

Walkable Community Workshops

Round 1



SPONSORED BY WILMAPCO AND
EDGEMOOR GARDENS CIVIC ASSOCIATION



WITH FUNDING BY DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
AND THE DELAWARE OFFICE OF STATE PLANNING COORDINATION

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Introduction

WILMAPCO was selected for the 2005 Walkable Community Workshops (WCW) program—part of the National Center for Bicycling & Walking effort to work directly with communities. WCWs are interactive events that bring together residents, elected officials, advocates, public agency staff, health practitioners, educators, planners and engineers to make our communities safer and easier to walk in. This first round of workshops, held in Brandywine Hundred, City of New Castle, and Edgemoor Gardens provided information on how we can turn our communities into the kind of pedestrian-friendly places we all like to experience.

Who is WILMAPCO

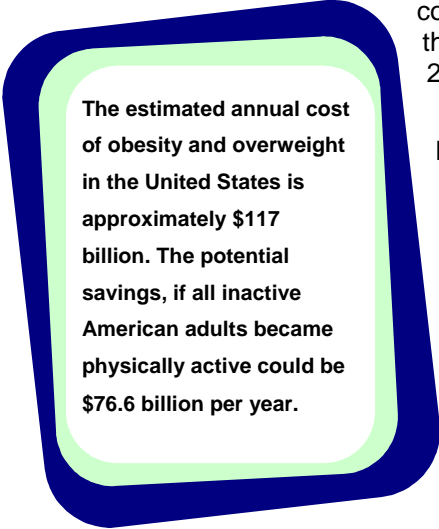
The Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) is the bi-state Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) serving New Castle County, DE and Cecil County, MD. Our policy-making body, the WILMAPCO Council, consists of state, county and municipal representatives. We have the important role of educating and involving the public and local agencies in the transportation decision-making and funding process. Our *Regional Transportation Plan* calls for **improving our quality of life** by protecting public health and supporting our communities, **transporting people** by providing transportation choices including facilities for bicycling and walking, and **supporting economic activity and growth** by making our region an attractive place to live and work. Making our communities more walkable achieves all these goals, and more.

Why are walkable communities important

We are all pedestrians. Whether we think of ourselves as one or not, we are pedestrians. We may walk to work, walk for exercise, walk to do errands or simply walk from where we park the car to the neighborhood store; we all need safe facilities for walking.

Walking is crucial to giving those who don't drive a travel choice. Many in our region are too young to drive, have a permanent or temporary disability which prevents their driving, have no access to a car, or choose not to drive. In New Castle County, Delaware, 25 percent of the population is under 18, 12 percent is over 65 (and this number will grow rapidly in the years to come), 16 percent have a disability and 9 percent of households have no available vehicle. In Cecil County, Maryland, 28 percent of the population is under 18, 11 percent are over 65, 19 percent have a disability, and 6 percent of households have no available vehicle. Many in these population groups need to walk in order to lead active and independent lives.

Walkable communities are healthier communities. American's waistlines keep getting bigger, along with a rise in related illnesses including heart disease and diabetes. In Maryland and Delaware respectively, 19 and 22 percent of adult are obese according to the CDC. Only 65 percent of adolescents engage in the recommended amount of physical activity. Adults have a worse track record, with only 26 percent getting the recommended amount of physical activity; in Delaware, 27 percent of adults engage in no leisure-time physical activity while 23 percent in Maryland report no activity. Yet we know that pedestrian-friendly communities make it easier for people to integrate physical activity into their daily lives. Indeed, those who report having access to sidewalks are 27 percent more likely to be physically active.



The estimated annual cost of obesity and overweight in the United States is approximately \$117 billion. The potential savings, if all inactive American adults became physically active could be \$76.6 billion per year.

Everyone benefits from walkable communities. Even if you don't personally enjoy walking, you still benefit from living in a walkable community. Approximately 40 percent of all trips are less than two miles – an easy walk or bike ride in an area with safe pedestrian and bicycling facilities. More people walking and bicycling can help reduce overall levels of congestion, benefiting drivers too. Less driving can also help reduce air pollution caused by motor vehicles. There are economic benefits as well, with higher property values and greater sales in commercial areas.

What is a Walkable Community Workshop

Most simply, a WCW is a four-hour session that includes an educational presentation on what makes a community walkable, a walking audit of a specific area, and a mapping session, putting pencils to paper brainstorming solutions. Focusing on a particular area, participants study it in terms of walkability: sidewalks, pathways, inviting streetscape, crosswalks, destinations, etc. The process gives everyone the tools for making a community walkable and realistic next steps participants can take to achieve their ideas. This first round of workshops was led by nationally-renowned experts, Peter Lagerwey (pedestrian and bicycle coordinator for the City of Seattle) and Deborah Spicer (director of the New York Healthy Heart Program) with funding from DelDOT and the Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination.

Three parts of the workshops



Part 1 - The presentation talks about sidewalk design, crosswalks, traffic calming, community design and other tools communities need to create walkable communities.

Part 2 – The walking audit gives participants a chance to walk through the area, identifying issues and thinking about applying what they have learned from the presentation. Getting out and walking is key to illustrating the challenges that people face when pedestrian facilities are not available.



Part 3 – During the mapping exercise people put down on paper their vision and realistic actions for improving the study area. Participants ended the session by committing to specific next steps to continue the process started at the workshop.

Edgemoor Gardens

Area Background

Edgemoor Gardens is a compact community with 382 townhomes connected with open space. The community would like to improve the open space with maintenance, well-defined foot paths, and recreational opportunities to better bring the community together. Currently a dirt path exists using the Connectiv utility line and open space parcels owned by the Edgemoor Gardens Civic Association. In addition, Rysing Drive is the main road through the community and is along a DART bus route. This is a family-oriented community with children who play in the open space and residential areas and need to be able to cross Rysing Drive safely. The workshop was held on the south side of the community, looking at both open space issues and issues along Rysing Drive.

Issues and Potential Solutions Identified

Issue:

- Cars disregard walkers and bikers along Rysing Drive. Both school bus and transit riders, as well as other pedestrians traveling from one side of the community to the other, must cross street without defined crosswalks. Unmarked crossings encourage jaywalking because people don't have defined places to cross.

Solutions:

At Rysing Drive or Paynter Drive, put electric speed sign slow down drivers. Electronic speed signs display a speed-reading to passing motorists along with the speed limit to educate the community about the need to slow down.

- ❑ Contact the Delaware State Police to request placement of an electronic speed sign as part of their SCAT trailer program (Speed Command Alert Trailer) at Delaware State Police Troop 1, 603 Philadelphia Pike, Wilmington, DE 19809, 302.761.6677.



Explore traffic calming solutions for Rysing Drive. Beneficial traffic calming may include “bulb outs” to narrow crossing distance at crosswalks, raised crosswalks to slow traffic where people cross, mini-circles to prevent high speed traffic, strategic use of on-street parking, and/or striping to visually narrow the road.

- ❑ Contact Michael Somers regarding the DeIDOT Traffic Calming Program at 302.659.2024. A copy of the Delaware Traffic Calming Guidelines is available on the DeIDOT web at www.deldot.net/static/pubs_forms/manuals/traffic_calming/DelDotFinal.pdf.



Mini circle

Bulb out



Install crosswalks across Rysing Drive.

- Coordinate with DeIDOT led study of crosswalks and pedestrian crossing signs. Contact Kristen Melendez, Traffic Studies Engineer, 302.659.2046, Kristen.Melendez@state.de.us. Elements of a pedestrian crossing include:

Pedestrian crossing sign.

The fluorescent yellow/green (FYG) shown here is more noticeable than traditional yellow crosswalk signs.



Curb ramps.

Curb ramps allow wheel chair and baby carriages to comfortably access crosswalk. This example has what is known as "truncated domes." Truncated domes provide a textural clue to vision-impaired pedestrians that they are at an intersection.



Crosswalks.

Zebra striping or wide stripes in reflective paint are most noticeable to drivers.



Issue:

- Transit stop locations do not provide best conditions for bus riders or adjacent residents.

Solutions:

- Work with DART to relocate bus stops where they are in people's front yards. Contact them at 1.800-355.8080 to discuss new locations for bus stop signs



Issue:

- Limited recreational activities have resulted in underused open space. This has resulted in littering and security concerns because few people monitor the area. Children tend to play in the street because of limited options.

Solutions:

Create walking path through open space using crushed gravel. At the southern end, a removable bollard will protect from vehicle traffic.

- ❑ Contact New Castle County Community Services at 302.395.5600 to discuss assistance for improving your parkland.
- ❑ Work with New Castle County to apply for a Greenways and Trails Grant from the Delaware Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund. Funding may be used for park land and greenway corridor land acquisition construction of outdoor recreation facilities, new trails, pedestrian/bicycle road crossing improvements for safety, facilities for persons with disabilities, and park/greenway plans. Call Delaware State Parks at 302.739.5285, email Patricia.Broadway@state.de.us or visit www.destateparks.com/greenway.
- ❑ Apply for funding through the Transportation Enhancements Program (note that these funds can be used for sidewalk and crosswalk improvements along Rysing Drive as well). Coordinate with your state representative and senator to use Community Transportation Funds for your matching funds. Contact the Program Coordinator at Jeff.Niezgoda@state.de.us, call 302.760.2178, or visit www.deldot.net/static/Community_programs_services/trans_ehnhance for more information.



Photo-rendering of Edgemoor Gardens open space with crushed gravel trail

Explore other active recreation uses for open space and the surrounding area.

- ❑ Work with New Castle County to explore the best site for a dog park, either in the open area near the intersection of River and Rysing or in the wooded area along the trail. A dog park will bring more adult use into the open space, increase positive interaction among neighbors, and help for monitor children's use of the open space. Visit www.dog-play.com/dogpark.html for some great ideas for setting up dog parks.
- ❑ Hold a park planning workshop with neighborhood children to learn what recreational facilities would be most important to include, i.e. basketball (as far away from houses as possible), playground equipment, multipurpose field, etc.. If given a sense of ownership early on, kids will be more likely to respect the park and assist with periodic cleanup. Remember to include seating for sports spectators and supervising parents in designs and soft materials on the ground to cushion falls in the tot lot. Anti-wrap swing hangers should be used to eliminate swings from being wrapped around the top bar. Any lighted areas should automatically turn off at pre-set time and may be operated by push-button to conserve electricity when not in use. Visit www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/playpubs.html or www.kaboom.org for safety information and ideas for planning play areas.



Anti-wrap swing

- ❑ Explore putting in a launching area in the river for small boats (the only one is in Newport). Contact DNREC to discuss your options.
- ❑ Submit a project to DeIDOT to connect a bike trail under the 495 overpass to access Fox Point.

Edgemoor Gardens Study Area



Edgemoor Gardens Recommendations



New Steps

A number of next steps were identified during the workshop. These include:

- ☐ Report on workshops at community planning meeting
- ☐ Call United Water about water main break
- ☐ Spread wood chips
- ☐ Coordinate with county of title to open spaces
- ☐ Report to bicycle shop owner on workshop
- ☐ Discuss with coordinating council
- ☐ Include in community newsletter

Appendix 1 – Evaluation of Workshop

Five evaluation forms were turned in at the Edgemoor Gardens workshop.

- 1) The PowerPoint presentation was: 4 excellent 1 good ___ fair ___ poor
- 2) The walking audit/walkabout was: 4 excellent 1 good ___ fair ___ poor
- 3) The discussion of possible local strategies and next steps was:
5 excellent ___ good ___ fair ___ poor
- 4) Overall, how useful was this workshop to you?
4 very ___ somewhat ___ a little ___ not at all
- 5) Overall, how useful do you think this workshop was or will be to this community?
5 very ___ somewhat ___ a little ___ not at all
- 6) The most useful part of this workshop was:
 - Showing what changes were possible
 - Traffic and health statistics
 - Excellent handouts and maps
 - Mapping out possible improvements
 - Sharing ideas
- 7) The least useful part of this workshop was:
 - None
- 8) What specific next steps would you like to see taken in your community?
 - More positive involvement from residents
 - County do maintenance and improvements in open spaces
 - Hold public meetings and get residents involved
 - Intersections
- 9) What specific next steps are **you** willing to take?
 - Contact DeIDOT and DART for crosswalks and signs
 - Work with officials to bring about changes
 - Document map improvements
 - Persistent writing letters to keep pressure on politicians
- 10) Please check any that apply to you:
4 community resident
___ elected official
2 pedestrian advocate
___ parent of children under 18 years of age
___ student (grade/level: ___)
___ employee of local agency (which one? _____)
___ employee of state agency (which one? _____)
2 employee of local business (which one? _____)
1 other: grandparent
- 11) Please share any additional comments on the back of this page.

Appendix 2 - Attendees

★ NATIONAL CENTER ★ for BICYCLING & WALKING

Walkable Community Workshop Sign-in Sheet



| Name | Organization | Address | Email |
|-----------------|-------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Koehn, Max Anne | North Hills Civic Assoc | 524 Mason Rd | max524@aol.com |
| Marcia Robinson | Elegant Gardens | 41 South Cornum Dr | marciarobinson@earthlink.com |
| Don McDonnell | Captain's Inn | 11 N. Kentucky Ave. | |
| Tom McDonnell | Captain's Inn | " " | |
| Jim Hodges | GREEN ACRES | 1504 RADFORD RD WILMINGTON, DE 19803 | |
| Sheila Boyer | Edgewood | 10 N. Danman | |
| Kyunkius | Edgewood | 713 Ragunig | KYUNKIUS@EARTHLINK.NET |
| Alma Speck | NCC | 12 Love Ave. Wilmington, DE 19804 | nspector@co.new-castle.de.us |
| Jim Carter | County Council | | jcarter@co.new-castle.de.us |
| Stephen Hodgson | Edgewood | 33 N. Cannon Dr | stephen@honey@hotmail.com |
| Terry Wright | Office of Sen. Biden | 1105 W. Market St. | terrywright@biden.senate.gov |
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