Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) Application
Municipal Comprehensive Plans

Delaware State Planning Coordination
122 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd • Dover, DE 19901 • Phone: 302-739-3090 • Fax: 302-739-5661

Please complete this "PLUS application in its entirety. **All questions must be answered. If a question is unknown at this time or not applicable, please explain.** Unanswered questions on this form could lead to delays in scheduling your review. This form will enable the state staff to review the project before the scheduled meeting and to have beneficial information available for the applicant and/or developer at the time of review. If you need assistance or clarification, please call the State Planning Office at (302) 739-3090. Possible resources for completing the required information are as follows:

www.state.de.us/planning
www.dnrec.state.de.us/dnrec2000/
www.dnrec.state.de.us/DNRECeis/
datamil.delaware.gov
www.state.de.us/deptagri/

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Name of Municipality: Town of Bellefonte	
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	Fax Number:
	E-mail Address: museumchick@yahoo.com

Date of Most Recently Certified Comprehensive Plan: August 2007

Carol K. Dougherty

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	Phone Number: (302) 897-5657
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General Plan Approval Process

Step 1: **Draft prepared by local government.**

Step 2: **Planning Commission and/or Legislative Body approves to send to PLUS at the time the plan is released for public review.**

Step 3: **PLUS meeting, application submitted by 1st business day of the month for that month's meeting.**

Step 4: **State comments submitted to local government within 20 business days of meeting.**

Step 5: **Local government replies to state comments in writing and submits revised plan to Office of State Planning Coordination (O S P C) for review.**

Step 6: **OSPC requires 20 working days to reply to revised plan. State sends a letter accepting changes or noting discussion items.**

Step 7: **Once you receive the Office of State Planning Coordination letter stating that all certification items have been addressed, your Planning Commission and Council should adopt the plan pending State certification. We strongly recommend that your Council adopt the plan by ordinance. The ordinance should be written so that the plan will go into effect upon receipt of the certification letter from the Governor.**

Step 8: **Send our office a copy of the ordinance (or other documentation) that formally adopts your plan along with an electronic or paper copy of the final plan. We will forward these materials to the Governor for consideration. At the discretion of the Governor a certification letter will be issued to your town. The plan is effective on the date of adoption.**

Step 9: **Once you receive your certification letter, please forward two (2) bound paper copies and one electronic copy of your plan to our office for our records. It is suggested that you incorporate a copy of the State's PLUS letter and the Governor's certification letter into the final comprehensive plan document.**

Comprehensive Plan / Amendment Checklist[1]

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	○	○	39

Population Data and Analysis	**Yes**	**No**	**Page #**
Past Population Trends	◉	○	15
Population Projections	◉	○	16
Demographics	◉	○	17
Position on Population Growth	◉	○	17

Housing	**Yes**	**No**	**Page #**
Housing Stock Inventory	◉	○	19
Housing Pipeline	◉	○	19
Housing Needs Analysis	◉	○	19
Position on Housing Growth	◉	○	146
Affordable Housing Plan	◉	○	15

Annexation	**Yes**	**No**	**Page #**
Analysis of Surrounding Land Uses	○	○	25
Annexation Plan	◉	○	43

Redevelopment Potential	**Yes**	**No**	**Page #**
Identification of Redevelopment Areas and Issues	◉	○	45
Redevelopment Strategy	◉	○	45
Community Development Strategy	◉	○	21-22

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

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Community Character	**Yes**	**No**	**Page #**
History of the Town or City	◉	○	13
Physical Conditions	◉	○	28
Significant Natural Features	◉	○	28
Community Character	◉	○	49
Historic and Cultural Resources Plan	◉	○	51
Community Design Plan	◉	○	49
Environmental Protection Plan	◉	○	53

Land Use Plan	**Yes**	**No**	**Page #**
Existing Land Use	◉	○	24
Land Use Plan	◉	○	46

Critical Community Development and Infrastructure Issues	**Yes**	**No**	**Page #**
Review of Community Conditions	◉	○	40-41
Inventory of Community Infrastructure	◉	○	41
Inventory and Analysis of Community Services	◉	○	30-38
Water and Wastewater Plan	◉	○	32
Transportation Plan	◉	○	47
Community Development Plan	◉	○	45
Community Facilities Plan	◉	○	11

Intergovernmental Coordination	**Yes**	**No**	**Page #**
Description of Intergovernmental Relationships	◉	○	31
Intergovernmental Coordination Strategy	◉	○	31
Analysis and Comparison of Other Relevant Planning Documents	○	◉	

Economic Conditions	**Yes**	**No**	**Page #**
Economic Base / Major Employers	◉	○	20
Labor Market	◉	○	22
Income and Poverty	◉	○	22
Economic Development Plan	◉	○	56

Open Space and Recreation	**Yes**	**No**	**Page #**
Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Facilities	◉	○	35
Open Space and Recreation Plan	◉	○	53

Implementation Strategies	**Yes**	**No**	**Page #**
Evaluation of Current Codes and Ordinances	◯	◯	40
Zoning Map Revisions	◯	◯	46
Zoning and Subdivision Code Revisions	◯	◯	46
Implementation Plan	◯	◯	40
Coordination with Other Government Agencies	◯	◯	31

Other State Programs, Policies, and Issues	**Yes**	**No**	**Page #**
Total Maximum Daily Loads	◯	◯	29
Corridor Capacity Preservation Program	◯	◯	
Agricultural Preservation Program	◯	◯	
Sourcewater Protection	◯	◯	28

Additional Comments:

~~The Town of Bellefonte Land Use Code is a separate Document that can be submitted, or is available at townofbellefonte.com.~~

Summary:

Town of Bellefonte

Comprehensive Plan

2017

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TOWN, COUNTY, AND STATE OFFICIALS

TOWN OF BELLEFONTE

President and Commission	David A. Brenner, President Scott MacKenzie, Secretary Brandon Dougherty, Commissioner Andrew Ritchie, Commissioner
Treasurer, Assessor, & Tax Collector	Curt A. Nass, Treasurer
Town Attorney	William A. Gonser, Esquire
Planning Commission	Carol Dougherty, Chairman Frank Holodick, Business Owner Andrew Moore, Bellefonte Resident Maya Madison, Bellefonte Resident James Paradise, Bellefonte Resident Charles Schneider, Bellefonte Resident, or Ann Schneider, Bellefonte Resident
Board of Adjustments	Brian Donovan, Chairperson Rich Mulhern, Secretary Andrew Shackelford, Bellefonte Resident Vacant
Building Inspector	New Castle County Department of Land Use
Plumbing Inspector	New Castle County Department of Land Use

NEW CASTLE COUNTY

County Executive	Matt Meyer
County Council	Karen Hartley-Nagle, President John Cartier, 8th District
Department of Land Use	Richard E. Hall, General Manager

STATE OF DELAWARE

Governor	The Honorable John C. Carney
Senate	The Honorable Harris B. McDowell, 1st District
House of Representatives	The Honorable Deborah Heffernan, 6th District
Office of State Planning	Constance S. Holland, AICP, Director Bill Matthews, Principal Planner

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Planning Commission would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their guidance and assistance in the development of this plan:

David Brenner, Former Planning Commission Chair
Scott Mackenzie, Former Planning Commission Chair

INTRODUCTION

This Comprehensive Plan serves as an official statement about the future of the Town of Bellefonte. First and foremost, the plan is a unified advisory document for the Town Commission and the Planning Commission on land use and growth issues. It is also the revision of a State of Delaware-approved Comprehensive Plan (2007).

The Town initiated development of the Plan in order to better manage land use matters, maintain town character, to update land use regulations, and to better plan for the future. It should be used to guide future development decisions, re-zonings, annexations, and capital improvements throughout the Town. The Town will use the plan as the basis to revise its zoning code and zoning map.

The plan is also an informational document for the public. Citizens, business people, and government officials can turn to the plan to learn more about Bellefonte, and its policies for future land use decisions. Potential new residents can use the documents as an informational resource about the Town, its characteristics and facilities. This document contains the most current information available on population, transportation, housing, employment and the environment.

Lastly, the Bellefonte Comprehensive Plan is a legal document. The Delaware Code specifies that ". . . any incorporated municipality under this chapter shall prepare a comprehensive plan for the city or town or portions thereof as the commission deems appropriate." The code further specifies that, "after a comprehensive plan or portion thereof has been adopted by the municipality in accordance with this chapter, the comprehensive plan shall have the force of law and no development shall be permitted except as consistent with the plan." (§ 702, Title 22, Delaware Code)

THE AUTHORITY TO PLAN

Delaware law (§ 702, Title 22, Delaware Code) requires that municipalities engage in comprehensive planning activities for the purpose of encouraging "the most appropriate uses of the physical and fiscal resources of the municipality and the coordination of municipal growth, development, and infrastructure investment actions with those of other municipalities, counties and the State…." This plan was written to comply with the requirements of a municipal development strategy as described in the Delaware Code for towns with population of 2000 or fewer.

The municipal comprehensive plan for small communities with fewer than 2000 people (such as Bellefonte) is to be 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." In addition, the Town's comprehensive planning process must demonstrate coordination with other municipalities, the county, and the state during plan preparation. (§ 702, Title 22, Delaware Code)

State law requires that planning be an ongoing process and that municipalities identify future planning activities. This document is Bellefonte's Municipal Comprehensive Development Plan as required by state law. It is intended to cover a ten-year planning period and be reviewed at least every five years. (§ 702, Title 22, Delaware Code)

COMMUNITY PROFILE

OVERVIEW

Bellefonte is a small town located in northern New Castle County Delaware and has a history as a working class suburb of the City of Wilmington. Residential lots are relatively small and nearly all lots have been built upon. The majority of the homes were built between 1930 and 1950. About half of Bellefonte's homes are cape cods, single-family detached dwellings mostly clad with brick and/or siding. There are a few apartments surrounding Brandywine Boulevard, which is Bellefonte's Central Business District. In general, architecture in Bellefonte is turn-of-the-century Arts & Crafts, without extensive detailing. One can find a few homes that are a bit ornate.

Bellefonte's main street is Brandywine Boulevard, which runs through the center of town. The street is accessible by foot to most residents and is also the primary route for public transportation. Most of the streets follow a grid pattern, which is easy and convenient to navigate. There are a few tree lined streets and a limited number of sidewalks.

There are no industrial uses in Bellefonte and commerce is limited to Brandywine Boulevard between Maple Ave and Bellefonte Ave and one side of Philadelphia Pike between Bellefonte Ave and School House Lane. The Brandywine Boulevard business district (central business district) consists of several resale and other unique shops, two restaurants, laundromat, barbershop, plumbing company, and engineering company along with several apartments, one large apartment building, single-family homes, and the Brandywine Hundred Fire Company. Some of the businesses on Brandywine Boulevard are located in what were once homes. Parking in this business district is primarily on the street and in a small public parking lot. The Philadelphia Pike business district contains a variety of businesses including a gas station, restaurant/takeout, tattoo parlor, nail salon, an engineering firm, a produce market, van/car-rental company, and others. Each of the businesses has a small private or shared parking lot for their patrons.

The Town Hall is located at 901A Rosedale Avenue, one block from Brandywine Boulevard at the intersection of Marion & Rosedale Avenues. The Town Hall building is a converted church and one of the more historic structures in the Town. Adjacent to Town Hall is the Town Hall Annex. Next door is Bellefonte Park, an area of recreation and relaxation funded by the Delaware Land & Water Conservation Trust Fund.

The combination of the architecture of the houses and buildings, the unique businesses on Brandywine Blvd, the quaintness of the Town, and the friendly people give Bellefonte its character, setting it apart from most other areas in the County. This character makes Bellefonte a desirable place to live and is an important factor in maintaining the Town's identity.

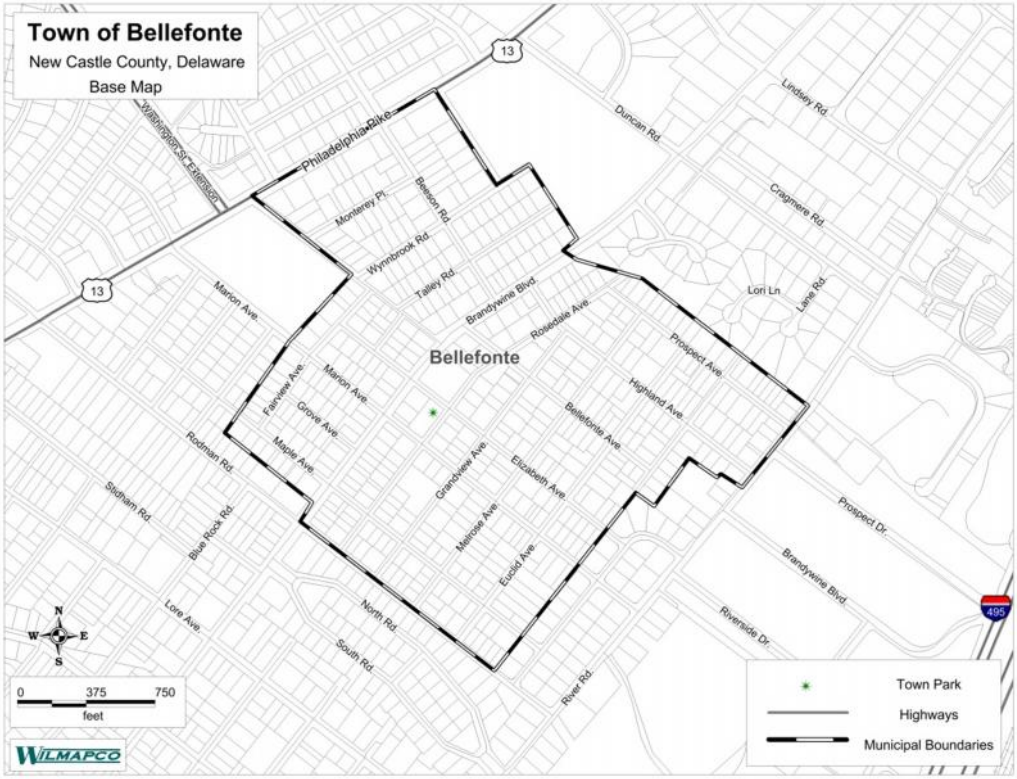
Bellefonte a "Hot spot for first-time buyers" – Out & About
"One of Delaware's best places to live" – Delaware Today
"Hip and cool…" – Spark Magazine, The News Journal

LOCATION

The Town of Bellefonte is located in northern Delaware, two miles northeast of the City of Wilmington in New Castle County.

Map 1: Location of Bellefonte in the State of Delaware

Map 2: Location of Bellefonte in Northern New Castle County



HISTORY OF THE TOWN

Located about one half-mile inland from the Delaware River, about equidistant from the much older urban centers of Wilmington and Claymont, the area now known as Bellefonte comprised mainly fields and estate lands from the period of exploration and settlement until the early 20th Century.

The first European settlers in this area were from Sweden. They began to construct mills on the nearby Shellpot Creek in the mid-17th century, and later purchased tracts of land from the Native Americans. Sovereignty over the region soon passed from the Swedes to the Dutch to the English; but after resurvey the Swedes' ownership of the lands was confirmed in 1688. The northeast boundary of Henry Toarson's (Tussey) tract coincided with the present day Marion Avenue.

When the Swedes settled this area, a survey was conducted by a Royal Swedish engineer, Peter Lindstrom. On his map of the area along the Delaware River, Lindstrom marked his map, dated 1654, with the word "AMIMENIPATJ." This word is the Algonquin (Lenni Lenape) word for "place where pigeons (or doves) sleep (or roost)," and is thought to be of significance to indigenous Delawareans. English settlers drove most indigenous people from the area and there are few signs or evidence that they were ever in Bellefonte.

AMIMENIPATJ is noted in several books such as "Indian Place Names in Delaware" and is a registered historic place name on U.S. Geological Survey Maps, at this location: 39°46' N, 75°30' W, very close to the Town's Municipal Parking lot on Brandywine Boulevard. The Town installed a historic marker at this location in 2016.

The King's Highway (now Philadelphia Pike or Route 13) served as the main road from Wilmington to Philadelphia from well before the Revolutionary War. In 1781 the troops of Washington and Rochambeau marched down it en route to the Battle of Yorktown. Structures still in existence from that time include the Penny, Tussey House, and Weldin houses. In 1813, the road was improved and designated as the Philadelphia Turnpike, with tolls to be paid at the Penny Hill Toll House.

Over the next several decades, the area remained as farms and open land. Landowners included the Weldin, Robinson, Sellers, Grubb, Carr, Guest, Duncan, Beeson, Clark and Lenderman families. Transportation, housing, and industry clustered around the Philadelphia Pike and the railroad tracks and the Delaware River.

Two homes, 715 Grandview and 1205 Melrose, are probably the earliest structures in present-day Bellefonte still extant, probably dating from around the Civil War. Available information shows that the next houses erected were clustered around the 1100 to 1200 blocks of both Brandywine Boulevard and Rosedale Avenue.

A turning point came in the 1890's, when planners for a new trolley line deemed the Philadelphia Pike too steep for the trolley's tracks. Instead, the line was routed up Hillcrest Avenue to the street now known as Brandywine Boulevard. In the 1910 census, this road was referred to as "Montrose on Trolley." A Montrose Improvement Association was formed and obtained cinders to pave the streets.

Bellefonte received its incorporation as a town from the State of Delaware on March 9, 1915. At that time, there were about a dozen houses and farms in the area. Land development proceeded as the Town was subdivided into lots of about 20' x 100' in the three sections still known as Montrose, Montrose Terrace, and Montrose Terrace Addition. Toward the northwest, the subdivisions of Bellefonte Heights and Villa Monterey were also established.

Other contemporaneous activity of note surrounding the new Town of Bellefonte included the erection of the Marcus Hook Rear Range Light, a couple of blocks south. A temporary structure was illuminated at the site in 1915. The permanent concrete lighthouse was completed and became operational in 1920, and represents one of only a few square lighthouses in the U. S.

The Bellefonte Methodist Church was organized in early 1919, and the main building at Marion and Rosedale dedicated in 1920 (a Sunday school wing was added in 1959). Around the same time, the Town Commissioners purchased several lots on Brandywine Boulevard and built a Community Hall; complete with meeting rooms and auditorium. By 1924, the Brandywine Hundred Fire Company had organized and applied for incorporation. They were the first fire company north of Wilmington, and the only company serving the entire area for several years.

By 1929 the Fire Company needed suitable quarters and a permanent home, and purchased the Community Hall property from the Town for $5,000, with the understanding that Town meetings could continue to be held there.

There was a building boom in Bellefonte in the '20s. It was still considered "the country" and some moved in for the fresh air. One family received parcels of land in exchange for a debt at their store. Personal automobiles gained popularity, and plumbing moved indoors. Electricity and water infrastructures were built. By the late '30s, the sale of bonds and the WPA facilitated the installation of sidewalks and sanitary sewers. In an understatement, a newspaper article of the time explained construction delays with the simple phrase: "rock was encountered."

In 1932, the Mount Pleasant School was constructed on Duncan Road, and housed grades one through nine. Fifteen years later, the board petitioned to expand to grade twelve. By 1958 a separate high school was opened on Washington Street Extension.

The original St. Helena's Roman Catholic Church was built along Bellefonte Avenue in 1936, with the larger present church building added in 1954. Bellefonte Avenue had been the main artery into Town, and Marion Avenue did not go through until around 1940.

As private cars and motorized buses became more prevalent, the trolley line was converted to "trackless" trolley and finally became a bus line in the 1950's.

The congregation of the Bellefonte Methodist Church decided to relocate, and offered their building up for sale. In 1971 the Town Commissioners purchased the building, church and Sunday school, to use as a Town Hall.

DEMOGRAPHICS, FUTURE POPULATION, AND HOUSING GROWTH

Data on population, demography, housing and economic conditions in Bellefonte are outlined in the following section, along with appropriate comparisons to New Castle County and the State of Delaware.

The United States Census has been the primary data source, with information taken from Summary File 1 (SF-1) and Summary File 3 (SF-3). SF-1 is a direct information count considered to be very reliable, while SF-3 is an estimate based on sample data, which has been known to lose accuracy with towns of small populations.

Housing Growth

As one of the older communities in Northern Delaware, Bellefonte has been almost fully developed for the past 20 years, with the exception of a few parcels that are too small to meet development requirements. This is consistent with development as a whole in North Wilmington, with very few available lots. Bellefonte has reached the point where some older homes are purchased for the purpose of demolition and new construction, and this situation is becoming more common in Northern New Castle County. This speaks to the desirability of this area.

Bellefonte's Land Use Code was developed to try to maintain the character of the Town, yet to control growth that could occur in the face of the situation stated above. Bellefonte's Land Use Code is designed to encourage single family residences in most zones, and to encourage multi-family units in mixed use zones. The code restricts unbounded development of multi-unit housing with height restrictions, parking requirements, and zoning. The Town is sensitive to the lack of affordable housing in Delaware and is open to planned affordable housing projects that might be proposed.

In the meantime, the housing stock in Bellefonte is affordable compared to surrounding areas because the homes tend to be smaller and sell for less. To the extent that this is true, Bellefonte continues to be a more affordable option for new and first-time homeowners.

Population and Housing

The U.S. Census is intended to be a count of all persons, though errors, omissions, and over-counts undoubtedly occur. While small errors have minimal effect on large populations, the same inaccuracies significantly impact small populations, such as Bellefonte, creating questions regarding the data's validity.

Additionally, factors ranging from government policies to economic conditions can alter trends and eventually affect population projections. However, the statistics are included for the value gained by comparing them to State and County level data to illustrate demographic and population trends.

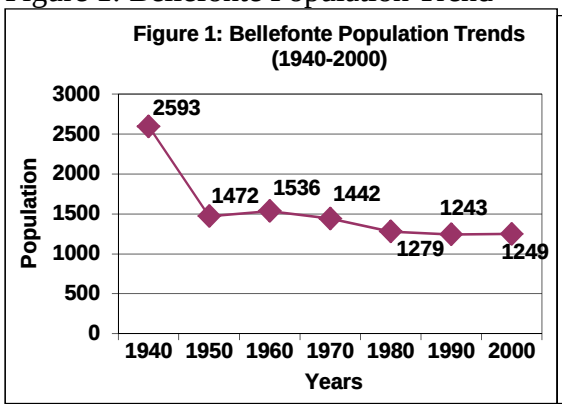
A review of information collected through the US Census indicates that from 1940 to 2010, while the population in Delaware and New Castle County has steadily increased, the population in Bellefonte has fluctuated with an overall decrease in population. According to the US Census, the Town's population peaked in 1940 at 2,593 persons. This population figure is probably an aberration as the census indicates that there were only 251 structures built prior to 1940. The

majority of the houses in the Town were built from 1940 to 1959 nearly doubling the total number of structures in the Town.

The 2010 Census reported 1,193 people living in Bellefonte and the 2010 Census data shows Bellefonte's population increased by 6 individuals or 0.5%. During the same time frame New Castle County's population grew from 441,946 to 500,265, an increase of 13%. Additionally, the State's population grew by 18% from 666,000 in 1990 to 783,000 in 2000. Bellefonte's total population in 2000 was 1,249 individuals, of which 48% were male and 52% were female.

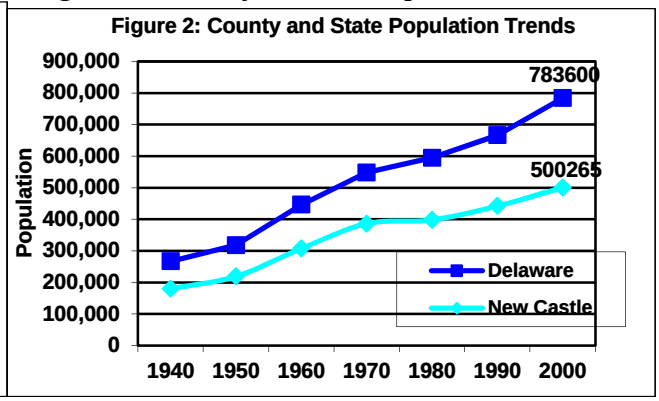
The following charts show the population trends for Bellefonte, New Castle County, and the State. Figure 1 shows the population for Bellefonte from 1940 to 2000. Figure 2 shows the population trends for New Castle County and the State of Delaware during the same time period.

Figure 1: Bellefonte Population Trend



Source: U.S. Census, 1940 – 2000.

Figure 2: County & State Population Trends



Source: US Census 1940 – 2000.

Population Projections

Population projections for areas as small as the Town of Bellefonte are very valuable in planning for future growth, but are extremely difficult to calculate with a significant degree of accuracy. The following projections have been prepared using growth figures from the Delaware Population Consortium's estimates for population growth in New Castle County, under the assumption that Bellefonte will grow at a rate similar to New Castle County. The housing projections were derived from the previously mentioned growth rate and the average household size of 2.33 in Bellefonte in the year 2000. The results of these projections appear in Table 1 and are summarized below.

Table 1: Future Population and Housing Projections

Population Projection						
	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
New Castle County	524,815	547,356	567,193	583,980	597,348	606,338
Bellefonte	**1305**	**1361**	**1410**	**1452**	**1485**	**1507**
Housing Projection						
	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Bellefonte	**560**	**584**	**605**	**623**	**637**	**647**

Sources: Delaware Population Consortium Annual Population Projections, 2004. US Census 2000, SF-1.

These projections show Bellefonte's population increasing to 1,452 by the year 2020 and to 1,507 by the year 2030. The housing projection from this study indicates an additional 18 housing units by 2020 and a total of 38 by 2030. The current trend of younger homebuyers with families purchasing the homes of our older single or married residents without children at home, the population could grow as shown in the projection. However, this increase in population is unlikely to increase the number of houses in Bellefonte as nearly every lot is built upon. The only way to increase the number of housing units to the figures stated in these projections is to replace single-family housing with duplexes or apartments or annex surrounding properties. The planned annexation activities recommended by this Comprehensive Plan (Phillips Heights and Riverside Gardens) could add approximately 60 new units to Bellefonte's housing inventory.

Racial Composition

In 2015, Bellefonte was fairly homogeneous with a 96% white population, contrasting New Castle County and the State of Delaware who had populations of 73% white and 70% white respectively, as seen in Table 2.

Census 2015 data indicates that Bellefonte became slightly more diverse during the 1990's as the white population as a percentage of the total population decreased from 98.3% in 1990 to 95.9%. Bellefonte is more homogeneous than New Castle County and the State of Delaware who are becoming more diverse, as seen in Table 2.

The following table lists the population by racial composition for Bellefonte, New Castle County and Delaware.

Table 2: Racial Composition of Bellefonte, New Castle County and Delaware

Race	Bellefonte		New Castle County		Delaware	
	2000	**2015**	**2000**	**2015**	**2000**	**2015**
White	**95.9%**	**95.9%**	73.1%	73.1%	75.0%	70.1%
Black	**2.4%**	**2.4%**	20.2%	20.2%	19.0%	22.0%
Other	**1.7%**	**1.7%**	6.7%	6.7%	6.0%	7.9%

Source: 1990 & 2015 U.S. Census; SF-1.

Age Profile

Bellefonte has an age distribution of its population, as shown in Table 3, equivalent to New Castle County and the State of Delaware.

Table 3: Age Profiles for Bellefonte, New Castle County, and Delaware, Census 2010

	Town of Bellefonte		New Castle County		State of Delaware	
Age	**Number**	**Percent**	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<5	**77**	**6.2%**	33,384	6.7%	51,531	6.6%
5-9	**84**	**6.7%**	36,150	7.2%	55,813	7.1%
10-14	**87**	**7.0%**	34,961	7.0%	55,274	7.1%
15-19	**62**	**5.0%**	36,309	7.3%	55,632	7.1%
20-24	**46**	**3.7%**	35,499	7.1%	51,665	6.6%

25-34	**191**	**15.3%**	73,869	14.8%	108,840	13.9%
35-44	**246**	**19.7%**	83,616	16.7%	127,601	16.3%
45-54	**177**	**14.2%**	66,882	13.4%	103,999	13.3%
55-59	**50**	**4.0%**	23,739	4.7%	39,320	5.0%
60-64	**36**	**2.9%**	17,953	3.6%	32,199	4.1%
65-74	**83**	**6.6%**	30,904	6.2%	56,415	7.2%
75-84	**84**	**6.7%**	20,556	4.1%	34,762	4.4%
85+	**26**	**2.1%**	6,443	1.%	10,549	1.3%

Source: 2000 US Census; SF-1.

Educational Attainment

The average level of educational attainment for Bellefonte is similar to the State of Delaware but slightly lower than that of New Castle County as seen in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Educational Attainment for Bellefonte, New Castle County, and Delaware, 2014.

Jurisdiction	High school graduate or higher	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Bellefonte	**84.9%**	**25.9%**
New Castle County	85.5%	29.5%
State of Delaware	88%	29.4%

Source: 2000 Census, SF-3.

Housing Units

Table 5 compares changes in the number of dwelling units in Bellefonte, New Castle County, and the State of Delaware as recorded by the U.S. Census Bureau. While New Castle County and the State have seen consistent dwelling unit increases over the past few decades, Bellefonte has grown at a much slower rate. It should be remembered that the numbers in the table below are taken from Census SF-3 and might not be fully accurate.

Table 5: Dwelling Units in Bellefonte, New Castle County, and Delaware, 1970-2000

Year	**Bellefonte**	**Change**	New Castle County	Change	Delaware	Change
1970	**528**	*******	120,683	***	180,233	***
1980	**N/A**	*******	148,452	23%	230,301	28%
1990	**523**	*******	173,560	17%	289,919	26%
2000	**551**	**5.3%**	199,520	15%	343,072	18%
2010	**560**	**1.6%**	218,589	9.5%	411,250	19.9%

Sources: US Census 1970 – 2010.

Type of Housing Stock

The following Table 6 and Table 7 summarize changes in the types of housing in Bellefonte, New Castle County, and the State.

Table 6: Composition of Housing in Bellefonte, New Castle County, and Delaware in 2014.

Housing Type	**Bellefonte**		New Castle County		State of Delaware	
	Number	**Percent**	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Single Family Detached	**491**	**86.3%**	114,073	56.6%	208,513	61.5%
Single family, Attached	**3**	**.5%**	40,309	20%	48,823	14.4%
Multi –Family	**75**	**13.2**	42,727	21.2%	56,621	16.7%
Mobile Homes	**0**	**0%**	4,635	2.3%	25,428	7.5%
Total	**569**	**100%**	201,543	100%	339,046	100%

U.S. Census, 2010, SF-1.

Table 7: Composition of Housing Stock, Bellefonte, New Castle County, Delaware, 2000

Housing Type	**Bellefonte**		**New Castle County**		**State of Delaware**	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Single Family Detached	466	85%	107,015	53.6%	191,688	56%
Single family, Attached	6	1%	39,609	19.8%	48,340	14%
Multi –Family	79	14%	47,818	23.9%	64,128	19%
Mobile Homes	0	0%	5,072	2.5%	38,281	11%
Total	551	100%	199,521	100%	343,072	100%

Source: https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF

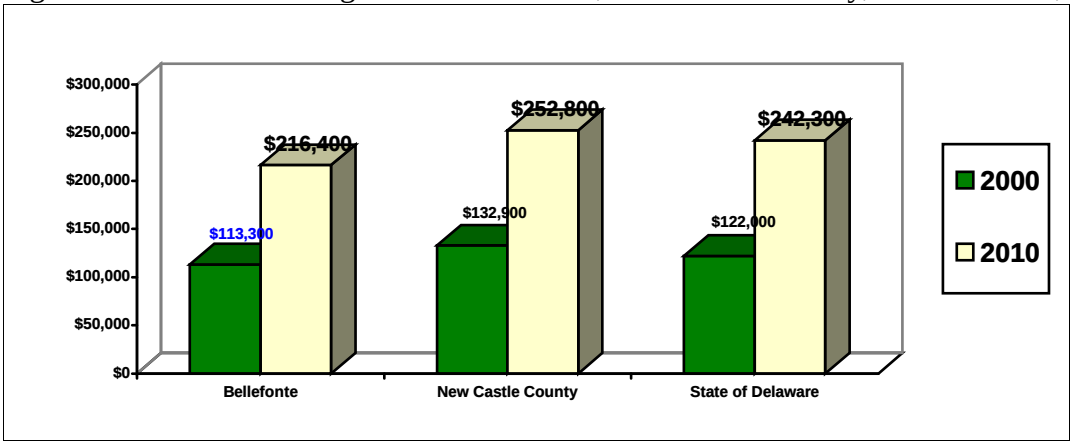
Age of Housing Stock

The median year homes were built in Bellefonte is 1935, substantially older than the median year homes were built in Delaware of 1985 and in New Castle County, 1995.

Housing Value

Figure 3a compares Bellefonte's 2000 and 2010 median housing value with housing values in New Castle County and the State of Delaware. Bellefonte experienced a 90% increase in housing values, the same as 90% in New Castle County, just behind the State, respectively. This difference can be attributed to Bellefonte being nearly built out causing a large disparity in number of new homes being built in the Town vs. the average for the State of Delaware. Another explanation for the disparity between Bellefonte and All of Delaware is the explosive growth of housing in Sussex County.

Figure 3a: Median Housing Values-Bellefonte, New Castle County, and Delaware, 2000-2010

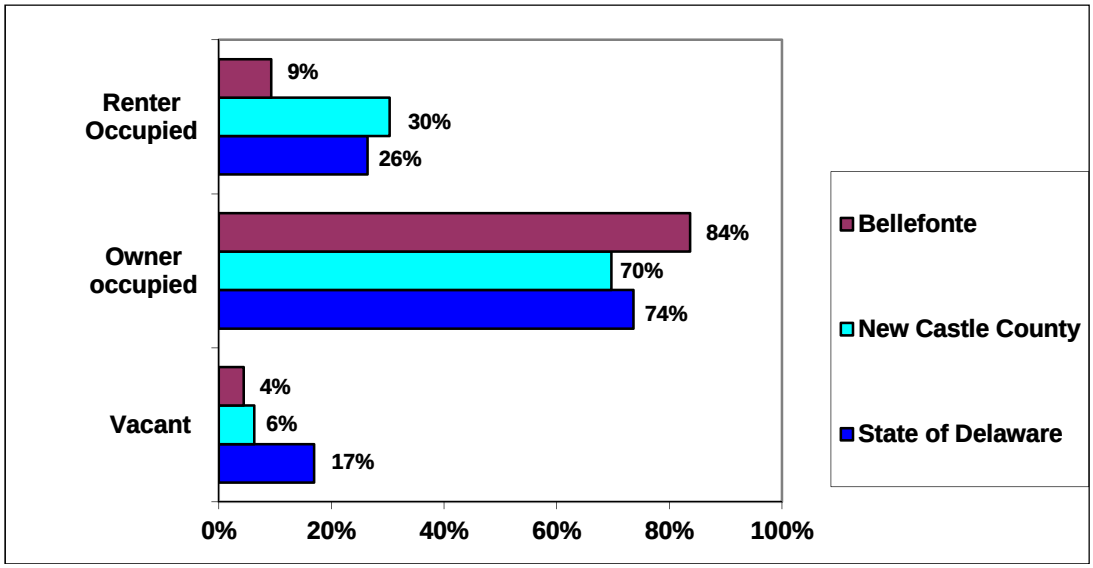


Source: https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF

Ownership and Vacancy

Figure 4 compares the proportion of vacant units, owner-occupied units, and renter occupied units found in Bellefonte, New Castle County, and the State. Bellefonte has a significantly higher percentage of owner occupied housing units versus the County and State.

Figure 4: Ownership and Vacancy Rates-Bellefonte, New Castle County, and Delaware, 2010



Source: https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF

Economic Profile

Bellefonte has historically been an independent entity although there is no single employer in the Town that supports/constitutes an economic base. Surrounding industries employ the majority of the residents, making Bellefonte more of a bedroom community to Wilmington and the surrounding areas. However, Bellefonte has a number of small businesses located in its two mixed-used districts.

Bellefonte's main street, Brandywine Boulevard, divides the Town. The street is accessible by foot to all residents and serves as Bellefonte's Central Business District. This business district is comprised of small unique businesses that are a major contributor to the character of the Town. While businesses came and went in the past, recent years have shown stability and even growth with the addition of new retail shops. Because of its uniqueness, this district is the backbone of Bellefonte's economic potential. Without these businesses, Bellefonte would be just another neighborhood in North Wilmington.

Table 8a: Brandywine Blvd. Businesses (central business district) (Sept. 2016)

Business Name	Address	Business Type
Chris Koyste Esq, LLC	709 Brandywine Blvd.	Legal Services
Eclectica	800 Brandywine Blvd	Retail – Gifts and Home Décor
Howard L. Robertson	801 Brandywine Blvd	Civil Engineers & Surveys
Bellefonte Arts	803C Brandywine Blvd	Art Gallery and Classes

JPT Chair Caning	803D Brandywine Blvd	Chair Caning & Repair
Serenity A'more	805 Brandywine Blvd	Women's Clothing
Bellefonte Café	804 Brandywine Blvd	Food Service – Restaurant
Boulevard Laundry	809 Brandywine Blvd	Service – Laundromat
Bellefonte Ctr for Children & Families	811 Brandywine Blvd	Family Counseling
Michael's Bellefonte Barbershop	900 Brandywine Blvd	Service – Barbershop
Bellefonte Vintage	901 Brandywine Blvd	Retail – Antiques & Collectibles
Artopia	903 Brandywine Blvd	Retail – Resale & Consignment
Russo Brothers, Inc.	912 Brandywine Blvd	Service – Plumbing & Heating
Sherm's Catering	913 Brandywine Blvd	Food Service –Caterer
American Roofing	1015 Brandywine Blvd	Roofing Replacement & Repair

Bellefonte also has another small business district along one side of Philadelphia Pike from Bellefonte Ave to School House Lane. Philadelphia Pike is in fact a large retail entity that stretches from Wilmington to Claymont and the Bellefonte section is only a small piece of that large entity. While these are also small businesses in this district, they benefit from being located on a major thoroughfare and from larger businesses neighboring the Town. This Bellefonte section of Philadelphia Pike has no separate identity from the rest of Philadelphia Pike; as a result, lacks the character of the Town. Since the Town only has one side of the street of a small section of Philadelphia Pike, any efforts to improve this district would need to be done in conjunction with New Castle County.

Table 8b: Philadelphia Pike Businesses (Sept. 2016)

Business Name	Address	Business Type
The Ice Cream Shoppe	700 Philadelphia Pike	Food Service – Take out
Budget Auto Rentals	702 Philadelphia Pike	Service – Vehicle Rental
Bellefonte BP	704 Philadelphia Pike	Service – Gas Service Station/ Convenience Store
Brandywine Realty	706 Philadelphia Pike, Suite 4	Real Estate
Wright USA/ Paragon Engineering	706Philadelphia Pike, Suite 1	Engineer
Eco Hair Garden	706 Philadelphia Pike, Suite 4b	Hair Salon
Horner Law, LLC	706 Philadelphia Pike, Suite 5	Law Office
J & J Produce	718 Philadelphia Pike	Retail Produce
All Ten Nails Salon	722 ½ Philadelphia Pike	Service – Nail Salon
Rita's Water Ice	722 Philadelphia Pike	Food Service – Takeout Restaurant

Northside Tattoos	722 Philadelphia Pike	Service – Tattoos/Body Piercing
Cajun Kates	722A Philadelphia Pike	Food Service – Takeout & Dine In Restaurant
ShowWorks	728-732 Philadelphia Pike	Service, Special Planning & Display Design

Table 9 shows the income data for the Town of Bellefonte compared to New Castle County and the State of Delaware. The Town median income falls below both that of the County and State. Possible explanations for this phenomenon are an increased number of seniors (living on retirements income/social security) (as noted in the age profile table 3) who are living below the poverty level, and also the national trends for income stagnation.

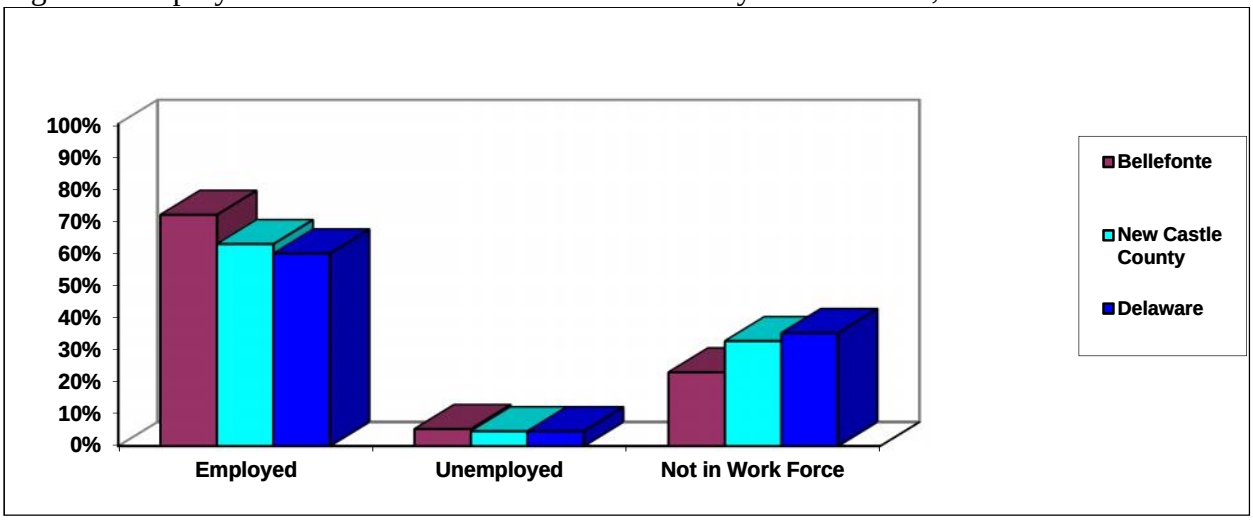
Table 9: Selected Income Data for Bellefonte, New Castle County, and Delaware, 2010

Item	Bellefonte	New Castle County	State of Delaware
Median household income	**$55,536**	$62,474	$57,599
% of households with wage and salary income	**84.6%**	82.6%	79.5%
% of households with social security income	**33.2%**	26.6%	30.1%
Mean social security income	**$13,135**	$16,927	$16,818
% of households w/ retirement income	**17.2%**	20.1%	23.5%
Mean retirement income	**$15,519**	$22,865	$23,157
% of households with public assistance income	**2.4%**	2.1%	2.3%
Mean public assistance income	**$4,700**	$2,970	$2,760
% of population below poverty level	**5.3%**	10.3%	11.0%
% of seniors (65+) below poverty level	**9.5%**	7.6%	7.3%

Source: https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF

Figure 5 shows the employment status for residents of Bellefonte compared to New Castle County and the State of Delaware. Bellefonte has a higher rate of employed and a nominally higher rate of unemployed and lower rate of not in the work force versus both the County and State.

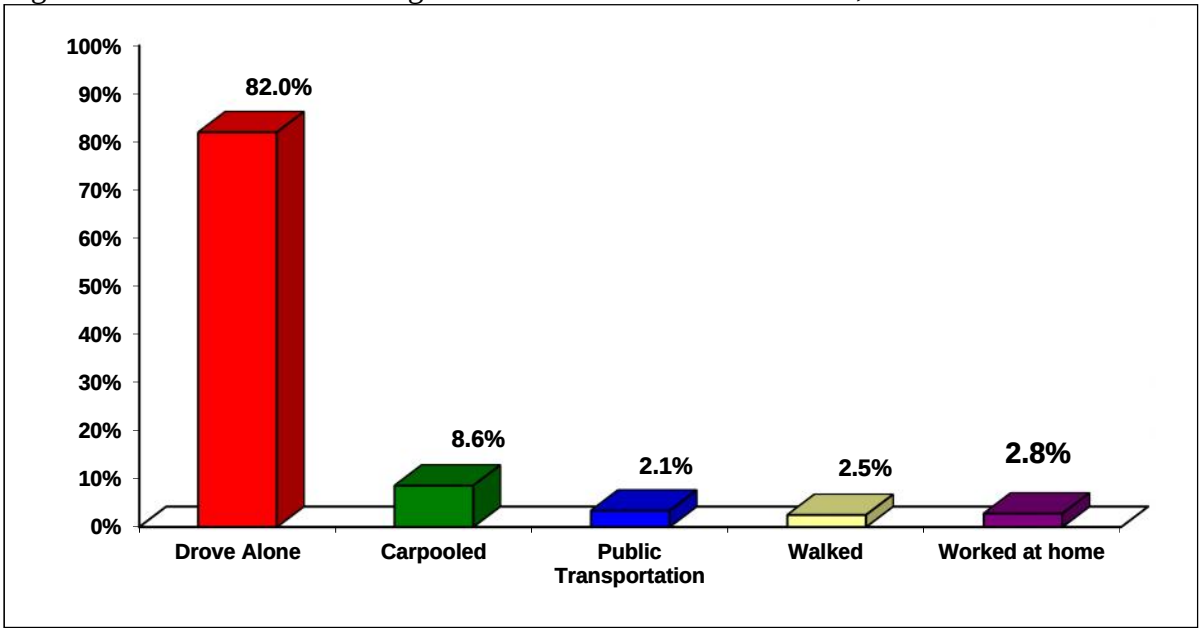
Figure 5: Employment Status for Bellefonte residents 16 years and older, 2010



Source: https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF

Figure 6 shows how the residents of Bellefonte commute to work. 87% drove to work alone, while 8.1% carpool. The mean travel time to work is about 25 minutes indicating the majority of the Bellefonte workforce is not employed in the immediate area.

Figure 6: Method of Commuting to Work for Bellefonte Residents, 2014



Source: http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF

Table 10 indicates that workers in Bellefonte are involved in a plethora of industries, with the finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing (14.9%) and educational, health and social services (14.6%) being the most popular. Retail trade (11.1%), manufacturing (10.5%), and construction (10.5%) represent the rest of the dominating industries.

Table 10: Industry of Workers 16 years and older

Industry	Bellefonte	New Castle County	Delaware
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	-	0.4%	1.0%
Construction	7.8%	6.1%	7.5%
Manufacturing	7.9%	9.7%	9.4%
Wholesale trade	2.3%	2.4%	2.3%
Retail trade	11.7%	11.2%	12.4%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	1.9%	5.0%	4.7%
Information	2.2%	2.0%	1.8%
Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing	14.3%	13.1%	10.5%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	8.1%	10.8%	9.5%
Educational, health and social services	25.4%	23.2%	22.7%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	10.2%	8.0%	8.6%
Other services (except public administration)	7.3%	4.0%	4.3%
Public administration	1.0%	4.1%	5.3%

Source: https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF

EXISTING LAND USES

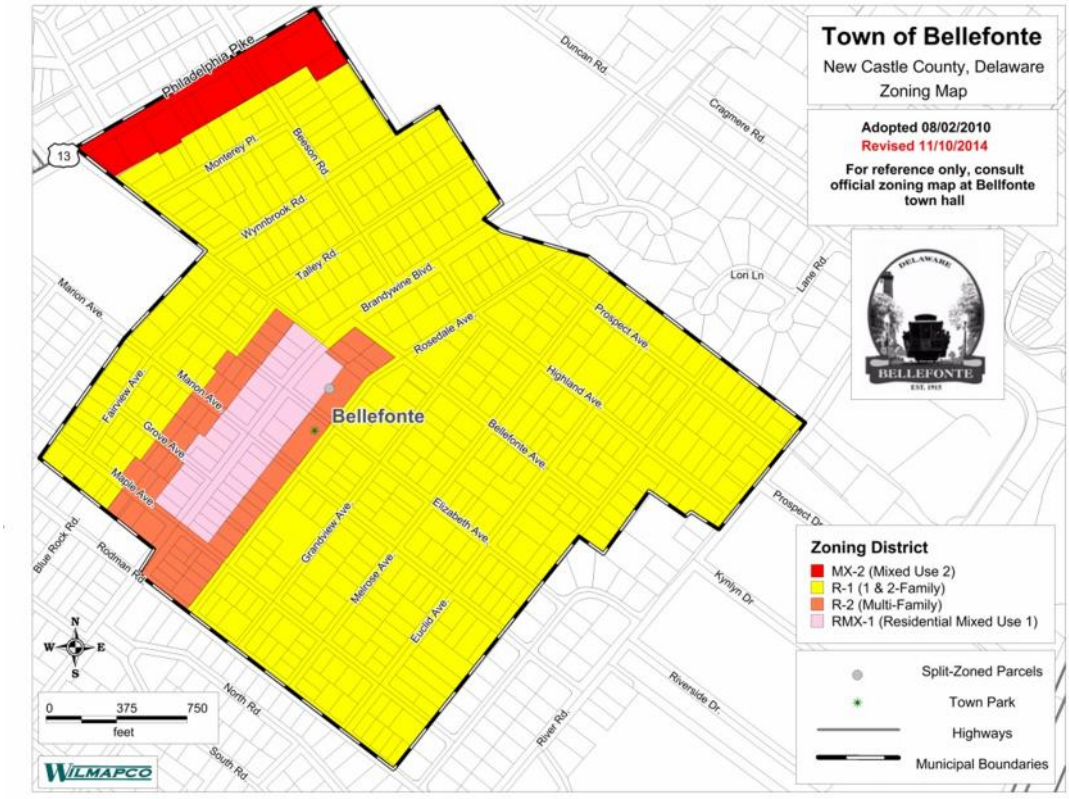
Land Use in Bellefonte

Land use within the Town of Bellefonte is primarily residential with two small commercial areas, one on Brandywine Blvd (central business district) and the second on the edge of the Town on Philadelphia Pike. The residential units in Bellefonte are primarily single family along with several two family units and a couple of apartment buildings. These apartment buildings were originally larger single-family houses, which have since been converted into apartments. The Brandywine Blvd business district (central business district) consists of several resale and other unique shops, one restaurant, laundromat, caterer, barbershop, upholstery shop, plumbing company, wellness center, and engineering company along with a public parking lot, several apartments, single-family homes, and the Brandywine Hundred Fire Station. A small Town park exists adjacent to this district on the Town Hall property. The Philadelphia Pike business district contains a variety of businesses including one gas station, ice cream parlor, hair salon, small restaurant, tattoo parlor, nail salon, produce store, auto rental company, and others. Only a few undeveloped parcels exist in the Town. These lots are currently primarily used as yards of adjoining parcels, but could be developed in the future.

Current Zoning of Land

The Town of Bellefonte's current zoning code was originally adopted in 1947 and was repealed and replaced in 2010 and amended in 2013. A copy of this ordinance and amendments can be found on the Town website, www.townofbellefonte.com. The zones consist of residential, apartment, and business.

Map 3: Town of Bellefonte Zoning



Residential – The residential zone allows for single family units, two family units (only with a variance from the Board of Adjustments), home-based businesses without exterior signs or display of goods, office of a physician, clergyman, or other spiritual leader residing on the premises, and places of worship.

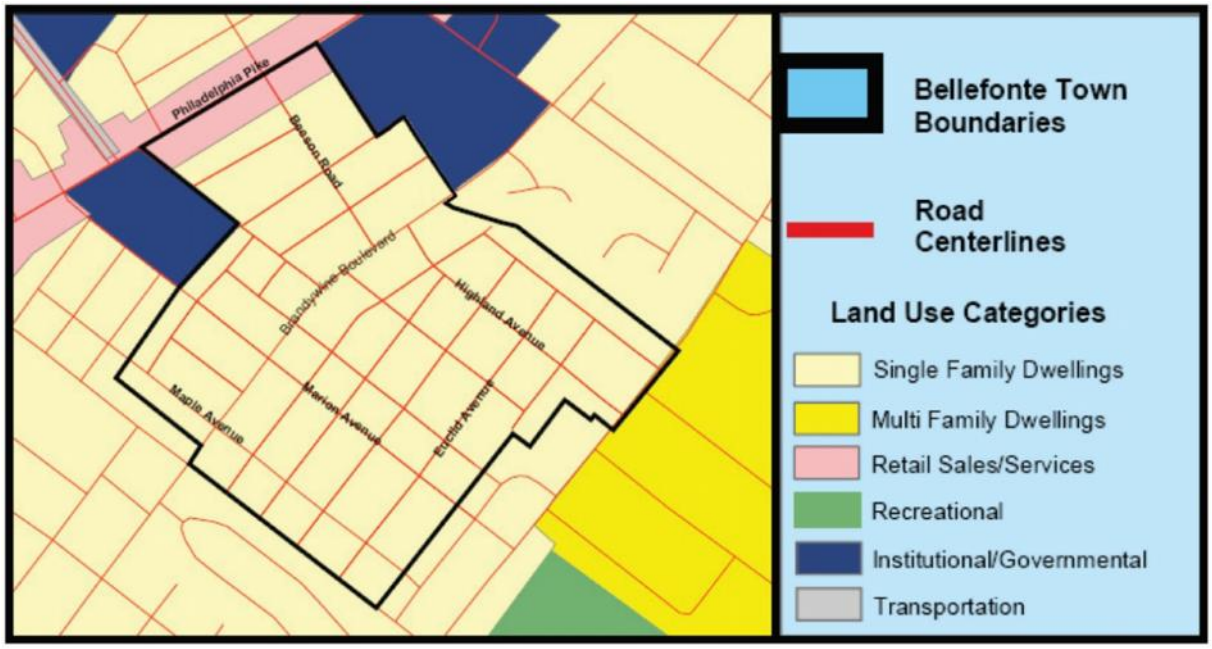
Apartment – The apartment zone allows for apartments for any number of families; apartment hotels, lodging and boarding houses not primarily for transients; dormitories and boarding schools; restaurants operated in conjunction with any of the above; lodge rooms and clubs; office of a physician or other similar profession; and single family homes.

Business – Both business districts allows any use permissible in the residential and apartment zones along with retail establishments, shop for personal services, offices, library, community center, and place of worship. Gasoline service stations, automobile agencies, public garages, liquor stores, taprooms, or any business where noxious odors, fumes, noises, or other unpleasant emissions are likely to result are prohibited in the Brandywine (central) business district unless passed by referendum and written consent is obtained from three-fourths of the property owners within 200 feet.

Land Surrounding Bellefonte

All of the land bordering Bellefonte is within unincorporated New Castle County. The adjacent lands to the Town are currently residential and the areas surrounding lands lie outside the County's growth overlay zone. The surrounding area is built out-residential and mixed use.

Map 4: Surrounding Land Uses



Housing

The Bellefonte housing stock is comprised of nearly all older houses with 90% of the houses built prior to 1950 (figure 7). The majority of housing styles are bungalow, cape cod, or colonial (figure 8) and small compared to newer construction in New Castle County with an average total area of only 1,445 sq. ft. The housing is mainly by single-family homes with some

multi-family occupancy (figure 9). There is one large apartment building with 11 units on Brandywine Blvd. The Bellefonte's housing stock is in good to excellent condition (figure 10) and its residential neighborhoods are stable both in terms physical condition and turnover. There are only a few remaining lots which are generally used as yards of the adjacent lot so additional building in Bellefonte is very limited.

Figure 7: Year Bellefonte Houses Built

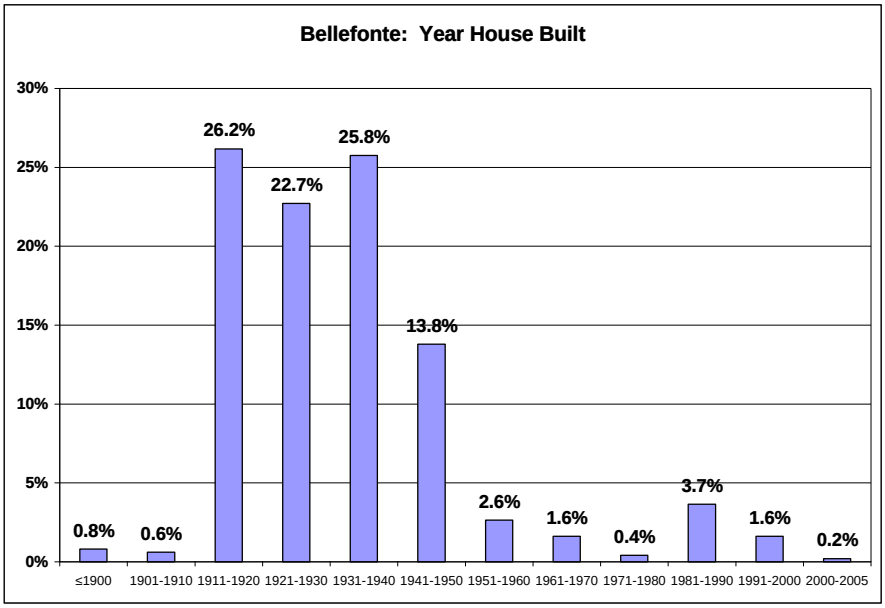


Figure 8: Bellefonte Housing Styles

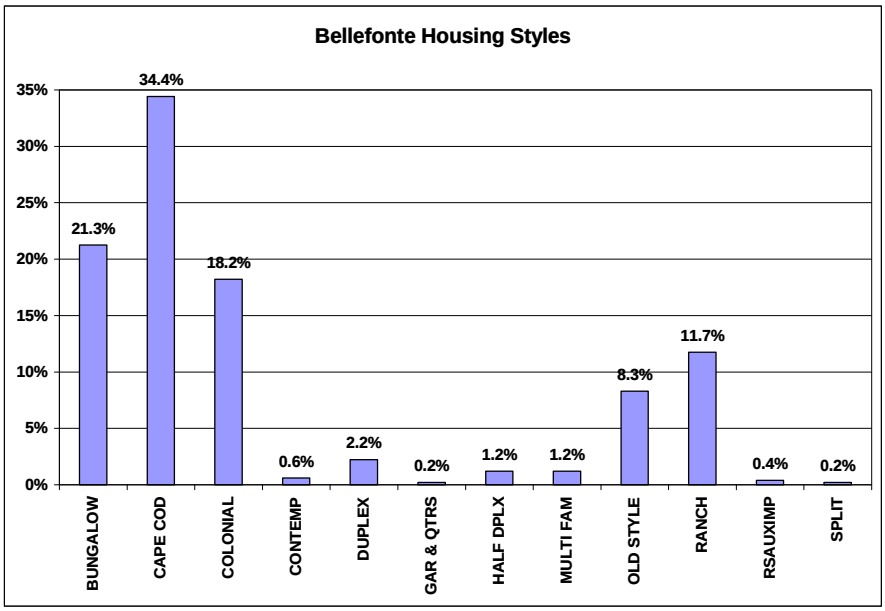


Figure 9: Bellefonte Housing Characteristics Occupied Dwelling Type

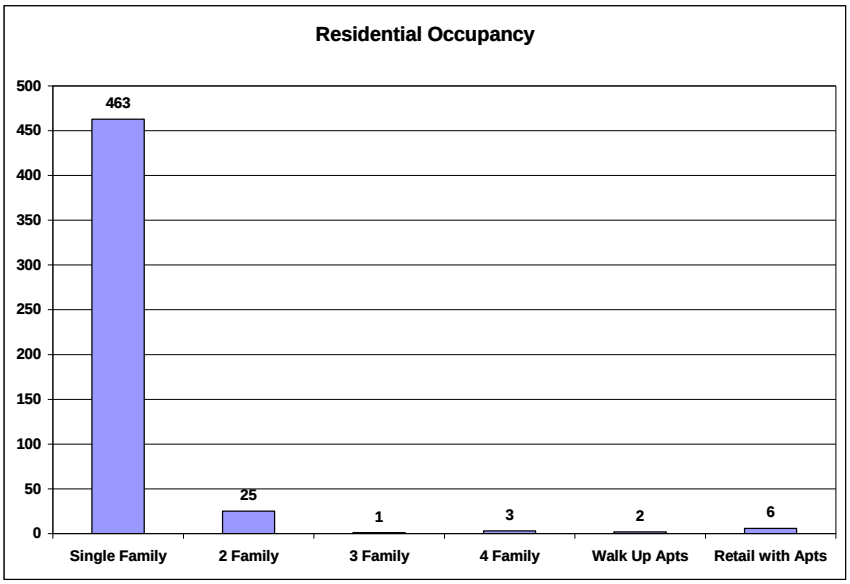
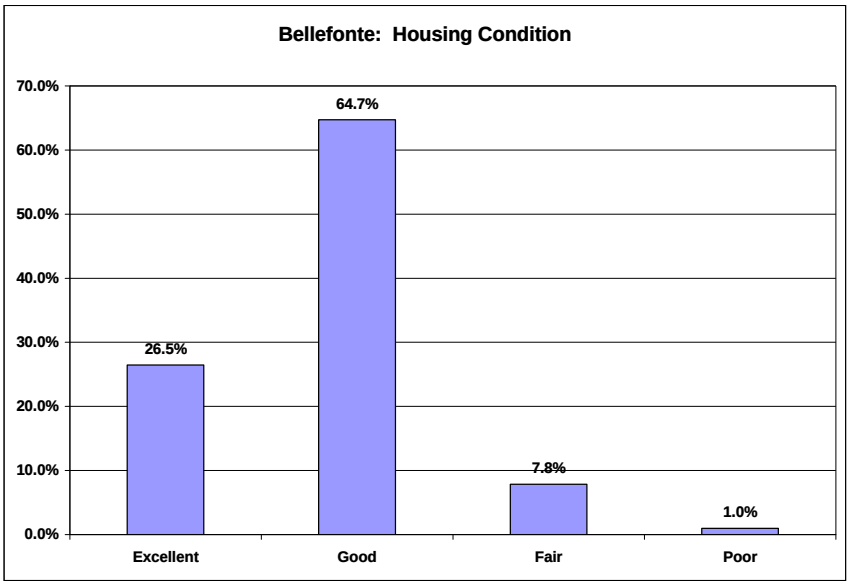


Figure 10: Bellefonte Housing Conditions



Floodplains, Wetlands, and Recharge Areas

Bellefonte is not located in a floodplain, wetlands nor are there any recharge areas.

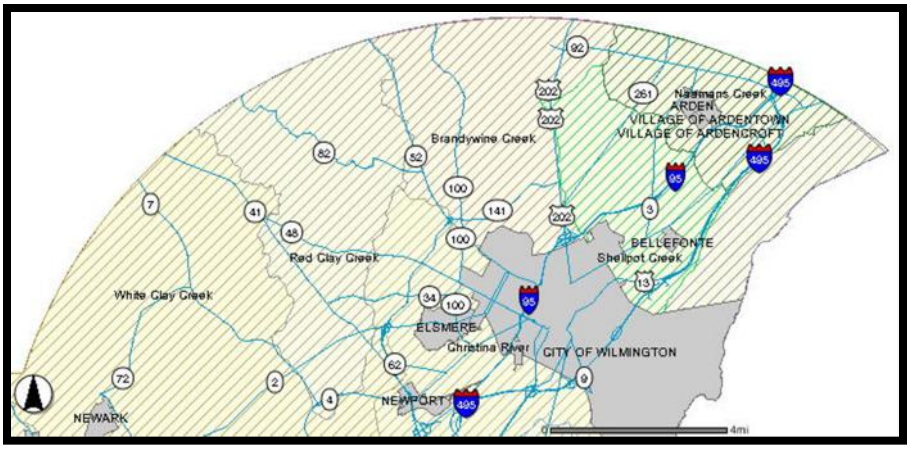
Soils

According to the 1971 *USDA-NRCS Soil Survey for New Castle County, Delaware*, the soils in Bellefonte are level to moderately sloping well drained medium-textured soils, relatively undisturbed to severely disturbed, formed over dark-colored gabbroic rocks; on uplands.

Shellpot Creek Watershed

As shown in Map 5, the Town of Bellefonte is located in the Shellpot Creek Watershed. This watershed is located north of the Christina River and east of the Brandywine River. The stream flows southeastward through piedmont region and enters Delaware River at Wilmington Cherry Island area. It drains about 9,000 acres of residential and commercial areas and has no point sources discharging nutrients and other oxygen consuming pollutants into the watershed.

Map 5: Northern New Castle County Watersheds



Water quality monitoring performed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) has shown that the Shellpot Creek is impaired by high levels of bacteria and elevated levels of the nutrients nitrogen and phosphorous, and that the designated uses are not fully supported by water quality in the stream.

Section 303(d) of the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires states to develop a list (303(d) List) of waterbodies for which existing pollution control activities are not sufficient to attain applicable water quality criteria and to develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for pollutants or stressors causing the impairment. A TMDL sets a limit on the amount of a pollutant that can be discharged into a waterbody and still protect water quality. TMDLs are composed of three components, including Waste Load Allocations (WLAs) for point source discharges, Load Allocations (LAs) for nonpoint sources, and a Margin of Safety (MOS).

DNREC listed Shellpot Creek on several of the State's 303(d) Lists and proposes the following Total Maximum Daily Load regulation for nitrogen, phosphorous and Enterococcus bacteria.

- The nonpoint source nitrogen load from the area south of Business Route 13 shall be reduced by 35% (from the 2000-2003 baseline). This shall result in reducing the yearly-average total nitrogen load from 19.2 pounds per day to 12.5 pounds per day.
- The nonpoint source nitrogen load from the area north of Business Route 13 shall be capped at the 2000-2003 baseline level. This shall result in a yearly-average total nitrogen load of 89.4 pounds per day.
- The nonpoint source phosphorous load from the area south of Business Route 13 shall be reduced by 35% (from the 2000-2003 baseline). This shall result in reducing the yearly-average total phosphorous load from 2.0 pounds per day to 1.3 pound per day.
- The nonpoint source phosphorous load from the area north of Business Route 13 shall be capped at the 2000-2003 baseline level. This shall result in a yearly-average total phosphorous load of 5.7 pounds per day.
- The nonpoint source bacteria load shall be reduced by 74% from the 1998-2004 baseline level. This shall result in reducing a yearly-mean bacteria load from 3.7E+10 CFU per day to 9.0E+9 CFU per day.
- The bacteria load from Wilmington CSO 31 shall be reduced by 28% from the 1998-2004 baseline level. This shall result in reducing a yearly-mean bacteria load from 5.4E+10 CFU per day to 3.9E+10 CFU per day.
- Based upon water quality model runs and assuming implementation of reductions identified by Articles 1 through 6, DNREC has determined that, with an adequate margin of safety, water quality standards will be met in Shellpot Creek.
- Implementation of this TMDLs Regulation shall be achieved through development and implementation of a Pollution Control Strategy. The Strategy will be developed by DNREC in concert with a Shellpot Creek Tributary Action Team, other stakeholders, and the public.

Source: DNREC Proposal: Secretary's Order Number 2005-W-0048. Final Regulations Approving Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for Shellpot Creek and Naamans Creek Watersheds (Issuance November 15, 2005; Effective December 11, 2005)

TOWN GOVERNMENT FORMAT

The Town's charter of 1915 established the government of Town of Bellefonte, as The Commissioners of Bellefonte. The Town Charter was updated in 2015. A five-member Town Commission governs the Town with elections held the first Tuesday of June. Commissioners must be citizens of the Town of Bellefonte and at least three must be freeholders. Each Town Commissioner is elected for a two-year term with the terms of three seats expiring in the odd years and the other two seats expiring in the even years. A Treasurer, who must be a citizen and freeholder is elected annually.

At the first Town meeting following the election, newly elected officials are sworn into office. The Commissioners elect one member to serve as the President, who serves as Chief Executive of the Town and another to serve as the Secretary. The Town Commission annually appoints a tax collector. All Town Commissioners receive a small stipend.

- The Town Commission is responsible for governing aspects of the Town including, but not limited to, passing laws in the form of ordinances, developing and administering a budget, overseeing the Treasurer, answering citizen complaints, intergovernmental relations, and citizen communications.
- The Commission currently holds its regular Town meeting on the second Monday each month.

In 1941, the Commissioners of Bellefonte passed the original "Rules and Regulations for Building and Plumbing" establishing the positions of Building Inspector and Plumbing Inspector and the Building and Plumbing regulations. In 2005, the Commissioners of Bellefonte passed Ordinance 2005-03 adopting New Castle County's Property Maintenance Code and New Castle County's enforcement of the Code. In 2006 the current Town Commission passed a new ordinance adopting the International Code Council's requirements along with the amendments to these requirements as adopted by New Castle County. These ordinances brought Bellefonte's building, plumbing and property maintenance regulations in line with the surrounding unincorporated New Castle County.

In 2015, the Commission of Bellefonte passed an ordinance transferring the building and plumbing inspection duties to New Castle County.

In 1947, the Commissioners of Bellefonte passed "The Building Zone Ordinance for the Town of Bellefonte, Delaware" establishing a Zoning Commission, Board of Adjustments, and the zoning regulations for the Town. The Zoning Commission will be responsible for making the recommendations to the Town Commission to update the zoning regulations to reflect the Town Comprehensive Plan. The original Board of Adjustments consisted of the President of the Town Commission, the Town Solicitor, and the Town Engineer. In 2006, the Commissioners of Bellefonte adopted ordinance 2006-01 establishing a new composition to the Board of Adjustment. The Board now consists of five residents appointed by the President of the Commission and confirmed by a majority vote of the Town Commission.

OTHER GOVERNING BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, & COMMITTEES

Planning Commission

In 2004, the Town Commission, by motion and vote, established the Town's first Planning Commission. The Commission consisted of nine members serving staggered terms. The members of the Planning Commission were appointed by the Town Commissioners and were an advisory body to the Town Commissioners. Its major responsibilities were to develop, evaluate and recommend modifications of the Town's Comprehensive Development Plan. In May 2006 the Town Commission, under advisement from the new town attorney, felt it best to reconstitute the Town Planning Commission by ordinance. This was done under Town of Bellefonte Ordinance number 2006-02. This document was a formal replacement of the nine-person commission with the five-person commission that exists at the writing of this document. Once the Plan is adopted, members of the Planning Commission will participate on various committees along with interested citizens to formulate action plans and recommendations as it pertains to implementation of the Town's strategies. These committees will report back to the Planning Commission. Based on the information from the committees, the Planning Commission will make recommendations to the Town Commission on the implementation of the Plan to obtain the goals set forth in the Plan.

Zoning Review Board

A formal Zoning Review Board (ZRB) has not existed for years in the Town of Bellefonte. The past Zoning Commissions consisted of three members appointed by the President and confirmed by the Town Commission. The Planning Commission and the Town Commission have taken up the responsibilities of the Zoning Commission and jointly established a new Zoning Ordinance consistent with the Town Plan. Zoning Review Board responsibilities were added to the Planning Commission in September 2016. New Castle County has agreed to handle all building permits.

Board of Adjustment

Previously, the Board of Adjustment consisted of the President of the Town Commission, the Town Solicitor, and the Town Engineer. In March 2006 the Town Commission of Bellefonte reconstituted the Board of Adjustment. This was done under the Town of Bellefonte Ordinance number 2006-01. This document was a formal replacement of the three-person commission with the five-person board that exists at the writing of this document. The members of the Board of Adjustment are appointed by the President and confirmed by majority vote of the Town Commission. The newly formed Board of Adjustment members were appointed to staggered terms of one to three years. All subsequent appointment will be for three years. This body has the authority under appropriate conditions to grant variances to the zoning ordinance as long as such variance is in harmony with the ordinance's general purpose and intent.

Intergovernmental Communication and Cooperation

The Town Commission has been working to strengthen relationships between the Town and State, New Castle County, other municipalities, and various government agencies. The Town Commission has developed a good working relationship with our district's State Representative, Senator and New Castle County Councilman. These State & County representatives attend our Town meetings as their schedules permit to keep abreast of activities and issues in the Town. In addition, a bi-directional flow of information occurs on an as needed basis. The Town has created and maintains a website and Facebook page to disseminate information. Through the development of this plan, the Town has also developed a good relationship with the Office of State Planning & Coordination and has joined the Delaware League of Governments to increase interaction with other municipalities and learn from their experiences. This is a primarily a function of the members of the Town of Bellefonte Town Commission.

WATER

SUEZ Water Delaware, mysuezwater.com, 2000 First State Blvd, Wilmington, DE maintains the water system and provide water service. All residences and businesses are connected to a public water system. The few remaining vacant lots in Town can be connected to the same system. Residents and businesses arrange water service directly with SUEZ Water and are billed monthly based on water consumption.

ELECTRIC

The Town of Bellefonte does not generate or deliver electricity. Electric service can be contracted directly by the resident with Delmarva Power. Delmarva does pay the Town taxes on assets, such as the number of electric poles in Town. The Town pays Delmarva for utilities used. The Town receives an energy credit from solar panels located on the Town Hall.

NATURAL GAS

The Town of Bellefonte does not provide natural gas service. Natural gas service can be contracted directly by the resident with Delmarva Power. Delmarva does pay the Town taxes on assets, such as gas lines, and the Town pays Delmarva for utilities used.

SEWER

The Town of Bellefonte does not have a public sewer system and does not process our waste water. The Town of Bellefonte anticipates New Castle County can accommodate any increases in sewer capacity due to minimal anticipated growth. New Castle County should be consulted prior to any subdivision of property to make sure there are not any sewer capacity implications. It is the responsibility of the property owner to obtain a permit from the County.

TELEPHONE, CABLE/SATELLITE TELEVISION, INTERNET ACCESS

Verizon and Comcast provide telephone, cable and internet service in the Town. Many companies provide cellular service in this area. Comcast and Verizon FIOS are currently the only cable television providers in Town paying the Town an annual fee for a non-exclusive franchise license. Satellite television service is also available.

TRASH COLLECTION, RECYCLING AND YARD WASTE

The Town provides curbside trash collection, recycling and yard waste. Recycling and yard waste are on alternate Fridays with Trash collected EVERY Friday. Recycling is not mandated by ordinance, but is strongly encouraged and has participation rates of more than 60 percent.

POLICE PROTECTION

Police protection in the Town of Bellefonte is provided by New Castle County Police. As needed, the Town does contract for additional law enforcement to curb speeding and other traffic violations. This arrangement works well for the Town given its small size, relatively low crime rate, and fact that County provides police protection to the surrounding neighborhood. Although the Town has no contractual agreement, State Police - Troop 1 is located on Philadelphia Pike, across from the Town of Bellefonte.

FIRE PROTECTION

Bellefonte and its residents are fortunate to have the Brandywine Hundred Volunteer Fire Company No. 1 located on Brandywine Blvd in Bellefonte's Central Business District. They provide service to the Town and surrounding areas 24/7. The entire unit is fully trained and qualified in fire, medical, and emergency management services. The fire company also hosts various community events throughout the year.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

These services are provided by New Castle County Emergency Medical Services a branch of the New Castle County Police. The EMS Section is responsible for the delivery of pre-hospital advanced life support and is available on a 24-hour basis. The paramedic units operate in a tiered-response configuration with the basic life support (BLS) ambulances of volunteer fire services and contractual ambulance services. Full-time EMS personnel are stationed at the Brandywine Hundred Fire Company No. 1 on Brandywine Blvd.

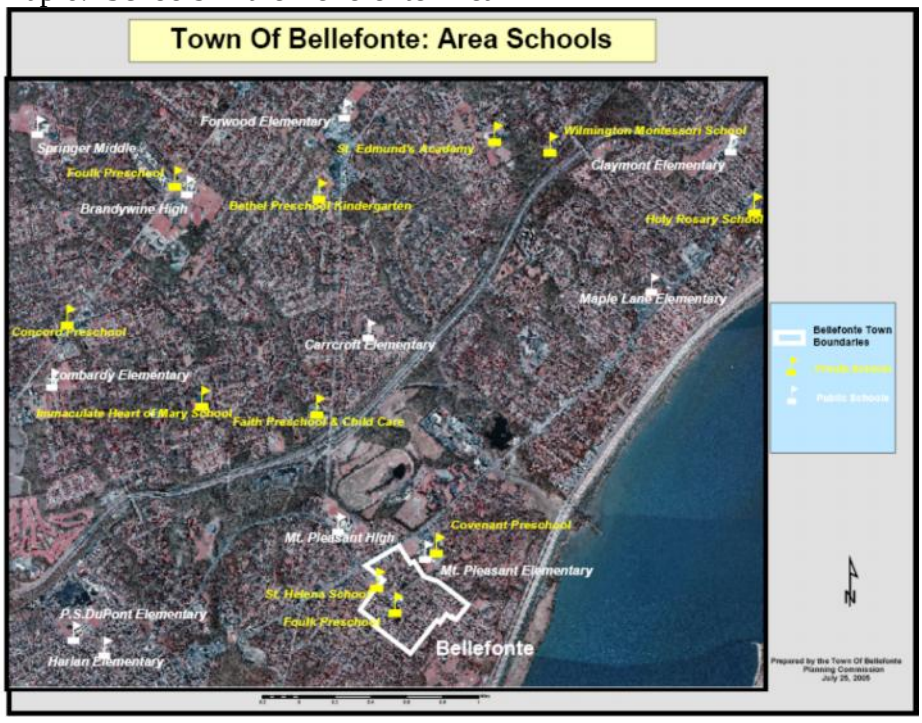
COMMUNICATION

The Town currently mails newsletters or postcards to residents on an as-needed basis. The Commission established *www.townofbellefonte.com* where anyone can view minutes of the meetings, announcements, the charter, the ordinances, etc. These items are also posted on the Town bulletin board at Town Hall. The Town now has a Facebook page where it regularly shares education, news and information and has close to 1,000 followers/friends.

SCHOOLS

The Town of Bellefonte is located in the Brandywine School District, but does not have any schools within the Town. While parents have a choice of schools, Mount Pleasant Elementary School (K-5), P.S. duPont Middle School (6-8), and Mount Pleasant High School (9-12) mainly serve the Town. Mount Pleasant Elementary and High Schools are within walking distance.

Map 6: Schools in the Bellefonte Area



PRESCHOOL/DAYCARE SERVICES

There are no day care facilities inside the Town of Bellefonte boundaries; however there several nearby including Bellevue Community Center, Faith Preschool, and Concord Preschool, all immediately adjacent to the Town at the corner of Brandywine Blvd and Duncan Rd..

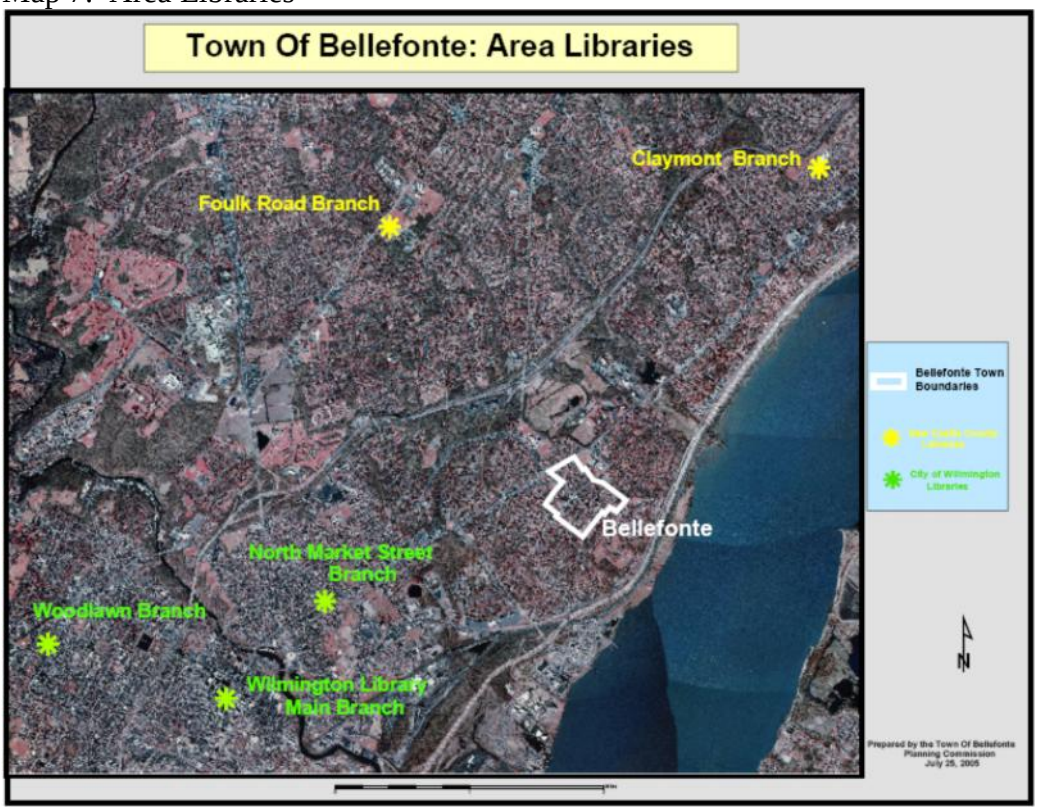
SENIOR SERVICES

Bellefonte currently provides no direct services for its senior population. However, Bellefonte seniors can obtain nutritional services including meals and education, as well as healthcare transportation through New Castle County Department of Senior Services. A couple of nearby community centers also provides senior services. Sellers Senior Center, located in the Bellevue Community Center, provides weekly programs for anyone 50 years or older. Weekly activities include bridge, pinochle, Bible study, dancing, billiards, computer training, crafts, and bingo. Trips, special events, and AARP driving courses are also available. Also nearby in the Claymont Community Center is the Brandywine Senior Center offering recreation, education, and enrichment activities as well as a daily lunch option to area residents 60 and older.

LIBRARY

The Town of Bellefonte does not have a library, but is served by two nearby New Castle County Public Libraries: Brandywine Hundred Library at 1300 Foulk Rd & Claymont Library at 400 Lenape Way. These libraries offer diverse programs and dynamic recreational resources that are easily accessed by the residents of Bellefonte. Additional libraries are located nearby in the City of Wilmington.

Map 7: Area Libraries



HOSPITALS/HEALTHCARE

Bellefonte does not have any hospitals or clinics. There are primarily four hospitals serving this area. Three of the hospitals, Wilmington Hospital, St. Francis Hospital, and Alfred I. duPont Children's Hospital are located a few miles away in the City of Wilmington. Christiana Hospital is located south of Wilmington in Stanton near I-95. Three Nemours Children Clinics are located near Bellefonte, one of which is just south of the Town on Philadelphia Pike. A walk-in clinic, Silverside Medical Center, is also located nearby Bellefonte on Silverside Rd.

POSTAL SERVICE

Bellefonte is served by postal facilities located in Edgemoor on Governor Printz Boulevard. Another postal facility utilized by citizens is located on Philadelphia Pike in Claymont.

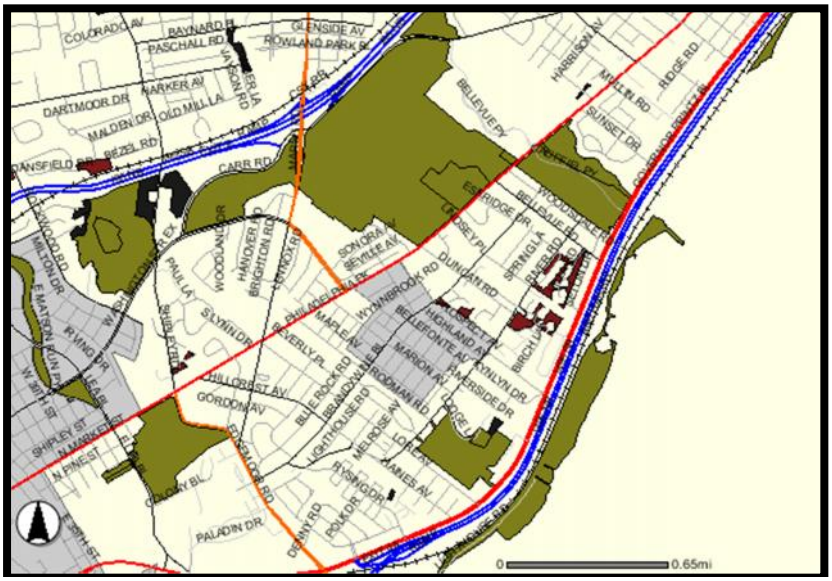
PARKS AND RECREATION

The Town of Bellefonte has a lovely park located on the corner of Elizabeth Street and Rosedale Avenue. The park was redesigned in 2006 with a matching grant from the Delaware Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund. The park was designed by landscape architect Andrew Durham and was intended to be in the style of a turn-of-the-century park, with a gazebo and wrought-iron fencing, benches, and a round walking path which symbolizes a trolley track - harkening back to Bellefonte's history as the end of the Wilmington trolley line. The park serves as a gathering space for events such as summer concerts, the annual town picnic, holiday gatherings and civic group events...even weddings!

Immediately adjacent to Bellefonte are Bellevue State Park between Philadelphia Pike and Carr Road which offers numerous opportunities for multiple recreational activities and New Castle County River Road Park on River Road. Other nearby parks include New Castle County Rockwood Park on Washington Street Extension and Fox Point State Park on Lighthouse Road which include portions of and are connected via the Northern Delaware Greenway / East Coast Greenway.

Just outside Bellefonte Town limits on Duncan Road is the Bellevue Community Center, which hosts many of multi-generational activities, including community gardening, a farmer's market, a daily activity schedule, summer camp, recreational activities, and child care/after-care program.

Map 8: Nearby Parkland



TRANSPORTATION

Pedestrian

The small size of the Town makes walking an attractive mode of transportation. Through the Streetscape Program the Town was able to install brick sidewalks along Brandywine Blvd in the central business district. The residents of the Town use the roadways frequently and the Town does need to address the need for additional crosswalks and signage to make the streets safer for pedestrians.

Bicycle

The Town of Bellefonte does not have any bike paths. Like pedestrian traffic, the narrow streets and parking on both sides of the street result in an unfriendly bicycle environment. The Town is near the Northern Delaware Greenway / East Coast Greenway, which offers miles of safe biking paths.

Motor Vehicle

The streets of Bellefonte are laid out in a grid-like pattern with Brandywine Boulevard serving as the major dividing artery north and south between Edgemoor Road and Duncan Road. Marion Avenue serves as the major artery east and west between Philadelphia Pike and River Road. Beeson Road receives a large amount of east/west traffic to and from the businesses located on Philadelphia Pike. Bellefonte Avenue between Brandywine Boulevard and Philadelphia Pike is the Town's only one-way street and serves as an emergency route to Philadelphia Pike for the Brandywine Hundred Fire Company and Ambulance. The traffic light located at the intersection of Brandywine Boulevard and Marion Avenue was removed in 2014, following a DelDOT traffic study. The light was replaced with four-way stop signs, which has improved the safety of the intersection and has also reduced speeding on Marion and Brandywine.

Like any area, traffic is the heaviest during the morning and evening commute times. In general, accident statistics show that Bellefonte's streets are relatively safe. The Delaware Department of Transportation is responsible for the maintenance of the 5.47 miles of streets in the Town, while Bellefonte is responsible for snow plowing.

Residential Parking

Residents without a driveway and/or garage may park on the street. There is ample curb space to accommodate these residents and visitors of all residents. However, the narrow streets of the Town along with parking on both sides of the street can make navigation of one vehicle difficult and passage of two opposing vehicles impossible on most streets. The Land Use Code of 2010 added required parking spaces for new construction and renovations in the residential zone.

Business District Parking

Parking for patrons of the Brandywine (central) business district is primarily on Brandywine Boulevard. Unlike most of the other streets, Brandywine Boulevard is wide enough to accommodate parking on both sides without impeding two-way traffic. During busy times parking may overflow to the cross streets. The Town does own a small parking lot on Brandywine Boulevard which provides additional public parking for this business district. This lot was repaved and re-lined in 2008. Generally, parking in the Philadelphia Pike business district is not an issue. These businesses have small private or shared parking lots. In 2013, the

Town passed an amendment to the Land Use Code which now requires parking spaces (based on intensity of use) for new construction/renovation in the mixed use area along Brandywine Boulevard.

Bus Service

DART First State provides extensive service within New Castle County and to other parts of the State. Two DART bus routes make regular stops in Bellefonte. The Route 1 bus makes multiple stops on Brandywine Boulevard and Philadelphia Pike. The Route 24 bus makes stops on River Road. Bus stops in Bellefonte lack cover and benches. In 2016, there was a slight change to the Route 1 schedule so that some buses stop on Brandywine Blvd. and some do not.

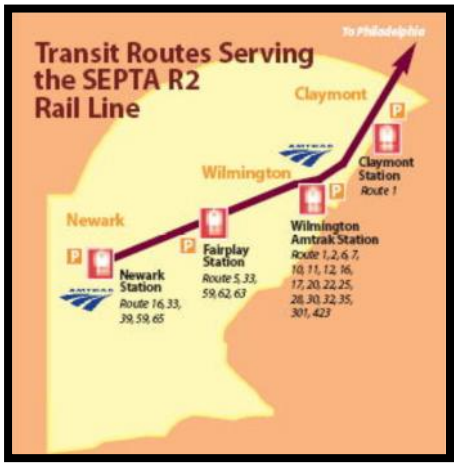
Map 9: DART Bus Routes

DART First State also provides Para transit service by appointment to disabled, eligible riders. Information may be obtained by contacting DART First State for eligibility information and an application.

Rail Service

There is no train service in the Town of Bellefonte. Two nearby train stations are easily accessible by DART bus service or by car. The Wilmington Amtrak Station services both Amtrak and SEPTA (regional service). SEPTA regional service is also accessible at the Claymont Station.

Map 10: SEPTA and Amtrak Stations



Air

Philadelphia International Airport is approximately 20 miles north of the Town of Bellefonte on I-95 and provides the area with commercial air travel provided by numerous carriers. Located south of Bellefonte is the New Castle Airport. This airport is operated by the Delaware River & Bay Authority offering services for mainly for private, business, charter, and cargo aircraft and is also home of the Delaware Air National Guard.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Stormwater drainage systems are designed to control the quantity, quality, timing and distribution of runoff. Other objectives in the design of stormwater management systems include erosion control and groundwater recharge. A stormwater drainage system collects surface runoff via inlets in road pavements and routes it to a treatment unit and/or receiving body of water, usually through underground pipes called storm sewers. In some cases, the surface runoff is discharged directly into a receiving body of water such as a stream, river lake or ocean. Currently, stormwater management, for the Town of Bellefonte; is handled by New Castle County. They maintain the water quality for local waterways. Routinely, they maintain stormwater drains and storm sewers to make sure that they are free of silt and debris so that the rainwater can flow freely. Given the Town's location and aging stormwater system, drainage problems have become a more frequently reported issue.

Since the Town does not have any paid staff or road crews, residents are encouraged to periodically keep stormwater catch basin grates clear of debris. As a signatory of the EPA Stormwater Interjurisdictional Agreement for New Castle County, residents are also forbidden from disposing of anything down the stormwater discharge basins. The Town is engaged in educating residents about this regulation. In addition, pursuant to this agreement, the Town will be regulating and reporting any foreign substances which could inadvertently end up in the stormwater system, such as road salt.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

OVERVIEW

In June of 2016, the Planning Commission hosted a Town Meeting to gain feedback from residents regarding future development of the Town. Two postcards were mailed to all addresses, as well as to surrounding communities in Phillips Heights and Riverside Gardens/River Road, and the event was promoted on the Town's website and Facebook page. Approximately six percent of the Town's population (70) persons attended and were invited to participate. A fairly representative group of the Town attended, including a broad range of age groups, new residents/old residents, and renters/freeholders/business owners.

Information was gathered using the recommended charrette method of inviting participants to make comments in writing based on a list of questions/comments -- most of which were used to gather information for the Town's first Comprehensive Plan. There were 15 questions/statements in all. Each was written on a large piece of paper and attendees were invited to react to each. The results were transcribed into a written record (which can be found in Appendix 1).

These results, taken in their entirety, have been considered and are reflected in the goals and objectives and this Comprehensive Plan.

It is clear from the results below, that the character of the community is extremely important to Bellefonte residents and any changes made in the Town should be to preserve and enhance this character. Residents like the small town, main street atmosphere and uniqueness that Brandywine Blvd provides to the Town. The character of Bellefonte is the reason people move to the Town and loss of this sense of community might be the main reason they would leave.

RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

- Most people plan to stay in Bellefonte unless serious problems become more pervasive: crime, school quality (good now), lack of code enforcement (dilapidated houses, unkempt yards, roads).
- People enjoy the activities currently held in town and would like to see more such as concerts, Town picnic and holiday gatherings

GOVERNMENT

A common concern of the Town Commission and citizens is the modernization of the Town's charter, ordinances, and establishment of written policies and procedures. Over the past ten years, following the approval of our Comprehensive Development Plan, the Town's Land Use Code was revised and adopted (2010), and the Town Charter was revised and adopted (2015). Now that these core legislative acts have been passed, the sole task is the development of a manual of Standard Operating Procedures and the establishment of a periodic review of active legislation/development goals.

Goal #1: Periodically Review and Revise Town of Bellefonte Ordinances as Needed

Background

Identifying the need for revision or introduction of new legislation takes two pathways in Bellefonte's government: through the Town Commission, or in the case of Zoning/Land Use matters, through the Planning Commission. In either case, residents/land owners are welcome to bring their needs to either body. This concurrent review of legislation is responsive; ie., responding to current events, new State legislation and requests from residents and property owners.

Strategies

1. Develop an official procedure for periodic review and update of ordinances
2. Review/Update remaining current ordinances as needed
3. Identify and write new ordinances as needed

Goal #2: Develop and Implement a Plan to Educate Residents about Code and Code Enforcement

Background

Code enforcement and the legislative development process are both complaint driven, ie., responsive to residents/property owners.

Strategies

1. Develop information on website to guide residents in how to use code and how to navigate New Castle County code enforcement

Goal #3: Periodically review the service needs of the community and to maintain the appropriate size of Town government to meet the operational needs of the Town and its citizens

Background

A town the size of Bellefonte along with the services currently provided does not need a large government operation; however, services should be delivered in a quality, cost-effective way that meets the needs of the community. As new

services are added or future needs of the citizens occur, the Town Commission needs to reevaluate the government infrastructure to ensure the proper resources are available.

Strategies

1. Explore the development of an official procedure for periodic review of services and associated resources necessary for those services
2. For new services or operational needs, an analysis of necessary resources must be included in the proposal

Goal #4: Establish Planning Commission subcommittees to make recommendations on implementation of strategic elements of the Town Plan and oversee approved recommendations. This should be done as events within the town warrant.

Background

As authors of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission has a great deal of knowledge of the needs of the citizens and Town and of the strategic plan to address these needs. Consequently, the Planning Commissioners are in the best position to chair subcommittees established to make recommendations on implementation of the strategic elements of the plan as well as oversight of approved recommendations.

Strategies

1. Establish subcommittees (chaired by a Planning Commissioner) of the Planning Commission to address the strategic elements of the Town Plan.
2. Subcommittees should have 3-5 members and comprised primarily of citizens not holding a position on the Town or Planning Commissions when possible based on number of volunteers available
3. Subcommittees will develop recommendations to the Planning Commission
4. Planning Commission will consideration recommendations and approve as submitted or send the recommendation back to subcommittee for additional information or revisions
5. Recommendations approved by the Planning Commission will be submitted to the Town Commission for consideration and approval
6. Implementation of recommendations approved by the Town Commission will be overseen by the appropriate subcommittee with periodic updates to the Planning Commission and the Town Commission

Update: Due to lack of volunteers this cannot be accomplished at present. It is recommended that the Town Commission share this function with the Planning Commission.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police protection for the Town of Bellefonte is provided by New Castle County Police. The small size of the Town's tax base makes the support of a Bellefonte police force financially infeasible without a tax increase of at least three-fold. Given its small geographical size, relatively low crime rate, and the availability of New Castle County Police patrolling the areas surrounding the Town of Bellefonte, the expense of a Town police force at this time is unjustifiable. Public safety is a major concern of the residents. The Town is not void of criminal activity, the most pressing current public safety concerns seem to stem from traffic issues, specifically speeding and visibility at intersections.

Goal #1: Traffic calming

Strategies

1. Explore traffic solutions to the high risk, highly traveled intersections. A possible solution for some may be to change a two-way stop to a four-way stop
2. Continue curb marking, as needed

Goal #2: Better coordination with Public Safety Agencies

Strategies

1. The Town Commission will appoint one of the five Town Commissioners as Public Safety liaison
2. Work with New Castle County Police though assigned Town Commissioner to request officers at busy times of the day, and on-duty officer patrols through the Town
3. Request to have a community liaison officer attend the Town meetings on a periodic basis

Goal #3: Explore Alert System for Public from the Town

Strategies

1. Explore alert system through phone, email or text. For example, residents could be alerted to snow, and asked to park in driveways or one side of the street to make plowing streets easier

Goal #4: Consider Strategies to Improve Pedestrian Safety

Strategies

1. Increase the number of marked crosswalks with priority to Brandywine Blvd. and Marion Ave.

Goal #5: Improve and Update the Inclement Weather Communication with Snowplowing Company

Strategies

1. Identify problem areas that may need pre-salting and special attention

ANNEXATION

Annexation of adjacent areas of a municipality is often used to control nearby development, secure open space, smooth the Town's boundaries, and increase the tax base. While in theory these seem to benefits the municipality, these benefits do come with additional responsibilities such as increased services and associated expenses as well as diminished small town character. All aspects of annexation must be scrutinized to determine the overall impact to a town.

While annexation of adjacent lands is not an immediate concern of the Town of Bellefonte at this time, it may as changes occur and opportunities arise. The adjacent surrounding land is fully developed and zoned as residential, with the exception of Philadelphia Pike which is commercial so the opportunity to secure open space and development is limited. The Town does have the opportunity to correct some irregularities in its boundary. In the future, there may also be the need to consider annexation of neighboring subdivisions as means to increase the tax base and/or control the conditions and character of those areas. While supplying services to these annexed areas should not be an issue, the Town must consider the effects of any annexation to the small town character of Bellefonte and should not annex any lands that would negatively affect this character, which is very important to its residents.

Goal #1: Continue annexation procedures with specific criteria, after identifying areas where boundary rationalization may be necessary.

Background

The Town of Bellefonte has completed the annexation of four properties identified in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan.

Strategies

1. Annexations should not negatively affect the character of the Town
2. Annexations should not be considered for the sole purpose of growing the geographical size of the Town instead should only be considered to adjust irregularities in a boundary, strengthen the Town's tax base, or control an adjacent area of concern where conditions in that area could negatively affect the Town
3. Annexations should have a financial impact study and should be revenue neutral or positive
4. All annexations should require a recommendation from the Planning Commission to ensure the annexation is in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan
5. Procedure must be in accordance with the Town Charter and Delaware Code

Goal #2: Explore annexation of two areas to smooth the boundaries of the Town extending it up to Philadelphia Pike and down to River Rd.

Background

The Town has now completed the annexation of four properties identified in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. There is some concern that the city of Wilmington will annex property in the direction of the Town of Bellefonte.

Strategies

1. Verify the annexation meets the criteria for annexation
2. Implement the necessary steps of the Annexation Procedure
3. Explore boundary areas of concern and identify areas where annexation may be necessary for boundary rationalization
4. Possible areas of annexation are Riverview Gardens, Phillips Heights over to Rodman Rd., and the North side of Rodman Rd. on the West side of Brandywine Blvd to Philadelphia Pike

Goal #3: Monitor adjacent areas of concern to determine if action is necessary.

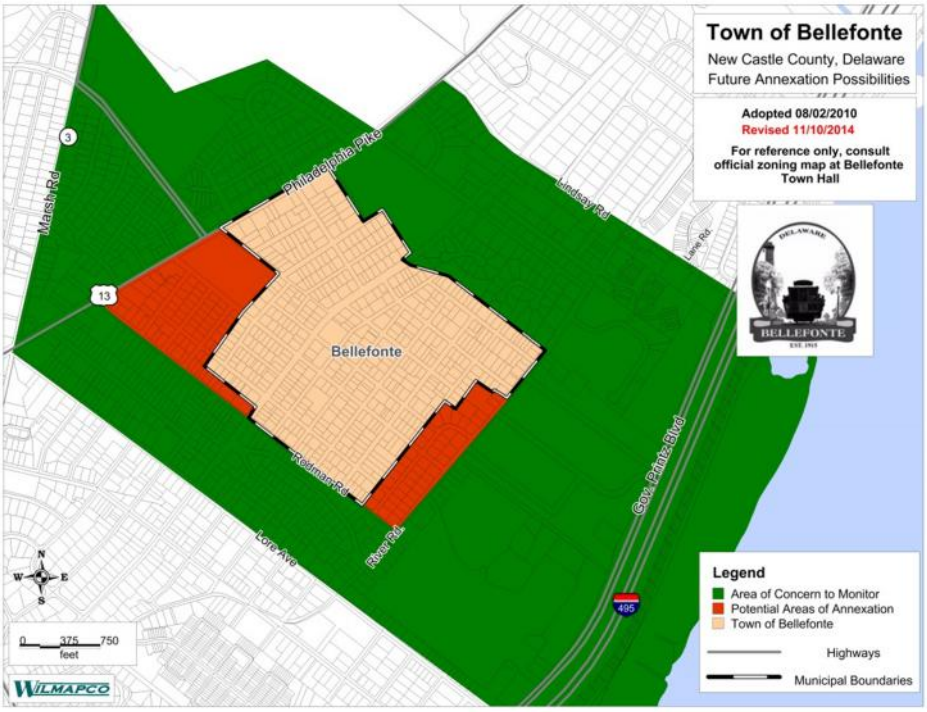
Background

The Town of Bellefonte has no physical buffer distinguishing it from the surrounding fully developed areas of New Castle County. Changes in these adjacent areas of concern could have a negative impact on the Town. The Town must monitor these areas for such negative changes and work with the County to prevent a negative impact or if necessary take control of the affected area by annexation.

Strategies

1. Monitor areas of concern for changes that could potentially affect the Town. This includes the Dupont Edgemoor Plant and the areas around and including the Delaware River
2. Work with New Castle County to prevent an impact to the Town
3. Last resort, explore annexation to take control of the area

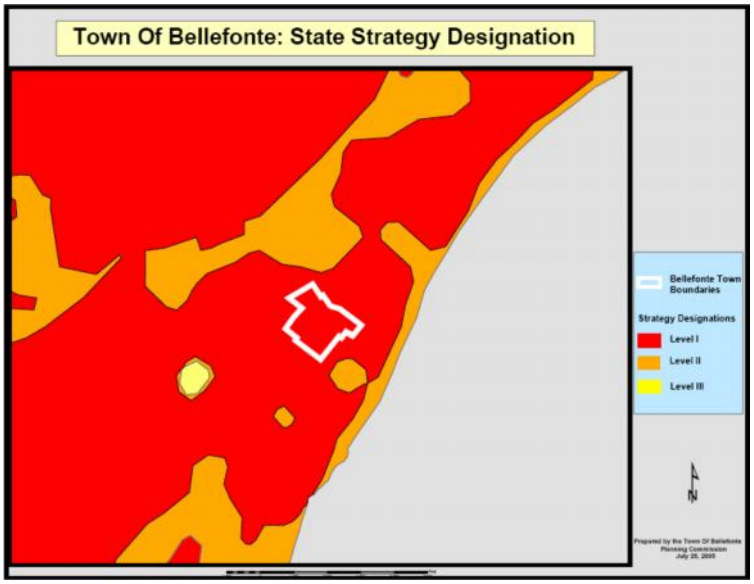
Map 11: Bellefonte Future Annexation Possibilities



REDEVELOPMENT

Bellefonte remains an Investment Level I area. True to the characteristics of a Level I area, Bellefonte has a central business district surrounded by a variety of housing. While at a smaller scale than larger towns and cities, the Town offers an array of businesses, services, and amenities. The institutions, such as schools, hospitals, etc, not located directly in the Town can be found in adjacent areas. Significant investment already exists in roads, water and sewer systems, and commercial and residential buildings. As a Level I area, the State investment strategy is to provide for continued health and vitality through reinvestment and redevelopment, foster efficient use of existing public and private investments, and enhance community identity and integrity.

Map 12: Bellefonte State of Delaware Strategy Designation



Goal #1: Monitor and improve streets

Background

DelDOT maintains the streets of the Town of Bellefonte. Immediate repair needs for conditions such as potholes should be reported by residents directly to DelDOT for repair. Projects such as repaving are overseen by DelDOT, but funded by the Community Transportation Funds controlled by the State Senator and Representative.

Strategies

1. It is recommended that residents contact DelDOT directly with minor road repair issues such as potholes, broken curbs, etc. The Town will continue to have contact information on the website
2. Work with State Senator and Representative to secure funding for repaving
3. Town Commission should identify the streets most in need of improvement, based on the public meeting in June 2016

LAND USE

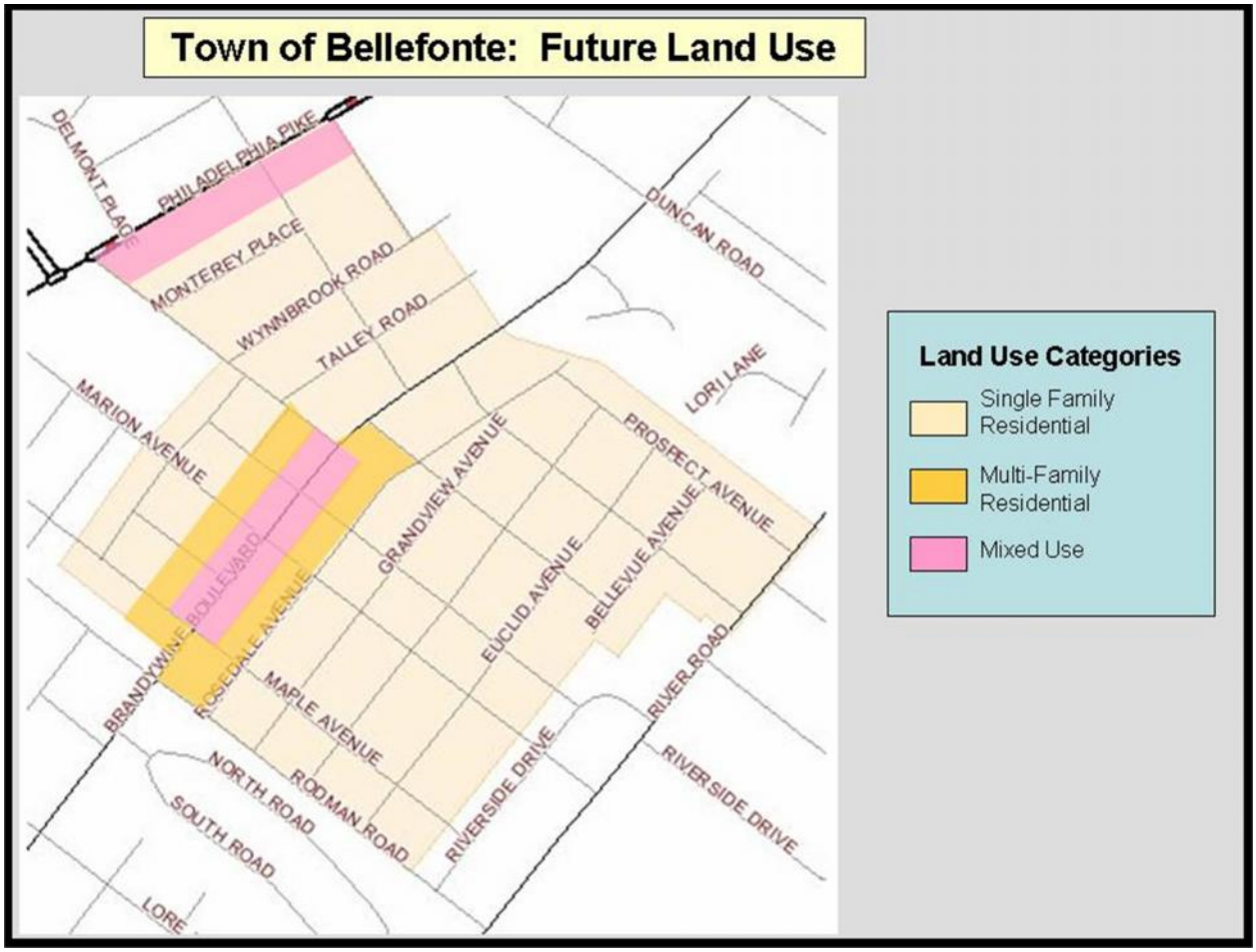
Bellefonte is considered "built out" and future land use within the Town will be related to rehabilitation activities of current structures with the exception of a few small building lots that may be able to accommodate a single structure. There are no large tracts of open land that would be suitable for future residential/commercial development.

Goal #1: Monitor Zoning Applications

Strategies

1. Zoning regulations were updated in 2010, and updated again 2013
2. The Planning and Zoning Commission will review applications for the standards set by Ordinance 2010-01 (Rev. 2013, 2016)

Map 13: Bellefonte Future Land Use



TRANSPORTATION

The main form of transportation in the Town of Bellefonte is personal motor vehicles. DART First State does provide bus service to the Town; however, it is underutilized. 87% of the residents commute to work alone compared to only 2% that use public transportation. The Town has mostly narrow streets that cannot accommodate two-way traffic when vehicles are parked on both sides of the street. The Town has only a couple of streets with sidewalks forcing pedestrians to walk in the street.

Goal #1: Improve the availability and safety of non-vehicular transportation

Background

The Town of Bellefonte has a limited number of sidewalks and clearly marked crosswalks. The Town has no bicycle or greenway paths. This situation forces pedestrians and bicyclists to share the very narrow streets with vehicular traffic. The safety of these modes of transportation, especially children walking in the street to school, is major concern of the citizens and the Town and Planning Commissions.

Strategies

1. Explore the feasibility, prioritization, costs, and possible sources of funding of installation of additional sidewalks
2. Explore ways to improve crosswalk safety such as improved markings, crosswalk signs, and/or yield to pedestrian regulations
3. Explore the feasibility, costs, and possible sources of funding of installation of greenway paths connecting the Town to adjacent parkland
4. Explore the feasibility, prioritization, costs, and possible sources of funding of installation of bicycle paths

Goal #2: Promote use of alternative means of transportation

Background

According to the last census, 87% of Bellefonte residents commuted to work alone while only 8% carpooled and 2% used public transportation. Use of alternative means of transportation will save residents money and be better for the environment.

Strategies

1. Work with DART First State to promote public bus transportation and explore including covered bus stops
2. Work with DART First State to promote the Rideshare Program
3. Use of the Town's website to promote DART
4. Explore other means of transportation such as a local shuttle service

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

The Town and Planning Commissions have been working to strengthen its intergovernmental relationships. The Town Commission has regular communication with its State Senator, State Representative, and New Castle County Councilman. The Planning Commission worked with Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination on the development of this plan. The Town worked with New Castle County Department of Land Use on the transfer of property maintenance enforcement to the County and with DelDOT on traffic improvements. The Town is a member of Delaware League of Governments and often consults with other small municipalities on issues and policies. The Planning Commission has also updated various agencies and associations on the development of this plan.

Goal #1: Improve communication and coordination with State agencies

Background

The Town has recently worked at establishing better relationships with various State agencies, State Senator, and State Representative. As the Town works toward implementation of this plan, coordination with State agencies such as DelDOT, DNREC, DEMA, Office of State Planning Coordination, etc. are even more important and need to strengthen.

Strategies

1. If not already done, identify and document the appropriate contacts in the various agencies
2. Make initial contact with those agencies with which the Town is not currently engaged
3. Verify that the various agencies have the current Town of Bellefonte contact information
4. When appropriate, establish periodic meetings with the agencies to exchange information
5. Ensure all agencies receive a copy of the current approved Town Comprehensive Plan

Goal #2: Improve communication and coordination with New Castle County agencies

Background

The current Town Commission has worked at establishing better relationships with various County agencies and its County Councilman. The Town recently worked with the County on the transfer of property maintenance enforcement to the County Department of Land Use. The County Department of Special Services recently developed a new park design for the Town Park as part of our revitalization effort. The Town also works with New Castle County Police for law enforcement.

Strategies

1. If not already done, identify and document the appropriate contacts in the various agencies

2. Make initial contact with those agencies that the Town is not currently engaged
3. Verify that the various agencies have the current Town of Bellefonte contact information
4. When appropriate, establish periodic meetings with the agencies to exchange information

Goal #3: Improve communication and coordination with neighboring civic associations and other municipalities of similar size

Background

While the current Town Commission has had contact with some of the neighboring associations, this contact has been limited to specific issues. The relationship between the Town and surrounding associations needs to be strengthened. The Planning Commission has provided information regarding this plan to surrounding associations.

Strategies

1. If not already done, identify and document the appropriate contacts for the surrounding associations
2. Make initial contact with those associations that the Town is not currently engaged
3. Ensure the various associations have the current Town of Bellefonte contact information
4. When appropriate, establish periodic meetings with the associations to exchange information.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN

With its unique businesses and fire station lining its main street, Brandywine Blvd, and its close-knit community of residents, Bellefonte can probably be best described as the small town in the city. The character of the Town is what gives Bellefonte its separate identity from the surrounding neighborhoods of North Wilmington.

Goal #1: Maintain the small town characteristics of the Town by establishing standards for buildings, signs, & streetscape design and renovation

Background

The character of the Town of Bellefonte is extremely important to its residents and must be preserved. Its small town characteristics are a main reason people move to Bellefonte, but loss of these characteristics is also a main reason people would decide to move. The importance of this character was reiterated in the results of the June 2016 Town Meeting. See addendum for questions and responses. The 2010 Land Use Code established standards for signs on Brandywine Blvd. and Philadelphia Pike. The Town has not established any other design standards for buildings.

Strategies

1. Explore design standards established by other communities to create a framework to be used
2. Develop, implement, and enforce design standards specifically for the Town of Bellefonte based on current design characteristics of the Town to include new construction and renovation of all types of residences and businesses as well as signs and streetscape

Goal #2: Maintain the small town characteristics of the Town by improving the vibrancy of the community

Background

The Town has had few community activities organized by the Town itself and by Brandywine Hundred Fire Company and the local businesses. Organization of social activities was mentioned numerous times by June Town Meeting attendees who hope to develop an even stronger sense of community. These social events would also help the new residents to the Town gain a sense of belonging. The Town Commission has a budget for additional activities. New Town traditions have been established with the Town picnic, holiday caroling, and summer concert series.

Strategies

1. Work with the fire company and businesses to partner on already established community activities
2. Develop a plan for additional regular communities activities throughout the year that can become Town traditions
3. Ensure the effective and timely communication of activities (see Government section)
4. Use the Town park as center point of weather permitting activities and also as a place where residents can meet and socialize anytime
5. Provide a mobility friendly (see Transportation section) and a safe community (see Safety section) to encourage resident interaction

Goal #3: Improve the small town characteristics of the Town by improving property maintenance and encouraging pride of ownership in the Town

Background

Property maintenance, enforcement of property maintenance, and enhancing the Town's appearance is a prime concern based on the questions and answers.

Strategies

1. Educate the residents about the standards and the enforcement policy and how to report properties not in compliance
2. The Town website and FaceBook page should contain information on standards and reporting
3. Encourage cosmetic improvements to homes and yards by recognizing well-maintained homes and yards periodically on the Town website

Goal #4: Maintain the small town characteristics of the Town by preserving the history and traditions of the Town

Background

Part of the character of the Town comes from its history. The protection of historic buildings or sites was second only to neighborhood preservation as areas that need special attention in the plan.The Town has a Historian working on the history of the Town. The current plan will adapt and update these goals. The Town dedicated a historic marker in 2016 to acknowledge a Native American settlement located in Bellefonte.

Strategies

1. Formation of a historic committee or society
2. Continued research of the Town history
3. Collection of historic artifacts & pictures
4. Create a history library
5. Create a history section on the Town website

Goal #5: Improve and preserve the integrity of the Town

Background

Even though the Town of Bellefonte was incorporated in 1915, many people in Delaware do not realize the Town exists. Through the Town's State Representative and DelDOT, the Town Commission had signs installed on the two major streets adjacent to the Town directing people to the Town and installed Town of Bellefonte signs at the Town limits.

Strategies

1. Explore use of Bellefonte as the postal address and/or a zip code for the Town. USPS recognizes Bellefonte as a location, rather than Wilmington. Town mailings should use Bellefonte, rather than Wilmington.
2. Continue to improve intergovernmental coordination & communication
3. Improve awareness through Town presence or sponsorship at area events
4. Explore other means of increasing awareness and improving the Town's identity

HOUSING

Availability of housing was not a major concern amongst the meeting attendees. The only way to increase housing in this built-out Town would be to raze existing buildings to make room for multi-family housing. This type of action would be against residents' wishes of neighborhood preservation. Instead, most people were more concerned about the maintenance and appearance of the houses, the size and design of the new houses recently built, and the number of rentals and vacant houses along with the condition of these properties. Consequently, the Town's strategy on housing should have more emphasis on preservation than on availability.

Goal #1: Establish regulations on rental properties

Background

It is well know that most renters tend not to maintain the rental property as well as homeowners. The same can be said about many landlords. Bellefonte has the full spectrum of renters and landlords. Bellefonte currently does not have any rental regulations being enforced.

Strategies

1. Require registration of rental properties
2. Require periodic inspections of housing to ensure safety of the tenant
3. Encourage the reporting of property maintenance violations to New Castle County
4. Explore ways to maintain an acceptable mix of rental and resident owned properties

Goal #2: Maintain & encourage mixed use in appropriate zones & protect existing housing choices

Background

The current Town zoning allows for mixed use in its business and apartment districts. In addition to businesses, the central business district has several single-family homes and apartments. While allowed by zoning regulations, the Philadelphia Pike business district is all businesses due to the heavy traffic on the Pike. The apartment district has both apartment and single-family residences; however, parking around the apartments is a concern with neighboring residents. To a limited extent, the residential district also has mixed use. Certain offices such as that of a residing physician or spiritual leader as well as home-based businesses are allowed.

Strategies

1. Preserve and encourage residential use in the business district
2. Preserve the current apartment district
3. Limit apartments to the current apartment district and the business district due to parking and rental concerns of the residents

PARKS & RECREATION

Goal #1: Use the Town Park to Full Potential

Strategies

1. Advertise events that have been planned by the Town Commission.
2. Explore adding electricity to the gazebo in the park to increase maximum use.
3. Consider a wellness event highlighting local organizations to add to the variety of events, and promote local businesses and non-profit organizations.

Goal #2: Explore Ways to Increase Recreation

Strategies

1. Ensure that the playground adjacent to the Town park is maintained to safe standards, or explore alternative uses.
2. Partner with the State and County to promote recreational activities and events at adjacent area parks to the residents.

Goal #3: Town will Explore the Acquisition of Small Open Undeveloped Lots for Recreation Use

Background

The current Town Park property may not be sufficient in size to accommodate all types of recreation activities.

Strategies

1. Explore purchasing of vacant lots to establish pocket parks

ENVIRONMENT

Goal #1: Encourage the greening of Bellefonte

Background

Trees, shrubs, plants, and flowers not only make the Town more visually appealing, they are also important to air quality and wildlife. The Town has many mature trees, but has also lost many to disease and development.

Strategies

1. Explore partnering with societies to educate residents on benefits of a greener town, most beneficial species of trees, plants, and flowers, and maintenance to prevent disease to prevent further loss
2. Explore establishment of programs to increase planting of trees, shrubs, and flowers
3. Explore and monitor current trends of tree removal restrictions in other municipalities.

Goal #2: Encourage recycling to become a model community of recycling

Background

Many meeting attendees mentioned recycling as a way to protect the environment. The Town Commission took advantage of an expiration waste disposal contract and established a request for bid that included recycling. Consequently, in September, a curbside recycling program was implemented through Delaware Solid Waste Authority (DSWA) and is available to all residents at no charge. Currently, recycling is voluntary and many residences are participating. The Town has received an award from DSWA for its establishment of its Town recycling program.

Strategies

1. Continue education on the benefits of recycling to increase participation
2. Expand the program to include recycling and/or composting of yard waste
3. Monitor participation to ensure maximum effectiveness of the program and determine if other measures, such as incentives or mandatory recycling, are necessary

Update: The Town provides recycling and yard waste recycling bins to all Town residents. A future goal could be to offer rain barrels.

Goal #3: Protect the natural resources at the County, State, and Federal levels

Background

Many environmental issues that can directly or indirectly affect the Town are debated and decided at the County, State, or Federal levels. Even though the Town has no direct control of solid waste, air & water quality, sewage, or other environmental concerns, the Town needs to work with the various agencies to protect the residents.

Strategies

1. Establish contacts and bi-directional communications with agencies establishing environmental policy
2. Monitor environmental activities to determine potential impact to the Town and its residents
3. Establish and communicate the Town's position on environmental concerns.

Goal #1: Increase senior services through partnership with area senior centers and New Castle County

Background

Senior services are available at two area community centers and New Castle County. At this time, it is unknown how many Bellefonte seniors utilize these services or if they even know the services are available.

Strategies

1. Establish a partnership with the area community centers
2. Educate senior residents on services available at the centers and throughout the County
3. Establish a senior section on the Town website and newsletter to promote services and scheduled activities

Goal #2: Increase Town-Sponsored Senior Services

Background

The Town currently does not have any established senior services.

Strategies

1. Explore financial feasibility of granting seniors a tax exemption similar to New Castle County
2. Explore establishment of a senior buddy system to monitor their well being during extreme weather conditions, emergency situations, etc.
3. Explore the establishment of a volunteer group of individual to assist senior with tasks such as minor property maintenance, errands, etc.
4. Utilize the Town website and newsletter to publish information and tips geared to seniors
5. Research and publicize County, State, and Federal assistance programs and explore a program to assist seniors with application
6. Explore a program to capitalize on the wisdom, experience, and values of the senior population to mentor the youth of the Town
7. Establish periodic senior social activities utilizing Town Hall as a gathering place.

Update: The Town explored the feasibility of lowering or exempting Town taxes, but it was not financially viable at this time.

As stated throughout this plan, the character of Town is extremely important to the residents. The businesses, especially the unique businesses on Brandywine Blvd (central business district), are an important contributor to this character. Many are small owner-operated businesses with narrow margins.

Goal #1: Support and promote the existing businesses

Strategies

1. Use the Town website to help promote the existing businesses in Town.
2. Improve the identity and awareness of the Town (see the Improve Integrity of the Town goal in the Community Character & Design section)
3. Expand the Town website to include more information on becoming a business in Bellefonte.

Goal #2: Attract additional small business to compliment existing businesses

Strategies

1. Identify the types of businesses which will be in character with the Town and complement the existing businesses
2. Explore establishing programs such as grants or tax incentives to attract business
3. Explore establishing programs such as grants or tax incentives to landlords to rent vacant buildings or a section of a building to a business.

Goal #3: Improve the appearance of the central business district

Background

While a number of meeting attendees thought the central business district (Brandywine Blvd) was improving in appearance, about an equal number thought it could be improved. Everyone seemed to agree that the streetscape program of installation of brick sidewalks and new period lampposts was a great improvement to the district. Despite this improvement, a few buildings are vacant and in need of repair and others could use a façade improvement.

Strategies

1. Explore the availability of grants to improve the public areas of the district as well as the facades of the buildings
2. Explore establishing programs such as grants or tax incentives to improve buildings
3. Explore cosmetic streetscape improvements such as flags, banners, decorations, flowers, benches, etc.

END OF DOCUMENT