

Delaware CEDS

a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
for the State of Delaware



Delaware CEDS – a program of the Delaware Economic Development Office
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Statewide LAND USE Facts

I. Relationship of Land Use to Economic Development

Land-Use Policies Impacting Economic-Development Considerations

- Zoning ordinances at the municipal and county level set forth the permitted uses and intensities of uses in Delaware.
- State-certified comprehensive plans adopted by the counties and municipalities establish future land uses across Delaware. Zoning must reflect the future land-use designation in the comprehensive plan.
- The Strategies for State Policies and Spending prioritizes the investment of state funds across Delaware.

Impact of these Policies on Economic-Development Considerations

- Location: State, county, and municipal land-use policies make certain areas of the state more or less desirable targets for economic-development efforts.
- Character: The desired character of economic-development efforts is often determined through the planning process by considering environmental, infrastructure, and public-opinion conditions with implementation occurring through the formal adoption of land-use policies.

II. Existing Conditions and Trends

- With over 470,000 acres in harvested cropland, agriculture continues to be the dominant land use in Delaware. As development pressures have increased, other uses have been growing. From 1992 to 1997, Delaware's residential uses increased in area by just over 15%. Commercial and industrial uses increased in area by approximately 8% over the same time-period.
- 307 Delaware farms, comprising 64,830 acres, have been permanently protected through the Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Program.
- Permitted land uses and intensities of use across Delaware are established by both municipal and county zoning ordinances.

III. Projections and Plans

Delaware Population Consortium: Population Projections

| | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 |
|------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| New Castle | 501,933 | 524,815 | 547,356 | 567,193 | 583,980 | 597,348 | 606,338 |
| Kent | 127,085 | 138,349 | 146,259 | 152,797 | 158,986 | 164,261 | 168,340 |
| Sussex | 157,430 | 175,749 | 194,615 | 212,880 | 229,441 | 243,392 | 254,525 |
| State | 786,448 | 838,913 | 888,230 | 932,870 | 972,407 | 1,005,001 | 1,029,203 |

Source: Delaware Population Consortium, Population Projection Series, September 29, 2004.

Plans

- All the counties and nearly all of the municipalities in Delaware are involved in some stage of the comprehensive planning process. These plans set forth future land uses for these jurisdictions.
- The Strategies for State Policies and Spending document serves as a guide for state investments with the aim of coordinating land-use decision-making and the provision of infrastructure and services in a manner that makes best use of Delaware's natural and fiscal resources. Two fundamental policies guide the State Strategies:
 - State spending should promote quality, efficiency, and compact growth.
 - State policies should foster order and resource protection, not degradation.
- Identify and prioritize where the state intends to make certain types of investments, the State Strategies designates areas as Levels 1-4 and Out-of-Play.
 - Levels 1 through 3 identify those areas of the state most prepared for growth and where the state can make the most cost-effective infrastructure investments.
 - Development is not currently preferred in Level 4 areas, and the state intends to make investments, such as open space and agricultural preservation, to preserve the rural character of these areas.
 - Out-of-Play lands are those that generally cannot be developed for a variety of reasons. These lands may be federal- or state-owned and protected, parkland, lands the development rights of which have been purchased, lands on which development may be prohibited due to state or local regulations.

IV. Identified Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities

- Development and redevelopment—The state is generally supportive of development and redevelopment efforts within areas designated as either Level 1, 2, or 3. Many of these areas have ready access to infrastructure and labor, making them suitable for economic development efforts.
- Agriculture—Agriculture is the largest industry in Delaware. The state is committed to making investments that preserve the rural character of agricultural areas, creating opportunities for the development of expanded and spin-off agriculture-related industries.

Constraints

Out-of-Play Areas—Due to the presence of sensitive natural resources, large areas of Delaware are not suitable for intense economic development efforts.
