



## TOWN OF DOVER

### T R A N S I T O R I E N T E D D E V E L O P M E N T P L A N





*Everything about the Town of Dover identifies it as one of New Jersey's true 'Centers of Place'. Historic downtown, relatively strong street network, and reliable rail and bus service are some aspects that contribute to this community's character.*

## TOWN OF DOVER

## TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PLAN





## CREDITS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**Heyer, Gruel & Associates**  
63 Church Street, 2nd Floor  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Susan S. Gruel, *P.P., Principal*  
Fred Heyer, *P.P., AICP, Principal*

Charles Latini Jr., *P.P., AICP, Project Manager*  
Dilip Roy Chittajallu, *Associate Planner, Urban Designer*  
Cynthia Hu, *Graphic Designer*

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# SECTION I





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## Executive Summary

Communities that have train stations, with excellent passenger service, have a distinct advantage over those that do not. Rail Stations, when properly utilized can be the catalyst for economic prosperity, new development opportunities, and a focal point of civic life. This plan, for the Town of Dover Station Area and Downtown, takes advantage of its particular location and marketability while preserving positive historical aspects of the Town. By augmenting existing land use patterns with new development, based on strong architectural form that compliment and enhance those uses, this plan seeks to create a more vital commercial and residential market for the Town of Dover.

This Transit-Oriented Development Plan focuses on the built form and recommends form-based zoning changes that will run concurrently to the Town's 2006 Master Plan process. By focusing on the details of physical form, the plan recommends changes that will also have a positive impact on social form, and will likewise spur private sector investment. To accomplish this, the plan utilizes historic planning and design practice while taking into account recent market studies that seeks to leverage the Town's resources and create special places within Dover that improve its marketability.

One of the plan's important focuses will be on pedestrian amenities. It is intended that a strong streetscape program be extended to create a stronger sense of place, as well as supplement interior space for restaurants and cafes. Included within the streetscape is the need for public-private partnerships to create public spaces that enhance access to and from Transit facilities.



*Dover Train Station*



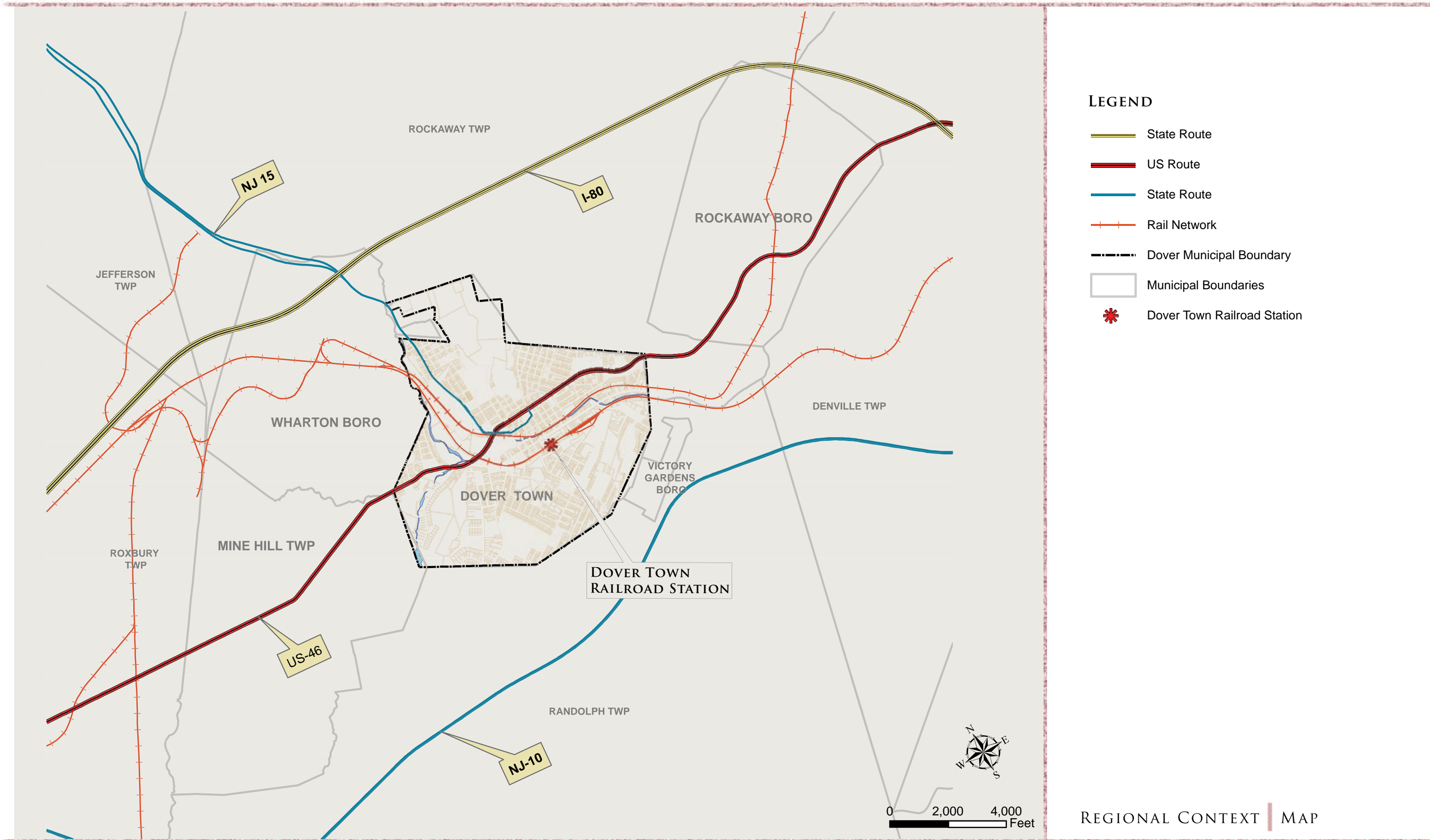
*NJ Transit*



*Blackwell Street*

*Dover circa 1903*







Another focus is that gateways should be established at Blackwell, Prospect, Morris (North & South), West Clinton and Salem Streets, to announce to residents and consumers, that they are now in the Dover Town Center. These gateways should also work toward inviting local employees, residents and visitors alike to the downtown.

Building façades and aesthetics are also key to the Town's economic success and marketability. New sign standards are recommended to regulate actual signage and type, including awnings, in concert with historic preservation efforts. Along with façade improvements, new commercial and residential infill development will supplement the existing commercial space and present new opportunities for other types of

larger end-users. To facilitate implementation of this, the Town needs to be proactive in creating a Special Improvement District (SID) or Business Improvement District (BID), where a façade improvement program may be created and funded by the private sector. It is also highly recommended that Dover consider hiring a bilingual Community and Economic Development liaison experienced in Main Street/ Downtown business attraction, retention and education.



First Presbyterian Church of Dover is a cornerstone of the town's character



An existing gateway into the Dover Downtown



the Historic Baker Opera House

Finally, the creation of additional mixed-use residential and commercial development will augment and support the existing commercial development. The new development will also require the creation of additional public space. Recommendations in the plan will focus on key redevelopment parcels as well as infill redevelopment opportunities throughout the fabric of the Dover development pattern. These development recommendations will not work separately, but in conjunction with, the existing Downtown community.

In all, the environment of the Dover Station and Downtown must be highly “connected” in all facets of the word. Pedestrian friendly, access to open space and recreational facilities, such as the Morristown and Erie Rail ROW greenway and the Rockaway River. Access and availability of parking, and continuity of building design must also be principles by which all future development moves forward by.



The details in the facade of the Dover Post Office are attributes worth duplication





# SECTION II





# INTRODUCTION

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Historical Train circa 1951

## Introduction

Everything about the Town of Dover identifies it as one of New Jersey's true "Centers of Place". (dcsn1358) Historic downtown, relatively strong street network and dense figure ground, reliable rail and bus service, and pedestrian accessibility are some aspects that contribute to this community's character. This plan is about connections and reconnections to both what Dover is, and what it was, and about taking Dover "Back to the Future". The plan is also based on community partnerships - partnerships across political lines, governmental tiers and social boundaries.



Baker Opera House

One of the things that stand out about Dover is the continued presence of the "American Dream". Once upon a time this "Dream" was pursued by Europeans entering a new world, where the opportunities pursued, were those that the iron forging and mining industry provided. Today, a myriad of Hispanic cultures have come to seek work in the booming construction trades, horticulture, agricultural and furniture industries in Morris County, amongst many other opportunities being sought to better the lives of these new immigrants and their families. Again, this

plan is about connections, and in making them from a land use perspective, will hopefully pave the way to better leverage social and capital resources. So that the entire region and its people benefits from Dover's success. Where new people from within the United States, and from other parts of the world, can come to enjoy success just as those who currently live in Dover.



Immigrants at Ellis Island circa 1900



Dover Station  
Image Source: epodunk.com



A great opportunity to accomplish these goals lies in the Downtown Area of Dover, which inherently is a transit-oriented center. A hub of commerce and social activity, the Downtown, complete with rail and bus service, is poised to serve as the lightning rod for new opportunities given the recommendations of this plan. These opportunities lie mostly within ¼ mile distance of Dover Station, and as such, presents an opportunity to bolster the existing Dover marketplace through solidly designed, Transit-Oriented development.

Transportation centers such as Dover Station, provide many opportunities for their communities. Taking advantage of these centers of pedestrian activity can lead to opportunities for new retail and commercial development. Combining these commercial opportunities, with an appropriate mix of residential development, will provide a product not currently offered in Dover that will boost the socio-economic demographics, as well as the overall economic climate of the community.

Blackwell Street  
Image Source: epodunk.com



The Town of Dover commissioned Heyer, Gruel & Associates to develop a plan for the Dover Station Area and Downtown in January 2005. Map 1- *Subarea Map* depicts the area included in this analysis. The plan was to focus on a comprehensive Transit-Oriented development strategy, land use recommendations, development standards, prototypical sign and facade treatments as well as a implementation plan for the Dover Downtown and Station Area. Additionally, the plan focuses on form-based development concepts for key sites within the study area to serve as a prototype for future planning efforts and development applications.

The undertaking of a separate, targeted planning effort in the Downtown is consistent with the planning objectives stated in the Town's 1999 Master Plan Re-examination Report as well as projects targeted by the Dover Economic Development Committee & Redevelopment Entity. Specifically, this Dover Transit-Oriented Development Plan seeks to address the following TOD planning goals:



PLANNING GOALS

- Guide future development and redevelopment of land within the Town so as to incorporate new construction without undue disruption of the established character of the Town, while cognizant of the municipal school budget;
- The preservation and continued promotion of the balanced variety of residential, commercial, public, recreation and conservation land uses;
- Safeguarding and broadening of the Town’s existing tax base by preserving economic balance and providing for continued sources of employment and new ratables through appropriate utilization of land resources;
- To protect the character and value of existing residential neighborhoods by regulating the type and intensity of land uses within close proximity to existing residential areas;
- To provide land use designations permitting the development of land uses that meet the needs of the Town residents and promote the economic viability of the Downtown;
- To provide for the continued vitality of established commercial districts;
- To maintain a balanced circulation system that incorporates the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, autos, trucks, buses and rail and connects neighborhoods to Downtown life and activity.
- To maintain and protect the historic resources identified in the Historic Preservation Element of the Master Plan.

Additionally, the following Master Plan objectives, which relate to the central business district, are relevant to this plan. They include:

MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES

- Revitalization of the C-1 Downtown Commercial District as imperative to the economy of the town; and,
- Tracts of land in the proposed C-1 zone which are deed restricted for parking should be developed as multi-story structures with deck parking since the deck parking would be sufficient to support the loss of existing parking plus the needed parking for the proposed use.
- Redevelopment of the Downtown area as a Transportation Center to help key the revitalization of the Downtown.
- Promote non-residential redevelopment in the C-1 zone, while recognizing existing residential uses and the economic viability.
- To upgrade the physical appearance of business area in keeping with an overall design theme of the historic district.

The end result of this plan leads the Town to adopt new standards and serve as a backdrop for redevelopment area designations as appropriate and feasible. The plan will ultimately focus on enabling the application and approval of the Town of Dover into the New Jersey Transit Village program and the financial and technical assistance provided by the State of New Jersey in support of Towns within the program.





## IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING FOR TOD

By delineating an area of study, this plan looks to contribute to an enhanced quality of life in Dover. Communities across New Jersey and United States are often misguided when they think of land-use planning for mixed-use, Transit-Oriented development. Much of this stems from our suburban patterns of development in the last 50 years and over-reliance on property taxes. In the traditional model of New Jersey

*Typical Suburban Street Patterns are  
Convolved and Unsustainable*



development, a residential unit usually means a burden on the school system because of additional school aged children. The suburban development model also often produces complicated traffic patterns, largely because of the lack of a connected and effective street network and auto-dependence. What is needed to solve these social and physical issues is a balanced and comprehensive planning process.

Neo-traditional, mixed-use, Smart Growth and Transit-Oriented Development Planning practices have

been studied for years. The good and the not so good have been dissected in many ways, and in fact, have shown that many of the aforementioned fears, to be perceptions, rather than actual threats. For example, school aged children in a traditional single-family home in Dover equates to 0.446 of public school aged children per household on average and an average household size 3.27 person household according the 2000 census. According to these numbers 0.446 children accompany a single-family home. In a TOD, that number is reduced to 0.017 school aged children or 1.7 per 100 units of housing<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> "Transit Oriented Developments in New Jersey" David Listokin, Phd Center for Urban Policy and Research at Rutgers University

Several factors attributing to this are:

- **Housing type, size and design/lay-out of unit.**
- **Communal style of living usually favored by pre or post-aged child bearing adults.**
- **Absence of a private rear yard.**
- **Urbane, mobile individual with limited personal attachments and high degree of freedom.**

So why plan for land use around Transit Stops and Stations? The answer lies in control. By planning for future growth and designing it to leverage the strengths of what is existing, and what is to come, we start to create a community that is greater than the sum of its parts. A good Transit-Oriented Development Plan will seek to accomplish the following:

### ESSENTIAL OBJECTIVES OF A TOD PLAN

- Improve the station setting and help establish and define public space and community identity.
- Increase economic development opportunities
- Rationalize where growth and change should be implemented and where it should not.
- Looks at enhancing retail opportunity rather than merely Transit ridership.
- Strengthen communication between the community and station and leverages multiple resources.
- Heightens the sense of community, therefore shared responsibilities and greater sense of security.



*Public space can make rail  
stations more desirable places*





Essential Elements of a pedestrian environment as displayed in Princeton, NJ





## DELINEATION OF STUDY AREA

Downtown Dover roughly runs east/ west in the central portion of the 2.7+/- square mile Town. The study area includes the original ¼ mile and ½ mile distance radiating from Dover Station depicted in previous planning efforts and studies by New Jersey Transit and others. It has also been adjusted to incorporate what are seen as key properties to the prosperity of Dover.

For purposes of this plan, the Downtown and Station Area has been broken up into sub-areas. The Map 1 *Subarea Map* indicates the precise location for each area. The areas are numbered, in priority order, as follows:

- ***Subarea 1- Dover Station Area***
- ***Subarea 2- Bassett Highway West***
- ***Subarea 3- Downtown Core***
- ***Subarea 4- Bassett Highway East/ Downtown North***
- ***Subarea 5- Dover Station Area West***
- ***Subarea 6- East Blackwell Street***
- ***Subarea 7- Dover Station Area South***
- ***Subarea 8- Dover Station Area East***

*Downtown Dover from a top Livingston Avenue at Boonton Street*





MAP 1  
SUBAREA | MAP

