

Industrial Land Needs Analysis

Prepared by Camoin Associates for Kent Economic Partnership

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KENT ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

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Executive Summary

Key Findings

Purpose

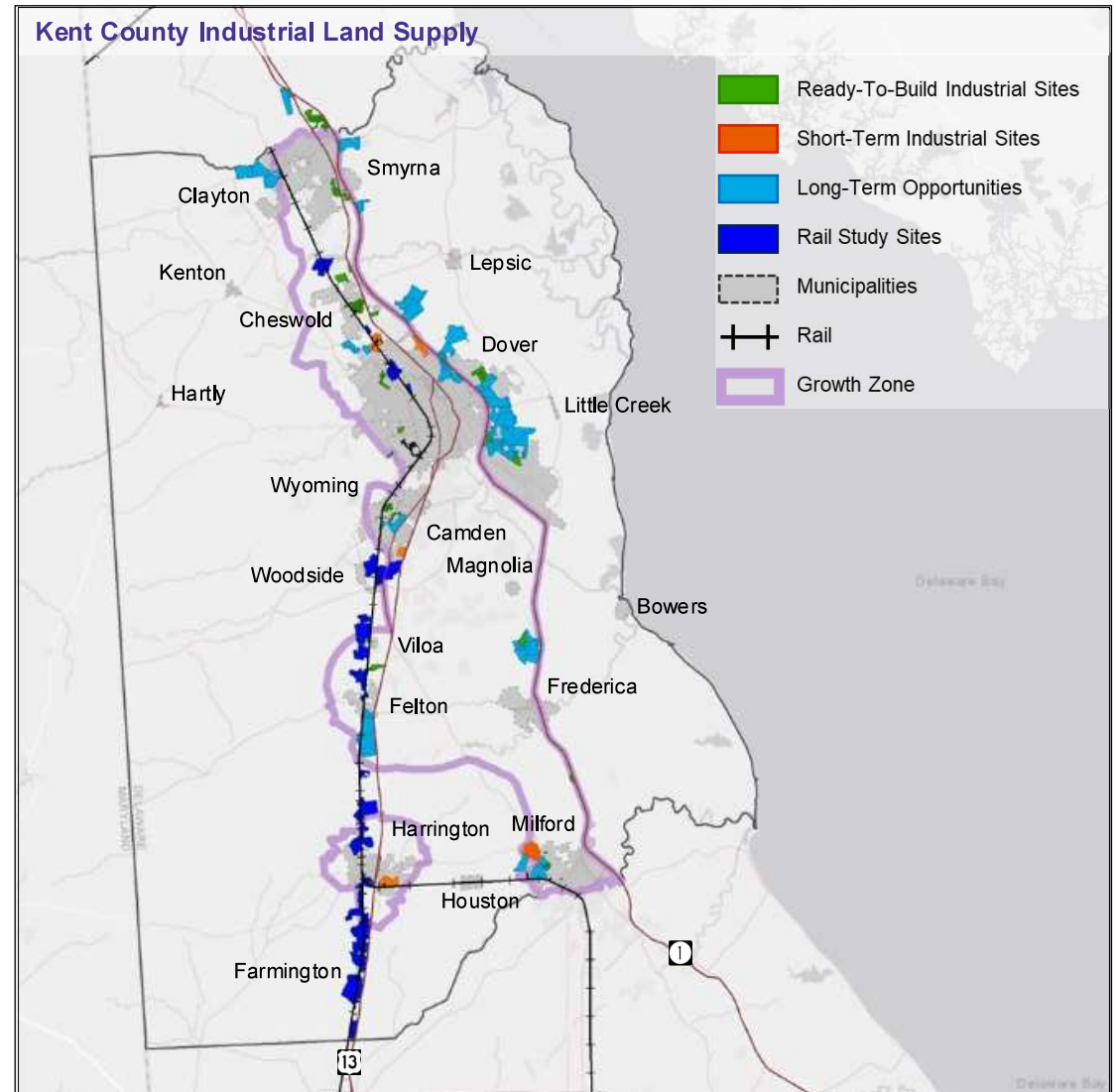
This study examines how Kent County can sustain industrial growth by maintaining a strong, market-ready pipeline of development sites. It evaluates current industrial market conditions, projected demand, and the readiness of available land to support future investment. The analysis is designed to help the County proactively advance strategic sites toward shovel-ready status and ensure it remains competitive as market conditions evolve.

Overview

Kent County is well positioned to capture near term industrial growth, but long-term growth will require additional planning

Kent County's industrial market is in a position of strength. Industrial demand is growing, market fundamentals are solid, and the County has assembled a meaningful inventory of ready to build and near term industrial sites. Vacancy rates remain low, rents have increased, and recent development has absorbed quickly—clear signals that Kent County is an attractive and competitive location for industrial investment.

At the same time, continued success will require proactive planning. As existing sites are absorbed and user needs evolve, the County must continuously advance strategic sites toward shovel ready status to maintain momentum and remain competitive over the long term.



Key Findings

Industrial Market and Employment Trends

Industrial demand is strong and aligned with Kent County's assets

Industrial users—including manufacturing, logistics, food processing, and flex oriented businesses—are projected to grow faster than the overall economy in Kent County. Business formation has outpaced job growth, reflecting demand from smaller, more space efficient firms that still require physical facilities. Stakeholders consistently report strong interest in flex, distribution, and specialized industrial space.

These trends align well with Kent County's location, workforce, and transportation access, positioning the County to capture both near term opportunities and longer term growth.

A tight market reflects success—and creates opportunity

Kent County's industrial and flex market has operated at low vacancy levels for several years, even as more than one million square feet of new space has been delivered since 2021. New buildings have leased quickly, and rents have increased, reflecting sustained demand and investor confidence.

These conditions demonstrate the strength of the local market. They also underscore the importance of maintaining a steady pipeline of development ready sites so that businesses can continue to locate and expand in the County as demand grows.

Modern industrial space is in demand, increasing the value of site readiness

Much of Kent County's industrial inventory is aging and may require modernization upgrades to be more marketable, while modern Class A space is limited and highly sought after. As a result, many growing firms and specialized users pursue build to suit solutions rather than relying on existing buildings.

This dynamic places a premium on large, well planned sites with access to infrastructure and transportation. Counties that can consistently bring these sites to market are best positioned to capture high quality industrial investment.

Target Industry Job Growth

9.8%

Kent County's projected job growth among industrial users

9.0%

Kent County's projected job growth across all industries

Supply Constraints

2.6%

Vacancy rate for industrial and flex space (2026 Q1)

3.0%

Vacancy rate for medical office (2026 Q1)

Quality of Space

52%

Share of industrial and flex space that is Class A or B

84%

Portion of countywide Class A and B space in Dover or Smyrna

Sources: Lightcast, CoStar

Key Findings

Industrial Land Needs

Kent County has a strong pipeline of ready-to-build and near-term industrial sites

Kent County has nearly **1,300 acres of ready-to-build and short-term industrial land**, more than enough to meet projected demand of 173 to 425 acres over the next 15 years. This provides a strong foundation for near-term growth. Existing industrial buildings are concentrated in Dover and Smyrna, while buildable land is more geographically diverse, including significant sites in Milford, Harrington, and unincorporated areas. This balance allows the County to support growth across multiple markets.

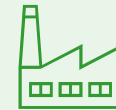
Planning for the next phase of development should focus on advancing strategically important sites

While Kent County's land supply is sufficient in aggregate, **future competitiveness depends on how quickly and strategically sites move through the development pipeline**. The County should advance strategically important sites to ensure it can maintain long-term competitiveness. The County's inventory of longer-term opportunities offers a foundation for future phases of growth as current ready-to-build and near-term sites are absorbed. Many locations provide the scale and transportation access needed to attract modern industrial users but will require coordinated planning and investments to unlock their full potential. Prioritizing these sites now will ensure Kent County maintains a pipeline of market-ready land to support the types of large, utility-intensive, and logistics-oriented users that will drive industrial demand in the coming decade.

Long term, the County must balance future housing and industrial needs, and infrastructure requirements

Kent County's long-term development strategy will require balancing industrial growth with future housing needs while ensuring that supporting infrastructure keeps pace. Strategic sites—particularly those with access to rail and transportation corridors—should be priorities for industrial preservation. Preservation and planning efforts should also consider improvements to electrical capacity and transportation access, implications for annexation and growth zone changes, and other coordinated efforts to maintain a competitive supply of industrial land and ensure the County's long-term economic health.

Future Industrial Demand and Supply



425

Acres needed to support development of industrial, flex, and medical office in Kent County, 2026 - 2041

1,300

Acres existing at ready-to-build and short-term industrial sites

The county should be continuously planning its pipeline to ensure that it is moving strategic sites toward shovel-ready status. Future industrial land planning should focus on identifying a next phase of large, modern industrial sites in central and northern Kent County while preserving rail-adjacent sites and long-term industrial development opportunities.

Industrial Opportunities and Constraints by Municipality

Municipality	Trend	Opportunity	Constraint
Town of Smyrna	A distribution hub straddling Kent and New Castle Counties	Strong concentration of ready-to-build sites, primarily located in New Castle County	Long-term sites will require considering annexation and growth zone changes
City of Dover	Kent County's industrial anchor and leading center for development	Garrison Oak is a large, modern business park ready to capture development Significant acreage available to support phased growth over time	Long-term sites will require significant investment in master planning, assembly, and infrastructure to become development-ready
Town of Wyoming	An older warehousing center with opportunities for near-term growth	Wyoming Business Center provides over 30 acres to support industrial development over the near term	Long-term industrial growth is constrained by limited site availability
Town of Camden	An older warehousing center with opportunities for near-term growth	Camden has a healthy mix of ready-to-build, short-term, long-term, and rail-adjacent industrial land	Limited recent development highlights opportunities to enhance site readiness and market positioning
City of Harrington	A diverse but aging industrial portfolio poised for new investment	The Harrington Industrial Park will provide over 120 acres of rail-adjacent land for industrial development Harrington has a competitive advantage due to a large number of rail-adjacent sites within the growth zone	Older, smaller industrial properties along the rail line reflect a lack of recent investment
City of Milford	An emerging industrial center in Kent County	The Milford Corporate Center is a 167-acre near-term site that will support industrial development over a long period	Lack of highway and rail access may make it difficult to compete with sites to the north