

Municipal Comprehensive Land Use Plan Annual Report

Name of Municipality: Town of Smyrna

Date of Plan Certification: June 17, 2013 Date of Report: July 7, 2020

In accordance with 22 Del. C. §702 (g) Municipalities shall provide to the Office of State Planning Coordination a report describing implementation of their comprehensive plan and identifying development issues, trends* or conditions since the plan was last adopted or amended. The report shall be due annually no later than July 1.

*Please note that the development trends data is collected each year to further supplement this requirement. Please contact the Office of State Planning Coordination with questions regarding development trends or this annual report.

- 1. Please review the recommendations, goals and implementation items within your comprehensive plan and Please indicate which items are complete, underway, or not yet started. Also please include any other comments you may wish to add.**

The 2012 Comprehensive Plan specifies five (5) major issues and goals for the Town to accomplish and/or tackle in this 5-10-year planning period.

In 2019, construction began on the 206-acre Duck Creek Business Campus. To date, roads, stormwater management facilities, and other utilities have been installed. The developer, KRM Development Corporation, has submitted construction plans and building permit for their first approximately 69,000 sq. ft. office/light industrial/warehouse flex building, and is expected to begin construction later in 2020. This business park is estimated (by the developer who owns and manages a dozen such parks across the country) to employ upwards of 4,000 persons upon the buildout in 20+ years dependent on the actual tenants which move into said Park. Additionally, staff has partnered with the Kent Economic Partnership and the Delaware Prosperity Partnership to market vacant employment center lands and vacant commercial/industrial buildings within the Town. These relate to Issue #1 specified on Page 27 calling for new employment opportunities for Smyrna area residents.

Issue #2 on Page 27 outlines the need to preserve historic buildings within the Town and to revitalize the commercial downtown district. Staff has conducted outreach to downtown property owners and developers, and in the past year two downtown historic rehabilitation projects have been approved by the Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs to utilize Delaware Historic Preservation Tax Credits (the first in Smyrna). Staff have continued to partner with downtown property owners and developers to assist them obtain Downtown Development District (DDD) funding. Notable projects include the complete renovation of the former Wright Mansion into the Cobalt Manor wedding venue and café. Importantly, staff has worked closely on the renovation of seven historic houses in the past year, and to obtain DDD funding (prior to 2019 no residential projects had received DDD funding in Smyrna). In addition, the Town expanded the Downtown Development District boundaries by approximately 11 acres in March 2020 and has mailed letters outlining all available incentives to all 52 new property owners in the DDD.

In the past year, the Smyrna Slum Clearance and Redevelopment Authority has approved and disbursed \$43,851.90 in façade improvement grants to 17 residential applications and 2 commercial applicants in the Smyrna Historic District.

Issue #5 on Page 27 outlines the need to extend public utilities to encourage development of appropriate uses and to avoid inefficient leapfrog development. The Town Engineer, Jason McClafferty of KCI Technologies, is currently working on a detailed plan to construct a new water tower and extend water, sewer, and electric service on the east side of U.S. Route 13 north of Duck Creek. This plan and strategy, if adopted by the Town Council, is estimated to bring public utilities to this area within 18-24 months.

From July 2019 to June 2020, the Town of Smyrna annexed five parcels totaling 2.55 acres that were all identified in Figure 3-1 of the 2012 Smyrna Comprehensive Plan. In the past year, staff members and elected officials have worked with local realtors, property owners, and developers to identify a limited number of additional parcels (almost all along U.S. Route 13) to be added to the Town's annexation area as part of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update. Staff has met with State and County staff members and elected officials' numerous times in the past year to gain their input and backing for a slightly expanded annexation area.

From July 2019 to June 2020, the Town of Smyrna has rezoned four parcels identified on Page 39 of the Smyrna U.S. 13 Corridor Plan and Design Book (adopted as a formal Comprehensive Plan Amendment) to either NC – North Corridor or SCZ – South Corridor. One of the parcels (former Mid Del Auto Salvage) will be renovated and repurposed as a government fleet service center and storage facility under the auspices of the Delaware Office of Management & Budget with only minor landscaping additions. The other three projects include a new Firestone Tire Service Center, Starbuck Drive-Thru Restaurant, and a 270-unit apartment complex which will all conform to the design standards outlined in the SCZ – South Corridor Zoning District (called out in the Route 13 Corridor Plan).

2. Please highlight any significant accomplishments development issues, trends or conditions since the plan was last adopted or amended that may either have enhanced or hindered the implementation of your plan. These accomplishments may be used in the annual report to the Governor.

On July 20, 2020, the Smyrna Town Council will adopt a completely revised 'Planned Village Community' Conditional Use Standards. This includes 25 pages of graphic design standards for new residential and mixed-use subdivisions in Smyrna related to street design, project layout, mixing of housing types and commercial uses, sidewalks, street trees and furniture, and building design and placement. This was the result of discussions and review during three meetings of the Planning Commission, and from input from area developers and engineers. This revised ordinance (first adopted in 2014) will provide greater clarity and guidance to developers and the Planning Commission in reviewing new large scale residential and mixed-use projects. The first project to use these revised standards, known as Graceville consisting of more than 700 residential dwellings, is expected to go before the Planning Commission in August 2020. This ordinance relates to and is in conformance to the following development strategy identified in Section 1 – Land Use (Page 30) of the 2012 Comprehensive Plan: "Achieve a more compact and cost-effective pattern of residential and neighborhood commercial development."

3. Are there any planning issues that the municipality is currently facing Do you anticipate any comprehensive plan changes for which the Office of State Planning Coordination may be able to offer technical assistance? If yes, please describe below.

Staff and the Planning Commission have been diligently working on a formal update of the 2013 Comprehensive Plan since August 2019. Planning Commission has reviewed and discussed the Comprehensive Plan update during seven meetings going chapter by chapter. It is expected that the draft Comprehensive Plan Update will go before the Smyrna Town Council in September 2020, and before PLUS for final approval by October/November 2020.

4. Please help update our mailing list by supplying the following information:

Mayor: Robert Johnson rjohnson@smyrna.delaware.gov

City/Town Manager: Andrew Haines ahaines@smyrna.delaware.gov

Planning Director: George DeBenedictis gdebenedictis@smyrna.delaware.gov

Town/City Clerk: Valerie Heritage vheritage@smyrna.delaware.gov

Council/Commission Members: Robert Johnson, Mayor
Valerie Forbes, Vice Mayor
Margaret Mann
William Pressley, Sr.
Michael Rasmussen
Tabitha Gott
Gerald Brown

Planning Commission Members: Robert Newnam, Chair
Michael McGrath
James Wolfe
Michael Reed
Amy Retzlaff

On behalf of the Town of Smyrna, I respectfully submit this comprehensive plan annual report to the Office of State Planning Coordination. The information contained in the report is correct and complete.



Signature of Mayor

7/8/20
Date

Robert Johnson
Printed Name of Mayor