

**Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) Application
Pre-Update Review Request
Municipal Comprehensive Plans
Comprehensive Plan Amendments
Municipal Ordinances
Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination**

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

All sections related to your project must be completed. Incomplete applications could lead to delays in scheduling your review. If you need assistance or clarification, please call the State Planning Office at (302) 739-3090.

REQUESTED REVIEW: Check one

Comprehensive Plan Pre-Update Review
Complete Sections 1 and 3 only

☐

Comprehensive Plan or Update
Complete Sections 1 and 3 only

☒

Comprehensive Plan Amendment
Complete Sections 1 and 2 only

☐

Municipal Ordinance Review
Complete Sections 1 and 2 only

☐

Date of most recently certified comprehensive plan:

4/11/13

Link to most recently certified comprehensive plan, if available:

If a link to the plan is not available, you must submit a copy of your plan with this application for a Pre-Update Review or a Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

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SECTION 1: MUNICIPAL INFORMATION

Name of Municipality: Bowers Beach	
Address: 3308 Main Street Frederica, DE 19946	Contact Person: Ada Puzzo
	Phone Number: 302-382-2501
	Fax Number:
	E-mail Address: ada.puzzo@delmar.k12.de.us or adaleecarter@comcast.net

Application prepared by: Ada Puzzo	
Address: 158 Cooper Avenue Frederica, DE 19946	Contact Person: Ada Puzzo
	Phone Number: 302-382-2501
	Fax Number:
	E-mail Address: ada.puzzo@delmar.k12.de.us or adaleecarter@comcast.net

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**SECTION 2. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT OR MUNICIPAL
ORDINANCE DESCRIPTION**

Please describe the submission.

2019 Draft Comprehensive Plan submission

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**SECTION 3. CHECKLIST FOR PRE-PLAN-UPDATE REVIEWS,
COMPREHENSIVE PLANS AND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
UPDATES**

Please indicate the section and page number where the following information can be found in the comprehensive plan. For additional details on this checklist, go to the following website: <http://stateplanning.delaware.gov/docs/comprehensive-plan-checklist-guide.pdf>

Comprehensive Plan Requirements for ALL Communities	
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Policies, Statements, Goals and Planning Components for Affordable Housing	15-16, 21, 25
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Policies, Statements, Goals and Planning Components for Protection of Sensitive Areas	17-20
Policies, Statements, Goals and Planning Components for Community Design	25-27
Policies, Statements, Goals and Planning Components for Adequate Water and Waste Water Systems	12-14
Policies, Statements, Goals and Planning Components for Protection of Historical and Cultural Resources	5
Policies, Statements, Goals and Planning Components for Annexation	27
Policies, Statements, Goals and Planning Components for other Elements which in the opinion of the community best promotes health, safety prosperity and general public welfare.	24-31
Sourcewater Protection (7 Del. C. § 6083)	12-14
Other Code Requirements Linked to the Comprehensive Plan	
<i>Elements of Delaware Code</i>	<i>Page #s / Section</i>
Municipal Boundaries accurately depicted on maps, and recorded in county if applicable (City / Town Charters). Required for all municipalities.	Appendix 1 and Appendix 2

Other elements	
Public Participation	6

Additional comments:

TOWN OF BOWERS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2019



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Introduction

The Town of Bowers Beach Comprehensive Development Plan is the Town's authoritative statement of land use policy. This plan brings Bowers Beach into compliance with Title 22, § 702 of the Delaware Code, which requires all municipalities to prepare comprehensive plans to direct land use. This Plan complies with the State requirements for a town with population of less than 2,000 people.



Photo by Graham Cross

The Plan is a legal document serving as a foundation for Bowers Beach's land use decisions and annexation policy. It also serves as a consolidated reference guide, containing demographic, economic, environmental, and historical information about the Town.

I. Background and Goals

A. Background

The Town of Bowers has historically been a small, overwhelmingly fishing village dating back to the 1600's; and located on a neck of habitable land lying between the Delaware Bay on the east, the St. Jones River on the North, and the Murderkill River on the South. This location is unsuitable for, and incapable of, sustaining significant development; therefore, the Town Council has determined it should, as authorized by law, update its Comprehensive Plan.



Steamer Frederica circa
1920

Paskey's Warf March
2019



B. Goals

The general goals which this Comprehensive Plan is designed to achieve are to:

1. Embrace and preserve the culture of a fishing village by protecting the natural environment, wildlife, wetlands, and beaches; and to permit, where appropriate and compatible, the agricultural use of the land.
2. Strictly control the number and types of commercial activities in order to provide only those which are needed, appropriate and compatible with the marine character and location of the Town; thereby, prohibiting industrial, manufacturing, and large commercial development in the Town.
3. Strictly limit residential development by allowing only those uses which are compatible with the fishing industry, character and history of the community; and to preserve the tranquil Bayfront community.
4. Implement sustained storm water management drainage improvements systems.
5. Develop and support ecotourism opportunities, focused on fishing and marine activities and is very interested in completing a feasibility study to determine if a fuel dock can be constructed on the Murderkill River support our recreational and commercial boats and to attract and support boats from other bayshore towns.
6. Prevent the overcrowding of land by imposing limits on the percentage of total lot area that can be built upon, and by requiring front, side, and rear yard setbacks.
7. Develop a means of balancing the competing interests of recreational and commercial fishing and the abutting waterfront property owners in maximizing their own enjoyment of the bay's view, light, and air with the public's enjoyment.
8. Enhance protection and preservation measures by adopting ordinances that minimize the impacts of climate change and sea level rise through enhanced resiliency measures.

C. Objective

The primary objective of this Comprehensive Plan is to preserve our culture of a fishing village, sustain and support recreational and commercial fishing, develop ecotourism opportunities, support our Bayfront community, examine and inventory the natural and man-made features of the Town as well as the Town's vulnerability to climate change, sea level rise, and increased precipitation in order to develop immediate and long range adaption and resiliency measures through the continuing modification of the existing zoning and subdivision ordinances.

II. Profile

A. General Information

1. Location

Bowers Beach is located in South Murderkill Hundred, Kent County, Delaware.

To the east of the town is the Delaware Bay, to the north the St. Jones River, and to the south the Murderkill River. The only access to the Town is by way of Road 18 which leads eastward to the Town's western boundary from Delaware Rt. 1.

2. History/Historical Demographics

Bowers Beach, one of the earliest settlements along the Delaware Bay, was named "Whitwells' Delight" in the late 1600's by Francis Whitwell. At that time, the tract contained 834 acres of woodland and 540 acres of meadow. In 1685, William Frampton acquired the property and called it "Dover Peers". Frampton died and the land was sold to William Bassett.

Later on, 420 acres of Whitwells' Delight was owned by Nathaniel and Mary Hunn. Nathaniel died, and in 1734 his children sold the 420 acres to John Bowers. Since then, August 16, 1734, the area "between the mouths of the St. Jones and Murderkill Rivers" has been known as Bowers' Beach.

The land passed to John Bowers' son and then to his granddaughter. She was the last person to own the land to carry the Bowers' name.



Beach Hotel circa 1907

John Booth acquired part of the land in 1750, and sold that part the same year to Benjamin Chew. Joseph Wood owned the Bowers Beach properties by the 1800's. Eventually, the properties were sold to many owners.

Bowers was first incorporated on March 9, 1907, and was reincorporated in 1962.¹

¹ Source: Montgomery, Gail Stewart, "Delaware Discovered Series, Vol. 1" (1974).

Bowers Beach has two properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places, Saxton United Methodist Church (K-5713) and the Maggie S. Myers oyster schooner (K-3058) (pictured). The Saxton Church has been elevated to mitigate flooding.



The State Historic Preservation Office has hired a consultant to do an initial architectural survey of selected small coastal communities, including Bowers Beach. The results of this survey may initiate additional planning efforts partnering to achieve common goals, support, and connecting with state and county planning efforts.

3. Population

The population of Bowers showed a decrease in population from 1960 to 1990. However, from 1990 to 2010, the population increased from 179 to 335 according to the 2010 census of the U.S. Census Bureau.

Population		Percentage of Change
1960	324	-----
1970	268	-17%
1980	198	-26%
1990	179	-10%
2000	305	+70%
2010	335	+11%

There has been an increase in part-time residents not reflected in the latest census. There has been an increase in renovation driven building permits indicating an upswing in property improvement. For the first time in this half-century the population exceeds what it was in 1960 after suffering a steady decline from 1960 to 1990 with 91% increase in the last two decades. This increasing trend is expected to continue as economic development strengthens.

Demographics

The current population reflects a stark increase in the amount of adults over 25 (77%) with 21% of them over the age of 65.

Of the 335 residents of the Town of Bowers Beach, 246 (80.4%) are over the age of 18, but of the 248 who are 16 years or older, 158 are unemployed.

Even assuming that all of those 65 or older (65) are part of the 158 unemployed, the calculations indicate unemployment at 37% for full time residents.

However, the median family income has increase from \$45,625.00 in 2000 to \$74,167-an increase of 62%.

There appears from the data, that a major shift has taken place in the demographics over the last ten years, reflecting a trend from an economic foundation based on the fishing and agricultural industries to a primarily residential community. This trend is expected to continue.

(All statistics were taken from the 2010 census from the United States Census Bureau.)

III. Form of Government

A. Town Council

Bowers is governed by a Town Council consisting of four members and a mayor, who are chosen for two-year terms. The Council selects a Vice-Mayor, a Secretary, and a Treasurer from its own number.

B. Elections

Elections are held annually on the first Saturday in August, from 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

C. Meetings

The Town Council meets monthly at 7:00 p.m. on the second Thursday of every month at the Town Hall.

D. Town Hall

The Town Hall is currently located at 3308 Main Street (pictured). The building is owned by the Bowers Fire Company and operates as a Town Hall under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Town of Bowers and the Bowers Fire Company. Public participation is encouraged at all meetings. One week prior to each meeting, an agenda is posted on the Town Bulletin Boards and places of business in the Town. This allows public discussion prior to motions made on the floor. The public is invited to request items be placed on the agenda. These requests can be made through the Mayor and/or up to one week prior to any meeting. Those items brought before council by the public at the meeting, will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting to encourage as much public input as possible. Any changes to the code, variances, appeals, and exceptional use petitions require a public hearing with due and proper notice as stated elsewhere in this plan and/or the zoning ordinance.



IV. Revenues and Expenses

The Town is on a fiscal year which begins July 1 and runs through June 30.

The total assessed value of all taxable property in Bowers is \$7,600,000; an increase in combined property value of 7% over the last decade.

The Town has adopted the Kent County assessment, on which that figure is based, pursuant to 22 Del. C. Ch. 11.

The Town's annual tax rate is presently .60 per \$100 of assessed valuation. Bowers also has a municipal tax of \$100.00 which is imposed on all property.

In F.Y. 2018, the Town's revenues consisted of the following:

<u>Revenue</u>	<u>FY18</u>
Municipal Street Aid	\$ 9,519.72
1.5% Transfer Tax	\$ 60,171.19
Property Tax @.3060	\$ 72,220.34
Building Permits	\$ 625.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 909.07

In fiscal year 2019, Town expenditures were estimated at the following:

Trash Removal	\$51,661.00
Insurance	\$3,554.00
General Maintenance	\$5,800.00
Attorney Fees	\$5,000.00
Security	\$2,106.00
Tax Collector	\$3,500.00
Street Lights	\$13,800.00
Miscellaneous	\$3,555.00
Town Hall	\$8,208.00
Town Park	\$7,400.00
Total	\$104,584.00

This 2019 information is provided as an example and changes yearly.

V. Public Service

A. Fire Protection

1. Service Area

The Bowers Fire Company serves the Town of Bowers, both sides of Bowers Beach Road (Kent Rd 18), Skeeter Neck Road (Rd 372), Mulberrie Point Road (Rd 373), Old Bowers Road (Rd 374), and Whitwells Delight Road (Rd 375). It also serves both sides of Delaware Rt. 1 from approximately 200 ft south to the old

Conley's Hardware property line to a point just past High Point Park, which is now known as Buffalo Run Road (Rd 376). Responsibilities go approximately 2 miles west to the second sharp curve where there is an imaginary line that cuts across a field back to Bowers Beach Road (Kent Rd 18).



Bowers Fire Company also serves both North and South bound portions of Bay Road and a small portion from the High Point traffic light to Buffalo Road which is known as Claphan Rd. This sets directly in front of High Point Park North and High Point Park South. The Bowers Fire Company also serves the Delaware Bay to the North, South and East to the cross over buoys which would be the New Jersey Line. Bowers Fire Company, Inc. was organized on April 5, 1938 and the fire station is located on Main Street. There are over 100 members. Of those members about 35 are active.

2. Equipment

The Fire Company owns an ambulance, brush truck, two pumpers, a tanker, two rescue boats, a Quint ladder truck and a command unit as well other support equipment.



B. Police Protection

Bowers has no police force of its own, but hires off-duty State Police troopers to provide police protection. The Town and its residents actively participate in the Kent County Watch.

C. Schools

There are no public schools within the Town limits. Bowers is located in the Lake Forest School District. Bowers' students go to Chipman Jr. High School, Center and Dorman Streets, Harrington; and Lake Forest High School, Felton. Bowers students attend either Frederica East Elementary in Frederica or they attend Central Elementary in Felton.

D. Dredging

Six hundred twenty seven thousand dollars (\$627,000) was allocated in the FY13 Bond Bill for DNREC to dredge the entrance of the Murderkill River (pictured), and the channel was dredged in FY14. Because of DNREC's help recreational fishing boats, commercial fishing boats and charter boats were able to safely navigate the channel for a time; but it is, again, in dire need of dredging. Recently our Maggie Myers oyster schooner (National Register of Historic Places (K-3058) had to wait over 2 hours for the tide to come in before she could safely come in the channel.

Prior to FY14, the channel had not been dredged for twelve (12) years and sand bars were visible at low tide in the channel. Sand bars are visible again.



Throughout our plan there is a commitment to support and develop ecotourism with a focus on fishing and marine activities; and we welcome the recreational fishermen and other marine activities, but again, we are worried about them because most are not familiar with the current conditions of the channel.

The Town is very interested in completing a feasibility study to determine if a fuel dock can be constructed on the Murderkill River to support our recreational and



commercial boats and to attract and support boats from other bayshore towns. This potential increased boat traffic in the channel is one of the primary reasons the Town would like to work with DNREC to develop a sustainable plan to maintain the channel so all boats can navigate safely.

VI. Streets

A. Town maintained streets

Bowers maintains 1.76 miles of streets within its limits. These streets are: Bay Shore Drive, Canal Street; Church Street; Cooper Avenue; Cross Lane; Davidson Street; Main Street; Maple Lane; Middle Drive; Mulberry Drive; Murderkill Avenue; South Flack Avenue; Williams Avenue; and Wyatt Street. The Town is open to creating a committee to complete a Heavy Precipitation and Sea-Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment of the Town-Maintained streets in order to develop a plan for meeting the needs revealed through the assessment and coordinating these efforts with DelDOT's plan.

Bay Shore Drive. The surface width of Bay Shore Drive is 14 feet, and the roadway width is 20 feet. This street has asphalt pavement and is graded and drained.

Canal Street. The surface width is 14 feet and the roadway width is 18 feet. This street has bituminous surface treatment (tar and chip) (tar and chip).

Church Street. The surface and roadway widths are 17 feet. The surface is asphalt pavement on surface treatment (tar and chip).

Cooper Avenue. The surface width is 14-20 feet, and the roadway width is 18-28 feet. Part of Cooper Avenue is bituminous surface treatment (tar and chip), but the street is mostly asphalt pavement on bituminous surface treatment (tar and chip).

Cross Lane. Cross Lane's surface is 10 feet wide. The roadway width is 14 feet. This street is bituminous surface treatment (tar and chip).

Davidson Street. This street is surfaced with bituminous surface treatment (tar and chip) and has a surface of 15 feet, a roadway width of 19 feet.

Main Street. The Town maintains Main Street from Flack Avenue (Road 18A) to 264 feet east of Flack Avenue. This street is asphalt pavement. The surface width of Main Street is 18 feet, and the roadway width (the right-of-way width) is 24 feet.

Maple Lane. According to the initial Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Town, this street once had surface and roadway widths of 40 feet, and was topped with asphalt pavement on bituminous surface treatment (tar and chip). The street has 10-foot surface and roadway width and was surfaced with bituminous surface treatment (tar and chip) since the mid 1980's. The Town has no record of when and under what circumstances the street dimensions were changed.

Middle Drive. This street has a 12-foot surface of bituminous surface treatment (tar and chip). Its roadway width is 16 feet.

Mulberry Drive. The 12-foot surface of this street is bituminous surface treatment (tar and chip). Its roadway width is 16 feet.

Murderkill Avenue. The surface and roadway widths of Murderkill Avenue varies from 14-26 feet. Part of its surface is asphalt pavement on bituminous surface treatment (tar and chip), part only bituminous surface treatment (tar and chip).

South Flack Avenue. The Town maintains 792 feet of this street. Its bituminous surface treatment (tar and chip) surface is 14 feet wide. The roadway width is 18 feet.

Williams Avenue. This street is surfaced with bituminous surface treatment (tar and chip). Part of this street has 16-foot wide surface and roadway. The remainder has a surface width of 14 feet, a roadway width of 16 feet.

Wyatt Street. Wyatt Street has a surface width of 16 feet and a roadway width of 28 feet. It is topped with bituminous surface treatment (tar and chip).

B. State maintained streets

The State of Delaware maintains 1.13 miles of streets in Bowers. These streets are North Flack Avenue (Road 18A), Hubbard Avenue, from Main Street to south of Murderkill Avenue, and Main Street, from Atlantic Avenue to North Flack Avenue.

North Flack Avenue. (18A)

The State maintains the entire length of this street. It is topped with bituminous surface treatment (tar and chip), and has a surface width of 18 feet. The roadway

width is 24 feet.

Hubbard Avenue. This street is maintained by the State from Main Street to south of Murderkill Avenue. Its surface width is 24 feet, the roadway width is 28 feet. The surface is bituminous surface treatment (tar and chip) on concrete.

Main Street. The surface width of Main Street is 24 feet, the roadway width 40 feet. The surface is asphalt pavement on concrete.

C. Roads outside of Town Limits

Road 18. Road 18 (Main Street in the Town) travels to the Town of Bowers directly from Delaware Rt. 1.

Road 18 is surfaced with asphalt pavement on concrete. The surface width of the road from the Town limits to Delaware Rt.1 is 22-24 feet.

VII. Utilities

A. Water

The Town water is presently individual wells and based upon the present restrictions on growth sees no need to change the existing condition. However, the Town relies on State and County regulations governing wells, though these regulations do not address well head protection for private wells. While not a requirement, in addressing vulnerability to the effects of Sea level Rise as well as the aging of existing wells, the Town intends to review the requirements of the Source Water Protection Law of 2001 towards adaption to local needs.

B. Electric

Electric service is provided to Bowers by Delmarva Power and Light Company. The capacity of the distribution line to the Town is 25,000 kilovolts. There are no transmission lines into the Town. The Town is very interested in exploring opportunities in renewable energy solutions such as solar and possibly hydroelectric to reduce energy spending and to protect the environment.

C. Sanitary Sewer

Sewer is provided and regulated by Kent County sewer and upgrades are the county responsibility. The Town has no plans for changing the system as described herein. A pumping station is located in Town. An auxiliary pumping station is located 3 miles from Town and was relocated, rebuilt, and updated with the Little Heaven Grade Separation Interchange. Existing lines are sufficient for any minor additions to service possible within the confines as reported herein.

Two unincorporated areas - South Bowers and Bay View Heights -- are located within the Bowers Sewer District and sewage from those areas is pumped through the two pumping stations noted.

D. Storm Water / Drainage

The Town has worked on several storm water management and drainage improvement projects. The Town has partnered with DNREC to repurpose and redesign the large Fish and Wildlife parking lot to more pervious areas, reduce runoff and better manage storm water flow. Engineering is complete, and it is anticipated this work will be complete by summer of 2019. This parking lot area

was identified as one (1) of the top three (3) ranked drainage problems in the Town in a flooding and coastal hazards vulnerability study done by the Delaware Coastal Programs (DCP), DNREC in 2011.



Example of flood event in front of the Bayview Inn on Murderkill Avenue

Example of flood event driving down North Bayshore Drive



The Town has also made drainage and storm water management improvements on Hubbard Avenue, including the installation of a new TideFlex valve. This project, primarily funded under a USDA grant, was also identified as one (1) of the top three (3) ranked drainage problems in the Town in the DCP study.

The Town is now focusing on the last of the top three (3) ranked drainage problem identified in the study: North Flack Avenue and Bayshore Drive. Work had started on this area, but was abandoned due to engineering and legal issues that severely affected our budget and timeline. The recommended solution for this area in the *Preliminary Engineering Report* was to reconstruct the storm drain in this vicinity including two new outfalls along the Delaware Bay shoreline at the norther limits of the Town and the installation of two tide control valves; but the selection committee at the time chose an alternative pumping solution that caused the budget and timeline issues, so this area of the project was put on hold and separated from the rest of the areas in the project. A new workgroup of key stakeholders will hold their first meeting in April, 2019 and are very anxious to complete this project.

(More information about the DCP study can be found in four reports, titled "Preliminary Drainage Report", "Ranking Report", "Final Drainage Report" and "*Town of Bowers Beach Drainage Improvements, Preliminary Engineering Report*".)

There are ditches and drainage pipes along Main Street that do not function properly most of the time. The Town would like to work with DelDot to develop a sustainable plan to scope and maintain the ditches and drainage pipes along Main Street.



Example of flood event on Main Street



Example of flood event driving down Wyatt Street

VIII. Housing Summary

RESIDENTIAL

1-Unit, detached	174	73.7%
1-Unit, attached	20	8.5%
2-Units	15	6.4%
3 or 4 Units	0	0.0%
5 to 9 Units	2	0.8%
10-19 Units	0	0.0%
Mobile Homes	25	10.6%
Total Units	236	
OCCUPIED	145	61.4%
SEASONAL	91	38.6%

HOUSING PIPELINE

2010 Census housing mix showed that 7.1% of the houses had a value of less than \$50,000 and 8.1% had a value of less than \$100,000. The Median Value of Owner-Occupied units has increased to \$215,000. This coupled with an over 50% decrease in the number of mobile homes indicates a trend in refurbishing existing properties and replacement of trailers and vacation cottages with permanent dwelling units.

The number of families at or below poverty income levels has decreased from 9% to 4.5% in the last decade. However, the median family income is \$74,167; \$16,568 over the Kent County Average. With the continuing trends toward a commuting population of higher wage earners, an increase in recreational usage, and retirees, it is the Town's position that no special provisions for affordable housing are required.



All statistics were taken from the Selected Housing Characteristic 2010 American Community Survey 5-year estimate and the Selected Economic Characteristic 2010 American Community Survey Selected Population Tables.

(See Map of Existing Uses Exhibit 1)

IX. Soil Conditions

The soil conditions in the Town of Bowers include: Tidal Marsh; Fallsington Sandy Loam; Sassafras Sandy Loam, 0-2 percent slopes; Sassafras Sand Loam, 2-5 percent slopes; Coastal Beaches (sand); and Fallsington Loam.

A. Tidal Marsh

Tidal marsh has a cover of salt tolerant vegetation, and at times is covered by a brackish water. Because of tidal flooding, Tidal Marshlands are severely limited for all uses. Tidal Marsh comprises a large area in the northern part of the Town, and also an area in the southern part of Town.

B. Fallsington Sandy Loam

This soil has a surface layer of dark grayish-brown sandy loam, and a subsurface of grayish-brown sandy loam. It retains moisture and is easy to work. It is poorly drained and has a water table near its surface unless drained artificially. Due to its high water table, Fallsington Sandy Loam is severely limited for disposal fields for septic tank systems, foundations for homes, roads and streets, parking lots, gardens and cemeteries.

This type of soil can be found in an area north of the Murderkill River and west of the beach.

C. Sassafras Sandy Loam

0-2% slopes and 2-5% slopes.

These well-drained soils have a surface layer of dark grayish-brown sandy loam and a subsurface layer of brown sandy loam. There are few limitations on this soil for farm or non-farm uses. Sassafras Sandy Loam, 0-2 percent slopes can be found in the western part of Bowers, running from a little south of Main Street to an area north of that street. A small area of Sassafras Sandy Loam, 2-5 percent slopes, lies within that area.

D. Coastal Beach

The soil in this area is loose sand, which is salty and very dry and arid. The vegetation which grows in this area is limited to salt tolerant species. Because of these soil conditions, there are severe limitations for general community development and recreational uses in the coastal beach area, which lies in the eastern part of Bowers, along the Delaware Bay.

E. Fallsington Loam

This soil is gray on the surface, poorly drained and moderately permeable. There are severe limitations for septic tank disposal fields, as well as for basements, lawns and most community development and recreational uses. The soil is well suited to general farming if the land is drained. A small area of Fallsington Loam can be found just north of the center of Town.

Source: United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service Soil Survey, Kent County, Delaware.

X. Statutory Environmental Concerns

A. Beach Preservation Act (7 Del. C. Ch.68)

Delaware's Beach Preservation Act was enacted "to enhance, preserve and protect the public and private beaches of the State (and) to mitigate beach erosion." 7 Del. C. §6801. The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) has the authority to protect the beaches within the State, and has prepared maps designating a "building line", which is "a line generally paralleling the coast, seaward of which construction of any kind shall be prohibited without a permit or letter of approval from the Department." 7 Del. C. §6802(4).

"Beach" under the Act includes the area "which extends from the mean high water line of the Atlantic Ocean and Delaware Bay landward 1,000 feet and seaward 2,500 feet, respectively", and encompasses "that area from the Delaware/Maryland line at Fenwick Island to the Old Marina Canal immediately north of Pickering Beach." 7 Del. C., §6802(1). The Beach Preservation Act declares these beaches to be "valuable natural features" and "an important economic resource for the people of the State." Further, the Act states that "development and habitation of beaches must be done with due consideration given to the natural forces impacting upon them and the dynamic nature of those natural features." 7 Del. C. §6801.

The Town of Bowers is within this beach area of Delaware and thus is subject to the Beach Preservation Act.

1. State Wetlands

Part of the incorporated limits of Bowers contain wetlands, and thus the Wetlands Act (7 Del. C. Ch. 66) regulates activities within some areas of the Town. The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control has inventoried the Wetland areas in the State, and has prepared photo/maps showing these areas. The Wetland areas of Bowers are shown on DNREC photo/maps nos. 19-16 and 21-14. As seen therein the following plants grow, or are capable of growing, in Bowers: saltmarsh cordgrass, marsh elder, saltmarsh grass, saltmarsh hay, and switch grass.

The Wetlands Act declares the wetlands to be "in jeopardy of being lost or despoiled" by unregulated dredging, dumping, filling, and similar activities; the purpose of the Act is to protect the wetlands and prevent their destruction and despoilation. 7 Del. C., §6602.

A permit is required from DNREC for any activity in the wetlands. Under the Wetlands Act, "activity" is defined as "any dredging, draining, filling, bulkheading, construction of any kind, including but not limited to, construction of a pier, jetty, breakwater, boat ramp, or mining, drilling or excavation." 7 Del. C. §6603. A permit is also needed to expand or extend a pre-existing use. In addition to a permit from DNREC, one seeking an extension or expansion of a pre-existing use must have municipal or county approval through zoning procedures. 7 Del. C. §6605.

2. Federal Wetlands Regulations

Pursuant to §404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. §1344), the United States Army Corps of Engineers has jurisdiction over navigable waters as to the discharge of dredged or fill material. The Corps of Engineers regulations promulgated under the authority of §404 uses the term "waters of the United States" instead of "navigable waters." 33 C.F.R. §328.1. "Waters of the United States" is defined in the regulations at 33 C.F.R. §328.3(a) and includes "wetlands." "Wetlands are defined as "those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas." 33 C.F.R. §328.3(b).

B. Coastal Zone Act

Bowers is located within the coastal zone of Delaware, and thus is subject to the Delaware Coastal Zone Act. Because "the coastal areas of Delaware are the most critical areas for the future of the State in terms of the quality of life in the State," the purpose of the Coastal Zone Act is "to control the location, extent and type of industrial development in Delaware's coastal areas." 7 Del. C. §7001. By controlling industry in the coastal areas, "the State can better protect the natural environment of its bay and coastal areas and safeguard their use primarily for recreation and tourism." 7 Del. C. §7001.

C. Coastal Barrier Resources Act

The Town of Bowers is not included in the Coastal Barrier. However, the lands north and south of the Town are included in the Coastal Barrier. In those areas federal financial assistance is unavailable for the construction of new structures or roads. Federal flood insurance is not available for new structures in those areas.

D. Flood Insurance Regulations

Bowers is located in a coastal flood plain area and the properties therein are subject to National Flood Insurance Regulations. Coastal flood plain areas are those areas which are subject to inundation by the flood waters of a one hundred year flood. A "one hundred year flood", or "base flood", is a flood that, on the average, is likely to occur once every 100 years, i.e., a flood that has a 1% chance of occurring each year.

The coastal flood plain is further divided into two areas: the coastal high hazard areas and the general flood plain area.

Coastal high hazard areas are those areas in the one hundred year flood plain subject to high velocity waters (hurricane, wave wash, tsunamis, etc.), while general flood plain areas are those areas in the one hundred year flood plain not in the coastal high hazard areas.

The Town of Bowers adopted a new Flood Ordinance February 10, 2011 in full compliance with FEMA and NFIP regulations. The plan is reviewed annually for continued compliance and has been amended on 9/12/13, 4/24/14 and 6/12/14.

E. Total Maximum Daily Loads, Stormwater Management and Drainage Improvements

TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOADS -Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act authorizes the EPA to assist states, territories and authorized tribes in listing impaired waters and developing Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for these waterbodies. A TMDL establishes the maximum amount of a pollutant allowed in a waterbody and serves as the starting point or planning tool for restoring water quality. <https://www.epa.gov/tmdl>

The St. Jones and Murderkill Rivers are monitored for the presence of elevated TMDLs. A source was isolated to nutrient infiltration in 2009. DNREC worked with Kent County Sewer and other sources to mitigate these elevations through a Tributary Action Team. The Town has no industry or large scale agricultural areas and does not intend to install its own waste water treatment plant at any time.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AND DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS - Water quality is also addressed through storm water management and drainage improvements.

The Town has worked on several storm water management and drainage improvement projects. The Town has partnered with DNREC to repurpose and redesign the large Fish and Wildlife parking lot to more pervious areas, reduce runoff and better manage storm water flow. Engineering is complete, and it is anticipated this work will be complete by summer of 2019. This parking lot area was identified as one (1) of the top three (3) ranked drainage problems in the Town in a flooding and coastal hazards vulnerability study done by the Delaware Coastal Programs (DCP), DNREC in 2011.

See section VII. D. Storm Water / Drainage for detailed information on the Town's current and planned storm water management and drainage improvement projects.

F. Agricultural Preservation

In order to encourage the Agricultural Areas within the Town limits, the Town designated under the original Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan, areas that are restricted in use to farming, recreation, and game preserve use. The specific restrictions are found in the Zoning Ordinance under Chapter 11. The stated purpose of these C/A (Conservation/Agricultural) areas is to permanently preserve the Town's wetlands, wildlife areas, and areas of special environmental quality, recreational potential, natural beauty, ecological importance, and areas needing special protection from erosion and pollution, protect flood plains from inappropriate development, and encourage agricultural use of productive soils.

G. Air Quality

Given the size of the Town and that there is no significant industry in the Town, there is little the Town can do to reduce emissions and improve air quality other than create an atmosphere that encourages bicycling and walking. To that end, the Town has contacted Kent County and DelDOT regarding expanding the state bike and pedestrian network to reach into Bowers. Bowers Road (Rt. 18) has

wide shoulders in many areas that could easily be connected to form a bike/pedestrian walkway from Bowers to the new Little Heaven Access Road.

XI. Summary and Conclusion

The data compiled in this Comprehensive Plan reveals and establishes the following:

A. Community Character Design Plan

The Town has historically been a small, sparsely populated bay front waterman's and fishing boat village that consisted overwhelmingly of small residential dwellings and seasonal cottages on small lots (i.e. less than 75' frontage). There have never been any manufacturing or heavy industrial uses in the Town and the few commercial uses were small operations [package store, groceries, boat supplies, restaurant, bars, and commercial fishing boats (head boats and charter boats)].



Riverfront circa 1906

It is the intent of the Town to preserve the historical character of the Town as a working maritime town. However, social/economic as well as environmental pressures have forced the Town to reevaluate the extent and location of the areas available to businesses that would enhance and expand on the present maritime industries and would be supported by the changing demographics.

To that end, the Town is making changes that would make it a prime access for the ecotourism industry, thereby attracting those businesses, visitors, and permanent residences that would provide economic development and employment that would also maintain the rich heritage of Bowers based on the maritime industries.





The Town has adopted zoning changes that moved portions of the commercial district to Main Street, away from chronic flooding problems in the current area. The Town also now allows higher density for shops in this area to make the square footage costs more attractive to small start-up businesses. As previously mentioned, the Town is going forward with storm water control enhancements in the parking area and completed storm water control enhancements in existing commercial district on South Hubbard which should increase interest in this area.

B. Position on Population and Housing Growth

The Town foresees a continuation of the gradual change in demographics from a split between vacation/tourist residents and residents working in the local industries to a retirement and permanent resident community and with it a gradual upgrade of existing properties. The present population trends and the economic opportunities afforded by the Delaware Bayshore Initiative indicate that the need to expand the physical and/or social infrastructure presently in place may be necessary to attract and accommodate the ecotourism trade. The two Town parks and recreation areas experience ever increasing use. The repurposing of the large parking area owned by Delaware Fish and Wildlife into a dual purpose recreational area, making this “Town Center” an attractive park-like area that serves the beach, water sports, ecotourism, and future businesses while, at the same time, enhancing Coastal Resiliency through adaptation.

C. Streets/Transportation/Biking and Hiking

The present system of roads seems adequate for any planned changes anticipated in this plan. The sizes and structure of the streets and roads within the Town for the residential and commercial uses presently in place as well as the limited expansion anticipated are also deemed adequate with regular maintenance that is presently being performed.

No statistics were available regarding commuting families other than average mileage. However, there has been no indication to Town Council that a significant need for public transportation exists to make such service practical.

The Delaware Bayshore Byway Initiative has opened ecotourism and conservation opportunities, recreational business opportunities, measures to improve and maintain transportation needs, and in planning for sea level rise/flooding countermeasures. The Town recognizes the need to formalize a plan for taking full advantage of these opportunities which include grant funding. The Town will engage the Town Planning Committee to meet this need.

The Town would like to create and improve opportunities for active recreation and transportation for cyclist and pedestrians with key destinations in our Town

which may include a network of on and off road cycling and pedestrian corridors that connect with neighboring towns.

1. Outside Town Limits

The Town has only one means of ingress and egress and although this is a state-maintained hard-surface road, it is only two lanes. This road is not suitable or adequate to accommodate heavy industrial or commercial truck traffic or an inordinately large volume of automobile and boat trailer traffic.

This main artery is prone to flooding outside of the Town Limits and egress problems during major storms is a concern to the Town as the number of permanent residences increases. The Town looks to develop a plan to meet with DelDOT, FEMA, and Homeland Security in order to make provision for reliable egress from the Town not just in an emergency, but under common circumstances, by elevating this road to make it more resilient to coastal storms and rising tides.

2. Within Town Limits

The inventory of town streets reveals that most of the Town's streets are inadequate for large volumes of traffic except on the state maintained roads. Additionally, the streets within large areas of the town are not well-suited to accommodate a significant amount of on-street parking. The present Zoning Ordinances allow for this condition in restricting uses in these areas. The Code also addresses off-street parking in its application. It is noteworthy that enhancements to the aforementioned parking lot would expand on the area as public parking while providing an attractive area for families to enjoy the resources the Town has to offer while controlling and reducing storm water runoff.

Flooding of roads in the center of Town and near the Murderkill River is a continuing problem. Upgrades to the closed storm system have been completed by DelDot. Upgrades to Hubbard Avenue are substantially complete, and upgrades to the open storm water system have been Engineered and funded. The Town is presently working with DNREC to complete this work in early 2019.

There are ditches and drainage pipes along Main Street that do not function properly most of the time. The Town would like to work with DelDot to develop a sustainable plan to scope and maintain the ditches and drainage pipes along Main Street.



D. Public Safety

1. Fire

Although the Town has its own resident volunteer fire company which appears adequately equipped to handle present residential development in the Town, it is questionable whether the fire company could provide adequate fire protection for any large industrial, manufacturing, or commercial development, or even for a large townhouse project. The Town has no fire hydrants. However, the fire company has a new fire boat with a pumping system that could distribute river water throughout the Town.

2. Police

The Town has no police force and must depend on contracting for police services from off-duty state police. The Town's financial statement reveals that police protection is a major expenditure for the Town that greatly exceeds any revenues from fines. Consequently, the Town relies heavily on the State Police.

3. Dredging

Throughout our plan there is a commitment to support and develop ecotourism with a focus on fishing and marine activities; and we welcome the recreational fishermen and other marine activities, but again, we are worried about them because most are not familiar with the current conditions of the channel.



The Town is very interested in completing a feasibility study to determine if a fuel dock can be constructed on the Murderkill River to support our recreational and commercial boats and to attract and support boats from other bayshore towns. This potential increased boat traffic in the channel is one of the primary reasons the Town would like to work with DNREC to develop a sustainable plan to maintain the channel so all boats can navigate safely.

See V. D. Dredging for more detailed information.

4. Natural Disasters

Residents will experience health impacts before, during, and after a natural disaster such as hurricane. These health impacts can include higher instances of water-borne and food-borne illnesses and mental stress. It is important to have an emergency transportation plan in place, but it is also important to have a plan in place that will ease stress of residents before an event (for example-

ensure that all residents are aware of their evacuation options), are knowledgeable of potential threats during an event (for example- not to wade through flooded areas as this will increase an individual's risk of water-borne illness), and a way to tend to health impacts after the event.

To that end, the Town is revisiting its interaction with Kent County Emergency Management to insure planning and responses comply with that agencies procedures.

5. Climate Change

The effects of climate change on human health should be emphasized in the conversation around specific impacts of climate change and addressed through planning and education. The Town would like to work with the Kent County Department of Health and Social Services for direction and assistance in the planning process as well as obtaining appropriate signage that alerts visitors of extreme heat and vector-borne illnesses.

6. Dune Maintenance and Beach Replenishment

The dune system provides the first line of defense in coastal resiliency. The beachfront property owners granted the state a right-of-way for the public use of the beach in exchange for maintaining the dune system. The Town encourages public use of the beach through the Town website as well as other media. The beach is considered "Public" under Delaware statute and, by statute, the State is responsible for maintaining those dunes and replenishing the beach just as it does other public beaches and dunes. Full replenishment and maintenance of the bay beaches has been neglected over the past 15 years due to State budgetary constraints.

Under a USACE proposal², excess materials from the maintenance of the Main Channel could be used for long term beach replenishment of the bay beaches at a cost share of 65% paid by the Federal Government and 35% paid by the State. Under the recently passed America's Water Infrastructure Act, there is \$75 million for a new beach replenishment pilot program under which this replenishment will qualify.³

The Town of Bowers supports the State's adoption of the USACE's proposal.

Quoting from the Kent County 2018 Comprehensive Plan:

Barrier beaches are narrow strips of land made up of unconsolidated material extending parallel to the coast and often separated from the mainland by a body of fresh, brackish, or saltwater, or a marsh. Some of the beaches occur on Pleistocene age highlands, which outcrop along the coast; such beaches exist at Bowers. The County's sandy beaches occur intermittently from Woodland Beach to Bowers and continuously from there along the

2

http://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Portals/39/docs/Civil/Reports/Draft%20Feasibility%20Report_Integrated%20EA_DMU_DE.pdf?ver=2016-11-23-085235-737

1. ³ S.3021 - America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018

Bay to the Sussex County boundary. These beaches are high-energy systems, with constantly shifting equilibriums that are subject to landward migration of the shoreline and coastal storm events. Beaches provide protection to buildings and infrastructure during damaging storms as well as offer a variety of recreational opportunities.

A number of the Bay communities are subject to storm surge and elevated water levels from coastal storm events, shoreline erosion, and sea-level rise leading to flood damage. On November 23, 2016, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in conjunction with the Delaware Department of Natural Resources released a Feasibility Report and Integrated Environmental Assessment for the Beneficial Use of Dredged Material for the Delaware River. The tentatively selected plan consists of dune and berm construction at dredged material placement at eight locations along the Delaware Bay including Pickering Beach, Kitts Hummock, Bowers Beach, South Bowers Beach, and Big Stone Beach. Implementing the tentatively selected plan will increase coastal resilience, reduce storm impacts to people and property, and enhance tourism opportunities along the coast. In addition, nourishing beaches helps provide greater resilience of natural habitats and may

Ensure the continued existence of beach habitat in areas where development precludes inland migration of the beach. Therefore, Kent County is in support of the findings of the Feasibility Study.”

The Town of Bowers supports the State’s adoption of the USACOE’s proposal and will continue to press for its implementation.

E. Housing

A review of all the parcels within the Town confirms that the lands in the town consist overwhelmingly of: (a) large undeveloped tracts of wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas or (b) lots laid out and developed for single family residential dwellings. There are only a dozen commercial uses in the Town, most of which are located along the Murderkill River. The vast majority of building lots in the Town consist of separately owned lots of less than 75-foot frontage. In order to limit density (because of the numerous reasons evident in this comprehensive plan), the Town favors 75-foot frontage, 7,500 square-foot area lots. However, the Town Council recognizes that it is not sound land use planning, and creates undue and unfair hardships, to impose an unreasonably restrictive lot size requirement on those areas of the Town which already have been developed and have long existed as sub-75-foot frontage lots.

F. Future Land Use Plan

The future land use plan for the town consists of the Future Land Use Map and the text in this section. In practice and use neither the map nor the text in this section shall be relied upon without consulting the other. This section provides a discussion of the land uses anticipated in each of the categories, and some examples of zoning districts that would be compatible in the respective land use categories. The zoning district examples are mentioned for guidance only, and

nothing precludes the town from enacting new or revised zoning districts or other land use regulations as long as the regulations are compatible with the purpose and intent of the future land use categories described here and shown on the Future Land Use Map.

- **Conservation / Agricultural.** The purpose of this land use category is to preserve the Town's wetlands, wildlife areas and areas of special environmental quality, recreational potential, natural beauty, ecological importance, areas needing special protection from erosion and pollution, to protect flood plains from inappropriate development, and, where appropriate, to encourage agricultural use of productive soils.
 - o Examples of compatible zoning districts:
 - C/A Conservation / Agriculture
- **Commercial.** The purpose of this land use category to provide for a variety of light commercial uses which are consistent with the Town's essential character as a primarily residential community with roots in the commercial fishing industry and a resort / recreational / retirement community and which will serve the immediate needs of the community giving due recognition to major commercial business establishments in Dover and Milford. The light commercial uses should not detract from the character of the Town.
 - o Examples of compatible zoning districts:
 - C-R Commercial Residential
 - R-R Retail Residential
 - R-C Riverfront Commercial
- **Residential.** The purpose of this land use category is to protect and support the character of existing residential neighborhoods, and provide for residential development and a limited number of other uses which will complement the existing neighborhoods and the character of the Town.
 - o Examples of compatible zoning districts:
 - R-1 Residential, 50' Frontage
 - R-2 Residential, 75' Frontage
 - R-3 Residential Townhouse
- **Public Utilities.** The purpose of this land use category is to provide suitable locations in the Town for public utility infrastructure which is essential to the public health, safety, welfare and continued viability of the Town as a place of residence and commerce.
 - o Examples of compatible zoning districts:
 - Town, County, State Lands
 - Public Service Corporations
- **Recreation.** The purpose of this land use category is to provide for both passive and active recreational facilities that serve the residents of the town as well as the region as a whole.
 - o Examples of compatible zoning districts:
 - Town, County, State Lands
 - Public Service Corporations

- **Institutional.** The purpose of this land use category is to provide locations in the town for public services, non-profit agencies, churches, governmental agencies and other similar uses that provide needed services to the community and the region as a whole.
 - o Examples of compatible zoning districts:
 - Town, County, State Lands
 - Public Service Corporations

G. Annexation

Recognizing the possibility areas of land outside of the Town Limits within properties that are split by the Town line could possibly have an impact on the Town's comprehensive plan, the Town has seen a necessity to annex some of these properties in order to better control conformance to the spirit of the Comprehensive Plan. Any use of the areas annexed would be within the present land use of that part of the property presently within the Town Limits. The properties under consideration would fall under residential or agricultural use. Said annexation plan would not permit additional development which is restricted by the present zoning ordinances.

H. Redevelopment Strategy

It is quite clear that the developable land in the Town is surrounded on all sides by environmentally protected and environmentally sensitive areas. Large areas of the Town are either within or bordered by lands subject to the Delaware Beach Preservation Act, the Delaware Wetlands Act, the Delaware Subaqueous Lands Act, the Delaware Coastal Zone Act, the Federal Coastal Barrier Resources Act, the Federal Clean Water Act, and the National Flood Insurance Act.

All of these statutes underscore the delicate environment in which the Town exists and dictates that the Town's zoning severely restrict and control development.

There are no areas presently considered for large scale redevelopment. The Town relies upon the growing economic strength of its residents as has been the trend over the past ten years and that these upgrades will be completed within the confines of the Zoning Ordinance. Further, properties in need of upgrades are not confined to one specific area, but rather scattered throughout the community making designation of a redevelopment area impractical if not impossible.

While there are no contiguous redevelopment areas, the Town's redevelopment strategy includes taking action on a parcel by parcel basis to redevelop and remedy buildings in disrepair by encouraging voluntary upgrade of residential properties. None the less, the Town may consider stricter codes that would require repairs of properties where the condition impacts quality of life and/or safety of the Town residents.

One potential development does exist. As stated in previous sections of this plan, the Town is very interested in completing a feasibility study to determine if a fuel dock can be constructed on the Murderkill River support our recreational and commercial boats and to attract and support boats from other bayshore towns.

I. Public Utilities

1. Water

Domestic water in the town is mainly supplied by individual private wells. It is evident that any substantial increase in residential development, or any large industrial or commercial use drawing large volumes of water could threaten existing water supplies and hasten salt water intrusion from the adjoining bay.

The Town of Bowers presently has three wells that are deemed public water systems by the Delaware Department of Natural Resources. These serve the fire house, condominium units, and a small development respectively. The revised zoning ordinance will incorporate language that requires the present extent of impervious cover within 150' radius not be extended. A reference to the DNREC well head protection plan will also be incorporated.

2. Electric

The Town has more than ample service from Delmarva Power and Light, but we are very interested in exploring opportunities in renewable energy solutions such as solar and possibly hydroelectric to reduce energy spending and to protect the environment.

3. Septic

The Town has a central sanitary sewage system provided by Kent County.

4. Storm Sewer/Drainage

Bowers has a few storm drains located on Main Street, near the church, and also near the corner of Main and Hubbard Avenue.

Some storm drains are also located on Hubbard Avenue.

The Town did have more storm drains but they were removed when the sanitary sewer was installed. Storm water still tends to lay in parts of the Town, and many streets up to a block away from the Murderkill River are flooded with several feet of water during flood tides.

See section VII. D. Storm Water / Drainage for detailed information on the Town's current and planned storm water management and drainage improvement projects.

J. Intergovernmental Coordination

It is evident in the reevaluation of the Comprehensive Plan that as the demographics of the Town change and as the societal changes in the surrounding area impact the Town of Bowers, the necessity to interact with other government agencies has increased. The Town must now look at items such as emergency response, environmental impacts, public services, health, and welfare in terms of the Town as a microcosm of the county, state, and federal governments and adjust accordingly. The Town recognizes the need, but is realistic in the anticipated time frame within which such a change can take place without disrupting the character of the Town and its residents.

The Town sees the development of these relationships as gradual and necessary for the fulfillment of its Comprehensive Plan. The Town presently interacts with DelDOT, Kent County, FEMA, DNREC and other agencies on an as needed basis,

but recognizes the need for establishing long term relationships with these and other agencies. The Town considers the Kent County comprehensive plan and the Delaware Strategies for Policy and Spending relevant planning documents to the development and implementation of this plan.

A critical area for Collaboration is economic development. Three organizations working to advance economic development and community revitalization efforts area the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce, Greater Kent Committee (GKC), and the Kent Economic Partnership. As described in Kent County's 2018 Comprehensive Plan states (Page 2-7), that the Kent Economic Partnership (KEP)

...is a non-profit organization created to help support and expand business interests throughout central Delaware. The Partnership is supported by a team of business leaders from all over Kent County whose mission is to create a business environment supportive of the entrepreneurial spirit. The Chamber of Commerce, GKC, and KEP work collaboratively with the County and increasingly with municipalities.

The Town plans to become active in this process.

K. Government and Finances

In the past, the Town skimmed along with a skeletal form of government and minimal finances and resources. Historically, the Town has had very few contested elections, largely because it has been difficult to get individuals to run for these unpaid elective offices. It has been equally difficult to fill the appointed offices. One reason for the historic lack of interest in the Town government is probably the seasonal nature of the community. Beginning in August of 2008, the following committees were formed by resolution: Planning, Budget, Parks & Recreation, and Streets. This increased citizen involvement has spawned an increased interest in public service.

The Town recently increased its taxes for the first time since 1982 increasing the rate from \$.30 to \$.60 per \$100.00 of assessed value and increasing the base tax of \$25.00 on unimproved lots to \$100.00. This increase took the vulnerability and uncertainty out of the tax base which previously was held captive to the housing market as a hefty portion of the Town's revenue was based on property transfer tax. This increase allows the use of the property transfer tax to expand or improve the Town's existing municipal services.

The limited amount of land available for development is reserved for low density residential development. This limitation is presently a natural restraint on population growth as it has been for the last twenty years. A reasonably anticipated increase in the population would be estimated to be less than 100 persons based on approximately 20 new homes with families of four at each residence.

It is the goal of the town to encourage the continuing improvement of the existing residential properties in a manner consistent with the Zoning ordinances and the historic nature of the Town.

The Town also has relocated a portion of its business district to an area along East Main Street that is more resilient to coastal storms and is more convenient to the beaches, rivers, and wetlands. The Town created a new zoning district R-

R, Retail Residential.

Quoting the 2018 Kent County Comprehensive Plan page 2-11:

“...Kent County has a wealth of opportunity for ecotourism. Ecotourism is a form of tourism that appeals to ecologically and socially conscious individuals. Generally speaking, ecotourism focuses on volunteering, personal growth, and learning new ways to live on the planet; typically involving travel to destinations where flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions.”

The Town’s commitment to strengthening its economic landscape will create a need for increased services as the appeal of the Town as a prime ecotourism destination increases.

Our Bowers Beach Maritime Museum has already “put us on the map” with our annual Buccaneer Bash and Big Thursday on Sunday.



The Buccaneer Bash is always on Memorial Day Weekend. An encampment of pirate reenactors perform demonstrations and skits to educate visitors about the pirates of the Delaware Bay.



We have a parade, vendors, food, music and activities for adults and children.

Big Thursday On Sunday is in October. We celebrate the Delaware Lenape Tribe, the First Oystermen of the First State.



Visitors are educated through:

- Native Life Demonstrations
- Archaeology Display
- Art Exhibit
- Drum Circle

The day starts off with a 5K Run/Walk followed by a day of fun with craft and food vendors, music and activities for adults and children.



The new R-R-Retail Residential district is to provide for a variety of light commercial and retail uses which are consistent with the Town's essential character as primarily residential fishing village and seasonal resort/recreational community and which will serve the immediate needs of the community, giving due recognition to the major commercial establishments and business communities in the nearby cities of Milford and Dover.

The Town sees this change as a dovetail into the County plans for an Employment Center in Little Heaven, just three miles outside of Town. As stated in the Kent Count Comprehensive Plan,

Employment Centers have been identified in key areas where infrastructure exists or is planned for the purpose of enabling larger scale employers. The Centers are not intended for development of retail or service uses but rather for uses that create jobs – offices of all types and light industrial development are the types of uses contemplated. Master plans should be developed for each of the identified Employment Centers.” These Centers “...seek to bring public and private stakeholders together for work on economic development opportunities; and develop a marketing strategy in partnership with the towns...

None the less, the Town Zoning Commission and Town Council have concluded that the Town Zoning Ordinance should prohibit industrial development and strictly limit commercial and dense residential development. Only those uses consistent with the unique and fragile nature of this small community should be allowed, subject to appropriate regulations.

Approved by the Town Council of the Town of Bowers Beach on _____.

_____ Mayor, Ada C Puzzo

_____ Council Member, Ryan Locke

_____ Council Member, Bob McDevitt

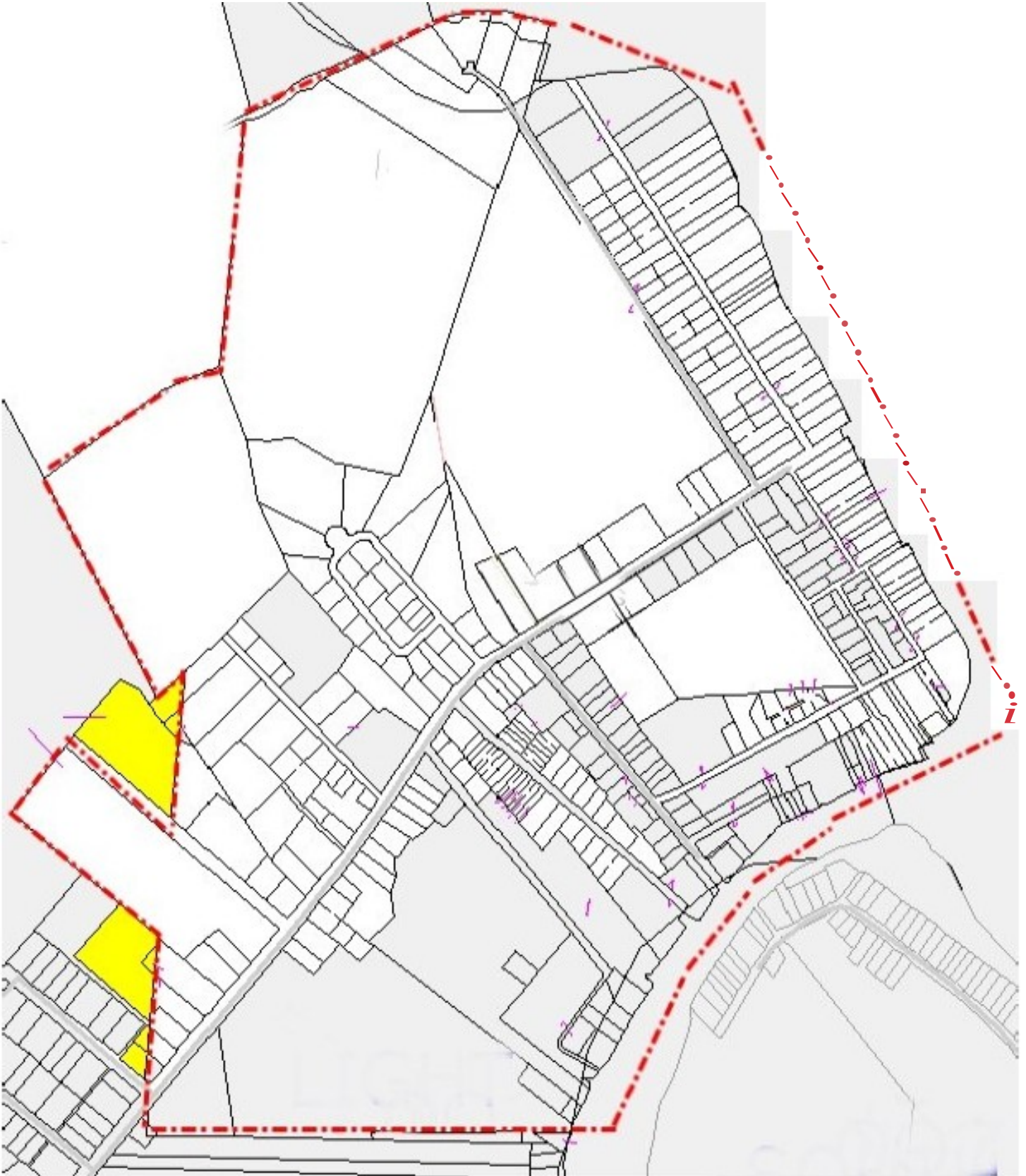
_____ Council Member, Shirley Pennington

_____ Council Member, Marty Manning

Appendix 1-Revision 01-12-13

ANNEXATION PLAN

(Areas in Yellow may be considered for annexation in the future)



MAP OF EXISTING USES

(Not to be used as an official zoning map)

Town of Bowers

Appendix 1 – revision 4-11-13

