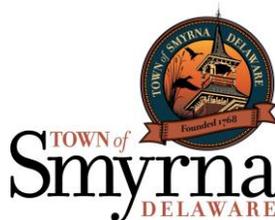


# Draft Smyrna 2020 Comprehensive Plan

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September 30, 2020

Jeremy J. Rothwell – Senior Planner



# Delaware Code - Title 22, Section 702(a)

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*“A Comprehensive Plan means 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. The comprehensive planning process shall demonstrate coordination with other municipalities, the county, and the State during plan preparation.”*

# Delaware Code - Title 22, Section 702(a) cont...

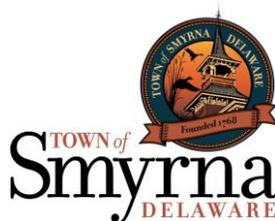
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- By state law, a municipal comprehensive plan must be reviewed every five years and updated every ten years.
- Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map must be in alignment with adopted Comprehensive Plan.
- Delaware Office of State Planning provides a checklist for municipalities (both under and over population of 2,000) for everything that must be included in Comprehensive Plan.  
<https://stateplanning.delaware.gov/lup/documents/comprehensive-plan-checklist-guide.pdf>

# Smyrna Planning History

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- Town Council adopted zoning ordinance on May 20, 1964, which remains in effect.
- First comprehensive plan was drafted with the assistance of third-party consultant and adopted in September 1973.
- Second comprehensive plan was drafted by another third-party consultant and adopted on April 18, 1988.
- Third comprehensive plan was drafted by staff and adopted on April 21, 1997.



# Smyrna Planning History cont...

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- The 2002 Comprehensive Plan Amendment was adopted on May 16, 2003, which formally designated an annexation area in compliance with State law.
- This annexation plan (as it pertains north of Duck Creek) was legally challenged by New Castle County. In 2005, Superior Court ruled that the Town could legally annex those designated lands north of Duck Creek.
- The 2005 Comprehensive Plan Update formalized the legal agreement between the Town of Smyrna, NCC, and the State of Delaware by limiting the extent of new annexations north of Duck Creek until 2012. The Town also relinquished its claims to annex lands south of Brenford Road.



# 2012 Comprehensive Plan & 2013 Plan Amendment

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- The Town Council adopted the 2012 Comprehensive Plan Update on February 4, 2013.
- The Plan was largely a continuation of those objectives outlined in the 2002 and 2005 Plans.
- In February 2013, the US 13 Corridor Plan and Design Manual was adopted by the Town Council, and subsequently adopted as a Comprehensive Plan Amendment on June 17, 2013.

# 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update

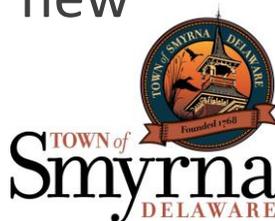
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- Originally began as a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to add 73 parcels to the Annexation Future Land Use Map in 2018.
- Due to the complexity of the map amendments and its effect on the rest of the Plan, the Office of State Planning Coordination recommended completing a formal Comprehensive Plan Update three years early.
- Staff drafted a completely new Comprehensive Plan that was reviewed by the Planning Commission during 12 public meetings from September 2019 to September 2020.

# Overall Plan Goals & Objectives

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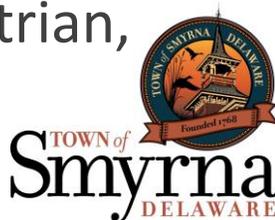
- New growth and development will be compact, pedestrian-oriented, appropriately-scaled, interconnected, and reflect the historical development patterns and neighborhoods of the Town. Low-density suburban sprawl will be strongly discouraged.
- Encourage the rehabilitation, restoration, and adaptive re-use of historical structures and homes within the Town using standards set forth by the United States Secretary of the Interior.
- Enable safe and efficient modes of travel for pedestrians, cyclists, vehicular drivers, and transit users through an efficient and interconnected transportation network and system.
- Provide for the orderly and efficient extension of public utilities and services as new lands are annexed into the municipal boundaries of Smyrna.



# Overall Plan Goals & Objectives cont...

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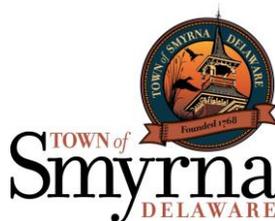
- Provide a mix of housing opportunities, types, and sizes to accommodate all ages, household sizes, and incomes.
- Transform the Route 13 corridor into a mixed-use and attractive gateway with multiple opportunities to live, shop, dine, and play in a walkable environment.
- Foster a predictable and transparent process for the review and approval of new development.
- Attract and retain quality businesses and high-paying jobs to the community and promote a balanced and diversified economy that supports a wide range and type of employers and jobs within the Town of Smyrna.
- Coordinate with DeIDOT and other transportation agencies to ensure that new development and existing neighborhoods are adequately served by road, pedestrian, and transit infrastructure.



# Overall Plan Goals & Objectives cont...

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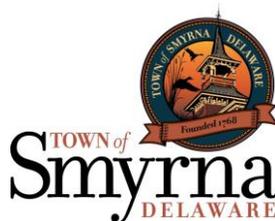
- Provide for a wide variety of parks and public recreational facilities to serve all members of the community regardless of age, interest, or physical ability.
- Partner with New Castle County, Kent County, and various State agencies to protect agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands outside of the municipal boundary of Smyrna to establish an urban growth boundary, and to create a clear delineation between town and country.
- Will ensure that Smyrna residents are provided with the highest level of police, medical, and emergency services.



# Annexation History of Smyrna 1856-2020

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<https://smyrna.delaware.gov/media/2020%20Comp%20Plan/COMP%20PLAN%20ANNEXATION%20HISTORY.pdf>



# Vacant Residential Building Lots

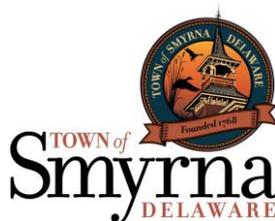
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## VESTED VACANT BUILDING LOTS

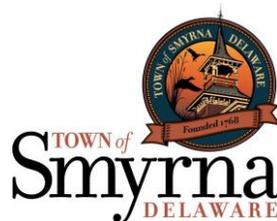
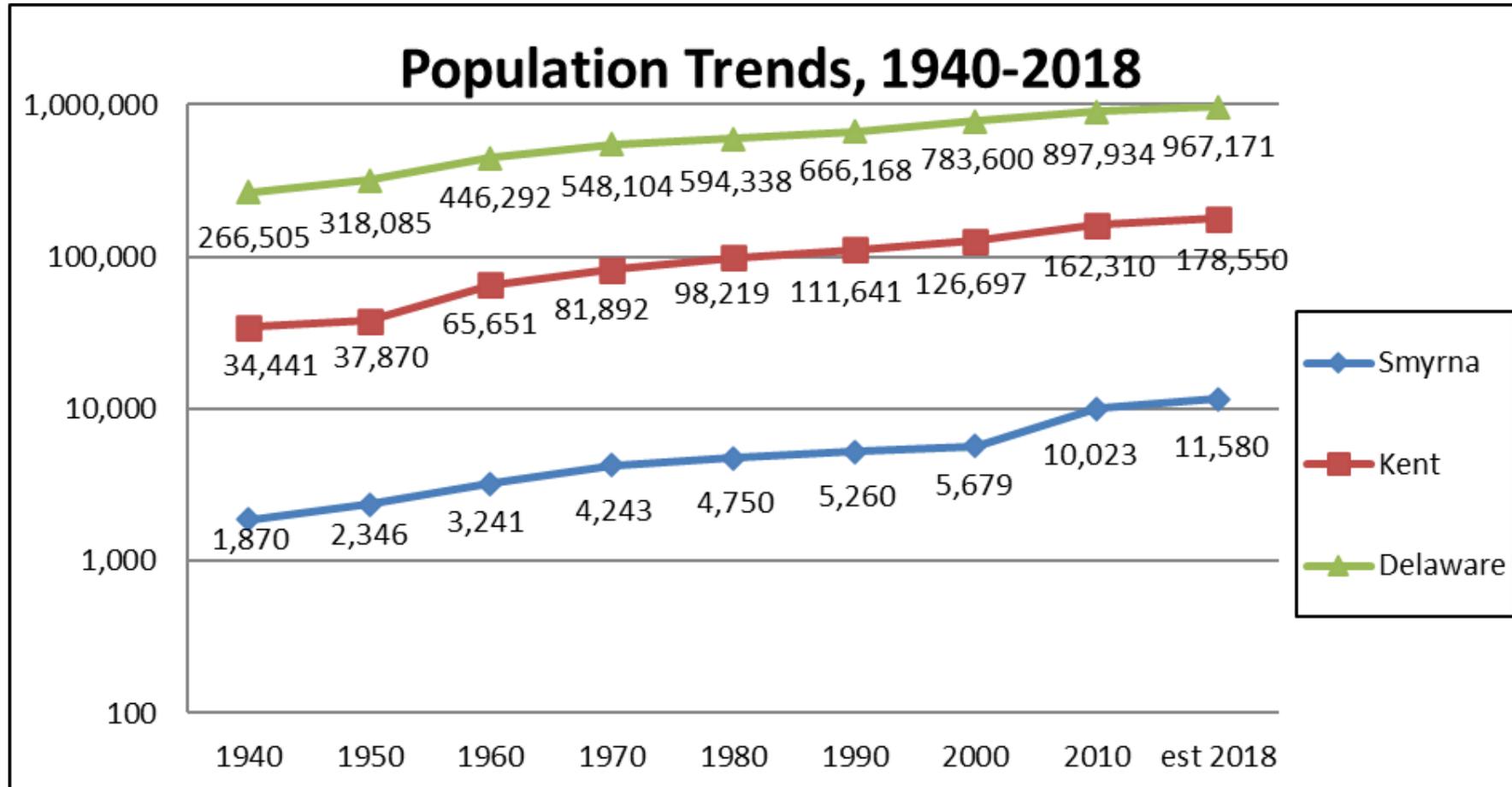
Ashland – 81 vacant lots (152 total lots)  
Bergmont Woods – 77 vacant lots (128 total lots)  
Bon Ayre – 172 vacant lots (404 total lots)  
Cambria Village – 62 vacant lots (280 total lots)  
Centreville – 397 vacant lots (426 total lots)  
Graceville – 430 vacant lots (430 total lots)  
Lake Como Woods – 8 vacant lots (61 total lots)  
North Park – 34 vacant lots (34 total lots)  
S. Dupont Mixed Use (Ramunno) – 48 apartments  
Simon’s Corner Apartments – 270 apartments  
Woodland Manor – 14 vacant lots (235 total lots)  
Worthington – 366 vacant lots (549 total lots)  
**TOTAL: 1,968 vested vacant lots/dwelling units**

## EXPIRED VACANT BUILDING LOTS

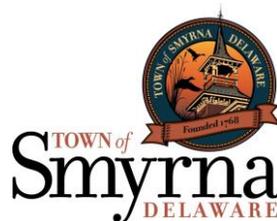
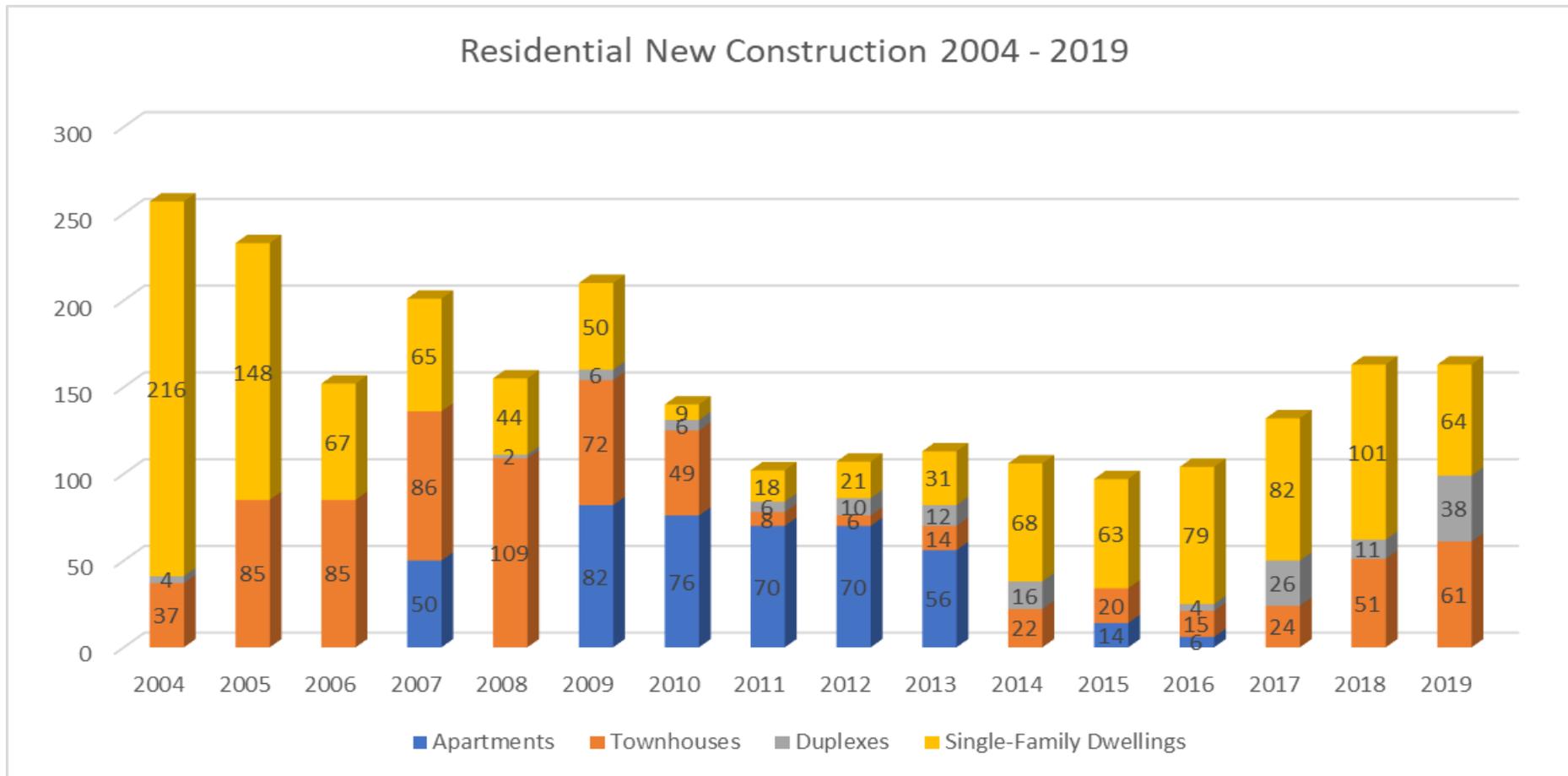
Duck Creek Crossing – 47 expired vacant lots  
Sharoff Farm (part of Watson Farm) – 255 expired vacant lots  
Tapahanna (part of Watson Farm) – 109 lots/288 apartments  
Watson Farm – 205 expired vacant lots  
**TOTAL: 904 expired vacant lots/dwelling units**



# Population Growth (1940 – 2018)

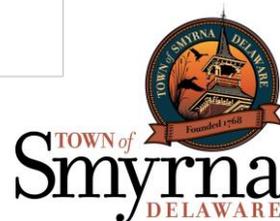
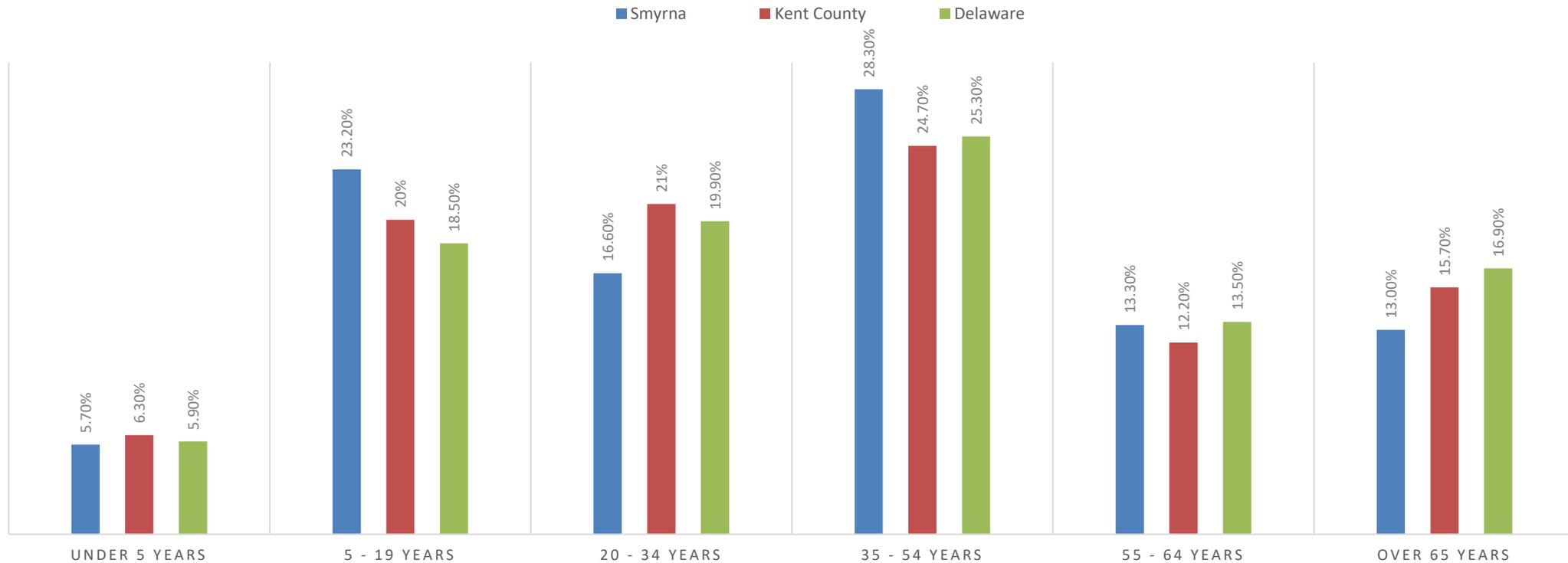


# Smyrna New Housing Starts (2004 – 2019)



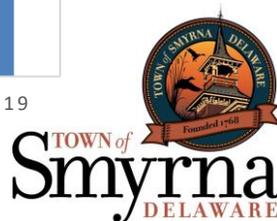
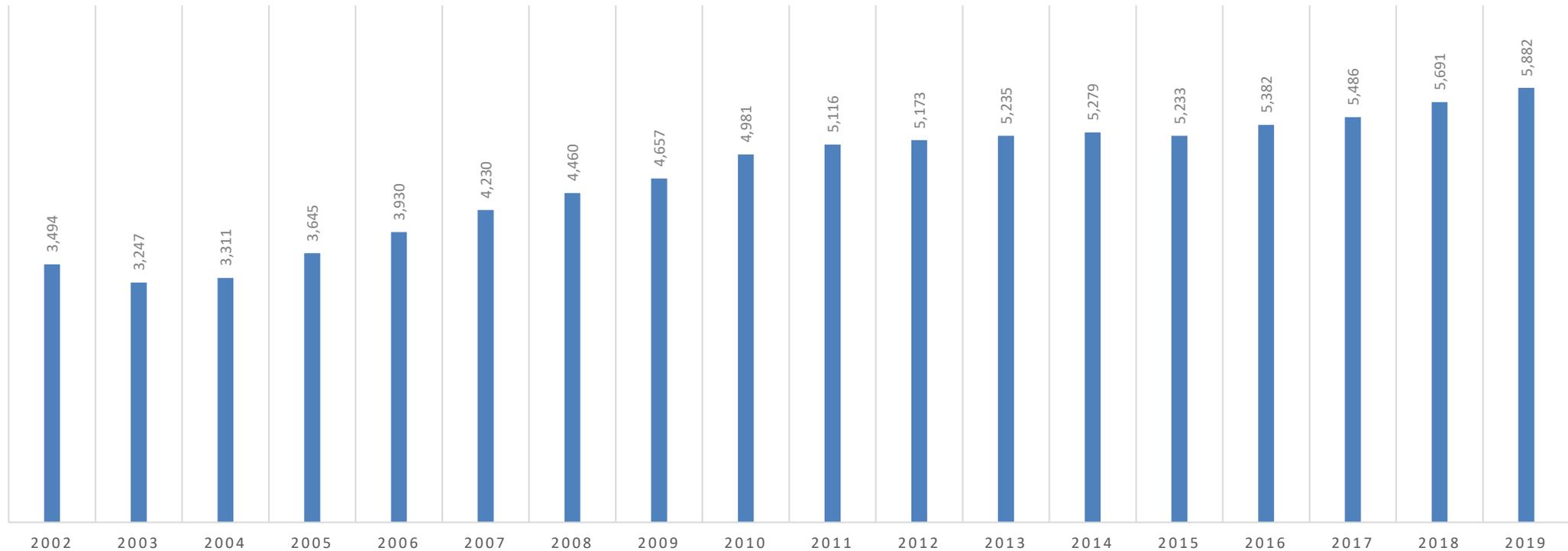
# Age Distribution Comparison

AGE DISTRIBUTION (2017 ACS)

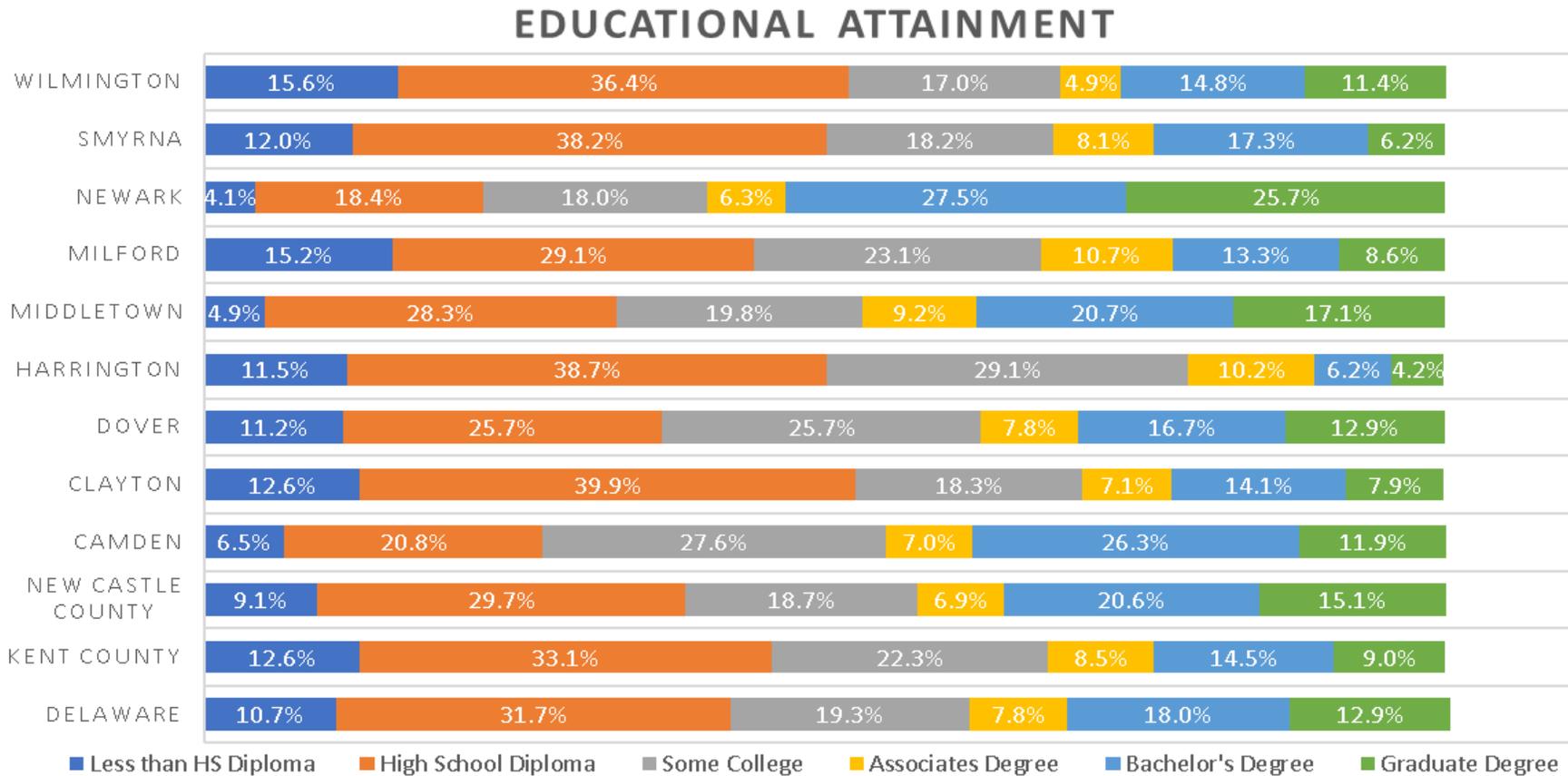


# Smyrna School District Enrollment (2002 – 2019)

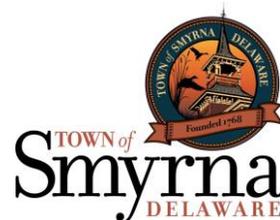
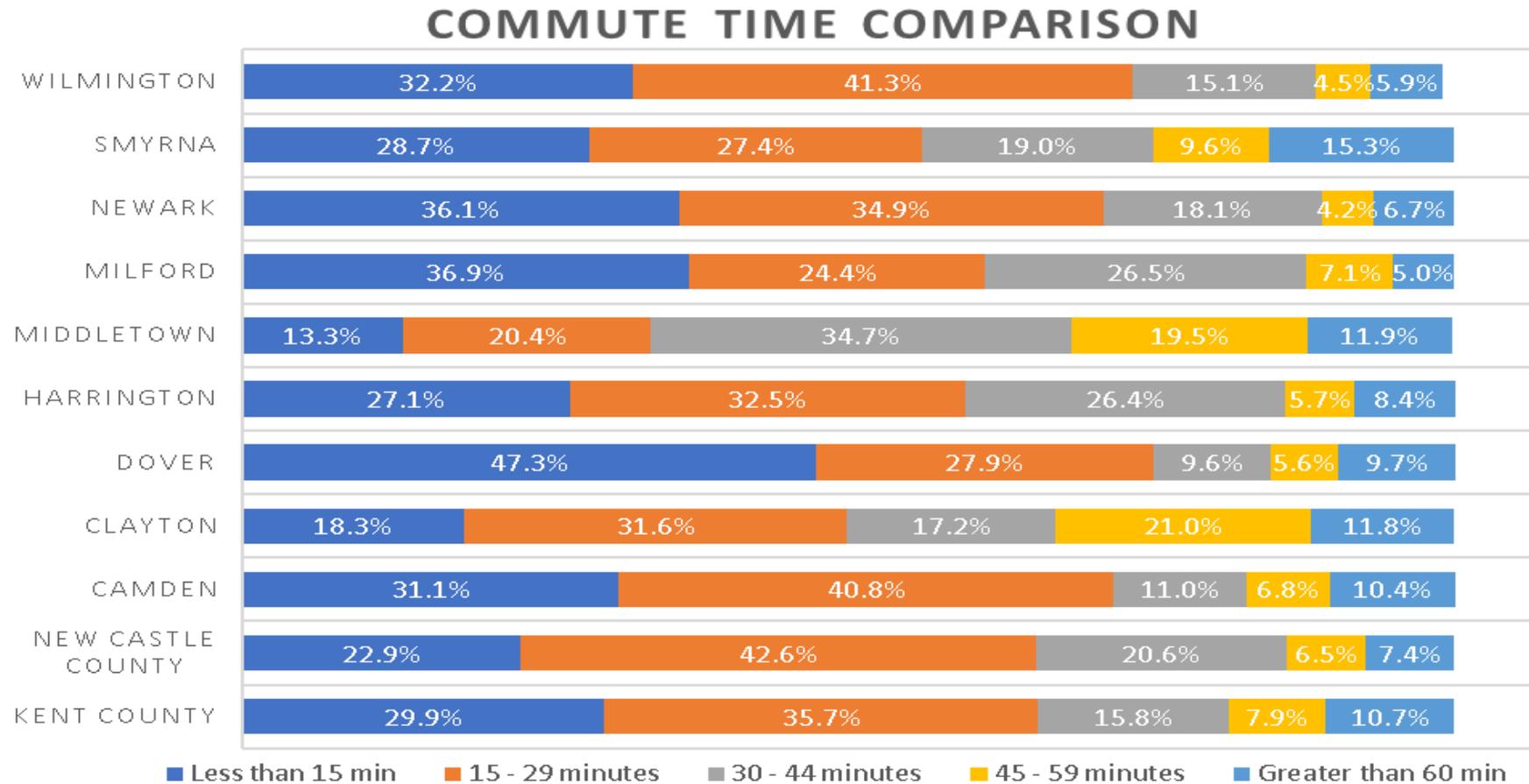
SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT HISTORY 2002 - 2019



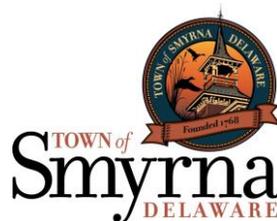
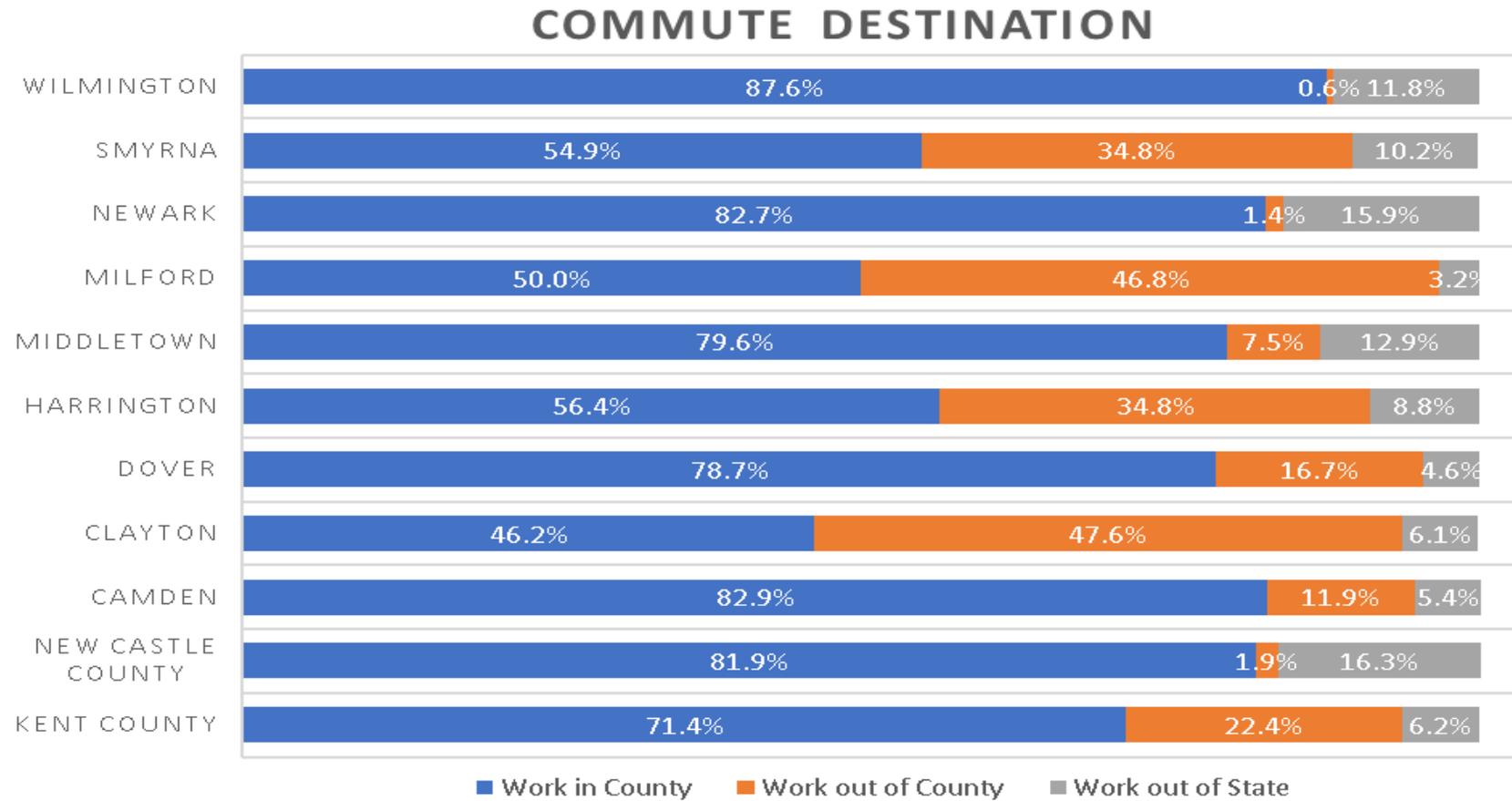
# Educational Attainment Comparison



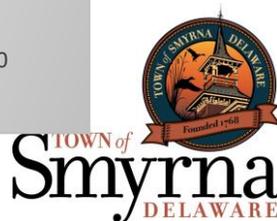
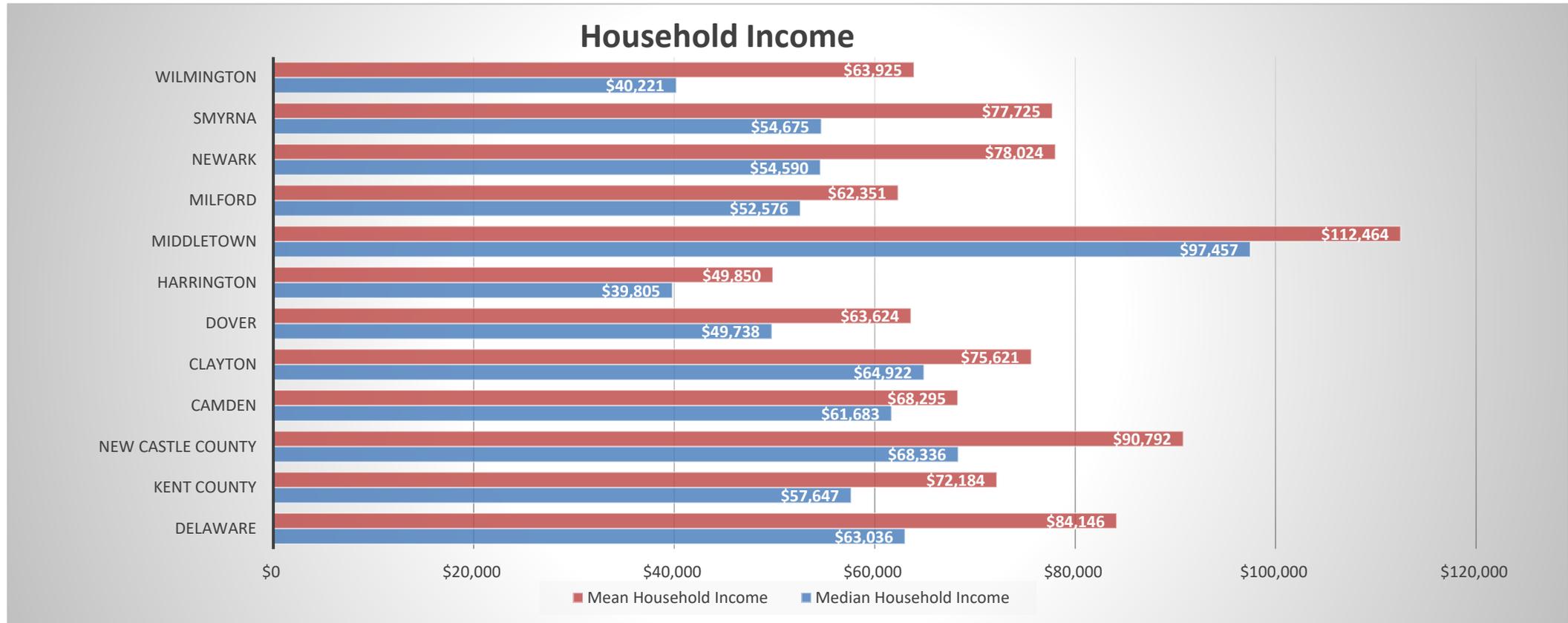
# Commute Time Comparison



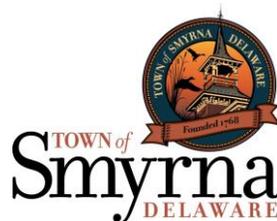
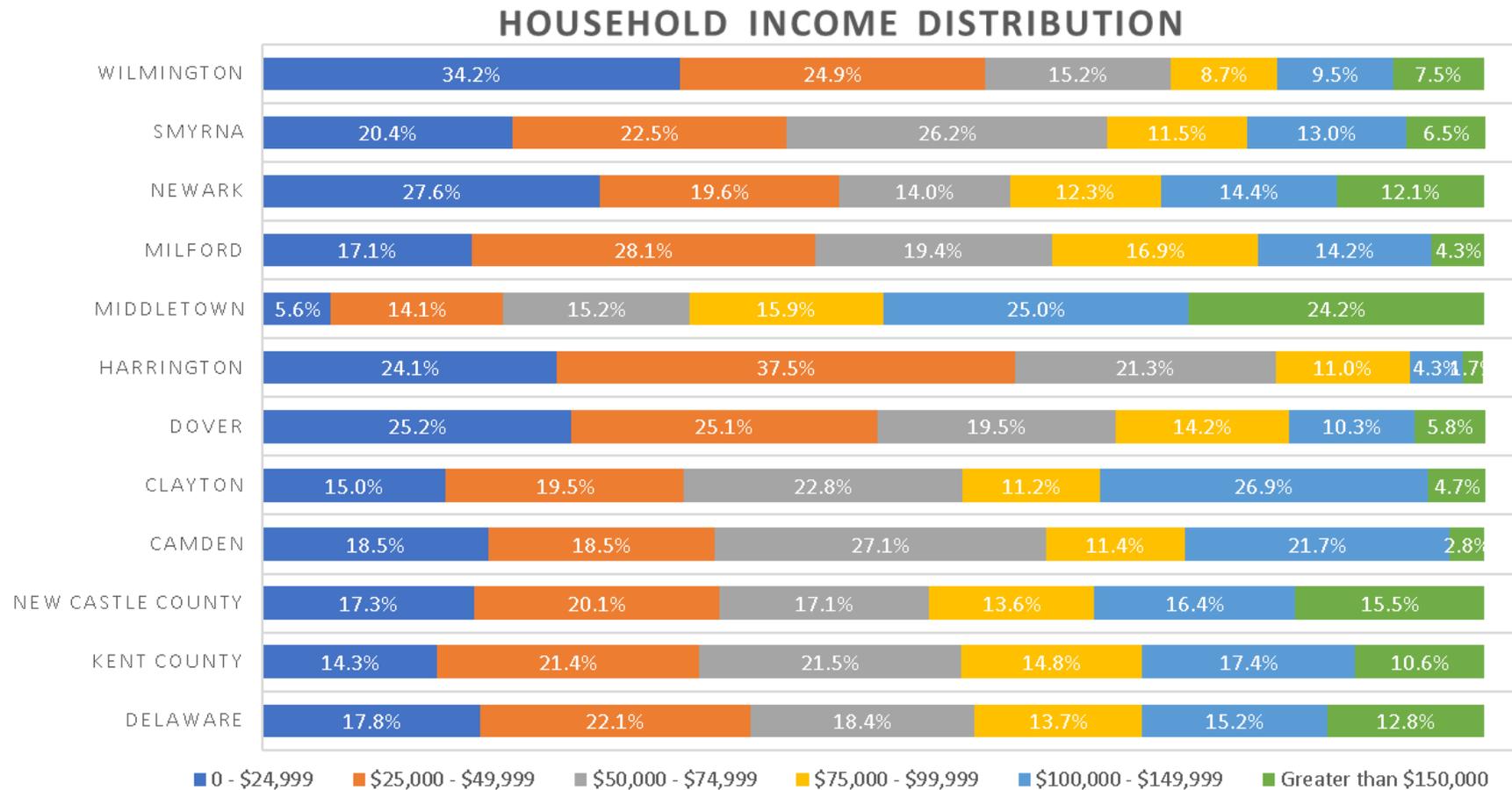
# Commute Destination Comparison



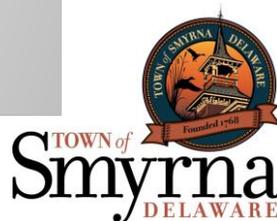
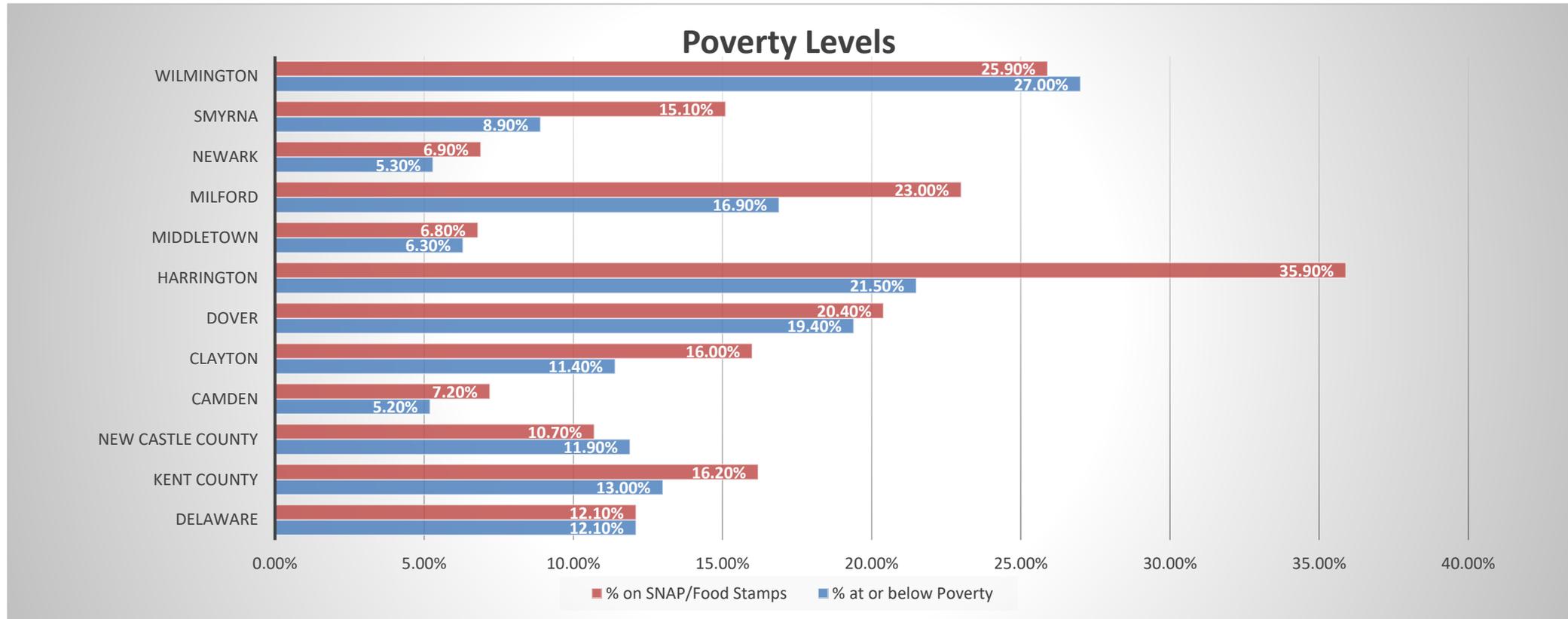
# Household Income Comparison



# Household Income Distribution Comparison

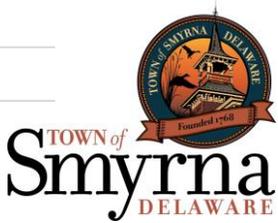
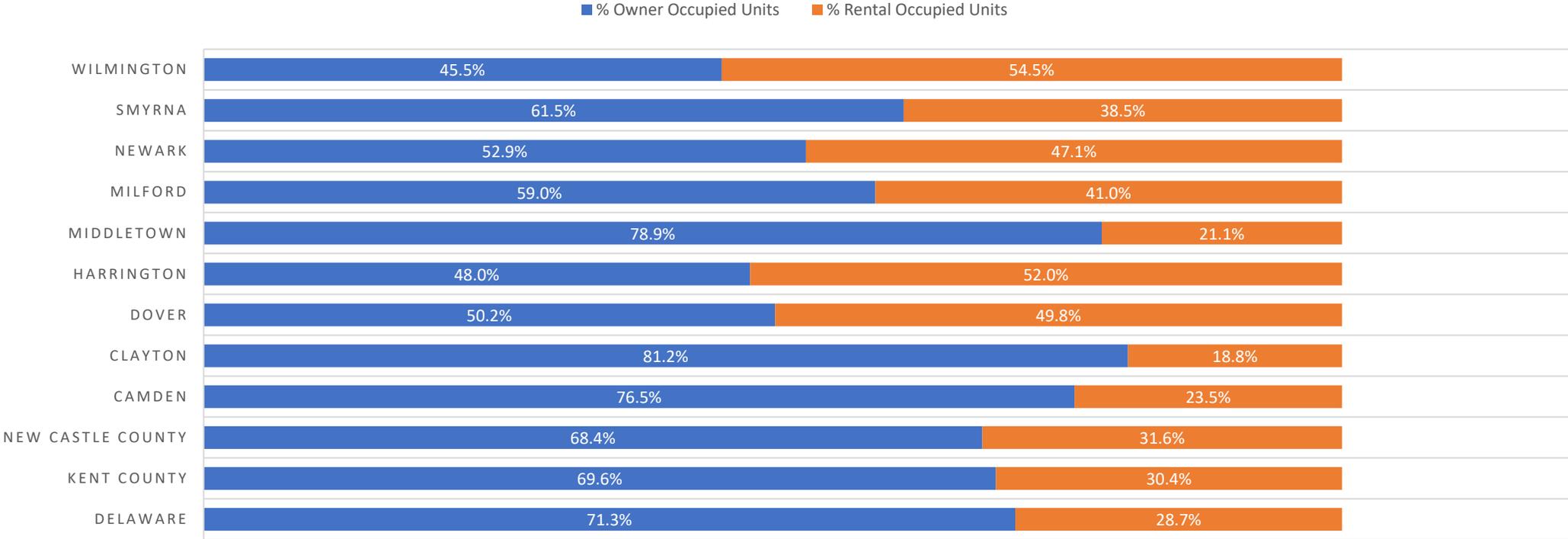


# Poverty Levels Comparison

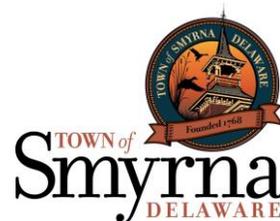
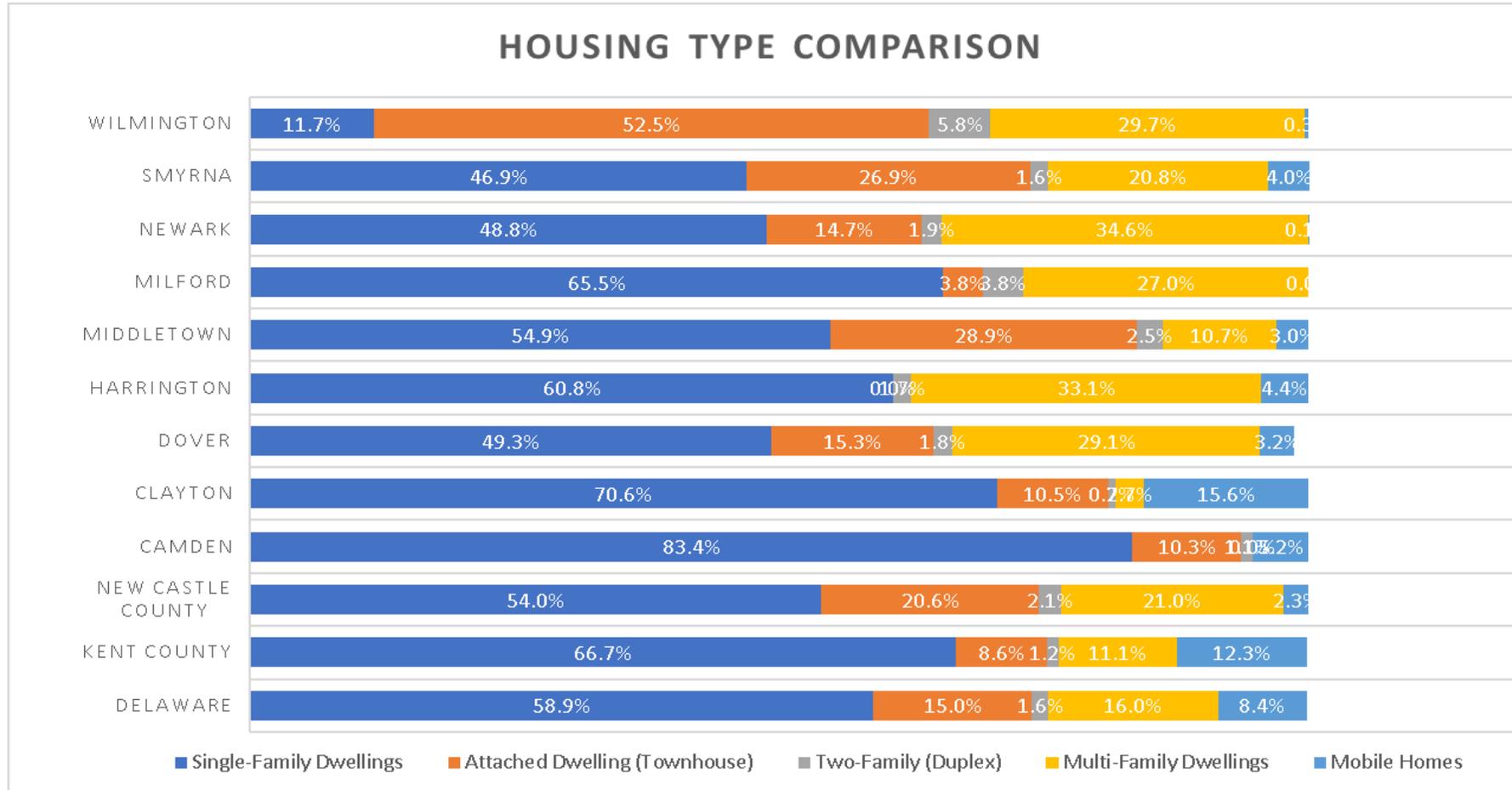


# Homeowner vs. Renter Comparison

## HOMEOWNER V. RENTER OCCUPANCY

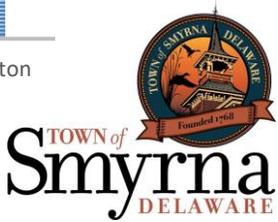
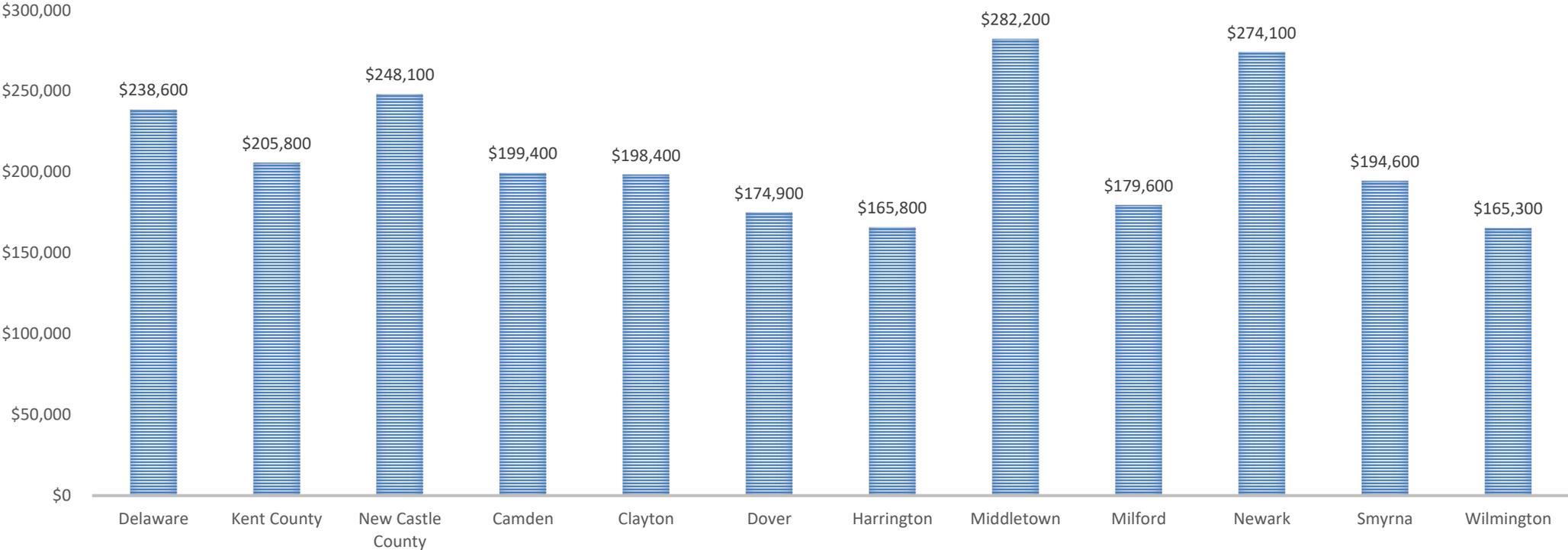


# Housing Type Comparison



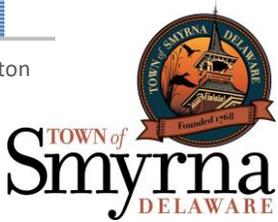
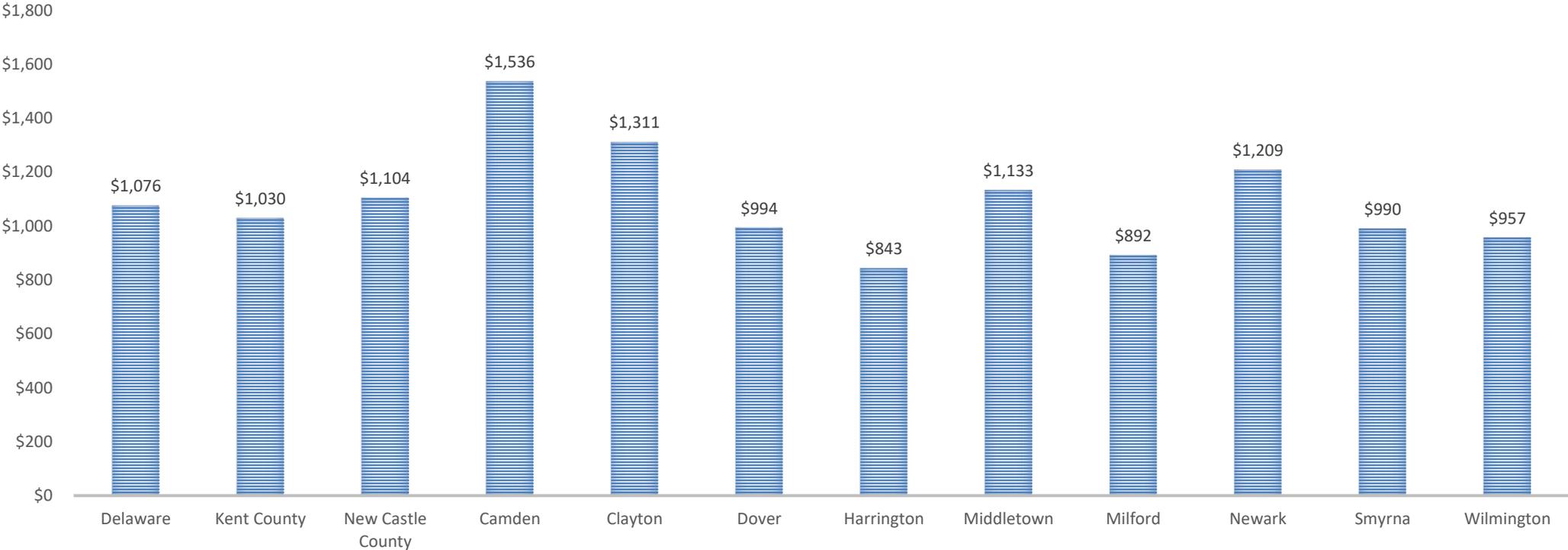
# Median Home Value Comparison

MEDIAN HOME VALUE, 2017 ACS



# Median Monthly Rent Comparison

MEDIAN GROSS MONTHLY RENT, 2017 ACS



# Future Land Use Map Changes – Combined Neighborhood Residential Designation

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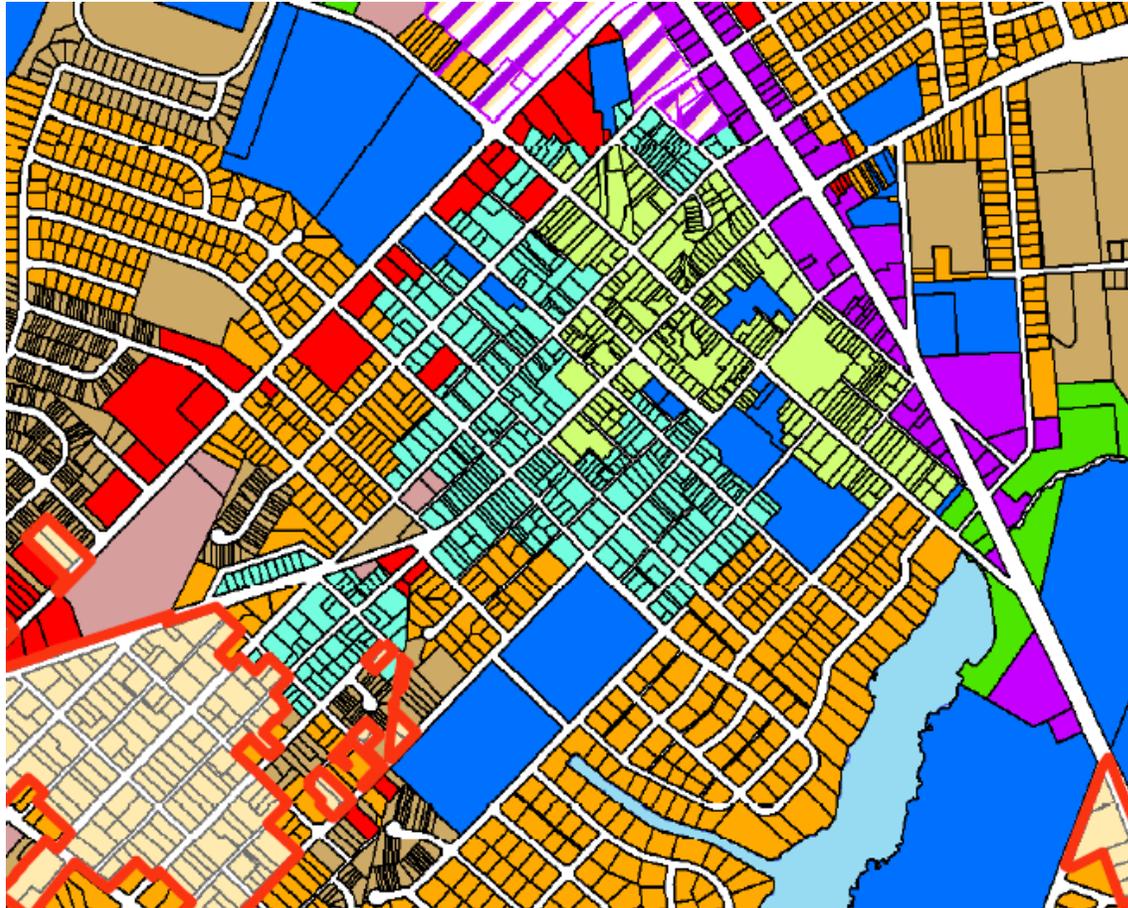
- Will consolidate the former Low Density Residential and the Medium Density Residential Land Use Designations shown in the 1997, 2002, 2005, and 2012 Comprehensive Plans.
- Will include those lands and subdivisions currently zoned R-1, R-1A, R-2, and R-2A
- High Density Residential (R-3 Zoning District) will keep the same designation.

# Future Land Use Map Changes – Combined Corridor Commercial Land Use Designation

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- The 2013 US 13 Corridor Plan & Design Manual previously had created three corridor land use designations along US Route 13 (North, Central, and South). In 2013-2014, the Town created and adopted the identical NC – North Corridor and SCZ – South Corridor zoning districts while a companion district for the Central Corridor was not created or adopted.
- This Comprehensive Plan consolidates these three land use designations into a single Corridor Commercial designation. The NC – North Corridor and SCZ – South Corridor zoning districts will be combined into one with this change.
- A Transitional Corridor land use designation remains under this Plan which allows the underlying parcels to keep their existing HC-Highway Commercial or SC-Shopping Center zoning while allowing the property owner to apply for a rezoning to the higher-density Corridor Commercial zoning district.

# Future Land Use Map Changes – Creation of Downtown Residential Designation

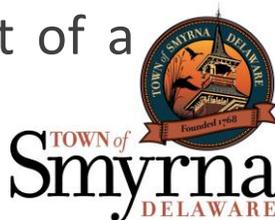


- Outside of the CC – Central Commercial District (shown in light green), the historic downtown residential neighborhoods are zoned R-2, R-2A, or R-3 which are generally suburban residential zoning districts.
- These districts permit higher density uses (townhouses and apartment buildings) and suburban-style development with deep setbacks and large minimum lot sizes which are out of character for these historic residential neighborhoods.
- This new Downtown Residential designation would permit single-family dwellings and duplexes on small lots and mandatory build-to-lines to ensure that new development compliments what is existing.

# Future Land Use Map Changes – Creation of Planned Village Community Designation

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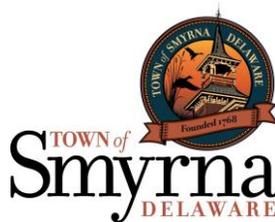
- In 2014, the Smyrna Town Council created the ‘Planned Village Community’ conditional use option allowing developers to achieve greater density if they voluntarily conform with additional design standards. To date three residential subdivisions have obtained PVC conditional use approval: Ashland, Brenford Station II, and Graceville.
- In 2020, the Smyrna Town Council adopted completely new and expanded design standards for the Planned Village Community conditional use option, which was completed for the re-subdivision of the Graceville residential subdivision.
- The Planning Commission, as part of the rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan, by unanimous consensus voted to create a new Planned Village Community land use designation for four existing expired residential subdivisions (Duck Creek Crossing, Tapahanna, Sharoff Farm, and Watson Farm) to ensure that any new development shall mimic the design and layout of a traditional and historic downtown neighborhood.



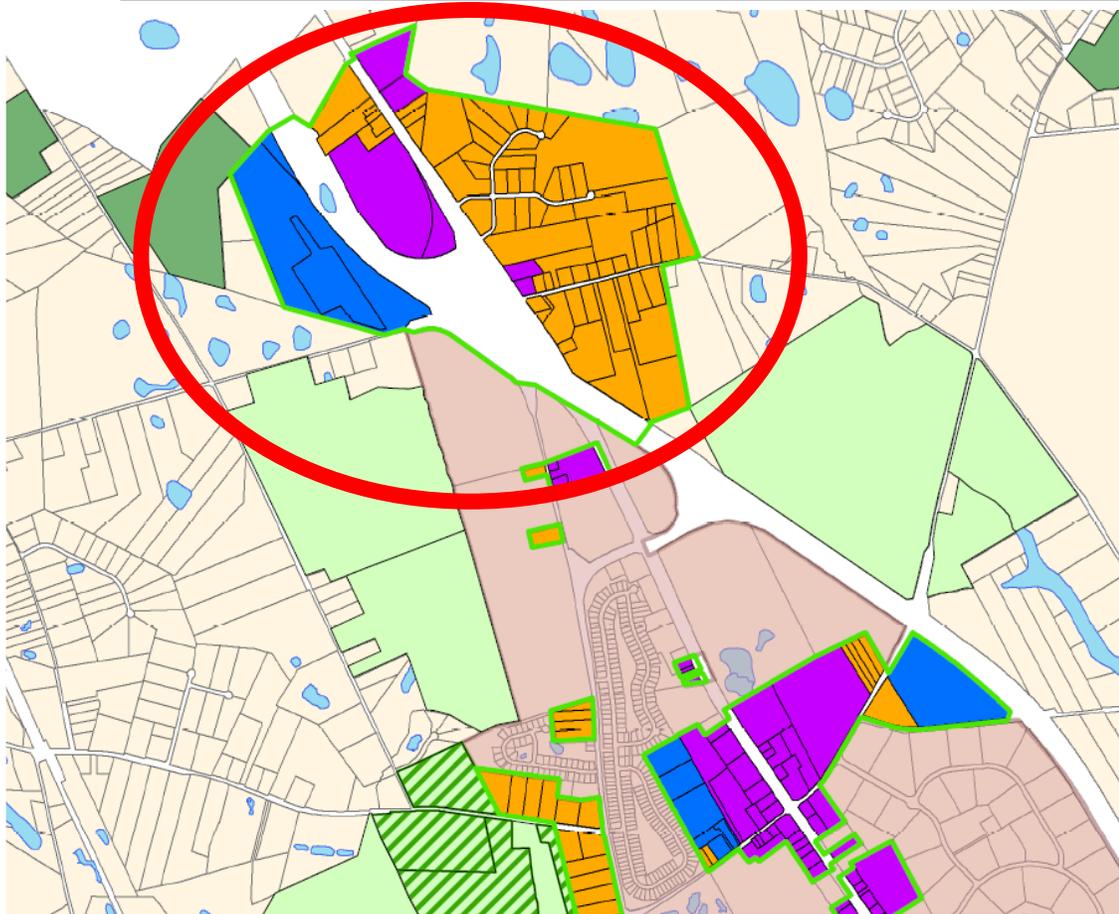
# Future Land Use Map Web Link

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<https://smyrna.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=529c70993fd741cbba61c2486ae6384e>

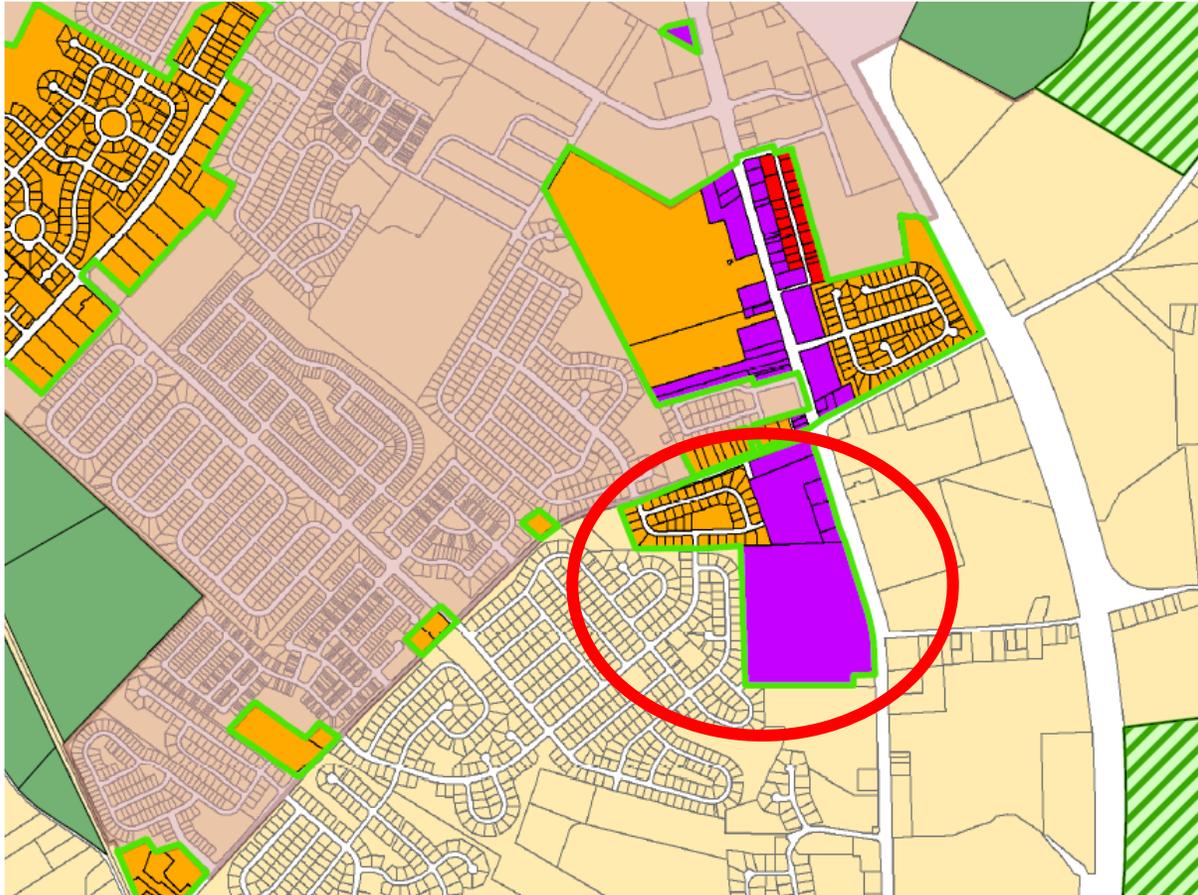


# Expanded Annexation Area - North



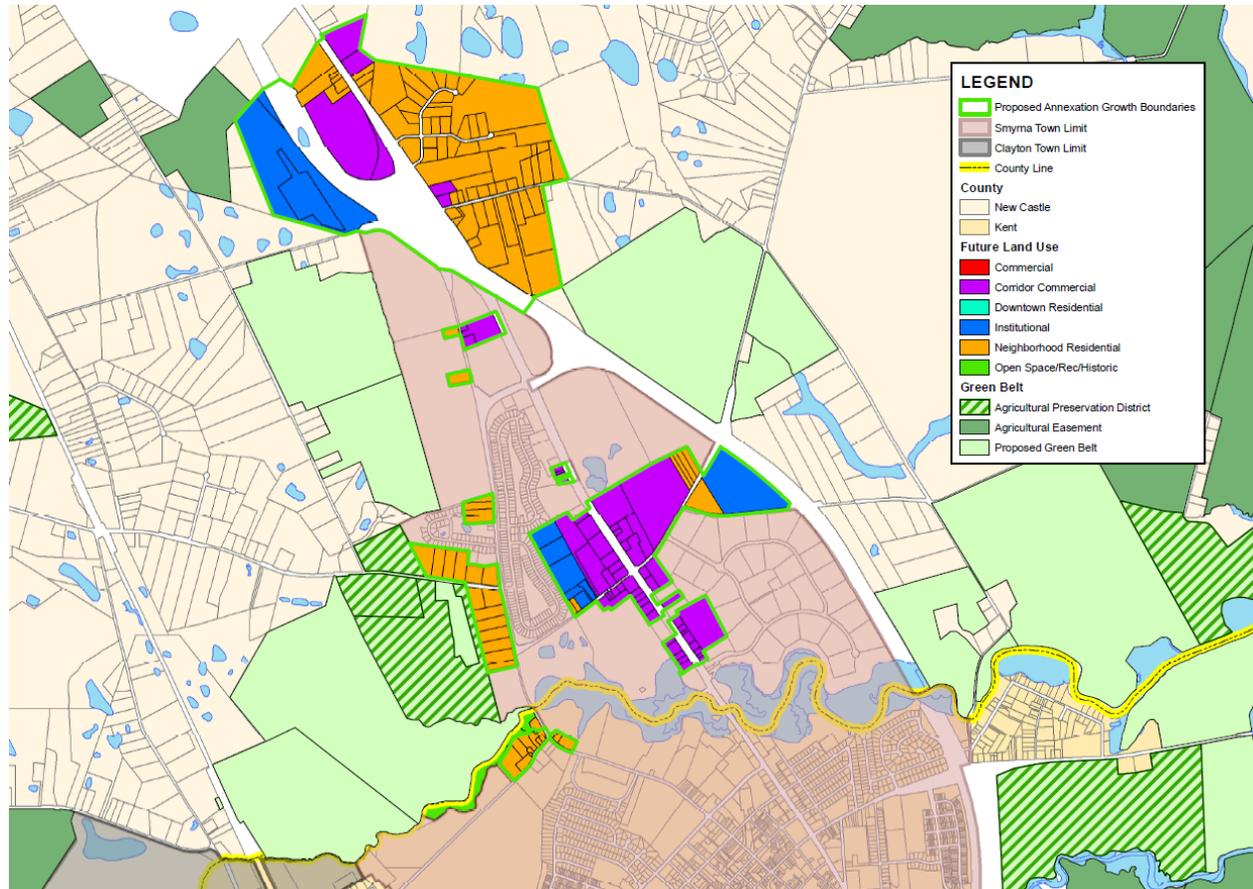
- Approximately 325 acres new annexation area
- Includes 35 acres of vacant land (former Adams Farm) between SR 1 and US Route 13 designated Corridor Commercial. Currently owned by a developer who plans to construct a shopping center with potential hotel and apartments.
- Includes the 60-acre State Police shooting range west of SR 1.
- Includes the already constructed Village of Savannah subdivision and other lots on east side of US Route 13 built since 1980.

# Expanded Annexation Area – South



- Approximately 75 acres
- Includes four parcels owned by Lou and Lee Ramunno that have been designated for Corridor Commercial allowing high-density mixed-use development.
- Includes the recorded (but unbuilt) 49-lot Big Oak residential subdivision, which would be eligible for annexation. Property owner may consider annexation if higher density development is permitted under PVC standards.

# Proposed Green Belt & Urban Growth Boundary



- For the first time, this Plan designates parcels of vacant, mostly agricultural lands, on the outer perimeter of the Town boundary and annexation area as a green belt to be permanently preserved.
- Would act as an urban growth boundary to provide a clear delineation between town and country.
- This Plan calls for the creation of a municipal Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to permanently protect those parcels shown in light green or hatched green. The Town would conceivably work to assist these parcels in coordination with the Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Foundation.

# Annexation Future Land Use Web Link

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<https://smyrna.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=e8e8974fdd2140d4b84440551d3c3605>



# Implementation – Comprehensive Rezoning

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- In accordance with State law, the Town’s Official Zoning Map must be evaluated for consistency with the Future Land Use Map and the Land Development Plan (Chapter 3) more generally.
- Within 18 months of the adoption of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan, the Town must amend the Official Zoning Map and rezone any land whose zoning is inconstant with the Future Land Use Map of this Plan.
- This will include the creation of the Corridor Commercial District, Planned Village Community District, and Downtown Residential District.
- Smyrna’s Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances date from 1964, and have both been amended dozens of times, and now include countless instances of conflicting and outdated language. This Plan calls for the Town to engage a third-party consultant to assist staff rewrite and adopt new zoning and subdivision ordinances.



# Near Term Goals & Objectives (1-2 Years)

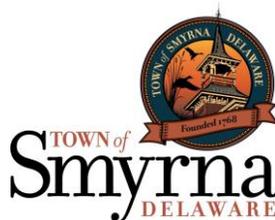
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- The Town shall complete the design for and seek state and/or federal funding for the North Main Street Streetscape and Utility Project and Phase II of the North Duck Creek Utility Project (East side of U.S. Route 13 to include a loop down Joe Goldsborough Road and Duck Creek Road).
- The Town shall coordinate with and provide input of proposed or recommended transportation projects to be included in the Dover/Kent MPO 'Innovation 2045' Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).
- The Town shall sign a Memorandum of Agreement with DelDOT regarding shared streetscaping and development review standards for those new projects in the U.S. Route 13 corridor.
- The Town shall create and maintain a prioritization and scoring system for the repair, repaving, and/or construction of new sidewalks, curbs, and streets.

# Near Term Goals & Objectives (1-2 years)

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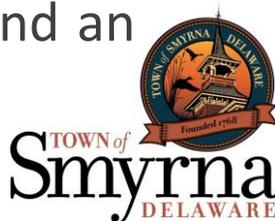
- The Smyrna Economic Development Committee shall update the 2014 Smyrna Economic Development Strategy to include tangible and obtainable goals and objectives.
- The Town shall explore the creation and implementation of a municipal Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to protect those large agricultural properties identified as 'Greenbelt' on the Annexation Future Land Use Map (Figure 4).
- The Town seeks to obtain and retain status as a Main Street Affiliate through the National Main Street Center. The Town shall partner with the Smyrna Downtown Renaissance Association and Delaware on Main (an office of the Division of Small Business) in this endeavor.
- The Town shall review and consider revising regulations in the Town Code pertaining to housing to ensure that the Town Code does not disproportionately and negatively affect protected classes and is in compliance with the Federal Fair Housing Act.



# Mid Term Goals & Objectives (within 5 years)

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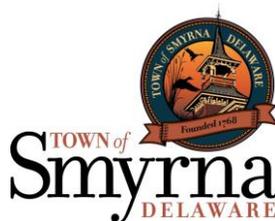
- The Town shall complete and adopt an Open Space Master Plan for the improvement and development of existing town-owned parks and properties, and for the acquisition of other targeted properties for active or passive recreation.
- The Town shall either expand the existing Smyrna National Register Historic District or create a new National Register Historic District in west Smyrna (i.e. Turner's Row, Spruance City, etc.). The boundaries of the Smyrna Historic Overlay District should be revised to conform with the National Register District(s) wherever possible.
- The Town shall seek status as a Certified Local Government through the Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs and the National Park Service.
- The Town shall coordinate with Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC) to either expand the number of DART bus stops and/or create a special circular bus route for the Town of Smyrna. The Town also seeks the improvement of existing bus stops with covered bus shelters and an adequate pedestrian path wherever possible.



# Mid Term Goals & Objectives (within 5 years)

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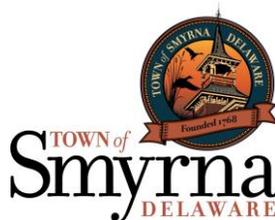
- The Town shall explore creating and funding a mechanism for the Smyrna Slum Clearance and Redevelopment Authority (RDA) to purchase, renovate, and re-sell blighted properties and buildings in Smyrna. The Town should also explore obtaining additional grant funding to restart the redevelopment lending program through the RDA.
- The Town shall complete the design for and seek state and federal funding for Phase III of the North Duck Creek Utility Projects (north of the U.S. Route 13/SR 1 crossover).



# Long Term Goals & Objectives (within 10 years)

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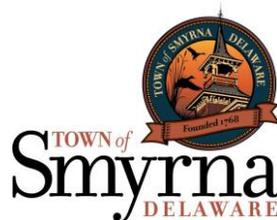
- The Town shall explore the creation of a Transportation Improvement District (TID) to manage and pay for transportation and other utility-related improvements north of Duck Creek.
- The Town shall explore the creation of a municipal parks and recreation department to coordinate recreational activities.
- The Town encourages the construction of an adequately sized library that meets the needs of the greater Smyrna community.



# Ongoing Goals & Objectives

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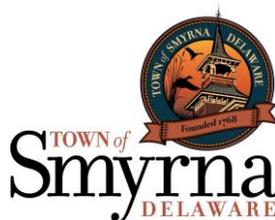
- Commit to regular review and updating of Smyrna's Comprehensive Plan, development of ordinances, facilities plans, and utility policies to ensure that Smyrna is a model for sensitive, sensible, and livable development. The Smyrna Town Council shall hold an annual public hearing to review the status and progress of items outlined in this Comprehensive Plan.
- The Town of Smyrna shall provide adequate training and continuing education opportunities for members of the Planning Commission, Board of Adjustment, and Historic District Review Board.
- The Town shall continue to complete necessary economic market analyses on a periodic basis to ensure that the Town is targeting the appropriate businesses and industry sectors.
- The Town shall partner with DNREC, Kent County Levy Court, New Castle County, and other local partners to implement and meet the standards set forth in the Smyrna River TMDL.



# Ongoing Goals & Objectives

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- The Town shall continue to educate and encourage property owners, businesses, and developers to redevelop buildings and properties within the Downtown Development District utilizing town, county, state, and federal grants and tax credits.
- The Town shall continue to retain a business development consultant to assist businesses, developers, and property owners (particularly in the downtown commercial district) to locate or expand their business and to assist in the redevelopment of said properties.
- The Town shall continue to retain a marketing consultant(s) to assist in the branding and marketing of Smyrna and Town-sponsored events.
- The Town shall continue to partner with county and state economic development agencies to coordinate economic development efforts on a regional scale.



# Comprehensive Plan Next Steps

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- October 25, 2020 - Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) Review by State agencies
- October-November 2020 – Additional Public Outreach & Comment (Notice to go out in 4<sup>th</sup> quarter utility bills)
- Mid November 2020 – Receive PLUS state agency comments.
- Late November & Early December 2020 – Make required/recommended corrections and/or revisions in consultation with Town Council. Additional Council work session(s) as required.
- Early January 2021 – Adoption by Town Council and certification by Governor.