DELAWARE
STATE STRATEGIES



October 23, 2026



Communication, Coordination, Collaboration

OSPC Mission: The Office of State Planning Coordination's mission is the continuous improvement of the coordination and effectiveness of land use decisions made by state, county, and municipal governments while building and maintaining a high quality of life in the State of Delaware.



DELAWARE STATE STRATEGIES

Smart Growth:

Efficient Spending.

Affordable Housing.

Climate Resiliency.

Land Conservation.

Economic Development.

https://stateplanning.delaware.gov/strategies/index.shtml

State Strategies Document & Maps

Explore the information below to view the final document and maps.

DELAWARE
STATE STRATEGIES



State Strategies Policy

Explore the Map

Purpose of State Strategies

- To coordinate the provision of infrastructure and services with land-use decisions at the local level.
- Why Coordinate:
  - Land use decisions are a local responsibility;
  - The provision of infrastructure and services is a State responsibility
  - If the above aren't coordinated, then waste and inefficiency can occur
  - The State and local governments must be **partners in planning** to avoid waste and inefficiency and implement smart growth.
- State Strategies is required by Delaware Code
  - Title 29, Chapter 91, Section 9101 (c) (5)

2025 Update

- Delaware Code: Title 29, Chapter 91, Section 9101 (c) (5) requires an update every 5 years
- Incorporate updated data
  - Comprehensive Plans certified since 2020
  - State Agency data layers
  - New data not available in 2020
- Review and refine State Agency implementation policies
- Implemented by Governor Meyer EO #16 on January 30, 2026

Figure 6: GIS Datasets Included

DELAWARE STATE STRATEGIES

Promoting Growth

Visit the Data Storymap for full details

Planned Growth	• County Growth Areas • Municipalities • Municipal Annexation Areas • Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Receiving Areas • 2020 Census Urban Areas • 2022 Built Areas • DelDOT Transportation Improvement Districts (TIDs) - (operational only) • Housing Areas of Opportunity
Services	• Public Transit - (1-mile major stop and ¾-mile other bus stop buffers, micro-transit areas) • Bike and Pedestrian Connectivity Priority Areas • Public Libraries - (3-mile buffers clipped to public transit and growth areas) • Public Schools - (2-mile buffers of upper schools, 1-mile buffers of lower schools) • State Service Centers - (2-mile buffers)
Public Safety	• Fire Stations - (3-mile buffers) • Emergency Medical Services (EMS) - (3-mile buffers) • Hospitals - (5-mile buffers of full-service and 24-hour emergency facilities) • Local Police Jurisdictions – (municipal only)
Utilities	• Public Sewer and Water Service Areas • Water and Wastewater Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) Service Areas – (within designated growth areas)

Figure 6: GIS Datasets Included

DELAWARE STATE STRATEGIES

Promoting Preservation

Natural Resources	• Coastal Zone • 100-Year Floodplains – (Sussex County only) • Excellent Groundwater Recharge Areas • Non-Tidal Wetlands - (100-foot buffers) • Tidal Wetlands - (100-foot buffers) • Wellhead Protection Areas • Delaware Ecological Network (DEN)
Resiliency	• Coastal Inundation – (3-foot sea level rise scenario) • Flood Risk Adaptation Map (FRAM)
Agriculture and Forests	• Agricultural Preservation Districts – (with agreements through 2030) • Agricultural and Forest Lands of Importance
Limits on Growth	• Areas East of Route 1 in Kent County • Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Sending Areas • Areas Outside of Designated Growth Areas
Misc. Protection	• Correctional Facilities - (1-mile buffers) • Dover Air Force Base Noise Zones and Accident Potential Zones (APZs)

Figure 6: GIS Datasets Included

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Out-of-Play

Out-of-Play	• Permanent Agricultural Conservation Easements • Permanent Forestry Conservation Easements • DelDOT Constraint Areas • 100-Year Floodplains – (New Castle and Kent Counties only) • Protected Lands (government and private conservation lands, and dedicated open space) • Tidal Wetlands • Dover Air Force Base Properties

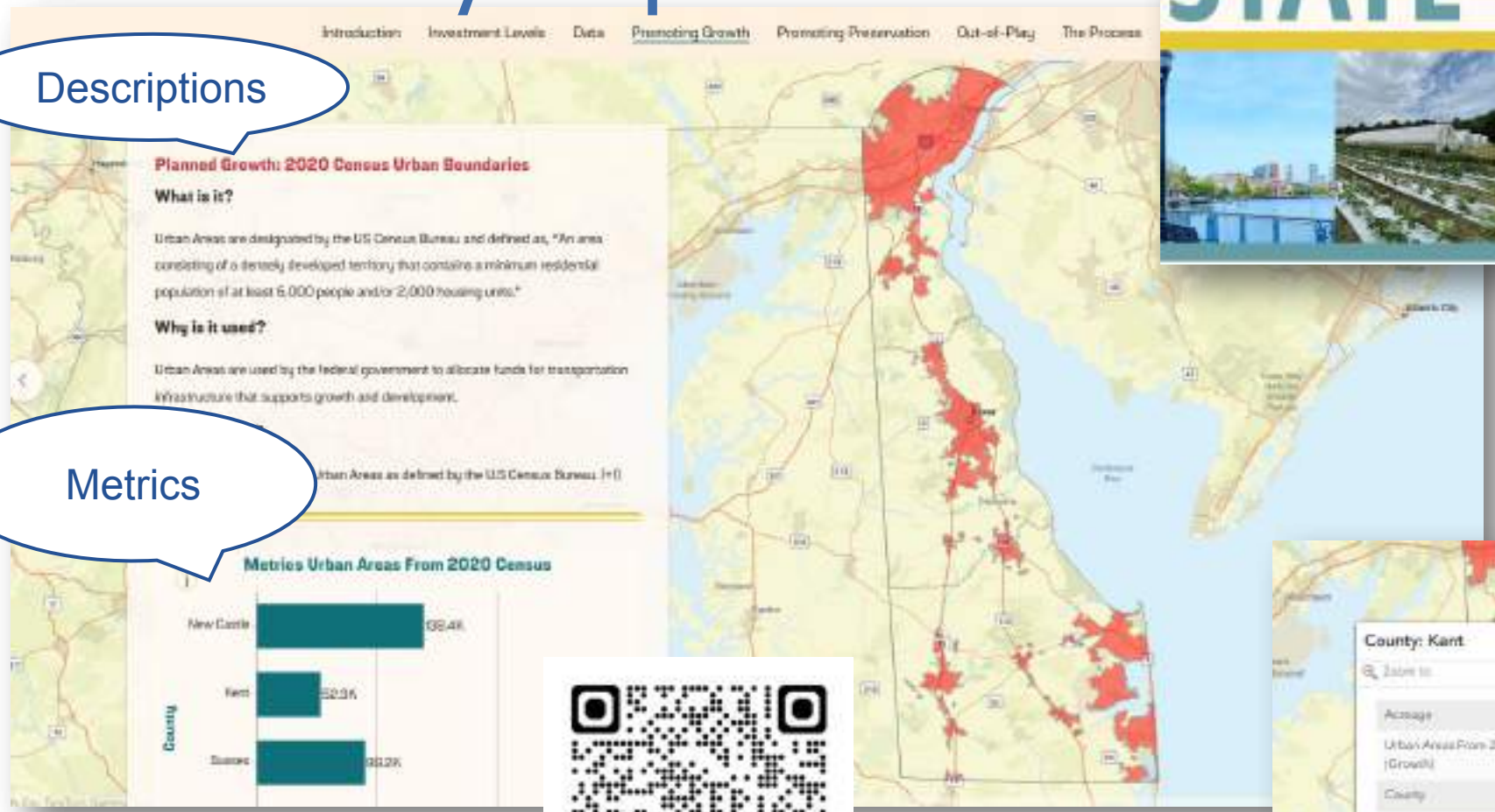
Data Storymap

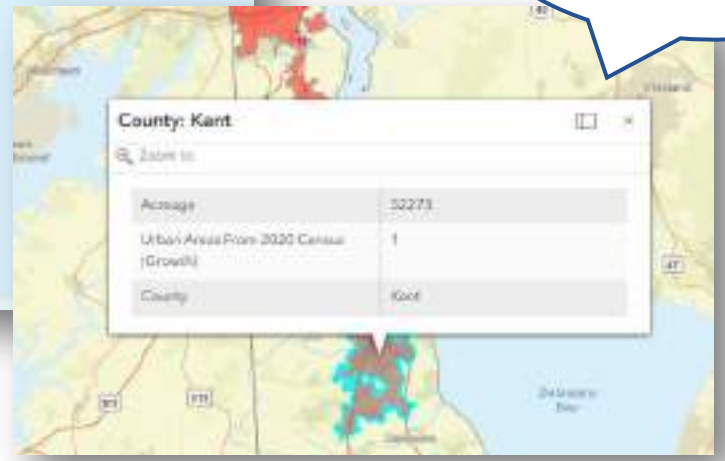


Descriptions

Metrics

Map click triggers pop up window with metrics





Collaboration

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Story Map Development

- OSPC worked closely with our agency partners to view and vet the data feeding the Story map.
- Datasets were provided where they did not already exist and were reviewed by SIT and other members.
- Some datasets were retired, removed or consolidated based on agency feedback and the overall goal of Investment level mapping.

Feedback

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Public comment – Story Map

- After internal consensus was reached with internal stakeholders a story map was produces and we received public comment on data items from both local and public entities.
- Where applicable data was corrected or updated.
- Items were updated in investment level mapping and provided a higher quality of data input into strategies stratification.

Feedback

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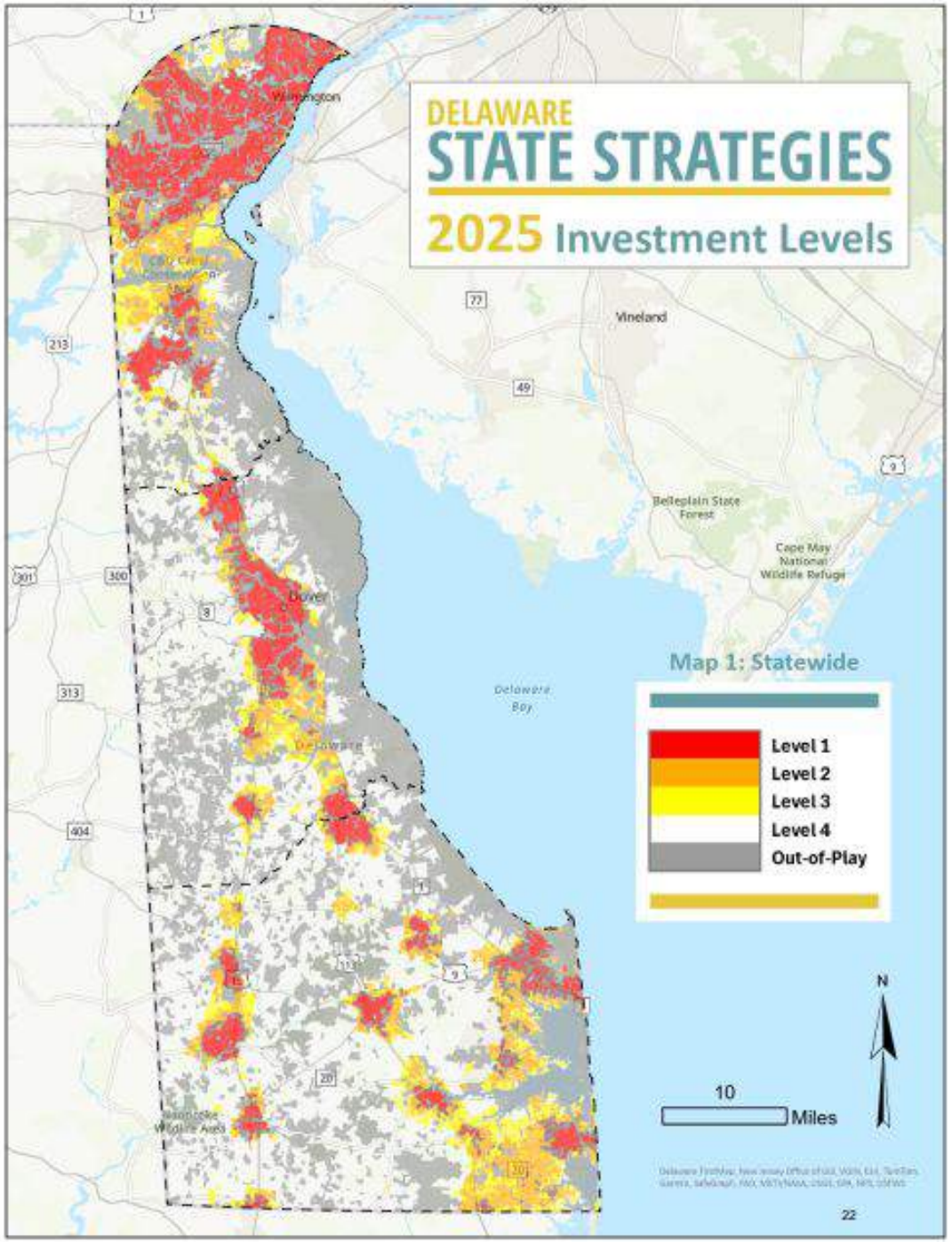
Public comment – Investment Mapping

- Following Story Map feedback and internal discussions we worked to use the vetted data in our spatial analysis.
- Various meetings in each county were scheduled and a demonstration of our process and the data as compiled in our efforts was shared openly and accessibly to all local governments and public interests.
- Feedback was received at these meetings, and we again went back to correct the data at the source, running new versions to correct areas that were based on incorrect source data for the analysis.


DELAWARE
STATE STRATEGIES
2025 Investment Levels
Vineland
Belleplain State Forest
Cape May National Wildlife Refuge
Dover
Delaware Bay
Map 1: Statewide
Level 1
Level 2
Level 3
Level 4
Out-of-Play
N
10
Miles
22

Level 1



Union Park Gardens, Wilmington

Location

- Municipalities, downtowns
- Urban centers in unincorporated areas

Characteristics

- Higher density development
- Mixed-uses, housing and transportation options
- Walkable communities

Policy Focus

- Wide range of uses and densities
- Infill and redevelopment, downtown revitalization
- Efficient use of public and private investments
- Maintain/enhance existing infrastructure
- Infrastructure investments for new growth

Level 2



Cannery Village, Milton

Location

- Suburban areas in or near municipalities
- Rapidly growing areas surrounding urban centers

Characteristics

- Mid to low density development
- Access to public water and wastewater, utilities
- More automobile oriented

Policy Focus

- Broader mix of housing and commercial options
- Efficient use of public and private investments
- Maintain/enhance existing infrastructure
- Infrastructure investments for new growth
- New higher density development where applicable

Level 3



Location

- Certified growth areas of municipalities and counties
- Disconnected areas with development pressure

Characteristics

- Environmentally sensitive and/or agricultural lands
- Access to infrastructure and utilities may be limited
- Urban to rural transition with leapfrog development

Policy Focus

- Development in near-term may not be appropriate
- Long-term growth areas after Levels 1 and 2
- Maintain/enhance existing infrastructure
- Infrastructure investments may be lower priority
- Growth compatible with agricultural/rural character

Level 4



Location

- Mostly unincorporated rural areas and open space
- Small settlements and disconnected homes

Characteristics

- Predominantly natural lands and agricultural uses
- Access to infrastructure and utilities may be limited
- Single-family homes with reliance on automobiles

Policy Focus

- Limited development retains the rural landscape
- Preserve open space, farmland, and forests
- Maintain/enhance existing infrastructure
- Infrastructure investments not for residential growth
- Growth only for agricultural and environmental uses

Out of Play



Location

- Lands not available for private development
- Legally protected lands for conservation/preservation

Characteristics

- Public parks, wildlife refuges, state forests, etc.
- Protected farmland and forests
- Tidal wetlands and 100-year floodplains

Policy Focus

- Permanent legal protection (such as easements)
- Maintain/enhance supporting infrastructure
- Development limited to improvements that serve the purpose of the protected lands

Strategies Insights

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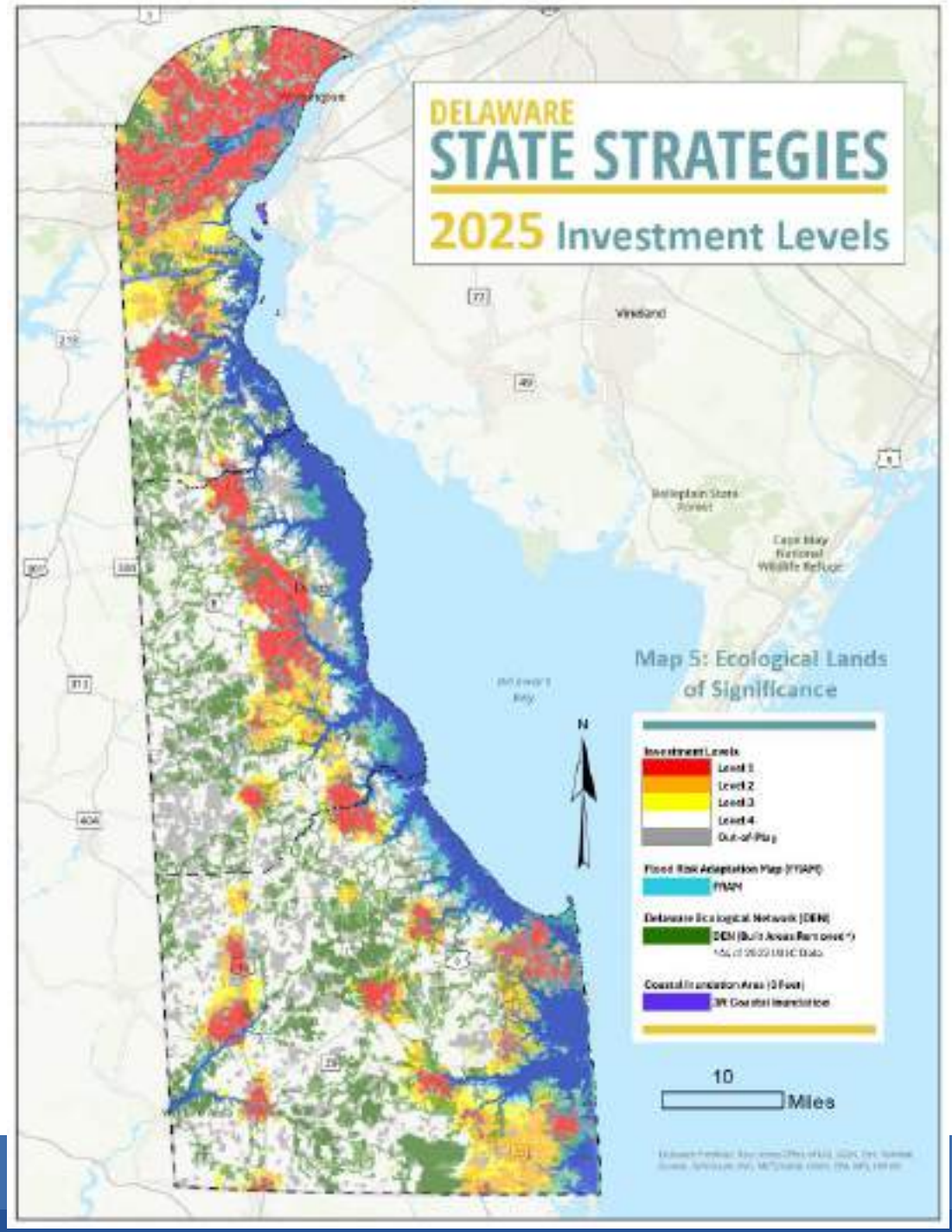
Ecological Lands of Significance Map

- It is imperative that future growth occurs in harmony with the environment and utilizes existing land capacity.
- The map displays key environmental data layers and demonstrates their relationship to each other and potential growth areas.
- The map layers are already reflected in the Investment Levels, since they were present in the analysis data. Their presence on this map does not have an additional impact on the Investment Levels themselves.
- Functions as an overlay to aid in decision-making.


DELAWARE
STATE STRATEGIES
2025 Investment Levels
Map 5: Ecological Lands of Significance
N
10
Miles

Strategies Insights

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Key Planning Areas Map

- The map displays existing DDDs, existing TIDs, and TIDs under development.
- It also designates two Corridor Planning Areas that require further study because they will continue to experience intense development pressure despite the current data showing them as predominately Levels 3 and 4.
  - The US Route 9 Corridor from Georgetown to the Five Points intersection
  - The US 113 Corridor from Georgetown to Millsboro
  - A call-to-action for state and local representatives to collaborate on long-term plans to ensure future development is anticipated and coordinated with the provision of infrastructure.

Strategies Insights

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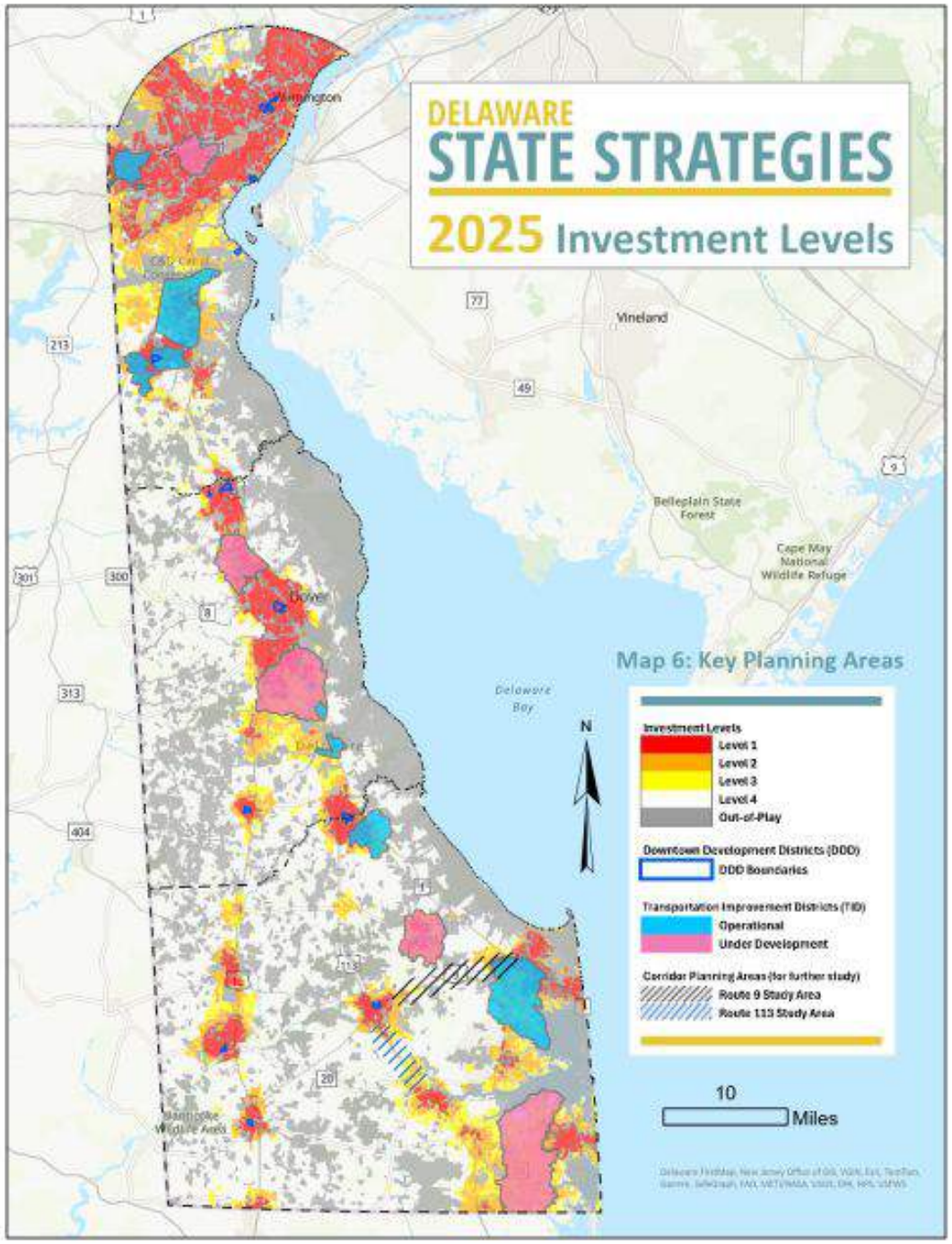
Key Planning Areas Map (cont.)

Goals include, but are not limited to:

- Coordinate master plans with the Sussex County Comprehensive Plan.
- Reach consensus on what density means for these areas.
- Generate land-use forecasts and scenarios to gauge the infrastructure impacts.
- Coordinate forecasts with existing and proposed TIDs.
- Create sufficient incentives to ensure that demand remains inside planned areas.
- Evaluate land reservation and preservation strategies.
- Ensure that future transportation improvements do not create induced demand and increase development pressure.


DELAWARE
STATE STRATEGIES
2025 Investment Levels
Map 6: Key Planning Areas
Investment Levels
Level 1
Level 2
Level 3
Level 4
Out-of-Play
Downtown Development Districts (DDD)
DDD Boundaries
Transportation Improvement Districts (TID)
Operational
Under Development
Corridor Planning Areas (for further study)
Route 9 Study Area
Route 113 Study Area
N
10
Miles
Vineland
Belleplain State Forest
Cape May National Wildlife Refuge
Delaware Bay
Dover

State Strategies Implementation

- Executive Order #16 “Strategy to Facilitate Smart Growth in Delaware”
  - Officially released the State Strategies policy document and maps and directs state agencies to use as their policy guide
  - Kicks-off corridor master planning with Sussex County
  - Launches a “2026 State Smart Growth Visioning” process
  - Expands the Downtown Development Districts (DDDs) to the maximum 15 districts
  - Charges OSPC to continue improving the Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) with efficiencies

Smart Growth Visioning

*Subject to change

Figure 20

2027-2030 State Strategies Enhancement Plan

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Implementation Timeline*

2027

- Develop a vision and revised goals for CCSPI adoption
- Reframe the "Investment Levels" and change numerical levels to text categories
- Implement a process for annual map amendments
- Formally request infrastructure data from public and private providers to fill gaps

2028

- Complete annual map amendments
- Develop and test new visualization methods to simplify the current investment levels, and
- Test new data as map overlays to enhance the current investment levels and aid decision-making
- Implement new processes for tracking comprehensive plan updates, amendments, and compliance

2029

- Complete annual map amendments
- Develop and test state infrastructure capacity analysis and mapping methods
- Use newly acquired data and new analysis methods to pilot a "readiness" map(s), based on favorable zoning and infrastructure availability

2030

- Develop a new comprehensive analysis methodology based on all enhancements to date, then
- Complete a full update of State Strategies with new methodology and visualization

Implementation Challenges

1. The next evolution of State Strategies will depend on new methods to assess current and future infrastructure capacity at the state and local levels. This will require access to additional data layers and will require local governments to use these data to justify growth areas in their comprehensive plans.
2. Local government compliance with the "Housing for Every Delawarean Act" (Senate Bill 23) and the "ROAD-DE Act" (House Bill 450) is ongoing and will be achieved through comprehensive plan amendments/updates and ordinance adoption over the next few years. Due to the coordinated nature of comprehensive plans and State Strategies, specific actions on this plan may need to be adjusted accordingly.

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Enhancement Plan

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Smart Growth Visioning

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OSPC publishes a monthly newsletter

Send us an email to sign up: ospc@delaware.gov



Thank You

Questions and Answers

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