

Livable Delaware Activity

Activity/Policy/Program name: Interconnectivity Policy

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Purpose: The Interconnectivity policy will explain why and where the Department will require developers to make and plan for street connections to adjacent future residential property. The reason for this is that it helps to shorten the distance people have to travel and makes it quicker and safer for people who are walking or bicycling to get from one neighborhood to another.

Enabling Laws: 17 Del. C. § 5086 (Subdivision Regulatory Authority), 17 Del. C. § 132 (General Authority)

Policies: (S-23) Stub Street for Future Interconnection Policy

History: The Department has used an unwritten policy supporting the interconnection of subdivisions to shape, in part, its reviews of subdivision plans. The premise upon which the Department has required interconnections is that interconnections within subdivisions benefit the transportation system. By creating a network of local streets allowing local residents the ability to create efficient trips to their destinations and thereby distribute and thus reduce the number of trips on the arterial system, the transportation system can benefit. As such, the Department requires, as a condition of our approval, that interconnections between subdivisions be provided as possible.

Current Situation: In recent years, interconnections have come under scrutiny by various segments of the community for various reasons. The predominate concern comes from existing subdivisions through/between which interconnection/s to adjacent lands have been planned. Some adjacent lands may not develop for a number of years. However, when they do develop, the older community objects to having their neighbors traffic in their development (the NIMBY, or last-in philosophies). Second, the issue of short-cutting through communities has recently been expressed as a concern by community members. As traffic continues to increase on collector and arterial streets, individuals using these roadways seek advantage by shortcutting through a subdivision and using the interconnections to gain that advantage. Third, as the rate of crime goes up in these subdivisions, concern has been expressed that interconnections provide multiple avenues of escape for the criminal element hindering law enforcement. Finally, the Planning Board for New Castle County has raised concerns about the Department's use of this unwritten policy and its consistency with the recently adopted Uniform Development Code in the county.

This policy supports the goals of Livable Delaware. Specifically, it promotes mobility by providing options for people to enter and exit their subdivision. It also will relieve nearby intersections of unnecessary trips. The policy will be developed in conjunction with local government planning departments and will therefore support the goal of multi-agency coordination.

Revisions/Actions Needed: The Department's approach to interconnectivity needs to be formalized. Rather than create a separate policy, this approach needs to be incorporated into the re-write of the Department's Subdivision Manual, which is currently underway. Companion pieces such as Policy S-23 should also be incorporated into the same document. A series of criteria, establishing the guidelines for decision making on requiring interconnectivity need to be created as part of the re-write.

Resources needed to create/revise: No new resources, other than those currently available, are needed to address this issue.

Process for creation/revision: This issue will be incorporated into the re-write of the Subdivision Manual (discussed separately), including a series of criteria to provide the guidance for decision-making on the requirement for interconnectivity.

Schedule: The re-write of the Subdivision Manual should be completed in 24 months.

Measures to guide progress: Regular reporting on progress toward the scheduled completion of the Subdivision Manual rewrite. Measure the Connectivity Index of approved subdivision plans and determine the average. To gauge how well we are doing with respect to the standards

Interactions or inter-relationships with other agencies or units of government: Coordination will be needed with each entity of county or local government responsible for subdivision plan review. Coordination is also needed with police, emergency and fire equipment operators on the social issues associated with interconnections.