

Quarterly newsletter of the Wilmington Area Planning Council

TRANSPORTER

WILMAPCO

Work begins on Newark Regional Transportation Center

Construction of the Newark Regional Transportation Center (NRTC) is set to start this summer with the expansion of parking and a new access road from South College Avenue. Work on this contract is expected to be completed in 2018, with the construction of the new station building and platform to be completed by 2021.

In 2004, the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) completed a study to expand passenger rail service to the Newark Train Station and eliminate the conflict with freight movement. The result of the study has been 11 years of work to design a station that will meet the future needs for commuter rail service while also allowing for the growth of freight movement. Through many consultations with partner agencies, it was determined that the most ideal station would be an integral part of the University of Delaware's STAR Campus, but would also have minimal impact on the Norfolk Southern freight yard, which lay between the STAR Campus and the Northeast Corridor (NEC). The current design was formulated in August 2014. It is integrated into Amtrak's plans to improve the performance of the NEC by increasing the distance between the four tracks to accommodate higher

train speeds, and to reconfigure the interlockings which allow trains to change tracks in this area.

The new station will be constructed on the current site, and will include a station building with ticketing, security, a climate-controlled waiting area, and restrooms. The station building will be connected by an elevated walkway, with stairs and elevators, to a new high-level platform that meets all Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and will allow passengers to easily step on and off trains without using stairs. This concept plan resolves conflicts between freight and commuter rail, and accommodates the expansion of passenger rail services, including Amtrak and SEPTA trains. Future commuter train service to the South, which could be realized with a connection to MARC train service, can also be accommodated.

The construction work was partially funded by a TIGER grant of \$10 million that was awarded in June 2012. The State of Delaware, along with local government and private contributors, will supply the additional funds that will be needed



to complete the approximately \$45 million project. Amtrak will fund its portion of the work, and the two projects will be coordinated to ensure that the passenger service will not be disrupted during the construction. Amtrak's work has yet to be scheduled, so an official project completion date has not yet been set, but completion is expected in 2021.

For more information on the NRTC, please visit www.wilmapco.org/newarktrain.

Prioritizing Transportation Projects: A Brief History

Recognizing that identified transportation needs and desired projects far exceed the available resources, WILMAPCO has prioritized its projects for funding since the late 1990s.

From 1995-1998, WILMAPCO developed its first project prioritization jointly with DelDOT and other stakeholders in response to federal and state policies. The resulting 1998 process was comprehensive and quantitative, but so complex, it required a 56-page guide. Since much of the required data was not easily available, WILMAPCO only used this process for one year before resorting to a subjective scoring process.

Between 2001 and 2006, WILMAPCO developed a series

of processes. With each iteration, WILMAPCO adjusted the criteria to be quantitative, relevant, and understandable to the public and decision makers, replicable, and tied to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The resulting process was adopted by the Council in 2006 and amended in 2008 and 2016 so that it would continue to use the best available data sources and be directly tied to the updated RTP.

Each spring, WILMAPCO uses this process to recommend the projects for implementation in the Transportation Improvement Program that best address the region's goals. Staff begins the process by screening new submissions to ensure they are eligible and consistent with the

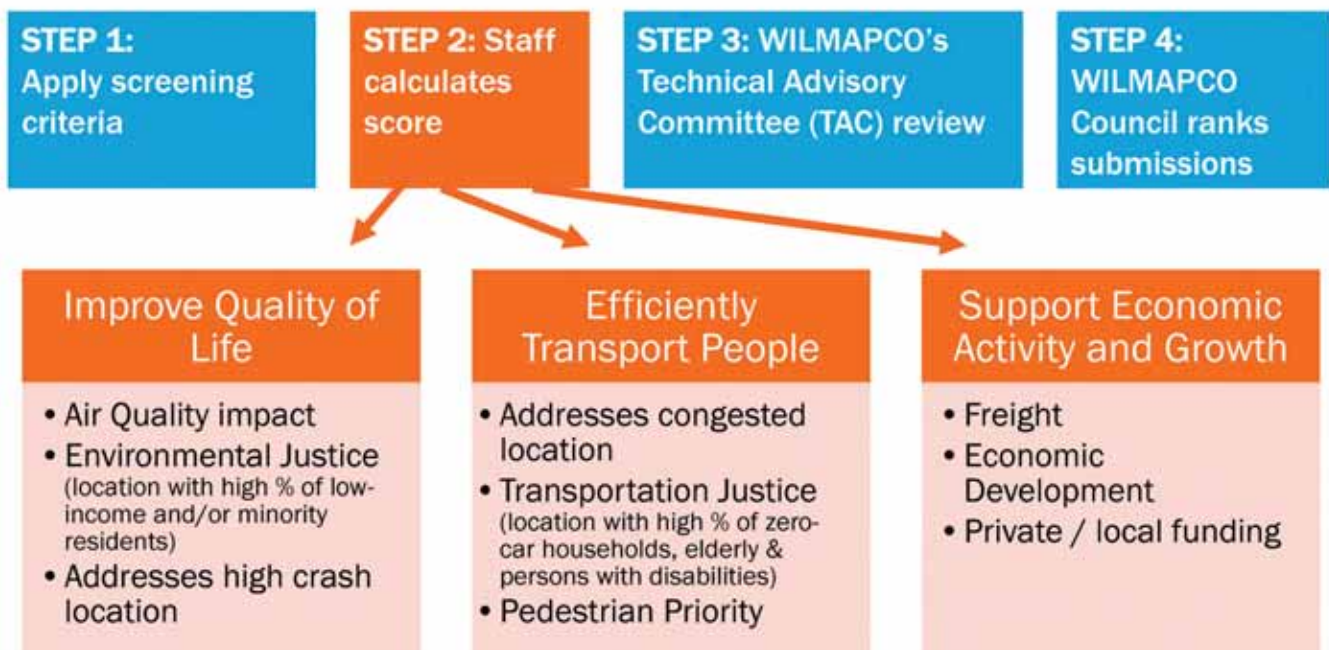
RTP. Staff then scores projects using nine criteria that relate to the RTP goals. All criteria except air quality are quantitative, and most use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping to evaluate projects based on their locations. Scoring is then reviewed by WILMAPCO's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and subcommittees. The Council's eventual ranking relies primarily on the project scoring but considers other factors.

Supplemental processes have also been developed for Transportation Alternatives Program and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funding.

Learn more at

www.wilmapco.org/priority.

PROJECT PRIORITIZATION PROCESS TODAY



Creating Safer Ways to Walk and Bike to School

WILMAPCO has been working to make it safer for local elementary school students to walk and bike to school through its Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs. SRTS programs provide federal funding for infrastructure improvements, including new sidewalks, crosswalks, and signs. They also offer funding for encouragement and educational activities, including Walk to School Days, contests, and bicycle rodeos.

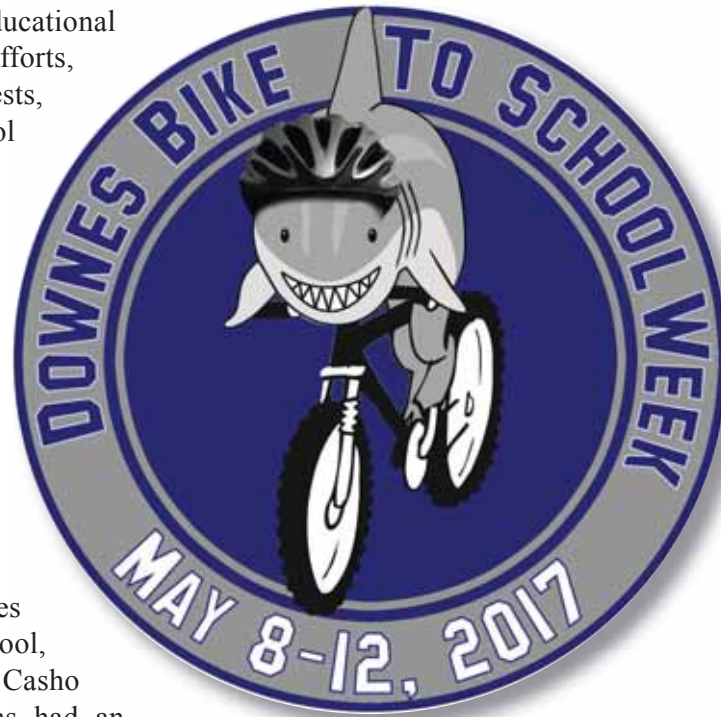
WILMAPCO has been working with Elbert-Palmer Elementary in South Wilmington since 2009. Elbert-Palmer saw its first phase of construction in 2010, where missing sections of sidewalk and crosswalks around the school were repaired and repainted. In spring 2015, another round of SRTS infrastructure improvements took place, including additional signage, a bicycle rack, and additional crosswalk improvements. In the fall of 2015, WILMAPCO held a walking assessment with parents and school staff to determine what additional improvements are needed. These project proposals were reviewed and prioritized at a meeting of the Southbridge Civic Association. Projects selected to proceed include: adding bicycle markings along Claymont Street and A Street near the school and Neighborhood House (where many students attend afterschool programs), adding bicycle parking at the Neighborhood House, making sidewalk repairs on Claymont Street near the youth garden, and adding a new sidewalk connection along B Street to better link to Barbara Hicks Park. Construction is planned for 2018.

Elbert-Palmer has also

undertaken many educational and encouragement efforts, including art contests, Walk/Bike to School Days, Safety Weeks, K9 police officer visits, bicycle and pedestrian rodeos, and Healthy Family Fun Nights where many organizations exhibited and shared health and safety information.

WILMAPCO has also been working closely with Downes Elementary School, located in Newark on Casho Mill Road. Downes has had an existing SRTS program since 2006, championed by its gym teacher. The program includes frequent-walker punch cards and prizes for the students who are walking and biking the most. It also features Walk to School Days and Park and Walk (or Ride) events, where parents meet at a local park and walk as a group to school. In 2016, Newark Bike Project, Bike Newark, DelDOT, the City of Newark, parents, school staff, the University of Delaware, and WILMAPCO teamed up to seek SRTS infrastructure funding, and help plan walking and biking events.

In April of 2016, a parent survey was conducted. Of the 35 parents who participated, 90% felt they lived too far to allow their child to walk, and 35% felt speeding was an issue along their route. In May of 2016, a walking assessment was held. Primary issues identified included speeding and wide lanes on Casho Mill Road, lack of crosswalks on side streets, and a stairway near the



school entrance that is not handicapped accessible.

In May, Downes held a Bike to School Week, which included a mockup of a buffered bike lane on Casho Mill Road. The bike lane would serve to narrow the roadway and slow traffic, in addition to providing a safer place for students to ride to school. The University of Delaware's Engineers Without Borders program helped implement the mockup. During Bike to School Week, there were four guided bike rides with students, led by parents, Newark police officers, and Newark Mayor Polly Sierer. A public meeting will be scheduled soon to allow community members and parents the chance to review proposed projects prior to construction in 2018.

To learn more about WILMAPCO's Safe Routes to School Program, visit www.wilmapco.org/saferoutes.



Elkton Makes Strides Toward Becoming More Pedestrian-Friendly

The Elkton Pedestrian Plan is beginning to take shape, forging a path toward a more walkable community. Over the past several months, Elkton officials have been working with WILMAPCO and the Maryland State Highway Administration to determine if all of the public sidewalks and curb ramps within the town's borders are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This was Elkton's number one priority in the planning process.

The sidewalk and curb ramp inventory has been completed, showing that there is extensive pedestrian infrastructure in downtown Elkton, although it is not entirely ADA compliant. Elsewhere within the town's borders, there is a disconnected pedestrian network, with many areas lacking curb ramps and sidewalks altogether.

After completing the sidewalk inventory, the Steering Committee researched previous studies to

discover recommendations that have already been proposed for Elkton:

- The East Coast Greenway Feasibility Study (2003) included a section of the greenway planned through Elkton.
- A Walkable Community Workshop was held in 2008, where the community had the opportunity to walk the town and come up with ideas to make the town more walkable.
- The Elkton Bicycle Plan (2011) proposed a network of bicycle routes for the town.
- The Elkton Transit Oriented Development Plan (2011) provided a vision for a walkable corridor from Main Street to the train station and promoted reintroduction of rail service.
- The Top Pedestrian Priority Segments Study (2012) prioritized road segments throughout the WILMAPCO region for pedestrian

improvements.

- The Locust Lane Sidewalk Feasibility Study (2015) researched adding a crucial one-block connector to the downtown sidewalk network.

Additionally, the plan will include a sidewalk prioritization analysis, which will determine areas that are likely to have high pedestrian activity. This will provide an understanding of where pedestrian improvements are needed most. This summer, the Steering Committee will develop draft recommendations for the plan and hold a public workshop, where the public will be able to learn about the plan and provide feedback. The Steering Committee hopes to develop a draft report by this fall, finalize the report in winter, and seek adoption from the Town of Elkton and the WILMAPCO Council in early 2018.

For more information on this plan, visit www.wilmapco.org/elktonpedplan.

The Glasgow Avenue Planning Study: Creating a Safe and Attractive Street

Glasgow Avenue is a 1.3-mile, two-lane collector road between US 40 and SR 896. This roadway previously served as a primary artery for traffic on SR 896 until a bypass was constructed to the east, which now carries the majority of vehicles and provides a higher-speed alternative.

The width of the roadway reflects its previous role, with wide lanes and shoulders that encourage higher speeds along an avenue which has a technical high school, a medical center, a 55-and-over community, and a major shopping center among its land uses. The goal of the study is to work with the residents to create roadway and land-use guidelines resulting in a safe and attractive street that:

- Encourages more nonmotorized trips
- Slows existing traffic
- Creates better connectivity
- Creates a vibrant mix of local uses and attractive public gathering places to enhance economic activity

Improved connections between the existing high school, parkland, residential development, and commercial areas would encourage more pedestrian and bicycle trips within the area, and add safety measures for existing pedestrians while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving respiratory health.

The Glasgow Avenue Planning Study is the result of a partnership between the New Castle County (Delaware) Department of Land Use, WILMAPCO, and DelDOT. The project team held stakeholder interviews with residents, commercial property owners,

community agencies, and elected officials, and has held three workshops that were open to the public. The first workshop was held on March 4, 2015 and was attended by 35 people. The project team used this meeting to review existing conditions on the corridor from the viewpoint of community residents and business owners. Small group breakout sessions were used to ask questions about future growth along the corridor, and direct feedback was recorded from the groups on how they wanted to see the community grow. There was general agreement that roadway travel speeds are too fast, and pedestrian and bicycle amenities are not currently in place. Residents also want better access to trails and open space, and more community activity areas including a new library.

The responses from the community were used to develop a community vision and a set of goals for the Glasgow Avenue corridor. The project team also used the comments to develop alternatives for the roadway configuration of auto travel lanes, bike lanes, and multi-use paths for different segments of the corridor. Finally, some draft design guidelines were created for a mixed-use, village-style development along the northern segment of Glasgow Avenue.

These concepts were brought back to the community in another public meeting that was held on June 10, 2015. Project team members collected the attendees' responses to the vision and goals, the roadway alternatives, and the land-use ideas. These comments were used to develop final recommendations for the corridor, which were presented at another public workshop this past May 22. During the workshop, residents expressed concern with the proposed development along Glasgow Avenue. While the response to the study's recommendations was mostly positive, residents would like additional safety measures to slow traffic and limited new traffic from the proposed development. WILMAPCO will try to address these concerns in the final report.

For more information on this project, please visit our website:
www.wilmapco.org/glasgow.



Work Program Outlines Planning Activities for FY 2018

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) lists the transportation planning activities to be completed by WILMAPCO between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018. The UPWP identifies specific planning tasks to address transportation issues in the region, and it serves as our official budget and work plan. The UPWP also identifies state and local matching dollars for these federal planning programs. The UPWP is a required element of the MPO regulations.

New to the FY 2018 UPWP is the development of a New Castle County Bicycle Plan. The Delaware Bicycle Facility Master Plan has served as WILMAPCO's bicycle plan for New Castle County since 2004. The 2017 update of the Delaware statewide plan is currently underway. The statewide plan is a policy plan, and will not make specific project recommendations. Following completion of the 2017 Delaware Bicycle Plan, WILMAPCO, New Castle County, municipalities, and other stakeholders will develop an accompanying New Castle County Bicycle Plan. The plan will identify and prioritize infrastructure needed to complete a low-stress bicycle network and associated programs for bicycle education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation.

The draft Fiscal Year 2018 UPWP was available for public comment from April 4, 2017 through May 5, 2017. The Work Program was reviewed by the Technical Advisory and the Public Advisory Committees, and was adopted by the Council on May 11, 2017. The UPWP describes all regional transportation-planning activities anticipated in the WILMAPCO area that will

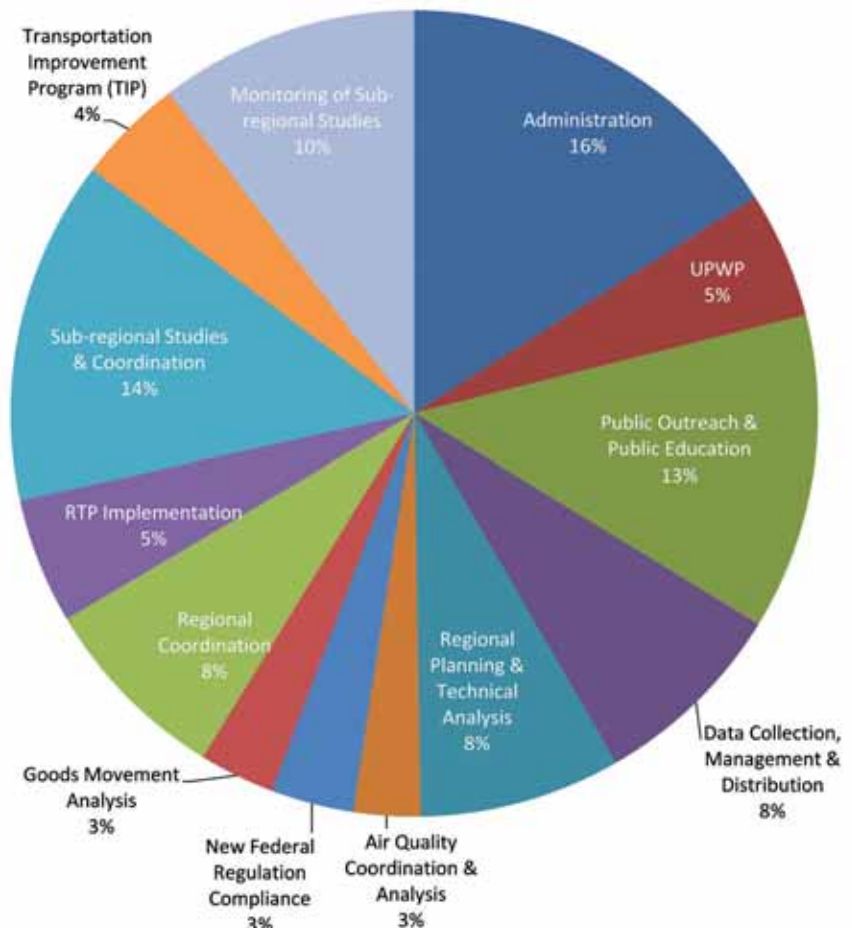
utilize federal funding (Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration). Similar to previous years, the UPWP allocates more than \$2.1 million in funding.

The work performed under this annual program is accomplished by a combination of professional, technical, and administrative staff of WILMAPCO, with the assistance of consulting firms and the support of member agencies. By working together, we are able to find solutions to transportation (including walking and biking), land use, and air quality and sustainability issues, and make recommendations for improvement.

Through the UPWP, WILMAPCO is available to assist local governments and communities upon request with planning for transportation choices, mobility-friendly design standards, land use and community studies, scenic byway assistance, walkable community workshops, and other planning needs. We also provide technical assistance with mapping, data and demographics, and public outreach support.

To view this or previous work programs, visit www.wilmapco.org/upwp.

FY 2018 WILMAPCO Work Program



WILMAPCO Publishes Map of Top Congested Corridors

WILMAPCO has produced its most recent map of the top congested corridors in New Castle County. The map was created through the Congestion Management Process (CMP) and by using the most current congestion assessment data available. A CMP is required in metropolitan areas with population exceeding 200,000, known as Transportation Management Areas (TMAs). In TMAs designated as ozone or carbon monoxide non-attainment areas (the Wilmington Area is in non-attainment for ozone), the CMP takes on a greater significance.

In New Castle County, there are three performance measures used to identify the most congested corridors in the region:

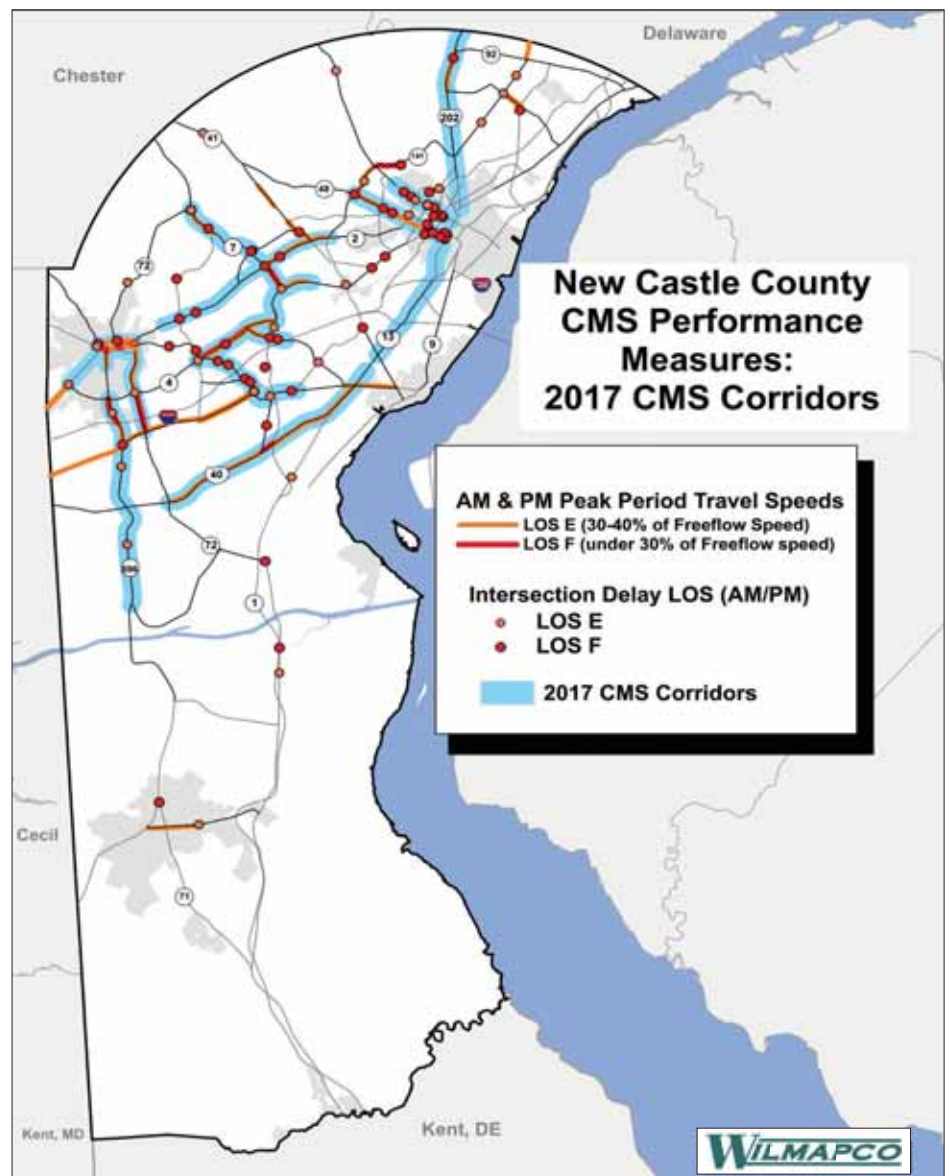
- Performance Measure #1: Intersection Level of Service (Delay)
- Performance Measure #2: Travel Speed vs. Free Flow Speed
- Performance Measure #3: Intersection Crashes (Frequency, Crash Type, and Severity)

Using these performance measures, WILMAPCO staff used GIS mapping software to analyze each roadway segment and intersection to show which segments and intersections are experiencing multiple performance failures. Then, members of the WILMAPCO Congestion Management Subcommittee (CMS) began the process of delineating congested corridors. By looking over each measure, areas in which repeated deficiencies occurred were identified. The CMS identified these corridors using criteria that analyzed congestion density (frequency of adjacent congested segments and intersections) and predominant

travel patterns.

The resulting maps are then used for a variety of planning applications, but the most significant is its use in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) prioritization process (see page 2), where projects receive a higher technical score if they fall within these identified corridors.

To see these corridors in more detail, please visit the congestion management webpage at www.wilmapco.org/cms.



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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.**

JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
WILMAPCO Council <i>July 13, 6:30 p.m.</i>	Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group <i>August 1, 3 p.m.</i>	Air Quality Subcommittee <i>September 14, 10 a.m.</i>
Joint Air Quality Subcommittee and Technical Advisory Committee <i>Lums Pond State Park July 20, 10 a.m.</i>	Air Quality Subcommittee <i>August 10, 10 a.m..</i>	WILMAPCO Council <i>September 14, 6:30 p.m.</i>
WILMAPCO Summer Picnic <i>Lums Pond State Park July 20, 11:30 a.m.</i>	Public Advisory Committee <i>August 14, 6:30 p.m.</i>	Technical Advisory Committee <i>September 21, 10 a.m.</i>
	Technical Advisory Committee <i>August 17, 10 a.m.</i>	

- HAVE YOUR SAY IN HOW MORE THAN \$2 BILLION OF YOUR TAX MONEY IS SPENT! JOIN US FOR A PUBLIC WORKSHOP ON SEPTEMBER 11 FROM 4-7 P.M. AT THE NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY. DON'T MISS THE CHANCE TO REVIEW AND COMMENT ON PROPOSED TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS FOR NEW CASTLE AND CECIL COUNTIES. FOR MORE INFORMATION: WWW.WILMAPCO.ORG/TIP.