

Preface

This Comprehensive Development Plan (“Comprehensive Plan” or “Plan”) is intended to serve as a policy guide for the future development of Dewey Beach. It has been adopted by the Dewey Beach Town Council and is given official recognition as a guide for future planning efforts of the community and its representatives.

The legal means for the implementation of the recommendations contained herein are to be addressed via Zoning Codes and other municipal codes and ordinances to be considered by the Town Council after adoption of this Plan. Such recommendations are intended to be flexibly interpreted within the context of the updated planning goals and objectives contained herein in order to insure that the planning program remains responsive to the changing needs of the community over the course of tens year life of this Plan.

The public’s understanding of its role in, and contribution to, the efforts of the Planning Committee in developing this Comprehensive Plan is critical if municipal Policymakers are to insure that the community’s best interests remain aligned with the Town’s growth and development plans for the future. Community interest and cooperative commitment to practical planning, and the timely implementation of the goals and objectives of comprehensive development planning, will contribute to a higher quality of life in Dewey Beach.

In addition to the technical requirements of a Comprehensive Plan, this Plan serves as an informational document for the public. Citizens, business people and government officials can turn to the Plan to learn more about Dewey Beach and its policies for future land use decisions. Potential new residents and commercial operators can use the documents as an informational resource about the Town, its population, characteristics, business climate and facilities, to help them make decisions about moving to and remaining in Dewey Beach.

Finally, the Dewey Beach Comprehensive Plan is a legal document. The Delaware Code specifies, in pertinent part, that “...any incorporated municipality under this chapter shall prepare a Comprehensive Plan for the City or Town or portions thereof as the commission deems appropriate”, and further specifies, “after a Comprehensive Plan or portion thereof has been adopted by the municipality in accordance with this chapter, the Comprehensive Plan shall have the force of law and no development shall be permitted except as consistent with the Plan”.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Comprehensive Development Plan, and in addition to any terms defined within the body of this document, the following terms shall have the meaning as set forth in this section. Terms not defined herein shall have the meaning set forth in the Town Code. Terms presented as singular or plural, masculine or feminine, shall be construed within the context in which they occur.

2.1 “Dewey Beach” shall mean the Town of Dewey Beach, Sussex County, Delaware, a body corporate and politic, and unless otherwise indicated, includes its Governing Body, elected officials, officers and staff.

2.2 “Governing Body” shall have the same meaning as Town Council.³

2.3 “Planning Commission” shall mean the Dewey Beach Planning Commission, established pursuant to section 23 of the Municipal Land Use Law and operating pursuant to the various regulations of the Town Code and other relevant ordinances and statutes.

2.4 “Publication” shall mean the date this instant Comprehensive Development Plan was finalized for submission to the Planning Commission (see front cover).

2.5 “Stakeholders” shall mean, individually and collectively, the residents, property owners, business owners and visitors of/to Dewey Beach.

2.6 “Town” shall have the same meaning as Dewey Beach.³

2.7 “Town Code” shall mean Chapter 142 of the Dewey Beach Municipal Code, as same may be amended from time-to-time.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ninety-nine-plus percent of the land area in the Town of Dewey Beach is developed and in use for residences and business, and the general patterns of use are unlikely to change significantly in the foreseeable future. Despite this apparent stability, challenges related to sustainability and growth in tourism are likely to face municipal planners over the next several years.

Accordingly, while remaining consistent with the requirements for Comprehensive Plans under State law, this Comprehensive Development Plan focuses on four major threats and opportunities ~ the Town’s Critical Community Development Issues or Grand Challenges ~ that should be addressed by the Planning Commission and governing body over the next 10 years. Specifically, natural and man-made issues related to sea level rise and overcrowding, as well as opportunities presented by bay-side transformation and the celebration of the Town’s natural resources will drive the evolution of Dewey Beach over that period and determine the Town’s sustainability into the future.

The continued sustainability of the vibrant commerce and culture of Dewey Beach will be determined by how the Town ~ both in terms of its governing body and its people ~ deals with these issues over the next 10 years.

Critically, the Town's success in addressing sea level rise will determine whether Dewey Beach remains sustainable and vibrant into the future, as well as how the residents of and visitors to the Town will enjoy all that the community has to offer.

ISSUE: SEA LEVEL RISE

Generally accepted estimates of the rate of sea level rise project as a two-foot to three-foot increase as early as 2050. Under such a scenario, much of the southern half of Dewey Beach will become uninhabitable. While 2050 may appear to those living in 2017 to be well into the future, the lead time necessary to responsibly plan for, fund and implement strategies in accordance with State Sea-Level Rise policy require long-term thinking ~ especially when seeking to leverage competitive State and Federal resources.

SOUND PLANNING TODAY IS REQUIRED

TO AVOID TRAGEDY TOMORROW.

POLICY: Begin the process to establish a strategy for resilience designed to protect the Town in the face of an incremental four-foot rise in sea level.

ISSUE: OVERCROWDING

Externally, much of Dewey Beach is bisected by Coastal Highway (SR-1). Increases in residential and commercial development countywide have resulted in ever-increasing levels of traffic through the Town on this roadway, causing increased pollution and ever-increasing threats to the safety and well-being of pedestrians and bicyclists in Town.

Internally, the Town is fully developed. Much of Dewey Beach's housing dates to the mid-1900s, and is comprised of 1 to 3 bedroom single-family homes. As with many older coastal communities, Dewey Beach's traditional housing stock is being demolished and replaced by much larger homes designed to accommodate an ever-increasing number of visitors.

These External and Internal conditions, combined with an increasing number of daily visitors taking advantage of the new interstate transportation hub in nearby Lewes, has resulted in increased congestion and overcrowding that is beginning to negatively impact the openness and natural beauty of our community and its environs.

POLICY: Establish policies and/or amendments to the Town's Municipal Code that can be implemented within the next 10 years, designed to protect and strengthen the character of the

local communities within Dewey, and protect against the overcrowding and environmental degradation resulting from tourism.

POLICY: Work with County and State agencies to establish policies, within the next 10 years, designed to resolve pedestrian and bicyclist safety issues created by the large volumes of traffic that pass through Dewey.

Quality of Life

Quality of life is a broad, subjective, and multifaceted term. In short, it can be defined as a state of well-being for people and place and characterized by a wide range of factors such as a health and wealth, a safe environment, access to goods and services, social interaction, and much more. Quality of life is at the core of any Comprehensive Plan. In fact, the matter is such a priority to the Town that it has formalized on many occasions various task forces and committees to discuss and address quality of life issues in depth.

The leadership and residents of Dewey Beach have worked cooperatively and have thoughtfully defined what a high quality of life means for the Town: a unique mid-Atlantic barrier island with amenities, small-town ambience, seasonal rhythms, and a walkable community that is people- and pet-friendly. The following summarizes several dimensions of the issue, broken out into four broad areas, which will guide and foster Dewey Beach as an increasingly vibrant place to live, work, shop, recreate, retire, and relax.

Culture

Quality of life includes values and cultural perspectives, which is how people shape their social environment and how the environment shapes them. As a resort destination, people from all walks of life and backgrounds intersect. Dewey Beach is a community that respects and values people and their diversity, and how they relate and interact positively with one another.

Objective:

Strengthen and refine the Dewey Beach “a way of life” through ongoing efforts to improve quality of life and a harmonious experience among residents, property owners, businesses, and visitors.

Actions:

1. Transition to a public image that is a family-friendly resort by promoting respect for diversity and a safe, vibrant summer season.
2. Continue efforts to promote Town-wide culture of respect for people and the rule of law: whereby people care for, and about, each other.
3. Expand advertising and promotional activities and visitor outreach commensurate with the Town’s changing image.

4. Continue efforts to meet and exceed public safety and security expectations for residents and visitors.
5. Provide special amenities to support a unique pet-friendly community.
6. Continue increased shoulder-season activity by working with many stakeholder groups and interested parties.

Natural Environment

The natural environment provides another dimension of the complex state of well-being. To simplify, where we live defines the human experience. If the surrounding environment is poor, then the human experience is poor, but if the surrounding environment is of high-quality, so then is that of the human experience. A top priority for Dewey Beach is protecting the beach and the surrounding waters, so that future generations can enjoy them.

Dewey Beach cannot preserve and protect its natural resources alone, but will work with state agencies and relevant external organizations. One such organization, for example, that the Town embraces is the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) which is an environmental stewardship organization that has established water quality and other environmental standards and rating systems and provides assistance to communities.

Objective:

Establish Dewey Beach as a world-renowned Mid-Atlantic beach destination with pristine sand, world class lifeguards and beach patrol, and exceptional water quality as designated by the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Actions:

- 1) Maintaining current open space, recreational resources, including Baywalk, marinas, and other bayside amenities.
- 2) Continue efforts to improve water quality by nutrient reduction.
- 3) To the greatest extent feasible, protect the natural environment from storm-related surge and flooding.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure is a broad term that covers a range of facilities needed to maintain community life, such a transportation (roads, bridges, and sidewalks), sewer and water systems, utilities, telecommunications, etc. As the basic building blocks of society, a strong infrastructure requires some level of initial investment and periodic and ongoing reinvestment. Dewey Beach recognizes that it has a positive financial standing and revenue growth, which provides the Town an opportunity to consider creating a new funding stream that would be directed towards strengthening the aging infrastructure in Town.

Objective:

Enhance the quality and convenience of community life through the regular maintenance and upgrades of community infrastructure.

Actions:

1. Secure funding to improve the streetscapes and landscapes throughout Town.
2. Implement efficiency improvements in residential trash and recycling services.
3. Establish a local funding stream to institute an Infrastructure Fund to address long-standing capital needs: drainage, electrical lines, lighting/safety, parking issues, and driveway encroachments.
4. Reconcile public lands to address rights-of-way and easement in residential areas.
5. Work with DelDOT to fund and eliminate traffic bottlenecks that contribute to seasonal congestion in key areas.

Public Behavior

Dewey Beach has benefited from having a beautiful and natural environment that draws in visitors. These visitors also stay and patronize restaurants and bars and participate in night life activities. One result of this, however, is public behaviors related to intoxication that are categorized as a nuisance to the community at large.

Dewey Beach has a notable amount of restaurants and bars which serve liquor (*how many license are available?*). Not only does this create a potential public nuisance concern for the Town, but it is also a public health concern as excessive alcohol use is one of the nation's top five leading causes of preventable death¹.

Dealing with public nuisances as they occur and counteracting subsequent negative perceptions is a priority for the Town. Part of the process of addressing this issue will involve public education on the consequences of committing a nuisance offense. Also, educating local businesses that have liquor licenses, or upon approval of the liquor license, on the laws regarding the safe and responsible consumption and sales of alcohol.

In addition to public intoxication, nuisances also occur on private property in the form of a disorderly residence. Both can and should be addressed through pertinent ordinances, law enforcement, and education.

Objective:

Maintain a safe and pleasant public realm for all residents and visitors.

Actions:

1. Revisit and refine local ordinances that govern disorderly and unkempt residential uses.
2. Enforce noise violations to protect a peaceful and tranquil community.
3. Launch a public education campaign to reduce public intoxication and related adverse behaviors.
4. Where feasible, partner with local health organizations on strategies to educate and reduce alcohol related behaviors.

¹ Center for Disease Prevention & Control (CDC)

Public Safety

While major crimes are not an issue for the Town, a poor public image can have a harmful impact on other areas of the community. For example, a negative external reputation could stall attempts to attract new investments, businesses and residents. Building on the previous section on Quality of Life, the Town desires to address Public Safety from the perspective of crime and the perception of safety, major emergency response, and unsafe building conditions. To address these issues, additional resources may be needed.

Law Enforcement

(Expansion of existing Section 3.12)

General Enforcement

Dewey Beach is responsible for a safe and orderly Town and this mandate falls under the Dewey Beach Police Department (DBPD). Presently, the DBPD are staffed with eight sworn, full-time officers and three part-time officers. The Patrol Division consists of three shifts, and adds two additional shifts during the summer months to accommodate the increase residents and visitors to the Town. Patrol officers are responsible for a variety of matters, including traffic enforcement and criminal investigations within the Town.

During the winter months, the patrol division works three 10-hour shifts, followed by three days off. In the summer months, the officers work five 8-hour shifts, followed by two days off. A Sergeant or Lieutenant serves as shift commander for each shift.

To assist with the increased population during the summer months, the Dewey Beach Police Department hires approximately 30 seasonal officers. These officers are part of the Community Foot Patrol Division and work a different shift rotation from the full and part-time officers. They are assigned to patrol one or two streets each, and actively work to detect and deter criminal activity. The foot patrol is the most visible division of the police force during the summer months. While the division effectively deploys officers throughout the beach area and neighborhoods to prevent crime, they also provide opportunities for officers to build relationships with residents and business owners, which enables information sharing that also supports crime prevention. Building upon the effectiveness of the foot patrols, it is recommended that bicycle patrols be integrated into the patrol division in order to permit officers to cover more ground and make more contact with the community.

(Are surveillance cameras currently available in Town? Are there spots where cameras should be installed?) In addition to foot and bicycle patrols, another approach to discouraging crime is the use of a surveillance camera system to monitor activity and relay real-time information to responding officers. Along with cameras, adequate lighting can greatly enhance public safety, especially in troublesome areas. It can also assist foot and bicycle traffic in commercial and residential areas when installed at the pedestrian-scale. Some areas that are served well by

lighting in Dewey Beach include _____ (?). Sections/streets in Town that would benefit from lighting improvements include _____ (?).

Community Programs

In addition to regular duties, Dewey Beach Beach Police Department has a winter watch program for property owners that have a primary residence elsewhere or are away for a short time. Anyone who wishes to participate can contact the DBPD and fill out a form with their property's address and contact information. Officers will then make periodic checks on the property and contact the property owner if they notice any signs of damage or other issues requiring attention. This service is extremely beneficial after large storms or freezing temperatures if the owner is not able to check on their property themselves. It also serves to protect owners from thefts or burglaries, since officers are regularly checking various properties.

Public safety can also be enhanced by through the strengthening of social capital in the community. A sense of community stewardship should exist among the full-time residents. To instill a deeper sense of community, Dewey Beach could support residents working together through civic groups. A Neighborhood Watch Network was previously discussed to enhance safety on a block-by-block basis. This type of civic engagement also involves continuous communication and coordination between the Police Department and residents, which reinforces the foot patrol activities currently underway.

Lifeguards

In addition to the Police Department, the Dewey Beach Beach Patrol is responsible for the protection of life on the beach. They are managed by a Beach Patrol Captain who is a regular part-time employee of Dewey Beach. The Beach Patrol employs nearly fifty Open Water Rescue Certified Lifeguards/Emergency Medical Responders during the summer season. Weather permitting, the Beach Patrol is on duty from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m from the Friday before Memorial Day through Labor Day. The Beach Patrol also has some limited extended season hours on weekends through September. In addition to their regular lifeguarding duties, the Beach Patrol runs a Junior Lifesaving Program for children ages 6 to 16, which is held two days a week for one hour. In the evenings on the beach, the Dewey Beach Patrol also holds youth recreational events such as whiffle ball, horseshoes, football and volleyball. For persons with mobility challenges, the Beach Patrol has beach wheel chairs that are available by advance registration which makes the beach accessible for all.

Code Enforcement

The Code Enforcement Office in Dewey Beach is tasked with enforcing parking, trash, dogs, smoking, and property maintenance regulations for the Town. A major concern for public safety is the lack of accountability displayed by certain absentee, rental, or other property owners with regard to property maintenance. In addition to poor aesthetics, lack of maintenance can lead to unsafe conditions, both for residents of the subject dwellings and for neighboring properties. In an attempt to hold property owners responsible for the conditions of their properties, it is

recommended that the Town strengthen its Code Enforcement efforts, specifically in areas with high concentrations of rental housing and in areas that display repeated violations.

Recommendations

The Police Department, the Beach Patrol, and the Code Enforcement Office are effective and efficient in their responsibilities. Dewey Beach is a safe place to live and visit due to the collective hard work, skill, experience of the enforcement agencies and emergency responders. The Town is also receptive to more efficient ways to deliver these services and employ the best technology as it becomes available. As full-time residences and the shoulder season activities increase, the Town should look closely at the number of full and part time sworn officers to ensure that the personnel is adequate to maintain the level of safety and security currently enjoyed by its residents and visitors. Some recommendations to explore are:

1. Objective: Enhance public safety through preventative and responsive approaches of law enforcement and emergency response units.

Recommendations:

- 1.1. Strengthen the Police Department's foot and bicycle patrols.
- 1.2. If necessary, expand training so officers feel comfortable interacting with a wide range of beach visitors with various backgrounds.
- 1.3. Continuously monitor best practices in community policing to help address all forms of interaction between the police department and residents and visitors.
- 1.4. Consider ways to improve communications during emergencies and between various emergency response units.

2. Objective: Utilize environmental design techniques as a method to enhance safety and promote activities that strengthen community cohesion.

Recommendations:

- 2.1. Improve lighting in key areas to discourage illicit and unwanted activities.
- 2.2. Pursue funding to install surveillance cameras in key locations.
- 2.3. Provide more opportunities for residents to engage with one another in social and cultural settings.
- 2.4. Leadership should work to build effective working relationships among neighbors to address safety and maintenance issues on a block-by-block basis.
- 2.5. Encourage neighbors to work together through a Neighborhood Watch Network.

3. Objective: Strengthen code enforcement to protect public well-being.

Recommendations:

- 3.1. Consider exploring technological solutions that would help improve code enforcement efficiency, such as an upgraded tracking system.
- 3.2. Provide educational resources and training to homeowners and landlords to assist them with their property maintenance.

3.3. Research programs that can be initiated by the Town that provides financing incentives for code compliance for rental properties.

Economic Profile

In 2014, tourism was cited as the State of Delaware’s fourth largest employment sector². Rated a five-star beach in terms of water quality³, Dewey Beach draws in substantial revenue related to its status as a premier tourist destination. Due to the size of the town, detailed data on economic characteristics is not available. However, the U.S. Census does provide select economic characteristics that helps to illuminate the economic profile of Dewey Beach. According to the 2011-2015 American Community Survey (ACS), the top leading industries for the Town were Arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation (33.4%) and Educational services, health care and social (11.8%). The Arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation category is nearly tripled for Dewey Beach compared to Sussex County and the State of Delaware.

Table x: Industry of Workers, 2011-2015

	Dewey Beach	Sussex County	Delaware
INDUSTRY			
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	119	90,239	433,816
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0.8%	2.1%	1.0%
Construction	5.0%	8.4%	6.0%
Manufacturing	10.1%	10.0%	9.1%
Wholesale trade	0.8%	2.0%	1.9%
Retail trade	10.9%	14.2%	12.3%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	1.7%	4.5%	4.7%
Information	0.0%	1.3%	1.7%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and	0.0%	5.1%	9.7%
Professional, scientific, and management, and	10.9%	8.2%	10.0%
Educational services, and health care and social	11.8%	22.4%	24.5%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation	33.6%	10.4%	9.1%
Other services, except public administration	3.4%	5.7%	4.5%
Public administration	10.9%	5.7%	5.7%

(Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Selected Economic Characteristics)

Employment

Dewey Beach does not have larger employers that comprise the majority of its economic base, but rather is made up of small, local businesses. This mix of small businesses creates a unique

² Delaware Economic Development Office (DEDO)

³ DEDO via the U.S. Natural Resources Defense Council rating

identity which sustains the Town and keeps it competitive, particularly during the peak season. Many are located along the primary commercial corridor of DE-1/ Coastal Highway. Ensuring that these local business stay open, remain within Town and have realistic opportunities to expand, when and where feasible, is key to the future of Dewey Beach.

In 2010, Dewey Beach had 171 workers age 16 and over. Of those persons, an estimated 24.6% worked within Dewey Beach and 75.4% worked outside of the Town. For 2011-2015, Dewey Beach had 119 workers age 16 and over and an estimated 14.9% worked within the town limits, representing nearly a 10% decrease in the total population employed. This shift may mirror a number of locales across the State, as the national economy has grown at a modest pace after the end of latest economic recession in 2009. With this in mind, the Town should also have an awareness of the broader regional economy. Delaware’s overall economy is diverse and workers from Dewey Beach will benefit from employment in other places. For example, Rehoboth Beach is also a supplier of jobs for Dewey Beach as well as many areas throughout Sussex County. Further, based on educational attainment levels, the current workforce is adequately prepared to staff key jobs in the Town. In 2010, over one-third of workers have obtained a Bachelor’s degree.

Table XX: Place of Work, 2011-2015

	Dewey Beach	Sussex County	Delaware
Worked in state of residence	83.5%	84.5%	85.2%
Worked in county of residence	66.1%	75.7%	78.2%
Worked outside county of residence	17.4%	8.8%	6.9%
Worked outside state of residence	16.5%	15.5%	14.8%
Living in a place	100.0%	25.0%	43.0%
Worked in place of residence	14.9%	6.4%	10.1%
Worked outside place of residence	85.1%	18.6%	32.8%
Not living in a place	0.0%	75.0%	57.0%

(Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Selected Economic Characteristics)

Place of work figures for Dewey Beach are also important to understanding commuting patterns and transportation needs of the Town, discussed in Section ---.

Additionally, the average Population/ Employment ratio for Dewey Beach was 50.2% for 2011-2015. This figure represents the ratio of total employment to the population and is an indicator of the labor market. This figure can also be used to track job creation. The unemployment rate is .8% compared to xx% for Sussex County, and % for the State of Delaware.

Economic Development

Economic development is a complex and multilayered process to improve the local economy in a way which allows growth to benefit both businesses and residents. Although the municipality is primarily residential, an economic development framework ensures that businesses are in place to meet the needs of the existing and future population and to continue to support a tourist base.

Dewey Beach’s goal for economic development is to create an environment that protects and supports the long-term sustainability of the business community which effectively meets the needs of residents and visitors.

Objectives include:

- Create a positive climate that supports businesses year-round.
- Recruit new and retain existing businesses and create job opportunities.
- Support a mix of commercial development that contributes to the vitality of the Town.
-

During the SWOT analysis for the planning process, there were a number of issues and concerns that emerged which overlap with and inform the economic development framework. Strengths and opportunities for Dewey Beach, include:

- Geographical location to population centers.
- Prospect of incentives to create new business growth.
- Prospect of capitalizing on local, unique assets.
-

Threats and challenges that were identified that may impact the economic climate include:

- Lack of diversity in use of commercial spaces.
- Lack of property tax which adds strain to keep up with infrastructure costs.
-

Dewey Beach has no traditional real estate tax for property owners. However, the Town has a variety of revenue streams. Below are figures reported by the Town for Fiscal Year 2016⁴:

Business Licenses	\$310,000
Parking Permits & Meters	\$720,000
Fines (parking only)	\$337,000
Accommodation Tax	\$468,000
Transfer Tax	\$500,000
Building Permits	\$263,000
All other Income	\$317,000

Recommendations

1 . Create a positive climate that supports businesses year-round.

The Town’s range of economic development activities may not be as intense as a larger city or metropolitan region. For example, economic development activities to attract a single large industrial employer may not have much promise or impact to the existing residents. However, a stronger tax base will directly benefit residents as the revenue would go back into the budget for providing town services, described in Section ---.

⁴ Dewey Beach Financial Information - <http://www.townofdeweybeach.com/Financial-Information/>

The seasonal nature of Dewey Beach's economy is challenging. Many businesses do well financially during the peak season, and struggle during the off season. Dewey Beach also aims to attract more full-time residents. A thriving business community is essential to support a year-round lifestyle in Dewey Beach. Further, businesses that cater to everyday needs are needed to balance with businesses that cater to seasonal tourists.

2. Recruit new and retain existing businesses and create job opportunities.

An economic development strategy that is right-sized for Dewey Beach should be the result of a cooperative relationship with neighboring municipalities, the business community, and a variety of state and county agencies such as Delaware's Economic Development Office, Delaware Tourism Office, and Sussex County Economic Development Office. The Town's proximity to other beach municipalities creates competition among new businesses looking for an ideal place to locate. Many larger cities and towns often utilize incentive programs and services for downtown development (i.e. Main Street Program). While Dewey Beach does not participate in the Main Street Program, it does have the support of its local chamber of commerce. The mission of the Rehoboth Beach-Dewey Beach Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center is to promote business, tourism and civic responsibility. In addition to services for its members, such as advertising opportunities and regular business and legislative updates, the Chamber collects important information such as annual visitation, website hits, and accommodation occupancy statistics. This information is used to track key tourism trends that will help inform businesses as well as municipal leadership in their planning activities.

Strategically marketing Dewey's unique assets will make it a more attractive place for new businesses to locate while maintaining competitiveness. Some of this work is presently conducted through the Dewey Beach Marketing Committee which is responsible for enhancing a positive town image in public through both print and digital formats. Current efforts for business retention and expansion may be assisted by these two organizations; however, a more intense focus on recruiting new businesses may be beyond the scope of work for the Rehoboth Beach-Dewey Beach Chamber of Commerce and the Rehoboth Beach Marketing Committee. Businesses that are able to survive during the off-seasons should be a priority for recruitment activities. Also, embracing innovation and entrepreneurship could lead to new opportunities for the Town.

3. Support a mix of commercial development that contributes to the vitality of the Town.

Land use regulations should work in concert with the economic development goal and objectives to ensure that available land is utilized to promote new businesses and expansion opportunities for existing businesses. Dewey Beach has identified areas of infill and modest expansion for commercial development for lands in close proximity to the downtown core which reinforces the connection between transportation and land use.

5.0 TRANSPORTATION

5.1 Background

Transportation is a part of a community's fabric and character and is interconnected with various facets of society such land use, housing, and economic development; thus an integrated multimodal transportation system is key to a prosperous future. Dewey Beach envisions itself as a community where residents and visitors, including adults, children, seniors and persons with mobility challenges, can safely reach key destinations in Town, including businesses and key points in the community. While automobile is the primary means of travel, the Town wants to encourage pedestrian and bicycle-oriented travel by providing a seamless non-motorized network that is free of mobility obstacles and enhances safety.

Dewey Beach recognizes that it should work collaboratively with other local entities, as well as the County and State to fulfill its transportation vision. Accordingly, a review of relevant state transportation policy was conducted, which included Delaware's Long Range Transportation Plan (2010).

The Delaware Long Range Transportation Plan was adopted by DelDOT to guide transportation investment in the State, over a 20-year planning horizon. This Plan includes policies and improvements for roadways, transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, greenways and trails.

5.2 Regional Roadways

Most State Transportation Departments assume the maintenance of roughly 20% of total roadway miles with the remaining mileage managed and maintained by county and local jurisdictions. In contrast, the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) maintains 87% of the statewide roadway network. As noted in the introductory chapter of this Plan, the main regional roadway in Dewey Beach is SR-1/ Coastal Highway, which is maintained by DelDOT. SR-1 is a four-lane divided highway that extends almost the entire north-south length of the State. Roughly one-mile of SR-1 traverses Dewey Beach. This road received an average amount of --- vehicles daily in 2015, compared to --- in previous years.

[Insert traffic volume data from DelDOT.]

5.3 Local Roadways

Apart from SR-1, Dewey Beach has a dense network of local roadways that provide access to a variety of uses, including residential and commercial. The local government is responsible for the enforcement activities of these local roadways. Many of these local streets do not have sidewalks, yet they carry a notable amount of pedestrian traffic. The pedestrian traffic, mixed with speeding motor vehicles, creates safety issues that should be addressed.

5.4 Parking

As a small town and resort area, Dewey Beach struggles with parking management during the high-season which is May through September. It is important for Dewey Beach to have an effective parking management system, as inadequate parking could create a poor experience for visitors, whom the Town desires to have return and patronize local businesses. Also, parking availability is a consideration for businesses seeking a new operating location. To help manage demand, the Town requires parking permits from May through September (*how many are available?*). These designated parking areas are well-signed (*are they?*) to assist visitors with usage. A total of (*how many are available?*) metered parking spaces are also available. When demand decreases, parking is free on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 5:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at permit and metered spaces. This creates an incentive for visitors to travel into Town during a less demanding time.

[Need more information from Town on parking challenges.]

Questions for Town: How many municipal parking lots/ total spaces are available? Are there significant amounts of parking infractions? Is parking enforcement handled efficiently? Do special events also create parking challenges? Are permitted parking areas easily discoverable for visitors? Are there any issues with parking in residential area or primarily in the commercial areas? Are maps available that indicate parking areas? Have businesses expressed concerns over inadequate parking? In addition to free parking, are there other things that work well for parking in Dewey?

5.5 Public Transit

In general, Sussex County is least served by public fixed route bus service compared to service throughout the State. Public transit in Dewey Beach is limited to seasonal resort bus service. The Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC) operates the Delaware Area Regional Transit (DART) Route 208, which is one of seven seasonal resort bus routes. It provides service between Ocean City, Fenwick Island, and Bethany, Dewey, and Rehoboth Beaches and operates during weekdays and weekends between the months of May and September. DART Route 208 also provides a critical regional mobility link for Dewey Beach residents and visitors by providing access to a connector DART route to Georgetown located in Rehoboth Beach. From there, a passenger could then travel to points throughout Sussex County and utilize the inter-county bus connector DART Route 301 to access points north as far as Wilmington in New Castle County. Also, DART Route 305, commonly known as the Beach Connection, carries passengers between the Rehoboth Beach Park-and-Ride and the Amtrak Station in Wilmington. Dewey Beach is also served by a seasonal private transportation service known as the Jolly Trolley. Service operates between Rehoboth Beach and Dewey Beach and generally runs between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

DART also manages the Park-and-Ride locations throughout the State. The most recent Park-and-Ride location is part of a three-phased project to construct a Transportation Center in Lewes,

just south of the Five Points Town Center. In 2016, DART opened the Center with over 248 park-and-ride spaces. This is the first park-and-ride in Sussex County and is designed to help meet the growing demand of residents and visitors that desire to reach and enjoy Delaware beaches. The third phase of this project will include a public meeting space, improved passenger amenities such as public restrooms, canopied bus boarding/alighting areas, an information kiosk and local tourist information. This new project has begun to bring a notable amount of visitors into Dewey Beach, and has reduced the amount of automobiles in the Town. While the influx of tourists' and their spending activities are welcome, the increased volumes of visitors has posed a new challenge of overcrowding in Dewey Beach. Efforts to coordinate with DART, including collecting ridership information, are recommended.

Using a bicycle in conjunction with bus and rail services is known to extend the travel shed, or geographic area where trips occur. Since data has demonstrated that people will travel three to four times farther by bicycle than walking to reach a transit stop or station, the link between bicycling and transit use is recognized at the State level. All DART buses are equipped with bike racks that can carry two bicycles and the Lewes Transit Center has bicycle racks and a bicycle repair station. Links between these two modes of transportation can reduce travel by single-occupancy vehicles in Dewey Beach.

Another transportation challenge for Dewey Beach is the high percentage of the senior citizen population. In order to age-in-place, seniors need high quality transit options as they tend to drive less or abandon altogether. Exploring the future transportation needs of seniors will allow the Town to sustain this population cohort.

5.6 Alternative Transportation

Travel solely by automobile is not sustainable. The growing amount of congestion experienced by the Town has reinforced the need to accommodate multimodal travel. In addition to transportation goals, walking and bicycling facilities offer recreational, environmental, and health benefits. Dewey Beach is a compact community, which by design, accommodates walking and bicycling due to shorter distances between destinations. The Town has also experienced an ever increasing number of pedestrians, bicyclists, skate boarders and hover boarders, and scooter riders in recent years. Thoughtful and coordinated transportation strategies and related capital investments will ensure that these various modes can interact harmoniously.

5.6.1 Pedestrian Circulation

Pedestrian facilities do exist in the Town. The main spines of sidewalks is along Coastal Highway (SR-1), and a short distance along King Charles Avenue (SR-1A) between Houston and Saint Louis Streets. There are 16 crosswalks along Coastal Highway between Collins and Bayard Avenues, about half of which are controlled by traffic lights.

Despite the pedestrian infrastructure in place, there are major safety-related issues with the existing sidewalks. Many of the crosswalks at intersections along SR-1 do not have traffic controls, making crossing Coastal Highway at these intersections dangerous due to the high volume of traffic, particularly during the summer season, and the lack of vehicles yielding to pedestrians in the crosswalks. Pedestrian crossings at controlled intersections is also difficult due to the signal timing, which is celebrated for vehicular traffic and therefore provides an inadequate amount of pedestrian crossing time. This tends to “encourage” pedestrians to cross in the middle of the block when they see an opportunity, rather than proceeding to the next intersection. Additionally, some sidewalks are not ADA-compliant and have curb cuts that provide an uneven surface along the length of the sidewalk. This poses a tripping hazard to many and the tactile-warning surface tiles for vision impaired persons has deteriorated or is missing at many intersections along Coastal Highway.

Many sidewalks are narrow and interrupted by utility poles and guy wires. There is insufficient space in many sections of sidewalk due to the number of pedestrians using them, as well as children on bicycles and families with strollers and wheelchair users. Another factor contributing to sidewalk congestion is high demand due to beach-goers and patrons enjoying restaurants, bars and night life activities during the evenings. From locally collected data (*source/daily/seasonal?*), patron occupancy in the Town’s restaurants is approximately 9,000, patrons who are exiting these establishments and utilizing the sidewalks along Coastal Highway in the seven blocks between Dickinson Avenue and Saulsbury Street. Finally, sidewalk barriers and threats to pedestrian safety are also created by delivery trucks parked along Coastal Highway. To address the variety of deficiencies in the existing pedestrian network, solutions including but not limited to, expansions to sidewalks in high demand areas, are recommended.

5.6.2 Bicycle Circulation

Similar to most beach towns, Dewey Beach has a bicyclist presence. The skill level of these bicyclists vary and they are often competing with other modes of travel within the public right of way. In addition to sidewalks along Coastal Highway, the Town also has striped bicycle lanes which are maintained by DelDOT and designated as a statewide bicycle route. These bike lane are significantly wider than the dedicated DelDOT bike lanes along Coastal Highway north and south of Town. The bicycle lanes in Town are often used by large delivery trucks. The result is that bicyclists are forced to ride in busy, and often fast moving travel lanes.

Like most, if not all, municipalities throughout Delaware, the Town lacks physical barriers between bicycle lanes and vehicle travel lanes, known as Separated Bicycle Facilities. This and other modern bicycle features are being employed in other States to separate different modes of transportation to enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety. Some travel lanes may be difficult to retrofit in Dewey Beach, but there are some locations where a range of opportunities can be explored.

As with pedestrian behavior, bicyclist behavior in Town is often unpredictable. Public education programs can be used to promote safe behaviors which can reduce the chances of bicyclist injury or fatality often as a result of common causes such as riding against traffic, failing to stop at a stop sign, obeying traffic control devices, making unsafe lane changes, and riding at night without lights and reflective gear. It is recommended that Dewey Beach develop a comprehensive public education program that targets audiences of all ages and skill levels.

5.7 Recommendations

To support the goal of an enhanced, safe and coordinated transportation system that enables residents and visitors, including adults, children, seniors and persons with mobility challenges, to safely reach key destinations in Town, the objectives and suggested actions below outline broad desired outcomes that the Town wants to achieve over the next decade through the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan.

Objective: Enhance the efficiency of motor vehicle travel, particularly during the peak season.

Actions:

- 1.1) Work with DeIDOT to address major bottlenecks that create seasonal peak-hour congestion.
- 1.2) Work with DeIDOT to re-examine and coordinate traffic signal timing along SR-1.
- 1.3) Work with DeIDOT to improve truck traffic circulation, loading zones, and to eliminate conflict-points between pedestrian and trucks.
- 1.4) Consider technology upgrades to manage high parking demand during peak seasons.

Objective: Develop a coordinated pedestrian network that is safe, accessible, convenient, and provides intermodal connections.

Actions:

- 2.1) Work with DeIDOT to upgrade all pedestrian facilities to ADA-standards through major projects and regular roadway maintenance.
- 2.2) Connect safe and adequately sidewalks with public transit facilities, as well as recreational, historic, and cultural resources in Town.
- 2.3) Consider providing a pedestrian wayfinding system to guide non-motorized travel to key points throughout Dewey Beach.

Objective: Develop a coordinated bicycle network that is safe, accessible, convenient, and provides intermodal connections.

Actions:

- 3.1) Provide safely designed, well-marked, and maintained on- and off-street bicycle routes with appropriate signage.
- 3.2) Provide bicycle connections between Dewey Beach and off-road regional bicycle networks such as the Heritage Trail and the Junction and Breakwater Trail in Sussex County.

- 3.3) Work with DART to promote the integration of bicycling with public transit facilities and services.
- 3.4) Consider providing adequate and secure bicycle parking at key destinations (i.e. Town Hall).
- 3.5) Consider incorporating bicycle elements into planning activities and development (i.e. bike parking requirements for new/ re-development).

Objective: Educate Dewey Beach residents and visitors on safe walking, bicycling, and scootering techniques and motor vehicle operations.

Actions:

- 4.1) Educate motorists and bicyclists regarding traffic laws related to sharing the road.
- 4.2) Provide educational messaging that emphasizes pedestrian and bicycle safety and laws.
 - 4.2.1) Work with DelDOT to expand bike safety checkpoints held in beach areas.

Objective: Develop a comprehensive parking strategy to address parking issues, specifically in the Business Resort Districts.

Actions:

- 5.1) Pursue funding for a comprehensive parking study for the Town.
- 5.2) Consider increasing parking capacity in the form of a surface parking lot or a structured garage.

Built Environment

(Incorporate into existing section)

In Section ---, the Town outlines the importance of the Natural Environment in their assessment of what a high-Quality of Life means for Dewey Beach. In this section, the Town now addresses its built environment, which includes man-made facilities such as buildings, storm water systems, water, sewer, and electric facilities, telephone and cable services, roads, and sidewalks.

When the built environment is poorly planned and designed, inefficient development patterns arise which create more traffic and negatively impact air quality. These, in turn, may negatively impact the Natural Environment, often in ways that cannot be reversed.

Overbuilt buildings, or buildings that exceed their allowable floor to area ratio, is a central issue for Dewey Beach. The Town has observed that the existing Zoning Ordinance facilitates overbuilding, which is a trend the Town wishes to curtail. *(Which land parcels are currently vacant and developable? These areas should be expressed on a map and include recent data about each parcel)*

To help guide the future arrangement and intensity of development, it is recommended that the Town's Zoning Ordinance be used as a tool to address the intersection of the Natural and Built Environments. Specifically, it is recommended that the Zoning Ordinance be reexamined to ensure that building regulations are appropriately tailored to the Natural and Built Environments where they exist (or are proposed). Regulations should consider geographic orientation, proximity to the inland, and potential for natural disaster within and across the various Zoning Districts so that requirements reflect the character of each Zone.

Residential Zoning

The Town's existing zoning map includes three residential districts: Planned Residential (PR), Resort Residential (RR), and Neighborhood Residential (NR). Within these districts, future development and redevelopment activities should conform to the future vision and goals outlined in Section --.

The purpose of the Resort Residential (RR) district is to provide for residential development of greater density than that provided for in the Neighborhood Residential (NR) district, together with low-impact community and municipal functions and services for adjacent resort business properties under the same ownership.

The RR Zone is the more flood-prone of the Town's Zoning Districts. The current Zoning Ordinance includes requirements for all Special Flood Hazard Areas, which includes the RR District. However, the existing standards under this zone allow for larger buildings to be constructed (e.g., the maximum square footage for a residential use is 5,000 square feet).

In contrast, the NR district, which is located in the wooded northern most part of the Town, has standards that are less restrictive.

Specific recommendations could include, but need not be limited to, a downzoning of the RR Zone to reduce the intensity of development and thereby the risk of flooding, revisions to bulk standards and reductions of maximum building size, adjustments to definitions regarding how decks and porches are calculated into the gross area of a lot or parcel.

Commercial Zoning

Dewey Beach's Resort Business (RB) zones are also in flood prone areas that expose them to potential risks. Alongside the recommended revisions to the Zoning regulations for the Town's Residential districts, it is recommended that Resort Business Districts 1, 2, and 3 be treated with the same conservative approach to building mass and density management. It is recommended that the Zoning regulations for each of the three districts be re-examined to determine if there are minor or major revisions need to simplify the development process while also achieving the overall land use goals of the municipality.

Flood Considerations

Dewey Beach continues to express concern as to how residential districts, and in particular, the Resort Residential (RR) Zone, might be impacted by sea level rise, which State models suggest is likely in the not-to-distant future.

Further, certain coastal areas of Dewey Beach may potentially be at a greater risk of flooding than other areas, which may require different regulations for coastal development.

While permanent inundation is not projected, studies do point to the need to protect development that will become increasingly vulnerable as sea levels rise and impact both coastal and inland communities.

Infrastructure *(incorporate into existing section)*

Utilities

Dewey Beach values its relationship with DeIDOT and pledges to work closely with the agency where commonality with respect to roads, sidewalks, and stormwater management exists.

As stated in the Transportation Section of this Comprehensive Plan, certain existing sidewalks in the Town obstruct pedestrian traffic and create an unfriendly walking environment. Methods to address these issues are recommended.

Methods to finance the systematic replacement of overhead utility poles and guy wires with underground systems where possible is also recommended. (Alternatively, it is recommended that the relocation of such utilities within grass strips between curbs and sidewalks be explored).

Dewey Beach recognizes that roadway construction or reconstruction projects present the opportunity to relocate overhead utilities, but that such action requires effective coordination with DelDOT as well as each impacted utility company.

Objective: Ensure future buildings are properly proportioned and fit within the existing character of the Town.

Actions:

- 1.1) Review and revise bulk standards to preclude overbuilt buildings.
- 1.2) Consider introducing select NR zoning requirements into the RR zoning district.
- 1.3) Consider revised requirements for building construction to ensure maximum protection from flooding (i.e. building elevation and construction techniques and materials).

Objective: Positively protect and improve the Town's natural environment through zoning.

Actions:

- 2.1) Determine Dewey Beach's coastal adaptation goals (protection, accommodation, retreat, or preservation), which may be different for different sections of the Town.
- 2.2) Assess potential vulnerabilities (by area, number, and type of structures, etc.) to assist in future decision making.
- 2.3) Determine if and when regulations should incorporate more restrictive requirements (i.e. new structures should be designed to be more resilient to flooding and other impacts).

Objective: Enhance and protect investments in the Town's built environment.

Actions:

- 3.1) Coordinate with DelDOT on the placement of utilities and other infrastructure for maximum efficiency and overall community aesthetics.
- 3.2) Ensure that future public infrastructure are outside of potentially vulnerable areas or built to withstand future impacts.