

# Firm selected to develop strategic master plan for downtown Dover

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DOVER — Mosaic Development Partners has been chosen by the board of directors of the Downtown Dover Partnership to create a strategic master plan for the city's central business district.

Community input will be coupled with market data and consideration of local assets and opportunities, including residential and workforce initiatives, to build a plan to transform central Dover into a thriving business district by 2030, a news release stated.

Mosaic was chosen as a result of a comprehensive selection process over the last five months, which included a team of community stakeholders representing DDP, the city, multiple public and nonprofit agencies, and Dover's three delegates to the state legislature.

Seven teams responded to the request for proposals that DDP issued in late June. After three short-listed teams were reviewed, Mosaic was selected.

"We are excited to begin working with the DDP and a broad array of members of the Dover community to develop a realistic, inclusive, and viable plan," said Greg Reaves, principal of Mosaic.

The firm is currently involved in the development of the final phase of the Philadelphia Navy Yard, a 109-acre, \$2.5 billion mixed-use project, as well as Cheyney University, a 200-acre multiphase master plan, and Wilberforce University, a 200-acre campus redevelopment.

Mosaic has strong experience working in diverse neighborhoods with challenges similar to Dover's.

"Each of the three short-listed candidate teams brought unique strengths," said Todd Stonesifer, DDP board president and lifelong Dover resident. "But the review panel unanimously agreed that Mosaic was best qualified to not only engage a team of professionals familiar with the region but also to move the resulting plan seamlessly into implementation, including helping the DDP to secure funding and possibly bring investors to begin the redevelopment of key downtown sites."

The target area for the plan is Loockerman Street and adjacent neighborhoods, and it will take into consideration development nodes within the 250-acre Downtown De-

velopment District.

This section is also designated a "Qualified Opportunity Zone," indicating that it is a high-priority target area for redevelopment and reinvestment. Delaware State University and DDP representatives have begun meeting regularly to ensure coordination of planning efforts, considering the recent acquisition of the former Wesley College campus by DSU and opportunities for a stronger college presence downtown.

During a six- to eight-month time, Mosaic will work with DDP to engage public and private stakeholders in the Dover community to build and deliver the master plan.

To create the plan, Mosaic has convened a team of experts in community and urban development.

This includes Bernardon, a firm offering architecture and design; Econsult Solutions, providing expertise in market research and analysis; Kimley-Horn, planning and design consultants; and Connect the Dots Insights, which will work with local stakeholders to gain ideas, vision and buy-in.

The project is targeted to launch in January and be completed within about eight months.

"DDP partners believe the time is ideal to develop this plan, particularly because we are beginning to see Post-COVID trends that are affecting how and where people live and work," said Diane Laird, DDP executive director. "This kind of plan has the potential to bring investment for mixed-use development, including multi-income residential units. A city filled with ... a critical mass of retailers and restaurants, and activities attractive to millennials and people of all ages will support an 'after five' environment that is reflected in thriving small cities around the nation."

Dover legislators Sen. Trey Paradee and Reps. Andria Bennett and Bill Bush have shown support for this plan and have participated in the review of interested vendors.

"As a lifelong resident of Dover, I remember shopping downtown as a kid," Sen. Paradee said. "We need to take this snapshot in time to look comprehensively at downtown and put a plan together that will capitalize on Dover's assets and potential, not to bring back 'what was' but to usher in a new day for downtown."