



October 14, 2025

Todd F. Lawson
Sussex County Administrator



Agenda

- Land Use Reform Working Group
- State Strategies Map
- Possible Pause in Development
- Questions & Answers

Land Use Reform Working Group

- Formed in early 2025 by County Council
- Asked to draft recommendations addressing land use development patterns
- Group made up of 10 stake holders (next slide)
- Held 10 public meetings and one-on-one interviews
- Facilitated meetings with Land Use Consultants



Land Use Reform Working Group

Representative Group	Working Group Member
Sussex Preservation Coalition	Jill Hicks
American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC)	Mike Riemann
Home Builders Association Of Delaware	Jon Horner
Environmental Group	Christophe Tulou (CIB)
Sussex Farm Bureau	Jay Baxter or RC Willin
Affordable Housing Advocate	Caitlin Del Collo (DSHA)
Affordable Housing Developer	Matthew Padron (Volker)
Local Residential Developer	Doug Motley (JLAM)
DE Department of Transportation	Mark Luszczyk or Stephanie Johnson
Office of State Planning Coordination	David Edgell or Dorothy Morris

Land Use Reform Working Group

- Report completed on October 3rd
- 20 recommendations (next slide)
- County Council and Planning & Zoning Commission met today to review the recommendations and develop implementation strategy
- Next steps – To Be Determined



Land Use Reform Working Group

Sussex County, Delaware

Prepared for:
Sussex County
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October 2025



Land Use Reform Working Group

		Requires Comprehensive Land Use Plan Change	Requires County Code Change	Length of Time Required to Enact	Difficulty Level	Coordination required with other Recommendations
1	Align Future Land Use Map <i>Summary: Revise the Future Land Use Map using State Strategies for Spending as a guide to establish new growth and conservation areas during the 2028 Comp Plan Update</i>	YES	YES	YEARS	ONEROUS	YES 2 & 3
2	Establish Growth and Conservation Areas <i>Summary: Develop new areas intended for growth and conservation based on specific criteria during the 2028 Comp Plan Update</i>	YES	YES	YEARS	ONEROUS	YES 1, 3, & 15
3	Comprehensive Rezoning <i>Summary: Update the entire County's zoning map to realign zoning districts for growth and conservation, prioritizing for housing diversity and affordability, during the 2028 Comp Plan Update</i>	YES	YES	YEARS	ONEROUS	YES 1 & 2
4	Establish Clear Standards for Rezoning <i>Summary: Develop criteria for rezoning applications and map amendments based on specific criteria</i>	NO	YES	MONTHS	SUBSTANTIAL	NO
5	Define Missing Middle Housing Types <i>Summary: Develop definitions for housing types, including duplexes, triplexes, stacked flats, and cottage courts</i>	NO	YES	WEEKS	MANAGEABLE	YES 6 & 7
6	Permit Missing Middle Housing in Strategic Areas <i>Summary: Update County Code to allow specific housing types in GR, MR, and HR</i>	MAYBE	YES	WEEKS	MANAGEABLE	YES 5 & 7
7	Establish Bulk and Setback Standards for Missing Middle Housing and Adjust Height, Building Length, and Separation Caps in Growth Areas <i>Summary: Revise lot sizes, widths, setbacks and separation distances; increase building height; and eliminate length caps in specific Zoning Districts</i>	MAYBE	YES	WEEKS	MANAGEABLE	YES 5, 6, & 8
8	Strategic Density Adjustments <i>Summary: Revise permitted densities in "growth areas" and "conservation areas"</i>	YES	YES	YEARS	ONEROUS	YES 1, 2, & 3
9	Develop Strategic Density Bonus Program <i>Summary: Create programs to add density above the base level to create funds for land preservation and units for workforce housing</i>	NO	YES	MONTHS	SUBSTANTIAL	YES 1, 2, & 3
10	Amend the Sussex County Rental Program (SCRIP) <i>Summary: Amend the SCRIP to change the set-aside number, AMI target, open space, and offer impact fee reductions</i>	NO	YES	WEEKS	MANAGEABLE	NO
11	Collaboration with DelDOT <i>Summary: Create TIDs for all growth areas and an impact fee for development in conservation areas</i>	YES	YES	YEARS	ONEROUS	YES 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, & 8
12	Complete Adoption of a Master Plan Zoning Ordinance for Large-Scale Development <i>Summary: Finish the adoption of the drafted Master Plan ordinance</i>	NO	YES	WEEKS	MANAGEABLE	NO
13	Forest Preservation <i>Summary: Develop value-based tree preservation requirements including mitigation options and incentives</i>	NO	YES	YEARS	ONEROUS	YES 1, 2, & 3



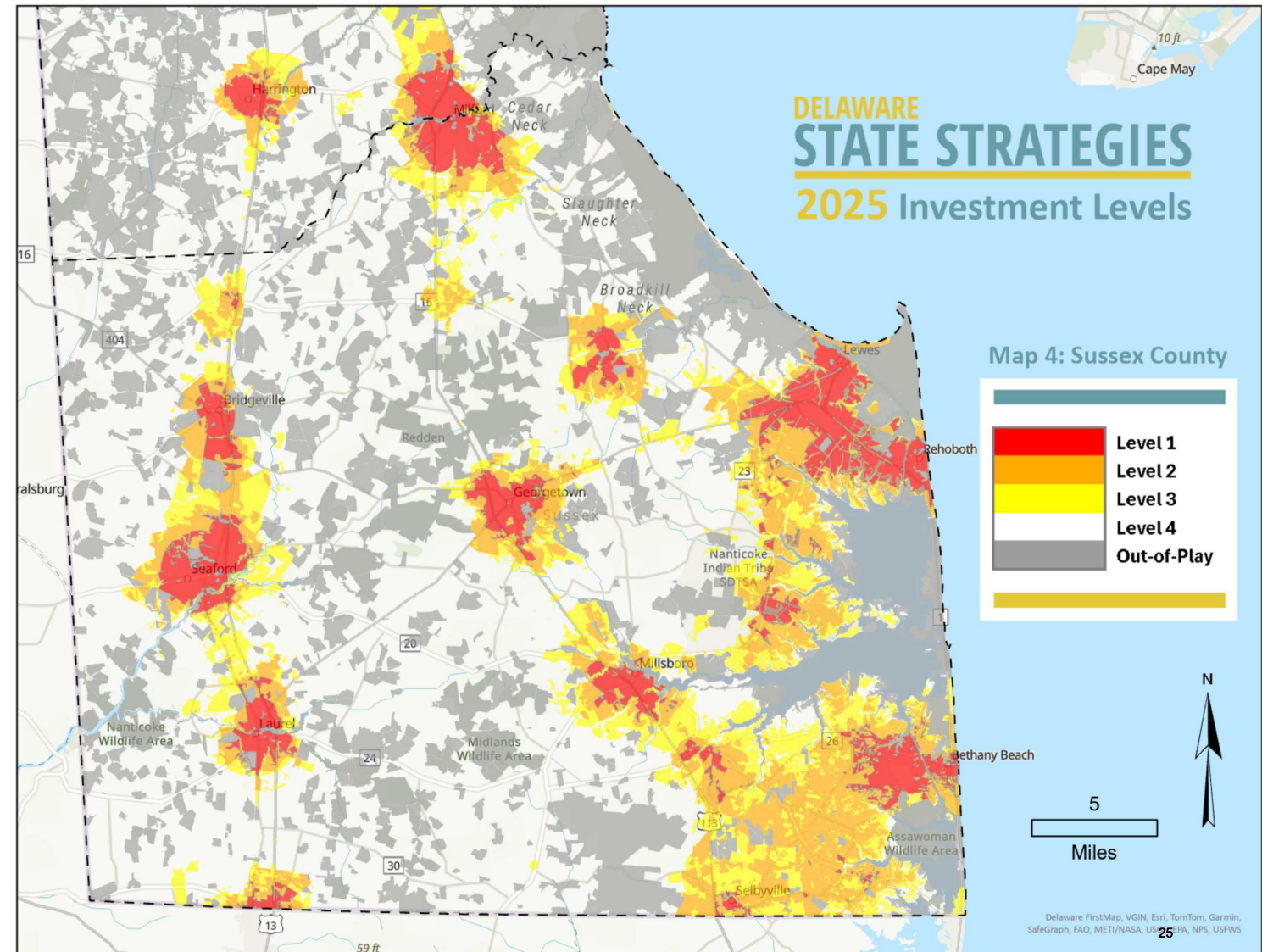
Land Use Reform Working Group

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14	Encourage Naturalized Landscaping in Passive Open Space <i>Summary: Develop standards for naturalized landscaping and native vegetation within open space where conditions permit</i>	NO	YES	WEEKS	MANAGEABLE	NO
15	Focus Subdivision Design in Conservation Areas Around Conservation Priorities <i>Summary: Develop new standards for major subdivisions in AR-1 to preserve the maximum lot size and valuable natural resources</i>	YES	YES	YEARS	ONEROUS	YES 1, 2, & 3
16	Support Working Farms Through Permitted Agricultural Support Uses <i>Summary: Update Code to permit commercial agriculture related uses by-right in AR-1 zoning outside the growth areas</i>	YES	YES	WEEKS	MANAGEABLE	NO
17	Explore a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program <i>Summary: Develop TDR program to enable voluntary transfer from conservation-priority areas to designated growth areas with sending/receiving areas</i>	YES	YES	YEARS	ONEROUS	YES 1, 2, & 3
18	Improve Clarity and Consistency of Subdivision Code Section §99-9(C) Standards <i>Summary: Revise the Subdivision Code to reduce subjectivity and improve clarity with objective criteria</i>	NO	YES	WEEKS	MANAGEABLE	NO
19	Prioritize Hearing Scheduling for Projects that Advance County Land Use Goals <i>Summary: Develop process to prioritize public hearings for projects that advance the County's goals and are located in the growth areas</i>	YES	YES	YEARS	ONEROUS	YES 1, 2, & 3
20	Modernize the Code to Support Mixed Use <i>Summary: Update Code to make mixed-use development a predictable permitted use in commercial districts</i>	NO	YES	MONTHS	SUBSTANTIAL	NO



DE State Strategies Map – 2025

- Undergoing 5-year update
- Final approval due December 2025
- Comments due October 10th
- Sussex raised a number of issues



Additional Topics

- Possible Pause in Development
- Questions & Answers



