

TRANSPORTER



WILMAPCO Council Endorses Southern NCC Master Plan Transportation Element



WILMAPCO worked with its project partners, New Castle County Department of Land Use, Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT), and the community to develop the Transportation Element of the Master Plan for Southern New Castle County.

The area south of the C&D Canal is one of New Castle County's fastest-growing. Since 1990, Southern New Castle County's total population has

increased from 19,000 to 55,000. Though Southern New Castle County has the largest amount of preserved land relative to other areas of the county, it has also experienced the most development, which is projected to continue as the area is estimated to add approximately 60,000 residents over the next 25 years.

Public involvement and consensus was a key component in developing the Master Plan. The planning process kicked off with an information

session on October 17, 2018 to provide residents a chance to voice their concerns. Two community-visioning workshops were then held on January 31 and March 13, 2019. Residents worked with the project team in small groups to prioritize the ideas from their group discussions. The results of the visioning sessions were used to develop goals and objectives for the study. The project team then came up with growth scenarios that were offered for feedback during a Public Meeting held on June 24, 2019. Growth scenarios allow planners to test how the transportation system will perform with low vs. high population and employment growth.

Another public workshop was then held on October 7, 2019 to present the three growth scenarios, which were revised based on the feedback from the previous public meetings. During the workshop, residents rated which of the scenarios best met their needs. *(Continued on page 2)*

October 2018 -----Spring / Summer 2019-----Fall / Winter 2020





A traffic analysis was then conducted on the scenarios to allow planners and residents the ability to better understand the impacts of these possible futures. Using the traffic analysis results, and Advisory Committee and community feedback, a preferred growth scenario was chosen and a draft was made available for public review on November 4, 2019.

Public feedback and technical analysis were used to develop recommended projects, which include intersection improvements along Route 13 and 71, traffic signal optimization at SR 299 (between Middletown and Odessa) and Boyd's Corner Road (between US 13 and Summit Bridge Road), monitoring of traffic in the Townsend area, and many more.

A draft of the Transportation Element of the Master Plan was released for public comment from August 10 through September 9, 2020, and was unanimously endorsed by the WILMAPCO Council on September 10, 2020. A draft of the full Master Plan was released for public comment on September 9, 2020.

To learn more, please visit www.wilmapco.org/snccmp.

WILMAPCO Adds New Projects to the TIP

WILMAPCO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funds the region's transportation projects, including roads, buses, walkways, and bike routes. Each September, WILMAPCO aligns its program with the planned spending by the Maryland and Delaware departments of transportation. With this realignment, the amended TIP includes almost \$3 billion in transportation investment — 32% more than the March 2019 document.

New projects include:

Delaware Statewide

- Rail Preservation Maintenance Program — maintenance to sustain and upgrade the condition of the rail system.
- Transportation Infrastructure Investment Fund — assistance for renovation, construction or other transportation improvements to attract new or expanded businesses.

City of Wilmington

- 12th Street Connector — create a connection from 12th Street and North East Boulevard to the 16th Street Bridge.
- East 7th Street — roundabout implementation, stormwater management improvement, and Riverwalk extension.
- Maryland Avenue and Monroe Street (Maryland Avenue/Monroe Street/MLK Area) — improve efficiency of the intersection, including multimodal improvements and a road diet (Maryland Avenue).

- South Wilmington Infrastructure — improvements associated with the Riverfront Business Improvement District.
- Wilmington DTC [Delaware Transit Corporation] Maintenance Building — improved DART maintenance and bus storage facility.

New Castle County

- Mill Creek Road and Stoney Batter Road Drainage Improvement.
- South College Avenue Gateway (Newark) — modify roadway from SR 4 to Main Street to include bike and pedestrian facilities, geometric improvements, lane configurations, signal coordination, etc.
- US 13 Median Barrier Replacement, SR 1 to Red Lion Road.
- US 13, from I-495 to PA State Line — bike, pedestrian, and streetscape improvements along US 13/Philadelphia Pike to complete Delaware portion of East Coast Greenway.

Cecil County (amended earlier in 2020)

- Belvidere Road Bridge Replacement — replace existing two-lane bridge with modern bridge that will connect to the new Belvidere Road/I-95 interchange.
- Cecil Transit Mid-County Bus Hub — new, centrally located transit hub to improve service for new and existing riders.

Learn more at www.wilmapco.org/tip.

2020 Strategies for State Policies and Spending

Adopted in July

On July 23, 2020 the update of the *Strategies for State Policies and Spending* (the *State Strategies*) was implemented by Governor John Carney's Executive Order 42, as recommended by the Cabinet Committee on State Planning Issues.

The Delaware Code requires that the *State Strategies* be updated every five years to reflect current policies and priorities among the State agencies and local-government comprehensive plans.

The Cabinet Committee on State Planning Issues is responsible for recommending the most desirable general pattern of land use within the state, the major circulation patterns,

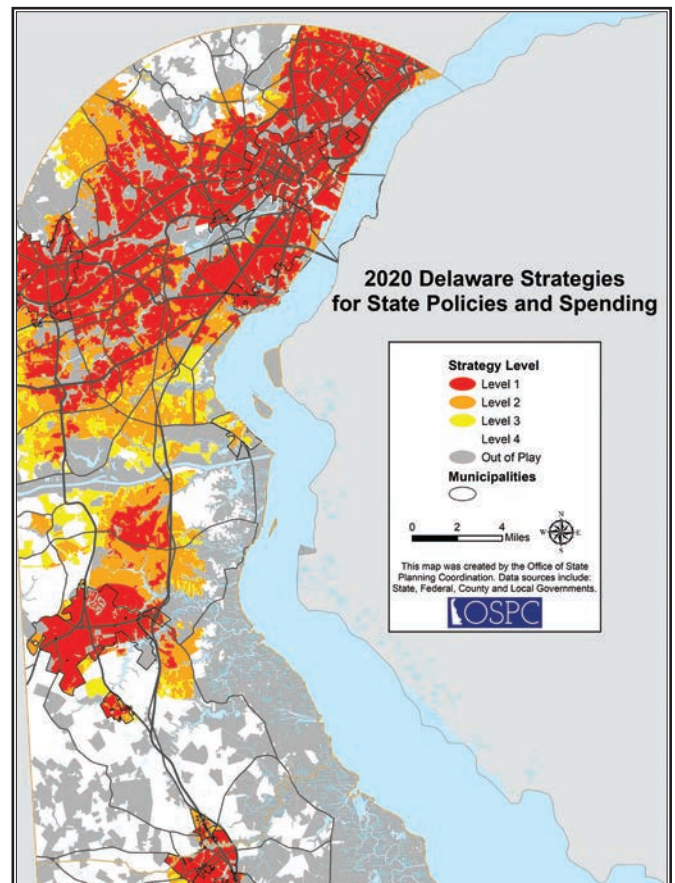
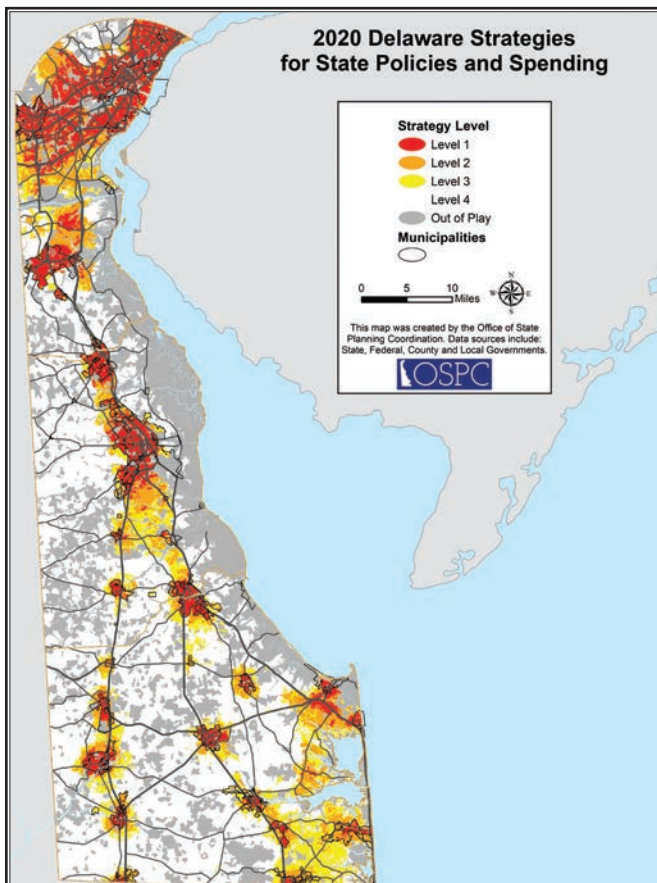
and the general locations of major public and private works and facilities. In order to do so, the committee prepares the *State Strategies* document and maps, which serve as the primary policy guide that summarizes the State's land use goals, policies, and strategies. The *State Strategies* direct state spending into investment levels that support the most efficient use of state resources, be they physical, fiscal, or natural.

The *State Strategies* comprise a document and a map series. The map series identifies areas of the state as one of four "Investment Levels." The State and its agencies have different policies and priorities for infrastructure investment, regulatory

programs, public services, and facilities in each of the Investment Levels that are fully described in the *State Strategies* document.

In addition to serving as a policy and spending guide for the State, the *State Strategies* are also an important guide for local comprehensive plans as well as planning for infrastructure and services. Of interest to WILMAPCO, the *State Strategies* and the Investment Levels maps guide transportation plans and investment policies for DelDOT as well as the metropolitan planning organizations.

To learn more, please visit <https://strategies.stateplanning.delaware.gov>.



Building Healthy Communities Along the Route 9 Corridor

WILMAPCO worked to secure nearly \$100,000 in funding from Healthy Communities Delaware (HCD) to advance and implement planning work along the Route 9 corridor in and south of Wilmington.

The Route 9 Master Plan's Monitoring Committee (R9MC) and the South Wilmington Planning Network (SWPN), both of which WILMAPCO helps lead, were each awarded nearly \$50,000 in funding. HCD aims to coordinate activities and resources to address the social determinants of health, such as housing, transportation, food, and social justice and equity.

The SWPN, in close partnership with the Southbridge Civic Association, will be refreshing Southbridge's 2006 Neighborhood Plan. The work will build off the recommendations identified in Wilmington's 2028 Comprehensive Plan, identifying action steps and priorities to realize them. Community input will be at the center of the effort, with resident-driven engagement proposed. The SWPN is currently seeking consultant support to begin the work.

Meanwhile, the R9MC, in close partnership with the New Castle



Healthy Communities Delaware
alignment. investment. impact.

Prevention Coalition, will use its funding to strengthen community infrastructure. The group will explore the feasibility of a Community Development Corporation (and/or other entities) to help drive the equitable land-development recommendations in the Master Plan, along with efforts to promote local workforce development, community beautification, and safe and affordable housing.

Both efforts, which are also being positioned to help speed recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, should be nearly completed by next summer. For more information, please visit www.swpn.org or www.wilmapco.org/route9.

Regional Air Emissions Sink During COVID-19 Lockdown

It has been a great year for air quality. Stay-at-home orders issued across mid-Atlantic states resulted in a 50% drop in traffic on major Delaware roads, as about half of the region's population stayed close to home. Air emissions subsequently sank sharply too.

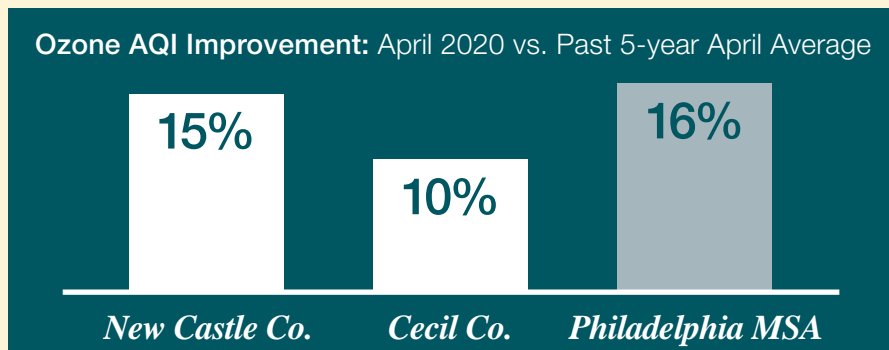
WILMAPCO examined Air Quality Index (AQI) values for ozone and fine particulate matter (PM2.5) during the month of April. This April,

average ozone AQI values improved by 15% in New Castle County, 10% in Cecil County, and 16% across the Philadelphia metropolitan region compared to the previous five-year April average. PM2.5 AQI average values were about on par with the previous five-year April average in New Castle County (-4%), but did see a 28% improvement in Cecil County and a 10% improvement across the Philadelphia metropolitan region.

Better AQI values helped push down the number of "bad air days." New Castle County, for example, only had one bad ozone air day through May 31, 2020. The previous best record during the past two decades was 10 bad air days.

Less vehicular traffic and emissions helped account for some of these improvements. Non-diesel light duty vehicles, the bulk of our traffic fleet, contribute to about a quarter of the region's ozone emissions. They account for less than 10% of its PM2.5 emissions.

WILMAPCO will continue to track the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the transportation sector. For more details about these air quality impacts, along with analyses of traffic, transit, and nonmotorized transportation impacts, visit www.wilmapco.org/cms.



Source: EPA, AirNow



Route 9 Paths Plan Seeks Public Feedback

WILMAPCO has begun public outreach efforts for the Route 9 Paths Plan. This plan will further develop the pedestrian and bicycle recommendations that were proposed in the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan.

A network of walking and biking paths will be proposed for the Route 9 corridor, including on-road connections, off-road connections between neighborhoods, and low-stress neighborhood streets with mixed traffic. This plan is being guided by the Health Subcommittee of the Route 9 Monitoring Committee.

Late last year, work on the Route 9 Paths Plan began with an analysis and update of the bicycle and pedestrian recommendations that were proposed in the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan, as well as other planning efforts in the area. This resulted in a map of recommendations that will be updated and refined as the plan progresses. Next, a variety of background data was collected, such as the percentage of people who walk and bike to

work, bus ridership, pedestrian and bike crashes, and DelDOT's Bike Level of Traffic Stress (Bike LTS) analysis for the area. This data was used to develop a draft prioritization process, which is a technical scoring process that determines which areas in the corridor would benefit the most from pedestrian and bicycle improvements. A "missing links" analysis was also developed, looking at specific sections of proposed recommendations that could make crucial connections in the pathway network.

In light of the pandemic, WILMAPCO has been working on remote public outreach strategies, in lieu of in-person outreach like public workshops. The primary method is through an online public survey, which is available on the Route 9 Paths Plan website. The survey asks questions about current walking and biking habits, specific areas of concern for walking and biking infrastructure in each neighborhood in the Route 9 corridor, recommendations

from the Master Plan, and how to prioritize projects based on location. Respondents who complete the survey can be entered into a drawing for a \$25 Visa gift card.

For those who are interested in the background data, an overview presentation is also available on the Route 9 Paths Plan website. This presentation serves as an alternative to presenting boards at a public workshop. It gives a more detailed introduction to the Paths Plan, as well as maps of background data, the draft prioritization process, Bike LTS, and the recommendations from previous plans. This presentation can help guide survey respondents to give the best possible feedback. A draft plan is expected by early spring 2021, after survey results have been reviewed.

For more information on the Route 9 Paths Plan and to take the public survey, visit www.wilmapco.org/route9pathsplan.

Community Weighs in on Alternatives for Governor Printz Boulevard



On a bus tour last November, WILMAPCO kicked off the Governor Printz Boulevard Corridor Study, seeking to improve multimodal mobility, safety, and travel choices while supporting sustainable economic development and enhanced neighborhood vitality.

In partnership with New Castle County Land Use, DelDOT, DART First State, Delaware Greenways, and community stakeholders, WILMAPCO is assessing the

feasibility of multimodal projects that will serve current and future transportation needs for roadway, transit, and nonmotorized travel.

The corridor extends 6.1 miles from U.S. 13, Philadelphia Pike, in north Claymont to the City of Wilmington line. Governor Printz is a four-lane minor arterial that parallels I-495 and has low traffic volumes, stormwater management issues, and few comfortable accommodations for people walking or bicycling. Overlooking the Delaware River, the corridor has a broad mix of residential, park, commercial, industrial, and institutional land uses. Opportunity Zones to promote economic revitalization have been designated in North Claymont and the greater City of Wilmington area, including Edgemoor.

The community shared their vision at a January 29 Public Workshop and through a February online survey. Major priorities include:

- Improving access to Fox Point State Park for people who walk and people who bike
- Improving facilities for people who walk and people who bike
- Maintaining capacity of the roadway
- Implementing a road diet

The planning team used the community priorities and technical analysis to identify five draft concepts and evaluation measures that were shared for public feedback at a September 21 public meeting and via an online survey



The alternative concepts presented were:

- 1A:** Maintains existing four traffic lanes and includes a shared bicycle/pedestrian path on the east (river) side of the street and a sidewalk on the west side.
- 1B:** Maintains existing four traffic lanes and includes a shared bicycle/pedestrian path on the west side of the street.
- 2A:** Converts the northbound travel lanes to a promenade for walking and bicycling.
- 2B:** Converts two southbound travel lanes to a promenade for walking and bicycling.
- 3:** Implements a road diet with a walking/bicycle path on both sides of the street.

Analysis of the concepts looks at how well they serve the needs of people driving, walking, biking, and using transit. Additional analysis looks at traffic, property, stormwater, and cost impacts.

Learn more at
www.wilmapco.org/governorprintz.

Study Kicks off Initiative for Additional Union Street Improvements



Located on the west side of Wilmington, Union Street serves as an important transportation corridor for the local residential and business community, while facilitating accessibility and connectivity to the surrounding region. Union Street is a one-way, southbound street and a main thoroughfare for many neighborhoods in Wilmington.

In addition, Union Street is a commercial corridor that serves the area as a “Main Street,” with many commercial establishments mixed with homes between Pennsylvania Avenue and Lancaster Avenue, and mainly residential areas between Lancaster Avenue and Sycamore Street.

The Union Street Rapid Reconfiguration project is a grassroots-led project to reduce Union Street from three lanes to two, add a bike lane, and convert the parallel parking on the east side to back-in diagonal parking. This project reduced travel speeds on Union Street and made crossing the street safer and more convenient for pedestrians, as well as facilitating bicycle use on the corridor. The parking change added more spaces for both businesses

and residents. Numerous information sessions and public outreach efforts were conducted prior to making any roadway changes. Since the roadway conversion, we have received many positive comments from community members in support of the project.

The Union Street Reconfiguration and Streetscape Improvement Study, currently ongoing, will be the vehicle that allows the Wilmington Initiatives Partnership (DeIDOT/ DTC, Wilmington, and WILMAPCO) to engage with the community to develop a plan for additional improvements that will transform Union Street into a safer, more walkable, more bikeable commercial center for the surrounding neighborhoods and the region.

To learn more, sign up for study updates, or share your thoughts, please visit www.wilmapco.org/wilmington-initiatives.



WILMINGTON AREA PLANNING COUNCIL

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WILMAPCO PUBLIC MEETINGS

For the latest information on meeting location or virtual login, please visit www.wilmapco.org
or email Dawn Voss at dvoss@wilmapco.org.

NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY
<i>November 5, 10 a.m.</i> Air Quality Subcommittee	<i>December 1, 3 p.m.</i> Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group	<i>January 7, 10 a.m.</i> Air Quality Subcommittee
<i>November 12, 10 a.m.</i> WILMAPCO Council	<i>December 3, 10 a.m.</i> Air Quality Subcommittee	<i>January 14, 10 a.m.</i> WILMAPCO Council
<i>November 19, 10 a.m.</i> Technical Advisory Committee	<i>December 14, 6 p.m.</i> Public Advisory Committee	<i>January 21, 10 a.m.</i> Technical Advisory Committee
	<i>December 17, 10 a.m.</i> Technical Advisory Committee	

DID YOU KNOW THAT **WILMAPCO** HAS A MONTHLY **E-NEWSLETTER**?

SIGN UP FOR WILMAPCO'S E-NEWS AT WWW.WILMAPCO.ORG.