



# Rail Corridor Land Use Study Presentation

## Delaware Winter Freight Meeting

### December 7, 2022



# Why is Freight Rail Important?

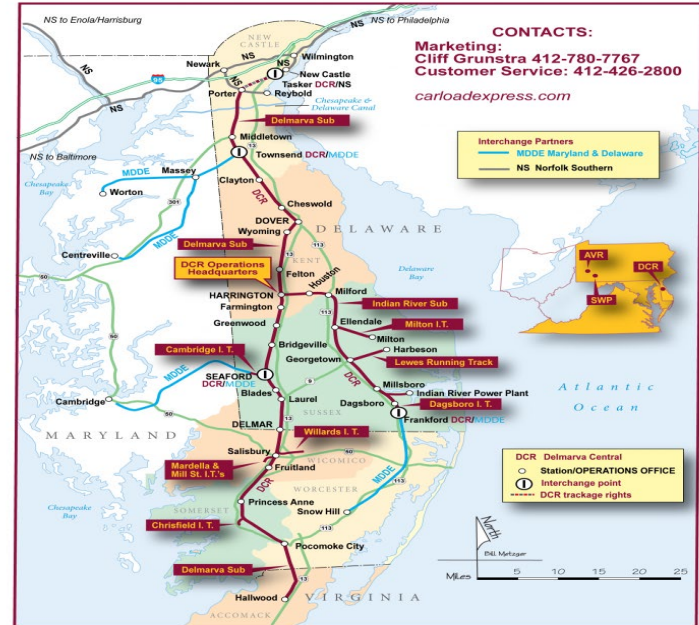
- Recently, two large Kent County projects required rail
- For large loads, rail is more cost effective than trucking
- Rockport 2.0 identified industrial and manufacturing as key target sectors
- Large parcels adjacent to rail attract strong industrial and manufacturing companies



# 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 and secures opportunities for economic growth

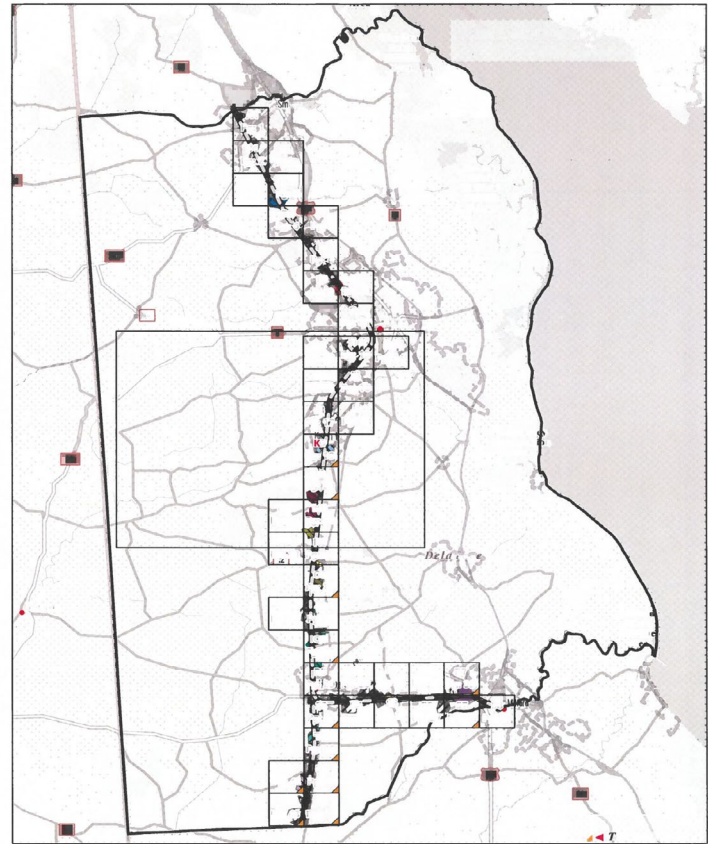
**CARLOAD EXPRESS**  
Delmarva Central Railroad



Allegheny Valley Railroad (AVR) ■ Delmarva Central Railroad (DCR)  
■ Southwest Pennsylvania Railroad (SWP)

# Rail Corridor Land Use Study

- Introduction
- Study Area
- Review of November 2018 MPO Rail/Freight Zoning Study
- Comprehensive Plans Review
- Process Used to Screen Parcels for Inclusion/Exclusion
- Detailed Examination by Municipality
- Maps of Parcel Groupings
- Summary
- Appendices



# INTRODUCTION

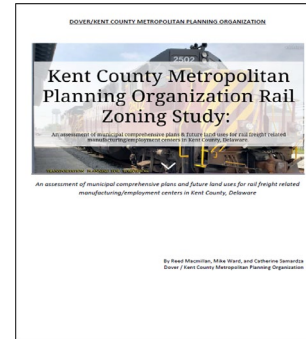
- September 2018, Rockport Study recommended warehousing, distribution and logistics as a key sector to target for Kent County economic development
- June 2021, KEP requested a study to identify appropriate available land adjacent to rail corridors which could be designated and preserved for industrial use
- Focus of the MPO study is an inventory and analysis of available parcels that have rail access that could attract small- to medium-sized manufacturing/industrial businesses

# STUDY AREA

- Norfolk Southern (NS) Railway Company operates approximately 19,300 route miles in 22 states and the District of Columbia
- Delmarva Central Railroad is one of 261 Short Line Railroads operating on NS tracks
- Delmarva Central Railroad operates on the Norfolk Southern tracks that serve the Delmarva Peninsula, specifically in Kent County
- Study focus is the portion of the DCR operating from Clayton at the New Castle border to the Sussex County border south of Farmington, as well as the line that diverges in Harrington and traverses the southern portion of Kent County to Milford

# KEP Commissions MPO Study

- MPO- 2018
  - 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
- MPO- 2022 Study
  - Identified large acreage parcels adjacent to the rail line
  - Created an interactive mapping tool
  - Offered guidance to help communities work towards making the most of rail-adjacent properties while avoiding any negative impacts



# Comprehensive Plans Review

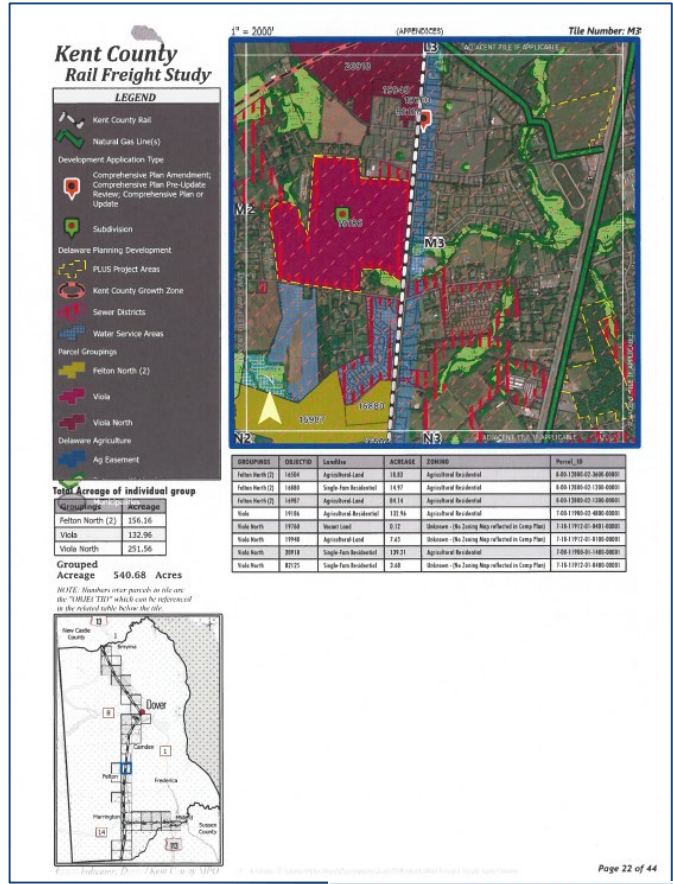
- Purpose of the review was to ascertain if rail freight-related uses or proposed future uses were being considered, identify future land use zoning map changes regarding industrial zoning, and identify potential areas where rail freight-related uses might be supported by rail spur lines
- 11 of the 14 plans do not specifically highlight rail uses
- Kent County-
  - Future Land Use Strategies Map identifies areas for future land development and includes industrial development
    - Page #8-7 of Kent County's comprehensive plan provides a summary about the 56 miles of active freight railroads in Kent County while also highlighting the importance of considering the rail lines for future land uses and economic development
- Camden, Cheswold, Clayton, Dover, Farmington, Felton, Harrington, Houston, Milford, Viola, Woodside, and Wyoming comprehensive plans all mention rail in some form





## DETAILED EXAMINATION BY MUNICIPALITY MAPS OF PARCEL GROUPINGS

- Once parcels were identified, an effort was made to group parcels in such a way as to identify possible configurations that could attract small- to medium-sized industrial businesses that specifically require rail access
- By grouping multiple smaller acreage parcels, larger sites could possibly be considered
- Groupings are presented in the Map Series Tiles, which run along the rail corridor from north to south, west to east
- Each tile is dynamic, meaning the information available on each tile differs depending on the specific characteristics of the location depicted on each individual tile
- The following information is available on each tile, as specifically appropriate
  - Utility coverage (natural gas, power, sewer, water)
  - Kent County Growth Zone
  - PLUS Project Areas
  - Parcel groupings with total acreage
  - Individual parcels within grouping(s), including current land use, acreage, zoning and parcel ID for each parcel



# Utilities Are Identified

Natural Gas Lines



Chesapeake Gas Service Areas



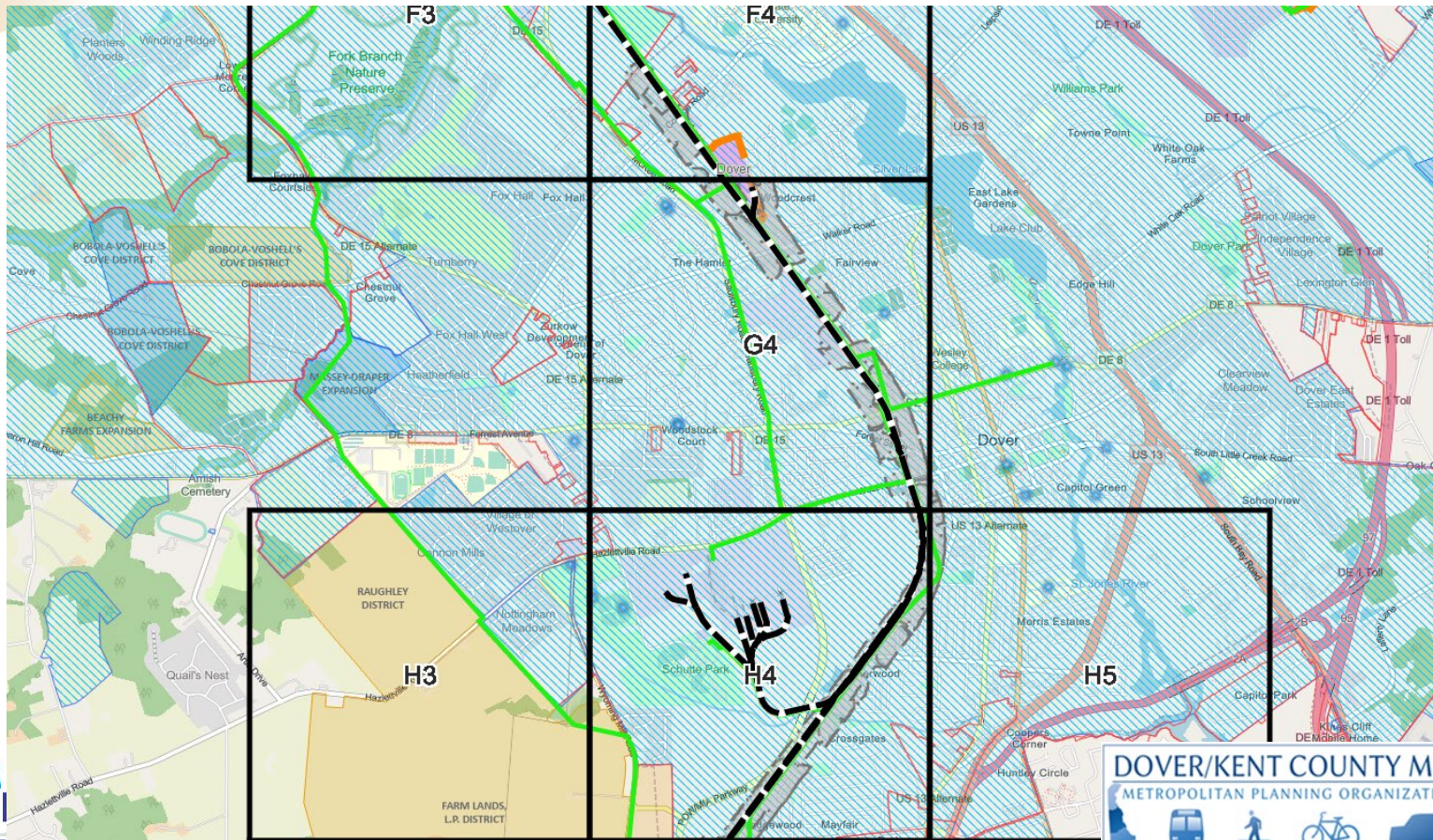
Substations / Power Stations



Sewer Districts



Water CPCN



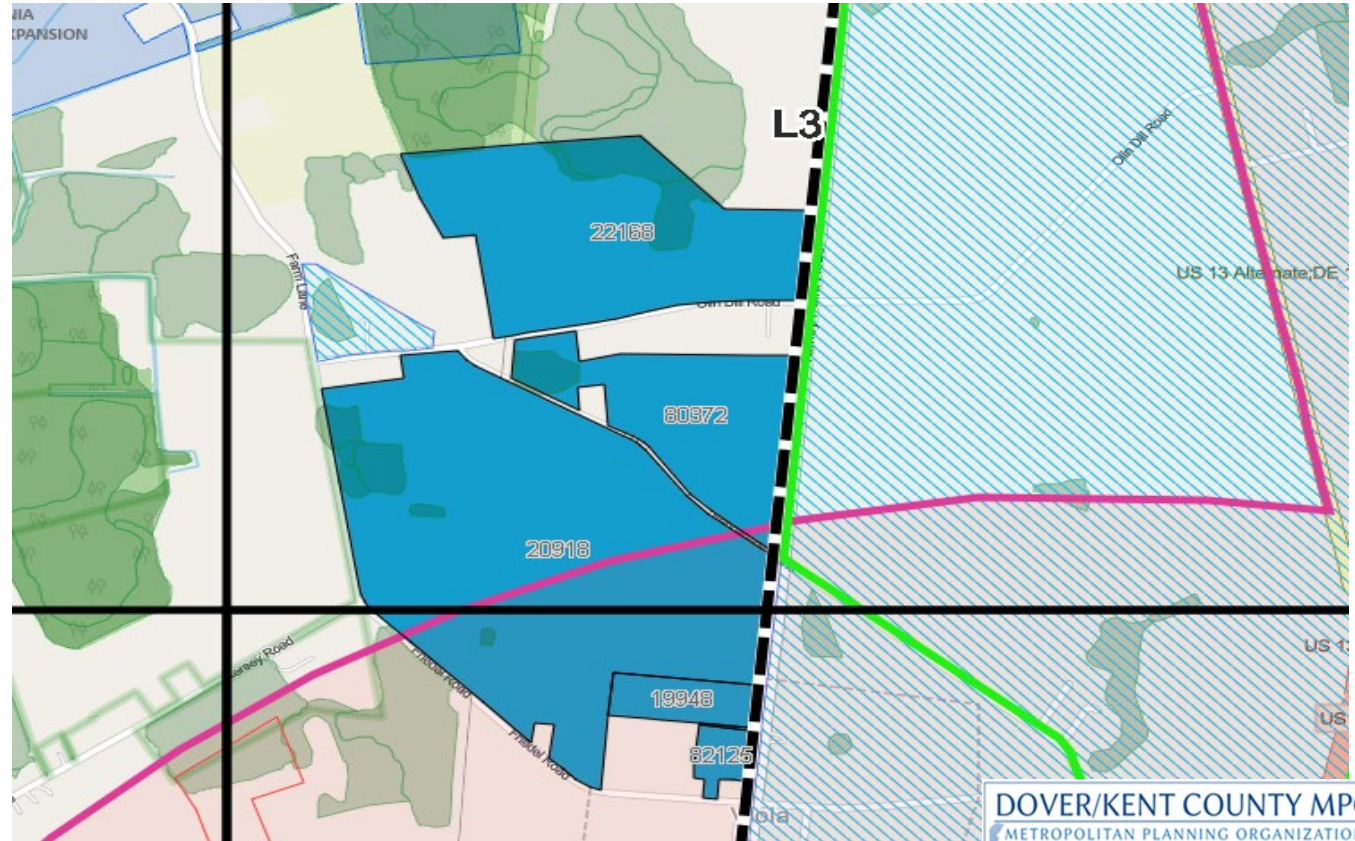
[choosecentraldelaware.com](http://choosecentraldelaware.com)

**DOVER/KENT COUNTY MPO**  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

# Large Parcels Adjacent to Rail

## Viola North

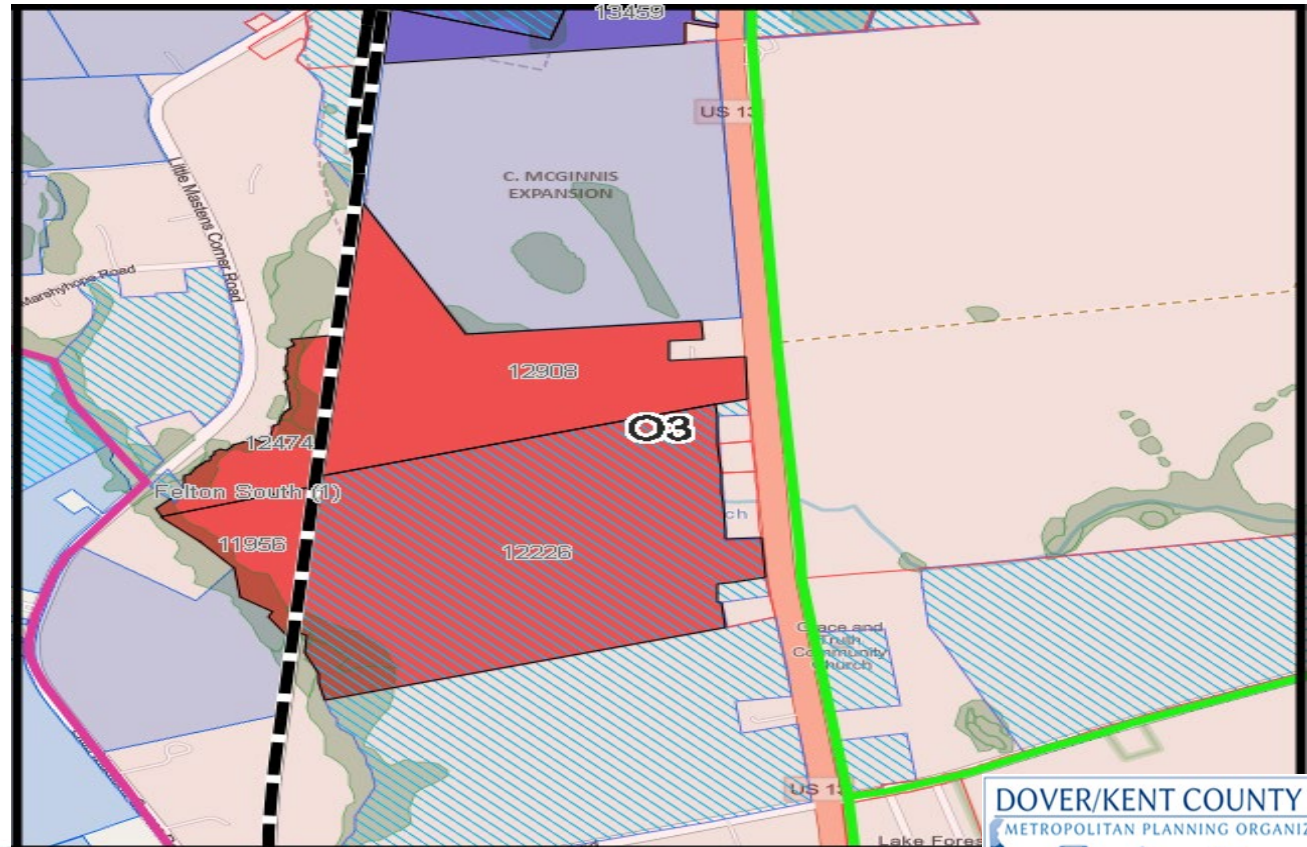
- 5 total parcels
- Totaling over 250 acres
- All Zoned AR



# Large Parcels Adjacent to Rail

## Felton South

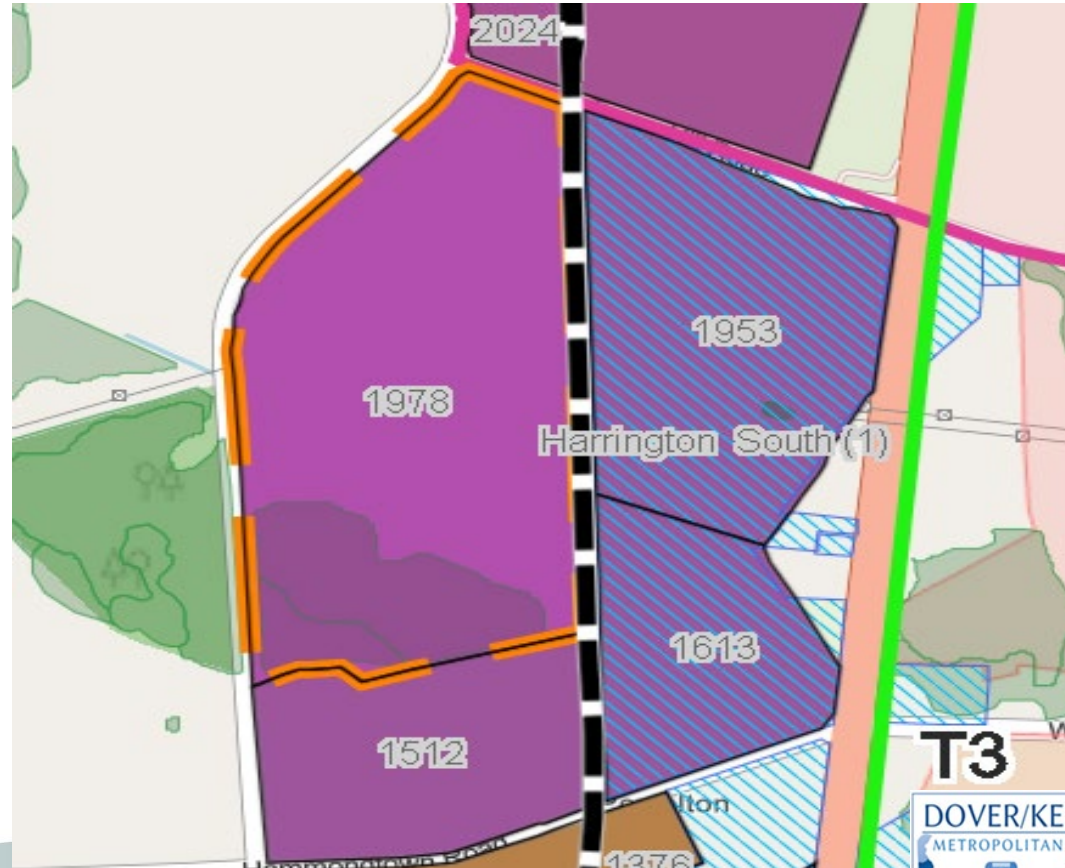
- 4 total parcels
- Totaling over 211 acres
- All Zoned AC



# Large Parcels Adjacent to Rail

## Harrington South

- 4 total parcels
- Totaling over 270 acres
- Zoned AR



# 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/projects/>

# Summary

- 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
- Based on the Comprehensive Plan review, several zoning changes and other actions are recommended
- If a municipality wants to encourage preservation of parcels along the rail for future commercial and industrial use, a process must be implemented to achieve that goal
- Appendix D includes 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

- Zoning decisions are important to protect rail land for future job creation
- Presentation to the following:
  - Levy Court
  - Municipalities- Larger parcels
  - UD IPA - Write proposed rail land ordinances



# Questions?

# Thank you!!

