



STATE OF DELAWARE
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF STATE PLANNING COORDINATION

August 24, 2016

Mr. Kenneth Bieri
New Castle County Land Use Department
87 Reads Way
New Castle, De 19720

RE: PLUS review 2016-07-11; New Castle County Ordinances

Dear Ken:

We appreciate your staff meeting with State agency planners on July 27, 2016 to discuss the proposed Ordinances as follows:

- 16-068: Ordinance to add a new Appendix 7 to Chapter 40 of the New Castle County Code that will provide guiding principles for new development.
- 16-067: Establishment of a new Neighborhood Preservation Overlay Zoning District
- 16-066: Establishment of a new Economic Empowerment Zone

Please note that changes to these ordinances, other than those suggested in this letter, could result in additional comments from the State. Additionally, these comments reflect only issues that are the responsibility of the agencies represented at the meeting.

This office has received the following comments from State agencies:

Office of State Planning Coordination – Contact Herb Inden 739-3090

- We are encouraged to see that the County is moving forward with these modifications to the County code. We feel that these changes will increase the County's ability to provide for more creative community options such as options the state has been promoting through our Complete and Healthy Community efforts. The Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA) comments below reflect our general sentiment toward this effort.

Department of Transportation – Contact: Bill Brockenbrough 760-2109

Ordinance No. 16-066 (Economic Empowerment Districts):

- In Sections 40.17.102.A and 40.17.303.D, there are references to reducing trips through Transportation Demand Management but it is not specified whether the goal is to shift trips out of the peak hours of the adjacent street or to eliminate trips entirely. DelDOT recommends that the County clarify their intent. Citing in particular the 25 percent target mentioned in Section 40.17.102.A, shifting 25 percent of a major employer's trips outside the peak hours of the adjacent street is a relatively easy target, achievable by changing employee's work hours, but eliminating that many trips would require a substantial effort to shift employees to other modes. In suburban areas it may not be achievable.

State Historic Preservation Office – Contact Terrence Burns 736-7404

- We recommend that the County include reuse of buildings as a helpful tool for preservation of historic properties.

Delaware State Housing Authority – Karen Horton: 302-739-4263

- DSHA strongly supports the proposed amendments to New Castle County's Unified Development Code (UDC) to: incorporate Guiding Principles for Development in Appendix 7; create a new zoning overlay district (Neighborhood Preservation Overlay District); and, a new zoning district (Economic Empowerment Zone). The adoption and implementation of these amendments will expand the range of quality housing options available for the County's residents in a strategic manner that is responsive to a broad range of housing needs, and also provides county-wide benefits related to economic competitiveness, health, and community well-being. The following are a few examples:
 - Provides attractive compact mixed-use development along available or planned transit and transportation corridors, creating a multi-modal transportation system that incentivizes walking, biking and transit. This not only reduces the costs of commuting for many households, but also provides opportunities to walk and bike to amenities and shopping, and provides better access for younger and older non-drivers.
 - Expands housing choice by providing a mix of housing types and densities that is more responsive to the market shift that no longer supports large suburban homes. The Delaware Population Consortium (DPC) projections for the next ten years indicate that not only will there be a large amount of suburban homes placed on the market by retiring baby boomers, but that there will be a *decline* in households in age ranges that typically seek large homes (30-55 years of age). These same DPC projections show population growth in the younger age ranges most likely at stages in their life and income to seek entry-level homes. The combination of excess suburban housing supply (including the projected additional supply to be added by aging baby boomers), more stringent lending standards, and the shifting market indicate that it is *critical* that communities move away from large lot single family-detached housing and *proactively* meet market demand by providing a variety of housing options,

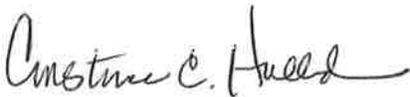
including smaller units, that are closer to employment and amenities, and are well connected to transit.

- Integrates housing in mixed-use development along commercial corridors that puts housing close to job centers, schools, open space, services, and markets. Extensive research indicates that improved access to health and social services, employment, education, active recreation, and markets enhances the ability of individuals and families to achieve positive life outcomes.
- Integrating multi-family housing, in a variety of modes and configurations, into existing communities through building design standards, along with requiring greater connectivity within and between communities, enhances social inclusion and cohesion.
- Providing diversity in housing type and configuration enhances a community's ability to maintain and improve its population's generational, income, and household size and composition diversity.

Once a decision has been reached on this proposed comprehensive plan amendment, please forward a copy of the plan amendment to the Office of State Planning Coordination for our records. The plan amendment must include a revised version of any maps that were updated as well as any text that was approved in amending the comprehensive plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this Comprehensive Plan amendment. If you have any questions, please contact me at 302-739-3090.

Sincerely,



Constance C. Holland, AICP
Director, Office of State Planning Coordination