

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 15, 2026**

The WILMAPCO Council meeting was held at WILMAPCO, 100 Discovery Boulevard, Suite 800, Newark, DE 19713 and virtually via Zoom.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mr. John Sisson, Council Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Members present:

John Sisson, Delaware Transit Corporation Chief Executive Officer

Geoff Anderson, Maryland Department of Transportation Chief and Maryland Governor's Appointee

Kenneth Branner, Mayor of the Town of Middletown, New Castle County Municipalities

David Culver, New Castle County Department of Land Use General Manager, representing County Executive Marcus Henry

David Edgell, Office of State Planning and Delaware Governor's Appointee

William Goldman, Cecil County Land Use and Development Planner, representing Cecil County Executive, Adam Streight

Grant Handley, representing Kelly A. Benson, Mayor of North East, Cecil County Municipalities Representative

Stephanie Johnson, Delaware Department of Transportation, representing, Delaware Secretary of Transportation, Shanté Hastings

Kelly Williams, City of Wilmington Department of Public Works Commissioner, representing City of Wilmington Mayor John Carney

Members absent:

Guests, Observers:

Mike Kaszyski, Public Advisory Committee, Chair

Shawn Kiernan, Maryland Department of Transportation

Tina Merrill, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Control

Staff members:

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner

Leonard Bonarek, Senior Planner

Sharen Elcock, Executive Assistant

Elizabeth Espinal, Administrative Assistant

Dave Gula, Principal Planner

Dawn Stant, Outreach Coordinator

Colleen Stroud, Transportation Planner

Bill Swiatek, Principal Planner

Jacob Thompson, Senior Planner

Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Minutes prepared by Elizabeth Espinal.

3. MINUTES:

ACTION: On motion by Mr. David Culver seconded by Mr. David Edgell the Council approved the November 13, 2025, Council Meeting Minutes.

Motion passed.

(01-15-26-01)

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

None.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

5. Chairperson's Report:

Mr. John Sisson announced his retirement to Secretary of Transportation Shanté Hastings, with his term concluding in early July. Mr. Sisson has served the transit and transportation industry for over 30 years, including a distinguished 12-year tenure as CEO of DART. While he is stepping away from full-time operational responsibilities, he expressed his intention to remain involved in the field moving forward.

Mr. David Edgell reported that the Cabinet Committee on State Planning Issues recommended approval of the State Strategies for Policies and Spending FY2025 Update on Monday. The document has been submitted to the Governor's Office. Mr. Edgell noted that this submission follows eighteen months of extensive collaboration between staff, member agencies, local governments, and MPOs.

Mr. Grant Handley shared that the Town of North East hosted the Cecil County Harford MML Chapter on December 18. During the meeting, he presented Regional Sidewalk Analysis tools and urged public participation in community data mapping. Additionally, on January 14, North East administrators discussed the MD 272 Plan and the proposal to convert Mauldin Avenue into a two-way street. Mr. Handley recognized the efforts of WILMAPCO staff, specifically Mr. Bill Swiatek, for leadership of the monitoring committee. Collaboration with WILMAPCO continues regarding an upcoming APA Walk Tour.

6. Executive Director's Report – Ms. Tigist Zegeye shared the following report:

- On November 17th, the SNCC Growth Area Land Use and Transportation Open House took place at the Odessa Fire Hall, partners met on December 10th and on January 14th, and staff held a briefing with elected officials on January 9th, following an Advisory Committee meeting on January 12th.
- On November 18th, the Churchman's Crossing Monitoring Committee fall meeting was held.
- On November 24th, Staff finalized the City of New Castle Walkable Community Workshop report.
- On November 25th, Staff presented the Mobility Opportunities Plan at a University of Washington class.
- On December 3rd, Staff presented on incorporating public health considerations in planning at the APA Delaware State Conference.
- On December 8th, Staff attended the 5th Neighborhood Planning Council meeting in Wilmington. Staff participated in the Maryland State Freight Summit.
- On December 11th, the MD-272 Monitoring Committee met, and on January 14th as well. Staff attended a legislative update for the Lancaster Ave/2nd St WCW. Staff also attended the NE Rising Community meeting.

- On December 16th, the KMIC Partners met; and will meet again on February 12th with an official kickoff meeting on February 23rd.
- On December 17th, Staff participated in Delmarva Winter Freight Meeting. Staff attended the 4th St/West Side joint community meeting.
- On December 18th, the Route 9 Monitoring Committee met, and the next meeting is on February 25th.
- 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 6th, 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, with another meeting planned for February.
- On January 16th, Staff will be participating in the Diamond State Rail meeting.
- On January 23rd, Staff will make a presentation for the WHA; to introduce WILMAPCO and projects in Wilmington.
- On January 27th, the Southbridge Truck Bypass Advisory Committee will meet, and the Management Committee will meet on February 23rd, with an Open House Workshop scheduled for February 24th in the Neighborhood House at 6p.m.
- On February 19th, Staff will be participating in the Downes Elementary School Night.
- WILMAPCO staff just sent the Transportation Performance Management letters to each DOT, DeIDOT and MDOT, for safety targets.

Ms. Zegeye concluded by reporting that approximately 45% of the budget had been expended, as reflected in the December Financial Report. She also noted that the call for projects for the UPWP FY 2027 would be distributed at the end of January, with submissions due by the end of February. Additionally, she stated that the preliminary audit report had been received with no findings, and that the final report would be provided in March.

7. Public Advisory Committee (PAC) Report:

Mr. Mike Kaszyski reported that the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) convened on Monday, December 15 for its regular bi-monthly meeting; however, a quorum was not present. Four members attended in person and two attended virtually. One guest was present in person.

Ms. Tigist Zegeye delivered the Executive Director's Report, summarizing the November 13 Council meeting and providing updates on ongoing studies, as well as an overview of upcoming fall and winter public engagement activities.

Two presentations were provided. The first introduced the Southern New Castle County Growth Area Land Use and Transportation Plan. Mr. Dave Gula and Mr. Dan Blevins outlined the study scope, schedule, and public outreach approach, and summarized feedback received to date. Mr. Blevins reviewed demographic trends, workshop comments, and key issues in the study area, including transportation improvement districts (TIDs) and roadway concerns.

The second presentation addressed the Regional Climate Action Plan. Mr. Bill Swiatek explained that the grant-funded, multi-state initiative includes counties in Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. He provided an overview of the plan's leadership structure, EPA

requirements, sector-based strategies, implementation timeline for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, preliminary modeling results, and public outreach efforts. PAC members discussed the plan as a valuable regional resource and considered topics such as offshore wind development and the role of electric vehicles in achieving decarbonization goals.

The next PAC meeting is scheduled for February.

8. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Report:

Mr. Dave Gula reported that the TAC met on November 20, during which one action item was considered involving an amendment to the TIP at the request of MDOT for the Area-Wide Congestion Management Program. Three presentations were also provided: the Southbridge Truck Bypass Study, the Regional Climate Action Plan, and Walkable Community Workshops presented by staff.

TAC also met on December 18, where multiple action items related to TIP amendments were considered. One presentation was provided on the Southern New Castle County Growth Area Land Use and Transportation Plan.

The TAC also met earlier on January 15; no action items were presented. Three presentations were delivered, including the Delaware Climate Action Plan presented by Ms. Susan Love of DNREC, an overview of the Delaware Rail Plan currently underway presented by DeIDOT, and a briefing on the Regional Progress Report, which is scheduled for TAC review in February.

ACTION ITEMS:

9. To amend the FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Jake Thompson reported that MDOT has requested an amendment to the FY25–28 TIP for the Areawide Congestion Management Project. As adopted in May 2024, the project includes a total of \$3.94 million across FY25 through FY28. The proposed amendment would reallocate funds from the construction category to the other category, with no change to the total project funding. This adjustment is necessary to accommodate safety and spot improvement projects committed in the FY25–28 TIP and does not alter the existing funding levels for the program.

TAC recommended endorsement of this amendment at its November 20 meeting. The AQS reviewed the amendment via email and determined that it does not trigger or require a conformity analysis. WILMAPCO staff recommended approval of this amendment.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. David Culver, seconded by Mr. Kenneth Branner, the Council approved the TIP amendment.

Motion passed.

(01-15-26-02)

10. To amend the FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Jake Thompson reported that this sheet summarizes six action items requested by DeIDOT to amend the FY25–28 TIP for transit vehicle replacement. Three of the amendments would add new projects to fund the purchase of hybrid buses, while three would remove funding previously allocated for hydrogen buses and related charging infrastructure. The justification for all six amendments is a revised procurement strategy that shifts from hydrogen fuel cell and zero-emission buses to hybrid buses.

Projects highlighted in green are proposed for addition to the STIP to replace those highlighted in red. These revisions are needed due to a pending discretionary grant that has shifted funding from hydrogen to hybrid buses. TAC recommended endorsement of these amendments at its December 18 meeting. The AQS reviewed the amendments via email and determined that they do not trigger a revised conformity analysis. WILMAPCO staff recommends approval of these amendments.

Each amendment must be endorsed separately as an individual action item. Action Item No. 10 proposes an increase of \$12.941 million in FY28 for the purchase of nine hybrid buses.

Mr. David Edgell inquired whether the shift to hybrid buses was due to hydrogen bus battery technology not yet being sufficiently mature. Mr. John Sisson responded that while hydrogen technology has not been abandoned, the supporting infrastructure and supply chain have not advanced as quickly as anticipated, making hybrid buses a more viable near-term solution.

In response to a related question from Mr. David Culver regarding the regional hydrogen supply, Mr. Sisson noted that a grant had been awarded to support hydrogen infrastructure development; however, implementation has progressed more slowly than expected.

Ms. Stephanie Johnson requested clarification on the federal and state funding match for Action Items 10 and 14. Mr. Sisson confirmed that the appropriate funding split is 85 percent federal and 15 percent state. Ms. Johnson also asked about the updated implementation schedule, and Mr. Sisson indicated that he would provide the latest information following the meeting.

Mr. Sisson further noted that the revised procurement strategy would increase the total number of buses purchased from 12 battery-electric and hydrogen units to 22 hybrid buses, resulting in a greater number of lower-emission vehicles being deployed overall.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. David Culver, seconded by Mr. Kenneth Branner, the Council approved the TIP amendment.

Motion passed. (01-15-26-03)

11. To amend the FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Sisson requested a motion based on the information provided in Action Item No. 10.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. David Culver, seconded by Mr. Kenneth Branner, the Council approved the TIP amendment.

Motion passed. (01-15-26-04)

12. To amend the FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Sisson requested a motion based on the information provided in Action Item No. 10.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. David Culver, seconded by Mr. Kenneth Branner, the Council approved the TIP amendment.

Motion passed. (01-15-26-05)

13. To amend the FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Sisson requested a motion based on the information provided in Action Item No. 10.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. David Culver, seconded by Mr. Kenneth Branner, the Council approved the TIP amendment.

Motion passed. (01-15-26-06)

14. To amend the FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Sisson requested a motion based on the information provided in Action Item No. 10.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. David Culver, seconded by Mr. Kenneth Branner, the Council approved the TIP amendment.

Motion passed. (01-15-26-07)

15. To amend the FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Sisson requested a motion based on the information provided in Action Item No. 10.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. David Culver, seconded by Mr. Kenneth Branner, the Council approved the TIP amendment.

Motion passed. (01-15-26-08)

PRESENTATIONS:

16. Southern NCC Growth Area Land Use & Transportation Study.

Mr. Dave Gula and Mr. Dan Blevins presented an overview of the Southern New Castle County Growth Area Land Use and Transportation Plan, an 18-month planning study initiated in September at the request of New Castle County and DeIDOT. The study evaluates existing and future land use conditions, identifies transportation gaps and constraints, and recommends infrastructure improvements needed to support continued growth in the area. While the County is advancing related studies on topics such as stormwater management and sea level rise, the plan remains focused on land use and transportation.

Mr. Dave Gula provided an update on recent public outreach activities for the study. He reported that a public information workshop was held in December, followed by the first Advisory Committee meeting earlier this week, with the next public workshop scheduled for March. He noted that the study is in its early stages and that initial outreach efforts are intended to gather community input prior to the development of recommendations.

The December workshop served as an informational session to present existing conditions in the study area, including transportation, safety, land use, and available facilities. Attendees also participated in an activity to identify desired and undesired retail and commercial development. The workshop was attended by more than 50 participants and generated substantial public feedback. Key concerns raised included speeding and roadway safety, requests for improved lighting, particularly in pedestrian areas with truck traffic along local corridors, intersection improvements such as roundabouts, the need for sidewalks and separate shared-use paths, and flooding concerns along Shallcross Lake Road.

Mr. Gula stated that a project website has been launched featuring an interactive feedback map and an online survey to allow continued public input throughout the planning process. Outreach efforts will include up to four public workshops and multiple Advisory Committee meetings. A recent legislative briefing for state and county officials was also well attended and provided

additional input to inform the Advisory Committee meeting held at the Appoquinimink Library. The committee includes representatives from local governments, emergency services, business organizations, developers, community institutions, and neighborhood groups. The meeting included a project overview, a summary of public workshop feedback, and a preview of upcoming modeling scenarios.

Mr. Blevins presented preliminary data findings, including demographic trends, travel behavior, development patterns, and transportation conditions. He noted significant population growth since 2000, an aging demographic, high rates of vehicle commuting, and substantial residential and retail development activity within the study area. He also reviewed emerging travel pattern data, crash and safety trends, and observed operating speeds on key roadways, which will inform upcoming modeling and scenario analysis. All study materials and data are available on the project website for public review.

To view this presentation in its entirety please [click here](#). [22m.02s.]

Following the presentation, Mr. Dave Gula noted that transit has been a recurring topic throughout the study process. He explained that the existing development pattern and limited density within the study area present challenges to supporting traditional fixed-route transit service, particularly given that the area is nearing buildout. Existing park-and-ride facilities and express bus services have experienced low ridership, indicating limited demand for conventional transit options. However, public feedback has identified interest in improved connectivity within the study area and to nearby destinations such as Middletown for shopping, dining, and recreational activities. Mr. Gula emphasized that any potential transit scenarios developed as part of the study will require evaluation of feasibility and associated costs.

Mr. Dan Blevins added that the study team is working to realistically assess potential transit scenarios, including consideration of alternative service models. He noted that public transit currently accounts for a very small share of overall travel, and increasing its usage would require significant investment. Mr. John Sisson highlighted that, given demographic trends, paratransit services may represent a more immediate need, particularly as the population ages and demand for medical and support service trips increases across New Castle County.

Discussion also focused on housing and demographic trends within the study area, including the growth of age-restricted communities and in-migration of older residents from other states. Participants noted that this trend may limit workforce participation locally while increasing future demand for specialized transportation services. Questions were also raised regarding the retention of younger residents and the long-term implications of changing land use patterns on transportation demand.

Additional comments addressed anticipated employment growth associated with recently approved commercial and industrial developments in the Middletown area, which may attract workers from outside the region. Participants also discussed the long-term impacts of age-restricted developments on travel demand, roadway capacity, and future infrastructure needs if occupancy patterns change over time. Crash data was reviewed, with staff noting that several intersections within the study area currently rank among the top locations for annual crashes. The discussion concluded with acknowledgement of ongoing coordination with local agencies and stakeholders as the study advances.

17. Regional Progress Report.

Mr. Bill Swiatek presented WILMAPCO's 2026 Regional Progress Report, a document updated every four years to evaluate progress on actions identified in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The report begins with an assessment of key regional trends and is followed by action-by-action evaluations using both qualitative and quantitative performance measures. Each action is assigned a red, yellow, or green indicator reflecting poor, partial, or good progress, respectively, and national performance measures are also incorporated for consistency.

Overall results indicate that 63 percent of RTP actions demonstrate good progress, 22 percent show partial progress, and 16 percent reflect poor progress. Mr. Swiatek noted that the percentage of actions with good progress is the highest among the last three reporting cycles, increasing from 50 percent in 2018 and 60 percent in 2022.

Several areas with poor progress were highlighted, including promoting growth in Center Transportation Investment Areas (TIAs), supporting shared mobility and carpooling, funding transit expansion and management projects, enhancing public transit access, improving safety (particularly pedestrian safety), and avoiding Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) projects in rural and ecologically sensitive areas. Data show that Center TIAs experienced negative household growth between 2000 and 2020 and are projected to continue declining through 2050, while a disproportionate share of transportation funding is directed toward developing and rural TIAs relative to their projected household growth. Carpooling rates have declined significantly since 1980, falling from more than 20 percent of commuters to less than 10 percent in both counties. Additionally, the share of TIP funding dedicated to transit projects has remained relatively flat and below 10 percent for most of the past two decades.

Examples of actions with partial progress include the use of project prioritization in selecting TIP investments. Mr. Swiatek noted that some lower-scoring projects received funding while higher-scoring projects from previous TIPs remained unfunded, suggesting opportunities to better align investments with technical evaluation results. Progress in supporting tourism through planning and projects was mixed: New Castle County has increased the share of East Coast Greenway segments completed to 90 percent, while Cecil County has remained at approximately 8 percent.

Mr. Swiatek also highlighted areas of strong performance. Since 1995, approximately 60 subregional plans have been completed, with 20 percent fully implemented and 60 percent partially implemented, indicating that the majority have led to tangible outcomes. Freight mobility has also improved, with most identified truck bottlenecks now associated with management or capacity projects in the TIP. In addition, electric vehicle charging infrastructure has expanded substantially, growing from two public stations in 2012 to more than 100 in New Castle County and more than a dozen in Cecil County.

Regarding next steps, the full draft of the document will be shared with the Technical Advisory Committee next month for recommended endorsement. Council endorsement will be sought at the March meeting. Staff will then begin developing policy updates to the Regional Transportation Plan and conduct an air quality conformity analysis and related activities. The updated plan is due in March 2027.

To view the presentation in its entirety, [click here](#) [10m. 51s.].

INFORMATION ITEMS:

18. DeIDOT's and MDOT's Administrative Modification Request Letters

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 3:19 p.m.

ATTACHMENTS: (0)