

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.