

The Downtown Development Districts Act of 2014 was enacted by the General Assembly in order to:

- Spur private capital investment in commercial business districts and other neighborhoods;
- Stimulate job growth and improve the commercial vitality of such districts and neighborhoods;
- Help build a stable community of long-term residents by improving housing opportunities; and
- Assist municipalities in strengthening neighborhoods while harnessing the attraction that vibrant downtowns hold for talented people, innovative small businesses and residents from all walks of life.

A Downtown Development District (DDD) was designated in Smyrna by the Governor in 2016 and is among twelve such DDDs across the State. Designation as a DDD allows landowners and businesses within our district to receive grant rebates up to 20% of their capital construction costs from the State. Smyrna's DDD includes 634 parcels on approximately 160 acres and encompasses almost the historic downtown core Smyrna radiating outward from the 'Four Corners.'

FOUNDING OF SMYRNA

William Penn first granted tracts of lands near Duck Creek to settlers in the 1680's. Lands were subsequently cleared for the cultivation of tobacco and wheat, and by the middle of the 18th century, a grist mill and settlement was established along Duck Creek known as Duck Creek Village. A prosperous shipping wharf, known as Smyrna Landing, was established about a mile to the east along Duck Creek which functioned as one of the primary shipping points for grain (and later fruit) until its demise in the early 20th century.

In 1768, James Green sold 15 acres of land to Samuel Ball, a Philadelphia merchant. This land, located at a crossing of two major roads, the north-south King's Highway and the east-west Maryland Road leading from the nearby Smyrna Landing to the Chesapeake Bay, served as the nucleus for Duck Creek Crossroads, and soon attracted grain merchants and other residents. The crossroads village flourished in the late 18th and early 19th centuries with the shipment of grain from the nearby Smyrna Landing to larger markets in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. Originally called Duck Creek Crossroads, the town's name was changed to Smyrna by the Delaware General Assembly in 1806.

The Delaware Railroad, built in 1856, bypassed Smyrna to the west, due in large part to businessmen reluctant to encourage competition with the steamboat line. As rail began to dominate the transport of local goods, manufacturing activities and canneries were located and constructed to the west in Clayton.

In 1923, a 97-mile two-lane north-south road (known today as US Route 13 - 'Dupont Highway') was constructed through Smyrna and connecting Wilmington to downstate agricultural communities in Kent and Sussex Counties. Following the Second World War, the Smyrna-Clayton area attracted several large manufacturing employers. This resulted in steady growth to the Town of Smyrna throughout the second half of the 20th century, growing from 2,346 in 1950 to 5,231 in 1990.

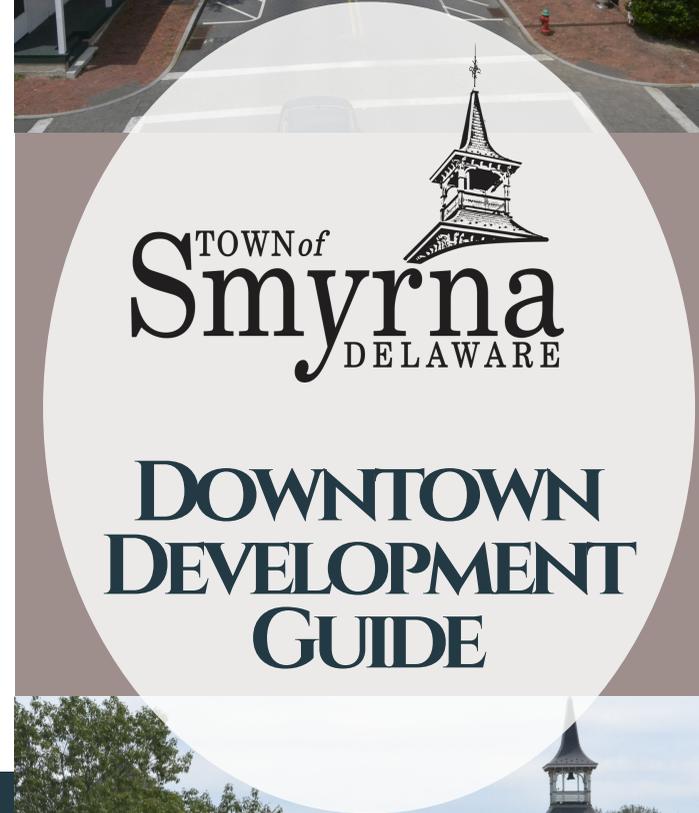
In 2003, Delaware Route 1 was completed connecting Wilmington to Dover, which coinciding with a nationwide building boom, ushered in an era of unprecedented growth to Smyrna to the present day. The Town's population more than doubled from 5,679 in 2000 to 12,883 in 2020. Despite its rapid growth, Smyrna retains its small-town charm and tight-knit sense of community. We are a town proud of its historic agricultural roots but are poised and ready to grow and prosper in the 21st century. We remain 'Smyrna Strong.'

WE ARE SMYRNA STRONG

Located just 30 minutes south of the I-95 Northeast Corridor, the historic Town of Smyrna is located astride of Delaware Route 1 connecting the banking and financial center of Wilmington to the north and the state capital of Dover to the south. Our bucolic tree-lined streets with Victorian and Colonial-era homes and quaint downtown businesses harken back to a different time. Despite rapid growth in recent years, we have preserved our small-town life, and the DDD program has us poised for success. Enjoy Smyrna - a place where the past co-exists pleasantly with the present while diligently preparing to leap into the future.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT OR TO EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES IN DOWNTOWN SMYRNA, PLEASE REACH OUT, WE WILL BE GLAD TO HELP!

**TOWN OF SMYRNA
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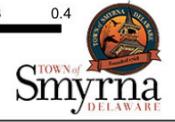
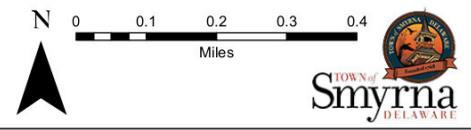
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT GUIDE



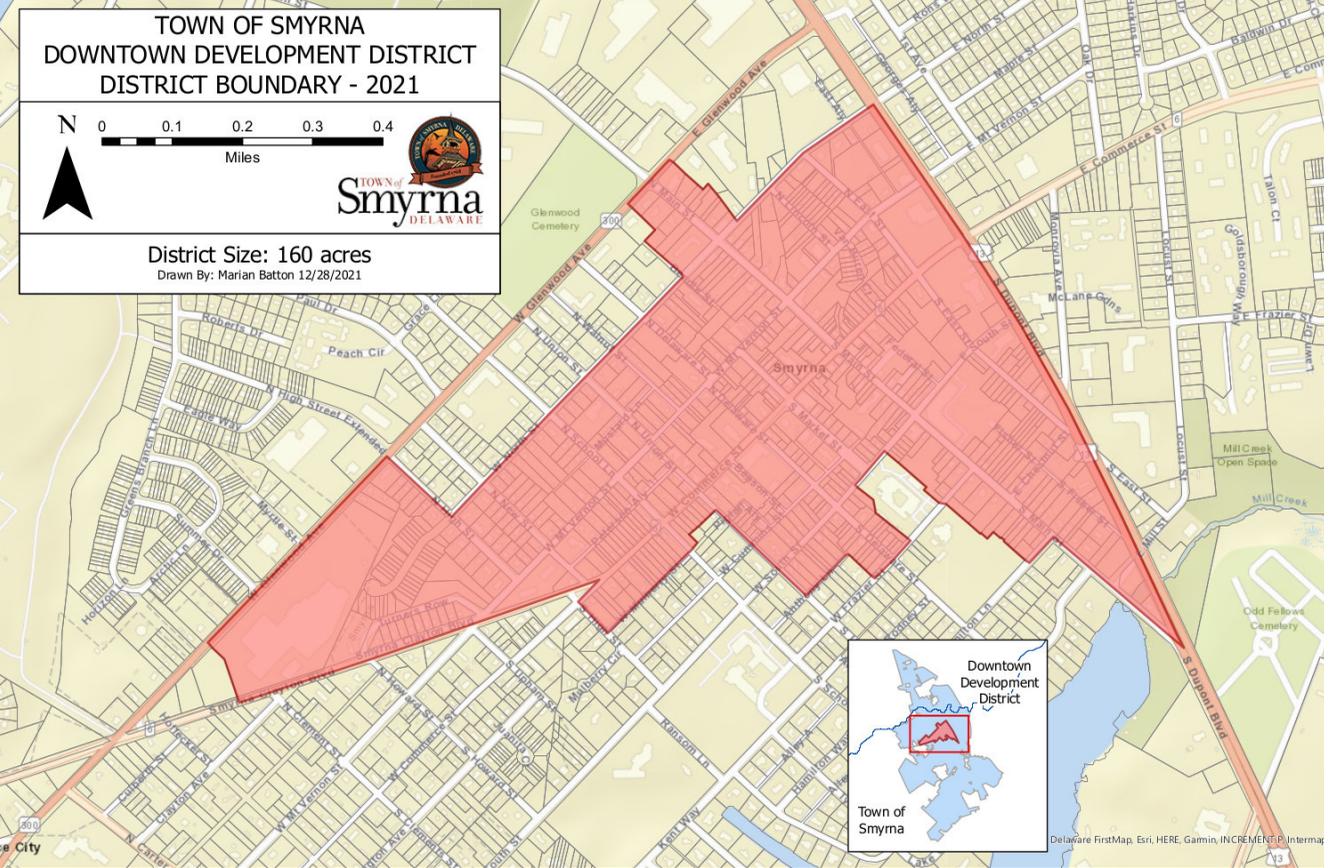
ABOUT OUR DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT



**TOWN OF SMYRNA
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
DISTRICT BOUNDARY - 2021**



District Size: 160 acres
Drawn By: Marian Batton 12/28/2021



DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Smyrna Façade Improvement Grant Program

This program, administered through the Smyrna Slum Clearance & Redevelopment Authority, provides a cash grant reimbursement to improve existing or construct new exterior front facades as follows:

- **Residential** – 25% cash grant reimbursement up to a maximum grant award of \$2,500
- **Commercial & Mixed-Use Buildings** – 25% cash grant reimbursement up to a maximum grant award up to \$10,000.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year.

Program Contact: George DeBenedictis
gdebenedictis@smyrna.delaware.gov
(302) 653-2327

Delaware DDD Program

- 1) **Small Project Grant** – 20% cash grant reimbursement based on cost of construction of up to \$350,000. Applications can be filed anytime throughout the year. Minimum qualified investment of \$25,000 to qualify for the program. Maximum grant rebate of \$70,000 per building based upon a qualifying investment threshold of \$350,000.
- 2) **Large Project Grant** – 20% cash grant reimbursement based on cost of construction over \$350,000. Applications are taken only during specified periods (typically twice per year).

Program Contact: Susan Eliason
SusanE@destatehousing.com
(302) 739-4263
http://www.destatehousing.com/Developers/dv_ddd.php

Kent County DDD Program

- 1) **\$1,500 cash match** of State DDD grant funding for applicants of residential projects.
- 2) **\$10,000 cash match** of State DDD grant funding for commercial and mixed-use projects.

Program Contact: Michael Petit de Mange
michael.petitdemange@co.kent.de.us
(302) 744-2305

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits

To qualify, the building must be listed as a contributing structure in the Smyrna National Register District before these tax credits may be claimed. All proposed improvements must be certified by the Delaware Division of Historic & Cultural Affairs prior to the start of construction.

1) **20% Commercial Federal Income Tax Credit for Income Producing Buildings** – This tax credit allows property owners and developers to claim a Federal income tax credit on 20% of the value of the qualified rehabilitation costs. The tax credit carries forward for a period of five years to allow property owners and developers to obtain the full value of the credit.

Delaware Historic Preservation Tax Credit

1) **20% Commercial State Income Tax Credit for Income Producing Buildings** – The property owner/developer may claim a State Income Tax Credit equal to 20% of the qualified rehabilitation costs. Unused tax credits may be “sold” on a market set up by the State at a discount, whereby the property owner/developer will get an actual cash reimbursement for the unused tax credits. There is no limit on the amount of tax credits that can be claimed.

2) **30% State Income Tax Credit for Residential, Owner Occupied and all Other Historic Buildings** – The property owner may claim a State Income Tax Credit equal to 30% of the qualified rehabilitation costs. And like the commercial tax credit program, the credits can be transferred and sold on an open market at a discounted rate. Government entities and non-profits are eligible to sell their tax credits.

Additional information about the State and Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits can be found at:
<https://history.delaware.gov/preservation/taxcredit/>

Program Contact: Kara Briggs
kara.briggs@delaware.gov
(302) 736-7433

LOCAL INCENTIVES

- 1) **Permit and Application Fee Waiver** - All building permit fees, demolition permit fees, sign permit fees, rezoning application fees, conditional application use application fees, and special exception application fees are now waived for qualifying projects.
- 2) **Property Tax Reassessment Waiver** - Qualifying projects are eligible for a 60-month municipal property tax reassessment waiver on the value of the improvements associated with the project.
- 3) **Property Tax Abatement** - For those projects that convert a rental property to an owner-occupied dwelling and for first-time homebuyers in the DDD, a five-year phased municipal property tax abatement is levied as follows: 100% abatement for year one; 75% abatement for year two; 50% abatement for year three; and 25% abatement for year four.
- 4) **Impact Fee Waiver** – Qualifying projects are eligible for a 100% waiver of all Smyrna impact fees.
- 5) **Business License Fee Waiver**
- 6) **Utility Rebates** – Qualifying projects are eligible for the following one-time rebate for all utility charges (water, sewer, and electric) as follows:
 - a. \$600 if the aggregate square footage for all buildings less than 5,000 sq. ft.
 - b. \$1,000 if the aggregate square footage for buildings equal to or greater than 5,000 sq. ft. but less than 10,000 sq. ft.
 - c. \$2,000 if the aggregate square footage for buildings equal to or greater than 10,000 sq. ft.

Additional information about these incentives can be found at:

smyrna.delaware.gov/facadegrant