20260 Update to the 202010



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TOWN OF TOWNSEND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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TOWN, COUNTY, AND STATE OFFICIALS

Town of Townsend Mayor and Council	Scott Lobdell~~Patrick Miller~~, Mayor Joseph Bangura ~~Eschalla Clarke~~, Council Member Matthew Chapman~~Edgar Dugan~~, Council Member Dylan K. Wiggins~~Scott Lobdell~~, Council Member Syed Sharif~~Joshua Mertz~~, Council Member
Town Solicitor	Lisa Hatfield, Connelly Gallagher~~Fred Townsend, III~~
Town Engineer	Brian Miller, Pennoni~~Edwin Van Otoo~~
Building Code Official	OPEN~~John Robitaille, C.B.O.~~
Town Staff	Julie Goodyear~~Anthony Mangeri~~, Town Manager Kelsey Gallagher,~~Antonina Tantillo, Deputy Town Manager/~~ Town Clerk Jennifer Helms, Financial Officer Earl McCloskey~~Robert Longo~~, Chief of Police Julie Abrams~~Staci Guillotte~~, Administrative Assistant & Events Coordinator Rick Boyer~~George Hargrove~~, Public Works Supervisor Colin Sebastian, Public Works Crew Member~~Maintenance Worker~~
Planning Commission	James Reyes~~Troy Geiger~~, Chairman John Holmes~~James C. Reyes~~, Vice Chairman ~~Sheryl Rojas, Secretary~~ Joseph Maher~~Louis Krause~~, Commissioner ~~Patrick Miller, Mayor~~ James Hollis, Commissioner Ed Duggan, Commissioner
~~Special acknowledgement to:~~	~~Tom McDonald, Former Mayor of Townsend~~ ~~Regina Albert, Former Commissioner~~ ~~Emily Seldomridge, Former Commissioner~~
New Castle County County Executive	Marcus Henry~~Matt Meyer~~
County Council	~~Karen Hartley-Nagle~~ David Carter, 6th District
Department of Land Use	Richard E. Hall, AICP, General Manager

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State of Delaware

Governor	Matt Meyer~~John Carney~~
Senate	Chris Coons Lisa Blunt Rochester~~Bruce C. Ennis, 14th District~~
House of Representatives	Jeffrey Spiegelman, District 11 Sarah McBride, Delaware Federal Representative~~Sherae'a Moore, 8th District~~
Office of State Planning	David Edgell, AICP, Director Coordination

A MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR TOWNSEND, DELAWARE 2026~~0~~

Introduction

~~This 2020 comprehensive development plan is intended to serve as a document for the future development of the Town of Townsend. It will be the guide for the planning efforts of the community and its representatives. The comprehensive development plan will be in effect after being adopted by the Town Council, officially recognized by the State of Delaware, and certified by the Governor of Delaware.~~

~~The legal means for the implementation of the goals and objectives of this plan are included in zoning codes and other municipal codes and ordinances. Updating or revision of planning goals and objectives is essential to keep the planning program responsive to the changing needs of the community. The community's best interest and cooperative commitment along with the contribution efforts of the Town Council are needed to align the town's growth and development plans for the future. Practical planning and timely implementation of the goals and objectives of comprehensive development planning contributes to a higher quality of life in Townsend.~~

~~The plan is also an informational document for the public. Citizens, businesspeople, and government officials can turn to the plan to learn more about Townsend and its policies for future land use decisions. Potential new residents can use the document as an informational resource about the town, including its characteristics and facilities, to help them make decisions about moving to Townsend. This document contains the most current information on population, housing, land use, transportation and the environment, which may be of interest to land developers, economic development professionals, and financiers.~~

~~Finally, the Town of Townsend comprehensive plan update is a legal document. The Delaware Code specifies that ". . . any incorporated municipality under this chapter shall prepare a comprehensive plan for the city or town or portions thereof as the commission deems appropriate." The code further specifies, "after a comprehensive plan or portion thereof has been adopted by the municipality in accordance with this chapter, the comprehensive plan shall have the force of law and no development shall be permitted except as consistent with the plan." (§ 702, Title 22, Delaware Code)~~

The 2026 Town of Townsend Comprehensive Plan serves as the official policy guide for the Town's future growth, development, and preservation efforts. Building upon the previous plan adopted in 2020, this update reflects evolving community priorities, demographic trends, infrastructure needs, and state planning requirements. The plan establishes a coordinated framework to guide public and private decision-making in a manner that promotes orderly growth, fiscal responsibility, environmental stewardship, and an enhanced quality of life for current and future residents.

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Upon adoption by the Townsend Town Council, recognition by the State of Delaware, and certification by the Governor, this Comprehensive Plan shall serve as the Town's primary planning document. It provides the foundation for land use decisions, capital investments, and policy development, ensuring that growth occurs in a manner consistent with the community's long-term vision.

Implementation of the goals and objectives contained in this Plan occurs through the Town's zoning regulations, subdivision standards, and other municipal codes and ordinances. Periodic review and updates are essential to maintain responsiveness to changing conditions, emerging challenges, and new opportunities. Achieving the Plan's objectives requires a collaborative commitment among elected officials, staff, residents, businesses, and regional partners to align growth and development with the best interests of the community. Thoughtful planning and timely implementation contribute directly to maintaining Townsend's character while supporting a sustainable and resilient future.

The Comprehensive Plan also serves as an important informational resource for the public. Residents, business owners, developers, and government agencies may refer to this document to better understand the Town's policies regarding land use, housing, transportation, utilities, environmental resources, and community facilities. Prospective residents and investors can use the Plan to gain insight into Townsend's character, assets, and long-term goals. The Plan incorporates the most current available data related to population, housing, land use, infrastructure, and environmental conditions to support informed decision-making.

Finally, the Townsend Comprehensive Plan is a legally binding document. The Delaware Code requires that "any incorporated municipality under this chapter shall prepare a comprehensive plan for the city or town or portions thereof as the commission deems appropriate." Furthermore, once adopted in accordance with state law, "the comprehensive plan shall have the force of law and no development shall be permitted except as consistent with the plan" (Title 22, §702, Delaware Code). As such, this Plan serves not only as a vision for Townsend's future, but also as the legal basis for guiding growth and development within the Town through 2026 and beyond.

Chapter 1. Background

1-1. The Authority to Plan

Delaware law requires that municipalities engage in comprehensive planning activities for the purpose of encouraging "the most appropriate uses of the physical and fiscal resources of the municipality and the coordination of municipal growth, development, and infrastructure investment actions with those of other municipalities, counties and the State…" This plan was written to comply with the requirements for a municipal development strategy as described in the Delaware Code (below) for towns with population of 2,000 or more.

The municipal comprehensive plan for communities (such as Townsend) with greater than 2,000 people is to be a "document in text and maps, containing at a minimum, a municipal development strategy setting forth the jurisdiction's position on population and housing growth within the jurisdiction, expansion of its boundaries, development of adjacent areas, redevelopment potential, community character, and the general uses of land within the community, and critical community development and infrastructure issues." (22 Del. C. 1953, § 702; 49 Del. Laws, c. 415, § 1.) The comprehensive plan for municipalities of greater than 2,000 population shall also contain, as appropriate to the size and character of the jurisdiction, a description of the physical, demographic and economic conditions of the jurisdiction; as well as policies, statements, goals and planning components for public and private uses of land, transportation, economic development, affordable housing, community facilities, open spaces and recreation, protection of sensitive areas, community design, adequate water and wastewater systems, protection of historic and cultural resources, annexation and such other elements which in accordance with present and future needs, in the judgement of the municipality, best promotes the health, safety, prosperity and general public welfare of the jurisdiction's residents." (22 Del. C. 1953, § 702; 49 Del. Laws, c. 415, § 1.)

In addition, the Town's comprehensive-planning process must demonstrate coordination with other municipalities, the county, and the state during plan preparation. It represents the best judgments of the municipality and is written to promote the health, safety, and general public welfare of all residents. The plan is the basis for the development of zoning regulations, and once the plan is adopted "the comprehensive plan shall have the force of law and no development shall be permitted except as consistent with the plan" (22 Del. C. 1953, § 702; 49 Del. Laws, c. 415, § 1.). State law requires that planning be an ongoing process and that municipalities identify future planning activities. This document is Townsend's Municipal Comprehensive Development Plan as required by state law. It is intended to cover a ten-year planning period and be reviewed at least every five years. In coordination with the proposal from New Castle County Planning for a Southern New Castle County Master Plan, an addition to plan to be considered is to extend the Town of Townsend Comprehensive Plan to include a 30-

year plan. The concept of long-term planning will take into consideration many of the goals and objectives that are conducive to insure qualitative future land use outcomes. The need for intergovernmental coordination and communication will assure seamless planning and coordination between the Town of Townsend, New Castle County and the State of Delaware.

The Town's first Comprehensive Plan was adopted and certified by the state in February 2003, amended in August 2003, and amended again in September 2005, with the assistance of Institute for Public Administration (IPA). The 2010 comprehensive plan update functioned as a stand-alone document that combined the previous planning work with new planning elements, replacing the 2003 Plan as the primary planning document for Townsend.

On April 16, 2016 Ordinance No. 16-03 passed and established the Townsend Planning Commission pursuant to 22 Del. C. § 701. The Commission replaced the Zoning Committee formed in 2013. This Commission will continue to assist the Town in its update efforts and facilitate its development by working with Town Council, encouraging the participation of residents and property owners in the planning process, and reviewing and refining planning policies.

1-2. A Brief Overview of the Community

1-2a. Location

Townsend is located in the southwestern portion of New Castle County, in what has traditionally been called the Middletown- Odessa-Townsend (MOT) planning region. Figure 1 shows the location of the Town relative to several other towns in New Castle County. The Town is located about 34 miles southwest of Wilmington, 24 miles south of Newark, and 23 miles northwest of Dover.

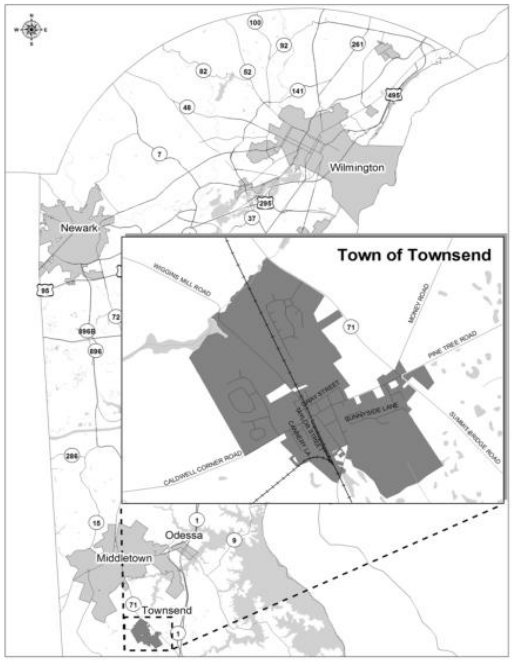


Figure 1: Location of Townsend Within Northern Delaware

1-2b. History of the Town

Before 1850, the area within the present boundaries of the town was occupied by a small African- American community called "Charley Town," named after Charles Lloyd, one of the residents. Around 1850, Samuel Townsend bought much of the land and subsequently gave the village its present name.

In 1856 the town became a stop along the new Delaware Railroad, bringing Townsend new prosperity. During the latter half of the 19th century, large quantities of agricultural produce were shipped from Townsend, especially peaches, grain, and lumber. The town served as a shipping point and a marketplace for the scattered rural population of the area.

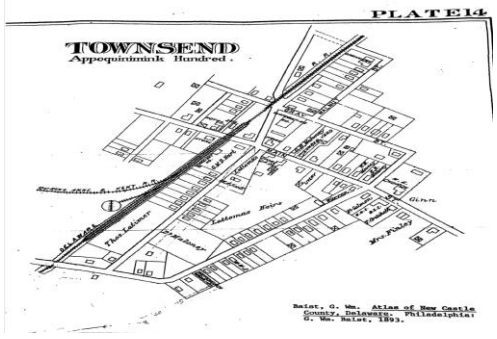
Townsend incorporated on April 3, 1885, at which time the town was platted, and the streets were laid out. By 1888, the village had a population of 350. Since that time, the railroad has lost its prominence to trucking for freight hauling in the United States. However, the railroad and agriculture are still important in shaping the character of Townsend. Today, it remains a small residential town of over 2,810~~049~~ residents. (2024~~10~~ ~~census~~Delaware Population Consortium)

Recently, the MOT region has experienced accelerated growth and development, especially in and around Middletown and areas to the north. The Townsend area has not escaped these development pressures, although New Castle County's Unified Development Code limits the intensity of new residential uses in the immediate vicinity of the town. Through a series of recent annexations, Townsend has significantly increased the area of the town. In 1885, the original size of Townsend consisted of 111 acres. Today in 2020, the total acreage has increased to 677.12 acres.

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1-2c. Historic and Cultural Resources

Townsend exemplifies the characteristics of many of the small towns in Delaware. It comprises predominantly single-family homes in a small-town, rural setting. The center of town is a relatively dense, walkable area centered on the crossing of Railroad Avenue and Main Street. The historic core is characterized by a wide variety of house sizes and styles, from Victorian homes to bungalows. The Townsend Historic District was entered into the National Register for Historic Places in 1986.



Once an isolated crossroads in 1856, Townsend was bisected by the railroad which created a more active shipping and commercial center by 1880. Tremendous growth in population and housing stock occurred at the turn of the twentieth century until about 1910. In 2010, the population and housing inventory surged to four times its previous size. (See Table 1)

1-3. Public Participation Process

~~The deliberations resulting in Townsend's Comprehensive Plan Update were conducted in open, public meetings that began and were publicized according to the Freedom of Information Act guidelines (FOIA, 5 U.S.C 553). Public participation in the planning process was explicitly sought through a public survey published in 2018. The survey was revised in 2019 and published again at that time. In addition, members of the Planning Commission participated in the Townsend Fair on September 23, 2017, and a Town Hall meeting on October 4, 2017 with an informational board about the Commission, as well as a paper copy of a survey.~~

~~The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the final plan completion by moving all meetings to virtual platform. Planning Commission members continued to discuss and move forward on the plan and provided a meeting link for the public to participate in the final discussion. Meetings were advertised on the Town website, but public participation did not happen during COVID.~~

~~New Castle County held public workshops on the New Castle County Master plan on October 7, 2019 and June 24, 2019. The New Castle County Planning Advisory Group held a meeting on June 16, 2019, and a PLUS pre-review on May 22, 2019. On January 24, 2020, a meeting was held in Townsend with New Castle County (various departments), Town of Townsend Council and members of Townsend Planning Commission to discuss concerns, clarification and considerations of municipal coordination recommendations.~~

~~It is important to note that the completion of the Townsend Comprehensive Plan Update was prolonged in order to fully integrate and coordinate it with the Southern New Castle County (SNCC) Regional Master Plan. This coordinated effort with SNCC that was initiated in September of 2006 and driven by a formal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) obtained in January of 2020. State agencies, school districts, New Castle County, Middletown, Odessa, Smyrna, and Townsend are all now coordinating the development of SNCC. The SNCC Master Plan study area was divided into five sub-areas, with Townsend being in the first sub-area to be studied. For additional details concerning the master-planning effort, see Chapter 3, Coordination and Implementation.~~

The preparation of the Town of Townsend's 2026 Comprehensive Plan Update was conducted through a transparent and inclusive public process in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), as amended, and all applicable state and local public notice requirements. Public engagement has remained a core component of the Town's planning efforts, ensuring that residents, stakeholders, and partner agencies had opportunities to provide input throughout the development and refinement of the Plan.

Public participation efforts for the original Comprehensive Plan update began prior to 2020 and included a community survey first published in 2018 and revised and redistributed in 2019. Members of the Townsend Planning Commission actively engaged residents through in-person outreach, including participation at the Townsend Fair on September 23, 2017, and a Town Hall meeting held on October 4, 2017. These events featured informational displays regarding the Planning Commission's role and provided opportunities for residents to review materials and complete paper surveys.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected the planning process between 2020 and 2021, resulting in a transition to virtual meetings. During this period, Planning Commission meetings continued to be held and publicly advertised on the Town's website, with virtual access provided for public attendance. While public participation during this period was limited, Planning Commission members continued to advance the Plan to maintain compliance with state planning timelines and coordination requirements.

As part of the 2026 update, the Town renewed its public outreach and coordination efforts through publicly advertised Planning Commission meetings, Town Council discussions, website postings, and continued collaboration with county and state partners. These outreaches included intergovernmental outreach to both Town of Middletown and Odessa. The update process focused on incorporating updated demographic and land use data, addressing infrastructure and service capacity considerations, and ensuring alignment with regional and state planning initiatives that have evolved since adoption of the 2020 Plan.

Intergovernmental coordination has been a key component of the Comprehensive Plan update process. New Castle County conducted public workshops related to the New Castle County Master Plan on June 24, 2019, and October 7, 2019. The New Castle County Planning Advisory Group met on June 16, 2019, followed by a PLUS pre-review meeting on May 22, 2019. On January 24, 2020, a coordination meeting was held in Townsend involving New Castle County staff from various departments, the Townsend Town Council, and members of the Townsend Planning Commission to discuss municipal coordination, shared concerns, and implementation considerations.

In addition to these earlier efforts, New Castle County held multiple coordination meetings with the Town of Townsend in both 2024 and 2025 to ensure continued intergovernmental alignment. These meetings focused on land use compatibility, infrastructure planning, growth management, and consistency between the Town's Comprehensive Plan update and County-wide planning objectives. This ongoing coordination reinforced a cooperative planning approach and ensured that local policies were informed by broader regional considerations.

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The completion of Townsend's Comprehensive Plan was intentionally extended to allow for meaningful coordination with the Southern New Castle County (SNCC) Regional Master Plan. This regional planning effort was originally initiated in September 2006 and formalized through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) executed in January 2020. The SNCC planning process includes coordination among state agencies, school districts, New Castle County, and the municipalities of Middletown, Odessa, Smyrna, and Townsend. The SNCC Master Plan study area is divided into five sub-areas, with Townsend located within the first sub-area to be evaluated. Continued coordination through this regional framework ensures consistency between local and regional planning objectives. Additional information regarding regional coordination and implementation strategies is provided in Chapter 3: Coordination and Implementation.

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1-4. Town Goals

~~The following goals were developed in 2003 to provide general guidance for Townsend's planning activities and were developed by referencing the Town's previous plans and through discussions with Town officials and residents. In 2020, the Planning Commission revisited these goals and determined that all goals remain relevant. The goals provided below are what Townsend officials and citizens seek to accomplish through the implementation of this plan.~~

The following Town goals were originally developed in 2003 to provide general guidance for Townsend's planning activities. These goals were informed by prior planning documents and through discussions with Town officials and residents. In 2020, the Planning Commission revisited the goals and determined that they remained relevant and reflective of the community's values at that time.

As part of the 2026 Comprehensive Plan Update, the Town has expanded upon and refined these goals to address changing conditions, growth pressures, infrastructure demands, and regional planning considerations, while continuing to respect Townsend's established character. The updated goals reflect both continuity and evolution—maintaining the Town's historic priorities while providing clear direction for strategic expansion and long-term sustainability. Together, these goals represent what Townsend officials and residents seek to accomplish through the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan.

- ~~Retain and reinforce the identity of the town and its setting within its immediate regional area.~~
- ~~Preserve and enhance the town's social, cultural, aesthetic, and environmental amenities.~~
- ~~Manage future land uses and transportation systems to adequately address patterns in town for the convenience and well-being of our residents, workers, and visitors.~~
- ~~Coordinate the development of the town with that of the surrounding areas and with the plans of New Castle County and the state of Delaware.~~
- ~~Provide adequate and efficient public facilities, utilities, and services to meet the needs of present and future residents.~~
- ~~Coordinate, manage, and create future land uses in the commercial and/or industrial sectors to attract businesses and create new jobs.~~
- **Strengthen and retain Townsend's identity** by reinforcing its small-town character and sense of place while guiding strategic and well-planned expansion that supports population growth, attracts investment, and enhances the Town's presence within the regional context.
- **Preserve and enhance social, cultural, aesthetic, and environmental amenities** by ensuring that future growth and development contribute positively to community character through deliberate planning, quality design standards, and responsible environmental stewardship.

- **Direct land use and transportation decisions** to manage existing development patterns and guide future expansion in a manner that improves connectivity, mobility, accessibility, and overall community well-being for residents, workers, and visitors.
- **Coordinate Town development and expansion with surrounding jurisdictions** by aligning local planning efforts with New Castle County and the State of Delaware to promote consistent, efficient, and sustainable growth across municipal and regional boundaries.
- **Ensure the provision of adequate, efficient, and fiscally responsible public facilities, utilities, and services** by planning, funding, and delivering infrastructure needed to support both existing neighborhoods and future growth.
- **Coordinate and manage commercial and industrial development** to support planned town expansion, diversify and strengthen the local economy, broaden the tax base, and create employment opportunities for current and future residents.

~~These overall town goals are discussed in further detail in this document. More specific goals are also presented and discussed in the text where appropriate.~~
These overall Town goals are discussed in greater detail throughout this document. More specific and topic-focused goals and policies are presented within the relevant chapters of the Comprehensive Plan, providing additional guidance for implementation and decision-making.

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Chapter 2. Municipal Development Strategy

2-1. Community Profile

This chapter provides details regarding Townsend's past, estimated present, and projected future population. The data contained in this section may be useful in providing information regarding future service and facility needs, as well as information regarding anticipated changes in the social character of the Townsend community. Demographic data used in this planning document were ~~collected from the 2010 and 2000 U.S. Census and other sources~~collected from the 2010 and 2020 U.S. Census, the American Community Survey 2020-2024 5- year estimates, and other sources, such as the Delaware State Housing Authority, WILMAPCO, and the Delaware Population Consortium. When appropriate, comparisons have been made with New Castle County and the state of Delaware.

2-1a. Historic and Current Population

The U.S. Census indicates that from 1940 to 2020~~15~~, the population and number of housing units for the state and the county steadily increased. As seen in Table 1, the town's population peaked in 1940 at 544 and steadily declined until 1970, when it briefly rose to 505. By 2000, the population had dropped to 346. ~~Since then, annexations and development have resulted in a large population projection surge to 2,593 for 2020 according to the October 2019 Delaware Population Consortium.~~Since then, annexations and development brought the population to 2,049 at the 2010 Census and 2,717 at the 2020 Census. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated 2,985 residents as of July 1, 2025.

Table 1: History of Population and Housing Units for Townsend, New Castle County and Delaware

	Population			Housing Units		
	Delaware	New Castle County	Townsend	Delaware	New Castle County	Townsend
1940	266,505	179,562	544	75,567	47,588	116
1950	318,085	218,879	441	97,013	62,901	NA
1960	446,292	307,446	434	143,725	94,688	130
1970	548,104	385,856	505	180,233	120,704	140
1980	594,338	398,115	386	238,611	148,563	143
1990	666,168	441,946	322	289,919	173,560	152
2000	783,600	500,265	346	343,072	199,521	157
2010[1]	897,934	538,479	2,049~~50~~	405,885	217,511	621~~0~~

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2020[2]	989,948~~977~~	570,719~~564~~	2,717~~593~~	364,323	204,441	797~~930~~[3]
2025[3]	1,045,328	570,719[4]	2985	445,104[5]	232,162[5]	840[6]

1-Source: U.S. Census 2100 Population: Delaware 2010: Population and Housing Unit Counts. Issued June 2012
2-~~Delaware Population Consortium October 31, 2019~~U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census
3-U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2025
4- Figures using certificate of occupancy reported by the Town of Townsend as of 12/31/2025~~Estimated using certificates of occupancy reported by the Town of Townsend between 2011 through 12/8/2020~~

2-1b. Population Projections

Population and housing projections for Townsend are difficult to develop because of the town's small demographic base. Therefore, projections have been calculated using two methods. First, the Center for Applied Demography Survey and Research (CADSR) at the University of Delaware, in conjunction with the Delaware Population Consortium (DPC), has made 25-year projections based on historic growth rates and trends. Secondly, a build-out analysis was developed using the 2010 Census and Townsend vacant parcels and new developments that were annexed into the town. ~~The population projection of 2,593 in 2020 reported in Table 1 was obtained from the Delaware Population Consortium data from October 31, 2019. A certificate of occupancy is issued by the local government when a building has been inspected and approved for habitation. According to the Town, 310 certificates of occupancy (CO) were issued between the 2010 Census and of Townsend's CO's issued as of December 8th of 2020. The number of certificates multiplied by 3.52 – the current average number of people per household in Townsend – equates to an additional 1092 residents. When added to the 2,050 residents recorded from the 2010 Census, the estimated population is 3,142 residents in 2020. Using the same information, the total number of households in 2020 is estimated at 930 (620 from the 2010 Census plus 310 additional certificates of occupancy).~~ The 2020 Census counted 2,717 residents, 797 housing units and 766 occupied households in Townsend, an average of 3.55 people per household. A certificate of occupancy is issued by the local government when a building has been inspected and approved for habitation. According to the Town, certificates of occupancy issued through December 31, 2025 bring the number of housing units to 840. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated the town's population at 2,985 as of July 1, 2025.

Method 1: DPC Data Comparing Townsend to New Castle County Growth Trends

This method of estimating future population trends for Townsend is based upon Delaware Population Consortium projections for New Castle County. The ~~October 31, 2019,~~ October 14, 2024 version of the DPC Annual Population Projections was utilized for this purpose. The DPC takes into consideration actual births and deaths in the county since 2020~~10~~ Census estimates, and migration patterns reported by the IRS. ~~The DPC projected that Townsend will grow to the projected population in 2020 is 2,593. By 2030 the population will have grown to 3,021, it would be 3,538 by 2040, and it would be 4,182 by 2050. The estimated households in Townsend for 2010, was 586 per the 2010 Census. Assuming the future households grow at the same rate as New Castle County, there would be 597 in 2015, 603 in 2020, 612 in 2030. Per the COs that Townsend has currently recorded to~~

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Commented [JG4]: I think this should be re-worded to include the new information in the table above. - JG

~~through 12/8/2020, the number of households (930) has already exceeded the DPC Annual projections through 2050! Also, comparing the population projections using the current COs of 930 times the 3.52 multiplier shows that Townsend's population has already exceeded the DPC estimate of 3,021 for 2030! The results are summarized in Table 2.~~ The DPC projects that Townsend's population will be 2,810 in 2025, 3,139 in 2030, 3,158 in 2040 and 3,148 in 2050. Over the same period the DPC projects New Castle County to grow from 582,747 in 2025 to 600,240 in 2040 and then decline to 589,023 in 2050. The DPC does not publish household projections for municipalities. The 2010 Census counted 586 households in Townsend and the 2020 Census counted 766. The Census Bureau's estimate of Townsend's population for July 1, 2025 (2,985) is above the DPC projection for 2025 (2,810) and below the DPC projection for 2030 (3,139). The results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Delaware Population Consortium Data for New Castle County and Townsend

	202000	202515	203020	204030	205040
New Castle County					
Population	570,719~~01,856~~	582,747~~552,592~~	593,944~~64,780~~ (+1.92.2%)	600,240~~580,351~~	589,023 (-1.9%)~~583,975~~
Households	219,939~~189,852~~	226,015~~02,268~~ (+1.9%)	228,990~~04,441~~ (+1.1%)	225,526~~07,355~~ (+1.4%)	217,002~~05,534~~
Townsend					
Population	2,735~~346~~	2,810~~193~~	3,139~~2,593~~	3,158~~021~~	3,148~~583~~
~~Population estimation on 3.52 multiplier of Certificates of Occupancy~~			~~3142~~		
~~Households~~	~~NA~~	~~597~~	~~603~~	~~612~~	~~621~~
~~Actual Certificate of Occupancy through 12/8/2020~~			~~930~~		

Source: Delaware Population Consortium, Annual Population Projections, October 14, 2024. The DPC does not publish household projections for towns.~~10/31/2019~~

~~*2010 Census Table 7 Households~~

Method 2: Future Build-Out Potential updates and numbers of built, lots, infill

A second method used to project future population called a build-out analysis. This method begins with the 2020 Census count of 2,717.~~the same base population estimate of 2,050 in 2010.~~ Future population is based on a consideration of the amount of vacant land in Townsend and the towns' future land use policy and possible annexations. Several assumptions were made in calculating the population estimates associated with the build out. First, it was assumed that all currently vacant parcels identified for future residential use would develop residentially by 2030. ~~Per information maintained by Townsend, as of February 2019 there were 23 vacant properties in Townsend, 8 are lots. As of this writing a further breakdown of vacant lots is: 11 vacant parcels in Townsend Village I and 8 in the "Heart of Townsend". Also, there are 222 new parcels in The Woods at Hidden Creek that are zoned for single family homes (R-2). The rest are zoned industrial, commercial, or preservation. If the number of parcels 241 is multiplied by the average household size of 3.52, then these parcels could possibly represent an additional 848 residents. Townsend recently approved the annexation of Townsend Acres 15.25 acres on December 12th that has the potential of producing double digit units and also increasing population numbers.~~ Per information maintained by the Town of Townsend, the amount and distribution of vacant and developable land within Town limits has continued to evolve as development and annexations progress. While earlier inventories identified a limited number of vacant lots within established neighborhoods such as Townsend Village I and the Heart of Townsend, much of the Town's remaining development potential is now associated with larger, planned residential areas.

The Woods at Hidden Creek includes a substantial number of parcels zoned for single-family residential use (R-2), portions of which are currently under development, with remaining parcels available for future buildout. Additional parcels within Town limits are designated for industrial, commercial, or preservation purposes, supporting a balanced mix of land uses.

Based on remaining residentially zoned parcels and typical household size assumptions, future development within existing and annexed areas has the potential to accommodate a significant increase in population over the planning horizon. In addition, the Town approved the annexation of **Townsend**

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Acres, approximately 15.25 acres, in December 2020. This annexation has the potential to generate a moderate number of new residential units and further contribute to population growth.
Together, existing undeveloped parcels, partially developed communities, and recently annexed properties provide Townsend with meaningful opportunities for continued residential growth, economic development, and thoughtful expansion consistent with the goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan.

Summary

~~One assumption made for the build-out potential of Townsend was that the average household size for Townsend was 3.52 from the 2010 Census. Next it was assumed that residential development would take place at a uniform rate. Without conducting an extensive environmental impact assessment, the amount of all environmentally sensitive areas and areas not suitable for building was estimated. Finally, it was assumed Hidden Creek would be developed to its maximum density allowed by current zoning regulations. Taking this into consideration, the maximum increase in population would be 1,792, bringing Townsend to a maximum possible population of 3,828 by the year 2030.~~
~~There is a sewer agreement signed in 2001that is in place for 25 years with automatic renewal option for an additional 5 years. This agreement states NCC supports existing customers and an additional capacity not to exceed 270,200 gallons per day. The county is willing to consider supporting sewer capacity for the development of a commercial area along Summit Bridge Road (SR 71) in Townsend. The Woods at Hidden Creek has the potential to hold 222 dwelling units, Townsend Village I have the potential for 11 new units, and 8 additional lots in town. The results of the two population forecasts are shown in Table 3. This calculation does not take into consideration the newly annexed Townsend Acres. Also, with the extensive residential development in Townsend since 2010, it is obvious that assuming that Townsend will grow at a comparable rate to the rest of New Castle County is a highly inaccurate assumption.~~

Earlier build-out and population projections for Townsend were based on several assumptions using the best information available at the time. These included an average household size of 3.52, as reported by the 2010 U.S. Census, an assumption that residential development would occur at a relatively uniform rate, and generalized estimates of environmentally sensitive or otherwise undevelopable land in the absence of a full environmental impact assessment. In addition, it was assumed that *The Woods at Hidden Creek* would be developed to the maximum density permitted under existing zoning regulations. Based on these assumptions, prior analyses estimated a potential population increase of approximately 1,792 residents, resulting in a maximum projected population of 3,828 by 2030. The 2020 Census average household size in Townsend was 3.55.

Since that analysis was completed, significant new information and development activity has occurred that warrants a reevaluation of these assumptions. Townsend has experienced substantial residential growth since 2010, and development patterns have demonstrated that growth rates have not followed a uniform or countywide average. In addition, *The Woods at Hidden Creek* is now partially developed, with remaining capacity to be built out over time, and newly annexed properties—such as Townsend Acres—were not included in the earlier projections.

Infrastructure capacity, particularly sanitary sewer service, remains a critical factor in future growth. The original sewer agreement executed with New Castle County in 2001, which was established for a

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25-year term, is currently under negotiation for renewal. That agreement provided for service to existing customers and additional sewer capacity not to exceed 270,200 gallons per day, and contemplated potential County support for commercial development along Summit Bridge Road (SR 71). Ongoing discussions and negotiations related to the renewal of this agreement are intended to incorporate updated development trends and to ensure that future growth and economic development opportunities are not constrained by sewer capacity limitations.

Given these changing conditions, population and build-out projections should be viewed as planning-level estimates rather than fixed limits. Continued monitoring of development activity, updated demographic data, and the outcome of the sewer agreement renewal will play an important role in refining future growth projections and guiding infrastructure planning efforts throughout the planning horizon.

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Table 3 Future Population Projections, 2020 to 2050~~2010 to 203~~

Population Projections	202~~1~~0*	203~~015~~[1]	204~~020~~[1]	205~~030~~[1]
Method 1: Comparison to NCC Growth Trends	2,717~~050~~	~~3,139~~2,193 ~~(+1.9%)~~	~~3,158~~2,593 ~~(2.2%)~~	3,148~~021~~ ~~(1.4%)~~
~~Method 2: Build-Out Analysis~~	~~2,050~~	~~2,420**~~ ~~(+370)~~	~~2,980**~~ ~~(+560)~~	~~3,828***~~ ~~(+848)~~

*Census 202~~010~~
[1]Source: Delaware Population Consortium, October 14, 2024~~10/31/2019~~
~~** certificates of occupancy~~
~~***Assumed vacant lots & annexations complete~~

2-1c. Demographics

General Characteristics

A profile of general demographic characteristics is presented in Table 4, drawn from the 2020 Census and the American Community Survey 2020- 2024 5-year estimates. ~~for the year 2010 is presented in Table 4.~~ While it is difficult to draw precise conclusions from this profile due to the relatively small demographic base of the town, certain trends can be noted. First, the median age of the Town (33.6) is younger than that of either the state (41.1) or the county (39.0).~~the median age of the town (31.3) is slightly younger than that of either the state (40.2) or the county (38.1).~~ However, this trend could be offset in the future as development occurs in the newly annexed areas. ~~Family households, including those with children under 18 years old, represent a significant larger portion of the town's population (69.52%) than in either the state (27%) or the county (28.8%).~~ Households with one or more people under 18 years old make up a much larger share of the town's households (64.2%) than in either the state (29.1%) or the county (30.7%).~~The average size of a household is larger than the state and county household sizes.~~The average size of a household in Townsend (3.55) is larger than the state (2.50) and county (2.53) household sizes. ~~Townsend's population that is 16 and over participating in the labor force is higher than state and county labor force numbers. Townsend's population that is of two or more races high is slightly higher than the state and county.~~The share of Townsend's

population 16 and over that is in the labor force (82.3%) is higher than in the state (62.1%) or the county (65.7%). The share of Townsend's population that is of two or more races (8.8%) is slightly higher than in the state and the county (7.7% each).

Table 4: Profile of General Demographic Characteristics

	Delaware	New Castle County	Townsend
Age			
Population 17 and under	20.31.4%%	20.91.8%	30.14.3%
Population 652 and older	21.718.7%	185.6%	5.614.5%
Median age	42.139.6	39.88.1	36.21.3
Households			
Households with children under 18	31.935.4%	20.94.7%	36.48.6%
Average household size	3.052.56	2.5063	4.243.52
Selected Characteristics			
Population 18 and over who are civilian veterans	7.29.0%	4.817.1%	127.9%
Population 16 and over in labor force	61.82.7%	65.83%	54.672.2%
Population 18 and over with an ambulatory disability	1424.3%	8.823.7%	9.922.6%
Population of Two or more races	7.72.7%	3.12.5%	113.6%

Source: Census 202010
2018 ACS 5-year Est Data Profiles Table DP03, DP05

Diversity Composition

As noted in Table 5 from U.S. Census data, Townsend's population in the year 2010 was more diverse than that of either New Castle County or the state except when comparing the Hispanic community. Townsend still lags behind the county and state in that ethnicity. As noted in Table 5 from 2020 U.S. Census data, 32.3% of Townsend's residents were Black or African American, a larger share than in New Castle County (25.7%) or the state (22.1%). The White share in Townsend (55.1%) was the same as the county's and below the state's (60.4%). Residents of all other races and of two or more races made up 12.6% of the town, compared to 19.3% in the county and 17.5% in the state. Hispanic or Latino residents were 6.0% of the town's population, compared to 11.1% in the county and 10.5% in the state.

Table 5: Ethnic CompositionTable 5: Racial and Ethnic Composition, 2020

	Townsend	New Castle County	Delaware
Racial Composition			
White alone	55.162.7%	55.165.0%	60.468.9%
Black or African	32.831.8%	25.726.1%	22.121.4%
Other (All Other Compositions)	12.65.5%	19.38.9%	17.59.7%
Ethnic Composition			
Non-Hispanic	94.095.8%	88.99.7%	89.590.5%
Hispanic	6.04.2%	11.110.3%	10.59.5%

Source: Census 2010U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census, Tables P1 and P2

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Education

As summarized in Table 6 and reported by the American Community Survey for 2020-2024, the educational attainment level ~~reported by the U.S. Census, the overall educational attainment level~~ for Townsend's population 25 years old and above was higher than that of either the county or the state. In Townsend, 98.1% had graduated from high school and 41.5% held a bachelor's degree or higher.

Table 6: Educational Attainment Level for 25 Years Old or Above

	High School Graduate Or Higher	Bachelor's Degree Or Higher
Townsend	98.194.3%	41.538.2%
New Castle County	92.691.5%	39.735.9%
State of Delaware	91.789.8%	35.831.4%

Source: 2018 ACS 5-year Est Table DP022020-2024 ACS 5- year Estimates, Table DP02

2-1d. Housing

Table 7 summarizes the number of dwelling units from 1940 to 2010 in Townsend, New Castle County, and the state. Historically, Townsend has increased its housing stock at a slower rate than the county and the state. However, as mentioned previously, by using the number of certificates of occupancy issued since 2010 and adding that number to the housing stock in 2010, the estimated available housing units in 2010 was 621. The 2018 ACS housing estimate has Townsend growing at 4.2% compared to New Castle at 2.1% and 5.5% for the State. Table 7 summarizes the number of dwelling units from 1940 to 2020 in Townsend, New Castle County, and the state. Through 2000, Townsend increased its housing stock at a slower rate than the county and the state. Since then the town has grown faster than both. The 2010 Census counted 621 housing units in Townsend and the 2020 Census counted 797, an increase of 28.3%, compared with 7.5% for New Castle County and 10.6% for the State.

Table 7: Total Housing Units in Townsend, New Castle County, and the State

Year	Townsend	New Castle County	Delaware
1940	116	47,588	75,567
1950	NA	62,901	97,013
1960	130	94,688	143,725
1970	140	120,704	180,233
1980	143	148,563	238,611
1990	152	173,560	289,919
2000	157	199,521	343,072
2010	621	217,511	405,885
202018	647797	222,146233,747	428,251448,735

Source: Census 2010, Delaware State Housing Authority, Townsend Certificates of Occupancy 2018 ACS 5-yr Estimate Table DP04 U.S. Census Bureau, decennial censuses 1940 to 2020; Delaware State Housing

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It is important to note that as of this writing there were also 11 vacant parcels pending construction in Townsend Village I. Additionally, there were approximately 8 vacant residential lots within the original town boundaries, and an additional 222 vacant parcels annexed since, for a total of 241 vacant residential lots. These lots have been zoned for single-family, residential uses at varying densities.

Age of Housing Stock

According to the ~~2018 ACS, 15.9%~~ 2020-2024 ACS, 7.1% of the housing in Townsend was built before 1960. However, since the 2010 Census, Townsend has greatly increased the number of housing units by developing areas annexed in 1999 and 2010. As shown in Table 8, ~~approximately 72.6% of the housing stock~~ approximately 82.8% of the housing stock was built between 2000 and 2019. ~~Current housing units within town is 780 homes~~The 2020 Census counted 797 housing units in town. With the completion of Townsend Village II and Townsend Village I almost completed, this will skew the year housing is built.

Table 8: Year Housing Built

	Townsend* (percent)	New Castle County** (percent)	Delaware ** (percent)
~~2014 or later~~2020 of later	~~4.3%~~2.6%	~~1.5%~~1.3%	~~2.4%~~3.1%
~~2010-2013~~2010-2019	~~12.2%~~28.3%	~~2.2%~~7.5%	~~3.9%~~12.3%
2000-2009	~~56.1%~~54.5%	~~10.6%~~11.1%	~~18.9%~~17.3%
1990-1999	~~4.6%~~1.9%	~~14%~~12.6%	~~16%~~13.6%
1980-1989	~~1.4%~~0.7%	~~12.7%~~11.8%	~~13.7%~~11.8%
1970-1979	~~2.0%~~4.2%	~~12.7%~~12.6%	~~11.9%~~11.8%
1960-1969	~~3.4%~~0.6%	~~14.3%~~13.1%	~~10.3%~~9.4%
1940-1959	~~5.4%~~1.8%	~~21.1%~~19.3%	~~14.6%~~12.6%
1939 or earlier	~~10.5%~~5.3%	~~10.9%~~10.8%	~~8.3%~~8.0%

Source: ~~2018: ACS 5-year Estimates Table DP04~~2020-2024 ACS 5-year Estimates, Table DP04

Type of Housing

~~Table 9 shows the type of housing in Townsend in 2019. The most up-to-date information for the state and county is from 2018. Currently, 94.9% of all housing units in Townsend are single-family detached homes, an increase of 2.4% from 92.5% in 2010. This is a much higher percentage than found across the county (53.5%) or state (58.8%).~~ Table 9 shows the type of housing in Townsend, New Castle County, and the state from the 2020-2024 ACS. Currently, 98.8% of all housing units in Townsend are single-family detached homes. This is a much higher percentage than found across the county (53.0%) or state (59.1%). This trend is expected to continue as newly annexed parcels of The Woods at Hidden Creek (Carter Farm) are all zoned R-2, residential with a minimum lot requirement of 7,000 square feet (.16 acres), allowing only single-family, detached dwelling units. In order to diversify housing types, the Town has proposed to add additional zoning codes that would allow higher densities and mix of uses.

Table 9: Housing Type

Housing Type	Townsend	New Castle County	Delaware
Single-Family, Detached	~~94.9%~~98.8%	~~53.5%~~53.0%	~~58.8%~~59.1%
Single-Family, Attached	~~2.5%~~0.5%	~~21.2%~~21.3%	~~15.3%~~15.5%
Multi-Family (2-20+ units)	~~2.1%~~0.7%	~~23.2%~~23.6%	~~17.5%~~18.3%

Other	~~0.5%~~0.0%	2.1%	~~8.4%~~7.1%

Source: ~~2018 ACS 5-year Estimates Table DP04~~2020-2024 ACS 5-year Estimates, Table DP04

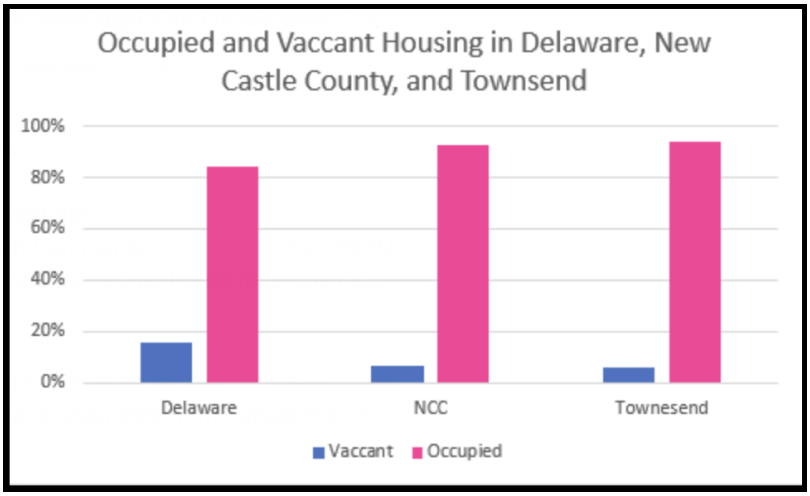
Housing Value

~~According to the 2010 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table DP04, the median housing values were significantly more expensive, on average, in Townsend ($289,900) than in the county ($252,800) or state ($242,300). Reviewing the 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table DP04 data available for Townsend, the median housing price has increased from $289,900 to $324,700. This reflects a 12% increasing in housing value for the Townsend. The county and state median housing value also increased but at a much-reduced level. New Castle County median house value was $254,500 (0.6%) and overall state median price is $244,700 (0.99%) per the 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimate~~ According to the 2020-2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table DP04, median housing values were significantly higher in Townsend ($465,100) than in the county ($352,200) or state ($352,000). The Townsend median increased from $324,700 in the 2018 ACS to $465,100, a 43.2% increase. The New Castle County median increased from $254,500 to $352,200, a 38.4% increase.

Ownership and Vacancy

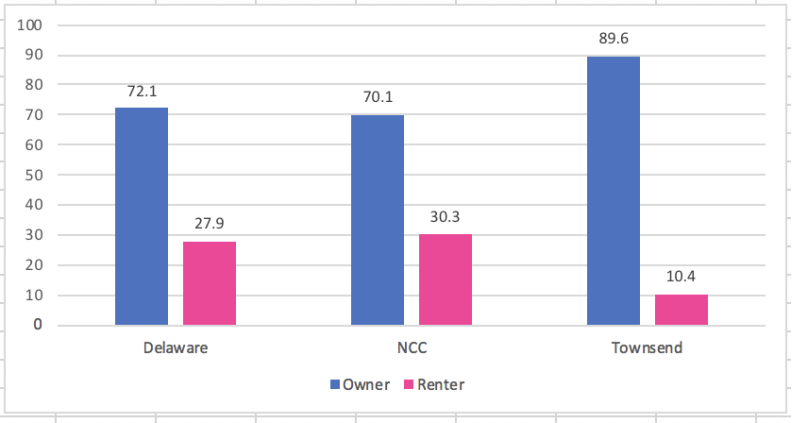
~~Information from the 2010 Census regarding the occupancy status of housing units in Townsend is shown in Figures 2 and 3. At that time, Townsend had a lower percentage of vacant properties than did the county or the state. The housing that is vacant (5.6%) is probably so because it is either for rent or for sale. Figure 3 shows that Townsend has a higher percentage of owners than renters than has either the county or the state. It is likely that this trend from the 2010 Census has continued, since the majority of the additional homes in town are new, larger, more expensive units built specifically for a customer.~~ Information from the 2020 Census regarding the occupancy status of housing units in Townsend is shown in Figures 2 and 3. Townsend had a lower percentage of vacant housing units (3.9%, or 31 units) than did the county (6.1%) or the state (13.9%). Of the 31 vacant units, 7 were for rent or for sale, 8 were rented or sold but not yet occupied, 5 were for seasonal use, and 11 were vacant for other reasons. Figure 3 shows that Townsend has a higher percentage of owner-occupied homes (93.0%) than either the county (66.7%) or the state (70.8%). In 2020, 54 of the town's 766 occupied homes were rented.

Figure 2: Percent Occupied and Vacant Housing



Source: 2020 Census, Table H1~~Census 2010~~

Figure 3: Percent Owner-Occupied and Renter-Occupied Housing for 202010



Source: 2020 Census, Table H4Census 2010

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2-1e. Economic Profile

Table 10 shows selected economic information for Townsend, New Castle County, and the state of Delaware. The median household income in Townsend was 66% higher than that of the rest of New Castle County, and 79.7% higher than the median income in the state. The data also shows that Townsend has a lower percentage of residents with social security and retirement income than New Castle County and of the state. This is indicative of a higher number of working families in the community. Also, individuals in Townsend who received public assistance is significantly less than public assistance received in both the county and the state. Townsend does have a higher level of poverty among the 65+ population. The median household income in Townsend ($153,000) was 67.8% higher than that of New Castle County ($91,166), and 80.1% higher than the median income in the state ($84,954). The data also shows that Townsend has a lower percentage of households with Social Security income (17.8%) and retirement income (22.2%) than New Castle County (31.2% and 27.6%) and the state (36.7% and 32.3%). This is indicative of a higher number of working families in the community. Also, the share of Townsend households receiving cash public assistance or SNAP benefits (8.8%) is lower than in the county (10.5%) and the state (11.5%). Poverty among residents 65 and older is lower in Townsend (2.9%) than in the county (7.8%) or the state (7.6%), although the town estimate is based on a small number of people.

Table 10: Economic Information

	Townsend	Middletown	New Castle County	Delaware
Median Household Income	$117,964$153,000	$89,354$112,831	$70,996$91,166	$65,627$84,954
Households with Social Security	8.7%17.8%	33.1%31.7%	29.2%31.2%	34.5%36.7%
Households with retirement income	16.2%22.2%	26..2%28.8%	20.7%27.6%	24.5%32.3%

Households with ~~public assistance income (cash, food stamps)~~ cash	~~4.6%~~8.8%	~~5.8%~~10.2%	~~11.9%~~10.5%	~~13.8%~~11.5%
Individuals under 1~~8~~7 below the poverty level	~~7.3%~~1.8%	~~10.7%~~12.0%	~~15.6%~~13.7%	~~17.6%~~15.0%
Individuals 65 & older below the poverty level	~~10.4%~~2.9%	~~2.4%~~3.3%	~~6.8%~~7.8%	~~6.6%~~7.6%

Source: ~~2018: ACS 5yr Est. Data Profiles Table DP03~~2020-2024 ACS 5-year Estimates, Data Profile Table DP03 and Table B19058

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Table 10a: 20260 Federal Poverty Guidelines~~Level~~

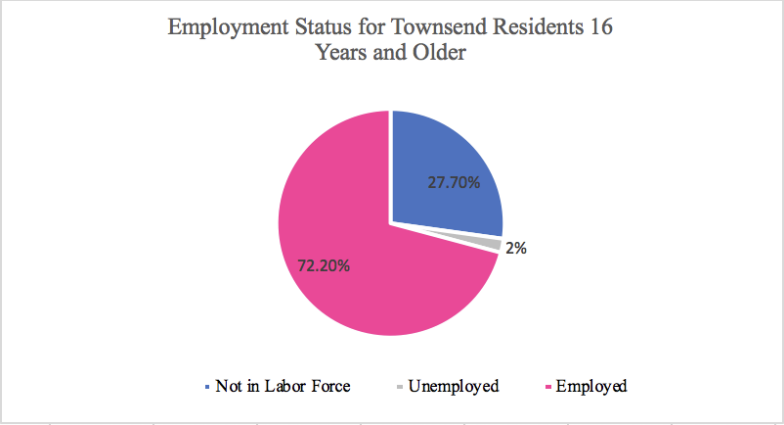
Number of Persons in Family/Households	Poverty Guideline
1	~~$12,760~~$15,960
2	~~$17,240~~$21,640
3	~~$21,720~~$27,320
4	~~$26,200~~$33,000
5	~~$30,680~~$38,680
6	~~$35,160~~$44,360
7	~~$39,640~~$50,040
8	~~$44,120~~$55,720
More than ~~8~~9	Add $5,560~~4,480~~ for each additional person over 8

Source: Office of the Asst. Secretary for Planning and Evaluation-Dept. Health & Human Services January 202~~6~~0

Unemployment Data

~~Figure 4 displays the unemployment status for residents of Townsend. Of the Townsend residents over the age of 16, about 72.2 percent were employed according to the 2018 ACS data, and 2 percent were unemployed. Residents not in the labor force was 27.8 percent of the population, which may be explained by the high number of retirees living in Townsend. Approximately 18.7 percent of the households have some sort of retirement income.~~ Figure 4 displays the employment status of Townsend residents. Of the Townsend residents age 16 and over, about 79.2 percent were employed according to the 2020-2024 ACS data, and 3.1 percent were unemployed. Residents not in the labor force were 17.7 percent of that population. Approximately 22.2 percent of the households have some sort of retirement income.

Figure 4: Employment Status



Source: 2020-2024 ACS 5-year Estimates, Table DP03 ~~2018 ACS- 5year Est. Table DP03~~

2-1f. Housing Affordability

Significant changes in the housing market make an accurate assessment of housing affordability in Townsend somewhat problematic. Rapid growth in the residential construction market during the past decade severely inflated home prices. This was particularly true in the MOT region, which saw explosive, nearly unchecked growth for much of this time period. As happened elsewhere, the price of homes in Townsend's existing (2000 and earlier) housing stock rose substantially. Compounding the problem was the construction of hundreds of new homes, almost all of them larger (in square footage and lot size) than the town's typical housing size. The number of homes built in Townsend from 2000 to 2007 is roughly equal to the total number built during the previous three decades. This growth has not slowed with an additional 347 Certificate of Occupancies issued and homes built from 2008-present. Predictably, the new homes sold for a significantly higher amount. The preponderance of newer, larger, more expensive homes also served to inflate the municipality's median housing value. Since 2007, Handler Homes built 163 homes in Townsend Village and an additional 95 homes in Townsend Village II. There were multiple builders in Townsend Village II, and it is not known exactly how many of the 221 homes were built after 2007.

After the housing market correction, the entire state of Delaware saw moderate gains in housing values. The largest housing increase was seen in Townsend. This would be explained by the large homes that were being built.

The determination of affordability is a straightforward process. Estimates of median household income are compared to estimates of median home values. Housing is considered affordable if there are opportunities for homeownership for individuals making less than the median amount—typically 80 percent.

The current data from the American Communities Survey (ACS) shown in Table 11, reflects a 45% increase in housing values in Townsend since the 2009 estimate.

Table 11: Median Housing Values

Jurisdiction	Value in 2000	Value in 2009	Value in 2018	Increase
New Castle County	$136,000	$225,000	$254,500	13.1%
Middletown	$119,600	$275,000	$288,400	4.9%
Townsend	$97,500	$224,000*	$324,700	45%
Kent County	$114,100	$200,000	$213,900	7%
Sussex County	$122,400	$180,000	$248,900	38.3%

Source: 2000 Census and DSHA Real Estate Data (2nd quarter 2009)
**2000 Census value multiplied by 130%*
2018 ACS: 5yr Estimated Data Profiles

While home values increased rapidly, median family incomes (MFI) increased at a more modest pace. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released MFI estimates, accounting for inflation and other variables, based on the *American Communities Survey* (ACS), a sort of mini census done each year. The 2018 ACS median family income is shown below that compares New Castle County and Townsend.

Table 12: Median Family Income

	2000	2008	2018
New Castle County	$58,760	$71,647	$88,300
Townsend	$47,500	$57,918*	$118,250

Source: 2018 ACS 5-year Est table DP03

Table 13 illustrates this apparent contradiction between median family income and median home value. The table shows that families in the 100-percent MFI category would still not be able to afford the median priced home in Townsend. However, it is likely that the median home value is more reflective of the larger, newer homes that are currently selling and have sold at a much higher price than older homes in the town. A quick search of listings using Zillow show the most recent home sales for April/May of 2020 resulted in several homes sold from $65,000 to $420,000 range. Also, a Zillow search of current homes for sale in Townsend resulted in an average list price of $226,400. These homes are located in the "heart" of town.

Table 13: Home Affordability by Median Family Income

	60% MFI $70,950	80% MFI $94,600	100% MFI $118,250
Three-Times Rule	$212,850	$283,800	$354,750
DSHA Calculator	$47,888	$63,851	$79,814
HUD-DE	$58,140	$77,520	$96,900
Median Estimated Value of Townsend Home			$324,700
Average Cost of Five Most Affordable Homes Zillow-Townsend 5/12/20			$226,400

Source: 2018 ACS 5-year Est table DP03, HUD FY2020 MFI, Zillow.com"Townsend"

Though the analysis is not definitive, Townsend appears to have a supply of affordable housing, despite newer home values continuing to increase. The downturn in the housing market during 2007-2008 has the trend of runaway housing prices and created an opportunity for investment and rental homes in the "heart" of Townsend. Additional data review suggests that there may be a market for more rental units in town with the continued disparity in family income and new housing prices. Smaller home options, such as townhomes and ranch living, may be an option to make Townsend more affordable to families and seniors while maintaining the small town feel and community that Townsend offers.

Housing Plan Recommendations

- Coordinate with DSHA and HUD to create a resource library for current and potential residents, detailing local, state, and federal homeownership/mortgage-assistance programs.
- Encourage the development of a variety of housing types, including more-compact alternatives to the two-story single-family home, such as ranch style, townhomes, and condos.
- Consider making provisions for multi-use or accessory dwelling units in the municipal code to allow for an increase in the supply of rental properties while creating a small business district in the "heart" of town.

2-1g. Community Profile Implications, Critical Issues & Future Needs

There are a number of implications stemming from these trends, and many recommendations addressing these issues are outlined in future sections. Although the town could not possibly address all of these issues, it should be aware of possible problems and be looking for partners in meeting the needs of all of its residents.

Public Safety

As a town grows, there continues to be an increased need for police. ~~Townsend has worked with the University of Delaware to investigate options to improve law enforcement within the town. Options include coordination with the Middletown Police Department, New Castle County Police, or Delaware State Police, and/or creating a Townsend police department. An additional option calls for the creations of a regional police force to address public safety and security concerns that will inevitably occur with the increase in population and community density.~~ In response, the Town established a municipal police force to enhance public safety and provide direct law enforcement services to residents and businesses. The Town will continue to coordinate with the Delaware State Police, New Castle County Police and the Middletown Police Department as the population and community density increase.

~~Although the elderly population is actually decreasing from 14.5% to 5.7%, combined with the population of disabled residents increasing slightly from 19.9% to 22.6%,~~ Residents age 65 and older make up 6.9% of Townsend's population (2020 Census), and 7.1% of residents report a disability (American Community Survey 2020-2024 5-year estimates). As the town grows, it may be necessary for the town to assist the volunteer fire company in increasing the capacity of its emergency medical services to provide the best service to residents.

Transportation

~~There has been an increase in the percentages of children under the age of 17 (from 26.9% to 34.3%) and disabled residents (22.6%), as well as all of Townsend households now owning at least one vehicle~~. ~~These people may be~~ Children under 18 make up 31.5% of Townsend's

population (2020 Census), and 7.1% of residents report a disability (American Community Survey 2020-2024 5-year estimates). About 1% of households have no vehicle. These residents may be dependent on walking, biking, and public transit for transportation. Disabled residents do have access to paratransit through DART and the MOT Senior Service Bus. Elderly residents are eligible to apply for paratransit services, but DART encourages able-bodied elderly to use regular DART bus services. Adding a new stop for Bus Route 302 further into town where a majority the population resides would make it easier for residents to utilize public transportation.

Due to the rapid change in population, there is a need for a traffic study (Railroad Avenue, Commerce Street, Main Street, Dogtown/Blackbird Station Road/Levels Road (Route 15), South Street, Wiggins Mill Road). Townsend has made road improvements to Main Street which has resulted in the road now being used as a bypass for the 301 Toll Road. Dogtown/Blackbird Station Road/Levels Road (Route 15) needs to be developed as a north/south throughway for the western part of the state. The NCC Master Plan desires an "employment zone" in Middletown and is denying the opportunity for this growth type in Townsend.

The Town is participating in the Southern New Castle County Regional Master Plan being developed by WILMAPCO with DelDOT, New Castle County, the school districts, and the towns of Middletown, Odessa, Smyrna and Townsend. Public workshops are being held in 2026 and the final report is scheduled for 2027. The Town will state its desired future growth in that plan and incorporate the plan's transportation recommendations into its own growth scenarios. A link to the plan (https://wilmapco.org/sncc/) will be posted on the Town website so residents can follow the plan and take part in the workshops.

Commented [JH5]: The State wants the plan to mention the WILMAPCO regional master plan and a link on the Town site. Julie, is the link up already? If so this can say 'is posted'. Also, is the 'NCC Master Plan' sentence above about this same plan? I wasn't sure.

To ensure walkability of the downtown area, a streetscape/safe corridor project that included sidewalks compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as ample street lighting was completed in 2014 for the first phase. Phase 2 was completed in 2020. Phase 3 is pending funding. Phase 3 will go from Railroad/Commerce Street to Katlyn. (start date unknown). As the town continues to grow it is imperative to continue the sidewalk system. The Town will work with DelDOT on sidewalk maintenance and repair needs along state-maintained streets, continue to participate in DelDOT's Municipal Street Aid (MSA) program to fund sidewalk improvements along town-maintained streets, and continue to work with DelDOT's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) to evaluate and plan bicycle and pedestrian connections throughout Townsend. Currently, the local park is not safely accessible to all developments in Townsend. Research should be completed to review the open space of newer developments and to create walkable paths to provide access to the park. In planning sidewalks, paths and bicycle routes, the Town will give priority to safe connections between residential areas and commercial areas, including Main Street and the businesses along Summit Bridge Road (SR 71), so that residents can meet daily needs without a vehicle.~~Town should continue to all new development is pedestrian oriented.~~ Additionally, children need to have a safe pathway to the assigned school bus stops throughout town. This may require coordination with the different school bus

companies and the school district office. Additionally, more open spaces should be planned to include trails that enhance the interconnectivity of these open spaces. The Town will evaluate the installation of electric vehicle charging stations in areas with a public or semi-public character, such as the commercial district along Summit Bridge Road (SR 71), where parking is already offered and businesses are concentrated. DNREC's Division of Climate, Coastal and Energy offers rebates of up to 75% of the cost of purchasing and installing a charging station for commercial properties and up to 90% for government and non-profit entities.

Commented [JH6]: DNREC asked for the Town's position on EV charging. 'Will evaluate' is a placeholder until the Commission picks a position.

Maintenance of Homes

The age of the existing housing stock and the percentage of rental units in the town indicate that housing maintenance may become an issue for the town in the future. Older homes have more maintenance needs, and ~~about 19.6% of the existing homes are more than 50 years old. As seen in Table 9,~~ about 12% of the existing homes were built before 1980 (7.8% before 1970). As seen in Table 8, the number of houses built since 2000 has dramatically increased. This creates a dichotomy of aging downtown residences surrounded by newer subdivisions. Elderly residents, disabled residents, single- parent households, those with fixed and/or limited incomes may have more problems than most in properly maintaining a home. An ordinance was implemented to inspect rental units to ensure they are in compliance with the code and also protect the tenants from properties that are not being properly maintained by the property owner.

Recreation and Childcare

Because of the high proportion of ~~residents aged 17 and under (34.3%),~~ residents under 18 (31.5% in the 2020 Census, compared with 21.2% in New Castle County), there is a need for more educational and recreational facilities for children in Townsend. The Town does not track in home businesses, but it is estimated that there are, three in-home childcare facilities, a privately owned commercial childcare center, and an early childhood development center at Townsend Elementary are located in town. An 11.5 acre municipal park provides space for recreation and summer camps, and the town should continue to form relationships with local community groups, such as the YMCA of Delaware, to provide recreational opportunities in town. A community center that will partner with the MOT Senior Center to provide programs for the elderly residents could assist in serving the elderly population in Townsend, which is 6.9% of residents (2020 Census). ~~maintaining and possibly increasing the elderly population in Townsend which has dropped to 5.7%.~~ In an effort to build a resilient and engaged community, there is a need for a community center to include youth programs, senior programs, and other town events.

Diverse Housing Types

Single-family, detached homes are the most common housing type in Townsend ~~(97.4%).~~ (98.8%, compared with 53.0% in New Castle County and 59.1% statewide). In order to provide housing for a growing population that is economically diverse, Townsend needs to

diversify its housing market. In addition, the fire company has raised concerns that the volunteers are no longer able to afford to live in Townsend, which has created problems with recruiting EMTs who live close enough to respond to emergencies. Children of long-time residents in town are finding it increasingly difficult to purchase real estate in Townsend due to the dramatic increase in housing values over the past few years. The town must work on providing adequate housing for a more diverse range of income levels. Townsend understands the importance of diversifying their housing types and are entertaining the idea of townhomes, condo, apartments, and smaller homes.

2-2. Government, Community Services, and Facilities

GOAL: Provide adequate and efficient public facilities, utilities, and services to meet the needs of present and future residents.

2-2a. Town Government

~~Townsend is an incorporated area with powers granted it by the state to govern itself through its elected officials and authorized appointees. The powers of the town were established in its charter, which was approved by the Delaware General Assembly in 1885 and most recently amended in 2015. The Town of Townsend has adopted a Council Manager form of government. The Town Manager serves as the Chief Operating Officer with administrative oversight over all town departments and personnel. The elected governing body consists of a five-member Town Council, comprising a mayor and four councilpersons. The Mayor is elected by a majority vote from the newly elected council each year. Two councilpersons are elected on even years, and three councilpersons are elected on odd years. The Town Council meets the first Wednesday of each month at the Town Hall.~~

The Town of Townsend is an incorporated municipality with powers granted by the State of Delaware to govern itself through elected officials and appointed staff. The Town's authority is established through its Charter, originally approved by the Delaware General Assembly in 1885 and most recently amended in 2015. Townsend operates under a Council–Manager form of government, which provides for elected policy leadership and professional administration.

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The Town Manager serves as the Chief Administrative Officer and is responsible for day-to-day operations, implementation of Town Council policies, oversight of Town departments and personnel, and coordination with State and County agencies.

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The elected governing body consists of a five-member Town Council, including a Mayor and four Councilmembers. Councilmembers are elected in staggered terms, with two members elected in even-numbered years and three members elected in odd-numbered years. The Mayor is selected annually by a majority vote of the newly seated Council. Town Council meetings are held regularly at Town Hall and are open to the public in accordance with Delaware's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

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~~The Town has established a Planning Commission and solicits volunteers for serving on the commission. The proposed commission has three members appointed on the even years and~~

~~two appointed on the odd years and acts as an advisory body to the council with the major responsibility of interpreting and recommending revisions to the town's zoning ordinance and maps and updating the town's comprehensive development plan. The commission is responsible for arranging public hearings for proposed subdivision plans and forwarding the committee's recommendations on subdivision plans to mayor and council.~~

The Town has established a Planning Commission to serve as an advisory body to the Town Council on land-use and development matters. Members are appointed by Town Council, with appointments staggered between even- and odd-numbered years to ensure continuity.

The Planning Commission's primary responsibilities include:

- Reviewing subdivision and land development applications
- Interpreting and recommending revisions to the Zoning and Unified Development Code
- Assisting with updates to the Comprehensive Plan
- Conducting and facilitating public hearings related to land-use proposals

The Planning Commission plays a critical role in ensuring that new development is consistent with the goals, policies, and implementation strategies of the Comprehensive Plan.

~~Townsend also has a Board of Adjustment to hear appeals and grants variances. According to the town's Unified Development Code, the Board currently been comprised of three members. The Board hears and decides appeals where it is "alleged there is an error in any order, requirement, decision or determination made by and administrative official in the enforcement of the Town's codes and the laws of the State of Delaware and any amendment thereto . . ." (Municipal Code Chapter 24 Zoning and Unified Development Code, Section 24.08.020 Board of Adjustment).~~

Townsend maintains a Board of Adjustment to hear appeals and grant variances in accordance with the Town's Unified Development Code. The Board is currently composed of three members, as authorized by Chapter 24 of the Town's Municipal Code.

The Board of Adjustment is empowered to hear and decide appeals where it is alleged that an error has occurred in the enforcement or interpretation of zoning regulations or other applicable Town codes, consistent with State law and local ordinance requirements.

~~The Mayor, with the confirmation of a majority of the Council, appoints standing or *ad hoc* committees as deemed necessary. To date, council committees include a Community Relations, Finance, Human Resources, Land Use and Development, National Wildlife Federation liaison, Parks and Recreation, Public Safety, and Veterans.~~

The Mayor, with confirmation of a majority of Town Council, appoints standing and ad hoc committees as needed to address specific issues and policy areas. Committees provide recommendations and assist Council in addressing operational, planning, and community priorities. Council committees have included, but are not limited to:

- Community Engagement
- Finance

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- Human Resources
- Public Works & Land Use and Development
- Public Safety
- Code Review

Committee structure and responsibilities may evolve over time in response to changing community needs.

~~The Town has several full-time employees including the Town Manager, Financial Officer, Town Clerk, Administrative Assistant, and Maintenance Manager. Townsend has professional services contracts for the positions of Code Enforcement, Town Engineer, and Town Attorney. The Town Manager is appointed by Town Council and serves as the Chief Operations Officer of the Town. There is a Town Clerk has the power to certify town documents. The Town Attorney is appointed by Council and provides legal advice to the Council and other town officers and departments. The Town Financial Officer is responsible for the disbursement of monies and has control over town expenditures. The Town Engineer is a consulting firm contracted with by the council, and it is responsible for reviewing subdivision plans, certifying building plans for the issuance of building permits, and maintaining the town's Zoning Map. Townsend can also utilize commercial contracts to maintain local streets and sidewalks in common areas and town parks.~~

The Town employs several full-time staff positions, including the Town Manager, Financial Officer, Town Clerk, Administrative Assistant, and Maintenance Manager. As the Town continues to grow, staffing needs are periodically evaluated to ensure the effective delivery of municipal services.

Townsend also contracts for professional services, including:

- Code Enforcement
- Town Engineer
- Town Attorney

The Town Manager is appointed by Town Council and serves as the primary administrative officer. The Town Clerk is responsible for maintaining official records and certifying Town documents. The Town Attorney provides legal counsel to the Town Council, boards, and staff. The Town Financial Officer oversees fiscal management, including the disbursement of funds and financial reporting. The Town Engineer reviews subdivision and development plans, certifies plans for permitting, and assists with infrastructure planning.

The Town may also utilize contracted services for street maintenance, sidewalk repairs, and park maintenance as needed.

Government Critical Issues & Future Needs

Planning Commission Members

~~The Town should actively engage new volunteers for the Planning Commission to assist Town Council with the numerous development issues facing Townsend.~~

As development activity continues, the Town should actively recruit and retain qualified volunteers for the Planning Commission to assist with increasingly complex land-use and development issues.

Historic Review Criteria for Future Development

~~The Town should designate criteria for historic review or design review as part of the Planning Commission review to help the town meet its historic preservation goals. This criterion will help determine if proposed renovations will preserve the historic and architectural integrity. The Town should create a historic review board to participate in reviewing renovation and new development concept plans to ensure the proposals will adhere to the historic and architectural integrity of the town.~~

The Town should continue evaluating the establishment of historic or design review criteria to ensure that renovations and new development preserve Townsend's historic and architectural character. Consideration may be given to forming a historic or design review board to support this effort.

Annexation Process

The sewer agreement signed between New Castle County and Townsend requires that all annexations be approved by both New Castle County Council and the New Castle County Executive. The current sewer agreement with NCC is in place until the end of 2026 ~~2025~~, at which time the Town will need to re-evaluate its relationship with the county or need to locate alternative wastewater treatment. ~~Additionally, all annexations are required to be consistent with a state-certified comprehensive plan and follow a multi-jurisdictional public process.~~ Annexations must remain consistent with State law, the Town's state-certified Comprehensive Plan, and applicable agreements with New Castle County. Continued coordination with County and State agencies is necessary to ensure adequate public services, infrastructure capacity, and consistency with regional planning objectives.

~~The proposed annexation area must be zoned at the time of annexation, and there must be a plan of service for the area certifying that capacity exists to provide all public services. A more systematic annexation process will help achieve one of the plan goals to coordinate the development of the town with that of the surrounding areas and with the plans of New Castle County and the state of Delaware.~~

Development Infill within Town Limits

~~Future development could target vacant lots and/or dilapidated properties within the Town limits prior to approving annexation for new construction. Targeting infill may assist with growth while maintaining compliance with the terms of the MOA with New Castle County to provide sewer service.~~

Future growth should prioritize infill development and redevelopment within existing Town boundaries where feasible, prior to annexation of new land, to support efficient service delivery and infrastructure use.

Staff

~~As the town continues to grow in size, additional employees may be needed in order to provide services to the town's residents and businesses. The Town may consider hiring a Code~~

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Commented [JG7]: Troy Question: What is the actual timing on the sewer. We are in 2026, was it extended. Can the NCC use the sewer to block development, especially with what is being proposed in the Future Annexation map.

Commented [JG8]: Troy Comment: This should include road infrastructure and water, not just sewer.

Commented [JG9R8]: Troy will be making additional edits here.

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~~Enforcement Officer and creating a Public Works Department. The potential increase in open areas and stormwater infrastructure, may require additional personnel. The Town is currently investigating the feasibility of a municipal police department.~~

As the Town continues to grow in population, development, and service demands, strategic investments in staffing and organizational capacity are necessary to ensure a high quality of life for residents and a supportive environment for businesses. Expanding municipal operations through the addition of a Code Enforcement Officer and the establishment of a Public Works Department will strengthen the Town's ability to effectively manage development, maintain public infrastructure, deliver essential services and respond efficiently to community needs.

The anticipated increase in open spaces, stormwater management facilities, and public infrastructure will require dedicated personnel to ensure proper maintenance, regulatory compliance, and long-term sustainability. In alignment with these evolving needs and community priorities, the Town has established a municipal police force to enhance public safety, improve response times, and provide local, accountable law enforcement services. Together, these strategically planned staffing and organizational initiatives position the Town to proactively manage growth while maintaining effective, responsive, and fiscally responsible governance.

In addition to permanent staffing, the Town should consider utilizing contracted professional support to assist the Planning Commission, particularly when reviewing large-scale development proposals or undertaking major updates to the comprehensive plan. Contracted planning services can provide specialized expertise, increase review capacity during periods of heightened activity, and ensure that complex planning initiatives are completed efficiently and in alignment with best practices. Together, these strategic staffing and resource investments position the Town to proactively manage growth while maintaining effective, responsive, and fiscally responsible governance.

Charter Update

~~The Town Charter was updated in 2015. The Town may need to update its charter to accurately reflect annexation procedures, planning commission and board of adjustment responsibilities, and the new town boundary that includes annexations. The Town should continue to communicate with their legislators to complete the update.~~

The Town Charter was updated in **2023** to reflect evolving governance needs and organizational responsibilities. The update included revisions to the powers and responsibilities of the Mayor, as well as changes to provisions governing Mayor and Council disqualification and removal from office. In addition, the Charter amendments clarified procedures related to the election process and established updated terms of office to ensure consistency and transparency in local governance.

The 2023 Charter update also introduced new provisions addressing the establishment, oversight, and operation of the Town's municipal police force. These additions define the authority, powers, and duties of police officers, providing a clear framework for public safety

operations and ensuring accountability, consistency, and alignment with state law and best practices.

Zoning and Unified Development Code (Chapter 24)

The current ordinance was updated in 2020. Updates to the Zoning and Unified Development Code is currently under review with the updating of the Comprehensive Plan. The updates to the ordinance plan included changes to the ordinance, some of which are discussed in other sections of this report. Additional zoning categories were added and an ordinance specifying the plan approval process.

Commented [JG10]: Troy Comment: Can not find ordinances on the website. They use to be listed so either they moved or I can not find them.

Government Goal

~~Develop, maintain, and enforce processes, such as land use controls that ensure the proper government procedures are followed and the intents and principles of this comprehensive plan are achieved.~~

Develop, maintain, and enforce effective administrative and regulatory processes—such as land use controls, development regulations, and review procedures—to ensure that proper governmental processes are consistently followed and that the goals, intents, and guiding principles of this Comprehensive Plan are achieved.

Government Recommendations

- Need to continue to develop a systematic written process for annexations to conform to state law and the New Castle County sewer agreement and include systematic notification to New Castle County.
- Town Council should include estimating the overall costs and timing of development in order to provide regulatory oversight of new development. This will provide better insight to the true cost in the provision of maintenance and town services and facilities, both new and expanded.
- The Town should review its charter to include addressing the current description of the town's boundaries and updated procedures.
- The Town should consider hiring additional employees, to create a Public Works Department.
- The Town should encourage development to infill vacant and/or dilapidated properties within Town municipal boundaries.
- Coordinate with surrounding areas, Middletown, Odessa and New Castle County.
- Review past amendments to review if applicable to current town comprehensive plan.

2-2b. Community Services

Community services and facilities must be provided to meet the present and future needs of the community. Community services and facilities discussed herein include public safety (police, fire, and ambulance service), parks, recreation, and open space, as well as stormwater management, street maintenance, and trash and recycling removal. Other facilities discussed in this section include meeting space, healthcare services, and educational facilities. Other jurisdictions, private utilities, and other organizations may provide some of these needs but overall, they are critical to the quality of future development in Townsend.

Issues that will become critical with future growth are police protection, maintenance of local streets, and services such as trash and recycling collection, building inspection, and stormwater maintenance. The town may need to consider expanding municipal services that will support the needs of a town comparable to the size that Townsend will become when expected development occurs. As the town grows and new residents need and expect new or upgraded community services and facilities, the town will need enough revenue to provide the services and facilities outlined herein.

Public Safety

~~Public Safety has increasingly become a concern in Townsend. At this time, police protection is provided through the Delaware State Police. Additional extra duty patrols are purchased to support in town patrols. Future funding has been the main deterrent to establishing a police force. The Finance Committee should continue to collect information about alternatives to increase revenue to fund a police department, other than through property tax increases.~~

Public safety has become an increasing concern in the Town of Townsend as the community continues to grow. In response, the Town established a municipal police force to enhance public safety and provide direct law enforcement services to residents and businesses. The police provide a local and accountable public safety presence within the community.

Town police officers patrol throughout Townsend to deter criminal activity, respond to incidents, and build a visible and approachable presence within the community. Through regular patrols and community engagement, the police force plays a vital role in promoting safety, maintaining order, and fostering a sense of security for residents, business owners, and visitors.

Townsend Fire Company provides fire and emergency medical service (EMS) to the town. ~~and has over 164 registered members, including 19 trained EMTs, 30 active firefighters, and 90 administrative and honorary members~~. The fire company was founded in 1927 and has a long history of activity in the town, including carnivals and the provision of banquet hall facilities in addition to fire services. A new fire station was completed on Main Street in the spring of 2002. Most responses are the responsibility of volunteers, although there are now several paid firemen who help respond to calls between the hours of 5 a.m. and 4 p.m. An additional ambulance and a quick response vehicle have been added to the fleet, creating a total of three available EMS vehicles.

In 2006 the Town established a fire company impact fee to be assessed on all new construction within the town limits and future annexation areas. This impact fee of $750 per unit is held in an escrow fund, and a donation is made yearly to the fire company for capital improvements to better serve the residents of Townsend.

Public Safety Critical Issues & Future Needs

Crime

Residents are concerned about increasing crime as a potential impact of the expected development of areas recently annexed into town. Currently, police service is largely complaint driven, and this critical service could be inadequate as the town continues to grow. With the rapid population growth, there are concerns about an associated increase in public safety problems. Crime has escalated within the town limits and needs to be addressed immediately.

Volunteer Fire and EMS

Commented [JG11]: Troy Comment: Not sure if this is still an issue.

The Townsend Volunteer Fire Company is beginning to experience recruiting problems. As older members retire and the area develops (increasing the needs), staffing the fire and ambulance services may become a critical issue for the town. Adding to this problem is the lack of workforce housing in Townsend, which is forcing volunteers to live further away from the fire station. This decreases the number of trained volunteers who live close enough to be able to respond to emergencies and creates a limited base of responders who are available nights and weekends.

Public Safety Goal

Coordinate with the Townsend Volunteer Fire Company, the Delaware State Police, Middletown Police, New Castle County Police, and DelDOT to provide adequate police, fire, and emergency medical services to the town.

Public Safety Recommendations

- Continue to provide money and assistance to the Townsend Volunteer Fire Company as it expands to meet the needs of a growing town through impact fees on new-home construction and other sources.

- ~~Investigate the public safety needs of Townsend, and the potential need to establish a regional/municipal police force including the development of strategies to address community policing and operations.~~Continue to have our Police Force engage in the public to ensure they provide adequate and pro-active support to our community members.

- Work with New Castle County and the State to ensure adequate emergency medical services for the community and the region.

Educational Services

Townsend is located in the Appoquinimink School District, which serves most of the area of New Castle County below the C&D Canal as well as some areas above the canal. As shown in Table 14, Townsend pre-K and kindergarten children attend the newest school in the district, the 26,000-square-foot Townsend Early Childhood Center. The school opened in the fall of 2008 and provides 15 classrooms to serve pre-K and kindergarten students. Children in grades one through five attend the Townsend Elementary School located on Main Street, grades six to eight attend the Everett Meredith Middle School in Middletown. ~~Due to the remodeling of Everett Meredith Middle School, Townsend students in grades 6-8 will attend Fairview Campus until Everett Middle reopens in the Fall of 2022.~~ Grades nine to twelve students~~had~~ attend~~ed~~ ~~Middletown High School in Middletown. Beginning Fall of 2020, Townsend high school students (grades 9-12) will attend the brand-new~~ Odessa High School at the Fairview Campus.

Table 14: Educational Facilities

School Name	Location	Date Built/ Renovated	Enrollment (Most Recent Available)~~2019~~	State Proficient Ratings 2019 ELA 52.7% Mathematics 42.1%
Townsend Early Childhood Center	Townsend	Fall 2008	~180~~242~~	NA (Early Childhood programs are not subject to state ELA or Mathematics proficiency testing)
Townsend Elementary	Townsend	1932/2014	~430~~443~~	ELA: At or above state average ~~64.8%~~ Mathematics: At or above state
Everett Meredith Middle School	Middletown	1928/Rebuilt and Reopened 2022~~2002 (Closed 2020/2021,~~	~925~~927~~	ELA: Below state average ~~58.2%~~ Mathematics: Below state average ~~32.87%~~
Middletown High School	Middletown	1997/2002	~1,230~~1,776~~	ELA: Near state average ~~60.7%~~ Mathematics: Below state average
Odessa High School	Townsend	2020	~1,190~~NA~~	NA

Source: Delaware Department of Education (DOE) School Report Card; Appoquinimink School District Enrollment Reports; National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)~~DOE Report Card~~

In addition to public school facilities, there is a private early childhood education center and several private day care centers in Townsend. The Town should work with YMCA of Delaware, and other youth organizations to provide summer camps and educational opportunities for children.

Post-Secondary Education

The closest post-secondary educational facilities to Townsend are in Dover, New Castle and Newark. Dover and New Castle is home to Wilmington University, Dover also hosts Delaware Technical College, and Delaware State University. Newark is home to the University of Delaware. Cecil County Community College is located nearby in Elkton, Maryland.

Library

~~The Town should continue to support the provision of adequate library services for the MOT region. Currently, the Appoquinimink Library, part of the Delaware system of Department of Libraries, is located on N Broad Street and in Middletown and provides public access to the library and seasonal educational programs for adults and children. A new library is anticipated to be built on a vacant property on Middletown Odessa Road (SR 299) (East Main St.) and Catherine St. north of Silver Lake Elementary. The Corbit Calloway Memorial Library in Odessa is a contract library to the New Castle County Department of Libraries and is available for community use.~~

~~The Town is also introducing the Little Free Library program within the community. Three book boxes will be installed with one being located at the Townsend Municipal Park, one in Townsend Village II and another in the county park located on the corner of Commerce and South Street. It is hoped that this program will be expanded throughout town.~~

The Town of Townsend benefits from a range of library resources that support education, literacy, and community engagement. The new Appoquinimink Library, located on East Main Street, has been completed and is now open to the public, offering residents access to books, digital resources, educational programs, and community events. This modern facility serves as a central hub for learning and collaboration within the region. In addition to the Appoquinimink Library, the Corbit Calloway Memorial Library in Odessa is a contract library to the New Castle County Department of Libraries and is available for community use.

In addition to this regional resource, the Town of Townsend has established a Little Free Library program, with multiple locations throughout Town. These small, publicly accessible book exchanges encourage reading, community interaction, and lifelong learning by providing convenient access to books for residents of all ages. Together, the Appoquinimink Library and the Town's Little Free Libraries reflect Townsend's

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commitment to supporting educational resources, promoting literacy, and enhancing quality of life for the community.

Education Critical Issues and Future Needs

Educational Facilities

Residents are concerned about crowding, usage, and the condition of the community's schools as development continues in the areas recently annexed into town. The Appoquinimink School District has been under immense growth pressure because of recent development in the Bear/Glasgow and MOT regions. As Townsend continues to grow, the corresponding population of school aged children will also grow, requiring additional classroom space. Townsend Elementary was recently remodeled in 2014 to continue to meet the needs of the residents of the town. Additionally, the existing school has been a cultural and community asset that the town and a Spanish immersion program has been implemented at the Learning Center as well as the Elementary school.

Education Goal

Continue to provide adequate educational facilities to meet the needs of current and future residents while preserving the community character of Townsend Elementary. The Town should continue to work with the staff of Townsend Elementary to provide community support for parents and students to become responsible, self-disciplined, contributing community members.

Education Recommendations

- Promote the continued role of the Townsend Elementary School as a community education, recreation, and cultural resource while developing and growing the partnership between the elementary school and the early childhood center.
- Continue to encourage childcare providers to locate in Townsend.
- Continue to promote educational activities (e.g., summer camps), at the Municipal Park through partnerships with local nonprofits such as YMCA of Delaware.
- ~~Develop safe walkways for children to cross the railroad tracks to walk to Learning Center and Elementary school and to bus stops.~~ Develop safe walkways for children to cross the railroad tracks to access the Learning Center, Elementary School, and bus stops. The Town is currently participating in the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) to evaluate and plan improvements that will enhance pedestrian safety and connectivity along these routes.
- Continue to encourage childcare providers to locate in Townsend.

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Health Care

Most town residents drive to Middletown to obtain health care, and even further depending on the severity of the problem. The Middletown Health Unit is located on North Broad Street in Middletown and is run by the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services' Division of Public Health. It provides dental care for Medicaid eligible children, cancer screening, a prenatal clinic, post-partum and family planning clinics, mental health, hygiene, pediatrics, and geriatric screening. The Bayhealth Outpatient Center is located on Main Street in Middletown and specializes in cardiology, cancer care, family medicine, general surgery, mental health, obstetrics/gynecology, and pediatrics. The Christiana Care Health System/Nemours operates a Family Health Care Center on Cleaver Farm Road in Middletown. On the west side of Middletown, Christiana Care Medical Center offers diagnostics such as MRI, X-ray, ultrasound, CAT-scan, as well as physical therapy and specialist doctor services. Christiana Care Primary Care is located on the east side of Middletown that serves as an emergency unit on the lower level. Encompass Health Rehab is also located on the east side of Middletown.

~~The closest acute care hospital is Christiana Hospital, located about 25 miles north of Townsend near Christiana, or Kent General Hospital, a Bayhealth Medical Center, located about 25 miles south in Dover.~~
The closest acute care hospitals are Christiana Hospital, located about 25 miles north of Townsend near Christiana, and Kent General Hospital, a Bayhealth Medical Center, located about 25 miles south in Dover. In addition, the emergency center in Middletown has been approved for expansion and is scheduled to open in the spring of 2027, providing closer access to emergency services for Townsend residents.

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Healthcare Recommendation

- Encourage professional healthcare services to locate within Townsend with the long-range planning by the state and county for adequate primary healthcare and emergency facilities to serve the MOT region.

Postal Service

There is currently a post office on Main Street that services the town Monday through Saturday and has the zip code 19734. Mail delivery is split. The old town area of Townsend is serviced by a rural route system that provides for mail delivery via postal box. While the developments of Townsend Village 1 and Townsend Village 2 as well as Townsend Station have their mail distributed via letter carriers from Middletown. Mail delivery can be requested from the original town area as long as a mailbox is present at the resident.

Solid-Waste Disposal

Trash removal and recycling is a basic service that residents expect and rely on when living in a town. Residents are required to use the town's contracted trash provider. Townsend contracts

to the qualified bidder for trash removal and recyclables collection services. Commercial businesses in town are required to contract for garbage and recycling services individually. Currently, trash and recycling needs are being met and the contracted collector has adequate capacity. The town should engage with the contractor to ensure current and future capacity is available as the town continues to grow.

Yard waste such as grass clippings, leaves, brush, and shrubs can be recycled into mulch or compost and be reused. The town has made available pick-up on a bi-weekly basis on the same weekday as trash and recycling. A yard waste bin is made available for the service. This service starts in April and runs through December. Check the Town Website for the days of collection. https://townsend.delaware.gov/2025/01/02/2025-municipal-waste-service-guidelines/

~~Although the town is not legally obligated to recycle yard waste, the town should encourage recycling by providing~~ Beyond the services provided there are other alternative options if you needed.~~information to residents about their recycling options.~~ Pine Tree Station, located outside of Townsend on Pine Tree Road, can accept yard waste. More information can be found at https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/waste-hazardous/yard-waste/drop-off-sites/.

Solid-Waste Recommendations

- Continue to provide trash removal and recycling service at the most affordable rate by providing the contract to the lowest qualified bidder.
- Encourage residents to participate in the recycling program and educate residents about allowable recyclables.
- Explore yard waste collection at various times throughout the year to improve upon cost effective services at Pine Tree Transfer Station.
- Encourage residents to compost their yard waste or take it to Pine Tree Transfer Station for recycling.
- Engage in regular conversations with the Pine Tree Transfer Station to ensure adequate capacity and services are available for current and future expected growth.

Electricity

At this time, Delmarva Power provides electricity throughout the town with no oversight by Townsend.

Gas

Chesapeake Utilities Corporation was granted a franchise to provide natural gas to the town with no oversight by Townsend.

Commented [JG12]: Check link

Commented [JG13]: Troy looking into this

Cable

Atlantic Broadband and Verizon Delaware, Inc., approved to provide cable services to the town with no oversight by Townsend.

State Service Center

The Division of State Service Centers of the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) operates a network of 14 state service centers across the state. These centers offer a wide range of public and not-for-profit services to help with health and human service needs. The center closest to Townsend is the Appoquinimink State Service Center located at 122 Silver Lake Road in Middletown. This center offers client services administered by DHSS divisions including the Division of State Service Centers, the Division of Social Services, and the Division of Public Health. The Delaware Department of Labor's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation also has an office at this location. For more information, go to www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/main/maps/dsscmap/appoquin.htm

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Parks, passive open spaces, natural areas, and preserved agricultural lands help define the community, provide for recreational pursuits, ensure the continued viability of agriculture, and promote the well- being of the community's residents. Townsend has indicated that preserving and enhancing the town's social, cultural, aesthetic, and environmental amenities is an important goal. Zoning codes require that at least 10 percent of all available land in a new residential development be dedicated as open space for passive or active recreation and at least 50 percent of the open space must be suitable for active recreation.

Smaller~~New Castle County~~ Townsend Park

The Smaller Town Park, formerly the New Castle County-Townsend Park, is located on the south end of town. The park was officially transferred to the Town in 2025 and is now administered by the Town of Townsend. This small and well-used park includes playground equipment, picnic tables, and a BBQ grill, providing recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.~~The New Castle County-Townsend Park is located on the south end of town, just outside the town's boundary and is administered by the county. This small and well-used park includes playground equipment, picnic tables, and a BBQ grill.~~

New Castle County Regional Park

A New Castle County Regional Park is in the master plan for the Southern New Castle County Land Acquisition and Development Plan to be built two miles north of town adjacent to Wiggins Mill Pond. The Park was originally to be constructed in 2003, but construction has not commenced. The Town should continue to work with New Castle County to initiate construction. The Park will eventually be a district park and recreational facility that will complement the Townsend Municipal Park. There is a need for a trail network to connect this park with Townsend Municipal Park and the Charles Price Park in Middletown. Other recreation providers in the area include the Middletown Senior Center, MOT Little League, football and soccer leagues, Boys & Girls Clubs, Girl and Boy Scouts, and 4-H.

Townsend Municipal Park

Commented [JG14]: Troy Question: Should we consider look at this again as this zoning may not be appropriate for downtown revitalization and may discourage developers.

Commented [JG15R14]: Look into the zoning restrictions for each zone to see how we can accommodate old town revitalization without affecting code changes for zones not in "Old town"

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The Townsend Municipal Park is an 11.5-acre, deed-restricted property that is located on Edgar Road in Townsend Village I. In early November 2007, the mayor and council held a groundbreaking ceremony on this municipal park property. The Town worked with DNREC and the Appoquinimink River Association to design the park in an environmentally responsible manner with native landscaping and a state-of-the-art stormwater-management system.

Future Use

There is a desire from the Town to work with groups, such as the YMCA of Delaware, and the MOT Senior Center to provide programs for the future center. The Park was designed to include ball fields, basketball courts, a skate park, and other multi-purpose active recreation areas. The Town should investigate the potential for constructing additional walking and jogging paths, a public swimming pool or splash pad, bicycle path, community gardens, and hiking trails in adjoining open spaces.

~~Greenbelt,~~ TDR, and Agriculture-Preservation Areas

In order to preserve the rural character in and around Townsend and help reduce conflict between urban and rural uses, the Town has indicated areas to the south, west, and north of the town to be preserved ~~as a greenbelt~~ and act as a buffer between Townsend and Middletown. These ~~greenbelt~~ areas serve as potential sending zones for a Transfer of Development Rights Program. This program should be jointly developed either as a "stand-alone municipal program" or as a joint effort with New Castle County and the state of Delaware. ~~The greenbelt areas are detailed on Map 4 in the Appendix.~~

Property owners located in the area identified ~~as the future greenbelt~~ should be encouraged to participate in the Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Foundation that partner with the Delaware Department of Agriculture and New Castle County. This program provides landowners the opportunity to enter into an Agricultural Preservation District, which provides tax relief in exchange for limits on development for ten years, or an Agricultural Conservation Easement that permanently preserves the land by purchasing the development rights. Within the area ~~greenbelt~~ there are property owners who are currently participating in the New Castle County permanent preservation program (175 acres), Delaware Department of Agriculture easement program (122 acres), and the Delaware Department of Agriculture preservation districts (10 acres). New Castle County owns a 194-acre park in the area.~~greenbelt.~~

New Castle County has incorporated a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program into the county Unified Development Code, allowing development rights to be transferred from one area to another. Rights in a "sending" area are bought by a developer and used in a "receiving" area to intensify development. This allows the owner of the "sending" areas to be compensated and still preserve open space. Townsend's future greenbelt will be identified as a sending area for development rights and an area of medium density along Summit Bridge Road (SR 71) in the north of town will be a receiving area. (See Map 4: Townsend Growth & Annexation & Future Land Use Map).

Commented [JG16]: Troy Comment: This is in complete opposition to what why we are doing this. This again needs to be discussed at length. This is the type of change that should require a community engagement to have an open discussion before it is just changed. That is my opinion, but I think to change this without community engage would not be very responsible.

Commented [JG17R16]: Ask Lisa- why no open meetings? This is counteractive to "growth" mentality, how much community insight do we need? Ask lisa these questions

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Connectivity
As a participant in the Safe Routes to School Program, DelDOT helped fund the streetscape project that installed sidewalk compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements and ample lighting. The Town should continue to connect the system of parks, trails, and greenways through town.

As the town acquires more open spaces and parks with the development of new subdivision and annexation areas, the interconnected network of trails, walkways, and shared pathways should continue to be a priority when designating open space. Main Street, the historic section of town, the new sub-divisions, the new municipal park, and the Townsend elementary school are all priorities for walking trails that promote interconnectivity.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Critical Issues & Future Needs

Local Parks
Located in Townsend Village I, Townsend Municipal Park has sufficient space for open space for a community center to provide recreational activities in town. Additional parkland or open space should be secured in the old section of town as well as in the new subdivisions. The U.S. Census data show a high percentage of children living in Townsend, and residents would like to see more places and activities for children.

Connectivity and Walkability
Increased development surrounding the old town has created a disjointed town that cannot be easily maneuvered on foot. The Town needs to continue to create a network of walking trails and paths throughout town to connect the various sections. The Town should plan for funding for purchasing and maintaining these trails. In particular, the new municipal park should be connected to the original section of town through a safe path near the southeast corner of the parcel.

Regional Greenway
~~The northernmost boundary of the town, currently at Townsend Village I, has the potential to serve as a link in a regional greenway, connecting Townsend Municipal Park to Wiggins Mill Pond, New Castle County Park and beyond. The Regional Greenway would serve as a pedestrian or bicycle path to connect the open spaces in the MOT area. Much of this land is protected from development either through floodplain regulations or existing parks and open space.~~
The northernmost boundary of the Town, currently at Townsend Village I, has the potential to serve as a link in a regional greenway, connecting Townsend Municipal Park to Wiggins Mill Pond, New Castle County Park, and beyond. The greenway would provide pedestrian and bicycle connections between open spaces in the MOT area, enhancing recreation and alternative transportation options. Much of this land is protected from development through floodplain regulations or existing parks and open space. The Town is currently conducting feasibility studies to determine where walking paths and

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bike trails would be most utilized and appropriate, allowing Townsend to strategically plan and take advantage of opportunities for community connectivity and active transportation.

Wildlife Preservation

Residents have expressed concern about the potential loss of wildlife as agricultural and wooded areas are developed in homes and commercial structures. The parks should use sustainable management practices such as stormwater management and the use of Delaware native species whenever possible. Concentrating development on newly developed parcels, linking open space and preserved areas, and participation in the Community Wildlife Habitat Program will maximize the area available for wildlife.

Open-Space Preservation

The continued effort to preserve open space in town and in future annexation areas is important. The Town should continue to enforce the open-space regulations in new subdivisions, promote the use of agricultural districts and easements, streamline and promote the Transfer of Development Rights program, and allow denser development in appropriate areas.

Zoning

The Town has designated a zoning classification of "Preservation," which can be used to identify land that might be suitable as part of a local-park system. The Town may want to revise the ordinance to allow certain public uses such as a library, or community/recreation center. Although the Townsend Municipal Park is deed-restricted, the Town might want to rezone the property to Preservation. The Town needs to amend its zoning code to allow for agricultural and/or agribusiness uses that are compatible with current or future land uses and specify uses in the future greenbelt.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Goal

Promote a connected system of open space to provide passive and active areas for recreation and preserve the town's natural wildlife habitat and aesthetic resources. This goal will require coordination with New Castle County.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Recommendations

- Update the Unified Development Code to allow higher-density development on newly developing lands to maximize land preserved as open space.
- Review current lands zoned "Preservation" and consider rezoning other open space areas in town as "Preservation."
- Consider updating the Zoning and Unified Development Code to include a zoning category that would designate Townsend Municipal Park as open space, but still allow structures such as a community center, or recreational equipment, bike paths, hiking trails, dog park, and splash pad.

- Have Town explore acquiring and utilizing space to allow structures such as a community center, library, or recreational equipment.
- Consider updating the Unified Development Code to include an agricultural and/or agribusiness zoning designation that allows agricultural activities, including livestock, and low-density development (about one dwelling unit/five acres) within the greenbelt in the town.
- Coordinate with Middletown to protect areas identified by both towns as greenbelt.
- Work with Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Foundation, Delaware Department of Agriculture, and New Castle County to encourage landowner participation in preservation districts and easements.
- Work with New Castle County to participate in the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program and designate sending and receiving areas in town.
- Continue to participate in the Community Wildlife Habitat Certification Project and encourage homeowners to complete the application for certification.
- Secure an easement near the southeast corner of the municipal park to provide safe access to the park from the center of town.
- ~~Continue to~~ Ssurvey residents about their local park needs and interests as necessary. ~~.~~
- Study maintenance and liability issues, arrangements, and costs for new local parks or open space.
- Locate future parks, both active and passive, to be accessible to all town residents and linked to other parks to provide corridors for recreation and wildlife.
- Work with New Castle County, Middletown, Delaware Greenways, DNREC, and others to establish a greenway/bikeway between Noxontown Pond and Wiggins Mill Pond with a connection to Townsend.
- To address connectivity of the Townsend Municipal Park with the historic section of town, Townsend should encourage private-property owners on Chestnut Street to allow public access through private property to access the park. Private-property owners are protected from liability according to Delaware Code Title 7 Chapter 59 "Public Recreation on Private Lands."
- Improve landscaping and add boardwalks where necessary to protect wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas along trails and greenways.

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- Support New Castle County efforts to develop a regional park facility adjacent to Wiggins Mill pond as part of the Southern New Castle County Land Acquisition and Development plan.

Other Community Needs and Services

Community meeting and banquet space is an important aspect of solidifying the community. Available space is located at the Townsend Fire Hall, the Fellowship Hall of Immanuel United Methodist Church, and the Townsend Elementary School. To meet the needs of the town, it is necessary to increase the amount of meeting space in town by securing a community center with Town and developing a commercial district along Summit Bridge Road (Route 71) for potential development.

Other Community Needs and Services Recommendation

- Continue the relationship with the MOT Senior Center to provide recreational opportunities for the elderly population in Townsend.
- Research the need and location for a community center.
- Partner with a Townsend community outreach program and local churches, non-profits and youth groups to assist with residential services for the betterment of the community.

2-3. Water and Wastewater

GOAL: Provide adequate and efficient public facilities, utilities, and services to meet the needs of present and future residents.

~~The provision of drinking water and wastewater disposal services are two elements that are vital to the public health of a community. This section of the plan reviews the condition of these services in Townsend and recommends action to improve the long-term provision of these services.~~

The provision of safe drinking water and reliable wastewater disposal services is foundational to public health, environmental stewardship, and sustainable community growth. This section of the plan evaluates the current capacity, condition, and performance of Townsend's water and wastewater systems and identifies strategic actions to ensure these services can support existing needs while accommodating future development. By planning proactively for system enhancements, operational resilience, and long-term scalability, the Town can position its utility infrastructure to enable responsible growth, protect public health, and support economic development well into the future.

2-3a. Public Water Supply

Currently an investor-owned water supplier, the Artesian Water Company (Townsend Water), supplies drinking water to the town. Artesian provides potable water to residents and businesses to satisfy their daily needs and provides a reliable source of water to combat fires. Public water systems are highly regulated by federal and state statutes and are continually monitored for water pressure and quality. Due to significant growth in the past five years, Artesian has prepared a five-year plan to upgrade the water system in order to provide the highest quality service to the town. Once completed, the company has assured the town it will have adequate supply to meet new demands. Artesian Water Company maintains Lattamus Street pump station that utilizes an underground storage tank on Railroad Avenue. As part of the five-year plan to upgrade the town water system, Artesian has added an additional pump station to help increase water delivery. Artesian utilizes two "Class A" wells located in the original section of town that draw water from the Rancocas Group Aquifer to provide drinking water to the system. These wells are protected by the Source Water Protection Ordinance

specified in the Unified Development Code. The wells are designated as "low vulnerability" because they withdraw water from a confined aquifer that has significant clay layers between the ground surface and the well-intake screen.

Due to the geology of the confined aquifer, the wells have a low susceptibility to most contaminants which is fortunate for the town because the wells are located in a section of town that was developed before the Source Water Protection Ordinances were enacted. Townsend has adopted an ordinance that requires all new construction and annexations to be connected to the municipal water system. No additional permits for the installation of private wells will be issued. However, residences that already had private wells in use before July 2, 1991, are exempt from the mandatory connection to the municipal water supply until the wells become inoperable. Table 15 provides basic information on the town's wells.

Table 15: Well Information for Artesian Water Company (Townsend Water)

Well Number	Permit Number	Year Constructed	Well Capacity (gpm)	Well Diameter (inches)	Screen Interval (fbgs)	Aquifer
Townsend Water 2R	187348	2002	200	8	95-125	Rancocas Group
Townsend Water 1	30148	1973	225	8	86-155	Rancocas Group

Source: Public Water Supply Source Water Assessment for Artesian Water Company (Townsend Water), October 2003

Public Water Supply Recommendations

- Coordinate with New Castle County and Artesian Water to ensure the timely implementation of the five-year plan to upgrade to provide adequate water services for present and future residents.
- Encourage homes nearest to town to be built first.
- Discourage development within the Source Water Protection areas.

2-3b. Wastewater

New Castle County provides wastewater service to Townsend through a sewer agreement negotiated in 2001 that extends until the year 2025~~5~~6. The county provides sewer service through infrastructure and a sewer easement located along Wiggins Mill Road that connects to a wastewater treatment and disposal facility known as Water Farm #1, located southeast of Odessa. Wastewater is treated by a sequencing batch-reactor system, and treated effluent is either discharged to the Appoquinimink River or used for spray irrigation.

The sewer agreement between Townsend and the county covers all existing residences in town and subdivisions to include: Townsend Villages I & II, Townsend Station, and The Woods at Hidden Creek. 24 infill dwelling units, and 45,000 square feet (23,000 gallons per day) of

Commented [JG18]: Troy Question: When was the last time this was done? Probably 2020.

Commented [JG19]: Troy Comment: This needs to be updated with new agreement. Just not sure what that is at this point.

commercial development. In return, Townsend agreed to improve environmental protections and give the county the right to refuse any annexation or industrial use.

Commented [JG20]: Troy Comment: This is an important point we need to take into consideration with regards to future annexation of the land.

Commented [JG21R20]: Bring this up to Lisa as well to review.

As a result of the sewer agreement between Townsend and New Castle County, commercial uses within town are limited until 2025 to 45,000 square feet (23,000 gallons per day). Additionally, any new industrial use is subject to both New Castle County Council and County Executive approval. These conditions have the potential to limit otherwise appropriate development. Several commercial and institutional uses have been added since the agreement that do not count towards the sewer quota for new commercial development. A Walgreen's drug store relies on a septic system, and the Townsend Early Childhood Center adjacent to Townsend Elementary that was built by Appoquinimink School District does not count towards the quota because it is a regional community use. With~~When~~ The Woods at Hidden Creek currently being~~is~~ developed it is to the highest density allowed by current zoning, there is the potential to construct about 222 additional dwelling units.

Wastewater Critical Issues & Future Needs

Development Phasing

The town appears to have more residential building capacity than sewer capacity in the long term. As new development occurs, it will be important to develop the areas closest to the existing town infrastructure first. This will ensure that the town grows in an orderly fashion and is not stuck later waiting for sewer capacity to fill a gap in the middle of town.

Growth Potential

~~In order for the town to grow, sewer capacity needs to increase. Townsend has continued to grow and plans to annex additional properties for a greenbelt and for residential and mixed-use development but can only do so if sewer capacity is increased. Townsend is located in an area experiencing substantial residential growth, and the town should be able to maximize development capacity surrounding already developed areas without strict limitations on sewer capacity.~~

Townsend is well-positioned for continued growth and strategic expansion. The Town has plans to annex additional properties for residential, mixed-use, and greenbelt development, supporting both community character and economic vitality. With proactive planning and coordination on infrastructure, including sewer capacity, Townsend can maximize development potential in areas adjacent to existing neighborhoods while accommodating the growing demand in Southern New Castle County.

County Investment in Sewer Infrastructure

~~Under the current agreement, New Castle County is obligated to provide improvements in sewer infrastructure that will result in sewer capacity for 800 additional residences, 45,000 square feet of commercial development, and 24 infill units (since 2001). Townsend should coordinate with the county to ensure the upgrades to infrastructure are completed in accordance with the rate of development in The Woods at Hidden Creek and any new annexations.~~

Under the current agreement, New Castle County is responsible for sewer infrastructure improvements that will support approximately 800 additional residences, 45,000 square feet of commercial development, and 24 infill units. The sewer agreement is set to renew at the end of 2026, and negotiations and discussions are already underway to ensure that future growth is not constrained by capacity limitations. Townsend will continue to work closely with the County to align infrastructure upgrades with ongoing development in *The Woods at Hidden Creek*, future annexations, and other growth initiatives, enabling the Town to achieve its long-term expansion and economic development goals.

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Cost of Connections

Some residents are still utilizing septic systems and are required to hook up to the county sewer system when these systems fail. However, the cost incurred to the homeowner to connect to the county sewer system can be extremely high. According to the sewer agreement, all annexed properties should be connected to the county sewer, but the high cost to the homeowner has prohibited this from occurring. In some cases, sewer lines were 150 feet short of reaching residences, and homeowner costs could reach up to $10,000.

Wastewater Goal

Provide additional sewer capacity for Townsend for both commercial and residential use in accordance with State Investment Strategies and the Southern New Castle County Memorandum of Agreement Local Area Plan for the MOT region. The town wishes to renegotiate its current sewer agreement with the county soon, in order to allow purchase of additional sewer services from Middletown.

Wastewater Recommendations

- Continue to negotiate with New Castle County to increase the sewer capacity stated in the agreement to allow growth in areas that are in accordance with the State Investment Strategies and the SNCC Memorandum of Agreement Local Area Plan for the MOT region.
- Continue communication with New Castle County regarding the sewer agreement.
- Investigate the possibility of connecting to Middletown and Smyrna Municipal Wastewater Treatment System to increase sewer capacity.
- Investigate the possibility of Townsend building its own municipal wastewater treatment facility.
- The town should work with the county and nonprofits to secure funding to make connecting to the county sewer more affordable for residents.
- Encourage homes to be built nearest to town first.

2-3c. Stormwater

Stormwater is the water that accumulates during precipitation events and travels across impervious surfaces. As development increases, the amount of impervious surface increases, which leads to more stormwater runoff flowing across the ground surface. Runoff has the potential to transport pollution such as oil, gas, pet waste, fertilizers, sediment, and other pollutants that collect on roadways and gutters into the drainage systems and eventually into streams, ponds, and rivers. Preventing pollution from stormwater runoff is addressed through stormwater-management ordinances, environmental regulations, and smart land use decisions.

New development projects are required to submit a stormwater-management plan that addresses stormwater issues and indicates the methods of stormwater management. In addition to plan submittal, inspection during and after construction and education about stormwater best management practices is required. Methods of stormwater management include structural and vegetative mechanisms, both of which control the quantity and quality of water that reaches waterways, such as stormwater-management ponds, rain gardens, riparian buffers and storm sewers. All stormwater-management plans shall be developed in accordance with the state of Delaware Sediment and Stormwater Regulations and be approved by the town engineer

Townsend has adopted ordinances in accordance with Source Water Assessment and Protection Plan that specifies land uses in Water Resource Protection Areas (WRPA). WRPA areas include Class A Wellhead Protection Areas and Excellent Water Recharge Areas that are shown on Map-2 in the Appendix. This ordinance is described in the natural resources section in more detail but generally restricts the amount of impervious cover allowed in WRPAs and requires all new buildings to drain stormwater from roofs into underground recharge systems. The underground recharge systems greatly reduce the velocity of runoff and opportunities for contamination.

Although Townsend is progressive in the implementation of green best management practices and stormwater retention and detention ponds in new development, stormwater quantity and quality management in the historic town core and industrial areas still need to be addressed. Currently, these areas have no stormwater-management systems, and rainwater and pollutants are free to enter streams and wetlands via runoff, creating the potential for unintended environmental impacts. Residents have indicated that standing water has collected in the streets and in basements after a rainfall. To address these issues, Townsend should begin to retrofit the historic section of town to improve stormwater management. This issue will become even more prominent if the town grows to the extent that one of the state-maintained roads needs to be widened or otherwise upgraded. If this occurs, the state will be required to upgrade the stormwater management system in that corridor, with potentially devastating effects on the town's historic and aesthetic resources if a stormwater management facility were inappropriately located. In addition to this, the Town should assess the age of the stormwater infrastructure. Old and aging pipes have the potential for catastrophic failure causing roads and sidewalks to sinkhole. Funds to assess stormwater infrastructure for old town should be state function as it is their roadways and right of way.

As the Town continues to develop with increased impervious cover, it is possible that permit coverage will be required under the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) program pending the outcome of the future census data. As of June 2021, Townsend lies within the minimum population threshold that allows for a waiver for the MS4 permit and associated requirements. This permit is for the discharge of stormwater from/through the municipal separate storm sewer system to surface waters of the State. The Town should plan for future permit coverage and retain staff that can administer the Phase II MS4 permit.

Stormwater Management Goal

Provide all areas of the town with adequate facilities for removal of stormwater in order to reduce pollutant and sediment loading in local streams and rivers and control excess stormwater that collects during rain events while preserving Townsend's small-town character.

Stormwater Management Recommendations

- Work with New Castle County Conservation District and DNREC to provide assistance with stormwater issues and implementation of green technology best management practices that could be used to reduce pollutants entering the Appoquinimink River and Blackbird Creek.

- Provide homeowners with education and training about best management practices for stormwater in residential areas.

- Require the town engineer to review the town for stormwater-management issues, especially those related to industrial land uses and street upgrades. This information should be used to identify and preserve appropriate land for stormwater-management facilities in anticipation of the need.

- When new stormwater-management regulations become available, adopt those parts that are compatible with Townsend's small-town character.

- The town should review and address future budgetary and staffing needs for future MS4 permitting.

- The town should continue to locate funding to improve drainage condition by retrofitting stormwater management techniques in the historic and industrial sections of town. In the past, the town received funding for drainage projects on Taylor Street to mitigate water collecting in residents' basements.

2-4. Natural Resources

GOAL: Preserve and enhance the town's social, cultural, aesthetic, and environmental amenities.

Natural resources are an important part of Townsend. ~~Measures the town has taken to proactively preserve the natural environment are described in this section.~~This section describes the Town's ongoing efforts to preserve, protect, and manage its natural resources. Open space and natural areas in town are vital for maintaining the town's character and protecting the drinking water supply. These resources also contribute to stormwater management, habitat protection, and climate resilience.This section provides an inventory of the environmental features present in town and describes programs and policies that address environmental protection and resource management.~~can address these concerns and protect the town's natural resources.~~

2-4a. Physical Characteristics

Townsend is located in southern New Castle County, Delaware, within the interior lowlands portion of the Atlantic Coastal Plain. The topography is characterized by elevations at about 60 to 70 feet above sea level throughout most of town, decreasing to an elevation of 10 feet in the

northwest portion of town near Wiggins Mill Pond. This topography influences drainage patterns, floodplain behavior, and the location of environmentally sensitive areas.

Wetlands

Wetlands protect water quality by naturally filtering runoff, providing wildlife habitat, and providing protection from flooding. Wetlands are generally categorized by having hydrophytic vegetation (plants suited to wet soils), hydric soils (soils that are seasonally or permanently saturated), and a hydrologic connection (a connection to either groundwater or surface water). The coastal plain seasonal ponds have a high ecological value providing breeding habitat for a variety of animals and supporting a high diversity of plant and animal species including state-rare amphibians, such as the tiger salamander and the barking treefrog as well as federally endangered species of bog turtles. Protection of both non-tidal and tidal wetlands falls under the regulatory jurisdiction of Section 404 provisions of the Federal Clean Water Act. ~~The regulatory authorities for development or disturbance in and around wetlands are the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, and the Environmental Protection Agency.~~ Regulatory oversight is provided by the Delaware Department of natural Resources and Environmental Control 9DNREC), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Wooded wetland areas exist along the Appoquinimink River and Wiggins Mill Pond in Townsend Village I, Townsend Village II, and on The Woods at Hidden Creek. In the northern part of Townsend Villages, there is an existing wooded area that is delineated as non-tidal wetlands. In Townsend Village II, a section of woods runs along the eastern side of the development and is also indicated as a non-tidal wetland area.

A small piece of property north of Gray Street in Townsend Village II is designated as a wetlands area. Since 1992 the Delaware Wildlife Species Conservation & Research Program, has been monitoring the area for changes in the bog turtle population. ~~The program continues to study and determine the impacts of new development on the habitat of the turtle.~~ Monitoring data continues to inform land-use decisions and development review. The Woods at a Hidden Creek, located in the southwest quadrant of town, has significant non-tidal wetlands, which need to be considered before development occurs. ~~Future development should avoid isolating and/or disconnecting contiguous wetland tracts.~~ Future development should avoid fragmenting or isolating contiguous wetland systems and should preserve functional connections between wetland areas. Additional wetlands interspersed throughout town can be identified on the Environmental Features Map 2 in the Appendix.

Forested Areas

Townsend has a significant amount of forested land within the town boundary with stands of mature forests located in Townsend Village I, Townsend Village II, and on The Woods at Hidden Creek. The town should actively promote the protection of this valuable resource by continuing to prohibit clearing of forests and require reforestation of open space with appropriate plants listed in the Zoning and Unified Development Code Section 24.36.170 of the

town's municipal code. Maintaining forest cover supports groundwater recharge, stormwater management, air quality, wildlife habitat, and temperature moderation. In addition, the town can work to promote the development and maintenance of forested areas through participation in the Urban and Community Forestry Program. This program is administered by the Delaware Forest Service within the Department of Agriculture and offers grants and technical assistance to communities for tree-planting, care and management projects on publicly owned lands, such as parks, open space and along streets. Information can be found at https://delawaretrees.com/programs-and-services/urban-grant-program/.

Open Space and Agricultural Preservation Areas

Open space in town is not only used to preserve rural character and provide outdoor recreation, it also provides important habitat and ecological benefits for wildlife. Townsend has been able to counteract some of the negative effects of development on wildlife habitat and natural ecosystems through zoning regulations that mandate a requirement of at least ten percent open space in new developments, programs that encourage using native plants, and reforestation requirements. The town is also making environmentally responsible choices in Townsend Municipal Park by planting Delaware native species and implementing stormwater best management practices. Open space also plays an important role in stormwater management, climate adaptation, and groundwater recharge.

The area surrounding Townsend is a proposed greenbelt and has agricultural easements and agricultural preservation districts in state and county programs. Agricultural landowners will be encouraged to participate in these programs. ~~that restrict development on prime agricultural land and to participate in a Transfer of Development Rights program after the sending and receiving areas are identified.~~ The Town may continue to evaluate participation in Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs as sending and receiving areas are identified. A future agricultural zoning category may be considered to allow agricultural activities and maintain low-density development within designated greenbelt areas. ~~A new agricultural zoning category should be considered for the town's Zoning and Unified Development Code that would allow agricultural activities within the town boundary and permit one dwelling unit per five acres in the greenbelt.~~ Farmland preservation is important because it not only protects food supply and open space but has the added benefit of protecting natural habitats.

Floodplains and Flooding

Floodplains occur naturally along water bodies and are the areas where increased stream flows are accommodated during storm events. While every flood event will have a unique flood plain based on the amount of rainfall received, the 100-year flood plain is accepted as the "regulatory" limit of flooding for flood insurance purposes and for zoning and development practices in Townsend. Land that is designated as a 100-year flood plain has a one percent (1/100) chance of a flood occurring each year. Occasionally the Federal Emergency Management Agency evaluates precipitation records and associated flooding events to assess the flood plain boundaries. Increased precipitation intensity associated with climate change is expected to increase flood risk. ~~As the climate changes, Delaware is projected to have more~~

~~frequent high intensity precipitation events, which may cause more pervasive and extensive flooding.~~ Floodplain boundaries can be viewed online: https://maps.dnrec.delaware.gov/FloodPlanning/default.html.

The maintenance and protection of Townsend's floodplain is important to minimize property damage during storm events and maintain the natural filtration of stormwater runoff on its way to water bodies. Residential development is prohibited in the 100-year flood plain in Townsend. As the construction of Townsend Village I is completed, the flood plain and riparian buffer areas are intended to be deeded to the Town for permanent protection. The site location is in the upper tip of the Townsend Village 1 development and is preserved as park land along the Wiggins Mill Pond

Watersheds

Wiggins Mill Pond and the Appoquinimink River serve as the municipal boundary of Townsend to the north. The Appoquinimink River continues to flow in a northeasterly direction toward Noxontown Pond and eventually into the Delaware Bay. This area in the north of town near the pond and the river is the area with the greatest change in elevation at the point where the flood plain gently slopes to converge at the water's edge. Non-tidal wetlands and wooded areas act as a riparian buffer and run along the border of Wiggins Mill Pond and the Appoquinimink River, with a few areas in the 100-year flood plain.

A watershed is all of the land that water moves across or under while flowing to a specific body of water and includes the plants, animals, and humans in this area. Townsend is in the Appoquinimink River Watershed in the north and the Blackbird Creek Watershed in the southern part of town. The Appoquinimink River watershed drains approximately 47 square miles in New Castle County and consists of three main branches, including the main branch of the Appoquinimink River (Wiggins Mill Pond and Noxontown Pond), Deep Creek (Silver Lake), and Drawyer Creek (Shallcross Lake). The ponds and lakes included in the Appoquinimink River watershed are typically shallow, man-made, and maintained by dams. The Appoquinimink watershed empties into the Delaware Bay, where expansive tidal wetlands are part of one of the largest undisturbed marsh systems in Delaware. These wetlands serve as important habitat for wildlife and waterfowl, spawning grounds for fish and other aquatic species, and passive recreation for local birdwatchers. This ecologically diverse watershed is home to many species of wildlife, including the bald eagle and bog turtle. Hawks, herons, egrets, kingfishers, osprey, swallows, otters, minks, beavers, deer, flying squirrels, meadow jumping mice, bats, and possums also inhabit the area.

A small portion of the southern part of Townsend is in the Blackbird Creek watershed. This watershed flows northeast into the Delaware Bay and is one of the most pristine watersheds in Delaware. It is primarily used for agriculture and very low-density housing. Much of this watershed is protected, including a large, forested area in Blackbird State Forest. The Delaware

National Estuarine Research Reserve protects many of the salt marshes that are located where Blackbird Creek meets the Delaware Bay.

Water Resource Protection Areas

Almost the entire original town and approximately half of Townsend Village I and II are designated as excellent water-recharge areas. Designation as an excellent-recharge area means that these regions have permeable soils that allow water from the surface to easily reach the water table. Wellhead-protection areas are the 300-foot-wide buffer surrounding the two Class A wellheads that are used for drinking water. The Town has adopted a Source Water Protection Ordinance to protect these vulnerable water resource protection areas. Protection measures include restrictions on hazardous materials and limitations on impervious surface coverage. Protecting these areas is critical because they allow for the relatively rapid transmission of potential contaminants to drinking water sources. Measures aimed at protecting excellent recharge areas include prohibiting the storage of hazardous materials within their boundaries and limiting impervious cover within these areas to best allow for the natural replenishment of aquifers.

Riparian Buffers

Riparian buffers are the vegetated lands adjacent to streams that help reduce erosion and prevent nutrient loading in streams. In Townsend, no vegetation can be removed, and existing native vegetation should be preserved in all riparian buffers. Townsend's codes 24-36-060 dictates that the riparian buffer areas. No septic systems are allowed, and any development occurring in this area should maximize drainage via natural swales, flow through grassland, or discharged from a stormwater management facility having a wetland or aquatic bench.

2-4b. Relevant Programs, Policies, and Regulations

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)

The 1972 Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) was developed to maintain the health of our nation's waters. Under Section 303(d) of the CWA, states are required to identify all impaired waters and establish total maximum daily loads to restore their beneficial uses (e.g., swimming, fishing, drinking water, and shellfish harvesting). A TMDL defines the amount a given pollutant may be discharged to a water body from all point, nonpoint, and natural background sources in order for that water body to meet or attain all applicable narrative and numerical water quality criterion (e.g., nutrient/bacteria concentrations, dissolved oxygen, and temperature) in the State of Delaware's Water Quality Standards. A TMDL may also 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 that pollutant without adverse impact. The realization of these TMDL pollutant load reductions will be through a Pollution Control Strategy (PCS). A PCS is the regulatory directive that

identifies what specific actions (e.g., best management practices) are necessary for reducing pollutants in a given water body (or watershed); thus, realizing the water quality criterion or standards set forth in the State of Delaware's Water Quality Standards ultimately leading to the restoration of a given water body's (or watershed's) designated beneficial uses. The PCS will also include voluntary or non-regulatory components.

The Town of Townsend is located within two separate watersheds the Appoquinimink River and Blackbird Creek. Both watersheds have specific assigned nutrient (nitrogen and phosphorus) and bacterial TMDL load reduction rates. In the Appoquinimink River watershed, a 60 percent reduction is required in the nitrogen and phosphorus levels. Additionally, bacteria loading must be reduced by 8 percent in freshwater portions and 71 percent in tidal regions. In the Blackbird Creek watershed, a 40 percent reduction is required in the nitrogen and phosphorus levels and an 80 percent reduction is required for bacteria.

The Pollution Control Strategies for the Appoquinimink River and Blackbird Creek watersheds have not been completed or adopted by the state to date. In 2000, DNREC did create a tributary action team, comprised of local stakeholders and residents in the watershed, to make it possible for everyone to take part in the process of determining how to improve water quality and comply with TMDLs in the Appoquinimink. In 2004, this Appoquinimink action team was incorporated as a nonprofit organization the Appoquinimink River Association (ARA) has been disbanded.

Source Water Assessment and Protection Program

The Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996 mandated that each state develop a Source Water Assessment and Protection (SWAP) program to better protect public-drinking-water sources. There are three basic components of all SWAP programs:

- Delineate the boundaries of the land area most important to public water sources.
- Identify the potential sources of contamination within those boundaries.
- Assess the susceptibility of the public-water source to these contaminants.

In Delaware, the SWAP program was coordinated mainly by DNREC, which developed the majority of the assessments for all public water systems in Delaware, including Townsend. Since Artesian Water provides water service to Townsend, the assessment can be viewed under Artesian Water System Reports at *www.wr.udel.edu/swaphome/Publications/fa_artesian.html.*

In 2001, the Delaware General Assembly passed legislation which required all jurisdictions with a population greater than 2,000 to implement measures to protect sources of public drinking water within its boundaries by the year 2007. In 2007, the population of Townsend was less than 2,000. However, the town voluntarily adopted environmental-protection regulations that included source water protection ordinances. The relatively quick

implementation of the environmental protection regulations in Townsend received regional attention. In 2002, the EPA awarded Townsend with a source water protection award for adopting a land use ordinance to protect its drinking water sources. The Townsend Source Water Protection Ordinance is a model for consideration by other towns.

Critical Natural Areas

A Critical Natural Area (CNA) is any site that is listed in the state natural areas inventory and has important or unusual natural significance. CNAs include forests, stream corridors, wetlands, nature preserves, and other natural areas. The Delaware Natural Areas Advisory Council designates which areas are CNAs, approves the mapping of these areas, and recommends areas for permanent protection through state acquisition. In New Castle County, 15 percent of the overall land area is designated as a CNA, and 64 percent of that acreage has already been protected. As described in section 1108 of Townsend's Unified Development Code, a CNA report is required before development can occur in an area designated by DNREC as a Critical Natural Area. There are no designated CNAs within the current town limits. However, there may be Critical Natural Areas located in potential annexation areas to the northeast of town surrounding the Appoquinimink River.

The 2016 amendment to the Land Protection Act established the Open Space Program and established the Open Space Council that approves maps and recommends areas for permanent protection. CNA designation is given to parks, fish and wildlife areas, forests, nature preserves, and cultural sites. The 2016 Land Protection Act also authorizes CNAs to be utilized in the comprehensive planning process and targets areas for state land acquisition from willing sellers. The Woods at Hidden Creek, within the municipal boundaries of Townsend, has a densely wooded section that provides valuable habitat for wildlife and falling within lands of the CNA, specifically the Blackbird Creek Natural Area.

Natural resource areas, originally mapped in 1990, were updated in 2006 to include green-infrastructure target areas. The intent of the CNAs is to establish a system for identifying preservation-worthy open spaces that have not yet been preserved to guide acquisition decisions and comprehensive land use planning. At the present time, counties and municipalities are highly encouraged to protect CNAs but are not required to do so. The maps were officially adopted by DNREC and transmitted to the counties in fall of 2006.

Community Wildlife Habitat (National Wildlife Federation)

The town is a participant in the National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat Certification Project, which allows homeowners to apply for certification as a habitat for local animal species by adopting practices that are beneficial to wildlife. By adopting practices such as native landscaping, pesticide limitation, and limits on turf grass, residents can help mitigate the effects of development on wildlife and reduce residential nonpoint-source pollution. If 50 residents in town certify their backyards, the town would qualify for certification that would increase the availability of grants in Townsend. The Delaware Nature Society provides technical assistance to homeowners who are interested in certification, and the town has also received support from U.S. Senator Carper for its efforts.

In order to help obtain certification in the program, the town has partnered with Townsend Elementary to encourage environmental responsibility among the students. The Town has participated in two of the school's assemblies that explained ways to protect wildlife habitats. There is interest to revive the annual Main Street cleanup organized with the elementary school to pick up trash in town and along the banks of the creek.

Preservation Zoning
The Town has preserved several parcels through the use of a "Preservation" zoning classification. The town should consider zoning appropriate parts of the newly annexed lands, including floodplains, wetlands, and dedicated open space, as "Preservation" to protect environmental resources.

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Natural Resources Critical Issues and Future Needs

~~*Climate Change*~~
~~Climate change is expected to result in more frequent heavy precipitation events. This can lead to flooding, especially in areas with inadequately sized drainage infrastructure. This flooding can result in safety hazards, inaccessible roadways, travel delays, and damage to buildings or other infrastructure. Townsend's infrastructure and its ability to handle such events plays a contributing role in how effectively the area can be evacuated and how it can prevent damage from these events. Planning for these events also contributes to how successful the Town and emergency services can respond to these events.~~

~~Another key issue surrounding climate change is a steady rise in temperature. Rising temperatures will result in a longer growing season, heat waves, and more days when it doesn't cool at night. This has many implications for infrastructure and human health. Air conditioning systems in buildings may not be sized appropriately for increasing temperatures and shorter, milder winters can mean residents are dealing with more ticks and mosquitoes. Of particular concern are vulnerable populations who may not have access to air conditioning in the summer.~~

Development Pressure
With increased development in Townsend, it is important that the town continue to monitor environmental quality and proactively enact programs that protect natural resources. Increased development typically reduces natural habitats and increases impervious surfaces. Unless mitigated with sound environmental policies, development can lead to environmental degradation and additional nonpoint-source pollutants in surface waters. Without effective mitigation, increased impervious cover can contribute to flooding, water-quality degradation, and loss of habitat. The Town should continue to apply environmental standards through

zoning, subdivision review, and site-design requirements to reduce nonpoint- source pollution and environmental impacts.

Sensitive Natural Areas

Townsend has an extraordinary number of wetlands, excellent water recharge areas, and mature forest within its limits. It is essential that the town protect these important resources and continue to enforce environmental regulations in the town's Unified Development Code. The Town should continue to protect sensitive natural resources through enforcement of environmental regulations contained in the Unified Development Code and through careful review of development proposals. Future development should avoid fragmenting or isolating wetlands, forested areas, and riparian corridors. Maintaining connected natural-area corridors is critical to preserving habitat functionality, water quality, and ecosystem resilience. In particular, future developments should not fragment and/or isolate tracts of wetlands. Natural area corridors are critical to preserving the functionality of Townsend's natural resources.

Community Wildlife Habitat

Townsend is actively engaged with in the Community Wildlife Habitat program; however, the town needs to engaging residents within the new developments of Townsend Village I & Townsend Village II.

Additional outreach and engagement are needed to expand participation among residents in newer developments, including Townsend Village I and Townsend Village II.

Increasing resident participation supports wildlife habitat preservation, reduces nonpoint-source pollution, and strengthens community awareness of environmental stewardship.

Natural Resources Goal

Preserve and enhance the town's aesthetic and environmental amenities through continual support of various environmental programs, environmental protection ordinances, responsible land use decisions, and coordination with environmental organizations.

Natural Resources Recommendations

- Continue to enforce environmental regulations (including Source Water Protection Ordinances) and adopt additional environmental protection measures as deemed necessary to protect water supplies and the health of the Appoquinimink River.
- Become more involved with conservation measures in the Blackbird Creek watershed to reach TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Loads) goals.
- Consider the adoption of a zoning category that allows agricultural and/or agribusiness uses within the town limits and one dwelling unit per five acres.

- Encourage participation in agricultural preservation programs and TDR programs.
- Continue to promote green space by protecting forested lands and requiring that a certain percentage of new subdivision be forested. Discourage clear-cutting and enforce reforestation projects when clear-cutting is necessary.
- Actively promote the development of forested areas through participation in the Urban and Community Forestry Program. This program is administered by the Delaware Forest Service within the Department of Agriculture and offers grants and technical assistance to communities for tree planting, care and management projects on publicly owned lands.
- Coordinate stormwater-management issues with the New Castle Conservation District and DNREC to ensure implementation of the Sediment and Stormwater Program. The town should work with the New Castle Conservation District to ensure that sediment and stormwater plan review becomes part of the town's planning process.
- Work with partners, such as DNREC's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and the Institute for Public Administration's Water Resources Agency to reduce nonpoint-source pollution through best management practices.
- Work with Mountaire Grainry about air-quality issues.
- Research the implementation of an energy conservation program in town that promotes energy efficient technology for town projects including street lighting.
- Adopt legislation that would protect identified CNAs once in town (via annexations).
- Continue to work towards community wildlife habitat certification by engaging residents within newer developments.
- Consider zoning appropriate areas in the town as Preservation to protect environmental resources.

2-4C. Climate Change and Community Resiliency

This Plan was informed by the 2025 Delaware Climate Action Plan and the Delaware 2025 Climate Change Projections. The projections for New Castle County identify flooding from heavy rain, heat, and drought as the main concerns. Statewide, average temperatures are expected to rise about 3 to 4 degrees by mid-century, and annual precipitation to rise 2 to 4 inches by the end of the century, with more days of an inch or more of rain. Most of the town sits 60 to 70 feet above sea level. The only mapped 100-year floodplain inside the town limits is about 10 acres of Zone AE along Wiggins Mill Pond at the northwest corner, where the Town already prohibits residential development. Maps 8 and 9 in the Appendix show the

FEMA flood hazard areas and the State's sea level rise scenarios in and around the town. No land within the town limits is reached at 2, 3, or 4 feet of sea level rise. The Town's code already addresses much of this. Section 24.36.060 protects riparian buffers, the Water Resource Protection Area ordinance limits impervious cover and sends roof runoff to groundwater recharge, Chapter 24.36 protects Critical Natural Areas and requires reforestation where land is cleared, and Section 24.20.040 requires every new development to meet the Delaware Sediment and Stormwater Regulations. The Town took part in the 2026 update of the New Castle County Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan and adopted it by Resolution 2026-009 on September 2, 2026.

The Town's goals are to keep every new home and business outside the Special Flood Hazard Area, as Section 24.36.040 already requires, and to protect the town's tree cover, which DNREC's review of this Plan notes helps moderate local heat. The Town's pending Chapter 24 amendments protect Critical Natural Areas and cap how much forest a development may clear, which is the forest ordinance DNREC's review asked for; the Town will adopt them within 18 months of this Plan's adoption. The Future Land Use and Annexation Map in this Plan already keeps the most heavily forested and wettest land out of the annexation area. New development will continue to go to higher ground outside the floodplain and riparian buffers, consistent with the Strategies for State Policies and Spending. Tree canopy will also be expanded through the Urban and Community Forestry Program, to shade the town and slow runoff. On emergency preparedness, the Town should work with New Castle County Emergency Management and the Delaware Emergency Management Agency on the Hazard Mitigation Plan actions assigned to Townsend. This section will be revisited at each five-year update.

2-5. Transportation

GOAL: Manage future land uses and transportation systems to achieve efficient functioning of the town for the convenience and well-being of its residents, workers, and visitors.

This section of the plan provides an inventory of the transportation system in Townsend, notes planned improvements to the transportation network, identifies issues that need to be addressed, and recommends actions to ensure safe and efficient mobility for all transportation modes in Townsend.

Inventory of Roads in Town

Townsend is bisected by the train tracks of the Norfolk Southern Delmarva Secondary Line, the primary freight line serving the entire Delmarva Peninsula. Typically, four to eight freight trains travel through the heart of Townsend each day, crossing Main Street at an at-grade intersection and serving some local industrial businesses. Just south of town, the main line branches off onto the Townsend Line, serving nearby Maryland's Eastern Shore. This track is

owned by the State of Maryland and operated by the Maryland Delaware Railroad, a private corporation. Approximately two trains per week use this track.

The Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) maintains the four major streets through town Main Street, Commerce Street, South Street, and Railroad Avenue/Wiggins Mill Pond Road. DelDOT currently has no plans to upgrade these streets. Townsend is responsible for sidewalks, snow removal, maintenance, and repairs of the local streets as well as the subdivision streets in the newly annexed developments. Snow removal is done by the town. Street repairs are also completed through private firms on a bid basis. The town strives to maintain and improve one street it is responsible for each year.

Traffic Counts

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DelDOT collects traffic count information for most of the major roadways in the state. Traffic count information from DelDOT from 2018 was examined. Due to residential growth, traffic has increased exponentially in town. According to the Delaware State Police the average daily traffic counts decreased due to COVID-19 and school closings. Annual average daily traffic counts for Main St range from 4,142 to 4,597, and Summit Bridge Rd. range from 8,599 to 9,364. Residents have expressed concern that DelDOT data does not reflect the current traffic flow. Delaware State Police completed a speed study on June of 2020 until September 2020 to address the concerns of the residents. The average speed on Main Street was recorded as 26 miles per hour in a posted 25 mile per hour zone. Commerce Street recorded and average speed of 27 miles per hour this is also a posted 25 miles per hour zone. Volumes on Summit Bridge Road have and will continue to increase dramatically due to the new developments within the MOT area. Increased traffic volumes are a growing concern in Townsend. DelDOT should consider the creation of a Transportation Improvement District to improve traffic flow and safety.

Walkable Communities and Green Infrastructure

The town's desire to improve its network of parks and open spaces led it to participate in the University of Delaware Institute for Public Administration's (IPA) Healthy/Walkable Communities Initiative in 2006. The green infrastructure of parks and trails served as the impetus for the Townsend Annual 5K Run Series, which follows local streets and greenways through town. As detailed in IPA's study, Townsend should attempt to permanently mark this course for residents to use for daily recreation. As the town acquires more open spaces and parks with the development of new subdivision and annexation areas, the interconnected network of trails, walkways, and shared pathways should continue to be a priority when designating open space. Main Street, the historic section of town, the new sub-divisions, the new municipal park, the future The Woods at Hidden Creek development, and the Townsend Elementary School are all priorities for walking trails that promote interconnectivity.

Harriet Tubman Byway

Since the 2010 comprehensive plan was adopted, Main St. and Summit Bridge Rd. north of Main St. have become part of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway. This designation should be included for any future programming opportunities, transportation improvements or maintenance, wayfinding, economic development, ecotourism, alleviation of flooding, and/or historic preservation.

Pedestrian Network and Environment Recommendations

- Continue to offer annexation of properties on the eastern side of town fronting Main Street in order to facilitate the installment of sidewalks to provide lighting and safe corridor for pedestrians.
- Continue negotiations with the rail line to mitigate pedestrian conflicts and potentially redesign the confluence of Main Street and the railroad tracks by adding sidewalk to the left of the signals.
- Re-stripe and nominally realign the town's crosswalks to ensure they are readily visible to pedestrians and drivers and that they lead directly to curb cuts and ramps.
- Continued to revise the Unified Development Code to mandate walkability features (short setbacks, sidewalks, side parking, dedicated open space or donations in lieu of dedication) to promote future development that is walkable and compatible with the existing town core.

Opportunities for Physical Activity Recommendations

- Purchase and install signs at regular intervals to create a walking route to raise community awareness and provide pedestrians with useful information, such as distance traveled.
- Consider additional street fairs, events, and festivals to acclimate Townsend residents to walking around and socializing with their neighbors.

Sidewalk Accessibility
Sidewalks greatly facilitate walking. Townsend has been aggressively completing its sidewalk infrastructure with handicapped ramp. Townsend should study how to connect sidewalks throughout the heart of town to the newer subdivisions off Railroad Road/Wiggins Mill Road and also Caldwell Corner Road to the entrance of Townsend Village I at Edgar Road.

~~The Town Council should continue to work with Middletown and New Castle County to connect the Townsend Municipal Park to open space in Middletown via a greenway.~~

Townsend should address the concerns of residents about safety issues with the greenway trail system. Additionally, improvements such as paving or boardwalks, which will need to be constructed, will have to comply with floodplains and wetlands regulations stated in the Zoning and Unified Development Code. Public safety issues with trails should be addressed to ensure

that parks and greenways are adequately monitored and maintained, which would help to prevent them from becoming crime-ridden areas. Trails should also be accessible by ambulance in case of an emergency or accident.

Bicycle Accessibility
Townsend is located within a bike-ride from the Michael N. Castle trail. This trail runs from Delaware City in the east to Chesapeake City, Md., in the west, and connects with Lums Pond State Park. Wiggins Mill Park is adjacent to Townsend to the north and slated to be upgraded by New Castle County to include significant recreational opportunities. While these bike rides are relatively short in distance, safety on these routes can be an issue that the proposed greenway trail will be able to address. The town's side streets generally offer favorable cycling conditions, as will the streets have platted for the new subdivisions. Marked bike lanes would be a nice improvement on Main Street and Wiggins Mill Road, as traffic volumes and curves on both likely leave them suitable only for intermediate level or highly experienced cyclists.

Public Transportation
Delaware Authority Regional Transit (DART), a Division of DelDOT, provides daily, regional bus service for the entire state. Route 302 provides public transit services in Townsend between Dover and Newark. There are two DART stops along Summit Bridge Rd. that are both served by bus route 302. Residents can also drive to the Odessa park-and-ride~~,~~ from where they can take a fared shuttle. Disabled residents are eligible to apply for paratransit services. The Middletown Senior Center runs a bus into Townsend several times a day.

In accordance with agreements among the MOT communities, outlined in the Southern New Castle County plan, Townsend will move to request direct access to public transportation. Though the majority of town residents own private automobiles, the town would like to provide mobility options for those who do not, or who would prefer not to own a primary or secondary vehicle. As the MOT region is a growing area, a feasibility study of the types of public transportation that would be appropriate for the area should be completed.

The State has developed a number of Park and Ride facilities throughout Delaware. These facilities offer a convenient place to park your car and board a bus and are most often used for commuting to work. There are three Park & Ride facilities within a short drive of Townsend—the Odessa Park & Ride at S.R.1 & Middletown Odessa Road (SR 299); the Boyd's Corner Park & Ride at S.R. 1 & Pole Bridge Road; Odessa Park & Ride at S.R. 1 and Middletown Odessa Road (SR 299). There is also a Park and Pool facility at Pine Tree Corner (U.S. Route 13 & Pine Tree Corner Road).

<u>Transportation Critical Issues and Future Needs</u>

Traffic on Brook Ramble Lane
Residents in Townsend Station are worried about the increase in the amount of traffic on Brook Ramble Lane in Townsend Station because of the Early Childhood Center. The residents are

concerned that they can't play in their yards because of speeders on Brook Ramble Lane, and they would like to see traffic calming devices installed to combat this problem. The homeowner's association and the Early Childhood Center should work together to come up with a solution for the increased amount of traffic.

Traffic on the West Side of Town

Areas on the west side of town were indicated by residents as an issue. Increased development to the west of town has increased the amount of traffic on residential roads, as evidenced by DelDOT's estimated traffic counts. DelDOT's construction of U.S. Rt. 301 was officially completed in 2019. The construction was anticipated to alleviate traffic. However, the opposite impact was observed. It is inferred that traffic has increased in town to avoid the toll on U.S. Rt. 301. The Amazon Fulfillment Center in Middletown has dramatically increased traffic on Main Street and Railroad Road/Wiggins Mill Road.

County Park Intersection

~~Townsend has proposed a parcel transfer with New Castle County for the small park that is located at the intersection of South and Commerce Streets. The town has deemed this an unsafe intersection and is planning on adjusting the traffic pattern to allow for safe vehicle navigation.~~

The former County Park, located at the intersection of South and Commerce Streets, has been officially transferred to the Town as of 2025. The intersection continues to be a safety concern, and discussions with DelDOT and other stakeholders are ongoing to determine appropriate traffic improvements that will ensure safe vehicle navigation and access to the park.

Summit Bridge Road (SR 71) and Main Street Intersection

This is an intersection that is identified as dangerous. The Public Works Committee worked with DelDOT to change the crossing near Main Street and the Walgreens. Safety remains a concern at this intersection. The Town Continues to request turning lanes be added to the intersection, or variable signal timing to allow one direction of traffic to make unimpeded turns, as the left turns are felt to be challenging.

Growth

Residents have expressed concern about increasing traffic volume and congestion as the area develops. Residents are also concerned about aging infrastructure, street repairs (including repaving and snow plowing), trash in the streets, and other street maintenance issues.

~~*Local Street Maintenance*~~

~~General maintenance, repairs, and sweeping of local streets are likely to become big issues for the town as the annexed areas develop. The town may need to consider structuring and supporting municipal services such as street maintenance and sweeping when expected development occurs. The town should begin planning to provide these services and estimate future funding needs and options.~~

The Town's road network consists of a combination of Town-owned streets, State-maintained roads, and streets yet to be turned over from developers, each maintained by the responsible party. Town-owned streets are maintained directly by the Town, State-maintained roads are maintained by DelDOT, and roads not yet accepted are the responsibility of the respective developers.

As annexed areas continue to develop, general maintenance, repairs, and street sweeping will remain important considerations. The Town should continue planning for future municipal services, including the potential expansion of street maintenance for Town-owned roads, and estimate funding needs and options to ensure safe and functional roadways throughout the community.

Walkable Access to Local Services

Currently, residents go elsewhere for most employment, education, goods, and services. Most residents work either in Middletown (4 miles), Smyrna (5 miles), Dover (15 miles), or Wilmington (25 miles). Except for elementary school, Townsend children are bused to Middletown and Odessa~~Old State~~ for middle and high school. Most residents drive to Dover for shopping and to Middletown, Glasgow, and Christiana Hospital for medical care. According to the US Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates the overall carpool percentage dropped to 9.0%. In Delaware approximately 21,257 residents age 16 or older walk, or use public transportation to commute to work. Average commute time to work is 25.8 minutes.

Local Street Design, Community Character, and Safety

The Townsend Zoning & Unified Development Code design standards have been updated in Chapter 24 section 24.20.010. These sections address pedestrian safety with sidewalk design, cul-de-sac, right-of-way and cartway widths to allow room for larger emergency vehicles to maneuver in newer developments. Consider subdivision streets utilize T-intersections to discourage speeding through neighborhoods.

Non-driving Population

There are a significant percentage of children (34.3%), elderly (15.7%), and disabled residents (22.6%). Many of these people may be dependent on walking, biking, and public transit for transportation. It is especially important that all new development is pedestrian oriented. School age children should have the ability to walk safely to school. This ability will reduce current traffic backup that occurs on Main Street during school time pick-up and drop-off.

The residents who apply and qualify for paratransit service, and the disabled have access to paratransit through DART, but additional resources may be needed to support those that do not own a vehicle and do not qualify for paratransit use. The town desires additional bus stops closer to residential areas, such as the corner of Ginn Street and Main Street. The current stop at Summit Bridge Road and Main Street is not near town housing areas.

Reduction of Truck Traffic on Residential Streets

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Townsend has a lot of trucks (especially grain and cement trucks) traveling on Main and Commerce Streets to access the commercial and industrial activities near the railroad track. This may become especially acute now that the grain facility at Mount Pleasant has closed, leaving the Townsend facility as the only one serving all of Southern New Castle County. Coordinating with DelDOT, Townsend should consider reserving right-of-way within the annexed, but undeveloped, parcels to the northeast and/or southeast to allow for future connector roads to Summit Bridge Road (SR 71). By so doing, trucks would be able to access the industrial areas of town without traveling through residential districts. Reserving this land expresses the town's commitment to this course of action. Note however, that current Delaware Code prohibits new at-grade railroad crossings (17 Del. C. §603). Therefore, if the town or DelDOT wanted to develop additional roads crossing the tracks, grade separation would be required.

Transportation Goal

Townsend desires to create a well-functioning system of roads, streets, sidewalks, bike paths, and public transit services that will serve the present and future development of the town and the region and furthers the logical development of town. The transportation plan should promote the safe and economical movement of goods and people and support both non-vehicular and vehicular modes of transportation.

Transportation Recommendations

- Conduct a traffic survey in front of the new Townsend Early Childhood Center to determine how to reduce traffic on adjacent Brook Ramble Lane in the Townsend Station. Determine the need for traffic-calming devices on Brook Ramble Lane.
- Continue to coordinate with New Castle County and DelDOT to determine the feasibility of annexing the county park and creating a new intersection at South and Commerce Streets.
- Continue to coordinate with the town engineer and DelDOT to prioritize areas for repair and secure funding.
- Coordinate with DelDOT's Statewide and Regional Planning Section to discuss and initiate a Transportation Improvement District to improve traffic flow and safety.
- Create a network of nature trails, walkways, and shared pathways connecting Main Street, the historic section of town, open areas surrounding and, in the subdivisions, the new Municipal Park, the future The Woods at Hidden Creek Park, and areas near the school.
- Continue to communicate with the county and DART concerning the acquisition of additional public transportation stops and routes servicing Townsend.

- Continue with sidewalk installation on every street in town to promote walkability.
- Coordinate with Middletown to create a greenway.
- Put nature trails in the parks.
- Continue to work on Main Street revitalization projects to improve downtown walkability.
- Develop of a balanced regional transportation system to include public transportation between Townsend and regional employment opportunities in the surrounding MOT area, access to higher education via public transportation, and access to shopping areas in Middletown.

2-6. Community Character and Design

GOAL: Retain and reinforce the identity of the town and its setting within its immediate regional area. Preserve and enhance the town's social, cultural, aesthetic, and environmental amenities.

This section of the plan reviews Townsend's unique characteristics and offers recommendations for the preservation and improvement of these distinctive features. The handbook "Better Models for Development in Delaware" was jointly produced in 2004 by the Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination and the Conservation Fund and sets forth six principles necessary for better development. This section of the plan uses these principles as a general framework to evaluate Townsend's development and recommend steps the town can take to ensure the maintenance of its unique character.

Six Principles for Better Development

1. Conserve farmland, open space and scenic resources.
2. Maintain a clear edge between town and countryside.
3. Build livable communities.
4. Preserve historic resources.
5. Respect local character in new construction.
6. Reduce the impact of the car.

Overview of Community Character

Recent annexations and the emerging patterns of development in the MOT area have the potential to dramatically change this community's character. As Townsend plans for the future, it must address both the historic features of the community and the implications of expected growth and development. The town is committed to preserving its character and identity through its negotiations with developers of the recently annexed properties, and any future annexation. The community's goals and planning policies expressed in this document and its

soon-to-be-revised Unified Development Code will guide how Townsend addresses these challenges.

Townsend is an historic town that for many years was a quiet community centered around the railroad and comfortable with its small-town, rural setting. It is a community of predominately single-family homes, many 60 to 120 years old, arranged in a compact design with some small commercial uses and public facilities. Except for some brick public service and commercial buildings (church, old and new firehouses, post office, interim town hall), the architecture tends toward wood-frame buildings clad in wood or wood-look siding. Homes tend to be either large Victorian homes on large lots, or smaller frame, foursquare, or bungalow homes on small, narrow lots with very small front yards. The historic core of town is characterized by a wide diversity of sizes and values. Gables, dormers, bay windows, and porches are common, although many porches have been closed in to create additional interior rooms. Although many of the smaller homes are similar in style, over time each has been personalized and changed so that no two looks exactly alike. There are no large strip malls, large office buildings, or apartment complexes. The existing commercial buildings are all of a residential scale. Townsend has the only operating grain station in southern New Castle County. Using the six principles listed above, the following are offered as recommendations the town should consider to maintain of its unique character

1. Conserve Farmland, Open Space and Scenic Resources

A very important element that contributes to the town's character is its natural resources. The historic town core area does not have a significant number of natural resources, but forests, streams, wetlands, and agricultural lands surround the town. With recent annexations, some of these resources are now within the town's boundaries and have the potential to provide significant enhancement to the town. Townsend updated its environmental regulations in its Zoning and Unified Development Code in 2000, 2003, 2004, and proposes changes in 2020 to provide greater protection for wetlands, floodplains, and water resource protection areas within the town limits.

Although the Town has preserved a small section of town using the "Preservation" zoning classification, the town should consider zoning additional lands, including floodplains, wetlands and dedicated open space, as Preservation in order to protect environmental resources.

The Townsend Municipal Park is deed-restricted for permanent preservation as a park. Also, the town requires all new development to have at least ten percent open space. Townsend hopes to annex a significant amount of land to the west of town to be used as a greenbelt, where agricultural activities are encouraged.

Trees and landscaping in developed areas and the mature-forested sections of town add to the community character, enhance the visual appeal of the town, and add environmental benefits. They also act as natural filtration systems, helping to mitigate the environmental effects from

suburbanization by improving air and water quality. Trees reduce the need for energy by naturally cooling the air, increasing real estate values, and aiding in stormwater management by stabilizing soil.

Street trees are needed in new developments and redevelopment to enhance the small-town feel of Townsend. However, the required street-tree species listed in the Townsend Zoning and Unified Development Code (Chpt. 24 Sec. 24.20.070) include several species notorious for being weak-wooded (prone to breaking limbs), dropping fruits, and heaving sidewalks. The town should continue to protect this valuable resource by revising landscaping requirements with species more appropriate for the urban environment. The town should also increase the number of trees planted in public spaces, such as the Townsend Municipal Park and along roadways.

Townsend is fortunate to have significant open spaces surrounding the town on all sides, which contributes to Townsend being a desirable place to live. Large, forested tracts are located to the south near The Woods at Hidden Creek, to the east near Summit Bridge Road (SR 71), along Wiggins Mill Pond, and in other areas scattered throughout town as seen in the aerial view on Map 1 in the Appendix. A large county-owned park is located to the north of town, and preserved agricultural lands are located to the northeast and west of town. Townsend should continue to take steps to preserve these valuable resources.

The regulations for water resource protection areas only allow up to 30 percent of the land to have impervious cover (paving, buildings and other surfaces that prevent water from soaking into the soil). One method to improve the character of this development and protect natural resources is to cluster the development of smaller lots onto a portion of the site (close to the existing town for interconnectivity and walkability), then preserve the remainder of the site as open space. An additional benefit of this approach would be the creation of a greenbelt of open space at the northern and southern edges of town, where much of the vacant land exists. Lands to the north could connect to the county park and other protected lands to the north.

In summary, this plan recommends that Townsend continue to work to preserve lands through the development of a greenbelt. The greenbelt should be defined in the Zoning and Unified Development Code of the Town's Municipal Code, and an additional zoning category should be added to allow agricultural activities within the town limits. Landowners in the areas slated for preservation should be encouraged to participate in agricultural-preservation programs, transfer-of-development-rights programs, or other nonprofit land-conservation organizations.

2. Maintain a Clear Edge Between Town and Countryside

Surrounding geography has been somewhat helpful to Townsend in maintaining separation between the town and the surrounding area. Wiggins Mill Pond and the county park serve as the town's northern border, while open spaces and protected agricultural lands serve as its western border. Summit Bridge Road (SR 71) acts as a barrier to the east. The town's southern border is not as well defined and consists of unincorporated land surrounding The Woods at Hidden

Creek. However, much of this land has significant environmental constraints identified by DNREC or considered Critical Natural Areas, which will restrict development.

Although Wiggins Mill Pond forms the border to the north, just a few miles farther north is the growing town of Middletown. While Wiggins Mill Pond effectively serves as a boundary between the two towns, it will be increasingly important for Townsend to preserve the town identity so the distinction between the two communities is not blurred. As detailed in the future land use section and seen on the Future Land Use map (Map 4 in the Appendix), Townsend has proposed the development of a medium-density residential area west of Summit Bridge Road (SR 71) and just southeast of Middletown's southernmost boundary. Currently, this land is in agricultural and low-density residential use. If developed, it will be necessary to carefully consider the design of the development to ensure distinction between the two towns. A prominent "Welcome to Townsend" sign would be useful in this area. Additionally, the property should be designed in keeping with Townsend's small-town, historic character to distinguish it from more suburban-style developments prominent in the region.

The eastern gateway into town, located near the end of Main Street and the intersection with Summit Bridge Road (SR 71) and Pine Tree Corners Road, is currently in need of some unification and aesthetic improvements. Motorists driving through on Summit Bridge Road (SR 71) have no idea that Townsend is only a few feet away, and this reality could be emphasized. Perhaps the town could initiate a gateway study through WILMAPCO, including the county, DelDOT, and the landowners to make some improvements to this critical area.

Close coordination with New Castle County will be necessary in order ensure that the unincorporated areas around Townsend do not develop in a manner or at a scale that will detract from the town's character. The town should continue to be involved with Southern New Castle County's Memorandum of Agreement with the county, Middletown, and Odessa to ensure adequate notification and commenting procedures for areas within Townsend's Areas of Concern.

3. Build Livable Communities

Townsend should continue to offer its residents a high quality of life by focusing on appropriately mixing commercial and residential uses within identified areas. Commercial uses in town should cater to the needs of residents seeking convenient access to retail and services and should be accessible to pedestrians to encourage walking while having little adverse effect on the residential community. Residents are concerned about the absence of convenience stores, and there is some concern about the how the sewer limitation imposed by New Castle County will affect proposals for commercial uses. Townsend will need to closely coordinate with the county when designing the new commercial uses on Summit Bridge Road (SR 71) to deal with the sewer limitations.

The newly constructed church on the northside of commercially zoned properties in Townsend Village II are accessible by Summit Bridge Road (SR 71) but should also be

pedestrian-friendly and accessible through the residential development Townsend Village II. Downtown future commercial uses should be developed in a manner consistent with the size and character of buildings in Townsend's historic district. In the area designated as the Town Center Redevelopment (see Map 4 in the Appendix), the intent is to permit small-scale commercial uses with residential units above that are in keeping with Townsend's historic character. Particular focus should be on developing future commercial uses so pedestrian access is facilitated.

The provision of affordable housing is another necessary component of a livable community. Median housing values in Townsend have increased significantly, mostly because of the higher prices of the larger homes in the new developments of Townsend Village I and II. Townsend should strive to provide rental opportunities and affordable housing by diversifying its housing stock. The housing-affordability analysis suggests that housing is generally affordable in Townsend.

According to Certificates of Occupancy information provided by Townsend in fall 2007 and 2000 Census data, almost 95% of the housing stock in Townsend is single-family attached or detached homes. This number is significantly higher than that of the county (53%) and the state (58.8%). This indicates that the town could seek to diversify housing types and could benefit from an increased number of rental properties in order to provide a more livable community.

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The provision of affordable housing also involves addressing some of the maintenance issues that arise in the historic downtown district. Older homes, such as those prevalent in the historic downtown area, can be more expensive to maintain than newer construction. There are existing programs in Delaware that provide funding for housing rehabilitation and affordable-housing development.

Town-sponsored community events enhance the town's appeal and create a sense of community. There are a number of town-sponsored events that help solidify residents' pride in Townsend --Town Fair, Movie Night, Easter Egg Hunt and Christmas Caroling all held in the Municipal Park. The Annual Town Fair includes a parade, games, rides, food, raffles, contests, a float competition, and other events. It is important that the town make a distinct effort to revitalize the social aspect of town, because residents have noticed that with growth, the community feel has diminished. By promoting social events, the town can bring together the residents in the older part of town with those from the newer developments.

4. Preserve Historic Resources

As has been noted throughout this plan, Townsend's historic resources are one of the town's greatest assets. The town should work toward enhancing Townsend's historic resources by preserving the character of the historic district and promoting appropriate redevelopment within the district and downtown redevelopment area. The historic district was entered into the National Register for Historic Places in 1986 and encompasses most of the original town. It

includes buildings that date back to around 1840 and later homes that offer fine examples of Gothic Revival and Queen Anne—style buildings. In addition to the historic district, two buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places: The Brook Ramble House and the Vandyke Heath House, both dwellings of the historic rural elite. In addition, New Castle County has recognized a number of properties on Main Street just outside town with Historic Preservation zoning. One of these buildings is the Townsend Elementary School.

The historic core of town has a pedestrian orientation, both functionally and visually, which makes the town picturesque and has the added benefit of making the community easy to get around and safe for residents, including children. Streets are grid-like (so it is easy to figure out where you are) with relatively short blocks. The streets have sidewalks, and many areas are lined with large trees. Driveways are narrow (8 feet to 12 feet) with garages, when present, behind or to the rear of the house. However, there have been some complaints about trash and debris on several properties scattered around the town. This is most acute within the historic core of the town and needs to be addressed.
It is recommended that the town continue to ensure that changes to buildings within the Townsend Historic District are consistent with the neighborhood's character and uphold guidelines provided by the National Historic Registry in order to maintain the Historic District. Next, the town should promote the necessary redevelopment of properties within the historic district and give historic preservation a high priority in the downtown redevelopment plans. The town should make certain that residents are aware of the Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program that can assist property owners in preserving and rehabilitating their historic properties. Additionally, the town should work with property owners to ensure that new construction is not out of character with the historic district.

5. Respect Local Character in New Construction
The primary concern expressed by residents is that new development be part of, and fit, the character of the town not just be typical suburban larger lots. There is concern that the town's identity will be lost as new development occurs and residents want to maintain the small-town feel of the community. Residents want new development that is designed to reflect the character and small-town atmosphere of Townsend. In essence, new development should be integrated into the fabric of the existing town.

To address these concerns, the town updated the Zoning and Unified Development Code to develop and institute design guidelines for new development. The purpose of these guidelines would be to ensure consistency with the historic character of Townsend by requiring that new developments in Townsend contribute a high level of design quality to the built environment. A well-crafted standard would afford developers, architects, and designers the flexibility to meet the challenge of designing attractive new communities while compelling them to meet minimum design standards and provide for adequate variety in new construction.

Other overarching issues include the adequacy and consistency of land-management regulations, and underlying these issues was a consistent concern about the potential impacts of development of the areas annexed into town. This was coupled with a concern that future commissioners might not share the same vision as those in office now and might be less inclined to follow the current philosophy regarding the character of future growth. According to a survey of the residents, they want the town to control community design, including connectivity of streets and pathways throughout the town to promote a small-town feel. These concerns should be of upmost importance of the Town Council and the Planning Commissioners as annexations are accepted into the community.

Throughout the planning process, the retention of Townsend's small-town character and local identity has been of primary importance to residents and town officials. Significant developments that could change that character are being planned inside the community. Particularly important are issues of connectivity to the existing street network, scale and design of the residential units, and overall layout of the developments so that they reflect a more traditional community pattern. It seems that the town generally has good relationships with developers in the area, and this relationship should be strengthened by regular discussion throughout the development process.

6. Reduce the Impact of the Cars on the Residential Communities

One reason why new development so often looks different from older development is the switch from a pedestrian to a vehicular orientation. It is possible to create new pedestrian-oriented developments without sacrificing vehicular convenience. The presence of sidewalks and street trees is one aspect of pedestrian orientation. Other elements include small lot sizes, maintaining a residential building scale, placing garages to the rear of a home or property, residential driveways which are only one vehicle wide at the curb (maximum nine to twelve feet wide), shorter block lengths (200 to 500 feet), and pedestrian cut-throughs on cul-de-sacs and long blocks.

Architectural detailing such as gables, dormers, porches, interesting entryways, and windows also enhance the pedestrian scale and character of development. Finally, large parking lots and expanses of asphalt are very uncomfortable for pedestrians. The town can mitigate these by minimizing their size, placing them to the rear or side of buildings, screening them from the sidewalk with attractive walls, fences or landscaping, and providing landscaped pedestrian walks through parking lots. These can be regulated through the Zoning and Unified Development Code. The transportation section of this plan details some of the impediments to pedestrian movement in town and recommends a focus on connectivity and coordination with the Healthy Walkable Communities Program to provide adequate sidewalks and bike paths throughout town. Additionally, completion of a greenway connecting the MOT region would significantly reduce the need for a car.

Community Character and Design Goal

Maintain the community's identity and small-town character in the design of new developments, through attention to scale, layout, connectivity and access, street and development naming, and location of community facilities. Sufficient land should be set aside for community facilities, recreational areas, and utilities to meet future needs, and the town's historic district, environmentally sensitive areas, and open spaces should be preserved.

Community Character and Design Recommendations

- As appropriate, the town should consult with the Office of State Planning Coordination and review the statewide historic preservation plan, *Partners in Preservation Planning, Delaware's Historic Preservation Plan 2018-2022* (http://history.delaware.gov/pdfs/2018-2022DelawareSHPOPlan.pdf) regarding the community design initiatives being undertaken by their office.

- Revise the Zoning and Unified Development Code to assure that pedestrian orientation is required in new developments.

- Revise the Zoning and Unified Development Code to minimize the impact of parking lots through placement, screening, and landscaped pedestrian walkways.

- Consider zoning appropriate portions of the newly annexed lands as "Preservation" to protect environmental and historic resources.

- Consider revising the Zoning and Unified Development Code to allow cluster-type development on lands in water resource protection areas to maximize land preserved as open space.

- Consider creating a historic overlay zone of the Historic Register District, with a Historic Review Board that oversees design standards, to provide an additional layer of oversight for development and redevelopment in this area of historic structures. The town should draft ordinances that apply specifically to the historic core of town and the Main Street Streetscape and the Downtown Revitalization Project proposal area.

- Increase the number of municipal tree-plantings in parks and open spaces along streets. The town should apply for urban-forestry grants to help offset the costs of planting and maintenance through the Urban and Community Forestry Program. The town should also work with the New Castle County Cooperative Extension Service or the State Urban Forester to identify the most appropriate species of street trees that survive in an urban environment and do not damage sidewalks.

- Initiate a gateway study of Main Street east of town to Summit Bridge Road (SR 71), through WILMAPCO, including the County, DelDOT, and the landowners to make some improvements to this critical area.

- Ensure appropriate development in the north of town to create a distinct boundary between Townsend and Middletown. This should be accomplished through design standards, adequate signage, and a greenbelt.
- Continue to fund the Main Street Streetscape efforts in the three-phase plan as funds become available.
- Research the feasibility of a downtown-revitalization project that would invest in the town center and support mixed-use development.
- Consider supporting mixed-use development in future annexation areas.
- Keep the town's identity of the small, residential, bedroom community.
- Continue to promote cultural and social events to enhance community cohesiveness between residents in the older section of town and the recently annexed areas.
- Continue discussing the feasibility of participation in a transfer-of-development-rights program.
- Continue to work with the existing owners of non-residential properties to clean up trash and debris, especially those within residential districts. Carefully regulate the location and type of any proposed non-residential uses to prevent additional problems.

2-7. Land Use, Annexation, and Areas of Concern

GOAL: Manage future land uses and transportation systems to achieve efficient functioning of the town for the convenience and well-being of its residents, workers, and visitors.
GOAL: Coordinate the development of the town with growth of the surrounding areas and with the plans of New Castle County and the state.
GOAL: Provide adequate and efficient public facilities, utilities, and services to meet the needs of present and future residents.

2-7a. Existing Land Use

~~Provided in the Appendix, Map 3 depicts Townsend's existing land uses. This map was developed from two windshield surveys. The first was conducted in 2001 as part of the background work for Townsend's 2003 comprehensive plan. The second was done in November 2007 for this plan document. The third was completed with the 2020 plan update. All land use information was then verified and approved by the town.~~

Residential
As Map 3, located in the Appendix, indicates, Townsend is predominantly a residential community. Most of the residential development in the town consists of single-family detached homes. Some residential units are located above commercial uses.

Commercial
Most of Townsend's commercial uses are concentrated in two areas. The first is around the Main Street and Railroad Avenue intersection. The uses in this area include a real estate office, pizza parlors and coffee house~~a beauty salon/barbershop~~. The second area is located around the intersection of Main Street and Summit Bridge Road (SR 71) and includes a liquor store, Jaime's Auto Shop, General Dollar store, Colonial Auto, Walgreen's and a private daycare facility.

There are two additional commercial uses areas that are located outside of the two concentrated areas. A vacant commercial/office building is located at the south edge of town near the industrial park, and a vacant commercial building is located on Wiggins Mill Road north of its intersection with Railroad Avenue.

Community
Townsend's pattern of development was strongly influenced by the intersection of Main Street running east-west and the railroad tracks running north-south through the center of town. It is here that most of the town's community uses are located, including two churches, post office, the Townsend Volunteer Fire Company, the old firehouse (now used for storage by the Appoquinimink School District), and the Townsend Elementary School and Early Childhood Development Center. An important municipal use, the Townsend Town Hall, is located on Main Street. Utilities within the town boundary include the water supply and distribution system and a number of stormwater-management facilities. These systems were described in Section 2-3.

Parks and Recreation
As Map 3, located in the Appendix, shows only three~~wo~~ parcels are designated park and open space within Townsend's municipal boundary. The larger of these is the 11.5-acre Townsend Municipal Park on Edgar Road in Townsend Village I. The second park is a school playground located at the Townsend Elementary School and the third being the smaller park located at the corner of South and Commerce Street (formerly a County Owned Park).~~.~~

Most of Townsend's open space can be found in the new subdivisions. Typically, these spaces consist of floodplain associated with streams, stormwater-management facilities, or wetlands. Another open space area, the New Castle County Townsend Park, is located on the southside of the town.

Delaware residents desire outdoor recreation space to include walking, jogging and bike paths, hiking trails, playgrounds, community gardens and a public swimming pool.

Business and Industry

A mix of business and industrial uses are concentrated in the southwest quadrant of the town along the railroad and in the existing industrial complex. One of these is the Mountaire Grainery, which is the only grain processing facility in southern New Castle County, and another is Heritage Concrete. Casella~~Waste Industries (GFL)~~ is located along Cannery Lane. Additional industrial uses in this area include welding, fabrication, auto repair and related storage, and masonry-building-materials storage.

~~*Vacant*~~

~~To date a portion of the town's vacant land is the 97-acre The Woods at Hidden Creek property annexed in 2000, located south of Main Street adjacent to the Townsend Elementary School.~~

Vacant / Partially Developed

A portion of the Town's previously vacant land is the 97-acre The Woods at Hidden Creek property, annexed in 2000 and located south of Main Street adjacent to Townsend Elementary School. The site is currently under development, with portions of the property already constructed and other areas remaining available for future development.

*Land Use Changes 20*10 - 2026~~02-2020~~

~~Table 16 indicates land use changes between the 2002 and 2020. As the figure shows, significant changes occurred in land use during this time as a large amount of vacant land was developed into residential and commercial uses. The residential increase is attributed to the construction of homes in Townsend Village I and Townsend Village II, and the increase in commercial use is attributed to a new Walgreen's pharmacy, a daycare facility, and a professional office around the intersection of Summit Bridge Road (SR 71) and Main Street. Also, the addition of Townsend Municipal Park greatly increased the amount of land for parks and recreation.~~

The town's area grew from about 640 acres in the 2010 survey to about 712 acres in 2026 (Table 16). Annexations in that period include the 15.25-acre Townsend Acres annexation in December 2020 (since platted as Townsend Cove), the 38.7-acre annexation of 6170 Summit Bridge Road in May 2024 (Ordinance 2024-008), and the park parcels at South and Commerce Streets in October 2025 (Ordinance 2025-004). Residential land grew by about 149 acres and vacant land fell by about 178 acres. The 2026 figures also show about 77 acres of common open space, about 74 acres owned by the Town, almost all in Townsend Village I and II, and about 3 acres owned by the Townsend Station Homeowners Association. The 2010 survey had no open space category, so that land was counted in other rows.

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Table 16. Townsend Land Use Changes, 2010- 2026~~02-2020~~

	2010~~02~~		2010~~2~~2026		
	Number of Acres	Percent of Total	Number of Acres	Percent of Total	Change in Number of Acres
Land Use					
Residential	141.7~~41.2~~	22.1~~6.9~~	~~141.7~~290.5	~~22.1~~40.8	~~+100.5~~+148.8
Commercial	15.3~~2.3~~	2.4~~0.4~~	~~15.3~~25.4	~~2.4~~3.6	~~+13.0~~+10.1
Community Uses	22.1~~4.9~~	3.5~~0.8~~	~~22.1~~33.9	~~3.5~~4.8	~~+17.2~~+11.8
Business and Industry	18.9~~18.6~~	3.0~~3.1~~	~~18.9~~12.9	~~3.0~~1.8	~~+0.3~~-6.0
Park and Recreation	12.4~~0.2~~	1.9~~0.0~~	~~12.4~~12.1	~~1.9~~1.7	~~+12.2~~-0.3
Open Space (Town and HOA Common Land)	-	-	77.4	10.9	+77.4
Vacant	348.04~~79.3~~	54.4~~79.9~~	~~348.0~~169.9	~~54.4~~23.9	~~-131.3~~-178.1
Subtotal	**~~558.45~~546.5**	**~~87.39~~1.1**	**~~558.4~~622.0**	**~~87.3~~87.4**	**~~+11.9~~+63.6**
Roads, Railroads, and Other Unclassified Areas	~~53.5~~ 81.6	~~8.9~~ 12.7	~~81.6~~89.6	~~12.7~~12.6	~~+28.1~~+8.0
Total	**~~640.06~~00.0**	**~~100.01~~00.0**	**~~640.0~~711.6**	**~~100.0~~100.0**	**~~+40.0~~+71.6**

Source: 2010, Institute for Public Administration, University of Delaware. 2026, analysis of New Castle County parcel and building footprint records, October 2026, classifying every parcel inside the county's municipal boundary by property class, ownership, and building footprint; builder-held lots are counted as vacant and owner-held house lots as residential.~~IPA, 2010~~

2-7b. Planning Environment

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A jurisdiction's planning environment encompasses not only its own goals and strategies, but also those of its surrounding area and the state. Accordingly, this plan's policies regarding future land use, annexation, and areas of concern consider the development climate in the Middletown-Odessa-Townsend area and the state's policy and spending strategies.

Development Climate

The Middletown-Odessa-Townsend (MOT) area has experienced rapid growth during the past two decades, and continued growth pressures are expected. ~~even in consideration of the recent economic downturn of 2008.~~ The area northwest of Townsend toward Middletown has seen significant development, especially along the U.S. Rt. 301 corridor. The development known as "Westown" will continue to add to this growth pressure.

The completion of U.S. Rt. 301 has placed additional growth pressure in Townsend. Main Street, Railroad Road, and Wiggins Mill Road have seen increased vehicle usage, including the increase of large semi trucks and other construction vehicles. New housing and industrial construction along Levels Road in Middletown, and the presence of Amazon, and Walmart directly impacted the usage of these roads pre-pandemic, during the pandemic, and post-pandemic. The roadways in Townsend are used to avoid paying the 301 toll to travel into Delaware.

To address the additional growth pressures, a regional master-plan process was initiated through a memorandum of agreement (MOA). Participants in this MOA include state, county, and local governments and the school districts. The regional planning area has been divided into five sub-areas, with the first priority given to the areas surrounding the towns of Middletown, Odessa, and Townsend. A more detailed description of this planning effort is found in Chapter 3, Inter-Governmental Coordination.

Strategies for State Policy and Spending

In 1999 the Cabinet Committee on State Planning Issues approved the Strategies for State Policies and Spending, outlining needs and concerns for future state planning and growth and identifying geographic areas where the state was most prepared for growth. Updated in 2025~~0~~, the State Strategies document delineates four investment levels across the state, with different types of state investments targeted for each investment level. In Levels 1 and 2 areas, the state would channel most of its intensive investments, such as new school facilities, roads, state service centers, and public safety facilities. Level 3 areas, slated for growth areas only when Level 1 and 2 areas are built up, would receive state funding only when needed to support Level 1 or 2 areas. Development is not preferred in Level 4 areas, and the state plans to make investments to address only public health or safety needs. Out of Play areas are not available for development or redevelopment, and, like Level 4 areas, state investment is limited.

The State Strategies for the Townsend region are depicted on Map 6, located in the Appendix. The majority of the areas in Townsend's municipal boundaries are designated as Level 2 with

a small core area of Level 1. Level 3 areas are located on the southern and eastern boundaries of the town. The areas surrounding the town are predominantly Level 4 or Out of Play.

2-7c. Future Land Use Within Current Town Boundaries

~~This section describes Townsend's recommended future land uses and shows their possible relationship to the comprehensive rezoning that should follow adoption of this plan. Map 4, located in the Appendix, depicts recommended future land uses within the current town boundaries.~~

Map 4 shows recommended future land uses inside the current town boundary using five categories: Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional/Community, and Preserved. The same categories apply to the Future Annexation Areas described in Section 2-7f. Each category guides the comprehensive rezoning that should follow adoption of this plan (Section 2-7e).

Residential

Residential is the predominant future land use in town. It combines the historic core's older homes with the subdivisions built since 2000, including Townsend Village I and II and The Woods at Hidden Creek. To give young families, seniors, and local volunteers more housing choices, the Town supports townhomes, smaller single-family homes, and accessory dwelling units. These fit best near the town center and the Summit Bridge Road gateway, where residents can walk to shops and services.

Commercial

This plan recommends that commercial uses remain and grow in these areas, as shown on Map 4:

Industrial

Industrial uses remain concentrated in the southwest quadrant of town, formed by the Railroad Avenue and Main Street intersection and extending along the railroad and Cannery Lane. This area supports local employers such as the Mountaire grain facility and Heritage Concrete.

Institutional/Community

This plan supports continuing Townsend's community and institutional uses. Most are concentrated around Main Street and Sunnyside Lane and include schools, government buildings, community facilities, and churches. Map 4 also shows a large Institutional/Community parcel in the southeast Future Annexation Area, reserved for public uses a growing town will need (see Section 2-7f).

Preserved

Preserved is a new category on Map 4 for land permanently protected as open space, parkland, or natural area Land in a State-designated Natural Area that is annexed in the future should also be designated Preserved.

Town-Center Redevelopment

The Town continues to support revitalizing the town center, roughly the properties on either side of Main Street between Edgar Road and South Street. This is a policy area rather than a separate category on Map 4, and it does not require a new zoning district. It identifies where the Town will focus actions

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named throughout this plan, such as streetscape improvements, mixed-use buildings, and small business support.

~~*Residential*~~

~~As Map 4 in the Appendix shows, the predominant future land use in town is residential. This residential development is a mixture of both older residential areas supplemented with recent construction during the past decade.~~

~~*Commercial*~~

~~This plan recommends that commercial land uses remain in the following areas.~~

~~- Around the intersection of Railroad Avenue and Main Street.~~

~~- Around the intersection of Main Street/Pine Tree Road and Summit Bridge Road (SR 71).~~

~~- At the southern end of Cannery Lane.~~

~~It also recommends additional commercial areas on the west side of Summit Bridge Road (SR 71) near Townsend Village II.~~

~~*Industrial*~~

~~As shown in Map 4, located in the Appendix, this plan recommends that industrial uses remain concentrated in the southwest quadrant of town formed by the Railroad Avenue and Main Street intersection.~~

~~*Community/ Institutional*~~

~~This plan supports the continuation of Townsend's community and institutional land uses. As Map 4, located in the Appendix ,shows, most of these are concentrated around Main Street and Sunnyside Lane and include schools, libraries, government buildings, community centers, community facilities, parks, and churches.~~

~~*Town Center Redevelopment*~~

~~Map 4, located in the Appendix, delineates a town center redevelopment area roughly consisting of the properties on either side of Main Street between Edgar Road and South Street. This recommendation does not necessarily call for creation of a new zoning district. Rather, it identifies an area within which the town might put together a series of actions aimed at revitalizing the area. A number of these actions have been identified throughout this plan.~~

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2.7d. Zoning

Map 3, located in the Appendix in the Appendix depicts Townsend's current zoning. As noted earlier, Townsend's zoning and subdivision regulations were consolidated into a single development ordinance in April of 2020. This ordinance establishes eight zoning districts. Six

of these are residential: R, R-1, R-1A, R-2, R-3 and R-AA. The other zoning districts are Preservation, Commercial, and Industrial.

Residential Zoning Districts
As Map 3, located in the Appendix, shows, most of the town is zoned residential. In addition to dwelling units, permitted uses in the residential zoning districts include community uses. R designation is for single family detached homes, and R-1 and R-1A are for single-family homes on smaller lots. R-2 is also a single-family residential district that reflects the lot sizes that exist in the original town of Townsend. The R-AA Zone permits duplexes, townhouses, condos, and single-family homes as well as assisted-living facilities for adults over 55 years of age. R-3 residential district permits the construction of townhouses.

Preservation Zoning District
The Preservation Zone is designed to protect open space, natural resources, and areas of special value. A former school site on the south side of Finley Street is the only parcel zoned Preservation. The municipal park on Edgar Road is not zoned Preservation because the construction of a community center or a town hall is not allowed in this zoning district.

Commercial Zoning District
Most of Townsend's commercial zoning is located along Main Street and Summit Bridge Road (SR71). The Commercial Zone is designed for a variety of commercial activities and targeted toward meeting the needs of the town and the surrounding area. The commercial zoning allows for apartments above the commercial building under "mixed use".

Industrial Zoning District
Industrial zoning is located in the southwest quadrant of town formed by the intersection of Main Street and Railroad Avenue. The types of uses allowed in the Industrial Zone include manufacturing, assembling, and distribution facilities as well as offices.

2.7e. Land Use and Zoning Link
Title 22, Section 702(c) of the *Delaware Cod*e requires that each municipality, "within 18 months of the adoption of a comprehensive development plan or revision thereof, amend its official zoning map to rezone all lands within the municipality in accordance with the uses of land [i.e., future land use] provided for in the comprehensive development plan." Table 17 displays how Townsend's existing zoning districts might match up with the land uses recommended on Map 4, located in the Appendix.

Table 17: Land Use and Zoning Link

Land Use Category in Map 4	Zoning District(s) to be Considered in Comprehensive Rezoning	Notes

Residential	R Residential R-1 Residential R-1A. Residential R-A Residential R-AA Residential R-2 Residential R3 Residential SR Residential	
Commercial	(C) Commercial	(a)
Industrial	(I) Industrial	(a)
Community/Institutional	All Zoning Districts	(a)
Preserved~~Town Center~~	(P) Preserved~~All Zoning Districts~~	(a), (b)

Notes:

a. ~~a.~~ While the Town has designated certain areas on its future land use map (Map 4, located in the Appendix) as "Community/Institutional", and "Town Center," this Comprehensive Plan does not require the Town Council to zone with these specific designations when rezoning in accordance with this Comprehensive Plan. These uses may be placed in any zoning district which the Town Council designates as permissible under Townsend's Unified Development Code or other applicable land use regulations.

b. The Town does not need to create an Institutional/Community zoning district. These uses may be placed in any zoning district the Town Council designates as permissible under the Unified Development Code.

c.

~~b. While the Town Center Area is encouraged by this Comprehensive Plan, the Town is not required to adopt a Town Center zoning designation within its land use ordinances. Other zoning classifications (including but not limited to residential, commercial, suburban reserve and planned community designations) may be used to encourage flexible development strategies in the Town Center Area.~~

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As noted in Table 17, the matchups between land use categories and zoning districts are intended as guidance for the Town Council and the Planning Commission to consider during the rezoning process. It is not intended to preclude either the development of new zoning districts or revisions to the Zoning and Unified Development Code and other land use regulations.

2-7f. Annexation Areas

~~The Future Land Use & Growth & Annexation Areas Map 4, located in the Appendix, also identifies proposed annexation areas, areas Townsend would like to include within its town boundaries. The largest portions of the proposed areas for annexation are located west and south of the current town boundary and along the west side Summit Bridge Road (SR 71). Several small enclaves (parcels in New Castle County that are completely surrounded by Townsend's corporate limits) are also identified for possible annexation. These are located at the west side of the intersection of Wiggins Mill Road and Railroad Avenue and at the southern end of Commerce Street between South Street and the railroad, at the north end of Walnut St. and at the south-eastern end of Main St. The NCC Master Plan desires an "employment zone" in Middletown and is denying the opportunity for this growth type in Townsend.~~

Commented [JG26]: Something to look at. -JG

Map 4, Townsend Future Land Use & Annexation Areas (revised October 1, 2026), is the Town's guide for where and how Townsend will grow beyond its current boundary. It replaces the 2020 Future Land Use & Growth & Annexation map. Map 4 no longer shows Areas of Concern; Section 2-7g explains that change. Any annexation the Town considers must be consistent with Map 4 and with this section.

Category (map color)	Intent	Where it appears on Map 4
Residential (yellow)	Walkable neighborhoods with a mix of housing types, open space, and trail links to town	Most annexation land west of town and north of Caldwell Corner Road; parcels east of Summit Bridge Road north of town
Commercial (red)	Main Street shops, services, restaurants, and local jobs at the town's gateways	Summit Bridge Road at the north entrance; Main Street at Pine Tree Road; the southeast corridor; small sites along Commerce Street
Industrial (purple)	Light industry and employment uses near the railroad	South side of town near Commerce Street
Institutional/Community (blue)	Schools, Town facilities, parks with buildings, and other public uses	Existing schools and civic sites in town; a large annexation parcel at the southeast edge
Preserved (green)	Permanently protected open space, parkland, and natural areas	A parcel on Caldwell Corner Road; the park site near Commerce Street

The plan recommends that detailed master planning be considered before development in these areas would occur through annexation. Some of the questions that master planning should address include the following:

- How would development be coordinated with current and future development activities underway in Middletown?
- What transportation improvements would be required to handle increased traffic, especially as impacted by the new U.S. Rt. 301 facility/interchange located northwest of this area?
- What provisions will be made to increase connectivity between Middletown and Townsend (e.g., biking and pedestrian facilities in addition to vehicular connections)?
- What opportunities exist for promoting a livable community that would provide for:
  - Increased employment opportunities.
  - A mix of housing choices.
  - Locating commercial and institutional uses within walking distance of residential areas to promote the development of healthy lifestyles?
- What opportunities are there for this area to become the receiving area for a transfer-of-development-rights (TDR) program?

By examining these questions, the town goals to manage future land use and transportation systems and coordinate development with that of the surrounding areas can also be addressed.

2-7g. Areas of Concern

Map 4 (October 1, 2026) no longer designates Areas of Concern. Area A, Area B, and the greenbelt shown in earlier versions of the plan and map have been removed. The Town will continue to coordinate with New Castle County on land use bordering the town, as described in the recommendations below. ~~Areas of Concern are areas whose future development is of interest to Townsend. Three Areas of Concern are identified on Map 4 in the Appendix.~~

~~*Area A*~~

~~Area A, consisting of about 437 acres, is located on the east side of Summit Bridge Road (SR 71) and is of interest to the town since it borders the town gateway from the east. A large portion of this area contains lands that are deed restricted and thus precluded from intensive development. Other portions of this area contain environmental constraints, which also limit development.~~

~~*Area B*~~

~~Area B encompasses approximately 5,112 acres and wraps around the general vicinity of the town on the south, west, and north boundaries. It is intended for consideration as a greenbelt and for the sending area for the transfer of development rights. It would also link up with the proposed greenbelt area of Middletown. Townsend is creating its own TDR program similar to the one developed in Middletown. This should be a coordinated effort involving private developers and the town to ensure a program that meets the needs of all parties involved and can be utilized effectively.~~

~~*Area C*~~

~~Area C is the 194-acre Wiggins Mill Park is located adjacent to the northwest corner of the town and owned by New Castle County. The county has indicated a desire to involve the town in the development of this park. Some of the topics that both the town and the county should consider include design, infrastructure capacity, and associated environmental impacts.~~

Land Use, Annexation, and Areas of Concern Recommendations

- Within 18 months of adopting this plan, bring the zoning map into line with Map 4, as Title 22, Section 702(c) of the Delaware Code requires.
- Coordinate future land use through the Southern New Castle County Regional Master Plan led by WILMAPCO, whose final report is expected in 2027.
- Coordinate with Middletown, New Castle County, the Office of State Planning Coordination, and DelDOT on land use bordering the town, and document that coordination in writing.
- Continue working with New Castle County on Wiggins Mill Park, including a trail connection to Townsend Municipal Park.

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• Consider revisions or additions to the Zoning and Unified Development Code that:
– incorporate this plan's Community Character recommendations;
– keep development densities consistent with the goals and policies of this plan;
– review the uses allowed in each zoning district;
– encourage a diverse, affordable housing stock, including townhomes, through mixed-use development;
– promote a mix of residential, commercial, office, and live-work units in the town-center redevelopment area;
– protect mature forest, wetlands, and coastal plain seasonal ponds before land in a Natural Area is annexed.

~~ In accordance with state law, bring zoning map into congruence with land use map following adoption of this plan.~~

~~ Continue efforts to coordinate future land use strategies through the Southern New Castle County Master Plan.~~

~~ Consider a memorandum of agreement among Townsend, Middletown, New Castle County, the Office of State Planning Coordination, and DelDOT to develop a master plan for Areas of Concern designated on Map 4, located in the Appendix, with "A" and "B".~~

~~ Continue involvement with New Castle County in the development of Wiggins Mill Park.~~

~~ Consider revisions or additions to the Zoning and Unified Development Code that:~~
~~ -Incorporate this plan's Community Character recommendations.~~
~~ -Ensure that future development densities are consistent with the goals and policies of this plan.~~
~~ -Examine uses allowed in each zoning district.~~
~~ -Encourage a diverse and affordable housing stock through mixed-use development, including townhomes.~~
~~ -Promote a mix of residential, commercial, office and "live-work" units in the town-center redevelopment area.~~

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Chapter 3. Coordination and Implementation

3-1. Intergovernmental Coordination

The intergovernmental coordination element for the Townsend Comprehensive Plan Update is unique due to the multi-agency process which was utilized. This process was carried out through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among the Delaware Department of Transportation, Office of State Planning Coordination, Delaware Department of Agriculture, New Castle County, Appoquinimink School District, Colonial School District, Smyrna School District, the Wilmington Area Planning Council, and the towns of Middletown, Odessa, Townsend, Clayton, and Smyrna. This MOA was executed in order to produce a comprehensive regional Master Plan to accommodate future growth in southern New Castle County.

The working group involved in this MOA has met numerous times during 2008, 2009, and 2010 to develop the regional Master Plan. In addition, individual meetings have been held with New Castle County and the Office of State Planning Coordination to discuss details of this effort. The Southern New Castle County Master Plan area has been divided into sub-areas with the Middletown, Odessa, and Townsend sub-area designated as the initial study area. Townsend has actively participated in the Southern New Castle County Master Plan, which has also helped to shape the town's comprehensive plan update; specifically, the areas of concern, annexation areas, and future land uses.

The recommendations contained in the future land use section call for further coordination, specifically between Townsend, Middletown, New Castle County, the Office of State Planning Coordination, and DelDOT through an additional MOA, which would lead to the joint development of a plan for Townsend's proposed annexation areas as well as areas of concern. Issues such as community design, infrastructure, transportation, environmental resources, and open space would need to be addressed. The Townsend 2020 Comprehensive Plan was shared with the surrounding communities of Middletown, Odessa but no feedback was received.

3-2. Plan Implementation

Implementation is one of the most important parts of the comprehensive planning process, as it provides direction to the town to accomplish the ideas discussed in its comprehensive plan. Also, it is recognized that the town of Townsend cannot implement this plan update without coordinating with other governments and agencies, in particular New Castle County and the many agencies within the state of Delaware.

The following is a summary of the main recommendations made throughout this plan update. It provides a guide to actions that will be needed following the adoption of this plan by the town and its certification by the state. It should be noted that the most immediate recommendation requiring attention is the updating and revision of the town's Zoning and Unified Development Code. An updated ordinance will provide the town with a better tool for maintaining the town's character and charm as it continues to grow.

Housing Plan Recommendations

- ~~Coordinate with DSHA and HUD to create a resource library for current and potential residents, detailing local, state, and federal homeownership/mortgage assistance programs.~~ Coordinate with DSHA, HUD, and other relevant agencies to support current and prospective residents by providing information and access to local, state, and federal homeownership and mortgage-assistance programs.

- Encourage the development of a variety of housing types, including more-compact alternatives to the single-family home, such as townhomes and condos.

- Consider making provisions for multi-use or accessory dwelling units in the municipal code to allow for an increase in the supply of rental properties while creating a small business district in the "heart" of town.

Government Recommendations

- ~~Need to continue to develop a systematic written process for annexations to conform to state law and the New Castle County sewer agreement and include systematic notification to New Castle County.~~ Maintain and periodically update the Town's established annexation process to ensure continued compliance with state law and the New Castle County sewer agreement, including consistent and systematic notification to New Castle County.

- Town Council should include estimating the overall costs and timing of development in order to provide regulatory oversight of new development. This will provide better insight to the true cost in the provision of maintenance and town services and facilities, both new and expanded.

- The town charter last updated in 2023~~15~~, including addressing the current description of the town's boundaries and updated procedures. A schedule for review of the town charter should be every 5 years at a minimum.

- ~~The town should consider hiring additional employees, including a Part-Time Code Enforcement Officer and additional maintenance assistance.~~ Consider hiring additional Town staff to support Town Hall operations and to expand the Public Works Department in order to meet increasing service demands and operational needs as the Town continues to grow.

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- The Town should encourage development to infill vacant and/or dilapidated properties within Town municipal boundaries.

- ~~Continue to support the Finance Committee's goal to increasing revenue through business licensing fees, or a new business tax.~~ Continue to support the Finance Committee's goal of increasing Town revenue through sound financial management, budgeting, and exploration of sustainable funding sources.

- Coordinate with surrounding areas, Middletown, Odessa and New Castle County.

Public Safety Recommendations

- Continue to collect impact fees and provide~~provide money and~~ assistance to the Townsend Volunteer Fire Company as it expands to meet the needs of a growing town through impact fees on new-home construction and other sources.

- Work with New Castle County and the state to ensure adequate emergency medical services for the community and the region.

- ~~Reimplement the Neighborhood Watch Program, possible alternative patrol options such as private security.~~

- ~~Investigate the public safety needs of Townsend, and the potential need to establish a regional/municipal police force including the development of strategies to address community policing and operations~~Support and invest in the Townsend Police Department, established in 2021, by evaluating the Town's public safety needs, enhancing staffing, training, and operations, and advancing community-oriented policing strategies, including neighborhood-based initiatives such as a Neighborhood Watch Program and coordination with regional partners as appropriate..

Education Recommendations

- Promote the continued role of the Townsend Elementary School as a community education, recreation, and cultural resource while developing and growing the partnership between the elementary school and the early-childhood center.

- Work with developers and the school district to reserve an alternative site for a new, larger elementary school within the town's boundaries, close enough that local children can walk as well as convenient for school bus access.

- Continue to encourage childcare providers to locate in Townsend.

- Continue to promote educational activities (e.g., summer camps), at the Municipal Park through partnerships with local nonprofits such as Girls, Inc., or the Boys and Girls Club of Delaware.

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- Develop safe walkways for children to cross the railroad tracks to walk to Learning Center and Elementary school and to bus stops.

Healthcare Recommendation

- Encourage professional healthcare services to locate within the town and long-range planning by the state and county for adequate primary healthcare and emergency facilities to serve the MOT region.

Solid-Waste Recommendations

- Continue to provide trash and recycling services at the most affordable rate by providing the contract to the lowest qualified bidder. The Town should consider creating a waste management department.
- Contact Recycle Bank and request more information about their recycling program. Encourage residents to participate in the recycling program and educate residents about allowable recyclables.
- Encourage residents to compost their yard waste or take it to Pine Tree Transfer Station for recycling.
- ~~The Town should look into a yard waste collection program for the residents during the early spring through the end of fall.~~ Continue providing yard waste collection service as part of the Town's solid-waste contract, offering seasonal collection to residents and evaluating opportunities to maintain or enhance this service over time.
- Engage in regular conversations with the Pine Tree Transfer Station to ensure adequate capacity and services are available for current and future expected growth.

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Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Recommendations

- Update the Unified Development Code to allow higher-density development on newly developing lands to maximize land preserved as open space.
- Review current lands zoned "Preservation" and consider rezoning other open space areas in town as "Preservation."
- Have Town explore acquiring and utilizing space to allow structures such as a community center, library, or recreational equipment.
- Consider updating the Zoning and Unified Development Code to include a zoning category that would designate Townsend Municipal Park as open space, but still allow structures such as a community center, or recreational equipment, bike paths, hiking trails, dog park, and splash pad.
- Consider updating the Zoning and Unified Development Code to include an agricultural and/or agribusiness zoning designation that allows agricultural activities, including livestock, and low-density development (about one dwelling unit/five acres) within the greenbelt in the town.
- Coordinate with Middletown to protect areas identified by both towns as greenbelt.
- Work with Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Foundation, Delaware Department of Agriculture, and New Castle County to encourage landowner participation in preservation districts and easements.

- Work with New Castle County to participate in the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program and designate sending and receiving areas in town.
- Continue to participate in the Community Wildlife Habitat Certification Project and encourage homeowners to complete the application for certification.
- Secure an easement near the southeast corner of the municipal park to provide safe access to the park from the center of town.
- Continue to survey residents about their local park needs and interests.
- Study maintenance and liability issues, arrangements, and costs for new local parks or open space.
- Locate future parks, both active and passive, to be accessible to all town residents and linked to other parks to provide corridors for recreation and wildlife.
- Work with New Castle County, Middletown, Delaware Greenways, DNREC, and others to establish a greenway/bikeway between Noxontown Pond and Wiggins Mill Pond with a connection to Townsend.
- To address connectivity of the Townsend Municipal Park with the historic section of town, Townsend should encourage private-property owners on Chestnut Street to allow public access through private property to access the park. Private-property owners are protected from liability according to Delaware Code Title 7 Chapter 59 "Public Recreation on Private Lands."
- Improve landscaping and add boardwalks where necessary to protect wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas along trails and greenways.
- Support New Castle County efforts to develop a regional park facility adjacent to Wiggins Mill Pond as part of the Southern New Castle County Land Acquisition and Development plan.

<u>Other Community Needs and Services Recommendation</u>

- Continue the relationship with the MOT Senior Center to provide recreational opportunities for the elderly population in Townsend.
- Research the need and location for a community center.
- Partner with a Townsend community outreach program and local churches, non-profits and youth groups to assist with residential services for the betterment of the community.

Public Water Supply Recommendations

- Coordinate with New Castle County and Artesian Water to ensure the timely implementation of the five-year plan to upgrade to provide adequate water services for present and future residents.
- Discourage development within the Source Water Protection areas.
- Encourage homes nearest to town to be built first.

Wastewater Recommendations

- Continue negotiating with New Castle County to increase the sewer capacity stated in the agreement to allow growth in areas that are in accordance with the State Investment Strategies and the SNCC Memorandum of Agreement Local Area Plan for the MOT region.
- Continue communication with New Castle County regarding the sewer agreement.
- Continue to investigate the possibility of connecting to Middletown Municipal Wastewater Treatment System to increase sewer capacity.
- Research the feasibility of Townsend building its own municipal wastewater-treatment facility.
- The town should work with the county and state to secure funding to make connecting to the county sewer more affordable for residents.
- ~~Encourage homes to be built nearest to town first.~~

Stormwater Management Recommendations

- Work with New Castle County Conservation District and DNREC to provide assistance with stormwater issues and implementation of green-technology best management practices that could be used to reduce pollutants entering the Appoquinimink River and Blackbird Creek.
- Provide homeowners with education and training about best management practices for stormwater in residential areas.
- Require the town engineer to review the town for stormwater-management issues, especially those related to industrial land uses and street upgrades. This information should be used to identify and preserve appropriate land for stormwater-management facilities in anticipation of the need.
- When new stormwater-management regulations become available, adopt those parts that are compatible with Townsend's small-town character.
- The town should continue to locate funding to improve drainage condition by retrofitting stormwater management techniques in the historic and industrial sections of town. In the past, the

town received funding for drainage projects on Taylor Street to mitigate water collecting in residents' basements.

Natural Resources Recommendations

- Continue to enforce environmental regulations (including Source Water Protection Ordinances) and adopt additional environmental protection measures as deemed necessary to protect water supplies and the health of the Appoquinimink River.
- Become more involved with conservation measures in the Blackbird Creek watershed to reach TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Loads) goals.
- Consider the adoption of a zoning category that allows agricultural and/or agribusiness uses within the town limits and one dwelling unit per five acres.
- Encourage participation in agricultural preservation programs and TDR programs.
- ~~Continue to promote green space by protecting forested lands and requiring that a certain percentage of new subdivision be forested. Discourage clear-cutting and enforce reforestation projects when clear-cutting is necessary.~~ Encourage the preservation and enhancement of green space by promoting the retention of forested areas within new development where practicable, supporting thoughtful land-clearing practices, and encouraging reforestation or landscaping measures when significant tree removal occurs.
- Actively promote the development of forested areas through participation in the Urban and Community Forestry Program. This program is administered by the Delaware Forest Service within the Department of Agriculture and offers grants and technical assistance to communities for tree- planting, care, and management projects on publicly owned lands.
- Continue to coordinate stormwater-management issues with the New Castle Conservation District, and DNREC to ensure implementation of the Sediment and Stormwater Program. The town should work with the New Castle Conservation District to ensure that sediment and stormwater plan review becomes part of the town's planning process.
- Work with partners, such as DNREC's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and the Institute for Public Administration's Water Resources Agency to reduce nonpoint-source pollution through best management practices.
- Work with Mountaire Grainry about air-quality issues.
- Research the implementation of an energy conservation program in town that promotes energy-efficient technology for town projects including street lighting.

Commented [JG29]: Is this still what PC wants to see the Town do? - JG

Commented [JG30]: I don't believe this is still true. - JG

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Commented [JG31]: I think this language is a little more relaxed. What are your thoughts? -JG

- Adopt legislation that would protect identified CNAs (Critical Natural Areas) once in town (via annexations).

- Continue to work towards community wildlife habitat certification by engaging residents within newer developments.

- Consider zoning appropriate areas in the town as Preservation to protect environmental resources.

Pedestrian Network and Environment Recommendations

- Continue to offer annexation of properties on the eastern side of town fronting Main Street in order to facilitate the installment of sidewalks to provide lighting and safe corridor for pedestrians.

- Continue negotiations with the rail line to mitigate pedestrian conflicts and potentially redesign the confluence of Main Street and the railroad tracks by adding sidewalk to the left of the signals.

- Continued to revise the Unified Development Code to mandate walkability features (short setbacks, sidewalks, side parking, dedicated open space or donations in lieu of dedication) to promote future development that is walkable and compatible with the existing town core.

- Re-stripe and nominally realign the town's crosswalks to ensure they are readily visible to pedestrians and drivers and that they lead directly to curb cuts and ramps.

- Work closely with the county to assure that the proposed park is well connected to Townsend's transportation network and that pedestrians need not walk through a large parking lot to gain access. Wherever possible, any park trails should directly access the town's sidewalks.

Opportunities for Physical Activity Recommendations

- Consider additional street fairs, events, and festivals to acclimate Townsend residents to walking around and socializing with their neighbors.

- Purchase and install signs at regular intervals to create a walking route to raise community awareness and provide pedestrians with useful information, such as distance traveled.

Transportation Recommendations

- ~~Conduct a traffic survey in front of the new Townsend Early Childhood Center to determine how to reduce traffic on adjacent Brook Ramble Lane in the Townsend Station. Determine the need for traffic calming devices on Brook Ramble Lane.~~ Participate in the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) to review and refine traffic study results related to the Townsend Early Childhood Center and evaluate traffic conditions on Brook Ramble Lane, including the potential need for traffic-calming measures.

- ~~Continue to coordinate with New Castle County and DelDOT to determine the feasibility of~~

Commented [JG32]: This may not be an accurate statement. What changes do you want here? - JG

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~~annexing the county park and creating a new intersection at South and Commerce Streets.~~ Continue coordination with DelDOT to implement intersection improvements at South and Commerce Streets, reflecting the transfer of the former County Park to the Town in 2025, and ensuring safe and efficient access consistent with local and state transportation standards.

- Continue to coordinate with the town engineer and DelDOT to prioritize areas for repair and secure funding.
- Coordinate with DelDOT to secure ramp access to SR 1 north at Pine Tree Corners.
- Coordinate with DelDOT's Statewide and Regional Planning Section to discuss and initiate a Transportation Improvement District to improve traffic flow and safety.
- Create a network of nature trails, walkways, and shared pathways connecting Main Street, the historic section of town, open areas surrounding and, in the subdivisions, the Municipal Park, the future The Woods at Hidden Creek park, and areas near the school.
- Continue to communicate with the county and DART concerning the acquisition of additional public transportation stops and routes servicing Townsend.
- Continue with sidewalk installation on every street in town to promote walkability.
- ~~Coordinate with Middletown to create a greenway.~~
- Continue to work on Main Street revitalization projects to improve downtown walkability.
- Develop of a balanced regional transportation system to include public transportation between Townsend and regional employment opportunities in the surrounding MOT area, access to higher education via public transportation, and access to shopping areas in Middletown

Community Character and Design Recommendations

- As appropriate, the town should consult with the Office of State Planning Coordination and review the statewide historic preservation plan, *Partners in Preservation Planning, Delaware's Historic Preservation Plan 2018-2022* (http://history.delaware.gov/pdfs/2018-2022DelawareSHPOPlan.pdf) regarding the community design initiatives being undertaken by their office.
- Revise the Zoning and Unified Development Code to assure that pedestrian travel is fluid orientation is required in new developments.
- Consider zoning appropriate portions of the newly annexed lands as "Preservation" to protect environmental and historic resources.
- Consider creating a historic overlay zone of the Historic Register District, with a Historic Review

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Commented [JG33]: Ask planning Commission if this is still the intended plan for the Town. -JG

Commented [JG34]: Ask planning Commission if this is still the intended plan for the Town.- JG

Board that oversees design standards, to provide an additional layer of oversight for development and redevelopment in this area of historic structures. The Town should draft ordinances that apply specifically to the historic core of town and the Main Street Streetscape and the Downtown Revitalization Project proposal area.

- Increase the number of municipal tree-plantings in parks and open spaces along streets. The Town should apply for urban-forestry grants to help offset the costs of planting and maintenance through the Urban and Community Forestry Program. The Town should also work with the New Castle County Cooperative Extension Service or the State Urban Forester to identify the most appropriate species of street trees that survive in an urban environment and do not damage sidewalks.

- Initiate a gateway study of Main Street east of town to Summit Bridge Road (SR 71), through WILMAPCO, including the County, DelDOT, and the landowners to make some improvements to this critical area.

- Ensure appropriate development in the north of town to create a distinct boundary between Townsend and Middletown. This should be accomplished through design standards, adequate signage, and a greenbelt.

- ~~Continue to fund the Main Street Streetscape efforts in the three-phase plan as funds become available.~~ Phase 3 is still underway.

- Continue to monitor and maintain the existing sidewalks in town and the funds become available.

- Continue to support the finance committee's goal to increase revenue through business licensing fees, commercial property re-assessments, or a new business tax.

- Continue to research the feasibility of a downtown-revitalization project that would invest in the town center and support mixed-use development.

- ~~Keep the town's identity of the small and residential community.~~ Maintain the Town's integrity and identity of an ever growing community that values the historical aspect while adapting to the ever growing surroundings.

- Continue to promote cultural and social events to enhance community cohesiveness between residents in the older section of town and the recently annexed areas.

- Continue discussing the feasibility of participation in a transfer-of-development-rights (TDR) program.

- Continue to work with the existing owners of non-residential properties to clean up trash and debris, especially those within residential districts. Carefully regulate the location and type of any proposed non-residential uses to prevent additional problems.

Commented [JG35]: Speak with Planning Commission about this. I don't have any context on the "why" of this.- JG

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Land Use, Annexation, and Areas of Concern Recommendations

- In accordance with state law, bring zoning map into congruence with land use map following adoption of this plan.

- Continue efforts to coordinate future land use strategies through the Southern New Castle County Master Plan.

- Continue involvement with New Castle County in the development of Wiggins Mill Park.

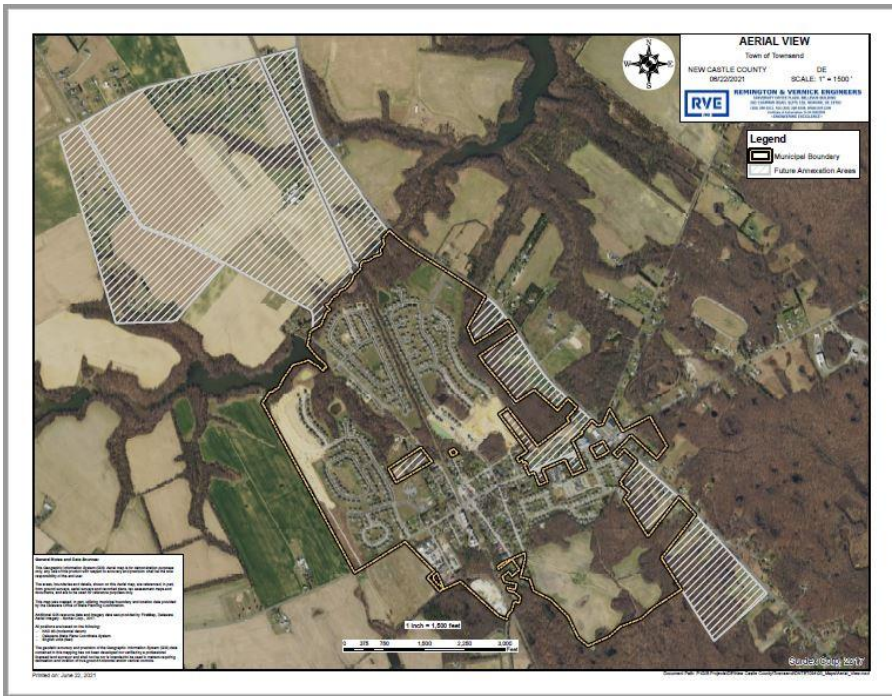
- Continue revisions or additions to the Zoning and Unified Development Code that:
  - Incorporate this plan's Community Character recommendations.
  - Ensure that future development densities are consistent with the goals and policies of this plan.
  - Examine uses allowed in each zoning district.
  - Possibly create a new zone to implement this plan's goals concerning redevelopment in the town center redevelopment area.
  - Encourage a diverse and affordable housing stock through mixed-use development, including apartments and townhomes.
  - Promote a mix of residential, commercial, office and "live-work" units in the town-center redevelopment area.

Appendix

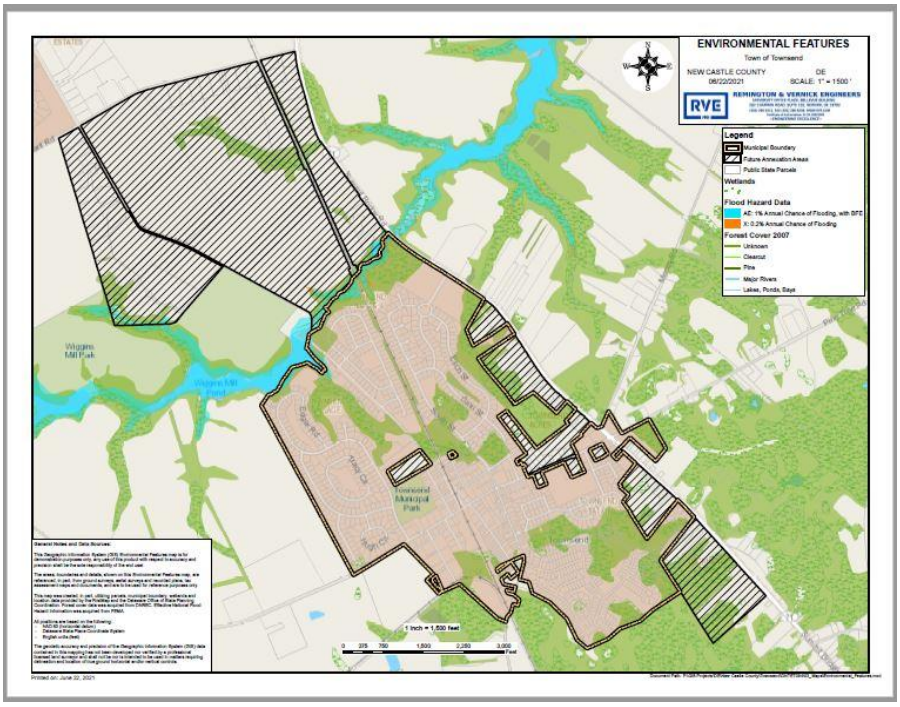
The data from the Comprehensive Plan maps are now accessible in an online viewer for Townsend.
https://rve.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=f2958cb5a2d244bd97551c60c0be98b4

All maps are enclosed and can be found in the following pages.

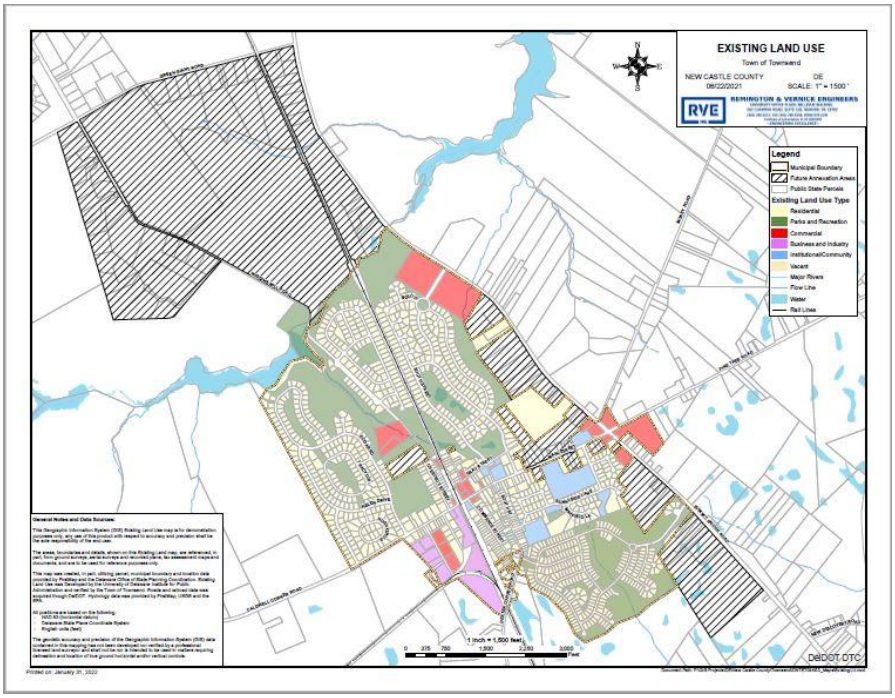
Map 1- Townsend Aerial View



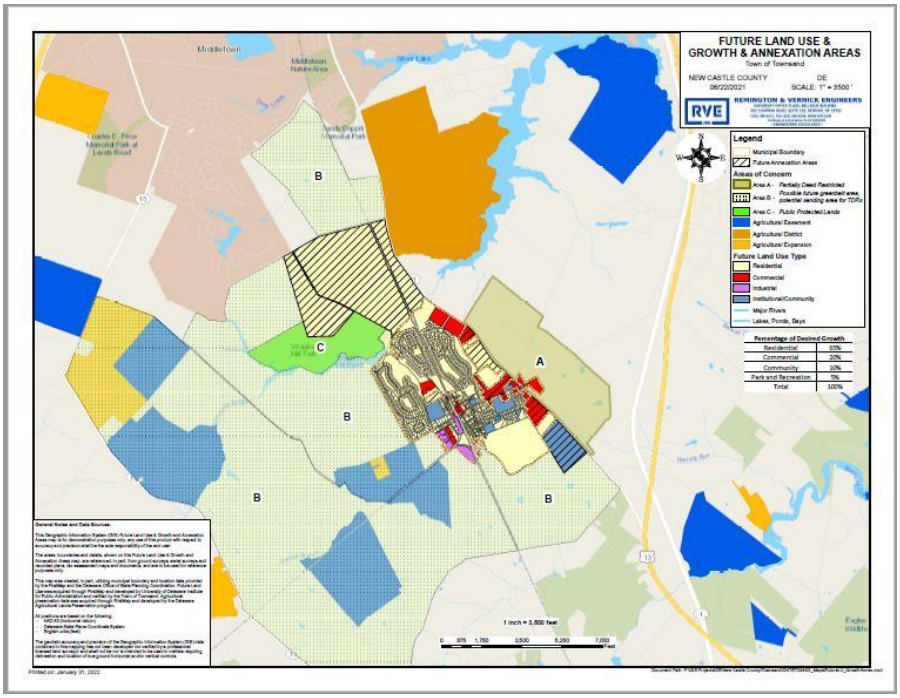
Map 2- Townsend Environmental Features



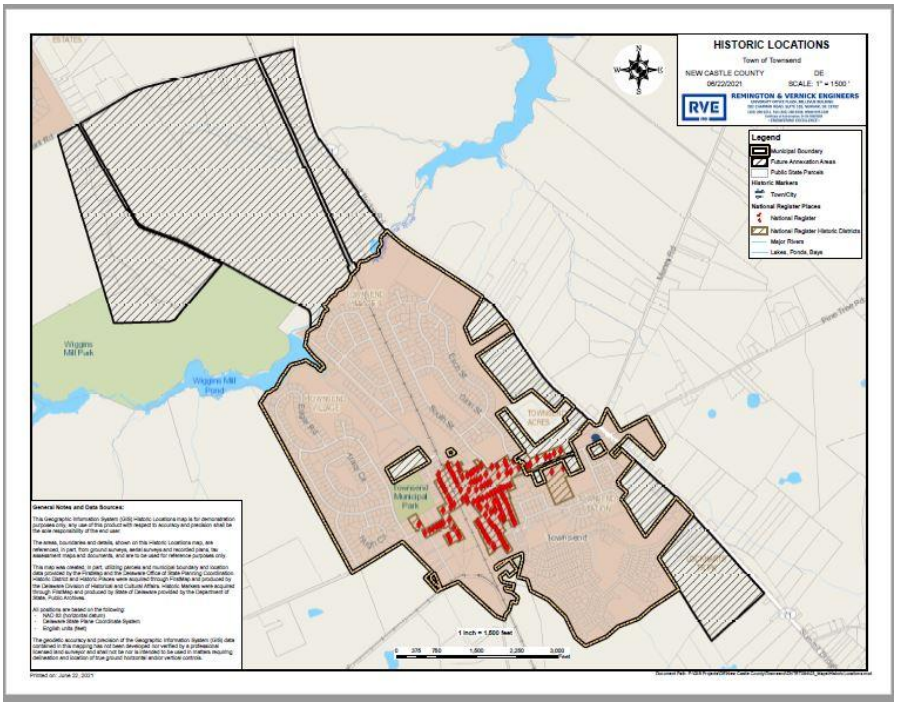
Map 3- Townsend Existing Land Use



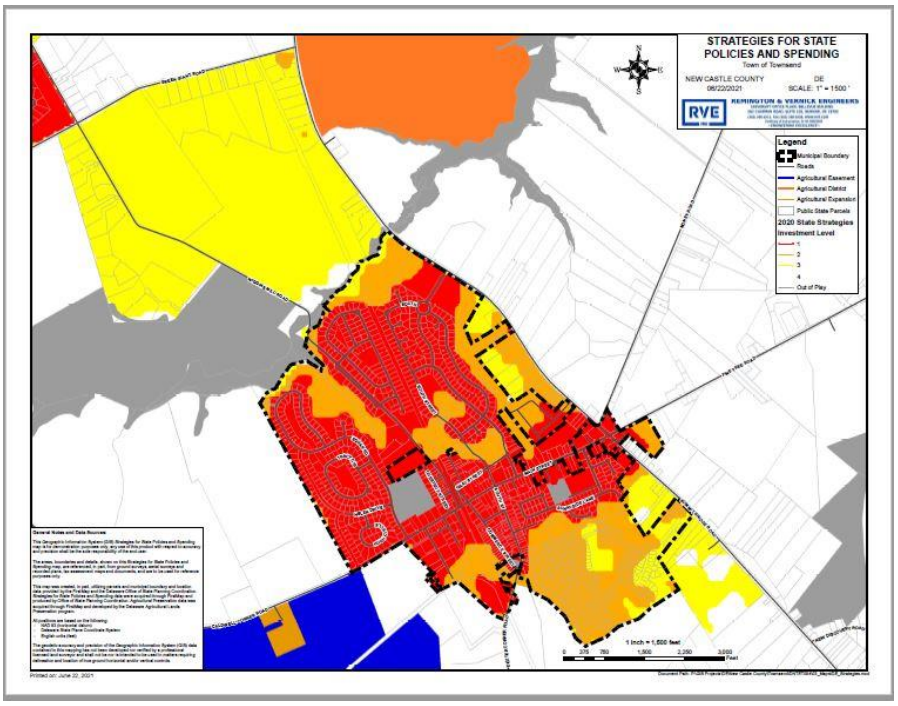
Map 4- Townsend Future Land Use & Growth, & Annexation



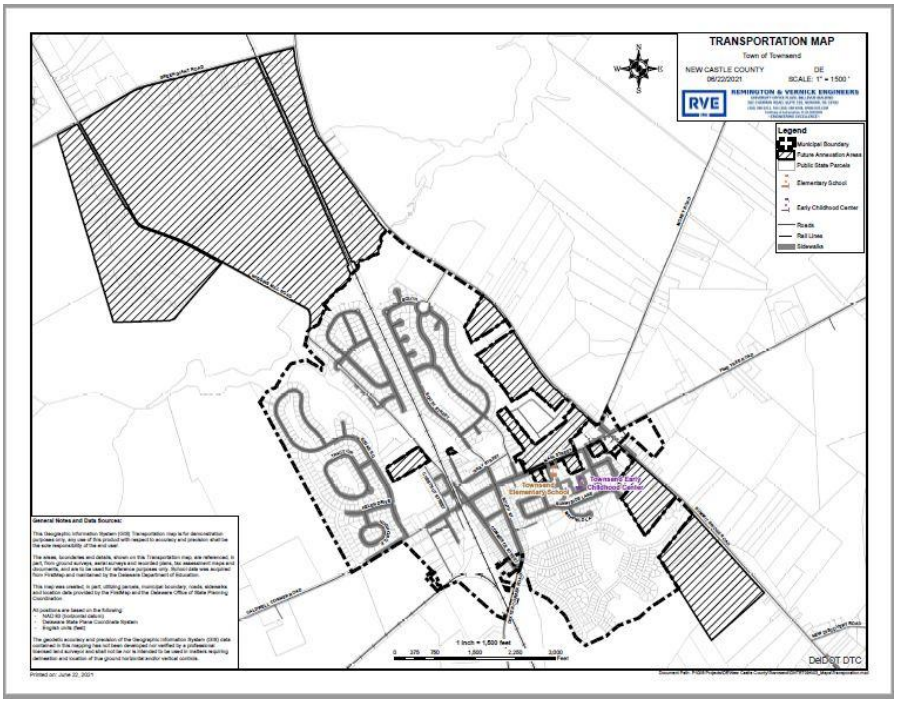
Map 5- Townsend Historic Locations



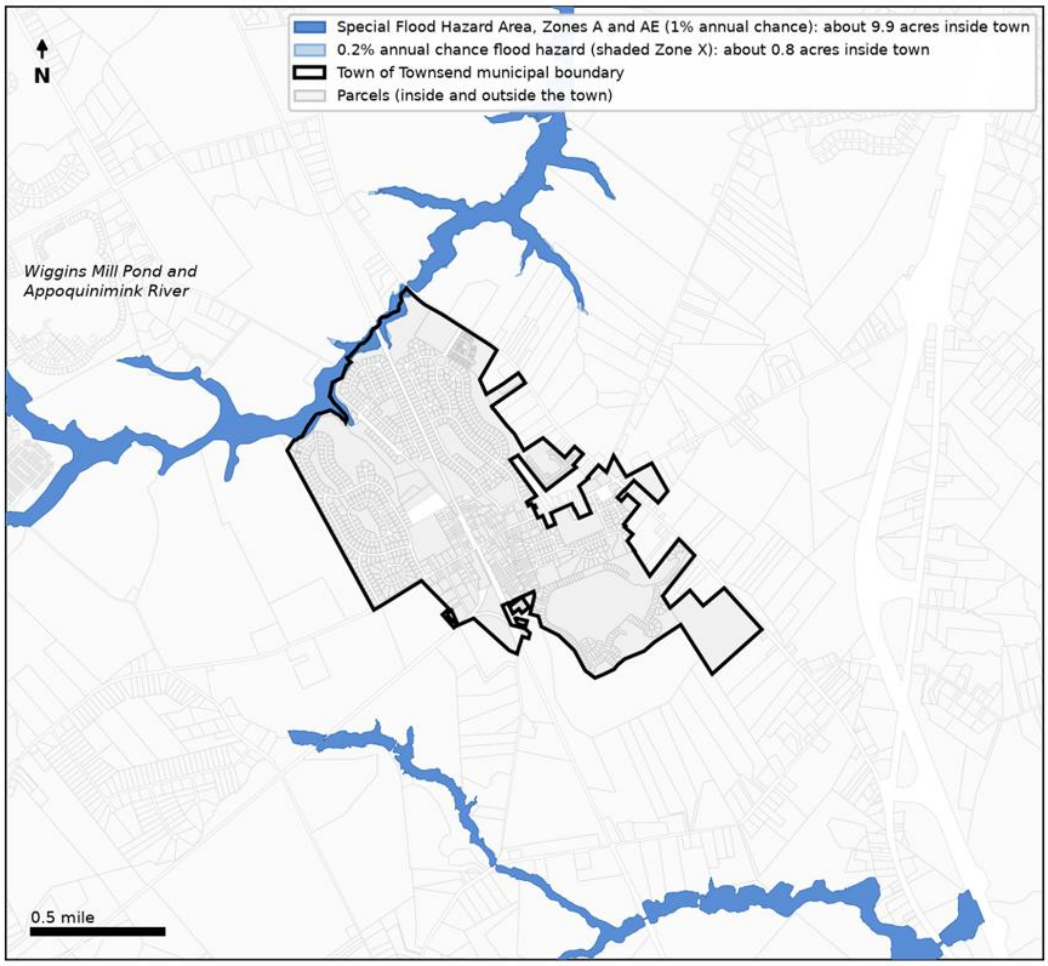
Map 6- Strategies for State Policies and Spending



Map 7- Townsend Transportation Map

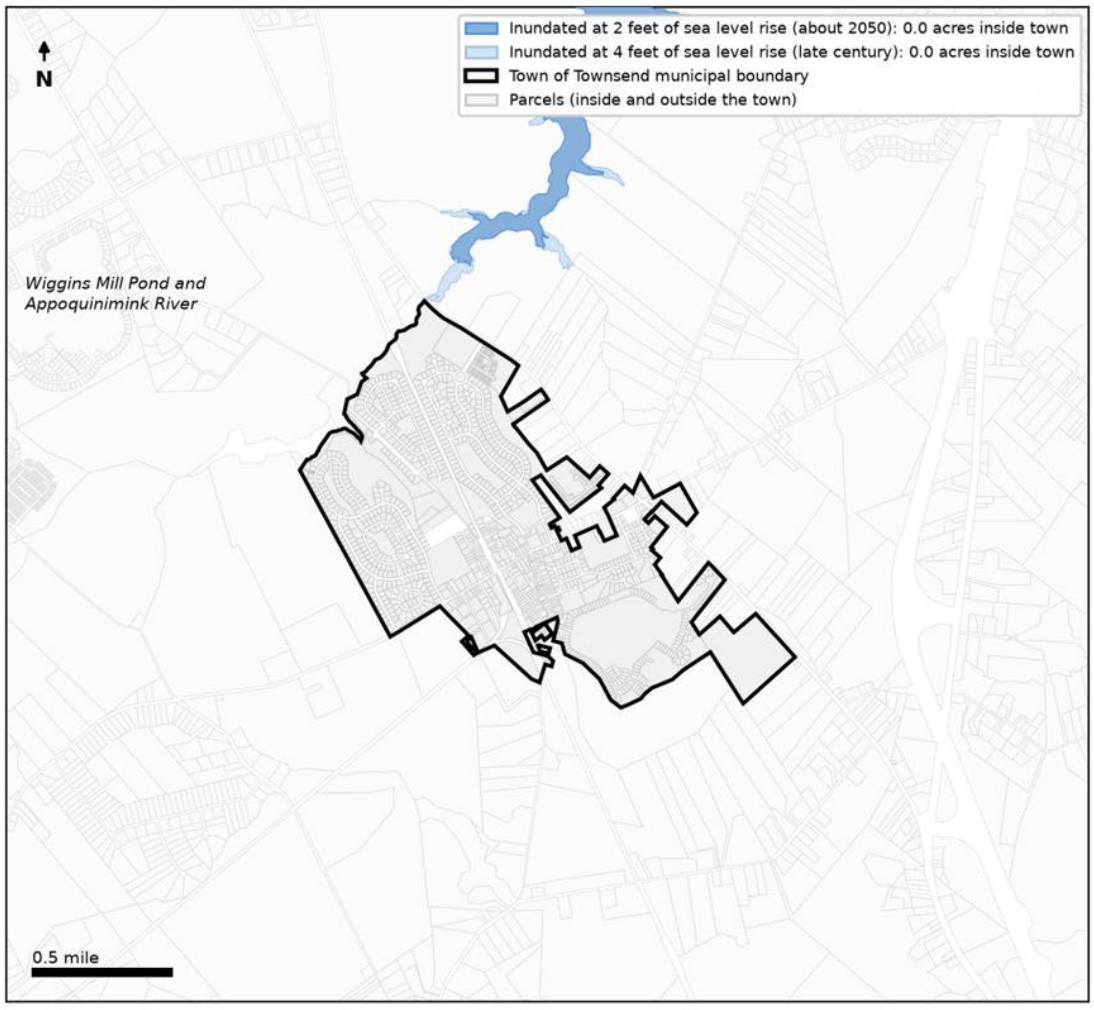


Map 8 – Flood Hazard Areas (FEMA), Town of Townsend



Source: FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer, panels 10003C0315L and 10003C0318L, effective January 22, 2020 (queried October 2026); New Castle County parcel and municipal boundary data. All of the hazard area inside the town is Zone AE.

Map 9 – Sea Level Rise Scenarios (DNREC), Town of Townsend



Source: DNREC Delaware Coastal Inundation (2017) sea level rise scenarios via FirstMap, shown separately from the FEMA map as the State toolkit advises; New Castle County parcel and municipal boundary data. The 3-foot scenario also reaches no land inside the town.