



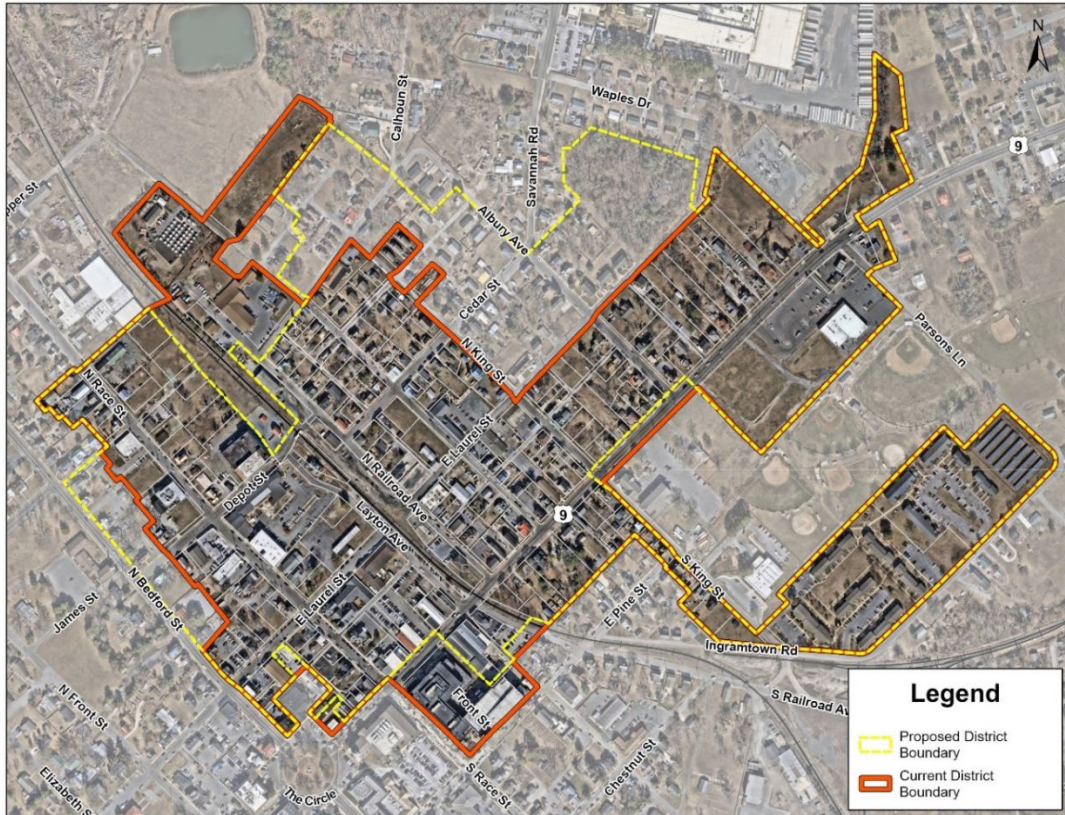
2025 Downtown Development Plan Update:

What's new?

With this update, the Town reviewed its proposed boundary for economic and community development and revised as necessary. This revision took into consideration potential for future development or buildings that may have different uses and also accounted for development growth since the initial submission. It also took into account the development that has occurred throughout the last ten years. Demographic and Housing data was updated to reflect the current submission.

District Boundary

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





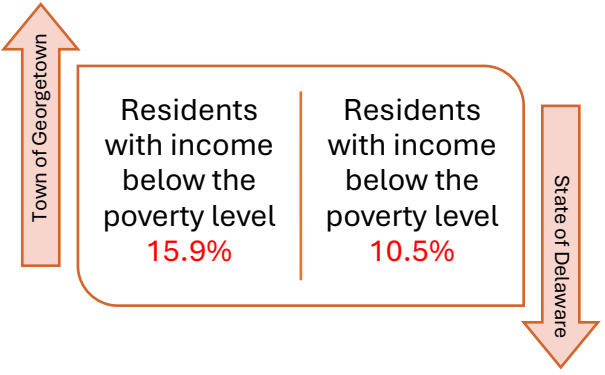
Demographics

Population

Georgetown’s estimated population in 2023 was 7,456, a slight increase over the 2020 US Census count of 7,134, but a 16% increase to the 2010 population of 6,422. While the populations of both Sussex County and the State of Delaware increased somewhat significantly between 2000 and 2013, 32% and 18% respectively, Georgetown’s increase exceed both by a fairly strong amount during the same time period. Census Blocks that approximate the District boundary showed a 2010 US Census count of 1,663, an increase of just over 8% from the 2000 Census count of 1,538. The 2023 estimates were not available at the Block level.

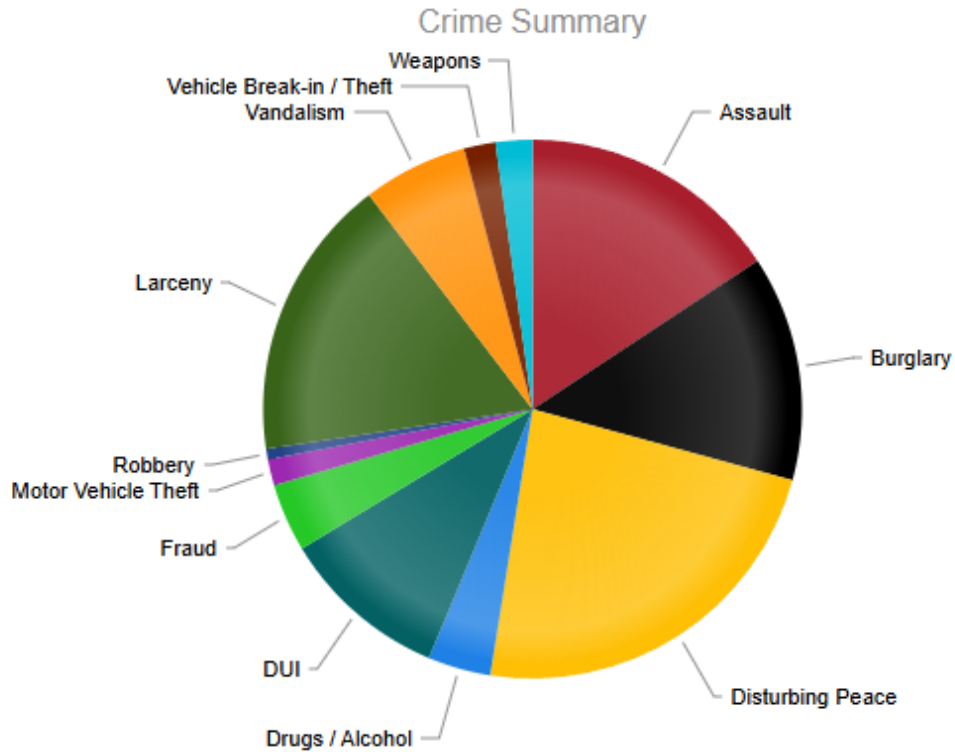
Income and Poverty

Median household income within the Town was estimated to be around \$47,423 in 2023, which is about three-fifths of the State median of \$82,855. Some of that may be due to inflation, state of the economy, etc. Median per capita income was \$22,713, compared to the State’s \$44,219. The 2019-2023 American Community Survey lists Georgetown’s poverty rate as 15.9%, a rate almost twice that of the State’s 10.7%. While both the State and the nation have been experiencing slight, but steady, increases to the poverty rate since 2000, Georgetown saw an 8% decrease in this rate from 2000-2013, but has had a sharper increase since that time.



Crime

Over the years crime has become an increasing problem throughout the Town. Using an online crime mapping program hosted by the Town, TriTech Software Systems, and the Georgetown Police Department (GPD), crime statistics were extracted for a mile radius of Georgetown. The crime data is extracted through the GPD’s records and up to six months of data can be viewed. Between May 1, 2025 and October 1, 2025 there were almost 318 incidents reported. The chart below shows the crime type summary. The most frequent types of crime committed between this time included disturbing peace (74 reports), larceny (54 reports), assault (50 reports), burglary (43 reports), and DUI’s (32 reports).



Source: [Crimemapping.com?crime.data.from.March.7.2868.1.to.October.7.2868.1](https://www.crimemapping.com?crime.data.from.March.7.2868.1.to.October.7.2868.1)

It is also important to analyze when reported incidents occur. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays are when the majority of criminal activity is being reported and most of them occur after 5 PM.

Source: [Crimemapping.com?crime.data.from.March.7.2868.1.to.October.7.2868.1](https://www.crimemapping.com?crime.data.from.March.7.2868.1.to.October.7.2868.1)

Homeownership and Vacancy Rates

The Town’s homeownership rate of 41.9% greatly falls behind the County (82%), State (74%), and national (65%) rates. The addition of rental apartments as well as amount of housing located within the Downtown Development District contributes to the lower rate. Homeownership rates in Georgetown have been consistently lower in recent decades. This can, in part, be attributed to the Town’s mobile population, with high rates of housing moves and occupancy changes. In the latter part of the 1980s, almost half of the residents had moved. In the subsequent decade, over 63% of residents moved. Frequent mobility combined with higher poverty rates, yield lower homeownership rates than the Town would like to see. In addition, Georgetown has seen an increase in vacancy rates from 9% to 13.8% between 2010 and 2013. Most of the vacancies in the latter year can be found in the homeowner market. As of 2023 Census data reports, the vacancy rate has dropped to 4.6%.

Statewide rental housing demand is strong for deeply affordable units (those less than 50% area median income) and market rate units (those above 80% area median income) and



the majority of demand for home purchases is from households earning more than 80% area median income.

Georgetown has also experienced a shift not only in the percentage of owner-occupied units versus renter-occupied units, but in the value of those units. The 2020 US Census identified 1,043 owner-occupied housing units. The majority of these, 42% were valued between \$200K and \$300K. 33% were valued above \$300K, while 25% were valued below \$200K. The median value was \$235,000. The number of renter-occupied units also saw an increase of 10%, with 80% of units valued over \$750 per month. The median rental value increased to \$1,200. This indicates a steady rise in both home values and rental prices, reflecting a positive and growing demand for housing in Georgetown.

Housing Stock

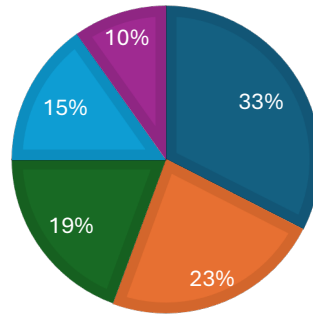
Almost 40% of Georgetown's housing units were built prior to 1980 and over 29% were built prior to 1960. Thirty years is considered to be the standard life cycle for homes before requiring substantial rehabilitation. It is often financially difficult for homeowners with lower incomes to maintain their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

Employment

Georgetown's 2020 population was comprised of 7,134 people aged 16 years and over, with 4,765 of those (or 66.8%) being in the labor force. Four hundred and twenty of those in the labor force, or 8.8%, were unemployed. Workers were employed in the following occupations: production, transportation, and material moving occupations (32.5%); service occupations (23.1%); sales and office occupations (19.4%); management, business, science, and arts occupations (15.2%); and natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations (9.8%). Most of the Town's residents are private or salaried workers (86.2%), with 10.7% employed by a government entity, and 3.1% being self-employed. Industries representing Georgetown's citizens are shown in the table below.

INDUSTRIES OF EMPLOYMENT

- Production, Transportation and Material Moving
- Service Occupations
- Sales and Office Occupations
- Management, Business, Science and Arts
- Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance



Education

The percentage of Georgetown’s population that has a high school diploma or higher has increased since 2013, when 65% of the population had achieved this goal. The percentage of the population achieving a bachelor’s degree or higher has also increased slightly from just under 14.1% in 2013. In 2023, 66.1% of the Town’s adult population had graduated with a high school diploma or higher degree and 15.3% had obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher.

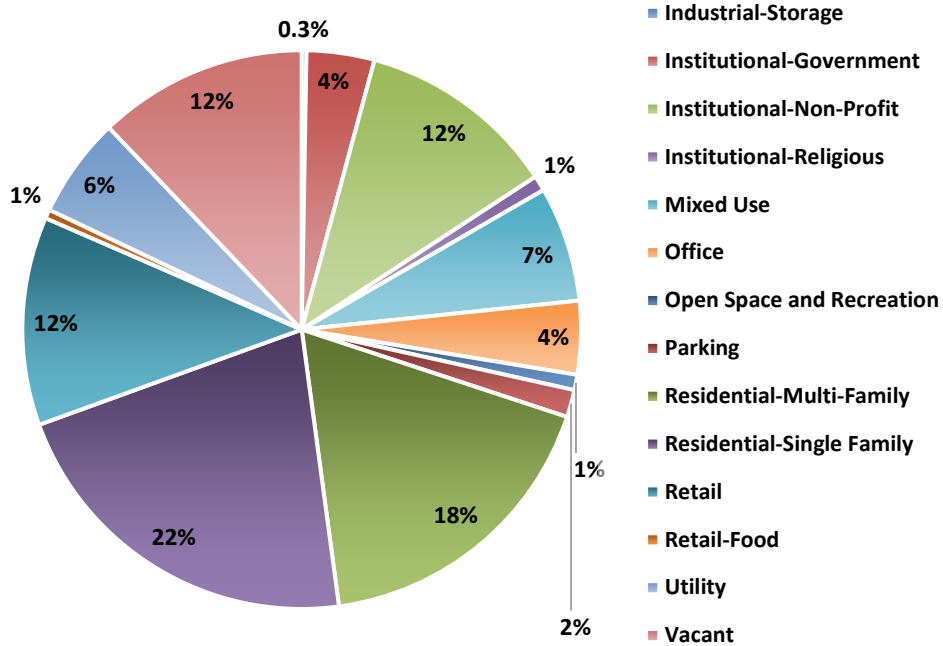
Land Use and Zoning

Existing Land Use

Map 2, Figure 6 and Table 3- Existing Land Use display the distribution of each land use type within the District boundaries. The District contains a diverse mix of uses that are well-dispersed throughout. The most prevalent land uses in terms of land area are open institutional/non-profit, single-family and multi-family residential, retail, and vacant land. These four categories make up 75% of the District area outside of the road and railroad rights-of way. While single-family residential uses are dispersed throughout the District, the majority of the area is clustered along the north side of East Market Street between Albury Avenue and Parsons Lane. Retail uses are grouped into two categories of general retail of goods and services and food related retail; together they make up 13% of the land area. Sixteen percent (16%) of the District includes institutional uses such as non-profits (ex. Habitat for Humanity), religious uses (ex, Georgetown United Methodist), and state and local government building sites. Offices and professional uses, including law firms, make



up 4% of the District land uses. Mixed-use buildings that contain retail or offices on the first floor and residential apartments on the upper floors make up 7%. The remaining land uses include industrial, storage, and utility sites.



Existing Land Use	Acres	%
Industrial-Storage	0.23	0.3%
Institutional-Government	3.20	4%
Institutional-Non-Profit	9.45	12%
Institutional-Religious	0.73	1%
Mixed Use	5.45	7%
Office	3.47	4%
Open Space and Recreation	0.72	1%
Parking	1.29	2%
Residential-Multi-Family	14.53	18%
Residential-Single Family	17.63	22%
Retail	9.85	12%
Retail-Food	0.42	1%
Utility	4.75	6%
Vacant	9.90	12%
Total	81.62	100%



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

Zoning

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

Map 3- Zoning, Figure 7 and Table 4 display zoning categories within the District boundaries. The District is made up of ten zoning districts, with the urban business zones (UB1- Urban Business and UB2- Neighborhood Business, and UB3- Professional Business) making up the majority (55%) of the area. The UB3 zone permits offices/professional uses. The UB2 zone permits professional uses as well as neighborhood retail type uses such as, barber shops, banks, restaurants and retail stores. The UB1 permits the largest range of uses, including those in the UB2 and UB3, as well as bakeries, cafes, delicatessens, flower shops, and other similar uses. Many of the permitted uses in the UB zones are conducive toward creating a vibrant, traditional mixed-use and walkable downtown. However, it also permits uses that are antiquated or may be unsuitable for a downtown such as wholesale establishments, warehouses, burial vault preparation, drive-in restaurants, telephone stations and frozen food lockers.

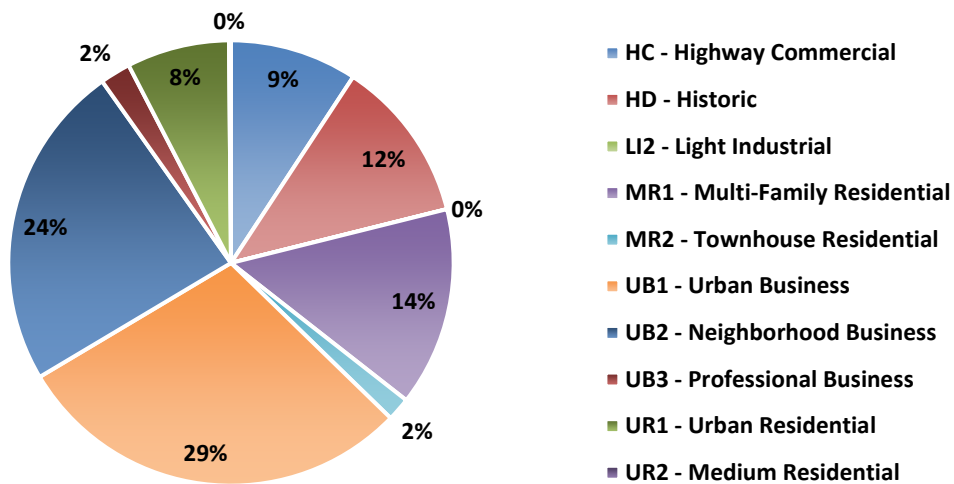
The HD- Historic District covers 12% in the center of the District and surrounding The Circle to the railroad. The permitted uses in the HD- Historic District build upon what is allowed UB zones. The Historic District Committee Report prepared in 2014 stated that allowing the same use as the rest of the downtown would result in the Historic District having no individual identity. The Committee recommended modifying the list of permitted uses to promote a more family and business friendly environment and that were unique to the historic character of the Town, which would be a draw to visitors. There are few entertainment, shopping and restaurant venues that would draw visitors, create the opportunity for employees to stay in Town after 5pm, and attract new residents to live, work and play in the downtown. Previous planning efforts have recommended prohibiting uses that may have an adverse effect in achieving these goals, such as pawn shops, adult stores, auto parts, drive-through restaurants, among others. The Comprehensive Plan recommends that pedestrian-oriented uses be encouraged in the downtown, including retail sales, personal services, offices and restaurants.



The HC- Highway Commercial zone located at the eastern boundary consists of four parcels making up 9% of the District area. While the uses permitted in the HC- Highway Commercial zone includes uses in the UB zones, it also permits uses that typically exist along highways such as Route 113, rather than a traditional downtown. These uses include auto sales and service stations, car washes, farm equipment sales and service, lumber and storage yards, and mobile home sales and storage. Some of the properties are currently underutilized, are highly visible and accessible, and are part of the eastern gateway. This area is therefore identified as priority redevelopment area, and is further discussed in the Development Potential section below. It is also noted that the existing land use of the adjacent parcel owned by Georgetown United Methodist Church is open space and recreational; however the zoning is UB1.

Residential uses (UR1- Urban Residential, UR2- Medium Residential, MR1- Multi-Family Residential, and MR2- Townhouse Residential) are mostly clustered around Cooper Alley between King Street and Albury Avenue, and make up the rest of the District at 24%. All of the zones in the District permit residential uses.

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



Zoning	Acre	%
HC - Highway Commercial	7.19	9%
HD - Historic	9.23	12%
LI2 - Light Industrial	0.001	0%
MR1 - Multi-Family Residential	11.25	14%
MR2 - Townhouse Residential	1.32	2%
UB1 - Urban Business	22.70	29%
UB2 - Neighborhood Business	18.47	24%
UB3 - Professional Business	1.72	2%
UR1 - Urban Residential	5.80	7%
UR2 - Medium Residential	0.11	0%
Total	77.80	100%

Development Potential

As shown on Map 4- Development Potential, there are numerous vacant and underutilized parcels that offer opportunities for compatible infill development. There are 36 vacant parcels totaling 13.33 acres and 13 parcels with infill potential totaling 6.5 acres. Lots with infill potential currently contain an occupied building or parking area, but are large enough with large yard areas to be subdivided and accommodate additional development under the current zoning regulations. It is further noted that while the parking areas are used to some extent, they may be underutilized and create unattractive dead spaces on the



streetscape. These lots offer an opportunity for higher and more beneficial uses that better fit the downtown historical context and character. As noted above, there is also retail space available in some existing buildings.

While the entire District is available for development, there are some highly visible and notable vacant lots and infill potential in prominent locations presenting a clear opportunity for infill development. There are multiple vacant and underutilized areas that are identified as prime opportunities for redevelopment. These vacant lands are considered an asset as they offer space to grow and an opportunity for infill development that fits within the context of the District vision and goals. Some examples from the District Survey for what the vacant lots and buildings could be used for include restaurants, niche retail and space for community events. As stated above there are many opportunities for redevelopment throughout the District, but there are four areas that have been identified as priority areas due to their high visibility, see Map 4- Development Potential and Table 5- Priority Redevelopment Areas.

Map Key	Location	Opportunities
A	Available retail space in existing buildings, large lots with large yards, and underutilized lots near Market Street	These vacant storefronts and lots are highly visible and offer opportunities for infill development that would fill in the gaps, define the street, and add pedestrian activity. There is also an opportunity for temporary uses such as pop-up venues, a farmers market, and other community events.
B	Vacant parcel and open land between Georgetown Square and United Methodist Church	Adjacent to the ballfields and currently used for community events, this area provides enormous potential for infill development and improved community gathering space.
C	Vacant parcels north of East Market Street and east of Parsons Lane	Redevelopment and improvements in this highly visible area would help provide a more attractive gateway for travelers entering the downtown from the west.
D	Vacant parcels to the west of N Railroad Ave	The 2021 Comprehensive Plan notes that there is opportunity for continued redevelopment of underused lands.

Connectivity

Walkability

Map 5- Transportation shows the road, sidewalk and bike route network within and surrounding the District. The center of Town is located at the intersection of two major arterial/collector state roads – Market Street (Route 9) and Bedford Street (Route 18 / 404). Both roads connect commuters to Route 113, and Route 9 is a major route to the Lewes-Rehoboth area. Airport Road directly connects the downtown and the Delaware Coastal Airport (formerly Sussex County Airport), which serves southern Delaware. This location and proximity to major access routes provides convenient access to surrounding areas,

which is a key asset and offers an opportunity for bringing more people into the downtown. It will be important that the downtown not be separated and that there be a regional draw and adequate signage bringing in travelers from Route 113 into the downtown.

It is noted that since the majority of the regional traffic occurs on Route 113 as an arterial bypass of the downtown, the downtown does not have major traffic problems similar to larger towns and cities. This has allowed Market Street to operate as a multi-function corridor meeting vehicular, biking and pedestrian needs. In general, the District is very pedestrian friendly as it is reasonably compact and has high connectivity within and to surrounding neighborhoods. Vehicular and pedestrian commuters are well-connected to employment, retail, professional and personal service, and recreational opportunities in the District. The District has a grid street network made up of narrow local roads, alleys and extensive sidewalks. Street blocks lengths are short and conducive to walking and biking. In most cases, the local road and intersection widths are narrow, which make it easier and safer for pedestrians to cross the street. The alleys provide access to rear parking areas for employees and residents, as well as places for trash/recycling pick-up and potential locations for some utilities and drainage.



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

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



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

In the future the rail line may act as a way to not only improve connectivity within the District but also to surrounding communities. The proposed Lewes to Georgetown Rail-with-Trail will be almost 17 miles of mixed-use trail running along the railroad from Georgetown's historic Train Station to Cape Henlopen State Park. The trail segment which arrives at Georgetown has already been constructed, and the remaining segments from Harbeson to Georgetown are presently being constructed, fully completing the trail all the way to Lewes. Amenities to the trail will include trailheads, mile markers and connections to other trails such as the popular Junction and Breakwater Trail. The Parsons Lane Trailhead is actively in development by the Town, which will be ready by the time the entire trail is completed in 2026. The Lewes to Georgetown Rail-Trail has the potential to improve connectivity, but will also act as a draw bringing people to the District and promoting health and wellness.

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

Another challenge includes reducing the amount and perception of crime within the downtown, which can influence a person's behavior on where, when and how people visit downtown. Almost 100% of people that took the Survey said they feel safe during the

daytime, time, but only two-thirds said they feel safe at night. Reasons varied as to why people felt unsafe but two reoccurring points were lack of people walking around and poor lighting. Providing lighting on unlit streets and parking areas, and having more “eyes on the streets” from places being open past 5 pm would help reduce crime and perceived fear of crime, which in turn encourages even more pedestrian activity.

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

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

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



The sidewalks end on Market Street near Albury Avenue so pedestrians have created their own path;

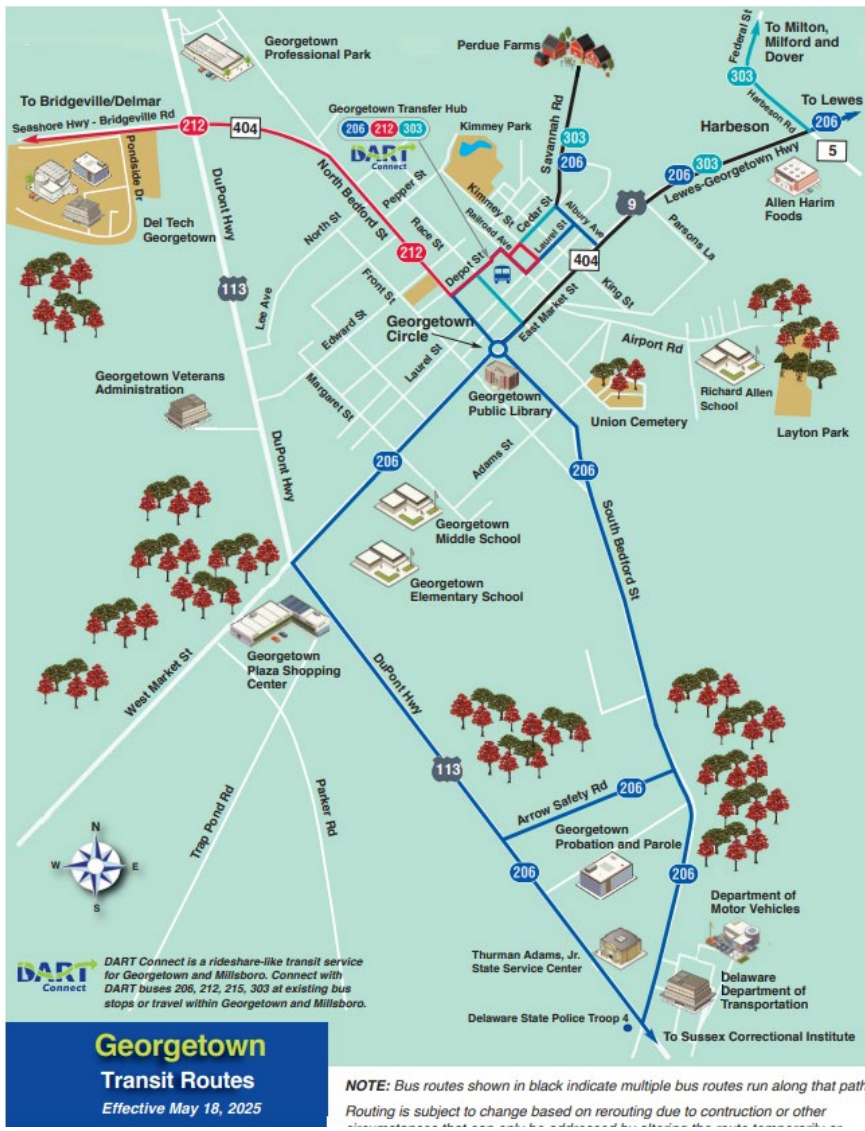
Providing a safe, comfortable, convenient and interesting pedestrian environment throughout the district and surrounding neighborhoods provides a clear competitive



advantage over suburban or highway commercial areas. As the District provides a greater regional draw, it will be important to maintain and enhance pedestrian connections and traffic calming features wherever possible.

Public Transit

There are three DART bus routes in town, as shown in Table 7. The main bus stop and regional hub for transfers between transit lines is located within the District at Railroad Avenue. Improvements to this area, such as increased lighting, landscaping and pedestrian connections, would help the station feel more comfortable and secure, and could help solidify the downtown as regional transportation hub in the long-term.



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

Gateways, Streetscape, and Public Spaces

The Downtown Development District has one of the most prominent gateways in The Circle and the County Administration Building steeple. These key features in the Historic District along with the downtown’s historic brick architecture and sidewalks, and streetscape amenities such as aesthetic lighting and banners, lets residents and visitors know that they have arrived in the historic downtown and provides a strong sense of place.

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



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

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



Georgetown Hair Studio reflects the architectural character of the historic downtown that has been preserved and enhanced through adaptive reuse;

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



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

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



The Circle offers a public space for residents and visitors to relax in Georgetown;

Parking

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

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

As noted in the section above, there are some parking areas in the downtown that may be underutilized, and in some cases, do not have improvements such as striping, clearly



designated access driveways and drive aisles, curbing and landscaping. These lots create unattractive dead spaces on the streetscape, and offer an opportunity for higher and more beneficial uses such as improved parking lots and/or infill development that better fits the downtown historical context and character.

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

The Comprehensive Plan also identifies the need to increase the parking supply without interrupting the “face” of the downtown along streets. There is an opportunity to acquire underutilized rear yards for public parking, which could be combined into one coordinated joint parking area. Joint parking spaces often results in a much higher number of parking spaces because the layout is more efficient. Another long-term opportunity is for the Town, the County and the State to jointly consider the construction of a parking structure in a strategic downtown location.

The Town’s parking regulations has some elements that are conducive to a walkable, mixed-use downtown environment than an auto-oriented commercial environment. Commercial and office uses are required to have one off-street parking space for each 200 square feet, which is high for a typical downtown; however to help remove any potential undue burden of complying with the parking requirements on property owners and developers, the regulations offer some alternatives. For instance, parking spaces may be provided on a separate lot if located within 400 feet of the building. In addition, two or more lot owners may join together towards complying with the required number of parking spaces. For instance, up to 100% of the spaces required for a church may be used jointly by banks, offices and retail and service shops.

While there are provisions in the Zoning Code which offer some flexibility, the code could be more prescriptive to provide greater certainty and predictability to builders and existing business owners wishing to make improvements to their lots. Property owners and prospective builders should be made aware of and encouraged to take advantage of these parking alternatives and credits. In addition, the code could allow a reduction in the number of spaces for proximity to on-street parking, municipal lots and public transit.



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



Unimproved parking areas such as these owned by Sussex County could have a better use appropriate for downtown. Many respondents in the Downtown Survey state they want improved parking conditions though these may be alleviated by the new Family Court parking garage

Natural Resources

Floodplain

The Downtown Development District is in an area of minimal flood hazard, with no special flood hazard areas mapped as of the latest FIRM publication of June 20, 2018.

Wetlands

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



Wellhead Protection

The full extent of the Downtown Development District lies within the Town's Wellhead Protection Areas, designated by DNREC. Georgetown adopted groundwater protection regulations in order to meet requirements of the State Source Water Protection Act of 2001. The purpose of Georgetown's Source Water Protection Area Ordinance is to ensure the protection of the public drinking water supply from contamination. While the entire DDD lies within the Town's Wellhead Protection Area, there are no delineated Excellent Recharge Areas within the Downtown Development District.

Historic Preservation

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

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

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

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

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

Recent Development and Impact of DDD

Not including the Family Court building and parking garage, the District has seen \$11,498,983.65 of capital investment measured by the value of building construction improvements. A full accounting of the investment impacts are below:



Georgetown DDD Projects

Rebate	Year	Project Name	Address	Development Type	Construction Type
Large (set-aside)	FY25	Bahar Opportunity Zone	208 & 210 N. Race Street	Mixed-Use	New Construction (in progress)
Large (set-aside)	FY25	Georgetown Apartments 2	700 Ingramtown Road	Residential	New Construction (in progress)
Small	FY25	Georgetown Mini Market, Inc	106 Railroad Ave.	Mixed-Use	New Construction
Small	FY24	Sussex County Habitat for Humanity (15)	211 Rosa St.	Residential	Rehab-Existing
Small	FY24	Sussex County Habitat for Humanity (16)	203 Rosa St.	Residential	New Construction
Small	FY24	Sussex County Habitat for Humanity (17)	207 Rosa St.	Residential	New Construction
Small	FY24	Sussex County Habitat for Humanity (19)	220 Kimmey St.	Residential	New Construction
Small	FY24	Sussex County Habitat for Humanity (18)	224 Kimmey St.	Residential	New Construction
Small	FY24	Sussex County Habitat for Humanity (20)	202 E. North St.	Residential	New Construction
Small	FY24	Sussex County Habitat for Humanity (21)	301 Rosa St.	Residential	New Construction
Small	FY24	Sussex County Habitat for Humanity (22)	303 Rosa St.	Residential	New Construction
Small	FY24	Sussex County Habitat for Humanity (23)	299 Rosa St.	Residential	New Construction
Large	FY24	Greenlea, LLC (3)	4 E. Laurel St.	Commercial	New Construction
Small	FY22	HP Layton Partnership	135 E. Market St.	Commercial	Rehab-Existing
Small	FY21	Epic Homes LLC	8 S. King St.	Residential	New Construction
Large	FY21	Jaelen LLC	201 E. Laurel St.	Mixed Use	New Construction



Small	FY20	Anchor Hope Investments LLC	413 E. Market St.	Commercial	Rehab-Existing
Small	FY18	Greenlea, LLC	32 The Circle	Commercial	Rehab-Existing
Small	FY18	H.P. Layton Partnership	131 E. Market St.	Commercial	Rehab-Existing
Small	FY17	Sussex County Habitat for Humanity (2)	11 N. Race St.	Residential	Rehab-Existing

Regarding the DDD’s effectiveness in increasing population: Georgetown’s estimated 2016 population of 6,917 (ACS 2016), and a 2020 population of 7,150 has increased significantly to an estimated 2024 population of 8,098. While population numbers are unavailable for smaller geographic units such as the DDD area, the growth in new and renovated residential units (see below) point to significant population growth.

Regarding the DDD’s effectiveness in creating jobs: From 2016 to today there has been an increase of over 100 jobs within the DDD – from 446 to 559. While many of those have come from the two Large Rebate projects in the area (the JB Wagamon building and Jaelen LLC/Splash Laundromat), there has been a noted increase in the number of small Hispanic restaurants and retail operations on and around North Race Street.

Regarding the DDD’s effectiveness in improving housing stock: A total of 11 new residences have been constructed which have taken advantage of the DDD Small Rebate, with at least 3 others likely to apply for the Small Rebate in the immediate future. An additional \$1,677,532.55 has been invested into existing single-family and multi-family units in the neighborhood. Habitat for Humanity’s construction of an office and warehouse in the district, which may likely apply for a receive a Small Rebate award as well, will further enhance their capability to deliver housing in the community. Georgetown Apartments II, an existing 49-unit affordable-housing project, is nearing final approval of 12 additional affordable units – the project has also been selected for a Large Project Reservation Award. Another affordable-housing project, Georgetown Apartments I, is going through the approval process of renovating all 79 of its units and improving accessibility to several of those units, where DDD incentives will significantly improve the financial viability of renovating these long-term affordable units.

Regarding the DDD’s effectiveness in providing enhanced retail and entertainment options: The district is responsible for enabling several small grocery store and restaurant operations along North Race Street...However, as reflected in the District Plan Update’s outreach surveys, there is significant progress still to be made on enhancing the



opportunities for diverse retail and entertainment options on East Market Street and elsewhere in the District as well.

Other Developments

Within the last ten years, several changes have occurred to provide affordable housing options to residents and those looking to relocate to Georgetown.

Georgetown successfully opened its first Pallet Village in 2023, housing 40 people who were previously experiencing homelessness. The project was funded by the American Rescue Plan, and is now also home to a community center, where residents can access a kitchen, office spaces, and community meeting rooms. This space will further allow residents of the pallet village to transition out of homelessness. The success rate has seen roughly 30% of residents transition to permanent housing, while approximately 10% have returned to homelessness over the last two years.

There is currently discussion surrounding the development of James Place – a single family residential to mixed residential community propose for the 22 acre parcel located on North Bedford Street. A public hearing was held on April 28th, 2025 to introduce the future land use map amendment to allow for the development. Habitat for Humanity would be in support of the project, using 20 of the properties for affordable housing.

The Town has seen the addition of the Family Court building as well as the future associated parking garage downtown as well, and has seen considerable development within the Kimmeytown area – resulting in the current request to expand the Downtown Development District Boundary to encourage the continued development of that area.

With the potential new developments coming to Georgetown, the Town is hopeful that the revitalization of downtown would occur organically – with more businesses and restaurants opening to support foot traffic and resident needs. Incentivizing this area through the DDD plan would assist in the growth necessary to allow for continued improvement downtown.