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III Part 3: Implementation

The adoption of the plan is but the first step in achieving the goals and recommendations found within the document. It will be necessary for the Town to work towards implementation in a consistent manner.

In order to accomplish plan implementation it is recommended that the Planning Commission form ad hoc committees to address the six main plan themes: historic preservation; economic development; housing; recreation, parks, and open space; utilities; and transportation. Each committee would be responsible for working with the Planning Commission and other members of the community to develop specific recommendations for implementing the plan.

The following sections list some specific actions that should be considered by the committees in order to implement the plan.

1 Revision of the Zoning Code and Subdivision Ordinances

The achievement of many of the goals outlined in the plan, including flexibility, mobility, mix of land uses, and development of employment centers, will require a revision of the Zoning Code and Subdivision Ordinances. The modification of zoning districts and changes in the standards in the subdivision code will be needed to influence the type and character of development within Georgetown.

Zoning ordinance changes:

Comprehensive Rezoning

- The first task that should be undertaken to implement the plan is a comprehensive rezoning. To accomplish this task, the Town should undertake an evaluation of the existing zoning map to ensure that the zoning of each parcel is consistent with the land use plan. Parcels that are inconsistent should be changed to an appropriate zone. This task should be initiated immediately after the adoption of the plan, and should be completed with no later than one year following adoption.

Evaluation of Existing Zoning Districts

- After the comprehensive rezoning has been accomplished, the Town should evaluate the current zoning districts to ensure that the regulations are suitable to accomplish the plan’s goals. This project may be accomplished in stages, over a period of several years. For example, one stage may be to review all of the residential zones. The results of the analysis might be to amend the permitted uses, the bulk standards, or other provisions found in the zoning text. There may also be recommendations made to add additional zones, with the regulations tailored to specific neighborhoods, housing types, or housing needs in the community.
Mixed Use Classification

- The existing zoning ordinance should be evaluated to determine which zones permit appropriate mixtures of uses, and amended if necessary to encourage a diverse and vibrant urban environment.

By introducing mixed-use zoning classifications, a more diverse and viable pattern of urban uses can be created in Georgetown. With the exception of industrial plants, most currently separately zoned uses in Georgetown can be regarded as compatible to each other. For example, small neighborhood stores can be located in residential areas, or offices in shopping areas. With such changes for mixed-uses, existing spot zoning in strictly residential zoned areas can be removed and zoning districts can be consolidated.

Conditional Uses

- To achieve a better mix of uses, a provision for conditional uses in residential areas should be established. Through such a provision, certain types of unconventional uses can be allowed by the Town on the basis of specific criteria. Since permission for conditional uses is only granted to a specific owner for a specific project, the municipality still remains in control over design and impact the area. Flexibility is increased while non-conforming uses are prevented.

- Conditional use zoning provides an opportunity to allow commercial uses without the necessity to rezone an area to commercial.

- The Town should create a “Neighborhood Service Conditional Use Ordinance” to encourage neighborhood services. This draft ordinance should set limits for density and size of such establishments. Additionally, other relevant performance criteria (e.g., noise or traffic indicators) can be included.

Subdivision Plans

- To implement the previous recommendations for achieving a multifunctional character in the town, new subdivision plans should contain elements that encourage mixed-use and intermodal transportation.

- Sidewalks should be required in every new development to facilitate internal pedestrian circulation.

- The subdivision ordinance should be revised to require interconnections to other neighborhoods as well as to vacant land to be developed in the future.

- The Town should pay particular attention to future road networks in the large area south of the high school. As subdivisions develop in this area care should be taken to reserve
adequate collector and internal circulation road right-of-ways. A central park or recreation area should also be reserved in this section of town.

- Conceptual circulation plans for automobiles, pedestrians, and cyclists should be required of all major developments. These plans should include conceptual plans demonstrating how the proposed transportation network will interact with existing developments and surrounding undeveloped areas.

Land should also be set aside for open space, playgrounds, and neighborhood parks. However, there should also be a provision giving discretionary power to the Town to waive certain requirements because for some subdivisions these general principles and standards might not be applicable.

**Historic Preservation Zone and Guidelines**

- To foster historic preservation, Georgetown should adopt a rehabilitation code and guidelines that give consistent advice to property owners.

- Existing building codes should be reviewed and checked for provisions that hinder the restoration of historic buildings.

### 2 Intergovernmental Coordination

The Town of Georgetown has recognized that intergovernmental coordination is essential to accomplish the goals identified in the planning process. The coordination of Town, County and State plans and actions in the Greater Georgetown area will have a direct impact on the well being and quality of life for all Georgetown residents. In several policy areas, close coordination between the town and other government agencies is crucial.

**Cooperation Procedures**

- For land use planning and transportation, establishing and maintaining close coordination with the Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination, the Delaware Department of Transportation, and Sussex County is crucial. Other important state agencies are the State Historic Preservation office, the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) and the Delaware Economic Development Office (DEDO).

- Coordination with the State is also relevant with respect to various funding opportunities. Federal TEA 21 grants for improving local streets. State infrastructure grants, which can be significant sources for the town, are administered by the State.

- With the intergovernmental coordination act, the State established formal procedures for coordination of land use planning in neighboring jurisdictions. Therefore, Sussex County is an important partner for the Town, particularly with regard to annexation and development in peripheral areas and for economic development in general. As a result, the Sussex County
Land Use Planning Department and Economic Development Department are important partners. Specific areas to address are annexation, retail, and industrial development and issues relating to the nearby Sussex County Industrial Park.

Development that is occurring outside the town limits is highly relevant to Georgetown because land uses outside Georgetown have economic and social impacts on the town.

- It is recommended that Georgetown develop a coordinated strategy with the County about zoning, subdivision plans, and the type of development occurring in neighboring areas.

- Areas that are likely to be annexed in the future should be identified. Such a strategy will enable the most efficient and coordinated extension of roads, sewer, and other infrastructure systems in both jurisdictions.

- Besides coordinating the location of new shopping and residential uses, a particular focus should be given to farmland preservation. Preserving farmland has numerous benefits for Georgetown. First, there are positive impacts for the local microclimate and air quality. As important, however, is the rural setting to the small town feeling among residents and visitors that is a significant part of Georgetown’s identity. Georgetown should coordinate farmland preservation activities and strategies with the Delaware Department of Agriculture.

3 Other Town Policies

Infill Strategies

Infill strategies are an important aspect to prevent sprawl, promote compact development, and maximize efficiency of infrastructure.

- For vacant lots that are within the exiting built-up area, the Town should cooperate with the owners to explore options for development of their properties.

- Another element in this approach is to identify absentee landlords and make sure that maintenance of their buildings meets the standards.

- To strengthen the downtown commercial area on East Market Street, the Town should create an incentive program to expand and upgrade the existing downtown businesses. Examples are waiving of building permits fees, a 50% tax break, or the transfer of tax exempt status.

Capital Improvement Programming

- To implement the recommended improvements of streetscape, transportation, or parks, the Town should determine the financial requirements of certain projects, prioritize them, and incorporate the most important schemes into its long-term capital improvement budget.
4 Future Planning Efforts

There have been issues raised by this comprehensive plan that will require additional study. These studies, and subsequent recommendations, will be important to fully implement the goals of the plan.

4.1 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

The plan recommends a comprehensive network of sidewalks and bicycle paths connecting the town’s residents and visitors to educational, cultural, and recreational attractions. Further study will be needed to determine the best routes for new sidewalks and bike paths, and which types of facilities are appropriate in each area of the town.

4.2 Downtown Georgetown Plan

Downtown Georgetown is perhaps the most important cultural, institutional, and historic area in the community. Because of its age and diverse mixture of uses, special strategies are needed to allow the downtown to adapt to modern uses, yet preserve its historic character. Small lots, a street network developed before the advent of the automobile, parking, and business recruitment and retention will be additional challenges. A comprehensive study of this important area of the town will help better define issues, and develop strategies to deal with them.

4.3 Corridor Preservation/Service Road Plan

It is recommended that Georgetown initiate talks with DelDOT to begin the service road planning process. During this process, representatives of the Department meet with representatives from the Town to design service roads and alternative access strategies. The resulting Corridor Preservation Plan will lead to greater predictability regarding future access for new businesses, and could result in direct funding to complete service road projects. Economic development opportunities along Route 113 can be enhanced with a Corridor Preservation Plan, approved by DelDOT. Such a plan will also improve traffic flow and improve safety along the roadway.

4.4 Northern By-Pass; Southern Street Network Plan

The plan recommends the construction of a limited access by-pass north of town to alleviate congestion caused by regional traffic and serve industrial uses on the northern side of town. In addition, an interconnected network of local streets is proposed in the southern portion of the town. These road projects are long-term solutions to Georgetown’s transportation needs. Potential road alignments must be explored in greater detail by the Town in conjunction with representatives of DelDOT. Environmental factors, particularly wetlands and mature forests, will be obstacles that will require creative solutions to overcome. Due to the complex nature of these roadway improvement projects, and their importance to both the regional and local transportation systems, it is recommended that the Town and DelDOT begin talks to develop the scope of work for a future study of these projects. If possible, the study should be initiated in the near term future, perhaps in conjunction with the Sussex County Transportation Plan which is currently being developed.
4.5 Annexation Plan

Georgetown is emerging as the central governmental, educational, and commercial hub of central Sussex County. It is likely that a number of the properties surrounding the town boundaries will be developed during the planning period. The Town should prepare a more detailed annexation plan to evaluate the desirability of annexing some of these properties, and to develop a strategy for future growth and expansion of the town’s boundaries. In the interim, the Town should use the Annexation Plan found in Part 2, Section 5 of this plan to guide annexation activities. However, a more comprehensive annexation plan is recommended in the future to guide the town through the planning period.