

Concept Plan for US 13 and 113 in Dover

Executive Summary

In 1997, the Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) conducted a workshop to generate new ideas for improving the appearance as well as the operation of the US 13/113 corridor through Dover. The need to develop the US 13/113 Concept Plan was identified during concurrent long-range planning efforts being conducted by the MPO, the City of Dover, and the Delaware Department of Transportation.

The MPO defined the concept of a commercial corridor as a roadway adjoining predominantly commercial development that is used for primarily local trips. The purpose of a commercial corridor is to provide an attractive roadway with enhanced access and circulation to serve businesses. It is to be a part of the community, creating a sense of place, important in attracting development and redevelopment. With amount of commercial development along its length, US 13 fits the definition of a commercial corridor.

This concept is needed to guide changes that are expected to occur in this corridor over the next five to ten years. With the completion of SR 1 around Dover and increased commercial development along it's length, US 13 fits the definition of a commercial corridor. SR 1 carries an increasing number of through trips that formerly used US 13 and US 113. Those trips are being replaced by local trips, changing the corridor's function as a bypass around Dover to a major destination. The future economic vitality of the corridor depends on its ability to retain that function.

To develop a Concept for US 13/113, the steering committee for this project, comprising the City of Dover, Kent County, and DelDOT, determined that the best approach would be to begin by conducting a planning workshop that included consulting engineers, planners and architects with experience designing site plans and subdivisions in the Dover area, as well as those employed by the City of Dover, Kent County, the Office of Statewide Planning, and DelDOT. In addition, representatives of the Delaware Association of Realtors, the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce, Delaware State University (DSU), and Delaware Technical and Community College (DTCC) were invited.

To make the project manageable for workshop participants, the corridor was divided into six segments, beginning at Denneys Road, ending at the south entrance to DelDOT on US 113 and South State Street on US 13. Participants were assigned to one of six teams. Each team discussed and examined one segment, and developed improvement recommendations for that segment. The segments were selected based on their physical characteristics and the perceived problems.

The six groups scrutinized their sections and identified many problem areas. They collaborated and generated solutions for their specific segments. The teams were directed to:

- consider all aspects and modes of travel operations in the corridor,
- indicate how pedestrians, bicycle, and transit services as well as cars and trucks would use the corridor,
- assume that all development and redevelopment, with the exception of DTCC and DSU, would be commercial,
- assume that residential development would be in close proximity,
- identify future right-of-way needs as well as solutions that could be implemented in the existing right-of-way,
- consider recommendations for changing operational characteristics such as traffic lights and speed limits, and
- consider regulatory changes such as sign ordinances or landscaping requirements.

Recommendations made by the majority of teams included:

- reducing driveways,
- adding landscaping,
- adding sidewalks or pedestrian paths, and
- constructing service roads.

Other policy recommendations were made by a majority of the teams, but were not universally supported. These included:

- burying utilities,
- reducing the number of signs,
- planting trees along streets, and
- directing bicycles to paths parallel to rather than on US 13.

Each segment and the Teams' recommendations are detailed in Technical Memorandum I of this study.

The teams' recommendations were subsequently reviewed by the City of Dover and DelDOT to ascertain which each jurisdiction could support from a policy perspective. They agreed on the following general policies for the corridor, which constitute the final recommendations for this study.

1. Develop a commercial corridor access management policy that will guide decisions to better organize the number of driveways.
2. Construct service roads for local traffic, buses, and bicycles, which supplement direct access from US 13.
3. Promote rear access to businesses along the corridor through public/private agreements to address parking, landscaping, and right-of-way issues.
4. Construct sidewalks on both sides of US 13, where possible, but at least on one side.
5. Establish a 3' grass strip between the sidewalk and the road where possible.
6. Provide pedestrian paths between bus stops and buildings.
7. Route bicycles to parallel facilities where there is not an adequate shoulder.
8. Place low height and low maintenance landscaping in the median.
9. Place street trees between sidewalks and buildings, where possible.
10. Add bus pullovers where needed & where possible, particularly in association with high traffic generators.
11. Install more attractive lights that serve pedestrians as well as motorists.
12. Bury utilities.
13. Install pedestrian buttons at signals and stripe crosswalks heavily.

The ideas generated to improve the US 13/113 corridor must have adequate funding to be implemented. The last section of this report discusses different strategies and funding sources for implementing the US 13/113 Concept Plan.

The recommendations made in this study are intended to result in a better, more attractive transportation system in the US 13/113 corridor that attracts rather than intimidates customers. Not all of the recommendations will be able to be implemented in every parcel in the study area. However, this concept can provide a basis for discussing which improvements can be made and by whom.

Phase II of this study includes a development of the commercial corridor access policy, identification of projects to be submitted to the Department of Transportation for construction, assessing right-of-way needs and costs for those projects and developing a sign plan for publicly-owned signs. During this phase individual property owners can be involved in determining how the concept can be applied to their lots in the future, as the opportunities arise.