

Land Use Subcommittee Meeting #6

September 15, 2025 - Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Land Use Subcommittee | Meeting #6

Date: Monday, September 15, 2025

Time: 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Attendees:

Subcommittee Members

Name	Position	Email
Michael Smith (Chair)	Governor Appointed Citizen Advocate	MichaelSmithEcon@gmail.com
Collin Willard	University of Delaware IPA	CWillard@udel.edu
Jared Kauffman	DART	Jared.Kauffman@delaware.gov
William Payne	Citizen Advocate	ublccreek@icloud.com
Jamie Whitehouse	Sussex County Planning & Zoning	Jamie.Whitehouse@sussexcountyde.gov
Stephen Bayer	DeIDOT Planning	Stephen.Bayer@delaware.gov

DeIDOT Support Staff

Name	Organization	Email
Kelly Valencik	DeIDOT	Kelly.Valencik@delaware.gov
Aaron Bell	DeIDOT	Aaron.Bell@delaware.gov
Angie Hernandez	JMT	AHernandez@jmt.com
Sophie Thompson	JMT	SThompson2@jmt.com

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this meeting was to hold the sixth Land Use Subcommittee meeting, and to discuss the following:

1. Call to Order

- Michael Smith called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm, took attendance, and welcomed attendees to the sixth meeting of the Land Use Subcommittee.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

- Michael Smith asked the subcommittee to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Jamie Whitehouse motioned to approve the draft minutes from Land Use Subcommittee Meeting #5. Jared Kauffman seconded the motion to approve the minutes. Bill Payne abstained from the vote since he did not attend the previous meeting.

3. Public Comment

- Michael Smith provided an opportunity for members of the public to share any questions or comments. No questions or comments were stated by the public.

Land Use Subcommittee Meeting #6

September 15, 2025 - Meeting Notes

4. Topics for Discussion

- a. Review the following Land Use subcommittee recommendations to be included in the 2025 Annual Report:
 - i. “The council is recommending DeIDOT continue to advance exploration of a pedestrian priority area program, working with the council on the data approach, how program will be kept updated, and to determine how to allocate funds to this effort. If pursued, DeIDOT would need to estimate the funding required and identify funding source, then develop an internal process to add this program to its project identification process.”
 - ii. “Recommend to DeIDOT to encourage local municipalities to adopt and use the DeIDOT Complete Streets Design Guide and provide complete streets trainings annually for municipalities. “
 - iii. “Recommend that the Department of State Planning, DeIDOT, and DTC review existing trainings and collaborate to create trainings targeted towards local governments that includes guidance on using land use strategies to create self-explaining roads and ways to encourage “Transit-Oriented Development” near DART / SEPTA stops promoting denser housing, mixed use retail, and safe pedestrian linkages. “
 1. Regarding recommendation #1, Collin Willard asked for a recap of what the pedestrian priority area program does, and how it is modeled.
 2. Angie provided an overview of the pedestrian priority area program. She shared that during the development of DeIDOT’s Pedestrian Action Plan, it was identified that there are many different DeIDOT programs which implement pedestrian-related projects across various departments. Each one has its own process for how such projects are identified, but what is lacking is an overall pedestrian priority area program looking to identify the highest need for pedestrian projects. Sidewalk projects and pedestrian improvements can sometimes get wrapped up into a variety of capital projects, maintenance projects, and other types of projects. The goal of the pedestrian priority area program is to look holistically from the statewide level to identify the top priorities for pedestrian projects.
 3. Bill Payne commented, mentioning that while this is a plan for the future, he would like to see changes happening now. He expressed that he would like to see focus on the main state highways, where he sees pedestrian accidents happening, such along State Route 1 in Rehoboth and Lewes. He also shared that there are not enough pedestrian crossings in this area.
 4. Jared Kauffman mentioned that the first two recommendations might be better suited for a third, separate subcommittee focused on street design.

Land Use Subcommittee Meeting #6

September 15, 2025 - Meeting Notes

5. Michael Smith agreed with Jared's point, but mentioned that he would not be able to chair another subcommittee at this time. Michael suggested the possibility of reworking the first two recommendations to include more land-use related wording. He also mentioned that he's not sure that a Complete Streets program is very unrelated to land use, either on the statewide level or on county or municipality level. Michael asked for any other thoughts from the group.
6. Collin recommended thinking of who the target of the recommendations is, for example, the target from a land use perspective would often come down to local governments. He shared that it would be interesting to see some more points that might talk about things that local governments could do to encourage development, for example in places that have some characteristics of walkability, whether thinking about density or thinking about infill development in targeted areas. Collin shared that he is interested in expanding more on the idea of helping municipalities, whether through training or different forms of technical assistance.
7. Michael Smith suggested changing the wording of the recommendations to say "local municipalities and counties" rather than just municipalities to clarify the potential to expand assistance to counties as well.
8. Michael mentioned California Senator Scott Wiener's Senate Bill 79, the Abundant & Affordable Homes Near Transit Act. This Act focuses on allowing more homes to be built near public transportation hubs/corridors. Michael mentioned that this strategy could be used in Delaware, for example, within half a mile or one mile of transportation hubs, potential zoning requirements such as parking minimums or height requirements could be relaxed. Michael mentioned that an example of this in Delaware could be near Fairplay Station in Churchman's Crossing near the hospital and the mall, where many people work or shop. Michael mentioned that workforce housing could also be a great way to collaborate with some of the big employers in the area, such as Walmart, Amazon, the casino, the mall, and the hospital.
9. Jamie Whitehouse shared that Sussex County is updating its comprehensive plan, starting in Spring of 2026. Jamie mentioned that there is a triangle of pedestrian connectivity forming in Sussex County, from Georgetown to Lewes, Georgetown to Milton, and from Milton to Lewes. Jamie mentioned challenges such as the Cool Spring development, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian infrastructure, and getting across Route 9 safely. Jamie mentioned the potential to put this into the comprehensive plan as a strategy or objective for the next 10-20 years. Jamie mentioned that things like this can be more than just theoretical and can become a codified strategy in a comprehensive plan.

Land Use Subcommittee Meeting #6

September 15, 2025 - Meeting Notes

10. Kelly mentioned that recommendations regarding comprehensive plans may not be directed towards DelDOT but could be directed towards the General Assembly or the Office of the Governor to take executive action or write legislation to do these things throughout the state.

b. Focus on the following items to align to Senate Bill No. 50, including:

- i. Accessibility and connectivity improvements to make transit a more viable option for all Delaware residents.
- ii. Improving pedestrian safety through modifications and improvements to land use planning, regulations, and processes in Delaware.
- iii. How state agencies and municipalities can better identify gaps in the system of pedestrian paths and sidewalks to create a system of sidewalks and pathways that is continuous and interconnected.
 1. Collin mentioned New Castle County's event on October 12 related to parking minimums. Collin asked if that's a topic that the group had discussed at all. He mentioned that this may be relevant in terms of destination proximity and being able to get people to destinations that they want to walk to.
 2. Kelly mentioned that this was shared with the subcommittees but was not brought to the rest of the Council. She mentioned that this may be an opportunity to have a new speaker come in and talk to the Council about this issue, or other topics that Strong Towns recommends for best practices. She mentioned that the recommendation could be written however the subcommittee/Council wants, for example asking DelDOT to initiate or facilitate discussions between the state legislature and the counties to develop a recommendation, putting this onto them to figure out the exact process.
 3. Collin suggested thinking about how to coordinate around large assets/pedestrian activity drivers as a topic for next year's report.

5. Closing Remarks

- a. There were no additional remarks. Michael Smith called the meeting to close at 1:51 p.m. All agreed.