



Sussex County 2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program Request

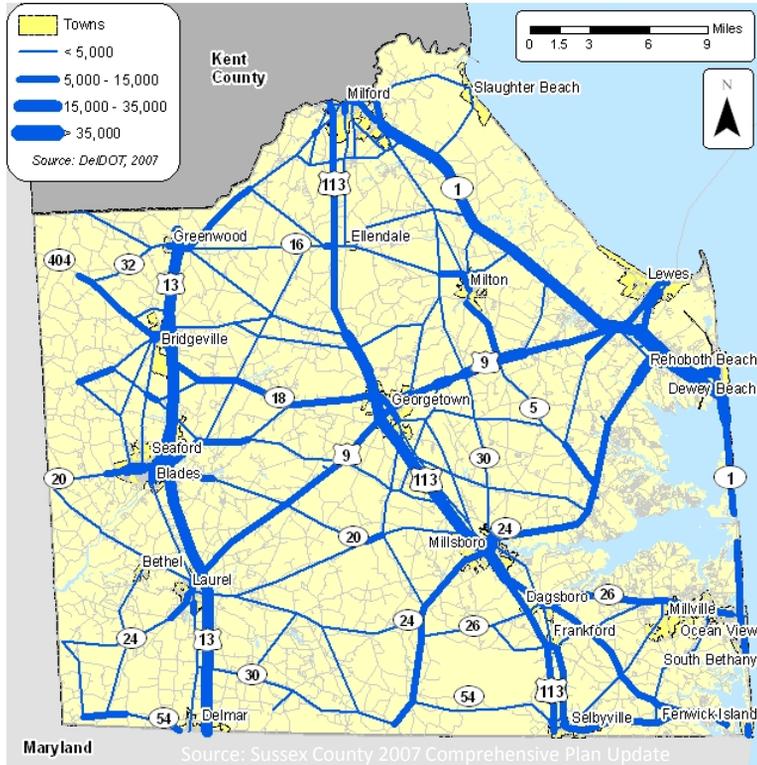


September 24, 2015

Sussex County

2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program Request

Average Annual Daily Traffic - 2005



Sussex County is Delaware's largest county, with 938 square miles of land within its borders. Within that broad expanse is more than 37 percent of the State's 6,281 miles of public roadway.

In Sussex County, the most heavily traveled roadways are US 13 and SR 1 (each carrying more than 30,000 vehicles daily), followed by US 113 with more than 24,000 vehicles daily. At the same time, the major east-west routes also are heavily traveled, though these are less capable of extensive traffic. Congestion due to the movement of summer visitors often compounds traffic problems.

As noted in the charts below, congestion is expected to worsen by 2030, even assuming currently planned projects are completed.

2000 and 2030 Year-Round Congestion (Volume to Capacity Ratio > 85%)



2000 and 2030 Summer Congestion (Volume to Capacity Ratio > 85%)



Sussex County Priorities

2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program Request



The following items are Sussex County's transportation priorities for the 2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program, based on past requests and public input. Each priority is explained in further detail in subsequent sections of this request:

- SR 1 Improvements
- Delaware Coastal Airport
- Park Avenue/US 9 Truck Route
- East-West Improvements
 - ❖ SR 24
 - ❖ SR 26
 - ❖ Routes 404/9
- Bicycling/Walking Trails
- North-South Highway Improvements
- Local Roads
- Intersections, Signage & Signalization
- Alternative Transportation

Del. Route 1 Improvements

2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program Request

Pedestrian and bicyclist safety along the SR 1 corridor in Sussex County's beach communities has gained increasing attention in recent years with numerous accidents, some fatal, occurring along the highway, particularly between the Five Points intersection and Dewey Beach.

Sussex County recognizes finding solutions to the challenges present along SR 1 will not be easy. An ongoing \$6.5 million effort to install sidewalks and add or improve existing crosswalks within the corridor, scheduled for completion by Fall 2016, stands to enhance pedestrian safety. However, pedestrian concerns must be balanced with the needs of the 80,000 daily beach-bound vehicles that depend on a steady traffic flow to reach their destinations. The County continues to call on DeIDOT to consider reduced speed limits and simplified, visible signage in the corridor to aid drivers and pedestrians. Additionally, a low-level median barrier also might be appropriate to discourage pedestrian traffic outside of crosswalks.



What is critical is that there be community consensus in whatever decisions are made, to ensure SR1 serves its primary purpose as the gateway to Delaware's beaches, while maintaining safety for those who walk, bike and ride the corridor each day.

Editorial »

Route 1 fatality demand

Hot topics: Route 1 lights, crosswalks

DeIDOT: Crosswalks

DeIDOT: Funds li...

Police investigate fatal crash near Dewey Sussex roads

Courtesy: Cape Gazette (Summer 2013)

Del. Route 1 Improvements

2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program Request

Sussex County supports a multi-faceted approach to enhancing SR 1 to improve pedestrian safety and ensure traffic flow.

➤ **Five Points Intersection/US 9 Realignment**

Improvements are needed at the Five Points intersection to reduce accidents at this gateway to the resort area, which is often congested and confusing to motorists. Realignment of the US 9 connection at Five Points, as well as reduced speeds on SR 1 south of the Nassau bridge, could ease congestion and improve safety. Meantime, intersection improvements at Wescoats and Savannah roads and a planned New Road connector could alleviate traffic approaching the Five Points area.



SR 1 at Nassau Bridge, Five Points

➤ **Intersection at SR 16 near Milton**

An overpass with exits at this intersection, similar to the design built at SR 1/SR 30 near Milford, would improve safety by eliminating cross-traffic and the need for a traffic signal.



Intersection of SR 16 and SR 1 near Milton

➤ **Sidewalks**

Additional sidewalks along SR 1, particularly in gaps that exist between Five Points to Dewey Beach, would improve safety for pedestrians and encourage walking along the busy corridor.

➤ **Pedestrian Crosswalks**

Pedestrian/bicycle crosswalks at key locations – namely existing intersections – along with reduced speed limits would improve safety, especially for those walking near the retail outlets.



Bicyclist crossing SR 1

➤ **Pedestrian/Bicycling Paths**

Expanding the popular Rails with Trails concept along railway corridors, particularly between Georgetown and Lewes, could improve alternative movement to and along the SR 1 corridor. Additionally, dedicated pathways, improved lighting, more visible signage and crossings, and education outreach efforts to visitors could enhance bicycling safety, which is paramount in light of recent tragedies involving motorists fatally striking pedestrians and cyclists on SR 1.

➤ **Commercial Properties Interconnectivity**

Connecting entrances/exits between adjoining commercial properties should be a priority, where possible, along the SR 1 corridor. This would allow those visiting stores the ability to move among the properties without having to re-enter and exit the highway. Such connectivity also should be used in commercial areas along the US 13 and US 113 corridors.



Sidewalk ends along SR 1

Delaware Coastal Airport

2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program Request



Delaware Coastal Airport near Georgetown is a critical part of Southern Delaware’s transportation system, and the facility – with a new name, marketing campaign and growing commercial activity – continues to provide lift to the local economy.

The airport records nearly 40,000 landings and takeoffs each year, and is home to a vibrant economic and educational base, including PATS Aircraft Systems with its auxiliary fuel tank installation business and the DelTech aircraft maintenance training program. Currently, there are 16 employers and nearly 1,100 jobs at the adjacent Sussex County Industrial Park, with an annual payroll of more than \$36 million.

Planned improvements, notably the extension of the main runway from 5,500 feet to 6,000 feet, will help retain well-paying jobs and attract new opportunities to Delaware Coastal Airport and the greater community. An earlier 500-foot runway extension project began in August 2012 and was completed in late 2013.

Sussex County government plans improvements of nearly \$12 million from FY16 to FY20 at the airport and industrial park complex. The local share of costs for the additional 500-foot runway extension will be approximately \$12 million. This includes \$6 million for the actual runway extension, and an additional \$6 million for the necessary realignment of Park Avenue (see Page 7). The Delaware General Assembly in June allocated \$5 million in the Bond Bill for improvements, laying additional groundwork for this important project to get in the air.

The County urges the Council on Transportation, the Department, and the State to continue their work with the County and Delaware’s Congressional delegation to secure the necessary federal and state funding for the full 1,000-foot runway extension, which is critical to ensuring aviation safety and continued economic opportunities in Sussex County.

Park Avenue/US 9 Truck Route

2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program Request



Park Avenue is an essential route in the Georgetown area, providing access to the Sussex County Industrial Park, as well as a bypass for trucks and local traffic moving through the central portion of the county. However, this two-lane road – also known as Truck Route 9, the designated road for tractor trailers moving through the Georgetown area – is in need of critical upgrades, from turn lanes and shoulders to intersection improvements and a partial realignment.

As part of the planned main runway extension project at Delaware Coastal Airport, the southern end of Park Avenue would shift from its current terminus at South Bedford Street to approximately one-half mile south, to the intersection of South Bedford Street and Arrow Safety Road. The realignment is necessary to accommodate the extension of the main runway at Delaware Coastal Airport to 6,000 feet.

Equally as important, the realignment and need for other upgrades provide an opportunity for the State to enhance this route, which could serve as the base of a future Georgetown bypass to accommodate through-traffic to and from the beaches, as well as along the US 113 corridor.

While the Delaware General Assembly has earmarked \$5 million in funding for the airport and Park Avenue project, spread over the next five years, County government requests the Council on Transportation give thoughtful consideration to allocating additional long-term funding for Park Avenue's realignment and other improvements. Doing this would enable the runway project to move forward sooner and guarantee a safer route for the traveling public.

East–West Corridors

2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program Request

The Capital Transportation Program budget in FY16 includes approximately \$20.5 million in State and federal funding for a number of improvements to portions of the county’s network of east-west arteries. Projects targeted for funding include preliminary engineering work on SR 24, intersection improvements along the US 9 corridor, and continued construction of the mainline SR 26 improvements.

Sussex County appreciates the State’s ongoing attention to these very critical links to the transportation system by budgeting for these current and future long-term projects.

However, substantially more funding will be needed in the years ahead, particularly for rights of way acquisitions, so improvements on other major east-west arteries can occur across the entire network. These improvements would include:

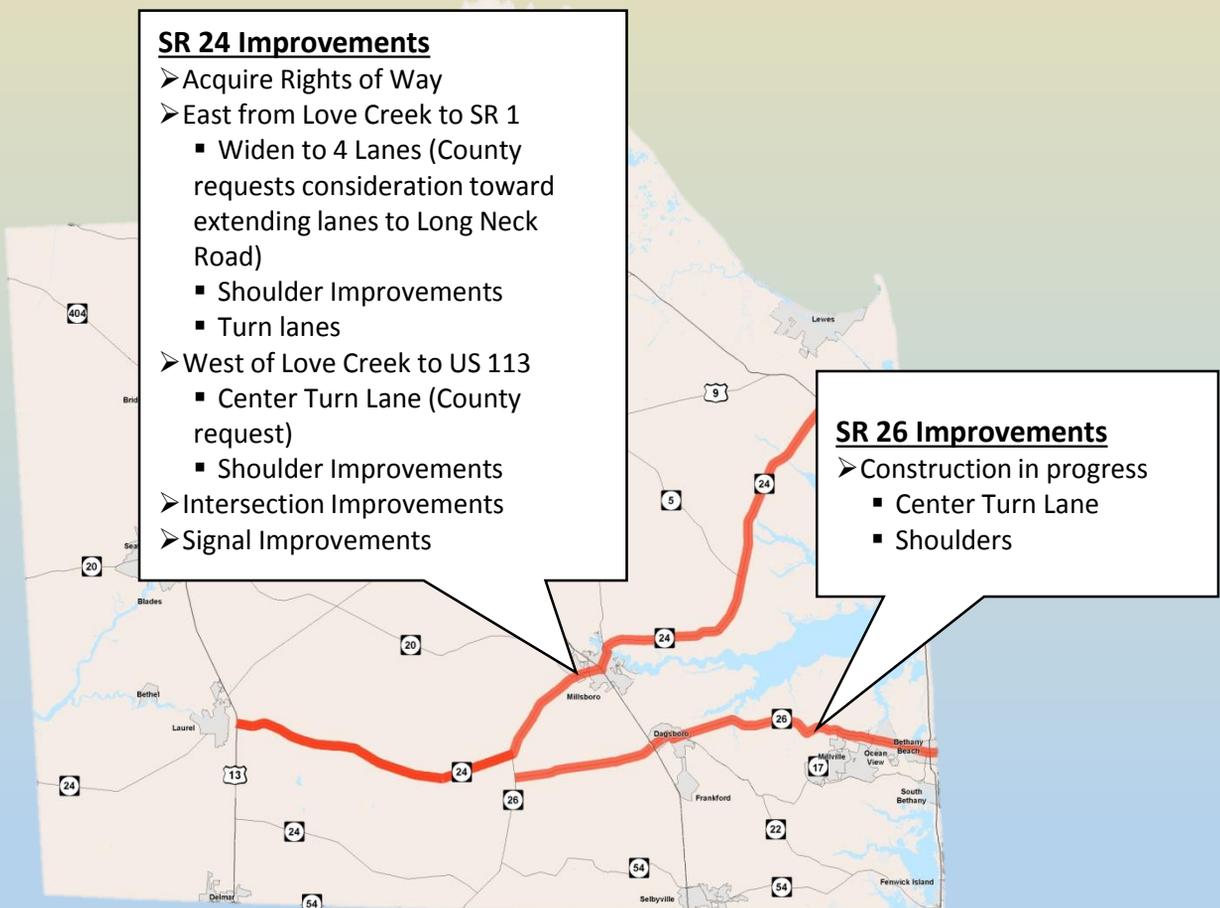
- Widening corridors with additional lanes and shoulders to accommodate increased traffic volume, improving traffic flow and safety;
- Resurfacing of shoulders to highway standards;
- Intersection upgrades such as the addition of left-turn lanes, increased illumination, and directional signage;
- Better coordination of traffic signals at identified choke points.

If current travel patterns continue as predicted, increased and frequent congestion will further interfere with local residents’ mobility in many areas. Anticipating and funding necessary improvements such as these across the county’s entire network of east-west arteries will better meet the travel needs of local residents and visitors for decades to come.

East–West Corridors

2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program Request

State Routes 24 and 26 are two of Sussex County's primary east-west corridors, allowing entry and egress from coastal communities. These routes are critical to allowing local motorists and destination drivers access to homes and commercial centers in the resort area. The routes in their current configuration, both two-lane roads, are currently insufficient to safely and efficiently move traffic into and out of the area, particularly during peak summer months and evacuations.



East–West Corridors

2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program Request

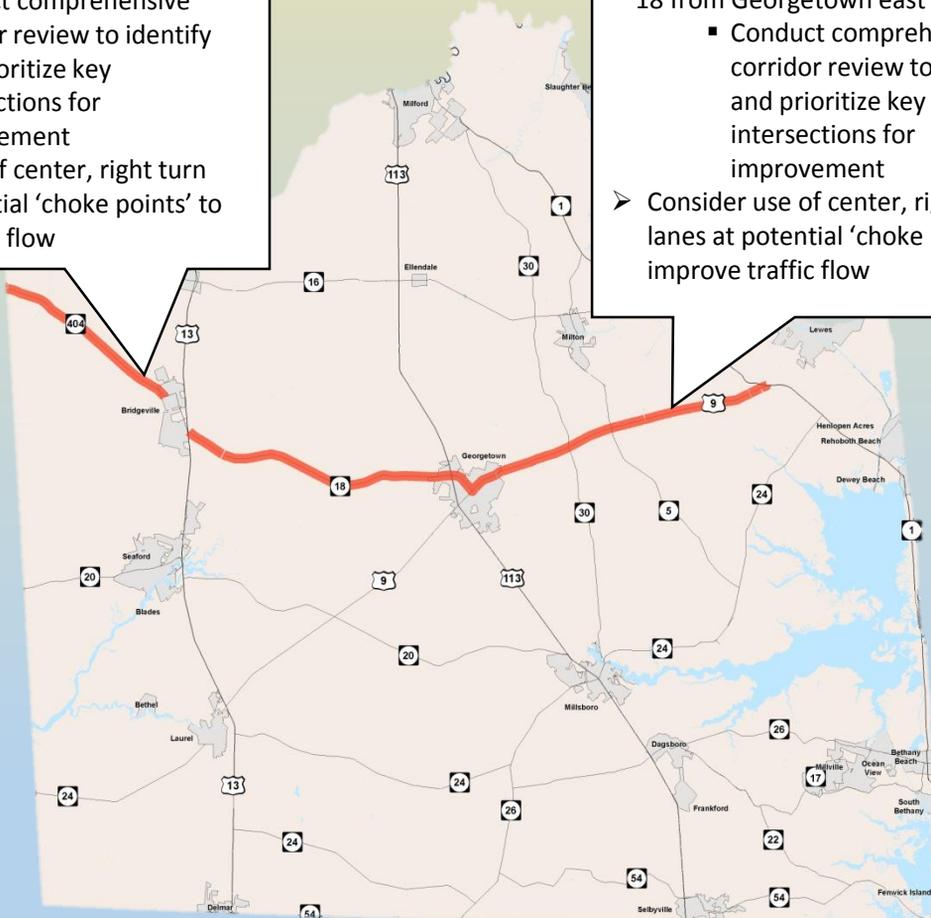
The SR 404/18 corridor, which connects with US 9 at Georgetown, is the principal means of east-west movement in Sussex County. This route, which connects to Route 404 in Maryland, is the gateway for beach-bound traffic during summer months. High traffic volume often limits this two-lane road's capacity; Maryland is widening its portion of the route to accommodate east-west traffic to and from Delaware.

SR 404/SR 18 Improvements

- Increase Capacity for SR 404/SR 18 from Maryland east to Georgetown
 - Conduct comprehensive corridor review to identify and prioritize key intersections for improvement
- Consider use of center, right turn lanes at potential 'choke points' to improve traffic flow

US 9/SR 404/SR 18 Improvements

- Increase Capacity for US 9/SR 404/SR 18 from Georgetown east to SR 1
 - Conduct comprehensive corridor review to identify and prioritize key intersections for improvement
- Consider use of center, right turn lanes at potential 'choke points' to improve traffic flow



Bicycling/Walking Trails

2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program Request

Sussex County supports the continued attention placed on efforts to bring new trails and pathways to Southern Delaware. Just this summer, new phases of the Junction & Breakwater Trail near Lewes and the Assawoman Canal Trail in Ocean View opened, giving cyclists and pedestrians safe, scenic ways to enjoy Sussex County.

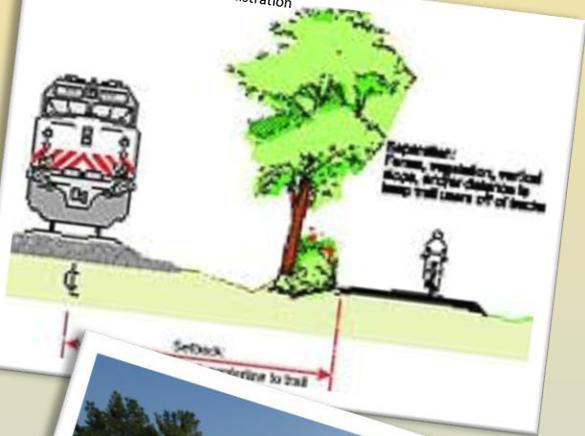
In the 2016 State budget, the Delaware General Assembly set aside \$3 million in funding, along with another \$1 million expected in federal dollars, to continue the trails initiative that will link communities, parks, and other points of interest in the First State.

One potential project that could benefit from this funding is the long proposed Georgetown-to-Lewes Rail Trail, which would stretch 17 miles alongside the Delaware Coastline Railroad line from the county seat to the beaches. This proposed multi-use path would provide an alternate means for residents and visitors alike to navigate Sussex County, to access other trails, such as the Junction & Breakwater Trail between Lewes and Rehoboth Beach, and would promote a healthier lifestyle for users young and old. It could also retain the current rail line, providing a critical link for businesses to move products and keep the local economy strong.

Sussex County requests that the Council on Transportation and the Department evaluate proposals such as the Georgetown-to-Lewes Rail Trail when deciding how to allocate Delaware's annual share of federal matching funds, such as the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and Surface Transportation Program (STP) grants.

Those dollars, in conjunction with the nearly \$34 million that has been allocated by the State in the past five years, could make alternative, multi-use paths a reality for bicyclists and pedestrians who want to connect with their communities and the natural beauty that makes Sussex County so special.

Source: Federal Highway Administration



Credit: Southern Delaware Tourism

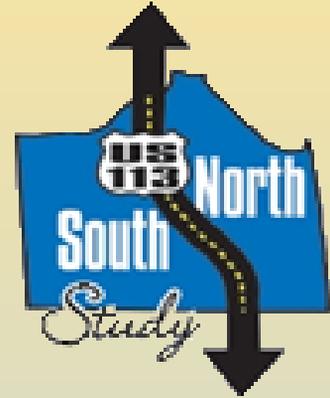


Credit: Office of the Governor

North-South Hwy Improvements

2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program Request

Improvements to Sussex County's major north-south corridors, specifically US 113, remain a significant transportation need to address local traffic requirements, seasonal demands and interstate travel. Public sentiment to preserve the highway with minimal impacts on properties remains high, and the State should weigh those concerns as it resumes corridor plans, particularly as it pertains to a possible Millsboro bypass and grade-separated US 113 and SR 18/404 interchange in Georgetown.



US 113 is fed by SR 1 from the north, SR 404 from the west and the Maryland portion of US 113 from the south. Many travelers to the coastal areas of Sussex County already utilize US 113 to bypass the often congested SR 1 corridor. This is especially evident along the corridor at points including Georgetown and Millsboro during summer weekends, as traffic can back up for miles at times.

Users have distinct, and in some cases, conflicting operational requirements. Local users prefer access to properties with relatively simple and safe traffic patterns. Trucks, vacationers, and long-distance commuters, on the other hand, desire high-speed traffic patterns with minimal interruptions. Intersection upgrades, additional travel lanes, and other modifications could satisfy travelers' needs, and ease demand on other north-south arteries, such as US 13 and SR 1.

Because of the project's potential costs and effects, the County believes improvements should be phased in, based on public consensus, and given high priority to move the project from concept to reality.

Local Roads

2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program Request

Routes such as SR 1, US 113 and US 13 serve as the major arteries of Sussex County's transportation network. Local roads, however, are the vessels that move traffic throughout all parts of the body.

The Sussex County Council submits the following list of local roads as those that should be targeted for upgrade and expansion. These roads are currently or soon will serve a growing population, which will result in added traffic. Many of these roads, either by State designation or through motorists' preference, are used as alternate routes for major thoroughfares.

Upgrades of these roadways includes paving of the surface, widening shoulders and/or installing turn lanes, as indicated. Upgrades also should include marking bicycle and pedestrian lanes, and illuminating key intersections.

The County recognizes it may be impractical to abandon the use of 'tar and chip' treatments on some roads. The County, however, encourages DelDOT to continue pursuit of its 10-year goal to pave all 'tar and chip' roads with an annual average daily traffic (ADT) count greater than 500 vehicles.



Double Bridges Rd.



'Tar & Chip' roadway west of Georgetown

Local Roads

2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program Request

Bethany Beach

- RD 360 – Fred Hudson Road
(Flooding)
- RD 363 – Double Bridges Road
(Shoulders/Bike path)

Blades

- RD 490 – River Road
(Shoulders)

Bridgeville

- RD 40 – Redden Road
(Shoulders)
- RD 525 – Coverdale Road
(Shoulders)

Dagsboro/Frankford

- RD 336 – Piney Neck Road
(Pave; Shoulders)
- RD 402A – Fox Run Road
(Pave)
- US 113 – DuPont Blvd. at Crickett Street
(Median crossover for EMS)

Fenwick Island

- DE 54 – Lighthouse Road
(Grade-separated
bike/pedestrian path at viaduct)

Georgetown/Harberson

- RD 48 – Zoar Road/Hollyville Road
(Shoulders; Intersections at
Avalon and Hurdle Ditch roads)
- RD 62 – East Trap Pond Road
(Shoulders)
- RD 318 – Park Avenue (Truck Route 9)
(Shoulders; Left-turn lane from
US 9)
- RD 527 – Wilson Hill Road
(Pave)
- US 9/SR 5 – Lewes-Georgetown Highway
(Intersection signal timing)
- US 113 – DuPont Blvd. at E. Trap Pond Rd.
(Median crossover for EMS)



Greenwood

- DE 36 – Scotts Store Road
(Shoulders)
- RD 594 – Webb Farm Road
(Flooding at sharp turn)

Laurel

- RD 446 – Beaver Dam Branch Road
(Pave & Widen)
- RD 468 – Discount Land Road
(Sidewalks)
- RD 492 – Portsville Road/Sixth Street
(Pave)

Lewes

- RD 88 – Cave Neck Road
(Lengthen left-turn lane from
SR 1)
- RD 266 – New Road
(Shoulders; Bike path; Elevate
bridge)
- RD 267 – Gills Neck Road
(Turn lanes; Shoulders; Signage)
- RD 268A – Dartmouth Drive
(Service exit)
- RD 269 – Clay Road
(Pave)
- RD 269A – Orchard Road at Savannah Road
(Signal)

Local Roads

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Lewes (cont.)

- RD 270 – Wolfe Neck/Munchy Branch roads
(Bike/pedestrian path)
- RD 283 – Cedar Grove Road/Plantations Road
(Shoulders)
- RD 285 – Beaver Dam Road
(Pave; Shoulders; Turn lanes)

Millsboro

- RD 328A – Godwin School Road
(Pave)

Millville/Ocean View

- RD 84 – Central Avenue
(Shoulders)
- RD 349 – Old Mill Road
(Shoulders)
- RD 350 – Railway Road
(Widen shoulders)
- SR 26 – Atlantic Ave. at Central Ave.,
West Ave.
(Intersection signal timing)

Milton

- RD 38 – Prime Hook Road
(Flooding; Widen)
- RD 88 – Cave Neck Road
(Widen shoulders)
- SR 16 – Broadkill Road
(Lengthen right-turn lane to SR 1)

Rehoboth Beach

- RD 15A – Rehoboth Avenue Ext.
(Shoulders/sidewalks/bike path)
- RD 15A – Rehoboth Avenue Ext.
(Drawbridge plates for bicycles)
- RD 15A – Rehoboth Avenue Ext. at
Church Street
(Intersection signal timing)
- RD 274 – Old Landing/Warrington roads
(Intersection improvements;
Signalization)



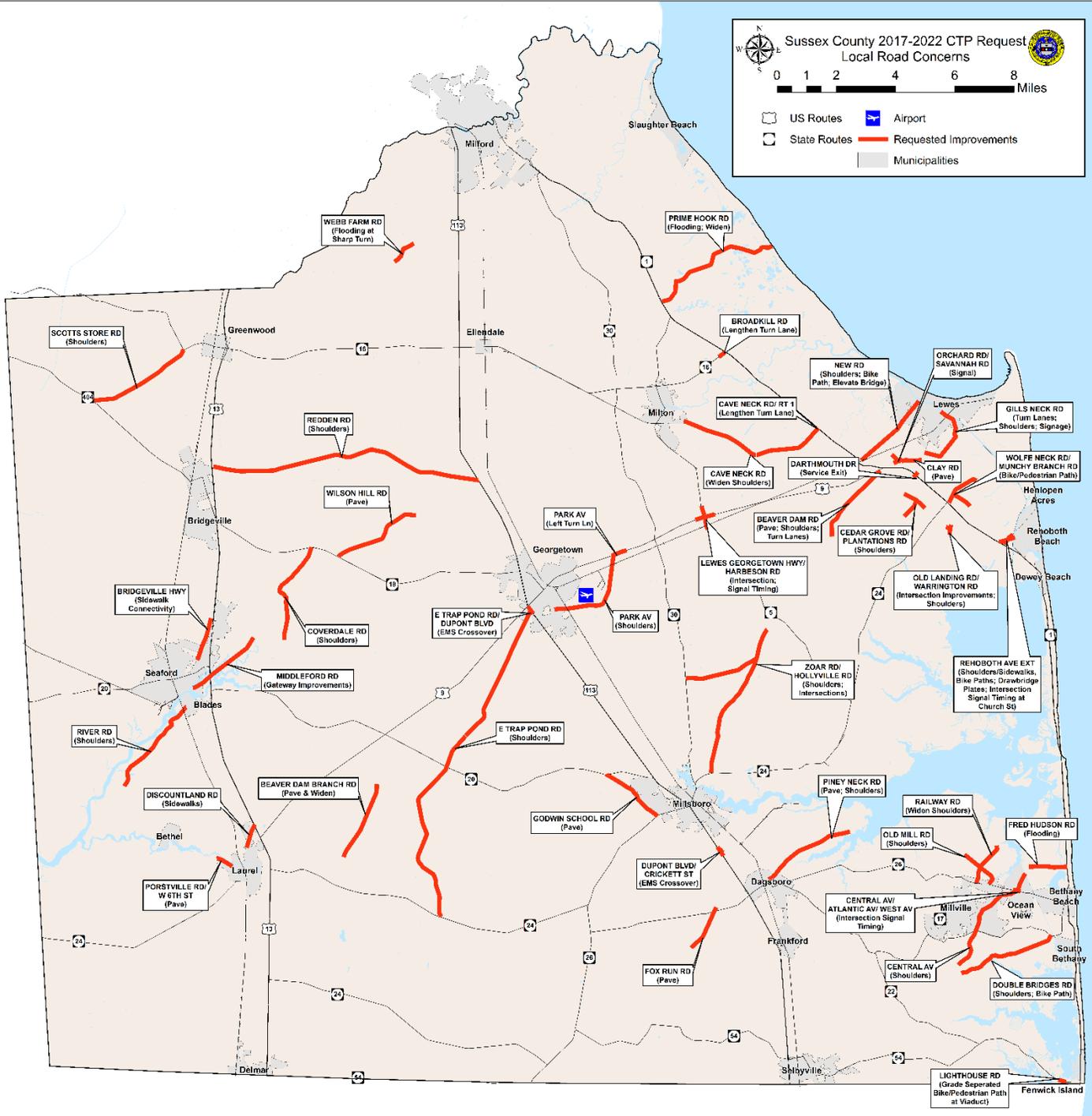
Seaford

- RD 535 – Middleford Road
(Gateway improvements)
- US 13A – Bridgeville Highway
(Sidewalk connectivity)

Local Roads

2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program Request

Items highlighted in **RED** correspond with road improvement requests listed on Pages 14 and 15 of the Sussex County 2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program request.



Intersections, Signage & Signalization

2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program Request

Like a chain, a transportation network is only as strong as the intersections, signage and traffic signals that connect together the system of roads and highways. Routes that easily clog because of limited capacity, poorly timed signals and inadequate signage can impede the flow of traffic.



The County encourages the State to continue evaluating intersections along major routes, such as the US 9 corridor between Georgetown and Lewes, to determine the best means for improving traffic flow. The County supports the State's current effort to improve US 9 intersections at Gravel Hill, Harbeson, Hudson and Sweetbriar roads. Improvements at these and other intersections includes the installation of dedicated turn lanes and better coordination of traffic signals.

The County also encourages the State to improve signage along and near roads, such as SR 30 and SR 5 from Milford to Long Neck, that could serve as local bypass routes, thereby alleviating congestion on major highway corridors, including SR 1 and US 113.

An additional suggestion to improving mobility is to incorporate blinking red arrow, left-turn signals at key intersections. This type of signal, found in areas of Kent and New Castle counties, could ease congestion at Sussex intersections, such as those along SR 1, US 9, US 13 and US 113.



Transportation Alternatives

2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program Request

Delaware is at a crossroads: how does the state continue to drive commerce without stalling its transportation system? With visits and new residents on the rise, particularly in coastal communities, now is the time to expand transportation alternatives – particularly mass transit – to meet growing public demand, conserve resources and lessen the burden on highways. Stronger consideration toward options, such as those listed below, could reduce traffic congestion on Sussex County’s network of roads.

➤ **Bus Service**

▪ *Fixed Route Service*

Extending DART First State service to other areas, such as Selbyville, Millsboro, Long Neck and other job centers; expanding year-round service to multiple Sussex County points from Dover/Wilmington

▪ *Private Partnerships*

Encourage private mass transit providers to offer bus routes between urban centers and Sussex beaches

▪ *Signage and Stops*

Current bus stops should be evaluated to ensure pick-up and drop-off locations are optimal and not placed at out-of-the-way sites; larger signs at those locations could better draw public attention and boost ridership

▪ *Coordinated ParaTransit Services*

Helps the growing senior and disabled population with more efficient service

➤ **Passenger Rail Service**

The County supports the effort by Delaware and Maryland to study passenger rail service on the Delmarva Peninsula

➤ **Expanded Park & Ride System**

Offer public additional park & ride locations to encourage carpooling, improve use of mass transit

➤ **Bicycle and Pedestrian**

Complement the popular Junction and Breakwater Trail with other rail trails (e.g. Georgetown to Lewes, as well as Ellendale to Milton); such interconnectivity of trails could allow cyclists to commute safely between coastal and inland portions of the county



Closing Remarks

2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program Request

Sussex County Council thanks the Department of Transportation and the Council on Transportation for considering its request for the 2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program.

As limited transportation funding is appropriated for various projects throughout the State of Delaware, particularly in these difficult economic times, the County Council trusts that DelDOT and the Council on Transportation recognize how vital the County's recommendations are to accommodating an increasing population, expansive geography and rebounding local economy.

Sussex County encompasses the largest geographic area in Delaware, occupying more than 46 percent of the area in the state. Additionally, nearly 37 percent of all State-maintained roads are in Sussex.

The Delaware Population Consortium estimates Sussex County's population will grow approximately 30 percent between 2010 and 2025. Despite a weaker national economy, tourism continues to thrive in Southern Delaware, and that causes additional demands on our transportation system.

Residents of Sussex County continue to express concerns regarding the maintenance and improvements needed to the local road system. As the county grows, these concerns will only increase. Waiting to plan and make needed roadway improvements after the fact will only make these improvements more expensive and difficult to implement.

Sussex County requests the State of Delaware weigh these factors as it allocates transportation funds. The State should also consider the economic impact as it relates to the County's request.

Closing Remarks

2017-2022 Capital Transportation Program Request

As noted in previous years, County Council encourages the State to consider adequate funding for needed improvements to the County's transportation system. Sussex County urges DelDOT to take the necessary steps now to make essential projects, namely improvements along SR 1 to ensure pedestrian and bicyclist safety, as well as improvements to the network of east-west arteries, among its highest priorities.

Pedestrian safety is of critical concern, especially with the volume of traffic along major corridors in the resort communities. Sussex County respectfully asks the State to evaluate pedestrian right-of-way laws, particularly in high-traffic corridors where speeds exceed 25 mph, to limit collisions and improve safety.

In addition to improving mobility and safety, enhancing economic development opportunities in Sussex County should be a factor in determining transportation priorities and funding.

Rerouting Park Avenue and extending the main runway at Delaware Coastal Airport will help to preserve existing jobs at the County's Industrial Park, and spawn new employment opportunities in the near future. Meantime, providing a walking/bicycling trail between Georgetown and Lewes would increase tourism opportunities, especially in central Sussex County.

Overall improvements to the County's transportation system will ensure Sussex County and the State of Delaware can continue to serve our population, as well as attract and safely accommodate the millions of visitors who come to our state each year.

Again, Sussex County Council thanks the Department of Transportation and the Council on Transportation for allowing the County the opportunity to submit its yearly requests for the Capital Transportation Program. We expect this report will assist the Department in prioritizing which projects earn priority funding from DelDOT's limited resources.



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