

Historic Preservation	Goal 1: Preserve and Protect Historic Resources	
	Recommendation 1: Identification and Designation of the Dover Historic District Zone • Identify and study properties and areas for potential future local Historic District designation either as individual structures or as Historic District areas. • Evaluate properties of interest and concentrated areas of historic resources for local Historic District designation. • Evaluate for local Historic District designation those areas currently listed in and/or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. • Evaluate proposed annexation areas for historic resources to address needs for preservation and protection.	In 2022, the Planning Commission made a recommendation to expand the Historic District Zone along South Governors Avenue (411/429/435/441/447 S Governors Ave & 117 W Water Street). City Council adopted this Rezoning through Ordinance #2022-02. While no new standalone local historic districts were officially designated during this 12-month period, the City actively evaluated properties within the existing Historic District Zone (H) during large-scale redevelopment proposals. The City utilized its 2025 recently renewed Downtown Development District (DDD) boundaries to streamline historic zoning priorities with economic incentives for incoming developments.
	Recommendation 2: Stewardship of Historic Resources • Encourage stewardship activities by public and private owners of historic resources to ensure the long-term care, protection, preservation, and continued existence of these resources. • Encourage appropriate stewardship of historic resources in City building projects and infrastructure improvements located within designated historic districts or areas. • Continue stewardship of The Green per the Preservation & Conservation Easement established with its designation as a National Monument/National Historical Park. • Develop strategies within disaster planning and disaster response plans that consider historic resources.	The Historic District Commission actively reviewed stewardship efforts for major public infrastructure. Most notably, on June 18, 2026, the HDC reviewed the Legislative Hall Building Addition at 411 Legislative Avenue. The evaluation ensured that the addition of an ADA-accessible ramp on the historic west façade demonstrated appropriate stewardship of one of the city's most significant state-owned historic resources. For the City of Dover's disaster planning and disaster response plans that historic resources, local mitigation heavily relies on broader state frameworks, such as the Delaware All-Hazard Mitigation Plan overseen by the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA), which addresses state-level property mitigation for public historic properties.
	Recommendation 3: Evaluation of Design Standards and Guidelines • Evaluate and update the “Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone.” This document was originally developed and adopted in 1992. • Evaluate and consider the standards and guidelines regarding the levels of protection for The Green and the Loockerman Street historic contexts. • Evaluate and consider the use of modern materials and technologies in the standards and guidelines.	There were no rewrites to the 1992 "Design Standards and Guidelines" adopted during this timeframe. Instead, the HDC strictly applied the existing standards to modern applications. For example, on February 19, 2026, the HDC evaluated a permit for 1 Kings Hwy NE, enforcing design standards by recommending that the replacement entry door maintain its historic double-door format to preserve visual integrity.

	Recommendation 4: Architectural Review Certification Process • Refine the regulatory process and procedure for Architectural Review Certification for properties located within the designated local Historic District Zone (H). • Offer education opportunities to the Historic District Commission, staff and the general public on the Architectural Review Certification process. • Evaluate process of requests for demolition and the identification of “demolition by neglect” properties for code revisions and education opportunities.	• In 2020, of the 34 permits in the Historic District, 29 required Architectural Review Certification. • In 2021, of the 35 permits in the Historic District, 26 required Architectural Review Certification. • In 2022, of the 39 permits in the Historic District, 34 required Architectural Review Certification. • In 2023, of the 51 permits in the Historic District, 42 required Architectural Review Certification. • In 2024, of the 32 permits in the Historic District, 27 required Architectural Review Certification. • In 2025, of the 34 permits in the Historic District, 31 required Architectural Review Certification. Educational Opportunities: In 2020, the Historic District Commission participated in a training session on the aspects of the Historic District Zone (H) including the provisions and procedures for Architectural Review Certification and its differences from the National Register of Historic Places.
	Recommendation 5: Evaluate Impact of Development Activity on Historic Resources • Explore other strategies, activities, and incentive programs to assist in the preservation and protection of historic resources in order to balance the needs of preservation and revitalization. • Develop and/or improve incentives and ordinances that encourage the use of historic structures and maintain historic integrity. • Encourage use of flexible building codes when rehabilitation of existing historic buildings is proposed. • Focus planning initiatives on Downtown Dover to strengthen Loockerman Street and adjoining areas while maintaining the balance of preservation and development activity. • Ensure Community Development Block Grant Program activities complete the Section 106 Review process.	When evaluating the impact of development activity on historic resources, the City of Dover successfully balances historic preservation with active downtown revitalization by leveraging powerful financial tools like the Historic Properties Tax Incentive and the Downtown Development District (DDD) program. Through these programs, property owners are heavily incentivized to rehabilitate aging, architecturally significant structures, such as the notable historic preservation and adaptive reuse projects preventing "demolition by neglect." Complementing this, the Downtown Dover Partnership (DDP) administers its Critical Improvement Program, which provides direct funding for essential upgrades like life safety improvements, ADA accessibility, commercial kitchens, and upstairs residential conversions, ensuring that Dover's rich historic building stock is thoughtfully preserved and safely adapted for modern economic vitality.
	Recommendation 6: Support of Historic Resources and Landscapes • Support consideration of historic resources and landscapes in development activities from infill projects to land annexation. • Continue to identify, assist, and review the nominations of eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places. • Explore opportunities to amend or provide updated information to existing National Register nominations to meet current standards. • Explore opportunities to conduct and/or update the Delaware Cultural Resource Survey for properties located within City limits. • Ensure preservation efforts reflect the diversity of the community as reflected in the City’s history, architecture, and culture. • Recommend completion of a Self-Assessment for the Historic District Commission to identify other strategic planning needs.	The City mandated that large projects, specifically the Dover Mobility Center and "The Governor" mixed use development, respect the historic character and landscape of the Historical District Zone. The Planning Commission evaluated parcel consolidations to ensure the footprint of these new developments did not overwhelm the existing historical context of the adjoining Loockerman Street areas. Both projects at four stories prevent them from visually overwhelming the lower-profile, 19th- and early 20th-century architectural fabric along Loockerman Street. Beyond managing mass and height, municipal oversight mandated that both buildings be strictly mixed-use to preserve the character of a historic downtown; incorporating compact footprints and active ground-floor spaces (such as a grocery store, daycare, community rooms, and retail spaces) rather than dead zones or blank walls. By blending multi-modal transit, workforce housing, and local commerce into a cohesive urban grid, these developments successfully foster continuous pedestrian activity that feeds directly into adjacent historic downtown businesses.

Goal 2: Provide and Promote Incentives for Preservation Activities		
	Recommendation 7: Tax Credit Program for Historic Properties - Continue the City’s Tax Credit Program for Historic Properties and promote awareness of the program. - Promote awareness of other Tax Credit Programs offered including State and Federal programs.	The City actively promoted its Historic Tax Credit program by packaging it with other local incentives. Notably, the City has done this through informational planning brochures, local view sheets for the Downtown Development District (DDD), and partnerships with groups like the Downtown Dover Partnership to connect owners with state and county programs. Throughout the 2025–2026 development window, City Planning officials publicized the historic tax credits alongside 10-year property tax abatements, transfer tax rebates, and waivers for Building Permit and Impact Fees to ensure property owners had the financial tools to rehabilitate historic properties.
	Recommendation 8: Increase Participation in Resource-Bearing Programs - Continue participation in the Certified Local Government (CLG) program of the National Park Service with a focus on increasing Historic District Commission training and evaluating staff needs. - Engage in promotion and implementation of corridor management efforts within the Delaware Byways Program that support historic preservation, promote tourism, and visitation for Downtown Dover.	The City maintains its status as a Certified Local Government (CLG) under the Historic Preservation Act, supported by an active Historic District Commission that unlocks vital grant opportunities. Operating through its 5-year Downtown Development District (DDD) extension, active through January 2030, the City successfully channels State Rebate funds to developers revitalizing the historic core. According to the Delaware State Housing Authority’s FY25 report released in January 2026, these strategic incentives have catalyzed millions in private investment for residential and commercial spaces. Simultaneously, the City advances corridor management via the Delaware Byways Program, partnering with the Dover/Kent County MPO and state agencies to harmonize land-use practices with the region's historic and scenic character. Collaborative partnerships with organizations like the Delaware Tourism Office and the Downtown Dover Partnership further drive tourism by celebrating local heritage assets, major events at the Dover Motor Speedway and Bally's Dover, and comprehensive downtown revitalization. Central to this economic momentum is <i>Capital City 2030: Transforming Downtown Dover</i> , a dynamic master plan projected to attract over \$500 million in cumulative private and public investment to the district. Serving as a powerful catalyst for commercial growth and urban renewal, community-driven promotion, including public charrettes, virtual reality tours, and presentations, has successfully paired with an initial \$25 million public investment of state and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to jumpstart transformative capital infrastructure, including a state-of-the-art multimodal transit hub and vibrant mixed-use spaces designed to maximize long-term regional prosperity. As one of Delaware's original Downtown Development District (DDD) designees and the first to secure a program renewal, the City of Dover continued to aggressively catalyze downtown revitalization throughout calendar year 2025. Administered jointly by City Planning Staff and the City Manager's Office, with robust marketing support from the Downtown Dover Partnership (DDP), the program saw the adoption of Ordinance #2025-01 on February 24, 2025, which updated district boundaries and local incentives following a five-year state extension granted in 2024. Over the course of 2025, the City officially approved eight DDD Incentive applications encompassing new single-family construction, duplex and home renovations, apartment creations, and commercial upgrades. To directly lower financial hurdles, Dover recorded \$8,559 in Permit Fee Waivers across ten properties, utilized \$8,000 in Impact Fee Waivers for two properties, and applied a three-year business license fee waiver valued at \$128. These municipal incentives powerfully reinforced broader housing investments by organizations like NeighborGood Partners and Central Delaware Habitat for Humanity. Furthermore, the city successfully linked local efforts to state-level financing through the Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA): staff processed multiple project conformity forms, culminating in significant state allocations that featured DDD Round 17 Large Project Reservations for key structural anchors like The Old Post at 55 Loockerman Plaza, the Cecil Street Townhouses, Mt. Zion AME Church, and the Priscilla Block Building, alongside five residential Small Project Rebates totaling \$155,909 and two Commercial Rebates totaling \$134,811.

Goal 3: Increase Public Information on Historic Resources	
Recommendation 9: Public Outreach and Education • Initiate educational programs on historic and cultural resources for the general public and elected/appointed officials to increase awareness and understanding. • Develop and/or update written and digital materials (brochures, process guides, web-based postings, GIS mapping, etc.) on such topics as the local Historic District Zone, historic resources, the Historic District Commission, the Architectural Review Certification process, no the City's Tax Credit Program for Historic Properties. • Conduct workshop training with the Historic District Commission and Planning Commission on preservation topics and the Architectural Review Certification process. • Identify and implement methods of on-going communication with historic property owners and interested groups.	A major educational milestone occurred on April 13, 2026, when the Dover City Council unanimously passed Resolution No. 2026-05. This resolution threw municipal support and resources behind the creation of The Greater Dover Museum, Inc., a new non-profit dedicated to housing historic artifacts and significantly expanding educational programming regarding the City's heritage for residents and tourists. The City collaborated with the State to highlight historic and Downtown investments via an interactive digital Story Map released in January 2026.
Goal 4: Collaborate with Diverse Groups and Governments	
Recommendation 10: Seek Assistance and Support of Interest Groups • Continue to coordinate with and assist government agencies/officials and preservation interest groups. Examples of these groups and agencies include the City Council, Planning Commission, Historic District Commission, the Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs (State Historic Preservation Office), the First State Heritage Park at Dover, and the First State National Historical Park (National Park Service). • Coordinate with preservation interest groups such as Downtown Dover Partnership, Preservation Delaware, Friends of Old Dover, and others. • Seek to educate other community-based organizations on preservation activities. • Build relationships with the historic preservation programs and other related programs at Delaware Technical & Community College, Delaware State University, Wesley College, and the University of Delaware.	The push for the Greater Dover Museum was a direct result of coordinating with the Friends of Old Dover, Inc., an interest group that needed a better facility to house its extensive collections. The City maintained active coordination with the Downtown Dover Partnership (DDP) and NeighborGood Partners (formerly NCALL) to execute the "Restoring Central Dover" plan, actively balancing the preservation of central historic neighborhoods with the need for affordable housing. The City integrates its shared cultural heritage through programs that engage local spaces like the Dover Green and First State Heritage Park, where student volunteers, interns, and academic researchers often participate in public history, architecture, and tourism events. The City builds relationships with local higher education institutions, such as Delaware State University, by engaging in regional preservation grants and local history preservation (such as NEH-backed archival projects preserving local historical imagery) that intersects with Dover's historic identity.