**BREAKING GROUND FOR BIKES**  
*Capital City Trail in progress in Dover*

April 26 in Dover turned bright and balmy — a great day for a walk or bike ride. So it was apt that ground officially broke that day on the Capital City Trail connector. The $800,000 trail will provide a link between the walk and bike trail network that starts at Silver Lake Park and extends to Legislative Mall, and the Isaac Branch Trail, which runs between the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) campus and Del. 10 in Dover. The connector provides a safe crossing of U.S. 13 at Public Safety Boulevard. Eventually, the two trails will extend 4.5 miles, connecting Dover residents and visitor to parks, historic attractions, government offices, Dover Air Force Base, schools and businesses. State money was invested into the project as part of Gov. Jack Markell’s First State Trails and Pathways program, which aims to expand the network of bike

See TRAIL, Pg. 4
New MPO Transportation Information Booklet Now Available

The Dover/Kent County MPO's Transportation Information Booklet for 2011/2012 is now available. Inside the 28-page booklet is traffic and road information, some descriptions of a few bicycle and pedestrian projects in which the MPO has been involved, transit and freight information.

There also are traffic and driver statistics. For instance, In 2012 there were 150,979 registered vehicles in Kent County. Also, Kent County had 3,054 crashes in 2012 and 3,034 in 2011. Of the number of crashes in 2012, 27 were bicycle crashes and 38 involved pedestrians. In 2011, 11 crashes involved bicycles and 51 involved pedestrians.

Readers can find out how bus ridership has changed in the last few years and where DART First State's Park N' Ride locations are in Kent County. The booklet is available on the MPO’s Web site, www.doverkentmpo.org, or upon request by calling the MPO office at (302) 387-6026 or (302) 387-6030.

Del State Officials Talk Planning at Public Advisory Committee Annual Workshop

Delaware State University is growing in more ways than one.

Enrollment is up by more than a thousand students since 2005, and is rising. The increase prompted the school to incorporate a facilities master plan to make sure it keeps pace with its growth.

Amir Mohammadi, DSU’s executive vice president and treasurer, and Victor Santos, DSU’s government liaison, spoke with the Dover/Kent County MPO’s Public Advisory Committee about the school’s growth and its master plan at the PAC’s annual workshop on June 25 at Dover Downs.

Mohammadi spoke with excitement about the university’s growth and expansion. At nearly 4,500 students, the population could grow to 5,000 in five years, he said. The uptick in enrollment, could soon include more international students from India, China and other countries.

In the past few years, the university renovated its student union and has a new recreation center. University officials had to assess residential facilities and laboratory space. Three residence halls are undergoing renovation.

“There’s going to be some pains attached to the growth,” Mohammadi told the PAC.

Pedestrian safety is a concern, Santos, said. Earlier this year, the MPO and the Delaware Department of Transportation, helped DSU perform a pedestrian study that resulted in a landscaping plan that would run in front of the campus sidewalk at U.S. 13 to keep students from crossing at places other than designated crosswalks. The landscaping was going to be done this fall, but now will likely be put off another year.

DSU, however, will have other transportation plans on its mind this fall.

See WORKSHOP, Pg. 5
MPO, Smyrna working on highway access management plan

Access. It’s a simple word that means a lot in the world of transportation planning. Access can make the difference between traffic jams and traffic flow.

The Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization is working with the Town of Smyrna on an access management plan for the north section of U.S. 13. The plan is an offshoot of the U.S. 13 Corridor Plan for Smyrna that the town, the MPO, the Delaware Department of Transportation and the Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination authored last year. The plan recommends consolidating access points for a number of planned developments in northern Smyrna.

“We’re basically looking at new connections to U.S. 13,” MPO Executive Director Rich Vetter said.

A 200-acre business park and approximately 1,000 mixed residential units are proposed for construction near the highway in northern Smyrna. The access management plan would help keep traffic moving. A key component, Vetter said, is to interconnect the properties so a network of walking paths could wind through the developments, and provide pedestrian access to the businesses.

MPO staff recently brought the draft access management plan to DelDOT and intends to later take it before Smyrna’s Planning & Zoning Commission.

Seasonal changes for DART First State’s regular route service are now in effect.

Changes went into effect June 17 for Kent County. There are no changes to Sussex County fixed route service.

In Kent County, Route 107 will be realigned to serve Luther Village, as well as the DART Administration Office and Delaware Department of Transportation Danner campus on Bay Road. As a result, service will operate every 60 minutes instead of every 30 minutes. Saturday trips will not serve the DART Administration Office, DelDOT campus or Blue Hen Corporate Center.

U.S. 13 in Smyrna

The beaches are calling, so why not head on down using DART First State’s resort bus service?

Summer resort area bus service, which started in late May, will last through Sept. 15. DART operates seven resort bus routes, seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 1 a.m., serving Rehoboth Beach and the Boardwalk, Lewes, Long Neck, Dewey Beach, Bethany Beach, South Bethany Beach, Fenwick Island, and Ocean City, Md. All buses are air-conditioned, ADA accessible and equipped with bike racks. Using the service helps alleviate traffic congestion on Del. 1 and local roads, reduces parking issues and provides a low-cost transportation solution for easier access around the beach areas.

“Summer is a time to relax and not worry about the hassles of traffic and parking,” said Lauren Skiver, chief executive officer for Delaware Transit Corporation. “As people look for ways of getting more for their money, they recognize the cost-effectiveness and value of public transit. I truly believe the best way to combat traffic and parking in the resort area is to ride the bus.”

Route 206 Weekend/Holiday service will have minor time adjustments to improve on-time performance. The parking fee at the Rehoboth Beach Park & Ride will change from $7 per vehicle to $8 per vehicle, with up to four passengers per vehicle receiving a free daily pass. Although parking fees have not increased since 2003, operating costs have increased by 50 percent and ridership by 66 percent. Visitors and residents are encouraged to use DART’s Park & Ride lot located off of Del. 1 on Shuttle Road, just north of the entrance to Rehoboth Avenue. For customers not using the Park & Ride, the cost is $1 per trip or $2.10 for a daily pass.

DART’s Route 305, Beach Connection, began service on May 24, providing bus service from Wilmington to Rehoboth Beach on Friday nights, Saturdays, Sundays and holidays through September 2, 2013. Route 305 stops include Rehoboth Train Station, Christiana Mall, Smyrna Rest Stop, Scarborough Park & Ride lot in Dover, Super Wal-Mart in Milford, and the Rehoboth Park & Ride lot.
If you happen to be on Airport Road in Milford this fall, you might see staff from the Dover/Kent County MPO at work.

Milford officials in the spring approached the MPO about conducting a traffic study at Airport Road where the city would like to make some road improvements. The traffic count would be the first step toward the study’s course. The city had considered building bicycle and pedestrian facilities onto the road.

Airport Road is closed for residential development construction and is anticipated to re-open in mid-August.
**WORKSHOP, CONTINUED FROM PG. 2**

By then, 250 to 300 students will call the Sheraton Dover Hotel their school-year home thanks to a 15 year, $12 million lease the university brokered in the spring on the 130,000-square-foot hotel. The Sheraton is a little more than half a mile north on U.S. 13 from the campus and has 150 double-occupancy rooms. Mohammadi told the PAC members that he anticipated 85-percent student occupancy this fall.

The school has a shuttle that takes off-campus students to and from campus, but the master plan includes working with the MPO and DelDOT to close a 400-foot sidewalk gap on the west side of U.S. 13 near Lowe’s home improvement store and the Capital City Inn motel for walking Sheraton commuters.

The MPO estimates that closing the gap could cost $60,000. Given the high traffic on U.S. 13 and that it is a busy commercial corridor, the MPO explained to DelDOT that the need to provide a continuous sidewalk network on U.S. 13 has taken on a renewed level of importance.

“It’s still a process,” Santos said. “We’re going to be working throughout this year. It’s going to be a continuous study and evaluation to see what we can do to see our students are safe.”

This map of U.S. 13 in Dover shows the distance between Delaware State University and the Sheraton Dover Hotel, which students will use as a dormitory starting this fall. As a way to help students safely walk between the two locations, the school is looking into sidewalk improvements along the west side of the highway.
Journeys Spotlight

David Edgell
Principal Planner
Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination (OSPC)

Complete Communities are Healthy Communities

This is Part Two of a two-part question and answer spotlight on David Edgell and his thoughts about one a rising trend in urban planning, called “complete communities.”

Q: With whom is your office working with regarding the complete communities approach? What other channels is the office following, if any?

A: In addition to [the Delaware Department of Transportation] and the [University of Delaware’s Institute of Public Administration], the OSPC has received strong support from the Delaware Association of REALTORS® and its parent organization, the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR). The NAR has conducted extensive market research on home buyers, and has independently uncovered the same trends regarding the shift in demand to complete communities. Realtors are eager to learn more about how to create these communities, which they expect to be in demand in the coming years.

Q: How does the complete communities approach relate to transportation and to the Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization? A: Transportation is at the heart of every complete community. It turns out that the size and design of a community really matters. Very large, spread out communities, such as most of our suburban and rural developments, are not likely to become complete communities because they are automobile dependent. Transit doesn’t work because the communities are too spread out. Distance and lack of sidewalks and trails additionally makes it difficult to walk or bicycle anywhere.

Complete communities are more compact, provide a greater mix of land uses, offer activity-oriented destinations, foster sociability, and promote greater economic competitiveness. It is possible to drive, walk or bicycle as a part of daily life. Parks, trails and other recreational facilities also are near. Transit can work because it can operate within a relatively organized system. Complete communities make alternatives to the automobile possible. This is a big part of what the MPO and DelDOT are working on as they plan for tomorrow’s transportation system.

Q: How affordable are complete communities?

A: This is a good question, and the answer varies. In theory, the cost of a home in a complete community setting should be similar or even a little bit less than the cost of a suburban or rural home. Homes in complete communities are typically smaller, and have less land. If a complete community is built in an existing town or city neighborhood, the cost of the infrastructure should be much less as well since streets, sewer, water and electric are already in place.

Of course, theory is often different from reality. Economics are based on supply and demand. We’ve been discussing all of the factors that are leading to the demand for complete-community-style development.

However, we have been building single-use, suburban-style developments for so long that we have a tremendous supply of those types of homes. So, the few complete communities that we have are relatively rare, and command a price premium. And the many suburban homes on the market tend to keep their prices relatively stable.

The answer is to allow for the market to build more complete communities, which would increase supply to meet the demand. Even so, research has shown that it is often more cost effective for families to purchase more expensive homes in complete communities near to transit and employment, rather than continuing to commute long distances by car.

The cost to drive places often exceeds the money saved on a lower priced home. Therefore, a home in a complete community is arguably still a good deal, even if it costs more than a comparable suburban or rural home.

Q: From an economic development standpoint, how does an area with complete communities stack up against similarly-sized areas that don’t have complete communities? All other things being equal, how competitive would an area with complete communities be to a prospective business that’s scouting locations? Would it win, lose, or would the complete communities presence matter?

A: During the housing crisis, neighborhoods with complete community features, such as access to transit and that had good Walk-Scores® (a way to measure walkability using an interactive Web site) retained more of their value than traditional suburban homes where residents drove more frequently.

Some of these properties even appreciated in value. Couple this with emerging consumer preferences and you could successfully argue that complete communities improve economic development. Many studies from cities across the country show how transit and similar infrastructure are encouraging private developers to build new offices and businesses as a result of that investment.

My advice to local governments is not to ignore these trends. I think that in the very near future, complete communities are going to be where people want to live, and where companies will want to locate to ensure their ability to attract and retain a qualified workforce.

See SPOTLIGHT Pg. 7
SPOTLIGHT, continued

Q: Have you found that your office is having to win anyone over with the complete communities concept? If so, who?
A: Remarkably, most individuals and groups are very receptive to the concept. In my career (which has lasted 18 years and counting), there have rarely been times when so many different interest groups have agreed on a concept. State agencies, local governments, planners, engineers, Realtors, health professionals and developers are all groups that to some extent have embraced the concept, or at least agreed to continue to learn more about it.

That said, there is still a lot of work to do in educating the public. Often, citizens react to specific development proposals rather than big concepts like complete communities. Residents might react negatively when an area across the street is up for rezoning, especially if they perceive that the new zone might bring too many houses, or too much traffic. This is where local government planning efforts and even neighborhood level master plans with strong public outreach components can make a real difference.

Q: What else has to happen for your office to achieve the complete communities endeavor?
A: The OSPC’s role is to coordinate the actions of the state government and its agencies, and to provide planning assistance to the local governments. Staff has embedded these concepts into State Strategies and is working with other agencies on ways they can support this concept. Complete communities is more than just a nice concept, it is about ensuring the most efficient use of state resources during what continues to be a fiscally challenging time.

My office also is promoting the concept of master plans. These plans are more specific than local comprehensive plans, and focus on actual implementation through phasing and timing of infrastructure. Master plans can be an important tool to enable the creation of complete communities. In fact, they may become essential to ensure that the proper design and mix of uses are present to create the five elements of a complete community. Our local governments have a very important, if not the most important, role in making complete Communities a reality.

After 50 to 60 years of suburban-style development, some town and county ordinances do not even allow for mixed uses or compact development. Local governments will need to integrate complete communities principals into their comprehensive plans, complete master plans and public outreach, and revise their ordinances to permit complete communities. The Office of State Planning Coordination is available to assist through its circuit rider planners. The IPA’s complete communities Web site contains many tools to help local governments as well.

Delaware is unique in that it is small, its people share many resources, and are closely connected to one another. We will all have to work together to decide how to build the Delaware of tomorrow, and I am expecting complete communities to be a big part of it.

Dover/Kent County MPO takes part in June Delmarva Freight Summit

On June 26, the third annual Delmarva Freight Summit took place at the New Castle County Chamber of Commerce. The Wilmington Area Planning Council and the Delaware, Maryland and Virginia departments of transportation all helped put the half-day forum together.

Public and private sector freight professionals examined the needs and interests of freight transportation across the Delmarva Peninsula and heard numerous speakers, including remarks from Delaware Department of Transportation Sec. Shailen Bhatt and the keynote speaker, Jack Wells, assistant secretary for the U.S. Department of Transportation. Wells discussed how the federal transportation bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) has changed the priorities for freight movement on a national level.

The summit featured industry experts who spoke about the changing dynamics of the chemical and petroleum trade in this region.

Other speakers presented topics including the Delmarva Fright Study, a multistate effort to develop a comprehensive multi modal evaluation of the freight transportation system and its operations along Delmarva. In northern Delaware, DelDOT, the Maryland and Virginia departments of transportation, WILMAPCO and other agencies have started work on a regional freight plan for the entire peninsula.

The overall goal of the plan is to comprehensively evaluate the freight transportation system and related operations on Delmarva to determine its effect on the environment and economic development and develop and assess planning scenarios to identify priorities for relevant investment and regulation changes.

Article courtesy of WILMAPCO
The Dover/Kent County MPO has been all over the place this summer promoting clean air, safe bicycling and walking and sharing information about some of the MPO’s projects. On June 16, the Dover/Kent County MPO, along with DART First State and RideShare Delaware, promoted safety and clean air when it attended Kent County’s Safe Summer Day, an event put on each year by Kent County Parks and Recreation. The day featured safety demonstrations and information from local fire and police departments. Vendors, such as the Dover/Kent County MPO/DART/RideShare offered information about safe bicycling, sharing rides, clean air and bus information. Nemours offered information about good nutrition. Other vendors offered information about good health, or had activities for children.

There’s still time to find the MPO out and about. Look for the MPO’s table at the Wyoming Peach Festival on Saturday, Aug. 3 by the railroad tracks in Wyoming, Del. Along with the MPO, there will be craft and information vendors, food, activities for children and, of course, peaches. The festival starts with a parade at 9 a.m. and the event ends at 3 p.m.

The following Saturday, Aug. 10, an MPO representative will take part in Healthy in the HeART of Delaware, a family event co-sponsored by the Biggs Museum of American Art and Kent Kids, a coalition of organizations working collaboratively to advocate for healthy kids, families, and communities in Kent County.

Sarah Fuller of DART First State and Michael Root of RideShare talk at a booth they shared with the Dover/Kent County MPO at Safe Summer Day on June 16 at Brecknock Park in Camden.

The preparation of this document was financed in part with funds provided by the Federal Government, including the Federal Transit Administration, through the Joint Funding Simplification Program, and the Federal Highway Administration of the United States Department of Transportation.