Transportation Infrastructure Investment Fund Council

Meeting Minutes

June 4, 2026
2:30 p.m.
Virtual via Zoom and In-Person (Delaware Room, DelDOT Admin. Bldg.)

Members Present:

Joe Westcott (CHAIR)
Representative Bill Bush
Senator Jack Walsh
Ms. Cornelia Johnson
Dr. Martin Nunlee
Mr. Bill Strickland
Mr. Larry Windley

Guests:

Susanne Laws	Delaware Department of Transportation
Wendy Polasko	Delaware Department of Transportation
George T. Lees III	Delaware Department of Justice – DAG for DelDOT
Lorie Walker	Delaware Department of Transportation
Jazmine Mathieu	Delaware Department of Transportation
EJ Lopez	Delaware Department of Transportation
Kristiana Robinson	Delaware Division of Small Business
Tom Ruszin	Two Farms Inc.
Shawn Tucker	Barnes and Thornburg LLC
Jim Smith	Barnes and Thornburg LLC
Marc Cote	Rossi Group
James Taylor	Verdantas

Agenda Item # 1: Welcome and Introductions

Discussion: Ms. Laws thanked the Council for attending this supplemental meeting, and introduced the DelDOT staff in attendance, and turned the meeting over to Chair Joe Westcott.

Mr. Westcott welcomed everyone. He led the roll call for the Council.

Quorum was confirmed.

Agenda Item # 2: Review of Received Transportation Infrastructure Investment Fund Grant Applications, including Executive Session*, Public Comment and Council Vote

Two Farms Inc. Store 369 Pulaski Highway

Discussion: Ms. Laws reminded the Council of the adopted policy guideline whereby four additional criteria need to be evaluated for a generally excluded development type (GEDT). The four criteria are first, how the particular jobs are created for this economic development project; second, how it will stimulate secondary growth near the project; third, the council also considers an environmental justice analysis of the impact the GEDT will have on the surrounding area; and fourth, the council considers the economic analysis report prepared by Division of Small Business to assess economic benefit indicators associated with the GEDT. For these types of projects, the transportation improvements under consideration are limited to improvements with direct public benefit, such as increasing intersection levels of service and safety improvements.

She then explained how this project falls under the Generally Excluded Development Types (GEDTs) for employment standard guidelines which was revised as of November 14, 2024.

Ms. Laws provided a summary of the project which includes a 4,649-sf convenience store with fueling station. Site is located within a Level 1 State Strategies Investment Area. Ms. Laws introduced representatives of the applicant in attendance, Tom Ruszin, Shawn Tucker, James Smith, James Taylor and Mark Cote.

Ms. Laws provided a summary of the TIIF Scope of Work based on the DelDOT-approved plans: modification of the existing crossover of US 13 (Pulaski Highway) at Fir Avenue to create a Restricted Crossover U-Turn (RCUT); engineering and contingency.

Ms. Laws indicated that the RCUT will remove conflict points at the crossover and provide channelized vehicular movements, preventing dangerous weaving by vehicles exiting the proposed Royal Farms.

Ms. Laws stated that the public endorser for the project is Marcus A. Henry, County Executive, New Castle County.

Ms. Laws also introduced a summary of the four additional GEDT criteria. Ms. Laws noted the applicant's response to how the GEDT will create or stimulate secondary jobs growth was to mention how pedestrian and cyclists will have safe access to the development project, and that these improvements "will enable older neighboring commercial properties to be aggregated and redeveloped…"

Ms. Laws presented a summary of the applicant's environmental justice (EJ) analysis, which indicated that the project would not result in adverse effects on any disadvantaged communities, therefore no EJ-specific mitigation is required.

Ms. Robinson provided an overview of the applicant's financial stability, noting that the applicant is proposing to hire 24 new full-time employees with an average salary of $36,895.83. When the project is successfully executed, it is projected to increase state and local tax revenue by approximately $212,918.18 annually. The applicant appears to be properly organized and in good standing within the state. A certificate of good standing was provided, along with a valid business license. Additionally, no compliance issues were identified during a review conducted with other state agencies.

Ms. Laws reviewed the performance measures. She stated in summary that the applicant is requesting $231,432.61.

Mr. Westcott opened the discussion to the Council members for questions.

Rep. Bush asked how this project will help with economic development for the adjacent properties.

Mr. Tom Ruszin stated that Wawa, a direct competitor, will benefit from these improvements as well as the industrial site in the area. This will also offer public safety for the entire area.

Mr.Ruszin commented that aside from preventing weaving through multiple lanes of traffic, the RCUT does not have any connection to Royal Farms. It is simply a public safety improvement, added on after the property was purchased. It is not really a benefit to Royal Farms.

Mr. Tucker added that the diner next door would benefit from this traffic safety project as would the community.

Sen. Walsh stated that he thought it was a stretch to consider this project under the GEDT status. His concern was that by allowing this, many more similar projects would apply for a grant. Only 24 jobs does not seem enough to satisfy the requirements of TIIF.

Ms. Laws commented that the project does meet the criteria that were adopted in 2024, therefore the guidelines may need to be re-examined and more specific details may need to be added.

Mr. Tucker commented that this corridor is redeveloping and mentioned the School Bell project across the street and a proposed Wawa that has been approved as examples. He directed attention to the photo shown in the presentation of junk cars parked in the lot showing the need for redevelopment. Mr. Tucker further stated this development project would help the diner and help transform the area, since in his opinion redevelopment will spark redevelopment. He acknowledged the grant is taxpayer money, but this applicant is proposing a true safety benefit for the area.

Dr. Nunlee mentioned when the Council developed the GEDT criteria it was for development that was happening in the middle of nowhere to bring in business that would otherwise not come to the community. However, he believes this project is not going to bring in business that would not have already been considered coming to the community. He stated it is not a good use of state funding.

Mr. Westcott stated that while in the past the Council has granted funds to convenience stores these situations were based on public good. He asked how the past approvals compare to this project.

Ms. Laws reviewed the previous projects stating that the Lincoln Wawa included a traffic signal as did the Royal Farms Milton. She stated that this application under consideration is a much smaller ask, and is very limited in scope. She also mentioned the RCUT was not recommended in the traffic impact study but was seen by DelDOT as something vital for traffic safety.

Rep. Bush added that one thing not mentioned regarding the Royal Farms Milton application which distinguished it quite a bit, is there an industrial park is being proposed adjacent to the convenience store. He expressed the additional development is going to help that area, too, creating a lot of economic development next to Royal Farms Milton, and that influenced his decision to vote in favor.

Mr. Cote responded that as part of the plan approval process, the applicant worked with DelDOT to create an interconnection to the adjacent parcel, that is, the parcels to the east as well as to the west of the Royal Farms. He explained the interconnections allow for additional redevelopment to occur without those parcels incurring entrance costs for construction, because access would mostly be shared with the Royal Farms parcel. Mr. Cote noted that many of the parcels to the west of the site have direct access to Route 40, with not very well-defined entrances, so by taking access through the Royal Farms site entrances are minimized, which is an important safety piece. He stated that interconnection does allow for the next party to come through and redevelop in this Level 1 investment area.

Mr. Windley asked how the RCUT would improve or help the business across the street.

Mr. Cote explained that the RCUT will prevent left turns out onto Route 40 from the properties on the south side, however School Bell Crossing provides an interconnection to those properties allowing them to get to the signal, taking away dangerous movements.

Mr. Windley asked if the Council has recommended awards for two convenience stores to date.

Ms. Laws confirmed that the Council has recommended awards to Wawa and Royal Farms.

Mr. Tucker added that so far Royal Farms has 37 stores in Delaware and they employ 330 people full-time and 350 people part-time, and this funding encourages growth in Delaware and brings jobs to the state.

Public Comments: None

Executive Session: None

Mr. Westcott asked for a motion to consider the application. Mr. Nunlee made the motion, and Mr. Windley seconded the motion.

Roll call vote was taken:
Mr. Westcott: Decline
Rep. Bush: Decline
Sen. Walsh: Decline
Mr. Strickland: Decline
Dr. Nunlee: Decline
Ms. Johnson: Decline
Mr. Windley: Decline

The motion did not carry to consider recommendation of an award to Two Farms Inc. Store 369 Pulaski Highway.

Mr. Westcott opened the discussion for Public Comment.

Agenda Item # 3: Public Comments: None

Agenda Item # 4: Future Meetings

Discussion: Ms. Laws stated that the next Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 18, 2026, at 10:30 a.m., for applications received by the May 26, 2026, deadline. The next submission deadline for TIIF applications is Monday, August 31, 2026.

Agenda Item # 5: Adjournment

Mr. Strickland moved to adjourn the meeting, and Sen. Walsh seconded.

Roll call vote was taken:
Mr. Westcott: Yes
Rep. Bush: Yes
Sen. Walsh: Yes
Mr. Strickland: Yes
Dr. Nunlee: Yes
Ms. Johnson: Yes
Mr. Windley: Yes

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Minutes Prepared by: Lorie Walker, DelDOT Economic Development Coordination
Minutes Reviewed by: Susanne K. Laws, P.E., DelDOT Economic Development Coordination

Approved by TIIF Council on 8/18/2026