

UNION STREET

Reconfiguration and Streetscape Improvement Study

Purpose:

The purpose of the project is to transform Union Street into a Main Street corridor that supports the multimodal mobility and connectivity needs of the local business community and of the residents of the Flats, Little Italy, Union Park Gardens, and surrounding neighborhoods.






Need:

Transportation and streetscape improvements are needed along Union Street between Pennsylvania Avenue and Sycamore Street to (a) better function as a Main Street corridor, balancing moving cars while functioning as a place for residents and neighbors to shop, dine, work, recreate, socialize, and play and (b) improve multimodal mobility and connectivity.

Better Function as a Main Street Corridor: The Wilmington 2028 Comprehensive Plan (2019) designated Union Street as a “Main Street corridor”: *“Main Street corridors are where Wilmington residents’ shop, dine, and work. These streets are core to the City’s economic well-being and local business community. Wilmington’s main streets balance their role of moving cars with their function as places for neighbors to recreate, socialize, and play. In addition to people driving, main streets must be welcoming for people walking and biking and need to ensure access for buses and delivery vehicles.”*

Union Street needs to balance moving cars while also functioning as a place for residents and neighbors to shop, dine, work, recreate, socialize, and play. There is not adequate public space for people to gather, recreate, socialize, or play. Union Street is not well shaded, creating an uninviting and uncomfortable environment for people in the warmer seasons. Lighting on Union Street is not consistently installed along the corridor or at intersections, which creates an uncomfortable pedestrian environment during nighttime and low-light conditions.

Multimodal Mobility and Connectivity: The existing roadway configuration creates conflicts between different types of users along the corridor. This has resulted in mobility and connectivity challenges that impede people and goods moving through the corridor, which has impacted residents, business owners, and commuters along Union Street.

-  **Pedestrian** — There are multiple ADA accessibility issues along Union Street and at most intersections: 16 out of 20 intersections have some type of accessibility deficiency. ADA compliancy issues along the corridor include non-compliant sidewalks, curb barriers, crosswalks, curb ramps, bus stop pads, pedestrian push buttons, and driveway crossings. Pedestrian improvements should include a continuous pedestrian access route (PAR) along Union Street for the length of the project area, including design elements that reduce pedestrians’ exposure to vehicular traffic.
-  **Bicycle** — Union Street has a level 3 bicycle level of traffic stress (LTS 3). According to DeIDOT’s LTS system, an LTS 3 is considered tolerable by “enthusiastic and confident bicyclists.” The one-way, southbound, unprotected bike lane on Union Street does not support two-way bicycle travel, and the bicycle lanes on Union Street have substandard transitions to the surrounding bicycle network. The existing bike lane has a high level of exposure to vehicles. There is also no dedicated bicycle parking throughout the corridor, which discourages people from traveling to Union Street by bicycle.
-  **Transit** — Union Street is served by DART Bus Route 6, with bus stops located at Pennsylvania Avenue, 9th Street, 8th Street, 6th Street, 4th Street, 2nd Street, Lancaster Avenue, and Sycamore Street. The connectivity between bus stops and the pedestrian network along Union Street have ADA compliancy deficiencies that need to be improved. Two of the eight bus stops have accessibility issues, and many of the bus stops do not have bus shelters or shade, making using transit uncomfortable, particularly during the warmer and wetter months.
-  **Freight** - There is insufficient access along Union Street for freight deliveries to commercial properties. Many deliveries occur within the street, blocking traffic flow and crosswalks and creating safety issues within the street. Better curbside management is needed to manage where and when deliveries can occur to avoid conflict with other modes.
-  **Vehicular** — The capacity and configuration of the existing on-street parking has been reported as problematic by the community and business owners alike. The existing on-street parking is inconsistently applied along the corridor. There are sections with back-in angle parking and sections with parallel parking. There are also areas of unutilized space between the parking types where the parking transitions from one configuration to another. Short-term parking for drop-offs, pick-ups, and deliveries has also been a problematic recurrence along Union Street, with short-term parking occurring within the travel lanes, obstructing crosswalks, and generally blocking vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian movements through the corridor. There were 38 recorded crashes along this section of Union Street in 2019. Twenty of the of the 38 crashes either occurred at an intersection or were intersection-related crashes. Eight of the 38 crashes in 2019 resulted in personal injury. Various causes were recorded as the reasons for the crashes, including driver inattention, ignoring traffic signals, failing to yield right-of-way, and following too close. Speeding has also been a problematic recurrence along Union Street, as well as vehicles not yielding to pedestrians crossing Union Street.

