



Municipal Comprehensive Plan

Town of South Bethany, Delaware

March 2, 2026



Rossi Group
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March 2, 2026

1. Cover Letter

Ms. Maureen Hartman
Town Manager, Town of South Bethany
402 Evergreen Road, South Bethany, DE 19930

RE: Response to Request for Proposal
Municipal Comprehensive Plan, Town of South Bethany, Delaware

Rossi Transportation Group, Inc. (dba Rossi Group) offers a dedicated local team with the expertise, commitment, and capacity to deliver a robust Comprehensive Plan where GIS and data-driven insights inform the development of actionable implementation strategies.

Experienced Team with Extensive Local Knowledge

Our team has extensive local planning experience with a deep understanding of the Town of South Bethany and Sussex County. Our Project Manager, Savannah Edwards, AICP, is experienced in comprehensive planning and is well acquainted with the Town. She served as Project Manager for the 2022 City of Lewes Comprehensive Plan Update and is currently acting as Planning Lead for the City of Newark's 10-Year Comprehensive Development Plan.

Effective Approach

Rossi Group brings the strength of over 50 local professionals ready to support the Town. We are well-versed in the procedural requirements for State adoption of Comprehensive Plans for small municipalities and in formulating municipal development strategies that are both feasible and implementable. Our approach prioritizes direct engagement with Town leadership and key stakeholders, ensuring clear communication, responsive collaboration, and proactive project management at every step.

Inclusive Engagement & Community Impact

Rossi Group is committed to elevating community voices and ensuring equitable outcomes. Our outreach strategies are designed to be inclusive, accessible, and culturally responsive; meeting people where they are. Our team integrates education and equity into every phase of planning, ensuring that the Town's residents are empowered to innovatively craft a vision that reflects their needs and aspirations.

We look forward to your favorable consideration.

Sincerely,



Rita Ossiander, PE, AICP
President, Rossi Group

Rita.Ossiander@rossitg.com | (443) 330-5505



Firm Qualifications and Experience



2. FIRM QUALIFICATIONS

Rossi Group is a multidisciplinary consulting firm dedicated to advancing sustainable, equitable, and innovative land use solutions. Established in 2015, we deliver comprehensive services that integrate technical expertise with strategic planning to meet the evolving needs of small municipalities and government agencies across Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. Our mission is to empower communities through data-driven solutions that prioritize accessibility, sustainability, and safety.



We are a community planning and engineering consulting firm with experience in a broad range of comprehensive planning and multimodal engineering services including Delaware Comprehensive Plans and MDS preparation.

Our broad range of core services include community strategic planning and design, community outreach and stakeholder engagement, land use administration, transportation planning and engineering, general civil engineering, landscape architecture, environmental services, utility design and coordination, and construction management and inspection.

We provide our clients with a high level of service based upon our corporate standards of quality, business ethics, and community support. We believe in diversity and have a passion for working with communities to develop strategies to meet their community vision.

Tailored Services

Beyond our core services, Rossi Group offers specialized expertise and related experience tailored to local land use reform and housing policy initiatives. These capabilities include:

- **Municipal Planning and Zoning:** Reviewing site development and subdivision plans, updating comprehensive plans, analyzing zoning codes, and drafting ordinances and resolutions to enable diverse housing types and mixed-use development.
- **Resilience Planning:** Working with communities to identify strategies to prepare for the effects of climate change and sea level rise.
- **Regulatory Framework:** Aligning local reforms with state strategies and legislative mandates to ensure compliance and maximize funding opportunities.
- **Community Engagement:** Designing inclusive outreach programs that “go where they go,” meeting residents, especially underserved populations, where they live, gather, and engage.
- **Data Analytics and GIS Mapping:** Leveraging spatial data and demographic analysis to inform decisions on housing needs, growth patterns, and infrastructure capacity.

Project Leadership

Rossi Group is comprised of a diverse group of uniquely qualified transportation professionals with significant knowledge of the Town of South Bethany, Sussex County, and the surrounding region.

Our **Project Manager, Savannah Edwards, AICP**, brings expertise working with state, county, and municipal agencies to develop long-range plans. As a multidisciplinary community planner, she has worked on economic development, transportation, stormwater, and resiliency issues, as well as identified and resolved disconnects between comprehensive plans and city codes and ordinances. Specifically, she has supported municipalities in Maryland and Delaware to develop comprehensive plans, facilitating discussions to help Planning Commissions and elected bodies develop a vision for the community and creating goals and strategies to support that vision.

Savannah has worked with every community in eastern Sussex County including Lewes, Henlopen Acres, Rehoboth Beach, Bethany Beach, Fenwick Island, Millsboro, Dagsboro and Frankford to address long-term growth, infrastructure improvements, or resiliency issues associated with coastal flooding.

Our **Senior Planner, Ann Marie Townshend, AICP, CC-P**, has also worked closely with local municipalities and state agencies across the Delmarva peninsula. With over 30 years of experience in municipal and regional planning, she has vast expertise in delivering municipal services, comprehensive planning, sustainability and resiliency, downtown revitalization, active transportation, housing, and engaging community outreach.

She has led and participated in the development of multiple Comprehensive Plans, principally in Kent and Sussex Counties in Delaware. Prior to joining Rossi Group, she served as the City of Lewes, City Manager for over six years and as Director of Planning and Community Development for the City of Dover for 11 years.

Both Savannah and Ann Marie have strong understanding of stakeholder engagement in seeking community-based solutions and the governing regulations in Delaware.

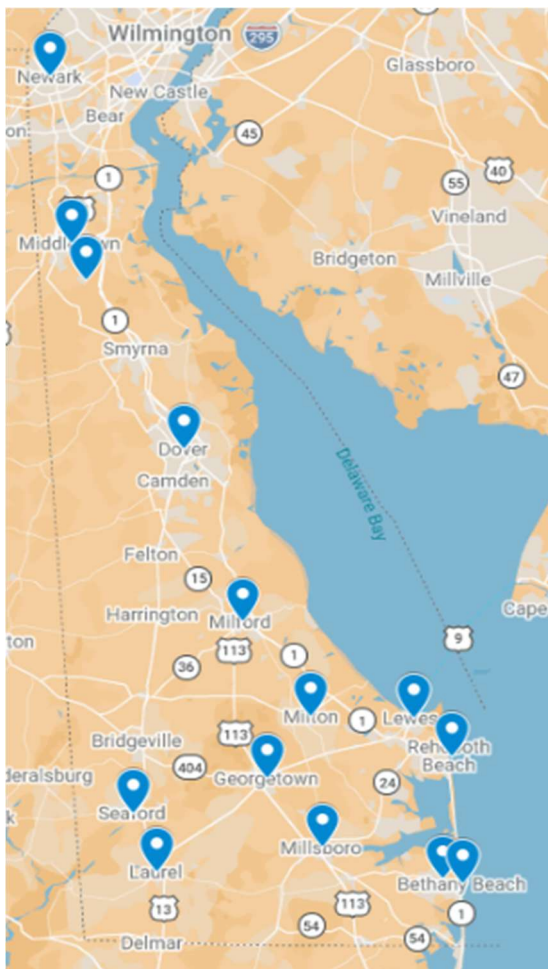
They currently teach Land Use Administration courses for the University of Delaware's Local Government Leadership Institute and have been active members of the Delaware's League of Local Governments, Sussex County Association of Towns, City management Association of Delaware, and Delaware Chapter of the American Planning Association, and regularly attended their meetings.

We are Local

This project will be managed out of our Dover and Wilmington, Delaware offices and will be supported by staff in our Hunt Valley, Maryland headquarters. With our local presence, we are positioned to provide responsive support and ensure seamless project delivery.

Our team offers the skillsets needed to update the comprehensive plan, with expertise ranging from coastal resiliency to demographic analysis. We are intimately familiar with Eastern Sussex County, as our staff has supported the region in a variety of roles over the past 15 years. With that experience comes the understanding of what makes each coastal town unique.

While South Bethany, is one of the smaller jurisdictions in coastal Delaware, its unique environmental features and water access have earned it the title of "Best Little Beach in Delaware" and fueled many visitors to choose to make it a year-round home. Not only do we understand the unique challenges of a small municipality and coastal community, but also the legislation and formal procedures that enable the Comprehensive Plan.



Delaware Municipalities served by Rossi Group Team

Our experience with Municipal Development Strategies (MDS) and Delaware's process allows the Town to focus on identifying the best local solutions to these challenges while we ensure state requirements are met in an efficient and effective manner.

We have worked with over 15 small municipalities in Delaware and are passionate about supporting locally driven solutions, integrating the latest technology and insights from successful initiatives and projects across the county to inform and enhance planning efforts.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution that can be applied in community planning.

Our goal is to serve small municipalities and the community with the time, care, and attention they deserve, while empowering residents as active participants in shaping their community.

Our experienced professionals will deliver high quality, technically sound results in a cost-effective manner. We are dedicated to listening to the communities we serve and are proud to be a part of those communities. Your project is our priority.

ROSSI GROUP EXPERIENCE

As demonstrated through the following projects, our relevant work experience covers all aspects of planning and analysis for motorized and non-motorized modes of travel, comprehensive strategic community planning and policy development, socioeconomic and land use forecasting, project tracking, administrative services, environmental documentation, preliminary and final engineering, traffic analysis, stakeholder and community coordination and outreach, cost estimating, and project management.

The projects below demonstrate our relevant experience with Delaware Comprehensive Plans and MDS preparation for small municipalities in Delaware:

Comprehensive Plans



City of Newark Community Day Public Engagement Event



Client

Various Delaware
Municipalities

Dates

2022-Present

Services Provided

Comprehensive Planning
Public Engagement
Program Evaluation
District Plan Development
Planning Commission
Coordination
Zoning Ordinances
Document Review / Research
Community Revitalization

City of Newark Comprehensive Plan

We are currently leading the 10-year update to the City's Comprehensive Development Plan, including stakeholder and community coordination, an outreach and public participation campaign, an update of City demographics and relevant data, evaluation and update of the community vision, goals, and objectives, and strategy development to address challenges identified through the planning process.

City of Lewes Comprehensive Plan Update and Addendum

The Planning Commission and City Council determined that several 2015 chapters required updates. We completed the five-year update to the 2015 Comprehensive Plan in 2022. We worked with the Commission to host a public workshop to facilitate community engagement, develop new goals, and create a plan addendum.

Dover On-Call Planning Support & Downtown Development District (DDD) Program Renewal and Implementation

Rossi Group has provided support to the Dover Planning Office since 2024. This support has included permit and plan review, development of reports to appointed boards and commissions, drafting zoning verification letters, and training staff. This on-call support included completing the renewal application for the City's designation within the DDD Program in 2024, including program evaluation, updates to the District Plan, ordinance development, marketing materials updates, a public workshop, and a presentation to the Cabinet Committee on State Planning Issues. Dover was the first City in Delaware to successfully complete the renewal process.

Town of Laurel Downtown Development District (DDD)

We are currently completing the District Plan update and renewal application for the Town's DDD Program designation, including program evaluation, strategy development, and presentations to Planning Commission and Town Council, and the Cabinet Committee on State Planning Issues.

Coastal Community Planning Services



City of Rehoboth Beach King Charles Avenue Pilot Project

Client

City of Rehoboth Beach,
Delaware

Dates

2021-2024

Services Provided

Data Collection / GIS
Analysis

Public Outreach /
Stakeholder Coordination

Long-Term Policy
Recommendations

Concept Development

Coastal Community
Revitalization Mobility
Solutions

Bicycle / Pedestrian Safety

Traffic / Safety Analysis /
Traffic Calming

Baltimore & Wilmington Avenues Conceptual Streetscape Development

Rossi Group developed concept designs to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and mobility with enhanced aesthetics focusing on widening walkways to better accommodate pedestrian traffic and outdoor activities.

City-wide Parking Inventory

Rossi Group supported the development of a Parking Strategic Plan, assessing current parking supply and demand, utilization patterns, projected parking supply and demand, current assets, parking system technology, organizational management/oversight, financial performance, and policies and programs, including ArcGIS mapping, establishing a stakeholder task force including residents and businesses, and public outreach facilitation.

State Road Sidewalk Improvements, Report a Pedestrian Issue (RPI)

Rossi Group performed concept development, engineering, and final design support of pedestrian improvements for DelDOT. Task assignments include projects requested through the RPI tool for citizens to report locations where pedestrian infrastructure is missing, insufficient, or in need of repair.

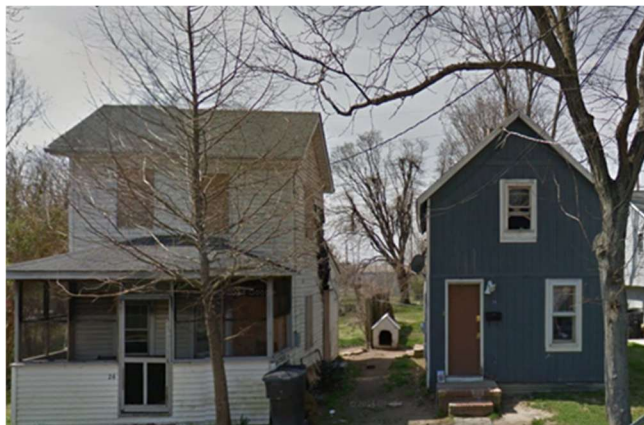
Traffic and Transportation Study

Rossi Group developed this 2023-2024 study with improvement options and recommendations that addressed transportation concerns including traffic, safety, congestion, and parking throughout the City. We identified current traffic and parking patterns and concerns to provide clear improvements and recommendations. We worked closely with the City to map a path for actionable implementation based on needs, funding, and timing. We also supported public meetings and a stakeholder survey.

King Charles Avenue Pilot Project

Rossi Group designed a 2023 pilot project involving two intersections as one of the safety improvement concepts identified through the Traffic and Transportation Study. We supported the design and implementation of temporary traffic calming measures and gathered public feedback via online and on-site surveys to evaluate the traffic calming performance.

Community Planning Services



Restoring Central Dover: Before and After Housing Construction by NeighborGood Partners

Client

Delaware Department of
Transportation (DelDOT)

Department of Natural
Resources and Environmental
Control of Delaware (DNREC)

NeighborGood Partners

Dates

2019-Present

Services Provided

Resiliency Planning

Public Outreach / Stakeholder
Engagement

Stakeholder Interviews

Land Development Ordinance
Regulation Planning &
Development

Long-Range Planning

Best Management Practices

DelDOT Public Participation Plan Guidance

Rossi Group worked with DelDOT Planning to develop a guidance document for DelDOT project managers when planning and scoping public participation their planning and design projects. Document includes best practices, descriptions of tools, and recommendations for planning for inclusive engagement that supports project objectives.

Coastal Communities Impervious Surface Coverage Report

Under the Resilient Community Partnership (RCP) Program, which provides technical assistance and potential funding to plan for and reduce the impacts of coastal hazards related to flooding from sea level rise, coastal storms, and climate change through local planning strategies.

Lewes, Henlopen Acres, Rehoboth Beach, Dewey Beach, Bethany Beach, South Bethany, and Fenwick Island, DE partnered with the Coastal Program in assessing current/future conditions of impervious surface coverage, and meeting with coastal communities and stakeholders to identify best management practices. Savannah helped develop guidance regarding stormwater infiltration and impervious surface cover in an approachable document. Final report guides corridor planning, long-range planning, land development ordinances, zoning and annexation regulations, infrastructure siting, and site/ subdivision plan reviews.

Restoring Central Dover Strategic Plan

We are actively developing an update to the Central Dover Strategic Plan to provide implementable strategies to invest in and strengthen the Central Dover community for the next five years. We are leading the five-year review, community engagement, and the draft plan development including kick-off, project team and Advisory Committee meetings, and monthly progress meetings, stakeholder interviews, community workshops, surveys, and interactive engagement activities, providing display boards and engagement materials, and drafting the final document.



Project Team



3. PROJECT TEAM

Rossi Group is a local team dedicated to improving the communities where we live and work while providing the highest level of innovation to find practical, sustainable, and cost-effective solutions for our clients. We have a solid track record and have established strong relationships with local and state agencies throughout Delaware through a variety of planning, design, and engineering projects.

Our staff members have completed several comprehensive plans and small area plans throughout Delaware. We also provide assistance to clients with land development review, policy and ordinance development, coordination with state and local agencies, long-range planning, innovative community engagement, environmental studies and assessments, and traffic/transportation engineering services.

To deliver the Town of South Bethany Comprehensive Plan as outlined in our Proposed Approach and Public Engagement Strategy, the following individuals are identified as key personnel. We have a team of over 50 engineers, scientists, planners, analysts, and technicians ready and willing to serve as backups if needed on this project.



Rita Ossiander, PE, AICP

Principal-In-Charge / Technical Advisor

25 Years of Experience

Rita will serve as the Principal-In-Charge and Technical Advisor. As the President and Principal Planner of Rossi Group, she is experienced in strategic planning and engineering design of transportation facilities for local and state governmental agencies. She has vast experience in preparing and managing projects of varying magnitude.

She fosters a planning process that is community driven, where the transportation and land use needs are reflected in the vision for improved connectivity, safety, and accessibility.

Rita understands state and federal grant requirements and will help identify the right partners and resources to implement Plan recommendations. She will ensure the project is delivered to Rossi Group's standards, on time and within budget.

Some of her recent project experience include the SHA Pedestrian Safety Action Plan concept development for MD 2 and US 1, various Delaware Safe Routes to Schools projects, and DelDOT's Active Transportation and Community Connection projects. These included recommendations for lane reconfigurations, safety improvements, traffic calming measures, transit enhancements, and walking and cycling paths.

LICENSES / CERTIFICATIONS

2006 / AICP Certified Planner

2009 / Professional Engineer:
Delaware

EDUCATION

1998 / BS, Surveying & Civil
Engineering

1998 / MS, Surveying & Civil
Engineering



Savannah Edwards, AICP

Project Manager / Primary Liaison

10 Years of Experience

Savannah is an experienced planner specializing in community and transportation planning for local governments and state agencies. Her expertise includes zoning codes and ordinance development, municipal and county comprehensive planning, on-call planning support, land use administration, resiliency planning, policy research, and strategic planning. She is skilled in public participation, presenting to governing bodies, facilitating working groups, synthesizing data and community research, and navigating regulatory frameworks.

LICENSES /

CERTIFICATIONS

2022 / AICP Certified Planner

EDUCATION

2014 / BA, Political Science & Government

2017 / MPA, Planning for Sustainable Communities

2019-Present / Instructor, Land Use Administration at the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration

City of Newark Comprehensive Plan Update

Planning lead for 10-year Comprehensive Plan Update. Providing stakeholder and community outreach coordination, developing and maintaining project website, and identifying potential strategic issue areas.

City of Lewes Comprehensive Plan Update

Led a 5-year plan update, including data collection, public workshop facilitation, recommendations to the Mayor and Council, Planning Commission presentation, and preparation of the final report.

DelDOT Middletown Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan

Managed planning and outreach; developed existing conditions memos, improvement recommendations, and cost estimates to support safe, accessible travel for all users.

Comprehensive Plans (Delaware: Town of Millsboro, 2021; Town of Ocean View, 2020; Town of Dagsboro, 2020; Maryland: Dorchester County, 2019; Garrett County, 2019)

Project Manager leading customized outreach strategies, including targeted engagement in Ocean View and in-person meetings across Dorchester County. All efforts included workshops and stakeholder coordination tailored to each community.

Resilient Communities Partnership

Led assessments with coastal communities to identify best practices for resilience. Provided technical guidance on corridor and long-range planning, land use regulations, and infrastructure siting.

Sussex County & Lewes Onsite Community Planner

Provided technical support for comprehensive plan implementation, corridor and long-range planning, zoning and annexation, infrastructure analysis, and ordinance review.



Ann Marie Townshend, AICP, CC-P

Senior Planner

30 Years of Experience

Ann Marie is a Certified Planner with 18 years of experience in local government. She specializes in municipal planning, downtown revitalization, and ordinance development. As Planning Director in Dover, she led the 2008 Comprehensive Plan, and as Lewes City Manager, she resolved state-local conflicts to secure certification of the 2015 Plan and has a unique perspective and understanding of the State's legal framework for land use and housing.

LICENSES /

CERTIFICATIONS

2003 / AICP Certified Planner

2023 / Certified Climate Change Professional

EDUCATION

1994 / BS, Political Science

1996 / MPA, State and Local Management

2011-Present / Instructor, Land Use Administration at the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration

2024-Present / Board of Directors, Central Delaware Habitat for Humanity

Comprehensive Plans

Delaware: City of Newark, City of Lewes, City of Dover, Town of Millville, and Town of Milton.

City of Newark, DE Comprehensive Development Plan VI

Supporting a 10-year plan update focused on sustainable growth and land use. Responsibilities include managing public engagement, collaborating with officials to refine the city's vision and goals, and establishing a planning framework for future development.

Town of Laurel, DE Downtown Development District (DDD) Plan Renewal

Led the effort to complete the renewal application for the Town's designation within the DDD Program. This effort included a program evaluation, developing a new District Plan, presentations with public comment to Planning Commission and Town Council, and a presentation to the Cabinet Committee on State Planning Concerns.

City of Dover, DE DDD Plan

Led the effort to complete Dover's DDD Plan Renewal application, including a program evaluation, mobility plans, District boundary modification, a public workshop and associated materials, and a City Council presentation. Participated in steering committee to establish Restoring Central Dover and identified and facilitated the transfer of city-owned properties to non-profits. This led to the development of over 60 new owner-occupied homes for low to moderate income families, stabilizing neighborhoods that had been deteriorating.

Restoring Central Dover Phase III

Led update of community-based redevelopment plan in partnership with NeighborGood Partners. Worked with resident advocates to develop a survey, engage the public, and build advocacy skills. Directed Rossi Group's team in drafting updated plan and creating actionable strategies for the next five years.



Hannah Hosey

Planner / GIS / Mapping / Data Analytics

4 Years of Experience

Hannah brings a strong background in environmental planning, GIS mapping, and data analytics to support transportation, land use, and community development initiatives for local and regional projects. She specializes in public participation planning, strategic updates, district revitalization, zoning analysis, and data driven decision-making.

DelDOT – Public Participation Plan Guidance

Planner supporting the development of a guidance document to help DelDOT staff and consultants plan effective, inclusive public involvement based on project type, scale, and audience. Focuses on addressing barriers to participation.

Restoring Central Dover Phase III

Assisting with the strategic plan update by documenting progress, evaluating lessons learned, and refining goals for continued revitalization. Supports public outreach and engagement to align community input with future planning.

Town of Laurel – Downtown Development District Renewal

Serving as planner and data analyst for the renewal application. Responsibilities include program evaluation, stakeholder interviews, focus group facilitation, census data analysis, district expansion review, and map development.

City of Dover – On-Call Planning Support

Planner and GIS lead providing support during staffing shortages including land use and permit reviews, zoning verification, and sign permit evaluations. Supported Dover DDD renewal application, updating ordinances and public-facing materials.

City of Rehoboth Beach – Traffic & Transportation Study

Contributed to analysis of traffic and parking patterns and supported public outreach through meetings and surveys. Helped develop actionable recommendations presented in a final report.

Town of Georgetown – Bicycle & Pedestrian Mobility Planning

Assisted in drafting the Existing Conditions Report, including analysis of infrastructure near schools and public facilities, and documentation of environmental, freight, and transit conditions.

Salisbury/Wicomico MPO – Long-Range Transportation Plan

Supported the Connect 2050 LRTP update through data analysis, GIS mapping, census review, and public engagement. Helped present the final plan to the MPO Council.

EDUCATION

2022 / BS, Environmental
Science

2022 / BA, Geology



Austin McBrady, CESSWI, LEED

Senior Environmental Planner

10 Years of Experience

Austin has a depth of experience delivering strategic environmental consulting and regulatory compliance solutions across federal and private sectors. Expertise spans NEPA compliance, wetland delineation, and sustainable site assessments, with a strong foundation in water resource science and environmental policy. Proven track record of supporting diverse stakeholders, including national homebuilders, commercial developers, and agencies such as DHS, HUD, and municipal governments, by integrating field data with regulatory frameworks to inform cost-effective, sustainable development strategies. Recognized for the ability to navigate complex environmental regulations, lead interdisciplinary teams, and contribute to policy development that aligns with ecological and economic goals.

LICENSES / CERTIFICATIONS

2017 / Certified Erosion
Sediment & Stormwater
Inspector (CESSWI)

2025 / LEED Green Associate,
USGBC

2025 / Underground Storage
Tank (UST) Class A & B
Operator

EDUCATION

2015 / BS, Environmental
Science, Technology & Policy

2023 / MS, Water Resources
Science & Technology

Anne Arundel County Safe Routes to School, Phase 2

Overseeing report development, supporting field data collection and on-site transportation evaluations for pedestrians and cyclists, and assisting with assessment of infrastructure within walk zones surrounding elementary and middle schools.

S/WMPO US 13 / US 50 Interchange Assessment

Deputy Project Manager providing development of the Project Plan, kickoff meetings, and facilitating ongoing team logistics. Also completed a desktop environmental review of project area.

Two Farms, Royal Farm #379 Environmental Justice Report

Provided comprehensive survey of community impacts on minority and/or low-income populations from the development and construction of a gas station and associated shopping plaza.

MTA Southern Maryland Rapid Transit (SMRT) Study

Provided comprehensive review of community impacts, including community facilities, services, demographics and land use for this Planning and Environment Linkages Study to evaluate Rapid Transit Improvements along nearly 19 miles of the MD 5 / US 301 corridor.

DHS – Environmental Protection Specialist

Supported Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Headquarters in environmental policy development and NEPA compliance across components. Conducted audits, delivers NEPA training, and performs resilience assessments. Led research on GHG emissions and embodied carbon, drafts SOPs, monitored regulatory updates, and represented DHS at professional events.



Proposed Approach and Methodology

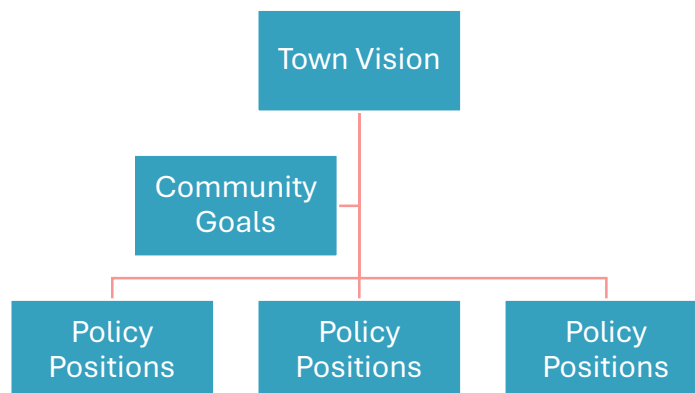


4. PROPOSED APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

Rossi Group will work with the Town of South Bethany to prepare a Comprehensive Plan that includes all required elements under Delaware law for municipalities with under 2,000 residents, focusing on creating a Municipal Development Strategy (MDS) that clearly defines a vision for South Bethany over the next 10 to 20 years.

The Comprehensive Plan will identify policy positions that align with that vision and reflect the values and priorities of South Bethany residents. The plan will integrate analysis and recommendations related to population growth, housing growth, expansion of boundaries, development of adjacent areas, redevelopment potential, community character, land use, critical community development issues, and key infrastructure issues. The plan will be an easy-to-understand guide that the Mayor and Town Council, the Planning Commission, various advisory boards, departments, developers, property owners, and residents can reference as a guide for the next 10 years.

To identify a vision and goals that reflect the community's priorities, we will engage the public through a variety of interactive tools and activities, synthesize the feedback collected, articulate the issues identified in the planning process, and use our expertise and research skills to identify actionable strategies to support the vision and goals of the community.



The Scope of Work detailed in the following pages addresses the planning process and how Rossi Group will address the Town's specified criteria.

Scope of Work

Task 1: Project Management & Coordination

Savannah Edwards, AICP will be the Project Manager for this Comprehensive Plan. Savannah brings ten years of experience working with communities across Delaware and Maryland to develop plans that bring together collective visions and realistic approaches to help communities plan their futures.

Savannah has led the development of Comprehensive Plans for communities in Sussex County, including Ocean View's American Planning Association (APA) award-winning Comprehensive Plan. She will utilize her experience to facilitate the Town's visioning exercises and community outreach to identify the unique needs, issues, and opportunities within the community. Her proactive, hands-on management style will involve coordination with the South Bethany Planning Commission, Town staff, and elected officials to identify issues and develop actionable strategies through the planning process.



Town of Ocean View Comprehensive Plan Workshop on Election Day

Under Savannah's leadership, we will commence our work by facilitating a kick-off meeting with Town staff where we will review a detailed project schedule and work plan.

Our approach to developing the new Comprehensive Plan will be to support the Town with insight and expertise to guide meaningful policy decisions and recommendations for South Bethany. We will maintain clear lines of communication throughout the project duration, including monthly project meetings with Town Staff, regular presentations and updates to the Planning Commission and any other elected/appointed bodies such as the Community Planning Advisory Committee, as required. We will prepare draft and final plan documents and perform a thorough Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) review to ensure that all documents are suitable for public review and adoption.

Task 2: Public Engagement

We will work with the Town of South Bethany to develop a robust yet cost-effective public engagement plan that meets the public where they are and provides a variety of opportunities for full-time and part-time residents to meaningfully participate in the planning process.

The public engagement plan will feature outreach strategies that range in scale from individual feedback opportunities like surveys to larger, more interactive events, such as open-house style workshops.



City of Newark Hybrid Planning Commission Meeting

We will work with the Town to identify stakeholders who may provide key insights and act as project champions to engage the public. We have found success using town subcommittees, HOAs, and local non-profit organizations or churches useful in connecting us to those who may be traditionally hard to engage. Public engagement will be coordinated with the Town's social media, website, and other established communication channels between the Town and its residents.

In coordination with the Town, we will set clear objectives for each public outreach effort, from general visioning and goal setting to evaluating plan recommendations. During our Planning Commission/Steering Committee Meeting #1, we will review and select engagement methods that are most appropriate for each outreach effort,

target audience, and stage in the planning process. For example, if the goal is to broadly inform the public about the upcoming Comprehensive Planning process, then the Town may use email blasts, press releases, social media posts, or newsletters to leverage a variety of existing audiences.

During public workshops and pop-up events, more targeted engagement activities, such as preference voting, can be used to gather feedback from residents. We will provide a variety of methods for engaging residents of varying ages and abilities, such as sticker preference voting, kitchen table conversations, and live polling.

One example of an interactive activity includes a community mapping exercise to solicit site-specific feedback on plan elements, where participants are asked to place stickers at locations where there have

ENGAGEMENT TOOL SPOTLIGHT



Kitchen Table Conversations allow the opportunity to engage residents in an informal setting. They can take place in a local café, park or HOA meeting and allow friends, neighbors, and business owners to share their perspectives about the community through facilitated discussion.

pedestrian or bicyclist safety concerns or areas where flooding has been an issue. Maps can be made available online and in paper form.

Our team has developed a toolkit of outreach techniques and tools that include 32 unique engagement strategies. We are committed to working with the Town to develop low-cost yet meaningful and engaging activities that are tailored to South Bethany's needs.

If desired, Rossi Group can work with Town staff to develop an online presence through the Town's website. Throughout the planning process, we would work with the Town to ensure that the project webpage is updated regularly and that materials are posted for public access in a timely manner. As we would not have access to post directly to the Town's webpage, we will provide content and a general layout so that materials may be posted by webmaster.



City of Newark Community Day Public Engagement Event

We propose kicking off the public engagement effort with a resident survey, followed by two open-house style public workshops, one during the goal-setting phase and one during the recommendation phase, and two pop-up engagements at existing community events or meetings. Each of these would be staffed by two Rossi Group team members.

We will work with Town to identify community events for the pop-up engagement. These may include hosting a booth with maps and preference surveys at the Summer Kick Off Party or handing out flyers at South Bethany's Historical Society's Tall Tales from the Sea.

Interactive activities could include the money game, where participants are given a "town budget" to allocate to different implementation strategies. If the Town is targeting families for outreach, we will include activities for kids where they can plan their town. We will target engagement to reach a broad cross section of South Bethany residents, full-time and part-time.

Throughout the public engagement process, we will ensure that all feedback is collected and summarized for incorporation into the plan.

Task 3: Data Collection & Existing Conditions Analysis

Early in the Comprehensive Planning process Rossi Group will complete a thorough review of relevant planning documents, including the 2016 Comprehensive Plan and 2022 update, recent work completed by South Bethany subcommittees, Comprehensive Plan annual reports to the State, and the Council's latest Action Plan.

We will also review relevant plans from the County and State, including the Strategies for State Policies and Spending to understand state planning priorities. Simultaneously, we will submit a Pre-Plus application to the Office of State Planning Coordination (OSPC) to understand any early concerns from the State.

Rossi Group will conduct a demographic review and identify any relevant shifts or patterns for planning purposes. Simultaneously we will develop maps needed for the Comprehensive Plan. Rossi Group will utilize existing, publicly accessible data and GIS mapping to develop informative maps for the Planning Commission

and public that cover a range of topics including environmental features such as wetlands and open space, critical infrastructure, community facilities, and land use.

Rossi Group will review all previous policy statements and recommendations included in the 2016 South Bethany Comprehensive Plan and 2022 Update, as well as annual reports submitted to OSPC to develop a ‘report card’ for the latest Comprehensive Plan and update. This will provide a foundation for building the new Comprehensive Plan as we assess which community goals and recommendations may still be relevant.

The report card, demographic information, state planning priorities, and early feedback received from the Community Survey will be presented at Planning Commission/Steering Committee Meeting #2. At this meeting Rossi Group will also facilitate a discussion to identify areas of need for the community. Rossi will conduct further analysis and best practice research to develop potential strategies for those areas of need.

Task 4: Draft Plan & Implementation Strategy

With the results of Tasks 2 and 3, Rossi Group will develop the draft 2027 Comprehensive Plan text update and associated maps. The Comprehensive Plan will address all requirements for a Municipal Development Strategy based on 22 Del Code §702. The Plan will focus on those priority areas identified by the Town and through the public engagement process.

When it comes to Land Use and Development, South Bethany is built out and surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, Assawoman Canal, Delaware Seashore State Park, and developed land. There is no area for the Town to grow, so that section of the Plan will focus on the area within the Town and coordination with other towns and the County to address development and infrastructure concerns. Understanding constraints, priorities, and planned projects in the surrounding area is vital to creating a cohesive and coordinated Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan will also focus on ensuring that the quality of life that attracts many people to choose South Bethany as their home can be maintained for years to come services. To address these challenges, we will present implementation strategies based on best practices that have been successful in similarly situated locations at Planning Commission/Steering Committee Meeting #3. Based on their feedback, strategies will be further refined and presented to the public for concurrence at Public Workshop #2.

The draft Comprehensive Plan, including a detailed implementation strategy, will be presented to the Planning Commission at Planning Commission/Steering Committee Meeting #4 for review. One round of edits will be



2022 Lewes Comprehensive Plan Update
Public Workshop

Recommendation		
No.	Short term (<2 years)	Long term (>2 years)
R-1	Complete update to the 2011 ADA Transition Plan and upgrade pedestrian facilities in accordance with Plan.	Complete update to the 2011 ADA Transition Plan and upgrade pedestrian facilities in accordance with Plan.
R-2	Fill in sidewalk gaps in locations where missing sidewalks causes interruptions in the current network, as identified in Figure 29.	Fill in sidewalk gaps in locations where missing sidewalks causes interruptions in the current network, as identified in Figure 29.
R-3	Launch pedestrian education campaign similar to others in Ocean City, MD, Roanoke, VA, and Baltimore, MD.	

Implementation Table Example – Rehoboth Beach Transportation Plan

completed following this review, prior to presenting a final draft Comprehensive Plan for the initiation of the formal review process.

We will develop an implementation strategy, that will identify short-, mid-, and long-term implementation actions. We will make recommendations for amendments to zoning or development regulations if appropriate. We will also provide guidance to the Town on capital improvements and funding strategies. Our implementation strategy will be summarized in an easy to reference matrix or chart format for easy reference.



Rossi Group will complete the Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) application, submit the final draft Comprehensive Plan, and represent the Town at the PLUS meeting. Rossi Group will incorporate changes as appropriate to address State agency comments.

Following this, Rossi Group will support two public hearings, one with the Planning Commission (Meeting #5) and the other with the Town Council. We will ensure that the public notice requirements for each public hearing are fully adhered to and executed.

Task 5: Final Plan & Approval

Following the two public hearings and final adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by the Town Council, Rossi Group will incorporate any final edits and finalize the Comprehensive Plan.

We will submit the document to the Office of State Planning Coordination for certification by the Governor. We will provide the full document to the Town in MS Word and PDF format. If the Town requests the GIS files, we will provide them as well.

Deliverables

- Draft Comprehensive Plan (including maps and graphics)
- Final Comprehensive Plan suitable for Adoption
- Municipal Development Strategy maps and documentation
- Public Engagement & Presentation Materials
- Digital files in MS Word and PDF format
- GIS data files if requested

Rossi Group's approach to comprehensive planning is thorough and focused on the community. As a result, the Comprehensive Plan will reflect the Town's values, priorities, and recommendations that are appropriate for the Town of South Bethany.



Public Engagement Strategy



5. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Rossi Group will work closely with Town staff to develop a public engagement strategy that is effective in connecting with the Town's full-time and part-time residents. Understanding the Town's demographics is essential to creating a public engagement strategy that works for the Town's population.

As a small, residential ocean resort, South Bethany has a full-time population of 451 residents but many more part-time residents who maintain second homes. The median age of full-time residents according to the 2020 Census was 68.7. The community is highly educated, with 47.1% having a graduate or professional degree. These factors influence the strategies and tools used for engaging the public. For example, with a large population of older adults, using strategies that rely less on technology and more on personal engagement are likely to be more effective. With a large population of part-time residents, weekend engagement activities and online/virtual engagement strategies might be needed to reach community stakeholders.

Our public engagement strategy includes

1. Resident and Visitor Survey
2. Open-House Style Workshop #1 – Visioning and Identifying Priorities
3. Pop-up Engagement (2) – Sharing Information and Gathering Feedback
4. Open-House Style Workshop #2 – Feedback on Draft Strategies and Recommendations

We will work with Town Staff to identify the best places for disseminating information to South Bethany residents. We will develop a resident and visitor survey in both digital and paper formats. Both mediums can be distributed via means where locals already expect to engage about their community. This will look like sharing survey links through the Mayor's monthly newsletter, NextDoor, Facebook and e-mail blasts. We can also distribute paper surveys and return boxes to places like Town Hall or the South Coastal Library. Paper surveys and/or QR code links can also be distributed with monthly electric bills. Ultimately, we will work with Town Staff to determine which methods will give us the greatest return on investment.

Throughout the public engagement process, we will make engagement materials that can be used and hosted somewhere online, like the Town's Planning Commission page, which will make it accessible for full-time and part-time residents.

Our public engagement plan allows for flexibility and relies on community leaders to connect us locally with stakeholders. The public engagement plan may include "Meetings-in-a-Box" to leverage recurring meetings among the Town's Committees, such as the Community Relations Committee, Bicycle & Pedestrian Meeting, and Budget & Finance Committee. They can also be taken outside to places like the South Coastal Village Volunteers or South Bethany Women's Club, where they could be featured as a portion of a meeting. Meetings-in-a-Box are small, informal meetings facilitated by community volunteers, potentially a member of the Planning Commission or other committee. The community volunteer would be provided with all necessary materials, such as discussion guides, worksheets, and questionnaires. At the end of the meetings, the volunteer would collect any forms and return them to the project team. Meetings-in-a-box take advantage of existing community meeting spaces while providing a comfortable and familiar setting for members of the public to provide feedback.



Project Schedule



6. PROJECT SCHEDULE

In coordination with our Project Approach and Public Engagement Strategy outlined above, we developed a project timeline subject to approval by the Town of South Bethany, assuming the project will begin in spring of 2026 and the submission of the final version of the Comprehensive Plan, including review, amendment by relevant bodies and project adoption by spring of 2027, and State certification by December, 2027.

	2026										2027				
	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May		
Task 1: Project Management & Coordination															
Task 2: Public Engagement															
Task 3: Data Collection & Existing Conditions Analysis		Resident & Visitor Survey Open													
Task 4: Draft Plan & Implementation Strategy															
Task 5: Final Plan & Approval											State Review & Approval				

Legend

Staff Meeting	
Planning Commission/Steering Committee Meeting	
Public Workshop or Pop-Up Event	
Mayor & Council Meeting	



Cost Proposal



7. COST PROPOSAL

Rossi Group's Project Methodology and Approach and Public Engagement Strategy were developed to provide the most qualified staff and feasible solutions to fulfill the needs of this Comprehensive Plan, while considering the funding approved for this project.

We are pleased to submit a fee of \$61,278.00 based on the fully loaded rates and hours of the staff positions listed below. Any additional direct costs will be billed based on the actual expenses incurred, including miles and printing of engagement materials.

TASKS	Project Manager	Senior Planner	Planner	TOTAL HOURS	FEE
1. Project Management & Coordination	68	34	44	146	\$ 19,964.00
2. Public Engagement	14	10	16	40	\$ 5,428.00
3. Data Collection/Existing Conditions Analysis	10	8	26	44	\$ 5,588.00
4. Draft Plan & Implementation Strategy	14	10	36	60	\$ 7,548.00
5. Final Plan & Approval	6	4	2	12	\$ 1,756.00
TOTAL HOURS	180	100	168	448	\$ 60,248.00
Direct Costs					
Estimated Mileage			1420 miles		\$ 1,030.00
Total Project Cost					\$ 61,278.00



References



8. REFERENCES

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