



SUSSEX PRESERVATION COALITION

Educate ~ Advocate ~ Impact

NORTHSTAR UPDATE

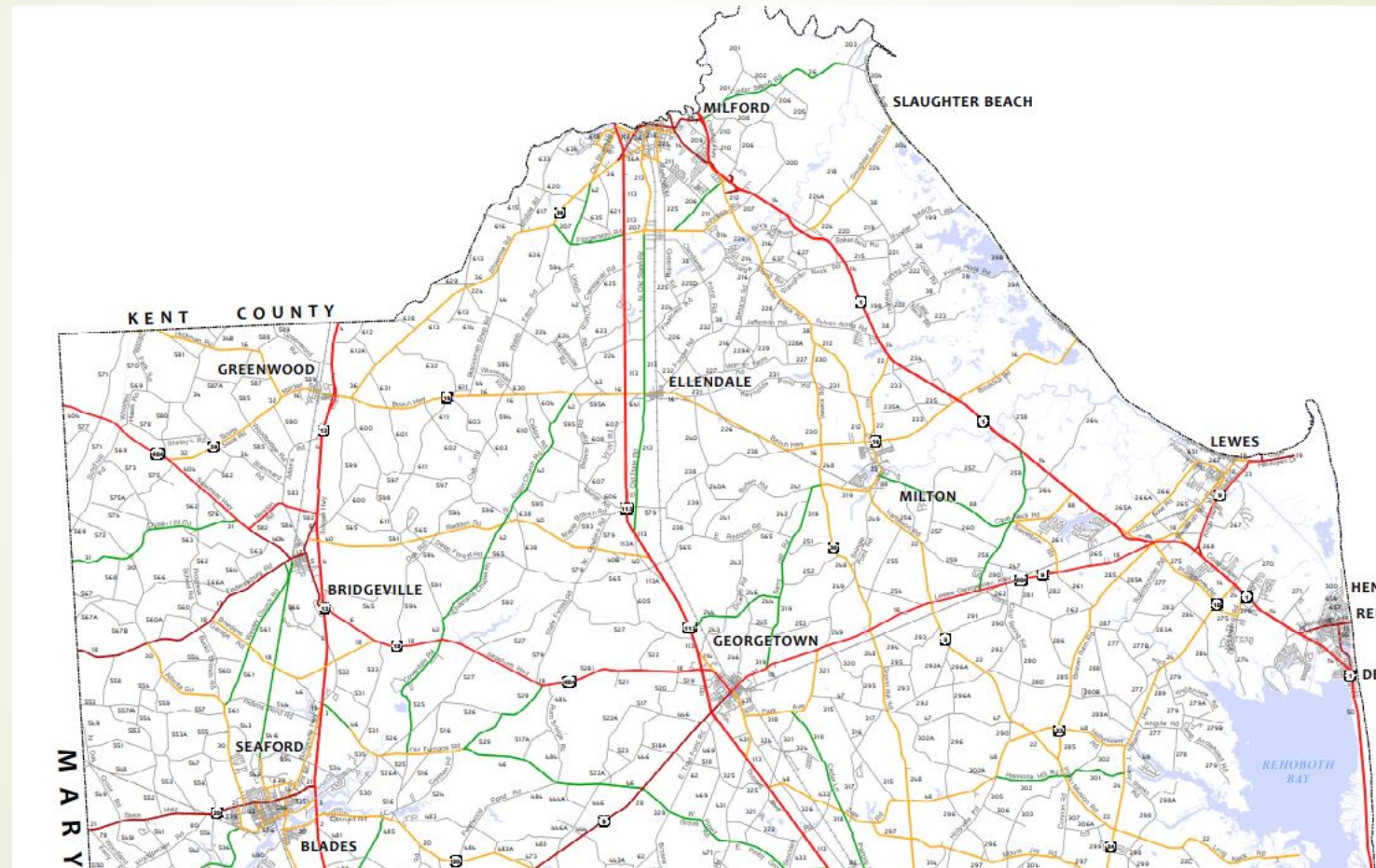
July 9, 2024



NorthStar & Traffic – The Problem

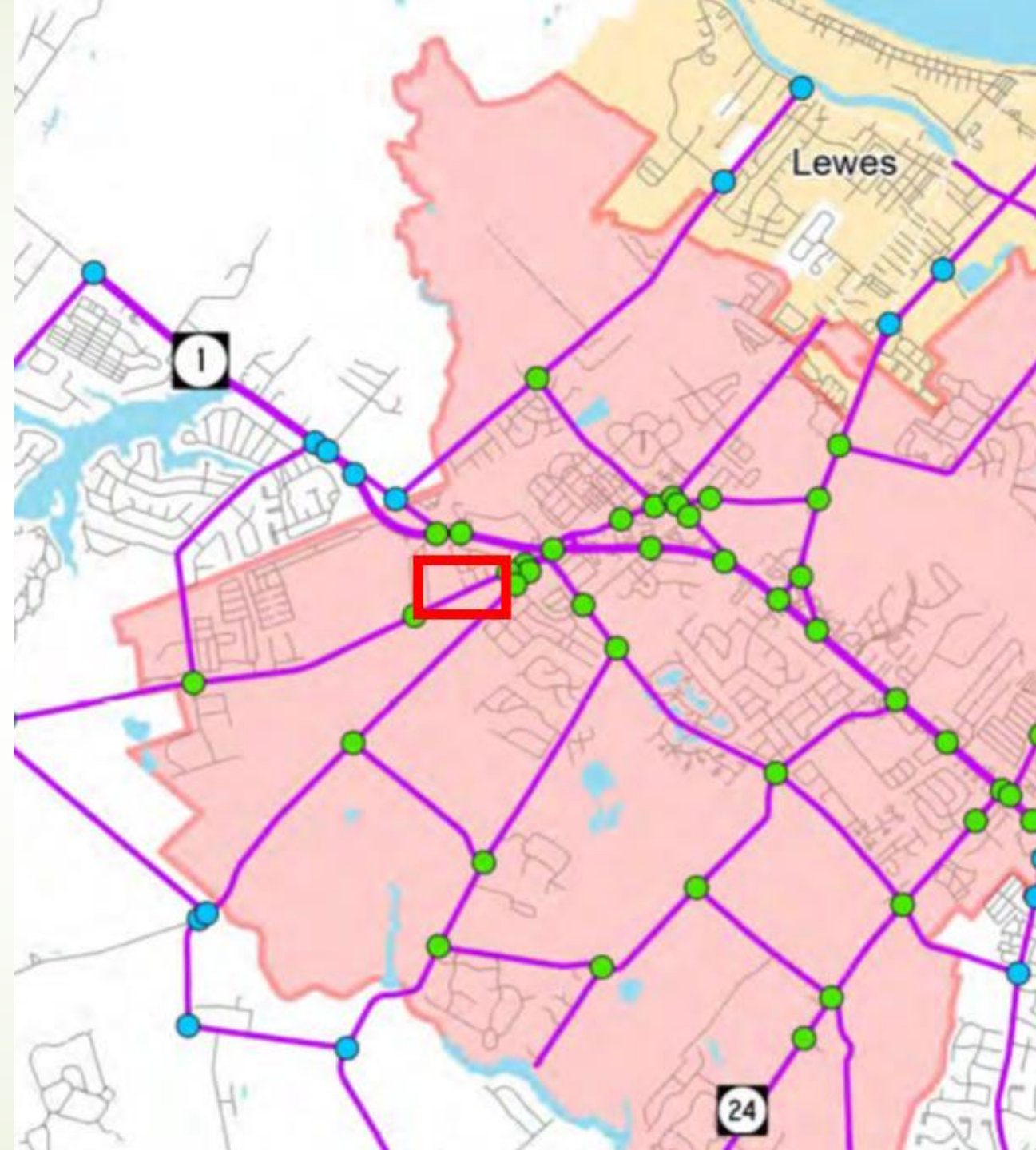
- ▶ NorthStar Impacts two roads:
 - ▶ Route 9 – principal east-west arterial highway in Sussex
 - ▶ Beaver Dam Rd – a major collector highway
- ▶ Traffic Volumes: (2022 data)
 - ▶ Route 9 – Route 1 to Dairy Farm Rd
 - 15,503 avg annual daily vehicle trips
 - 19,774 vehicle trips daily in **summer**
 - ▶ Beaver Dam Rd – Belltown Rd to Dairy Farm Rd
 - 3,701 avg daily vehicle trips
- ▶ DelDOT assessment:
 - ▶ “NorthStar will have a MAJOR impact to local area roadways”
 - ▶ **Daily 13,359 vehicle trips**

Between Two Critical Sussex Highways



Part of Henlopen Transportation Improvement District (TID)

- ▶ Henlopen Traffic Improvement District created 2017
- ▶ SOP: Waive a TIS (Traffic Impact Study) for developments inside a TID





Solutions: SPC Wrestling with Questions

- ▶ Can the impact be accommodated within the existing TID?
- ▶ Do Decision Makers have the best data?
- ▶ Can the county do more?
- ▶ Ways to reduce NorthStar's traffic impact?
- ▶ What are DeIDOT's planned improvements? Enough?
- ▶ When will DeIDOT's improvements be completed?
- ▶ How can we coordinate development and improvements – to achieve CONCURRENCY?



Delaware Code Delegates Land Use Decisions to the Counties

- 1988 Quality of Life Act (Title 9; Chapter 69; subchapter II)
- Through the process of comprehensive planning, it is intended that units of county government can preserve, promote and improve the public health, safety, comfort, good order, appearance, convenience, law enforcement and fire prevention and general welfare; **facilitate the adequate and efficient provision of transportation, water, sewage, schools, parks, recreational facilities, housing and other requirements and services; and conserve, develop, utilize and protect natural resources within their jurisdictions.**



Concurrency: Key to Livable Communities

- ▶ SPC Position – Livable Communities/Quality of Life*
 - ▶ Infrastructure – Capacity & Concurrency
 - ▶ Transportation
 - ▶ Public Safety
 - ▶ Healthcare
 - ▶ Education
 - ▶ Environment
 - ▶ Essential Services – Capacity & Concurrency
 - ▶ Water & Sewer
 - ▶ Electricity
 - ▶ Gas
 - ▶ Internet/Cable

* Sussex County Council has responsibility and authority (Zoning & Quality of Life Acts and DeIDOT MOU)



NorthStar's Population

- Implications for Schools and Medical Care
- Developer estimate: 1,850 (probably low)
- Census Bureau Avg Household Size (2.54): 2,164
- Census Bureau Avg Family Size (3.04): 2,590

- SPC Use 2,164 – depends on many variables

Standards for Medical Care: Primary Care

- ▶ Council on Graduate Medical Education (CGME) recommendation:
 - ▶ ratio of patients per primary care physician should be 1,250:1
- ▶ # Delaware Residents per every primary care physician 2021
 - ▶ Sussex County - 2,162:1 (approx. 100 PCPs short)
 - ▶ Kent County – 2,111:1
 - ▶ New Castle County – 1,240:1

Elderly patients (> 74) require 3X as many physician encounters

Young patients (< 5) require 2X as many physician encounters

(Source: Primary Care Physicians in Delaware 2021 Delaware Department of Health and Social Services

Division of Public Health February 2022)

NorthStar Impact: Primary Care Physicians

- Projected NorthStar population = 1 additional primary care physician at current Sussex ratio of 2,162:1
- Support for each physician: business operations, clinical staff, front office support staff, ancillary support staff = 2 additional persons + (Medical Group Management Association <https://www.mgma.com/mgma-stats/medical-practices-look-to-clinical-support-staff-to-optimize-care-delivery-in-2021>)
- Shortages in support staff post-pandemic: The Great Resignation
- Critical Shortages for other physicians, as well, including dentists and obstetricians



Healthcare: Horror Stories Abound

- “I had a surgical pre-op at the beginning of April. the doctor said, give us two weeks, if you have not heard from us to schedule a surgical appointment, call us. Two weeks later i called, no one answered the phone but there was a recording that said, "wait 3 weeks, and we will call you" One month later I stopped by and left a message at the front desk and at the time the lady at the desk said, "oh I will have the coordinator call you; no one ever called. Today, 3 months since the initial visit, i called again and asked to speak to the office manager and once again, she was not there but the desk supervisor said, "sorry, we are overwhelmed, we will call when we can". (Next Door, 7/4/24)

Ripple Effects: More Crowded Roads

- Increased response and transport time for EMS calls
 - London study examined ambulance response times during pandemic vs. post-pandemic. Findings: 1 second increase in response time for every 1% increase in traffic
 - Hypothetical: +13,359 from NorthStar = 86% increase = 86 seconds
 - Importance:
 - Research mixed: does shorter response time result in better outcomes?
 - **Call time+ gathering time+road time = response time** – Sussex 8-minute response time in 64% of calls to paramedics (national standard = 8 minutes)
 - **Transport time** = transport to hospital – Sussex 30-45 minutes “not uncommon” due to distance (and traffic?)
 - **Does potential 1 minute 26 second increase in response time matter?**
 - Source: National Accreditation: <https://sussexcountyde.gov/news/sussex-county-ems-earns-first-ever-national-accreditation>



Ripple Effects: Emergency Evacuations

- Schools – how to avoid overcrowding?
- Emergency Evacuations – many roads lead to Route 9/404
- Public Safety – state police positions recently added in county budget
- Environment – trees, flooding, open space, air pollution, public health, etc