



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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SHANTÉ A. HASTINGS
SECRETARY

COUNCIL ON TRANSPORTATION

Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 10, 2026

Zoom and In-Person Meeting

Council Members Present:

Martin Lessner (Acting Chair), Jordan Howell, Marti Dobson, Thomas Holmes, Michael Carey, Herbert Russell

DelDOT Staff

Shanté Hastings, Secretary; Lanie Clymer, Deputy Secretary; Mark Luszcz, Chief Engineer; Anne Brown, Director of Finance; Pamela Steinebach, Director of Maintenance & Operations; C.R. McLeod, Community Relations Director; Austin Gray, DelDOT; Anson Gock, DelDOT; Melanie Carlson, DelDOT Finance; Angela Christian, DelDOT Finance; Cathy Smith, DTC; Tremica Cherry-Wall, DTC; Ian Peters, DelDOT; Stephen Bayer, DelDOT; Tami Venn, DelDOT; Ken Feater-DOJ-DELDOT

Guests:

Ryan O'Donoghue, FHWA; Camille Otto, FHWA

Agenda Item # 1: Review and Approval of Minutes:

Acting Chairman Martin Lessner called the meeting to order and confirmed that a quorum of council members was met. Chairman Lessner continued to the agenda and asked for approval of the meeting minutes from the February 19th, 2026, CMT meeting. Chairman Lessner made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, and Marti Dobson seconded. The Council approved the Minutes.

Agenda Item #2: Secretary's Update:

Secretary Hastings started off with a minute of silence for the passing of Chairman Ted Williams, as he was a long-time member of the COT. Shanté provided a PowerPoint presentation

on DelDOT updates. Her briefing began with a review of the organizational structure to provide a few updates. John Sisson retired, and Lilia Montoya replaced him as transit CEO. Lilia joined on June 1st and worked with John for a month before taking on the role independently.

Secretary Hastings updated that the DMV has separated tolls into a new division to better manage upgrades and operations. Suzanne Laws, who previously led the Transportation Infrastructure and Investment Fund and the Expedited Review Team, was appointed director of Toll Facilities and Operations.

Secretary Hastings outlined our key priorities: safety, asset maintenance, multimodal transportation, and resiliency. Our focus is safety, with a budget for infrastructure repair. To address population growth and congestion, we're expanding travel options. Given our low-lying terrain, we face flooding challenges and are exploring solutions like elevating roads and adjusting traffic management based on costs. These priorities will shape our future efforts.

Secretary Hastings said that there were 68 road fatalities in the past four years, showing an 11% increase from last year. Achieving zero fatalities remains a priority. A major concern is deaths due to non-seat belt use, leading to increased messaging about their importance. Educational videos on e-bikes and e-scooters are being produced, emphasizing helmet use, safe riding areas, and treating them like motor vehicles at higher speeds. These efforts aim to complement engineering and law enforcement initiatives.

Secretary Hastings said the safe system approach is a safety philosophy adopted by state DOTs, emphasizing that death and serious injuries are unacceptable and that safety is proactive. It recognizes human errors and shares responsibility for safety. A recent inquiry focused on guardrails, a topic discussed for over a decade. The primary national guide for guardrail installation and design is the AASHTO Roadside Design Guide.

Secretary Hastings then outlined guidelines for assessing roadside hazards, focusing on removing hazards like trees and utility poles to avoid guardrails, which can be dangerous. Alternatives include redesigning, relocating, using breakaway devices, barriers, or improving visibility. It notes that guardrail height was increased to 31 inches for new installations in 2010-2011, but states aren't required to replace existing lower guardrails, only damaged ones. In Delaware, contractors handle new installations with compliance inspections, while staff or contractors handle repairs as needed.

Secretary Hastings said the organization spends about \$1.5 million annually on repair materials and has implemented independent inspections for in-house repairs. A team joined the MASH committee in 2019 to enhance guardrail installation and safety, providing staff with regular roadside safety training. A committee prioritizes safety in reviewing guardrail installation requests. Staff is currently developing a manual on best practices for maintaining various barrier types. While assessments of guardrail damage highlight the need for independent inspections, data indicate no significant issues with current installations or repairs, reinforcing confidence in their safety.

Chairman Lessner asked whether there is a list of guardrails currently out there that need to be replaced for safety reasons or for other reasons requiring urgent replacement.

Secretary Hastings noted that urgent guardrail issues are being addressed, with some states having older guardrails that need replacement. No complete list exists because maintenance districts manage these issues differently. The main safety concern is unaddressed damage from guardrail hits, which can expose blunt ends. To mitigate risks on high-speed roads, trucks with crash cushions are deployed around damaged areas until repairs occur. In-house teams or contractors track down and resolve safety issues promptly.

Chairman Lessner stated that a speaker referenced a New Yorker article on guardrail hazards, aiming to ensure Delaware isn't featured in future editions. They highlight that Delaware's DelDOT manages 90% of the public road network, allowing for better oversight of guardrails than in other states.

Councilman Jordan Howell stated this year, Delta approved independent inspections of the guardrails its own staff installs. So, are there any guardrails installed by DelDOT that aren't inspected, or are there guardrails out there that haven't been inspected, or does it just mean DelDOT inspected its own work?

Secretary Hastings clarified her statement of independent to be separate from the installation team. Previously, we inspected contractor-installed guardrails while our in-house crews focused on repairs like a damaged 30-foot section after an incident. We're now ensuring a different DelDOT section inspects these repairs.

Councilman Jordan Howell stated that some sections of guardrails haven't undergone the same safety reviews as others because they were repairs, not new installations.

Agenda Item # 3: Fiscal Year 2027 Budget

Secretary Hastings went on to the FY27 budget. Our funding totals approximately \$1.12 billion, including revenue, federal funds (31%), bond proceeds, DMV revenues (27%), tolls (20%), and motor fuel tax (11.5%). We expect \$19 million in fare revenue from DTC and under \$32 million in general funds for specific programs. The budget is structured around these funding sources.

Secretary Hastings continues. About 44% of the budget covers operating expenses, including debt, while the rest supports a \$626 million capital program for maintenance and expansion. Revenue sources include motor fuel tax, tolls, and DMV revenues. In October 2025, a revenue package was enacted that increased tolls and DMV fees and added a new alternative fuel vehicle fee. We aim to keep debt service below 20% of revenue. For 301, we expect to generate \$34.8 million, with funds allocated for our TIFIA loan operations and rare repairs. This year, we anticipate a small excess revenue again, with half going toward the TIFIA loan and the rest to the Transportation Trust Fund, indicating strong road performance.

Councilman Lessner wanted to clarify whether Route 301 revenue was accounted for and when the bonds will be paid off.

Secretary Hastings stated Route 301 is expected to generate \$34.8 million in FY27, covering the TIFIA loan, operations, and a repair fund. Half of any excess revenue will pay down the TIFIA loan, and the other half will go to the Transportation Trust Fund. This marks

the second consecutive year of projected excess revenue, indicating strong road performance. For 301, it goes out to 2055; I believe that would be the last payment.

Agenda Item # 4: Delaware Task Force on Sustainable Transportation Funding Update

Secretary Hastings updated on the Delaware Task Force on Sustainable Transportation Funding. The Governor established this task force to work with an independent group to evaluate sustainable transportation funding. The task force will review our budget and revenue trends, assess transportation needs for the next 20 years, and involve stakeholders in developing a plan.

Secretary Hastings updates that the task force has held 9 meetings to date, with the next scheduled for August 24th, leaving 5 sessions remaining. Topics covered include DelDOT basics, budgets, asset management, and a 20-year capital program projection. A financial consultant presented the Transportation Trust Fund and national trends. The task force is reviewing past unadopted recommendations and new ideas for potential revenue or savings. The task force expects to release a list of draft recommendations by month-end.

Secretary Hastings states that the available funding for CTP-ranked projects from FY27 to FY32 is approximately \$240 million, while \$540 million is needed to complete all projects, resulting in a six-year deficit of \$300 million, or \$50 million annually. In the pavement area, annual funding requirements range from \$90 to \$100 million, with a current deficit of \$37 to \$47 million for non-subdivision streets. When including neighborhood streets, the deficit ranges from \$5 million to \$15 million.

Councilman Lessner asked whether the City of Wilmington streets, if included in DelDOT, would be paid for separately, as it would help determine which City of Wilmington streets to repave.

Secretary Hastings stated that the mileage details vary by agency. The City of Wilmington maintains many streets, while some state streets fall under our purview. We can send you a GIS map link showing each agency's responsibilities. The figures I provided are specifically for the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT). Yes, this is state funding; however, some paving projects can also be used by federal funds. It's not a large amount, but some can be covered by federal dollars. This discussion focuses on the overall budget deficit.

Secretary Hastings said that Annual funding for bridge maintenance is \$95 million, plus \$10 million for other structures, with a \$25 million shortfall. Upcoming unfunded projects include \$450 million for Interstate 495 and \$75 million for I-95 bridges north of Route 202. The DMV needs \$50 to \$70 million for system replacement and upgrades. Major projects like the 113-corridor preservation and Route 1 widening will cost billions and cannot be completed in 20 years. A task force will gather stakeholder input in September and aims to submit a draft report by year-end.

Councilman Lessner asked how the priorities for all those billions of dollars will be determined and how it differs from what the Council does in setting priorities for capital improvement projects.

Secretary Hastings mentioned that the task force's main role is to recommend funding strategies for projects under the Council on Transportation and asset management. They explore innovative financing methods but do not prioritize projects. Since the 2011 report, half of the 95 proposed ideas have been implemented, but a funding gap of \$5-6 billion remains over the next 20 years. The task force will identify unfunded needs to address future challenges, while the Council will prioritize projects and ensure compliance with the approval process.

Councilman Howell stated that the text discusses an unfunded project to add a third rail to the Northeast Corridor, specifically between Wilmington and Claymont. It mentions that this project has been in the plans for years and likely requires matching state funds. I question whether it should be listed under major underfunded efforts and seek clarification on the funding source, whether it will be funded entirely by the federal government or require state contributions.

Secretary Hastings stated we completed a trail rail project, but I'm unsure about the specific limits associated with it. Jordan, I don't clearly understand those limits. We meet with Amtrak regularly, but they haven't brought this to our attention yet, so it's not currently on our agenda.

Agenda Item # 5: Major Project Updates

Secretary Hastings covered the major project updates and briefly overviewed ongoing work across the state. The new project portal allows users to zoom in on maps, search for specific projects, and receive instant updates. The highlighted 2026 construction map helps visualize projects, identify conflicts, and strategize, with annual updates planned.

Secretary Hastings continues that we have successfully completed the 295-widening project on the 95 corridors. The ongoing Four Bridges project, located between Route 141 and the 95-495 split, will continue through much of 2027. Additionally, we have a follow-up project for the substructure work beneath 95, which began in spring 2025 and should finish later this year with minimal lane closures. Our major project, 95896, is nearing completion, with all ramps now open and additional bridge work on I-95 ongoing. While the trail hasn't opened yet, we are excited about the project's impact, including reduced crashes and congestion.

Councilman Lessner asked whether the trail will allow northbound cyclists on Route 896 to pass through that intersection.

Secretary Hastings responded that the shared-use path is on the west side of the road, as shown in the left picture. It crosses over I-95, providing a safe route for cyclists and pedestrians along Route 896 from Newark to Glasgow. This new path closes a two-mile gap and enhances safety, and we are very excited about it.

Secretary Hastings added that the Route 1 widening project from I-95 to Milford is essential, citing past auxiliary lane projects in the Route 427/273 area. Current efforts focus on grants, hard shoulder running, and bus rapid transit to reduce congestion at the 1 and 273 interchange. Route 40 is being widened from Salem Church Road to Walther Road, expected to finish by late next year, with ongoing design projects for Routes 40 and 896. Route 40 project design is nearly complete, and right-of-way acquisition is in progress; however, the

Route 40 and Route 7 grade separation project is on hold due to funding. The Route 40 widening includes pedestrian improvements on Route 13, with safety barriers being discussed for Dewey Beach.

Secretary Hastings said transportation projects in Kent County include the nearly completed East Camden Bypass with a new roundabout and ongoing work on the West Camden Bypass to divert truck traffic. The Route 8 Corridor features a new roundabout at Chestnut Grove and another under construction at Central Church.

Secretary Hastings continued with the Route 1 project in Sussex County, which is set to finish by fall 2028, with a second bridge opening before summer 2023. Construction of a grade-separated intersection at Route 113 and Route 404 will begin and is expected to last three years. Additionally, the Georgetown to Lewis Trail will offer a 16-mile commuting route along Route 9, with a supporting 5K event planned for October.

Secretary Hastings said the project at the Old Orchard Road and Westcoats/Wescoats Road intersection aims to create a new signalized intersection to improve access to New Road and enhance safety during busy summer traffic. Construction is ongoing, set to be completed by the 27th. Additionally, the Lighthouse Road bridge on Route 54 is being rebuilt, with main work starting in October and lasting until spring, with a return in fall 2027 to finish the project. These improvements will boost safety for bikers and pedestrians.

Secretary Hastings said a traffic signal project in Sussex County, managed by a residential developer, is nearing completion after delays. The government inspects the work but does not control the contractor. A bridge improvement project on Route 10 is in the design phase. Trail regulation varies in Sussex County, with some managed locally and others by DelDOT. Discussions on e-bike regulations focus on safety due to varying speeds, as faster models raise concerns despite improving mobility for some, especially the elderly.

Councilman Lessner discussed concerns over bike safety regulations for e-bikes and mopeds on trails. Ongoing talks between the Bike Council and DelDOT aim to clarify which agency—DelDOT, counties, or state parks—regulates the Georgetown Lewes Trail. DNREC has proposed allowing Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes on previously restricted trails, but there's uncertainty about DelDOT's jurisdiction and role in setting e-bike rules. The Bike Council is coordinating among Delaware agencies on these matters.

Secretary Hastings stated that various trails across the state fall under our jurisdiction, including those managed by DNREC, counties, and municipalities. We aim to create a unified set of rules and regulations for all trail users. Stephanie Johnson, our Director of Planning, has been involved in discussions on e-bike safety to ensure equitable guidelines across trails.

Secretary Hastings continued with the Newcastle County mid-county maintenance expansion project, which opened in May and is funded by a grant. DART is studying the Newport train station, with a report expected soon, while construction for the Fair Play Station parking relocation starts in about a year. In Kent County, the Dover Bus Canopy Solar Panels Project and solar panels at the Dover Transit Center will begin this fall. In Sussex, the Rehoboth park-and-ride improvement project is in final design, with construction planned for next year. A grant will fund 22 battery-electric hybrid buses and rehabilitate 51 fixed-route buses, with some replacements scheduled for FY27 and fare box updates planned.

Councilman Lessner stated that, currently, to pay electronically at fare boxes, users must use the DelDOT app to purchase a ticket, which is valid for only about 10 minutes. There is a suggestion to convert to a TAP system similar to SEPTA and the New York subway, where users can tap their phones with Apple Pay without needing an app.

Catherine Smith from Delaware Transit Corporation says the new fare boxes can support that technology, but we need more behind-the-scenes investigation and research. The new fare boxes could incorporate that technology, but we still need more behind-the-scenes investigation and research. Ultimately, upgrading the fare boxes with this technology is possible.

Secretary Hastings stated that the Diamond State Line study is considering passenger rail service from Newark/Wilmington to Maryland, pending approval from the Federal Railroad Administration.

Eight legislative measures have been introduced: two are signed, and six are awaiting signatures. Updates include a 20 mph residential speed limit, extended open-end contracting from 3 to 5 years, and a new law allowing people who lose their driver's license for medical reasons to keep their ID. Additionally, the city authorized electronic bid openings and green lights for construction vehicles, and raised the appraisal waiver threshold for property disposal to \$25,000.

Agenda Item # 6: Review of 2024 and 2025 COT Annual Reports

Councilman Howell stated that he wanted to revisit my earlier question about the upgrade to the Northeast Corridor between Wilmington and Claymont regarding unfunded projects. I've found references in Amtrak project inventory reports and 5-year plans dating back to May 2017, almost 10 years ago.

Councilman Howell continues, discussing ongoing issues with unfunded projects on the Northeast Corridor, particularly necessary repairs and upgrades. It notes that Amtrak and the FRA consistently flag these issues in reports, but improvements keep getting delayed. I would like more information for the next meeting, as they observed a lack of awareness about this topic among others. They said state funding is needed to complete the work and expressed uncertainty about the state's role, suggesting a need for clarification.

Secretary Hastings responded that we have a representative on the Northeast Corridor Commission, and I can follow up with them. We completed a \$71 million third-track project in 2020 between Wilmington and Newark. I'm unsure if this is the next phase, and I haven't received any funding requests from Amtrak. I'm happy to gather more information.

Secretary Hastings said the Council on Transportation has key roles, but the DRBA manages aviation in coordination with the FAA. The council reviews and approves the prioritization of ranked capital transportation projects and serves in an advisory role, though it lacks decision-making authority over paving, bridges, or safety programs. It can approve new corridors and issue certificates of public convenience and necessity for certain DART transportation types.

Secretary Hastings continued that the text addresses DelDOT's scope and notes that Austin's team handles aviation. It confirms the Route 1 corridor preservation effort includes

Sussex County and notes a dedicated website is available. The updated Route 1 plan outlines improvements like grade separations and service roads and is part of DDOT's Corridor Capacity Preservation Program. We will share links with further information.

Secretary Hastings stated what would fall under the COT's purview is if there were major rail projects that we had to list individually in tCTP. Outside of that, you know, we pay, Amtrak, and we pay SEPTA, we pay SEPTA to run service to Delaware, we participate in the Northeast Corridor, and so we have a payment that we make to Amtrak, and those things don't fall under I just meant in terms of, like, this idea with the RA, all this going potentially in the future, any of this rail. Yeah, if we came up with a standalone rail project, it would go through the prioritization process.

Agenda Item #7: Public Comment:

Chairman Lessner opened the floor for public comment. No public comments were made.

Chairman Lessner entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. All in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Tami Venn, Recording Secretary