



# Building Great Communities!

**Moving Toward an Active Delaware  
Through Community Design Forum  
October 7, 2009 – Dover Downs Hotel**

**Marcia Scott, Associate Policy Scientist  
University of Delaware  
Institute for Public Administration**

# UD Institute for Public Administration

- **Who We Are**

**IPA is a public service, education, and research center at the University of Delaware.**

- **What We Do**

- **Comprehensive plans**
- **Transportation planning and policy**
- **Public service projects and forums on mobility- and pedestrian-friendly community design**
- **Research on public policies that support active living and smart growth strategies**

# Recurrent Theme of IPA Research

- **Mobility-Friendly Design Standards**
- **Interconnectivity of Future Developments**
- **Sidewalks and Shared-Use Paths:**
  - **Safety, Security, Maintenance**
  - **Improving Mobility and Designing Transit-Ready Communities**
- **Safe Routes to School**
- **UD Healthy/Walkable Communities Initiative**

**Theme: Link between land development patterns and less active lifestyles**

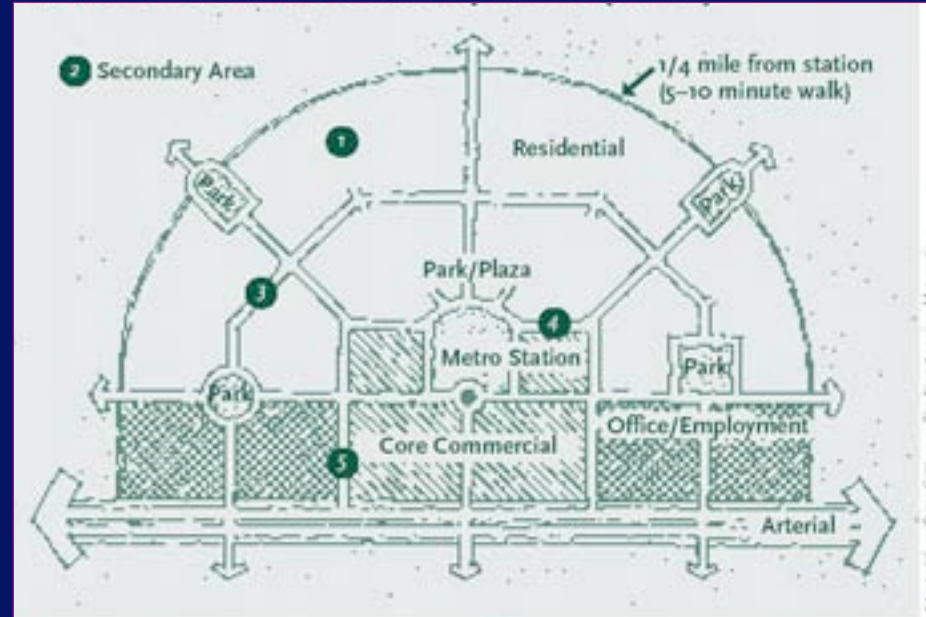
# Less Healthy Communities - Why?

- **In the past:**
  - **Communities were built on a human scale; people could walk everywhere!**
  - **Compact, mixed-used development was the norm.**
  - **Streets were connected.**
- **Today:**
  - **In the era of suburbanization, the car is king!**
  - **Land-use patterns promote sprawl.**
  - **Developments don't connect (cul-de-sacs).**
  - **Streets lack pedestrian infrastructure (sidewalks).**

# Community Design & Health



**Sprawl:**  
Lacks Connectivity  
and is Auto-Dependent



**Development that is  
Pedestrian-Friendly and  
Transit-Oriented**

# Obesity in Delaware

- **Issues of physical inactivity, unhealthy eating, and chronic disease**
- **Kids**
  - **Obesity rates among high school students has increased from 10.1% to 13.3%, a 32% increase over 8 years.**
  - **High school students overall reporting NO physical activity is 18.3% (about 1 in 5).**
  - **Behavior is exacerbated by the increasing prevalence of computers and Internet accessibility.**
  - **Middle school and high school students spend up to 6 hours per week day on Internet.**

# UD Healthy/Walkable Communities Initiative

Improve walkability to achieve health, environmental, and economic benefits.

1. Conduct community walkability assessments.
2. Provide report.
3. Award \$2,000 mini-grant to communities for improvements.



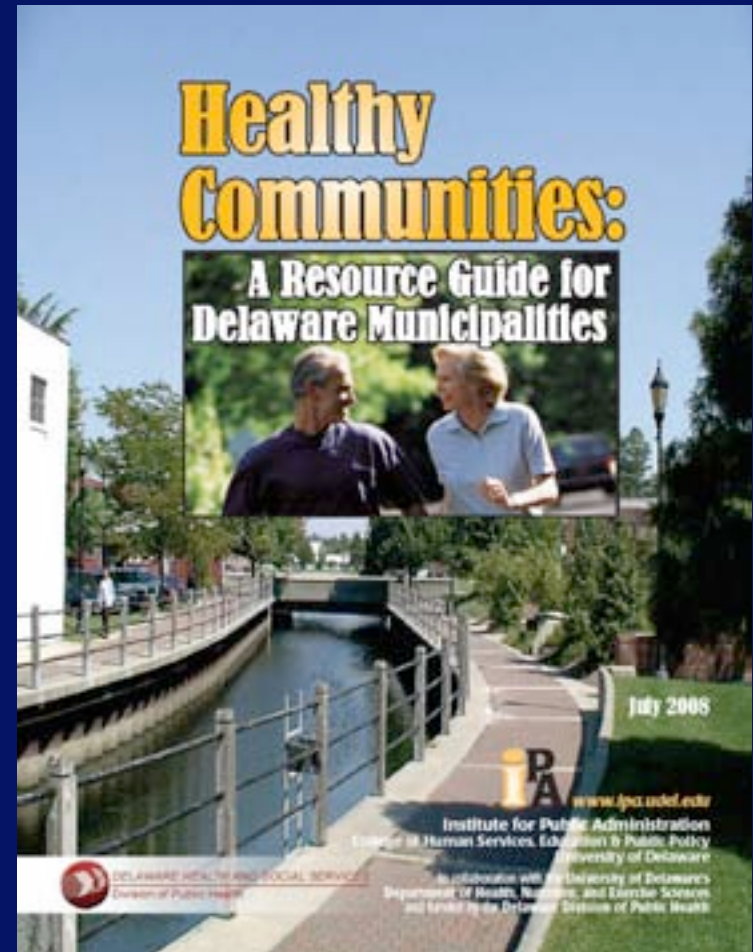
Townsend, Del.



# Healthy Communities: A Resource Guide for Delaware Municipalities

Purpose is to show:

- Benefits of walkability
- Need to build consensus
- Importance of policies and plans that support walkability
- How to leverage funds
- Need for improvements to built environment
- Need for recreation programming!



# Topics of Resource Guide

- **Community Assets of Walkability**
- **Catalyzing Change Through Stakeholders & Partners**
- **Policy Initiatives for Walkability**
- **Planning a Pedestrian-Friendly Community**
- **Designing a Walkable Community**
- **Funding Resources**
- **Promoting Physical Activity Through Recreation Programming**
- **Case Studies in Del.**

# Community Assets of Walkability

- **Protects Environmental Resources**
- **Greater Livability**
- **Provides Transportation Equity**
- **Economic Benefits**



# Catalyzing Change

## Build Consensus on:

- Needs for policies, built environment, recreation programs

## How:

- Identify stakeholders
- Identify potential partners
- Form an advisory committee or board
- Enlist volunteers
- Create & sustain a volunteer program



# Policy Initiatives for Walkability

- **Promoting active living means more than just building sidewalks, trails, recreation facilities, and infrastructure.**



- **Communities need to develop public policies and plans that encourage “smart growth.”**

# National Policy Initiatives for Walkable Communities

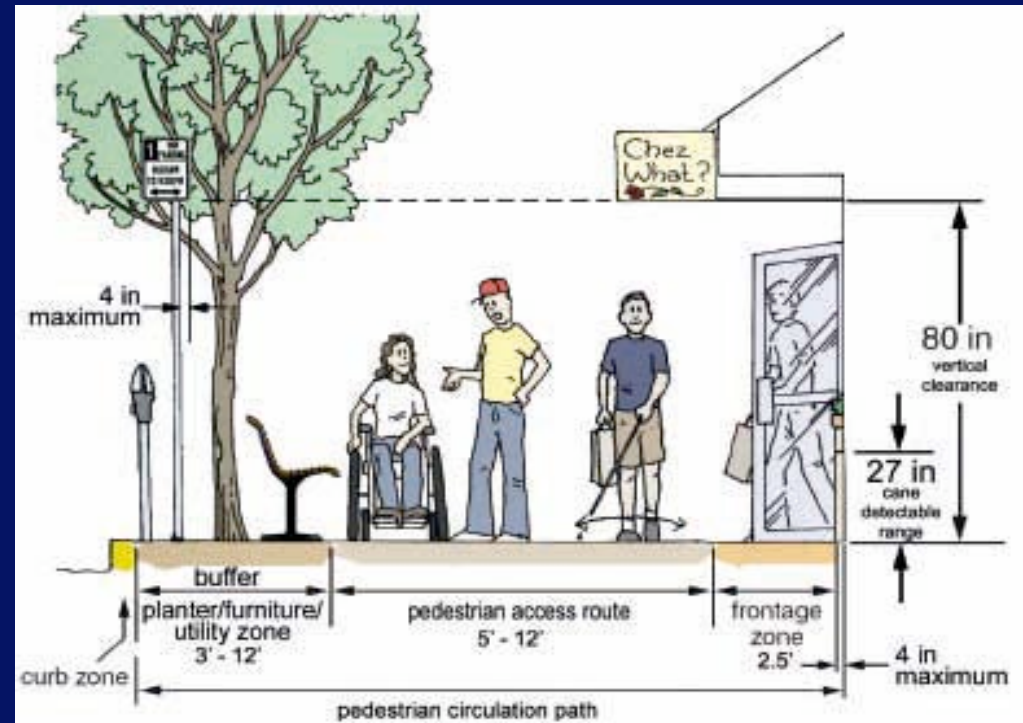
- **Leadership for Healthy Communities**
- **National Conference of State Legislatures**
- **Smart Growth Network**
- **Complete Streets**
- **ADA Accessibility Assistance**
- **National Trust Main Street Center**



NATIONAL CONFERENCE  
of STATE LEGISLATURES  
*The Forum for America's Ideas*

# Policy Initiatives in Delaware

- Delaware Livability Principles
- Delaware Statewide Pedestrian Action Plan
- Better Models for Development in Delaware
- Complete Streets
- Safe Routes to Schools



# Making Walkability a Public Policy Agenda in Municipalities

- **Comprehensive Plans**
- **Zoning Ordinances**
- **Form-Based Codes**
- **Context-Sensitive Design**
- **Transit-Oriented Development**
- **Other regulatory tools:**
  - **Subdivision ordinances**
  - **Pedestrian-friendly design ordinances**
  - **Official Maps**
  - **Annexation agreements**
  - **Local building codes and standards**

# Planning a Pedestrian-Friendly Community

## THE OREGON MODEL: a comprehensive community-visioning process

1.  
Where are  
we now?



*descriptive  
information,  
community values*

2.  
Where are  
we going?



*trend  
information,  
probable scenario*

3.  
Where do we  
want to be?



*possible/preferred  
scenarios,  
community vision*

4.  
How do we  
get there?



*goals, strategies,  
actions;  
action agendas  
and priorities*

# Components of a Successful Walkable Community

- **Shared vision.**
- **Identify key assets.**
- **Plans based on preservation and enhancement.**
- **Pick and choose among development proposals.**
- **Know impact of land-use policies.**
- **Use education, incentives, and voluntary initiatives.**
- **Meet needs of landowners and community members.**
- **Pay attention to community appearance.**
- **Link between land use and transportation.**

# Designing a Walkable Community

## Implementation Checklist for Walkable Communities:

- ✓ Continuity
- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Comfort
- ✓ Convenience
- ✓ Visual Appeal



# Funding Resources

- ✓ Is the project consistent with the overall mission, goals, and objectives?
- ✓ Is the proposed project in a state of readiness?
- ✓ Is there organizational capacity to administer the project/activity?

**The Resource Guide provides a list of and websites for:**

- Federal grants
- State programs
- Technical assistance services
- Local funding strategies
- Foundation funding

# Promoting Physical Activity Through Recreation Programming



# Special Events and Activities



# Case Studies in Delaware

## Milford's Mispillion Greenway



## Delaware City Canal Promenade Project



## Newark's James F. Hall Trail

# What's Next?

- **Work with two new partner communities each year on the UD Healthy/ Walkable Communities Initiative.**
- **Provide technical assistance to partners.**
- **Provide training.**
- **Develop an online toolkit.**
- **Develop an online assessment tool.**



