

Walkable Community Workshops

Round 1



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SPONSORED BY WILMAPCO AND
CCOBH
CITY OF NEW CASTLE
EDGEMOOR GARDENS CIVIC ASSOCIATION



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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

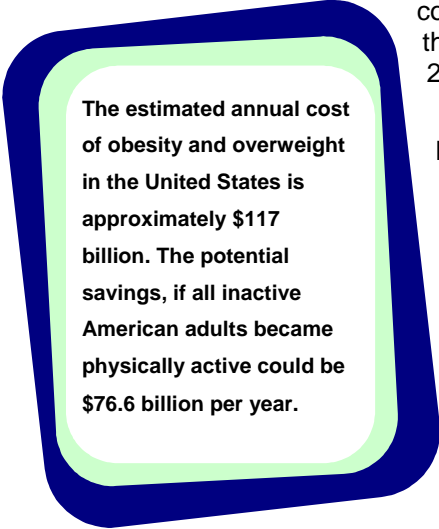
The Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) is the bi-state Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) serving New Castle County, DE and Cecil County, MD. Our policy-making body, the WILMAPCO Council, consists of state, county and municipal representatives. We have the important role of educating and 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.

City of New Castle

Area Background

The City of New Castle has a walkable historic area dating from the 17th Century, a popular riverfront greenway, and a new greenway that are enjoyed both by residents and visitors. The City has adopted a comprehensive plan and transportation plan which both emphasize enhancing pedestrian facilities and the walkability of the City. Route 9, an arterial road, separates the historic area from newer development and several schools. New Castle is seeking to maintain walkability in the Historic area, use pedestrian connections to link the Historic downtown to other developed and redeveloped areas in the City, and provide a better pedestrian environment along Route 9.

Issues and Potential Solutions Identified

Issue:

- The popular new Greenway ends abruptly just south of Route 9. A significant difference in elevation requires pedestrians and cyclists to travel on a steep hill to go between the Greenway and Route 9. Also, only a temporary connection links it to the Saint Anthony's Hall.

Solutions:

- ❑ Connect Greenway to south side of Route 9 with a gradual ramp using land at the end of the 11th Street cul-de-sac. According to the New Castle County parcel map, this land is in the public right-of-way.
- ❑ Consider feasibility of bridge or tunnel to connect Greenway with schools on north side of Route 9 and future East Coast Greenway.
- ❑ Replace temporary bridge connecting Saint Anthony's Club to Greenway with a permanent pedestrian bridge.



End of trail

*Proposed
ramp
connecting
Greenway and
Route 9, using
public land at
end of 11th
Street*



Issue:

- Safe pedestrian connections along and across Route 9 are crucial for safe access between schools, shopping and newer homes north of Route 9 and the Greenway, historic district and Battery Park south of Route 9.

Solutions:

- ❑ Square off T-intersections at 9th and 10th Streets at Route 9 and add crosswalks
- ❑ Widen crosswalk by Middle School improve pedestrian connection into school.
- ❑ Crosshatch shoulder near railroad crossing to reduce the use of this as an extra lane.
- ❑ Install ADA accessible curb ramps at intersections.



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:

- Intersection of Ferry Cutoff and Delaware Street is confusing for motorists and pedestrians. Slip-ramp directs through traffic into the historic district and encourages excessive speeds at this intersection. Poor sight distances exist for both pedestrians and drivers and numerous pedestrians were observed using this intersection.

Solution:

- ❑ As recommended in the *Delaware City Transportation Plan* and funded for completion by DelDOT, close the slip-ramp so that left turns are made at the existing traffic signal. Space gained can be used to create an attractive gateway to the historic area.
- ❑ Eliminate free right turn lanes and place with straight/right lanes.
- ❑ Add crosswalks across all legs of the intersection.



Existing Route 9 at Delaware Street



Proposed Route 9 at Delaware Street



Existing Route 9 at Delaware Street



Proposed Route 9 at Delaware Street

Issue:

- Speeding traffic along 6th Street.

Solutions:

- ❑ Improve crosswalk striping at 6th and Delaware Streets.
- ❑ At the intersection of 6th and Treemont Street consider bulb out and crosswalks or a mini traffic circle to control speeding traffic.
- ❑ Consider “brick” crosswalks from stamped concrete to coordinate with brick sidewalks.
- ❑ Improve the geometry of the intersection of 6th and South Streets with a bulb out and crosswalks.



6th Street is often used as a cut through route



Mini circle

Bulb out



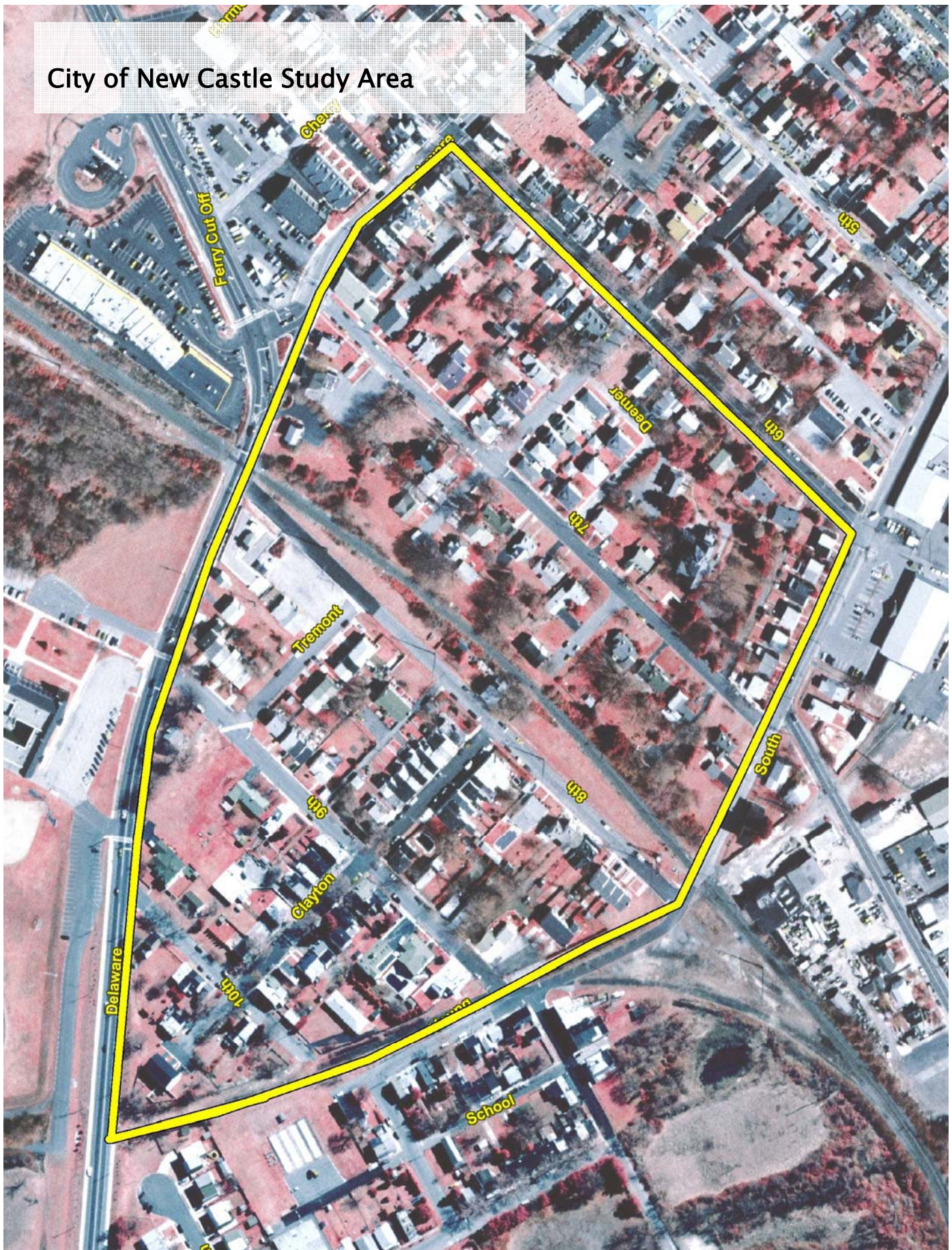
Issue:

- South Street should visually direct visitors from the Greenway to Battery Park.

Solutions:

- ❑ Add street trees along South Street.
- ❑ Define access to lumber store with a curbed sidewalk and additional street trees.
- ❑ Add signage and imprint symbol (perhaps a ship) into sidewalk to direct pedestrians to Park.

City of New Castle Study Area



City of New Castle Recommendations



