Chapter 6: Intergovernmental Coordination

The Town of Odessa is influenced by a wide variety of intergovernmental activities. The Town receives services from New Castle County in the operation of its sewer collection and treatment facilities and the provision of public safety services. The major roads through the town and area transit services are maintained by the Delaware Department of Transportation. Since the Town is located within the rapidly developing southern New Castle County area, the activities of the New Castle County Department of Land Use in administering the Unified Development Code, and the Department of Special Services development of the Southern NCC Sanitary Sewer District will significantly impact the lands surrounding the Town. The regulations and fee structures built into the New Castle County ordinances impact existing and new development within the town.

The Delaware Economic Development Office impacts the Town with its efforts to attract new businesses to the area including the potentially explosive semi-conductor industry initiative. The Delaware Department of Agriculture manages an Agricultural Preservation Program that could enable some of the surrounding farmlands to resist the pressures of developers and continue raising crops. Much has already been concerning the influence that the State Department of Transportation has had on Odessa with its construction and maintenance of U.S. Route 13 and SR1. And, on the municipal level the Town of Middletown has developed a growth management program that includes the annexation of land along State Route 299 between Middletown and SR1. Middletown has accepted annexation requests for lands right to the edge of the SR1 right of way. The need for intergovernmental coordination will continue to be important as the Town continues to depend on other governments for the provision of basic municipal services and as development occurs in the southern New Castle County region.

The above-cited activities illustrate the range of impacts that decisions made by other governmental jurisdictions can have on Odessa. Now more than ever it is important for Odessa to embrace, and perhaps initiate intergovernmental coordination with other governmental jurisdictions. Odessa’s location within the rapidly developing southern New Castle County area demonstrates the importance of interaction with other governments to discuss initiatives being developed or enacted that will impact the quality of life of the residents and businesses within its borders. This coordination should involve State, New Castle County and municipal governments regarding such topics as land use and annexation, transportation, infrastructure and public services, and natural resources management.

A good example of the need for intergovernmental coordination is a discussion of the impacts upon the Town from a newly adopted New Castle County Unified Development Code and subsequent pro-active zoning. Currently New Castle County has zoned most of the land bordering Odessa for “Suburban” development. This zoning category permits a “full range of...
residential uses in a manner consistent with providing a high quality suburban character.” Exceptions to this pattern exist along the Town’s southwest boundary where New Castle County has zoned land “NC40” (Single-family 40,000 square ft.), “NC6.5” (Single-family 6,500 square ft.) and “ON” (Office Neighborhood). It should be noted that there is existing development on most of these lands near Odessa that are not zoned Suburban. As development continues in New Castle County, the Town will need to monitor the character, location and impact of development and strive to minimize negative impacts to the town character. Thus, Odessa should express its land use concerns to the New Castle County Department of Land Use through its land development process.

Of critical importance to the Town will be the impact on the land in and around Odessa from the recently completed SR1 and the Route 299 interchange located to the west of the town. Historically, interchanges have increased the pace and the intensity of land development changes within an area. In addition, new travel patterns may develop on the area’s roadways. Both of these activities if not properly coordinated, could negatively impact the town.

As the Town works to advance the recommendations in this Plan, the key agency for coordinating efforts involving the State is the Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination. The Office helps to coordinate public policy and shape growth in Delaware and has a primary role in supporting the activities of the Governor’s Cabinet Committee on State Planning Issues.

The Plan recommends the following array of intergovernmental coordination techniques to protect the Town’s interests. These techniques include the following:

- Initiate/participate in discussions between the State, New Castle County, and municipalities regarding planning issues important to the Town.
- Monitor and as necessary participate in the land development activities of the State, New Castle County and municipalities.
- Inform other governmental jurisdictions of the Town’s goals and objectives in regards to its future.
- Continue to review and as necessary amend the Town’s Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The Town of Odessa should institute regularly scheduled meetings with other governmental jurisdictions e.g. State, County, and Municipal governments. The purpose of these meetings would be to establish an ongoing line of communications regarding issues, topics, opportunities and concerns of mutual interests. The Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination should be requested to participate in all meetings involving State agencies.
2. The Plan recommends the Town enter into Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) as needed with the various governmental units to formalize their relationship, especially as it pertains to notification procedures related to land development, construction of infrastructure and the mitigation of environmental impacts. MOUs should be made with the following key agencies. A MOU concerning coordination of planning activities and maintenance of roads should be made with the Delaware Department of Transportation. An agreement with the New Castle County Department of Land Use should be made concerning the coordination of planning review in the County and within Odessa concerning zoning changes and annexation requests. Also an agreement should be negotiated with the Town of Middletown concerning the extent of development that Middletown plans in the State Route 299 corridor and to discourage Middletown from considering annexation across SR1.

3. The Plan recommends that Odessa consider budgeting funds to compensate someone on a part-time basis to represent and manage the Town’s interest in the range of issues discussed throughout this Plan.