



# Comprehensive Plan First Quarter Summary: November 2020

The New Castle County Department of Land Use kicked off the NCC@2050 Comprehensive Plan on June 24, 2020, which will replace the current New Castle County 2012 Comprehensive Plan in the year 2022. The Comprehensive Plan is a community-driven process that creates the legal justification for planning and land use decisions to continue to make New Castle County a great place to work, live, and play into the year 2050.

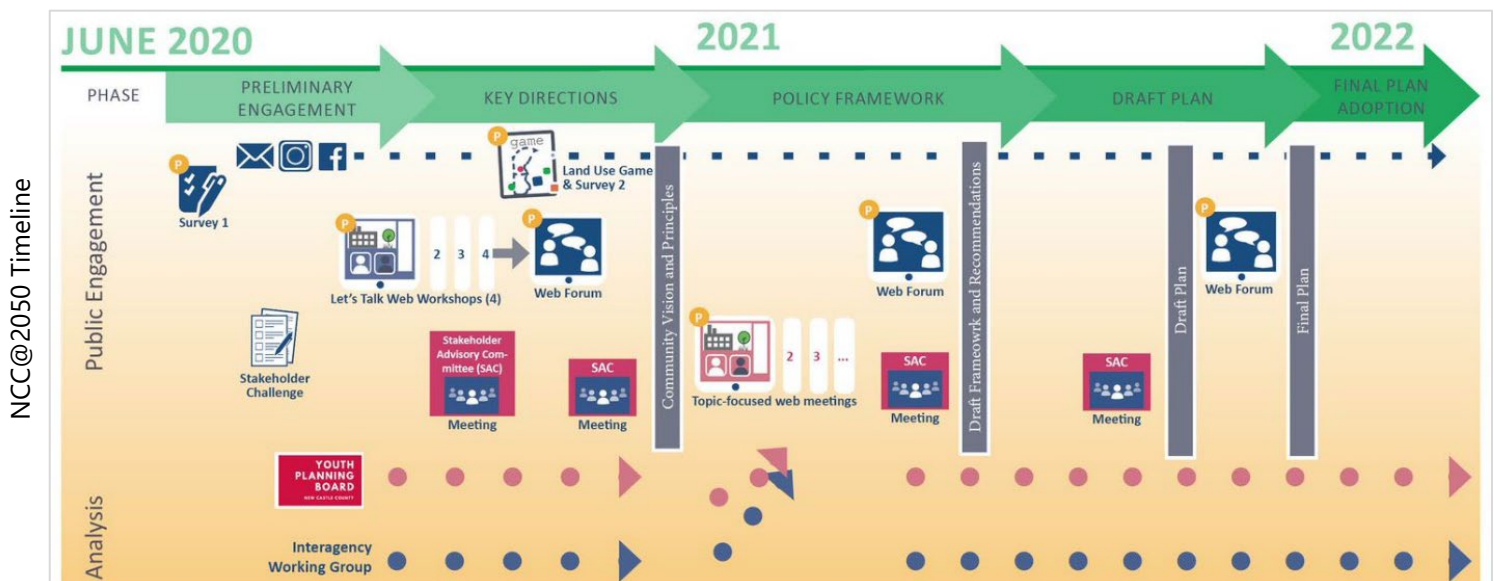
**NCC@2050 will provide land use policies and recommendations for the built and natural environment, shaping the places where we:**



Since kickoff, efforts have focused on:

- first public survey
- the Stakeholder Challenge
- first meetings of the Youth Planning Board
- first meetings of the Inter-agency Work Group
- first meeting of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (October 26, 2020)
- first community survey (conducted during the summer of 2020, results below)
- web workshops to share introductory information and data and gather early ideas from the public

These activities aimed to gather and share foundational data and perspectives toward shaping a vision and key directions for our plan and our future. The thoughts and ideas we heard from the community from these activities help lead into the Fall Forum (held on November 18) to provide more focused analysis and help shape the goals, future land use, policy framework and preliminary strategies for NCC@2050.



There's still time for you to get involved! A successful comprehensive plan is achieved by active involvement from the whole community. To learn more about how you can get involved, visit [NCC2050.NewCastleDE.gov](https://NCC2050.NewCastleDE.gov) or email us at [NCC2050@Newcastledel.gov](mailto:NCC2050@Newcastledel.gov).



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We received many good comments and questions from up to this point, covering a wide range of issues. Some input was specific and some general. Overall, there seems to be a desire to maintain and improve what is great about the County and to grow in a smart and green fashion. This initial input will be further discussed and refined as we continue to build the plan. Please stay tuned.

To view the recordings, summaries and more, please visit the “Current Phase” section of our website:

[NCC2050.NewCastleDE.gov](http://NCC2050.NewCastleDE.gov).

## Pressing Challenges and Top Priorities in New Castle County



### Connectivity

- Safe infrastructure for walking and biking (especially to daily amenities)



### Environmental Issues

- Flooding
- Pollution
- Climate Change



### Recreational Areas and Land Preservation

- Preserving farms, natural areas, and historic properties
- More (and better maintained) parks



### Infrastructure Physical and Social/Redevelopment

- Redeveloping former industrial land, strip malls, and office parks



### Inequities (Social and Environmental Justice)

- Affordable housing
- Crime/Safe Spaces/Places
- Schools/ Improved education
- High quality jobs that pay a fair wage
- Proximity of heavy industry to residential neighborhoods

# ***What New Castle County should aspire to over the next 30 years:***

## **Economic**

- Promote development near existing infrastructure
- Jobs where housing is & housing where jobs are
- Couple economic growth with community character preservation
- Higher paying jobs/quality jobs/encourage local business development over national brands
- Evaluate economic impact of preserved land
- Access to WIFI/high speed internet for everyone

## **Housing**

- Provide/incentivize a variety of inclusive housing types including more affordable housing
- Universal design principals used for homes and neighborhoods, so our places are accessible to people with a wide range of abilities, disabilities, and other characteristics
- Improved quality of life/safe neighborhoods

## **Design**

- Universal design is standard
- Pedestrian and bicycle friendly residential and commercial areas
- Preserve smaller roads, less multi-lane highways
- Child and handicap accessible communities
- Promotion of park use and more park options
- Incorporate more art into public spaces (fountains, sculptures, interactive art, etc.)
- Promote compact development, in-fill development, and reuse of existing buildings that is pedestrian and bicycle friendly
- Better development (control sprawl/encourage mixed use & redevelopment of empty buildings)

## **Land Use Patterns/Location**

- Connectivity to goods and services
- Focus on the impact of development on public health
- Mixed use communities that promote community inclusivity
- Less industrial, more residential
- Encourage metropolitan planning directing growth to existing downtowns
- Retail balance – new vs. redevelopment
- Maintain rural character south of the canal

## **Transportation and Land Use**

- Reduce traffic/congestion
- Balance of jobs and housing
- Better transit and transit supportive development/multi-modal methods
- More options for biking/walking that connect major population centers and special places
- Restrictions on small electric transportation (ebikes, scooters, etc.)

## **Environmental Issues**

- Safe environmentally friendly neighborhoods
- Climate change and concern about environmental impacts of growth and sprawl
- Preserve and protect native species with green corridors by protecting open space
- Incorporate greenery into architecture
- Air quality/renewable energy/electric vehicles
- Land/agriculture preservation
- Expanding government-nonprofit-private partnerships and prioritize funding
- Prioritize farm preservation to also protect natural areas & provide environmental benefits
- Promote innovative agricultural and land preservation practices: regenerative farming, native landscaping and biodiversity, pollinator gardens, community composting, creative stormwater management, equal access to healthy foods, increased tree canopy
- Support youth agriculture education programs
- Hazard Mitigation (flooding/climate change/adaptation/water pollution)

## **Social Justice Issues**

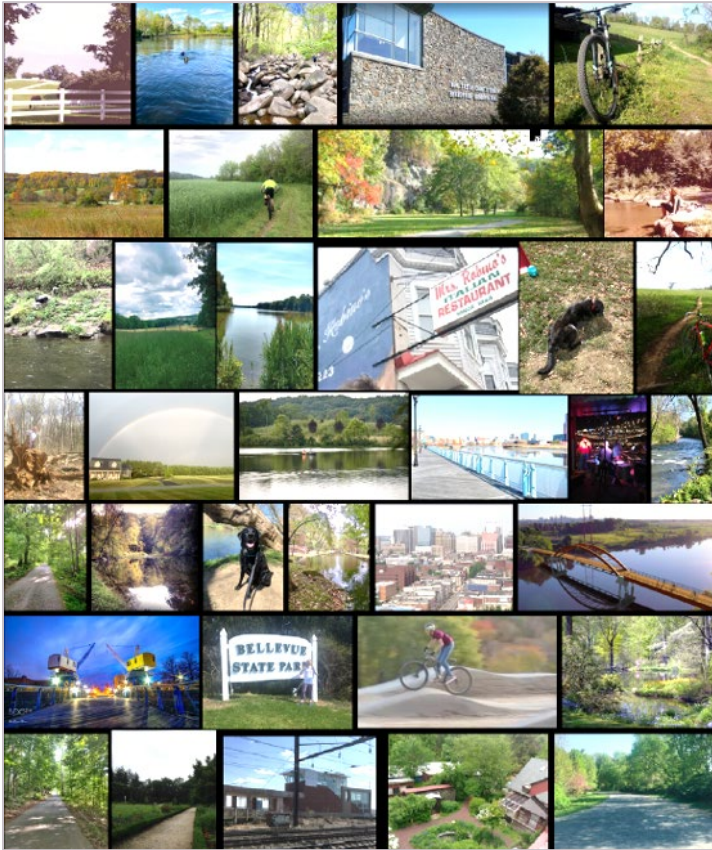
- Implement cumulative impact caps, safe economic growth and equity in resource distribution
- Economic, health, and education inequities
- Prioritize efforts with the most significant impact – don't overlook small incremental changes (e.g. connectivity improvements, water resources, parks and green spaces)
- Evaluate Land Use policies to rectify environmental and social justice issues
- Intergovernmental coordination and clear messaging to address potential issues



## Early Engagement

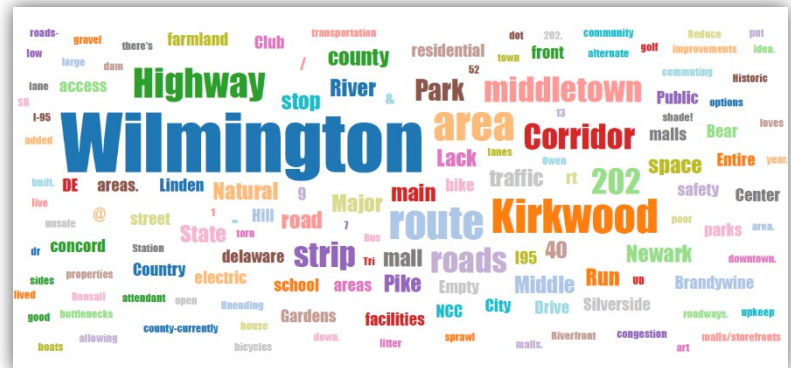
### Online Survey #1: June 24, 2020 – August 3, 2020

### Three places in the County that respondents love:



To see more photo submissions, visit: [NCC2050.NewCastleDE.gov](http://NCC2050.NewCastleDE.gov)

### Places that could be improved:



### How can this area be improved?



## Youth Planning Board

Today's youth will inherit the New Castle County of the future. We believe there is a significant need to involve young people in governance generally, and planning specifically, as well as to empower them to advocate for the changes they want to see in their communities.

The Department of Land Use has led the development of the New Castle County Youth Planning Board (YPB) with support from community partners including the University of Delaware, Network Delaware, and the Delaware Chapter of the American Planning Association. The YPB is the first of its kind in the state and welcomes young New Castle County residents between the ages of 14-22. There are 22 participants in the program this year.



One of the initial activities of the YPB was to explore the *Growing Better Places Game*, a development scenario board game that helps residents, students, and other stakeholders discuss and understand the dynamics of growth, development, infrastructure, and community amenities and tradeoffs involved in related real-world decision making.

← *Growing Better Places Board Game*

## Early Engagement

### Summer 2020 Outreach & Virtual Workshops

**Historic Preservation** - June 8, 2020: The Department held a virtual public meeting to discuss multiple approaches to historic preservation, including legislation and community-based efforts. This meeting featured an historic preservation approach overview by Mr. Nicholas Redding, Executive Director of Preservation Maryland, and information regarding historic legislation and next steps by Land Use historic preservation staff as well as a facilitated question and answer session.

**Heavy Industrial Zoning** - June 24, 2020: The Department held a meeting to provide an update about the Heavy Industrial Zoning District and the environmental protections existing in the Unified Development Code. The discussion focused on environmental concerns, economic growth and aligning best practices in the regulations.

**NCC@2050 Overview** - July 29, 2020: The Department was invited to the **Rotary Club of Middletown, Odessa, Townsend's** weekly meeting to give an overview of the comprehensive plan and how important it is for residents of southern New Castle County to get involved.

**NCC@2050 Overview** - August 27, 2020: The Department participated in the **Sierra Club Delaware Chapter's** "Conversation on the impact of the Comprehensive Plan and how you can shape the future of New Castle County!" This conversation with local civic organizations and other environmental groups provided information to better understand the process and an overview of the importance of the Comprehensive Plan. See this link for the video/recording: <https://youtu.be/VbJwytAMXNQ>

**NCC@2050 Overview** - September 17, 2020: The Department participated in the **Committee of 100's** "Virtual NCC@2050 Workshop". This meeting was a virtual Q&A session for members of The Committee of 100 to discuss the planning efforts and ways to get involved in the process.



**SIERRA CLUB**  
DELAWARE CHAPTER



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## Early Engagement

### Let's Talk Workshop Series

(September 2020 – November 2020)

Over 350 people registered for the Let's Talk Workshop Series. Each workshop included an overview of the importance of the Comprehensive Plan, subject matter expert presentations, a panel discussion, and a public Q & A focused on specific issues and how they should be addressed in NCC@2050.



Let's Talk Workshop. Panel discussion/chat focused on existing transportation conditions and "What you think are the most important economic and transportation issues for the New Castle County Comprehensive Plan to address?"



Let's Talk Workshop. Panel discussion/chat focused on existing housing conditions, incremental infill affordable housing and healthy communities.



This workshop provided a Keynote Presentation

#### Workshop #1: Transportation and the Economy -

September 14, 2020: 74 community members registered for Transportation and the Economy -

#### Workshop #2: Our Homes and Neighborhoods -

October 7, 2020: 91 community members registered for Our Homes and Neighborhoods-

#### Workshop #3: Our Places and Spaces -

October 21, 2020: 95 community members registered for Our Places and Spaces-Let's Talk Workshop.

around "Ten Big Ideas about the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Neighborhood". Panel discussion focused on imagining New Castle County now vs. 30 years in the future; great places in New Castle County, neighborhoods and places to be preserved, favorite town centers/commercial spaces, and places where change should occur.



**Workshop #4: Our Environment and Nature -** November 9, 2020: 110 people registered for our Environment and Nature Let's Talk Workshop. Panel

discussion/chat focused on sea level rise and climate action planning, environmental justice and equity, land preservation, and water quality.

To view the recordings, summaries and more, please visit the "Current Phase" section of our website: [NCC2050.NewCastleDE.gov](https://NCC2050.NewCastleDE.gov).

### Stakeholder Challenge

A combined 50 groups and individuals completed the Stakeholder Challenge, a 5-question survey in which participants provided valuable input regarding their hopes and priorities for the county's future. These findings have been incorporated into page 4. Participants listed items below as their top priorities NCC@2050 should address:

- Access to WIFI/ high speed internet for everyone
- Economic, health, and education inequities
- More services south of the canal
- Maintain rural character south of canal
- Transportation (volume/noise/infrastructure/ public transit/ multi-modal transportation/funding
- Higher paying jobs/quality jobs/encourage local business development over national brands
- Affordable housing/address homelessness
- Environmental justice/social justice
- Climate change/environmental protection/hazard mitigation/stormwater runoff/water pollution
- Protect open space/preserve farmland/more walking trails/biking trails/encourage native plants
- Better development (control sprawl/encourage mixed use & redevelopment of empty buildings)