



City of Harrington  
Downtown Development District Plan  
*Five-year Renewal Plan - January 2026*



City of Harrington



*Downtown Development District*



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## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter One - The Introduction</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<i>Downtown Description</i>	<i>Page 6</i>
<i>Need &amp; Impact</i>	<i>Page 8</i>
<b>Chapter Two - The Data</b>	<b>Page 10</b>
<i>Demographics &amp; Housing</i>	<i>Page 11</i>
<i>Downtown Public Survey</i>	<i>Page 15</i>
<b>Chapter Three - The Goals, Objectives &amp; Strategies</b>	<b>Page 23</b>
<i>Goal No. 1</i>	<i>Page 25</i>
<i>Goal No. 2</i>	<i>Page 26</i>
<i>Goal No. 3</i>	<i>Page 30</i>
<i>Goal No. 4</i>	<i>Page 31</i>
<i>Goal No. 5</i>	<i>Page 33</i>
<i>Goal No. 6</i>	<i>Page 34</i>
<i>Goal No. 7</i>	<i>Page 35</i>
<i>Goal No. 8</i>	<i>Page 36</i>
<i>Goal No. 9</i>	<i>Page 37</i>
<i>Goal No. 10</i>	<i>Page 39</i>
<b>Chapter Four - The Key Priority Projects</b>	<b>Page 42</b>
<i>Redevelopment Areas</i>	<i>Page 43</i>
<i>Key Priority Projects</i>	<i>Page 43</i>
<b>Chapter Five - The Incentives</b>	<b>Page 48</b>
<i>Existing Local Incentives</i>	<i>Page 49</i>
<i>Other Funding &amp; Support Opportunities</i>	<i>Page 50</i>
<b>Chapter Six - The Maps</b>	<b>Page 54</b>
<b>Chapter Seven – Appendix</b>	<b>Page 64</b>
<i>Downtown Survey</i>	<i>Page 65</i>
<i>Certified Mail Receipts</i>	<i>Page 79</i>
<i>Public Hearing Meeting Minutes</i>	<i>Page 85</i>



## Maps

<i>Map 1. Downtown Boundary</i>	<i>Page 55</i>
<i>Map 2. Downtown Aerial</i>	<i>Page 56</i>
<i>Map 3. Existing Land Use</i>	<i>Page 57</i>
<i>Map 4. Zoning</i>	<i>Page 58</i>
<i>Map 5. Key Priority Projects</i>	<i>Page 59</i>
<i>Map 6. Potential Redevelopment Areas</i>	<i>Page 60</i>
<i>Map 7. Environmental Features</i>	<i>Page 61</i>
<i>Map 8. Transportation</i>	<i>Page 62</i>
<i>Map 9. Downtown Parking</i>	<i>Page 63</i>

## Tables

<i>Table 1. Approximate Population Breakdown</i>	<i>Page 11</i>
<i>Table 2. Approximate Race Breakdown</i>	<i>Page 12</i>
<i>Table 3. Median Household Income</i>	<i>Page 12</i>
<i>Table 4. Education Attainment Breakdown</i>	<i>Page 13</i>
<i>Table 5. Housing Stock Composition</i>	<i>Page 13</i>
<i>Table 6. Family Poverty Status</i>	<i>Page 14</i>
<i>Table 7. Question 8. Why do you feel safe or unsafe?</i>	<i>Page 18</i>
<i>Table 8. Key Priority Projects</i>	<i>Page 46</i>
<i>Table 9. Direct Job Creation Impact Fee Waiver</i>	<i>Page 50</i>

## Figures

<i>Figure 1. Question 2. How often do you shop at the following locations?</i>	<i>Page 15</i>
<i>Figure 2. Question 3. What places/stores do you visit in Harrington’s Downtown?</i>	<i>Page 16</i>
<i>Figure 3. Question 5. Have you attended any of the following events in the past 3 years ?</i>	<i>Page 16</i>
<i>Figure 4. Question 6. How do you most often travel to establishments in the downtown?</i>	<i>Page 17</i>
<i>Figure 5. Question 7. Do you feel safe in Harrington’s downtown during the day and night?</i>	<i>Page 18</i>
<i>Figure 6. Question 9. Currently, what are the major advantages of Harrington’s downtown?</i>	<i>Page 19</i>
<i>Figure 7. Question 10. Currently, what are the major disadvantages of Harrington’s downtown?</i>	<i>Page 20</i>
<i>Figure 8. Question 11. What businesses/events/activities would you like to see more of in the downtown?</i>	<i>Page 21</i>

# Chapter One.

## *Downtown Harrington - The Introduction*



## Downtown Description

In 2014, the Downtown Development Districts Act was enacted by the Delaware General Assembly in order to:

- spur private capital investment in commercial business districts and other neighborhoods;
- stimulate job growth and improve the commercial vitality of such districts and neighborhoods;
- help build a stable community of long-term residents by improving housing opportunities; and
- assist local governments in strengthening neighborhoods while harnessing the attraction that vibrant downtowns hold for talented people, innovative small businesses, and residents from all walks of life.

Selection as a Downtown Development District (DDD) in Delaware allows private construction projects within the designated area to receive grants covering 20% of eligible capital construction costs.

The Downtown Development District program was rolled out in three rounds:

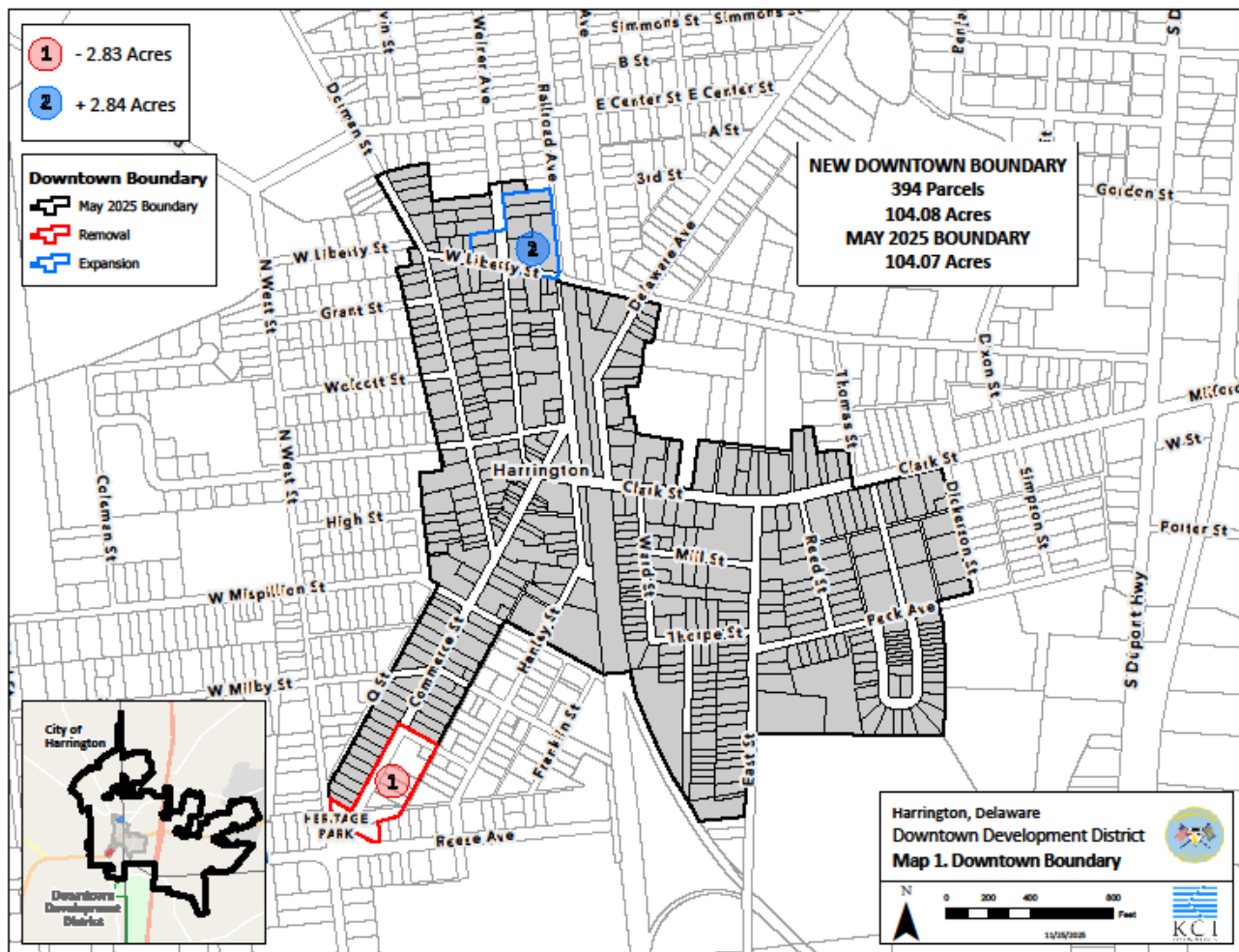
- 2014 (Round 1): Dover, Seaford, and Wilmington
- 2016 (Round 2): **Harrington**, Smyrna, Milford, Georgetown, and Laurel
- 2019 (Round 3): Clayton, Delaware City, Middletown, and City of New Castle

Harrington received its DDD designation in 2016, with an initial term extending through 2026. This designation is currently eligible for a five-year renewal through 2031, with a final potential renewal available through 2036.

Harrington's Downtown Development District, referred to as the Downtown, was originally established as a 33-acre area encompassing 108 parcels centered around the city's traditional business core (Commerce Street, Railroad Avenue, and Mechanic Street). The boundary also included nearby residential streets (Fleming, Dorman, and Delaware Avenue) where many homes had been converted to businesses or other non-residential uses and extended east along Clark Street to include commercial properties crossing the north-south railroad tracks. With a population of approximately 3,500, according to the 2010 U.S. Census count, this area represented the portion of the city most in need of revitalization.

Within the past decade, several boundary adjustments have been made in alignment with the state's Downtown Development District guidelines, which allow up to 105 acres for municipalities with populations under 9,000. The most recent update (May 2025) expands the district to approximately **104 acres**, encompassing **398 parcels**. Currently, the Downtown includes a mix of residentially zoned areas (Dorman Street, Fleming Street, Commerce Street, Clark Street, Ward Street, East Street, and Peck Avenue) alongside commercially zoned areas (Railroad Avenue, Mechanic Street, Hanley Street, and the northern sections of Commerce, Clark, and East Streets).

This five-year renewal plan proposes a new change to the Downtown boundary, displayed in Map 1. Downtown Boundary, removing ten parcels on the South end of Commerce Street and adding six parcels along Weiner Avenue. The expansion is intended to extend incentive opportunities to additional properties, while the removed parcels no longer meet the current criteria or strategic objectives for inclusion within the DDD.



Map 1: Downtown Boundary

## Need & Impact

Over the past decade, the DDD program has been a cornerstone of revitalization and community growth, fostering investment, improving infrastructure, and enhancing the quality of life in the heart of the city. By leveraging both public and private resources, the DDD has encouraged commercial, residential, and mixed-use development that has strengthened the economic, cultural, and social vitality of the downtown district.

In the last ten years, approximately nine projects, both commercial and residential, have been completed in and around the downtown core, representing more than \$400,000 in reinvestment. These improvements have repaired and renovated important properties, preserved the district's historic character, and advanced the goal of creating an inviting, economically sustainable downtown.

An additional six projects within the downtown area have contributed over \$370,000 in improvements to building exteriors and interiors, helping to enhance the visual appeal and functionality of the district. These efforts have introduced new businesses and amenities, such as a sweet shop, which complements long standing establishments like banks, the post office, and retail shops, creating a more diverse downtown experience. However, the next section, Demographic Data, will highlight the continued need for additional variety in Downtown establishments. Several barriers contribute to these needs, including vacant and non-code-compliant buildings, vacant lots, and existing ADA accessibility gaps.

Efforts to market the downtown for customers and businesses have started through two successful shopping events, with more planned in the future to increase visibility and engagement. Additionally, the city is pursuing a partnership with the Milford Chamber of Commerce to take on the role once held by the Harrington Business Association. This collaboration will help connect potential businesses with available downtown properties, encourage entrepreneurship, continued growth and investment in the district. Furthermore, the new city website will feature an online business directory and interactive map to increase awareness of downtown businesses and make it easier for residents and visitors to connect with local services.

Accessibility improvements have begun with updates to curbing, addressing pedestrian safety and supporting future ADA compliance efforts. While this represents an important first step toward creating a more walkable and inclusive downtown, additional ADA compliant improvements to sidewalks and pedestrian pathways are still needed to fully enhance accessibility for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.

Community engagement and cultural vitality have continued to grow through annual events like Heritage Day, as well as newer initiatives such as the Night with Frostbites movie night. The Community Events Committee and Beautification Committee have become active contributors to downtown programming, and the museum has expanded its offerings to include Black History Month and other educational events.

To further strengthen coordination and visibility, a comprehensive calendar of community events and activities focused on downtown will be launched with the city's new website, providing a central hub for promoting events, volunteer opportunities, and partnerships.

Public safety continues to be a priority for maintaining an inviting downtown environment. The installation of security cameras and upgraded LED street lighting has improved both safety and perception, supporting a sense of comfort for businesses, residents, and visitors.

In addition to these downtown-focused improvements, the city has invested more than \$1.5 million in parks and recreation projects, enhancing the community's overall livability and attractiveness. These include the renovation of the former National Guard facility into a multi-purpose community center, the addition of outdoor pickleball and basketball courts, a community pavilion, a paved walking trail, a playground, Price Center renovations, and

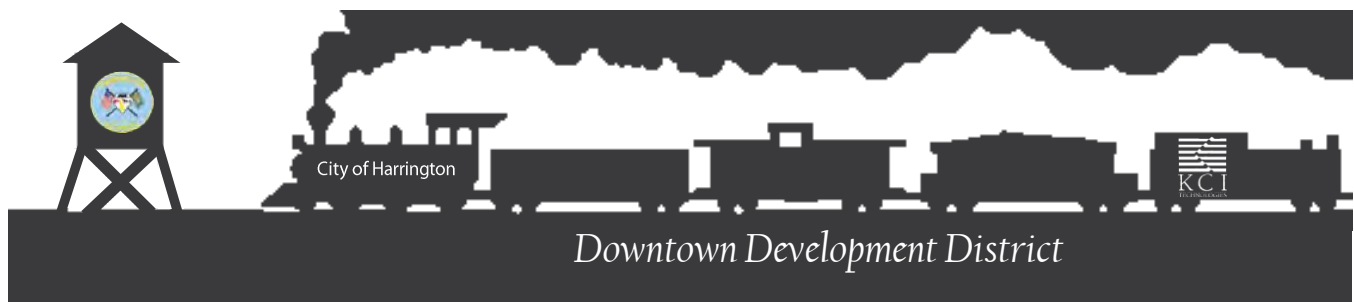


the development of a new library. These facilities provide recreation, education, and gathering spaces that complement Downtown Development District’s mission of fostering an active, engaged downtown community.

The progress achieved through the DDD program over the past ten years has been substantial, but continued investment is essential to maintain momentum and address emerging needs. The upcoming chapter will present demographic data and community survey findings, which will further illustrate the current needs, opportunities, and challenges within the downtown area. This data will help guide the next 5 years of strategic planning, identifying target demographics, highlighting community priorities, and supporting data-driven decisions to ensure the DDD continues to strengthen the heart of the city.

# Chapter Two.

## *Downtown Harrington - The Data*





Through the many assets, opportunities, and challenges identified through this Downtown Five Year Renewal Plan, it is clear that Harrington’s Downtown is well-positioned for growth and infill development. This Plan builds from these strengths, carries out the City’s vision, and puts the placemaking recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan and recent zoning updates to work. Redevelopment is a top priority and Harrington wishes to address several critical issues that may be hindering the Downtown from meeting its economic potential and capitalizing on its many strengths and opportunities.

While some demographic and population data are available from the U.S. Census Bureau, the overall scope of information is limited due to funding constraints. The data below has been collected from the U.S. Census Bureau, the City of Harrington, and Harrington’s 2025 Comprehensive Plan and provides useful insights into population trends, community characteristics, and other key indicators, but gaps remain in coverage and detail.

## Demographics & Housing

### Population

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Harrington’s total population is 3,774, an increase of just about 6% from 2010 with a total population of 3,562. Population figures are not available for the Downtown due to the way the Census collects data at this smaller area level, but the City of Harrington’s data exhibited a population growth of 6% from 2010 to 2020, growing from a population of 554 to 587.

Table 1 below is the approximate population breakdown comparison in age group from 2010 to 2020. Overall, the population distribution shifted during this time period. The share of working-age adults declined from 60% to 53%, while both seniors and preschool-aged children increased from about 8% to 11%. The proportion of school-aged children remained stable at 26%. This indicates an aging population along with a slight rise in the youngest age group and a shrinking working-age segment with the median age being 30.7 years.

*Table 1: Approximate Population Breakdown*

Age Group	2010	2020
Working age (20-65)	60%	53%
School age (5-19)	26%	26%
Seniors (65+)	8.5%	11%
Preschoolers (≤ 5)	8%	11%

According to the U.S. Census, Table 2 below is the approximate population breakdown comparison in race from 2010 to 2020. The category “other” encompasses American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and other races not specifically listed. The data shows a modest demographic shift over the decade, with growth in the White and Other race categories, a decline in the Black population, and overall stability among multiracial residents.

*Table 2: Approximate Race Breakdown*

<b>Race</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>
White	66%	70.3%
Black	19%	14%
Two or More	6%	6%
Other	8%	9.7%

### *Income & Poverty*

According to the U.S. Census, Table 3 below is the median household income breakdown by relevant areas. Harrington’s 2020 median household income has increased by 47% from 2013, 10% more than the 37% national increase. Median household income rose significantly across all areas in the table below from 2013 to 2020, with Harrington showing the largest gain. Kent County and Delaware also experienced steady growth, reflecting broader regional economic improvement. Overall, incomes improved at every level, with Harrington’s increase outpacing both county and state trends. A variety of factors seem to be involved. Minimum Wage laws, wealthier individuals moving into the area from out of state, and an increase in education levels for professionals.

*Table 3: Median Household Income*

<b>Area</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2020</b>
City of Harrington	\$38,182	\$72,606
Kent County	\$55,000	\$81,117
Delaware	\$60,000	\$87,534

### Education Attainment

According to the U.S. Census, Table 4 below is the education attainment breakdown by education level. Overall, the data shows a clear upward trend in higher education attainment from 2010 to 2020. The share of people with education beyond high school increased at every level, while the percentage with only a high school diploma declined slightly. This indicates that the population became more highly educated over the decade.

*Table 4: Education Attainment Breakdown*

Education Level	2010	2020
High School or Equivalent	25.3%	24.3%
Some College	13.1%	16.9%
Associate’s degree	5.5%	6.6%
Bachelor’s degree	13.2%	15.6%
Master’s or Higher	8.3%	11.0%

### Housing & Homeownership

According to the U.S. Census, The City’s 2020 homeownership rate of just over 62% has risen by slightly more than 12 percentage points since 2010, when the homeownership rate was 50%. According to Harrington’s 2025 Comprehensive Plan, in 2022 there were 1,458 total housing units in 2022. Table 5 below breaks down each housing type in comparison to Kent County and Delaware. Harrington’s housing stock is predominantly single-family detached homes, which make up a larger share of units compared to both Kent County and the state overall. The city has a relatively small proportion of attached homes and mobile or other housing types, while apartments account for a higher percentage of units than both the County and State average.

*Table 5: 2022 Housing Stock Composition*

HOUSING TYPE	HARRINGTON		KENT COUNTY		DELAWARE	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Single Family, Detached	1,036	71.06%	45,613	66.39%	235,374	60.51%
Single Family, Attached	13	0.89%	6,245	9.09%	60,864	15.65%
Apartments	400	27.43%	9,421	13.71%	67,698	17.40%
Mobile Home/Other	9	0.62%	7,426	10.81%	25,064	6.44%
Total	1,458		68,705		389,000	



*Employment & Poverty Status*

From 2010 to 2020 the employment rate in the Downtown has increased by nearly 0.5% from 93% to 93.4% respectively. Table 6 below breaks down Harrington’s poverty status in 2022 in comparison to Kent County, Delaware and the United States, according to Harrington’s 2025 Comprehensive Plan. The table depicts the number of families in each category as well as the percentage of those families that reported poverty status. Harrington reports a higher overall family poverty rate than Kent County, the state, and the nation, with the gap widening significantly for families with children under 18. Among racial and ethnic groups, both Black and Hispanic families in Harrington experience a lower poverty rate than their counterparts countywide and nationwide. Poverty among older adults and those without a high school diploma appears underreported in Harrington, suggesting data limitations. Overall, the figures indicate that families with children face the greatest economic challenges within the community.

*Table 6: 2022 Family Poverty Status*

	HARRINGTON		KENT COUNTY		DELAWARE		UNITED STATES	
	#	% Reported Poverty	#	% Reported Poverty	#	% Reported Poverty	#	% Reported Poverty
All Family	846	13.7%	46,594	9.4%	252,505	7.5%	81,432,908	8.8%
With kids aged 18 and below	526	22.1%	21,250	16.0%	105,452	13.2%	37,443,291	13.6%
Black	241	16.6%	111,212	18.6%	49,187	15.3%	9,135,434	17.5%
Hispanic	110	8.2%	3,027	13.1%	20,007	14.2%	13,141,075	14.7%
65 +	128	N/A	11,341	52.0%	67,991	3.4%	18,112,899	5.5%
No High School Diploma	37	N/A	4,135	23.1%	17,671	22.0%	7,423,233	23.0%



## Downtown Public Survey

As part of the original DDD Plan established in 2016, the City of Harrington distributed a comprehensive community survey to inform the District’s priorities. The 2025 Downtown Survey is a shortened version of that original questionnaire, allowing for meaningful comparison of how community needs and perspectives have evolved over time. This year, the City mailed an invitation to Downtown residents and businesses to complete the updated survey, and their firsthand insights are especially valuable in identifying how Downtown serves them and where additional improvements are needed. The results will guide future investments and Key Priority Projects. The invitation, 2025 survey, and 2025 results are included in the appendix.

The following section presents selected highlights from the survey results. Not every question from the survey is included; instead, the analysis focuses on the responses that offered the most meaningful insight into community needs, priorities, and perceptions. It should be noted that the 2025 survey received 21 responses, compared with 90 responses in 2016. This difference in sample size presents challenges, including potential limitations in statistical reliability and representativeness. When interpreting the results, the focus will be on overall trends and patterns rather than on individual response differences, with these sample size considerations taken into account.

### “How often do you shop at the following locations?”

Question two in both surveys asks respondents about shopping frequency at several local and popular areas, as illustrated in Figure 1 below. As a whole, similar patterns appear between 2016 and 2025, with most frequent shopping occurring in the Route 13 corridor and Milford, and the least frequent shopping occurring in Seaford. These results highlight the need for specific strategies that increase shopping trips to Harrington, helping to strengthen the local economy and bring the town’s activity levels closer to those seen in the Route 13 corridor and Milford.

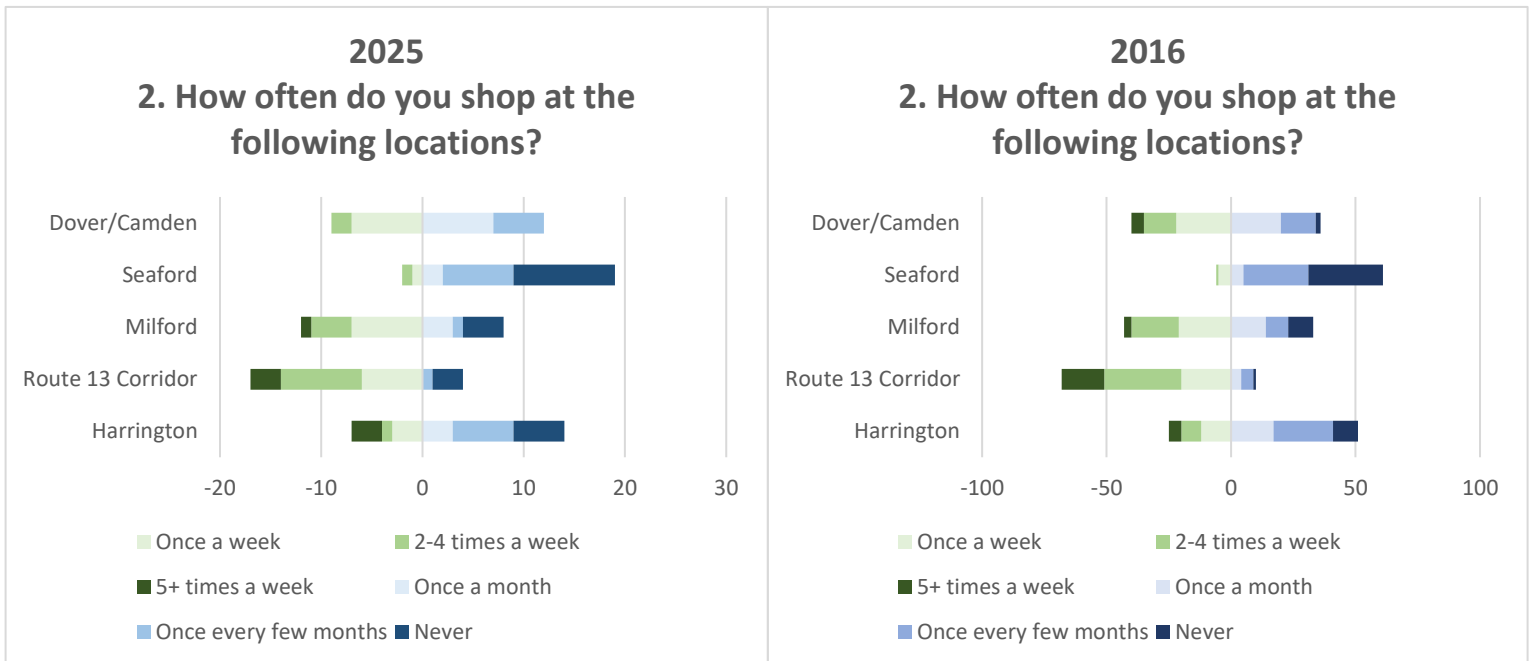


Figure 1: Question 2. How often do you shop at the following locations?

*“What places/stores do you visit in Harrington's Downtown?”*

Question three in both surveys asks respondents about what kind of places or stores are being visited within the Downtown, as shown in figure 2 below. The 2025 results mirror the trends seen in 2016, with the Post Office or Bank remaining the primary reason people come Downtown. Restaurants, service-oriented businesses, and retail shops continue to follow closely behind as common destinations. The write-in options include “Hockey game” and “senior center” (verbatim).

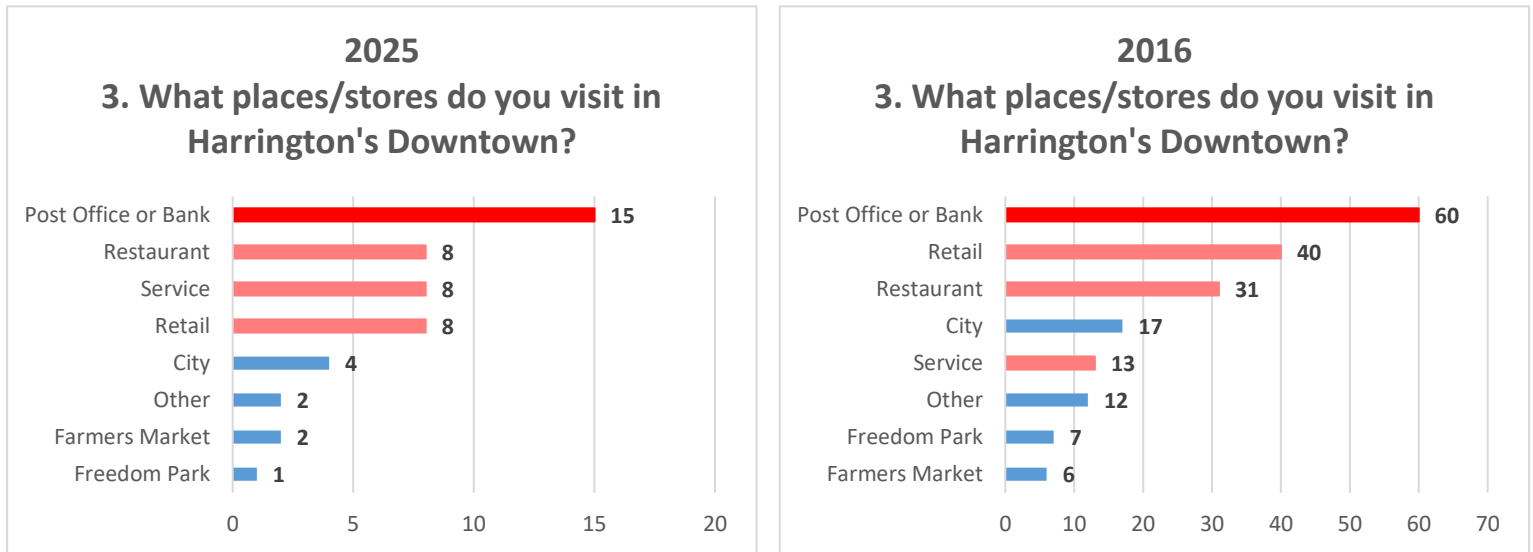


Figure 2: Question 3. What places/stores do you visit in Harrington’s Downtown?

*“Have you attended any of the following events in the past 3 years?”*

Question five in both surveys asks respondents about what kind of events are attended, as shown in figure 3 below. The two most popular events within the last decade are the Christmas Parade and Heritage Day. The police National Night Out has fallen in popularity from 2016 but that may be due to sample size. The 2025 survey write-in option mentions “Trick or Trunk” (verbatim).

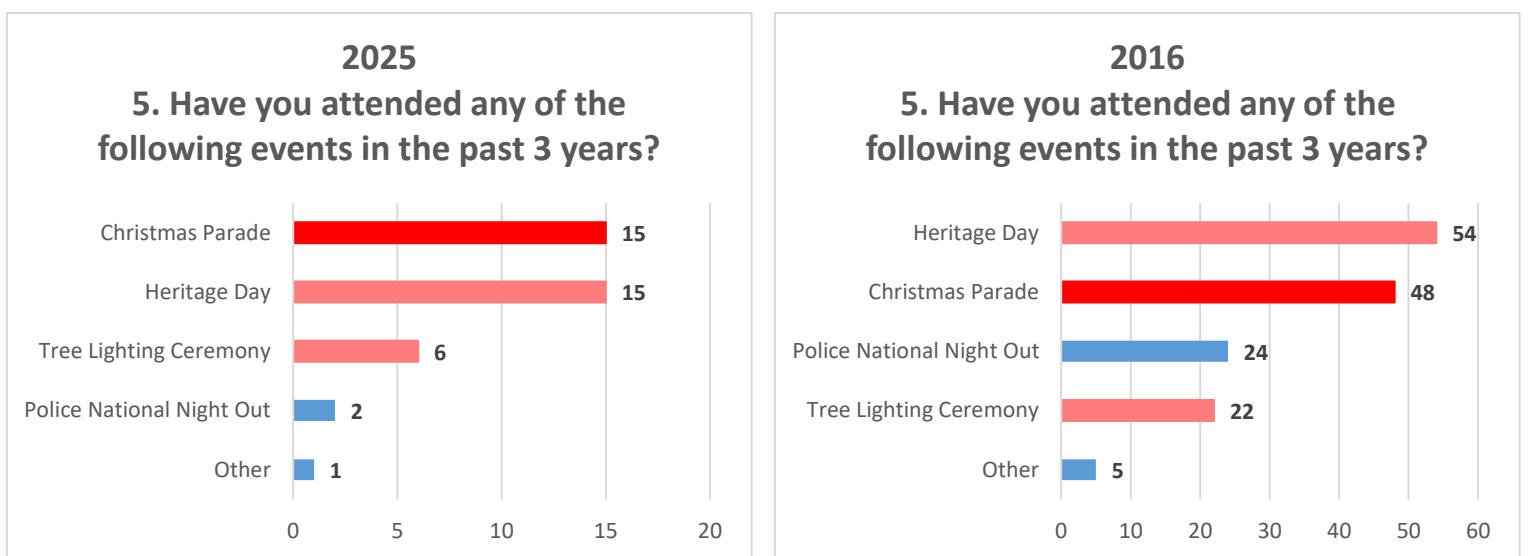


Figure 3: Question 5. Have you attended any of the following events in the past 3 years?

“How do you most often travel to establishments in the downtown?”

Question six in both surveys asks respondents about how they travel to and park within the Downtown, as shown in figure 4 below. The results show several notable differences, including a positive increase in walking. Although biking remains an uncommon mode of travel, a regional bike route runs along Commerce and Clark Streets (see Map 8. Transportation), suggesting that investment in shared roads or bike-friendly infrastructure could be a valuable improvement for the area.

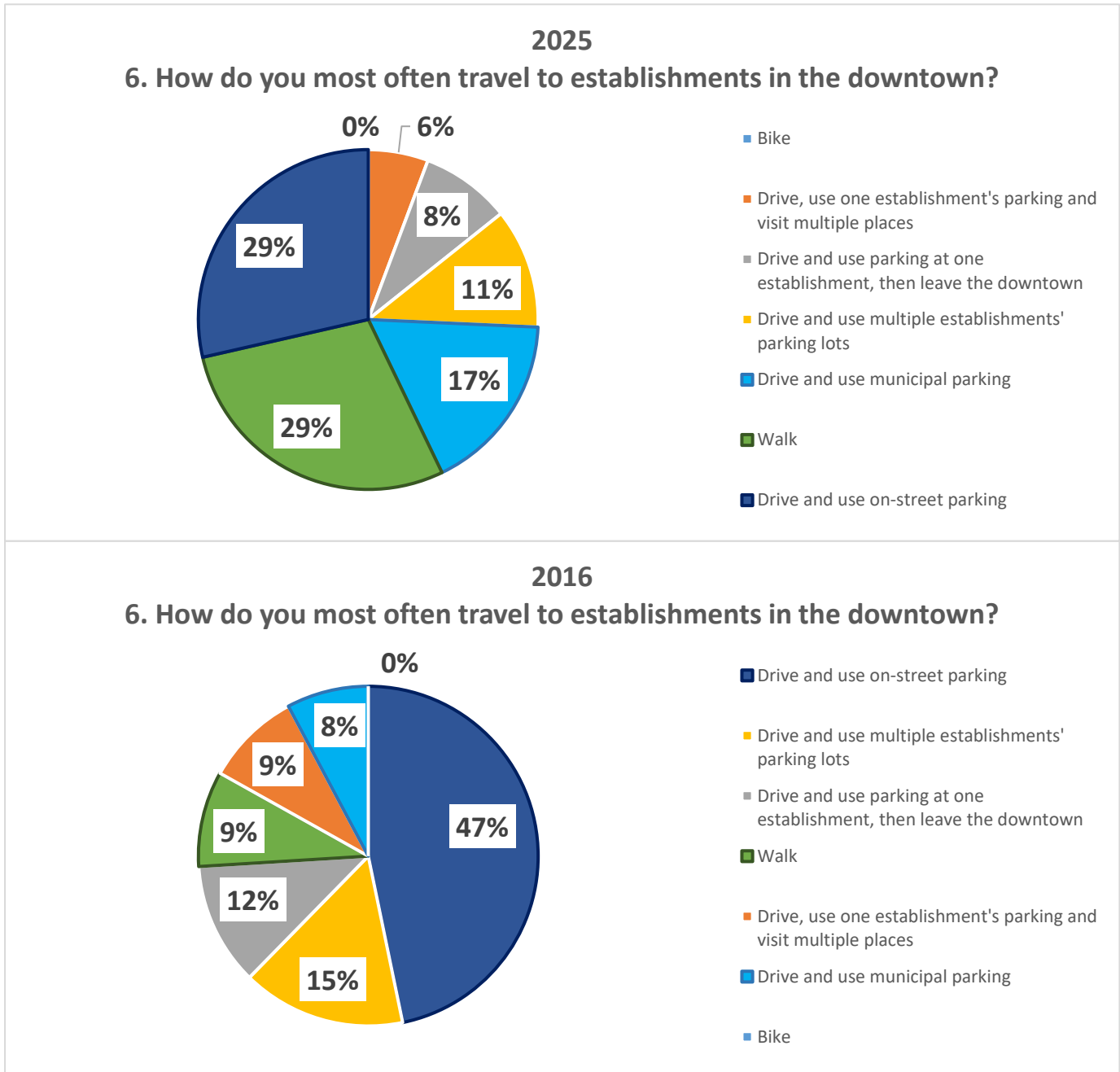


Figure 4: Question 6. How do you most often travel to establishments in the downtown?

“Do you feel safe in Harrington's downtown during the day and night and why?”

Question seven and eight in both surveys asks respondents whether they feel safe in the Downtown and why, as shown in figure 5 below. An increase in the percentage of the sample size from 2016 to 2025 feels safer during the night. Table 7 below shows question 8 responses from the 2025 survey on why they feel safe or unsafe. Overall, respondents generally feel safe in Downtown Harrington, citing strong police presence, proximity to the police station, and a friendly, quiet neighborhood. However, concerns emerge at night, when visibility decreases and groups of teens, loitering individuals, and people associated with the nearby recovery clinic contribute to a sense of unease. Responses on adequate lighting varies, some saying, areas are well lit and some saying there is not enough lighting.

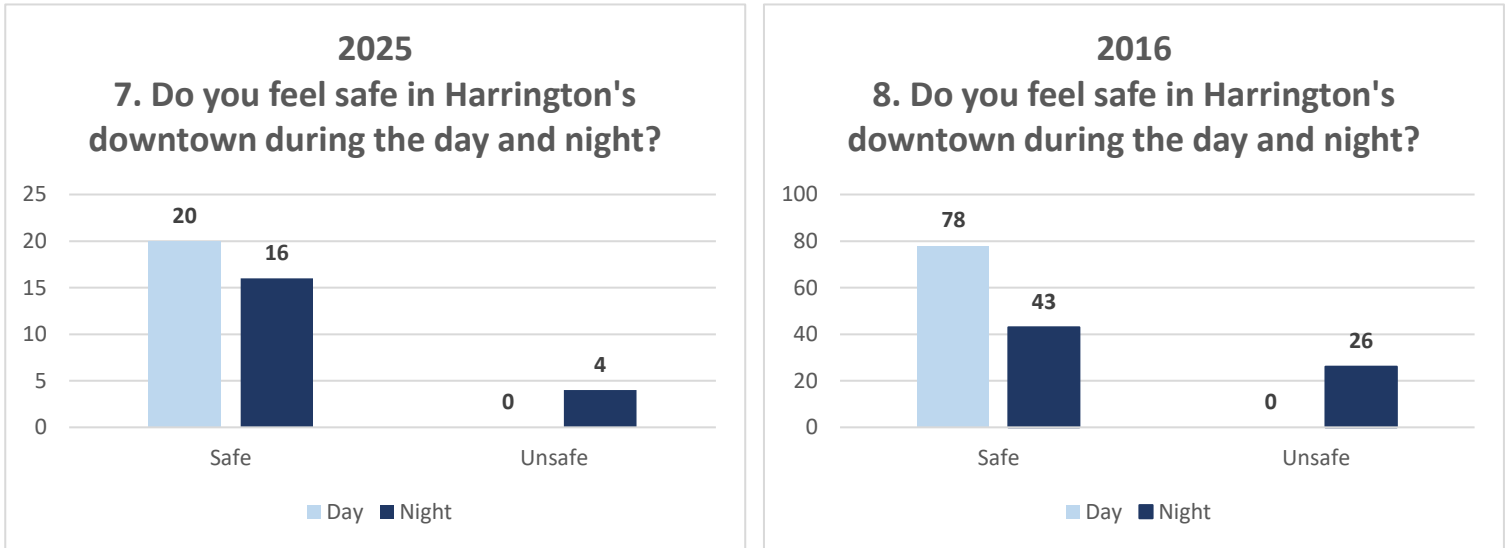


Figure 5: Question 7. Do you feel safe in Harrington’s downtown during the day and night?

Table 7: Question 8. Why do you feel safe or unsafe?

Police presence and DSP.
I live near the police station. Streets are well lit near my house.
The town is quiet and well policed
Feel unsafe at night because the teens that live around here create a lot of mischief at night.
Lots of weird some homeless people walking around. People from the drug rehab place are always walking around. Police don’t ride through developments or side streets at night. Impossible to get a police officer especially at night even though they are sitting on the edge of town stopping speeders.
Police station right near by
It seems friendly and busy during the day. In the evening it is dark and regularly groups of teens roaming around.
Wholesome neighborhood with great people who care about each other. Street lights are on at night.
Police station close by
I have always felt safe in Harrington
I have had zero issues with safety.
I feel safe during the day because I can see my surroundings. I don't feel as safe at night and it's harder to see in some areas. Also, I don't feel safe with the recovery clinic being in town.
Police station is right there, my office is right there, Ive been living or working here my whole life



“Currently, what are the major advantages of Harrington's downtown?”

The next two questions in the 2025 survey include a slight update from the 2016 version: respondents were given a new option to select apartments or homes. This addition allows for a clearer understanding of how residential uses factor into Downtown activity. Question nine in both surveys asks respondents what they think the major advantages are in the Downtown, as shown in figure 6 below. Similar trends appear overall from the last decade. Supporting local businesses, friendly local service, and convenient location ranking as the top advantages, with selection of goods and services and selections of apartments/homes ranking one of the lowest. The 2025 survey write-in option states “Convenient and close but nothing there to draw people” (verbatim).

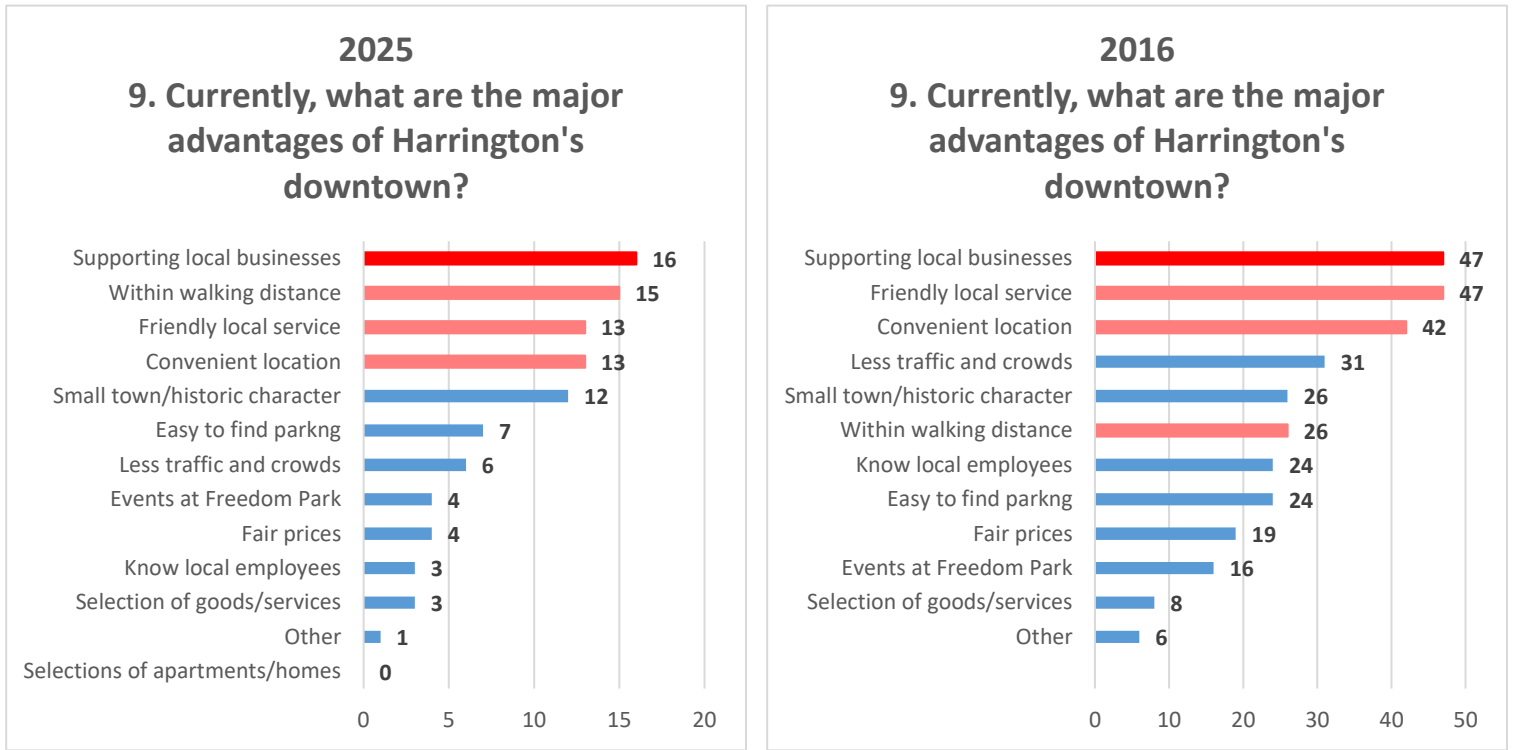


Figure 6: Question 9. Currently, what are the major advantages of Harrington’s downtown?

“Currently, what are the major disadvantages of Harrington's downtown?”

Question ten in both surveys asks respondents what they think the major disadvantages are in the Downtown, as shown in figure 7 below. Lack in variety of goods and services is the clear number one disadvantage since 2016. Lack of apartments and homes is ranked high in the 2025 survey, and as previously mentioned was not an option in the 2016 survey. 2025 write-in options include, “Lack of choices”, “Miss eating establishment”, “Too many complexes being built”, “Entertainment, eminities”, and “Over crowded” (verbatim).

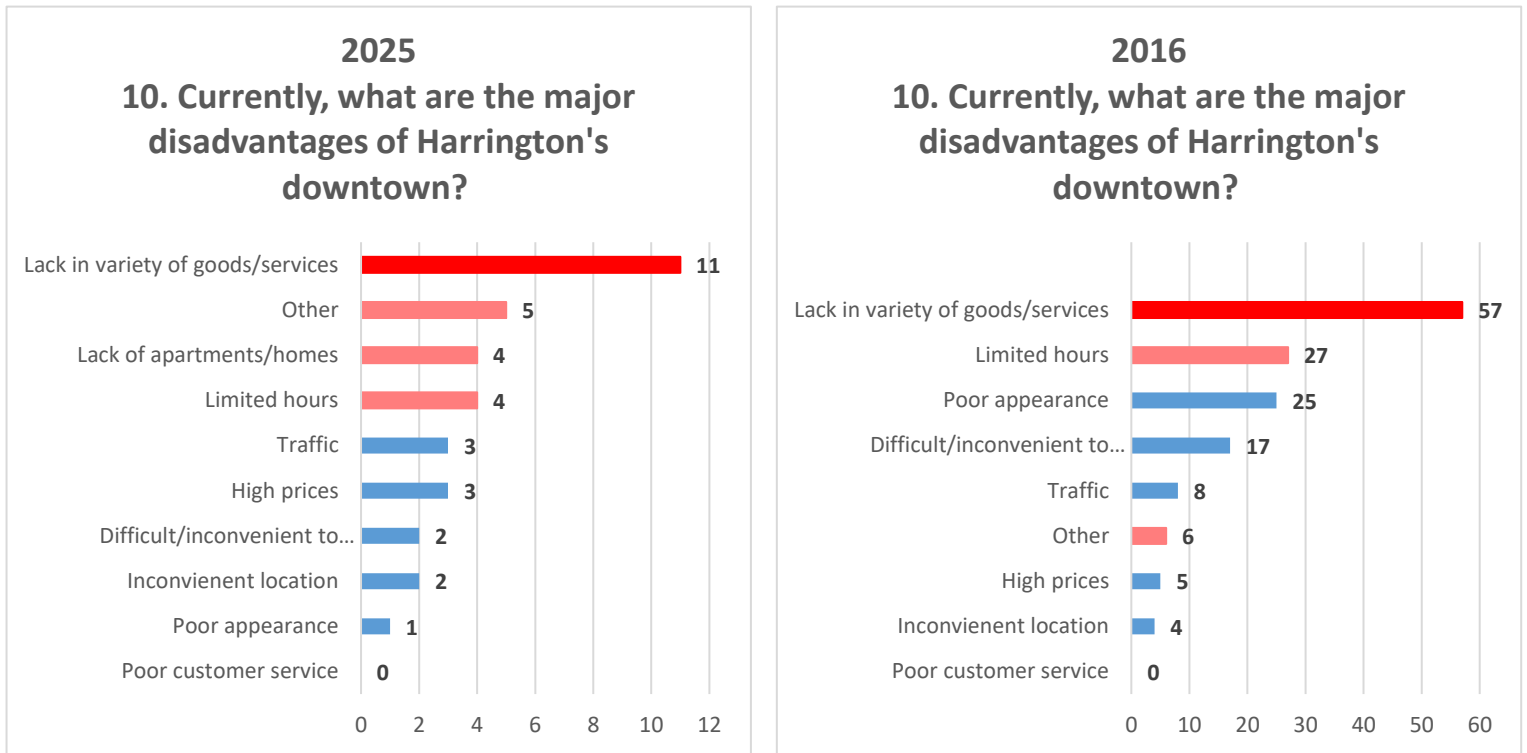


Figure 7: Question 10. Currently, what are the major disadvantages of Harrington’s downtown?

“Currently, what are the major disadvantages of Harrington's downtown?”

Question eleven in the 2025 survey and the combination of questions 12-14 in the 2016 survey asks respondents what businesses/events/activities should be in the Downtown, as shown in figure 8 below. In 2025, dining options dominate the top preferences, including locally owned restaurants, coffee shops, and breakfast or lunch establishments, with Commercial retail ranking second in preferences. The 2025 survey write-in options describe “Nite life like the Milton theater provides” (verbatim). In contrast, the 2016 results highlight a stronger interest in community events and personal service businesses as the leading priorities.

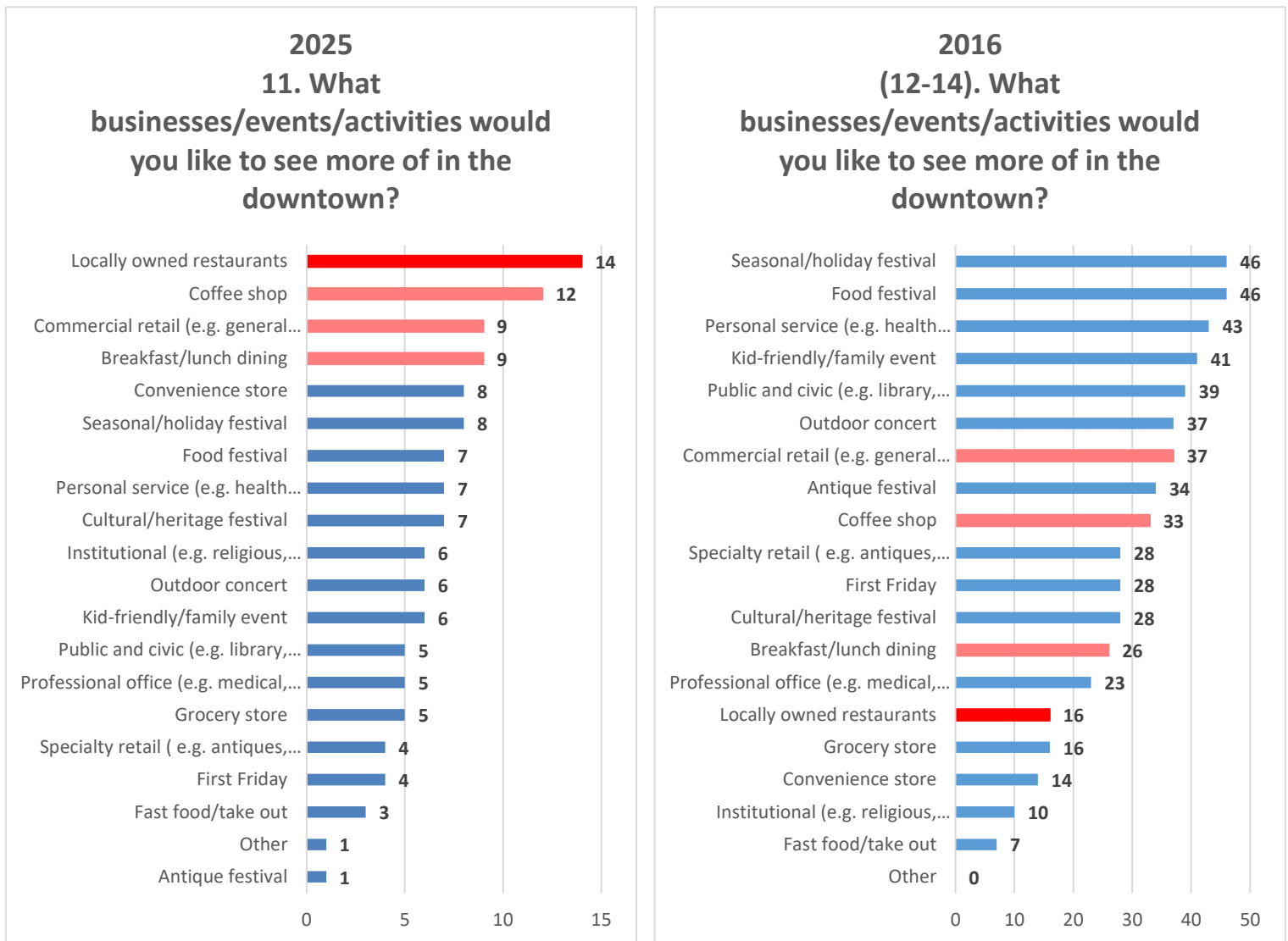


Figure 8: Question 11. What businesses/events/activities would you like to see more of in the downtown?



In summary, the data and survey insights presented in this chapter demonstrate that Downtown Harrington is well-positioned for continued revitalization, supported by steady population growth, rising household incomes, improving educational attainment, and a strong base of single-family housing. While challenges remain, particularly related to limited retail variety, housing options, and nighttime safety concerns, the community continues to express pride in Harrington’s friendly character, convenient location, and local businesses. Comparisons between the 2016 and 2025 survey results show consistent trends in how residents use and experience the Downtown, alongside emerging needs such as expanded dining options, more diverse goods and services, and improved multimodal accessibility. These findings, together with the City’s ongoing planning efforts, provide a clear framework for future investment and redevelopment initiatives that strengthen the Downtown’s role as the heart of the community.

# Chapter Three.

## *Downtown Harrington - The Goals, Objectives & Strategies*



The research conducted to develop the original Downtown Development District Plan established a clear vision that will be carried forward in the Five-Year DDD Renewal Plan. This vision is centered around eight core principles:

*One.*

Downtown is a place where **people come to play, work, shop, and live** – a vibrant and important community gathering place.

*Two.*

Downtown is **safe and friendly** for people of all ages, income levels, and cultures.

*Three.*

Downtown is an **economic engine for the City**, promoting a diverse economic environment that supports local entrepreneurial ventures.

*Four.*

Downtown is a **successful and desirable neighborhood** with a variety of housing choices and a mix of uses.

*Five.*

Downtown **values its historic buildings** and encourages **compatible, high-quality new construction**.

*Six.*

Downtown's streets safely accommodate **many modes of travel**: pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles, transit, and freight.

*Seven.*

Downtown's **streetscape is active and comfortable day and night**, with coordinated amenities that establish a distinct identity.

*Eight.*

Downtown has **thriving public events** that are local and regional destinations.

Harrington's Five-Year DDD Renewal Plan keeps the existing goals, objectives, and strategies largely intact, with only minor updates, reaffirming the City's commitment to steady and focused progress toward achieving the Downtown Vision. Each topic is established around a broad goal - a statement of what the community wants to achieve in the long term with respect to the Downtown. The goals reflect the original Vision for Downtown, listed on the previous page. The chapter also sets out objectives related to each of the ten goals. These objectives are statements of what needs to be done for the community to move forward toward achieving the goal. For each objective, the chapter then sets out specific **strategies** - projects or activities - that contribute to accomplishing the stated objective.

This chapter lays out an integrated, holistic plan for improving the Downtown by addressing ten key issues. In many cases, these issues overlap - for example, the lack of activity in the Downtown is partially the result of the limited number of businesses. Similarly, many of the strategies proposed address more than one issue - for example, a strategy that generates additional activity in the Downtown may also involve youth and students as well as bringing potential customers for businesses.

This Plan describes many of the proposed actions in detail to ensure that various groups or organizations that may carry out the different strategies in the future understand the thinking that went into the Plan. This should enable them to carry out the intent of the Plan even if the actual strategy is modified to better reflect the situation when the strategy is implemented or to capitalize on new opportunities.

## Goal No. 1

Strengthen **residential** neighborhoods, with an emphasis on encouraging homeownership, rehabilitating older buildings, and maintaining the existing character.

**Background** | A strong and robust Downtown residential population is critical to the overall health and vitality of the area. Downtown residents provide a steady and consistent clientele for the retail, service, dining, and entertainment uses found Downtown and create around-the-clock vibrancy for the area.

Downtown is home to a dynamic population that spans a wide range of ages and incomes. Each segment of the population has a diverse set of housing needs and preferences that should be reflected in the types of housing provided. There are various types of housing options that can meet a diverse Downtown housing market. General categories include upper floor rental units, apartment buildings, townhouses, live/workspaces, and single-family residences. These options typically involve re-using existing buildings as well as infill construction on vacant or underutilized properties.

Placing residents within close proximity to jobs and amenities increases street level activity and creates a vibrant environment throughout the Downtown. Public and private entities should work together to identify housing needs and preferences and foster partnerships to meet these needs.

### Objective

Improve and expand the overall housing stock to provide for and attract both older and younger household populations, thereby supporting all household incomes in the Downtown.

### Strategy

Continually evaluate zoning and land use regulations to ensure policies allow for and encourage Downtown housing in the form of rehabilitation and preservation of existing buildings, infill development, and new construction.

**Strategy**

Actively monitor the condition of existing housing and enforce the City's Property Maintenance Code.

Active enforcement of the Property Maintenance Code ensures that the character of the community remains intact and appealing to the residents and visitors by eliminating blight

**Strategy**

Create a clearinghouse, database, and/or promotional brochure for existing residential financing options and incentives.

**Strategy**

Create a clearinghouse, database, and/or promotional brochure for existing residential financing options and incentives.

**Strategy**

To encourage increased homeownership within Downtown, the City will proactively promote the full range of federal, state, and local financial incentives available to prospective homebuyers. The City will work to make these programs easy to find and understand by developing clear informational materials, featuring them on the City's website, coordinating outreach with local lenders and realtors, and incorporating them into Downtown marketing and housing initiatives.

## Goal No. 2

Create a **Downtown** where shops, banks, and other traditional businesses flourish alongside creative enterprises in a friendly, lively, and successful atmosphere.

**Background** | To achieve our vision of the Downtown, existing businesses need to be more successful and additional businesses that build on the Downtown's strengths need to be attracted to the area. This will require a focused effort to attract new customers to Downtown and to promote Downtown as a desirable place to do business. The City must think in terms of marketing Downtown as well as its individual businesses to both consumers and to business people.

Downtown functions in a regional economy - it competes with other commercial centers for customers' spending. It also competes with other locations to attract and retain businesses. As the regional economy has evolved over the last few decades, customers for downtown businesses have been siphoned off, first by big box retailers and then by new retail centers. For Downtown to prosper, it has to reestablish a niche in the larger regional economy. Downtown Harrington offers a unique set of opportunities including its small-town historic character, convenient access, and the availability of moderate cost space - successful revitalization must build on those opportunities.

*Objective*

Identify and support an organization to lead and champion Downtown revitalization.

**Strategy**

Establish a focus on Harrington with the board of the Greater Chamber of Commerce for Milford to foster new development and redevelopment Downtown and to help implement the goals, objectives, and strategies identified in this Plan.

### Strategy

Develop a comprehensive marketing and branding strategy for Downtown revitalization.

Downtown Harrington lacks a clear identity in the minds of the public. While the City has a new logo approved in 2018 – Where Delaware Comes Together - Downtown is simply downtown. A program should be undertaken to develop a “brand” for the Downtown that creates a clear identity for the area while reflecting the core values of the community. This “brand” should then be used in a comprehensive marketing program.

### Strategy

Establish an ongoing program of retail promotions to encourage consumers to use Downtown businesses. Businesses within Downtown Harrington periodically conduct retail promotion activities to attract customers to Downtown and increase sales. An ongoing program of retail promotions should be undertaken including consideration of the following types of activities:

- Develop targeted retail promotions aimed at specific consumer groups such as Downtown workers or people who live in Downtown or other specific areas
- Develop cluster cross-business referral discount programs where customers who make purchases at Downtown businesses receive discounts on other purchases made at participating businesses in the Downtown
- Assist local businesses to participate in existing internet discount coupon programs such as Living Social or Groupon

### Objective

Improve the economic vitality of existing Downtown businesses.

The economic vitality of Downtown is dependent on people spending money in Downtown businesses and on activities located there.

### Strategy

Increase the awareness of Downtown businesses by creating an internet business directory and map.

To provide people with up-to-date information about what is available in the Downtown, a web-based business directory should be established and regularly updated. This directory should categorize businesses by the goods and services they provide. For each business, the site should provide information about the business, provide a link to a map showing the location of the business, and a link to the business' website if they have one.

### Strategy

Support the Buy Local program.

Most Downtown businesses are, and likely will continue to be, locally-owned independent businesses. The State of Delaware has a Buy Local program. Downtown businesses and improvement activities should support the Buy Local program and encourage area residents and visitors to think about buying “locally” when they make purchases.

### Objective

Increase the number and diversity/variety of businesses and other uses in the Downtown.

#### Strategy

Undertake a targeted business recruitment program.

Attracting new businesses and uses to the Downtown should be a shared responsibility. On one hand, the primary responsibility rests with the property owners who have space to rent or sell, but the City can also play a role in identifying and recruiting potential tenants. Typically, business recruitment involves advertising and responding to inquiries. A proactive targeted business recruitment program should be undertaken to interest businesses and other organizations to move to Downtown. This program could include the following types of activities:

- Develop recruiting materials and a welcome packet that provide information about the current business mix, the market, space costs and availability, and the sources of assistance
- Develop a “How to Start a Business in Harrington Guide”
- Establish a group of “business ambassadors” consisting of Downtown business and property owners and others who are involved in Downtown who will agree to be involved in the actual recruiting process and meet with people who are interested in Downtown
- Identify potential targets - individuals, businesses, or organizations - focusing on the following groups:
  - independent, locally-owned enterprises
  - businesses that are not located in Harrington and might be potentially interested in relocating from another location
  - businesses that are located outside of Harrington that may have the potential to open an additional location in Harrington
  - home-based entrepreneurs/businesses in the Harrington area that may be ready to open a full-time business
  - potential business owners who are interested in the Downtown
- Do background research about each identified target to learn about their business and space situation in preparation for an informed contact
- Personally contact each target to talk about Downtown Harrington, explain what it has to offer as a location, and provide targets with a welcome packet and other information about the community and Downtown
- Maintain ongoing contact with people who may be interested in Downtown in the future but who are not yet ready to make a space commitment

#### Strategy

Establish a system for connecting potential businesses with property owners.

A number of different people own buildings in Downtown and various people handle the rental of space in those buildings. When people are identified who have an interest in Downtown, making the connection to the property owners is a key step. A central listing of available space in Downtown should be created and maintained, and a system for connecting potential tenants with property owners established.

#### Strategy

Gradually add retail space that capitalizes on new, higher income residents and employees, as their numbers increase.

**Strategy**

Encourage the development of niche businesses.

There is an opportunity for Downtown businesses that provide shopping experiences and goods or services that are unique. Niche retail establishments that offer high quality products that are locally produced or have qualities that are “uniquely Harrington” can appeal to both tourists and the local community. Also, providing interesting, enjoyable, and unique shopping experiences can have great appeal.

**Strategy**

Encourage sit down restaurants with outdoor seating areas.

The City should provide opportunities for outdoor dining and gathering spaces that promote active and lively streetscape environments. Appropriate sidewalk widths will have to be provided in order to accommodate small dining tables without restricting pedestrian flow. Revisions may be required to allow restaurants to operate outdoor dining within the public right-of-way. Temporary, low-level decorative barriers that also incorporate planter boxes should be used to separate dining from pedestrian through-traffic on the sidewalk.

**Strategy**

Encourage personal service businesses to locate within the Downtown.

*Objective*

Attract new private and public investment.

**Strategy**

Evaluate existing incentive programs and create additional incentive programs, as appropriate.

**Strategy**

Strengthen the relationship with supportive economic development based organizations with extended resources to ensure the Downtown’s vacant structures and lots are being marketed and occupied with investments.

*Objective*

Encourage and support businesses, nonprofits, government, and citizens working together to attain common goals and fully capitalize on the Downtown’s resources.

**Strategy**

Market the Downtown for customers and businesses, including joint marketing and promotions among businesses and special events.

**Strategy**

Assist in marketing walkability and community events with local merchants.

**Strategy**

Encourage businesses of similar types to standardize hours of operation to provide a more coordinated and cohesive Downtown and a more consistent and predictable environment for visitors and patrons.

**Strategy**

Focus on enhancing the characteristics that set Downtown apart from other places in the City.

The U.S. Route 13 highway commercial corridor is more auto-oriented and occupied by businesses that need to attract and accommodate vehicle traffic. Downtown can also accommodate and attract vehicle traffic, but what makes it unique is that it is also a good place to get out of the car and walk around. Economic activity can be enhanced by improving pedestrian infrastructure and providing interesting experiences through public art, architecture, and urban design throughout the Downtown. Rather than view Downtown as being in competition with the highway commercial corridor, it should be seen as an opportunity to have complementary and unique commercial neighborhoods.

*Objective*

Promote a balanced mix of service, restaurant, retail, public, and residential uses.

*Objective*

Encourage infill while preserving and strengthening the existing Downtown character.

### Goal No. 3

Preserve **natural and cultural resources** by encouraging the appropriate preservation and/or reuse of older buildings and sites and the protection of environmentally sensitive resources.

**Background** | The Downtown has an opportunity to become a leader in transitioning to a greener economy. This includes opportunities to increase the rate of recycling among Downtown residents and businesses as well as to reduce overall energy use. In its past, Downtown Harrington was a walkable community where people shopped Downtown and lived in the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Over the years, some of these things have changed; however, the Downtown has the potential to recapture more of a mixed-use character with employment, shopping, services, and housing all available in a compact area.

*Objective*

Encourage the appropriate reuse of older buildings, particularly including the rehabilitation of historically or architecturally significant buildings.

*Objective*

Protect the amounts and quality of groundwater and promote groundwater recharge.

Sustainability and best management practices (BMPs) should play a larger role in future development, redevelopment, and improvements to reduce stormwater runoff. The following are sustainable practices and applications that should be considered for future development, redevelopment, and improvements in the Downtown.

**Strategy**

Investigate the use of permeable pavers and porous asphalt in new parking lot construction to reduce stormwater runoff, especially in designated Source Water Protection Areas.

**Strategy**

Encourage biodiversity.

**Strategy**

Use bioswales, bioretention facilities, and rain gardens in new development, parking lots, and the public right-of-way to reduce stormwater runoff.

*Objective*

Encourage the Downtown to be a model green community that fosters environmentally sound practices.

**Strategy**

Promote recycling among Downtown businesses and residents.

An informational program should be conducted to inform property owners, businesses, and residents about the benefit of recycling and to encourage them to utilize the substation or have their recycling picked up with their waste.

**Strategy**

Encourage the Downtown to be a model for City recycling efforts by increasing the share of the wastes generated by Downtown businesses and residents that are recycled.

**Strategy**

Promote programs to improve the energy efficiency of Downtown buildings and infrastructure.

The Sustainable Energy Utility (and other State agencies) offers a number of loan, grant, and technical assistance programs to assist both residential and non-residential property owners and businesses reduce their energy use. A program should be developed to make people in the Downtown aware of these programs and to help them participate in these programs. This could include making program information available, holding workshops, and providing one-on-one assistance.

## Goal No. 4

Improve the **appearance** of the Downtown's public and private realm.

**Background** | The appearance of an area influences how people feel about it. If the area is attractive, clean, and well-maintained, it creates a positive, inviting feeling. Conversely, if the area is rundown and poorly maintained, it is a deterrent to people coming to the area. The basic infrastructure of Downtown Harrington (or the bones) is quite attractive. Commerce Street is lined with older buildings that in large measure have retained their basic character. The location of buildings at the back of the sidewalk is consistent, and reasonably intact, with a few exceptions. The City undertook streetscape improvements that upgraded portions of the Downtown with improved sidewalks and new ornamental street lighting. A number of storefronts have also been improved.

In spite of its “good bones” and prior improvement efforts, the appearance of the Downtown is not as inviting and welcoming as it could be. Both the public infrastructure and private buildings need to be “spruced up” to make the Downtown more attractive. While the historic character of buildings should be maintained and enhanced, Downtown should be “brightened up” with the addition of more color to buildings.

*Objective*

Provide and support streetscapes that foster a sense of place, civic pride, belonging, and accessibility for all members of the community.

**Strategy**

Continue support for the Beautification Committee

Efforts should be made to regularly provide greenery and flowers throughout the Downtown. The use of planters and appropriate species of street trees should be investigated.

**Strategy**

Develop a public art program for Downtown improvements.

Public art can enhance the Downtown environment and highlight a creative economy. The City should include public art in downtown improvement projects at appropriate locations. A focus of this program could be to tap into a local Harrington artist.

**Strategy**

Extend streetscape improvements and street lighting throughout the Downtown.

**Strategy**

Continue to support the improvements and events at Freedom Park.

**Strategy**

Increase property maintenance and zoning enforcement throughout the Downtown.

*Objective*

Enhance the visual appearance of the City-maintained buildings in the Downtown.

*Objective*

Integrate the railroad station and tracks into the Downtown's character.

*Objective*

Seek to extend the best features of existing development into newer development and promote compatible infill development into the Downtown. Promote new construction that extends the community's character and promotes a pedestrian-friendly environment.

*Objective*

Enhance the visual appearance of privately-owned buildings within the Downtown.

**Strategy**

Work with property owners to upgrade the appearance of buildings.

While most buildings in the Downtown are attractive, historic structures, the overall visual environment can be somewhat drab and uninviting. A number of tenants and property owners have invested in their buildings and some have used bright colors or interesting signage as part of their improvement. A short term improvement program should be undertaken to work with property owners to clean and brighten up buildings throughout the Downtown. This effort should include the following components:

- A cooperative program should be undertaken to help property owners clean up the exterior of their buildings by identifying areas where a coordinated effort might reduce the costs for individual owners. This might include power washing of buildings, window cleaning and repair, and similar activities that have significant mobilization or equipment costs that can be shared.

- A program or design project to encourage property owners to “brighten up” the facade of their buildings by painting doors, trim, or building accents with bright colors. One possibility would be to create a “Doors of Downtown” concept in which property owners and/or businesses are encouraged to paint their front door or the trim around the front door in a bright color. This could then be used as part of the marketing identity for Downtown.

#### Strategy

Work with property owners/businesses to provide storefronts/store window lighting including spaces that are currently vacant.

Some Downtown businesses light their display windows in the evening while others do not. In addition, many of the storefronts of vacant spaces are unlit. This creates dark spots in the nighttime environment in the Downtown. A program should be developed to work with existing businesses and the owners of building spaces to install attractive displays in storefronts and to light them in the evening. This program could use high school students and other volunteers to develop and maintain the window displays for participating businesses and property owners. This program could also include seasonal window painting and seasonal activities.

## Goal No. 5

Proactively plan for improved **infrastructure** (e.g., structures, roads, utilities, pedestrian connectivity, routine maintenance).

**Background** | There is a set of core facilities that supports the Downtown including its streets, sidewalks, park, street lighting, traffic signals, water and sewer systems, telecommunication networks, power systems, and similar infrastructure. This infrastructure also includes public parking facilities both on street and in parking lots, facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists, and bus service. This group of infrastructure is additionally discussed under Goals No. 6 and 7. For Downtown to be an economically viable and attractive place, these basic systems must work, be well maintained, and be attractive.

#### Strategy

Implement improvements such as bicycle racks, transit bus shelter, benches, planters, downtown directory, and common area outdoor sitting areas.

#### Strategy

Identify, prioritize, and correct ADA accessibility barriers to sidewalks, curbs, pedestrian signals, and other pedestrian facilities.

Ensure proper ADA compliant seating, sidewalks, and crosswalks with a universal design.

#### Strategy

Investigate the provision of a fiber network around the City or public Wi-Fi zones within the Downtown.

Making wireless access to the internet a universal service has the capacity to enhance City management and public safety, especially when used by City employees, police officers, and firefighters out in the field. It can also be viewed as a social service to visitors and tourists as well as residents who may not have access to private high-speed service. The most compelling benefit of offering free internet access Downtown is its ability to attract and improve economic development.

**Strategy**

Encourage private property owners and developers to consider the use of high efficiency lighting when new lighting is installed.

**Strategy**

Ensure underground utilities are evaluated for replacement or repair when road reconstruction projects are being addressed.

All road restoration projects within the Downtown create an opportunity to evaluate existing conditions to ensure services are being provided without disruption to their maximum ability.

**Strategy**

Partner with DelDOT to apply for state capital grants using the DDD incentives for infrastructure.

## Goal No. 6

Enhance the Downtown's **transportation and circulation** system to connect and integrate amenities and destinations.

*Objective*

Create an environment that promotes the use of alternative transportation including walking, biking, and transit to move around and come to the Downtown.

**Strategy**

Improve traffic flow.

**Strategy**

Promote the use of alternative transportation.

A program should be undertaken to promote the use of mass transit and other non- automobile forms of transportation to come to the Downtown. This might include programs to offer incentives to people who use the bus to come to Downtown, such as a Bus 'n Buy program in which people who make a purchase in the Downtown are provided a voucher for a free or discounted ride or special transit promotion days to encourage use of the bus system. These programs would need to be coordinated with DART to ensure their viability.

**Strategy**

Develop a bicycle and pedestrian plan and participate in the statewide bicycle plan.

**Strategy**

Improve bicycle facilities and lanes.

There are currently limited facilities for bicycles in the Downtown. As part of the program to improve pedestrian facilities, additional places for parking and locking bicycles should be installed. Although the State has designated Clark and Commerce Streets as part of its regional bicycle route, DelDOT AADT counts show that these corridors carry significant traffic volumes, more than 5,000 vehicles per day on Clark Street and over 8,000 vehicles per day on Commerce Street. While Clark Street includes shoulders and wide outside lanes, Commerce Street does not. Consideration should be given to encouraging recreational cyclists to use alternative streets unless their destination is on a main street in the Downtown.

### Objective

Develop a comprehensive Downtown wayfinding system.

Wayfinding should be a coordinated effort with the goal of directing pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists by providing directions to popular destinations, events, and information relevant to the Downtown. The City should implement a coordinated wayfinding program that can better guide travelers to the Downtown and more effectively direct movement within and around Downtown.

### Strategy

Pursue funding options to develop a comprehensive wayfinding program.

### Strategy

Establish a high quality wayfinding program to better direct motorists to and from the Downtown from the surrounding community and the regional highway system. This entails the placement of signs along roadways well outside the boundaries of the Downtown.

### Strategy

Supplement the proposed wayfinding program with printed maps and brochures, digital and audio tours, a freestanding kiosk(s), and/or website and apps to guide visitors throughout the Downtown.

## Goal No. 7

Provide a sufficient amount of **parking** within the Downtown and ensure its use is properly managed.

### Objective

Optimize Downtown parking for all stakeholders and visitors.

### Strategy

Conduct a comprehensive parking study to guide the Downtown parking program.

The City should conduct a comprehensive Downtown parking study to quantify and qualify existing parking assets, obtain detailed parking demand data by location, time period, and day of week, including event days, to quantify future parking need, refine potential public parking locations/feasibility, shared parking and evaluate cost implications of parking operations/ management efficiencies. Railroad Avenue and Hanley Street are a priority redevelopment area located Downtown for improvements such as additional on-street parking, sidewalks, bicycle racks, and pedestrian amenities.

### Strategy

Improve bicycle parking facilities within the Downtown.

### Objective

Ensure that there is adequate and appropriately located parking to meet the needs of residents, employees, and patrons.

### Strategy

Improve parking signage.

There is one public parking lot currently in the Downtown, but ample on-street parking; however, there are limited signs directing people to either the lot or on-street parking areas. The lot is not clearly marked to designate it as public parking. The City should undertake a program to install signs

directing people to the public parking lot at City Hall and other public parking areas as may be available in the future, and clearly designate which spaces are for public use in those lots where there are also reserved spaces.

## Goal No. 8

Create a Downtown that is alive night and day with **events and activities**.

**Background** | Events and activities can attract visitors to Downtown Harrington, generating activity, creating a greater sense of community, showcasing the Downtown area, and reinforcing Downtown as a community focal point, and social and entertainment center. During the public outreach process, Harrington residents, employees, visitors, and business owners discussed numerous events and festivals they enjoyed, both past and present, including Heritage Day, the Strawberry Festival, and Concerts in the Park, among others. While not all of these events are active, they are well-known and many hope to see current ones continued and/or expanded, and past ones revived.

In addition, the simple request of hosting “more events downtown” has been frequently heard throughout the process. Unfortunately, Downtown may currently lack sufficient space to host or expand regular large-scale events. By creating new spaces for improved community events, including new open space or utilizing parking areas or rights-of-way, the City can better position Downtown to become a stronger and more vibrant center for art and entertainment.

### *Objective*

Increase the number and diversity of cultural, entertainment, and recreational activities and events in the Downtown that attract a wide range of people to the Downtown.

### **Strategy**

Continue current activities and events designed to bring people to the Downtown, with a focus on increasing participation in these activities and expanding the potential for integrating business enhancement actions during events.

Many of the current activities and events are designed to bring people Downtown. In some cases, these are people who come for the specific events but are not regular customers of Downtown businesses. Current activities should be reviewed and new activities designed to include tie-ins with Downtown businesses such as retail promotions to convert event attendees into customers. This can include having concurrent activities involving the businesses during the events or activities, promotions that encourage event participants to return to shop at Downtown businesses such as discount coupons for future purchases, or information about what is available in Downtown in the way of goods and services. As part of this effort, a media and marketing plan should be developed to capitalize on events that are already occurring in the Downtown.

### **Strategy**

Review past and historical events and festivals that could be revived or incorporated with other events (e.g., Strawberry Festival, Harrington Healthy Community Day). Encourage new Downtown volunteers to get involved in the planning and organization of the events to ensure they are maximizing the amount of visitor business during the events.

**Strategy**

Revive the Downtown Farmers' Market.

Look at opportunities to partner with and take advantage of the state's Buy Local and other Department of Agriculture programs to revive the Downtown Farmers' Market.

**Strategy**

Develop and maintain a coordinated calendar of community events and activities with a focus on Downtown activities and place an emphasis on youth activities.

The City of Harrington maintains a calendar of community activities on its website, but it is not a complete list. An implementation item should be the development of a consolidated calendar of community events and activities. This should include a system to collect and disseminate information about all public and community activities and events that occur in or involve Downtown Harrington.

## Goal No. 9

Create a Downtown where residents, workers, visitors, and patrons feel **safe** both day and night.

**Background** | To achieve Harrington's vision for the Downtown, visitors must feel safe when they think about coming to Downtown, business owners have to know that Downtown is safe - for their own business and for their customers, and residents have to be safe to live in Downtown. Creating an environment in which people feel safe in Downtown is absolutely essential to improving the area, to attracting new customers and businesses, and to making Downtown a desirable place to live. Unless Downtown is safe, and is also perceived to be safe, other efforts to improve the Downtown will struggle.

A perception of safety emerges from a variety of factors. There needs to be a visible police presence and involvement with the Downtown community to make people feel safe, as well as to deter inappropriate activity. But safety is not just about having more police. It also involves having more "eyes on the street" and more positive activity in the Downtown. It requires creating a cooperative environment in which property owners, business people, and residents work with the police and each other to address issues and concerns. It requires having more people in the Downtown - think about the difference in how you feel walking along an empty street versus one that is alive with people. It requires having a physical environment that feels safe - that is well lit and that is comfortable to be in. The following describes a program for increasing the perception, as well as the reality, of safety in the Downtown.

### Objective

Ensure that the environment in the Downtown promotes a feeling of safety.

The physical environment contributes to a person's perception of safety. A well-lit, clean, and nicely maintained space creates one perception while a dimly or unevenly lit space that is littered and poorly maintained conveys a different feeling.

**Strategy**

Increase street level vitality by encouraging the active use of ground floor space in the Downtown core.

**Strategy**

Conduct a lighting inventory study of the Downtown to determine areas of poor lighting, especially for pedestrians.

**Strategy**

Improve pedestrian facilities and street lighting.

*Objective*

Ensure that people feel safe in Downtown by minimizing activities that contribute to concerns about safety. The behavior of a few people can greatly influence the overall perception of public safety in Downtown Harrington. This includes motorists speeding through the Downtown and patrons congregating on the sidewalk outside of businesses, potentially creating disturbances. The Police Department is working to reduce these behaviors but it requires an ongoing effort. The following actions are designed to reduce the amount of problems or anti-social behavior in the Downtown.

**Strategy**

Support Police Department efforts to reduce anti-social behavior in the Downtown.

The efforts of the Police Department to reduce the incidence of anti-social behavior in Downtown should be endorsed and supported by the community-at-large and people should be encouraged to support the Department by helping to “make the case” against offending businesses and their patrons. This should include encouraging Downtown residents to report incidents of inappropriate behavior, to participate in public meetings, and to support directing police services and resources to these activities including budget hearings and similar events. Ongoing efforts should be made to locate and secure outside funding to support the Police Department’s work in these areas.

**Strategy**

Publicize and enforce the State’s “Yield to Pedestrians in the Crosswalk” law.

The agency responsible for the jurisdiction of the street should regularly upgrade the marking of crosswalks in the Downtown and install clear “yield to pedestrian” signs and indicators. Several of the streets in the Downtown are maintained by the Delaware Department of Transportation. An informational campaign should be undertaken to inform the public and motorists to yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk.

*Objective*

Enhance community policing to increase citizen awareness of the police presence in the Downtown.

The Harrington Police Department plays a critical role in creating a safe downtown. The Department recognizes this and supports the concept of community policing. Many people are unaware of what the Department is doing to ensure that the Downtown is a safe place. The following actions are designed to increase the awareness of the Police Department’s ongoing community policing activities in the Downtown.

**Strategy**

Publicize Police Department community policing activities in the Downtown.

An ongoing program should be undertaken in conjunction with the Police Department to make both Downtown interests and the greater community more aware of what the Department is doing to improve public safety in the Downtown and how people can assist them in this effort. This program will need to evolve over time, but should include articles in The Harrington Journal, City Chatter Newsletter, and Chief’s Corner about the activities of the Police Department, activities to make people aware of Downtown patrols and patrol officers, publicity for successful efforts to reduce problem behavior, and a mechanism to provide support for Police Department funding and activities that relate to the Downtown.

### Strategy

Create a community event procedure to establish a clearinghouse to ensure an appropriate police presence at Downtown activities as well as any additional services such as trash, traffic control, public works, and City personnel.

A system should be established that informs the City and all departments of planned activities in the Downtown - even those not requiring event permits. This should provide the City with sufficient lead time to allow them to assess the need for a City service and to schedule additional coverage if appropriate. This system should function as the clearinghouse where various groups can notify and work with the City to ensure that an appropriate police presence is provided during special events and activities.

## Goal No. 10

Create an environment in which **young people** feel welcome in the Downtown and contribute to making it a friendly, lively, and successful atmosphere.

**Background** | Our youth are the future of Downtown. If they develop an interest in and a habit of doing things in the Downtown, this will pay long term dividends to the community. It is key that young people be involved in deciding how they can help and what roles they should play in both implementing this Downtown Plan and being involved in the City in general. This section looks at some possible approaches for involving them in the implementation process.

### Objective

Foster more involvement by local school students and other young people in Downtown activities.

### Strategy

Establish a City of Harrington student liaison position.

The City of Harrington should designate a person to act as a student liaison to work with young people and to involve them in Downtown revitalization activities.

### Strategy

Add student representatives to existing and future City committees, as appropriate, especially in regard to the Downtown.

Young people should have a seat at the table and participate in the decisions about the future of the Downtown and help determine how students can be involved in the implementation of the Downtown Plan. Student board member positions should be created and solicited. This effort should include a commitment to ensure that these student board members will be able to get to and from meetings.

### Strategy

Consider the creation of a program for Downtown businesses to mentor young adults and involve them as interns.

Involving high school students in Downtown businesses will increase their interest in the Downtown while allowing them to develop important job and life skills. A program should be established to place young people as “student interns” in Downtown businesses. This effort should include a commitment on the part of the businesses to provide the student with ongoing mentoring during the internship period.

**Strategy**

Involve students in projects to improve the Downtown.

The City of Harrington student liaison should work with student representatives to identify ways that young people can be involved in the implementation of the Downtown Plan and to help organize those activities.

*Objective*

Expand the range of businesses and activities in the Downtown that appeal to younger customers.

**Strategy**

Encourage development of businesses that will create a home base for teens.

Young people are invested in the future of their community and its Downtown, yet a recurring theme is the lack of activities and destinations that attract teens and young adults. To address this gap, the City should actively engage students and other young residents in planning and shaping an appropriate teen-centered space in Downtown.

Potential concepts include youth-oriented community facilities such as a YMCA or a Boys & Girls Club, or similar programs that offer recreational, educational, and social opportunities. The specific nature and scale of the facility should be refined through a collaborative planning process to ensure it meets the needs of the City's youth and remains viable over the long term.

To advance these opportunities, the City should proactively communicate the full suite of DDD incentives to potential investors, helping to attract investment and ensure the feasibility of such developments.

**Strategy**

Keep youth informed about the Downtown. The City of Harrington's student liaison should provide information about Downtown activities and programs to area schools as well as the Harrington Public Library for publication and dissemination among students. The liaison should also work with interested faculty and staff to ensure that students are kept involved in Downtown activities.

The following is a restatement of the ten goals developed for Downtown Harrington:

### *Goal No. 1*

Strengthen **residential** neighborhoods, with an emphasis on encouraging homeownership, rehabilitating older buildings, and maintaining the existing character.

### *Goal No. 2*

Create a **Downtown** where shops, banks, and other traditional businesses flourish alongside creative enterprises in a friendly, lively, and successful atmosphere.

### *Goal No. 3*

Preserve **natural and cultural resources** by encouraging the appropriate preservation and/or reuse of older buildings and sites and the protection of environmentally sensitive resources.

### *Goal No. 4*

Improve the **appearance** of the Downtown's public and private realm.

### *Goal No. 5*

Proactively plan for improved **infrastructure** (e.g., structures, roads, utilities, pedestrian connectivity, routine maintenance).

### *Goal No. 6*

Enhance the Downtown's **transportation and circulation** system to connect and integrate amenities and destinations.

### *Goal No. 7*

Provide a sufficient amount of **parking** within the Downtown and ensure its use is properly managed.

### *Goal No. 8*

Create a Downtown that is alive night and day with **events and activities**.

### *Goal No. 9*

Create a Downtown where residents, workers, visitors, and patrons feel **safe** both day and night.

### *Goal No. 10*

Create an environment in which **young people** feel welcome in the Downtown and contribute to making it a friendly, lively, and successful atmosphere.

# Chapter Four.

## *Downtown Harrington – The Key Priority Projects*



## Redevelopment Areas

Redevelopment areas are identified as vacant structures and vacant lots located in the Downtown area. Some of them are further identified as key priority projects. Map 5. Potential Redevelopment Projects, shows the two areas for redevelopment. These areas have been identified as high-importance for redevelopment based on their existing infrastructure, walkability, visibility at key locations, and needed curb-appeal improvements. The curb appeal and occupancy rate plays a vital role in sustaining the Downtown as an economic development engine for the City. Recognizing that different types of redevelopment have unique improvement needs, the City plans to actively market vacant structures and lots through its website, while also offering the potential for streamlined zoning and permitting to support new investment.

### Vacant Structures

Verified through a 2025 field survey, there are currently 10 vacant structures within the Downtown and they play a critical role when stakeholders are looking to invest in this area. It is important that filling existing structures be a priority for the Downtown. Structures can remain vacant for several reasons such as rent being too high, selectivity with specific tenants, structure not being up to building code requirements, lack of investment to bring the property to the current market needs, difficulty in finding tenants, location, etc. To actively market the vacant structures and provide a presence Downtown, it is recommended that any vacant structure with windows provide seasonal displays and promote City events as well as post the property and owner contact information for potential occupancy. It is further recommended that the City work with all existing structures that have boarded windows to suggest window replacement or encourage the installation of older Downtown images such as those located on Downtown Junction's exterior walls.

### Vacant Lots

The Downtown area has quite a few vacant lots; however, several of them are very small in size and it would be difficult to meet all of the development requirements if they were to be developed separately. Some of the challenges to the small vacant lots, if required, include stormwater management, off-street parking, entrance and exit locations, trash services, fire lanes, and loading spaces. Shown on *Map 5. Potential Redevelopment Areas*, there are 20 vacant lots zoned as commercial and 45 vacant lots zoned as residential. 27 of the 45 residential vacant lots are located South of New and East Street. There is an abundance of opportunities to fill in gaps that these parcels display to better connect the Downtown

## Key Priority Projects

While the above-mentioned redevelopment areas are of high importance and any projects done at these locations will be a catalyst for further investment, more specific locations and projects are identified as key priority projects. Delaware's Downtown Development District Guidelines in 2022 defines key priority projects as specific projects that could be a potential catalyst and provide significant positive impacts to the district should they be implemented. These projects receive priority scoring for DDD Rebate funding and may receive added support such as enhanced marketing. With the additional support in mind and based on the downtown survey, development activity, and collected data, the priority projects have been chosen and are shown in *Map 6. Key Priority Projects*, described below, and shown in Table 8 immediately following this chapter.

### *Railroad Area Improvements*

Railroad area improvements would take place along Delaware Avenue and Railroad Avenue to Hanley Street. This area is located in the middle of the Downtown and is an opportunity to create a train themed walking

tour destination. Each street has different improvement needs within the area.

### Delaware Avenue

Delaware Avenue has been identified as a Downtown gateway connecting the north side of Delaware Avenue to Clark Street. The western side of the street provides access to a rail storage yard as well as the Train Station and is predominantly a gravel surface with no landscaping or identified parking spaces. This area could easily be improved by adding landscaping components, marked parking spaces, and a buffer between the storage yard and Delaware Avenue. The eastern side of the street provides a mix of vacant lots between a few neighborhood businesses. This area could be improved by new structures being built on the vacant lots or landscaped green open spaces.

### Railroad Avenue & Hanley Street

The Railroad Avenue and Hanley Street area presents a strong opportunity for a coordinated master plan that enhances visitor experience and strengthens connections across Downtown. A thoughtfully designed route would guide visitors from the northern portion of Railroad Avenue past the Train Museum on Hanley Street, supported by educational and interpretive signage highlighting the history of railroad service in Harrington and the State of Delaware. A consistent train themed design, incorporating the “Where Delaware Comes Together” slogan, could be reflected in elements such as benches, pedestrian-scale lighting, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, and safe pedestrian connections. Ensuring ADA-compliant pathways and crossings will be essential. The master plan should also address key infrastructure and amenities, including additional on-street parking, improved lighting, drainage upgrades, sidewalk enhancements, and strategic fence relocation to create a welcoming and accessible environment throughout the project area.

The initial identified stakeholders could include Norfolk Southern Railroad, the Harrington Historical Society, Delaware Department of Transportation, Kent County Tourism, train enthusiast organizations, and the Delaware Division of Small Business Delaware on Main Program, along with the Downtown stakeholders.

### Harrington Meadows

Harrington Meadows is a residential project initiated in 2020 that still contains 20 undeveloped single-family and duplex-style lots located off Peck Avenue, west of Diamond Court. Completing these remaining homes would bring much-needed new housing to the area and help reduce the number of long-vacant parcels near Downtown. This development would also reinforce the viability of the residential-zoned vacant lots across the street by creating a stronger neighborhood presence, supporting future infill opportunities, and encouraging additional investment in the surrounding area.

### Key Priority Vacant Structures

Aligned with the rationale behind the high-importance vacant structure redevelopment projects, these specific sites serve as pivotal anchors for stimulating further investment and generating sustained redevelopment momentum.

#### 1-II Spartan Station Shopping Center, Parcel #6-09-17908-04-0700-00001

This partially vacant shopping center consists of a single building with multiple units. Currently, two businesses operate on-site, Connection CSP and CORAS Wellness & Behavioral Health. Located at 1 East Street on a prominent corner adjoining Clark Street, the property offers high visibility and is surrounded by other commercial uses. Revitalizing this center would also complement two other Key Priority Projects, 45 Clark Street and Parcel #6-09-17908-06-0200-00001, described in the Vacant Lots section below.

### 12 Commerce Street

This commercially zoned, 2,589-square-foot brick and concrete block building, constructed in 1998, is surrounded by a range of established commercial uses, including The Bowers Group, Happy Tails Dog Grooming, The Clutter Box, WSFS Bank, M&T Bank, and others. Investments made to bring this building up to code will be vital in order to bring in further business that will enhance this commercial area

### 14 Commerce Street

Located directly adjacent to 12 Commerce Street, this commercially zoned, 4,184-square-foot brick-vener building was constructed in 1930. Given their proximity and complementary commercial context, reinvestment in either property has the potential to serve as a catalyst for improvements to the other.

### 19 Dorman Street

This 3,596-square-foot Colonial-style structure, built in 1900, presents a strong commercial redevelopment opportunity within the C-2 zoning district. Its location, within a walkable residential neighborhood and just steps from the shops and services along Commerce Street, makes it well suited for ground floor commercial use such as office, service, or small-scale retail, all of which are permitted and encouraged in this zone. The building's size and layout also offer the potential to incorporate an upper story residential unit, aligning with the district's mixed-use objectives and supporting additional foot traffic in the Downtown. Bringing the structure up to code remains essential to remove it from the vacancy list, but once stabilized, the property could serve as a high value commercial anchor with complementary residential space overhead.

### *Key Priority Vacant Lots*

Consistent with the reasoning applied to the high-importance redevelopment vacant-lot projects, these sites present opportunities for new development or, where size is limited, enhancements such as landscaping or public amenities. Several of these lots are also adjacent and could be combined to maximize development potential and better utilize the available land.

### 45 Clark Street

Located directly across from the Spartan Station Shopping Center, this commercially zoned, 8,449-square-foot corner lot sits at the intersection of East Street and Clark Street. Surrounded by a mix of commercial and residential properties, the site is well positioned for redevelopment. Any investment here would directly complement and strengthen the Spartan Station Shopping Center priority project.

### Parcel #6-09-17908-06-0200-00001

Situated immediately south of 45 Clark Street, this commercially zoned, 9,888-square-foot parcel adjoins the Buggy Bath Car Wash. Its proximity to both commercial activity and other targeted redevelopment sites makes it a strong candidate for future investment.

### 108 Delaware Avenue

Situated on the east side of Delaware Avenue, across from the Delmarva Central Railroad, this, 13,242-square-foot commercial zoned lot occupies a strategic location within a mixed residential and commercial area. The Harrington Volunteer Fire Company sits immediately behind the property, further reinforcing its central position within the community.

### Parcel #6-09-17020-05-6500-00001

Located directly south of 108 Delaware Avenue, this commercially zoned, 5,227-square-foot parcel presents a strong opportunity for reinvestment that would create a direct positive impact on the 108 Delaware Avenue priority project. The parcel is positioned near established commercial uses including Farm Family Life Insurance Company and Harrington Motor World.

Table 8: Key Priority Projects

#	Project	Location	Parcel #	Existing Use	Proposed Use	Justification	Alignment with DDD Goals
1	Delaware Avenue	South end of Delaware Avenue, mostly on the west side with one vacant parcel on the East side	6-09-17020-03-9201-00001, 6-09-17020-05-1000-00001	Western side: Gravel, rail storage yard with undefined parking Eastern side: Vacant lot	Western side: Permanent parking area, landscaping components with a buffer between the storage yard Eastern side: New structure or landscaped open space	Enhances a key Downtown gateway, improves aesthetics, creates clearer parking organization, and supports reinvestment in underutilized land.	Goals 4, 5, 6
2	Railroad Avenue & Hanley Street	Railroad Avenue from West Liberty Street through the north end of Hanley Street	6-09-17020-03-9200-00001, 6-09-17908-04-0101-00001	Railroad Avenue: Gravel lot with unmarked parking Hanley Street: Train museum	Coordinated master plan including pedestrian route, ADA-compliant pathways, interpretive/educational signage, train-themed benches, lighting, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, improved on-street parking, drainage upgrades, sidewalk enhancements, and fence relocation	Enhances Downtown visitor experience, strengthens connections to the Train Museum, improves accessibility and safety, and supports placemaking with a consistent thematic design.	Goals 4, 5, 6, 8, 10
3	Harrington Meadows	Off Peck Avenue, west of Diamond Court	20 consecutive parcels: 6-09-17908-05-6400-00001, 6-09-17908-05-6300-00001, 6-09-17908-05-6200-00001, ..., 6-09-17908-05-4500-00001	Undeveloped single-family and duplex-style lots	Completion of single-family and duplex homes	Completes remaining homes, provides new housing stock, reduces vacant parcels, strengthens neighborhood viability, and supports future infill investment.	Goals 1, 4, 5
4	1-11 Spartan Station Shopping Center	1 East Street (corner of Clark Street)	6-09-17908-04-0700-00001	Partially vacant shopping center; single building with multiple units; current businesses include Connection CSP and CORAS Wellness & Behavioral Health	Revitalization of the shopping center; potential redevelopment or renovation of vacant units to attract new commercial tenants	Enhances a high-visibility commercial property, supports local businesses, reduces vacancy in a key Downtown location, and complements other priority projects on Clark Street.	Goals 2, 3, 4, 5
5	12 Commerce Street	12 Commerce Street	6-09-17908-01-3200-00001	2,589 sq. ft. vacant commercial building; surrounded by established commercial uses including The Bowers Group, Happy Tails Dog Grooming, The Clutter Box, WSFS Bank, M&T Bank	Interior and/or exterior improvements to the structure to bring it up to code to attract and accommodate a new commercial tenant	Improves property condition, attracts new tenants, strengthens surrounding commercial corridor, and supports ongoing Downtown revitalization efforts.	Goals 2, 3, 4, 5
6	14 Commerce Street	14 Commerce Street	6-09-17908-01-3300-00001	4,184 sq. ft. vacant commercial building; adjacent to 12 Commerce Street	Interior and/or exterior improvements to the structure to bring it up to code to attract and accommodate a new commercial tenant	Proximity to 12 Commerce Street offers a chance for coordinated improvements; reinvestment could catalyze additional Downtown commercial activity and enhance the corridor.	Goals 2, 3, 4, 5
7	19 Dorman Street	19 Dorman Street	6-09-17020-02-3100-00001	3,596 sq. ft. vacant Colonial-style single-family structure	Improvements to the structure to bring it up to code to allow for ground-floor commercial use (office, service, small-scale retail) and potential upper-story residential unit	Supports redevelopment in a walkable neighborhood, removes vacancy from the property, strengthens the Downtown commercial corridor, and creates mixed-use opportunities with complementary residential space.	Goals 1, 2, 3, 4

#	Project	Location	Parcel #	Existing Use	Proposed Use	Justification	Alignment with DDD Goals
8	45 Clark Street	Intersection of East Street & Clark Street	6-09-17908-06-0100-00001	Vacant corner lot, 8,449 sq. ft.; commercially zoned; across from Spartan Station Shopping Center	Improvements to prepare the lot for commercial redevelopment, including site clearing, grading, and utilities to attract new commercial tenants	Strategically located to complement Spartan Station Shopping Center; redevelopment strengthens the commercial corridor and supports Downtown economic vitality.	Goals 2, 3, 4, 5
9	Parcel #6-09-17908-06-0200-00001	Immediately south of 45 Clark Street	6-09-17908-06-0200-00001	Vacant commercially zoned parcel, 9,888 sq. ft.	Improvements to prepare the lot for commercial redevelopment, including site clearing, grading, and utilities to attract new commercial tenants	Strategically located near 45 Clark Street and other commercial activity; redevelopment supports coordinated growth and strengthens the Downtown commercial corridor.	Goals 2, 3, 4, 5
10	108 Delaware Avenue	108 Delaware Avenue	6-09-17020-05-0500-00001	Vacant commercially zoned lot, 13,242 sq. ft.	Improvements to prepare the lot for commercial redevelopment, including site clearing, grading, and utilities to attract new commercial tenants	Strategically located within a mixed-use area; redevelopment strengthens the Delaware Avenue corridor and supports adjacent priority projects.	Goals 2, 3, 4, 5.
11	Parcel #6-09-17020-05-6500-00001	Directly south of 108 Delaware Avenue	6-09-17020-05-6500-00001	Vacant commercially zoned parcel, 5,227 sq. ft.	Improvements to prepare the lot for commercial redevelopment to complement 108 Delaware Avenue, including site clearing, grading, and utilities to attract new commercial tenants	Complements redevelopment of 108 Delaware Avenue; strengthens adjacent commercial activity and supports coordinated investment in the Downtown corridor.	Goals 2, 3, 4, 5

# Chapter Five.

## *Downtown Harrington - The Incentives*



## Existing Local Incentives

### Expedited Review Process | Citywide

In 2007, a two-tiered review process was presented and adopted by the City Council that created a Category A Site Plan Review and a Category B Administrative Plan Review. This tier system allowed specific development applications to be completed without any public meeting, if the project was Code compliant with an Administrative review process. These procedures can be found in the City of Harrington Code, Chapter 440- 287, Uses Requiring Site Plans. If the requirements were followed as stated in the City Code, the process is faster and less expensive in terms of time and cost. This process has been very successful and encourages redevelopment through onsite guidance and building improvements and is believed to have initiated a Downtown resurgence.

### Downtown Revitalization Area Tax Incentive Program | Downtown

On May 7, 2012, the City Council approved Ordinance 12-07 relating to the Downtown Revitalization Area Tax Incentive Program. All improvements to the exterior of existing commercial structures located in the downtown area facing Commerce Street and/or Clark Street are eligible to apply for a partial exemption from the City's real estate taxes. See City Code Chapter 378 Downtown Revitalization Area Tax Incentive Program.

### Sewer and Water Impact Fee Calculations | Citywide

On February 19, 2013, the City Council approved Ordinances 13-01 and 13-02 regarding the calculation of Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDUs) in relation to sewer and water impact fees. This revision was adopted based on Kent County Levy Court's impact fee calculations.

### Site Plan Extension | Citywide

On June 2, 2014, the City Council approved Ordinance 14-09, which extended the length of time for a site plan approval. The Planning Commission's site plan approval shall become null and void unless a zoning compliance certificate has been issued for the proposed development within two years from the date of the Planning Commission approval. The Planning Commission may, for good cause, grant an extension of up to a total of eighteen months.

### Reduced Fee Adoption | Citywide

On June 16, 2014, the City Council approved Ordinance 14-04, which adopted a new fee schedule, reducing the water impact fee from \$2,000 to \$1,170 and adjusting other municipal fees.

### Water Usage Fee Reduction | Citywide

On September 16, 2014, the City Council approved Ordinance 14-14 to reduce the water usage fees. This ordinance reduced the water rate for in-City users from \$3.55/1,000 gallons of usage to \$3.25/1,000 gallons of usage and for out-of-City users from \$4.72/1,000 gallons of usage to \$4.32/1,000 gallons of usage.

### First-Time Home Buyer Realty Transfer Tax Exemption | Citywide

On April 18, 2016, the City Council approved Ordinance 16-04 to allow for an exemption from the realty transfer tax for first-time homebuyers as defined in the City of Harrington Code, Chapter 378 Taxation.

### Direct Job Creation Impact Fee Waiver | Citywide

A tiered system to waive water and sewer impact fees based on the number of full-time jobs created within the City. Table 9 below, from section 157-37 of the City of Harrington eCode, describes the tiered system.

*Table 9: Direct Job Creation Impact Fee Waiver*

Tier	Full-Time Equivalent Jobs Created	Impact Fee Waivers*
1	5 to 9	1
2	10 to 14	2
3	15 to 19	3
4	20 to 24	4
5	25 to 29	5
6	30 or more	All
* Number of impact fees waived is for both water and sewer (1 = 1 water impact fee and 1 sewer impact fee)		

### New Business License Fee Waiver | Downtown

New businesses located in the Downtown, as shown on *Map 1. Downtown Boundary*, will be eligible for a one-time waiver of its Business License fee for the first three years. Businesses will still be required to obtain the Business License. This license waiver does not apply to rental licensing.

**Development Application Fee Reduction | Downtown** Development applications for a Category A or Category B plan review within the Downtown, as shown on *Map 1. Downtown Boundary*, are eligible for a one-time fee reduction in the amount of \$200 per parcel and/or application.

### Development Application Expedited Review Time | Downtown

Any site plan review applications submitted in the Downtown, as shown on *Map 1. Downtown Boundary*, will receive review comments within 10 working days from the date of submission to the City.

**First-Time Home Buyer Tax Abatement | Downtown** A first-time homebuyer for an owner-occupied single-family home may be eligible for a one-time abatement of the first full tax assessment billing.

## Other Funding & Support Opportunities



### Federal Sources

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) | CDBG** grants are funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for community revitalization through housing, infrastructure, and economic development programs that serve the interests of low- and moderate-income populations.

**Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grant | EDA** grants can be used to finance construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure and facilities that are necessary to achieve long-term growth and economic vitality.

**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Assessment Grant | Assessment** grants provide funding to carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites. An applicant must own the site for which funding is requested at the time of the application.

**Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program (HPTC)** | HPTC provides developers with a federal tax credit up to 20% off of the costs associated with the renovation or rehabilitation of a building listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**HOME** | HOME provides grants to states and municipalities to fund a wide range of activities intended to assist in building, buying, and/or rehabilitating affordable housing.

**Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program** | The LIHTC program provides a dollar-to-dollar tax credit to attract equity investments to finance the development of affordable housing.

**New Market Tax Credit (NMTC) Program** | The NMTC Program attracts investment capital to qualifying low-income census tracts by permitting individual and corporate investors to receive a tax credit against their Federal income tax return in exchange for making equity investments in specialized institutions called Community Development Entities (CDEs).

**U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) BUILD Grant** | BUILD Grants provide funds for investment in road, rail, transit, and port projects that promise to achieve critical national objectives that make communities more livable and sustainable.



#### *State Sources*

**Advantage 4** | This grant program assists qualified borrowers in the purchase of their own home by providing down payment and closing cost assistance in the form of a grant equal to 4% of the first mortgage loan amount.

**Brownfields Grant Funding** | this grant is used to spur the return of brownfields to productive economic reuse. Funding levels vary by applicant type: nonprofit developers may receive up to \$600,000, qualifying small for-profit businesses up to \$250,000, and other for-profit developers up to \$200,000. Additional supplemental funding may also be available depending on project needs.

**Clean Transportation Incentive Program** | This program provides grants and rebates for Delawareans, Delaware counties and municipalities, and Delaware businesses for the purchase of new, alternatively fueled vehicles and electric vehicle charging stations.

**Delaware Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (DEMAP)** | DEMAP is designed to assist Delawareans who are 90 days or more delinquent on their mortgage payments. Reasons for hardship are limited to unemployment or reduction in hours as a result of a downturn in the economy, illness, or injury. The Delaware State Housing Authority brings the mortgage current with a lump sum payment and makes additional payments for up to 24 months that allows the borrower to stabilize their financial position.

**Energy Assessments** | The Delaware Sustainable Energy Utility is subsidizing energy audits performed by the University of Delaware's Industrial Assessment Center. This program also serves to train UD graduate students through hands-on energy auditing experience. After the building assessment, participants receive a list of recommended energy conservation measures, estimated costs and savings, and payback periods.

**Energy Efficiency Investment Fund (EEIF)** | The EEIF program helps businesses offset upfront costs for energy efficiency improvements and offers two grant/loan options for installation of energy efficiency projects.



**First Time Homebuyer Tax Credit** | This program is a federal income tax credit designed to help make homeownership more affordable to qualified homebuyers. Homebuyers who elect to use the federal tax credit are eligible to claim a portion of the annual interest paid on their mortgage as a special tax credit.

**Green Energy Program** | This program provides grant incentives for qualifying renewable energy systems installed in Delaware. In order to qualify for rebates, a participant's electricity provider must collect funds for the program and currently offer a grant program for renewable energy projects. Each utility company offering rebates has unique program regulations, requirements, program budgets, incentive levels, and application forms.

**Green Infrastructure** | Green infrastructure loans are available for projects at below market interest rates. Interest rate subsidies and/or principal forgiveness may be provided based on the affordability of the project. Wastewater facilities and environmentally innovative projects are eligible.

**Home Purchase Rehabilitation Program** | This program assists homebuyers purchase a home that may need to be repaired, improved, or made more energy efficient. The cost to purchase the home and the costs of repairs (up to \$35,000) are combined into one loan.

**Housing Development Fund (HDF)** | The HDF is designed to provide financing for developers through sponsoring agencies. Types of developments that will be considered include, but are not limited to, the acquisition and/or rehabilitation of existing housing, the adaptive reuse of buildings, and new construction.

**Leaking Storage Tank Remediation** | These loans provide a source of low interest financing for protecting the State's groundwater supplies by rehabilitating underground storage tank systems. Eligibility open to owners or lessees of underground storage tank facilities that need rehabilitation in order to meet regulatory requirements and where the applicant demonstrates ability to repay the loan.

**Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)** | The statewide program provides a direct federal income tax credit to qualified owners and investors to build, acquire, or rehabilitate rental housing units to rent to working low-income Delawareans. The equity raised through the tax credit investment makes it possible for developers to attract the financing needed to create or restore low-income rental housing.

**National Register of Historic Places Technical Assistance** | The Delaware Department of State, Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs provides technical assistance to parties interested in applying for recognition on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA)** | The NAA program encourages businesses and individuals who pay Delaware state income taxes to invest in programs serving impoverished neighborhoods or serving low- and moderate-income families. In exchange for a qualified contribution to benefit an approved non-profit program, the NAA provides state tax credits equal to 50% of the investment.

**Recycling** | Recycling programs support the statewide universal recycling law and offers grants, loans, business sector recycling toolkits, and technical assistance. Government, commercial, and non-profit applicants are eligible for grants and loans to increase the recycling rate.

**Second Mortgage Assistance Loan (SMAL)** | SMAL assists income qualified borrowers in the purchase of their own home by providing down payment and closing cost assistance in the form of second mortgages. SMAL must be used in conjunction with the Delaware State Housing Authority's Homeownership Loan.



**SEU Low-Interest Loan Program for Businesses and Non-Profits** | The Delaware Sustainable Energy Utility will provide direct low-interest loans to businesses, non-profits, and governments for the purpose of financing energy conservation measures. Loans can range between \$25,000 and \$1 million.

**Strong Neighborhood Housing Fund (SNHF)** | The SNHF is intended to fund local jurisdictions and non-profit development agencies to acquire, renovate, and sell vacant, abandoned, foreclosed, or blighted buildings in targeted areas.

**Stormwater Infrastructure** | Loans are available for stormwater infrastructure projects at below market interest rates. Interest rate subsidies and/ or principal forgiveness may be provided based on the affordability of the project. Projects with water quality benefits are eligible.

**Sustainable Energy Utility (SEU)** | The SEU buys solar renewable energy credits (SREC) for \$0.45 per watt from solar installations up to 50Kw. In exchange, the generation owners assign SREC generated over the next 20 years to the SEU. Residential photovoltaic systems up to 50kW are eligible to generate for SREC procurement.

**Waste Reduction** | This program conducts free waste assessments to help participants understand Best Management Practices (BMPs) and navigate service options related to waste streams. Government and commercial applicants are eligible for technical assistance to increase the recycling rate, reduce waste generation, and cut costs.

**Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)** | WAP is a free service that is designed to reduce energy costs for low-income families by improving the energy efficiency of their home. Grant funds are provided by the U.S. Department of Energy and state sources for administering the program. Residential home owners, low-income housing developers and owners, and home renters are eligible to apply for direct grants to install energy efficiency and home weatherization measures.

**Welcome Home/Home Again** | This is a home ownership program that provides first mortgage financing at below-market interest rates to qualified homebuyers.




# Chapter Six.

## *Downtown Harrington - The Maps*



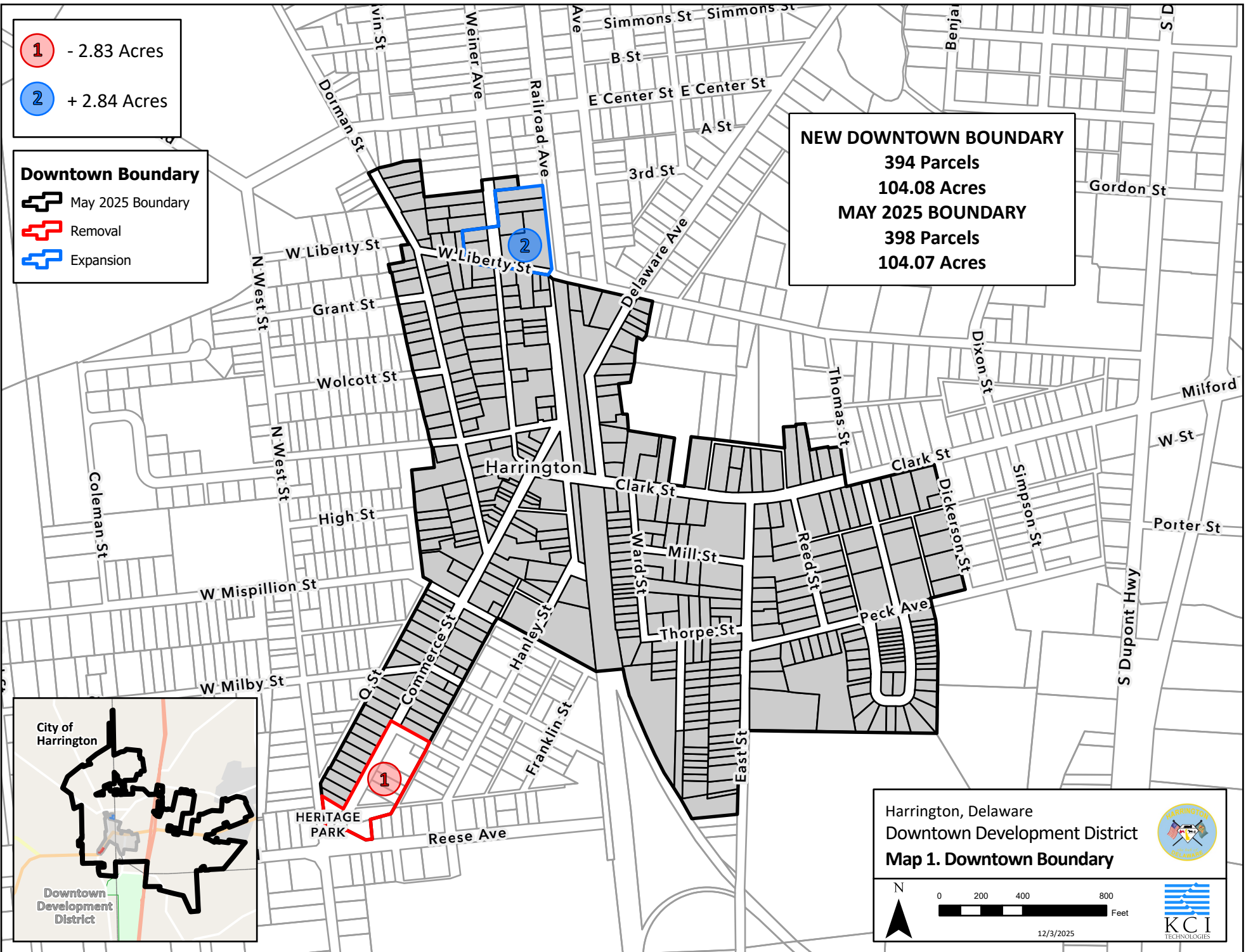
- 1 - 2.83 Acres
- 2 + 2.84 Acres

**Downtown Boundary**



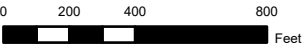
-  May 2025 Boundary
-  Removal
-  Expansion

**NEW DOWNTOWN BOUNDARY**  
 394 Parcels  
 104.08 Acres


**MAY 2025 BOUNDARY**  
 398 Parcels  
 104.07 Acres



Harrington, Delaware  
 Downtown Development District  
**Map 1. Downtown Boundary**

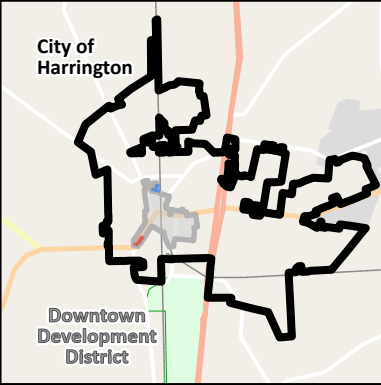
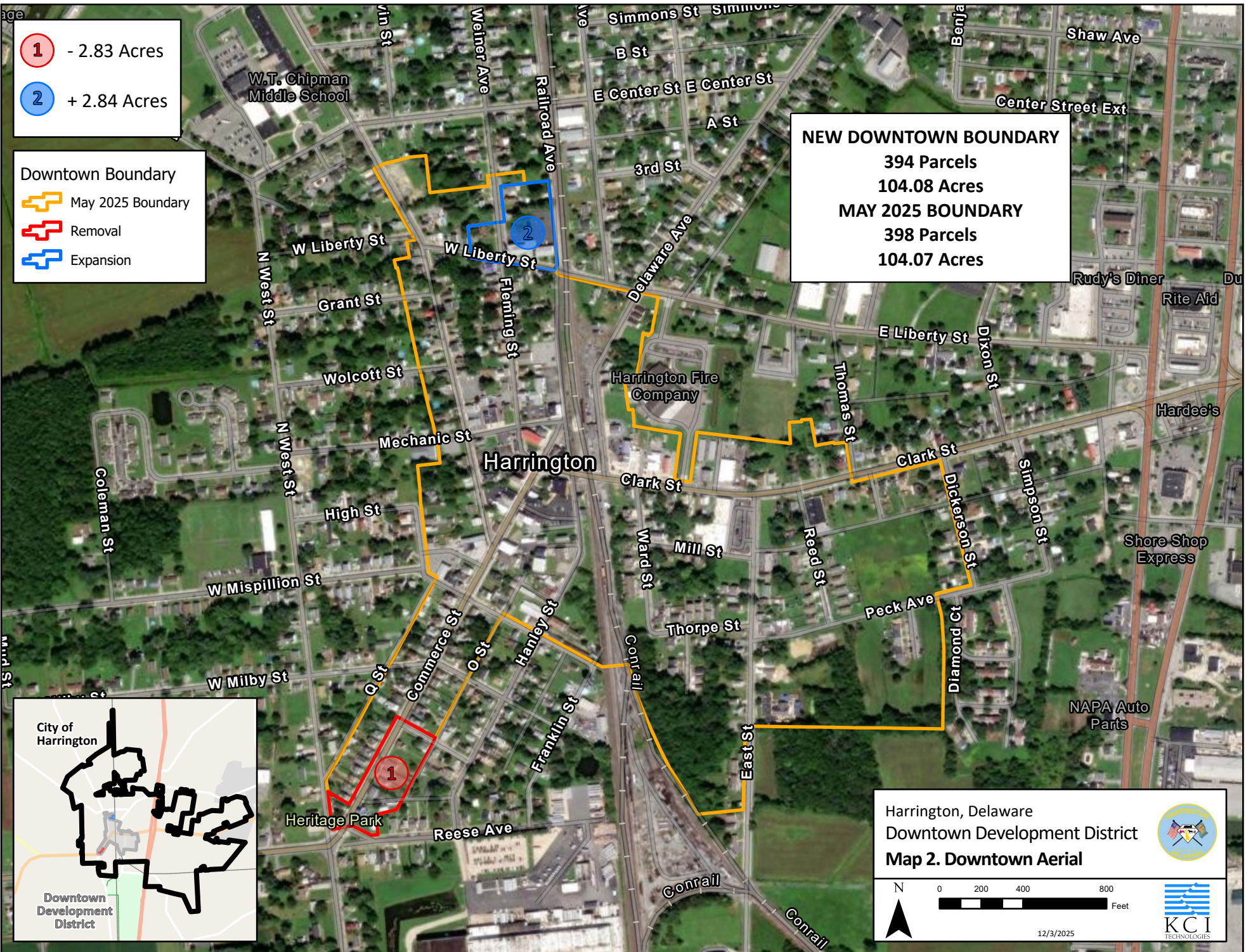
12/3/2025




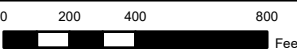

- 1 - 2.83 Acres
- 2 + 2.84 Acres

- Downtown Boundary
- May 2025 Boundary
  - Removal
  - Expansion


**NEW DOWNTOWN BOUNDARY**  
 394 Parcels  
 104.08 Acres  
**MAY 2025 BOUNDARY**  
 398 Parcels  
 104.07 Acres

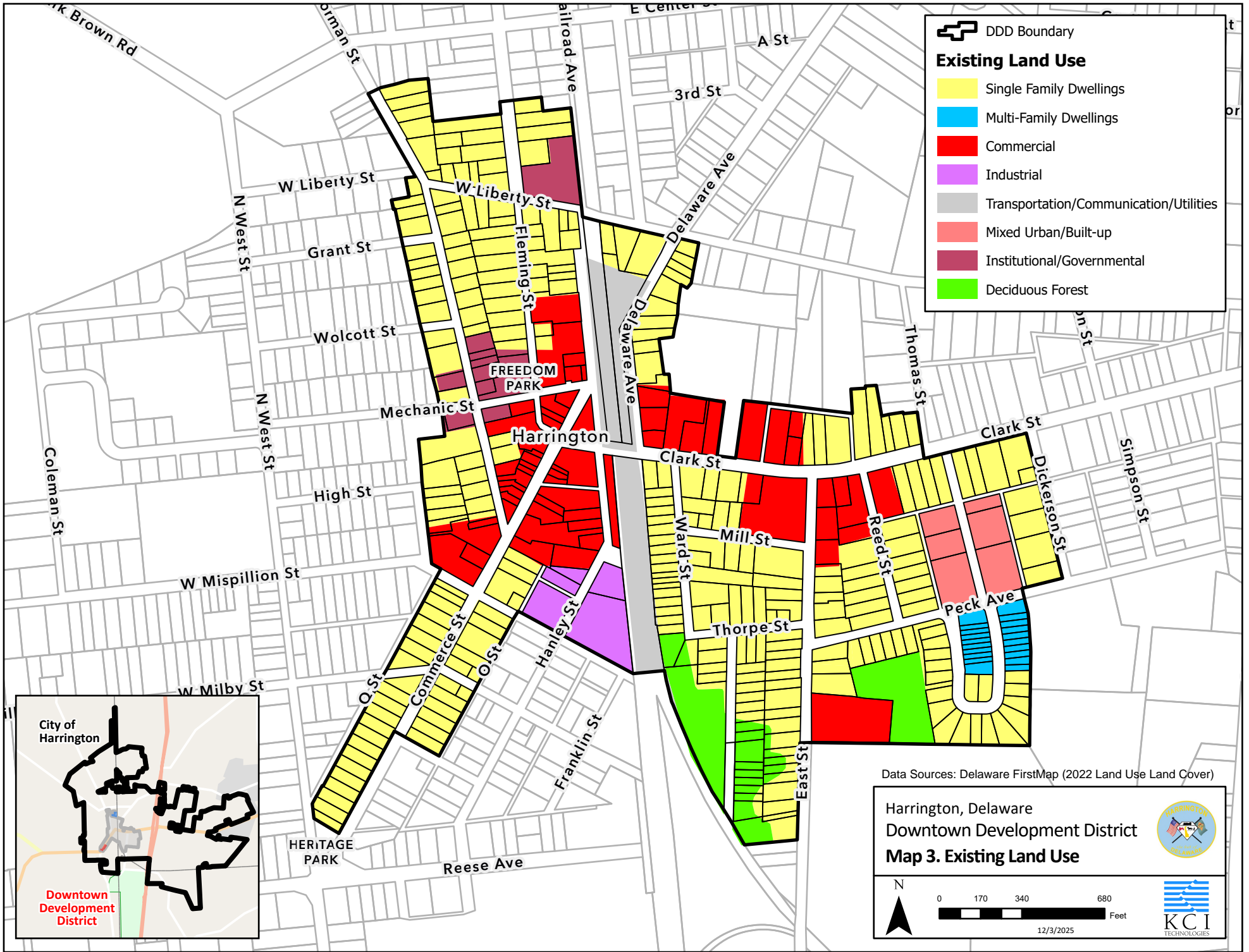


Harrington, Delaware  
 Downtown Development District  
**Map 2. Downtown Aerial**

12/3/2025

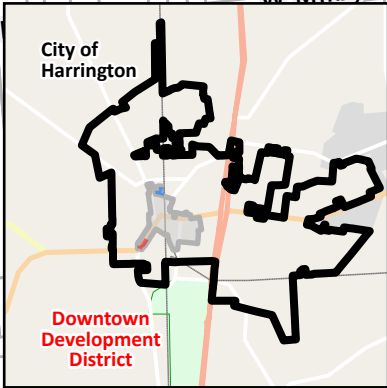




**DDD Boundary**

**Existing Land Use**

- Single Family Dwellings
- Multi-Family Dwellings
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities
- Mixed Urban/Built-up
- Institutional/Governmental
- Deciduous Forest



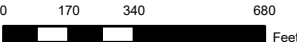
Data Sources: Delaware FirstMap (2022 Land Use Land Cover)

Harrington, Delaware  
Downtown Development District

**Map 3. Existing Land Use**




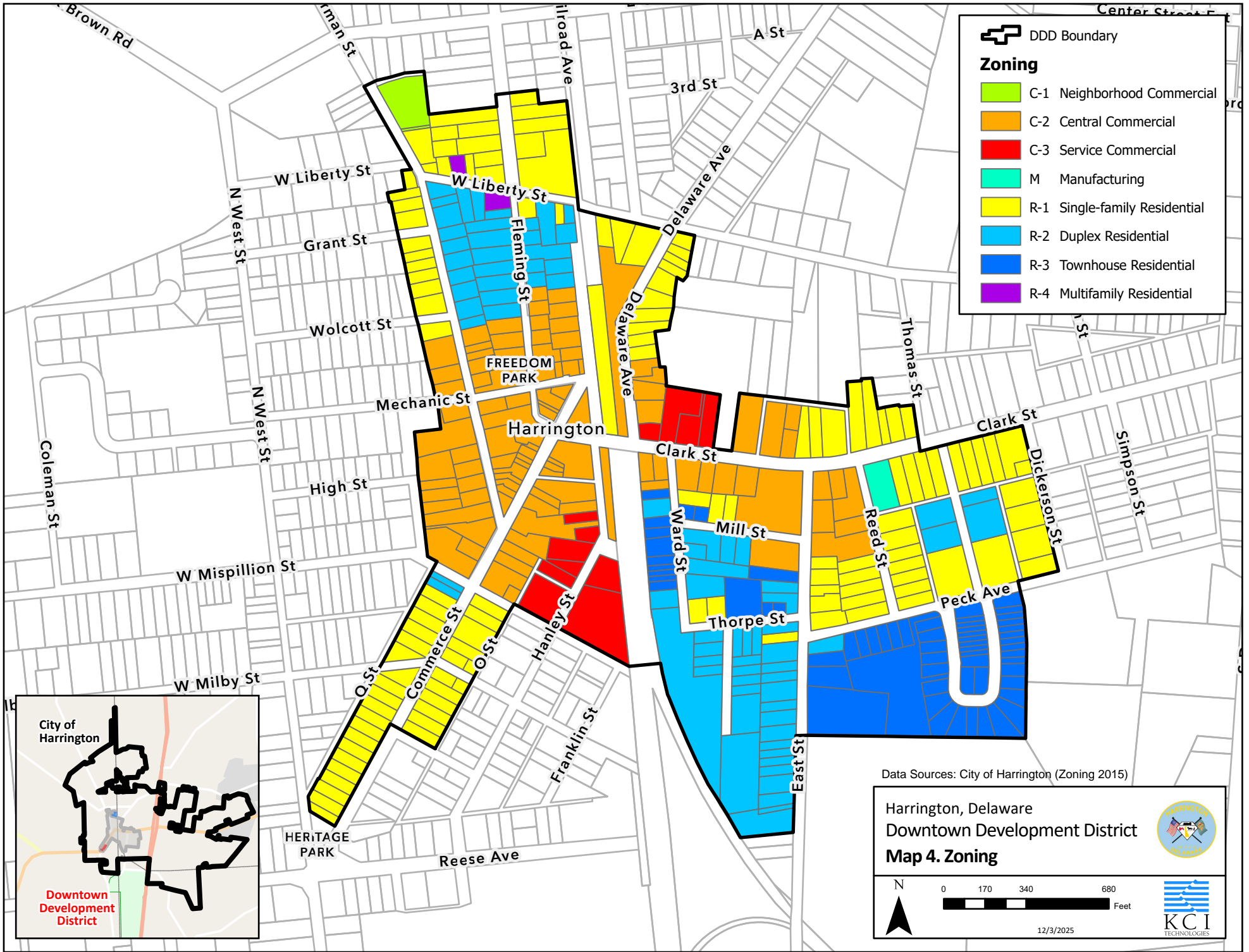
N



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12/3/2025

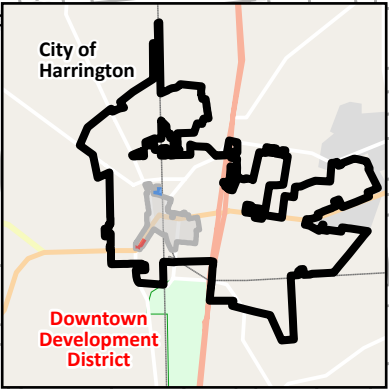




DDD Boundary


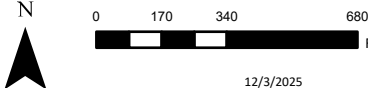
**Zoning**

- C-1 Neighborhood Commercial
- C-2 Central Commercial
- C-3 Service Commercial
- M Manufacturing
- R-1 Single-family Residential
- R-2 Duplex Residential
- R-3 Townhouse Residential
- R-4 Multifamily Residential




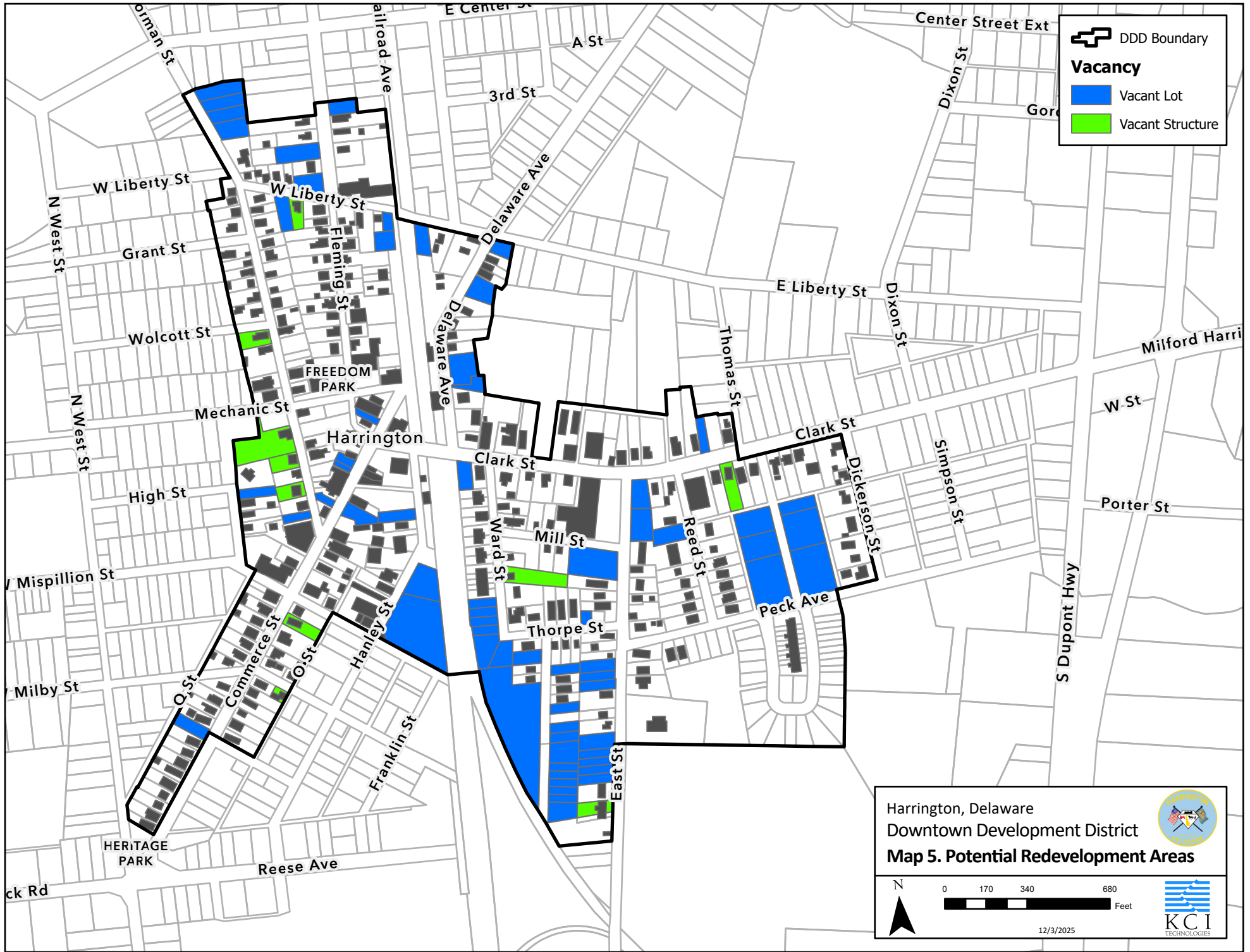
Data Sources: City of Harrington (Zoning 2015)

Harrington, Delaware  
Downtown Development District  
**Map 4. Zoning**

12/3/2025





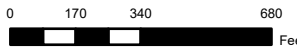


**DDD Boundary**


**Vacancy**

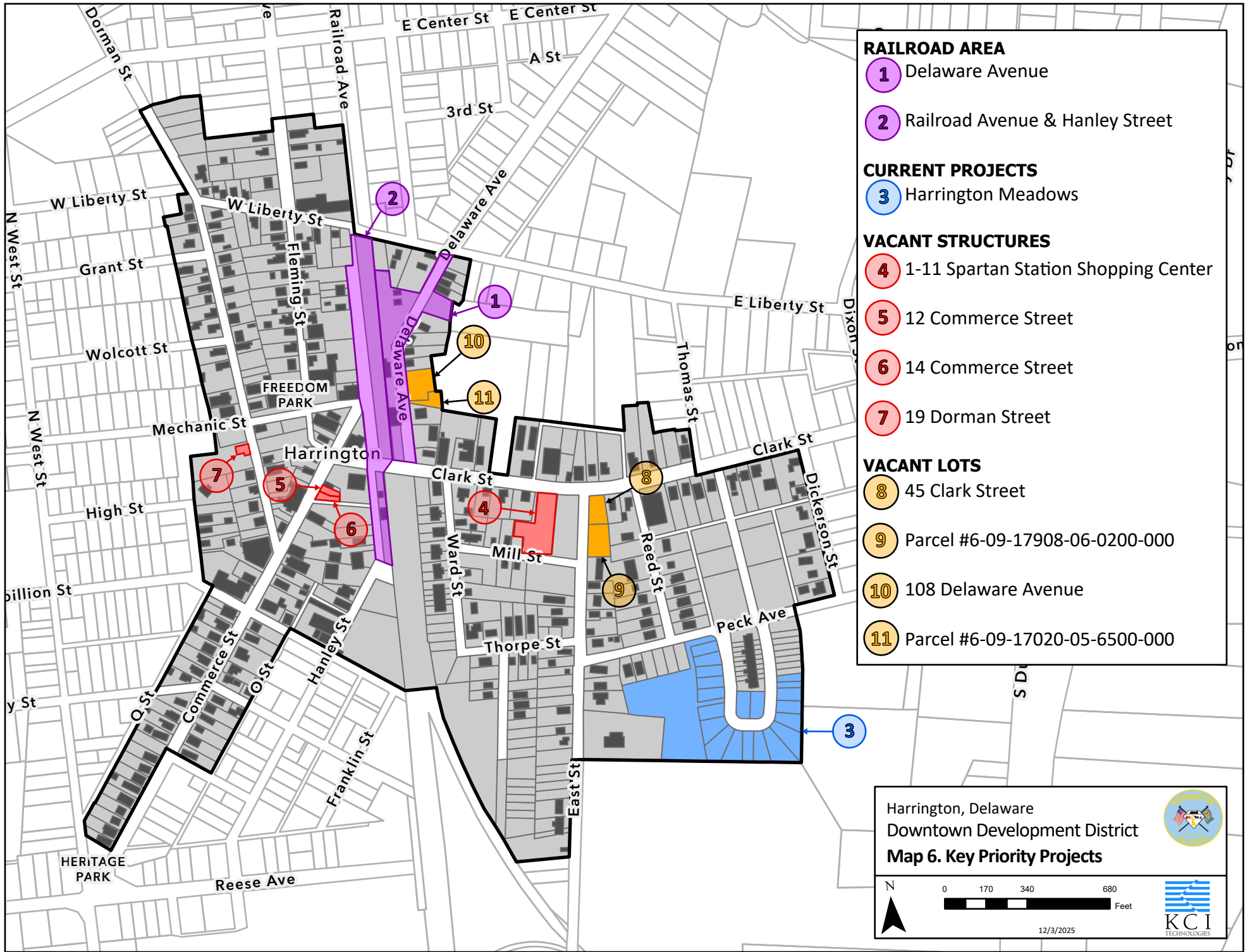
- Vacant Lot
- Vacant Structure

Harrington, Delaware  
 Downtown Development District  
**Map 5. Potential Redevelopment Areas**


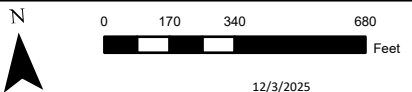




12/3/2025




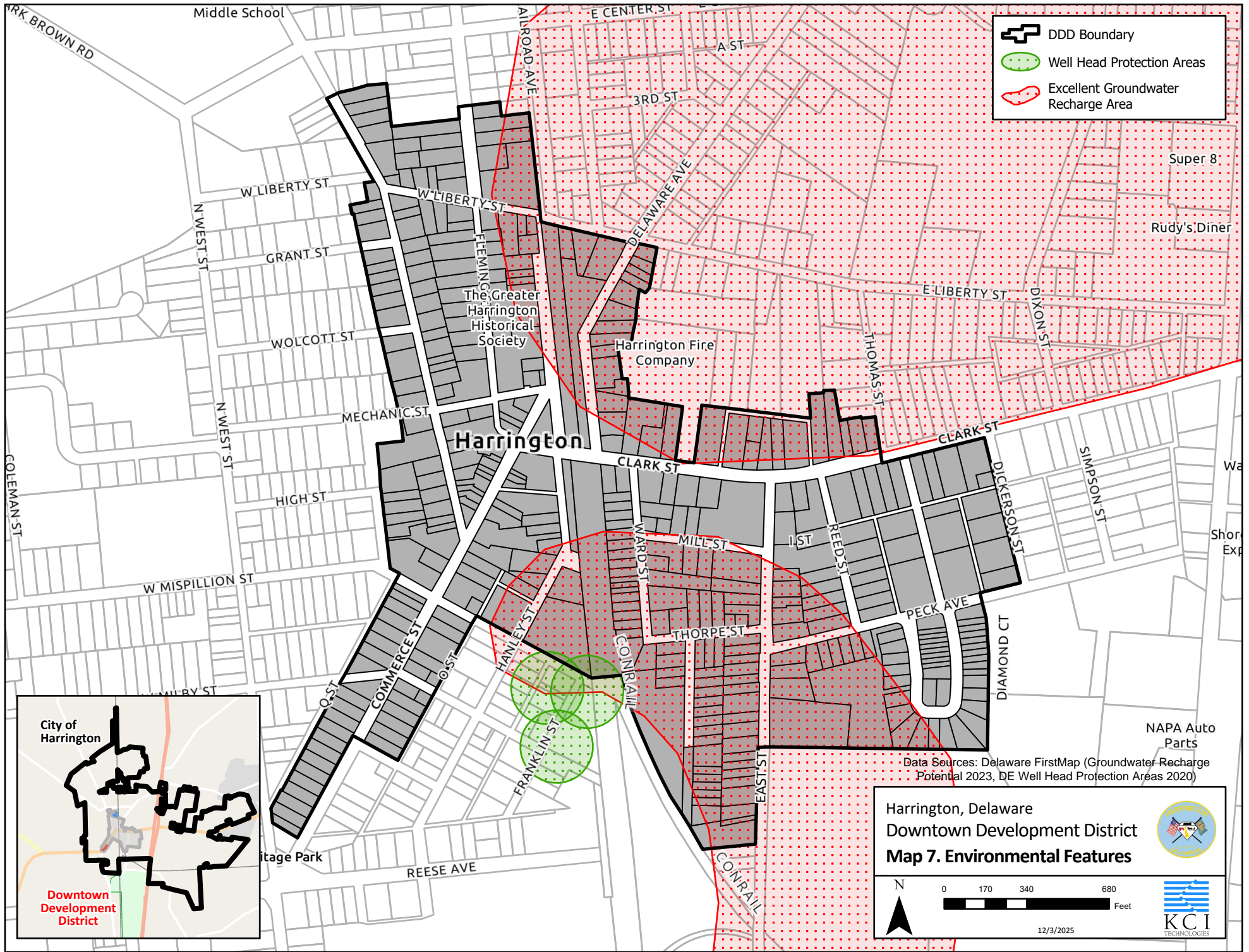





Harrington, Delaware  
 Downtown Development District  
**Map 6. Key Priority Projects**

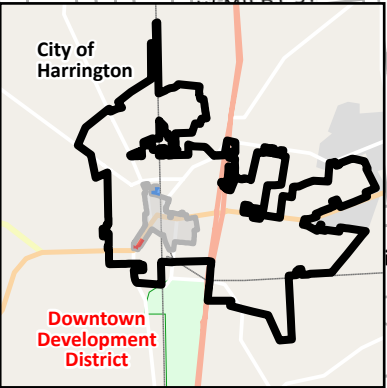



12/3/2025





-  DDD Boundary
-  Well Head Protection Areas
-  Excellent Groundwater Recharge Area



Data Sources: Delaware FirstMap (Groundwater Recharge Potential 2023, DE Well Head Protection Areas 2020)

Harrington, Delaware  
 Downtown Development District  
**Map 7. Environmental Features**



NAPA Auto Parts

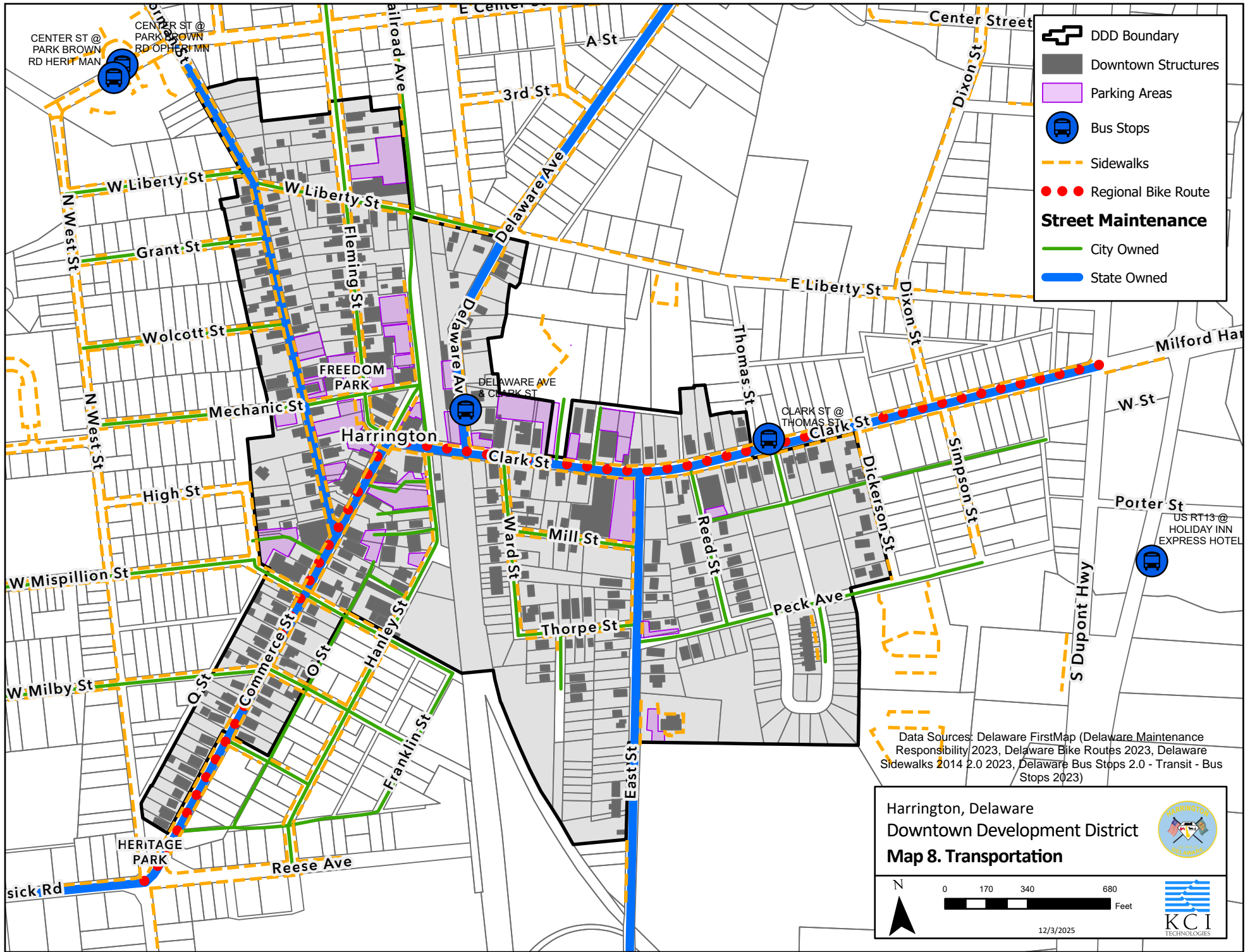










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12/3/2025





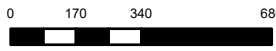
KCI TECHNOLOGIES




-  DDD Boundary
-  Downtown Structures
-  Parking Areas
-  Bus Stops
-  Sidewalks
-  Regional Bike Route
- Street Maintenance**
-  City Owned
-  State Owned

Data Sources: Delaware FirstMap (Delaware Maintenance Responsibility 2023, Delaware Bike Routes 2023, Delaware Sidewalks 2014 2.0 2023, Delaware Bus Stops 2.0 - Transit - Bus Stops 2023)

Harrington, Delaware  
 Downtown Development District  
**Map 8. Transportation**



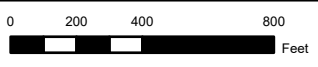




12/3/2025






Harrington, Delaware  
 Downtown Development District  
**Map 9. Downtown Parking**

12/3/2025



# Chapter Seven.

## *Appendix*





# *2025 Downtown Survey*

# Harrington Downtown Development District – Five Year Renewal – Survey **DUE BY NOVEMBER 7, 2025**

Welcome to the Harrington Downtown Development District Survey!

We need your voice to help shape the future of Downtown Harrington!

Our city is currently up for a **5-year renewal of the Downtown Development District (DDD)** — a state-supported program that provides grants, incentives, and investment opportunities to strengthen our downtown. For the past 10 years, the DDD has helped support local businesses, improve properties, and boost community pride right here in Harrington.

As we look ahead, we want to make sure the next 5 years are even better — and that's where you come in!

We've created a **quick survey** to hear from the people who live, work, and play downtown. Your feedback will help city planners evaluate how well the DDD has worked so far and guide our priorities for the next chapter.

You can fill out the survey in two ways:

- **Scan the QR code below** to complete it online
- **Or fill out the paper version included** and return to:

City of Harrington  
106 Dorman Street  
Harrington, DE 19952

Whether you're a homeowner, renter, business owner, or simply love our downtown — your input matters. Let's keep the momentum going and make Downtown Harrington an even better place for everyone.

**Thank you for being part of our community!**

Just a few minutes of your time  
can make a big difference!

**2025 Downtown Survey**



## 2025 Downtown Survey

Harrington's Downtown Development District (DDD) is up for a five-year renewal — and we need your support to keep this impactful program going! The DDD brings valuable benefits to local businesses and homeowners, helping our community thrive.

Survey closes November 7th!

\* Required

1. Are you a: \*

- Harrington Resident
- Harrington Property Owner
- Harrington Business Owner
- Harrington Employee (within the downtown area)
- Visitor

2. How often do you shop at the following locations?

	5+ times a week	2-4 times a week	Once a week	Once a month	Once every few months	Never
Downtown Harrington	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Route 13 Corridor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Milford	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seaford	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dover/Camden	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. What places/stores do you visit in Harrington's Downtown? (If you choose other, please specify)

- Retail
- Service
- Restuarant
- City
- Freedom Park
- Post Office or Bank
- Farmers Market
- Other

4. What time do you typically visit Harrington's downtown?

	Before 5pm	Between 11am - 2pm	After 5pm
Monday - Thursday	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friday	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Saturday	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sunday	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Have you attended any of the following events in the past 3 years? (If you choose other, please specify)

- Heritage Day
- Police National Night Out
- Tree Lighting Ceremony
- Christmas Parade
- Other

6. How do you most often travel to establishments in the downtown?

- Walk
- Bike
- Drive and use on-street parking
- Drive and use municipal parking
- Drive and use parking at one establishment, then leave the downtown
- Drive, use one establishment's parking and visit multiple places
- Drive and use multiple establishments' parking lots

7. Do you feel safe in Harrington's downtown during the day and night?

	Safe	Not safe
Day	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Night	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Why do you feel safe or unsafe?

9. Currently, what are the major advantages of Harrington's downtown? (If you choose other, please specify)

- Convenient location
- Fair prices
- Friendly local service
- Easy to find parking
- Supporting local businesses
- Less traffic and crowds
- Within walking distance
- Selection of goods/services
- Know local employees
- Events at Freedom Park
- Small town/historic character
- Selection of apartments/homes
- Other

10. Currently, what are the major disadvantages of Harrington's downtown? (If you choose other, please specify)

- Inconvenient location
- Poor appearance
- Lack in variety of goods/services
- High prices
- Difficult/inconvenient to park/walk
- Limited hours
- Traffic
- Poor customer service
- Lack of apartments/homes
- Other

11. What businesses/events/activities would you like to see more of in the downtown? (If you choose other, please specify)

- Public and civic (e.g. library, park, community center, community garden, gallery)
- Institutional (e.g. religious, government, education, financial)
- Personal service (e.g. health club, beauty, tailor, dry cleaning, jewelry, household repair)
- Convenience store
- Commercial retail (e.g. general merchandise, clothing, hardware, household supplies & furnishings)
- Professional office (e.g. medical, law, accounting, architecture)
- Specialty retail ( e.g. antiques, plants/flowers, gift shops)
- Locally owned restaurants
- Coffee shop
- Breakfast/lunch dining
- Fast food/take out
- Grocery store
- Outdoor concert
- Food festival
- Antique festival
- Seasonal/holiday festival
- Cultural/heritage festival
- Kid-friendly/family event
- "First Friday"
- Other

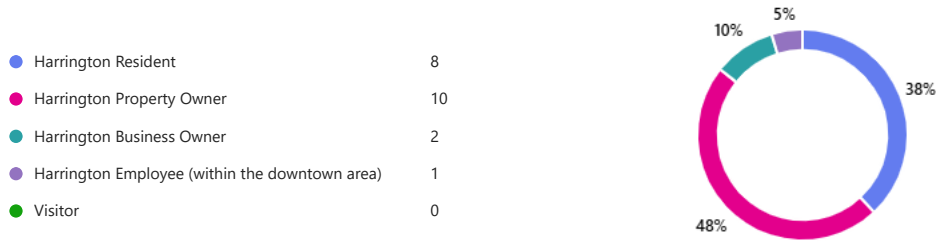
This content is neither created nor endorsed by Microsoft. The data you submit will be sent to the form owner.



### Responses Overview Closed

<p>Responses</p> <p><b>21</b></p>	<p>Average Time</p> <p><b>05:23</b></p>	<p>Duration</p> <p><b>24</b> Days</p>
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1. Are you a:



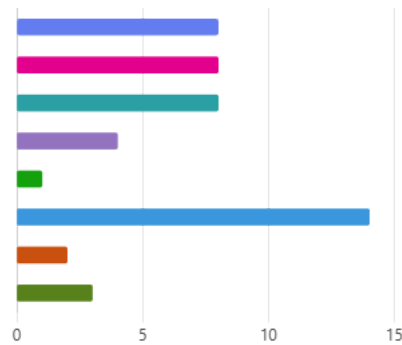
2. How often do you shop at the following locations?

- 5+ times a week
- 2-4 times a week
- Once a week
- Once a month
- Once every few months
- Never



3. What places/stores do you visit in Harrington's Downtown? (If you choose other, please specify)

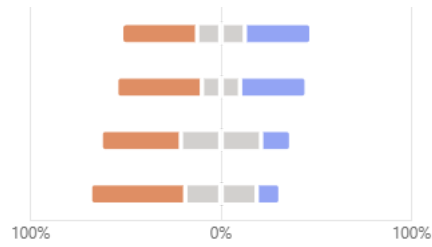
- |  |    |
|--|----|
| <span style="color: blue;">●</span> Retail                   | 8  |
| <span style="color: magenta;">●</span> Service               | 8  |
| <span style="color: teal;">●</span> Restuarant               | 8  |
| <span style="color: purple;">●</span> City                   | 4  |
| <span style="color: green;">●</span> Freedom Park            | 1  |
| <span style="color: lightblue;">●</span> Post Office or Bank | 14 |
| <span style="color: orange;">●</span> Farmers Market         | 2  |
| <span style="color: darkgreen;">●</span> Other               | 3  |



4. What time do you typically visit Harrington's downtown?

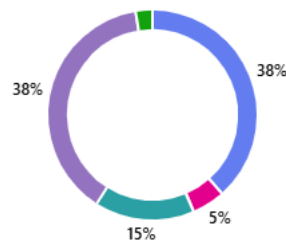
- Before 5pm
- Between 11am - 2pm
- After 5pm

Monday - Thursday  
 Friday  
 Saturday  
 Sunday



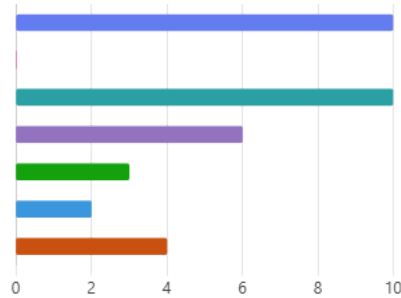
5. Have you attended any of the following events in the past 3 years? (If you choose other, please specify)

- Heritage Day 15
- Police National Night Out 2
- Tree Lighting Ceremony 6
- Christmas Parade 15
- Other 1



6. How do you most often travel to establishments in the downtown?

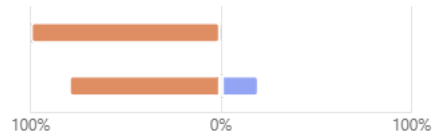
- Walk 10
- Bike 0
- Drive and use on-street parking 10
- Drive and use municipal parking 6
- Drive and use parking at one establishment, then leave the downtown 3
- Drive, use one establishment's parking and visit multiple places 2
- Drive and use multiple establishments' parking lots 4



7. Do you feel safe in Harrington's downtown during the day and night?

- Safe
- Not safe

Day  
 Night



8. Why do you feel safe or unsafe?

13 Responses

Latest Responses

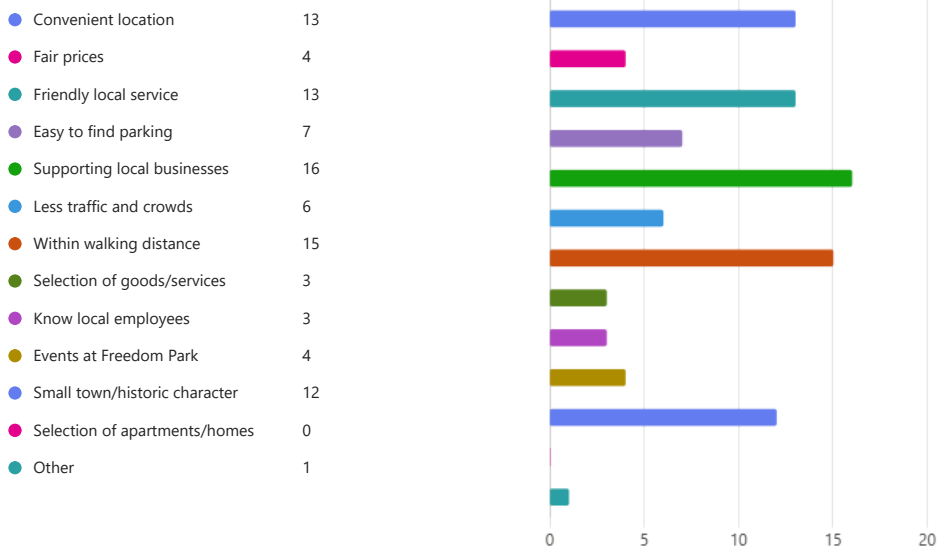
"Police station is right there, my office is right there, Ive been living or working her..."  
 "I feel safe during the day because I can see my surroundings. I don't feel as safe a..."

...

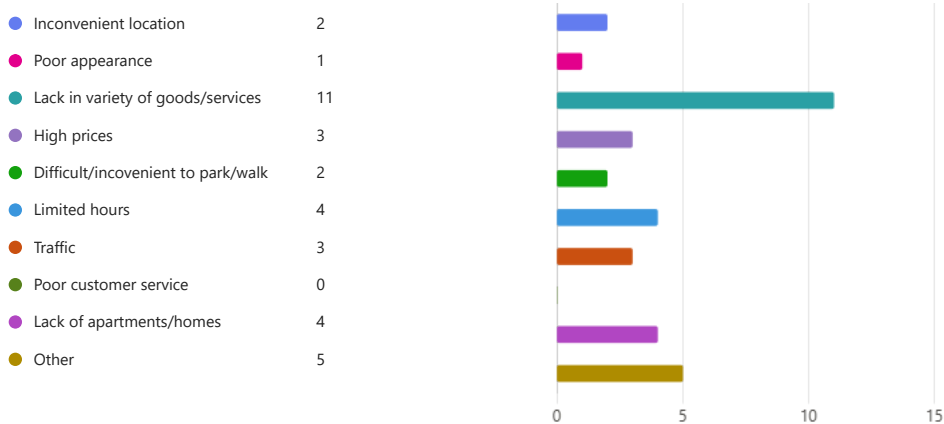
4 respondents (31%) answered police station for this question.



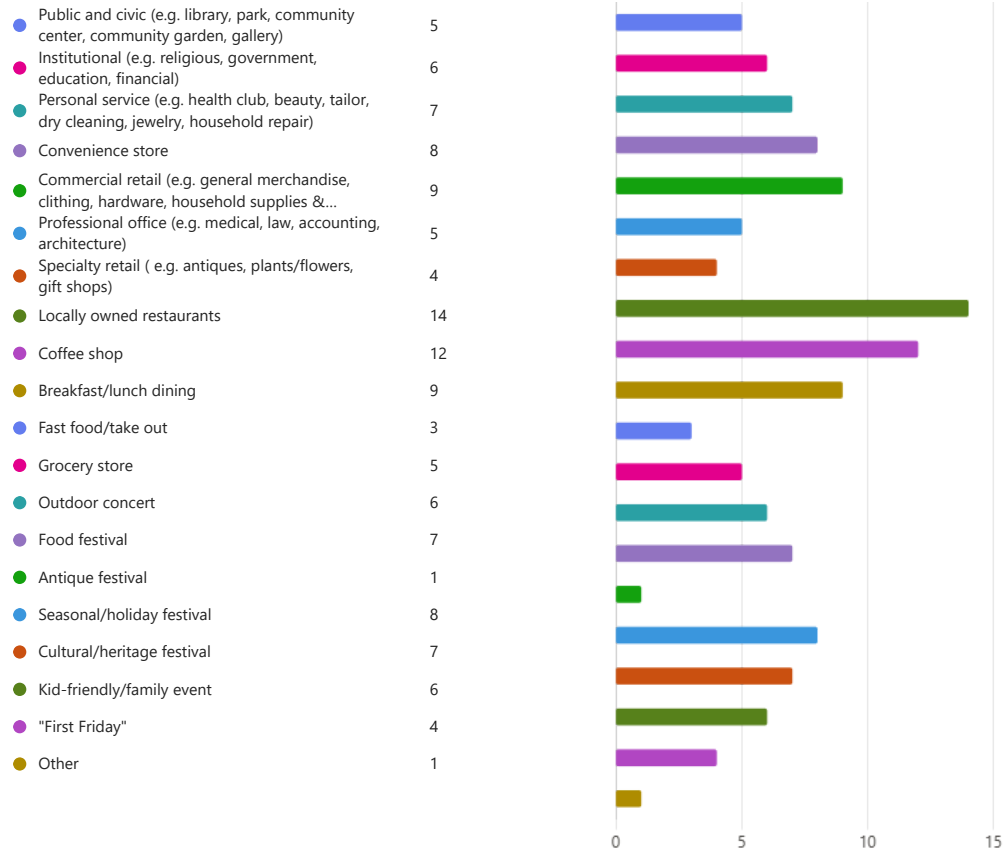
9. Currently, what are the major advantages of Harrington's downtown? (If you choose other, please specify)



10. Currently, what are the major disadvantages of Harrington's downtown? (If you choose other, please specify)



11. What businesses/events/activities would you like to see more of in the downtown? (If you choose other, please specify)

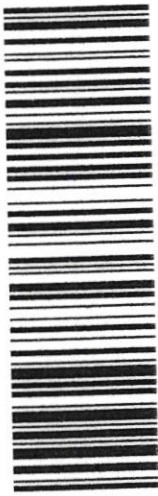




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*City of Harrington*  
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 HARRINGTON, DE 19952



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FIRST-CLASS



US POSTAGE IMIPITNEY BOWES  
  
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 255 BENJAMIN STREET  
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*City of Harrington*  
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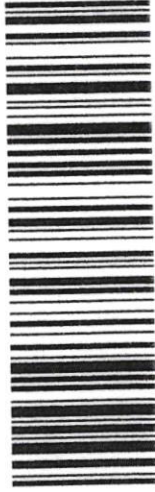
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MICHAEL BOTTEON  
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HARRINGTON, DE 19952

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KENNETH COLLINS  
228 COMMERCE STREET  
HARRINGTON, DE 19952

WHITE DELAWARE COMES

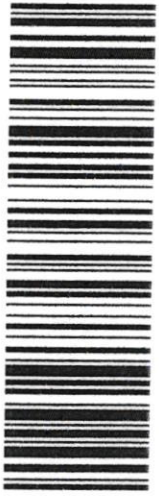


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*City of Harrington*  
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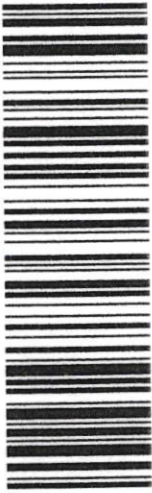
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 222 COMMERCE STREET  
 HARRINGTON, DE 19952

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HARRINGTON, DE 19952



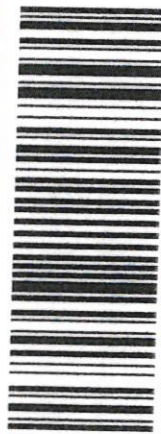
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TIFFANY LEBEAU  
220 COMMERCE STREET  
HARRINGTON, DE 19952

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\$ 010.440  
OCT 17 2025

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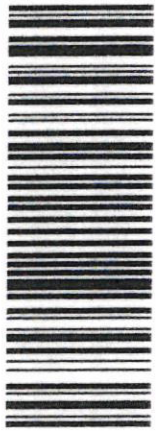
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ZIP 19952  
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0006187417  
\$ 010.440  
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LOUISE APTT  
214 COMMERCE STREET  
HARRINGTON, DE 19952



# *Public Hearing Meeting Minutes*



Thanks to everyone who contributed to the

City of Harrington  
Downtown Development District  
Renewal Plan



City of Harrington



*Downtown Development District*