



Delaware Downtown Development District Program
Application Completeness Checklist

Applicant:	Town of Milton
Reviewed By:	Staff
Checked By:	Staff
Date:	11/6/14

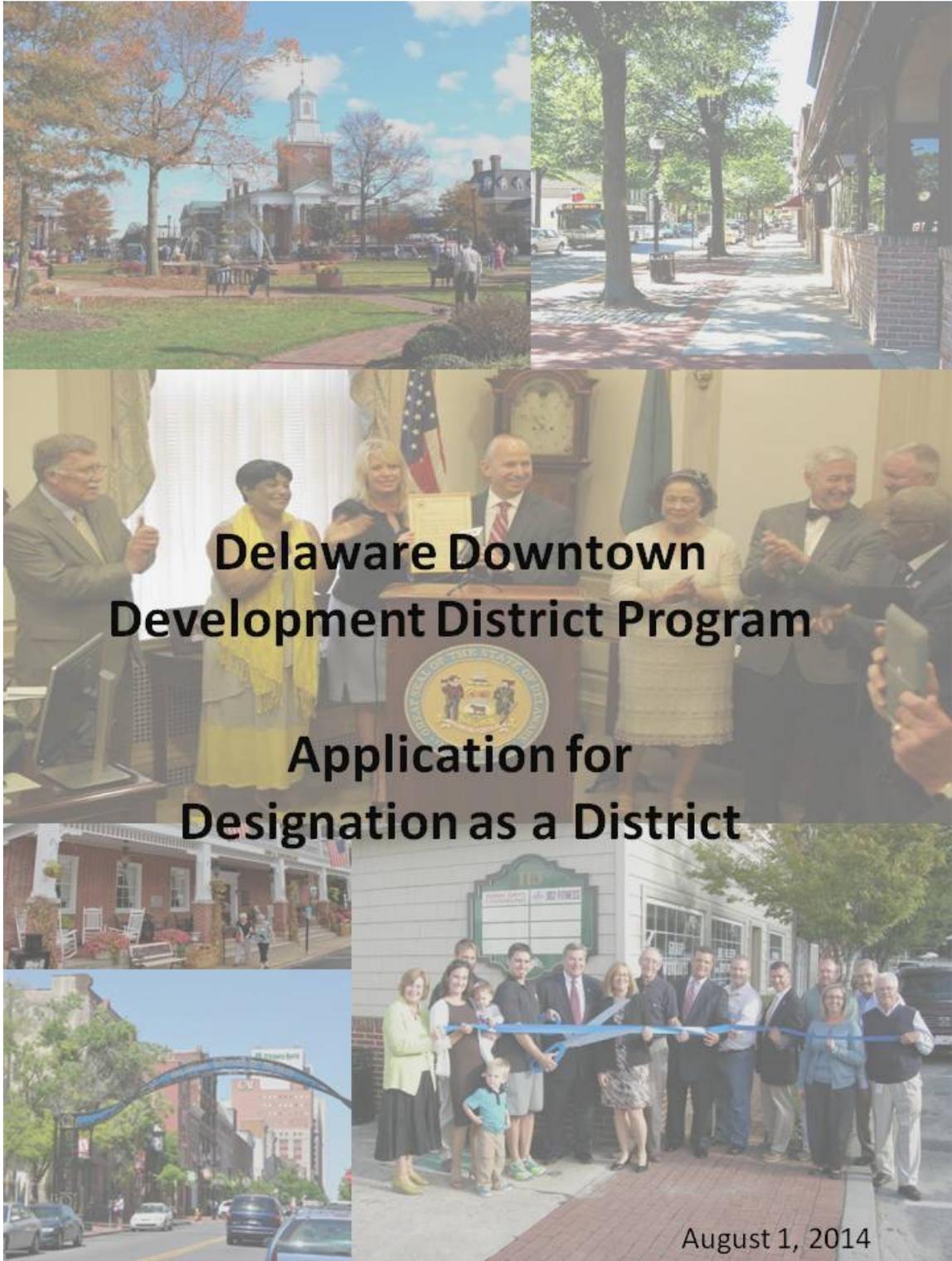
Application Item	Complete	Incomplete	Notes
Cover Sheet / Checklist		X	Not all items checked off; some items checked off not included
Information Sheet	X		
Signatures		X	Need to ask for signature
100 Word Description	X		
District Boundary Map – attached		X	Not provided; map shows a variety of areas, none of which are clearly identified as District Boundary
GIS data (optional)		X	Ok, optional
Rationale for Choosing Boundaries	X		
Future Land Use Map – attached		X	Not provided
Zoning Map – attached		X	Not provided
Discuss Land Use Regulations		X	Not filled out
Discuss Overlays etc.	X		
Describe Need for District	X		
Summary Spreadsheet – attached	X		
Additional data (optional) – attached		X	Ok, optional
Describe Need for District		X	Not filled out
Describe Positive Impacts		X	Not filled out
District Plan – attached	X		
Summary of District Plan	X		
Summarize Leadership Role	X		
List Key Implementation Items	X		
List other Organizations	X		
Letters of Support – other Orgs.		X	Not provided
Energy Efficient / Env. Sensitive		X	Not filled out
Consistent with <i>State Strategies</i>		X	Not filled out
Local Incentives – attached		X	Not provided
List Local Incentives		X	Not provided

Funding for Incentives		X	Not provided
Specifics of How Each Incentive Works		X	Not filled out
Summarize Package of Incentives		X	Not provided
Legislative Body Resolution - attached		X	No resolution: no evidence of local government consent to submit application.

Other Items Included with Application	Notes

INCOMPLETE APPLICATION: NO RESOLUTION, NO MAP WITH CLEAR DISTRICT BOUNDARY, MULTIPLE SECTIONS ARE NOT COMPLETE AND / OR NOT PROVIDED.

Milton



Downtown Development District Program How to Use this Application Form

This application is a Microsoft Word document that has been modified. The text in the document is “locked” meaning that you can’t edit it. The fields where you are supposed to enter information are “open” allowing you to type or paste information into these fields. The fields that can be edited are in gray.

First, we recommend that you save this document with a unique file name that includes the name of your jurisdiction. An example would be “DDD-Application-Dagsboro.” Then you can work on the document without fear of overwriting it, and when you send it to us we will know who it came from (and we won’t be in danger of overwriting it).

Some of the fields are informational in nature, such as places to type in the name and address of your jurisdiction. It should be relatively straightforward to type this information in and save it. Some of the fields are check boxes, which are similarly straightforward.

Many of the fields are questions that ask you to respond in either 100 or 750 words. You might find it helpful to write and edit your responses in a separate Word document and then paste them in to the application once they are complete. The 100 word statement is to be used internally for review and in printed materials where we need a concise description of each proposed District. Almost all other questions are suggested to be no more than 750 words, which is about a page and a half of text (using 12 point font). In these responses it is important to clearly and concisely answer each question. Your District Plan can go into much more detail about each topic, and it is appropriate and expected that you will reference your District Plan in these 750 word responses. There is no penalty for exceeding 750 words, but if you find that you are writing much more than 750 words please consider putting the additional information in your District Plan.

There are numerous attachments mentioned throughout this application. The most obvious one will be the District Plan. The application also asks for various maps, spreadsheets, letters of support, resolutions and data to be attached associated with particular questions. Please compile all of the attachments into one Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) document. It would be wonderful if you could include a table of contents, and organize these attachments in the order of the questions.

It is likely that when you are done with the application form (Word document) and the attachments (.pdf document) the combination of both documents will be larger than 15mb, which is the limit for external email in the State system. In these cases, we will arrange for you to have access to a sftp file transfer site to upload your documents. Email the OMB Application Team at OMB_APP_Team@state.de.us to request an account and a password to upload the file. You must include the following information in your email in order for the OMB Application Team to process your account access: Name, Company, Email Address, and Phone Number.

OSPC will provide technical assistance with Census data and GIS mapping if requested by local governments that can demonstrate the need for the assistance. We will provide assistance to all local governments on the technical aspects of completing this application and transmitting / uploading finished applications. To request assistance or if you have questions about any part of this application or the program in general please contact your Circuit Rider Planner at the Office of State Planning Coordination, (302) 739-3090.



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

Section I General Guidelines

The Downtown Development Districts Act of 2014 (the Act) was enacted by the 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.

Local governments¹ that wish to take advantage of this program must identify a downtown district in their community and apply for designation. To make an application for designation this form must be completed, supporting materials must be attached, and the entire packet submitted to the Office of State Planning Coordination as detailed herein in order for the request to be considered.

¹ Municipalities and counties are eligible to apply for Downtown Development District designation. Throughout this document, the terms “local government” and “applicant” refer to either the municipality or county that is presenting the application.

Completed applications will be considered by the Cabinet Committee on State Planning Issues (the Committee). The Committee will make recommendations to the Governor, who will then designate between one and three Downtown Development Districts in the current program year. Additional Districts may be designated in future program years. The number of Districts is limited to 15 at any one time. District designations last for 10 years, and the Committee can consider up to two five year extensions.

Selection as a Downtown Development District will entitle private construction projects within the identified District to receive grants to offset 20% of their capital construction costs. There are a host of other benefits that will be described in more detail in other materials. Grant funds will be administered by the Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA).

Applications must be addressed to the Office of State Planning Coordination as follows:

Mrs. Constance C. Holland, AICP
Director
Office of State Planning Coordination
122 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, S.
Dover, DE 19901

**Application Due Date for
FY15 Cycle:
November 1, 2014**



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

Section II Specific Requirements

Local governments must identify proposed Downtown Development Districts in accordance with the Act. Districts must include a traditional mixed-use downtown area, commonly known as a Central Business District (CBD)². Districts must be no more than 85 acres in area for jurisdictions with a population under 9,000³ persons, no more than 170 acres in area for jurisdictions with a population between 9,000 and 30,000 persons, and no more than 225 acres in area for jurisdictions with a population over 30,001 persons. Applicants are encouraged to geographically concentrate the incentives to the greatest extent possible.

The size and shape of the proposed District must make sense from an urban planning and revitalization perspective. The applicant must fully describe the rationale for choosing the boundaries as a part of this application. Guidelines for preparing District boundaries are found elsewhere in this application.

A map of the District is required as a part of this application. Local governments must also supply maps showing the future land use and zoning of the district area, and discuss how the

² Central Business District: An area around the downtown portion of the city or town allowing for higher intensity residential uses as well as commercial, office, personal services, governmental, and similar uses intended to serve the community and surrounding areas of the city or town.

³ Population to be based on the 2010 US Census.

plan and land use regulations support the application for the District.

The Act identifies three components of the application for designation as a District:

- The need and impact of the District designation;
- The quality of the District Plan
- The quality of the local incentives offered

Each of these components will now be described in more detail.

Need and Impact: The applicant must describe the need for the economic incentives that will be available in designated District. The need must be documented through the use of relevant data and other methods. The conditions of the local economy, income, poverty, homeownership rates, prevalence of vacant or abandoned buildings and other metrics may be used to make the case that the proposed District is in need of the incentives.

In addition, the applicant must describe the potential positive impacts that are likely to accrue due to designation as a District. Applicants are encouraged to describe the impacts using both data and other methods.

The **Need and Impact** section will account for 50% of the consideration given to scoring each application.

District Plan – The local government must present a District Plan that will be used to guide development activities and



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

revitalization efforts in the District. The District Plan is to be a detailed description of the overall strategy for the development of a proposed district.

The applicant must demonstrate that the District Plan is consistent with the local government’s certified Comprehensive Plan and the *Strategies for State Policies and Spending* and any other local planning documents or studies that are applicable. Additionally, if other governmental, non-governmental and/or quasi governmental organizations are involved with revitalization efforts in the downtown area they must be identified and it must be demonstrated that coordination of all activities will be part of the District Plan.

The District Plan should clearly and concisely describe the key actions and strategies that are in place and / or will be used to guide growth and revitalization efforts in the proposed District. The overall vision of the plan, the clarity of actions to be taken, and proof of the ability and the will of the municipality or county and other partners to implement the plan will be key considerations when evaluating this section of the application.

Changes to the District Plan must be reviewed by the Committee. District designation may be rescinded if the District Plan is not adhered to.

The quality of the **District Plan** will account for 30% of the consideration given to scoring each application.

Local Incentives – The local government must detail a package of local development incentives that will apply within the proposed District. These incentives may include, but are not limited to, a reduction in fees or taxes; regulatory flexibility; permit process and licensing reform; special zoning districts; or exemptions from local ordinances. These incentives may either be currently in place and in use by the municipality or county or they may be proposed for implementation upon designation as a District.

Upon designation as a District the local government is required to implement the incentive package as described and proposed for the duration of the District designation. Grant funds will not be available to projects until the incentive package is adopted by the local government and made available to the project developer. Changes to the incentive package must be approved by the Committee. The District designation may be rescinded by the Committee if these conditions are not adhered to.

The quality of the **Local Incentives** will account for 20% of the consideration given to scoring each application.

Section III Application Instructions

Check List - self-explanatory.

Information Sheet - The local government must supply the jurisdiction's name, mailing address, and phone numbers. The applicant must provide the date of the last update of the



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

comprehensive plan and briefly describe the District being proposed.

Map of the Proposed District – The local government must submit a map of the proposed District in sufficient detail to clearly identify the boundaries of the District and calculate its area. Maps should be created with GIS software, and the associated computer files should be made available to aid our review of the proposal. Districts must be contiguous, and be no more than 85 acres in area for local governments with a population under 9,000 persons, no more than 170 acres in area for jurisdictions with a population between 9,000 and 30,000 persons, and no more than 225 acres in area for jurisdictions with a population over 30,001 persons. There are guidelines detailed elsewhere in this application that must be followed when preparing the proposed District boundaries. Applicants must also supply maps showing the future land use and zoning of the district area, and discuss how the plan and land use regulations support the application for the District.

Summary of Need and Impact – The local government must complete this form to summarize the need for District designation and the potential positive impact of the district. Supporting documentation should be attached to this form.

Summary of District Plan – The local government must complete this form to summarize the District Plan for the proposed District. Copies of the District Plan or Plans must be attached to this

form, along with any relevant supporting documentation.

Written Documentation from Supporting Organizations – The local government must supply written documentation from other organizations that will be relied upon to implement the District Plan. The documentation must be attached to the “Summary of District Plan” form.

Summary of Local Incentives – The local government must complete this form to summarize the local incentive package to be made available within the District upon designation. The local ordinances (or other regulations or documentation) enabling and governing these incentives must be attached to this form, along with any relevant supporting documentation. In the case of incentives proposed upon designation, the draft ordinances must be attached.

Legislative Body Resolution – The local government must attach an adopted resolution from the jurisdiction’s legislative body that indicates the local government’s desire to apply for designation as a District, and the local government’s willingness to adhere to the District Plan and the Local Incentives for the duration of the District designation.



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

Application Cover Sheet and Check List

Jurisdiction Name:

Milton, DE

Date of Application 10/31/14

Date Received _____

Check List for Application Materials

- Application Cover Sheet and Check List.**
- Information Sheet.**
- Map of the Proposed District (GIS files encouraged).**
- Map of Future Land Use in Proposed District (GIS files encouraged)**
- Map of Zoning in Proposed District (GIS files encouraged)**
- Summary of Need and Impact (with attachments).**
- Summary of District Plan (with attachments).**
- Written Documentation from Supporting Organizations.**
- Summary of Local Incentives (with attachments).**
- Legislative Body Resolution.**



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

Information Sheet

Municipality / County: Milton / Sussex

Contact Person for Application	
Name: <u>Lisa Sumstein</u>	
Address: <u>707 Chestnut St., Milton, DE 19968</u>	
Phone: <u>302/684-1101</u>	
Email: <u>chamber@historicismilton.com</u>	
Signature	Date

Proposed District Administrator (if different)	
Name: _____	
Address: _____	
Phone: _____	
Email: _____	
Signature	Date

Date of certified Comprehensive Plan 2010 (2015 is in draft form)

Population of the municipality or county (as per 2010 US Census) 2,661

Population of proposed District (based on 2010 US Census Block data) _____

Area of proposed District in acres 79.2

Brief description of the proposed Downtown Development District (100 words or less)

Note: this description will be used as a summary for internal review and in printed materials

<p>Milton's Downtown Development District is a 79.2-acre tract in the heart of the historic town. The district is comprised the town's historic district, the designated town center, (per the 2010 Comp Plan), a newly-designated "town center" parcel of land, and open space along the Broadkill River that had previously been "town center," but is no longer considered appropriate because of expected increased flooding. The DDD contains a of a mix of commercial and residential properties, many of which were constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The town center has struggled in recent years, burdoned with several unoccupied store fronts, vacant lots that interrupt flow and discourage shoppers, and key buildings that are in poor repair. In spite of these, the town's pituresequ riverside location and enviable stock of historic buildings place it in good stead to be revitalized. The recent establishment of a number of new businesses have begun to unlock this potential. Milton's downtown development strategy will build upon these recent positive developments through a targeted five-part plan to:</p>
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Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

1. Adjust the town's designated town center to take advantage of river views and minimize flooding risks to businesses;
2. Highlight the Broadkill River;
3. Improve connectivity and walkability;
4. Encourage development of currently vacant properties; and
5. Facilitate renovations to key buildings in the downtown district.



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

Map of the Proposed Downtown Development District

Instructions: Prepare a map of the proposed Downtown Development District. The map must clearly show the boundaries of the District. The area of the proposed District, in acres, must be calculated from the boundaries designated on the map. The following guidelines must be adhered to when preparing the boundaries of the proposed District:

- The maximum size of the District is 85 acres for local governments with populations below 9,000, 170 acres for local governments with a population between 9,000 and 30,000, and 225 acres for local governments with populations over 30,001 (population as per the 2010 US Census).
- Districts must be contiguous.
- Districts must include the streets and right-of-ways within it. These count towards the maximum acreage.
- Enclaves within District boundaries are not acceptable.
- Prioritizing, phasing and /or timing of redevelopment activities in different geographic areas of the District is acceptable, and will be considered favorably when it can be demonstrated that this will concentrate the incentives to achieve specific revitalization goals.
- If any portion of the proposed District is in the floodplain, the FEMA floodplain map must be included as a layer on the map. Contact OSPC for technical assistance if needed.

Attach the map of the proposed Downtown Development District

Attach a map showing the future land use in the proposed District from the municipality's or county's certified Comprehensive Plan. Attach a map showing the zoning or land use regulations that apply to lands within the District. Discuss how the plan and land use regulations support the application for the District.

It is encouraged that the map(s) be created using GIS software. If the municipality or county is able to use this software, please submit digital files to our office to supplement the application and aid us in our review. Please contact OSPC if you need assistance and / or to arrange to electronically transfer the files.

District Boundaries Map Attached

GIS data is available and will be electronically transferred to OSPC

Name of person who created the map: John Collier

Phone 302-684-4110

Email jcollier@ci.milton.de.us



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

Map of the Proposed Downtown Development District - continued

Describe the rationale for choosing the boundaries of the proposed District (please limit your response to 750 words or less).

The proposed Downtown District is largely comprised of the “town center” area designated in Milton’s 2010 Comprehensive Plan, which is centered around the town’s historic center.

It also includes an additional “town center” area, previously designated as “residential.” This newly-designated area runs along the south side of Front Street and along the west side of Chestnut Street.

This newly-designated town center area replaces a tract of land that is bounded on the south by Front Street and on the north by the Broadkill River. This section of the “town center” is being re-zoned in the town’s 2015 Comprehensive Plan as “open space” because the area has been subjected to repeated flooding (which is expected to increase in the future as sea levels continue to rise). This had effectively made the “town center” designation meaningless, due to the difficulty (or impossibility) of building on that site.

The DDD also includes the town's historic district, which includes 190 historic structures.

Attach a map showing the future land use of the District from the local government’s certified Comprehensive Plan.

Map Attached

GIS data is available and will be electronically transferred to OSCP

Attach a map showing the zoning or land use regulations that apply to lands within the District

Map Attached

GIS data is available and will be electronically transferred to OSPC



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

Map of the Proposed Downtown Development District - continued

Discuss how the plan and land use regulations support the application for the District (Please limit your response to 750 words or less).

Are there other special overlays, districts, or areas that intersect the proposed District? Examples of such special areas include historic districts, BID taxing districts, etc. Please describe any of these special areas and how they will interact with the proposed Downtown Development District. Include maps, if applicable. (Please limit your response to 750 words or less).

Most of the designated area is within the town's Historic District.



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

Summary of Need and Impact

50%

Instructions: Complete this form to document the need for the District designation and its potential to positively impact your community. Attachments of data and other documentation are required. There is no specific page or word limit on the information that can be attached, *however* please be aware that applications that provide clear and concise documentation that is directly related to the need and impact of the District proposal will be scored the highest.

Please describe the **need** for the Downtown Development District designation in your community (please limit your response to 750 words or less).

Once a vibrant community, Milton endured a period of swift population decline through the later half of the twentieth century. In recent years, that decline has been reversed, as the population of Sussex County has rapid grown, largely due to the influx of large numbers of retirees. The period of decline, however, left an indelible mark on Milton’s downtown. Several long-neglected buildings declined beyond the point of saving and had to be razed, leaving the town center dotted with vacant lots. Several storefronts have stood vacant for several years. In some cases because of failed businesses; in other cases because the property owners simply chose to leave them empty. Several buildings in the town center, while occupied and operational, have suffered from poor maintenance or insensitive renovations.

Fortunately, this trend has begun to change. Over the past year, a number of developments have taken place that have begun to unlock the great potential that resides beneath the surface of this storied and picturesque town. The Milton Theatre, built in 1910 and renovated in the 1930s, stood vacant for several years before opening in June 2014 as the Premier Centre for the Arts. Between June and September 2014, the theatre sold more than 3000 tickets to a range of performance. The company has also hosted several summer camp programs and offers on-going music, dance and performance classes. Within a few months, the theatre has established itself as a central gathering place for the community, with performances held every weekend. Once-empty street parking places are now filled; pedestrians can now be seen chatting on Milton’s sidewalks.

Across the street from the theatre, Irish Eyes Restaurant (which had kept its doors open during the economic downturn, thanks to the better performance of its Lewes and Rehoboth Beach branches) has begun renovations to vacant space next-door and has renovated the facades of both storefronts. The restaurant’s business has increased by 30% thanks to newly opened theatre.

A block south of the theatre, at 102 Federal Street, a new restaurant, Modern Mixture Too,



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

opened in August 2014 in a former used bookstore. A “hobby” for the owner, the bookstore was rarely open and did little to enliven the streetscape or increase commerce. The restaurant’s casual charm and creative menu have quickly established it as a well-loved gathering spot. Positive reviews on-line and in local press have attracted visitors from out of town. The Nature Conservancy recently moved its offices to the adjacent storefront, replacing an antique store, which, like the bookstore, was a part-time hobby for the owner and seldom open for business.

At 106 Union Street, immediate next to the theatre, a long-vacant building – perhaps one of Milton’s most unique – is slated to become a wine bar in 2015. The new owners have proposed a two-stage restoration effort. The first phase will replace the building’s roof, replace mechanical systems, install a kitchen and lavatory facilities and address cosmetic concerns, thereby readying the new business for operations. A second phase is planned, which will add a rooftop deck and balcony to increase the wine bar’s capacity and take advantage of water views.

This last example is instructive. It demonstrates that private investors can begin to effect change, but truly transformational actions require partnerships with the public sector. The wine bar building was purchased for \$110,000 and its new owners have budgeted \$55,000 for renovations to prepare the building for its new purpose. However, the truly transformational effort to implement Phase Two and design and build a rooftop deck, would benefit greatly from a DDD partnership.

Similarly, the Premiere Centre for the Arts relied heavily on donated goods and labor to make the formerly vacant building habitable, but the more substantive – and public – effort to renovate its façade will require much greater resources. This is also true for the very problematic façade of the Mercantile at Milton.

Even more challenging are the currently vacant properties located at 112/114 Union Street and at the Intersection of Front, Federal and Union streets. In order to knit the fabric of Milton’s town center back together through the construction of new, contextually appropriate buildings, the town and property owners will need the very substantive help the DDD can offer.



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

Summary of Need and Impact – continued 50%

Attach relevant data to that demonstrates and documents the **need for** the Downtown Development District designation.

The following table summarizes the **required** data from the US Census. Input the data into the summary spreadsheet provided, and attach any other written documentation that can summarize the data. Contact OSPC for assistance with the Census data, if needed.

Required Data from the US Census

The municipality or county as a whole			
Median Income	Poverty Rate	Age of Structures	% Homeownership
% Rental	Vacancy	Median Home Value	
The Census Tract(s) that contains the proposed District			
Median Income	Poverty Rate	Age of Structures	% Homeownership
% Rental	Vacancy	Median Home Value	% Low / Mod Income
The Census Block(s) that most closely correspond to the proposed District			
Total Population	% Homeownership	% Vacancy	

Summary spreadsheet and other documentation attached

Please provide any other data that support the municipality’s application for the District. The following table contains some **suggested** data sources that can serve to supplement the required data. Please attach any that apply, and any other data that is relevant. Cite the source for each dataset.

Suggested Data from a Variety of Sources

Blight	Condemned Properties	Code Violations
Crime Statistics	Economic Analysis	CDBG Program Statistics
Market Studies	Redevelopment Authority Activities	Public Works Projects
Education Data	Infrastructure Condition or Need	Other

Additional data and documentation attached



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

Summary of Need and Impact – continued 50%

Describe how the attached data demonstrates the **need for the** Downtown Development District designation in your community (please limit your response to 750 words or less).

see attached

Describe the potential positive impacts of the proposed Downtown Development District designation in your community. Impacts can include economic, social and / or cultural impacts among others. Attach supporting documentation if applicable (please limit your response to 750 words or less).

see attached



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

Summary of District Plan 30%

Instructions: through this application the municipality or county will be presenting the District Plan that will guide future revitalization, growth and development activities in the District. Upon designation, the local government will be required to adhere to the District Plan in order to qualify for grants and other incentives. Attach the District Plan, and summarize the content, goals, and objectives in the space provided.

The District Plan Checklist is provided as a separate document. The proposed District Plan must be prepared in accordance with the Checklist.

Attach the District Plan.

District Plan Attached.

Summarize the content, goals and objectives of the District Plan. (please limit your response to 750 words or less).

The Town of Milton plans to undertake a five-part program to catalyze the development of its historic downtown. This will include:

1. Adjusting the town’s designated town center to take advantage of river views and minimize flooding risks to businesses;
2. Highlighting the Broadkill River;
 - a) opening viewshed at Federal Street
 - b) opening the viewshed and creating a fishing pier at Chestnut Street
 - c) opening the viewshed at walnut Street
 - d) opening the vieshed and constructing a boat launch at Collns Street
 - e) opening the viewshed at Front Street
3. Improving connectivity and walkability;
 - a) creating a river walk from Cave Neck Road to Federal Street
 - b) creating a river walk from Magnolia Street to the John Milton Park
 - c) conducting a study to determine the feasibility of a Broadkill River trail between Milton and Lewes
4. Encouraging development of currently vacant properties;
 - a) 112/114 Union Street
 - b) intersection of Federal, Front and Union streets
5. Facilitating renovations to key buildings in the downtown district.
 - a) Milton Theatre



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

b) Mercantile at Milton



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

Summary of District Plan – continued 30%

Please summarize how the local government envisions itself in a leadership role to guide the successful implementation of the District Plan (please limit your response to 750 words or less).

Appointed by the Town Council and Mayor, the members of the Milton Planning and Zoning Commission and Economic Development Committee will work in collaboration with the town's elected officials to advance this plan. These elected and appointed officials will be supported in their work by the Milton Chamber of Commerce.

The Downtown Development Districts program comes at an opportune time for the town of Milton. Over the course of several months in 2013 and 2014, the town of Milton undertook a Comprehensive Plan process that engaged the community. This effort was guided by a series of 15 community meetings, at which the community discussed a number of planning issues. These included: the town center; historic preservation; the Broadkill River; open space and recreation; utilities; cultural resources; Front Street; transportation; and town expansion. These meetings made use of subject-specific experts and posed a series of questions in order to solicit public input. Participants often worked in small break-out sessions and participated in design charrettes. The town also conducted a survey to collect the community's thoughts on a number of issues related to the Comprehensive Plan. This survey was administered on-line (through Survey Monkey) and mailed on paper to all town residents.

This extensive process revealed several very clear and specific desires of the residents of Milton. This vision formed the basis of the Town of Milton Comprehensive Plan - which is currently in draft form and will be adopted by the Mayor and Town Council in January 2015.

List key implementation strategies for the District Plan. Please also list any known projects or proposals that can be underway within six to twelve months of District designation. Key Priority Projects⁴ should be identified, if applicable. See the Checklist for more details (please limit your response to 750 words or less).

1. Adjusting the town's designated town center to take advantage of river views and minimize flooding risks to businesses;

⁴ Key Priority Projects are specific projects identified in the District Plan that are considered to be potential catalysts for other redevelopment activity and / or contribute to superior urban design or other benefits to the District.



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

2. Highlighting the Broadkill River;
 - a) opening viewshed at Federal Street
 - b) opening the viewshed and creating a fishing pier at Chestnut Street
 - c) opening the viewshed at walnut Street
 - d) opening the viewshed and constructing a boat launch at Collins Street
 - e) opening the viewshed at Front Street
3. Improving connectivity and walkability;
 - a) creating a river walk from Cave Neck Road to Federal Street
 - b) creating a river walk from Magnolia Street to the John Milton Park
 - c) conducting a study to determine the feasibility of a Broadkill River trail between Milton and Lewes
4. Encouraging development of currently vacant properties;
 - a) 112/114 Union Street
 - b) intersection of Federal, Front and Union streets
5. Facilitating renovations to key buildings in the downtown district.
 - a) Milton Theatre
 - b) Mercantile at Milton



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

Summary of District Plan – continued 30%

List any other governmental, quasi-governmental or non-governmental organizations that will be involved in the creation and / or implementation of the District Plan. A Main Street organization would be an example of such an organization. For each organization, describe how the local government will coordinate their activities to encourage revitalization and economic development in the District.

Milton Chamber of Commerce; Milton Historical Society; Milton Planning and Zoning Commission; Milton Economic Development Committee

Attach written documentation (in the form of letters of agreement, memorandums of understanding, board resolutions etc) from each of the above listed organizations indicating support for this application to be designated as a Downtown Development District and identifying a willingness to coordinate with the municipal government to implement the District Plan.

Written documentation attached from all other organizations



Downtown Development Districts

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Summary of District Plan – continued 30%

Describe any actions your local government has taken to ensure energy efficient and environmentally sensitive development, and to prepare for flooding and sea level rise, if applicable. How will these efforts be implemented in the proposed District? (please limit your response to 750 words or less).

Describe how the District Plan is consistent with your certified Comprehensive Plan and the *Strategies for State Policies and Spending* (please limit your response to 750 words or less).

<http://stateplanning.delaware.gov/strategies/>

see attached



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

Summary of Local Incentives - continued 20%

List any of the existing Local Incentives that will be modified to have specific benefits to properties in the proposed District.

Local Incentive	How modified?	Geographic area covered
		DDD Only

List the Local Incentives that are new and will be available only in the proposed District.

Local Incentive	Date enacted (or proposed date of adoption)	Geographic area covered
		DDD Only



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

Summary of Local Incentives - continued 20%

Please describe how each local incentive will be funded. If the incentive involves a reduction or waiver of taxes or fees, or in-kind services (for example, expedited permitting utilizing existing staff resources) please note that here.

Local Incentive	Funding Source

For each Local Incentive to be provided, please describe the specifics of how the incentive works (details are needed), and how the incentive encourages economic development and revitalization in your community.

--



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

Summary of Local Incentives - continued 20%

Summarize the package of Local Incentives, and describe how these incentives will work in concert with the Downtown Development District benefits to encourage revitalization and economic development in your proposed District (please limit your response to 750 words or less).



Downtown Development Districts

Application for Designation as a District

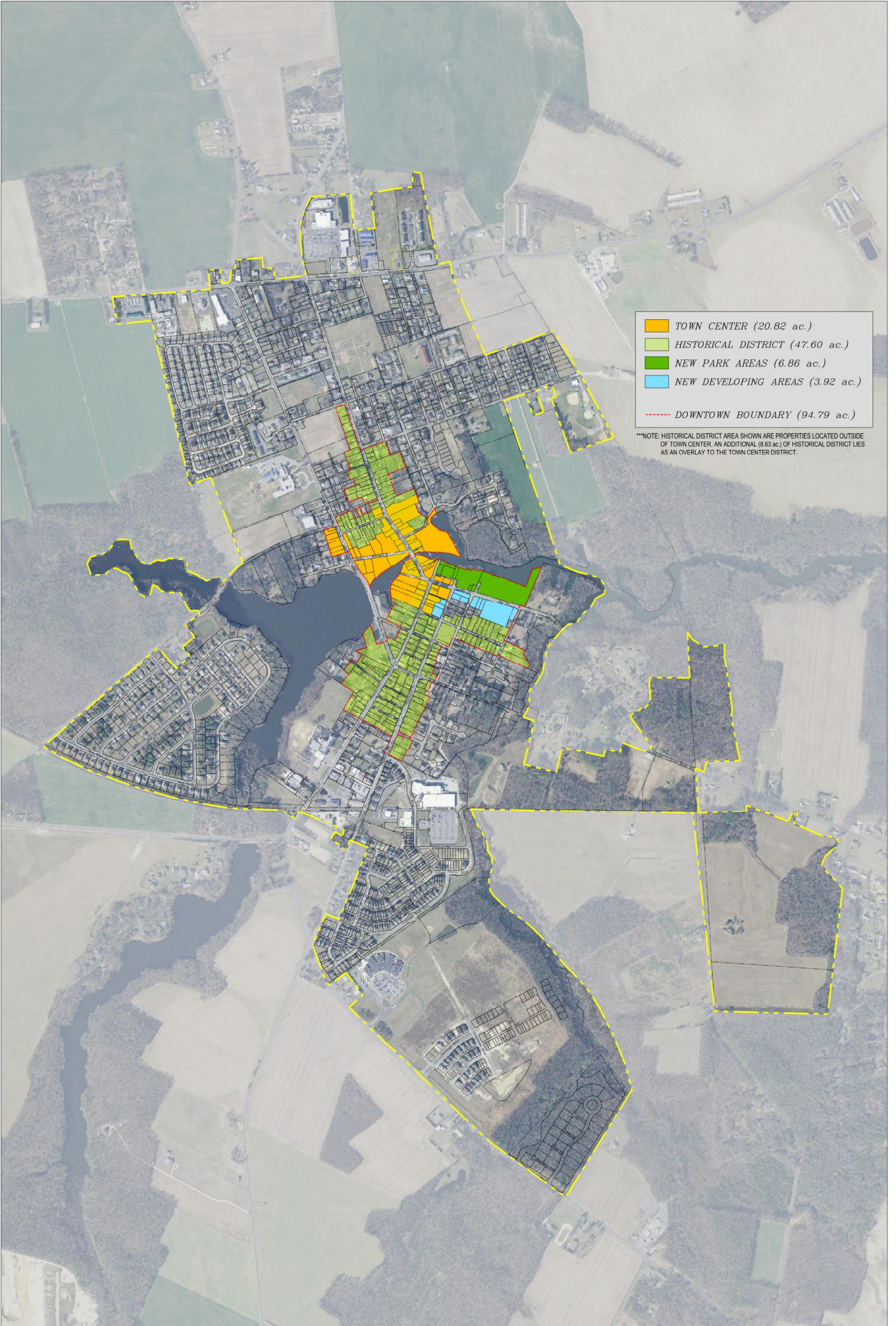
Legislative Body Resolution

Instructions: Attach a resolution that has been adopted by the legislative body of your municipality or county. The resolution must affirmatively indicate that the legislative body supports the application for designation as a Downtown Development District and is willing to adhere to the District Plan and the Local Incentives for the duration of the District designation.

Date of Resolution September 8, 2014

Resolution Number

Resolution Attached.



TOWN OF MILTON US CENSUS DATA	
MUNICIPALITY DATA	
Median Income	\$39,532
Poverty Rate	15.4%
Age of Structures	
% Homeownership	59.9%
% Rental	41.1%
Vacancy	17.8%
Median Home Value	\$226,848
CENSUS TRACT(S) CONTAINING THE PROPOSED DISTRICT	
Median Income	\$39,532
Poverty Rate	15.4%
Age of Structures	
% Homeownership	59.9%
% Rental	41.1%
Vacancy	17.8%
Median Home Value	\$226,848
% Low/Moderate Income	39.9% below median income level
CENSUS TRACT THAT MOST CLOSELY CORRESPONDS TO THE PROPOSED DISTRICT	
Total Population	2,661
% Homeownership	59.9%
% Vacancy	17.8%

A Proposal
Submitted by
The Town of Milton
To
**The Delaware
Development District
Program**

MILTONPLANS
CREATING A **FUTURE** FOR OUR HISTORIC TOWN

OVERVIEW

The town of Milton is completing an exhaustive process to draft its 2015 Comprehensive Plan. The process, which began in 2013 and continued throughout 2014, included a series of community meetings and design charrettes and made use of the advice of several topic-specific experts.

The process resulted in a remarkably cohesive vision of the town, which is articulated in the draft Comprehensive Plan, and which will be formally adopted by the Town Council and Mayor in January 2014. This proposal to the Downtown Development District Program flows directly from the vision contained in Milton's draft 2015 Comprehensive Plan.

The proposed program is very manageable and targeted. It makes use of a few critical catalyzing projects that are intended to leverage other development projects that will unlock the potential that is inherent in Milton's historic riverside downtown. The proposed project is comprised of five elements:

1. Adjusting the town's designated town center to take advantage of river views and minimize flooding risks to businesses;
2. Highlighting the Broadkill River;
3. Improving connectivity and walkability;
4. Encouraging development of currently vacant properties; and
5. Facilitating renovations to key buildings in the downtown district.

DISTRICT DESCRIPTION

Milton's Downtown Development District is a 79.2-acre tract in the heart of the historic town. The tract includes the town center and historic district. The downtown sits astride and along the Broadkill River, which had once allowed the town to become a leading wooden ship-building center. In recent years, the picturesque river has once again emerged as a focus for active and passive recreation. Considered by most residents as the town's most important and beautiful feature, the river will be central to the town's center's revitalization.

Milton's town center is comprised of a mix of commercial and residential properties, many of which were constructed in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. As is shown in the map on page 6, the primary north/south artery through the town center is Rt 5 (Union Street/Federal Street). It is along this thoroughfare that the highest concentration of existing commercial buildings stand. The designated Downtown Development District also extends along Front Street and Magnolia Street, both of which run parallel to the Broadkill River, as well as a small number of side streets, which run off these main arteries.

The facades of the two largest and centrally located buildings in Milton's town center are in need of renovation. The Milton Theatre, located at 110 Union Street, has become a central hub around which much of the community's activities revolve since opening in June 2014. Unfortunately, over the years, the façade has been renovated through good intentions but with little understanding of the original design or materials.



Milton Theater facade

Directly across the street, the recently opened Mercantile at Milton has brought a similar new lease on life to the town center's other large commercial building. Having once been a hardware store and, more recently, a dark and haphazard antique "mall," the building recently reopened following cosmetic improvements to the building's interior and offers a more thoughtfully curated collection of antiques, crafts and

giftware. Unfortunately, the façade of this building, which also dominates the town center, is in very poor condition.



Mercantile at Milton, 109 Union Street

More troubling than the insensitive use of unfinished clapboards and vinyl casement windows to replace the original large wood-frame plate windows, the façade has significant structural problems, which must be addressed.



The façade of Mercantile at Milton. In addition to being an insensitive renovation of the hundred-year-old building, the façade has significant structural problems. This photo shows how the clapboard façade has detached from the building's masonry.

The downtown commercial district also includes several lots that have remained vacant years after the buildings that had once occupied them had been razed -- as well as storefronts that have stood vacant for many years. While Milton first appears to be a town that invites people to get out of their cars to walk, these gaps in the streetscape serve as a disincentive to this impulse. They also fly in the face of the one of the town's expressed core values (determined during the Comprehensive Plan process) of

“connectivity.” It is critical to the appearance and vitality of Milton’s town center to eliminate these gaps.

The most notable of the vacant lots exist at the intersection of Union, Federal and Front Streets, on the south side of Front Street. Currently, an unused paved parking area, the vacant lot stands between the Milton Theatre and the recently opened Modern Mixture Restaurant. This large expanse of emptiness (and the crumbling sidewalk that abuts it) stands at a 75-degree turn in Rt. 5, making the decrepit property highly visible to travelers along the town’s main artery. The parcel also runs along a short spur of Front Street that ends abruptly in a tangle of vegetation that blocks views of the Broadkill River and Wagamon’s Pond. Proper development of this property could have a transformative effect on Milton’s downtown. It could link the theatre to the restaurant (and other businesses) and it could draw visitors down the spur of Front Street and open up water views that are currently blocked.



This vacant lot at the intersection of Front, Federal and Union Streets destroys the continuity of the downtown.

Another key vacant lot (112 and 114 Union Street) stands immediately next-door to the Milton Theatre and directly adjacent to the Broadkill River. Once the site of two commercial buildings that stood vacant for many years, they suffered significant water and mildew damage and were razed several years ago. The property has since stood vacant.



112/114 Union Street, adjacent to the Milton Theatre (left) and Broadkill River (right), sits vacant and creates a gap in the town center’s streetscape.



Map of the proposed downtown development area. Two properties targeted for development (112/114 Union St and the intersection of Front, Federal & Union streets) and two targeted for façade improvement (the Milton Theatre and Mercantile at Milton) and are shown in red. The area currently designated as “Town Center” is shown in gold. The proposed expansion of the town center is shown in blue.

DEVELOPMENT/REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Milton is poised to take off. Over the past year, a number of developments have taken place that have begun to unlock the great potential that resides beneath the surface of this storied and picturesque town. The Milton Theatre, built in 1910 and renovated in the 1930s, stood vacant for several years before being purchased in 2013 by Glen Howard, a Milton resident. Mr. Howard rented the property to the Middletown, DE-base Premier Centre for the Arts, which made cosmetic improvements to the building’s interior and began operations in June 2014.

Between June and September 2014, the theatre sold more than 3000 tickets to a range of performance. The company has also hosted several summer camp programs and offers on-going music, dance and performance classes. Within a few months, the theatre has established itself as a central gathering place for the community, with performances held every weekend. Once-empty street parking places are now filled; pedestrians can now be seen chatting on Milton’s sidewalks.



After standing vacant for several years, the Milton Theatre now hosts performances every week and has become a central focus of downtown activity.

At 106 Union Street, immediate next to the theatre, a long-vacant building – perhaps one of Milton’s most unique – is slated to become a wine bar in 2015. The new owners have proposed a two-stage restoration effort. The first phase will replace the building’s roof, replace mechanical systems, install a kitchen and lavatory facilities and address cosmetic concerns, thereby readying the new business for operations. A second phase is planned, which will add a rooftop deck and balcony to increase the wine bar’s capacity and take advantage of water views.



106 Union Street is slated to become Bacchus Wine bar in 2015

Across the street from the theatre, Irish Eyes Restaurant (which had kept its doors open during the economic downturn, thanks to the better performance of its Lewes and Rehoboth Beach branches) has begun renovations to vacant space next-door and has renovated the facades of both storefronts. The restaurant’s business has increased by 30% thanks to newly opened theatre.



Irish Eyes. The space to the right has gamely weathered the nation's economic downturn and downtown Milton's high vacancy rates. The restaurant recently started renovations to the space to the left in order to expand its business and improved both spaces' facades.

A block south of the theatre, at 102 Federal Street, a new restaurant, *Modern Mixture Too*, opened in August 2014 in a former used bookstore. A "hobby" for the owner, the bookstore was rarely open and did little to enliven the streetscape or increase commerce. Housed in a c.1910 brick building, the restaurant's casual charm and creative menu have quickly established it as a well-loved gathering spot. Positive reviews on-line and in local press have attracted visitors from out of town.

The Nature Conservancy recently moved its offices to the adjacent storefront, replacing an antique store, which, like the bookstore, was a part-time hobby for the owner and seldom open for business.



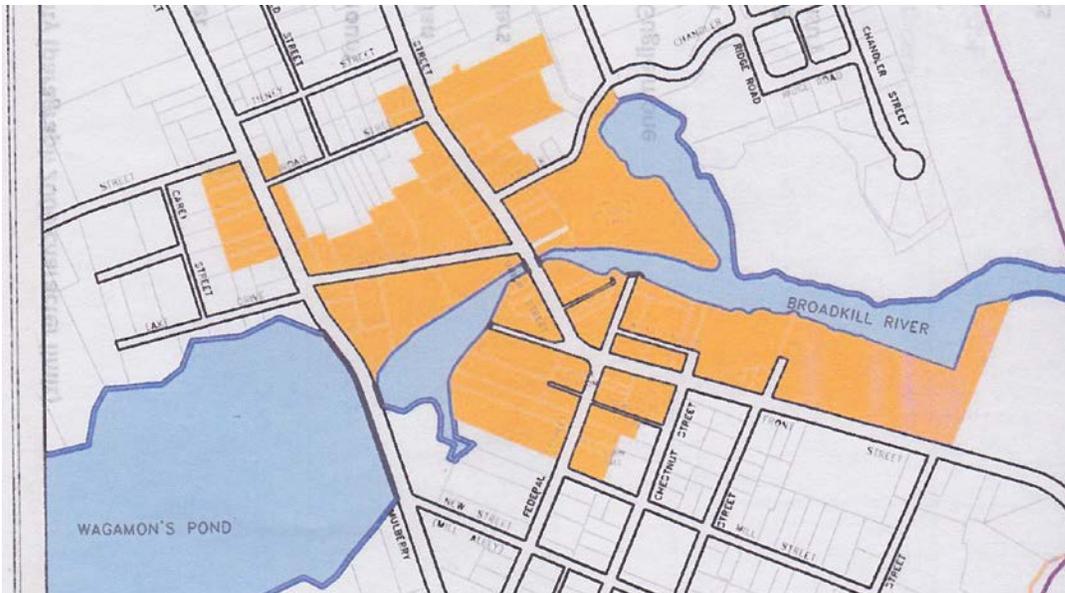
Modern Mixture Too, an outgrowth of a Rehoboth Beach restaurant, opened at 102 Federal St. (on the right) in August, 2014. The Nature Conservancy occupies #106.

Milton’s downtown development strategy will build upon these positive developments through a targeted five-part plan to:

- Adjust the town’s designated town center to take advantage of river views and minimize flooding risks to businesses;
- Highlight the Broadkill River;
- Improve connectivity and walkability;
- Encourage development of currently vacant properties; and
- Facilitate renovations to key buildings in the downtown district.

Adjust the Town’s Designated Town Center

The map below shows Milton’s Town Center, as determined in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, in gold. This designated area includes a two-block-long stretch of land defined by Front Street on the south and the Broadkill River to the north. This low-lying parcel is prone to flooding; its only buildings include the town’s wastewater treatment plant, an abandoned industrial storage building and two private homes. The majority of the land is open space enclosed by chain-link fence.



Because the low-lying land along the north side of Front Street has been historically prone to flooding and DNREC projections predict increased flooding in the future, the 2015 Milton Comprehensive Plan changes this parcel's designation from "town center" to "open space." This flood-prone land is clearly unsuited for construction and at odds with the community's expressed desire is for increased river access.

The new Comprehensive Plan compensates for the loss of this designated town center space by changing the designation of two parcels of land on the opposite side of Front Street. Both parcels are on higher ground and are, therefore, less prone to flooding. They are shown on the map below in light blue. The first parcel runs along Front Street from Chestnut Street to Collins Street. In spite of its close proximity to the river and its role as a primary gateway to the town center, this stretch of Front Street is generally considered unattractive and blighted. Largely comprised of vacant properties, the stretch's only two buildings are a vacant concrete block outbuilding (at Front and Collins) and the town's Public Works garage. These seem to be poor uses of what could be prime real estate with river views.

The second re-designated parcel stands on the west side of Chestnut Street. This plot of land had been designated residential, although it contains only one private residence. The rest of the block (along Front and Federal streets) has been classified as "town center." The re-designation of the Chestnut Street properties in the new Comprehensive Plan creates greater consistency and continuity.



Improving Connectivity and Walkability

As the residents of Milton have worked to craft its Comprehensive Plan, the concept of *connectivity* has arisen repeatedly. Miltonians want to be able to walk around. They want easy access between the town’s various neighborhoods and they want to be able to connect with the river and the history that make the town so unique. When the community gathered to articulate the core values that would guide its planning, *connectivity* was its foundational core value. Similarly, respondents to a survey about planning priorities consistently ranked sidewalks, trails and pedestrian connections among their most pressing concerns.

Consistent with those expressed desires and concerns, the town of Milton plans a series of trails and pathways to link into and expand the town’s existing paths and trails. The community also plans to explore how Milton’s planned pathways can tie into the region’s expanding network of pedestrian and bicycle trails. 70% of survey respondents expressed a desire to undertake a feasibility study for a pedestrian and bicycle trail between Milton and Lewes along the Broadkill River.

As shown on the map below, Milton plans two significant additions to its existing pathway system. The first, shown in blue (against the green background) to the right of the map, will run through newly-designated open space along the Broadkill River between Cave Neck Road and Federal Street. The second, to the left of the map against a gold background, will traverse a new footbridge across the river, linking the Magnolia Street parking lot to the waterfront behind the Milton Theatre. The pathway will continue along the water’s edge, providing access to a waterfront area currently inaccessible to most visitors and blocked by a tangle of invasive plants. These invasive

plants will also be removed and a riparian buffer of native plants will be re-established in order to open up the views of the water. The pathway will connect to the existing “Governors Walk” in the John Milton Park, thereby creating a loop.



Highlighting the Broadkill River

The Broadkill River is considered to be Milton’s most important feature, yet its ubiquity has often caused it to be taken for granted. As a result, visual and physical access to the river is limited. Views are blocked and points of access are limited primarily to Milton’s Memorial Park. A central feature of Milton’s Comprehensive Plan and its Downtown Development strategy is to increase the number of physical and visual points of access to the Broadkill River, thereby creating new recreational opportunities and increasing the value of nearby properties. This will be done through a number of targeted projects that will highlight the river and maximize its value to the town:

The Terminus of Federal Street

Federal Street brings travelers on northbound Rt. 5 past some of Milton’s most impressive historic homes before descending down a gentle hill into the town’s center. Federal Street intersects Front Street one block from the Broadkill River where Rt. 5 makes a sharp left turn onto Front Street and an immediate right turn onto Union Street. This leaves a one-block-long spur of Federal Street that dead-ends at the Broadkill River.

The Federal Street hill and Rt. 5’s quick zigzag should offer travelers, residents and walkers along Federal Street an opportunity to view the Broadkill River. Unfortunately, this view is obstructed by a tangle of shrubs and low hanging tree limbs. A fence of wide horizontal planks at the end of the Federal Street also blocks the view.



Looking toward the Broadkill River and Milton Memorial Park from the intersection of Front and Federal streets. Views of the river and park are blocked by brush along the river's edge and low hanging tree limbs. A plank fence also creates an obstruction.



Removing obstructing vegetation and fencing will open up the vista to the Broadkill River and Memorial Park for residents, travelers and pedestrians on Federal Street, Milton's main thoroughfare.

Intersection of Chestnut and Front Streets

Chestnut Street runs parallel to Federal Street and ends at Front Street. While just yards from the edge of the Broadkill River, the water is completely invisible from the intersection and provides no economic or aesthetic value to the residents of the 100 block of Chestnut Street. The remains of a derelict paint storage building block the view; a chain link fence blocks physical access.

The town of Milton plans to create physical and visual access to the Broadkill River by razing the vacant building and building a walkway from the intersection of Front and Chestnut Streets to a new fishing pier. This will add significant value to the properties in the 100 block of Chestnut Street, which currently do not enjoy river views or access. The new fishing pier will be the first of three new opportunities for recreation on the south side of the Broadkill River.



Physical and visual access to the Broadkill River will be created by eliminating a decrepit and vacant building and building a walkway to a new fishing pier at the intersection of Front and Chestnut Streets.

Intersection of Walnut and Front Streets

Walnut Street runs parallel to Chestnut Street and also ends at Front Street. The river is similarly invisible from the intersection and provides no economic or aesthetic value to the residents of the 100 block of Walnut Street. The view is partially blocked by the Sewage Treatment Plant and a chain link fence blocks physical access.

Tidewater Services, the company that runs Milton's sewage treatment plant, is exploring options to move the plant off the river and expects to announce plans for the implementation of this move in May 2015. Milton's Comprehensive Plan is encouraging this move in order to help the town reclaim its waterfront – which will include a river walk that will eventually run from Federal Street to Cave Neck Road (see *Improving Connectivity and Walkability*, above).



Photos showing how the Broadkill waterfront will be opened to create better visual and physical access.

Intersection of Collins and Front Streets

Similar access will be created at the intersection of Collins and Front streets, where a new boat launch will be erected.

Encouraging Development of Currently Vacant Properties

Milton will focus on finding partners to develop two key vacant properties in the town center – 112/114 Union Street and the large parcel that dominates the intersection of Front, Union and Federal Streets.

112/114 Union Street

112/114 Union Street is directly adjacent to the Milton Theatre and at the edge of the Broadkill River. The town is exploring two possibilities for its development:

The first approach is a fairly low-risk, low-impact approach, which would establish an open-air beer garden on the now vacant site. This approach has been used effectively in other communities and can be designed as a pop-up business, which operates seasonally, occasionally or for a designated period of time (over a year or two, for example, until a permanent structure is built). It could also be designed as an ongoing business. This business would help to draw some of the NUMBER visitors to Milton's Dogfish Head Brewery each year into the town center – something that is not happening today.



Dacha Beer Garden (above) has helped to enliven a once vacant and decrepit lot in a transitional Washington, DC neighborhood

The second approach is to find a developer to develop the site with a mixed-use building, with retail on the first floor and offices and/or residences on the second and third floors.



Rendering of a mixed-use building at 112/114 Union Street, on the Broadkill River

Intersection of Front, Union and Federal Streets.

As noted above, this centrally located parcel stands at a 75-degree turn in Rt. 5, making the vacant property highly visible to travelers along the town's main artery. The parcel also runs along a short spur of Front Street that ends abruptly in a tangle of vegetation, which blocks views of the Broadkill River and Wagamon's Pond.

The goal is to develop this property with a mixed-use building in order to reconnect the two disconnected sections of the town center, draw visitors down the spur of Front Street and closer to the proposed walking trail and open up water views that are currently blocked.



Rendering of a mixed-use building at Federal, Front and Union Streets. The building will reach down the currently unused spur of Front Street, take advantage of water views, and engage a proposed waterfront walkway

Facilitating Renovations to Key buildings in the Downtown District.

As noted above, the two largest buildings in downtown Milton also bear facades that have suffered from insensitive renovations over time. The Milton Theatre’s aluminum doors and windows are anachronistic and poorly-scaled additions that are ill-suited to the building, which was built in 1910. Similarly, the glass block second floor window and poorly scaled reproduction marquee do little to reference the building’s history.



The Milton Theatre has recently become the center of activity in Milton’s downtown, with the opening in June 2014 of the Premiere Centre for the Arts. The building’s lackluster façade does little to indicate the importance and vibrancy of this important institution.

Directly across the street, the Mercantile at Milton, suffers from similar ill-advised renovations. It’s broad expanses of plate glass windows replaced years ago by an incongruous combination of weathered clapboards and vinyl windows. While the building’s interior has recently been transformed into a light-filled space filled with antiques, giftware and crafts, the exterior is a looming and foreboding blight.





Even more troubling, the clapboard facade has detached from the building's masonry threatening to open the building to water damage and further decay.

Working in conjunction with the Milton Historical Society – which will assemble historical photos of these buildings' past appearances – the town of Milton will work with the properties owner (both are owned by the same person) to leverage DDD funds and historic preservation tax credits

LOCAL INCENTIVES

Milton plans to offer several incentives to invite participation in this program. The Milton Chamber of Commerce is creating a mentor program, which will guide new developers and property owners through town processes and state historic preservation tax incentives, and will assist with the DDD guidelines and applications for reimbursement. The Chamber will also create a "scholarship fund" to pay permit and application fees for projects within the DDD designated area.

The town will also create a streamlined on-line application process for business owners to help them move through the permit application process with the town.

The Milton Planning and Zoning Commission holds regular meetings on the third Thursday of each month. The Commission will add additional meetings to speed up the application process for projects that will advance this undertaking.

The community embraced the idea of imposing fines on property owners in the town center who neglect their properties or who fail to look for tenants for their vacant storefronts. The Milton Town Council will introduce a motion to advance this.

CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The approach outlined in this application flow directly from the town of Milton's 2014 Comprehensive Plan. Under the direction of the town's Planning and Zoning Commission, the people of Milton have been developing a new Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Milton, as is mandated by the state of Delaware.

Milton's "Comp Plan" process has revolved around a series of community meetings at which specific topics were considered, utilizing the expertise of topic-specific professionals and the feedback of community members. These meetings were part of a grassroots effort, called *Milton Plans*, which saw the process of developing a shared effort that engaged all facets of the community.

Three topics, among those considered at these 15 community meetings, which were of particular importance for the purposes of this program application were: *The Town Center, Historic Preservation, and The Broadkill River*. The community's thoughts and plans about these three issues, and the resulting Comprehensive Plan directives, provide the basis for the Milton's Downtown Development and guide the approach outlined in this application.

Through the comprehensive plan process, the town of Milton has established a 79.2-acre downtown development district that:

- Builds upon the existing designated town center (per the 2010 Milton Comprehensive Plan);
- Maximizes the viewsheds, recreational opportunities and property value enhancements of the river that flows through it; and
- Celebrates the town's rich history and historic structures.

The newly established downtown district shifts and expands the boundaries of the previously designated town center district. One significant factor that guided this shift is the increasing frequency and severity of flooding, which is expected to continue as sea levels continue to rise.

The Broadkill River flows into Delaware Bay just seven miles from Milton's town center. The level of the river rises and falls on a daily basis in concert with the bay's regular high- and low-tide cycles. It is also susceptible to storm surges, which push water up the river from the bay during the many storms that frequent the east coast. In recent years, these daily tidal changes and seasonal storm surges have increased in severity and have flooded Milton's town center with increased frequency. These floods have proven to be very problematic to small business owners close to the river, whose properties have been flooded. In some cases, the resulting financial hardship has forced these

businesses to close or to relocate outside of the Milton downtown. Several downtown storefronts close to the river have remained vacant as the result of repeated flooding.

According to projections made by the Army Corps of Engineers, FEMA and DNREC, the frequency and intensity of these flooding incidents are expected to increase over the foreseeable future. Because of this, the town of Milton is expanding its designated town center in order to allow commercial activity to move to higher ground away from expected increased flooding. Similarly, along Front Street, the designated downtown district is being moved from the north side of Front Street (which is on the banks of the river) to the south side of the street (which is slightly higher).

Of course, the river is not simply seen as a threat to the town; it is also its greatest asset, offering spectacular views and countless recreational opportunities. This place of primacy is already evident in the hearts, minds, economy and concerns of the residents in Milton. During the course of the summer, a number of special events draw visitors to the town for events that revolve around the Broadkill River – including the annual Horseshoe Crab and Shore Bird Festival, Duck Race, Canoe and Kayak Race, Bargains on the Broadkill, weekly summer concert series, and Blues on the Broadkill.

Some adjustments to the downtown district’s boundaries were made in order to make use of river views, which can be valuable assets to attract businesses and customers.

In addition to the river, Milton’s enviable stock of historic structures is the town’s other most valued asset. The town’s center is located within the Milton historic district and is therefore protected by the communities’ preservation ordinance. The variety of architectural styles in the historic district -- ranging from colonial era Cape Cod-style homes to Victorian buildings to bungalows -- draw visitors and residents alike. This traditional architecture is emulated in new developments, including federal architecture of Cannery Village and the bungalows and Victorian elements at Heritage Creek Coordination

PUBLIC COMMENT

As noted above, the approach outlined above and within the town’s draft Comprehensive Plan flows directly from public comments made during a series of 15 community meetings, at which the community discussed a number of planning issues. These included: the town center; historic preservation; the Broadkill River; open space and recreation; utilities; cultural resources; Front Street; transportation; and town expansion. These meetings made use of subject-specific experts and posed a series of questions in order to solicit public input. Participants often worked in small break-out sessions and participated in design charrettes. The town also conducted a survey to collect the community's thoughts on a number of issues related to the Comprehensive

Plan. This survey was administered on-line (through Survey Monkey) and mailed on paper to all town residents.

This extensive process revealed several very clear and specific desires of the residents of Milton. This vision formed the basis of the Town of Milton Comprehensive Plan - which is currently in draft form and will be adopted by the Mayor and Town Council in January 2015.

Public outreach and community engagement was at the core of this process. A local volunteer was enlisted to design a *Milton Plans* logo in order to create a sense of importance and identity for the undertaking. This was used on all printed materials, on the town's website and on a special Milton Plans Facebook page, that was created to keep the community apprised of upcoming meetings and developments.



The Planning & Zoning Commission also designed and administered a town-wide survey. This was administered through a web-based service called Survey Monkey; a paper version was also mailed to all town residents.

It is interesting to note that, in spite of its reputation for lively public debate, the survey revealed a great deal of unanimity in the community's dreams and desires for the town. The primacy of the river and the preservation of the town's rich history were universally embraced. The desire for walkability and connectivity were also of critical importance. The community longed to see the the potential of the town center unlocked, with more services, restaurants and cultural institutions. All of these expressed desires guide Milton Comprehensive Plan and this application to the state of Delaware.

We have been gratified to have this inclusive approach embraced by the local community, which has been very generous with its time and opinions. Our very ambitious schedule of public meetings has demanded a great deal of time and commitment from the community and the Commission members – and they have responded enthusiastically. For example, the town center public meeting was held on a sunny Saturday morning during August. Even though it was prime family and beach time, the 3-hour meeting attracted approximately 80 people.

Similarly, the local press has noticed our process. Below is an editorial cartoon that appeared in the September 29 *Cape Gazette*.

