

WILMINGTON LOOP SUPPORTERS HAIL FUNDING FOR NEWPORT TRAIL

City of Wilmington Connector is Critical Remaining Link for Completion of Transformational Community Asset

Wilmington (July 6, 2023) - The growing coalition of business, community and government leaders advocating for a continuous trail around and through the City of Wilmington heralded the announcement of federal funding for a new path that will connect the Town of Newport with the Jack A. Markell Trail in Wilmington.

The \$23M grant to New Castle County enabling construction of an approximately 2-mile, ADA-accessible, shared-use trail from Newport to Wilmington makes possible the completion of a circular 16-mile path connecting jobs, schools, cultural institutions and state and national parks.

Advocates for the “Wilmington Loop” say plans for the Newport River Trail leaves a roughly 2.1-mile gap through the city’s East Side as a key critical link in completion of a transformational community thoroughfare for the state’s largest city and surrounding suburbs. This segment would connect the existing, hugely successful Brandywine and Christina River trails, creating a conduit for every neighborhood in and bordering the city to access resources and recreation safely and easily. (See red highlighted section in map on page 3 below and detailed Wilmington section map on page 4.)

“This is an exciting and important step in completion of the Loop,” said Scott Johnson, a businessman and leader of WilCO – the Wilmington Loop Coalition. “A trail connecting East Side residents with the beauty, fun and practical value of the Brandywine and Christina trails is long overdue, and it is an essential missing link in a trail that will be a game changer for Delaware’s economy and quality of life, and we need to get it done.”

“The immense value of community trails here in Delaware and across the country – from an economic, environmental and public health standpoint – is clear, and we are delighted to see this funding for the Newport River Trail and thankful to our Congressional delegation, Gov. Carney and County Executive Meyer for their support,” said Mary Roth, executive director of Delaware Greenways. “We are looking forward to continuing to work with state and city leaders to make that critical connection a reality.”

“We often joke about how connected we all are and the limited degrees of separation in our city of 70,000 and state of one million,” said Logan S. Herring, Sr., CEO of the WRK Group. “However, these blurred lines come into focus as it pertains to access and opportunity, and I see these barriers clearly everyday working in Riverside and Northeast Wilmington - barriers to jobs, education, and community resources. By connecting the Wilmington Loop through the city, we can help make the promise of true community connectivity a reality.”

“The city is pleased to be part of a wonderful project being led by the Wilmington Loop Coalition,” said Wilmington Mayor Mike Purzycki. “This initiative has picked up encouraging momentum and the city supports the effort to create numerous outdoor recreational opportunities to explore our great city as well as beautiful neighboring environs. Congratulations to all who see the tremendous value in the completion of the Loop.”

A natural extension of a complete city trail through Alapocas Woods and Rockford Park will make thousands of jobs in the state's thriving bioscientific research, health care and banking sectors just north of the city accessible for Wilmington residents via bike or foot. Simultaneously, the Loop will provide a safe, easy way for suburban employees and apartment and neighborhood dwellers to access city jobs and cultural amenities. Combining the city link and this extension, less than 6 miles of trail in total is needed to complete the full loop. (This segment is highlighted in yellow in the map below.)

About the Wilmington Loop

In September of 2021, a group of civic, educational, business and government leaders came together in support of the Wilmington Loop, a proposed transformational public infrastructure project that would create a continuous community trail around Delaware's largest city. The WILCO group includes:

Scott Johnson, Johnson Commercial Real Estate
Mary Roth, Delaware Greenways
Michael Fleming, Delaware BioScience Association
Logan Herring, WRK Group
Rod Ward, CSC
Patrick Callahan, LabWare
Greg Pettinaro, Pettinaro Company
Brian DiSabatino, EDiS Company
Chris Buccini, Buccini/Pollin Group, Inc.
Gene Delle Donne, Avenue North
Rep. Krista Griffith
Rep. Mike Smith
Sen. Spiros Mantzavinos
Megan McGlinchey, Riverfront Development Corp.
Jennifer Kmiec, Committee of 100
The Hon. Ryshema Dixon, Wilmington City Council
The Hon. James Spadola, Wilmington City Council
Bob Perkins, Delaware Business Roundtable
Cathy Parsells, Kalmar Nyckel Foundation
Paul Herdman, Rodel Foundation
Linda Jennings, Community Education Building
Aaron Bass, East Side Charter
Nate Durant, Freire Charter School

The coalition urged state, county and city leaders to leverage and extend existing trail networks to seamlessly connect the Northern Delaware Greenway Trail, the Jack Markell Trail, the cities of Wilmington, Newport and New Castle, multiple National Heritage sites, state and local parks and hundreds of thousands of people with great jobs, restaurants, and cultural attractions. Coalition members said doing so will improve public health, lift-up isolated, underserved neighborhoods and spark economic renewal and expansion benefiting every citizen.

Wilmington Trail is Key Gap

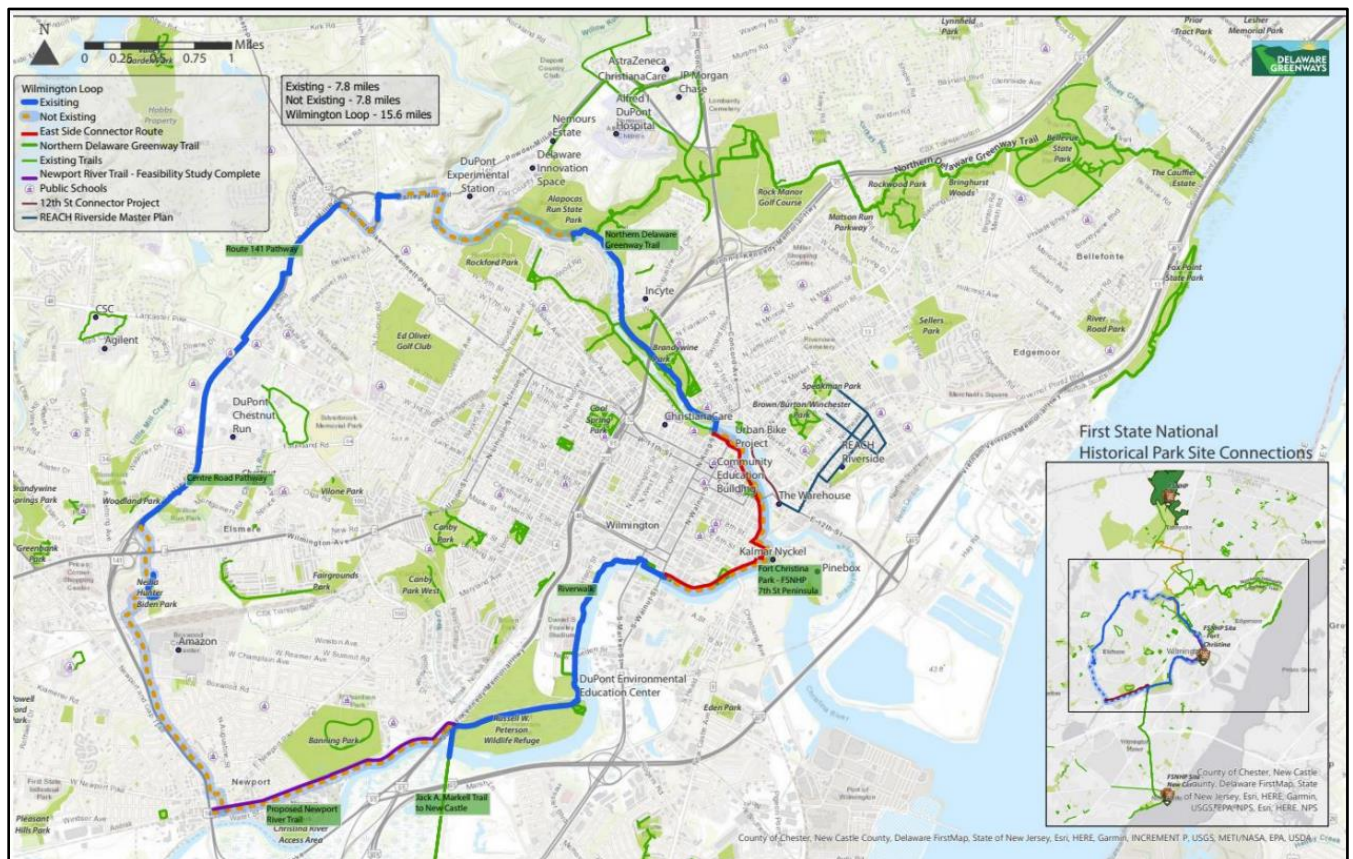
A critical remaining phase of the Loop, the East Side Connector, will link Wilmington's East Side neighborhood with the beautiful Brandywine and Christina River trails that each currently end in that underserved community. Linking these two city river trails will connect a historically disadvantaged community now seeing significant investment with transportation, jobs, schools, and recreational

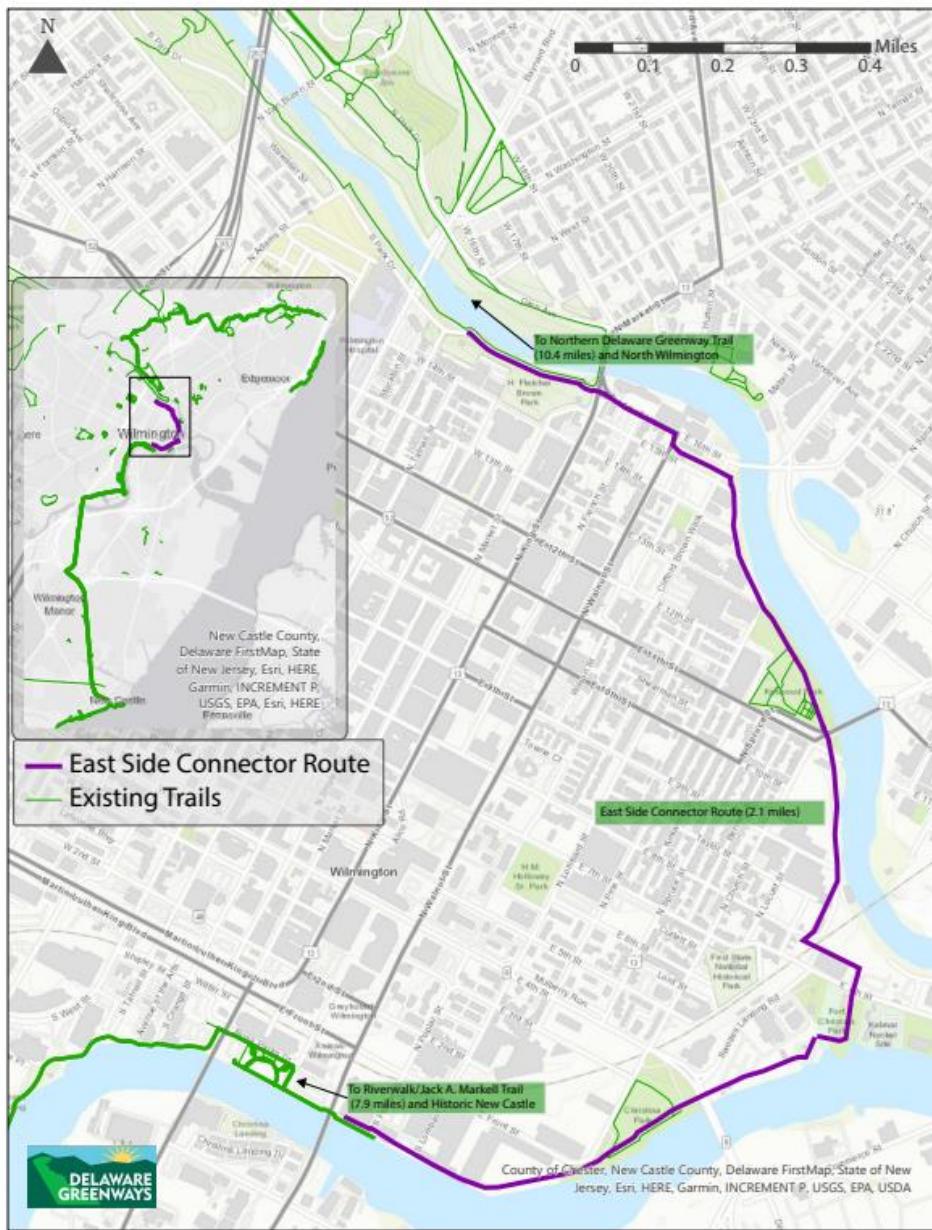
opportunities. This Brandywine-Christina trail link will be a powerful catalyst for connecting neighborhoods across the city.

With the impending connection between Newport and the Wilmington Riverfront, a complete loop around Delaware's largest population center is within reach.

Beyond being just a bike or pedestrian pathway, the proposed Wilmington Loop would be a destination: a compelling, differentiated selling point for the entire state. No state in the region offers such a distinguishing asset. And the Wilmington Loop abounds with possibility for ideas and events – bike-loan stations, scooter rentals, festivals, races and more.

Learn more about the Wilmington Loop at www.delawaregreenways.org





Contacts

Mary Roth, Delaware Greenways: mroth@delawaregreenways.org

Scott Johnson, WILCO: sjohnson@jcomre.com

Michael Fleming, Delaware Bio: michael.fleming@delawarebio.org