

Memo

To: PLUS Reviewers
From: Dorothy Morris
Date: October 4, 2007
Re: City of New Castle Pre-Update review

The City of New Castle has submitted a copy of their most recently certified comprehensive plan which is due for update in 2008. The City is beginning its update process and has requested that we review the plan to determine if any changes have been made to State regulations since its certification. Our review should also provide suggestions for revisions and improvement, in addition to any code changes since the last planning cycle.

The City of New Castle submitted one annual report since its certification. A copy of that report is attached.

Link to the certified plan: <http://www.ci.new-castle.de.us/pdf/CompPlan.pdf>

**Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) Application
Municipal Comprehensive Plans
Pre-update review request**

Delaware State Planning Coordination

122 William Penn Street • Dover, DE 19901 • Phone: 302-739-3090 • Fax: 302-739-6958

Name of Municipality: <i>City of New CASTLE</i>	
Address: <i>220 Delaware St New CASTLE, DE 19720</i>	Contact Person: <i>MATTHEW J. Christopher</i>
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Plan certification date: 2003

The municipality requests that the enclosed plan be reviewed to provide suggestions for revisions and improvements. The review is also to notify the municipality of any code changes since the certification of this plan that should be included in the scheduled update.

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Comprehensive Plan / Amendment Checklist¹

Please check yes or no as to whether the following information has or has not been included in the comprehensive plan and indicate page numbers where information may be found.

Public Participation	Yes	No	Page # / Sections
Public Participation Summary and Results	X		21, 22

Population Data and Analysis	Yes	No	Page #
Past Population Trends	X		6
Population Projections	X		7
Demographics	X		7
Position on Population Growth	X		7, 8, 9

Housing	Yes	No	Page #
Housing Stock Inventory	X		11
Housing Pipeline	X		63
Housing Needs Analysis	X		64
Position on Housing Growth	X		63, 64
Affordable Housing Plan	X		63, 64

Annexation	Yes	No	Page #
Analysis of Surrounding Land Uses	X		23, 24, 25
Annexation Plan	X		29

Redevelopment Potential	Yes	No	Page #
Identification of Redevelopment Areas and Issues	X		59
Redevelopment Strategy	X		59
Community Development Strategy	X		60

Community Character	Yes	No	Page #
	X		43

¹ Please go to the following website for detailed checklist information:
<http://www.state.de.us/planning/services/circuit.shtml>.

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History of the Town or City	x		43
Physical Conditions	x		68
Significant Natural Features	x		43
Community Character	x		43
Historic and Cultural Resources Plan	x		45
Community Design Plan	x		51
Environmental Protection Plan	x		68

Land Use Plan	Yes	No	Page #
Existing Land Use	x		27
Land Use Plan	x		28

Critical Community Development and Infrastructure Issues	Yes	No	Page #
Review of Community Conditions		x	
Inventory of Community Infrastructure	x		33
Inventory and Analysis of Community Services	x		16-20
Water and Wastewater Plan	x		33, 34
Transportation Plan	x		37-42
Community Development Plan	x		51
Community Facilities Plan	x		72, 33

Intergovernmental Coordination	Yes	No	Page #
Description of Intergovernmental Relationships	x		78
Intergovernmental Coordination Strategy	x		78
Analysis and Comparison of Other Relevant Planning Documents	x		51, 61

Economic Conditions	Yes	No	Page #
Economic Base / Major Employers	x		54
Labor Market		x	
Income and Poverty	x		14
Economic Development Plan	x		54

Open Space and Recreation	Yes	No	Page #
Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Facilities	x		72
Open Space and Recreation Plan	x		71

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Ordinance # 429

Implementation Strategies	Yes	No	Page #
Evaluation of Current Codes and Ordinances	x		51-57
Zoning Map Revisions	x		57
Zoning and Subdivision Code Revisions	x		1-22
Implementation Plan	x		74
Coordination with Other Government Agencies	x		57-61

Other State Programs, Policies, and Issues	Yes	No	Page #
Total Maximum Daily Loads		x	
Corridor Capacity Preservation Program		x	
Agricultural Preservation Program	x		26
Sourcewater Protection	x		33-35

68-70

Additional Comments:

Summary:

**Municipal Comprehensive Plan
Annual Report**

Name of Municipality: City of New Castle

Date of Plan Certification: 2003

Date of Report: January 24, 2005

1. Please state the municipality's accomplishments in implementing its comprehensive plan over the last year.

During 2004, the City of New Castle retained a professional planner through KCI Technologies, Inc., and undertook numerous activities to implement the provision of the Comprehensive Plan including significant revision to the City zoning ordinance and map. The City has also moved forward with a rental housing code enforcement effort, playground improvements in several City Parks and completion of a trail on an abandon railroad bed. A more complete list of the current efforts is shown on the attached table.

2. Title 22, Chapter 7, Section 702, Del Code requires that within 18 months of comprehensive plan adoption, lands be rezoned in accordance with the land uses provided for in the comprehensive plan. Has this process been completed? If not, why? When is it expected to be complete?

The revised Zoning Map was finalized July 13, 2004
The Zoning Text Amendments were adopted as Ordinance #429, dated 12-14-04.

3. Has any land been annexed into the municipality since the adoption of the comprehensive plan or the last annual report? _____ Yes X No

of annexations: _____

of acres annexed: _____

Please list any annexations during this time period.

4. The annual report is the municipality's opportunity to submit any plan corrections or minor plan amendments to the Office of State Planning Coordination for review. Does the municipality have any such corrections or minor amendments to offer at this time? If yes, please describe. (Please note that any amendments to a certified comprehensive plan may be subject to review under the Preliminary Land Use Service. Major plan amendments may require a more thorough review and/or update of the comprehensive plan).

Approved by Planning Commission January 24, 2005

The Buttonwood School was rezoned from Open Space Recreation (OSR) to Historic Commercial (HC) in Ordinance #427, dated 7-11-04. The Bull Hill Park is proposed for rezoning from Historic Residential (HR) to OSR.

5. Please review the recommendations and implementation items in your comprehensive plan. Indicate on the list which items are complete, underway, or not yet started. Also if there are other comments to add, please include them.

See the attached Table

6. Are there any planning issues that the municipality is currently facing for which the Office of State Planning Coordination may be able to offer technical or financial assistance? (Livable Delaware Grants are available for development and implementation of comprehensive plans) If yes, please describe below.

Two issues of importance to the City may benefit from additional funding from the state. The first is the Buttonwood Drainage improvement that has been in the works for several years with assistance from the New Castle Conservation District. This project is critically necessary to address ongoing safety and health concerns of the residents of this area of the city. The estimated cost of the total project is \$296,000.

The progress toward financing these improvements is broken down as follows:

1.) Buttonwood Ditch cleanout	252,000
Total match required	63,000
Match to date	35,000
<u>Match needed</u>	<u>\$28,000</u>
2.) Holcomb Lane Culvert	44,000
<u>Match needed</u>	<u>\$11,000</u>

The second issue of concern is the finalization of a tree ordinance for the City. The Tree Commission and City have been working to develop a tree ordinance that will address numerous concerns related to street trees throughout the City. An inventory of existing trees within public right of way and on key public lands has been completed with funding from the State Department of Agriculture. Numerous procedural issues related to the ongoing responsibilities of the Tree Commission, City staff, the Municipal Services Commission and the Trustees of the New Castle Common remain to be resolved. The City has convened a series of meetings between the affected City Commissions, staff, and citizens to resolve the procedural challenges. The City Planner will be acting as a facilitator for this process and will assist in developing the revised ordinance language. The estimated cost of this effort is \$4,700 and the City would welcome a grant to defray this cost.

	Activity underway	Begin	Complete	Comment
Require landscape buffers and screening to protect residential neighborhoods	✓	2004	2004	Ordinance #429
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT				
Assign responsibility for Economic Development activities				
Conduct market analysis				
Develop targeted marketing campaign				
Create tourism corporation focused on historic area				
Develop interpretive historic program				
Examine zoning of nonconforming commercial uses	✓	2004	2004	Ordinance #429
Rezone parcels for mixed use and neighborhood retail Ferry Cutoff area	✓	2004	2004	Adopted July 13, 2004
Set design standards	✓			
Streetscape improvements	✓	2004		Tree Ordinance is being reviewed
Traffic calming and improvements				
REDEVELOPMENT				
Create inventory and marketing brochure of vacant parcels	✓			
Link open space needs with appropriate vacant parcels				
Examine zoning of vacant parcels to promote appropriate redevelopment				
Create "gateway image along in Ferry Cut-off area and link to downtown	✓			DeIDOT initiating planning studies
Create redevelopment image for 7th and South Street area				
HOUSING				
Set conversion standards and licensing program for rental units	✓	2004	2004	Licensing program in place
Promote home ownership and maintenance	✓	2004		Code enforcement initiative begun
Promote renovation through grant and tax incentive programs				
Offer historic home rehabilitation training				
Establish list of local historic rehabilitation contractors				

Approved by Planning Commission January 24, 2005

Status of Comprehensive Plan Implementation Activities

	Activity underway	Begin	Complete	Comment
LAND USE AND ANNEXATION				
Change zoning provision for nonconforming uses	✓	2003	2004	Ordinance #429
Adopt mixed/use/retail/office zone	✓	2003	2004	Ordinance #429
Development and redevelopment of industrial lands		2003	2004	Ordinance #429
Identify possible annexation areas				
Establish annexation criteria				
Set "ultimate city boundary"				
INFRASTRUCTURE				
Burying existing aerial lines				
New ordinance language to require burying of aerial lines during development and redevelopment				
TRANSPORTATION				
SR 9 - Sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, bike lanes, lighting, intersection improvements	✓	2004		DeIDOT initiating planning studies
Realignment of SR 9	✓	2004		DeIDOT initiating planning studies
Streetscape along 7th street	✓	2004		DeIDOT initiating planning studies
Bike Path along old RR in Shawtown	✓	2004	2004	
Pave and mark gravel parking lots along 4rd Street and Chestnut Street				
Downtown parking				
Parking enforcement				
HISTORIC PRESERVATION				
Promote development and livability of Historic Area				
Adopt formal standards and guidelines				
Address historic resources outside downtown				
Address New Amstel Archeological Preservation Plan				
COMMUNITY DESIGN				
Develop Urban Design Standards for new development	✓	2004	2004	Ordinance #429

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