



Town of Delmar, DE



2020 Comprehensive Plan
Adoption Date March 1, 2021



The foundation of our Town is built on the strength, patience, understanding, suggestions, and support of our residents, which has proven to maintain a resilient community over the many decades.



The Comprehensive Plan
of the
Town of Delmar, Delaware

Adopted March 1, 2021

Certified March 1, 2021

Delmar Council

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Mary Lee Pase – Vice Mayor

Gregory Smith - Council Member

William Boyan – Council Member

Planning & Zoning Commission

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is the official guide to the long-term physical development of Delmar, Delaware. It has the force of law and development proposals must be consistent with the Plan. It is also the basis for land use regulations such as the Town's zoning code.

This is an update to our Comprehensive Plan, which was last adopted in 2010. Its purpose is to guide future growth and development in a way that preserves Delmar's unique character, enhances economic vitality, and protects vital natural resources through the year 2040.

Framework for Planning

The Town of Delmar, Delaware shares governmental operations with the Town of Delmar, Maryland. Although operational functions are shared between the towns, both must produce plans that meet their respective State mandates. Fortunately, there is a combined Planning and Zoning Commission. Delmar, Maryland adopted its Plan in 2009 and the next update is scheduled for 2022. A copy of the Plan is available upon request of the Town Office and can be reviewed on the Town's website or the website of the Maryland Department of Planning.

Authority to Plan

The Town of Delmar derives its comprehensive planning powers from Title 22, Chapter 3 of the Annotated Code of Delaware and its authority to zone from Chapter 7. The State of Delaware requires that each municipality prepare a comprehensive development plan and that the plan be reviewed every five years and revised, updated and amended as necessary, and readopted every ten years.

Once the State has reviewed the plan and finds that it meets the requirements of Delaware Code, and is consistent with the Strategies for State Policies and Spending, the Governor is asked to certify the plan. After a comprehensive plan or portion thereof has been adopted by the municipality, the plan has the force of law and no development shall be permitted except as consistent with the plan¹.

Severability Clause

Should a court decide that any section or provision of this comprehensive land use plan is unconstitutional or invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of this plan as a whole or any part other than the part judged unconstitutional or invalid.

Public Involvement

The Planning Commission conducted four work sessions and meetings during the planning process in which the public could join discussions of the plan as it was being prepared and reviewed: September 10, 2020, January 21, 2021, and February 11, 2021. The Town also sought input through a survey of residents through the late summer of 2020 which generated extensive written answers from three households to the following questions:

- What changes would you like to see in Town?
- Would you like to see the Town grow or remain the same?
- What type of growth would you like to see?

The responses indicated a desire for continued planned growth, growth that is balanced with the capacity in local schools, commercial development including restaurants, outdoor recreational opportunities, downtown revitalization, and the restoration of older buildings. The responses were shared with the Planning Commission and Town Council.

¹ Per Section 702(d), Title 22, of the Annotated Code of Delaware.

At its October 5, 2020 meeting, the Mayor and Town Council reviewed the draft plan and voted to release it for formal public review. At its meeting on January 21, 2021, the Delmar Planning Commission deliberated on the comments received during the review period and on February 11, 2021, after further deliberation and an additional opportunity for public comment, it indicated its support and transmitted it to the Delmar Mayor and Council for a public hearing and official adoption. The Mayor and Council held a public hearing on the Plan on March 1, 2021 and adopted it following the close of the hearing.

Overall Goal

We recognize that, for comprehensive planning purposes, the State line that runs through Delmar is mostly inconsequential. What is good for the Delaware side is good for the Maryland side. The same essential facilities serve all residents of Delmar and the land use decisions on one side of State Street impact the other side too.

The main goal of this Plan is to guide our combined Town in becoming an ever-greater place to live, work, learn, visit, shop, and play characterized by:

- a strong sense of community,
- stable residential neighborhoods,
- vibrant businesses,
- the protection of historic character, and
- the creation of open spaces for both recreation and conservation.

Pursuant to Delaware planning law, this Plan sets forth our positions and policies on multiple aspects of the Town's growth and development including population growth, land use development, and key infrastructure. While this plan satisfies the requirements of Delaware planning law and the need for a timely plan submittal, it is our intention within five years to merge this Comprehensive Plan with one comprehensive plan that encompasses both the Maryland and Delaware sides of our unified town, meeting the separate but complimentary standards of both States. We will then submit a combined plan for Delaware state certification.

BACKGROUND

This part of the Comprehensive Plan summarizes historic and existing conditions. It addresses population trends, natural environmental conditions, land use, and transportation. It also discusses the current state of the Town's community facilities, including water and sewer systems.

Location

As shown on Map 1, Delmar is situated on the Mason-Dixon Line, which runs through the center of the community along State Street. Delmar, DE is on the north side of the line in southwestern Sussex County. Delmar, MD, on the south side of the line, is in north-central Wicomico County. Made of two separate municipalities, Delmar is a single, unified entity.

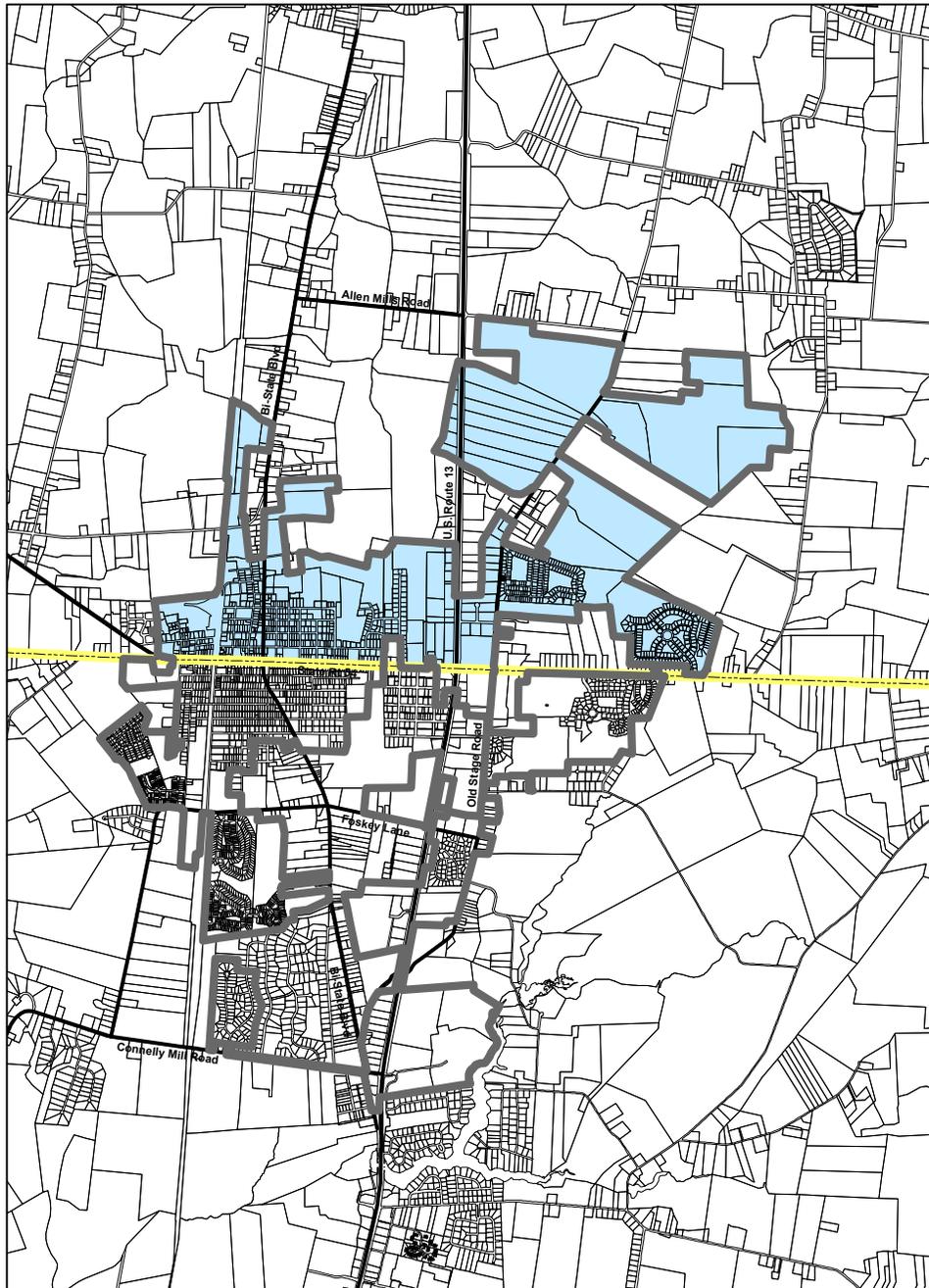
The community is situated along U.S. Route 13, a major north-south arterial highway through Sussex County, connecting Delmar to the towns of Laurel, Seaford, Bridgeville and eventually to Dover. South of Delmar, U.S. Route 13 enters Salisbury, MD and intersects with U.S. Route 50.

Population and Economic Characteristics²

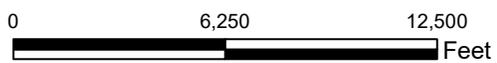
Population

As shown in Table 1, Delmar DE's current estimated population is 1,822. Since 2010, it has increased by 225 residents or by 14%. Over the 19-year period since 2000, the Town added 415 residents, growing at an average annual rate of 1.37%. Over the same period, the combined towns grew at an average annual rate of 2.45%, nearly twice the rate of Delmar, DE.

² The 2020 Census data will be available to Delmar within two years, at which time the Town will incorporate these data into the Plan as an addendum to this report. We believe the 2010 Census data is too far removed to be a reliable source of data to describe the existing make-up of the community.



Map #1
Town of Delmar



Legend

-  Mason Dixon Line
-  Delmar, DE

By comparison, Sussex County's 2019 estimated population is 234,225. Since 2010 it has added 40,080 residents, representing an increase of 20.3%. Over the 19-year period since 2000, the County added 76,866 residents, growing at an average annual growth rate 2.1%³.

Table 1: Population

Year:	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2019*
Delmar, DE	881	1,015	934	943	942	962	1,407	1,597	1,822
Delmar, MD	1,184	1,328	1,291	1,191	1,238	1,430	1,859	3,003	3,354
Total	2,065	2,343	2,225	2,134	2,180	2,392	3,266	4,600	5,176

Source: US Census 1940--2010, * U.S. Census, Vintage Population Estimates

Over the past nearly 20 years, Delmar, DE has grown at a slower rate than the combined town and Sussex County. As a result, the Delmar, DE share of the combined town's population has fallen from 43% in 2000 to 35% and its share of Sussex County's populations has fallen slightly and remains just under 1%.

Income and Housing Values

Table 2 compares the Delmar, DE with Delmar, MD and Sussex County⁴. Town's median household income of \$40,529 is only 2/3 of that recorded in both the County and Delmar, MD. While the estimated median income differs substantially between the towns, the estimate of persons in poverty is about the same at 16.3%, roughly one in six residents, or 300 people in Delmar, DE lives in a household with an income below the poverty line. For context in 2018, the U.S. Census poverty threshold for a family of two adults and two children was \$25,465. For a person living alone, over the age of 65, the threshold was \$13,064.

³ The 2000 U.S. Census recorded the population of Sussex County as 157,389.

⁴ U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS), 2014-2018, 5-year estimate. This was the last report period for data at the municipal level. The ACS estimating program is no longer operated by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Table 2: Housing and Income

	Delmar, DE	Delmar, MD	Sussex County
Housing Units	719	1,428	135,529
Median Household Income	\$40,529	\$60,275	\$60,853
Persons in Poverty	16.3%	15.0%	12.3%
Median Housing Value	\$147,600	\$120,500	\$248,900

The median home value is estimated to be about \$27,000 higher than in Delmar, MD, owing in part to the relatively larger number of mobile homes on the Maryland side. Relative to Sussex County however, the Town's median home value is only 60% of the County's.

Natural Features

Climate

The climate of the Delmarva Peninsula is influenced by proximity to both the Atlantic Ocean and the Chesapeake Bay. This climate, "East Coast Marine", is distinguished as warm and humid with no distinct dry season. Summer weather is influenced by sub-tropical warm moist air moving poleward. Winter precipitation results mostly from continental air masses moving west to east, though ocean air moving west can provide a warming effect.

Average annual temperature approximates 57 degrees F. The month of July is the warmest month with temperatures reaching above 90 degrees F. The coldest period, late January to early February, can have temperatures in the 20's F. Temperatures of 32 degrees F or lower can be expected on about 90 days.

Annual precipitation averages about 46 inches of which 12.4 inches fall as snow. Drought may occur at any time of the year, though even the drier summer months usually receive 1.2 inches of precipitation.

Physiography

The Eastern Shore / Delmarva Peninsula is of fairly recent geologic origin, resulting from a gradual decline in sea level. The decline in Sea Level created a number of marine terraces, which determine elevation and geologic age. Delmar is located on the Penholoway Marine Terrace, which ranges between 40 to 70 feet above sea level.

The relief of the Delmar area ranges from nearly level to slightly sloping with local relief provided by stream and erosion action. State Street through the center of Delmar is not only the state line, it's also the line between watersheds. The Wicomico River Watershed is south of State street and the land here drains and slopes gradually southward. On the north side of State Street, the community is within The Little Creek-Broad Creek Watershed.

Ground Water Hydrology

Approximately 50% of the annual precipitation that falls on the Lower Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay becomes ground water recharge, while the rest is lost to surface runoff, evaporation, or transpiration. The relatively permeable soils and the lack of topographic relief result in a high water table. In the wetter months when evaporation and transpiration are low, the water table often exceeds ground level, creating areas too wet for urban use.

Ground water resources in the Delmar area are generally abundant and readily developed. The layered unconsolidated formations of sand and clay that constitute the Atlantic Coastal Plain provide the structure for the Eastern Shore's aquifer system. An aquifer is a permeable underground geological formation through which ground water flows. There are two aquifers of importance to Delmar, the Manokin Aquifer and the Naylor Mill Paleo channel. The Manokin Aquifer, at a depth of approximately 140 feet below sea level, provides a water yield of 150 to 1,000 gallons per minute. In many places, as a result of unique geologic configurations, the Manokin Aquifer may be artesian. The chemical character of the water varies widely and may be mildly acidic and/or high in iron content in certain places.

The Paleo Channel

The Paleo channel is a bed of an ancient river that lies at a depth of 75 to 175 feet below the surface. It is a channel scoured in an earlier geologic age when sea level was much lower. So much water had been captured in glaciers that the shoreline of the sea was at the edge of the continental shelf 75 miles east of Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. When the glaciers melted and the sea rose, the river slowed, and the channel gradually filled with sand and gravel. Seventy percent of the old riverbed is filled with sand and gravel. The remainder is filled with water. The Paleo channel is entirely within the Maryland borders of the Town and development over it is specifically regulated to prevent water contamination.

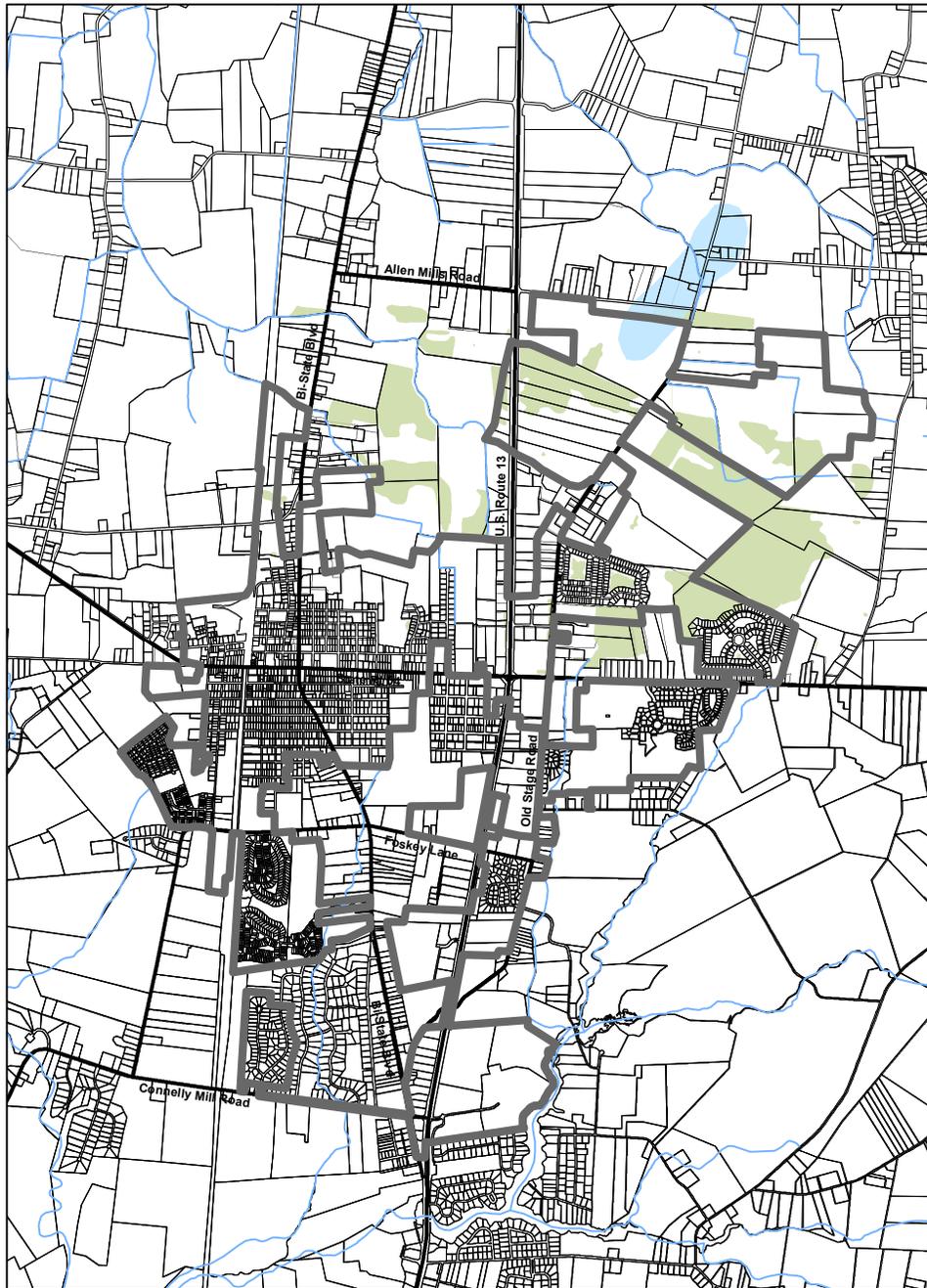
Soils

The soils underlying the traditional old Town of Delmar are Matawan-Norfolk associations, which according to the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, consist of level to gently sloping, moderately well-drained to well-drained, generally sandy, upland soils that have a subsoil of fine, sandy, and clay loam. These present essentially no limitation to good land development

However, much of the area including the large tracts of land that were annexed over recent years are underlain with hydric soils. Hydric soils are permanently or seasonally saturated with water to such a degree that they are depleted of oxygen. Hydric soils present limitations to land development including poor drainage, standing water, and very high water tables, which negatively impacts building, street, and infrastructure development. Hydric soils are associated with wetlands.

Wetlands and Streams

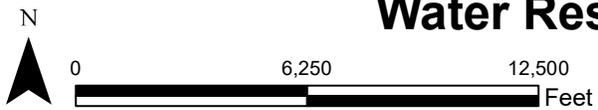
Map 2 shows the latest mapping of wetlands from the State Wetlands Mapping Project. As shown, large and mostly forested non-tidal wetlands are a dominant landform in the area north of E. State Street and east of Old Stage Road. Wetlands are low-lying areas saturated by water or even covered by water year-round or during intervals throughout the year.



Map #2 Significant Wetlands & Water Resources

Legend

- Delmar Municipal Boundary
- Stream
- Water Recharge Area
- Wetland



Existing Land Use

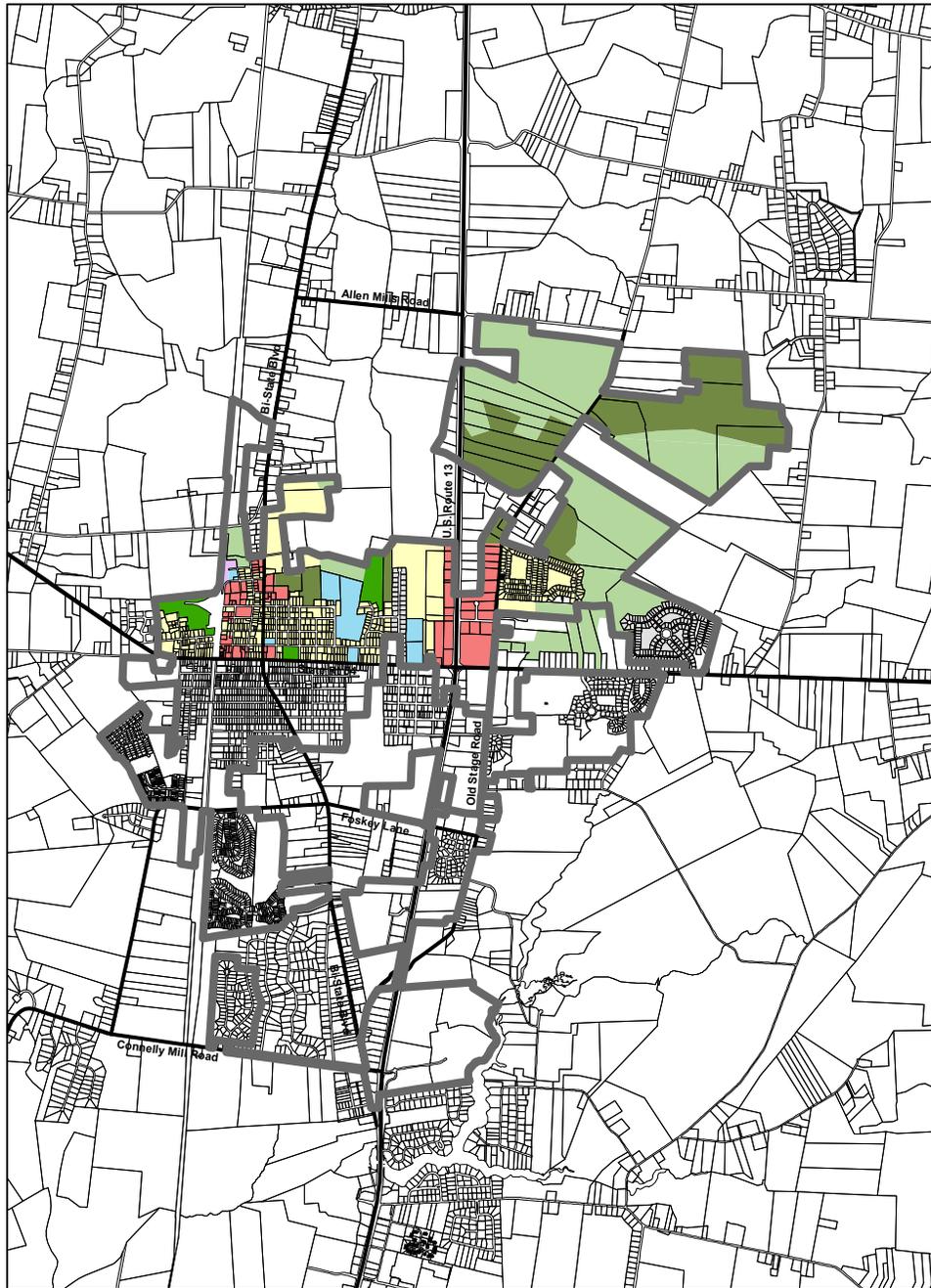
Map 3 shows the general pattern of land use in Delmar, DE in 2020. By area, wetlands, woodlands, and agricultural tracts make up the most significant use of land. Indeed, these large tracts of land exceed the total area of the historic town which is mostly in residential use.

North-south transportation routes have shaped the development of Delmar. Its center has not been fixed; instead, it has moved west to east during three periods. The historic center was established at the railroad's crossing with State Street. The remaining block of 19th and early 20th century buildings along N. Pennsylvania Avenue facing the rails attest to that legacy. The buildings are largely vacant and/or underused now, and the Town Hall and Police Station have replaced commercial uses.

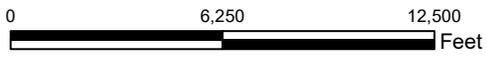
Later with the advent of the private automobile and transport of goods by truck, the Town's center shifted to State Street's intersection with Bi-State Boulevard, the original U.S. Route 13. Today, what was once intensively developed in commercial use is somewhat underutilized.

With the development of U.S. Route 13 bypassing the Town, the center of economic activity has again shifted east along State Street to its intersection with U.S. Route 13. The amount of land devoted to commercial use there is substantial, and commercial uses have extended northward. The two legacy commercial centers along State Street and the new commercial concentration along U.S. Route 13 are visible as on the Existing Land Use Map.

The residential base of Delmar, which grew around the State Street/ Bi-State Boulevard commercial center remains. It developed with a highly walkable street grid with typical blocks at dimensions of roughly 300 feet by 340 feet. On the south, or Maryland side of State Street the grid extends eastward to U.S. 13. On the north side, the grid encompasses the high school but stops at N. 101 Street, about 1/3 of a mile west of U.S. Route 13. Newer residential subdivisions with both single family and multifamily homes have been developed without reference to Delmar's historic grid pattern.



Map #3 Existing Land Use



Legend

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| Delmar Municipal Boundary | Residential |
| Wetlands / Woodlands | Commercial |
| Agriculture | Industrial |
| Park / Open Space | Vacant |
| Institutional | |

Transportation

Salisbury-Wicomico County Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

The Salisbury/Wicomico County Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the federally designated transportation planning agency for the region from Seaford, Delaware to Fruitland, Maryland. The MPO develops a long-range transportation plan that examines how to improve safety, accessibility, and connectivity. The combined Towns of Delmar and the proposed growth area are within the MPO's region.

The latest regional plan, Connect 2045, was adopted in 2015 and amended in 2018 and looks through the year 2050. The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) guides the units and agencies of government, including Delmar, in planning and developing a regional Transportation Improvement Plan, which is a short-term program to provide Federal funding for transportation improvements.

Highways

U.S. Route 13 is a major north-south regional highway connecting to Wilmington and points beyond. Through Delmar it is a four-lane divided highway with shoulders and dedicated right-hand turning lanes and a variable width grass median, which generally approximates 35 feet.

With few exceptions, the management of access to U.S. Route 13 within the Town has favored coordinated and strategically located intersections and crossovers using major commercial driveways or streets such as Thornton Ave. In limiting access in this way and channelizing traffic to certain crossing points, the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) is seeking to preserve the capacity of the highway for regional through traffic while still accommodating local access and circulation needs. Recent town planning along the highway is distinguished by the large building setbacks from the highway and inter-parcel connecting streets and commercial drives. This has allowed commercial traffic to move through the area without excessive turning movements onto and off of the highway. On the east side of the highway, Old Stage Road actually operates as a service drive to commercial businesses. This pattern preserves flexibility for overpasses should they be required in future decades.

This is a good place to mention DelDOT's Corridor Capacity Preservation Program, the goals of which are supported by this Plan⁵. The State has designed the program to maintain the regional importance and functionality of certain designated highway corridors, including U.S. Route 13. Because land use decisions made at the local level can impact the traffic carrying capacity of the highway, local jurisdictions like Delmar coordinate with DelDOT in the review of land use development projects along the route. The program's primary goals are to maintain the highway's ability to handle traffic safely and efficiently, minimize the impacts of increased economic development, preserve the ability to make future improvements, and sort local and through traffic.

To the west, State Street (Delaware Road 54) connects Delmar to U.S. Route 50 at Sharptown, Maryland and U.S. Route 50 provides access to the Atlantic beach communities east of Delmar. Through Delmar, State Street is an attractive two-way street mostly lined with houses and sidewalks. An ongoing problem for State Street through Town has been its use as a trucking route between U.S. Route 50 to U.S. Route 13. State Street is signalized at only two intersections, Bi-State Boulevard (U.S. Route 13A) and U.S. Route 13.

Bi-State Boulevard connects Delmar with the towns of Laurel and Seaford to the north, and to the south, it connects with U.S. Route 13 at Connelly Mill Road. Within Delmar, it is an important north-south collector road. The intersection of State Street and Bi-State Boulevard is problematic in that the State Street approach lanes are narrow without room for left turning lanes which adds congestion and delay.

The regional highway system as described above presents some problems that impair residential quality and hamper the local traffic in Delmar. There is a high volume of truck traffic passing through town. It is caused by the fact that trucks of local origin must use the collector system in the center of town to reach major regional highways. This situation is aggravated by trucks that use DE 54 as a short-cut between U.S. 50 and U.S. 13 and those that pass through Town to avoid weigh stations on U.S. 13.

⁵ In 1996, the Delaware General Assembly passed legislation enabling DelDOT to develop a program to protect corridors serving "predominantly statewide and/or regional travel in the State. The law established a roadway nomination process, and four highway corridors were identified for the program including U.S. Route 13.

Local Streets

The local street system, which is comprised primarily of residential streets, was formed into a grid pattern. In many cases, streets are not perfectly aligned where they intersect other streets, thereby forming off-sets or jogs. This is usually not a problem as travel speeds and volumes are typical of local streets with a residential character. This is an issue at the Pennsylvania Avenue / State Street intersection. Pennsylvania Avenue (in combination with York Street) carries heavier than average north-south traffic including truck traffic which makes the off-set intersection near the railroad line problematic.

With narrow widths, small blocks, and intersecting streets, the Town's core is highly interconnected and very walkable. The typical street is narrow, averaging about 30 feet in width for east-west streets and about 20 feet for north-south streets. Some residential lots, particularly in the oldest sections, lack parking spaces and on-street parking on narrow streets typically means that vehicles must yield way for oncoming traffic, which effectively keeps traffic speeds slow throughout. In some locations, one-way street pairs have been established but this is not the norm. There are few public parking areas in the historic downtown which can tend to shift parking demand onto residential streets.

Delmar's streets are generally in good condition; although, as with many older communities, reconstruction and repaving of streets is a constant need. However, curb, gutter and sidewalks are often absent especially for many of the north-south streets causing some drainage issues and a concern for pedestrian safety.

Railroad

The regional line of Norfolk Southern traverses north and south through Town. The Town was founded as a rail transfer and classification center for the Delmarva Peninsula railroads. Rail traffic has been on the decline since the 1940's because truck transportation is often cheaper and more convenient.

Regional Airport

The Salisbury-Wicomico Airport is the closest regional airport. The airport provides commuter service to Charlotte, North Carolina and the Philadelphia International Airport. Flights are scheduled throughout the day and on weekends. The Salisbury-Wicomico Airport is the second largest airport in Maryland. Currently, the airport is served by American Airlines and a Flight Service Center operated by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Community Facilities

Municipal Water

Groundwater Sources

Delmar's source of potable water is groundwater from the Manokin and Columbia Aquifers. The Town has two wells but only well 3A is currently supplying water to the public distribution system. These wells are located near the Delmar Water Treatment Plant (WTP) on York Street. Both yield high quality water with the exception of moderate iron contamination. In June 2008, the Town published the "Annual Drinking Water Quality Report for 2007" stating there were no violations of EPA Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCL).

In 2009, the Town adopted a Wellhead Protection Ordinance to prevent source water contamination through use of land use regulations. The Town will utilize the Ordinance during project planning, evaluate potential problem areas, and present solutions to prevent source water contamination.

Water Appropriations & Use Permit

The Town's Water Appropriation and Use Permit (WAUP) allows for withdrawal of 438,000 gallons per well for a total of 876,000 gallons on a daily average. The permit allows for up to 650,000 gallons to be withdrawn from each well during the maximum day. Over the past three years, the annual daily average has been approximately 410,000 per day with a peak month average daily usage of approximately 450,000 gallons per day.

These numbers show that the Town's permitted water yield allowed by the present WAUP is sufficient to meet the Town's current usage demands. However, "Ten States Standards" (Recommended Standards for Water Works, 2007) requires that the total source capacity meets the peak demand with the largest well out of service. The Town is currently attempting to construct a redundant back-up well at the Water Treatment Facility (in Delmar, DE), which will allow the Town to meet supply requirements and permit regulations with the largest well out of service. Raw water from the wells is treated at the water treatment plant on York Street.

Water Storage

"Ten States Standards" require that finished water storage facilities have sufficient capacity to meet one day's domestic usage plus fire flows. Where source water and water treatment facilities have back-up power, available capacity can supplement peak storage demands.

Storage for the distribution system is provided by two elevated storage tanks. One 250,000-gallon water tower is located on York Street at the treatment plant. The second, a 300,000-gallon leg tank is located on Foskey Lane. The towers provide a system pressure of approximately 50 PSI.

The domestic usage, the average daily usage during the peak month, equals 450,000 gallons. The required fire flow storage equals 180,000 gallons⁶. Therefore, total storage required is 630,000 gallons. The existing elevated storage tanks provide total storage of 550,000 gallons. The water supply and treatment systems can supplement an additional 650,000 gallons per day, if required. Therefore, the two towers, plus supplemental storage offered by the water supply and treatment facilities with their back-up power, provide sufficient storage capacity and pressures for the existing system demands.

Distribution System

The Town is served by a single distribution system consisting of 4-inch through 12-inch diameter water mains with isolation valves and fire hydrants. Significant distribution system upgrades were made between 2012 and 2019. Many of the older 4-inch lines have been upgraded. However, some undersized mains still inhibit fire flows and pressures and do not meet the minimum 6-inch main diameter for fire protection systems per the "Ten States Standards".

⁶ Calculated based on 1,500 GPM fire flow for 2 hours.

Sewerage System

Collection and Transmission

The Town of Delmar is served by a single sewerage system. In combination, gravity collection and sewage pumping stations convey sewage to the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). A professional assessment of the Town's systems has provided recommendations for upgrades to several major pumping stations and manifold transmission force main systems to accommodate aging infrastructure and facilities as well as recent growth and development within Town limits.

Wastewater Treatment

The Town owned and operated WWTP is located off Connelly Mill Road south of Delmar's corporate limits. Sewage is treated to enhanced nutrient removal (ENR) levels and discharged into Wood Creek, a tributary of the Wicomico River. The treatment facility is currently permitted for 850,000 gallons per day with a present 3-year average usage of 756,000 gallons per day, or 89% of rated capacity⁷. The Town has sufficient sewer collection, transmission and treatment capabilities to accommodate current user demands.

There are an estimated 75 to 80 on-site septic systems in use within Town limits in areas that are not served by the central collection system. There are no immediate plans to extend sewer service to these areas. However, the Town may eventually have to serve these areas if the septic systems fail, and therefore, the Town will reserve capacity for that.

Schools

The combined town has three schools managed by two separate school systems: Delmar Middle School and Delmar High School in Delaware are operated by the Delmar School District, one of eight school systems in Sussex County⁸. The middle school and high school share a joint facility built in 2000, along with the central offices of the school system. The Delmar Elementary

⁷ The 3-year average includes years 2017, 2018, and 2019.

⁸ Originally each side of Delmar supported its own school system, creating a needless duplication of services. Fortunately, the civic leaders had the foresight to unite both schools into a single school system. The school on Foskey Lane in Delmar, Maryland became Delmar Elementary School. The Delmar, Delaware school on Eighth Street became Delmar High School. The relations between the two school systems are formally governed by a Bi-State Agreement. All elementary school students in the Delmar, Delaware school district and the Wicomico County public school attendance area attend Delmar Elementary School for grades Pre-Kindergarten through 4th grade. The same students advance to the Delmar Middle School when they enter 5th grade through 8th grade and then continue to 9th grade through 12th grade at Delmar High School.

School is in Maryland and is operated and under the authority of the Board of Education of Wicomico County Public Schools. It is the largest elementary school in Wicomico County in terms of students and teachers. In 2019, the student enrollment numbers for the three schools were: Delmar Elementary, 857, Delmar Middle, 750 and Delmar High, 680. It is very important to the Town of Delmar that the children in the community continue to have schools within the Town to attend.

In terms of higher education, Delmar residents can choose among a variety of colleges and universities that offer distance learning and are located within a 100-mile radius in surrounding municipalities. The colleges/universities with over 2,000 students nearest to Delmar are:

- Salisbury University
- Wor-Wic Community College
- Delaware Technical and Community College
- University of Maryland-Eastern Shore
- Delaware State University
- Chesapeake College
- United States Naval Academy
- University of Delaware
- Wilmington College

Parks and Recreation

In addition to being activity centers, parks are neighborhood focal points. They can provide a favorable residential image of the community and strengthen community character.

Recreation areas are considered to be any building or land basically devoted to recreational pursuits both public and non-profit in nature. Within the Town of Delmar and the surrounding area, there are nine public and semi-public recreation areas totaling 75.5 acres as shown below.

Public and Semi---Public Recreation Areas

Name	Acreage
Woodlawn Family Campground	29.5
Delmar Park	22.0
Mason – Dixon Sports Complex	11.4
Gordy Park	5.0
Woodlawn Park	4.6
State Street Park	2.6
Bi-State Park	0.2
Westside Tot Lot	0.2
Total:	75.5

Fire and Police Services

The Delmar Fire Department provides fire protection and emergency ambulance service within a service area that extends well beyond the Town into both Wicomico and Sussex Counties. The station is located at the corner of Bi-State Boulevard and Grove Street and has space for 15 vehicles / apparatus. The department has 75 active members and uses three pumper trucks, one tank truck, one rescue truck, two ambulances, and two utility trucks.

The Delmar Police Headquarters, also interjurisdictional, is located on Pennsylvania Avenue. The Department has 12 sworn officers, one full-time officer, two part-time civilian officers, 10 vehicles, and two K9 police dogs.

Maryland Police officers must be sworn in both Delaware and Maryland to legally provide bi-state police service. In addition, there is a mutual agreement that the Delmar Police Department will serve as back up to the County and/or State institutions that occur outside the Town boundaries.

Library

The Delmar Public Library is independent of municipal government and is funded mainly by Sussex County and the State of Delaware, with supporting services being provided by the Town (e.g. sewer, free water, trash pickup). The library is situated in a beautiful building at 101 N. Bi-State Boulevard, opposite the Fire Department. It completed a building expansion in 2018 which it designed to accommodate the 20-year growth of its service area population.

THE 2040 PLAN

This Comprehensive Plan is long-range and general. It provides the organizing framework for more detailed town planning and design. Upon its adoption, development proposals will be evaluated to determine their required consistency with this Plan.

Delmar is situated in an area undergoing urbanization. The nearby City of Salisbury has grown substantially along U.S. Route 13 approaching Delmar from the south. The patterns that took hold there are taking shape in and around Delmar now. Over the past two decades, the Town has seen major commercial development and a number of residential subdivisions. Over the next two decade the Town will have the unique opportunity to guide the shape, intensity, location, and character of development.

The Strategies for State Policies and Spending and the Sussex County Comprehensive Plan recognize the need to focus future development around existing urban centers. The immediate area surrounding Delmar in the Sussex County Comprehensive Plan is identified as either Town Center or Development District. This 2020 Comprehensive Plan is consistent with State and County planning principles and recommendations because it provides that both development and land conservation be coordinated with an overall land use and municipal expansion plan, and that growing areas be served with municipal water and sewerage and be thoughtfully designed into walkable mixed use communities.

While this Plan's maps may include Delmar, MD, the recommendations and policies are officially only applicable to Delmar, DE, until such time as Delmar, MD updates its Comprehensive Plan endorsing the same recommendations. At such time, the Town intends to produce and adopt one combined and fully integrated comprehensive plan which will be provided for Delaware certification.

Position on Population Growth

While there are many factors that affect growth, in projecting population, it is useful to put a town's growth in context with the larger jurisdiction of which it is part, in this case Sussex County. Sussex County projects its population will grow to 258,760 by 2040, growing at an annual average rate of 0.4%. This is an increase of 24,535 residents over the 2019 estimate. The population of Wicomico County will grow too. Between 2019 and 2040, it is projected to add 23,040 residents, at an average annual rate of about 1% per year.

Factors that will contribute to Delmar's population growth include job growth within the region, favorable State income tax treatment in Delaware, the close proximity to the economically vibrant City of Salisbury, the planning and public facility financing policies in Delaware and Sussex County which direct growth to municipalities, and the quality of life the Town provides its residents.

Presented here are three scenarios for Delmar's growth based largely on the previous experience and past growth rates. These do not take account infrastructure capacity issues or regulations that may in practice limit or slow growth over the next 20 years. The base year for the first three projections is 2019 at the estimate of 1,822 for Delmar, DE and 5,176 for the combined town. The fourth item is the Delaware Population Consortium projection released in 2019 which has a base year of 2010 and include projections per decade through 2050.

1. If Delmar, DE grows at the same rate projected for Sussex County, the population would approximate 1,982 by 2040, adding 160 new residents. This is certainly plausible but seems increasing unlikely as recent subdivision activity can be expected to bring about more population in the near term. This is equivalent to adding 60 households.
2. If Delmar, DE grows at the same rate it grew since 2000, or 1.37 percent per year, its population would approximate 2,425 by 2040 adding about 600 residents. This is certainly possible given the factors noted above and the amount of raw land already zoned for residential use. It is equivalent to 11 new households per year for 20 years or 220 households.
3. If Delmar, DE grows at the same rate as the combined Town grew since 2000, or 2.45 percent per year, its population would approximate 3,030 by 2040, adding roughly 1,210 residents. This is possible given the extent of available raw land already zoned for residential development in Delmar, DE. It is equivalent to 22 households per year for 20 years or 450 households.

4. The Delaware Population Consortium has projected the following population levels for Delmar, DE: 2020 (1,856), 2030 (2,117) and 2040 (2,381). This projection approximates the second projection noted in this list and is only 5% lower than the third projection.

For planning purposes, this Comprehensive Plan anticipates a 2040 population between 2,500 and 3,000 for Delmar, DE equivalent to about 930 to 1,120 households. At these levels, the Town's population would comprise a slightly higher share of Sussex County's population, roughly 1 to 1.2 percent. We recognize that extending the range to 3,000 may be a modest overstatement. Given the amount of undeveloped land zoned for residential use in Town already and the capacity limitations in the Town wastewater treatment plant, we intend to approach the future conservatively and well prepared for the possibility that growth rates may surpass those experienced in recent decades.

The above projections focus only on the growth potential within Delmar, DE and do not consider the Maryland side. Because the jurisdictions share essential public facilities, a projection is needed for the combined towns too. The currently adopted Comprehensive Plan for Delmar, MD projects that it will reach of a population of at least 4,970 by the year 2030, which is about 1,620 above the current level. This is equivalent to adding about 600 new households over the next decade which in hindsight now seems rather aggressive. It is more probable that Delmar, MD will approximate this level in 2040.

Together, the combined town could reasonably expect a 2040 population of 6,800 to 7,300 people. This is equivalent to 2,540 to 2,720 households. This projection does not take account the limited capacity in the current WWTP. As a practical matter there is capacity available now only to serve existing demand and presently approved and permitted development.

The Town of Delmar supports population growth as projected here to the extent that:

1. Essential public facilities and services are expanded as needed and acceptable reserve capacities are retained in the municipal water and sewer systems; and
2. The pace of growth does not exceed the Town's ability to manage all aspects of development process and provide competent engineering and town planning reviews, permitting, and inspections.

Position on Housing Growth

In keeping with the population projections noted above, the Town anticipates the addition of 450 households at the high end of the range by 2040, assuming an average household size of 2.68 persons per household. The Town of Delmar, DE supports this level of housing growth guided by the land use recommendations of this Plan and the housing-specific policies laid out herein.

1. New residential growth will largely occur north and east of the Town's historic center on undeveloped lands zoned for residential development or on lands outside of Town limits but within the designated growth area (see Map 4). Because the undeveloped acreage within the existing boundaries exceeds what is necessary to accommodate the Town's 20-year projection, the Town will take great care to ensure that new housing growth occurs in a way that can be efficiently served by public water and sewer and other essential services and facilities including schools, parks, police, and fire services. Delmar is not interested in approving isolated subdivisions that are unconnected to the existing community. Instead it will insist on guiding development of neighborhoods that will eventually fit harmoniously together into a beautiful and economically vibrant town.
2. The Town supports the development of infill lots and will consider ways to incentivize the rehabilitation of older housing units. The Town will maintain a reserve of water and sewer capacity to ensure that all exiting lots of record can be developed for housing as allowed under the Zoning Ordinance.
3. The Town will promote a variety of housing types over time such as single-family detached houses, townhouses, and apartment buildings. Other housing types that fit compatibly with single-family houses, such as duplexes, quadplexes, courtyard apartment buildings, and cottage clusters will be encouraged in existing neighborhoods and required in newly developing neighborhoods. The objective is to bring about, over time, a diverse housing stock that meets the needs of all age groups and income levels. The Town will consider amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to address this policy. However, the Town will keep its zoning rules preventing the conversion of single-family homes to apartment rentals.
4. The Town will implement a comprehensive strategy to promote the production of housing units that meets the needs of households with incomes insufficient to afford the market prices for housing. Programs at the local, state, and federal level will be synthesized into a *Delmar Strategy* to address the needs of resident households who either reside in substandard housing, meet the HUD cost-burdened standards, or have unaddressed housing needs related to disability and age.

Position on General Land Use

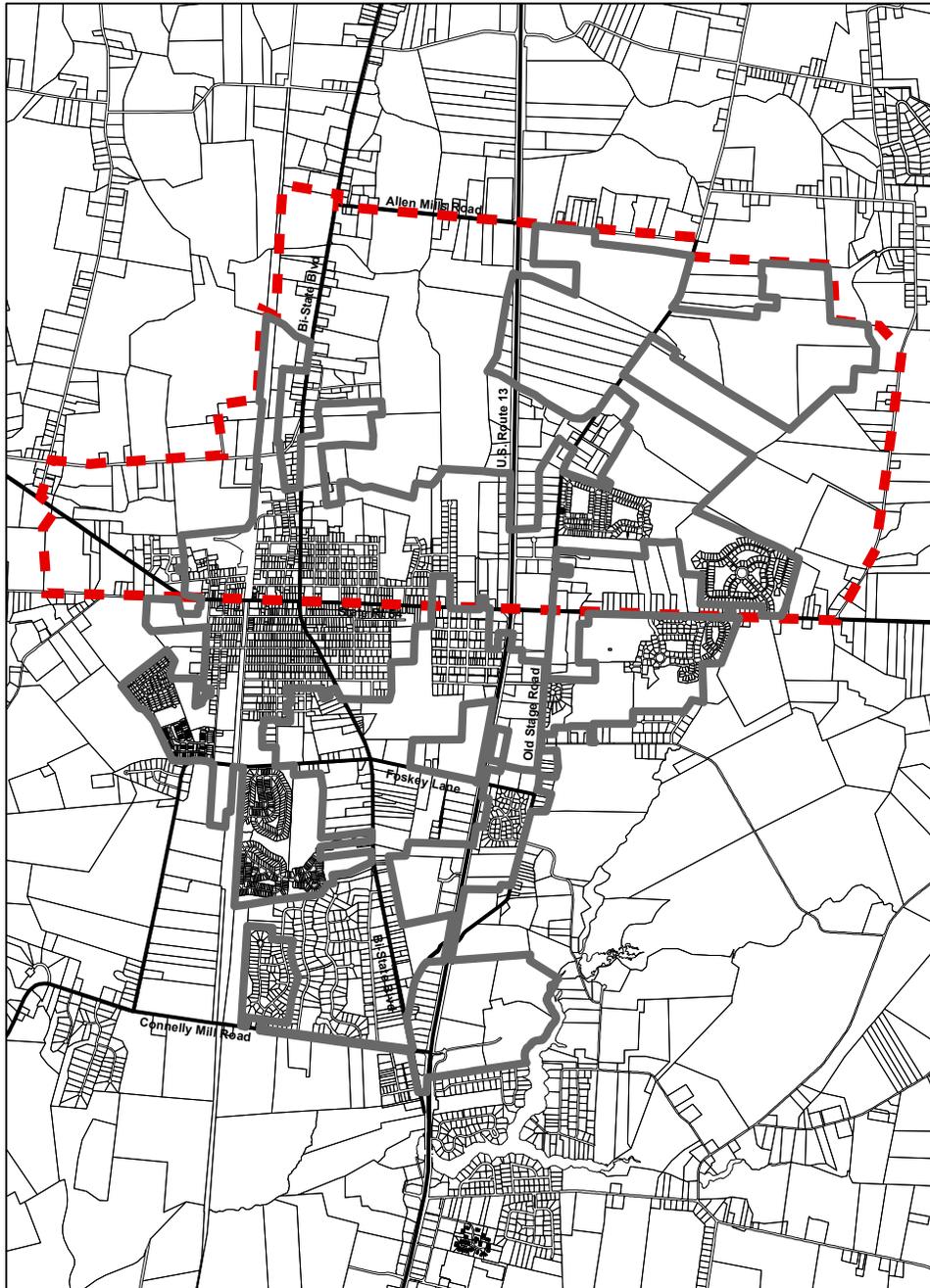
This Comprehensive Plan (1) establishes a planned growth area, (2) organizes land use planning in the growth area into five general categories of land use, (3) provides a plan for land use within the existing boundaries of the Town, and (4) establishes guidelines which will shape a town development (and annexation) strategy. The latter is discussed in each of the next two sections of this report. Each of other items is presented here. Map 4 shows the planned growth area. Map 5, discussed later, shows the future land use of both the growth area and the lands within existing municipal limits.

Planned Growth Area

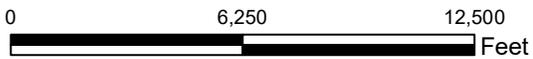
Map 4 shows the planned growth area, which encompasses all the land around Delmar, DE that may be incorporated into the Town through the year 2040. All land shown within the growth area is eligible for annexation at the discretion of the Delaware Town Council provided the intended use of the land matches the categories shown on this Map 5.

As a matter of strict policy, no public water and sewer service will be extended to a property unless the property is annexed or the owner contracts with Delmar to be annexed when the Town decides it is ready. The development of the growth area will be guided by this Comprehensive Plan and the Town Center and Development District objectives set forth in the Sussex County Comprehensive Plan.

The land use plan seeks to protect major wetlands from development. As more detailed site development planning takes place, more refined mapping and wetland delineation will be done by developers. When wetlands are found to be located within planned development tracts, they ought, as a matter of policy, to be likewise protected and preserved as natural resources.



Map #4 Planned Growth Area



Legend

- Delmar Municipal Boundary
- Planned Growth Area

Generalized Future Land Use

Map 5 shows the recommended land use within existing town limits and in the planned growth area. Each of the colors indicates a recommended land use category. Following adoption of this Plan, the zoning ordinance and zoning map will be updated as needed to implement this overall plan. The major land use categories are described below.

Complete Neighborhoods

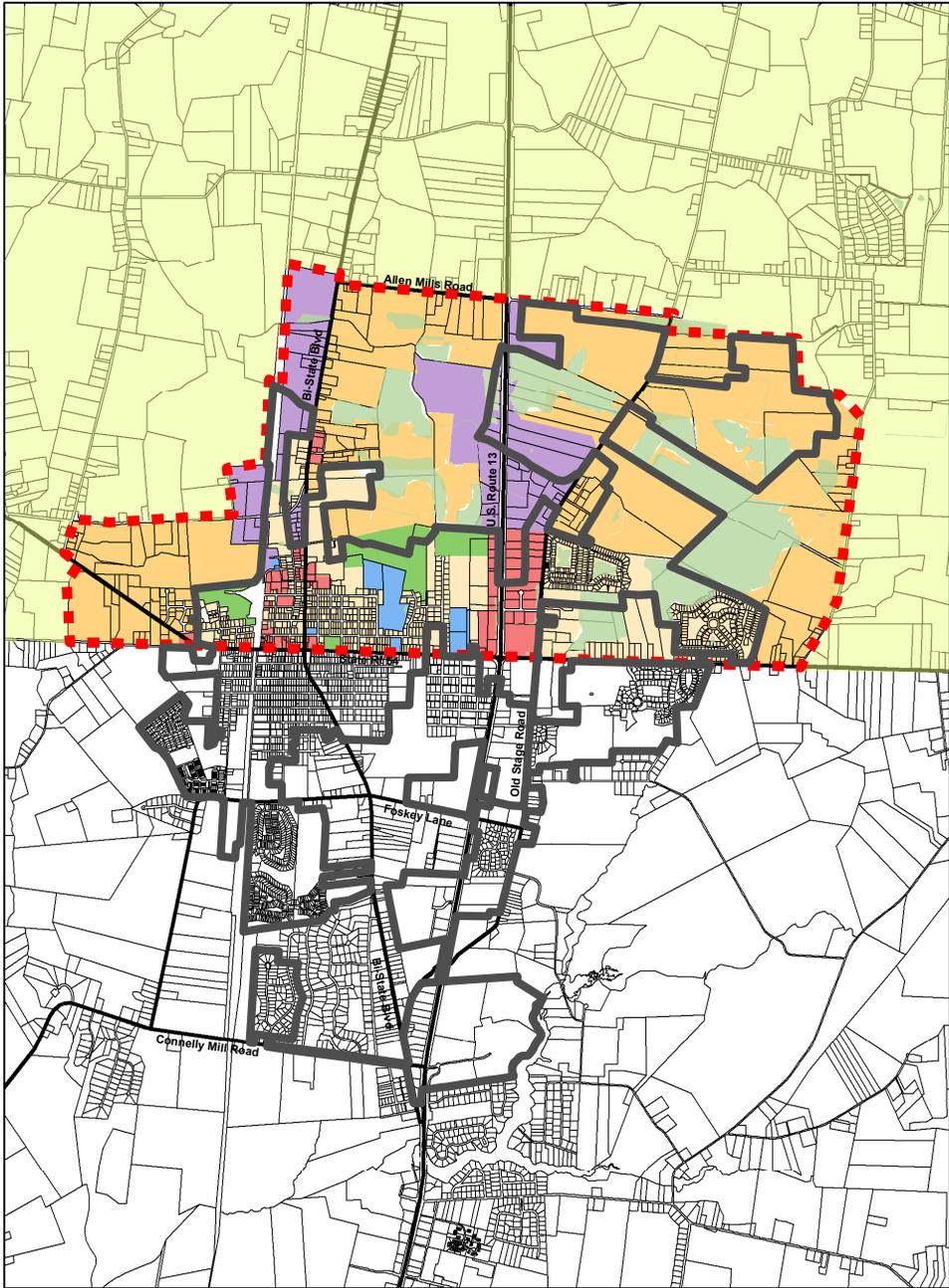
The yellow areas indicate planned neighborhoods which are presently in the planned growth area. These areas will allow for a diverse set of housing types, open spaces and parks, institutional uses, and, where applicable, neighborhood level commercial shopping, office, and related uses. Following adoption of this Plan, the Town will consider and adopt general town planning standards that will guide the eventual development of each area. To most effectively implement complete neighborhoods, the Town will consider adopting residential planned unit development standards, as zoning amendments, making them applicable to each major tract of land in the growth area. This is a priority. This represents a departure from the standard Euclidian zoning districting in which each zone is set aside primarily for one main use to the exclusion of most others.

Commercial

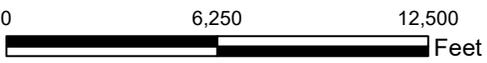
The Commercial category is shown in red on Map 5. As discussed in the Existing Conditions section of this Plan, the center of Delmar has shifted to the intersection of U.S. Route 13 and State Street. This Plan will seek to intensify this central area in order to facilitate an economically vibrant center for commercial and community activities. The Plan seeks to avoid the emergence of a continual strip of automobile oriented commercial sprawl along the highway.

Employment / Industrial-Office

Employment zones are shown in purple on Map 5. They encompass both the area's legacy industrial areas aligned with the railroad and future light industrial areas aligned with U.S. Route 13. It is imperative for the long-term vitality of Delmar that these areas be reserved for industrial and office employment.



Map #5
Future Land Use



- Legend**
- Delmar Municipal Boundary
 - Planned Growth Area
 - Green Belt
 - Conservation of Wetlands / Woodlands
 - Park / Open Space
 - Institutional
 - Residential
 - Complete Neighborhoods
 - Commercial
 - Employment / Industrial-Office

Office/Light Industrial

These are uses which can intrinsically operate outside of Delmar's legacy industrial area and blend harmoniously with surrounding non-industrial uses. These can have attractive building architecture and landscaped sites and avoid adverse external impacts to adjoining properties. By ensuring adequate space for these uses, the Town will help encourage enterprises in professional, scientific, technical, engineering, computing, and both advanced and artisan manufacturing in addition to more traditional food product processing and goods assembly and manufacturing.

Light industrial activity includes processing, manufacturing and/or assembly of soft or non-durable goods, often confined to one building and with limited outdoor operations. While certain light industrial uses could be incompatible with nearby residential areas, with proper site design including wide buffers, such uses are clearly suitable for all the Employment Zones shown on Map 5. It is recommended that zoning regulations be adopted, as necessary, to ensure that light industrial developments are adequately buffered from adjoining uses and that external effects, i.e. noise, odor, traffic, etc., are minimal.

Industrial and Heavy Commercial Operations

Industrial and certain heavy commercial operations that create off-site impacts require special sites and conditions, creating a need to reserve areas and to prevent encroachment by incompatible uses. Existing industrial development is situated along the Penn Central railroad. Where these areas abut existing residential areas, operations that produce excessive smoke, odor, or noise, or generate heavy truck traffic, should be limited.

Heavy industrial activity includes handling or storage of bulk commodities or the manufacture or storage of potentially hazardous materials. Heavy industrial activity is often characterized by a need for large sites, not only because these activities are not entirely confined to buildings, but also because their operation is often accompanied by objectionable external effects such as noise, odor, dust, smoke, vibration, glare, and unsightly outdoor storage.

Resource Conservation of Wetlands / Woodlands

Shown as light green on Map 5, these areas are large and mostly forested non-tidal wetlands, which are a dominant landform in the area north of E. State Street and east of old Stage Road. Wetlands are low-lying areas saturated by water or even covered by water year-round or during intervals throughout the year.

Wetlands capture and hold stormwater and reduce flooding and are therefore an important resource to conserve in a developing community. The hydric soils that are so prevalent north and east of the Town have very high water tables and are poorly drained. These features present severe limitations to sound community development. On a town wide scale, major wetlands cannot be lost to development without sizable risk to the long term sustainability of the community and the well-being of future neighborhoods. This Plan recommends the conservation and protection of these areas as natural open spaces. Delaware does not regulate development activities in freshwater wetlands, so it is important for the Town to protect them to the extent possible when reviewing development plans.

Park and Open Space

Also shown on Map 5 are park and outdoor recreational open spaces including most notably a proposed major open space, which together with open spaces in the Town already, including the middle and high school athletic fields, comprise an area of nearly 65 acres. It extends from U.S. Route 13 west toward Bi-State Boulevard. This open space represents a major organizing feature for the future development of Delmar, connecting the existing town to its growth area to the north. It would also connect the planned commercial center on U.S. Route 13 to existing and future neighborhoods. It would provide a major amenity for the residents of the greater Delmar area. While not shown on Map 5, as planned complete neighborhoods are developed, they should include neighborhood parks and recreational open spaces.

Institutional

Properties in existing institutional use, as schools and churches, are shown on Map 5. It is recommended that the use of these properties remain institutional. While future institutional uses are not shown on Map 5, as the planned complete neighborhoods are developed, they should be provided and/or adequate space should be allocated for them.

Residential

Existing and proposed residential areas which are not otherwise designated as complete neighborhoods are also shown in Map 5. These areas include existing residential areas and some lands not yet developed. The plan recommended the undeveloped areas so designated, develop in residential use generally in a manner compatible in intensity and housing type with the residential areas that adjoin them.

In Summary

As illustrated on Map 5, in the U.S. Route 13 corridor, commercial development is proposed to be clustered in the first ½ mile north of State Street, and the rest of the highway's frontage is devoted only to employment uses or resource conservation. The area's major wetlands, which are mostly wooded, would remain largely in a natural condition, while residential neighborhoods would be developed in areas that are more suitable for buildings, streets, and infrastructure.

The areas shown as "complete neighborhoods" on the map comprise approximately 760 acres, which is sufficient to accommodate more than twice the level of housing growth projected by 2040 as well as other uses that support neighborhood development. As complete neighborhoods, non-residential uses (such as parks, institutions and neighborhood level commercial uses) would be encouraged, in a manner reminiscent of the traditional parts of Delmar.

North of the old town, near the high school and middle school, multiple parcels, currently in farmland or open space, including the school athletic fields, would form a central community open space, and become a park and recreational center for greater Delmar.

Position on the Expansion of Delmar's Boundaries

The planned growth area map presented in Maps 4 and 5 identifies the limits of the Town's planned expansion. This area roughly encompasses the land shown by the Sussex County Comprehensive Plan for eventual development. On the Delaware side, the borders are defined as follows:

- On the north, by Allen's Mill and Iron Mill Roads;
- On the east, by Robin Hood Road;
- On the west, by the railroad south and roughly Old Racetrack Road.

By design, the area's size is greater than necessary to meet the expected development through 2040. Its intent is to signal where the Town may extend its boundaries in the foreseeable future and to provide ample space and flexibility so land supply is not unnecessarily constrained which could ultimately inflate housing costs. All properties within the planned growth area are eligible to be considered for annexation into Delmar. To guide, in a more detailed way, how the Town may be expanded, Delmar will consider preparing and adopting an expansion and growth management strategy. In the meantime, the following general principles will guide the Town through 2040:

1. Water and sewer infrastructure will be designed, sized, and extended in a manner that efficiently and cost effectively serves the community.
2. The arrangement of natural resource lands and open spaces on Map 5 will generally guide how sensitive environmental areas and future recreational lands are to be protected. More specific mapping may be done to guide how future neighborhoods can be connected together with open spaces and amenities like bike paths and greenways.
3. The arrangement and configuration of future development will generally conform to the access and circulation recommendations including the major streets plan provided in this report (See Map 6).
4. The general location of future public institutions and facilities (such as school sites, municipal well sites, and public parks) will be identified in consultation with the Counties and the appropriate agencies and organizations and be added to the Plan.
5. The recommendation for complete neighborhoods will generally guide long term planning for the growth area and the character of new development. Complete neighborhoods will contain a mix of housing types and neighborhood level commercial, institutional, and recreational uses.
6. Annexations should be in accordance with a predetermined policy which will allow smaller areas to be annexed as a part of an overall pattern. Smaller area annexations should also be undertaken to rationalize boundaries and prevent "enclaves" from occurring⁹.

⁹ Section 3 of Delmar's Charter authorizes the Town to annex any additional contiguous territory adjoining the corporate limits of the Town and outlines procedures for annexation. Title 22, Section 101 of the Delaware Code clarifies that "contiguous" means that some part of a parcel proposed for annexation must be coterminous with the boundaries of the annexing municipality and roads or right-of-way cannot be used to create "corridor" annexation.

7. Because the Town assumes obligations to supply services to annexed areas as they develop, service extensions to small isolated areas, certainly without a thoughtful long-term strategy, are not preferred.
8. Proposed annexation areas should generally be economically self-sufficient and fiscally prudent and should not result in municipal expenditures which exceed anticipated revenues because that could burden existing residents with the costs of services or facilities to support the area annexed.
9. The costs of providing roads, utilities, parks, and other community services that the Town decides will be needed by new residents should generally be borne by developers.

Position on Development of Adjacent Areas

Expansion of Municipal Services

The Town will not support the extension of its public facilities beyond its planned growth area boundaries or the provision of water and sewer by any other entity, public or private, within this area. Within southwestern Sussex County, the Town will coordinate with the County to ensure that Delmar and fellow municipalities remain the preferred place for water and sewer services.

Development Along U.S. Route 13

The Town will coordinate with Sussex County to discourage land development in the U.S. Route 13 corridor north of the Town's growth area boundary; this includes commercial uses. The Town's goal, which is in keeping with the Sussex County Comprehensive Plan, is to direct development into thoughtful arrangements connected to municipal water and sewer service and fully interconnected with the community. This also preserves the capacity of the highway and maintains the scenic beauty of the landscape around Delmar.

The Protection of Wellheads and Water Recharge Areas

The State via its Source Water Protection Law of 2001 (7 Del. C. 6081, 6082, 6083) requires municipalities with year-round populations of 2,000 residents or greater to implement measures to protect both the quality and quantity of public water, including wellheads and ground-water recharge areas. In the coming years, the Town will comply with this requirements in full. In the meantime, Delmar has mapped its wellheads and recharge areas, which are judged to be excellent by the Town Engineer.

Map 2 shows the major recharge area located in the northeast section of the Town running parallel with Old Stage Road and crossing over Iron Hill Road. The Town has adopted a wellhead protection / source water protection ordinance which will protect only the part of this recharge area within town limits. The Town supports the open space and agricultural preservation of the land covering the remaining section of this recharge area which extends well into the County.

Greenbelt

It is the position of the Town that land use adjacent to its growth area boundaries ought to be primarily agricultural and resource conservation and by this policy we mean it should be a greenbelt for the foreseeable future. This is shown on Map 5. The Town is opposed to low-density suburban development in this greenbelt. In the decades ahead, as the Town updates this Comprehensive Plan, it will consider the advisability of expanding the growth area.

Delmar also supports the preservation of the large wetlands and forested stream buffers which lie within and just outside its growth area. These elements of the natural environment are linked to the source of the municipal drinking water supply. Further, because the vast majority of this area is underlain by hydric soils which are formed under conditions of ground saturation, the preservation of these wetlands would prove critical to the wellbeing of future residents if and when the Town expands. In future decades these resource lands could be incorporated into the Town and become part of its preserved and protected natural landscape in the same way the large wetlands already in Town would be under this Plan.

The Town encourages Sussex County and the State to promote agricultural land preservation and natural resource conservation in the southwestern Sussex County outside planned municipal growth areas. This plan especially recommends that the Town embark on a process of coordination with Sussex County to arrive at an agreement about the Town's optimal involvement in the review and comment on potential proposed developments in the greenbelt.

Position on Access and Circulation

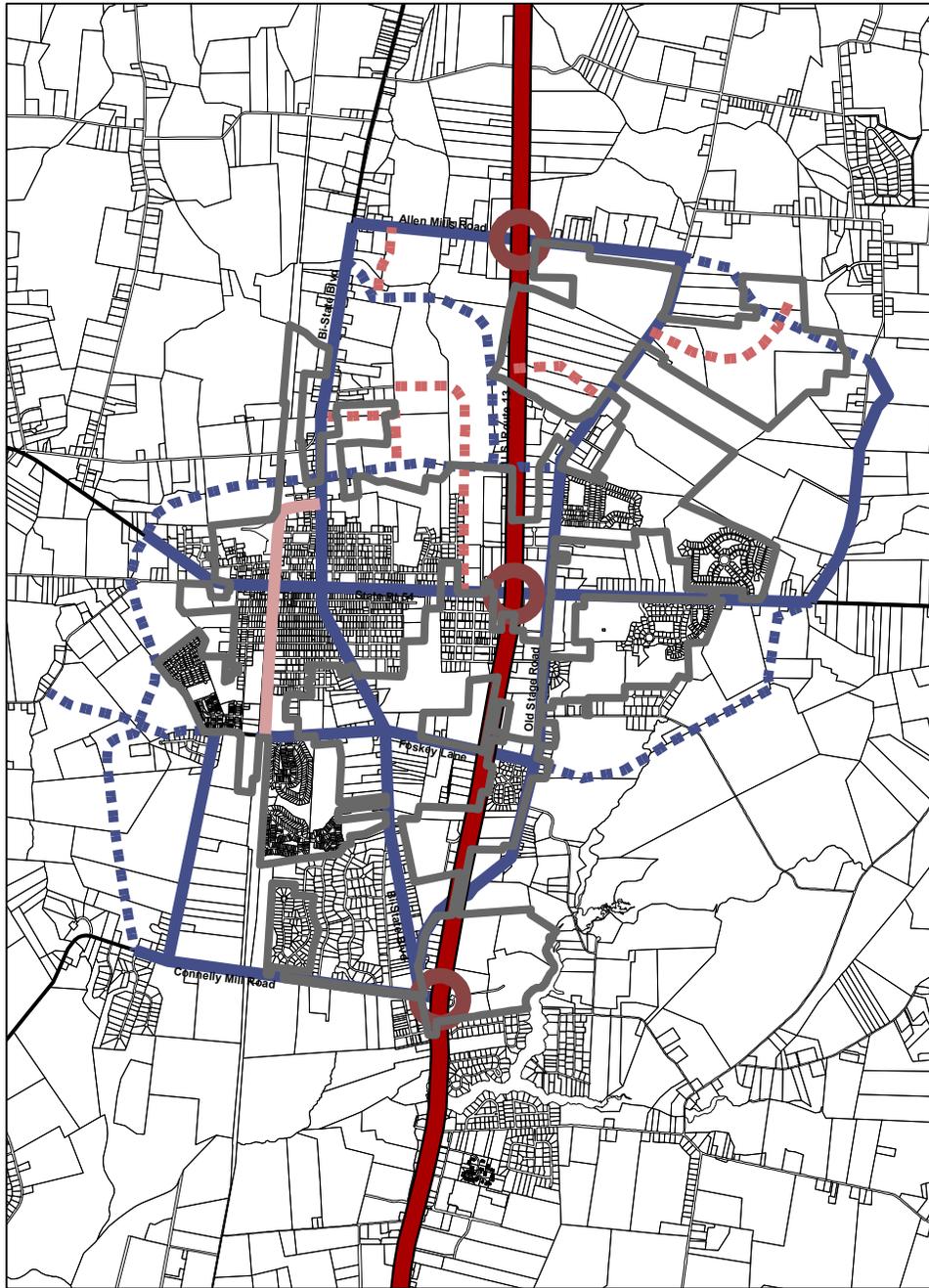
This section addresses future access and circulation needs and existing areas of concern. Existing streets will need to be improved and new streets constructed over time to support town growth and expansion. Map 6 shows the planned street system. The numbers on the Map correspond to the discussion of proposed street projects under the heading A Collector Street System below.

Major Street System

U.S. Route 13

There is one arterial highway in Delmar, U.S. Route 13. Its primary purpose as a State designated principal arterial is to convey high volumes of traffic at relatively high speeds through the Town to points within the greater region. In support of that function, the Town's position is that access to the highway should be strictly controlled with limited public street intersections and no further direct property access points unless such access is required to provide a substantial public benefit.

The Town will coordinate with the State over the long term to secure or reserve locations for overpasses should they be needed in future decades. Three priority locations are proposed on Map 6: an interchange at State Street, an overpass ½ mile north of the planned interchange, and an overpass 0.7 mile south of the planned interchange at the present-day Foskey Lane intersection. These overpasses will be essential to ensure the Town can safely function as a unified community and provide timely police and emergency services as traffic volumes increase on the highway. Two additional major intersections or overpasses are shown; one at Allen Mill Road on the north and the other at Connelly Mill Road on the south.



Map #6
Planned Major Street System

- Legend**
-  Delmar Municipal Boundary
 -  Proposed Overpass
 -  New Primary Neighborhood Street
 -  Upgrade Primary Neighborhood Street
 -  New Collector Street
 -  Principal Arterial Highway / Access Controlled
 -  Upgraded Collector Street



A Collector Street System

The street system will need to evolve to accommodate the Town's development, especially the development of the growth area. A plan is needed to ensure that streets are improved in a way that is cost effective and delivers lasting mobility benefits to existing and future residents and businesses in Delmar. Proposed alignments for new collector streets are shown on Map 6.

When the large tracts of land already within town limits or in the growth area are proposed for development, developers will be required to coordinate their plans with this planned street system and build the new streets or upgrade existing roads that serve their projects. The Town will work with DelDOT to review Traffic Impact Statements for developments along State maintained roadways. The Town will also consider adopting standards for its own impact studies as it intends to require developers to make street upgrades where necessary as a condition of development approval.

Until they are needed, the mapped street alignments are to be reserved and protected from development. The most significant projects are shown on the map with corresponding descriptions below.

1. Westside Collector

The Westside Collector would extend from U.S. Route 13, on an alignment which could include Francis Street, west to Route 13A to Old Racetrack Road. A number of alternative alignments are possible. From Old Racetrack Road, it would continue south, intersecting Foskey Lane and then connecting with Connelly Mill Road, which extends east to U.S. Route 13. This street would connect the industrial areas along the railroad directly to U.S. Route 13.

2. Northwest Radial Collector

The Northwest Radial Collector would extend from Bi-State Boulevard, just south of Allens Mill Road, to the Westside Collector at its planned overpass with U.S. Route 13. It travels on an alignment to avoid existing streams and wetlands and would provide access for the planned employment zones to and from U.S. Route 13.

3. Old Stage Road Radial Collector

The Stage Road Radial Collector would be an upgrade of Old Stage Road from its intersection with Iron Hill Road to a new intersection with U.S. Route 13, opposite the planned Westside Collector.

4. Eastside Collector

The Eastside Collector would include the extension of an upgraded Iron Hill Road to Robin Hood Road and the extension of Robin Hood Road south of Road 54, bearing westward to intersect with U.S. Route 13 at Foskey Lane.

5. Foskey Crosstown Collector

The Foskey Crosstown Collector would extend on the existing road alignment from the current Foskey Road intersection at U.S. Route 13 westward to the planned Westside Collector and then on to Waller Road.

6. Foskey North-South Collector

The Foskey North-South Collector would be an upgraded Foskey Lane from W. State Street south to Connelly Mill Road. Its southern section, between the Foskey Crosstown Collector and Connelly Mill Road, would serve the planned employment zone.

The principles to guide the development of the collector street system are as follows:

- The primary purpose of each street is to collect traffic from the local street system and convey it to regional highways and to allow efficient travel throughout the Town as it grows. Access via local public street intersections is preferred over direct driveway access, especially for residential and small commercial uses.
- Access to adjoining properties should generally be strictly limited in order to preserve the capacity and beauty of the Town’s collector streets.
- The streets are envisioned as municipal parkways with street trees, landscaped medians, and separate protected bike lanes.
- To the extent possible, the right-of-way for each street should be 90-foot wide which will ensure space for the ultimate buildout of Delmar and the flexibility for configuring travel lanes, turning lanes, bike ways, pedestrian amenities, street trees, landscaping, and utilities.
- All new collector streets should be smart streets—that is, outfitted with sensors that monitor and record traffic volumes, heavy truck traffic, wear and tear, and conditions such as temperature, ice, and other factors that would allow for the most efficient long-term care and management of the street system.

New Local Primary Streets

Map 6 also shows a number of local primary streets which are not part of the collector system per se but will be necessary to serve future development. These are shown conceptually only, which is not the same as saying they can be ignored. To the contrary, while the actual alignment and design of these streets will depend on the unique characteristics of the land use proposed, developers will be required to build the streets as planned unless an evaluation of conditions indicates there will be no need or that other options are preferred by the Town. The principles to be followed in building these new primary streets include:

- New streets should interconnect parcels so that continuity is achieved.
- The right-of-way for new streets should be wide enough to accommodate their ultimate function within the street system, even though the street itself may be sized for lesser demands in the short term.
- All developments will have adequate access and circulation for public service vehicles, but paved street sections should be as narrow as possible to maintain an acceptable level of service while ensuring safe pedestrian crossings and enjoyable walking and biking.
- All primary streets should feature sidewalks on both sides and accommodate bike traffic.
- To the extent possible, all primary streets should include ample planting strips and street trees well suited to and selected to complement the design of the street.
- The pattern for new neighborhood streets should generally be modelled on a traditional grid.
- The development of all new streets, primary streets, and local streets and lanes, should follow required design standards and specifications that the Town will adopt.

Existing Neighborhood Streets

A program should be undertaken to systematically upgrade Delmar's residential streets. Such a program would include repaving; installation of curb, gutter and sidewalks; storm drainage and planting of street trees. Priorities for residential street improvements near the historic downtown (to be studied as part of the recommended master plan) would include Lincoln, Grove, and East Streets between Bi-State Boulevard and Pennsylvania Avenue. Other priorities for improvements include South Pennsylvania Avenue and its intersection at State Street to resolve the intersection off-set.

New construction and major improvement projects should be scheduled as part of an overall Capital Improvements Program. Ongoing maintenance and preservation of Town streets should be facilitated through an asset and performance management program administered by the Town Engineer.

Rail

The main line of the Carload Express railroad formally known as Norfolk Southern continues to provide rail freight service to industry in the Delmar area. The chief advantage to local rail users is the savings incurred through a low car transfer fee which could serve as an added benefit to attract various types of industrial development.

The uncertainties relating to the future status of the railroad are of great concern to Delmar because the Town considers the railroad vital to existing industrial activity and future employment growth. In order to encourage continued rail service, the Town will work with public and private parties to develop policies to stimulate rail use, attract new industry, and heighten public awareness of the importance of the railroad to the entire region.

Position on Redevelopment Potential

The Town has two legacy central business districts. The original was centered at the intersection of State Street and the railroad. Formerly the location of restaurants, taverns, shops and overnight accommodations, it grew to serve rail passengers and related business activity. It was mainly bounded by Grove Street on the north, Railroad Avenue on the west, East Street on the south and 2nd Street on the east. It also served the shopping needs of Delmar's growing number of households. The area was destroyed twice by fire in the late 19th century and was rebuilt and thrived for many additional decades.

The economic reason for this original central business district no longer exists, yet historic buildings and structure still stand, and the area is important to the Town's heritage. In fact, N. Pennsylvania Avenue is the home for the Town's Annual Heritage Day Event. Today there are vacant lots and underused or abandoned commercial buildings and little traffic.



The second legacy central business district, which became an extension of the first, is centered on State Street at Bi-State Boulevard (the original U.S. Route 13). This area is mainly bounded by Jewell Street on the north, 2nd Street on the west, East Street on the south, and 4th Street on the east. At the approach to the intersection, vacant and underused lots that were previously in active commercial use seem to dominate the scene and the overall quality of the streetscape is weak relative to the streets around it. Again, the original economic reason for this center is gone. The bypass of Town with the new U.S. Route 13 shifted the Town's business center to its current location almost one-mile east and along the highway.

There is strong potential for thoughtful redevelopment and reuse of both areas, but neither will be the central business district it once was. However, both can again be vital centers within a growing Town, linking the future to the past. Both have assets: historic buildings, the Library, the fire house, and a strong fabric of residential buildings and historic churches. They are connected together by State Street, which along with the houses that front it, retains its charm, beauty, and character as a main avenue through Town.

This Plan recommends that a master plan be prepared to decide the optimal vision for both areas and to guide their redevelopment and reuse leading to revitalization. The master plan does not need to be a complicated or drawn-out study, but it will require a market assessment and serious coordination with property owners and residents. The plan should evaluate the viability and effectiveness of incentives to encourage the adaptive reuse and redevelopment of the historic buildings. The first step though is to secure resources to preserve the existing building stock on N. Pennsylvania Avenue and prevent further decline there.



As discussed throughout this Plan, Delmar's existing residential land use is composed largely of intact traditionally designed neighborhoods; mostly single family homes on smaller lots. There are an estimated 779 housing units in Delmar, DE. This Plan does not recommend residential redevelopment but instead continued community development efforts to ensure the quality of the Town's housing stock and the vibrancy of neighborhoods. As noted later in this report a critical community development issue for Delmar is household income and poverty; the U.S. Census estimates that one in six residents live in households with incomes below the poverty line.

Position on Community Character

Delmar's traditional "old town" is built on a street grid. Blocks are small and streets are designed for slow residential traffic with many intersections and narrow widths. Lots are typically 50 feet wide and range from 7,000 to 10,000 square feet in size. Houses are set back, in a uniform way, generally 20 to 25 feet from the sidewalk. Lead walkways connect the public sidewalk to the front porch of each house. Parking is on-street, in driveways, or in detached garages to the side or rear of the houses. This pattern of residential design has broken down somewhat over time in a number of places, but this overriding character still unifies Delmar and creates sustainable civic beauty and a real sense of place.

The landscape of Delmar is perfectly suited to the grid system as there are few if any natural resource areas that force streets to curve or loop. The terrain is level and potential development parcels are expansive owing to their historic use as cropland. The standard grid, or a modified grid which introduces strong diagonal streets, is the preferred design character for Delmar's future neighborhoods.

The character of the historic business district has been discussed elsewhere in this report. Worth noting here is that because Delmar is so walkable, each center and its nearby businesses and institutions (such as the Library) are very accessible to residents by walking and biking. It features a mix of land uses--residential, commercial, recreational, and institutional. It is the definition of the complete neighborhood that this Plan seeks to bring about as the town grows and expands.

The emergence of commercial strip development along U.S. Route 13 has disrupted the Delmar traditional town character. However, it is apparent that care is being made over time to establish a grid system of sorts in the highway corridor. The new streets (commercial drives) extend from the highway inward toward existing or future public or private streets. In this way, the large and separated buildings, parking lots, and parcels are being interconnected. These streets (or commercial drives) will establish a form for development and a character, which over time will support the emergence of a real commercial district as recommended in this Plan.

It is the position of the Town that:

- The essential character-defining elements be retained and used and as a model for the Town's continual development. Delmar rejects formulaic subdivision design with cul-de-sacs and curvilinear streets. Instead, it will insist on development patterns like the traditional grid that defines the Delmar character and sense of place.
- The Town's built character also includes a mix of land uses rather than monolithic residential or commercial areas. Therefore, maintaining the character of Delmar means promoting a mix of uses in future neighborhoods.
- The Town will consider adopting architectural and building design guidelines that will guide both infill development or redevelopment within the existing old town and new development outside of it. Application of design standards is most appropriate where the physical and visual properties of development can significantly influence the character of the Town. Development design guidance, or the lack thereof, can affect real estate values, community pride, and the overall investment climate in the community.

Position on Critical Community Development Issues

This section discusses two critical community development issues. The municipal sewerage system, which is another critical issue is discussed in the next section on key infrastructure issues.

Income and Poverty

As noted, in Table 2 of this report, the U.S. Census estimates that one in six residents live in households with incomes below the poverty line. The source of the data is the American Community Survey 2014 to 2018, which has a relatively high margin of error, especially for more descriptive data when estimated at the town level. When the 2020 U.S. Census is published in 2021-2022, the Town will update data on income and poverty and evaluate the distribution of poverty by household type (e.g. family households or single person households) and age. Typically, children and the aged comprise significant shares of the population in very low-income households.

The 2020 Census data will be helpful in underpinning recommendations to support the Town's on-going work in community development like housing affordability. For the purposes of this Plan, the Town aims over the next 20 years to: (1) reduce its poverty rate by fostering commercial development and job creation, and (2) help bring about transportation solutions that can connect residents to jobs in Delmar and in nearby centers like Salisbury.

This Comprehensive Plan is a long-term plan. Its focus on creating employment zones, a major commercial center, and a revitalized historic downtown is intended to ensure a strong local economic base with a diversity of employment. Local economic development like this can provide higher paying jobs that are readily accessible to residents. Manufacturing and other light industrial firms often provide on-site skills training and other incentives to attract a quality workforce.

For harder to reach places and jobs outside of Delmar, the importance of a private automobile, for a household's wellbeing cannot be underestimated because it provides the flexibility and autonomy needed to secure and sustain good employment and higher education. By 2040, technological advances in autonomous cars could facilitate rapid commuting to jobs along U.S. Route 13 and become an alternative to traditional bus public transit, which is exceedingly expensive to effectively provide outside urban centers. Delmar will advocate with DelDOT, MDOT, and the region's MPO to build the capacity along U.S. Route 13 for autonomous vehicles as a commuting alternative for Town residents. Until that time, the Town will advocate with both States for the extension of regular transit service into and through Delmar.

The Potential Loss of Wetlands that Cover Much of the Growth Area

As noted previously in this chapter forested wetlands are the major landform in much of the Town's growth area and on its large undeveloped tracts. Wetlands are nature's stormwater management systems. They clean water as it moves into ground water reserves or to other bodies of water.

Inursions into and filling of these wetlands with asphalt and building foundations permanently removes this essential resource, which can risk the longevity of the streets, curbs, and the residential lots themselves, especially where hydric soils are so prevalent. When wetlands are filled, developers replace them with stormwater management facilities, but these are expensive to maintain and become a continual cost to local government or to residents who may have to maintain them through a subdivision's homeowner assessments.

Delaware does not protect non-tidal wetlands through regulation except when they are part of a contiguous area greater than 400 acres. Therefore, the Town is left to protect this resource. The Town will study and adopt amendments to the zoning and subdivision codes to protect wetlands from being lost to development.

Position on Key Infrastructure Issues

Wastewater Treatment Capacity

The Delmar wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) has a permitted capacity of 850,000 gallons per day (gpd). Its current use approximates 756,000 gpd, or 89% of permitted capacity. The Town's engineering investigations suggest that inflow and infiltration (I & I) of water into the system accounts for 45% of the current use, or roughly 340,000 gpd.

With that understanding, the Town has programmed for 2021 the first phase of a three-phase project to fix I & I and expects this first phase to reduce overall flow by 15% to 20%. A 15% reduction in overall flow to the WWTP would bring the total current use to 642,600 gpd. At this level of demand, the plant would be operating at 75.6% of its permitted capacity. But over the longer term, the completion of all three phases of the project is expected to reduce the total current use to 416,000 gpd, which is 49% of capacity.

Moving forward (as long as the plant is sized for 850,000 gpd) the Town will aim to keep a capacity reserve of 10% in the plant. The planned 10% reserve capacity would be enough to provide service to current septic system users should those systems fail plus room for contingencies. Therefore, once the three-phase I & I project is completed, Delmar may expect an effective capacity of 765,000 gpd. Since the flow to the plant will approximate 416,000 gpd, once the I & I project is completed, and assuming the 10% reserve is maintained, Delmar will have 349,000 gpd to support new users, i.e. development.

At a rate 250 gallons per day per dwelling unit, the WWTP will then have capacity to support the equivalent of about 1,400 new dwelling units. Recall from the population projections discussed earlier in this report, absent sewer constraints, the combined towns could add 1,050 households by the year 2040 and Delmar, DE itself would add about 450 households. Therefore, upon completion of the I & I project, the Town's WWTP should be capable of serving the growth projected through the year 2040.

This overview reveals that currently the Town has WWTP capacity to serve 1,400 new equivalent dwelling units—that is, new housing units plus new or expanded non-residential users such as restaurants, shops, office buildings, and industrial buildings. The Town's position on this key infrastructure issue is as follows:

- The Town will not permit new residential subdivisions or new non-residential development until Phase 1 of the I & I project is completed, and the amount of capacity actually recovered is certified by the Town Engineer; and
- No connections to the system will be permitted that cause the use of the WWTP to exceed 90% of its permitted capacity.

It is also important to note that the Town's WWTP is permitted to be expanded to 1.2 million gpd. This would add substantial capacity but it likely would not be sufficient for the ultimate build out of the combined Town. The cost of this level of upgrade would be exceedingly high, and it is not in the Town's capital planning. The cost and feasibility of this upgrade in coming decades will need to be evaluated and a joint planning determination made. This may be a factor in the next update to this Comprehensive Plan, when the combined Town will need to thoughtfully consider expanding the WWTP or adopting new zoning approaches and capacity management strategies so that development does not overrun available capacity.

Lastly, this Plan does not contemplate the extension of wastewater or water mains, except for minor service lines, to industrial users for heavy processing or manufacturing purposes or for the treatment of industrial waste because of the demand this type of user would place on the capacity of the Town's treatment systems. However, as the Town expands to the north and west, it would need to extend water mains northward along Bi-State Boulevard and, at such time, adequate hydrants and water capacity would be constructed to afford fire protection to adjoining existing and planned industrial development on the west.

Maintenance and Upgrades of Streets

Delmar's unique and character defining old grid street system, with its very small residential blocks and proliferation of intersections, is expensive to maintain, much less upgrade with the project ideas mentioned previously (curbs, street trees, etc.). This is compounded by the fact that this particular street design results in fewer houses per street mile than more typical street grids. In other words, it creates a relatively small accessible tax base per street mile, which translates into less revenue generated by the users of the street to fund their upkeep.

As the aerial photo of a random six-block part of Town shows, essentially no homes front three of the north-south streets meaning these public streets basically function as large public alleys providing access to the side yards. Further, they are not needed at this level of density of streets to facilitate traffic movements.



While the Town has not studied this issue enough yet to develop a position or to adopt a set of recommended solutions, it will do so in the coming years. This will involve conducting a basic traffic study and evaluating the cost and benefits of various options. Solutions may include:

- Transferring all or parts of the rights-of-way of some streets to the owners of the adjoining properties while maintaining utility or access easements as warranted.
- Incentivizing infill development on existing vacant lots to increase the assessable base which could include allowing lots to be created from the combined rear yards of adjoining backyards.
- Converting some streets to one-way and/or closing intersections to vehicle movements.

Stormwater Management

The careful management of stormwater both within the developed parts of Town and in newly developing areas is centrally important to the Plan's overall goal of becoming an even better place to live and work. The fact is, development often changes the grade and natural drainage of the land and introduces impervious surfaces like buildings, parking lots, and streets which can negatively impact the quality of area streams if not properly managed. At its heart, stormwater management is about interconnecting community development to the underlying natural systems of an area, ideally in a way that mimics natural processes. If the techniques and systems that manage the rainwater falling onto or flowing over a site are not properly designed and maintained, new development can irreversibly degrade the environment. This happens in part because the stormwater flowing from impervious surfaces (runoff) can carry sediments and pollutants and can even erode stream banks or raise the water temperature of nearby streams. Fortunately, when residential development is proposed in Delmar, the engineers at the Sussex Conservation District review development and construction plans to ensure that both the quantity and quality of stormwater leaving each site, or new neighborhood, meet the State's standards. The Town also retains the services of its own Town Engineer who is involved in the review of development plans of all types.

The State's Sediment and Stormwater Regulations have a goal of reducing stormwater runoff for the rainfall events up to the equivalent of a one-year storm, 2.7 inches of rainfall in 24 hours, or a maximum of one inch of runoff. The Town further encourages runoff reduction practices that direct stormwater to infiltrate the soil just like it would if the land were in an open space condition, which is what the State's regulation seeks to bring about through techniques that are called "Best Practices".

Best Practices include rain gardens, rain barrels, cisterns, green roofs, open vegetated swales, and many types of infiltration systems including large scale systems that can be installed under impervious surfaces like parking areas. This Plan also recommends that the Town consider ways of reducing the amount of impervious coverage associated with land development. In this regard, the Town could consider allowing narrower street widths, reducing parking requirements, and using or requiring pervious sidewalk materials where practical.

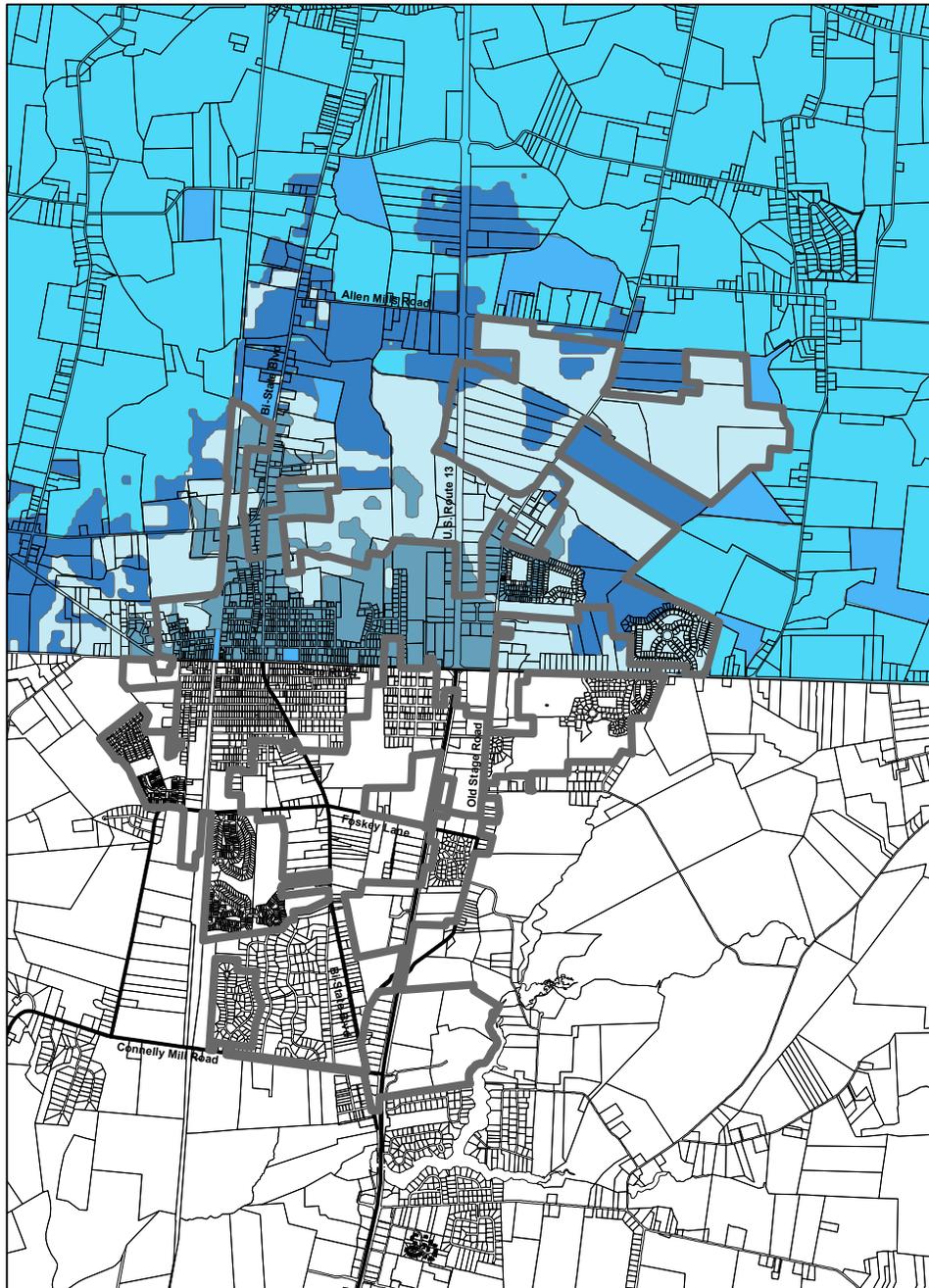
Of special note, the Delmar, DE currently has an exemption from the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) requirements under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). The Town meets the requirements for a waiver based on population and other State requirements. As noted above, Delmar, DE requires that all new construction meet the most current Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sediment Control regulations as required by the State of Delaware and Sussex County. The Town of Delmar has a centralized wastewater collection, transmission, and treatment system with an NPDES Permit and Wastewater Discharge Permit in the Wicomico Watershed in the State of Maryland.

Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination

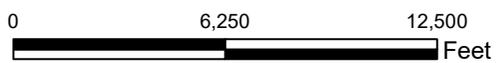
While the Town did not receive comments from Sussex County upon requesting that it review and provide input on the draft plan, the Town has benefited substantially from an evaluation of the County's Comprehensive Plan¹⁰. In formulating this Plan, Delmar considered that plan and by extension the Delaware's Strategies for State Policies and Spending. Our Town Planner discussed the Plan and its main goals and recommendations as they pertain to Delmar at the Planning Commission's workshop on September 10, 2020. Of particular importance to the Town is the County's general land use recommendations for the vicinity of the Town and State priorities policies for spending, shown on Map 7.

The Sussex County Plan supports growth and development within the Town as the highest priority (Level 1 Priority for State Funding). It also supports Town Center development and "well-designed development" of lands just beyond our borders which are assigned a Level 2 priority for State funding . Lastly the County Plan acknowledges the long-term growth potential of Delmar by applying a "Developing Areas" designation to certain lands assigned a Level 3, or long-term priority.

¹⁰ As requested by PLUS, the Town's email to Sussex County seeking input on the draft plan is included in the Appendix to this report.



Map #7
2020 Strategies for State Policies and Spending



Legend

- Delmar Municipal Boundary
- Investment Level 3
- Investment Level 1
- Investment Level 2
- Investment Level 4
- Investment Level 5

The County Plan recognizes the Town's authority to annex such lands and extend municipal water and sewer services. The Town seeks the County's support in ensuring that land development within and adjoining the Town's growth area will not occur unless and until such areas have been annexed to the Town. The generalized land use and growth area recommendation, described throughout this Plan, are consistent with the County's comprehensive plan and Delaware's planning and development policy.

The Town also seeks the State's coordination and support through the DelDOT's Corridor Capacity Preservation Program especially, in controlling access to U.S. Route 13 in support of the Town's land use and circulation objectives including preserving options for interchanges or overpasses of the highway. The Town also seeks the State's coordination, especially with the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, in protecting the large wetlands and stream buffers that remain in and around Delmar.

CONCLUSION

This updated plan is long term and comprehensive and aims for the year 2040. It covers many aspects of the Town's growth and development.

- It anticipates population and housing growth and provides guidance on the physical expansion of the Town.
- It envisions that housing growth will be formed into mixed use neighborhoods with multiple housing types thoughtfully designed around the area's extensive network of wetlands and parks, trails, schools, and other neighborhood institutions, as well as locally-serving commercial uses.
- It envisions that the one-half mile long corridor of U.S. Route 13 north of State Street will evolve into a walkable commercial center for the Town and larger region.
- It envisions zones of employment where light industrial businesses will have space to grow and prosper.
- It provides for a future collector street system that will be necessary to serve the developing town.
- It envisions a revitalized and re-purposed downtown area where the legacy of Delmar's original founding and economic development will be celebrated.
- It seeks a balance between land development and resource conservation. Especially important to the Town's future is the preservation of large and intact wetlands and stream buffers.

In order to achieve these aims, the Plan recommends a number of implementing actions:

- Officially map the planned alignments of major future streets and when those streets are part of and impacted by future development, require that they be constructed by developers.
- Amend the zoning ordinance, zoning map, and subdivision regulations to create planned residential development districts in order to provide both the flexibility and the standards needed to create complete neighborhoods.
- Amend the zoning ordinance, zoning map, and subdivision regulations to make them consistent with the future land use recommendations and map.
- Prepare a master plan for the downtown area and study the feasibility of incentives to promote revitalization including the preservation and reuse of historic buildings.

- Adopt design standards to guide new buildings, new sites, and redevelopment proposals into patterns that protect, preserve, and advance the Town's unique character.
- Maintain and beautify existing neighborhoods and address the fiscal impacts of maintaining the extensive grid system of streets and intersections.
- Repair inflow and infiltration into the sewer system and thereby return treatment capacity to the wastewater treatment plant, keep a reserve at the WWTP of at least 10% of capacity, and maintain strict management over new connections to the system.
- Coordinate with Sussex County, the State of Delaware, and the Salisbury-Wicomico County Metropolitan Planning Organization to help realize this Plan and mostly notably to help: promote economic development and job creation as a means to raise area income and reduce poverty, preserve lands in the growth area in agricultural and rural uses until Delmar annexes them, manage access to U.S. Route 13 and modernize it into a smart highway where automated vehicles can rapidly connect residents and businesses to opportunities and markets beyond the Town's borders, construct the new streets and expand existing roads, and revitalize the Town legacy commercial districts.

Delmar envisions a very bright future where all town residents will feel welcome to participate and engage with each other in the essential work of shaping our community so that it will be an ever-greater place to live, work, learn, visit, shop, and play. There is much work to be done and success depends on the ongoing commitment of citizens. This Plan is, at its heart, an invitation.