



February 1, 2012

David Culver, General Manager  
Department of Land Use  
and  
Richard Killingsworth, Chairman  
New Castle County Planning Board  
NCC Government Center  
87 Read's Way  
New Castle, DE 19720

RE: Draft 2012 Comprehensive Plan Update  
Comments of the Delaware Greenways Board of Directors

Dear Mr. Culver and Mr. Killingsworth:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft 2012 Comprehensive Plan Update. These comments have been authorized for submission to the County by a unanimous vote of the Board of Directors of Delaware Greenways. As an advocate for sustainable development and quality of life through the preservation and enhancement of our natural, scenic, historic, and recreational resources, Delaware Greenways would like to call your attention to some key suggestions for the plan. We have listed our comments into two categories: comments concerning procedural aspects of implementing the plan and comments concerning substantive aspects of the plan.

Procedural:

1. The 2012 Comprehensive Plan Update speaks well to the quality of life goals that are of top concern to the public and to Delaware Greenways. However, the plan is too vague, and offers few real implementing measures to ensure that the goals will be achieved. Measurable objectives and specific strategies must be added to ensuring that the plan's goals are realized. Furthermore, those objectives and strategies must translate to changes in the Unified Development Code and the application of the code to ensure that the goals actually become accomplishments over the next 5-10 years. The 2012 Update contains essentially the same content as the 2007 version. Since 2007 there has been too little innovative development. Likewise, there has been few changes in development patterns toward achieving more balanced transportation options, conserved and interconnected open space, and establishing or preserving communities' sense of place. We believe that elaborating on objectives, strategies, and measures will strengthen the plan and help ensure that our organization and others can support the County in achieving the plan's goals. In our

opinion, the update should state what changes must be made to the UDC and what the County's operating departments must do differently than they have in the past.

2. The plan speaks to a new level of cooperation with WILMAPCO, DNREC and DelDOT as well as to the importance of the PLUS process. But the plan is again lacking in specifics. We believe that the plan should detail how that cooperation will occur. For example, in Section 11.3, the plan discusses the PLUS process and notes that cooperation should begin as early in the process as possible. It fails to provide direction as to what should be done differently to achieve the goals of the plan.

Substantive:

- 1) Establish a viewshed protection mechanism**—In its role as manager of three of Delaware's byways, Delaware Greenways believe viewshed protection is as important as other resource protections that the County has in place. Scenery and visual character are the foundation of the byways. We are concerned that there is no mechanism for the protection of viewsheds in place today and the plan does not speak to viewshed protection in any detail. In our scenic conservation study of the Brandywine Valley National Scenic Byway, we identified some of the state's most valuable viewsheds. The iconic country estate, Granogue, and hundreds of acres of other views are unprotected and susceptible to development. We acknowledge that complete protection from development of such landscapes is not always possible; however, through our Scenic Conservation Plan, we are identifying methods to protect the most scenic portions of these properties and ensure that we minimize the impacts that new development will have on the views and visual character. Also at risk are the viewsheds of the Red Clay Byway, the Route 9 Coastal Heritage Byway and other viewsheds of special note throughout the County. We stand ready to work with you on this issue of great importance.
- 2) Tighten redevelopment regulations to ensure appropriate application**— To spur redevelopment of abandoned sites and underutilized land, the County has included special language in the UDC to incentivize redevelopment. We believe that the language is too broad and indefinite and thus enables development projects to be classed as redevelopment projects without accomplishing the intended goal: redeveloping blighted sites. Development proposals should be classed as redevelopment and be eligible for incentives only if they redevelop long abandoned, blighted or brownfield sites in areas so designated. Greenfield, undeveloped sites or sites with approved but expired approvals should not be eligible for redevelopment status. We believe that the County should revise the UDC to designate geographic locations eligible for redevelopment and/or limit the use of the incentives to sites that are truly abandoned or designated as brownfield, and not simply in need of a "freshening up" funded by increasing the square footage of the site.

- 3) Make sustainable development the as-of-right development**—We see opportunity to make sustainable development more common throughout the County by treating it as the “as-of-right” standard for development, rather than an option as is the case today. Delaware Greenways believes that all of the goals in the update chapters in which the UDC is the implementing vehicle be translated into the UDC to redefine sustainable development as the as-of-right development for the different zoning classes. For example, the County goes partway in the OR zoning category by allowing some limited commercial uses, but does not permit residential. It should require a certain appropriate proportion of each. In the CR category, residential is permitted, but not required. The zoning classes should require a sustainable mixture of the land uses with the elimination of them or different proportions of them requiring a variance.

We have attached additional comments, which respond to each chapter of the plan in more detail.

On behalf of the Delaware Greenways Board of Directors, thank you for considering our comments. We look forward to working with you in advocating for the elements of the plan and as you update the Unified Development Code to reflect the new plan. We would like to meet with you to elaborate on our comments and ensure that Delaware Greenways can be a part of the effort to achieve these worthy goals.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or the members of our staff with any questions that you may have about our comments.

Sincerely,

Delaware Greenways

Peter J. Walsh, Jr.  
President

Attachments

# COMMENTS ON NEW CASTLE COUNTY DRAFT 2012 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

## INTRODUCTION

Delaware Greenways has reviewed the Draft 2012 New Castle County Comprehensive Plan Update and has developed the following detailed comments. Our comments are presented in the spirit of partnership with the County. In general, we believe that the Draft Plan contains the ‘right ideas’ but needs to be more specific, particularly in the action steps to implement them. Most of our comments fall into that general area. Our recommended action steps are underlined for emphasis.

## CHAPTER 1:

This section mentions strengthening the TDR program with specific reference to the southern part of the county. We are also interested in how TDR might be applied in the Brandywine Valley and would welcome the opportunity to collaboratively research this mechanism and identify how it may be adapted and applied best for the county and in other the areas. We recommend that the UDC be amended to permit TDR within the Brandywine Valley and across the boundary of the two planning areas within the Valley.

In section 1.4, under *is growth desirable or inevitable?* Good reasoning is used to explain that the county and its residents will not benefit from a “no growth here” policy. However, there should be clear recognition that rather than just have a policy that allows growth, the County should be actively promoting development of the type and in the locations that this plan’s goals layout and also be actively developing policies that offer reasonable incentives for prospective residents and businesses to locate in the desirable development. For example, creative housing policy and financing should be further explored to help push demand to the critical level at which developers can then build or redevelop compact, transit-oriented complexes.

## CHAPTER 3: LAND USE

The County acknowledges its MOU with Delaware Nature Society for the preservation of scenic viewsheds of the Red Clay Valley Scenic Byway. Delaware Greenways is the managing entity of the Brandywine Valley National Scenic Byway and would like to work with the County on similar arrangements to preserve the scenic beauty of the Brandywine Valley.

Section 3.0 cites that one accomplishment of the 2007 update was the streamlining the development review process from a three step to a two- step process, which allows better more timely comment from the public and other stakeholders. Please consider further refining the development review process so that sustainable development—such as transit oriented

development—is incentivized through a significantly speedier process than for applicants with non-compliant development.

Goal 3 on page 3-10 implies that the existing design of communities in the County are desired to remain; however, it seems contrary to the acknowledgement therein that in many places the development patterns and community design currently existing are in need of change. Sprawl and isolated cul-de-sac developments do not promote sustainability and should be discouraged.

We are particularly concerned with such development types because of their impacts on public health. New Castle County lacks a successful modern example of innovative and popular walkable, bikeable and mixed use development that can serve as inspiration for other new development. New development since 2007 has instead followed a formulaic and unsustainable auto-dependent model typical of post-World War II development in the County. We hope that the Comprehensive Plan 2012 update leads to the first and many more of such developments.

We believe that the UDC should be amended to make these innovative types of development ‘as-of-right’ with approvals easier and faster to obtain. Further, the Department of Land Use should actively work with developers proposing such developments.

## CHAPTER 4: MOBILITY AND TRANSPORTATION

We would like to be sure that through planning and foresight, the County is positioned to proactively ensure that greenways, trails, and pathways are included in new development as a way to provide balanced transportation options and additional recreational opportunities. We believe that each of these initiatives should be identified in the plan and shown on a map in the document. In high growth areas of the County, such as along Lancaster Pike, there are opportunities to develop and implement recreational plans, and incorporate greenways and trails in new development or redevelopment. While the plan calls for cooperation between the State and the County, we are concerned that more action may be needed. We would like the plan to lead the way in advocating for the trail proposals on the books and continue to work with the communities throughout the county in developing additional trails and greenways. We also urge you to list the 23 trail projects advocated by WILMAPCO in the plan and actively support them by identifying what the County would like to see happen on each project within the life of the plan.

The Plan should support the joint DelDOT, WILMAPCO, Delaware Greenways plan to add a second span to the Tyler McConnell Bridge and improve Route 141 to become a traffic calmed boulevard that supports the beauty of the Brandywine Valley. Over two years and \$5,000,000 has been expended to develop the plan for the Bridge and the effort shouldn't be wasted. While transportation funding is tight, we believe that the resultant plan is a sound application of context sensitive design that will serve as a suitable gateway to the Brandywine Valley.

We would encourage the County to acknowledge the importance of connectivity and access to the byway destinations and all places, not just by car, but by non-motorized kinds of travel. There are a number of multi-use trail efforts underway that hold substantial promise, thanks in great part to the Governor's First State Trails and Pathways plan and associated funding. In addition to large regional trails, we need to also be working to create smaller, neighborhood level connections to the

larger trails and open spaces so that the resources that go into place are easily accessible. These initiatives should be listed along with the improvements that the County would like to see accomplished during the life of this Plan. We would like to offer some specific ideas for how to incorporate the Trails and Pathways Plan:

- With regard to Objective 2 on page 4-8 we would like to encourage the County to also be pro-active at supporting these clusters of greater density so that they grow in a sustainable way, enable a more efficient transportation system and become the kind of walkable, bikeable, healthy, resilient and beautiful communities that County residents want and deserve.
- We would suggest changing objective 5 on page 4-9 to read in a way that emphasizes that existing roadways are used and managed in a way that offers maximum return on investment prior to expenditures going toward new roads and expanded capacity. For example it might read: "With the rapid increase in vehicle miles of travel, an expanding population and new employment opportunities, the transportation system is constantly under pressure to move more people with speed and efficiency. Simple preservation of the current transportation system, however, is already straining the State's financial resources. Plans already in place to expand the road system in Southern New Castle County and extend U.S Route 301 will further increase the system's operational costs. A key element to any plan should be to use all methods necessary to manage demand on the system so that the return on the investment that has already been made in the current road system is maximized without the need for capacity expansion and further increase in operational costs."
- We are glad to see emphasis on non-motorized transportation. As a way to align well with the current projects and programs in the state, we would suggest Objective 10 be re-written as follows:

*New Title: Promote walking and bicycling as a form of transportation by supporting the First State Trails and Pathways Plan, Top Pedestrian Priority Segments and enhancing pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout the County.*
- DelDOT and DNREC have created the First State Trails and Pathways Plan to make Delaware one of the most walkable and bikeable states in America by creating an interconnected network of non-motorized travel routes. The plan identifies significant investment in two new routes connecting cities in New Castle County:
  - Wilmington – New Castle Greenway
  - Wilmington – Newark Pathway

These trails represent our priorities for trail development. Accordingly, we ask that the plan recognize that priority.

- The County will collaborate with DelDOT and DNREC on the implementation of the First State Trails and Pathways Plan.

- The County will also work with WILMAPCO in its Top Pedestrian Priority Segments process to more wisely spend our limited non-motorized transportation funding in the top pedestrian corridors to maximize both safety and walkability.
- Likewise, strategy 11 should also reference the First State Trails and Pathways Plan and may be revised as follows:

*Continue participation in, and assist in implementing, DelDOT's and DNREC's First State Trails and Pathways Plan and WILMAPCO Top Pedestrian Priority Segments process.*

Note that the plan erroneously references the TMA of Delaware, which no longer exists (see page 4-7 and elsewhere).

We have a number of suggestions related to transportation as part of the development review process:

- a. Connectivity – The Draft Plan calls for connectivity by reinforcing DelDOT's regulations and calling for walkable communities but it recognizes that not all residents desire such development design. But it does not:
  - i. Require developments to be connected, only suggesting that developments of compatible land use be connected.
  - ii. Prohibit loop and lollipop developments in which there is no connectivity to neighboring street systems.

Without such requirements, non-connected developments will predominate in the development process. We recommend that the UDC be revised to require developers to seek a variance to build non-interconnected developments.

- b. Coordination of Access Design and Internal Circulation – In general the design of access is the province of DelDOT and internal circulation is the province of the Department of Land Use. Some coordination occurs between the agencies but in many instances, the level of coordination could be improved. We request that the UDC be revised to require comments submitted by DelDOT relative to transportation on either the site plan or on the Traffic Impact Study or Traffic Operations Analysis be addressed to the County's satisfaction and aired in public before land use approval is issued by the County. Further, the UDC should be revised to require that DelDOT's TIS approval be issued prior to preliminary approval by the County. This way, the County will be approving a development that is consistent in all factors from the UDC requirements to transportation.
- c. Traffic Impact Studies – The Draft Plan continues the existing requirements for traffic analysis, permitting them to be waived for certain types of development in favor of a traffic operations analysis or no analysis at all. The traffic impact study should never be waived; traffic impacts should always be understood and then a decision to waive all or parts of the required mitigations should be made by the County when doing so is in the best interests of the County. The existence of a transportation corridor or area plan

- would be reflected in the scope of the traffic impact study for the proposed development. The UDC should be revised to reflect the above requirements.
- d. Level of Service Standards – The Draft Plan continues the existing standards. Delaware Greenways understands that setting high level of service standards yields large mitigations and lower levels of standards yields smaller mitigations and that the agency responsible for setting the standards is DelDOT. We are working with DelDOT to establish a more context sensitive set of standards so that both the County and DelDOT have more flexibility. An example of this is along the Byways in the County. The regulations do not currently distinguish between a driveway on a byway or off it. The DelDOT Context Sensitive Manual for Byways suggests but doesn't require the Department to use a more context sensitive design. However, it is well within the purview of the County to advocate for more context sensitive design for development access designs. Please join us in this regard.
  - e. Public Input into the Development Process – Recent developments in the approval pipeline have illustrated a gap in the review process. Traffic impacts have not been a part of the public discussion at the zoning process and in the early part of the development review process. The Plan and the UDC should be revised to insure that the public has ample opportunity to review developments at a point in the pipeline when the comments generated by the public can be incorporated into the process.

## CHAPTER 5: WATER AND SEWER

The Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives ensure water quality and supply meets standards and public sewer systems are provided whenever possible. However, while we generally agree with the Comprehensive Plan in this area, one issue causes us concern:

In the Brandywine Valley, the lack of public water and sewer in some of the areas of the valley closest to Pennsylvania has served as a control on the density of development. While that control has worked effectively to prevent overdevelopment in the area, we can foresee a time when in some or all of that area, water quality issues may begin to emerge. It is important that the current suburban estate zoning classification be retained as the underlying zoning and that the need for public water and sewer not be the vehicle to increase density.

## CHAPTER 6: CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Delaware Greenways is an advocate for sustainable development and quality of life. We value the environment as a key component of sustainable development and quality of life. More specifically, the environment:

- provides crucial “green infrastructure” services that are often irreplaceable or are cheaper than engineered infrastructure solutions (e.g. protecting drinking water quality by guiding development away from our water sources and buffering is cheaper than building new water-treatment facilities to deal with an overburdened system);

- provides places in which to recreate, relax, learn, or get fit; and,
- sustains our natural resources—including the trees, soil, air, and water—which are critical to our health as individuals, are critical to our social fabric, and are critical to our economy.

The Plan clearly acknowledges the importance and value of sustainable development and protection of natural resources. However, we would like to suggest the following additions to the conservation and natural resources section:

- The plan should establish measures of effectiveness to serve as a benchmark on progress toward goals. The plan does little, if anything, to indicate any qualitative measures of effectiveness to verify accomplishments and benchmark quality of either past, current, or proposed strategies. On page 6-9 the document identifies in strategy 4 that the County should establish standards for measuring and monitoring stormwater to ensure the utilization of best management practices. We need to have more of this kind of strategy so that we can be confident that the efforts that are being put forth are truly effective, or if not, then we can adjust the strategies in the future. The steps that the County will take to achieve strategy 4 should be described in detail in the plan.
- Although challenges are generally identified in the early chapters of the Plan update, acknowledgement of specific challenges and weaknesses that exist would be helpful to better understand how our organization could work toward solutions and would also make clearer for all stakeholders of the plan understand what challenges need to be overcome to accomplish the goals.
- It would be helpful to identify in the various chapters what the County's area of influence is in relation to the different issue areas to better understand the County's role in various aspects of accomplishing goals in the Plan. For example, with regard to the environment and natural resources, the document brings forth a variety of sub-issues, including air emissions and land conservation. The document consistently identifies DNREC as a key party in accomplishment of goals and identifies actions that DNREC takes to help protect air quality and conserve land. On page 6-2, the document highlights DNREC's mission on the environment and natural resources. We would like to see a concise mission statement from the County on the issue of the environment. However, rarely in the document does the County explicitly identify what its role is and how it is working to accomplish the goals. Clearly one of the County's most significant spheres of influence is in land use. As such, we suggest that you acknowledge and detail how the County will help, for example, to achieve emissions standards, in partnership with the State, by working through its land use policies to promote transit oriented development with specific revisions to the UDC.
- We are happy to see that recently the County's "focus for open space has been to create a strategically planned and managed network of forest, parks, natural resources, and greenways" (page 6-5). We would encourage the County to acknowledge the importance of connectivity and access to these places, not just by car, but by non-motorized kinds of travel. There are a number of multi-use trail efforts underway that hold substantial promise, thanks in great part to the Governor's First State Trails and Pathways plan and associated funding. In addition to large regional trails, we need to also be working to create smaller, neighborhood level connections to the larger trails and open spaces so that the

resources that go into place are easily accessible. We would like to partner with the County and leverage your efforts to preserve open space and treasured viewsheds.

- We applaud the County’s concerns about flooding. Delaware Greenways believes that good planning and land management is an important aspect of flood mitigation—both by limiting development in hazard prone areas, and protecting the ecosystem services that will prevent natural disasters. We would also like to see the issue of Sea Level Rise addressed in more detail and the County assuming a larger role. Route 9 is a state designated scenic byway, valued especially for the wildlife and natural areas along the corridor and its historic and working landscapes. Currently, DGI works with communities along Route 9 from New Castle to Dover to protect their resources and encourage sustainable community development. Delaware Greenways would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with New Castle County in this effort.
- On page 6-7, Objective 4 aligns well with our mission and the interest of our members. We continue to welcome the County’s engagement in our open space conservation efforts, including the Brandywine Valley Scenic Conservation Plan and the Route 9 Byway Corridor Management Plan, among others. Our work on these two plans has enabled us to work at a sub-county level and start to identify new strategies for conservation that may be feasible. We must work together in order to be effective. We would also like to suggest that preservation of viewsheds be a particular objective identified in the Comp Plan update. Land development regulations in the county do prevent development in certain environmentally valuable or sensitive areas, such as steep slopes and floodplains. However, there are not similar guidelines to protect many of the iconic views of Delaware, particularly in the Brandywine Valley. We request that the plan identify a series of strategies to preserve viewsheds and develop a requirement in the UDC to identify and design developments such that viewsheds are preserved with the same protections as any other protected resource.
- Transfer of Development Rights – The Draft Plan permits transfer of development rights in the agriculture zones only. Delaware Greenways believes that transfer of development rights is a valuable tool for preservation of viewsheds. Accordingly, we recommend that it be extended to all zoning classifications where open space and low density development is called for in the Plan. Requirements for the receiving zones should be flexible within the County. Delaware Greenways sees transfer of development rights as a valuable tool to preserve the most treasures views in the Brandywine Valley, such as Granogue, and along Route 9 in the Delaware City/Port Penn Area. We request that the UDC be revised to permit Transfer of Development Rights to be afforded to the above areas as a strategy for protection of viewsheds and open space.

## CHAPTER 7: HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Our review finds this chapter to be mostly aspirational and while it articulates worthy “goals,” “objectives” and “strategies,” it does not really *require* developers to take any special measure to preserve historic sites, limiting the ability of the Land Use department and ultimately the County Council to preserve our collective history. While this may be an item for the planned revisions to

the UDC, we believe that the Comp Plan should put some “teeth” into historic preservation. We ask that the following be considered for inclusion in the Plan and the UDC be so revised as follows:

- Identify all historic and heritage sites (including national, state, and local) in the county on a single map and require the Historic Review Board to identify all properties in NCC that should be designated Historic Zoning Overlay Districts;
- If an applicant wishes to make changes to, or develop in such a District, the application must first be considered by the Historic Review Board, which must then make a recommendation to the County Council that the project be rejected, approved, or approved with modifications;
- Establish specific guidelines to incentivize developers to become eligible for grants, loans, and/or tax incentives for projects that preserve and/or rehabilitate historic structures.

Delaware Greenways asks that a study by the Northern Delaware Heritage Coalition (NDHC) be considered in the update to the Comprehensive Plan. Delaware Greenways was one of many organizations that participated in a coalition of diverse groups to identify and define a Concept Plan for a potential integrated network of important heritage sites in northern New Castle County (NCC). The coalition worked for three years with staff from New Castle County, the National Park Service and WILMAPCO to create this plan, holding over fifteen public meetings from 2006 to 2008 to gather input.

The broad NDHC vision was to integrate important sites into a beneficial network (to be connected physically and thematically), to further preservation of NCC’s heritage, and to promote beneficial connections for residents to the sites and with other independent efforts of the:

- National W3R trail (Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route)
- National Historic & Scenic Brandywine Byway
- State Coastal Heritage Byway
- East Coast Greenway
- Northern DE Greenway

These sites and trails comprise much of the rich heritage of northern NCC.

Because such a compilation of NCC heritage sites did not exist in one place, facts were gathered for each site - regarding their contribution to NCC heritage, their physical facilities, and multi-modal access - to aid in NCC long-term planning. This is an important documentation of the priorities of the community in creating linkages that they felt were important. The extensive information developed at the time - including a proposed heritage vision and goals for NCC and Concept Plan - is valuable, and should be recognized and considered for integration into the Comprehensive Plan. Results of the effort-to-date are published in substantial detail on WILMAPCO’s website ([www.wilmapco.org](http://www.wilmapco.org)) under “Plans and Studies”, Northern Delaware Heritage Coalition.

Delaware Greenways wants to assist in the preservation of our history and recently participated in the failed effort to save the Murphy House. We would appreciate the opportunity to join forces with

the County in this regard. We believe the stronger UDC provisions as noted above would be a tremendous first step.

## CHAPTER 8: HOUSING

NCC has 15,000 vacant housing units (up almost 50% since 2000), with almost 7% vacancies. The housing stock has become unaffordable.

One way to make the housing stock more affordable is to make it less expensive and faster for developers to do infill development and harder and more expensive to do greenfield development. Tools like tax abatements and incentives, and faster approvals would be helpful. We also request tightening the definition of redevelopment in the UDC and the designation of specific areas of the county eligible for the benefits of redevelopment. Rebuilding a tired shopping center, a vacant lot with expired approvals or office park should not qualify as a redevelopment project.

Whenever a developer submits a plan that achieves the specific goals of the Plan such as walkable, transit friendly, traditional neighborhood development, and in the case of single land use developments, converts to mixed-use developments in a village design, the county should incentive that development as well. The UDC should be revised to make that type of development as-of-right on parcels of sufficient size and in preferred locations that would support such development.

## CHAPTER 10: COMMUNITY DESIGN

We are pleased that the County has adopted leading edge community design. The goals and objectives are on target. We also note that the County will be expanding the zoning provisions to make village/hamlet communities easier to protect from out of context development.

Delaware Greenways supports a plan, code and policy that allow communities and neighborhoods to develop their desired sense of place. New Castle County is a large, diverse County, and planning for neighborhoods and districts at the County scale through the comprehensive plan and unified development code makes achieving an individual community's specific goals very challenging. We acknowledge the village/hamlet ordinance as one way that may help address this challenge.

A particular example for which we feel such an approach is necessary is the Brandywine Valley area of northern New Castle County. Delaware Greenways is in the middle of developing a Scenic Conservation Plan for the valley, which will include design guidelines for the general area as well as specific recommended design guidelines for the rural villages, such as Rockland and Montchanin (Centreville already has design standards which are working). We would like to be part of the discussion of the development of village/hamlet zoning for the Valley as we see it as a tool to preserve the scenic and historic character which is of national significance and a valuable part of the environment and economy of the area.

We request that village/hamlet zoning be developed for communities north of the C-D Canal and included in the UDC for the specific communities that would derive benefit from it.

In the Brandywine Valley and elsewhere, there are many beautiful scenic viewsheds that are worthy of protection yet are vulnerable to development. Across the country, valuable viewsheds are being protected through a variety of methods. Nonetheless, the draft Plan does not call for viewshed protection. In fact, we can point to the County's 1987 Brandywine Valley Scenic River and Highway Study which began the scenic preservation effort. It is still a valuable reference document for our efforts. Delaware Greenways has been working in the Brandywine Valley to identify and protect the endangered viewsheds in a number of ways, some involving land use practices and some traditional preservation techniques. However, our analysis conducted as part of the Brandywine Valley Scenic Conservation Plan we are preparing as part of the America's Byways Program, has demonstrated that many of the Valley's most cherished viewsheds, including Granogue, Oberod, and the three golf courses in the valley have no protection at all. If the Plan and subsequent revisions to the UDC include protection language, our efforts at preservation will have a chance. Otherwise, these treasures will be lost forever. We recommend consideration of viewshed preservation as a special topic with a set of implementation tools is included in the Final Plan.

The Scenic Conservation Plan for the Brandywine Valley develops land use and transportation contexts (character segments) for the Brandywine Valley. These contexts will be the basis for basis for transportation and land use design guidelines for the Valley. Delaware Greenways believes that the Brandywine Valley could be a demonstration of good planning practices by recognizing the unique character of the Valley through its character segments and tailoring design guidelines specifically to each character segment and incorporating the design guidelines into the UDC.

There are two communities in the Brandywine Valley that are not eligible for the existing Hometown Overlay ought to have the ability to develop and redevelop in a manner befitting the special context of each community. The Draft Plan recommends that the existing zoning remain unchanged for the village of Montchanin. Tracts of Commercial Regional seem inappropriate for the context of the village. We recommend a special district be established to preserve the special character of Montchanin. Similarly, the village of Greenville is a typical suburban village from the 1950's. It is not particularly walkable and well-connected and there is no real transition to the adjacent land uses. Delaware Greenways was recently awarded a grant to develop a Hometown Overlay for the village. This work will begin in a few months. The existing Hometown Overlay District Zoning does not fit well with Greenville but the concept of an overlay does. In this respect, we believe that the Final Plan should recognize the village of Greenville as eligible for a Hometown Overlay specifically designed for it. We invite the County to join us in this effort as it supports the plan update.

The Draft Plan recognizes the need for sub-regional plans. We believe that this is crucial and is directly applicable to the Brandywine Valley and parts of the Route 9 Coastal Heritage Byway. In this regard, we solicit the County's support of the Scenic Conservation Plan Delaware Greenways is progressing. It is designed to become a sub-regional plan as the Draft Plan defines it. And we appreciate the continuing support the Department of Land Use is giving the Route 9 Byway Corridor Management Plan. However, we see throughout the County, smaller communities like Montchanin, Greenville, and others not currently eligible for a Hometown Overlay Zone to be a perfect fit for a small area plan. The small area plans would be community based and lead to special

zoning classifications, design guidelines, approval powers, as applicable. The reason for this comment is that a county-wide planning organization has a difficult time applying more general planning initiatives to small villages.

Particularly in the Brandywine Valley and elsewhere, sign clutter and sign design is an important issue. The Draft Plan does not address the issue of signing. We see the problem as twofold: sign design for commercial structures and private signs that are supposed to be temporary. We request that the sign design standards to be tightened. Within the Brandywine Valley, for free-standing signs we desire wood signs that are mounted on monuments made of brick or stone. These signs should be externally lit rather than internally lit. Signs that change or flash should be dis-allowed as should neon signs. Building signs should be mounted on the walls of the building rather than the roofs. They should not flash or change and they should not be neon. These could be internally lit but the brightness should not be powerful. We also like to work with the County on the size and placement of signs. Special provisions limiting the type, size and illumination of signs should be recognized in the plan and such provisions should be incorporated into the UDC.