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## COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN SUMMARY

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**TO:** TOWN OF DEWEY BEACH MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS  
**FROM:** DAVID KING (VICE-CHAIR PLANNING AND ZONING)  
**DATE:** 12/09/2006

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### **The Comprehensive Development Plan is:**

- A roadmap to guide sustainable Town growth over the coming 5 to 10 years;
- A legal document.

### **The Plan Development Process Was:**

- Guided by a team from The University of Delaware Institute for Public Administration;
- Built upon an extensive, earlier effort;
- Based on an extensive survey instrument mailed to all Town property owners, with a 50% response rate, and
- 2 years of public meetings with SRO attendance at early meetings where the broad, sweeping vision of the plan was being developed, and dwindling attendance at later meetings where subtle details of zoning-district boundaries were finalized; it was
- Assigned to the CDP Working Group, which included participation by 3 mayors, 9 commissioners and 10 members of the Planning and Zoning Commission whose appointments extended across three administrations; and
- Driven by the spoken and perceived needs of the Town's residents, property and business owners, and visitors.

### **The Big Impact of the CDP Is:**

- Creation of a comprehensive 5- to 10-year strategic plan, or roadmap for sustainable development of the Town of Dewey Beach that enables the
- Transitioning of Town governance to a process guided by broad stakeholder input
- Rather than ad hoc reaction to one-off issues and individual concerns.

### **The CDP:**

- Defines areas of broad stakeholder concern for the Commissioners, but
- Does not seek to define specific solutions;
- Leaves issue prioritization, researching of appropriate solutions, and implementation to future Town Commissioners.

### **The Overarching Effect Of CDP Implementation Is:**

- Legal charge to the Town's officials and employees to provide for the health, safety, convenience, comfort, and well-being of the population by:
  - Pursuing land development and improvement strategies that balance the need to protect owners' property values and to protect community resources;
  - Encouraging patterns of appropriate and sustainable economic development that meet the needs of residents, property owners, business owners, and visitors.

- Maintaining fiscal responsibility by living within the Town's budgets and to creating long-term finance plans; and
- Coordinating with county, state, and federal agencies to rehabilitate, preserve and protect the natural resources in the area.

**Significant Issues Identified For Commissioners' Consideration and Action Include:**

- Clear articulation of property owners' desire to retain the small beach town feel of Dewey that contributes to its unique "way of life" by, e.g., encouraging future development that is similar in architectural character, scale and density to the existing community, encouraging mixed-use development where appropriate and discouraging high-density development and cluster housing, and preserving existing trees and the feel of open space;
- The need to improve/ augment Town infrastructure (e.g., address bay side flooding; establish a bayside walk, performing arts center, and public restrooms), and a long-term capital-projects financing plan to fund such infrastructure development;
- The need to annex the Rehoboth Bay waters immediately adjacent to Town, so the Town has control over access to, and stewardship of the bay front;
- The need to address affordable local transportation services and develop a plan for improved pedestrian and cyclist safety along S.R. 1;
- The need to identify and monitor the character and change of all stakeholder groups;
- Clear articulation from all stakeholders of the Town's obligation to formally adopt a business-friendly attitude; encouraging the expansion of commercial business activities to serve the Town's growing shoulder- and year-round residential population by, for example, updating the Town's business zoning districts, and providing incentives for the development of large-area planned mixed-use areas such as seen in many emerging planned "town centers" and "main street" revivals;
- The need to establish financial management procedures and a long-term financing plan for Town operations;
- The need to pursue long-term plans and agreements with state and federal agencies for protection and preservation of the beach, and review the ability of the current beach replenishment tax for financing the Town's contributions to this;
- The desire of the Town's property owners that the Town become more environmentally responsible by, for example, reducing pollution into the bay and ocean, and encouraging the use of "green" construction materials and designs and recycling;
- The need to coordinate with county and state officials to develop and implement a regional emergency response plan.

**One specific recommendation**

One specific zoning change recommended by the Planning and Zoning Commission while working to define the proposed resort business districts described in the Plan, is to remove "single family and multi-family residences" from permitted uses in the most business-intensive, RB1 and RB2 zoning districts while providing encouragement for mixed-use development.

- Input from the major stakeholders who would be affected by this zoning change was solicited.
- At the final, of several public meetings held to discuss resort business zoning there was no public opposition to this change.
- In fact, the legal representative for the major affected stakeholder, Dewey Beach Enterprises (e.g., owner of the Rudder Town and Bay Center properties), stated that he viewed the proposed zoning and acceptable framework for planning future land use development.