

Land Use Subcommittee Meeting #9

January 12, 2026 - Meeting Notes

Date: Monday, January 12, 2026

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
Jamie Whitehouse	Sussex County Planning & Zoning	Jamie.Whitehouse@sussexcountyde.gov
Jared Kauffman	DART	Jared.Kauffman@delaware.gov
Sabrina Shultz	DNREC	Sabrina.Shultz@delaware.gov
Cooper Bowers	New Castle County Land Use	Cooper.Bowers@newcastlede.gov

DeIDOT Support Staff

Name	Organization	Email
Kelly Valencik	DeIDOT	Kelly.Valencik@delaware.gov
Matthew Langton	DeIDOT	Matthew.Langton@delaware.gov
Aaron Bell	DeIDOT	Aaron.Bell@delaware.gov
Sophie Thompson	JMT	SThompson2@jmt.com

Meeting Purpose

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

1. Call to Order

- a. Michael Smith called the meeting to order at 1:02 pm, took attendance, and welcomed attendees to the ninth meeting of the Land Use Subcommittee.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

- a. 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 #8. Sabrina Shultz seconded the motion to approve the minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously, with no opposition or abstentions.

3. Public Comment

- a. 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.

4. Subcommittee Discussion Items

- a. Review of Draft 2025 Annual Report
 - i. Michael asked the subcommittee members if they have any additional comments or revisions that they would like to be made to the draft report.



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- ii. Michael highlighted key points from the report, including a decrease in pedestrian fatalities in 2025 compared to 2024, and the subcommittee's goals of improving pedestrian infrastructure and developing recommendations for land use strategies aligned with pedestrian safety.
 - 1. Jamie Whitehouse mentioned that Sussex County is updating its comprehensive plan update, which will gear up full time in July of 2026. Jamie shared that he may not be able to attend the subcommittee meetings as frequently once this picks up in July.
 - iii. The conversation ended with a brief overview of the recommendations for state agencies, which the subcommittee had developed in the recent meetings.
 - 1. Jared Kauffman asked a question about recommendation #4 on page 19 of the report, asking what 'Encourage collaboration between law enforcement and municipal maintenance' means in the context of 'regular upkeep and monitoring of ADA infrastructure'. He asked whether law enforcement is talking about police, or about enforcing ADA law. Sophie shared that this language was requested to be added due to concerns about people parking and blocking sidewalks. The group agreed to rephrase this point, since it reads like it's talking about infrastructure. Michael added that this will be especially important if daylighting is implemented in Delaware, since enforcement will be an important piece of making sure that cars aren't parked up against crosswalks.
 - a. It was agreed that the language in recommendation #4 will be rephrased.
 - iv. There were no other comments or modifications from the group.
- b. Last minute budget spending ideas
- i. Michael asked the group if anyone has any small-scale ideas for budget suggestions before the general Council votes to approve the yearly budget.
 - 1. Sabrina mentioned that she has done a lot of work with Open Streets Wilmington as well as West Side Grows Together. The organizations recently told her that they don't anticipate having a 2026 season due to a lack of funding, and suggested that there may be an opportunity to partner to do a smaller season than usual (4 months rather than 9 months). This group works with Living Labs and DelDOT (assisted with the Baynard Boulevard bike lane pop-up). Sabrina suggested that there may be an opportunity for the Council to help fund these organizations.
 - 2. Michael asked for more information about what Open Streets Wilmington does. Sabrina shared that the group typically picks streets that are very car-centric, for example 4th Street or Baynard Boulevard.

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WILMAPCO and DeIDOT have attended in the past. The group closes the street to give people an opportunity to realize how much space goes to cars.

3. Jared asked what date the Council will need to spend the money by. Kelly shared that it must be spent by June 1.
 4. Jared asked whether Open Streets Wilmington does any data collection during the events. Sabrina shared that they have surveyed the attendees to collect demographic information and gather information about how people got there (did you walk, bike, drive), as well as asking how safe they feel on nearby streets.
 5. Kelly shared that this idea may need to be looked into as an option for next year's budget, since the vote will be held next week, which may not be enough time to meet with Open Streets Wilmington to work out funding logistics.
- ii. The group also considered organizing a visit to Hoboken to learn about their pedestrian and bicycle initiatives, with Jared suggesting this could be an opportunity for cross-training between municipalities.
 - iii. Michael and Kelly emphasized that the budget is planned to be voted on in the upcoming January 22 meeting of the general Pedestrian Council, which will be important to attend since the vote requires quorum.
- c. Discuss potential Strong Towns speakers to present to the Council
 - i. Michael proposed inviting a Strong Towns speaker in 2026, possibly jointly with the Delaware Bike Council and the Pedestrian Council.
 - ii. Michael noted that Strong Towns has virtual options, which may be easier to coordinate, and that many of their speakers are focused on pedestrian/bike issues. He offered to reach out to the Wilmington chapter of Strong Towns to explore the possibility of having a speaker (local or national) present to the council or subcommittee and will report back on potential topics and availability.

5. Closing Remarks

- a. The next meeting will be held on February 16, 2026. (The February 16 meeting was later cancelled due to subcommittee member conflicts).
- b. There were no additional remarks. Michael Smith asked for a motion to adjourn. Kelly motioned to adjourn. All agreed. Michael brought the meeting to close at 1:48 p.m.