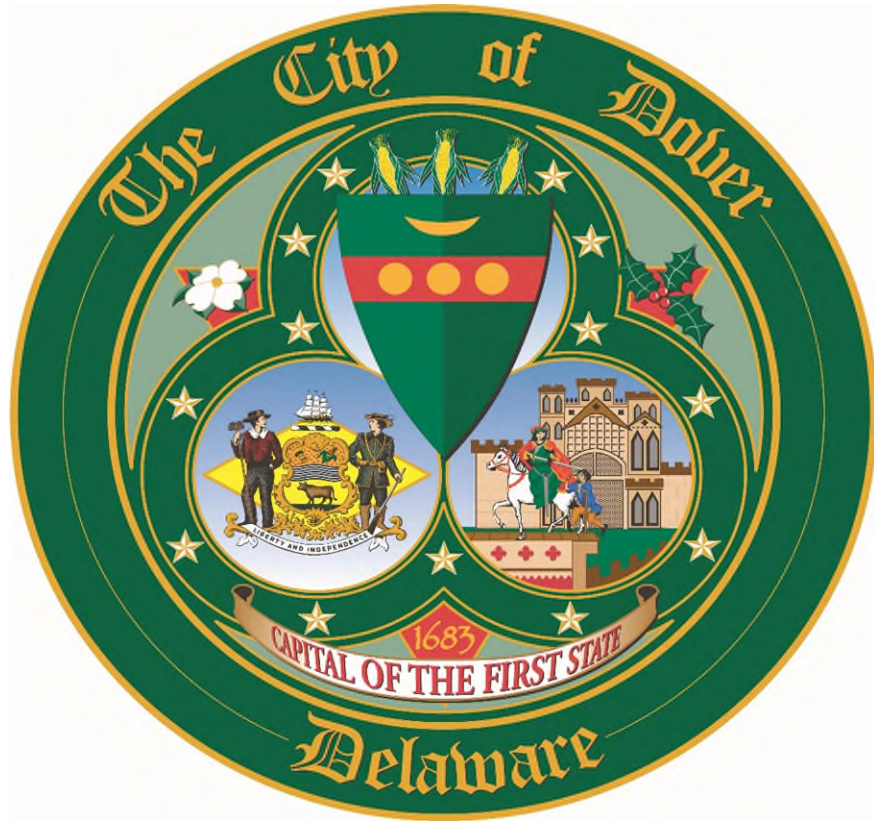




Dover Downtown Development District Relaunch

Planning Commission
June 16, 2025



Background

Downtown Development Districts

- The DDD Act of 2014 was enacted to

- Spur private capital investment.
- Stimulate job growth.
- Help build a stable community of long-term residents by improving housing opportunities.
- Assist municipalities in strengthening neighborhoods while harnessing the attraction that vibrant downtowns hold.

Statewide Implementation

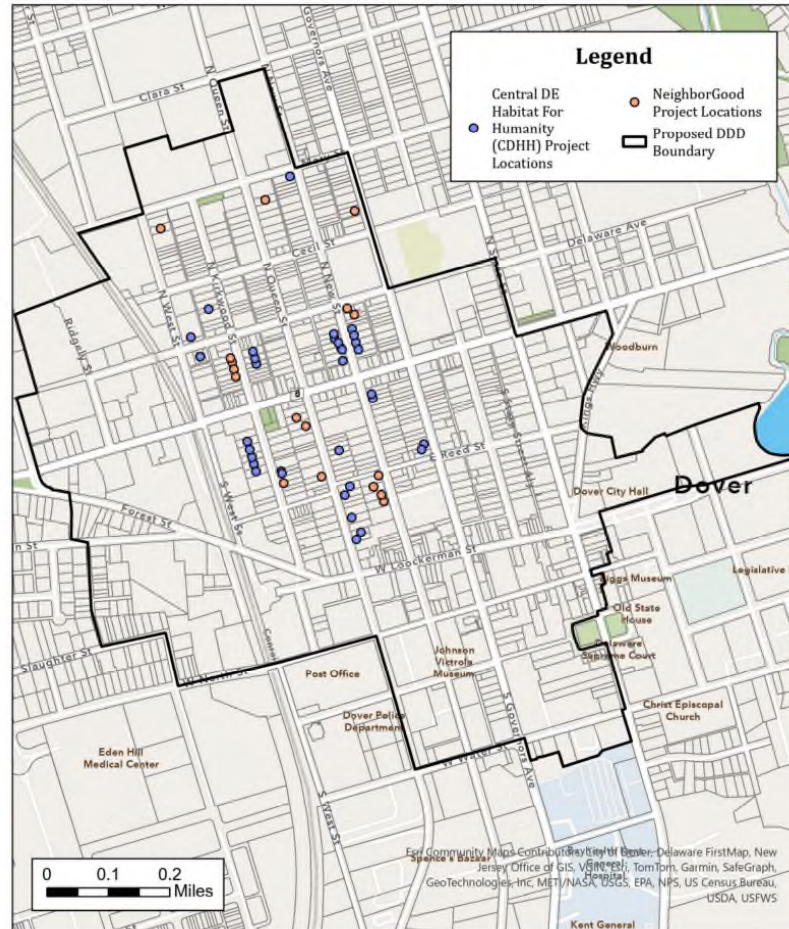
- Dover, Wilmington, and Seaford were the first districts designated in 2015.
- Today there are 12 designated DDD's.
- Dover's first 5-year extension began on February 1, 2025.



Program Successes



N. Kirkwood Street,
Rail Haus
Beer Garden,
Janaid's
Salon



Housing

- More than 60 new homes constructed by Habitat for Humanity, NeighborGood Partners, and others.

Businesses

- New businesses have benefited from DDD incentives.



Financial Impact



Incentives



- **City:** Waives Impact fees, building permit fees, new business license fees; offers a 10-year property tax abatement, a transfer tax rebate, and a historic tax credit.
- **Downtown Dover Partnership:** Architectural, Façade, and Critical improvement.
- **State:** 20% construction rebate and a \$10,000 matching program.



Results 2015-2023

- Total state rebates since program started in 2015: **\$1.6 Million**
- 2018-2023 Total value of City incentives used: **\$73,134.20**
- Private Investment: **\$13.2 Million**



DDD Renewal

- Application and Updated District Plan approved by City Council in May 2024.
- Governor Carney granted 5-year extension by letter dated August 20, 2024.
- City Council adopted Ordinance #2025-01, amending the District Boundary on February 24, 2025.



DDD Relaunch

Updated Webpage

Planning Menu

Marijuana Regulations

2019 Comprehensive Plan

Brochures, Applications and Ordinances

Brochures - Planning & Inspections

Community Development

Comprehensive Rezoning 2021 Project

Dover's Downtown Development District

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Floodplain Management

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Historic District Guidelines

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Planning and Inspections Forms

Safe Communities

Silver Lake Boat Permit

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Community

Dover's Downtown Development District

Home > Groups > Planning > Dover's Downtown Development District

Dover's Downtown Development District



On January 11, 2015, Governor Markell announced Dover's designation as one of three Downtown Development Districts. Nearly 10 years later, on August 20, 2024, Dover's Downtown Development District became the first district in the program's history to achieve five year renewal, as approved by Governor Carney. Property owners in the Downtown Development District are eligible for a variety of incentives from the State and the City of Dover. The most valuable of these

<https://www.cityofdover.com/departments/Planning/dovers-downtown-development-district-210248>

Updated Information Sheets

City of Dover, DE Downtown Development District

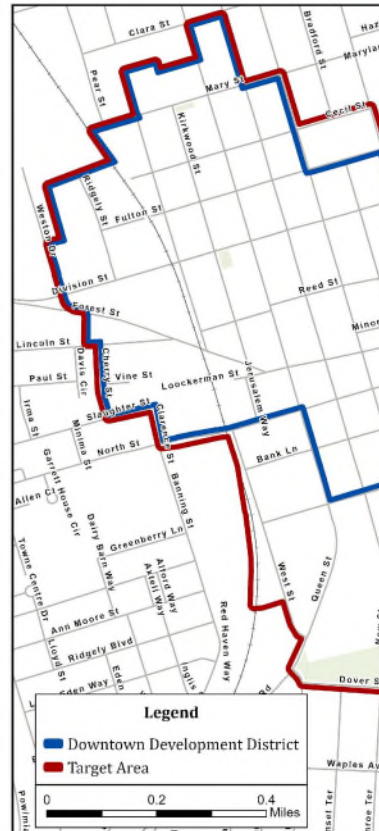


Dover's Downtown Development District

On January 11, 2015, Governor Jack Markell designated the Downtown Development District. On August 20, 2024, the City Council adopted the Downtown Development District Designation through the Downtown Development Districts Act.

- Spur private capital investment;
- Stimulate job growth and improve community life;
- Help build a stable community of long-term residents;
- Assist municipalities in strengthening their downtowns held for talented people, in part, for their life.

City of Dover, DE Downtown Redevelopment District



Adopted February 24, 2025

City of Dover, DE Tax Credit Program

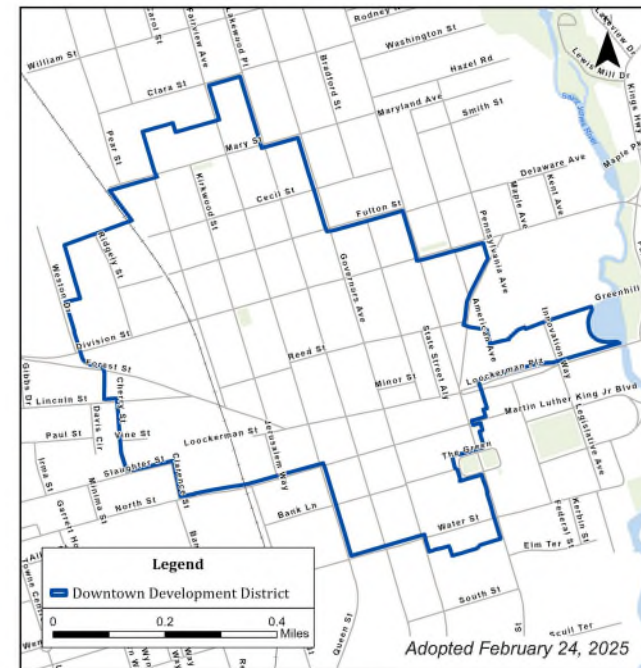
The historic buildings and homes of Dover are an essential part of the City's past and future. The Tax Credit for Historic Properties helps relieve some of the expenses of owning and maintaining a building within the Historic District. It serves as an incentive for repair and renovation of these historic buildings.

How do the Tax Credits Work?

- The Tax Credits equal 50% of the total cost of the approved project. The maximum Tax Credit is \$6,000. The cost of the project must be at least \$1,200, resulting in a minimum Tax Credit for the project of \$600.
- The Tax Credits are applied to an individual property.
- The Tax Credits run with the property. For example, a \$1,000 tax credit would not transfer to any new owners of the property. Tax Credit per year is \$600.
- The owners of the property may apply for Tax Credits. A property may not receive more than \$12,000.

City of Dover, DE Downtown Homeownership Incentives

The City of Dover offers a variety of homeownership incentives to qualifying purchasers. Some incentives are available citywide, and others are specific to the Downtown Development District.



First Time Homebuyer Transfer Tax Exemption

First time homebuyers are eligible for a transfer tax exemption citywide if they use the property as their principal residence. City Council shall have the right to deny this exemption to any property owner where the sale and purchase appears to be done fraudulently to take advantage of the realty transfer tax exemption ordinance.

For property located within the **Downtown Development District**, the seller will also receive and exemption from their portion of the transfer tax if they sell to a first time homebuyer. See Dover Code, Chapter 102 Taxation, Article III Realty Transfer Tax, §102-71 Definitions (a)(3) for more detail about the Realty Transfer Tax Exemption.

New Incentive Application Form

APPLICATION FOR DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT & TARGET AREA INCENTIVES

City of Dover - Planning and Inspections
PO Box 475
Dover, DE 19903
DoverDDD@dover.de.us



Please complete electronically or print.

1. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

2. SUBJECT PROPERTY DATA

Tax Parcel ID: _____
Location/Address: _____
Owner Name: _____
Owner Address: _____

3. INCENTIVES AVAILABLE FROM THE CITY OF DOVER

Please check incentives for which you are applying:

- ☐ Waiver of Building Permit Fees
- ☐ Waiver of City Water and Wastewater Impact Fees
- ☐ Abatement of property taxes on the value of improvements
- ☐ Waiver of new Business License fees for 3 years (DDD only)
- ☐ Rebate of buyer's City Transfer Tax when Certificate of Occupancy is issued within 5 years of property transfer (DDD only)

4. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Use additional sheet if necessary.

☐ Additional information attached

Updated June 2025

City of Dover
Application for Development Incentives



Page 2

Date of Purchase: _____

Project Cost Estimate: _____

5. ASSURANCES

All information in this application is complete and true to the best of my/our knowledge. I/We certify that certain expenses are only reimbursable after Certificate of Occupancy or final inspection by Planning and Inspections. I/We understand that if I/we do not comply with the provisions of the development incentives program, the City may terminate the incentives.

Date Applicant Signature

6. STAFF ACTION

	YES	NO
Located within Target Area?	☐	☐
Located within the DDD?	☐	☐
Cost of Project:	_____	
Transfer of Property Date:	_____	

	APPROVED	DENIED
Building Permit Fee Waiver	☐	☐
10 Year Tax Abatement	☐	☐
City Impact Fees	☐	☐
Transfer Tax Rebate	☐	☐
New Business License Fee	☐	☐

STAFF NOTES/COMMENTS

Date Signature of City Planner

Date Signature of City Manager

Updated June 2025

Rossi

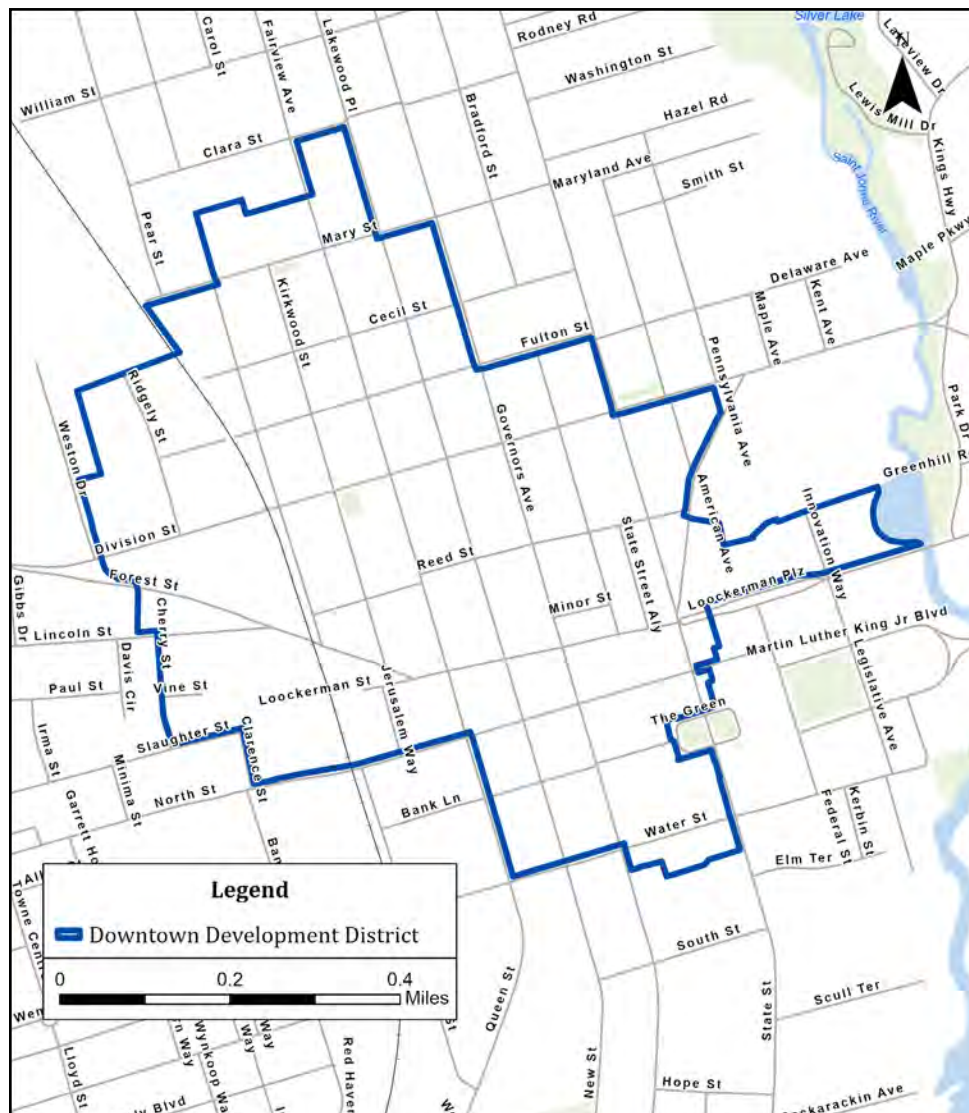
Other Implementation Actions

- DDD Signs Placed at New Boundary Locations.
- Press Release to promote the DDD program.



Questions?

City of Dover, DE Downtown Development District Program Overview



Adopted February 24, 2025

Dover's Downtown Development District

On January 11, 2015, Governor Jack Markell announced he had selected Dover as a Downtown Development District. On August 20, 2024, Governor John Carney extended Dover's Downtown Development District Designation through January 2030. The goals of the program, as established in the Downtown Development Districts Act of 2014, are to:

- Spur private capital investment;
- Stimulate job growth and improve commercial vitality;
- Help build a stable community of long term residents; and
- Assist municipalities in strengthening neighborhoods while harnessing the attraction that vibrant downtowns hold for talented people, innovative small businesses, and residents from all walks of life.

How to Participate

Construction projects and new businesses within Dover's Downtown Development District (see map on other side) may qualify for a variety of incentives from sponsoring agencies, including the State of Delaware, the City of Dover, and the Downtown Dover Partnership. Not all projects are eligible for all incentives. To make sure you know which incentives apply to your project, contact the administering agency or the Dover Planning Office at (302) 736-7196 or DoverDDD@dover.de.us. For the City of Dover local incentive application visit <https://evogov.s3.amazonaws.com/media/27/media/13253.pdf>. For more information about the State's Downtown Development District Program visit <https://www.stateplanning.delaware.gov/ddd>.

Incentives by Sponsoring Agencies

State of Delaware

Downtown Development District Rebates

- Administered by Delaware State Housing Authority
- Up to 20% cash rebate for qualifying construction projects (capped at \$1 million per property)
- For more information visit <https://www.destatehousing.com/build/ddd-program/>
- Call (302) 739-4263 for more information.

State Historic Preservation Tax Credits

- Administered by the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs
- Assist with the preservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings
- For more information visit <https://history.delaware.gov/preservation/taxcredit/> or call (302) 739-7400.

Downtown Dover Partnership

- The DDP also administers programs to help business owners. For more information contact the DDP at (302) 678-2940 or visit <https://www.downtowndoverpartnership.com/>.

City of Dover

- Waiver of City Water and Wastewater Impact Fees
- Waiver of Building Permit Fees
- Abatement of property taxes on the value of improvements
- Waiver of new Business License fees for three years
- Rebate of buyer's City Transfer Tax when Certificate of Occupancy is issued within five years of property transfer
- Transfer Tax waiver for owner-occupied homes for first-time buyers
- Abatement of property taxes for owner-occupied homes
- Historic Property Tax Credits for restoration of building exterior
- For more information visit <https://www.cityof-dover.com/Dovers-Downtown-Development-District-210248/>.
- Call the Dover Planning Office at (302) 736-7196 or email DoverDDD@dover.de.us with questions.



Department of Planning & Inspections

Dover City Hall

15 Loockerman Plaza

Dover, DE 19901

Phone: 302-736-7196

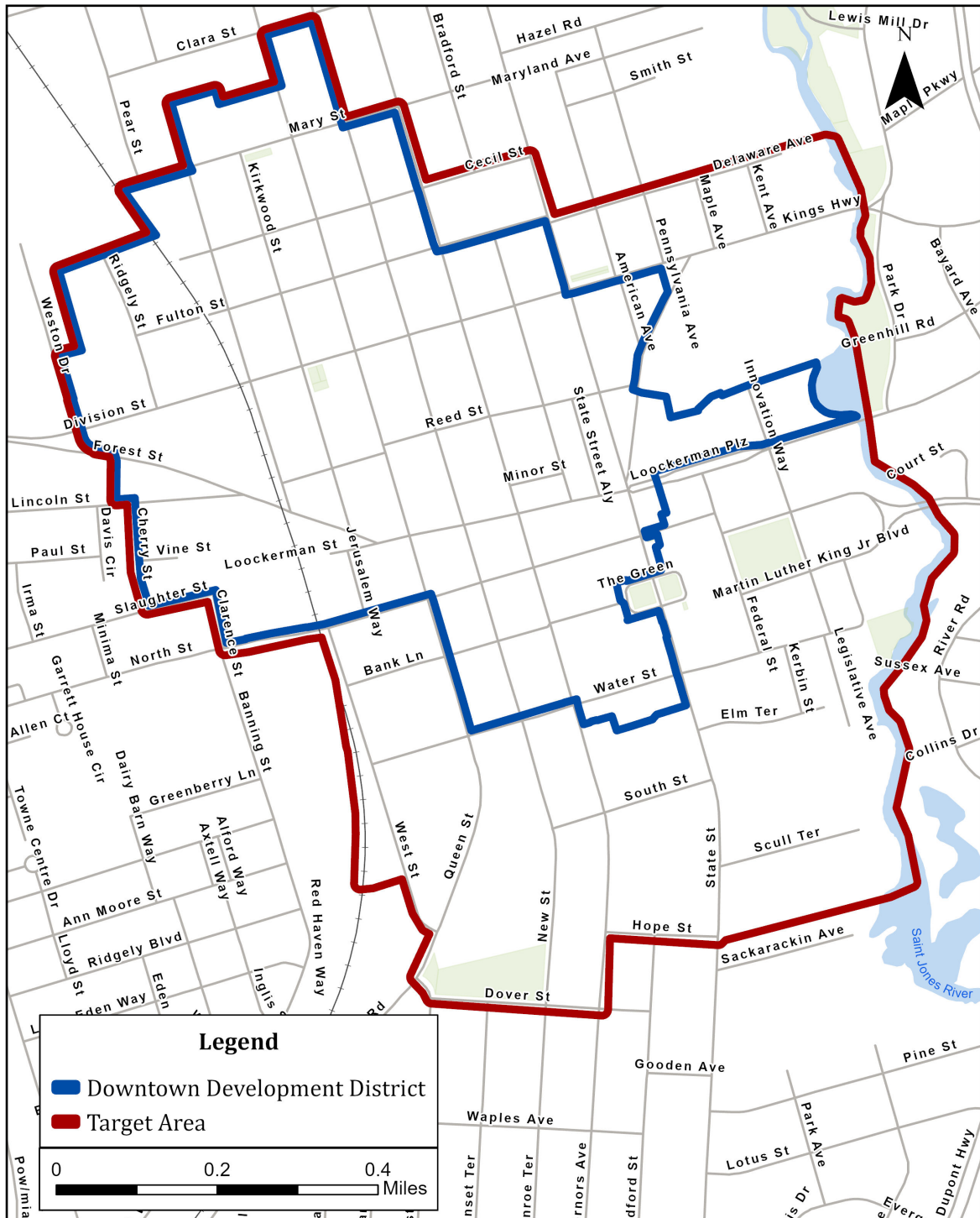
Fax: 302-736-4217

<https://www.cityofdover.com/Planning-and-Inspections/>

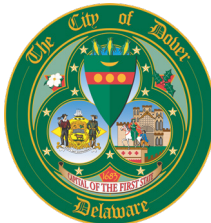
DoverDDD@dover.de.us

City of Dover, DE

Downtown Redevelopment Incentives



Adopted February 24, 2025



What Projects are Eligible for Incentives?

Projects will be eligible for incentives if they meet the following criteria:

- Are new construction or renovation projects.
- Are located within the **Target Area** (outlined in **red** on the map) or **Downtown Development District** (outlined in **blue** on the map). The Downtown Development District is included in the Target Area.
- Exceed \$5,000 fair market value in terms of the materials used and the labor to be performed.

Tax-exempt properties are **not** eligible for these incentives, except as specified in Appendix C. Incentive Applications must be filed prior to applying for a Building Permit.

Incentives Available in the Target Area and Downtown Development District:

Permit Fee Waivers - Waiver of Building, Plumbing, Mechanical & Fire Protection Permit fees. (Sign Permit fees are not eligible.)

Impact Fee Waivers - Waiver of City Water & Wastewater (Sewer) Impact Fees. (Kent County Impact Fees are not waived by this program.)

Property Tax Abatements - 10-year abatement of City property tax on the value of improvements.

Additional Incentives Available in the Downtown Development District:

Business License Fee Waivers - For new businesses or businesses that expand or relocate to the Downtown Development District, City of Dover Business License Fees will be waived for three years. All businesses are required to obtain a City of Dover Business License, but no fee will be charged.

Transfer Tax Rebates - For properties that transfer on or after March 1, 2015, the property owner will be eligible for a rebate of the buyer's portion of the Real Estate Transfer Tax paid to the City of Dover upon issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, provided that a Certificate of Occupancy is issued for improvements to the property within five years of the payment of the Real Estate Transfer Tax.

Additional Incentives Available

Contact 302-678-2940 or visit <https://downtowndoverpartnership.com> for more information about their additional incentives.

See Dover Code, Appendix C - Downtown Redevelopment for more detail about the incentives for downtown redevelopment or visit https://library.municode.com/de/dover/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR_APXCDORE

Department of Planning & Inspections

Dover City Hall

15 Loockerman Plaza

Dover, DE 19901

Phone: 302-736-7196

Fax: 302-736-4217

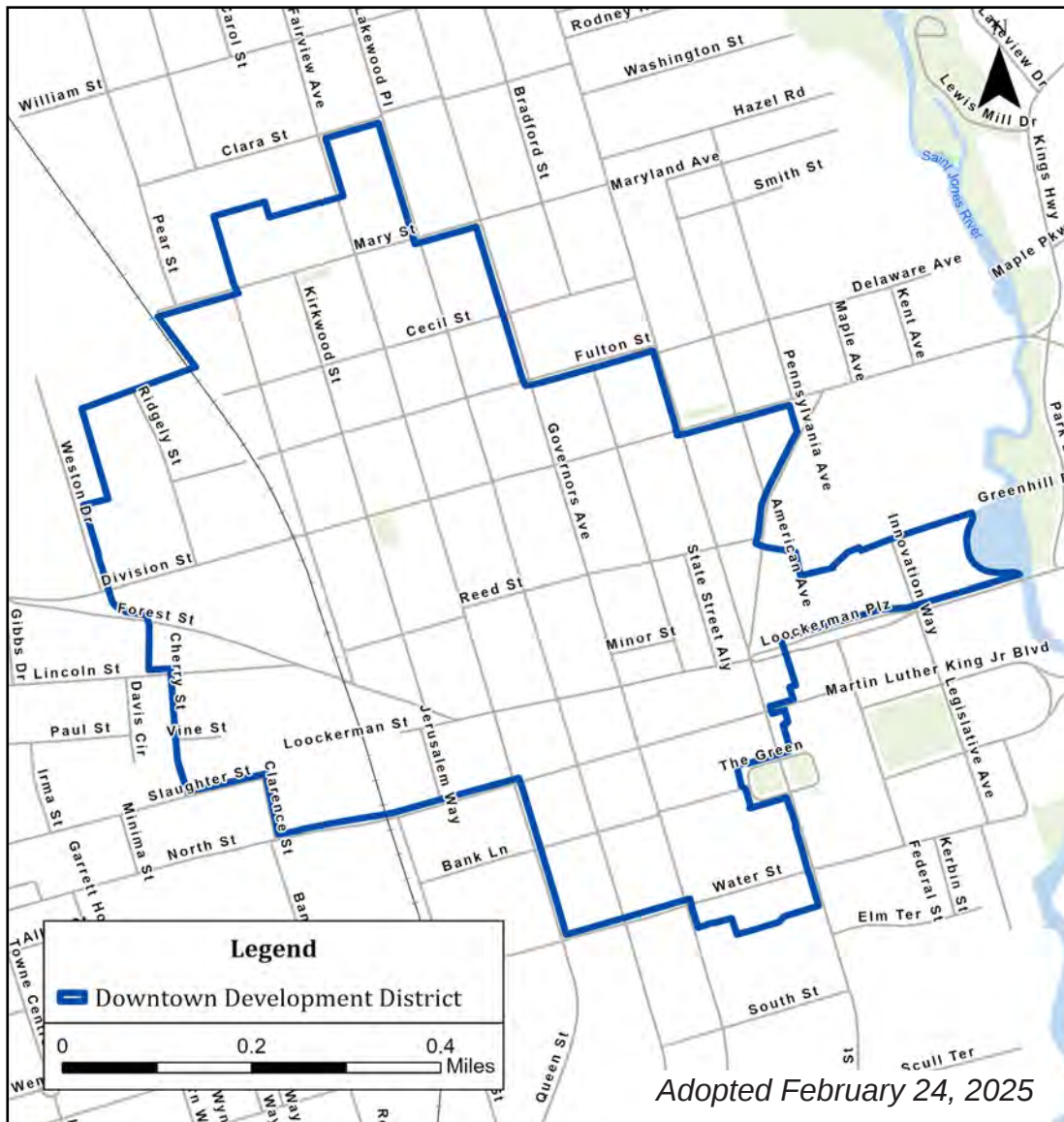
<https://www.cityofdover.com/Planning-and-Inspections/>

DoverDDD@dover.de.us

City of Dover, DE

Downtown Homeownership Incentives

The City of Dover offers a variety of homeownership incentives to qualifying purchasers. Some incentives are available citywide, and others are specific to the Downtown Development District.



First Time Homebuyer Transfer Tax Exemption

First time homebuyers are eligible for a transfer tax exemption citywide if they use the property as their principal residence. City Council shall have the right to deny this exemption to any property owner where the sale and purchase appears to be done fraudulently to take advantage of the realty transfer tax exemption ordinance.

For property located within the **Downtown Development District**, the seller will also receive and exemption from their portion of the transfer tax if they sell to a first time homebuyer. See Dover Code, Chapter 102 Taxation, Article III Realty Transfer Tax, §102-71 Definitions (a)(3) for more detail about the Realty Transfer Tax Exemption.

Real Estate Tax Abatement

Any person purchasing a residential property in which they will reside within the Downtown Development District shall be eligible for relief from the payment of City real estate taxes in the following manner:

1 st year of owner occupancy	100% reduction of City taxes
2 nd year of owner occupancy	75% reduction of City taxes
3 rd year of owner occupancy	50% reduction of City taxes
4 th year of owner occupancy	25% reduction of City taxes
5 th year of owner occupancy	0% reduction of City taxes

How to Obtain the Real Estate Tax Abatement

The homeowner must make application by letter sent to the city manager stating the provisions under which he or she qualifies for the real estate tax abatement. The city manager will notify the applicant within 30 days if their application is eligible for approval. After a certificate of occupancy is granted for the property, the city manager will present the abatement request with the qualifying documentation to City Council for approval. The applicant must submit a statement of compliance by April 15 of each year to the City Manager. Failure to submit the statement of compliance shall disqualify the applicant from the abatement.

See Dover Code, Chapter 102 Taxation, Article IV Abatement of Real Estate Taxes for more information about this incentive.

Dover First Start

First time homebuyers in Dover may also be eligible for downpayment assistance through the Dover First Start program. For more information, contact the Community Development Office at (302) 736-7175. Applicants must have a household income of 80% of Area Median Income or less to be eligible for the Dover First Start Program.

First time homebuyer means a natural person who has at no time held an interest in residential real estate, wherever located, and which has been occupied as their principal residence, and who intends to occupy the property being conveyed as his principal residence within 90 days following recordation of the deed.

Department of Planning & Inspections

Dover City Hall
15 Loockerman Plaza
Dover, DE 19901
Phone: 302-736-7196
Fax: 302-736-4217
<https://www.cityofdover.com/Planning-and-Inspections/>
DoverDDD@dover.de.us

Tax Assessor's Office

P.O. Box 7100
Dover, DE 19903
Phone: 302-736-7022



Updated June 2025

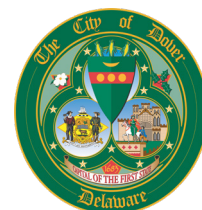
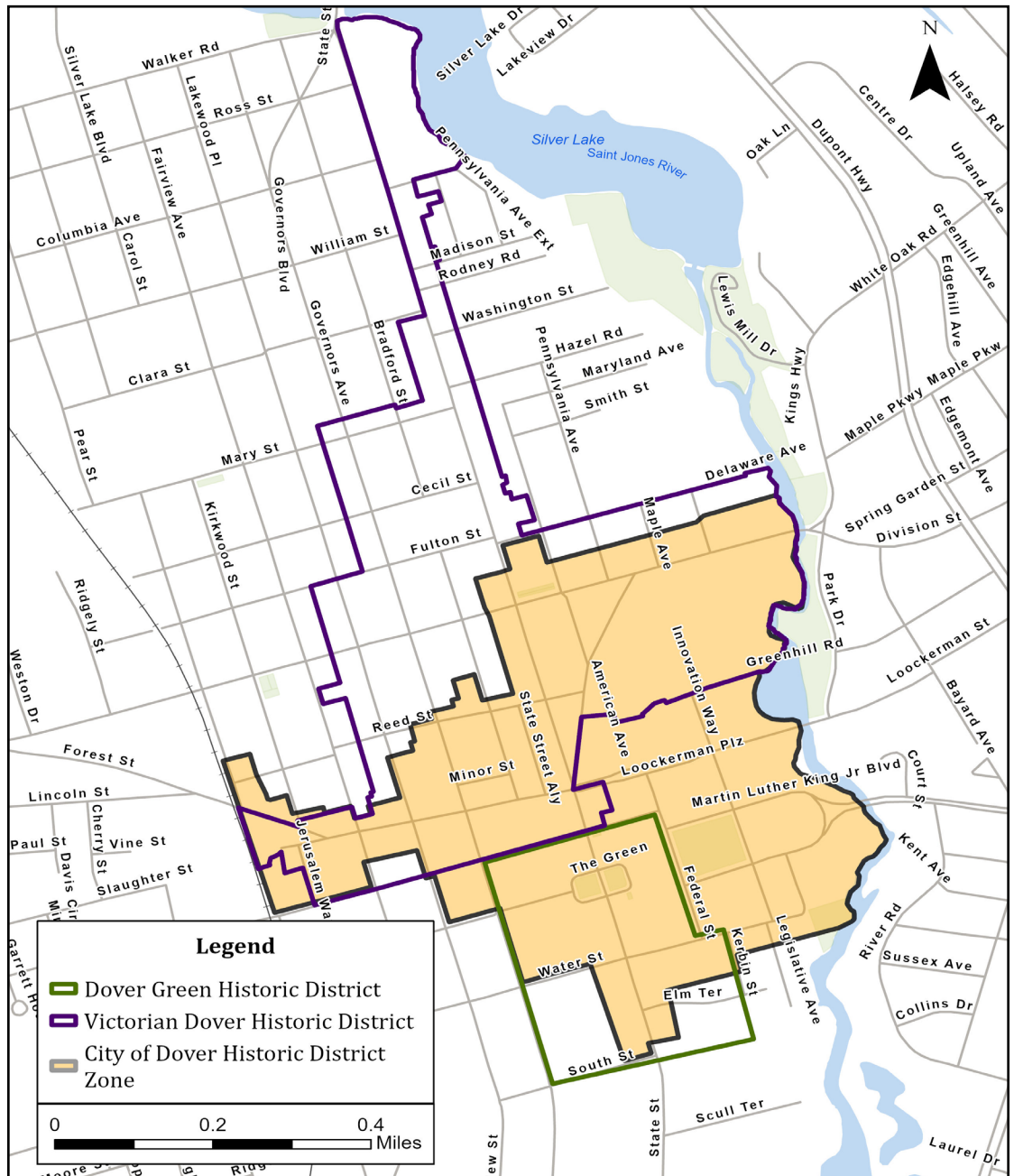
City of Dover, DE

Tax Credit Program for Historic Properties

The historic buildings and homes of Dover are an essential part of the City's past and future. The Tax Credit for Historic Properties helps relieve some of the expenses of owning and maintaining a building within the Historic District. It serves as an incentive for repair and renovation of these historic buildings.

How do the Tax Credits Work?

- The Tax Credits equal 50% of the total cost of the approved project. The maximum Tax Credit is \$6,000. The cost of the project must be at least \$1,200, resulting in a minimum Tax Credit for the project of \$600.
- The Tax Credits are applied to annual City property tax bills.
- The Tax Credits run with the property for a ten-year period and is prorated over the ten years. For example, a \$1,000 tax credit would be \$100 each year for ten years. However, the Tax Credit does not transfer to any new owners of the property. The maximum Tax Credit per year is \$600.
- The owners of the property may apply more than once for Tax Credits. A property may not receive a total Tax Credit greater than \$12,000.



What are Eligible Properties?

Properties located in the City's Historic District Zone (as shown in the shaded area on the map) or properties listed on or within a Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places may be individually eligible for tax credits for exterior improvements.

What are Eligible Projects?

- An eligible project is a preservation, restoration, and/or rehabilitation project involving exterior improvements to the architectural facade of the building.
- The project must be visible from a public street, sidewalk, or public way. An **exterior preservation project** is construction or maintenance work that sustains the existing form, integrity and material of the building. A **rehabilitation project** returns the property to a state of utility while preserving features which are central to its historic significance. **Exterior restoration projects** recover the form and detail of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time.

How to Apply for Historic Properties Tax Credit

- 1) Contact the City Planning Office for the [Application Form](#) & instructions.
- 2) Property Owners must submit a Historic Property Tax Credit Application and required documentation with their Building Permit Application.
- 3) Include the following in the submittal:
 - Color photographs of the property showing its current condition and existing materials on site.
 - Plans and information describing the project activities.
 - An itemized cost estimate for the project.
- 4) The City Planner will review the application to confirm eligibility and ensure consistency with the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone* and the Architectural Review Certificate, if one has been approved. The City Planner may refer any application to the Historic District Commission for consultation. See Dover Code, Chapter 102 Taxation, Article V Tax Credits for Historic Properties for more detail about tax credits for historic properties.

How are Tax Credits Activated?

Once an approved project is completed:

- Submit a final expense report to the Planning Office. The project is inspected for compliance with approvals.
- Upon verification of the project, the Tax Assessor will apply the Tax Credit.

Department of Planning & Inspections

Dover City Hall
15 Loockerman Plaza
Dover, DE 19901
Phone: 302-736-7196
Fax: 302-736-4217
<https://www.cityofdover.com/Planning-and-Inspections/>
DoverDDD@dover.de.us

Tax Assessor's Office

P.O. Box 7100
Dover, DE 19903
Phone: 302-736-7022

APPLICATION FOR DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT & TARGET AREA INCENTIVES

City of Dover - Planning and Inspections
PO Box 475
Dover, DE 19903
DoverDDD@dover.de.us



Please complete electronically or print.

1. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name:
Address:
Phone:
Email:

2. SUBJECT PROPERTY DATA

Tax Parcel ID:
Location/Address:
Owner Name:
Owner Address:

3. INCENTIVES AVAILABLE FROM THE CITY OF DOVER

Please check incentives for which you are applying:

- ☐ Waiver of Building Permit Fees
- ☐ Waiver of City Water and Wastewater Impact Fees
- ☐ Abatement of property taxes on the value of improvements
- ☐ Waiver of new Business License fees for 3 years (DDD only)
- ☐ Rebate of buyer's City Transfer Tax when Certificate of Occupancy is issued within 5 years of property transfer (DDD only)

4. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Use additional sheet if necessary.

☐ Additional information attached

City of Dover Contact List

City Manager's Office

(302) 736-7005

CityManagers@dover.de.us

Role/Responsibility:

Conformance with Downtown
Development District Plan

Contacts:

David S. Hugg III, City Manager

Yvonne Martine, Executive Assistant
to the City Manager

Planning Office

(302) 736-7196

DoverDDD@dover.de.us

Roles/Responsibilities:

Conditional Use, Site Plan, Zoning,
Subdivision, Architectural Review
Certificates/Historic Reviews,
Downpayment Assistance and
Housing Rehabilitation

Contacts:

Dawn Melson-Williams, AICP,
Principal Planner

Chris Salzano, AICP, Planner II

Tracey Harvey, Planner/Community
Development

Maretta Savage-Purnell,
Administrative Assistant

Building Inspections

(302) 736-7011

[PermitsandLicenses@
dover.de.us](mailto:PermitsandLicenses@dover.de.us)

Role/Responsibility:

New Construction, Building
Renovations, Change of Occupancy
of Building Space, Building Code/
Building Permits

Contact:

Matthew Brown, Deputy Fire Marshal

Fire Marshal's Office

(302) 736-7011

[PermitsandLicenses@
dover.de.us](mailto:PermitsandLicenses@dover.de.us)

Role/Responsibility:

Fire Code, Change of Occupancy
of Building Space, Fire Protection
Permits, Public Occupancy Permits

Contacts:

Jason Osika, Fire Marshal

Matthew Brown, Deputy Fire
Marshal

Licensing & Permitting

(302) 736-7011

[PermitsandLicenses@
dover.de.us](mailto:PermitsandLicenses@dover.de.us)

Role/Responsibility:

Business Licenses, Building
Permits, Rental Dwelling Permits,
Planning and Inspections Payment

Contacts:

Kristen Mullaney, Licensing &
Permitting Supervisor

Taryn Bauer, Office Assistant

Tax Assessment Office

(302) 736-7022

DoverDDD@dover.de.us

Role/Responsibility:

Current Assessment Values, Tax
Incentives, Tax Billing

Contacts:

Annette Hart

Water/Wastewater Department

(302) 736-7025

[WaterWastewater@
dover.de.us](mailto:WaterWastewater@dover.de.us)

Role/Responsibility:

Additions to Plumbing Fixtures, Water
and Sewer Utilities, Impact Fee
Calculation

Contact:

Jason Lyon, P.E., Director of Water/
Wastewater

Public Works Department

(302) 736-7005

PublicWorks@dover.de.us

Role/Responsibility:

Trash Collection/Recycling, Grounds/
Street Trees, Public Streets,
Stormwater Management

Contact:

Mark Nowak, Director of Public Works

Electric Department

(302) 736-7070

Electric@dover.de.us

Roles/Responsibilities:

Electric Service Size/Feed, Load
Sheets

Contacts:

Paul Waddell, Electric Director

Lois King, Administrative Assistant

Aren Wright

Customer Service Department

(302) 736-7035

[CustomerService@
dover.de.us](mailto:CustomerService@dover.de.us)

Role/Responsibility:

Utility Accounts, Billing and
Collections, Tax Payments

Contacts:

Allison Haines



Updated June 2025