

Centreville Village Plan

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Definition

The Centreville Village Plan (CVP) sets the tone and vision for future development. It is a commitment to a course of action that will maintain and enhance a desirable physical, social, and economic environment for present and future generations. The CVP is designed to provide broad, flexible guidance for the future development of the Centreville village. It does not contain specific and detailed instructions on how each parcel should be developed or redeveloped. Rather, it provides general guidance for making land use decisions that support Centreville's vision and the public good.

The CVP represents a long-range vision for the Centreville village, providing an overall framework under which development proposals will be reviewed, and affording a stronger voice to the community. Many properties in the village already have federal and/or county historic designations, and receive additional protection provided by the New Castle County Historic Review Board (*New Castle County Historic and Cultural Resource Design Guidelines*, June 2006, or as amended). The Hometown Overlay enhances that protection by allowing a community Design Review Advisory Committee ("DRAC") to consider additional standards created to address specific concerns in Centreville.

The CVP will be used by government officials and other employees who make decisions with direct or indirect land use implications, including, but not limited to, the inter-jurisdictional coordination of planning efforts. It is anticipated that Centreville residents, property owners, and businesses will also make use of the CVP.

The overall thrust of this Plan and its associated Design Guidelines is to focus on 5 critical elements for the village of Centreville:

- **Maintain** the historic character;
- **Preserve** the small town/ village character;
- **Enhance** the everyday quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors;
- **Enrich** the future shopping, dining, and working experiences; and
- **Beautify** Centreville's physical environment and create a walkable community.

1.2 The Centreville Village Plan

At the request of the Centreville Civic Association (CCA), the County initiated a community planning process for the Centreville Village area. From the beginning, it was established that any plan developed for the area must not take away any existing property rights. The Centreville Village Plan is, therefore, an incentive-based plan. This Plan does not recommend any changes to the underlying zoning currently in place. No changes to already developed properties are required unless changes to the site or exterior of structures are proposed.

1.3 Relationship to Existing County and State Planning Documents

The CVP builds on the New Castle County Comprehensive Plan by providing a more detailed recipe for adhering to the community's vision. The CVP is also in conformance with the policies and objectives of the State's Livable Delaware program, and may serve as a model for infill and redevelopment for other village or town centers. The CVP encourages the infill and redevelopment of properties within an already developed core, and utilizes existing infrastructure to accomplish its objectives.

1.4 Planning Process

1.4.1 Earlier Planning Efforts

In 1985, CCA initiated an effort to protect historic resources in the village. With the assistance of New Castle County historic planners, 15 village structures were

included in the National Register of Historic Places as the "Centreville Historic District." Three other village buildings were listed separately in the National Register, recognizing their unique importance. At the same time, many of the National Register properties were included in a New Castle County "Centreville Historic Overlay District," which offers increased protection for these buildings. (See Map x: Historic Properties)

A more recent planning effort was jointly undertaken by CCA, WILMAPCO, DelDOT and New Castle County. It resulted in *The Centreville Village Plan for Centreville, Delaware*, dated April 12, 2002, prepared by Alberto & Associates. The Alberto plan considered the entire village in relation to the overall Centreville area. A Corridor Management Plan for the Brandywine Valley Scenic Byway was completed in April, 2005 and includes strategies and recommendations for preserving and enhancing the byway corridor as it passes through the Village of Centreville (See Appendix x: 2005 Corridor Management Plan Excerpt). The present community planning effort considers previous planning endeavors.

1.4.2 Current Community Planning Process

In 2002, the New Castle County Executive initiated a community planning program within the Land Use Department. One aspect of this program is to work with communities to prepare small area plans that will build on the foundation provided in the County's comprehensive plan. The value added by a small area plan is the ability to identify the unique characteristics of a distinct community within the County. The Centreville Village area has been selected as the third community in the County to establish a community plan.

In 2004, a steering committee was assembled to look at two primary issues: design guidelines and business retention/recruitment. This was a joint effort between CCA, DelDOT, WILMAPCO and New Castle County.

A public workshop was held on October 25, 2004 to present to the public the initial findings and recommendations of the design guidelines committee as well as of the preferred traffic calming option developed by DelDOT and its consultant. The workshop was well attended by the public, and many questions and concerns were raised. At that time, several other groups expressed interest in participating in the planning process. As a result, the County Land Use Department decided to expand the guidelines (Village Plan) committee to include the Kennett Pike

Association, the Brandywine Valley Scenic Byway organization (represented by Delaware Greenways) and residents outside the village core. The revised Centreville Village Plan Committee Membership list is found at Table I - 1.

The Centreville Village Plan Committee is tasked with gathering input and ideas from the greater Centreville community on how best to preserve the village of Centreville and assimilating that information into a community plan and design guidelines.

Members recognized that while approximately 900 properties in the Centreville area could be indirectly affected by future changes in the village, the 50 village core properties along Route 52, from gateway to gateway, will be directly impacted. Secondly involved will be the 120 surrounding properties with sole access from Route 52 in the Village (see Map xx).

The Committee continually endeavored to maintain transparency, and created a planning process in which all residents, business owners and other interested parties could be heard and involved. A Communications Subcommittee was established to oversee the public involvement process, and periodic public meetings were held to share information with and seek guidance from the community. In an effort to reach a broader audience, an interactive website was developed. During an April 2006 public meeting, community members commented on a bullet point list of images for the future of the village. The following vision statement was developed from that exercise and subsequently served as the basis for the policies and recommendations in the CVP.

Centreville Vision Statement - 2040

It is our vision that in the year 2040, Centreville village would remain a small, unique, federally designated historic community on The Kennett Pike (Route 52), part of Delaware's first national scenic byway. Although the village's main corridor would include small, colorful specialty shops, professional offices, and a variety of dining venues, many of the current properties would continue to be single-family residences.

Historically significant buildings within the village would be preserved largely through adaptive re-use and design controls. New and renovated sites and buildings would also be sensitively guided by the County's hometown overlay process to be visually consistent with the historic village appearance and character.

A stable area of residential homes would exist north of Center Avenue and Valley Way. South of this area, a commercial core would continue to exist where buildings have access to a mix of on-street or unobtrusive off-street parking. Walking within the village would be easy and facilitated by attractive, gently lighted sidewalks, safe crosswalks and pedestrian amenities. Thoughtfully designed landscaping would soften the streetscape.

The Kennett Pike would remain a two-lane road. Village-scale traffic control would provide a reasonable balance between safety and access for residents, bicyclists, pedestrians, and through-traffic. Business and traffic signs would be tasteful and minimal. Through a successful partnership of area residents, village merchants, New Castle County officials and staff, and the Delaware Department of Transportation, a lively mix of residential, businesses and tourism opportunities would prevail.

Corner and adjoining lots on streets intersecting the main corridor would provide local business opportunities. Interior lots separated from Kennett Pike by intervening lots or alleys

will have maintained their single-family detached residential use. All village development would still depend on the use of on-site sewage disposal methods and the use of private wells.

The quaint village setting will have been protected by the surrounding permanent open space, yet easy access to the greater Wilmington region would still be readily available. Some village land will have also been preserved as public space, including the centrally located Canby Grove Park on Twadell Mill Road. Smaller village greens strategically located near shops and restaurants would add to the people-friendly nature and viability of the village throughout the day.

In the year 2040, Centreville village would be a popular stop along the Brandywine Valley Scenic Byway where residents and visitors could shop, dine, and stroll, remaining true to the vision of those who settled it nearly three centuries ago.

Table I - 1

Centreville Village Plan Steering Committee Members

Brenda Boucher	Co-Chairperson
Warren Scott	Co-Chairperson

Richard Abbott
Richard Beck
Patt Cannon
James Chandler
Joann Bahr Cushman
William Duncan
Richard Fleming
William Gotwals
Maureen Jarvis
Ellie Maroney
John Meisel
Gretchen Mercer
Carroll Shannon
Hon. William Tansey
John Theilacker
Susan Teiser
Gail Van Gilder

Staff: James Smith
Mary Grace Fariello