



RESTORING CENTRAL DOVER



OUR VISION FOR VITALITY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RESTORING CENTRAL DOVER LEADERSHIP

The Restoring Central Dover Plan was made possible by generous funding from the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation, SPEER Trust, the City of Dover, NeighborWorks America, Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh, and NCALL Research, Inc. The plan process was led by NCALL Research, Inc. and a committed Steering Committee comprised of local stakeholders, elected officials, residents, and service providers.

PLANNING TEAM

INTERFACE STUDIO LLC

Scott Page, Principal
Leah Murphy, Principal
Rapheal Randall, Urban Designer

V LAMAR WILSON ASSOCIATES

Lamar Wilson, Principal

ABOUT NCALL

The National Council on Agricultural Life and Labor Research Fund, Inc. (NCALL), based in Dover, Delaware, was incorporated in 1955 and began providing housing development services in 1976; added homeownership education and counseling in 1989; became a U.S. Treasury-certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) in 2004 in order to provide housing and community facility lending; launched financial literacy training in 2005; added default & foreclosure prevention counseling at the end of 2007; and was selected as the Kent County partner for the \$tand by ME® financial coaching initiative in 2012 and became lead organization for the Restoring Central Dover planning initiative in 2013. NCALL has become a leader in affordable housing development and services in Delaware, creating affordable housing alternatives and helping families statewide to access and maintain homeownership.



www.ncall.org
(302) 678-9400
363 Saulsbury Road
Dover, DE 19904

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Debbie Armstrong, United Way
Paul Bernat, Dover Police Chief
Dianne Bogle, Capital School District
Justina Brewington, Dover Housing Authority
Shelly Cecchett, Greater Kent Committee
David Clendaniel, Dover Federal Credit Union
Susan Cooper, Dover Presbyterian Church
Elizabeth Daniels, Neighborhood Representative
Wallace Dixon, Dover City Council
Tenish Gregory, CenDel Foundation
Pastor Will Grimes, Solid Rock Baptist Church
Tracey Harvey, City of Dover, Planning and CDBG
Clay Hammond, Delmarva Black Chamber of Commerce
Kent Hurst, Wesley College
Chanda Jackson, Neighborhood Representative
Jeanine Kleimo, Dover Interfaith Mission for Housing
Herb Konowitz, Dover Interfaith Mission for Housing
Bishop Marion Lott, House of Pride
Mike Metzger, Bayhealth
Joe Myer, NCALL
Bill Neaton, City of Dover, Economic Development
Ed Perez, Downtown Dover Partnership
Maggie Pleasant, NCALL
Delcina Ramsey, Public Ally
Mary Reed, Dover Presbyterian Church
Ida Rios, Neighborhood Representative
Michael Rogers, Interdenominational Ministerial Association
Reuben Salters, Inner City Cultural League
Ami Sebastian-Hauer, Dover Housing Authority
Pauline Smith, Neighborhood Representative
Karen Speakman, NCALL
Roy Sudler, Neighborhood Representative
Jocelyn Tice, Central Delaware Habitat for Humanity
Ann Marie Townshend, City of Dover, Planning and CDBG
Amy Yarnell, Wesley United Methodist Church

Restoring Central Dover, “Our Vision for Vitality,” is an initiative that grew out of the CenDel Foundation’s Safety Task Force and broadened into a community wide effort to work at revitalization planning for central Dover. The planning process has been amazing and very engaging. Thank you to Steering Committee members who invested so much time, energy, and enthusiasm throughout the past year and worked through the thoughtful and exciting recommendations herein. Thank you to Interface Studio for your expertise and guidance in crafting this creative blueprint. Thank you to residents who assisted with the community survey, attended the Community Leadership Institute, helped organize block parties, and put their heart into this effort.

This plan looks at affordable housing, business development, strong community, and infrastructure needs for central Dover to become a vibrant business corridor and community as our State Capital.

The plan is meant to be a living document that guides our implementation steps both now and years to come. No doubt there will be changes and modifications as efforts evolve, as new partnerships and collaboration takes place, and as new funding becomes available. The recommendations within this plan will be evaluated regularly with the goal of making them even more applicable and achievable.

With the completion of this plan, Restoring Central Dover will transition into the implementation phase. Central Dover has a wealth of assets and some very real needs. We believe this plan will enable central Dover to become even a more wonderful place to live, work and play.

As you view this plan and its vision, please think about what role you might play to make it a reality, whether it be your leadership, support, or funding.

Sincerely,

Joe L. Myer, Chair
Restoring Central Dover



INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

In 2013, a “Central Dover Neighborhood Planning” collaboration was convened between NCALL, the CenDel Foundation/Greater Kent Committee, Dover Interfaith Mission for Housing, and the City of Dover (including the Downtown Dover Partnership and Dover Police Department) to address the high-priority needs of low-income Central Dover residents with the goal of achieving long-term benefits by way of affordable housing, neighborhood safety and desirability, opportunities for economic growth, and essential services for children and families. With generous support from the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation and other sources, NCALL and its partners initiated the Restoring Central Dover planning process and recruited a steering committee comprised of local stakeholders, elected officials, residents, and service providers to lead a community-driven vision with the goal of ultimately establishing a solid community infrastructure that will result in long-term and successful revitalization and meaningful opportunities for residents.

Over the course of the year-long process, concerned residents, community groups, neighborhood-based institutions, city representatives, and local businesses were engaged in generating ideas for a better community and the ways in which we can all help to achieve that vision together. As this vision began to take shape, plan leadership recognized the need for this initiative to focus on where efforts should be placed within the next five years to establish a foundation for longer-term positive change. With an eye towards truly Restoring Central Dover, this plan is centered on short-term incremental strategies founded on the idea that revitalization is about reinvesting in both people and in place. This plan is intended to:

- Empower community members as agents of change in Central Dover
- Strengthen neighborhood streets and expand affordable housing options
- Raise the profile of Central Dover to attract new residents, businesses, and investment
- Expand economic opportunity and ensure that the revitalization of Central Dover benefits all residents



CENTRAL DOVER

PLAN AREA

THE PLAN AREA IS MADE UP OF **75** BLOCKS WHICH IS APPROXIMATELY **393** ACRES IN SIZE

01 Restoring Central Dover planning area

- Bring resources to support the needs of disadvantaged residents and families
- Revitalize Loockerman Street as a vibrant commercial corridor and asset to adjacent neighborhoods
- Coordinate the efforts of the city, nonprofit organizations, churches and residents to make the most of resources
- Assure informed funding decisions and secure resources for neighborhood investments

This document represents extensive hours of work volunteered by the many residents, stakeholders, and local leaders dedicated to envisioning a path towards Restoring Central Dover. The planning process itself was a critical step towards plan implementation, as the members of the plan's leadership recognize that they will be agents of change in Central Dover and will continue to collaborate in realizing the goals and objectives outlined in this plan.

PLANNING CONTEXT

A number of planning initiatives have been completed or are currently underway in and around Central Dover that have helped and will continue to help guide the City and local partners in bringing about positive change. This plan seeks to reinforce and incorporate the results of these prior planning efforts while providing an overarching vision for Central Dover coordinated with ongoing planning processes. Each of the following plans provided valuable insight and direction to the development of these recommendations.

COORDINATION WITH ONGOING INITIATIVES:

It is important to realize that Restoring Central Dover is one among multiple initiatives currently underway that will bear great relevance to implementation efforts emerging from this process. Part of the mandate for this plan is to ensure active coordination with these other activities:

> CITY OF DOVER BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLANS

During the Restoring Central Dover planning process, the City of Dover, the Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization, and the Delaware Department of Transportation released drafts of updates to the City's bicycle and pedestrian plans. The community expressed great interest in addressing a range of mobility issues as a part of Restoring Central Dover, and the feedback and recommendations put forth in this document are intended to serve to further inform the City's efforts to plan for improving alternative transportation in Central Dover.

> CITY OF DOVER CDBG ACTION PLAN

Since the City of Dover became an entitlement community to receive CDBG funding in 1995 to present, there has always been an emphasis in the city's annual plan to address the needs in the Downtown Target Area. The top priorities that were determined by the stakeholders in the community were: housing needs, infrastructure needs, public service needs, homeless needs and public facility needs. As a result of the needs determined in the city by the stakeholders, several homes

in the target area have been brought up to housing code through the homeowner rehabilitation program.

The City of Dover's Comprehensive Plan and annual CDBG Action Plan have led to an increased emphasis on building codes and their enforcement, resulting in the demolition of several dilapidated properties, the construction of some new buildings (including affordable apartments) in the business district, and the upgrading or renovation of other properties. To a great extent, the success of Restoring Central Dover will rely upon close coordination with the City's own ongoing planning initiatives and allocation of resources.

> ECONOMIC INCLUSION STUDY OF DOVER

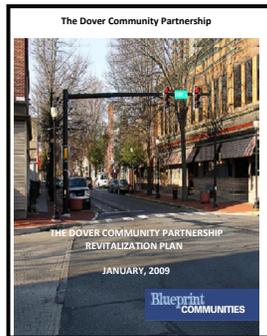
Commissioned by the DelMarVa Black Chamber of Commerce (DBCC), the City-funded Economic Inclusion Study of Dover is currently underway and is modeled off of a similar analysis of Pittsburgh, PA concluding that, among other contributing factors, racial equity and inclusion are cornerstones of sustained development and successful, healthy economies for that particular region. The Restoring Central Dover plan and the prospects of it leveraging public and private resources present a unique opportunity to advance both agendas by linking economic inclusion as a policy and practice with community revitalization as a goal.

FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

As demonstrated above, there is a lot of ongoing planning work intended to bring local partners together and improve Central Dover. To be truly effective, this work must also build upon the foundation set by the plans and strategies that have come before. These include:

> DOVER TRANSIT CENTER NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN AND DESIGN BOOK (JAN 2011)

The Dover Transit Center Neighborhood Plan and Design Book provided the City of Dover with a design and planning strategy to guide development around the new Dover Transit Center and to improve transportation infrastructure in Central Dover. The planning area included a portion of the Restoring Central Dover boundary south of Loockerman to South Street. The plan was focused primarily on long-term physical development scenarios and is considered an important companion piece to Restoring Central Dover, which is centered on what needs to happen in the short term in order to position Central Dover for longer-term investment and positive change.



> DOVER COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP REVITALIZATION PLAN (JAN 2009)

The Dover Housing Authority formed the Dover Community Partnership in 2003 to address concentrated poverty and housing issues. The general consensus was that the homeownership rate and economic opportunities in the area were poor and an initiative was needed to address the issues. The resulting Dover Community Partnership Revitalization Plan [covering a 20-block area now within the Restoring Central Dover boundary and comprising about 12% of this effort's planning area] set forth a set of strategies geared toward:

- Creating a safe environment for current and future residents to live, work, and play.
- Providing a range of housing opportunities that address the needs of the homeless to homeowners. Special care will be taken to ensure that housing initiatives do not displace current residents but instead enhance their living conditions.
- Supporting the efforts of the Downtown Dover Partnership to promote the public welfare of the residents of the City of Dover via the development of the economic, cultural and historic resources of the downtown area.

These objectives were considered a jumping off point for Restoring Central Dover, the outcomes of which harmonize well with this previous effort. The overlap in leadership between the Dover Community Partnership and the Restoring Central Dover steering committee, as well as the synergies between the two efforts, should capitalize on opportunities to collaborate in bringing needed resources to the Central Dover community.

PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process was designed to be both data-driven and people-driven. This required us to:

LISTEN through a variety of Community Outreach & Engagement activities—a key component of the plan and the basis for the recommendations.

COLLECT & ANALYZE DATA to provide a comprehensive picture of the challenges Central Dover faces today.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Restoring Central Dover: Our Vision for Vitality was conceived as a true, community-driven plan that will serve as a unified voice for local residents, business owners, institutions, youth, community leaders, and political representatives, among others. As such, the planning process was designed to not only engage the public, but also help to build a sense of community among the area's diverse constituency.

To create a plan grounded in the realities of Central Dover requires an open and ongoing public dialog. The process informed and brainstormed with residents and stakeholders using a range of outreach tools including:

Monthly Steering Committee meetings conducted throughout the process brought together stakeholders to guide all aspects of the project. The Steering Committee is comprised of local residents, community leaders, elected officials, and representatives from local institutions.

Ten confidential **one-on-one interviews** with a sample of residents, community leaders, business owners, service providers, and City officials.

Three **focus groups** to discuss unique concerns and perspectives regarding the future of Central Dover. The focus groups brought together leaders of the faith-based community, social service providers, and representatives of the business community to discuss their perspectives and ideas for Central Dover.

An **interactive open house** to publicly launch the plan and invite community members in to provide their opinions on the community. At the beginning of May 2014, the open house utilized the 1st floor community room of Bayard Plaza on Lookerman Street and was open seven times

over the course of nine days. The planning team created temporary window installations on both sides of Loockerman to draw attention to the open house and filled the interior with information, a photo suggestion booth and other exercises designed to get residents thinking creatively. At least 177 residents participated in this event. The input provided by residents at the open house led to many of the strategies in this plan.

A number of **collaborative maps** were used to help residents pinpoint specifically where they had concerns about their community. A large-scale collaborative map was used in the open house that asked residents to identify mode-specific transportation issues. Residents were also engaged in public realm mapping to identify hotspots for crime, illegal dumping, poor lighting and flooding.

A **“do-it-yourself” budget** exercise at the open house allowed participants to allocate play money in multiple denominations to piggy banks representing general budget categories, such as “transportation networks” and “housing and neighborhoods.”

Community members wrote their big ideas for Central Dover on a dry erase board, which they posed next to for a snapshot in the **“photo suggestion booth”** at the open house.

A **resident perception survey** to collect the perceptions and concerns of residents across all of the Central Dover neighborhoods. Community volunteers that administered the survey received 224 completed surveys representing 18% of households in Central Dover.

Following the open house, a final **public meeting** was held in July 2014 to allow the community to review preliminary recommendations and participate in an exercise designed to set priorities among the range of ideas presented to determine where limited funds and resources should be directed.



PUTTING THE PLAN TOGETHER

To understand the underlying trends and socio-economic characteristics of Central Dover, the planning team utilized The Reinvestment Fund's [TRF] Policy Map data sets. This data on population, race, income, housing and other aspects of the community was augmented where necessary with other US Census information, parcel data provided by the City of Dover, Dover Police Department crime data, and other datasets.

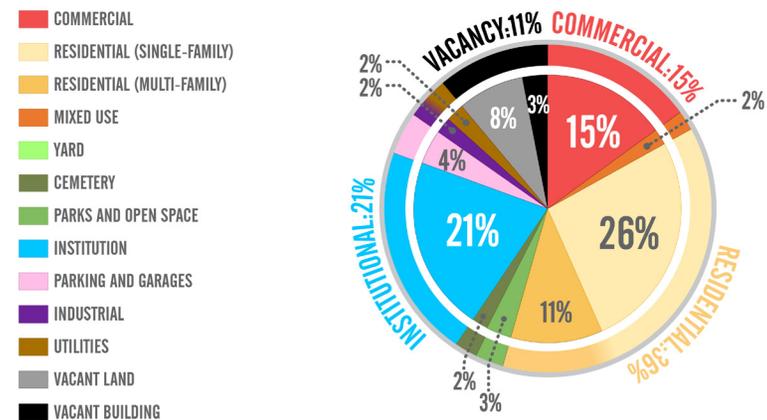
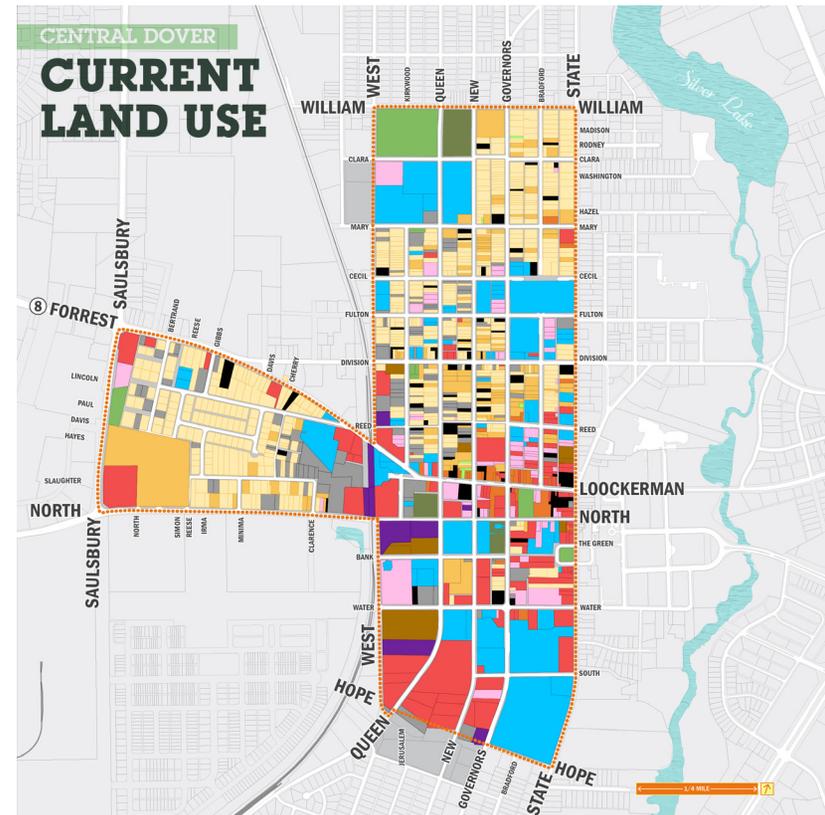
In addition to the base data described above, the planning team conducted a parcel by parcel survey of every property in the Central Dover study area. The survey collected detailed information on each property, including land use and condition but also recorded physical observations regarding housing, businesses, parks, roads, maintenance, safety, and so on.

The planning process consisted of three phases:

1. RESEARCH & EXISTING CONDITIONS

During the first phase of work, which was defined by research and data collection, the planning team explored and documented the physical and economic conditions in Central Dover through:

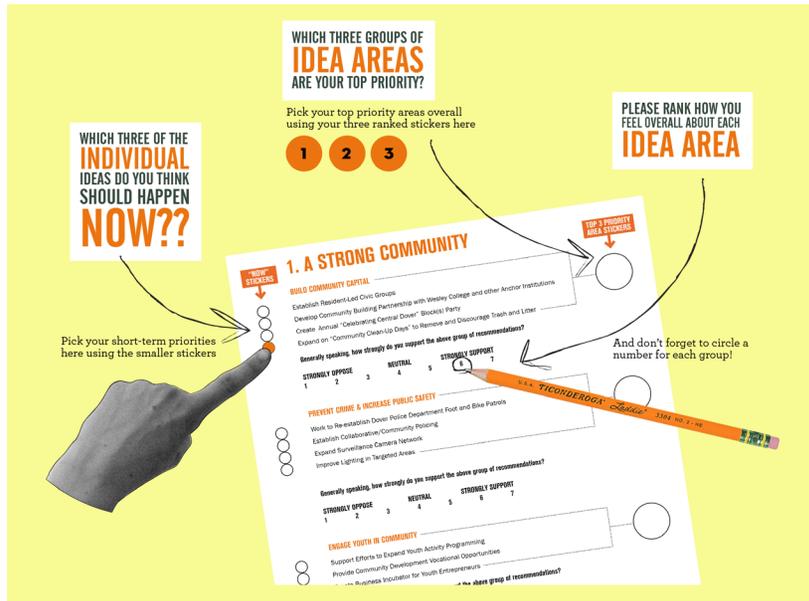
- > A GIS parcel by parcel mapping of land use, building condition and vacancy data to create an up-to-date land use map
- > An in-depth examination of the physical environment to assess the existing commercial and retail mix, the quality of the natural environment, local traffic and circulation patterns, the transit system, and pedestrian / bicycling amenities
- > Research using Policy Map and the Census to evaluate demographic and socioeconomic changes within the community over time
- > A review of existing planning documents whose boundaries overlap with those of the study area
- > The launch of a public outreach initiative beginning with the door-to-door resident survey and followed by the public open house designed to get a handle on the qualitative aspects of the neighborhood
- > The facilitated discussion of specific concerns raised during the process to date over a series of three focus groups
- > A series of one-on-one interviews to review our work and discuss possible solutions with key stakeholders and funders
- > Processing the information collected during the analysis to identify opportunities and challenges for the future of Central Dover
- > Review of this information by the Steering Committee



02 Land use survey map and breakdown

Existing land use was one of the data points collected during the parcel-by-parcel physical survey conducted during Phase I of Restoring Central Dover.

SOURCE: Field survey, Nov 2013 - Jan 2014



2. PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

During the second phase of the process, the planning team worked closely with community partners to develop well-tailored recommendations in response to the research findings and community input collected in Phase I. Phase II resulted in:

- A list of goals and objectives based upon public input
- A series of preliminary recommendations for achieving such goals and balancing observed trends and projections with desired outcomes
- Presenting the preliminary recommendations to the community for feedback and critique at a public meeting, along with a prioritizing exercise



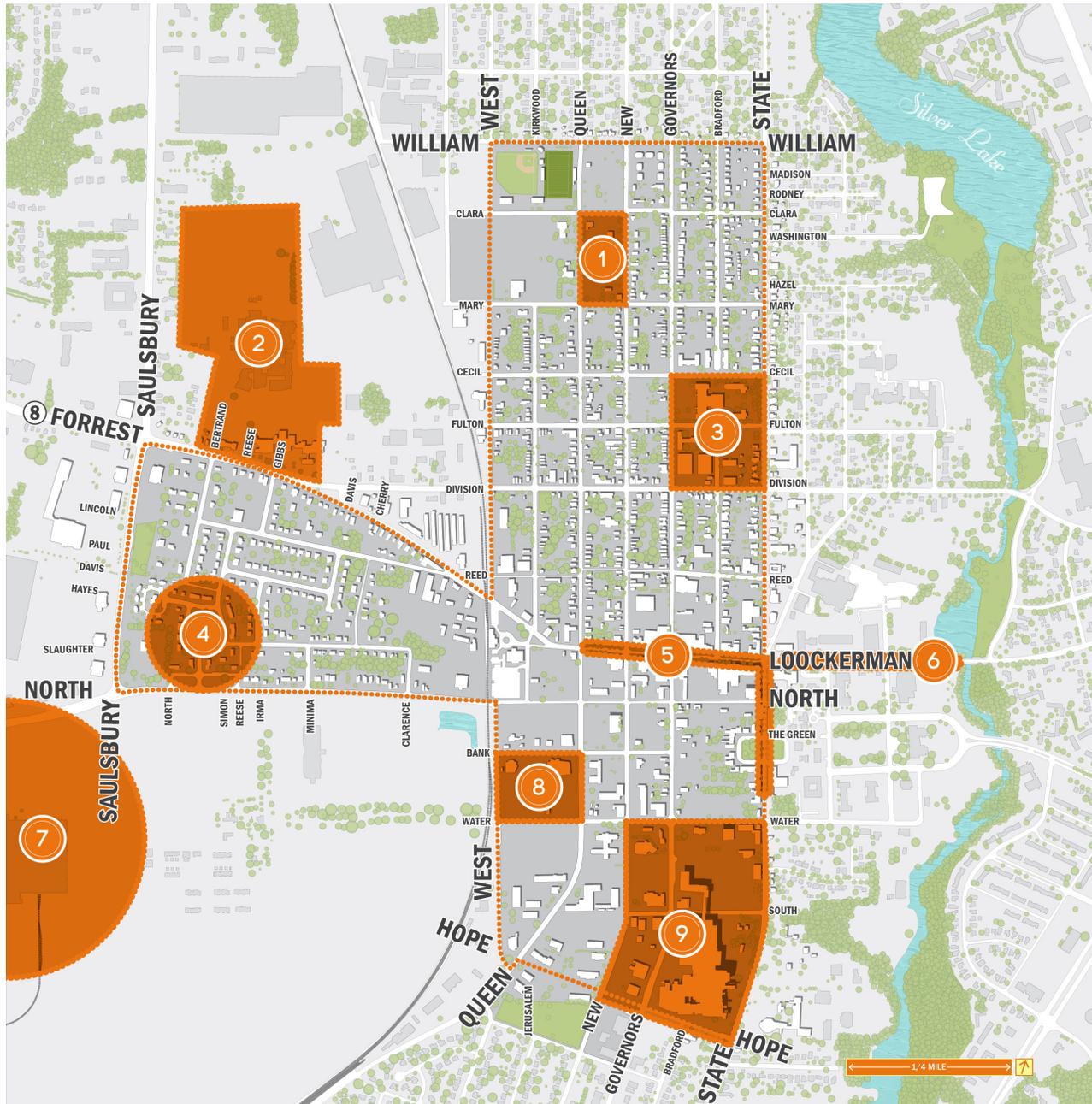
3. FINAL MASTER PLAN

During the third phase of work, the planning team refined the recommendations, incorporating the input collected from members of the Steering Committee and the general public at the end of Phase II. The analysis and revised implementation recommendations are packaged together in this report to guide the next steps in coming weeks, months, and years.

The Central Dover area, its network of involved neighborhood institutions and leaders, and all interested community members will assume responsibility for the revitalization plan, its acceptance by the City of Dover, and its implementation.

CENTRAL DOVER

AREAS OF INTEREST



- 1 FLEMING GOODWIN UNITED STATES RESERVES CENTER
- 2 BOOKER T WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY AND WILLIAM HENRY MIDDLE SCHOOL
- 3 WESLEY COLLEGE
- 4 SIMON CIRCLE PUBLIC HOUSING
- 5 LOOCKERMAN CORRIDOR & THE GREEN
- 6 GOVERNMENTAL CORRIDOR
- 7 KRAFT FOODS
- 8 DOVER POLICE DEPARTMENT & JUSTICE OF THE PEACE
- 9 BAYHEALTH MEDICAL CENTER & MEDICAL OFFICES

SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY (NOVEMBER 2013 - JANUARY 2014)

03 Central Dover Landmarks
 SOURCE: Field survey, Nov 2013 - Jan 2014

A SNAPSHOT OF CENTRAL DOVER

WELCOME TO CENTRAL DOVER

Dover, the capital city of the first state, is centered on the area referred to as Central Dover, comprised of a number of distinct areas clustered around the historic Loockerman Street commercial corridor. Let's start off by getting our bearings in Central Dover:

Loockerman, once a thriving traditional main street [A], is anchored by Dover City Hall and the Dover Library on the east end and a recent commercial development at the west end, where Loockerman connects to Route 8 (an important gateway to Central Dover) via Forrest Street. The corridor features primarily two and three-story historic buildings [B], some with active ground floor commercial uses, but some with vacant storefronts.

The Wesley College campus [C], which serves about 2,500 students, is located just north of the Loockerman corridor. The campus is surrounded by residential blocks featuring larger houses (some which have been converted to office uses) with predominantly well maintained historic architecture [D].

Just north of Loockerman between Governors Avenue and West Street lay a few blocks of distressed residential streets with concentrated vacancy

and below average building conditions [E]. This area has been targeted by the city in recent years to bring housing up to code and demolish hazardous structures.

The Norfolk Southern rail line divides the Dover Housing Authority's Simon Circle and Lincoln Park neighborhoods and surrounding primarily residential streets to the west.

The Green, a historic park located in the old downtown Dover area, was during colonial times a center of civic life and activity, and is now used for large scale events. 79 historic buildings contribute to the Dover Green Historic District—many of these buildings are now being used for law, finance, and other professional offices [F].

The Southern portion of the study area is defined by a number of large footprint public, government and medical uses such as Bayhealth [G], as well as senior housing and commercial offices. The block structure results in a much looser urban fabric, in contrast to the more pedestrian-friendly scale found north of Loockerman. This area is a significant center of employment in Dover, but feels physically disconnected from Loockerman and adjacent neighborhoods.

[A]



[B]



[C]



[D]



[E]



[F]



[G]



EXISTING CONDITIONS TAKE-AWAYS

The analysis of existing conditions conducted in Phase I of Restoring Central Dover led to some important conclusions that formed the basis, along with community input, for the drafting of recommendations. The broad stroke highlights of the opportunities and challenges among these follow. More detail can be found in the full plan.

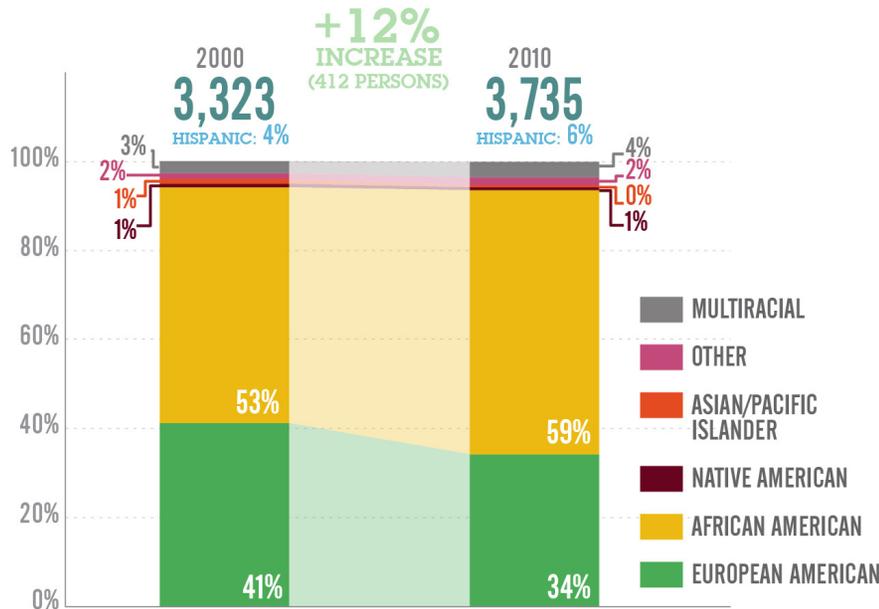
POPULATION DYNAMICS IN CONTEXT

Central Dover is predominantly African American (59%), with the number of African American residents increasing by 6% between 2000 and 2010. The 12% increase in population overall in Central Dover [Fig 04] is on par with the City of Dover's 14% increase; but the population of Kent County increased 28% over the same period, far outpacing local growth. The rate of population growth in the Central Dover area continues to decline relative to the rates in other areas in the City and County. As long-term

vitality relies on short-term stabilization of deteriorated blocks, strategies to **retain existing residents as well as attract new neighbors** should be a priority of Restoring Central Dover.

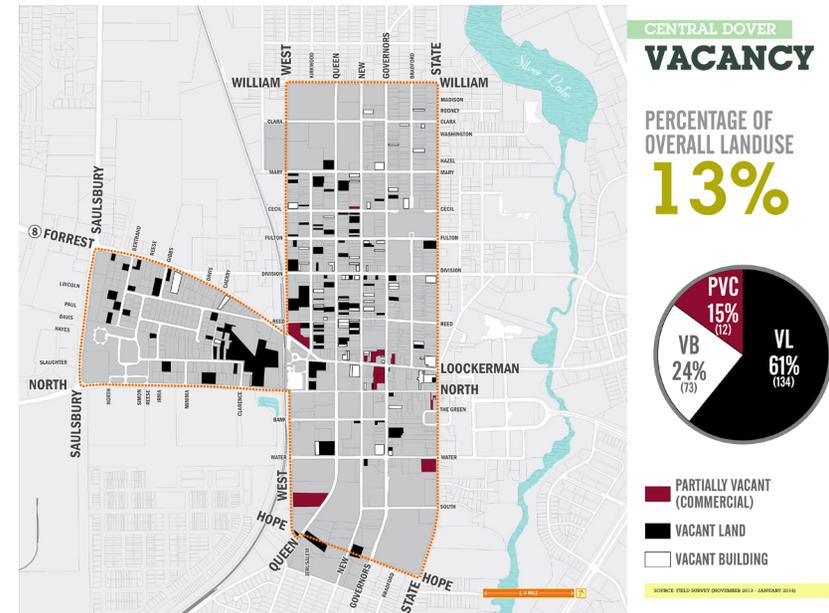
VACANCY

There has been comparatively modest population growth and vacancy remains a challenge in Central Dover. As an overall percentage of parcel area, vacant land and buildings comprise 13% of Central Dover. The aggregated area of vacant land in Central Dover is equal to 25 football fields. The effects of vacancy impact perception and can hinder reinvestment, especially when concentrated on individual blocks [Fig 05]. At the same time, these clusters of vacancy are also **opportunities for infill development**.



04 Change in population and racial breakdown, 2000-2010

SOURCE: 2000 & 2010 US Census



05 Map of vacant land and buildings

SOURCE: Field survey, Nov 2013 - Jan 2014

BUILDING CONDITIONS

The parcel survey included rating buildings on a scale according to their apparent condition as observed from the street, with an “A” rating given to buildings in “Excellent” condition, through an “F” rating given to buildings in “Very Poor” condition [Fig 07]. Some patterns emerge in concentrations of buildings in below average condition relative to the study area overall [Fig 06], which coincide with concentrations of vacant buildings and land. These distressed residential streets speak to the need not only for infill development, but **targeted home repair assistance to preserve existing housing stock** where possible.

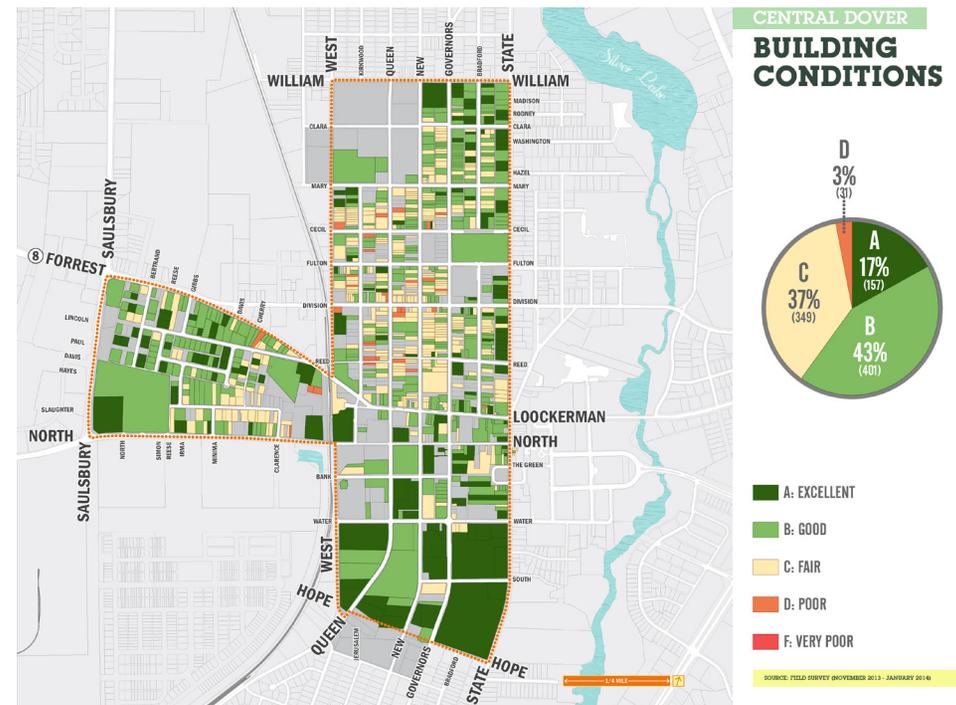
COMMERCIAL SERVICES

Though the land use survey counted a number of commercial uses in the study area, most of them are concentrated in the southern end and are offices and other commercial typologies that don’t serve the daily needs of Central Dover’s residents. Local residents typically travel outside of Central Dover to more suburban/auto-oriented commercial developments situated along Route 13 or Route 8. For existing residents without a car, this is a significant distance to travel to access services and goods or retail jobs.

The Lockerman commercial corridor is an opportunity to **bring commercial services within walking distance** of Central Dover residential neighborhoods. However, the challenges to overcome in revitalizing the corridor include perception of safety, high vacancy and tenant turnover rates, and a lack of readily leasable spaces due to deferred maintenance and lack of property owner resources to rehabilitate properties.



Bayard Plaza, a recent mixed use development on Lockerman Street



06 Surveyed building conditions

It should be noted that because the building condition survey typically relies on judgments based only on what is visible from the street, it is fair to say that the survey results overestimate the condition of buildings, as defects on the sides and rears of buildings are often not visible.
 SOURCE: Field survey, Nov 2013 - Jan 2014



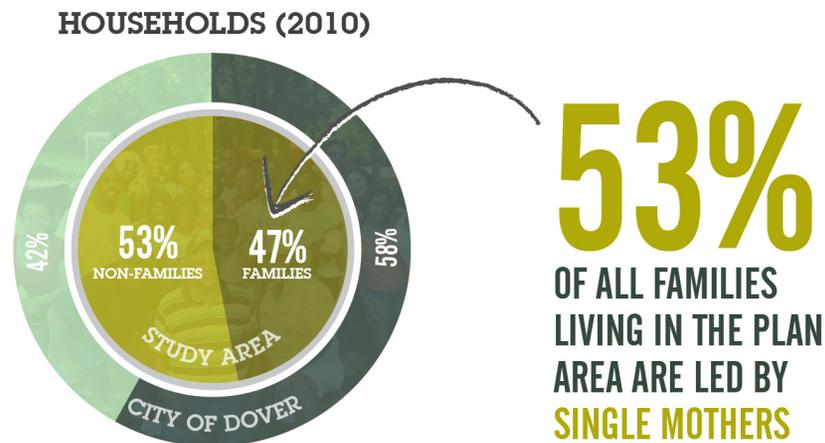
07 Building condition ratings criteria

SOURCE: Field survey, Nov 2013 - Jan 2014

Capitalizing on housing development opportunities on or within walking distance of Loockerman would help change perception of this struggling commercial corridor, as well as bring a denser customer base to support commercial revitalization. Recent developments along Loockerman, such as the large new office building at the west Loockerman gateway, the mixed use development at Bayard Plaza, and the recruitment of The Delaware EZ-Pass Customer Service Center and Division of Motor Vehicles Call Center, can be leveraged to continue to **build momentum and critical mass along Loockerman**.

SOCIOECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Some Central Dover residents have faced disadvantages in life that have placed them at the margins. The area's weighted average median income, \$34,730 is 27% lower than the City of Dover's \$47,754. More than half of families in Central Dover are headed by a single female householder [Fig 08], compared to one in three families with single female householders city-wide. Many Central Dover residents face considerable housing cost burdens, with a significant portion of the study area showing 81% or more of renters paying more than 30% of their income towards gross rent [Fig



08 Household characteristics

The concentrated college student population is classified in the "non-family" group by the Census, which likely explains why the non-family share in Central Dover is 11% higher than that of the City of Dover. The rate of 53% of families being headed by single female householders refers only to the 47% of households that are considered a "family" and does not include students.

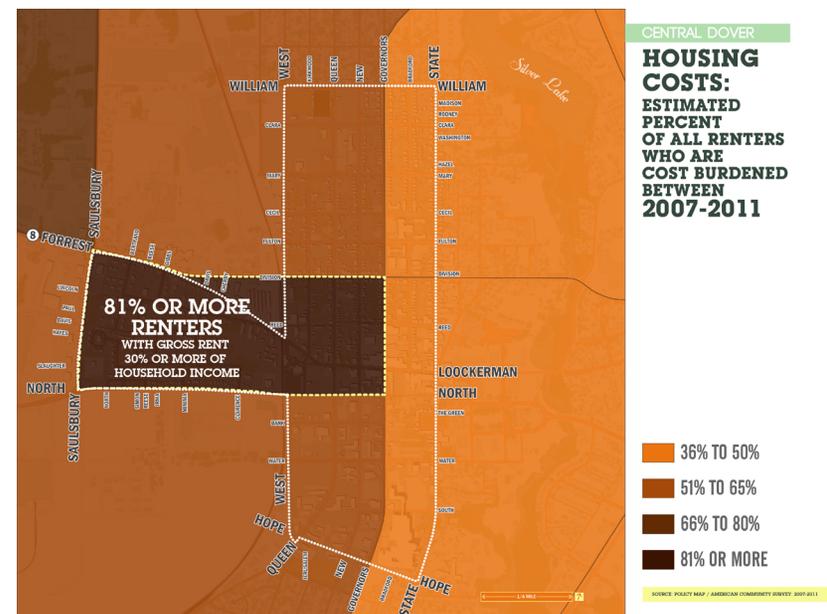
SOURCE: 2010 US Census

09]. The **preservation of and increased access to affordable housing** will be key to providing housing opportunities to Central Dover residents.

Add to those factors a high unemployment rate [10% in 2010] and lower educational attainment levels, and it becomes clear that many members of the Central Dover community face a number of challenges that will require the **continued expansion of local services to meet the needs of residents**.

CRIME AND PERCEPTION OF SAFETY

One of the most prominent major quality of life issues that arose in community discussions during the Restoring Central Dover process—and one that impacts efforts to retain residents and businesses as well as



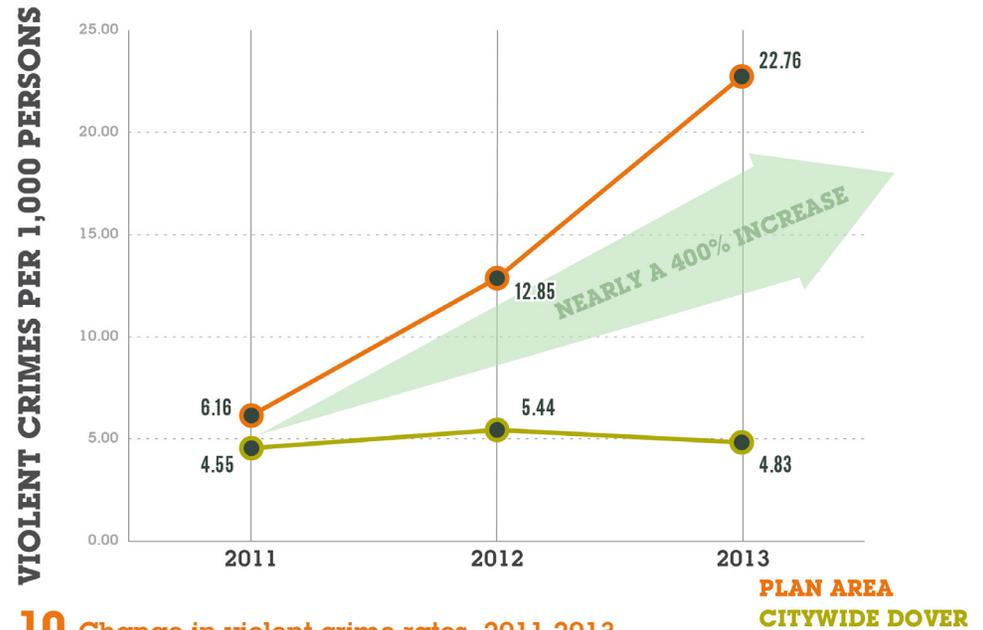
09 Percent cost-burdened renters

Percent of renter households for whom gross rent is 30% or more of household income. Gross rent is the contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities.

SOURCE: American Community Survey, 2007-2011

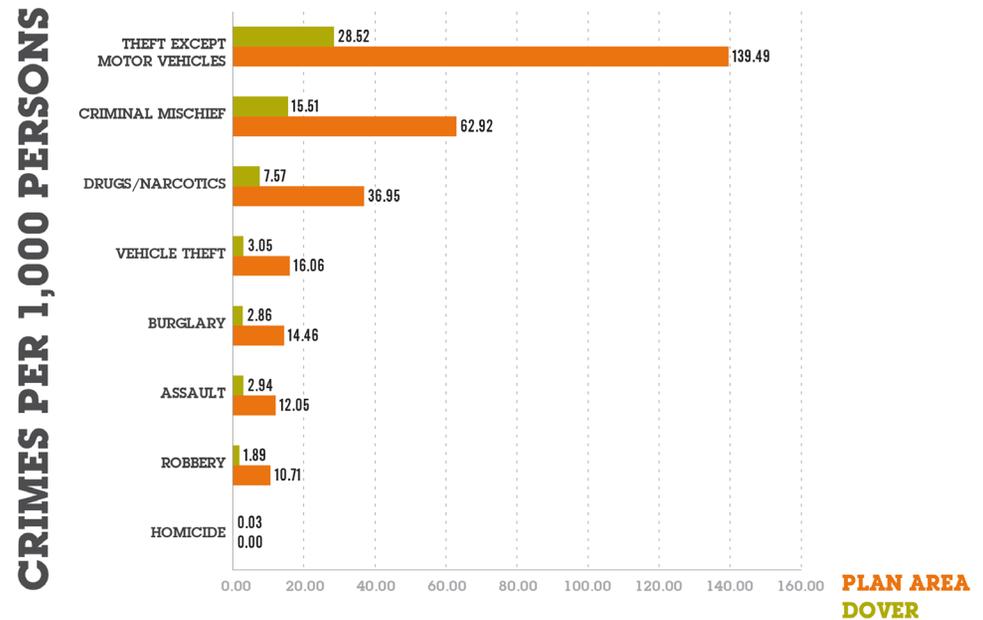
attract new ones—was crime and perception of safety. When asked what they liked least about Central Dover, 42% of resident survey participants identified “Safety in the community,” which received the greatest number of “least liked” responses by a margin of 12%.

Crime data from the Dover Police Department shows that the number of violent crimes per 1,000 persons in the Central Dover area rose from 6.16 per person in 2011, to 22.76 per person in 2013, a nearly 400% increase over a three year period [Fig 10]. In 2013 alone, nearly all forms of reported crimes in the plan were 3- to 5-times that of Dover overall [Fig 11]. These figures were alarming to the Central Dover community and plan leadership, and indicates a clear need to bring more resources to **ensure the safety of the Central Dover community.**



10 Change in violent crime rates, 2011-2013

SOURCE: Field survey, Nov 2013 - Jan 2014



11 2013 Crime rate breakdown: Central Dover and City-wide

SOURCE: Field survey, Nov 2013 - Jan 2014

OUR VISION FOR VITALITY

This plan represents our community's vision for restoring the vitality of Central Dover. It offers a range of achievable strategies, implemented over a five year period, designed to lay the foundation for future opportunities to fully realize Central Dover's potential as a place to live, work, and play.

GOAL AREAS

A range of strategies towards achieving our vision for vitality are organized in three goal areas designed to achieve:

- 1. A STRONG COMMUNITY**
- 2. POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT**
- 3. AN INTEGRATED PUBLIC REALM AND INFRASTRUCTURE**



A STRONG COMMUNITY

01

BUILD COMMUNITY CAPITAL

Community support is critical to implementing the goals of this plan. Working to strengthen community cohesion through the cultivation of neighborhood groups will not only provide spaces for residents to enjoy each other's company as well as address issues collectively. It will also encourage them to root themselves in Central Dover, as well as attract new residents looking for a deeper sense of community.

ESTABLISH RESIDENT-LED CIVIC GROUPS

SHORT TERM

Initial Action Steps: Determine existing groups, organize leadership, hold meetings, and develop leadership.

DEVELOP COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP WITH ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS

SHORT TERM

Initial Action Steps: Overtures to Wesley and Bayhealth; Discussions with Wesley about their Strategic Plan and BayHealth on their Community Impact Plan; Implement community building partnership.

CREATE ANNUAL "CELEBRATING CENTRAL DOVER" BLOCK PARTY

SHORT TERM/ANNUALLY

Initial Action Steps: Develop timeframe fall or spring; Assemble partners and sponsors; Plan and hold event.

EXPAND ON "COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP DAYS"

SHORT TERM

Initial Action Steps: Convene prior partners; Envision new plan going forward and hold events.

DEVELOP AND DISTRIBUTE COMMUNITY CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

SHORT TERM

Initial Action Steps: Assemble dates, publish and distribute.

EVALUATE LEVEL OF ACCESS TO COMMUNITY FACILITIES FOR SERVICES

INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Create inventory of existing facilities; Evaluate current usage and determine areas where needs are not being met by existing facilities.

DEVELOP COMMUNITY FACILITIES FOR SERVICES

LONG TERM

Initial Action Steps: Explore the development of community facilities as community social service needs are identified; Predevelopment and feasibility work leading to development phase; Construction of Community Facilities.

02

INCREASE PUBLIC SAFETY

Expanding efforts to make an at-risk community safe is imperative for any neighborhood revitalization initiative. Without a viable plan for reducing crime, attempts to attract investment, businesses, and new residents can be inhibited or even rendered impossible. Reducing illicit activities in Central Dover will greatly benefit current residents and improve efforts to attract investment, businesses, and new residents.

ESTABLISH COLLABORATIVE/COMMUNITY POLICING

SHORT TERM

Initial Action Steps: Form citizen oversight committee on community policing; Create neighborhood watch network.

DEPLOY POLICE FOOT AND BIKE PATROLS

SHORT TERM/ON-GOING

Initial Action Steps: Convene meeting to discuss options with partners; Develop action plan and seek funding and deploy.

EXPAND SURVEILLANCE CAMERA NETWORK

INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Cost estimate for expanded system; Seek community buy-in; Seek funding for expanded surveillance cameras.

IMPROVE LIGHTING IN TARGETED AREAS

INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Research and develop scenarios for resident assisted porch lighting program; Work with Sustainable Energy Utilities and install street lighting in poorly lit areas.



03

ENGAGE YOUTH IN COMMUNITY

Finding ways to involve youth in the revitalization and stewardship of Central Dover will not only provide activities for young people to take part in or simply provide employment opportunities. This will help reinforce the need for their active participation in shaping their community and keep them accountable to sustaining it and protecting Central Dover's vitality.

SUSTAIN AND EXPAND YOUTH PROGRAMMING

SHORT TERM

Initial Action Steps: Evaluate existing youth programming level of service; Seek resources to expand programming where needed.

ESTABLISH POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE

SHORT TERM

Initial Action Steps: Dover Police Department is planning to establish PAL; Market PAL to community; Implement the program.

CREATE YOUTH OUTREACH AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT CENTER

SHORT TERM/INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Complete construction of facilities; Develop programming and curriculum; Examine access to broader community recreational assets and improve transportation to these assets for youth in Central Dover.

PROVIDE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT VOCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Examine Youth Build or similar programs for feasibility; Develop intern and mentoring opportunities in year 3, 4 and 5.



04

EXPAND ADULT AND FAMILY SERVICES

Restoring Central Dover must include strengthening support for residents who live on the margins by providing opportunities for them to actively pursue improving their employment situations. According to the American Community Survey, approximately 46% of Central Dover households earn less than \$30,000 annually.

STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING AND RELATED SERVICES

INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Target housing towards families with children; Convene partners and develop plan; Develop housing.

ESTABLISH A FAMILY SERVICES COLLABORATIVE

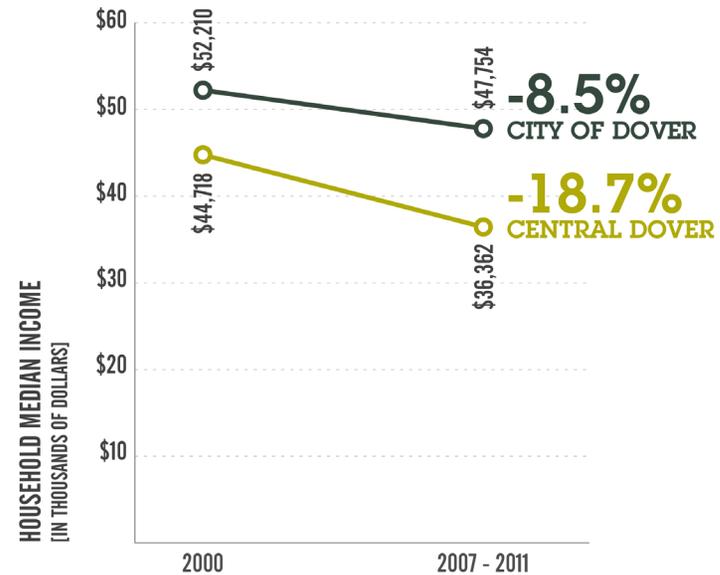
SHORT TERM

Initial Action Steps: Steering Committee facilitate initial meetings; Collaborative then establishes its ongoing agenda.

EXPAND FINANCIAL EDUCATION AND HOUSING COUNSELING SERVICES

SHORT TERM/ON-GOING

Initial Action Steps: Strategize ways to engage the community residents; Identify site for workshops in the plan area; Refer to NCALL's on-going programs.



CHANGE IN MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Change in median household income

SOURCE: 2000 U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2007 - 2011

EXIT

SECTION





POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT

05

STRENGTHEN EXISTING HOUSING

Neighborhood building conditions shape perception of neighborhood character and potential. Distressed buildings falling into disrepair, especially when concentrated, can make streets appear unsafe, deterring new residents and investors. Developing strategies to help maintain and improve housing stock is essential to ensuring long-term neighborhood vitality and encouraging reinvestment in Central Dover.

EXPAND ACCESS TO HOUSING REPAIR PROGRAMS

SHORT TERM/INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Examine recent repair program statistics to assess impact program is making in Central Dover and expand outreach to homeowners; Meet with partners to determine plan to serve Central Dover and implement; Provide educational resources and training for homeowners in rehabilitation techniques, homeownership responsibilities, and financial management; Consider allowing first time buyers to utilize repair funds when purchasing in Central Dover.

INITIATE VOLUNTEER-BASED NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING REPAIR ORGANIZATION

INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Meet with potential partners to determine plan for going forward and implement.

STRENGTHEN CODE ENFORCEMENT

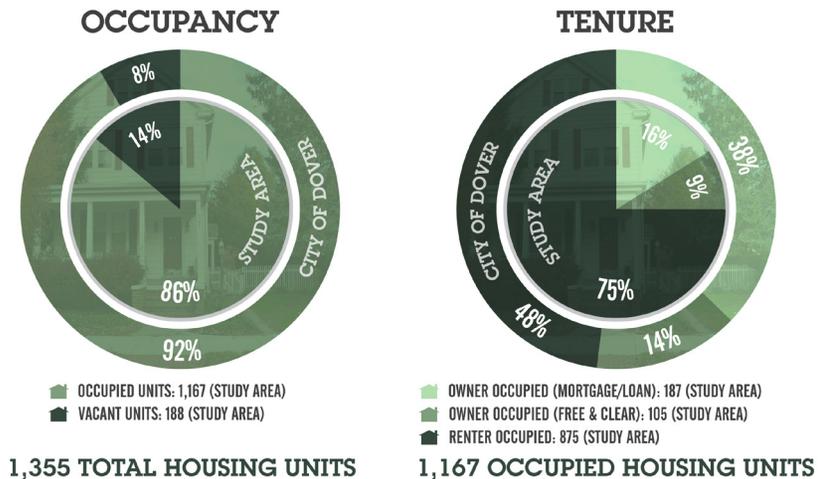
SHORT TERM

Initial Action Steps: Work with city to engage an independent consulting firm to assess department efficiency and identify areas for improvement; Work with homeowners and landlords to provide education and financial incentives to maintain housing units; City will be notified by DHA and DSHA when a housing unit or property fails a Section 8/Voucher housing inspection.

EXPLORE WAYS TO BOOST HOMEOWNERSHIP

SHORT TERM/INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Bringing together all parties to brainstorm on methods of boosting homeownership such as employer assisted housing, incentives, and education and come up with an implementation plan; Recruit from existing renters and workers commuting to Central Dover and provide homebuying education and financial incentives.



Housing occupancy and tenure

SOURCE: 2010 U.S. Census, 2007-2011 American Community Survey

06

SUPPORT NEW DEVELOPMENT

The Central Dover area has enough vacant land to comprise 25 football fields. Opportunities for residential and commercial development in the plan area are considerable. Removing certain regulatory and property acquisition barriers to development may encourage infill construction.

ENCOURAGE GREATER ZONING FLEXIBILITY TO ENABLE INFILL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

SHORT TERM

Initial Action Steps: Develop zoning overlay for Downtown Redevelopment District to allow condominiums and townhouse styles; Allow some flexibility in setbacks and block standards for architectural and design elements that complement area; Engage neighborhood residents to share ideas for design and neighborhood standards in Central Dover.

FACILITATE PARCEL ASSEMBLY AND REDEVELOPMENT

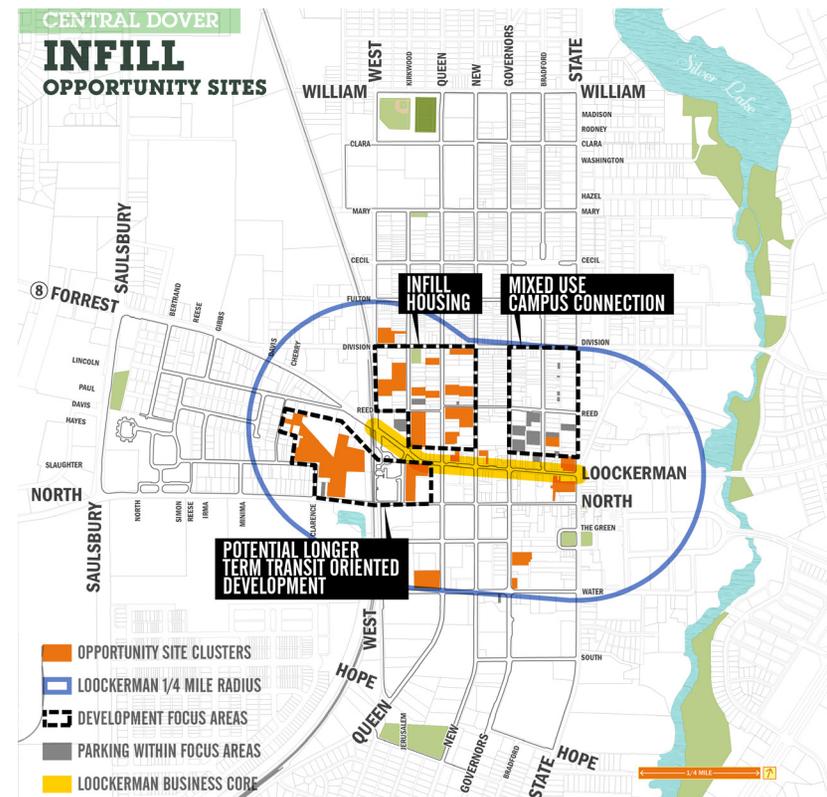
INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Explore land banking and land trust options for assembling parcels and redevelopment efforts; Meet with Diamond State Community Land Trust to explore what is possible; Establish a parcel assembly process and make lots available for development.

EVALUATE WAYS OF PROVIDING FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR DEVELOPMENT

SHORT TERM

Initial Action Steps: City consider waiving impact fees, lowering permitting fees, and real estate taxes (PILOT) for developers of new housing and especially affordable housing.



Infill development opportunity sites

From a the full inventory of vacant buildings, vacant land, and parking lots in the Central Dover study area clusters of development opportunity sites within walking distance of Loockerman are identified in orange. Prioritizing development close to Loockerman will reinforce commercial corridor revitalization efforts.

SOURCE: Field survey, Nov 2013 - Jan 2014

DEVELOP AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS

INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Recruit and select housing developers to repair and to build new affordable and market-rate housing for homeownership and rental housing; Secure capital for projects; Undertake predevelopment activities and start the development process.

PROVIDE ASSISTANCE IN ACTIVATING UPPER STORIES ALONG LOOCKERMAN STREET

LONG TERM

Initial Action Steps: Research existing, successful programs; Pilot financial assistance programs to assist businesses and building owners to enact façade improvements and repairs to help attract residential tenants; Improvements will provide incentives for upper floor renters such as lower utility costs, increased security and other amenities.

EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES TO CREATE CENTRALIZED STUDENT HOUSING OPTIONS OFF CAMPUS

INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Engage Wesley, City, and DDP to develop list of housing options for students and faculty within Central Dover; Explore off-campus mixed use student housing options linking the campus to Loockerman Street; Develop a plan.



07

REINVEST IN COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

Loockerman Street, Central Dover's main commercial corridor of Central Dover, has a unique character and great potential, but currently struggles with high vacancy and turnover rates. Developing a strategy to fill vacancies along Loockerman and recast the corridor as a vibrant and bustling destination will improve the revenue streams and draw visitors from all over Delaware and the tri-state area.

BUILD AND EXPAND ON MARKETING/ BRANDING EFFORTS FOR THE LOOCKERMAN STREET CORRIDOR AND CENTRAL DOVER

SHORT TERM/INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Review, revise and implement current Downtown Marketing Plan with updated marketing information/materials tailored to potential investors and small business inquiries; Recruit new retail and businesses to locate in Downtown Dover.

ACTIVATE VACANT STOREFRONTS

SHORT TERM

Initial Action Steps: Coordinate the implementation of creative work by area youth and displays by nonprofit organizations in the vacant storefronts; Encourage pop-up stores and incubator businesses by providing free rent incentives.

ADDRESS CONCENTRATED LOITERING

SHORT TERM

Initial Action Steps: Revisit licensing requirements and zoning restrictions as well as a direct approach to nuisance business owners about ways to change their business' image.



Conceptual visualization of temporary vacant storefront installation

EXPAND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR NEW AND EXISTING BUSINESS OWNERS

INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Continue the implementation of Downtown Dover Partnership Technical Assistance Program (Small Business Development Workshops, Intake Assessment, Loan Programs, incentives, and space referrals); Examine and pilot other possible programs that could be implemented.

RECRUIT MAJOR LOCAL EMPLOYERS TO ESTABLISH SATELLITE OFFICES ON COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Implement a recruitment initiative focusing on relocating smaller operations and targeting specific, mid-size available and/or vacant office spaces within the downtown corridor.



08

ENSURE EQUITABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The racial and ethnic composition of Central Dover has grown more diverse over the past decade. From 2000 to 2010, the plan area saw a 12% increase in total population, from 3,323 to 3,735 residents. During that period, the percentage of those identifying as persons of color increased by 6%, with the European American cohort dropping from 41% to 34%.

DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

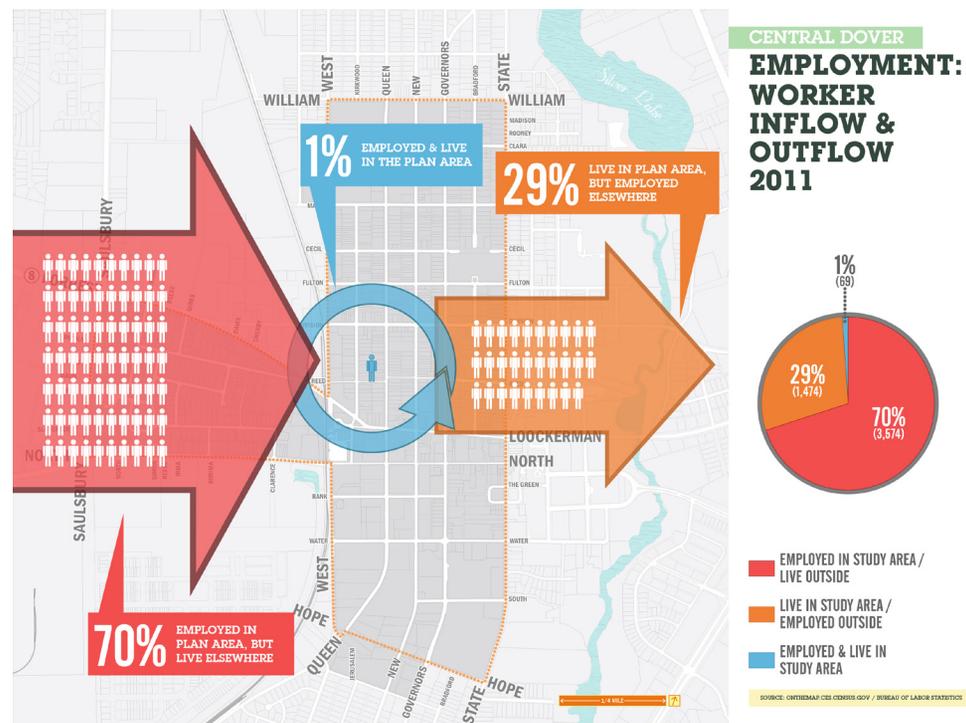
INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Explore potential pilot programs such as “Ice House” Entrepreneurship Program and Small Business Development Program Phase I; Implement a pilot program.

COMPLETE ECONOMIC INCLUSION STUDY

INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Implement recommendations from study that is presently underway upon approval of committee.



Worker inflow & outflow

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics

my
VISION

for
VITALITY

OKS

WE ARE THE CAPITAL
CITY OF THE "1ST" STATE
SO WE SHOULD BE
" THE FIRST CLASS
CITY OF THE 1ST
STATE"



AN INTEGRATED PUBLIC REALM AND INFRASTRUCTURE

09

IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Much of the Central Dover area is a fairly walkable urban fabric, however, the contextual land use patterns and low-density development standard in the region result in a pervasive reliance on cars for personal transportation. The community's hopes for improved alternative transportation options resulted in a number of recommendations towards improving mobility and achieving more balanced streets.

EXPAND AND ENHANCE TRANSIT SERVICES

INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Learn what transportation studies have been done for the plan area and if needed, request that an in-depth transportation accessibility study for Central Dover; Advocate for better bus routes and better times of operations to serve Central Dover with DeIDOT; Change name of bus route 109 to Central Dover.

IMPROVE BUS STOPS AND TRANSIT DEPOT

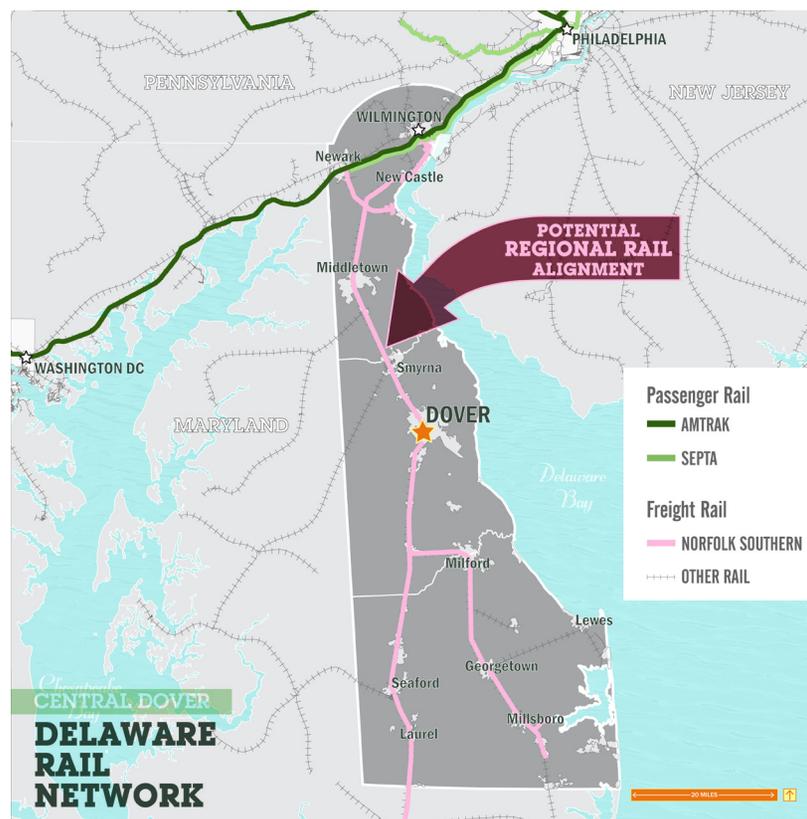
INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Meet with the community to determine placement of additional bus shelters; Construct additional bus shelters within the target area; Improve the Dover Transit Center with seating, shelter, public rest rooms and real-time schedule displays.

ADVOCATE FOR A REGIONAL TRANSIT CONNECTION STUDY

LONG TERM

Initial Action Steps: Initiate conversation with DeIDOT regarding status of study regarding the feasibility of a commuter rail services from Wilmington to Dover; Examine feasibility of additional bus service from Dover to other DE destinations.



Potential regional rail connection

SOURCE: DeIDOT, 2011 Delaware State Rail Plan

WORK TO SUBSIDIZE YOUTH AND FAMILY TRANSIT ACCESS

INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Examine other subsidized transit programs for low-income families and youth; Seek ways to reduce the cost to low-income riders in Central Dover and implement a process with the State Social Service Dept. and Dept. of Labor to reduce bus transportation costs for Central Dover residents.

BUILD ON EXISTING BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE

LONG TERM

Initial Action Steps: Support the proposed network of existing and improvement ideas for the bicycle network in Central Dover, especially the enhanced through-access on Route 8 and Loockerman Street; Examine the possibilities for bike lanes such as the right-of-ways on Route 8 for a separated bicycle infrastructure as well as a North - South bicycle route through Dover.

IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

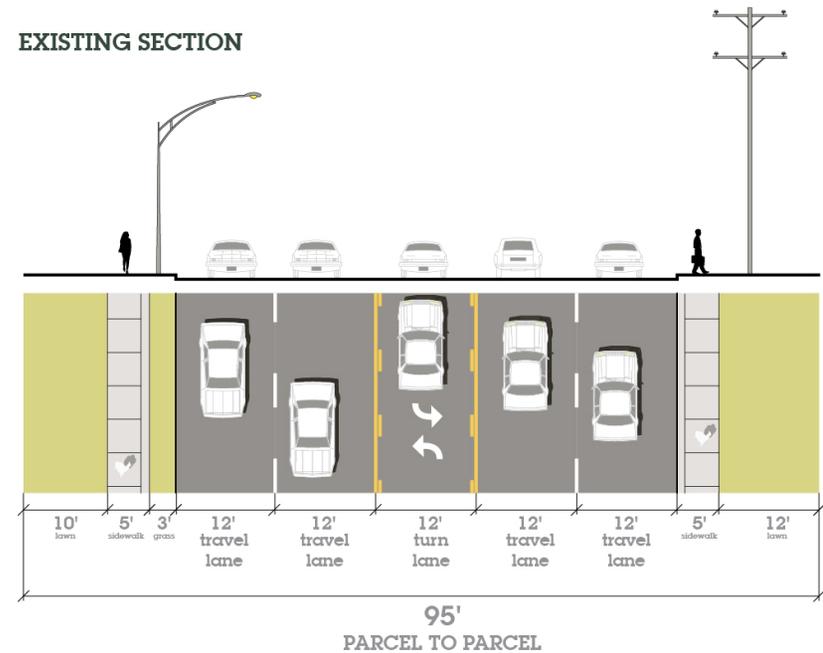
INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Repair all broken and eroding sidewalks in Central Dover; widen where possible.

CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE PARKING STUDY FOR CENTRAL DOVER

SHORT TERM

Initial Action Steps: Examine the parking study conducted by the City of Dover/DDP to determine if the allocation and number of parking spaces for business employees vs customers is adequate; Conduct another study if necessary and implement recommendations such as developing a map of the parking areas, a parking app and/or electric signage.



Existing and proposed Forest Street/Route 8 right of way configuration

10

ENHANCE OPEN SPACES AND EXPAND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Central Dover community shared a wealth of ideas for improving parks and creating more green space. Investing in Central Dover's public gathering spaces and green infrastructure will bring several benefits, including raising the profile of the neighborhood and attracting new residents, businesses, and visitors.

DEVELOP PROGRAMMED RECREATION SPACES

INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Examine existing and other options for recreational spaces in Central Dover for best use according to community needs; Upgrade, and make the existing parks in the plan area accessible and user friendly.

STRATEGICALLY DEVELOP POCKET PARKS ON VACANT LOTS

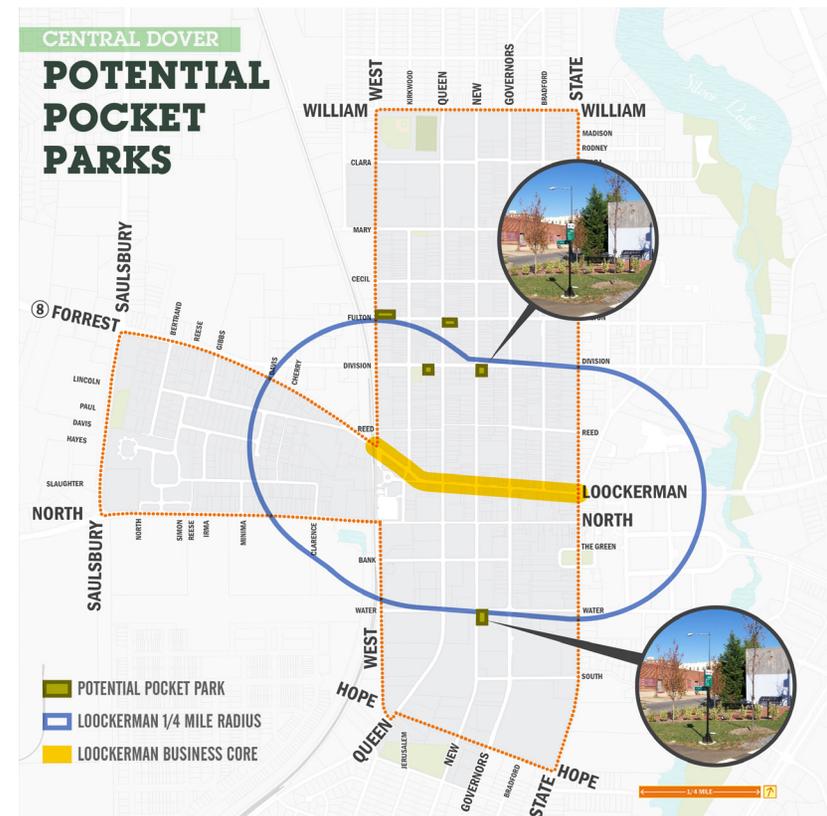
INTERMEDIATE TERM

Initial Action Steps: Create pocket parks where vacant land exists that could be used for recreation, relaxing or community gardens.

CREATE A WEST LOCKERMAN GATEWAY PARK

LONG TERM

Initial Action Steps: Determine site owner's willingness to partner; Develop plan for the park and construct the park.



Potential pocket park opportunity sites

ENABLE PLAY STREET DESIGNATION

LONG TERM

Initial Action Steps: Meet with the residents to identify the streets and best times during the year to close off a street as a play street; Work with the City to determine the procedure for turning a street into a play street during summer months; Establish the procedure; Establish and publicize the schedule or calendar of when certain blocks of each street would be a play street.

INTEGRATE GREEN STORMWATER MANAGEMENT ON WATER STREET

LONG TERM

Initial Action Steps: Contact the City to learn what the plans are for stormwater improvements along Water Street and advocate for the integration of green stormwater management.

PROJECTED PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COSTS

A STRONG COMMUNITY	\$8,090,000
POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT	\$21,070,000
AN INTEGRATED PUBLIC REALM AND INFRASTRUCTURE	\$4,185,000

TOTAL IMPLEMENTATION COST: **\$33,345,000**

