

01

Introduction

PURPOSE

The purpose of the project is to develop a master plan and establish the desired future character for New Road, located in Lewes, Delaware. The route serves as one of three gateways from SR 1 into the City of Lewes and is part of the Historic Lewes Byway, a state designated scenic byway. The Historic Lewes Byway Corridor Management Plan (CMP) was approved by Delaware's Secretary of Transportation in 2015 and is referenced in both the most current Sussex County and City of Lewes Comprehensive Plans. The CMP was created to guide growth along the corridor and to assist in preserving and enhancing significant natural and historic resources. The CMP specifically noted New Road's conservation emphasis aimed at retaining its overall rural character, including its farms, forests, wetlands and tributary streams.

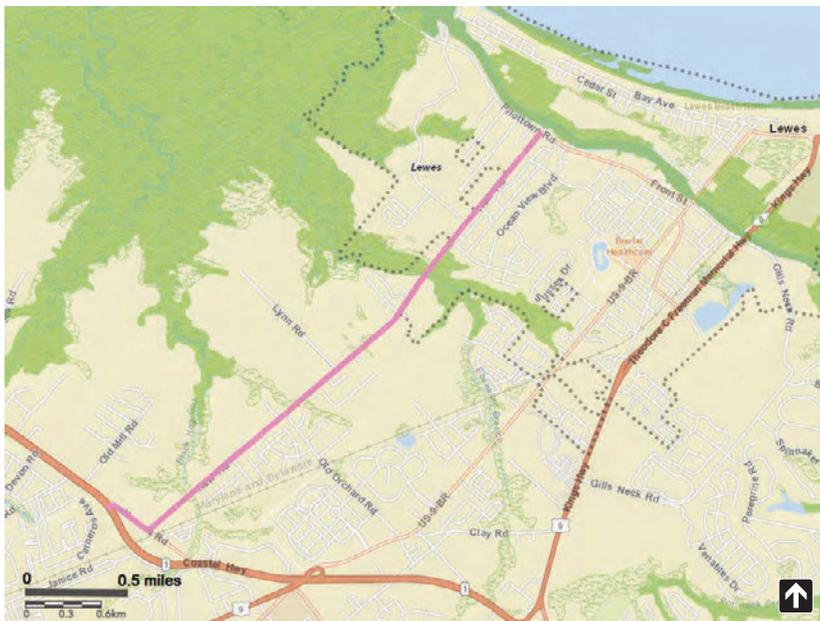


Figure 1 New Road (ESRI)

However, circumstances have changed since the Corridor Management Plan was completed. Development pressure has increased along and adjacent to the corridor. DelDOT has also initiated certain transportation projects to meet growing transportation demands throughout the region, and several of those projects will directly affect the New Road Corridor.

While land conservation along the corridor remains a priority, the focus of this Master Plan is how to address and coordinate the roadway-related changes that are planned in both the near-term (funded projects entering the design and engineering phases) and mid-term (next five to ten years).

The Master Plan provides a comprehensive overview of design concepts in relation to roadway improvements and desired roadway character that reinforce the community's desired vision. The plan also identifies the coordinated public and private actions necessary to achieve the desired vision and character. The concepts included in the Master Plan are intended to guide future changes to the corridor and are not intended for design or construction exactly as shown.

PROJECT LOCATION

Originating from SR 1, New Road serves as one of three gateways into Lewes. New Road primarily consists of one, ten-foot wide travel lane in each direction. Shoulders and other minor upgrades are associated with more recent subdivisions. For most of its length, bicyclists must ride with traffic and there are almost no facilities for pedestrians.

New Road is a state highway classified as a major collector that extends from Nassau Road to Pilottown Road and includes the following distinct segments:



Figure 2 New Road near Lynne Road intersection



Figure 3 New Road approaching 4th Street

- Between Nassau and Old Orchard: semi-rural with agricultural uses and scattered residences on the WB side, existing commercial uses at the SE intersection with Nassau, and a residential subdivision on the EB side
- Between Old Orchard and Canary Creek: existing agricultural land is being converted to a new residential neighborhood on the WB side while the EB side includes primarily residential subdivisions (with a few limited commercial uses on individual parcels) and a new residential neighborhood proposed at the Brittingham Farm adjacent to Canary Creek
- Between Canary Creek and Fourth Street: primarily residential with limited commercial uses and a church on individual parcels on the WB side and primarily residential subdivisions on the EB side
- Between Fourth Street and Pilottown Road: the right-of-way narrows and residences are closer to the street on both the EB and WB side with a marine services use located at the historic "Ice House" property (WB side)

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

The process for developing the Master Plan was an open and collaborative effort involving the corridor's many stakeholders, City, County and DeIDOT staff and representatives, the Historic Lewes Byway Committee, and State agency representatives and legislators. A project team comprised of representatives from the City, County, DeIDOT and the Byway Committee coordinated the development of the Master Plan. The City of Lewes served as the contractual entity for the project and established the Ad Hoc Committee. The Ad Hoc Committee provided critical input at three key milestone meetings throughout the process. The Historic Lewes Byway Committee, in addition to being represented on the project team, provided support in reviewing private landscape concepts and initiating early action, communicating with developers (on a voluntary basis) of the Brittingham Farm and Groome Church property (Tower Hill). Key meetings and milestones included the following:

It is the intent of the Historic Lewes Byway Committee to seek the endorsement of the Lewes City Council and Sussex County Council as well as the approval of the Master Plan by DeIDOT. These steps would establish the Master Plan as a policy document, meaning that the recommendations contained herein must first be considered and used unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise. Any governmental agency finding the need to alter a recommendation would be obligated to work with the Historic Lewes Byway Committee (and others involved) to find an alternative measure in keeping with the initial recommendations and consistent with the required public outreach and environmental and policy guidance.

Meeting	Topic	Month
AC #1	Identify issues and opportunities	8/22/18
AC #2	Review initial master plan concepts/corridor design principles	10/24/18
Public #1	Community Design Work Session (public meeting)	11/27/18
AC #3	Joint Ad Hoc / Historic Lewes Byway Committees Meeting (public workshop)	3/27/19
AC #4	Review and refine draft plan concepts and principles	5/7/19
Public #2	City of Lewes/Sussex County meetings to review draft	June 2019

Comments, meeting summaries, and display materials from these meetings are included in Appendix A.

KEY ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Throughout the planning process, several common issues were raised that have shaped the content of this plan. These include:

Corridor Management

- Allow corridor treatments to vary for each section/character area
- Serve the emergency evacuation needs of nearby neighborhoods
- Encourage creative and innovative practices to guide development

Conservation/Preservation and Land Use

- Preserve and maintain character-defining features in the face of rapid change
- Address flooding and drainage problems
- Address sea level rise and its potential impact on nuisance flooding in the near term, and tidal storm surge in the long term
- Promote compatibility of new development with existing uses and character
- Preserve historic buildings and working farms

Transportation/Context Sensitive Design

- Consider alternative travel demand approaches for roadway and intersections prior to increasing their capacities
- Retain New Road as the slow and scenic route – consider traffic calming to slow operating speeds
- Consider the potential impact of proposed near- and long-term transportation projects (Minos Conaway, Five Points, etc.)
- Consider the potential effect of development projects, both approved and in the pipeline, on the capacity of New Road (especially intersections)
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle facilities that are compatible with character-defining features
- Make connections with the Georgetown to Lewes Rail-Trail or design an independent alignment coordinated with adjoining development projects, instead of an alignment immediately adjacent to the roadway



Figure 4 New Road Corridor Master Plan public meeting

Character-defining Features

The use of the term “character-defining features” is derived from the Secretary of Interior’s Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties and is used to establish the baseline from which various treatment approaches can be selected: whether to preserve, restore, rehabilitate or reconstruct an historic property.

The same methodology can be adapted to scenic byways and historic roads by adjusting the treatment approaches to “preserve, maintain, or enhance” a byway’s character-defining features.

The term, “character-defining features,” is used throughout this master plan document, in reference to the intrinsic qualities or resources and the elements of the road and roadside context that contribute to a byway’s designation as a Delaware Scenic and Historic Byway.

The Historic Lewes Byway CMP includes documentation on the significance of the Byway and provides a list of character-defining features, such as scenic and historic resources. Information about the Historic Lewes Byway can be found on DelDOT’s byway web page at: <https://www.del.dot.gov/Programs/byways/index.shtml?dc=cmp>.



Figure 5 New Road east of Nassau looking toward Black Hog Gut



Figure 6 New Road view looking north near Blue Heron Drive



Figure 7 New Road view of Canary Creek



Figure 8 New Road looking east toward Pilottown

COMMON ASSUMPTIONS

The plan is based upon the following commonly held assumptions among all stakeholders:

- OVERALL GOAL:** Increase safety for all users while maintaining the bucolic and diverse nature of the corridor
- FUNCTION:** Continue to provide local access to existing and planned residential neighborhoods, retail and marine businesses, government field offices, the University of Delaware and public boat ramp
- TYPICAL SECTION:** For new development projects, a two lane road (one travel lane in each direction) with eleven-foot travel lanes and six-foot shoulders and a ten-foot wide, off-road, shared use path. Within the City of Lewes, that section may need to be narrowed due to right-of-way and land use constraints – to two ten-foot lanes, five-foot striped bike lanes, twelve-inch curb and gutter pan (narrow); a five-foot sidewalk on one or both sides, and various widths for planting strips on both sides or one side for street trees (fits within 50' right-of-way).
- MAINTENANCE:** Landscape enhancements must require cooperative agreements and safety assurances between DelDOT and a sponsoring organization (for anything more complex than just grass and trees). The Historic Lewes Byway Committee will strive to identify responsible parties as it works with developers, homeowners associations, the Lewes Parks and Recreation Commission and DelDOT to implement landscape recommendations in the state right-of-way.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

The character of New Road is recognized for the following character-defining features:

- Diverse array of open spaces (differing sizes, orientation, shape and composition)
- Waterways and Wetlands – most notably, Roosevelt Inlet, Canary Creek and Black Hog Gut, feeding into the Great Marsh
- Hedgerows – located between cultivated fields and some remnants along roadside areas, providing important birding and wildlife habitat as well as serving to shape the visual experience of traveling along New Road
- Agricultural Fields – remaining farmlands have been in continuous cultivation or agricultural use since at least the settlement period, and likely pre-settlement, which makes them eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a cultural landscape and archeological resource
- Pilottown – with its marine architectural heritage, narrow setbacks and narrow right-of-way, retains a distinct historic maritime neighborhood character