

To: Mike Hahn/Bill Brockenbrough
DelDOT, Dover DE

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From: **HISTORIC LEWES BYWAY...”Gateway to the Bayshore”**

PLUS Review Comments

Groome(2018-05-16), Intersection of New Rd & Lynn Rd

Transportation

New Rd is a state designated scenic byway. It was designated primarily for its scenic, natural, recreational and archeological intrinsic qualities. It is a two lane rural road with mostly 10 ft wide travel lanes with no connected bike path or shoulders. Today it is used mainly for local traffic, boat trailer traffic, Beebe Hospital and University of Delaware traffic. Rush hour commuter traffic in the morning and evening is heavy. Locals consider it the “back door” to Lewes that has provided a way for local traffic to move around town when Kings Highway and Savannah Rd back up.

Big changes are on the horizon for New Rd with the potential of well over 1600 new homes on undeveloped lands, a new underpass to access New Rd from SR1, and new service roads on SR1 that will connect to the underpass and ultimately to Rt 9 to Georgetown via Minos Conway Rd. A bypass from the New Rd underpass to Old Orchard Rd/Wescoats Corner will bring additional traffic to New Rd. from SR1 from those seeking a faster way to downtown Lewes by avoiding Five Points.

1. Consider that a New Rd. Master Plan has been funded by legislators addressing these impacts on New Rd.
2. Require that developer provides right of way(**ROW**) to allow for future expansion beyond existing two travel lanes on New Rd. The two lane option to include two 11 foot travel lanes, two 8 foot shoulders and a separated 10 foot bike lane connecting to the Georgetown to Lewes Rail Trail. The future expansion in this very long stretch of New Rd. from Old Orchard Rd almost to Canary Creek would have an expanded cross section and a center landscaped median as recommended for Kings Highway. (See Kings Highway/Gills Neck Rd. Master Plan). Require that enough ROW be retained to expand Lynn Rd should it become an access road to future developed land.

Future growth projections for development on both sides of Route 1, construction of the New Rd. underpass connecting to Minos Conway service roads and future expansion at the University of Delaware could substantially increase traffic on New Rd. beyond its two lane capacity. Plan for the future as done on Kings Highway.

3. Include and master plan “**Future Traffic**” in your projections as noted below in the DelDOT Development Coordination Manual, Chapter 2.2.8.10.* To project peak hour traffic we recommend using item “B” below in coordination with Sussex County.

*2.2.8.10 Future Traffic

Road network diagrams of future peak hour traffic, both with and without site traffic added, shall be included in the report.

There are three acceptable ways of projecting future peak hour traffic:

- A. Through growth factors by which existing volumes should be multiplied

B. Through assumptions made, in conjunction with, and subject to the approval of, DeIDOT and the local zoning/land development agency, as to types and levels of development for the undeveloped land in the study area which are then used to generate and distribute trips for these developments.

C. Through use of forecast volumes from a DeIDOT travel demand model.

4. Require that the developer pay for the connection of the **bike path** to the Georgetown to Lewes trail head at Nassau. Biking is extremely dangerous on New Road today as bikers have to bike in the road slowing traffic. Adding almost 300 more homes with bike paths connecting to New Rd is unsafe, if it does not safely connect to the Lewes to Georgetown Rail Trail.

5. Recommend an additional **entrance** to both sections of development. Only one entrance to each side of two separated cul de sac developments proposed. Consider two entrances for emergency vehicle and evacuation access especially since this is in a future flood zone. (See state sea level rise map).

6. Require that developer contribute to the expansion of **Canary Creek bridge** and its approaches that flood on a regular basis making the road impassable, not just during major storm events. This project has now been raised to a Level 1 priority at DeIDOT.

7. Require a full **new TIS** be done in high season on New Rd., Pilottown Rd., and down town Lewes using current data, as traffic conditions are rapidly changing, with more year round residents, a large increase in approved new developments, rendering earlier data unreliable.

8. **Stormwater ponds** along New Rd. while attractive for the byway, could impede future expansion of New Rd.

Scenic Byway Program Recommendations

1. Recommend that developer include a **context sensitive landscaped buffer** with native plants along New Rd. and Lynn Rd. to screen homes and to enhance and retain the Lewes Byway streetscape. Retain or replace existing mature trees and buffer vegetation along New Rd and Lynn Rd.

2. Include brick crosswalks to complement the streetscape of historic Lewes.

3. Include a boulevard design in the four lane road expansion.

4. Use traffic calming devices such as lowering speed limits, landscaped medians, roadside landscaping to narrow the look of the road and narrow turning lanes for both safety and to enhance byway aesthetics.

5. No backyards facing New Rd. If they are permitted require setbacks and screen them.

6. A series of stormwater drainage ponds combined with open space could provide views to the Great Marsh. Open space increases the value of lots.

7. Clustering using smaller lots will provide more open space and reduce impervious cover in this environmentally sensitive area.

DNREC is no longer providing comments for development projects due to staffing cutbacks. The Byway contacted DNREC and received the following recommendations:

1. Recommend clustering homes on smaller lots to increase open space and reduce impervious cover in this **environmentally sensitive area** in close proximity to Great Marsh.
2. Consider the large impact of impervious cover on water quality and implement necessary technology to filter water before discharge into Great Marsh waterways. Maintenance of systems should be required for the long term. Require home owner association and developer to provide for long term maintenance.
3. Consider impacts on wildlife given the proximity of this property to the Great Marsh, a globally significant ecological area. It is an international migration route for birds and critical feeding ground for birds traveling on the mid atlantic flyway. Bald Eagle may be nesting.
4. Preserve old growth trees/forested areas.
5. Require a forested buffer between the development and adjacent agricultural lands.
6. This property was approved for purchase by the State Open Space Council due to its proximity to the Great Marsh and extensive archeological resources.
7. Note that this property will be increasingly vulnerable to flooding from sea level rise.

Archeology

New Rd was designated as a state byway because of its significant archeological resources. According to Tim Slavin, the Director of the State Division of Historic & Cultural Affairs and Dan Griffith, the former Director, this property is one of the most significant archeological sites in the state of Delaware.