

Town of Georgetown

Comprehensive Plan

Sussex County, Delaware

As Adopted by the Georgetown Town Council on January 13, 2010.

Community Planning Consultants

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Scenes of Georgetown



INTRODUCTION

The Community Character of Georgetown

Georgetown truly is a special town with great community character. Georgetown has historic architecture, strong neighborhoods, vibrant commercial areas and a walkable development pattern. Information on Georgetown's historic buildings is included in the Appendix of this Plan.

Purposes of this Plan

This Plan recommends major policies regarding the development and conservation of Georgetown and adjacent areas over the next decade. This Plan is intended to set the foundation for revisions to development regulations of the Town. In addition, this Plan works to coordinate activities of the Town, County and State Governments. Moreover, this Plan includes recommendations for actions by individuals, organizations and businesses.

Public Participation

This Comprehensive Plan was primarily developed by a Committee that was intended to represent various viewpoints. The Committee met at 10 meetings that were open to the public, and included representatives of Town Council, the Town's Planning Commission, the Route 113 Steering Committee, and the Chamber of Commerce, as well as other interested residents and businesspersons. In addition, the Planning Directors of the Town and Sussex County served on the Steering Committee.

The draft Plan was then revised based upon reviews of the Town's Planning Commission, who held two public meetings. There was a delay in the completion of the process while the Town awaited the completion of the County Comprehensive Plan, in order to achieve consistency in annexation areas and County growth areas.

The Town Council then held a public hearing, after the PLUS review was completed by State agencies. Members of the public attended each of the three public meetings/hearings and provided comments. A second PLUS review was completed, followed by adoption by the Town Council and Certification by the Governor.

The Comprehensive Plan meetings were advertised in a local newspaper and on the Town's website.

THE VISION AND GOALS OF THIS PLAN

The Overall Vision of this Plan

As we look to the future, Georgetown has become more of a destination showcasing small town charm, historical prominence, cultural diversity, and excellence in educational facilities. Easily accessible from major roadways, Georgetown is close to the beach and provides access to a growing airport. Being the County Seat for Sussex County, Georgetown will continue to be the heart of Sussex County's legislative and judicial activity. With affordable homes and a strong sense of community, Georgetown has become an even greater place to live, work, learn, shop and play. The vision is to protect vital Town resources, improve the quality of life for the residents and provide new commercial services to the area, especially those that are not offered in Sussex County.

The historic center of Georgetown will be protected so it will maintain its historical heritage and be strengthened as an active business center for the region. The Town will have preserved the best features of older neighborhoods and extended similar features into the newer development. The architectural theme of the buildings and the streetscape in the Town center has been used as a blue print for the design of newer development throughout the Town. Attractive streetscape improvements will make the center of town more pedestrian-friendly. Highway improvements will divert the heaviest traffic away from the center of Georgetown.

Most new parking will be located to the rear or side of buildings—allowing the front yards to be landscaped. New business development will have occurred in ways that fit into the character of the community. This will include reuse of older buildings and construction of newer buildings in older areas that are similar in character to older buildings. There will be a blend of younger families and a retiring population of people for a bedroom community effect.

Key lands will have been annexed, while much of the land outside of Georgetown will continue to be farmed or remain forested. While the Town's boundary has changed with annexation of land, the impact on the Town has been minimal and the Town's character maintained.

Interconnected open space, recreation trails and recreation areas will be within larger new developments, providing attractive visual relief between buildings. A trail system will also extend north-south into the center of Georgetown connecting the new Library and the Nutter Marvel Museum and many new homes. Roads and streets will be shaded by a canopy of street trees.

Plentiful high-quality groundwater supplies will remain available, with large amounts of stormwater recharging into the ground.

Most new development will be served with public water and wastewater service that will minimize the total amount of land that is consumed. Substantial areas of inter-connected open space will have been preserved within most new development, particularly through clustering.

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Unsightly and inefficient “strip” commercial development of new commercial businesses with individual driveways along long stretches of major roads will have been avoided. Larger scale commercial development will be located along the Rt. 113, Rt. 404 and Rt. 9 corridors. Extensive landscaping will add to the attractiveness of new development.

Traffic will have increased but will be carefully managed, with improvements to smooth traffic along major corridors. As traffic is better managed along major roads, there will be less incentive for vehicles to travel on residential streets. Coordinated driveways and interconnected parking lots will be provided between adjacent businesses. Wider shoulders or adjacent paths will be provided on roads to increase safety and promote bicycling and walking.

Signs will be of modest size and height. Lighting will be controlled to avoid nuisances to neighbors and motorists.

A wide variety of recreation opportunities will be available and the local schools will continue to be known for high quality education.

Direction: the Major Goals of this Plan

The following goals provide overall direction for this Plan. The recommendations work to carry out these goals.

Overall Goal: Continually strive to make Georgetown an even greater place in which to live, work, learn, visit, shop and play, with a strong sense of community, stable neighborhoods, vibrant business areas, high-quality recreation opportunities, a historic character, and an excellent quality of life.

Natural Features

- Conserve important natural features, with a special emphasis upon waterways, wetlands and mature woodlands.
- Seek to maintain agricultural activities in large portions of the surrounding region.
- Protect the amounts and quality of groundwater, and promote recharge into the groundwater.

Land Uses and Housing

- Promote compact, as opposed to sprawled, development.
- Provide for orderly patterns of development that provide compatibility between land uses, particularly to protect the livability of residential areas.
- Maintain an attractive medium-density character in most of the Town, with lower densities in some outlying areas. Promote use of the "Open Space Development" concept to cluster homes on the most suitable portions of a tract, in order to permanently preserve landscaped open spaces and recreation areas.

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- Direct most development to locations that can be efficiently served by public water and wastewater services, in order to minimize the total amount of land that is consumed by development in the County and to direct most housing away from agricultural areas.
- Direct new commercial uses to the center of Town and other concentrations of development that allow for safe and efficient traffic access - as opposed to strip commercial development with multiple individual driveways.
- Strengthen Downtown Georgetown as a business, civic, cultural, and entertainment center for the region, building upon its role as the County Seat.
- Provide areas for a range of housing types, prices and densities, including various types of housing for senior citizens.
- Promote additional housing that is affordable to the average Georgetown household, particularly recognizing the needs of various types of households.
- Strengthen older residential neighborhoods, with an emphasis on encouraging home-ownership, rehabilitating older buildings, and avoiding incompatible development.
- Seek to extend the best features of older development into newer development and promote compatible "infill" development in older parts of the Town. Promote new construction that extends the community character and promotes a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Encourage appropriate reuse of older buildings, particularly including rehabilitation of historically or architecturally significant buildings.
- Promote appropriate mix of uses to reduce commuting distances, promote walking, and reduce travel times to commercial areas.
- Further improve the visual attractiveness of Georgetown, with an emphasis upon the Bedford and Market Street corridors and Route 113, and with an emphasis upon street trees, landscaping and historic preservation.
- Stress a strong diversified economy that generates stability, sufficient tax revenues and wider employment opportunities.
- Promote coordination and seek opportunities for synergies between Sussex County's interest in continued improvements to the Airport, the State's interests in expanding its facilities and the private development of areas in the southern end of Georgetown.
- Emphasize tourism that is built upon the area's heritage, arts and culture, and recreational assets.
- Promote pride and sense of community within the Town by providing education of the Town's Code with emphasis on property maintenance to property owners and residents.

Community Facilities and Services

- Provide high-quality community facilities and services in the most cost-efficient manner, including addressing needs for future growth.
- Make sure that the street system, water system, wastewater system and stormwater drainage are able to accommodate the expected amounts of development. Extend the wastewater system in logical phases.
- Continue full cooperation and coordination of municipal and emergency services with the County and nearby towns.

Transportation

- Carefully plan road/street patterns and access from development according to the function each road is intended to serve within the overall road network.
- Continue work to control and divert heavy truck traffic, through-traffic and higher speed traffic on residential streets/roads and divert some heavy traffic from the center of town.
- Work with DeIDOT to design highway/road improvements in a manner that will support this Comprehensive Plan, will minimize conflicts with residential areas, and will address heavy seasonal east-west traffic.
- Improve opportunities throughout the Town for safe bicycle and pedestrian travel, carpooling and public transit.

Putting this Plan into Action

- Update the Town's development codes to carry out this Plan, and periodically update the Plan and codes as needed.
- Continually work to put this Plan into action - through a program of updated planning and many short-term actions within a long-range perspective.
- Promote substantial citizen input, including making sure residents are well-informed about community issues and encouraging volunteer efforts to improve the community.
- Maximize communications, coordination and cooperative efforts between Georgetown and other towns, the Indian River School District, the County, State agencies and other organizations.

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Map of Georgetown's Borders and Potential Annexation Areas

NATURAL FEATURES CONSERVATION

The U.S. Geological Survey map for the Georgetown area is included on a following page. That map shows topographic contours, major wooded areas, and waterways/ditches.

Woodlands provide important benefits for wildlife habitat, erosion control, filtering pollutants from stormwater runoff and reducing the volumes and velocities of stormwater runoff. The goal is to preserve larger forested areas and waterway corridors, which will have much higher ecological and wildlife value than fragmented open spaces. Forest fragmentation separates populations, increases road mortality, and increases "edge effects" that can leave many forest-dwelling species vulnerable to predation and infiltration by invasive species. Equally important are forested areas along water courses which not only protect water quality but also provide wildlife with habitat for breeding, resting, foraging and migrating.

The proposed cluster/open space development option (described in the Land Uses and Housing section) should be encouraged to be used in a way that preserves inter-connected woodlands and provides a buffer adjacent to State Forest Lands. Issues of compatibility with State Forest Lands are discussed in the Land Use chapter of this Plan.

Where feasible, wetland buffers should be encouraged to be wider than the 25 feet wide minimum to protect water quality or to provide habitat for some wetland dependent species. Ideally, 100 feet wide buffers are desirable in rural areas. The wetland buffers should include planting of native species of vegetation.

As part of any planning for road improvements, any transportation consultants hired by Georgetown should coordinate their work with the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control's (DNREC) Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP). Applicants for new developments, particularly in outlying areas of the Town and along waterways, should also be requested to contact the NHESP staff. The goal is to find ways to minimize impacts upon rare or endangered species of plants or animals. Information on "Key Wildlife Habitats" is available as part of the Delaware Wildlife Action Plan, which is available on the DNREC internet site.

The Town should require all applicants to submit to the City a copy of the development site plan showing the extent of State-regulated wetlands (as depicted by the State Wetland Regulatory Maps), and a United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) approved wetlands delineation as conditional approval for any new commercial and/or residential development. Additionally, the site plan should depict all streams and ditches which are jurisdictional pursuant to the Subaqueous Act (7 Del. C., Chapter 72) as determined by DNREC.

The Town should work to minimize the amount of impervious cover outside of the center of the Town. This should include strongly encouraging use of pavers and other pervious paving materials to reduce the need for traditional asphalt paving. Pervious asphalt, pervious concrete and similar materials can often be suitable on the 50 percent of a parking area that receives the least amount of use. In areas with seasonal or occasional usage, stone may be suitable in some areas, or stone may be used under grass to provide a stabilized surface. Moreover, parking requirements should be reviewed to make sure they do not require an excessive number of spaces and to promote shared use of parking.

The Town should work with the Conservation District to actively encourage use of Best Management Practices that reduce water pollutants in runoff and that promote groundwater recharge. "Green-technology" stormwater management should be encouraged in lieu of "open-water" stormwater management ponds whenever practical.

Wastewater treatment areas and open-water stormwater treatment structures should not be allowed to count towards the minimum amount of open space in a development. Regulated wetlands should continue to not be allowed to count towards the minimum amount of open space in a development, unless used as an amenity within the criteria of the Town's Development Design Standards.

Waterways and the 100 Year Floodplain

The 100 year floodplain is a graphic representation of the Base Flood on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps. The Base Flood is the flood expected to have a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. In a 30 year period, there is a 26 percent chance that a structure in the 100 year floodplain will be flooded by a 100 year flood event.

Georgetown participates in the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program. The Town has adopted and enforces a Floodplain Ordinance that regulates construction in the 100 year floodplain. The current Town Floodplain Ordinance requires that a Base Flood Elevation be provided by an applicant's professionals for any development that involves more than 5 acres or 50 lots. All of the floodplains around Georgetown have been approximately located by FEMA. When the Town is reviewing proposed developments, the developer should be required to provide detailed base flood elevation information to the Town. The Town can then provide that information to FEMA and request that the floodplain map be revised.

Georgetown is at a relative high point at the juncture of three watersheds, and therefore has few defined floodplain areas. The most prominent Federally-mapped floodplain is along the Savannah Ditch to the north. Other floodprone areas are along the Georgetown-Vaughn Ditch to the west, the McGee Ditch to the south, the Eli Walls Ditch to the southeast and the Peterkins Branch of the Indian River to the southeast.

The Watersheds and Waterways Map on a following page shows the locations of waterways and the dividing lines between the watersheds that flow into each waterway.

The Georgetown-Vaughn Ditch flows west into the Deep Creek and eventually to the Nanticoke River, while the Savannah Ditch flows to the Broadkill River to the northeast. All of the other ditches eventually flow to the Indian River to the southeast. The State is particularly concerned about water quality in the Nanticoke River watershed because the river is designated as having "Exceptional Recreational or Ecological Significance."

This Plan recommends that thick natural vegetation be preserved and/or planted along the major waterways. This vegetation is essential to protect the water quality of the waterways, including to filter out pollutants and eroded soil before they enter the water. Where feasible, a 25 feet wide vegetated buffer should be provided on each side of the centerline of the major ditches that typically carry water year-round.

Wetlands

Wetlands are defined by three criteria: 1) wetland hydrology, 2) hydric soils, and 3) hydrophytic vegetation. Wetlands are particularly important to reduce or mitigate flooding impacts, maintain and improve water quality, and provide habitat for a variety of plant and animal species.

Regulatory protection of wetlands is mandated under the Federal Clean Water Act. Certain other wetlands (mainly in tidal areas) are regulated under the State of Delaware Code. These provisions may require an applicant to submit an Army Corps of Engineers approved wetlands delineation and/or a wetland jurisdictional determination from DNREC.

Development site plans should be required to show the extent of State-regulated wetlands (as depicted on State Wetland Regulatory Maps) and an approved wetland delineation from the Army Corps of Engineers. Additionally, site plans should depict all streams and ditches which are regulated under the Delaware Subaqueous Lands Act (Title 7 Chapter 72 of the Delaware Code) as determined by DNREC.

Where detailed wetland delineations have not yet been completed, hydric soil mapping can provide one indicator of possible wetland locations that should be further examined. Hydric soil mapping is available from the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service.

Ideally, wetlands should include preserved open space around them, instead of parts of individual lots. Wetlands setbacks as an important part of the Town's ordinances to protect environmental resources. During prolonged wet periods, the area within the wetland setback may become too wet for normal residential use. Designation as open space will aid in the prevention of decks, sheds, fences, kennels, and backyards being placed within the setback, thereby reducing common drainage complaints.

DNREC recommends that a 100 feet minimum vegetated buffer be provided around all wetlands. This buffer should be free of buildings and paving. The Town should consider establishing a minimum buffer from non-man-made wetlands as a development regulation, although 100 feet would be difficult to achieve within much of the Town's limits. One option would be a 25 feet wide buffer, which would also help to keep construction equipment and materials out of the wetlands during construction. A wider buffer (such as 50 to 100 feet) may be feasible from the more ecologically important wetlands in outlying parts of the Town.

Most wetlands in the area are forested. DNREC reports that forested wetlands in headwaters of a waterway are particularly important to protect water quality.

Important Natural Areas

In 2006, DNREC completed maps of proposed State Resource Areas (SRAs). The State Resource Areas were intended to be areas where the State would like to see preserved over time, particularly to link together important ecological areas. The intent was to help set priorities for when money is spent to purchase land or to purchase conservation easements. A conservation easement involves buying the right to development land, while the land itself can remain privately owned. A conservation easement typically allows agricultural and other activities, but does not allow subdivisions or construction of multiple homes. The State Resource Areas also were intended to be

used by State agencies when they are reviewing proposed developments, annexations and grants under the State PLUS review system.

Some of the SRAs were designated as Proposed Natural Areas. These are areas that the State has determined have particular ecological importance, because they are along important waterways, may be habitats for rare or endangered plants or animals, or are particularly important for water quality.

The SRA on Route 404/18 west of Delaware Tech is part of the Redden State Forest. The SRA southwest of Delaware Tech south of Raccoon Ditch Road is preserved by a conservation easement. Many of the SRAs north of Georgetown include wetlands. The SRA/Natural Area southeast of Georgetown is a wet area at the juncture of the Eli Walls and McGee Ditches.

As of 2009, the process to designate the SRAs is the subject of complex legal challenges throughout the State of Delaware. Therefore, the map in this Plan has been revised to refer to these areas as Important Natural Areas.

Wellhead Protection

The Wellhead Protection Map on a following page shows information compiled by DNREC on areas expected to have the greatest impact upon public water supplies. To meet requirements of the State Source Water Protection Act of 2001, both Georgetown and Sussex County adopted groundwater protection regulations.

Water Quality Issues

Under the Federal Clean Water Act, Delaware has identified impaired waters and established total maximum daily loads to restore their beneficial uses (such as swimming, fishing, and drinking water). A TMDL defines the amount of a given pollutant that may be discharged to a water body from point, nonpoint, and natural background sources and still allows attainment or maintenance of the applicable narrative and numerical water quality standards. A TMDL is the sum of the individual Waste Load Applications (WLA's) for point sources and Load Allocations for nonpoint sources and natural background sources of pollution. A TMDL may include a reasonable margin of safety to account for uncertainties regarding the relationship between mass loading and resulting water quality. In simplistic terms, a TMDL matches the strength, location and timing of pollution sources within a watershed with the inherent ability of the receiving water to assimilate the pollutant without adverse impact.

A Pollution Control Strategy (PCS) specifies actions necessary to systematically achieve pollutant load reductions specified by a Total Maximum Daily Load for a given water body; and must reduce pollutants to level specified by the State Water Quality Standards. A variety of site-specific best management practices (BMPs) will be the primary actions required by the PCS to reduce pollutant loading(s).

The Town of Georgetown is located within the Broadkill, Upper Nanticoke, and Indian River Bay watersheds (high reduction zone). The pollutants specifically targeted for reduction in the aforementioned watersheds are nutrients (such as nitrogen and phosphorus) and bacteria. As

mentioned previously, these TMDL pollutant reductions must be met in order to satisfy the water quality goals and criteria in the State Water Quality Standards.

The DNREC internet site provides current information on the amount of reduction that is needed from non-point sources to achieve the TMDLs in various drainage areas and watersheds. As of 2010:

- the Broadkill watershed was required to achieve a 40% nitrogen reduction, a 40% phosphorus reduction and a 75% bacteria reduction;
- the Upper Nanticoke watershed was required to achieve a 30% nitrogen reduction, a 50% phosphorus reduction and a 2% bacteria reduction; and
- the Indian River Bay watershed high reduction zone was required to achieve a 85% nitrogen reduction, a 65% phosphorus reduction and a 40% bacteria reduction.

The PCS for the entire Inland Bay drainage was approved in 2008 and is now an enforceable regulatory directive. The PCS for the Nanticoke watershed is projected for completion at the end of 2010. No date has yet been projected for completion of the Broadkill watershed PCS.

Potential Brownfield Sites

Brownfield sites are buildings or lands that may include some environmental contamination because of past activities on the property. If future development is proposed on sites with previous manufacturing, industrial or agricultural use, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment should be conducted by the developer. A Phase I Assessment investigates past uses on the property and seeks evidence of possible contamination. If a Phase I Assessment raises reason for concern, then a more detailed investigation should be conducted. The Site Investigation and Restoration Branch of DNREC can provide assistance in investigating, remediating and redeveloping brownfield sites.

Watersheds and Waterways Map

USGS map

Important Natural Areas Map

Wellhead Protection Map

LAND USES AND HOUSING

Existing County Planning and Zoning

The bulk of the unincorporated areas surrounding Georgetown are designated in the County's 2008 Land Use Plan as "Developing Areas." This is one type of designated growth area in the County Plan. This County growth area corresponds approximately to Georgetown's potential annexation area, but the County area is slightly larger. The County Plan is currently being carried out through a set of zoning code amendments.

The County's "Developing Areas" category is intended to concentrate development in areas where public wastewater and water services could be efficiently provided. The County Plan recommends a mix of housing types in these areas at a medium density, plus mixed use developments that include some commercial uses. The County Plan promotes use of clustering of new homes in these Developing Areas similar to what is already allowed in the AR-1 District (as described below).

The Airport and adjacent areas are shown as an Employment Center in the County Comprehensive Plan.

Existing Zoning in Areas Outside of Georgetown

When planning for development near the edge's of Georgetown's borders, it is important to consider what development is possible under the County's current zoning. This is because a) the land may be developed under County zoning without being annexed, and b) a developer is less likely to ask to be annexed unless he is able to get more favorable zoning than is offered currently. In addition, the Town has had a policy of avoiding extension of the Town's wastewater system unless land is annexed, with one exception near the wastewater plant. However, a developer has an option of building a private central wastewater system, such as a system that treats wastewater in a treatment plant and then sprays the resulting effluent onto fields.

The County currently has provided for little commercial zoning outside of the Town's borders. A portion of E. Market Street is currently zoned Commercial east of Georgetown, however most of the corridor is in residential uses. The Airport and the adjacent County Industrial Park are both zoned industrial under the County ordinance. There also is an industrially zoned parcel along Wilson Road north of Georgetown. However, the development of that land is limited by wetlands.

Almost all land that is outside of Georgetown's borders in surrounding areas is zoned as of 2008 within the County's AR-1 Agricultural Residential District. This district covers the largest land areas of the County. This district mainly allows agricultural uses and single family detached houses on 3/4 acre minimum lots with an on-lot septic system. If soils are high quality, some 1/2 acre minimum lots are possible with an on-lot septic system, provided the density is maintained at an average of 3/4 acre per home. If central wastewater service is provided, then the lot size can be reduced to 1/2 acre. A cluster housing option in this district has been widely used. It allows smaller lots if a minimum of 30 percent of the total land area of the project is preserved as open space. The developer is required to show that the cluster plan will be superior to what would otherwise be allowed. The cluster option usually allows an average of 2 homes per acre.

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If a developer has 10 acres or more and will provide central wastewater service, then a cluster option is available. Around the edges of a cluster development, there are some current provisions to seek compatibility - including a 30 feet buffer adjacent to farmland and existing homes. This cluster option allows lots of 7,500 square feet (approximately 5 per acre) if 30 percent of the tract is preserved as open space. (Note - In the more rural areas of the County, such as areas that are not adjacent to Georgetown, the density is reduced by 25 percent for a cluster development.)

Other uses that are currently allowed in AR-1 zoned areas adjacent to Georgetown include:

- golf courses,
- livestock and poultry operations, with 200 feet setbacks for manure storage from residential districts and dwellings,
- dog kennels, with a 200 feet setback from lot lines,
- the following uses if they are approved by County Council as a conditional use:
 - mobile home parks on a minimum of 5 acres and at a maximum density of 8 homes per acre,
 - agriculturally related industry,
 - airports,
 - biotechnology campus,
 - mining of sand, gravel or stone,
 - fairgrounds,
 - land application of treated sewage sludge,
 - livestock auction markets,
 - private clubs,
 - vehicle or horse race tracks,
 - public utilities,
 - commercial picnic grounds,
 - other residential, commercial or industrial uses that meet the purposes of the District.

The County Zoning Board of Adjustment is allowed to approve the following uses in the AR district:

- nursing homes and assisted living centers,
- day care,
- commercial communications towers,
- asphalt or concrete plant (5 year maximum),
- dog kennels (5 year maximum),
- golf driving ranges (5 year maximum), and
- Firearms target ranges (5 year maximum).

In addition, because the land surrounding Georgetown is within a County-designated growth area, developers of land in the AR-1 district are provided another opportunity. If a developer in a designated growth area contributes to a fund that preserves open land in the County, they are allowed additional density. That currently equals \$15,000 for each additional home. The funds are then used by the Sussex County Land Trust to preserve outlying lands.

Housing types other than single family detached houses are not currently allowed in areas adjacent to Georgetown; however, townhouses are possible in certain cluster developments.

The Sussex County Zoning Code is currently being revised through a set of amendments.

Existing Land Uses

Two maps on the following pages illustrate the existing land uses of land in Georgetown and in surrounding areas. The land uses in areas outside of the Town are generalized.

State Strategies for Policies and Spending

The State of Delaware has developed a system of State Strategies for Policies and Spending. These strategies divide the State into four investment levels, as shown on a map on a following page. These are described in a detailed Strategies document that is available on the State Office of Planning Coordination website. Level 1 mainly includes incorporated towns and is intended to provide for higher densities and mixtures of uses. In these areas, the State is encouraging redevelopment and reinvestment. These areas are intended to be the primary locations for new State facilities and should receive priority in infrastructure funding. The emphasis is also placed upon cleaning up and redeveloping underused brownfield sites that may have contamination.

Level 2 areas are prime development areas that are mainly adjacent to towns and could have efficient access to public water and wastewater systems. The State promotes allowing a mix of housing types, plus commercial services that serve nearby residents. The State intends to use its spending to promote well-designed development in these areas. This includes preserving important natural areas when adjacent land is developed.

Level 3 areas are typically longer-term growth areas. These include areas that are not needed for immediate growth, but may be suitable for the future. Some areas near towns were placed in Level 3 because they include environmentally sensitive lands or prime agricultural land. Some of these areas have included leapfrog development that is not immediately adjacent to compact development areas. The intent is for the State to generally avoid spending State dollars on roads, wastewater, water and public buildings in these areas during the immediate future. Level 3 areas are intended to be periodically reassessed to determine whether they should be raised to Level 2.

Level 4 areas include the bulk of Sussex County. Most of these areas are predominately agricultural or wooded. However, in Sussex, many developments of over 300 homes have been built in these areas. The State's intent in these areas is to discourage intensive development, and instead to promote agriculture and forestry activities. The State intends to limit State infrastructure spending in these areas. Transportation projects are intended to be limited to needed safety improvements, as opposed to improvements that would increase capacity. Where development does occur in Level 4 areas, the intent is that it should include clustering of homes with substantial preservation of open space.

Level 1 mainly includes the existing boundaries of the Town of Georgetown. Level 2 mainly includes the Airport, the Airport Industrial Park and a few immediately adjacent areas. Level 3 includes areas immediately adjacent to Georgetown to the northeast, west, southwest and south. All other areas, including much of Georgetown's Potential Annexation Area, is within Level 4.

The Town of Georgetown should work with State agencies and Sussex County to jointly complete a regional plan for two areas. The first area is south and east of the Town adjacent to the County

Airport, the new Park Road corridor, the State Correctional Institution, DelDOT facilities and various other State Service Centers. The intent is to address long-term needs to provide compatible land uses, water and sewage services, road improvements and take advantage of economic development opportunities.

In addition, more detailed planning is needed along Route 113, in cooperation with DelDOT. The proposed long-term road improvements that call for the creation of mix of at-grade improvements and grade-separated intersections that will significantly change the character and accessibility to existing businesses along Route 113. The Town should begin to plan for these changes now to address future conflicts and to assist with the further implementation of Route 113 Road Improvements.

These regional planning efforts should culminate in a formal agreement between the Town, the County and State to seek implementation of the recommendations and to allocate responsibilities.

The intent is to minimize the amount of industrial development near primary and secondary schools, and to require a larger setback when those uses are adjacent.

State Strategies for Policies Areas Map

Existing land use Map - Georgetown Area

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Existing land use map - Central Georgetown

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Excerpt of County Land Use Plan Map

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Town Comprehensive Plan Map

Future Land Use Categories

The following describe the major Land Use Categories that are shown on the Comprehensive Plan Map, which is included on a previous page. The intent is to combine certain of the existing zoning districts in Georgetown to reduce the complexity of the Zoning Map. Another intent is to reduce the land areas that allow high density housing. However, overall, revolutionary changes are not proposed to the current Zoning Map or Zoning Code.

Zoning and Subdivision Code Updates – This Plan recommends that the Town’s Zoning and Subdivision Codes be updated within 9 months after this Plan is adopted to carry out the Plan. The codes are the main tools that are directly controlled by the Town to implement these policies. Recent developments should be reviewed to assemble a list of items that should be encouraged or avoided in future developments. Special attention needs to be paid to the Residential Planned Community (RPC) provisions because most denser developments are using that option. Portions of the Town’s Design Guidelines should be integrated into the Zoning Code. A number of definitions also need to be modernized or expanded upon.

Wetland Deletions – When calculating the allowable density for new housing developments, this Plan recommends that areas within wetlands be required to be deleted. Therefore, if a 5 acre lot includes one acre of wetlands, and an average density of 6 homes per acre is allowed, then the maximum density should be 24 homes - 4 acres multiplied by 6, as opposed to 5 acres multiplied by 6.

Low Density Residential – As described above, a new Low Density Residential zoning district should be established. This district is intended to be used for the vast majority of lands that may be newly annexed into the Town. This district should provide for an average of 3 single family detached houses per acre. An option should allow 4 homes per acre if a substantial area of open space is preserved through cluster/open space developments. This cluster/open space option could allow singles, side-by-side twins and townhouses. This cluster option should also utilize the Town’s Residential Planned Community Option (RPC) standards.

The goal of the cluster/open space option is to place homes on the most suitable portions of a tract of land, while permanently preserving the most important open spaces. Open space development can be valuable to provide buffers around wetlands, to preserve valuable forested areas and to provide recreation opportunities close to homes.

For example, smaller lots and smaller lot widths could be allowed as an option, provided there was permanent preservation of significant recreation land. Proper standards are needed to make sure that the open space truly serves a valuable public purpose, and is not simply leftover fragments of land. For example, at least half of the required open space could be required to be in one contiguous lot, and areas of less than 50 feet in width could not count as open space. Proper standards are needed to make sure that the preserved open space is well-located and improved so that it serves important public functions. Wastewater facilities and stormwater facilities that do not serve a recreation purpose should not be allowed to count towards the required amount of open space. There could be requirements to plant trees and install trails in the open space.

Many future Annexation Areas are adjacent to State Forest Lands, particularly to the north of Georgetown. The Delaware Department of Agriculture seeks that a buffer be provided between new homes and State Forest Lands whenever possible. The proposed Open Space Development Option could help to achieve this type of buffer. A buffer is not only valuable to help maintain the aesthetic and environmental aspects of the Forest Lands, but also to provide a fire break between new homes and the woodlands. The Delaware Department of Agriculture also requests that developers install signs between new development and State Forest Lands to make new residents aware of the State lands and to refer them to State regulations regarding the use of the State lands.

Medium Density Residential – These areas are mainly intended to provide for single family detached houses at an average of 4 to 6 homes per acre, such as 6,000 to 10,000 square feet minimums. An emphasis should be placed upon having usable rear yards. Through the RPC Option (described below), a mix of housing types should be possible if open space is preserved and a higher level of site design is used. This category related to the current UR2 and UR3 zoning districts, which could be easily merged together.

Medium High Density Residential – These areas should provide for a mix of single family detached houses, apartments/multi-family dwellings, twin dwellings and townhouses. Care is needed to make sure that zoning requirements do not discourage construction of single family detached houses, which is presently the case in some zoning districts. The maximum densities should be 7 to 12 homes per acre. Certain areas could be limited to singles, twins and townhouses at 7 or 8 homes per acre, without allowing apartments. This category mainly related to the current MR2 zoning district.

In particular, the current MR1 Multi-Family Residential zoning district allows excessive densities and the land areas within that zoning district should be reduced. New annexations that would use MR1 zoning should be avoided. Larger areas that have not been approved for development or are not actively under review should be changed to a zoning district that promotes medium density development, such as townhouses. At the same time, attention is needed on “infill” lots that currently can experience dense apartments that are inconsistent with the neighborhood.

Retirement Communities – There should continue to be options in the Town's zoning provisions to encourage retirement communities. These developments should allow a mix of housing types, nursing homes and assisted living centers, as well as support and recreational services for older persons. These developments should also be allowed to simply include single family detached condominiums, with small side yard setbacks, if desired by the developer. A minimum of one resident of each housing unit should be required to be at least age 55 or have significant physical disabilities. A significant density incentive should be provided above the density for non-age-restricted housing. A minimum percentage of the tract should be required to be improved for recreation areas for seniors, which could include ADA-accessible paths with landscaping and a community recreation room.

This category related to the allowance of Retirement Residential Planned Communities in several areas in the current zoning code.

Residential Planned Community (RPC) Designation – These provisions should continue to be used in the Town's Zoning Code to allow flexibility in the standards for larger developments, in return for a higher quality of site design and the provision of open space. A 10 acre minimum tract size is

currently required in order to use these provisions. Currently, an applicant may ask the Town to add this option to their property as an optional “overlay” to the regular zoning provisions.

- The RPC provisions allow a mix of housing types, including singles, townhouses and apartments.
- The density for a RPC should be slightly higher than the density that is possible without use of the RPC provisions.
- A RPC should continue to allow a percentage of the tract (currently up to 15 percent) to be developed in neighborhood-oriented commercial uses that are highly compatible with homes. A more specific list of allowed uses and maximum sizes for businesses would be appropriate. The provisions specifically state that first floor commercial uses shall be allowed with apartments on upper stories.
- The RPC provisions give the Town the authority to modify zoning requirements, such as setbacks, within a RPC development. The Town can also approve reduced street widths.
- A set of design standards are included in the provisions. Use of alleys should be encouraged to allow rear driveways and rear garages. There should be a stronger connection to the Town’s Design Guidelines.
- The current standard is that a minimum of 15 percent of the tract must be preserved in open space. Greater attention is needed to the design of the open space to make sure it serves a valuable public purpose and is inter-connected. It would be desirable to reduce the maximum density for conventional and RPC development to achieve a higher percentage of open space (such as 25 instead of the current 15 percent) in RPC projects. In outlying areas of the Town that may be annexed, an even higher percentage of open space should be sought.

Medium Density Residential - Office – These areas should provide for homes, plus offices, bed and breakfast inns, personal service businesses and day care centers. These areas include a mix of homes and offices along West Market and North Bedford Streets. These areas are particularly sensitive because they include many buildings with historic architecture and are adjacent to many residential neighborhoods. Many older homes on these blocks have been converted into attractive offices. The main current zoning restriction in place is that an existing single family home that is converted to a business must retain a residential appearance and that the Planning Commission has the ability to control the appearance of new construction. This category related to the current UB3 zoning district.

- Minimum landscaped area standards should be added, particularly for front yards. It is particularly important to maintain the character of these areas because they represent such a highly visible “face” of the Town.

Education and Major Community Facilities – These areas includes Delaware Tech and the public and private elementary and secondary schools. This category also includes the Town’s wastewater treatment plant. New schools should be located in areas that the State has designated as Investment Levels 1 or 2, where feasible. Many of these lands are currently zoned ED Education in the current Zoning Code.

Neighborhood Business – These areas correspond to the current UB1 and UB2 zoning districts. This district mainly allows for less intense types of commercial businesses, such as offices, personal service businesses, banks, restaurants and retail stores. Care is needed regarding which areas are suitable for restaurants with drive-through service and uses that would be open late night hours.

These areas should also provide for some residential uses. In all business areas, a set of landscaping standards should be added. The setbacks between businesses could be minimal, while the setbacks between businesses and homes should be emphasized.

Commercial District – These areas include most of the land along both sides of the Route 113 corridor. These areas should continue to provide for a very wide range of commercial uses, plus single family detached houses. This category related to the current HC Highway Commercial zoning district.

It is important to work with DeIDOT to have proper access controls onto Route 113. A minimum lot width should be added along heavily traveled roads. “Considering the need for curb radii and a deceleration lane, DeIDOT has recommended that a 300 feet minimum lot width may be appropriate where a new commercial lot would have its own vehicle access onto Route 113.

Setbacks from adjacent homes should vary based upon the type of commercial use—a 24 hour gas station should need larger setbacks than a bank or office. Also, a setback and landscaped screening should be required between any business and any residential district or dwelling, instead of the current standard that only applies along single family detached dwellings. Other types of dwellings exist and are proposed next to commercial areas.

There is tremendous opportunity for redevelopment of underused lands between North Race Street and the railroad. These areas are currently zoned “Urban Business,” which is mainly a commercial district. A wider range of mixed uses may be appropriate, as well as taller maximum heights (such as a maximum of 5 stories). An ideal arrangement may involve retail and service businesses on a first floor, with residential condominiums on upper stories.

Additional standards are needed in commercial areas to avoid monotonous strip commercial development layouts. Instead, higher quality architecture and creative site layouts should be promoted. This intent could be achieved by incorporating some of the Town’s current Design Guidelines into the Zoning Code.

Limited Commercial/Airport Approach – There is a need for compatible land uses within the primary approach areas to the most used runway of the Sussex County Airport. This Plan recommends considering the creation of a Limited Commercial/Airport Approach zoning district in certain lands east of South Bedford Street and west of the railroad. The intent is to avoid “noise sensitive uses” such as schools and homes. In addition, the intent is to limit commercial uses to types that would be compatible with adjacent homes. For example, office uses and contractor headquarters may be appropriate, but restaurants and uses with late night hours should not be allowed. Industrial uses and uses that are likely to generate significant tractor-trailer truck traffic should be prohibited. Substantial landscaped buffers should be required between new businesses and existing homes. This would be a new zoning district.

Light Industrial – These areas include the Perdue plant and adjacent land and the lands in the southeast side of Georgetown near the Airport along Railroad Avenue and Sand Hill Road. Heavier types of industrial uses should continue to need Town Council approval as a conditional use, including stone crushing and asphalt plants. This category relates to the current LI1 and LI2 zoning districts.

The existing industrial park at the Airport is almost completely developed. The largest employers are involved with aircraft-related businesses. Other industrial parks in the County also are almost completely developed. Therefore, there is a need for additional land with “ready to build” sites for desirable types of industrial employers. A new industrial subdivision is planned south of the railroad east of the Airport.

The County is seeking opportunities for additional light industrial zoning adjacent to the Airport. These areas would have access to Park Avenue, which is being relocated to the south. Intensive residential developments should be avoided near future industrial areas.

The main runway of the Airport is being extended, which will allow larger aircraft to use the facility. Many of these potential Light Industrial areas will be impacted by the noise from the main runway, and therefore are less suitable for homes. Also, some of these areas were purchased with Federal Aviation Administration funds, which restricts their use for “noise sensitive” uses, such as homes.

Business Park – It would be desirable to seek the development of a new business park in a location with convenient access to Route 113. The business park should be well-landscaped with a site design that will help to attract higher-income jobs to the area. The emphasis should be upon offices, light industrial uses and business services. Retail and personal service businesses should be limited to types and sizes that will primarily service employees of the park. This could be a new zoning district, and ideally would be within reasonable proximity to Delaware Tech, to allow mutual benefits to employers and the college.

Health Care Services - Health care has been one of the fastest-growing and most recession-proof sources of employment. Georgetown is centrally located in the County, but residents need to travel to Milford or Lewes for many types of health care. The Town should work with health care providers and developers to promote the establishment of additional health care services within Georgetown. Two of the most suitable locations would be along Arrow Safety Road, particularly once the Park Avenue extension is built. These facilities could include an outpatient surgery facility, rehabilitation facilities or a small in-patient hospital, in combination with offices of health providers. Some doctors may be attracted to a complex that offers condominium office space. The Town could also work with a developer to pre-approve pad sites that could be quickly made available for the construction of medical office buildings.

The Georgetown State Service Center is a facility offering health/clinical services to the community. This Center is operated under the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services. In addition, the La Red Health Center is a Federally-Qualified Health Center.

Campus of the University of Delaware - The Chamber of Commerce and the Town should continue to promote Georgetown as a suitable location for a Southern Campus of the University of Delaware. Downtown Revitalization – These areas include the Circle and the very center of town. It includes the area east of Front St., north of Pine St., west of the railroad and south of Laurel St.

Pedestrian-oriented uses should be encouraged in the Downtown, including retail sales, personal services, offices and restaurants. Drive-through restaurants should be prohibited in the Downtown.

The center of the Downtown is currently in the HD Historic zoning district. In these areas, new construction, extensions and alterations of existing buildings must be provided to the Planning Commission for review based upon a site plan. The Zoning Ordinance should specify which types of changes need Town approval, versus which items are given an advisory review. Any demolitions should specifically need zoning approval by the Town. This district should have more specific standards and procedures to make the provisions more legally defensible and to provide greater direction for applicants.

Market Street, Bedford Street and the Circle are all maintained by DeIDOT. DeIDOT has expressed an interest in working with the Town to install additional traffic calming measures, provided that funding is available. This may involve seeking funding through the DeIDOT Transportation Enhancement program. DeIDOT also completes lower cost traffic calming improvements through their Traffic Section.

As of 2009, the Greater Georgetown Chamber of Commerce was working on re-establishing a weekly Farmers Market in Georgetown. The State Department of Agriculture has a marketing section who can assist in recruiting farmers and marketing farmers markets and farm stands to connect residents with local agricultural products.

Historic Preservation is discussed in a later chapter of this Plan.

Strengthening Downtown Georgetown

Based upon the nationwide Main Street Program, a series of policies should be considered to strengthen the Downtown, including the following:

- Improving pedestrian safety and amenities.
- Promoting a balanced mix of service, restaurant, retail, public and residential uses.
- Emphasizing historic preservation.
- Marketing the Downtown for customers and businesses, including joint marketing and promotions among businesses and special events.
- Providing sufficient numbers of parking spaces and making sure their use is properly managed.
- Building upon the Chamber of Commerce to bring together all interested parties working cooperatively in partnerships to carry out needed actions.
- Further improving the physical appearance of the “streetscape” and the attractiveness of the fronts of buildings (particularly through rehabilitation of historic features), to make them more inviting to customers.
- To recruit and retain businesses and investors to expand job opportunities and generate additional local tax revenue. To provide information to support new business development. To maintain regular contacts with existing businesses to help them remain and grow in the downtowns. To particularly emphasize seeking a wider variety of restaurants and places for evening entertainment.
- To emphasize high-quality distinctive products and personalized services, including businesses serving a special market niche that is not served by mass-market discount retailers.

During many times of the day, it is difficult to cross Market Street, Bedford Street and the Circle. This discourages a person from visiting multiple businesses, and discourages persons employed in

the Downtown from visiting businesses over their lunchtime and after work. There are pedestrian crossing signals at certain intersections, but they are not exclusive, meaning that pedestrians have to watch for turning vehicles. At most other intersections, there are no signals of any kind.

The Delaware Department of Transportation has published “Traffic Calming Design Manual” standards to promote methods to reduce speeding, minimize traffic on residential local streets and make streets more friendly to pedestrians. Those standards were published in the Delaware Register of Regulations and can be read for free on the State’s website. Signage should be added to tell motorists that they have a legal obligation to stop at major pedestrian crossings for pedestrians who are in the crosswalk. Crosswalks should be made more visible. This can involve the use of patterned asphalt within crosswalks. Crosswalks can also use a textured material that makes them much more visible and that generates a noise as vehicles drive over them. Crosswalks can also be combined with a “speed table” in which the crosswalk is slightly elevated above the road surface to create a mini-speed bump.

Where sufficient road width exists, it may be desirable to have a median in the center of a heavily traveled road at a pedestrian crossing. This median can provide a safe refuge for pedestrians so that they only need to cross one lane of traffic at a time.

At intersections with high pedestrian traffic, consideration should be given to extending curbs outward. These are known as “bulb-out curbs.” The goal is to reduce the width of the street that a pedestrian needs to cross. If properly designed, these bulb out curbs would not interfere with turns by trucks or buses and would not cause the loss of any on-street parking spaces.

It would be desirable to make The Circle more pedestrian friendly. During high traffic periods, it can be difficult for pedestrians to walk to the center of The Circle. Efforts are needed to slow down traffic and encourage motorists to watch for pedestrians. These efforts may involve signs and police enforcement. At times, motorists have limited visibility of pedestrians because delivery vehicles are parked in unauthorized locations and are blocking the line of sight.

Parking – Metered parking spaces maintained by the Town are located around The Circle, on East Market Street, on West Market Street and along parts of North and South Front Street. There are additional metered spaces on Race Street one block in both directions off East Market Street.

It is essential to not only provide sufficient amounts of parking, but also to properly manage the spaces that are available. Many persons have come to expect a parking space close to their destination. It is desirable to continue to limit the most sought after parking spaces to a reasonable time limit (such as 2 hours) so that they are available for high turnover use by many persons throughout the day. As unpopular as parking tickets can be, they are essential to avoid use of the best parking spaces by a single car for an entire day. If this is routinely allowed to happen, persons wishing to visit a downtown business for a quick trip will turn away and not return.

Persons visiting the Downtown should be directed to locations where parking is currently underused, such as along the railroad. Cooperative efforts are needed between the Town and the County to find ways to provide additional parking without harming the urban fabric along historic and pedestrian-oriented streets.

At best, underutilized rear yards would be acquired for public parking because it would result in a total increase in the number of available spaces. If adjacent rear yards are combined into one coordinated parking area, it often results in a much higher number of parking spaces because the layout is more efficient.

Georgetown should not try to replicate suburban parking or it will destroy the historic character and streetscape that makes the town special. However, there may be additional opportunities over time to provide additional parking, particularly by demolishing accessory buildings and underused rear extensions of buildings in the inside of blocks. This is a method to increase parking supply without harming the “face” of the downtown along streets.

Over the long-term, the Town, the County and the State should jointly consider the construction of a parking structure in the Downtown. Parking structures are expensive for each additional space that is added because: a) the costs of operation, maintenance and periodic reconstruction of the structure, b) the amount of land that is consumed by ramps and c) the fact that the net amount of new spaces may be modest because it will displace existing surface parking spaces. A large enough footprint is needed to make the construction cost-effective.

Ideally, any parking structure would be in a location where the parking structure itself would not be highly visible from Market or Bedford Streets. A parking structure can also be designed with an attractive facade and with first floor commercial businesses, but that greatly increases the costs.

Marketing and Promotion – Marketing efforts are needed to persuade employees of nearby businesses to regularly visit downtown businesses, particularly during lunch-times and immediately after work. Once persons are visiting one attraction, it is critical to encourage them to visit downtown businesses. These visitors need to be made aware of the locations and types of businesses that are available. Furthermore, it should be easy to walk from these events to local businesses.

The Greater Georgetown Area Community Market Analysis was completed by the University of Delaware’s Institute for Public Administration, in cooperation with the Greater Georgetown Chamber of Commerce. The study included a survey of local persons to ask their shopping and dining preferences, as well as an inventory of various types of businesses. The study estimated that approximately 15 percent of all retail and food service sales in the Georgetown area were attributable to the local Wal-Mart. Shoppers reported that Wal-Mart was their top shopping destination, followed by the Georgetown Plaza Shopping Center on Route 113.

Among persons surveyed, the most popular requests for new businesses were for: a movie theater, a grocery store, additional clothing/shoe stores, a book/music store, a hardware store, a fitness center and a large chain convenience store/gas station. The study found that many residents travel outside of the Georgetown area to buy furniture, electronics, appliances, clothing and sporting goods.

The study highlighted a need to keep visitors in the area for a longer period of time, vs. simply traveling through Georgetown. Additional hotels would assist in this matter. The study recommended building upon the many persons who participate in tournaments at the Sports at the Beach complex.

The study recommended an emphasis on business recruitment, including maintaining an inventory of available business space and publicizing available opportunities. A special effort should be made to target marketing towards types of businesses highlighted in the study. The study also recommended using a Main Street type revitalization approach, as described earlier in this Plan. Furthermore, the Plan recommended that businesses publicize available parking areas.

Hours – In order to have persons visit multiple businesses, greater uniformity in hours would be desirable. It is difficult for a business to be successful if it is not open during the hours when most people have free time to shop - which is evenings and weekends. At the same time, operators of small family businesses often are over-extended with long hours. One option on weekdays would be to shift from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. to 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. business hours, to seek to serve persons on their way home from work. Longer hours should be considered during warmer months. In addition, it may be possible to emphasize a single weekday shopping night or one evening per month when most businesses would be open. On this night, special events and promotions can be used to encourage downtown workers to stay for dinner and entertainment.

Special Events – Special events are important to bring people into a downtown so that they can see what is available. Even if these visitors do not purchase many goods or services on the day of the event, they are much more likely to come back another day. Many area residents have gotten out of the habit of shopping in a downtown. Special events can provide the motivation for them to return.

For example, the Town and the Chamber could jointly sponsor outdoor movie nights in a park on warm evenings, featuring family-oriented movies.

Organization and Promotion – It is important that downtown businesses and property-owners be organized, particularly to put together joint promotions, joint marketing and special events. Many individual businesses have little money to advertise individually, but when their resources are pooled together, they can afford joint advertisements and flyers and other promotions. This type of advertising is particularly important because the goal is to get customers to visit more than one downtown business at one time.

Financing – Any grants and low-interest loan programs should be geared towards physical improvements that will have long-term benefits, regardless of what business occupies a particular space. Low interest loans and grants are particularly valuable for improvements that are appearance-oriented, such as historic rehabilitation.

Financing programs can be valuable to spur intensified use of upper story spaces, such as for market-rate apartments or offices. Large expenses can be needed to meet fire safety requirements if the use of upper story space is changed. For example, if storage space is proposed to be converted to apartments, then a second fire-safe stairwell and fire-resistant wall and ceiling separations are often needed.

Moderate the Supply of Commercial Zoning – If an excessive amount of commercial zoning is allowed at one time, it may encourage sprawled development, with businesses simply relocating from one business site to a new site, leaving the old site vacant. There are a number of shopping centers with large vacant spaces in the Middle Atlantic States, as new stores have decided to build on new sites instead of reusing sites of stores that have closed. However, if the supply of

commercially zoned land is held to a moderate amount, it will encourage rehabilitation and redevelopment of older commercial sites.

Streamlining Business Approvals - Georgetown needs to continue to emphasize quick approvals of businesses that wish to move into existing building space. The Town should then promote the fact that most local business approvals are able to be expedited, to publicize the positive business climate that is offered.

Key Areas of Georgetown

The previous section addressed the Downtown of Georgetown. The following sections discuss issues that pertain specifically to certain other geographic parts of the Town that need particular attention.

Route 113 Corridor - The emphasis in these areas is to balance the need for new business development with the need to serve through traffic along Route 113 and other highways. DeIDOT seeks to carefully manage access onto major highways whenever feasible, such as by requiring access onto side roads or rear roads that then access a highway at a well-designed signalized location. If the entire length on both sides of Route 113 would become developed with commercial development, it would be difficult for Route 113 to properly function. Therefore, any proposal to add commercial zoning to Route 113 should be conditioned upon a well-planned system of traffic access that is coordinated with neighboring properties. Where feasible, a developer should be required to provide a new road connection to allow traffic to have an alternative route around a congested intersection and to allow customers to visit multiple businesses without having to re-enter Route 113 each time. These objectives can be achieved by promoting commercial development that extends a deeper distance from the highway, versus commercial zoning that involves an elongated commercial district of shallow depth.

There also is a desire to build upon increased economic activity at the Airport, such as by developing hotels and restaurants nearby.

Route 113 should be planned for more than the typical commercial strip development. There should be opportunities for mixed use buildings, such as having light commercial uses on the first floor and offices or condominiums on upper floors. It may be desirable to allow 4 or 5 story buildings, particularly for hotels or offices. The Town should re-consider whether sidewalks should be required along Route 113 and connecting roads. Also, the community should work with DeIDOT to beautify the median.

West Market and Bedford Streets - Where businesses are allowed, they should be limited to designs that maintain an appearance similar to a large older single family home. New parking in the front yard should be prohibited or severely limited. These streets represent some of the most visible “faces” of Georgetown and therefore need special attention in regards to appearance and design. Existing buildings should be reused to the maximum extent feasible, as opposed to new construction.

North Race Street/Railroad Area - This area historically included industrial uses along the railroad on the north side of Georgetown. There currently is a mix of dwellings, social service uses, industrial uses and commercial businesses. Certain older industrial buildings are vacant or in need

of renovation. Uses that would result in heavy truck traffic on residential streets or nuisances for nearby homes should be avoided. Opportunities should be examined to allow new mixed use development in this area, particularly combinations of light commercial businesses and market rate housing.

The conversion of older industrial buildings into dwellings or commercial businesses should be carefully considered. The Zoning Code could include provisions that send these “adaptive reuse” projects to the Zoning Board of Adjustment for a decision, considering the adjacent uses and the specific proposal.

Kimme Town/ King Street/ E. Pine Street Area - This area includes a high concentration of Latino residents of limited income, including many persons who work in area poultry operations.

This area needs the most attention in regards to housing rehabilitation and infill development of new homes. Individual homes with historic features should be preserved when feasible. The densities of housing need to be controlled, particularly to avoid conversions of existing one family homes into multiple units or into rooming housings. Housing recommendations are addressed in the following section of this Plan report, including financial incentives to develop owner-occupied housing.

Eastern Georgetown - The E. Market Street corridor has some older commercial uses that would benefit from redevelopment. There also will be pressure over time to allow existing homes on E. Market St. that are residentially zoned to be converted into commercial businesses. If that option is considered, the sizes and types of allowed commercial businesses should be limited to avoid nuisances for adjacent homes and to avoid traffic congestion and safety problems. It may be appropriate to limit any new commercial uses in current residential areas to locations where the applicant can prove that a rear interconnected driveway will be provided to limit the number of driveways onto E. Market St. The development of an alternative two lane road around the north side of Georgetown would reduce stress upon E. Market Street.

Areas Near Sussex Correctional Institution - Annexation into Georgetown and new housing are likely to eventually occur in areas near the Sussex Correctional Institution. In such case, care will be needed in plan reviews to provide compatibility and safety. For example, additional street and parking lighting may be appropriate. Landscaping should be located in places where it will not obstruct views needed for security purposes. For example, tall canopy trees can be combined with low shrubs to still allow visibility into parking lots. Consideration also needs to be given to the fact that the Correctional Institution may expand over time and therefore may move closer to proposed housing.

If areas near the Correctional Institution are annexed, this Plan recommends Low Density Residential development. The Low Density Residential category emphasizes clustering of homes, which should result in open space being placed adjacent to the Correctional Institutional.

Housing Needs and Issues

The Delaware State Housing Authority in 2007 completed a Statewide Housing Needs Assessment. The report highlighted how increases in housing prices have far surpassed increases in incomes. Additional findings from that report are included in the Appendix of this Plan report.

Georgetown includes a high percentage of its housing units in rental units that received government subsidies when they were constructed or receive current subsidies. The following table lists the major housing developments that involve government assistance:

SUBSIDIZED HOUSING	ADDRESS	UNITS	TYPE OF ASSISTANCE
Acorn Acres - Townhouses	100-600 Charles Way	24	USDA Rental Assistance
Cheer Apartments	3 Sandhill Road	60	Elderly Tax Credit
Dunbarton Oaks - Apts.	900 Franklin Street	32	USDA Family
Dunbarton Oaks II - Apts.	420 Franklin Street	24	USDA Family
Dunbarton Oaks III - Apts.	500 Margaret Street	32	USDA Elderly/Handicap/Disabled
Dunbarton Oaks IV - Apts.	500 Franklin Street	31	USDA Elderly/Handicap/Disabled
Dunbarton Village Apts.	501 Robinson Street	31	USDA Elderly/Handicap/Disabled
Georgetown Apartments	1000 Ingramtown Road	75	Section 8 Tax Credit
Georgetown Apartments II	1000 Ingramtown Road	<u>50</u>	Tax Credit
		359 Total Units	

Some of the current affordable housing units are privately owned and the restrictions on income limits of residents will expire in future years. At that time, they could become market rate housing, with no restriction on the incomes of their occupants. The State Housing Needs Assessment reports that 235 of the 375 assisted housing units in Georgetown could potentially be lost through conversion to market rate housing.

A large amount of housing that serves persons with special needs is located in Georgetown. This includes facilities serving the homeless (such as Crisis House), persons with substance abuse problems (such as Tau House and Corinthian House), transitional housing (such as Psychotherapeutic Services) and a shelter for victims of abuse (Abriendo Puertas). Twelve apartments of transitional housing are also proposed by the Milford Housing organization. Moreover, there are 10 housing units proposed to each be used for four recently released prisoners.

The concentration of subsidized housing, transitional housing and human service facilities within one small town creates great burdens upon Georgetown, particularly in regards to police services. Therefore, this Plan recommends that an emphasis be placed on promoting additional market rate owner-occupied housing, while seeking to avoid additional subsidized rental units.

In 2000, only 51 percent of occupied housing units were owner-occupied, compared to an average of 81 percent for Sussex County as a whole.

As of 2009, the Georgetown housing market was reportedly also affected by a reduction in the number of Latino residents. A large number of Latinos had moved to Sussex County to take advantage of the high number of jobs in construction. Once the national recession became severe and reduced the number of local construction jobs, many Latinos have moved away from Georgetown. This has reduced the demand for lower priced rental housing.

The Town of Georgetown, in cooperation with the Delaware State Housing Authority, will develop a housing analysis for the Town that will help to predict Georgetown's housing needs versus the current housing stock.

Many households are stressed by the need to care for elderly relatives. The Town's Zoning Code should include provisions to allow a semi-independent living unit for a relative who needs special care and supervision because of a disability or old age. The resident would need to agree in advance that the unit would not be rented separately after the relative no longer needs it. Instead, the unit would need to be integrated into the principal dwelling.

Strengthening Older Residential Areas

Stable neighborhoods are not only important to provide desirable places to live, but also to protect the health of nearby business areas. If the residential areas deteriorate, they will cause crime and vandalism problems that will discourage business activity. If the surrounding residential areas are strengthened, they will provide a strong base of customers who will hopefully find the downtown a convenient place to serve their shopping and service needs.

The stability of older neighborhoods should be promoted through code enforcement, linking persons to available funding sources and resources, rehabilitating housing, and community-based policing.

Promoting Home Ownership - Many households could afford the monthly costs of owning a home, but do not have sufficient savings for the closing costs and down-payment. These households need to be linked with available programs to help them achieve home ownership. Many of these programs are administered through the Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA).

Housing counseling programs are offered by the First State Community Action Agency. Many prospective homeowners find they need to improve their credit scores in order to be eligible for a mortgage. Moreover, current homeowners often find they need better financial skills in order to continue to afford their existing home, or need assistance in renegotiating a mortgage.

However, care is needed to avoid placing very low-income households in subsidized home-ownership. In too many cases, these households do not have the funds to pay for repairs that are periodically needed in an older home. If they have no equity in the home, they may be tempted to walk away from the mortgage. As a result, a property can stand vacant for months until foreclosure occurs and the property is resold. During this time, the property can deteriorate and/or be vandalized.

Maintaining Housing Conditions - It is important to prevent blight and deterioration before it occurs. A single problem property can encourage responsible residents of nearby properties to move out of the neighborhood and can discourage new home-buyers from investing in the neighborhood. A problem property can also discourage homeowners from investing in improvements to their home because they do not believe they will be able to see any return on their investment if they sell.

To promote home ownership and neighborhood stability, and to avoid parking problems, the conversions of existing one family homes into additional numbers of housing units should be prohibited or very strictly regulated in most areas. Owner-occupied housing typically has a much higher level of property maintenance than older renter housing. Types of new housing should be promoted that are most likely to be owner-occupied, such as singles, side-by-side twin homes and townhouses, as opposed to apartments or one unit above another unit. Exceptions could be provided in zoning regulations to allow limited conversions of unusually large existing homes.

The Town must continue to emphasize enforcement of property codes to require property-owners to: a) properly maintain their buildings or b) sell the buildings to another party who will make the needed improvements. The goal in code enforcement must be to intervene before buildings deteriorate to the point where it is no longer cost effective to repair them. If property-owners are forced to complete basic maintenance and repairs in a timely manner, severe deterioration can be avoided.

Many older communities have adopted programs for the periodic inspection of rental properties to make sure they meet basic safety standards. To target an inspection program to the properties that are most likely to involve fire and safety hazards, inspections could be limited to buildings that were constructed prior to the enforcement of any comprehensive building codes. This would avoid the need for regular inspection of apartment buildings built during the last few decades, because those buildings typically have fire-resistant construction and safe means of access.

One option would be to require inspections when there is a change in tenants. This would make the program less intrusive to tenants. This option would also target the program to the housing units with the most turnover, which often are the units that need the most improvements. The cost of inspections can be covered by an annual license fee.

The Town should continue to structure its fees so that fines for code enforcement increase with each offense and fees should increase if multiple follow-up inspections are needed. The goal is to provide incentives for compliance and to make sure that problem landlords are reimbursing the Town for the administrative costs they incur to the Town.

Each building owner should be required to designate in writing to the Town a local individual to serve as an agent. That individual would be responsible to oversee the building and must be authorized to accept enforcement notices and legal papers on behalf of the owner.

To avoid overcrowding, the Town might require every landlord to provide the name to the Town of every resident age 18 and older in each housing unit, and to regularly update that list. Such a list is also valuable to maintain up-to-date tax rolls.

Emphasize housing rehabilitation – Most housing efforts primarily involve low-interest loans to rehabilitate homes owned by households with low or moderate incomes. Expanded marketing

efforts are needed to make sure that eligible owners of properties in need of rehabilitation are aware of the financing programs that are available. Particular attention needs to be paid to low-income resident owners of property who need to make improvements to comply with town and state codes.

Buyers of older homes should be encouraged to take advantage of the Federal Housing Administration's 203(k) program. This allows a homebuyer to receive a single loan to purchase a home and to complete a major rehabilitation of it.

It would be desirable to combine job training funding with housing rehabilitation programs. Local non-profit housing organizations should work with job training agencies to design programs to meet mutual needs. Residents can learn useful job skills, while the job training programs help provide funding for needed housing rehabilitation.

Housing Funding Programs – In early 2009, the Federal Recovery and Reinvestment Act authorized a dramatic increase in funding of housing programs for 2009 and 2010. Most of these funds are being directed through existing programs, particularly at the State level. Georgetown is already considered to be a “target area” for many of these programs, such as the Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

Many programs are available for development of low or moderate income housing, but in practice are mainly used by private developers for moderate income housing. To the maximum extent feasible, the Town should seek that any new construction of subsidized housing should primarily involve owner-occupied housing or lease-to-own housing. The Town should seek early input into any proposals to construct new low income rental housing, particularly in regards to location.

This Plan recommends that any rental housing programs be targeted to improving the livability of existing rental housing, as opposed to increasing the supply of rental units within Georgetown. This matter is discussed further in the “Housing Needs and Issues” section on a previous page.

The Community Development Block Grant program, administered by the DSHA, offers annual funding opportunities, particularly for projects in areas with a majority of residents having a low or moderate income or projects in blighted areas. Likewise, funds are available on annual basis for grants under the Federal HOME program to acquire, rehabilitate or construct housing.

To further implement these housing recommendations, the Town and housing agencies should consult resources available from DSHA. These include DSHA's “Affordable Housing Resource Center” website, which describes tools that can be used to create housing for persons of various incomes.

Other programs include:

- State and federal programs provide funding for weatherization of homes (such as adding insulation).
- The Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit program authorizes a developer constructing low or moderate income housing to sell tax credits to investors. The tax credits must be assigned to the project. This is a method of raising private funding for housing projects.
- The State Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program provides low interest loans to make repairs to housing to meet the State Housing Code or improve handicapped accessibility.
- The State Single Family Mortgage Revenue Bond Program provides low interest rate mortgage funding to persons who have not owned a home in the past three years. The State Mortgage Assistance Loan Program offers assistance with down-payments and closing costs for homebuyers.
- The State Live Near Your Work Program provides employees of participating employers with a grant towards the purchase of a home near their place of employment. The State, the municipality and the employer split the cost of the grant. The Town of Georgetown and Purdue Farms currently participate in this program.
- The State Resident Homeownership Program provides funding assistance to purchase a home to residents who currently receive State housing assistance. The Delaware Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program provides assistance to homeowners who are threatened with mortgage foreclosure that results from circumstances beyond the homeowner's control.
- The Delaware Housing Development Fund offers funding to develop, convert or rehabilitate housing for low and moderate income households.
- The Neighborhood Stabilization Program is a new program to assist communities affected by high rates of foreclosure and to expand home ownership opportunities. The program can be used to benefit households with incomes of up to 120 percent of the median income for the area. An allocation has been set aside for Sussex County. For example, funds could be used to buy and renovate foreclosed homes, or to demolish blighted properties. Another intent of the Federal program is to acquire foreclosed homes from lending institutions at a discounted price. Funds can be directed to non-profits, housing authorities or towns.
- The Delaware Neighborhood Assistance Act Program provides tax incentives to companies to provide funding or in-kind services to support revitalization programs in cooperation with a neighborhood organization.

Compatibility in Uses – It is important to protect older residential areas from incompatible development. This is a particularly a concern in older areas where there is typically a relatively dense mix of commercial, industrial and residential uses, with small setbacks.

In commercial areas near neighborhoods, the types of commercial uses should be carefully controlled. Most commercial areas near neighborhoods should not allow for heavy commercial uses, such as gas stations, 24 hour convenience stores, taverns, nightclubs and auto repair. Where practical, the hours of operation and hours of trucking activities should be controlled (such as conditions upon any zoning hearing board approval that is needed). Other problem uses should be very carefully controlled or prohibited, such as after hours clubs that are open after 2 a.m. There should be careful review of changes to existing businesses in residential zoning districts (which are called "nonconforming uses") to make sure they will not harm the neighborhood.

High Speed Telecommunications – All major housing rehabilitation projects and attached housing construction should be designed to allow for competing companies to provide connections for high speed internet service and telecommunications.

Strengthening the Community Character of Georgetown

Development Design Standards – Georgetown has developed an excellent set of Development Design Standards that address historic preservation, site design, signs, open space, landscaped screening and many other matters. The standards say that when the use “shall” is used, it is mandatory, but when “should” is used, it is an advisory guideline. However, for matters that are intended to be mandatory, they should be specifically written into the Zoning or Subdivision Codes in order to be enforceable. Even stronger design standards are needed to guide the development of new commercial complexes.

Rear Yard Parking – Particularly as homes are converted to businesses, the rear yards are often completely paved for parking. Parking in the rear is often preferable to front yard parking. However, there still should be landscaping requirements so that there is not a conflict between a large rear yard parking lot and adjacent homes. It would be desirable to use care in any excavations in historic areas to seek to recover archeological artifacts.

Maximum Building Setbacks and Limits on Front Yard Parking – In key older areas of the Town, it may be appropriate to specifically establish a maximum building setback. The goal is to have new construction be consistent with prevailing setbacks along a block of older buildings. The ordinance can also limit new parking in the front yard in older areas. The goal is to encourage front yard setbacks that are relatively small, but well-landscaped. Front porches should be encouraged. Currently, zoning provisions may unfortunately force a building to be set back from the street in an urban area, which usually results in front yard parking.

Where an alley is available or could be feasibly extended, a developer could be required to have driveways and garages access that alley, as opposed to having a front garage door. Garage doors and driveways can also be promoted to use the less heavily traveled street on a corner lot.

Trail Connections in Combination With Drainageways - The Stormwater Management section of this Plan also discusses value of improving drainageway corridors for bicycle and pedestrian interconnections.

Traditional Neighborhood Development – "Traditional neighborhood development" involves: a) making sure new development fits into the character of existing older neighborhoods and b) encouraging new development that incorporates the best features of older development. This involves extending the best features of the older areas into new neighborhoods. The Town may wish to consider whether they want to encourage this concept.

Traditional neighborhood development primarily involves the following:

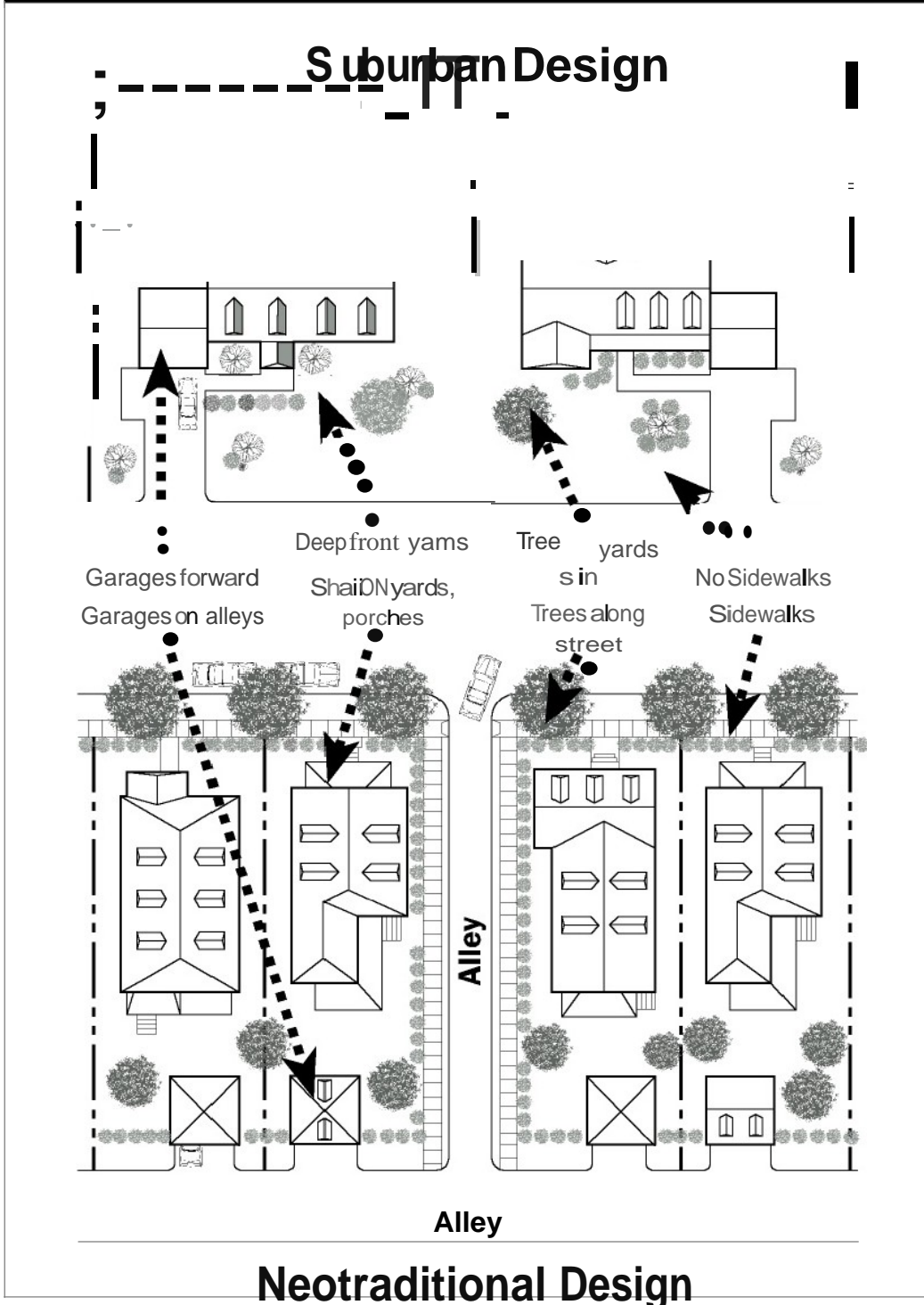
- Street trees should be planted to eventually provide a canopy of shade over streets. Studies show that mature street trees can increase the value of homes up to 10 percent. If it is not appropriate to have shade trees in the right-of-way, they can be required immediately outside of the right-of-way.

- Requiring that new street lights meet a certain design standard that is similar to older styles of street lights.
- Sidewalks should be provided (or asphalt paths along main roads in rural areas). There should be an orientation to pedestrians, with an ability to walk or bicycle to stores, schools and parks. Overly wide residential streets and intersections should be avoided to discourage speeding and to make it easier for pedestrians to cross the street.
- A modest density should be encouraged that is similar to the typical development that occurred during the 1930s through 1940s. This density (such as 4 to 8 homes per acre) should make best use of available land, while avoiding overly dense development and parking problems.
- Whenever practical, parking should be located to the rear or side of buildings, so that the front yard can be landscaped. At best, parking and garages would be placed to the rear of lots, with access using alleys. This design avoids conflicts between sidewalks and vehicles backing into the street, and allows the entire curbside to be available for on-street parking.
 - If rear access to garages is not practical, then garages should enter onto the side of homes whenever possible, particularly on corner lots. If a front-entrance garage is proposed, it should be designed so that it is not an overly prominent part of the street. For example, a one lane driveway can pass along the side of a house and then widen to enter a two-car garage that is setback from the front of the house. "Snout" houses should be avoided that have a front entrance garage as the home's most prominent feature.
- Buildings should be placed relatively close to the street, with front or side porches, to encourage interaction among neighbors. On a corner lot, a side porch can have the same effect. If residents spend time on their front porch, they can help oversee the neighborhood and report suspicious activity to the police.

The Town could require certain features and could provide incentives to promote other features. A density bonus could be provided if a development incorporates the features of a "Traditional Neighborhood." Traditional Neighborhood Development can be particularly attractive to developers by allowing single family lots that are more narrow than would otherwise be allowed. This reduction in lot width can result in dramatic reductions in the average costs of improvements per housing unit. Allowing relatively narrow single family detached lots can also provide an alternative to building townhouses - at the same density.

- Many of the traditional neighborhood development ideas can be incorporated through the Town's current Residential Planned Community option (described above).

Suburban vs. Neotraditional Design



Other Development Code Recommendations to Carry Out this Plan

Controversial Uses – Care is needed when regulating uses that are most likely to cause nuisances and hazards. These include chemical plants, asphalt plants, trash transfer facilities, quarrying, boarding houses, salvage/scrap yards, after hours clubs, Bring Your Own Bottle clubs, large nightclubs, and drug and alcohol treatment centers.

Adult Entertainment Uses – Zoning regulations should be added on adult uses, including adult bookstores, adult video-stores, massage parlors (other than legitimate massage therapy by a trained person) and live entertainment uses. These have been the subject of many Federal court cases across the nation. Federal courts have allowed a complete ban on totally nude dancing. Because of free speech issues, Federal courts have required that every town make some provisions for allowing other types of adult uses. These uses should need Zoning Board approval, be limited to an Industrial District and require large setbacks from homes, residential districts, churches, parks, schools and day care centers.

Control of Nuisances – Additional zoning controls are needed on excessive lighting, noxious odors and noise. For example, noise levels can be regulated, with more restrictive regulations if the noise is being heard within a residential district, particularly at night. Noise levels can be measured with a simple noise meter.

Buffering and Landscaping – A much greater emphasis is needed on buffering and landscaping within new development and in previously developed areas. A list of approved species of street trees is needed, and minimum sizes need to be set for tree and buffer plantings. A high impervious coverage can still be attractive with the proper landscaping. However, a minimum percentage of every lot should be required to be landscaped.

Street trees and shade trees in parking lots should also be required. Buffering with evergreen trees is particularly important between new businesses and residential neighborhoods. A buffer yard in some cases can be strengthened with a berm. To minimize the amount of land that is consumed by a berm, a retaining wall could be used on the business side of the berm. The Town should also have the authority to require fencing when needed on the business side of buffer yard landscaping.

Many older areas of the Town would benefit greatly from the planting of additional street trees. A street tree(s) could be required to be planted as part of any new construction of a principal building or development of 3 or more new parking spaces.

Landscaped Islands – As part of new developments, landscaped center islands should be encouraged. This boulevard-type of design is more attractive, reduces head on collisions, and makes it easier for pedestrians to cross streets because they only need to cross one direction of traffic at a time.

Building Heights – In most of the Town, a maximum height of approximately 38 feet should apply, which is equal to 2.5 to 3 stories. Along portions of the Route 113 corridor and in certain business redevelopment areas outside of the Downtown that are not adjacent to existing single family homes, a maximum height of 5 stories may be suitable. Taller buildings typically are required to include a full sprinkler system under State regulations, which greatly minimizes hazards. However, building heights should take into account the fact that the Georgetown Fire Company has an aerial ladder

truck that extends 95 feet. A 95 feet long aerial ladder can typically reach a person at the top of a 5 or 6 story building.

Potential Annexations

The Comprehensive Plan Map shows the boundaries of Potential Annexation Areas. If any areas would be annexed that are outside of these boundaries, then an Amendment would be required to this Comprehensive Plan, after review under the State PLUS Program.

Annexation Areas – State law requires that the Comprehensive Plan show a boundary for future annexation areas. The currently established boundary would allow for a doubling of the total land area within Georgetown's jurisdiction. Amendments to State law require that the Town plan for future land uses in areas that are intended to be annexed. Consideration should be given to showing phases in annexation areas, which should consider the cost-effectiveness of wastewater extensions.

This Plan recommends that the vast majority of lands that may be annexed into Georgetown be zoned as a new Low Density Residential District that would allow single family detached houses at approximately 3 homes per acre. An option could allow 4 homes per acre if a substantial area of open space is preserved through clustering. This cluster option could allow singles, side-by-side twins and townhouses. Once a more detailed design for the Route 113 improvements has been decided upon, then higher densities and/or additional commercial or industrial zoning should be considered. The vast majority of the land areas around Georgetown that could be annexed, as of 2008, are under the County's AR1 zoning district. These densities in the Town would still be higher than the 2 homes per acre that is common under County zoning in most areas outside of the Town without cluster and the 3 homes per acre that is possible under the County's cluster option.

The County Zoning Ordinance currently allows very limited commercial and industrial zoning in most of the areas outside of the Town. Developers may seek annexation to obtain commercial and industrial zoning.

Another major reason why landowners request annexation is to be able to be served by the Town's wastewater system. This Plan recommends that the Town continue its present policy of not extending the wastewater system outside of the Town's limits, except possibly to interconnect with the County's wastewater system at the Airport.

Annexations hold two major benefits to the Town: 1) they provide added tax revenue, and 2) they provide control to the Town to make sure that development does not occur that is incompatible with Georgetown's neighborhoods and road system. It is also valuable to seek that logical borders result that can be efficiently served, while avoiding awkward boundaries or outparcels. State law requires that any annexation be contiguous, but that standard could still result in peninsulas of annexed land.

Another advantage of annexation to a landowner is service by the Town's Police Department, as opposed to relying upon the State Police. The main disadvantage to a landowner from annexation is higher tax rates. Therefore, it is less common for existing homeowners to ask to be annexed than owners of undeveloped land. This can create inefficient pockets of land that are not within the Town's boundaries.

One major disadvantage is that large annexation areas may require a much larger and more expensive wastewater system expansion. Annexations are likely to result in higher densities than are currently allowed by the County's zoning code. The resulting higher densities could worsen traffic problems in the Town.

The Town should seek input into the County's Zoning Code update process regarding the zoning of areas in the potential Annexation Area. In particular, landowners should be expected to seek annexation before obtaining denser residential zoning or new commercial or industrial zoning from the County. Developers should also be expected to seek annexation in order to use the Town's sewer system, as opposed to developing a new private sewer system near the Town's borders.

Georgetown should also encourage annexations that will result in more logical borders. Most notably, one enclave of land is completely surrounded by the Town. Another large enclave exists south of Delaware Tech.

Transfer of Development Rights in Cooperation With the County

There have been discussions at the County and State levels about the possibility of allowing transfers of density from unincorporated areas to within areas within the Towns. Under this idea, a portion of fees paid by a developer would go directly to the Town to reimburse the Town for needed infrastructure improvements.

If a system of transfer of development rights (TDR) would be considered jointly by the County and the Town, it would help to direct growth into suitable areas, but without greatly increasing the total amount of development. TDR would be a voluntary system that would allow a developer in a designated growth area to pay an owner of woodland or farmland to permanently preserve their land. In return, the number of homes that would have been possible on the land that is preserved can be transferred to the development site. One major advantage of transfer of development rights is that it greatly minimizes the amount of land that is consumed by each house. TDR also uses private developer dollars to permanently preserve land (most likely outside of the Town). TDR also has an advantage of being fair to property-owners, because they only participate if they feel they are being fairly compensated. This matter will be considered as part of the County's Land Use Plan. TDR provisions could be placed in the Town and County zoning codes under existing State law.

As described below, the County already has a system that allows higher densities for cluster development, in return for the developer paying monies. The funds can only be used to preserve farmland and natural areas in the County. This functions somewhat similar to a TDR program.

Another type of TDR system is also being considered in the State Legislature. Under this system, a bank of TDR rights would be maintained. A portion of the monies paid by developers would be paid to a town that agreed to accept additional density to help compensate the Town for infrastructure costs needed to serve the increased density.

TRANSPORTATION

Route 113 Improvements

DelDOT commissioned a US 113 North/South Study to explore transportation options to more efficiently move through traffic around Georgetown. Eastern and western bypasses, and an on-alignment route were just some of the options considered. After several years of focus groups, work shops, and gathering of public opinions, in 2007, a decision was made by DelDOT to discontinue analysis of the bypass options around Georgetown. Instead, the decision was made to emphasize improvements along the existing alignment of Route 113. This Recommended Preferred Alternative is known as the Refined On-Alignment Alternative.

Federal regulations require that DelDOT carefully consider the impacts of each alternative, including impacts upon homes that might be condemned, wetlands that might be altered and historic buildings that might be demolished.

There will be great challenges finding the needed funding, which has not been programmed. The intent is to seek initial funding to preserve the right-of-way needed to improve Route 113 and to complete final design. Funding for the actual construction will be much more difficult. Funding for Georgetown area improvements will be competing for funding with other projects in the State. The conversion of US Route 113 to the “Refined On-Alignment Alternative” is intended to occur over a number of years, as capacity and safety conditions dictate and funding is available. Because of this uncertain funding, this Comprehensive Plan needs to be able to function even if major improvements to Route 113 are never built.

The Refined On-Alignment Alternative that is currently proposed by DelDOT would involve major changes to the Route 113 corridor. The goal is to allow Route 113 to serve high-capacities of traffic by eventually removing most or all at-grade street intersections and removing turning lanes in the median. The current proposal is to construct bridges and ramps at major intersections. DelDOT’s design seeks to move some of the construction of bridges and ramps away from the current highway to minimize disruptions of traffic during construction. DelDOT’s current intent is to not propose traditional diamond or cloverleaf ramps, but instead to use unusual ramp layouts. By removing turning areas in the medians, space would be available for 3 lanes of through-traffic in each direction. DelDOT’s currently proposed alternative would require the acquisition and demolition of a number of businesses and homes along the Route 113 corridor.

DelDOT’s intent is to construct the improvements along Route 113 in phases over a number of years, as traffic conditions dictate and funds are available.

DelDOT also has a goal of consolidating access to properties along Route 113 whenever feasible.

Careful designs are needed to minimize disruption to adjacent neighborhoods, and minimize disruption of traffic during construction. Also, existing businesses would be adversely impacted if it is more difficult to make left-hand turns along the highway to access businesses on the other side.

One goal is to make sure that Route 113’s ability to handle through-traffic is not obstructed by poorly planned new strip commercial uses with multiple driveways. Also, there is a desire to avoid

intense new development in locations that would inhibit the construction of needed improvements. Therefore, great care should be used before approving additional areas for intense development along portions of Route 113 that are not already commercialized. Developers should also be asked to provide additional right-of-way where needed adjacent to developments.

It is recognized that budgetary constraints have limited the ability of DelDOT to undertake new road improvement projects. A northern relief route is intended to be constructed in phases by developers as adjacent lands are proposed for development, to link together existing road segments over time. Sussex County should be asked to cooperate in seeking the completion of this road link in areas that are not being annexed. At some point, it may be necessary to seek public funds to complete a missing link. In any case, a more detailed study should be conducted to determine the best route, considering the presence of natural features and homes. If State funds would be involved, then a more detailed study process would be required.”

Impact Of Development On Level Of Service (LOS) [Added 12-11-2013]

The Town of Georgetown recognizes the impact of commercial development at major intersections: US Route 9 (County Seat Highway) and US Route 113 (DuPont Boulevard) and State Route 18/404 (Seashore Highway) and US Route 113 (DuPont Boulevard).

Accordingly, a reduced level of service at these intersections (D, E or F) is acceptable for limited portions of the day (morning & afternoon rush hour) provided there are interior connector roads within the commercial development to permit travel within the development versus having to travel along the impacted roadways.

Level of Service (LOS) is a qualitative measure describing operational conditions within a traffic stream, based on service measures such as delay, speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort and convenience. Levels range from A (most desirable to the traveler) to F (least desirable to the traveler). For the purposes of long-range planning, Level of Service is generally measured in terms of volume-to-capacity ratios that are usually obtained from a travel demand model such as that used by DelDOT.

As funding becomes available, the limited access, on-alignment improvements should then be made.

Other Transportation Improvements

Sussex County is constructing a new Park Avenue roadway that will extend from the intersection of Arrow Safety Road/S. Bedford St. to around the south side of the Airport to connect with the current Park Avenue. This roadway is designed to provide a better truck route for east-west traffic and to allow for an extension of the Airport’s main runway by 1,000 feet. This project is targeted for completion in 2011. The new Park Avenue should include a bridge over the railroad tracks to provide improved access for emergency vehicles. Access onto Arrow Safety Road and Park Avenue from adjacent developments should be carefully controlled so that the roads can primarily serve through-traffic that is diverted from the Downtown and residential streets.

One objective of this Plan is to identify road links that are needed to provide alternatives around bottlenecks, and then to seek that developers of adjacent land build portions of those road links as part of their developments. This type of road link is intended to be two lanes wide, with a third lane

if needed for turns at major intersections. At grade intersections are envisioned. The goal is not to specify the exact location of each road, but instead to seek that a developer construct a road that connects from approximately “Point A” to “Point B.” If certain lands are not proposed for development, then it will likely be necessary for the Town, County or State to construct missing links of roads between segments built by developers.

It is difficult to obtain approval from Norfolk Southern Railroad for new at-grade crossings of a main railroad line. Therefore, the new proposed roads are designed to use the existing railroad crossings or to allow the replacement of one road crossing with another in the same vicinity.

One of the goals is to reduce stress on the entire Market Street/Route 9 corridor, including the Circle and the warm weather weekend backups at multiple intersections of Route 113. In recognition that there are no active plans to build a Route 113 bypass, an improved route is needed from the north end of town to the east end of town. The intent is to seek to complete these improved routes over time through cooperation between the Town, DeIDOT, adjacent developers and Sussex County (particularly for lands that are not annexed). The intent is that developers of adjacent lands would play a key role in funding and completing the improvements, whenever feasible over time. This type of alternative route is intended to include two lanes of traffic, plus turn lanes at major intersections. The road improvements and any connecting segments would need to be designed to meet DeIDOT standards.

One alternative could start at the intersection of Route 113 with Gravelly Branch Road north of Georgetown. This route foresees that a segment of Donovans Road could be used, including the existing railroad crossing. Then, the goal would be to seek that new road segments be built by developers of adjacent land. The intent is to connect with Route 9/E. Market St. somewhere east of Sand Hill Road—either as part of new development along Route 9 or at the current intersection of Route 9 with Park Avenue.

A second alternative route starts at the Wilson Road/Route 113 intersection north of Georgetown. That alternative has the benefit of being along a road that has already been designated as a truck route. New links would be necessary to provide an effective relief route around the northern side of Georgetown.

It would be desirable to have a road link between North Bedford Street and Savannah Road. One possible link would cross at an existing low traffic railroad crossing.

As part of new developments west of Route 113 and north of County Seat Highway, there are proposals to construct a new road that would run north-south parallel to Route 113. This road could connect to the intersection of County Seat Highway with Little Street or to the entrance to the Georgetown Shopping Center. In either case, the resulting intersection would probably be signalized.

The Town should work with developers of land west of Route 113 to construct north-south alternative connections. These roads should have additional right-of-way that could allow for widening in the long-term. These roads could also offer higher visibility to business sites that are not immediately along Route 113, and thereby make the sites more marketable.

Overall, interconnected driveways and/or rear access connections that are shared among businesses are desirable along Route 113 to minimize the number of access points onto Route 113.

DelDOT's Capital Transportation Program (FY 2008–FY 2014) proposes to improve the intersection at Route 9 (Lewes-Georgetown Highway) and Airport and Sand Hill Roads. The current alignment of this intersection is skewed, and DelDOT believes the level of service would deteriorate to unacceptable levels if not improved. DelDOT plans to improve intersection turn lanes, auxiliary through lanes, traffic signals, and pedestrian facilities (sidewalk and crosswalks). This project is reportedly on hold until a comprehensive stormwater management plan is completed for the region.

The transportation improvements required at the intersection of US Route 9 with Sand Hill Road and Airport Road are being studied by the Town and DelDOT to determine appropriate phasing for both developments and the intersection improvements. Currently, there are three active developments in the immediate vicinity of the intersection that are proposed within the Town. Small scale interim improvements, such as turning lanes, are being explored to accommodate partial build-out of the area developments so the developments may proceed prior to completion of the ultimate DelDOT realignment and improvement project. However, the primary objective still remains the realignment of the intersection to the east and improvement of the intersection as detailed in conceptual plans prepared by DelDOT. The conceptual intersection design includes exclusive lanes for all movements as well as dual eastbound left-turn lanes along US Route 9.

Those improvements may be revisited based upon current traffic counts and approved or proposed developments in the area.

The Town has encouraged DelDOT to coordinate with the Town and the County to establish a Transportation Improvement District (TID) for the area surrounding the intersection of US Route 9 with Sand Hill Road and Airport Road. The TID should be established with boundary lines extending a reasonable distance in each direction from the intersection. The boundaries should include parcels approved for development, with pending development applications, and that are likely to develop in the near future. The distance the TID extends from the intersection should be determined as part of a collaborative effort between DelDOT, the Town, and the County. Any proposed developments located within the TID will be required to contribute an equitable cost share towards the DelDOT project. A maximum cost per unit (i.e. dwellings, square feet, or peak hour trips) may be established so developers can budget for the improvements.

In the event that a TID is not established for the intersection, but a development is ready to proceed with development that cannot be accommodated without the necessary DelDOT intersection realignment and improvement project, the Town may be willing to consider allowing development in the area of the intersection to proceed as long as level-of-service (LOS) "E" can be maintained. The developer will still likely be required to enter into an agreement obligating them to contribute an equitable cost share towards the DelDOT project, but would not be prevented from moving forward with their project.

As traffic increases, several other intersections will likely need new traffic signals. This includes the intersection of Bridgeville Road/Route 18 with N. Bedford St. The intersections of Arrow Safety Road with Route 113 and with S. Bedford St. may need to be signalized as traffic increases to the newly relocated Park Avenue. If Laurel Street would be promoted as an east-west traffic route, then a traffic signal may be needed at Laurel and North Bedford Streets.

Several years ago, a plan was proposed to convert Market and Laurel Streets into one-way streets. There are pros and cons to this proposal, with many strong opinions. For example, Laurel Street

might be converted to one-way westbound traffic, while Market Street would be limited to one-way eastbound traffic. One way streets are able to more efficiently carry traffic because there are fewer turning movements at each intersection. In order for that concept to work, a new railroad crossing would probably be needed at Laurel Street. This might involve closing the current vehicle crossing at Depot Street.

A cheaper alternative with fewer impacts would be to direct more traffic to East Laurel Street. This alternative may open up more opportunities for business development along E. Laurel Street. Laurel Street is wide enough for the traffic. However, it would not be desirable to steer large volumes of traffic onto the western end of Laurel Street, which is primarily residential. There is no easy way to direct traffic back onto Market Street in the western part of the Town. Also, businesses on Market Street may experience reduced visibility and access because they would not be seen by westbound traffic. Some customers may feel it is inconvenient to go around the block to visit one business.

Therefore, a much simpler alternative is recommended, that would not involve any new construction or any one-way limitations. A large volume of traffic is seeking to move from Route 9/E. Market Street to Route 113 North of Georgetown or to Route 404/18 northwest of Georgetown. This traffic currently causes serious congestion and confusion around the Circle and other points.

Signs could be used to direct traffic headed in this direction to make a right onto Layton Street, and then left onto Laurel Street and then right onto North Bedford Street. The signs could say “To Routes 113 North, 404 and 18” with an arrow. This route would not create a need for additional traffic signals or railroad crossings, and would avoid overloading the awkward intersection near the railroad crossing at Depot Street. This traffic could also help to spur new business development along the blocks of Laurel Street between Bedford and the railroad. This routing may also help make better use of the public parking available along the railroad.

Transportation Consultant and Plan

This Plan recommends that Georgetown engage its own transportation consultant. The goal is to coordinate the Town’s planning with the Route 113 improvement planning. Also, the consultant should be charged with refining the ideas in this Plan for additional street connections, and seek to have those connections incorporated into new developments, where feasible.

This effort could lead to a more detailed Transportation Master Plan for the Town, particularly to find ways to limit truck traffic through the center and residential areas of Georgetown.

Public Transit

It is desirable to publicize the availability of the public transit system, to provide wider use, particularly by persons using a park and ride lot or who bicycle to a transit stop.

The Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC) operates DART First State—Delaware’s public transportation network. In Sussex County, this service takes the form of nine bus routes. Two of these routes offer year-round service: 1) Route 206: Georgetown/Lewes/Rehoboth, with service to Del Tech and the Rehoboth Park and Ride; and 2) Route 212: Georgetown/Laurel, with service to Del Tech, Laurel Commons, Bridgeville and Seaford. An inter-county service, Route 303, operates between Dover and Georgetown, connecting the Kent and Sussex fixed-route systems with service

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to Del Tech. All three routes offer weekday and weekend service, however Route 206’s weekend service is only offered during the summer. The main hub for transfers between transit lines is being moved to Railroad Avenue in downtown Georgetown.

Public Transit Routes in the Georgetown Area

Bus Route	Destinations	Cost (round trip)	Operation Time and Frequency
Route 206	Lewes, Beebe Hospital, Rt. 1 commercial area, Rehoboth, Harbeson, SCI, Delaware Tech, The Circle	\$1.00	M-F, 8 round trips Weekend, 2 r/t trips (summer)
Route 212	Laurel, Blades, Seaford, Bridgeville, Nanticoke Hospital, Delaware Tech	\$1.00	M-F., 6 round trips
Route 303	Dover, Milford, Milton, Frederica, Ellendale, Delaware Tech	\$1.50 to \$4.50	M-F, 8 round trips

Source: DART

DART has also organized a ride-sharing transportation option available to Georgetown residents. There is a “Park & Pool” lot available for carpools and vanpools located at First Baptist Church on North DuPont Highway. Residents interested are advised to call a phone number or register online to be matched to a potential carpool.

The CHEER Center, located in Georgetown and serving the needs of area senior citizens, operates a van/bus service to and from the CHEER Center. The service also transports seniors to the bank, grocery store, and other CHEER-sponsored event. A donation of \$1 is suggested for all passengers. DART offers a similar service for elderly patrons—Paratransit—which requires a reservation in advance. Patrons must also register with DART, who will provide a Paratransit ID card used to book a trip.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

The Stormwater Management section of this Plan also discusses value of improving drainageway corridors for bicycle and pedestrian interconnections.

Traditionally, pedestrian traffic around The Circle and adjacent blocks during the work week is moderately heavy. Pedestrian mobility outside of the central business district is considerably lower. Improving crosswalk labeling and access points throughout Georgetown would increase pedestrian mobility. Insuring that pedestrian access points connect to one another for full fluid movement around Town is recommended.

Several conceptual recreation trails are shown on the Comprehensive Plan Map. A more detailed Trail Master Plan should be developed, which would work to extend interconnecting trails as part of new developments. As new roads are built or improved, recreation trails should be developed along them. For example, a recreation trail along Park Avenue should interconnect with the Georgetown to Lewes recreation trail.

DelDOT is exploring a major “Rails with Trails” (RWT) route from Georgetown to Lewes. The Georgetown to Lewes trail would run along the railroad line that runs to the south of E. Market Street. This trail would not only be valuable for recreation, but also for bicycle transportation to the many employers along its length. Rails-with-Trails are public multi-use trail systems that are developed adjacent to active railroad lines and share the same right-of-way corridor. Successful RWT facilities are typically separated from active rail lines with a barrier (grade separation, vegetation, drainage ditch, or fencing), with the type of barrier selected based upon the speed and frequency of train using the line. Another alternative may involve removal of part of the rail line. The proposed Georgetown-Lewes route would connect Downtown Georgetown to Cape Henlopen State Park 16.7 miles to the east, via the Delaware Coast Line Railroad (DCLR), which run 1-2 trains per week. The initial DelDOT study was presented in 2006.

DelDOT published a statewide bicycle master plan in 2005 to recommend statewide, regional, and connector bicycle routes. One of the proposed statewide routes would create a bicycle route from Wilmington to Selbyville, and pass through Georgetown. Of note, the master plan viewed The Circle in Georgetown as an obstacle.

Regional routes passing through Georgetown include the Maryland Border to Georgetown route, which would utilize Sate Road 18 and US Highway 113 and pass through Bridgeville en route to Georgetown.

Another regional route would follow US Highway 9 from Laurel to Lewes via Georgetown. The master plan listed several barriers to this bicycle route: 1) bridges across Broad Creek and the Lewes and Rehoboth Canal are drawbridges without shoulders or designated bicycle lanes; 2) US Highway 9 in Georgetown has increased traffic volumes, access points, turning movements, and sporadic shoulders or space for bicycles; and 3) The Circle in Georgetown permits parking in the outer lane.

The State Department of Transportation is planning to establish bike lanes and construct sidewalks along North Bedford Street, particularly to reach the North Georgetown Elementary School.

A major study provides excellent guidance on needed bicycle and pedestrian improvements within Georgetown. This is the “Georgetown Delaware Planning Study: Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections,” which was completed under contract by DelDOT. The recommendations of that Plan should be carried out, including improving pedestrian and bicycle connections to schools, including providing safer street crossings. One major project in that Plan is being carried out, to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the North Georgetown Elementary School.

Air Service

Sussex County owns and operates the Sussex County Airport, located just east of Georgetown. The airport sits on 615 acres and has two active runways serving general and corporate aviation. An increasing number of NASCAR drivers are using the airport when coming to Delaware to race at Dover.

A 10-year, \$36 million program is underway to expand the airport and industrial park complex and use it as an economic development hub / employment incubator. The main runway is being extended by 1,000 feet and a secondary runway is being reconstructed. Part of this expansion includes five new leases for the construction of new hangars and a new restaurant. The entire airport expansion should be completed by 2011.

Residents seeking scheduled commercial air service typically travel to Salisbury, Philadelphia or Baltimore-Washington.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Public schools, the library, police and fire services are discussed in the Appendices.

Parks and Recreation

The largest opportunity for new public recreation facilities in Georgetown involves 52 acres on the south side of Railroad Avenue. The Town has entered into a partnership with the Boys and Girls Club to improve this area. This area may include a new site for the Boys and Girls Club. A Master Plan should be developed for the site, with logical phases of improvements that can be completed as funding is available. Once an overall plan is completed, State grants should be sought each year for various phases. Opportunities should be sought to add additional land. Ideally, this park should include restrooms, athletic fields, basketball courts, trails and a range of other facilities. Because there are few neighbors, it could be an appropriate location for lighted fields and courts, which would allow greater use. An emphasis should be placed upon providing safe bicycle and pedestrian access to this park from neighborhoods in the center of Georgetown.

This community park should encourage multi-generational activities. For example, while an older child is playing sports, a younger child should be able to play on playground equipment, while parents or grandparents walk on a nearby trail.

Other non--profit organizations should be encouraged to participate in the improvement and maintenance of this Park, such as athletic groups agreeing to complete routine preparation of fields, and organizations sponsoring pavilions in return for naming rights. A Gifts Catalog should be prepared that offers various choices of improvements that could be funded by individuals or groups. For example, a person may pay for a tree or bench in return for a small memorial plaque recognizing a loved one.

This community park should also include the permanent preservation of important natural areas, including mature woodlands and wetlands. Some natural areas could be improved as picnic areas, with nature trails.

The Town is dependent upon the schools and privately owned land for much of its recreation. For example, the main existing park on N. Bedford Street is owned by a church. The Georgetown Little League operates a park on E. Market Street and uses it for baseball practices and games. The organization is managed and governed by a private board of officers and is primarily funded through charitable donation, fundraisers, and gifts. The Little League operates both spring and fall sessions, and traditionally holds a parade, flea market, and other assorted celebrations—in cooperation with the Town—to commemorate the occasion.

The privately owned Sports at the Beach recreation complex exists east of Georgetown, within the potential Annexation Area. That private complex has room for additional facilities, and is used for many tournaments.

There is a need for additional playground equipment at Town parks.

Georgetown’s most notable feature—The Circle—serves as a public park used primarily for Town celebrations and special events, often in combination with the Old Sussex County Court House.

Recreation facilities on school grounds generally include ball fields, play equipment, tennis courts, and open spaces. Additionally, Delaware Technical and Community College also has recreational facilities that are used by Town residents.

Georgetown Parks, Recreational Facilities, and Open Spaces

Park/Facility	Location	Type of Facility
The Circle	Market & Bedford Streets	Historic park, public gathering space, historic marker in front of Old Courthouse
Delaware Technical and Community College	Route 404	Pavilion, picnic tables, ballfields
Georgetown Elementary School	W. Market Street	Playground
Georgetown Little League Park	E. Market Street	Baseball complex with concessions and parking
Georgetown Middle School & Sussex Central Middle	W. Market Street	Basketball courts, tennis courts, and fields
Georgetown Public Library Park	Between Bedford & Market Streets, near The Circle	Benches, small grassy landscaped area
Kimme Park	Pepper & New Streets	Playgrounds, benches and mosaic landmark
King Street Park	King Street, near Route 9	Adjacent to Little League Park, picnic tables, playground
Layton Thompson Park		Ball fields, basketball courts, woods, open field
Noah’s Park	Behind Grace Church	Playground
North Bedford Park	Bedford & Edwards Sts.	Playground, hard court, picnic tables
North Georgetown Elementary School	N. Bedford St.	Playground
Richard Allen Elementary School	S. Railroad Ave.	Playground
Rosa Street Park	Rosa St.	Playground
Sussex Central High School	Patriots Way	Basketball and tennis courts, open space
Howard T. Ennis Elementary School	Ennis Road, south of Delaware Tech.	Playground, indoor pool, fitness center.
Wilson Park	Market Street & railroad tracks	Brick walkway, flower garden and landscaping

Pedestrian and bicycle circulation and trails are discussed in the Transportation section. The Stormwater Management section of this Plan also discusses value of improving drainage corridors for bicycle and pedestrian interconnections.

Georgetown is located near many State and Federally-owned recreation areas and nature preserves, including various parcels within the Redden and Ellendale State Forests. Over 6,500 acres of forest are maintained by the Department of Agriculture, and includes hiking trails, hunting, softball, and camping facilities.

Trap Pond State Park is located nearby on Route 24 and offers many recreational activities: horseback riding, hiking, swimming, boating, disc golf, fishing, and camping. Trap Pond also is home to the northernmost publicly owned natural stand of Bald Cypress in the country. Nearby coastal state parks include Cape Henlopen, Delaware Seashore, Holts Landing, and Fenwick Island. Large areas of Federal wildlife preserves exist to the northeast.

Within the limitations of State law, Georgetown should update provisions regarding recreation facilities and open spaces that are required to be provided by developers. Currently, when recreation areas are provided within a development, they are often limited to residents of that development. An alternative would be to promote the payment of a fee for each housing unit that the Town could use to develop larger centralized recreation areas that are open to all residents.

Protecting open space (wetland and wooded areas with buffers around them) as a component of recreation land can serve a dual purpose by providing important passive recreational opportunities and at the same time protecting valuable wildlife habitat.

In 2008, the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation conducted a telephone survey of Delaware residents to gather information and trends on outdoor recreation patterns and preferences as well as other information on their landscape perception. These findings are the foundation of the 2008-2011 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) providing guidance for investments in needed outdoor recreation facilities. The Town of Georgetown is located within SCORP Planning Region 4.

Statewide, 91% of Delaware residents indicated that outdoor recreation had some importance in their lives, while 64% said it was very important to them personally. These findings are very close to the results of the same question asked in the 2002 public opinion telephone survey, indicating a continued demand for outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the state. In Region 4 (western Sussex County), 87% of residents indicated that outdoor recreation had some importance in their lives, while 60% said it was very important to them personally.

In SCORP Region 4 (western Sussex County), walking and jogging (81%) was the most participated in household activity followed by picnicking (66%), visiting historic sites and passive recreation in the outdoors (both 62%). This areas' household participation in golf (20%) and tennis (12%) were well below the statewide average while boating by powerboat (29%) and hunting (23%) were above the statewide average.

In Region 4, 52% of the residents said that they participate in outdoor recreation for their physical fitness. This is a 12% increase from the same question asked in 2002. Other frequent responses include both to be with family and friends (22%) and to be close to nature (22%).

Based on the public opinion portion of the SCORP, the most needed outdoor recreation facilities in Georgetown include:

High Facility needs:

- Walking/Jogging Paths
- Swimming Pools
- Open Space/Passive Recreation Areas
- Picnic Areas
- Playgrounds
- Fishing Access
- Bicycle Paths
- Access to Historic Sites

Moderate Facility Needs:

- Camping Areas
- Nature Programs
- Baseball/Softball Fields
- Basketball Courts
- Football Fields
- Soccer Fields

The Division of Parks and Recreation provides matching grant assistance through the Delaware Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund (DTF) to local governments for land acquisition and for park development. Lands that have received DTF assistance must remain as open space for conservation or recreation purposes in perpetuity. The Town of Georgetown should submit additional applications under this program to complete public recreation improvements.

The Delaware Division of Public Health encourages policies that promote a healthy community. This includes promoting physical activity (such as installing recreation trails and sidewalks and improving conditions for bicyclists), access to healthy eating (such as encouraging sale of fresh fruits and vegetables) and discouraging use of tobacco.

Ensuring that new residential and commercial development incorporates pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly features allows people to travel by foot or by bicycle and promotes physical activity as part of daily routines. Further, developments that include open space for active recreation offer an opportunity to engage in physical activity.

Research shows that incorporating physical activity into daily routines has the potential to be a more effective and sustainable public health strategy than structured exercise programs. The goal is promote physical activity and reduced obesity among all age groups, including children and senior citizens.

Certain patterns of land use can act as a barrier to physical activity and healthy eating for children and adults alike. Examples of such barriers include neighborhoods constructed without sidewalks or parks and shopping centers with full-service grocery stores situated too far from residential areas to allow for walking or biking between them.

Pedestrian and bicycle access is addressed under the Transportation section of this Plan. Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity should be improved between residential and commercial properties through sidewalks, crosswalks and walking/bicycling paths. Crosswalks should be well-marked to improve their visibility to motorists. Bike racks should be required to be installed as part of larger

commercial developments. Incentives could be used to promote bike racks in smaller projects, such as allowing bike racks to be used in place of one required parking space. The "Healthy Communities: A Resource Guide to Delaware Municipalities" publication includes strategies and funding ideas to incorporate amenities (such as tree canopy, sidewalks, walking/bicycling paths) that facilitate a healthy community.

Wastewater Services

The Town of Georgetown provides sewer service to most parts of the Town, as well as some adjacent areas in Sussex County. Georgetown treats wastewater from Sussex Correctional Institution (SCI), the Country Club, Golf Village, the Airport Industrial Park and Ellendale, a small town located eight miles to the north. The Perdue plant, on Savannah Road and within Town boundaries, manages its own wastewater treatment facility.

The Georgetown wastewater system has a treatment capacity of 1.3 million gallons per day. Average flows are 0.85 million gallons per day, but the peak flows during heavy rains can reach 1.05 million gallons per day. The Town has been working to reduce inflow and infiltration into the system during heavy rains. Multiple pump stations are used to maintain proper flows in the system.

The system uses spray irrigation on open land to dispose of the effluent after it has been treated. State and Federal regulations seek to effectively prevent disposal of effluent into any waterway or ditch. Therefore, there are separate needs for treatment capacity and for disposal capacity.

The Town is planning on expanding the wastewater system, to increase the treatment capacity to 1.7 million gallons per day and to add at least 100 acres to the available spray disposal fields. The Town currently owns one spray field and leases other areas to the southeast of the Town, near the treatment plant. Areas for spray irrigation need suitable soils and cannot be used to produce food for human consumption. The better soils for spray irrigation are generally to the east and south of town. It is important to obtain the rights to spray fields in the near future, while the suitable land is still available. It is recommended that the Town discuss with Sussex County the potential of using open County-owned lands around the airport runways for spray disposal. These areas cannot be used for buildings because they affect the flight paths and clear zones of the runways.

The Wastewater Plan also lays out a system of new force mains to serve new development. Many of these new lines are proposed along the Route 113, East Market Street, and S. Bedford Street corridors. The timing of these improvements will depend upon the timing of nearby developments.

There currently is no system in place to allow developers to pay money to reserve capacity in the wastewater system. Care should be used to make sure that sufficient capacity is kept in reserve for "infill" development in older areas and for high priority business development.

The Town's Wastewater and Water Facility Plan was completed in 2002 and included recommendations for future growth and capacity requirements. The 2002 update included estimates for areas within Georgetown's current borders and potential annexation area. To help meet future wastewater treatment needs an agreement is in place, between the Town and Artesian Wastewater Management, Inc., for when their Northern Sussex Regional Water Recharge Facility is available.

Population Based Estimates

Area/Year	2000	2025	Sewer Capacity Needed
Georgetown 2002 Borders	4643	6626	1.8 mgd
Georgetown and Potential Annexation Area	5299	7217	1.95 mgd

Source: Davis Bowen, & Friedel, 2002

Future upgrades to the wastewater plant could be done adjacent to the existing facility, assuming 25 acres of existing spray field could be converted to facility usage.

Water Service

The Town's water is supplied by a set of six wells, including the highest volume well on King St., one behind the SCI prison and one at DelTech. The practical capacity of the current wells are 1,450 gallons per minute. Most of the water is drawn from the Columbia aquifer, with the Manokin aquifer is the secondary source.

There are water treatment facilities at the King Street well, at Del Tech and at SCI. The two water tanks in Georgetown (located at Lynch Lane and Delaware Tech, respectively) provide 325,000 gallons of storage capacity.

The County also operates a water system for the Airport and the adjacent Industrial Park. That system includes two wells and two storage tanks. Consideration should be given in the future to incorporating the County system into the Town's system.

There are three water plants, located at N. King Street, Delaware Tech, and Sussex Correctional Institute. The following information is provided for the six wells:

Georgetown Wells

Well #	Depth	Aquifer
1	0-120 feet	Columbia
1A	330-354 feet	Manokin
2	40-92 feet	Columbia
2R	90-129 feet	Columbia
3	108-143 feet	Columbia
3A	313-329 feet	Manokin

Source: Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control

A seventh well is being completed as part of the College Park development adjacent to Delaware Tech. The Purdue Company also operates its own wells for its plant in Georgetown.

DNREC reports that the average water use per day per person has fallen from 163 gallons in 2000 to 136 gallons in 2007. DNREC reports that the maximum daily water use limit of 2.38 million gallons per day in the Town's Water Allocation Permit should be adequate for the foreseeable population growth, considering that the reported peak day use is 1.375 times the average daily use.

DNREC recommends that the Town place a higher priority on water conservation, well maintenance and leak detection than upon developing many new wells.

The Town's Water Supply Plan foresees a long-term need for additional well sites, such as on the SCI prison property. In the next 15 years, the Water Supply Plan recommends:

- 1) Two more wells with treatment facilities at 450 gpm, each
- 2) An additional 325,000 gallons of additional elevated storage (most likely on the east or northeast side of town)
- 3) Back up power for wells / treatment plants

The need for additional wells may be reduced by the slowing of the construction market, as a result of the 2008-2010 recession.

Stormwater Management

Areas maintained as drainage ways within new development should also be examined for possible use for bicycle and pedestrian interconnections. The goal is to interconnect various parts of the region and promote accompanying landscaping that will have benefits for wildlife habitats and for water quality protection. Green technology should be used in stormwater management, particularly to use best management practices to promote infiltration into the ground and to improve water quality.

A major stormwater management plan is being completed for areas that flow into the Savannah Ditch in the northern part of Georgetown. Additional master plans for stormwater management should be completed for various sub-watersheds, particularly to make sure that stormwater facilities are coordinated among various developments, and to make sure that there is sufficient capacity in ditches. In future Annexation Areas, these stormwater plans should be coordinated with Sussex County.

Within drainageways, a maintenance program should be put into place to address blockages from storm debris, sediment, beaver dams and other sources. Periodic removal of sediment is also needed to maintain a sufficient grade for drainage. This maintenance program should identify existing open channels and stormwater pipes that may require maintenance in the future. As land is annexed, drainageways should be added to the maintenance program. Points of access for maintenance equipment should be incorporated into development plans. Consideration should also be given to areas that can be used for spreading of sediment that is removed from ditches.

It is desirable to maintain wetlands, trees and other natural vegetation and plant new trees and understory vegetation along drainageways to maintain a high water quality. This vegetation helps to filter out sediment and other pollutants before they enter the drainageway. Tall trees can have the maximum benefit if they are planted on the south or west side of a drainageway, in order to maximize shade of the water. Invasive species should be removed and native species should be planted. Species should be chosen that will allow ease of maintenance, erosion control and reduction of nutrients entering the water.

However, provisions also need to be made for maintenance of the drainageways. This should include spacing of trees to allow for mechanized drainageway maintenance, in consideration of the

mature size of the trees. Trees should not be planted closer than 5 feet from the top of the bank in order to avoid future blockages from tree roots.

The Town should seek the establishment of drainage easements or rights-of-way along waterways, ditches, and storm drains where such measures are not currently in effect. These easements can be written so that the Town has the legal ability, but not the legal responsibility, to conduct maintenance.

The Sussex County Conservation District reviews stormwater management and erosion control plans, following State regulations. The Town should seek that an applicant for a development meet with the Conservation District early in the development process. This will help to coordinate stormwater management, ditch capacity and tax ditch maintenance issues.

As of 2009, the State Sediment and Stormwater Program Regulations are currently being revised. The State Sediment and Stormwater Program reports that as of 2009 they intend to begin requiring a pre-application meeting for all proposed land disturbing activities that require a detailed Sediment & Stormwater Plan. The developer also must submit a Stormwater Assessment Study to the Conservation District. These meetings will serve to assist developers in the design process and for early notification of approval requirements.

It would be desirable to upgrade the stormwater system to improve water quality. One method to fund improvements and retrofits may be through a stormwater utility. This should include cooperative efforts with developers, State agencies, the Sussex Conservation District, Sussex County and the Delaware Clean Water Advisory Council.

The future stormwater impacts of future development in Annexation Areas also needs to be considered to ensure adequate drainage for the cumulative stormwater impacts.

The placement of permanent obstructions within tax ditch rights-of-way is prohibited. Any change to the location of the tax ditch, or the existing tax ditch rights-of-way, will require a change to the tax ditch court order.

Stormwater and sewer systems are not combined in Georgetown.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Preserving Georgetown's historic buildings has long been a priority to Town residents. Working in concert with the Georgetown Historical Society, the State Historic Preservation Office and Sussex County have assisted in preserving historic structures located in and around the Circle. Numerous buildings around town, including the Sussex County Courthouse, the Brick Hotel, as well as the Circle itself, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Georgetown Historical Society keeps records on file of local historically significant properties.

Georgetown's Zoning Ordinances include a Historic Zoning District to regulate preservation of historic buildings in the center of the Town. In the Historic District, buildings are subject to architectural review by the Town's Planning Commission. These efforts include gauging the appropriate historical context of building design and materials to make sure that new construction meshes cohesively with existing historical structures.

There are many concentrations of historic buildings that are not within the Historic zoning district, such as along North and South Bedford Streets. In these other areas, there currently are no controls on demolitions or changes to existing buildings. Many Delaware municipalities have zoning regulations for historic buildings. The most common method is an "overlay district" that includes provisions that apply in addition to regular zoning districts. This method could be used for wider areas than just the center of Town.

In some areas, the Town could simply regulate demolition of historic buildings or removal of historic features, without requiring approval of minor changes, such as replacement of doors and windows. As a result, this type of regulation would not be an intrusion upon the average building owner. Instead, this provision would be targeted to the actual demolition of the main building on the lot. A partial demolition should also be regulated, such as a removal of an older front porch.

If a more comprehensive set of historic provisions is not established, then the current Historic Zoning District could be extended to adjacent blocks.

The Zoning Code could also allow incentives for historic rehabilitation. For instance, a restored historic building might be allowed to be converted into an office or bed and breakfast inn within a district that would not normally allow those uses.

Only the Circle and individual buildings (such as the current and old courthouses) are on the National Register of Historic Places. A much larger area of the Town could be eligible for listing on the National Register. A property or district can be listed on the National Register if approved by the State, following Federal standards. That listing would make investment properties eligible for Federal and State tax benefits if they are substantially rehabilitated in a way that preserves the exterior historic features. Listing on the National Register by itself does not involve any additional regulations upon a private property-owner. A National Register listing does limit actions by a government agency that could harm the historic resource.

As part of the Route 113 alternatives study, John Milner Associates has completed a study of additional buildings and districts in Georgetown that they believe are eligible for the National Register.

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The State has laid out a set of strategies to help preserve historic buildings in “The Future of Our Past: Planning for Historic Preservation in Delaware, 2001-2005,” published by the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office. Those strategies focus on increasing awareness and education, as well as encouraging local municipalities to create incentives for historic preservation, and removing obstacles inherent to the process.

As land is annexed into the Town, the Town should also consider whether any historic preservation protections should be added for buildings within those new areas.

An overview of Georgetown’s history is included in the Appendices.

Historic Resources

Georgetown Properties on the National Register of Historic Places, 2007

PROPERTY	STYLE	PERIOD	SIGNIFICANCE
Joseph T. Adams House 12 E. Pine St.	Italianate, Colonial & Greek Revival	1850-1874, 1875-1899, 1900-1924,	architecture
The Brick Hotel The Circle	Federal Greek Revival	1825-1849	architecture
Peter S. Faucett House W. Laurel St.	Gothic, Italianate, Greek Revival	1825-1849	architecture
Georgetown Coal Gasification Plant N. Railroad Ave.		1875-1899	architecture, industry
Stella Pepper Gyles House SW of Georgetown	Greek Revival	1825-1849, 1850-1874	architecture
Judge’s House and Law Office 100 & 104 W. Market St.	Greek Revival, Georgian	1750-1799, 1800-1824	law, politics, government, architecture
Dr. John W. Messick House 144 E. Market St.	Second Empire, Queen Anne, Late Gothic Revival	1875-1899, 1900-1924	architecture
Old Sussex County Courthouse S. Bedford St.	Georgian	1750-1799	social history, politics, government
Carlton Pepper David Farm State Road 469	Greek Revival, Federal	1850-1874, 1925-1949	agriculture, architecture
Redden Forrest Lodge, Forester’s House and Stable Redden State Forest	Shingle Style	1900-1924	architecture
Richards Mansion N. Bedford St & The Circle	Greek Revival, Federal	1750-1799, 1825-1849, 1850-1899	law, architecture
Short Homestead DE 526 & DE 529		1700-1749, 1750-1799	architecture
Thomas Sipple House N. Bedford & New St.	Greek Revival, Italianate	1850-1874	architecture
St. John’s Methodist Church	Gothic Revival	1900-1924	architecture

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PROPERTY	STYLE	PERIOD	SIGNIFICANCE
SR 30 & CR 37			
St. Paul’s Episcopal Church E. Pine St.	Gothic	1750-1799, 1825-1849, 1875-1899	religion, architecture
Sussex County Courthouse and The Circle The Circle	Georgian	1825-1849, 1900-1924, 1950-1974	architecture, politics, government
Gardiner Wright Mansion 228 S. Front St.	Second Empire, Italianate	1825-1849	architecture

Source: National Historic Register

The following are additional notes about sites listed above, and other historic sites in Georgetown:

- Local legend says that a slave girl named Liz was responsible for plowing the center of The Circle and planting the trees there.
- The new Sussex County Courthouse (1, The Circle) was designed by architect William Strickland, and built between 1837-1839, on the same location as the old courthouse. The cupola and portico were added later, in 1914.
- The current Town Hall (39, The Circle) sits where a tavern called “Rising Sun”—built in 1820, used to thrive. The current brick structure was built in 1921 for the Delaware Trust Company, and donated to Georgetown in 1965 by the Wilmington Trust Company.
- The Mansion House (28, The Circle) typifies the Greek Revival style, as the front section of the house dates to 1830-1866. The back section of the house is older, and was likely built in 1799. The house was once owned by Charles Sudler Richards, who served as Delaware Secretary of State, and Chief Justice of the Delaware Supreme Court.
- The Paynter House (26, The Circle) was built in the early 1800s, and occupied by the Paynter family, which also owned Clayfield Farm. The Paynters produced local physicians, a bank president, and a Delaware Supreme Court Justice.
- The Brick Hotel (18, The Circle) was constructed in 1836, and served as the interim Sussex County Courthouse while the new courthouse was under construction.
- The Old Georgetown Post Office (2, The Circle) was built in 1932 for less than \$64,000. In 1994, the Sussex County Council acquired the building for meeting chambers and councilmen offices.
- The Old Sussex County Courthouse (10 S. Bedford St.) was built in 1791-1792 to exactly replicate the former county structure in Lewes. It was moved to its current site from its former location on The Circle in 1837, upon completion of the new courthouse. The wooden structure was restored in 1976, and is still open for tours.
- The Clayfield Farm (228 S. Front St.) home was built in 1841 by the son of US Senator William Wells. It was later owned by Judge James M. Tunnel, Jr. a Delaware Supreme Court Justice.
- The Judge’s House (104 W. Market St.) typifies Early-Georgian style, and was constructed in 1809 by Judge Peter Robinson. Other residents over time included several judges, State Supreme Court Justices, and Delaware Secretaries of State.
- The Peter S. Faucett House (11 W. Laurel St.) shows two separate 3-bay houses joined together, with the oldest section constructed in 1830.

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- The Alfred Robinson House (112 N. Bedford St.) was originally constructed on The Circle before 1800. It was moved in 1857, and local legend says that the giant magnolia tree in its front yard was a gift from a sea captain in the 1850s.
- Francis Asbury reportedly preached in the Georgetown area as early as 1779, but the Wesley United Methodist Church (10 N. Race St.) was not built until 1802 near the church cemetery on W. Pine Street. The current sanctuary, the church's fourth, was built in 1896 and the parsonage was added in 1907.
- St. Paul's Episcopal Church (122 E. Pine St.) was originally built as a wood frame structure in 1804, after the church organized in 1794. A brick structure was constructed in 1844, but a fire destroyed the parish house in the rear in 1987. The parish house was later rebuilt in 1990.
- The Nutter D. Marvel Museum (508 S. Bedford St.) includes a collection of historic structures (two barrel roof barns, a church, a one-room school house, and a blacksmith shop) and period horse drawn carriages. Nutter D. Marvel was a Georgetown entrepreneur, horseman, and legislator, who died in 1988. His property was gifted to the Town in 1992 by his grandchildren, and is used as a repository for Town history.

References used in this section:

Georgetown Historical Society

National Register of Historic Places

Greater Georgetown Chamber of Commerce

Georgetown Comprehensive Plan, 2002

The Future of Our Past: Planning for Historic Preservation in Delaware, 2001-2005, Del SHPO

Greater Georgetown Chamber of Commerce

IMPLEMENTATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

This section describes methods that should be considered to implement this Plan.

The volunteer efforts of neighborhood and civic organizations and individuals are essential to further improve the region and to carry out this Plan. The objective is to strengthen community pride and emphasize volunteer efforts for residents and property-owners to improve their surroundings.

It is essential to keep citizens informed and provide opportunities for meaningful citizen input, while making use of new technologies for communication.

The Town's website should continue to be regularly updated with information that will help spur public interest, enthusiasm and involvement. This should include information on recreation programs and agendas for upcoming municipal meetings. Opportunities for citizen involvement should also be highlighted through the newspaper and other media.

Planning is an on-going process. The Plan is intended to promote many short-term actions that are made within a long-range perspective. The most immediate action will be updating as needed of Georgetown's development regulations.

Maximize communications, coordination and cooperative efforts between Georgetown, the School District, other municipalities, the County, DelDOT and other State agencies and organizations.

The Town Government cannot implement this Comprehensive Plan alone. Involvement is needed by residents, neighborhood organizations, civic groups, businesses, institutions, property-owners and many other groups.

This Comprehensive Plan should be consistently used as an overall guide for land use and transportation decisions. In addition, the Plan needs to be reviewed periodically and, if necessary, updated to reflect changing trends.

Use a Full Set of Tools to Implement this Plan

This Comprehensive Plan establishes overall policies for guiding the future development and conservation of the region. However, this Plan is not a regulation. The following major tools are available to help implement this Plan:

- Plan of Services for Annexation Areas
- Special Development Districts,
- Impact Fees on New Development,
- the Zoning Code,
- the Subdivision Code,
- computerized mapping,
- Capital Improvements Planning,
- the Town's annual spending, and
- seeking Federal, State and County grant funds to accomplish important projects.

Plan of Services for Annexation Areas

When annexations are considered, the State requires that a plan be prepared to provide services for the resulting new development. Such plan of services should be reviewed by key State agencies. Such a plan should consider the timing and phasing of development, the protection of natural and historic resources in the area, interconnections of roads, inter-connections of open space and pedestrian access, and ways to fund needed infrastructure.

The State Drainage Program recommends each parcel have a tax ditch right-of-way review. The Town will recommend that, prior to filing an application for annexation, that the applicant meet with the State DNREC Drainage Program Staff and the Sussex Conservation District. This will help to coordinate drainage, stormwater management, ditch capacity and tax ditch maintenance issues.

Special Development Districts

The General Assembly revised the Charter for Georgetown to allow use of Special Development Districts (SDDs) and Tax Increment Financing (TIF). A SDD would be extremely valuable to help fund infrastructure needed for larger new development. The State law allows a very wide variety of improvements to be funded by a SDD, including streets, stormwater management, wastewater lines, water lines, curbs, street lights, sidewalks and other improvements. SDDs allow these improvements to be funded without raising taxes of existing residents of the Town. SDDs can also be used to fund an improvement that is needed that is not immediately adjacent to the development.

SDDs are currently being used in Bridgeville and Millsboro. If a major new development would be proposed, the Town Council could create a SDD. Persons who buy property in the SDD area would be placed on notice that they would be paying higher property taxes than other residents of the Town. The additional taxes would be committed to annually make payments on bonds. The bonds would be used to pay the initial costs of the infrastructure needed for the new development. This system can work particularly well because the average property tax bill in the area is much less than surrounding states. The developer also benefits because they do not need to raise as much financing

in the early stages of the project. The home buyers may benefit if the developer is able to offer lower home sales prices.

SDDs are also attractive because they do not reduce the amount of debt that the Town can issue, and because the Town is not responsible to pay for the debt if there is a default. Instead, the property-owners in the development would be assessed even higher taxes if the development did not generate enough revenue to pay for the debt.

In effect, SDDs are impact fees, with the payments spread out over time and that are paid by the new residents. This addresses a problem that a developer often does not have the cash flow at the beginning of a development to pay for a major needed public improvement.

It is recommended that SDDs only be used in Georgetown to fund an improvement that is beyond the type of improvement that is normally constructed by a developer. For example, a SDD could be used to help fund a major road improvement. However, this Plan does not recommend that SDDs be used to fund routine internal improvements within a development, such as local residential streets, storm drains, curbs and street lights. The intent is that SDD would be an option that would be considered in negotiations between the Town and one or more developers.

TIFs work in a similar manner to a SDD. A bond is issued for an improvement as part of a development. Then the additional tax revenue that results from the development is used to pay for the payments on the bond. A TIF does not involve a higher tax rate. A TIF is particularly useful for a redevelopment project, when a town determines that the development would not occur without it. In that case, the Town is committing new tax revenue that it otherwise would not see to pay for the improvement. Once the bond is paid off, then the full tax revenue is paid to the Town.

Impact Fees on New Developments

The goal of an impact fee is to make sure that new development helps to cover the capital costs that result from the development. The goal is to avoid making existing residents pay additional costs for infrastructure and services that would not be needed if the new development did not occur. Georgetown already charges significant impact fees for water service and wastewater service for each new development. The Town currently assesses an emergency services fee with the issuance of a building permit for new construction and will continue to review costs to determine if any additional fees should be assessed. Other towns in Sussex have allocated a portion of the building permit fee to fund local fire and emergency medical services. It may be desirable for Georgetown to work through municipal associations to seek additional authority in State law to charge reasonable fees on new development.

The Town can also establish a separate wastewater district to make sure that the additional costs of serving a new development area are paid by the persons serviced in that area.

Improvements to Existing Roads

A system also exists to have adjacent property-owners pay for needed improvements to an adjacent public street. Each property-owner can be assessed a proportionate share of the costs.

Computerized Mapping

The County and State utilize Geographic Information System (GIS) software and tools for mapping and data sharing. This system has been used as the base for the maps in the Plan. Increased efforts are needed to fully integrate this system with operations of municipal agencies. For example, regular mapping of traffic accident locations can be helpful to identify hazardous conditions that need to be resolved, such as sight distance problems.

Capital Improvements Planning

The Town should have a system in place to continually plan and budget for major capital expenditures. “Capital” improvements are projects involving a substantial expense for the construction or improvement of major public facilities that have a long life span and that are not annual operating expenses. Examples of capital projects include major street improvements and building renovations of parkland.

A Capital Improvements Program (CIP) can help identify projects that will be needed, prioritize the projects, identify possible funding sources and then budget for their completion. A typical CIP looks five years in the future. A CIP should identify major street reconstruction projects that will be needed over the next few years, which can help coordinate the reconstruction with underground projects for water and sewer lines and by various utilities. This avoids the need to cut into a street after it has been recently repaved. Through a CIP, many different projects can be combined into a single bond issue, which avoids the high administrative costs of multiple bond issues. A CIP also can help the Town to carefully time any bond issues to take advantage of the lowest interest rates.

The Town may explore the feasibility of stormwater utility to fund upgrades to existing stormwater infrastructure. Upgrades to the stormwater system may reduce pollutant loads and help reach the established total maximum daily load for nitrogen, phosphorus, and bacteria. It may be desirable to reach out to the Sussex Conservation District, Sussex County and the Delaware Clean Water Advisory Council as partners in funding stormwater retrofits.

GOAL: Update the Town’s development regulations to carry out this Plan, and periodically update the Plan and regulations as needed.

Zoning Code

The Zoning Code is the primary legal tool to regulate the uses of land and buildings. The Zoning Code includes a Zoning Map that divides the Town into different zoning districts. Each district permits a set of activities and establishes a maximum density of development. The Zoning Code must be updated as needed to be generally consistent with this Comprehensive Plan within 18 months after the Plan is certified by the State. A zoning update is also valuable to modernize standards and to address local concerns.

In addition to regulating land uses and densities, zoning also controls the following:

- the heights of buildings,
- the percentage of a lot that may be covered by buildings and paving,
- the minimum distances that buildings may be placed from streets and property lines,

- the minimum size of lots,
- the maximum sizes and heights of signs, and
- the protection of important natural features.

Many suggestions for zoning revisions are included in the Land Uses and Housing section of this report. The Town should also consider greater use of the conditional use process, which provides the Planning Commission and Town Council with greater control over complex development proposals. Many of the great ideas in Georgetown's Design Guidelines should be written into the Zoning Code as regulations or incentives in certain parts of the Town. The Design Guidelines should also be reviewed to determine whether they could be re-organized to improve the ease of use.

The Town should also consider additional ways of allowing mixtures of compatible uses. For example, schools and day care centers should be allowed in most residential areas. Small neighborhood-oriented commercial uses should be allowed as part of larger housing developments, particularly if no commercial districts are located nearby. The goal is to reduce dependence upon motor vehicles for short trips.

As described in the Land Use and Housing section, a much greater emphasis should be placed upon requiring trees and other landscaping in new development.

A separate memorandum has been prepared that summarizes recommended changes to the Town's Zoning Code to carry out this Plan. Among other recommendations, the intent is to reduce the land areas within the highest density residential zoning district in areas where developments are not actively underway.

Subdivision Code

The Town's Subdivision Code mainly regulates the creation of new lots, the construction of new streets by developers, and other improvements. Updates to the Subdivision Code should include innovative ways to manage stormwater in a more environmentally friendly manner through use of "best management practices (BMPs). This includes greater use of measures to promote infiltration into the groundwater and to filter pollutants out of runoff.

State Sediment and Stormwater Program requirements should be cross-referenced on the Town's development application checklists.

Note - Through the State PLUS process, developers consult the DNREC Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) to determine if their project activities will impact an endangered species.

GOAL: Maximize communications, coordination and cooperative efforts between the Town, the school district, other municipalities, the County, DelDOT and other agencies and organizations.

This Plan helps to establish a framework for further cooperative ventures between various levels of government. Intergovernmental cooperation can not only decrease the costs of many services, it can

also improve the quality of services. The following types of alternatives should be considered to promote inter-governmental cooperation:

- Shared Services and Shared Staff-persons – Shared staff-persons can be particularly beneficial for specialized staff, such as different types of code enforcement staff. Two or more municipalities could hire the same person to do the same job, with so many hours assigned to each municipality. This allows each municipality to hire a highly qualified person who is working full-time, as opposed to each trying to find a part-time person. This can reduce turnover, which reduces training costs and reduces the potential for mistakes being made by inexperienced staff. In addition, sharing staff makes staff-persons available during more hours of the day, which is beneficial to residents and business-persons. It also provides greater coverage during periods of illness or vacation.
- Shared Recreation Programs – When municipalities share and coordinate recreation programs, it greatly increases the types of programs that can be offered. For example, one municipality may offer a gymnastics program, while another municipality offers basketball programs, with residents of each municipality being allowed to participate in each at the same cost per person. These programs are often organized in partnership with a school district.
- Joint Purchasing – Joint purchasing can reduce the costs to each municipality of preparing bid documents and legal ads. It also can result in lower costs because larger volumes are being purchased. This process is particularly useful for annual purchases of standardized materials, such as road salt. Municipalities can also join together to jointly purchase insurance or other services. Joint auctions can also be used to sell surplus vehicles and equipment.
- Sharing of Equipment – This sharing is most beneficial for expensive equipment that is needed by each municipality for only portions of the year, such as paving, rolling or grading equipment. The equipment could be jointly owned, or be owned by one municipality and leased to other municipalities. Or an arrangement could allow trading of equipment.
- Cooperation Between Fire Companies – Consideration should be given to promoting additional cooperation between fire companies. Cooperation is particularly beneficial to make the best use of extremely expensive fire apparatus, such as rescue trucks, hazardous materials equipment, tanker trucks and aerial ladder trucks. Mutual aid agreements should continue to be used among the Fire Companies.

Implementation Strategy - Recommendations

The following table lists the major recommendations of this Plan. For each recommendation, a note is included whether it is proposed to be high priority for immediate action. This table also identifies each item as a short-range (1-3 years), mid-range (4 to 6 years), long-range (7 or more years) or continuous recommendation.

Recommendation	High Priority for Immediate Action?	Time Frame
<p><u>Natural Features Conservation:</u> Use ordinances and plan reviews to seek that thick natural vegetation be preserved and/or planted along waterways. Where feasible, a 25 feet wide vegetated buffer should be provided on each side of the centerline of the major ditches that carry water year-round.</p>	X	Short-range for ordinances, continuous for plan reviews
<p>Consider requiring that a buffer be established around non-man-made wetlands, with a wider buffer to be considered around the more ecologically important wetlands in outlying areas.</p>	X	Short-range
<p>Consider the State-proposed Resource Areas and Natural Areas in the location of open spaces within development, and in areas where conservation easements may be purchased by a group or a level of government.</p>		Continuous
<p>Continue to use the Town’s Wellhead Protection Ordinance to avoid pollution of public groundwater supplies.</p>	X	Continuous
<p>Work to minimize the amount of impervious cover outside of the center of the Town. This should include strongly encouraging use of pervious paving materials.</p>		Continuous
<p>Work with the Conservation District to actively encourage use of Best Management Practices that reduce water pollutants in runoff and that promote groundwater recharge.</p>		Continuous
<p>Seek that wetlands include preserved common or public open space around them, instead of being comprised of individual lots.</p>		Continuous
<p>Require that drainage easements be established within new developments along waterways, ditches, and storm drains where easements are not currently in</p>		Continuous

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Recommendation	High Priority for Immediate Action?	Time Frame
effect, with proper access points for maintenance. Seek improvements to stormwater systems to improve water quality. Carefully consider the future stormwater impacts of future development in Annexation Areas to be considered to ensure adequate drainage for the cumulative stormwater impacts.		
Within drainageways, a maintenance program should be considered to address blockages.		Continuous
<p><u>Land Use and Housing:</u> Update the Town’s Zoning and Subdivision Codes to carry out the Plan. Special attention needs to be paid to the Residential Planned Community (RPC) provisions because most denser developments are using that option.</p>	X	Short-range
Incorporate portions of the Georgetown Development Design Standards that are intended to be mandatory directly into the Zoning or Subdivision Codes to make them more enforceable. Even stronger design standards are needed to guide the development of new commercial complexes.	X	Short-range
When calculating the density for new housing developments, delete areas within wetlands.		Short-range
Establish a new Low Density Residential zoning district that should be used for the vast majority of lands that may be newly annexed into the Town. This district should provide for an average of 3 single family detached houses per acre, with an option for 4 homes per acre if a substantial area of open space is preserved through cluster/open space developments.	X	Short-range
Seek to use the Open Space Development Option in Low Density Residential areas to provide open space along drainageways, interconnected recreation areas with trails, contiguous preserved forestland and buffers adjacent to State Forest Lands.	X	Continuous
In Medium Density Residential areas, place an emphasis upon having usable rear yards and promoting use of the RPC Option.		Short-range
In Medium High Density Residential areas, make sure	X	Short-range

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Recommendation	High Priority for Immediate Action?	Time Frame
that zoning requirements do not discourage construction of single family detached houses. The land areas zoned MR1 should be reduced, and the densities in that district should be reduced. Attention is needed on “infill” lots that currently could be developed with dense apartments that are inconsistent with the neighborhood.		
Prohibit or very strictly regulate the conversions of existing one family homes into additional numbers of housing units.	X	Short-range
Use density incentives in zoning provisions to encourage retirement communities.		Short-range
Promote redevelopment of underused lands between Race Street and the railroad. These areas are currently zoned “Urban Business,” which is mainly a commercial district. A wider range of mixed uses may be appropriate, as well as taller maximum heights.	X	Continuous
Promote use of the RPC zoning option, while tightening the types of commercial uses that are allowed. Use of alleys should be encouraged to allow rear driveways and rear garages. Greater attention is needed to the design of the open space to make sure it serves a valuable public purpose and is inter-connected.		Continuous
Promote additional market rate owner-occupied housing, while seeking to avoid additional subsidized rental units. Government funding for rental housing should emphasize improving the livability of existing units.		Continuous
Improve the stability of older neighborhoods through code enforcement, linking persons to available funding sources and resources, increasing rates of home ownership, rehabilitating housing, and community-based policing. Particular attention needs to be paid to seeking financing for low-income resident owners of property who need to make improvements to comply with town and state codes.		Continuous
Along older highly visible corridors, such as Bedford Street and W. Market Street, add minimum landscaped	X	Short-range

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Recommendation	High Priority for Immediate Action?	Time Frame
area standards, particularly for front yards. New parking in the front yard should be prohibited or severely limited. Where businesses are allowed, promote designs that have an appearance similar to a large older single family home.		
In cooperation with the Delaware State Housing Authority, the Town of Georgetown will develop a housing analysis for the Town that will help to predict Georgetown’s housing needs vs. the current housing stock.	X	Short-range
In commercial districts, vary setbacks from adjacent homes based upon the intensity of the commercial use. In commercial areas near residential neighborhoods, use care regarding which areas are suitable for restaurants with drive-through service and uses that would be open late night hours.		Short-range
Establish a new Limited Commercial/Airport Approach zoning district within the primary approach areas to the County Airport, east of South Bedford Street and west of the railroad. The intent is to avoid new homes and provide for limited commercial uses that would be compatible with adjacent homes.		Short-range
Seek the development of a new business park in a location with convenient access to Route 113 and Delaware Tech. The business park should be well-landscaped with a site design that will help to attract higher-income jobs to the area. The emphasis should be upon offices, light industrial uses and business services.		Long-range
Work with health care providers and developers to promote additional health care services within Georgetown, such as an outpatient surgery facility, rehabilitation facilities or a small in-patient hospital, in combination with medical offices.		Long-range
Consider allowing taller heights along portions of the Route 113 corridor and in certain business redevelopment areas outside of the Downtown that are not adjacent to existing single family homes.		Short-range
Promote Georgetown as a suitable location for a		Mid-range

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Recommendation	High Priority for Immediate Action?	Time Frame
Southern Campus of the University of Delaware.		
As part of any proposal to add commercial zoning to Route 113, first require the applicant to propose a well-planned system of traffic access that is coordinated with neighboring properties. Where feasible, a developer should be required to provide connections to allow traffic to have an alternative route around a congested intersection and to allow customers to visit multiple businesses without having to re-enter Route 113 each time.	X	Continuous
Along Route 113, promote opportunities for mixed use buildings, such as having light commercial uses on the first floor and offices or condominiums on upper floors.		Continuous
Strengthen zoning regulations for uses that are most likely to cause nuisances and hazards. These include chemical plants, asphalt plants, trash transfer facilities, quarrying, boarding houses, salvage/scrap yards, adult live entertainment uses, after hours clubs, Bring Your Own Bottle clubs, large nightclubs, and drug and alcohol treatment centers.	X	Short-term
Encourage pedestrian-oriented uses in the Downtown, including retail sales, personal services, offices and restaurants, while prohibiting drive-through restaurants. Re-establish a weekly Farmers Market in Georgetown.		Continuous
Work with DelDOT to install traffic calming measures to reduce speeding, improve pedestrian safety and avoid excessive amounts of traffic on local residential streets. Particular attention needs to be paid to pedestrian safety in the Circle and adjacent blocks. Make crosswalks more visible, and possibly installing “speed tables” in selected blocks.	X	Continuous
Use the Greater Georgetown Area Community Market Analysis to target types of businesses that should be attracted to the Downtown. Seek ways to keep visitors in the area for a longer period of time, vs. simply traveling through Georgetown, such as the development of additional hotels.		Continuous

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Recommendation	High Priority for Immediate Action?	Time Frame
Among downtown businesses, seek greater uniformity in business hours, particularly on evenings and weekends. Emphasize special events to bring people into a downtown so that they can see what is available.		Short-term
Persons visiting the Downtown should be directed to locations where parking is currently underused, such as along the railroad. Cooperative efforts are needed between the Town and the County to find ways to provide additional parking without harming the urban fabric along historic and pedestrian-oriented streets.		Continuous
In key older areas of the Town, establish a maximum building setback, to have new construction be consistent with prevailing setbacks along a block of older buildings. Front porches should be encouraged. Where an alley is available or could be feasibly extended, a developer could be required to have driveways and garages access that alley, as opposed to having a front garage door. Garage doors and driveways can also be promoted to use the less heavily traveled street on a corner lot.		Short-term
If areas near the Correctional Institution are annexed, this Plan recommends Low Density Residential development, with clustering of homes to result in open space as a buffer.		Continuous
Work cooperatively between the Town, State agencies and Sussex County to jointly complete a regional plan for areas south and east of the Town adjacent to the County Airport, the new Park Road corridor, the State Correctional Institution, DelDOT facilities and other State Service Centers. The intent is to address long-term needs to provide compatible land uses, water and sewage services, road improvements and economic development opportunities.	X	Short-range
Encourage annexations that will result in more logical borders, such as to annex enclaves of land that are surrounded by the Town.		Continuous
<u>Tranportation:</u> Assist DelDOT in completing planned improvements to Route 113, in prioritized phases as funding allows,	X	Continuous

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Recommendation	High Priority for Immediate Action?	Time Frame
while working to minimize conflicts with homes and disruption to area businesses.		
Work with developers of land west of Route 113 to construct north-south alternative connections. These roads should have additional right-of-way that could allow for widening in the long-term. These roads could also offer higher visibility to business sites that are not immediately along Route 113, and thereby make the sites more marketable. Promote interconnected driveways and/or rear access connections that are shared among businesses to minimize the number of access points onto Route 113.		Continuous
Control traffic access directly onto Arrow Safety Road and Park Avenue from adjacent developments so that the roads can primarily serve through-traffic that is diverted from the Downtown and residential streets.		Continuous
Seek an improved route from the north end of town to the east end of town. The intent is to seek to complete these improved routes over time through cooperation between the Town, DelDOT, adjacent developers and Sussex County (particularly for lands that are not annexed). Developers of adjacent lands would play a key role in funding and completing the improvements, whenever feasible over time. This type of alternative route is intended to include two lanes of traffic, plus turn lanes at major intersections.		Continuous
Work with DelDOT to carry out “The Georgetown Delaware Planning Study: Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections” report, including improvements to pedestrian and bicycle connections to schools, including providing safer street crossings. Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity should be improved between residential and commercial properties through sidewalks, crosswalks and walking/bicycling paths. Bike racks should be required to be installed as part of larger commercial developments.		Continuous
<u>Historic Preservation:</u> In the HD Historic zoning district, add more specific standards and procedures to make the provisions more	X	Short-term

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Recommendation	High Priority for Immediate Action?	Time Frame
legally defensible and to provide greater direction for applicants.		
Strengthen protection of important historic buildings in the Zoning Code, including provisions (such as an overlay zoning district) to control demolition of important buildings outside of the current Historic zoning district.	X	Short-term
<u>Community Facilities and Services:</u> Construct new public recreation facilities on land on the south side of Railroad Avenue, in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club and using State grants. A Master Plan should be developed for the site, with logical phases of improvements that can be completed as funding is available.	X	Continuous
Improve the wastewater system, to increase the treatment capacity to 1.7 million gallons per day and to add at least 100 acres to the available spray disposal fields.		Mid-range
Carry out the Town’s Water Supply Plan, including adding additional storage.		Mid-range
Use a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to identify expensive projects that will be needed, prioritize the projects, identify possible funding sources and then budget for their completion.		Continuous
Investigate the feasibility under State law to charge fees on new development to help fund capital needs of the Fire Company.		Short-range
Consider use of use of Special Development Districts (SDDs) and Tax Increment Financing (TIF), to help fund major infrastructure that is needed for larger new developments. These processes allow infrastructure to be funded without increasing the debt of the Town.		Continuous
Complete stormwater management plan for the various watersheds, to coordinate stormwater facilities are coordinated among various developments, and to make sure that there is sufficient capacity in ditches.		Short-range and mid-range
Investigate opportunities for shared services and		Continous

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Recommendation	High Priority for Immediate Action?	Time Frame
shared staff-persons, with nearby municipalities, particularly to provide specialized skills and to provide coverage during periods of vacation or illness.		

APPENDICES – EXISTING CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

The Population of Georgetown

The section will illustrate and analyze significant population trends for the Town of Georgetown., compared to similar towns and the County as a whole. Data sources for this report include the U.S. Census and the Sussex County Economic Development Office. Also, the Delaware Population Consortium provides annual population projections for the County. Unless otherwise stated, all data in the Population, Housing and Economic sections is from the U.S. Census Bureau.

From 1940 to 1980, Georgetown’s population hovered just under 2,000 people. However, the town’s population spiked to 3,732 residents in 1990—up from 1,710 in 1980. This 118 percent increase was mainly caused by annexations that doubled the physical size of the town, an increase in the immigrant population, and new housing construction. By 2000, Georgetown’s population had grown to 4,643 residents, representing a 24.4% increase from 1990.

The US Census estimates that the Town of Georgetown grew by 10% from 2000 to 2007, increasing in population from 4,674 to 5,157.

Georgetown Population Growth (2000-2007)

	2000	2002 Est.	2004 Est.	2007 Est.
Georgetown	4674	4767	4,862	5157

Population Growth Projections

The Statewide Housing Needs Assessment in 2007 projected that the number of households in the Town of Georgetown could increase from 1,489 in 2006 to 1,843 in 2012. That would be an increase of 354 households.

The US Census estimated only modest population increases in Georgetown until recently. However, the increase may be under-reported because of the presence of persons without legal documentation.

According to the Delaware Population Consortium, Sussex County had 157,430 residents in 2000, and an estimated 183,798 residents in 2007. This represents a 17 percent increase in 7 years. In October 2008, the Consortium projected that the County’s population will reach 197,313 in 2010 and 237,278 in 2020. However, the economic recession became much more severe in late 2008 and may result in lower growth rates.

In 2008, the Consortium estimated that there was a net in-migration into Sussex County of 18,179 persons from 2000 to 2005.

Sussex County has grown at faster rates than both Kent and New Castle Counties, as well as the State of Delaware.

Other towns with similar base populations can be compared to Georgetown's to provide further analysis. From 2000 to 2005, Georgetown grew on average one percent faster than other Sussex County towns of similar size (Laurel, Lewes, and Seaford), and showed comparable population growth to Millsboro (5.3%), which has been affected by increasing growth pressures from coastal communities.

Racial Composition

According to the 2000 US Census, Georgetown's population included 56.2 percent white, 20.9 percent African / American, 31.7 percent Hispanic or Latino, and 2.4 percent Native American / Asian / Pacific Islander. Precise numbers for the Latino community may be difficult to obtain because some residents are uncooperative with the Census and because of language barriers. The Hispanic/Latino category may overlap with the white or African-American category.

The 2007 American Community Survey estimated that 12 percent of residents of the Indian River School District were African / American.

The Latino/Hispanic Community

Latinos have moved into Georgetown in large numbers over the past ten to fifteen years to take advantage of opportunities in the local industry, such as poultry and construction, and they represent the fastest growing segment of the town's population. Many of the Latinos in Georgetown are from Central America. The 2000 Census reported that 32 percent of Georgetown residents were Hispanic.

As of the 1990 US Census, only 54 Hispanics were reported to live in all of Sussex County (1.4 percent of the total population). Between 1991 and 1998, the Delaware Population Consortium reported an exponential increase (262.5%) in the number of Hispanics residing in the County.

In 2007, the American Community Survey estimated that 10 percent of the residents of the Indian River School District were Hispanic.

Age Profile

According to 2000 US Census, the median age in Georgetown was 30 years old, down from 34 in 1990. Total adult residents (age 18 and older) numbered 3,465, representing 75 percent of the total population. Approximately 643 residents (13.8 percent) were over the age of 65. The number of persons over age 65 has been virtually unchanged from the 1990 data, however, the percentage has decreased due to Georgetown's increasing total population numbers. Georgetown's total population of persons 17 years or younger stood at 771 in 2000 (16.6 percent of the total population), of which 715 were school-aged children (ages 5-17).

In Sussex County, the median age in 2000 in the County was 41.1 (compared to 30.1 for the Town). Residents aged 18 and older accounted for 77.5 percent of the population (compared to 75 percent in the Town). Those residents over the age of 65 represented 18.5 percent of the County's population. This contrasts to the 13.8 percent elderly figure for the Town, 13.1 percent for the state of Delaware, and 12.4 percent nationally. This could be attributed to the large number of retirement

communities developed in recent years along the coast. Children (aged 0-17) accounted for 16.9 percent of the County’s total population (compared to 16.6 percent for the Town).

Education

The 1990 US Census reported that 69.8 percent of Georgetown’s residents 25 and older were high school graduates, attended some college or graduated from college. That was equal to the County average. According to the 2000 Census, Georgetown’s percentage of residents who at least graduated from high school has increased to 77.4 percent, while the County had only increased to 71.5 percent.

In 1990, 15 percent of Georgetown residents had earned a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 13.4 percent of County residents. Those numbers fell to 12.6 percent in the Town and increased to 16.6 percent in the County in 2000.

Education Levels: Georgetown and Sussex County

	High School Graduate, or Higher		Bachelor’s Degree, or Higher	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Georgetown	69.8	77.4	15.0	12.6
Sussex County	70.0	71.5	13.4	16.6

The 2007 American Community Survey estimated that among residents age 25 or older in the Indian River School District, 20 percent had not completed high school, 38% had only a high school diploma, 18% had attended some college classes, 5% had an associate’s degree, 11% had a bachelor’s degree, and 8% had a graduate or professional degree.

Housing in Georgetown

The section will describe the housing stock in Georgetown, compared to that of Sussex County and the State of Delaware, where applicable. The Land Use and Housing Plan section also includes discussion about subsidized housing and housing needs.

According to the 2000 US Census, there were 1,688 housing units in Georgetown, an increase from 1,376 units, in 1990 (22.7%). Of these, 1,554 units were occupied (92.1%). These figures are increases from 1990 data, where 1,252 housing units of 1,376 total units were occupied (90.9%).

As of 2000, three-fourths of all owner-occupied housing units in Georgetown were built before 1980. The median age of Georgetown’s housing stock (both owner and renter occupied) is significantly older than both Sussex County and the State of Delaware.

As of 2000, Georgetown had a lower percentage of owner occupied housing (51.2%) than the 80.7% rate across Sussex County and 72.3% for the State as a whole.

Housing Values

A median value means that half of the values were above a certain number, while half were below that number. In 2000, residents of owner occupied housing were asked to estimate the market value of their homes. Median housing values in Georgetown were reported to have risen to \$85,600 in 2000, up from \$67,300—a 27.2% increase. However, these gains could be considered modest when one looks at the increase of median prices in Sussex County (\$122,400) and the State (\$130,400), representing gains of 52.6% and 30.8% respectively, from 1990 data. Housing prices throughout Georgetown and Sussex County have risen dramatically since 2000, but have more recently stabilized as part of a national trend.

Comparison of Median Housing Values

	1990	2000	Percent Change
Georgetown	\$67,300	\$85,600	27.2%
Sussex County	\$80,200	\$122,400	52.6%
Delaware	\$99,700	\$130,400	30.8%

Homeownership Rates

Georgetown’s population is much more mobile than in the past, with high rates of housing moves and occupancy changes. From 1985-1990, almost half of the residents had moved, with only 52.3 percent of residents living in the same house as they did in 1985. Continuing that transient trend, from 1990 to 2000, over 63 percent of residents moved. In 2000, only 36.7 percent of residents were living in the same house as they had in 1990. Sussex County residents were similarly transient with 62.5 having moved, and only 37.6 living in the same house in 2000 as they did in 1990.

In 2000, there were 759 rented housing units within the Town of Georgetown. The Statewide Housing Needs Assessment estimated that in 2000, 35 percent of households that rented were considered to be “cost-burdened.” That study estimated that there are 223 households that rent in Georgetown that are considered to be “at risk.” In most cases, at risk means that they have excessive financial burdens affording housing, however, the term is also used for living in a substandard unit.

Economic Characteristics and Trends

This section provides an overview of Georgetown’s current economic profile, complemented by analyzing past trends.

Employment

Georgetown’s employment base is varied among many service-based and manufacturing industries. As the county seat and the location of many State facilities, many government-related service jobs are located in the Town, as well as legal services. Education-related services are also particularly high in employment, with both Delaware Technical and Community College (Delaware Tech) and several schools located in Georgetown. The Sussex County Industrial Airpark’s location has contributed to the prevalence of manufacturing and technology-based industries. In addition, agriculture, poultry production and processing are largest employment sectors within the County.

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Data from the 2000 US Census reported that Georgetown’s largest segment of occupations (37.1 percent) involved production, transportation, and material moving occupations. Georgetown’s second largest segment (21.4 percent) involved service occupations. Comparatively, Sussex County’s largest (27.2 percent) and second largest (25.3 percent) segments were management, professional, and related occupations, and sales and office occupations, respectively. Additional occupational data for the Town and County is provided below.

Occupations of Employed Residents of Georgetown and Sussex County, 2000

OCCUPATION	Georgetown	Sussex Co.
Management, professional, & related occupations	17.8 %	27.2 %
Service occupations	21.4 %	16.7 %
Sales and office occupations	16.4 %	25.3 %
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	2.1 %	1.3 %
Construction, extraction, & maintenance occupations	5.1 %	12.8 %
Production, transportation, & material moving occupations	37.1 %	16.6 %

Comparing these figures to similar-sized towns in Sussex County, one finds that Georgetown stands out because production, transportation, and material moving occupations (37.1 percent) dominate the Town’s economy. Data from Lewes, Millsboro, and Seaford suggests that management, professional, and related occupations are the largest segments of occupations—garnering 47.0 percent, 29.2 percent, and 28.3 percent, respectively. In Laurel, sales and office occupations (25.1 percent) represented the largest segment of employment.

As the above data might suggest, Georgetown’s largest employment sector (35.8 percent) involved manufacturing. Comparing the same four similar-sized towns, Laurel’s largest sector (14.9 percent) was manufacturing as well. However, the largest section in Lewes, Millsboro, and Seaford was educational, health, and social services, at 26.9 percent, 24.0 percent, and 20.8 percent, respectively. Comparatively, Sussex County’s largest industry (18.2 percent) was also educational, health, and professional services. An industry profile comparing Georgetown and Sussex County is described in the chart below.

Economic Sectors of Employed Residents of Georgetown and Sussex County, 2000

INDUSTRY	Georgetown	Sussex Co.
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	2.6 %	2.7 %
Construction	3.3 %	11.1 %
Manufacturing	35.8 %	14.1 %
Wholesale trade	1.7 %	3.1 %
Retail trade	8.2 %	15.0 %
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	1.4 %	4.2 %
Information	1.1 %	1.6 %
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental leasing	3.1 %	5.9 %
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	6.5 %	5.6 %
Educational, health, and social services	15.5 %	18.2 %
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	12.9 %	9.1 %

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INDUSTRY	Georgetown	Sussex Co.
Other services (except public administration)	0.7 %	4.3 %
Public administration	7.3 %	5.2 %

Source: US Census Bureau

Some of the largest employers in the Georgetown and immediate vicinities within Sussex County are listed below.

Largest Employers in the Georgetown Area - 2006

COMPANY	TYPE OF BUSINESS	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES
Townsend, Inc.	Poultry, packaging, shipping	70
Perdue, Inc.	Plant, distribution center, live production	1435
State of Delaware	DelDOT, human service agencies, State Police, courts and other agencies	N/A
Wal-Mart	Retail sales	Over 150
Eastern Shore Poultry	Poultry processing	N/A
Sussex County Industrial Airpark	Multiple manufacturing businesses	1100
Allen Family Foods	Poultry processing	800
Sussex County Government	County government	400 in Georgetown area
Indian River School District	Public schools	330 in Georgetown area
Delaware Technical and Community College	Higher education	280 full time 50 part-time
Harrison Senior Living	Assisted living	135
Megee Plumbing and Heating	Plumbing and Heating	70
Wilmington Trust Co.	Banking	60
Justin Tanks, LLC	Manuf. of Fiberglass tanks	30
Shone Lumber	Lumber	20

Townsend, Inc. saw a sharp decline in the number of employees in recent years due to a plant closing, though much of this change was offset by increased employment at other poultry plants, including Perdue.

Some of the above listed employers have already forecasted changes in the near future. Similarly, the Harrison Senior Living Center currently plans to hire 10-15 additional employees in the near future.

Within Sussex County as a whole, as of 2006, the largest employers include:

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Mountaire Farms (poultry processing)	3,500
Perdue Products (poultry processing)	2,700
Bayhealth Medical Center	2,700
Discover Bank	2,400
Beebe Hospital	1,400
Allen Family Foods (poultry processing)	1,200
Food Lion (retail grocery stores)	900
Nanticoke Memorial Hospital	900

Source - Delaware Housing Needs Assessment, based upon information from Chambers of Commerce.

In 2008, the Delaware Population Consortium estimated that as of 2005, a net of 8,358 more Sussex County residents commuted to a job outside of Sussex County compared to residents of other counties who commuted into Sussex.

Income

Income levels in Georgetown have historically been lower than income levels for both Sussex County and the State. In 1999, the average median household income for Georgetown (\$31,875) represented 81 percent of the median household income for Sussex County (\$39,208), and 67 percent of the median household income for the entire state (\$47,381). However, median incomes in Georgetown exceeded three of four similar-sized towns in Sussex County (Laurel, Millsboro, and Seaford). Only the beachfront town of Lewes (\$48,707) exceeded Georgetown.

The percentages of households receiving social security income in Georgetown and the State were the same (26.9 percent), less than percentages in Sussex County (36.0 percent). This directly reflects Sussex County's growing reputation as a retirement destination.

An estimated 6.3 percent of Georgetown residents received public assistance monies, compared to 3.2 percent in the County and 2.7 percent in the State. At the extremes, only 2.2 percent of Lewes residents received public assistance while 11.2 percent of Laurel residents received public assistance. The percentage of residents who received public assistance in both Millsboro (5.9 percent) and Seaford (7.8 percent) were more closely in line with data from Georgetown.

However, the mean public assistance income for families in Georgetown was \$1,690, considerably less than the mean public income figures in both Sussex County (\$2,605) and Delaware (\$2,516). As these figures suggest, Georgetown has a significantly higher proportion of its families living in poverty (20.9 percent), than the County (7.7 percent), State (6.5 percent) and country (9.2 percent).

The percentage of Georgetown families living in poverty (20.9 percent) has held steady between 1989 and 1999, when it was 20.2 percent. In all likelihood, increased immigration fueled by low-wage jobs in the poultry industry has a significant bearing on recent data, which shows Georgetown's poverty rate almost triple the State and County rates.

The following table displays comparative income and poverty statistics for Georgetown, Sussex County, and Delaware.

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Income and Poverty Comparison: Georgetown, Sussex County, and Delaware - 1999

US Census Category	Town of Georgetown	Sussex County	State of Delaware
Median household income	\$31,875	\$39,208	\$47,381
Households with wage or salary income	75.2%	73.8%	81.3%
Households with Social Security income	26.9%	36.0%	26.9%
Mean social security income	\$11,142	\$11,785	\$11,997
Households with retirement income	17.0%	26.8%	21.0%
Mean retirement income	\$26,093	\$18,134	\$17,871
Households with public assistance income	6.3%	3.2%	2.7%
Mean public assistance income	\$1,690	\$2,605	\$2,516
Families below poverty level	20.9%	7.7%	6.5%
Families with children <5 below poverty level	41.7%	44.2%	13.2%
Elderly below poverty level	8.4%	8.4%	7.9%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

In 2007, the American Community Survey reported that among Indian River School District residents:

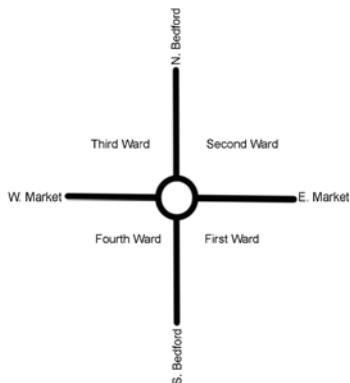
- 9 percent of all residents lived under the poverty level;
- 18 percent of children under age 18 lived under the poverty level; and
- 30 percent of all families with a female head of household and no husband present lived under the poverty level.

Community Facilities and Services Background

Recreation, water supply and wastewater services are described in the Community Facilities and Services Plan section.

Town Government

Georgetown is governed by a mayor and a four-member council (representing each of the Town’s four wards). The Town Council serves as a legislative body charged with passing legislation, and providing advice and consent to the mayor’s appointments. Council members serve two-year terms. The mayor is also elected for a two-year term and serves as the Council President. The boundaries of Georgetown’s wards are delineated by the centerlines of East and West Market Streets, and the centerlines of North and South Bedford Streets—dividing the Town into four quadrants around The Circle.



Members of the Town Council are responsible for appointing a Town Manager, a Solicitor (attorney), the Police Chief and members of committees and commissions. The Town Manager is the chief administrative officer.

County and State Government

As the County Seat, many County government offices and agencies are located within Georgetown. These include county administration, financial services, personnel, planning and zoning, and the offices and meeting facilities of the County Council. Most administrative offices are located around The Circle. There is discussion about constructing additional administrative offices and employee parking within the Downtown.

The County's new emergency operations center (EOC) at the airport is the nerve center for emergency communications, disaster response and other emergency services.

State offices and State court buildings are also located in the Downtown, as well as many human service agencies.

Municipal Buildings

The Town Hall is adjacent to The Circle. The current intent is to extend the Town Hall by using an adjacent building. The Planning and Zoning Offices and Police Department facilities are at 335 N. Race St.

Police Protection

The Georgetown Police Department is unusually busy for a town the size of Georgetown. For example, during calendar year 2005, the Department answered 5,647 calls for service, including 1,671 criminal arrests, apprehension of 551 fugitives, and 185 persons charged with driving under the influence. In 2005, there were also 471 vehicle crashes. During one month (August 2006), the Department responded to 643 calls for service. Georgetown also has a large number of persons who commute to work in Georgetown, but do not live in Town.

The Department includes 18 sworn police officers (including 3 detectives) and 2 civilian employees. In addition to marked and unmarked vehicles, the Department uses a motorcycle and bicycle and foot patrols.

The Department is based at Race and New Streets. Once the Town Hall is expanded, it may be practical for the Planning and Zoning Office to move to the Circle. The hope of the Police Chief is that the Police Department would then be able to expand into the current Planning and Zoning building space to relieve their overcrowding. The Police Department reportedly has a particular shortage of space for training and records storage. There also is a desire to fence the entire property with a gate, and to renovate the building to address electrical and roof problems.

Some of the workload of the Police Department results from the large number of court facilities and human service agencies located in Georgetown. For example, many persons on probation, parole and work release must report to locations in Georgetown. Many mental health facilities are also located in Georgetown. A high percentage of police activity is in the Kimmeytown area.

The Town also includes a large immigrant population, many of whom are not typically counted in the US Census, and some of whom are not legal residents. A high percentage of these immigrants are from Central America and Caribbean nations. The Police Department is faced with a situation that is common across the nation. The police have little authority to enforce immigration laws, and Federal immigration agencies typically only enforce the laws after a person has been charged with a crime. The police seek to let residents know that they can report a crime without worrying that the local police will seek to deport them. At the same time, an illegal resident will hopefully realize that if they commit a crime, they will greatly increase their chances of being deported, which should serve as a deterrent. The Police Department has responded to these issues by hiring bi-lingual officers and using bi-lingual persons for victim's assistance programs.

Reportedly, many of the illegal residents do not have valid driver's licenses or insurance. At times, this causes drivers to run from the police after an accident. This becomes an issue in many traffic stops by the Police. A large number of the fugitive arrests in Georgetown are made during routine stops for traffic violations. Crimes against children also occur when unrelated persons are asked to watch children while parents are at work.

The Police Chief reports that traffic accident locations are widely scattered, and that there are few major concentrations of accident-prone locations. Most traffic accidents result from driver error, and not the design of the streets and highways. The greatest difficulties arise from traffic headed to and from the beaches on Summer weekends, particularly along Market Street. As more residents live in the beach areas for longer periods of time, the traffic problems are stretching over a greater part of the year. Some of the worst backups occur around the intersection of Route 113 with W. Market St. The Police Chief reports that any type of alternative route around Market Street to carry some east-west traffic would be helpful.

Traffic problems also arise from tractor-trailer trucks that use Market Street instead of using the designated Truck Route for Route 9 to the south. A particular traffic concern is the intersection of Sand Hill Road with E. Market St. The intersection is relatively narrow and off-set, and mixes traffic from high school students from the Christian High School with senior citizens from the Cheer Apartments. If the proposed new concrete plant is built to the south, the traffic problem will worsen.

Traffic fatalities have mainly occurred along Route 113, because that is where speeds are the highest. For example, fatalities have occurred at Route 113/Arrow Safety Road and Route 113/Route 8.

The Police Chief reports a need for police personnel to increase with the increase in police activity and development.

State Police

Delaware State Police Troop 4 is located on US Route 113 in Georgetown. Servicing 335 square mile territory, Troop 4 is comprised of 68 sworn personnel including patrol officers, criminal investigators, school resource officers, DARE officers, Governor's Task Force members, administrators, as well as three civilians. The Delaware State Police and Georgetown Police collaborate on several community initiatives focusing on crime prevention, community relations, and road and child safety.

Fire Protection

Fire protection for Georgetown and a large surrounding area is provided by the Georgetown Fire Company. The Company has one station, on S. Bedford St., south of the Circle. The Town has discussed the possibility of building a satellite fire station with one fire truck on the east side of the railroad tracks. This is particularly important considering the traffic blockages that can be caused by trains, together with the large geographic area served by the Georgetown Fire Company.

The Fire Company's primary apparatus includes:

- a 2006 pumper truck with rescue equipment
- a 2005 pickup truck
- a SUV that serves as a command vehicle
- a 2001 pumper truck
- a 2001 heavy rescue truck
- a 1994 tanker truck with a 3,000 gallon tank
- a 1993 pickup truck
- a 1986 pumper truck
- a 1981 pumper truck
- a 1978 pumper truck
- a 1975 rescue truck, and
- a 1971 aerial ladder truck

The fire services are served completely by volunteers, who number approximately 80. Over the long-term, consideration should be given to adding a limited number of paid firefighters to serve during weekday mornings and afternoons, if sufficient numbers of volunteers are not available.

There should continue to be Mutual Aid agreements among the nearby fire companies to promote cooperation and to provide the personnel and apparatus needed for major events.

Ambulance and Emergency Medical Services

Ambulance services for the Town are provided by Sussex Post #8 American Legion Ambulance, located at N. Front W. North Streets. The company is comprised of approximately 40 volunteers serving the same region as the fire company.

The Ambulance Service is reporting that they are having financial difficulty serving all of the new development in the area. One option would be to seek a financial contribution from applicants for annexation, to address issues in the Plan of Services that the applicant is required to prepare under State law.

The Sussex County Emergency Medical Services (SCEMS) are headquartered along the east side of Route 113 in Georgetown, which is one of several paramedic stations in the County. SCEMS provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) to the entire county, and utilizes eight to nine non-transport rapid response vehicles. SCEMS answers more than 15,000 emergency calls per year, and works closely with Basic Life Support (BLS) services provided by the American Legion and other organizations. A State Police medical evacuation helicopter is based at the Sussex County Airport.

Public Schools

The Indian River School District covers the southeastern quarter of Sussex County, including Georgetown, Millsboro, Frankford, Selbyville, Fenwick Island and Bethany Beach, covering 360 square miles. The District serves approximately 8,100 students. The School District's student enrollment is 20 percent African-American and 14 percent Latino. Seven percent of students are considered to have a limited proficiency in English.

The District's schools include:

- the new Sussex Central High School on Patriots Way in Millsboro, which has a 1,500 student capacity and a 2006 enrollment of 1,237,
- the new Indian River High School in Dagsboro,
- the Georgetown Middle School (former Sussex Central High School) at 301 W. Market St. in Georgetown, which was recently renovated,
- the North Georgetown Elementary School in 664 N. Bedford St. in Georgetown, which served 604 students in 2006,
- the Georgetown Elementary School at 301-A West Market St. in Georgetown, which served 576 students in 2006,
- the Howard Ennis School at 20346 Ennis Rd., Georgetown, which provides alternative education for grades K through 12 and which serves 127 students in 2006,
- the Richard Allen School at 316 S. Railroad Av., Georgetown, which serves students with behavior problems, and served 56 students in 2006,
- the Millsboro Middle School in Millsboro, which was recently renovated,
- the Southern Delaware School of the Arts in Selbyville and
- other schools in Millsboro, Frankford, Dagsboro, Ocean View and Selbyville.

The high schools serve grades 9 to 12, the middle schools serve grades 6 to 8, and the elementary schools serve either Pre-K to 5th or 6th.

School property taxes are much lower than are commonly found in the Middle-Atlantic States. For example, in 2003-4, the average school property tax for a home valued at \$100,000 was \$224. This was also much lower than the County average. The District receives 61 percent of its funding from the State Government and 8 percent from the Federal Government, with the remaining 31 percent funded by local taxes.

Students seeking a vocational or technical-based curriculum attend Sussex Technical High School. Located three and a half miles southwest of Georgetown on Route 9, Sussex Technical draws students from across the county. Typically, 1/3 of the students are from the Indian River School District.

Head Start and other pre-school developmental programs are readily available in Georgetown. Primeros Pasitos, a federally funded Head start program, serves children from six weeks to three years old. Further, First State Community Action Agency, Primeros Pasos, Project V.I.L.L.A.G.E, and Delaware Tech's Early Childhood Center all offer Head Start and Early Childhood Access Program classes to pre-K children.

Private Schools

Two private schools operate in the Georgetown area. The Jefferson School on Wilson Road serves children in multi-age classrooms from kindergarten through eighth grade. Approximately 120 students were enrolled at The Jefferson School in 2006. Delmarva Christian School serves grades 9-12 and is located on Airport Road. A non-denominational Christian school, Delmarva Christian is currently seeking accreditation through the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and enrolled approximately 125 students in 2006.

Post-Secondary Education

The Owens Campus of Delaware Technical & Community College (Delaware Tech) is located on Route 404, west of US Route 113 within the municipal boundaries of Georgetown. Delaware tech offers associates, bachelors, and certificate programs, as well as many partnerships with four-year institutions—including the University of Delaware, Delaware State University, and Wilmington College. Delaware Tech serves over 5,000 students at the Owens Campus, with the average age of students being 27. Campus facilities may be contractually leased to civic organizations from around Sussex County. Similarly, Georgetown residents may contractually use the grounds, athletic fields, and swimming facilities on campus.

Healthcare

Three area hospitals are easily accessible to Georgetown residents (within 15 miles). Beebe Medical Center in Lewes, Milford Memorial Hospital in Milford, and Nanticoke Hospital in Seaford each provide emergency, in-patient, and out-patient care. Additionally, the Peninsula Regional Medical Center in Salisbury serves as a regional hospital for Delmarva. The Stockley Center near Georgetown provides specialized care for mental illnesses.

Library

The Georgetown Public Library, located on W. Pine Street, is an independent library supported by county and state funding. A new 22,000 square foot building is under construction. The Georgetown Library shares resources with other libraries through the Delaware Inter-Library Loan network, and houses a special collection including history, census data, and general Delaware statistics. The library is administered by a five-member board, and employs three full time staff members.

Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling

Georgetown contracts municipal waste management to a private company. The Town, in coordination with the Delaware Solid Waste Authority, provides several locations for recycling. They include:

- Sussex County West Complex (Route 113 and Old Laurel Road, behind Wilmington Trust)
- Sussex County Correction Center (Route 113)
- Southern Solid Waste Management Center (Jones Crossroads Landfill)
- Delaware Tech

Overview of Georgetown's History

In response to requests from residents of western Sussex County in 1791, a decision was made to move the county seat from Lewes to a more central location. At the time, central Sussex County was largely uninhabited, wooded and included larger wetland areas than are present today. The County government selected commissioners to purchase land in central Sussex near “James Pettyjohn's old field or about a mile from where Ebenezer Pettyjohn now lives,” according to the original order. Further, they were to build a jail and courthouse, and sell lots (60' x 120') in the area that was to become the Georgetown. The County noted that the new site was purportedly “sixteen miles from everywhere.”

Led by Delaware State Senator George Mitchell, the commissioners purchased 76 acres. In the center of town, a “spacious square 100 yards in each way” was laid out. The original boundaries of the Town was laid out within a circle one mile in diameter from the center square. Reportedly, the new Town was named in honor of Senator George Mitchell—a principal figure in the founding of Georgetown.

The new Town became a crossroads for County residents— where residents paid their taxes, bought and sold goods, and exchanged information. Unique to Georgetown is “Return Day,” an event that evolved from this historical exchange of information. Two days after the biennial General Election, Sussex County residents would gather in Georgetown to hear the town crier announce the election results from the courthouse steps. The winning and losing candidates would parade around The Circle together in open horse drawn carriages, and ceremonially “bury the hatchet” amid much celebration and feasting on ox roast sandwiches. Return Day is a holiday for all State and County workers in Sussex County, and has been recognized by the United States Congress as a “Local Legacy.”

Building upon the role as a county seat, new businesses were established on the Town's primary streets—Bedford, Market, and The Circle. These businesses included stores, banks, hotels, and taverns. The early homes included varying styles: Greek Revival, Queen Anne, Italianate, Gothic Revival, and Colonial, many of which are well-maintained today. The surrounding area revolved around raising of corn, livestock and lumber.

During the Civil War, Delaware was a key border state where slavery was legal. However, Delaware did not leave the Union. There was varying sympathies among residents between the North and the South. At times, there were northern- and southern-sympathizing militias practicing military exercises in the same field outside of Town. Slavery was not ended until after the end of the Civil War.

In 1869, the Delaware, Maryland and Virginia Railroad was extended to Georgetown. The railroad opened up opportunities for sale of many types of products, such as fresh fruit. Canneries followed the fruit industry.

The mass production of chickens started in Sussex County in the 1920s. The related poultry processing industry grew to be a major part of the economy of Georgetown and surrounding areas.

The Town has grown commercially (particularly along Route 113) and residentially in many directions. Georgetown also increasingly has become a center for State government activities, including the new Division of Motor Vehicle (DMV) facility.

The center of all Town activity is still concentrated on The Circle, where the historic Sussex County Courthouses are located. County residents still venture to Georgetown every two years for Return Day festivities, and candidates are still paraded in horse drawn open carriages—housed at the Nutter D. Marvel Museum.

Transportation Background

The transportation network includes highways and streets, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, rail services, and airports. Traffic counts and road capacities, as well as future large-scale transportation projects will also be discussed.

Highways and Streets

Georgetown is centrally located in Sussex County. Delaware Route 113 (DuPont Highway) is near Georgetown's western boundary, and connects Dover to the north and with Pocomoke City, Maryland, to the south. Improvements to Route 113 are discussed in the Transportation Plan section. The combined Delaware Routes 404 and 18 (Seashore Highway) intersect with US Route 113 and N. Bedford St. in Georgetown. This is a primary route for summer beach traffic from the Baltimore-Washington area. Delaware Route 9 runs east to west connecting Georgetown to Laurel (via County Seat Hwy.) and Lewes (Lewes-Georgetown Hwy). Route 9 to Lewes is also known as Delaware Route 404 for purposes of providing a one-number route for traffic from the Baltimore-Washington region. Route 9 bisects Georgetown north to south as Market Street, and intersects with Bedford Street at The Circle.

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Streets in Georgetown are laid out in an historical block and grid pattern with streets running parallel to each other and intersecting at 90-degree angles. Market and Bedford Streets form central east-west and north-south axes, respectively, and converge at The Circle. The majority of traffic enters Georgetown via Market and Bedford Streets. Collector streets connecting to Market and Bedford tend to be narrower and more residential in character. Commercial traffic that is not stopping in Georgetown is encouraged to use alternative routes around town, including Route 9 TR (Truck).

DelDOT maintains highways and major streets, while the Georgetown Streets & Grounds Department maintains all other streets.

As mentioned earlier, Georgetown serves as a crossroads community to the beach, and experiences varied levels of traffic congestion based primarily on season. Typically, beach traffic uses both US Route 9 (SR 404) and US Route 113 en route to the shore. Other high volume roads include Sussex County Route 114 and Market and Bedford Streets.

The following chart details monthly traffic counts from 2002-2006 at two DelDOT counting stations: SR 404 (west of Georgetown) and US Route 113 (south of Georgetown). The data is based upon the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) observed by travelers on a typical, non-holiday weekday. The Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) is computed by dividing total annual traffic by the number of days in the year.

Traffic Volumes - Rt. 404, West of Georgetown

Month	2002	2004	2005
January	7543	7855	8326
February	8370	9021	8958
March	8,802	9,546	9492
April	9505	10,391	9391
May	10,968	11,819	10078
June	12958	13,405	12045
July	14578	15416	15925
August	14691	15,083	15586
September	11,534	12,404	12813
October	10043	10,732	11086
November	8983	9,920	10247
December	8048	8,946	9241
Annual Average Daily Traffic	10502	11,212	11099

Traffic Volumes - US Rt. 113, South of Georgetown

Month	2002	2005	2006
January	14566	16,511	17830
February	15757	17,482	17962
March	16373	18494	19569

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Month	2002	2005	2006
April	17283	19544	20734
May	19831	21199	23028
June	22036	25666	25268
July	25162	28496	28198
August	25332	28464	28792
September	20308	23691	23068
October	17833	20,285	20841
November	16200	19,142	19465
December	15228	17,719	18435
Annual Average Daily Traffic	18826	21391	21932

Source: Delaware Department of Transportation

As shown above, traffic in the Georgetown area has steadily increased over the past five years. Traffic counts virtually double from off-season to peak tourist season in the summer:

Railroad

There are not any passenger rail routes that served Georgetown, however two freight routes do pass through town. Norfolk-Southern operates a north-south route called the Indian River Secondary Track, with stops in Millsboro, Dagsboro, and Frankford. Beyond Frankford, the railroad travels to its terminus at Snow Hill, Maryland. South of Frankford, the railroad is operated by the Maryland and Delaware Railroad. North of Georgetown, the railroad converges with another Norfolk-Southern line in Harrington.

The second rail line follows an east-west route connecting Georgetown (as a terminus) with Lewes on the coast. This line currently serves two main customers: Barcroft Industries (Lewes) and the Mountaire Grain Terminal at Gravel Hill.