

ELEMENT O

# Intergovernmental Coordination

# O. Intergovernmental Coordination Element

## Element Defined

Fifteen incorporated municipalities and unincorporated areas made up of communities and Census-designated places comprise New Castle County. A focus of NCC2050 is cohesive planning for the unincorporated areas of the county, and where appropriate, coordinating efforts with the municipalities and state agencies. Working with the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) and the Delaware Emergency Management Association (DEMA) will help ensure a cohesive future as the Comprehensive Plan is implemented. The Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) has jurisdiction over most roadways within the county, planning strategically for growth and transportation must involve coordination with DelDOT. Active recreation and active transportation will require close coordination with DelDOT for roadways and Delaware's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) to enhance recreation opportunities for all.

At a regional level, New Castle County is surrounded by three other states and bordered by seven counties. The Intergovernmental Coordination Element, as required by the State of Delaware, is a process that allows New Castle County to create a Comprehensive Plan that is coordinated with the overall goals of the incorporated, unincorporated, and state governments which creates a better plan and likelihood for success.

The element also facilitates cooperative solutions for goals that may be applied differently across the county but are still critical to the development and implementation of the plan. Comprehensive by nature, NCC2050 addresses many aspects of New Castle County and the responsibility of the Intergovernmental Coordination Element is to weave the various agencies and experts into the process. The collaborative approach includes discussions around climate change, social equity, protection of natural resources, emergency preparedness, and many others. This coordinated effort drives not only the development of the plan but also ensures future implementation support.



Figure O-1: Interagency Working Group Member Logos

# What We Heard

*“To close the intergovernmental gaps, we need to develop a Equity Baseline Report and then use it to strategically develop a regional equity framework with specific strategies.” -*

*Councilperson David Carter (District 6)*

*“Metropolitan planning! We need to stop planning in silos.”*

*- Councilperson Dee Durham (District 2)*

## NCC Today

Throughout the Planning Process, New Castle County has worked closely with many agencies. Hosting Interagency Working Group meetings allowed agencies to come together over the plan’s creation to review plan topics, recommendations, and compatibility with other incorporated municipal and statewide initiatives (See **Figure O-1**). Participants in the Interagency Working Group included representatives from planning, finance, public works, land use, transportation, agriculture, environment and natural resources, housing and community services, and leadership from governments and agencies at all levels.

State legislation has provided several tools that transcend jurisdictional boundaries, most critical of which is the Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) Process. The PLUS Process involves reviews by applicable State agencies at the initiation of the major land development process. New Castle County has a separate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Office of State Planning Coordination (OSPC) that requires significant zoning changes and all major plans be submitted to the Office of State Planning Coordination and scheduled for hearing at monthly PLUS meetings. These meetings provide a mechanism for applicants with land development proposals to meet with State agency representatives to discuss issues and opportunities relating to potential regional or area impacts of development and the integration of state and local development plans; and to bring State agency staff together with developers and local officials early in the land development process.

Environmentally sensitive projects or those requesting a variance from the environmental standards outlined in Article 10 of the [Unified Development Code](#) must be reviewed by a committee that incorporates representatives from both public and private jurisdictions to address the range of potential issues. This committee, RPATAC (Resource Protection Area Technical Advisory Committee) consists of representatives from DNREC, the Consulting Engineers Council, DGS, New Castle County Chamber of Commerce, New Castle County Departments of Public Works and Land Use, the Water Resources Agency at the University of Delaware (WRA), the chemical industry, water companies, an environmental advocacy group, the New Castle County Conservation District, a private sector environmental representative and a private sector representative.

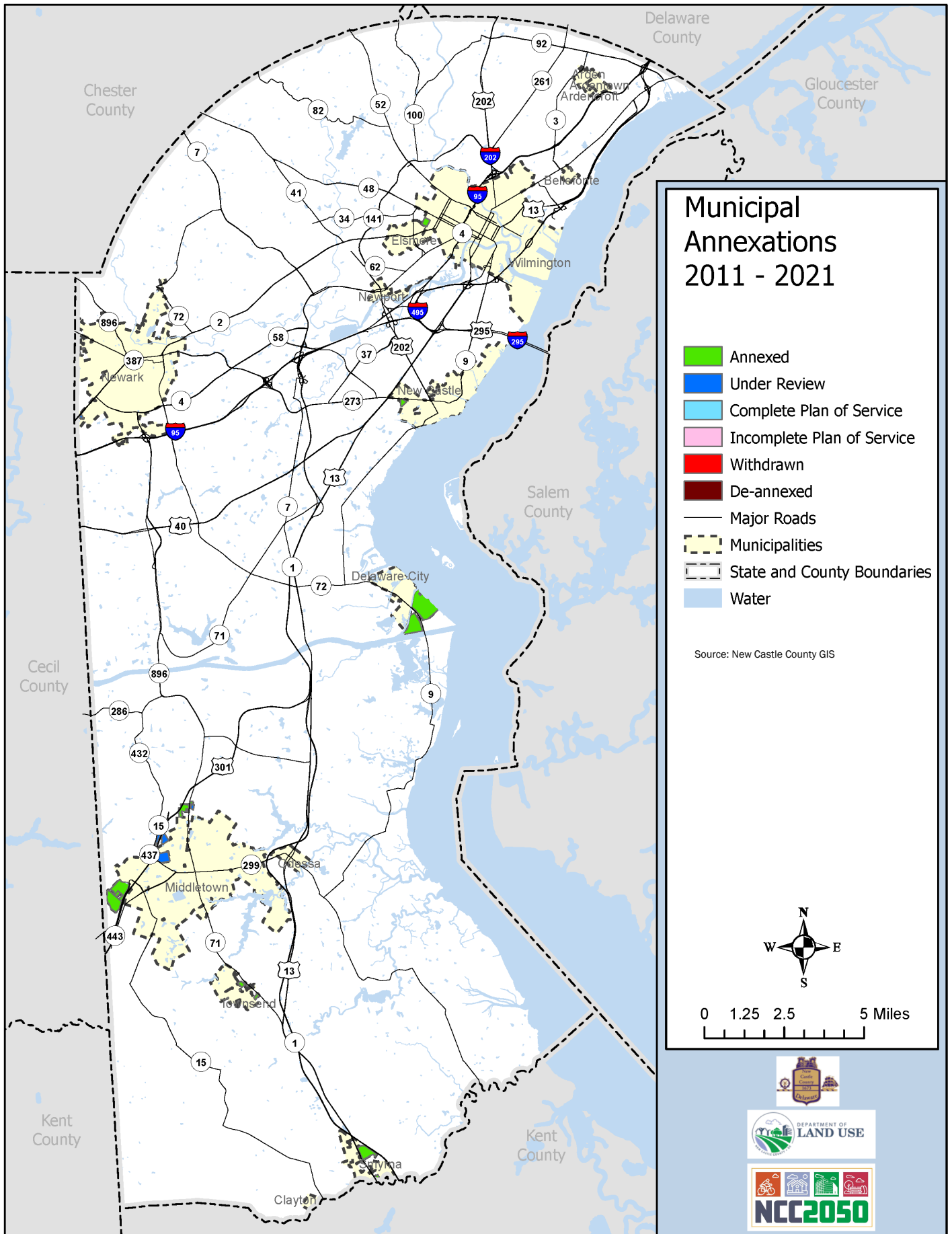
# Annexation

In 2018, NCC released an Annexation Background Report discussing the process and state of the annexation of unincorporated land and municipalities within NCC. Currently, annexations by municipalities must go through the State’s process, which includes a PLUS hearing and comprehensive plan change, which helps bring forth concerns, but ultimately the decision to annex is between the State, the municipality and the property owner. Municipalities under 50,000 people (currently all municipalities in New Castle County, except Wilmington) seeking to annex land in unincorporated New Castle County do not need consent from the County. Since 2011, there have been approximately 156 acres of annexed land in New Castle County. **Table O-1** shows the acreage breakdown between municipalities. Completed annexations between the 2012 Comprehensive Plan and 2021 are included in green on **Map O-1**.

Municipality	Acreage
Bellefonte	0.15
Delaware City	67
Middletown	46
New Castle	3
Newark	3
Smyrna	27
Townsend	4
Wilmington	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>

Table O-1: Annexation by Municipality, in acres  
(Source: New Castle County GIS)

Map O-1: Municipal Annexations 2011-2021



Currently, there are no joint or regional planning areas within the county. However, joint planning areas (JPA) are proposed in the draft [Southern New Castle County Master Plan](#). JPAs encourage collaborative and proactive planning, agreements, and ongoing monitoring to achieve a range of benefits including predictability, environmental benefits, service efficiencies, and cost-savings. JPAs might involve establishment of growth, transition, and preservation areas and definitions would be incorporated into jurisdictions' planning and zoning. Forming regional planning partnerships between incorporated and unincorporated areas would be a step in ensuring intergovernmental decisions are happening to achieve shared local goals. Planning at the boundaries of municipalities is important for coordination of infrastructure and development as well as for open space and farmland preservation. This could also include joint coordination with the State and MPO from an infrastructure-planning perspective.

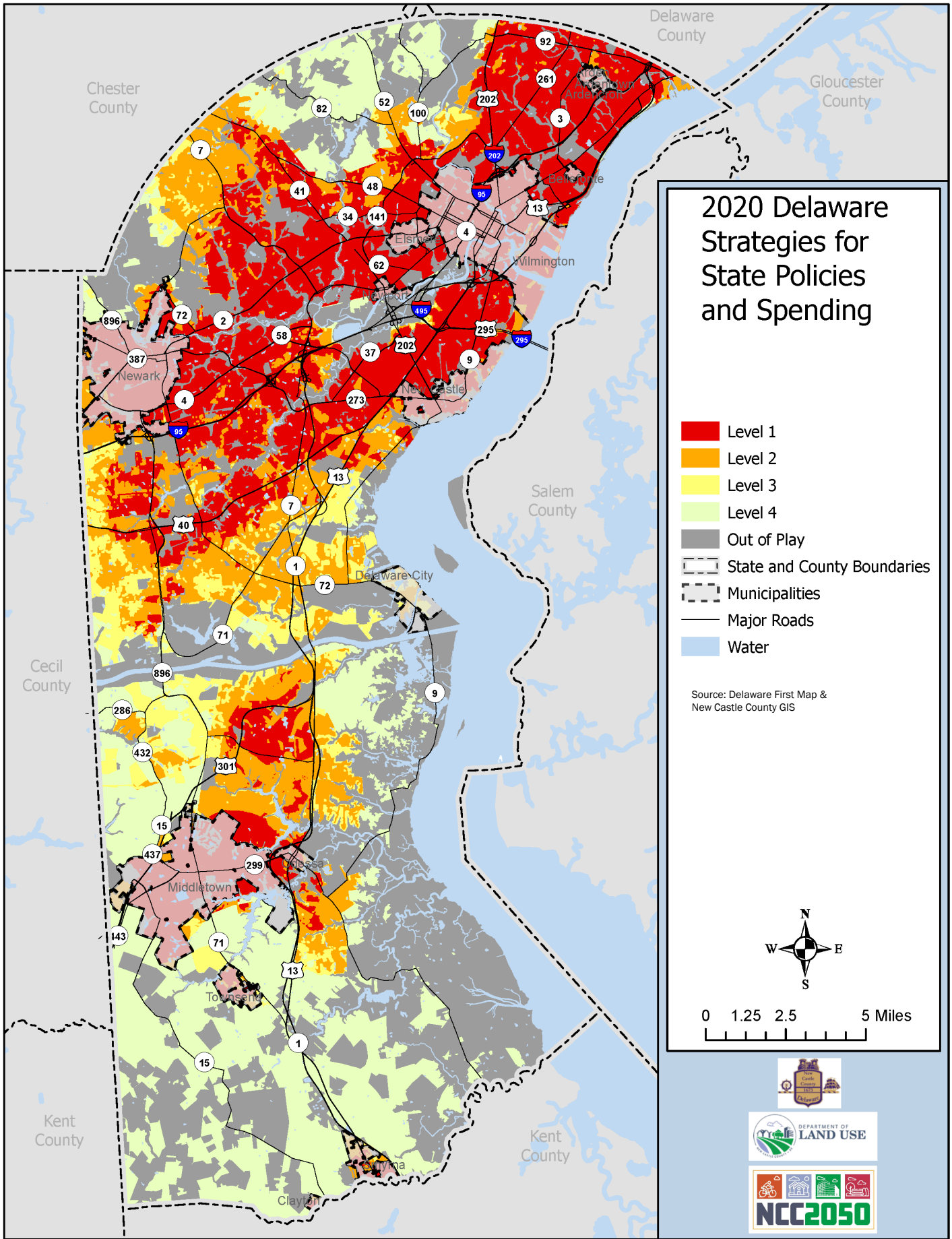
## Statewide Planning

The Delaware Cabinet Committee on State Planning issues prepares the [Strategies for State Policies and Spending](#) document which serves as the primary policy guide summarizing the State's land use goals, policies, and strategies. The Strategies use Investment Levels to distinguish different types of policy, service and funding priorities. See **Map O-2** for a map of 2020 Delaware Strategies for State Policies and Spending.

New Castle County strives to increase employment opportunities near transit and existing services, which are primarily found in Investment Level 1 areas. These include municipalities and urban/urbanizing areas characterized by higher density, increased transportation options, and mixed-use properties. In New Castle County, Level 1 areas are concentrated in the northern portion of the county, near Wilmington and Newark, as well as in southern New Castle County in and around Middletown.

Public-private partnerships and coordination at all levels of government are key to redevelopment and economic revitalization in these downtowns and distressed urban areas. Local policy should be coordinated with state and County efforts to encourage redevelopment of existing but disused or underused "greyfields" like industrial parks and underutilized or vacant strip malls, thereby improving local community cohesion and quality of life by reducing vacant or blighted property while providing additional housing, services, and/or employment in those communities.

Map O-2: 2020 Delaware Strategies for State Policies and Spending



# School Districts

The school districts in Delaware are independent and have no direct ties to the government of New Castle County; they are regulated by the Delaware Department of Education. Within New Castle County there are six school districts and one vocational school district:

- Red Clay
- Brandywine
- Christina
- Colonial
- Appoquinimink
- Smyrna (in New Castle County and Kent County)
- New Castle County Vo-Tech

Within New Castle County, there are a total of 83 public schools, including 10 high schools, 4 vocational-technical schools, 14 middle schools, 42 elementary schools, 7 early education and kindergarten facilities, and 6 special centers. **Map O-3** illustrates the geographic boundaries of school districts in New Castle County. Total public school enrollment for kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade is 73,806, and total private school enrollment in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade is 14,432, for a total of 88,238, according to the 2019 ACS (See **Figure O-2**). There are also 23 charter schools. The average “per pupil” expenditure from all funding sources (federal, state, and local) in 2020 was \$16,369 in Delaware, up from \$15,730 in 2019, according to the Delaware Department of Education [Delaware Report Card](#). While schools are operated independently from the County, it is imperative that the schools, State and County work together to plan for future growth.

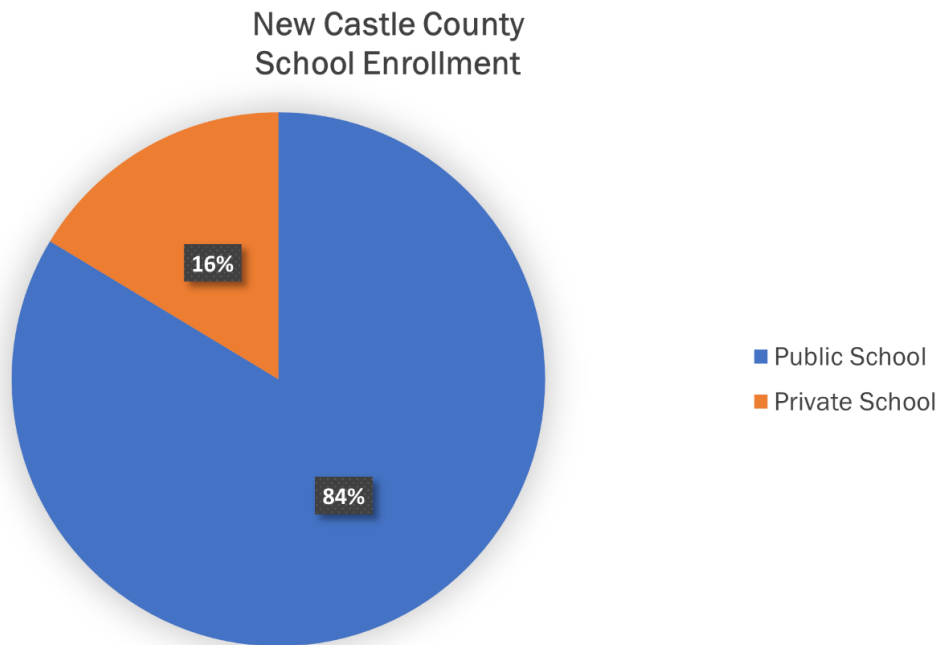


Figure O-2: New Castle County School Enrollment; Source: U.S. Census 2019 American Community Survey

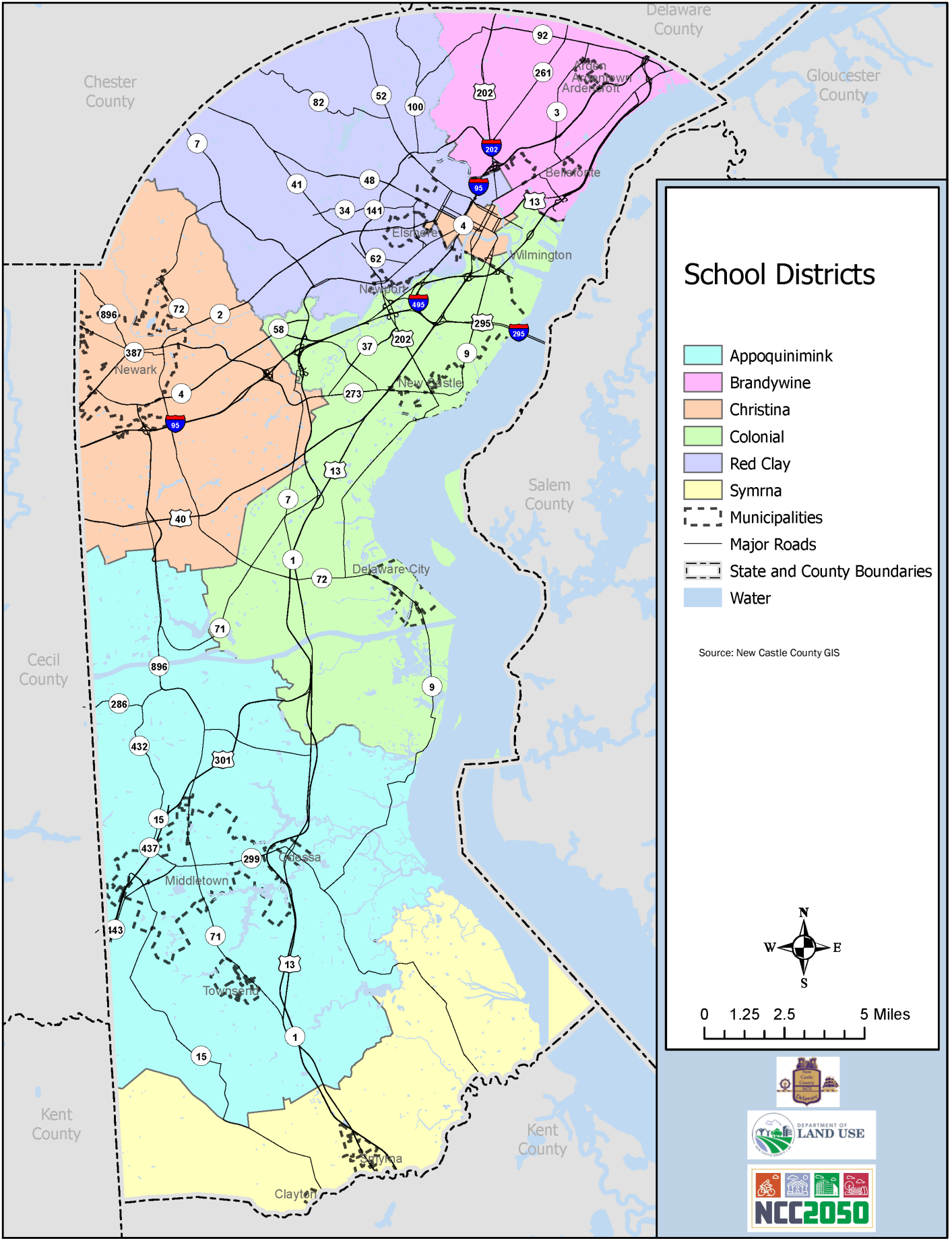
**Table O-2** illustrates appropriation for public school improvements since FY2017 in New Castle County. It is comprised of school construction, expansion, and maintenance projects. The Appoquinimink School District had the most projects and the most funding appropriated over the five most recent fiscal years.

Table O-2: New Castle Public School Improvement Appropriations (FY2017)

Agency/Entity	Description	IPU	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021
<b>K - 12 Education Projects</b>							
Appoquinimink	New 330 Student Kindergarten Center	95-29-00	-	-	-	-	11,753,900
Appoquinimink	New 840 Student ES at Summit Campus	95-29-00	-	-	-	-	2,720,000
Appoquinimink	De mo/Construct Meredith MS	95-29-00	-	-	2,500,000	-	24,297,000
Appoquinimink	A&R to Silver Lake ES	95-29-00	-	-	1,244,300	4,524,000	35,621,600
Appoquinimink	Construct 1,000 student MS & 1,600 student HS	95-29-00	-	14,475,066	48,258,268	48,679,000	-
Appoquinimink	Summit Land Purchase	95-29-00	-	-	-	-	4,123,600
Appoquinimink	Louis L Redding Reconstruction/Addition	95-29-00	-	-	-	-	-
Brandywine	Reno Brandywine HS	95-31-00	1,760,300	1,760,200	2,640,400	2,640,300	-
Brandywine	Reno Claymont ES	95-31-00	317,800	2,860,100	7,944,900	3,178,000	1,588,900
Brandywine	Bush Playground Equipment	95-31-00	-	-	-	40,000	-
Christina	City of Wilmington Education Initiatives	10-02-11	-	2,000,000	17,500,000	12,100,000	7,500,000
Smyrna	North Smyrna ES Roof & Mechanical Renovation	95-24-00	-	-	-	-	2,234,100
Smyrna	Land Purchase Rabbit Chase Lane	95-24-00	-	-	-	-	693,000
Smyrna	New 600 Student ES	95-24-00	-	-	-	-	-
Smyrna	Addition to Clayton Intermediate	95-24-00	-	-	-	-	-
Smyrna	North Smyrna ES Addition/ Renovation	95-24-00	-	-	-	-	-
Christina	Christina Early Education Center Mechanical & Electrical	95-33-00	-	-	-	-	683,100
Christina	Marshall ES HVAC	95-33-00	-	-	-	-	3,875,000
Christina	Leasure ES HVAC Renovation	95-33-00	-	-	-	-	2,264,600
Red Clay	Enhanced MCI	95-32-00	-	-	-	300,000	-
DOE	Market Pressure - Brandywine	95-01-01	-	-	-	-	1,854,900
<b>Total K-12 Education Projects</b>			<b>\$ 2,078,100</b>	<b>\$ 21,095,366</b>	<b>\$ 80,087,868</b>	<b>\$ 71,461,300</b>	<b>\$ 80,209,700</b>

Note: This is appropriated funds provided in the Bond Bill and not actual expenditures as capital funding is set up with a 3-year budget life. Spend may occur sometime after the actual appropriation is available.

Map O-3: School District Boundaries



Projections included in the [Delaware Unified School District Enrollment Projections \(2014-2040\)](#), from the Delaware Department of Education and the University of Delaware, show expected changes in total school enrollment by county. These projections were based on the Delaware Population Consortium population projections released in November 2015. The data provides information about the Delaware public school system which includes the 16 traditional school districts, the three vocational-technical school systems, and charter schools as configured in the 2015-16 school year. Overall public school enrollment in New Castle County is expected to rise through 2040. The Appoquinimink (Appo) and Brandywine School Districts are projected to see slight decreases in enrollment over that period (1.35% and 0.33% reductions, respectively), while all other districts are expected to see increases of more than 6%, as shown in **Table O-3**. (This data does not include charter and vocational schools.)

*Table O-3: New Castle County School Enrollment by District (Not Including Vo Techs)*

District	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2015-2040 % Change	2015-2040 Change
Appo	10,381	10,259	10,358	10,456	10,437	10,241	-1.35%	-140
Brandywine	10,577	10,505	10,607	10,676	10,671	10,542	-0.33%	-35
Christina	15,553	15,749	15,828	15,849	16,194	16,509	6.15%	956
Colonial	9,760	9,893	10,002	10,068	10,259	10,423	6.79%	663
Red Clay	16,094	16,276	16,309	16,350	10,259	17,145	6.53%	1,051
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>64,380</b>	<b>64,702</b>	<b>65,129</b>	<b>65,429</b>	<b>59,855</b>	<b>66,900</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>2,495</b>

*(Source: Delaware Unified School District Enrollment Projections, 2014-2040)*

**Table O-4** shows the detailed breakdown of school enrollment in New Castle County, including vocational and charter schools. The projected total enrollment for 2020 totals to 81,052, which is slightly lower than the actual enrollment for public and private schools, as reported in the 2019 ACS, as noted above (88,238). This indicates that actual school enrollment is growing faster than projected.

Table O-4: Total Public School Enrollment (New Castle County); Source: Delaware Unified School District Enrollment Projections, 2014-2040

**Total Public School Enrollment (New Castle County)**

	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	'15-'40 %change	'15-'40 # change
<b>NCC</b>								
Appo	10,381	10,259	10,358	10,456	10,437	10,241	-1.35%	-140
Brandywine	10,577	10,505	10,607	10,676	10,671	10,542	-0.33%	-35
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Colonial	9,760	9,893	10,002	10,068	10,259	10,423	6.79%	663
Red Clay	16,094	16,276	16,309	16,350	16,800	17,145	6.53%	1,051
NCC VoTech	4,697	4,755	4,838	4,900	4,974	5,022	6.92%	325
DE College Prep (66)	186	189	194	196	197	199	7.04%	13
Prestige (67)	223	227	232	234	235	238	6.59%	15
DAPS (68)	302	303	308	312	316	316	4.37%	13
Aspira (69)	637	664	665	667	709	754	18.32%	117
Wilm Charter (70)	972	948	924	903	907	895	-7.92%	-77
East Side Charter (72)	444	455	468	474	478	487	9.71%	43
Thom. Edison (76)	760	774	801	814	811	814	7.14%	54
DMA (79)	563	551	558	569	565	545	-3.20%	-18
Family Found. (80)	794	809	827	835	842	853	7.53%	60
Kuumba (82)	643	657	677	687	690	698	8.56%	55
Odyssey (86)	1,162	1,145	1,151	1,158	1,155	1,132	-2.51%	-29
MOT (88)	1,011	998	998	1,000	1,001	986	-2.53%	-26
Newark Charter (89)	2,142	2,097	2,078	2,065	2,065	2,026	-5.40%	-116
Gateway (92)	214	212	215	218	217	213	-0.37%	-1
Academia Alonso (9605)	321	337	340	342	362	386	20.17%	65
1st State Mont. (9606)	326	321	323	325	325	318	-2.45%	-8
Design Lab (9609)	214	217	220	220	222	225	-2.45%	-8
STEM (9610)	233	234	238	240	242	243	-2.45%	-8
Great Oaks (9611)	215	220	226	229	232	236	-2.45%	-8
Freire (9612)	233	237	241	242	245	250	-2.45%	-8

The report noted some statewide trends that may be reflected on a smaller scale in New Castle County:

Low-income enrollment coming from families receiving assistance from SNAP (food stamps) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is increasing slowly and steadily over the projection period.

English Language Learners (ELL) are variable but are generally increasing as the Hispanic population steadily increases.

The four categories of special education which are funded at a higher level than those who do not qualify for special education are increasing in numbers but generally at the rate of growth of total enrollments.

The numbers of students who do not qualify for special education are increasing at the same rate as the total enrollment.

The racial/ethnic distribution is slowly changing as the White non-Hispanic population declines and the Hispanic population increases.

## Municipalities within the county

New Castle County has had ongoing communications with municipalities during the comprehensive planning process through the Interagency Work Group, individual meetings, and phone calls. We discussed important intergovernmental coordination including but not limited to:

- Potential municipal growth internally and through annexation,
- Ways to coordinate gateways
  - Wilmington – East Riverfront/South Market Street area, Miller Road, and Northeast/Lea Blvd/Gov Printz corridors
  - Newark – Kirkwood Avenue and Glasgow Avenue
  - Middletown – Summit Bridge Road & Middletown & Warwick Road
- Climate Change and resource protection

Through continued outreach and coordination, we assure that county planning efforts are consistent with the vision(s) expressed at a county and municipal level.

## Surrounding Jurisdictions

When planning for our future it is important to not only consider planning efforts within our boundaries but evaluate, examine, and capitalize on best practices by our neighbors. To our north important planning/preservation efforts are being made regarding watersheds and the Brandywine Greenway Chester County. Additionally, with the volume of commuters traveling from Chester County to the Wilmington area via Concord Pike, we need to factor this into our planning efforts for the Concord Pike corridor. Kent County's proposed Food Innovation Districts (Kent County 2018 Comprehensive Plan), if successful could be an interesting approach for increasing the viability of farms.

The North Claymont area is seeing a shift from heavy industrial uses to corridor type development with a mix of office, commercial and potentially residential uses, however, there has been recent heavy industrial growth in Marcus Hook (Delaware County), which need to be taken into account to assure that we provide the best protections to our residents.

As we move forward the County will continue to work with and learn from surrounding jurisdictions when developing land use policy.

## Libraries

New Castle County is home to several libraries which are available for residents' use for research and learning. The mission of New Castle County Libraries is to inspire innovation and lifelong learning, advance literacy, and strengthen connections within the community. Each branch offers different community classes and activities. The libraries work to adapt and innovate in order to stay relevant to changing needs and interests, provide equitable and inclusive access to free information, and foster community engagement and outreach.

The County's library system is comprised of 16 public libraries, as noted in the FY2022 Approved Capital Program and Budget. Ten facilities are directly administered by the County (Appoquinimink, Claymont, Brandywine Hundred, Hockessin, Kirkwood, Newark, Bear, Route 9, Elsmere and Woodlawn), and six are contractually managed (Corbit-Calloway, Delaware City, New Castle, Wilmington and its two branches, La Biblioteca del Pueblo and the North Wilmington Branch).

In 2022, New Castle County plans to open a new 26,300 square foot library facility in Middletown, which will replace the existing Appoquinimink Community Library, which is the main library serving southern New Castle County. In addition, the planned 25,000 square foot Duck Creek Library in Smyrna will replace the existing Smyrna Public Library and will serve the southernmost area of the County.

Library funding comes from multiple sources; however, the largest portion of operating funds comes from county tax revenue.

In December of 2010, the Department of Community Services completed a Library Master Plan for 2010-2030 to update the previous Master Plan for Libraries 1990-2010. This plan is designed to ensure that all residents of New Castle County will have outstanding access to public library services for many years to come. New facilities or facility updates have been developed in accordance with the Master Plan to reflect changes in population growth in the county.

The County Department of Community Services coordinates with the community through the Library Advisory Board, a 13-member board including general citizens and library friends' groups. The board advises the county library manager, recommends programs concerning local library needs, and assists in implementation of an effective county library system. The board also reviews and makes recommendations related to matters including new and modified administrative policies, the library budget, long-range plans, new library site selection and conceptual plans, and material changes to the master plan.

## Public Safety

The New Castle County Department of Public Safety provides police services, emergency medical services (EMS) and emergency communications center services (police, fire and EMS.) In addition, the Department provides emergency management and preparedness and victim assistance programs.

Police Services provide patrol and investigative services for the unincorporated areas of New Castle County. They respond to the immediate needs of communities with a problem-solving approach. This places the County's police in more direct contact with the citizens served, as demonstrated by community policing sub-stations, mounted, foot, motorcycle, and bicycle patrols.

To provide more proactive and community-oriented police service, studies conducted externally and in-house indicate the County would benefit from a significant increase in staffing. In early 2021, County Council approved expanding the police force by 15 officers. The new officers were part of the police academy class which started in May 2021. The expansion helped to meet the staffing demands of the body camera program, specialized units including the behavioral health unit, and to address population growth.<sup>53</sup>

New Castle County Emergency Medical Services provides pre-hospital advanced life support services. This paramedic service significantly increases survivability from a medical emergency or traumatic emergency. In addition to emergency response, the department provides public information, education, and public relations aimed to increase quality of life within the county. Activities include the promotion of prevention and proper response to medical emergencies, CPR training, Heroin Alert Program, Delaware Resuscitation Academy, special event medical coverage, and the distribution of "Vial of Life" kits to senior citizens.

As our population grows, so does the need for emergency services, increasing the calls into the 9-1-1 center for assistance. The lifeline to these services is the Emergency Communications Center, also known as the 9-1-1 Center. 9-1-1 takes calls from all New Castle County residents, businesses, and people traveling through New Castle County, both in the unincorporated areas and in the towns and cities, with the exception of Newark and Wilmington.

New Castle County is the first 9-1-1 center in the state to offer [Smart911](#) capabilities. Smart911 is a free service that allows residents to create a Safety Profile for their households to include any information that emergency responders would need in the event of an emergency. When anyone in the household dials

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<sup>53</sup> New Castle County's police department gains 15 positions, Sophia Schmidt, Delaware Public Media, Feb. 10, 2021, <https://www.delawarepublic.org/politics-government/2021-02-10/new-castle-countys-police-department-gains-15-positions>  
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9-1-1 from the phone(s) associated with the profile, the profile information is displayed to the 9-1-1 operator to facilitate the proper response to the proper location.

Volunteer fire companies provide fire protection services under an agreement with the New Castle County government, resulting in large savings for the taxpayers of New Castle County. New Castle County has established impact fees for infrastructure improvements and provides annual funding to ensure fire protection facilities keep pace with demand.

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is charged with preparing New Castle County and the public to manage activities before, during, and after the impact of natural and technological disaster agents to protect lives and property within the county. The Office operates under the concept of Comprehensive Emergency Management, which applies to all types of hazards and requires a partnership among all levels of government, the private sector, industry, voluntary organizations, and the public. Additional details about the County emergency preparedness efforts are found in the [Climate Change/Hazard Mitigation](#) element.

All goals, objectives, and strategies included in this Comprehensive Plan must not be implemented in a vacuum. These efforts will require support and participation from agencies, organizations, and partners across New Castle County and the state. Even the development of this plan was coordinated with a variety of partners. Involving and coordinating with our diverse partner organizations will facilitate better, innovative and cooperative solutions to improve all aspects of our communities included in this plan, including sustainable and effective investments in transportation networks, economic and community development, and environmental protection.

## Related Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

[Conservation](#), Goal 3

[Mobility](#), Goal 8, 9 & 11

[Community Planning and Design](#), Goal 10

[Climate Change and Hazard Mitigation](#), Goal 13, 14 & 15

[Environmental and Social Justice](#), Goal 16

