

Laurel of Delaware

2011

Greater Laurel

DRAFT Comprehensive Plan



A Chesapeake Bay Community

**Prepared for:
MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL
THE TOWN OF LAUREL, DELAWARE**

**Prepared by:
THE TOWN OF LAUREL PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION**

June 17, 2011

2011 GREATER LAUREL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Strategy of the 2011 Greater Laurel Comprehensive Plan

The 2010 Greater Laurel Comprehensive Plan update will build on the strengths of Laurel as a vital Southern Delaware small town and a growth center in western Sussex County. The Comprehensive Plan seeks to grow these strengths in order to accomplish a balance of growth and preservation, residential and business use, revitalization along US Route 13 and within the Historic Town Center. This shall be based on balanced environmental, historical and economic perspectives. Laurel's



values shall be respected, including its traditional neighborhoods and agricultural economy, its southern Delaware tradition; as well as its potential for reinvestment into the Chesapeake Bay Watersheds.

The 2010 Update of the Greater Laurel Comprehensive Plan highlights major changes and accomplishments over the last five years, identifies goals and objectives that remain to be accomplished, and identifying new goals, objectives, and strategies based on current conditions and recent events. The major focus of this update is the growth and development of the Town of Laurel over the next two decades, including annexation, development, and redevelopment strategies. In general, these strategies are aimed at increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the Town government and enhancing the health, safety, and welfare of the residents and citizens of the Town of Laurel.

The priorities of the Plan are:

- Make Laurel competitive through a new economic development strategy, develop one or more planned business parks in the community and continue to upgrade Laurel's municipal water, sewer systems and street network.
- Work to maintain existing businesses while attracting new investment opportunities by allowing for innovative design solutions for residential and commercial developments
- Provide and expand new home ownership opportunities through improved and enhanced zoning and related code enforcement.

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- Expand and promote the Laurel's historical and natural relationship with the Nanticoke River while connecting the Town Center and US Route 13 revitalization efforts.

Legal Basis of the Plan

Delaware, Title 22, Chapter 7, Section 702, of the Delaware Code identifies the requirements for the Comprehensive Plan:

§ 702. Comprehensive Development Plan

(a) A planning commission established by any incorporated municipality under this chapter shall prepare a comprehensive plan for the city or town or portions thereof as the commission deems appropriate. It is the purpose of this section 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 through a process of municipal comprehensive planning.

(b) Comprehensive plan means a document in text and maps, containing at a minimum, a municipal development strategy setting forth the jurisdiction's position on population and housing growth within the jurisdiction, expansion of its boundaries, development of adjacent areas, redevelopment potential, community character, and the general uses of land within the community, and critical community development and infrastructure issues. The comprehensive planning process shall demonstrate coordination with other municipalities, the county and the State during plan preparation. 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.

(c) The comprehensive plan shall be the basis for the development of zoning regulations as permitted pursuant to Chapter 3 of this title. Should a jurisdiction exercise its authority to establish municipal zoning regulations pursuant to Chapter 3 of this title, it shall, within 18 months of the adoption of a comprehensive development plan or revision thereof, amend its official zoning map to rezone all lands within the municipality in accordance with the uses of land provided for in the comprehensive development plan.

(d) After a comprehensive plan or portion thereof has been adopted by the municipality in accordance to this chapter, the comprehensive plan shall have the force of law and no development shall be permitted except as consistent with the plan.

(e) 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.

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(f) The comprehensive plan or amendments or revisions thereto shall be submitted to the Governor or designee at such time as the plan is made available for public review. The municipality shall provide sufficient copies for review by the Governor's Advisory Council on Planning Coordination. The Advisory Council, within 30 days of plan submission, shall conduct a public meeting, at which time the municipality shall make a presentation of the plan and its underlying goals and development policies, except when the Advisory Council determines that the comprehensive plan, amendments or revisions are fully consistent with statewide land development goals, policies and criteria as adopted by the Governor or Cabinet Committee on State Planning Issues. Following the public meeting the plan shall be subject to the state review and certification process set forth in § 9103 of Title 29. If the Advisory Council determines that a public meeting is not required as provided above, the plan shall be submitted directly to the Governor or his or her designee for certification provided in § 9103 of Title 29. Any proposed comprehensive plan that has been submitted to the Office of State Planning Coordination prior to July 13, 2001, for review shall be exempt from the requirements of this subsection.

Priority Actions

Delaware requires that municipal Comprehensive Plans be certified by the Governor after review by state agencies through the State's Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS). As a result of Delaware's passage of House Bill 255 in 2001, the Comprehensive Plan now plays a significant role in decisions pertaining to town's growth and potential annexation. House Bill 255 requires that in order to be eligible for future annexation, a property must be identified as such in a municipality's adopted, and state-certified, Comprehensive Plan.

In addition, House Bill 255 requires that lands that might be annexed in the future must be evaluated and identified within the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan will address a twenty-year time frame; where some elements are immediate and others may occur within 5-10 years, and others are 10-20 years into the future and focus on the physical development and community design, while considering socio-economic, civic, cooperative, competitive and cultural factors in the life of Laurel. It will also address healthy population growth, jobs and economic development, environmental protection, historic preservation and land conservation in the Greater Laurel Area.

The following Prior Plans and Studies have been reviewed to support this effort:

- Broad Creek Greenway Promenade and Bicycle Path, Laurel, Delaware
- Revised Town of Laurel Zoning Ordinance
- Town of Laurel Water and Wastewater Master Plans
- Laurel Redevelopment Corporation Annual Report
- Sussex County Long-Range Transportation Plan Update, November 2008
- 2008 Sussex County Comprehensive Plan Update
- Laurel Historic District – Documentation and Narrative for the Nomination of the Town of Laurel Historic District as a National Register Historic District,

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The 2010 Plan Update has been developed in keeping with the recently adopted 2008 Sussex County Comprehensive Plan Update, The State Strategies for Policy and Spending and with related Delaware Code and endeavors to respect and protect the natural environment of the Broad Creek Greenway. The Greenway reaches from Trappe, Trussum and Chipman Ponds on the east to the Nanticoke River on the west. Laurel and the Greenway are part of the Nanticoke River Watershed which flows to the Chesapeake Bay. These irreplaceable natural environments will be protected through land use planning, town and county zoning and land conservation programs. In this manner, development will be encouraged at existing centers, rural and farmland areas will be protected and prime natural resources will be conserved.

The Comprehensive Plan identifies the following priority actions:

- Continue to grow and enhance Town Services in order to protect public health and service both existing and future growth.
- Implement funding for a Town-Wide Rehabilitation and Reinvestment Program to protect property value and address future needs.
- Develop New Residential Areas which implement measures for Superior Community Design that promote a neo-traditional design on a variety of sites to support the appropriate neighborhood styles within the framework of Laurel's tradition of architectural scale.
- Continue to implement Transportation Improvements to further grow a mix of transportation options throughout the community.
- Continue to work with various partners to implement Land Conservation Programs for the Broad Creek Greenway.
- Continue to implement the Community Facility and Service Improvements for the Laurel Public Library, Laurel Town Hall, the Laurel Historical Society, and the Laurel Redevelopment Corporation.
- Expand the Economic Development Program to stimulate small business growth and attraction, technology development, Town Center commercial revitalization and creation of a progressive new Business and Technology Park.

The Comprehensive Plan will guide future planning and zoning decisions including land use and transportation, utilities, zoning, annexations, site selection for new facilities, State investment, and capital improvement programming.

The Comprehensive Plan has been prepared with active community participation and with Sussex County and State of Delaware cooperation. Once final citizen and agency comments have been received and responded to, the 2010 Greater Laurel Comprehensive Plan will be approved by the Town of Laurel Planning and Zoning Commission and will then be submitted to the Mayor and Town Council for final adoption by resolution. It will then serve as Laurel's guide for planning, zoning and development.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Section 1.0 – Introduction

The purpose of the 2010 Greater Laurel Comprehensive Plan is to provide a guide to future planning, development and conservation in the Greater Laurel Area. The Plan expresses a vision for the future of Laurel, its neighborhoods, business centers and surrounding countryside. The Plan contains goals and objectives, policies and programs and recommended action projects to implement the vision.



Named for a flowering plant that symbolizes achievement since antiquity, Laurel is a Garden City of southern Delaware. It will continue to develop the quality of its municipal services for its neighbors, businesses and visitors. It will honor its character as a family town and its heritage as the capital of the Broad Creek Greenway. Its rich relationship with its farming countryside and its legacy as a Town founded in the Nanticoke watershed will be protected by the promotion of sustainable and balanced growth. Its connection to Route 13 as a business boulevard will be continually refined and developed. To further enhance its role as a residential center and marketplace.

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan Update in visions the Greater Laurel area as a network of neighborhoods focused around a historic Town Center, adjacent to Route 13, along the Broad Creek and surrounded by countryside which serves as an agricultural market center.

Section 2.0 Location, History and Position in Sussex County



As community and business center in southwestern Delaware, Laurel occupies a strategic position. It is a Nanticoke River and Broad Creek community, which the Plan seeks to emphasize. It is equally a U.S. Route 13 community, which the Plan endeavors to document and improve planning for. It is located in a major growth area of Sussex County and the Delmarva Peninsula. It has important historic,

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community and business relationships with Seaford, Georgetown, Delmar, Dover and Salisbury rich in agriculture and forestry activities which the Plan seeks to identify and build on. It is inland of the Delaware beach communities but not far distant from them. Laurel is also located on a vital and historic Greenway connecting the Nanticoke River with Trappe and Chipman Ponds.

Priorities of the Plan are to help strengthen Laurel's neighborhoods and community institutions, its physical environment in the Greater Laurel area and its economic development in the form of attractive, planned new commercial and business development that hopes to reflect its natural and social heritage.

The History and Character of Laurel

“**LAUREL**, 44.2 m. (25 alt., 2,277 pop.), at the head of navigation on Broad Creek, was laid out in 1802 and named for the laurel bushes growing thick on the banks of the stream. Thousands of crates of cucumbers and cantaloupes are shipped annually from here by truck, rail, and diesel boats. Other industries are basket making, canning, and fertilizer mixing. The town is too busy and “modern” to permit the survival of many old houses, but the tempo of living never suggests hurry or anxiety. Cooking is a fine art here; the broiled partridges (quail) and fried oysters served in the private homes of Laurel are not surpassed elsewhere.”

- from **Delaware – A Guide to the First State**,
American Guide Series, 1938

“**LAUREL (Population: 3,668)** Founded in 1683 and incorporated in 1883, Laurel is host to more buildings on the National Historic Record than any other town in Delaware - 800. Laurel was plotted in 1802 after the sale of an Indian reservation on Broad Creek and named for the abundance of laurel growing along its banks. Nearby is the historic Old Christ Church, which features an unpainted heart-of-pine interior, close to Chipman's Pond. Trap Pond State Park and Trussum Pond are both east of Laurel, and are home to the northernmost natural stand of bald cypress trees in North America. The two largest trees in Delaware, a pair of bald cypresses, are located here. Forestry officials estimate the age of the larger tree at 750 years.”

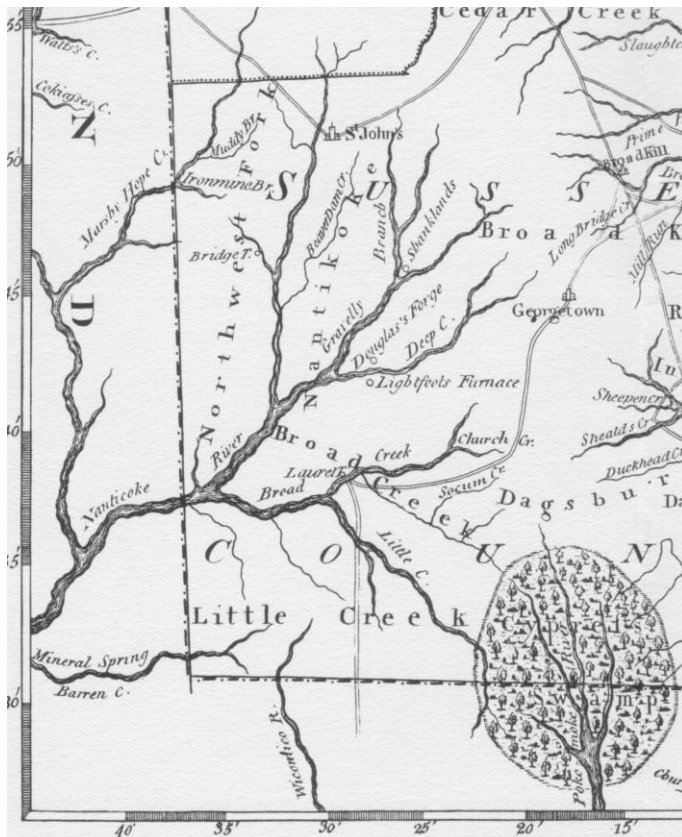
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- **Sussex County Profile 2002**, Independent Newspapers and Laurel Chamber of Commerce.

In order to plan for Laurel's future, it is important to understand its past, which, as Shakespeare said, "is prologue". Laurel's known roots are those of a Nanticoke Indian community and European settlement of the 17th and 18th centuries. An effort to understand the power and strength of the community's location, without which it would not have become a growing town, is also essential for planning.

The following description of Laurel's history is based on several sources, including an interview with Kendall Jones, past President of the Laurel Historical Society, review of the excellent Laurel history submitted with the 1988 nomination of the Laurel Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places and a discovery by the Chamber Of Commerce of a copy of the brochure for the 1952 Laurel Sesqui-Centennial Celebration. The following text has used material directly from the December 7, 1988 National Register of Historic Places Registration Form prepared by Dr. Susan Fox, Professor, Wesley College for the Delaware State Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs.

Laurel's Strategic Location



Laurel lies at a strategic "drop" in Broad Creek as the creek runs its course and fall to join the Nanticoke River at Phillips Landing. The Town is an integral part of the Nanticoke River Watershed, which in turn is part of The Chesapeake Bay. No place is more central to Laurel's founding than "the Wading Place" of the late 17th and early 18th centuries, which was between today's Central and Delaware Avenues.

By the 17th century, and possibly much earlier, a Nanticoke Indian Trail followed Broad Creek and crossed it between today's Central and Delaware Avenues. This crossing was called the "Wading Place" and was in existence before 1680. It was there that people on

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foot, by horseback or in wagons could safely cross Broad Creek from north and south. Upstream the creek lent itself to the damming of millponds and downstream to open navigation to the Nanticoke River, the Bay and the Ocean. Many a canoe, raft, shallop and sailing ram connected Laurel's site to the Nanticoke River in the history of Laurel.

The 1952 Sesqui-Centennial booklet says of the site:

“All the cleared land of today was then covered by a primeval forest that had never known an ax. The rotted leaves that had fallen for thousands of years had produced a deep rich soil. Trees rooted in this fertile soil had reached eternally upward for air and sunshine. This produced mighty oaks sixty to eighty feet high before a single limb thrust out. Pines straight and tall, chestnuts, hickories, maples, buttonwoods, poplars, silvered beeches and ash trees covered this land as a jungle.”

By the 17th century, the Laurel site had long been occupied by the Nanticoke Indians who lived throughout the Nanticoke River Watershed. Until the 1764 survey of the Mason-Dixon Line, the area was treated as part of Old Somerset County, Maryland. Its first European settlers migrated north from Old Somerset, having first come north from Northampton County on the Virginia Eastern Shore. The Broad Creek and Little Creek Hundreds, early administrative units north and south of the creek, were formed at this time. In 1683, James Wyeth and Marmaduke Master patented “Batchelor’s Delight”, a 250-acre tract south of the “Wading Place”. In 1711, 3,000 acres south of the creek were reserved as a Nanticoke Indian Reservation authorized by an Act of the Maryland Legislature.

Old Christ Church on Chipman Pond was built as a Chapel of Ease, a satellite chapel to the Anglican Church at Old Green Hill on the Wicomico River. The stage road known as the Kings Highway ran along today’s County Road 461, from Salisbury to St. Johnstown. In that age of waterpower and water transportation, John Mitchell established a mill at the Mill Dam on Records Pond by 1760. The Nanticoke Indian Reservation was closed in 1768. After 1775 the boundary dispute between Lords Baltimore and William Penn was finally settled, and it was clear that Laurel was part of the three lower counties of Pennsylvania, which would become part of Delaware after the American Revolution

A village known as “Laurel”, named for the flowering laurel growing naturally on the creek banks, was in existence as early as 1799. Laurel quickly developed into important shipping and manufacturing town in Southwest Delaware. The home of a number of Delaware's governors, the Town exerted an influence over Delaware far greater than its size would suggest. Originally oriented to the Chesapeake Bay market, when the railroad came through in the mid-nineteenth century, the market orientation shifted to Philadelphia and to the manufacture of lumber products and the shipping and canning of fruits and vegetables. The growth and prosperity in Laurel is reflected in its architecture. While none of Laurel’s eighteenth century buildings are known to survive, the range of

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nineteenth and twentieth century architecture is a reflection of the prosperity of Laurel in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's.

Logging was a major industry. Lumber, including cypress, pine and other hardwoods, was shipped along Broad Creek to the Nanticoke River and Chesapeake Bay by 1800. The principal agricultural products were corn and wheat.

The founder of Laurel was a Dorchester County, Maryland resident named Barkley Townsend. A wealthy merchant and ship owner, he bought land at the former Indian reservation site, which by this time was known as "Broad Creek Wading Place". He laid out 32 lots and sold them to tradesman and merchants. The first lot was leased to Henry Edger, a blacksmith, in 1789. By 1803 the lots were owned by nine individuals.

By 1810, Laurel had become “. . . a small post town, situated on both sides of Broad Creek . . . it contains about 40 houses, a Presbyterian and Methodist church.” At that time the population of Little Creek Hundred was about 2,300 and that of the village of Laurel about 350. Delaware law required public schools after 1821. Warehouses were built along the creek. In 1830 state lottery funds were used to dredge Broad Creek and better connect Laurel with the Nanticoke. Businesses grew from 4 in 1832 to 41 in 1850. By 1850 shipbuilders were building three-masted Chesapeake Bay schooner rams on the banks of Broad Creek. These cargo ships plied the Atlantic Coast and Inland Waters from Halifax to Havana. Victorian mansions were built as wealth increased and neighborhoods began to take their present form. Local inventions arising from the business of agricultural and lumber processing and distribution became numerous.

West Laurel as a neighborhood began to form before the Civil War and grew rapidly thereafter. The Railroad reached Laurel from the north in 1859, connecting the village with Wilmington, Philadelphia and northern cities. By 1860 the Town population was 1,200. Marvil Packaging, basket manufacturers, became the biggest business in Laurel.

The various census and tax lists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century do not separate Laurel from the surrounding Hundred. The 1800 population census showed 1909 free individuals and 255 slaves in Little Creek Hundred. The town of Laurel was described in the 1807 edition of Scott's Geography as having 40 houses, which indicates that Laurel had grown to about 150-200 people within its first two decades.

Almost all of the grain and lumber from the surrounding area was processed locally. The number of saw mills and grist mills was high, especially considering the slow moving nature of most of the streams in the Laurel area.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, Laurel was important politically. Four Laurel men were elected Governors of Delaware between 1805 and 1855. The first, Nathaniel Mitchell, was an original settler of Laurel. Trained as a lawyer, he also had

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interests in a number of mills. He was elected as a Federalist in 1805 and served until 1808. The second was John Collins, a miller who was elected as a Democrat-Republican in 1821 and served one term. William Barkley Cooper, a grandson of Laurel founder Barkley Townsend, won the 1841 election as a Whig and served until 1845. The fourth Laurel governor was William Ross. He was elected in 1851, several years after moving north to Seaford.

Laurel continued its steady growth during the first half of the nineteenth century. Roads and transportation had been concerns from the beginning. In 1798 and again in 1810 the town petitioned the state legislature to authorize bridges over Broad Creek. The bridges were to be public and high enough for boats without masts to pass underneath. In 1822, pigs running through town were a problem that was addressed. During this period, roads were officially laid out and in 1830 the town's boundaries were established.

Laurel's industrial base grew with the town. The iron industry was present. Established in the early eighteenth century, it continued into the nineteenth century near Laurel using bog iron as its source of raw material. Tanning and wool carding were other important industries. The abundant surrounding forests encouraged cabinetmakers, chair makers and shingle makers to locate near Laurel. The enterprises were not large, most employing only a few men.

With the coming of the Delaware Railroad, the economic orientation of Laurel changed from the Chesapeake Bay to the railroad's service area to the north, including Philadelphia and Wilmington. There were ready markets for the corn and lumber products collected and processed in Laurel. Laurel and Seaford to the north competed for the trade with Laurel having the advantage for lumber by virtue of its location. The railroad also brought many new consumer goods into the town including hardware, drugs, package goods, and clothing. Books, magazines, and newspapers also arrived on the railroad. Laurel residents were also able to travel more widely and in new directions.

The same year that the railroad arrived, the Delaware State Directory listed the occupations of the town's inhabitants; including a boat and ship manufacturer, a guano dealer and several lumber dealers, carriage builders and grain and flour dealers. There was also a daguerreotypist. Five country stores supplied general merchandise. To service the building needs of the inhabitants there were three carpenters, two cabinetmakers, one painter, and one sash, door, and blind manufacturer working in the town. In 1860 about five million board feet were shipped by rail or steamer from Laurel. One of the largest suppliers was John S. Bacon whose family remained in the lumber and building supply business until the early 20th century.

On the eve of the Civil War, the population of Laurel was 1,200 white persons, approximately 500 free Blacks and about 200 slaves. The Civil War, which began in April of 1861, divided Laurel. There were two militia companies: one fought for the

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North and the other for the South. Many Laurel residents supplied the South with goods and others supplied the North.

Although shallops still carried goods and passengers to Bethel or Portsville after the Civil War, connecting with steamers that carried their cargos to Baltimore, more and more of Laurel's transportation focused on the railroad. After the Civil War, local farmers began shifting their crops to berries, peaches and melons, although corn remained the principal crop.

In 1867, the Delaware Tribune, a Wilmington newspaper ran an article announcing that three large fruit canneries had been established along the Delaware Railroad at Seaford, Princess Anne, and Laurel. All of the canneries were owned by Abraham Anderson of Camden, New Jersey, who later formed a partnership with Joseph Campbell. Their company became the Campbell Soup Company. The Laurel cannery was most likely located on rented land as there is no record of Anderson's having purchased land in the town. Because he had business connections with the Dashiell family, it is possible that this first cannery was located on their land.

From time to time after the Civil War, attempts were made to dredge Broad Creek to allow access to shallow draft steamboats, but these attempts were never completely satisfactory. However, exportation by rail gradually led to increased wealth for the town. In 1868, when Beers' Atlas of Delaware was published, the streets had names reflecting the economy of the town including Wheat, Corn, Rye, Cedar, and Pine Street. Only Pine remains as a name today. According to the Atlas, there were two hotels in the town: the Cannon Hotel on the west side of Wheat (Central Avenue), on the site of the Rigbie Hotel, and the Planter's Hotel at the southwest corner of Wheat and Back (Market Street). Four churches were shown on the town map in this time period: the African Church (Mount Pisgah) west of Back Street (West Street); the Methodist Episcopal Church at the southwest corner of Corn (Poplar Street) and Back Street on the site of Centenary Methodist Church; the Methodist Protestant Church where a later church now stands, and St. Philips Episcopal Church also on the site of the present church.

The train depot was south of where it is today and was located just north of W.W. Dashiell's Fruit Packing House. An Academy was shown at the Far East end of Mechanic Street (6th Street). Also shown was the J.B. Lewis Grist Mill and his house, which still stands today on the south side of Cooper Street just east of Willow Street. There were four lumber dealers and grain buyers and ten general merchandise dealers. In addition there were two carpenter-contractor-builders. Among the names listed were the Bacons, Dashiells, Horseys, Hearn, Cannons and Fooks; all of whom were prominent residents during the second half of the century.

In 1869, the Delaware Tribune published another article on Laurel which described the surrounding land as good farmland, but described the farmers as being behind the more

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progressive farmers in other areas in that they were still mainly growing corn. By the 1870s, however, this emphasis on corn shifted to fruits and small berries, which became the basis of the area's prosperity.

Concurrent with the gradual change from mostly corn to fruits and berries was the arrival in town of an entrepreneur who amassed a fortune with his fruit basket and container business. Joshua H. Marvil, a former shipwright, manufacturer of agricultural equipment, carpenter, and cabinetmaker, was one of the most important and colorful of 19th century Laurel residents. Besides being an entrepreneur, he was also an inventor who received seventeen patents in eighteen years. Most were for fruit baskets and containers.

Around 1870, he built a basket factory on the west side of West Market Street and used the Gothic Revival house across the street as his office. During his first year of operation he manufactured 600,000 baskets. Thereafter he expanded his business to include wharves and warehouses along the river and warehouses along the railroad. By the 1880s, he was producing 2,000,000 baskets and crates annually; one of his workers could make a basket in two minutes. He also developed a network of agents, subagents, and contractors. He later expanded his business to Sharptown, Maryland. In 1894, he was elected Governor of Delaware but died shortly after being sworn in. He was the fifth Delaware Governor to come from Laurel. He and his family were responsible for many of the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival houses which remain in the town, including two houses on the west side of West Street.

After his death in 1895, his company was taken over by his son Joshua Dallas Marvil who continued to expand the business to include baskets and packages for tomatoes, apples, and potatoes as well as half barrels for beans and onions. When he feared the supply of wood was diminishing in the area, he purchased timberland along the Roanoke River in North Carolina. In 1903, the business became the Marvil Package Company and was in operation until 1957. Some of the warehouses remain along the west side of the railroad and along Broad Creek.

The same year that Marvil first opened his basket factory, the Delaware Gazette reported that business in Laurel was in a slump. The town had a private school for 50 students and another school was under construction. That same year Adams & Company, owner of one of the largest mills near town installed a new turbine waterwheel making it one of the finest in the state. There were also two mills on the other side of the dam from the Adams mill. One had a large circular saw and the other a smaller one.

By 1873, the town included ten ship captains, six grain merchants and lumber dealers, three fruit basket and crate manufacturers, four flour and lumber millers, and three fertilizer and phosphate dealers. To aid in new construction there were three carpenters, one bricklayer, one plasterer, and two sash, door, and blind dealers. A chair maker and cabinetmaker were also operating in Laurel.

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The following year, Milford's Peninsular News and Advertiser published an article about Laurel which stated that the town did not provide a welcome environment for strangers. Another drawback to the community, the article stated, was that the individualistic farmers refused to join organizations that would benefit them such as The Grange, a Fruit Growers Association, or an Immigration Society. Milford and Laurel, along with other Delmarva towns were competing for new residents from New York and New England. The benefits of moving to Delmarva were widely advertised with each section claiming to have the cheapest and best land and the most convenient transportation system.

Laurel Academy was described in the article as being very prosperous under the direction of Professor Thomas N. Williams and his assistant M. Thomas Beerwood of Cambridge, Maryland. The academy offered a classical education to 50 students each year. Public examinations were given twice a year. There was another private school under the leadership of Robert B. Beerwood which also had 50 students.

The article concluded that there was some industry such as the Marvil basket factory and the Adams mill that provided capital, but what was needed was enterprise and an increased population. Over the next two decades Laurel received both.

By 1878 The Delawarean reported that business was improving in Laurel and that house carpenters and mechanics were very busy. The following year there was an act passed to incorporate Lodge #1528 of the Grand Union Order of Odd Fellows showing that Laurel inhabitants could organize and join organizations. Thereafter the number of men's groups grew.

In the 1880s, the new business of fruit drying or evaporating came to Laurel. In 1882, a Laurel physician, William Short Hitch, purchased a Williams evaporator machine for drying fruits. He employed 75 people, mostly women, whom he paid between \$1 and \$3 per day, who could dry 700 baskets of fruit daily. This company continued until 1888 when Joshua Marvel bought the building and used it for storage.

During the 1880s, there was a building boom in Laurel. In February of 1881 the Morning News reported that many new houses were being built and that older ones were being freshly painted. That same year the Delaware State Journal reported that Laurel had the largest lumber market on the Peninsula and that there was much new construction taking place. The following year, The Morning News reported that a law had been passed in Laurel to protect shade trees, and thus citizens were placing hitching posts in front of their homes. The streets were improved with the laying of oyster shell in front of the homes. According to the article, more building and repairing of buildings was continuing and the town's mechanics and laborers were busy.

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In 1882, the Peninsula Directory included an article about Laurel in which it was described as not a well-planned town. The streets were too narrow and the architecture needed much improvement; however, the paper saw improvements occurring in the town. In 1883, the *Morning News* reported that Joshua Marvil was building a "fine residence" for his youngest son and that William W. Dashiell was building a "commodious mansion" for his son-in-law, Dr. Joshua Ellegood. In 1885 the *Morning News* reported that Marvil was erecting a windmill to supply water to his son Dallas' home which had rooms warmed by heated air and bathrooms with hot and cold water on the first and second floors. Later in the 1890s Dallas Marvil added statuary to his front yard, including statues of dogs and angels, one of which remains today after having been saved from the fire which destroyed the mansion in 1918.

In 1883, Laurel received a charter and organized a town government. The new town government contracted with George Parsons to build an iron bridge over Broad Creek and began to pave streets, which gave the town a "neat appearance".

In 1885, the *Morning News* reported that Henry Bacon's planing mill was useful to many builders and that Selby Lowe's planing mill five miles away supplied most of the good quality house frames used in the area. By 1886, Harry Bacon had built another planing mill near the railroad station and planned to build a phone line from the mill to the town. Thomas Bacon was also building a planing mill on his wharf below the pivot bridge.

In 1889, another cannery was established in town. Originally called Wright & Smith, it became known as the Laurel Canning Company and operated until the early part of the 20th century.

During the 1880s, two newspapers carried accounts of the opening of a grocery and confectionery shop on the corner of Wheat (Central Avenue) and Front Streets by Stanford Parker, a black man. His business, which included ice cream and peaches, was very profitable for someone who began with \$40 and was making \$6,000 at the end of two years.

By 1893, brick sidewalks were gradually replacing plank walks in town and the town had hired a bailiff, lamplighter, and street repairer. Street crossings were made of "good white oak lumber". In the Minutes of the Laurel Town Commissioners there are numerous references to people being ordered to repair their brick pavements.

In 1894, the city government allowed a merry-go-round to operate in the town. Other leisure activities of the citizens included bicycling which became very popular in the late 1890s and early 20th century. In September of 1896, the Town Commissioners passed an ordinance forbidding bicycle riding on sidewalks. At night bicycles were required to have a lamp and a bell which had to be rung three times at each crossing. One of Laurel's residents, Eugene Fowler, received a patent for a bicycle stand in 1899.

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By 1894, there was a marble works in town named the Laurel Marble Works. Not only did they make marble and granite monuments, head, and footstones, but they also made galvanized iron fencing. The Laurel Marble Works also made stone, granite, and marble sills and coping as well as marble and slate mantels, many of which survive today. The business was located on Market Street.

That same year a local directory listed 16 carpenters, 4 builders, 2 paper hangers, and 5 painters in addition to Samuel Bacon & Sons, who still produced building materials. The marble works was also listed. The Every Evening newspaper reported that S. H. Bacon & Company was adding a wing for the production of window sashes and that it was enlarging its lumber, sash, and door factory as well as starting a branch in Seaford. The Bacon firm sold framing, flooring, siding, moldings, boxes, sashes, doors, laths, and shingles.

In 1895, there was a Chinese laundry located in the town run by a man by the name of Jack Lee; this laundry, however, only remained for about a month. Perhaps Lee was attracted by the town's attractive offer of a ten-year tax exemption for new businesses. The Odd Fellows also offered to donate manufacturing sites along the railroad to any new businesses. A pickle factory and a hosiery and underwear factory were two businesses that were persuaded to come to Laurel.

At this time Daniel J. Fooks built a cannery at the foot of Central Avenue. He was a wealthy local landowner, ship owner, large fruit grower, and the first President of the Sussex Trust, Title and Safe Deposit Company. Fooks brought in George W. Stradley, a canner from Bridgeville, to run the cannery. The Fooks family, including his son Harry K., remained in the canning business until the 1920s. It was Harry K. Fooks who built the large Colonial Revival house on West Street; one of the most impressive houses in town. Stradley lived on Pine Street in a smaller, but very interesting house with decorative fleur de lis brackets and shingle work

Many cannery workers lived along 10th Street in the many simple gable front Queen Anne houses or along 5th Street.

Many of Laurel's men joined fraternal lodges. By 1896, there were seven including the Improved Order of the Red Men, the United American Mechanics, the Improved Order of Heptasophs, the Borthhood of Union, the Ancient Order of United Workmen, the Improved Order of the Odd Fellows and the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons. The Odd Fellows and several other groups met in the Odd Fellows Hall on the east side of Poplar Avenue. The Masons had their meeting hall on the south side of 6th Street, and the Red Men met in the wigwam over the Sussex County offices on the north side of Market Street.

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By 1896, the Dover Telephone Company was given a franchise to come into town with its poles and wires.

That same year the Wilmington newspaper, Every Evening reported that houses in Laurel were in such demand that many people could not find housing and were forced to sell their possessions and board with families despite the fact that in one month sixteen dwellings had been built. The housing shortage was caused by a business boom in the gristmills and basket factories.

The population of Laurel had grown to nearly 3,000 by 1897 and there were fourteen carpenters, four builders, three painters and a marble works.



With all the building there was a demand to improve public services. The Town Commissioners investigated the possibilities of developing a town water system, which subsequently was adopted and built. A lot was purchased from Dr. Edward Fowler on Poplar Street for the water plant and locations for fireplugs were chosen. The town clerk also ordered illustrated catalogues for hose carts and trucks for the fire department.

By 1898, the Laurel Shirt Factory was located on the north side of Market Street near 4th Street. It was employing a full force and plans were being made to enlarge it. Later it was reported that it was running night and day. In a similar manner, the local basket factories were working eleven hours daily to keep up with the large number of orders.

In June of 1899, a fire destroyed several blocks of the business district. The result of the fire was increased building, but with a new emphasis. Almost all of the commercial buildings constructed after the fire were made of brick. Thus along Market Street today there are many good examples of Italianate and Colonial Spanish Revival brick commercial buildings. There was also a concerted effort made to finish the town's water system and to create a permanent fire company.

On July 4th, 1899, Laurel hosted a celebration honoring business in the town. Wagons ere displayed and paraded for each of the major businesses including the Bacon Planing Mill, Adams and Company, J. H. Marvil Basket Company, Windsor Bricks, Laurel Marble

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Works and others. This celebration of business was occurring all over America at that time as the country approached a new century.

Also in 1899, Laurel completed construction of a new graded school, which was to be heated by steam, and which would employ five teachers. That same year, the town also dredged Broad Creek again and established a county trolley line.

By 1900, Laurel had grown to a city of about 4,000, a population which remained stable until after World War II when the population was 3,000. In 1900 a Delaware newspaper characterized the town as a "thriving manufacturing city."

At the turn of the century, Laurel was still experiencing rapid house and commercial development, partly related to rebuilding after the fire and partly answering the demands of growth. There were twelve carpenters employed in the town as well as plasterers, painters, builders, masons, brick makers and cabinetmakers.

In the summer of 1900, the newspapers reported that members of the Fooks family were spending the hot summer in Fenwick Island and in Atlantic City. The J. Dallas Marvil family was summering in Rehoboth at their summer cottage. Having summer or vacation homes became popular among the upper class during the 1890s and early 20th century. By 1907, the Pennsylvania Railroad was running special trains to Rehoboth for which a round trip ticket cost \$1.80.

In 1901, F. H. Small was advertising that he was selling furniture, carpets, wallpaper, and paints at his store on Central Avenue. The following year S. L. Parker advertised that he had the best sweet potato house in the area at the rear of his Egg and Poultry business. The potato building measured 28 by 40 and could hold 10,000 bushels of sweet potatoes. He would buy potatoes from the local farmers and store them year round.

During the early twentieth century, Laurel continued to be an economic distribution center for Southwestern Sussex County as well as a manufacturing center with canneries, basket and crate factories, planing mills, shirt factories and other businesses.

In 1921 the DuPont family made a major contribution to the Laurel Public Schools and the Laurel Public Library was founded with their assistance. DuPont comes to Seaford in 1939, creating many good jobs filled by Laurel residents. The DuPont Company apparently had wished to come to Laurel, but interest was low. With the massive construction for the new DuPont Nylon factory in Seaford, many workers sought rental housing in nearby Laurel. This marks the beginning of significant rental housing in Laurel. U.S. Route 13, "the dual highway", which was also called called the "Ocean Highway to Florida", opened for travel in 1925.

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In 1921, Laurel's schools were consolidated into one public school district. Bus stations located on Market Street and. Motels began to develop on the dual highway. The Laurel Farmers Market was now a very active place and it moved from the town center to Route 13 in 1952, becoming a southern Delaware tradition. The town center was very busy with drugstores, department stores, bus stations, theater, four ladies clothing stores, banks, five and dime stores and sporting goods shops. Laurel High School and the adjacent Village Drive-In become a strong social center.

During the Depression, the Federal Works Progress Administration provided funding for municipal water and sewer systems. After World War II, suburbanization began in earnest in Laurel as elsewhere. In 1988, the Laurel Historic District was established as Delaware's largest. In response to businesses departures from the Town Center, the Laurel Redevelopment Corporation began a redevelopment program for the revitalization of the Town Center and Broad Creek area. During this period, Johnny Janosik and the Laurel Public Schools became Laurel's largest employers. Laurel, like Sussex County around it, has grown rapidly in population during the past four decades. Three low and moderate-income housing developments have been added to the Town's inventory of housing.

Laurel at the beginning of the 21st Century is a Town of traditional small town design and special historical scale. The 3-story Globe Building is downtown's tallest structure. Laurel has the appearance of a historical town. It focuses on Broad Creek because the Creek, as a place of shipbuilding, box manufacture and transshipment, was the center of both its natural environment and its economic development. The USGS map makes it vivid that Laurel is at the center of a natural system of greenways and waterways. It is also the gateway to the Nanticoke River in a green and historical corridor defined by special places such as Bethel, Portsville, Phillips Landing and Woodlawn Ferry on the west, and Records, Chipman, Trussum and Trappe Ponds on the east. U.S. Route 13, less than a mile to the east of the Town, is one of Delaware's burgeoning highway commercial environments.

Section 3.0 Purpose

The 2010 Greater Laurel Comprehensive Plan presents a vision, goals, objectives and recommended action projects; a process which has actively involved the Laurel community through interviews and a community meetings. The Plan presents concepts for a series of new projects and initiatives. These include the creation of:

- Projects to upgrade Laurel's water and sewer systems
- Revise its Zoning Ordinance and related codes,
- Strengthen downtown revitalization,
- Continue the work of establishing a Broad Creek Greenway,

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- Improve Laurel's park system,
- Strengthen planning for community facilities,
- Define a Town economic development entity and program,
- Improve transportation,
- Identify land conservation measures for the surrounding countryside,
- Provide a concept plan for potential annexation areas,
- Strengthen Laurel's planning relationships with Sussex County and the State of Delaware.

Section 4.0 Public Participation

As a major component of the 2010 update process, the Laurel Planning and Zoning Commission completed a multi-part public participation process aimed at raising public awareness of the value of comprehensive planning, engaging the citizens of Laurel in the plan update process, and eliciting substantive public input regarding issues addressed in the comprehensive plan. The following components were included as part of this public participation portion of the comprehensive plan update:

Written Questionnaire – In cooperation with Town staff, the Planning and Zoning Commission developed a written questionnaire designed to gauge public values and opinions regarding a range of planning issues. The questionnaire included eighteen individual statements about a range of planning issues. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. The questionnaire form also included an area for the inclusion of written comments. The questionnaire was distributed with the Town's spring 2009 (April) newsletter, which included an article describing the comprehensive plan update process and inviting the public to complete and return the questionnaire and to attend the public plan update workshops held each month before the regular meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission. The questionnaires included detailed instructions as well as a deadline for submission of May 31, 2009. A total of 59 questionnaires were returned by the deadline and two were returned after the deadline.

Respondents most strongly agreed with the following statements:

- *Neighborhoods such as Lakeside Manor and Woodland Heights are a part of Laurel and should be formally incorporated into the Town so they can pay for the local services and infrastructures they use.*
- *Additional steps should be taken to preserve historic homes and areas in Town.*
- *There are too many local streets in disrepair.*
- *The area around the Broad Creek should be protected as a natural public space.*
- *Laurel can be a modern Town while also preserving its architecture and heritage.*

Also, Respondents most disagreed most often with the following statements:

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- *There are too many apartment and rental units in Laurel.*
- *New residential development, like the proposed Village Brooke project is good for the economy and social health of the Town over the long term.*
- *Laurel should try to remain a small community with conservative values.*

Finally, Respondents were least willing to provide answers to following statements:

- *New residential development, like the proposed Village Brooke project, is good for the economic and social health of the Town over the long-term.*
- *There needs to be more activity options for our local teens.*

The questionnaire responses were coded and tabulated by Town staff and presented at a public workshop on June 10, 2009.

Email Comments – Included in the newsletter article and in the instructions on the questionnaire form was an invitation to submit comments by email. By the deadline, one comment was received by email and was presented at the public workshop on June 10.

Public Workshop – The Planning and Zoning Commission held an advertised public workshop on June 10, 2009. The purpose of the workshop was to present the results of the community questionnaire and to elicit direct input from attendees regarding issues related to the comprehensive plan. The event was not well-attended and did not yield any substantive input for inclusion in the plan update.

The planning work then began in July of 2009. The Town engaged The State Planning Coordinator and Sussex County Circuit Rider of the Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination to discuss the comprehensive planning process and to better understand what expectations could be anticipated from State agencies. Staff then conducted a photographic reconnaissance of Laurel and its environs. Walking and driving tours were made. Demographic, population and land use data was assembled and evaluated. Design and architecture were considered and Town Zoning Ordinance and other codes were reviewed. A zoning analysis, water and sewer needs analysis and a draft Vision and Goals statement was prepared for, and discussed with, the Planning and Zoning Commission in the fall of 2009.

In early April of 2010, a Draft 2010 Greater Laurel Comprehensive Plan was prepared by staff. Copies were placed in Town Hall and the Laurel Public Library. A Public Community Meeting was held at the Laurel Fire Hall on ***, 2010. The draft plan was presented with the help of color slides and a lively, and positive, discussion of plan ideas was then held and a record of the meeting was made by Town staff.

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Following review of the draft by the Town and consideration of citizen comments at the Community Meeting, the Comprehensive Plan was revised and the Draft Plan will now be submitted to the Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination and Delaware State agencies for their review and input through the Preliminary Land Use Service or PLUS Process. Following receipt of comments from the State, and an additional Community Meeting in Laurel, the staff worked with the Planning and Zoning Commission to complete the plan document. The 2010 Greater Laurel Comprehensive Plan will then be approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission and be given to the Mayor and Town Council for adoption by resolution.

Section 5.0 Community Profile

The Town of Laurel is now growing at a moderate rate. In past decades, Town population has grown or declined in response to surrounding economic conditions. Table 1 highlights the population changes which have occurred in the Town of Laurel over the past century. Population has grown and declined in response to local, regional and national economic forces.

The 2004 Greater Laurel Comprehensive Plan relied upon decennial US Census data for its demographic summaries and analyses. To date, there is no updated demographic data available from the US Census for the Town of Laurel, primarily due to the Town's small size. However, the Delaware Population Consortium (DPC) provides annual population estimates for all incorporated places in Delaware. Using this data, it is possible to provide updated data regarding the estimated total population of the Town of Laurel between 2000, the last decennial census year, and 2008, the most recent population estimate available from the DPC. This data also provides for a conservative population projection based on year-to-year data to contrast against more aggressive population projections based on 10-year population data from the US Census.

Year	Total Population	% Change
1960	2,709	-
1970	2,403	+ 11.3%
1980	3,052	+ 27.0%
1990	3,312	+ 8.5%
2000	3,668	+ 10.8%

Table 01 Total Population, 1960-2000 Source: US Census

Over the last five decennial census periods, the total population of the Town of Laurel grew by an average of 14.4% every ten years, or an average of 1.44% each year over the last fifty years. Based on this data, the total population of the Town can be expected to double every fifty years, notwithstanding any limitations on available space, zoning, and local and regional resources such as jobs and housing. Using these measurements as a benchmark for future population growth, the Town of Laurel may be expected to grow to

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4,196 by the year 2010, to 4,800 by the year 2020, and to 5,492 by the year 2030. This provides a baseline population projection as shown in Figure 1.

Year	Total Population	% Change
2000	3,747	-
2001	3,769	+0.59%
2002	3,800	+0.82%
2003	3,833	+0.87%
2004	3,845	+0.31%
2005	3,870	+0.65%
2006	3,878	+0.21%
2007	3,920	+1.08%
2008	3,982	+1.58%

Table 02 Total Population 2000-2008 Source: Delaware Population Consortium

Based on the data provided by the DPC and shown in Table 2, the estimated population of the Town of Laurel shows a much slower rate of growth between 2000 and 2008 as compared to the population growth shown by the US Census for the previous five decades, with the exception of the estimated population growth between 2007 and 2008. Based on the DPC data, the total population of the Town of Laurel grew by 6.27% between 2000 and 2008, which equates to a ten-year growth trend of 7.84%, nearly half that experienced by the Town during the previous fifty years. The DPC data suggests that the total population of the Town will double approximately every 92 years. This data provides the benchmark for a more conservative population projection, as shown in Figure 1.

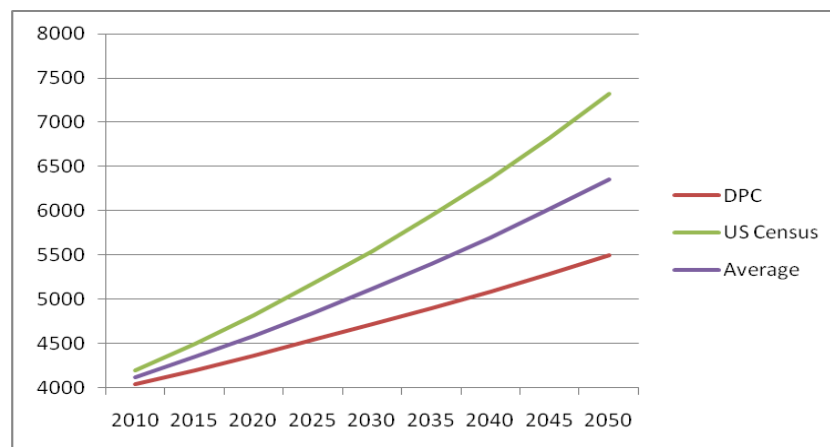


Figure 01 Population Projections 2010-2050

The data displayed in Figure 1 is shown in Table 3. As shown, the historic population data from the US Census provides the basis for a relatively aggressive population projection. The population estimates provided by the DPC are the basis for a much more conservative population projection. An average of the two projections is also shown.

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Based on the population projections shown here, the total population of the Town of Laurel may be expected to grow at a regular rate over the next four decades, reaching a level between about 5,500 and 6,300 by the year 2050. However, these projections assume that the availability of housing, employment, and other resources will grow relative to the population growth rates seen over the last fifty years and/or the previous eight years. This probably will not be the case, as recent growth in the municipal boundaries of the Town and subsequent plans for aggressive commercial and residential development have occurred over the last five years that may substantially increase the total population of the Town of Laurel beyond the level shown in the projections displayed here.

Year	DPC	US Census	Average	Year	DPC	US Census	Average
2005	***	***	***	2030	4,713	5,542	5,114
2010	4,041	4,196	4,119	2035	4,898	5,941	5,398
2015	4,199	4,498	4,348	2040	5,090	6,368	5,698
2020	4,364	4,822	4,589	2045	5,289	6,827	6,015
2025	4,535	5,169	4,844	2050	5,496	7,318	6,349

Table 03 Population Projections, 2005-2050

More specifically, the Town annexed more than 500 acres of undeveloped land between 2005 and 2009, which is expected to host more than 250,000 square feet of new commercial development and more than 2,500 new housing units. Consequently, the build-out of this slated development over the next two to three decades may add more than 5,000 new residents to the Town's total population. These factors, in addition to any future annexation, new development, and redevelopment activities, would serve to dramatically shift the population projection for the Town upwards. As such, the population projections provided here serve as a general baseline reference for a relatively conservative pattern of growth in the event that the slated new development is either partially abandoned or is built out much more slowly than anticipated. If the anticipated development occurs as planned, the total population of the Town of Laurel is expected to grow to near 10,000 within the next two to three decades, reaching a plateau as the approved developments are built out and assuming that the Town does not annex develop additional land beyond the current municipal boundary or allow existing development to intensify through its future redevelopment activities.

Section 6.0 Existing Land Use

Existing Land Use for the Town of Laurel and the Greater Laurel Area is presented on map entitled Map Existing Land Use. With its central waterfront, historic Town Center and neighborhood and commercial areas distributed along radial streets, Laurel displays the classic form of a traditional city. Perhaps the most significant change in this pattern is the location of the Dual Highway, US Route 13; one mile east of the Town Center. It

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would be better, economically and socially, if there were stronger connections between the Town and Route 13.

Existing Land Uses

Residential

The Town provides for a mixed of residential housing types within varied locations throughout the Town. The Town's current land uses has allowed for larger single family homes to develop around the established Town Center along Broad Creek and begins to provided for more mixed used style of homes along the fringe of the community. Through recent efforts to the Town's Zoning and Subdivision codes, the Town has worked to allow for continued mixed uses and promote housing styles similar to those homes within the historic district of the Town to promote community character and foster a continued sense of place.

Commercial

Over the past five years the Town has allowed for a variety of commercial land uses to promote small business, revitalize downtown and expand highway commercial development along US 13. As part of the implementation of 2004 Comprehensive Land Use Plan and revisions to the Town's Zoning Code; the Town has expanded business along the Town's waterfront, focused commercial development to the South and along DuPont Highway in forms keeping with the desired character for each of these areas of the Town.

Industrial

Like many Towns within Sussex County over the past five years, the desire to keep and maintain existing industrial land uses has been difficult given the strength of the residential housing market. However, with the recent economic downturn of 2009, Town's like Laurel are now reconsidering the need for industrial land uses suitable for the Town to allow for expanded economic development while preserving the local community. Over the past five years the Town has focused these activities to the far northern and southern ends of the community along the existing rail line as well as along US 13 to provided a mix of opportunities to expand the employment base within the Town.

Major Land Use Patterns

In addition, to the more common general land uses that are associated with this and similar comprehensive land use plans, the Town has focused on several major land uses patterns that establish possible development districts to further promote and expand

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growth and development throughout the community. The major land uses patterns of the Greater Laurel Area consider as part of this update are the following:

Route 24, 4th, Market and West Streets

Delaware's scenic Route 24, which is also the path of the Southern Delaware Scenic Trail, is the principle east-west roadway through the Town and between the Town's neighborhoods and points east and west. It connects the Town Center with US Route 13. Truck traffic traversing Laurel is a problem for the neighborhoods along Route 24. A variety of uses has been promoted along this corridor to promote connectivity throughout the community.

Laurel Town Center and Broad Creek Waterfront Revitalization Areas



Laurel's Town Center developed on Broad Creek early in the nineteenth century. Marvil Box Company and Valiant Fertilizer were its biggest businesses. Market Street was a continuous canopied row of shops, offices, restaurants and banks. Phillips Men's Store was the largest retailer. Since the 1960's Laurel's Town Center has experienced the same decline in business activity which most American downtowns have experienced.

Laurel has devoted a special private-public partnership effort toward successful town center and waterfront revitalization. In 1992, a group of public-spirited business and community leaders came together to form the Laurel Redevelopment Corporation (LRC) for this purpose. LRC is a 501c (4) non-profit corporation pledged "to rehabilitating and revitalizing the blighted areas of downtown Laurel, Delaware". In its fifteen-year history, the leadership of LRC has either led or materially aided in the accomplishment of the following projects and programs to revitalize downtown Laurel:

- Market Square Park and Bandstand – LRC acquired properties and redeveloped the Market Street block between Central and Delaware Avenues, creating a central downtown park and bandstand for civic events.
- Creekside Park and Promenade – On the south bank of Broad Creek, LRC spearheaded the development of Creekside Park, a central park element in an overall Greenway Concept for the creek. The park focuses on scenic views of the adjacent Records Pond Milldam and contains a brick promenade.

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- Initial Elements of a Broad Creek Greenway Promenade and Bicycle Path – In addition to Creekside Park, the corporation has championed the development of:
- The Laureltown Town Center Office and Commercial Project, a village atmosphere and street of shops, with new retail and office uses for downtown Laurel.
- Provided continued opportunities to support local businesses along Laurel’s Riverfront such as the Georgia House Restaurant and the various medical offices.
- The creation of the “Operation Facelift” Downtown Façade Rehabilitation along Market Street.
- Revitalization and rehabilitation of residential and commercial structures, and site clearance for new development, in the Oldtown Quarter of Downtown between Oak and Poplar Streets.
- Advocacy for a “Laurel Crescent” residential project for the Oldtown area’s waterfront edge on the South Bank of the Creek at Oak Street, modeled after the famous Crescent of Bath in England.

The Poplar Street Railroad Area

The development of the railroad in and through Laurel created a railroad-oriented industrial corridor along its path. This is true both north and south of Broad Creek. To the north of the creek, major industrial parcels, as well as the Town’s Wastewater Treatment Plant, line the tracks. To the south of the waterway, the area between Market and Mechanic Streets is dominated by the remains of the Marvil Packaging Company, once Laurel’s most prominent business. South of 7th Street, the railroad corridor is dominated by larger industrial and agricultural processing sites. Over the past five years, the Town has promoted redevelopment needs to be considered for many of these sites which show increasing signs of underutilization and disuse.

The Laurel Historic District

The Laurel Historic District is a National Register of Historic Places historic district established in 1988. The Town has not adopted a Local Historic Preservation District Ordinance or established a Historic Preservation Commission. The effect of a National Historic District is to require federal Section 106 review if federal or state investment will alter district properties. Section 106 reviews are the responsibility of the Sussex County Historic Preservation officer working with the Delaware State Historic Preservation

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Office (SHPO). The Laurel Historic District is the largest in Delaware, containing some 709 contributing properties as well as 99 noncontributing buildings and sites.

Historically, the Laurel Historic District was established during the third phase in Delaware's history, the 1770 - 1830 period of transformation from colony to state. The period of significance of the historic district extends to 1940.

The Laurel Historic District represents a number of historic themes identified in the Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan. As a major trading center in southwest Delaware, Laurel serves as an example of urbanization throughout its history. As a manufacturing town from its founding, Laurel has resources that represent manufacturing including saw mills, basket factories and canneries. The various building styles and techniques used in Laurel provide examples for the theme of architecture, engineering and decorative arts. Additional information on Laurel history can be found in such themes as transportation, religion and education.

Among the property types represented in the Laurel Historic District are houses, various outbuildings, stores, warehouses, manufacturing buildings, bridges, schools, churches, and railroad related buildings and structures.

The Laurel Historical Society and the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office have worked together to propose an enlargement of the District to the east of its present boundaries, along Delaware, Market and 6th Streets. The proposed expansion is currently under review at the State and local levels, and is also awaiting the development of a narrative description by the SHPO Office. The Town of Laurel and the Sussex County Community Development Department have expressed some concern about the proposed expansion, feeling that the requirement for lengthy Section 106 reviews might inhibit needed investment in the rehabilitation of District properties. The Town continues to work to rehab the many deteriorated structures within the District.

Section 7.0 Future Land Use

Based on the Plan goals and recommendation identified in the 2004 Comprehensive Plan, this section defines the specific accomplishments that were achieved between the adoption of the Plan and the 2010 Plan Update.

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As part of the town's continued efforts to implement comprehensive land use planning the Town continues to provide for the very basic of land uses to allow for the responsible growth within and around the community and continued prosperity for its residents.

Future Land Uses

Residential

The Town will continue to provide for a mixed of residential housing types within varied locations throughout the Town. The Town's future land uses will allow for larger single family and modest mixed uses homes to develop around the established Town Center along Broad Creek. The Town will continue to work with new developers and the State to provide for new and rehabilitated mixed used style of homes along the fringe of the community. The Town will continue to revise Town's zoning and subdivision codes to allow for expanded continued mixed uses and promote housing styles similar to those homes within the historic district of the Town to promote community character and foster a continued sense of place. As part of this 2010 update, the Town will continue to focus on efforts to grow and expand the existing Town, a key element of these efforts is Residential Infill to grow the core Town Center and the objectives for Infill are as follows:

- *Residential Infill* – The Town will continue to coordinate with nonprofits and developers to encourage residential infill on existing parcels of municipal land that were vacant or underdeveloped. Over the last five years, the Town has coordinated with Sussex County Habitat for Humanity and multiple small- and large-scale developers to build both single-family homes and duplexes on vacant land in Town. Habitat for Humanity has added several owner-occupied housing units in the western section of Laurel. The Town expects to continue working with both private and nonprofit residential developers to continue adding new infill projects and redevelopment projects.

Commercial

Over the upcoming five years the Town will continue to allow a variety of commercial land uses to promote small business, revitalize downtown and expand highway commercial development along US 13 Highway in forms keeping with the desired character for each of these areas of the Town. To continue to expand these commercial opportunities, the Town will continue to promote and expand Gateways into the along key transportation routes within and around the community. The Town will consider the following to further grow commercial activities through the enhancement of these crossroads throughout the community:

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- *Gateways* – The 2010 Plan continues to recognize the multiple gateways of interchanges of Route 13 with Route 24 and Route 9, at the southern entry to the Town along South Central Avenue, the western entry at West 6th and Little Creek, and at the Five Points intersection in the center of North Laurel. The Town continues to believe these locations should be explored for development by the Town as entranceways into the Town, which would serve to both draw visitors into the Town and establish the bounds between the urban and rural. The Town plans to work with Del-DOT and other state agencies to develop a landscaped gateway park with signage to welcome residents and visitors into the main downtown area of Laurel at various locations within and around Town.

Industrial

As part of this Update, the Town wishes to maintain and expand existing industrial lands throughout the Town. The Town will continue to focus these activities to the northern and southern ends of the community along the existing rail line as well as along US 13 to provide a mix of opportunities to expand the employment base within the Town. These revived efforts will focus these new industrial uses to newly defined business parks that will have necessary infrastructure to grow these businesses. The Town's proposed ideas for the Business Parks and Industrial Areas are as follows:

- *Business Parks and Industrial Areas* – The Town has identified the absence of industrial development as a major issue for the future of the Town of Laurel. During the past five years, the Town saw the development of a large industrial operation located at on Tenth Street adjacent to the railroad. The Town has also been approached for the rezoning of a large parcel of land along the northern portion of the Town's Route 13 commercial corridor for the development of another new industrial operation. As part of the Town's continued effort to promote further industrial uses, the Town will explore additional locations within Town to allow for redevelopment and infill as well as the creation of possible new business parks to grow the economic base of the community.

Based upon these continued strategies, the 2010 Comprehensive Plan Update's Future Land Use element will serve as Laurel's official policy guide for land use, development and conservation. It shall be used to continue to guide, revise and implement the Town of Laurel Zoning Ordinance and other related codes. It shall be used to assist Sussex County in future land use and zoning revisions for the study area. It shall serve as a guide for establishing the desired Town Growth Boundary in cooperation with Sussex County.

- The Comprehensive Plan shall serve as a policy guide for land subdivision, rezoning, special exception uses, design standards, variances and capital expenditures.

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- It will guide changes or additions in water and sewer service, transportation improvements, planning for community facilities and the pace and timing of new development.
- Land use and community development planning shall consider both the incorporated and unincorporated portions of the Greater Laurel Area.
- Land use decisions will recognize the vision and goals expressed by the Laurel Comprehensive Plan, which are seen as inherent to Laurel's time, place and form as a historic village alongside Broad Creek.

Objectives

- The Town Staff in cooperation with the Planning and Zoning Commission will conduct periodic review of zoning and subdivision codes to address issues and concerns that may arise as redevelopment and new development occurs within the community.

Section 8.0 Growth and Annexation

As the Town considers future growth and annexation, it is important to consider that growth has been at a moderate pace over the past five years that is in keeping with its traditional character as a small Delmarva community. Moderate growth will allow for quality and compatibility in design between existing and new development. It will also help sustain the natural environment, preserve community history and enhance Laurel's economic base for the benefit of future generations. To ensure that new growth pays for itself, the Town will consider future annexations based upon adequacy and cost of the services which the Town would provide to the newly annexed area. Once these factors have been considered then the Town will seek to enter into annexation agreements for areas that are contiguous with Town boundaries and connected to its street system. The Town will work to avoid fragmentary annexations that will lead to fragmentation of services and confusion as to neighborhood political representation. By continuing to adopt progressive zoning, generally demonstrating good positive government, and implementing selected public improvements along the edges of Town, the voluntary process of annexation may be encouraged.

Objectives

- Focus on greater direct connection to U.S. Route 13 by annexation by directing utility extensions to selected intersections, or "corridors" where there exist previous expressions of interest in annexation and significant parcels for redevelopment.

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- Adopt the Potential Growth and Annexation Areas Element included in this Comprehensive Plan in accordance with HB 255 as the basis for future annexation policy.
- Consider appropriate incentives for annexation in cases where incentives are desirable, assistance in paying for advertisement costs or assistance in paying a portion of the water and sewer connection and assessment costs at such time as the property owner requests connection to the water and sewer systems.
- Evaluate the highest and best development potentials of the Town's vacant buildings and parcels, consistent with preserving the integrity of surrounding properties and uses, especially residential and parkland.
- Develop new procedures through which the Town, working as appropriate with non-profit and property-owner organizations, can act to halt the deterioration caused by vacant properties.
- Encourage new uses which result in healthy new activity and increase Laurel's tax base, taking into account the needs of surrounding land uses.

Future Land Use Categories

As the Town considers future annexations, the Town recognizes the need to provide a mix of future land use classifications to support the growth and development that may occur within the next five years.

Residential / Commercial Land Use Areas

These areas as defined within the Potential Growth and Annexation Map 04 are areas that will support a mix of uses to promote mixed use communities that promote easy access to services and amenities. The overall uses within these areas will be defined by the Town's zoning code but will have a diverse mix of residential and commercial uses.

Commercial / Industrial Land Use Areas

These areas as defined within the Potential Growth and Annexation Map 04 are areas that will support a mix of uses to promote economic development and easy access to services and amenities. The overall uses within these areas will be defined by the Town's zoning code but will have a diverse mix of industrial and commercial uses.

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Section 9.0 Community Design



Community design considers the best general patterns of architectural scale, building materials and styles and site design for and within Laurel. These patterns may be expressed in the practices of private designers and developers, in the Town Code (especially the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations), in the design of public improvements by the Town and the development of new residential and business areas.

Within the Town; development should be “gathered” along street frontages with relatively small setbacks from streets and sidewalks. Favored materials should be brick and clapboard, allowing for new innovations through organized design review. A “neighborhood” approach to design should be developed in which the design of an individual structure is related to the design of its surrounding neighborhood.

In addition, the Town will also focus on better design for the two commercial districts within the Town. The first is the historical Town Center centered at Market Street and Central Avenue. The second is the US Route 13 Commercial Highway less than two miles to the east. The Town Center continues to struggle to find new uses to replace the general merchandising retail uses which were once concentrated within it. The challenge is to target and find the kinds of specialty retail, institutional, entertainment and office uses which can thrive here. In addition, the Town continues to identify means to connect with the US Route 13 to its east. The Town continues to review its codes and work to incorporate State regulations to allow for these connections.

In the course of implementing the 2010 Comprehensive Plan Update, the Town may wish to expand the Planning and Zoning Commission to allow for greater comment on design to assist in reviewing of future development plans. Additional comments provided by the commission augmented by professional designers will be helpful in improving designs within a community design plan.

The goal for community design in Laurel is to develop the community in a manner which continues Laurel’s historical character as a town of one- and two-story buildings in a village setting of small, richly landscaped lots. The design aspects of the Comprehensive

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Plan are standards for building setbacks, façade treatments, landscaping and relationships to public spaces. The following objectives are keys to further enhance the community:

Objectives

- New single-family homes and townhouses can be developed on small or large lots with attractive tree planting and landscaping. Houses should front the street to the extent possible, garages should be oriented to side streets or rear alleys. Curbs and sidewalks should be used within the Town limits. To the extent possible, houses should be two-storey in height and front door entrances should be expressed in their architecture with porticos, arches or gables. In addition, the Town should continue to provide for a town-wide property fix-up and rehabilitation campaign should be continued and expanded, as an action essential to community design and to provide diversity of housing types.
- Within the Town Center, Historic District, and Traditional Neighborhood areas, where street patterns are part of Laurel's heritage, buildings should be designed to be compatible with their neighbors, setbacks from streets should be kept to a minimum and landscaping should reflect the landscaping pattern of the larger district. In addition, historic and older homes should be preserved and rehabilitated wherever possible.
- The Town's "Gateways", as identified on the Framework for Future Land Use map, should be highlighted and beautified with new landscaping, signage pylons, banners, possible sculpture and directional signage to give people a strong image of the best of Laurel.
- Laurel's interconnected street network should be extended into new growth areas and bike paths and multi-use trails should be developed along major roads and through parks and public areas.
- Along Business Route 13, new street tree plantings established and mature trees should be maintained and new flower plantings should be added to the streetscape.
- Within the Broad Creek Special Environmental and Heritage Area, new development, and its design, should be carefully related to the environmental condition of being in the 100-year Floodplain, the heritage values of the area and relationship to the waterfront of Laurel.
- Parks should be established for both passive and active use and park furniture, lighting and signage should be of a style consistent with the traditional design pattern of the Town and Historic District.

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Section 10.0 Historical Resources

The Town recognizes its rich agricultural heritage and appreciates the resulting cultural and historical resources that have evolved over time within and surrounding the community. As a result the Town continues to work with non-profit, State and County partners to preserve these resources.

The Laurel Historic District

The Laurel Historic District is a National Register of Historic Places historic district established in 1988. The Town has not adopted a Local Historic Preservation District Ordinance or established a Historic Preservation Commission. The effect of a National Historic District is to require federal Section 106 review if federal or state investment will alter district properties. Section 106 reviews are the responsibility of the Sussex County Historic Preservation officer working with the Delaware State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). The Laurel Historic District is the largest in Delaware, containing some 709 contributing properties as well as 99 noncontributing buildings and sites.

Historically, the Laurel Historic District was established during the third phase in Delaware's history, the 1770 - 1830 period of transformation from colony to state. The period of significance of the historic district extends to 1940.

The Laurel Historic District represents a number of historic themes identified in the Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan. As a major trading center in southwest Delaware, Laurel serves as an example of urbanization throughout its history. As a manufacturing town from its founding, Laurel has resources that represent manufacturing including saw mills, basket factories and canneries. The various building styles and techniques used in Laurel provide examples for the theme of architecture, engineering and decorative arts. Additional information on Laurel history can be found in such themes as transportation, religion and education.

Among the property types represented in the Laurel Historic District are houses, various outbuildings, stores, warehouses, manufacturing buildings, bridges, schools, churches, and railroad related buildings and structures.

The Laurel Historical Society and the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office have worked together to propose an enlargement of the District to the east of its present boundaries, along Delaware, Market and 6th Streets. The proposed expansion is currently under review at the State and local levels, and is also awaiting the development of a narrative description by the SHPO Office. The Town of Laurel and the Sussex County Community Development Department have expressed some concern about the proposed expansion, feeling that the requirement for lengthy Section 106 reviews might inhibit

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needed investment in the rehabilitation of District properties. There are many deteriorated structures within the District which could benefit from basic rehab measures.

Objectives

- The Town of Laurel National Historic District should be reflected in the Zoning Ordinance as an Overlay District over the affected areas within the community.
- Within the Overlay District the Town should be authorized to consider the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Historic Preservation in conducting its required site plan reviews.

Section 11.0 Economic Development



Laurel's economy has always been that of a well-located agricultural market center, symbolized by the Laurel Farmers Auction, Grain Silos and supporting agricultural business throughout the community. This economy is now slowly changing due to regional pressures from nearby economic centers such as Salisbury and Seaford, as well as from future environmental regulations for the Chesapeake Bay and stressor from the recent housing boom are just some of the

factor impact agriculture in the Laurel Area. As a result it is essential that Laurel seek new forms of knowledge-based economic activity as well as consider new emerging agricultural industries to supplement the traditional base.

The overall objective for development is to achieve a healthy pace of growth, develop the tax base of the Town and implement partnerships which can accomplish the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Having cooperative partnerships with strong standards will protect the natural and historic environment, accomplish sustainable residential, commercial and civic development and achieve the design objectives of the Plan. The Town commits itself to directing development to existing close-in areas with adequate public facilities and services. The purpose in doing so is to ensure harmonious development, minimize cost and avoid unnecessary taxes.

As part of the 2010 Update, the Town will work to develop new opportunities to support for the community such as:

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Commercial Development

While the current economic downturn has stalled many planned commercial development projects in Laurel, a number of new commercial developments have been established. Most of this commercial development has been commercial infill to replace or redevelop existing commercial property that had been previously vacated by a past commercial entity. The Town expects additional commercial development and redevelopment to occur as the Town's infrastructure is enhanced and the national and regional economy strengthens allowing for additional residential development and redevelopment to increase the consumer base of the Town.

Industrial Development

In the past five years the Town became host to a new multi-facility industrial manufacturing operation along existing rail lines within the Town. The Town would like to develop a formal redevelopment plan for other areas near this new business and adjacent to others to allow for in-fill development of similar business within the southern area of the Town. In addition, the Town will work to develop future business sites to establish additional industrial and business oriented parks within the community.

Route 13 Commercial Corridor

A vital piece of the economic development plan for the Town of Laurel includes the development and enhancement of commercial enterprise along US Route 13 transportation corridor. This highway is a major north-south route for local, regional and national travelers. There is considerable undeveloped and underdeveloped commercially zoned property along this corridor near the Town of Laurel that could take advantage of the heavy local and through traffic along this route.

A key component of realizing economic development in this area of town is the extension of local utilities to the properties along Route 13. This will be a primary initial step in encouraging the development of new commercial operations and the expansion of underdeveloped commercial enterprise there. Overall, the Town recognizes that the Route 13 commercial corridor in Laurel is extremely underdeveloped when compared to points north and south. The economic development and redevelopment of this area will bring much-needed jobs to the Laurel area and help to increase the local median household income, which is among the lowest in the State.

Objectives

- Target new business recruitment with high quality, knowledge-based, technology-oriented service, office and other commercial/industrial businesses.

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- Work to retain existing businesses and to attract new business and industry to a Town of Laurel Business and Technology Park.
- Encourage clean-up of deteriorated buildings and sites, including sites which may be “brown-field sites” in the sense of having some contamination as a result of past use.
- Continue a public-private partnership approach Town Center and Broad Creek revitalization.
- Develop an attractive Farmers Market on the banks of Broad Creek.
- Redevelop and improve vacant Market Street sites for new uses and Encourage the visiting, shopping, tourism and related development, including development of a Broad Creek Interpretive and Visitors Center
- Support the idea of convenient small-scale neighborhood retail uses wherever possible, including as part of new Mixed-Use developments.
- Sensitive redevelopment of the Broad Creek area with special use and design controls to both protect the area against inappropriate or too-dense development and also positively attract developments which will bring new life to this unique Laurel place
- Bring new business investment and people activity to Laurel’s Town Center through focus on new specialty retail, entertainment, dining, convenience goods and services, collectible and consignment shop and small business and office uses in rejuvenating downtown Laurel
- US Route 13 is the most powerful location for commercial activities. It includes lodging, convenience, restaurant, auction house, furniture, farmers market and other marketplace uses. In addition there is an array of retail, light industrial, small office and institutional uses Along Trussum Pond Road. US Route 13 should be interconnect to the Town with this powerful tourism, retail and business concentration. This can be accomplished through strong planning for improving the municipal water and sewer systems, welcoming new parties to annexation, improving the Laurel Gateways on the highway and collaborative working relationships.

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Section 12.0 Transportation

The objective for Transportation element is to maintain the traffic efficiency of the Town of Laurel road network to ensure public safety and provide for future growth. As seen in the traffic projections for the Town, continued efforts are necessary to address traffic within and around the Town. As a result the Town will consider reworking of street designs to make them more attractive and efficient.

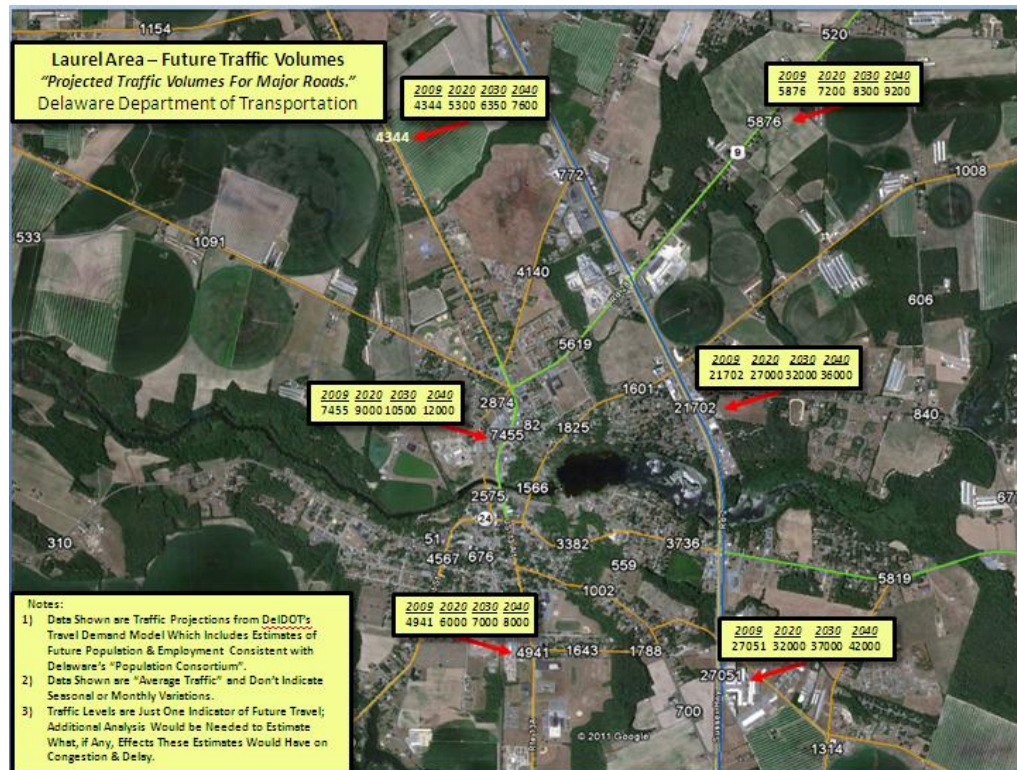


Image 01 Existing and Forecast Average Annual Daily Traffic Count Data for Major Roads
Source: DelDOT

During the period of 2004 through 2009 the Town has partnered with the Department of Transportation to further enhance a mix of transportation options within the community, some these successes include:

Five Points Intersection Improvements – In 2008, the Delaware Department of Transportation completed comprehensive intersection improvements at the “five points” intersection—the meeting point of State Route 9, Route 13A (North Central Avenue), North Poplar Street, and Woodland Ferry Road—at the northern gateway into the main section of Town. These improvements included reorientation of the intersection, the addition of pedestrian signals, and the installation of faux-brick crosswalks.

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Continued Intersection and Transportation Facility Improvements – Since the completion of the Five Points Intersection, the Town has identified several additional intersections and related transportation resources that should be considered for future improvement and or replacement:

Intersections:

- *Delaware Route 9 (County Seat Highway) and US 13 Sussex Highway* – Continued Safety Improvements as needed.
- *Delaware Route 24 (Laurel Road) and US 13 Sussex Highway* – Continued Safety Improvements as needed.
- *Trussum Pond Road and US 13 Sussex Highway* – Continued Safety Improvements as needed.
- *Discount Land Road and US 13 Sussex Highway* – Continued Safety Improvements and Completion of local service road to Delaware Route 9 (County Seat Road) as needed.

Infrastructure Facilities:

- The repair and upgrade of the Seaford Road (Alternate 13) Drawbridge over Broad Creek.
- The repair and upgrade of the Poplar Street single lane steel bridge over Broad Creek.
- Repair and replacement of various local street rail crossings.

Front Street Renovations – As a part of an overall economic development strategy developed and implemented through a partnership between the Town of Laurel and the Laurel Redevelopment Corporation, the transportation infrastructure along Front Street, between South Central Avenue and Willow Street, was renovated in 2005. This project included curbing, new paving, sidewalks, and drainage improvements to prevent flooding.

Sidewalk Upgrades – Between 2004 and 2009, the Town completed the repair of existing deteriorated sidewalks and the installation of new sidewalks in multiple areas of Town. These projects included sidewalks repairs and installations on Second Street and Tenth Street. In addition, new sidewalks were installed along Route 468 (Discountland Road) as part of a multi-million dollar rehabilitation of the Holly Brook apartment complex. Finally the Town will continue to upgrade existing sidewalks throughout the Town. The Town intends to partner with the State, local residents and the State repair older failing sidewalks, connect incomplete sidewalks throughout the Town and improve crosswalks when possible to promote mixed transportation options for local residents.

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Street/Sidewalk Evaluation Project – In 2008, the Town contracted with its engineering consultants to complete a town-wide evaluation of the conditions of local streets and sidewalks. The evaluation included detailed descriptions of road surface conditions, sidewalk conditions, gaps in sidewalk networks, and other pertinent details. The Town expects to utilize the results of this report to develop a strategic plan for maintenance and improvement to its transportation infrastructure. In addition, this data may be used to support requests for grant funding to complete critical infrastructural improvements.

ADA Improvements – As a continuing commitment, the Town has completed multiple transportation construction projects between 2004 and 2009 aimed specifically at bringing the Town’s infrastructure into compliance with current standards for accessibility as set forth in the federal Americans with Disabilities Act. The Town has completed such projects on Tenth Street, Second Street, and West Street, mainly in coordination with larger transportation-related projects. The Town expects to continue work in this area and respond appropriately to any complaints regarding accessibility.

In addition to these recent improvements, the Town wishes to continue to build its transportation network by considering the following:

Public Transit Service – DART Transit and Wicomico Transit provide transit service to Laurel. The transit route follows Central Avenue and Route 9 and the main Laurel station stop is at the Rite Aid Pharmacy on South Central Avenue. Transit ridership is growing. The transit agencies express an interest in considering a transit stop closer to the center of Laurel.



DelDOT Corridor Capacity Preservation Program – US Route 13 – DelDOT has implemented a Corridor Capacity Preservation Program along U.S. Route 13. The central feature of the program is to separate through traffic from local access and turning traffic. The program installs service roads along the edges of the highway when possible. DelDOT will rebuild four Route 13 intersections within the Study Area. These projects should be coordinated with Comprehensive Plan provisions for water and sewer extensions and planning for potential future annexation.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation – A state bicycle route has been designated along portions of the Southern Delaware Heritage Trail, including portions of Route 24 and the

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Portsville Road. Given the great popularity of biking and hiking on Delmarva, there appears to be greater potential for designated bike routes, perhaps along the Broad Creek Greenway. Laurel is a very walkable town and it appears that pedestrian routes and trails should be given considerable new emphasis in future years.

Water Transportation – Broad Creek should be developed as a popular route for small-scale recreational water transportation connecting Laurel with the Nanticoke River and the Chesapeake Bay. It is possible to boat between the Records Pond Dam and the Nanticoke River today, but the sections of Broad Creek closest to Laurel are obstructed with fallen trees.

Laurel Airport – Laurel Airport is a privately owned grass strip general aviation airport open to public use, located one mile southwest of Laurel, Delaware. Because of the airport's exceptional geographic location providing access to Southern Delaware and the Eastern Shore of Maryland; airport uses are focused on agricultural activities such as crop spraying and recreational activities such as skydiving. When the airport is annexed into the Town of Laurel, the Town will adopt the Airport Overlay District (AOD) as adopted by Sussex County to protect the functional integrity of the Laurel Airport and to recognize the economic and social benefits of the Airport by permitting compatible land uses and prohibiting incompatible land uses within the established AOD.

Objectives

- Better integrate U.S. Route 13 into the life of the Town through reevaluating traffic flows, intersection improvements and design of streetscape projects which can be combined with infrastructure improvements.
- Encourage completion of DelDOT identified road and intersection improvement projects along Route 13 and within the Town and surrounding area.
- Implement Transportation Improvements including DelDOT intersection designs for US Route 13 and 5 Points, Gateway streetscape improvement for the Route 13 intersections with Routes 9 and 24, Five Points and South Central Avenue.
- Encourage greater pedestrian use of neighborhood, Historic District, Town Center and Broad Creek streets and sidewalks by promoting walking tours of these areas, signage and walking route markers and maps.
- Promote greater use of bicycles by promoting extensions of the Southern Delaware Heritage Trail and the promotion of bicycle travel on roadways which are well located for bicycles and have wide shoulders.

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- Within the Special Broad Creek Environmental and Heritage Area, design and develop a new pedestrian and vehicular circulation system along the Broad Creek, Nanticoke and Underground Railroad sites in Western Sussex County.
- Coordinate with Norfolk-Southern Railroad and Del-Dot to identify any possible new rail sidings connection which might serve industrial development in the Town of Laurel.
- Coordinate with Laurel Airport and State DOT officials to discuss any possible cooperative actions to both promote greater use of the airport and greater air accessibility to residents and businesses in Laurel.

Section 13.0 Housing

Until early 2009, development occurred at a breakneck pace in Sussex County; making it the fastest growing area in the State. The following table reflects the significant growth experienced by the Town in response to the continued desire of out-of-state residents to relocate to Delaware for its many social and financial benefits. Tables 03 shows the total building permits issued in the Town of Laurel between 1996 and 2009:

Year	Total Permits Issued	Year	Total Permits Issued
1996	80	2003	143
1997	168	2004	221
1998	165	2005	212
1999	159	2006	190
2000	158	2007	164
2001	85	2008	126
2002	91	2009	109
TOTAL	906	TOTAL	1165

Table 04 Town of Laurel Total Building Permits Issued 1996-2010
Source: Town of Laurel Planning and Zoning

In response to this growth and to address the dynamic housing market, the Housing Element is to ensure an adequate supply and diversity of good housing for both present and future residents. The composition of Laurel's housing stock is portrayed by the following Census 2000 table:

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<i>Subject</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Total housing units	1,504	100
UNITS IN STRUCTURE		
1-unit, detached	1,097	69.1
1-unit, attached	65	4.3
2 units	30	2
3 or 4 units	96	6.4
5 to 9 units	90	6
10 to 19 units	165	11
20 or more units	0	0
Mobile home	18	1.2

Table 05 Town of Laurel Composition of Housing Stock
Source: US Census Bureau

Of Laurel's 1999 total of 1,561 housing units, 15% of these homes are reported vacant, approximately twice the national average. 51% of Laurel's units are owner occupied, as contrasted with the national average, which is rising, of 68%. In addition, Laurel has a significant elderly and/or middle and low income population. According to the 1990 census, about 15% of the population was 60 years old or older. It is clear that the Town makes a concerted effort to offer a variety of housing to meet the needs of all its residents. The implications of this data are that Laurel should provide mixed housing types for an aging population, promote home ownership opportunities, attempt to build more home ownership units and find ways to reduce the number of vacant housing units.

Mayor and Council have pursued affordable housing goals with vigor as far back as the mid-1970s. Town initiatives coupled with state and federal grant funds have been used to construct streets, sidewalks and extend water and sewer service to meet the needs of all its residents.



The Town continues to be an active participant in the Community Development Block Grant Program. In recent years, several houses have been rehabilitated. The Town also participates in the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, referring applicants to the State Housing Authority to apply for renovation loans. In addition, the Town continues to partner with local non-profit groups to provide to attempt to grow ownership within the community and revitalize aging neighborhoods.

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The Town has sufficient and appropriately located land zoned to provide housing for all income ranges. Approximately 36% is zoned high density residential wherein single family dwelling unit lots can be 7,500 square feet. Alternatively, about 33% is zoned low density where lot sizes are a minimum of 10,000 square feet. Both zoning districts provide lot sizes to meet the needs of all residents. Also, The Town's full time code enforcement officer vigorously enforces property maintenance codes to protect all residents and further enhance the overall appearance of the community.

In conclusion, the Town is proud of the vigorous, varied and successful approaches it has taken to meet its citizens' housing needs. It has a variety of housing types available within the Town with sufficient vacant land correctly zoned to meet the varied tastes and needs of the community, including the historic district and new residents. It has appropriate subdivision rules to demonstrate a clear and flexible subdivision process. The Town has utilized and will continue to search for additional state and federal resources, to attain its goal of providing a variety of housing types for all income levels within the Town.

Objectives – New and Existing Housing

- Housing rehabilitation should continue to be a primary goal for all neighborhoods within Laurel, with an improved emphasis on the Rehabilitation of Carvel Garden Apartments.
- The Town should continue to utilize Community Development Block Grant and housing rehabilitation loan and grant funds to improve housing conditions where they are most severe in Laurel.
- Community Development projects should be developed with a larger strategic significance to neighborhood renewal and should be smaller, well-designed homes on small sites that are utilize existing neighborhood street pattern.
- The Town of Laurel should work closely with the Delaware State Housing Authority to develop a housing policy consistent with State goals.
- Encourage the development of an innovative, well-designed Senior Retirement Housing development on a Laurel site which is as close to the Town Center as possible.
- Address housing rehabilitation needs with housing rehabilitation incentives coordinated between the Town of Laurel, the Sussex County Community Development and Housing Division and the Delaware State Housing Authority.

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- Encourage innovative subdivision and housing designs through continued review of the Town's zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and housing code.
- Recognize the Town's historic housing stock as its single greatest asset for the future and develop an active housing fix-up, reinvestment, rehabilitation and new development effort.
- Identify and promote new residential development areas with low-density, well-designed housing types well-suited for Laurel and at the same time, recognize that Laurel has done a great deal with assisted multi-family housing in the recent past and that it should now be a time of emphasizing the preservation and development of single-family, owner-occupied houses.

Section 14.0 Natural Environment

Laurel's Natural Setting

Laurel is located in the Lower Peninsula/Cypress Swamp zone of Delaware. The landscape is relatively flat and well watered. The water table is high with extensive ditching required to make the rural agricultural land usable. Most of the rivers drain into the Chesapeake Bay. Laurel is 20 to 30 feet above sea level. The Cypress Swamp is an extensive marsh and swamp that historically was a major source for lumber and bog iron. It presently has the northernmost stand of bald Cypress trees in the United States.

Soil Conditions, Hydrology & Topography

The Greater Laurel Area is located on the flat coastal terrain of southern Sussex County, with sporadic woodlands and gentle slopes along waterways. According to the 1974 US Department of Agriculture Sussex County Soil Survey, the predominant soils are of the Evesboro-Rumford Association, characterized as excessively or somewhat excessively drained that have a rapidly permeable subsoil of sand to sandy loam. This association includes the following soil classifications: Evesboro loamy sand, subtypes A, B and D, with 0 to 2 percent, 2 to 5 and 5 to 15 percent slopes respectively; Johnston silt loam (Jo); Rumford loamy sand with 0 to 2 percent slopes (RuA), and Fill Land (Tf). The steepest slopes are those along Broad Creek. Evesboro soils, while suitable for agriculture, sometimes drain excessively and are strongly acidic. The Fill Land (Tf) soils are found at the Wastewater Treatment Plant site.

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Open Space & Recreation Inventory



The Division of Parks and Recreation contracted Responsive Management Inc., a survey and research firm specializing in outdoor recreation and natural resource issues, to conduct a survey to assess Delawareans' participation in outdoor recreational activities. The survey was conducted in May and June 2008. Responsive Management obtained a total of 1,940 completed interviews that were used in the statewide and regional results. An additional 239 completed interviews were obtained for the data used in the analysis for the selected municipalities that have staffed park

departments. In total, 2,179 completed interviews were collected. Specifically, the survey concentrated on assessing the respondents' view of seven content areas:

- Importance of and participation in outdoor recreation
- Outdoor recreational locations visited most frequently
- Accessing facilities
- Reasons for participating in outdoor recreation and for choosing specific areas
- Ratings of facilities and opinions on specific aspects of facilities
- Priorities for funding and for state and local policymakers
- Environment and land use attitudes

A similar survey was completed in 2002 which will be useful for comparisons and revealing outdoor recreation trends.

Importance of Outdoor Recreation

When looking at the findings from the 2008 telephone survey, it is apparent that Delawareans place a high importance on outdoor recreation. Statewide, 91% of Delaware residents indicated that outdoor recreation had some importance in their lives, while 64% said it was very important to them personally. These findings are very close to the results of the same question asked in the 2002 public opinion telephone survey, indicating a continued demand for outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the state.

The Town of Laurel falls within the SCROP Region 4 area and is all of western Sussex County from US 113 West. As part of the overall statewide survey questions, information pertaining to this district was captured and is reflected in the following:

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Region 4 Outdoor Recreation Trends and Demands

Sussex County is the largest and southernmost county in Delaware. Though large in size, Sussex County is the only county in the Delaware without a county park system. Region 4, which encompasses the western part of Sussex County, has a landscape characterized by rural agricultural land punctuated by small towns. Walking or jogging (81%), picnicking (66%), visiting historic sites and passive recreation in the outdoors (both 62%) were the most popular household activities in this region. Residents in Region 4 are more likely to participate in hunting (23%), fishing (55%), and all-terrain vehicle use (15%) than in most other regions. A Summary of the rankings for all types of recreation can be seen in the following Table 05

Table 05 Region 4 Outdoor Recreation Facility Needs

High Priority	Moderate Priority	Low Priority
Walking / Jogging Trails	Hiking Trails	Tennis Courts
Swimming Pools	Camping Areas	Rollerblading Areas
Open Space / Passive Recreation	Nature Programs	Roller skating Areas
Picnic Areas	Powerboat Access	ATV Trails
Playgrounds	Baseball / Softball Fields	Equestrian Trails
Fishing Areas	Basketball Courts	Disc Golf Courses
Bike Paths	Kayak / Canoe Access	Mountain Bike Trails
Beach Access	Hunting Areas	Lacrosse Fields
Access to Historic Sites	Football Fields	Roller Hockey Areas
	Soccer Fields	Dog Parks
	Golf Courses	Water Parks
	Volleyball Courts	
	Skate parks	

Laurel is a Town of numerous open spaces, parks and recreational facilities, as indicated by the municipal inventory prepared by Town staff. In the larger sense, it can be said that the entire town is the focus and center of the Broad Creek corridor and greenway. The Laurel River Park in West Laurel is an outstanding Olmsted-styled creek side park with much additional potential for future design and use. Laurel Middle School is the site of the most active recreational facilities, as well as the Little League facilities on the Bethel-Woodland Ferry Road. The Town Center Market Street Square open space is Laurel's central urban park space. The Creekside promenade is the beginning of a connected network of trails and paths connecting the creek, town center and walkable neighborhoods of Laurel.

Floodplains and Wetlands

Waterways including Broad Creek and its tributary creeks and millponds include: Chipman Pond, James Branch flowing from Trap and Trussum Ponds, Records Pond, Rossakatum Branch, Little Creek and several unnamed branches flowing into the Creek from the north. Broad Creek is a major tributary of the upper Nanticoke River.

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According to the 28th edition of the National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration (NOAA) Nautical Chart for the Honga, Nanticoke and Wicomico Rivers, dated July 2002, the depth of Broad Creek at Phillips Landing is approximately 12 feet. It is approximately 10 feet at Bethel and some 5 feet between Bethel and Laurel. It is known that there has been sedimentation.

State-designated wetlands are found within many areas located 2 or more miles inland from Broad Creek. They serve an invaluable holding and release function as part of the hydrology system and need to be preserved.

The waterways are Laurel's most sensitive environmental feature. In times of storm, hurricane or flooding, and in the daily and seasonal cycle of hydrology in the area, it is essential that the waterways be protected. The Town of Laurel wishes to continue to protect them for the benefit of all residents of the area, using Federal, State, County and Town resources and programs for environmental protection.

The 100-year floodplain in the Study Area, as delineated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency reflects that this area likely to fill with water on an average of once each 100 years. During the recent Hurricane Isabel (September 2003), Broad Creek rose to an elevation some five feet lower than the 100-Year FEMA-identified level. It appears that the flooding caused by Hurricane Isabel will require the condemnation and removal of one structure in Laurel's 100-year floodplain.

It is important to note that the Laurel Wastewater Treatment Plant Lagoon #3 is located entirely within the 100-Year Floodplain. For this reason, it must be terminated for use as a part of the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The waterway system is a part of the Nanticoke River and Chesapeake Bay. It must be protected against environmental degradation. The improvement of Laurel's Wastewater Treatment Plant will be a major contribution to improving and protecting this unique natural environment.

The Nanticoke River Watershed

Laurel and Broad Creek lie within the Nanticoke River and Chesapeake Bay watersheds. The Nature Conservancy, together with other conservation organizations, is pursuing an active conservation program for lands within the watershed. Lying between the Atlantic Ocean and the Chesapeake Bay, the Nanticoke River weaves through the heart of the Delmarva Peninsula draining 725,000 acres of coastal plain landscape on Maryland's Eastern Shore and southwestern Delaware. Numerous small headwater streams feed into the major tributaries of the River, Deep Creek and Broad Creek in Delaware and the Marshyhope in Maryland. The main stem's head of tide occurs just north of Middleford, DE. The Nanticoke widens as it flows downstream into Maryland, where it becomes

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brackish near the Town of Vienna, south of the confluence with the freshwater Marshyhope. Before entering the Chesapeake Bay, Nanticoke waters merge with the Blackwater River to the west, forming a vast area of estuarine tidal marsh and shallow open-water habitats known as Fishing Bay and Tangier Sound. Salinities in the river system range from freshwater (less than .5ppt) to 10 to 18 ppt depending on the season. The project area is the entire Nanticoke River watershed.



The Nanticoke River watershed lies in a rural landscape dominated by agriculture (48% of the land area). Crops are primarily grown as feed for poultry, which is now one of the leading industries on the Delmarva Peninsula. About 40% of the watershed is forested, with most of that cover consisting of forested floodplains and wetlands along rivers and creeks, or other low, seasonally wet woods. Most of the original native forest has been

converted and/or fragmented by agriculture or development or is used for timber production (private and commercial). The total population of the watershed is about 90,000 with urban/suburban development comprising about 3% of the land. Residential development is spreading around population centers like Salisbury, Federalsburg, Seaford, and Laurel. The local economy is a mix of manufacturing, trade and service industries. Commercial and industrial developments are concentrated in and around the larger towns.

The Nanticoke is considered one of the most ecologically significant watersheds in the mid-Atlantic region. With a wide range of freshwater to brackish wetland communities and several distinct upland communities, the watershed harbors a vast array of both rare and common species and unique natural habitats. Over 200 plant species and almost 70 animal species that are rare, threatened or endangered have been documented in the watershed. Globally rare species (G3G4 or higher) include over 20 plants and 5 animal species. The watershed also provides important habitat for large numbers of migratory waterfowl and neotropical migratory birds, and makes a significant contribution to the ecological health of the Chesapeake Bay.

Within the upland areas of the Nanticoke watershed, ancient xeric dunes are gently sloping sandy ridges that were formed 13,000 to 30,000 years ago out of the underlying Parsonsburg Sand formation. Ancient dunes are found scattered over Delmarva, but they are particularly well developed along the east side of the Nanticoke River and Marshyhope Creek. The smaller dunes are rather inconspicuous features on the

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landscape, but larger ones (12 meters in height, 1500 meters in length) are notable in a relatively flat coastal plain context. The dunes are usually dominated by Virginia pine and oaks. Lichens - especially reindeer moss- and bryophytes are important components of the community. The sandy soil is nutrient-poor with low water-retention capacity. The dunes harbor globally rare pine-barren gerardia, cream-flowered tick-trefoil and box huckleberry. Many dune complexes have been converted by agriculture or forestry or destroyed by development.

This habitat type, in which Atlantic white cedar dominates the forest, can be found just above the regularly flooded intertidal swamp zone along rivers, as well as in palustrine wooded wetlands away from rivers. Once much more common, the white cedar swamps have significantly diminished as a result of past logging for shipbuilding. In mature stands, Atlantic white cedar may occupy up to half of the canopy, with red maple, ash and other hardwoods making up the remainder. Rare plant species found in cedar swamps include seaside alder, Collin's sedge, Mitchell's sedge, and Southern twayblade. Atlantic white cedars also serve as the host of the Hessel's hairstreak, a globally rare butterfly. Quality cedar swamps found in Broad Creek.

Riverine aquatic habitats are tidal or non-tidal waters that lack persistent emergent vegetation, but may include areas with submerged or floating-leaved aquatic vegetation. High quality aquatic communities such as freshwater mussel assemblages, important fish habitat including spawning areas for anadromous fishes (e.g. striped bass, white and yellow perch, herring species) and submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) beds will be a priority for protection.

Currently 40% of the Nanticoke watershed remains under forest cover. But this total includes extensive forested wetlands along rivers and streams and an undetermined, but substantial acreage in pine plantations for timber production. Much of the native oak/hickory upland forest has been eliminated through conversion to agricultural land and residential uses. Remaining forest is highly fragmented and often too wet for productive agricultural use. However, large tracts of remaining native forest provide important breeding and stopover habitat for neo-tropical migratory birds, as well as habitat for the federally endangered Delmarva fox squirrel and a number of declining amphibian and reptile species. They are also crucial to protecting the quality of adjacent wetland and aquatic systems by filtering excess pollutants in surface and groundwater. These forest complexes, which include a mosaic of wetter flatwood stands and drier oak/hickory forest communities, will be targeted for protection and restoration. Nanticoke Wildlife Area includes over 4000 acres of native hardwood forest.

The Broad Creek, Nanticoke and Chesapeake Bay TMDL's

The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) and studies performed by others have shown that the Nanticoke River and Broad Creek are highly

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enriched with the nutrients nitrogen and phosphorus. Although nutrients are essential elements for plants and animals, their presence in excessive amounts causes undesirable conditions. Symptoms of nutrient enrichment in the Nanticoke River and Broad Creek have included frequent phytoplankton blooms and large daily swings in dissolved oxygen levels. These symptoms threaten the future of the Nanticoke River Sub basin - very significant natural, ecological, and recreational resources of the State.

A reduction in the amount of nitrogen and phosphorous reaching the Nanticoke River and Broad Creek is necessary to reverse the undesirable effects. These nutrients enter the rivers from point sources and nonpoint sources. Point sources of nutrients are end-of-pipe discharges coming from municipal and industrial wastewater treatment plants and other industrial uses. Nonpoint sources of nutrients include runoff from agricultural and urban areas, seepage from septic tanks, and ground water discharges.

Section 303(d) of the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires States to develop a list (303(d) List) of waterbodies for which existing pollution control activities are not sufficient to attain applicable water quality criteria and to develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for pollutants of concern. A TMDL sets a limit on the amount of a pollutant that can be discharged into a waterbody and still protect water quality. TMDLs are composed of three components, including Waste Load Allocations (WLAs) for point source discharges, Load Allocations (Las) for nonpoint sources, and a Margin of Safety (MOS).

DNREC listed the Nanticoke River and Broad Creek on the State's 1996 and 1998 303(d) Lists and proposes the following Total Maximum Daily Load regulation for nitrogen and phosphorous.

Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) Regulation for the Nanticoke River and Broad Creek, Delaware

Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR), or equivalent, processes shall be employed in three large municipal wastewater treatment plants in the Nanticoke River and Broad Creek Sub basin. These three facilities include Seaford Sewage Treatment Plant, Bridgeville Sewage Treatment Plant, and Laurel Sewage Treatment Plant. This shall result in reducing nitrogen load from these three facilities from the current permitted load of 199 kilograms per day (439 pounds per day) to 100 kilograms per day (221 pounds per day). Reduction of phosphorous loads from these three facilities will be from the current permitted load of 33 kilograms per day (73 pounds per day) to 25 kilograms per day (55 pounds per day). For the remaining wastewater treatment plants in the watershed, discharge of nitrogen and phosphorous loads shall be capped at their current permitted loads. These loads are 568 kilograms per day (1252 pounds per day) of nitrogen and 1.0 kilograms per day (2.2 pounds per day) of phosphorous.

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The nonpoint source nitrogen load to the Nanticoke River and Broad Creek shall be reduced by 30 percent (from the 1992 base-line). This shall result in reduction of nitrogen loads during a normal rainfall year from 2274 kilograms per day (5013 pounds per day) to 1723 kilograms per day (3799 pounds per day). The nonpoint source phosphorus load to the Nanticoke River and Broad Creek shall be reduced by 50 percent (from the 1992 base-line). This shall result in reduction of phosphorous loads during a normal rainfall year from 54 kilograms per day (119 pounds per day) to 36 kilograms per day (79 pounds per day).

Based upon hydrodynamic and water quality model runs and assuming implementation of reductions identified has been determined that, with an adequate margin of safety, water quality standards will be met in the Nanticoke River and Broad Creek.

Implementation of this TMDL Regulation shall be achieved through development and implementation of a Pollution Control Strategy. The Strategy will be developed by DNREC in concert with the Department's ongoing Whole basin management Program and the affected public.

Forest Canopy Density and Forest Preservation

The Town of Laurel recognizes the importance of tree canopy in communities. Trees help to clean our air and water while enhancing the quality of life for Delaware's residents. In addition, these and other State agencies recognize the importance of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and its value in supporting the rich and diverse natural and social resources throughout Delaware. In an effort to ensure the health and vitality of this watershed, the State is working in cooperation with its Federal partners to implement the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements through the enhancement of forest resources within the Cities and Towns throughout the Bay watershed. The following is intended to provide guidance to these communities with this implementation.

What is an urban and community tree canopy?

An *urban forest* can be defined as trees growing individually, in small groups or under forest conditions on public and private lands in our cities, towns and suburbs.

A *Tree canopy* is the layer of tree leaves, branches, and stems that cover the ground when viewed from above. In its ability to intercept rainfall and filter sediment (among various other functions), tree canopies help reduce storm-water runoff and improve air and water quality. Tree canopy can augment the roles of riparian forest buffers in providing ecological services; such as clean air and water.

Urban forests and riparian buffers are found within developed settings, urban riparian buffers are often narrower and more confined than in rural areas. In addition, the natural

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hydrologic functions of infiltration and basic water flows are severely altered by impervious surfaces, making urban riparian buffers less likely to carry out the full range of riparian buffer functions compared to more rural conditions. In developed areas where water flow is altered by roads, sidewalks, parking lots, roof tops, and storm drains, tree canopy can augment the functions of narrow buffers in the developed environment by capturing rainfall, reducing storm-water through evaporation-transpiration, and intercepting pollutants before they enter the Bay.

What defines Laurel?

A target of this tree canopy effort is US Census defined urban places (see below). However, there are others bound by interest or place that may also want to develop a tree canopy goal. For this reason, a “community” is defined as:

- An urban place as identified by the 2000 U.S. Census (USDA Forest Service, “National Community Database”); or
- Cities, counties, towns or boroughs that are incorporated and thus support an elected governing body; or
- Entities that do not meet the above definitions but maintain a recognized board or leadership (elected or designated) (e.g., unincorporated towns, school districts, military facilities, homeowners’ associations, conservation groups, land trusts, etc.) and have direct responsibility or influence associated with a clearly defined geographic area.

Community Forest Canopy Assessment

In order to establish canopy cover goals, communities need a baseline from which to operate. An assessment of urban and community tree canopy provides that baseline. It is recognized that there are various assessment approaches that differ in their level of detail. Communities within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed segments working with State agencies and other partners to assess tree canopy will:

- Use remote sensing data with one meter resolution (or greater);
- Use data that was initially acquired/captured within the last five years (next step below);
- Clearly define geographic boundaries of the assessment;
- Include the percent land cover types, percent of land with tree canopy, percent imperviousness, and priorities for canopy enhancement; and
- Update the assessment every 5-10 years.

Current Canopy Density for Laurel	20.4%
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A Community Forest Canopy goal that work for Laurel

This effort to improve the Chesapeake Bay Watershed calls for a multiple efforts to protect this valuable resource. One such effort is for communities to adopt a local goal to *increase* tree canopy. The products of the assessment above, specifically, percent land cover types and percent of land with tree canopy, essentially describe the current urban forest condition. Communities working from this baseline and in consultation with local planning departments will set tree canopy goals for a 10 year horizon to maintain and enhance their urban forest. Goals will include a desired percent increase of tree canopy (a numerical target such as 40%) but may also include additional complementary goals such as those related to imperviousness or others. It is recognized that there are various factors beyond existing tree canopy cover that may influence community goal setting.

Setting a realistic numerical target for cover depends as much on the current condition of the tree canopy as some estimate of the future canopy condition (e.g., canopy spread as trees mature and mortality events). Planned zoning within the community will dictate, to some degree, the area available for meeting tree canopy goals. For example, an area of the community slated for commercial development may not provide as many opportunities for tree planting as “open” urban land (e.g., city parks). Likewise, an area of forest cleared for development will diminish tree canopy. With these examples in mind, communities may find it meaningful to set canopy goals in the context of local zoning categories such as commercial, multi-family residential, or ½ acre residential. Specific goals for water quality, storm-water reduction, public health, air quality, heat island/energy conservation, and community revitalization may also play a role. Below are two examples of goal setting.

In addition to the overall canopy goals for the community, optional sub-goals may also be established for specific units within the community’s geographic area. For example, a canopy sub-goal could be established for parking lots, public streets, commercial, or riparian areas. Watershed forest cover may also be considered as a complimentary goal. Setting a 10 year canopy cover goal also necessitates establishing targets for percent increase in canopy cover at specified intervals within the 10 year horizon. Identifying this target is discussed further under “Implementation.”

Responsibility for setting the goal and endorsing its implementation rests with the locally elected officials or local governing body for non-incorporated jurisdictions, non-profit organizations, or other entities. So in summary, communities setting tree canopy goals will:

Adopt a local goal to *increase* tree canopy;

- Outline a 10-year timeframe for attainment of the goal with annual comparison against goal to ensure successful implantation; and

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- Goal setting by the State in cooperation with local governments of a 10% increase over a 10 year period will require endorsement of this implementation by locally elected officials, local governing body for non-incorporated jurisdictions, non-profit organizations, or other entities.

Additional Recommendation (optional):

- Sub-goals may also be established for specific units within the community's geographic area such as parking lots, riparian forest buffers, public streets, public lands or industrial/commercial/institutional areas.

A good urban and community tree canopy goal for Laurel

Canopy goals are most meaningful when tied to specific desired outcomes such as the protection of urban streams, reduced storm-water flows, improved water quality, reduced ozone concentrations or other air quality parameters. To improve the forest resources within the Bay watershed and enhance the overall quality of the Bay, the Forest Service and Office of State Planning recommend the following Canopy Cover Goals:

Land Use Type Recommended Canopy Cover Goal within 10 Years

- *Suburban Residential 45%*
- *Urban Areas 25%*
- *Central Business Districts 20%*
- *Average for all zones 30%*

As urbanization continues to expand over the landscape, understanding the relationship between urban growth, urban influence, and natural resource systems will become increasingly important in our efforts to restore the health of the Bay. Communities can play a significant role in directing the course of urban influences now and into the future. Community-based planning efforts and goal setting are critical steps toward the protection, enhancement and restoration of the urban and community tree canopy.

10 Year Canopy Goal for Laurel	30.4%
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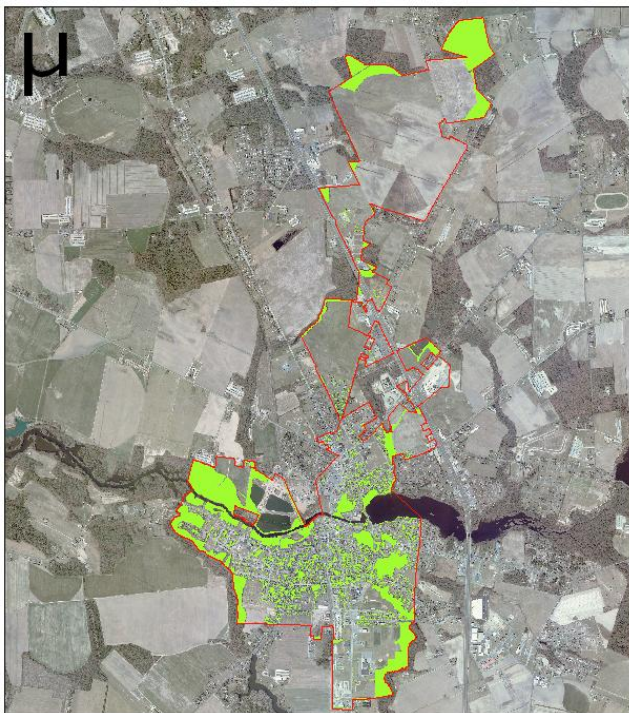
How Laurel will implement these goals

In this step, tree canopy goals for a community are integrated into the comprehensive land use plan outlining specific recommendations for meeting those goals such as acquiring conservation easements to protect existing forest canopy, developing landscaping requirements for new developments, or tree planting along rights-of-way. Tree canopy implementation plans are required to ensure that communities link results of the initial assessment to the goals, the implementation techniques, and the implementation

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techniques to goal achievement may be included within the environmental element of the community's comprehensive land use plan. This plan element should include:

- Listing of outreach, educational, and funding opportunities.
- The percent increase in canopy cover and specified time intervals for attainment;
- The relationship of the canopy goal to other local goals, ordinances or regulations;
- Identification of priority sites for implementation (e.g., tree planting) and rationale for selection; and,
- Any resolutions, motions or minutes from governing bodies or boards endorsing the participation in the program, the goals set by the community and plans for implementation.
- Additional Recommendation (optional):



Community Name: Laurel
Total Area: 1,650.30 Acres
Urban Tree Canopy (UTC): 336.58 Acres

UTC: 20.40%
Municipal_Bounds
Tree Canopy

Map is for information only and is not intended as a survey



When and how does a community report, evaluate, and monitor for forest canopy?

When evaluating the success of a community's ability to enhance forest canopy, community leaders should consider the availability to afford and prioritize this effort, their willingness to implement an assessment, set local canopy goals, and develop a plan that identifies measures to attain those goals;

- Tree canopy assessments completed and associated findings;
- Tree canopy goals established and approved;
- Implementation plans developed and approved; and

- An annual evaluation of each selected community's progress towards completion of an assessment, goal setting, plan development, and implementation.
- Communities should incorporate an evaluation method that includes measurable indicators with which to gauge progress such as number of trees planted, canopy lost, or forest acres protected from development (e.g., conservation easements).

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The Chesapeake Bay is a vital resource that continues to shape the State. It is the hope that through this cooperative effort that we can improve the overall health of the Bay and your community.

Conservation Programs

Agricultural Land Conservation

The conservation of prime agricultural land, and of valuable natural resource areas, in the Greater Laurel area is undertaken by several non-profit groups and government agencies. These include: the Delaware Department of Agriculture, The Delaware Forest Service The Nature Conservancy, The Nanticoke River Conservancy and the Sussex County Land Trust. The Town will continue to as part of the implementation of this update partner with these organizations to direct future growth to areas best suited while preserving the State's precious agricultural and natural resources.

Objectives

- Partner to development and implementation of Land Conservation Programs for the lands surrounding Laurel.
- Enhance forest cover in all parks and other publicly owned lands to increase forest canopy density throughout the community.
- Establish new and revised standards for landscaped and vegetative buffers, planted setback areas, provision for open space on development sites and related density factors.
- The Town of Laurel will work with DNREC to develop a TMDL and related pollution control strategy for Chesapeake Bay Watershed.
- Limit development within the 100-year floodplain in accordance with the FEMA-designated area by types of permitted developments, base flood elevations, densities and setback requirements.
- Working closely with DNREC and Sussex County, to implement the SCROP recommendations to expand recreational activities with special focus on active trails and pedestrian ways program for the Broad Creek Greenway.
- Plan for the redesign and redevelopment of the Market Square Park in the Town Center.

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- Implement the proposed Nanticoke Small Boat Harbor as a focus point in the Laurel open space network, especially for linkages between the harbor, Old Town, West Laurel and the Laurel Gardens site.

Section 15.0 Community Facilities

The Town of Laurel currently provides a mix of services to its residents ranging from police to both sewer and water. Over the past five years under the direction of the 2004 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, the Town has implemented many goals and objections to further expand its role to meet the needs of new and current Town residents.

Town Hall



Renovations have been carried out within the first floor Town Hall to provide additional space for the Laurel Police Department and the Code Enforcement Office. The need exists for redesigned space for Planning and Zoning and Public Works and over the next five years the Town will consider the need for new facilities. The need exists for the creation of a New Town Hall with a separate building for the Police Department.

Laurel Train Station

The former Laurel Train Station behind the Town Hall has been rehabilitated but is currently unoccupied. It is still being considered for reuse as a museum by the Town of Laurel. At this time however, like many local jurisdiction, the Town struggles with finding funds and a strong community base to engage in the necessary activities to grow this project further. The Town will continue to work with the Historical Society and the State to determine ways to develop this facility to its fullest.

Municipal Water & Sewer Systems

The Town of Laurel provides municipal water and sewer service to residents and businesses within its town limits and a limited group of homes outside of Town limits. To meet the continued demand for these serves, the corrections, improvements and procedures for the water and sewer systems continue to be a major focus for the present town council and administration.

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Water Facilities

There are presently an estimated 1,257 municipal water service connections with a total daily usage of approximately 415,200 gallons per day (gpd). 85% of the water service is provided to residential users and 15% to industrial and commercial users. The water system is served by two (2) active production wells capable of producing 1,000 gallons per minute and a theoretical daily discharge of 1,836,000 gallons per day. The wells draw water from the underlying Columbia aquifer from depths of approximately 100 feet. The locations, year drilled and capacity of the wells are as follows:

<u>Town Well Location</u>	<u>Year Drilled</u>	<u>Capacity</u> (Gallons per minute)
8 th & Maple	1977	500 gpm
Washington & Wilson	1991	500 gpm
Total Capacity		1,000 gpm

Table 06 Town Well Location, Year Drilled and Capacity

Source: Town of Laurel

The system also has two elevated water storage tanks with a combined capacity of 450,000 gallons. A 150,000-gallon tank is located on Poplar Street and was constructed in the late 1940's. A 300,000-gallon tank is located on Central Avenue and was constructed in 1976. These tanks provide reserve water storage and static pressure for the distribution system.

The distribution system consists of a network of water mains ranging in size from 4 to 10 inches in diameter. Treatment consists of liquid chlorine fed into the system to maintain a free chlorine residual of at least 0.3mg/l throughout the water distribution system. The Town's water source contains iron in concentrations which are high enough to require use of a sequestering agent to reduce iron concentrations sufficiently to meet the Secondary Maximum Containment Level standard of 0.3mg/l. The Town does not currently add fluoride to its drinking water but plans to do so in the future.

Over the past five years the Town has installed a SCADA computerized system to enable central supervision and control of the wells and storage tanks by the town Public Works Supervisor. In addition, the town continues to replace all street valves during the next year and also plans to install water meters. In addition the Town continues to improve the town's existing water lines which are highly corroded to the point of seriously inhibiting water flow. These lines will be replaced with 8" plastic lines as part of the Town's continued maintenance efforts.

Also, based upon the recent period of rapid growth and expansion, the Town has undertaken an effort to evaluate the capacity of the water distribution system as it relates to the planning area used for the sizing of the wastewater treatment plant upgrade. The

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evaluation has taken into consideration average and peak water demands as well as fire storage reserve and as part of the annexation agreements for various parcels, developer agreement have been secured to help secure these improvements.

Finally, to ensure the viability of the Town's water system, in 2008 the Town passed a Source Water Ordinance. Required by Delaware Code and reviewed by DNREC Water Section for compliance with State Code, this new ordinance will provide wellhead protection and limit the impacts of future growth on areas essential to recharging local water sources.

Waste Water Facilities

The Town of Laurel operates a municipal sewer treatment facility and a collection and transmission system that serves most of the properties located within town boundaries. The average daily flow in the system for the year 2002 was 300,000 gallons per day.

A wastewater flow analysis for sizing the Laurel Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade and expansion was completed in August 2003. The findings of the analysis are documented in Appendix B, entitled "Laurel Wastewater Treatment Plant 20-Year Projected Flow", prepared by George, Miles and Buhr.

The analysis takes into account a planning area that consists of the current sewer area, future planned and proposed construction and annexations in growth areas including the US Route 13 corridor and connectors. This analysis estimated an average daily flow of 700,000 GPD for the wastewater treatment plant by the year 2025. Included within the estimated flow is the acceptance of septage from septic removal trucks serving outlying rural areas.

Based upon this 2003, the sewage system has serious deficiencies in relationship to modern standards for sewage treatment, e.g. more stringent requirements for nitrogen and phosphorus removal. Based on the nitrogen concentration measured in 2002, the plant's current operating capacity is 239,000 GPD. The GMB sanitary system plan called for an upgrade to the system which included ending reliance on the lagoon system in its current form through the following steps:

- (1) Termination of the lower, or third, lagoon, as this lagoon is located within the 100-year floodplain of Broad Creek, which in turn is within the Nanticoke River and Chesapeake Bay watersheds. The lower lagoon would be converted to a small boat harbor, a natural wetland, a development area or a combination of these.
- (2) Installation of a Biolac System with the Wave-Oxidation Process for providing Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) in which multiple oxic and anoxic environments are created thus promoting nitrification, denitrification, and biological phosphorous removal.

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- (3) Long term sludge storage in the second lagoon.

Since the 2002 the Town has worked to implement these recommendations provided by GMB have since completed the required steps to improve the facility.

As a result of these efforts taken by the Town, the facility is now permitted as a sanitary treatment plant (STP) with no industrial waste contributors, and no combined sewer overflows (CSO). During the current permit term, the facility has undergone a major upgrade and expansion. The expansion and upgrade of the wastewater treatment plant (Construction Permit No. WPCC3028/05) consisted of new head works and grit handling system, new biological nutrient removal (BNR) lagoon, new filtration system, new disinfection system, modifications of two (2) existing lagoons for sludge storage and treatment, new sludge handling pumps, and other miscellaneous piping, electrical and mechanical work.

This STP has a single discharge (Outfall 001) of treated sanitary wastewater to an unnamed tributary of Broad Creek, which is a tidal fresh water tributary of the Nanticoke River. The wastewater treatment process consists of mechanical bar screen, grit chamber, anaerobic zone, BNR basin with integral clarifiers, denitrifying filters, UV disinfection, and cascade aeration.

Finally, to ensure there is short-term sewer capacity for any proposed development, the Town as part of the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Plan implementation, a fair policy for allocating EDU's and the costs of new water or sewer extensions and related facilities between the general district and specific development projects is now in place for the Town's future development. This policy is based on established concepts of "general benefit" for the Town as a whole versus "special benefit" for a given project. Developers are required to pay those portions of extension and facility costs which result only in special benefit to a project area and provide phasing plans for new projects to ensure sufficient sewer capacity for all current and future users.

Electricity, Gas, Telephone & Internet Service

Verizon provides local and long distance telephone service as well as high-speed, broadband Internet access. Comcast provides Cable TV. Both Verizon and Comcast now offer high-speed Internet service to Laurel subscribers. Electrical service is provided by Delmarva Power and Light, Inc.

Laurel Public Schools

The Laurel School District operates five schools within the Greater Laurel Area which include:

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*North Laurel Elementary School
Laurel Middle School*

*Paul Lawrence Dunbar Elementary School
Laurel Intermediate School
Laurel High School*

Currently the schools are not considered overcrowded by State standards at the present time having an approximate enrollment of 2000 students; however, there is a need for new space to provide latitude for renovating the older school facilities. It is commonly accepted that any school should be periodically upgraded its facilities to remain attractive in an era where parents may choose any school in the region to send their children. Consequently, there is concern that wealthier districts with more modern facilities may attract students away from Laurel. In the spring of 2010, the District held a referendum to implement the proposed expansion and improvement plan for the five schools. The referendum passed and the Town of Laurel, the State and the School District looks forward to develop and grow services to the students within the district.

The Laurel Public Library



A major project to expand and redesign the Laurel Public Library has been completed. The project has provided additional services and opportunities for both the community in general and the revitalization of the Town Center.

The new 26,069 square foot facility includes:

- Space for more books
- Greater access to electronic resources
- Increased programming for children, teens and adults
- A Storytime Area and Youth Area
- Casual seating and study spaces
- A meeting room for adult programs and for use by community organizations
- Delmarva Room to house a collection of Delaware memorabilia and resources

Laurel Police Department

The Laurel Police Department consists of 13 sworn officers and has 13 police cruisers to patrol the Town. It reports all crime under guidelines established by the Federal Government, this report contains the UCR federal definition for crime categories. The State Bureau of Identification is the reporting agency for the State of Delaware.

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The Town has experienced a significant increase in Part I crimes (homicide, robbery, rape, aggravated assaults, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft and arson) over the past three years. Part II Crimes include all crime not included in the part I crime definition.

The Department operates from the first floor of Town Hall in space shared by Public Works, Town Hall, Code Enforcement, and the Court. Additional space is being prepared in the southwest corner of the building.

While the short- and mid-term space needs of the Department will be fulfilled by the renovation of the first floor of Town Hall, it may be that Laurel will need further expansion of police space in future years.

The Laurel Volunteer Fire Company

The Laurel Fire Department provides fire service to a large service area centered on Laurel. It operates from a modern fire hall on 10th Street. In response to the recent growth within the area, the Fire Company has explored the creation of a satellite facility east of US 13, Sussex Highway. A site has not been determined at this time; however, the Town continues to work with the Fire Company to address their needs to meet the needs of the community.

Objectives

- Continue to renovate and strengthen the Town Center Complex, including Town Hall, the Police Department, the Railroad Station and adjacent property on the former Marvil site.
- Continue to support Town institutions and voluntary associations, like the Laurel Fire Department, and the Town's many non-profit and charitable organizations in their roles of providing valuable service to the Town, its residents and visitors.
- Continue to work with Laurel Public schools and its Parent-Teacher Association to help make Laurel a center of academic excellence and community involvement.
- Continue to repair and upgrade the Town's water and wastewater systems in accordance with major plans developed by the Town of Laurel and its engineering consultant, George, Miles & Buhr.
- Work to reduce the overload on the Town's Wastewater Treatment Plant due to storm water runoff during periods of wet weather.

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- Work with other public utilities to address interdependent infrastructure system needs, including fiber optic and Point of Service provisions for high-speed Internet service.
- Address other infrastructure needs in the areas of electricity, telephone, and gas and coordinate with those providers to ensure adequate service.

Section 16.0 Regional and Intergovernmental Cooperation

The Town of Laurel as part of this 2010 Update recognizes the need for local, County and State partners to ensure that health, safety and welfare and to provide for a high quality of life for its residents. To ensure these efforts are met the Town will continue to work with all aspects of the community to improve local and regional infrastructure, enhance local schools, promote a sense of community and protect the area's natural resources.

Objectives

- Develop new cooperation and coordination mechanisms with nearby local governments and with Sussex County government. The Town should meet with these groups and should participate actively in with other municipal activities within the region.
- Work closely with Delaware State agencies like the Office of State Planning Coordination, Delaware Economic Development Office and DelDOT in advancing Laurel's programs and services.
- Advocate the establishment of a continuing forum for cooperation with surrounding towns and areas and Sussex County to ensure future growth occurs in designated areas within the Town and County.
- Explore service consolidation and sharing arrangements with Sussex County where they make mutual good sense, for example possible future infrastructure needs.
- Work with regional entities such as Sussex County, area universities, the Chamber of Commerce and other entities on new approaches to regional cooperation
- Develop a Town Capital Improvements Program which is coordinated with the C.I.P. program of Sussex County.

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Section 17.0 Implementation

To implement the 2010 Comprehensive Plan Update the Town will consider the following:

Land Use

- The will conduct periodic review of zoning and subdivision codes to address issues and concerns that may arise as redevelopment and new development occurs within the community.

Annexation

- Focus on greater direct connection to U.S. Route 13 by annexation by directing utility extensions to selected intersections, or “corridors” where there exist previous expressions of interest in annexation and significant parcels for redevelopment.
- Adopt the Potential Growth and Annexation Areas Element included in this Comprehensive Plan in accordance with HB 255 as the basis for future annexation policy.
- Consider appropriate incentives for annexation in cases where incentives are desirable, assistance in paying for advertisement costs or assistance in paying a portion of the water and sewer connection and assessment costs at such time as the property owner requests connection to the water and sewer systems.
- Evaluate the highest and best development potentials of the Town’s vacant buildings and parcels, consistent with preserving the integrity of surrounding properties and uses, especially residential and parkland.
- Develop new procedures through which the Town, working as appropriate with non-profit and property-owner organizations, can act to halt the deterioration caused by vacant properties.
- Encourage new uses which result in healthy new activity and increase Laurel’s tax base, taking into account the needs of surrounding land uses.

Community Design

- New single-family homes and townhouses can be developed on small or large lots with attractive tree planting and landscaping. Houses should front the street to the extent

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possible, garages should be oriented to side streets or rear alleys. Curbs and sidewalks should be used within the Town limits. To the extent possible, houses should be two-storey in height and front door entrances should be expressed in their architecture with porticos, arches or gables. In addition, the Town should continue to provide for a town-wide property fix-up and rehabilitation campaign should be continued and expanded, as an action essential to community design and to provide diversity of housing types.

- Within the Town Center, Historic District, and Traditional Neighborhood areas, where street patterns are part of Laurel's heritage, buildings should be designed to be compatible with their neighbors, setbacks from streets should be kept to a minimum and landscaping should reflect the landscaping pattern of the larger district. In addition, historic and older homes should be preserved and rehabilitated wherever possible.
- The Town's "Gateways", as identified on the Framework for Future Land Use map, should be highlighted and beautified with new landscaping, signage pylons, banners, possible sculpture and directional signage to give people a strong image of the best of Laurel.
- Laurel's interconnected street network should be extended into new growth areas and bike paths and multi-use trails should be developed along major roads and through parks and public areas.
- Along Business Route 13, new street tree plantings established and mature trees should be maintained and new flower plantings should be added to the streetscape.
- Within the Broad Creek Special Environmental and Heritage Area, new development, and its design, should be carefully related to the environmental condition of being in the 100-year Floodplain, the heritage values of the area and relationship to the waterfront of Laurel.
- Parks should be established for both passive and active use and park furniture, lighting and signage should be of a style consistent with the traditional design pattern of the Town and Historic District.

Historical Preservation

- The Town of Laurel National Historic District should be reflected in the Zoning Ordinance as an Overlay District over the affected areas within the community.
- Within the Overlay District the Town should be authorized to consider the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Historic Preservation in conducting its required site plan reviews.

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Economic Development

- Target new business recruitment with high quality, knowledge-based, technology-oriented service, office and other commercial/industrial businesses.
- Work to retain existing businesses and to attract new business and industry to a Town of Laurel.
- Encourage clean-up of deteriorated buildings and sites, including sites which may be “brown-field sites” in the sense of having some contamination as a result of past use.
- Continue a public-private partnership approach Town Center and Broad Creek revitalization.
- Develop an attractive Farmers Market on the banks of Broad Creek.
- Redevelop and improve vacant Market Street sites for new uses and encourage the visiting, shopping, tourism and related development.
- Support the idea of convenient small-scale neighborhood retail uses wherever possible, including as part of new Mixed-Use developments.
- Sensitive redevelopment of the Broad Creek area with special use and design controls to both protect the area against inappropriate or too-dense development and also positively attract developments which will bring new life to this unique Laurel place.
- Bring new business investment and people activity to Laurel’s Town Center through focus on new specialty retail, entertainment, dining, convenience goods and services, collectible and consignment shop and small business and office uses in rejuvenating downtown Laurel.
- US Route 13 is the most powerful location for commercial activities. It includes lodging, convenience, restaurant, auction house, furniture, farmers market and other marketplace uses. In addition there is an array of retail, light industrial, small office and institutional uses Along Trussum Pond Road. US Route 13 should be interconnect to the Town with this powerful tourism, retail and business concentration. This can be accomplished through strong planning for improving the municipal water and sewer systems, welcoming new parties to annexation, improving the Laurel Gateways on the highway and collaborative working relationships.

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- Better integrate U.S. Route 13 into the life of the Town through reevaluating traffic flows, intersection improvements and design of streetscape projects which can be combined with infrastructure improvements.
- Encourage completion of DelDOT identified road and intersection improvement projects along Route 13 and within the Town and surrounding area.
- Implement Transportation Improvements including DelDOT intersection designs for US Route 13 and 5 Points, Gateway streetscape improvement for the Route 13 intersections with Routes 9 and 24, Five Points and South Central Avenue.
- Encourage greater pedestrian use of neighborhood, Historic District, Town Center and Broad Creek streets and sidewalks by promoting walking tours of these areas, signage and walking route markers and maps.
- Promote greater use of bicycles by promoting extensions of the Southern Delaware Heritage Trail and the promotion of bicycle travel on roadways which are well located for bicycles and have wide shoulders.
- Within the Special Broad Creek Environmental and Heritage Area, design and develop a new pedestrian and vehicular circulation system along the Broad Creek, Nanticoke and Underground Railroad sites in Western Sussex County.
- Coordinate with Norfolk-Southern Railroad and Del-Dot to identify any possible new rail sidings connection which might serve industrial development in the Town of Laurel.
- Coordinate with Laurel Airport and State DOT officials to discuss any possible cooperative actions to both promote greater use of the airport and greater air accessibility to residents and businesses in Laurel.

Housing

- Housing rehabilitation should continue to be a primary goal for all neighborhoods within Laurel.
- The Town should continue to utilize Community Development Block Grant and housing rehabilitation loan and grant funds to improve housing conditions where they are most severe in Laurel.

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- Community Development projects should be developed with a larger strategic significance to neighborhood renewal and should be smaller, well-designed homes on small sites that are utilize existing neighborhood street pattern.
- The Town of Laurel should work closely with the Delaware State Housing Authority to develop a housing policy consistent with State goals.
- Encourage the development of an innovative, well-designed Senior Retirement Housing development on a Laurel site which is as close to the Town Center as possible.
- Address housing rehabilitation needs with housing rehabilitation incentives coordinated between the Town of Laurel, the Sussex County Community Development and Housing Division and the Delaware State Housing Authority.
- Encourage innovative subdivision and housing designs through continued review of the Town's zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and housing code.
- Recognize the Town's historic housing stock as its single greatest asset for the future and develop an active housing fix-up, reinvestment, rehabilitation and new development effort.
- Identify and promote new residential development areas with low-density, well-designed housing types well-suited for Laurel and at the same time, recognize that Laurel has done a great deal with assisted multi-family housing in the recent past and that it should now be a time of emphasizing the preservation and development of single-family, owner-occupied houses

Natural Environment

- Partner to development and implementation of Land Conservation Programs for the lands surrounding Laurel.
- Enhance forest cover in all parks and other publicly owned lands to increase forest canopy density throughout the community.
- Establish new and revised standards for landscaped and vegetative buffers, planted setback areas, provision for open space on development sites and related density factors.
- The Town of Laurel will work with DNREC to develop a TMDL and related pollution control strategy for Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

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- Limit development within the 100-year floodplain in accordance with the FEMA-designated area by types of permitted developments, base flood elevations, densities and setback requirements.
- Working closely with DNREC and Sussex County, to implement the SCROP recommendations to expand recreational activities with special focus on active trails and pedestrian ways program for the Broad Creek Greenway.
- Plan for the redesign and redevelopment of the Market Square Park in the Town Center.
- Implement the proposed Nanticoke Small Boat Harbor as a focus point in the Laurel open space network, especially for linkages between the harbor, Old Town, West Laurel and the Laurel Gardens site.

Community Facilities

- Continue to renovate and strengthen the Town Center Complex, including Town Hall, the Police Department, the Railroad Station and adjacent property on the former Marvil site.
- Continue to support Town institutions and voluntary associations, like the Laurel Fire Department, and the Town's many non-profit and charitable organizations in their roles of providing valuable service to the Town, its residents and visitors.
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Intergovernmental Coordination

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