

City of Dover DSHA Technical Assistance for Housing and Land Use Reform

Planning Commission Meeting

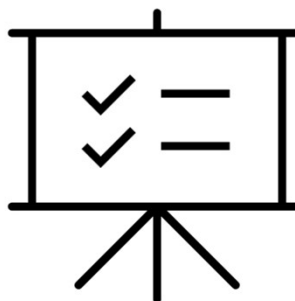
May 18, 2026



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Agenda

- Background
- Our Approach
- Housing Resources Committee (HRC)
- Participating Jurisdictions
- Housing Affordability in Dover
- Chosen Reform
- Questions/Next Steps



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Background



In response to Delaware's housing affordability crisis, the General Assembly passed [House Bill 442](#), creating the Affordable Housing Production Task Force.



The Affordable Housing Production Task Force released a [report](#) which recommended implementing zoning reform to allow more housing choices at a local level.



The General Assembly passed [Senate Joint Resolution 8](#) (SJR8), directing the DSHA to create a pilot program to provide technical assistance for municipal governments related to zoning reform.

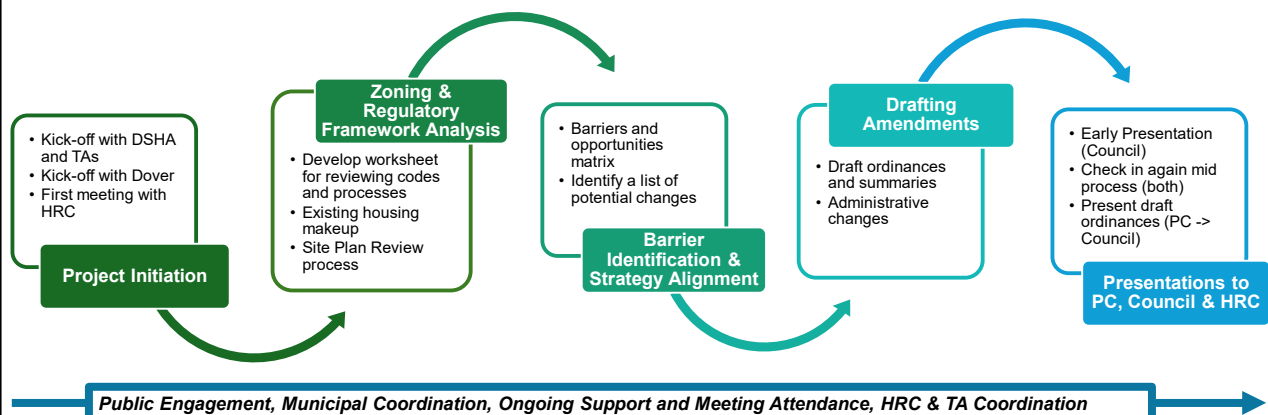


DSHA opened an application process for municipalities to participate in this [pilot program](#) where they could select zoning reform options and Dover applied to participate.



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Our Approach



HRC = Housing Resources Committee



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Housing Resources Committee (HRC)

Advisory group of non-participating jurisdictions and state agencies who have deep understanding of local development processes

Role

- ✓ Support technical assistance (TA) providers and local jurisdictions
- ✓ Provide expertise and guidance on challenges and solutions
- ✓ Engage and convene TA providers and municipalities via monthly meetings
- ✓ Evaluate proposed solutions
- ✓ Support development of public engagement



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Participating Jurisdictions & TA Providers

Rossi Group

- Newark
- Dover
- Lewes
- Laurel

Smart Growth America

- Milford
- Rehoboth Beach
- Georgetown
- Bridgeville

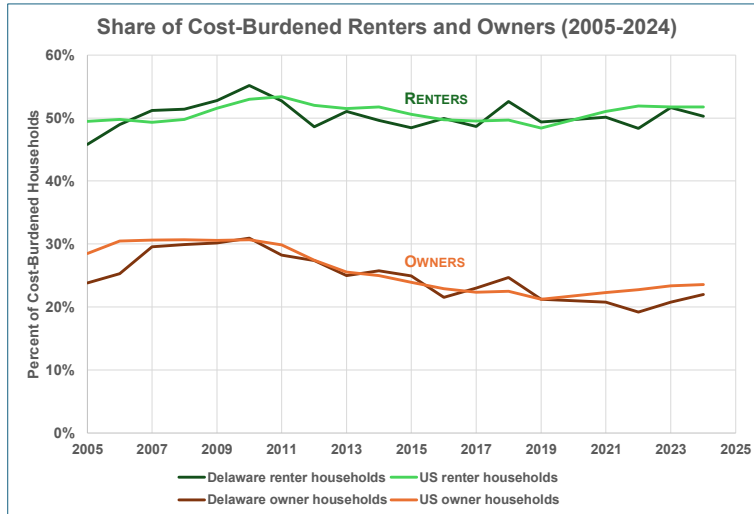
McCormick/Taylor

- Sussex County



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Housing Affordability in Delaware



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Cost-burdened households:

Households who spend at least 30% of their total income on rent or mortgage payments and utilities.

According to 2024 ACS data, 50% of renters and 22% of homeowners are cost-burdened in Delaware.

Median monthly housing cost in Dover: **\$1,337**

An individual would need to make **\$4,457** a month to afford the median housing cost in Dover



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Zillow Home Value Index (ZHVI)

- The **ZHVI** is a smoothed, seasonally adjusted measure of the typical home value and market changes across a given region and housing type.
- It reflects the typical value for homes in the 35th to 65th percentile range.
- Dover ZHVI: \$339,650**
- Kent County ZHVI: \$368,542**
- Delaware ZHVI: \$396,207**



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Dover Rental Market (ZillowRentals)

- Average overall monthly rent in Dover is **\$1,800**
- Average rent for a one-bedroom apartment \$1,450

Compare average rent in markets

Rent in Delaware is 6% higher than Dover, DE.

Delaware vs.

\$1,900

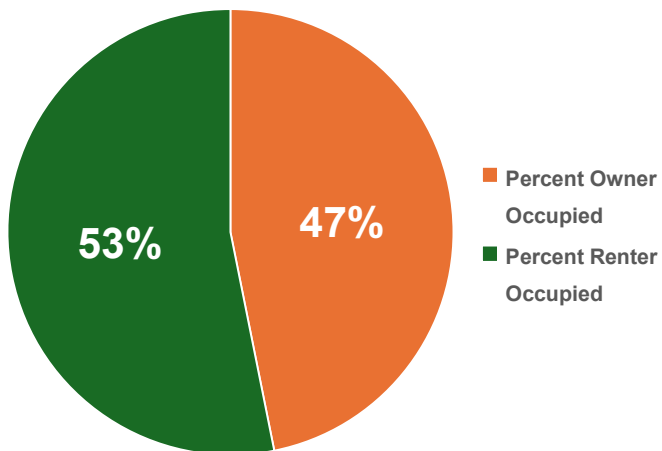
\$1,800

Dover, DE average rent



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Owner and Renter Occupancy in Dover

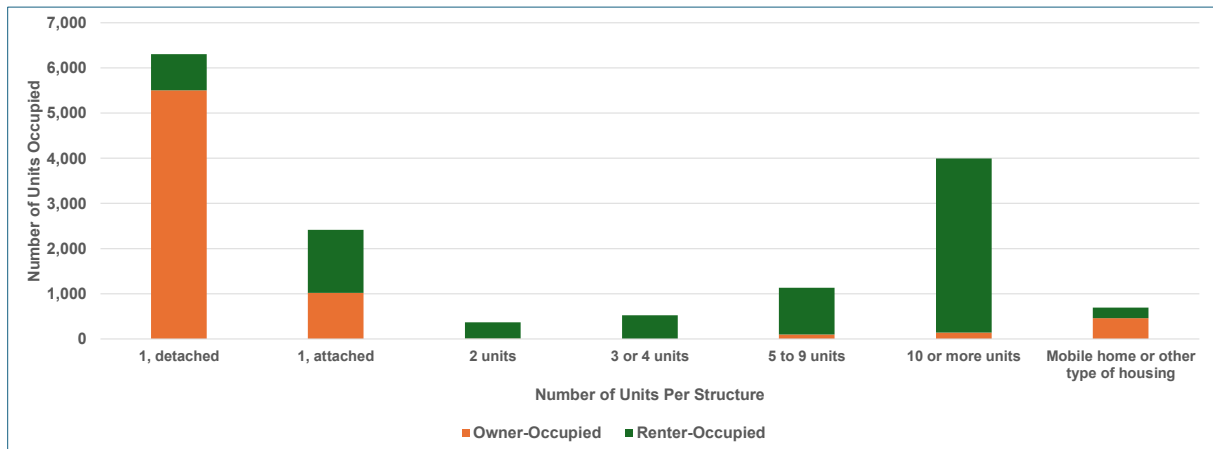


- Per 2024 ACS data, there are 16,448 housing units in Dover, 15,428 of which are occupied



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Occupancy by # of Units* per Structure



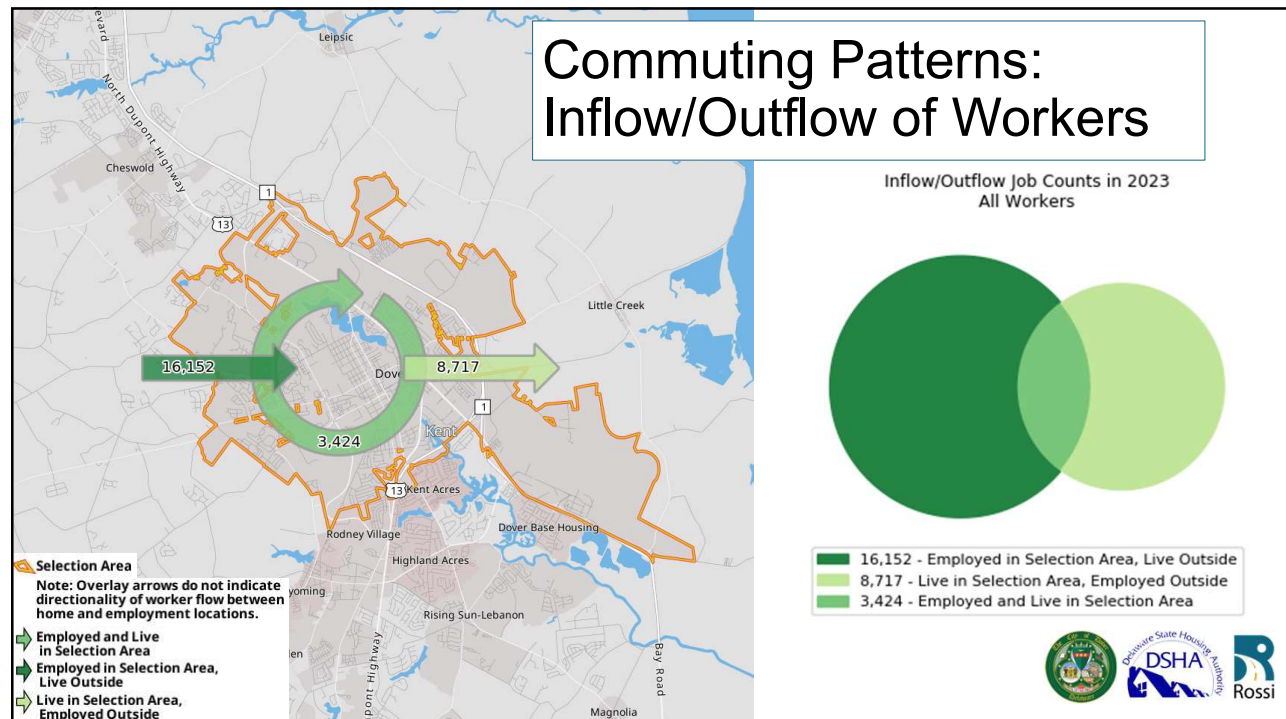
*A housing units refers to a house, a condo, an apartment, a mobile home or trailer, a group of rooms, or a single room that is occupied

2024 ACS, 5-Year Estimates



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Commuting Patterns: Inflow/Outflow of Workers



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Local Barriers vs. Local Levers*

Local Barriers

- Zoning and Land-use constraints limiting small-scale housing
- Permitting timelines and development friction increasing project costs
- Infrastructure and site readiness issues
- Financing gaps for small developers and rehab projects
- Market pressures such as rising construction costs, taxes, and insurance

Local Levers

- Enable gentle density (ADUs, duplexes, and triplexes)
- Streamline approvals for small housing projects
- Launch programs to bring vacant units back online
- Support small-scale developers and rehab projects
- Expand attainable homeownership pathways

* From Fuller Center for Housing presentation of 3/10/2026



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Chosen Reform

- Allow ADUs and/or “missing middle” housing types as permitted in residential zones
- Increase buildable density for housing by reducing minimum lot sizes and bulk standards
- Increase building heights for multifamily housing and/or mixed-use developments
- Establish an inclusionary zoning program to address affordable and workforce housing needs
- Allow higher density, mixed-use with residential in commercial zones or employment centers

Additional Reforms Available

- Allow manufactured and/or modular homes placed on permanent foundations as a permitted use where single-family detached homes are permitted
- Create pre-reviewed design plans for “missing middle” housing types
- Reduce parking requirements in areas zoned for residential and mixed-use to promote walkable communities and provide more affordable development opportunities



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Additional Reforms Available – City Council Feedback

Reform	Support	Opposed	Undecided
ADUs	-	-	-
Missing Middle	-	-	-
Buildable Density	-	-	-
Building Heights	-	-	-
Inclusionary Zoning	-	-	-
Higher Density Mixed-Use Residential	-	-	-
Manufactured/Modular Homes	-	-	-
Pre-Reviewed Designs	-	-	-
Reduced Parking Minimums	-	-	-



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Questions?



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