



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING SERVICES

STAFF RECOMMENDATION REPORT January 8, 2026

Application Number & Name	:	CS-26-01 Kent County Fire School
Present Zoning District	:	AR (Agricultural Residential)
Present Use	:	Fire School
Proposed Use	:	Same with Comprehensive Sign Package
Area & Location	:	28.0+ acres located on the north side of Chestnut Grove Rd., approximately 0.27 miles east of Stonewater Way., west of Dover.

I. APPLICATION SUMMARY:

The applicants have submitted an application for a comprehensive sign package for the existing Delaware State Fire School and Fire Commission Facilities. The proposed comprehensive sign package includes the following signage:

- Proposed attached sign - *Delaware State Fire Commission* (21.82 sq. ft.)
- Proposed attached sign – *Fire Commission Plaque* (19.64 sq. ft.)
- Proposed attached sign – *Delaware State Fire Service Center* (39.22 sq. ft.)
- Proposed attached digital sign – 14' x 5' (70 sq. ft.)
- Existing attached sign to be relocated – *Delaware State Fire School Louis J. Amabili Fire Service Training Center* (59.56 sq. ft.)
- Existing attached sign – *Office* (5.5 sq. ft.)
- Existing attached sign – *Training Entrance* (6 sq. ft.)
- Existing attached sign – *Delaware State Fire Marshal* (46.67 sq. ft.)
- Two proposed detached signs – (42.63 sq. ft. each)

The subject property is located inside the growth zone and is improved with two office buildings and accessory buildings. The surrounding properties to the north, south, east, and west are utilized residentially and agriculturally.

II. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL** of the proposed Comprehensive Sign Package based on the information submitted as the application demonstrates compliance with the conditions for approval as outlined in Kent County Code Section 205-231.1. Comprehensive signage for major subdivisions and complexes.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

The applicant has demonstrated compliance with the conditions of approval in Section 205-231.1. Comprehensive signage for major subdivisions and complexes as outlined below:

B. Qualifications. Comprehensive signage plans may only be submitted in conjunction with the following types of development projects:

- (1) Major subdivisions and residential developments involving more than one DelDOT approved entrance or involving 200 or more dwelling units, planned unit developments, and cluster subdivisions.*
- (2) Any shopping center, or group of three or more nonresidential principal structures under common management and located on one or more contiguous properties.*
- (3) Any institutional complex, professional office, medical or educational campus, or business park.*

✓ The comprehensive sign package is within an institutional complex, professional office, medical or educational campus, or business park.

C. Standards. Comprehensive signage plans shall comply with the following standards:

(1) Comprehensive signage plans may not be held to the size, height, number and area regulations for signs found in other sections of this article. However, the number, type and size of signs proposed shall not be excessive and must be in proportion to the scale of the buildings and the uses planned for the site.

✓ The applicant is proposing to install four new attached signs and two detached signs, relocate one existing sign, and keep three existing signs. The signage is in proportion and not excessive to the scale of the existing 43,136 sq. ft. and 9,474 sq. ft. buildings that they will be located on. The detached signage will be located in front of the 43,136 sq. ft. building.

(2) All proposed signage shall be designed and coordinated with the overall architectural concept for the buildings on the site. Sign type, color scheme, size, and illumination shall be coordinated and compatible with the architecture of the development so as to formulate a thematic sign plan for the site.

✓ Proposed attached signage will be consistent with the existing attached signage being 6" – 12" white lettering. Also proposed to be attached is the State Fire Prevention Commission seal and a digital sign which are also compatible with the architecture of

the complex. The detached signs are blue backgrounds and gold lettering 57'± from the front property line and are compatible with the sign plan for the site.

(3) Wall-mounted signs shall be coordinated with the overall design theme of the site and designed as an integral component of the facades of buildings.

- ✓ Proposed wall-mounted signs are essential to identify the different agencies that occupy the site.

(4) Site landscaping shall be designed to complement and not conflict with sign placements.

- ✓ The two proposed detached signs will not conflict with site landscaping.

(5) No off-premises signage will be permitted as part of an application for a comprehensive signage plan.

- ✓ No off-premise signage is proposed.

IV. AGENCY COMMENTS:

A. KENT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, Engineering Division

Contact: Brian L. Hall, Engineering Project Manager II

Requirement:

1. The direct sanitary sewer provider is the city of Dover (a Contract User).

Comment:

1. The Engineering Division grants “Approval, With No Objection to Recordation”.

B. DOVER/KENT COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Contact: Malcom Jacob, Transportation Planner

Comments:

Dover Kent MPO would like to make several comments regarding the site plan. First, note that Chestnut Grove Road is a Major Collector road with an annual average daily traffic (AADT) of 2,740. There are no shoulders on the sides of the roadway, leaving little room between road users and offering no separation for bicyclists. There is also a curve in the roadway immediately to the west of the parcel that could increase the risk for motorists.

The applicant should work with DelDOT to ensure Chestnut Grove Road is built to handle the needs of the Delaware State Fire School and the surrounding parcels. The Delaware State Fire School would benefit from right-turn deceleration and acceleration lanes and a left-turn bypass lane at the site entrance, which would allow for safer turns into the property and improve the flow of traffic during peak hours. An example of these improvements can be found at the entrance to Stonewater Creek, which is located to the west of the property. To further the discussion of potential improvements to Chestnut Grove Road, please reach out to DelDOT and Dover Kent MPO.

It is also worth noting that the frontage of the property does not contain sidewalks. It would be beneficial to add these facilities to the site plan, so that pedestrians can safely walk along this portion of Chestnut Grove Road. These sidewalks would not initially connect to anything, but it would help create connections in the future as neighboring parcels are developed.

Aside from these two points, Dover Kent MPO has no major objections to the site plan. Transportation improvements such as accessible parking spaces and pedestrian walkways are included in the plan. Note that these measures should follow all of the necessary State and County requirements, including the use of ADA ramps.

**C. DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL,
Division of Fish & Wildlife**

Contact: Faith Garcia, Environmental Review Coordinator

Comment:

A review of our database indicates that there are currently no records of state-rare or federally listed plants, animals or natural communities at this project site.

V. OWNER/APPLICANT:

The owner/developer shall be aware of and be prepared to comply with all the comments regarding this project stated in this report. All comments must be addressed in the final plan prior to final approval. Final approval of the plan must occur within 24 months from the date of preliminary plan approval. Failure to obtain final approval shall nullify the plan. Once the plan receives final approval, construction in accordance with the plan must occur within 18 months of final approval or the plan shall be deemed null and void. Letters of "No Objection to Final Approval" from the following agencies will be required prior to final approval:

A. DelDOT, Division of Highways

This recommendation was made without the benefit of public testimony and is based on the information presented when the application was received by the Department of Planning Services. The Regional Planning Commission shall give considerable weight to public testimony received during public hearing in considering its recommendation to Levy Court in this matter.

ENC: Data Sheet

Exhibit A- Location and Zoning Map

Exterior Elevations

Signage Renderings

Site Plan