

Wilmington - New Castle Greenway

Travel Between Wilmington and New Castle Faster By Bicycle Than Car?

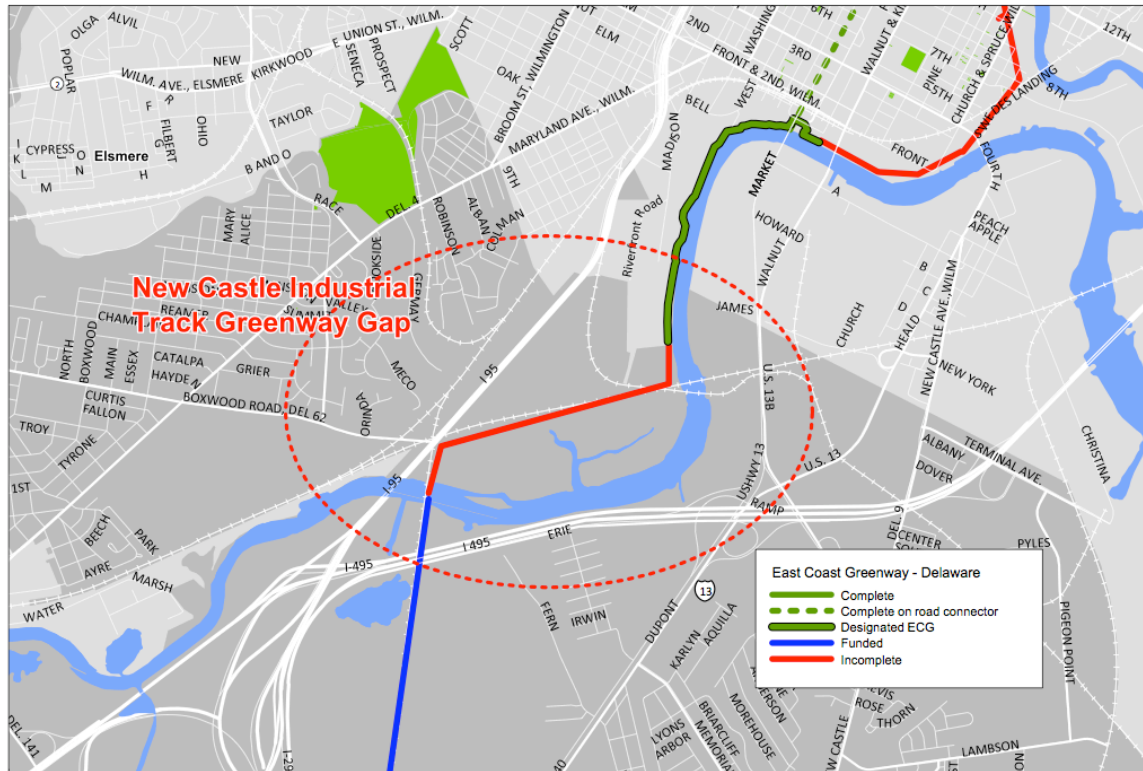


Phase 1 of the Wilmington - New Castle Industrial Track Greenway

After years of planning, effort and investment, a six-mile long “bicycle highway” connecting the cities of Wilmington and New Castle is only **one mile** away from completion. By closing this small remaining gap, Delaware would complete a safe, direct, paved, flat and nearly uninterrupted non-motorized six-mile travel route between the Wilmington Riverfront and New Castle. The route will feature a single at-grade road crossing in the entire six miles along an independent right-of-way that became available when the Penn Central Railroad went bankrupt in the 1970s.

Considerable investment has already been made in the route so that now only this small gap remains. The Wilmington Riverwalk currently extends over a mile south from downtown Wilmington towards the Russell Peterson Wildlife Refuge, where it terminates in a dead-end. Similarly, Phase 1 of the New Castle Industrial Track Greenway (built with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds in 2010) and Phase 2 (funded by New Castle County) extend north from old New Castle to the southern edge of the Cristina River. The remaining gap to connect with the Wilmington Riverwalk— which is the third and final phase of the New Castle Industrial Track Greenway – is approximately one mile.

Currently, the only travel options between New Castle and Wilmington for bicyclists are two high speed, high volume arterial roads, Rt. 9 (4 travel lanes) and Rt. 13 (8 travel lanes). Between 2000 and 2008, these roadways had 98 pedestrian crashes, including 8 fatality crashes and 69 injury crashes. A motorized traffic-free, independent right-of-way “bicycle highway” alternative to these busy roads between Wilmington and New Castle will hugely expand the pool of potential bicycle commuters in the area, while simultaneously offering an active transportation and recreation opportunity to all the adjacent communities along the route.



Final Phase of the New Castle Industrial Track Greenway

Governor Markell, Delaware’s Congressional delegation, DeIDOT, DNREC, WILMAPCO, New Castle County, the City of Wilmington and the Riverfront Development Corporation all support

connecting the Riverwalk to the New Castle Industrial Track. DELDOT has given permission and negotiated an arrangement with New Castle County for use of this state owned right-of-way. Further, the Riverwalk and the New Castle Industrial Track are planned to be part of the East Coast Greenway as it passes thru Delaware. DeIDOT hired Whitman, Requardt and Associates in 2010 to complete a feasibility study of the final phase.

The Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) is the regional transportation planning agency for Cecil County, Maryland and New Castle County, Delaware. Out of all the bike/ped projects that have been identified in their planning area (which includes all of New Castle County), the WILMAPCO Council voted this project as their #1 priority project in the bike/ped category in 2010.

On August 19, 2010, Delaware's entire congressional delegation also declared its support for the project in a letter of support for a TIGER 2 grant. Sens. Carper, Kaufmann and Rep. Castle wrote to USDOT Secretary LaHood that "[c]losing this gap will strengthen connections between communities, commercial centers, schools and open green spaces and make opportunities for active transportation more readily available and accessible."

In May of 2011, the Delaware General Assembly unanimously passed "Walkable, Bikeable Delaware", directing the state to build "*multi-use paths for pedestrian and bicycle user travel within and between cities and towns in Delaware on independent right-of-way outside of the right-of-way of existing roadways.*" One month later, the Delaware General Assembly approved \$5,000,000 for state bike routes to start making this vision a reality.

On September 8, 2011, the WILMAPCO Council voted \$480,000 of federal transportation matching funds to match \$120,000 of state bike route funds for the final phase of the Wilmington - New Castle Industrial Track.

On October 14, 2011, Governor Markell, Secretary Bhatt and Secretary O'Mara released the "First State Trails and Pathways Plan", laying out in detail how they planned to implement the vision of the General Assembly. Their Plan included completion of the Wilmington – New Castle Industrial Track.

On January 19, 2012, Governor Markell proposed dedicating \$13,000,000 in his next budget to "*make Delaware one of the most walkable and bikeable states in America.*"

To drive between Wilmington and New Castle means stopping at a dozen stop lights on either Rt. 9 or Rt. 13. Could a motivated bicycle rider really go from Wilmington to New Castle on the Industrial Track faster than a motorist on Rt. 9 or Rt. 13? With unprecedented support from the General Assembly, the Governor and WILMAPCO in 2011 to build a more walkable and bikeable Delaware in 2011, we will soon have an opportunity to find out.



Greater **Wilmington & Brandywine Valley**
AMERICA'S CULTURAL GEM



Riverfront Development Corporation
OF DELAWARE



Stephen Kingsberry
Chair
WILMAPCO Council
900 Public Safety Boulevard
Dover, Delaware 19901

July 14, 2011

Dear Chairman Kingsberry,

In the wake of the vote of the Delaware General Assembly on June 30 for new state funds for bike routes, we request that the WILMAPCO Council program \$480,000 of congestion mitigation / air quality (CMAQ) federal funds in FY2012 for the final phase of the New Castle Industrial Track. The Council voted last year on July 15, 2010 to rank this project as the Council's #1 priority in the TIP Bike/Ped category. As the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control is willing to provide the required local match, we request that the Council include this project in the program going out for public comment and consider advancing it to design and engineering by programming FY2012 CMAQ funds for it.

As you know, after years of planning, effort and investment, this six-mile long off-road route and greenway between Wilmington and New Castle is nearly complete. Only a one-mile gap remains to be funded. By closing this small remaining gap, Delaware would complete a safe, direct, paved non-motorized travel route between the Wilmington Riverfront (and the Wilmington train station) and New Castle. Completing the route would dramatically increase opportunities to replace car trips with non-polluting bicycling trips and reduce congestion on two high speed, high volume arterial roads, Rt. 9 (4 travel lanes) and Rt. 13 (8 travel lanes). This non-motorized "bicycle highway" would increase opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle commuting to the many business located along the route, serving several thousand employees. The completed trail would provide rail passengers with non-motorized access to the Wilmington Amtrak station, potentially replacing long distance car trips with bike-to-rail trips. The trail would also increase safety. Between 2000 and 2008, these roadways had 98 pedestrian crashes, including 8 fatality crashes and 69 injury crashes.

On top of the substantial congestion and air quality benefits, the project is also attractive from economic development, recreation and tourism points of view. When complete the project will

support the Wilmington Riverfront as a recreational and leisure destination for everyone who wants to access a long, flat trail that's free and safe for all for walking and bicycling, including children, seniors and people with physical disabilities. More, it would also make the Riverfront an easily accessible bicycle destination for people bicycling from the New Castle area. Going in the other direction, it would provide easy access to old New Castle for bicycle tourism originating in Wilmington. In other areas of the country where such 5 to 10 mile bike paths exist between neighboring towns, it is observed that they are used by individuals and small groups who ride from one town to the other, stop for breakfast or lunch, and then turn around and ride back home. A bike connection with a neighboring town also offers a significant activity for tourists that can provide a reason to prolong a visit and can be something that they can do in an unscheduled way.

Both New Castle County and DeIDOT support connecting the Riverwalk to the New Castle Industrial Track. DELDOT has given permission for the trail and negotiated an arrangement with New Castle County for use of this state owned right-of-way. Further, the Riverwalk and the New Castle Industrial Track are planned to be part of the East Coast Greenway (ECGW) as it passes thru Delaware. Completion of the New Castle Industrial Track Greenway would not complete the entire ECGW in Delaware, but it would close the most critical remaining gap and bring the Delaware portion of the ECGW a giant step forward. Together with the Northern Delaware Greenway, it would also form a spine for off-road bicycling extending thru Wilmington from north to south.

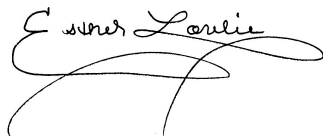
Very sincerely yours,



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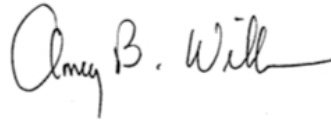
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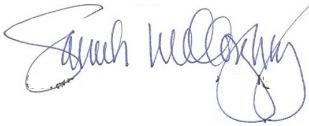
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Mayor Vance Funk
Donald Halligan
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Karl Karlbacher
Jeanne Minner
James Mullin
Representative Michael Mulrooney
Michael Nixon
Collin O'Mara
Ken Potts
Ralph Reeb
Kyle Sonnenberg
Kash Srinivasan
Tigist Zegeye



SPONSOR: Sens. Venables & Cloutier
Reps. Hudson & Wilson
Sens. Blevins, Bunting, Connor, Ennis, Hall-Long,
Katz, Peterson, Sokola, Sorenson; Reps. Atkins,
Barbieri, Bennett, Brady, Briggs-King, Heffernan,
Hocker, Jaques, Manolakos, Mitchell, Miro,
Osienski, Ramone, D. Short

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY DELAWARE HOUSE ON MAY 12, 2011
PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY DELAWARE SENATE ON MAY 10, 2011

DELAWARE STATE SENATE
146th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 13

WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation has in recent years made a significant effort to provide facilities for walking and bicycling using monies provided through federal programs such as the Transportation Enhancement Program, the Safe Routes to School Program, and the Hazard Elimination Program; and
WHEREAS, the future of these programs with respect to federal funding is uncertain; and
WHEREAS, there are other types of federal funds that can be used for walking and bicycling; and
WHEREAS, funds from a wide variety of other State, local government, and private sources can be similarly used; and
WHEREAS, the General Assembly believes that the capital expenditures of the Department of Transportation for various transportation modes should be approximately proportional to the use of those modes in Delaware; and
WHEREAS, there are large gaps in our transportation system where it is difficult, or even dangerous, for pedestrians and bicycle users to travel; and
WHEREAS, safe routes for walking and bicycling are especially important for transit riders, young people, seniors, travelers with disabilities, and casual and inexperienced bicycle users; and
WHEREAS, walking and bicycling are cost-effective transportation options for providing people with the mobility and access they need for daily life; and
WHEREAS, safe options for reducing transportation costs can provide essential flexibility for Delaware families that may need to cut costs in their household budgets when faced with unexpected changes in their economic circumstances; and
WHEREAS, rising fuel prices are expected to make the availability of cost-effective transportation options even more important in the future; and
WHEREAS, safe, non-motorized, transportation options can serve as an inexpensive insurance policy for the Delaware economy to help buffer the effects of oil price shocks and can help to reduce our dependence on foreign oil; and

WHEREAS, safe and enjoyable walking and bicycling routes can attract tourists to the State of Delaware and can spur economic development; and

WHEREAS, Delaware is facing a public health crisis with nearly two-thirds of adults and almost 40% of children in Delaware classified as overweight or obese; and

WHEREAS, the life expectancy of this generation of Delawareans may be less than the previous generation for the first time in our history if these health trends are not reversed; and

WHEREAS, providing safe opportunities to walk and bicycle for transportation and recreation promotes physical activity, which helps maintain a healthy weight and prevent heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and other chronic diseases;

NOW THEREFORE:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the 146th General Assembly of the State of Delaware, the House of Representatives concurring therein, that the Delaware Department of Transportation shall be responsible for leading the effort, working in conjunction with the Counties and Municipalities, Metropolitan Planning Organizations and other State agencies such as the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, to plan, prioritize and fund the timely construction and maintenance of interconnected systems or networks of walkways and bikeways with special focus on connecting centers of population with destinations such as workplaces, schools, residences, businesses, recreation areas and other community activity centers in order to provide safe, convenient, cost-effective and healthy mobility via walking and bicycling;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in these efforts the Department of Transportation shall **create multi-use paths for pedestrian and bicycle user travel within and between cities and towns in Delaware on independent right-of-way outside of the right-of-way of existing roadways;**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that **the Department of Transportation is requested to identify funds for strategic investments in creating and maintaining walkways and bikeways** in addition to the funds provided for paving and other routine maintenance and separate from the funds provided to design and build general purpose road projects that include transportation facilities for walking and bicycling as required by Executive Order and the Department's "Complete Streets" policy or through such programs as Transportation Enhancements and Safe Routes to School;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Department of Transportation shall report annually to the Bond Committee as part of its proposed capital budget regarding the progress that has been made in the previous year to design and construct interconnected networks of walkways and bikeways.

SYNOPSIS

This Senate Concurrent Resolution directs the Department of Transportation to expand its efforts 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.

Author: Sen. Venables

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 19, 2010

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood,

We are writing to urge your consideration of an application submitted by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation Natural Resources for a TIGER 2 Discretionary Grant. The program is called Generating Recovery by Enhancing Active Transportation in the Mid-Atlantic region (GREAT-Mid-Atlantic) to build trail segments in Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey and it will enhance major trail and pedestrian/bikeway corridors in those states.

Currently, this trail corridor is hampered by the critical gap between the Wilmington Riverwalk and the recently completed phase 1 of the New Castle Industrial Track Greenway. Closing this gap will strengthen connections between communities, commercial centers, schools and open green spaces and make opportunities for active transportation more readily available and accessible.

This application proposes to construct thirty important rural and urban trail, greenway and bicycle and pedestrian segments that will close gaps in and create greater connectivity among seven major trail corridors. In Delaware, the application includes engineering plans for a key gap in the New Castle to Wilmington Industrial Track Greenway to provide for a traffic free route between historic New Castle and Downtown Wilmington.

This application will enhance efforts at the state and local level to create connected greenways to provide sustainable transportation routes and to improve recreational amenities. Closing gaps in the seven Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey trail systems and urban complete street networks will enhance livability in many urban and rural communities.

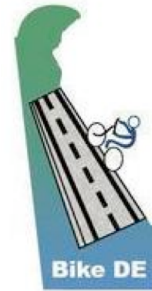
Once a decision has been reached or if further information is required, please contact us through our respective staff members: Mr. Josh Magarik of Senator Carper's office may be reached at (302) 573-6291; Mr. Brian Horsey of Senator Kaufman's office may be reached at (302) 573-6345; and Ms. Erin Innes of Congressman Castle's office may be reached at (302) 428-1902.

Sincerely,


Thomas R. Carper Edward E. Kaufman Michael N. Castle
United States Senator United States Senator Member of Congress



East Coast
Greenway®



Stephen Kingsberry
Chair
WILMAPCO Council
900 Public Safety Boulevard
Dover, Delaware 19901

June 25, 2010

Dear Chairman Kingsberry,

As representatives of a consortium of Delaware organizations involved with non-motorized transportation, we write to draw your attention to an un-ranked FY 2012-2015 TIP Bicycle/Pedestrian project named “**New Castle Industrial Track/ECGW: Boulden Blvd little league-Wilm Riverwalk**”. At the next meeting of the WILMAPCO Council on July 15, the Council will have an opportunity to prioritize this project. We request that the Council rank this project highly.

The Wilmington Riverwalk extends over a mile south from downtown Wilmington towards the Russell Peterson Wildlife Refuge, where it currently terminates in a dead-end. Similarly, the New Castle Industrial Track Greenway recently built with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds runs north from old New Castle to a little ways beyond Boulden Blvd, where it also terminates in a dead-end. The “New Castle Industrial Track/ECGW: Boulden Blvd little league-Wilm Riverwalk” project would connect these now isolated paths, leveraging investments already made and providing a non-motorized connection between Wilmington and New Castle.

The project is attractive from utility, recreational and tourism points of view. It would complete a safe, direct and nearly uninterrupted non-motorized path for commuters between downtown Wilmington and New Castle. Currently, the only travel options between New Castle and Wilmington for bicyclists are Rt. 9 and Rt. 13, both high speed and high volume roads, which draw only a small number of, on the one hand, highly skilled, experienced, confident and committed bicyclists and, on the other, bicyclists who do not own a car and so are compelled to use these roads because the option to drive is closed to them. A bicycle “highway” between Wilmington and New Castle will hugely expand the pool of potential bicycle commuters in the area.

In addition, when complete the project will support the Wilmington Riverfront as a recreational and leisure destination for everyone who wants to access a long, flat trail that’s free and safe for all for bicycling, including kids, seniors and people with physical disabilities. More, it would also make the Riverfront an easily accessible bicycle destination for people bicycling from the New Castle area. Going in the other direction, it would provide easy access to old New Castle for bicycle tourism originating in Wilmington. In other areas of the country where such 5 to 10 mile

bike paths exist between neighboring towns, it is observed that they are used by individuals and small groups who ride from one town to the other, stop for breakfast or lunch, and then turn around and ride back home. A bike connection with a neighboring town also offers a significant activity for tourists that can provide a reason to prolong a visit and can be something that they can do in an unscheduled way.

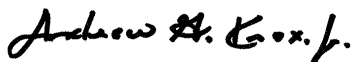
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Very sincerely yours,

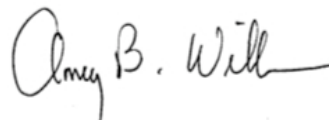


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Christopher Coons
Vance Funk
Karl Karlbacher
Ralph Reeb
Kash Srinivasan
Carolann Wicks
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Comments from Community Leaders and Residents

"I am writing this letter in strong support of pushing forward with the planning, engineering, and construction of the Wilmington to New Castle Bicycle Highway. The man-made obstacles of I-95 and I-495 have created a nearly impassable barrier for pedestrian/bicycle traffic to safely move from Wilmington and areas West of Wilmington. From the Prices Corner area a bicyclist has the option of riding into the city on either Kirkwood Highway or Maryland Ave and then out to New Castle on New Castle Ave or risking life and limb by cycling on Route 141 which is simply a death wish. The completed bicycle highway will provide a long awaited safe route for cyclists to travel between the two cities. If the taxpayers can fund roads to every corner of the state it is only fair that we can provide at least a few bicycle routes." Tom Gears, Wilmington.

"As a resident of Wilmington who works in New Castle, the creation of a Wilmington-to-New Castle bicycle highway would improve my quality of life tremendously. I have attempted to commute to work by bicycle, but the only routes available to me feel much too dangerous, especially during rush-hour traffic. If a safe route becomes available, it will allow me to realize my goal of leaving the car at home and bicycling to work to improve both my health and my personal budget. Additionally, I would welcome the ability to bicycle with my wife and children from Wilmington to New Castle for weekend outings. This project would be an enormous leap forward for New Castle County." Shane Hoffman, Wilmington.

"For the past four years, we have commuted by bicycle between Newport and New Castle. With limited ways to safely cross over I-95, we travel through Wilmington instead. We often brave South Market Street, Garasches Lane, Heald Street and New Castle Avenue, the bridges, the roadway debris, and the dilapidated pavement. We race over the I-295 interchange, hoping for light traffic and patient drivers as we make our way down Route 9. The route from Wilmington to New Castle is daunting and challenging, even for experienced cyclists. The challenge is only amplified when there is construction or less-than-ideal weather.

"Completion of the New Castle Industrial Track Greenway will provide safe, non-motorized passage in these areas. It will allow safe, direct access between areas where people work, shop, and live. There is a need for a safe crossing over the Christina River traveling both north and south, the arching railroad overpass on South Market Street, and the I-295 interchange with Route 9. The completion of the NCITG will provide these facilities, and connect existing islands of non-motorized infrastructure in Wilmington and New Castle. It will allow us to safely commute by bicycle on more days, regardless of weather, roadwork, or accidents, and further reduce our carbon footprint. Furthermore, the elimination of real and perceived barriers will encourage less-experienced cyclists to commute by bicycle.

"We urge our state, county, and local officials to support funding for and construction of this project. Please provide this desperately needed connection for non-motorized transportation for the benefit of Delaware's environmental and public health." Rebecca and Todd Keyser, Wilmington.

"A six-mile transportation and recreation corridor between the Wilmington Riverfront and old New Castle will bring new visitors and energy (but no new automotive traffic!) to New Castle and will be an important part of the commercial renaissance of the city." Esther Lovlie, President, Historic New Castle Alliance.

"Based on various research from other states, the economic impact and the number of jobs created by tourists traveling and staying overnight strongly supports the great need for Delaware to have the Wilmington to New Castle Greenway completed. In addition, with the National Park proposal, it is safe to bet that we will all see an increase of tourism in and around New Castle County.

"Our Visitor Center provides current biking information and we are always asked to recommend longer rides." Sarah Willoughby, Executive Director, Greater Wilmington and Brandywine Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau.
