

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
January 15, 2026

A meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was held on Thursday, January 15, 2026, at WILMAPCO, 100 Discovery Boulevard, Suite 800, Newark, DE 19713 and via video conference/conference call.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Cooper Bowers, from New Castle County Department of Land Use, and TAC Chair, brought the TAC meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

2. TAC Members present:

Cooper Bowers, New Castle County Department of Land Use
Alexandra Brun, Maryland State Highway Administration
Samantha Bulkilvish, Delaware Office of State Planning
Michael Fortner, City of Newark
William Goldman, Cecil County Division of Planning and Zoning
Shawn Kiernan, Maryland Department of Transportation
Quinn Krenzel, Town of Elkton Planning
Tina Merrill, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
Clare Quinlan, Delaware Department of Transportation
Catherine Salarano, Maryland Department of the Environment
Catherine Smith, Delaware Transit Corporation
Steven Weber, City of Wilmington Department of Public Works

TAC Ex-Officio Members present:

Gregory Beacoat, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Jasmine Champin, U.S. Federal Highway Administration

TAC Members absent:

City of Wilmington Planning
Delaware Division of Small Business, Development, and Tourism
Delaware River and Bay Authority
Maryland Department of Planning

TAC Ex-Officio Members absent:

Amtrak
Diamond State Port Corporation
U.S. Federal Transit Administration

Guests and Invitees:

Taylor Englert, AQS member
Sibtay Haider, Jacobs Consultant
Pamela Keeney, AQS member
Susan Love, DNREC
Rachel McGuire, Jacobs Consultant
Colton Phillips, DelDOT
Andrea Quinn, Jacobs Consultant
Jessica Quinn, DNREC
Matthew Rogers, NCC

Harry Romano, MDOT-SHA Consultant
Sabrina Schultz, DNREC
Alysha Ulrich, DNREC
Hunter A. Withers, Wallace Montgomery

Staff:

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner
Leonard Bonarek, Senior Planner
Sharen Elcock, Executive Assistant
Elizabeth Espinal, Administrative Assistant
Dave Gula, Principal Planner
Dawn Stant, Outreach Coordinator
Colleen Stroud, Regional Planner
Bill Swiatek, Principal Planner
Jake Thompson, Senior Planner
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth Espinal.

3. MINUTES

Approval of December 18, 2025, TAC Meeting Minutes.

ACTION: On motion by Ms. Samantha Bulkilvish and seconded by Ms. Catherine Smith, the TAC minutes are approved.

Approval of the October 16, 2025, TAC/AQS meeting minutes.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Shawn Kiernan and seconded by Mr. Michael Fortner, the TAC/AQS minutes are approved.

4. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

None.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None.

ACTION ITEMS

None.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

6. Delaware Climate Action Plan

Ms. Susan Love of DNREC presented an overview of Delaware's 2025 Climate Action Plan, a comprehensive, statewide framework designed to both reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and strengthen community resilience to climate impacts. She noted that the plan was developed over a two-year period with extensive public engagement and technical input, including consultation with approximately 80 technical experts, participation by more than 200

residents in public workshops, and outreach to over 2,000 individuals through community events.

Ms. Love explained that climate change is already affecting Delaware through rising temperatures, sea level rise, heavier precipitation events, and increased risks to infrastructure, public health, and energy systems. Transportation, industrial activity, and electricity generation were identified as the state's largest sources of GHG emissions. Since 2005, Delaware has reduced overall emissions by approximately 24 percent, but transportation emissions have declined only marginally, underscoring the sector's importance in future reduction strategies.

The Climate Action Plan establishes an ambitious but achievable goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. Using quantitative modeling conducted with *ICF International, Inc.*, DNREC evaluated a "business-as-usual" scenario and found it would result in only a 54 percent reduction by 2050. Additional policy and programmatic actions were then modeled, demonstrating that Delaware could achieve approximately a 96 percent reduction with aggressive implementation of new measures.

Ms. Love noted that most emissions reductions are concentrated in four primary areas: transportation, industry, electricity generation, and buildings. Meanwhile, natural landscapes such as forests and wetlands serve an essential function in carbon sequestration. The plan details objectives and immediate actions across eight sectors, alongside resilience strategies designed to address rising sea levels, extreme heat, and overall community preparedness.

Within the transportation sector, which is the largest source of emissions in the state, the plan prioritizes the transition to electric vehicles for passengers and cleaner options for larger freight vehicles. It also emphasizes decreasing total driving through enhanced public transit and better infrastructure for walking and biking. Findings suggest that moving toward electric passenger vehicles provides the most substantial opportunity for emissions reduction, complemented by renewable fuel use for larger trucks and shifts in travel behavior.

Ms. Love concluded by encouraging agencies and partners to use the Climate Action Plan as a practical implementation guide and noted that the plan will be updated every five years, with progress reports issued biennially. The plan and supporting technical documentation are available on DNREC's website, and DNREC staff are available to assist partners in advancing implementation.

To view this presentation in its entirety please [click here](#). [34m.52s.].

Mr. Colton Phillips noted that construction of electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure may cause short-term increases in greenhouse gas emissions due to material delivery, lane closures, and traffic delays, but stated that these temporary impacts are outweighed by long-term emissions reductions and improved roadway efficiency once projects are completed. He also asked whether DNREC has evaluated the environmental impacts of proposed data centers and their associated energy demand.

Ms. Susan Love responded that emissions from specific proposed data centers were not modeled because project details remain uncertain. General economic and population growth were included in the modeling, but large hyperscale data centers were not assumed. She acknowledged that data centers present a significant and growing concern statewide and nationally, and noted that DNREC, the Public Service Commission, the State Energy Office, and the General Assembly are actively examining mitigation strategies.

Mr. Phillips further inquired about anti-idling measures, noting that unnecessary idling contributes to transportation-sector emissions.

Ms. Love explained that Delaware has anti-idling regulations for heavy-duty vehicles, with exemptions for emergency and public safety vehicles, and that effectiveness depends on implementation and enforcement. She added that electrification will eliminate tailpipe emissions during idling for light-duty vehicles and that the State can lead by example through contract requirements and incentives for construction contractors to limit idling. DNREC is also pursuing grant funding for power take-off and similar technologies that allow heavy-duty vehicles to operate auxiliary equipment without running diesel engines, with a focus on reducing impacts in overburdened communities.

Mr. Dave Gula thanked Ms. Love for the presentation and expressed optimism about long-term improvements in air quality.

In response to a comment regarding gas-powered leaf blowers, Ms. Love stated that two-stroke engines produce high emissions, noise, and dust that negatively affect air quality and wildlife. She noted that electric lawn equipment offers cleaner and quieter alternatives and that market adoption is increasing due to improved product performance, supplemented by education and incentive programs.

7. Delaware Rail Plan

Mr. Colton Phillips, DeIDOT Planner and Program Manager for the State Rail Plan Update, introduced the effort to comprehensively update Delaware's State Rail Plan, last completed in 2011. Although not federally mandated, regular updates are strongly encouraged by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). The plan is being developed in accordance with FRA's revised 2013 guidance and addresses six required criteria, supported by a statewide public input survey. Mr. Phillips noted that Jacobs Engineering, led by Mr. Sibtay Haider, is assisting with data collection, analysis, and plan development.

Mr. Haider explained that the update reflects significant changes in federal guidance and conditions over the past decade. The project team has conducted extensive outreach with state agencies, MPOs, local jurisdictions, neighboring states, and other stakeholders, and has analyzed existing conditions and trends affecting both passenger and freight rail. The plan will inventory Delaware's rail system, evaluate performance, assess needs and opportunities, and develop a 10- to 20-year investment strategy integrated with other state and regional transportation plans.

Key passenger rail priorities identified include preserving SEPTA service between Delaware and Philadelphia, advancing a commuter rail connection between Delaware and Maryland via MARC, better integrating rail into multimodal planning, and leveraging recent station investments to improve ridership along the Northeast Corridor. Freight rail priorities include improving highway-rail grade crossing safety, enhancing system resilience to flooding and climate-related impacts, preserving land near rail corridors for industrial uses, improving freight network efficiency, and strengthening partnerships with local, regional, and interstate entities.

The presenters highlighted that Delaware's freight rail network includes Class I and short-line railroads serving major corridors and supporting agricultural and industrial activity, particularly in southern Delaware. Analysis shows a high share of commodities currently moved by truck that

could potentially shift to rail, presenting opportunities to reduce highway congestion and improve system efficiency.

Mr. Haider emphasized the importance of public participation through the online survey, which will inform priorities and investment decisions, particularly in historically underserved communities. The team has completed the Existing Conditions Report and will next develop passenger and freight improvement alternatives and an investment framework, incorporating stakeholder feedback to produce a cohesive, implementable State Rail Plan for Delaware.

To view this presentation in its entirety please [click here](#). [16m.57s].

8. Regional Progress Report

Mr. Bill Swiatek presented WILMAPCO's 2026 Regional Progress Report, a document updated every four years to evaluate progress on actions identified in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The report begins with an assessment of key regional trends and is followed by action-by-action evaluations using both qualitative and quantitative performance measures. Each action is assigned a red, yellow, or green indicator reflecting poor, partial, or good progress, respectively, and national performance measures are also incorporated for consistency.

Overall draft results indicate that 63 percent of RTP actions demonstrate good progress, 22 percent show partial progress, and 16 percent reflect poor progress. Mr. Swiatek noted that the percentage of actions with good progress is the highest among the last three reporting cycles, increasing from 50 percent in 2018 and 60 percent in 2022.

Several areas with poor progress were highlighted, including promoting growth in Center Transportation Investment Areas (TIAs), supporting shared mobility and carpooling, funding transit expansion and management projects, enhancing public transit access, improving safety (particularly pedestrian safety), and avoiding Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) projects in rural and ecologically sensitive areas. Data shows that Center TIAs experienced negative household growth between 2000 and 2020 and are projected to continue declining through 2050, while a disproportionate share of transportation funding is directed toward developing and rural TIAs relative to their projected share of households in 2050. Carpooling rates have declined significantly since 1980, falling from more than 20 percent of commuters to less than 10 percent in both counties. Additionally, the share of TIP funding dedicated to transit projects has remained relatively flat and below 10 percent for most of the past two decades.

Examples of actions with partial progress include the use of project prioritization in selecting TIP investments. Mr. Swiatek noted that some lower-scoring projects received funding while higher-scoring projects from previous TIPs remained unfunded, suggesting opportunities to better align investments with technical evaluation results. Progress in supporting tourism through planning and projects was mixed: New Castle County has increased the share of East Coast Greenway segments completed or funded from 68 percent in 2011 to 90 percent today, while Cecil County has remained at approximately 8 percent.

Mr. Swiatek also highlighted areas of strong performance. Since 1995, approximately 60 subregional plans have been completed, with 20 percent fully implemented and 60 percent partially implemented, indicating that the majority have led to at least some tangible outcomes. Addressing freight mobility has also been a success, with most identified truck bottlenecks having management or capacity projects in the TIP. In addition, electric vehicle charging infrastructure has expanded substantially, growing from two public stations in 2012 to more than 100 in New Castle County and more than a dozen in Cecil County today.

Next steps include seeking Council endorsement of the 2026 Regional Progress Report by March 2026, with a Technical Advisory Committee endorsement anticipated beforehand. The findings will inform the upcoming update to the Regional Transportation Plan, particularly in areas where progress has lagged.

To view this presentation in its entirety please [click here](#). [10m.05s].

INFORMATION ITEMS

13. Staff Report

Mr. Dave Gula reported the following updates:

- On January 5th, Staff met with Delaware's Advancing Healthy Lifestyles Policy Committee to discuss supporting better access to food and parks. The Ardens Transportation Plan Monitoring Committee also met.
- On January 6th, Staff met with Delaware's Mobile Sources Air Quality Planning Group.
- On January 7th, Staff presented the Route 9 Master Plan to the Rt. 9 / 13 Civic Alliance.
- On January 8th, the East Elkton Monitoring Committee met.
- On January 9th, Staff held a SNCC-LUTP briefing for elected officials and it was well attended.
- On January 12th, the SNCC Growth Area LUTP AC met.
- On January 14th, the MD-272 Monitoring Committee met.
- On January 16th, the Delaware State Rail partners will meet.
- On January 23rd, Staff will make a presentation for WHA at the Herlihy Tower.
- On January 26th, Staff will attend the Ardens Town Assembly Meeting.
- On January 27th, the Southbridge Truck Bypass Study's Advisory Committee will meet.
- On January 29th, the Sidewalk Gap Analysis Advisory Committee will meet.
- On February 3rd, the Southbridge Truck Bypass Study's Management Committee will meet.
- On February 10th, Staff will attend DeIDOT's State Rail Plan update meeting.
- On February 11th, the SNCC LUTP partners will meet.
- On February 12th, the Kirkwood Monitoring Implementation Committee partners will meet.
- On February 19th, the Ardens Monitoring Committee will have a joint meeting with Claymont civic leaders on the Harvey Road Lane Reduction over I-95 concept. Staff will participate in Downes Elementary School's Family Night.
- On February 23rd, the Kirkwood Monitoring Implementation Committee (KMIC) will meet.
- On February 24th, the Southbridge Truck Bypass Study will have a Public Workshop.
- On February 25th, the Route 9 Monitoring Committee will meet.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Ms. Cathy Smith from DTC announced proposed May 2026 service changes, which primarily focus on improving on-time performance and running time accuracy. Key adjustments include a comprehensive rescheduling of Route 25 to address performance issues and the discontinuation of evening deviations on Routes 10 and 15 at Reed's Way. Seasonal "Beach Bus" service is scheduled to begin May 17, with Route 305 bypassing the Odessa Park and Ride to improve efficiency. Legal notices will be published next week, and a public hearing for New Castle County will be held on Tuesday, February 10, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Wilmington Library.

Ms. Samantha Bulkilvish, OSPC, reported that the Cabinet Committee on State Planning Issues met on Monday and approved the updated State Strategies for Policies and Spending. These strategies have been submitted to the Governor for final approval, with further updates expected as the process moves forward.

ADJOURNMENT:

ACTION: Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Attachments (0)