

The Healthy and Transit-Friendly Development Act

Endorsed by: Transportation for America, PeopleForBikes, Bike Delaware, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Delaware Greenways, Council on Health Promotion & Disease Prevention, Delaware Association of REALTORS®, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce, Delaware Nature Society, Sussex Outdoors, AARP Delaware, American Heart Association, League of Women Voters, Nemours, YMCA of Delaware



The Kind of Growth We Get By Default in Delaware

In our normal mode of growth in Delaware – single-use subdivisions, shopping malls and office parks – every independent adult requires a car to meet their mobility needs. No matter where we’re going – even if it’s only for a quart of milk or a child getting to school – we go by car.

The Alternative: “Complete Communities”

“Complete Communities” are a new name for the kinds of communities that Delaware used to build before World War I. Many everyday destinations – shopping, offices, schools and services - are within easy walking or cycling distance. Streets are designed to be safe and comfortable for walking and cycling, and car speeds are limited.

Improved Public Transportation

For many people who depend on it, public transportation in Delaware means infrequent service, multiple stops and time-wasting transfers. But complete communities are dense enough so that frequent and higher quality transit service becomes financially viable.

Why We Don’t Build Complete Communities

The two indispensable pre-requisites for building complete communities are appropriate zoning and safe multi-modal transportation infrastructure that prioritizes transit, walking and cycling. But municipal and county governments control zoning while transportation is under the authority of state government.

A Local and State Government Partnership

How can local government and state government collaborate to create complete communities? That's what the Healthy and Transit-Friendly Development Act does. It sets out the basic framework for any local government to choose to "opt-in" to encourage walkable, bikeable and transit-friendly development in their communities in partnership with state government.

Four Reasons Why Local Governments Might Choose to Opt-In

1) Economic Development and Jobs: Increased Local Demand

Walkable, bikeable and transit-friendly development would be a big win for local Delaware businesses because this kind of development enables the formation of new households that own fewer cars, yielding household savings of between \$5,000 and \$10,000 every single year. That might not be so great for Delaware's economy if that money was going to our local car manufacturers or our local oil drillers in Delaware. But Delaware doesn't have either any local car manufacturers or any local oil drillers, which means that that \$5,000 to \$10,000 saved per household is additional discretionary income that those households can instead spend with local Delaware businesses creating local Delaware jobs.

2) Economic Development and Jobs: Competitive Advantage

Businesses are increasingly choosing locations with transportation options and amenities within walking distance in order to attract a talented, mobile workforce.

3) Active and Healthy Lifestyles

Safe opportunities to walk and bicycle for transportation promotes physical activity, which helps maintain a healthy weight and prevent heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and other chronic diseases.

4) Poverty Reduction

AAA calculates that the average annual cost to own, insure, maintain and fuel a personal vehicle is almost \$9,000. Much lower-cost, time-efficient mobility is a fundamental requirement for low-income Delawareans seeking to lead independent and productive lives.

