

7.3 Survey Results

A survey of Camden residents was performed in 2007. The following is an overview of the results, including some of the survey questions.

The survey response rate was 10% (133 respondents out of 1300 surveys distributed).

Most respondents (57%) had lived in Camden for 1-5 years and came from 23 states.

Demographics:

- 83% of the respondents were over 50.
- Respondents were evenly divided between men (49%) and women (51%).
- 40% of respondents had high school degrees or GEDs; 18% had BA degrees; 26% had graduate degrees.
- Most respondents (74%) were married.
- 69% of respondents were retired; 29% were employed.
- 23% had incomes over \$65,000; 14% had incomes between \$35,000-\$45,000; 11% had incomes in the \$55,000-\$65,000 range.

How important are the following to you as a resident of Camden?

30% felt that it was either very important or important to **be close to their workplace**, with 29% feeling that it was not important.

73% felt that it was either very important or important to **be close to family and friends**; only 17% felt that it was not important.

54% felt that the **quality of the school system** was either very important or important; only 18% felt that it was not important.

86% felt that **reasonable housing cost** was either very important or important.

92% felt that **available town services** were either very important or important.

94% felt that a **reasonable tax level** was either very important or important.

85% felt that **being close to shopping** either very important or important.

Please rate the following services:

80% felt the **Police Department** was either good or very good; 10% felt it needed improvement.

88% felt the **Garbage Service** was either good or very good; 11% felt it needed improvement.

75% felt that **Road Maintenance** was either good or very good; 20% felt it needed improvement.

67% felt that **Snow Removal** was either good or very good; 11% felt it needed improvement.

45% felt that **Code Enforcement** was either good or very good; 20% felt it needed improvement; 33% had no opinion.

72% felt that the **Mayor & Council** were either good or very good; only 8% felt they needed improvement; 20% had no opinion.

70% felt that the **Town Administration** was either good or very good; 8% felt it needed improvement and 23% had no opinion.

Please tell us how you think each of the following indicators have changed in the last five years... (Results below, unless otherwise indicated, are for people who have lived in the town for five years or more.)

33% felt that the **quality of town services** had stayed the same; 19% felt they had improved.

37% felt the **quantity of town service** had stayed the same; 39% felt it had improved.

43% felt the **quality of town facility** had stayed the same; 26% had no opinion.

31% felt that **access to town officials** had stayed the same; 30% had no opinion.

36% felt the **attractiveness of the town** had stayed the same; 28% felt it had improved; *28% felt it had declined. 8% of those living in town less than 5 years also felt it had declined.*

59% felt that the **traffic condition in town** had declined; 22% felt it had stayed the same. *28% of those living in town less than 5 years also felt it had declined.*

52% felt that **property taxes** had stayed the same; 15% felt they had declined; 11% saw an improvement.

31% felt that **affordability of housing** had declined; 26% felt it had stayed the same. *13% of those living in town less than 5 years also felt it had declined.*

43% felt that the **crime level** had stayed the same; 20% felt it had declined and 10% felt it had improved. *Among those living in town less than 5 years 13% had also seen a decline.*

61% felt that **community spirit** had stayed the same; 16% felt it had declined. Only 4% saw an improvement.

46% felt that the **quality of natural environment** had stayed the same; 6% saw a decline and 24% felt it had improved. *Among those living in town less than 5 years, 25% felt it had stayed the same; 11% saw a decline; 8% saw an improvement.*

In your opinion, should the Town of Camden...

46% felt there should not be more **single family homes**; 32% felt there should be.

70% felt there should not be more **multi-family homes**; 22% had no opinion; only 4% felt there should be.

52% felt that the Town should **create recreational facilities**; 24% had no opinion and 22% felt that Town should not do so.

44% felt the Town should **have more commercial business**; 36% felt it should not.

56% felt the Town should **have more industrial growth**; 24% felt it should not, and 17% had no opinion.

66% were against **allowing larger commercial buildings in the Town center**; 17% had no opinion, and 16% said for it.

65% were against **encouraging redevelopment of residential properties to commercial properties**; 18% had no opinion, and 13% were for it.

49% were against **hiring more police officers**; 30% had no opinion, and 15% were in favor of it.

60% were against **reducing the level of speeding enforcement**; 21% were for it.

50% were for **creating a mandatory recycling program by 2008**; 26% were against it; and 20% had no opinion.

Please rate how efficiently you feel your tax dollar is spent...

87% felt taxes were spent either very efficiently or efficiently for **law enforcement**.

92% felt taxes were spent either very efficiently or efficiently for **garbage collection**.

82% felt taxes were spent either very efficiently or efficiently for **street maintenance**. 11%, however, felt the monies were spent inefficiently.

77% felt taxes were spent either very efficiently or efficiently for **snow removal**; 10%, however, felt the monies were spent inefficiently.

62% felt taxes were spent either very efficiently or efficiently on **code enforcement**; 19%, however, felt the monies were spent inefficiently.

57% felt taxes were spent either very efficiently or efficiently on **building inspection**, 20%; however, felt the monies were spent inefficiently.

71% felt taxes were spent either very efficiently or efficiently on **administration**.

73% felt taxes were spent either very efficiently or efficiently on **town management**.

To improve the situation you have just listed, how much tax increase would you be willing to accept:

49% wanted no tax increase; 38% would accept an increase of less than 5%; and 7% would accept an increase somewhere between 5% and 10%.

Are you satisfied with the development in Camden?

59% were satisfied; 33% were not; 8% did not respond.

Please indicate the section of the Town of Camden in which you live...

44% of the respondents were from Barclay Farms; 12% were from Chapel Croft; 9% were from Tamarac; 8% from the Southeast Section; 7% from Newell's Creek.

(For more detailed survey results, see Appendix A)

7.4 Redevelopment

As may be expected in a small town that has not annexed significant property in its recent history, much of the land in Camden is developed. While there are limited opportunities for new development, the future of Camden is likely to be in the redevelopment of existing structures and land areas as opposed to new construction. Additionally, growth for Camden may be achieved through selective annexation as depicted on the Proposed Annexation Plan. Toward these ends, the recommendations contained in section 7.2.5 of this Comprehensive Plan address revisions to the Town's Zoning, redevelopment of existing areas, and growth through annexation.

8.0 CRITICAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

8.1 Goals & Objectives

The mapping of the growth of the Town, Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), and awareness of Town history and historic structures were cited as the top goals during the planning process. The following is a list of objectives for the Comprehensive Plan and how the Town has advanced these objectives:

- *Objective 1: Maintain the character of the Town's built environment*

The Mayor and Council adopted in May and August of 2006 a new zoning ordinance. The Mayor and Council on August 6, 2007 updated re-established zoning maps and specifications on construction. The Mayor and Town Council re-established the Land Use and Subdivision Ordinance to enhance the revision of the Zoning Ordinance August 6, 2007.

- *Objective 2: Maintain and enhance the existing "small town" commercial entities and neighborhoods.*

Established highway commerce zoning as indicated through above development. The Route 13 Corridor now reflects the growth design. Residential zoning code and maps depict growth and land use practices

- *Objective 3: Participate fully in shared municipal functions*

Mayor Robert Mooney has assumed an active role as a board member on the Kent Dover Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Mayor keeps the Town of Camden and its neighbors aware of the transit and funding issues.

- *Objective 4: Respond to environmental challenges*

The Mayor and Council adopted an ordinance entitled the Source Water Protection Plan for groundwater protection. The Town is following the CWSWA Five-Year Plan.

- *Objective 5: Coordinate with other planning entities to improve recreational opportunities*

The Mayor and Council play active roles in the oversight and administration of building permits for the Caesar Rodney School District. The Town of Camden recently passed an ordinance which requires building permits for school construction in Camden. With the adoption of the Ordinance, the Land Use Subdivision Ordinance, and the Zoning Ordinance, the Open Space Plan has been implemented.

- *Objective 6: Improve the traffic plan within the community.*

The Town has recently implemented a Project in the center of Town. The report is still awaiting approval.

- *Objective 7: Continue the planning process through development of a detailed governmental needs assessment tied to the projected population growth, land use mapping, and an annexation plan.*

The Mayor and Council with the Town Manager have been working on strategic planning requirements to identify capital improvement projects and equipment needs.

- *Objective 8: Provide an awareness of Town history and historic structures through design standards, an online database, and a “home of the day” program.*

Members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee have compiled a database of historic structures.

- *Objective 9: Conformance with State Plan and Kent County Comprehensive Plan*

The Town will continue to annually submit to the State changes to the Town Comprehensive Plan receive feedback from the State to ensure that the Town Comprehensive Plan is in conformance with the State Plan. The Town will continue to coordinate planning efforts with the County to ensure that the Town Comprehensive Plan conforms to the County Comprehensive Plan.

8.2 Issues & Recommendations and Implementation

The following issues and recommendations in this Plan are based on input from the Town's residents and elected officials.

8.2.1 Traffic & Transportation

Transportation matters in Delaware are managed by the Delaware Department of Transportation. DeIDOT's principal responsibility is to construct and maintain roads, but it also focuses resources on providing options to address transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and freight needs. The Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the federally-designated agency responsible for coordinating transportation planning and programming in Kent County, Delaware, including all of the cities of Milford and Smyrna.

*Recommendations*¹⁰:

- Develop measures to manage traffic from the regional vehicular roadway network. Issues include limiting speed, buffering noise, reducing air pollution, and addressing growing dangers to pedestrians.
- Evaluate options for appropriate traffic-calming¹¹ techniques to improve both traffic and pedestrian safety, especially for the downtown commercial section of the Town.
- Explore opportunities to incorporate traffic-calming with appropriate

¹⁰ It is recognized that implementation of many of these recommendations will require cooperation with DeIDOT, Dover/Kent County MPO and other appropriate State agencies.

¹¹ Traffic Calming is the practice of using roadway geometry to improve safety. Speed bumps, rumble strips, hammerheads, flare-outs, doglegs and other combinations of geometry and streetscaping (landscaping and street furniture) can be effective in lowering drivers' speed on streets.

development design standards in order to help to ensure safety and mobility for pedestrian and non-motorized modes of transport. Design standards may include, but not be limited to, shorter and narrower blocks, on-street parking, through streets and walkways, and other elements designed to keep regional traffic dispersed and at low-speeds.

- Develop a plan for the regular monitoring of vehicular traffic (including the vehicle mix of cars versus tractor-trailers) and associated impacts over the next decade. The plan should include annual reporting from the appropriate agency to Camden Town Council.
- Promote a seasonal air quality monitoring program in the vicinity of State Route 13 to track changes over time.
- Develop a system of pathfinder signage throughout Camden to guide visitors to various locations, including parking lots. Such a system will reduce traffic congestion and associated noise and air pollution.
- Capitalize on Camden's accessibility from State Route 13 while concurrently implementing measures to manage regional traffic.

8.2.2 Parking

The way parking is managed has a significant impact on the type of development that takes place and the resultant look and feel of the community. Older downtowns typically do not have sufficient off-street parking due to the development patterns established prior to the advent of mass automobile usage. Business-owners attempt to address this issue by either demolishing buildings for parking lots or by converting green space or other (otherwise) unproductive areas to parking. The result is *often* a haphazard use of land and an increase in

congestion. The result is *always* a reduction in the quantity of spaces and quality of the commercial downtown.

Recommendations:

- Work with select business-owners with parking to institute shared parking arrangements as appropriate. Commercial tenants whose primary office hours are during the day can share parking facilities with establishments whose patronage is primarily at night. Camden can facilitate “Parking Agreements” between the parties in order to define the terms of such shared parking arrangement.
- Consider locating parking lots behind buildings or street walls. Successful urban design for commercial downtowns places retail and office buildings close to the sidewalk with no set back. Rear parking becomes a logical extension of such a design.
- Explore public/private partnerships with downtown businesses to effectuate the above-recommended municipal parking plans.

8.2.3 Transportation

Recommendations:

- As discussed under section 8.2.1 Traffic and Transportation, explore opportunities for developing pedestrian and bicycle pathways and other means of alternate transportation to connect various locations in the Town.
- As appropriate, coordinate all Transportation improvement efforts with

implementation of recommendations outlined under section 8.2.1 Traffic and Transportation and section 8.2.2 Parking.

8.2.4 Historic Preservation

Recommendations:

- Currently, the methodology is to preserve the properties through a historic overlay district. The Committee has determined to preserve the properties on a case-by-case basis.
- The properties will be inventoried and uploaded to an online database for the public to access. There will be properties “of the day” or “month” on the Town internet website to educate residents on Town history and culture.

8.2.5 Economic Development

Camden continues to work with the Kent County Department of Commerce and the Delaware Economic Development Office to promote economic growth while preserving the integrity of the agricultural and small business community.

Recommendations:

- Promote business expansion within existing Town and future annexation areas that can provide the appropriate infrastructure and community support to nurture business growth.
- Work to preserve farmland and recognize the small farm owner as an important economic contributor to the Town.

- Continue to promote assistance of educational institutions in educating a competitive regional, national and international workforce.
- Monitor the accessibility of the Town's commercial, industrial, and educational facilities, and continue to work to enhance the transportation of people and freight by means other than highway.

8.2.6 Land Use & Development

The primary Land Use and Development issues for Camden are Zoning, Redevelopment of Existing Areas, and Growth through Annexation. Rather than addressing these issues as distinct topics, they are discussed herein within the context of the significant land use categories existing in Camden at the time of this Comprehensive Plan.

Recommendations:

The Planning Commission should continue to seek input from Town (government) representatives, local business owners and residents to assist in developing specific strategies and procedures for implementing the zoning, redevelopment and annexation recommendations contained in this Comprehensive Plan.

Housing

In general, Camden's housing stock, while older, is in good to excellent condition and its residential neighborhoods are stable, both in terms of housing 'turnover' and the character and integrity of the areas.

With the exception of the residential neighborhoods bordering commercial zones, it appears that the Town's existing Zoning controls for residential districts, with

minor modifications, will continue to maintain the character of these districts into the future.

Recommendations:

- Review and streamline the number and types of permitted uses in residential zones. Remove certain incompatible land uses to protect the Town's residential neighborhoods. Such revisions should reflect current land uses in these locations, reinforce the integrity of the residential neighborhoods and reflect market realities for Camden.
- In addressing issues where residential zones border commercial zones, seek to modify the existing regulations for the commercial districts as opposed to seeking changes for the residential areas.
- Develop strategies that will reverse the trend toward rental housing by reinforcing homeownership and addressing permitted locations for rental housing units.
- Develop innovative zoning techniques to provide additional affordable housing opportunities within the existing housing stock, such as permitting accessory dwelling units in residential areas as a matter of right.
- Require, as part of all annexation agreements, that some units be set aside to be affordable for low and moderate income persons via long-term affordability restrictions.
- Partner with the Diamond State Community Land Trust (DSCLT) to ensure long-term affordable homeownership opportunities to low and moderate income households.

- Provide developers with incentives, such as density bonuses or expedited review, to facilitate affordable housing opportunities.

Commercial

- Camden's residents and elected officials are concerned with the Town's economic (commercial) base. While there is no desire to significantly increase the population of Camden, there is recognition of the need to expand its commercial center.
- Camden plans to utilize various State programs to assist in attracting various types of commerce to the Town.
- Camden's strategy is to remake its "downtown" into a commercial destination by utilizing Smart Growth design principles¹² and redevelopment initiatives. The goal is to recreate a "sense-of-place" in this area by incorporating dining, shopping, work and entertainment uses under the theory that a vibrant commercial center requires all such uses in a mutually reinforcing arrangement (no one activity can flourish in the absence of any other). Improving the economic viability of the Town's downtown in this manner can be enhanced by historic preservation measures, which promote a unique character to the area, and design guidelines that encourage construction that is context-sensitive and "fits in" with existing improvements.
- In developing recommendations to pursue this strategy, Camden proposes to employ a combination of Smart Growth design principles, traffic calming,

¹² Smart Growth principles include the encouragement of mixed-use Development, walkable town centers and neighborhoods, mass transit accessibility, sustainable economic and social development and preserved green space.

streetscape improvements, and land use controls, working in conjunction with available pro-business programs, to attract and retain appropriate investment. Other Redevelopment programs, including façade and other improvements to existing operations, re-planning land uses to produce a more efficient and effective configuration and the relocation of incompatible land uses may be used to provide a physical setting which will attract appropriate investment.

Recommendations:

- Develop a Strategic Plan for increasing and improving the use of the commercial properties in Camden. Explore marketing the Town’s accessibility, increased cooperative ventures with the State, and redevelopment of certain parcels and the rezoning of selected sections of the Town. Said Strategic Plan may include, but need not be limited to, efforts to:
 - Encourage the relocation of professional office and related businesses into appropriate Zoning Districts within Camden.
 - Encourage the redevelopment of “downtown” Camden by creating a Redevelopment Overlay to a portion of the (revised) General Business Zone. Such a strategy would recognize and protect the preexisting buildings and land uses in the Overlay Zone by maintaining existing zoning regulations for these parcels,¹³ while providing for new land use and zoning regulations for new or redeveloped parcels.
 - As a cornerstone of any redevelopment program, enter into

¹³ Said regulations to ‘run-with-the-land’, thus protecting the transferability of existing businesses.

negotiations with each owner and/or operator of each parcel and/or facility in the Redevelopment Overlay Zone. The goal of these negotiations is to enter into a public/private partnership between the Town and each of the individual operators in the Overlay Zone to assist in the general redevelopment of this area. Such negotiations should include, but need not be limited to, voluntary actions (on the part of the owner/operator) to address adverse impacts (to the extent any such impacts exist) resulting from said operations as well as the visual improvement to the physical structure.

- Where appropriate, utilize zoning, financial incentives, and other programs to (voluntarily) relocate incompatible, unattractive, and undesirable land uses to a more appropriate section of Town.
- Institute a program of Code Enforcement to ensure all parcels and operations conform to acceptable property maintenance and other appropriate standards.
- Revise Camden's Zoning Ordinance to support the goals of this Comprehensive Plan.
- Review, streamline, and reorganize the number and types of permitted uses in each nonresidential zone. Develop a schedule of permitted uses for each zoning district designed to the desired level of intensity of each district. Prohibit incompatible land uses. Revisions should reflect current land uses, reinforce the integrity of the districts and reflect market realities for Camden.
- Revise the current parking regulations as outlined in section 8.2.2

herein to assist in attracting and retaining desired commercial uses.

Mixed-Use

The above-cited Smart Growth design principles reinforce mixed-use development to provide life all hours of the day. Second floor apartments provide customers for shops, activity for the street and nighttime surveillance for the area. While such principles and the following recommendations are appropriate for the Town center, they are key components for redevelopment in the proposed Redevelopment Overlay Zone.

Recommendations:

- Allow mixed-use development (residential units above ground-floor commercial and office uses) downtown.
- Address parking issues pursuant to the discussion under section 8.2.2 herein. Additional parking considerations will arise with mixed-use development. Address residential parking either by dedicated parking areas or by shared parking arrangements.

Architectural Design Standards

Communities which include well-designed buildings, attractive signage, well-maintained facades and a positive orientation of buildings to the street are often the most distinctive. As Camden establishes its own definition of a desirable look, the opportunity exists to create a unique, memorable streetscape to attract future development.

Point 8.2.2 discusses site design standards in order to facilitate parking in downtown Camden. Architectural design standards regulating building setbacks, street and sidewalk design, architectural styles, signage and building materials can enhance both existing buildings and new development as the community addresses its sense-of-place¹⁴. Such guidelines may be prescriptive and specific (addressing the level of detail to the size and color of signs), or they may set broad parameters for design to allow for maximum diversity among users. In either case, when applied in a clear and consistent fashion, such standards provide guidance for developers and create higher quality projects by being attentive to design from the early stages.

While such standards are appropriate for the Town center, they are key components for the proposed Redevelopment Overlay Zone.

Recommendations:

- Develop clear site and architectural design guidelines so that streets, buildings and public spaces work together to create a sense-of-place for Camden's downtown.

Open Space

Recommendations:

- Recognize the unique nature of Camden's green spaces and conservation areas by creating a new Zoning category. Permit only open space and

¹⁴ Architectural design standards often go hand-in-hand with Zoning and Land Use regulations. For example, mixed-uses often require multi-story buildings, whose height, in turn, contributes to defining a street as a "place".