

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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Kent Co. 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 for Kent County.
- State-certified comprehensive plans adopted by the county and municipalities establish future land uses for these jurisdictions. 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 Kent County.

Impact of these Policies on Economic Development Considerations

- Location: State, county, and municipal land-use policies make certain areas of the county 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

- Agriculture has historically been the dominant land use in Kent County and accounted for nearly 49% of Kent County's total area in 1997. Nearly 51% of the land area in Kent County was used for agricultural purposes in 1992.
- Kent County farms account for 156 of the 307 Delaware farms permanently protected through the Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Program, comprising approximately 55% of the 64,830 acres preserved in Delaware.
- Permitted land uses and intensities of use across Kent County are established by both municipal and county zoning ordinances.

III. Projections and Plans

Delaware Population Consortium: Kent County Projections

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Population	127,085	138,349	146,259	152,797	158,986	164,261	168,340
Households	47,201	52,595	56,338	59,179	61,845	64,073	65,634

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

Based on the volume of recent building-permit and certificate-of-occupancy issuances, Kent County believes its population is increasing at a rate exceeding that projected by the Delaware Population Consortium.

Plans

- Kent County's 2002 Comprehensive Plan Update established a growth zone generally bounded on the east by State Route 1, running north to south from Smyrna to Milford, and extending east to west from Felton to Frederica. This zone includes most of the municipalities in Kent County. Kent County would like to see growth focused in this area, since infrastructure to support growth is either already in place or can be relatively easily provided for.
- Kent County's plan designates the areas outside the growth zone for either low-density development or open-space preservation. The adoption of Kent County's Transfer-of-Development Rights (TDR) program allows for development at higher densities within the growth zone in exchange for the preservation of lands outside the growth zone.
- The Strategies for State Policies and Spending generally prioritizes the most-intense state investments (level 1 and 2 investments) within those areas included in the county's growth zone and in and around municipalities. The vast majority of other areas in the county are classified as either the least-intense investment area (level 4) or as Out of Play for development.
- State-certified comprehensive plans, laying the groundwork for future growth and development, have been adopted by the majority of the Kent County municipalities.

IV. Identified Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities

- Growth Zone—Kent County and the state have targeted areas generally within the county's growth zone for development and investment.
- Municipalities—Municipalities have outlined their growth plans in comprehensive plans and the state has generally promoted investment in existing communities through the Livable Delaware Program. Many municipalities have land appropriately zoned for economic-development purposes.
- Agriculture—Agriculture is the largest industry in Kent County. The existing agriculture sector creates opportunities for the development of expanded and spin-off agriculture-related industries.

Constraints

Areas east of State Route 1—The environmentally sensitive nature of areas east of State Route 1 and policy decisions to discourage development in this area inhibit intense economic development efforts in much of the eastern portion of Kent County.
