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WILMAPCO Invites Public Comments on Proposed Transportation Projects

More than \$1.8 billion dollars of anticipated transportation projects are proposed in a new draft transportation program, released for review by the Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) today for a public comment period that will extend through Tuesday, March 4, 2013.

The draft FY 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for New Castle County, Delaware and Cecil County, Maryland is a four-year listing of transportation priorities and projects based upon available funding. Projects are drawn from recommendations in the long-range region transportation plan for the WILMAPCO region. The proposal has an 8 percent decrease in funds compared to the current approved TIP.

Because transportation funding shortfalls remain in the region, the proposed projects focus on preserving existing infrastructure and addressing safety concerns with 38 percent of funding going towards preservation of existing infrastructures. Projects with the largest funding increases include Paving & Rehabilitation and Dam Preservation Program statewide in Delaware, the New Castle Industrial Track Greenway in New Castle County, Delaware, and Areawide Safety and Spot Improvements in Cecil County.

Proposed new projects include:

Claymont Sidewalks on Myrtle and Manor Avenues - The projects consists of proposed sidewalk construction along Myrtle Avenue from the Philadelphia Pike to the Route 495 overpass and along Manor Avenue from the Governor Printz Boulevard to the Route 495 pedestrian overpass. The project would provide a safer pedestrian route from the Philadelphia Pike to the Claymont Train Station.

SR 299, SR 1 to Catherine Street – Drawn from the East Middletown Master Plan, this project seeks to expand capacity along SR299 from SR1 to Silver Lake Road by adding an additional through lane in each direction with a center median, with a two-way left turn lane from Silver Lake Road to Catherine Street. Bike and pedestrian improvements would be added throughout the corridor.

Wilmington Initiatives – Walnut Street, MLK to 16th Street and 4th Street, Walnut Street to I-95 – These projects would improve important transportation corridors in Downtown Wilmington. Walnut Street, a major in-bound route to the downtown, would receive a new roadway pavement surface, which will then allow for new striping and pavement markings. As a result, lane assignments will be clearer and will facilitate a smoother movement of traffic. Streetscape improvements would enhance pedestrian safety, provide low-level lighting, and generally beautify the area with new sidewalks and decorative crosswalks/new lighting poles and street trees. On 4th Street, the goal is to improve pedestrian safety of the four-lane roadway and create a transit-friendly environment by constructing bus shelters, improving striping and crosswalk location, and re-constructing sidewalks. Improved signalization would also be done as part of the project.

US 13, Duck Creek to SR 1 - Drawn from the Town of Smyrna's land use and transportation master plan, Improvements would include controlled access, sidewalk, bike access, and other amenities.

Susquehanna River Bridge Replacement - The Susquehanna River Bridge is the longest movable bridge on the entire North East Corridor (NEC), approximately three quarters of a mile long. Completed in 1906, the bridge connects Havre de Grace and Perryville, MD and is perhaps the worst bottleneck and arguably the most badly in need of replacement in the NEC. In 2011, the state was awarded a \$22-million grant to initiate preliminary engineering and environmental review of new bridge facilities.

MARC Maintenance Facility - The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) received State and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds to advance preliminary engineering and to prepare a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental documentation for a proposed MARC Maintenance Facility in Cecil County, Maryland. The project includes construction of a facility that will provide MARC with the capability of storing, servicing and inspecting complete commuter rail trainsets and performing scheduled and unscheduled maintenance and repair work on both locomotives and passenger cars. The general project area is a 115 acre site in Perryville, Maryland.

The public comment period will extend from Monday, January 13 through Tuesday, March 4, 2013, and also includes comment on the revised Air Quality Conformity Determination of New Castle County. The public may review and comment on the proposed documents at a public workshop on Monday, February 24 from 4 to 7 p.m. at WILMAPCO, hosted WILMAPCO and DelDOT. The draft documents and workshop materials are also available for comment at www.wilmapco.org/tip; print versions are available at WILMAPCO's office or can be mailed upon request.

Comments about the TIP may be submitted online at www.wilmapco.org/tip, in writing to Wilmington Area Planning Council, 850 Library Avenue, Suite 100, Newark, DE 19703, by fax to 302-737-9584, or by e-mail to wilmapco@wilmapco.org. For more information on the TIP, contact Heather Dunigan at hdunigan@wilmapco.org, or 302-737-6205 ext. 118.

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WILMAPCO (the Wilmington Area Planning Council) is the regional transportation planning agency for New Castle County, Delaware and Cecil County, Maryland. As the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO), WILMAPCO is charged with planning and coordinating transportation investments for the region based on federal policy, local input, technical analysis and best practices.

