



<https://doverkentmpo.delaware.gov/>

Expanded Rail Land Use Study

Winter Freight Meeting
December 7, 2023

Why Is the MPO Doing this Study?

- As part of Dover Kent MPO's FY24 UPWP, this is one of the DelDOT-sponsored projects
- DelDOT is interested in compiling a technical identification of available land adjacent to rail corridors which could be designated and preserved for rail-supported industrial and agricultural use
- Supports the recent recommendation by the Office of State Planning Coordination (OSPC), 2023 Annual Report on State Planning Issues
 - Utilization of Rail Infrastructure - Consider potential incentives for local governments to rezone properties adjacent to rail lines to industrial and/or commercial, based on the recommendations of the Dover Kent MPO Rail Land-Use Study
- This information would be intended to:
 - show the importance of local government comprehensive plans and how these documents can support state and regional rail freight plan goals and objectives
 - promote better coordination between local and state government
 - better inform rail operators' land use decisions
 - attract freight related manufacturing/agricultural/employment centers to Central and Southern Delaware

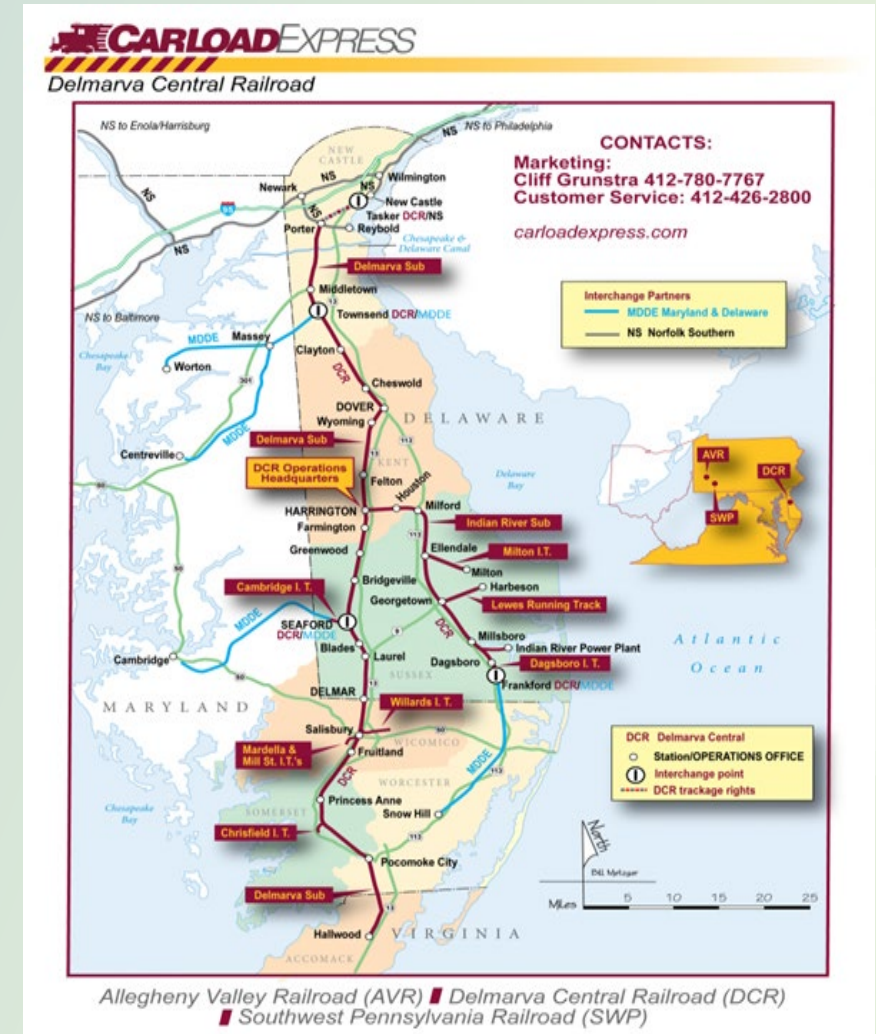
Why is Freight Rail Important?

- Recently, two large Kent County projects required rail
- For large loads, rail is more cost effective than trucking
- Industrial, manufacturing and agriculture are key target sectors for economic development
- Large parcels adjacent to rail attract strong industrial and manufacturing companies
- Called out in the Statewide Freight Plan



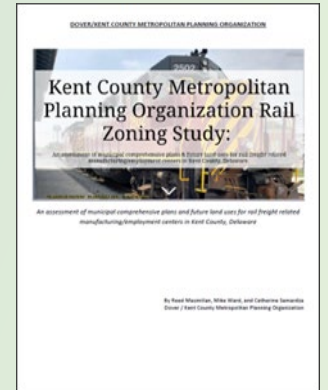
What has Changed in 20 Years?

- Delmarva Central Railroad becomes one of the short line railroads operating on the Norfolk Southern track in 2016
- Rail demand is on the rise
- Preserving land adjacent to rail for enterprises that require rail access contributes to compatible long-term land uses as well as secures opportunities for economic growth



Previous Studies

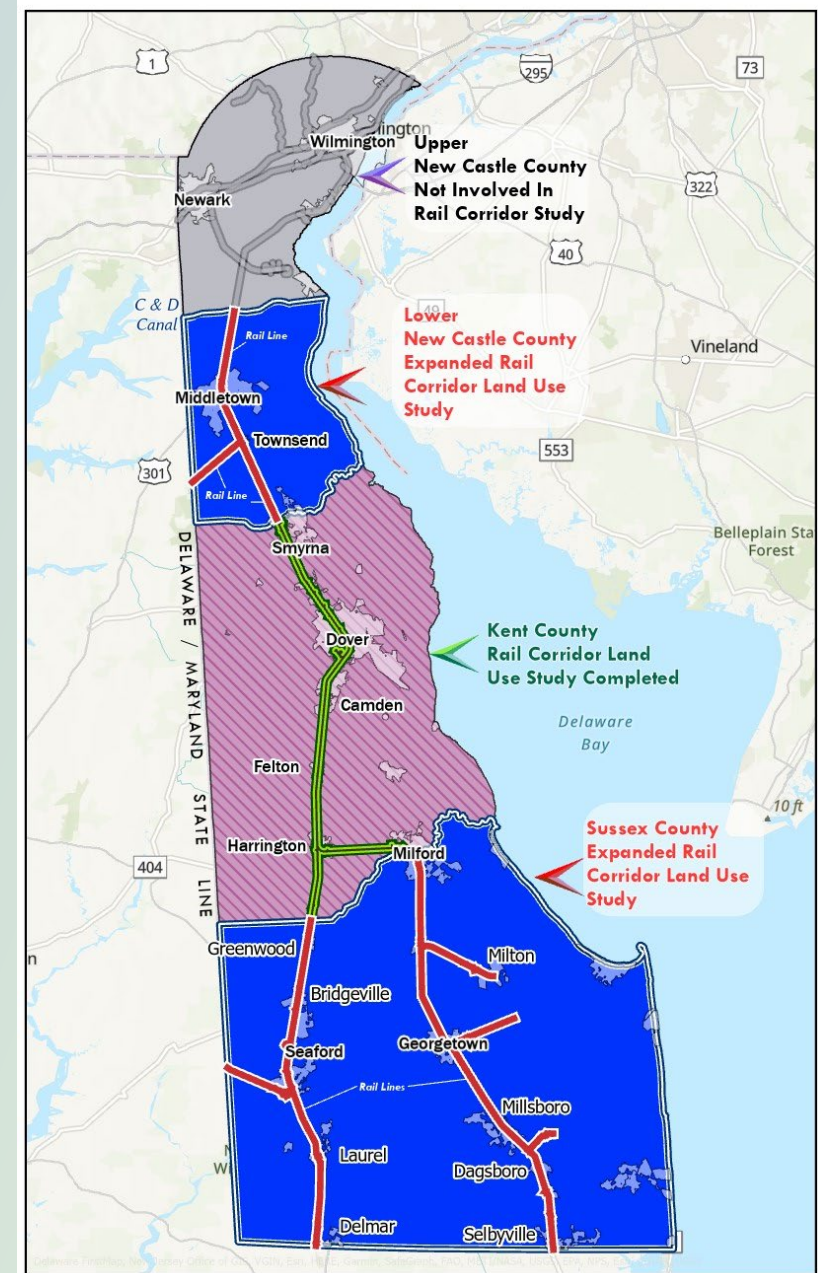
- **Dover Kent MPO - 2018 Rail Zoning Study**
 - The November 2018 study identified five recommendations to help support existing Federal, State, and Regional plan goals and objectives and identified future economic initiatives requiring additional study
- **Dover Kent MPO - 2022 Rail Corridor Land Use Study**
 - Identified large acreage parcels / parcel groupings adjacent to the rail line
 - Created an interactive mapping tool
 - Offered guidance to help communities work toward making the most of rail-adjacent properties while avoiding potential negative impacts
- **DeIDOT Delaware Freight Plan - 2022**
 - The Delaware Freight Plan was most recently updated to comply with the federal freight planning requirements introduced in November 2021 by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)
 - The draft Plan was developed from summer 2021 to fall 2022, and the Federal Highway Administration approved the Plan in December 2022
 - <https://deldot.gov/Business/freight/>



What will this Study Entail?

- **Study Area**

- From Porter, in New Castle County, south to the Kent County line (approximately 75 miles), and the entire rail corridor in Sussex County (approximately 120 miles)
- Red lines indicate rail in the study area, green indicates the Kent County portion from the previous study

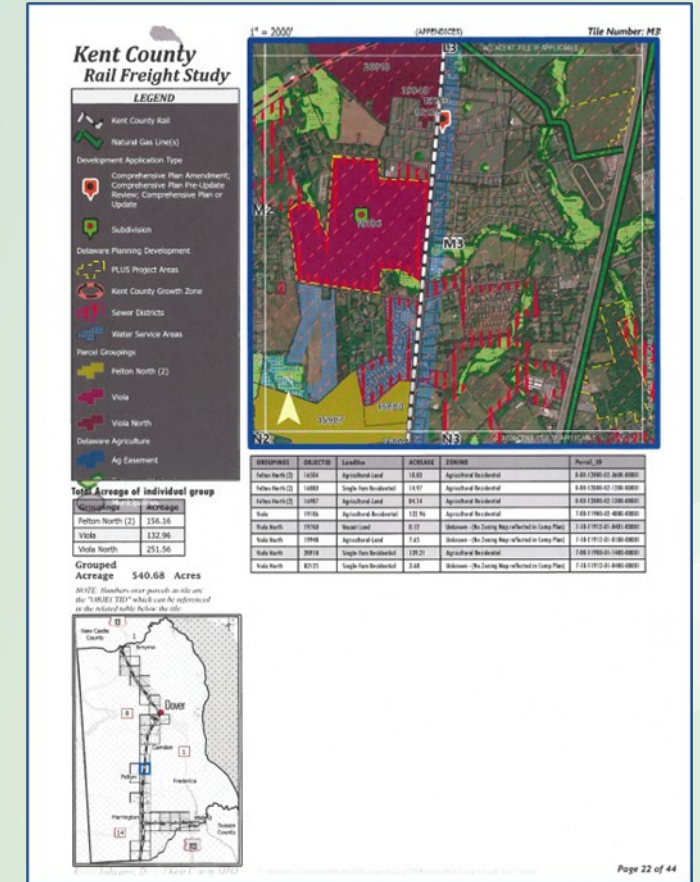


What will this Study Entail?

- **Comprehensive Plans Review**
 - Purpose of the review will be to ascertain if rail freight-related uses or proposed future uses are being considered, identify future land use zoning map changes regarding industrial and agricultural zoning, identify potential areas where rail freight-related uses might be supported by rail spur lines
- **Process Used to Screen Parcels for Inclusion / Exclusion**
 - Large acreage (7+ acres) with applicable frontage
 - Parcels that have the potential of being grouped into one larger parcel
 - Highly impacted with wetlands or other environmental concerns
 - Parcels with permanent agriculture easements or in the Ag-Land Preservation program
 - Residential “Open Space” and various stand-alone residential properties
 - Permanent restrictions and protected lands
- **Detailed Examination by Municipality**
- **Maps of Parcel Groupings**
- **Summary**
- **Appendices**

Sample from Previous Study

- Interactive Map, Study & Map Tiles
 - A dynamic web-based map can be found at:
<https://dkcmpo.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=62152bdabad24416aaa3d19819abf4fe>
- Final version of the written report and map tile series are posted on the MPO website:
<https://doverkentmpo.delaware.gov/files/2023/01/Rail-Corridor-Land-Use-Study-Final-September-2022.pdf>



Summary of Anticipated Study Deliverables

- The purpose of the rail is to move freight
- Residential uses along the rail can cause interruptions
- Adjacent properties should accommodate rail and at best provide a place for those enterprises that need rail access
- If a municipality wants to encourage preservation of parcels along the rail for future commercial, industrial and agricultural use, a process must be implemented to achieve that goal
- Resources and guidance that may be helpful - Concepts to consider for rail-positive zoning, sample process to facilitate a zoning change, Sample Rail Overlay Districts

Next Steps - How Can You Help?

- Gathering parcel data
 - Begin analysis
 - Share findings with stakeholders
 - Provide data
 - Engage and be responsive to requests
 - Lend expertise
 - Ambassadors and champions
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- Anticipate a first draft for review and comments by March 2024
 - Stakeholder meeting - April 2024
 - Final report to MPO PAC/TAC/Council and DeIDOT - June/July 2024

Questions / Comments / Discussion

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Thank you!