

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
MARCH 13, 2025**

The WILMAPCO Council meeting was held at WILMAPCO, 100 Discovery Boulevard, Suite 800, Newark, DE 19713 and virtually via Zoom.

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. John Sisson, Council Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

**Members present:**

John Sisson, Delaware Transit Corporation Chief Officer, WILMAPCO Chair  
Geoff Anderson, Maryland Department of Transportation Chief, Maryland Governor's Appointee  
John Carney, Mayor of City of Wilmington, Delaware  
David Culver, New Castle County Department of Land Use General Manager, representing  
County Executive Marcus Henry  
David Edgell, Delaware Office of State Planning, Delaware Governor's Appointee  
Stephen O'Connor, Cecil County Planner, representing Cecil County Executive, Adam Streight  
Pamela Steinebach, representing Delaware Secretary of Transportation, Shanté Hastings  
Eric Scott Thompson, Mayor of Elsmere, Delaware representing New Castle County  
Municipalities

**Members absent:**

Charlestown Commissioner, Cecil County Municipalities

**Guests, Observers:**

Jasmine Champion, FHWA  
William Goldman, Cecil County  
Maggie Heigl, AECOM Consultant  
Jeanne Jackson, DelDOT Tolls  
Shawn Kiernan, Maryland Department of Transportation  
Drew Marshall, Crypto Hydrate, Researcher  
Stephanie Mergler, City of Wilmington  
Kevin Schwar, DNREC  
Jordan Seemans, Harvey & Hanna  
Marilyn Smith, Dover/Kent MPO  
Sean Weaver, DelDOT  
Kelly Williams, City of Wilmington, Public Works Commissioner

**Staff members:**

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner  
Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner  
Sharen Elcock, Executive Assistant  
Elizabeth Espinal, Administrative Assistant  
Dave Gula, Principal Planner  
Bill Swiatek, Principal Planner  
Jacob Thompson, Senior Planner  
Dawn Voss, Outreach Coordinator  
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Minutes prepared by Elizabeth Espinal.

### **3. MINUTES:**

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. Stephen O'Connor seconded by Ms. Pamela Steinebach the Council approved the January 9, 2025, Council Meeting Minutes.

**Motion passed.**

**(03-13-25-01)**

### **4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:**

Mr. Drew Marshall has spent the past nine months assisting with parking enforcement outside the Islamic Society of Delaware. He urged support for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) proposal submitted on February 14th, aiming to improve infrastructure along the northern corridor of Salem Church Road by adding sidewalks, crosswalks, and turn lanes. Significant improvements have already been made in traffic flow and pedestrian safety. The initiative seeks further enhancements in collaboration with the German Club, the co-sponsor, and the Department of Land Use. For those with questions regarding the project, he offered availability after the meeting and welcomes the opportunity to connect.

### **COUNCIL MEMBERS' AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

#### **5. Chairperson's Report:**

Mr. John Sisson introduced Ms. Jeanne Johnson, who is participating in the DeIDOT Leadership Academy and is shadowing for the day. Ms. Johnson works in Toll Operations under the DMV. Mr. Sisson emphasized the value of the Leadership Academy, now in its 11th year, highlighting its role in fostering career development and providing participants with broader professional experiences. He expressed his appreciation for Ms. Johnson's presence and participation in the program.

Mr. Sisson announced that on the DART public hearings for the May service changes will take place March 17-21. These hearings will be held at the Wilmington Library from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM and at the Red Clay Adult Education Center from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM. The proposed changes include schedule modifications aimed at improving on-time performance. The full list of proposals is available online, and public comments can be submitted either in person at the hearings or through various virtual channels.

Mayor Carney inquired about the process used to determine necessary service changes and their timing. Mr. Sisson explained that current efforts focus on implementing the DART Reimagined recommendations, which were developed over a year and a half. The study assessed service demand shifts, particularly in response to changing post-COVID commuting patterns. The traditional 9-to-5 workforce has evolved, with more people working in the service industry, leading to adjustments in routes and scheduling.

As part of this, underperforming routes have been evaluated for potential elimination, while DART Connect, an on-demand transit service, is expanding across the state. Currently, two zones are in operation, with an additional 8 to 10 zones proposed. These changes aim to better align transit services with shifting travel behaviors, including alternative work schedules and the return to in-person work.

Mr. Sisson acknowledged the challenges of discontinuing low-performing routes, noting that even when ridership is minimal, the public often provides feedback on service reductions. Mayor Carney noted the impact of service changes on a small number of affected riders. Mr. Sisson concurred and referenced Delaware City, where last year's adjustments left 15 to 16

people without service. He also pointed out the indirect effects on Paratransit services and emphasized the importance of maintaining reliable on-time performance as congestion patterns shift.

Mayor Carney further observed that many buses appear nearly empty, particularly on major commuter routes in and out of the city. He questioned whether alternative solutions, such as rideshare services, bike-sharing, or smaller vehicles, had been considered to optimize efficiency.

Mr. Sisson responded that DART is gradually shifting its approach, particularly on routes with fluctuating ridership. For example, Route 13 continues to serve 20+ riders per trip, justifying the use of larger buses, while Route 8 may only have four to five riders, making it a candidate for smaller vehicles. However, due to federal regulations, buses must remain in service for 12 years before being replaced, making immediate changes challenging.

To address these concerns, shorter, cutaway buses have been ordered and will be incorporated as part of a gradual transition. Additionally, DART Connect services are expanding in areas with lower population density, allowing for more flexible and demand-based transit options rather than relying solely on fixed-route services.

Mr. Sisson concluded by announcing the establishment of the Nominating Committee for next year's Council officers. Pamela Steinebach, David Edgell, and Geoff Anderson have agreed to serve on the committee. Individuals interested in Council leadership roles are encouraged to contact them.

#### **Council Member's Reports:**

Ms. Pamela Steinebach introduced Mr. Sean Weaver, who is participating in the DelDOT Leadership Academy Program. Mr. Weaver is an engineer in DelDOT's Bridge Section and serves as the Co-Project Manager for the CAP I-95. Ms. Steinebach expressed appreciation for his presence and participation in the program.

Ms. Steinebach announced her upcoming transition to the role of Director of Maintenance and Operations, which will take effect in the coming weeks. Ms. Stephanie Johnson, currently serving as the Director of Transportation Resilience and Sustainability, will assume Ms. Steinebach's responsibilities in Planning and will represent DelDOT on the WILMAPCO Council.

The Council on Transportation met in February and formally adopted the new Capital Transportation Program (CTP) prioritization criteria, which will be used for the next CTP cycle. Additionally, DelDOT recently held what is expected to be a final discussion with federal officials to finalize the 2025–2030 CTP. While the plan has not yet been officially adopted, final federal approval is nearing just in time to initiate the new CTP cycle.

#### **6. Executive Director's Report – Ms. Tigist Zegeye shared the following report:**

- On February 6th, the Kirkwood Highway Plan held an advisory meeting.
- On February 10th, a public workshop for the Rocky Run Underpass Feasibility Study was conducted, with 33 attendees.
- On February 20th, Staff provided Pedestrian Safety instructions to approximately 40 students at Downes Elementary School during Family Night.

- On February 25th, the Maryland Route 272 Planning Committee met; its next meeting is scheduled for March 24th.
- On February 25th, Staff participated in the Delaware MPO and DeIDOT Roundtable.
- On February 26th, Staff attended the Council on Transportation meeting.
- On February 26th, the Newport Transportation Study Monitoring Committee convened.
- On February 28th, the final public workshop for the Kirkwood Highway Plan was held, with over 100 attendees.
- On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Augustine Cut-Off Reconfiguration Study held a public workshop, attended by over 60 people. A survey is now available online for those who could not attend.
- On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Ardens Transportation Plan Monitoring Committee met; its next meeting is scheduled for April 7th.
- On March 10th, the Air Quality Partnership of Delaware convened.
- On March 19th, the Churchman's Crossing project team will hold an official meeting for its monitoring committee (following its online office hours session earlier in the month).
- On March 20th, the Route 9 Master Plan Monitoring Committee will meet.
- On March 20th, Staff will participate in a webinar on public participation for the AMPO Core Product Interest Group.
- Staff will attend the National Planning Conference in Denver at the end of this month.
- On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, Staff will participate in the MASITE MPO Roundtable, which brings together transportation engineers and other professionals.
- On April 10-11th, Staff will host a pedestrian safety station at Downes Elementary School.
- On April 17th, Staff will represent the Air Quality Partnership with its mascot, TROPO, at the Wilmington Earth Day event.
- On April 21st, the East Elkton Monitoring Committee will meet.
- On the Newport Train Station Project, DTC has selected JMT consultants to complete the NEPA and PE phases for the project. The work is expected to take 18–24 months.
- Staff will be working on joining Delaware's Comprehensive Climate Action Plan Update's Transportation Core Team, which is responsible for developing transportation policy within the plan.
- On another note, the DVRPC has postponed the development of the MSA Comprehensive Climate Action Plan due to concerns regarding the availability of federal funds, project staffing, and competing priorities.

Finally, Ms. Zegeye reported that the Financial Report indicates approximately 58% of the budget has been expended as of the end of February.

Mayor Carney inquired whether discussion on the Climate Action Plan was permitted. He further noted that he had recently read a report indicating that upcoming changes might affect the plan. Ms. Tigist Zegeye confirmed that there are indeed ongoing changes. She explained that she is currently working with AMPO (the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations), which is compiling a list of terms that may need to be revised or removed from official documentation. She added that they are awaiting final guidance on these modifications. Additionally, she emphasized that all federally funded projects must receive approval from the FHWA and the FTA.

Mayor Carney then asked if there was any information available regarding potential reductions in transportation funding.

Mr. John Sisson responded, acknowledging the complexity of the issue. He noted that formula funding appears to remain stable, while discretionary grants face a higher risk of reductions. He stated that, at present, there are obligated funds in place, so there is no immediate concern. However, he pointed out that discretionary grants related to electric vehicles, hydrogen vehicles, and similar initiatives remain uncertain as federal funding decisions continue to evolve.

#### **7. Public Advisory Committee (PAC) Report:**

None.

#### **8. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Report:**

Ms. Tigist Zegeye reported that the TAC met on January 16th, during which no action items were presented. Three presentations were made on the Transportation Justice Update, the Rocky Run Feasibility Study, and the Claymont Area Master Plan.

Ms. Zegeye reported that at the February meeting, the committee addressed three action items: Recommendation to amend the FY 2025-2028 TIP to include funding for the I-95 and SR 896 interchange; recommendation is to amend the TIP to allocate additional funds for the Route 40 and SR 896 improvements; and recommendation for approval of the Technical Scoring and Project Prioritization for the 2025 New Castle County TAP. Additionally, two presentations were delivered during the meeting, a Performance Report from Maryland, and the Augustine Cut-Off Bike and Pedestrian Improvement Study.

Mayor Carney inquired about the PAC and TAC, asking for clarification on their roles. Ms. Zegeye explained that the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) consists of community members and stakeholders, while the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is composed of staff members from Council member agencies. Mayor Carney then asked about the current membership status of both committees. Ms. Zegeye stated that while the TAC is fully staffed, the PAC has vacancies. The PAC currently has 18 members but can accommodate up to 24. Mr. John Sisson acknowledged that administrative changes sometimes impact committee membership.

Mayor Carney then asked about the current representatives for the City of Wilmington. Ms. Zegeye confirmed that both the TAC and PAC have city representatives. Mr. Gula provided specific names, stating that Steve Weber and Gwinneth Kaminsky-Rivera serve on the TAC, while Sarah Lester, from West Cornerstone Community Projects, is the sole representative on the PAC. Additionally, Ms. Zegeye encouraged the Mayor's office to submit member recommendations, as additional PAC representatives would be welcomed.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

##### **9. To Amend the FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).**

Mr. Jake Thompson reported that DelDOT has requested an amendment to the FY 2025–2028 TIP to increase funding for the I-95 and SR 896 interchange project, which was last amended in November 2024. The project's current total funding stands at \$173.901 million. The proposed amendment would increase the total funding to \$189.06 million, representing an increase of \$15.158 million.

The TAC recommended endorsement of the amendment at its February 20th meeting. The Air Quality Subcommittee reviewed the request via email and confirmed that it does not trigger any conformity issues. WILMAPCO staff also recommends approval of the amendment.

Mayor Carney inquired about the reason for the increase in project funding. Ms. Heather Dunigan responded that it was her understanding that DelDOT intended to utilize contingency funds that had been previously set aside, which prompted the need for the amendment. Ms. Tigist Zegeye added that she believed the funding increase may be related to soil condition issues encountered during the project. She also noted that there were cost adjustments involving the reallocation of funds from US 40 to the SR 896/I-95 interchange project, which had been extended to include nearby intersections.

Mr. John Sisson confirmed that there is active construction in the area, including work on the bike path over I-95, which extends south toward the interchange. The current interchange project continues to progress southward, encompassing more comprehensive improvements, including the bike infrastructure.

Ms. Pam Steinebach provided additional clarification, stating that although there is no change to the scope of the I-95 and SR 896 interchange project, the contractor encountered unanticipated complications during the pipe installation. As a result, the contingency funds initially set aside for such issues were heavily used. Had these funds not been needed, they would have been returned. The amendment ensures these contingency expenditures are accounted for. She also emphasized that the funds being added are for projects scheduled to be implemented in FY 2026, and they are not adding to a longer-term funding list.

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. David Culver and seconded by Ms. Pamela Steinebach the Council approved the request to amend the TIP.

**Motion passed.**

**(03-13-25-02)**

**10. To Amend the FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).**

Mr. Jake Thompson reported that DelDOT has requested an amendment to the FY 2025–2028 TIP to increase funding for the US 40 and SR 896 improvements project, which was last amended in November 2024. The current total project funding is \$2.882 million. The proposed amendment would increase that amount to \$7.882 million, reflecting a total increase of just under \$5 million.

The TAC recommended amendment at its February 20th meeting. The AQS reviewed the amendment via email and determined that it does not trigger a conformity analysis. WILMAPCO staff supports and recommends approval of the amendment.

Mr. John Sisson added that the project is currently in the design phase, which will continue over the next three fiscal years, with construction funding scheduled for FY 2028. He then asked if there were any questions.

Mayor Carney inquired whether the funding consists of federal and state dollars, or if it is solely federal. Mr. Sisson responded that the project is funded 80% with federal funds, and the construction phase will utilize toll credits. He noted that a deeper explanation of toll credits could be provided, and that Ms. Lanie could help explain further if needed.

Mr. Culver remarked that the project is long overdue and expressed hope that it is finally progressing through the pipeline. He asked for clarification on what the project entails. Mr.

Sisson explained that the project involves constructing a grade-separated interchange as part of the broader SR 896/I-95 improvements. He noted that the improvements are critical but cannot be completed simultaneously, as doing so would result in significant gridlock in the area. He credited Ms. Pam Steinebach's team for their work in tackling the complexities of these corridors, focusing on safety and congestion improvements across major intersections.

Ms. Steinebach elaborated that the project will elevate SR 896 over US 40. She noted the complexity of the area, with businesses lining US 40 and proximity to parks, making safety improvements a key driver. She emphasized that the interchange is expected to bring major relief to congestion, but acknowledged the high cost associated with such improvements.

Mayor Carney added that the I-95/SR 896 interchange is currently confusing and difficult to navigate, with insufficient signage, particularly for drivers traveling northbound who are unable to exit appropriately near the welcome center. Mr. Sisson asked for clarification on whether the issue was near SR 896 or the Welcome Center. Mayor Carney replied that he had a firsthand negative experience during a recent trip, noting that contractors need to improve signage in the area approaching SR 896 and the Welcome Center. Ms. Steinebach confirmed the issue, stating that for northbound I-95 traffic, the exit is not accessible, and she committed to reaching out to Mark in Construction to address the concern.

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. David Culver and seconded by Mr. John Carney the Council approved the request to amend the TIP.

**Motion passed.**

**(03-13-25-03)**

#### **11. To recommend approval of the Project Prioritization for the 2025 New Castle County Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).**

Mr. Jake Thompson presented the TAP submissions from New Castle County, along with the technical scores for those projects. A call for new projects in New Castle County was issued, and submissions were accepted through February 14. An additional call for projects in Cecil County is planned for the spring. TAP is a set-aside program within the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program, requiring a minimum 20% funding match. The program funds pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects, with eligible activities listed on [WILMAPCO's website](#).

Each submission underwent a prioritization process based on transportation criteria, with projects earning points for factors such as proximity to bus stops, designated bicycle routes, existing greenways, high-crash areas, abandoned railway corridors, or for closing gaps in pedestrian and bicycle networks. Additional points were awarded for locations near community centers, schools, parks, municipalities, historic elements, or areas with high population and employment density, EJ neighborhoods, or residential Black concentrations.

Mr. Thompson presented the New Castle County TAP Submissions and Technical Scores, and these five projects were submitted and ranked based on prioritization criteria:

##### **1. Ardens State Roads Crossing Improvements (18 points) –**

- Location: Harvey Rd. and Veale Rd., Ardens
- Scope: Enhancing pedestrian crossings identified in the Ardens Transportation Plan, improving connections to the village's off-road path network

- Funding Use: Community outreach, preliminary engineering, and design for up to six crossing locations

## **2. Adams Street Sidewalk Improvements (23 points) –**

- Location: Adams St. from 6th St. to Delaware Ave., Wilmington
- Scope: Sidewalk replacement, ADA upgrades, traffic calming measures, intersection improvements, and minor landscaping

## **3. Northern Salem Church Road Corridor Improvement Plan (15 points) –**

- Location: Salem Church Road, from SR 4 to Chapman Road
- Scope: New sidewalks, crosswalks, and left-turn lanes to improve access to the Islamic Society of Delaware and the Delaware Seagarbund and Library Association

## **4. Commons Blvd. Pathway Phase 2 (13 points) –**

- Location: Along a two-mile alignment from SR 141 to Old Airport Rd.
- Scope: Construction of a 10-foot-wide asphalt path

## **5. City of New Castle Delaware River Trail (Petty Path) (12 points) –**

- Location: Business Park to the City of New Castle
- Scope: Riverfront trail with lighting and a potential scenic overlay.

Mr. Jake Thompson presented the overall results of the project prioritization process. The Adams Street Sidewalk Improvements ranked first, receiving 23 points. The Arden State Roads Crossing Improvements ranked second with 18 points, followed by the Northern Salem Church Road Corridor Improvement Plan in third place with 15 points. The Commons Boulevard Pathway, Phase II placed fourth with 13 points, and the Delaware River Trail ranked fifth with 12 points.

The TAC recommended Council approval of these rankings at its February 20th meeting. Additionally, the Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group reviewed the prioritization via email. Based on that review, DelDOT recommends the following as priority projects:

- *Adams Street Sidewalk Improvements*
- *Commons Boulevard Pathway, Phase II*
- *Northern Salem Church Road Corridor Improvement Plan*

WILMAPCO staff concurs and recommends Council approval of these priority projects.

Mr. John Sisson questioned if the vote was being taken on the top three prioritized projects: the Adams Street Sidewalk Improvements, the Northern Salem Church Road Corridor Improvement Plan, and the Commons Boulevard Pathway, Phase II.

Ms. Tigist Zegeye responded that staff was recommending the use of the technical scoring results. However, she noted that DelDOT, due to its need to quickly expend TAP funds to avoid forfeiture, recommended the order as follows:

1. Adams Street Sidewalk Improvements
2. Commons Boulevard Pathway – Phase II



### 3. Northern Salem Church Road Improvement Plan

Ms. Heather Dunigan added that the TAP project prioritization process includes reviewing the technical scoring and Council ranking based on technical scores and any other factors.

Mayor Carney inquired about the purpose of this approval, asking whether it places the projects on a plan to eventually receive funding. Ms. Pam Steinebach explained that the approval is a step toward securing funding, although the projects may not be funded immediately.

Mr. Sisson added that the approval supports two of the projects moving into the construction phase and clarified that this approval is required before a project can enter the TAP funding pipeline.

Ms. Steinebach elaborated that TAP is a specific type of funding, and approval is necessary before a project can move forward. She emphasized that projects from other areas such as Cheswold or Dover, would have to go through Dover/Kent MPO.

Mayor Carney asked whether the only way to be included on the list is to go through this committee's approval first. Ms. Zegeye confirmed that all projects in this region must go through this process and noted that submissions had been received from both New Castle County and the City of Wilmington.

Mayor Carney noted that the City of Wilmington had submitted a list of potential projects, and this process appeared to be a result of that effort. Mr. Sisson confirmed that all public agencies are eligible to submit projects.

Mr. Drew Marshall commented on the Northern Salem Church Road project, mentioning that there are four non-ADA compliant bus stops along Route 10, where riders are often seen waiting without benches or shelters. He highlighted the safety concerns and the volume of pedestrians, especially on Fridays. He stated that while they have already taken steps to accommodate pedestrian needs by removing 35 parking spaces, there is more to be done.

Mr. O'Connor raised a question regarding the urgency of funding, asking Ms. Steinebach if the intent was to expend the funds in FY 2026 and avoid adding to a long list of pending projects.

Ms. Steinebach explained that while there are currently 8 to 11 top-ranked projects, some of the rolling TAP funds are set to expire in the next fiscal year. Therefore, it is important to obligate the funding before it is potentially rescinded.

Mr. O'Connor acknowledged the response, affirming that this process was not contributing to a backlog of 30-40 projects, but was focused on a select group.

Ms. Dunigan explained that this was an extra call for projects, outside the normal summer cycle. WILMAPCO and DelDOT initiated this process because of concerns that unspent TAP funds might be rescinded. She emphasized that although this cycle had fewer submissions, the intention is to return to the regular schedule in the future. She referred to this as a "mini cycle."

Mr. Culver asked whether these projects are subject to rescinded callback provisions. Ms. Dunigan responded that they are not yet and emphasized the importance of moving forward swiftly to avoid missing future funding opportunities.

**ACTION:** On motion by Mr. David Culver and seconded by Mr. John Carney the Council approved the project prioritization for the 2025 New Castle County Transportation Alternatives Program.

**Motion passed.**

**(03-13-25-04)**

**PRESENTATIONS:**

**12. FY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

Ms. Tigist Zegeye presented WILMAPCO's proposed FY2026 UPWP. She began by outlining the funding sources and cash commitments. Delaware funding includes approximately \$2.5 million from the FHWA, \$943,000 from the FTA, and \$808,000 from the State of Delaware. Additional contributions include \$31,500 from New Castle County and \$11,796 from the City of Wilmington, which is allocated between the Public Works and Planning Departments. Maryland funding includes FHWA is providing approximately \$94,000, MDOT and Cecil County splitting 20% and 10% contributions, respectively, amounting to \$15,856. The total funding for FY2026 is approximately \$4.4 million.

The UPWP includes 13 tasks ranging from administration to the monitoring and implementation of regional studies. A significant portion of the funding is directed towards monitoring and sub-regional studies, as well as coordination efforts with member agencies. Additionally, funding supports RTP implementation and administrative functions, including staffing and committee operations.

In February, WILMAPCO issued a call for project submissions from member agencies, which include municipalities in both New Castle and Cecil counties. Three project submissions were received from member agencies, with two additional projects included by staff.

The first submission, from DelDOT, focuses on intersection control evaluations and alternative screening in New Castle County. This initiative aims to apply a data-driven, performance-based approach to intersection evaluations, following FHWA guidance. Initially derived from the Kirkwood Highway Program, DelDOT identified the potential for statewide application. The requested funding amount is \$100,000 for up to six intersections. WILMAPCO staff recommend expanding the project scope to include additional intersections, increasing the proposed funding to \$200,000.

The second submission is a joint proposal from New Castle County and DelDOT for the Southern New Castle County Growth Area Land Use and Transportation Plan. This project seeks to update the TID and the Southern New Castle County Master Plan, which was last revised several years ago. The requested funding is \$200,000, with an anticipated completion timeline extending to 2027. Staff recommend including this project in the UPWP with the understanding that additional time will be required for completion.

The third submission, jointly proposed by New Castle County and Cecil County, is the Logistics and Fulfillment Center Transportation Land Use Impact Study. This study will evaluate the effects of logistics and fulfillment centers on roadway infrastructure in both counties, considering the facilities' size and operational impact. The requested funding for this project is \$60,000. However, WILMAPCO staff recommend increasing the budget to \$100,000 to ensure comprehensive analysis and presentation of findings to both counties and stakeholders.

An additional staff-recommended project involves conducting a Sidewalk Gap Analysis for New Castle and Cecil counties, with a proposed budget of \$200,000. This project is in response to

frequent requests from DOTs and member agencies to assess sidewalk connectivity gaps within the region. WILMAPCO plans to collaborate with both counties and their respective DOTs on this initiative.

The final submission pertains to the Delaware Statewide Freight Plan Update, with a funding request of \$75,000. WILMAPCO will contribute \$50,000 towards the update, alongside contributions from Dover/Kent MPO and Sussex County, with the majority of funding provided by DelDOT. An additional \$25,000 is allocated for a truck parking count at various park-and-ride locations in coordination with DTC.

The following page outlines consultant funding allocations for FY2026. Newly proposed projects are highlighted in yellow, while ongoing initiatives include data analysis, intersection and congestion management, and the implementation and monitoring of sub-regional reports. The total consultant budget is approximately \$2 million.

A subsequent page details the allocation of total funds by federal, state, and local agencies. This information was shared with the Council last week and will be presented to the PAC in April, with the PAC focusing on the public outreach component of the UPWP. The draft UPWP will be available for public review from March 24 through April 24, with final adoption by the Council scheduled for May 1. Following approval, the plan will be submitted to the FHWA, FTA, DelDOT, and MDOT, with an anticipated implementation date of July 1st.

Mayor Carney inquired about the origins of the funding and the specific work plans to which it applies. Ms. Zegeye explained that the UPWP is funded 80% by the Federal Highway Administration, with a 20% local match. In Delaware, the match comes from DelDOT, the City of Wilmington, and New Castle County. In Maryland, the state and Cecil County each contribute 10% toward the match. This funding supports the entirety of the UPWP, which includes several ongoing projects from the Wilmington Initiatives. These initiatives focus on transportation planning and coordination of multiple projects; most of which are currently in the design or construction phases. One planner at WILMAPCO is dedicated to monitoring these projects in collaboration with the City of Wilmington.

Mr. Sisson elaborated that these projects often begin with large-area master plans, such as those for Claymont, and then identify individual components to be advanced through design and construction. He emphasized the collaborative nature of the Wilmington Initiatives, which include DelDOT and DART as partners, and noted how changes in land use (e.g., office buildings becoming apartments) affect transportation patterns. He also highlighted an innovative approach; transforming underused park-and-ride lots into truck parking facilities, which has gained national attention. Truck parking shortages have become a pressing issue, with trucks frequently parking along highway ramps due to lack of space.

Mayor Carney referenced personal observations of truck congestion at the welcome center near the interstate, pointing out that trucks were parked far beyond designated areas. Mr. Sisson responded that DelDOT is exploring expansion of truck parking at that location. He noted the challenges in logistics planning and the need for developments, such as distribution centers, to include adequate parking for trucks awaiting their delivery windows.

Mr. Culver shared that New Castle County is revising its warehouse regulations to require rest areas and truck accommodations at fulfillment centers. He encouraged the City of Wilmington to consider similar updates.

Mayor Carney then questioned whether park-and-ride lots were underutilized due to changes in commuting behavior. Mr. Sisson confirmed that transit ridership remains below pre-COVID levels, with commuter rail down 45% and overall bus ridership down about 25%. He observed that parking lots, including the Wilmington parking deck, show significantly less use on Mondays and Fridays, reflecting shifts in work patterns. This shift has impacted projects like a park-and-ride on U.S. 301, which had been built to serve pre-pandemic commuting needs.

Mr. Carney acknowledged similar trends seen by the Wilmington Parking Authority. Mr. Sisson concurred, noting that the focus has shifted to managing truck-related issues.

Mr. Dan Blevins concluded by noting that WILMAPCO is currently monitoring parking usage at park-and-ride facilities. He added that Mr. Mark Larkin had requested conducting counts every half hour to better assess overnight usage. Additional counts will resume in the fall as part of an ongoing effort to track and potentially reconfigure the use of these facilities.

### **13. Augustine Cut-Off Corridor Bike/Ped Improvements Study**

Mr. Dave Gula delivered a detailed presentation on Phase 2 of the Augustine Cut-Off Multimodal Improvement Study. He emphasized that the initial steps involve close collaboration with key stakeholders, including New Castle County Council, DelDOT, DART, and the City of Wilmington, as a portion of the corridor lies within city limits. In addition to agency representatives and elected officials, the study also includes participation from community institutions and local residents to ensure a diverse range of perspectives, particularly those who use the corridor regularly, not just those who live along it.

The corridor stretches from Concord Pike, (Route 202) down to Lovering Avenue, with connections to 18th Street and Cantera Road. The study places significant emphasis on intersections, which are a major focus for safety and design improvements.

The project is roughly halfway complete, following a well-attended public workshop in early March that drew more than 60 participants, more than were expected. Mr. Gula described Phase 2 as more comprehensive than Phase 1, which had a narrower focus and was limited to the segment from Edgewood Road to Lovering Avenue. Phase 1 did not adequately address issues like traffic calming or fully engage surrounding neighborhoods. Phase 2 seeks to correct this by integrating broader community feedback and analyzing the entire corridor from Concord Pike to Lovering Avenue.

Key goals include addressing safety concerns, especially for pedestrians and cyclists, and mitigating vehicle speeds, which currently exceed posted limits. The corridor is characterized by long stretches of open roadway, minimal shoulder protection, and high travel speeds. Mr. Gula noted that existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is lacking, making non-vehicular travel hazardous. The project aims to create a safer environment for all users, including, motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists alike.

The corridor has been a focus of planning efforts since 2018 and was identified in both the City of Wilmington's and New Castle County's bike plans. It was submitted for DelDOT's Bike/Ped pool funding and included in the county's "Connecting Communities" initiatives. Though a previous DelDOT Secretary had issued a letter opposing expansion of the Augustine Cut-Off, legal clarification from the Deputy Attorney General determined that the letter was specific to adding travel lanes, so improvements confined within the existing right-of-way do not constitute an "expansion." This allowed the study to proceed.

Phase 2 proposes an extension northward to Edgewood Road and Concord Pike. It also incorporates concerns voiced during Phase 1 regarding traffic volumes, safety, and roadway design. Mr. Gula described this phase as taking a “Safe System” approach—one that considers the roadway comprehensively, accounting for all travel modes. He stressed that merely adjusting speed limits or enforcement is ineffective without physical changes to roadway design that influence driver behavior.

Speed studies revealed consistent speeding along the corridor, with most drivers exceeding limits by 9 to 10 mph. Particular concern was raised about downhill segments where speeds are harder to control. Crash data highlighted clusters of incidents; especially at intersections like Alapocas Drive and 18th Street and included a fatality involving a pedestrian with dementia, along with frequent deer-related accidents.

The study found that around 70% of southbound traffic is through traffic, not local. Northbound traffic showed similar, though less extreme, patterns. Major traffic generators include Insight, 18th Street (access to Salesianum School), and Friends School.

Mr. Gula introduced the concept of Intersection Control Evaluations (ICE) to guide recommendations for intersection treatments, such as roundabouts or signalization, based on data-driven analysis rather than assumptions.

The presentation included case studies of successful corridor redesigns, illustrating how physical changes can positively affect driver behavior and safety. Mr. Gula emphasized the importance of integrating aesthetic elements like street trees and thoughtful landscaping, both to calm traffic and to address resident concerns about impacts on private property.

The March public workshop used randomized seating to encourage cross-neighborhood dialogue. Participants shared written feedback on corridor concerns and helped prioritize key issues. The results informed an online survey, open through April 11, available at [www.wilmapco.org/augustinecutoff](http://www.wilmapco.org/augustinecutoff). The survey invites residents to rank priorities based on their travel modes such as: driving, walking, or biking.

Mr. Gula noted a shift in public sentiment since Phase 1. Residents who were previously opposed to any improvements, including one who objected to any expansion, have become more receptive—some even now requesting roundabouts to slow traffic near their homes. He attributed this shift to increased public understanding of the safety benefits.

Mayor Carney added that the corridor was originally improved as part of infrastructure development to support AstraZeneca’s relocation. However, circumstances have changed, and the corridor now functions more as a high-speed commuter route than a community-focused roadway. He emphasized the need to rebalance priorities to serve residents.

Mr. Gula concluded by reaffirming the project’s commitment to safety and connectivity, especially in linking New Castle County’s and Wilmington’s trail networks. He noted that only a few attendees at the workshop voiced strong opposition, and many participants expressed support after engaging in the issues in more detail.

#### **14. Claymont Area Master Plan**

Ms. Heather Dunigan provided an update on the Claymont Area Master Plan and mentioned that recent public engagement efforts have become more complex and somewhat controversial, prompting additional community outreach.

In January, a small, self-organized group of stakeholders convened in a closed-door meeting, where WILMAPCO representatives addressed a list of submitted questions. In February, a second meeting involving the same group and elected officials took place, but WILMAPCO was not invited to participate. Following this meeting, WILMAPCO received a letter from the newly elected state senator for the district. This letter, which was also shared with the WILMAPCO Council last week, presented an unusual request to halt the planning process.

In response, WILMAPCO followed up with Senator Siegfried, clarifying that a public workshop had already been planned and emphasizing that an ongoing public process could not be halted due to a private, closed-door meeting. In consequence additional engagement efforts have been implemented including an upcoming Advisory Committee meeting and a public workshop. The next Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for April 28th at the same community center as previous meetings. The fourth public workshop is tentatively set for May 14th or May 19th, pending final venue approval.

In parallel with these outreach efforts, WILMAPCO is conducting further assessments of the intersection at Philadelphia Pike and Governor Printz Boulevard. In January, discussions were held with representatives from The Waterfall, a prominent local event venue that hosts weddings, proms, and other large gatherings. With a maximum capacity of approximately 800 guests across its two ballrooms, it was essential to evaluate potential traffic impacts from one of their busiest events. As a result, WILMAPCO is re-running intersection analyses to explore options such as improved signal timing and assessing the feasibility of a proposed roundabout to avoid detrimental impacts on area businesses.

Following the Advisory Committee meeting and public workshop, WILMAPCO will make further revisions to the draft report. At this stage, it is unlikely that a single preferred transportation scenario will emerge due to the strong divergence of community opinions. Instead, the report will document all considered scenarios, outlining community concerns and detailing the pros and cons of each option.

Additionally, some lower-cost improvements, such as modifications to traffic signal timing or repaving, may be achievable in coordination with scheduled corridor rehabilitation efforts. However, larger-scale projects will require continued community dialogue beyond the scope of this study. WILMAPCO plans to present the revised report in June for a recommendation of adoption, with final approval anticipated at the July Council meeting.

Mr. Sisson, representing DelDOT and DART, emphasized the importance of sustained public engagement and transparency. He noted that while communities may initially resist changes, over time they often come to value the outcomes of well-considered planning efforts.

Mayor Carney reflected on the unique challenges facing Claymont, citing the absence of a formal municipal government and significant changes in the community's demographics and built environment. He described Claymont as a place with a complex identity and fragmented public sentiment.

Ms. Dunigan addressed the spread of misinformation, particularly rumors that the planning process intended to remove a local statue to accommodate a proposed roundabout. She reaffirmed her commitment to the community and recognized the passionate involvement of local residents, acknowledging their deep-rooted investment in the area. She further explained that while planners strive for community-driven solutions, achieving transformative goals such as Vision Zero often entails difficult decisions.

Discussion also turned to the redevelopment of the Claymont Station area. Mr. Sisson highlighted ongoing rezoning and mixed-use development opportunities that could help catalyze local revitalization. Mr. Culver reinforced this point, expressing optimism about future planning around the station and disappointment in previous redevelopment efforts, including those at Tri-State Mall. He advocated for a more visionary and creative approach to redevelopment moving forward.

Ms. Dunigan provided assurances that zoning and land use recommendations continue to progress and that transportation-related improvements, such as those outlined in Scenario One could offer practical, near-term benefits. She cited language from a letter sent by a newly elected state senator, which called for a shared vision informed by local institutions and residents, warning that an unfocused roundabout proposal could become a time-consuming misstep.

In response to Mayor Carney's inquiry about the fire department's position on the roundabout, Ms. Dunigan clarified that the department had actively participated in all public workshops and advisory committee meetings, and any claims of exclusion were inaccurate. Mr. Sisson acknowledged that while some fire officials remain opposed to the roundabout concept, such designs can be navigated effectively. He suggested that beginning with smaller, less controversial improvements might help build consensus.

Mr. Culver added that thoughtful staging beginning with improvements near the train station could help establish broader support. Mayor Carney inquired about the main objective being to reduce traffic speed. Ms. Dunigan confirmed that a primary objective of the proposed improvements is to reduce traffic speeds to align more closely with posted limits. She noted that simply lowering the speed limit or increasing police enforcement would be ineffective without corresponding changes to roadway design.

Mr. Gula concluded the discussion by observing that while it may take years for major infrastructure projects to move from planning to implementation, the time can allow communities to better understand and accept proposed changes. He reiterated the importance of focusing first on feasible, near-term improvements as part of a sustained, long-term planning strategy.

#### **INFORMATION ITEMS:**

##### **15. DeIDOT's Administrative Modification Request Letters**

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Meeting adjourned at 3:53 p.m.

#### **ATTACHMENTS: (0)**