

Dear Governor Carney and DelDOT Secretary Cohan,

In line with Delaware's existing efforts to improve pedestrian and driver safety and as an effort to prevent future accidents on Route One in North Bethany, south of the Indian River Inlet Bridge to the Town of Bethany, we have recently formed The Coalition for a Safer North Bethany. We are a well-organized group of 20+ North Bethany neighborhoods (~1,200 homes) and other community stakeholders including the 3 main North Bethany restaurants (Sodel Concepts: Blue Coast Bethany & Matt's Fish Camp and La Vida Hospitality Group: The Big Chill), the leading Bethany real estate firms and property management companies, all of the bike shops, the leading Sussex County area cyclist clubs and other concerned partners listed below.

We are asking for your assistance and support to:

1. Lower the speed limit on Route One in North Bethany from the current 55mph to 45mph thus improving the driver's field of vision.
2. Add traffic calming modifications such as transverse markings and Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFBs) on Route One in North Bethany.
3. Improve driver awareness by modernizing signage and adding Dynamic Speed Display Devices.
4. Increase enforcement on this three mile stretch from the Indian River Inlet Bridge to Town of Bethany, especially during the summer months.

Our goal is to save lives on this road by improving both pedestrian and driver safety. There is little question from a public safety standpoint that the speed limit along this short but densely populated stretch of Route One needs to be reduced at least to 45mph, similar to the new 45mph speed limit south of Fred Hudson Road along Route One to Town of Bethany.

In the past, some opposition to a lower speed limit was based on the misconception that said reduction would increase drive time significantly. However, at a reduced speed of 45 mph vs 55mph prior, actual driver travel time for this three-mile stretch would change by less than one minute.

We believe that a proper analysis of risk to life here needs to start with a national driver and pedestrian safety program called VISION ZERO (<https://visionzeronetwork.org/about/what-is-vision-zero/>) and similar to what Delaware calls Toward Zero Deaths. There should be no tradeoffs when it comes to saving lives. Mobility is a basic human right. The current practice of setting speed limits based on the "single factor" of 85th percentile free-flow speeds is insufficient for this complex growing residential area.

According to the Delaware Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) Section 2B.13.16 other factors to be considered when establishing or reevaluating speed limits would include pedestrian activity (point D, which is booming) and crash experience (point E, which we hope to lower.)

The coalition requests a total reevaluation of the current 55mph speed limit and a new DelDOT study not just of the pace of current traffic flow in North Bethany but of the increasing risk to pedestrians and drivers during the busy summer season.

We would ask that the new DelDOT study specifically measure:

1. The growth in recreational pedestrian traffic use (i.e. runners, bikers, walkers) along the shoulders of this section of Route One in North Bethany, as well as the number of pedestrians crossing Route One in North Bethany to access the beach, the bay and homes in this residential area.
2. The number of cars entering and exiting the 20+ neighborhoods and restaurants in North Bethany where cars enter or leave Route One without the benefit of an acceleration or deceleration lane. This massive risk should be properly analyzed.
3. The increased use of the northern trailhead for the popular Fresh Pond Delaware Seashore State Park on the west side of Route One just south of the Ocean Ridge West community. Sadly, a cyclist was killed here on Route One a few years ago. <https://www.destateparks.com/wwwroot/maps/delaware-seashore/FreshPond.pdf>

The Bethany Beach area is marketed to both tourists and homeowners as the family oriented “Quiet Resorts” but the dangerous situation along Route One in North Bethany, where the speed limit remains at 55mph, puts this very reputation in jeopardy. The outmoded 55mph speed limit, given the rapid growth of the area, is another accident waiting to happen.

Importantly, this should not be a seasonal resident or tourist vs. year-round resident issue. Saving lives and pedestrian safety is something that year-round residents, part time residents and tourists all should care about. Many in North Bethany are seasonal but also plan on retiring and voting here.

We are confident that you share our concern for the welfare of all citizens. Without more of a focus on safety in North Bethany, all of the Bethany Beach area will lose its identity as a family seaside resort.

The Coalition for a Safer North Bethany would like your support.  
Slow Down & Save Lives!

Seth Hamed  
Coalition for a Safer North Bethany founder  
410.935.4717

List of communities, businesses and stakeholders supporting Coalition for a Safer North Bethany:

Indian Harbor Villas  
The Villas at Beach Cove  
The Cove  
Whartons Cove  
Atlantic Watergate  
Tower Shores  
Breakwater Beach  
Cotton Patch Hills East  
Cotton Patch Hills West  
Ocean Ridge  
Ocean Ridge West  
Gulls Nest  
The Preserve  
Bayberry Dunes  
Pelicans Pouch  
Bethany Dunes  
Bethany Village  
Ocean Village  
Seabreak  
Sea Del Estates  
The Leslie Kopp Group at Long and Foster  
ResortQuest Delaware LLC Rentals & Property Mngmt  
Coldwell Banker Vacations  
Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage  
Crowley Associates Realty  
Keller Williams Realty  
Ocean Atlantic Sotheby's International Realty  
Northrop Realty Bethany / Tom Dambrogi  
Matt's Fish Camp / SoDel Concepts  
Blue Coast Bethany / SoDel Concepts  
The Big Chill Beach Club / La Vida Hospitality Group  
Sussex Cyclists Club  
Bicycle Connection, Inc. Bethany  
Bethany Bike Shop  
Ocean Cycles Bethany  
Fenwick Islander Bicycle Shop