

Camden Sidewalk Network Gap Study

Technical Memorandum – Task 2



DATE: April 2, 2025

TO: Harold Scott, Town Manager
Camden, Delaware

FROM: Mike Petit de Mange, AICP
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SUBJECT: Technical Memorandum – Camden Sidewalk Network Gap Study

Introduction

Dover Kent Metropolitan Planning Organization (DK MPO) is engaged in the development of a Sidewalk Network Gap Study for the Town of Camden, Delaware pursuant to our Project Agreement dated 12/10/ 24. At this time, DKMPO has completed work through Task 2 (Data Collection) of this Agreement which includes development of an Existing Conditions Inventory of all existing public Sidewalks and other dedicated Pedestrian Facilities within the limits of the Town of Camden. This Technical Memorandum is presented for the purpose of documenting details of the current state of public Sidewalks and Pedestrian Facilities and identifying deficiencies and gaps in the existing Pedestrian Environment in Camden.

Information presented below will form the basis for public discussions centered on the present state of the pedestrian accommodations in Camden and desired near term and long range improvements necessary to realize a more continuous and complete Pedestrian System.

Existing Conditions Inventory

Methodology

For purposes of this Project, DK MPO created an Existing Conditions Base Map Grid System of the Town of Camden at a working scale of 1 Inch equaling 100 Feet (Map Scale: 1" = 100"). Our Grid System is a typical coordinate system involving 9 Rows (lettered "A" through "I") and 5 Columns (numbered "1" through "5"). Holding to this working scale of 1" = 100" and maintaining the standard Map Sheet ratio of 3:2, a total of 32 individual Map Sheets or "Map Tiles" were established. This Base Map is displayed upon the most current aerial photography available through the State of Delaware's enterprise Geographic Information



System known as Delaware First Map (Aerial Imagery dated March 2022). The Base Map Grid System is presented below in Exhibit 1.



With the Base Map established, DK MPO imported an Existing Sidewalk Data Layer for Camden prepared by DelDOT and available via FirstMap. The FirstMap sidewalk information is generalized and was last updated in September of 2023. With this information as our base, DK MPO prepared individual Map Sheets for conducting a field investigation to locate and measure all existing public sidewalks and other public pedestrian amenities located within Camden.

Mapping Existing Conditions

DK MPO Staff conducted field reconnaissance throughout the entire Town of Camden to locate all existing sidewalks within Town Limits. Field investigation involved documenting sidewalk locations, limitations, width measurements, and other notable characteristics on 24"x36" paper Field Sheet Maps for each tile within the Base Map System. Field notes were also recorded on Field Note Sheets corresponding to each Map Tile. This field investigation included photographic documentation of representative examples of various sidewalk types and unique conditions. At the conclusion of our field work, the Base Map was updated accordingly.

Primary Pedestrian Trip Generators – Existing & Planned

Virtually every building, property, or place is a generator of pedestrian trips. Whether it's a retail shop, a place of employment, a park that you like to visit, or the place you call home, these and many other locations are both origins and destinations of pedestrian trips. When you think about it, for most people, at least a portion of our daily travels begin and end with a pedestrian trip. Pedestrian movements can differ greatly in duration, distance, modality, frequency, and purpose. The effectiveness and efficiency of all such trips rely upon a well defined, safe and reliable travel route.

The propensity for persons to choose to walk or to wheelchair to or from a particular destination is greatly influenced by proximity to their destination, the availability and connectedness of pedestrian improvements such as barrier-free sidewalks, trails and shared-use-pathways, pedestrian safety - real and perceived, prevailing weather conditions, time-of-day, and the distance of the anticipated trip. The choice to utilize public transit as a travel option can also be greatly influenced by these same factors, and particularly the condition and availability of pedestrian system improvements that connect transit stops.

For larger urban areas with much greater population density, a pedestrian trip generation study and growth forecast may be necessary in order to fully understand pedestrian trip activity and future needs. Pedestrian trip activity can result from various land uses (origins

and destinations), population density, and pedestrian concentrations and movements in the urban environment.

Such detailed urban analysis is beyond the scope of work of this Study and is not recommended for the Town of Camden. While this Study is limited to the identification of gaps and deficiencies in the Sidewalk System within the limits of the Town of Camden, an inventory of key drivers of existing and potential pedestrian activity is useful as recommendations are formulated and priorities are considered.

Area Schools

The most significant contributors to regular daily pedestrian movements in Camden observed by the DK MPO Team involve Caesar Rodney High School, Fred Fifer Middle School, and W.B. Simpson Elementary School (in the Town of Wyoming). While the vast majority of students travel to and from these schools by motor vehicle transportation, the neighborhoods in close proximity to these schools generate significant numbers of walkers during the arrival (AM) and dismissal (PM) hours. Each school is provided with pedestrian accommodations along the school property frontage with barrier free linkage sidewalks to school building entrances.

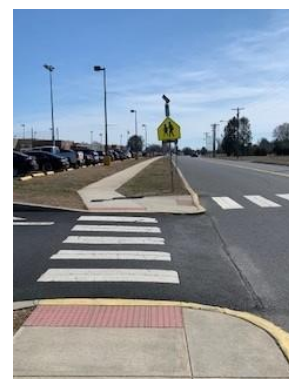


Figure 1 Frontage Sidewalk and Cross-Walk at Caesar Rodney High School

Brecknock County Park

Brecknock Park is a heavily used public park situated in the Town Limits of Camden at the north end of town. This Park adjoins the Camden neighborhoods of Chapel Croft, Weeks Drive, and Pharsailia and also borders lands of the Caesar Rodney School District at Caesar Rodney High School and W.B. Simpson Elementary School. The well-maintained perimeter Park Trail System connects with sidewalks in the Pharsailia neighborhood and includes a Trailhead Access Point at the rear of W.B. Simpson Elementary School. A Shared-Use Path along the frontage of Old Camden Road provides access to the Park from the neighborhood of Rodney Village to the north, just outside of Camden Town Limits.



Figure 2 Shared-Use Path along frontage of Brecknock Park

Although Brecknock provides for a variety of active and passive recreational pursuits and is in close proximity to several neighborhoods and schools, most visitors to the Park arrive by automobile. DK MPO observes that the lack of continuous sidewalk along Old Camden Road connecting the Chapel Croft neighborhood and Caesar Rodney High School may be a significant deterrent to pedestrian access to Brecknock Park.



Figure 3 Shared-Use Path
Terminus at Brecknock Park

Camden Town Center

Camden Town Center in south Camden fronting US Route 13 (Southbound) is anchored by Walmart, Lowe's and Aldi and is a major center of commerce serving Camden and Central Kent County. This complex provides complete internal sidewalk accommodations and adjoins the neighborhoods of Newell's Creek and Tidbury Crossing. These residential communities are provided with continuous and complete pedestrian sidewalk connectivity into the Town Center. An internal commercial access service road known as Walmart Drive is oriented parallel with US Route 13 and provides for both vehicular and pedestrian access to commercial and service establishments within the Town Center. This complex currently lacks sidewalk accommodations along its US Route 13 frontage.

King Commercial Complex

North of the Camden Town Center, a commercial complex fronting on US Route 13 north of Voshell Mill Road is nearing completion. This new commercial complex which includes a Wawa, McDonalds, Grotto Pizza and various other retail businesses has incorporated approximately 1,240 Linear Feet+/- of 10 Foot-wide Shared-Use Path along its US Route 13 frontage with linkage sidewalk to each commercial establishment in the complex. Camden Town Center is situated approximately 1,168 Feet+/- south of Voshell Mill Road. Currently, there are no pedestrian accommodations along US Route 13 south of Voshell Mill Road. This includes the absence of pedestrian sidewalk along the entire 862 Feet+/- of frontage of Camden Town Center.

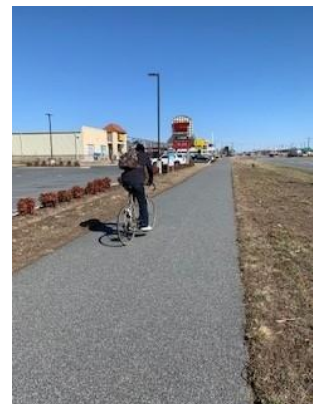


Figure 4 Shared-Use Path along
US Route 13- Southbound at King
Commercial Complex

Continuation of a Shared-Use Path south of Voshell Mill Road to include the entire frontage of Camden Town Center would represent a significant enhancement to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle access to this important center of commerce. Plans for widening US Route 13 from Puncheon Run Connector to Lochmeath Way prepared by DelDOT include

provisions for a 10 Foot shared-use-path to be installed along this entire frontage. This Project is currently in the State Capital Transportation Plan

Camden-Wyoming Little League Complex

Although this facility is not located within the Town Limits of Camden it is immediately adjacent to town and is a significant public gathering place within the Camden-Wyoming community. Its particular purpose is to serve as a venue for youth sports. While most participants and visitors travel to this location by motor vehicle, its close proximity to existing residential areas of both Camden and Wyoming are important considerations when planning for improved pedestrian safety and connectivity.

Pedestrian System Constraints

This section describes very specific constraints and barriers that are present within the Town of Camden that may present real challenges to safe and efficient pedestrian circulation. These constraints are not insurmountable, but do present practical difficulties to achieving a complete and seamless pedestrian system.

US Route 13

US Route 13 is a busy four (4) lane divided highway that runs north-south along the easterly side of Camden for a distance of approximately 3 Miles. This highway through Camden is largely a commercial corridor with a multitude of commercial site entrances and configurations involving a wide range of destination points. As indicated above, several recently completed commercial complexes have incorporated pedestrian accommodations along portions of the US Route 13 frontage in Camden. However, at the present time there is no continuous sidewalk or shared-use-path along US Route 13 in Camden and significant gaps exist. With the widening of US Route 13 from the Puncheon Run Connector to Walnut Shade Road over the coming years as mentioned above, 10 Foot wide shared-use-paths are planned for both sides of the highway. This major improvement will provide continuous pedestrian and bicycle accessibility along US Route 13 and will link to safe crossing locations at controlled intersections.



Figure 5 Proposed US RT 13 Widening Project (excerpt) to include Shared-Use Paths on both Sides of Highway

Within this stretch of US Route 13 there are six (6) major signalized intersections. It is at these signalized intersections where vehicular traffic flow is better controlled and regularly

interrupted that safe and effective pedestrian crossing may be accommodated. The distance between controlled intersections varies greatly with the shortest distance being 783 Feet (0.15 Miles) and the longest being over 2,000 Feet (0.39 miles). Random crossing of US Route 13 at locations other than at controlled intersections can be extremely dangerous due to travel speeds and traffic volumes.

Lochmeath Way

Standard 5 Foot sidewalk is present along the northerly side of Lochmeath Way from Walmart Drive west to the frontage of the Tidbury Corossing community where it transitions to a 10 Foot Shared-use-path. The shared-use-path extends for the entire frontage of Tidbury Crossing. However, at the westerly perimeter of Tidbury Crossing, the shared-use-path comes to an abrupt end approximately 700 Feet+/- from the intersection of Lochmeath Way and Upper King Road. There are six (6) residential properties fronting on Lochmeath Way in close proximity to the road that are situated between the terminous of the shared-use-path and Upper King Road which make this connection difficult.



Figure 6 Shared-Use Path
Transition to 5 Foot Sidewalk on
Lochmeath Way

The intersection of Lochmeath Way with US Route 13 currently lacks accommodations for safe and effective pedestrian crossing. Immediately east of this intersection are the residential communities of Seabrook Village, Brookfield and Harmony Hill. These neighborhoods are within a reasonable walking distance of the Camden Town Center. However, at the present time, US Route 13 forms a significant barrier to safe pedestrian access. Sidewalk is absent on Lochmeath Way from US Route to Walmart Drive.

Railroad Crossings

There are two (2) railroad crossing locations in or adjacent to Camden Town Limits that present concerns for the provision of safe and effective pedestrian crossings. The first is at the railroad crossing of DE Route 10 (Willow Grove Road). The future residential development of Savannah Farms (discussed in more detail below) will necessitate the installation of an ADA compliant pedestrian railroad crossing at this location. The actuated railroad crossing gate should be equipped and designed to warn and protect pedestrians and cyclists along with motor vehicles.

The second railroad crossing of concern is on Bison Road, adjacent to the Tamarack Development on the easterly side of the railroad tracks, and properties west of the railroad tracks fronting on Bison Road that have been annexed into Camden (discussed in more

detail below). Similar to the DE Route 10 crossing, this crossing should be equipped and designed to warn and protect pedestrians and cyclists along with motor vehicles.

Legacy Constraints

As a town with a rich history that dates to its founding in 1783, Camden has been evolving for over 240 Years. That evolution is documented in part within the physical qualities and extents of its transportation systems. As part of the overall transportation system the pedestrian environment within Camden has adapted and evolved with the times, needs, and preferences of the citizens of the town.

Today, the Camden Town Subdivision Code enacted in 2007 establishes a standard of 5 Foot wide sidewalk to be constructed along all public rights-of-way with new subdivisions of property within Camden. It appears that the Town has been enforcing this requirement since enactment. However, a variety of conditions exist in Town with respect to land subdivision and development activity that took place prior to enactment of the Sidewalk Ordinance requirements. Many secondary residential streets within the older neighborhoods in town characterized by a gridded street pattern, currently lack sidewalks altogether. Most main thoroughfares and commercial streets in the older portions of Town may include existing sidewalks that would be considered non-conforming with the current Camden standard for sidewalk width and accessibility requirements.



Figure 7 Typical 5 Foot Sidewalk in the Pharsalia Neighborhood as per Camden Code

In cities and towns, it is very common to find situations that do not conform with contemporary standards and expectations. In contrast to the Code compliant Sidewalk shown above, below are a few examples of non-conforming sidewalks in Camden today:

Non-Conforming Sidewalk Widths with Various Obstructions



Utility Conflicts

ADA Conformity Issues

Existing Sidewalk Terminations & Related Non-Conformities



Additional Examples of Non-Conformities



West Camden Bypass (Temporary Constraint)

The West Camden Bypass Project will incorporate significant pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements. The first phase of this Project referred to as the East Camden Bypass is currently underway east of US Route 13. The West Camden Bypass represents the second phase of construction with completion slated by 2028. While these projects proceed toward completion, an important consideration should be how the Camden pedestrian system will incorporate these improvements and connect them to the larger pedestrian system.



Figure 8 West Camden Bypass (excerpt) - Proposed Roundabout at Upper King Road and South Street

Public Resistance

As plans are prepared to develop a more continuous and connected pedestrian system, changes to the physical landscape may be met with public concern from time to time and from location to location. As potential pedestrian system improvements are identified, it will be important to share these ideas with the public and to provide opportunities for citizen participation and input. Public input is an essential ingredient to the formulation of priorities moving forward.

Land Use: Present & Future

Camden is a full service municipality with an incorporated area of 3.69+/- Square Miles situated entirely within the Kent County Growth Zone. The Delaware Population Consortium projects the 2025 resident population of Camden to be 4,416 persons. This reflects an 18.74% increase in Total Population in Camden since the 2020 Decennial Census (pop - 3,719). Based on this information, the Town of Camden leads all municipalities in Kent County in population growth for the 5 Year period. By comparison, the total Kent County population has grown 5.47% over the same period.

The Town of Camden annexed over 850 Acres of land into Town Limits over a six year period from 2007 to 2013. Most of this annexed land is situated to the south and west of the center of town and remains in agricultural use at the present time. In total, over 1,000 Acres of vacant developable land currently exists within the corporate limits of Camden.

Lands Zoned R-3 (Multi-Family Residential)

Three (3) significant tracts of land totalling 392.37 Acres+/- are zoned R-3 (Multi-Family Residential). The Savannah Farms tract on the west side of town includes 225.10 Acres+/- of land in Camden zoned R-3 that is planned for mixed-use residential development. Another sizable tract of developable land totaling 105.85 Acres+/- that is currently in agriculture use is situated along the westerly side of Upper King Road immediately south of the future South Camden Bypass and is also zoned R-3. Rounding out the vacant developable R-3 lands is a tract of approximately 40 Acres+/- fronting on the easterly side of Upper King Road, directly across from Bison Road, and being part of the Peters Cooper Farm property south of Lochmeath Way.

The Savannah Farms Project is a large scale residential development fronting on DE Route 10 (Willow Grove Road) and DE Route 15 (Moose Lodge Road) that includes 136 Acres+/- in neighboring Wyoming that is zoned R-1 for Single-Family Residential uses. Savannah Farms proposes a total of 1,114 Dwelling Units: 888 DU's in Camden including Single Family

Detached (211), Duplexes (88), Townshouses (277), and Apartments (312); and, 226 Single Family Detached DU's in Wyoming. This tract of land also borders the westerly right-of-way line of the Delmarva Central Railroad Freight Line that runs north-south through Kent County and includes an at-grade crossing of DE Route 10 immediately east of planned entrance to the Savannah Farms Development. Plans for this development should include pedestrian improvements along the DE Route 10 frontage to include safe pedestrian crossing of the active railroad crossing. Ideally, a 10 Foot wide Shared-use-path would be provided along the northerly side of DE Route 10 from Savannah Farms to connect with the Future West Camden Bypass improvement.

Lands Zoned AG (Agriculture)/ TDR Receiving Areas

The annexations briefly mentioned above include approximately 579.50 Acres+/- of land in active agricultural and zoned AG (Agriculture). These large farm tracts located at the southerly end of Camden corporate limits partially border the Town of Woodside and are designated as potential Receiving Areas for the application of Transferable Development Rights (TDR). In 2007, the Town of Camden adopted a TDR Receiving Area Ordinance that is designed to work with the TDR Program enacted by Kent County in 2004. The 2019 Camden Comprehensive Plan specifically identifies these properties as Residential TDR Receiving Areas within its Future Land Use Plan. According to the Camden Ordinance, a TDR Receiving Area may develop at a maximum density of 7 Dwelling Units per Acre which similar to the 8 Dwelling Units per Acre achievable in the R-3 District.

Findings – Existing Conditions Summary

The pedestrian system in Camden has evolved over many decades and reflects a range of materials, conditions, dimensional qualities, and public priority. The existing system is somewhat fragmented with significant gaps between some of the most important origin and destination points for pedestrian travel. Many older neighborhood streets lack sidewalks altogether.

New and developing portions of Camden reflect a much more consistent, connected, and complete approach to incorporating pedestrian amenities as part of design and construction. This clearly is a result of the Town elevating pedestrian amenities as a community priority and incorporating requirements within its development codes and approval processes. As new development projects incorporate pedestrian improvements as part of their site improvement bundle, this amplifies the gaps in the system and draws attention to the need for continuous pedestrian connections and linkages.

Next Steps: Task 3 – Community Engagement

Upon completion of the Data Gathering Phase (Task 2), the Project Scope of Work contemplates opportunities for members of the public to become involved with this Project and to provide input and guidance. The Task 3 work effort anticipates conducting a Public Workshop to inform the general public about the purpose and intent of this Study and to begin gathering public input concerning pedestrian system needs in Camden.

In addition to collecting public input during the Public Workshop, Dover Kent MPO will establish and promote an online portal for citizens to complete a pedestrian needs questionnaire and to provide additional commentary. It is anticipated that the Online Portal will remain available for two (2) full weeks after the Public Workshop. Dover Kent MPO Staff will also conduct interviews with Municipal Officials and property owners as directed by the Town Manager.

At the conclusion of Task 3, Dover Kent MPO will provide the Town Manager with a written summary report of the Community Engagement Phase. This report will include a description of our public engagement methodology, a summary of public commentary received, and the main pedestrian themes, interests and needs expressed by the public. This information will be essential to establishing recommended pedestrian system projects and improvements as we consider alternatives during Task 4.