

**Town of Henlopen Acres  
2024 Comprehensive Plan Update**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The 2024 Plan is a 10-year update to the Plan adopted by the Board of Commissioners on July 10, 2015, and reaffirmed on March 4, 2016. As required by State law, it sets forth the Town's municipal development strategy with positions on community character, population and housing growth, land use, annexation, redevelopment potential, and critical community development and infrastructure issues.

The Planning Commission held six meetings since August 2023 and solicited resident input in May and July 2024, with assistance provided by Lauren Good of KCI Technologies. Among the updates to the Plan are:

- Town boundaries have been revised to reflect the annexation of the eastern bank of the Lewes and Rehoboth Canal in June 1973, adding 15.7 acres for a total Town area of 173.8 acres;
- New sections were drafted on Sandy Bottoms and the oceanfront parcels on Block W;
- Aerial photos were added of Sandy Bottoms, the two beaches, and the forested lot across from Deauville State Park, along with historic photos of the Homestead and jetty; and
- The autobiography of Colonel Wilbur S. Corkran, Henlopen Acres: The Colonel & His Vision, is included in the bibliography for its historical account of the founding of this unique residential community.

Highlights of recommendations by section are as follows:

Community Character and Zoning

- Recommends that the community character of the Town be preserved, with its residential character maintained as new homes are built. No change in zoning or land use is recommended.
- Recommends that efforts continue to clarify the Zoning Code to enhance compliance by residents and contractors. Suggests that the Zoning Code and building permit process apply to property within Town limits under the jurisdiction of the Army Corps, including for docks and bulkheads.

Rehoboth Art League

- Describes the cooperative relationship the Town has with the Art League and the assistance provided for large events, such as the Outdoor Art Show, and in supporting the Art League's building permits to maintain its historic structures and campus.
- Reiterates the Town's belief that the Art League can thrive within the existing residential zoning as a non-conforming use. Includes as an exhibit an October 2024 letter from RAL Board Chair Denise Clemons stating that the Art League is not seeking a zoning change.
- Discusses the Art League's 2015 Conservation Easement with the State and includes as an exhibit the recorded letter to the State Director, Historical and Cultural Affairs, that the easement does not have an effect on the Town's zoning laws or land use authority.

### Block W Oceanfront Parcels

- Includes a new section on the 13-acre Block W beachfront area, with the history of the jetty on Parcel 1 and dune development on Parcel 2 that together protect the “low Acres” from ocean flooding.
- Recommends that the Town work with the Beach Club for the jetty to be inspected by a marine engineering firm every 5-7 years to ensure its continued functioning, and work with HAPOC to preserve the natural wildlife, bird, and plant habitat of its parcel, along with annual dune grass planting and sand fence repair.

### Sandy Bottoms and Storm Drainage

- Includes a new section on Sandy Bottoms that describes its important role in the Town’s storm drainage system, and describes work performed in 2018 and 2024 to improve stormwater outfalls with bar guards.
- Recommends an annual schedule of maintenance for Sandy Bottoms to maintain optimal drainage flow and a system cleaning of the 50+ storm drains throughout the Town every five years.

### Marina Dredging

- Recommends that the Town continue periodic Marina dredging, with the next dredge to occur after the planned dredging of the Canal by DNREC and the Army Corps in 2025-2026.
- Also recommends that the Town work with Tidewaters residents to obtain a dredging permit along Sandy Bottoms to facilitate use of their boat docks, with residents paying the cost of such work.

### Climate Change

- Recommends that the Town, through a committee of the Planning Commission, study the effects of sea level rise on property near the Ocean and Canal and on the Town’s critical infrastructure, such as the water plant, wells, marina, Sandy Bottoms, and stormwater drains, and consider steps to improve resiliency.

### Air and Noise Quality

- Recommends that the Town consider the selection of a preferred trash company to provide service to residents at a reduced rate to reduce large vehicles on the roads, similar to the step taken by North Shores.
- Recommends that the Town purchase hybrid or electric vehicles for the Security Patrol, and consider mandating electric-powered, hand-held landscape equipment once such measures are the majority practice among towns in the area, to reduce noise and air pollution.

### Tree Canopy

- Recommends that the various efforts by the Town to maintain the dense tree canopy be continued, including annual tree planting and the free arborist service for residents' private trees that was begun in 2021, along with effective enforcement of current Code provisions.
- Suggests that the minimum tree planting requirement for new homes be enhanced to require a higher percentage of deciduous and evergreen canopy trees, with a focus on retaining mature trees throughout the Town, especially during new home construction.

### Water Supply

- Recommends that the Town continue to ensure the provision of safe water to residents, by compliance with all existing regulations and exploration of appropriate steps to address PFAS contamination through the recent \$100,000 grant from the Division of Public Health.
- As part of that study, recommends that consideration be given to whether a smaller number of larger wells would provide greater protection from contamination than the existing eleven wells that are located in close proximity to dwellings.

### Fire Protection

- Recommends that the Town proceed with plans to install fire hydrants to provide more timely fire protection to residents' property and a reduction in homeowner insurance.

### Adjacent Land Use and Annexation

- States that the Town has no current interest in annexation, however remains concerned about certain land use beyond Town limits, including preservation of wetlands along the west side of the Lewes and Rehoboth Canal and the forested lot on Duneway across from Deauville State Park.
- Encourages the Town to seek assurances from the State that the Deauville property will remain passive open space without improvements, as currently zoned by the City of Rehoboth Beach, and explore possible purchase of the property from the State.