

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