

WILMAPCO 2050 RTP Virtual Meeting Q and A

November 2, 2018

1. Can the MARC train line be extended to Newark, DE?
We are definitely working on that – the new train station in Newark will accommodate southbound and northbound trains. The RTP project list includes an extension north to Elkton, but the final connection to Newark is still a wish list item. We are working on this and hope it is a project we can add onto the list for this plan.
2. With part of the geography being in a non-attainment area for ozone - have you considered prioritizing alternative fuel (Compressed Natural Gas, for example) for larger public equipment (e.g.: trash trucks, buses, heavy duty trucks)?
Points are given to projects that improve air quality, and points are taken away from those that don't.
3. What are you doing with the information/data you received today?
We're going to capture everything, and respond to additional questions and ideas/suggestions on the website if we don't answer or receive them today. We hope project ideas can be added to the aspirational projects list at the very least, if not the fully funded list in the future.
4. Can you explain how you're going to fund all these projects?
Funding comes half from the Federal government and half from State/Local government. Federal funding comes from user fees (tolls, DMV/MVA fees, gas tax, etc.), and locally, we are seeing an increase in funding coming from private developer contributions since transportation and land use are so closely tied together.
5. Can you provide a status update on the Claymont Intermodal Station design?
The bids for this project just came in, and it's a Design Build. The community has only seen initial plans, the winning bidder will complete the final design, begin construction next year, and the station will be open by 2021.
6. What can be done to get more people out of their cars in newer walkable mixed use projects? *The main thing that will help is doing a better job of tying land use to transportation – options need to be provided so that when people walk out their front doors, they have access to stores, job opportunities, and a variety of transportation modes, so they can get around in a better and more effective way.*
7. Is the list of items that projects can receive or detract points for available?
We have a project prioritization process that is posted on our website as part of the Transportation Improvement Program – there is a link where you can see what's coming soon and what's been added for this year.
8. Can we get information on the bus passes available from DTC?
I recommend going onto DART First State's website, which provides a link of all the places you can get them from, and I believe there is a way to purchase them online as well.
9. Do you think the number of roads that are failing as noted in the CMS maps contributes to the Air Quality problems?
I think so, and we need to look at ways to reduce congestion by not only expanding capacity, but looking to push ways to get people out of their cars and off the roads by implementing solutions like optimized traffic signal timing, and bus/bike/pedestrian improvements.

10. How do work with local agencies to coordinate and implement these ideas?

When we update the plan every 4 years, we try do a tour of every town in our region, we wish we could get out more. If you live in a town and haven't seen WILMAPCO recently, please work with your local officials to recommend projects and plans in your community so we can get out and visit with you.

11. Will the RTP get into recommending alternative (maybe non-traditional) funding strategies (i.e., VMT tax, additional user fees, etc.)?

We focused on this in the last 2 updates of our plan (4-8 years ago) – we could only (just barely) afford to maintain the existing projects in our infrastructure then. This time things are looking better and more steady, but there could be challenges with funding the Transportation Trust Fund and having it remain sustainable in the future (i.e. if gas tax funding decreases or goes away because of more economical vehicles or vehicles that run on alternative fuels and electricity.)

12. How is New Castle County doing with infrastructure maintenance (roads, bridges, etc.)? Are we keeping up with the needed maintenance?

Yes, the largest share of funding in our program is for maintaining existing infrastructure. We constantly check on critical infrastructure (roads, bridges, etc.) to make sure they are in working condition, and work to secure funding for immediate repairs if they are not.

13. I noticed that planning to accommodate autonomous vehicles was part of the planning strategy. Can you explain how this fits with the priority to create a greener transportation system?

Part of the RTP is to look at ways to provide autonomous vehicle (AV) infrastructure so we are ready, as well as look at ways to upgrade existing infrastructure to accommodate/support it. We also want to see AV incorporated in local plans throughout the region. We want to make sure we are ready for it. As far as AV being a green initiative, we are trying to understand how they fit in - for instance, they could reduce sprawl.

14. Who decides which of the projects prioritized by WILMAPCO actually get done?

It is a partnership between the WILMAPCO council and the implementing agencies. In New Castle County, DE, we make our recommendations and prioritize using technical scoring, and council makes the recommendations, which get submitted to DeIDOT for inclusion in statewide priorities/plans. Cecil County, MD and its towns submit priority letters to MDOT SHA, which is where their plans come from. Different processes, but a collaborative and cooperative effort for both.