

New Castle County, Delaware
Comprehensive Plan



NCC 2050

Preparing our Built and Natural
Environments for the Future

— AN EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW —

PHOTO CREDIT: GREATER BRANDYWINE CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU



NEW CASTLE
COUNTY | DE



Be prepared.

It's true for individuals and families and equally true for our communities. The future is full of uncertainty, imposing challenges to overcome and opportunities to make the most of. How we respond and whether we prosper depends on how we prepare.

Public health crises. Severe weather fueled by climate change. Economic downturns. We recognize the urgency of these threats. And we plan for resilience.

WHY *we plan*

The same goes for more slow-moving changes. How we prepare our built and natural environments to respond goes a long way toward determining our future wellbeing and our capacity to avoid the worst impacts of an unknown tomorrow.

That puts the onus on us. Together, we must translate a vision for our future into priorities for policies, programs, and projects over the next 30 years: A *comprehensive plan* that requires acknowledging and addressing what we already know and readying ourselves for what we can't yet fully predict.



A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IS THE STATE-MANDATED FOUNDATION FOR COUNTY DECISION-MAKING.



- » Shapes the places in which we live, work, and play.
- » Directs the public services, infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, sewer services, and more) and capital investments that make our communities livable.
- » Guides the use, density, and design of homes and buildings, directly shaping the physical appearance of our neighborhoods while simultaneously preserving environmental, historical, and cultural assets.

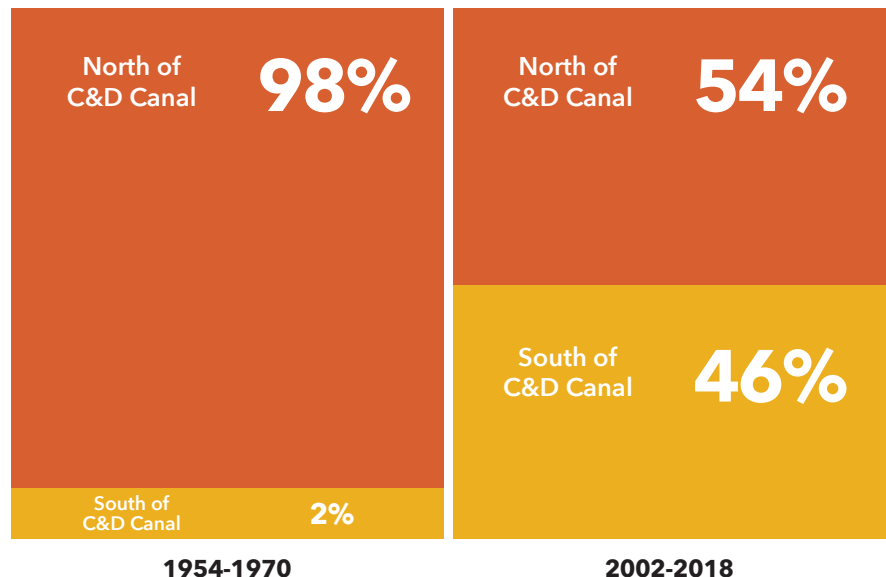
REALITY *checking*

New Castle County is changing every day, responding to influences that originate both within our county and from regional, national, and global trends. Among realities we must address:

- » We have the advantage of living within the most economically dynamic corridor in the Eastern United States. But current growth patterns are creating an imbalance of jobs, people, and infrastructure demand. Up until the mid-1980s, lower-density single family home development was concentrated primarily in the northern end of the County. More recently, it's shifted into formerly rural areas south of the C&D Canal. The increase in population and developed lands has come with a corresponding loss of resource lands, longer commutes between homes in the south County and jobs in the north, and rising costs for roads and other infrastructure to support low-density, low-employment development.

SEEING
FROM
NOW TO
2050

Shift in New Single Family Detached Home Development



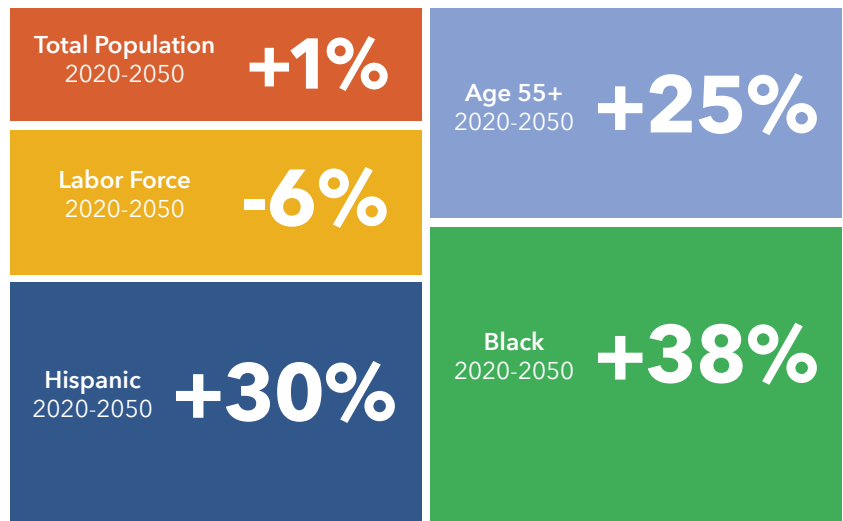
**EVERYTHING IS
CONNECTED.**



Protecting open space and achieving the right mix of housing in the right places. Reducing carbon emissions and broadening transportation choices. Addressing environmental justice now and anticipating future threats to those in harm's way. Each priority on our to-do list is woven into relationships with other priorities. If we focus too narrowly on overcoming one challenge, we can undermine success for others. So each of our strategies should be tested against the likelihood they'll distribute opportunities and reduce threats across the broadest possible range of people who live, work, and play in New Castle County. The Comprehensive Plan must be comprehensive.

- » New Castle County's population growth has been slowing, with the 55-plus demographic segments projected to increase the fastest in the coming decades. The population is also becoming more diverse. Taken together, the trends call for planning inclusively to address changing needs and to leverage the potential contributions of new mixes of people.

Projected Community Change (2020-2050)



SOURCE: [HTTP://WWW.STATEPLANNING.DELAWARE.GOV/DEMOGRAPHY/DPC-PROJECTION-DATA.SHTML](http://www.stateplanning.delaware.gov/demography/dpc-projection-data.shtml)

- » Throughout the County, some of the ways we've planned and paid for new development and the infrastructure to support it have not aged well. We need strategies for building the new and replacing the old.
- » Some communities where business and other community activity flourished in the past have lost residents and jobs. They're in need of reinvestment and revitalization.

Broadening the PERSPECTIVE

A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

*Four virtual
workshops in fall 2020
with 370 attendees*

*Youth Planning
Board with
40 participants*

*Virtual public
forums in Nov. '20
and July '21 with
426 registrants*

24,574
visits to the
NCC@2050
website

Five “deep dive”
virtual sessions,
spring ‘21 with
837 attendees

909
multiple
response
surveys

Four meetings
attended by 88
Stakeholder Advisory
Committee and Inter-Agency
Workgroup members

What we heard from individuals, organizations, and businesses over two years of conversations:

- » Broad support for a goal of preserving open space and agricultural land.
- » Encouragement for developing new strategies and support systems to address the opportunities of 21st Century economies, both within and beyond our region.
- » General agreement that more affordable housing is needed.
- » Desire for more walkable, mixed-use development, residential density, and housing type diversity—at least in some places in the County.
- » Strong arguments for addressing environmental justice concerns.
- » Support for improving infrastructure, both where it now exists and where new development requires it.



Putting it all **TOGETHER**

SIX CONSISTENT THEMES

To address both what we know about current trends and what's required to realize our vision for the future, we've identified six interconnected themes for policymaking:

- » **Sustainable Growth:** Development, redevelopment, and revitalization occur in planned growth areas, efficiently using existing and planned infrastructure while limiting the impact on the environment. Growth will be economically and socially sustainable.
- » **Livable Built Environment for All:** All elements of the built environment (land use, transportation, housing, energy, and infrastructure, for example) work together providing a high quality of life for all our residents.
- » **Conservation and Preservation:** Our environment (air, water, land, natural resources, and climate) is protected as part of our thriving county.
- » **Robust Economy:** The economy is diverse, strong, and resilient. It adapts to change with innovation and collaboration, while ensuring access to local, living-wage jobs.
- » **Thriving Places and Community Character:** The places in which we live, work and play are well designed, accessible, and vibrant, with active locations for people to gather.
- » **Diverse Engagement:** Our communities are central to our future and the diversity of the county's residents is represented in civic life, engagement, and leadership.

**Review the Comp Plan process in full and
learn about opportunities to participate:**

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