

MEDIA RELEASE

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Dover Seeks Developer to Kickstart Transformation

Dover, DE. On Thursday the Downtown Dover Partnership (DDP) issued an RFQ (Request For Qualifications) to receive proposals from building developers. Concurrent with their search for a Property Development Director, the DDP is seeking the most qualified developer or team of developers to kick off the priority redevelopment project proposed for 120 S. Governor's Ave.

Formerly housing a small Acme grocery, the S. Governor's Ave. parcel has long been identified for multi-story, mixed-use redevelopment. The conceptual drawing prepared through the master planning process calls for 196 residential units, a 27,000 SF grocery, 113 space parking garage and an outdoor amenity above the first-floor podium. "These kinds of outdoor amenities are typically open to the public and can include firepits, gardens, market light strands, water elements like fountains or pools, and tables and seating for social gatherings," commented Dover City Manager Dave Hugg, an active proponent of the transformative plans for the Capital City. "Imagine watching the Fourth of July fireworks with family and friends from a downtown rooftop."

Through the RFQ, the DDP seeks a summary of what a developer proposes to build, an evaluation of the respondent's qualifications and experience in designing, financing, executing, and managing similar developments in the past. DDP is also seeking a responder that has experience as a partner in a Public Private Partnership (PPP). Projects completed by a PPP often have the advantages of using a broader range of funding sources and being completed within targeted timeframes. They also benefit from private sector processes and innovation.

DDP believes that launching just one of several redevelopment projects will be a strong catalyst to motivate private property owners to get similar projects started. According to DDP Board President, Todd Stonesifer, "As we consider priorities for implementing redevelopment strategies in this master plan, finding and hiring the right person for this position and getting a redevelopment project off the ground are both at the top of the list. The new Development Director will focus on getting several mixed-use construction projects off the ground and just two of these projects could bring as many as 340 of the nearly 1000 new residential units targeted for downtown."

After two rounds of requests for proposals to hire a suitable Property Development Director to lead redevelopment strategies in the downtown master plan, leadership of the Downtown Dover Partnership has changed its recruitment strategy. "We originally planned to hire a contractor to fill the position, but we believe that has limited our pool of candidates," said DDP Executive Director Diane Laird. An independent contractor must be established as a small business, and that comes with the cost of franchise taxes, liability insurance, and other some requirements. So, the DDP will consider either form of hire. "Being a staff person with the DDP, versus a contractor, can bring a sense of longer-term security and being on site consistently will bring value to the project."

The person selected for the DDP staff position will plan, direct, and coordinate redevelopment efforts and will also be charged with recruiting developers while overseeing construction project(s) like the one at 120 S. Governor's Ave. from inception to completion. "Our hope is to have a strong pool of qualified developers to consider and to simultaneously have the Property Development Director hired and participating with the DDP's review panel to evaluate the RFQ responses," said Laird.

Responses for the RFQ are due no later than August 15 and a decision to select the most qualified developer is targeted for late September. The DDP continues to seek resumes from qualified candidates for the Development Director position by June 28, but resumes will be accepted until a hire is made.

For details of the master plan, the RFQ, and the Property Development Director position, visit: www.DowntownDover.com

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The Downtown Dover Partnership is committed to driving an improved quality of life for the residents and visitors of Dover, Delaware, through collective collaboration, economic development and promotion of downtown Dover's unique historic properties. Call 302-678-2940 or visit: www.DowntownDover.com.

Two images follow:

GET OLD ACME PIC



Bringing back grocery and residents to downtown at 120 S. Governor's Ave. and along New Street.

Concept drawing by Bernardon.