nonmotorized transportation system expansion component

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Project enhances transportation in ~~locations with a high percentage of low income and/or minority residents~~ **Economic Opportunity areas as identified in the Mobility Opportunities Plan**. Supportive projects reduce risk of crashes, and/or enhance neighborhood **access and connectivity**. Negative impacts include increased crash risk for vehicular and/or nonmotorized traffic, displacement of homes or businesses, and/or increased traffic through neighborhoods.

3	Project enhances a significant environmental justice Economic Opportunity area
1	Project enhances a moderate environmental justice Economic Opportunity area
0	Project does not impact environmental justice, regardless of location is outside an Economic Opportunity area
-1	Project negatively impacts a moderate environmental justice Economic Opportunity area
-3	Project negatively impacts a significant environmental justice Economic Opportunity area

~~* TIP Spending Equity—Additional points for projects areas within demographic concentrations receiving less than expected funding.~~

3	Project enhances a non-Hispanic Black concentration
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SAFETY: Intersections scored using a composite of average annual crash frequency, manner of impact (i.e. Head-on, sideswipe, etc.), and severity (fatality, injury, property damage, etc.). Analysis includes a 3-year average of crashes at signalized and non-signalized intersections that average 10 or more crashes per year. Score is based on the highest scoring intersection within the project limits.

4 7	20% highest crash scores
3 6	20-40% worst crash scores
2 5	40-60% worst crash scores
1 4	60-80% worst crash scores
0	20% lowest crash scores

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH: Project enhances area of potential health concern in locations identified using high school graduation rates, ~~minority population segregation,~~ employment rates, homeownership rates and tenure, single parent households, and food deserts data.

2	Project enhances area with highest potential public health concern (SDOH score 12-16 10-14)
1	Project enhances area with moderately high potential public health concern (SDOH score 8-11 6-9)
0	Project falls outside areas of potential SDOH concern or does not enhance areas with potential SDOH concern

Criteria:

- Improve system performance
- Promote accessibility and connectivity
- Engage the public via an open involvement process

2	Project within a CMS corridor identified by the CMS Subcommittee
1	Road segment with LOS E or F but outside of identified CMS corridors
0	Road segment is neither in CMS nor LOS E or F

Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)	
+	4 Greater than 60,000 AADT
	3 40,000 – 60,000 AADT
	2 20,000 – 40,000 AADT
	0 Less than 20,000 AADT

Transit Usage—Transit Load Factor by segment based on average # of riders vs. # of available seats.

+ 3 Greater than 35% capacity

2 25 – 35% capacity

1 15 – 25% capacity

0 Less than 15% capacity

3	Supportive project within an area of a significant concentrations of mobility-challenged populations Mobility Challenged area
1	Supportive project within an area of a moderate concentrations of mobility-challenged populations Mobility Challenged area
0	Project does not improve travel choices, regardless of location

3	Top 90th percentile of pedestrian network scores
1	Top 70 th – 90th percentile of pedestrian network scores
0	Bottom 70th percentile of pedestrian network scores

GOAL: SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND GOODS MOVEMENT

0 – 15 points

Criteria:

- Maximize our investments
- Develop effective transportation networks
- Plan for energy security and environmental resilience

FREIGHT: Scores using the three-tiered scoring defined in the WILMAPCO freight & goods movement analysis.

Bottlenecks are identified using high truck trip generating traffic zones, areas of high truck crash frequencies and travel time delays which hamper the efficient movement of truck traffic which can effect economic growth and competitiveness.

5	"Significant Bottleneck" – Refers to segments with multiple failing criteria, and generally includes roadways which carry the highest traffic volumes and experience heaviest congestion.
3	"Moderate Bottleneck" – Refers to segments that are experiencing some failing, or nearly failing, criteria. There is more variation in scoring across the criteria, with some criteria demonstrating failure and others at more modest levels.
2	"Minor Bottleneck" – Refers to segments that experience one or more criteria that are near failing. While most have only a few criteria showing near failure, others are at acceptable levels.
0	All other road segments

SUPPORT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES: Projects that support state and local economic development policies.

Those include transportation in WILMAPCO Center and Core Transportation Investment Areas (TIAs). Center and Core TIAs have the heaviest concentrations of people, jobs, and infrastructure, which requires greater future investment.

6	Project located in a Center TIA.
3	Project located in a Core TIA.
0	Project not located in either of the above areas

PRIVATE OR LOCAL FUNDING CONTRIBUTION: Local and/or private commitment demonstrated by funding contribution.

4	Greater than 80% through private/local funds
3	60-80% funded through private/local funds
2	40-60% funded through private/local funds
1	20-40% funded through private/local funds
0	Less than 20% through private/local fund