



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



Riverfront Development Corporation
OF DELAWARE



American
Heart
Association

American
Stroke
Association®



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.

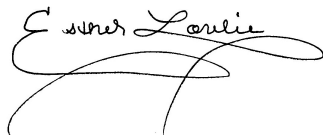
Very sincerely yours,



Mark Chura
Executive Director
Delaware Greenways



Jonathan Kirch
Government Relations Director (DE)
American Heart Association



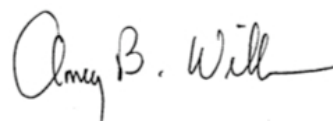
Esther Lovlie
President
Historic New Castle Alliance



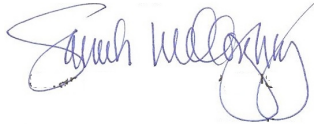
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