



# OCEAN VIEW 2020

*Welcoming you home yesterday, today and tomorrow.*



Comprehensive Land Use Plan



November 2019

**Draft**



**PROJECT** .....

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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*And a special thank you to Jill Oliver, Assistant to the Director of Planning, Zoning & Development, for photographs and public engagement leadership!*

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Gerald W. Hocker, 20th District Representative

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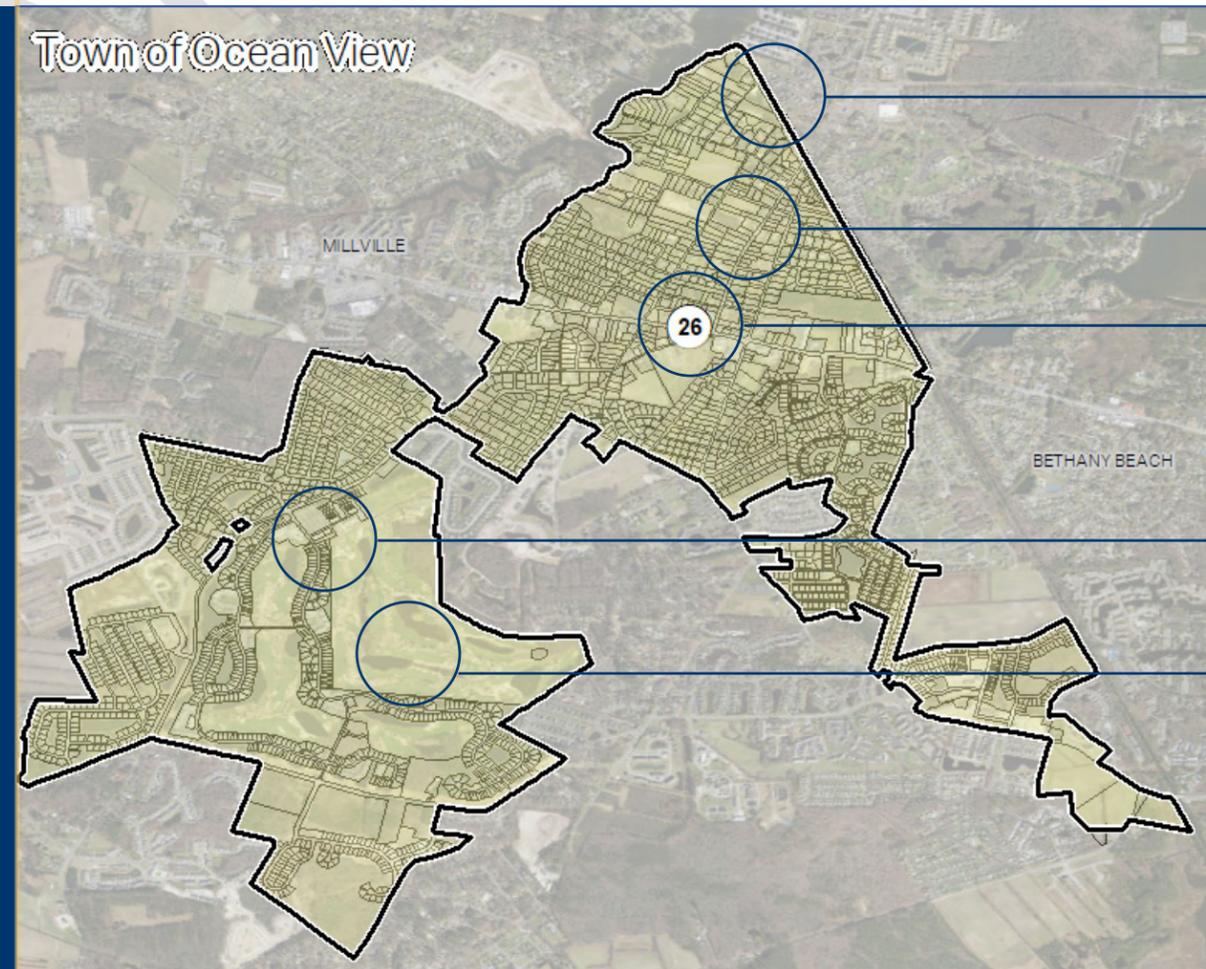
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# 1 | INTRODUCTION

The Town of Ocean View initiated the development of this Comprehensive Plan in November 2018. The updated plan will provide a framework for development and growth for the Town through 2030. It will be used to guide code changes and development approval.

Figure 1.1 Municipal Boundaries



- Assawoman Canal**  
Waterway linking the Indian River Bay and Little Assawoman Bay. A multi-use path parallels a portion of the canal.
- John West Park**  
A municipal park that hosts year-round events and the location of the historic Town Hall.
- Focused Business Area**  
Offers a wide variety of goods and services, from chain stores to locally owned small businesses.
- Administrative Complex**  
Town Administrative offices and the Ocean View Police Department are located here.
- Bear Trap Dunes**  
A large mixed-housing development with seasonal shuttle service and recreational amenities.

## WELCOME TO ..... OCEAN VIEW

Quiet, safe, friendly, quaint, peaceful and clean were all words commonly used by citizens to describe Ocean View. It is an idyllic small town located one mile west of the Atlantic Ocean. Originally formed in 1889, over the past 130 years the town has transformed from a farming community into a thriving residential beach town that attracts full time residents and second-time homebuyers looking to retire in the coastal area.

A comprehensive plan is essentially a collective vision for how a municipality wants to grow and develop. The Delaware State Code outlines that in Delaware a comprehensive plan is a document in text and maps, containing a municipal development strategy for population and housing growth within a 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. Title 22 §702 requires Delaware municipal governments to develop and regularly update these land use plans. At least every five years a municipality shall review its adopted plan for updates, amendments and applicability. Furthermore, comprehensive plans help municipalities efficiently utilize their resources to accomplish important tasks and goals. They are powerful tools that can be used to leverage outside assistance, and represent the collective vision of a community.

The Comprehensive Plan serves as a plan for the future of the Town and as a unified document to address land use and growth issues for the Town Council and Planning Commission. The plan is also an informational document for the public. Citizens, the business community and government officials can turn to the plan to understand Ocean View's focus for potential policies related to future land use decisions. Finally, the Comprehensive Plan is a legal document. As with the aforementioned requirements to complete a periodic update, Title 22 also explains 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." With that said, the document is a living document with an overarching goal of doing the right thing for the community.

Ocean View's 2010 Comprehensive Plan focused on maintaining the Town's small-town feel, while guiding growth and new development to certain pockets of town. It also mentioned community character issues and includes many urban design strategies that could help create a stronger sense of place. It outlines recommendations to increase opportunities for physical activity and mobility. The plan was amended in 2013 and 2016.

### **AUTHORITY TO PLAN**

The State of Delaware requires that towns participate in comprehensive planning 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 towns, Sussex County 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 a population greater than 2,000.

The comprehensive plan for larger communities 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. The comprehensive planning process shall demonstrate coordination with other municipalities, the county and the State during plan preparation. The comprehensive plan for municipalities of greater than 2,000 population shall also contain, as appropriate to the size and character of the jurisdiction, a description of the physical, demographic and economic conditions of the jurisdiction; as well as policies, statements, goals and planning components for public and

private uses of land, transportation, economic development, affordable housing, community facilities, open spaces and recreation, protection of sensitive areas, community design, adequate water and wastewater systems, protection of historic and cultural resources, annexation and such other elements which in accordance with present and future needs, in the judgment of the municipality, best promotes the health, safety, prosperity and general public welfare of the jurisdiction's residents." (22 Del. C. 1953, subsection 702 : 49 Del. Laws, c. 415, subsection 2)

This plan is the Town of Ocean View's Comprehensive Plan as required by state law. It is intended to cover a 10-year planning window and be reviewed at least every five years.

### **VISION AND GOALS**

In striving to become a complete community, Ocean View, Delaware, with the support of an involved citizenry, is attempting to further define its unique character by introducing new transportation options, improving connectivity, supporting mixed and efficient uses of land, honoring our history, promoting healthy and engaging environments and encouraging business diversity and job growth. In short, the future complete Ocean View community will in turn be a place where people desire to live and be engaged.

The current Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) for Ocean View was adopted in July 2010. The Town, like many towns within Sussex County, has experienced significant growth over the past several years. Ocean View is approaching build-out capacity and shifting its focus towards better, more efficient service delivery as well as improvements to community amenities. Furthermore, after an initial kick-off meeting it was clear that transportation and community development would be major focus areas for the Plan. In order to gauge residential concerns and

preferences, the Town of Ocean View hosted two initial community outreach opportunities for thoughts and concerns to be shared. Ocean View hosted the first public workshop April 13, 2019 at its municipal park. The event ran parallel to the Town's council elections and was well attended and received. Five interactive stations were set up to cover the topics of future land use, community character, transportation, town strengths and weaknesses, and livability. Then, the Town launched a public survey that was live for the month of June; the survey followed the same topics as the workshop, but featured more detailed questions. Additional information and results can be found in Chapter 2: Public Outreach.

In summary, the most important considerations identified in updating the Comprehensive Plan are:

- Exploring strategies for managing growth, both inside and outside of Town boundaries.
- Fostering a stronger sense of community by identifying unique features, encouraging more community events, and possibly acquiring additional community gathering spaces.
- Expanding streetscaping along Route 26 and restricting commercial growth to mainly this corridor.
- Increasing the Town's multi-modal transportation offerings by extending sidewalks/crosswalks and off-road pedestrian corridors throughout Town, and adding public transportation options.
- Examining an array of transportation options to get visitors and residents to the beach safely.
- Protecting invaluable natural and recreational resources and assets such as the Assawoman Canal and Trail.

**PLANNING DOCUMENTS**

Relevant planning documents were reviewed to develop a better understanding of local and regional challenges. Overall, each document points to the fact that Ocean View is now focused on improving the quality of life for its residents by actively managing development, providing for a mix of land uses, improving multi-modal transportation, and promoting appropriate redevelopment. Each initiative sharpens its reason for being called home.

**State Strategies**

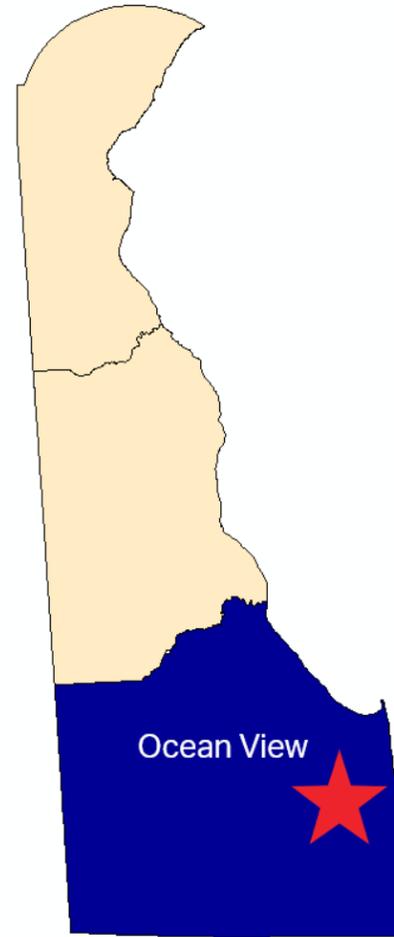
The 2019 Delaware Report on State Planning Issues is a document produced by the Delaware Office for State Planning Coordination to coordinate land-use decision-making with infrastructure and services in order to make the best use of Delaware’s natural and fiscal resources. The document references the 2015 Delaware State Strategies for Policies and Spending Map. The majority of Ocean View is classified as either level 1 or 2, some portions of Ocean View are considered level 3. See **Figure 1.2 State Strategies**. According to the State’s Plan, “investments and policies should support and encourage a wide range of uses and densities, promote a variety of transportation options, foster efficient use of existing public and private investments, and enhance community identity and integrity.” OSPC recommends investing in economic development, housing, education facilities and redevelopment in Level 1 areas. Level 2 is considered “less developed, but rapidly growing, suburban and urban areas where infrastructure is in place or planned for the near future.” Level 3 areas are “in longer-term growth plans, and/or areas within growth areas that have some environmental constraints.”

**Sussex Plan**

While developing their Comprehensive Plan, Sussex County took an extensive look at how to accommodate growth and development over the next twenty years. Much like Ocean View, Sussex County has experienced high growth. As such, there is a greater need for supportive services such as schools, central water and sewer, traffic control, health care, social services, affordable housing, and recreation facilities. The County calls for accommodating growth mainly in already-established towns and cities, such as Ocean View, and clustering higher densities near town centers. The County also recommends prioritizing destination marketing and tourism-based economic development because it is capable of yielding a broad set of impacts.

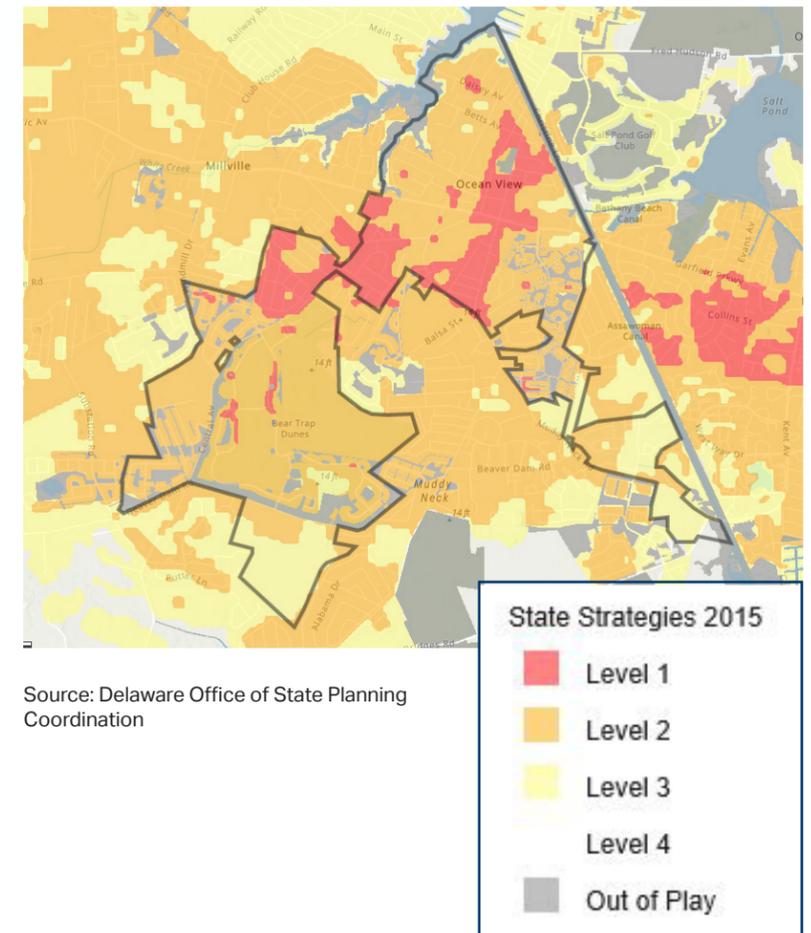
**Ocean View's 2010 Comprehensive Plan**

Ocean View's most recent Comprehensive Land Use Plan was adopted in 2010 and amended in 2015. The previous plan focused on establishing clear and logical municipal boundaries, developing a multi-modal transportation plan, and adopting community design standards.



**Figure 1.2 State Strategies**

Most of Ocean View is either level 1 or 2 investment strategy.



Source: Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination

## 2 | PUBLIC OUTREACH!

Public engagement efforts created the foundation that Ocean View's 2020 Comprehensive Land Use Plan was upon - community engagement. The Town and AECOM partnered to produce a three-tiered approach to community engagement. Each unique opportunity offered a different way to engage and target diverse parts of the community, and took place throughout different times of the year. First, the Town sought ideas on general concepts like community character, strengths and weaknesses, and livability at a public workshop that was timed to be sure to capture input from year-round residents. Second, a survey was sent to Town residents with specific questions regarding transportation, community values, recreation, as well as service and retail desires. Finally, the public provided feedback on specific plan goals, design concepts, incentives, and community branding. Each effort provided an opportunity for meaningful engagement.

### Engagement Opportunities:

April 13, 2019  
*Election Day Public Workshop*

May - June, 2019  
*Community Survey*

October 26, 2019  
*Cops & Goblins Public Workshop*

December 2, 2019  
*Comp. Plan & Cookies Presentation*

### ELECTION DAY PUBLIC WORKSHOP

On April 13, 2019 the Town of Ocean View and their contracted consultant, AECOM, hosted the first public workshop for the Town of Ocean View's Comprehensive Land Use Plan update from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm at the John West Park. The event purposefully ran parallel to the Town's council elections. Five interactive stations were set up to cover the topics of future land use, community character, transportation, town strengths and weaknesses, and livability. Each station was manned by either a Town or AECOM employee to guide participants through the exercises and answer any questions. A summary of the responses gathered at each station are included below.

The Town and AECOM worked to advertise the event locally. Prior to the event, posters were created that advertised the event and then placed strategically around town. Flyers were also printed and posted within local



organizations. The Town advertised the event online on their website and Facebook page, as well as the local newspaper. The Town also donated gifts cards from local businesses to be used as raffle items.

Ninety-seven individuals participated in the Public Workshop. Upon arriving, residents were greeted by Town staff and directed to sign-in, then pick up a 'Passport' to receive a signature from each station leader for participating. Once their passport book was complete, participants were eligible to enter the raffle. Residents were invited to visit each of the five stations set up under canopies in beautiful John West Park.

**Station 1 - Comprehensive Plan Overview**

This station summarized the process of updating a Comprehensive Plan. A member of AECOM's team greeted participants and invited them to review why municipalities create comprehensive plans, he guided them through what topics are typically covered in a comprehensive plan, pointed out the project's timeline and then guided them to the four interactive stations.

**Station 2 - Transportation**

The Transportation Sign Board had six illustrative photos that each represented a unique transportation option that could be adapted to Ocean View. Participants were directed to rate each option by placing colored dots (green for a positive response, yellow for neutral, and red as a negative response) near each option.

The station leader noticed that some of the participants focused on the environments of the photos rather than the subject concept; they asked where the photos were taken in Town and/or thought it depicted exactly what we wanted to build. The station volunteer quickly began to advise them that they were just random photos meant to highlight various options. This resulted in better engagement. Each of the options featured are broken down below:

<p><b>SEASONAL BEACH BUS</b> <i>Mostly Positive</i> - Responses were primarily green and yellow; some discussions evolved around a seasonal pass, partnering with neighboring communities, and a possible pilot program.</p>	<p><b>BICYCLE FACILITIES</b> <i>Positive</i> - Responses were primarily green, there is a desire to be able to bike (or walk) to transit, but many residents expressed that we have not made bike lanes and sidewalks a priority as the community has grown.</p>	<p><b>MULTI-USE PATHS</b> <i>Very Positive</i> - Multi-use paths received overwhelming support, the Assawoman Canal Trail was specifically noted as a highlight of the Town; residents would like to see more connections to it.</p>
<p><b>YEAR-ROUND TRANSIT</b> <i>Mostly Negative</i> - Responses were mostly red, with some green and yellow. Most participants associated the pictured bus-stop with more densely-populated urban areas.</p>	<p><b>SIDEWALKS</b> <i>Mostly Positive</i> - Responses were primarily green, some red responses were from individuals that did not want to be responsible for maintaining sidewalks. Many noted a need for clear crosswalks on Rt26.</p>	<p><b>PUBLIC PARKING</b> <i>Mixed Feedback</i> - Individuals were torn on increasing public parking in Town. Some recongized the benefits of economic development and increased activity, but many worried about the aesthetics and traffic.</p>

**Station 3 - Community Character**

The Community Character Board had six illustrative photos that each represented a unique placemaking option that could be adapted to Ocean View. Participants were directed to rate each option by placing colored dots (green for a positive response, yellow for neutral, and red as a negative response) near each option.

**Mixed Use Development**

*Mostly Positive*

This photo received mixed reviews, but overall it received a higher number of green dots, suggesting support. There was a lot of talk about the need for additional streetscaping, including specific trees being planted and decorative light posts. People suggested we install unique street lights that are lower to the ground to bring focus to them and away from the higher more unsightly poles, wire and lights. Others added that we could have the American Flag on each and/or a large planter with flowers overflowing. Once again individuals noted that this would help with overall placemaking and create an improved visual experience when in Ocean View. The photo seemed to help participants focus on what Ocean View's portion of Route 26 could look like. Some residents expressed interest in seeing the Ocean View section look and feel welcoming and different than the other sections along Route 26, perhaps offering more upscale retail and dining options.

**Adaptive Reuse of Historic Structures**

*Very Positive*

There was overwhelming support towards adapting historic structures. Several individuals noted their support of the efforts of the Ocean View Historical Society – the photo of their replica of the Post Office may have prompted this. Unfortunately, no one made any mention of a specific facility they would like to see addressed.

**Figure 2.1 Public Workshop Passport**

In order to encourage engagement with each station, participants were given a passport. Individuals that had received a stamp from all five stations were eligible to enter a raffle for the local gift cards.



**Placemaking**

Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design, and management of public spaces that capitalizes on a community's unique strengths for the benefit of its citizens. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.

**Planned Communities**

**Very Negative**

This photo received an overwhelmingly negative response. However, the participants really did not have comments about planned communities, as much as they all expressed concerns regarding congestion in the area, and their belief that the Town does not need any more large-scale planned communities.

**Wayfinding Signage**

**Somewhat Positive**

This photo and topic received mostly caution or yellow and green support dots. Many commented that Ocean View may likely not require wayfinding – not unless there is more to lead people to and parking. This also is when some brought up light posts along Route 26 and in neighborhoods. There were quite a few people that said they thought all streets – even in neighborhoods - needed lights.

**Protect and Preserve Rural Lands**

**Very Positive**

This photograph received strong support. Many individuals asked if the photo was taken nearby (the photo was taken in New England.) The station leader clarified that it was not in Town but just demonstrative of open space or rural farms and business. There were a few yellow as they felt they needed to know locations of any possible farms in Town.

**Community Gathering Places**

**Mostly Positive**

The suggestion of creating a community gathering place received mostly positive support. Discussions centered around excitement at the thought of a town square and marketplace and having open space along Route 26 in Ocean View. Many noted that they would like the gathering place to be accessible by trails and sidewalks. Once again residents communicated their love of John West Park and enjoyment of the events that took place there.

**Station 4 - Livability Index**

This exercise revealed that a majority of the participants felt that the Town was already meeting or exceeding expectations in the delivery of services that provide a high quality of life. As the Town looks ahead to the future, a large number of participants would like to see a focus on encouraging more medical facilities to open up in Town. Many of the participants would also like the Town to explore the creation of additional transportation options. Some participants felt strongly that the Town is already overwhelmed with housing options and should not focus on new construction—affordable or otherwise. Some were cautiously optimistic about the future and hoped the Town could accomplish all the goals without raising taxes. The feedback at the Livability Index station, in general, was overwhelmingly positive and the participants seemed excited to contribute their ideas.

The instructions at the station were to “place a green dot if you think we should invest more resources into this option, place a yellow dot if you’re not sure, or a red dot below the option if you do not think it is appropriate for Ocean View.” Therefore, the results are not truly a measure of current perceptions of livability, but instead reflect the personal values of the participants and what they feel should be priorities (or not) as the Town moves forward. Many times, they were pleased with the current service levels and want the Town to continue to invest time, money and energy into particular areas.



**Housing—Affordability & access**

The most “controversial” topic was housing and, as can be seen from the board, the results seem to be split down the middle. Almost all who offered an opinion thought that low-income housing should not be subsidized by the town of Ocean View.

**Red dots:** Many participants felt that there is currently too much housing and we do not need any more options—affordable or not, period. About half of the people opposed to more housing options were also adamant in their opposition to any future townhouses, multifamily dwellings, and apartment units.

**Green dots:** Others acknowledged that, yes, there is plenty of housing, but it is not necessarily affordable for some families or even Town employees/police officers. A few retirees stated that they love living in Ocean View and that their adult children would like to move here too but cannot afford to do so.

**Yellow dots:** Most people who placed a yellow dot in housing were torn between the two aforementioned opinions and could see both sides of the argument. One note from a participant reads, “We’re not perfect, but we’re trying.”

### Neighborhood—Access to life, work & play

*Most participants thought this topic was a little too broad for them to make an informed decision, but in general, most participants felt strongly that the Town needs to continue to encourage access to life, work and play.*

**Red dot:** The lone red dot (technically pink) was from a participant who felt strongly that these items were not a Town responsibility, but a personal responsibility. In other words, it's up to the individual to seek out these opportunities and not the government's job to create them.

**Green dots:** A majority of participants believe that, not only is the Town doing a good job creating access to quality of life, work, and play, but they feel strongly that we should continue to explore additional opportunities in the future. A subset of the participants in this category were also very interested in the Town exploring the idea of a unified trash pick-up in order to cut down on noise and truck traffic in our residential neighborhoods. Other participants felt that we especially need to invest in our small business community.

**Yellow dots:** Most people who placed a yellow dot for "Neighborhood" felt that the topic was too broad and that they needed more information to make an informed decision. Generally, they felt that Ocean View was already acceptable in this area.

### Transportation—Safe & convenient options

*Transportation was a "hot-button" topic, with a majority of participants feeling the Town needs to do more in this area.*

**Red dots:** Many of these participants believe that transportation should not be a Town concern. Some argued that it is a generally accepted "fact" that this area is congested with vehicular traffic because we are so close to the beach; it's not up to the Town to fix that problem. Some feared taxes would be raised to throw money at an issue that would be difficult to measurably improve. Most didn't realize the majority of "collector" roads are owned by DeIDOT.

**Green dots:** A majority of participants were very interested in the exploration of options for additional bike paths/lanes, more transportation/paratransit choices for seniors, and a beach shuttle to alleviate traffic on Route 26. Some stressed that safety and reliability would be the key to a shuttle's success. Most didn't know that these efforts need to be coordinated with DeIDOT.

**Yellow dots:** A number of participants were on the fence about transportation. Some liked the sound of more access but were hesitant about any tax increases that might occur to fund these additional transportation options.

### Environment—Clean air & water

**Red dots:** No one stated that they did not value clean air and water, but they felt that these areas are better regulated by State and Federal agencies than by local jurisdictions.

**Green dots:** A majority of participants highly value clean air and water and felt the Town should continue to do its part to protect the environment moving forward. Some mentioned the Town needs to do more to protect wetlands with increased buffer zones. One participant would like the Town to explore meadows as an option for stormwater management. Some participants were worried about littering and short-dumping in and around the Ocean View area. Their proposed solution is for the Town to place more "No Littering" signs along our roadways and to increase awareness through education. They also encouraged the Town to organize a Town-wide cleanup effort before and

after the busy summer season and suggested that various communities could engage in friendly competition to see who could pick up the most trash/recyclables.

**Yellow dots:** Most of the feedback from those neutral on the topic was that the Town was already doing well in this area and we should simply stay the course.

### Health—Prevention, access and quality

*Health was another hot topic on the board, with an overwhelming majority seeming to indicate this should be a Town priority in the future.*

**Red dots:** Those participants who placed red dots were not opposed to additional health access but felt that the area in and around Ocean View had already immensely improved in recent years. They felt that the new Beebe facility in Millville would help draw more doctors to our area and that the Town does not need to take any action. Others felt that it was no big deal to drive to Lewes, Rehoboth, Berlin, or Salisbury for care.

**Green dots:** A majority of participants felt strongly that the Town should work hard to encourage doctors to open their practices in Ocean View. Some indicated that it was a hardship for them to drive to appointments in the Rehoboth/Lewes area in summertime traffic. Others were retirees who mentioned that they feel compelled to travel back to their hometowns in Baltimore, Annapolis or Philadelphia for high quality medical care. Many seemed surprised by the lack of dermatology practices in area beach towns largely populated by "sun-worshippers." Some participants were very encouraged by the new Beebe facility in Millville but felt that it still would not be enough to adequately service our growing population.

**Yellow dots:** Most of those who were neutral on this topic were satisfied with their current access to health care.

### Engagement—Civic & social involvement

**Red dot:** One participant felt strongly that the Town was already doing enough to encourage civic and social involvement and that it's up to the citizenry to educate themselves and take part in the political process.

**Green dots:** It was a fairly even split between the green and yellow dots, but those who felt more focus was needed in this area would like to see the Town invest in additional public workshops and events. One participant mentioned that they felt Town Council needs to listen more before they vote on certain agenda items. This person perceived that Council makes up their minds before the meetings even occur. Several participants felt that the Town should do more to foster relationships with neighbors, particularly the Town of Millville.

**Yellow dots:** Most of those who were neutral on the topic were satisfied with their current opportunities for engagement.

### Opportunity—Inclusion & possibilities

*This category was probably the most difficult to explain to participants, and, generally, it was up to the individual to decide what "opportunity" meant to them personally. Many participants felt that "opportunity" was very closely related to "engagement" and placed the same color dots for both topics. Some were confused and chose to skip the topic entirely.*



**Red dot:** Generally, these participants felt that the Town was doing enough in this area and did not need to expend any additional resources on creating “opportunity” in the future.

**Green dots:** These participants felt that creating opportunities for people of all walks of life to be heard and valued should be a Town priority. Most felt that the Town was doing well in this area, but that there is always room for improvement.

**Yellow dots:** Most of the “neutral” participants seemed confused by the category and indicated that they were not sure how they felt.

**Station 5 - Strengths and Weakness**

Overall, participants exhibited a lot of interest in participating in this exercise. Many wanted to identify where their home was on the map and it was clear that they took pride in where they lived.

Residents were quick to praise recreational opportunities and natural features in Town, especially the Assawoman Canal Trail and John West Park. Several individuals even suggested expanding the trail in different directions (South Bethany, Bethany Beach, and the Ocean View Marina to the west.) Many individuals iterated that they would like to see Ocean View become even more bicycle-friendly. They noted that routes like Central Avenue had bicycle lanes but felt unsafe. As many residents talked about the beauty of the Town and noted concerns about development, several individuals asked about wetland protection. The station leader suggested that Sussex County had recently adopted a density calculation that netted out wetlands; 16 individuals agreed with this suggestion.

As with many municipalities in Eastern Sussex County, traffic issues were among the top weaknesses noted. The Town will need to maintain a strong relationship with the State’s Department of Transportation in order to communicate residents’ concerns and lobby for capital improvements that affect the Town. The Town should work with DelDOT to engage and educate citizens on traffic issues. For example, many residents suggested constructing additional crosswalks across Route 26, but some of those same residents also wanted a smoother flow of vehicular traffic through Route 26. Both of these desires are seemingly at odds. One resident suggested adding a speed bump or electronic speed sign in the older parts of Town to discourage individuals from speeding. However, the response from other residents was clearly in opposition. Only two individuals agreed with that suggestion, while 19 disagreed.

Many residents said that they were concerned over development. Anecdotally, they shared that there is current litigation involving misconceptions about how land was supposed to be developed. Overall, from the public workshop it was clear that residents do not want to see more high-density planned communities within Town. Most residents agreed with one suggestion that the Town should limit commercial development to just the Route 26 corridor. A couple residents disagreed, noting West Avenue in particular as a good site for some neighborhood-style businesses, such as salons or bakeries. Another particularly popular suggestion was for the Town to develop a way to keep developers in check. Generally, all participants exhibited distrust of developers and agreed that there should be some provisions to limit their abilities. One resident suggested that HOA’s should have stronger rights over the developers, some residents agreed with that and others disagreed on that strategy.

Several residents praised the Town’s safety and said that they had a great police force. Some residents disagreed on the need for the Town’s force to grow because they felt like it was currently more than adequate; however, they did agree that it was a good force and the Town felt very safe.

A few residents pointed out areas that had drainage or property maintenance issues and they were noted by the Town’s Planning Department. A few individuals voiced their support of the new brewery/brew-pub coming to Town; a few individuals voiced their desire for more healthy food options in Town (both restaurants and grocery stores); many residents also noted the need for an expansion of broadband services in Town.

**COMMUNITY SURVEY**

The initial public workshop provided the Town and AECOM with a lot of initial feedback. Residents demonstrated that they lived in Ocean View for a reason – they loved the community for its history and quiet, bucolic nature. Over the month of May, AECOM developed a survey to build off the responses gathered at the first public workshop. On May 29, 2019 the Town officially launched the survey. The survey was announced in the Town’s May newsletter that was mailed to all Ocean View property owners, on the Town’s website and via postcards that were distributed at Town-sponsored movie nights at John West Park. The Town’s survey was live for the entire month of June, throughout this time 149 individuals completed the survey. The complete survey and all responses can be reviewed in Appendix XX, a summary of the responses is included below.

The majority of survey respondents were either Full-Time (58.4%) or Part-Time (27.5%) Ocean View residents, 28.9% of respondents identified as Sussex County residents, 3.4% as Ocean View Business Owners, and 2% identified as visitors. Approximately 95% of respondents were 41 years of age or older. The most popular reason for living in Ocean View is access to beaches and coastal area (56.4%), followed by small town atmosphere (20.1%). When asked to rank town priorities by importance, residents tended to indicate shared values. They valued community character, environment, town aesthetics/cleanliness and public safety above all else.

Three adjectives clearly emerged from the list as the most widely-applied to describe Ocean View: quiet (39), safe (38), and friendly (37). Questions were included in the survey to ask how people felt about the Town taking on challenging issues that were brought up at the initial public workshop, including long-range transportation planning, community character and design standards. Many of the respondents were split on what the Town’s role should be when it comes to addressing these issues. When asked, should the Town explore expanding or developing stricter building design standards, 62.4% said yes, 21.5% said no and 16.1% chose ‘I’m not sure.’ When asked if the Town should be involved in long-range transportation planning in order to balance growth 47% responded yes, 15.4% no, and 30.9% said maybe. Individuals were passionate about protecting Ocean View’s historic resources and character, however, many did not have specific buildings in mind to protect. When asked about interest in a unified trash pick-up services for all Town residents, 49.7% of respondents said yes, 17.4% said no, and 20.8% said maybe. When asked about the importance of Town sponsored events (on a scale of 1 (not important) to 5 (very important) the average response was a 3.5, most chose either a 3 or 4. Finally, respondents felt somewhat neutral, but mostly positive about communication from the Town.



### Ocean View Community Survey

Scan the QR Code below or visit [www.oceanviewde.com](http://www.oceanviewde.com) to begin the brief survey now!

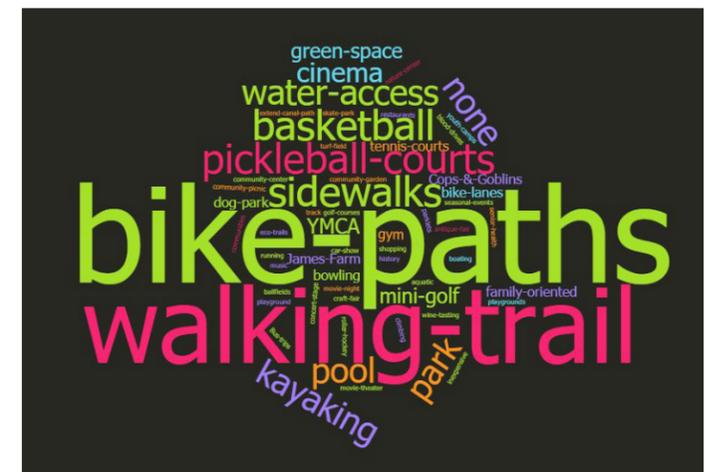


What is your vision for the future? Help us shape a better tomorrow by taking 10 minutes to share your thoughts in our 2020 Comprehensive Land Use Plan Survey by June 28!

The featured postcard was handed out at community events and Town meetings throughout May and June.

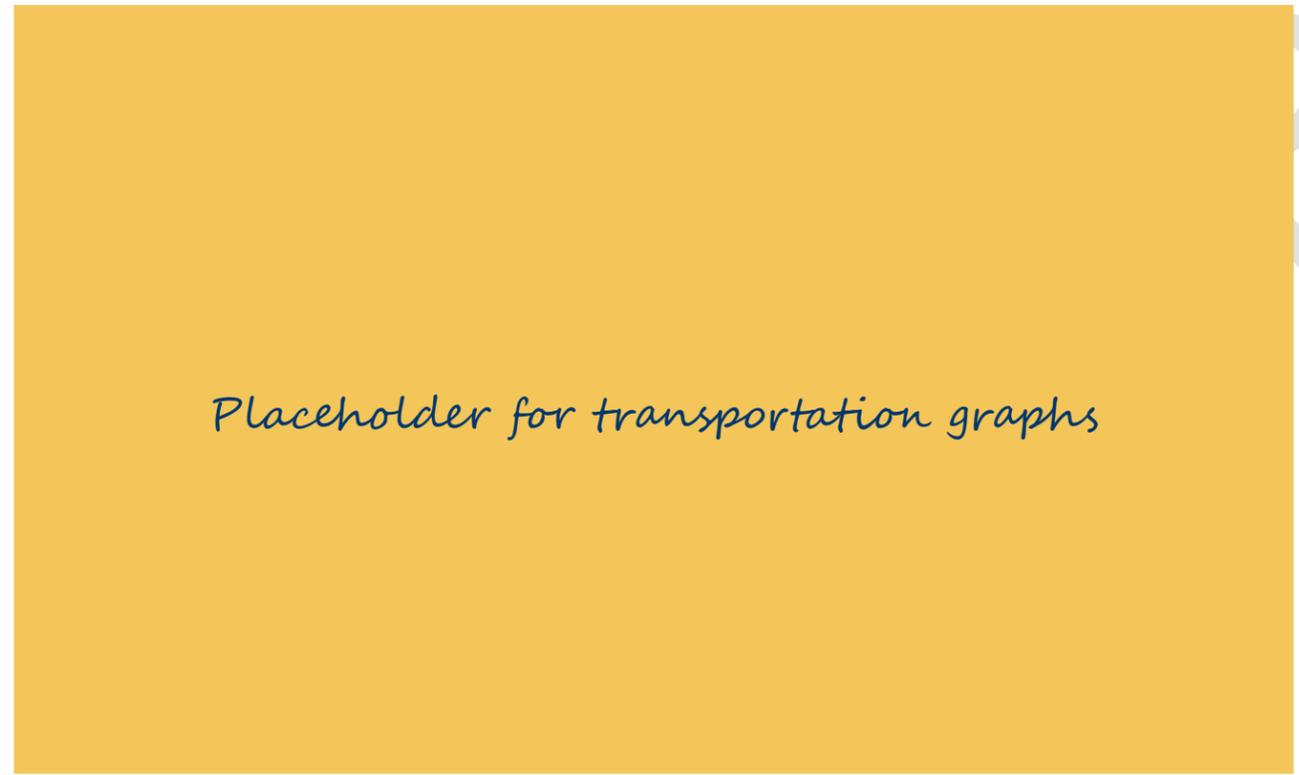
Some of Ocean View’s greatest assets are its local recreational opportunities. It was clear that residents appreciate what they have, but would enjoy more opportunities, connections and efforts to creating a safe environment. Ocean View received a variety of answers when they asked residents which recreational opportunities they would like to see in Town; the most popular responses were bike-paths (19) and walking trails (15), followed by an assortment of suggestions such as pickleball-courts (6), basketball courts (6), more sidewalks (6), water-access (5), kayaking (5), and a pool (5) also receiving several votes each.

The survey also asked individuals about future development and land use. Generally, Ocean View is built out, and responses reflected just that. When asked how the Town should deal with residential development 60.4% said that they should limit it by regulation, the majority of other responses suggested that it should be curtailed to areas already identified or serviced by water and sewer. Most felt like current regulations in Ocean View strike a good balance (45.6%) or are too lenient (26.2%). And the majority of respondents said that commercial growth should be limited to Route 26/Atlantic Avenue (58.9%) or possibly Central Avenue (9.2%) or West Avenue north of Atlantic (9.9%); nearly a quarter of respondents indicated that they did



not want to see any commercial growth in Town. When asked about what types of future shops or services would be desired for Ocean View the most popular responses were restaurants, boutiques, Trader Joe's, Target, medical offices, doctors, and transportation.

Respondents were then guided through several questions regarding transportation options. First, respondents were asked to suggest locations for future sidewalks or trails; the most requested locations were along Central Avenue, West Avenue, and extensions to the Assawoman Canal Trail. When asked about interest in a beach shuttle service, 49.7% responded that they were interested, 29.3% said no, and 21.1% responded maybe. About 44% of individuals said they would like a few shuttle stops throughout Town, while 24.4% said that one in each neighborhood would be ideal. Approximately 46% of respondents said they would even be willing to pay for a seasonal pass to utilize shuttle services. The overwhelming majority of these respondents (91.9%) have never utilized DART services before, but most (77.2%) were open to possibly using service if it were reliable and accessible. Most respondents would like to either drive (45.4%) or walk (31.5%) to a future shuttle stop.



### COPS & GOBLINS PUBLIC WORKSHOP

The Town's third opportunity for public engagement occurred on Saturday, October 26 at the annual Cops & Goblins event hosted by the Town of Ocean View's Police Department. Once again, the Town was able to engage over 100 unique individuals about important planning concepts. The stations at this event were designed to provide feedback on specific options and strategies for the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

#### Transit Improvements

The first station was to solicit feedback for specific transit improvement locations. Citizens have told that the Town they would like Ocean View to be more walkable and bicycle-friendly. Once again individuals asked for more protected bicycle lanes and additional sidewalks, some specific locations noted included: Daisey Avenue, Muddy Neck Road, Route 26, and Woodland Avenue.. Conversations also led to discussions about sidewalks along West Avenue for safe access to and from the Park. While many were for expanding the sidewalk network to this area of Town, several people mentioned they were against sidewalks if it meant the property owner had to maintain the sidewalk (repairs, snow removal, etc.), and they felt it was a liability for the property owner if someone were to fall on the sidewalk in front of their property. If the sidewalks were to be maintained/owned by someone else, property owners felt sidewalks were needed. A couple of individuals also requested a shuttle that ran to Bethany Beach.

#### Plan Goals

After providing feedback on potential transportation improvements, individuals reviewed each of the six goals identified for the Comprehensive Plan. Overall, feedback on each goal was positive. Some respondents were confused about which color to use (green and pink were both used to represent approval, orange was used if someone felt overwhelming neutral to a goal, and red was used to signify disapproval.) **Overall, individuals tended to overwhelmingly agree with the goals outlined.** The goal with the least amount of approval was "exploring transportation options for getting visitors



PHOTO BY KEN SIGVARDSON





and residents to the beach safely.” However, the votes of affirmation for that goal still outweighed those opposed to it; some opposed noted that they thought public transportation like this was better suited for larger, more urban communities.

**Community Design**

After providing their feedback on the plan’s overall goals, individuals then moved on to the ‘Route 26 Design Guidelines’ station. Here individuals were asked to place a green dot under the option if they thought Ocean View should incentivize it by offering local grants, development incentives, or rebates; an orange dot if they thought the option should be required before approval of an application; or a pink dot if the option is not appropriate for Ocean View. For the most part people used the dots as described, however some used them as green for ideas they liked, orange for things they felt neutral about, and pink if they disagreed with the idea. Residents felt like attractive lighting and sidewalks and pedestrian connections should be incentivized through local grants, development incentives or rebates. Residents felt strongly about needing lighting along Route 26. Participants felt most strongly about sidewalks and pedestrian connections, noting the positive impacts seen from the Route 26 improvement project completed several years ago. Participants also felt like site furnishings should be required before approving new applications along Route 26. Respondents were split on parking lot landscaping – some residents did not like the idea of additional parking lots period, while others felt like if there are going to be additional parking lots then they should be required to have landscaping.

**Commerical District Renaming**

Finally, participants were asked to vote for their favorite name for the Town’s commercial district. The Town provided three options:

- Town Center (70)
- Central Business District (8)
- Atlantic Avenue Corridor (42)

Most of the votes were cast by adults or parents; however, some of the votes were cast by children. In this case, it was explained that a commercial district was typically where one would find shops, restaurants and entertainment venues as a teachable moment to introduce the concept of a commercial district to children.





**POPULATION  
AND  
DEMOGRAPHICS**



**COMMUNITY  
CHARACTER  
AND  
DESIGN**



**FUTURE LAND USE**



**ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT**

# CONTENT



**ENVIRONMENT**



**OPEN SPACE  
AND  
RECREATION**



**HISTORIC  
RESOURCES**



**HOUSING**



**COMMUNITY  
SERVICES  
AND  
FACILITIES**



**TRANSPORTATION**



### POPULATION PROJECTIONS

When deciding how to calculate a town’s potential population projection, several factors need to be considered. In the 2010 Comprehensive Plan the Town of Ocean View had already recognized that counting people was a particular challenge for the coastal community; mostly due to rapid growth and its popularity amongst seasonal visitors and its proximity to the Ocean. In order to cover the range of possibilities, the 2010 Plan provided estimated low and maximum population projections that were based on previous growth rates and potential build-out analysis. The previous Plan estimated a population range of 1,162 - 1,227 people by 2010. The 2010 Census population total for Ocean View was 1,882 residents, far exceeding projections.

The updated Census total was used as a base number in determining a new population projection. That same plan estimated a 2020 population of approximately 1,500 residents. However, the Census Bureau currently estimates Ocean View’s 2018 population to be 2,140, far exceeding the Town’s previous projections. Until the Town receives the results of the 2020 Census, their exact population is unclear, but projections

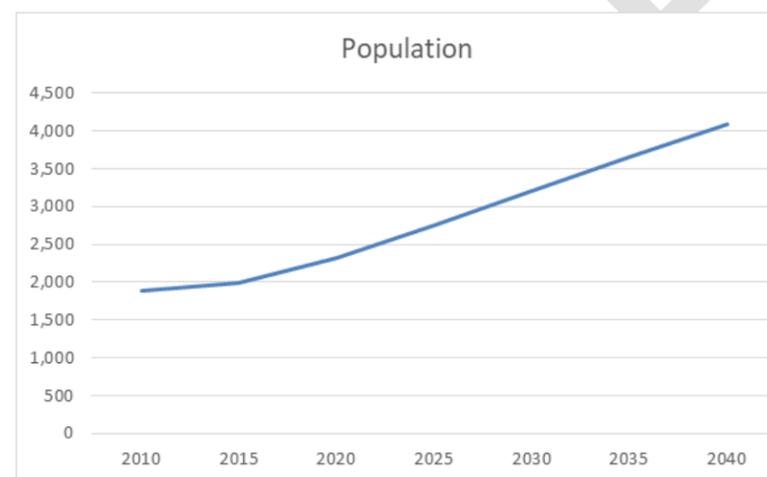
indicate a current population of over 2,000 residents. Along with current population totals, estimated residential construction is the second factor in determining a population project.

#### Future Housing and Population Build-Out

As Table 3.1 demonstrates, Ocean View has been growing at a rapid pace. Since 2010, Ocean View has seen a steady increase of residential construction from the on-going development of several major subdivisions. From 2010 to 2018 an average of 68 new residential units were built in Ocean View annually. This was calculated into the population projection figuring the rate of approximately 68 units built every year will remain the same. However, the Town has nearly reached its build out potential and, although growth has been rapid in the preceding years, it will likely reach the maximum potential. Without the inclusion of annexation areas, there are still opportunities for development but limited land available. To accurately project future population, it is justifiable to remove the approximate number of seasonal residents which are expected to continue to come to Ocean View at the same rate or higher. Seasonal residents are those that own property spending much of the “in-season,” May through September, in Town, but do not live in Town permanently. By estimates determined via



Graph 3.1 Population Projection based on Building Activity



vacancy and occupancy within the Town boundary it was determined that roughly 40% of the Town’s housing stock is inhabited by seasonal residents. Given this information, the population increase was reduced at each increment by the seasonal vacancy of 40%. In doing so the estimated population more accurately reflects what potential build out would look like for the future.

Table 3.1 Historic Population Change

YEAR	POPULATION	% CHANGE
1940	406	-
1950	450	11%
1960	422	(6%)
1970	411	(3%)
1980	495	20%
1990	606	22%
2000	1006	66%
2010	1882	87%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 3.2 Population Projection based on Building Activity

	2010	2015	2016	2017	2018	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Town of Ocean View Population Projections	1,882	1,942	2,142	2,127	2,140	2,494	3,976	4,717	5,458	6,199
New Residential Units	34	56	78	110	145	136	340	340	340	340
Population Increase (based on 2.18 persons per household)	-	122	170	240	316	296	741	741	741	741
Seasonal Baseline	-	-	-	-	-	118	445	445	445	445
Final Projected Population	1,882	1,986	2,035	2,103	2,198	2,316	2,761	3,206	3,651	4,096

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Estimates, 2012 - 2016

\* For census geographic entities map, see Appendix B

**Other Demographic Characteristics**

Table 3.3 outlines selected demographic characteristics for the Town of Ocean View and how they compare to Sussex County and the State of Delaware. The data is based on estimates from 2013 to 2017 provided in the U.S Census' 2017 American Community Survey (ACS). These estimates should be updated when the 2020 Census is completed.

In comparing Ocean View to Sussex County and Delaware statistics, the Town's median age skews slightly higher at approximately 60 years. This can be attributed to Ocean View being an attractive community to those looking towards retirement. This is confirmed with additional statistical information that shows about 41% of the population is 65 or older, and only 11% of households have children under the age of 18 years.

It is also important to note the high vacant housing rate of 54%. However, classifying these units as 'vacant' can be misleading because the high rate can be attributed to a number of "seasonal homes" which includes houses being used as second or vacation homes that are not occupied year-round. Based on the US Census data, 48.5% of housing units are considered seasonal or only used partially throughout the year. Trends seem to indicate that Ocean View will keep moving in this seasonal direction, in 2000 around 61% of housing units were classified as 'occupied', in 2010 only 46% of housing units were 'occupied.' In 2000, 36% of homes in Ocean View were classified as 'for seasonal or recreational use', by 2010 that figure grew to 48%.

Interestingly, 41% of Ocean View's population is aged 65 and older. In comparison to the State (17%) and County (25%), this is extremely high. Its almost twice the number of aging residents when compared to Sussex County and its nearly triple the amount for the State as a whole. Almost half of Ocean View's population will need, or already has the need for, additional services.

A population with high average age contributes to Ocean View's development and current land use being centered on planned communities with low maintenance lots. This will be highly relevant in the future as well, noting that as the population further ages the demand for this type of development will increase. With a median age just under 60 it will be important for the Town to develop strategies to help keep access to these amenities available to residents.



**Table 3.3** Profile of Demographic Characteristics for Delaware, Sussex County and Ocean View

		DELAWARE	SUSSEX COUNTY	OCEAN VIEW
2017 ACS Demographics				
TOTAL POPULATION		943,732	215,551	2,150
AGE	Population under 18 years	21.6%	19.3%	10.1%
	Population 65 years and older	17.0%	25.2%	40.8%
	Median Age (years)	39.8	48.3	59.6
HOUSEHOLDS	Total Households	352,357	86,322	976
	Households with children under 18 years	25.4%	20.6%	10.7%
	Households with single parent families	9.0%	7.2%	6.5%
	Households with 65 and older living alone	10.7%	13.0%	15.8%
	Average household size (# of people)	2.61	2.46	2.18
HOUSING UNITS	Total Housing Units	423,489	132,980	2,129
	Total Occupied Units	83.2%	64.9%	45.8%
	Renter Occupied Units	28.7%	10.8%	12.2%
	Vacant Housing Units*	16.8%	35.1%	54.2%
INCOME	Median Household Income	\$63,036.00	\$57,901.00	\$73,397.00
	Population 25 and over - High School Graduate or Higher	89.3%	86.8%	95.8%
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS	Population 25 and over - Associate or Bachelor's degree or Higher	38.7%	34.6%	39.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5 Year Estimates, 2017

\*A housing unit is vacant if no one is living in it at the time of enumeration, unless its occupants are only temporarily absent. Units temporarily occupied at the time of enumeration entirely by people who have a usual residence elsewhere are also classified as vacant.

*Delaware ranks above the national average when it comes to percentage of population aged 65 and older. Ocean View ranks above the state average. Over the next several decades, Delaware will continue to experience growth in its older adult population. As the demographics in Delaware, Sussex County, and Ocean View continue to shift, identifying land-use planning policies and other strategies that promote healthy aging is essential for residents to remain active and safe in the communities they call home.*

### AGING-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORC) are communities or neighborhoods in which at least 40% of the population is 60 or older and live in their own homes, although they were not specifically planned or designed with the needs of seniors in mind. Several NORCs have developed in Sussex County, including Ocean View, where 49% of the population is 60 or older. Without the necessary forethought to the needs of elderly residents, these NORCs can present both opportunities and challenges for communities.

State, county and local leaders can make a significant impact on barriers faced by older people. As the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration explains, "policies, services and structures, related to the physical and social environment of aging-friendly communities, are designed to help seniors "age actively." These communities are specifically designed to help seniors live safely, remain healthy, and stay active and involved." Features of age-friendly communities include adequately-timed pedestrian crosswalks, buildings with no-step entry, homes with one-level living, bike paths, public transportation, accessible health services, and recreational opportunities. State, county, and community leaders face significant challenges and demands related to meeting long-term housing, transportation, and health and social service needs. Specific barriers to age-friendly communities include lack of cooperation, communication, and public participation in local planning and development projects. Additionally, a lack in community readiness can pose barriers. Other barriers can include restrictive zoning laws that prohibit certain types of housing stock or universal design standards that might be more conducive to older adults or multigenerational families.

AARP has developed a Livability Index that scores neighborhoods and communities based on the services and amenities that impact individuals' lives the most. The Town's strong commitment to protecting the environment is clear, however, access to life, work and play could be strengthened. Some of Ocean View's biggest hurdles are access to destinations like parks, libraries, jobs, grocery stores and farmers markets. Convenient transportation options are lacking. Even though Ocean View is located in an expensive coastal area, it benefits from a mix of housing types, offered in a variety of sizes and at different price points.



Ocean View is similar in many ways to another NORC in Sussex County, the City of Lewes. As the University of Delaware's IPA describes:

*Coastal proximity, along with a unique, rich history, growing medical community, and accessibility to major transportation routes and resources are appealing features for both native Delawareans and retirees from other states. Other popular community amenities that promote healthy aging include easy access to parks, beaches, walking/biking trails, and other cultural and recreational activities... Housing, transportation, and access to medical and community services have been identified by local leaders and community-based representatives as barriers to aging in place.*

## Resources

The Complete Communities Delaware Toolbox features resources that promote healthy aging and are available to both individuals and communities:

The Delaware Aging and Disability Resource Center, (ADRC) is a resource of the Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities within the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, is an access point for information and services for older persons and adults with physical disabilities. It publishes an online Guide to Services for Older Delawareans and Persons with Disabilities. Delaware's Citizens Council on Aging is a seven-member advisory board that is charged with developing and implementing all facets of aging-related policy.

The State of Delaware has established a number of successful partnerships to foster aging in community. The Delaware Aging Network (DAN), a consortium of over 50 agencies across the state of Delaware, is committed to improving the quality of services older adults receive in the state. The emphasis of DAN is to help older adults live successfully in their own homes as they age with the help of community resources. DAN agencies and partners work with seniors to provide resources and case management services at local senior centers and other locations throughout the community. DAN agencies provide information about housing, health care, Medicare, Medicaid, in-home services, and transportation. Referrals are made to services to meet the personalized needs of each individual.

Planning for Age-Friendly Communities <http://udspace.udel.edu/bitstream/handle/19716/24460/planning-aging-friendly-communities-2019.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

AARP NORC Toolbox - <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/act/planning-land-use/info-12-2012/NORC-Toolbox.html>

Complete Communities Delaware Toolbox - <https://www.completecommunitiesde.org/planning/healthy-and-livable/models/>

### TOTAL INDEX SCORE



[Livability Score](#) ⓘ

### CATEGORY SCORE

48	<b>HOUSING</b> Affordability and access	>
35	<b>NEIGHBORHOOD</b> Access to life, work, and play	>
48	<b>TRANSPORTATION</b> Safe and convenient options	>
62	<b>ENVIRONMENT</b> Clean air and water	>
42	<b>HEALTH</b> Prevention, access and quality	>
48	<b>ENGAGEMENT</b> Civic and social involvement	>
42	<b>OPPORTUNITY</b> Inclusion and possibilities	>

AARP's Livability Index  
Score for Ocean View, DE

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Explore options and viable partners for facilitating a village-model resource
- Work with neighboring communities, the County, and State to provide residents emergency preparedness training and information
- Conduct a community-based senior needs assessment

## COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN

### Community Character

The terms friendly, quaint, quiet, safe, and beautiful were all used to describe the Town of Ocean View during the 2019 survey. Those words represent the small-town, coastal atmosphere that has attracted seasonal and full-time residents and business owners to Ocean View. Wanting to maintain those attributes, the Town has focused on making community character and town aesthetics a priority in this 2020 Comprehensive Plan update. Community character can be defined as the collective impression a town makes on residents and visitors; it can be shaped by the built environment, natural features, demographic shifts, and ultimately the way residents live. It is important to note that aesthetics and design are just a component of community character. It is built and natural features, and its residents, that give a town its identity. From its quaint beginnings, the Town seems to have remained as such despite seeing major growth in the past decades. It is important to the Town and its residents to maintain this atmosphere while also finding ways to build upon and improve community character, defining Ocean View from its neighboring coastal communities.

### History

In 1688 a 500-acre tract known as Middlesex was established and granted to Matthew Scarborough by Lord Baltimore. Over time the tract of land was passed to different families, first the Hazzard family followed by the Hall family. Around 1800 W.S. Hall opened a general store on his farm. After the opening of the store, the area became known as Hall's Store. A small settlement developed around the general store with the first post office opening in 1833 on Central Avenue. The area eventually became known as Ocean View due to its proximity to the beach. It is claimed that in the late nineteenth century residents could see the Atlantic Ocean

from the second story of some of the dwellings.

Ocean View's businesses listed in the Sussex County Farm Directory of 1875-1877 included J.M. Steel (blacksmith), Holt & Townsend (lumber), Js. F. Holt, G.W. Tunnell, McNeal & Williams (merchants), Miss M. Townsend (milliner), Jas. B. Davis (shoemaker), Lemuel H. Derrickson and Geo. H. West (vessel captains), John W. Evans, James A. Firman, Joseph E. Hall, James F. Holt, Willian H. Hudson, Benton Mitchell, Jacob Pusey, Nathaniel F. Quillen, Thomas H. Richards, John Taylor, Peter Townsend, and John M. Turner (farmers and fruit growers). The Town of Ocean View was officially incorporated on April 13, 1889 with the first Town Council meeting being held a week later. The first town council president elected was Captain George W. West.

An 1890 map of the Town, drawn by John T. West, included 44 residential dwellings, four stores, and two churches – Ocean View Presbyterian Church and Mariner's Ocean View Methodist Church. By 1895 the Town had a population of 350 residents according to the Sussex County Farm Directory of 1895-1897. Residents at that time held jobs as sailors, life savers, masons, shopkeepers, carpenters, fishermen, mill operators, and farmers.

Ocean View became the birthplace of broiler-fryer chicken industry in the 1920s when Mrs. Cecile Long Steele raised her first flock for commercial sale in 1923. Today, poultry is one of Sussex County's largest industries.

The Town would eventually shift from a predominately agricultural community to a year-round residential community with a commercial center. In the 1980s and 90s the Town started to see an increase in retirees and vacationers. Today, the Town of Ocean View continues as a residential community often referred to as a bedroom beach community. Ocean View is home to a year-round population with seasonal vacationers that increases the Town's population during the summer months.



### Community Events

Ocean View has a history of promoting the Town and showcasing residents' civic pride through community events. Starting in the early 1900s, the Town held its first Homecoming which featured bands, food, and appearances by governors and senators. Some years the crowds reached 5,000 people. This event continued annually until the 32nd Homecoming when it stopped due to gas rationings during World War II. The Town also held its Centennial from June 12-15, 1989. The festival included food, music, and activities. The event was also paired with the 41st Delmarva Chicken Festival.

In recent years, the Town has been striving to increase the number of community events as they have become popular among residents of all ages. The Town hosts events such as an Arbor Day celebration and seasonal events like the Halloween festival Cops & Goblins hosted by the Ocean View Police Department, and new in 2019 the Old Town Holiday Market & Tree Lighting. There are additional event series held during the summer season including concerts in the park and classic movie nights.

These events are held at John West Park making it a focal point of the Town as a space for gathering and contributing to a sense of place. As noted in the introduction, community character includes built and natural features, such as a park, but its also about the people that reside and visit a town. In the comprehensive plan update survey, 53 percent of participants ranked town sponsored events as important or very important. Community events and creating town traditions all contribute to building Ocean View's community character.



### Community Design

From its humble beginnings as a small village developed around a general store, Ocean View has, in many ways, maintained a similar organization. Today, Route 26 is the Town's primary commercial corridor. There is a small, secondary commercial corridor along Central Avenue consisting of primarily older structures that have been converted into small retail shops and businesses. The older, established neighborhoods are concentrated north of Route 26 and dispersed throughout the Town on the south side of Route 26, intertwined with the newer planned communities. The development of Ocean View has resulted in an eclectic mix of both historic and newer structures. With all the Town has to offer its residents, many feel the Town meets, and for some exceeds, their expectations for a livable community. However, the Town and its residents believe there are still ways to improve upon community character and general livability.

Residents had the opportunity to voice their opinions regarding the Town's community character during the public engagement opportunities held in April and October 2019, as noted earlier. Participants discussed the current community design and where they thought improvements could be made. Residents responded positively to the concepts of placemaking and preservation. These concepts included mixed-use, adaptive reuse of historic structures, community gathering places, the protection and preservation of rural land and improvements to streetscaping. Of those community character ideas, adaptive reuse of historic structures received overwhelming support, many noting the reconstruction of the old Post Office as a positive project. Participants also felt strongly about wanting community gathering places. Many residents expressed interest in the idea of a town square or marketplace with open space to be located along Route 26. People also felt a community gathering place should be accessible utilizing sidewalks or trails. Equal support was given to the protection and preservation of rural lands though no specific property was mentioned.

The idea of mixed-use received mostly positive feedback with residents focusing on ways to encourage placemaking. It was suggested improvements to streetscaping along Route 26 would help define Ocean View from its neighboring towns. Attractive lighting, street trees, planters, and decorative flags were all mentioned as ways to enhance community design and character. While wayfinding signage is typically included in streetscape improvements, residents were neutral on how they felt about needing additional signage. At the October workshop participants were prompted to provide opinions on specific design guidelines to improve streetscaping along Route 26. Streetscaping options included lighting, parking lot landscaping, sidewalks and pedestrian connections, and site furnishings. Residents felt strongly about needing more sidewalks and trails for better connectivity, an opinion also stressed during the April workshop. Participants also felt street lighting was important for safety. Site furnishings and

parking lot landscaping had neutral responses with residents agreeing they would be a positive addition.

The Town agrees with many of the sentiments concerning community character expressed by residents during the public workshops. The development of a commercial center or "main street" along Route 26 could provide the opportunity needed for placemaking and preservation. A more traditional business district could include the adaptive reuse of older structures as well as the design of a marketplace or focal point along Route 26. The addition of greenery or landscaping, lighting, and seating would add to Route 26's streetscape which is currently lacking all of these elements. These ideas could be accomplished through a set of design guidelines that would provide design requirements for projects along Route 26. In the 2019 comprehensive plan update survey, 62% of participants felt expanding or developing stricter design standards would be positive for the Town, policies that would affirm the Town's commitment to upholding character and aesthetics.

In 2006, the Town, with the assistance of planning consultants, finalized the Town of Ocean View Route 26 Corridor Development Design Standards. The purpose included building on the rich heritage and character of Ocean View, maintaining scale and texture of development, supporting pedestrian movement, bicycles and use of transit. The Design Standards addressed the need to recognize historical context, commercial and residential development, parking lots and landscape design, stormwater design, as well as lighting and signage. Much of the document is applicable to how the Town would like to see the Route 26 commercial corridor developed and help define Ocean View apart from the towns of Millville and Bethany Beach. The Design Standards, despite being 10 years old, is a good starting place for the Town to work towards incorporating community design and character back into Ocean View. The Town has considered guidelines in the past; however, the document never went through a formal adoption process.

Referring back to the introduction and definition of community character, the Town of Ocean View is considering the built environment, natural features, and its residents as it works towards improving upon the Town's identity. It is important that all three components are incorporated to create a livable community for its residents and destination for visitors.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KEN SIGVARDSON, VIEW FROM WEST AVENUE

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Move towards a more traditional town center design.
- Use Delaware's Complete Communities and Complete Streets toolkits as a guide.
- Review and update the *Town of Ocean View Route 26 Corridor Development Design Standards*. The final document should be adopted as part of the Town's Zoning Code.
- Modify bulk standards in the Town's Zoning and Subdivision regulations to allow for a traditional town center development pattern, especially for mixed-use and commercial development.
- Incorporate landscaping design into zoning requirements for design standards.
- Consider options for encouraging mixed-use development along the Route 26 commercial corridor.
- Reevaluate parking regulations and consider requiring parking to be located behind the business.
- Assess options for purchasing and creating a centrally-located public space.



## FUTURE LAND USE

In the past decade, the Town of Ocean View has seen rapid residential growth like many of the coastal communities in Sussex County. While the Town has identified a future annexation area, there is limited acreage for the Town to expand due to its location situated between the towns of Bethany Beach, Millville, and South Bethany. Due to limited options for expansion, Ocean View is shifting their focus from rapid growth to infill development and community character and livability building. The Town plans to utilize the University of Delaware IPA's Complete Communities as a resource as they plan for the future, among other resources. The Complete Communities is a guide for building healthy, resilient and livable communities.



The Town’s highest land use priority is infill development and improvements to the Route 26 commercial corridor, the Town’s main corridor and primary commercial area. The Town and its residents feel there are some missed opportunities and a need to make improvements to Route 26 focusing on streetscaping and improving connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. As the Town moves towards completing these improvements it will be important for the Town to go through additional reviews and analysis of the existing land use, future land use and annexation, as well as zoning.

**Existing Land Use**

Ocean View’s existing land use is predominately residential, with about 50 percent of the total land acreage being dedicated to residential use and planned communities; this includes older, established neighborhoods north of Route 26 and newer planned developments south of Route 26. Table X Existing Land Use shows the close balance of residential land use, but also shows open space as the largest portion of the Town’s current land use. The open space is comprised of the Town’s park, Assawoman Canal Trail, and dedicated open space areas throughout the large planned communities. Based on the current Town

boundary and land area, the Town is almost completely developed.

Commercial uses are primarily focused along Route 26, with a few small-scale businesses located on Central Avenue. Currently, there are five acres dedicated to special uses. Parcels identified as special uses are all located north of Route 26, mostly along Central Avenue. The special use properties are primarily commercial businesses and went through the former conditional use process. There are a few vacant properties along the Route 26 corridor available for infill redevelopment. Commercial and institutional uses make up about the same percentage of land use: 3% and 2%, respectively. Ocean View has two large parcels identified as institutional – Lord Baltimore Elementary School and Mariner’s Bethel United Methodist Church which includes a cemetery.

About 104 acres, or seven percent of the total acreage, are currently vacant. It is plausible over the next 10 to 15 years that the Town’s current vacant land, which consists of agricultural and forested lands, could be developed. The Town has no brown fields, former industrial complexes, or large vacant shopping centers that require redevelopment.

LAND USE	ACREAGE	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Residential	397.77	25.67%
Planned Community	417.40	26.97%
Open Space	538.33	34.78%
Commercial	50.56	3.27%
Institutional	31.31	2.02%
Special Use	5.10	0.33%
Utilities	3.31	0.21%
Vacant/Undeveloped	103.98	6.71%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1547.76</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Future Land Use**

In order to facilitate the annexation of properties and encourage development, the Town has developed a map detailing which parcels and annexation areas that are of primary concern. The future land use information is a planning tool to facilitate efficient and logical growth, allocate appropriate land uses, and develop a vision for the future. Map X - Future Land Use includes a large annexation area to the south of Route 26 which include the area east of Bear Trap and south to Double Bridges Road (Rt 54A), as well as the area southwest of Bear Trap bounded by Double Bridge and Peppers Corner Roads (both also identified as Rt 54A), and Beaver Dam Road. There are also several enclaves, specifically along the Assawoman Canal within the annexation area. Within this area the Town would like to focus on encouraging continued orderly growth while still delivering the same quality of service to the already established residential and planned communities. A large percentage of the annexation area is already developed or has planned communities that have already received approval from Sussex County. These areas will fit the overall balance Ocean View has crafted between preserving its character with open spaces while also adapting to the influx of population and their desires for low-maintenance living. If the entirety of the annexation area was brought into municipal boundaries it would still provide ample open space. The annexation area is very similar to the current town land use ratios and would complement the land uses already in place. There are higher density residential areas in the northeastern portion of the annexation area and the southwestern section is a collective of several planned communities. There are very few commercial parcels, but those that do exist are conveniently located for the residents to access. The municipality utilizes the South Coastal Sewer Treatment Plant which is within the annexation boundary for its services so extending Town services could be implemented easily.

To the south of the annexation area is the Assawoman Wildlife Area which provides open space and passive recreation in southeastern Sussex and to the residents of Ocean View. Having a natural southern boundary with the wildlife area would benefit the Town by

creating easily accessible opportunities for outdoor recreation. It is unlikely many of the already developed annexation area parcels will be annexed into Ocean View unless additional services, such as police coverage, are required or desired by developers or residents. The Town’s goals will overall remain the same for future land use. Ocean View will focus on filling in key redevelopment opportunities and underutilized parcels while maintaining the ability to serve the current population.

The Town hopes to retain its small-town charm by continuing to implement adequate safeguards through zoning regulations and through future annexation procedures to ensure a balanced land use throughout the community. As the Town considers future growth, many feel - according to survey and Town meetings - that annexation should continue to be considered; however, the Town should evaluate the annexation process to ensure that all residents receive a high-quality level of service that is sustainable, and the annexation provides benefits towards community goals.

**Annexation**

Annexation is a process through which land becomes incorporated into the municipality from the surrounding county. The Town’s Charter specifies procedures and criteria that every property owner wishing to annex into the Town must follow. To be eligible for annexation, the property must be contiguous to the existing corporate limits of the Town and in the Town’s proposed growth area. As part of any annexation proposal, a plan of services must be submitted with the annexation application to the State Planning Office. This plan of services must include not only the amenities the Town will authorize but a detailed explanation of the manner in which they will be provided and proof of the fiscal and operating capabilities of the provider of the services. Annexations also require approval from Sussex County on the availability of sewer, since a portion of the annexation area is outside the current sewer service area. The Sussex County Area Planning Study (SCAPS) is being updated, and sewer may become available in the

## VISION

### *Placeholder for Future Land Use Map*

planning period. In addition to satisfying all requirements of the Town Charter and the Town Code, annexations must also comply with all annexation requirements under State law, including, but not limited to Title 22, Section 101 of the Delaware Code.

The Town Council reviews and votes on annexation petitions. Under the Charter, if the annexation is less than five acres, the property annexation is effective on the date of the Council vote and cannot be contested. If the annexation is over five acres, a 31-day waiting period follows the vote, and the annexation ordinance becomes effective if not contested. Annexations are not subject to referendum unless 33% of the qualified voters petition for one. If a referendum is held, the annexation ordinance is effective if the majority of the qualified voters vote for the annexation.

In annexing any new parcels of land into the Town, the Town is committed to avoiding the creation of new enclaves and to eliminate, if possible, existing enclaves during the negotiation of any new annexation agreements. The Town will work with Sussex County Planning Department during the annexation process to address potential or existing enclaves as well as any other concerns raised through this process. In addition, when possible, the Town will endeavor to annex roads and/or rights-of-way contiguous with the lands proposed to be annexed to provide necessary jurisdiction to the Ocean View Police Department.

### Zoning

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Community Character, the Town is working to refocus efforts on improvements to the Route 26 commercial corridor - the main corridor through Town and primary commercial area. One goal is to differentiate the section of Route 26 through Ocean View from its neighboring communities, in order to create a distinct feel and to create a more distinguished commercial center. While much of the attention is on connectivity and streetscaping improvements, such as the addition of more sidewalks, lighting and site furnishings, the Town will likely consider updates to the existing commercial zoning districts - General Business District 1 (GB-1) and General Business District 2 (GB-2). A review and analysis of the GB-1 and GB-2 Districts should be twofold, evaluating existing permitted uses and bulk standards. The purpose of reviewing the



regulations for GB-1 and GB-2 is to ensure the appropriate uses are permitted in the commercial districts and provides an opportunity to update definitions. It is also to ensure the Town allows for businesses and services to meet the needs of Town residents. There are a number of similarities between GB-1 and GB-2, so a review process would allow for an evaluation of maintaining separate commercial districts, with distinct characteristics, or possibly combining the two. A preliminary discussion at the October workshop recommended the combining of two districts and renaming to Town Center. After permitted uses, the Town should review current bulk standards which includes regulations such as lot size and frontage, setbacks, and location of parking. Bulk standards are important to review, and update where needed, as these regulations can help or hinder the Town's desire to create a commercial center. The Town is envisioning a commercial center where storefronts are brought closer to the street, parking lots are out of sight behind buildings with the possibility of shared access between businesses, mixed-use with commercial on the ground level and residential units above, and create a living sidewalk – attractive patios, site furnishings and landscaping. However, based on a very preliminary review of the current GB-1 and GB-2 regulations, buildings would not be allowed to be brought up to the front lot line because current zoning requires buildings to be set back a minimum of 30 feet. A comprehensive review of both the permitted uses and bulk standards would help move the Town forward in their efforts to develop a commercial center and make overall improvements to the Route 26 commercial corridor.

During the review of the commercial districts, the Town has the opportunity to evaluate other sections of the Town Code that could have impacts to land use. Referring to the above discussion on permitted uses, from time to time there are uses that are permitted but require additional regulations or approvals. The Town of Ocean View currently addresses that issue by allowing applicants to apply for special exceptions. The Town defines special exceptions as “a use that is generally desirable for the general convenience and welfare, but, because of its nature and location, requires additional review by the Board of Adjustment to assess its impact on neighboring properties and the entire Town.” Some of the uses listed in the Town Code include medical clinics, mixed residential and commercial, and veterinary offices or hospitals. As the definition states, these types of uses are permitted, but must ensure they will not be detrimental to the surrounding area such as create noise and fumes, effect vehicular or pedestrian traffic, or adversely affect the health and safety of residents. Another way of handling this issue is with conditional uses. The major difference is that conditional uses are parcel based where special exceptions are based on use. A conditional use typically goes through an annual review process to assess any adverse effects from the use, however, the timeframe could be adjusted to best meet the needs of the Town. For special exceptions, a use is approved once and if a new property owner wants the same use, they must receive a new approval. The other difference is the entity completing the review. In Ocean View the Board of Adjustment completes the review for special exceptions, whereas a town council typically reviews conditional uses. The benefit of using special exceptions or conditional uses is that it allows for flexibility within a zoning district where a use may be appropriate but in the best interest of the residents requires an extra review. A disadvantage is that this additional review could also be a deterrent to a prospective developer. However, the special exception and conditional use review process is not intended to limit uses but instead reduce any potential impacts to surrounding properties and the towns' residents. Currently, the Town's approved special exceptions relate to commercial uses. As noted above, the current Town Code needs to be reviewed, especially as it relates to commercial land use, and the desire to develop a more focused business/commercial area.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Evaluate current permitted uses for GB1 and GB2 to see if they can be combined as a single district.
- Pursue mixed-use provisions to be made to the GB1 Zoning District for the Route 26 commercial corridor.
- Review the possibility of reinstating conditional uses (parcel based) and determine reasoning maintaining both special exceptions and conditional uses.
- Continue to pursue a town-center branding effort. Rename the GB1 district Town Center as per the results of public engagement.



## ENVIRONMENT

The Town of Ocean View continues to work towards protecting the Town's natural resources through establishing regulations such as protective buffers, encouraging increases in greenery, and preparing for the future as climate change becomes an increasing threat. In recent years, the Town has received Tree City status and contributed to the increasing tree coverage through grant opportunities. The Town has also participated in the drafting of Sussex County's hazard mitigation plans. It is important for the Town to continue these planning efforts that directly impact the Town and continue involvement in protecting natural resources as the County and State levels.



**Habitat Preservation**

Cumulative forest loss and wetland degradation in Delaware is of the utmost concern to the Division of Fish and Wildlife, which is responsible for conserving and managing the State’s wildlife. It is also of importance to DNREC who is responsible for natural preservation and maintaining open space corridors. Current State, County, and local ordinances do not adequately protect these resources. Therefore, the State must rely on landowners and municipalities, like the Town of Ocean View, to consider implementing measures that will aide in forest loss reduction, wetland protection, and water quality protection. Outreach by Town staff to these agencies would be highly beneficial to Ocean View.

*Whites Creek*

The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP) database contains observations of state-rare plants and animals on the northern end of Ocean View along Whites Creek. In addition to state-rare species, Whites Creek also hosts nesting Ospreys. Maintaining existing buffer zones in this area will help to preserve the integrity of these wildlife habitats. Enhancing the open space corridor in this area will improve existing wildlife habitat and may also provide the benefit of improved water quality in Whites Creek.

*Assawoman Canal*

The Assawoman Canal, part of the State Park system, is a greenway corridor that links areas of open space. The preservation of this corridor helps the local ecological balance and provides wildlife with an abundance of natural areas for reproduction, especially for amphibious and aquatic species.

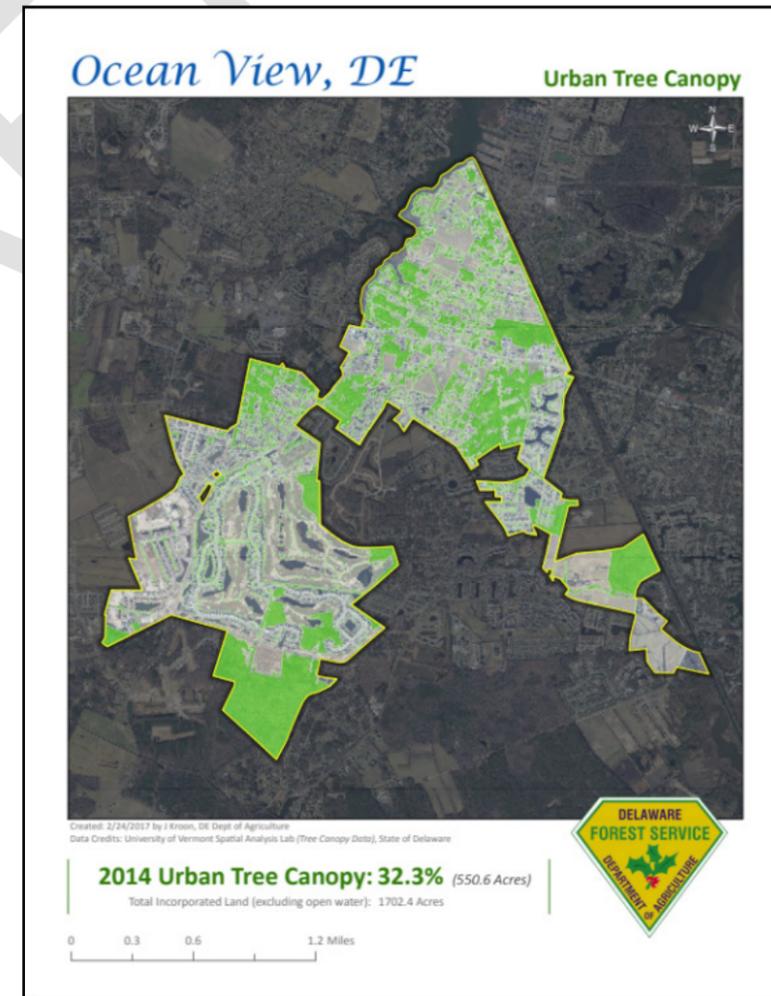
**Forestry Grants**

Between 2000 and 2020 Ocean View has been successful in obtaining grants from Delaware’s Department of Agriculture Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program to plant and take care of trees in John T. West Park. The grants ranged from \$1,895 to \$5,000 dollars totaling approximately \$15,000. To date, the Town has been awarded five grants concerning the park. Some of the grants were utilized to plant trees within John T. West Park while the others focused on park maintenance and tree care. The grants have allowed for the planting and maintenance of 26 trees for the residents of Ocean View to enjoy.



**Tree City USA**

The Tree City USA Program is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation and works in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. The Arbor Day Foundation helps forestry programs by providing technical assistance, public attention, and direction for anyone interested in becoming a member of the program. Ocean View received its status as a Tree City USA partner 12 years ago and has maintained the objectives of the program throughout that time, and annually holds an Arbor Day Celebration event. The Delaware Department of Agriculture partnered with the Arbor Day Foundation to compile tree coverage data for the municipality and create a map portraying the amount of canopy coverage in Ocean View. This map, created in 2017 by the Delaware Urban and Community Forest Service, is a great resource for the Town to utilize. As shown in Image \*, Ocean View has a 32% tree canopy covering equating to approximately 551 acres. The percentage includes the portion of the Assawoman Canal that is within Town limits and does not include open water ways. There is more tree cover in the area just south of the Town boundary in the annexation area that would give this map even more significance if these areas were approved for annexation.



In order to attain Tree City status there are four criteria Ocean View must comply with. These standards are continually met by the Town and are as follows:

Standard 1 - Someone must be legally responsible for the care of all trees on city- or town-owned property. By delegating tree care decisions to a professional forester, arborist, city department, citizen-led tree board or some combination, city leaders determine who will perform necessary tree work. The public will also know who is accountable for decisions that impact community trees.

Standard 2 - A basic public tree care ordinance forms the foundation of a city’s tree care program. It provides an opportunity to set good policy and back it with the force of law when necessary.

Standard 3 - City trees provide many benefits - clean air, clean water, shade and beauty to name a few - but they also require an investment to remain healthy and sustainable. By providing support at or above the \$2 per capita minimum, a community demonstrates its commitment to grow and tend these valuable public assets. Budgets and expenditures require planning and accountability, which are fundamental to the long-term health of the tree canopy and the Tree City USA program. To meet this standard each year, the community must document at least \$2 per capita toward the planting, care and removal of city trees - and the planning efforts to make those things happen.

Standard 4 - An effective program for community trees would not be complete without an annual Arbor Day ceremony. Citizens gather to celebrate the benefits of community trees and the work accomplished to plant and maintain them. By passing and reciting an official Arbor Day proclamation, public officials demonstrate their support for the community tree program and complete the requirements for becoming a Tree City USA (delawaretrees.com).

As development continues it will be crucial for the Town to maintain tree canopy cover and it is recommended that the Town continue development of a community forestry ordinance.

**Wetlands Buffer**

To ensure that natural areas around the waterways of Ocean View are kept in good condition for future generations, the Town added a wetlands buffer to its legislative code. Part II, Article II (116-14) establishes there shall be a 25-foot buffer consisting of two zones around any water body or wetland. Zone A will be on the resource side of the total buffer area and be 10 feet in width while the development side of the buffer will contain the other 15 feet. Any development plan application must include a wetland report examined by a qualified professional and must be documented according to USACE and/or DNREC standards (Ecode360.com).

**Total Maximum Daily Loads for the Inland Bays Watershed**

The Town of Ocean View is located within the greater Inland Bays drainage area. Under Section 303(d) of the 1972 Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), states are required to identify all impaired waters and establish total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) to restore their beneficial uses (e.g., swimming, fishing, and drinking water). A TMDL defines the amount of a given pollutant that may be discharged to a water body from point, nonpoint, and natural background sources and still allows attainment or maintenance of the applicable narrative and numerical water quality standards. A TMDL is the sum of the individual Waste Load Applications (WLAs) for point sources and

Load Allocations (LAs) for nonpoint sources and natural background sources of pollution. A TMDL may include a reasonable margin of safety (MOS) to account for uncertainties regarding the relationship between mass loading and resulting water quality. In simplistic terms, a TMDL matches the strength, location and timing of pollution sources within a watershed with the inherent ability of the receiving water to assimilate the pollutant without adverse impact. Moreover, reducing the pollutants to the level specified by the TMDL(s) will ensure that a water body meets the water quality criteria and goals in the State Water Quality Standards.

A Pollution Control Strategy (PCS) is an implementation strategy that identifies the actions necessary to systematically reduce the pollutant loading rate for a given water body and meet the TMDL reduction requirements specified for that water body. A variety of site-specific best management practices (BMPs) will be the primary actions required by the PCS to reduce pollutant loadings. The pollutants specifically targeted for reduction in the Inland Bays watershed are nutrients (e.g., nitrogen and phosphorus) and bacteria. The PCS for the Inland Bays was approved on November 11, 2008 and is now a regulatory directive containing enforceable provisions.

The Town of Ocean View is located within the greater Inland Bays drainage (high nutrient reduction area). The Inland Bays drainage is assigned a range of nutrient (e.g., nitrogen and phosphorus) and bacterial TMDL load reduction requirements that, as mentioned previously, must be met in order to meet the State Water Quality Standards (See Table \*).

Inland Bays Drainage (High Reduction Area)	N - Reduction Requirements	P - Reduction Requirements	Bacteria Reduction Requirements
Indian River Bay Watershed	85%	65%	40% Fresh; 17% Marine

DNREC oversees the State’s Source Water Assessment Protection Program (SWAPP), which is primarily aimed at protecting water supplies from contamination. Central well protection areas and excellent recharge areas have been designated by DNREC. Sussex County has a source water protection ordinance that was recently adopted to meet a requirement of the State Source Water Protection Law of 2001. The ordinance is primarily designed to minimize the threats to major water supply wells from pollutants. The best type of land use around water supply wells is preserved open space or low-density residential development. Ideally, the amount of impervious coverage around major water supply wells would be minimized to allow the groundwater to be recharged.

The 2007 Sussex County Comprehensive Plan identified a large area of the County near the coast as an Environmentally Sensitive Developing Area. Ocean View is within the designated area. The County defined the area as a location for new housing as well as an area that contains ecologically important resources that help absorb floodwaters and provides a place for wildlife habitat and overall health of the Inland Bays. The County has made changes to the defined area in their updated 2018 Comprehensive Plan. The name has been revised from Environmentally Sensitive Developing Areas to Coastal Areas. It did not mention if the area boundaries have changed. The plan also notes the Environmentally Sensitive Development District Overlay Zone (ESDDOZ) is to be updated to be consistent with the County’s Comprehensive Plan. The Town should stay up-to-date on any changes made to this district. There are still potential concerns of stormwater runoff flowing into and polluting

waterways. It is important for Ocean View to be aware of how the Town might be affected by this area, and additional engagement with the County is warranted.

Regulatory protection of wetlands (tidal and nontidal) is mandated under Section 404 provisions of the Federal Clean Water Act through the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Certain other wetlands (mainly in tidal areas) are accorded additional regulatory protection under Title 7, Chapter 66 provisions of the State of Delaware's Code.

### Source Water Protection

Ocean View rests right along the Assawoman Canal and Whites Creek and has wetland areas, wellhead protection sites, and excellent groundwater recharge areas throughout the Town. These waters replenish the areas groundwater supply, serve as drinking water for residents, and invite tourism around the Town; preserving the quality of these waters is crucial to the Town's success. Map \* Environmental Features shows the location and proximity of in town and out of town water bodies. The Town has a population near 2,000 residents and rising. The state requires any town having a population over 2,000 residents to create a source water protection ordinance. This would ensure that Ocean View is actively engaged in helping to ensure safe drinking water and recreation areas are free from contamination.

As part of this effort, the Town may also consider recommendations for reducing impervious surfaces within the municipal limits for improving storm water management and drainage. These recommendations might include:

- Requiring the use of pervious paving materials, whenever practicable, in lieu of conventional paving materials. The use of pervious paving materials is especially beneficial for large commercial parking lot areas. Studies have shown a strong relationship between increases in impervious cover to decreases in a watershed's overall water quality. Reducing the amount of surface imperviousness using pervious paving materials "pervious pavers" in lieu of asphalt or concrete, is an example of practical BMPs that could easily be implemented to help reduce surface imperviousness.
- Potentially requiring an impervious surface mitigation plan for all residential and commercial development exceeding 20% imperviousness. The impervious surface mitigation plan should demonstrate that the impervious cover in excess of 20% will not impact ground water recharge, surface water hydrology, and/or water quality of the site and/or adjacent properties. If impacts to groundwater recharge, surface water hydrology will occur, the plan should then demonstrate mitigation of said impacts and/or if impacts cannot be mitigated, the site plan will be modified to reduce the impact of impervious cover. Additionally, it is further recommended the pervious paving materials be required. In commercial areas, it is strongly recommended that pervious paving materials be required for at least 50% of the total paved surface area(s). Define how



developers may calculate surface imperviousness. The calculation for surface imperviousness includes the following forms of constructed surface imperviousness: all paved surfaces (e.g., roads, sidewalks, and parking areas), rooftops, and open-water stormwater management structures.

## FEMA

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was established by President Jimmy Carter on April 1, 1979 to ensure that anyone needing help before, during, or after a disaster received adequate attention. Delaware is encompassed by Region III of FEMA's regional coverage zones which includes the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. Along with protecting against unnatural threats and emergencies, FEMA partners with the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) to evaluate and inform residents of Delaware about incoming storms, the possibility of flooding, and how to remain safe should a flood occur. To that end, FEMA collaborates with multiple agencies to keep a flood map service open as the official public source for flood hazard information. Ocean View residents may use this information, which also supports the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to protect themselves and their homes against natural disasters. Due to its proximity to the Atlantic Ocean it is important for the residents to know evacuation routes, 100-year floodplain data, and how to plan for a high-water event. This information can be found on the Map Service Center (MSC) that FEMA has published ([fema.gov](http://fema.gov)).

## Climate Change

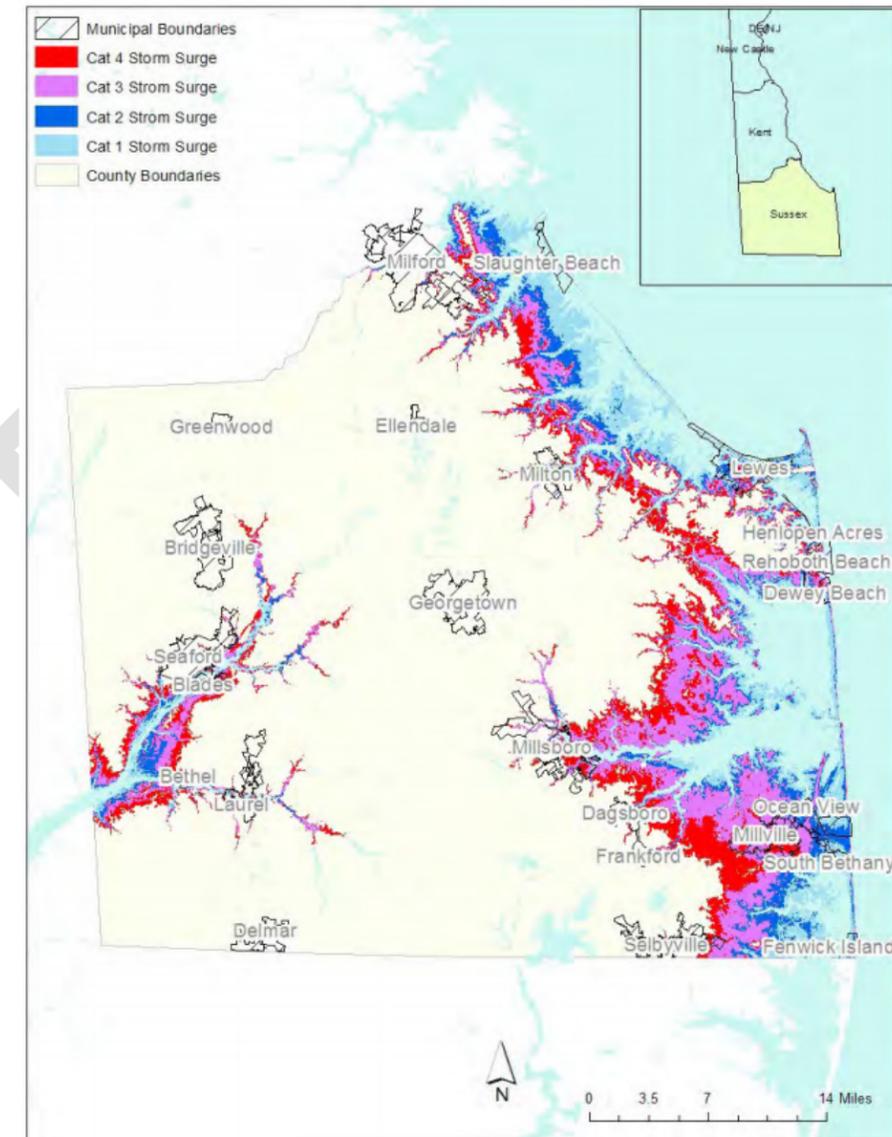
The coastal areas of Delaware are especially susceptible to climate change and Ocean View is no exception. Its highly residential land use, proximity to the Atlantic Ocean, and aging population make it imperative that the Town plan for climate change. The pressing issues that the Town faces are: heavy precipitation events, sea level rise, and temperature increases. Mitigation of the effects on the Town is an integral part of what will shape Ocean View in the coming years (this comprehensive plan will address how this can be accomplished).

### Heavy Rainfall / Storm Events

One of the major concerns with a changing climate is the recurrence of storms or heavy precipitation events that can cause flooding. Ocean View's infrastructure and the ability for it to handle such events plays a contributing role in how effectively the area can be evacuated and how it can prevent damage from these events. Planning for these events also contributes to how successful the municipality and emergency services can respond to these events. Ocean View should assess the vulnerability of older commercial and residential structures in preparation for the higher frequency of heavy rainfall events. Reducing congestion Route 26, the primary evacuation route through Town, would also support evacuation efforts in several surrounding towns ([sussexcountyde.gov](http://sussexcountyde.gov)). Efforts to increase the Town's ability to communicate with residents through advanced warning (Government Access Channel) will improve the Town's success in educating about local concerns and require action.

### Sea Level Rise

The Sussex County Comprehensive Plan highlights the importance of sea level rise and its impacts to coastal, and nearby, communities. One of the topics of concern when addressing climate change is flood inundation. Image \* Coastal Inundation from the Sussex County Plan shows the Coastal Areas of the County and the level of inundation based on storm surge. It is clear from the image that Ocean View has the potential to see major impacts from coastal inundation despite being inland. Rising sea level continues to threaten increasing impacts to coastal towns and their nearby neighboring communities. In order to maintain a vibrant community, it is crucial for Ocean View to plan for the future to ensure that buildings and infrastructure are secure. By partnering with DNREC, Sussex County, and the surrounding towns to prepare for these events the Town can be better prepared to respond in an emergency.



### Temperature Rise

The final key issue surrounding climate change is a steady rise in temperature. Although temperature is not something that can be controlled there are ways for Ocean View to prepare for a possible increase. Tree planting and shade contribute greatly to heat dispersion. Making sure buildings are up to code for cooling systems will also mitigate the effects of long-term temperature changes. Educating people on how to deal with heat waves and erratic weather also helps prepare the population for such events and can be a successful way to prevent the dangers of high temperatures. A shift in modes of transportation may also decrease carbon emissions and help combat rising temperatures, though on a town-wide scale these would be negligible contributing factors and would require a larger scale effort to be effective. However, both communication improvements (Government Access Channel) and new transportation options to be explored by the Town are encouraged.

### Hazard Mitigation

The Multi-jurisdictional All Hazard Mitigation Plan 2016 Update ([https://sussexcountyde.gov/sites/default/files/PDFs/SussexCounty\\_2016\\_HMP\\_Update.pdf](https://sussexcountyde.gov/sites/default/files/PDFs/SussexCounty_2016_HMP_Update.pdf)) was developed by Sussex County in cooperation with several other agencies and highlights in-depth statistical data gathered for the region concerning many of the various types of hazards that occur during storms. Everything from annual rainfall to tornado frequency can be found in this encompassing document. There are many different images, charts, tables, and maps showing all the ways in which storms can cause damage to property and buildings. The Town of Ocean View may choose to consult this document in further planning efforts.

### Air Quality

The American Lung Association reviews overall air quality elements and reports an assessment on a regional basis. Sussex County has a "D" rating in the system while Kent and New Castle counties have "C" and "F" ratings respectively (lung.org). The Town of Ocean View is dedicated to preserving natural resources for its residents. Although land use regulations do not typically account for the regulation of air quality, by contributing less carbon using multi-modal pathways, promoting more sustainable modes of transportation, and the integration of open space, Ocean View hopes to incrementally decrease its emissions in an effort to improve air quality.

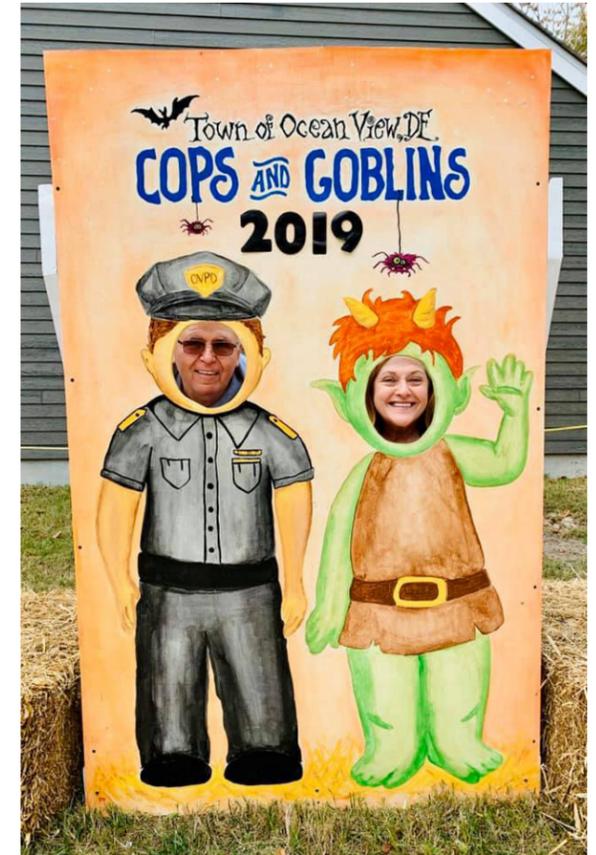
## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to preserve and maintain the current parks for future generations and increase educational efforts and fitness opportunities within the parks to promote livability and health improvements as well as helpful connections with the residents of Ocean View.
- Pursue grants and continued growth of any areas deemed as an ideal location for more recreation, conservation, or preservation of flora and fauna.
- Make any necessary changes to current zoning of areas that can be protected from development when possible.



### OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

According to a majority of Ocean View residents, the Town provides adequate recreational opportunities. In the comprehensive plan survey, 64% of participants believed recreational needs were being met. Within Ocean View there is the Town Park, trail-head access to the Assawoman Canal, and the Town's location provides a short walk, bike ride, or drive to the beach. It should be noted that developing new transit opportunities to easier serve the older population is encouraged. However, residents still felt there were opportunities missing, including a need for more walking and bike trails as well as courts for activities like basketball, tennis, and pickleball. Providing open space and recreation opportunities helps with building community character by creating a sense of place.



### Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

The Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation recently updated the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) to help understand development patterns, population, and track recreational trends. To achieve this goal SCORP divides Delaware into five regions. Ocean View is within Region 5, which consists of Eastern Sussex County. The purpose of the document is to identify the needs of the population within each region in terms of recreational and activity-based opportunities. A strategy for State policy and spending for recreational needs was developed based on findings from a Spring 2018 survey. In a phone interview, respondents were asked about their preferences in recreational activities and those of their household. Approximately 2,000 responses were obtained. Specifically, the survey concentrated on the respondents' assessment of five content areas:

- Importance of, and participation in, outdoor recreation
- Reasons for participating in outdoor recreation
- Ratings of facilities and opinions on specific aspects of facilities
- Accessing facilities
- Priorities for funding and policy making decisions

There were three prior surveys in 2002, 2008, and 2011 which have been used for comparison in the updated document. Key concepts that SCORP reaffirmed from their survey are that residents of Delaware in general believe recreation is "very important" and this percentage has seen an increase each time the survey was conducted. This indicates that the opinion is found more widespread with each year. SCORP rates activities in their importance to a specific region. Residents of Region 5 value walking and jogging, swimming at the beach, and fishing as the top three priorities of the area. With some slight variations, this has historically held true for the region. Other popular recreational activities in Region 5 include visiting historic sites, bicycling, swimming in a pool, and picnicking.

The second concept that SCORP focuses on is the Level of Service (LOS) of each region, meaning recreation opportunities in close proximity and accessible to its residents. This is broken down by five-minute and 15-minute walksheds which help identify accessibility levels. According to SCORP, a walkshed is "a pedestrian travel zone defined by the walkable area around a particular point of interest," such as parks and recreation facilities. The SCORP focuses on improving the number of total population served by these walksheds with the current percentages at nine percent for five minutes and 17% at 15 minutes. This information will be used in development of future parks and in evaluation of quality of life.



The Town of Ocean View will continue to provide recreational facilities and outdoor space for its residents. Looking to the future, the Town should continue to promote and improve areas dedicated to cyclists, pedestrians, swimming, and fishing, with a nod towards an aging population.

#### Town

Recreation, both active and passive, continues to be an important role in the health and well-being of families in Ocean View. The Town of Ocean View created a space to meet recreation needs and preserve open space with the establishment of John T. West Park, situated in a central location on West Avenue adjacent to Town Hall. The Park provides walking trails and a playground, as well a location for picnicking with outdoor grills and tables under a pavilion. This wooded park is maintained by the Town and has constant visitors. The building of the Park was made possible by a matching grant from Delaware's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) which helped provide funding for equipment and a fitness course. The Park also serves as a gathering place for residents of Ocean View and the surrounding towns. Community events are held at the Park, including concerts and movies during the summer and Old Town Holiday event in the winter. During the October comprehensive plan workshop, several residents noted the need for sidewalks, especially along West Avenue for residents to have safe access walking to and from the Park. Efforts are underway for facilitate this.

Additionally, the large-planned communities within Ocean View provide their community members with multiple recreational facilities including pools, playgrounds, and sports facilities. Most of the facilities are private and can only be used by residents and guests of the community. Some of these recreational facilities are accessible to the public, such as "Bear Trap Dunes Golf Course" which is one of the premier public golf courses in Delaware. Aside from these and other amenities, Ocean View is also in close proximity to the Atlantic Ocean which provides additional recreational opportunities. Delaware Seashore State Park, Fenwick Island State Park, Holts Landing State Park and James Farm Ecological Preserve are also easily accessible to residents of Ocean View.

### Assawoman Canal

The Assawoman Canal is part of the Delaware State Parks system, and is owned, operated and maintained by the State Parks. In 2008, the Town joined with the Towns of Bethany Beach and South Bethany Beach, and the Sea Colony Community in applying for a \$20,000-dollar matching grant through DNREC to plan for the development of a natural pathway along the Assawoman Canal extending from Whites Creek to South Bethany. Opened in 2011, this trail system provides recreation activities for walkers, joggers, and cyclists along both sides of the Canal. The nature trail signage provides visitors with information about where to find benches and other highlights along the trail while also sharing information on the history, wildlife, and natural vegetation along the Canal. As planned, the trail was completed according to the ADA standards and maintains accessibility to all.

The addition of the Assawoman Canal Bike and Pedestrian path has had a big impact on those that enjoy walking, jogging, and cycling. At the time of construction there was a strong push from several agencies and towns on improving the surrounding areas open spaces to accommodate the future. Governor Jack Markell opened the park on August 11, 2015 and since that time the mile-long bike and walking trail has been an outdoor staple for Ocean View and the surrounding communities. A recent improvement at the trail-head in Ocean View includes a much anticipated kayak launch in 2019.

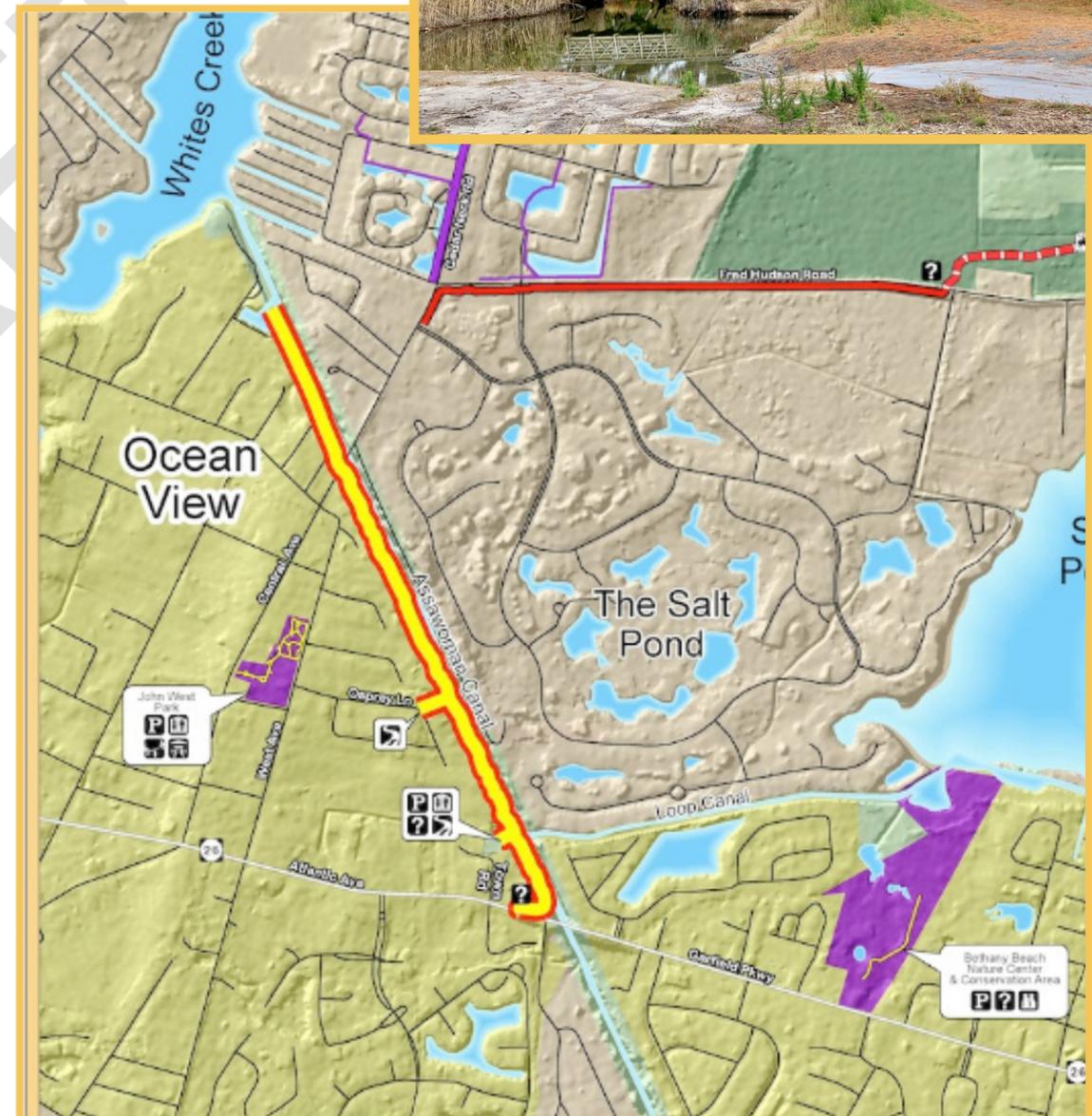
Portions of the Assawoman Canal make up Ocean View's eastern town boundary. Having close access to the Canal's pathways and open space, the Town could utilize this resource by incorporating it into a larger system of walking and bike trails throughout Town. With existing access points to the Canal in place, the Town should plan to link other open space areas as greenways to the Canal. This would increase the Town's open space and provide safe access throughout Town and to the Canal.

### Open Space and Recreation Opportunities

Ocean View benefits from close access to two popular active recreation sites – John West Park and the Assawoman Canal Trail. However, the Town feels there are additional opportunities for more passive recreation. Where active recreation is associated with activities like biking and the use of a playground, passive recreation is more focused on enjoying the natural environment through activities like walking and picnicking. The Town would like to see more pocket parks, senior exercise stations, and connections to the Canal Trail.

The Town has already identified a few parcels to develop into open space and passive recreation. Between the Beach Club community and Muddy Neck Road, there is a triangular parcel that would be prime for open space or a wetland landscape walking area. There are additional parcels on the south end of Town along the Canal that could be developed in collaboration with the County. These parcels would be an ideal location for an additional kayak launch. On the west side of Town, in the older neighborhoods, there is currently no open space. Residents would benefit from having accessible pocket parks on the west side of Town.

The Town should continue to identify potential locations for additional open space and passive recreation. A focus should be on locations that are easily accessible to all residents. A survey should also be conducted to prioritize types of activities residents would like to see. Based on potential park locations and survey results, the Town can then make an assessment on best locations for new open space and passive recreation based on feasibility and preferences. It is strongly suggested that recreational and exercise options for an aging population, but active population be explored.





## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue use of John T. West Park as a recreational facility as well as Town gathering space and attempt to incorporate exercise areas for active adults.
- Develop an open space and recreation plan to see where trails and areas of open space could connect to the Assawoman Canal Trail.
- Look for possible opportunities to add sidewalks throughout the Town, and in particular for safe access to the Park and business areas.
- Engage DNREC for assistance with Assawoman Canal Trail Bank improvements and expansion.



## HISTORIC RESOURCES

Since its establishment in the early 1800s and official incorporation in 1889, the Town of Ocean View has developed into a modern coastal community that has been able to retain many of its historic resources. Over the years, the Town has continued to promote historic preservation through the establishment of a historic district overlay and by having an active historical society. As the Town works towards prioritizing community building, its historic resources can provide a basis for enhancing community character based on 130 years of history since its incorporation.



### Historic District

In March 2009 the Town of Ocean View created the Historic Preservation Overlay Zoning (HPOZ) District, later establishing regulations and formally adopting the ordinance (Ordinance No. 252) in August of that same year. The boundaries of the HPOZ District include to the south Atlantic Avenue from Woodland Avenue to West Avenue, to the east is West Avenue from Atlantic Avenue to the Assawoman Canal, to the north is the Canal from Central to Elliott Avenues, and the western bound includes Elliott, Daisey and Woodland Avenues from the Canal to Atlantic Avenue. The purpose of the HPOZ District is ultimately the preservation of the Town's character and heritage. Promoting restoration over demolition, ensuring new construction and alterations keep with the character of the HPOZ, encouraging proper maintenance, and promoting the preservation values as described in the Town's comprehensive plan are also listed as the purpose for the HPOZ District.

The HPOZ regulations provide definitions which help clarify important terminology used throughout the ordinance such as alterations versus maintenance/repairs or contributing structures versus non-contributing. Structures that are considered "contributing" meet the Planning and Zoning Commission's criteria of historical significance, integrity and context as well as architectural and longevity tests (represents architecture of the Town and is more than 50 years old). It is important to note that residents have the option to submit their property to be considered a contributing structure and have the choice to withdraw from that designation. The regulations also provide review procedures identifying the types of projects that need building permits versus those that do not. Also included are procedures for proposed demolition projects. The last section of the regulations describes the review criteria and standards. Mirroring the purpose statement of the HPOZ, the criteria are based on historic and architectural value and significance, distinctive features, compatibility with other contributing structures, and ultimately the impact of its removal and loss of history.

### Historic Structures

The Town currently has two properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2012 the Tunnell-West House (1885) was listed on the National Register making it the first property in Ocean View to be listed. Three years later in 2015 the Evans-West House (1901) became the second property in Town to be listed on the National Register. The Delaware State Historic Preservation Office has determined the only property within Town limits eligible for National Register listing is Lord Baltimore Elementary School. This could provide an opportunity for the Town and Ocean View Historical Society to work together to complete a third National Register nomination for an important institutional site that has served children in the Ocean View area since the 1930s.

Many of the properties throughout Town have been surveyed over the years by the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office. These surveys are accessible through an online mapping source maintained by the Delaware Division of Historic and Cultural Affairs. The online mapping resource is referred to as CHRIS – Cultural and Historic Resource Information System. The mapping program provides important information regarding historic sites including identifying properties listed on the National Register, properties that have been determined eligible or ineligible to be listed on the National Register, and properties surveyed but not labeled. Within Town bounds there are approximately 40 properties, mostly along Atlantic Avenue, that have been determined to be ineligible for National Register listing. This could be due to the property having significant exterior changes that have caused the structure to lose its historical value according to national standards. Approximately 120 properties are listed on the CHRIS map as "All Other Values." Majority of the "All Other Values" properties are located within the Town's Historic Preservation Overlay Zoning District, with about 30 properties to the south of Atlantic Avenue. This could provide an opportunity for further research on the Town's historic properties and to determine if the HPOZ District should

be expanded.

### Ocean View Historical Society

The start of the Ocean View Historical Society began in the early 2000s as the Town's Historic Preservation Committee. In 2005, the Town established a Historic Preservation Committee tasked with identifying historic buildings, preserving Town history, and developing regulations to preserve the Town's cultural resources. The Committee eventually became the Ocean View Historical Society and was officially incorporated as a non-profit in January 2008. Their goal was similar to the Historic Preservation Committee's, but more broadly stated: educate residents and visitors on the history of the Town. At the time they leased the Shore House as a museum for local history.

Within the first 10 years of their establishment, the Ocean View Historical Society has been able to accomplish a number of projects. The organization established a historical complex to display artifacts at the Tunnell-West House (39 Central Avenue), restored an 1800s outhouse, restored the exterior of the 1889 post office, and constructed a replica of Cecile Steele's first chicken house. In 2017, the organization acquired the Evans-West House (40 West Avenue) from members of the Evans family. The location will be the new home of the Coastal Towns Museum showcasing artifacts from the towns of Ocean View, Millville, Bethany Beach, South Bethany, and Fenwick Island. As of 2018, the Historical Society had completed the exterior of the new visitor's center, appropriately named Hall's Store, and is working on funding to complete the interior. Hall's Store will include rotating exhibits, as well as space for lectures, social events and meetings.

The Ocean View Historical Society has recently evolved into the Coastal Towns Historic Village in Ocean View. The new focus of the organization is the preservation of southeastern Sussex County, also known as the Baltimore Hundred. Their new mission statement is to:

*"preserve, interpret and collect the history of Ocean View and the surrounding Baltimore Hundred area, sharing our past with all communities that comprise the Ocean*



Photographs from  
Ocean View's 2012  
Homecoming event



*View Area, visitors, and locals; thereby building an identity that will enable us to wisely approach the challenges the future will bring to Delaware's coastal towns."*

With 200 members and volunteers, the organization is continuing their proactive approach of promoting the importance of local history and creating a sense of place. The goals of the organization continue to be 1) develop and operate a center/museum for a variety of community educational activities and display artifacts, 2) collect, preserve and interpret a collection of local history artifacts and records, 3) promote community events of historical significance with the public, and 4) encourage the preservation and restoration of local historical assets. The efforts of the Ocean View Historical Society have been a major contributing factor in the Town's ability to preserve its history and character.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to work with the Ocean View Historical Society on preservation planning related projects.
- Explore options for incentivizing homeowners to declare their property as "contributing."
- Periodically review the Historical Preservation Overlay Zoning District regulations for needed updates.
- Continue to support the Historical Society as they continue to grow their organization and expand opportunities to learn about the Baltimore Hundred.



## HOUSING

The Town of Ocean View's housing stock consists of a mix of older structures located in established neighborhoods, newer residential units within large planned communities as well as a few small infill residential areas, all within a few miles to the Atlantic Ocean. This offers residents, and those looking to move to Ocean View, a variety of housing types, architectural styles, and neighborhoods to select from. The diversity in housing options has become attractive to a growing retiree community which includes those that are currently retired and those purchasing second homes as they look towards retirement in the coming years. The seasonal residents have also taken advantage of the variety in housing, many preferring the planned communities that offer additional amenities and services. Of high interest to year-round residents is the relaxed atmosphere and many off-season specials provided by Town restaurants and businesses.



**Occupancy**

Within town limits, the US Census estimates as of 2017 a total of 2,129 housing units. Of those, 46% are predominately occupied while 54% are classified as vacant. The US Census defines a vacant housing unit as “no one living in it at the time of enumeration, unless its occupants are only temporarily absent. Units temporarily occupied at the time of enumeration entirely by people who have a usual residence elsewhere are also classified as vacant. This can be contrasted with both Sussex County and the State which have predominately occupied housing, 65% and 83% respectively. Ocean View’s reversal in occupied versus vacant housing can be attributed to the Town having a predominantly seasonal population. It is also worth noting that these figures have not changed since the 2010 US Census which account for the same percentages of occupied and vacant housing. Of the 976 occupied housing units, 88% are owner occupied with 12% being rentals. This ratio is approximately the same as the 2010 Census – 85% owner occupied and 15% rentals. The Town ranks slightly higher than the County and State in owner versus renter occupied as depicted below in Table X. Moreover, the higher rental vacancy, again, can be attributed to seasonal housing. The outcome of the 2020 Census regarding these findings will be of interest in relationships to future decisions.

**Table 9.1** Housing Occupancy and Tenure

	TOWN OF OCEAN VIEW	SUSSEX COUNTY	DELAWARE
Total Housing Units	2,129	132,980	423,489
Occupied Housing	45.8%	64.9%	83.2%
Vacant Housing	54.2%	35.1%	16.8%
<b>Total Occupied Housing Units</b>			
Total Occupied Housing Units	976	86,322	352,357
Owner Occupied Units	87.8%	79.2%	71.3%
Renter Occupied Units	12.2%	20.8%	28.7%
<b>Homeowner Vacancy Rate</b>			
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	2.3%	2.9%	2.1%
<b>Rental Vacancy Rate</b>			
Rental Vacancy Rate	19.6%	7.2%	7.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 - 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**Housing Composition**

The primary type of housing found in Ocean View is single-family. This type of housing can be found in the older sections of Town as well as the newer residential areas. Single-family dwellings account for 95% of total units. Of that total, 76% are single-family detached while 20% are single family attached units such as townhomes. Only 5% of housing is multiunit which is defined as two or more units. All multi-family units are located within the planned communities.

**Table 9.2** Housing Composition

Types of Homes	Number	Percent
Single-Family, detached	1,613	75.8%
Single-Family, attached	416	19.5%
Multi-unit (2 or more units)	100	4.7%
Other	0	0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 - 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates  
 Note: "Other" includes mobile homes, boats, RVs, vans, etc.

**Age of Structures**

Based on housing age it is clear that the Town saw a recent boom in housing construction. Houses built between 2000 and 2009 make up over half (about 57%) of the total housing. Several large planned communities were approved and began construction during this time period. About 24% of housing was constructed between 1980 and 1999. Together, this approximately 30-year time period (1980-2009) makes up for 81% of the total housing. Since 2009 the several large planned communities, like Bear Trap Dunes and Beach Club, have been built-out. Housing units constructed in 2010 and later accounts for close to 5% according to the Census estimates. However, the estimates for 2010 and later are very low compared to Town’s records. According to the Town’s records, there have been 615 building permits issued for residential dwellings since 2010. If the number 615 replaced the 97 structures built 2010 and later, as listed in Table X, the new percentage would be 23% as opposed to under 5%. The major discrepancy is due to the Census data being estimates and not accounting for number of proposed developments.

It is also notable that close to nine percent of housing is historic meaning structures that are 50 years or older. About four percent of the housing stock was built prior to 1940.

**Table 9.3** Housing Age

Year Structure Built	Number	Percent
2014 or later	22	1.0%
2010-2013	75	3.5%
2000-2009	1,210	56.8%
1990-1999	301	14.1%
1980-1989	204	9.6%
1970-1979	134	6.3%
1960-1969	56	2.6%
1950-1959	31	1.5%
1940-1949	14	0.7%
1939 or earlier	82	3.9%
	2,129	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 - 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



**Future Housing**

As part of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan process, a town wide survey and public workshop was completed. Through the survey and workshop residents of Ocean View had the opportunity to voice their opinions on existing and future housing opportunities. Generally, residents felt the Town has adequate housing options and should no longer focus on large-scale planned communities. Along with that similar sentiment, many residents were opposed to the idea of more townhouses or multi-family dwellings which are commonly found in planned communities. Due to limitations in future town expansion and a lack of large parcels available for development,

there are not many opportunities to continue in the direction of large-scale planned communities. New housing will likely be focused on infill with mixed-use structures comprised of residential above commercial uses.

Some residents did note that a variety of housing would provide more affordable options for those that work in Town such as business owners, Town staff, teacher, police officers and those who work in the hospitality service industry. In general, it is common to not find affordable housing in close proximity to coastal areas due to high property values. The result is a local workforce finding housing well outside the coastal community where they work. According to the US Census' 2017 estimates, the median home value in Ocean View was \$337,600. Compared to its neighboring towns, Ocean View's median home value is about \$46,000 more than the Town of Millville (further away from the coast) and approximately \$158,000 less than the Town of Bethany Beach (directly situated along the coast). When it comes to rent, Ocean View's median gross rent was \$1,174 which is slightly less than Bethany Beach (\$1,211) and significantly less than Millville (\$1,429). It should be noted that the range in rent is likely due to the amount and type of rentals available.

With the feedback from residents in mind, the Town would like to continue offering a variety in housing types to current and future residents. This includes housing affordable to the local workforce, families, retirees, and seasonal residents. Along with current housing options, the Town is considering the incorporation of mixed-use **in appropriate locations** which would allow for residential units to be constructed above first floor commercial. This type of use would be concentrated along Route 26 with shops and businesses on the ground level with housing on the upper levels. This type of housing could be appealing to people that work within Town limits as well as the surrounding communities adding to the Town's desire to be a complete community.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Maintain a diverse housing stock that is attractive to current and future residents.
- Focus new housing projects on infill development.
- Work with the Ocean View Historical Society and Sussex County Preservation Office to survey the historic dwellings within Town limits.
- Review the existing zoning ordinance to better incentivize mixed-use - residential above commercial uses - along Route 26.
- Consider amending the zoning code to allow for Accessory Dwelling Units when appropriate.
- Engage DSHA and the Delaware State Community Land Trust (DSCLT) about opportunities to partner to provide appropriate senior housing.



## COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES

Ocean View provides its residents with essential community facilities and services, from 24-hour public safety services to public utilities. Residents benefit from being in close proximity to the towns of Bethany Beach and Millville for services not provided within Town limits. The Town is always striving to maintain and improve their facilities and services to meet the needs of Ocean View's unique community. This means accommodating a year-round population, seasonal residents, and a community that is predominately 65 years and older.

*Insert quote  
from survey  
or workshop*

MEMBERS OF THE OCEAN VIEW POLICE DEPARTMENT



**Community Facilities**

*Town Hall*

The Town of Ocean View currently operates two municipal facilities – one housing the administrative offices and the Police Department and the second as its formal meeting space and community center of sorts. Town staff work on the second floor of the Wallace A. Melson Municipal Building located at 201 Central Avenue. The space is shared with the Town’s police department which is located on the first floor. The building was constructed in 2007. Ocean View’s original Town Hall is located at 32 West Avenue and remains in use for special events, like elections, meetings, and serves as home to long term tenant – University of Delaware Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

*Postal Service*

The U.S. Postal Service operates two post offices within close proximity to Ocean View. There is a post office in Millville located at 35764 Atlantic Avenue. A second post office is in Bethany Beach at 14 N. Pennsylvania Avenue.

*Libraries*

The South Coastal Library, located at 43 Kent Avenue in Bethany Beach, is less than two miles from Town. Three additional public libraries are located in nearby towns - Rehoboth Beach, Frankford and Selbyville - and less than a 30-minute drive.

*Education*

The Town is located within the Indian River School District and has one school within Town limits. Lord Baltimore Elementary School is located off Route 26 on the western most side of Town at 120 Atlantic Avenue. The elementary school serves kindergartners through 5th graders from Ocean View and surrounding towns. As of the start of the 2019 school year, 681 students are enrolled at Lord Baltimore.

Students then move onto Selbyville Middle School located at 80 Bethany Road in Selbyville. As of 2019 there are 740 6th through 8th graders enrolled at the school. For high school, 9th through 12th grade, students attend Indian River High School located at 29772 Armory Road in Dagsboro. For the 2019 school year, there are 950 students enrolled in the high school.

Alternative school options are also available to students. The Southern Delaware School of the Arts is a public school within the Indian River School District emphasizing learning through the arts. The school is located in Selbyville and serves students in kindergarten through 8th grade with 472 students currently enrolled. Sussex Academy of Arts and Sciences is a charter school is Georgetown. As of the 2019 school year there are 795 students 6th grade through 12th grade that attend the school. For an alternative high school option, Sussex Technical High School offers a Tec academic education. The school has a current enrollment of 1,240 students grades 9th through 12th. Sussex Tech is also located in Georgetown.

*Senior Services*

With a large retiree population, it is important the Town promote services to meet their needs. Just outside of Town limits is one of CHEER’s seven activity centers in Sussex County. These centers provide activities, meals and events for seniors as well as transportation. Ocean View’s CHEER activity center is located at 30637 Cedar Neck Road and open to members Monday through Friday. A yearly membership is available to people 50 years and older. The center offers exercise programs, crafts and games, educational trips as well as support groups. A fitness room with a variety of equipment is also available with a separate fitness membership. Transportation is also available for needed trips to the grocery store, bank, etc. Even though the CHEER center is outside of Town limits it is still a



OCEAN VIEW ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES (ABOVE)  
OCEAN VIEW AREA CHEER CENTER (BELOW)



**Ocean View Daily News**

Issue No. 1010101 Thursday, July 18, 2019 Since 1889

**OVPD NABS NOTORIOUS DOG-SNATCHING DUO!**



Cruella De Vil & Jasper Apprehended by Sgt. Ballentine — Residents & Canines Rejoice!

**VILLAINS DON'T STAND A CHANCE IN OCEAN VIEW, DE!**

useful resource to Ocean View residents and those living in nearby towns.

As Ocean View continues to maintain a high population of retirees, it is important the Town continue to offer and promote services geared towards that population. These services include multi-modes of transportation, access to services like medical care, shopping and recreation, and opportunities to engage with others. The Town can work towards promoting services for an aging population by increasing the number of sidewalks and signalized crosswalks, as well as welcoming businesses geared towards a 65 and older population.

**Public Safety & Services**

*Police*

The Ocean View Police Department’s motto is “Small Agency, Big Results,” and they work by that motto by providing full-service police protection to the community 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The department is comprised of one secretary and 11 sworn positions that receives the support of a dedicated team of volunteers. All officers have completed advanced training and are prepared to respond to any emergency. The Department also benefits from having a police K9. A recent staffing study was completed and recommended the Department hire two additional

officers to meet the needs of the Town.

The Town also benefits from additional programs the Police Department offers to residents. One of the more popular programs is Home Check-In. This is geared towards seasonal residents whose home may sit vacant for long periods of time. As requested by a property owner, the Police Department makes the extra effort to stop by these properties.

#### *Fire & Rescue*

Fire and rescue services are provided by the Millville Volunteer Fire Company which serves Millville, Ocean View and surrounding areas. The fire station is located off Atlantic Avenue (Route 26), about one mile outside of Ocean View's town limits. The Company currently has over 100 members. Emergency medical services are provided by Millville Volunteer Fire Company's ambulance service and Sussex County's EMTs. To assist with the continued demands for these services, the Town makes an annual donation to the fire company. The donation of \$84,000 is raised from money received from building permits and put into the Emergency Services Enhancement Fund.

#### *Electric and Telecommunication*

Delmarva Power and Light, and Delaware Electric Cooperative provide electrical services to Ocean View residents and businesses. Mediacom is the only cable provider for Ocean View residents.

#### *Trash Service*

The Town does not currently have a trash service. In the 2019 comprehensive plan survey, about 50 percent of participants said they would be in favor of a unified trash pick-up service. Ocean View's aging population would benefit from the added service. Ocean View's environment and street network would also benefit from fewer trucks on the road and less large vehicles in neighborhoods on a weekly basis. The Town should consider how they might



benefit from taking some level of control of this service provision.

### **Water and Wastewater**

#### *Public Water*

The Town of Ocean View Water System is a municipal utility that serves approximately 900 properties within the Town. The system is operated for the Town by Tidewater Utilities and water is provided from Tidewater's wells in the Bethany Bay District. Included in the system are fire hydrants located along streets in the Town's service territory. All properties located within the service territory are required to connect to the system.

Under an agreement with Tidewater, it provides meter reading and billing on behalf of the Town's water system. Meters are read quarterly, and water bills are mailed in January, April, July, and October.

#### *Public Sewer*

The Town of Ocean View falls within the Sussex County Unified Sanitary Sewer District. The Town was formerly part of the Bethany Beach Sanitary Sewer District as an expansion area before the County consolidated the existing sewer districts under one name. Sewage is collected and treated at the South Coastal Wastewater Treatment Plant just south of Town off Beaver Dam Road.

Sewer capacity will continue to be an important consideration as the coastal and nearby communities continue to see growth. The Town currently requires subdivision and annexation applications be accompanied with a letter stating sewer capacity is available for the proposed development. The Town will continue to work with Sussex County to ensure new development does not exceed sewer capacity limitations for the area and that necessary improvements are made.

#### *Stormwater and Drainage*

The Town does not have an inventory of the existing stormwater infrastructure; however, they have identified problem areas. Majority of the drainage issues occur in the older neighborhoods, established before development requirements were in place. The Town has made these areas a priority by addressing the issue or budgeting for improvements to be made. In the Town's Capital Expenditures Budget for fiscal year 2020-2024 there are 11 proposed drainage projects in the budget. Some of the target areas include Country Village and Country Estates, Woodland and Daisy Avenue. Types of projects range from pipe cleaning and video to pipe repairs.



PHOTO BY KEN SIGVARDSON

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Address the future needs of the retiree population by ensuring adequate and appropriate services are provided.
- Consider the benefits associated with any expansion of the Town Police Department in association with the staffing study.
- Conduct an evaluation of possible benefits of a unified trash, recycling, and waste collection service.
- Continue to address stormwater and drainage issues by prioritizing and budgeting for green infrastructure projects.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As described in the 2010 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Ocean View continues to benefit from a strong local economy due to residential development. A large portion of Ocean View's growth has come from retirees and the second home market. Furthermore, its proximity to the Ocean has helped to develop a strong tourism base. As the Town continues to develop it should focus on attracting unique small businesses and destination marketing.



**Economic Conditions**

According to Census data the mean travel time to work is 31.3 minutes, down from 33 minutes in 2010. The Census bureau estimates that 15% of Ocean View's workers work at home. According to the 2017 American Community Survey, the median household income is \$73,397, compared to \$63,036 and \$57,901 at the State and County level respectively. Only 54.5% of the population aged 16 years and over is in the labor force, compared to 62.2% of the State's 16+ population and 56.3% of the County's; almost half of the Town's working population (45.5%) is not in the labor force. However, only 7.5% of all people and 3.1% of families in Ocean View were considered below the poverty level in 2017. In the State of Delaware, 12.1% of all people and 8.2% of families fall below the poverty level; those rates are strikingly similar at the County level - 12.0% and 8.0%.

The real estate boom in Ocean View is expected to slow and other markets such as health and social service industries are growing in Eastern Sussex County. Based on the 2017 American Community Survey, the top three industry sectors in Ocean View are 'educational services, health care and social assistance' (18.8%), 'retail trade' (17.7%), and 'construction' (11.0%).

Since a majority of Ocean View's new residents are retired, employment opportunities need not grow at the same pace of the population. However, the increasing numbers of retirees need additional services that ultimately result in job growth regardless. Additionally, the seasonal influx of tourists will continue to provide employment opportunities for younger residents and hospitality industry employees. Some studies have already been conducted and many are still on-going to assess the economic impacts of retiree in-migration. The in-migration of retirees to a relatively undeveloped, low-density area will have both economic benefits and socio-economic costs. While in-migrating retirees may stimulate health services, housing, banking, restaurant, and entertainment industries, they may also need increased public spending on healthcare and support services. Retirees have a tendency of driving housing prices up, but also create new jobs. In coastal areas where home prices are already high, new employees, first time homebuyers or young families may have trouble finding suitable housing options.

Throughout the public engagement process the Town received a few suggestions from the community regarding economic development:

- Invest in helping the current small business community in Ocean View.
- Most residents believed that future commercial development should be limited to the Route 26 corridor, but several residents thought government should not have a strong role in economic development, instead leaving it to market forces.
- Some residents noted the need for expanded broadband options in Town.
- Some residents said they would like the Atlantic Avenue corridor to be vibrant and walkable.
- When asked to rename the commercial district, the most popular choice amongst residents was Town Center, further demonstrating the desire for vibrant commercial core.



The Town is engaged with neighborhood businesses and property owners along the Route 26 corridor but has no formal economic development division or plan at this time. As the Town continues to focus on delivering more, high-quality services to its residents it will need to pay attention to any wealth-housing disparities that may arise.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to monitor and assess any gaps between income and housing needs.
- Amend the zoning code to prohibit any large-scale or auto-oriented commercial development along Route 26 (currently GB-1 district.)
- Explore expansion of community events to include working with local businesses to create events such as 'First Fridays' or pop-up shops to highlight local shops and vendors.
- Target industries, such as service providers, that will complement the needs of an aging population.
- Promote regional place-based tourism.

 **TRANSPORTATION**

This chapter identifies and describes the different components to Ocean View's transportation system. It identifies potential transportation improvements and policies that are needed to support planned land uses and improve the function and safety of the transportation system. The Plan recommends improvements that will encourage multi-modal transportation and accommodate bicycle and pedestrian circulation as components of the transportation network.

The Transportation Chapter was prepared by reviewing Town transportation policies and goals, state system components including highways, pedestrian facilities, bicycle routes, and public transportation. Existing conditions were identified using the most recent available data. Recommendations to address local transportation issues and support regional transportation goals and objectives are listed at the end of this chapter.



**Goal & Objectives**

The objective of the Transportation section of this Comprehensive Plan is to outline planning efforts that can be taken in order to create a well configured community. To accomplish this the Town will implement many of the concepts described within Complete Streets in Delaware: A Guide for Local Governments (University of Delaware IPA). According to the Complete Streets guide, a well-furnished street should consist of several characteristics that make it stand out. Chief among these characteristics is providing the public with multimodal transportation options which encourage use of the street as a vibrant center for activity. One step to promoting local multimodal transit is making sure that the streets have common features and designs so that they can be easily recognizable and encourage use. Building the street in a way that makes it flexible and accessible to everyone is another important concept behind the success of building a complete street network.

There are goals the Town can accomplish through careful and creative planning efforts that will help create a network of these highly functional roadways and alluring streetscapes. The Town of Ocean View can begin developing this network by implementing the following goals:



- Streets must meet all ADA requirements
- New streets should be designed in order to be easily maintained
- Streets need to have an appealing look
- Identify opportunities for improved network connectivity and efficiency
- Encourage and promote safety for all modes of transportation
- Explore opportunities to provide nodes connecting bicycle traffic and pedestrian traffic to Route 26

## Roads

Existing Conditions: Main corridors within Ocean View are owned and maintained primarily by the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT). The Town maintains many of the roads adjacent to the state-owned corridors. Private entities including developers and property owners' associations also have responsibility for maintaining some roads within their developments. In light of the potential need for sidewalk improvements in these areas and throughout the town having a clear distinction for who maintains the roads becomes vital to budgeting and identifying partnerships for improvement efforts concerning modern concepts for walkability and sidewalk safety.

### State

Within the Town of Ocean View there are 8.1 miles of state-maintained roadways. These routes carry the majority of the eastbound and west bound traffic. The most heavily used state road is Route 26, which divides the North and South portions of the historical part of Town. Ocean View would like to see these roads effectively maintained to the standards of the Performance Measures of the State Transportation Improvement Program or TIP (deldot.gov). This includes ensuring that safety for all modes of transportation is of the highest priority.

The State and County funded two Capital Transportation Projects (CTP) that directly affected the Town. The first project was a result of the recommendations of the Route 26 Planning Study and included improvements to intersections as well as the addition of five-foot shoulders along the Route 26 corridor from Clarksville to the Assawoman Canal. Sidewalks were constructed from Windmill Road (S362) to the Assawoman Canal. The typical section for this project is two 11-foot travel lanes, two five-foot shoulders, and a 12-foot continuous center left turn lane. The section from Clarksville to west of Windmill Drive is an open section with roadside ditching for drainage. The section from west of Windmill Drive to the Assawoman Canal is a closed section with curb, gutter, and closed drainage. Most of the closed section has a three-foot grass strip behind the curb and

gutter, as well as five-foot sidewalks. The intersection of Route 26 and Central Avenue was realigned and turn lanes were added in each direction. The Route 26 and Powell Farm Road intersection has also been realigned. Additionally, a second project involving the construction of a sidewalk/pedestrian pathway on Central Avenue from Woodland Avenue north to Route 26 was completed (deldot.gov).

The State of Delaware classifies roads based upon their function throughout the area. To date the only arterial road in Ocean View is Route 26, which is a minor arterial. All the other state-owned roads through the Town are considered collector roads; specifically, major collectors. It should be noted that the classification of arterial is a more frequently trafficked road than a collector in this functional classification. The notable collector roads are Central Avenue, Woodland Avenue, West Avenue, Muddy Neck Road, and Beaver Dam Road.

### Town

The Town of Ocean View maintains approximately 23 miles of roadway within the municipal boundaries. A majority of what the Town must maintain are secondary roads to the State-owned highway network and residential streets. Two notable roads the Town services are Woodland Avenue and West Avenue, north of Route 26. Maintenance of these roads is now under a Pavement Management Plan developed by a contract company that was initiated by the Town in 2014. The design focuses on rehabilitation and preservation of the roads via a long-term capital improvement fund. The roads were assessed based on damage and the need for repairs. Maintaining roads can be costly and to mitigate these expenditures the Town has created four categories of maintenance that include: sealing cracks, fixing potholes, surface treatments, and overlays. When appropriately utilized, this plan should be cost-effective, extend the life of the roads, and prevent future damages. Before the implementation of this plan the financial backlog for maintenance was roughly \$700,000. To date the backlog is almost half that amount, showing that the program has been very cost effective and should continue to help preserve the roads in Ocean View.

There are also several private developments in Ocean View that maintain responsibility over their own roadway maintenance.

## Traffic Trends

From 2015 to 2018 there has been roughly a 1% increase in traffic on every major and minor roadway in Town except for the northern portion of Central Avenue leading to Fred Hudson Road. There are no counts for roads adjacent to this section of road, but it is likely that the decrease in traffic counts is due to traffic dispersion off the surrounding streets and not a decrease in traffic within the Town.

On August 28, 2019 Ocean View was authorized by the Department of Transportation for a Traffic Restriction. A traffic investigation was completed by DelDOT and it was determined that Traffic Restriction TRSC109-19 would be put in place to prohibit trucks over two axels, except for local deliveries. These restrictions will help mitigate truck traffic through the heart of Ocean View and restricts truck use on Central

Avenue from Fred Hudson Road to where it intersects with Route 26. These recommendations come after a long history of complaints about commercial truck traffic that should be utilizing the state route network as opposed to Central Avenue. This restriction took effect on the day it was authorized (deldot.gov).

Route 26, or Atlantic Avenue, is the main corridor through Town for all seasonal and local traffic. As the Town continues to grow, many of the side roads will see more of this traffic as motorists "cut through" portions of Town to avoid the congestion. We can see this in Table \* AADT Traffic Counts for Ocean View Roads below.



PHOTO BY KEN SIGVARDSON

Road Segment	2015 AADT	2018 AADT	Difference	Percent Change	Annual Percent Change
Route 26 Atlantic Avenue, Central Avenue, Road 35	13,598	14,436	838	6.2%	2.1%
Route 26 Garfield Parkway, E. Ocean View Limits	12,791	13,135	344	2.7%	0.9%
Fred Hudson Road, Del. 1, Road 50	10,279	12,0125	1,736	16.9%	5.6%
Central Avenue, N. E. Ocean View Limit	10,277	9,567	710	6.9%	2.3%
Central Avenue, Del. 26, Atlantic Avenue	8,256	8,583	327	4.0%	1.3%
Central Avenue, Ocean View Limits	2,369	2,484	115	4.9%	1.6%
Beaver Dam, Central Avenue, Road 84	1,680	1,929	249	14.8%	4.9%
Beaver Dam, Muddy Neck Road	1,881	1,956	75	4.0%	1.3%
Parker House Road, Muddy Neck Road	1,570	1,616	46	2.9%	1.0%
West Avenue, S. Ocean View Limits	6,200	6,447	247	4.0%	1.3%
West Avenue, Beaver Dam Road	2,841	2,953	112	3.9%	1.3%
West Avenue, Double Bridges Road	3,576	3,728	152	4.3%	1.4%
Old Church Cemetery Road, Double Bridges Road	408	434	26	6.4%	2.1%

**Table 12.1** AADT Counts for Ocean View Roads

Source: DeIDOT Vehicle Volume Summary

**Bicycle Facilities**

The Ocean View Town Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission approved a plan in September 2019 to address the issues and concerns involving safety and mobility in Town. The plan came after a series of concerns were voiced to the Town Council. The plan was approved with a \$35,000 budget and will consist of three phases which will focus on studying and completing traffic counts, creating a bicycle safety plan targeting Route 26, and the development of strategies to deal with seasonal reckless driving through adjacent neighborhoods. To create public awareness the Town decided to levee some of the budget, \$6,000, towards an advertisement campaign over the months of April 2020 to September 2020 that will consist of printed advertisement and a radio campaign. The bicycle-safety portion of the plan will be jointly coordinated with the Ocean View Police Department and the Office of Planning, Zoning, and Development.

The Town should adopt a Complete Streets Policy and utilize the Complete Streets Guide to incorporate a low-stress, bikeable network of streets. The concept behind Low-Stress Cycling (LSC) comes from the Complete Communities Toolbox developed by the University of Delaware’s Institute for Public Administration to ensure that cyclists, regardless of experience, are comfortable and safe navigating through Town. To encourage the use of other transportation modes the Town should implement the Low-Stress Bikeability Assessment Tool in its design for future streets and developments as well as any redeveloped streets. There are four levels of traffic stress that can affect mobility along a roadway, Stress Level 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest. For example, a park trail where a cyclist does not have to confront motorized vehicular traffic would be classified as level 1 while a heavily trafficked highway would be level 4. To take roads from the high to low-stress the Town can begin implementing concepts such as a “road diet” and creating separate bike lanes need to be implemented.

The Delaware Department of Transportation (DeIDOT) also encourages safe bicycling throughout the state. In order to provide safe, low-stress facilities the state assesses the entire network, it begins with a process known as Pre-Assessment. To plan for bike safe roads there are six topics that are assessed that make up a checklist of possible hazards for towns to investigate, and

they include: Facilities, Network, Road Conditions, Visibility, Intersections, and Transit Interaction. By involving the community in discussing these topics the Town can become aware of all threats and plan for safer travel. The second step in the process is to facilitate a workshop where residents of the town or other participants canvass the roadways in search of possible hazards from the checklist. At the end of this exercise there would be a debriefing and mapping of the congested and unsafe areas for representation. Once this is done the Town implements step three which is called the Post-Assessment where all the traffic concerns are addressed via planning and the Town presents findings to key local officials to garner support and funding for the implementation of safer roadways (completecommunitiesde.org). The Complete Communities Toolbox, Visualizing complete streets: Story Map, features four sites within Town where the Complete Streets conceptual renderings visualize what implementing Complete Street strategies would look like. They are all along Route 26 east of West Avenue.

### Pedestrian Facilities

The Town has been implementing Streetscape Improvements through the Phase IV portion of the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). The Transportation Alternatives Program was established through federal legislation with a goal of developing a more balanced approach to mobility via multi-modal accessibility. The improvements designed by the TAP Program have been in construction since 2012 with the completion of Phase I, improvements to Woodland Avenue just South of Route 26. By 2014 Phase II had been completed along West Avenue south of Route 26. With the successful implementation of these ADA compliant sidewalks and streetscapes the Town began the design of Phase IIIA and IIIB along with initial works for Phase IV. Since then Phase IIIA has been completed along Central Avenue where it meets up with the completed portion of Phase I on Woodland Avenue.



A revised master plan is being developed, which is set to take place over the next couple years. The plan includes the addition of sidewalks along Central Avenue north of Route 26 that will extend all the way to the Assawoman Canal, along West Avenue to Central Avenue, along Daisey Avenue between Central and Woodland Avenues, and sidewalks along Woodland connecting Daisey Avenue to Route 26. The addition of these sidewalks will increase pedestrian mobility and provide safe access for residents and visitors to walk throughout Town.

### Transit

Ocean View's unique location lends itself to a number of transit challenges. Seasonal visitors disrupt annual traffic patterns. Throughout the winter month the main roads through Ocean View see far less traffic than during the spring, summer, and fall months. The beach bound traffic often time redirects through smaller roads within the Town if traffic is exceedingly congested on the main thoroughfares. During the off-season these roads are fairly accommodating to the residents of the Town with little to no congestion, but in the summer months they become prone to gridlock. To ease traffic in both the year-round and seasonal months in several communities in Ocean View the Town has begun researching options for public transportation. Additionally, other forms of transportation have become more popular over the past several years as bike paths and walking trails have become viable means of mobility.

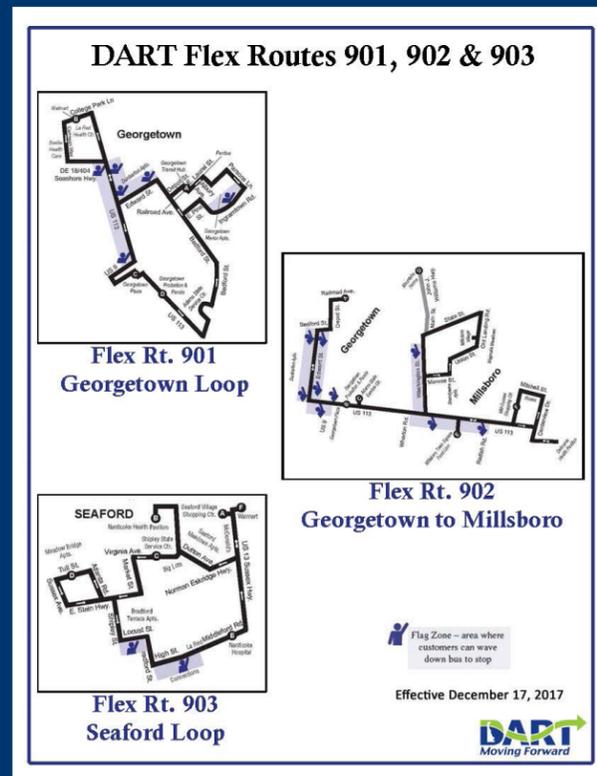
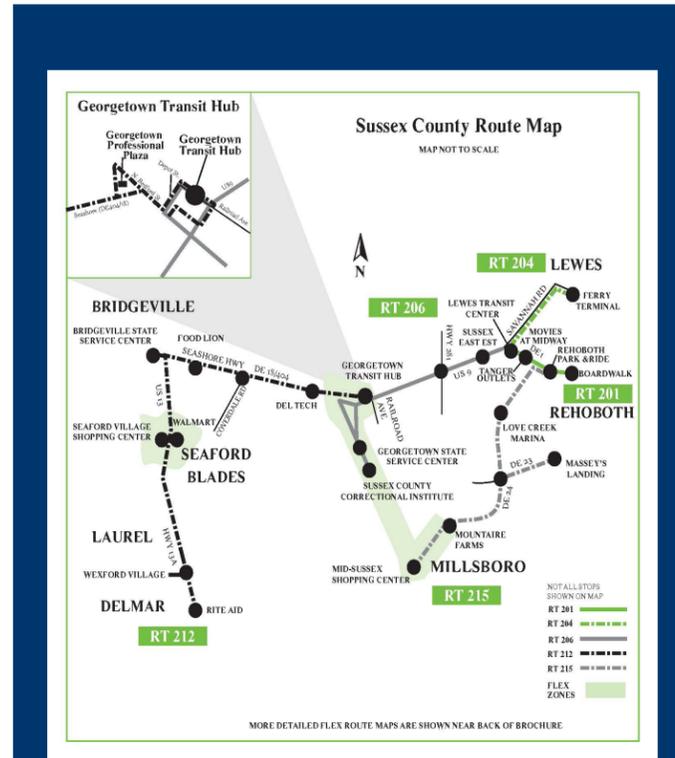
The Town has been investigating the possibility of working with DART First State to begin creating beachward, and other destination, mobility for residents. Currently, there are no existing DART stops or connections within the Town, but the possibility for connections to nearby lines exists. The closest stops are in Millsboro for westward and northbound travel and Bethany Beach for southbound travel to places such as Ocean City, Maryland. DART runs the 208 Blue Line from Rehoboth Beach, Delaware to Maryland that residents can capitalize on in nearby Bethany Beach, however it fails to resolve the problem of eastbound transit for the Town (dartfirststate.com). The Town of Bethany Beach offers a seasonal trolley service for their residents that could be investigated as a possible model for the Town to replicate. There is no interest in collaboration at this time.

Along with regular DART services there is also a Paratransit service that meets ADA-requirements and is accessible on demand. Having a bus service that meets the needs of an aging population will be essential to the Town being able to keep up with the demand for transportation services. Currently the Paratransit service charges a slightly higher fee if your beginning or end point is not within three quarter mile radius of a local bus route during a time at which the busses are scheduled. The Elderly and Disabled Transit Advisory Committee (EDTAC) meets regularly to discuss the issues that impact individual using DART services that are disabled. They help keep riders informed of changes and discuss issues surrounding Paratransit through a notification service that can be sent to anyone interested free of charge. One of the benefits of this group is that they meet to discuss the issues surrounding paratransit, and the Town should look to contact them and maintain open communication to stay current with changes to the Paratransit services.

Furthermore, access to affordable and reliable transportation for the elderly is a concern for many communities, especially in rural areas like Ocean View, where service is practically non-existent. A policy brief from the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration (IPA) explains that Sussex County – Delaware's largest geographically and most rural jurisdiction – will experience the largest percentage increase of seniors, and incur rapid growth in the number of "older" 85+ seniors. Projected increases in more rural areas where fewer transportation options currently exist will result in greater challenges for communities and service providers. As the state's population ages, integrated and community-based options for transportation.

At the Public Workshop, held by the Town regarding the launch of the Comprehensive Plan for 2019, there were multiple questions regarding transportation and how residents thought it could be improved upon. Overall there is a high demand for the development of a beach-bound bus route or some form of transportation. The Town followed up on these comments with a more extensive survey that questioned users about their transit habits and preferences. Over half of the residents surveyed agreed that they would be willing to pay for a beach shuttle. A little over 42% of people agree that there should be multiple stops to this service and that seasonal service made the most sense. Most residents agree that the service would need to be reliable to be appealing and would have to prioritize safety not only for passengers, but also pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The location of stops throughout Town near population hubs would be vital to the success of the line. While some residents noted an interest in walking to the shuttle stop, the survey indicates that most people would like to be able to drive to these stops and park their vehicles before riding the shuttle further away from their homes.

When looking at the overall layout of Ocean Views transit options it becomes clear that due to beach proximity, neighboring towns, current public transportation offerings, and increasing yearly traffic the Town needs to work closely with DelDOT, Sussex County, DART First State and possibly neighboring towns to create an inclusive transit system. The benefits of having an integrated system would be felt regionally. It will also help to reduce the amount of on-road congestion while increasing the safety of the beach-bound corridor roads. Bethany Beach and Millville are particularly influential on the flow of traffic in Ocean View and the cooperation between the Town and these two neighboring municipalities is critical to traffic mitigation efforts for all these communities over the next 10 years.



Source: DART First State

Some of the Home Owners Associations within the municipal boundaries operate their own shuttle services. For example, Bear Trap Dunes runs a line that stops at 11 different places within the community then travels to the intersection of Garfield and Pennsylvania Avenue in Bethany Beach, the same location as the seasonal 208 Blue Line stop for DART. The image to the right shows the signage used to indicate where the bus stops are located. A round trip takes roughly 45 minutes and the shuttle is a seasonal commodity for the residents of Bear Trap Dunes

Understanding the growth and development in the area is critical to a successful transportation system. To better encourage multi-modal use of the roads within Town and to ensure safety of all travelers there are a few key items the Town should integrate for the future:



Source: Jack Lingo Realty Company

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a plan to inventory total sidewalk connection and identify gaps. Then prioritize gaps based on maximum utility.
- Create a platform for community discussion of options for a tailored transit program or bus routes within the Town. Engage the public for feedback after testing any pilot programs.
- Continue to pursue safe bicycle activity, safe streets, and pedestrian mobility through appropriate signage and community events.
- Investigate plausible senior mobility options, both regionally and in Town.
- Work with neighboring communities on transportation related issues including traffic and safety improvements, better connectivity, and transit options.

# INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

As the Town of Ocean View, its neighboring communities, and the County continue to see growth, it is important to be aware of how other jurisdictions are managing future development. Therefore, it is important for a town to promote and encourage communication, cooperation, and coordination between intergovernmental agencies when developing growth management strategies and policies. This means collaboration with neighboring communities, as well as county and state agencies on issues of mutual interest. The Town of Ocean View has worked in the past with the State and Sussex County on various development and annexation projects. The Town also coordinates with its neighboring towns of Bethany Beach and Millville on a variety of planning matters. It is especially important for neighboring towns to communicate so everyone is aware of each town's needs and priorities, as well as bleed over issues impacting each other. To stay up-to-date on local and regional issues the Town participates in two professional associations – Sussex County Association of Towns (SCAT) and the Delaware League of Local Governments (DLLG).



BETHANY BEACH BOARDWALK ARTS FESTIVAL

## Neighboring Communities

Since the adoption of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, Ocean View and the Town of Millville were able to complete a joint planning effort involving split parcel. The previous Plan noted the Town would continue working with Millville and the Indian River School District to have the portion of Lord Baltimore within Millville's town limits de-annexed from the town and then annexed into Ocean View. This would allow the school and its recreational fields to be fully located within the Town of Ocean View. With the coordination between both towns and the assistance of the school district, the annexation process was completed in 2013.

The Town recognizes any future land use decisions made by the Town and Millville impact both towns. In comparing Ocean View's Future Land Use and Annexation Map (Map X) to Millville's, there is some overlap between parcels identified for potential annexation. Ocean View is committed to working with Millville to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the towns regarding any annexation proposals to either town. This MOU, if executed, would continue to outline strategies for coordination between the two towns on any annexation petition or development request in common areas. The Town should also consider developing MOUs with other adjacent towns including Bethany Beach and South Bethany.

## Sussex County

Similar to working with neighboring towns, Ocean View has coordinated with Sussex County on projects related to new developments and annexations. The Town works with different County agencies to ensure services such as sewer and water can be provided to proposed developments. A similar MOU should be developed between the Town and County, similar to Millville, to coordinate development projects that fall under the County's jurisdiction. The MOU should also include referring plans to Ocean View for proposed developments in the County that are also within Millville's annexation area. Like the Lord Baltimore annexation, the Town would like to continue working with the County on eliminating jurisdictional splitting of properties.

Aside from annexations and proposed developments, the Town has coordinated with Sussex County on other projects. Ocean View joined other municipalities, in providing input on potential vulnerabilities for the County's All Hazard Mitigation Plan (2010) and the Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazard Plan 2016 Update.

## State and Federal

For all proposed development and annexation projects, the Town works with the Office of State Planning Coordination throughout the project review process. For proposed developments with Town limits, there is close coordination with the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT), Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA), and Sussex Conservation District (SCD).





## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to maintain memberships and involvement in professional associations like Sussex County Association of Towns (SCAT) and the (Delaware League of Local Governments) DLLG.
- Continue coordination with Millville and Sussex County to eliminate split properties and enclaves.
- Work with Millville, Bethany, South Bethany, and Sussex County to develop MOUs for each jurisdiction regarding future annexation and development projects, as well as other issues impacting each other's jurisdictions.
- Engage agencies including DelDOT, DEMA, DNREC and SCD, and organizations such as the Center for Inland Bays and CHEER Center, for technical assistance and partnership opportunities.

## 14

# IMPLEMENTATION

The Town of Ocean View is lucky to be blessed with new guidance and energy moving forward. The Town has myriad tools at its disposal such as the Route 26 Design Guidelines, the Historical Society, and an active community. Each of the document's recommendations have been compiled and labeled as either a 'short-term' or 'long-term' goal.

The Town recognizes that stakeholders, government agencies, and community members need to partner and collaborate to successfully implement the strategies in this plan and achieve the established vision. Some of these crucial stakeholders, government agencies, and community members are listed below.

Bethany-Fenwick Area Chamber of Commerce  
 Delaware Authority for Regional Transit (DART)  
 Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC)  
 Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT)  
 Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs  
 Delaware Division of Small Business  
 Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA)  
 Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA)  
 Millville Fire Company  
 Ocean View Historical Society  
 Ocean View Police Department  
 Office of State Planning Coordination  
 Resilient and Sustainable Communities League (RASCL)  
 State Fire Marshal  
 State Historic Preservation Officers  
 Sussex Economic Development Action Committee, Inc (SEDAC)  
 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)  
 University of Delaware Center for Historic Architecture and Design  
 Sussex County, Millville, Bethany Beach, and South Bethany

The Town of Ocean View will be the main entity to implement the plan and ensure that current and future projects align with the established objectives and will work closely with the entities listed above and all other organizations that have a community or economic impact on the Town. Future planning efforts should build upon the goals and vision established within this document. Therefore, the Comprehensive Land Use Plan is fully integrated in the Town's current planning initiatives leading to a long-lasting impact and implementation.

Recommendations	Timing	Potential Partners & Coordinating Agency	Potential Technical & Financial Assistance
Move towards a more traditional town center design.	Long-Term	University of DE IPA, Downtown Delaware	Transportation Alternatives Program, Main Street America
Use Delaware's Complete Communities and Complete Streets toolkits as guides.	On-going	University of DE IPA, DelDOT	
Review and update the <i>Town of Ocean View Route 26 Corridor Development Design Standards</i> . Adopt final document.	Short-Term		
Review the current requirements for GB1 and GB2 Districts, permitted uses, lot size, setbacks, height restrictions. Consider combining districts and/or renaming.	Short-Term		
Incorporate landscaping design into zoning requirements for design standards.	Short-Term		
Consider options for encouraging mixed-use development along Route-26 corridor.	Long-Term		Main Street America
Reevaluate parking regulations and location of required parking.	Long-Term		
Assess options for purchasing and creating a centrally-located public space.	Long-Term		AARP Livable Communities Challenge, USDA Rural
Continue to preserve and maintain the current parks for future generations and increase education efforts within the parks to promote helpful connections with the residents of Ocean View.	On-going	DNREC	
Pursue grants and continued growth of any areas deemed as an ideal location for more recreation, conservation, or preservation of flora and fauna.	Long-Term	DNREC, RASCL	Outdoor Recreation, Parks & Trails Program
Make any necessary changes to current zoning of areas that can be protected from development when possible.	Short-Term	DNREC, OSPC	
Seek to develop open space and greenways along waterways and plan to link open space areas with greenways and trails.	Long-Term	DNREC, Delaware Greenways	Delaware Greenways, Transportation Alternatives Program, Outdoor Recreation, Parks & Trails Program

Recommendations	Timing	Potential Partners & Coordinating Agency	Potential Technical & Financial Assistance
Continue to work with the Ocean View Historical Society on preservation planning related projects.	On-going	Ocean View Historical Society	
Explore options for incentivizing homeowners to declare their property as "contributing."	Short-Term	Sussex County Historic Preservation Office	Delaware Preservation Fund
Periodically review the Historic Preservation Overlay Zoning District regulations for needed updates.	On-going	Sussex County Historic Preservation Office	
Continue to support the Historical Society as they continue to grow their organization and expand opportunities to learn about the Baltimore Hundred.	On-going	Ocean View Historical Society	
Maintain a diverse housing stock that is attractive to current and future residents.	On-going	Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA)	
Focus new housing on infill development.	Short-Term		
Work with the Ocean View Historical Society and Sussex County Preservation Office to survey the historic dwellings within Town limits.	Long-Term	University of DE Center for Historic Architecture & Design, DE Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs	Delaware Preservation Fund
Review the existing zoning ordinance to incentivize mixed-use (residential/commercial) in the GB1 district.	Short-Term		
Consider amending the zoning code to allow for Accessory Dwelling Units when appropriate.	Long-Term		
Engage DSHA and the Delaware State Community Land Trust (DSCLT) about opportunities to provide appropriate senior housing.	Long-Term	DSHA, DSCLT	DSCLT
Assess the need for separate commercial districts.	Short-Term	OSPC	
Consider adopting 'Town Center' name for commercial district.	Short-Term		
Specify the difference between a Special Exception and Conditional Use case. Create guidelines for when to apply each designation.	Short-Term		

Recommendations	Timing	Potential Partners & Coordinating Agency	Potential Technical & Financial Assistance
Conduct a community-based senior needs assessment.	Long-Term	University of DE IPA	AARP Livable Communities Challenge
Support the Ocean View Police Department in expanding their force to meet the safety needs of the Town.	On-going	Ocean View Police Department	
Continue exploring options for a unified Town trash and recycling service.	Short-Term		
Investigate the possibility of privatizing the Town's water system.	Long-Term		
Continue to address stormwater and drainage issues by prioritizing and budgeting for projects.	On-going	DNREC, DEMA	DE Water Infrastructure Advisory Council
Develop a plan to inventory total sidewalk cover and connection.	Long-Term	DeIDOT	Transportation Alternatives Program
Create a platform for community discussion of options for a tailored transit program.	Short-Term, On-going	DART	
Continue to pursue safe bicycle activity, safe streets, and pedestrian mobility through appropriate signage and community events.	On-going	DeIDOT, Sussex County	AARP Livable Communities Challenge, DE Office of Highway Safety
Investigate plausible senior mobility options, both regionally and in Town.	Long-Term	University of DE IPA	

# APPENDIX A

## COMMUNITY SURVEY SURVEY RESULTS

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# APPENDIX B

## MAPS

-  Town Boundary
-  State Roads
-  Town & County Roads



1 in = 2,000 ft

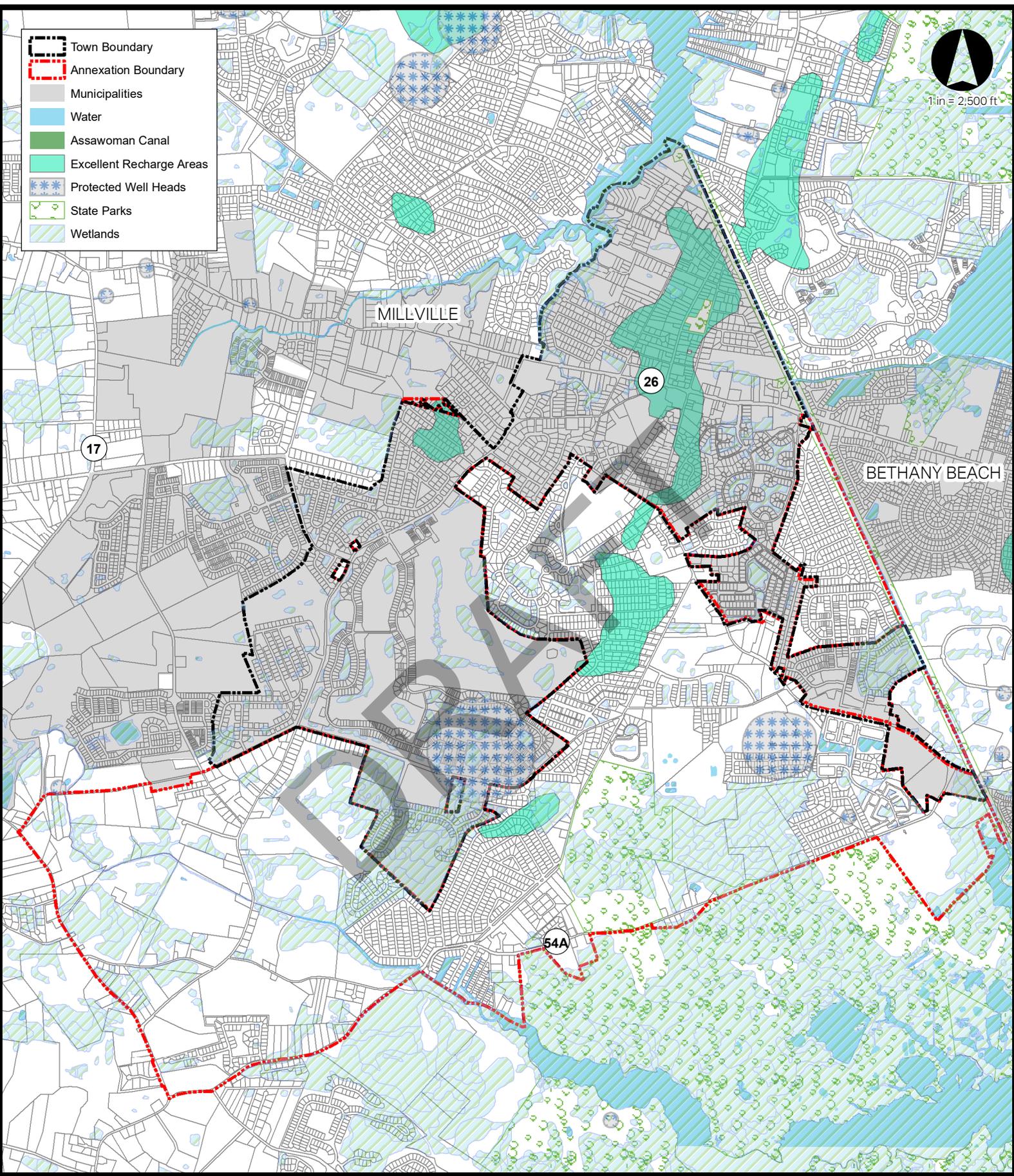


**MAP 1. AERIAL VIEW**  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2019  
Town of Ocean View



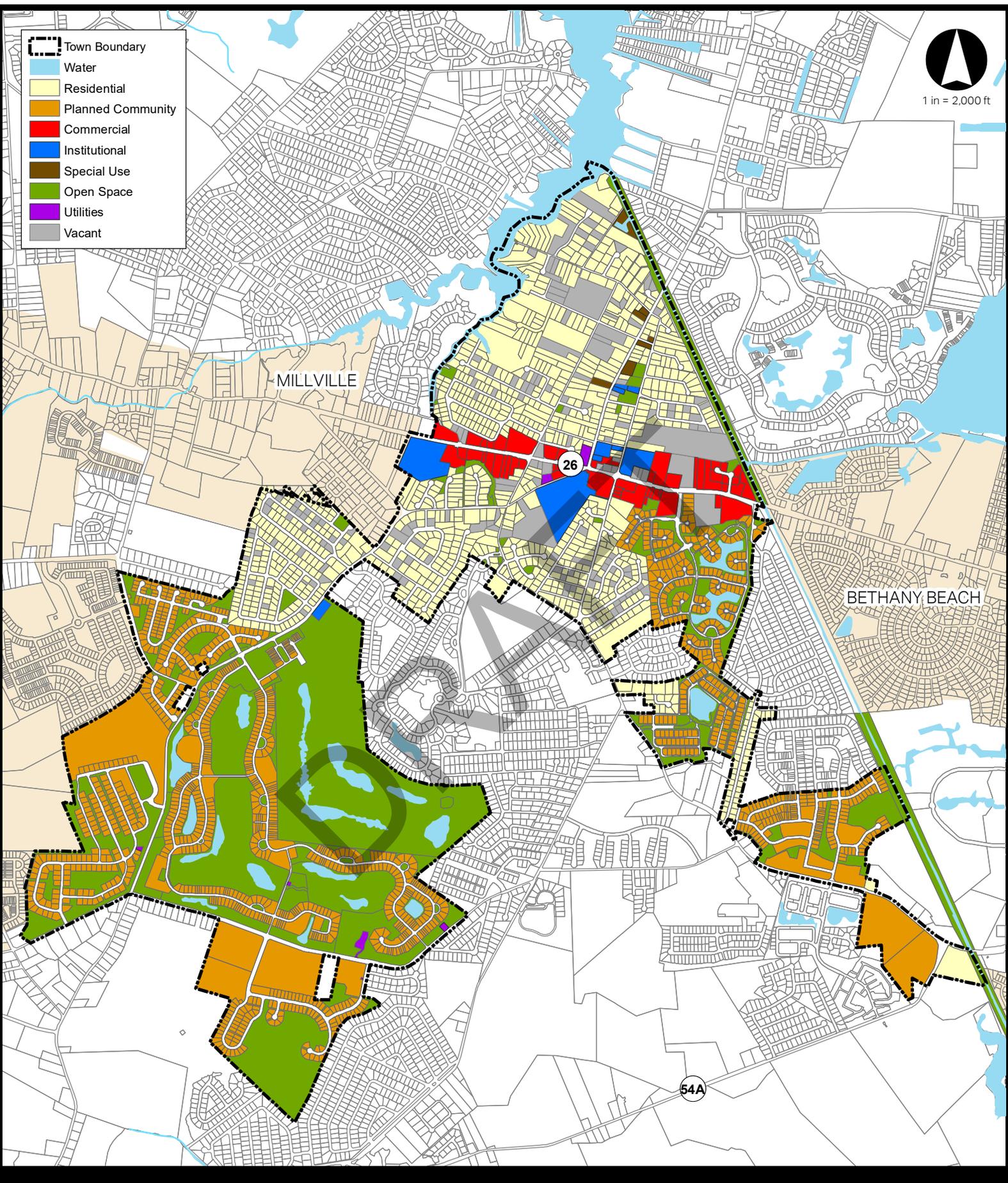
November 2019

-  Town Boundary
-  Annexation Boundary
-  Municipalities
-  Water
-  Assawoman Canal
-  Excellent Recharge Areas
-  Protected Well Heads
-  State Parks
-  Wetlands



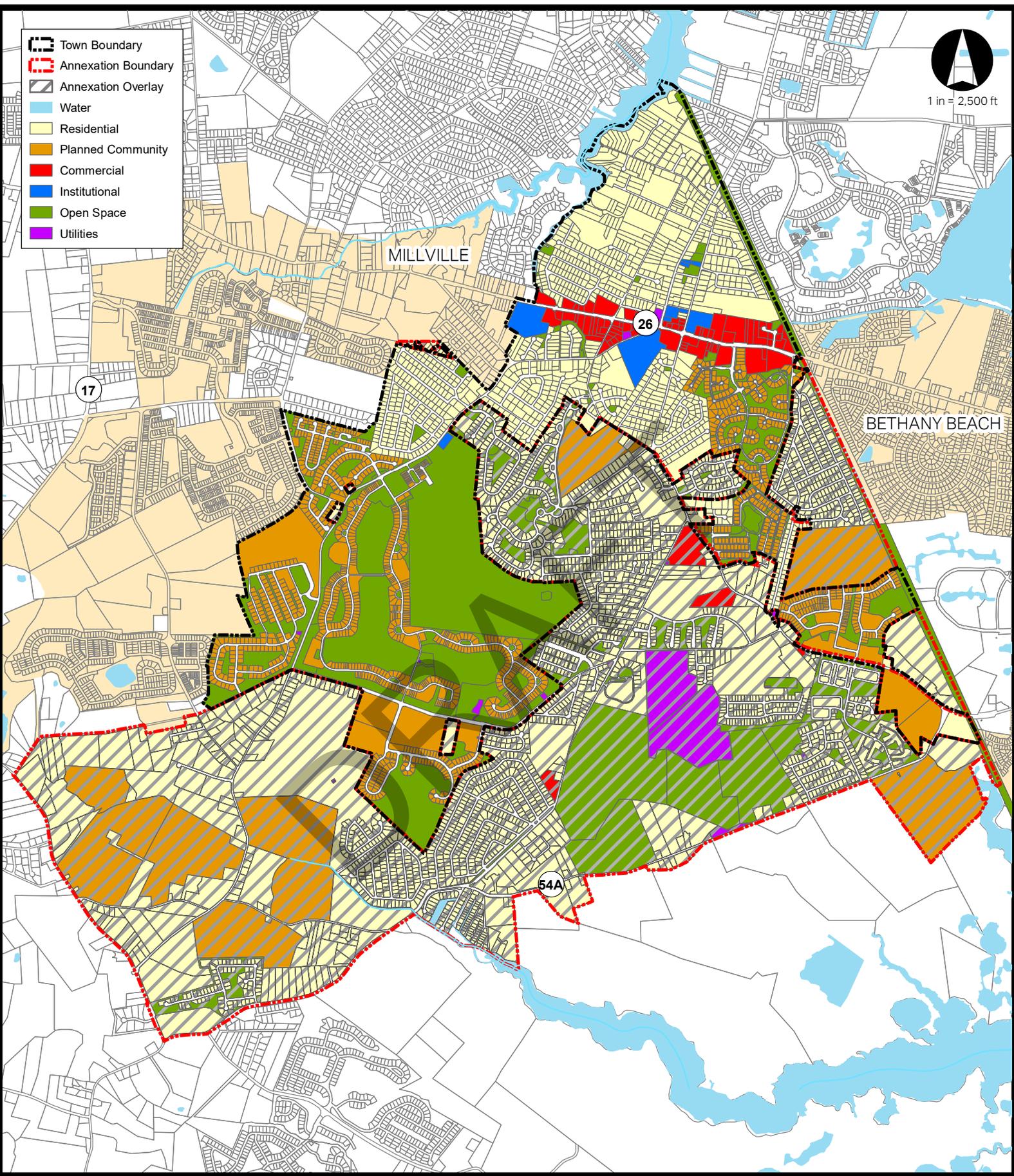
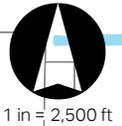
**MAP 4. ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES**  
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2019  
 Town of Ocean View

-  Town Boundary
-  Water
-  Residential
-  Planned Community
-  Commercial
-  Institutional
-  Special Use
-  Open Space
-  Utilities
-  Vacant



**MAP 5. EXISTING LAND USE**  
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2019  
 Town of Ocean View

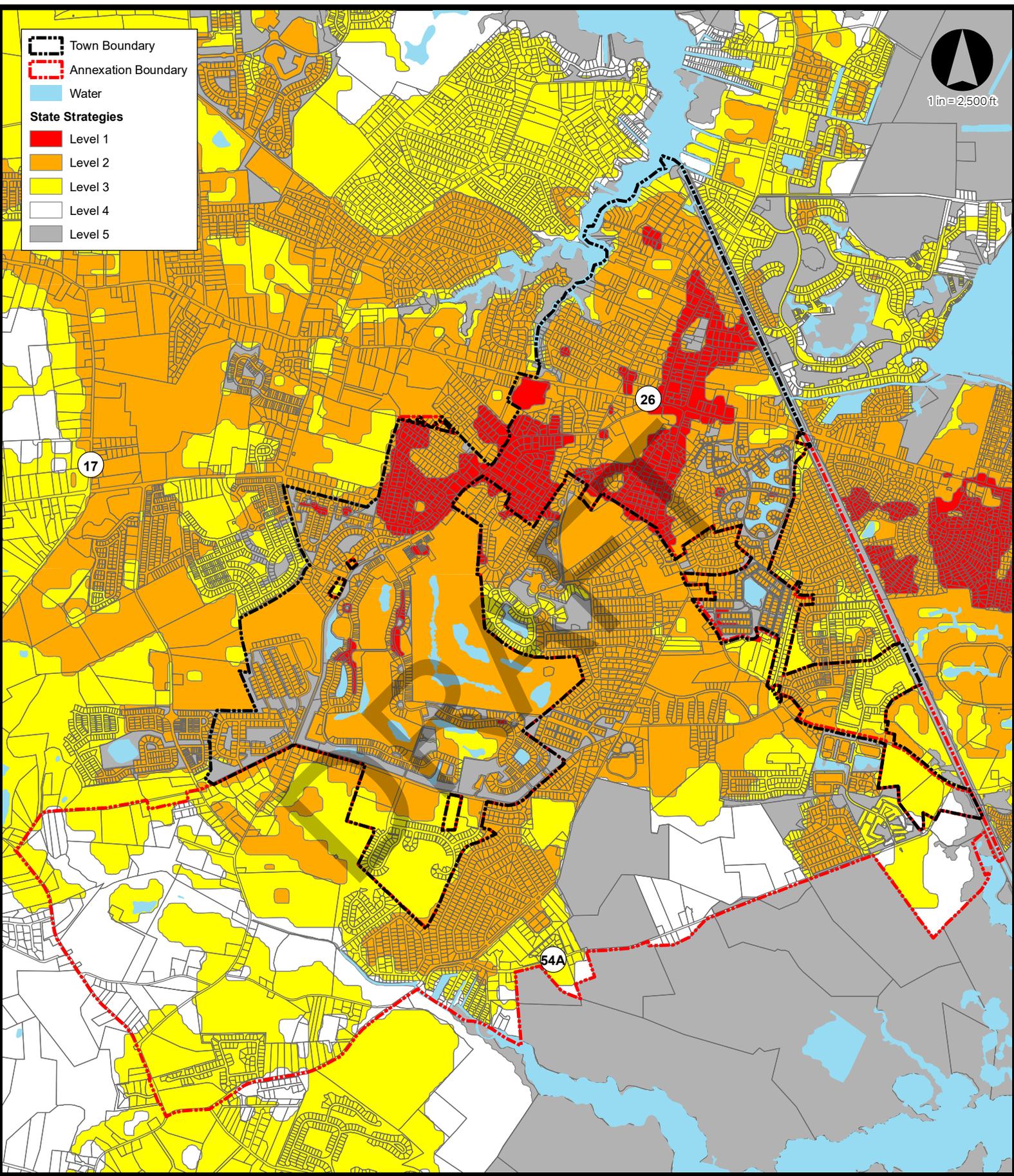
-  Town Boundary
-  Annexation Boundary
-  Annexation Overlay
-  Water
-  Residential
-  Planned Community
-  Commercial
-  Institutional
-  Open Space
-  Utilities



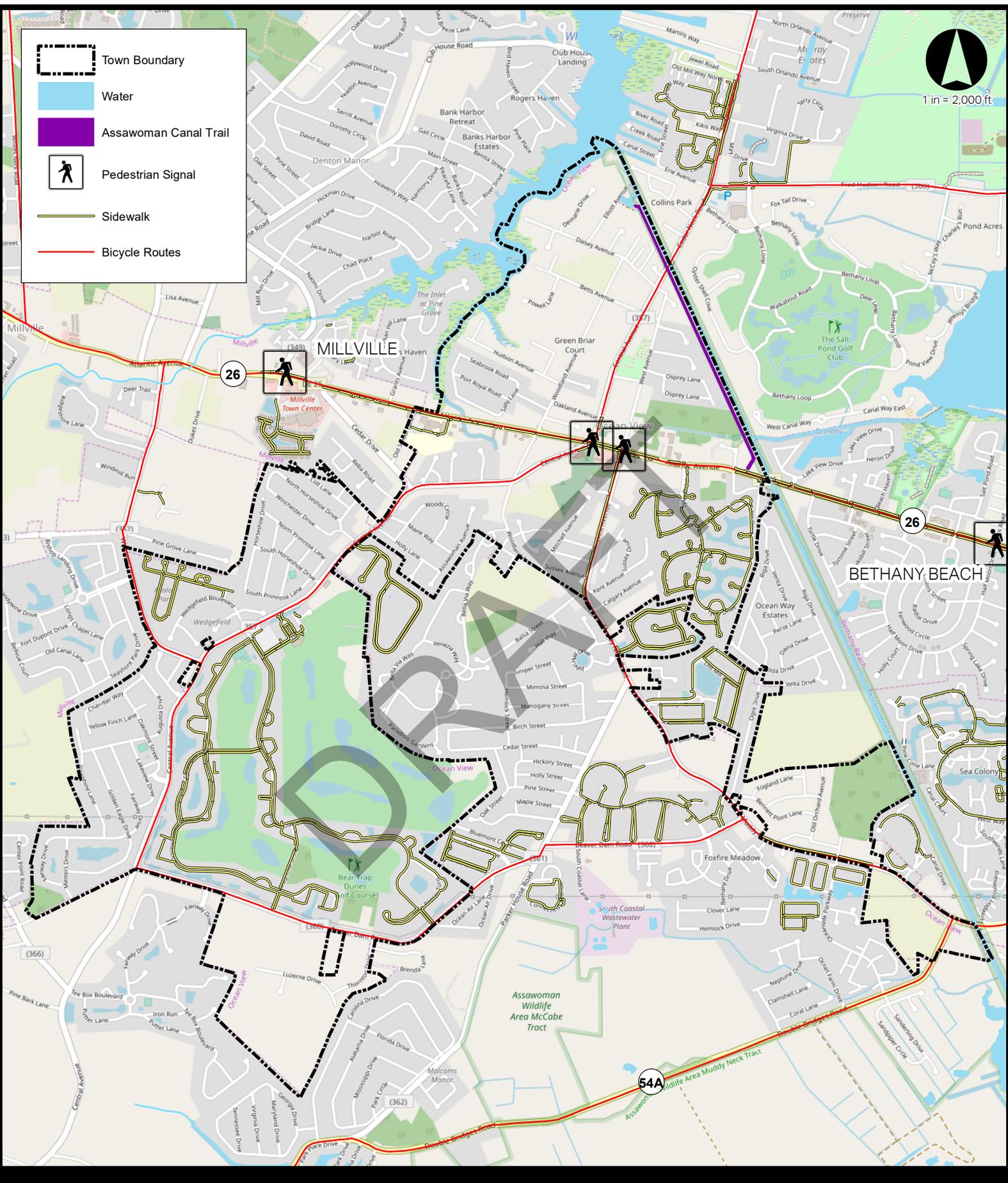
**MAP 6. FUTURE LAND USE**  
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2019  
 Town of Ocean View

 Town Boundary  
 Annexation Boundary  
 Water  
**State Strategies**  
 Level 1  
 Level 2  
 Level 3  
 Level 4  
 Level 5

  
 1 in = 2,500 ft



**MAP 3. STATE STRATEGIES**  
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2019  
 Town of Ocean View



**MAP 2. TRANSIT**  
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2019  
 Town of Ocean View



November 2019