

Municipal Comprehensive Land Use Plan Annual Report

Name of Municipality: Town of Smyrna

Date of Plan Certification: February 4, 2013 **Date of Report:** June 25, 2021

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.

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 four 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.

In the past year, the Smyrna Slum Clearance and Redevelopment Authority has approved and disbursed \$13,716.36 in façade improvement grants to seven residential applications 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. In January 2021, the Town of Smyrna contracted with two additional engineering firms to continue designing the Phase II extension of water, sewer, and electric service north of Duck Creek and to redesign the replacement of aging water and sewer infrastructure along Locust Street. The Town expects to extend water, sewer, and electric infrastructure on the west side of US Route 13 north of Duck Creek within 18 months.

From July 2019 to June 2020, the Town of Smyrna annexed one parcel totaling 0.79 acres that were all identified in Figure 3-1 of the 2012 Smyrna Comprehensive Plan.

From July 2020 to June 2021, the Town of Smyrna has rezoned two parcels identified on Page 39 of the Smyrna U.S. 13 Corridor Plan and Design Book (adopted as a formal Comprehensive Plan Amendment) to SCZ – South Corridor. One of the parcels is adjacent to the Gateway North Shopping

Center and will be developed into a three-story mixed-use building with 12,000 sq. ft. of first floor retail and 32 second and third floor apartments. The other parcel is currently vacant and the applicant is currently designing a commercial building to occupy said property utilizing the design standards set forth in the SCZ South Corridor District.

The Town Council will tentatively adopt the 2020 Comprehensive Plan on July 19, 2021. Staff have already been holding work sessions with the Planning Commission to identify those hundreds of parcels that would be rezoned as part of the Comprehensive Rezoning to comply with said Comp Plan. On June 7, 2021, the Town Council adopted an ordinance to simplify the physical posting and notice requirements to accommodate this massive comprehensive rezoning.

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 October 19, 2020, the Town Council adopted an enhanced and expanded economic development incentives package, which:

- 1.) Provides a five-year 100% property tax reassessment waiver for eligible projects in the DDD.
- 2.) Provides a graduated ten-year property tax reassessment waiver for eligible projects in the employment center zoning districts.
- 3.) Provides a complete waiver for building permit, development review applications, and all town related impact fees for projects in the DDD.
- 4.) Provides a complete waiver for building permit and development review fees and a partial graduated waiver of town-related impact fees for eligible projects in the employment center zoning districts.

On May 24, 2021, the Town Council gave preliminary approval for the Smyrna Slum Clearance & Redevelopment Authority to partner with True Access Capital (a Wilmington-based community development financing organization) to administer the Town's business revolving loan and micro-loan program which has remained dormant for nearly three years. The Town is awaiting final approval from the USDA Rural Development Office in Dover before the contract is signed with True Access Capital.

On June 21, 2021, the Town Council adopted an ordinance increasing the maximum façade grant award for commercial and mixed-use buildings from \$2,500 to \$10,000, while also restricting use of said façade grant funding to projects within the historic downtown commercial district and outlying residential neighborhoods.

In November 2020, the Town signed a contract with Tischler Bise Associates to complete a comprehensive analysis of the Town's impact fee structure. Currently, the Town charges a single impact fee without a breakdown as to how the fee is to be divided between various Town departments and programs. This process will result in the creation of separate water, sewer, police, parks and recreation, and general town impact fees based upon sound data and research to adequately capture the costs of new development to the Town's coffers. This analysis is nearly complete and is expected to be adopted by the Town Council by August 2021.

In November 2020, KRM Development broke ground on their first building (approximately 70,000 sq. ft. flex space) in the Duck Creek Business Campus, which is nearly completion and will hopefully have a signed tenant(s) for occupancy by the early fall.

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.

With the pending adoption of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Smyrna will quickly embark upon a Comprehensive Rezoning and the creation of two new zoning districts. Once this is complete, the Town is interested in completing a Master Parks Plan (have already drafted the RFP) and also exploring the creation of a municipal TDR/PDR program. The Town would welcome the participation and assistance of OSPC on both of these endeavors.

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

Mayor: Robert Johnson e-mail address: rjohnson@smyrna.delaware.gov

City/Town Manager: Andrew Haines e-mail address: ahaines@smyrna.delaware.gov

Planning Director: George DeBenedictis e-mail address: gdebenedictis@smyrna.delaware.gov

Town/City Clerk: Valerie Heritage e-mail address: 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
Carol Binns
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

6/30/21

Date

Robert Johnson

Printed Name of Mayor.