

J. Community Planning & Design Element

Element Defined

New Castle County has an assortment of land use issues and development types, ranging from older urban areas, post-World War II subdivisions and shopping centers to newer development, some scattered in previously rural areas. Much of the county has been developed, particularly north of the C & D Canal. Trends show an emerging interest in concentrating new suburban growth, redeveloping older developed areas, and repurposing economic centers and former industrial sites that are no longer supported in today's economy. Community planning efforts in the county are also focused on improving the quality of new and existing development, place-making, planning for infill, redevelopment, and revitalization/repurposing where appropriate. However, current zoning regulations and land use policies have not always been sufficient to address the unique needs of different areas throughout the county.

Community design is focused on creation and management of environments for people. This process can be applied from the neighborhood to the regional scale and aims to meet community needs through participatory decision-making at all levels.

Many components make up a community's overall design and sense of place, including:

- Streetscapes that are safe, comfortable, and a beneficial part of the public realm for the whole range of users;
- Green infrastructure, such as trees and other planted stormwater infiltration areas that create beauty, moderate temperatures, and mitigate flooding;
- Quality design and maintained buildings and the relationship between buildings and other built form; and
- Historical and cultural assets.

New Castle County has made progress toward this participatory decision making in the recently-completed master planning efforts, and this progress should be continued in future planning and development efforts.

A key theme for the NCC@2050 plan is *Thriving Places and Community Character: The places we live, work and play are well designed, accessible, and vibrant, with active locations for people to gather. Our communities reflect important aspects of our past and are places in which we take pride.*

These principles support our goals of promoting compact development, infill development, and reuse and redevelopment to strengthen communities while protecting our existing open space and natural resources. When applied in coordination with other efforts outlined in this plan, community design is an important part of creating a New Castle County where everyone can thrive—from residents and homeowners to visitors and employers.

What We Heard

“I would like to see us incorporate into the building code requirements for preserving an equal amount of open space for every piece of developed land.” – Public Participant, Open Space, Conservation, Recreation, Environment Deep Dive Session, February 3, 2021

“Considering zoning to create buffers between industry and our neighborhoods and preserve the open space that already exist...” – Public Participant, Open Space, Conservation, Recreation, Environment Deep Dive Session, February 3, 2021

A majority of Youth Planning Board members agreed on Goals related to Community Design including:

- Promote a convenient, but active lifestyle by increasing park accessibility
- Expand public transportation to smaller cities to benefit residents and promote a sense of interconnectedness
- Create bus stops in smarter locations where injury is less likely
- Modernize local parks with new or refurbished equipment from recycled materials
- Restore vacant properties including homes and stores

– Youth Planning Board Meeting, May 26, 2021

After Public Forum #1 in November 2020, attendees were invited to participate in an Image Preference Survey to select their three most and least favored images, related to elements of the images that they do or do not want to see in the future of New Castle County. Areas of agreement included: open space and trees; affordability; maintenance; aesthetics and appearance; underground utilities; and accessibility. There was a lack of consensus related to suburban/urban balance; parking; density; balance of planned design and control; balance of modern and traditional design. The images that received the highest scores are included below.



Select Positive Comments



Select Negative Comments



- ✓ A place you want to be
- ✓ Bustling market place - Lots of nice small shops
- ✓ LOVE LOVE LOVE the brick pavers/sidewalk
- ✓ Healthy trees, shade - Flowers in trees

- ✗ Bricks look uneven - could be dangerous or trip hazard
- ✗ Would like a bench for resting, sitting
- ✗ Limited parking space
- ✗ Could be busy



- ✓ Don't let it change!
- ✓ Lots more of this - LOVE IT!
- ✓ Green is good
- ✓ A place I can take my friends and family... good place to bring friends/family/tourists. Walk along a trail and have a good time

- ✗ Phragmites? Non-native species plants are a concern
- ✗ Is there a pathway? Want people to be able to walk safely
- ✗ Is this walkable from anywhere?



Select Positive Comments

- ✓ The wave of the future - Like the EV chargers and autonomous vehicle all still at pedestrian scale
- ✓ Porous pavement
- ✓ Native grasses, greenery, visible nature
- ✓ Very walkable



Select Negative Comments

- ✗ Doesn't look like Delaware
- ✗ Too futuristic/modern
- ✗ Everything - Don't like the structure or charging stations - adding more traffic; don't like the building behind
- ✗ Driving on cobblestone not fun



- ✓ Cozy! Cute! Love this!
- ✓ Family friendly - Could be a senior living area
- ✓ Sense of community, welcoming, neighborly
- ✓ Compact, walkable
- ✓ Porches, landscaping, car free

- ✗ Where is the parking?
- ✗ Requires respectful neighbors
- ✗ Bad stormwater drainage
- ✗ Not much room for children to play - pretty tight
- ✗ Too high density - ok somewhere, but not everywhere

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New Castle County Today

County Zoning & Unified Development Code

A comprehensive plan and zoning ordinances are two ways that the County can ensure that development is orderly, environmentally appropriate, and in alignment with community priorities and concerns. The Future Land Use Map outlines the proper placement of housing, economic activity, community services and resources, recreation facilities, government buildings, and much more. The County Zoning Code provides the regulatory framework and specific density for each land use type, site design requirements to protect our environment, and quality and safety requirements for all buildings and structures.

New Castle County's zoning code is found in the [Unified Development Code](#) (UDC). The UDC regulates and controls several aspects of land use and development in the unincorporated areas of the County:

- The planning and subdivision of land
- The use, bulk, design, and location of land and buildings
- The creation and administration of zoning districts
- The general development of real estate

The UDC is intended to protect the health, safety, prosperity, convenience, and general quality of life of current and future residents, visitors, and neighbors from potential adverse impacts of different land uses, while also respecting landowners' rights to use their land in a beneficial way. The UDC was originally created in 1997 with a focus on achieving greater flexibility with regard to mixed use and overall design. It includes a variety of topics related to land use and development, many of which are also found in this comprehensive plan:

- Land Use Patterns and Community Character
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Economic Development
- Public Infrastructure
- Growth Management
- Affordable Housing
- Justifiable Expectations

Zoning Districts

New Castle County is divided into zoning districts that help to achieve a compatibility of land uses and community character consistent with the vision and goals outlined in the comprehensive plan. Zoning districts fall into four major "community character classes:" urban, suburban transition, suburban, and special. More detail about the zoning districts and the additional classifications can be found on the New Castle County [Department of Land Use website](#). In addition to these basic classes, the County also uses three special overlay districts – Historic Overlay, Hometown Overlay, and Neighborhood Preservation Overlay District (NPOD). In addition, there is one special zoning district, Economic Empowerment District (EED).

[Hometown Overlays and Design Review Advisory Committees](#)

The [Hometown Overlay District](#) seeks to perpetuate and enhance the unique character of early settlement areas, hamlets, villages, and pre-World War II subdivisions. These areas

often do not conform to modern zoning standards but are viable and attractive places to live and work. This overlay district is intended to ensure infill, redevelopment, and changes to the zoning patterns are compatible with the existing community character.

Four communities have successfully undertaken the Hometown Overlay Process:

- Centreville Village
- Claymont
- Hockessin Village
- North St. Georges

Each Hometown district requires its own community redevelopment plan and design guidelines, which future development should conform to, rather than strictly following the modern zoning guidelines.

Each Hometown district also has a Design Review Advisory Committee (DRAC), which is responsible for reviewing any land development applications to ensure they comply with the community redevelopment plan and other community standards and guidelines. The DRAC also makes recommendations for revisions to the community redevelopment plan and/or design guidelines manual based on community standards.

[Historic Overlay Districts](#)

It is necessary to preserve and protect buildings, structures, sites, objects, districts, and landscape features of historic, architectural, cultural, archeological, educational, and aesthetic importance. The County preserves these assets because it is in the interest of the health, safety, and general welfare of all citizens of the county.

The Historic Overlay District outlines specific standards to protect these assets within the district. Historic zoning identifies properties where renovations and changes should be carefully planned. Only exterior alteration and new development of land within the overlay districts require historic review. The general philosophy behind the Historic Overlay Districts is to respect the original character of the historic property by making repairs and renovations as seamless as possible. County Historical Overlay Districts are distinct from other historic designations, such as the National Register of Historic Places.

Historic Overlay Districts are not concentrated in a single area of the county which creates the need for flexible and diverse guidelines. The historic properties in New Castle County span more than 200 years and include more than 15 historic architectural styles, so the guidelines provide the flexibility for property owners to make changes that are appropriate to each building's particular style. The design guidelines provide the principles of the County's preservation approach, but does not dictate required styles, regulate the interior use of the properties (beyond the existing base zoning of the area), or require a single treatment that should be applied to all buildings in a district.

In 2020, the Department of Land Use undertook a comprehensive update to the portions of the UDC related to historic preservation in order to ensure consistency and clarity. This update modified and reorganized existing code sections to provide uniformity across various chapters of the code; provided a clear path for the evaluation, identification, and documentation of historic resources; and provided new incentives for historic preservation activities. More information can be found in the [Historic Preservation element](#) of this document.

Neighborhood Preservation Overlay Districts (NPOD)

The NPOD is an overlay zoning designation that is intended to maintain the distinctive physical qualities of existing neighborhoods. An NPOD designation is intended to provide a regulatory tool for communities concerned with issues of incompatible infill and structural alteration that could inappropriately change the appearance or character of residential neighborhoods. An NPOD must include at least one residential zoning district (Neighborhood Conservation (NC), Suburban Reserve (SR), Suburban Estate (SE), Suburban (S), Suburban Transition (ST), and Traditional Neighborhood (TN) districts) and may include all or part of any nonresidential zoning district. However, at least 50 percent of the parcels within the proposed overlay district shall be a residential use.

To establish an NPOD, a conservation plan that identifies the designated boundaries, establishes regulations for the specific NPOD overlay district, and demonstrates consistency with the Comprehensive Development Plan shall be prepared. The final approval of an NPOD must be adopted via an ordinance approved by County Council. Currently there have not been any NPOD designations in the county. Applications for an NPOD were limited to during the first three (3) years after the effective date of adoption of the NPOD provisions into the UDC, January 24, 2017.¹

Economic Empowerment Districts (EED)

The EED is a special district established to facilitate the approval of employment uses (and complementary accessory uses) in a master planned, campus-like setting. Proposed uses in an EED must consist of targeted industries as identified by the New Castle County Economic Development Strategic Plan, dated September 2014, as may be amended, or updated, and shall consist of corporate headquarters, high technology offices, research and/or light assembly centers, or master planned employment centers.

A proposed EED must have a minimum parcel size of ten (10) acres. The area or site within the proposed district must take access from a collector or arterial street or be located within one quarter (1/4) mile of a bus stop or within one half (1/2) mile of a commuter rail station. Between 80% to 90% of the proposed gross floor area (GFA) for a proposed EED must be allocated for a targeted industry. The percentage of GFA that must be allocated for a targeted industry is dependent on the total proposed GFA. The approval of an EED must also include design guideline standards, which includes elements related to site design, building massing, landscaping, and building materials. A proposed EED must include trip reduction/transportation demand management (TDM) measures where possible to reduce the number of vehicle trips to and from the site. Once an EED is approved, proposed land development projects within the EED are processed as a Minor Land Development Plan demonstrating compliance with the development and design standards adopted for the district. Currently there have not been any EED designations in the County since the adoption of the EED provisions into the UDC on January 24, 2017.

¹ Until January 24, 2020 only areas identified in the New Castle County Department of Land Use Action Plan & Work Program, 2014/2015, dated October 7, 2014 (areas include: Pike Creek, Concord Pike, Route 9, Kirkwood Highway, Newark/Route 273 Corridor, and Claymont) or where a WILMAPCO study had been conducted were eligible to establish an NPOD.

Smart Code

New Castle County has applied Smart Code principles in the UDC within the Suburban zoning district. Across the County, this district includes the areas designated as growth areas in the previous comprehensive plan and permits high-density development “consistent with providing a high-quality suburban character.” Projects proposed in this Division must be zoned Suburban (S) and be located south of the C&D canal, west of US 13, east of the Norfolk and Southern Railroad spur and generally north of Marl Pit Road and be served by public sewer. It also provides for a balance between green space and structures. “The highest densities are permitted in designed communities, hamlets and villages, through the use of Smart Code techniques.” (New Castle County Unified Development Code, Section 40.02.232, Section 40.25.121)

The Smart Code is a form-based code incorporating Smart Growth and New Urbanism principles. Form-based codes focus more on the physical form of a place rather than specific land uses or statistical information. Smart Code was created in response to the development patterns of the mid- to late-20th century, when there was an increase in zoning codes that separated residential development from employment, shopping centers, schools, and other land uses, which caused people to rely almost entirely on automobile travel. The Smart Code encourages mixed land uses within walking distance of residential areas and a connected transportation network. By focusing development on areas where people already live, work, or shop, Smart Codes and other form-based codes also help to preserve open space, environmentally sensitive areas, and agricultural land.



Figure J-1: The Village of Whitehall

The Village of Whitehall is a development in southern New Castle County, which utilizes this development option.

In lieu of traditional zoning categories, transect zones are used. The transect zones are administratively similar to the land use zones in conventional codes, except that in addition to the usual building use, density, height, and setback requirements, other elements of the

intended habitat are integrated, including those of the private lot and building and public frontage.

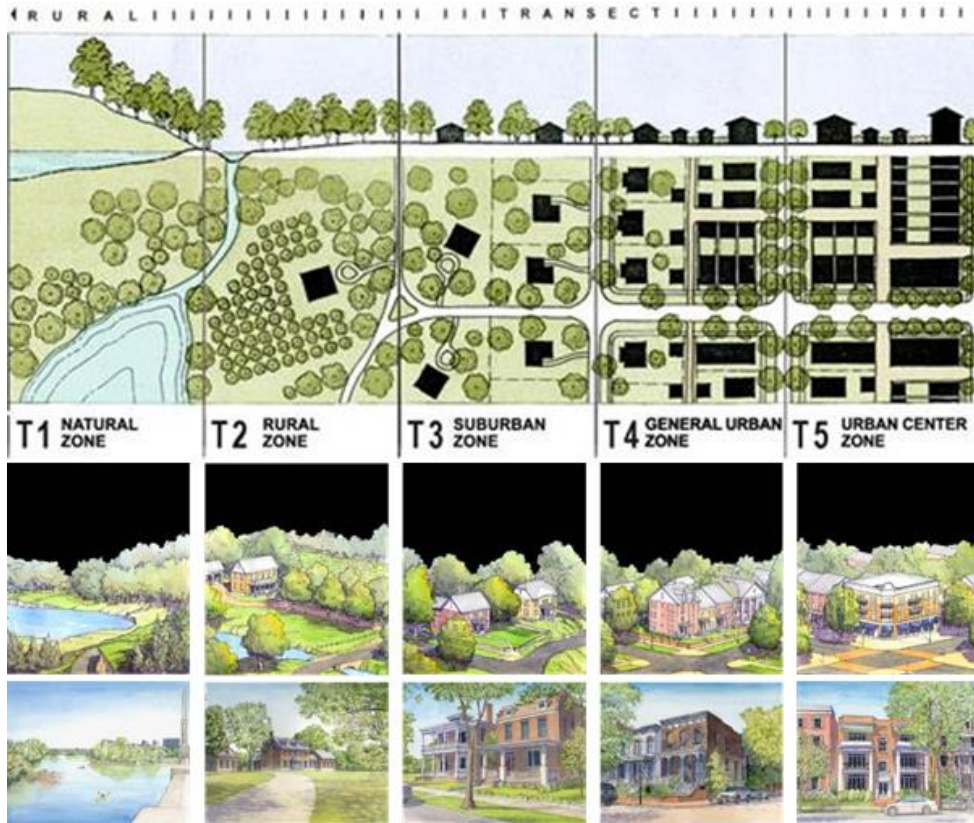
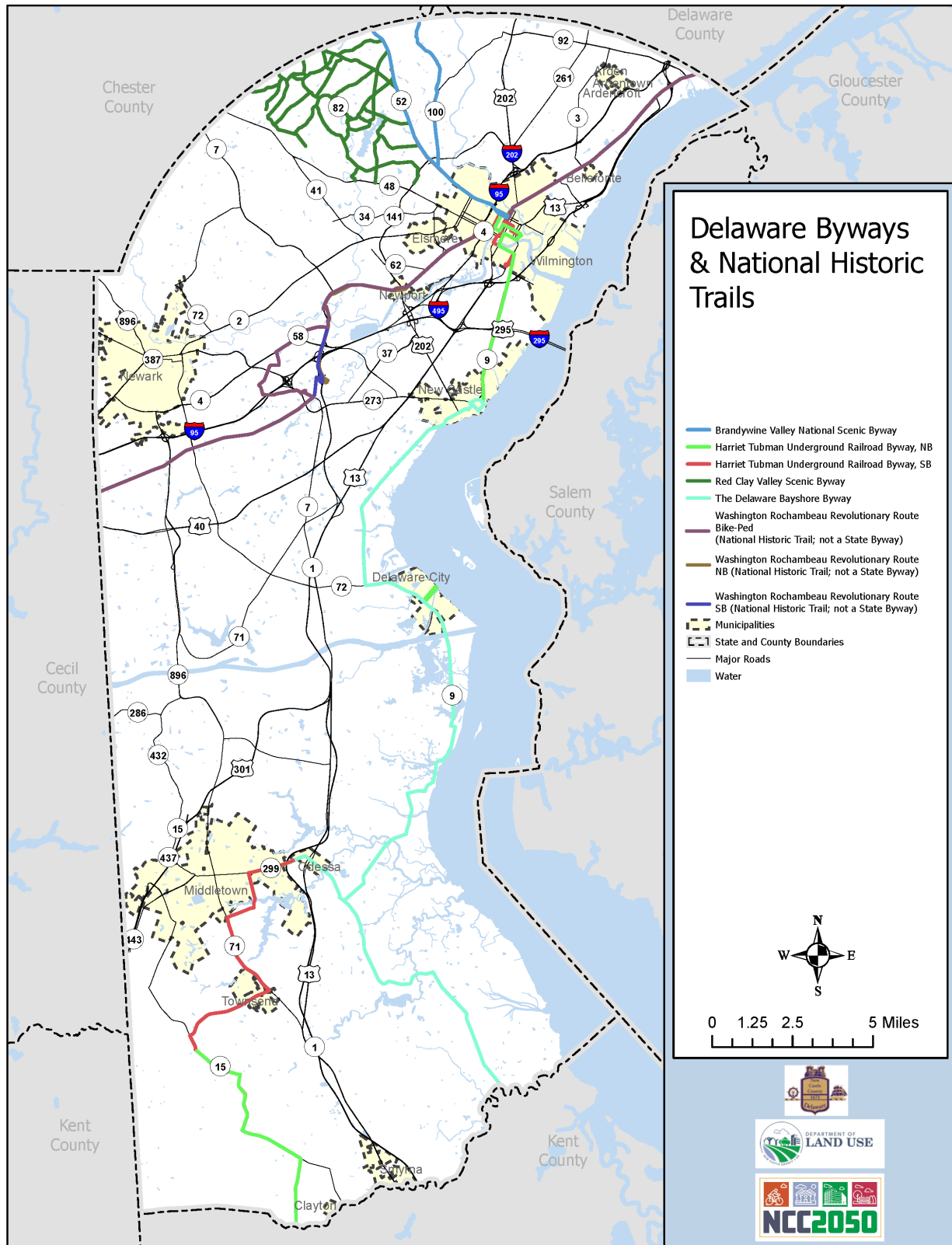


Figure J-2: Transect Zones, Source: Duany Plater-Zyberk

Byways

The Delaware Department of Transportation was authorized in 2000 to develop the [Delaware Byways Program](#). According to DeIDOT, the purpose of the program is to “identify, promote, preserve, and enhance Delaware roadways with scenic, historic, natural, cultural, recreational, or archaeological qualities.” It is a collaborative effort of the citizens and local, state and federal governments. DeIDOT’s effort was initiated following the creation of the [National Scenic Byways](#) program in 1991. There are six byways designated in Delaware, and four of those pass through New Castle County (see *Map J-1*). Other details related to byways in New Castle County is found in the [Historic Preservation element](#).

Map J-1: Delaware Byways and National Historic Trails



In 2018, the County began a process of examining and updating methods for preserving scenic byways in the County. This work is part of the County's ongoing work to identify the unique assets of the landscapes and features seen from public roads. Also known as "intrinsic qualities," these assets include scenic, natural, cultural, historic, archaeological, and recreational features, which contribute to the overall beauty and quality of life in the County. There are four state or federally designated Byways in New Castle County.

- **Brandywine Valley National Scenic Byway** – Extending from Rodney Square in Wilmington along Routes 52 and 100 to the Pennsylvania state line, the significance of the byway is related to its role in 18th- and 19th-century American industrial history.
- **Red Clay Valley Scenic Byway** – Following an interconnected and interdependent network of 28 roads, this byway is intimately linked to the Red Clay Creek and its watershed, including Red Clay Ravine, Red Clay Creek, Burrows Run, Coverdale Woods, and Red Clay Reservation.
- **Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway** – A continuation of the Maryland Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway, the route traverses Underground Railroad sites in Camden and Dover, through Smyrna, Middletown and Odessa. It then follows Route 9 along the Delaware River to Wilmington to Kennett Pike to the Pennsylvania state line.
- **Delaware's Bayshore Byway** – This byway begins near the City of New Castle and extends to the beaches just outside Lewes in Sussex County.

One outcome of the 2018 process seeks to modify existing code language and create a new Article 18, which is intended to preserve, protect, and enhance the resources associated with county, state, and federal scenic byways in the County. The goals of this effort include:

- Preservation and enhancement of character-defining features
- Scenic viewshed protection
- Conservation design²
- Context-sensitive solutions³

The ongoing effort to preserve and enhance the county's byways and associated resources continues with focus on updating the existing structure of the UDC. New development along designated scenic byways should be oriented around the preservation of these scenic aspects of the property. The proposed language includes standards related to building placement, visible building height, facades, landscaping, and buffering. As of fall 2021, the proposed language is under development at the County.

² A design system that takes into account the natural landscape and ecology of a development site and facilitates development while maintaining the most valuable natural features and functions of the site. It includes a collection of site design principles and practices that can be combined to create environmentally-sound development. (Conservation Design Manual, Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission and Chicago Wilderness, March 2003, <https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/49967/Resource+Manual.pdf/b7cc9d90-d47b-4bb0-99a3-c28dbc0608f9>)

³ An approach integrating land use and transportation decision-making and design that considers the communities and environment where the roadways or developments are planned, It is a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach leading to preserving and enhancing scenic, historic, community, and environmental resources.

Responsible Subdivision and Land Development Design

The UDC outlines the principles the County uses in review and approval of proposed subdivisions and new land developments. In this case, “subdivision” refers to the creation of new smaller parcels from a large piece of land. This portion of the code (Chapter 40, Article 20) outlines the County’s provisions to ensure new developments preserve or enhance the neighborhood or community character. Some key principles and standards which New Castle County looks for in all subdivision plans include a safe and well-planned transportation network; preservation of or provision for open space and the protection of natural resources; and the integration of drainage and utility systems to avoid impacts to the environment or neighboring properties.

These provisions and the additional standards included in the UDC help to ensure that development occurs in context with existing land uses and does not have adverse effects on existing residences, schools, community resources, environmental features, and economic activity.

In addition to the ordinances in the UDC, the County created general design guidelines which developers are encouraged to follow when submitting subdivision and land development plans, called Guiding Principles for Development in Appendix 7 of the UDC. The Guiding Principles establish five Character Areas, which correspond with future land use categories: Residential Neighborhood, Mixed Residential Neighborhood, Center, Corridor, and New Community Development. Character Areas designations correlate with the zoning category, State Strategies Level, and the Future Land Use categories of the Future Land Use Map. With the completion of NCC@2050 it will be important that the Guiding Principles be updated to correlate with the new Future Land Use Categories, as outlined in the [Future Land Use and Implementation element](#) of the plan. Likewise, the design guidelines of the Guiding Principles should be updated for consistency with community design and desired built form.

[Sub-area Plans and Special Studies](#)

For many decades, New Castle County has also used more localized, fine grain planning efforts. Previous sub-area plans are incorporated into the New Castle County Comprehensive Development plan as Special Study Areas (1997) and Sub-Regional Corridor Plans (2012). These plans have been an essential tool for guiding land use decisions for nearly 25 years. The most recent sub-area planning efforts, which have taken place roughly over the last five years, are important continuation of this long-standing practice.

These sub-area plans help to achieve one of New Castle County goals to maximize the beauty, functionality, and unique features of the county by developing strategies for special areas, activities, and public interests. Partnering with state, county, and municipal agencies; organizations; and non-profits, the department of Land Use identifies corridors or designated areas on which to focus, holds public workshops and solicits input, presents data and drafts objectives for discussion, and develops the best path forward for reaching the shared objectives. These sub-area studies support planning at a more local scale where specific community ideas and concerns can be more fully vetted, which is important in a county as large and diverse as New Castle County.

In recent years, these studies and plans have included park surveys and plans; corridor studies and master plans; a county-wide bicycle plan, and flood and stormwater studies.

Current and recently completed plans:

- [Ardentown Paths Plan](#) (November 2017)
- [Churchmans Crossing Land Use and Transportation Plan](#) (In Progress)
- [Concord Pike Master Plan*](#) (November 2020)
- [Glasgow Avenue Planning Study](#) (Sept 2017)
- [Governor Printz Corridor Study](#) (January 2021)
- [Marshallton \(March 2014\)](#)
- [New Castle County Bicycle Plan](#) (May 2020)
- [Newport Train Station Feasibility Study](#) (July 2013)
- [Newport Transportation Plan](#) (January 2021)
- North Claymont Area Master Plan*(January 2017)
- [Port Penn Flood Study](#) (April 2016)
- [Red Clay Valley Scenic Byway Design Standards Overlay](#) (Nov 2016)
- [Route 141 Corridor 20-Year Land Use and Transportation Plan](#) (Completed)
- [Route 40](#) (September 2014)
- [Route 9 Corridor Master Plan*](#) (May 2017)
- [Route 9 Paths Plan](#) (Expected 2021 adoption)
- [Southern New Castle County Master Plan*](#) (September 2020)
- [SR 141 Transportation and Land Use Plan](#) (August 2017)

**Community Area Master Plans*

Community Area Master Plans (CAMPs)

The Community Area Master Planning effort seeks to provide a community-based, finer grained planning approach in specific geographical areas within the county. These are generally areas that are experiencing, anticipating, or desiring more significant change, whether due to population growth, market pressure, or desired revitalization. In a place as socially, economically, and geographically diverse as New Castle County, conducting long-range, sub-area planning is especially important to address issues and land use at a localized level sensitive to the area's context and conditions.

Notably, the planning process is a key component of success—the process enables critical issues to emerge, be vetted, and ideas get developed and refined. Plan products such as a future land use map and principles for development are also imperative to establish policy, inform decision making, and help achieve plan goals over time. Community Area Master Plans are distinct from other community planning documents as they formalize the great efforts of local communities toward planning and achieving the vision for their local community by officially adopting the essential recommendations from the plans as County policy under the current countywide comprehensive plan and documented on the Future Land Use Map.

Four CAMPs are defined at this point and shown in *Map J-2* along with the Churchman's Crossing area, which is anticipated to become a CAMP as community planning moves forward there:

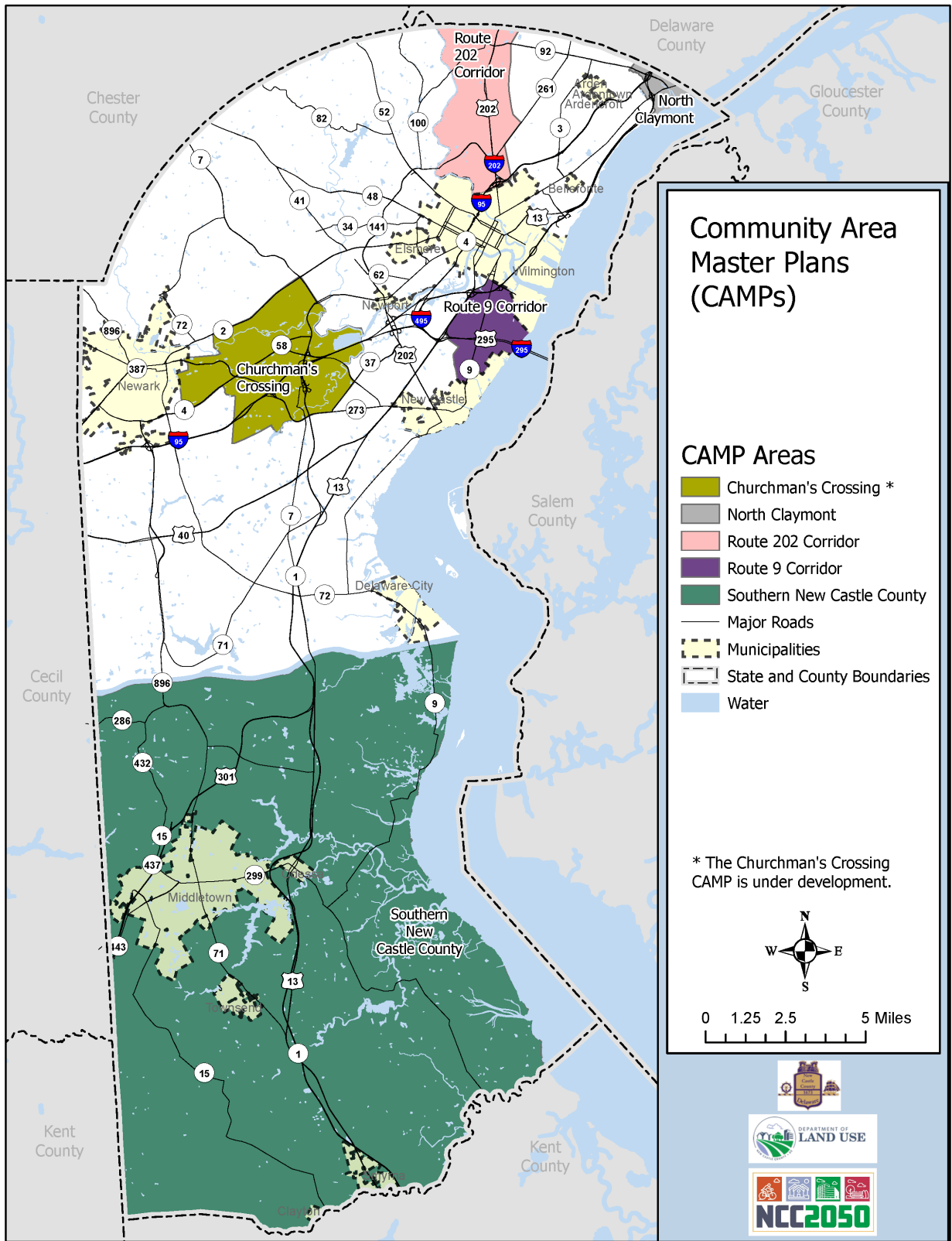
- Route 9

- North Claymont
- Concord Pike (US 202)
- Southern New Castle County

Each are summarized in the following pages and included is a zoomed view of the New Castle County Growth Areas Policy Map, with respect to each study area. These maps generally depict areas where growth (development and redevelopment) or preservation is prioritized, providing a spatial relationship to policy recommendations. Additional information regarding the New Castle County Growth Areas Policy Map can be found in Section B, NCC@2050 Priorities. Key recommendations for each Community Area Master Plan can be found in Appendix F, which identifies recommendations and their location that were incorporated throughout the NCC@2050 Comprehensive Plan elements.

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Map J-2: Community Area Master Plans



Route 9

Overview

The Route 9 Corridor Land Use and Transportation Plan (also known as the Route 9 Master Plan) addresses several important issues including Social Justice, Environmental Justice and neighborhood revitalization. Funded and managed by WILMAPCO with support from project partners DelDOT and New Castle County, the plan was the product of more than two years of community-driven planning. Since the plan's completion and endorsement by WILMAPCO in May 2017, the Route 9 Monitoring Committee formed and has proceeded implementing multiple plan recommendations. During fall 2021, the Committee submitted written comments to the County in support of the plan with several clarifying and content recommendations including additional objectives and strategies regarding public engagement, Social Justice, Environmental Justice, and multifamily housing. Those points were reviewed and factored into the following content, are integrated in relevant elements and recommendations throughout the plan and are reflected in more detail in Appendix F: Essential CAMP Recommendations.

The Plan

Much of the Route 9 area is an older suburb of Wilmington that was originally developed during the mid-20th century. It includes many residential neighborhoods, with a mix of housing types, detached homes, duplexes, townhomes, and some apartments. To the south, Route 9 contains a few strip shopping centers and smaller commercial properties and becomes more industrial closer to the City of Wilmington and the Port of Wilmington. Residential developments were at times developed in a piecemeal or disconnected manner. In addition, industries were built too close to homes; roads were built too wide; commercial activity became decentralized; healthy food and routine healthcare became difficult for those without a car; and the construction of I-295 and I-495 divided communities. Like many older communities throughout the county, the area has struggled particularly with issues of vacancy, poverty, environmental justice, and associated problems. In addition, and more uniquely, public health concerns have grown among residents in the area, particularly those in Eden Park Gardens and Hamilton Park. These neighborhoods are located adjacent to, and insufficiently buffered from, active heavy industry. The air quality and particulate matter associated with that heavy industry and its associated truck traffic, as well as, the presence of two major interstates, pose a serious concern to area residents. In 2014, the County prepared the Route 9 Innovation District Plan as part of an application to the State of Delaware seeking a Downtown Development District designation. While the designation was not granted at the time, the Plan helped organize residents and inspire the Route 9 Master Plan. This designation could be pursued in the future.

The Master Planning process included detailed market analysis to understand the demand and feasibility for industrial, office, retail, and residential growth. It is important to ensure that the plan's vision aligns with market feasibility and also to communicate and maximize the economic potential while preserving the local character. The Master Planning process also included a traffic analysis. This analysis assessed existing and future traffic conditions along Route 9, including road design, vehicular traffic, bike and pedestrian movement and facilities, accident data and safety issues. The Master Planning process also included robust and continuous community engagement. The plan identifies four centers, which are targeted areas for investment or redevelopment. The main area for redevelopment is around Center 3, which encompasses the Route 9 Library. The community engagement process

established the Plan's vision, identified, and prioritized the top community needs, and provided guidance in developing and refining the plan's scope and recommendations. Together, the market analysis, traffic analysis and community input, form the basis of the recommendations for this Master Plan, which focus on concentrating development (and redevelopment) in one of four centers along the corridor. The center-specific recommendations target four key intersections that are well-positioned for growth based on the existing zoning, current use, and surrounding development. Each of these centers addresses major intersections in need of streetscape improvements and key parcels within a 1/4-mile walking radius (equal to an average 5-minute walk) that are prime opportunities for investment or redevelopment. Key parcels identified in the study area include any underutilized land within 200 feet of Route 9. The center-specific recommendations are broken down into Land Use and Zoning Recommendations and Transportation Recommendations.

The four centers identified are (see Figure 3):

A. Center 1: Terminal Avenue:

Center 1 is situated at the intersection of Terminal Avenue and Route 9, directly north of Interstate 495. This area consists primarily of the Eden Park neighborhood and recreational facility, directly adjacent to the Port of Wilmington, large industrial properties, and I-495 making the public health impacts of dust, emissions, noise, and heavy truck traffic a significant concern for local residents and officials. A majority of the industrial properties along this stretch of Route 9 are heavily utilized, causing incompatibility issues with the residential properties.

B. Center 2: Rogers Road:

Center 2 is situated at the intersection of Rogers Road and Route 9 just south of I-495. In this area, a mix of smaller commercial and industrial properties line the western edge of Route 9. On the east side, a mix of single-family detached and attached homes are directly adjacent to the corridor and surrounded by large industrial properties. The Hamilton Park neighborhood and Rose Hill Gardens community are two neighborhood pockets currently located directly adjacent to industrial development. Hamilton Park, in particular, is situated between I-495 and Pyles Road, a major truck route to the Port of Wilmington and various industrial sites. A majority of the commercial and industrial properties along this stretch of Route 9 are underutilized, poorly maintained, and incompatible with the neighborhood fabric that exists around it. Center 2 has the potential to be a neighborhood center that could benefit from strategic investment along the Route 9 Corridor.

C. Center 3: Hillview Avenue:

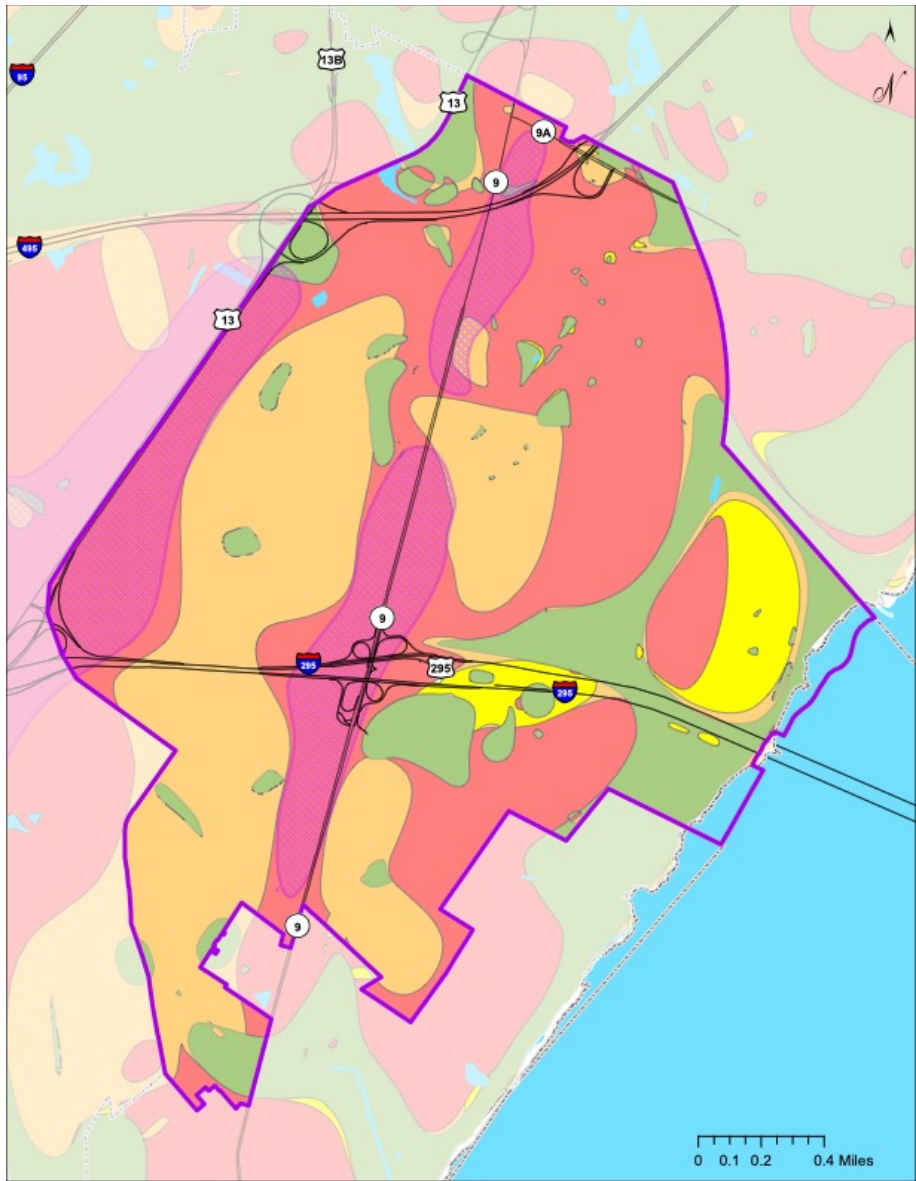
Center 3 is situated at the intersection of Hillview Avenue and Route 9. A prominent intersection along the corridor, this center encompasses large commercial parcels with surface parking that are ideal for redevelopment, undeveloped land that is currently underutilized, and several hotels that are outdated and poorly maintained. Conveniently located adjacent to the Route 9 Library, the intersection is strategically positioned for additional development spurred by the library's new investment and is envisioned as the heart of the Route 9 Corridor.

D. Center 4: Stamm Boulevard:

Center 4 is situated at the intersection of Stamm Boulevard and Route 9 just south of I-295. In this area, a mix of commercial, institutional, and single-family detached homes front Route 9. The neighborhoods of Collins Park and Swanwyck Gardens are established communities immediately adjacent to this segment of the corridor. The Crossroads Plaza and New Castle Plaza shopping centers, the CVS, and the Rite Aid stores are fairly new and primarily surface parked. These specific parcels provide the opportunity for future redevelopment that better utilizes the land and with new buildings that face Route 9.



Figure J-3: Four Centers in Route 9 Plan



New Castle County Land Use Policy

- Redevelopment and Infill
- Potential Development Areas
- Focused Redevelopment and Infill Areas
- Targeted Resource Protection and Land Preservation Areas
- Areas not Targeted or Anticipated for Future Growth or Preservation

Figure J-4: Route 9 Future Land Use

North Claymont

The North Claymont Area Master Plan (NCAMP) area is in the northeast part of the county abutting the Pennsylvania state line, with access to I-95 and I-495, as well as the SEPTA Claymont train station (part of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor). The train station will be relocated to a site northeast of the existing location upon completion of the Claymont Regional Transportation Center (scheduled to open in summer 2023). While these factors have historically helped the area become an important job center, several major employers, including the Tri-State Mall and Claymont Steel, have ceased operations in recent years. Both sites have recently undergone demolition with the intent of redevelopment. An important industrial employer is the Sunoco Logistics Plant, located in the eastern portion of the area extending into Pennsylvania, which is a former oil refinery repurposed for natural gas storage, processing and distribution.

The combination of geographical location, accessible transportation infrastructure and soon to be shovel ready sites provide an opportunity for large-scale re-development with a focus on placemaking. The plan sought to create a vision of areawide redevelopment centering on the built environment along a multimodal transportation corridor. Establishing appropriate form, scale and massing, as well as a multimodal transportation system that has the Claymont Regional Transportation Center as its anchor, are fundamental to achieving the goals of the plan. While not intended to be prescriptive, the plan examined a mix of uses, in specific focus areas, that if developed with a focus on design and scale could achieve the community's vision. The North Claymont Area Master Plan, completed in 2017, provides important guidance regarding transportation improvements and land use policy that can help revitalize the area and serve as an example for surrounding communities.

When developing a concept scenario depicting the community's vision, the plan examined seven focus areas (*Figure J-5*). The first four of these areas; the Train Station, Waterfront, Central Node and Tri-State Mall Area are likely to see significant changes in land use in the near future and were noted as "Redevelopment Focus Areas." The other three focus areas are more stable and are unlikely to see significant land use changes in the short term. All focus areas can benefit from improvements recommended in the Master Plan.

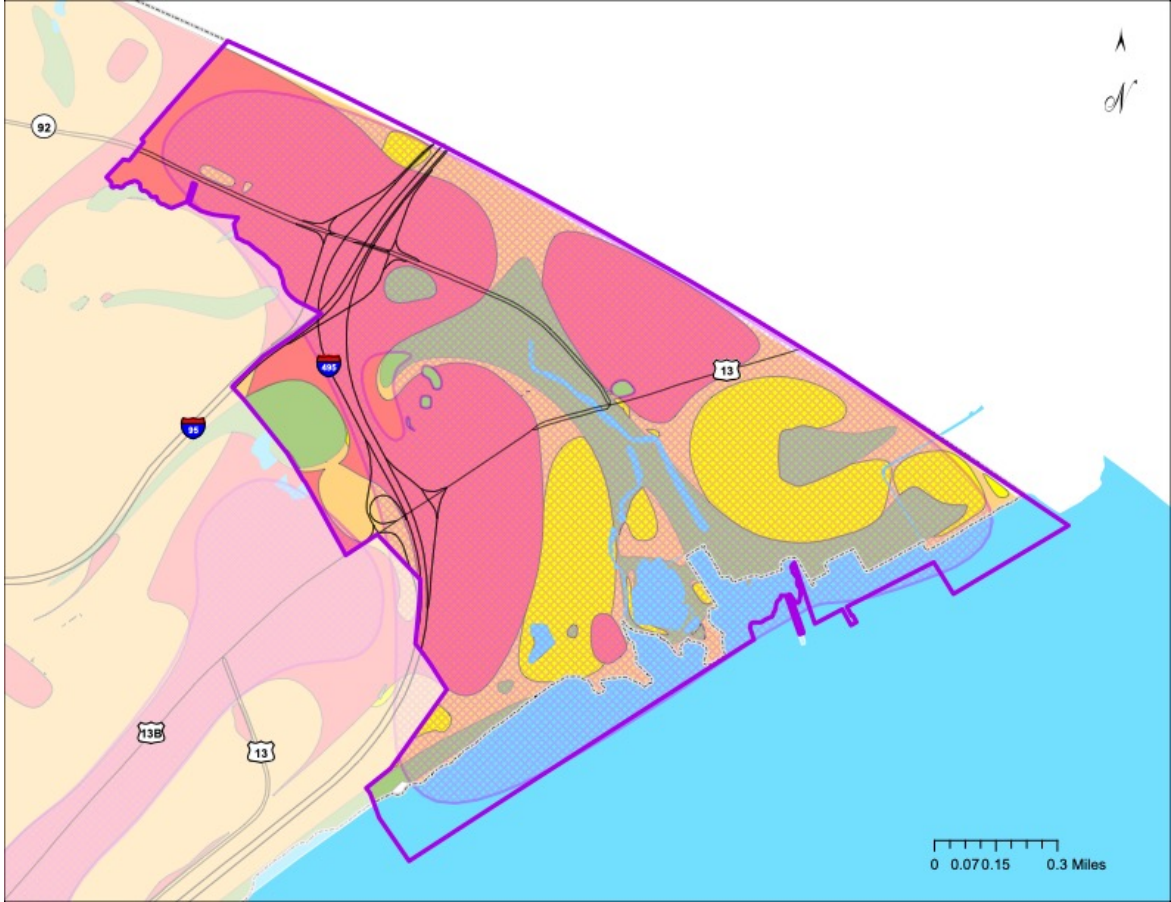
Focus Areas:

1. Train Station
2. Waterfront
3. Central Node
4. Tri-State Mall Area
5. Naamans Road from Hickman to US 13
6. West of I-95
7. Existing Active Industrial



Figure J-5: North Claymont Focus Areas Map

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New Castle County Land Use Policy

- Redevelopment and Infill
- Potential Development Areas
- Focused Redevelopment and Infill Areas
- Targeted Resource Protection and Land Preservation Areas
- Areas not Targeted or Anticipated for Future Growth or Preservation

Figure J-6: North Claymont Future Land Use

Concord Pike (US 202)

Overview

The Concord Pike (US 202) Corridor Master Plan represents an area along the US 202 corridor that stretches from the City of Wilmington to the Pennsylvania state line. The planning process began in the Summer of 2018. In addition to public visioning sessions, a WikiMap (an online mapping tool) gave the opportunity for people to provide additional input based on specific locations along Concord Pike. The plan was completed and endorsed by the Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) November 12, 2020.

The Plan

Historically constructed as a private toll road in the early 1800's, Concord Pike was a major route that provided access to several farms and smaller factories that developed along Brandywine Creek. Completed as a state highway in the early 1920's, Concord Pike was a two-lane road surrounded by a patchwork of farms. It was designated as US 202 in 1934, connecting New Castle County to Maine. This section of the roadway in Delaware was subsequently widened to a six-lane major thoroughfare. Today, Concord Pike (US 202) Corridor is primarily a six-lane north/south commercial arterial connecting Wilmington, DE to the Pennsylvania state line.

The Concord Pike Corridor Master Plan focuses on a six-mile portion of US 202 with mixed commercial and office uses surrounded by mixed residential uses (primarily single-family neighborhoods) and open space. The corridor was designed for multi-lane vehicular traffic and lacks pedestrian and bike friendly facilities such as: continuous sidewalks, crosswalks, and landscaped areas. The study area is also characterized by sprawling commercial and suburban development which creates situations where land is underutilized. Land use recommendations focus on improvements and redevelopment in the areas of Fairfax, Talleyville, Widener and Brandywine Town Center. These improvements are examples of various facilities, designs, and amenities that can be implemented to improve corridor by making it more attractive, providing more services, more bikeable and walkable, and by enhancing community and economic development opportunities.

Key land use recommendations are summarized below and also addressed in Appendix F and through other NCC@2050 elements:

Zoning Recommendation 1: Develop Land Use Policy That Encourages Context Sensitive Commercial Redevelopment in the Identified Redevelopment Areas (TRA)

Design elements were identified that would: establish a mix of vertical and horizontal land uses; promote active storefronts at the street level; accommodate pedestrian-friendly multimodal streets; encourage upper story residential and office uses; and provide guidance in parking lot design and location. These reflect existing elements in the Unified Development Code (UDC), Appendix 7 – Guiding Principles for Development. New Castle County should revise the redevelopment provisions of the UDC to encourage redevelopment consistent with the principles of the Concord Pike Corridor Master Plan.

Zoning Recommendation 2: Encourage Neighborhood Preservation through Land Use Policy

A number of neighborhoods are identified in the Concord Pike (US 202) Corridor Master Plan that are adjacent to the commercial areas. These residential areas are zoned Neighborhood Conservation, which New Castle County calls for these areas to be protected or conserved. The County should continue land use policy that encourages conservation of the existing

neighborhood character. The UDC empowers these communities to pursue a Neighborhood Preservation Overlay District should these neighborhoods seek to further integrate adjacent non-residential development.

Zoning Recommendation 3: Identify Potential Historic Properties

New Castle County is a Certified Local government and administers the Department of Interior’s grant program, which has enabled the County to prepare seven National Register Nominations over the last two years. The National Register of Historic Places does not provide protection to resources, but the Unified Development Code provides historic resource protections through the Historic Overlay Zoning District (H-Overlay). The Historic Review Board (HRB) must approve plan and permits that could potentially impact a historic resource within an H-Overlay.

Within the Concord Pike (US 202) Corridor Master Plan study area, there are a number of historic resources. Some areas fall within established H-Overlay Zoning Districts while others do not currently have these protections. The New Castle County Department of Land Use should work with these property owners to encourage the pursuit of establishing Historic Overlay Zoning Districts. Additionally, the County should continue to evaluate properties along the corridor for historic significance and consider providing additional protections for historic resources through the land development process.

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New Castle County Land Use Policy

- Redemption and Infill
- Potential Development Areas
- Focused Redevelopment and Infill Areas
- Targeted Resource Protection and Land Preservation Areas
- Areas not Targeted or Anticipated for Future Growth or Preservation

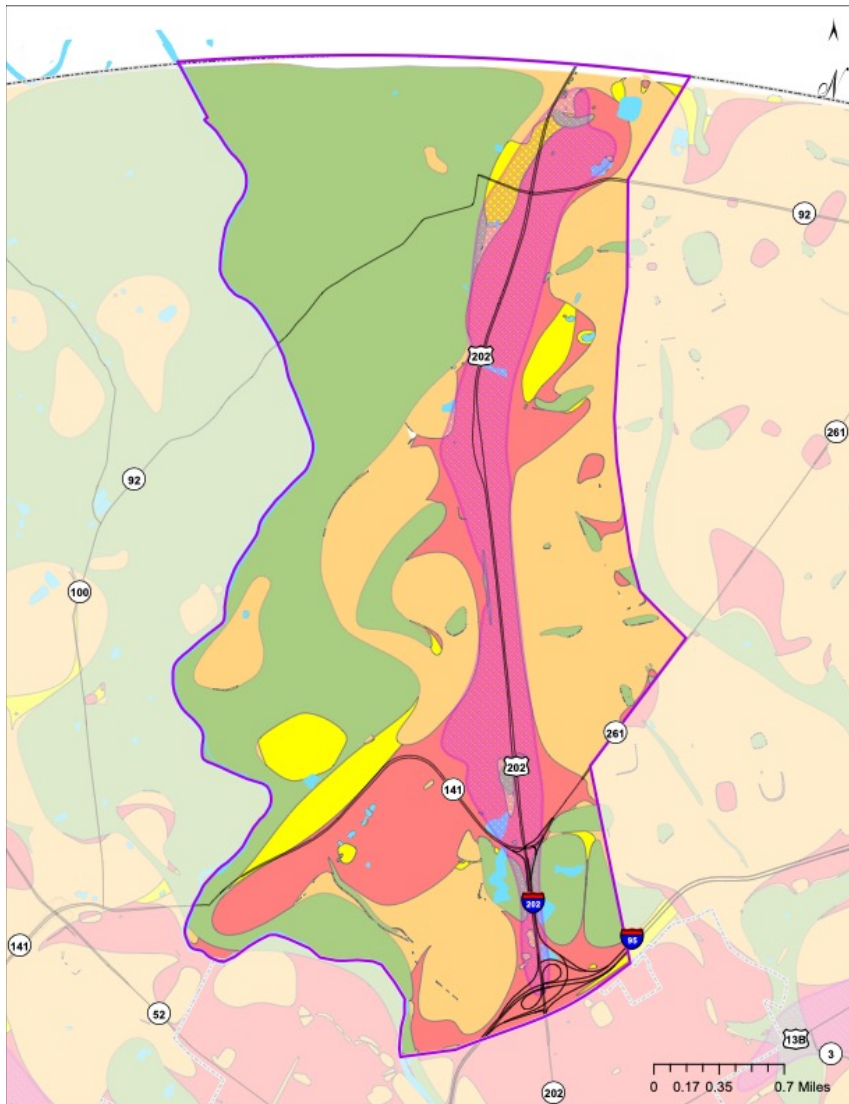


Figure J-7: Concord Pike (US 202) Future Land Use

Southern New Castle County

Overview

Planning for southern New Castle County began in late 2018 as part of a Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) funded transportation and land use plan update. WILMAPCO, DelDOT, and the County jointly managed the process, which involved extensive public engagement and aimed to create a 30-year vision and plan for land use and infrastructure in the area of the county south of the C and D Canal. The plan guides development, preservation, infrastructure and policy decisions in the study area, based on growth patterns and strategies tied to population growth, housing needs, environmental protection, preservation efforts, and transportation improvements. It connects past planning efforts with a clear set of objectives for the future to establish a sustainable path forward for existing and future residents that preserves and enhances the environment.

The full plan draft was published in late summer 2020 and the plan's transportation element was completed and endorsed by WILMAPCO Council in late 2020. In fall 2021, as part of planning board public hearings associated with this and the aforementioned sub-area plans, further planning and engagement was requested by community members who had not yet participated in the process. Through the planning process for NCC@2050, additional meetings were conducted to get those community members up to speed with plan specifics, ranging from the technical and analytical aspects of the plan to community feedback and policy recommendations.

Key Land Use and Zoning Recommendations from the planning process can be found in Appendix F.

The Plan

For the purpose of this plan, the Southern New Castle County planning area is divided into the east and west wings as well as the central core. These subsets are based on current development patterns, sewer service area, (defined in the 2012 Comprehensive Development Plan), and the predominately southern agricultural area with several agricultural easements.

Between 1954 and 1970, 2% of new housing units were located in southern New Castle County. Since then, the share of new single-family dwellings has more than doubled every 16 years. These growth trends have transformed southern New Castle County from several small towns, surrounded by agricultural and natural resources, into a suburban bedroom community. The current landscape of Southern New Castle County is characterized by a predominance of single-family homes, auto-oriented retail and expanding roads, with limited local employment and transit options.

Non-residential growth has not had the desired diversity with the majority being local retail and service-oriented business. Growth in other economic sectors has not been complimentary to the new residential growth as evidenced by about 86% of Southern New Castle County residents commuting to jobs outside of the area (65% to northern New Castle County). Trends in online retail locally and nationally have and will continue to significantly impact this area resulting in development of warehousing and freight/logistics centers such as the Middletown Amazon logistic center.

Moving forward, the Southern New Castle County area has tremendous opportunities while also facing vexing challenges. The area continues to be sought after for its high-quality

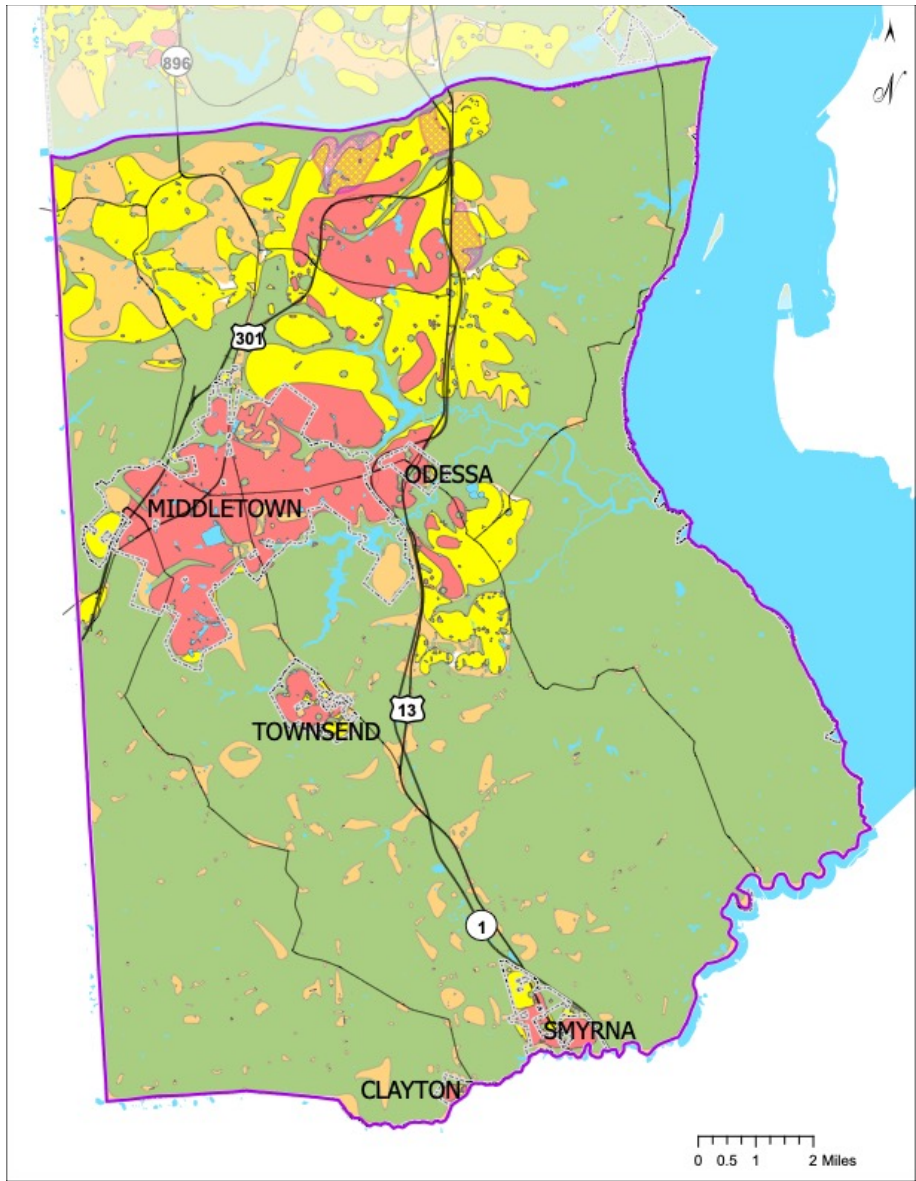
schools; relatively low cost of land and housing; proximity to regional destinations, resources, amenities; and agricultural, natural, and historic character.

The Southern New Castle County plan seeks to:

- Better manage growth and clarify the confusion between what are growth areas and what are areas for rural preservation
- Enhance existing and developing new policies and mechanisms to preserve agricultural and natural resources
- Increase coordination between the municipalities and the county
- Better plan for infrastructure and strongly link that to growth policy
- Focus on enhancing and infilling existing towns and other growth areas, with an emphasis on economic development
- Prepare for the shift in the age of the population toward a greater share of people 65 and older, including housing, local community services, and multi-modal transportation infrastructure.

(See also Appendix F)

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New Castle County Land Use Policy

- Redevelopment and Infill
- Potential Development Areas
- Focused Redevelopment and Infill Areas
- Targeted Resource Protection and Land Preservation Areas
- Areas not Targeted or Anticipated for Future Growth or Preservation

Figure J-8: Southern New Castle County Plan Future Land Use

Community planning efforts in the county are focused on improving the quality of development, planning for infill, redevelopment, and revitalization/repurposing; however, current regulations and policies have not always addressed the unique needs of different areas throughout the county. New Castle County seeks to preserve and enhance the parts of our communities that are meaningful and support our quality of life through the protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment, including natural, historical, and cultural assets. Key themes for this plan are to create livable communities that are vibrant and reflect the important aspects of our past where we can thrive into the future.

Design and Implementation Concepts

While the Community Area Master Plans provide more specific design guidelines for the planning area. The following examples outline more generally how the vision for community design can be fulfilled.

Shopping Centers and Malls

The retail landscape continues to evolve, moving away from traditional bricks and mortar shopping, as more people shop online. With less need for brick and mortar shopping, many aging shopping centers, sometimes referred to as “greyfields” will need to be reimagined. Spaces occupying former shopping centers could be redeveloped into mixed-use and residential development, which contains a variety of housing units, including multi-family units, townhomes, and single family-detached homes.

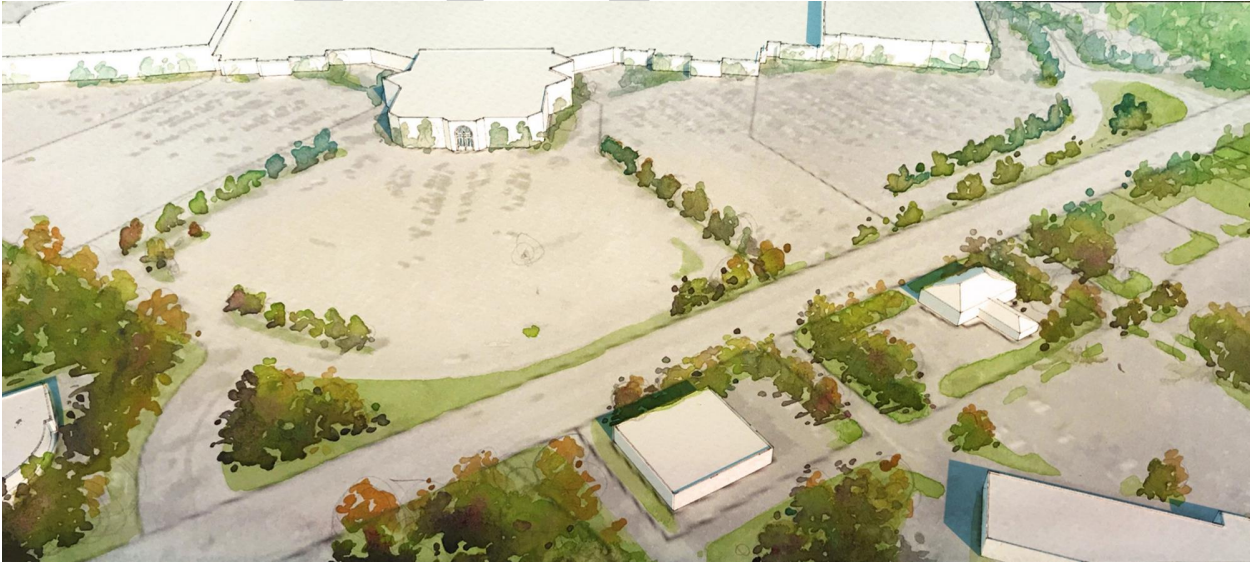


Source: Dover Kohl and Partners Town Planning



Source: Dover Kohl and Partners Town Planning

Like shopping centers, changes in how people shop, especially with the rise of online shopping, shopping malls will also need to be reimagined. The large swaths of parking, surrounding a shopping mall, will no longer be needed, and therefore could be developed, while still maintaining elements of the existing shopping mall.



Citadel Mall, Charleston, South Carolina; Source: Dover Kohl and Partners Town Planning



Source: Dover Kohl and Partners Town Planning

Streetscape Design

Old New Castle is an example of an attractive, walkable community. Buildings are close to the street along the sidewalk. Elements of this traditional design can be incorporated into newer sites around the county.



Source: New Castle County

Below is an example of a commercial property located along a fast moving, multi-lane road. There are no sidewalks or bike lanes, and community character is lacking. Placing a frontage street along the existing busy road, creates an opportunity for buildings to be build closer to the street, thereby enhancing the environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. The addition of street trees and landscaping buffer the frontage street from the busier road. In addition, the landscape buffer area provide space to incorporate green infrastructure into the design.



Source: Dover Kohl and Partners Town Planning, Beaufort, South Carolina

Transit Oriented Development

There is an inherent relationship between land use and transportation. Transit Oriented Development (TOD), which is compact mixed-use development around a transit station encourages the use of transit, while also creating an environment that is walkable and bikeable. Incorporating a variety of uses like multi-family development, retail uses, pharmacies, grocery stores, shops and restaurants, etc., foster the creation of a community where residents live, work, and play, without the need for a car.



Source: Dover Kohl and Partners Town Planning, El Paso, Texas

Related Goals, Objectives and Strategies

10. Goal: Land uses, transportation, and other infrastructure complement each other, and neighborhoods and areas across the county are distinctive, attractive, functional, comfortable, and human scale. The physical environment is high quality, retains value, and is fiscally sustainable.

10.1. Objective: Redevelop and infill key areas of the county (identified in Community Area Master Plans and other studies/analyses) and struggling industrial land, strip malls, office parks, and other “greyfields” to achieve connected places, continuity of design, and sense of place.

10.1.1. Strategy: Incentivize/encourage growth and redevelopment in those targeted areas through public investment and flexible policies that work toward achieving other goals (e.g. preservation, environmental enhancements, watershed improvements, placemaking, walkability/bikeability, etc.).

10.1.2. Strategy: Establish flexible/hybrid zoning in designated areas to support flexibility and creativity for redevelopment/infill and economic development, including consider amending the Unified Development Code to expand opportunities to employ Smart Code principles.

10.1.3. Strategy: Increase use of universal design in public space.

10.1.4. Strategy: Ensure that as change occurs, communities and neighborhoods evolve intentionally toward the community’s vision; change aligns with local needs as well as part of the broader countywide vision.

10.1.5. Strategy: Focus on implementation in areas where local, community plans exist (master plan, corridor plan, etc.)

Implementation process:

As suggestions and/or requests for additional community planning and implementation come through, the following actions represent the overall intended approach:

- a. Conduct a community planning process.
- b. Plan product—the completed community plan is on file/available on the web
- c. Council resolution—attaining a resolution in support of a community plan gives it an additional level of recognition than a or b.
- d. Formalization of plan (become formal policy) incorporate into Future Land Use Map (FLUM) (at the regular update of FLUM interval).

A community may proceed with actions a, b, c, and d, but the later steps imply and result in greater formalization of the plan as official County policy (see the CAMPs explanation above).

10.1.6. Strategy: Prioritize physical form and design, not just land use and density in policies and decision, with plans, regulations, and incentives.

- 10.1.7. Strategy: Identify and preserve cultural and historical resources, to contribute to the character, quality, and function of communities.
- 10.2. Objective: Increase compact development in places where it is appropriate and will support the range of community goals (like transit, affordable housing/lifestyles, non-motorized accessibility, enhancement of place, etc.).
 - 10.2.1. Strategy: Achieve optimal balance of land use mix (and fees structure)
 - 10.2.2. Strategy: Support the creation and enhancement of transit-oriented development. (See [Mobility element](#))
 - 10.2.3. Strategy: Direct residential development in and around existing job centers in a manner that is complementary with county and municipal development patterns. (See [Housing](#) and [Economic Development](#) elements)
- 11 Goal: The built environment and streetscapes promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles including options for walking and biking. All residents have safe access to physically active and healthy lifestyles.**
 - 11.1. Objective: Increase the percentage of people who walk, bike, and take transit to work (from 6% in 2018).
 - 11.1.1. Strategy: Increase trees and landscaping to promote safer, more comfortable spaces (See [Conservation element](#))
 - 11.1.2. Strategy: Increase use of varied, pedestrian-scaled building form and frontage, with streetscapes that are physically and visually connected, providing a safe, low-stress experience
 - 11.1.3. Strategy: Connect the low-stress bike and walking network
 - 11.2. Objective: Increase access to healthy food retailers, medical care, and other daily needs.
 - 11.2.1. Strategy: Establish incentives and flexibility in regulations to encourage these types of development
 - 11.2.2. Strategy: Work with transportation partners to support improved accessibility
 - 11.2.3. Strategy: Seek and support other emerging solutions for affordable provision of daily needs
 - 11.2.4. Strategy: Direct funds for affordable housing to connected, accessible, and walkable locations close to transit, schools, daycare, jobs, shops, and services

See Also:

[Historic Preservation Element, Goal 12](#)

[Intergovernmental Coordination Element, Goal 17](#)