

Chapter III

Future Land Use and Design

3.1 Introduction

The *Community Redevelopment Plan for the Village of Hockessin* is the result of the people’s vision for a distinct village center that serves as the physical and symbolic focal point for the community. Hockessin residents seek a village character that is scaled to the pedestrian and consists of a mix of uses including public buildings and outdoor spaces that serve the community and enhance the village’s unique identity. They want a place that is well connected by a network of small streets and paths that are safe and pedestrian friendly. This vision can be achieved through appropriate infill and redevelopment supported by civic projects that make the village center inviting to residents and visitors alike.

In this respect, the Plan supports the principles of “smart growth” as outlined in the Livable Delaware initiatives, namely:

- create a range of housing opportunities and choices;
- create walkable neighborhoods;
- encourage community and stakeholder collaboration;
- foster distinctive, attractive places with a strong sense of place;
- make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective;
- mix land uses;
- preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas;
- provide a variety of transportation choices;
- strengthen and direct development towards existing communities; and
- take advantage of compact building design.

The strategies outlined in the Plan reflect the Livable Delaware principles. They involve the public and private sectors in the pursuit of common goals expressed in this Plan through cooperative processes that involve community organizations, County and State agencies and private property owners. The common threads in all of the strategies are community enhancement, fiscal responsibility, and economic prosperity.

3.2 Land Use Goal

Encourage a mix of land uses in the Village area that preserves and enhances its character, scale and economic viability. Emphasis is to be placed on smart growth in retail, office and housing that is compatible with existing neighborhoods and design objectives.

3.3 The Planning Area

Hockessin Village is bounded by Valley Road and Wilmington Road on the northeast and northwest, by Evanston Road on the north and Brackenville Road on the southeast and southwest. The Land Use Plan identifies several sub-areas within the Village, each with somewhat different but related planning objectives. (See Illustration III-1). These sub-areas are described in Section 3.4 below.

3.4 Village Center

The Village Center extends from Valley Road to just beyond the Wilmington and Western Railroad crossing and encompasses residential, highway commercial, institutional, civic, recreational, and neighborhood commercial uses that have developed along Old Lancaster Pike (the traditional village center). It includes numerous small scale shops as well as a small shopping center (the Shoppes at Hockessin).

3.4.1 Village Center Planning Objective

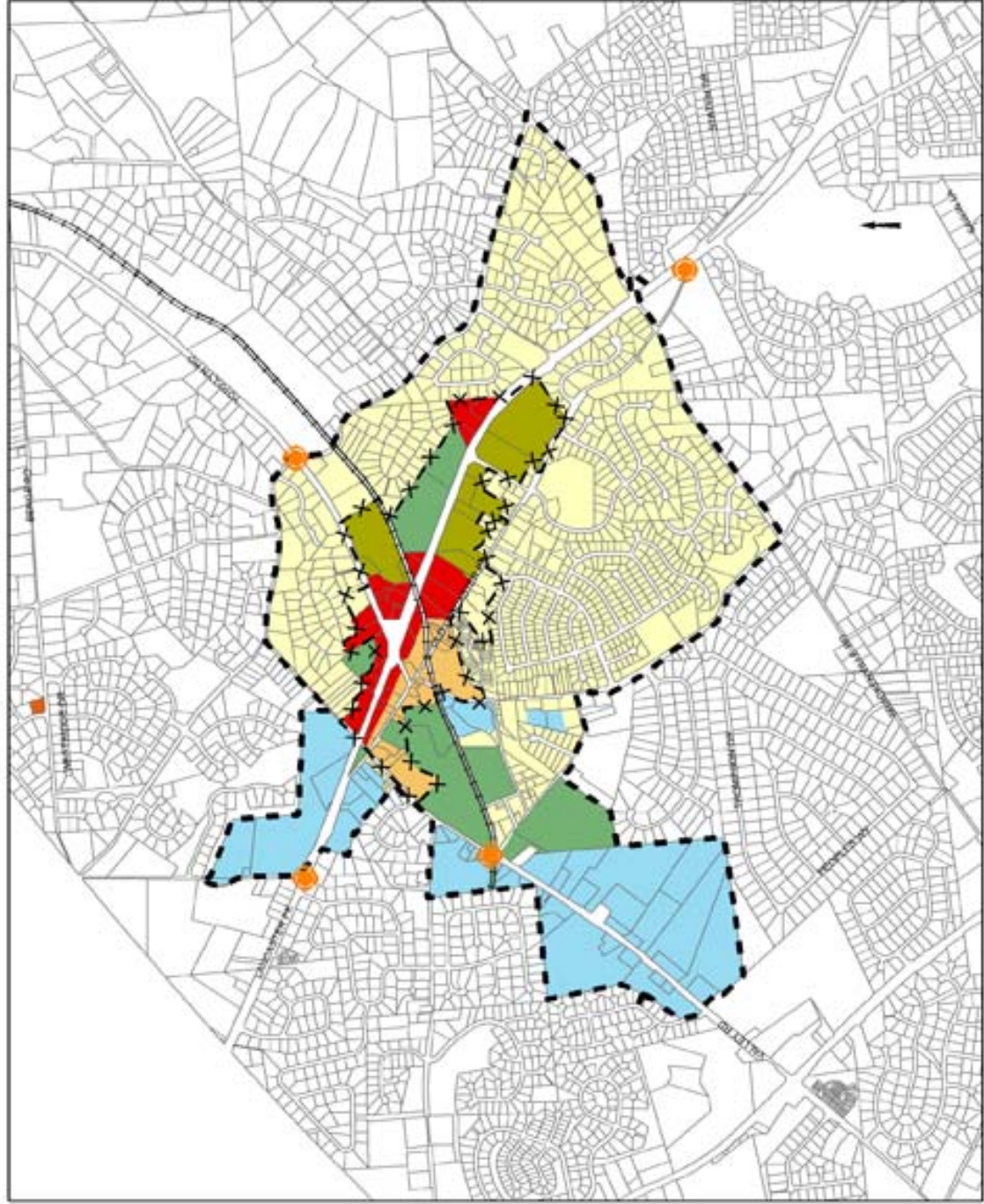
The primary planning objective for the Village Center is to encourage commercial, business, office and residential infill and redevelopment with accessory residential uses where appropriate. The objective has several purposes, including:

- increase the array of goods and services available within a comfortable walking distance of nearby residents;
- capture potential economic opportunities within the traditional village center by encouraging investment in existing properties and structures;
- focus public investment in infrastructure to address existing traffic and drainage problems;
- increase opportunities for affordable housing; and

ILLUSTRATION III-1

Land Use Districts

- Business Institute
 - Regional Commercial
 - Parks & Recreation
 - Village Center
 - Neighborhood Conservation
 - Residential Infill and/or Redevelopment
- Other Categories
- Gateways
 - Village Boundary
 - Village Overlay Zone



SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF LAND USE
 NEW CASTLE COUNTY
 MAY 2004

LAND USE DISTRICTS, GATEWAY SITES & VILLAGE OVERLAY BOUNDARY

- establish appropriate design guidelines to improve the visual qualities of the village center and insure proposed development is consistent with the community’s vision for Hockessin.

3.5 Regional Commercial

The Regional Commercial area includes commercial, business, institutional and recreation uses located along the SR 41 corridor. Important planning objectives for this area include:



3.5.1 Regional Commercial Planning Objectives

The planning objectives for the Regional Commercial are:

- 3.5.1.1 Accommodate traffic while insuring pedestrian safety.
- 3.5.1.2 Create safe pedestrian connections to surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- 3.5.1.3 Improve the visual qualities of the corridor through highway enhancements and improved sign quality.
- 3.5.1.4 Encourage redevelopment of existing strip centers.

3.6 Business and Institutional

Business and Institutional includes the Village’s civic and employment uses located in the Village.

3.6.1 Business and Institutional Planning Objectives

The planning objectives for Business and Institutional are:

- 3.6.1.1 Strengthen pedestrian linkages with surrounding residential neighborhoods and the Village Center.
- 3.6.1.2 Encourage the expansion of employment opportunities within the Village.

3.7 Neighborhood Conservation

Neighborhood Conservation area encompasses existing residential areas along Old Lancaster Pike between the Village Center and School House Road. The Neighborhood Conservation District also includes the residential subdivisions that surround and are served by the uses located in the Village Center, Business and Institutional and Regional Commercial areas.

3.7.1 Neighborhood Conservation Planning Objectives

The primary planning objectives for this area are:

- 3.7.1.1 Maintain the existing traditional residential character.
- 3.7.1.2 Enhance the public realm with streetscape and pedestrian safety improvements.
- 3.7.1.3 Facilitate context sensitive infill and redevelopment of existing residential properties.
- 3.7.1.4 Minimize the adverse impacts from commercial activities in the adjacent Village Center, Business and Institutional and Regional Commercial areas.
- 3.7.1.5 Improve the quality of life by providing a central place that is uniquely Hockessin’s.

3.8 Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation consists of public park land, recreation facilities and community open space. Hockessin is fortunate to have extensive park and

recreation facilities in close proximity to the Village Center and the surrounding neighborhoods. Parks are important to the social well being and quality of life of the community. Park and recreation facilities, especially those located nearest the Village Center, help promote social interaction and enhance the visual qualities of the Village Center.



3.8.1 Parks and Recreation Planning Objectives

The primary planning objectives for Parks and Recreation are:

3.8.1.1 Improve pedestrian systems to insure adequate linkages between residential neighborhoods, the Village Center, Regional Commercial, Business and Institutional and park and recreation areas.

3.8.1.2 Increase recreation opportunities through expansion of the pedestrian systems within and linked to the Village.

3.9 Infill and Redevelopment

Infill and Redevelopment includes bypassed, vacant or underutilized properties within a relatively short walking distance of the Village Center. These properties represent potential opportunities to increase the residential population within and near the Village Center.

3.9.1 Infill and Redevelopment Planning Objectives

The primary objectives for this area are:

3.9.1.1 Infill and redevelopment supports the goals and objectives of this Plan.

3.9.1.2 The quality of infill or redevelopment is sensitive to the context in which it is proposed.

3.9.1.3 Protect existing residential neighborhoods by insuring infill and redevelopment is appropriately located and of a quality that reflects positively on the Hockessin community.

3.10 Implementation Objectives

3.10.1

Require that all development, public and private, reflect high standards of compatibility and visual quality with appropriate site planning, architecture design and signage guidelines.

3.10.2

Protect established residential neighborhoods from adverse impacts associated with nearby nonresidential land uses.

3.10.3

Create additional residential opportunities in and around the Village area.

3.10.4

Integrate a well-planned transportation and circulation system that accommodates the increase in land uses within the Village center, reinforces the village identity and facilitates pedestrian movement.

3.10.5

Encourage infill and redevelopment along Route 41 that improves the visual impression of Hockessin.

3.10.6

Encourage appropriate mixed-use infill and redevelopment in the village center along Old Lancaster Pike that will expand the array of goods and services offered in the village core.

3.10.7

Encourage appropriate public investments in the Village center and along the SR 41 corridor that enhance the overall identity of the Hockessin Village.

3.10.8

Maximize pedestrian connections to Old Lancaster Pike area, all economic nodes, public facilities, and recreational green nodes.

3.10.9

Promote improvement and implementation techniques that achieve the overall goals for the village in such a way that enhances property values of the Hockessin area.

3.10.10

Establish design standards, guidelines and processes that enhance the physical environment and help create a distinct village identity.

3.10.11 Improve access to businesses in the Village.

3.11 Implementation Strategies

To advance these implementation objectives, the community will pursue the following strategies:

3.11.1

Incorporate the Master Plan for the Hockessin Village as an official element of the New Castle County Comprehensive Plan.

3.11.2

Revise the existing UDC standards to:

3.11.2.1 Permit an appropriate mix of uses and increased site utilization, as set forth in the Plan.

3.11.2.2 Permit more intense use of existing commercial properties and to facilitate infill and redevelopment.

3.11.2.3 Permit accessory apartments in commercial and business establishments.

3.11.3

Work with the State and County to increase public parking and reduce on-site parking requirements. Establish appropriate funding mechanisms to support construction and maintenance of public parking and that reflect the benefits gained from reduced on-site parking requirements.

3.11.4

Work with DELDOT to develop a Street Enhancement Concept for Old Lancaster Pike (as part of the Transportation Enhancement program) that maintains appropriate traffic flows and increases pedestrian safety. (See Conceptual Alternatives)

3.11.5

Develop a comprehensive regional stormwater management approach coupled with watershed restoration that will protect and enhance natural resources while enabling more intense use of sites located in the Village Center and Regional Commercial planning areas.

3.11.6

Encourage infill and redevelopment projects that add to the inventory of housing in the Village Center.

3.11.7 Limit new commercial development to the Village Center and the Regional Commercial area.

3.12 Community Design

3.12.1 Community Design Objectives

3.12.1.1 Enhance identity through design of sites, buildings and structures in the public and private realms that respond to and reinforce locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture.

3.12.1.2 Ensure that Hockessin Village is a place that has a clear image and a form that is easy to understand by providing recognizable routes, intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around.

3.12.1.3 Promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable place that responds to local needs.

3.12.1.4 Provide the community with attractive and successful outdoor areas by creating public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all society, including disabled and elderly people.

3.12.1.5 Ensure places connect with each other and are easy to move through, putting people before traffic and integrating land uses and transportation in a way that supports this objective.

3.12.1.6 Ensure a distinct public realm through unified design features along street frontages and the enclosure of space by development which clearly defines private and public areas.

3.12.1.7 Ensure that the design of new sites and structures is done in a manner that preserves natural resources (e.g. trees, water areas, etc.) protects sensitive environmental areas, manages run-off to minimize damage to water quality and mitigates any negative impacts on land, air, water, vegetation and energy to the maximum extent possible.

to provide incentives for development proposals that meet community design objectives within the Village Center and Regional Commercial areas.

3.13.3

Establish a coordinated system of gateways, landmarks and wayfindings devices.

3.13.4

Undertake a signage improvement program to improve existing signage and establish appropriate guidelines for new signs.

3.15 Design Concepts

The Hockessin Village Plan process explored planning issues through conceptual master plans that illustrate alternative land use, transportation and community design concepts. The products of these exercises are included in this Plan to provide a beginning point for further exploration. The concepts illustrate aspects of an ideal outcome but certainly not the only outcome. The community can be fairly certain of the public improvements to SR 41 that will result from the Safety Improvements Project (programmed for construction in Spring 05). Improvements to Old Lancaster Pike will likely result from the Transportation Enhancement Project.

Both of these highway projects are described in Chapter VII Transportation. Beyond these road improvements, achieving the community development objectives of this Plan is dependent on successful public-private partnerships to implement plan strategies. Unless State and County agencies, working with private property owners, are successful in initiating programs and projects to insure the protection of sensitive environmental features the private sector will be limited in its ability to invest in infill and redevelopment projects. The conceptual master plans are optimistic in this regard and represent a best case scenario

for achieving the community's vision.



3.13 Implementation Strategies

3.13.1

Work with State and County agencies to plan and implement streetscape and other public improvements along Old Lancaster Pike and SR 41.

3.13.2

Finalize environmental and parking strategies

3.14.1 Village Center Concepts

The alternative Village Center Plan concepts illustrate ways retail space and public parking can be increased and the pedestrian environment (access and safety) can be improved. The concepts depicted have several design elements in common. The concepts assume that the “main street” shopping portion of Old Lancaster Pike begins west of Mill Creek and ends west of the rail road tracks at the entrance to the Goodyear store. The objective is to establish continuous shopping street that will entice patrons to walk from one end to the other. To the extent feasible, vacant lots and gaps between existing buildings are filled with new buildings or building additions that feature retail shops on the first floor.

The Village Center Plan concepts illustrate a parking scheme that includes a large public parking area at the back of shops fronting on Old Lancaster Pike and backing up to the existing ball fields at Swift Park. These concepts demonstrate that if the parking here were more organized, and public/private partnerships could be developed to extend the parking area onto private property, the Village Center would realize a substantial increase in the amount of available public parking.

The Village Center Plan concepts illustrate opportunities to use design features that visually unify the “main street” and enhance the pedestrian environment. These design features include streetscape improvements such as street lighting and street furniture, street trees, parking lot landscaping, improved public and commercial signage, and low walls, sign bases and textured sidewalk and plaza surfaces constructed from native stone. Details concerning the use of these features should be addressed in the Old Lancaster Pike TE project, in design guidelines (for signage and site improvements) and in the consideration of overall gateway signage design schemes. All concepts assume that the existing roadside ditches along Old Lancaster Pike will be replaced with underground storm sewer.

3.14.1.1 Alternative 1

Alternative 1 (see Illustration III-2 and Illustration III-3) assumes continuation of two-way traffic movement on Old Lancaster Pike. Because the existing right-of-way on Old Lancaster Pike is narrow (less than 32 feet in some areas) it would be difficult to fit the street with sidewalks on both sides of sufficient width to support a main street type shopping environment. This design concept illustrates a 5-foot wide sidewalk along Old Lancaster Pike and a 10-foot wide pedestrian promenade located along the rear of properties on Old Lancaster Pike and extending to Mill Creek Road (see Illustration III-4). This approach would permit commercial establishments with double frontages, one on Old Lancaster Pike and the other on the pedestrian promenade. Pedestrian cut-throughs at key locations provide access to Old Lancaster Pike store fronts. One advantage of this approach is that pedestrians are completely shielded from traffic on Old Lancaster Pike. It also presents opportunities to create interesting small spaces (e.g., a plaza) for pedestrians.

The “main street” concept extends down Mill Creek Road to the entrance to Swift Park. An important infill site is located at the corner of Old Lancaster Pike and Mill Creek Road. Development on this site would not only fill a gap along Old Lancaster Pike, but also would block the back of buildings located in the Shoppes at Hockessin center. One concept for this site could be a structure resembling a train station. In any case important design objectives are to fill the streetscape gap here and improve the visual character in this vicinity of the Village Center.

3.14.1.2 Alternative 2

Alternative 2 illustrates one-way traffic movement on Old Lancaster Pike from the intersection of Yorklyn Road west to the rear entrance to Hockessin Mill Plaza (See Illustrations III-5 and III-6). Two-way flows are maintained from Valley Road to the entrance to

OLD LANCASTER PIKE: TWO-WAY TRAFFIC PATTERN



Legend:

- Existing Buildings
- Village Commercial
- Infill Village Commercial
- New Parking
- Sidewalk/Promenade
- Floodway

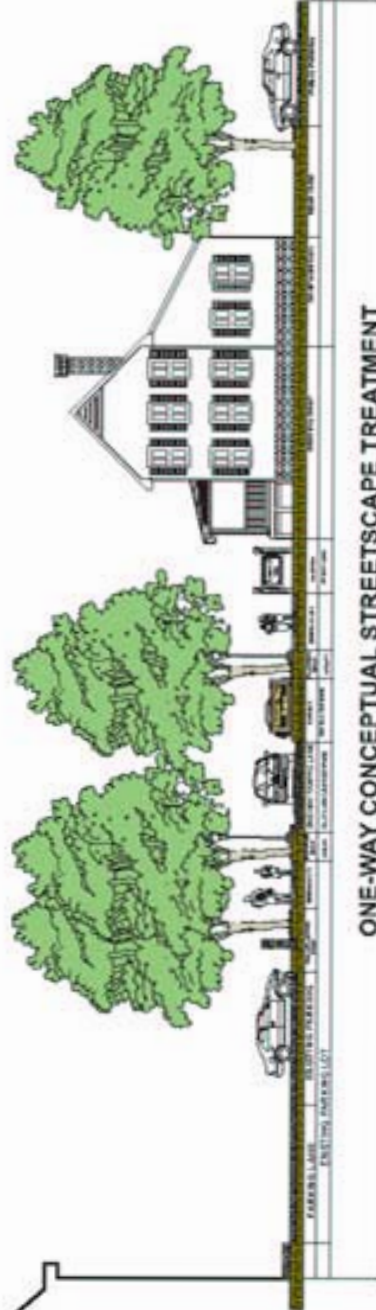
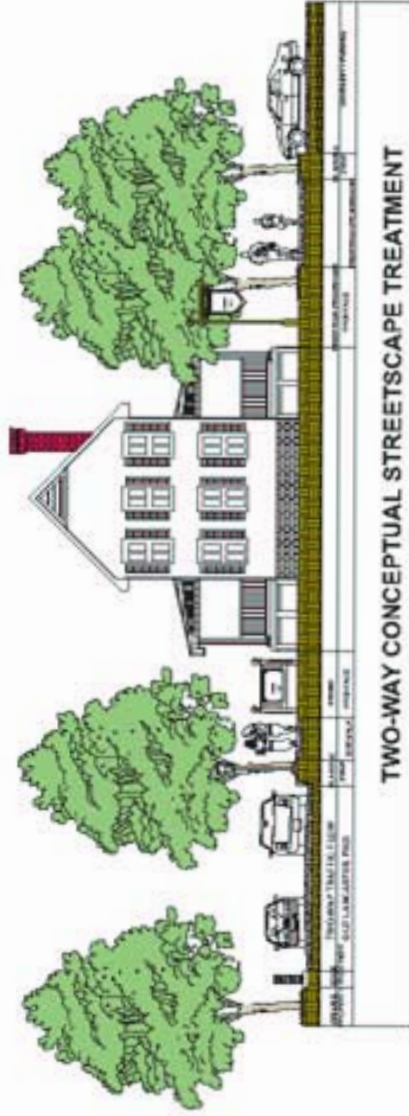
TWO-WAY TRAFFIC PATTERN ON OLD LANCASTER PIKE



Hockessin Village
Plan

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF LAND USE
NEWCASTLE COUNTY
MAY 2004

OLD LANCASTER PIKE: CROSS-SECTION OF STREETSCAPE CONCEPTS



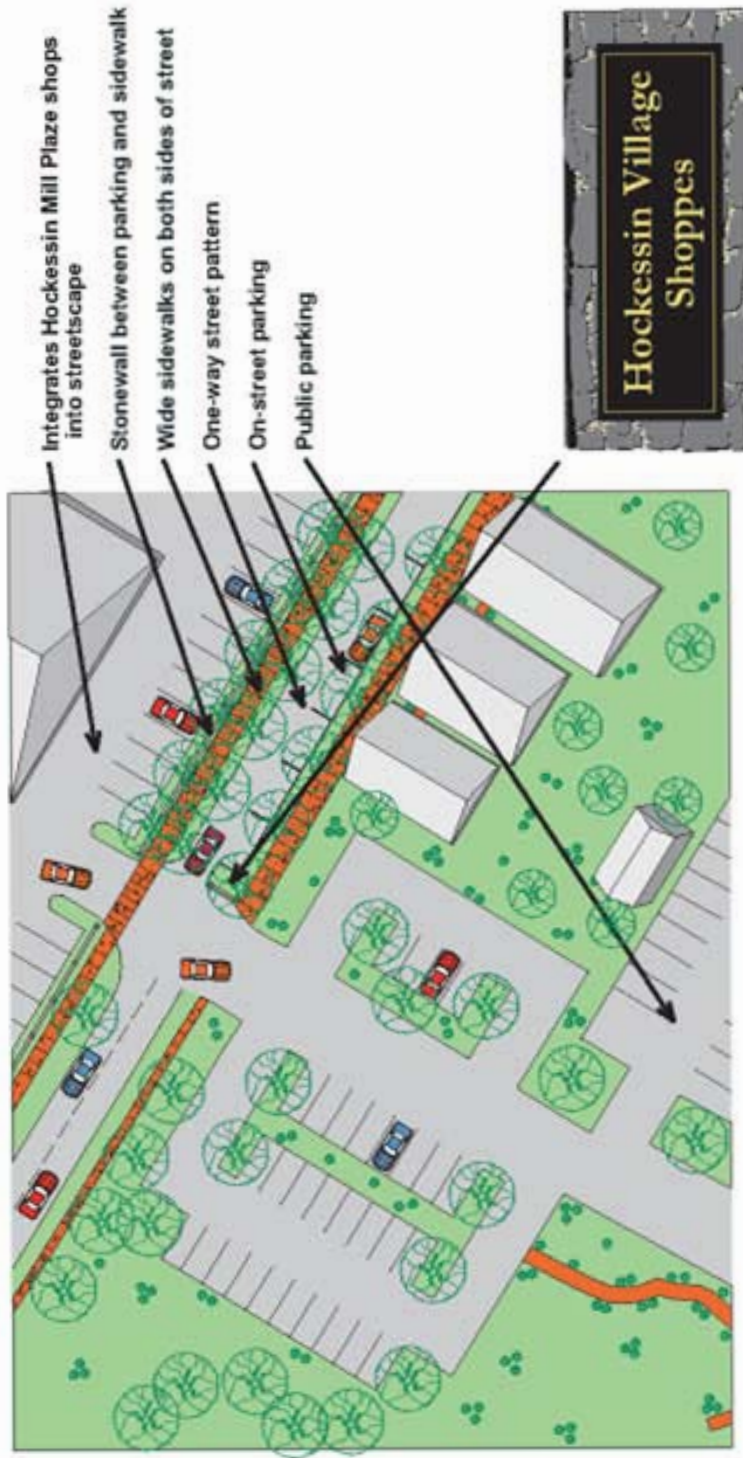
Hockessin Village
Plan

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF LAND USE
NEW CASTLE COUNTY
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ONE-WAY TRAFFIC PATTERN ON OLD LANCASTER PIKE



ONE-WAY TRAFFIC PATTERN ON OLD LANCASTER PIKE



Hockessin Village
Plan

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF LAND USE
NEW CASTLE COUNTY
MAY 2004

the public parking lot and the rear entrance to Hockessin Mills Plaza. The one-way option permits greater use of the existing right-of-way for pedestrian improvements, including sidewalks on both sides of the street. This will improve pedestrian access to commercial establishments located between Old Lancaster Pike and SR 41 (e.g., WAWA, Hockessin Mill Plaza, WFSF Bank) and presents opportunities to integrate the design of the rear of these commercial buildings into the Old Lancaster Pike streetscape. This concept shows a 2,000 square foot addition on the Hockessin Mill Plaza building which extends the building closer to the street and expands the retail draw in the Village Center.

Alternative 2 includes approximately 20 additional on-street parking spaces on Old Lancaster Pike and 18 additional parking spaces near the intersection of Valley Road and Old Lancaster Pike. On-street parking on Old Lancaster Pike benefits merchants by providing the most convenient parking for patrons using stores in the immediate vicinity. It also enhances pedestrian safety by providing a barrier between the sidewalk and travel lane of the roadway.

Even with the additional right-of-way available for pedestrian improvements that result from a one-way concept, additional right-of-way is needed to provide adequate sidewalks and other streetscape improvements on both sides of Old Lancaster Pike west of the Yorklyn Road intersection. Alternative 2 assumes that land owners will see the benefit of the proposed streetscape improvements and volunteer the right-of-way required to implement this concept.

3.14.2 Regional Commercial Concepts

Within the regional commercial area, existing strip centers may be transformed in the future by applying the following steps recommended by the Urban Land Institute. These steps include:

- **Put a firm limit on the length of any commercial district;** instead of a long strip, allow commercial expansion in greater depth. This concentrates commercial uses and encourages shared parking and walking between stores.
- **Limit curb cuts and consolidate entrances** along the road to a few main driveways with internal service streets based on a block system to connect businesses. This relieves traffic back-ups, accidents, and the need for expensive road widening.
- **Help unify the streetscape with continuous street trees,** high-quality parking-lot landscaping and, where possible, planted medians in the main roadways to prevent unlimited left-hand turns.
- **Build sidewalks and crosswalks** throughout the area to encourage shared parking, public transportation, and walking between stores and to nearby homes and offices.
- **Build a street frontage** by filling in the front of large parking lots with small, closely spaced store fronts with parking behind or on the side.
- **Provide incentives** for the use of attractive, place-responsive architecture, smaller signs, and multi-story buildings.
- **Encourage a mix of other uses,** including nearby housing to begin to build a walkable neighborhood rather than a driving-only strip district.
- **Eradicate the ugliness** by controlling signs, under-grounding utility wires, planting street trees and improving the design of new buildings.