

JOURNEYS

—Planning Transportation for Everyone—



WORK FINISHED ON CAPITAL CITY TRAIL *OFFICIALS CUT RIBBON ON DOVER FACILITY*

In December, the Dover/Kent County MPO, and state and municipal officials cut the ribbon on the newly complete Capital City Trail.

"The Capital City Trail represents a great example of successful coordination and collaboration between a variety of agencies, all striving to meet the transportation needs of Dover's residents," said MPO Executive Director Rich Vetter.



FROM LEFT: Dover Mayor Robin R. Christiansen, former DelDOT Secretary Shailen Bhatt and Ray Bivens, director of the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation cut the ribbon on the newly complete Capital City Trail in Dover.

Work began on the 1.5-mile trail in April 2013. It is a combined effort of the Delaware Department of Transportation, DNREC, the MPO and the city of Dover. Trail construction continued in three phases, before it finished last autumn.

The trail begins at Public Safety Boulevard on southbound U.S. 13 before crossing to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and running to Legisla-

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SEC. BHATT LEAVES DELAWARE FOR COLORADO *JENNIFER COHAN APPOINTED AS TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY*

Delaware Department of Transportation Secretary Shailen Bhatt has left the First State and gone west for the Rocky Mountains of Colorado.

In early January, Bhatt announced that he accepted a nomination from Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper to serve as executive director of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). His work there begins in February.

"Shailen has done an excellent job enhancing the State's transpor-

tation network while earning the respect of his colleagues and the trust of our citizens," said Gov. Jack Markell. "The agency faced numerous challenges over the past sev-

eral years, including the need to address a significant debt load and respond to severe weather events, but under his leadership DelDOT tackled those challenges with dedication and professionalism. While this is a big loss for the State of Delaware, I am happy he'll have the opportunity to work with one of the best governors in the country and am confident Shailen's ex-

(Continued on page 2)



Bhatt

"Throughout my career I've tried to go where I felt I could do the most good, looking for opportunities to make meaningful contributions as a public servant."

— Shailen Bhatt

BHATT, CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

perience and leadership skills will have a positive impact in Colorado.”

In his new role, Bhatt will lead the department in planning and addressing Colorado’s transportation needs. He will oversee 3,300 employees statewide and an annual budget of approximately \$1 billion.

Gov. Markell appointed Bhatt as DeIDOT secretary in 2010. Prior to that, Bhatt served in several leadership roles throughout the country, including associate administrator at the Federal Highway Administration in Washington, D.C., deputy executive director with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, and director of the Bowling Green/Warren County Metropolitan Planning Organization.

“Throughout my career I’ve tried to go where I felt I could do the most good, looking for opportunities to make meaningful contributions as a public servant,” Bhatt said.

“I appreciate the opportunity Governor Markell gave me and I will always treasure the time I’ve spent in Delaware. It’s been an honor to lead Team DeIDOT. I’m very proud of the people I served with and appreciate their unwavering support and enthusiastic commitment towards improving Delaware’s transportation system.”

One of Bhatt’s accomplishments during his time with DeIDOT was work on the First State Trails and Pathways Initiative, which includes the Capital City Trail in Dover.

Soon after Bhatt announced his resignation, Gov. Markell tapped Delaware Division of Motor Vehicles Director Jennifer Cohan to step into Bhatt’s role as DeIDOT secretary. The Delaware Senate confirmed the nomination in late January.

“Jennifer’s proven leadership skills have played an integral role in the transformation of the Delaware Department of Transportation over the past eight years, particularly as it relates to improved services and supports within the Division of Motor Vehicles,” Markell said. “She has

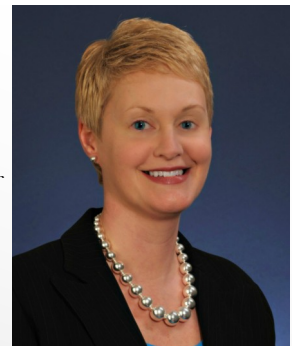
sources and Environmental Control (DNREC) managing the state’s Clean Water Program. Cohan also worked with the Delaware State Legislature within the Office of the Controller General.

“This administration has made significant investments in transportation and the dedicated employees of DeIDOT play a critical role in ensuring those investments equate to positive changes for the people of Delaware.”

Cohan is an adjunct professor at Wilmington University teaching lead-

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—Gov. Jack Markell



Cohan

worked her way up through the ranks of state government, starting as a casual/seasonal front-line worker to Director of DMV, gaining extensive knowledge and experience that will make her an ideal candidate to serve as the state’s transportation secretary.”

Cohan has worked in Delaware state government for 25 years. She became DMV director in 2007. Before that appointment, she worked as financial/program manager at the Department of Natural Re-

ership and public policy in the Master’s program. She also is a member of the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) International Board of Directors.

Cohan, 42, graduated summa cum laude from Wilmington University with a Bachelor of Science in Business Management and a Master of Science in Public Administration.

She resides in Dover with her husband and daughter.



PAC NEWS

Thank you,
Prameela Kaza



Jayce Lesniewski elected
PAC vice chairman

The Dover/Kent County MPO extends its best wishes to one of its longest standing Public Advisory Committee members, Prameela Kaza. Kaza retired in December from her position as a Dover City Council appointee on the PAC.



Kaza

Dover City Council first appointed Kaza to the PAC in 1992, making her one of the committee's first members. She still serves the city and the community as a member of the Dover Human Relations Commission as well as the Delaware Board of Accountancy and Delaware Board of Physical Therapy.

Kaza has a long career in transportation, having worked at the Delaware Department of Transportation before transferring to what is now the Delaware Transit Corporation, a division of DelDOT. The MPO wishes to thank Kaza for many years of service as a PAC member.

NEW PAC VICE CHAIRMAN

The Dover/Kent County MPO's PAC has a new vice chairman.

In a December special election, the PAC selected Jayce Lesniewski to fill the spot that Ed Maron vacated when he left the PAC last year.

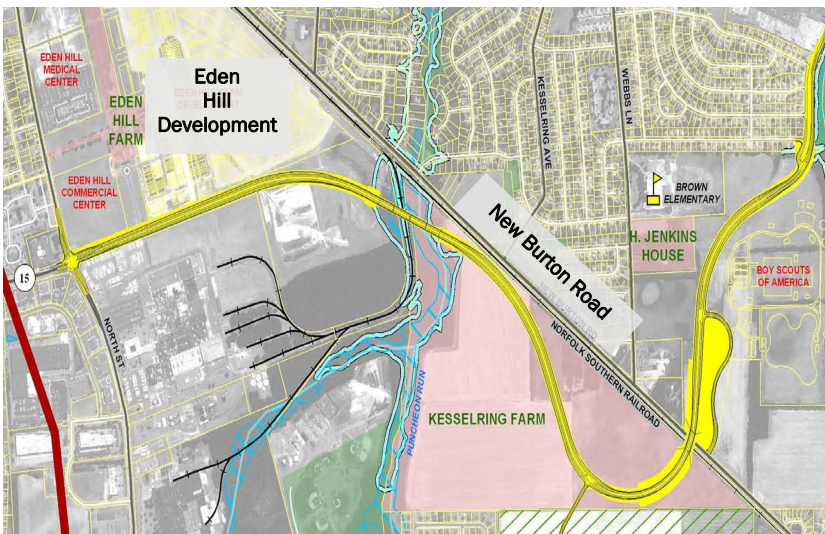
Lesniewski is an attorney who lives and works in Dover. He additionally serves on Dover City Council's Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee.



Lesniewski

The MPO is now looking to fill two vacant seats on the PAC, as well as add alternates to the PAC membership. One vacancy is a Dover City Council appointment, and the other is a Kent County Levy Court appointment. A Dover appointee must reside in Dover to qualify for the position, and a Kent County appointee must reside within the county. Anyone interested in joining the PAC can inquire by contacting PAC Liaison Kate Layton at: kathleen.layton@doverkentmpo.org, or by calling (302) 387-6026.

West Dover Connector breaks ground



In January, the much anticipated West Dover Connector road broke ground. The Connector is a 3.2-mile new road that will run on the west side of Dover and provide a direct connection from Saulsbury Road to U.S. 13 just north of Camden by running along the west side of the new Eden Hill community, then cross the Norfolk Southern railroad and New Burton Road as it heads south. There also will be a new connection to Wyoming Mill Road in Dover. Construction is expected to last more than two years. Pictured from left to right, Dover City Councilman Bill Hare, City of Dover Mayor Robin R. Christiansen, Delaware Department of Transportation Secretary Jennifer Cohan and Town of Camden Mayor Justin King.

TRAIL, continued from Pg. 1



UPPER LEFT: MPO Executive Director Rich Vetter says a few words at the December ribbon cutting for the Capital City Trail.

RIGHT: The 1.5-mile Capital City Trail is a multi-use path for walkers and bicyclists, as well as benches for people to sit and rest. There are marked cross walks where the trail intersects with city roads.

LOWER LEFT: MPO Public Advisory Committee member and avid cyclist Chris Asay, left, and local triathlete Marie "Chris" Neaves try out the newly finished walk and bike trail in Dover.

tive Hall. From there, the trail crosses to Loockerman Street, in front of the Delaware Public Archives. The path continues from Loockerman Street and follows to Park Drive and Division Street.

"Passing through the heart of Dover, the Capital City Trail will become a part of the daily lives of city residents," said Shailen Bhatt, then secretary of the Delaware Department of Transportation [\[See related story on Page 1\]](#). Bhatt further mentioned the upcoming construction of the West Dover Connector, which will include bicycle lanes.

"Pretty soon, you're going to pretty much be able to bike all over

Dover," Bhatt said.

State planners envision the Capital City Trail connecting to Brecknock Park along Route 10 and joining with Schutte Park along the West Dover Connector.

Eventually, a 14-mile loop of trails will connect Dover with Dover Air Force Base housing and the towns of Camden and Wyoming.

Ray Bivens, director of the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation called the trail a fantastic connection. DNREC, he said, performed a study to gauge public impact by how many people live near a trail.

"This one kind of has off the charts

people around," Bivens said, referring to more than 13,000 people live within a 10 mile bicycle ride up the Capital City Trail. "I'm sure it's destined for great use. If you throw in all the different sights and things to view, I'm sure it will be a very popular trail."

Bivens thanked Gov. Jack Markell and the General Assembly for the funding to construct the \$1.6 million trail, which is part of the First State Trails and Pathways Program.

Dover Mayor Robin R. Christiansen spoke of the trail's potential for Dover and its downtown area.

"We are proud to have been a partner in this effort and feel that the successful completion of this trail will be another tool in the marketing and economic development of our downtown area as well as continuing the theme of historically happening Dover," said Dover Mayor Robin Christiansen.

Vetter said the collaboration between the MPO, state and municipal agencies not only made the trail possible, it bodes well for the future of Kent County. He mentioned projects listed within the draft of Dover's updated bicycle plan as well as other upcoming transportation projects.

Vetter also spoke of the economic vibrancy, transportation alternatives and choices to which the projects could lead the city.

"All that kind of fits in with the vision for the city of Dover," Vetter said.

Dover holds final public workshop for bicycle and pedestrian plan updates

After nearly 20 years, Dover could soon have up-to-date plans for pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

In January, the City of Dover, the Dover/Kent County MPO and the Delaware Department of Transportation held a second and final public workshop

for Dover’s draft bicycle and pedestrian plan updates.

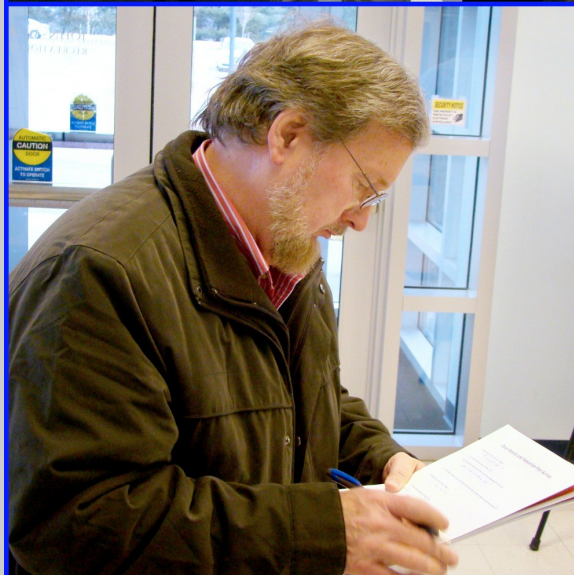
About 30 people attended the workshop held at the John Pitts Center at Schutte Park in Dover. There, attendees were able to view maps showing recommended areas for improvement, ask questions and provide comments about the pro-

posed plans that the Dover Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee and MPO staff started working on last year to show where gaps and needs exist in the city’s on-road and off-road bike and walk facilities.

Some attendee comments reflected a desire to have better connections between trails and bicycle

lanes or for the bicycle and pedestrian plans to mesh with a plan for restoring central Dover.

The subcommittee is nearly ready to put the two plans before Dover City Council’s Safety, Advisory and Transportation Committee for review and recommendation and then to council for approval.



LEFT: DelDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator Anthony Aglio, left, Dover Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee member Chris Asay, middle, and Dover City Planner Ann Marie Townsend look at and discuss one of the maps of bicycle facility recommendations for Dover.

RIGHT: MPO Executive Director Rich Vetter, upper right, talks to workshop attendees about some of the recommended improvements in Dover’s draft bicycle plan.

LOWER LEFT: Joe Myer, a Dover resident and executive director of NCALL, which has led a Restoring Central Dover plan and committee, fills out a survey at the January public workshop.

Spotlight on ...

Delaware Parks and Recreation

Technology helps agency keep abreast of services

When the City of Dover was looking for the best place to install a splash pad in town, it asked the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation for help.

As it turned out, the best location for the pad was different from what the city originally thought. By working with State Parks, which has an Outdoor Recreation Inventory and a fairly new service area modeling software, the city eventually decided a better location for the pad was on the east side of town rather than on the west side of Dover.

State Parks, part of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, has kept an Outdoor Recreation Inventory for nearly 20 years. The ORI is a constantly updated database of all publicly accessible outdoor recreation facilities throughout Delaware (including state, county and municipal properties).

"It is, probably, the biggest, most complete set of [outdoor parks and recreation] data in the state," said Kendall Sommers, outdoor recreation planner for State Parks.

Within the last year or so, the agency started using the service area modeling software as an additional tool for its ORI. The software enables State Parks to make more sophisticated and detailed

recreation data analyzes.

"We wanted to develop the service area models to incorporate some of the information into the last SCORP [Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan] update in 2013," said Sommers, who recently gave a presentation to the Dover/Kent County MPO's Technical Advisory Committee about the modeling software and how it works with the ORI.

The tool was developed by Azavea, Inc. in Philadelphia. State Parks uses it to bring a Geographic Information Systems approach to determining if people have recreational facilities nearby that are easily accessible. Since the software additionally uses Delaware census data from 2010 with the geographic data, State Parks can analyze park and recreation data in various measures of detail from a general overview to a city block, as well as age ranges, socioeconomic status, ethnicity and more.

Furthermore, State Parks can run analyses for bicycle and walking facilities and their proximity to outdoor recreation areas. The model looks at an identified travel network of walking, driving or bicycling, and identifies an area that can reach a public outdoor recreation facility within a certain amount of time, by the specified means of transportation. As a benchmark, State Parks typically measures within five, 10 and 15

minutes for walking or biking.

"So the idea of this, is, what we're trying to do is look at the way that people can move throughout the landscape safely, and get to these facilities in one piece," said Mike Krumrine, another State Parks planner.

The ability to access these details, Sommers and Krumrine explain, help state and local governments, planners, and developers in any number of ways, such as where recreational facilities are needed and where money should be invested for infrastructure. Infrastructure could mean a full park, or just a park entrance, a bike path or a connecting trail to safely and effectively allow people to access recreation. For instance, if a ditch separates a neighborhood from a park, a municipality could build a bridge over the ditch for easier park access.

In Dover's case, the city asked State Parks for walk shed analysis data that it could use in addition to survey responses from the city's Recreation Needs Assessment to determine the splash pad location.

"[State Parks] also helped us in preparing maps for our Recreation Needs Assessment workshops, showing walk sheds of our parks and the overall availability of public recreation within walking distance of residential areas,"

Parks continued ...

Dover City Planner Ann Marie Townshend said. "The information they provided has been very helpful."

One reason for State Parks to start using the modeling software was to get a better idea of where underserved areas — sometimes called recreation deserts — are located. The agency also wanted the tool to aid in prioritizing the State Parks grant program which funds new recreation facilities or improvements to existing ones.

"We already had a comprehensive inventory of publicly accessible parks, trails and outdoor recreation facilities," Sommers said. "The models gave us a way to analyze the data that we already had."

While using the software, State Parks found out that Kent County offers the fewest opportunities for people to enjoy outdoor recreation in the state. For example, only 21 percent of Kent County residents live within a 15 minute walk of an outdoor recreation facility, be it a park, trail, or the like, Krumrine said. About 14 percent of the population lives within a 10 minute walk to a facility. Roughly six percent live within a five minute walk to a facility.

On bicycle, nearly 30 percent of Kent Countians are within a 10 minute bicycle ride to a facility, while 20 percent of residents are within a five minute bike ride.

By comparison, 22 percent of New Castle County residents live within a five minute walk to a park or recreation facility, while 55 per-

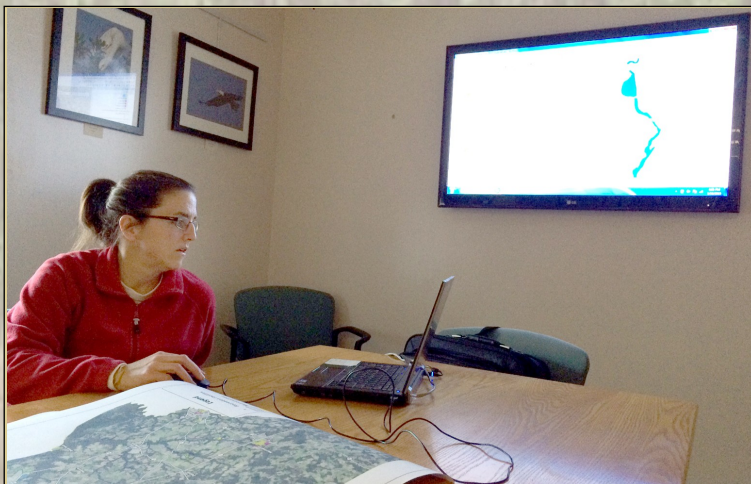
State Parks hasn't yet identified all the underserved outdoor recreation areas in Delaware, only underserved areas on a county level. Closer examination is needed to find out where they are, Sommers said. Each area is unique, she said.

"The modeling we have done to this point has identified the areas where we need to take a closer look," Sommers said. "We are just beginning to do that now."

To help gather more information about underserved locations, State Parks has given presentations about the recreation inventory and modeling software, similar to the one at the MPO's TAC meeting. The presentations let people know the software exists and could be a useful planning tool that could aid in comprehensive

plans, parks planning, and recreation investment strategies.

Division staff have provided presentations for the Governor's Council for Health Promotion, Delaware HEAL, the Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals, at the national Pro Walk/Pro Bike conference, the 2013 Heels and Wheels Summit and others.



Kendall Sommers, outdoor recreation planner for the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation demonstrates how the agency's service area modeling software works and can map various park and recreation service criteria.

cent are within a 15 minute walk.

Any way you slice it, Kent County's access to facilities is still the lowest in Delaware, even though Kent County development has increased in the past decade.

"Basically, what this is saying is that recreation infrastructure investment has not necessarily been keeping up with the population," Sommers said.

GROUND BREAKS ON THOMPSONVILLE OVERPASS



State, federal and local officials broke ground in January on what will be the next Rt. 1 grade-separated intersection, or overpass. This intersection will be built at Rt. 1 and Thompsonville Road and will replace the existing ground-level intersection and traffic light. Safety was one of the main reasons to build the overpass. Information from the Delaware Department of Transportation shows that the Thompsonville Road light is one of the few signals that many drivers encounter at highway speed after leaving Dover city limits. More than 80 percent of the collisions at the intersection have been rear-end crashes. After the grade-separated intersection is finished, highway traffic will flow past Thompsonville Road without stopping. The project will also extend Thompsonville Road to the intersection of Tub Mill Road and Church Hill Road. The project's approximate cost is \$11.5 million.

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The Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization mostly publishes its newsletter, Journeys, via e-mail and the Internet. While you might see the occasional paper copy, the MPO has changed to an electronic format. To join the Journeys e-mail list, write to kate.layton@doverkentmpo.org, or call the office at (302) 387-6026, or visit the MPO's website at www.doverkentmpo.org. Thanks for helping the MPO's efforts to be earth conscious.

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