

Mobility Friendly



Design Standards: A Framework for Delaware

SUMMARY REPORT

*from the February 2004 Summit
published June 2004*

by Lisa Moreland and Dená McClurkin-Brummer



**Institute for Public Administration
College of Human Services, Education & Public Policy
University of Delaware**

www.ipa.udel.edu

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Preface

**Dr. Jerome R. Lewis, Director
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware**

As the director of the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) at the University of Delaware, I am pleased to provide this report on the 2004 Mobility Friendly Design Standards Summit. The summit was held on February 26, 2004, at the University of Delaware's Goodstay Center and was sponsored by IPA in conjunction with the Delaware Department of Transportation and Transportation Management Association of Delaware with assistance from the Office of State Planning Coordination.

Stakeholders from the business community joined representatives from state and local government and civic leaders to discuss the issues of mobility friendly design and the recommendations that have been formulated specifically for the state. For a complete list of attendees, see the Appendix.

What is Mobility Friendly Design? Mobility Friendly Design describes a broad set of design solutions for maximizing the opportunities of all people to move within and between communities independently and safely. It includes various modes of travel (e.g., auto, bus, commuter rail, walking, and bicycling) as well as travel for various trip purposes (e.g., employment, school, shopping, recreation, and community services). Best practice integrates the design of transportation infrastructure with the land development process to encourage people to travel by modes other than the automobile. Barriers to integrating land use and transportation planning include lack of funding, resistance to change, public perception about smart growth policies, and regulations that discourage innovation.

As part of the study effort that accompanied this summit, existing state and county land development regulations were reviewed with the purpose of enhancing current mobility friendly standards in New Castle County with regard to transit, traffic calming, interconnectivity, school transportation and location, and trails.

Attempts have been made to implement Mobility Friendly Design concepts throughout the county. Area studies have been completed by DelDOT, WILMAPCO, and New Castle County, with varying degrees of success. The next step in this process is to review the implementation efforts against the recommendations to measure success and identify areas where more work is needed, focusing on implementation activities that will benefit the majority of New Castle County residents who live in already-developed areas of the county.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge those who contributed to the success of the summit. My colleagues Dr. Robert Warren, School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Delaware, and Edward O'Donnell, IPA, were principally involved in the planning of this summit. I would like to acknowledge Ed McMahan, Vice President and Director of Land Use Programs for The Conservation Fund, for his keynote address on "Dollars and Sense of Growing Smart" and Thomas Hylton, President of Save Our Land, Save Our Towns, Inc., for his luncheon address on "Short on Parks? Hit the Streets!" IPA staff members Lorene Athey and William Fasano presented a summary of the working paper "Mobility Friendly Design Standards: A Framework for Delaware" and Edward O'Donnell moderated an open discussion on the major themes of the summit. Also, I would like to thank Nelcenia Downer, Institute for Public Administration, for providing exceptional staff support.

Finally, I wish to recognize the valuable contributions of the individuals involved in producing the working paper associated with the summit and the summary report that follows. IPA staff members Edward O'Donnell, Lorene Athey, and William Fasano worked in partnership with Dr. Robert Warren on all aspects of logistics and planning for this timely summit and drafting the working paper. Lisa Moreland, IPA, edited the working paper and managed the overall effort to produce and edit the summary report for the summit. Lisa Brennan, an IPA research assistant, assisted in the editing of the working paper. Dená McClurkin-Brummer, an IPA research assistant, provided logistical support for the forum and co-authored this summary report. IPA research assistants William DeCoursey, Erin Cole, and Tai-Ju Rene Tseng provided notes on the forum remarks for use in the summary report. Mark Deshon supported all graphics needs, including registration flyers, event programs, attendee name badges, and the cover of this report.

Dollars and Sense of Growing Smart

Edward T. McMahon

Vice President and Director of Land Use Programs

The Conservation Fund

The following is a summary of the Mobility Friendly Design Standards Summit keynote address presented by Mr. Edward McMahon. Mr. McMahon is Vice President and Director of Land Use Programs at The Conservation Fund. The Conservation Fund works to purchase and protect land for conservation and to create economic development that is profitable and environmentally safe.

Introduction

McMahon's keynote address discussed the connections between land use and transportation; between the built and natural environment; between the people and the land; and between walkability and livability.

McMahon set the tone for his speech by quoting Stewart L. Udall, former Secretary of the Interior:

America today stands poised on a pinnacle of wealth and power, yet we live in a land of vanishing beauty, of increased ugliness, of shrinking open space, and of an overall environment that is diminished daily by pollution and noise and blight.

Patterns of Development

A *sense of place*, as defined by McMahon, is formed when "your hometown is different from my hometown" and when the physical surroundings are worth caring about. He suggests that America is losing its *sense of place* with the dwindling character of its cities and countryside. Across America, everything looks the same. This diminishing character results from the destruction and degradation of the land as people build one convenience after another. McMahon points to the patterns of development as the cause. There are three specific areas that should be addressed to curtail further ruin of America, including the placement, arrangement, and appearance of communities.

Placement

Common sense warns that there are some areas where we should not build. Flood plains and beachfronts, for example, are not wise choices for development. McMahon argues that there are other locations that, for historic reasons, should not be developed.

One example is Spotsylvania, Virginia, where a shopping center was built on the grounds of Chancellorsville, a civil war battlefield. Had the community crafted a long-range conservation plan, citizens may have chosen instead to honor the site's historical significance and designate it as a destination as well as a center for economic development. The case illustrates how a community may lose its sense of place. Mr. McMahon asks, "What is the point of saving a structure, but losing a place?" Long-range conservation plans may prevent this type of destruction. Establishing direction for a community provides a sense of predictability and certainty. In preserving our sense of place, we must recognize that some places are better for development than others.

Arrangement

According to McMahon, the layout of towns and cities should mimic the development model used prior to World War II. A model of the type of development is Chesapeake City, Maryland, which has an

identifiable edge and center, a walkable, pedestrian-friendly scale and environment, and mixed uses, including housing types. Chesapeake City is architecturally coherent and interesting.

The pattern for development since WWII, however, is sprawl. With sprawl, cars must be driven everywhere for everything. Sprawl spreads the population around, ravaging our countryside and threatening the economic well-being of communities. It diminishes public safety and the public realm, which is the physical manifestation of the public good. There are, however, alternatives to sprawl that offer social, physical, and economic benefits including Traditional Neighborhood Development, Transit Oriented Development, brownfield redevelopment, watershed sensitivity development, and green development.

Community Appearance

A community's image is fundamentally important to its economic well-being. The image of a community establishes both a *sense of pride* and a *sense of place*. Communities need to have something to differentiate them from other locations. When one community is the same as any other, there is little incentive for investment. Next, communities should be scenic. Naturally, better views increase housing value. Communities should also build pedestrian and bike paths so that people can enjoy the scenery. Third, communities need to preserve their histories, since it is places that physically link us to the past. Investing in communities' histories creates economic well-being. Pike Place Market in Seattle, Washington, is an excellent example of the use of historic preservation for economic well-being. Incidentally, an earlier proposal for the area had been to use the site for parking. McMahon asks, what is the use of parking when there is nothing to draw people to that location?

Investment in Existing Communities

Today, our communities do not reflect a sense of pride or place. Little attachment can be felt towards a parking lot; structures look like they are built out of LEGOs[®]. Few buildings are being created today that are worth preservation. Almost everywhere we go, stand identically designed fast-food franchises.

It is never too late, however, to invest in a community. Changes—one project at a time—can restore community character. We must recognize that buildings in one region of the country should look different from buildings in another region. Jurisdictions should demand that new structures fit the character of their communities. McMahon refers in particular to corporate franchises and cites locations across the nation where corporations yielded to community requests for architecture that reflects the character of their communities, whether it is Cape Cod or Spanish colonial style design.

In addition, the future belongs to town centers, not strip malls. Urban strips are unattractive, congested, and often abandoned, therefore not sustainable or profitable. Town centers are a great alternative because they provide people with a place to gather and attract people's affection. In this way, people spend more time in town centers. Communities should also encourage mixed uses, which provide the necessary densities to support Transit Oriented Development.

Other changes communities should make include reducing the amount of land on which big box retailers can build, decreasing large lot subdivisions, and creating walkable environments. Trail ways can be used by everyone—pedestrians, joggers, cyclists, families with children, the elderly, and individuals using assistive devices, such as wheelchairs. Trails create new activity. Private investment will follow public investment. For example, in Augusta, Georgia, a river walk was built along the levee. The Augusta River Walk has restored activity—physical and economic—to the downtown area. McMahon discusses more about suburban town centers, green space, open space systems, and downtown housing

in his article “Smart Growth Trends,” which was featured in the *Planning Commissioners Journal* (Issue 33, Winter 1999).

Conclusion

According to McMahon, the fundamental question is not whether America will continue to grow, but how it will grow. By taking a proactive approach to the planning of our cities and preservation of our countryside, our communities will be places that are worth caring about and will enjoy restored economic well-being.

Panel Presentation: *Mobility Friendly Design Standards – A Framework for Delaware*

Panelist: William J. Fasano, Jr.

Research Assistant

Institute for Public Administration

The following is an edited summary of comments made by Ms. Lorene Athey and Mr. William Fasano during their address entitled “Mobility Friendly Design Standards: A Framework for Delaware.” The presentation provides an overview of the issues of mobility on the national and statewide levels and establishes a common foundation on which future work may be based.

Definition of Problems, Issues and Challenges

Four major issues have been identified:

- **Inefficiencies and the costs of the modern transportation system.** Costs typically include economic, social, and less tangible costs such as time or emotional health.
- **Challenge to public transit services.** Challenges include issues of efficient service provision and provision of equitable transportation services.
- **Land issues and development decentralization.** Unmanaged development, or sprawl, that is tied to rising incomes, increased use of personal transportation, and employment decentralization.
- **Health and fitness.** The more time Americans spend in their cars, the less time they will walk or ride a bicycle.

Examples of these issues are seen all across the country from cul-de-sac ridden subdivisions with no interconnectivity to wide avenues that discourage pedestrian activities.

Purpose, Plan and Goals

The next step in the research process was defining mobility. The most inclusive, comprehensive, and effective definition comes from the Transportation Research Board:

“Having transport services going where and when one wants to travel; being informed about the services; knowing how to use them; being able to use them; and having the means to pay for them.”

This definition suggests two overarching goals for action: sustainability of the built environment, meaning building transit infrastructure that will be flexible enough to provide sufficient accessibility to a community as it grows, matures, and changes over time; and the overall improved quality of the built environment. The objective should be to form development design standards for statewide transportation infrastructure.

Ten Common “Mobility Friendly” Elements

1. Mix of land uses and housing types. Multi-modal transportation infrastructure and mobility friendly design appear most often in places that include a variety of land uses and a range of housing types.
2. Grid-like street pattern and interconnected streets. Accessibility and connectivity are key characteristics of a mobility friendly environment, and these traditional street patterns tend to

facilitate the use of a range of transportation modes. The use of small block lengths provides a “human scale” that encourages foot travel in contrast to the “auto scale” of major highways.

3. Public spaces as the focal point of development. Central public spaces establish the importance of the community as a whole and allow for equal use of public facilities for recreation and travel.
4. Minimum population densities. Managed density is necessary to support public transit systems.
5. Accessibility for persons of all ability levels. The concept of universal accessibility, based on the idea that designing for the least-able of our community provides measurable benefits to the community as a whole, has been recognized and mandated by state and federal laws.
6. Pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. Examples such as safe intersections and crosswalks increase public safety for walkers and encourage non-auto transportation. Two issues are the design of attractive and interesting pedestrian environments and maintenance of this infrastructure.
7. Efficient transitions between modes of transportation. Multi-modal infrastructure or hubs provide for safe and fast transitions between modes.
8. Public facilities transportation and location. The location of transportation infrastructure and the public facilities can be a key factor in determining whether a community will be equitable and mobility friendly or auto-based.
9. Off-road facilities such as trails and paths. These facilities are important in a recreational sense, but also encourage healthy, walkable communities. Current research points to the use of trails for utilitarian purposes as well, including traveling to work or school.
10. Well-managed parking. Aesthetically pleasing and land efficient parking can contribute vastly to the richness and vitality of communities.

National Best Practices

Four national trends that incorporate many of the above principles include:

- Transit Oriented Design
 - Involves compact, mixed-use development near new or existing public transportation infrastructure that serves housing, transportation, and neighborhood goals. TOD incorporates well-designed, multi-modal infrastructure and transit support structures.
- Universal design
 - Focuses on accessibility and ease of use, building on the premise that designs implemented for the least-capable will transmit measurable benefits to the entire community at little or no extra cost and without the need for adaptation or specialized design.
- Traditional Neighborhood Design, Neo-Traditional Design and New Urbanism
 - Allows for the development of fully integrated, mixed-use pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods.
- Smart growth development policies
 - Aims to prevent urban sprawl and pollution and reduce the profligate use of non-renewable fuels marked by excessive dependency on private cars in industrialized countries by emphasizing sustainability, dense development, mass transit, car-free areas, children’s rights, cycle trails, and pathways. Governor Minner’s Livable Delaware initiative incorporates smart growth development policies.

Panel Presentation: *Mobility Friendly Design Standards – A Framework for Delaware*

Panelist: Lorene J. Athey, ASLA

Planning Consultant

Institute for Public Administration

Implementation and Delaware-Specific Strategies

WILMAPCO, New Castle County, and the Delaware Department of Transportation have recently updated long-term plans that support mobility friendly design. Governor Minner’s Livable Delaware initiative also addresses the goals for the state. Key goals of the state strategies include:

- Invest in future development for existing communities, urban concentrations, and growth areas.
- Improve housing quality, variety, and affordability for all income groups.
- Encourage redevelopment and improve livability of existing communities and urban areas, and guide new employment into underutilized commercial and industrial sites.
- Promote mobility for people and goods through a balanced system of transportation options.
- Improve access to educational opportunities, health care, and human services for all Delawareans.

The state strategies map illustrates three main categories: communities, developing areas, and rural. The state’s preferred investments for growth and expansion of infrastructure will focus on communities and developing areas. Spending in rural areas would be limited to maintenance of existing infrastructure.

Some key concepts, recommendations, and their applicability in Delaware follow:

Universal Accessibility – Review national accessibility literature and AAB rules to improve the design, spacing, and location of seating, waiting areas, and drop-off areas.

Pedestrian Friendly Infrastructure and Design – Require pedestrian circulation systems with interconnections and necessary easements within the parcel, between the parcel and adjacent streets, to transit facilities, through parking lots, and at cul-de-sacs. Provide sidewalks as part of all new developments and redevelopments greater than one dwelling unit per acre and set at a minimum of five feet wide.

Pedestrian Crossings – Design and locate pedestrian crossings to serve pedestrians and provide maximum visibility. (This may include marked crosswalks on all subdivision streets and the possible implementation of mid-block crosswalks where maximum block lengths have been exceeded.) Locate bus stops near signalized intersections to ease pedestrian crossings.

Pedestrian Environment/Setbacks – Design developments to enhance the pedestrian environment using setbacks. Require residential “build-to” lines in transit served areas, locate residential garages to the rear of the residence, require commercial “build-to” lines in transit served areas (15-20 feet), and require setbacks and landscaping of parking lots.

Pedestrian Environment/Building Articulation – Require residential building facades to be varied with front doors facing and visible from the street. Require development in commercial areas to be varied and articulated to include windows and multiple entrances. Avoid blank walls, particularly along streets, sidewalks and parking lots.

Placement and Design of Parking – Design developments to enhance the pedestrian environment using parking lot placement and design. Locate all non-residential parking lots to the rear and sides of buildings. Provide clearly marked, paved walkways where pedestrians are required to cross through parking lots. Minimize the visual impact of large expanses of asphalt with trees and landscaping. Require large surface parking lots to be set back at least ten feet from property and require them to be screened along the street edge.

Pedestrian Environment/ Landscaping – Provide street trees at one tree per 40 linear feet of right-of-way frontage. Locate landscaping, walls and fencing so as not to preclude site-to-site connections.

Pedestrian Environment/Traffic Calming – Use traffic calming techniques to enhance the pedestrian environment.

Multi-Modal Infrastructure and Design – Require pedestrian and transit supportive land use within one-quarter mile of a transit stop. Require a site circulation plan during the design review process. Plan for the presence of bicycles in all development.

Transit Facilities – Design transit facilities to maximize customer convenience, comfort, and safety. (At minimum, bus stops should be lighted, located on a concrete pad, and have a sign with a schedule.) Encourage developers to provide additional transit amenities such as shelters, benches, and trash receptacles. Locate bus stops adjacent to signalized intersections. Outfit well-used stops (e.g., those in a transit arterial district, near major residential developments, or near major retail, office, or transfer stations) with shelter, benches, schedules, ticket purchasing info, and additional amenities.

Park and Ride Lots – Design and locate park and ride lots to maximize customer convenience, comfort, and safety. Develop lots with enhanced attention to pedestrian safety and amenities. (Lots should contain shelters, benches, bicycle parking and storage, pedestrian scale lighting, and kiosks.) Avoid large surface lots in transit arterial districts by utilizing existing excess parking. Locate park and ride lots in close proximity to ancillary uses and design to the same standards as conventional parking.

Managing Density – Actively work to achieve transit supportive densities in existing or proposed transit-served areas. (In residential areas this translates into seven dwelling units per acre or fifty to sixty employees per acre in commercial areas to support public transit in thirty-minute intervals.)

Increase Densities Near Transit – Increase density to a depth of one-quarter mile from transit arterials by allowing up to 50 percent of a parcel zoned non-residential to be utilized from multi-family residential. Allow residential uses on upper floors of office or retail and zone undeveloped residential parcels for multifamily residential.

Parking – Adopt methods to reduce the amount of land dedicated to parking lots and manage the supply of parking to discourage single occupant vehicle trips by allowing on-street parking to be counted toward parking requirements, revising commercial and office parking requirements, reducing the total number of required spaces in mixed use projects, reducing the number of required spaces where neighboring interests can share parking due to differing peak demand, reducing the minimum allowable size of parking spaces, and allowing for reduced parking in transit arterial districts.

Grid-Like Intersections, Interconnected Streets – Require development proposals to identify nearby trip generators. Design for interconnectivity and an arterial grid. (New subdivisions should have a

connectivity index rating of at least 1.4.) Discourage through traffic on local streets and encourage linkages between neighborhoods, community facilities, and shopping. Plan a network of arterial streets for an average half-mile grid. Keep block lengths short; avoid cul-de-sacs by using loops and permit alleys. Provide bike and pedestrian connections between cul-de-sacs.

Reducing Speeds – Reduce design speeds and incorporate traffic calming as needed. Lower design speeds for minor streets and minor collectors to 20 mph and 25 mph, respectively. (Lower design speeds will allow the horizontal curve radius to be reduced proportionally.)

Short Blocks – Design short blocks and streets while minimizing the use of cul-de-sacs. (When dead end streets cannot be avoided, the cul-de-sac length should be 250 feet, but no more than 500.) Establish a preferred block length of 250 to 500 feet.

Street Widths – Allow reduced lane widths. (Nine-foot travel lanes on minor streets and ten-foot travel lanes on minor collectors are preferred.) Set striped parking lanes at seven feet wide. Set pavement width for minor streets at 20 to 27 feet, depending on whether a parking lane is provided. Set pavement width for minor collectors at 29 to 36 feet, depending on parking. Provide a right-of-way width of 20 feet and a minimum paved width of 12 feet for alleys in residential zones.

Intersections – Encourage T- and four-way intersections with two- and four-way stop control. Substitute roundabouts for stop signs whenever they are applicable. Design intersections at 90-degree angles, with a minimum of 60 degrees allowed on local streets. Encourage L-curves or 90-degree turns in loop or U-shaped roadways. Reduce the minimum curb return radii to decrease crossing distances for pedestrians and slow vehicles. Require marked crosswalks at all intersections within one-quarter mile of bus stops.

Alleys and Driveways – Allow alleys in order to reduce the impact of driveways in both residential and non-residential zones. Allow driveways at a 50-foot minimum spacing from centerlines. Require narrower lots to have alley access or shared driveways. Apply a maximum driveway width of 8 to 16 feet, or 18 feet for a multi-family residence.

Land Use/Housing Types – Allow vertical and horizontal mixing of land uses and require a variety of housing types including both single and multi-family. Permit all types of residential uses within the commercial district, including apartments over stores and offices. Allow retail uses within office/employment zones. Provide incidental service and retail uses within the manufacturing/industrial district, and require a variety of housing types, including both single and multifamily housing in neighborhoods. Require a variety of land uses and housing types in communities and neighborhoods, whether villages, hamlets, towns or transit arterial districts. Design communities with public spaces as focal points. (There are no regulations or laws that currently require the site design of commercial and employment buildings to include pedestrian-oriented public spaces.)

Public Facilities – Locate and design public facilities such as schools to maximize pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access, in addition to access by school buses.

Off-Road Facilities – Review the national literature, AAB rules and regulations, and DNREC guidelines to develop dimensional and design standards for off-road trails and paths.

Conclusion and Questions for the Future

At the policy level, mobility friendly design is strongly supported in Delaware and many recommendations have been formulated specifically for the state. Some recommendations are reflected in local codes, rule, and regulations. A number of these adopted standards, however, are optional and virtually none have been implemented. Certain questions must be answered before this process can go forward, including:

- To what extent have the mobility friendly design standards been put into place?
- Are the best practices that have been applied sufficient?
- What specific activities should be recommended in order to create new legislation or policy?
- What specific changes to current legislation and policy are in order?

Group Discussion

Moderator: Edward J. O'Donnell
Senior Policy Advisor
Institute for Public Administration

During the summit, Mr. Edward O'Donnell moderated a group discussion on the current mobility friendly design standards in New Castle County. The following is an edited summary of the discussion.

Edward O'Donnell – When you ask a question or comment, please state your name and your affiliation. Bob, you had a question?

The Honorable Robert Weiner (New Castle County Council) – Interconnectivity has been on everyone's books. It sounds wonderful, but the state and the county have to be willing to stand by the policy in the face of community opposition and from those who do not have the big picture yet.

Edward O'Donnell – Any questions?

The Honorable William Tansey (New Castle County Council) – On the review, doesn't DelDOT look at these things and make recommendations? How do we enforce them if they are not in the Unified Development Code (UDC)?

Edward O'Donnell – I'll let Charlie Barker answer that.

Charles L. Baker (New Castle County Dept. of Land Use) – My staff and DelDOT's staff are looking at these things. Although we do not have a separate sheet called a circulation plan, we are looking at these things, including a pedestrian section.

Peter Besecker (City of Wilmington Dept. of Planning) – The *Mobility Friendly Design Standards: A Framework for Delaware* draft report is oriented more to the county and state. It mentions a few things that are not in existence, such as a requirement for the treatment of blank walls. The City of Wilmington created a design district for its downtown that includes the prohibition of commercial lots and demolition proceedings. The Planning Department reviews all demolitions and parking lot landscaping requests.

Edward O'Donnell – Do you think some of the regulations you mentioned would serve as good patterns for counties and states?

Peter Besecker (City of Wilmington Dept. of Planning) – It is worth looking into things such as transparency requirements.

Edward O'Donnell – Any other questions or comments?

Tim Plemmons (Delaware Greenways) – People have a lot of questions about interconnectivity and the problems associated with it. We have tried to explain it to the community in terms of creating a vision. It is hard to sell interconnectivity piece by piece. We need institutional change and a long-term plan for trails and open space.

Constance Holland (Office of State Planning Coordination) – State strategies for planning have been worked on for about a year and public reviews are coming soon. We have overseen development for nature trails and greenways. I think that you will see state strategy patterns for interconnectivity involving critical areas, tree lined areas, and open spaces. What I have heard today is wonderful for New Castle County, but it is also needed in local jurisdictions. As one gentleman said, we need to start at the grassroots level.

The Honorable Robert Weiner (New Castle County Council) – There are two legislative initiatives have been considered by New Castle County Council. William Tansey, Patty Powell, and I are sponsoring a hometown overlay ordinance. An overlay zone, which encourages pedestrian friendly development, needs to be created. We need the type of development that allows people to live, pray, and shop in the same community. Centreville, Claymont, Stanton, and Christiana are some examples that come to mind. Another initiative that needs to be change is the 3.319 procedure that is the final hurdle developers have to go through to build a cluster development with open space set aside. Most developers want to build cookie-cutter houses with a “McMansion” on a one-half acre lot because that is easier to manage monetarily. In southern New Castle County, we are not giving people options other than the one- to two-acre cookie-cutter mansions. I hope to see the 3.319 procedure changed.

Charles L. Baker (New Castle County Dept. of Land Use) – The UDC does not allow large lots to be built south of canal. I do not want to get a bad report card. There are conversations occurring about more open spaces and smaller lots. With regard to what Tim said about open space and interconnectivity such as the transportation issue, we need state support to bridge transportation facilities to long range planning. There is a lot of fear about this and we have talked about it for a long time. Getting community groups to buy into 70 dwelling units per acre has been difficult. It is difficult to get local officials to buy into these challenges.

Edward O’Donnell – Patt Cannon has a comment.

Patt Cannon (Centreville Civic Association) – In response to Charles Baker, as a community member, the problem I see is that we have not educated the neighborhood. If community associations saw Ed McMahon’s presentation, they would jump on board because it makes sense. But when it comes in a confrontational manner, everyone’s blood pressure goes up.

Beverley Baxter (Committee of 100) – We are preaching to the choir. The resistance is not from the development community and not from decision-makers. It is coming instead from the community. Until we engage the community and its leaders, we will not be able to do anything creative.

Edward O’Donnell – Larry Tarabicos has a comment.

Larry Tarabicos (Young, Conaway, Stargatt & Taylor, LLP) – I came here with the impression the MFDS Summit had very little to do with New Castle County because it is already developed. I thought the Summit would focus on the rest of Delaware. The problem is that the UDC has not been adopted anywhere else in Delaware. Level service standards have been codified in its laws. That is why development has occurred in Smyrna, Middletown, and Clayton at a level that cannot occur in New Castle County. Clayton and Middletown do not have these laws. Years ago, I encouraged statewide laws for development, but these jurisdictions do not want to do that because it would affect their economic development. New Castle County also wanted economic development, but under regulated conditions. This has inadvertently pushed development away. One thing Ed McMahon said in his

presentation is that people want a sense of place. I don't see that. If that were true, people would want track housing. People do not want to live in towns; they want to live on their one acre in rural New Castle County.

The Honorable Robert Weiner (New Castle County Council) – I think this is about choices and options. People are not offered the option of cluster development with open space set aside. They are not given the opportunity to see what this alternative looks like. Claymont is a success story. I undertook an initiative three years ago with Claymont's business and civic community. We worked with the planner who was responsible for Manayunk, Philadelphia, a river community much like Claymont. We came up with a model, a mixed-use residential community with densification, affordable housing, and a main street like Newark's. The key was starting the project with an affordable housing component called Greentree Apartments. We took the local leaders to Baltimore, where a similar project was underway. We didn't show them pictures—we took them there and they found out that affordable housing was not what they thought it was. They agreed to proceed. That project paved the way for future planning. Claymont can be used as a model of success on a larger scale, but we have to take people on field trips to educate them.

Edward O'Donnell – Ted Williams has a comment.

Ted Williams (Landmark Engineering, Inc.) – I suggest taking a look at the current standards and working with the new conservation design adopted in New Castle County. Some of the things outlined in traffic calming manuals and sidewalk management work well with some of the things conservationists want.

Edward O'Donnell – You are basically saying they should meet for cross-purposes?

Ted Williams (Landmark Engineering, Inc.) – I believe so. With the one-acre lots in New Castle County, for example, traffic calming calls for curbing, green space with sidewalks, but does that work with conservation design? We have to make sure both work together.

Edward O'Donnell – Yes, Roger.

The Honorable Roger Roy (Transportation Management Association of Delaware/Delaware House of Representatives) – I have a comment on interconnectivity. My district consists of suburban single-family homes. We do not have a lot of success stories for people to look at. So interconnectivity for us is older neighborhoods that connect between developments. Driveways coming out on the interconnections make it hard for people to back out. Another problem is speeding. People use the roads in my district as highways. The general public uses the interconnections as short cuts. The community does not hate the interconnections; they just hate the speeding that is associated with them.

The Honorable William Tansey (New Castle County Council) – I have a question. Centerville Road is narrow with streams and hills, and people still speed. How do you stop it?

Chris Yasik (University of Delaware) – I know what you mean. A community leader tried to get traffic calming in my neighborhood but was denied.

Edward O'Donnell – You have to go to your councilman or state legislature to make those changes.

Chris Yasik (University of Delaware) – We have tried time after time.

Edward O'Donnell – I have been there. You have to keep hitting the door and try again. Go ahead, Ralph.

Ralph Reeb (Delaware Department of Transportation) – We have tried to make these things available to individuals, but make sure communities can take technical tools with our technical advice and solve their own problems at the same time. Traffic calming is not always the answer. I am not sure why you were denied Chris, but I will give you my card and we can talk. One of the things we have done is give people options and try to get out of the way. The Mobility Friendly Design Standards were developed so we can say to the development communities, “It is a good idea, here it is. Go ahead, it is okay.” The development community said they are not sure how it is going to work. There are a lot of hurdles, and the people who have to make the final planning decisions are not ready because of reasons previous cited, such as neighborhood opposition. I think one main thing we have to do is provide information and ask the question, “Where do we take these fieldtrips?” Our colleagues in the state of Washington have experience with speed tables and fire trucks. We need to have our firemen learn from their experience. We definitely have to find the soft spots in our policy, what is not working. Ted’s point about cross-purposes is valid. We know we have problems but not major ones. One of the reasons why this group is here today is to answer the question, “Is this really sellable?” One question for me is, “How do we help people that live on 200 acres of farmland find the value of that land, keep it as farmland, and move development to where the county has identified as growth areas. I don’t know how to do that.

Constance Holland (Office of State Planning Coordination) – Ralph didn’t give himself or DelDOT enough kudos. To place commercial uses in one corner and residential uses in another is not the answer. There has got to be a better way to do this. There is a window of opportunity for looking at the cumulative effect and have developers pay for it. It is happening now and next time I will bring the statistics to prove it.

Edward O'Donnell – Bob?

The Honorable Robert Weiner (New Castle County Council) – I want to follow up on Ralph’s point. DelDOT has become more progressive and traffic-calming ordinances in my district, including Mount Lebanon Road and Ebright Road, show that DelDOT has changed. I also want to comment about our concerns for providing incentives for equalizing infrastructure. We need to pass the state property tax credit bill that I am co-sponsoring and other tax strategies. We know that the population will continue to grow. That is why we need to acknowledge the growth zone and no growth zone consistent with state policy. We also need to provide incentives for moving development to those growth regions and encourage better coordination between the state and the county for interconnectivity. Further education of the community is needed. We need to start first with utilizing existing infrastructure.

Edward O'Donnell – A couple of themes were discussed today. First is the lack of public information, another is that some codes may cut at cross-purposes and, finally, some codes may not reflect the most recent information we have at the time. Are there any other questions?

Dr. Jerome Lewis (Institute for Public Administration) – Having concrete examples of success and letting people see and taste the results is needed. Another theme that needs to be explored is crime and the safety of the areas.

Dr. Robert Warren (Institute for Public Administration) – I think a major part that needs to be explored is downtown redevelopment. I have not heard much about Wilmington, and the most efficient process would be to reconfigure a population around Wilmington. Is there any way to increase incentives for Wilmington?

Edward O'Donnell – We were going to do that in the chip plants and some planners suggested that we place it in Wilmington. However, critics said that we should not place it there for a variety of reasons including the wage tax. After their criticisms, it never played out.

Ralph Reeb (Delaware Department of Transportation) – Thank you. Three things that I would like to do is 1) find out what features people are searching for, setting up a research project to answer this question, 2) do as Dr. Warren suggests and engage not only Wilmington but also other small towns ripe for this project, and 3) determine the level of planning. Superblocks—what are they? I know that I do not have the right to plan a road across someone else's property. All of our projects deal with existing roads or major projects. During the construction of Route 1, for example, people had to move to proceed with the project. It is rare that we have to do that.

The Honorable Robert Weiner (New Castle County Council) – Middletown and Townsend have continued natural interconnectivity. But they became an escape route for diverting away from the unified development of New Castle County. This led to suburban sprawl. In Europe, there are sacred spaces without development. They were there over a thousand years ago and will be there a thousand years from now. We have to protect the sacredness of our open space and keep our villages vibrant.

The Honorable Thomas Gordon (New Castle County) – Thank you, Larry Tarabicos, for your common sense. Look at the politics. Politicians say control growth and stop high density. No one will ever say that they are for smart growth, because they will never get elected. It is still a democracy. Sometimes it is a terrible thing. But you cannot just force people to go someplace or do anything. The other comment that I have is that we must be careful about what we do before future development does not come into New Castle County. All we have done is quadruple the size of Middletown, and Smyrna will be next. We have not done anything with the UDC. It is a great concept, but it is not going to work because it is not a level playing field. Unless the public is educated, this exercise will be limited to academia.

Short on Parks? Hit the Streets!

Thomas Hylton

President

Save Our Land, Save Our Towns, Inc.

In his presentation, Mr. Thomas Hylton stresses the importance of building traditional communities and preserving our nation's open space. The following is an edited summary of Mr. Hylton's comments.

A "true believer" in traditional towns and their merits, Mr. Hylton has dedicated himself to trying to persuade people that, for economical, environmental, and social reasons, the character of towns enhances our quality of life and we will get there one day.

Our world consists of public and private places. The most common public spaces are the streets and sidewalks. Everyone comes together in the streets. We spend a great deal of time on the roads. Kids play in the streets. We shop on main streets. A lot of land is devoted to streets. Even in developing areas, the public areas are streets. Years ago people walked or rode horses in the streets to get to their destinations. They also mingled in the streets. Even when society started to use trolleys and stage coaches, people could still mingle because the vehicles were slower. Our street systems, historically, have been gathering places for people, marketplaces, or places where kids could play.

Then cars came along, revolutionizing our transportation system and how we use our streets. At the end of World War II, we started building more roads. We were able to build anything—anywhere. We just connected everything with roads. So, we were building out in the countryside. And the traditional town pattern of houses, buildings, and stores in close proximity—in walking distance—was thrown out. Now our country's free space is being filled with cars. Experts estimate that we have five to six parking spaces for each registered car in this country. And, naturally, the spaces are empty most of the time. Basically, our cities are parking lots interspersed with buildings strung along roads for easy access.

Trying to separate cars and pedestrians, which characterized the conventional wisdom for a long time, the Department of Transportation (DOT) made roads wider and straighter. The result, however, was more roads and faster drivers. The current trend is traffic calming. The parking lot, suggests Hylton, is the best traffic-calming device. While much land has been consumed for parking, the best place to put parking spaces is still on the street. On-street parking consumes less raw acreage and acts as a form of traffic calming. The French have been very successful with this approach. In this country, our land is already paved over with asphalt, so we might as well put the streets to good use—for parking. Benefits of on-street parking include increased access to stores and decreased vehicle speeds.

During the 1930s, Pennsylvania employed angled parking, but the suburbanization movement of the 1950s led to its abandonment and replacement with large parking lots. The movement eventually killed the downtown district. During the mid-1980s, an attempt was made to bring back angled parking, but the biggest hurdle was a Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) regulation that required an excessively wide back-up area that effectively negated the space-saving benefits of angled parking. Fortunately, there was no regulation on the books that addressed back-in angled parking. Looking to other communities for success stories, Wilmington, Delaware, is a local example.

Aside from being mechanically easier than parallel parking, it was calculated my municipality would gain 93 spaces. The project was eventually approved and worked out well, increasing pedestrian, bike and auto traffic to local merchants.

Individuals spend on average one-half hour per day commuting to and from work, totaling 240 hours per year in their cars—the equivalent of six weeks of work. Taken over 20 years that amounts to two and one-half years of work spent on the road.

Incorporating mobility friendly design in community design has many benefits, both to society and individuals. Medical experts agree that a mere 45-60 minutes of moderate exercise per day has demonstrable health benefits. Most people are able to walk one mile in about 17 to 20 minutes. Even in a country dominated by urban sprawl, many of destinations are within an easy walking distance or short bicycle ride of our homes. Fully 41 percent of our trips fall within a two-mile radius. Moreover, bicycles occupy less room on roads than automobiles and require far less room to park and store.

The Dutch purposefully have chosen a healthier way of life. As a matter of choice and lifestyle, they enjoy a far more pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented society. In addition, they intentionally plan to incorporate natural beauty along their streets. The effect is visually stunning outdoor rooms, natural canopy roofs, and attractive transportation corridors.

Americans' perceptions of trails differ from that of our European counterparts. Americans tend to see trails as purely recreational—ironically an activity to which we often drive. Conversely, Europeans, and the Dutch in particular, view and use trails as a legitimate mode of travel. Retrofitting existing streets to accommodate bicycles is not too difficult. Opponents point to the number of accidents and fatalities associated with bicycle use near automotive traffic flows, however the Dutch have a far lower rate of bicycling fatalities despite having many times the number of cyclists.

Streetscaping is an important element in creating hospitable places, particularly in areas with high population densities. Trees, for instance, are very effective for slowing the flow of traffic. If you think of streets as rooms, buildings form the walls for outdoor rooms while overhanging tree branches form the ceiling. In Paris, streets are parks.

Utility companies often pose the greatest obstacle in the effort to beautify streets with trees, as there is an apparent conflict between suspended utility lines and overhanging branches. Although much is made of this, the problem is not insurmountable. Trees can be pruned artfully to allow cables to pass through. A tree cable, an innovation, makes this easier. The cable surrounds high-voltage wires (up to 13,200 volts), allowing them to be strung literally through the trees with minimal risk. Often, these efforts run contrary to individuals' perceived primary comforts. Similar projects may not be easy to initiate, but it is important to remember that, like any open space, our streets are under development pressure and can be damaged irreversibly. At the least, planners need to secure the right-of-way at the outset and re-initiate efforts when people have become enlightened.

Appendix: List of Participants

Lorene Athey
Planning Consultant
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

Charles L. Baker
General Manager
New Castle County Department of Land Use

Beverley V. Baxter
Executive Director
Committee of 100

Peter Besecker
Director
Department of Planning
City of Wilmington

Lisa Brennan
Research Assistant
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

Patt Cannon
President
Centreville Civic Association

Joseph Cantalupo
Transportation Planning Supervisor
Delaware Department of Transportation

Don Carbaugh
Chairman
Delaware Bicycle Council

Debbie Carr
Senior Secretary
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

Bill Cohen
Supplemental Faculty
Department of Geography
University of Delaware

Erin P. Cole
Research Assistant
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

Christopher A. Coons
Council President
New Castle County Council

Kevin F. Coyle
Principal Planner
Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control

Thomas Davis
Vice Chairman
Transportation Management Association of Delaware

William J. DeCoursey
Research Assistant
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

Catherine Dennis
Planning Manager
Delaware Transit Corporation

Nell Downer
Staff Assistant
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

Bernie Dworsky
Senior Advisor
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

Heather Dunigan
Principal Planner
Wilmington Area Planning Council

David Edgell
Circuit-Rider Planner for Kent County
Office of State Planning Coordination

Ardeshir Faghri
Professor
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
University of Delaware

William Fasano
Research Assistant
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

Tammy Ford
Program Manager
Transportation Management Association of Delaware

Thomas Gordon
County Executive
New Castle County

Bob Hitchens
Chairman
Transportation Management Association of Delaware

Constance Holland
Director
Office of State Planning Coordination

Karen Horton
Principal Planner
Delaware State Housing Authority

Thomas Hylton
President
Save Our Land, Save Our Towns, Inc.

Herb Inden
Circuit-Rider Planner for New Castle County
Office of State Planning Coordination

Saundra Johnson
Director
Delaware State Housing Authority

Stephen Kingsberry
Director of Development
Delaware Transit Corporation

Larry Klepner
Program Coordinator
T² Center
University of Delaware

David Levett
Research Assistant
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

Jerome Lewis
Director
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

Ron Love
Supervisor of School Transportation
Delaware Department of Education

Dená McClurkin-Brummer
Research Assistant
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

Edward McMahon
Vice-President and Director of Land Use Programs
The Conservation Fund

Daniese McMullin-Powell
Disability Rights Activist
State Council for Persons with Disabilities

Raymond C. Miller
Executive Director
Delaware Transit Corporation

Lisa Moreland
Assistant Policy Scientist
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

Edward O'Donnell
Senior Policy Advisor
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

Tim Plemmons
Executive Director
Delaware Greenways

Ralph Reeb
Director of Planning
Delaware Department of Transportation

Roger P. Roy
Executive Director
Transportation Management Association of Delaware

Pamela J. Scott
Partner
Saul Ewing, LLP

Jeffrey Seemans
Landscape Architect
Blenheim Management Company

Alexander M. Settles
Assistant Policy Scientist
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

William J. Tansey
Councilman, Third District
New Castle County Council

Larry Tarabicos
Partner
Young, Conaway, Stargatt & Taylor, LLP

Ann Marie Townshend
Circuit-Rider Planner for Sussex County
Office of State Planning Coordination

Tai-Ju Rene Tseng
Research Assistant
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

Robert Warren
Professor
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

Robert S. Weiner
Councilman, Second District
New Castle County Council

Ted Williams
Vice President of Operations
Landmark Engineering, Inc.

Martin Wollaston
Planning Manager
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

Tigist Zegeye
Executive Director
Wilmington Area Planning Council

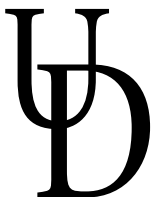


***Institute for Public Administration
College of Human Services, Education & Public Policy
University of Delaware
180 Graham Hall
Newark, DE 19716-7380***

phone: 302-831-8971 e-mail: ipa@udel.edu fax: 302-831-3488

www.ipa.udel.edu

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