

SUMMER 2014

Quarterly newsletter of the Wilmington Area Planning Council
TRANSPORTER

WILMAPCO

2040 Regional Transportation Plan Update

Every four years, WILMAPCO is required to update its regional long-range transportation plan (RTP) to reflect changing conditions such as new project priorities, demographic changes and anticipated funding. The 2040 RTP was last updated in 2011. The 2014 Regional Progress Report assesses accomplishments and challenges toward meeting our goals and objectives of the RTP.

We have made good progress on half of the actions in the RTP. Notably, technological advances in cars and on the highways where they operate have led to a safer and cleaner transportation system. Though still the leading cause of unintentional death

in the United States, vehicle crashes have dropped over the past decade. Cleaner engines and fuels have also helped to slash vehicle emissions in regulated pollutants, in spite of rising vehicle travel.

Challenges identified in the Progress Report included anticipated growth in places without existing infrastructure, continued growth in trips by driving alone, a decline in the percentage of population within walking distance to public transit, ensuring affordable transportation choices and identifying transportation funding.

Currently, WILMAPCO is reviewing state, county and local plans to update our list of projects. These include the “financially reasonable projects” for which funding can be identified, and our longer “wish list” or aspirations list. A preliminary list has been identified and we will test to ensure that they pass air quality standards. We will also seek additional feedback on the draft projects from community groups and local government.

WILMAPCO staff is also examining how the region may develop over the next 25 years based upon projected population and employment growth. Where and how we



grow impacts demand for driving, public transit, walking and bicycling. Therefore, the RTP will consider alternative land use and transportation futures and their impacts on achieving our goals.

Throughout the summer, look for WILMAPCO at area festivals and events where we will be seeking input from the community. This summer, WILMAPCO also conducted a public opinion survey to gauge regional priorities and concerns. Preliminary recommendations for the RTP will be unveiled at WILMAPCO’s Our Town event on Sept. 3, 2014, at 4 p.m. at Embassy Suites Hotel in Newark, Del.

For more information, please visit www.wilmapco.org/rtp.



Air Quality Partnership Unveils New Mascot

At Wilmington's Earth Day Celebration in Rodney Square on April 22, the Air Quality Partnership of Delaware (AQP) unveiled its newest educational tool. Tropo, a life-sized mascot named for the troposphere, will educate kids and adults about air quality and how it can be improved. Tropo, who hails from the planet Sora, will be visiting schools and community events throughout the state highlighting air quality, the health effects of poor air quality and the simple steps that everyone can take to improve the air that we breathe.

The event also highlighted Air Quality Awareness Week, April 28 through May 3, a week devoted to educating Delawareans on local air quality and encouraging voluntary actions to minimize pollution. Held every year at the beginning of air quality action season, Air Quality Awareness Week brings attention to the impacts of ground-level ozone and particulate pollution for people susceptible to the impacts of air pollution – especially young children, seniors and people with asthma.

In support of Air Quality Awareness week and on behalf of Mayor Dennis P. Williams, the City of Wilmington's Communications Director Alexandra Coppadge read an Air Quality Proclamation.

"Earth Day and Air Quality Awareness Week are more than an annual environmental

wake-up call, they are opportunities for the community to recognize the earth's many valuable natural resources, promote environmental education and encourage citizens to actively play a role in minimizing pollution," Ms. Coppadge said. "Air Quality Awareness Week presents the opportunity for people to check air quality forecasts, learn about what causes poor air quality and determine what they can do to help make our air cleaner."

DNREC Secretary Collin O'Mara also read an Air Quality Awareness Week Proclamation from Delaware Gov. Jack Markell that urges Delawareans to do their share on Air Quality Awareness Week and throughout the year to help combat air pollution and help make our air cleaner and healthier to breathe.

During Air Quality Awareness Week, the AQP in partnership with RideShare Delaware encouraged state residents to pledge to reduce air pollution for just one day during the week by walking, biking, carpooling or riding public transit instead of driving a vehicle. More than 200 participated in the pledge. According to DNREC's Division of Air Quality, by walking or biking one mile, instead of driving a car, nearly one pound of carbon dioxide emissions is eliminated. If every adult Delawarean pledged to walk or bike

just one day during the week, approximately 15 million pounds of pollution would be reduced from our air.

More information on air quality awareness and Tropo can be found at the Air Quality Partnership of Delaware's website at www.wilmapco.org/aqp.



The Chesapeake Connector Economic Benefits Study

In May, the WILMAPCO Council voted to endorse the recently completed Chesapeake Connector Economic Benefits Study. The purpose of this report is to revisit previous studies and findings, while also considering recent developments in the region to determine the most feasible engineering and operational recommendations for this project. The Chesapeake Connector rail project would relieve a bottleneck on the Amtrak Northeast Corridor (NEC) between the Bacon and Prince Interlockings, a 6.3-mile two-track section of the NEC between Perryville, Md., and North East, Md. The addition of a third track in this location would both alleviate the bottleneck and improve a safety concern for both freight and passenger rail services. Construction of the Chesapeake Connector has the potential to benefit multiple public and private partners. This project has been a recognized regional need for more than a decade, but has taken on increased importance as freight, intercity and commuter traffic has continued to increase, putting additional pressure on this 100-year-old network.

Recent developments include: changes at the nearby ports (Baltimore and Wilmington); Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) relocations to the Aberdeen Proving Ground that are expanding the number of households within the region and the potential demand for commuter rail service; future potential for high speed rail in the corridor; shifting freight demand in the region; and the proposed reconstruction of the Susquehanna River NEC Bridge. The analysis developed in this report assesses the benefits of the Chesapeake Connector project as an independent project.

The study suggests two design alternatives to be considered and includes cost estimates for both options. An extensive analysis of freight movements within the region is included to explain the impact of this project on the regional economy. The majority of rail freight that moves into and out of the WILMAPCO region passes through the Chesapeake Connector Study area. A Benefit Cost Analysis is also provided in the report.

Adding to the complexity of this study, Norfolk Southern Corporation (NS) has

begun shipping crude oil from the western United States to the PBF Refinery in Delaware City, Del., via the NEC. This has added four to five trains per day to the traffic along the Chesapeake Connector project section. This freight movement began after data collection and analysis had been completed for the study, but the value of these new train movements may have an impact on the Benefit Cost Analysis that is included in this report.

The conclusion of this report is consistent with prior studies that concluded that the Chesapeake Connector would ease operations in the corridor but may not generate large economic benefits relative to its cost. The difference is that while past studies found the project cost to be prohibitive, this study finds that recent developments have altered conditions to suggest a more positive return on the infrastructure investment. The final report can be found at www.wilmapco.org/chesapeakeconnector.





WILMAPCO Welcomes Several New Members to its **Public Advisory Committee**

The Public Advisory Committee or PAC is the committee responsible for advising WILMAPCO on public outreach, developing methods and opportunities for public involvement, reviewing WILMAPCO's public participation and education efforts, and advising on effective strategies for generating meaningful public involvement. The PAC contains up to 35 members from groups in different geographic areas throughout the region that have an interest in transportation and public involvement. PAC members are recruited from civic umbrella groups, business groups, public interest groups, environmental groups, transportation interest groups and agencies that represent diverse populations, such as minorities, the elderly, disabled residents and transit-dependent populations.

This year, several new members have been appointed to WILMAPCO's PAC, including:

- Vic Singer, representing the New Castle County Civic League (NCCCL). Mr. Singer has served as Chairman of the New Castle County Planning Board for more than 13 years, was a former president of NCCCL, was a former member of Coastal Zone Industrial Control Board ad hoc committees and is currently a member of Delaware Water Supply Coordinating Council.
- William Dunn, NCCCL President, will serve as an alternate for Mr. Singer.
- Frank Vari, representing Chesapeake City. Mr. Vari is a member of Chesapeake City Town Council and a member of Council on Planning and Zoning, as well as the Director of Chesapeake City Recycling and Racing Program.
- Lisa Snyder, President of the 7/40 Alliance.
- Fran Swift, President of the Greater Hockessin Area Development Association.
- Dave Tancredi, Vice President of the Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance.
- Charles Shaw, on behalf of AARP's Driver Safety Program. Mr. Shaw is a graduate of Duke University, former Navy pilot and professional engineer, retired from DuPont. He has been president of the Windy Hills Civic Association for several years.
- Antonio Valenzuela, a passionate walking and biking advocate, will represent the City of Wilmington.
- Matthew Eskridge, Safety and Services Manager, AAA Mid-Atlantic's Foundation for Safety and Education. Mr. Eskridge has also been working with WILMAPCO on its Safe Routes to School Programs educating students on pedestrian and bicycle safety.

WILMAPCO PAC meetings are open to the public. To learn more, please visit www.wilmapco.org/pac.

Asthma Mitigation in Wilmington

Residents in the 19801 and 19802 zip codes in Wilmington are more likely to suffer from asthma. Officials blame both the outdoor factors concentrated here (such as vehicle exhaust and industrial pollution) and indoor triggers (such as dust, mold and inappropriate cleaning solutions).

Working through the South Wilmington Planning Network, WILMAPCO has been collaborating with Nemours Health and Prevention Services (NHPS), Christiana Care and the Henrietta Johnson Medical Center on a project, funded by the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Innovation, to tackle asthma in the area. Beyond the development of a long-term Asthma Action Plan, two immediate

outcomes are being pursued this summer.

The first involves reducing diesel exhaust, which harms our respiratory system. WILMAPCO facilitated a meeting with the Christina School District – the largest school bus operator in these impacted neighborhoods – where the importance of reducing idling was discussed, along with opportunities to utilize cleaner vehicles in densely populated communities. A presentation on the effects of asthma and the importance of bus idling reduction will be provided to all school bus drivers in the District this August. Drivers, who are responsible for cleaning their buses, will also receive appropriate cleaning supplies.

Second, NHPS has taken the lead in coordinating with the Wilmington Housing Authority (WHA) on a pilot project aimed at reducing indoor asthma triggers. A workshop was held in June. Residents will receive cleaning products that do not aggravate asthma and are less expensive than brand name products and they will also learn effective cleaning techniques. If this pilot proves successful, WHA hopes to expand the training to all its sites in Wilmington.

If you would like to learn more about this project, or get involved, call us at 302-737-6205.

2014 Transportation Justice Study Update

Work is continuing on our 2014 Transportation Justice (TJ) Study. An extension of our Environmental Justice initiative, which considers the needs of low income and minority groups, TJ pertains to the mobility needs of households without vehicles, the disabled and seniors.

Across the United States, transportation is a growing problem. Both disabled and nondisabled individuals are having an increasingly difficult time getting around.

There are two specific transportation concerns with TJ populations:

- **Private vehicle dependency**—raises the risk of social isolation, as well as leads to economic and health impacts.
- **Aging in place**—creates the need for better transportation connectivity and accessibility, especially in a suburban setting.

A workgroup comprised of public advocates and planners was organized to help us plan for these concerns and guide the TJ study. It currently includes representatives from: Delaware Health and Human Services, DART First State, the League of Women Voters and the University of Delaware.

A telephone-based public opinion survey is currently underway to better

understand the transportation needs of the TJ groups in our region. Questions include perceptions of the transportation network, needs and barriers to reaching medical care and other necessities. Specific to TJ groups, the results of the survey will be compared to regional averages.

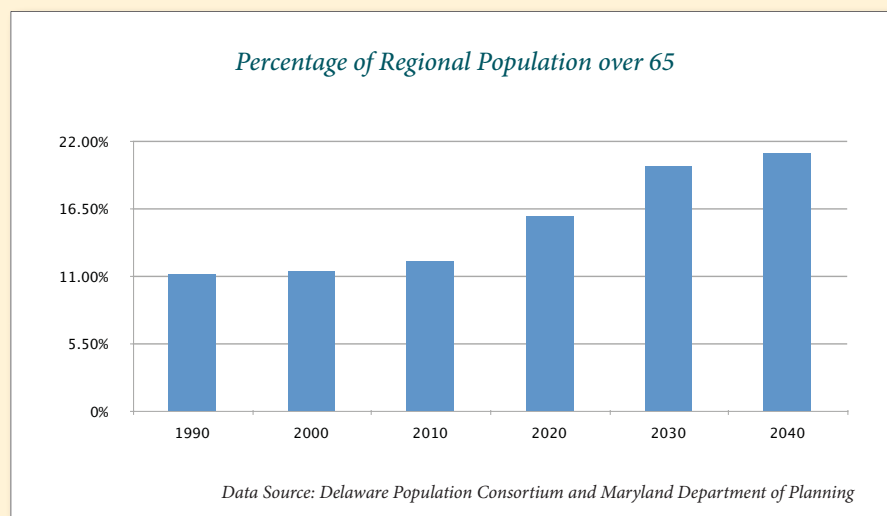
Many technical analyses are also planned for the 2014 TJ Study. This work will include:

- Mapping concentrations of TJ populations
- Mapping age-restricted communities
- Bus stop and pathway accessibility
- Transportation connectivity to destinations such as: senior centers,

libraries, grocery stores and medical centers

Several recommendations will be made in the study to improve the transportation network for these constrained groups and to better involve them in our transportation planning process. Council adoption is expected in the fall.

If you would like to get involved in this work, please email bswiatek@wilmapco.org, call us at 302-737-6205 or visit www.wilmapco.org/ej for more information.





Bicycle Friendly Newark Recognized

In May, the League of American Bicyclists renewed the City of Newark as the region's only Bicycle Friendly Community and WILMAPCO endorsed the 2014 Newark Bicycle Plan, capping off two years of developing the plan and implementing improvements. Newark was first designated as a bronze level Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists in 2010; this designation came with suggested actions which the community has been working to carry out.

One suggestion was to update Newark's Bicycle Plan. The City of Newark, WILMAPCO and the Newark Bicycle Committee developed the Plan to make bicycling a more safe and convenient choice for transportation and recreation for people of all ages and abilities. Recommendations include bicycle routes and other infrastructure, education and safety programs, programs to encourage cycling, and maintenance programs. Development of the Plan is being done in coordination with the update of Newark's Comprehensive Plan. Recommendations were developed based on community participation, agency input and best practices.

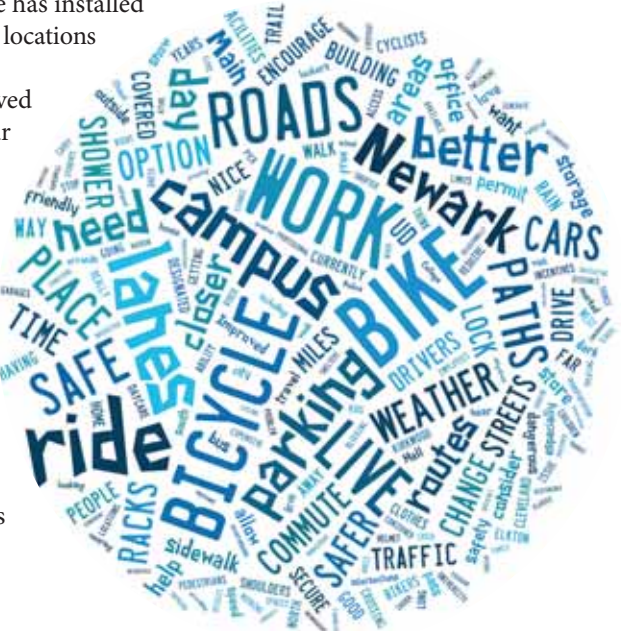
Other actions since Newark was first designated have focused on cyclists' education and encouraging safer bicycling. Newark Bike Project was founded in 2011 as a community repair shop that offers shared access to professional tools, knowledgeable volunteer mechanics and resale of donated bicycles to provide affordable transportation. DeDOT has partnered with Newark Bicycle Committee to conduct bicycle safety checkpoints with free bike lights and helmet giveaways. To further promote safe, maintained bicycles, the University of Delaware has installed bicycle repair stations at six locations around campus.

Infrastructure has improved dramatically in the past four years as well. In 2013, sharrows were installed on East Main Street and construction of bicycle and sidewalk improvements were completed on South Main Street. Newark's off-street facilities continue to attract people walking and bicycling, with almost 90,000 users

counted on the Hall Trail in 2012.

With Newark's adoption of the Plan and renewal as a Bicycle Friendly Community, WILMAPCO will work with the City and Newark Bicycle Committee over the summer to review feedback from the League of American Bicyclists and identify next steps for Newark.

To learn more about the Newark Bicycle Plan or Newark Bicycle Committee, visit www.wilmapco.org/bikenewark.



Wilmington Transit Moving Forward

The Wilmington Transit Moving Forward project team has had a busy winter and spring. Since the new year, the advisory group and management committee met over a dozen times. This intensive schedule is just part of the effort to complete this project by June 30.

The use of Rodney Square as a major bus hub for downtown Wilmington poses many concerns. Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC) has made changes to DART bus schedules and routes to reduce the number of buses at Rodney Square and moved some bus stops to sections of King Street to further alleviate issues. However, more needs to be done. The Wilmington Transit Moving Forward project is taking another look at the transit operations in and around downtown Wilmington. WILMAPCO and the project consultant team have been working extensively with staff from DTC and the City of Wilmington

to study the existing transit system and develop improvements that will benefit bus riders and downtown stakeholders, while reducing bus congestion and maximizing DART resources. The team has also utilized the results of an Origin and Destination Study that was recently completed for DTC. This information provides valuable insights in current bus rider usage patterns that show volume of trips, most popular destinations and transfer information.

The Project Management Committee partners (DTC, Wilmington, WILMAPCO and RK&K) have used this information to develop principles and opportunities that will be used to guide DTC in creating service improvements. The Advisory Committee, which is made up of city agency representatives and stakeholders, has the role of reviewing this information and offering insights to strengthen the process.

These concepts were brought to the public at a second Open House Meeting held at the Wilmington Library on May 28. Feedback will then be incorporated into a final report that the partners can use to design meaningful changes to the delivery of transit in Wilmington.

The Wilmington Transit Moving Forward project will run through June 2014. A third and final public workshop will be held to bring service change concepts back for public review before implementation.

For more information about the Wilmington Transit Moving Forward project, please visit www.wilmapco.org/wilmtransitmoveforward.

WILMINGTON TRANSIT
MOVING FORWARD →



WILMINGTON AREA PLANNING COUNCIL

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

- *Connie C. Holland, Acting Chair
Delaware Office of State Planning
Coordination, Director*
- *Shailen P. Bhatt
Delaware Dept. of Transportation
Secretary*
- *Thomas P. Gordon
New Castle County Executive*
- *Donald A. Halligan
Maryland Dept. of Transportation
Director, Office of Planning and Capital
Programming*
- *Tari Moore
Cecil County, County Executive*
- *John Sisson
Delaware Transit Corporation
Chief Executive Officer*
- *Michael Spencer
Mayor of Newport*
- *Dennis P. Williams
Mayor of Wilmington*
- *Tigist Zegeye
WILMAPCO Executive Director*
- *Randi Novakoff
Transporter Newsletter Editor*



PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
NEWARK, DE
PERMIT NO. 190

**Transporter Newsletter
Summer 2014**

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.

JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
Air Quality Subcommittee <i>July 10, 10 a.m.</i>	Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group <i>August 5, 3 p.m.</i>	WILMAPCO's Our Town Event <i>Embassy Suites Hotel, Newark September 3, 4 – 7 p.m.</i>
WILMAPCO Council <i>July 10, 6:30 p.m.</i>	Air Quality Subcommittee <i>August 14, 10 a.m.</i>	Air Quality Subcommittee <i>September 11, 10 a.m.</i>
Joint Technical Advisory Committee and Air Quality Subcommittee <i>July 17, 10 a.m.</i>	Public Advisory Committee <i>August 18, 7 p.m.</i>	WILMAPCO Council <i>September 11, 6:30 p.m.</i>
WILMAPCO Summer Picnic <i>Lums State Park July 17, 12 p.m.</i>	Technical Advisory Committee <i>August 21, 10 a.m.</i>	Technical Advisory Committee <i>September 18, 10 a.m.</i>

Join us for WILMAPCO's Our Town event, September 3, from 4 to 7 p.m., at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Newark. For more information, visit www.wilmapco.org/ourtown.