



# FOURTH STREET WILMINGTON WALKABLE COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

June 24, 2015

Hosted by Cornerstone West & WILMAPCO



Walkable Community Workshops are interactive events that bring together the community and transportation professionals to focus attention on making it safer and easier to walk. Workshop participants identified real-world problems and hands-on solutions for the community.



## Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	1
WHO IS WILMAPCO? .....	1
WHY ARE WALKABLE COMMUNITIES IMPORTANT? .....	1
WHAT IS A WALKABLE COMMUNITY WORKSHOP? .....	3
FOURTH STREET WILMINGTON BACKGROUND AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	4
Area Background .....	4
Summary of Recommendations .....	7
Getting along the street.....	7
Getting across the street .....	10
Transit .....	13
Bicycle Routes .....	14
Aesthetics and Beyond .....	15
FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION RESOURCES .....	17

## APPENDIX: BEYOND THE WALKABLE COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

**Learn more about the Walkable Community Workshop Program at  
[www.wilmapco.org/walkable](http://www.wilmapco.org/walkable)**

*Thanks to the University of Delaware Institute for Public Administration for providing photos from the Workshop.*

*The preparation of this document was financed in part with funds provided by the Federal Government, including the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration of the United States Department of Transportation.*

## 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. Since 2005, workshops have been held throughout the WILMAPCO region, providing 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.

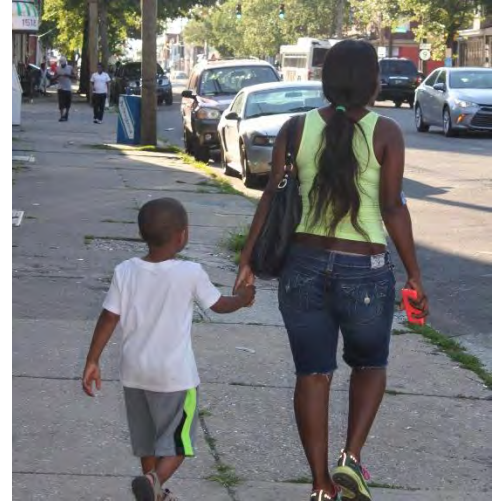
**Walking is crucial to give those who don't drive a travel choice.** Many in our region are too young to drive, have a permanent or temporary disability which prevents their driving, have no access to a car, or choose not to drive. In Wilmington, Delaware, 24% of the population is under 18, 12% are over 65 (this number is expected to grow rapidly in the years to come), 15% of the population has a disability, and 27% of households have no available vehicle. Many people in these population groups need to walk in order to lead active and independent lives.





### **Walkable communities are healthier communities.**

Americans' waistlines are getting wider, triggering a rise in related illnesses including heart disease and diabetes. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that in Delaware 27% of adults are obese, only 46% of adults engage in the recommended amount of physical activity, and 22% of adults engage in no leisure-time physical activity at all. Additionally, only 24% of adolescents get the recommended amount of physical 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% more likely to be physically active.



**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?

A WCW is typically 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, where participants engage in brainstorming solutions. Focusing on a particular area's walkability, participants study sidewalks, pathways, inviting streetscape, crosswalks, destinations, etc. The process gives everyone the tools for making a community walkable and provides realistic next steps that can be used to achieve their ideas.

There are three main parts of a workshop:

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



**Part 2: Walking Audit** – 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: Mapping** – 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.





## FOURTH STREET WILMINGTON BACKGROUND AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Area Background

The greater West Side community is home to more than 500 businesses, restaurants, and health care providers, 13,000 residents, and community gathering space including parks, the Woodlawn Library, and the West End Neighborhood House. Approximately 30 residents, business representatives, community organizations and transportation professionals attended the 4<sup>th</sup> Street WCW held on June 24, 2015 in the Fourth Street neighborhood of the West Side community at the Westside Health Center. The walking audit route (Map 1) began at the Westside Health Center and then traveled on 4<sup>th</sup> Street between Scott Street and Rodney Street, Rodney Street between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street between Rodney and Scott Streets.

The Fourth Street WCW builds upon past planning in the community, particularly the *West Side Grows Together Neighborhood Revitalization Plan*. This plan outlined a collaborative vision for the community and identified safer, more attractive, pedestrian-friendly streets as a priority. Specifically, the plan stated that one necessary improvement of the district is to give it a stronger pedestrian atmosphere that would attract more customers by making it safe and easy for them to visit, park and walk around.

Elements of the plan's 4<sup>th</sup> Street recommendations that most relate to walkability include:

- Economic Development - COLLABORATION
  - Organize 4th Street Collaborative to invest in community and people
  - Form a 4th Street Revitalization entity
- Economic Development - PUBLIC SAFETY/MAINTENANCE
  - Clean the corridor
  - Target crime in the area



- **Economic Development - PROMOTION**
  - Reposition and rebrand the corridor
  - Hold more events year round
  - Launch community markets
- **Economic Development - PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS**
  - Improve existing homes and businesses
  - Consider re-zoning 4th Street
  - Target redevelopment to support emerging commercial corridor
  - Encourage new businesses to locate in target area by offering incentives
  - Improve 4th Street to make it safer and more attractive
  - Improve and redesign I-95 ramp at 4th Street
  - Inaugurate a big impact public art project
- **PUBLIC TRANSIT**
  - Target bus shelter improvements on commercial corridors and near parks and institutions
  - Consider bus bulbs along 2nd and 4th street to decrease travel time
  - Consider consolidated stops on 4th Street to improve travel times
- **PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS**
  - Add pedestrian signals and crosswalks
  - Calm traffic for pedestrian safety
  - Improve pedestrian connections over and under I-95
  - Create walking routes that connect amenities
- **BICYCLING NETWORK**
  - Create a bike network that links the West Side and the City
  - Install bike parking at institutions, on commercial corridors, and at parks
  - Create a community bike center for maintenance and education
  - Organize a bike club for group rides







Map 1 Study Area



## Summary of Recommendations

Workshop attendees divided into two groups and completed a walking audit along the route shown in Map 1. Following the walking audit, participants divided into two groups to brainstorm and map their recommendations. Maps 2, 3 and 4 summarize the discussion by the two groups. Highlights of the discussion along the walk and during the mapping include:

### Getting along the street



*Most sidewalks on 4<sup>th</sup> Street are wide but lack pedestrian street lighting and landscaping.*



*Beautiful trees such as these along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street enhance the walking experience but care should be taken to ensure trees don't obscure street lights.*

**Sidewalks** Sidewalks in the area studied vary in width and character. Sidewalks should be at least 5 feet wide in residential areas, but in commercial areas 8 feet or wider is preferred. Wider sidewalks provide space for outdoor dining, benches, bicycle racks, sandwich boards and trash cans separate from where people are walking.

Along 4th Street, sidewalks are sufficiently width for a commercial district, but some sections lack landscaping, bus shelters, pedestrian-scale lighting. Along Rodney, 3<sup>rd</sup> and Scott Streets, sidewalk widths vary but most have sufficient widths for residential streets; these streets have short sections with street trees but mostly lack landscaping and lighting. Throughout the area studied, many of the sidewalks are in poor condition, with cracked and crumbling concrete.

Poor sidewalk conditions present access challenges for those with wheel chairs, vision problems, strollers, and other users, and are particularly dangerous as tripping hazards at night due to the lack of street lights.









**Driveway improvements** Driveways present another challenge for walking. Sidewalks that remain level are preferred to sidewalks that slope down at each driveway. Some sidewalks slope at driveways and do not meet ADA guidelines if the grade of the slope is more than 2%. The sidewalk can wrap around the driveway ramp if needed to remain level, however this presents a challenge for those who have visual impairments. The photos below show example driveway designs.



*Example of level sidewalk with driveway apron using the planting strip*

Photos: [www.pedbikeimages.org/](http://www.pedbikeimages.org/) Dan Burden



*Example of sidewalk wrapped around driveway*

**Lighting** Pedestrian scale streetlights are missing from most of the corridor. While there are some cobra head street lights, these are sometimes blocked by trees and often fail to illuminate the sidewalks. The cobra head lights may be retrofitted to incorporate pedestrian scale lighting (e.g., shorter light poles and/or lower light fixtures that are designed to be effective in illuminating the pedestrian travel way). Design should be coordinated to match lights at other locations along the 4<sup>th</sup> Street corridor.



*Cobra head street light*

*Pedestrian scale light*



## Getting across the street

Signalized crossings with crosswalks on 4<sup>th</sup> Street are at Rodney, Clayton, DuPont and Scott streets, while 3<sup>rd</sup> Street has no signals or marked crosswalks. Crossing 4th Street currently presents a challenge to the pedestrian friendliness of the area due to its four-lane width. Curbs can be extended with “bump outs” to reduce this distance, make crossing pedestrians more visible to drivers, and protecting parked cars. Bump-outs will also help with the issue of cars parking too close to the intersections.



**Crosswalks** At minimum, crosswalks should be striped as wide as or wider than the sidewalk it connects to and use high-visibility markings that contrast with the pavement and are reflective at night. Crosswalks along 4th Street are marked at all signalized intersections and at no unsignalized location. Some signalized side streets do not have marked crosswalks. Participants noticed people crossing at unmarked locations. Crosswalks should be added to all side streets and intersections along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.





Map 3 Recommendations: Getting Across the Street



Crosswalks can also be installed using materials to add color and texture—helping to give unique character to the neighborhood. This can be done using textured and/or colored concrete or high friction surface epoxy. Some examples are below.



**Corners** The design of the corner should provide access for all pedestrians including persons with disabilities, make drivers and those waiting to cross visible to one another, deduce the distance needed to cross and reduce excessive turning speeds by drivers.

Most locations lack curb ramps that meet ADA standards. Curb ramps are important, not only for those persons with disabilities, but for others who may be pushing strollers, or rolling shopping carts, luggage, etc. Working with DelDOT and Wilmington Department of Public Works, ADA curb ramps installed should be installed at all intersections. When possible, ramps should be installed for each crosswalk direction, rather than a single ramp per corner.



Bump-outs (or curb extensions) serve several important roles; with bump-outs drivers and pedestrians can clearly see one another, the distance to cross is significantly reduced and parking is protected. Larger bump-outs provide space for benches, planters, trash cans and other needs.



**Signals** Existing and potential signals should be review with DelDOT Traffic to identify ways they can improve the walkability of the community. Improvements to consider at existing signals include:

- Shorten signal lengths if feasible, to reduce the wait time for pedestrians.
- Coordinate signal timing to give “green wave” for drivers traveling at the speed limit.
- Leading Pedestrian Interval gives pedestrians a 3–7 second head start when entering an intersection with a corresponding green signal in the same direction of travel.



A HAWK or High-Intensity Activated crossWalk beacon (left) or Rectangular Flashing Beacon (right) is used to stop traffic only as needed. The signal remains unlit when not in use.

## Transit

Transit riders are pedestrians and must walk to reach bus stops and cross the street to reach destinations. DART Route 4 and 24 travels east-west on Fourth Street. Location of bus stops should be reviewed to make sure they are located close to safe places to cross. Benches, shelters and trash cans make waiting for the bus more comfortable. Locating bus stops at bump-outs help bus drivers spot waiting riders.

## Bicycle Routes

No streets within the study area are signed as bicycle routes. The nearest designated east-west routes are SR 48 and SR 52. Near the study area, Broom Street is a suggested north-south route but lacks accompanying pavement markings and signage. Types of bicycle facilities are described as follows.



Bicycle lanes should be 4-6 feet wide. If there is more space, a painted buffer might also be added as shown to the left. Space for bicycle lanes might be gained from the Road Diet, narrowing the width of motor vehicle lanes to 10-11 feet, or narrowing parking lanes to 7-8 feet.



Sharrows, or Shared Lane Markings, accommodate bicyclists on lower volume, lower speed streets without sufficient width for bicycle lanes. Sharrows also assist bicyclists with proper lane positioning relative to the curb and on-street parking.



Lower volume streets can be designed as Bicycle Boulevards. Bicycle Boulevards use a mix of signs, pavement markings, and traffic calming measures to discourage through trips by motor vehicles, create safe, convenient bicycle crossings of arterial streets, and give bicycles travel priority.



## Aesthetics and Beyond

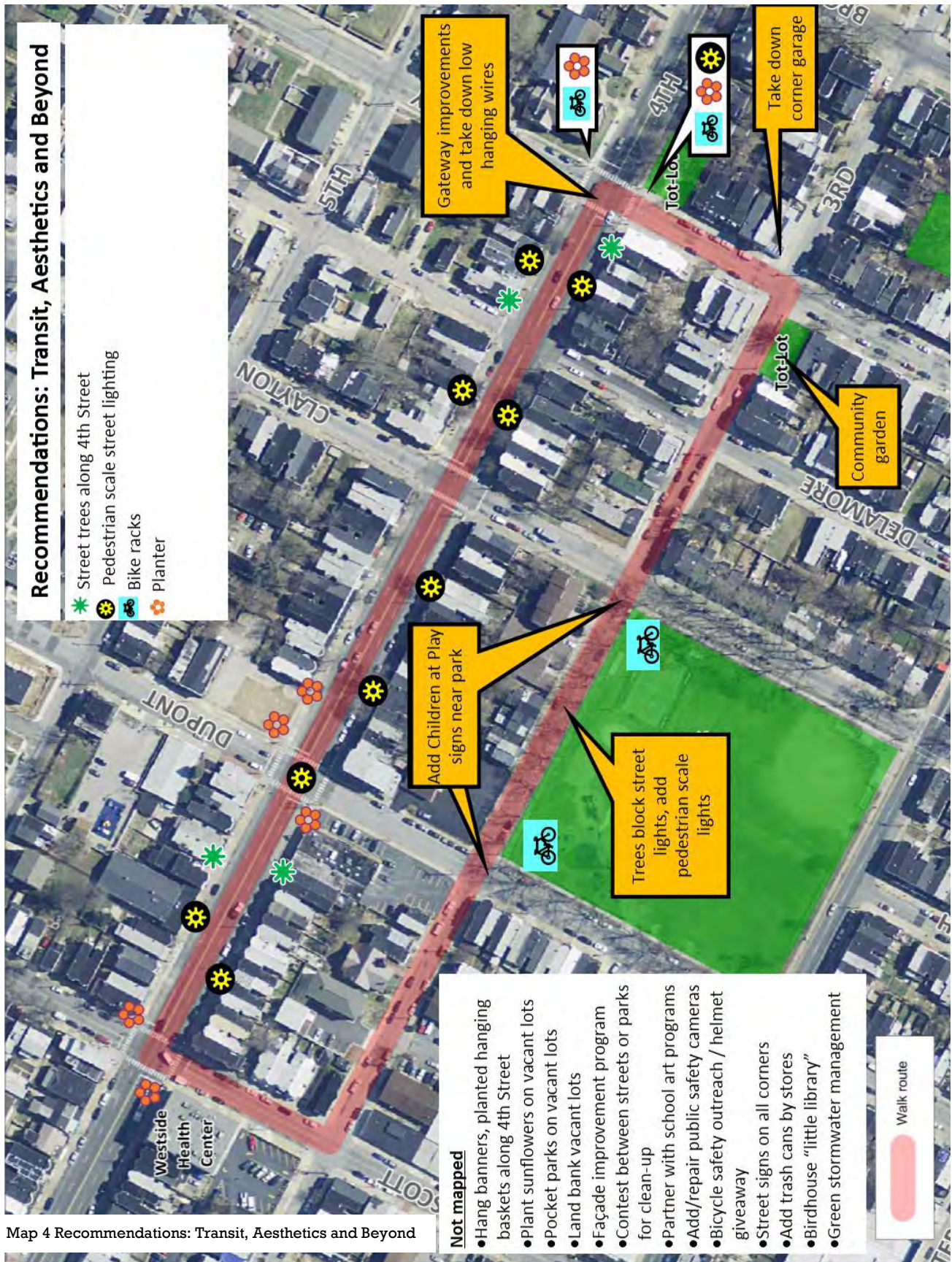
Compared with other areas in Westside Wilmington, the Fourth Street corridor lacks community defining elements. Places to sit, street lighting, public art, trash cans, and wayfinding information can elevate the character of a safe pedestrian environment into a more distinctive place and more vital, cohesive community. Examples shown below are from the nearby Little Italy neighborhood and include public art, planters, street trees, interpretive signs and outdoor dining.



Landscaping can also serve dual function as a buffered bump out around on street parking and even environmentally friendly stormwater management.







Map 4 Recommendations: Transit, Aesthetics and Beyond





Blank surfaces such as walls and traffic signal boxes, that might otherwise attract graffiti, can become canvases for local artists or even display art from student art classes.

Photo: [www.seattle.gov](http://www.seattle.gov)



Outdoor dining was also identified as something that can be expanded. Given the limited sidewalk width, “parklets” can transform off-street parking spaces into temporary outdoor seating. Parklets combine modular decking with railings, planters, and seating to create seasonal cafes. Narrow café seating located close to buildings may be another option.

Photo: [universitycity.org/parklets](http://universitycity.org/parklets)



Pop-up events can take place in vacant lots or parking lots using local musician and food carts.

Other place-making elements that can be installed throughout the business district include banners, decorative bus shelters and benches, directional signs, and distinctive colored/pattern crosswalks or intersections (subject to approved colors in MUTCD).



Photo: [gtechstrategies.org/projects/sunflowers](http://gtechstrategies.org/projects/sunflowers)

Participants discussed use of vacant lots to provide other enhancements to the area. Community gardens and land banking for redevelopment were ideas discussed. Other short-term ideas were planting sunflowers and adding a “little library”.



Photo: [www.pinterest.com/susanmooney/little-free-libraries](http://www.pinterest.com/susanmooney/little-free-libraries)

## FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION RESOURCES

## Funding Programs and Contacts

### City of Wilmington

City of Wilmington Department of Public Works is a good starting point for most recommendations from the Walkable Community Workshop. The Director for Transportation and Streets, David Blankenship, can be contacted at [dblanken@ci.wilmington.de.us](mailto:dblanken@ci.wilmington.de.us) or (302)576-3086.

### DelDOT

DelDOT administers the **Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)**. TAP offer funding opportunities to help expand transportation choices and enhance the transportation experience, formerly known as the Transportation Enhancements (TE) Program. TAP Activities must relate to surface transportation. Eligible projects most related to the Walkable Communities include:

- Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized forms of transportation
- Construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs
- Safe routes to school program

In Delaware, projects require a twenty percent funding match.

Delaware TE Coordinator  
Jeff Niezgoda  
Delaware Department of Transportation, PO Box 778, Dover, DE 19903  
Tel: 302-760-2178  
Fax: 302-739-2251  
Email: [Jeff.Niezgoda@state.de.us](mailto:Jeff.Niezgoda@state.de.us)  
Web: [www.wilmapco.org/tap](http://www.wilmapco.org/tap)

### State Elected Officials

**Community Transportation Fund (CTF)** funding provides a fixed amount of funds annually to each State Senator and House Representative to be used as they and their constituents believe is best for transportation improvements within their district. Legislators may also fund their own project ideas and they have the option of banking a portion of their yearly CTF budget for up to three years in order to fund a larger transportation improvement.

[www.deldot.gov/information/pubs\\_forms/brochures/pdf/ctf\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.deldot.gov/information/pubs_forms/brochures/pdf/ctf_brochure.pdf)



### **Other Useful Links**

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center - [www.pedbikeinfo.org](http://www.pedbikeinfo.org)

League of American Bicyclists - [www.bikeleague.org](http://www.bikeleague.org)

National Center for Bicycling and Walking - [www.bikewalk.org](http://www.bikewalk.org)

Federal Highway Administration - [www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/index.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/index.htm)

Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) - [mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov](http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov)

NACTO Urban Street Design Guide - [nacto.org/usdg](http://nacto.org/usdg)

WILMAPCO - [www.wilmapco.org/walk](http://www.wilmapco.org/walk)



850 Library Avenue, Suite 100  
Newark, DE 19711  
(302)737-6205  
[www.wilmapco.org](http://www.wilmapco.org)