

*Town of*  
**Middletown**  
Comprehensive Plan

adopted and certified  
**November 2005**



STATE OF DELAWARE  
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
STATE PLANNING COORDINATION

January 11, 2006

The Honorable Kenneth Branner  
Mayor, Town of Middletown  
216 North Broad Street  
Middletown, De 19709

RE: Certification of Comprehensive Plan

Dear Mayor Branner:

I am pleased to inform the Town of Middletown that as of November 7, 2005, per the recommendation of the Office of State Planning Coordination, the comprehensive plan for the Town of Middletown is hereby certified. The certification signifies that the comprehensive plan is currently in compliance with State Strategies.

My staff and I look forward to working with the Town to accomplish the mission of allowing economic development while protecting Delaware's heritage and natural resources.

Congratulations on your certification!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Constance C. Holland".

Constance C. Holland, AICP  
Director

CC: Morris Deputy

**RESOLUTION TO ADOPT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The Mayor and Council of Middletown  
Middletown, Delaware 19709

**WHEREAS**, Title 22 of the Delaware Code empowers municipalities to develop a comprehensive plan to guide the future of the Town; and

**WHEREAS**, Delaware House Bill 255 requires that all municipalities in Delaware develop and adopt comprehensive plans that address issues established in this bill; and

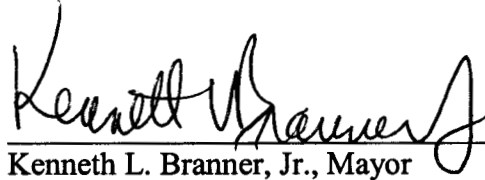
**WHEREAS**, the Town of Middletown contracted with the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) College of Human Resources, Education, and Public Policy, University of Delaware to assist in the development of a Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Middletown applied for and received advisory comments regarding this Comprehensive Plan from State of Delaware agencies at an August 24, 2005 Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) meeting; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Middletown Planning Commission has reviewed this Comprehensive Plan and recommended at their October 20, 2005 meeting that the Town Council adopt this plan including revisions made in response to comments received at the August 24, 2005 PLUS meeting; and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Middletown Town Council adopts the Middletown Comprehensive Plan, a copy of which is attached to, and made part of, this resolution.

Adopted by the Mayor and Council of the Town of Middletown on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

  
Kenneth L. Branner, Jr., Mayor

Attest:

  
Town Clerk

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## TOWN, COUNTY, AND STATE OFFICIALS

### Town of Middletown

Mayor and Council

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James Reynolds, Vice Mayor  
Jason Faulkner, Councilman  
Catherine Kelly, Councilwoman  
Robert McGhee, Councilman

Planning & Zoning Committee

Robert Pierce, Chairman  
Frank Bailey  
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House of Representatives

Bethany A. Hall-Long, Representative 8th District

Office of State Planning  
Coordination

Constance S. Holland, AICP, Director

## **INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

This plan was prepared by the Town of Middletown Planning Commission with assistance from the Institute for Public Administration (IPA), a unit within the College of Human Services, Education & Public Policy at the University of Delaware. IPA links the research and resources of the University of Delaware with the management and information needs of local, state, and regional governments in the Delaware Valley. IPA provides assistance to agencies and local governments through direct staff assistance and research projects as well as training programs and policy forums.

Comprehensive plans produced by IPA are a true team effort. Martin Wollaston manages the IPA Planning Services Team. Troy Mix, an IPA Planner, functioned as project manager and principal drafter of the Middletown plan. Jonathan Justice, an Associate Policy Scientist with IPA, provided project management and drafting assistance. IPA Graduate Research Assistants Tony Doss, Barrett Edwards, and Garrett Wozniak provided valuable research and drafting support to the project.

### **Institute Director**

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### **Acknowledgements**

In addition to the IPA Staff listed above, many thanks go to Ed O'Donnell and William DeCoursey for their valuable comments and assistance throughout the planning process. Special thanks go to Sara Wozniak of the Appoquinimink River Association for her invaluable assistance with the natural resources elements of this plan. Finally, sincere thanks go to Herb Inden, the Office of State Planning Coordination's Circuit Rider Planner for New Castle County, for his guidance in developing the Town of Middletown Comprehensive Plan.

**A MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR  
MIDDLETOWN, DELAWARE  
NOVEMBER 2005**

The Town of Middletown Comprehensive Plan is Middletown’s authoritative statement of land use policy. This plan brings Middletown into compliance with Title 22 of the Delaware Code, Chapter 7, Section 702, which requires municipalities to prepare comprehensive plans to direct land use.

The plan is a legal document serving as a foundation for Middletown’s land use decisions and annexation policy. It also serves as a consolidated reference guide containing demographic, economic, environmental, and historical information about Middletown.

**AUTHORITY TO PLAN**

Delaware law requires that municipalities engage in comprehensive planning to encourage “the most appropriate uses of the physical and fiscal resources of the municipality and the coordination of municipal growth, development, and infrastructure investment actions with those of other municipalities, counties, and the state....” This plan was written to comply with the requirements of a municipal comprehensive plan as described in the Delaware Code for towns with a population of 2,000 or greater.

The Delaware Code states the following:

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.

At least every 5 years a municipality shall review its adopted comprehensive plan to determine if its provisions are still relevant given changing conditions in the municipality or in the surrounding areas. The adopted comprehensive plan shall be revised, updated and amended as necessary, and re-adopted at least every 10 years (22 Del. C. 1953, § 702; 49 Del. Laws, c. 415, § 1).

This document is Middletown’s Municipal Comprehensive Plan as required by state law. It is intended to cover a ten-year planning period and be reviewed at least every five years.

## CHAPTER 1. BACKGROUND

### 1-1. Planning Process

#### Reason for New Plan

Since the adoption of a comprehensive plan in 1974, Middletown has been actively planning for future growth and development. As growth and development in Southern New Castle County accelerated during the mid-1990s, Middletown again charted its future with the adoption of a comprehensive plan in 1998 and an update to that plan in 2001.

Comprehensive plans are not meant to be static documents and should be reevaluated as regional conditions evolve. Much has changed since Middletown's 2001 plan update was adopted. First, Delaware has enacted legislation that requires municipalities to review their comprehensive plans every five years and details the required contents of those plans. This plan update is crafted to fulfill these requirements and consolidates much of the previous planning principles established in the 1998 and 2001 Middletown plan documents.

The state also completed an update to the *Strategies for State Policies and Spending* in 2004, establishing guidelines for where and how the state plans to make investments. The plan incorporates this update in state policy and accounts for how growth and development in Middletown fits into this framework for state investments.

New data has also become available since the last plan update was completed. This plan incorporates demographic information from the U.S. Census 2000, the 2004 population projections from the Delaware Population Consortium, and a variety of infrastructure plans and upgrades that have occurred since 2001.

Finally, Middletown has grown dramatically since 2001. Much of the land annexed prior to 2001 has been developed or is in the process of being developed. Middletown's population has approximately doubled from 6,000 to 12,000, and population growth is expected for some time as residential construction continues. Recent development activity has presented the opportunity to master plan nearly the entire western portion of Middletown. This plan accounts for this master planning opportunity and incorporates the necessary changes to effectively implement the planned development.

#### Comprehensive-Planning Approach

The comprehensive-planning process involves establishing goals for the future of a community, analyzing current and projected conditions, and laying out steps that can be taken to help a community reach its goals. This plan has followed this general process. Much time was devoted to updating data in order to paint an accurate picture of the existing and expected conditions that Middletown faces and will likely face in terms of demographic, infrastructure, environmental, economic, and land use conditions. A public-participation event was held to take the pulse of the community regarding concerns and hopes for Middletown's present and future. Public input was utilized to develop this plan's goals, and recommendations for action were made in a variety of topical areas in order to help Middletown achieve these goals.

## 1-2. Public Participation

A public-participation meeting was held in the boardroom of the Middletown Fire Hall on December 8, 2004. The meeting's purpose was to receive input from residents of Middletown in order to identify and prioritize topics to be addressed in the town's comprehensive plan. Town officials and staff and graduate research assistants from IPA were on hand to facilitate discussion with town residents at various stations regarding the following topics: transportation, satisfaction with town services, open space and recreation, economic development, and town demographics. Approximately 50 residents participated and provided useful insight into their desires for the community's future. A brief summary of the results from the public-participation meeting follows.

### General Comments

Residents were given the opportunity to provide general comments regarding how they felt about the town. Numerous residents commented on liking the small-town, agricultural, and open-space atmosphere of the town, while not being pleased with insufficient bicycle and walking paths, lack of restaurants in town, and limited cultural and recreational activities. Residents also expressed concern that there are a lack of recreational opportunities for teens, not enough community outreach and resident influence on town decisions, too much traffic and development, and insufficient parks and open space.

### Transportation

Transportation was arguably the most discussed topic at the meeting and was a concern expressed by many residents. Generally speaking, residents were concerned with traffic congestion. Particularly, residents expressed concern about traffic congestion on SR 299 through town and a lack of amenities encouraging safe and viable pedestrian and bicycle transportation in town.

### Satisfaction with Community Services in Middletown

The majority of residents participating in the public-participation event expressed satisfaction with the community services provided in Middletown. Residents seemed to be extremely satisfied with fire, emergency medical, police, electric, sewer, and trash collection services. Some residents expressed concern that police were not visible enough in the community. Residents seemed least satisfied with the drinking water service provided in town, although a majority of the participants still indicated they were satisfied with this service.

### Open Space and Recreation

A general desire for more open space and recreational opportunities in town was expressed by participants. It was suggested that an Open Space Committee be established to advocate for land preservation and make recommendations for the use of existing open space in town.

### Economic Development

Economic development in Middletown is currently market-driven, with most commercial activity initiated by the private sector. Evidencing support for the Main Street Approach, residents voiced support for arts and cultural activities along with a downtown designed to be pedestrian-friendly.

**1-3. Overall Community Goals**

- Goal:** Maintain the integrity of Middletown’s historic, small-town character.

**Objective:** Implement policies that encourage development complementing the appearance and character of historic development patterns in Middletown.
  
- Goal:** Enable the safe and efficient flow of bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicle traffic throughout town.

**Objective:** Adopt policies and encourage investments that provide for safe, attractive, and efficient transportation options in Middletown.
  
- Goal:** Promote the public health, safety, and welfare of current and future residents of Middletown.

**Objective:** Stage development and capital improvements in order to ensure that Middletown residents are provided with adequate access to basic public services.
  
- Goal:** Ensure that Middletown residents have adequate access to local retail, personal and professional service, and employment establishments.

**Objective:** Revise and amend land use regulations allowing for locally desired economic development and encouraging investments in Middletown that increase the desirability for appropriate firms to locate in Middletown.
  
- Goal:** Ensure that natural resources are protected for the health and enjoyment of existing and future residents of Middletown and the surrounding region.

**Objective:** Adopt and implement policies that promote environmentally sound and sustainable development practices.
  
- Goal:** Enhance the quality of life of Middletown residents by providing for adequate open space and recreation opportunities throughout the community.

**Objective:** Acquire, develop, and maintain appropriate open space and recreation facilities to be used and enjoyed by Middletown residents.

## CHAPTER 2. COMMUNITY CHARACTER

A community's character is what makes a town a unique place. In the face of intense development pressure, Middletown is committed to protecting and enhancing those qualities that make Middletown a unique place. This chapter details some of the elements that define Middletown's character and recommends approaches designed to protect and enhance those elements.

**Goal:** Maintain the integrity of Middletown's historic, small-town character.

**Objective:** Implement policies that encourage development complementing the appearance and character of historic development patterns in Middletown.



### 2-1. Location

Middletown is located in southern New Castle County, Delaware, and straddles the boundary of the St. Georges and Appoquinimink Hundreds. State Route 299 (SR 299) bisects the town from east to west and connects it to Delaware's major north-south highways, U.S. Route 13 and State Route 1 (SR 1), just east of the present town limit. U.S. Route 301 (US 301) runs north to southwest through the western half of Middletown. The Appoquinimink Creek forms the town's southern boundary. Middletown is the largest town south of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal in New Castle County. Cities in proximity with a population of over 50,000 are Wilmington, Del., and Philadelphia, Pa. The capital of Delaware, Dover, is located approximately 25 miles south of Middletown.

## **2-2. History**

In 1675 a Swede named Adam Peterson assumed warrants for the land that later became known as Middletown. The first recorded survey of the 200 acres was completed shortly thereafter in 1678. The small hamlet, located approximately 25 miles north of Dover and 25 miles south of Wilmington, was an early crossroads town and one of the few old Delaware towns not on a navigable waterway. It was around the 1750s that the name Middletown first came into use, but not due to its position between the two cities. The town's name refers to its location midway on a trade route known as the "Cart Road" between the head of the Bohemia River and the waters of the Appoquinimink Creek. Since the portage of six miles between these two bodies of water was the shortest on the peninsula, Middletown prospered from its inception.

The town's industry stemmed from the abundant agricultural resources found in its hinterlands. Its mills and granaries were located along the western side of town, while residential growth initially spread eastward towards Odessa. The construction of the Delaware Railroad on Middletown's western border reversed this trend, drew development inward, and filled out the northwestern side of town.

Schools, including the Middletown Academy built in 1826, were erected as Middletown's population grew. That regionally acclaimed school, which once offered students a classical education, now serves as Town Hall. Around 1834, the Pennsylvania, Baltimore, and Wilmington Railroad proposed to run its line through Odessa. However, the townspeople wanted no part of the noisy iron horses, so in 1855 the PB&W built a depot in Middletown. Middletown entered into a new era of growth with the arrival of the railroad. The success of the railroad brought prosperity and three decades of economic and social progress. Local farmers found wealth in the peach industry that flourished throughout the Delmarva Peninsula. By the mid-19th century Middletown had a population of 368 people. Fifty years later it was the largest village in the Hundred.

On March 4, 1861, following the granting of the charter, an election was held for five Commissioners to serve one-year terms. The first town council decided the town should be bounded at one square mile. Therefore, Middletown became known as the "Diamond Town of the Diamond State." Middletown began to expand its scope of government services. By March 1866 town leaders began to consider providing street lighting. Police protection has been provided for residents since 1873. In 1893 the first Light and Water Commission was organized, making Middletown one of the first towns in the state to have electricity. The following year local firefighters organized the Volunteer Hose Company, and a system of fire hydrants was initiated. Water was supplied by a water stack which still stands on East Lake Street. In 1924 the Town took over the daily operations of the water system.

### 2-3. Community Design

The currently developed sections of town are primarily accessed by the two historic thoroughways, with Broad Street (SR 71) running north-to-south and Main Street (SR 299) running east-to-west. The intersection of the two streets divides the central section of the town into four quadrants, each with a grid pattern of secondary streets and alleyways. The historic commercial and civic center is concentrated along the blocks of West Main, and has extended over time to include the formerly residential blocks of North Broad that now house first-floor businesses.

As detailed in the *Small Town Design Atlas* prepared by David Ames, Emily Paulus, Jennifer Leister, Sharon McLean, and Sarah Killinger for the University of Delaware's Center for Historic Architecture and Design, Middletown's neighborhoods have developed over three distinct time periods. The bulk of the historic residences lie in the northern portion as well as along the main thoroughfares and are bounded by the railroad to the west, Catherine Street to the east, Lake Street to the north, and Green Street to the south. In the northwest quadrant, where a high percentage of historic structures remains intact, occupied, and in good condition, are the more upscale residential neighborhoods, crowned by those along Cass Street. The northern quadrant east of Broad Street is an area of more modest buildings and has traditionally been the location of Middletown's African-American community.

Areas south of Green Street and north of Lake Street represent the second period of development and the twentieth century's expansion of Middletown. The most recent development has been occurring primarily outside the boundaries of the historical town center and without continuing the traditional grid pattern of streets, following the now-familiar trend of automobile-oriented suburbanization to low-density residences and commercial strips. Development has spread to the north and east within roughly a two-mile radius of the town center, and is now poised to extend to the west of the rail line, south of Main Street/Bunker Hill Road.

Middletown offers a wide variety of housing types and sizes, reflecting continuous development. The historic center provides primarily single-family housing on consistently sized ¼-acre lots. East of Broad and north of Main are a series of multi-family units and duplexes, gradually shifting into single-family residences in the north. An apartment complex on Lake Street adds to the diversity of housing types offered.

Two- and three-story, attached commercial buildings front Main Street's western corridor, with first-story storefronts lining the sidewalks. These first-story uses include retail stores, service businesses, offices, restaurants, and the Everett Theatre. On Broad Street, immediately north of Main, are a collection of retail businesses and the Neighborhood House Community Center. One block south of West Main Street is the location of the new Town Hall.

Commercial development in Middletown has continued to move beyond the town core. At the corner of Broad and Lake is an early post-WWII strip center, but the most recent movement is towards the modern suburban strip malls on the outskirts of the town.

The historic center of Middletown is a highly walkable area, both between neighborhoods and the center and among neighborhoods. Important spaces, both commercial and civic, are within easy walking distance (approximately a ¼ mile radius) of most neighborhoods. The density of the center, in addition to the well laid-out grid that generally has sidewalks on both sides and rear alleys, ensures that the town is adequately connected. Street lights ensure that these paths are inviting to pedestrians by adding an element of safety. As one leaves the core of town, these attributes begin to fade. Crosswalks are minimal, streets become wider, and safety becomes more of an issue.

#### **2-4. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Middletown's historic and cultural resources include structures, public spaces, and institutions dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present. Many of the historic resources are described in great detail in Middletown's nomination to the National Register of Historic Places and in the *Small Town Design Atlas*.

In 1761, David Witherspoon built a "publick house," which became popular in Middletown as a stopover for travelers along the Upper King's Road. Portions of the tavern remain within the walls of the present Witherspoon building, located in the center of town, which was heavily damaged in the Valentine's Day fire of 1946. Many notables of the Revolutionary period, such as Caesar Rodney, stopped at the Witherspoon house for rest and refreshment.

Due to its rapid growth in the second half of the nineteenth century as a railroad town and market center, Middletown has perhaps the best collection of Victorian architecture in Delaware. Large, distinctive Victorian houses are found along North and South Broad Streets and on Cass Street, three blocks west of North Broad Street. Although displaying the Italianate and Second Empire traits of Victorian buildings, the buildings of Middletown are restrained by Delaware architectural conservatism, rooted in long-term dedication to the earlier classically inspired colonial styles.

Middletown's notable civic and community spaces are scattered along Main and Broad Streets within the historic district. Cochran square sits on the southwest corner of the Main and Broad intersection. The former Middletown Academy on Broad Street adds a pleasing spot of green open space, with benches and shade trees enclosed by a circular drive. The Everett Theatre, opened on December 7, 1922, occupies the site where two other theaters and an opera house burned down. Designed in the Art Nouveau style, this 375-seat theater originally was a showplace for vaudeville acts and movies.

Middletown's cultural resources include several centers of activity in the performing and visual arts. The Gibby Center for the Arts is a community-based arts center located in a historic building (circa 1920s) adjacent to the Everett Theatre. The Gibby Center provides a venue to teach and promote studio arts. Premiere Centre for the Arts offers classes in dance, music, the visual arts, theatre, and yoga. The arts center has more than 450 students and 20 instructors. The 7500 sq. ft. facility features an art gallery and 14 studios, including music and dance studios. The Arts Pavilion houses a clay studio, a fiber-arts studio and a painting and drawing studio. Other spaces of significant importance to the community include the old firehouse, several churches, and the old post office.

## 2-5. Principles for Better Development

The handbook *Better Models for Development in Delaware* was jointly produced in 2004 by the Conservation Fund and the Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination and sets forth six principles necessary for better development. This section of the plan examines these principles in the context of Middletown, in order to recommend steps that the town can take to ensure better development and the maintenance of its unique character.

### *Six Principles For Better Development*

1. Conserve farmland, open space and scenic resources.
2. Maintain a clear edge between town and countryside.
3. Build livable communities.
4. Preserve historic resources.
5. Respect local character in new construction.
6. Reduce the impact of the car.

The conservation of Middletown's rural surroundings has been the focus of many of the town's recent planning efforts. Middletown's greenbelt policy has been aimed at encouraging the preservation of farmland surrounding Middletown, encouraging St. Andrew's School to obtain additional agricultural and open-space holdings, and coordinating with New Castle County to encourage rural land uses in Middletown's proximity. This plan recommends that the town's greenbelt policy be continued, in order to preserve the rural character of Middletown's immediate surroundings (see *Map 10. Greenbelt*).

Middletown has also actively pursued the preservation of open space within town. Much of this open space has been dedicated through the residential-subdivision process. Additionally, large parcels within town have been set aside for use as spray-irrigation facilities for treated wastewater. This plan recommends that the town continue to enhance its open-space-preservation efforts by requiring that a certain percentage of dedicated open space is maintained in its natural state, creating open spaces within neighborhoods as usable, focal points within the community and requiring the protection of important natural features such as riparian buffers and mature trees. These recommendations are more thoroughly covered in the Open Space and Recreation chapter of this plan.

Middletown's main venue for maintaining a clear edge between town and countryside has been its greenbelt policy. As stated previously, this plan recommends that that policy be continued. In order to adequately maintain an edge between Middletown and the surrounding countryside, the Town should not encroach on the established greenbelt through annexation. Recommendations related to the greenbelt are more fully covered in the Growth Management and Land Use chapter of this plan.

In order to work towards building a livable community, preserving historic resources, respecting local character in new construction, and reducing the impact of the car, Middletown will need to focus on the concepts of infill, redevelopment, and design. The town has been very active in encouraging infill and redevelopment. For example, the new town hall will be located on the site of the old Acme building. Also, the ongoing Main Street Middletown program aims to improve the appearance, accessibility, and economic vitality of the downtown area. Approaches in this program include bringing more people to

the commercial district, restoring downtown's image, improving its physical appearance, encouraging partnership among local businesses, and creating a strong economic base for downtown, based on specialty shops and arts.

This plan recommends that the efforts related to the Main Street Program be continued. It is also recommended that the town continue to locate important civic uses near the downtown area and encourage the redevelopment of existing commercial, industrial, and residential development while minimizing the amount of greenfield development.

Middletown's historic downtown maintains many of the elements that have made and continue to make it a vibrant, walkable community. It is the aim of this plan to encourage the continued viability of Middletown's downtown, increase mobility within the entire town, and ensure that development outside of the downtown area complements the historic development found at Middletown's core. Mobility should be increased by maintaining the policy of requiring sidewalks within new subdivisions, constructing bicycle and walking paths that connect neighborhoods, and providing sidewalks in the areas within town where they are not currently found.

The 2001 update of Middletown's comprehensive plan recommended that the Zoning Code and Subdivision regulations be modified to require the placement of commercial and institutional buildings in accordance with the exhibits now contained in these regulations. This plan again makes this same recommendation so that these buildings will be placed in a more attractive and pedestrian-friendly manner, with features such as properties fronting the roadway, tree-lined streets, and integration with a pedestrian and bicycle-circulation network.

The Westown development promises to bring a neo-traditional neighborhood to a large portion of Middletown's western side. The neo-traditional style of development is typified by being highly-walkable with a wide variety of housing types and styles arrayed in a relatively dense pattern, as compared to that found in more typical suburban developments.

With the promise of nearly 2,000 homes and a large amount of commercial space associated with Westown, it is important that this development be integrated with the rest of the community. The groundwork for the integration of new developments into the existing community was laid with amendments to Middletown's Zoning and Subdivision regulations resulting from the 1997 Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) study, *Mobility Friendly Design Standards*. This study recommended a series of measures that have been folded into Middletown's codes, including enabling vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle interconnections between subdivisions, locating buildings in a more pedestrian-friendly manner, and amending off-street parking requirements to enable both more attractive streetscapes and improved accessibility to future commercial and institutional developments.

This plan recommends that Middletown closely coordinate with DelDOT, WILMAPCO, and developers as the circulation plan for the Westown area is developed. The circulation plan should allow for maximum vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle interconnections both within the new development and between Westown and existing development. Buildings in new commercial centers should be placed in a manner consistent with the requirements that parking to be located to the side and rear of buildings and to allow for maximum accessibility by pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic.

With the aim of ensuring that new developments in Middletown contribute a high level of design quality to the built environment, this plan recommends that Middletown explore the prospect of incorporating architectural design standards into their land-development regulations. A well-crafted standard would afford developers, architects, and designers the flexibility to meet the challenge of designing attractive new communities while compelling them to meet minimum design standards and provide for adequate variety in new construction. Architectural standards could address areas such as:

- Requiring that neighboring dwellings vary with respect to the location of certain features, dimensions, and/or building materials.
- Requiring that the facades of attached dwellings be varied with respect to siding style, pattern, or material.
- Requiring that garages be offset from the front of the façade and additional features such as porches, porticos, and bay windows be provided in order to provide relief and visually integrate the garage into the façade of the house.

## **2-6. Community Character and Design Recommendations**

The recommendations related to community character and design are discussed at length within this chapter of the plan. Listed below are the major recommendations made in this chapter:

- Maintain greenbelt policy.
- Enhance open space and natural resource–preservation efforts.
- Continue active Main Street program.
- Site important civic uses in downtown area.
- Encourage redevelopment of underutilized locations.
- Make investments in construction of bicycle and pedestrian pathways.
- Require more attractive, pedestrian-friendly placement of commercial and institutional buildings.
- Ensure adherence to mobility-friendly design standards in Westown area.
- Explore Prospects of Implementing Architectural Design Standards.

## CHAPTER 3. COMMUNITY PROFILE

### 3-1. Population Characteristics

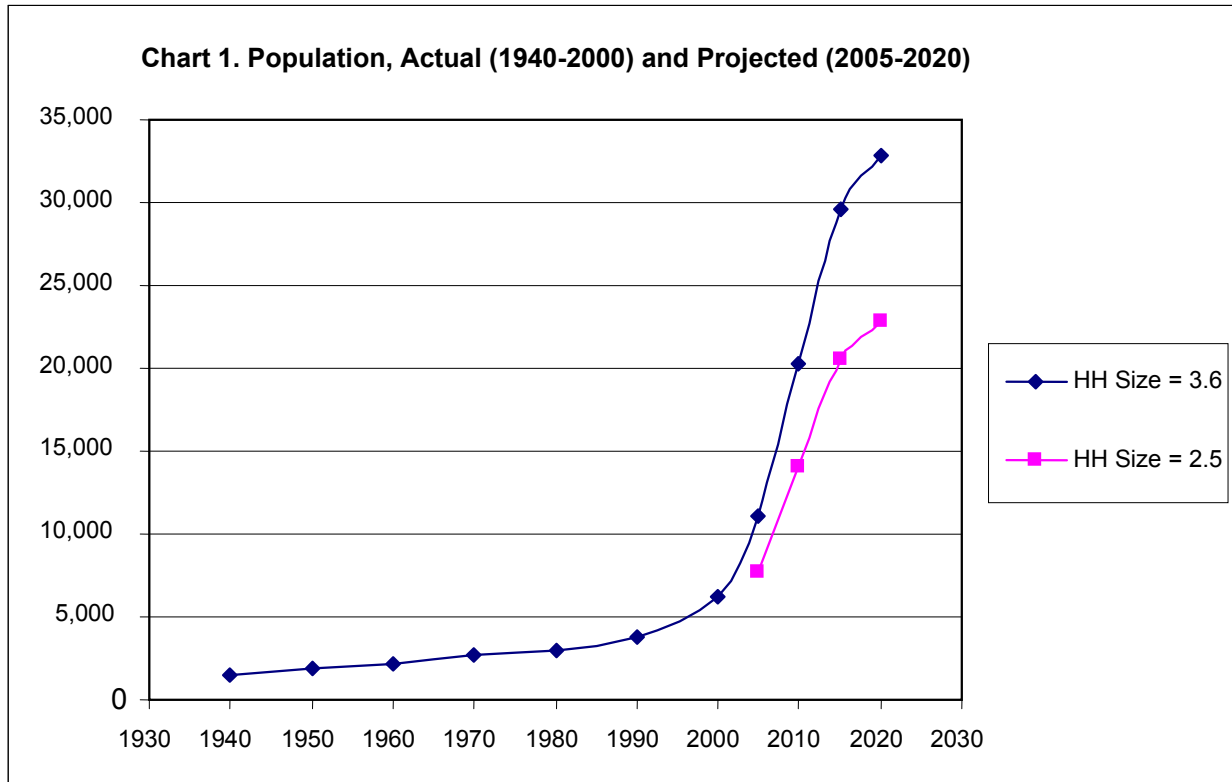
Middletown is in the midst of a period of considerable residential development spurred by the construction of SR 1. This recent trend of rapid land consumption and in-migration caused population growth in the town and in the surrounding Middletown-Odessa-Townsend (MOT) census county division portion of New Castle County is expected to continue in the near future. It is likely to bring with it significant increases in Middletown's housing values and costs and the average education levels and incomes of its residents. Middletown's population is expected to increase from 6,161 in 2000 to perhaps as high as 33,000 residents by 2020, many of whom will be school-age children. As a result of this population growth, there will be dramatic increases in the demand for public services, recreational facilities, schools, transportation facilities, and other public infrastructure, as well as a range of commercial goods and services. Together with extensive residential and commercial development in adjacent unincorporated areas of MOT, this will significantly change the character of the community. The preservation of an adequate stock of housing affordable to Middletown's lower-income residents may become a concern.

#### *3-1a. Trends and Projections*

Chart 1 summarizes the pattern of actual and projected population growth in Middletown's population from 1940 to 2020. After growing steadily, but slowly, from 1940 to 1980, Middletown's population has quadrupled since 1980. The U.S. Census recorded 2,946 residents in 1980 and 6,161 in 2000. Based on the number of newly completed housing units, estimates place the population at 10,000 or more in 2005. The town's growth of 61 percent between 1990 and 2000 was slightly more than the overall MOT area's growth of 60 percent, and nearly four times as great as the 17.6 percent population growth of the state as a whole. Annual rates of increase averaged 1.6 percent from 1940 to 1980, 2.6 percent from 1980 to 1990, and 4.9 percent from 1990 to 2000. For comparison, Delaware's statewide average annual growth rate from 1990 to 2000 was 1.6 percent, and New Castle County's was 1.2 percent.

Population projections are difficult to make with a significant degree of accuracy, particularly for areas as small as Middletown. With that said, currently approved and anticipated residential developments are likely to continue the pattern of rapid growth in and around Middletown into the future. Over the period 2000 through 2004, the Town issued about 2,000 residential certificates of occupancy. At the average household size of 2.68 recorded by U.S. Census 2000, this number of residential units may have increased the town's population to more than 11,000 residents in 2005. Recorded plans for residential developments in Middletown as of January 2005 call for 5,743 additional residential units to be developed. Since a majority of the units are single-family homes, likely to be occupied by young families, average household size may peak at over three residents per unit. Assuming that all of the planned units are built over a ten-year period, Middletown's population by 2020 will range from approximately 23,000 residents, assuming an average household size for the new units of 2.5, to approximately 33,000 residents, assuming an average household size of 3.6 (See Chart 1).

Development in the rest of the MOT area, including unincorporated areas immediately adjacent to Middletown is also continuing. For example, the recently approved Bayberry development to the north of town is slated to include nearly 2,500 residential units. This nearby development will exacerbate the pressures leading to increased commercial development, traffic, and the attendant increased demand for public infrastructure, services, and facilities.



Sources: Actual population data, 1940-2000, were obtained from the University of Delaware Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research ([www.cadsr.udel.edu](http://www.cadsr.udel.edu)); Projections, 2010-2030 are based on currently approved residential development plans and estimates of household size, as described in the text.

**3-1b. Demographic Characteristics**

Middletown’s racial composition in 2000 was generally similar to those of New Castle County and Delaware as a whole, but other population characteristics differed. Overall, according to data from the U.S. Census 2000, Middletown’s population in 2000 was slightly younger, less wealthy, and less extensively educated than the rest of New Castle County and Delaware. The attraction of relatively higher-income professionals through the continuing development of new single-family housing, however, is likely to change the overall educational, occupational, and income profiles of the town significantly in the next few years.

Households and Families

Compared to the county and state in 2000, Middletown had a slightly higher proportion of family households and a larger average household size. These figures are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1. Household and Family Characteristics, 2000**

	Middletown	New Castle County	Delaware
Total Population	6,161	500,265	783,600
Total Households	2,298	188,935	298,736
Total Family Households	1,632	127,106	204,590
Average Household Size	2.68	2.56	2.54
Average Family Size	3.14	3.09	3.04

Source: U.S. Census 2000, Summary File 1.

Racial Composition

Tables 2 and 3 summarize changes in Middletown’s racial composition from 1990 to 2000 and compare its 2000 racial characteristics to those of the state and county. Changes over the 1990s made Middletown’s composition more similar to those of New Castle County and Delaware as a whole in 2000 than in 1990. One noteworthy change, summarized in Table 4, has been the increase in the share of the town’s population reporting themselves as being of Hispanic or Latino origin from 1.4 percent in 1990 to 5.3 percent in 2000. This change paralleled similar shifts in the county (from 2.7 to 5.3 percent) and state (from 2.4 to 4.8 percent) over the same period. In the United States overall, 12.5 percent of the population in 2000 reported Hispanic or Latino origin. The number of foreign-born residents of Middletown increased from 36 (0.9 percent of total population) in 1990 to 298 (4.8 percent of total) in 2000.

**Table 2. Changes in Middletown’s Racial Composition, 1990 – 2000**

	1990		2000		Change, 1990 - 2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White (respondents reporting only one race)	2,928	76.4	4,585	74.4	1,657	-2.0 points
Black or African American (reporting only one race)	869	22.7	1,312	21.3	443	-1.4 points
Other (including those reporting two or more races)	37	1.0	264	4.3	227	+3.3 points
Totals	3,834	100.0	6,161	100.0	2,327	

Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000, Summary File 1

**Table 3. Comparison of Middletown’s Racial Composition in 2000 to State and County**

	Middletown		New Castle County		Delaware	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White (reporting only one race)	4,585	74.4	365,810	73.1	584,773	74.6
Black or African American (one race)	1,312	21.3	101,167	20.2	150,666	19.2
Other (including those reporting two or more races)	264	4.3	33,288	6.7	48,161	6.1
Totals	6,161		500,265		783,600	

Source: U.S. Census 2000, Summary File 1

**Table 4. Middletown Population Reporting Hispanic or Latino Origin, 1990 and 2000**

	1990		2000		Change, 1990 - 2000
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	54	2.7	326	5.3	272
Not Hispanic or Latino	3,780	97.3	5,835	94.7	2,055
Total Population	3,834	100.0	6,161	100.0	2,327

Source: U.S. Census 1990 and 2000, Summary File 1

### Age Distribution

Middletown's population is relatively young, compared to the rest of Delaware and New Castle County. The median age of Middletown residents in 2000 was 30.9 years, compared to 36 statewide and 35 countywide. While the share of Middletown's population 15 to 59 years of age is comparable to that of the state and county overall, Middletown has a larger share of residents under 15 and a smaller share aged 60 or more (see Table 5).

**Table 5. Resident Population Age Distribution, 2000**

	Middletown		MOT CCD		New Castle County		Delaware	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 15 Years	1,634	26.5	7,106	23.9	104,495	20.9	162,618	20.8
15 to 59 Years	3,849	62.5	19,447	65.5	319,914	63.9	487,057	62.2
Over 60 Years	678	11.0	3,129	10.5	75,856	15.2	133,925	17.1
Totals	6,161		19,182		500,265		783,600	

Notes: "MOT CCD" is the Middletown-Odessa-Townsend Census County Division, comprising the portion of New Castle County south of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. Source: U.S. Census 2000, Summary File 1.

### Education

The overall average educational attainment of Middletown's population in 2000 was generally higher than that of MOT, but lower than that of New Castle County and the state overall. Table 6 summarizes and compares levels of educational attainment for the population age 25 years or more in the town, county division, county, and state. The continuing influx of buyers of homes priced in excess of \$200,000 is likely to increase the number of higher-income, college-educated residents in both Middletown and the surrounding area.

**Table 6. Educational Attainment, 2000.**

	Middletown		MOT CCD		New Castle County		Delaware	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Not HS Graduates	798	21.1	3,392	28.0	47,245	14.5	89,536	17.4
Graduated HS, but no further degree	2,174	57.4	6,798	56.1	159,834	49.2	262,374	51.0
Associate Degree	311	8.2	692	5.7	21,957	6.8	33,831	6.6
Bachelor's Degree or Greater	507	13.4	1,243	10.3	95,774	29.5	128,917	25.0
Totals	3,790		12,125		324,810		514,658	

Notes: "MOT CCD" is the Middletown-Odessa-Townsend Census County Division, comprising the portion of New Castle County south of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. Source: U.S. Census 2000, Summary File 3.

### 3-2. Housing Characteristics

Rapid growth and new construction are changing the size and composition of Middletown's housing stock. In 2000 the housing stock included a significantly higher proportion of manufactured homes than the rest of the county or state and a significantly smaller share of single-family detached units. Based on residential completions from 2000 through the end of 2004, however, new construction has more than doubled the stock of single-family units in Middletown since the U.S. Census 2000. The current and planned future residential development, with its larger average unit size and relatively high proportion of single-family units, will bring the distribution and median value of housing types in Middletown closer to that of the rest of Delaware as a whole. The extent of new and recent construction will also leave Middletown with a significantly newer housing stock than the rest of New Castle County or the state as a whole.

#### 3-2a. Housing Inventory

Table 7 summarizes the distribution of housing unit types in Middletown and comparison areas as of the U.S. Census 2000. Middletown, in 2000, had a significantly smaller share of detached, single-family units and a significantly larger share of manufactured homes than the rest of New Castle County, Delaware, or the United States. Median unit size, at 5.6 rooms for Middletown in 2000, was slightly smaller than the statewide median of 5.9 rooms and considerably smaller than the MOT median of 6.9 rooms.

**Table 7. Housing Stock Composition, 2000**

	<b>Middletown</b>	<b>MOT CCD</b>	<b>New Castle County</b>	<b>Delaware</b>	<b>United States</b>
Percent (number) single-family detached	42.9 (1,010 units)	82.2 (8,222 units)	53.6	55.9	60.3
Percent (number) single-family attached	20.1 (474 units)	5.3 (526 units)	19.9	14.1	5.6
Percent (number) multi-family	18.4 (434 units)	5.1 (515 units)	24.0	18.7	26.3
Percent (number) manufactured housing	18.6 (439 units)	7.4 (741 units)	2.5	11.2	7.6
Percent (number) other	0.0 (0 units)	0.0 (0 units)	0.0	0.2	0.2

Source: U.S. Census 2000, Summary File 3

At the time of the U.S. Census 2000, the age of Middletown's 2,357 housing units and the dates on which occupants had moved in reflected the 1990s beginnings of the current building boom and immigration. Of the 2,282 Middletown housing units occupied as of April, 2004, one-third (763) were occupied by householders who had moved into them in 1999 or the first quarter of 2000. The comparable proportions for the rest of New Castle County, Delaware, or the United States are slightly under one-fifth. Table 8 compares the age of Middletown's housing stock in 2000 to the county subdivision, county, and state. Consistent with the rest of MOT in 2000, Middletown had a significantly higher share of its housing stock constructed after 1989 than New Castle County or Delaware as a whole.

**Table 8. Age Distribution of Housing Units in 2000**

	<b>Middletown</b>	<b>MOT CCD</b>	<b>New Castle County</b>	<b>Delaware</b>
Percent (number) built from 1990 through March 2000	39.5 (931)	43.9 (4,391)	16.5	21.2
Percent (number) built from 1970 through 1989	31.6 (745)	33.0 (3,299)	30.0	34.2
Percent (number) built from 1940 through 1969	17.4 (411)	12.0 (1,201)	43.4	33.9
Percent (number) built in 1939 or earlier	11.5 (270)	11.1 (1,113)	12.1	10.7

Source: U.S. Census 2000, Summary File 3

The median value of specified owner-occupied units in Middletown was reported by U.S. Census 2000 as \$116,900. This was the same as the national median, although significantly lower than the \$172,100 median for the MOT census county division. The 43.4 percent increase in Middletown's median housing unit value since the U.S. Census 1990 was somewhat less than the 52.4 percent national increase over the period, but well above the statewide (30.8 percent) and countywide (23.5 percent) figures. The median unit value will increase significantly in Middletown as the development boom continues, since most of the new units are anticipated to be priced well above the 2000 median value. As of November, 2004, online real-estate listings suggested that prices for new units in Middletown ranged from \$150,000 to \$220,000 for townhouses and from \$280,000 to \$400,000 or more for single-family detached units.

### **3-2b. Housing Pipeline**

Single-family and townhouse types predominate the mix of new residential units permitted and planned. Table 9 summarizes the mix of residential units existing as of the U.S. Census 2000, developed from 2000 through 2004, and planned for future construction as of January 2005.

**Table 9. Existing and Planned Middletown Residential Units**

<b>Unit Types</b>	<b>At Census 2000</b>	<b>Completed 2000 – 2004</b>	<b>Planned or Begun by 2005</b>	<b>Total Existing, New, and Planned</b>
Single-family detached	1,010	1,464	4,986	7,460
Single-family attached	474	583	1,856	2,913
Duplex	95	52	524	671
Multiple-dwelling units	339	0	892	1,231
Mobile home	439	0	0	439
Total housing units	2,357	2,099	8,258	12,714

Sources: Town of Middletown, 2004. U.S. Census 2000

### **3-2c. Housing Needs**

The preservation and provision of affordable housing for Middletown's existing lower-income residents may be increasingly a matter of concern as the development of owner-occupied dwellings proceeds and housing prices increase. Preservation and expansion of the affordable rental housing stock and of affordable housing options for the residents of the mobile-home park may be particular concerns in the future.

Nearly half of Middletown’s renting households paid more for housing than the proportion of household income conventionally considered affordable. U.S. Census 2000 estimates indicate that gross rents exceeded 30 percent of household income for a high proportion (46.5 percent) of Middletown’s renters, compared to that of New Castle County (35.8 percent), Delaware (34.3 percent), or the United States (36.8 percent). At the same time, rents as reported by U.S. Census 2000 were generally lower in Middletown than elsewhere in Delaware, with median gross monthly rent at \$490 in Middletown compared to \$670 in New Castle County and \$639 statewide. This suggests that a significant share of Middletown’s renting households are particularly vulnerable to potential increases in rental costs, and that they would have few good options for alternative housing if displaced from their homes by rent increases.

News accounts in the first months of 2005 concerning ground-rent and other disputes between unit-owners and the owners of manufacturing-housing parks in Sussex County indicate additional potential consequences of rapid development and escalating land values. Development pressure in Middletown may introduce similar tensions over ground rents, or may lead to attempts to have the land rezoned for alternative uses that may provide for immediate gain or respond to the preferences of purchasers of relatively more expensive homes in the adjacent suburban-type residential developments.

**3-3. Economic Characteristics**

Middletown’s population in 2000 had slightly lower incomes and slightly higher rates of poverty than those of New Castle County and Delaware overall. Per capita income for Middletown was \$18,517 in 1999, only 86 percent of the national figure, and the poverty rate for residents over 65 years old was 13.6 percent, compared to 9.9 percent nationally and 7.9 percent for Delaware as a whole. Middletown’s median household and family incomes were closer to the national figures, and poverty rates for families with children were lower than the national average. Tables 10 and 11 summarize income and poverty data for Middletown and compare Middletown to the rest of the county, state, and nation.

**Table 10. Household, Family, and Per Capita Annual Income in 1999**

	Amount in Dollars		Income Amount as a Percent of U.S. Income Amount			
	Middletown	United States	Middletown	MOT CCD	New Castle County	Delaware
Median Household Income	41,663	41,994	99.2	147.2	124.8	112.8
Median Family Income	47,270	50,046	94.4	136.7	124.2	110.4
Per Capita Income	18,517	21,587	85.8	106.5	117.7	108.0

Source: U.S. Census 2000, Summary File 3

**Table 11. Selected 1999 Income Distribution and Poverty Data**

	Middletown		MOT CCD	New Castle County	Delaware	United States
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Households with annual income under \$25,000	641	27.5	15.3	20.4	23.5	28.7
Households with annual income of \$100,000 or more	180	7.7	18.4	17.4	14.0	12.3
Families below poverty level	149	8.8	3.5	5.6	6.5	9.2
Female-headed families, no husband present, with related children under 18 years, below poverty level	84	27.4	20.1	23.8	26.3	34.3
Individuals below poverty level	676	10.9	4.7	8.4	9.2	12.4
Individuals 65 years and over below poverty level	70	13.6	6.0	7.4	7.9	9.9

Source: U.S. Census 2000, Summary File 3

Based on current mortgage-interest rates and local prices for new single-family houses, most of the incoming residents can reasonably be expected to have annual household incomes in excess of \$65,000. At about \$55,700 in constant 1999 dollars, this represents an income level more than 30 percent greater than the median of the households residing in Middletown in 2000.

### 3-4. Summary of Key Issues

Key issues for Middletown result primarily from the scale and nature of the current housing boom, which will result in significant changes in overall population, population characteristics, land-use patterns, and housing characteristics. These, in turn, will drive significant increases in the scale of demand for public services and utilities, public infrastructure and transportation, recreational facilities, schools, and a range of commercially provided goods and services.

Rapid growth in the housing stock and the bias of that development toward single-family residences for relatively affluent families will facilitate the rapid in-migration of commuters with significantly higher incomes and educational attainments, on average, than current residents. This will introduce some potential for revitalizing the downtown business district through the arts and entertainment strategy being pursued by the town's Main Street Program, as described in Chapter 5. The influx of households will also help to support a growing volume and range of commercial establishments in the many newly constructed and proposed commercial developments in town.

The increase in household income levels and land values will also introduce the potential for gentrification and displacement of current lower-income residents, particularly those who live in low-cost rental housing or in the manufactured-home park. This can occur both directly, through increased ground rents and housing rents and prices, and indirectly, through citizen pressures for alterations to adjacent neighborhoods.

Finally, rapid growth in population will require a similarly rapid increase in the capacity of the town and the Appoquinimink School District to provide services and infrastructure to residents. Careful strategic planning for growth based on projections of the precise rates and locations within Middletown of the increases in demand over the next ten to fifteen years can help to increase both jurisdictions' abilities to respond appropriately and minimize the associated "growing pains." These increases in the scale of service provision and infrastructure may also imply a need for increased formalization of the town's management structures and regulatory procedures.

Management planning should also include careful projection of the required number, size, and location of the schools and other facilities required to serve the increased and spatially redistributed population. The reservation of adequate and appropriately located sites and initiation of planning for schools may be a particular concern, since the school-age population may increase by several thousand over the next 20 years.

## **CHAPTER 4. GOVERNMENT, COMMUNITY SERVICES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **4-1. Government**

Middletown's governing body consists of a mayor and four council members. The council members are elected in staggered two-year terms. The mayor and two council members are elected in odd-numbered years. The remaining two council members are elected in even-numbered years. Elections for town officials are held on the first Monday in March in Town Hall. As of the writing of this plan, Town Hall is located in the historic Middletown Academy building at 216 North Broad Street. A new Town Hall, to be located on West Green Street at the site of the old Acme building, has been approved for construction. The 12,280-square-foot building will have a full basement and three entrances with tree-lined landscaping around the 100-space parking lot. Once Town Hall is relocated, the Historical Society and Chamber of Commerce will move into the Academy building.

A Planning Commission has been established in accordance with Chapter 3, Title 22 of the Delaware Code to review the zoning ordinance and to create the Comprehensive Development Plan for the town. The Planning Commission also has the responsibility to review zoning changes, alterations in the zoning ordinance, and make recommendations to the council for revision. The mayor, with consent of the council, appoints members to the Planning Commission. There are nine voting members of the Planning Commission and one non-voting member.

The Board of Adjustments has been established according to Chapter 3, Title 22 of the Delaware Code for the task of granting or denying variances and special exceptions and hearing zoning appeals. The Board of Adjustments members are appointed by the mayor with consent of the council. There are five members on the Board of Adjustments.

Along with a town manager, Middletown employs a town clerk and five foremen for the administration and operation of town services. These foremen include electric, wastewater, parks, water, and streets foremen. The mayor, town manager, town clerk, superintendent of daily operations, and administrative assistant all have offices in the Town Hall. In total, the Town employs approximately 80 employees.

### **4-2. Community Services**

#### Police and Emergency Medical Services

Police protection for Middletown is provided through a contract with the New Castle County Police. The county police force provides 24-hour-a-day protection for the town. The New Castle County Police Southern Patrol Unit Headquarters was completed in Middletown in 1996 to provide a base for the public safety personnel assigned to southern New Castle County.

The Town of Middletown has developed an important intergovernmental relationship with the New Castle County Department of Public Safety through the police service contract. This partnership allows the town to have police services while not necessitating the formation and operation of a town police department. Middletown plans to continue strengthening this relationship as growth and development

occur. In addition to contracting for police service, Middletown currently contracts for 9-1-1 emergency communications and basic life support (BLS) emergency services through the New Castle County Department of Public Safety. Respondents at the Middletown public participation meeting were generally very pleased with the police and emergency medical services provided in town.

#### Fire Protection

Fire protection is provided by the Volunteer Hose Company of Middletown located at 27 West Green Street. The service area for the fire company covers approximately 57 square miles and includes the Town of Middletown and the surrounding areas bounded on the north by Howell School (Maryland Line Road), on the east by a line dividing the county into eastern and western halves (just prior to Route 13), on the south by the northern boundary of the Townsend Fire District, and on the west by the Maryland State Line. The Volunteer Hose Company of Middletown participates in mutual aid agreements with surrounding fire companies. Fire equipment is dispatched through the New Castle County 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Center. The public participation event conducted in connection with this plan revealed that the great majority of respondents were pleased with the town's fire protection services.

#### Solid-Waste Disposal

The town contracts with Waste Management, Inc., to provide trash collection services to residences and commercial operations in Middletown. Trash is collected on Tuesday and Friday of each week. The Middletown Street Department collects and disposes of yard waste (grass, leaves, and chippable brush). The vast majority of respondents at the Middletown public participation meeting reported that they were satisfied with trash collection.

#### Libraries

In the fall of 1996, with the completion of the new Middletown High School, a 20,000 square foot community library was opened to replace the 1,500 square foot Appoquinimink Library. The new library is named the Middletown-Odessa-Townsend Library and is open six days a week. The regional library facilities located in northern New Castle County are also available to Middletown residents.

#### Postal Service

Middletown is served by the United States Postal Service with a Post Office building located at 298 East Main Street. Middletown's zip code is 19709.

#### Senior Services

The Middletown-Odessa-Townsend Senior Citizens Center, Inc., is a private, nonprofit senior center located at 300 South Scott Street. The senior center provides recreation, nutrition, and outreach services to seniors throughout southern New Castle County.

### Health Care

A variety of regional and local health providers serve the healthcare needs of Middletown residents. The Middletown Health Unit, run by the Division of Public Health within the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, is located at 216 North Broad Street, behind the Old Academy Building. The Middletown Health Unit provides the following medical services: dental care for Medicaid-eligible children, cancer screening, prenatal clinic, post-partum and family-planning clinics, mental health, hygiene, nurse pediatric clinic, physician pediatric clinic, and geriatric screening.

The Middletown Medical Center was opened in 2001. Located at 209 East Main Street, the Middletown Medical Center specializes in cardiology, cancer care, family medicine, general surgery, mental health, obstetrics/gynecology, and pediatrics.

The Medical Center of Delaware operates a Primary and Specialty Care Center in Middletown located at Suite 300, 200 Cleaver Farm Road. The Alfred I. du Pont Institute runs a Children's Clinic at Suite 201, 200 Cleaver Farm Road. Christiana Care opened a new medical center on the west side of Middletown at 214 Sleepy Hollow Drive. The facility features MRI, x-ray, ultrasound, CAT scan, physical therapy, and specialist doctor services on-site.

To give southern New Castle County residents another health care option, the Christiana Care Health System opened a health care facility in 2004, equipped with imaging services, physical therapy, rehabilitation services, family medicine, and women's health services. This facility is located in the Springside Plaza in Glasgow, west of SR 896 on Route 40. In the near future, Christiana Care is also planning to locate health care facilities in downtown Smyrna.

The regional hospital in closest proximity to Middletown is the Medical Center of Delaware, Christiana Hospital, located approximately 30 minutes away at 4755 Ogletown-Stanton Road, in Newark. Situated 40 minutes to the south is Kent General Hospital, a Bayhealth Medical Center, located at 640 South State Street in Dover, DE.

### **4-3. Education**

#### Education Facilities

Middletown is located within the Appoquinimink School District. Appoquinimink has been one of the fastest growing districts in the state, averaging 15 percent annual increases in student enrollment since 2001–2002. The total enrollment for the 2004–2005 school year is 6,710, according to the Appoquinimink School District.

The district currently operates five elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. Every school within the district has been recently remodeled or renovated. Silver Lake Elementary School, Brick Mill Elementary, Redding Middle School, Meredith Middle School, and Middletown High School are located within Middletown.

In order to satisfy the growing educational needs in the Middletown area, a capital expenditure referendum was recently passed, enabling the construction of a new high school (2007), middle school

(2008), and early-childhood center (2006). The high school will be located at the corner of Choptank and Bunker Hill Roads, while the middle school and early-childhood center will be located near Cedar Lane Road and SR 896. In addition to new school construction, the referendum will allow for extensive renovations at Louis L. Redding Middle School and the construction of new athletic fields at Middletown High School.

**Table 12. Appoquinimink School District Enrollment Breakdown**

School	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Early Childhood Center	425	372	442	481
Silver Lake Elementary	735	640	569	623
Cedar Lane Elementary	817	695	607	609
Townsend Elementary	458	457	331	317
Olive B. Loss Elementary	0	505	569	610
Brick Mill Elementary	0	0	561	599
Redding Middle School	995	818	724	724
Everett Meredith Middle School	969	763	884	931
Middletown High School	1422	1531	1708	1816
<b>District Total</b>	<b>5,821</b>	<b>5,781</b>	<b>6,395</b>	<b>6,710</b>

Source: Appoquinimink School District, 2004

Table 12 lists the actual enrollment numbers for the Appoquinimink School District from the 2001–2002 school year through the 2004–2005 school year. Table 13 lists projected enrollment in Appoquinimink School District through 2008.

**Table 13. Appoquinimink School District Past and Projected Enrollment**

Years	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Students	5,821	5,781	6,395	6,710	7,485	8,158	8,810

Source: Appoquinimink School District, 2004

The town of Middletown recognizes the importance of maintaining high-quality public education facilities. A connection exists between the land use decisions of a local jurisdiction and the ability of the public school facilities to handle the number of students attracted to the district through expanded residential uses. An appropriate mix of land uses that include agricultural, residential, commercial, office, and industrial land uses will provide the adequate tax base for the school district to meet the financial needs of the future.

The majority of schools within the district are located in or near the town limits of Middletown. The continuation of siting schools within the town of Middletown and in close proximity to residential developments will reduce school transportation costs and assist the town in meeting its goal to integrate civic land uses with residential and other land uses. The historic pattern of placing schools within the

Town of Middletown has contributed to the creation of community character, and setting aside land in or near Middletown for the siting of new schools is recommended.

#### Post-Secondary Education

The University of Delaware expanded its continuing education program to Middletown in 1997 and offers evening courses at Middletown High School. These offerings provide additional convenience for Delawareans living and working in the growing southern New Castle County region. Courses featured are useful to individuals hoping to complete a bachelor's degree and for those seeking professional development opportunities. The potential location of a Goldey-Beacom College campus as part of the Westown development would significantly increase the post-secondary offerings available in the Middletown area.

### **4-4. Water and Wastewater**

#### Water

The Town of Middletown currently provides water service to approximately 4,900 residential and 550 commercial/industrial customers. Average daily usage is approximately 750,000 gallons, with a peak demand of approximately 1,200,000 gallons. Water supply is provided by Middletown's allocation with the state and Artesian Water Company's allocation with the state for those areas for which they hold the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN).

Middletown obtains water from four wells located within the incorporated limits of the town. Water from wells 4, 8, and 9 is treated to remove iron at the Lake Street station, which is the main source of water for the town. This station has a treatment capacity of 900 gallons per minute (gpm). A fourth well, well 6, is located south on Lakeside Drive and has a capacity of 272 gpm.

In addition to its own source of supply, Middletown continues to partner with Artesian Water Company to purchase water to serve all the areas of the town annexed after 1996. Artesian currently has an iron-removal facility at Willow Grove, within the town limits, and has constructed a second iron removal facility at Choptank Road, outside of the town limits. These two facilities provide an additional source of supply to the town.

Water system storage is provided by the 500,000 gallon elevated storage tank at Hercules, and the Green Lawn 1,500,000 gallon elevated storage tank. The top 200,000 gallons of the Hercules tank are available for the town's use under normal conditions. During a fire or with Hercules' permission, the town can open a valve and use the remaining 300,000 gallons.

Since its most recent comprehensive plan, Middletown has completed several upgrades that will ensure adequate water capacity for remaining development. Following is a list of the upgrades:

- Completion of a study assessing the supply capacity and hydraulic capacity of the town water system
- Increase of 975 gpm in supply through upgrades to the Willow Grove facility and construction of the Choptank facility
- Fluoridation

- Construction of new filters in the town’s Lake Street facility
- Rehabilitation of the town’s water reservoir, including the addition of a liner
- Upgrades to the town’s Lake Street facility to allow for both manual and automatic operation

In order to handle future growth, the Town continues to partner with Artesian to assist in the modeling and analysis of the overall water system. As a result of current studies, the Town plans on the construction of a new, elevated water tower in the southwestern portion of town. The tower is currently being designed and planned for construction in 2006. Completion of the tower will provide the storage capacity necessary to handle the growth planned on the west side of town. In addition to the tower, the town is installing several water trunk lines into developing areas. Artesian is also planning to secure the location for an additional well, in the event demand exceeds the current available supply from Willow Grove, Choptank, and Lake Street.

Based on the high- and low-population projections presented in Chapter 3 of this plan, Middletown’s population can be expected to reach anywhere from approximately 23,000 to 33,000 residents by 2020. Accompanying this growth in Middletown’s population will be an increasing growth in the demand for water. Table 14 projects peak daily usage and annual use based on high- and low-population projections discussed in this plan, a peak per capita water usage of 195 gallons, and an average daily water usage of 120 gallons per capita.

**Table 14. Projected Water Demand**

	<b>Projected 2020 Population</b>	<b>Projected 2020 Peak Daily Water Demand (gallons)</b>	<b>Projected 2020 Annual Water Demand (gallons)</b>
<b>Low Population Projection</b>	23,000	4,485,000	1,007,400,000
<b>High Population Projection</b>	33,000	6,435,000	1,445,400,000

Source: Population Projection as discussed in section 3-1 of this plan; water demand using DNREC-provided water-use factors

Water is provided to Middletown residents by both Artesian Water Company and the Town of Middletown. These water purveyors are allocated water by the state of Delaware. Based on projected water demand, these allocations will not fully support Middletown’s water needs by 2020. Table 15 lists allocations for the Town of Middletown, Artesian Willow Grove, and Artesian Choptank systems that will supply the town’s future water needs.

**Table 15. Middletown Water Allocations**

<b>Allocation Number</b>	<b>Daily Allocation</b>	<b>Monthly Allocation</b>	<b>Annual Allocation</b>
98-0013A	144,000	4,320,000	51,840,000
98-0013BM	720,000	21,600,000	259,200,000
98-0016	790,000	23,700,000	284,400,000
87-0004AR	720,000	21,600,000	259,200,000
87-0004BRM	800,000	24,000,000	292,000,000
87-0004CRM	900,000	27,000,000	328,500,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,074,000</b>	<b>122,220,000</b>	<b>1,475,140,000</b>

Source: DNREC, 2005

As shown in Table 16, based on Middletown’s projected population growth, water demand will likely exceed the allocations for water systems serving incorporated Middletown. The timing and magnitude of this excess water demand will depend on the pace of residential development in Middletown and the size and water-use characteristics of new households in Middletown. The Plan recommends that the town work with DNREC to both evaluate the adequacy of groundwater supplies serving Middletown and seek water allocation increases as needed.

**Table 16. Middletown Projected Water Supply/Demand Difference**

	<b>Projected 2020 Population</b>	<b>Projected 2020 Peak Daily Water Demand (gallons)</b>	<b>Total Daily Water Allocation</b>	<b>Projected Supply/Demand Difference (gallons)</b>
<b>Low-Population Projection</b>	23,000	4,485,000	4,074,000	-411,000
<b>High-Population Projection</b>	33,000	6,435,000	4,074,000	-2,361,000

Source: Population Projection as discussed in section 3-1 of this plan; water demand using DNREC-provided water-use factors

Wastewater

The Town of Middletown currently provides sewer service to approximately 4,900 residential customers and 550 commercial/industrial customers. Average daily usage is approximately 625,000 gallons per day (gpd). The town’s total average treatment capacity is currently 3,250,000 gpd. This total average flow is treated at the town’s new spray facility, the Frog Hollow spray facility, and the New Castle County water farm.

Middletown’s new spray facility is currently constructed with an average treatment capacity of 2,100,000 gpd. This facility is capable of expansion to 2,500,000 gpd after the construction of irrigation in the town’s proposed park located on Levels Road. Currently, the facility is operating with an average flow of about 400,000 gpd. Treated effluent from the facility is sprayed on a combination of farmland owned by the town and a private golf course under construction. Operation and maintenance of the facility is currently contracted with Artesian.

The Frog Hollow spray facility currently has a permitted capacity of 212,000 gpd. The ultimate design capacity is 250,000 gpd with an increase in spray area. Approximately 140,000 gpd is treated at the facility, with treated effluent used as irrigation for the Frog Hollow golf course.

The Town of Middletown currently has a contract with New Castle County to treat 500,000 gpd at their spray facility in Odessa. Approximately 85,000gpd are currently being sent to the facility.

Since its most recent comprehensive plan, the Town of Middletown has completed several upgrades that will ensure adequate sewer capacity for the town’s remaining development. Following is a list of the upgrades:

- Construction of the 2.5 million gpd spray facility
- Upgrade of the Villagebrook pump station to serve additional development from the north side of town and allow the elimination of a failing lift station
- Design of a regional pump station and sewer trunk line to serve development from the west side of town

In order to handle future growth, the Town is currently constructing two regional pump stations and trunk lines that will convey sewage from development occurring on the west side of town to the town's new spray facility. To increase the spray capacity of Frog Hollow, the town is studying several areas of open space to determine their potential as spray sites. Increasing the spray capacity will allow Frog Hollow to treat at its maximum design capacity of 250,000 gpd. The town is also designing a 100-acre regional park on Levels Road. Construction of the park will allow the town to increase the capacity of the new spray facility to 2,500,000 gpd with the installation of irrigation to spray the parkland. Phasing of the park will coincide with the planned residential development from Westtown, Southridge, and St. Anne's.

#### Stormwater Management

Middletown and the New Castle County Conservation District have jurisdiction over stormwater management within the town. The stormwater-management system was constructed as a separate system from the sanitary sewer system, consisting of a series of drains, transmission lines, and catch basins that direct stormwater into natural stormwater-management areas.

Storm drainage on new construction is required to be constructed in conformance with the New Castle County Drainage Code, the New Castle County Specification for Sediment and Erosion Control, and the New Castle County Storm Water Management Code. The Town of Middletown also specifies that new development should utilize natural stormwater-recharge points within or in proximity to low points, such as swales, so as to collect stormwater and return it to the natural water table.

#### **4-5. Electricity**

Middletown currently provides electric service to approximately 4,900 residential and 550 commercial/industrial customers. In 2004, the average monthly residential usage was approximately 3,185,000 Kwh, and the average monthly commercial/industrial usage was approximately 3,900,000 Kwh. The Town of Middletown continues to be a member of the Delaware Municipal Electric Corporation (DEMEC). Through this corporation, the Town, along with eight other municipalities, negotiates the purchase of electricity for its customers.

Since its most recent comprehensive plan, the Town has completed several upgrades that will ensure adequate electric capacity for remaining development in town. Following is a list of the upgrades:

- A new 138 kV transmission line was constructed to upgrade the town's main electric feed into the system.
- A new 25 kV substation was built, with the capability of providing dedicated service to high demand commercial/industrial users.

- New 25 kV distribution lines out of the new substation have been constructed to upgrade the town's service and reliability to customers throughout town.
- The town's original 12 kV substation was purchased from Conectiv (now Delaware Power) and is fed from the new substation with the town's 25 kV.
- Through DEMEC, the Town partnered in the construction of a 1 MW generation plant in Smyrna. The generation plant helps protect DEMEC customers from experiencing unexpected spikes in the cost of electricity.

Planned improvements to the town's electric system include the construction of additional distribution lines to provide service into developing areas and increase the service reliability. The majority of these lines are being constructed to service development in the western and southern portions of town.

#### 4-6. Summary of Key Issues and Recommendations

##### Ensuring the Adequacy of Provision for Public and Community Services

As Middletown's population continues to increase, the demand for public and community services will increase. The following recommendations are made in an effort to ensure that the provision of public and community services keeps pace with demand for these services.

- **Implement Capital Improvements Program:** With the goal of continuing to provide adequate public services to Middletown residents, the Town should annually prepare and adopt a Capital Improvements Program that plans for needed infrastructure repairs, improvements, and expansions.
- **Finance and Management Study:** Middletown has budgeted money for a finance and management study to be conducted by the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration. This plan recommends that Middletown initiate this study in order to think strategically and systematically about expanding governance capabilities.
- **Assess Customer Satisfaction:** Consider developing and administering an annual survey of customer satisfaction with municipal services
- **Coordination:** In order to continue to provide an adequate level of community services to existing and future Middletown residents, coordination with other governments and agencies will be necessary. Particular partners for coordination include New Castle County, DNREC, Artesian Water Company, the New Castle County Conservation District, DEMEC, and the Appoquinimink School District.

##### Educational Sites

The location of Appoquinimink School District buildings has greatly contributed to the fostering of Middletown's strength as a desirable community. In order to continue the policy of locating future school sites in and about Middletown, the following measures are recommended.

- **Coordination:** Coordinate with Appoquinimink School District in order to arrive at accurate forecasts of needed school facilities and plan for the location of those facilities.
- **Reserve School Sites:** Middletown should require that, as a condition of annexation, the applicant dedicate land sufficient for public uses. All land dedicated to public uses should be the property of the Town of Middletown until such time as a transfer to the Appoquinimink School

District has been finalized. Under no conditions should land dedicated through this process to the Appoquinimink School District be converted to a non-public use, and at the termination of educational use the land should be required by deed to be transferred to the Town of Middletown. In addition to existing open space requirements of the Middletown Subdivision Code, five percent of the total acreage of a property proposed for annexation should be dedicated for public uses, including education and institutional uses.

## CHAPTER 5. TRANSPORTATION

This chapter provides an inventory of the transportation system in Middletown, identifies issues that need to be addressed, notes planned improvements to the transportation network, and recommends action to ensure maximum mobility for all transportation modes in Middletown.

**Goal:** Enable the safe and efficient flow of bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicle traffic throughout the town.  
**Objective:** Adopt policies and encourage investments that provide for safe, attractive, and efficient transportation options in Middletown.

### 5-1. Inventory

The transportation system in the Town of Middletown consists of roadways, rail, sidewalks, and Delaware Administration for Regional Transit (DART) buses. This section of the transportation chapter provides a brief overview of the major modes of transportation currently found in Middletown.

#### Roadways

As development pressure has increased in the greater-Middletown region, congestion on area roads has become more and more prevalent. Middletown's major roadways include Main Street (SR 299), Broad Street (SR 71), and U.S. Route 301 (US 301). Middletown also has many primarily residential streets in its historic core and curvilinear street patterns in its newer subdivisions. Middletown's historic core, surrounding the intersection of Main and Broad Streets, is generally laid out in a grid pattern with ample intersecting roads and sidewalks. As growth and development has occurred outside of Middletown's original center, subdivisions have tended to develop in a stem-and-leaf pattern off the town's major arteries. Consistent with typical suburban development, these more recent subdivisions have typically reinforced the role of the automobile as the primary method of transportation around town. These newer developments typically have few, if any, vehicle, pedestrian, or bicycle connections between neighborhoods.

Recent traffic count numbers indicate that the busiest roadways include East and West Main Street, North Broad Street, and Summit Bridge Road. A 2003 count found the portion of East Main Street with a breakpoint at Odessa's western limits to have an Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) of 10,555 vehicles-per-day (vpd). Another 2003 count concluded that the AADT for West Main Street at Peterson Road was 12,974 vpd. In 2003, the count for North Broad Street at Lockwood Street was found to be 11,965 vpd. A 2002 count for Broad Street at Middletown's Northern Limits found the 2002 AADT to be 13,574 vpd.

WILMAPCO's 2004 *Congestion Management System Summary* (CMS) identified and analyzed the US 301/SR 896 corridor in the Middletown area as a congestion-management-system corridor. The CMS employs a holistic approach to identifying and addressing congestion in the WILMAPCO region.

WILMAPCO's CMS also identified trends in the US 301/SR 896 corridor. From 1990–2003, the number of households increased 92.2 percent in the corridor, compared to an increase of 19.7 percent across the region. Similarly, population in the corridor increased 123.5 percent over this same time

period, compared to a 17.1 percent regional population increase. From 1998–2002, AADT in the corridor increased 17.4 percent, with regional traffic increasing only 2.8 percent. Finally, the volume to capacity ratio for this corridor was reported as greater than 100 percent, and had increased significantly from 1998–2002.

As significant development in Middletown and the surrounding region continues, traffic volumes and congestion will almost surely continue to increase. Middletown will need to balance the needs of community character, pedestrian and bicyclist mobility, and vehicle commuters when making decisions that will impact the town’s transportation network.

Bicycle Traffic

Delaware Bicycle Route 1, running from Brandywine Creek State Park in New Castle County to the Atlantic Ocean in Sussex County, passes through Middletown on Bunker Hill Road, East Main Street, and South Broad Street. The *New Castle County, Delaware Bicycle Map*, produced by DelDOT in 2002, evaluated the cycling conditions on roadways in New Castle County, including Middletown.

Several roadway segments in Middletown were identified as having “Below Average” cycling conditions. These segments were West Main Street near the intersection with US 301, North Broad Street, and the northern portion of South Broad Street. Summit Bridge Road, Wiggins Mill Road, the majority of South Broad Street, Silver Lake Road, and Main Street east of Silver Lake Road were ranked as having “Above Average” cycling conditions. The remaining road segments in town were ranked as having “Average” cycling conditions. The definitions of these cycling condition ratings appear in Table 17.

**Table 17. Cycling Conditions**

<b>Above Average:</b> Most suitable for on-road cycling. A majority of cyclists would find conditions favorable.
<b>Average:</b> Moderately suitable for on-road cycling. Cyclists of lesser skill and experience riding in traffic may find conditions unfavorable.
<b>Below Average:</b> Least suitable for on-road cycling. Cyclists of advanced skill and experience riding in traffic may find conditions unfavorable.

Source: *New Castle County, Delaware Bicycle Map*, DelDOT, 2002

Middletown is located a short bike ride away from the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal Greenway. This greenway runs from Delaware City in the east to Chesapeake City, Maryland, in the west and connects with Lums Pond State Park. Middletown is also located a short bike ride away from Wiggins Mill Park, which is being upgraded by New Castle County to include significant recreational opportunities.

Increased traffic from continued development will likely negatively impact the biking conditions along Middletown’s roads. Currently, dedicated bicycle paths do not exist along Middletown’s roads. As road upgrades take place, these paths should be added to Middletown’s busier roadways in order to ensure the safety and viability of bicycle travel in town. The addition of dedicated bicycle paths between subdivisions and in existing parks should help to provide for viable and safe bicycle travel in the Middletown region.

### Pedestrians

Sidewalks run throughout Middletown, both in the downtown area and in individual subdivisions. The central downtown area is generally pedestrian-friendly. However, sidewalk conditions along parts of Main Street and the heavy traffic volumes along Broad and Main Streets can make walking in these areas difficult at times. Planned improvements to Main Street's sidewalks should remedy concerns over their condition. Traffic-calming measures, improved signage and crosswalks, and improved timing of crosswalk lights may help to better accommodate pedestrian traffic along these busy roads.

Pedestrian travel outside the immediate downtown becomes more difficult. There are several areas within the downtown area that have gaps in sidewalks. Outside of the downtown area, there are long stretches where sidewalks are not provided. Also, pedestrians walking to commercial centers are often confronted by large parking lots with no dedicated pedestrian pathways leading to the stores or neighboring parcels. These problems could be lessened through the filling-in of sidewalk gaps throughout town and the requirement that commercial and institutional sites be designed to be as pedestrian-friendly as possible.

### Railroads

The major north-south railroad line on the Delmarva Peninsula runs roughly parallel to Broad Street through Middletown. This railroad line connects Middletown with the northeast corridor, thus providing transportation to statewide and regional destinations. The rail line is owned by Norfolk Southern and is currently only used to move freight. Studies are being conducted that may eventually bring passenger rail service to Middletown. Two potential locations for these facilities have been identified, specifically one along Industrial Boulevard and one along Route 301 north of Peterson Road.

### Public Transportation

The public transportation provided to Middletown is operated by DART First State. DART First State operates fixed-route service in New Castle County. The Middletown shuttle connects with the US 301/Wilmington-Dover/Intercounty route, which connects with routes in both northern New Castle County and Kent County.

Park-and-Ride lots in the Middletown area are located at:

- Bethesda United Methodist Church at 116 East Main Street
- Odessa Park & Ride, at the intersection of SR 1 and SR 299
- South of town at the State Highway Maintenance Yard
- The intersection of Route 13 and Road 15
- Pine Tree Corners east of Townsend at the intersection of US Route 13 and Road 25
- The intersection of SR 299 and SR 1. A shuttle bus connects the in-town Park-and-Ride lots with this location.

DART Paratransit service provides a door-to-door transportation service for elderly and disabled riders. Paratransit rides need to be arranged at least one day in advance. Also available is the Senior Citizens

Affordable Taxi (SCAT) service, which provides elderly or disabled persons with a 50 percent discount on taxi fares from participating companies.

### Aviation

The Summit Aviation airport is the closest airport to Middletown and is located north of town on US 301 at Summit Bridge. Summit Aviation services small planes and consists of a 4,500-foot paved runway. The closest larger facilities are the New Castle County Airport near Wilmington, with a 7,165-foot paved runway, and the Dover Air Force Base Civil Air Terminal, with a 13,000 foot paved runway. The nearest regular passenger air service is provided at the Philadelphia International Airport, approximately 60 miles to the north of Middletown. In addition, the Baltimore-Washington International Airport is located approximately 75 miles to the west.

## **5-2. Planned Transportation Improvements and Studies**

### Choptank Road

Choptank Road is a heavily traveled, narrow two-lane road situated between Bunker Hill Road and Bethel Church Road in southern New Castle County. New development near Middletown will result in increased traffic volumes along Choptank Road. Due to high traffic volume and the absence of a drainage system, the road is not in good condition. Choptank Road is also part of Bicycle Route 1 and, therefore, must accommodate bicycles.

Planned improvements to Choptank Road's approximately 4.8 miles include the reconstruction of the pavement to provide two 11-ft. travel lanes and two 5-ft. shoulders and the construction of three roundabouts in order to encourage safety, discourage truck traffic, and preserve the "rural feel" of Choptank Road. The roundabouts will be located on Choptank Road at Bunker Hill Road, Churchtown Road, and Bethel Church Road. Drainage issues will be addressed with open drainage ditches, biofiltration swales, and stormwater ponds. Relocation of several utilities is also anticipated. DelDOT intends to make improvements to Choptank Road as funds become available for that purpose.

### Westown Projects

A tri-party agreement among the Westown development group, Middletown, and DelDOT has been executed, with the purpose of providing for coordination of private development construction with necessary infrastructure improvements to public utilities and roadways. Pursuant to this agreement and DelDOT's US 301 Project Development Study, reconstruction of portions of US 301, Bunker Hill Road, Level's Road, Saint Anne's Church Road, and Wiggins Mill Road are planned in order to support recent and future development in Middletown. Proposed improvements are summarized on *Map 9. Proposed Transportation Improvements*. Proposals for road construction include a new connector road from Bunker Hill Road to St. Anne's Church Road and a new connector road from Industrial Drive to Level's Road. The Bunker Hill/St. Anne's Church connector will link residential, commercial, and employment areas. The Industrial Drive/Level's Road connector will link existing and proposed industrial and employment areas to US 301. These connectors will provide additional access to US 301, distributing some traffic that might otherwise use West Main Street or the intersections of US 301 and Bunker Hill/West Main.

Additional proposals include a limited-access Route 301 highway. Such an improvement would allow realignment of Level's Road. As a result of this reconstruction, there would be easier access to US 301 from the south of Middletown. Accompanying plans for the limited-access highway is a plan to upgrade 2.2 miles of the existing US 301, pursuant to the Westtown agreement and DelDOT's US 301 project development study. Intersection and signalization improvements have also been proposed for Money's Truck Stop, Bunker Hill Road, Level's Road, and the Kohl/Cochran employment center.

#### Middletown-Odesa Road

Project development for Middletown-Odesa Road (SR 299) from Silver Lake Road to SR 1 is included in DelDOT's 2006–2008 Transportation Improvement Program. With recent commercial and residential development outgrowing the current transportation infrastructure's capacity, project development will determine the ultimate solution for traffic congestion and intersection improvements through this area. As the future character of Middletown's Main Street depends on the eventual outcome of this project, Middletown should be actively involved in this project's development and planning.

#### Passenger Rail: Newark to Middletown

The *Delaware Passenger Rail Engineering Study Report*, completed in January 2002, and the *Delaware Passenger Rail Operations Study Report*, completed in May 2003, concluded that capital and maintenance costs of potential passenger rail service south of the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal would be reasonable compared to other rail systems in the U.S. and that the preferable rail route is Wilmington-Newark-Middletown. While current ridership projections do not justify the extension of service south of Middletown, the long-term objective is to provide passenger rail service south to Dover as development along SR 1 continues.

The provision of passenger rail service to Middletown holds the potential to allow for at least some commuters to utilize passenger-rail service rather than individual automobiles for commuting and would likely increase the attractiveness of Middletown as a place to live and work. As plans are developed, the Town and Middletown residents should be actively involved in how passenger-rail service will be provided.

### **5-3. Identified Issues**

#### Public Participation

During the December 8, 2004, public-participation meeting, residents raised many important transportation-related issues. The general concerns expressed at this meeting are summarized in this section.

Residents expressed general concerns about the amount of traffic coming through Middletown via SR 299. There was a feeling that the high traffic volumes, particularly the number of trucks passing through town, detract from the historic, small-town feel of downtown. Many residents commented that a mechanism to allow thru-traffic to bypass downtown seems like a reasonable option for improvement.

Several residents expressed concern that traffic lights should be better synchronized throughout town in order to relieve congestion. Residents also noted that there may be a need for more traffic lights at the outskirts of town in order to keep pace with commercial and residential development.

General concern was expressed about any new congestion that will result from new development on the west side of town. Residents wanted to know what infrastructure improvements are being planned to accommodate new growth. Also, residents noted the importance of communication among Odessa, Townsend, and Middletown, since the towns are part of the same growing area.

While the brick sidewalks in downtown are scheduled to be repaired, there are many areas in town where there are persistent gaps in sidewalk connectivity. Residents voiced concerns about not being able to walk to parks within neighborhoods, not being able to walk between neighborhoods, and not being able to walk from their respective neighborhoods to downtown.

Finally, residents voiced concerns about the safety of biking on many of the roads in Middletown. Specific concern focused on a lack of traffic lights at intersections on the periphery of town and the need for more bicycle connectivity throughout town.

#### WILMAPCO Congestion-Management System

As noted previously, the US 301/SR 896 corridor in the Middletown region was identified as a congestion-management corridor. Key indicators leading to this corridor's identification include rapid population and household growth in the corridor and the resulting stress that this growth has and will likely continue to put on roadways in the corridor. The *2004 Congestion Management System Summary* identified several strategies that could be employed to help mitigate congestion along the US 301/SR 896 corridor. These strategies include:

- Exclusive Right of Way – New Rail Services
- Exclusive Right of Way – New Bus Facilities
- Improved/Expanded Bicycle Network and Facilities
- Improved/Expanded Pedestrian Network Facilities
- Intersection Signalization Improvements
- Coordinated Intersection Signals
- Relief Routes

#### Potential Higher-Education Use

A higher education campus has been proposed for a location on the west-side of Middletown and has been included on *Map 6. Future Land Use and Annexation*. While the exact scale and character of the campus has not been finalized, it has been mentioned that student dormitories may be part of the campus. If Middletown is to realize the benefits of a college student population within its borders, then adequate transportation must be provided to connect the campus with the rest of the community. In order to minimize the need for vehicles for around-town trips, special attention will likely be needed to ensure that there are adequate bicycle, pedestrian, and public transportation connections between the campus and key commercial and institutional locations within Middletown.

## 5-4. Recommendations

### Coordinate to Implement Westown Improvements

The Westown development will bring significant changes to Middletown's west side. Middletown should continue to coordinate its efforts with DelDOT, WILMAPCO, residents, and developers as plans are finalized for transportation improvements and construction of those improvements begins.

### Develop Multi-Modal Transportation Plan

While much attention is focused on improvements connected with the Westown project and DelDOT's US 301 Project Development study, there are significant transportation issues that need to be addressed in other parts of Middletown. Middletown residents have expressed concern over traffic congestion, particularly along SR 299, and have also expressed a desire for improved bicycle and pedestrian networks connecting Middletown's neighborhoods and parks. The scale of Westown and other developments in town will also bring more people and traffic to Middletown as it attempts to maintain its small-town character. Finally, the potential location of a college campus on Middletown's western edge will require providing transportation to an entirely new population.

With these challenges in mind, Middletown should pursue the development of a multi-modal transportation plan. This will require the town to work closely with WILMAPCO, DelDOT, and residents to scope and carry out the plan. At a minimum, the Middletown Multi-Modal Transportation Plan should accomplish the following:

- Identify and prioritize appropriate pedestrian and bicycle routes in Middletown.
- Prioritize the expansion of the existing pedestrian network.
- Plan for the maintenance and expansion of the Main Street character along SR 299.
- Plan for the mitigation of congestion along the US 301 corridor and SR 299.
- Plan for appropriate vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle interconnections between existing and planned neighborhoods.
- Plan for vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle connections from the potential college campus to key commercial and institutional centers throughout Middletown.

## CHAPTER 6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT

Economic development is concerned with policies and practices that serve to enhance the local tax base, create and retain employment opportunities for local residents, and promote ready access for residents to desired goods and services. Market trends in the development of southern New Castle County are likely to result in Middletown becoming a significant commercial hub for the surrounding area over the next 20 years. This will create a range of employment opportunities, especially service- and retail-related, and business investments, as well as ready access to a broad variety of goods and services for residents. At the same time, the ongoing peripheral commercial development and accompanying increases in traffic volume will require active efforts to prevent overbuilding of new retail space and to preserve the viability of older commercial developments, including the historic center of town.

**Goal:** Ensure that Middletown residents have adequate access to local retail, personal and professional service, and employment establishments.

**Objective:** Revise and amend land use regulations allowing for locally desired economic development and encouraging investments in Middletown that increase the desirability for appropriate firms to locate in Middletown.

### 6-1. Economic Base and Major Employers

As recorded by the 1997 Economic Census, manufacturing accounted for a major share of the town's economic base as measured by employment, sales, and payroll. Table 18 summarizes establishment data from the Economic Census for 1997 and, where available, for 2002. The census figures show considerable growth in annual sales/receipts and employment for the retail and service sectors, although the retail sector shows consolidation of establishments and a reduction in inflation-adjusted average wages. Table 19 lists the largest current employers in Middletown. The largest employers are in the sectors of public administration, manufacturing, and retail sales. Continuing growth in business volume, employment, and numbers of establishments in the sectors of retail, public administration, and services can be expected to occur naturally as a result of the continuing population growth over the next ten to 15 years.

**Table 18. Economic Census Data for Middletown, 1997 and 2002**

Industry Description	Number of Establishments 1997 / 2002	Number of Employees 1997 / 2002	Annual Payroll (\$1,000) 1997 / 2002	Annual Receipts (\$1,000) 1997 / 2002
Manufacturing	5 / N	811 / N	31,222 / N	251,329 / N
Wholesale trade	8 / 7	b / b	D / D	D / D
Retail trade	46 / 41	422 / 605	7,775 / 10,638	59,909 / 116,054
Real estate, rental and leasing	6 / 12	52 / 36	1,613 / 1,068	8,363 / 6,351
Professional, scientific, & technical services	11 / 13	44 / 60	1,259 / N	2,793 / 5,162
Administrative & support & waste management & remediation	4 / 6	19 / 62	137 / 1,153	358 / 4,150
Educational services	1 / N	a / N	D / N	D / N
Health care & social assistance	10 / 27	58 / c	1,332 / N	3,317 / D
Arts, entertainment, & recreation	4 / 17	21 / 122	382 / N	1,194 / 6,262
Accommodation & food services	12 / 15	216 / 180	2,098 / 1,750	6,260 / 5,498
Other services (except public administration)	11 / 19	35 / 63	423 / N	2,126

Source: Economic Census, 1997, 2002 Notes: D= Withheld, N= not available or not comparable, a=0-19 employees, b=20-99 employees, c=100-249 employees

**Table 19. Largest Employers in Middletown, 2004**

Employer Name	Employer Activity	Number of Employees
Appoquinimink School District	K-12 Public School District	510
Johnson Controls, Inc.	Battery Manufacturer	230
Acme	Retail Grocery Store	190
Lowes Home Center	Retail Building Supplies	150
Super G	Retail Grocery Store	140
DelStar Technologies, Inc.	Plastic Netting Manufacturer	127
Letica Corporation	Plastic Containers Manufacturer	107
Food Lion	Retail Grocery Store	100
Town of Middletown	Public Administration	89
NAPA/Quaker City	Auto Parts Sales & Distribution	75

Source: Town of Middletown, 2004

Over the period June 2001 to 2003, the manufacturing sector suffered a net loss of 4,200 jobs statewide. Statewide, manufacturing was the only Delaware industry sector that failed to gain jobs from June 2003 to June 2004, registering a net loss of 300 jobs. Statewide, as is generally true throughout the United States, manufacturing does not appear to be a growing sector of the economy.

## 6-2. Labor Market

Middletown's residents enjoy high rates of labor-force participation and low unemployment, with most commuting to jobs out of town. Considerably larger proportions of both the male and female populations of Middletown were employed in 2000, compared to the rest of Delaware and the nation as a whole. This reflected both a greater labor force participation rate and a lower unemployment rate for Middletown residents aged 16 years and over than the rest of the state and the nation. At 4.5 percent,

the unemployment rate for Middletown labor-force participants was, however, slightly higher than the 2.9 percent recorded for the MOT area overall. Table 20 presents labor-force participation and employment data for Middletown, Delaware, and the United States.

**Table 20. Labor Force Statistics, 2000**

	Middletown		Delaware	United States
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Civilian non-institutional population, 16+ years	4,529	100	100	100
Civilian labor force (participation rate)	3,291	72.7	65.5	63.7
Male (labor force participation rate)	1,683	79	71	69.8
Female (labor force participation rate)	1,608	67	60.2	57.5
Employed (percent of civilian population 16+)	3,144	69.4	61.7	59.7
Unemployed (unemployment rate)	147	4.5	5.2	5.8

Source: U.S. Census 2000, Summary File 3

The majority of employed Middletown residents drove out of town for work according to the U.S. Census 2000. Of the 3,112 residents who commuted, approximately 83 percent traveled outside their place of residence to work, compared to approximately 75 percent statewide. Mean travel time to work was higher for Middletown residents than other Delawareans, 32 minutes for Middletown residents, compared to 24 minutes statewide. These figures are consistent with those for the rest of the MOT area. At the census county division (CCD) level, approximately 60 percent of MOT resident workers commuted to northern New Castle County, nine percent to adjacent Kent County, Maryland, and approximately 19 percent commuted within MOT. Of the commuters to northern New Castle County, approximately a third traveled to the Newark and greater Wilmington CCDs, and the remainder traveled to the other eight CCDs in northern New Castle County.

As shown by Table 21, Middletown residents' employment by broad occupational category in 2000 differed somewhat from Delaware overall and the United States, and even more from the rest of New Castle County. Middletown's work force in 2000 was noticeably more blue collar than that of the United States as a whole, even though New Castle County appeared sharply less blue collar than the nation. Only 25.6 percent of Middletown workers were in managerial, professional, and related occupations. These occupations accounted for 39.1 percent of the workers in New Castle County and 33.6 percent of all workers across the nation. Higher proportions of Middletown residents worked in the construction, extraction, and maintenance and production, transportation and material-moving categories compared to New Castle County, Delaware, and the United States. As migration into Middletown's new residential developments continues, residents' occupational distributions will likely more closely resemble those of the greater region.

**Table 21. Occupational category grouping percentages for Middletown residents, in percent**

Occupation	Middletown	New Castle County	Delaware	United States
Management, Professional & Related Occupations	25.6	39.1	35.3	33.6
Service Occupations	14.9	13.4	14.6	14.9
Sales & Office Occupations	31.3	28.4	27.6	26.7
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.7
Construction, Extraction, & Maintenance Occupations	10.5	8.1	9.5	9.4
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving	17.3	10.7	12.5	14.6

Source: U.S. Census 2000, Summary File 3

Residents' employment by industry in 2000 showed two sharp differences compared to the rest of the county and state: relatively high levels of manufacturing employment and relatively low levels of employment in the educational, health, and social services sectors. Nearly 20 percent of residents were employed in the manufacturing sector, compared to 13 percent for both the county and the state. This sector is not likely to see significant job growth nationally over the period 2002 to 2012, according to the *2004–2005 Occupational Outlook Handbook* published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Slightly more than 12 percent of Middletown residents were employed in the educational, health, and social-services sector, compared to nearly 20 percent in the county and state overall. This is predicted by the BLS to be a high-growth sector.

### **6-3. Redevelopment and Economic-Development Plan**

Significant economic development, including new retail centers, enhanced professional- and personal-service options, and employment centers, has accompanied the rapid residential development occurring in the Middletown area. This plan section collectively addresses economic-development and redevelopment issues in Middletown and sets forth recommendations aimed at focusing the town's economic-development and -redevelopment efforts.

#### **6-3a. Redevelopment**

Existing development in Middletown has and will continue to be impacted by ongoing new development in the area. This impact creates the need to develop strategies to preserve and enhance the vitality of existing development in Middletown. Middletown's major redevelopment issues include Main Street revitalization, commercial vacancies, housing stock rehabilitation, and the continued provision of affordable housing.

##### Main Street Revitalization

New commercial development outside Middletown's historic downtown will continue to pose challenges for the preservation of the town's historic commercial center, both directly through commercial displacement and indirectly through traffic generation. The approach adopted by Middletown's renewed Main Street program, as reflected in its recently adopted strategic plan, has been

successful in similar circumstances throughout the United States. The recommended “four point” model includes elements of design, promotion, economic restructuring and organization (see [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org) for a fuller description), all four of which are evident in Main Street Middletown’s strategic plan. The pending road reconstruction and streetscape project for the downtown can support the design element of the strategy by retaining on-street parking and ensuring the creation of a pedestrian-friendly environment. Residents participating in the December 2004 public-planning session indicated strong support for the likely economic-restructuring program of developing the downtown as a regional destination for arts, entertainment, cultural, restaurant, and specialty retail goods and services.

### Commercial Vacancies

Ongoing commercial development in Middletown has led to commercial vacancies in some established locations through both business relocations and closings in the face of increased competition from new businesses. The following recommendations are intended to prevent excessive commercial vacancies and to mitigate the effects of changes in the local commercial property market.

- **Encourage Redevelopment:** Redevelopment of obsolete commercial properties can restore their value. The Town has been active in redeveloping older commercial centers, particularly with its choice to locate the new Town Hall on the site of the old Acme building. Middletown should work with property owners of those commercial developments experiencing high vacancy rates to assess what improvements or changes to the development may result in higher occupancy.
- **Manage Commercial Development:** Careful monitoring and regulation of the extent of new commercial development can reduce the tendency toward overbuilding of retail space. An approximate analysis of current and future demand for goods and services by households in the MOT area, performed in support of this plan, suggests that current market demand will support about 900,000 square feet of retail space. This will increase at a rate of approximately 6 percent per year, reaching a level of roughly 3.5 to 4 million total square feet in 2030, based on the assumptions built into the analysis. It is recommended that the zoning code and commercial construction activity be monitored actively to avoid overbuilding that could result in excessive vacancy rates. More detailed analyses of market demand should be conducted as required in support of continuing management efforts. Coordination with neighboring municipalities and New Castle County is also recommended, since commercial development in each jurisdiction will affect and be affected by the sustainability of commercial space in the other jurisdictions.

### Affordable Housing and Housing Rehabilitation

For the most part, new houses being constructed in Middletown have a higher selling price than existing homes in Middletown, and persons purchasing these new homes tend to have higher household incomes than existing Middletown residents do. Middletown does have a fairly large existing stock of affordable housing, including a manufactured-home community, multi-family homes, town homes, and apartments. As property values in Middletown rise, those living in affordable housing may be forced to pay an increasing portion of their income for housing costs. This creates concerns, since those living in affordable housing tend to be those least able to absorb increases in monthly expenses.

Often what makes housing affordable is its age and condition. While it is certainly desirable from an affordable-housing standpoint that there are houses of a variety of ages, sizes, and values in a community, it is equally desirable that the housing stock be in adequate and safe condition. With many older homes in town, providing for a sound housing stock will likely be a challenge that continues to face Middletown. The following recommendations are made with regard to the challenges facing Middletown in terms of affordable-housing provision and housing stock-condition:

- **Zone for Affordable Housing:** Valuable sources of affordable housing are currently provided due to zoning that allows for housing types that are typically affordable, including manufactured homes, apartments, and multi-family homes. These zoning designations should continue so that affordable housing in town, particularly the manufactured-home community, can continue to exist. Also, zoning that allows for a mix of housing types and sizes should help to provide for affordable housing in new residential development.
- **Coordinate to Promote Development of Affordable Housing:** Development and redevelopment of affordable housing has already begun in some parts of Middletown. For example, areas on Lake Street have been targeted for the construction of Habitat for Humanity homes. The Town should support the continued development of affordable housing in Middletown by coordinating with the Delaware State Housing Authority, developers, and relevant non-profit organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity.
- **Seek Funding for Housing Rehabilitation and Affordable Housing Development:** There are existing programs in Delaware that provide funding for housing rehabilitation and affordable housing development. The Town should promote individual involvement in and seek funding from programs including the variety of programs administered by the Delaware State Housing Authority and the Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program, administered by the State Historic Preservation Office.

### ***6-3b. Economic and Community Development***

Business investment and the resulting tax base increases and employment opportunities in the retail and service sectors will likely occur without direct public intervention as capital is attracted to the market opportunities presented by Middletown's rapidly growing population. However, there are measures to improve economic development that will require active intervention on the part of the town. Key economic-development issues in Middletown include creating and preserving a viable Main Street business district, retaining and attracting employment opportunities in town, preventing excess retail vacancy, and enabling workforce-development efforts. The following recommendations are made on these counts:

- **Develop Main Street Business District:** Keys to developing the Main Street business district include maintaining the active Main Street program, cultivating a pedestrian-friendly environment, and positioning the Main Street district to serve niche markets rather than compete head-on with suburban-style shopping centers. The Middletown Main Street Program's current strategic plan incorporates these elements.

- **Retain and Attract Employment Opportunities:** This plan recommends, through its future land use policies, that a sufficient amount of space be preserved in M-I zoning to facilitate the long-term retention and attraction of manufacturing and related industries. The Town should work with the Delaware Economic Development Office (DEDO) to attract suitable new industrial employment uses to town and retain existing businesses.
- **Avoid Overdevelopment of Retail Space:** Use zoning and updated evaluations of retail market demand and commercial construction in adjacent communities to prevent overbuilding that can lead to excessive vacancies. The Town should coordinate these efforts with neighboring municipalities and with New Castle County.
- **Workforce Development:** While local retention and expansion of manufacturing businesses should be pursued, national and regional trends are toward decreasing levels of manufacturing employment. A complementary employment strategy can help current residents of Middletown by providing opportunities to develop skills suitable for higher-wage employment in a post-industrial economy. The potential relocation of an institution of higher education to Middletown's west side may create enhanced opportunities to provide such retraining locally, in coordination with the Delaware Economic Development Office, the Delaware Workforce Investment Board, and other public and private partners.

## CHAPTER 7. NATURAL RESOURCES

The natural resources present in Middletown and the surrounding region are of significant aesthetic, recreational, and economic value to regional residents. The Town of Middletown endeavors to implement a sound natural-resources policy that strikes a balance between protecting natural resources and appropriately siting developments within Middletown. This chapter inventories existing environmental conditions and policies, identifies issues of concern in this topic area, and recommends steps that Middletown should pursue in order to implement a sound natural-resources policy.

**Goal:** Ensure that natural resources are protected for the health and enjoyment of existing and future residents of Middletown and the surrounding region.

**Objective:** Adopt and implement policies that promote environmentally sound and sustainable development practices.

### 7-1. Physical Characteristics

Middletown is located in southern New Castle County, Delaware, within the interior lowlands portion of the Atlantic Coastal Plain and is characterized by elevations ranging from about 8 feet near the western end of Silver Lake to about 75 feet near the north end of town. Key environmental features in the Middletown area include the Appoquinimink River, Drawyer's Creek, Silver Lake, and Noxontown Pond.

Only one soil association, the Matapeake-Sassafras Association, appears within Middletown and its immediate area. The deep, well drained, silty Matapeake soil dominates the association. The proportion of Matapeake to Sassafras soils is approximately four or five to one. The association as a whole is characterized by nearly level to steep slope. The average slope is less than 3 percent over approximately 80 percent of the area. Generally speaking, steeper slopes only occur adjacent to the banks of water bodies. The potential for agricultural use is generally greater than in any other soil association or area of the county.

### 7-2. Water Resources

The quality and quantity of water available in the Middletown area has been and will continue to be of critical importance to growth and development in Middletown and the public health of town residents. Water-quantity issues are fully addressed in section 4.4 of this plan. This section deals primarily with water-quality issues in the Middletown region and steps that the town can take to minimize any negative impacts on water quality in the region.

#### Drinking Water Sources

Delaware's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) conducted a "Public Water Supply Source Water Assessment for Middletown Water Department" in September 2003. According to this assessment, drinking water in Middletown is drawn from the Magothy and

Potomac Formation aquifers, and the town's wells are classified as "Confined," due to the fact that significant clay layers exist between the ground surface and the wells' screens. This assessment found that Middletown's drinking-water supply has exceeded drinking water standards for metals due to high-levels of naturally occurring iron. The water supply has a low susceptibility to contamination by pathogens and pesticides, is moderately susceptible to contamination by petroleum hydrocarbons, and has no susceptibility to contamination by nutrients, PCBs, and other inorganic and organic compounds. More information on the Source Water Assessment for the Middletown Water Department can be found at [www.wr.udel.edu/swaphome/phase2/finalassessments2.html](http://www.wr.udel.edu/swaphome/phase2/finalassessments2.html).

### Watershed

A watershed is all of the land that water moves across or under while flowing to a specific body of water. A watershed includes the land and the water in it as well as the plants, animals, and humans who live and work there. Middletown is located within the Appoquinimink River Watershed. This watershed drains approximately 47 square miles in New Castle County and consists of three main tributaries—the main stem of the Appoquinimink River, Deep Creek, and Drawyers Creek. Expansive tidal wetlands at the mouth of the Appoquinimink River are part of one of the largest undisturbed marsh systems in Delaware. These wetlands serve as important habitat for wildlife and waterfowl, spawning grounds for fish and other aquatic species, and passive recreation for local birdwatchers. The Appoquinimink watershed is home to many endangered species including the bald eagle, bog turtle, and various species of hawks. It also supports abundant wildlife including herons, egrets, kingfishers, osprey, swallows, otters, minks, beavers, deer, flying squirrels, meadow jumping mice, bats, and opossums.

### Excellent-Recharge Areas

As depicted on *Map 8. Environmental Resources*, a significant majority of Middletown's land area is classified as having excellent-recharge potential. This designation means that these areas have properties allowing for the best ability to transmit water from the surface to the water table. Protecting these areas from contaminants is critical since these areas allow for relatively rapid transmission of potential contaminants to drinking water sources and ultimately to water bodies. Measures aimed at protecting excellent-recharge areas include prohibiting the storage of hazardous materials within their boundaries and limiting impervious surface cover within these areas to best allow for the natural replenishment of aquifers.

### Wetlands

As depicted on *Map 8. Environmental Resources*, tidal and freshwater wetlands are present within Middletown's municipal boundaries. Tidal wetlands appear extensively along the Appoquinimink River at the south of town and Drawyer's Creek to the north of town. Freshwater wetlands appear in limited locations across town with particular concentrations appearing near both Drawyer's and the Appoquinimink and to the east of Choptank Road in the northwest section of town. In addition to providing wildlife habitat, wetlands provide protection from flooding and protect water quality by naturally filtering runoff on its way to water bodies. Protection of wetlands falls under the regulatory jurisdiction of Section 404 provisions of the federal Clean Water Act. In Delaware, nontidal and tidal wetlands are regulated under this act; however, tidal wetlands are subject to additional and more stringent regulatory protection under Title 7, Chapter 66 provisions of the Delaware State Code.

### Floodplains

Floodplains occur naturally along water bodies and refer to the areas where increased stream flows are accommodated during storm events. Floodplains in Middletown surround the Appoquinimink River and Drawyers Creek. The maintenance and protection of Middletown's floodplains is important in order to both minimize property damage during storm events and maintain the natural filtration of stormwater runoff on its way to water bodies.

### **7-3. Relevant Programs, Policies, and Regulations**

#### Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)

The Clean Water Act and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Water Quality Planning and Management Regulations were developed to maintain the health of our nation's waters. As such, they provide for the regulation of impaired waters that are not meeting their designated uses. Designated uses are those water uses identified in state water-quality standards that must be achieved and maintained as required under the Clean Water Act. For example, in the Appoquinimink Watershed portions of the waterways have specific designated uses as a warm-water fishery or general statewide uses as areas for aquatic life and recreation. When waters do not meet these designated uses, they are required to have a TMDL. A TMDL specifies the maximum amount of pollution that is allowed in a water body and still meet water-quality standards.

Before 1998, several portions of the Appoquinimink River were not meeting the water-quality standards for their designated uses. As such, the Environmental Protection Agency established the first nutrient and dissolved-oxygen TMDL in the Appoquinimink Watershed for just the tidal portions of the river. Research found that these waters of the Appoquinimink were 20 percent above the TMDL levels of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) and, as such, reductions were required. After further examination through December 2003, a second TMDL was issued for the entire watershed. This re-evaluation demands a more stringent 60 percent reduction in the nitrogen and phosphorus levels throughout all the waters in the Appoquinimink.

In order to meet the TMDL-designated nutrient reductions, a Pollution Control Strategy is being developed by DNREC with participation by local stakeholders. A Pollution Control Strategy is a document that specifies where pollution reductions can be made to meet the TMDL targets.

#### Source Water Assessment and Protection (SWAP) Program

The Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996 mandated that each state develop a Source Water Assessment and Protection (SWAP) Program to better protect public drinking water sources. There are three basic components of all SWAP Programs:

- Delineate the boundaries of the land area most important to public water sources;
- Identify the potential sources of contamination within those boundaries;
- Assess the susceptibility of the public water source to these contaminants.

In Delaware, the SWAP Program was coordinated mainly by DNREC, which developed the majority of the assessments for all public water systems in Delaware, including Middletown. The assessment for Middletown was completed in 2003 and can be viewed at [www.wr.udel.edu/swaphome/phase2/finalassessments2.html](http://www.wr.udel.edu/swaphome/phase2/finalassessments2.html).

In 2001, the Delaware General Assembly passed Senate Bill 119, which requires all jurisdictions with a population greater than 2000 (such as Middletown) to implement measures to protect sources of public drinking water within its boundaries by the year 2007. There are a variety of tools available to assist jurisdictions in their efforts to better protect sources of public drinking water, including ordinances, best management practices, and public education. These measures are provided in a manual developed for DNREC by the Institute for Public Administration's Water Resources Agency (IPA-WRA) at the University of Delaware called *Source Water Protection Guidance Manual for the Local Governments in Delaware*.

### Middletown Regulations

Middletown's zoning code and map set forth permitted and conditional uses for areas within Middletown's municipal boundaries. Middletown's subdivision regulations establish the process for how land in town shall be subdivided and developed. Jurisdictions addressing environmental concerns often embody these regulations in either a zoning or subdivision ordinance. For example, New Castle County has provisions in the Unified Development Code (UDC) that require specific amounts of open space in identified environmentally sensitive regions.

Middletown does not have a specific set of environmental protections incorporated in its land-development ordinances. However, Middletown's subdivision regulations do contain general provisions stating that "subdivision planning should take into consideration trees, groves, waterways, scenic points, natural topography, vegetation, and especially historic spots, landmarks, and other community assets," and that "it is the intent of the Town to stress the preservation of all substantial vegetation, woodland, and agriculture which is feasible and worthwhile of such preservation."

### Appoquinimink River Association

In 2000, DNREC established the Appoquinimink Tributary Action Team as a first step in addressing how to improve water quality in the Appoquinimink River and comply with TMDLs. DNREC created this group, comprising local stakeholders and residents, to make it possible for everyone to take part in the process of determining how to reduce pollution in the Appoquinimink. The Tributary Action Team has since been incorporated as a nonprofit organization—the Appoquinimink River Association (ARA). ARA's mission is to preserve, protect, and enhance the rivers and related natural resources of the Appoquinimink Region. Its volunteer members are educators, landowners, farmers, citizens, scientists, and elected officials who care about the quality of the water that residents drink, play in, and near which they live. They work to make other community members more aware of how their actions can help to ensure clean water in the Appoquinimink River areas of Delaware.

## 7-4. Recommendations

### Adopt Environmental-Protection Ordinance

The adoption of an environmental-protection ordinance will enable Middletown to both enhance the environmental quality of the Appoquinimink Watershed and preserve and protect the town's public drinking water supplies. IPA-WRA has prepared the *Source Water Protection Guidance Manual for the Local Governments of Delaware* in order to assist municipalities in complying with the requirements of the Source Water Protection Law. Included in this manual is a model environmental-protection ordinance for the Town of Middletown. This model should be utilized as a starting point for finalizing and adopting an environmental ordinance that brings Middletown into compliance with the Source Water Protection Law and TMDL regulations.

In order to comply with the Source Water Protection Law of 2001, Middletown is required to "implement measures to protect the quality and quantity of public water supplies within delineated surface water, wellhead, and groundwater recharge areas by 2007." At a minimum, measures adopted by Middletown should require open space in the areas surrounding wellheads and prohibit the storage of hazardous chemicals in groundwater-recharge areas.

The establishment of TMDLs for impaired segments of the Appoquinimink River requires further environmental protections in order to prevent excess nutrient loading of the Appoquinimink. Some measures explained in the ordinance that should be included in an environmental-protection ordinance for Middletown are the limitation of impervious-cover levels in excellent-recharge areas, the preservation and development of forested and riparian buffers, development restrictions in floodplain and steep-slope regions, and the management of open-space lands in order to reduce nutrient loading.

### Coordination

Middletown should aim to coordinate its natural resources-related activities with those agencies and organizations that can lend their assistance and expertise including, but not limited to, DNREC, IPA-WRA, New Castle County, the New Castle Conservation District, and ARA. Coordination will be particularly important in order to comply with the Source Water Protection Law and Appoquinimink River TMDLs. Areas of likely coordination include environmental-protection ordinance development, the adoption of Best Management Practices to reduce nutrient loading to the Appoquinimink River, and public outreach efforts aimed at raising awareness of the impact of private actions on water quality.

## CHAPTER 8. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Open space and recreational facilities play a critical role in enhancing the quality of life of a community's residents. The provision of open space and recreational facilities allows residents the opportunity to enjoy both active and passive outdoor recreation and enjoy nature in its undisturbed state. This section of Middletown's comprehensive plan sets forth a primary goal and objective regarding open space and recreation, inventories the existing open space and recreation facilities in Middletown and the surrounding area, and recommends a path forward to ensure the continued provision of open space and recreation facilities that meets the needs of existing and future residents.

**Goal:** Enhance the quality of life of Middletown residents by providing for adequate open space and recreation opportunities throughout the community.

**Objective:** Acquire, develop, and maintain appropriate open space and recreation facilities to be used and enjoyed by Middletown residents.

### 8-1. Inventory

#### Town Parks

Silver Lake Park is the primary recreational space in Middletown and is operated by the town. The park covers 22 acres at the site of Silver Lake Elementary School. Within the park there is one baseball field, two softball fields, five soccer fields, four tennis courts, a community pool, an all-weather running track, a picnic area, a playground, and two pavilions.

Other recreational areas maintained by the town include a tot-lot on Lake Street, parks within Middletown Village, a little league field on West Green Street, Middletown Nature Area, and Greenlawn Open Space. A 100-acre park is planned to be located east of Levels Road in the southwest portion of town, with likely completion in 2006. The park will allow primarily passive recreational uses and incorporate a "bark park" with specified areas where leashes for dogs are not required.

#### Town Open Space

Middletown's Subdivision Ordinance requires the dedication of public open space (or private open space if a private maintenance association is established) within residential subdivisions. Fifty percent of this open space is required to be usable and accessible to residents within the neighborhood, with appropriate connections provided to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian access. Consideration is also to be given to incorporating the open space as a focal point in the neighborhood, such as a public square or neighborhood park.

There is a large amount of open space and parkland within Middletown. Approximately 900 acres of land in Middletown are either public parklands or have been dedicated as open space. The vast majority of this land is dedicated as public open space and is situated primarily within residential subdivisions throughout town. Golf courses within town are dedicated as required, private open space. If these courses ceased to operate, use of these areas as spray irrigation sites would still be required.

### Regional Parks and Open Spaces

New Castle County is home to more than 190 regional parks. The county maintains these parks, which are available for use by the public. Once completed, Wiggins Mill Park will be the first county-operated active recreation park south of the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal and will likely be regularly utilized by Middletown residents. The park will be located on 193 acres northwest of Townsend at the intersection of Wiggins Mill Road and Lake Valley Drive and will include a wide variety of sports and recreation facilities. Hiking trails will also wind through the park. The groundbreaking ceremony for the park was held in the fall of 2004. The first few facilities are scheduled for completion within six to nine months of the groundbreaking with the entire park scheduled for completion in approximately one-and-a-half years. Another county-operated park, planned along with the county's spray irrigation facility on Marl Pit Road, is in the preliminary planning stages.

Regional park and open space areas include Blackbird State Forest to the south, Augustine and Cedar Swamp Wildlife Areas to the east, and the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal Wildlife Area to the north. Plans are being developed for the enhancement of the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal's Wildlife Area as a recreational, cultural, historical, and environmental resource. Funds leveraged from state, county, and federal sources are being utilized to master-plan the area. The plan for this area is slated for completion by December 2005. While maintaining the wetlands and other natural infrastructure of the canal area, it is likely that recreational opportunities such as jogging, hiking, bicycling, and picnicking will be available within the next several years.

### Appoquinimink Schools

Appoquinimink School District facilities in Middletown, including Redding Middle School, Middletown High School, and Cedar Lane Elementary School, have recreational and open-space areas. Redding Middle School lands contain a baseball field, football field, basketball court, horseshoe pit, volleyball court, and a track. The high school includes a baseball field, softball field, and football field. Finally, Cedar Lane Elementary School contains two multipurpose areas and a picnic area.

### St. Andrew's School

St. Andrew's, a private boarding school, owns a large amount of land south of the town and east of Summit Bridge Road. In total, St. Andrew's land holdings are in excess of 2,000 acres. The vast majority of these areas are working farms and open spaces, with the school itself occupying only a small portion of the total land. St. Andrew's lands are of significant importance to the character of the Middletown region since they provide a large amount of land at Middletown's southern border that for the foreseeable future will be maintained in agricultural and open-space uses.

### Agricultural Preservation Areas

There are several large parcels in the immediate Middletown region that are involved in the Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Program. Lands designated as Agricultural Preservation Districts include one parcel at the western border of town, south of Middletown Warwick Road, two parcels just east of Choptank Road at the town's western border, two parcels to the south of town, including a large parcel owned by St. Andrew's, and one parcel located just within the town's southeastern boundary (See *Map 3. State Investment Strategies*). Landowners who place their lands in Agricultural Preservation Districts agree not to develop their lands for at least ten years and receive tax benefits, right-to-farm

protection, and the opportunity to sell a preservation easement to the state that permanently protects the land from development. One parcel west of town on Middle Neck Road has had its development rights purchased through the Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Program, thus permanently protecting this property from future development.

**8-2. Relevant Programs and Activities**

State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

The 2003–2008 SCORP was undertaken in order to identify Delaware’s outdoor recreation needs and issues, and provide a series of recommendations aimed at achieving those needs. General SCORP recommendations include incorporating sidewalks and trails into comprehensive plans and ordinances; identifying specific routes for walkers, joggers, and bicyclists for safe recreation and commuting; integrating and retrofitting greenways, trails, and open space/recreation in existing and newly constructed neighborhoods; having communities work with DelDOT on road sharing projects and improving intersection crossings for non-motorized traffic; identifying issues, barriers, and voids in outdoor recreation; and assisting in planning for local parkland acquisition and development.

Middletown is located in SCORP Region 2 which spans from just south of Newark to just north of Smyrna. Table 22 summarizes the facility needs in Region 2, as identified in the SCORP.

**Table 22. SCORP Region 2 Priorities**

High Priority Facility Needs	Moderate Priority Facility Needs	Low Priority Facility Needs
Walking/Jogging Paths	Hiking Trails	Volleyball Courts
Bike Paths	Fishing Areas	Football Fields
Swimming Pools	Playgrounds	Power Boat Access
Picnic Areas	Soccer Fields	Hunting Areas
	Skate Facilities	Golf Courses
	Baseball/Softball Fields	Canoe/Kayak Access
	Tennis Courts	Mountain Bike Trails
	Basketball Courts	Equestrian Trails
	ATV Trails	Disc Golf
	Lacrosse Fields	
	Campgrounds	

Source: State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2003-2008

Middletown Greenbelt

Middletown’s 1998 and 2001 comprehensive plans discussed and recommended the development of a greenbelt surrounding the town. The purpose of this greenbelt is to provide for a clear separation between the more urban uses present and expected in Middletown and the more rural uses present in surrounding New Castle County. The idea of establishing a clear edge between town and countryside is one of the six principles for better development mentioned in the *Better Models for Development in Delaware* booklet produced by the Conservation Fund in partnership with the Livable Delaware Advisory Council and the Office of State Planning Coordination. Underlying this principle is the idea that establishing a clear edge between town and countryside allows for the preservation of Delaware’s rural and open-space landscapes while enabling the creation of more compact, walkable development patterns that enhance the vitality of existing communities.

Middletown's greenbelt policy is consistent with Livable Delaware concepts promoting infill and reinvestment in existing communities while discouraging more costly, far-flung development patterns. The Town and regional partners have made significant progress on the establishment of a continuous greenbelt. To the south of town, St. Andrew's School properties make up a significant portion of the greenbelt, with these parcels extending from roughly Summit Bridge Road to the southeastern-most portion of Middletown. To the east of town, SR 1 remains the boundary of potential development in Middletown, with lands east of SR 1 being the concern of New Castle County and the Town of Odessa. At the southwest border of town, open-space parcels used as spray-irrigation facilities and an agricultural district establish a greenbelt with no subsequent annexation planned in this area. In connection with the Westown development, annexation of the Von Croy property is planned. Open space is planned for the western most portions of the Westown development, and an agricultural district with its development rights purchased rounds out the town's western greenbelt. It is the policy of the town to not annex any parcels north of the future realignment of US 301, except for that mixed-use parcel identified on *Map 6. Future Land Use* and intended for future higher-education and open-space use. With the placement of a New Castle County spray-irrigation facility along Marl Pit Road the greenbelt at the northern edge of town is largely complete (see *Map 10. Greenbelt*).

#### Public-Participation Meeting

During the December 8, 2004, public-participation meeting, residents offered many recommendations regarding open space and recreation in Middletown. The majority of residents in attendance that expressed their opinion noted that they would support the creation of a more formalized Middletown parks and recreation department with an expanded roster of programs and activities. Residents also expressed their desire for more recreational facilities and open areas within the town. Particular recreation facilities mentioned included trails for hiking, jogging, and walking, picnic facilities, and indoor facilities similar to those offered at a YMCA. It was also suggested that access to the Appoquinimink River be improved to both offer enhanced recreational opportunities and increase community awareness of water-quality issues related to the Appoquinimink.

### **8-3. Recommendations**

#### Enhance Recreation and Open-Space Opportunities

While Middletown does host significant park and open-space facilities, several factors point to the need for the town to remain vigilant in its attempts to adequately provide these amenities. First, significant growth and development has occurred and is expected to continue in Middletown. This additional population is likely to create increased demand for open space, parks, and recreational facilities in the Middletown region. Residents have also expressed their desire for a variety of open-space and recreational opportunities through both the SCORP and the public-participation event held during this comprehensive-planning process. Again, as new residents come to Middletown, they are likely to bring with them many of the same desires for parks and open spaces in their neighborhoods.

The following recommendations are made in order to enhance recreation and open space opportunities available to Middletown residents:

- Continue the policy of requiring usable dedicated public open-space within new residential subdivisions.
- Establish a Citizen's Advisory Committee on Parks and Open Spaces with the following charges:
  - Work with Middletown residents to prioritize the community's open space and park needs.
  - Identify areas in Middletown appropriate for walking, hiking, and bicycle trails.
  - Identify measures to connect Middletown's existing and planned parks, open spaces, and trails with each other and regional trails and greenways.
  - Recommend the acquisition, preservation, and conversion of park lands and open space in Middletown.
- Convert existing dedicated public open spaces to enhance their recreational potential and acquire additional park and open space lands as appropriate based on the findings of the proposed Citizen's Advisory Committee.

#### Better Ensure Preservation of Natural Areas

For aesthetic and natural resource-protection purposes, Middletown should strengthen its regulations governing the preservation of natural areas that will not be used for recreational purposes. Three particular measures are recommended.

- Promote the use of open space and compact-development subdivision techniques by amending zoning and subdivision ordinances to allow for these developments by right, as appropriate. These development techniques focus on maximizing the amount of open space and natural areas preserved on a development tract while creating residential communities that are often more walkable and connected to the surrounding community than traditional, suburban-style subdivisions.
- Strengthen open-space management requirements by establishing a minimum percentage of a new residential subdivision that must be set aside and managed in its native state and not for active recreational uses.
- Require that a minimum percentage of a residential subdivision's area be forested and specifically define those trees that must be preserved during development. (e.g., trees exceeding a certain trunk size).

#### Maintain Greenbelt Policy

Middletown's Greenbelt Policy, established in its 1998 and 2001 Comprehensive Plan documents, should be maintained. As Middletown continues to grow, it becomes increasingly important to provide a greenbelt buffering the denser, urban development occurring in Middletown from the more rural, suburban-style development occurring outside Middletown. This greenbelt provides Middletown with boundaries for development that result in a more unified sense of place while providing residents with ready access to the rural landscape and natural scenes that may have originally attracted them to the area. Two measures, also mentioned in the future land use section of this plan, are recommended in order to effect the implementation of Middletown's Greenbelt Policy.

- Middletown should continue to work with New Castle County, the state, and property owners in order to preserve those areas in the identified greenbelt in their rural state (see *Map 10. Greenbelt*).
- Middletown should not seek to annex areas within the identified greenbelt area for development purposes but should instead seek to promote uses fitting for the rural nature of these areas, including, but not limited to, parks and open spaces, nature preserves, and preserved agricultural areas.

## CHAPTER 9. GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND LAND USE PLAN

This section of the plan examines existing land use conditions in Middletown and the surrounding region, discusses the development climate in Middletown and the surrounding region, and prescribes a future land use pattern for lands within Middletown and those identified for potential annexation.

### 9-1. Existing Land Use

A variety of land uses are maintained within the corporate boundaries of Middletown. A land use survey conducted in the fall of 2004 by staff and research assistants from the University of Delaware Institute for Public Administration catalogued the existing land uses in Middletown. Town staff and elected officials reviewed and approved the survey for accuracy. A summary of the findings from this activity appears in Table 23 and on *Map 4. Existing Land Use*.

In terms of absolute number of parcels, residential land uses are the predominant land use in Middletown with nearly 90 percent of all parcels in town used for this purpose. Residential uses account for about 25 percent of the total land area in Middletown. These uses are spread throughout town, with substantial amounts found in and about the town center and newer residential subdivisions found around the periphery of Middletown's northern and eastern boundary. While there are currently few residential uses in the southwest portion of town, this will drastically change with the development of the Estates at St. Anne's and Westown.

Middletown's residential uses are a mixture of single-family, detached and attached homes, townhomes, manufactured housing, and apartment buildings. The median lot size for the town's residential uses is approximately 0.2 acres, which translates into a rather moderate median density of five dwelling units per acre.

At the time of the land use survey, the largest single land use in Middletown, in terms of area, was agriculture. Approximately 45 percent of Middletown's area was used for agricultural purposes. The great majority of this land is located on the western edge of town and is slated for either residential or commercial development in connection with the Westown or Estates at St. Anne's developments.

Commercial land uses account for roughly 5 percent of Middletown's land area and 2 percent of the total parcels in town. Large commercial centers are located on the periphery of the town center, with relatively smaller commercial uses populating the historic core of the community.

Institutional land uses include government buildings, churches, and educational sites. These uses comprise approximately 4 percent of Middletown's total land area. Some of the major institutional uses in town include the Town Hall, several schools in the Appoquinimink School District, a variety of churches, the town's wastewater-treatment facilities and other utility uses, and a New Castle County police station.

Industrial uses in town are generally located along Summit Bridge Road when entering Middletown from the north, and on Industrial Road. While these uses do not constitute a large portion of Middletown's area (just over 1 percent of the total area), they provide residents of Middletown and the surrounding region with significant employment opportunities.

Parks and open space uses account for nearly 15 percent of all the land area in town. The vast majority of this area is public open space dedicated in connection with the development of residential subdivisions. The largest public park in Middletown is Silver Lake Park.

At the time of the land use survey, vacant lands accounted for slightly more than 3 percent of Middletown's land area. Vacant land refers to parcels that are either being developed or could be considered candidates for development. Open spaces, although often vacant, are not included. Lands that were once in agricultural use and have had improvements made but not been developed are considered vacant. Vacant parcels at the time of the land use survey include several large parcels along Summit Bridge Road and the southern extreme of Industrial Road and several vacant parcels within business and industrial parks throughout town. The majority of these vacant parcels are zoned for either future commercial or industrial uses.

**Table 23. Middletown Existing Land Use Composition**

Land Use	Percent of Total Parcels	Percent of Total Area	Median Parcel Size (acres)
Residential	87	24	0.2
Agriculture	7	45	0.4
Commercial	2	5	0.5
Parks/Open Space	1	15	2.0
Vacant	1	4	0.3
Institutional	1	6	0.8
Industrial	0.2	1	2.3
Total	100	100	-

Source: Land Use Survey, Fall 2004

## 9-2. Town Zoning

Middletown's Zoning Code defines the permitted and conditional uses for all the lands within the town's corporate boundaries. Consistent with the existing land uses in town, the majority of parcels in town are zoned for residential uses. Significant areas of town are also zoned for commercial and industrial uses. *Map 7. Zoning* shows the town's zoning as of January 2005. Table 24 lists the zoning districts in Middletown and provides a brief summary of the permitted uses in each zone. More specific details on the permitted and conditional uses allowed in each zoning district can be found in Middletown's Zoning Code.

**Table 24. Middletown Zoning Districts**

<b>Zoning District</b>	<b>Permitted Uses</b>
R-1A Single-family Residential	Single-family, detached dwellings with a minimum lot size of 9,750 sq. ft.; a variety of institutional uses
R-1B Single-family Residential	Single-family, detached residential dwellings with a minimum lot size of 12,500 sq. ft.; a variety of institutional uses
R-2 Single-family Residential	All permitted uses in R-1 districts; Single-family, semi-detached dwellings with a minimum lot size of 5,000 sq. ft.
R-3 Multi Family Residential	All permitted uses in R-2 district; Garden apartments, townhouses, and row dwellings
R-MH Mobile Home Residential	Mobile Home Parks at least 10 acres in area
C-2 Downtown Commercial	Wide variety of commercial and institutional uses; Single-family, detached dwellings
C-3 Employment/Regional Retail	All permitted uses in C-2 district; Service stations, professional and administrative offices, and shopping and employment centers
M-I Manufacturing-Industrial	Administrative offices, manufacturing plants, and a variety of institutional uses
AP Agricultural Preservation	All permitted uses in R-1 district with no more than one dwelling per 5 acres; a variety of agricultural uses; spray irrigation of treated waste
OP Office Park	Employment enters, office for professional and administrative activities, research facilities, and warehousing
H Historic	An overlay district designated to protect buildings in Middletown's historic district from significant alteration

Source: Town of Middletown Zoning Code, 2005

### 9-3. Development Climate

#### Middletown Development

Since approximately the mid-1990s, Middletown has served as the hub for rapid residential and commercial development in southern New Castle County. With the completion of SR 1, which enabled relatively easy access from Middletown to regional employment centers, Middletown has become an even more attractive location for development. Table 25 displays residential-building-permit data for Middletown since 1995. On average, about 350 building permits for residential construction have been issued per year in Middletown. Close to 60 percent of these permits have been for single-family construction, with approximately 10 percent issued for duplexes, 27 percent issued for townhouses, and 5 percent issued for apartments. Certificates of occupancy in Middletown have been issued at a similarly brisk rate. Table 26 shows the certificates of occupancy issued for residential dwellings from 2000–2004.

**Table 25. Town of Middletown Residential Building Permits Issued: 1995-2004**

Year	Total	Single-family	Duplex	Town House	Apartments
1995	60	17	18	15	10
1996	230	12	21	46	151
1997	77	19	24	34	0
1998	201	88	16	94	0
1999	328	231	44	53	0
2000	434	281	42	101	0
2001	608	413	34	161	0
2002	492	255	52	185	0
2003	434	227	74	133	0
2004	637	468	34	135	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3501</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>957</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>Yearly Average</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>16</b>

Source: Town of Middletown, January 2005

**Table 26. Town of Middletown Residential Certificates of Occupancy Issued: 2000-2004**

Year	Certificates of Occupancy Issued
2000	230
2001	483
2002	351
2003	398
2004	537
<b>Yearly Average</b>	<b>400</b>

Source: Town of Middletown, January 2005

New residential construction in Middletown will likely continue at a rapid pace in the near future. Table 27 lists the construction status of approved residential subdivisions in Middletown as of January 2005. Nearly 6,000 approved residential units are slated to be built in Middletown. Broken down by housing type, approximately 45 percent of these units are to be single-family, 30 percent are to be townhouses, 15 percent are to be apartments, and 9 percent are to be duplexes.

**Table 27. Status of Residential Construction in Middletown - January 2005**

Housing Type	Total Proposed	Total Built	Active Permits	Total To Be Built
Single-family	4,351	1,740	261	2,626
Duplex	576	52	8	516
Townhouse	2,439	583	103	1,753
Apartment	892	0	0	892
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,258</b>	<b>2,375</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>5,787</b>

Source: Town of Middletown, January 2005

Westown is the largest single development currently planned within Middletown and is a master-planned concept for a large portion of the west side of town. The components of the Westown development include an age-restricted housing community, a traditional neighborhood development, and a mixed-use residential/retail/office development. The residential component of this development will consist of approximately 1,000 single-family homes, 260 duplexes, and 540 townhouses. Commercial and office components of the master-planned area include an 83-acre auto mall, a 47-acre business park, a 38-acre shopping center, and a one-million-square-foot retail and office center slated to include a WalMart.

A selection of the forthcoming non-residential development in Middletown includes The Shops at Middletown Crossing, a four-story, 72-room hotel, the Broadmeadow Nursing Home on South Broad Street, and a proposed residential-commercial complex on East Main Street, including luxury apartments, a movie theater, and several large national-chain restaurants.

### Regional Development

In the coming years, development in the greater Middletown region will also be significant. This development will have implications for Middletown in terms of traffic and its likely increasing role as a commercial and cultural hub for southern New Castle County. Bayberry is the largest residential development currently approved in the New Castle County region surrounding Middletown. Located northeast of town on SR 896, the Bayberry development will include approximately 2,500 residential units.

The majority of lands under county jurisdiction and immediately surrounding Middletown are zoned for low-density residential uses (See *Map 5. Adjacent Areas*). In total, residential development in surrounding New Castle County and nearby municipalities will likely increase traffic on roads in the Middletown region and create an increased demand for commercial and cultural offerings in Middletown.

## **9-4. Strategies for State Policies and Spending**

In 1999 the Cabinet Committee on State Planning Issues adopted the Strategies for State Policies and Spending, outlining needs and concerns for future state planning and growth, and identifying geographic areas where the state was most prepared for growth. Building on this foundation, Governor Ruth Ann Minner announced the Livable Delaware agenda in 2001. As part of this policy the State aims to focus on spending taxpayers' dollars efficiently, slowing sprawl, preserving farmland and open space, encouraging infill and redevelopment, facilitating attractive affordable housing, and preserving quality of life through sustainable development.

The State Strategies were updated in the fall of 2004, resulting in the delineation of four investment levels across the state with different types of state investments targeted for each level. The state is most prepared for growth to occur in Levels 1 and 2 and plans to make most of its intensive investments, such as new school facilities, roads, state service centers, and public-safety facilities, in these areas. The State of Delaware anticipates that the Level 3 areas are the future growth areas and looks for future investments in these areas. Development is not currently preferred in Level 4 areas, and the State plans to make investments in order to preserve the rural character of these lands.

The State Strategies for the Middletown region are depicted on *Map 3. State Investment Strategies*. The majority of the areas within Middletown's municipal boundaries are designated as either Investment Level 1 or 2 areas. The strategies call for state investments in these areas to focus on the encouragement of relatively dense residential developments and a mix of commercial, employment, educational, and public-service uses. Investments aimed at minimizing congestion, such as public transportation and walking and bicycle paths, are also targeted for these areas.

Investment Level 3 areas are found around much of Middletown's periphery. These areas serve as a transition between the more urbanized environments found in Levels 1 and 2 and the more rural environments found in Level 4. Ideally, Level 1 and 2 areas should be mostly developed before Level 3 areas are developed. Virtually all of the level 1 and 2 areas in Middletown are either already developed or are slated for development in the near future. Level 3 areas lying just outside of Middletown's western boundary will likely be developed in the next several years as part of the Westtown development.

Level 4 investment-strategy areas surround all but the eastern side of Middletown and are dominated by open space, farmland, and low-density residential uses. The State endeavors to make investments in these areas that will preserve their rural character. An example of such investments would be the acquisition of lands for open space and agricultural preservation. The areas include several agriculture districts and one agricultural area for which the development rights have been purchased by the State. Those level 4 areas surrounding Middletown are roughly coterminous with the areas Middletown has designated for preservation as a greenbelt.

## **9-5. Key Land Use Issues and Recommendations**

Middletown has been in the midst of a development boom since the mid-1990s. This development has been accompanied by significant growth of the town through annexation. As evidenced by residential and commercial building projects that have been approved to date, Middletown's population can reasonably be expected to increase rapidly for some time, peaking at nearly 30,000 or more by the year 2020, if the absorption rate of residential units continues at roughly its current pace.

### Community Services

The expected increase in Middletown's population will require a commensurate scaling up of the community services provided within town in order to maintain current municipal-service levels. This consideration creates the need for the following recommendation:

- It is crucial that Middletown initiate its planned Finance and Management Study near the time of adoption of this plan. This study will help the town to systematically plan for needed capital infrastructure, public-service delivery, and human-resource improvements as population growth occurs.

### Geographic and Policy Constraints of Development

The establishment of a greenbelt buffering the more urban uses in Middletown from rural New Castle County has been a town policy since the adoption of Middletown's 1998 comprehensive plan. Development and annexation plans embodied in this plan largely round out Middletown's borders without encroaching upon the planned greenbelt area. As stated previously, this plan reaffirms Middletown's commitment to the establishment of a greenbelt in order to enable the establishment of a clear edge between the town and countryside, the fostering of a cohesive community unit, the preservation of scenic views and vistas, the protection of critical natural-resource and agricultural areas, and the provision of adequate open space in the Middletown region. The following recommendations are made in this regard:

- Middletown should continue to work with New Castle County, the State, and property owners in order to preserve those areas in the identified greenbelt in their rural condition (see *Map 10. Greenbelt*). While some of the identified areas on this map have already been developed, the intent of the greenbelt designation is to coordinate with property owners, developers, and relevant jurisdictions, including surrounding municipalities and New Castle County, to preserve the rural character of this area to the greatest degree possible.
- Middletown should not seek to annex areas within the greenbelt area for development purposes but should instead seek to promote uses fitting for the rural nature of these areas, including, but not limited to, parks and open spaces, nature preserves, and preserved agricultural areas.
- Middletown should adopt a Transfer of Development Rights Ordinance (TDR). This ordinance will allow developers to develop at higher densities within Middletown in exchange for the preservation of selected areas surrounding the town in their agricultural or natural condition.
- Coordinate with the Office of State Planning Coordination for the review of projects within Middletown through the Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) process and remain aware of projects in the greater region that are reviewed through the PLUS process.

#### Development of Employment Uses

One of the objectives of this plan is to adopt land use regulations that allow for locally desired economic development and to encourage investments in Middletown that increase the desirability for appropriate firms to locate in Middletown. The following recommendation is made in this regard:

- Maintain a sufficient amount of area in Middletown with a future land use designated as Industrial, zoned appropriately, so as to allow for the location of significant employment uses ranging from light industry to office park, within town.

#### **9-6. Future Land Use and Annexation Plan**

The future land use and annexation plan presented as part of this Comprehensive Plan does not deviate greatly from that set forth in the 1998 Middletown Comprehensive Plan or the 2001 update to that plan. This future land use and annexation plan reinforces Middletown's commitment to the continuation of the town's historical land use practices, including the encouragement of mixed uses, the preservation of open space and a buffer between rural and urban uses, the maintenance of significant employment uses, and a focus on maintaining a vital Main Street. Nearly all of the parcels identified in this plan for potential annexation had been identified as areas for town growth in previous plans.

As a comprehensive plan is not a static document, several changes from previous plans have been made. Most significantly, development interest has presented the opportunity to master-plan the west-side of Middletown in connection with the Westown development. This future land use and annexation plan reflects the master-planned concept for this area of Middletown, allowing for a variety of residential, institutional, commercial, and employment uses in connection with Westown. Next, Middletown's future land use maps have been amended to reflect development activity that has occurred since the adoption of previous plans. Finally, the annexation plan has been refined to reflect the 2004 update of the *Strategies for State Policies and Spending*.

Middletown's future land use and annexation plans are depicted on *Map 6. Future Land Use*. The remainder of this section gives an overview of the character and location of the future land uses within town and in potential annexation areas.

### **9-6a. Future Land Use**

#### Residential

Reflective of Middletown's residential character, the largest future land use in town is residential. Future residential uses account for existing residential uses in town and set the groundwork for newer residential subdivisions. As stated in the town's zoning ordinance, the intent for future residential uses is to create a variety of residential environments that offer housing choices and complement Middletown's historic character and development pattern. The Town encourages the location of limited neighborhood retail and services within residential developments through the conditional-use process.

#### Government and Community Services

Government and community-service future uses allow for necessary public and community uses, including schools, government buildings, and churches. Notable government and community service uses in town include the current and future town halls, several schools, the post office, and several churches. The town's spray-irrigation sites and wastewater-treatment facility are also located on the west side of town.

#### Commercial

Future commercial uses make up a significant portion of the land in Middletown's historic core and account for large uses along major roads in town. Uses in future commercial areas are intended to be neighborhood, community, and tourist-serving, including retail, offices, restaurants, and personal and professional services. Commercial uses should be placed in a pedestrian-friendly nature, including sidewalks, street trees, and public spaces, and consider the scale and location of parking. As Middletown's zoning ordinance allows some residential uses in commercial districts, it is expected and desirable that some areas marked for future commercial uses will include a mixed-use residential component.

#### Industrial

Large parcels within town have been preserved for future industrial use. There are already established industrial uses along US 301, Industrial Road, and within business parks in town. A large parcel along US 301, adjacent to the Westtown development, has been slated for future industrial development. The primary goal of encouraging future industrial land use within town is to provide for good-paying employment opportunities. Uses in this land use category should include a range of activities such as light-industrial and office-park uses.

### Parks/Open Space

Large portions of Middletown will be preserved as parks or open space. Much of this land has already been dedicated to the town through the residential-subdivision process. The largest existing park in town is Silver Lake Park. An approximately 100-acre park is planned on the west side of town. Dedicated open spaces will also be created as new residential subdivisions are constructed. In general, it is desirable that these areas be accessible and usable by the residents of Middletown. Consideration should also be given to preserving certain open space areas in their natural state.

### Agricultural (Ag) Preservation

The parcel designated for Ag Preservation on the southeastern edge of town was initially slated for use as a spray-irrigation facility, but to date that use has not been necessary. It is desirable that this parcel be preserved in its rural state, with the potential for future spray-irrigation use if needed. As currently zoned, this parcel could be developed residentially at a maximum density of one dwelling unit per five acres.

### **9-6b. Potential Annexation Areas**

Title 22, Chapter 7 of the Delaware Code indicates that a municipal comprehensive-development plan should address annexation policy. Since this plan is written to be reexamined every five years, the annexation areas depicted on *Map 6. Future Land Use* and discussed in this section represent all the areas that Middletown may consider for annexation within five years' time of this plan's adoption.

A few important notes should be made about Middletown's annexation policy. First, property cannot be annexed into the town against the will of property owners. While the town charter grants the Mayor and Town Council the power to annex contiguous territory, it may only do so "upon the petition of two-thirds of the freeholders of such contiguous territory."

Next, Town Council has unanimously passed a resolution renewing its commitment not to annex territory before 2006, when a five-year moratorium agreed to in 2001 expires. Therefore, any territory identified for potential annexation would not be annexed prior to 2006.

Middletown has also agreed not to annex any territory west of the potential future realignment of US 301, with the exception of the mixed-use parcel on the future land use map that has been identified for future higher-educational use and as a sending area for transfer of development rights. *Map 6. Future Land Use* identifies areas for potential annexation. While some of these parcels may straddle the future realignment of US 301, Middletown will not annex areas to the west of the eventual realignment of US 301 except for the one mixed-use parcel identified for future higher-educational use.

Finally, the large majority of the areas identified for potential annexation in this plan had been identified in previous plans for potential annexation. The few exceptions to this include a set of parcels just south of St. Anne's Church Road identified for future residential uses and several parcels on the west side of town located within and adjacent to the Westown development.

Residential Annexation Areas

Areas for potential residential annexation are located at the northern entrance to town along Summit Bridge Road, just south of St. Anne’s Church Road, just east of Choptank Road, and just east of Brick Mill Road. If annexation occurs, these parcels should be developed in a style promoting a mix of housing choices and integration with the existing Middletown community.

Commercial Annexation Areas

Major areas for potential commercial annexation are located along US 301, extending west to Middle Neck Road, on SR 299 extending east to the SR 1 right-of-way, and several enclave parcels along Summit Bridge Road entering town. These commercial areas should be developed in a manner similar to future commercial uses within town, with a focus on providing a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere and providing for a mix of uses as appropriate.

Industrial Annexation Areas

The potential industrial annexation areas are located along Summit Bridge Road entering Middletown. These areas are almost completely surrounded by the town and are zoned for industrial uses in New Castle County. The intent would be to continue these industrial uses if property owners requested annexation.

Government and Community-Service Annexation Areas

Three parcels surrounding Silver Lake Road have been identified as potential annexation areas for government and community-service uses. Initial discussions have begun about developing the parcels west of Silver Lake Road as a park and Boys and Girls Club. These uses would be continued if annexation were to occur.

Mixed-Use Annexation Areas

Two parcels on the western edge of town have been identified for annexation for mixed-use purposes. In regard to the parcel bordering Middleneck Road, Middletown will not consider annexing any portion of this parcel that extends west of the potential realignment of US 301. Discussions with Goldey Beacom College have targeted the other mixed-use parcel for development as a college campus. Open space would also be preserved around a potential campus for use in a transfer of development rights to the Westown development. The educational and transfer of development rights portion of this mixed-use parcel represents the only area west of the potential realignment of US 301 that Middletown would consider for annexation.

## CHAPTER 10. IMPLEMENTATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Implementation is one of the key parts of the comprehensive-planning process. Without effective implementation, a municipality can be stuck knowing where it wants to go but not knowing how to get there. The purpose of this chapter is to lay out the steps that Middletown needs to take in order to reach the goals set forth in this plan. Also, it is recognized that Middletown cannot implement this plan on its own. The need for coordination with other governments and agencies is stressed throughout this chapter, and partners are identified for specific implementation steps. While not specifically mentioned under these implementation steps, it is important that Middletown work with its neighboring municipalities, Odessa and Townsend, to implement its plan. These three municipalities are all located in the same growing area, and each town's policies and practices will most likely impact conditions within the other two municipalities.

This chapter identifies the major necessary implementation steps identified throughout this plan. Details on these and other implementation steps can be found in their respective plan chapters. These steps are organized by topic area, desired outcomes, and initial measures of success. Partners for coordination are also identified.

### Community Character and Design Implementation

**Desired Outcome:** Middletown is distinguished as an attractive location in which to live, work, and play.

**Initial Measures of Success:** Development and redevelopment occurs that complements the appearance and character of historic development patterns in Middletown, including a variety of housing types and sizes, pedestrian amenities, and commercial and institutional uses reflective of Middletown's small-town character.

### **Implementation Steps:**

- Amend the Middletown Subdivision Code to require more attractive, pedestrian-friendly placement of commercial and institutional buildings.
- Explore prospects of implementing architectural-design standards.

### **Partners for Coordination:**

- Office of State Planning Coordination—Utilize OSPC as a resource when developing design standards and amendments to zoning and subdivision ordinances.
- WILMAPCO—Coordinate with WILMAPCO to plan for context-sensitive improvements to Middletown's transportation network.
- DelDOT—Work with DelDOT while transportation improvements are developed and constructed in the Middletown region.
- Developers—Work with developers to encourage development in town that is attractive and complements historic-development patterns and styles in Middletown.
- Residents—Solicit public input on desired character of new developments and transportation improvements in town.
- New Castle County—Work with the county to ensure that surrounding development supports Middletown's greenbelt policy.

### Government, Community Services, and Infrastructure Implementation

**Desired Outcome:** Current and future residents of Middletown are highly satisfied with the variety, quality, and reliability of the municipal services and infrastructure provided by the town.

**Initial Measures of Success:** Policies and procedures in place that allow for annual forecasting, prioritization, and implementation of needed municipal service and infrastructure improvements.

#### **Implementation Steps:**

- Annually prepare and adopt a Capital Improvements Program that plans for needed infrastructure repairs, improvements, and expansions.
- Initiate an already planned study of management and finance systems in order to think strategically and systematically about expanding governance capabilities.
- Coordinate with Appoquinimink School District in order to arrive at accurate forecasts of needed school facilities and plan for the location of those facilities.
- Conduct an annual survey of customer satisfaction with municipal services.

#### **Partners for Coordination:**

- Residents—Solicit public input on satisfaction with existing municipal services and desire for the provision of new services.
- New Castle County—Continue to coordinate with New Castle County to provide police and wastewater services.
- Appoquinimink School District—Work with the school district to accurately forecast future school facility needs and to reserve appropriate locations for future school sites.
- Institute for Public Administration—Work with IPA to develop the study of town management and finance systems.
- Artesian—Continue to coordinate water-supply and wastewater operations with Artesian.
- DNREC—Work with DNREC to evaluate the adequacy of groundwater supplies serving Middletown and seek water-allocation increases as needed.

### Transportation Implementation

**Desired Outcome:** Middletown is a place where pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists can safely and efficiently travel to and from residential, commercial, recreational, government, and employment uses.

**Initial Measures of Success:** Plans for multi-modal transportation improvements in Middletown are in place, and construction on these projects has begun.

#### **Implementation Steps:**

- Develop a Multi-Modal Transportation Plan to accomplish the following:
  - Identify and prioritize appropriate pedestrian and bicycle routes in Middletown.
  - Prioritize the expansion of the existing pedestrian network.
  - Plan for the maintenance and expansion of the Main Street character along SR 299.
  - Plan for the mitigation of congestion along the US 301 corridor and SR 299.
  - Plan for appropriate vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle interconnections between existing and planned neighborhoods.
  - Plan for vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle connections from the potential college campus to key commercial and institutional centers throughout Middletown.
- Coordinate with residents, DelDOT, WILMAPCO, and developers as transportation improvements are planned and constructed.

**Partners for Coordination:**

- WILMAPCO—Coordinate with WILMAPCO to develop a multi-modal transportation plan and plan for transportation improvements in the Middletown region.
- DeIDOT—Coordinate with DeIDOT as transportation improvements are finalized and constructed.
- Developers—Coordinate with developers to provide for pedestrian and bicyclist amenities within their projects and effectively integrate their projects into the existing Middletown transportation network.
- Residents—Middletown residents will need to be involved in the process of prioritizing and planning transportation improvements in town.

Economic Development and Redevelopment Implementation

**Desired Outcome:** Middletown residents of all economic means are provided with access to a sound, affordable housing stock and a variety of retail, employment, and personal and professional services.

**Initial Measures of Success:** Streetscape improvements are complete on Main Street, commercial vacancies are reduced, and projects are underway to develop and rehabilitate affordable housing in town.

**Implementation Steps:**

- Maintain sufficient and properly zoned areas to allow for the location and retention of significant employment uses within town.
- Continue active Main Street Program.
- Use estimates of retail space supportable in Middletown to guide commercial-zoning decisions.
- Maintain zoning that allows for provision of affordable housing and promote funding sources aimed at the development and rehabilitation of affordable housing.

**Partners for Coordination:**

- Delaware State Housing Authority— Coordinate with and seek assistance from DSHA on the provision of affordable housing and rehabilitation of existing housing.
- Delaware Economic Development Office— Coordinate with DEDO to retain and attract major employers to Middletown.
- Nonprofit Organizations— Coordinate the provision of affordable housing development and redevelopment with relevant nonprofit organizations.
- State Historic Preservation Office— Work with SHPO to publicize the availability of Historic Preservation tax credits to rehabilitate housing.
- Developers— Work with developers to provide for a mix of housing types and sizes in new developments.

Natural-Resources Implementation

**Desired Outcome:** Middletown is prized for its location amid pristine natural resources.

**Initial Measures of Success:** Environmental protections are adopted, future developments minimize their impact on natural resources, and best management practices are employed to minimize the impact of existing development on natural resources.

**Implementation Steps:**

- Adopt an Environmental-Protection Ordinance designed to protect public water supplies and reduce nutrient loading to the Appoquinimink River.

- Encourage the preservation of critical natural-resource areas through requiring maintenance of a certain percentage of open space in its native state and requiring and restoring riparian buffers and forested areas.

**Partners for Coordination:**

- ARA— Coordinate with the Appoquinimink River Association to promote environmental stewardship in the watershed and for assistance in complying with sourcewater-protection and TMDL requirements.
- DNREC— Coordinate with DNREC to comply with sourcewater-protection and TMDL requirements.
- IPA-WRA— Consult with IPA-WRA for assistance in developing an environmental-protection ordinance addressing compliance with TMDL and sourcewater-protection requirements.
- New Castle Conservation District— Coordinate stormwater practices with the Conservation District.
- Residents— Promote environmental stewardship among the public.

Open Space and Recreation Implementation

**Desired Outcome:** Middletown offers residents ready access to a wide variety of passive and active recreation opportunities and is surrounded by lands with a rural character.

**Initial Measures of Success:** Ordinances are amended to require the maintenance of a certain percentage of open space in its natural state, a Citizen’s Advisory Committee on Parks and Open Spaces is formed, and additional properties within the greenbelt are permanently preserved from development

**Implementation Steps:**

- Establish a Citizen’s Advisory Committee on Parks and Open Spaces with the following charges:
  - Work with Middletown residents to prioritize the community’s open-space and park needs.
  - Identify areas in Middletown appropriate for walking, hiking, and bicycle trails.
  - Identify measures to connect Middletown’s existing and planned parks, open spaces, and trails with each other and regional trails and greenways.
  - Recommend for the acquisition, preservation, and conversion of park lands and open space in Middletown.
- Establish a minimum percentage of area within new residential subdivisions that must be managed in its native state.
- Encourage the preservation of areas in the identified greenbelt in their rural state.

**Partners for Coordination:**

- Residents— Solicit public input regarding desired character and location of parks and open spaces in Middletown.
- New Castle County— Coordinate with New Castle County to preserve greenbelt areas in their rural state and plan for regional park locations.
- Property Owners— Coordinate with area property owners to preserve Middletown’s greenbelt buffer.
- Developers— Work with developers to set aside useful open space within subdivisions and preserve critical natural-resource areas in their natural state.

### Land Use and Growth-Management Implementation

**Desired Outcome:** Middletown is a community filled with a variety of housing styles and types, offering convenient access to a variety of commercial, employment, personal-service, government, open-space, and recreational uses.

**Initial Measures of Success:** Lands within the identified greenbelt are preserved, innovatively designed, mixed-use developments occur, and employment uses locate in Middletown.

#### **Implementation Steps:**

- Adopt a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Ordinance.
- Maintain sufficient and properly zoned areas allowing for the location of significant employment uses within town.
- Coordinate with New Castle County, Odessa, Townsend, the state, and property owners in order to preserve the rural character of the identified greenbelt.
- Promote the use of open space and compact development subdivision techniques by amending zoning and subdivision ordinances to allow for these developments by right, as appropriate.
- Continue to coordinate land use policies with state agencies through the PLUS process.

#### **Partners for Coordination:**

- Office of State Planning Coordination— Work with OSPC to coordinate land use policy through the PLUS process, complete annual reports on comprehensive-planning efforts, and develop a TDR ordinance and other revisions to land use codes.
- New Castle County, Odessa, and Townsend— Coordinate with these jurisdictions through efforts such as the New Castle County Comprehensive Plan Update process on topics including the preservation of areas in the identified greenbelt, annexation, and the provision of regional infrastructure and community services.
- Property Owners— Coordinate with property owners to preserve the greenbelt in its rural state.

## **APPENDIX A. MAPS**

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- Map 2. Roads and Boundaries
- Map 3. State Investment Strategies
- Map 4. Existing Land Use
- Map 5. Adjacent Areas
- Map 6. Future Land Use
- Map 7. Zoning
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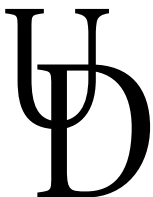


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