

# Georgetown-Lewes Rail/Trail Study

- House Resolution Bill No. 47:  
New Road Extension
- Rail/Study Trail :  
Cool Spring to Cape Henlopen State Park

August 22, 2011



# Presentation Outline

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- House Resolution Bill No. 47: New Road Extension
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# Background

## Benefits:

- Transportation / Livability
- Conservation / Environment
- Tourism and Economic Development / Revitalization
- Historic Preservation / Community Identity
- Public Health and Quality of Life

**Both the Delaware House and Senate voted unanimously to direct DeIDOT to** *“create contiguous systems or networks of walkways and bikeways within and between cities and towns in Delaware in order to provide travelers with the opportunity for safe, convenient, cost-effective and healthy transportation via walking and bicycling.”*

**(Senate Concurrent Resolution # 13)**



Example: Trolley Line Trail, NJ



# Background

- 17.8 mile corridor from the Historic Georgetown Train Station to the Cape Henlopen State Park
- Currently owned by the State of Delaware and operated by the Delaware Coast Line Railroad for the purposes of moving freight



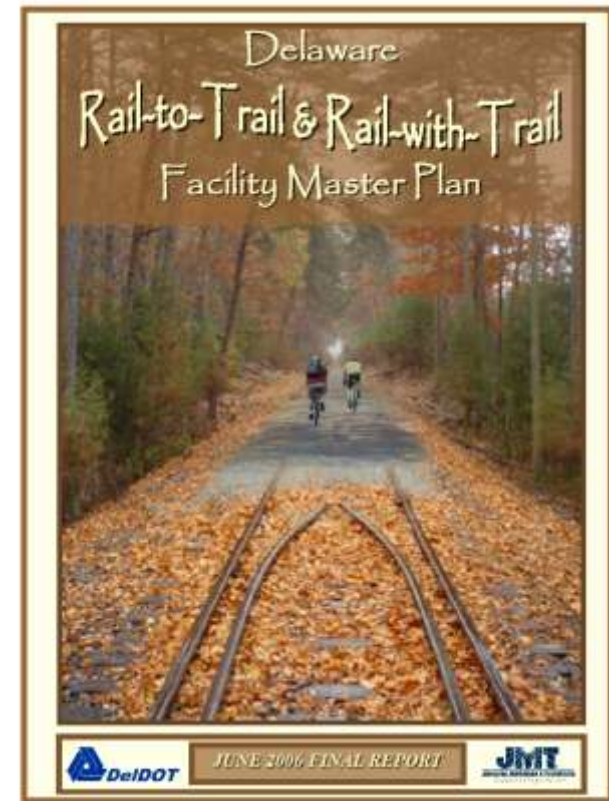
*Example: Allegheny Highlands Trail of Maryland*



# Background

## The Statewide Rails to Trails/Rails with Trails 2006 Master Plan:

- Identifies 11 railroad corridors for potential bicycle and pedestrian use
- Recommends the Georgetown to Lewes corridor for inclusion in the prioritization process for Capital Improvements Program projects for its:
  - Potential connectivity
  - Value to the overall statewide trail system
  - Proximity to the Southern Delaware Heritage Trail and
  - Availability of Right-of-Way (66 feet wide)



# Background

## Project Goals:

- Provide a Shared Use Path
- Provide connection to existing trails and bike routes along the corridor
- Provide user amenities such as trailheads, parking, mile markers
- Compatible with Delaware Rail-To-Trail/ Rail-With-Trail Facility Master Plan



# Background

## Regional Consistency:

### **Statewide Rails to Trails / Rails with Trails Facility Master Plan (June 2006)**

- Recommends the Georgetown-to-Lewes rail corridor for inclusion in the prioritization process for CIP projects

### **2003-2008 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)**

- Identified walking or jogging paths and bike paths as high priorities for the Georgetown and Lewes area according to a research study based on regional demand analysis.

### **Sussex County Comprehensive Plan (April 2008)**

- Identifies the Georgetown-Lewes Rail/Trail as a proposed facility within the strategic plan to provide more parks and trails and create more recreation opportunities for Sussex County residents.

### **Town of Georgetown Comprehensive Plan (January 2010)**

- Includes the Georgetown-Lewes Rail/Trail as a component of their pedestrian and bicycle circulation plan which is “valuable for recreation, but also for bicycle transportation to the many employers along its length”.

### **Delaware Strategies for State Policies and Spending Report (Draft June 2010)**

- Georgetown and Lewes are within Level 1 Investment Areas which should adopt policies to develop and maintain recreation areas, greenways and bikeways.



# Background

## Regional Consistency: Trail Network & Neighborhood Connectivity

Existing railroad corridor is in close proximity to:



- Bicycle Routes and Greenways (Rt 9, US 1, Cape Henlopen Drive, Gills Neck Road, Old Orchard Road)
- Multi-use Paths and Off-Road Trails (Junction and Breakwater Trail, Southern Delaware Heritage Trail, Sidewalks and shared roadway facilities, Lewes bicycle friendly travel network)
- Residential Developments and Neighborhoods (existing and proposed)
- Commercial Developments
- Scenic and Historic Highways (Kings Highway, Rt. 9)
- Cape May-Lewes Ferry
- Cape Henlopen State Park





# Background

## Regional Consistency: Junction Breakwater Trail

- Operated and managed by DNREC
- Close proximity to Georgetown/Lewes rail track corridor
- Current Trail Usage:
  - Frequently and highly used
  - Special events 1,500 users a day



**JUNCTION & BREAKWATER TRAIL 3.6 MILES**

**Permitted Trail Uses**

-  Pedestrian
-  Bicycle
-  Wheel Chair

**Grade Average**  
1% Overall

**Trail Width**  
Minimum 10 feet  
Maximum 12 feet

**Surface Type**  
Crushed Rock

**Stay on Trail**  
Shortcuts damage the environment

 Delaware State Parks  
Division of Parks & Recreation



# House Resolution Bill No. 47: New Road Extension

## Project Needs:

- Relocation of the Lewes Boat Ramp
- Increased traffic of towing boats along New Road
- Fire truck accessing SR1
- Safety concerns:
  - Access from SR 1 southbound to New Road
  - Access from Minos Conway Road to SR 1 northbound due to crossing of two lanes of SR1 traffic especially when towing a boat



# House Resolution Bill No. 47: New Road Extension

Alignment:



# House Resolution Bill No. 47: New Road Extension

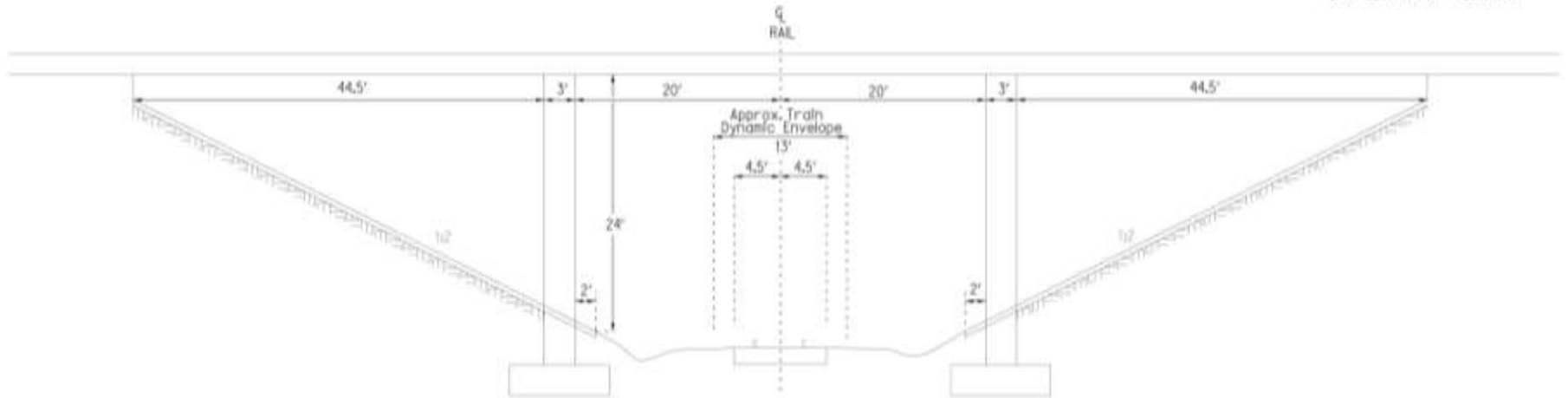
## Alignment:

### Existing bridge conditions

- 40 ft clear width between piers



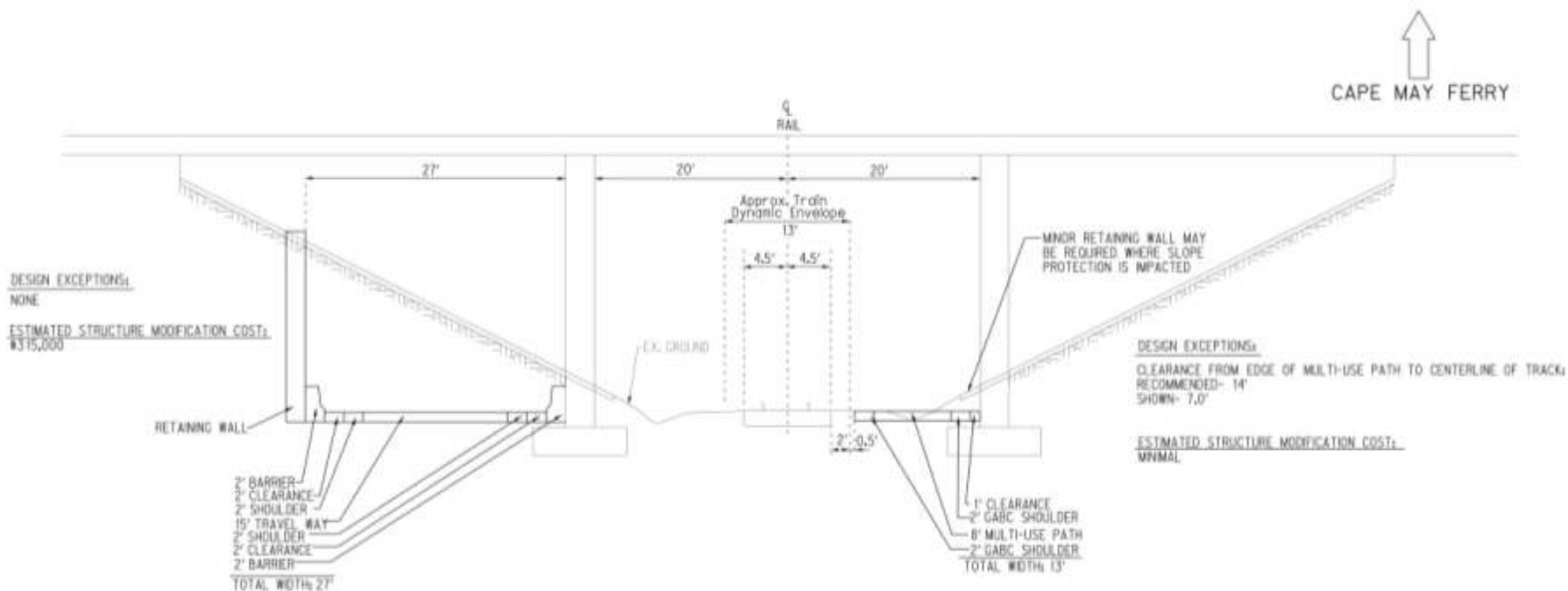
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CAPE MAY FERRY



# House Resolution Bill No. 47: New Road Extension

Alignment:

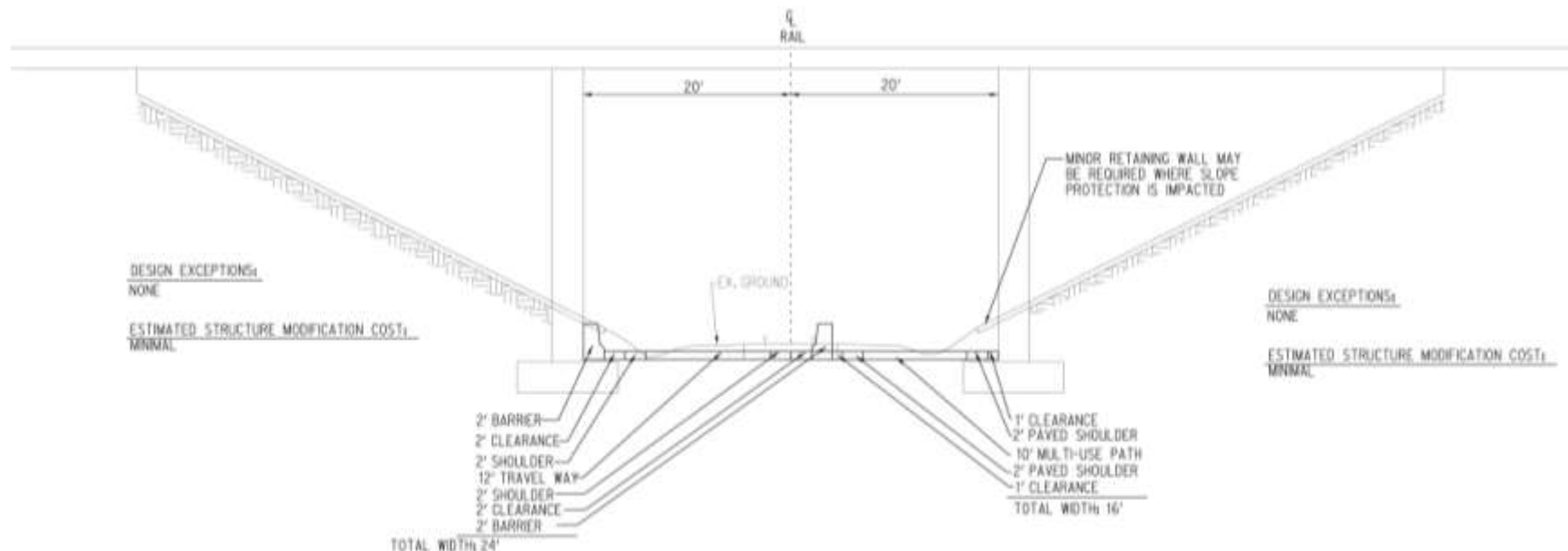
Typical Sections: Rails-with-Trails option



# House Resolution Bill No. 47: New Road Extension

Alignment:

Typical Sections: Rails-to-Trails option



# House Resolution Bill No. 47:

## New Road Extension

### Findings:

- A safe roadway connection from SR1 southbound to New Road is feasible
- RTT and RWT are both feasible options
- Anticipated impacts to utilities, traffic, right-of-way, and environmental resources

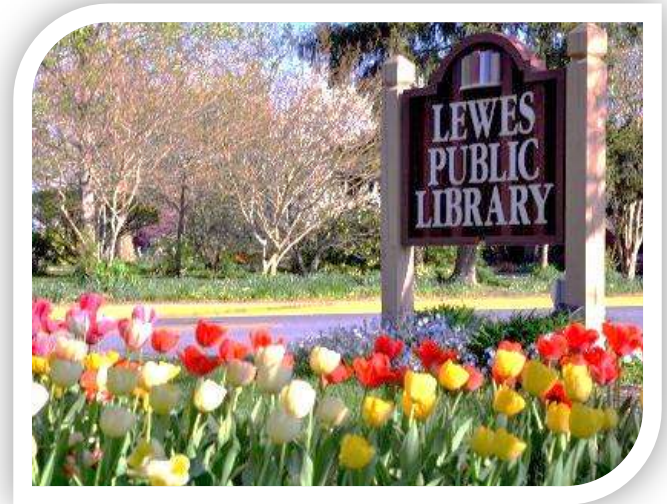
	RTT	RWT
New Road Extension Construction Cost Estimate Cost	3.7 million	4.7 million



# Lewes Library Project

## Coordination with City of Lewes:

- Potential library and parking lot expansion
- Purchase of adjacent property
- At grade railroad crossing for pedestrians and vehicles (estimated \$280,000)
- Parking lot may serve as trailhead for Junction Breakwater Trail and Georgetown to Lewes Trail. Typical trailhead cost is approximately \$415,000





# Rail/Trail Study: Cool Spring to Cape Henlopen State Park

## Design Guidelines:

- Trail width: 10 ft usable width w/ 2 ft safety grading on both sides
- Motorized vehicles: EMS and rail maintenance vehicles only
- Equestrians prohibited
- Trail surface recommended to be asphalt pavement with stone dust safety grading
- Include mile markers, wayfinding signage, and benches
- Provide connectivity to nearby trails/bicycle routes/sidewalks



*Example: Junction Breakwater Trail*

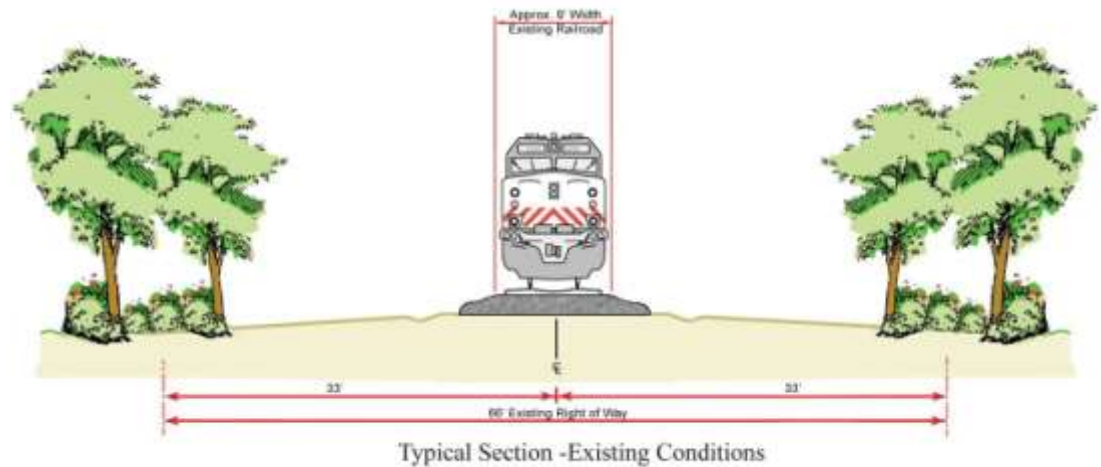


# Rail/Trail Study: Cool Spring to Cape Henlopen State Park

## Design Guidelines:

### Existing Conditions:

- 66' width of existing right-of-way
- Top of ballast is approximately 9' wide

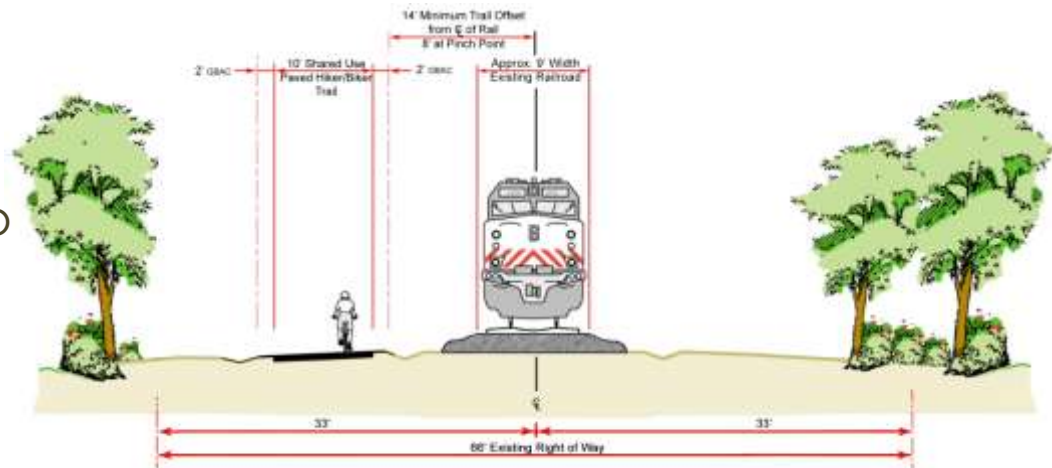


# Rail/Trail Study: Cool Spring to Cape Henlopen State Park

## Design Guidelines:

### Rails-with-Trails:

- Multi-use path is adjacent to the rail tracks
- Requires wider footprint



Existing Conditions



Artists Rendering of Proposed RWTOption

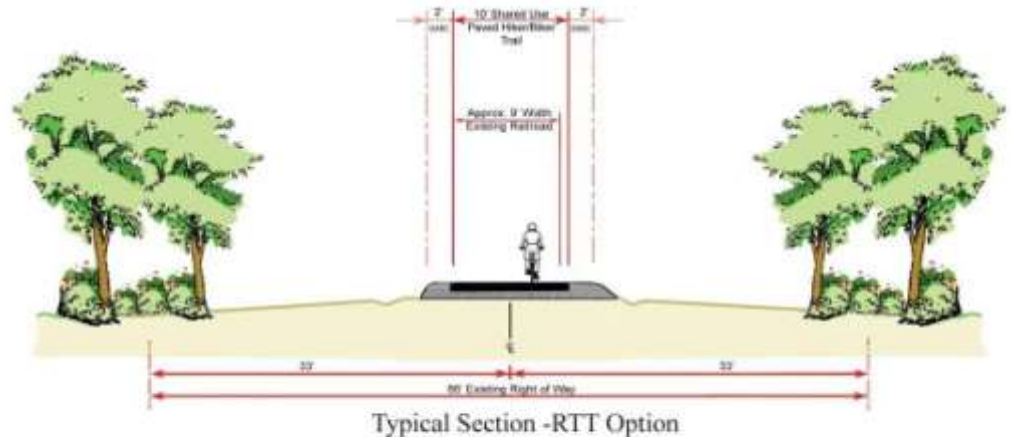


# Rail/Trail Study: Cool Spring to Cape Henlopen State Park

## Design Guidelines:

### Rails-to-Trails:

- Existing rail tracks and ties will be removed
- Multi-use path will go on existing rail ballast



Existing Conditions



Artists Rendering of Proposed RTT Option



# Rail/Trail Study:

## Cool Spring to Cape Henlopen State Park

### Current Freight Rail Usage/Operations:

- **Schagrin Gas  
(at Sussex County Industrial Airpark)**

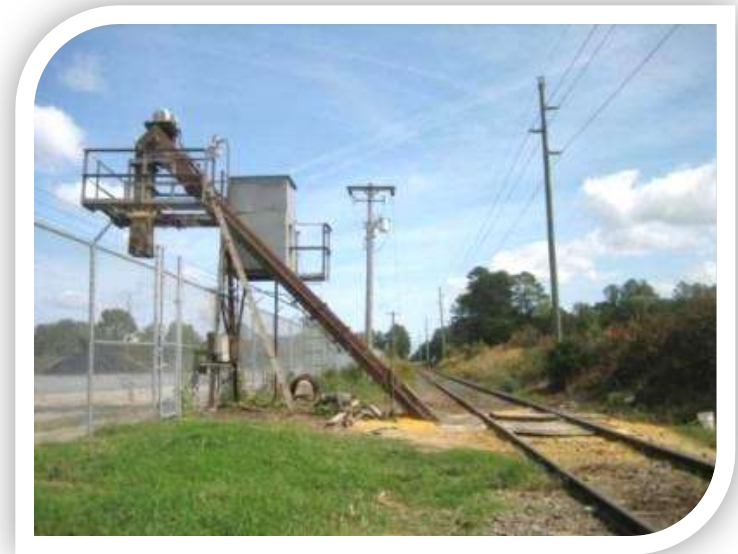
Approximately 2 to 4 carloads per week

- **Mountaire Farms (at Gravel Hill)**

Approximately 8 to 9 carloads per week

- **SPI Pharma  
(near Cape Henlopen State Park)**

Approximately 3 carloads every two weeks  
(materials are not hazardous)



- Freight rail operations are currently low speed and infrequent
- Coordination indicates that existing freight customers (Schagrin Gas and Mountaire Farms) would face negative economic impacts if rail operation was eliminated



# Rail/Trail Study:

## Cool Spring to Cape Henlopen State Park

### Future Rail Usage/Operations:

#### **Existing/Future Rail Customers:**

(No major increase in volume or usage anticipated)

- Mountaire Farms (Gravel Hill)
- Schagrin Gas (Sussex County Industrial Airpark)
- SPI Barcroft (Cape Henlopen State Park)

#### **No rail usage planned or anticipated:**

- Justin Tanks (Sussex County Industrial Airpark)
- Off-shore wind farm
- Dinner excursion train
- Passenger rail line (due to low population density)



# Rail/Trail Study:

## Cool Spring to Cape Henlopen State Park

### Future Rail Usage/Operations: Passenger Rail Service

- Potential for a public transportation/transit route (**commuter train, light rail**) from Georgetown to Cape May-Lewes Ferry or Cape Henlopen State Park
- Future Sussex County land use and density were evaluated (year 2030):  
Census data indicated a dwelling unit of **1.7 – 2.9**
- FTA provides general thresholds for successful transit projects based upon number of dwelling units per acre.
  - 0 - 3.0:** Does not support bus or rail
  - 3.01 – 7.0:** May support bus, does not support rail
  - 7.01 – 9.0:** Supports bus, may support rail
  - 9.01 – up:** Supports bus and rail

#### Comparison:

Commuter rail line from Philadelphia, PA to Atlantic City, NJ  
Serves 2 counties with density of 2,309 people/sqmi and 489 people/sqmi.

Sussex County, DE density = 210 people/sqmi  
*(line never turned a profit; due to low ridership, the line was suspended from January to May, 2011)*



# Rail/Trail Study:

## Cool Spring to Cape Henlopen State Park

### Future Rail Usage/Operations: Trans-shipment Area

If rail line is terminated and tracks are removed, a trans-shipment area is required for SPI Pharma.

Potential locations:

- Gravel Hill
- Cool Springs Road

Cost: approx. \$330,000

(Does not include cost for mechanical or electrical equipment used by SPI Pharma for their operations)





# Rail/Trail Study: Cool Spring to Cape Henlopen State Park

## Environmental Impacts:

### Findings:

- Environmental features/ resources are present within and in close proximity to the right-of-way corridor
- Impacts to the resources can be anticipated
- Avoidance, minimization, mitigation efforts need to be determined
- Permits will be required

Potential Environmental Impacts from Cool Spring to Cape Henlopen State Park	RTT	RWT
<b>STREAM CROSSING IMPACTS</b>	0	7
<b>WETLAND IMPACTS</b>	0.4 ac	1.2 ac
<b>FOREST IMPACTS</b>	1 ac	4 ac



# Rail/Trail Study: Cool Spring to Cape Henlopen State Park

## Right-of-Way Impacts:

RWT option will have significantly more property impacts

Approximately 175 properties will be impacted by Rails-With-Trails  
(from Cool Springs Road to Cape Henlopen State Park)

- Sheds
- Mature trees and tree canopy
- Private landscaping
- (some of which have been placed on public right-of-way)

RTT avoids the majority (if not all) of the impacts



# Rail/Trail Study: Cool Spring to Cape Henlopen State Park

## Preliminary Structural Evaluation:

### Railroad swing bridge over the Lewes-Rehoboth Canal

- Bridge structure carries rail tracks only
- Evaluation suggest that structure cannot accommodate and cannot be modified/widened to accommodate pedestrians/bicyclists



### Freeman Highway Bridge (US 9)

- Bridge structure may be used for a trail or sidewalk/bikeway to cross over the Lewes-Rehoboth Canal
- Preliminary findings indicate that the structure can be modified/widened to accommodate pedestrians/bicyclists



# Rail/Trail Study:

## Cool Spring to Cape Henlopen State Park

### Preliminary Trailhead Locations:

- Historic Georgetown train Station
- Near Sussex County Industrial Airpark/Sports At The Beach
- Broadkill Station (SR 5, Harbeson Road)
- Nassau (SR 1, Coastal Highway)
- Queen Anne's Railroad Station in Lewes
- Cape Henlopen State Park



*Example: Junction Breakwater Trail*



# Decision Considerations

Considerations	RTT	RWT
<b>House Resolution Bill No. 47: New Road Extension</b>		
Construction cost	3.7 million	4.7 million

Considerations	RTT	RWT
<b>Cool Spring to Cape Henlopen State Park</b>		
Future Rail Usage/Operations	no	yes
Freight and passenger rail	no	yes
Trans-shipment area	\$330,000	n/a
<b>Environmental Impacts</b>		
Stream crossings	0	7
Wetland impacts	0.4 ac	1.2 ac
Forest impacts	1 ac	4 ac
<b>Utility Impacts</b>	\$150,000	\$220,000
<b>Right of Way Impacts</b>	minor	175 parcels
<b>Right of Way cost</b>	minor	major
<b>Construction cost</b>	\$10.1 million	\$12.9 million



# Next Steps

- **Review Comments Received from Public Meeting Tonight**
- **Receive Input from the City of Lewes**
- **Further Coordination with SPI Pharma**
- **Provide Recommendation for Rail to Trail (RTT) or Rail with Trail (RWT)**
- **Determine Potential Funding Options and Implementation Strategies**
- **Complete Final Design and Right-of-Way Requirements**
- **Construction**
- **Provide continuous Updates to the Public throughout the process**

