



# Environmental Justice: Transportation Equity Analysis for the WILMAPCO Region



**Prepared by the staff of the  
Wilmington Area Planning Council**

**May 1, 2003**

The preparation of this document was financed in part with funds provided by the Federal Government, including the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration of the United States Department of Transportation.

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Section 1: What is Environmental Justice?</b>	
Three Core Principles of Environmental Justice.....	2
MPO Responsibilities.....	2
<b>Section 2: Transportation Equity Technical Analysis and Area Identification Methodology</b>	
Methodology Used to Identify Transportation Equity Areas.....	3
Aggregate Score Calculation .....	7
<b>Section 3: Evaluation of Current WILMAPCO Plans</b>	
RTP Evaluation.....	10
TIP Evaluation.....	13
Mobility and Congestion Evaluation.....	15
Plan Evaluation Conclusions .....	16
<b>Section 4: Evaluation of Public Involvement Processes</b>	
Public Participation Activities .....	17
<b>Section 5: Future Actions</b>	
Improving Public Outreach.....	19
Developing Performance Measures.....	19
Monitoring and Continuing Efforts.....	19

## List of Figures and Tables

### FIGURES

<b>Figure 1:</b> Minority Population by Census Block Group .....	4
<b>Figure 2:</b> Hispanic Population by Census Block Group .....	5
<b>Figure 3:</b> Median Income by Census Block Group .....	6
<b>Figure 4:</b> Minority/Low Income Populations Based on Aggregate Scores .....	8
<b>Figure 5:</b> Identified Areas and Transportation Investment Areas.....	10
<b>Figure 6:</b> Major Management and Expansion Projects in the 2025 RTP .....	11
<b>Figure 7:</b> 2003-2005 TIP Projects .....	13
<b>Figure 8:</b> Transit Access .....	15
<b>Figure 9:</b> Roadway Congestion .....	15

### TABLES

<b>Table 1:</b> Current Profile of the WILMAPCO Region .....	3
<b>Table 2:</b> Statistical Profile of Minority/Low Income Populations .....	9
<b>Table 3:</b> Major Management and Expansion Projects in the 2025 RTP Projects within Minority/Low Income Populations .....	12
<b>Table 4:</b> Projects from the 2003-2005 TIP within Minority/Low Income Populations .....	14

## **Introduction**

The Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) is a federally mandated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) consisting of two counties; Cecil County, Maryland and New Castle County, Delaware. Our mission is to serve the citizens and stakeholders of the region by carrying out a comprehensive, continuing and cooperative regional transportation planning process consistent with federal transportation legislation. To that end, WILMAPCO informs and involves the public on transportation planning decisions, guides the investment of federal transportation funds, coordinates transportation investments with local land use decisions, and promotes the national transportation policy expressed in federal transportation law.

WILMAPCO is responsible to all the citizens of the region to ensure the development of the best transportation plan for the region. The implementation of the transportation plan is carried out by WILMAPCO's member agencies. We collect, analyze and evaluate demographic, land use and transportation-related data and seek public input to understand the transportation system requirements of the region. Understanding these requirements allows for the development of plans and programs and the implementation of a transportation system that provides for the efficient transport of people, goods and services.

In response to our federal mandate to incorporate Environmental Justice (EJ) considerations into our planning process, we have developed this report to demonstrate our progress to date and to lay out a path forward. In the following sections we will:

- Describe our methodology and analysis used to identify minority and low income populations
- Evaluate our plans and programs for compliance with EJ principles
- Describe our current public participation activities
- Describe monitoring tools we will use to measure our success in complying with our EJ responsibilities
- Lay out the next steps to be taken in regards to future EJ planning practices

## **Section 1: What is Environmental Justice?**

Environmental Justice (EJ) is an initiative to ensure that federal funds are not used in ways that would discriminate against minority and low income populations or cause adverse effects. Environmental Justice is an outgrowth of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which stated that, *"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."*<sup>1</sup>

In 1994 the initiative was given further credence when President Clinton signed Executive Order 12898 that stated that all federal agencies receiving federal funding must include as part of their mission the identification and addressing of the effects of all programs, policies and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.

In 1997, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) issued its *"DOT Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (DOT Order 6640.23)"* that further defined the role of transportation in regard to Environmental Justice. This order provided a clearer picture of what was being asked of agencies and identified three major principles.

### **Three Core Principles from USDOT:**

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority populations and low-income populations.

### **MPO Responsibilities**

The MPOs serve as the primary forum where State DOTs, transit providers, local agencies, and the public develop local transportation plans and programs that address the metropolitan area's needs. To certify compliance with Title VI and address environmental justice, MPOs need to:

- Identify residential, employment, and transportation patterns of low-income and minority populations so that their needs can be identified and addressed, and the benefits and burdens of transportation investments can be fairly distributed.
- Enhance analytical capabilities to ensure that the Long Range Plan and TIP comply with Title VI requirements.
- Evaluate and - where necessary - improve their public involvement processes to eliminate participation barriers and engage minority and low income populations in transportation decision making.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

<sup>2</sup> FHWA Publication No. FHWA EP-00-013, *An Overview of Transportation and Environmental Justice*

## **Section 2: Transportation Equity Technical Analysis**

### **Methodology Used To Identify Transportation Equity Areas**

In order to determine where minority and low-income populations are located, we developed a methodology that first defined which population segments should be considered. Guidelines on Environmental Justice provided by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) listed the general criteria to use to identify concentrations of Minority / Low Income populations. These criteria are:

- Minority Population
- Hispanic Population
- Low Income (Household Income below Federal Poverty Guidelines)

We used these criteria to identify locations with high minority, Hispanic and low-income populations relative to the rest of our WILMAPCO region. The data being used is from the 2000 U.S. Census.

**Table 1: Current Profile of the WILMAPCO Region**

	<b>NEW CASTLE COUNTY 2000 TOTAL</b>	<b>CECIL COUNTY 2000 TOTAL</b>	<b>REGIONWIDE 2000 TOTAL</b>
Population	500,265	85,951	586,216
Households	188,935	31,223	220,158
Minority Population*	134,455	5,679	140,134
% Minority Population	26.8%	6.6%	23.9%
Hispanic Population**	26,293	1,306	27,599
% Hispanic Population	5.3%	1.5%	4.7%
% Low Income Households***	8.1%	6.9%	7.9%
Zero Car Households	16,684	1,869	18,553
Population over 65	57,903	8,995	66,898
Median Age (Years)	35.0	35.5	35.1
Average Household Size	2.64	2.75	2.66
Mean Travel Time to Work	24.3 min	28.2 min	24.9min

\* Minority Population: The Census defines minority as: Black, Asian American, American Indian or Alaskan Native  
Source: U.S Census, 2000

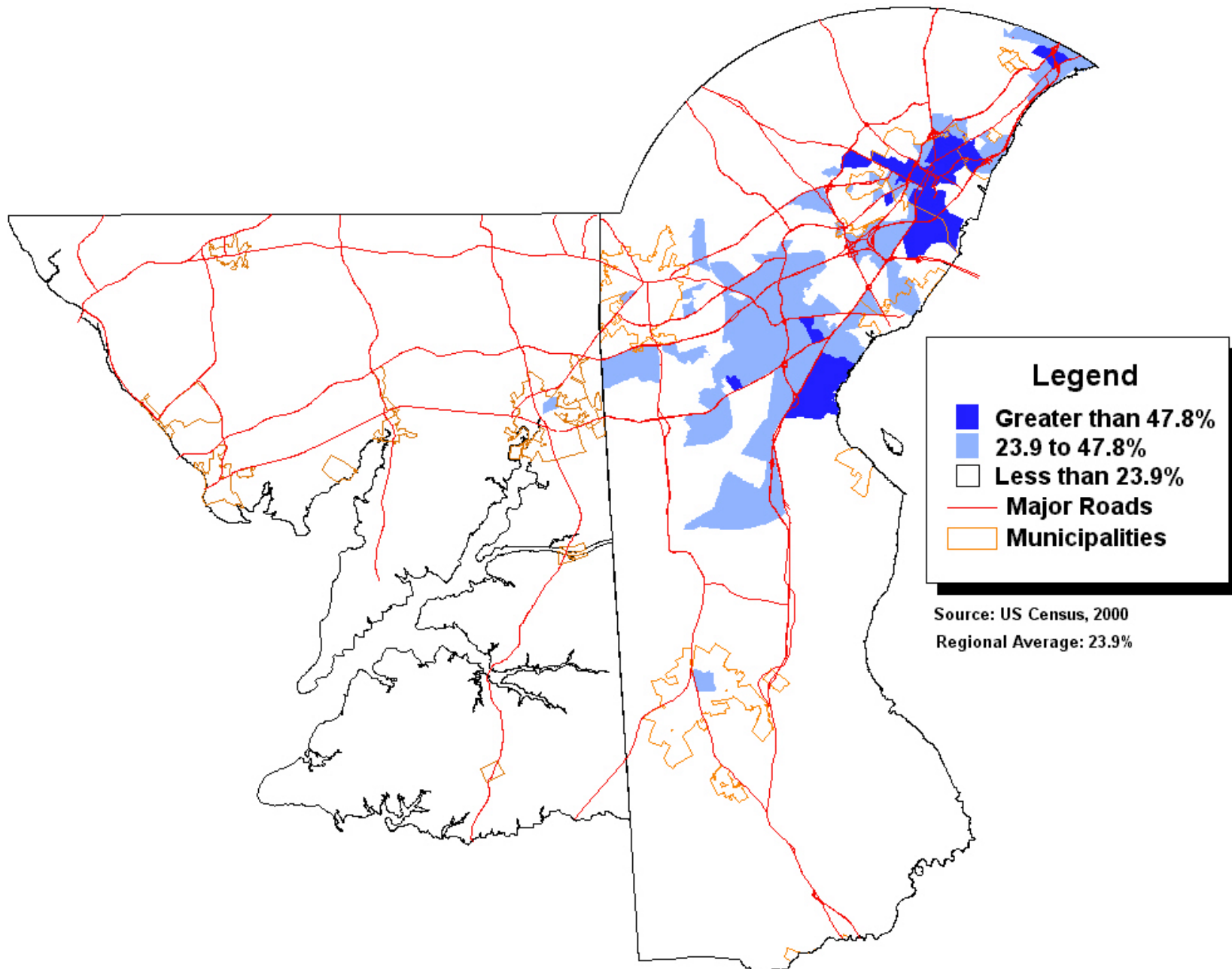
\*\* Hispanic Population: Defined as persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

\*\*\* Low Income Households: Based on 1999 Household Size and Income according to Poverty Guidelines issued by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

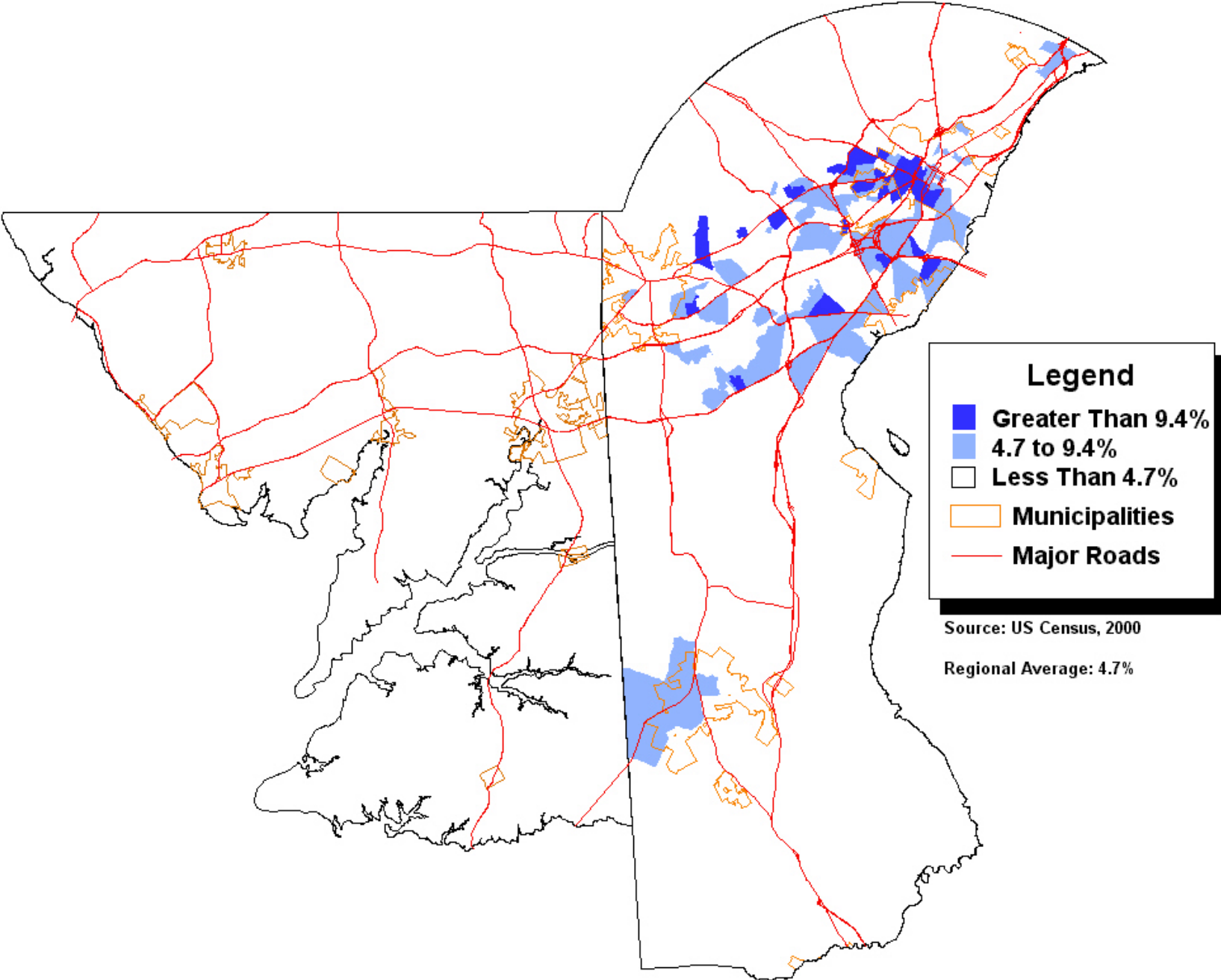
These numbers represent the baseline against which we compared data from the smaller census block groups – areas defined as small clusters of populations ranging from 600-3,000 people or special places or institutions, military installations, or hospitals. For reference, New Castle County contains 349 block groups while Cecil County contains 55. This level of geography is the lowest level for which the Census reports such detailed data.

Based on the regional totals, minority populations make up 23.9% of the region's total population and the Hispanic population makes up 4.7% of our region. In addition 7.9% of the households in the region are living below the poverty line according to 1999 household incomes. We then compared each of the region's 404 census block groups against these baselines. The figures on the following pages show the locations and concentrations of populations that exceeded the regional percent of minorities (**Figure 1**), Hispanics (**Figure 2**) and households with incomes below the poverty line (**Figure 3**).

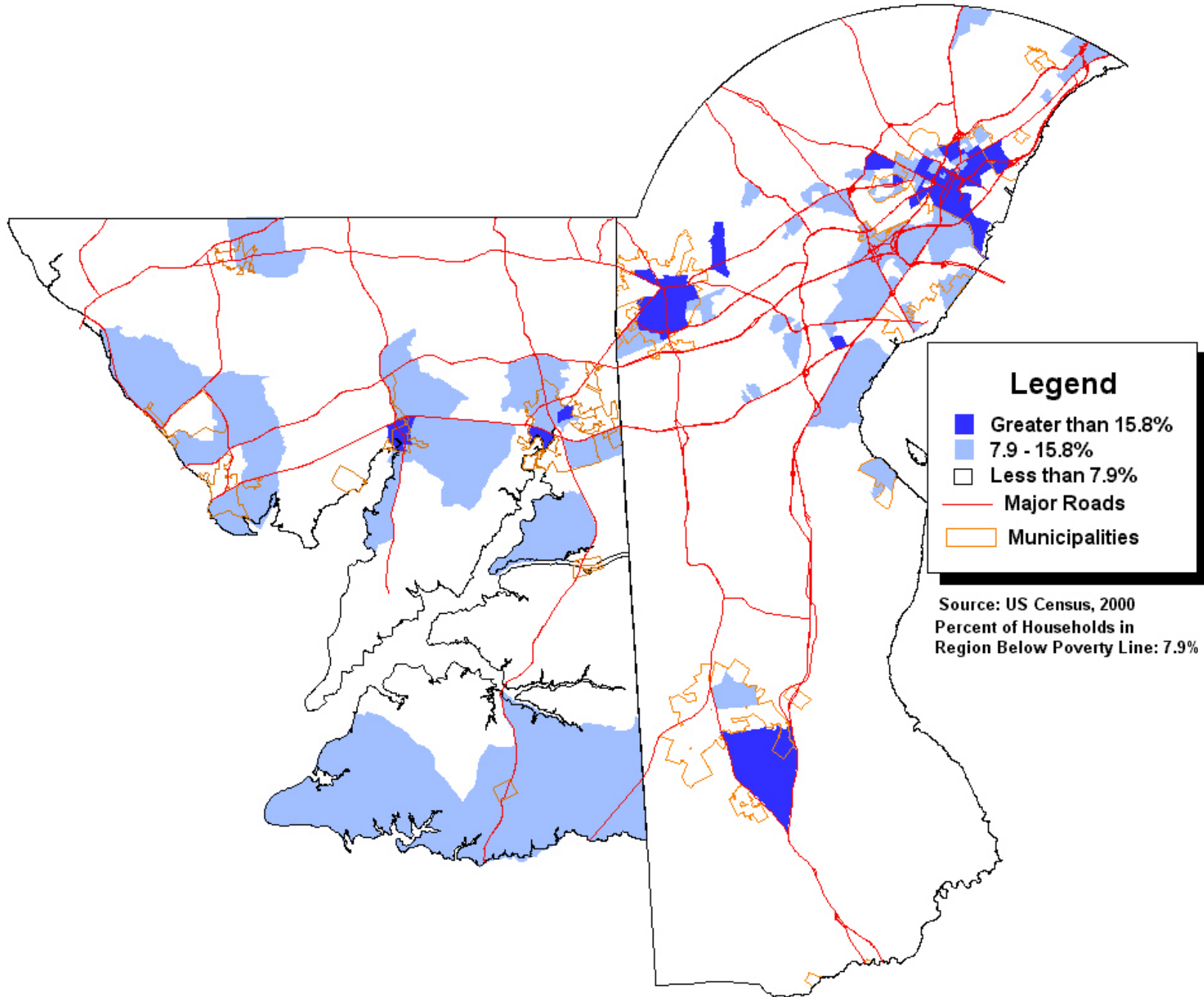
**Figure 1: Minority Population by Census Block Group**



**Figure 2: Hispanic Population by Census Block Group**



**Figure 3: Households with Income Below Poverty Line by Census Block Group**





## Aggregate Score Calculations

From this information, we created a single map that captured all of the evaluation criteria to show which areas were susceptible to transportation equity concerns. By using a scoring system that assigned points based on each block group's relation to the regional baseline, an aggregate was determined for each block group.

Minority Percentage – A score of 2 was given to any block group whose percentage of minorities is more than double the regional average, a score of 1 to any block group whose percentage of minorities is greater than the regional average up to double the regional average, and a score of 0 to any block group whose percentage of minorities is less than or equal to the regional average.

Hispanic Percentage– A score of 2 was given to any block group whose percentage of Hispanics is more than double the regional average, a score of 1 to any block group whose percentage of Hispanics is greater than the regional average up to double the regional average, and a score of 0 to any block group whose percentage of Hispanics is less than or equal to the regional average.

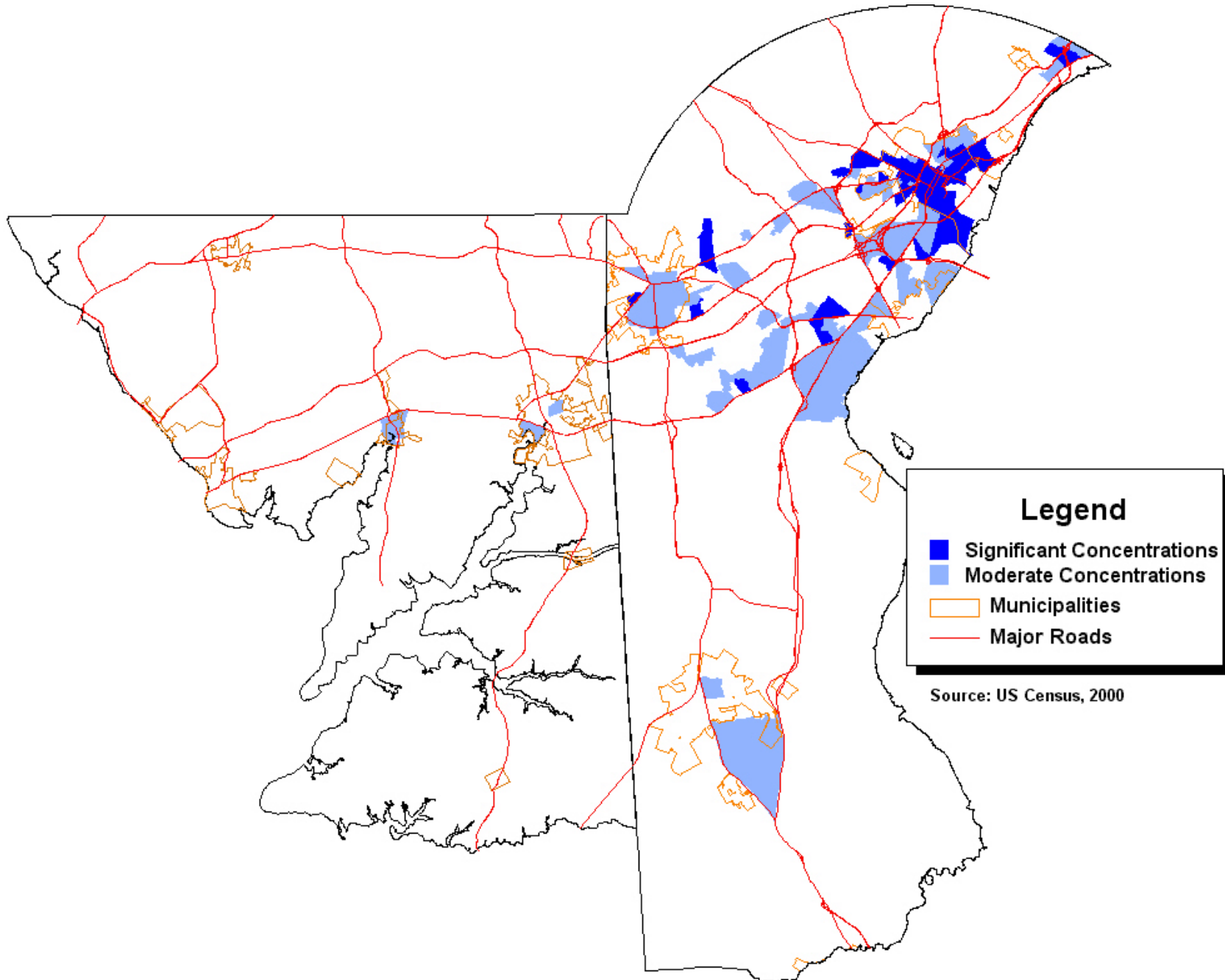
Low Income – A score of 2 was given to any block group whose percentage of households with incomes below the poverty level is greater than double the regional average, a score of 1 to any block group whose percentage of households with incomes below the poverty level is greater than the regional average up to double the regional average, and a score of 0 to any block group whose percentage of households with incomes below the poverty level is less than or equal to the regional average.

Once each of the block groups had been assigned a score, the scores were added together to create an aggregate score. By doing so, we were able to see which locations are affected by the factors and, more importantly, to what degree. The maximum score a block could receive was six (6) and zero (0) was the minimum. Census block groups were categorized as follows:

- 0-1 Point: Low concentration of minority and low-income populations**
- 2-3 points: Moderate concentration of minority and low-income populations**
- 4-6 points: Significant concentration of minority and low-income populations**

**Figure 4** on page 8 illustrates where the analysis found populations meeting the criteria and the degree to which they are concentrated.

**Figure 4: Concentrations of Minority and Low Income Populations Based on Aggregate Scores**



Finally, we compared our three categories derived from the initial analysis to the regional totals to gauge whether the analysis was effective in capturing the populations in question.

**Table 2: Statistical Profile of Identified Minority and Low Income populations**

Measure	Regional Totals	Areas of Low Concentration (Score of 0-1)	Areas of Moderate Concentration (Score of 2-3)	Areas of Significant Concentration (Score of 4-6)
Population	586,216	398,302	103,724	82,527
Households	220,158	151,499	38,621	30,111
Minority Population	140,134	48,022	37,239	53,805
Hispanic population	27,599	9,280	6,405	11,880
Median Household Income	\$52,143	\$63,147	\$41,521	\$29,686
Number of Households with household incomes below poverty line	17,470	6,137	4,344	6,719
0 Car Households	18,553	6,703	4,268	7,582
Avg. Autos per Household	1.68	1.85	1.51	1.10
Population over 65	66,898	49,470	9,485	7,973
Avg. Travel Time to work by all non-public transit modes (in Minutes)	24.25	24.83	22.89	21.18
Avg. Travel Time to work by transit (in Minutes)	45.97	51.65	30.76	32.70
Avg. Travel Time to Work (All Modes)	24.86	25.33	23.38	22.91

Source: 2000 Census

Based on the above profile, we can analyze the characteristics of the identified minority low income populations. In summary, the areas determined to have moderate and significant concentrations of Minority / Low Income populations (scores of 2 or higher) were found to contain:

- 31.7% of the region’s population
- 64.9% of the region’s minority population
- 66.3% of the region’s Hispanic population
- 63.3% of households with incomes below poverty level
- 63.8% of all households with zero vehicles available
- 60.3% of all workers who use transit as primary mode to work
- 26.1% of all persons over the age of 65

On a positive note, the mean travel time to work in these areas was found to actually be below the regional average. For example, the average travel time to work via transit is 18.3% faster within these areas versus the rest of the region. With the majority of these identified areas being centered near the City of Wilmington, the availability of transit service and large concentrations of employment help reduce the distance and time it takes to reach employment destinations.

### Section 3: Evaluation of Current WILMAPCO Plans

The next phase of our analysis was to evaluate the current WILMAPCO plans and products and determine if and how they impact the identified minority low-income populations. **To focus the analysis on our most sensitive areas, the locations that have been identified as having significant concentrations of minority and low income populations (Aggregate Score of 4+) will be reported on for the remainder of the document and referred to as the *identified areas*.**

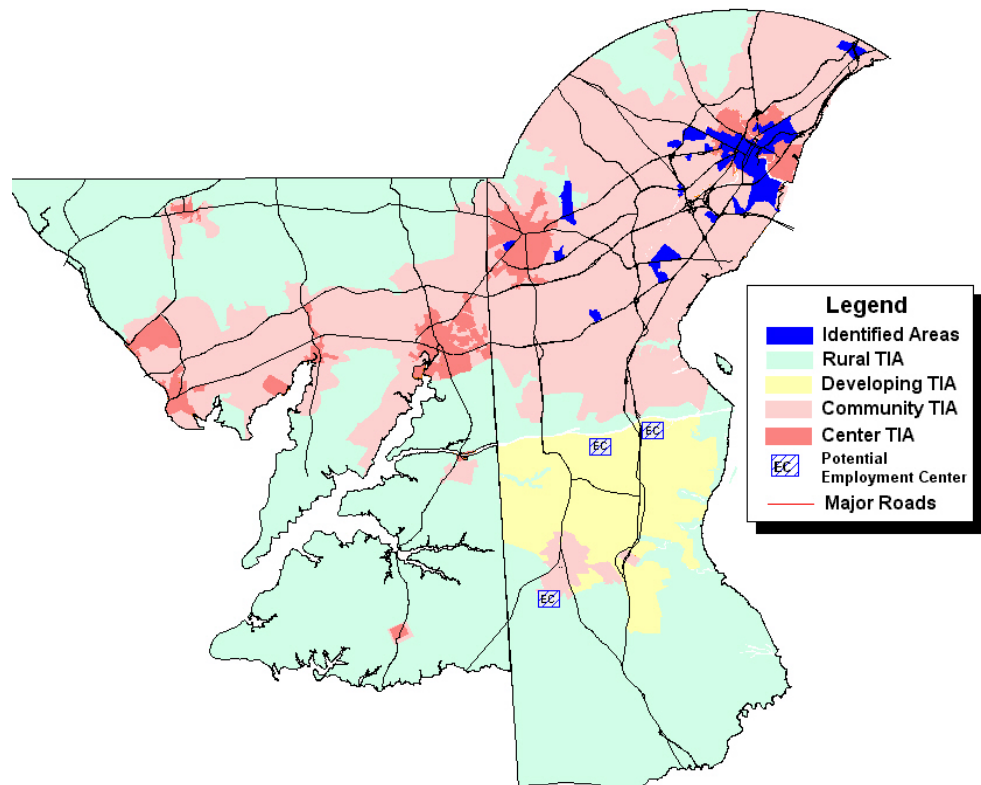
#### Evaluation of the 2025 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) serves as the mechanism to guide transportation policies and spending for the next 20 to 25 years. One of the roles of the RTP is to define what areas of the region will be prioritized for transportation investments. These areas are known as Transportation Investment Areas (TIAs). **Figure 5** shows the identified areas in relation to the TIAs.

**Figure 5: Identified Areas and TIA's**

1. **Centers** – These are areas with the highest concentrations of population and/or employment with well-established land uses and development patterns and opportunities for re-development. The transportation objective for these areas is to provide the greatest number of transportation options with an emphasis on public transportation, walking and bicycling, and to make existing and planned improvement as safe and efficient as possible.

2. **Community** - These are areas with well-established land uses and development patterns and where growth and development pressures are expected to be moderate. The transportation objective for these areas is to expand and improve transportation facilities and services, and to make each as safe and efficient as possible.



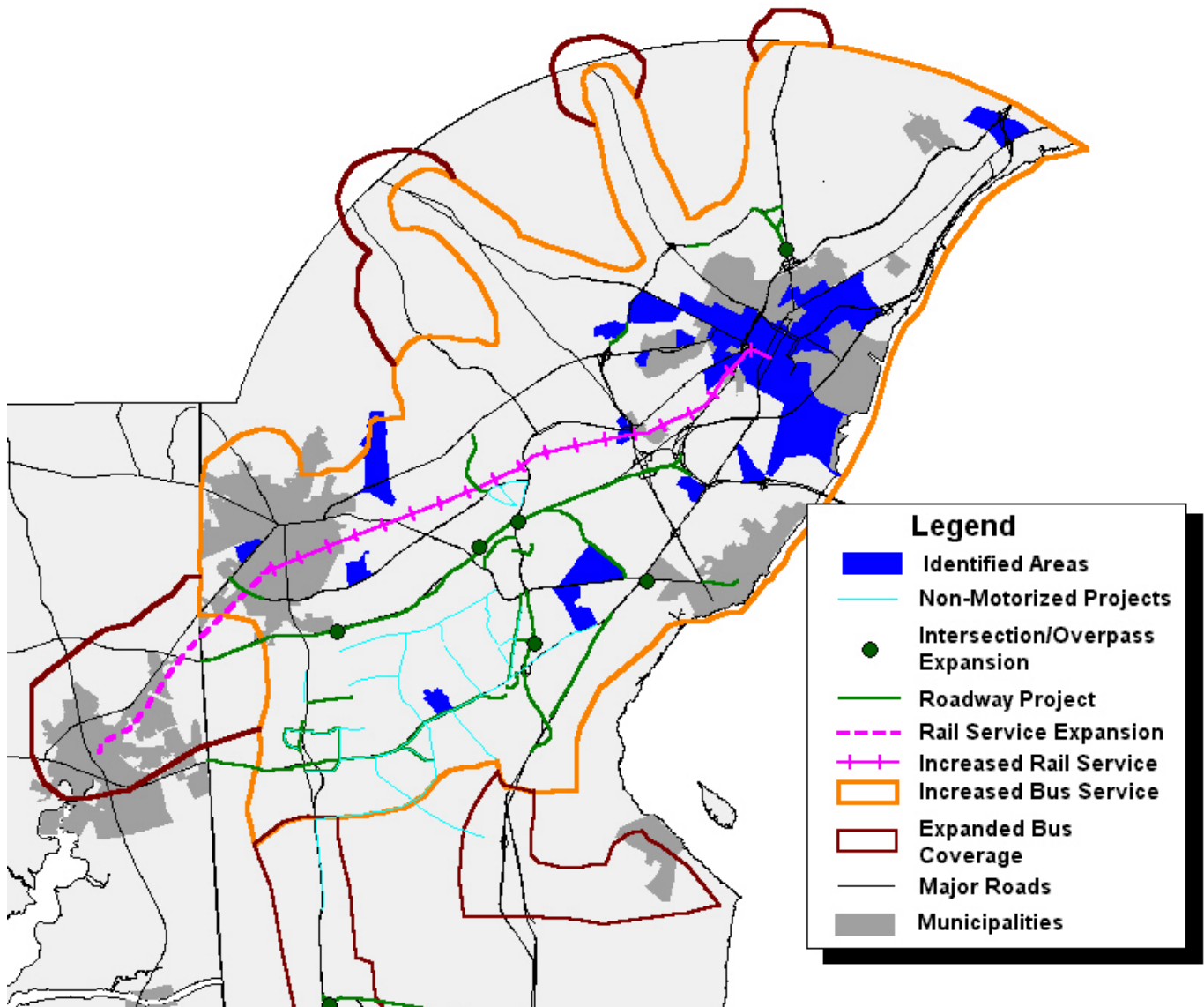
3. **Developing** - These are areas where land uses and development patterns are not yet set and where they continue to emerge. The transportation objective for these areas is to appropriately encourage deliberative growth and rational development through a planned set of phased investments, land use coordination, and policy actions consistent with zoning densities and designations.

4. **Rural** - These are rural areas where limited growth and development exist or are expected, where transportation facilities and services are considered adequate to meet needs, and where natural resources are to be preserved. The transportation objective of these areas is to preserve existing transportation facilities and services, and to manage the transportation system to support the preservation of the natural environment.

Of the 8,099 acres that make up the identified areas, 45.8% fall within the Centers Investment Area, 49.2% are in the Community Investment Area and 5.5% is part of the Rural Investment Area. The Center and Community investment areas are scheduled to receive the majority of the transportation funding of an estimated \$1.89 Billion over the next 20-25 years.

The RTP also lists major management and expansion projects planned for the next 25 years and indicates whether they will be implemented in the short-term or the long-term. **Figure 6** illustrates where these planned major projects will be located. Those projects planned within the identified areas are listed in **Table 3** (on page 12).

**Figure 6: Major Management and Expansion Projects Listed in the 2025 RTP**



**Table 3: Listing of Major Management and Expansion Projects within Identified Areas**

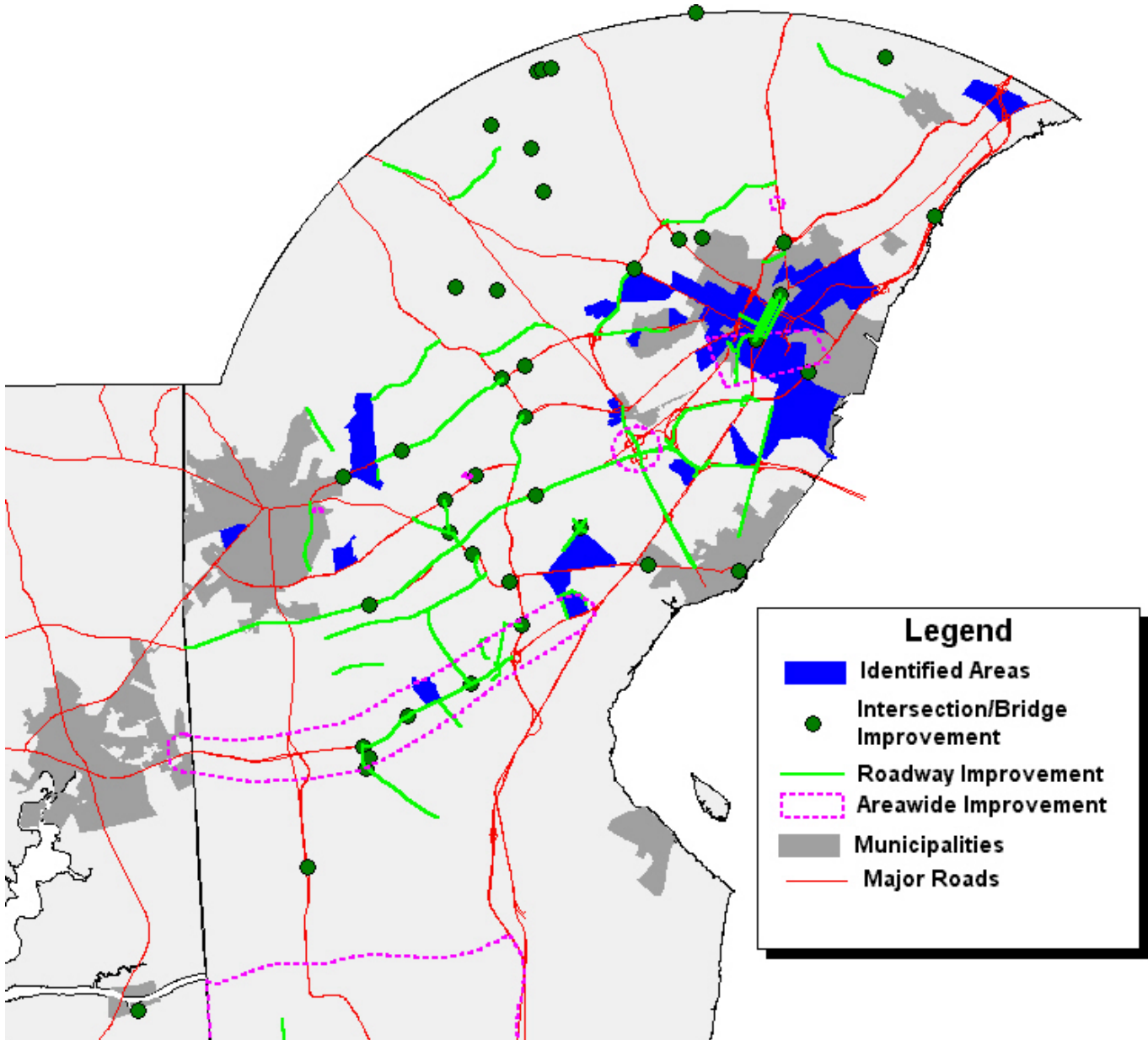
<b>System Management Projects</b>	<b>Project Origination</b>	<b>In-Service Date</b>
DE 2 Safety, Pedestrian and Transit improvements from the MD line to Delaware Avenue	Newark-Elkton Transportation Plan	2009
Wilmington Initiatives Plan	Wilmington Initiatives	2008
I-495, Christina Ave, Terminal Ave. realignment	DeIDOT Planning	2008
Port of Wilmington Circulation Study	DeIDOT Planning	2008
Wilmington Urban Corridor Plan Corridor 1 Lancaster/2nd Street/4th Street	Wilmington Initiatives	2025
Wilmington Urban Corridor Plan Corridor 2 Maryland Avenue/Broom Street	Wilmington Initiatives	2025
Wilmington Urban Corridor Plan Corridor 3 North Market Street	Wilmington Initiatives	2025
Wilmington Urban Corridor Plan Corridor 4 Concord Avenue/Vandever Avenue	Wilmington Initiatives	2025
Wilmington Urban Corridor Plan Corridor 5 Church Street/Spruce Street	Wilmington Initiatives	2025
Wilmington Urban Corridor Plan Corridor 6 East 4th Street/South Heald Street/New Castle Avenue	Wilmington Initiatives	2025
Interstate Access; Riverfront to I-95 & I-495	Wilmington Riverfront	2005
Sidewalk Additions on Market Street	Wilmington Riverfront	2004
Water Street East Improvements	Wilmington Riverfront	2004
Water Street West Improvements	Wilmington Riverfront	2004
West Street Connector	Wilmington Riverfront	2005
US202, Broom Street to I-95 Improvements	DeIDOT Planning	2005
DE 141 Safety Improvements - Limit access between DE 2 & DE 34 to create major arterial	DeIDOT Planning	2006
DE 141 from Jay Drive to Newport including I-95 Ramp at Commons Boulevard	DeIDOT Planning	2015
10 Regional Express Bus Routes – Statewide System	DTC Long Range Plan	2008
1,400+ New Park-and-Ride Spaces at Statewide Express Bus Stops	DTC Long Range Plan	2015
Timed-Transfer "Pulse" System With 10 Dedicated Transit Centers	DTC Long Range Plan	2015
New Evening and Weekend Bus Service, as Appropriate	DTC Long Range Plan	2025
25% More Metropolitan Area Bus Service	DTC Long Range Plan	2025
Improved Fare Collection (Stored Value Cards, "Smart" Cards, etc.)	DTC Long Range Plan	2025
Addition of 1,000+ New Parking Spaces at Existing Rail Stations	DTC Long Range Plan	2008
8 Additional Weekday Trains to Wilmington and Newark (Elkton)	DTC Long Range Plan	2015
New Weekend Rail Service to Newark (Elkton)	DTC Long Range Plan	2015
<b>System Expansion Projects</b>	<b>Project Origination</b>	<b>In-Service Date</b>
Port of Wilmington Rail Service Expansion	DeIDOT Planning	2015
Riverwalk VII Connection; Shipyard to Peterson Wildlife Preserve	Wilmington Riverfront	2009
Widening of US 40; Scotland Drive to Salem Church Road	US 40 20-year Plan	2025
Widening of US 40; Salem Church Road to Church Road	US 40 20-year Plan	2025
US 40 Sidepaths (DE 1 to US 13)	US 40 20-year Plan	2025
Third Lane on I-295 from DE 141 to DE 9, I-95 to US 13 Weave Elimination, Lighting	DeIDOT Planning	2007
US 13 - Tybouts Corner to Wilmington - Add additional capacity	DeIDOT Planning	2025
US 202 Rail Extension	DTC Long Range Plan	2025
SEPTA R2 Rail Extension from Newark to Elkton	DTC Long Range Plan	2015
Addition of Third Rail Line from Newark to Wilmington	DTC Long Range Plan	2025

The review shows that there are 37 major projects/initiatives that will affect the identified areas. Twelve of them are transit-oriented projects and twelve are roadway improvements (four of which add capacity and eight are roadway management projects aimed at easing congestion and improving the mobility through portions of the identified areas). In addition, two identified safety projects are programmed. Also there are projects that deal directly with the addition of sidewalks/sidepaths as well as ten that are multi-modal projects providing several improvements to road, transit and pedestrian facilities.

**Evaluation of the 2003-2005 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

The TIP lists all transportation projects that will be undertaken or issues that will be studied over the next 3 years. Due to its short timeframe, the TIP is an important document to look at as part of this analysis. **Figure 7** shows the location of projects in relation to the identified areas. **Table 4** (on page 14) refers to the specific projects that fall within these areas and their projected completion dates.

**Figure 7: 2003-2005 TIP Projects**



**Table 4: Projects from the 2003-2005 TIP within Identified Areas**

<b>System Preservation Projects</b>	<b>Project Origination</b>	<b>To be Completed</b>	<b>Planning Phase Completed?</b>
BR 575 on Market Street Bridge over Brandywine R	DelDOT Planning	FY 2003	YES
BR688 On South Market Street Over Christina River	DelDOT Planning	FY 2004	YES
BR 813 on I-495 over Christina River	DelDOT Planning	FY 2003	YES
Shellpot Rail Bridge Improvements	DelDOT Planning	FY 2003	YES
I-95 Rehabilitation Program, Viaduct to US 202	DelDOT Planning	FY 2003	YES
I-295 Roadway Improvements; Lighting/Weave Elimination	DelDOT Planning	FY 2004	YES
Market St/Walnut St. Bridges	Wilmington Riverfront	FY 2004	YES
Municipal Street Aid	DelDOT Planning	FY 2003	N/A
Transit Vehicle Replacement and Refurbishment*	DelDOT Planning	N/A	N/A
<b>System Management Projects</b>			
SR141, Kirkwood Hwy to SR 48	DelDOT Planning	FY 2003	YES
SR141/ SR 100 Intersection Improvements	DelDOT Planning	FY 2003	YES
Airport and Old Churchmans Road Intersection Improvements	DelDOT Planning	FY 2005	YES
Wilton Rd./Appleby Rd. Sidewalks	US 40 20-Year Plan	FY 2004	YES
US 40 Sidepaths, Church Road to Salem Church Road.	US 40 20-Year Plan	FY 2004	YES
US 40 Streetscaping	US 40 20-Year Plan	FY 2006-2008	YES
Kirkwood Highway, SR141 to SR 100, Elsmere	DelDOT Planning	FY 2003	YES
DEL TRAC Signalization*	Wilmington Initiatives	N/A	N/A
Interstate Access, Riverfront to I-95 & I-495	Wilmington Riverfront	N/A	NO
Water Street, Shipley St. to West St.	Wilmington Riverfront	FY 2004	YES
Browntown Pedsetrian Walkway	Wilmington Riverfront	N/A	YES
RiverwalkVII - from Shipyard through Peterson Preserve	Wilmington Riverfront	FY 2004	YES
West Street Connector - South Madison to Stadium Drive	Wilmington Riverfront	FY 2004	YES
Market Street, Phase II	Wilmington Traffic Calming	FY 2004	YES
US 202, broom Street to I-95	Wilmington Traffic Calming	FY 2005	YES
Orange Streets, MLK Boulevard to 13th Street	Wilmington Traffic Calming	FY 2004	YES
King Streets, MLK Boulevard to 13th Street	Wilmington Traffic Calming	FY 2004	YES
Walnut St, MLK to 16th Street	Wilmington Traffic Calming	FY 2004	YES
Fourth Street, Walnut Street to I95	Wilmington Traffic Calming	FY 2004	YES
<b>Planning Studies</b>			
I-295 Improvements; Thrid Lane Expansion Study	Del DOT Planning/DRBA	N/A	NO

\* Statewide projects with projects in Wilmington

There are no current expansion projects in the 2003-2005 TIP scheduled for the identified areas. Out of the twenty-nine projects that are scheduled, nine are projects that are actively preserving the existing infrastructure or improving the appearance and mobility of locations. Nineteen projects are designed to manage the existing infrastructure, increasing the efficiency of the network and/or increasing the number of transportation options available. Also, sixteen projects have come about as a result of the work done by four different working groups that have been charged with developing a plan of action in cooperation with local leadership and citizens on projects that will improve and enhance their community. There are two projects that are programmed in the TIP, but are still in the planning phase.

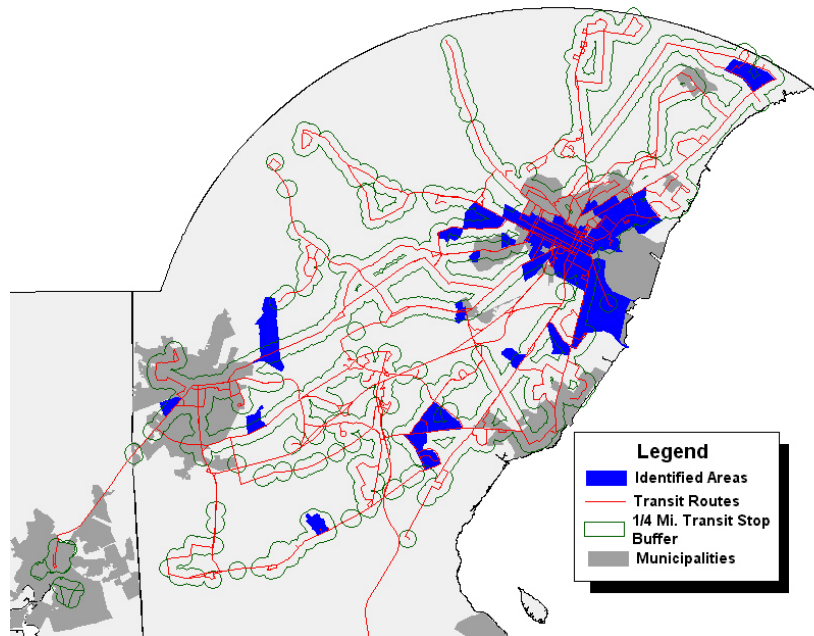


## Mobility and Congestion Evaluation

When analyzing mobility within the identified areas we must look at transit as well as roads since 60.3% of all who use transit as their primary mode to work live within the identified areas. One way to evaluate the transit network is to overlay the identified areas with the area that falls within a ¼ mile radius of each transit stop along Delaware Transit Corporation's (DTC) fixed route bus service. The results are depicted in **Figure 8**.

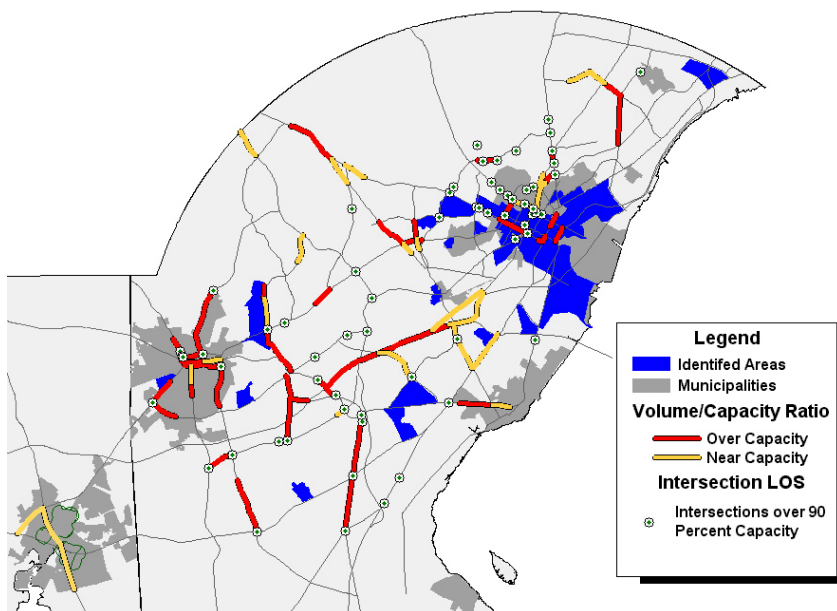
The analysis shows that 75.7% of the identified areas fall within ¼ mile of a transit stop. This, however, may not be the most accurate assessment of transit accessibility as there is no data to measure the actual walking distance to these stops. The true walking distance could be much longer. Further data will be collected as part of our Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) data collection task, which will gather information on pedestrian travel that can be used in various project analyses.

**Figure 8: Transit Access**



The 2002 Congestion Management System (CMS) is a tool developed by WILMAPCO to monitor congestion on our region's roadways and of our transit systems. It identifies areas that are experiencing significant amounts of congestion and screens for possible methods to mitigate the congestion. **Figure 9** shows where the CMS has identified road segments that are functioning at over 93% of their capacity and intersections above 90% capacity.

**Figure 9: Roadway Congestion**



In the WILMAPCO region there are 506 miles of major roadway segments (arterial or greater) out of which 60.5 miles (12.0%) fall within the identified areas. Out of the 70.42 miles of congested roadway segments recorded in the 2003 CMS, 9.1 miles fall within the identified areas (12.9%). By way of comparison, 12.1% of the segments in the remainder of the region are functioning at LOS E or worse. In addition 7 of the 15 corridors (contiguous stretches of congested roadway and intersections) identified by the CMS fall within an identified area. (For further details, consult the full CMS document.)

### **Plan Evaluation Conclusions**

While it appears that WILMAPCO's plans and programs do not adversely impact the identified areas, and, in fact, appear to improve the mobility of minority and low-income populations, this initial analysis may not tell the whole story. In many cases we cannot know until projects are better defined and designed whether or not their implementation may actually have negative consequences for some members of the minority and low-income communities. Because WILMAPCO is not an implementing agency, we must work with our partners to ensure that seemingly beneficial projects do not, in fact, create adverse impacts for some minority and low-income citizens when they are implemented.

In addition, this analysis does not measure whether benefits to minority and low-income populations are denied, reduced or significantly delayed. Are we providing the same level of investment to identified areas and are these investments beneficial to the resident populations or will the benefit be to those outside the identified areas (e.g., a widened corridor in an identified area may displace or disrupt the local residents but be a benefit to suburban commuters)? Are the mobility and quality of life concerns of the minority and low-income populations being addressed as quickly and as well as those of more affluent communities? And, finally, are projects in the identified areas designed and implemented with the same quality and attention to local concerns as those in other areas?

WILMAPCO's role in ensuring equitable benefits to minority and low-income populations is to carry out a comprehensive and inclusive public participation process that allows low income and minority citizens to be informed and involved in the transportation decisions that affect their lives. In the following section we discuss WILMAPCO's outreach activities to date.

## **Section 4: Evaluation of Public Involvement Processes**

### **Public Participation Activities**

WILMAPCO has an extensive outreach program. As one of our primary functions we provide the public with material and information to assist them in understanding the transportation planning and decision making process. We encourage them to get involved and help them make informed transportation decisions. WILMAPCO uses several public outreach mechanisms to engage communities and get them involved in our efforts.

A large portion of the minority and low-income populations live in the City of Wilmington. WILMAPCO has been a lead agency in the Wilmington Initiatives Program, which was started in the fall of 1995 by the City of Wilmington, WILMAPCO and DeIDOT. The purpose of this partnership was to develop a collaborative transportation investment strategy for the City in support of our Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) goal of investing in existing communities. An integrated public involvement program was designed to actively solicit the advice of the public in defining transportation improvements and, where possible, to incorporate their ideas into the design of the resulting projects.

An important component of the Wilmington Initiatives Program is the Steering Committee which is made up of representatives of: civic associations, residents, builders and developers, business owners, area elected officials, Transportation Management Association of Delaware, other interested groups, and members of the general public. The Steering Committee provides input to the study process at periodic meetings and review materials for public workshops and meetings prior to such events.

Seven Citywide public meetings provided the framework for the outreach program. Designed as open houses, these meetings allowed participants to learn more about the Wilmington Initiatives program while providing the forum for more direct discussion on individual projects. Where possible, meetings were scheduled to coincide with key project milestones.

To ensure that all residents had input into the program, individual outreach meetings tailored to specific audiences were scheduled throughout the city between these large-scale open houses. As the meetings progressed the input provided by the public was carefully integrated into the materials generated for the large-scale public workshops. Additionally, all of the issues raised were recorded in an issues log. This log provided an individual reference for the project team as well as for meeting participants. Over time, participants came to understand that what they said was being heard and acted upon which added credibility to both the outreach and decision-making process. It is also provided a resource for individuals who were new to the process and not sure where to begin or what they could reasonably request.

At the individual project level, ongoing support for downtown projects was provided through briefings to the Downtown Business Association and the Preservation Roundtable, along with related business and neighborhood interests. Additionally, preconstruction meetings for four projects were held to apprise businesses and communities about upcoming construction. It should be noted that in addition to meetings scheduled as part of the outreach program, information on the projects was also made available, where possible, at auxiliary meetings including the Mayor's Town Meetings, Transportation Day, Neighborhood Planning Council Meetings, and Transportation Summits.

To support the analysis being conducted as part of the Urban Corridor Studies section of the Wilmington Initiatives, a comprehensive series of meetings was held in each of the individual corridors. To effectively accommodate the schedules of participants, and provide an appropriate context for the individual discussions, meetings were held in local schools, churches and community

centers. Materials for these meetings included synthesis maps that provided participants with pertinent characteristics of the specific corridor including traffic volumes, pedestrian activity, accident rates, et cetera. Each of these meetings was highly interactive and encouraged participants to record their comments and suggestions directly on the maps. These comments, along with issues identified in general conversation, were then recorded in the project issues log. The meeting schedule for the Urban Corridors Studies was particularly aggressive and included eighteen outreach meetings.

To support the overall outreach program, materials were developed to both educate and update the public on the importance of these projects to the community. One such outreach material was a video entitled "Where is Mark?". This video, which tracked an individual's travels in and around the City, was produced to effectively highlight issues identified in the urban Corridor Studies, showcase projects resulting from the Downtown projects, highlight the components of Wilmington's transportation investment program, and provide an identity for the Wilmington Initiatives as a whole. The video was shown at project wide open houses, project briefings, and at neighborhood corridor meetings.

A series of pre-recorded public service announcements regarding upcoming construction projects were produced and aired on local radio stations. Each spot aired twice a day during morning and evening drive times as part of a series of agency sponsored traffic reports. The airing of each spot coincided with the start dates of construction projects. These announcements were also used as a vehicle to publicize public workshops.

In additions to the video and the pre-recorded public service announcements, a handout entitled "Transforming Transportation in Wilmington" was developed for open houses to educate the public on the components of transportation investments. This document also identified the goals of both the Downtown and Urban Corridor Studies projects, the sponsoring agencies, and provided information on how to get involved. This piece was formatted as a brochure and circulated at meetings held throughout the City.

To bridge the gap between individual project meetings and program wide meetings, a newsletter highlighting specific projects, upcoming construction and the importance of public participation was mailed to community leaders, elected officials, the business community, neighborhood associations and interested parties.

In addition to the above communication methods, monthly project status reports were distributed at all briefings, individual downtown neighborhood meetings, and the program wide public meetings.

The success of the Wilmington Initiatives program is due in no small part to the active participation of the public. Through sustained public outreach, we have drawn on the substantial expertise of the public and they in turn have learned that they not only have a voice, but a seat at the table when it comes to how public funds are spent. By consulting the public early and often, we have managed to build consensus for a program that is already yielding positive results for both the City and the region.

## **Section 5: Future Actions**

In this first phase of our Environmental Justice program we developed the data and the methodology necessary to identify the low income and minority populations in our region and we evaluated, with the tools currently available, our plans and programs to see if any of them led to adverse impacts on these populations. In addition, we continued our aggressive public outreach program, seeking to include all citizens in the decision making process.

The results of this document have shown us where our efforts need to be focused in order to reach out to all minority and low-income communities in our region. In the future, we will extend our public outreach efforts, develop performance measures to give us a view of our success in meeting Environmental Justice goals, and continue to apply existing tools and methods and develop new and enhanced methods of identifying and understanding Environmental Justice issues.

### **Improving and Focusing Public Outreach**

With our Public Advisory Committee (PAC), we will develop more strategies for engaging minority and low-income populations in transportation decision-making and strategies for reducing the participation barriers experienced by these groups. We will continue our efforts to enlist representatives of minority / low income groups to ensure that the PAC reflects the diversity of our current population. In addition to meetings and publications to inform minority and low-income communities about specific plans or projects being developed in their area, we need to develop materials to educate them about the transportation planning process and about options and services they may not be aware of, such as transit training or transportation enhancements for their communities. These efforts need to find new ways to reach out to these communities, ways that allow the greatest participation. New outreach efforts may mean giving presentations to church groups or at community centers or giving presentations in Spanish or other languages as needed.

We will also focus on working with the agencies that implement transportation projects in the region to provide highly focused environmental justice efforts when projects impact the identified populations. WILMAPCO will seek opportunities to focus agency activities on particular projects to ensure that environmental justice issues are addressed, and to further develop outreach approaches and methods.

Among WILMAPCO's services to the public are map production and other data needs upon request for various public meetings and other occasions. By utilizing this service, civic groups can receive material to aid in educating their local communities in order to help them make more informed decisions.

### **Developing Measures to Monitor Performance**

Addressing environmental justice issues is one of the objectives of WILMAPCO's Regional Transportation Plan, associated with our goal to improve our quality of life. WILMAPCO is currently developing the revised Annual Effectiveness Review of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which will use a performance measure based system to track progress in implementing the RTP and achieving the goals articulated in that plan. Using this method, WILMAPCO will be able to track, on an annual basis, how well we have addressed the need to eliminate activities that violate the goals of environmental justice.

### **Continuing Application and Further Development of Environmental Justice Analysis**

WILMAPCO produces three documents that will be important tools in our efforts to ensure that environmental justice principles are reflected in our regional transportation plans.

- The *Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)* contains a section devoted to Environmental Justice. Updating this document as required by federal legislation serves as a periodic review of the identified areas and allows for the consideration of new data. It also lists all projects that are being planned and

allows for issue identification and adequate time to develop public involvement plans once these projects move into the study phases of development.

- The *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* will be closely monitored and analyzed for Environmental Justice issues. To guide the development of the TIP, WILMAPCO has developed a TIP Project Prioritization Process. One of the evaluation elements relates to Environmental Justice. The score will reflect whether the project improves mobility and enhances the local environment in areas of minority and low-income residents. A positive score is given for projects that have a positive impact while a negative score is given to projects that would bring a negative impact to an area. In addition, the TIP process will further allow projects to be identified that affect an identified Environmental Justice area and that may require special outreach efforts.
- The *Congestion Management System (CMS)* will assess each year whether a corridor contains areas identified by the Environmental Justice Analysis. Planners can use this information as they determine which mitigation strategies would best apply to these corridors.

To further improve the identification of minority and low-income areas, WILMAPCO will work with our member agencies to review other criteria that may potentially be utilized to capture known “pockets” of minority and low-income populations. The current level of geography (the census block group) is the smallest geographic area for which the Census provides detailed data; however, it may not always capture smaller, isolated minority and low-income populations. In order for our analysis to remain objective we need to apply screening criteria uniformly and not rely on subjective, anecdotal evidence of impacted populations. Recognizing, however, that these populations do exist and should be the beneficiaries of this analysis as well, we will need to explore other resources and determine if there is other data available that can be utilized to objectively identify them.

WILMAPCO will also work to develop and apply data that will allow for the measuring of travel times between traffic analysis zones. Using data sets such as these, WILMAPCO can move to the next step of understanding not only the direct impacts of transportation projects, but gauge the transportation system performance as well. This next level of analysis will identify communities that are underserved, relative to other areas of the region, on transportation system performance, accessibility, and mobility. Where these areas are identified as Environmental Justice areas, work can begin with member agencies to address these transportation system performance deficiencies to ensure that the benefits of transportation services are provided in a fair and equitable manner for all citizens of the region.

Finally, in order to maximize the utility of our Environmental Justice analysis, WILMAPCO will identify others with whom we can share our results such as social service agencies, environmental agencies, and other transportation agencies, as well as local and regional governments. In so doing we will help to ensure that Environmental Justice is addressed as fully as possible in many realms thus improving the quality of life for all of the citizens of our region.



850 Library Avenue  
Suite 100  
Newark, DE 19711  
(302) 737-6205

Toll Free for Cecil County 888-808-7088  
Fax Number (302) 737-9584  
Website [www.wilmapco.org](http://www.wilmapco.org)  
Email Address [wilmapco@wilmapco.org](mailto:wilmapco@wilmapco.org)