



## Chapter I Introduction

# A Community Redevelopment Plan for the Village of Hockessin

## 1.1 Purpose and Definition

As the first focused planning effort for Hockessin Village, the *Hockessin Village Community Redevelopment Plan* sets the tone and vision for future development. Containing goals, objectives, and implementation strategies, it is a commitment to a course of action that will lead, through the years, toward a desirable physical, social, and economic environment for existing and future generations.

The Hockessin Village Community Redevelopment Plan (HVP) is designed to provide broad, flexible guidance for the future development of Hockessin Village. It does not contain specific and detailed instructions on how each parcel should be developed or redeveloped. Rather, it allows public and private property owners, as well as developers, appropriate discretion in making land use decisions, while at the same time, assuring that Hockessin's vision and the public good is realized.

The HVP represents a long-range vision for Hockessin Village. It identifies goals and objectives to realize this vision, and contains an action agenda that outlines specific strategies to guide development. The action agenda contains both short-term and long-term strategies. The short-term recommendations focus on items that create positive visual impacts, can be completed within a two-year time frame, and either require only modest financial investment or already have funding committed. The majority of these will require County action, but many will also be dependent upon public-private and intergovernmental (State and County) partnerships. The longer-term strategies will typically be more complex in nature and may have more significant budget implications. The HVP provides an overall framework under which development proposals will be reviewed, rather than the current process of case-by-case consideration, resulting in a piecemeal and uncoordinated growth in this area.

The HVP will be used by elected and appointed officials and staff on a daily basis in making decisions with direct or indirect land use implications. It is also to be used by officials and staff of government agencies - federal, state, and local - to provide a framework for inter-jurisdictional coordination of planning efforts. Hockessin area residents, property owners, and businesses are expected to be major users of the HVP. Members of these groups may use the HVP to review a particular property or for a particular subject of interest to them. The real estate community will use the HVP to understand the community's vision regarding the quality and type of development that will be acceptable in Hockessin Village.

## 1.2 Core Goals

**After the Steering Committee had the opportunity to examine existing conditions within the village and obtain a thorough understanding of the previous planning processes and local issues, subcommittees were established to prepare goals and objectives for the planning process. The goals for each element are presented below. Each subsequent chapter contains the more detailed objectives supporting the goals and identifies implementation strategies necessary to realize them.**

### 1.2.1 Land Use

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.

### 1.2.2 Historic

Preserve the rich heritage and character of the Hockessin Village by planning its future to celebrate its past.

### 1.2.3 Transportation

Provide a transportation system to facilitate the safe and smooth flow of vehicles, public transit, bicycles and pedestrians throughout the Hockessin Village Area.

### 1.2.4 Economic Development

Take advantage of population and demographic trends to sustain an economically viable Village core that is vibrant and offers many higher quality goods and services to its residents and to the overall region.

### 1.2.5 Public Facilities and Utilities

Create, maintain and preserve excellent community facilities and services to include cultural and recreational facilities, social services and programs for all citizens.

### 1.2.6 Natural Resources

Sustain a balanced and healthful relationship between man and the environment that minimizes the adverse impacts of development on natural resources and features.

## 1.3 Relationship to Existing Planning Documents

The HVP builds on the New Castle County Comprehensive Plan, and provides a more detailed set of goals, objectives and strategies intended to meet the specific needs of this defined area within the County. The HVP is also in conformance with the policies and objectives of the Livable Delaware program, and may serve as a model for infill and redevelopment within established village or town centers. The HVP

Residents	Community Leaders	Business/Property Owners	Government Officials
Diane Hagerty	Ken Murphy	Joe Amon	Thomas P. Gordon, County Executive
Connie Toschlog	Steve Borleake	Peg Castorani	Sherry L. Freebery, Chief Administrative Officer
Paula Maniacalco	Dave Rosner	Jim Chandler	William Tanaey, County Council
Larry Tarabioos, Esq.	Roalyn Woodard Smith	Harold Fleishut	Patricia Blevins, State Senate
	Robert Price	Jennifer Harnett, Esq.	Charles Copeland, State Senate
	Joe Lake	Dan Lickle	Liane Sorensen, State Senate
		Matt Minker	Debbie Hudson, State House of Representatives
			Roger Roy, State House of Representatives
			Charles L. Baker, Land Use Dept.
			Herb Linden, State Planning
			Ralph Reeb, DelDOT
			Jack Cunningham (Ret.), County Police

encourages the concentration of development within an already developed core, and utilizes existing infrastructure to accomplish its objectives.

## 1.4 Planning Process

The primary purposes of this planning effort were to formulate a community position for the future of the Village, and then draft a land use plan with stated goals, objectives and implementation strategies. The process focused on how the village should function in the future:

- who it is intended to serve - a local market v. a regional one;
- mix of uses desired measured against economic realities;
- architectural and site design guidelines and how should they be implemented;
- transportation improvements and enhancements, including vehicular, transit, pedestrian and bicycle, to address both through travel and local needs;
- physical design features to define the geographic limits of the village and

- identify to travelers that they have entered a distinct place; and
- regulatory changes necessary to realize the vision and achieve the objectives defined in the planning process.

Hockessin is one of the unique areas of New Castle County whose residents are working to balance their rich history with the demands of contemporary development and modern transportation.

The HVP Process was undertaken by the New Castle County Land Use Department, and was guided by a Steering Committee comprised of area residents, business and property owners, and government officials. The HVP is the result of a community planning process, intended to prepare a plan for the future of Hockessin Village based on priorities established by the community. The County provided the professional expertise necessary to facilitate discussion, obtain technical information, and offer planning input and options; however, the policy issues addressed in this plan have been formulated by the community for the community.

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 Hockessin Village area has been selected as one of the first communities to participate in this program.

This planning effort recognizes the work that has already been done in the Hockessin community, prior to New Castle County's involvement. This earlier work provided the starting point for the community planning process. The previous efforts incorporated into the process included the WILMAPCO/Urban Engineers study, the pre-planning study completed in the fall of 2001 by Alberto & Associates, the DeIDOT Route 41 safety improvement and Old Lancaster Pike transportation enhancement projects, and the WILMAPCO coordination effort between Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.

This planning process utilized both staff and consultant expertise. Economic Research Associates of Washington D.C. was hired to prepare a market analysis for the village area. The report identified the type, mix and square footage of various land uses and activity that can be supported within the village. The County also contracted with Redman/Johnston Associates of Easton, Maryland, to provide planning and design expertise throughout the planning process.

A Steering Committee was appointed by the County to oversee and guide the process. The Committee had twenty-six members, with representation from area residents, business and property owners, elected and appointed officials, as well as State and County personnel (See Illustration I-1). The first Steering Committee meeting was held in December, 2002 and meetings were generally held monthly thereafter.

Public input and feedback were sought in a variety of forums, including the open Steering Committee meetings, monthly membership meetings of the Greater Hockessin Area Development Association (GHADA,) and various merchants and property owners' meetings. Information was regularly disseminated in these meetings, and direction was solicited from the various stakeholders.

The HVP Process has produced a Plan that defines the community's vision for the future of the Village and recommends implementation techniques necessary to realize that vision.