

Active Transportation in Northern Delaware-Making the Case

What is the Campaign for Active Transportation?

The Campaign for Active Transportation is an effort to elevate active travel and recreation--walking and biking--by targeting investment in communities to shift automobile trips to walking, biking and transit. The campaign builds off of the Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program (NTPP) of the 2005 federal transportation bill SAFETEA-LU. The NTPP funded four communities nationally with \$25 million each to promote walking and biking. The campaign aims to expand the NTPP into a full-fledged program with dozens of communities each receiving \$50 million for their active transportation programs through a competitive grant program.

In Delaware, a partnership of Bike Delaware, Nemours Health & Prevention Services, Cities of Newark and Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware Greenways, DelDOT, Delaware State Parks, TMA Delaware, and WILMAPCO have teamed up to promote healthy transportation choices for the greater Wilmington area. Investment in walking and bicycling facilities for the project area will serve 50 percent of Delaware's population within 8 percent of our land area. The planning team has developed a case statement outlining what investments are needed to complete gaps in the travel network, make transit work more effectively through greater access, and make walking and bicycling safe and convenient transportation options for a healthier Delaware.

Why is Active Transportation Critical for Northern Delaware?

Mobility

- Nearly 24 percent of all trips are one mile or less—an easy walking distance for most healthy adults and youth—yet less than 20 percent of these trips are made by walking within our region.
- Less than 30 percent of school trips less than one mile are made by walking.
- We invest more on roads than on walking, bicycle and transit combined, yet cannot mitigate congestion.
- Active transportation investments lead to increased mode share. In Minneapolis, a NTPP participant, 28 percent of all trips now involve walking or biking.

Public Health

- 63 percent of Delaware adults and 36 of children between age 10-17 are overweight or obese.
- The obesity epidemic in Delaware results in \$207 million in health-related expenses annually.
- 41 percent of Delawareans report insufficient physical activity.
- Integrating exercise into daily walking or bicycling trips is an easy and fun way to meet this requirement.

Economic Development

- Main Streets and Downtowns throughout the region require good walking facilities for the 30 percent of our population who don't drive or have access to a vehicle.
- Walkable communities consistently increase property values, with recent data showing homes selling for \$700-3,000 more than in surrounding less walkable areas.
- Successful transit and transit oriented development requires walking facilities near train stations and bus routes.

Environment

- Transportation accounts for almost ¼ of all energy use in Delaware..
- Our cars, trucks and buses account for 21% of the State's CO2 emissions
- Walking and biking investments are cost effective at reducing CO2 emissions.

Family and Community

- Greenways like the Northern Delaware Greenway or Newark's Hall Trail generate community pride and enhance social contact.
- Greenways provide safe places free of traffic for children and others to learn bicycling skills.
- Walking and bicycling facilities providing accessible transportation choices for children, the elderly, disabled populations and low-income groups.

Why do we need to act now to accomplish our goals?

Every six years, Congress adopts transportation legislation allocating hundreds of billions of dollars for projects that shape our communities for generations. SAFETEA-LU, the previous transportation bill, expired September 30, 2009. An extension has been approved, and congress is now drafting its replacement. Now is our best chance to accomplish the goals of the 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation in the federal transportation bill. Senator Carper, as member of the Committee on Environment and Public Works, will be a key author of this bill.

Why is Delaware the right choice for active transportation?

Delaware has been laying the groundwork for effectively using the active transportation funds, making us a competitive candidate if the program receives funding. In 2009, Delaware jumped to #9 in the ranking of bicycle-friendly states, up from #31 only a year ago. Delaware's Complete Streets Policy shows our commitment to making active transportation a success. In our allocation of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds, Delaware ranked third nationwide by dedicating 28 percent of the funds to public transportation, biking or pedestrian projects. The gaps in our active transportation network have been planned for with projects our implanting partners can quickly get on the ground.