

WELL ROUNDED

TOWN OF GEORGETOWN

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT PLAN

WORKING DRAFT

APRIL 15 2016



Georgetown Downtown Development District Plan

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Georgetown Downtown Development District Plan

WORKING DRAFT

1. Introduction

a. Purpose & Need

Healthy and vibrant downtowns are critical components of Delaware's economic well-being and quality of life. To help our downtowns and neighborhoods become more dynamic and vibrant places, the Delaware General Assembly enacted the Downtown Development Districts Act in 2014, which helps our cities and towns create designated areas that can then qualify them for significant development incentives and other State benefits. The Town of Georgetown is seeking Downtown Development District (DDD) designation as an integral component to its comprehensive economic, housing and community development initiatives. The goals of the designation are to:

- Spur private capital investment in commercial business districts and other neighborhoods;
- Stimulate job growth and improve the commercial vitality of such districts and neighborhoods;
- Help build a stable community of long-term residents by improving housing opportunities; and
- Assist local governments in strengthening neighborhoods while harnessing the attraction that vibrant downtowns hold for talented people, innovative small businesses and residents from all walks of life

Georgetown received a Neighborhood Building Blocks Fund Grant in 2015 to develop a DDD Plan, in order to one day apply for State designation under this program. The grant, funded by a JP Morgan Chase settlement agreement, awarded \$45,000 to Georgetown to engage a planning consultant and prepare a District Plan. The District Plan identifies needs, challenges and opportunities within the designated downtown, establishes a shared vision and goals for the downtown, and recommends development strategies and incentives to achieve this vision. The planning process for the Plan included an extensive stakeholder and public outreach process, including the formation of a Task Force.

Georgetown's downtown has strong bones, rich in history with the capacity and infrastructure to absorb growth. The amount of planning documents and efforts speaks volumes about the Town's design expectations in the area as well as its political will to cultivate positive and context sensitive change. The Town has invested in planning studies and actions that address downtown development, including the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, East Market Street Design Standards, Historic District Study Committee, Downtown Façade Improvement Program, and the Branding Initiative and Beautification Efforts Improvement Program. The Town has also made many public investments in the downtown including, but not limited to: improving public spaces such as Wilson Park and developing the Town's first public playground on North King Street, beautifying the streetscapes such as tree plantings and sidewalk upgrades along Market Street, and improving pedestrian safety and mobility such as crosswalks and signage around the Circle.

While the Town has set forth great energy and taken many steps forward, the downtown still faces many challenges. These challenges first include creating the right mix of uses and promoting day and night economic activity. As the Sussex County Seat the Town consists of mostly weekday daytime activity resulting from the courthouse and government employment. The Town desires to create a more vibrant, 24-hour community where people stay after work to dine, shop and recreate. The downtown would benefit from a wider range of options to engage community residents after hours. It is difficult for a business to be more successful if it is not open during the hours when most people have free time – evenings and weekends.

Second, the downtown struggles to compete with the commercial retail along the Route 113 corridor. In a 2008 community market analysis, confirmed by an online survey conducted for this Plan, shoppers reported that Wal-Mart and the Georgetown Plaza Shopping Center on Route 113 were their top shopping destinations.

In addition to providing a mix of pedestrian-oriented uses, a third challenge is to improve the physical walking environment. Many times throughout the day it is difficult to cross Market Street, Bedford Street and the Circle. This discourages a person from visiting multiple businesses and discourages persons employed in the downtown from visiting businesses over their lunchtime and after work.

Other challenges and needs include reducing the amount and perception of crime within the District area, providing the appropriate amount of parking in strategic locations, enhancing gateways and maintaining the Town's unique historic character. The Town further desires to physically and culturally connect adjacent neighborhoods with minimal adverse impact, as well as promote economic and social diversity within the downtown area.

b. Benefits of Downtown Development District Designation

The Town District Plan and DDD designation will result in an additional mix of uses, beautifying the streetscape, and marketing and stimulating economic activity. A live-work-play community requires a mix of residential, retail, service and entertainment uses. Market, economic and social diversity will create a more vibrant place and strengthen the downtown's market position. DDD designation will promote and incentivize infill development of prime vacant and underutilized lands in key locations in the downtown which will in turn be a catalyst to spur redevelopment and physical improvements elsewhere in the District and surrounding neighborhoods.

Designation will help leverage and 'make the case' for other funding opportunities for private and public projects that improve the downtown aesthetic and function, as well as public health and safety. Improvements would make the streets more pedestrian friendly and beautify the public realm generating street activity and foot traffic. Pedestrian activity means more visits to downtown establishments, and puts more 'eyes on the street' creating a safer and more comfortable environment. Such physical improvements may include new street amenities with tree plantings, pedestrian scale lighting, or street furniture such as benches and trash/recycling receptacles. They may also include façade improvements with creative window displays and signage, or adaptive reuse and restoration of underutilized buildings with historical and/or architectural value.

In addition, marketing, promotion and additional downtown branding efforts are needed to encourage local residents, employees, and visitors to regularly visit downtown businesses and community events. Businesses need to be organized and set forth joint promotions, advertising, marketing and special events. Through designation the Town would also be able to better focus on business recruitment and investment incentives, while maintaining an inventory of available business space and publicizing commercial opportunities.

In short, Downtown Development District designation by the State will be a catalyst for public and private investments. Designation will assist to make the entire District, and strategic sites in the downtown, market-ready, and attract and incentivize private capital investment by entitling private construction projects to receive grants and other local incentives. While designation is not guaranteed, this District Plan will be used as the primary tool to not just stimulate economic activity within the downtown, but to also guide this activity through strategic, efficient and sound investments.

c. Downtown Development District Planning Process

i. Task Force Role

The Task Force members were hand-selected to represent the many interests of the Town. The members of the group included residents, property and business owners, a member of the Chamber of Commerce, a County representative, members of local organizations, Planning Commission members, town staff and planning consultants. The planning consultants helped facilitate the meetings by preparing documents and visuals to be used during the meetings, and presenting the topics to be discussed at each meeting. With their vast knowledge of Georgetown, the Task Force led the discussion providing insight and the path forward in creating the DDD Plan.

The Task Force met on six separate occasions:

Task Force Meeting No. 1 | Kick-Off

The Task Force Kick-off meeting was held on October 26, 2015 at the First State Community Action Agency. Nine Task Force members were present to hear the consultants discuss background on the 2014 Downtown Development District Act, Neighborhood Building Blocks Fund Grant and Georgetown NBBF grant application. The overall project scope and schedule was discussed as well as project roles and responsibilities. A brief overview of recent projects, organizations, and investments was given that lead into a discussion of the District's demographics and existing conditions. Members were introduced to their homework assignment – a SWOT analysis – where they were asked to walk the District area and think about its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Members were also asked to begin thinking about draft goals and objectives, as well as potential survey questions.

Task Force Meeting No. 2 | Visioning

The second Task Force meeting focused on visioning activities and was held on November 23, 2015, also at the First State Community Action Agency. Task Force members heard the consultants review five model projects: Winchester, VA; Apex, NC; Milford, DE; Keswick Village, PA; and a mixed-use Habitat for Humanity project. Consultants also discussed lessons learned in interviewing staff from these and other “model” towns. Participants were asked their opinions on the proposed District boundaries. The SWOT analysis that had been assigned as homework for the first meeting was discussed in depth (See *Appendix #*). Draft survey questions were introduced to Task Force members for their review and comment. Members were also reminded to continue working on their draft goals and objectives homework and to attend the community outreach event – *Project Display / Holiday Photo Booth* – being held in conjunction with the annual Christmas Parade.

Task Force Meeting No. 3 | Goals & Strategies

The third Task Force meeting focused on goals and strategies and was held on January 27, 2016 at the Georgetown Train Station. For this meeting Task Force members heard an overall review of the online survey. There was also a finalization of the District boundary and further discussions of the SWOT analysis that began during the second Task Force meeting. Attendees discussed their goals and objectives for the Downtown Development District Plan and they were asked to start thinking about possible incentives that the Town could consider as part of their local incentive package.

Task Force Meeting No. 4 | Strategies & Incentives

The fourth Task Force meeting focused on strategies and incentives, and was held on February 29, 2016 at the Community Center in the Village of Cinderberry. During the meeting Task Force members added to the list of goals and objectives that were discussed at the previous meeting, and decided to look at prioritizing the goals when written in the draft format. The majority of the meeting

was spent discussing potential strategies and incentives. Ideas for incentives were presented as a starting point to the discussion.

Task Force Meeting No. 5 | Draft Plan

The fifth Task Force meeting centered on finalizing the proposed incentives and a review of the draft Downtown Development District Plan, and was held on March 23, 2016 at the Community Center in the Village of Cinderberry. Task Force members were provided a copy of the draft plan to review prior to the meeting. Everyone was given an opportunity to discuss needed revisions to the draft. The proposed incentives discussed at the previous meeting were also reviewed. A new incentive was introduced, form-based code, with a brief overview of what form-based code is and how it could be applied as an incentive. The Task Force members felt an additional meeting was needed to do a more in depth review of form-based code and how it could benefit the Town as an incentive.

Task Force Meeting No. 6 | Incentives & Form-Based Code

The last Task Force meeting focused on form-based code and finalizing the incentives, and was held on April 4, 2016 at the Community Center in the Village of Cinderberry. The discussion on form-based code used documents put together by the Office of State Planning and the Institute for Public Administration at the University of Delaware titled *Form-Based Codes, A Primer for Delaware Municipalities* as a general overview of what form-based code is and how it differentiates from conventional zoning. As part of this discussion, the group also reviewed permitted uses. It was agreed that form-based code would be an essential incentive and was included to the list of proposed incentives.

ii. Stakeholders & Partnerships

Town of Georgetown | The Town will work to promote the District Plan, administer the incentives and work on completing the strategies put forth in the Plan. The Plan can be used as a tool to support the reasons developers and business owners should come to Georgetown. The Town can simultaneously work to complete the strategies over the course of the designation. The Town will also continue their branding and marketing efforts. The Town recently went through a re-branding process and developed a new town logo, motto, color palette, etc. giving the Town website and other published materials an updated and cohesive look. These re-branding efforts can be put towards a marketing campaign putting focus on the District, looking to attract new residents and visitors as well as potential developers.

First State Community Action Agency | Community Action Agencies (CAA) are private nonprofit or public organizations created by the federal government to combat poverty in geographically designated areas. Status as a CAA is the result of an explicit designation by local or state government. CAAs seek to involve the community, including elected public officials, private sector representatives, and especially low-income residents, in assessing local needs and attacking the causes and conditions of poverty. CAAs reach out to low-income people in their communities, address their multiple needs through a comprehensive approach, develop partnerships with other community organizations, involve low-income clients in the agencies' operations, and administer a full range of coordinated programs to have a measurable impact on poverty. The First State Community Action Agency celebrated 50 years of empowering people and changing lives in 2015.

Georgetown Chamber of Commerce | The Greater Georgetown Chamber of Commerce is a business corporation dedicated to serving its membership. The non-profit 501(c)(6) is organized to promote and advance the business of its members and, through group effort, expand and improve the economic, physical, and social welfare of the Greater Georgetown area. Member benefits include

Chamber referrals, broadcast emailing, networking events, special event sponsorships, ribbon cuttings, monthly newsletter, low-cost advertising, Member2Member program, notary services and more.

Historic Georgetown Association | The Historic Georgetown Association (HGA) was formed in 1993 and included Mayor Joe Booth and several members of the Council, Chamber of Commerce, Georgetown Business Association as well as concerned residents. Some of the many important projects the HGA has worked on include the revitalization of Kimmeytown, restoration of the train station and restoring the Town's first fire house. The organization continues to be active in preserving the history and the Town of Georgetown.

Harrison Senior Living | Since May 1985, Harrison Senior Living has been providing premiere senior care at their Georgetown location. Their mission is to provide "excellent healthcare by professional experienced staff in an atmosphere of warmth and concern, opportunities to increase your peace of mind, maintain your dignity and define an exciting new way of life, and a home-like environment to share and create memories under a blanket of care and services." Harrison Senior Living also has two locations on the eastern shore of Maryland and two in southeastern Pennsylvania.

Sussex County Economic Development Office | With the motto: *Explore, Excite, Exceed* the County's Economic Development Office is the "key business connector in Southern Delaware." The Office works closely with businesses of all sizes including start-ups and businesses looking to expand or relocate. Recruit and retention are two key words the Office focuses on. Every day Sussex County's Economic Development Office is striving to ensure all businesses throughout the County are successful through outreach, support and incentives.

iii. Community Outreach

Community outreach is an important component to the planning process. The opinions of residents, business owners and operators, property owners, downtown employees, and visitors help to identify what they think the important issues are that need to be addressed and how they think Georgetown's downtown can be improved for the future. In the process of creating the Georgetown Downtown Development District Plan, community outreach has come into play through several Task Force sessions that were open to the public (described under *Task Force Role*), a community outreach event, as well as a Downtown Survey.

A joint workshop for the Town Council and Planning Commission was held on April 13, 2016. The purpose of the workshop was to give an overview of the process of developing the Plan and an overview of the Plan itself. Town Council and Planning Commission members were also given a chance to ask questions. The Downtown Development District Plan went to Town Council for approval at their May 11, 2016 meeting. All public comments received during Town Council public hearings are provided in Appendix X.

Project Display

On December 3, 2015 the Town of Georgetown in conjunction with their planning consultants held a project display at the Old Sussex County Courthouse during the annual Christmas Parade. The purpose of this booth was to display information on the Downtown Development District project, gain feedback on the proposed boundary and SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis, and to encourage attendees to fill out the Downtown Survey (discussed further below). There was a proposed boundary map, as well as District Plan components and information on the Downtown Development District Act for community members to review and ask questions.

Downtown Survey

In December 2015 an online survey was opened to all residents, business owners and operators, property owners, downtown employees, renters and visitors to the Town of Georgetown. Paper copies of the survey were also made available to those without internet access. Postcards describing the Downtown Development District project, as well as requesting completion of the survey, were distributed at the Christmas Parade, throughout the downtown and emailed. Paper copies that were returned to Town Hall were manually entered into the online survey for data aggregation purposes. A total of 356 responses were collected. Surveys were differentiated for residents/visitors and merchants. The purpose of the survey was to collect information on the frequency and purpose of consumer activity in the Georgetown area, the demand for new and expanded commercial offerings, the factors that influence local consumer shopping decisions, and the needs of local business owners and operators.

Out of the 356 responses 32% were Georgetown residents, 28% were persons employed by Georgetown, 22% were property or business owners and 19% were visitors. When asked about shopping frequencies only 15% said they shop downtown once a week compared to 29% of respondents who said they visit downtown once every few months. About 50% stated the most common time for them to shop downtown would be Monday through Friday before 5pm. According to the survey responders the major advantages of downtown Georgetown are being able to support local businesses, its small town character and convenient location, while the main disadvantage is the lack of variety of goods and services. The need for more variety in businesses was a reoccurring theme throughout the survey responses. Those taking the survey ranked wanting commercial retail, specialty retail and personal services each at or above 50%. When looking at additional ways to improve downtown Georgetown, people thought an improved appearance and improved parking would be beneficial. People also thought the best ways to help attract people to the downtown would be through a strong marketing campaign that could be used by the Town and businesses, better promotion of Town festivals and events, the creation of an inviting gateway into Town as well as the District, and enforcing property maintenance codes to encourage property owners to maintain their properties. Given the opportunity to be more specific about ideas to attract people and businesses downtown responders wrote: think outside the box, create a healthy blend of activities, advertise on major routes that lead into Town, create kiosks to provide information on locations of goods and services, have an event celebrating the history of Georgetown and create cultural learning opportunities. Many also noted that they thought the Town was moving in a positive direction.

Additional information collected from the survey can be found throughout this Plan. The survey forms and more detailed results can be found in Appendix X.

iv. District Reconnaissance Survey

District reconnaissance consisted of visiting the Town of Georgetown and performing a walkthrough within the Downtown Development District boundaries at the very outset of the planning process. The objectives of the reconnaissance survey were to observe, document, and photograph the existing conditions of the District, including but not limited to types of uses and businesses, urban form, contributing features to community identity and character, property maintenance and upkeep, redevelopment opportunities, streetscape conditions and overall walkability.

d. Existing Documents, Activities & Organizations

i. Comprehensive Plan

Georgetown's Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2010, recommends major policies regarding the development and conservation of the Town and adjacent areas over the next decade. It sets out an overall vision for the Town, where Georgetown is a destination showcasing small town charm, historical prominence, cultural diversity and excellence in educational facilities. The Town will continue to be the heart of Sussex County's legislative and judicial activity. It will remain a great place to live, work, learn, shop and play, with affordable homes and a strong sense of community. The underlying vision throughout the Comprehensive Plan is to protect vital resources, improve the quality of life for residents and provide new commercial services to the area, especially those that are not already offered in Sussex County.

The overall goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to continually strive to make Georgetown an even greater place with a strong sense of community, stable neighborhoods, vibrant businesses areas, high-quality recreation opportunities, a historic character and an excellent quality of life. To help further achieve this overarching goal, the Plan lists 31 sub-goals under a series of topics, many of which are applicable to the Downtown Development District. Applicable goals fell under the topics of Land Uses and Housing, Community Facilities and Services, Transportation, Natural Features, and Putting the Plan into Action. The Comprehensive Plan also included a series of policies to be considered to strengthen the downtown area.

As part of this Downtown Development District Planning process, the goals and strategies relating to the downtown area were evaluated. Those that are still valid and have not yet been completed have been incorporated into this Plan. This Plan has also augmented the goals and strategies found in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and set forth additional implementation strategies aimed at creating the vision outlined in this Plan's *Downtown Vision*.

An updated comprehensive plan will be developed in 2016-2017. The 2010 Comprehensive Plan can be found on the Town's website. A link to this document can be found in Appendix X.

ii. Historic District Study Committee Report of Findings and Recommendations

In the fall of 2014 a Historic District Review Committee put together a thorough report on their discussions and recommendations based on a yearlong review of the Town's current Historic Zoning District. The Committee was tasked with looking at ways to preserve and improve the Historic District. The three topics discussed were permitted uses in the District, design standards and possible expansion of the District. Design standards were tabled and discussed by a separate committee that worked to develop the East Market Design Standards. Some of the recommendations set forth by the Committee included renaming the District to Town Center, permitted uses would be based on sub-districts, creating an overlay district to preserve and protect historic properties, and the Committee felt expanding the District was not necessary. Many of the recommendations from this Report can be used as a starting point to put together a form-based code to apply to the District, which is discussed further in the *Implementation Plan* section.

iii. State Strategies

On April 1, 2011, Delaware Governor Jack Markell signed Executive Order #26 approving an update of the Strategies for State Policies and Spending, originally approved in 1999 and updated in 2004. The strategies represent a combination of state and local land use policies intended to guide State agencies as they make investment decisions. As shown on Map No. 8 – State Investment Strategies, the District and the majority of the Georgetown are within Level 1. Designated Level 1 identifies areas that are most prepared for growth and where the State can make the most cost-effective

infrastructure investment for schools, roads and public safety. The State Strategies generally prioritize the most intense State investments in and around municipalities such as Georgetown. These areas typically provide an opportunity for contiguous development that should grow consistently with historic character. The State encourages new development and reinvestment in these areas.

iv. Zoning Regulations & Design Standards

The Town has been proactive in progressing downtown redevelopment by promoting pedestrian-oriented and placemaking principles, and retaining and attracting neighborhood scale businesses. For instance, the Town has zoning and design standards that help protect the downtown character, including the East Market Street Design Standards, and have proposed for consideration in the future a Historic Overlay District.

In general, the mix of zoning districts within the Downtown permit a wide range of uses that is conducive toward creating a vibrant, traditional mixed-use and walkable downtown. However, some permitted uses are antiquated or may be unsuitable for a downtown. Previous planning efforts have recommended prohibiting uses that may have an adverse effect in achieving the desired downtown character, such as “drive-thrus” and auto-oriented business. The Comprehensive Plan recommends that pedestrian-oriented uses be encouraged in the downtown, including retail sales, personal services, offices and restaurants. With few exceptions, the zoning requirements in the District zones generally allow an overall density, rhythm and scale that are typical of traditional downtowns. A more detailed description and assessment of the zoning districts within the downtown are provided in Section_____.

v. Greater Georgetown Area Comprehensive Market Analysis

This Market Analysis was an investigation of regional market conditions in order to identify current and future opportunities for business expansion in the Greater Georgetown Area. It included a demographic and economic analysis of the population, a customer intercept survey and inventory of businesses in the 19947 zip code. It also included a comparative analysis of existing and potential retail and food-service sales.

A summary of the Market Analysis findings is as follows:

- The primary trade area for Greater Georgetown included Ellendale, Milton, Millsboro, Dagsboro, Frankford, Selbyville, Millville and Ocean View.
- More racially and ethnically diverse portions resided in Town; while predominantly white portions with higher average incomes tend to reside in portions outside of Town in suburban areas.
- The median and average household income are higher for trade area than for the Town suggesting that residents of Greater Georgetown trade area possess significant purchasing power upon which existing businesses can draw.
- The most common times for grocery shopping: Friday, Monday, and Saturday after 5pm
- It is more common to shop for non-grocery items between 11am-2pm than to shop for grocery items.
- People dined out for breakfast once every few months, and 2-4 times per week for lunch and dinner.
- People spent money most frequently on personal care and financial services.

- The most common requests for the Georgetown area were for a new movie theater, grocery store, clothing and shoe store, and restaurants (seafood and steakhouse were the most requested restaurants).
- The most important factors that influenced where respondents shop were cleanliness, safety and security, lighting and store variety.

The Market Analysis made the following recommendations:

- Develop a market-guided plan for regional economic development;
- Target noteworthy sales gaps for recruitment efforts;
- Track relevant market data;
- Preserve and enhance critical infrastructure and services;
- Connect economic development with comprehensive plans;
- Focus on downtown business-development approaches; and
- Create a more visitor-friendly Georgetown.

vi. Economic Development & Business Organizations

The following is a list of economic development, business organizations and other stakeholders that the Town can collaborate with to market, brand and promote the downtown as a great place to live, work and visit.

- American Association of University Women- Coastal-Georgetown Branch
- American Legion
- Delaware District III Little League
- Georgetown Chamber of Commerce
- First State Community Action Agency
- Franklin Masonic Lodge #12
- Georgetown Chamber of Commerce
- Georgetown Historical Society
- Georgetown Kiwanis Club
- Georgetown Lions Club
- Georgetown Little League
- Georgetown Millsboro Rotary
- Georgetown Public Library
- Historic Georgetown Association
- Midland Grange #27
- Pop Warner Football
- Red Men Nanticoke Tribe #21
- Sussex Central Ruritan Club
- Sussex County Habitat for Humanity
- Convention & Visitors Bureau for Sussex County
- Delaware Main Street
- VFW Post #2931

vii. Community Events

Georgetown offers many events throughout the year, each offering fun and drawing attention to the character and variety of the greater Georgetown community.

Return Day

Every two years Georgetown hosts this event, which features a parade and festival two days after Election Day. It stems from colonial times when the public would congregate along Georgetown streets two days after the election to hear the results – because it would take that long to deliver them to the courthouse by horseback. The day is marked by a traditional parade around The Circle and the ceremonial “burial of the hatchet” in sand from nearby Lewes, the original Sussex County seat, by leaders of Delaware’s political parties. For the current event, the winner and loser of each political race ride together in a horse-drawn carriage from Georgetown Middle School to The Circle, where they are announced and pass a reviewing stand. Other parade participants include current State officials, high school bands and local pageant winners.

Oyster Eat

In 1937, the Georgetown Volunteer Fire Company established an annual fundraising event known as the “Oyster Eat.” Hundreds gather each February to enjoy the event, which has been recognized by the United States Congress for its historical and cultural significance. One of the biggest social events to take place in southern Delaware, the event has traditionally been men-only, with all-you-can-eat oysters, all-you-can-drink beer and bluegrass music. The Oyster Eat is held each year at the end of February.

Easter Egg Hunt

The Georgetown Chamber of Commerce hosts Georgetown’s Annual Easter Egg Hunt every spring. Hundreds of children search for 5,000 eggs hidden on the Nutter Marvel Carriage Museum property. There is also a moon bounce, face painting, arts and crafts, entertainment and refreshments. The Easter Bunny is also on hand to say hello and take pictures.

Georgetown Farmers’ Market

The Georgetown Farmers’ Market features a wide variety of farmers and their goods – vegetables, flowers, fruit, breads, meats, seafood, organic dairy, baked goods and desserts, specialty products and more. The Market has most recently been hosted at 16 Mile Brewery on South Bedford Street.

Peninsula Bluegrass Festival

Peninsula Bluegrass Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of bluegrass music. Their festival is held each year on the third weekend of June at the Marvel Museum in Georgetown.

Wings & Wheels | A Georgetown Fall Festival

Wings & Wheels is a family-friendly event that features a “fly-in” of vintage planes, a classic car show, WWII re-enactors, food and craft vendors, all-day entertainment, and amusements and games. The event is held at the Sussex County Airport. The festival, held in the fall, attracts numbers in the thousands.

Caroling on the Circle

This popular event kicks off the holiday season and doubles as a food drive. The annual caroling celebration has donated more than 550,000 canned goods to help those in need.

Christmas Balloon Parade

In early December the Greater Georgetown Chamber of Commerce hosts its Volunteer of the Year Presentation and the annual “Lighting of the Tree” on stage prior to the Town’s Christmas Parade.

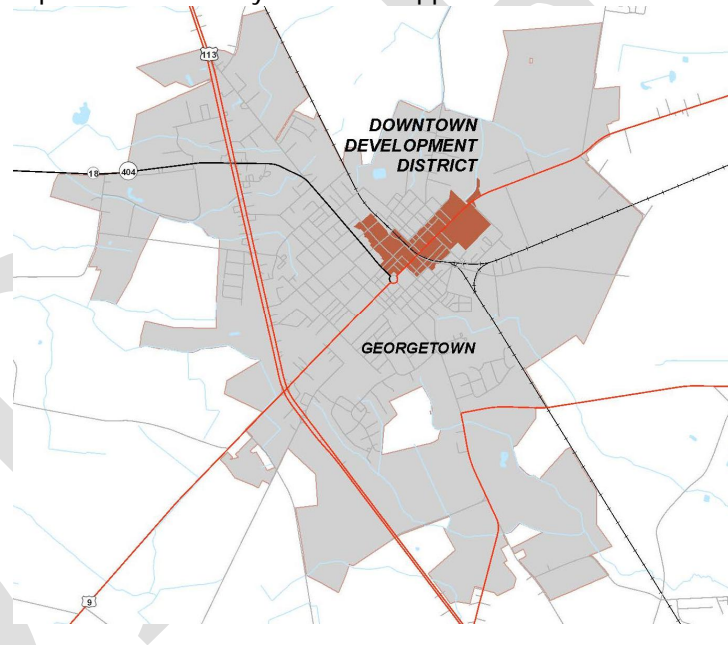
Notices of upcoming events within the Town of Georgetown can be found on the Town’s website. A link to the Town’s Upcoming Events listing can be found in Appendix X.

While Georgetown has numerous events that are well attended, there is still an opportunity to promote the downtown and to encourage events that may attract the types of businesses that the community wishes to see in the downtown. In the Downtown Survey, when asked what types of arts and cultural events are best suited for the downtown respondents answered outdoor concerts (77%), seasonal and holiday festivals (76%) and food festivals (72%). Town events currently being held that ranked as the most popular in the survey, including Return Day (71%), the Farmer's Market (66%) and Concerts in the Park (46%) should be used as successful models when establishing new events.

2. District Conditions & Analysis

a. District Boundary

Map 1 - District Boundary delineates the proposed boundary for economic and community development efforts that are part of this District Plan. The District key corridors are West Market Street and North Race Street. Georgetown has some development constraints to overcome as well as many strengths and assets that can be drawn upon to augment the vision and goals for improvement in the Downtown Development District. Georgetown wishes to address several critical issues that may be slowing the Town from meeting its economic potential and capitalize on its many assets and opportunities.



b. Demographics & Housing

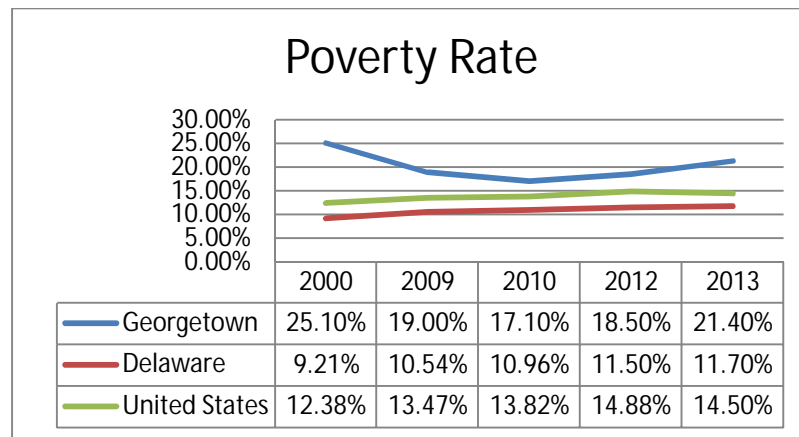
Population

Georgetown's estimated population in 2013 was 6,741, a slight increase over the 2010 US Census count of 6,422, but a 45% increase to the 2000 population of 4,643. While the populations of both Sussex County and the State of Delaware increased somewhat significantly between 2000 and 2013, 32% and 18% respectively, Georgetown's increase exceed both by a fairly strong amount during the same time period. Census Blocks that approximate the District boundary showed a 2010 US Census count of 1,663, an increase of just over 8% from the 2000 Census count of 1,538. The 2013 estimates were not available at the Block level.

Income | Poverty

Median household income within the Town was estimated to be just under \$48,000 in 2013, almost \$12,000 below the State median of \$60,000. Median per capita income was \$19,600, compared to the State's

\$28,200. The 2009-2013 American Community Survey lists Georgetown's poverty rate as 21.4%, a rate almost twice that of the State's 11.7%. While both the State and the nation have been experiencing slight, but steady, increases to the poverty rate since 2000, Georgetown actually saw an 8% decrease in this rate from 2000-2013, but has had a sharper increase since that time.



Homeownership | Vacancy Rates

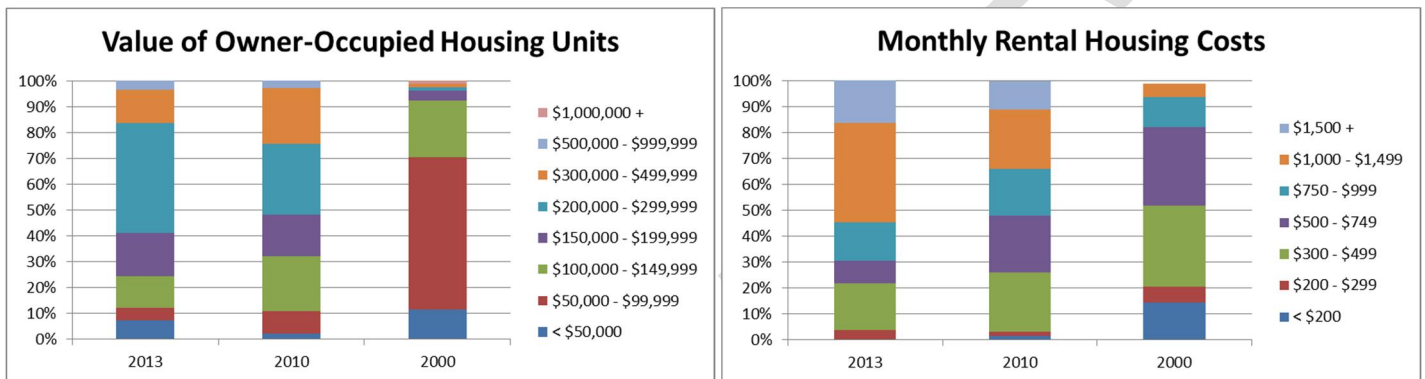
The Town's homeownership rate of 47.8% greatly falls behind the County (79%), State (72.5%), and national (64.9%) rates. Within the Downtown Development District the homeownership rate is even lower, at only 19%. Homeownership rates in Georgetown have been consistently lower in recent decades. This can, in part, be attributed to the Town's mobile population, with high rates of housing moves and occupancy changes. In the latter part of the 1980s, almost half of the residents had moved. In the subsequent decade, over 63% of residents moved. Frequent mobility combined with higher poverty rates, yield lower homeownership rates than the Town would like to see. In addition, Georgetown has seen an increase in vacancy rates from 9% to 13.8% between 2010 and 2013. Most of the vacancies in the latter year can be found in the homeowner market.

Statewide rental housing demand is strong for deeply affordable units (those less than 50% area median income) and market rate units (those above 80% area median income) and the majority of demand for home purchases is from households earning more than 80% area median income.

Georgetown has also experienced a shift not only in the percentage of owner-occupied units versus renter-occupied units, but in the value of those units. The 2000 US Census identified 717 owner-occupied housing units. The majority of these, almost 60% were valued between \$50,000 and \$99,999. Only 7.6% were valued above \$150,000, while 11.7% were valued below \$50,000. The median value was \$85,600. The value of renter-occupied units was not so evenly split. The largest market segment was for the \$300 - \$499 price range, with 31.4% of renters falling in that category. Fewer than 12% of renters paid between \$750 and \$1,500 per month, while 20.5% paid less than \$300. The median rental price paid in 2000 was \$487 per month.

The 2010 Census saw a 51% increase in the number of owner occupied housing units. The values of those units also normalized considerably with 86.5% of units ranging in value from \$100,000 to \$499,999. Just fewer than 11% of units were valued under \$100,000, while almost 3% were valued over \$500,000. The median value for owner occupied units was \$207,800. The number of renter occupied units also increased, although not as robustly, by 20%. The value of these units was a bit more spread out and skewed toward the higher side with 74% valued over \$500 per month and only 3.3% valued at less than \$300 per month. The median value for renter occupied units in 2010 was \$772.

Unfortunately, 2013 did not continue this forward momentum and instead saw a 32% rate of decline in the number of owner occupied units, although almost 43% (352) of those were valued between \$200,000 and \$299,999. Just over 12% were valued under \$100,000, while 3.4% were valued over \$500,000. The median value for owner occupied units was \$224,000. The number of renter occupied units also saw a 5% rate of decline to 901 units, but the largest segment was that whose value was between \$1,000 and \$1,499 per month. Over 78% of units were valued at over \$500, while just fewer than 4% were valued under \$300. The median rental value was \$1,046. This could be indicative of a number of previously owner-occupied units converting to renter-occupied in the past few years due to difficulties in achieving home ownership (e.g., non-mortgage monthly costs, closing costs, down payment) and the state of the Town's existing housing stock.



		2013		2010		2000	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Owner-Occupied	Total Owner Occupied Units	824	-	1085	-	717	-
	< \$50,000	60	7.3%	25	2.3%	84	11.7%
	\$50,000 - \$99,999	40	4.9%	93	8.6%	422	58.9%
	\$100,000 - \$149,999	101	12.3%	231	21.3%	157	21.9%
	\$150,000 - \$199,999	137	16.6%	175	16.1%	28	3.9%
	\$200,000 - \$299,999	352	42.7%	298	27.5%	9	1.3%
	\$300,000 - \$499,999	106	12.9%	234	21.6%	8	1.1%
	\$500,000 - \$999,999	28	3.4%	29	2.7%	0	0.0%
	\$1,000,000 +	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	9	1.3%
Renter-Occupied	With Mortgage	517	62.7%	833	76.8%	417	58.2%
	Without Mortgage	307	37.3%	252	23.2%	300	41.8%
	Total Renter Occupied Units	901	-	944	-	759	-
	< \$200	0	0.0%	14	1.5%	111	14.6%
	\$200 - \$299	35	3.9%	17	1.8%	45	5.9%
	\$300 - \$499	161	17.9%	214	22.7%	238	31.4%
	\$500 - \$749	78	8.7%	209	22.1%	230	30.3%
	\$750 - \$999	133	14.8%	170	18.0%	89	11.7%
	\$1,000 - \$1,499	346	38.4%	214	22.7%	38	5.0%
	\$1,500 +	148	16.4%	106	11.2%	0	0.0%

As stated above, in 2010, the latest year data was available at the Block level, there were 478 housing units identified within the Downtown Development District. Of those, 19% were owner occupied, 71.8% were

renter occupied, and 9.2% were vacant. In order to take better advantage of the proposed District offerings, Georgetown should try to market this area for additional ownership opportunities to provide stability and protect the health of the business area. In addition to supporting owner occupancy in this area, it is important to encourage property maintenance and rehabilitation for all properties, but particularly rental properties as owner-occupied housing typically has a higher level of property maintenance than older renter housing.

Housing Stock

Almost 40% of Georgetown's housing units were built prior to 1980 and over 29% were built prior to 1960. Thirty years is considered to be the standard life cycle for homes before requiring substantial rehabilitation. It is often financially difficult for homeowners with lower incomes to maintain their homes over time, often leading to postponed maintenance, substandard housing conditions and, without some kind of repair and/or demolition, blight and abandonment. This is true for both owner occupied homes and rental housing. For many low income homeowners the cost to repair aging homes is too costly, and in cases where home values are depressed, the costs of repair do not add sufficient home value to warrant investment. Areas that represent older housing stock and have concentrations of lower-income households have the potential to become clusters of substandard housing if property maintenance codes are not regularly enforced, something that Georgetown hopes to avoid.

Employment

Georgetown's 2013 population was comprised of 5,080 people aged 16 years and over, with 3,397 of those (or 66.9%) being in the labor force. Three hundred and thirty-one of those in the labor force, or 6.5%, were unemployed. Workers were employed in the following occupations: production, transportation, and material moving occupations (35.2%); service occupations (21%); sales and office occupations (18.3%); management, business, science, and arts occupations (14.7%); and natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations (10.8%). Most of the Town's residents are private or salaried workers (85.4%), with 11.9% employed by a government entity, and 2.5% being self-employed. Industries representing Georgetown's citizens are the following:

Industry	%
Manufacturing	26.7%
Educational Services, Health Care & Social Assistance	16.3%
Retail Trade	11.4%
Professional, Scientific & Management, Administrative & Waste Management Services	9.4%
Construction	7.1%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, Accommodation & Food Services	5.5%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	4.4%
Wholesale Trade	4.2%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting, Mining	3.7%
Public Administration	3.7%
Finance & Insurance, Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	3.4%
Transportation & Warehousing, Utilities	2.9%
Information	1.2%

Education

The percentage of Georgetown's population that has a high school diploma or higher has increased since 2000, when 55% of the population had achieved this goal. The percentage of the population achieving a

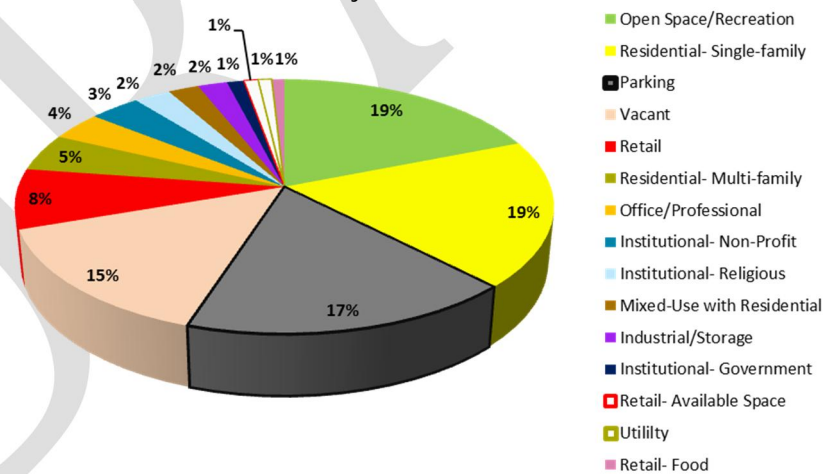
bachelor's degree or higher has also increased slightly from just under 12.6% in 2000. In 2013, 64.7% of the Town's adult population had graduated with a high school diploma or higher degree and 14.1% had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher.

c. Land Use, Zoning, and Development Potential

Existing Land Use

Map 2 and Figure X – Existing Land Use display the distribution of each land use type within the District boundaries. The District contains a diverse mix of uses that are well-dispersed throughout. The most prevalent land uses in terms of land area are open space/recreational, single-family and multi-family residential, parking areas and vacant land. These four categories make up 75% of the District area outside of the road and railroad rights-of way. The 13 acres of open space/recreational land is largely driven by the inclusion of the property owned by the Georgetown Methodist Church; which contains ballfields and open land. While single-family residential uses are dispersed throughout the District, the majority of the area is clustered along the north side of East Market Street between Albury Avenue and Parsons Lane. Retail uses are grouped into three categories of general retail of goods and services, food related retail, and available space; together they make up 10% of the land area. Eight percent (8%) of the District includes institutional uses such as non-profits (ex. Habitat for Humanity), religious uses (ex, Georgetown United Methodist), and state and local government building sites. Offices and professional uses, including law firms, make up 4% of the District land uses. Mixed-use buildings that contain retail or offices on the first floor and residential apartments on the upper floors make up 2%. The remaining land uses include industrial, storage and utility sites, such as Xergy Inc. and Verizon.

It is important to note that as the Sussex County seat, the County Administrative Building and the County Courthouse are located in the downtown and directly adjacent to Downtown Development District boundary. While not located in the District, these uses physically and socially anchor the downtown, and have generated many spinoff uses, such as government and non-profit offices, professional offices such as law and engineering firms, bail bond services and weekday lunch venues.



Existing Land Use	Acre	%
Open Space/Recreation	12.9	19%
Residential- Single-family	12.7	19%
Parking	11.8	17%
Vacant	10.0	15%
Retail	5.2	8%
Residential- Multi-family	3.2	5%

Office/Professional	2.5	4%
Institutional- Non-Profit	2.4	4%
Institutional- Religious	1.7	3%
Mixed-Use with Residential	1.5	2%
Industrial/Storage	1.4	2%
Institutional- Government	0.8	1%
Retail- Available Space	0.7	1%
Utility	0.6	1%
Retail- Food	0.6	1%
Total	68.1	100%

Zoning

Given the wide range of land uses in the District, it is not surprising that the zoning districts permit a variety of uses. Even though the predominant existing land use is residential, the zoning would permit a transition to commercial uses depending on real estate market conditions. This transition is already evident in the adaptive reuse of several homes along East Market, east of the railroad, extending the retail and office uses eastward.

Map 3- Zoning and Figure X display zoning categories within the District boundaries. The District is made up of eight zoning districts, with the urban business zones (UB1- Urban Business and UB2- Neighborhood Business, and UB3- Professional Business) making up the majority (70%) of the area. The UB3 zone permits offices/professional uses. The UB2 zone permits professional uses as well as neighborhood retail type uses such as, barber shops, banks, restaurants and retail stores. The UB1 permits the largest range of uses, including those in the UB2 and UB3, as well as bakeries, cafes, delicatessens, flower shops, and other similar uses. Many of the permitted uses in the UB zones are conducive toward creating a vibrant, traditional mixed-use and walkable downtown. However, it also permits uses that are antiquated or may be unsuitable for a downtown such as wholesale establishments, warehouses, burial vault preparation, drive-in restaurants, telephone stations and frozen food lockers.

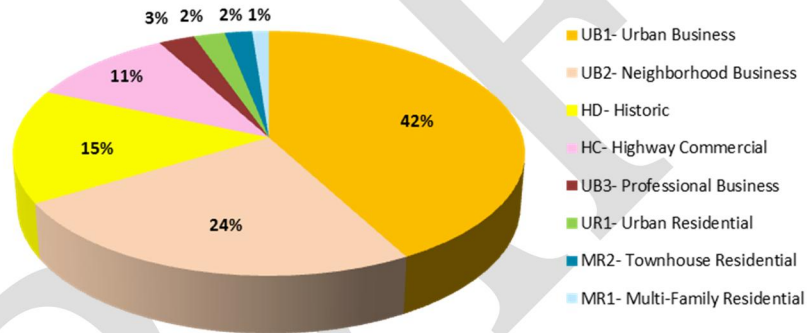
The HD- Historic District covers 15% in the center of the District and surrounding The Circle to the railroad. The permitted uses in the HD- Historic District build upon what is allowed UB zones. The Historic District Committee Report prepared in 2014 stated that allowing the same use as the rest of the downtown would result in the Historic District having no individual identity. The Committee recommended modifying the list of permitted uses to promote a more family and business friendly environment and that were unique to the historic character of the Town, which would be a draw to visitors. There are few entertainment, shopping and restaurant venues that would draw visitors, create the opportunity for employees to stay in Town after 5pm, and attract new residents to live, work and play in the downtown. Previous planning efforts have recommended prohibiting uses that may have an adverse effect in achieving these goals, such as pawn shops, adult stores, auto parts, drive-through restaurants, among others. The Comprehensive Plan recommends that pedestrian-oriented uses be encouraged in the downtown, including retail sales, personal services, offices and restaurants.

The HC- Highway Commercial zone located at the eastern boundary consists of four parcels making up 11% of the District area. While the uses permitted in the HC- Highway Commercial zone includes uses in the UB zones, it also permits uses that typically exist along highways such as Route 113, rather than a traditional downtown. These uses include auto sales and service stations, car washes, farm equipment sales and service, lumber and storage yards, and mobile home sales and storage. Some of the properties are currently underutilized, are highly visible and accessible, and are part of the eastern gateway. This area is therefore identified as priority redevelopment area, and is further discussed in the Development Potential section

below. It is also noted that the existing land use of the adjacent parcel owned by Georgetown United Methodist Church is open space and recreational; however the zoning is UB1.

Residential uses (UR1- Urban Residential, MR1- Multi-Family Residential, and MR2- Townhouse Residential) are mostly clustered around Cooper Alley between King Street and Albury Avenue, and make up the rest of the District at 5%. All of the zones in the District permit residential uses.

With few exceptions, the height, area and bulk requirements in the District zones generally allow an overall density, rhythm and scale that are typical of traditional downtowns. The HD and UB1 zones offer flexibility and help to foster a pedestrian-oriented scale as they do not have minimum area and setback requirements, which allow a building to be built to the sidewalk and close to each other. The height requirement is 35 feet and three stories, which further helps define the streetscape and create a public realm. The UB2 and UB3 zones require a minimum lot area and lot width of 7,200 square feet and 60 feet, front yard and side yards of 25 feet and 10 feet, and maximum height of 24 feet and two stories. It is noted that the residential zones permit building heights of 35 feet and three stories. The requirements in the HC zone promote larger scale commercial developments. While there are no lot area and width requirements, the front yard is required to be a minimum of 40 feet and the maximum height is 55 feet and five stories.



Zone	Acre	%
UB1- Urban Business	28.2	42%
UB2- Neighborhood Business	16.4	24%
HD- Historic	10.1	15%
HC- Highway Commercial	7.1	11%
UB3- Professional Business	1.7	3%
UR1- Urban Residential	1.5	2%
MR2- Townhouse Residential	1.3	2%
MR1- Multi-Family Residential	0.8	1%
	69.2	100%

Development Potential

As shown on Map 4- Development Potential, there are numerous vacant and underutilized parcels that offer opportunities for compatible infill development. There are 32 entirely vacant parcels totaling 10.36 acres and 13 parcels with infill potential totaling 6.5 acres. Lots with infill potential currently contain an occupied building or parking area, but are large enough with large yard areas to be subdivided and accommodate additional development under the current zoning regulations. It is further noted that while the parking areas are used to some extent, they may be underutilized and create unattractive dead spaces on the streetscape. These lots offer an opportunity for higher and more beneficial uses that better fit the downtown historical

context and character. As noted in Section # above, there is also retail space available in some existing buildings.

While the entire District is available for development, there are some highly visible and notable vacant lots and infill potential in prominent locations presenting a clear opportunity for infill development. There are multiple vacant and underutilized areas that are identified as prime opportunities for redevelopment. These vacant lands are considered an asset as they offer space to grow and an opportunity for infill development that fits within the context of the District vision and goals. Some examples from the District Survey for what the vacant lots and buildings could be used for include restaurants, niche retail and space for community events. As stated above there are many opportunities for redevelopment throughout the District, but there are four areas that have been identified as priority areas due to their high visibility, see Map 4- Development Potential and Table X – Priority Redevelopment Areas.

Table X. Priority Redevelopment Areas

Map Key	Location	Opportunities
A	Available retail space in existing buildings, large lots with large yards and underutilized lots on Market Street	These vacant storefronts and lots are highly visible and offer opportunities for infill development that would fill in the gaps, define the street and add pedestrian activity. There is also an opportunity for temporary uses such as pop-up venues, a farmers market and other community events.
B	Vacant parcel and open land between Georgetown Square and United Methodist Church	Adjacent to the ballfields and currently used for community events, this area provides enormous potential for infill development and improved community gathering space.
C	Three vacant parcels north of East Market and east of Parsons Lane	Redevelopment and improvements in this highly visible area would help provide a more attractive gateway for travelers entering the downtown from the west.
D	Multiple parcels between railroad and North Race Street, and north and south of New Street	The Comprehensive Plan notes that there is tremendous opportunity for continued redevelopment of underused lands between North Race Street and the railroad. Recent redevelopment projects in this area have included mixed-use development with retail and service businesses on the first floor and residential apartments on upper floors.



Vacant and underutilized lands, such as this land on Market Street, offer opportunities for infill development or temporary uses, such as a farmers market and community events.



Available retail space for lease on Market Street.



Lands at the Georgetown United Methodist Church site offer many opportunities for community events, open space and recreational uses, and infill opportunities.



Recent redevelopment project on North Race include retail on the ground floor and apartments on upper floors.

Connectivity and Walkability

Map 5- Transportation shows the road, sidewalk and bike route network within and surrounding the District. The center of Town is located at the intersection of two major arterial/collector state roads – Market Street (Route 9) and Bedford Street (Route 18 / 404). Both roads connect commuters to Route 113, and Route 9 is a major route to the Lewes-Rehoboth area. Airport Road directly connects the downtown and the Delaware Coastal Airport (formerly Sussex County Airport), which serves southern Delaware. This location and proximity to major access routes provides convenient access to surrounding areas, which is a key asset and offers an opportunity for bringing more people into the downtown. It will be important that the downtown not be separated and that there be a regional draw and adequate signage bringing in travelers from Route 113 into the downtown.

It is noted that since the majority of the regional traffic occurs on Route 113 as an arterial bypass of the downtown, the downtown does not have major traffic problems similar to larger towns and cities. This has allowed Market Street to operate as a multi-function corridor meeting vehicular, biking and pedestrian needs. In general, the District is very pedestrian friendly as it is reasonably compact and has high connectivity within

and to surrounding neighborhoods. Vehicular and pedestrian commuters are well-connected to employment, retail, professional and personal service, and recreational opportunities in the District. The District has a grid street network made up of narrow local roads, alleys and extensive sidewalks. Street blocks lengths are short and conducive to walking and biking. In most cases, the local road and intersection widths are narrow, which make it easier and safer for pedestrians to cross the street. The alleys provide access to rear parking areas for employees and residents, as well as places for trash/recycling pick-up and potential locations for some utilities and drainage.



The design of Market Street, from The Circle to King Street, focuses on pedestrian mobility and safety with crosswalks and signs.

A railroad operated by the Norfolk-Southern Railroad bisects the District, impeding connectivity and limits movement to some degree; however the District does have multiple crossings at Depot Street, Cooper Alley, East Market Street, Strawberry Alley and East Pine Street. It is worth noting that it is difficult to obtain approval from Norfolk Southern Railroad for new at-grade crossings of a main railroad line, so any additional crossings may not be likely.



The Norfolk-Southern Railroad runs north-south through the District. While the railroad has limits mobility in the District, it also offers an historical context and character to the District.

The majority of the District is well-served by over three miles of sidewalks and crosswalks. The sidewalks on Market Street from The Circle to King Street are wide and made of brick, which significantly add to the historic character of Georgetown and help to create a public realm. The sidewalks become narrower and transition to concrete east of King Street. In addition, as a walking and biking alternative to the main roads, the District also has many alleys that are less traveled by cars.

There are concerns with the walkability within the downtown and surrounding. Per the Downtown Survey, 73% of respondents stated that pedestrian safety and convenience is what attracts them to a shopping or business area, and just 35% stated that pedestrian convenience is a strength in Georgetown.

Another challenge includes reducing the amount and perception of crime within the downtown, which can influence a person's behavior on where, when and how people visit the downtown. In response to a question in the Downtown Survey, 99% of respondents stated that they feel safe during the daytime. However, over a third of the respondents stated that they do not feel safe at night. The majority of these respondents stated the reason they do not feel safe at night is because there are few places open at night and less people are out in the streets. Other popular and related reasons include the fear of crime, having general uncomfortable feeling or concerns of "seedy" areas, and poor lighting. Providing lighting on unlit streets and parking areas, and having more "eyes on the streets" from places being open past 5 pm and having more people in the downtown would help reduce crime and perceived fear of crime, which in turn encourages even more pedestrian activity.

In general, the sidewalks and crosswalks in the District boundary are in good condition and well maintained, however there are areas in need of maintenance. In addition, there are gaps in the network at the following locations:

- Market Street (south side from Albury Avenue eastward)
- North Lane/Layton Street (both sides)
- Laurel Street east of the railroad (both sides)
- North Railroad Avenue (west side)
- South Railroad Avenue (both sides)
- Parsons Lane (both sides)
- Market Street and South Railroad Avenue and the railroad crossing

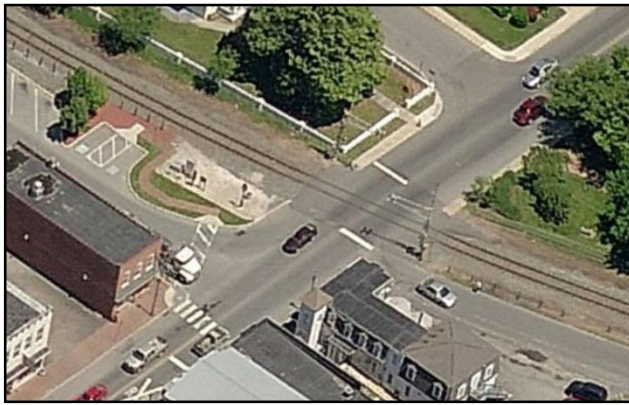
Additional gaps and sections in need of repair should be identified by sidewalk inventory.



A pedestrian walking on East Market Street towards the Downtown. The District and surrounding is well connected by sidewalks, however there are some notable gaps.



The sidewalks ends on Market Street near Albury Avenue, so pedestrians created their own path.



The railroad intersection area lacks a clear path for pedestrians.

Providing a safe, comfortable, convenient and interesting pedestrian environment throughout the district and surrounding neighborhoods provides a clear competitive advantage over suburban or highway commercial areas. As the District provides a greater regional draw, it will be important to maintain and enhance pedestrian connections and traffic calming features wherever possible.

Public Transit

There are three DART bus routes in town, as shown in Table #. The main bus stop and regional hub for transfers between transit lines is located within the District at Railroad Avenue. Improvements to this area, such as increased lighting, landscaping and pedestrian connections, would help the station feel more comfortable and secure, and could help solidify the downtown as regional transportation hub in the long-term.

Bus Route	Destinations	Operation and Frequency
Route 206	Lewes/Rehoboth area, Harbeson, Delaware Tech, SCI	Weekdays 8 round trips; Weekends 2 round trips (summer only)
Route 212	Laurel, Blades, Seaford, Bridgeville, Delaware Tech	Weekdays; 6 round trips
Route 303	Dover, Milford, Milton, Frederica, Ellendale, Delaware Tech	Weekdays 8 round trips



The Georgetown bus stop is a DART transit hub.

Gateways, Streetscape, and Public Spaces

The Downtown Development District has one of the most prominent gateways in The Circle and the County Administration Building steeple. These key features in the Historic District along with the downtown's historic

brick architecture and sidewalks, and streetscape amenities such as aesthetic lighting and banners, lets residents and visitors know that they have arrived in the historic downtown and provides a strong sense of place.



The historic steeple, street lights, banners and The Circle offer a prominent gateway into the Downtown Development District from the north, west and south.

Buildings in this area are built up to the sidewalk, anchor the intersection corners, are within close proximity of each other, and are of varying sizes. The buildings have distinguishable architectural features, and the ground floors of retail stores, such as the Georgetown Antique Market, are largely dominated by attractive window displays. These factors help to define the streetscape as public realm and create a more interesting and pedestrian-friendly environment.



Many buildings on Market Street have unique architectural features, such as large windows displays, awnings, and aesthetical facades and signage that help define the District's quaint and pedestrian-oriented character; and that are exemplary of a traditional historic downtown.

Further west on Market Street, between the railroad tracks and Albury Avenue, residential homes have been converted to offices and retail stores, which further add to the District's unique architecture and pedestrian-scale character. Streetscape amenities, such as brick sidewalks, decorative street lighting, and street trees exist from The Circle to King Street.



Georgetown Hair Studio reflects the architectural character of the Downtown historic district that has been preserved and enhanced through adaptive reuse.

The eastern District boundary lacks a sense of arrival. The lack of sidewalks, streetscape amenities, vacant properties, and expansive parking areas do not offer a sense of place and entry into a pedestrian friendly, historic and vibrant downtown. The streetscape and pedestrian amenities on Market Street from The Circle to the railroad and the adaptive reuse of vacated homes offer some great examples for improvements at the eastern gateway, as well as other areas in the District. For instance, given the mixed-uses, the high level of activity and its connection to Market Street, streetscape amenities may be desired on North Race Street.



Vacant land, vast parking areas, highway scale development and signage, lack of sidewalks and streetscape amenities do not help to create a welcoming entry into the Downtown.

There are five separate designated open space and recreational areas making up 14 acres and 16% of the total Downtown Development District area. Four of these are public spaces, including The Circle, Wilson Park on Market Street, the recreational fields at the Georgetown United Methodist Church site, and the tot lot on North King Street. These amenities are key assets and opportunities for the District, as they offer residents and visitors a public gathering space for community events and programs, and another place to visit while in the downtown.



The Circle offers a public place for residents and visitors to relax in Georgetown.

Parking

Map 6- Parking shows off-street parking, both private and public, that are five spaces or more. There are large expanses of parking covering a significant portion of the downtown. The total parking area, including the driveways and driving aisles, is approximately 12 acres and 14% of the total District.

Many of the parking lots are situated on the same lot as the buildings they serve. Given the overall mixed-use nature of the downtown with some mixed-use buildings, there are some shared and satellite parking areas. In addition, most of the streets in the District have available on-street parking. The major facilities in downtown that require large amounts of parking are the County Administrative Building and the County Courthouse. In general, the parking areas for these and other government buildings are located behind the buildings, connected by alleys, and are improved and well-maintained. Even though these parking areas are large, their location behind the buildings lessens their visual impact. These parking lots and the on-street parking around The Circle and the Courthouse fill up during the day time hours, and the parking demand that they generate overflow into other areas of the Downtown. Still, there are predominantly vacant parking areas elsewhere in the District during the day, such as Layton Street adjacent to the railroad. The majority of all the lots in the District are empty during the night time hours and on weekends.

As noted in the Vacant section above, there are some parking areas in the downtown that may be underutilized, and in some cases, do not have improvements such as striping, clearly designated access driveways and drive aisles, curbing and landscaping. These lots create unattractive dead spaces on the streetscape, and offer an opportunity for higher and more beneficial uses such as improved parking lots and/or infill development that better fits the downtown historical context and character.

Based the Downtown Survey results, there are perceived parking issues in the downtown. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of respondents to the Downtown Survey stated that they agree that convenient parking attracts them to a shopping and business area. Then, only twenty-two percent (22%) of respondents stated that a major advantage to the downtown is that is easy to find parking. Fifty-five (55%) stated that improved parking would help the downtown area.

When asked if there was one thing that could change about the downtown, some respondents stated (Q18):

- *should the sidewalk be expanded for things like that and eliminate a few parking spots*
- *better parking*
- *improve parking*
- *traffic congestion & parking*
- *add more parking [around The Circle area]*
- *offer additional parking*
- *too much parking assigned to state and county employees*
- *change traffic and parking issues*
- *more parking*
- *offer a discount parking ticket to those who work during the day in town*
- *change the metered parking*
- *parking and congestion*
- *metered parking with different payment options besides only change*
- *free parking*
- *parking is a major problem, especially during the day*
- *the congestion of traffic and parking on Market Street*

When asked for ideas are how to attract residents, businesses, and visitors to the downtown, respondents stated (Q19):

- *better parking (5)*
- *convenient parking*
- *free parking*
- *provide nearby parking areas to free up space for pedestrians and outdoor street activities/events*

The merchant portion of the Survey revealed that 50% of merchants would need more parking in order to expand, which represented the greatest need. In addition, 50% stated that parking is a major barrier or obstacle facing their business.

Overall, the responses can be interpreted as safe and convenient parking is very important to residents and visitors; and improved parking conditions may attract more residents and visitors. It remains unclear from the results, if “better” or “improved” parking means increasing parking availability, creating more convenient locations or improving the design or improving management. From a business owner perspective, it appears that merchants may be seeking solutions to comply with on-site requirements, such as minimum number of parking spaces.

The Comprehensive Plan notes the importance of not only providing a sufficient amount of parking, but also to properly manage the spaces that is available. Metered on-street parking is located around The Circle, on East Market Street, along parts of North and South Front Street, and on Race Street one block in both directions off East Market Street. Enforcement of these time-limited spaces allow for a high turnover of short-term users throughout the day.

The Historic District Committee recommended that a parking inventory be completed, comparing the square footage of the buildings to the number of spaces provided. Such a study would need to include a long-term supply and demand assessment as well. Should additional spaces be required, the Comprehensive Plan recognizes that cooperative efforts would be needed between the Town, the County and the State to find ways to provide additional parking without harming the urban fabric along the historic and pedestrian-oriented streets. The Comprehensive Plan identifies the need to increase the parking supply without interrupting the “face” of the downtown along streets. There is an opportunity to acquire underutilized rear yards for public parking, which could be combined into one coordinated joint parking area. Joint parking spaces often results in a much higher number of parking spaces because the layout is more efficient. Another long-term opportunity is for the Town, the County and the State to jointly consider the construction of a parking structure in a strategic downtown location.

The Historic District Committee also recommended that a wayfinding signage program be implemented to easily guide visitors to their destinations and public parking. In addition, visitors to the Downtown could be directed to locations where parking is currently underused, such as Layton Street.

Some parking areas in the District are not improved with pavement, striping, and curbing. Some of these private, undesignated and unimproved parking areas are along the public street creating visual blight and use up valuable land that could have higher and more beneficial uses. Especially since there does not appear to be a significant issue with parking supply, there is an opportunity to redevelop the underutilized lots.

The town’s parking regulations has some elements that are conducive to a walkable, mixed-use downtown environment than an auto-oriented commercial environment. Commercial and office uses are required to have one off-street parking space for each 200 square feet, which is high for a typical downtown; however to help remove any potential undue burden of complying with the parking requirements on property owners and developers, the regulations offer some alternatives. For instance, parking spaces may be provided on a separate lot if located within 400 feet of the building. In addition, two or more lot owners may join together

towards complying with the required number of parking spaces. For instance up to 100% of the spaces required for a church may be used jointly by banks, offices and retail and service shops.

It is noted that the code allows the Planning Commission to waive or relax the parking requirements in the Historic District if it finds that “customers will stay for a short time, if customers will generally walk, or if customers will generally patronize the business on evenings and weekends.” In addition, the Town Manager may reduce the number of spaces up to 20% for mixed uses and proximity to transit. Since some parking lots and on-street spaces are under capacity in some areas and over-capacity in other areas, there appears to be an opportunity to encourage more use or even require these parking flexibilities for the entire downtown. While these provisions offer some flexibility, the code could be more prescriptive to provide greater certainty and predictability to builders and existing business owners wishing to make improvements to their lots. Property owners and prospective builders should be made aware of and encouraged to take advantage of these parking alternatives and credits. In addition, the code could allow a reduction in the number of spaces for proximity to on-street parking, municipal lots and public transit.



Designated government parking in the rear of buildings on Market Street are well-maintained and well-connected by alleys to local roads.



Unimproved parking areas could have a higher and better use appropriate for Downtown. Many respondents in the Downtown Survey state they want improved parking conditions.

d. Natural & Cultural Resources

Floodplain

The Downtown Development District is in an area of minimal flood hazard, with no special flood hazard areas mapped as of the latest FIRM publication of March 16, 2015.

Wetlands

There are no mapped wetlands located within the Downtown Development District.

Wellhead Protection

The full extent of the Downtown Development District lies within the Town's Wellhead Protection Areas, designated by DNREC. Georgetown adopted groundwater protection regulations in order to meet requirements of the State Source Water Protection Act of 2001. The purpose of Georgetown's Source Water Protection Area Ordinance is to ensure the protection of the public drinking water supply from contamination.

While the entire DDD lies within the Town's Wellhead Protection Area, there are no delineated Excellent Recharge Areas within the Downtown Development District.

Historic Preservation

Preserving Georgetown's historic buildings has been seen as a high priority to Town residents. The Town has worked closely with the Georgetown Historical Society, the State Historic Preservation Office, and Sussex County to preserve historic structures in and around The Circle. The Georgetown Historical Society keeps records on file of local historically significant properties.

Map 7 displays designated historical properties within the District boundaries. There are currently twenty Georgetown properties included on the National Register of Historic Places, two of which fall within the Downtown Development District:

- Georgetown Coal Gasification Plant at 116 New Street; and
- Dr. John W. Messick House at 144 East Market Street.

Other historic structures that can be found within the Downtown Development District include:

- Town Hall at 39 The Circle;
- Old Fire Hall at 37 The Circle;
- Georgetown Train Station at 140 Layton Avenue;
- Wesley United Methodist Church at 10 North Race Street; and
- Masonic Lodge at 151 East Market Street.

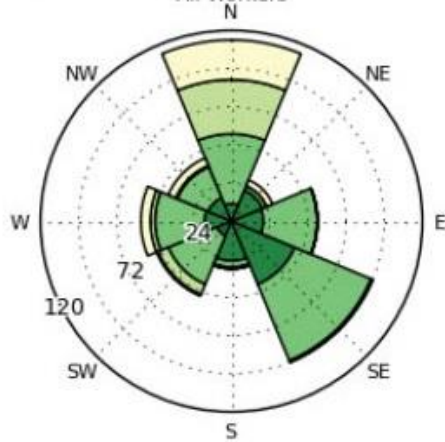
e. Economic & Retail Development

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's Center for Economic Studies, there were 258 people living within the District who held primary jobs in 2013. A primary job is a single job per worker, public or private, that is the highest paying job for that individual. Almost 57% of these were aged 30 to 54. Industries representing the District's citizen include the following:

None of these residents actually worked within the District, although 32% worked less than 10 miles from their home. The graphic to the left shows the distance and direction residents travel to work while the table on the right accounts for the top locations where residents work.

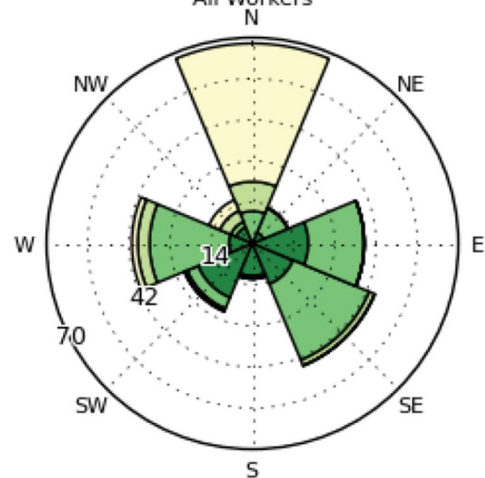
Industry	%
Manufacturing	29.5%
Health Care & Social Assistance	14.0%
Retail Trade	10.1%
Administration & Support, Waste Management & Remediation	9.7%
Construction	7.0%
Accommodation & Food Services	6.2%
Educational Services	4.7%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	3.1%
Public Administration	3.1%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	2.7%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	2.7%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1.9%
Wholesale Trade	1.6%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	1.2%
Finance & Insurance	0.8%
Transportation & Warehousing	0.8%
Information	0.4%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0.4%
Utilities	0.4%

Job Counts by Distance/Direction in 2013
All Workers



Distance	%
Less than 10 miles	34.5%
10 to 24 miles	46.9%
25 to 50 miles	9.9%
Greater than 50 miles	8.7%

Job Counts by Distance/Direction in 2013
All Workers



Distance	%
Less than 10 Miles	32.2%
10 to 24 Miles	39.1%
25 to 50 Miles	8.1%
Greater than 50 Miles	20.5%

Place	%
Georgetown, DE	5.9%
Milford, DE	3.6%
Dover, DE	3.0%
Seaford, DE	2.3%
Millsboro, DE	1.9%
Laurel, DE	1.3%
Harrington, DE	1.1%
Salisbury, MD	1.1%
Frankford, DE	0.8%
Milton, DE	0.8%
Ocean View, DE	0.8%
Bridgeville, DE	0.6%
Highland Acres, DE	0.6%
New Castle, DE	0.6%
Selbyville, DE	0.6%
Smyrna, DE	0.6%
Philadelphia, PA	0.6%
Lewes, DE	0.4%
Wilmington, DE	0.4%
Bear, DE	0.2%
Blades, DE	0.2%
Bowers, DE	0.2%
Claymont, DE	0.2%
Ellendale, DE	0.2%
Frederica, DE	0.2%

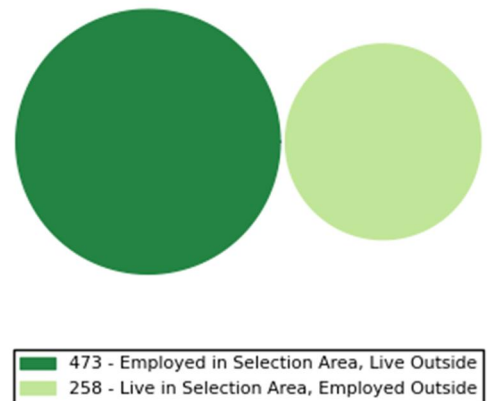
Place	%
Georgetown, DE	14.7%
Seaford, DE	8.5%
Selbyville, DE	6.6%
Milford, DE	4.3%
Lewes, DE	2.7%
Dover, DE	2.3%
Wilmington, DE	2.3%
Bear, DE	1.9%
Bridgeville, DE	1.2%
Long Neck, DE	1.2%
Rehoboth Beach, DE	1.2%
Wilmington Manor, DE	1.2%
Dewey Beach, DE	0.8%
Millsboro, DE	0.8%
Ocean View, DE	0.8%
Smyrna, DE	0.8%
Bethany Beach, DE	0.4%
Blades, DE	0.4%
Brookside, DE	0.4%
Camden, DE	0.4%
Claymont, DE	0.4%
Glasgow, DE	0.4%
Milton, DE	0.4%
New Castle, DE	0.4%
Newport, DE	0.4%

In contrast, 473 people held jobs within the District who commuted from outside the area. The greatest share of these workers (47%) traveled 10 to 24 miles to arrive at their jobs within the District, with almost 9% traveling more than 50 miles. Three people came from as far away as Philadelphia. The graphic on the left shows the distance and direction workers travel to get to the District, while the table on the right accounts for the top locations from where workers originate.

As shown in the graphic to the right, there is a great imbalance between the number of people who are employed within the District who live outside the area and the number of people who live within the District who are employed outside the area. This is important to be aware of if the District is to become a successful live-work-play community. If that is indeed one of the goals, the Town and its partners should aim to have a more balanced inflow/outflow count in the future – or at least try to capture some of the District employees within the downtown residential areas.

Per the 2013 Downtown Merchant and Business Survey, 77% percent of respondents stated that would be willing to collaborate with other business owners and manager in strategies to share existing customers or entice new ones to Georgetown.

Inflow/Outflow Job Counts in 2013



In an effort to understand residents and visitors retail and shopping desires and motives, and then compare them to what Georgetown is providing or lacking, the 2015 Downtown Survey asked participants the following three questions:

- What attracts you to a shopping/business area?
- What are the major advantages of Georgetown's downtown?
- What are the major disadvantages of Georgetown's downtown?

The responses, compared side-by-side, are provided in the following table:

	What attracts you to a shopping/ business area?		Major Advantages	<i>Differential</i>	Major Disadvantages	<i>Differential</i>
Advantages to capitalize on	Friendly customer service	89%	46%	43%	3%	86%
	Convenient location (close to home/ work)	84%	61%	23%	3%	81%
	Look and feel of the business area	80%	62%	18%	30%	50%
	Independent stores over chains	70%	64%	6%		70%
	Price	70%	22%	48%	3%	67%
Disadvantages to improve upon	Variety of products and services	77%	4%	73%	78%	-1%
	Pedestrian safety and convenience	73%	35%	38%	38%	35%
	Limited hours and Shopping after 5pm on weekdays and on weekends	47%	-	-	42%	5%

When analyzing these survey results, it is also important to understand where and when people are visiting downtown Georgetown compared to other surrounding areas. Approximately 29% of responders said they shop in downtown Georgetown once every few months. Only 10% said they shop in downtown two to four times a week and 15% said they shop there once a week. That is compared to the Route 113 Corridor where 30% said they shop there two to four times a week and 27% shop once a week. This can also be compared to the Millsboro/Milford area where 13% said they shop in that area two to four times a week and 26% said they shop there once a week. A popular write-in was traveling to Salisbury, MD to shop. While the survey did not specifically ask why people prefer shopping at these alternative locations, it is important to consider what makes these shopping areas more popular, and do these areas make up for the disadvantages of downtown Georgetown. Most would agree that the Route 113 Corridor, Millsboro/Milford area, and even Salisbury, have a variety of goods and services, pedestrian access is safe with sidewalks and crosswalks and many businesses have hours after 5 pm on weekdays and weekends, which are all the areas that downtown Georgetown currently lacks.

As for the time people typically visit downtown the most common answer by far was Monday through Friday before 5 pm. This coincides with the table above that a major disadvantage is limited hours after 5 pm. When asked where people visit in downtown the most popular response was restaurants at 84%. The next most frequented type of business was retail at 37%. Some write-ins for that question included the bank and post office. This large margin in where people frequent emphasizes the real need for more of a variety in goods and services to encourage residents, County employees and visitors to patronize many types of businesses. The survey did provide information on what people would like to see downtown. When it comes to food related businesses locally owned restaurants was the most popular choice. People were also in favor of specialty food shops (bakeries, ice cream shops, etc.), evening dining, and tavern and grill options. Although not ranking high in the survey many people wrote-in quality grocery stores as a needed business in downtown. To be expected, ranking equally high was the need for commercial and specialty retail, with personal services close behind. Survey responders commented on wanting card and gift shops, clothing stores, boutique type stores as well as services that could be supported by residents and County workers such as a dry cleaners and tailor.

Marketing, promotion, and additional downtown branding efforts are needed to encourage local residents, employees, and visitors to regularly visit downtown businesses and community events. Businesses need to be organized and set forth joint promotions, advertising, marketing, and special events. Through designation, the Town would also be able to better focus on business recruitment and investment incentives, while maintaining an inventory of available business space and publicizing commercial opportunities.

3. Downtown Vision

Georgetown is well-rounded. The downtown is a meeting place and the center of community activities with a mix of shopping, restaurants, cultural and recreation spaces. It offers an aesthetic blend of green space, natural elements, and pedestrian amenities with an historic and small town flavor. Not only is it a niche destination place where specialty retail stores and restaurants attract visitors from the greater area, but it is also a place where local residents and employees from locally owned stores, offices and businesses run personal errands, shop, dine, and patron other establishments in the downtown.

4. Goals, Objectives & Strategies

a. Housing

GOAL | Promote additional housing that is affordable to the average Georgetown household, particularly recognizing the needs of various types of households.

GOAL | Strengthen older residential neighborhoods, with an emphasis on encouraging homeownership, rehabilitating older buildings and avoiding incompatible development.

GOAL | Improve housing integrity and maintenance within and adjacent to the District.

OBJECTIVE | Provide for a range of housing types, prices and densities, including various types of housing for senior citizens.

STRATEGY | Investigate financial incentives to assist current homeowners and encourage new homeownership.

STRATEGY | Promote the use of grant and loan programs to assist lower income homeowners in rehabilitating and maintaining homes.

STRATEGY | Enforce existing and new property maintenance codes and impose fines on violators, in accordance with adopted regulations.

STRATEGY | Distribute a brochure to all property owners explaining the Code requirements for property maintenance.

STRATEGY | Provide home maintenance training programs to educate District residents.

STRATEGY | Advertise financial incentives for reconvert multi-family to single-family units.

STRATEGY | Advertise rehabilitation grants and loan programs to assist lower income homeowners with maintaining and repairing their homes.

STRATEGY | Put together a community group that would be willing to walk the District and identify properties that need improvements. Local organizations could then offer to assist with small home improvements for donations.

STRATEGY | Look into hiring a town broker that would promote downtown Georgetown.

STRATEGY | Work with area real estate agents that are familiar with Georgetown to promote the downtown to potential buyers and other advantages to living in town, such as the numerous education options. Also work with realtors that specialize in older homes.

b. Economic & Retail Development

GOAL | Strengthen Downtown Georgetown as a business, civic, cultural, and entertainment center for the region, building upon its role as the Sussex County Seat.

GOAL | Stress a strong diversified economy that generates stability, sufficient tax revenues and wider employment opportunities.

GOAL | Encourage the growth and diversity of neighborhood scale businesses.

GOAL | Reinforce the downtown's position as the governmental, commercial and cultural center in the County.

OBJECTIVE | Direct new commercial uses to the Downtown Development District.

OBJECTIVE | Encourage the location of businesses that would cater to the professional populations' needs.

OBJECTIVE | Emphasize high-quality distinctive products and personalized services, including businesses serving a special market not already served by mass-market retailers.

OBJECTIVE | Emphasize downtown tourism that is built upon the area's heritage, arts and culture, and recreational assets.

OBJECTIVE | Attract businesses that will encourage travelers to the beach to stop and take advantage of their offerings and will eventually become a destination business of their own.

OBJECTIVE | Encourage businesses that downtown Georgetown is an ideal location for satellite businesses whose names are already well known to existing clientele.

OBJECTIVE | Keep a forward-thinking mindset in order to capture the synergy that exists between existing businesses owners, potential businesses and Town officials.

STRATEGY | Market the downtown for customers and businesses, including joint marketing and promotions among businesses and special events.

STRATEGY | Build upon the current actions of the Chamber of Commerce to bring together all interested parties working cooperatively in partnerships to carry out needed actions.

STRATEGY | Recruit and retain businesses and investors to expand job opportunities and generate additional local tax revenue.

STRATEGY | Work with a funding source that is already familiar with Downtown Development Districts and their processes and other revitalization efforts, in order to provide better step-by-step technical assistance to those wishing to apply for State incentives.

STRATEGY | Evaluate the possibility of deferring, waiving or prolonging payment of EDUs as they can be cost prohibitive to new businesses coming to downtown.

STRATEGY | Be proactive in approaching and gauging interest of restaurants and/or businesses that the Town is interested in having within its District and begin communications/negotiations with property owners.

STRATEGY | Proactively market downtown Georgetown as a business-friendly area and emphasize the revisions the Town has made to their Code making approval process more clear and streamlined.

STRATEGY | Promote downtown Georgetown as a place that people want to visit.

STRATEGY | Look at review process to see if there are more opportunities for town staff to make approvals oppose to Council approval.

STRATEGY | Keep an active list of people looking to buy, rent or lease commercial property, as well as a list of vacant commercial buildings and lots.

STRATEGY | Focus on locally owned businesses over regional and national chains since local business revenues are more integrated within the community.

STRATEGY | Conduct a market analysis to determine the optimal tenant mix, including the consideration of competing with commercial areas (Route 113) and the identification of market gaps that suggest future opportunities for the downtown.

STRATEGY | Focus the economic development strategy, branding/marketing efforts, and business recruitment/retention/expansion efforts on this identified optimal tenant mix. There is a clear need to recruit more locally owned retail business, restaurants and arts and entertainment uses.

STRATEGY | Carryout a marketing and promotion campaign focuses on the key strengths of the downtown which differentiate it from surrounding regional or national chain stores. These strengths include high quality and fair priced products and service, the unique downtown character, and high quality and friendly customer service.

c. Land Use, Zoning and Development Potential

GOAL | Promote a balanced mix of service, restaurant, retail, public and residential uses.

GOAL | Work on the perception that there is no space or land available for new development or a new tenant.

GOAL | Seek to extend the best features of older development into newer development.

OBJECTIVE | Encourage the retention of all government buildings.

OBJECTIVE | Provide high-quality community facilities and services in the most cost-efficient manner, including addressing needs for future growth.

OBJECTIVE | Promote standards that foster adaptive reuse of existing structures as well as compatible and context-sensitive infill development emulating the town's historical downtown setting.

STRATEGY | Ensure any development, when it applies, meets the Design Guidelines for East Market Street (October 2014).

STRATEGY | Continue with the existing effort of underground utilities from King Street to Parsons Lane.

STRATEGY | Encourage adaptive reuse of existing structures that have character and architectural significance for new uses rather than replacing them. Preserve and protect home-like business structures east of the railroad (an example includes the Georgetown Hair Studio).

STRATEGY | The design for commercial and mixed-use buildings should be sensitive to the overall character of the neighborhood, including the historic character west of the railroad or residential character east of the railroad.

STRATEGY | The design for commercial and mixed-use buildings shall be human-scaled and pedestrian-friendly to help stimulate an active and successful downtown commercial district

STRATEGY | Promote and market the identified priority redevelopment areas as catalyst projects to spur future redevelopment.

STRATEGY | Review the UB zoning district requirements and amend where appropriate to make it conducive toward creating a vibrant, traditional mixed-use and walkable downtown. For example, consider amending the permitted uses to remove antiquated or unsuitable uses for a downtown and that may have an adverse effect in achieving the District vision and goals. Such uses may include pawn shops, adult stores, auto parts, drive-through restaurants, wholesale establishments, warehouses, 'burial vault preparation', telephone stations, and frozen food lockers. Ensure that pedestrian-oriented uses are permitted and encouraged, including retail sales, personal services, entertainment, shopping, and restaurants.

STRATEGY | In the next Comprehensive Plan Update, evaluate the zoning and future land use designation of the four parcels in the proposed Downtown Development District zoned HC-Highway Commercial zone. The HC permits uses and larger scale commercial developments that typically exist along highways such as Route 113, rather than a traditional downtown.

STRATEGY | In the next Comprehensive Plan Update, evaluate the zoning and future land use designation of the open space and recreational lands on the Georgetown United Methodist Church property. The current zoning is UB1. If the owner and the community want this land to remain recreational for little league and community events, then the zoning and any potential plans for the site may need to be discussed and evaluated.

d. Natural & Cultural Resources

GOAL | Encourage appropriate reuse of older buildings, particularly including rehabilitation of historically or architecturally significant buildings.

GOAL | Promote water and energy efficiency through the use of sustainable energy sources, green infrastructure, and other green building design principles and practices.

OBJECTIVE | Identify historical and architecturally significant buildings within the District.

STRATEGY | Continue to enforce the Town's current regulations for construction in the Sourcewater Protection Area.

STRATEGY | Publicize funds to rehabilitate historic structures.

e. Connectivity and Walkability

GOAL | Promote an active, healthy and vibrant downtown through high connectivity, pedestrian-oriented design, and public gathering spaces.

OBJECTIVE | Improve opportunities throughout the downtown for safe bicycle and pedestrian travel, carpooling, and public transit.

OBJECTIVE | Work to control and divert heavy truck traffic, through-traffic and higher-speed traffic from the downtown.

STRATEGY | Conduct a sidewalk and crosswalk inventory that identifies gaps and sections in need of repair, and add the necessary improvements in the capital improvement budget.

STRATEGY | Identify, enhance, and maintain appropriate traffic calming and pedestrian safety measures for Market Street and Race Street.

STRATEGY | Promote the Georgetown-Lewes Rails to Trails program, and encourage the start of design for the Georgetown end.

STRATEGY | Promote health and wellness through the town's walkability, and work with organizations like Beebe to promote a healthy lifestyle through walking.

f. Gateways, Streetscape, and Public Spaces

GOAL | Provide and support streetscapes that foster a sense of place, civic pride and belonging for all members of the community.

GOAL | Reinforce community identity with attractive gateways at the downtown's edge.

OBJECTIVE | Improve the physical appearance of the streetscape and the attractiveness of building facades to make them more inviting to customers.

STRATEGY | Identify, prioritize, and construct placemaking improvements along Market Street and Race Street, and at the District's gateways, including but not limited to: Extending streetscape improvements, such as sidewalks, traffic calming, and pedestrian scale lighting with banners; Establish wayfinding signage to attractions and parking.

g. Parking

GOAL | Formalize and optimize the existing parking supply.

GOAL | Enhance the feeling of safety in existing parking areas.

OBJECTIVE | Provide a sufficient amount of parking spaces within the downtown and make sure their use is properly managed.

OBJECTIVE | Encourage businesses and other entities in the downtown to share parking.

STRATEGY | Explore methods to provide temporary special event parking, including the possibility of shuttle service to and from remote parking areas. If this is not feasible, publicize the location of parking areas to be used for special events held in the downtown area.

STRATEGY | On-street parking should be provided anywhere that it can be accommodated in the downtown.

STRATEGY | Consider a parking management program to maximize limited available parking in the areas of the highest demand.

STRATEGY | Improve pedestrian connections between areas with the highest visitor volume (such as The Circle and Courthouse area) to underutilized parking area (such as the Railroad Avenue parking lot).

STRATEGY | Review and amend the parking standards to ensure that the requirements are more conducive to a walkable, mixed-use downtown environment versus an auto-oriented commercial environment. For instance, the code should set a maximum number of spaces permitted, incentive or require shared parking, require parking lots to be behind or to the side of the primary structures, require connections from public sidewalks to parking lots, and require sufficient landscaping and pedestrian scale lighting.

STRATEGY | Revise the parking standards to be more prescriptive in allowing a reduction in the number of spaces in a shared lot. Also permit a reduction in the number of spaces for proximity to on-street parking, municipal lots and public transit.

STRATEGY | Consider acquiring underutilized rear for public parking, which could be combined into one coordinated joint parking area.

STRATEGY | The Town, the County and the State should jointly consider the construction of a parking structure in a strategic downtown location.

STRATEGY | Consider a program where builders may pay a fee in-lieu of providing the required spaces, which would be kept in a dedicated fund to provide for public parking purposes.

STRATEGY | Evaluate and improve wayfinding signage with a parking unique logo to guide drivers to parking areas (such underused parking areas as the Railroad Avenue and Layton Street).

STRATEGY | Provide merchants, chamber of commerce, and tourist bureaus with a downtown map showing businesses, points of interest, and parking lots.

h. Community Events

GOAL | Continue to provide quality community events of interest to a variety of audiences and age ranges.

GOAL | Enhance publication of community events prior to their occurrence.

OBJECTIVE | Look to partner with others to develop new community events.

STRATEGY | Consider establishing new cultural events within the downtown area, such as a Hispanic Festival.

STRATEGY | Consider holding an International Food Day on Race Street where local restaurants and other vendors could participate.

STRATEGY | Consider holding an annual Food Truck Festival or “Food Truck Friday” event where food trucks could be licensed to be set up in Town one day a week.

STRATEGY | Encourage more seasonal and holiday festivals along the lines of the Christmas Parade which is popular among residents and visitors.

STRATEGY | Better advertise community events by using all forms of media, TV and radio, newspaper, Town and community organization websites, as well as social media.

5. Implementation Plan

It is going to take continuous work to put this plan into action. There is no one fix or solution to improve Georgetown's downtown; instead it will take many short-term actions with a long-range perspective. A vision for the downtown and the goals and objectives have been established through public and stakeholder outreach process including the downtown survey, community events, and the Task Force meetings. Through this process Georgetown's assets, challenges to overcome, and opportunities for improvement have been identified. The next step is to outline recommendations for the Town to move forward and start implementing these solutions to create a healthy and vibrant downtown.

This Implementation section is intended to function as a summary and an implementation tool for the Downtown District Plan. It is intended to assist town officials and staff in coordinating planning actions with other government agencies and making decisions in a timely, systematic manner. Many of the recommended strategies involve coordinating with other governing agencies and partners that have a shared interest or jurisdiction towards obtaining technical guidance and assistance, securing funds, seeking approval, coordinating physical improvements, and aligning common goals.

Table #- Implementation Schedule summarizes the recommended strategies provided throughout this plan, lists the applicable agencies and partners to coordinate with, and prioritizes the strategies. The recommendations are grouped into four categories: Short term, Medium term, Long term, and Ongoing. The Town should act on the short term priority levels immediately in order to benefit from and work in conjunction with the State Downtown Development District incentives and the town's local incentives. The medium term and term long term are secondary priorities and may require further analysis and discussion in the next Comprehensive Plan Update. Ongoing items are recommendations that will occur on an ongoing basis. Criteria for selecting the priorities include the following: 1) Level of importance towards achieving downtown development goals, 2) Realistic expectation to achieve in a certain time frame, 3) Logical order to implement a task prior to the implementation of other tasks, and 4) Feasibility considering resources, available funding, and time. This table will further serve as a checklist for the Town in implementing the District Plan.

Table #. Implementation Schedule

Recommendations	Potential Partners & Coordinating Agency	Priority Level	Potential Technical & Financial Assistance
Housing			
Investigate financial incentives to assist current homeowners and encourage new homeownership.		Short Term	
Promote and advertise the use of grant and loan programs to assist lower income homeowners in rehabilitating and maintaining homes.	Delaware State Housing Authority Habitat for Humanity Chamber of Commerce	Short Term	DSHA's Affordable Housing Resource Center Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) USDA Rural Development Loans and Grants: Rural

			Repair and Rehabilitation; Housing Preservation
Enforce existing and new property maintenance codes and impose fines on violators, in accordance with adopted regulations. Look into providing a home maintenance training program to educate District residents. Also, put together and distribute a brochure to all property owners explaining the Code requirements for property maintenance.		High	Town Resources
Advertise financial incentives for reconvert multi-family to single-family units.		Medium	
Put together a community group that would be willing to walk the District and identify properties that need improvements. Local organizations could then offer to assist with small home improvements for donations.		Medium	Town Resources
Look into hiring a town broker that would promote downtown Georgetown.		Medium	
Work with area real estate agents that are familiar with Georgetown to promote the downtown to potential buyers and other advantages to living in town, such as the numerous education options. Also work with realtors that specialize in older homes.		High	
Economic & Retail Development			
Carryout a marketing and promotion campaign that focuses on, the proposed incentives and the key strengths of the downtown which differentiate it from surrounding regional or national chain stores.	Chamber of Commerce	High	Delaware Main Street / USDA Rural Community Development Initiative
Work in partnership with SCAOR to develop an active list of available properties in the DDD	Sussex County Association of Realtors	High	Sussex County Association of Realtors
Hold meetings with local real estate agents promoting the proposed incentives and the benefits of locating in Georgetown	Sussex County Association of Realtors	High	Sussex County Association of Realtors
Work with a funding source that is already familiar with Downtown Development Districts and their processes and other revitalization efforts, in order to provide better step-by-step technical assistance to those wishing to apply for State incentives.		High	NCALL
Be proactive in approaching and gauging interest of restaurants and/or locally owned businesses that the Town is interested in having within its District.			
Proactively market downtown Georgetown as a business-friendly area and emphasize the revisions the Town has made to their Code making approval process more clear and streamlined.		High	Town Resources
Conduct a market analysis to determine the optimal tenant mix, including the consideration of competing with commercial areas (Route 113) and the identification of market gaps that suggest future opportunities for the downtown.		Medium	Sussex County Association of Realtors
Land Use, Zoning and Development Potential			

Ensure any development, when it applies, meets the Design Guidelines for East Market Street (October 2014).		High	Town Resources
Continue with the existing effort of underground utilities from King Street to Parsons Lane.		High	
Encourage adaptive reuse of existing structures that have character and architectural significance for new uses rather than replacing them. Preserve and protect home-like business structures east of the railroad.		High	Town Resources
Ensure design for commercial and mixed-use buildings should be sensitive to the overall character of the neighborhood, and that the buildings are human-scaled and pedestrian friendly.		High	Town Resources
Promote and market the identified priority redevelopment areas as catalyst projects to spur future redevelopment.		High	Town Resources
Review and amend the UB zoning district requirements to make it conducive toward creating a vibrant, traditional mixed-use and walkable downtown. For example, amend the permitted uses to remove antiquated or unsuitable uses for a downtown and that may have an adverse effect in achieving the District vision and goals.		High	Town resources
During the Comprehensive Plan Update, evaluate the zoning and future land use designation of the four parcels in the proposed Downtown Development District zoned HC- Highway Commercial zone. Also, evaluate the zoning of the Georgetown United Methodist Church property to look into preserving this site as open space and recreational lands.		High	Town Resources
Natural & Cultural Resources			
Identify historical and architecturally significant buildings within the District, and publicize funds to rehabilitate historic structures.	SHPO	Medium	Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program Delaware Preservation Fund
Connectivity and Walkability			
Conduct a sidewalk and crosswalk inventory that identifies gaps and sections in need of repair, and add the necessary improvements in the capital improvement budget.	DelDOT	Medium	Municipal Street Aid Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
Identify, enhance, and maintain appropriate traffic calming and pedestrian safety measures for Market Street and Race Street.	DelDOT	Medium	
Determine the trail head location for the Georgetown-Lewes Rail to Trail plan and work towards funding and implementation of the Georgetown portion of the trail.	DelDOT	Medium	Municipal Street Aid Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Promote health and wellness through the town's walkability, and work with organizations like Beebe to promote a healthy lifestyle through walking.	Beebe Hospital Local Physicians	High	
Gateways, Streetscape, and Public Spaces			
Identify, prioritize, and construct placemaking improvements along Market Street and Race Street, and at the District's gateways, including but not limited to: Extending streetscape improvements, such as sidewalks, traffic calming, and pedestrian scale lighting with banners; Establish wayfinding signage to attractions and parking.		Medium	Municipal Street Aid Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Delaware Main Street / USDA Rural Community Development Initiative
Parking			
Explore methods to provide temporary special event parking, including the possibility of shuttle service to and from remote parking areas. If this is not feasible, publicize the location of parking areas to be used for special events held in the downtown area.		Short Term	
On-street parking should be provided anywhere that it can be accommodated in the downtown.		Medium	
Consider a parking management program to maximize limited available parking in the areas of the highest demand.		Medium	
Improve pedestrian connections between areas with the highest visitor volume (such as The Circle and Courthouse area) to underutilized parking area (such as the Railroad Avenue parking lot).		High	
Review and amend the parking standards to ensure that the requirements are more conducive to a walkable, mixed-use downtown environment versus an auto-oriented commercial environment. For instance, the code should set a maximum number of spaces permitted, incentive or require shared parking, require parking lots to be behind or to the side of the primary structures, require connections from public sidewalks to parking lots, and require sufficient landscaping and pedestrian scale lighting.		Medium	Town resources
Revise the parking standards to be more prescriptive in allowing a reduction in the number of spaces in a shared lot. Also permit a reduction in the number of spaces for proximity to on-street parking, municipal lots and public transit.		Medium	
Consider acquiring underutilized rear for public parking, which could be combined into one coordinated joint parking area.		Medium	
The Town, the County and the State should jointly consider the construction of a parking structure in a strategic downtown location.		High	
Consider a program where builders may pay a fee in-lieu of providing the required spaces, which would be kept in a		High	

dedicated fund to provide for public parking purposes.			
Evaluate and improve wayfinding signage with a parking unique logo to guide drivers to parking areas (such underused parking areas as the Railroad Avenue and Layton Street).		High	
Provide merchants, chamber of commerce, and tourist bureaus with a downtown map showing businesses, points of interest, and parking lots.		Medium	
Community Events			
Consider establishing new cultural events within the downtown area, such as a Hispanic Festival.	Chamber of Commerce Convention & Visitors Bureau for Sussex County	Medium	Town resources
Consider holding food related festivals such as an International Food Day on Race Street where local restaurants and other vendors could participate, or an annual Food Truck Festival / "Food Truck Friday" event where food trucks could be licensed to be set up in Town one day a week.		Medium	
Encourage more seasonal and holiday festivals along the lines of the Christmas Parade which is popular among residents and visitors.		Medium	
Better advertise community events by using all forms of media, TV and radio, newspaper, Town and community organization websites, as well as social media.		High	

6. Local Incentives

a. Existing

INCENTIVE | Façade, Sign and Awning Improvement Grant Program

This program seeks to address the maintenance and rehabilitation needs of building facades in the East Market Street Business District by offering 50/50 matching grants to interested, qualified building and business owners. Grants may be awarded for up to 50% of the total cost of qualified façade rehabilitation, repair, or restoration projects, signs, or awnings with a maximum grant award of \$500. The annual amount set aside for this program is \$3,000, funded from Real Estate Transfer Tax revenues. A cash match is required. Grants are awarded on a reimbursement basis only after the applicant demonstrates full compliance with the grant award. Each eligible improvement may be phased over two fiscal years in order to maximize grant assistance. Full details on this grant program along with the current application (if application period is open) can be found on the Town's website. Enabling legislation for this grant program can be found in Appendix X.

INCENTIVE | Realty Transfer Tax Exemption – 1st Time Homebuyers

This program was established in August 2004 and applies to the entire town.

b. Proposed

10 Year Property Tax Increase Phase In (on improvements) | Completed within 90 days of designation

Impact Fee Reduction | Completed within 90 days of designation

This program will reduce impact fees for both water and sewer. Commercial structures will get a 20% reduction while mixed-use will get a 35% reduction. This reduction will apply to one initial EDU and additional EDU's will be calculated at the end of the first 12 months in operation.

Business License Fee Waiver | Completed within 90 days of designation

This will be a five year waiver for new businesses.

Accelerated Development Review Process | Completed within 90 days of designation

An accelerated development review process will allow many of the approvals to be done administratively.

Building Permit Fee Reduction | Completed within 90 days of designation

The building permit fee reduction would be on a sliding scale ranging from 15% to 75%.

Emergency Services and Georgetown Recreation, Education and Arts Trust Reduction | Completed within 90 days of designation

This program would be a 50% reduction. This was a previous incentive offered by the Town in 2010 applied to targeted commercial areas but had sunsetted.

Form-Based Code | Completed within 90 days of designation

A form-based code document will be put together and applied to the properties within the District. Many of the recommendations from the Historic District Study Committee will be used, including naming the District the Town Center, creating sub-districts possibly based on types of roads/streets, using the proposed permitted uses as a starting point and possibly creating form-based code as an overlay district. These recommendations along with the East Market Design Standards, Town Design Standards and information from the Form-Based Code Institute will be used to create a comprehensive and reader-friendly document. Form-based code will make it clear to potential developers what the town is looking for when it comes to type of development and aesthetic.

c. Funding Opportunities

Delaware Main Street and USDA Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI)

Delaware Main Street, a program of the Delaware Economic Development Office, is the recipient of a USDA Rural Development Grant in the amount of \$200,000. Georgetown is one nine communities that the USDA RCDI targets for funding assistance. Funds are used to provide technical assistance and training. Per the USDA website, "the main focus of the assistance is downtown business development, but also includes energy efficiency and renewable energy design options, organizational development, downtown design issues, and community image promotion, marketing and advertising." The Program promotes sustainable economic development through training and technical assistance focusing on business development, building entrepreneurship, small business innovation, and economic development planning.

<http://www.delawaremainstreet.com/usda-recipients>