



Sussex County Comprehensive Plan Response to State PLUS Comments

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1. Intergovernmental Coordination – Towns

▶ Towns

- ▶ Reviewed proposed plan with each of 25 towns
- ▶ Sussex County Association of Towns meeting
- ▶ Used town maps for future land use areas within and surrounding each town
- ▶ Ongoing – County/Town Police Grant Program, Wastewater Agreements with Georgetown, Rehoboth, and Seaford, active SCAT member

1. Intergovernmental Coordination – State

- ▶ DE Population Consortium demographic information
- ▶ DNREC map
- ▶ DNREC – SRA information and guidelines
- ▶ Planning office staff at each of seven public meetings
- ▶ DeIDOT authored transportation element
- ▶ Subsequent meetings and calls with State Planning, DNREC, DeIDOT, Governor’s Office.
- ▶ Ongoing coordination
- ▶ State Police contract
 - ▶ 36 additional police - County contribution \$1.6 million
 - ▶ Bridgeville Adams-Ewing Public Safety Building - County contributed \$1.1 million

1. Intergovernmental Coordination – State

- ▶ State Farmland Preservation Program – Since 2003 Sussex County is only government to contribute each year to purchase development rights. To date, County has contributed \$2.1 million for 2,471 acres
- ▶ Wastewater
 - ▶ County works closely with DNREC to expand central sewer and eliminate septic systems – 2,985 during last five years
 - ▶ Regional Rehoboth wastewater solution – County working with Rehoboth & DNREC
- ▶ DeIDOT
 - ▶ Capital Transportation planning collaboration
 - ▶ Collaboration with wastewater projects (i.e. DE Rt. 26)
 - ▶ County recommending use of special development district bonds for offsite infrastructure
 - ▶ Subarea Plans – DeIDOT Recommendation

1. Intergovernmental Coordination – State

- ▶ **Delaware Housing Authority**
 - ▶ Regular coordination on Moderately Priced Housing Program
 - ▶ CDBG – Housing Rehabilitation Programs
- ▶ **Open Space – County contributed \$1.5 million toward purchase of additional 327 acres for Redden State Forest**
- ▶ **State Committee Participation – DeIDOT, Storm Water, Emergency Management, Geographic Information, Economic Development, Housing Authority, Clean Water Advisory Council, PLUS, Pollution Control Strategy, etc.**
- ▶ **Near Future:**
 - ▶ DeIDOT – Support long-term plans
 - ▶ Seek State advice on plan ordinances

2. Growth Areas

- ▶ Growth areas centered around 25 municipalities where demand for infrastructure will be greatest, boundaries based on current zoning and town Comprehensive Plans for 25 municipalities
 - ▶ Density Bonus Program
 - ▶ TDR Program to guide growth areas

- ▶ Growth areas include town centers, developing areas, environmentally-sensitive growth areas, and other growth areas
 - ▶ Environmentally-sensitive growth areas around the Inland Bays
 - ▶ Maximum allowable impervious surface regulation
 - ▶ No density can be transferred in from TDR's
 - ▶ Delete wetlands from lot size calculations used to determine density
 - ▶ Buffer incentives from tidal and non-tidal wetlands and waterways, such as expedited review, density bonus and Center for the Inland Bays recognition

- ▶ Sub-area plans for selected parts of County
 - ▶ Examine available and future infrastructure needs

2. Rural Areas

- ▶ Protected lands – Government-owned or easements to keep property in open space for farming, 21% of County
- ▶ Agriculture Preservation Districts
 - ▶ Voluntary agriculture zoning district with nuisance provisions
 - ▶ Agri-Business Districts
- ▶ Strategies for preserving rural environment
 - ▶ TDR Program – from AR-I zoning districts to sending areas within approximately 8-mile radius
 - ▶ County to continue purchasing farmland preservation easements – Sussex is first and only government to participate with State from beginning of this program; 2,471 acres for \$2.1 million in County funds
 - ▶ Voluntary agriculture preservation zoning districts and agri-business districts
 - ▶ Open Space Preservation Program – 10% of general fund net income committed to open space
 - ▶ Cluster Density Bonus Program to purchase open space
 - ▶ County open space purchase guided by Grand Preservation Loop, a green ribbon of interconnected lands and trails, as recommended by Sussex County Land Trust

2. Rural Areas



2. Rural Areas

- ▶ **Additional recommendations to conserve more open space**
 - ▶ Non-tidal Wetlands Buffer Ordinance
 - ▶ Incentives for larger buffers for Inland Bays area
 - ▶ Green storm water management regulation
 - ▶ Wellhead and Excellent Recharge Area Ordinance
 - ▶ Delete wetlands from density calculations in environmentally-sensitive area
 - ▶ Forest buffer requirements for developments adjacent to farms
 - ▶ Developers to provide recreation facilities and trails
 - ▶ Strengthen open space definition ordinance
 - ▶ Requirements for more trees along streets and parking lots
 - ▶ For new developments, natural areas protected by easement requiring maintenance in natural state and demarcation of area identified as a natural environmental area

2. Growth Impact Strategies

- ▶ Continued aggressive County program to expand central sewer – Angola, Johnson’s Corner, and Oak Orchard Expansion, as well as more new projects, such as Golf Village and Miller Creek Expansion
 - ▶ County wastewater expansion from 3,000 connections in 1978 to more than 55,000 today
 - ▶ County regulations to prohibit private sewer service providers from operating within designated County sewer service areas
 - ▶ Continued coordination with DelDOT with Capital Transportation Program including coordination with wastewater expansion
 - ▶ Create Special Development Tax Districts to fund off-site infrastructure, such as roads and intersections requested by DelDOT
 - ▶ Subarea Plans for selected areas – including Delmar, Millville–Ocean View, Milton, U.S. Rt. 13 corridor and Greenwood

3. Capital Improvement Program 2008-2012

Non-Sewer & Water Projects in the Current Plan

- ▶ **Sussex County Airport extending main runway, including clear zone – \$21 million over next five years, needed for economic development in Sussex County**
 - ▶ PATS/DeCrane has grown from 50 jobs in 1997 to over 600 today
 - ▶ Extending the runway from 5,000 feet to 6,000 feet will provide additional jobs by enabling larger planes to land at airport
- ▶ **Other Airport/Industrial Park improvements**
 - ▶ Construction of crosswind runway – \$4.4 million
 - ▶ Industrial Park expansion - \$1 million
 - ▶ Other - Storm water improvements, wetlands mitigation, perimeter fence upgrade, tie-down ramps
- ▶ **County Administration Building expansion – \$22 million needed for expansion of County government**
- ▶ **County Administration Records Storage Program – \$100,000**
- ▶ **Library expansions**
 - ▶ Greenwood Library - \$2.3 million
 - ▶ South Coastal Library - \$6.5 million (construction underway now)
 - ▶ Milton Library 2nd floor
- ▶ **Emergency Operations Center**
 - ▶ New communications building – \$1.5 million
 - ▶ Completion of new center
- ▶ **Landfill post-closure costs - \$2.7 million**

3. Capital Improvement Program 2008-2012

Sewer & Water Projects in the Current Plan

- ▶ **New project expansions recently approved via referendum and public hearings**
 - ▶ Angola Sewer District - \$35.6 million
 - ▶ Oak Orchard Expansion - \$14 million
 - ▶ Johnsons Corner Expansion - \$13.7 million
- ▶ **Construction of new sewer expansion projects previously approved**
 - ▶ Miller Creek Sewer District - \$10 million
 - ▶ Oak Orchard Sewer - \$750,000
 - ▶ Millville Sewer District \$29.6 million
 - ▶ Pinetown Sewer Extension - \$600,000
 - ▶ Dagsboro-Frankford Prince Georges Acres - \$800,000
- ▶ **Treatment Plant Expansions**
 - ▶ Piney Neck Treatment Plant serving Dagsboro-Frankford area \$10.2 million
 - ▶ Inland Bays Regional Wastewater Facility Expansion - \$26 million
 - ▶ West Rehoboth Sewer Treatment Expansion - \$22 million
- ▶ **Other expansion projects planned for the future**
 - ▶ Western Sussex Sewer District - \$20 million
 - ▶ South Coastal Regional Wastewater Facility Pump Station No. 30 - \$13.2 million
- ▶ **Other capital projects to maintain and improve existing system, including SCADA, Administration Maintenance Building, pumps, pole barn, upgrade controls at stations, lower manholes, etc.**

4. Population Projections & Demographic Information

- ▶ Sussex County is projected to be the fastest-growing County in the State. Demographics project graying of population base, more racial diversity, growth in seasonal housing.
- ▶ Implications for County planning
 - ▶ New schools and school expansions – although population is up 35% over previous 10 years, public school enrollment grew 7.7%. School property tax revenues increased 122%. This reflects graying of County's population.
 - ▶ New sewer and water services – water service primarily provided by towns and private providers in Sussex County. County aggressively expanding sewer with construction underway to replace 2,130 septic systems. New projects approved in 2007 will replace an additional 2,500 septic systems.
 - ▶ Traffic congestion continued problem with need for more coordination.
 - ▶ Sub-area planning in the hope of providing funding for future improvements.
 - ▶ Special Development Tax Districts for off-site improvements.
 - ▶ Social, Health and Security Needs
 - ▶ Expansion of hospital medical facilities must be encouraged. County continuation of grant programs for human service, paratransit, and senior programs. Continued expansion of County paramedic program. Continuation of expanding supplemental State Police program providing 36 additional State Police officers in Sussex, which will expand to 52 in four years.
 - ▶ Demand for affordable housing. Moderately-Priced Housing Unit Program, RFP released for new applicants.
 - ▶ Expansion of program to include previously-approved developments.
 - ▶ Affordable housing rental program to be developed.

5. Public Process and Public Meetings

- ▶ Public meetings during January and February 2007 at Greenwood, Lewes, Seaford, Selbyville, and Bethany Beach
- ▶ Two public meetings September 2007 – Rehoboth Beach and Laurel
- ▶ Meetings with each of Sussex County's 25 municipalities
- ▶ Meetings with organizations and individuals at their request including conservationists, Center for the Inland Bays, farm organizations, manufactured housing representatives, developers, realtors, etc.
- ▶ Public comments received in written form, as well as on Web site
- ▶ Recordings of public meetings posted on Web site
- ▶ Public meeting concerns
 - ▶ Property rights
 - ▶ Control growth
 - ▶ Reduce traffic congestion
 - ▶ Unknown implications of State Resource Area legislation
 - ▶ Protect environment

6. Integrate County's Growth Strategy

- ▶ **Summary Overview Section, which will note recommended items such as:**
 - ▶ Sub-area planning
 - ▶ Controlling private sewer providers
 - ▶ Continued expansion of County wastewater service
 - ▶ Special Development Tax Districts for off-site infrastructure
 - ▶ TDR's
 - ▶ Agriculture zoning and agri-business zoning
 - ▶ Incentives for additional wetland buffers
 - ▶ Tightening of open space definition within developments
 - ▶ Superior design definition

6. Integrate County's Growth Strategy

- ▶ **List of 23 ordinances needed to implement the Plan:**
 - ▶ Agricultural Zoning District (p. 25)
 - ▶ SRA Documentation and Review (p. 30)
 - ▶ Remove Barriers to Manufactured Housing (p. 33 and p. 81)
 - ▶ Definition of "Superior Design" (p. 33)
 - ▶ Density Bonus for Cluster Development (p. 34)
 - ▶ Revised Community Design Standards (p. 33 and elsewhere)
 - ▶ Revised Definition of Allowable Open Space (p. 33 and elsewhere)
 - ▶ Locally Formulated TDR (p. 27 and p. 28)
 - ▶ Green Storm Water Management (p. 45)
 - ▶ Wildlife Habitat Protection (p. 45)
 - ▶ Added Environmental Protection for ES-I (p. 45)
 - ▶ Revised Forest Buffers (p. 46)

6. Integrate County's Growth Strategy

- ▶ List of 23 ordinances needed to implement the Plan (continued):
 - ▶ Requirement for Recreation Facilities and/or Trails in Larger Developments (p. 55)
 - ▶ Wellhead Protection (p. 45 and p. 59)
 - ▶ Public Sewer Providers in Designated County Sewer Service Areas (p. 72 and p. 73)
 - ▶ Reauthorize and Revise Moderately Priced Housing Unit Program (p. 80)
 - ▶ Agribusiness Zone (p. 89)
 - ▶ Demolition of Historic Structures (p. 101)
 - ▶ Traditional Neighborhood Development (p. 109 and p. 110)
 - ▶ Development Standards re: Maximum Building Setbacks, Buffering and Landscaping Green Site Design (p. 116, p. 118 and p. 119)
 - ▶ Strengthened Cluster Development Regulations (p. 116 and p. 117)
 - ▶ Sign Controls (p. 121)
 - ▶ Buffer incentives to meet Center for Inland Bays recommendations

7. Maintain Rural Areas

- ▶ Provide additional funding for existing County programs including:
 - ▶ Purchase of Development Rights
 - ▶ Purchase of open space
 - ▶ Density Bonus Program
- ▶ Proposed Transfer of Development Rights Program
- ▶ Incentives for large buffers to waterways and wetlands
- ▶ Open space in developments
 - ▶ Improve definition
 - ▶ Demarcation of environmental areas
- ▶ Agriculture preservation overlay zone – voluntary zone for Agriculture
 - ▶ Limited residential use
 - ▶ Nuisance protections
 - ▶ Property taxes reduced
- ▶ Agriculture Business/Industry overlay district – special voluntary district to encourage and include large-scale agriculture operations, such as feed mills
 - ▶ Reduce residential capability
 - ▶ Larger minimum tract sizes and setbacks

8. Coordination with DNREC

- ▶ The County has met on January 7th, January 23rd, and February 14th, 2008, with DNREC to discuss issues of concern.
- ▶ The County regularly meets with DNREC on issues, such as wastewater expansions, funding new wastewater projects, pollution control strategy, regional wastewater solutions, storm water issues, etc.

9. Source Water Protection Ordinance

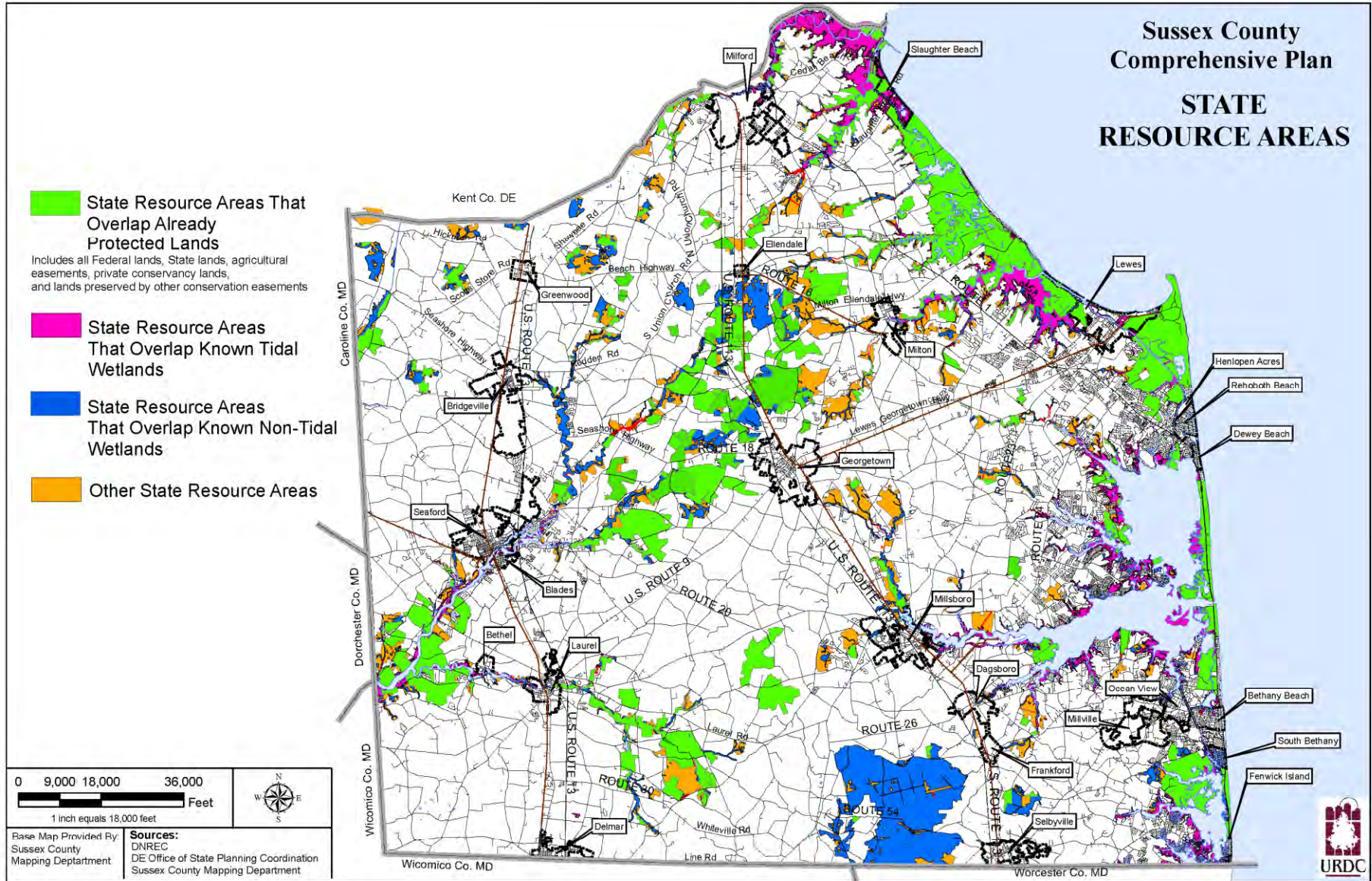
- ▶ The County Council discussed the Source Water Protection Ordinance draft at the February 5 and February 12, 2008, meetings. On February 21, 2008, the Source Water Protection Committee met and proposed changes. On February 26, 2008, the County Council voted unanimously to reject the original Ordinance proposed by the committee, which did not meet DNREC's standards. On February 26, 2008, the County Council introduced an Ordinance which meets DNREC's standards. A public hearing will be held in March and action will be taken thereafter.

- ▶ Public water data tables will be included.

10. State Resource Area Guidelines

- ▶ Additional information regarding SRA's will be included in the Plan
 - ▶ Information regarding State Resource Areas, including definitions, why they are important, etc., will be included
 - ▶ Eight conservation strategies from DNREC Secretary John Hughes' January 19, 2007, letter are included
 - ▶ The County agrees to:
 - ▶ Include SRA map in zoning ordinance
 - ▶ Require development applications to show location of SRA land plans
 - ▶ Review how SRA lands are proposed to be used on development plans
 - ▶ Review SRA maps in making decision about open space lands for permanent preservation by the County
 - ▶ Initiatives to provide preservation of valuable resources, such as incentives for larger buffers for waterways, identification of environmentally-sensitive areas within developments, encouragement for green infrastructure, regulations to help protect wildlife habitat, etc.
 - ▶ Make efforts to provide additional information regarding programs and means to conserve natural resources
 - A brochure listing available programs and contact information for USDA, Delaware Agriculture Lands Preservation Foundation, Delaware Wild Lands, Inc., Sussex County Land Trust, Nature Conservancy, US Fish & Wildlife, Delaware Forest Land Preservation Program, Ducks Unlimited, Sussex Conservation District, US Forest Service Legacy Program.
 - This information is also available on the County website.

10. State Resource Area Guidelines



11. Housing Strategy Discussion

- ▶ **Revision of Chapter includes the following:**
 - ▶ MPHU Program to include previously-approved developments where feasible, without bonus density or expedited review
 - ▶ Request for proposals from developers for new MPHU projects
 - ▶ Continue further work with developers to undertake affordable housing projects, such as Capstone Homes
 - ▶ Continue to aggressively support Community Development Block Grant Program, including County's \$100,000-per-year contribution toward rehabilitating homes, as well as \$325,000-per-year contribution for administrative costs for the program
 - ▶ Create moderate-priced rental unit program to provide affordable rental housing in Sussex County
 - ▶ Continue County monetary support for programs, such as Habitat for Humanity, West Rehoboth Land Trust, Interfaith Mission, First State Community Action, NCALL, Milford Housing Development Corp., Diamond State Land Trust, etc.

Other Items

- ▶ **I2. Correct references and expand discussion regarding Strategies for State Policies and Spending**
 - ▶ References will be corrected and additional description of Investment Levels 1-4 will be included, as recommended

- ▶ **I3. Other Non-certification Issues**
 - ▶ Other suggestions included in the PLUS response will be addressed in the Draft Plan