



Transforming **Downtown Dover**

Capital City 2030

DOVER, KENT COUNTY, DELAWARE

January 2023

Executive Summary

Transforming Downtown Dover:

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provides a fresh and integrated approach to transform Downtown Dover and the surrounding area into a vibrant, thriving community and regional destination. With the support of the public, the business community and public officials, this document is intended to spur public and private investment to realize this vision.

The team engaged in an intensive listening process, reaching more than 800 residents, business owners, property owners, elected officials, and public and private stakeholders. The team then dissected key issues, needs and concerns to identify opportunities for meaningful growth.

They focused on a range of physical and programmatic solutions to jump start Downtown Dover and augment its already historic and bucolic setting. The areas of focus included key destination points, business attraction and connection, public financial support tools, architectural strategies, ground floor activation, multi modal transportation, public space, permits and zoning and new residential density.

The plan puts people first, with a focus on the customer who may be an employee, a resident, a student, a soldier, a nurse and artist, or a public servant. DDP's plan respects cars but is not constrained by them. The plan welcomes those who walk, cycle, use a scooter, take a bus or drive. We prioritize how streets interact with residents and visitors to increase

connection and improve the overall experience on the ground. Specifically, we reimagined the future Lookerman Street to again serve as the spine for the downtown district, having wider sidewalks, better tree infrastructure, brighter store fronts, more food and retail options, outdoor seating and traffic calming strategies.

The central premise of a reignited downtown district calls for density and connection to become the engines that drive change. The future requires new developments that activate ground floor spaces, adding nearly 1000 new residential units, a boutique hotel, centralized parking, more contemporary architecture, upgraded existing building structures, restaurants with outdoor seating, authentic retail, programmed public spaces, streamlined government approvals and government assisted financial incentives.

Our plan recommends incentives for building owners and businesses to stay or come to Downtown Dover. To attract and keep businesses, we recommend continued public investments in infrastructure, creating new financial tools such as TIFs to spur economic development, and an expedited path to approval for projects that align with the DDP plan.

By working with our existing key anchors, we start from a position of strength. These anchors are located within minutes of the downtown district, and include government entities, healthcare, and education. Delaware's state capital, its government agencies, Bayhealth, Delaware State University, and Dover Air Force Base are all longtime investors who could create synergy and directly benefit from a revitalized community.

These anchors employ and/or house thousands of people who currently are not fully engaged with downtown. This plan will build stronger connections through initiatives such as safe and convenient pathways from the anchor sites to downtown, quality residential housing and amenities and other programming that directly supports these anchors.



This plan was also built on the principles of equitable development. Building a more vibrant community also means including those who are traditionally left behind in the process. Dover has a large population of low- and moderate-income residents, many of whom need programmatic support to invest in job training, small business development, stabilized housing, and social support.

To help achieve that, we recommend attracting new businesses and training programs that emphasize local hiring, working closely with not-for-profits to leverage all investments, and working with established agencies to lessen the burden of homelessness, vagrancy, drug addiction and crime. The plan creates spaces for young people to learn, create and play, giving them new ways to enjoy the downtown.

To implement this plan, we recommend strengthening public-private cooperation. Leading this plan will be the Downtown Dover Partnership and its supporters. To assist them, we recommend adding a high-level development position to DDP to guide this project, convening a public-private Finance task force to investigate, implement, and manage financial incentives to bring investment to downtown, continue to outreach to the community to maintain support and engage the private sector directly in the development of DDP controlled sites.

Capital City 2030 will create a new downtown for the City of Dover. This will become a model community for people to live, work, and play. Working together, we can make the Capital of the First state of the nation a true destination worthy of its heritage.

Projected OUTCOMES

