



South Wilmington PLANNING NETWORK

August 25, 2021

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Mr. John Sisson
Chief Executive Officer
Delaware Transit Corporation
119 Lower Beech Street
Suite 100
Wilmington, DE 19805

RE: Letter of Support for the "Connecting Route 9 Corridor Communities" FTA Grant Application

Dear Mr. Sisson,

The South Wilmington Planning Network (SWPN) is pleased to support DART's Grant Application "Connecting Route 9 Corridor Communities" for the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Areas of Persistent Poverty Program funding. The project aims to build off existing planning work along the Route 9 Corridor (from Southbridge to I-295) to improve transit services or facilities through planning, engineering, technical studies, or financial plans.

We feel it will extend work in draft Southbridge Neighborhood Plan. A community-driven effort currently in the final stages of review, one mobility recommendation specific to bus travel states:

Coordinate with DART to enhance transit access to jobs and healthy food. Begin by extending the planned shuttle route between the train station and South Market Street to Southbridge. Stops should include the Wilmington Transit Center, the Delaware Technical Community College Wilmington Campus, Rt 9 Library/Rose Hill Community Center, and Neighborhood House or Henrietta Johnson Medical Center. Make sure the service is provided free of charge for all users.

This grant would provide funding for DART to examine this and other service improvements.

We also feel this work addresses the Wilmington region's transportation inequities. According to WILMAPCO's 2018 Public Opinion Survey, about half of low-income residents report difficulty reaching everyday destinations. Moreover, a 2016 WILMAPCO Data Report found that residents of the Route 9 Corridor spend more than they should on transportation – money that could go towards better education, healthcare and housing. By examining improvements to bus connectivity, this study would address these needs by proposing a more viable transit network, a less costly and safer alternative to private car travel.

Additionally, this project will help address racial inequity in our region. Beyond better connecting residents to jobs and other key destinations to alleviate poverty, WILMAPCO's 2019 Transportation Justice Plan found that majority Black areas like the Route 9 Corridor (65% Black) have received 38% less transportation spending since 2002 than would be expected based on their population size. By setting the stage for future transit expansion and capital funding, this study is a step towards rebalancing our region's racially inequitable transportation spending pattern.

The South Wilmington Planning Network (SWPN) is a collaborative partnership of residents and dozens of government, non-profit, and private agencies who work together to improve quality of life in the Southbridge neighborhood of Wilmington, Delaware.

Should you have any questions or concerns, contact me at: SouthWilmingtonPlanningNetwork@gmail.com.

Britt Salen
Co-Chair, South Wilmington Planning Network