

Sustainable Coastal Communities

SAVE THE DATE



Planning for Prosperity in the Cape Sub-Region

Join agriculture, business, and development community leaders; area citizens; and local officials as we explore the benefits and challenges of regional planning in a sub-region of coastal Sussex County to insure economic vitality, protection of natural resources, and livable communities.

Keynote Speaker:

Mr. Harrison Rue, Principal at ICF International

Former executive director of the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission and the Charlottesville-Albermarle MPO in Charlottesville, VA, and founding director of the Citizen Planner Institute that trains average citizens, public officials and business people in the basics of neighborhood and town design. He was appointed to the U.S. EPA's National Advisory Council on Environmental Policy and Technology and conducts facilitator training and visioning workshop across the country.

Special Feature:

Demonstration of community land use model to project future growth scenarios in the Cape Sub-region.

Wednesday, June 23, 2010
Virden Center, University of DE,
Hugh R. Sharp Campus
Lewes, DE
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Workshop Sponsors: UD, Sustainable Coastal Communities Program; UD, Sea Grant Program; Greater Lewes Foundation and other community partners.

Registration information will be forthcoming shortly

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Planning for Prosperity in the Cape Sub-Region Wednesday, June 23, 2010 Virden Center, UD Lewes Campus

According to the Delaware Population Consortium, Sussex County is projected to grow by more than 75,000 people between 2010 and 2030. A significant share of this growth is targeted for the coastal regions of the County. The Cape Region of Eastern Sussex County encompasses an area that embraces four municipalities (Lewes, Rehoboth Beach, Dewey Beach and Henlopen Acres), a vibrant tourism economy, a major thoroughfare (Highway 1), vast natural resources, extensive farmland, and bountiful historic and cultural resources. The towns face individual but similar issues and concerns that differentiate them from other towns in County. Primarily these issues include: their small size, their historic nature, the stress of development on their perimeters, some are largely retirement communities, they are water oriented, and they are negatively impacted by north-south traffic which intensifies during the summer months.

In the coming years, this sub-region is destined to see new residential and commercial development, increasing populations, and changes in land use. Even though this growth can stimulate the economy in many ways, local residents and visitors to the region insist that the quality of life that they currently enjoy must be maintained.

One way to insure that growth in the region is managed properly is to incorporate a regional focus to the towns' and county's planning processes. To that end, the University of Delaware's Sustainable Coastal Community Program, the Delaware Sea Grant Program, the Greater Lewes Foundation and representatives from many other organizations are planning a workshop scheduled for Wednesday, June 23, 2010, at the Virden Center, Lewes Campus on what could be termed "Regional Planning 101". It will be an opportunity to explore the benefits and challenges of engaging in regional planning in an area of coastal Sussex County defined as the Cape Sub-Region.

There are huge tracts of unincorporated land in the Cape Sub-Region and land-use decisions approved by the County are often made without taking into account the cumulative effect of their decisions on the local municipalities. Conflicting land uses may occur between jurisdictions creating impacts to local infrastructure and regional economic centers. To help overcome some of these concerns, the State Office of Planning Coordination promotes the benefits of master planning. This approach recognizes that town and county boundaries are somewhat arbitrary and land use issues are not confined to one particular area. In short, master planning is intended to address issues that transcend the local level. A regional approach is essential to manage growth adjacent to town centers, and can aid in planning for sewer and water service, transportation improvements, preserving natural resources, and even stimulating economic development. In a coastal area like the Cape region, multi-jurisdictional planning can also help to prepare for natural disasters such as hurricanes and nor'easters.

The planned workshop will highlight the benefits and obstacles to regional planning in the Cape Sub-Region. After presentations by regional planning experts, stakeholders representing municipal and county government, businesses, developers, and active citizens will work to identify issues and concerns affecting growth within the region. In addition, the workshop attendees will be asked to provide future visions of the area and help provide scenarios for overcoming challenges facing the region in the years to come.

We anticipate that the workshop participants will be able to focus on ways in which real cooperation can have the effect of developing a collective voice when discussing issues with the public, elected officials at both the county and state levels, and we can begin to consider a "road map" that may lead to regional planning in this critical area of the County.