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, Lanie Clymer, Mark Luszcz, Anne Brown, Pamela Steinebach, C.R. McLeod, Austin Gray, Anson Gock, Melanie Carlson, Angela Christian, Cathy Smith, Tremica Cherry-Wall, Ian Peters, Stephen Bayer, Tami Venn, Ken Feaster

Guests:
Ryan O'Donoghue, FHWA; Camille Otto, FHWA

Agenda Item #1: Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Acting Chairman Martin Lessner called the meeting to order and confirmed that a quorum of council members was met. Acting Chairman Lessner moved to the next agenda item and asked for approval of the meeting minutes from the February 19th, 2026, COT meeting. Acting 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 moment of silence for the passing of former Chairman Ted Williams.

Secretary Hastings started the presentation, noting John Sisson's retirement from the Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC) and Lilia Montoya's new role as DTC CEO. Secretary Hastings also noted the establishment of the new Division of Toll Operations and Facilities, led by Susanne Laws. Secretary Hastings reviewed DelDOT's main priorities, including safety, asset maintenance, multimodal transportation, and resiliency, and highlighted the year-to-date Delaware transportation fatalities.

Secretary Hastings provided updates on DelDOT's guardrail policies at the request of Acting Chairman Lessner in response to an article in *The New Yorker*. Secretary Hastings stated that current data indicates no significant issues with guardrail safety in Delaware. Acting Chairman Lessner asked whether there is a list of guardrails that need to be replaced for safety reasons or for other reasons requiring urgent replacement. Secretary Hastings responded by stating that maintenance needs differ per district and that DelDOT does not have a comprehensive list. Councilman Howell asked whether DelDOT conducts independent inspections for guardrails installed by in-house staff and contractors. Secretary Hastings responded stating to clarify that "independent" means that different teams handle inspections and installations. Councilman Howell asked whether some guardrails haven't had the same safety reviews because they were repaired, not newly installed, to which Secretary Hastings agreed.

Agenda Item #3: Fiscal Year 2027 Budget

Secretary Hastings presented DelDOT's FY27 capital and operating budget. Secretary Hastings also noted that DelDOT increased tolls, DMV fees, and implemented an alternative fuel vehicle fee in October 2025 to continue funding DelDOT operations.

Acting Chairman Lessner asked whether the revenue from US 301 had been recorded and when the bonds would be fulfilled. Secretary Hastings stated that US 301 revenue covers the TIFIA loan, operations, and repairs along US 301, and that half of any excess revenue reduces the TIFIA loan, and the other half goes to the Transportation Trust Fund.

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

Secretary Hastings provided an update on the Delaware Task Force on Sustainable Transportation Funding, which has held nine meetings already and has five remaining.

Acting Chairman Lessner asked about roadway maintenance responsibility for streets within Wilmington. Secretary Hastings noted that mileage responsibilities vary by

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agency and directed Acting Chairman Lessner to DelDOT's online resources for this information.

Acting Chairman Lessner asked how funding priorities differ between the task force and the Council, which prioritizes capital improvement projects. Secretary Hastings explained that the task force will only be recommending funding strategies, not ranking the unmet project needs.

Councilman Howell asked about an unfunded project to add a third rail to the Northeast Corridor and noted that it was not on a previously presented list of unfunded project needs. Secretary Hastings was uncertain about the project's specifics.

Agenda Item #5: Major Project Updates

Secretary Hastings provided an update on major capital projects in each county.

Acting Chairman Lessner asked whether the trail will allow northbound cyclists on SR 896 to pass through that intersection. Secretary Hastings stated that the new shared-use path on SR 896 built as part of the I-95/SR 896 improvements project, will provide a connection from Glasgow to Newark for cyclists.

Councilman Russell inquired about a traffic signal installation at Holland Glade Road in Sussex County. Secretary Hastings responded by stating that the project is a developer project.

Councilman Holmes and Acting Chairman Lessner inquired about e-bike safety and regulations. Secretary Hastings responded, stating that discussions are ongoing with partner agencies and local governments to agree on a consistent set of rules.

Secretary Hastings provided updates on transit projects throughout the state.

Acting Chairman Lessner stated that users must use the DelDOT app to purchase a ticket, which is valid for only about 10 minutes, and suggested transitioning to a tap-to-pay system. Catherine Smith responded, stating that new fareboxes can support that technology with additional research, and that it is not being implemented at this time, but maybe in the future.

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

Agenda Item #6: 2026 DelDOT Legislative Priorities

Secretary Hastings stated that eight legislative measures were introduced by DelDOT in 2026. Several legislative measures are awaiting signature from the Governor.

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Agenda Item #7: Review of 2024 and 2025 COT Annual Reports

Austin Gray stated that the 2024 and 2025 COT Annual Reports were developed and shared with members. The reports document the Council's activity each year and are required by Delaware law. No members provided comments on the reports.

Councilman Howell inquired about the unfunded projects for the Northeast Corridor upgrade between Wilmington and Claymont, citing Amtrak long-range plans and programmatic documents. Secretary Hastings stated that DelDOT staff will gather more information on Amtrak funding requests by reaching out to the Northeast Corridor Commission.

Councilman Carey inquired about the role of the COT in aviation. Secretary Hastings responded by stating that the Council has no specific role in aviation programs and investments.

Acting Chairman Lessner inquired about rail project prioritization in the CTP. Secretary Hastings responded by stating that major rail projects must be listed in the CTP and will undergo DelDOT's defined project prioritization process.

Agenda Item #8: Public Comment:

Chairman Lessner opened the floor for public comment. A member of the public inquired about the SR 1 Corridor Capacity Preservation Program. Secretary Hastings responded by stating that program documents are available on the DelDOT website.

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

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