

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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New Castle 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 New Castle 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 New Castle 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

- Agricultural and Residential/Urban uses each accounted for approximately 30% of New Castle County's land area in 1997. With strong residential growth continuing, particularly south of the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal, it is highly likely that residential land uses now account for the largest area of any land use in New Castle County.
- New Castle County is home to two of Delaware's three largest cities (Newark and Wilmington), long-established suburbs in northern New Castle County, and rapidly growing incorporated and unincorporated areas in southern New Castle County.
- Permitted land uses and intensities of use across New Castle County are established by both municipal zoning ordinances and the county's Unified Development Code (UDC).

III. Projections and Plans

Delaware Population Consortium: New Castle County Projections

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Population	501,933	524,815	547,356	567,193	583,980	597,348	606,338
Households	189,017	197,868	207,832	217,891	226,640	233,828	238,707

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

Plans

- New Castle County's 2002 Comprehensive Plan Update generally calls for medium- to high-density residential and commercial development along major roadways and within existing developments in northern New Castle County. Pockets of industrial and office uses are

planned for across the northern part of the county. Low and very-low density residential development is planned for in most of the remaining areas in the county, with the area south of the Middletown-Odessa-Townsend (MOT) region nearly entirely slated for very-low density residential development.

- The Strategies for State Policies and Spending generally prioritizes the most intense state investments (level 1 and 2 investments) for areas north of the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal, south of the canal along routes 301, 13, and 1, and in and around municipalities. Large areas along the Delaware Bay, Chesapeake & Delaware Canal, and throughout the county are designated as “Out of Play” due to a variety of environmental constraints and protections. The majority of the level 4 areas (the least intense investment level) in New Castle County are found south of the MOT region.
- State-certified comprehensive plans, laying the groundwork for future growth and development, have been adopted by the majority of the New Castle County municipalities.

IV. Identified Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities

- Infill and Redevelopment—As the most heavily developed county in Delaware, New Castle County has large areas of existing commercial and industrial uses. This characteristic creates the opportunity for the development of additional complementary uses and the revitalization of underutilized sites.
- 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.

Constraints

- Critical Natural Resources—Due to environmentally sensitive features, nearly 200,000 acres in New Castle County are either completely or partially protected from development by the UDC. These protections inhibit certain economic-development efforts in these areas.
 - Growth-Management Strategies—Intense economic-development efforts are inhibited in the area generally south of the MOT region due to the lack of public sewer provision in the area and land-use policies allowing for only very-low-density residential development in the area.
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