

FALL 2014

Quarterly newsletter of the Wilmington Area Planning Council

TRANSPORTER

WILMAPCO

WILMAPCO Report Recommends Improvements to Public Transportation in Wilmington

The Wilmington Transit Moving Forward Report is now available for public review. The project is taking a fresh look at the transit operations in and around Downtown Wilmington. The report identifies a vision and priorities for implementation of recommendations for public transportation in Wilmington. In order to provide the public an opportunity to review the report and provide feedback, an Open House Public Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 23 at the Wilmington Public Library, across from Rodney Square, in Downtown Wilmington. Attendees are welcome to stop by anytime between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m.

The Wilmington Transit Moving Forward Report is the result of a nine-month effort to identify a collective vision for the future of transit in the Wilmington area. The report was developed through an Advisory Group representing a broad spectrum of community groups, businesses, public agencies, transit riders, and other stakeholders. The report is defined by a series of "Principles" and "Opportunities," many of which are recommended for short-term implementation (defined as 2015 and 2016 by the report), including: providing audible announcements at bus stops and on buses, providing real-time bus arrival information at stops, eliminating barriers impeding pedestrian access to transit locations and shortening some downtown routes.

During the Public Meeting, Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC) will present preliminary proposals for the January DART Service Changes. Members of



the public will have the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the proposed changes to individual routes in advance of the Service Change Public Hearings that will be held in October. The DART Service Change Proposals will be linked to the Principles and Opportunities from the Wilmington Transit Moving Forward Report.

To view the report, please visit www.wilmapco.org/wilmtransitmovingforward.

OPEN HOUSE PUBLIC MEETING

September 23, 2014
4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Wilmington Public Library
across from Rodney Square in
Downtown Wilmington.

WILMINGTON TRANSIT
MOVING FORWARD



2014 Delmarva Freight Summit

The 4th annual Delmarva Freight Summit was held on Aug. 6, 2014, at the Dover Downs Hotel. The summit was hosted by the Delaware, Maryland and Virginia Departments of Transportation, along with WILMAPCO and the Dover/Kent MPO. The half-day summit brought together both public and private sector freight professionals to focus on the needs and interests of freight movement across the Delmarva Peninsula. The event featured numerous speakers, including welcoming remarks from Shailen Bhatt, Delaware Secretary of Transportation, and Tigist Zegeye, WILMAPCO's Executive Director.

Other speakers included:

- Marc Dixon, Federal Highway Administration, who discussed the current federal transportation legislation (MAP-21) and its increased focus on freight.
- Lee Derrickson, Executive Director, Delaware Motor Transport Association (DMTA), who spoke about the transportation challenges faced by the agribusiness industry.
- Rudy Husband, Norfolk Southern Railroad, who detailed recent increases in crude oil movement by rail and the changes being made

in an effort to improve its safe transportation.

- Chad Reece, Whitman, Requardt and Associates, who presented the Delmarva Freight Study, a multi-state effort to develop a comprehensive, multi-modal evaluation of the freight transportation system and its operations along the Delmarva Peninsula.

The Delaware Department of Transportation, in coordination with WILMAPCO, the Maryland and Virginia Departments of Transportation, and numerous

other agencies, have also begun work on a regional freight plan for the Delmarva Peninsula. The overall goals of the plan are to comprehensively evaluate the freight transportation system and related operations on the Peninsula, to determine its effect on the environment and economic development and to identify priorities for relevant investment and regulation changes.

To view the summit presentations or learn more about the freight plan, please visit www.wilmapco.org/delmarva.



WILMAPCO Annual Public Opinion Survey

Results Are In

Each year, WILMAPCO conducts a telephone survey of New Castle and Cecil County residents to gauge the region's thoughts and priorities regarding transportation. As in previous years surveyed, residents consider transportation one of the most critical issues facing the region (see chart below) with congestion being the worst transportation issue for New Castle residents. Cecil County residents were most concerned with their limited access to public transportation.

Over half of respondents feel they have "very few" travel options from which to choose, and when a series of seven items were read to respondents, two were rated as most critical by about 50% or more of respondents in both counties. These included cleaning up the environment (58% overall) and preserving open space and farmland (49% overall).

Employed respondents were asked how they usually travel to work each day. Overall, eight in 10 workers drive alone to work each day. Respondents were also asked to rate the effectiveness of various transportation improvements. Traffic signal timing

and land-use planning were perceived to have the most impact, with over half of respondents rating these as "very effective" in reducing congestion.

Overall, respondents feel there has not been enough coordination between land-use development and planning, which has declined over the years, from 79% in 2006 to 73% in 2010, and 66% in 2014. Those interviewed prioritized improving existing transportation facilities (63%) over constructing new facilities in developing areas (37%).

Public Opinion Survey participants were asked whether they supported various ways to fund transportation projects and more than 60% of respondents from both counties supported delaying or eliminating some projects to save money. The least popular options were raising tolls and raising gas taxes. Raising tolls was less popular in Cecil County (15% support in 2014) than in New Castle County (35% in 2014).

About six in 10 Cecil County respondents and almost half (48%) of New Castle County respondents had not used any form of transit in the past year. This is similar to what had been

observed in previous surveys. The most commonly used public transportation options were DART buses, AMTRAK and SEPTA trains.

Those interviewed were asked their opinions regarding pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Just over half of New Castle County respondents (52%) felt there are adequate and safe pedestrian facilities, compared to only 16% of Cecil County respondents, and about four in 10 in both counties said they do not bicycle due to reasons other than safety, including medical issues, age and not owning a bike. Only 7% of those in Cecil County and 22% of those in New Castle County said there are adequate bike routes or lanes.

Most respondents (66%) had not heard of WILMAPCO before taking the survey, about the same proportion as in 2006 and 2010. About one third said they would be interested in receiving free newsletters or public meeting announcements from WILMAPCO.

To view the results of WILMAPCO's Public Opinion Survey, please visit www.wilmapco.org/survey-results.

Looking ahead, what do you think will be the most critical issue facing the region in the next 5 to 10 years?	New Castle County			Cecil County		
	2006	2010	2014	2006	2010	2014
The economy	9%	25%	23%	3%	20%	27%
Growth/development	24%	16%	17%	35%	16%	21%
Transportation	37%	27%	28%	22%	22%	34%
Environment	2%	4%	8%	3%	3%	4%
Open space and farmland	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%	3%
Public education	5%	2%	6%	2%	1%	4%
Crime	2%	1%	6%	1%	2%	3%
Affordable housing	3%	0%	2%	2%	0%	0%
Other	37%	39%	8%	43%	43%	8%

How do you usually travel to work each day?	New Castle County			Cecil County		
	2006	2010	2014	2006	2010	2014
Drive alone	–	84%	82%	–	86%	64%
Carpool/ride with others	–	9%	4%	–	8%	12%
Take a bus	–	3%	6%	–	1%	0%
Take a train	–	2%	1%	–	1%	5%
Walk	–	3%	11%	–	2%	3%
Bicycle	–	3%	3%	–	2%	3%
Work at home	–	4%	9%	–	6%	21%

WILMAPCO Identifies “Hotspots” for Electric Vehicle Public Charging

Electric vehicles (EVs) have been rolling along North American roads for over 150 years. Prior to World War I, they were widely used as private vehicles on the continent. However, the arrival of more effective and mass-produced versions of their gasoline-powered cousins spelled doom for EVs. Sporadic attempts to revive the EV market during the past century have failed, until recently.

More than 200,000 plug-in vehicles have been sold in the United States over the past several years. Improving technology and increasing gasoline costs have spurred this trend. EVs are part of the solution to reducing our

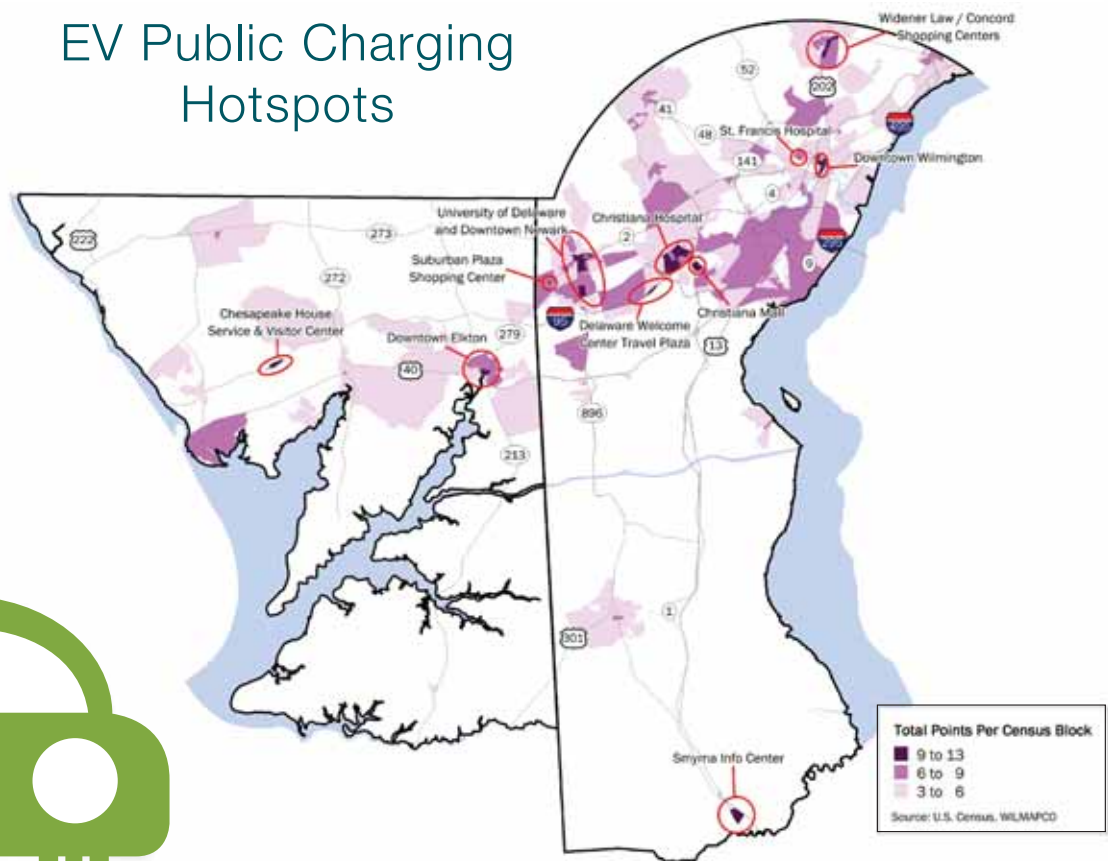
greenhouse gas emissions, in which one third are released by the transportation sector. Indeed, EV owners often cite their desire to reduce their individual carbon footprint as a motivating factor for their purchase. More widespread adoption of EVs has been hindered by their high cost, unfamiliarity with the technology and limited range.

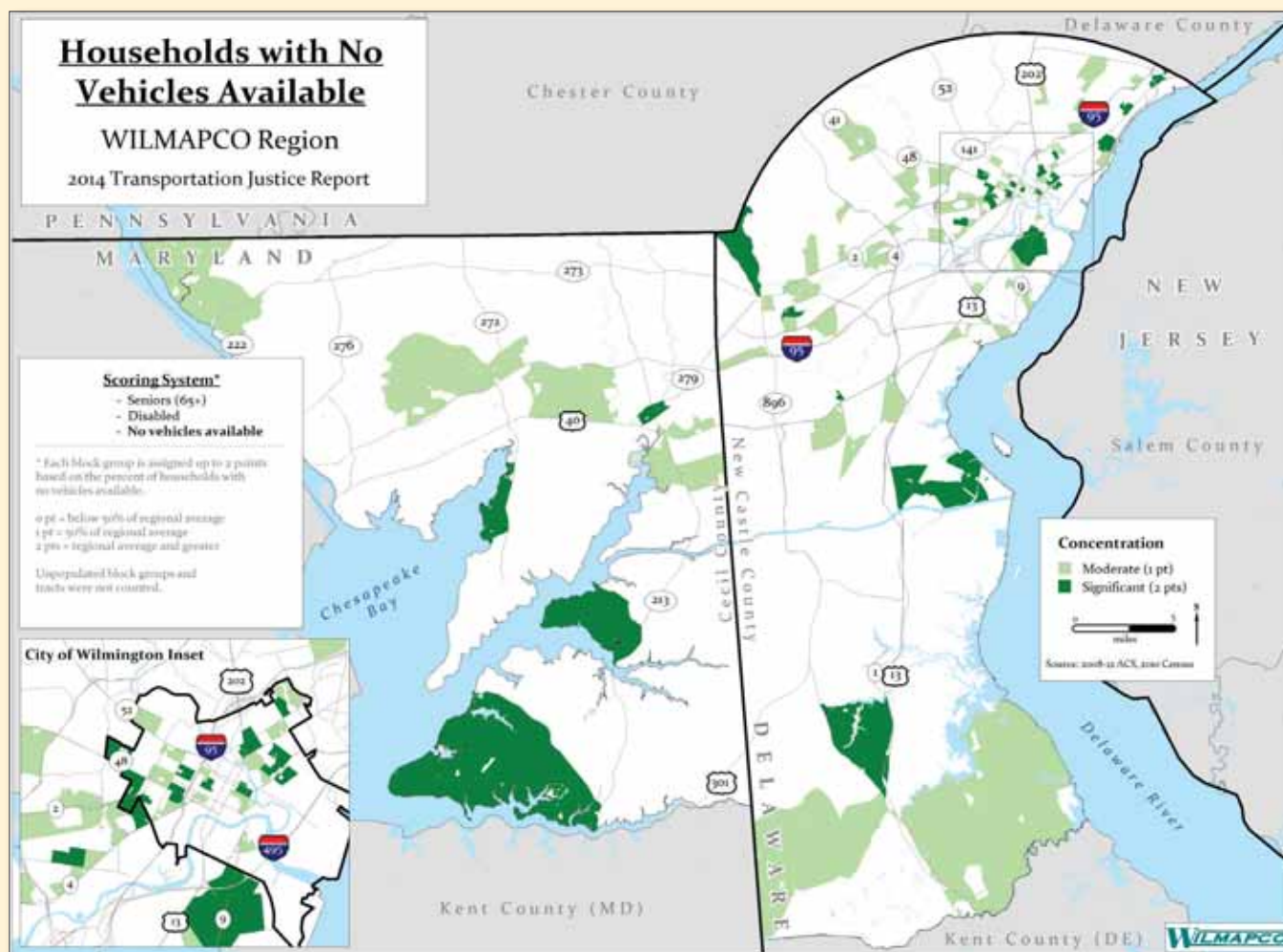
In an effort to help ease the “range anxiety,” WILMAPCO identified some good locations to install public recharging stations. The idea is to support the development of a skeleton of an EV charging network, so EV motorists can extend their trips when the charge they made at home runs out.

We scored locations on an index, considering their ability and desirability to host a public charging station. A dozen “hotspot” locations were identified – such as the Delaware Welcome Center on I-95, the University of Delaware and the Christiana Mall. On the ground, WILMAPCO staff has supported the towns of Chesapeake City and Elkton to find funding for EV charging stations in their downtowns.

To view the report, please visit www.wilmapco.org/data/DataReport12_EV.pdf.

EV Public Charging Hotspots





Transportation Justice Telephone Survey

Do households without vehicles, the disabled and seniors (age 65+) see the transportation system differently than the average resident? Do they have different ideas for which projects to fund? Where are the gaps in service for these groups, if any? These questions motivated a recent public opinion survey, specific to these three groups – classified collectively as Transportation Justice (TJ) populations. The survey took place by telephone in conjunction with our 2014 Public Opinion Survey, featured in this issue.

Overall, we found that our TJ groups are more likely to have some trouble using the transportation system. More than one-third of those with disabilities

and non-disabled seniors report their transportation needs are not met well, compared to only about a quarter of the average population. Accessing specific services, such as grocery stores, medical care, and social activities, was at least somewhat difficult for about half of no vehicle households and the disabled, but only about 10% of non-disabled seniors.

TJ groups and the general population were in agreement that maintaining and repairing the existing system, along with using technology to improve it, ought to be the two highest funding priorities. TJ groups were, however, less inclined than average to view widening existing highways as “very effective” in

reducing congestion. Instead, they felt improving public bus services would yield more effective results.

In many other areas, TJ groups were in agreement with the average resident. For example, both looked with equal favorability (about 80% of respondents) on mixed-use development and revising zoning codes to support alternative transportation.

The results of the survey will help inform our 2014 TJ Report, which will consider the transportation needs and gaps of these populations. The report is due for release by January 2015.

To learn more about TJ and our other social justice initiatives, please visit www.wilmapco.org/ej.



WILMAPCO Invites **Public Comments** on Proposed Transportation Projects

Proposed amendments to the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) were available for public comment from July 21 through Sept. 10, and voted on by Council on Sept. 11. This proposal will revise the TIP to reflect available Delaware funding from the FY 2015 Delaware Bond Bill. The TIP is a \$1.7 billion, four-year listing of expected priority transportation projects. The proposal has a six percent decrease in funds compared to the previous TIP.

Due to the decrease in funds and funding priorities, the following projects will have all or most of their funding removed:

- City of New Castle Intersections: Realigns intersections to reduce traffic cutting through historic New Castle and increase pedestrian access across Route 9.
- Churchmans Crossing Fairplay Station Parking: Expands train station parking.
- Possum Park Road at Old Possum Park Intersections: Includes constructing separate left-turn lanes along Possum Park Road at St. Regis Drive and at the relocated Old Possum Park Road.
- SR 9 between 3rd Street and Heald Street: restructuring and multimodal improvements.
- Tyler McConnell Bridge: Reconstruct the bridge with four lanes to eliminate a pinch point in the SR 141 corridor.
- US 13 between Duck Creek and SR 1: Improvements are drawn from the Town of Smyrna's land use and transportation master plan.
- Wilmington improvements on 4th and Walnut Streets: Resurfacing, traffic flow upgrades, streetscaping, and pedestrian improvements.
- Wilmington Transit Hub: New facilities to alleviate Rodney Square crowding, provide bus layover facilities, and facilitate passenger transfers.
- SR 4 between Elkton Road and South College Avenue.
- New Christina River Bridge connecting US 13 to the Wilmington Riverfront.
- SR 72 widening including bike lanes and sidewalks between McCoy Road and SR 71.
- I-295 westbound from US 13 to I-95 rehabilitation in partnership with Delaware River and Bay Authority.
- SR 1 widening and resurfacing from Roth Bridge to SR 273.
- Southern New Castle County local road improvements on Cedar Lane Road and Jamison Corner Road with drainage improvements, intersection upgrades, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- Train station improvements at Claymont and Newark SEPTA stations.

Other projects will be stripped of construction funds including:

For more info on the TIP, please visit www.wilmapco.org/tip.

WILMAPCO Evaluates Its Public Outreach Efforts

In conjunction with the update of our Regional Transportation Plan, we have carried out an evaluation of our public outreach activities. In order to determine the effectiveness of our outreach, we examine several performance measures and set goals for each. Measures include the number of people requesting WILMAPCO newsletters and E-news, the number of people attending WILMAPCO events, the number of public comments received on draft documents, the geographic distribution of newsletter subscribers (see map to the right), familiarity with WILMAPCO in its annual Public Opinion Survey, frequency of media mentions and many more.

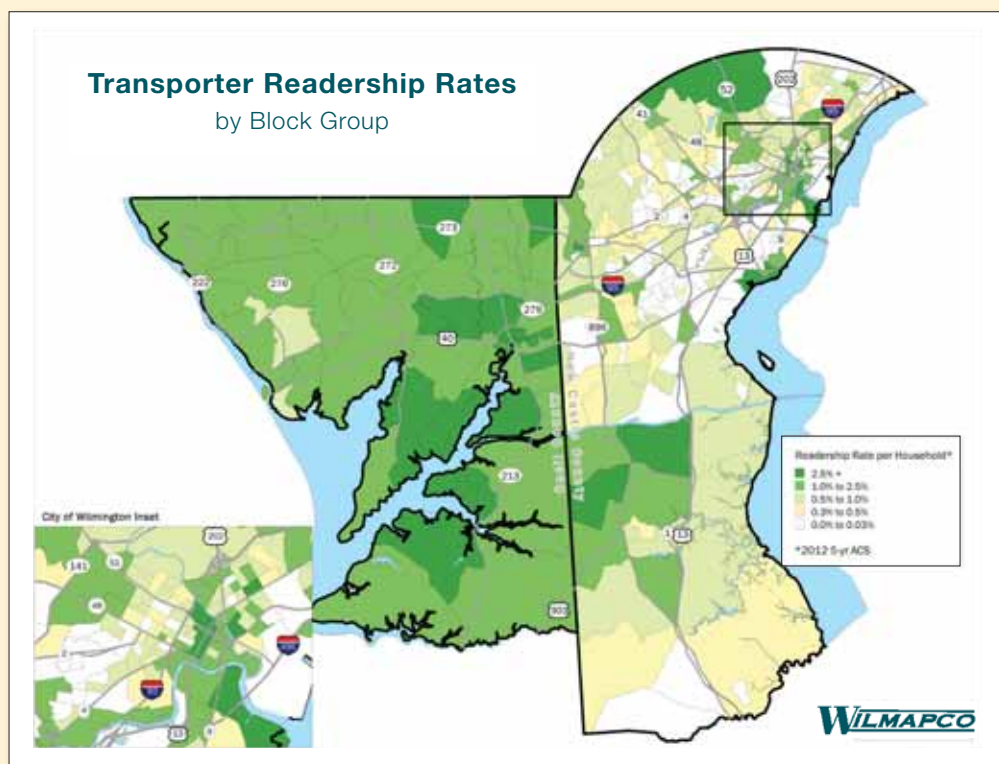
This year we saw a 13 percent increase in the number of names and addresses in our database and a 16% increase in Transporter Newsletter subscribers, well outpacing our goal of a three to five percent increase of each. Many of these new signups came from community events and festivals where we participated, including Southbridge Weekend,

the Elkton Fall Festival, Middletown Peach Festival, Newark Community Day and many more. We participated in 10 festivals, spoke at 17 events, and distributed nearly 2,000 incentive items, including blinking safety lights, pens, key chains and magnets in 2013.

Overall, we achieved 21 of the 29 outreach targets. Targets we did not meet include increasing familiarity with WILMAPCO in our Public Opinion Survey (8% decrease since

2010), having a quorum of Public Advisory Committee members in attendance at all meetings (two meetings were held without a quorum) and accomplishing at least 80% of the 29 outreach targets (missed it by two).

To view the complete results of WILMAPCO's Public Outreach Evaluation, please visit www.wilmapco.org/ppp.



WILMAPCO thanks former Elkton **Mayor Joseph Fisona** for serving as chairman of WILMAPCO's Council from 2011 through 2014.

We wish Mr. Fisona all the best in his future endeavors.

WILMINGTON AREA PLANNING COUNCIL

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WILMAPCO PUBLIC MEETINGS

Unless specified, meetings will be held at WILMAPCO, 850 Library Avenue, Suite 100, Newark, Delaware. Your participation at these meetings is appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact us at (302) 737-6205, or toll free from Cecil County at (888) 808-7088. During inclement weather, please call to verify meetings.

OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group <i>October 7, 3 p.m.</i>	Air Quality Subcommittee <i>November 13, 10 a.m.</i>	Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group <i>December 2, 3 p.m.</i>
Air Quality Subcommittee <i>October 9, 10 a.m.</i>	WILMAPCO Council <i>November 13, 6:30 p.m.</i>	Air Quality Subcommittee <i>December 11, 10 a.m.</i>
Technical Advisory Committee <i>October 16, 10 a.m.</i>	Technical Advisory Committee <i>November 20, 10 a.m.</i>	Public Advisory Committee <i>December 15, 7 p.m.</i>
Public Advisory Committee <i>October 20, 7 p.m.</i>		Technical Advisory Committee <i>December 18, 10 a.m.</i>

Review Recommendations for Improvements to Public Transportation in Wilmington during a Public Meeting on Tuesday, September 23. Stop by anytime between 4 & 7 p.m. at Wilmington Public Library (across from Rodney Square). For information, visit www.wilmapco.org/wilmtransitmoveforward.