

Governor Announces Executive Order to Increase Pedestrian Safety and Walkability

Council will help set pedestrian infrastructure priorities to make paths safer and better connected

Wilmington, DE – Building on his initiative to make Delaware a more walkable and bikeable state, Governor Markell today announced an Executive Order to increase safety, accessibility, and connectedness of pedestrian paths throughout the state. E.O. 54 establishes the Advisory Council on Walkability and Pedestrian Awareness, which will bring together key members of state agencies, local government representatives, as well as non-profit and citizen advocates to support and make recommendations on issues such as:

- Identifying and fixing gaps in pedestrian paths and sidewalks;
- Designing crosswalks, sidewalks, and pathways in the most effective way possible and ensuring compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act;
- Reviewing traffic rules to support a safe pedestrian environment; and
- Developing strategies for pedestrian safety education and awareness.

[Full text of Executive Order 54 is available here.](#)

The Council's work will add to the success of the First State Trails and Pathways Initiative, which is creating more than 50 miles of new trails and has raised Delaware's bike-friendly ranking from 31st to 3rd in the nation. The initiative has helped link communities and existing paths through interconnected pathway networks, as well as create and

maintain “complete streets” that promote safe access for all types of transportation.

In issuing E.O. 54, Markell also noted the responsibility of the state to address the number of pedestrian fatalities, of which there have been 26 so far in 2015.

“We have made tremendous progress in making our transportation system more effective for everyone, and I’m proud that we have paid more attention than ever before to walking and biking,” said Markell. “Improving walkability raises the quality of life in our communities, which in turn makes them more attractive places to live and work, while also increasing property values. I am asking the Pedestrian Council to revisit Delaware’s Statewide Pedestrian Action Plan last updated in 2007, and to report to me their findings and recommendations and to help catalyze further improvements.”

DelDOT, which has recently undertaken many major projects aimed at pedestrian use, will provide expert staff and support to the Council.

“This Council has a vital role to play in helping the state to focus on these issues and ensure our work is prioritized most effectively,” said DelDOT Secretary Jennifer Cohan. “We have made a lot of improvements in the last few years, but we know there is a lot of ground to cover and our mission to ensure Delaware is the most walkable state in the country never ends. I look forward to the opportunity to work with other safety and mobility advocates statewide to better identify how we can meet the needs and priorities for serving pedestrians and prevent future tragedies.”

Projects recently completed or now underway include:

- The installation of a pedestrian-hybrid beacon at the intersection of DE Route 8 and Heatherfield Way
- Upgrades to pedestrian facilities including crosswalks and pedestrian signals at 28 intersections.

- Installation of sidewalks, crosswalks, new signals and lighting in the SR 1 corridor between Lewes and Rehoboth Beach.

Included in areas that Cohan has identified for improvements are many suburban areas where families are dependent on motor vehicles for almost every activity, or in some cases take unacceptable risks in walking along or crossing our roads. In addition, too many existing sidewalks include barriers to those with disabilities, while others begin and end without making important connections that would provide safe pedestrian routes for students, transit users, shoppers, seniors and others likely to include walking as a mobility choice. Motorists and pedestrians also must have a better understanding of Delaware laws.

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