Walk, bike, take public transit, or drive? Unfortunately, today many Americans lack choice in transportation modes. Automobile-oriented transportation planning, segregated land uses, and dispersed development patterns have contributed to a cycle of automobile dependency. After decades of building car-oriented roadway networks, many streets lack connectivity and do not safely accommodate pedestrians or bicyclists. In addition, mobility-constrained populations—including children, elderly, persons with disabilities, zero-car households, and low-income and minority groups—face substantial challenges and transportation inequities in such a car-dominated culture.

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the need to plan, design, and construct streets that meet the needs of all roadway users—that is, creating “complete streets.” The National Complete Streets Coalition has advocated for the adoption and implementation of state, regional, and local government complete streets policies. While definitions vary, “complete streets” have been described as:

Roadways designed, built, and maintained to safely accommodate travelers of all ages and abilities—motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit users—including children, non-drivers, older adults, and persons with disabilities (AARP, 2009).

While “complete streets” is a relatively new term, Delaware has been building toward creating better pedestrian and bike accessibility for at least two decades. The Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) has been using established, well-regarded federal documents, policy
statements, and guidelines to plan, design, and operate multimodal facilities, which have provided a foundation for complete streets. In addition, DelDOT has integrated complete streets concepts into its policies, master plans, and design manuals to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected, and multimodal transportation network.

Complete streets became a part of Delaware’s policy agenda with Governor Jack A. Markell’s issuance of an executive order on April 24, 2009. DelDOT subsequently adopted a Complete Streets Policy to “promote safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and [transit] riders of all ages to be able to safely move along and across the streets of Delaware” (DelDOT, 2009).

DelDOT is unique among states in that it funds and has jurisdiction over 90 percent of its state’s roads (DelDOT, 2009). With control of a high percentage of roads, DelDOT has the ability to incorporate complete streets within internal planning, design, and engineering practices. While DelDOT transportation planners and engineers are designing streets with all users in mind, Delaware local governments have authority for local plans and policies, which may not be consistent or compatible with the statewide Complete Streets Policy.

This resource, Complete Streets in Delaware: A Guide for Local Governments, is intended to help Delaware towns, cities, and counties achieve complete streets in order to provide more balance transportation systems and to create healthy, livable environments for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities.

The document first explains how complete streets can address an unbalanced transportation system. Consequences of decentralized and automobile-dependent development patterns include segregated zoning uses, impacts to community livability, safety problems, issues of transportation equity, economic degradation, environmental concerns, and disconnected transportation networks. Next, benefits are cited—including evidence that complete streets can improve pedestrian safety, community health, air quality, smart growth, and transportation equity. New research indicates that there is a link between walkability and the economic vitality of a community. Walkability can help revitalize a downtown, increase private investment, bolster property values, promote tourism, and support the development of a good business climate. In addition, market demand is growing for properties located in walkable, mixed-use communities that are centrally located and transit accessible.

Complete streets are further characterized within this document as:

- **Flexible**—considering the existing and future transportation uses, existing and future land use, adjacent land uses, residential density, topographical constraints, and character of development

- **Accessible**—meeting Title II ADA requirements that state and local governments ensure accessible design, construction, and maintenance of all transportation projects

- **Multimodal**—providing transportation options that address the needs of people of all ages and abilities
• **Vibrant Centers of Activity**—regarding streets as public places that foster mobility, economic vitality, civic engagement, and active and healthy communities.

• **Having Common Features and Design Elements**—including speed-control strategies, traffic-control devices and signage, pedestrian infrastructure and amenities, bicycle features, transit facilities, and pedestrian-oriented lighting

A history of the complete streets movement is provided—both at the national level and at the state level in Delaware. Since the adoption of its Complete Streets Policy, Delaware reinforced its commitment to multimodal transportation through executive orders, transportation-funding investments, and “Walkable, Bikeable Delaware” legislation.

The heart of this document, chapter 9—**How Can Delaware Local Governments Implement Complete Streets?**—explains strategies that Delaware local governments can undertake to support the state’s policy to provide safe, equitable, and accessible transportation to all users and modes. The IPA Complete Streets Implementation Checklist serves as a foundation for local governments to move toward achieving complete streets by evaluating the extent to which their community vision, plans, policies, design standard, and facility maintenance practices are consistent with complete-streets principles. This section provides examples of best practice-implementation strategies, primarily at the national level. In addition, complete-streets “best practice” strategies are summarized within the *IPA Complete Streets National Best Practices Matrix* and *Delaware Local Government Complete Streets Implementation Matrix*, both of which are included in the appendix.

A large section of this document focuses on progress being made by Delaware local governments toward implementing complete streets through the comprehensive-planning process and land use–policy development. Many Delaware local governments have, in fact, begun to transform a vision for complete streets into plans, policies, design standards, and maintenance practices. This section focuses extensively on how Delaware local governments have incorporated the state’s Complete Streets Policy principles and concepts within comprehensive plans and policies—specifically subdivision, unified development, and zoning codes. Examples are cited, and an analysis is provided, of Delaware local governments that are progressing toward complete streets. In addition, information is summarized in the *Delaware Local Government Complete Streets Implementation Matrix*, included in the appendix.

The final section focuses on the use of IPA’s online *Toolkit for a Healthy Delaware: Bringing Communities and Health Together* as an ongoing mechanism for outreach to local government officials. A “Complete Streets” section, www.ipa.udel.edu/healthyDEtoolkit/completestreets, was added to the Toolkit in July 2011. This section provides an overview of complete-streets principles, benefits of complete streets, Delaware’s Complete Streets Policy, Delaware local government complete streets–implementation strategies, and information on technical and funding assistance. A large portion of this section is devoted to before-and-after visualizations (conceptual renderings) of ten locations in Delaware, which were devised using Google SketchUp (Google’s 3D computer-aided-design software).