

WILMAPCO Council:

November 18, 2016

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Mr. Ronald A. Amirkian
Planning Branch Manager
DNREC DAQ
100 W. Water St., Suite 6A
Dover, DE 19904

RE: Route 9 Corridor Master Plan Comments from DNREC DAQ

Dear Mr. Amirkian:

Many thanks for your letter dated September 6, 2016 (received in final form October 31, 2016) with comments regarding the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan.

This Plan was requested by New Castle County, and WILMAPCO is executing the effort with our consultant team and a host of community and agency participants. The vision is to identify the best redevelopment strategies for the corridor (defined north/south from the Wilmington to the New Castle municipal borders and west/east from US 13 to the Delaware River).

The Plan is still under development, but our initial proposals meet the sustainable growth practices outlined in your letter.

Forecasts predict a population loss within the Route 9 corridor near Wilmington. Meanwhile, growth is expected to continue in our sprawling suburbs. The principal aim of the Plan is to reinvigorate and redevelop the inner suburban Route 9 area near Wilmington. This will help to push more population and jobs there. The Plan seeks to add more housing, office, retail, and industrial development in strategic places to stimulate reinvestment, redevelopment, and growth.

We propose that this redevelopment primarily occur within mixed-use nodes, situated around key intersections along the corridor. Within these nodes, we envision housing, commercial, and institutional uses mixing together in a dense, pedestrian and transit-friendly environment. We are proposing changes to existing zoning to enable this type of mixed-use development.

Additionally, we are seeking to separate industrial uses from residential uses along the corridor. We believe the proximity of industry to homes underlies many of the environmental and public health issues here, such as localized exposure to particulates. Neighborhoods in the corridor's north are surrounded by industry, a seaport, and a freeway. We feel these areas should be ceded to industry, to allow for the expansion of jobs (a local priority), or left as open space. Further south, where commercial and residential uses predominate, industrial zoning should be phased out. Adjusting this land use "mismatch" will reduce the burdens of excessive truck traffic along residential streets, truck idling, dust and noise pollution, and more.



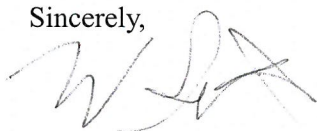
Finally, the Plan proposes sweeping changes to the area's transportation network. With DelDOT's input, we are exploring road diets for both Route 9 and Memorial Dr., along with rebuilds of key intersections. We are confident that these adjustments will help to improve safety, connectivity, available green space, and more. The additional landscaping and street trees featured in our proposals will shield industry, reduce runoff, improve drainage, and reduce dust pollution. In addition, we are proposing the construction of new pedestrian and bicycle routes to provide a viable alternative to private car travel, as well as new roads to more directly connect industry with the seaport and the freeways. These new truck routes will not only improve freight efficiency, but reduce the burden of truck trips on residential streets.

Thank you for taking the time to write us, and for DAQ's participation on our Steering Committee and at our public workshops. As with most plans environmental impacts are inevitable. However, we feel the development envisioned in the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan is both smart and sustainable.

We would appreciate it if DAQ could provide us some resources for stakeholders and residents who may be concerned about your findings, especially as they relate to their health and property value. Additionally, we would appreciate information about how they can stay in touch with DAQ and follow your continued monitoring of the area.

To learn more about the Plan please visit: www.wilmapco.org/route9. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 302-737-6205 ext. 113.

Sincerely,



William Swiatek, AICP
Senior Planner

Cc:

James Brunswick – DNREC
Lauren DeVore – DNREC
Tigist Zegeye – WILMAPCO
Cecily Bedwell – Design Collective
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