
Downtown Dover Pathways Field Walk and Partners Meeting 1

September 22, 2023
Dover, DE

Attendees

Marilyn Smith	Dover/Kent County MPO
Malcolm Jacob	Dover/Kent County MPO
Michelle Vinson	Dover/Kent County MPO
Helen Wiles	Dover/Kent County MPO
Diane Laird	Downtown Dover Partnership
Tina Bradbury	Downtown Dover Partnership
Ken Anderson	Downtown Dover Partnership
Jordan Resh	Downtown Dover Partnership
Dave Hugg	City of Dover
Linda Parkowski	Kent Economic Partnership
Tremica Cherry-Wall	DART
Heather Saint	Bayhealth
Jed Hatfield	Colonial Parking
Chris Asay	Citizen / Cyclist
Marie Neaves	Citizen / Runner
Dina Vendetti	Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce
Tim Bailey	Habitat for Humanity
Chrissy Kyriss	Habitat for Humanity
Karen Speakman	NeighborGood Partners
Humaira Nabeela	DeIDOT
Jeff Riegner	Kittelson & Associates
Tara Hofferth	Kittelson & Associates

Field Walk

Purpose: The group was tasked with thinking about the safety, comfort, and convenience of existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Downtown Dover. The walking route is shown below:



*the group ended up not walking down to South Street given time constraints.

Comments received during the walk are summarized below.

State Street

- Some midblock crosswalks do not feel safe / comfortable to cross.
- Some midblock crosswalks lack ADA curb ramps.
- Crosswalk markings are narrow.
- The driveway exiting the banks drive-through near Loockerman Street has visibility issues.
- The intersection of State Street and Kings Highway is particularly challenging.
 - Limited visibility
 - Confusing configuration
 - Limited crosswalks
 - Ideas for alternatives were explored in the Mosaic planning effort
- Loitering on benches
- Mix of sidewalk materials (this challenge is present throughout Downtown)
 - Brick sidewalks are not consistently maintained.
- Unfriendly/uncomfortable bicycle route through Downtown
- Bayhealth employees sometimes utilize State Street to get Downtown
- Emergency route, can be chaotic when an emergency vehicle is passing through

Loockerman Street

- Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) at intersection with Governors Avenue
- Does not feel comfortable for bicycling
- Lack of mid-block crosswalks, including at the bus shelter location on Loockerman Plaza
- Emergency route, can be chaotic when an emergency vehicle is passing through
- Terrifying to turn from Loockerman onto State Street
- Need to ask DelDOT to retime the light cycle, left turns onto Loockerman cause back-up, people pass on the right using the curb

Division Street

- Lack of street trees make the roadway feel less hospitable for pedestrians
- Narrow sidewalks with no planting strips
- Higher volume, more traffic; noisy due to traffic volume
- Higher speeds
- Does not feel like a safe or comfortable bicycle route
 - Bicycling in mixed traffic does not feel comfortable
- Vehicles have to shift into right lane to continue straight (a lot of “back-and-forth”)
- Study has been completed for Division Street
- Lack of midblock crossings
- Location of some utility poles interferes with sidewalks
- Disorienting near Jackson House, how to get back into Downtown

Bradford Street

- Portions of sidewalks have been widened
- More comfortable and calm walking experience than Governors Avenue
- The alley between Bradford Street and State Street could act as a bicycle route
 - Alleys - questions regarding safety, lighting, residents' parking, trash pick-up, etc.
 - Would need a midblock crossing at Division Street
 - Bradford Street does not continue south of Loockerman Street

Governor's Avenue

- Lack of crosswalks at intersection with Reed Street
 - Reed Street lacks crosswalks at several other intersections
- High speed; Governors Ave runs directly north-to-south so motorists regularly speed
- Emergency route
- APS at intersection with Loockerman Street
- Loud, less comfortable pedestrian experience
- Three new Habitat for Humanity houses being built on Governors Ave, others previously built
- Bayhealth employees regularly walk northward to La Baguette

Bank Lane

- Many intersections lack crosswalks

New Street

- Can feel uncomfortable walking due to fears of crime

Water Street

- Feels busy and loud when walking
- The signalized crosswalk at State Street-Water Street may not work

Federal Street

- Wide sidewalks
- No crosswalk directly in front of library

General Observations

- Where there are bicycle sharrows, drivers can get frustrated and honk at cyclists in the roadway
- Lack of bicycling wayfinding
- Security concerns walking/biking in alleys
- APS should be considered at major intersections
- DART Reimagined envisions a micro-transit system, with zones
- Habitat for Humanity is building houses throughout Downtown Dover for families to own; when these houses are built they are required to upgrade sewer and water lines, as well as curb cuts

- Speeding and aggressive driving are concerns throughout downtown
- Impact of recent City decision to change truck routes
- City is responsible for maintaining sidewalks
- Curb maintenance has proven to be a challenge
- Emerging vision for a riverwalk facility at the south end of Legislative Avenue
 - Remediation efforts would be necessary
- State employees appear to be back working in offices at the Legislative Mall following COVID-19
- Bayhealth hourly employees only have 30 minutes for lunch, not enough time to leave the campus without better connections
- Need to “draw people in with things” i.e. Spences, La Baguette
- Shorter street segments could be abandoned if there are no buildings front the street
- The Legislative Mall park is loved by residents and workers in Dover
 - High degree of pedestrian comfort

Key Takeaways

- Sidewalks are plentiful, but they are often narrow, lack planting strips, and are not well maintained.
- The shared bicycle facility network does not provide an experience for all ages and abilities.
- There are some missing crosswalks and ADA ramps, as well as narrow crosswalks.

Partners Meeting

Purpose: After the walk, the group gathered in the Dover Public Library for a presentation and discussion of existing conditions.

Public Engagement

- Comment map is currently active. Need to widely distribute.
- Engagement needs to be inclusive and diverse – the project team can rely on partners’ connections for help with this.
- QR codes on buses for accessing online materials.
- Connect with the Capital School District transportation office, especially about school bus stops.
- The project team will be distributing posters, flyers, etc. for public engagement.

Previous Plans/Existing Conditions

Low-Income Households

- Colors might be reversed.
- This map will be revised.

Employment

- Large employment and residential concentration at Eden Hill.
- The percentage of Downtown workers in public administration is very high relative to the percentage of Downtown residents in public administration.

- What are the sectors that residents primarily work in?
- Where are Dover residents working? Leave the City vs. work in the City? Sharon said there is a study, need to find it.

Transit

- Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC) might know how many people use the facility to access work.
- Collect information on high-ridership bus stops throughout the study area.
- Need to coordinate with DART Reimagined to determine which current bus stop locations will remain, where new locations will be, etc. Some current locations are not ideal.
- What is the correlation between desirable bus stops (safe, sheltered, no mud, and likely ridership)?
- Facility upgrades are based on ridership. With micro-transit, there will be less need for shelters and upgrades.
- Every transit riders is a ped/cyclist first.

Infrastructure

- Chris Asay can provide updates for the bicycle facility map.
- Dave Hugg can provide information on speeding locations.
- Traffic calming efforts on State Street have been very effective.
- There is a project coming to Governors Avenue north of DSU Downtown.
- Speed humps have historically not been installed in Dover due to issues with utility trucks and fire trucks.
- Alter transit map to show the overlapping routes more clearly.
- State Street speed limit is likely 25 mph rather than 20 mph.
- DART stops with the most ridership receive the most funding/additional infrastructure.
- Ken - Can we forecast the impact of new development at 120 and 129 So. Governors?
- Jed – there are “mobility center” elements in the master plan.
- Old Post Office redevelopment, maybe to residential.

Safety

- Bayhealth pedestrian “dot” now has a crosswalk with a flashing beacon.
- The project team will provide additional crash details beyond “high/low” in the legend.
- Noteworthy that State Street has fewer crashes than Governors Avenue.
- State Street feels more bike/ped friendly than Governors.
- It was noted that the design of State Street may help naturally calm traffic. (Tall trees, etc.)
- DDP crosswalk painting project may slow traffic.

Key Corridors

- 129 South Governors Avenue is a proposed “mobility center”.

- Bradford Street has potential for a north/south bike/ped connection north of Loockerman Street.
- Reed Street and Bank Lane have potential as east/west routes.
- Tina: key corridors will change as various streets are closed for major utility projects in the next few years.
- Traffic from new developments and redevelopment needs to be considered.
- Investigate whether new crosswalk projects in the master plan make a difference in speeding, safety, etc.

Micromobility

- A non-profit or publicly funded model is likely the best fit for Dover.
- More study is necessary before providing recommendations.
- What is the economic viability?

Performance Measures

- Dave – safe, comfortable, and convenient transportation is important – particularly in reference to transit stops.