



# INTRODUCTION

# A.1 - PROJECT GOALS



The purpose of the Dover Transit Center Neighborhood Plan is to use the new transit center as an impetus for redevelopment that will transform and energize the surrounding area. The Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Downtown Dover Partnership (DDP) conceived the plan.

The effort offers an opportunity for the community to influence the future of the neighborhood and downtown by exploring simple urban design questions such as appropriate building height, the pedestrian experience, the character of neighborhood roads and streetscapes, and building setbacks. To have the area develop using transit-oriented design, with the new transit center as the focal point, and to drive growth and economic opportunity in the area are additional goals.

The MPO and DDP are committed to working with the City of Dover and the State of Delaware to put the necessary tools in place, such as reviewing and revising existing codes and ordinances to entice redevelopment, encourage public-private investments, partnerships and forums, and utilize key community stakeholders in generating changes that are needed to help fulfill the project's mission.

This master plan, created through a public charrette process, serves as a vehicle to implement the community's vision through the following series of specific strategies:



- Develop a downtown neighborhood plan with community and stakeholder involvement
- Leverage the transit center to encourage downtown revitalization
- Identify context sensitive, adaptive use, and infill development options
- Promote walkability and integrate multimodal transportation solutions
- Improve the gateways and entrance corridors to the downtown area with buildings, coordinated signage, and streetscapes that frame views and provide a sense of arrival
- Strengthen key North-South and East-West road connections to area activity centers, such as Wesley College, the St. Jones River, Eden Hill and the Bayhealth Medical Center campus
- Reinforce the architectural character of downtown Dover through the rehabilitation and redevelopment of key downtown buildings, lots, and intersections
- Create a network of parks, civic squares, and public gathering spaces within the neighborhood plan area that will enhance the downtown and lead to increased public use
- Create an identity for the future that builds on Dover's history
- Develop an orderly framework for growth (including community design guidelines and standards) that enhances economic development
- Identify the codes and policies needed to foster growth and redevelopment that are consistent with the master plan's goals and overall vision

## A.2 - COMMUNITY VISION



Dover, as the capital of Delaware, is growing and evolving to meet the challenges and opportunities that come with serving as the center of the region and the home of the legislature. The city provides a range of regional services, uses, and governmental functions, and must provide access to these services.

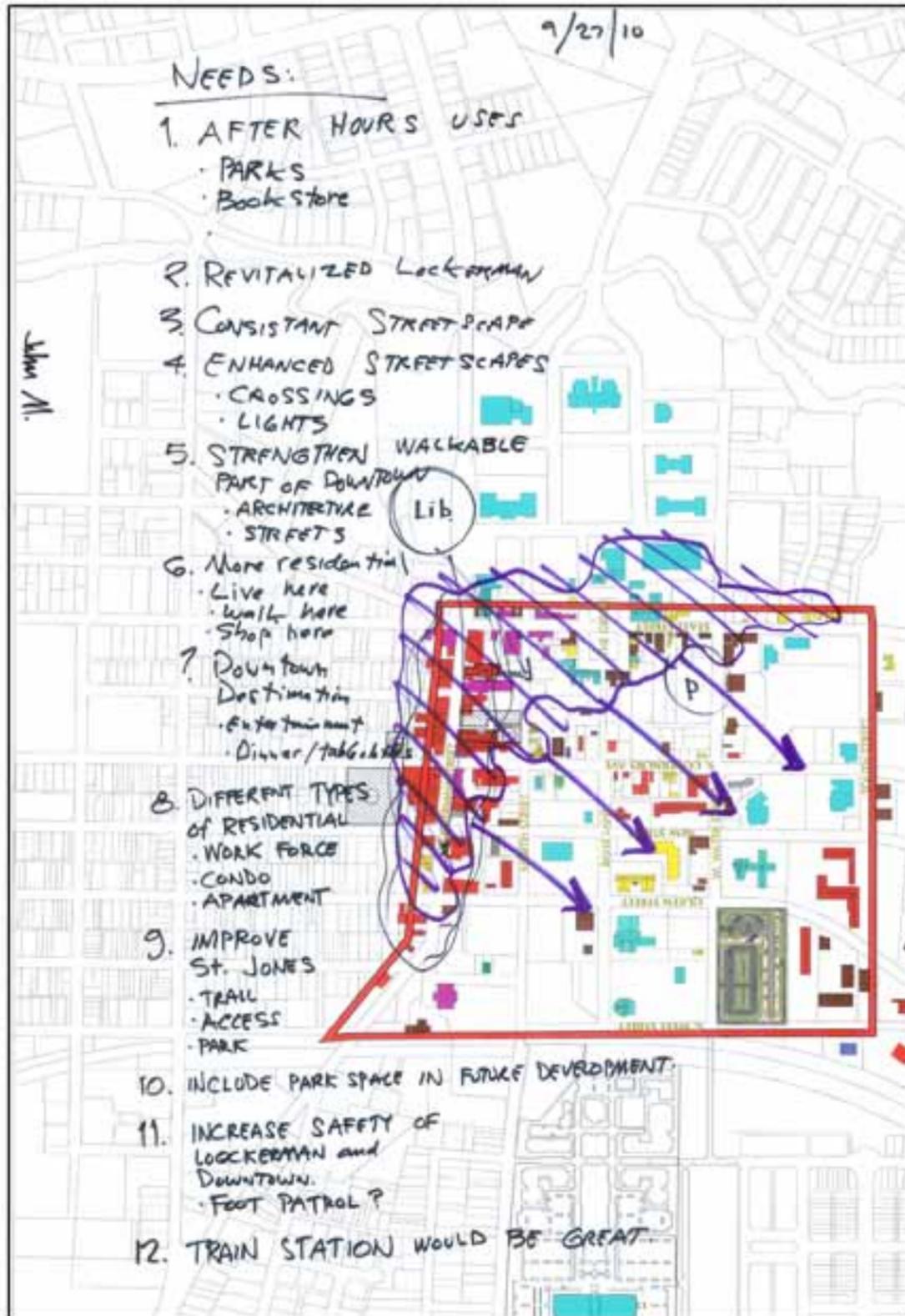
The Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) sought community input on what the future of the neighborhood should be, with special focus on the activities that were adjacent to the new transit center. The Downtown Dover Partnership, whose mission is to promote development and economic growth within downtown Dover, expressed an interest in the planning process and served as a cosponsor to the MPO's neighborhood plan study.

The MPO promotes alternative modes of transportation as a function of its program. The downtown Dover neighborhood depicted in the plan is the center of transit in Kent County. For several years, Dover's transit hub stood on Water Street between State Street and Governor's Avenue. In 2010, the state relocated the transit hub less than a mile away to a larger site at Queen and Water streets. The new transit center represents a great opportunity to revitalize downtown and reconnect parts of the city that do not function cohesively. The new location also creates a broader opportunity for the transit hub to serve the region.

While no single characteristic represents the community's vision, there were several important themes and goals for Dover that reoccurred during the process that led to the neighborhood plan. The following points represent the most important items to consider:

- The plan needs to look several generations ahead
- City residents and business people are anxious to see new development
- The downtown area does not have a cohesive layout
- Underground pollution and brown field sites need to be addressed
- The population around the transit center is not dense enough
- The transit center should be a destination and not just a transfer station
- New construction should complement the scale and context of downtown Dover's historic buildings
- The area at the edge of the St. Jones River – access, parking, trails and activities should be improved
- Walkability of downtown should be improved through architecture and streetscapes
- Build a train station near the transit center
- Rail right-of-way designs should improve to create more defined and attractive edges
- People agree that parking is a perceived problem, not an actual problem
- Develop shared parking facilities and district-wide parking
- Create consistent streetscapes with crosswalks and lighting, and consider burying utility lines
- "Mixed-use" should include retail on the first floors of buildings and residential on upper floors
- The residential mix needs to include student and workforce housing, such as apartments, townhomes, small, single homes and condominiums.
- North Street needs to have "fronts" of buildings and include office, service, and residential uses
- Create new "rules" for the area and incentives for development
- Integrate new green areas to link pedestrian pathways
- Reconnect Water Street across railroad tracks to Eden Hill Farm

# A.3 - PUBLIC PLANNING PROCESS



The charrette took place during the week of September 27, 2010. More than 100 participants attended the various meetings including Dover City Council members, city, county, and state agency staff, Downtown Dover Partnership representatives, community leaders, developers, business owners, and citizens. The design team worked more than 450 hours during the charrette. The major events that contributed to the process were as follows:

- An opening presentation was held on September 27, 2010 at the Eden Hill Medical Center conference room. The project's design principles, planning context, overview of the study area's constraints, strengths and challenges were provided in a PowerPoint presentation and numerous, large printed displays. Participants engaged in roundtable discussions, which provided the design team with feedback and direct citizen input.
- Numerous stakeholder and focus group meetings, as well as individual and group discussions, were held at the Becker Morgan Group offices September 27, 2010 through September 29, 2010.
- An open house was held on September 29, 2010, at the Becker Morgan Group office. The design team presented its work from the previous three days, as well as preliminary neighborhood plan and development goals derived from feedback it received during stakeholder and roundtable discussions. The open house was well attended and community members provided additional feedback.
- A closing presentation was held on October 1, 2010 at the Eden Hill Medical Center conference room. The neighborhood vision plan, action plan framework, proposed urban design framework, opportunity plans and sites, demographic study, state capital comparison, and plan implementation recommendations were presented through a PowerPoint presentation and numerous large printed displays. The team held a question and answer session after the presentation to gain further feedback and public input.

The final component of the MPO's planning process will be to create a document that catalogs the work completed prior to and during the charrette in written and visual formats. This document will serve as a road map for downtown development and implementation of the vision plan, as well as a marketing tool to showcase the development potential of downtown Dover for private and public stakeholders.