

# Chapter One.

## *Downtown Harrington - The Introduction*





## Downtown Description

For the purposes of this Plan, Harrington's Downtown Development District shall be referred to as the Downtown and identified as the area shown on *Map 1. Downtown Boundary*. The Downtown, comprised mostly of the traditional central business district (Commerce Street, Railroad Avenue, and Mechanic Street), encompasses some of the adjacent residential streets where homes have been converted to businesses and other non-residential uses (Fleming Street, Dorman Street, and Delaware Avenue) and also extends eastward along Clark Street to incorporate commercial properties that cross the north-south running railroad tracks. The City has a population of approximately 3,500 and so chose a boundary of approximately 33 acres and 108 parcels, representing an area most in need of revitalization in which to concentrate their initial efforts.

The City used relevant data to support the need for the creation of their Downtown Development District Plan (Downtown Plan). With Census and other local data, the City was able to provide evidence that the Downtown has low homeownership, vacant buildings and storefronts, and a number of structures with existing code violations.

The City was able to identify a variety of potential positive impacts, including economic development potential, increased homeownership, positive marketing and identity creation, formation of a downtown organization, and a greater feeling of Downtown ownership. By attracting a greater number of owner-occupied residences, the City hopes that there will be increased residential property maintenance and general activity within the Downtown. They also feel that Downtown redevelopment will increase community pride, in turn encouraging additional investment, and reinvigorating the City as a whole.

## Purpose & Need

In 2014, the Downtown Development Districts Act was enacted by the Delaware General Assembly in order 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.

In the first round of Downtown Development District (DDD) applications in 2014, three communities were awarded designation: Dover, Seaford, and Wilmington. Governor Markell announced the opening of a second round of DDD applications on March 16, 2016. Communities throughout the State would have the opportunity to apply to have their downtown areas designated as Districts and take advantage of the program.

Local governments wishing to take advantage of the program must identify a downtown district in their community and apply for designation through the Office of State Planning Coordination. Completed applications are considered by the Cabinet Committee on State Planning Issues, which makes recommendations to the Governor, who then designates Downtown Development Districts. Selection as a Downtown Development District entitles private construction projects within the identified District to receive grants to offset 20% of their capital construction costs.

Unlike similar incentives in other states that are often limited to commercial and industrial projects, Downtown Development District grants are available for a broad range of projects including residential, mixed-use, commercial, and industrial projects within the boundaries of a DDD. Grants are available to virtually anyone who makes qualified real estate improvements in a DDD. This includes for-profit builders and investors, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and even homeowners. For eligibility purposes, qualified real property investments are capital expenditures, incurred after DDD designation, necessary for rehabilitation, expansion, or new construction, sometimes referred to as "hard costs". Examples include exterior, interior, structural, mechanical, or electrical improvements; excavations; grading and paving; landscaping or land improvements; and demolition. In addition to the DDD grant administered by the Delaware State Housing Authority, several State agencies are offering enhancement to existing programs for those

communities that achieve DDD designation including the Department of Agriculture; Department of Children, Youth and Their Families; Department of Health and Social Services; State Housing Authority; Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control; Department of State; and the Sustainable Energy Utility. Many State agencies also have existing programs that will further DDD initiatives.

Harrington received a Neighborhood Building Blocks Fund Grant in 2015 to develop a Downtown Development District Plan, in order to apply for State designation under this program. This grant, funded by the JP Morgan Chase settlement agreement, awarded \$40,000 to the City of Harrington to engage a planning consultant and prepare a District Plan (including stakeholder and public outreach process) and accompanying maps for submittal to the Office of State Planning Coordination for application for designation as a Downtown Development District. Harrington intends to submit their application for Downtown Development District designation in the June 1, 2016 designation application round.

The City of Harrington has long been an important commercial, agricultural, and entertainment hub in Delaware. In more recent history, the majority of the regional draws and attractions are located outside of the City's core downtown. A major challenge for the City is to redevelop the Downtown with the right mix of uses, promote day and night economic activity as well as year-round activity, and compete with the abundant commercial and entertainment options outside of the downtown. The Downtown still has a variety of small-scale businesses including retail, banks, and professional and general services, but currently has a number of vacant and underutilized properties.

Harrington is starting to see a redevelopment trend occur in the Downtown, which has experienced some infill and also several redevelopment projects that have made improvements such as exterior renovations and signage upgrades. In 2007, the City changed its development review process, making many processes subject to only administrative review, thereby expediting the project review and resulting in a process that was less expensive in terms of time and cost. This process has been very successful and encourages redevelopment through onsite guidance and building improvements. Unfortunately, most of the successful redevelopment projects that have

taken advantage of this new, expedited process have been located on DuPont Highway; however, some were located in the Downtown area, such as Spartan Station, Downtown Junction, and a local farmers' market.

The City desires to continue stimulating development in the Downtown and build off of these recent successes. One major goal is to revitalize the Downtown, improve existing businesses, and attract new businesses. Toward this goal, the City supports additional infill development on vacant parcels for mixed uses, as well as the adaptive reuse of existing structures. While the majority of the empty structures are older and may not be up to current building code regulations, they still hold great development potential. Several of the buildings are large and the building footprint takes up the majority of the property. As such, some development requirements such as on-site parking may be difficult to meet.

The City also desires to create a more vibrant live-work-play community with a mix of residential, retail, service, and entertainment uses. Currently, the City wishes to attract additional retail and professional office type uses. The Downtown would benefit from more daily amenities such as groceries, nighttime restaurants, a movie or play theater, and housing options for all ages and income groups. Retail, entertainment, and lodging uses in the City could dovetail and benefit from the many regional attractions such as the Harrington Casino and Raceway and other uses on DuPont Highway, as well as annual attractions such as the Harrington State Fair. In addition, the City would like to increase its resident population working within City limits. Apartments above retail or offices in the Downtown would offer additional housing options for a wider range of ages and income levels, and additional retail and office uses in the Downtown would offer more job opportunities for residents.

The City further wishes to encourage foot traffic and make the streets more pedestrian friendly, beautify the public realm, and promote public safety through street activity. The City has been advancing placemaking principles that promote pedestrian activity and retaining and attracting neighborhood scale businesses. For instance, the City received funding to reconstruct the sidewalks in the Downtown. This is a major enhancement project to enhance character, as well as bring the Downtown into Americans with Disabilities Act compliance.

Marketing, promotion, and additional branding efforts are also 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 marketing and special events. The City would also like to focus on business recruitment, including maintaining an inventory of available business space and publicizing commercial opportunities.

## Downtown Planning Process

### *Downtown Reconnaissance Survey*

At the beginning of the Downtown planning process, City Planning Consultants visited the City of Harrington and walked the streets that would eventually comprise the Downtown boundary in order to best observe, document, and photograph its existing conditions. This survey included documentation of uses and businesses, urban form, contributing features to community identity and character, property maintenance and upkeep, redevelopment opportunities, streetscape conditions, and overall walkability. One of the Consultants has served as Harrington's City Planner for over ten years and is very familiar with the City and was able to give even deeper insight to this process than would a casual observer who did not have nearly the same depth and breadth of knowledge.

### *Stakeholders & Partnerships*

Stakeholders and partners play significant roles in achieving the goals stated within this Plan. It is important that everyone work together to implement the Plan as well as work toward improving the overall Downtown. When forming a Downtown Merchants' Organization, it is important to strive for diversity, dedication, and positive promotion within leadership positions. The City should encompass a supportive role and not a leadership role other than the initial coordination. The local stakeholders identified within the Downtown include, but are not limited to:

- Business Owners
- Property Owners
- City of Harrington City Hall

- City of Harrington Police Department
- Residents/Consumers
- Harrington Senior Center
- U.S. Post Office - Harrington
- Norfolk Southern Railroad
- Religious Institutions
- Financial Institutions
- Harrington Historical Society

Partners play a significant role within the Downtown. While these partners may not reside in the City limits, the resources, knowledge, and overall support to the Downtown can be significant. The potential partners identified within the Downtown include, but are not limited to:

- Harrington-Greenwood-Felton Centennial Rotary Club
- Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce
- Kent Economic Development
- Delaware Economic Development Office
- Kent County & Greater Dover Tourism
- Delaware Department of Transportation
- Delaware Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control
- Small Business Association - Delaware District Office
- United States Department of Agriculture - Business and Cooperative Rural Development

### *Community Outreach*

Community outreach is an important component in the planning process. The opinions of residents, business owners and operators, property owners, and visitors help to identify what they think the important issues are that need to be addressed and how they think the Downtown can be improved in the future. The following outreach methods were completed during the process of creating this Plan:

- Task Force Meetings (4);
- Downtown Survey;
- Community Outreach Events (2);
- Public Presentation (draft Plan); and
- Public Hearing.

### **Task Force Meetings**

The Downtown Task Force was appointed by the City Manager and was comprised of a number of

Harrington citizens, business owners, and nonprofit organization members who are active in the community. Members donated numerous hours to attend meetings, provided their input on a variety of topics, decorated their businesses and organizations for Downtown open houses, encouraged friends and family members to participate in online surveys, attended public presentations, and most importantly, gave invaluable input into the Downtown Plan that could not have been written without their support and encouragement.

The Task Force met on four separate occasions:

#### *Task Force Meeting No. 1 | Kick-Off*

The Task Force kick-off meeting was held on December 1, 2015 at the Price Community Center. Task Force members were present to hear the City Planning Consultants discuss background on the 2014 Downtown Development Districts Act, Neighborhood Building Blocks Fund (NBBF) Grant, and Harrington's successful NBBF grant application.



The overall project scope and schedule was discussed, as well as project roles and responsibilities. A brief overview of recent projects and investments was given that led into a discussion of the Downtown's demographics and existing conditions. Members were introduced to their homework assignment – a SWOT analysis – where they were asked to walk the Downtown and think about its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Members were also asked to review and comment on draft survey questions that would be finalized and made public in January 2016. A proposal for a community outreach event was also discussed – *Love Your Downtown*. Members were also asked to consider whether they would like to see any changes to the proposed Downtown boundary.

#### *Task Force Meeting No. 2 | Visioning*

The second Task Force meeting focused on visioning activities and was held on January 12, 2016, also at the Price Community Center. Task



Force members heard the City Planning Consultants review five model projects: Winchester, VA; Apex, NC; Milford, DE; Keswick Village, PA; and a mixed-use Habitat for Humanity project located in Albany, NY. Consultants also discussed lessons learned in interviewing staff from these and other “model” towns, as well as their own past experiences. Members were asked their opinions on the proposed Downtown boundaries. The SWOT analysis that was assigned as homework during the first meeting was discussed in depth (information can be found in Chapter Two under Economic & Market Analysis). Members were introduced to their homework assignment – consideration of possible goals and objectives. They were also asked to attend the upcoming community outreach event – *Love Your Downtown* – and were reminded to participate in the downtown survey and ask others to as well.

#### *Task Force Meeting No. 3 | Goals & Objectives*

The third Task Force meeting focused on goals and objectives and was held on March 10, 2016, again at the Price Community Center. Task Force members heard the City Planning Consultants present an overview of the downtown survey results. A follow-up to the previous Task Force meeting's SWOT analysis was held, based on results of the survey. Members began a discussion of goals and objectives that would be completed at the following meeting.

#### *Task Force Meeting No. 4 | Incentives*

The fourth Task Force meeting centered on a discussion of possible incentives to be offered within the Downtown. It was held on March 23, 2016 in the Harrington City Hall Council Chambers. Goals and objectives for the Downtown were finalized and the ultimate vision was determined. Direction was determined for incentives and the Task Force gave 100% buy-in to the process to-date.

#### **Downtown Survey**

In January 2016, an online survey was opened to all residents, business owners and operators, property owners, renters,



employees, and visitors to the City of Harrington. The online survey ran from January 11, 2016 through February 19, 2016. Paper copies of the survey were also made available to those without internet access. Postcards describing the Downtown project, as well as requesting completion of the survey, were distributed at the Love Your Downtown Open House, throughout the Downtown, and emailed to various stakeholders. The survey was also available for those who chose to complete it in a paper format. These were returned to the City Hall and were manually entered into the online survey for data analysis. A total of 88 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 Harrington 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.

The survey focused on the following areas:

- when and where visitors shopped in the Downtown;
- features that attract respondents to a shopping/business area;
- advantages and disadvantages of Harrington's Downtown;
- safety;
- preferred future scenarios;
- businesses respondents would like to see in the Downtown;
- changes that would improve the Downtown;
- needs for Downtown business expansion;
- potentially useful services for local merchants;
- importance of various consumer segments;
- barriers and obstacles facing Downtown businesses; and
- forms of advertising currently utilized by Downtown businesses.

Forty percent of survey respondents were Harrington residents. Nearly 65% of those responding to the survey were women. Over 93% of the respondents were white and over 97% indicated they were not Hispanic or Latino. Slightly over 45% of respondents indicated their age to be between 45 and 64. The following list briefly summarizes

responses to the survey:

- The most common frequencies for visiting Downtown Harrington was “once every few months” (31% of respondents) and “once a month” (23% of respondents).
- Respondents indicated that the places they most frequently visited in the Downtown were the “Post Office or Bank” and “Retail”.
- The most commonly identified time to visit the Downtown was Monday-Friday, before 5:00pm.
- When questioned about safety, 100% of respondents indicated they felt safe in the Downtown during the day and 61% indicated they felt safe during the night.
- The factors “friendly local service,” “supporting local businesses,” and “convenient location” were most commonly cited as major advantages of the Downtown.
- “Lack in variety of goods and services” was most commonly cited as a major disadvantage of the Downtown.
- When questioned about the types of businesses respondents would like to see come to the Downtown, the most common requests were for personal service uses, public and civic uses, and commercial retail uses, with specific requests such as a small grocery store and hair salon. Locally-owned restaurants, coffee shops, and specialty food shops were the most requested food-related businesses, with specific requests such as an ice cream shop, bistro, and sports bar.
- When asked if respondents “strongly agree” that certain traits attract them to a shopping/business area, “friendly customer service,” “quality of products and services,” and “variety of products and services” were most commonly rated as influencing factors.
- 40% of respondents to the merchant survey indicated they had a need to expand. In a separate question, only 40% of respondents indicated that they were committed to keeping their business Downtown.

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

**Community Outreach - Love Your Downtown Open House**

On February 5, 2016, the Harrington Downtown Development District Partnership (comprised of the City of Harrington, City Planning Consultants, and Downtown businesses and nonprofits) held an event, Love Your Downtown, in conjunction with the City Council's proclamation of February as City Goes Red Month and February 5th as Wear Red Day. In addition to working with the City to promote City Goes Red Month and Wear Red Day to urge all citizens to show their support for women and the fight against heart disease, the Love Your Downtown Open House encouraged businesses to create red window displays and decorations. This outreach event encouraged area residents to visit Downtown businesses, nonprofits, and government agencies to learn what they sell or services they provide, and hopefully to encourage these same people to patron a new business or entity. Each participating business/nonprofit was provided an event card that encouraged each person to visit all the businesses/nonprofits shown on the Downtown map and obtain a signature of each business to be eligible for a gift basket upon completion. An educational project booth was displayed within the City Hall Council Chambers to wrap up the end of the day by drawing event cards to win the two gift baskets. The purpose of this booth was to display information on the Downtown project, gain feedback on the proposed boundary and SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis (see Chapter Two), and to encourage attendees to fill out the downtown survey. There was a proposed boundary map and SWOT analysis, as well as information on the 2014 Downtown Development District Act for community members to review and ask questions.



Nine stakeholders participated in the open house:



*Happy Tails Dog Grooming*



*The Harrington Florist & Cakery*



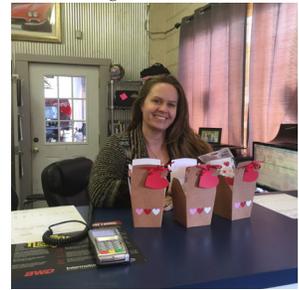
*The Clutter Box*



*City Manager Teresa Tieman with  
OMG Collage owner Marie Gannon*



*Power in Praise Ministries*



*Cook's Tire Center*



*Harrington Police Department*



*Harrington City Hall*



*City of Harrington Staff members Joyce Wix, Beverley Ireland, and City Manager Teresa Tieman join City Planning Consultants Lauren Good and Debbie Pfeil of KCI Technologies at the Love Your Downtown project booth displayed in City Hall.*



*Harrington Historical Society  
Mayor Anthony Moyer, Jean Miller, Viva Poore, and City Manager Teresa Tieman*

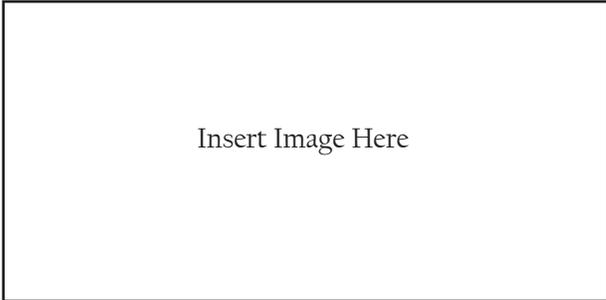
### Community Outreach - Senior Center Birthday Celebration

Gene Price, Director of Harrington Senior Center, Inc., invited the City Planning Consultants to attend their February 16, 2016 birthday celebration to discuss the Downtown project. Keeping the “Love Your Downtown” theme of the open house event, display tables were set up and the two Consultants gave brief presentations on the Plan and eventual goals of Downtown Development District designation with the State. They also assisted numerous celebration participants in filling out their downtown surveys (more information above). Celebrants who filled out surveys were entered into a raffle for gift baskets provided by the City Planning Consultants.



### Public Presentation

On April 14, 2016, a joint meeting of the Harrington City Council, Planning Commission, and Downtown Task Force was held at the Price Community Center, and was open to the public. All stakeholders with physical addresses located within the Downtown were hand-delivered a flyer inviting them to attend. Information about the presentation was also advertised in the newspaper and posted on the City’s website. At this meeting, City Planning Consultants gave a presentation on the Plan’s development, the outreach process, the Downtown vision, the Plan’s goals and objectives, implementation strategies and timelines, incentives, and an overview of the Downtown Development District Designation application process. All attendees were invited to ask questions. This presentation served as the public release of the Plan document and the following day (April 15th) marked the beginning of the public comment period, which would end on May 9th at the close of the Public Hearing.



### Public Hearing

The Public Hearing on Harrington’s Downtown Development District Plan was held on May 9, 2016 and public comments were received from April 15th through the close of the Public Hearing. All public comments received during this period are provided in the Appendix.



### Agency Coordination

A draft of this Downtown Plan was submitted to the Office of State Planning Coordination (OSPC) on

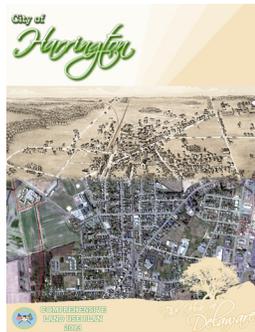
April 15, 2016, the same time the draft was released to the public. Comments received from OSPC are included in the Appendix.

All comments were considered when preparing this Plan and were addressed as noted in the Appendix. As per the requirements of the Neighborhood Building Blocks Fund Grant that the City of Harrington received to create this Plan, a copy of the final Plan was submitted to the OSPC upon its adoption.

## Existing Documents, Activities & Organizations

### *Comprehensive Land Use Plan*

The City of Harrington's Comprehensive Land Use Plan was adopted on December 16, 2013 and certified by the Governor. Its primary vision is to maintain the quality of life and rural character of the community while protecting the health, safety, economic health, and welfare of its citizens. Harrington recognizes that responsible and sustainable use of land and natural resources is critical to the economic growth of the community.



The function of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan is to provide direction relating to growth management, redevelopment, transportation, environmental protection, and City services based on past and present data and trends. The Comprehensive Plan identified areas of improvement and implementation items for future consideration.

While applicable to the entire City, the Comprehensive Plan holds a number of themes that can be used to further inform the Downtown planning process. It indicates that the downtown in every small town reflects the heart and soul of the community. Harrington's Downtown should reflect the City's small town character with seasonal window displays that encourage the community to shop locally. It should be the location of events and gatherings for neighbors and businesses. The

community should be able to park their vehicles, walk, or ride their bicycles to the Downtown to shop, eat, and socialize. The Comprehensive Plan's themes and goals that are relevant to the Downtown have been incorporated throughout this Plan and, most specifically, into Chapter Four.

Upon adoption of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, the City prepared a comprehensive rezoning to ensure the proposed zoning changes complement the approved future land use classifications. During this process, all parcels were compared to the existing zoning to determine proposed zoning changes. Notifications were sent to the affected property owners allowing an opportunity to meet with the City to discuss the changes and to determine if property owners wished to oppose the proposed zoning. Based on requested meetings by the property owners, only eight parcels were in opposition to the proposed zoning changes. These eight parcels were reviewed and a recommendation was made to allow the current zoning classification to stand. One hundred and sixty-seven parcels (excluding the eight opposed parcels) were presented for zoning changes and adopted as presented in Ordinance 15-07 on July 20, 2015. Ordinance 15-16 was presented to amend the recently adopted Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Exhibit 17 - Future Land Use to change the eight parcels to complement the existing land use classification. This Ordinance was adopted on December 7, 2015. The City submitted the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Amendment to the Office of State Planning Coordination on February 1, 2016 and presented at the Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) meeting on February 24, 2016. Correspondence was received regarding the PLUS application with no State objections.

### *Zoning Regulations & Design Standards*

The 2013 Comprehensive Land Use Plan identified certain needs as they pertain to aesthetic appearance and the function of the Downtown. During this process, it was discovered that the Downtown area had several spot zoning classifications and the neighboring uses were not complementary in nature. The identified needs included, but were not limited to, the following:

- lack of character and maintenance;

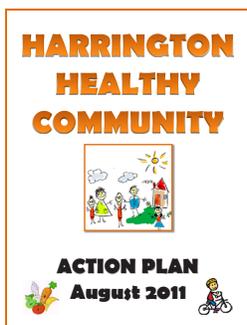
- structure and curb appeal improvements;
- new street lighting for remaining downtown area; and
- window displays and maintenance of vacant buildings.

The City's Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 440 of the City Code) recently underwent a comprehensive update, which was adopted on July 20, 2015 and ensured the neighborhood uses were allowed throughout the area. The majority of the Downtown is in the C-2 Central Commercial Zone, which was completely updated to be a major component in the City's redevelopment efforts. The intent of this zoning district is to create a lively, safe, human-scaled downtown area in which people will want to live, visit, shop, and work. The C-2 Zone regulations permit a variety of uses that one finds in a traditional downtown. In addition, the design standards focus on creating a pedestrian-oriented space through form-based site, building design, and placemaking standards.

The Downtown also includes a smaller portion of C-3 Service Commercial Zone, which permits uses and has zoning requirements that are more typical of a higher commercial highway environment than a traditional, walkable downtown. A more detailed description and assessment of the zoning districts within the Downtown are provided in Chapter Two.

### Healthy Community Action Plan

The Harrington Healthy Community Action Plan (HCAP) provides a tool containing strategies based on community assessment data and input from a partnership team comprised of positive, active, diverse, committed, and community-driven individuals that brought several different viewpoints to the project. A community assessment was completed using the Community Health Assessment and Group Evaluation (CHANGE) tool developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Project goals were to develop and/or strengthen the capacity of the Harrington community



to reduce obesity and other chronic diseases and improve the health of residents by implementing policies, systems, environmental strategies, and programmatic supports to increase healthy eating and opportunities for active living and healthy behaviors.

The HCAP, while applicable to the entire City, includes some goals that have and can be used to further inform strategies for the Downtown:

- develop a mixed use zoning classification (this goal was achieved through the adoption of new C-2 Zone regulations in Chapter 440, Zoning in 2015);
- develop a bicycle and pedestrian plan;
- conduct annual Harrington Healthy Community Day;
- continue the Farmers' Market; and
- encourage medical and dental services to locate in Harrington.

### Strategies for State Policies & Spending

On March 3, 2016, the 2015 Strategies for State Policies and Spending were approved by the Cabinet Committee on State Planning Issues and forwarded to Governor Jack Markell for his approval. Originally approved in 1999 and updated in 2004 and 2010, the 2015 document is the third iteration and is now available online. A link has been provided in the Appendix.

The purpose of this document, as with previous Strategies for State Policies and Spending documents, is to coordinate land use decision making with the provision of infrastructure and services in a manner that makes the best use of natural and fiscal resources. The importance of such coordination lies in the fact that land use decisions are made at the local level, while the bulk of infrastructure and services that support land use decisions are funded by the State. The development of the State Strategies document with local governments and citizens helps to create a unified view toward growth and preservation priorities that all levels of government can use to allocate resources.

The document uses the following area designations:

- Levels 1 and 2 identify areas of the State that are most prepared for growth and where the State can make the most cost-effective infrastructure investment for schools, roads, and public safety.
- Level 3 areas reflect areas where growth is anticipated by local, county, and State plans in the longer term, or areas that may have environmental or other constraints to development. State investments will support growth in these areas; however, the State may have other priorities in the near term, especially for Levels 1 and 2.
- In Level 4 areas, the State will make investments that will help preserve a rural character, such as investments to promote open space and agriculture. The State is also looking to enhance agricultural activities by encouraging the location of complementary businesses in these areas.
- Out-of-Play lands are those that cannot be developed for reasons including designation as federally- or state-owned protected lands, parkland, the development rights have been purchased, or State and local regulations prohibit development.

The entirety of Harrington's Downtown has been designated as Level 1. A link to the Office of State Planning's website with more information and official maps can be found in the Appendix. According to the 2015 document, in investment Level 1 areas, State investments and policies should support and encourage a wide range of uses and densities, promote a variety of transportation options, foster efficient use of existing public and private investments, and enhance community identity and integrity. Overall, it is the State's intent to use its spending and management tools to maintain and enhance community character, to promote well-designed and efficient new growth, and to facilitate redevelopment within these areas.

### Public Investments

Since fiscal year 2010, significant public investments have been made to the Downtown. The investments made were between fiscal years 2010-2013:

- Clark Street - \$33,354 DelDOT funded with no City match
- Streetscape Phase 1 - \$24,000 Transportation

- Streetscape Phase 1 - \$302,032 (\$248,600 DelDOT funded and \$53,432 City funded)
- Clark Street Curbing - \$6,010 City funded
- Freedom Park - \$49,987 (\$20,000 Delaware Land Trust funded and \$29,987 matching funds)

### Downtown Streetscape Improvements

The City of Harrington received funding for several improvements within the Downtown. This project not only served to enhance the Downtown character, but achieved Americans with Disabilities Act compliance. The DelDOT Transportation Enhancement and Community Transportation Fund provided monies for construction of the Downtown Streetscape Project.



Phase one consisted of the enhancement of the sidewalks and intersections on Commerce Street from Dorman Street to Fleming Street and on Clark Street from Fleming Street to Hanley Street. The extent of work at each location included:

- removal and disposal of 620 linear feet of curbing
- removal and disposal of 11,400 square feet of existing concrete sidewalk and asphalt paving
- installation of 622 linear feet of concrete curbing
- installation of 11,000 square feet of concrete sidewalk and driveway apron
- installation of 50 tons of hot mix paving
- installation of 15 landscaped islands
- installation of electric conduit and lighting for 18 street lights
- installation of 5 aluminum drain outlets



### Freedom Park

Freedom Park, located on the corner of Fleming Street and Mechanic Street, was once a vacant lot with broken pieces of concrete and weeds used as an overflow parking lot. The Police Department, with approval from the City Council approving Resolution 13-R-11 on July 15, 2013, applied for a Delaware Land Trust Fund (DTF) grant in the amount of \$20,000 for landscaping, signage, and sidewalks. A 50% match was required from the City; therefore, monies from seized funds and donations accounted for the match. With the vision of the Harrington Police Department and support of the Mayor and City Council, the new park was designed to include a gazebo, benches, sign, Christmas tree, flag pole, irrigation, fence, and landscaping so that it could be a multi-purpose open space area. Freedom Park is the site of many Downtown events throughout the year. More information about these events can be found below in the Downtown Events section.



## Designations

The City of Harrington is one of ten “Commercial District Affiliate” (CDA) designations by the State of Delaware Department of Economic Development Office (DEDO). This designation is for communities that choose to implement downtown revitalization strategies similar to designated Main Street programs, but on a smaller scale. Some of these towns are “testing the waters” as they consider future Main Street designation. DEDO works with these communities to build strategies that will encourage partnership development, new funding opportunities, and increased opportunities for small businesses. The CDA municipalities can participate in Downtown Delaware’s group training activities led by state and national downtown development experts. Affiliates are in the “network” to learn about best practices in the field of revitalization, to work with a downtown business development expert, and to trade best practices with peers from around the state, particularly in the area of business development. Many of Delaware’s CDAs are direct beneficiaries of USDA grant-related activities. Ultimately, CDAs are offered an opportunity to plan proactively for a vibrant, synergistic downtown commercial business district based on the Four Point Main Street model.

On June 3, 2008, representatives from the Delaware Economic Development Office presented the “Main Street Program and Next Step for Downtown” to the City identifying the Main Street Four-Point Approach. The four point approach presented included:

**Organization** | Develop a budget, gauge community interest, have a speakers bureau, gauge volunteer level, ascertain pledges, and prepare the Delaware Main Street application to DEDO.

**Design** | Streetscape design, design incentives, and review zoning to include project buildings.

**Promotion** | Coordinate a calendar of events.

**Economic & Restructuring** | Work with a DEDO business development specialist, make use of free energy audits, and develop a building/business inventory.

The next steps were preparing a Main Street work plan to move forward in applying for the Main Street designation. The official Main Street application was never submitted by the City of Harrington based on the lack of Downtown stakeholders and partners.

## Downtown Events

Several large events take place in the Downtown throughout the year that bring the community together.



*Heritage Day is an annual celebration of the City's history, featuring a parade (above, far), food, games (above, low), entertainment, and crafts, as well as an annual watermelon-eating contest.*



*Police National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make neighborhoods safer, better places to live.*



*Freedom Park is the site of many Downtown Events including Movies in the Park (left) and Music in the Park (logo, right). These events draw many participants from throughout the community.*



*Freedom Park is also the site of the City's annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, as well as a spot where many people congregate for the Christmas Parade. As you can see above, the site is well-decorated for all of the City's holiday festivities.*

Lake Forest High School also rotates its annual Homecoming Parade, which takes place in Harrington's Downtown every few years. In addition to these events, there are also a number of popular community services, including Parks and Recreation programs, Police Department community events, school outreach events, Library community programs, local church and nonprofit organization events, and supportive local business' events that occur either within or very close to the Downtown area.