Dover/Kent County MPO
Metropolitan Planning Organization

JOURNEYS

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MPO adopts Regional Bicycle Plan

On Sept. 7, the Dover Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization adopted its Regional Bicycle Plan for central Delaware.

The bike plan aims to create an effective, safe bicycle system in central Delaware. It shows where there are bicycle trails, lanes and similar facilities in central Delaware and where there are gaps in service. In addition, the plan addresses the need for bicyclists and motorists to share the road, increase recreational biking as well as encourage people to bike to work or school.

The main objectives are to:

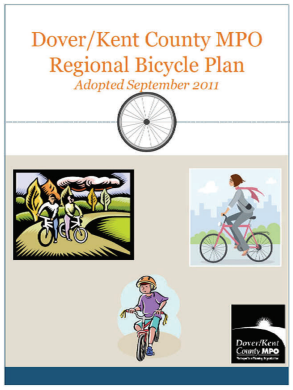
- Create an effective, safe bike system
- Educate bicyclists and drivers to know and follow the rules of the road
- Increase local bicycle trips
- Have more students bike to school
- Increase bicycle-to-work commutes
- Increase recreational riding

MPO staff put the plan through a 30-day public comment period in 2011, and the MPO's Technical Advisory and Public Advisory committees endorsed the plan's adoption.

The plan contains four recommendations:

- Selecting appropriate bicycle facilities
- Putting bicycle facilities at intersections
- More bicycle parking
- Education and enforcement of bicycle laws.

With the bicycle plan adopted, the MPO is pursuing the implementation of the plan's recommendations. MPO staff is developing alternatives, meeting with the public, completing cost estimates, and developing a final recommendation to proceed into design for proposed off-road bike trails, such as a connector between the Silver Lake Park and Isaacs Branch trails in Dover, as well as a trail that would lead from Smyrna to Big Oak Park.



The MPO recently met with staff from the Department of Transportation, the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control and the City of Dover to begin the planning process for the Silver Lake connector. The MPO will look for further opportunities to collaborate with DNREC on projects included in Delaware's First State Trails and Pathways Program.

(See BIKE PLAN, Pg. 5)

The Regional Bicycle Plan lists a number of projects to improve bicycling in central Delaware. The recommendations include on-road and off-road improvements. Seven criteria, ranging from safety and significance to cost would influence how projects would be prioritized.

On-Road Improvements

1. S. West Street
2. U.S. 13 (through Dover)
3. State Street
4. Denney's Road
5. Del. 8/Forest Ave.
6. Walker Road
7. North Street
8. College Road
9. DE 10 (DAFB to Camden)
10. Milford Riverwalk
11. Saulsbury Road/DE 15
12. U.S. 113 (through Milford)
13. Dover-Kenton Road
14. Sorghum Mill Road
15. Pearsons Corner Road
16. Chestnut Grove Road
17. Del. 12
18. Del. 15

Off-Road Improvements (Trails)

1. Silver Lake to St. Jones Connector Trail
2. Camden to Dover Trail
3. Del. 10 Trail
4. Smyrna-Clayton Trail
5. Smyrna/Big Oak Park Trail
6. Clayton to Easton, Md. Rail Trail
7. Dover Air Force Base Bike Trail

DTC's Kingsberry leaves Delaware for NY, NJ Port Authority position

Stephen Kingsberry, executive director of the Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC), left his post on Oct. 30 to be deputy director for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Kingsberry will work in rail services at the Port Authority.

Kingsberry

Kingsberry, who was a member of the Dover/Kent County MPO's Council, served as DTC's Executive Director since 2005, after joining the agency in 1999 as Development Director. He previously served with New York's Metropolitan Transit Administration and New Jersey Transit.

DTC operates as DART First State, providing fixed route bus, paratransit, RideShare statewide, and state-funded commuter rail service under contract with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA).

"We are indebted to Stephen Kingsberry for his service to transit riders in Delaware," said Shailen Bhatt, Secretary of the Delaware Department of Transportation. "Stephen guided DTC through repeated years of budget challenges, but still managed to expand DART to introduce Sunday service in New Castle County, Saturday service in Kent County and weekday buses to Delaware City for the first time in over 40 years."

Kingsberry said the decision to move was a tough one.

"It is difficult to leave DART whose employees have become like my Delaware family," he said. "I believe that we are continuing to make progress in providing convenient, efficient transit services that meet the needs of our customers."

Annual transit ridership is over 12 million, which includes more than 1.15 million commuter rail trips. Six years ago ridership was 9.2 million, which relates to a more than 30 percent increase in public transportation use in Delaware.

"Delawareans are using DART," Kingsberry said.

Bhatt said that a national search is underway to replace Kingsberry.

Welcome, Chris Kirby

The Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization welcomes its newest staff member, Chris Kirby.

Kirby

Kirby is a Planner I for the MPO and handles mapping and Geographic Information System (GIS) work, data collection and other duties.

Kirby comes to the MPO from the planning and engineering firm, Rummell, Klepper & Kahl (RK&K) in Dover, where he was a designer and survey technician. At RK&K, he was involved in all aspects of preliminary planning, conceptual design and final design of civil engineering projects.

Prior to RK&K, Kirby worked for the planning and engineering firms Davis, Bowen and Friedel in Milford as a designer, McCormick, Taylor & Associates in Newark as a designer and planner, and the Delaware Department of Transportation as a road design technician. He has extensive experience with Microstation and AutoCAD and similar software.

Kirby, his wife and three children live in Wyoming. He enjoys family time, camping and music.

MPO committees hold elections; council to hold elections later

The MPO's Technical Advisory Committee has new leadership.

Following the TAC's annual round of elections on Aug. 10, Mary Ellen Gray, of Kent County Planning, is the committee's new chairperson. David Edgell was re-elected as the TAC vice chairman.

The Public Advisory Committee re-elected Dwight S. Meyer as PAC chairman and Michael Gumrot as vice chairman on Aug. 23.

The MPO Council voted on Sept. 7 and Nov. 9 to defer its elections until a later date. Dover Mayor Carleton E. Carey Sr. remains council chairman and Bradley S. Eaby is council vice chairman.

The MPO Council is the organization's policymaking body. Members include the highest elected officials, or their representatives, from member governments and representatives of major transportation providers.

The TAC comprises employees of member governments in central Delaware or related agencies who provide skilled analysis and comments regarding proposed transportation plans and programs.

The PAC ensures that the MPO receives input from the public regarding all proposed transportation plans, programs and policies. PAC members are volunteers appointed by the county, the City of Dover and the state via MPO Council members.

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Bike Summit 2011 sees new strides toward bikability

The third annual Delaware Bike Summit was held on Oct. 14 at the University of Delaware's Virden Center in Lewes, further paving the way for better bicycling in the First State.

Speakers from around the state and the region packed the day full of information about transportation laws and regulations, and how local governments can overcome obstacles toward better bikability.

The highlight of the day was the signing of a memorandum of agreement between Delaware Department of Transportation Secretary Shailen Bhatt and Collin O'Mara, secretary of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, for Gov. Jack Markell's First State Trails and Pathways Program. Seven million dollars backs the program that outlines 19 statewide bike and pedestrian enhancement projects. Some of the listed projects also are in the Dover/Kent County MPO's Regional Bicycle Plan, such as a connector between the Silver Lake and Isaacs Branch trails in Dover.

"Starting today, let's all get to work on the goal that Governor Markell has outlined," Bhatt said. "Let us agree that our legacy will be to make Delaware the most bike-friendly state in the country."

O'Mara echoed Bhatt's sentiments at the summit. "Under Governor Markell's leadership, Delaware has the potential to create a world class network of interconnected trails," O'Mara said. "By making strategic investments and adopting innovative public policies, we will connect our communities and make them truly bikeable and walkable."

Gov. Markell, who was not able to make the summit in person, surprised the audience by addressing attendees via the Internet.

Tracy Hadden-Loh, director of the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse in Washington, D.C., updated the audience on the status of the federal transportation bill. Carol Silldorff, executive director of Bike Maryland talked about her accomplishments in terms of bicycle safety bills in Maryland. She and James Wilson, executive director of Bike Delaware, held a panel discussion on the value of bicycle advocacy groups.

Mark Luszcz, DelDOT's assistant chief traffic engineer, talked about traffic control devices, such as roundabouts, and updates to bicycle signs, signals and markings on Delaware roads.

The Bike Summit Planning Committee also gave awards to four people for their accomplishments in cycling. Former Congressman Michael N. Castle received an award for lifetime achievement toward bikability. While in office, Castle fulfilled his vision to turn the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal into a recreational area for biking, hiking, fishing and running. Betsy Reamer, executive director for the Lewes Chamber of Commerce received the Outstanding Bicycle Commuter Award, Sen. Robert L. Venables, Sr. (D-Laurel) received the Bicycle Friendly Elected Official award and Amy Wilburn, chairperson for the Delaware Bicycle Council received the Outstanding Bicycle Advocate award.

Clockwise from top: DelDOT Secretary Shailen Bhatt signs a memorandum of agreement for Gov. Jack Markell's First State Trails and Pathways Program.

A Bike Summit attendee looks at a map of bike trails in Delaware.

Tracy Hadden-Loh, director of the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse, updates the audience on the federal transportation bill.

Bike Delaware Executive Director James Wilson, left, and Bike Maryland Executive Director Carol Silldorff, hold a panel discussion.

First State Trails and Pathways Program proposed Kent County Projects:

Dover to Clayton Rail Pathway – Connect the existing Scarborough Road shared-use pathway at Delaware Technical and Community College in Dover with the town of Clayton along an existing rail right-of-way.

Capital Bikeway – Extend the existing 0.7 mile bicycle/pedestrian pathway through Dover to the St. Jones River Trail. This project extends the existing 1.5 mile pathway that lies between Schutte Park and West Street.

Isaacs Branch Trail – Make improvements such as installing a pedestrian bridge, widen sidewalks and upgrade traffic signals.

St. Jones River Trail – Extend and complete connections. This work will be in partnership with Dover Air Force Base.

Killens Pond State Park – Complete a trail gap along Killens Pond Road, linking the northern and southern Park sections.

DMV expo stresses safety for seniors

From top to bottom: George Moore of Felton takes home a few informational goodies from the tables at the Senior Safety Expo. Earlier, he renewed his driver's license and registration without having to wait in line.

Sean Saffle, left, project manager for RideShare Delaware, talks with Robert Brookins of Camden about the RideShare program.

Gloria Collins, left in front of counter, and David Collins, right, of Dover take care of business at the DMV.

Rhonda West, left, of the Delaware Insurance Department and Charita Olabiyi, outreach manger for Westside Family Health Care provided information to patrons at the expo.

On Saturday, Oct. 8, the Dover branch of the Delaware Division of Motor Vehicles opened its doors especially for seniors at the second annual Senior Safety Expo.

At the expo, seniors were able to renew their licenses, registration, get a handicap placard and have their cars inspected without having to wait in line. Of the dozens of people who attended the event, 25 had DMV services taken care of while they were there.

Patrons also were able to do self safety assessments, Bayhealth Medical Center representatives provided free health screenings and members of AARP of Delaware offered CarFit inspections to make sure vehicle components properly fit a driver's needs for maximum comfort and safety. Trained CarFit technicians adjusted seat height and mirror angles for optimum vision and measured the distance between the driver and the steering wheel to prevent air bag injuries in case of a crash. A driver's body should be 12 to 14 inches away from their steering wheel to allow room for an airbag to deploy.

Other vendors included the Delaware Department of Aging, the Delaware Department of Insurance, Griswald Special Care, Heritage of Dover, Modern Maturity Center, Moss Rehabilitation and Westside Family Healthcare. WDSD FM radio provided music.

MPO aiding Delaware Transit in ridership, resident studies

The Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization is lending Delaware Transit Corporation a hand to increase bus ridership. Throughout October, the Dover/Kent County MPO will be at the five Park and Ride lots in Dover performing automobile counts to find out, roughly, how many people ride DART from these locations, as well as examine how many vehicles in the lots have out-of-state license plates. The MPO will perform this count four times a year. In another study, the MPO will take a look at the 10, 55-plus neighborhoods in central Delaware, put them on a map with existing transit routes and find out if there are ways to connect the routes with the communities. A 55-plus neighborhood is a residential development restricted to residents age 55 or older. A third study will search for neighborhoods where there is a concentration of residents with limited English proficiency, again to find out where these populations are in proximity to local bus routes, and find out if any of the routes can be brought closer to the residents to better serve them, and possibly increase bus ridership. The study also could be used later in real estate searches to show which neighborhoods are close to transit.

MPO to update long-range plan next year.

With new air quality requirements coming through in 2013, the Dover/Kent County MPO will begin updating its long-range Regional Transportation Plan next year.

The Plan, or RTP, provides a blueprint for integrating transportation, land use and Delaware's statewide development strategy to prioritize transportation programs and projects. Typically, MPO's update these plans every four years, but the MPO will update its plan early to stay in keeping with the pending air quality rules. The U.S. Department of Transportation requires a long range plan for metropolitan regions to receive federal funding.

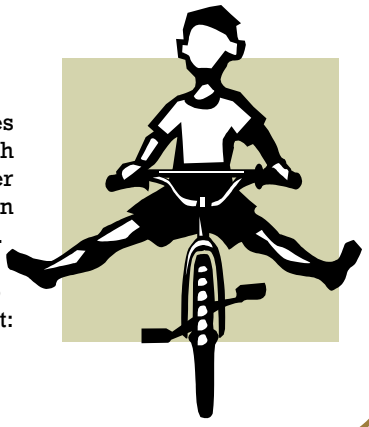
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently extended a grace period that provides an additional 12 months before its new Motor Vehicle Emission Simulator, or MOVES, air quality model is required for regional transportation conformity analysis. According to the EPA, MOVES is a new emission modeling system that estimates emissions for mobile sources covering a broad range of pollutants and allows multiple scale analysis. The system estimates emissions from cars, trucks and motorcycles.

The Dover/Kent County MPO will have its RTP update ready for approval in 2013, and the plan will provide an overview of transportation planning in central Delaware up to 20403. A public outreach period will likely begin in mid-2012 to receive comments about transportation needs for the area.

BIKE PLAN, continued

The plan is compatible with the Department of Transportation's statewide bicycle plan and includes criteria from which to prioritize projects for bicycle facilities. Projects identified in the Regional Bike Plan will be submitted to DelDOT for development and funding. The bicycle plan was the result of the MPO's 2008 Regional Transportation Plan, in which public comments expressed a need for more bicycle facilities. For two years, a working group comprised of MPO staff, representatives from state agencies, Kent County, municipalities and the public worked with consultant Andrea Kreiner of A. Kreiner Company in Dover to create the plan.

For a copy of the plan, call (302) 387-6030. To view the plan online, visit: www.doverkentmpo.org .



MPO transportation information booklet available

Did you know that although the number of registered drivers increased by nearly 49,000 people in Kent County, the percent of female drivers consistently remained higher than the percent of male drivers?

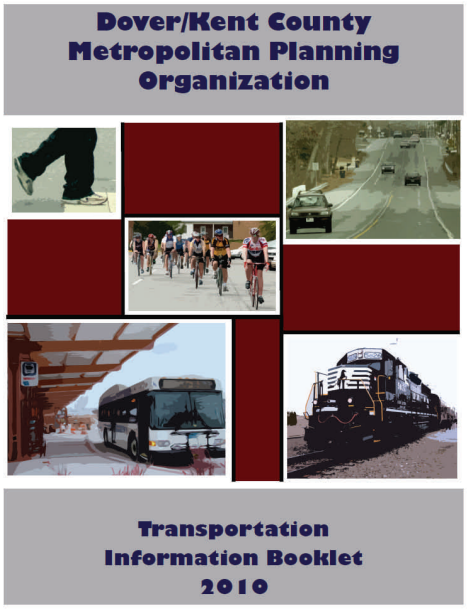
Did you know that local roads make up the majority of roadway miles -- about 67 percent -- in the county?

You can find this and plenty more in the Dover/Kent County MPO's new transportation information booklet, now available at our Camden office, online, and soon at Kent County libraries.

Chock full of transportation data, we've included definitions to road and traffic terminology, information about auto, bicycle and pedestrian crashes, the RideShare Delaware program, transit service, freight information and maps of rail lines and airports in Kent County.

There's also some brand new information in this year's booklet. We have included a page with information for older drivers, as well as more about the MPO's Regional Bicycle Plan, including on-road and off-road maps of bike facilities.

To view the booklet online, visit www.doverkentmpo.org. To request a hard copy, visit us on the third floor of Camden Town Hall at 1783 Friends Way, call the MPO office at (302) 387-6030, e-mail: Kate.Layton@doverkentmpo.org, or write to us at P.O. Box 383, Dover, DE 19903.



Koenig is Dover's new city manager

Scott Koenig, a longtime member of the Dover/Kent County MPO's Technical Advisory Committee, is Dover's new city manager.

Koenig, 44, has served as interim city manager since June when Anthony J. DePrima retired from the post. A hiring panel officially selected Koenig as city manager on Nov. 4. He was appointed on Nov. 14 during a regular meeting of Dover City Council.

Koenig has been a City of Dover employee for 21 years, most recently serving as the city's public services manager. Koenig is a graduate of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. He and his family live in Dover.

Koenig

DART holds annual Stuff the Bus holiday food drive

DART recently held its annual Stuff the Bus food drive for the holidays.

The campaign ran from Nov. 8 to 11 in Dover, Milford and Wilmington.

Last year's campaign collected 20.4 tons of non-perishable food for the Food Bank of Delaware. DART buses were in Dover and Milford from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 8at the Acme grocery store shopping center off of U.S. 13 and the Milford Wal-Mart, off of U.S. 113.

Those who did not make it to where the buses can still make a donation to the Food Bank. Call (302) 292-1305, or visit its Web site at www.FBD.org for more information. Non-perishable food, except for baby food and formula, is accepted.

The Food Bank is a non-profit agency working to end hunger in Delaware. Each year it distributes between 7 million to 10 million pounds of food and fills orders for 440 hunger relief partners in Delaware.

Find the Dover/Kent County MPO on Facebook!

Byways conference highlights scenic roads, value of good planning

The Delaware Byways program started as one designated road in northern Delaware's Brandywine Valley.

Ten years later, the program has grown into six scenic byways throughout the First State, including the Route 9 Coastal Byway in Kent County, and the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway that runs through Kent County and northward. Residents and visitors alike travel daily on these scenic roads. But byways are, by design, more than scenic routes. Byways offer economic bonuses to their states, as they often are places where people will get out to look around, shop, eat and explore, said Carol Truppi, a Washington, D.C. based contractor in planning and design.

"It's not about the road itself, it's about the corridor … It's about the experience … it's about the uniqueness of each road," Truppi said on Sept. 13 at a Delaware Byways Program Workshop, held at Delaware Technical Community College in Dover.

Delaware's Department of Transportation (DelDOT) held a workshop for personnel, communities, consultants and organizations involved in the Delaware Byways Program. This workshop was made possible by the DelDOT, Delaware Greenways, and the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) through their Context Sensitive Solutions Champions (CSS) Program. It brought speakers from around the United States to highlight the various challenges and successes faced in applying context sensitive solutions in urban planning.

Besides Truppi, speakers included Ralph Reeb of DelDOT, Mark Chura, executive director of Delaware Greenways, Nick Blendy of FHWA, Joe Cantalupo of Parsons Brinkerhoff, Jeff Niezgoda of DelDOT and Leigh Lane of the Center for Transportation and the Environment at North Carolina State University, and Gary Toth of the Project for Public Spaces, plus many others.

At the workshop, DelDOT launched its new manual: Context Sensitive Solutions for Delaware Byways. The manual was developed to provide guidance to DelDOT designers and consultants during the planning, design, construction, and operation and maintenance of projects on Delaware Byways. The manual integrates context sensitive solutions with the Delaware Department of Transportation's (DelDOT) Project Development Process. It provides guidance for projects within designated byway corridors. Byways, as the manual describes, are corridors significant to Delaware's heritage, recreational activities or scenic beauty.

Before any project along a byway begins, the manual said, it is vital that all participants become familiar with and acquire "a broad understanding of the byway."

For its work on CSS for Byways and this workshop. DelDOT is a 2011 FHWA CSS Champion. The CSS Champions Technical Assistance Program provides resources and training to transportation agencies that are championing CSS principles in their work. This technical assistance program is administered by the Project for Public Spaces and is made possible by the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Surface Transportation Environment and Planning Cooperative Research Program (STEP). A summary of proceedings from the workshop and profiles of this year's four other CSS Champions will be available soon on the contextsensitivesolutions.org Web site.

(FHWA contributed to this article)

Ralph Reeb of the Delaware Department of Transportation talks about Delaware Byways and how little they are still in the public know.

Mark Chura, executive director for Delaware Greenways talks about level of service in relation to land use at the Delaware Byways Conference in September.

Upcoming MPO meetings and calendar

Public Advisory Committee	MPO Council	Technical Advisory Committee	Office Closed
Next Meeting: 7 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 20. Location: TBA	Next Meeting: 3 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2012 Council Chambers, Camden Town Hall, 1783 Friends Way, Camden	Next Meeting: 10 a.m., Wednesday, Dec. 7, Council Chambers, Camden Town Hall, 1783 Friends Way, Camden	The Dover/Kent County MPO office will be closed on Nov. 24 and 25, as well as Dec. 26 in observance of state holidays.

2011 Amish Country Bike Tour has most riders yet

After 25 years, Kent County's annual Amish Country Bike Tour keeps growing in popularity.

This year's tour broke last year's record for participation with 1,750 cyclists – 400 more than last year.

The tour began at Legislative Mall and wound through scenic Amish Country farmland in western Kent County. With a variety of route lengths, the tour offered riders, from novice to advanced levels, a chance to participate.

Cindy Small, head of Kent County Tourism, which organizes the event, said that nearly 300 cyclists rode the tour's 100-mile loop. Cyclists came from 15 states, including Arizona and New Mexico. Sixty percent of participants came from outside of Delaware.

The Dover/Kent County MPO is going Green

To save paper and postage, the Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization would like to deliver its newsletter, Journeys, via the Internet. Please contact the MPO at kate.layton@doverkentmpo.org, or at (302) 387-6026 and tell us if you prefer to receive Journeys via e-mail, or the U.S. Postal Service. Thanks for helping the MPO's efforts to be earth conscious. Go green!

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