

Spring 2021

Quarterly newsletter of the Wilmington Area Planning Council

TRANSPORTER

WILMAPCO

Celebrate Earth Day With Us!

Join the City of Wilmington, the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, the Air Quality Partnership of Delaware, and many more organizations this April for a full week of virtual Earth Day and Arbor Day celebrations.

From April 19 through April 23, you'll have the opportunity to enjoy interactive live streams, educational videos, activities, and resources, all related to one of our Earth Week themes. The themes include Food and Gardening, Transportation, Water, and Plants.

Students can also take part in an interactive scavenger hunt with opportunities to win great prizes.

Adults can join in the fun (and the prizes) by pledging to complete one of our "try-it" activities and committing to small behavioral changes that can have a big impact on helping to improve our environment, like walking, biking, and carpooling more often.

For more information and a complete schedule of events and offerings, please visit www.delawareestuary.org/earthandarbort.



IMPORTANT News!

WILMAPCO is converting this printed newsletter to a digital version. Unless we hear from you, this will be **the last issue** you receive.

PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS, SO WE CAN KEEP PROVIDING YOU WITH THIS IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

To continue to receive WILMAPCO's Transporter Newsletter, please email Dawn Voss at dvoss@wilmapco.org or call (302) 737-6205 ext. 110.

We will continue to mail printed newsletters upon request. Please call or email Dawn to request a printed copy.

*Don't be
left out
of the
planning
process.*

Delaware Population Consortium Has Released Its Annual Population Projections



On November 4, the Delaware Population Consortium (DPC) adopted its most recent series of population, household, and employment projections for the State of Delaware and its three counties. These figures are produced on an annual basis to provide policymakers, planners, and the general public with an agreed-upon set of numbers that factor into all levels of decision-making.

Overall, the projections show Delaware falls in line with the

national trend of slower growth as birth rates continue to fall. The state will still see an increase of about 75,000 in total population from 2020 through 2050 due to people moving to Delaware.

During the next few decades, Delaware is expected to undergo several demographic changes in the composition of its residents that include:

- New Castle County is expected to “peak” in population around 2041, then begin a slight decline.

- Sussex County will grow the most in numbers (59,979) and percentage (78%). Net in-migration is driving this growth.
- The 65-and-over population will continue to grow statewide by 39% from 2020 to 2050. This population is expected to increase by approximately 41,000 in New Castle County, topping out at about 131,000 residents over the age of 65 by 2050. This age group is expected to make up nearly a quarter of the county’s population by 2050.
- Sometime before 2025, Delaware’s natural population growth (births vs. deaths) will turn negative, meaning that more deaths than births will occur. The only growth expected will be based upon migration into the state.

For more details, or to view the full set of projections, please visit the Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination at <https://stateplanning.delaware.gov/demography/dpc.shtml>.

County Population Projections for Delaware: 2020-2050

Population	2010 Census	2020	2030	2040	2050	2020-2050 Population Change
New Castle	539,642	558,863	566,642	571,198	566,364	7,501
Kent	162,847	181,673	187,388	189,601	189,562	7,889
Sussex	197,970	239,384	270,128	289,698	299,363	59,979
DE Total	900,459	979,920	1,024,158	1,050,497	1,055,289	75,369

% of Population	2010 Census	2020	2030	2040	2050
New Castle	60%	57%	55%	54%	54%
Kent	18%	19%	18%	18%	18%
Sussex	22%	24%	26%	28%	28%

Source: Delaware Population Consortium, Version 2020.0 October 2020

WILMAPCO Invites Public Comment on New Castle Transportation Plan



WILMAPCO, the City of New Castle, and DelDOT have begun working with the community to develop an updated City of New Castle Transportation Plan. The city's last transportation plan was adopted in 1999, so our planning will further analyze previously identified issues, build upon the 2020 Comprehensive Plan, and seek new ideas.

The purpose of this plan is to:

- Improve the multimodal transportation network, provide connectivity to communities and trails, enhance health and livability, reduce illegal truck traffic, and improve safety

- Address flooding and sea-level rise impacts on land use and access to major transportation corridors
- Improve gateways to the historic city
- Develop a shared-parking analysis

The plan kicked off a visioning process held this winter at a February 10 Public Workshop. During the workshop, following a brief study overview, participants broke into virtual roundtables and discussed issues. Some of the themes we heard included:

Bicycle/Pedestrian Travel

- Challenging intersections make it difficult to cross Route 9 for people trying to access the historic center, shopping areas, and schools
- A gap in network between Jack Markell and Battery Park Trails

Public Transit

- Connections to Wilmington and Newark are slow
- A better link to airport and Amtrak station needed

Traffic

- Issues with speeding traffic along neighborhood streets
- Local congestion and cut-through traffic occurs when U.S. 13 is busy
- Large trucks cut through town
- Areas of Route 9 often flood
- Many intersections are challenging for drivers, people walking, and bicyclists

Parking

- Issues with new parking area on 3rd Street
- Issues with looping by drivers looking for parking along one-way streets
- Facilities for electric vehicle charging needed

Streetscaping

- Beautification and landscaping needed along Ferry Cutoff and gateways
- Better wayfinding needed

We are continuing to invite comments on transportation issues and concerns. An interactive map is available at www.wilmapco.org/cityofnewcastle where anyone may share their thoughts and concerns.

This spring, we will take the feedback received from the community, and our analysis of existing conditions, and identify potential strategies to address issues. A second public workshop will be held in late spring or early summer to allow the community to review proposed strategies.

Learn more or comment online at www.wilmapco.org/cityofnewcastle.



DelDOT Analyzes Benefits of New Castle County Bike Projects



As part of the New Castle County Bicycle Plan, endorsed in May 2020, WILMAPCO asked local jurisdictions to submit their highest-priority bicycle projects. Local governments shared a total of 22 projects, including submissions by New Castle County, the City of New Castle, the City of Newark, the City of Wilmington, and the Town of Middletown.

Following the Bicycle Plan's endorsement, WILMAPCO began working with DelDOT to explore the feasibility and strategies for advancing these priorities.

Some were referred to DelDOT bridge or traffic sections, in hopes that they might be integrated into roadway resurfacing or bridge preservation projects. For others, DelDOT felt further refinement and planning was needed before exploring funding options.

DelDOT undertook a rigorous analysis of seven projects, as recommended in the 2018 Blueprint for a Bicycle Friendly Delaware Statewide Bicycle Plan. Using the Delaware Bicycle Mobility Tool, DelDOT examined the potential of

projects to increase the number of bicycle connections between homes and schools, employment centers, community centers, parks, and public transit, using a low-stress route that most adults would feel comfortable biking on.





PRIORITY PROJECTS ANALYZED INCLUDE:

- **Jack Markell Trail (JAM), Battery Park Extension:** This project would provide a protected bike lane to link the JAM Trail to Battery Park. Next steps include further analysis as part of the City of New Castle Transportation Plan and a Delaware Bicycle Council Innovation Grant.
- **New Castle to Llangollen Connector:** This project proposes a path from the southern terminus of Battery Park to Route 9, River Road. This proposal presents environmental building challenges due to drainage ditches and a dike. The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control and New Castle County would likely play a key role in its implementation.
- **School Lane Trail:** Also in the City of New Castle, this would connect Route 273 to U.S. 13

along a local street and section of unused DelDOT right of way, serving to link downtown New Castle, several neighborhoods, schools, the farmers market, and the airport. The next step for this project includes a wetland assessment to be conducted by DelDOT.

- **Wilmington Brew Works Connector:** This project proposes a pathway from Baynard Boulevard to Tally Road via the Wilmington Brew Works. Potential conflicts with access to the DelDOT maintenance yard complicate this proposal. DelDOT suggests that other supporting projects in the vicinity be finished first.
- **Commons Boulevard Pathway:** This project would link the JAM Trail with the Corporate Commons corridor not far from the New Castle Airport. This is a large, multi-phase project. Early

phases are being implemented by DelDOT as part of an intersection improvement project and by the county.

- **Augustine Cutoff Pathway:** A pathway or protected bike lane is suggested for the corridor that stretches from Edgewood Road in New Castle County to Kentmere Parkway/South Park Drive in Wilmington. DelDOT plans to host a public workshop to finalize the concept and begin design and engineering.
- **Wyoming Road Protected Bike Lanes:** A path or protected bike lanes are suggested from Marrows Road to Chapel Street in Newark. The City of Newark has received a Delaware Bicycle Council Innovation Grant to undertake a feasibility study for this project.

To learn more, please visit www.wilmapco.org/bikencc.



Three Freight Projects Underway in the WILMAPCO Region

WILMAPCO has begun work on three freight studies that will help implement the regional goals developed in the Delaware Statewide Freight Plan.

Additional analysis was needed for several issues identified by the plan, so that the best possible solutions could be developed. Below is a short summary of each new freight study:

Analysis of Truck Access Improvements Around the Port of Wilmington Area:

This study will evaluate and analyze possible improvements in truck circulation, traffic, and access in and around the Port of Wilmington developed by recent studies, including the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan, Southbridge Circulation Study, and City of Wilmington Comprehensive Plan. Additional analysis is needed to determine the viability of proposed improvements. Project ideas include:

- a Garasches Lane Extension that would create a connection between U.S. 13 and Route 9 south of the railroad;
- a Pyles Lane extension that would create an alternate connection from Route 9 to the port area, avoiding truck traffic through local neighborhoods;
- and a Pigeon Point Road Extension that would create an alternate connection from I-295 to the port.

These ideas will be studied for their ability to provide better freight access in and around the port area, while having fewer impacts on the local residents. To learn more about this study, please visit www.wilmapco.org/port_analysis.



Delaware Statewide Truck Parking Study:

This study addresses the statewide overnight and localized, shorter-term truck parking and staging needs within the State of Delaware. The study will include strong engagement with the local trucking community to help evaluate potential ideas and recommendations. To learn more about this project, please visit www.wilmapco.org/truckparking.

Delaware Statewide First and Final Mile Freight Network Development:

This study includes a statewide effort to create a greater understanding of Delaware's first and final mile freight connections. First and final miles of truck trips link local businesses to the state and national highway networks.

These connections are characterized as the generally smaller roadways that serve as the last link between needed local goods and truck-generating facilities that provide those goods. They can be located near residential areas and can have infrastructure challenges that include multiple users such as passenger vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. They also may not have been initially designed to effectively accommodate truck traffic, which often creates delays that cost both time and money. To learn more, please visit <http://www.wilmapco.org/finalmile>.

For more information on any of these studies, please contact Dan Blevins at dblevins@wilmapco.org.

New Study Launched for Union Street Improvements

Union Street in the City of Wilmington is a one-way, southbound street that serves as a main thoroughfare for many of the local neighborhoods. The City of Wilmington Comprehensive Plan identified this corridor as having the potential to become more of a local shopping, dining, and entertainment destination, as well as one that could be safer and more welcoming for pedestrians.

The Wilmington 2028 Comprehensive Plan (2019) designated Union Street as a “Main Street Corridor,” defined as “where Wilmington residents shop, dine, and work. These streets are core to the City’s economic well-being and local business community. Wilmington’s main streets balance their role of moving cars with their function as places for neighbors to recreate, socialize, and play. In addition to people driving, main streets must be welcoming

for people walking and biking and need to ensure access for buses and delivery vehicles.”

Union Street is a commercial corridor that currently serves the area as a “main street,” but the existing roadway is designed to serve automobiles, with three wide lanes that encourage drivers to exceed the posted speed limit of 25 MPH. The Union Street Rapid Reconfiguration Study in 2018 included a grassroots-led effort to reduce Union Street from three lanes to two, add a bike lane, and convert the existing parallel parking on the east side of the street to back-in, diagonal parking. The project was designed to reduce travel speeds and make Union Street safer and more convenient for pedestrians and bikes. The parking change also added more spaces for businesses and residents. This project included extensive public outreach and numerous information sessions and public workshops. After

the conversion, many community members’ comments have been positive and supportive of the project, but there is still more work to be done, so a new study has been launched.

The new Union Street Reconfiguration and Streetscape Improvement Study will be the vehicle that allows the Wilmington Initiatives (WI) Partners (DelDOT/DTC, Wilmington, and WILMAPCO) to engage with the community in developing permanent improvements that can transform Union Street into a safe, walkable, bikeable, commercial center for the surrounding neighborhoods and the region. The WI Partners will hold a Public Visioning Session in the spring of 2021 to solicit ideas from the community.

For more information, please visit www.wilmapco.org/unionstreet.



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