

COUNTY COUNCIL

MICHAEL H. VINCENT, PRESIDENT
JOHN L. RIELEY, VICE PRESIDENT
CYNTHIA C. GREEN
DOUGLAS B. HUDSON
MARK G. SCHAEFFER



Sussex County

DELAWARE
sussexcountyde.gov

(302) 855-7743

REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON PLANNING

SUSSEX COUNTY, DELAWARE

2023-2024

June 18, 2024

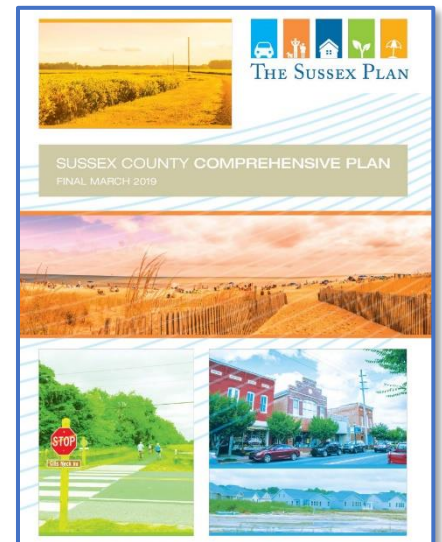
INTRODUCTION

This is the fifth annual report regarding Sussex County's 2018 Comprehensive Plan ("the Plan"), which was adopted by County Council on Tuesday, December 4, 2018. The Plan was subsequently certified by Governor John C. Carney on March 19, 2019, as being in compliance with Title 9, Chapter 69, Subchapter II (The Quality of Life Act) of the Delaware Code.

This report is intended to comply with Title 9, Section 6958 of the Delaware Code. Delaware law mandates that all Counties and municipalities have a Comprehensive Plan in place. Counties and municipalities must review and update those plans for State certification every 10 years, while also providing annual updates on the progress of implementation.

NEW INITIATIVES

In the July 2023 to June 2024 reporting year, Sussex County has undertaken a number of initiatives to implement the strategies within the Comprehensive Plan. In accordance with the structure and format of the Comprehensive Plan, the initiatives are summarized below based on the different elements within the Comprehensive Plan.

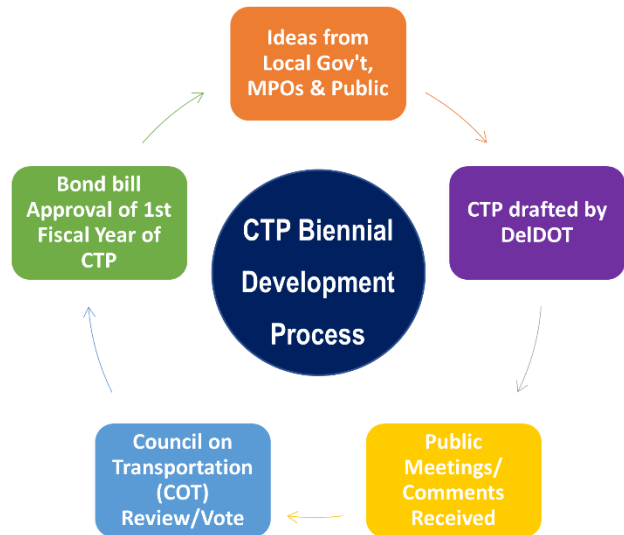


COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
2 THE CIRCLE | PO BOX 417
GEORGETOWN, DELAWARE

MOBILITY/TRANSPORTATION

FY 25-30 Capital Transportation Program (“CTP”) Update for Sussex County

Every two years the State of Delaware Department of Transportation (“DelDOT”) develops a 6-year Capital Transportation Program (CTP) that identifies anticipated capital investments. This program is developed in cooperation with the Salisbury-Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization, and Sussex County. The program provides information on various DelDOT capital and maintenance programs



and on the estimated cost expenditures for the project phasing of a capital project that are anticipated in each specific fiscal year. In May 2023, Sussex County finalized its submissions for new CTP candidates for the FY 25-30 Capital Transportation Program Update. A link to an online map showing the FY 25-30 CTP Projects, which the County has requested to be included in the next CTP update, can be found at the link below: A list of projects is below:

[Capital Transportation Program \(CTP\) - Delaware Department of Transportation \(deldot.gov\)](https://deldot.gov)

- Hudson Road between Route 9 and Route 1 Improvements
- US 9 between Old Vine Boulevard and Dairy Farm Road Improvements:
 1. Redden Road Corridor Improvements
 2. Incorporating projects added to the FY23-28 CT
 3. Redden Road (Oak Rd to Kings Crossroads) Improvements
 4. US 113 and Redden Road/E. Redden Road GSI
- Route 24 between Love Creek Bridge and Indian Mission Road Improvements
- Zoar Road at South Bedford Street Intersection Improvements
- Phillips Landing Road between Mt. Pleasant Road and Phillips Landing Improvements

On August 14, 2023, the Council on Transportation released the draft FY25 - FY30 Capital Transportation Program to seek public comments. The three public workshops were held in

August/September 2023. The Council on Transportation approved the FY25 to FY30 Capital Transportation Program (CTP) on February 22, 2024. In 2024, DelDOT will seek Federal approval for the FY25 – FY30 CTP. Below is a link to the CTP implementation plan:

- [Link to FY25 – FY30 Capital Transportation Program Implementation Information](#)

In spring 2025, Sussex County will begin the update process for the FY27 – FY32 Capital Transportation Program, which will begin with a call for ideas to be submitted to the County by the public.

Coastal Corridors Study

On June 6th, 2023, Sussex County worked with the Delaware Department of Transportation to facilitate a joint public workshop outlining the progress and recommendations of the Coastal Corridors study group. DelDOT's Coastal Corridors Study is focused on identifying transportation solutions for east-west routes in Sussex County including Route 16 and Routes 404/9 between US 113 and SR 1 as well as Redden Road and other local roads in the area. These roadways represent the primary east-west corridors in the northern part of Sussex County that are currently congested or are at risk for congestion based on anticipated growth.

The workshop was a successful event, with the final recommendations, based upon over 12 months of study, being presented to the Public to enable the receipt of public comments. The Coastal Corridors Study group will now review the comments received as part of its goal of generating recommendations for the future of the Coastal Corridors.

A second workshop of the Coastal Corridors group was held on March 19, 2024, to finalize the group's recommendations within a final draft ahead of public consultation. The final draft was then subject to public consultation until May 17, 2024. The Coastal Corridors study group is currently considering the next steps, following the completion of the public consultation period.

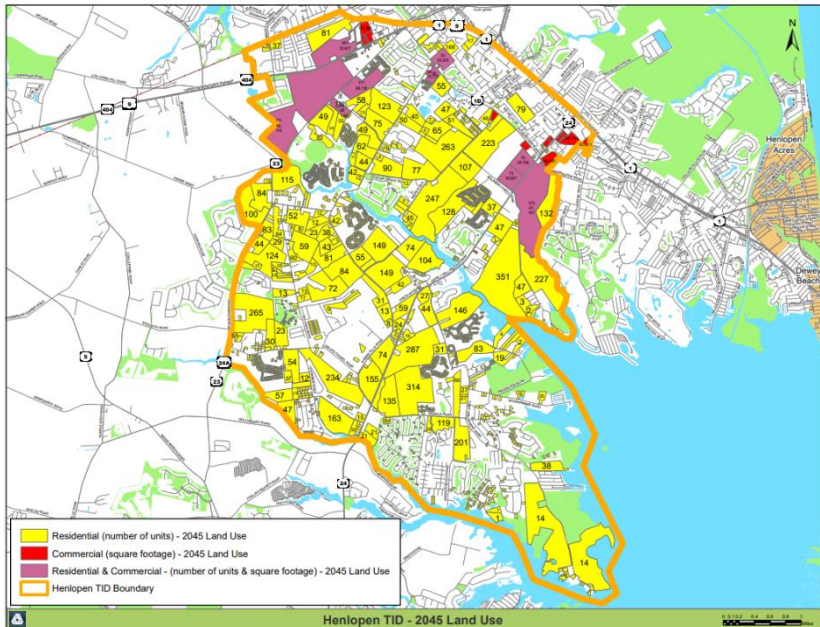
Long-Range Transportation Plan

During the review period, the County continued to work with the Delaware Department of Transportation to finalize the County’s Long-Range Transportation Plan. The Plan, once finalized, is likely to form a component of the Mobility Chapter in the County’s 10-year Comprehensive Plan update, which is due to be completed by the end of CY 2028.

Henlopen Transportation Improvement District (“TID”)

The County has successfully implemented Strategy 13.1.1.2 of the Comprehensive Plan by working with the Delaware Department of Transportation to implement the County’s first Transportation Improvement District for the 24 square mile Henlopen area south of Rt. 9 and west of SR.1. The Henlopen TID was adopted on October 29, 2020, and unless a development falls within a specified exemption, is required to contribute to planned transportation infrastructure improvements within the District.

Projects have continued to come forward for consideration during the review period. As of June 2024, the total amount of financial commitments for the Henlopen TID, as reported by the State of Delaware Department of Transportation, now stands at \$9.6 million since 2020. The table below illustrates the new commitments that have come forward during the review period



Project Name	Total Amount (\$)
DGAS, Minor Subdivision	\$5,832.00
Reed Commerical Site Plan	\$16,209.59
Scenic Harbor Subdivision	\$52,488.00
Price Automotive, Commercial Site Plan	\$85,020.15
Chase Oaks Subdivision	\$101,556.00
AllTemp Commercial Addition	\$12,600.00
Grottos Commercial Addition	\$1,499.27
Coastal Tide Apartments	\$93,480.00
Total	\$267,129.01

Potential Roxana Transportation Improvement District

In July 2023, the Sussex County Planning & Zoning Department completed a three-month land-use study to assist the Delaware Department of Transportation with a long-range land-use forecast for a new potential Transportation Improvement District that is being explored. The TID is located in the southeast of Sussex County between Selbyville and the Indian River Bay. The land use forecast will be used by the Delaware Department of Transportation to predict likely infrastructure growth in the study area out to the year 2055.



A map showing the location of the new potential Transportation Improvement District is shown (right).

Potential South/South-East Milton Transportation Improvement District

In January 2024, following the adoption of a Transportation District by the Town, the Planning & Zoning Department commenced a study of the land use forecast for parcels adjoining the Town of

Milton. This study, which is being coordinated with the Delaware Department of Transportation, is due to be completed in fall 2024. The data will be utilized for consideration of a potential additional Transportation Improvement District in the areas surrounding the Town of Milton.

LAND USE ORDINANCES

Ordinance Relating to the Retail Sales of Marijuana

On February 6, 2024, the Sussex County Council introduced an Ordinance regulating Marijuana Establishments in Sussex County. The Ordinance, which creates Code definitions for “Marijuana Cultivation Facilities”, “Marijuana Product Manufacturing Facilities”, “Marijuana Testing Facilities” and also “Retail Marijuana Store”, and defines which Zoning Districts these may be permitted within, was subject to Public Hearings before both the Planning & Zoning Commission and the County Council in Spring 2024. On May 14, 2024, following a Public Hearing, the County Council adopted the Ordinance, after considering potential revisions to increase the precision of the text within the Ordinance. The Ordinance takes immediate effect, and is now being implemented by the Planning & Zoning Department in day-to-day practice.

Perimeter Buffers for Residential Development Ordinance

Objective 4.3.1 of the Future Land Use Element outlines an objective to consider strategies for preserving environmental areas from development and the protection of wetlands and waterways. Objective 4.3.2 promotes new development that incorporates preserved usable open space and mitigates for the protection or replacement of environmental resources in subdivision design. There are multiple strategies within the Comprehensive Plan that flow from these objectives including, Strategy 4.3.2.1 and 4.3.2.2 and 4.4.1.1.

Most notably, Goal 5.1 of the Conservation Element of the 2019 Sussex County Comprehensive Plan states that Sussex County should “Encourage development practices and regulations that support natural resources protection”. With this goal in mind, on March 19, 2024, the County Council introduced a new potential Ordinance to increase the width of perimeter buffers around residential development. The Ordinance also contains language to forest assessment reports to be included in



new subdivision applications, along with new penalties for the removal of perimeter buffers following their planting.

The Ordinance was subject to a Public Hearing before the Planning & Zoning Commission at its meeting on May 8, 2024. At the meeting on June 5, 2024, the Planning & Zoning Commission recommended that the County Council adopt the Ordinance, subject to recommended revisions. The County Council held a Public Hearing on the Ordinance at its meeting on June 11, 2024.

Any potential action on the Ordinance is likely to be in the next reporting year and will be reported to the State of Delaware in the County's 2025 update.

Master-Planned Zoning District (MPZ) Ordinance

As part of Strategy 4.4.1.5, Strategy 12.2.2.2, Strategy 13.1.1.3 & Strategy 13.6.2.1, the County has continued to explore the creation of a new Zoning District designed to secure a superior planned design in new larger-scale mixed-use developments. The potential new Zoning District, which would be targeted at developments of more than 400 units, or with gross site areas greater than 200 acres, would allow for a more streamlined approach to decision-making by front-loading larger amounts of information into the application process. Following the introduction of a potential Ordinance on Masterplanned Zoning by the County Council in 2023, and following Public Hearings before both the Planning & Zoning Commission and the County Council in 2023, it is anticipated that work will continue on the preparation of this Ordinance during the upcoming reporting year. The Ordinance was reported to the State of Delaware's PLUS review service in Spring 2023 and the State's comments are being explored as the Ordinance continues to be considered.



LAND USE APPLICATIONS

In the reporting year, there has been a change in the number and type of applications received. Since July 1, 2023, the Planning & Zoning Department has received a total of 76 applications for Conditional Uses and 15 Changes of Zone, compared with a total of 68 and 25 respectively for the previous 12-month period.

	Change of Zone	Conditional Use
July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020	30	41
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021	21	55
July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022	42	83
July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023	25	68
July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024	15	76

Total Conditional Use and Change of Zone applications by received date

During the reporting year, the total number of Major Subdivision applications has decreased from 19 to 9, whilst the total number of lots collectively proposed has increased from the previous year, to a total of 2,557 lots, as outlined in the table below:

	Total Number of Applications	Total Number of Lots Proposed
July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020	24	942
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021	34	1,817
July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022	32	3,334
July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023	19	1,556
July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024	9	2,557

Total of Major Subdivision Applications by received date

Major subdivisions include applications for the creation of more than 5 lots, or on parcels where the permitted number of minor subdivisions has been utilized. The above subdivision totals do not include Change of Zone applications for Residential Planned Communities (“RPC”s).

Whilst the total number of major subdivision applications has slowed compared with recent years, the overall number of proposed lots has increased.

The County continues to see growth across all sectors including residential, commercial, agricultural and industrial. Along with this growth is a recent increase in applications for solar farms and renewable energy-related development, such as energy storage. In the past two years, the County has seen over 40 applications for utility-scale renewable energy projects.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

During the review period, the County has continued to see non-residential growth and the associated generation of new employment opportunities. Examples of projects include:

Frankford Business Park

The Frankford Business Park was just a dream in 2018. By the end of 2024, the new business park, which was constructed in two phases, will have 300,500 plus square feet of building space on 20 acres just south of the town of Frankford on northbound U.S. Route 113. With the assistance of the Sussex County Economic Development Office, the property owner applied for \$1 million from the Site Readiness Fund for civil engineering, earthwork, site work, and major utilities to the site. He was awarded the \$ 1 million.

The purpose of the fund is to create a shovel-ready site to attract business to Delaware. Mr. Martin, the property owner, states: *“I feel blessed to have the support of the Sussex County Economic Development Office. It feels like a partnership. If you’re looking to grow your business, Sussex County, Delaware is a wonderful place to be. There’s a lot of potential business in the future”* Martin said. When it come to permitting *“I believe they’re doing it thoughtfully and carefully. All in all, it’s not haphazard, and it’s fair to the residents, and it’s fair to the business. It’s a good place to grow your business.”*

Today the Park is the home for many new businesses. One of the businesses was a big win for Sussex County Economic Development, CP Cases, from Maryland. The British company creates a variety of protective gear for military, medical, marine, and more stemming from their background in shipping

rock n' roll instruments. The company was merely distributing products through a smaller Maryland location, but with 25,000 square feet of space in the Frankford Business Park they're now manufacturing here. They're just getting warmed up. Another win from Maryland is a commercial washer that supplies lines for the Delaware and Maryland resort industry. Chesapeake Plumbing and Heating built an auto maintenance shop in the Park just to support their several dozen fleet vehicles and other specialized equipment. Coastal Trade Supply is a brand-new business that would not have been able to launch without this business park. They occupy 30,000 square feet of inventory for HVAC, plumbing, and fire suppression materials business servicing Sussex County, Maryland, and the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

Western Sussex Business Campus

Strategy 9.2.2.3 of the 2018 Sussex County Comprehensive Plan calls for the exploration of public-private partnerships for the development of additional industrial parks within the County. Western Sussex Business Campus, which is a 100-acre industrial park located on the west side of the County, is the result of a partnership between Sussex County Council, The City of Seaford, and KRM Development Corp., a full-service development company that specializes in speculative building. Phase one consists of 44 acres and the first 50,000 square feet is all but complete.

Seaford inked a deal with the Sussex County Council to spend \$1.88 million on the first phase of infrastructure. The second and third phase of infrastructure is estimated at \$2.1 million and \$2.9 million, respectively.

Seaford secured a \$750,000 Transportation Infrastructure Investment Fund (TIIF) grant that funded road access improvements to the business park. The project is estimated to bring up to 1,100 jobs when fully built out.

Showtime Power Sports, an online motorcycle parts distributor, that bought the final piece of Allen Harim's Seaford headquarters is a prime example.

Again, Sussex County Economic Development played a key role in attracting the PA-based company to Seaford. Sussex County Economic Development through the ExciteSussex Fund loaned the

money to purchase the facility. This loan allowed the PA-based company to upcycle the Allen Harim Hatchery in Seaford, DE.

The future Western Sussex Business Campus signals a hopeful renaissance for Seaford, which was crippled when DuPont left behind its nylon manufacturing operations in 2004. In the early stages of DuPont's downsizing, Seaford officials started buying land directly in a bid to entice developers to buy land at low prices, including the 243 acres now called the Western Sussex Business Campus.

WASTEWATER

Sussex County continues to increase the availability of central sewer to environmentally sensitive areas of the county. Construction is complete and connections have begun to additional sections of the Herring Creek project with the remaining sections expected to come online by the end of 2024. Sanitary sewer collection and transmission systems for Long Neck Communities, Lochwood and Joy Beach Phase 1 are under construction, with several projects approved and in the queue for construction including Countryside Hamlet, Oak Acres, Tanglewood, Warwick Park, Pintail Pointe, and Wolfe Runne. Current projects in various levels of design include Slaughter Beach and North Georgetown. Additional areas in the unified sanitary sewer district in the pipeline for design include Briarwood, Indian River Acres, Bethany Forest, Beaver Dam Road, and Red Fox Run.

The County continues its effort to utilize private utility infrastructure owned by regulated utilities under bilateral agreement(s) in an effort to prevent the installation of parallel underutilized infrastructure.

The County has completed the easement acquisitions for the 5.7± mile transmission line from the county's Piney Neck Regional Wastewater Facility to our South Coastal Regional Wastewater Facility for treatment and disposal. This transmission line will be a progressive design-build project that will eliminate the need for the Piney Neck facility.

Water

The County has completed the design and is preparing to bid the Winding Creek Village Optimized Water District project. County Council approved the creation of the Optimized Winding Creek Village water district in October of 2017. The County is anticipating a fall start for the project contingent on final funding. The project is estimated to be complete end of 2025 with connections to commence immediately following completion.

Constructed Wetlands Project

Construction was completed on the Inland Bays Submerged Gravel wetland in 2023. This innovative waste management system uses enhanced polishing and disposal for wastewater effluent as well as groundwater with elevated nutrient levels. The facility provides an effective enhanced treatment of effluent and contaminated groundwater in terms of nutrient uptake while using a smaller, runoff-controlled footprint than the conventional spray irrigation systems.

The facility was designed and constructed in coordination with DNREC under a 5-year “operational testing” program and permitted by the Sussex Conservation District. A standard wastewater operation permit application was submitted concurrently with this request for “operational testing.” As part of the operational testing program, Sussex County will perform regular testing of soil, plant tissue, groundwater, and wastewater effluent within the facility. Biennial operational status reports will be provided to DNREC in order to evaluate the system for improvement and scalability.

It is estimated that between 750,000 and 900,000 gallons of treated effluent, supplemental groundwater, and stormwater could be passed through the facility daily without excessive mounding under the wetlands or at the associated infiltration gallery.

HOUSING

Sussex County continues to promote fair and affordable housing through the Planning & Zoning Department and the Community Development and Housing Department. The construction of the first large-scale housing project approved under the Sussex County Rental Program (SCRP) known as Coastal Tide (formerly known as The Arbors of Cottagedale Apartments) was expanded in 2023. Coastal tide is an 18.08 ac. parcel of land located in Lewes and Rehoboth Hundred (Tax parcel 334-6.00 504.02). The Final Site Plan includes 198 apartments including 1, 2, and 3-bedroom units, with 32 of the apartments set-aside as affordably priced housing units through SCRCP. To date, 26 SCRCP units are occupied by eligible tenants earning less than 80% of Area Median Income for Sussex County.

The County continues to work with applicants proposing residential developments to explore ways to deliver an increase in affordably priced units within the County.

The Sussex County Housing Trust Fund (SCHTF) was officially launched in April 2022 and has continued to be funded by Sussex County Council and American Rescue Plan (ARPA) dollars. SCHTF includes two main components: a direct homebuyer assistance program and a developer grant program. The homebuyer assistance program provides grants of up to \$30,000 for down payment and closing for households below 120% AMI seeking to purchase a home in Sussex County. During the reporting year, the County has provided direct homebuyer assistance to forty-one (41) qualifying households. The developer grant program offers up to \$500,000 per project for applicants seeking to create or preserve affordable housing for households earning 65% or below AMI. More than \$4 million has been awarded to projects across Sussex County for the construction and/or preservation of nearly 200 affordable housing units. The current round of funding applications is being reviewed at the time of this writing, with award recommendations expected in June 2024.

In October 2022, Sussex County Council approved an ordinance seeking to provide more affordable rental opportunities for Sussex County residents. This ordinance not only amended Chapter 72 of the Sussex County Code to streamline the SCRCP process but also added a new and substantial change to the zoning code to allow “by-right” multi-family housing projects at a density of twelve units per acre if at least thirty percent of those units are set aside as SCRCP units. As of this writing, two



applications have been submitted through the new ordinance, which, if approved, will result in the creation of 75 affordable rental units in Lewes.

During the reporting year, Sussex County has expanded the home repair program with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and assisted nearly 300 households with owner-occupied rehabilitation and emergency repairs, water and sewer hookups for low- and moderate-income households. The County continues to work and partner with the Sussex Housing Group and its affiliates to coordinate public/private partnerships that leverage dollars for community development efforts in impacted communities.

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

The Sussex County Subdivision Code allows for applicants to apply under the cluster development option whereby the lot size and lot width requirement of the AR-1 Zoning District is reduced for subdivisions that provide a minimum of 30% of the site area as open space. This option is also available within the Coastal Area. During the review period, the following areas of open space were approved or recommended for approval under this option:

County Project Reference Number	Subdivision Name	Total # of Lots	Open Space Retained (in Acres)
2022-10	Raley Farm	646	147.49
2022-16	Armada	67	33.31
2022-17	Ironhook Harbor	165	47.53
2022-18	Wil King Station	58	12.88
2022-19	Grayrock Preserve	94	25.11
2022-20	Marvel Subdivision	44	12.03
2022-22	St Georges Terrace	34	7.6



2022-26	Ballenger Subdivision (FKA Warrington)	106	28.01
2022-27	Peck Farm Subdivision	128	31.93
2022-28	Smokey Hollow	82	40.9
2023-06	Twin Masts	249	70.15
TOTAL		1,673	456.94

The total new open space approved during the review period is 456.94 Acres. Land approved as “open space”, as defined by the Code of Sussex County, must be maintained in a predominantly undeveloped or natural state, including lands used for agricultural purposes, promote conservation, protect wildlife, or serve as a buffer between residential and nonresidential areas and/or commercial and noncommercial areas. The table below illustrates the total amount of open space created over the past 4 years.

Year	Total Open Space Protected
July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021	362.33 ac.
July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022	453.02 ac.
July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023	657.97 ac.
July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024	456.94 ac.
4-Year Total	1930.26 ac.

In addition to the above, and since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan in 2019, the County has also protected the following lands in perpetuity as open space:

- In May 2023 - A 294-acre tract known as the Forest of Broadkill Preserve, bordering Ingram Branch, off Shingle Point Road outside Milton. The property, a mix of fields and wooded areas costing \$1.85 million, will be managed by the Sussex County Land Trust, and is expected to eventually include a publicly accessible trail system;
- In May 2023 - An 11-acre assemblage of three wooded parcels, known as the Wright properties, along the Nanticoke River near Seaford. The parcels, costing approximately

\$460,000, will be managed by the Nanticoke Conservancy and feature public access at a later date;

- In 2022 - Fifty-one acres known as the Hopkins Preserve, along Sweetbriar Road, just north of U.S. 9, outside Lewes, for a price of \$1.5 million. The property owner, Walter Hopkins, and his family (a fourth-generation farmer), discounted the sale price by 50 percent in exchange for the parcel being used at a later time as open space and a recreational amenity, specifically as part of a trailhead that will be developed and managed by the Sussex County Land Trust for the still-under-construction Georgetown to Lewes Trail;
- In 2022 - Forty-seven acres known as the Jones Family tract, for \$650,000, located off Conaway Road adjacent to the State-owned Midlands Wildlife Area, west of Millsboro;
- In 2022 - Forty acres, named the Dawson Bros. tract, for a price of \$2.5 million, located along the south side of Del. Route 24, near the Nanticoke Indian Center, east of Millsboro;
- In 2022 - Thirteen acres, for a sale price of \$400,000, adjoining a larger parcel acquired by the County in 2020 and collectively known as the Dorman Family Farm Preserve, located along Herring Creek and Sarah Run, near Angola.

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

In addition to cooperating with State Agencies on various technical matters throughout the year, Sussex County continues to work with the municipalities within Sussex County to share and receive data to provide accurate information to the public. In July 2023, staff provided comments to the Town of Fenwick Island on its proposed draft Comprehensive Plan documents.

In addition to providing comments on emerging Comprehensive Plans, the Planning & Zoning Department has continued to participate in Delaware Department Public Workshops and events held throughout the year, including the DelDOT Five Points group, the Southeast Sussex Study, and the Coastal Corridors Study workshops held between 2023-2024.

In addition, in the first week of June 2024, the County assisted the Town of Slaughter Beach by providing technical support as part of their FEMA Community Assisted Visit. Such visits, which

occur approximately every 4-5 years for Counties and Municipalities, allow for FEMA staff to visit each jurisdiction to review the implementation of adopted Flood Codes. Sussex County's last Community Assisted Visit was in 2019, and the County received an excellent report following the visit – with the County being formally declared as being in “good standing” with FEMA in terms of its compliance with the adopted Flood Code contained within the Code of Sussex County.

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES IMPACTING COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

During the 2023-2024 reporting period, changes to Titles 9 and 22 of the Delaware Code were considered by the 152nd General Assembly. Senate Bill 237, would require that, with effect from November 15, 2026, New Castle, Kent, and Sussex County's Comprehensive Plans contain strategies to increase community resiliency and address the impacts of climate change. Senate Bill 237 also requires that County Comprehensive Plans also consider forests, habitat areas, and wildlife corridors and that the housing element consider anticipated growth areas and encourage new housing growth away from areas vulnerable to inland and coastal flooding.

In addition, on October 3, 2022, Senate Bill 327, was adopted by the 151st General Assembly. The Bill amends Title 9 of the Delaware Code to require that, effective January 1, 2023, all three Counties in Delaware must include an educational element in their next Comprehensive Plan update.

CONCLUSION

The 2023-2024 reporting period has seen solid progress toward the implementation of the Strategies contained within the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. The County looks forward to continuing to implement the Comprehensive Plan during the 2024-2025 reporting period. Based upon the solid progress made, the County is not proposing to pursue a 5-year update to the Comprehensive Plan, and will instead shift its focus to the 10-year Comprehensive Plan Update expected in 2027-2028.

Initial work for the 10-year update is due to commence in the 2024-2025 reporting period, with public workshops before both the Planning & Zoning Commission and the County Council anticipated to follow in the 2025-2026, and 2026-2027 reporting periods. Public Hearings on the next Comprehensive Plan Update, along with submittals to the State of Delaware for review by the Office



of State Planning and Coordination, are then expected to follow in the 2027-2028 reporting period, to enable the County to be ready for submittal to the Governor for certification ahead of the 10-year anniversary of the current Comprehensive Plan on December 4, 2028.