

WAIVER REQUEST

DOWNTOWN DOVER PARTNERSHIP DOVER MOBILITY CENTER GARAGE

TREE PLANTING REQUIREMENTS / TREE MITIGATION REQUEST

REQUEST: Due to the nature and use of the subject site and its proposed layout which will encompass the entire site, the Downtown Dover Partnership requests a waiver from the tree planting requirements of the zoning code for the subject site and proposes to plant the required number of trees to meet the zoning code requirements, either on other lands of the Partnership or in City owned Pocket Parks within the downtown area. The specific location is to be determined after discussions between the City and the Partnership.

EXTENT OF THE REQUEST: By code, the property will be required to provide 13 trees on the subject site. We request to plant the 13 trees at a location yet to be determined, but within the downtown area as noted above.

BASIS FOR REQUEST: Article 5, section 16.91 states that The Planning Commission may waive the provisions of [sub]sections 16.52, 16.53, and 16.62, and require replacement planting for mitigation purposes should the planning commission determine, after demonstration by the applicant, that due to physical limitations of the land which would otherwise prohibit the reasonable use of the land, or for purposes of preserving, protecting and promoting the interest of public health, safety, welfare and/or public convenience. All tree mitigation plantings must occur within the corporate limits of the City of Dover. Tree mitigation may occur off-site in accordance with the provisions listed below in this ordinance:

- (a) If a waiver is sought from the provisions of § [subsection] 16.62, new tree plantings are required at a rate of 1:1. All new tree plantings shall meet the minimum size at planting requirements of the City of Dover table of trees.

The proposed facility is a multi-story parking garage with some minor ancillary spaces for retail space, a management office and a welcome center. The facility will encompass the entire site thus leaving no space for tree plantings on the property. For these reasons, we request that a waiver be granted allowing the required trees to be planted on other lands of the Partnership or on City owned lands (pocket parks, etc) within the downtown area. The location is to be agreed upon by both the city and the Partnership.



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December 5, 2024

City of Dover Planning Commission
c/o Department of Planning and Inspections
P.O. Box 475
Dover, DE 19903-0475

RE: **Parking Strategy Statement**
DOVER MOBILITY CENTER GARAGE
Dover, Delaware
2024314.00

Dear Commission Members:

On behalf of our client, Downtown Dover Partnership, we are hereby submitting this parking strategy statement for your consideration.

The properties associated with the project are zoned C-2 - Central Commercial and H - Historic. There is no minimum parking requirement based on use for this zoning designation within the Downtown Redevelopment Target Area, however, this parking strategy statement is required for consideration to meet code requirements.

The site currently consists of public surface paid and permit parking lots and two existing office buildings with private parking spaces. These will be replaced with the new Mobility Center Hub/Parking Garage. 83 existing parking spaces associated with the surface lots and the offices will be removed as well as the existing office buildings.

The new mobility hub will provide a place for people to connect to multiple modes of transportation at a central convenient location to the downtown area. The garage will provide 431 total vehicle parking spaces. Additionally, 33 bicycle parking spaces will be provided within the garage as well as scooter parking and the possibility of future bikeshare opportunities. The structure will include 8,738 s.f. of enclosed space which includes a welcome center, a management office, restrooms, storage and some small retail space. The welcome center can provide travel information for patrons. The Hub will allow for future rideshare, carshare or ridehail pickup/drop off (Uber, Lyft etc.) at a convenient safe location. All of these options help to reduce parking in general for the downtown area with the multi-modal travel options that can be available at the Hub. The intent of the garage is to provide public parking for the downtown area in general, including the uses within the structure. The ground level of the garage will include 30-minute parking spaces, handicapped accessible spaces and bicycle/scooter parking spaces as well as the aforementioned uses. The upper levels will house longer term paid and permit parking spaces which will provide parking for visitors to downtown, residents of the local area, employees of downtown businesses etc.



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We believe the Mobility Hub will be a great benefit to Downtown Dover. Please consider this statement as part of your review of the project.

Sincerely,

BECKER MORGAN GROUP, INC.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Michael J. Henry".

Michael J. Henry, LEED AP
Senior Associate

MJH/

202431400ai-ltr-COD.docx

August 1, 2024

Department of Planning & Inspections
City of Dover
PO BOX 475
Dover, DE 19903

The Dover Mobility Center will be a newly constructed 4-story, ~~400-space~~ **319-space** multi-purpose garage in the heart of Downtown Dover. The structure will be situated at 133 S. Governor's Avenue, Dover, DE 19904, a future consolidation of six contiguous parcels currently known as 133 S. Governors Ave., 139 S. Governors Ave., 145 S. Governors Ave., 136 S. Bradford St., 148 S. Bradford St., and 150 S. Bradford St. The intended lot consolidation will require vacating a portion of an existing paper alley that currently runs through the boundaries of the project parcels. The site is located one block north of Lookerman Street, the site is bordered by S. Governors Avenue to the west, S Bradford Street to the east, and Minor Street Alley to the south. Currently, surface parking lots on this site serve as public and permit parking for the downtown district.

The proposed Mobility Center aims to accommodate the increased parking demands resulting from incentives outlined in the *Capital City 2030: Transforming Downtown Dover Master Plan*, which anticipates greater business activity and an influx of new residents downtown in mixed-use redevelopment projects. The Center's parking infrastructure is crucial in supporting the transformation of the Capital City into a vibrant hub for commerce, living, and cultural activities projected through 2030 and beyond.

Architectural Design and Adherence to Historic District Guidelines

The architecture of the Mobility Center is crafted to creatively reflect and honor the historic district while adhering to its guidelines. The design aligns with the Historic District Zone's standards, emphasizing that:

"...the slavish and literal copying of architectural styles and elements will trivialize and confuse the genuine historic architecture of the City of Dover... Contemporary architecture should be representative of the time in which it is created and should thus contribute to Dover's architectural diversity for the appreciation of future generations."¹

Although "contemporary" in style, the Center's architecture respects the historic context rather than replicating neighboring structures. Drawing inspiration from the tectonics of early Victorian-era carriage and horse stables—the antecedents of modern automobile garages—the building incorporates their guiding principles of scale, rhythm, proportion, and materiality. This approach enables the structure to harmonize with its surroundings and avoid appearing contextually foreign.

¹ *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone*; John Milner Associates, 1992; 4-2

Aligned with the Design Standards and the new C-2 zoning regulations, the building's massing incorporates a tripartite form with a six-foot setback. This setback, applied on both frontages after the second floor, scales the building comfortably for public interaction. It also enables the use of materials on the first two levels that correspond with the historic context by aligning with elements like the historic cornice lines prevalent within the historic district.

With the core approach of respect rather than replication, the building takes cues and architectural style from the buildings downtown, rather than direct forgery. An example of which is the building's brickwork, which takes cues such as the size, shape, color variation, and uniformity of bricks prevalent downtown. The patterning of the brick, mainly running bond with accents of soldier coursing, is a common theme downtown and serves as an acknowledgement and method of folding the building into the fabric of Dover.

On the upper levels, contemporary materials and forms predominate. Precast concrete spandrel panels reference historic cornice styles, incorporating dynamic spandrel panels with historically inspired insets. The exposed stair towers on S Governors and S Bradford introduce modern glass construction, serving as a wayfinding beacon. To acknowledge the building's place in the ongoing history of Downtown Dover, the glass also serves as a mirror to reflect its neighboring architecture and sky.

Site

The building is designed to adhere closely to C-2 zoning requirements, which call for a zero-foot setback, positioning the Mobility Center directly along the sidewalk edge. At the entry points, the sidewalk will be expanded to enhance pedestrian flow and create a welcoming, accessible frontage. This expansion is further supported by thoughtfully planned site elements such as light poles and wall sconces that provide essential lighting while complementing the architectural design.

In addition, a selection of street trees and landscaped plantings along the building's perimeter will create a comfortable, shaded environment for pedestrians, contributing to a pleasant streetscape. **In response to Staff and HDC comments, we will explore canopy tree options to provide enhanced greenery and shade.** To the north of the structure on S Bradford Street, a greenspace area is proposed, incorporating trees, shrubs, and various plantings to enhance the aesthetic quality of the site and provide a natural respite within the urban landscape. This greenspace will serve as a "pocket park", offering a convenient and valuable amenity for residents and visitors with pets.

All site elements, including landscaping and lighting, will be carefully positioned to ensure they do not obstruct visibility for drivers or compromise pedestrian safety in addition to limiting light pollution for neighboring properties. Special attention will be given to sightlines at entry and exit points, promoting a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment that aligns with the broader vision of Downtown Dover as a vibrant

and accessible community space. **In response to Staff and HDC comments, exterior and street lighting will complement in their style the light fixtures prevalent throughout the Dover Historic District.**

Ground Floor Programming and Design

The ground floor of the Mobility Center is thoughtfully programmed to serve a variety of needs, enhancing both functionality and accessibility. Key features include ~~a welcome center, with~~ **expanded retail spaces for various local businesses,** public washrooms accessible through ~~the bike & scooter parking area on S. Bradford Street.~~ **welcome center** during business hours to support visitors, as well as a bicycle repair hub that encourages cycling as a sustainable transportation option. **In addition to the retail,** the ground floor also houses a management office, **storage for building operations,** and designated parking areas for bicycles and scooters, which will be complemented by lockers to facilitate secure package delivery and retrieval. Vertical circulation elements, including stairwells and elevators, connect this level to the upper floors, while back-of-house spaces support the operational needs of the facility.

~~In addition to general garage parking,~~ The ground floor is designed with a number of specialized parking spaces, such as accessible spots, including those designated for van access., as well as designated electric vehicle (EV) charging stations ~~and short-term 30-minute parking spaces.~~ These additions promote inclusiveness, sustainable transportation, and convenience for ~~short-term~~ **Dover** visitors.

An exterior location along Governors Avenue is designated for bikeshare docks, aligning with the objectives of both the Kent County MPO's strategic plan and the *Capital City 2030: Transforming Downtown Dover* plan by the Downtown Dover Partnership (DDP). This bikeshare docking area supports regional and local goals to encourage sustainable transportation options and increase bike accessibility for residents and visitors. The placement along Governors Avenue strategically situates the bikeshare docks for easy access, allowing users to seamlessly connect to other downtown destinations and transportation nodes. The integration of bikeshare infrastructure into the Mobility Center not only supports eco-friendly transit but also contributes to Dover's vision of a more connected, pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly urban core.

Garage entrances and exits ~~are~~ **is** strategically placed on ~~both S Governors Avenue and S Bradford Street,~~ enhancing access to the facility while limiting a burden of vehicles on ~~either side~~ **S. Bradford Street.** The S Governors Avenue entrance is expected to handle ~~a higher~~ **the** volume of traffic due to its status as a state road with larger traffic flows, allowing for efficient circulation in and out of the garage. This thoughtful layout ensures a streamlined experience for all users, aligning with the Mobility Center's goals of accessibility, sustainability, and integration within the downtown infrastructure.

Façade Design and Materiality of the Pedestrian zone

The Mobility Center's garage façade will feature primarily precast architectural concrete with brick cladding that matches the color and scale of surrounding buildings. This material selection, as well as the overall design, reflects the input gathered from the public at the October 23, 2024 Open House, where attendees helped shape the aesthetic by voting on their favorite of three pre-selected brick samples that range in color and shape. The brickwork employs varying orientations, particularly within column bays and at the cornice level, to introduce architectural texture and provide a contemporary nod to traditional Victorian brickwork. This technique ensures a harmonious blend with Dover's historic aesthetic while expressing a modern identity.

Both street-facing elevations follow this brickwork pattern up to a setback above the second floor. Beyond this setback, the façade transitions to decorative precast concrete spandrels, which, in color and form, were also selected with public input. The thoughtful progression from brick to concrete on the upper floors emphasizes the building's contemporary character while maintaining visual cohesion with the district's architectural language.

Along Minor Street, the brickwork and decorative detailing wrap the corner up to the second structural column, then simplify into a streamlined design. This strategic simplification allows flexibility for future transformations of Minor Street Alley, envisioning a shift from a car-dominated space to a pedestrian-friendly zone. The simplified façade is primed for future additions, such as murals, supplementary lighting, and screening, giving the Downtown Dover Partnership the agency to shape this side of the building as the surrounding area evolves.

The north elevation, which will function as a party wall due to fire safety regulations of proximity to the building's property line and existing adjacent neighbor, has limited openings but retains visual interest through adjacent landscaping. A pocket park with trees, and greenery will create a collaborative public space that draws people into the area. This elevation is specifically designed to host a large mural, turning the party wall into a canvas for public art and adding vibrancy to this side of the building. Together, these design choices reflect a commitment to honoring public input, integrating contemporary style with historical context, and aligning with the Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone.

Windows, Openings, and Canopies

The windows in the Mobility Center's welcome center, retail, and office spaces are proportioned to align harmoniously with those of neighboring buildings, creating a cohesive streetscape. For the parking garage's pedestrian entries, double doors are planned to match the proportions of surrounding storefronts, integrating seamlessly with the architectural rhythm of the street.

Extending across the length of the ground floor, canopies with dark painted metal fascia will be installed, designed with detailing that complements the brickwork and adds an additional layer of architectural refinement. These canopies ~~are topped with a landscaping tray system, which serves the dual function of managing stormwater runoff and~~ visually lowering the building's scale to create a more pedestrian-friendly atmosphere.

In the main body of the parking garage, much of the structure is open above the ~~safety railing and~~ spandrel panels, maximizing airflow to meet the ventilation requirements of a parking facility. This open design supports efficient air exchanges, enhancing both the comfort and safety of the garage environment. The design choices throughout the structure focus on balancing functionality, historical alignment, and pedestrian comfort, reinforcing the Mobility Center as a well-integrated, accessible element of downtown Dover's urban fabric.

Sincerely,

Michael S. McCloskey, AIA, LEED AP
Vice President
215.609.4609 | mmccloskey@core-states.com