

# The Healthy and Transit-Friendly Development Act

Senate Bill 130

**Prime Sponsors:** Sen. McDowell and Sen. Bonini; Rep. Osienski and Rep. Keeley

**Endorsed by:** League of Women Voters of Delaware • Governor's Council on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention • American Heart Association • AARP Delaware • Bike Delaware • Delaware Nature Society • Delaware Greenways • Rails-to-Trails Conservancy



## The Kind of Growth We Get By Default in Delaware

Our normal mode of growth – single-use subdivisions, shopping malls and office “parks” - is completely auto-oriented. The result: no matter where we’re going – even if it’s only for a quart of milk or a child getting to school – 99.9% of the time we go by car.

## The Alternative: “Complete Communities”

“Complete Communities” are a new name for the kinds of communities that Delaware used to build before World War I. Many everyday destinations – shopping, offices, schools and services - are within easy walking and cycling distance. Streets are designed to be safe and comfortable for walking and cycling, and car speeds are limited.

## Improved Public Transportation

For many people who depend on it, public transportation in Delaware means infrequent service, multiple stops and time-wasting transfers. But complete communities are dense enough so that frequent and higher quality transit service becomes financially viable.

## Why We Don’t Build Complete Communities

The two indispensable pre-requisites for building complete communities are appropriate zoning and safe multi-modal transportation infrastructure that prioritizes transit, walking and cycling. But municipal and county governments control zoning while transportation is completely under the authority of state government.

## **Getting Local Government and State Government on the Same Page**

How can local government and state government collaborate to create complete communities? That's what the Healthy and Transit-Friendly Development Act does. It sets out the basic framework for any local government to choose to "opt-in" to encourage walkable, bikeable and transit-friendly development in their communities. (Local governments that do not choose to opt-in can instead continue to pursue typical automobile-oriented development.)

### **Four Reasons for Why a Local Government Might Choose to Opt-In**

#### **1) Less Air Pollution**

Fewer car trips means a lot less air pollution.

#### **2) Active and Healthy Lifestyles**

Safe opportunities to walk and bicycle for transportation and recreation promotes physical activity, which helps maintain a healthy weight and prevent heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and other chronic diseases.

#### **3) Reduction in Pedestrian Fatalities**

Since 2012 Delaware has had the highest per capita pedestrian fatality rate in America, primarily due to large numbers of crashes on Kirkwood Highway, Dupont Highway, Concord Pike, Pulaski Highway and our other high speed multi-lane suburban arterial "corridor" roads. Senate Bill 130 is a pedestrian-friendly development alternative to additional "corridor" development.

#### **4) Economic Development and Jobs**

Walkable, bikeable and transit-friendly development would also be a big win for local Delaware businesses because this kind of development enables the formation of new households that own fewer cars, yielding household savings of between \$5,000 and \$10,000 every single year. That might not be so great for Delaware's economy if that money was going to our local car manufacturers or our local oil drillers in Delaware. But Delaware doesn't have either any local car manufacturers or any local oil drillers, which means that that \$5,000 to \$10,000 saved per household is additional discretionary income that those households can instead spend with local Delaware businesses creating local Delaware jobs.

