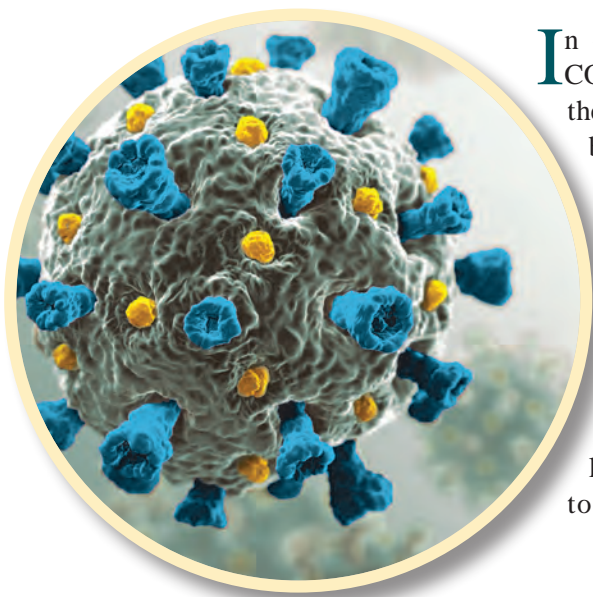


TRANSPORTER

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WILMAPCO Studies COVID's Impact on Regional Travel

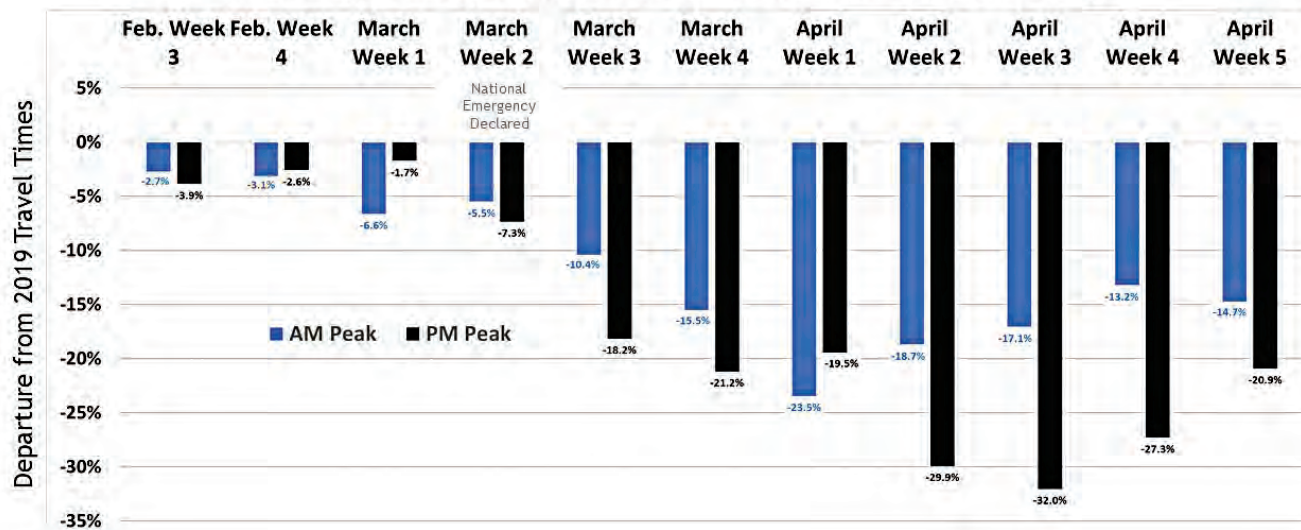


In order to understand how the COVID-19 virus has impacted the region, WILMAPCO has been performing a year-to-year travel time comparison (2019 vs. 2020) each day since early February (before the national emergency was declared) and in the weeks following the declaration. Overall, the second week of April (6th-12th) represented the lowest point of travel compared to the same week in 2019.

Peak-period travel times averaged between 30% and 35% lower during this week due to a 50% decrease in traffic volumes. During the second half of April and into early May, those figures started to slowly trend upward, as travel restrictions across the region begin to ease.

WILMAPCO will continue to track these data throughout the summer, as this will be an evolving situation. To access the most recent updates, please visit www.wilmapco.org/cms.

Departures in Weekday Travel Times:
2020 vs. 2019 Peak Periods for all Interstate/US Routes in New Castle County



WILMAPCO Analyzes Pandemic's Impact on Bus Service for Vulnerable Populations

Bus service was slashed during the recent COVID-19 lockdown. DART cut its fixed-route bus service in New Castle County to only 38% of its normal daily runs at the beginning of the lockdown. Cecil Transit also made significant reductions in Cecil County, pulling lines out of operation and ending weekend trips.

With many riders staying at home and the reduced daily runs, our region's bus ridership plummeted by 70% during that time. That exceeded the 40 to 50% decline in car traffic on the region's major roads.

Bus use during the pandemic was publicly discouraged. Skeleton bus services were for essential trips only — to work, to supermarkets, to doctor's offices, etc. While agencies stepped up sanitation efforts, enacted various passenger restrictions, and sought ways to keep both passengers and drivers safer, buses may have put passengers and drivers at some risk of viral transmission.

Riders who used bus service likely had no other readily available means of transportation. Many of these riders are our critical low-wage workers, or are otherwise people dependent on transit to meet basic needs.

These generally lower-income residents were more mobile than higher-income residents during the pandemic — a reversal of the norm — according to analyses of cell-phone location data by the firm Cuebiqu. In the Philadelphia metropolitan region, which includes New Castle County and Cecil County, around 60% of higher-income residents were sheltering in place at the beginning of the lockdown in late March. That can be compared to about 50% of lower-income residents sheltering in place at that same time.

In the weeks following the reduction of bus services, WILMAPCO conducted a high-level scan of bus coverage to vulnerable populations. We looked at the accessibility and frequency of the service from low-income areas located far from a supermarket (food deserts). We also considered the accessibility and frequency of service to areas with underlying public health concerns (areas of high Social Determinants of Health [SDOH]). These areas have underlying demographic and socio-economic conditions, such as high rates of poverty, racial segregation, and unemployment, which lead to worse health outcomes.

The analysis found that about 65% of households within food deserts in New Castle County were within walking distance to a bus line with direct, relatively frequent access to a supermarket. Some 86% of households in areas of high SDOH concern, meanwhile, were within walking distance to any bus line with relatively frequent service. Neighborhoods with limited coverage were often in Wilmington's suburbs. These include places like the Murray Manor Mobile home park off Kirkwood Highway, where more limited service and greater walking distances to reach bus stops are common, even with normal daily bus service.

In Cecil County, a key finding was that the continued operation of the Glasgow Route (operating as an on-demand service during the pandemic) more than doubled bus accessibility to residents in Elkton's areas of SDOH concern. These places include communities such as Hollingsworth Manor. With only the Cross-County Route in service, only 30% of households in Elkton's areas of SDOH concern were within walking distance to a bus. With the Glasgow Route in place, that figure jumped to 78%.

WILMAPCO shared its analyses and findings with both DART and Cecil Transit for their consideration when making future routing adjustments. We hope to use the methodology we developed here to further analyze bus service to vulnerable communities post-pandemic, carrying forward recommendations from the 2019 Transportation Justice Plan.



COVID-19 Leads to Surge in Walking and Bicycling

While driving and transit use have declined in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, interest has surged in safe places to practice social distancing while walking and bicycling.

Part of the reason is that these non-motorized options have filled a critical need for essential transportation while transit use may be risky due to physical proximity to others, or less reliable due to reduced schedules. Bicycling and walking have also filled a need for physical and mental health while fitness centers and recreational activities were shut down.

It has been said that “bikes are the new toilet paper,” and bike shops were classified as essential businesses in Delaware and Maryland with some restrictions.

Urban Bike Project distributed 209 bikes in May alone and Newark Bike Project distributed 310 bikes from March to May, a 70% increase from 2019.

Trail use surged. Counts collected by Delaware State Parks and DelDOT/Delaware Greenways showed heavy trail use. On May 2, for instance, the Jack Markell Trail saw more than 2,000 trips on a single day. Managers of trails have posted signs reminding people to keep 6 feet apart and wear a mask. Other trails have had restrictions on use, such as the Newark Reservoir becoming one-way and New Castle’s Battery Park being open to residents only.

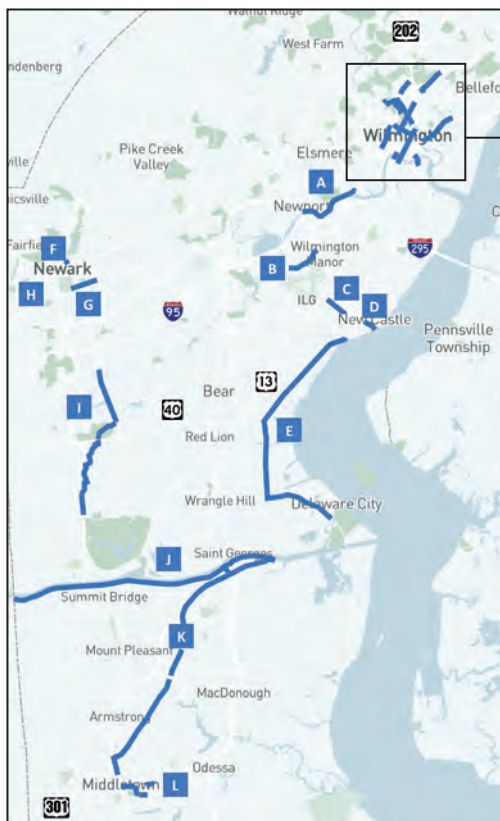
As businesses continue to reopen and social distancing continues, WILMAPCO will work with local

and state agencies to help keep us safe as we walk and bike.

Learn more about what other areas are doing at www.nacto.org/streets-for-pandemic-response-recovery.



WILMAPCO Endorses New Castle County Bicycle Plan



The WILMAPCO Council endorsed the New Castle County Bicycle Plan on May 7. The plan recommends strategies to improve the safety, access, and comfort of bicycling; prioritizes infrastructure improvements; and identifies programs and policies for education, enforcement, and encouragement in New Castle County. Local governments identified 22 priority projects as shown by the blue lines on the maps to the left.

Learn more and view the plan at www.wilmapco.org/bikenc.

- A Newport Connector
- B Commons Boulevard Connector
- C School Lane Trail
- D JAM to Battery Park Extension
- E New Castle-Delaware City Trail
- F Olan Thomas Sidewalk Conversion
- G Wyoming Road Protected Lanes
- H Newark Low-stress Wayfinding
- I Newark-Castle Trail Connector
- J C&D Canal South Bank
- K Middletown to St. George Path
- L Middletown Bike Connections

- M Wilmington Brew Works Trail
- N Augustine Cut-off/Connectors
- O Baynard Boulevard
- P Northeast Boulevard
- Q CBD Westbound Bikeway
- R East 4th Street Bridge
- S Walnut Street
- T Christina River SB Crossing
- U Downtown-Riverfront Connector
- V Adams/Jackson Streets

Concord Pike Corridor Master Plan Nears Completion

After nearly two years and extensive public input, the Concord Pike Corridor Master Plan is reaching the finish line. A draft of the plan is currently being finalized and will be released for public review in the coming months, when a final public workshop will be held.

Several outreach strategies were used to solicit public involvement in the plan, including four public workshops (both in person and virtual), online mapping, and two online surveys.

During the first public workshop, held in July 2018, nearly 200 attendees shared their visions for the future of the corridor. Ideas expressed included a desire for a more walkable area that considers the needs of seniors, the need for reduced speeding and traffic, more pedestrian and bicycle trails connecting the area's recreational amenities, and protection of the corridor's natural, wildlife, and open-space areas.

During a follow-up workshop, held in November 2018, many concerns were brought to light. Eighty-five

attendees expressed desires for more convenient access to a wide range of commercial amenities and services; a need to preserve and enhance the network of natural features, open spaces, parks, and trails; and a desire for more public spaces for community activities (farmers' markets, outdoor movies, festivals, etc.).

Stakeholder Focus Group meetings were also held in November 2018, where 36 of the area's business owners, politicians, and civic leaders were interviewed regarding the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improving the corridor. During this time, a Wiki Map was launched, where hundreds of residents and stakeholders shared their ideas on improving community connections and needed amenities via an interactive online map.

After collecting stakeholder and Wiki Map feedback, another public workshop was held in March 2019, where 135 people shared their thoughts on a range of land-use and transportation solutions

and potential redevelopment areas.

Another public workshop was then held in December 2019, which 86 people attended. The event included several stations with detailed information. Attendees provided their feedback and shared their thoughts on the possible solutions that were presented. A fourth virtual public workshop, held on April 1, 2020, allowed 125 attendees to view and provide feedback on draft land-use development scenarios and traffic analyses. It also helped





Climate Action Plan to Outline Options for Emissions Reductions

This year, the State of Delaware, through its Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), is putting together its first Climate Action Plan.

The Plan will outline steps the State can take to minimize greenhouse-gas emissions, which drive the climate change we see today. The Plan will also map out state-agency actions to maximize Delaware's resilience to climate change impacts like sea level rise, heavy precipitation, and increased temperatures.

Transportation is a key consideration for Delaware's Climate Action Plan. The transportation sector is currently the largest contributor to greenhouse-gas emissions in the state. Moreover, climate change is certain to impact Delaware's transportation system. Among other things, the state could face increased flooding of roadways and damage to road infrastructure. This is why strategies to reduce emissions and increase resilience in the transportation sector will be a focus area for the Plan.

Public input is an important part of developing Delaware's Climate Action Plan. DNREC held public and technical advisory workshops in early March to gather input on strategies that could reduce greenhouse-gas emissions in the state, including in the transportation sector. Summary reports from these workshops are posted on the Climate Action Plan website, www.declimateplan.org.

Later this year, the public will have an opportunity to provide input on the actions state agencies can take to help Delaware adapt to climate change. Details will be announced in the coming weeks.

To make sure you stay up to date on Delaware's Climate Action Plan, visit www.declimateplan.org and follow the Plan on social media (www.facebook.com/ClimateCoastalEnergyDE and [@EnergyClimateDE](https://twitter.com/EnergyClimateDE) on Twitter). You can also be notified of opportunities to provide input on the Plan by joining an email list for updates; simply email jamesw.lee@delaware.gov with your full name and subject line "Email List."

to further refine proposed improvements for specific intersections along the corridor.

Two online surveys were launched throughout the project to offer the additional opportunity for feedback, particularly for those unable to attend workshops. The first survey, available from November 2018 through January 2019, allowed its 220 respondents to share their greatest concerns for the corridor. Traffic and congestion as well as overcrowding were identified as the top concerns. The second survey, available from April 1 through June 1, 2020, allowed its 200 respondents the opportunity to share any remaining feedback.

The results of all the feedback were used to develop guiding principles and preliminary land-use recommendations — including establishing target redevelopment areas that focus development — and to develop a plan that best considers the needs of all.

To view all materials from the workshops, the Wiki Map, surveys, and a draft of the plan when available, please visit www.wilmapco.org/202.



Efforts to Implement Route 9 Master Plan Speed Up

Adopted in May 2017, the Route 9 Corridor Land Use and Transportation Master Plan identified the best reinvestment and redevelopment strategies for the Route 9 corridor south of Wilmington.

A Monitoring Committee — comprised of civic leaders, government, and other stakeholders — has been guiding plan implementation and extending the work into other areas of community need in the years since.

Key accomplishments in this past year include:

- **Memorial Drive Road Diet** – Pushed for an overbuilt roadway in the corridor to be restriped from four lanes to two, with a new bike lane and extra space for car parking. The change, implemented during a DelDOT repaving and considered an interim improvement in the Master Plan, is expected to reduce crashes and make Memorial Drive an easier and safer road to walk across. This was a key need identified by young people in the area.
- **Transportation Alternatives Program** – Supported DelDOT in the early stages of implementing about \$1 million worth of walking

and biking improvements at the Dunleith community entrance, and between the Route 9 Library & Innovation Center and Rose Hill Community Center. This New Castle County-sponsored initiative, sparked by a 2015 WILMAPCO Walkable Community Workshop Report, is being guided by members of the Monitoring Committee.

- **Proposed Amendment to the New Castle County Comprehensive Plan** – Provided feedback on proposal to incorporate the Master Plan into the county's Comprehensive Plan.
- **Supported Local-Hire Efforts** – Helped guide work by ProRank Business Solutions via a New Castle County grant to study the feasibility of implementing a local-hire preference on transportation contracts. Supported a local-hire pilot program by Everyone Can Achieve to train and hire a dozen unemployed and underemployed Route 9 residents as construction zone flaggers at prevailing wages.
- **Healthy Communities Delaware Grant** – In a partnership with the New Castle Prevention Coalition, awarded a \$50,000 grant to study the feasibility of developing and implementing community

infrastructure improvements. This includes considering the establishment of local nonprofits to support improved locally-driven landscaping and home repair work, and a community development corporation to drive the equitable redevelopment imagined in the Master Plan along the corridor.

- **Health Assessment and Action Plan** – Began data collection efforts for an area-wide Health Assessment and Action Plan. Led by the University of Delaware's Cooperative Extension, this work will seek to uncover and address health needs particular to the corridor. The South Wilmington Planning Network received a separate \$50,000 grant to support planning efforts in Southbridge.
- **Pandemic Response Support** – Advocated for increased COVID-19 testing along the corridor, advised on testing locations, shared demographic data to help the state prepare enough care kits for vulnerable residents, and utilized our public outreach databases to spread the word about testing opportunities and virus awareness and prevention.

New work for this coming year includes: rolling out a Route 9 Paths Plan that will refine and prioritize pieces of an interconnected walking and biking pathway network conceived in the Master Plan, developing an outreach video, and supporting the Clean Air Council with the deployment of local air monitors.

For more information on this work, to see a copy of the Route 9 Master Plan, or to get involved, please visit www.wilmapco.org/route9.



WILMAPCO Details Priorities for FY 2021

As another fiscal year (FY) draws to an end, WILMAPCO has started work on a slew of new projects for the upcoming year. All of WILMAPCO's projects, plans, and studies are described in our recently approved FY 2021 Unified Planning Workshop Program, or UPWP.

One responsibility of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) like WILMAPCO is to provide opportunities for participation in transportation decision-making. WILMAPCO staff undertake many activities to accomplish this, including presentations and briefings; public meetings and workshops; and coordination with other agencies and groups. These activities are detailed in our Public Participation Plan (www.wilmapco.org/ppp), currently available for public review and comment through Sept. 9.

While public outreach isn't new, WILMAPCO has placed an additional emphasis on its transportation-justice public outreach this year. This resulted from the recent 2019 Transportation Justice (TJ) Report (www.wilmapco.org/tj). The TJ report found several inequities in funding and safety in the low-income and minority communities in our region. When working in these communities, additional outreach measures will be employed. Communities of particular concern include ethnic and racial minorities, low income, those with disabilities, female-headed households with children, and those with Limited English Proficiency. Additional strategies for outreach to those communities may include investing in local relationship building, encouraging local leadership in studies, and striving for equitable participation.



Draft Public Participation Plan

JUNE 2020

Another major function of an MPO is to develop, research, and analyze data to assist member agencies and the public in understanding the demographic, economic, and transportation planning issues confronting the region. WILMAPCO collects, analyzes, and evaluates demographic, land-use, and transportation-related data, and seeks public input to understand the transportation needs of the region and inform decisions.

Managing all this data is no easy task, so to assist in data management and sharing, a Data Clearinghouse will be available on WILMAPCO's website. The clearinghouse will function as a common site for sharing and exchanging information. Data such as population and employment projections, roadway network coverages, transit ridership figures, accidents, travel time, congestion, and many other data sets will be available on the site. This format allows us to best accommodate individual public data requests.

Many other tasks are also outlined in the FY 21 UPWP. For the City of Wilmington, WILMAPCO will undertake a Union Street Reconfiguration and Streetscapes Improvement Study that will result in a preferred configuration of lanes on Union Street between Pennsylvania Avenue and Sycamore Street. We will also be updating the 1999 City of New Castle Transportation Plan and will analyze issues raised in the 2009 City of New Castle Comprehensive Development Plan.

WILMAPCO has a number of freight initiatives planned for FY 21 as well. These include a Statewide Truck Parking Study, an analysis of truck access to the Port of Wilmington, and a First and Final Mile Freight Study to help us develop a deeper understanding of the locations, roles, needs, and importance of the area's first- and last-mile facilities.

To learn more about these and other WILMAPCO studies, please visit www.wilmapco.org/upwp.

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WILMAPCO PUBLIC MEETINGS

For the latest information on meeting location or virtual login, please visit www.wilmapco.org
or email Dawn Voss at dvoss@wilmapco.org.

AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER
August 4, 3 p.m. Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group	September 3, 10 a.m. Air Quality Subcommittee	October 1, 10 a.m. Air Quality Subcommittee
August 6, 10 a.m. Air Quality Subcommittee	September 10, 10 a.m. WILMAPCO Council	October 6, 3 p.m. Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group
August 17, 6 p.m. Public Advisory Committee	September 17, 10 a.m. Technical Advisory Committee	October 15, 10 a.m. Technical Advisory Committee
August 20, 10 a.m. Technical Advisory Committee		October 19, 6 p.m. Public Advisory Committee



RIDESHARE DELAWARE, a free commuter services program of DART First State, is excited to present a special event called **CARING COMMUNITIES**.

A \$1,000 donation will be made to the Food Bank of Delaware once **3,000 work-from-home trips (telecommutes)** have been recorded through the RideShare Delaware program. Together, we can help our neighbors and make a difference. To record your trips, visit www.ridesharedelaware.org.