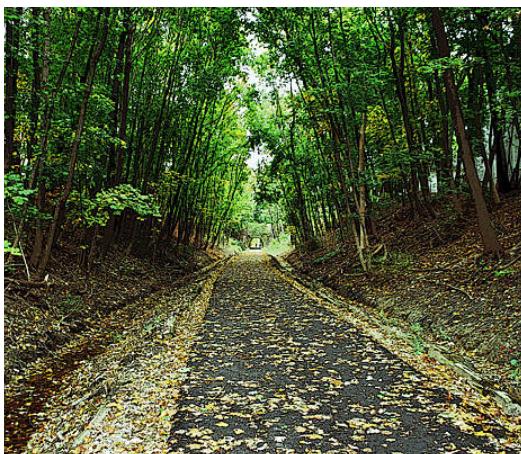




# A Pathway for the Future

## Planning for Future Land Use and Development



**City of Dover  
Master Plan  
January 13, 2026**



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The preparation of this Land Use Chapter would not have been possible without the insight, commitment, and collaboration of many individuals. The City of Dover extends its sincere appreciation to the Land Use Steering Committee and City staff, whose dedication and vision for Dover's future helped shape the direction and content of this chapter. Gratitude is also extended to the consulting team for their expertise and support throughout the planning process. The collective contributions of all involved are instrumental in guiding this important work.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. DOVER TODAY</b>	<b>4</b>
Land Use Trends and Issues	5
Existing Land Use Map	6
<b>3. WHERE WE ARE GOING</b>	<b>12</b>
Distinctly Dover Vision	13
<b>4. HOW WE WILL GET THERE</b>	<b>15</b>
Future Land Use Strategy	16
Future Land Use Map	17
Downtown	18
Integrated Development Areas	19
Primarily Residential Areas	20
<b>5. NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>23</b>
Implementation Resources	25
Action Matrix	26
<b>6. APPENDICES</b>	<b>30</b>
Existing Conditions Summary	
Polco Survey Results	



# 1. INTRODUCTION



**Dover has spent the past two decades laying the groundwork for a strong and vibrant future. As the fastest-growing City in New Hampshire, it has established a reputation for thoughtful land use planning, strategic investment, and community visioning. At the same time, the City recognizes there is still important work ahead.**

From its revitalized, walkable downtown to its growing mixed-use centers, well-maintained public spaces, and commitment to community resilience, Dover continues to evolve while staying true to what makes it distinct. Land use planning has played a central role in this success, guiding development to the right places, creating local assets, like the Community Trail, and supporting infrastructure improvements, while preserving the city's scenic riverfronts, rural areas, and distinctive neighborhoods.

Dover's Land Use Chapter builds on Dover's progress, aligning the next phase of land use strategies with the "Distinctly Dover" vision—ensuring that growth continues to reflect community values and enhances the quality of life for all who call Dover home.

## **PURPOSE OF DOVER'S LAND USE CHAPTER**

The 2035 Land Use Chapter of Dover's Master Plan offers a clear strategy and roadmap for guiding future growth while preserving the city's most valued resources—its vibrant downtown, diverse neighborhoods, historic charm, and natural landscapes—and addressing emergent challenges and issues that impact the city. Rooted in the Distinctly Dover Vision, the chapter provides direction for where and how development should occur, while balancing housing choice, economic opportunity, and environmental stewardship. Informed by recent planning efforts, local data, and broad community input, the chapter outlines a Future Land Use Strategy that supports infill development, redevelopment, and open space protection, ensuring Dover remains desirable, resilient, and inclusive for generations to come.

## **OUR COMMUNITY VALUES**

Dover's community values were shaped through a robust and inclusive outreach process during the creation of the city's Vision Master Plan Chapter that invited residents, business owners, and community members to share their priorities for the city's future. Through workshops, surveys, and public forums, participants consistently expressed a desire to preserve Dover's unique character while embracing thoughtful, sustainable growth. These community conversations highlighted values such as environmental stewardship, housing choice, walkability, civic participation, and respect for Dover's historic and natural assets. The resulting values reflect what people love most about Dover today—and their shared vision for what the city should continue to be tomorrow.

# 2. DOVER TODAY





# LAND USE TRENDS AND ISSUES

Dover is a growing city of over 33,000 residents, encompassing nearly 17,000 acres of land that includes a historic, walkable downtown, several emerging mixed-use development areas, and large tracts of open space and conserved land. The more densely developed portions of the city are balanced with the surrounding neighborhoods, working farms, forested hillsides, and scenic riverfront shorelines along the Cochecho and Bellamy Rivers that reflect the city's identity within the Seacoast region. These assets attract a wide variety of people and contribute to why so many residents choose Dover as a place to live, raise families, work, and age in place. As housing demand and development pressures increase, Dover has both the opportunity and responsibility to guide future growth in ways that support livability, economic resilience, and environmental stewardship.

## Existing Land Use

**Overall, Dover's land use pattern today reflects a thoughtful balance of urban vibrancy, residential neighborhoods, and rural landscapes.**

Residential uses make up the largest share of land use in the city—more than half (52%) of Dover's total land area—with a range of housing types that include compact neighborhoods near downtown and more dispersed, larger-lot homes in rural areas. Commercial and industrial development, which support Dover's strong and growing economy, is concentrated along key corridors like Route 108, Central Avenue, and Sixth Street, and together account for about 14% of the city's land.

Open space, conservation land, and undeveloped parcels are defining features of Dover's landscape. Roughly 22% of the city's land area is permanently conserved, helping to preserve natural resources and rural character. Separately, approximately 9% of the city—about 1,400 acres—is classified as vacant land, of which one-third overlaps with land already under permanent conservation. And, according to the 2020 Culture and Recreation Master Plan chapter, recreation properties account for ~8% of Dover's land area. As housing and economic development continues, particularly in mixed-use districts and infrastructure-supported areas, Dover must carefully direct growth to suitable locations while protecting its rural edges, agricultural lands, recreation assets, and natural resources.

Dover has 18 primary zoning districts and 9 overlay districts—each designed to regulate land use intensity, dimensional standards, and permitted activities. A significant portion of the city's land area is zoned for low-density residential development, with approximately 37% of parcels located in the R-20 and R-40 zoning districts. At the same time, Dover allows mixed uses (defined on page 16) throughout their zoning districts, reflecting the city's efforts to support development diversity and adaptability.

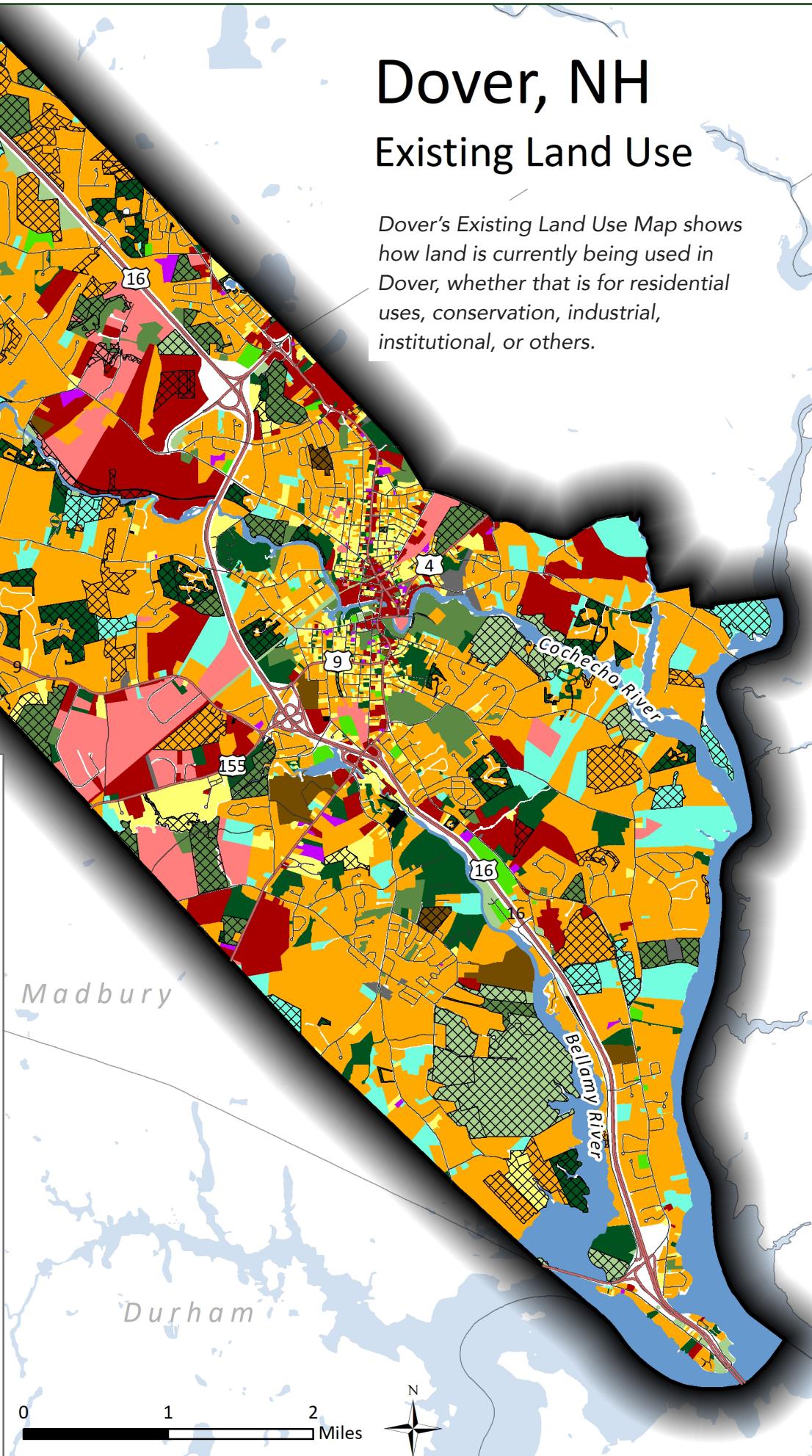
***However, there is an opportunity to continue working to modernize the zoning ordinance to better reflect the "Distinctly Dover" vision.*** This includes enabling a wider variety of housing types—especially small-scale infill and missing middle housing (defined on page 19)—and further supporting mixed-use design in appropriate locations that meet evolving housing, mobility, and sustainability goals.

Rochester

# Dover, NH

## Existing Land Use

Dover's Existing Land Use Map shows how land is currently being used in Dover, whether that is for residential uses, conservation, industrial, institutional, or others.



# Demographics and Housing

Dover is experiencing steady housing and population growth, but challenges remain in meeting the needs of all residents.



Dover's population grew by 9.4% between 2013 and 2023, making it the fastest-growing city in New Hampshire over that time period. The city is seeing an increase in single-person households, a growing senior population, and sustained demand from younger adults and families drawn to its many amenities and walkable neighborhoods. In 2023, Dover's median age was 37.6, similar to the county and below the state. Currently, the 25–34 age group is the largest, growing 37% from 2013–2023. School enrollment data indicates a decline in the number of school-age children attending Dover's public schools, reflecting broader census trends showing fewer youths in the community. Between 2019 and 2023, enrollment fell by 9%.



Although approximately 1,440 housing units are approved for construction in the coming years, housing costs in Dover continue to rise faster than incomes. Driven by a persistently tight housing market, the median home price in Dover rose by 36% between 2020–2023 resulting in a median home price of \$450,000 by March of 2025. Between 2013 and 2023, median rents nearly doubled, surpassing both county and state averages and placing growing pressure on younger residents, lower-income households, and the local workforce.



The homeownership rate—that is, the percentage of occupied homes that are owner-occupied—is about 51.3% in 2023, with a renter-occupied share of around 48.7%. Roughly 38% of renters are considered cost-burdened, paying more than 30% of their income on housing. And, Dover continues to be a high demand city, where people want to live and work. While new units are primarily multi-family developments and infill development near downtown, there remains a shortage of housing types that are

affordable and accessible across all life stages and income levels.

Land use policies play a key role in addressing these challenges. Encouraging compact, mixed-use development, further incentivizing accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and revisiting zoning standards can help support a broader range of housing types. *As demand grows, Dover will need to continue planning for housing in ways that support walkable neighborhoods, promote equity, and align new development with infrastructure and transportation access.*

## Economic Development

Dover's economy is growing steadily, driven by strong employment in healthcare, education, and professional services. The city has become a regional job center with increasing demand for mixed-use development and supportive infrastructure.



Dover's economy plays a central role in shaping land use needs and trends throughout the city. With over 1,500 business establishments, according to the 2020 U.S Census, Dover is the largest employment center in Strafford County and among the top ten employment hubs in New Hampshire. Major employers include Wentworth-Douglass Hospital, Lincoln Financial Group, and Community Partners.



These institutions, among others, clustered in and around downtown, along the Route 108 corridor, and near the hospital campus, drive demand for transportation infrastructure, commercial space, and housing to support a growing workforce. Dover's Central Business District also remains an important commercial area in the city, featuring a diverse array of businesses, offices, and service providers. As Dover continues to experience population and job growth, land use planning will play a critical role in ensuring space for economic expansion while maintaining the city's livability.

To support continued economic vitality, Dover's planning efforts must balance commercial growth with quality design, housing affordability, transportation needs, and the preservation of open space. Economic growth in healthcare, education, professional services, and advanced manufacturing requires thoughtful land use strategies that direct new development toward designated nodes and corridors. ***By aligning land use policies with economic priorities, Dover can sustain its momentum as a regional employment center while reinforcing its identity as a vibrant, inclusive, and well-designed city.***

## Transportation

Dover is increasingly prioritizing multimodal transportation—expanding its pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and rail infrastructure—to support walkable development, reduce congestion, and align future land use investments with sustainable mobility options.



Dover's transportation system plays a critical role in shaping land use patterns and supporting future development. Major corridors like Central Avenue, Sixth Street, and Broadway serve

as critical arteries for both local circulation and regional access. Traffic congestion—especially during peak commuting hours—has become a challenge in some areas.



At the same time, the presence of the Amtrak Downeaster station positions Dover as a regional hub for rail transit, enhancing access to Boston, Portland, and beyond and supporting transit-oriented development opportunities near the station.



Land use and transportation are closely linked in Dover's growth strategy. The city is actively promoting multimodal connectivity and walkable developments, especially in its downtown and surrounding mixed-use areas, and safe streets for all users, including youth traveling to school. Improvements to sidewalk networks, bicycle infrastructure, and intersection safety continue to be essential to supporting higher-density, pedestrian-oriented land use in these locations. ***Dover's ongoing planning efforts aim to align future land use decisions with investments in transportation infrastructure to ensure that new development is accessible, efficient, and consistent with the city's sustainability and mobility goals.***





## Community Resilience

Dover's community resilience efforts focus on sustainable land use, proactive climate adaptation, and thoughtful infrastructure planning that protects natural resources while supporting a healthy, connected, and prepared community.



Dover's approach to land use planning is increasingly centered on building community resilience—ensuring that people, infrastructure, neighborhoods, and ecosystems are prepared for and can adapt to changing environmental conditions. As a city within the Seacoast region with waterfront areas, Dover is vulnerable to flooding, sea level rise, and more frequent extreme weather events. In response, the city is incorporating resilience planning into zoning, infrastructure investments, and capital improvement decisions to reduce risks and improve safety for residents and businesses. This includes mapping hazard areas, supporting and deploying green infrastructure, and encouraging development patterns that reduce exposure to climate threats.



Community resilience in Dover also means protecting the systems and places that contribute to quality of life. To that point, climate resilient lands were also a priority in the 2024 Open Space & Conservation Chapter of the Master Plan. Preserving wetlands, forests, and open space helps manage stormwater and buffer neighborhoods from natural hazards. At the same time, promoting compact, energy-efficient, and walkable development can lower emissions and reduce long-term infrastructure costs. ***As Dover continues to grow, integrating resilience into land use policies will help ensure that neighborhoods remain safe, livable, and sustainable in the face of future challenges.***

### ***Land use impacts everything.***

Land use planning is a crucial process that shapes many aspects of our community. It determines how we travel within our community, the look and feel of our neighborhoods and public spaces, where homes are built, how traffic flows, the locations of parks, and what types of businesses are permitted.

Thoughtful land use planning protects what people value most—scenic views, natural resources, and neighborhood character—while guiding new development to the right places with the right infrastructure. Planning balances growth and preservation, supports affordability and walkability, and helps create livable, inclusive, and resilient communities. Local policies, regulations, and investments ultimately shape the kind of place a community becomes.

# A SNAPSHOT OF DATA

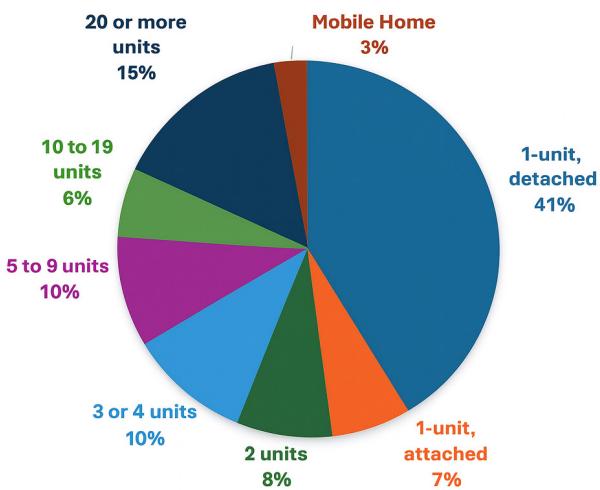
## 2024 MAJOR EMPLOYERS IN DOVER

Business Name	Industry	Employees
Wentworth-Douglass Hospital	Healthcare Services	2,668
Lincoln Financial Group	Financial Services	1,032
Community Partners	Counseling and Mental Health Services	494
Strafford County	County	487
Dover Schools/SAU 11	Education	410
City of Dover	Local Government Services	363
Stonewall Kitchen	Manufacturing	225
Hannaford Supermarkets (combined locations)	Retail/Distribution	118
HiRel Systems/Vishay	Manufacturing	94
Randy Whitney	Manufacturing	54
Nemo Equipment	Manufacturing	38
Forward Merch	Manufacturing	37
Agility Manufacturing	Manufacturing	36
Reylco	Distribution	28
Children's Museum of NH	Arts and Entertainment	14

Source: City of Dover (includes only those businesses that responded to employer outreach)

## HOUSING UNIT TYPES IN DOVER

2023 5-YEAR AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY ESTIMATES



## MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME TRENDS

Med. Household Income	2013	2023	Growth Rate
Strafford County	\$58,825	\$84,869	+44.2%
Dover	\$57,389	\$92,748	+61.6%
Durham	\$71,250	\$126,658	+77.7%
Portsmouth	\$64,577	\$105,756	+63.7%
Somersworth	\$53,223	\$79,677	+49.7%
Rochester	\$62,398	\$79,388	+27.2%

Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## HOUSING COST TRENDS

Year	Median Purchase Prices			Median Rental Prices		
	Dover	Strafford County	NH	Dover	Strafford County	NH
2013	\$248,475	\$200,000	\$220,000	\$953	\$942	\$1,108
2014	\$243,500	\$210,000	\$219,000	\$958	\$974	\$1,037
2015	\$228,100	\$205,000	\$221,000	\$1,026	\$992	\$1,069
2016	\$233,500	\$211,500	\$230,000	\$1,073	\$1,043	\$1,113
2017	\$268,000	\$229,000	\$240,000	\$1,143	\$1,108	\$1,143
2018	\$290,000	\$244,900	\$254,000	\$1,166	\$1,146	\$1,177
2019	\$288,000	\$255,000	\$270,000	\$1,347	\$1,259	\$1,251
2020	\$315,000	\$284,500	\$302,300	\$1,439	\$1,210	\$1,283
2021	\$365,000	\$320,000	\$350,000	\$1,470	\$1,356	\$1,373
2022	\$403,000	\$390,000	\$400,000	\$1,801	\$1,518	\$1,510
2023	\$430,000	\$390,000	\$418,000	\$1,981	\$1,571	\$1,644

Source: New Hampshire Housing and Finance Authority

# A SNAPSHOT OF COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Feedback collected from residents on the complexity of land use planning in Dover indicated some tensions that should be recognized. This feedback illustrates some foundational dilemmas for Dover to be aware of while implementing this Chapter. These are not problems to solve, but priorities to balance in the years ahead:

- **Growth and Preservation:**

Residents value targeted growth and also emphasize preserving open spaces, rural character, and wildlife habitat.

- **Housing Diversity and Neighborhood Integrity:**

The need for affordable, flexible housing options (including accessory dwelling units and rental units) appears alongside a strong desire to maintain established neighborhood character and support homeownership.

- **Fiscal Sustainability and Quality of Life:**

Some residents stress thoughtful development to support the tax base and fund city services, while others worry about impacts on long-term livability, community feel, walkability, access to amenities, and rising costs.

These notable tensions — growth/preservation, housing diversity/neighborhood integrity, fiscal sustainability/quality of life — are important to understand. They each need to be addressed as dual priorities, not solved separately. By recognizing the need for this work we have a better chance of accessing the upsides of each and avoiding the downsides.



# 3. WHERE WE ARE GOING



As the city implements a future land use strategy that reflects community priorities, growth trends, and the existing land use pattern, it's important to keep in mind Dover's recently adopted Vision Statement and Pillars. The Future Land Use Strategy presented in this chapter is a direct expression of the **Distinctly Dover Vision**, adopted as part of the Vision Chapter on July 25, 2023. This vision translates community values into a geographic strategy for how and where the city should grow. It reflects the community's desire for walkable neighborhoods, a thriving downtown, protected natural resources, housing choices, and resilient infrastructure. By aligning land use policies and investments with this vision, the strategy helps ensure that growth in Dover is intentional, inclusive, and reinforces what makes the city special.

# VISION PILLARS

## **1. We are a welcoming, connected, and engaged community with a high level of civic participation and a transparent, responsible local government.**

Dover fosters meaningful civic engagement by providing consistent opportunities for residents to participate in decision-making and community life. The City prioritizes clear communication, accessible information, and responsive governance to build trust and strengthen community connections.

## **2. We are a City with an emerging urban vibrancy, guided by intentional growth to create connected neighborhoods, attractive streetscapes, and accessible open space, while maintaining what makes Dover distinct.**

Growth is directed toward walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods with high-quality design, complete streets, and convenient access to parks and open space. Development respects historic character while promoting compact land use patterns, infill, and connectivity between neighborhoods.

## **3. We have an attractive, thriving downtown, connected to a lively waterfront, that serves as a City center and gathering place, and is known as a destination for visitors, businesses, and community events.**

Downtown and the waterfront function as vibrant social, cultural, and economic hubs with active public spaces, diverse businesses, and community gathering areas. Pedestrian-oriented design, enhanced public amenities, and seamless connections to surrounding neighborhoods support year-round activity.

# VISION PILLARS

## **4. We have affordable and attainable housing and support services that are accessible to, and utilized by, individuals, families, and households of diverse backgrounds and needs.**

Dover's vision emphasizes a diverse mix of housing types across income levels, ages, and household sizes, supported by policies that increase availability and reduce barriers. Integration of housing with transportation, services, and amenities ensures households can thrive and access daily needs.

## **5. We are a community committed to supporting, attracting, and expanding business and employment opportunities that foster economic growth and community well-being.**

The City supports a resilient and diverse economy by nurturing local businesses, attracting new industries, and providing space and infrastructure for job growth. Workforce development, entrepreneurship, and strategic economic planning ensure long-term prosperity and broad community benefit.

## **6. We have a robust transportation system that encourages safe and appealing pedestrian, transit, and other alternative transportation options that connect us to the broader region.**

Dover prioritizes multimodal mobility through safe sidewalks, bike routes, transit access, and transportation options that reduce reliance on cars. Regional connections and complete streets improve accessibility, safety, and convenience for all travelers.

## **7. We have outstanding schools, recreation, and cultural activities for all ages, and our community organizations collaborate to provide us a strong foundation and promising future.**

High-quality education, diverse recreation opportunities, and strong cultural assets contribute to residents' quality of life. Partnerships among schools, nonprofits, and cultural institutions expand programming, foster lifelong learning, and build a vibrant, inclusive community.

## **8. We are leaders in incorporating innovation to create resilient and environmentally focused infrastructure, energy, and utility systems to responsibly steward our resources and cherished environment.**

The City advances environmental sustainability through resilient infrastructure, renewable energy, modern utility systems, and climate adaptation strategies. Stewardship of natural resources—such as water, open space, and ecological systems—ensures long-term environmental health and community resilience.

# 4. HOW WE WILL GET THERE





The **Future Land Use Strategy**, provides a visual overview of how land use change, new development activity, infrastructure investment, and resource protection will be guided over the next ten years and beyond. It examines the distinct areas of the community and describes how land use activity will be guided in different ways depending on the location, existing character, desired character, opportunities, and needs of those areas. The Strategy also brings forward elements of Dover's other Master Plan Chapters and incorporates them into a broad policy statement that is a companion to the vision statement. Together they will guide the city over the next decade. Overall, Dover's Future Land Use Strategy aims to balance development needs with the protection of natural resources and open space assets.

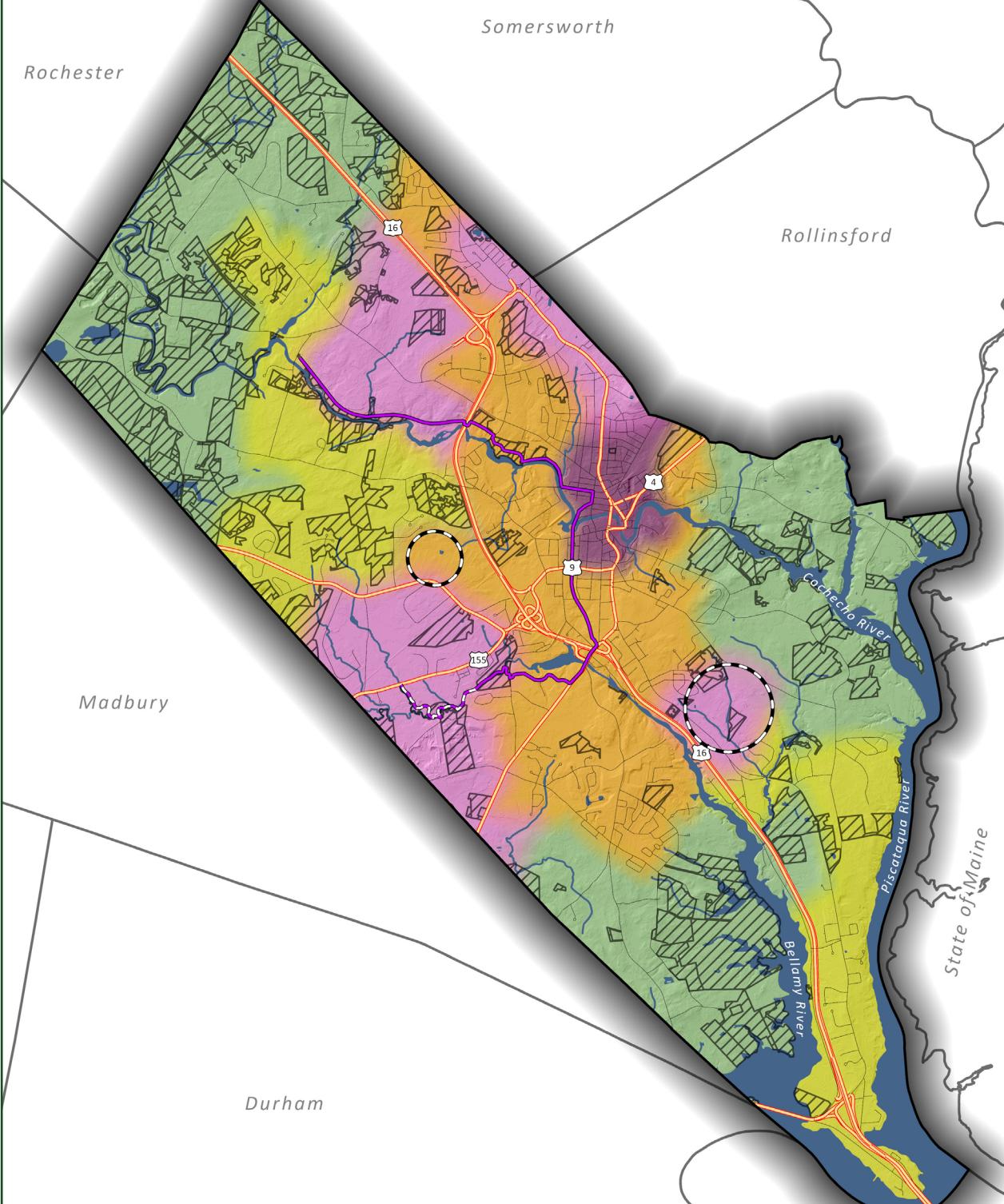
The **Future Land Use Map**, shown on page 15, is the visual representation of the Strategy and illustrates primary areas where land use will be guided and shaped. These areas include:

- **Downtown** - which serves as the anchor and community hub within the city
- **Integrated Development Areas** - with two identified village centers for compact, mixed use development and areas characterized by existing or expanding industrial and commercial uses
- **Primarily Residential Areas** - with three sub-areas that each have their own character, land use pattern, and level of development intensity

Each of these areas is connected, to varying degrees, by Dover's transportation network, while the city's open space and conservation land weave between developed areas.

# City of Dover, NH Future Land Use Map

- City boundary
- Major road
- Other road
- Waterbody
- Stream
- Community Trail
- Community Trail Extension
- Conserved land
- Integrated Development Area
- Downtown
- Primarily Residential Areas
- Area 1
- Area 2
- Area 3
- Village Centers



Map created by:  
Resilience Planning & Design  
July 2025  
Data sources: City of Dover,  
RP&D, GRANIT

0 1 2 Miles

This map is intended to be for planning purposes  
only and serves as a tool for guiding future  
regulatory and non-regulatory changes in town.



# DOWNTOWN

**Dover's Downtown is the heart of the city—a place where people come to connect, gather, and experience a sense of community.**

Dover aims to focus on increasing mixed-use activity—residential, commercial, and social—in this area to support a vibrant sense of place where people can live, shop, dine, recreate, and work. To this end, future land use change in the Downtown will prioritize infill development and the thoughtful redevelopment of underutilized sites that enhance the area's character and vitality. This activity-rich district should continue to be a hub for small business development and entrepreneurship, fostering spaces where businesses can thrive and residents can easily access goods, services, and jobs within walking distance of their homes.

To strengthen community connections, the Downtown must support a mix of housing types—ranging from upper-story units in mixed-use buildings and medium- to large-scale multi-family housing—designed to fit seamlessly into the historic fabric. The vision is for a mixed income Downtown to ensure a diverse and inclusive community where people of all ages and incomes can live and engage with one another.

To this end, the Downtown should offer a higher level of activity and intensity than other areas of the city, while remaining welcoming, accessible, and human-scaled. Continued use of form-based zoning and design standards will guide redevelopment that is context sensitive and integrates harmoniously with existing structures while supporting a walkable, attractive streetscape. Prioritizing public access to the waterfront, open space areas, and green infrastructure is equally important—because Dover aims to bring nature into the city center to support community

**WHAT IS MIXED-USE?** Mixed use refers to development that combines residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, or industrial uses within a single building, site, or neighborhood, designed to promote walkability, reduce reliance on cars, and create vibrant, connected communities.

**WHAT IS MULTIMODAL?** Multimodal transportation refers to a system that supports multiple forms of travel—such as walking, biking, driving, and public transit—ensuring people can move safely and efficiently using the mode that best suits their needs.

well-being, environmental sustainability, and climate resilience. Public parks, the riverfront, and green corridors are essential gathering places that promote social cohesion and access to nature for all.

Transportation connectivity is also a central goal. Dover intends to create safe, multimodal routes that link Downtown to other parts of the city, especially the surrounding neighborhoods and mixed-use nodes—making it easy to get there by foot, bike, bus, or car. Reducing car dependence and encouraging walkability and transit use will improve accessibility, reduce congestion, and support Dover's climate and sustainability goals. A Downtown for everyone means accessible public spaces, affordable housing options, and inclusive community design that fosters civic pride, prosperity, and connection.

## NATURE-BASED CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

**NATURE BASED CLIMATE SOLUTIONS** are strategies that use natural systems—such as forests, wetlands, rivers, and soils—to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve resilience to climate impacts, and enhance overall ecosystem health. These solutions include protecting and restoring forests, expanding tree canopy in urban areas, conserving wetlands to manage flooding, and using green infrastructure like rain gardens and vegetated buffers to absorb stormwater. Integrating these strategies into zoning, subdivision design, and land use planning supports climate resilience while enhancing quality of life and preserving Dover's natural character.



# INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT AREAS

## Dover's Integrated Development Areas are characterized by a blend of commercial, light industrial and residential land uses.

Some serve as key entry corridors into the city, while others are distinct mixed use development nodes or active industrial parks. These areas—such as the Central Avenue corridor, the Spaulding Turnpike exits, and the Knox Marsh Road and Littleworth Road corridors—offer critical opportunities to:

- promote mixed-use development that support both economic and housing goals
- encourage growth of high-employment commercial and industrial development (such as manufacturing, life sciences, or medical sectors), and;
- support Dover's growing workforce and existing businesses, while reinforcing Dover's identity as a dynamic, connected community.

While each of these areas has its own mix of uses and distinct character, the intent is to encourage the transformation of corridors into multi-modal, walkable, internally connected places, similar to the Pointe Place development off of Dover Point Road, where commercial and residential development coexist in cohesive neighborhoods. Littleworth Road presents a promising opportunity for future development that aligns with Dover's land use and economic goals. Situated near existing infrastructure and in close proximity to employment centers, the area is well-positioned to support a mix of light industrial, commercial, and potentially residential development. Improved transportation connections from Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods to Littleworth Road are a priority, especially to enhance access for the local workforce and reduce reliance on personal

vehicles. With strategic planning, this corridor can support job creation, increase tax revenue, and serve as a key mixed-use employment hub in Dover's future growth strategy.

Future land use policy should promote redevelopment and infill development that includes a diversity of housing types—from single-family homes to townhouses and multi-family dwellings—alongside retail, office, and service-oriented businesses. However, existing industrial development should also be maintained, as it plays an important and unique role in the city's economy. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs can be strategically used to focus growth in these areas, relieving development pressure from more rural parts of the city.

Given their proximity to the Community Trail, many of these areas are well-positioned to support sustainable, multimodal transportation that could also serve as city-wide connectivity corridors. As development continues, future investments should expand and connect the Community Trail to each Integrated Development Area and to the Downtown and key residential neighborhoods. Improved transit service and road connections—particularly between Downtown, Dover's industrial parks, and Littleworth Road—will be essential to better serve workers, residents, and businesses.

In areas such as the Central Avenue and Knox Marsh corridors, land use planning must also consider natural resource protection. These gateways contain important groundwater recharge areas that should be preserved through smart design, open space integration, and low-impact development practices. The goal is to guide growth that is vibrant, inclusive, and environmentally responsible, while strengthening transportation access, housing diversity, and economic

# PRIMARILY RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Dover's Primarily Residential Areas vary from each other by their intensity of development and the mix of land use activity, but they are all similar because residential uses are the predominant land use type. There are three distinct primarily residential areas in Dover where the primary focus is on maintaining and creating neighborhoods that have a distinct sense of place and community, ensuring a variety of housing types for people of all ages, incomes, and abilities, and balancing the protection of natural resources as future development occurs.

## AREA 1:

Encircling Dover's vibrant Downtown, this area serves as a critical transition between the city center and the more suburban and rural parts of the community. It encompasses neighborhoods found in parts of Central Avenue and Back River Road and within the Heritage Residential District, such as the Silver Street and Locust Street neighborhoods. It is characterized by a higher intensity of development, walkable streets, diverse housing types, and a strong sense of identity. Dover envisions these neighborhoods remaining primarily residential, supported by thoughtful infill and redevelopment that reinforces their historic charm and neighborhood character.

These neighborhoods currently include a variety of housing options—from single-family homes to accessory dwelling units, two-, three-, and four-family structures. Dover intends to preserve this diversity to promote multigenerational and transitional housing that can meet the needs of residents at different life stages and income levels. Any new development or redevelopment should reflect the established scale and pattern of the neighborhood, ensuring that change integrates smoothly with its surroundings while building on the area's history and character.

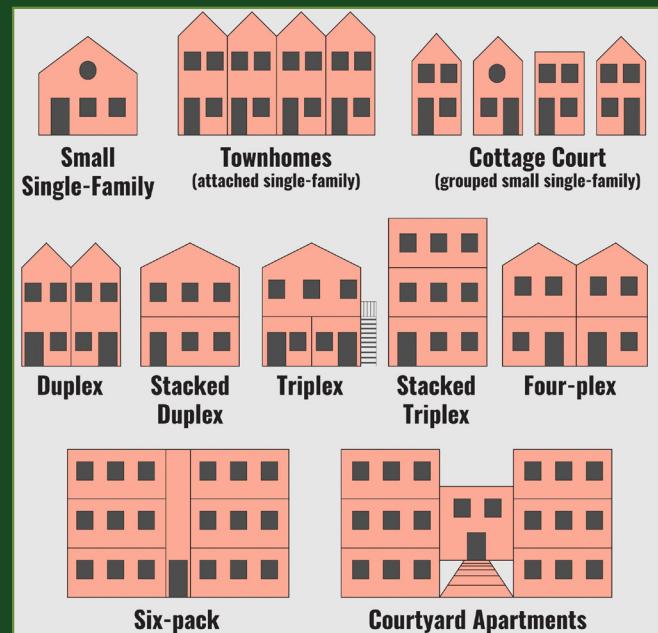
Maintaining strong connections—both physical and social—is central to the future of these neighborhoods. These areas are well-served by sidewalks and are ideal for biking and walking, especially for residents commuting to Downtown or accessing nearby parks, schools, and civic spaces. Improving these connections further—through bike infrastructure, safe crossings, and greenways—will support active transportation and strengthen neighborhood-to-downtown ties. Portions of these neighborhoods also connect to Dover's surrounding conserved lands along the Bellamy and Cochecho Rivers, offering opportunities for outdoor recreation and deeper integration with the city's natural landscape.



## EXPANDING DOVER'S HOUSING DIVERSITY

Dover is aiming to create a balanced and diverse housing stock within the city. Often this is referred to as missing middle housing or a range of housing types—such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhomes, and cottage courts—that offer a scale between single-family homes and large apartment buildings. These housing types can blend into existing neighborhoods while providing more diverse, attainable options for residents of all phases of life.

In Dover, missing middle housing can be thoughtfully integrated across a variety of land use areas—from infill housing above shops in the Downtown, to small clusters of duplexes in walkable neighborhood corridors, to open space subdivisions in more semi-rural areas that offer smaller homes while preserving natural resources. This flexibility helps support affordability, walkability, and a vibrant community fabric across the city.



## AREA 2:

This area represents transitional residential development that bridges the city's in-town neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown with its more rural and conservation-focused residential development on the outskirts of Dover. This area is characterized by conventional single-family housing patterns, including open space subdivision developments, typically found in the R-40 district, with some areas served by municipal sewer and water infrastructure. The layout of these areas supports gradual shifts in development intensity—from higher-density areas via main roads and sidewalks to low-density areas via smaller roads, trails, and green buffers.

Dover envisions these neighborhoods continuing to function as primarily residential places that offer privacy, community, and connectivity. Future development should promote compatible alternative housing options such as smaller-lot single-family homes, duplexes, or cottage-style subdivisions where

appropriate. Continuing to encourage open space subdivision designs in this area can help protect Dover's valuable groundwater resources and wildlife habitat—particularly important in this part of the city—while also introducing more attainable housing types that support a broader range of household needs.

While commercial uses are not envisioned within these neighborhoods themselves, maintaining strong non-vehicular connections to services and amenities remains a high priority. Many subdivisions in this area have included open space set-asides, though much of this land is currently not publicly accessible. Over time, expanding the network of open space set-asides could strengthen neighborhood identity while displaying the creative balance Dover strikes between development and natural resource protection.

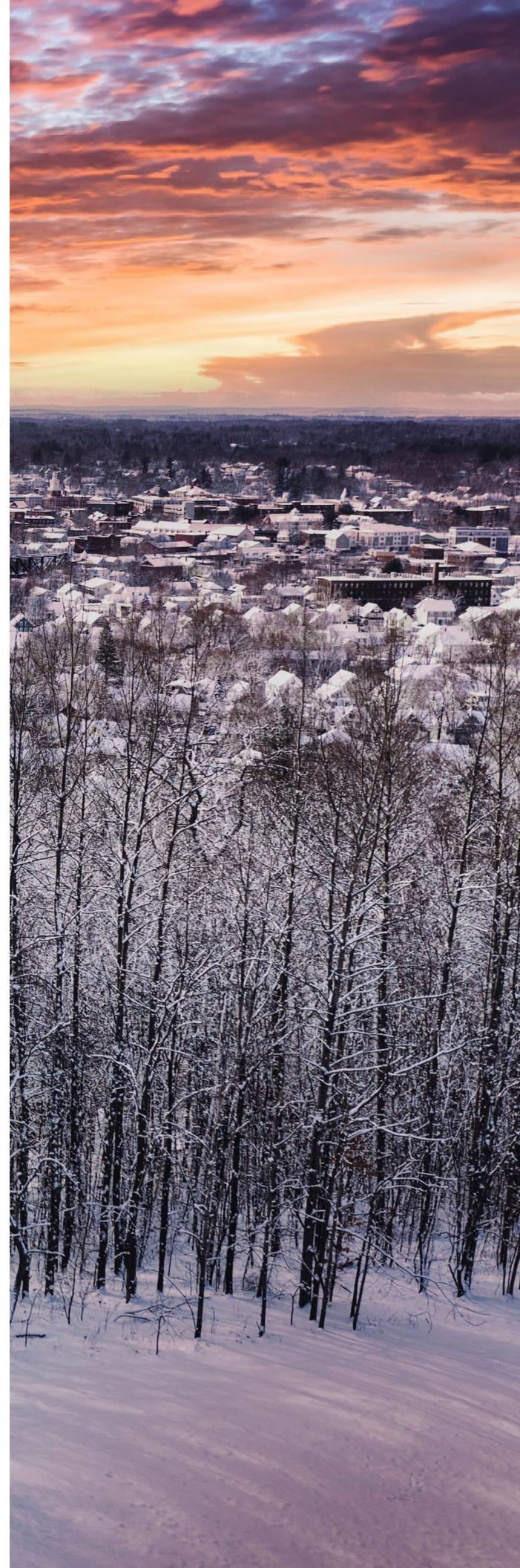
## AREA 3:

These areas, located primarily in the southern, northwestern, and eastern parts of the city, are defined by their interspersed residential neighborhoods, scenic landscapes, important wildlife habitats, forested land, and natural resources that provide vital ecosystem services—including flood mitigation, water quality protection, carbon storage, and recreational benefits. They reflect the city's commitment to protecting its natural assets, supporting climate resilience, and maintaining the open spaces that many residents value.

Dover aims to preserve the natural character of these areas to support environmental health, biodiversity, and climate resilience. To this end, land use policies should prioritize permanent open space conservation and encourage residential development patterns that are compatible with natural resource protection. Most land in these areas is low-density residential, typically featuring larger single-family lots, or conservation land. However, Dover can guide future development by encouraging or requiring open space subdivisions where appropriate. This approach protects priority environmental areas while allowing for a more diverse range of single-family homes—including smaller, more affordable homes—within a rural context.

In certain parts of the city, open space priorities overlap with residential land use. For example, conserved lands in southern portions of Dover support critical climate resilience objectives such as stormwater absorption and habitat connectivity, while the northwest and eastern conservation areas contain significant wildlife corridors. These goals should shape future land use decisions, with a focus on preserving contiguous open space, maintaining ecosystem functions, and avoiding habitat fragmentation.

Some of these areas are served by municipal water and sewer, while others rely on private wells and septic systems, making thoughtful planning around infrastructure particularly important. As the city continues to grow, enhancing trail connectivity, signage, and bike/pedestrian access will be key to integrating these lands into Dover's broader recreation and mobility network. The goal is to create lasting public and environmental benefits while allowing for limited, well-designed development that is sensitive to the natural setting.



# 5. NEXT STEPS





**The following implementation actions are designed to help Dover translate its future land use strategy and vision into action - supporting intentional growth, protecting natural resources, and preserving the character and vitality of our neighborhoods.**

Grounded in community input, local data, and best practices in planning, the recommendations provide a roadmap for how zoning, infrastructure investments, and conservation efforts can work together to promote affordability, sustainability, resilience, and a high quality of life for all residents. Dover has a long history of carefully tracking and reporting on Master Plan implementation efforts, and the effort to implement this chapter will be no different.

These recommendations are organized by type of activity and identify the local department and entities that will be most responsible for carrying out the actions. Each action also identifies a time period for implementation. The following are the time periods for implementation:

- Ongoing Actions, which are continuous or are already being carried out
- Immediate Actions, which should be undertaken in 1-2 years
- Short Term Actions, which should be undertaken within 3-5 years
- Long Term Actions, which will take more than 5 years to be initiated or completed

# IMPLEMENTATION RESOURCES

This Master Plan chapter was informed by these resources, and they should continue to be instrumental in working towards the vision for future land use in Dover.

## DOVER'S MASTER PLAN

Dover's Master Plan is a long-range planning document that outlines the community's vision and strategic goals to guide future growth, development, and preservation efforts. The Land Use Chapter is interrelated to other chapters like the 2023 Vision Chapter, the 2024 Open Space and Conservation Chapter, and the 2016 Stewardship of Resources Chapter, and should work cohesively together.

## NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY

Dover's Natural Resource Inventory identifies and maps the city's critical environmental assets—such as wetlands, floodplains, wildlife habitats, forests, and groundwater resources—to support informed land use decisions and long-term resource protection. This should be a driving resource in future open space protection efforts.

## 2024 LAND USE REGULATION AUDIT REPORT

Dover's 2024 Land Use Regulation Audit Report provides a comprehensive review of the city's zoning and development regulations, identifying barriers to housing diversity, sustainability, and economic development, and offering recommendations to modernize and streamline the code. This should be a helpful resource in determining future zoning changes, especially pertaining to housing, as they align with the future land use vision.

## 2023 CITYWIDE RESILIENCE PLAN

The Citywide Resilience Plan outlines strategies to prepare Dover for climate-related risks, promote sustainability, and strengthen the city's ability to adapt and thrive in the face of environmental

and social change. This should guide the city as it works towards maintaining and ensuring a sustainable land use pattern that meets the city's resiliency goals.

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Dover's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) outlines the city's planned investments in public infrastructure, facilities, and equipment over a multi-year period, helping prioritize projects that support growth, safety, and quality of life. Dover's Capital Improvement Program supports implementation of the Land Use Chapter by prioritizing infrastructure investments in designated growth areas, guiding development, and aligning budgeted projects with long-term goals for livability, sustainability, and resilience.

## THE DOVER BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY'S STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This Plan outlines a forward-looking strategy to strengthen the city's economic vitality by supporting business growth, workforce development, and placemaking initiatives that align with Dover's community values and long-term vision. As the city directs business growth strategically in the city, this will be a resource to ensure consistency with economic development efforts and ensure they are grounded in the city's vision for future land use.

## SRPC REGIONAL MASTER PLAN

The Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) is updating its regional plan in 2026 that will guide land use, housing, transportation, economic development, natural resources, and quality-of-life policies across its 18 member municipalities. This updated plan will serve as a strategic tool for coordinating cross-town policies, projects, and investments over the coming decade.

The following action items will be tracked and reported on annually to clarify progress being made on implementation efforts.

ACTION MATRIX FOR DOVER'S LAND USE CHAPTER				
#	Action Item	Priority (High, Med, Low)	Timeframe (Long, Med, Short, Ongoing)	Responsible Party
<b>1. Transportation</b>				
1.1	Improve multi-modal connectivity, including bike and pedestrian infrastructure, between mixed-use nodes and key destinations (e.g., Pointe Place, Downtown, neighborhoods, businesses, schools) to reduce car dependence and improve safety.			
1.2	Implement recommendations from Dover's recently completed Transit Access Study, which identifies future investments to address needed last-mile access improvements. Last-mile access improvements enhance the connection between major transportation routes and final destinations by adding sidewalks, bike paths, and other facilities that make it easier and safer to walk, bike, or take transit.			
1.3	Monitor Amtrak and Downtown transit loop ridership to inform future transit investments.			
1.4	Continue to expand, and improve, the Community Trail to further connect distinct areas of the Dover.			
1.5	Continue to strategically expand public EV charging infrastructure and promote this infrastructure as part of a broader economic development strategy to increase visitation to Dover's Downtown and other key destinations.			
<b>2. Housing</b>				
2.1	Review, prioritize, and implement recommendations aimed at addressing Dover's housing challenges provided by the Ad-Hoc Committee to Address Community Housing Needs. These include actions like increasing community engagement and education on the benefits of affordable housing and housing programs, expanding affordable and workforce housing options, addressing homelessness and housing insecurity.			
2.2	Expand opportunities for Missing Middle Housing by allowing a wider range of 2–4 unit dwellings by right in appropriate zoning districts, in an effort to increase housing diversity and walkable neighborhood living.			
2.3	Promote mixed-income neighborhoods by implementing equitable housing policies that ensure a range of housing options within new developments, supporting economic diversity and housing choice throughout the city.			

#	Action Item	Priority (High, Med, Low)	Timeframe (Long, Med, Short, Ongoing)	Responsible Party
2.4	Encourage the development of pocket neighborhoods and cottage courts—small clusters of homes oriented around shared open space—to provide diverse, community-scaled housing options that fit within existing neighborhoods. Update zoning and design standards to allow this form of infill development in walkable areas while maintaining or enhancing the character of existing neighborhoods.			
2.5	Promote adaptive reuse of existing structures and historic buildings to support housing and mixed-use development opportunities while preserving Dover's architectural character.			
2.6	Incentivize mixed-income and upper-story housing in the Downtown to foster diversity and livability.			
2.7	Continue to identify and promote financing tools that make it easier for homeowners to build or convert accessory units, expanding housing options for residents of all ages and incomes.			
2.8	Collaborate with local businesses and financial institutions to develop programs designed to increase housing access in appropriate locations within the city.			
2.9	Develop an online Housing Dashboard to track and share information on current and recently approved housing developments in Dover.			

### 3. Economic Development

3.1	Collaborate with the Dover Business and Industrial Development Authority and other partners to ensure Dover's regulations, within appropriate areas of the city, are business friendly.			
3.2	Review and update land use ordinances to expand opportunities for context-sensitive and small-scale commercial development, such as incremental business spaces, accessory commercial units, or refined home occupation standards.			
3.3	Identify strategies and locations to support small business development, including a possible small business incubator.			
3.4	Support opportunities for small businesses to own their buildings through targeted programs, partnerships, and flexible zoning.			
3.5	Review current Economic Revitalization Zone and RSA 79-E policies, and target locations and areas identified for future commercial growth.			

#	Action Item	Priority (High, Med, Low)	Timeframe (Long, Med, Short, Ongoing)	Responsible Party
3.6	Expand “Discover Dover” initiatives to market conservation land, open space, recreation, and quality of life as economic assets.			
3.7	Educate local employers and property owners about the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program to encourage reinvestment and efficient land use in Dover’s employment areas.			
<b>4. Natural Resource Protection and Community Resilience</b>				
4.1	Continue the protection and stewardship of Dover’s natural resources and open space resources according to the Natural Resource Inventory and the plan laid out in Dover’s Open Space and Conservation Master Plan Chapter.			
4.2	Expand public access to the waterfront and open space parcels, including green corridors, riverfront parks, and urban green spaces.			
4.3	Integrate nature-based climate solutions (e.g., green roofs, rain gardens, urban tree canopy, no and low mow areas, pollinator gardens) into municipal land management and future redevelopment projects.			
4.4	Ensure climate resilience strategies are embedded in growth scenarios and infrastructure planning, especially in vulnerable areas and flood prone locations.			
4.5	Partner with regional universities, environmental organizations, or state agencies to conduct a study that quantifies the value of Dover’s ecosystem services—such as flood mitigation, water filtration, and carbon storage—to inform land use planning and highlight the economic and environmental importance of conservation.			
<b>5. Land Use</b>				
5.1	Continue implementing and refining form-based zoning and design standards to ensure high-quality, context-sensitive infill development and redevelopment projects.			
5.2	Encourage infill and redevelopment of underutilized sites to increase housing, mixed-use, commercial and industrial development opportunities.			
5.3	Implement changes to the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Ordinance based on recommendations from the TDR subcommittee.			

#	Action Item	Priority (High, Med, Low)	Timeframe (Long, Med, Short, Ongoing)	Responsible Party
5.4	Explore the use of pattern zoning—drawing on Lebanon New Hampshire’s example—as a tool to guide context-sensitive residential development. Pattern zoning identifies and codifies the scale, form, and design of existing neighborhoods so that new development fits seamlessly with Dover’s character while allowing for more predictable, streamlined permitting.			
5.5	Promote mixed-use redevelopment while preserving existing industrial activity within the Integrated Development Areas, including along Central Avenue, Knox Marsh Road, and Littleworth Road.			
5.6	Guide density increases in residential areas in a reasonable and context-sensitive way according to Dover’s Future Land Use Strategy.			
5.7	Balance the protection of Dover’s open space assets and future compatible housing development in the residential areas on the outskirts of the city.			

# APPENDICES

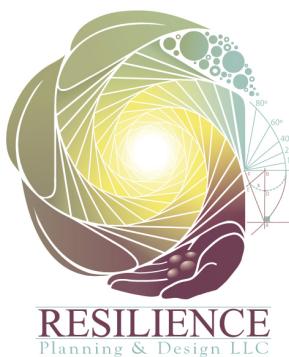
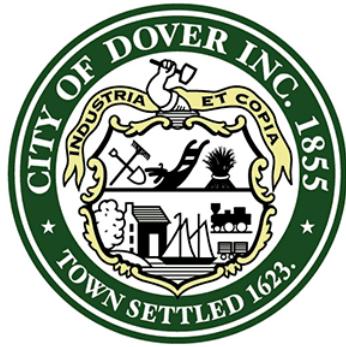
# Existing Conditions Summary

## 2025 Land Use Chapter

Dover, New Hampshire



May 13, 2025



# Contents

## Introduction

Existing Land Use.....	1
Zoning District Analysis.....	4
Demographics and Housing.....	16
Economic Development.....	24
Transportation.....	30
Natural Resources, Open Space, and Conservation.....	33
Community Climate Resilience.....	37

## Introduction

The Existing Conditions Summary was created to provide a baseline understanding of data, trends, needs, and opportunities on a variety of topics that influence land use. This document will serve as a resource to directly inform the Land Use Chapter and will serve as a basis to explore future land use scenarios and possibilities.

## Existing Land Use

Successful land use planning reveals its impact over time, and Dover is now seeing the results of decades of thoughtful effort. These planning efforts have shaped a vibrant, historic downtown; a mixed-use core that serves residents and visitors; protected rural areas; and distinct neighborhoods. Infill development has preserved community character, while open space and recreation areas connect rural and urban parts of the city. As a regional leader in planning, Dover continues to guide growth with recent work, like the Conservation and Open Space Chapter. The upcoming Land Use Chapter will build on this legacy, aiming to balance natural resource protection with the city's ongoing growth needs by first understanding existing land use patterns.

### Existing Land Use

With the help of the Land Use Chapter Committee, the existing land use classifications in this section were created from the nearly 100 unique land use codes in the City of Dover's Assessing data. The codes were aggregated to determine the 13 existing land use classifications seen in Table 1. The simplified Assessing data was then linked to the nearly 9,000 individual parcels in Dover, such that each parcel in Dover is associated to one land use classification, which is seen in Map 1, while Map 2 includes conserved lands with land use.

Residential uses account for more than half of Dover's existing land use. Single-family residential properties account for most of Dover's land area with an average size of each lot being 1.2 acres. While multi-family residential properties are found throughout the City, they are mostly congregated within 1 mile of the downtown area (as measured from the Cochecho Mill Courtyard).

Table 1: Dover Existing Land Use Source: City Assessing and GIS data				
Existing Land Use	Acres	Percent of Dover's land area	Acres conserved	Percent conserved
Commercial	1,429	9%	113	8%
Exempt: Education	196	1%	32	16%
Exempt: Government (county, state, federal)	1,027	7%	845	82%
Exempt: Municipal	1,209	8%	845	70%
Exempt: Other	1,189	8%	511	43%
Exempt: Religious	104	1%	-	-
Industrial	814	5%	32	4%
Mixed Use	64	0%	-	-
Residential: Multi-family	621	4%	83	13%
Residential: Single-family	7,405	48%	868	12%
Unknown	40	0.3%	-	-
Utility	52	0.3%	-	-
Vacant	1,391	9%	430	31%
Total	15,541		3,759	24%

Although commercial uses only account for 9% of the City's land area – with an additional 5% of industrial use – they are dense, highly productive, and represent the primary economic drivers in Dover.

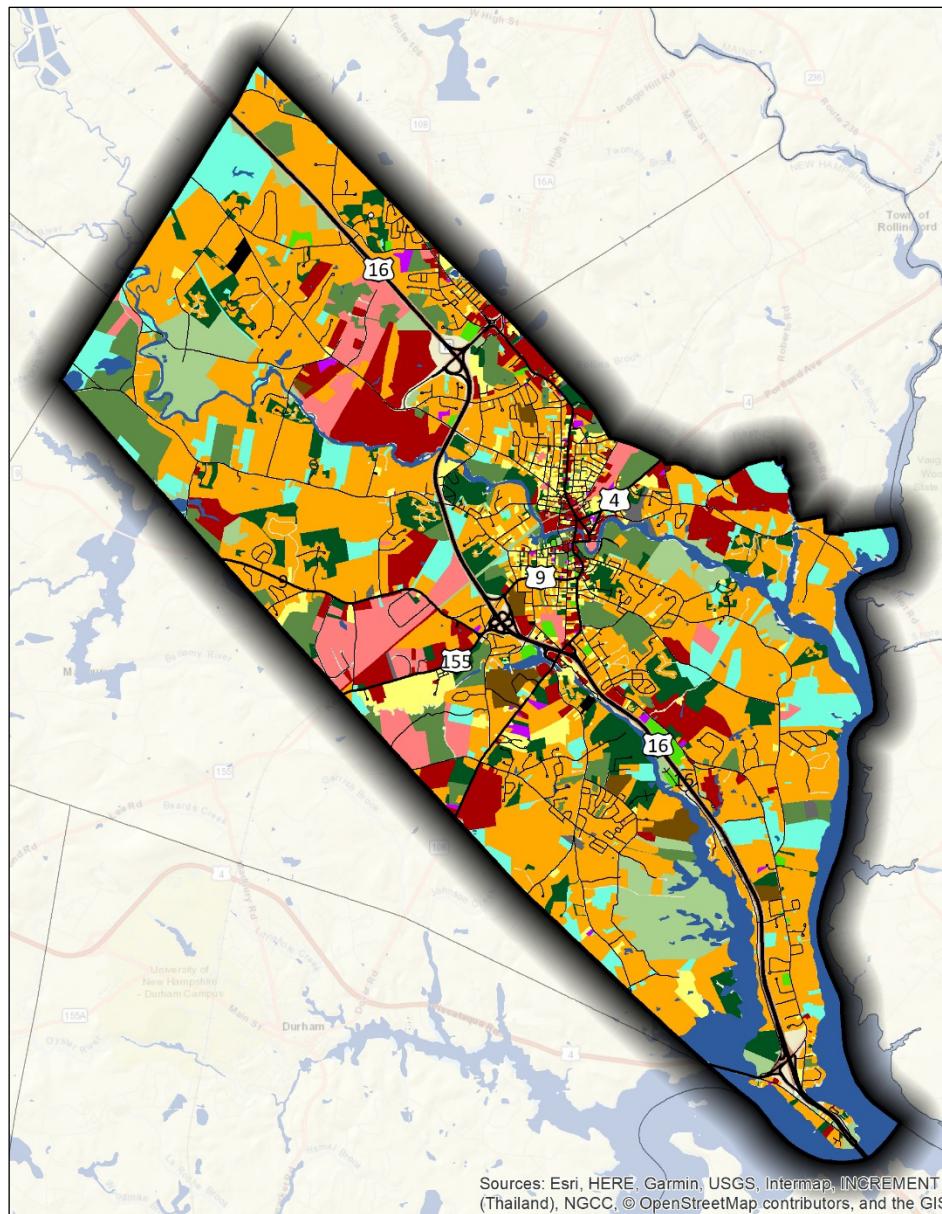
There is also a significant amount of tax-exempt land (combined 24% of land uses in Dover), much of which is owned by the City of Dover or other governmental agencies. Although not exclusively, much of the tax-exempt lands are permanently conserved, which speaks to Dover's continued efforts in protecting its natural resources. To that end, 60% of all tax-exempt lands in Dover are permanently conserved. Furthermore, 70% of municipally exempt lands and more than 80% of government exempt lands are permanently conserved, which, again, displays the importance the City of Dover places on natural resource protection and open space.

Vacant land accounts for 9% of Dover's land area and represents nearly 1,400 acres. Approximately 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of these lands (430 acres) are permanently conserved. Another 181 acres have some other type of development constraint as defined by the 2025 Conservation & Open Space Chapter of the Master Plan. This leaves 780 acres of vacant land unspoken for.

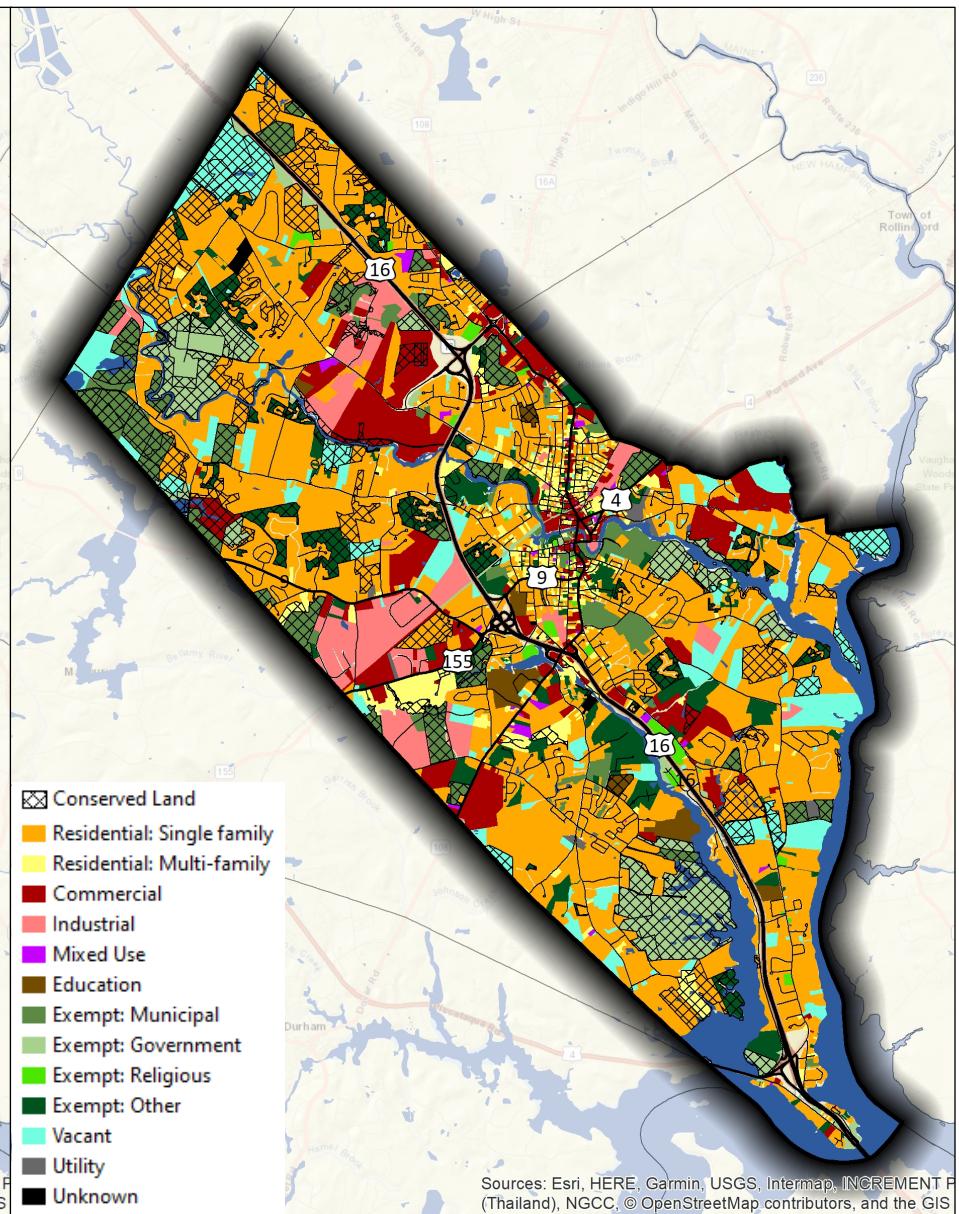
A note about recreation: it has been determined that recreation isn't sufficient to be a standalone land use classification. Although it was included as such in the 2015 Land Use Chapter, it is unclear how that classification was determined. Furthermore, recreation has many definitions and can include, but is not limited to, public playgrounds, municipal athletic fields, private golf courses, and individual properties with trails. Because of the varied definitions for recreation, the overlying land uses provide greater insight into how a particular property is actively being used. For example, a privately owned single-family residence that allows trail access is not a predominantly recreational use. Rather, that property would be single-family residential. Another example would be a private golf course, which would more broadly be considered a commercial use rather than recreational. Because of these recreational nuances, rather than having a recreation land use classification, recreation will be discussed as it relates to the various land uses.

According to the 2020 Culture & Recreation Chapter of the Master Plan recreation properties account for ~8% of Dover's land area totaling 1,470 acres. A more detailed breakdown of the specific recreation properties can be found in the 2020 Chapter, which further differentiates between recreation "sites" and recreation "areas".

Map 1: Existing Land Use



Map 2: Existing Land Use with Conserved Land



## Zoning District Analysis

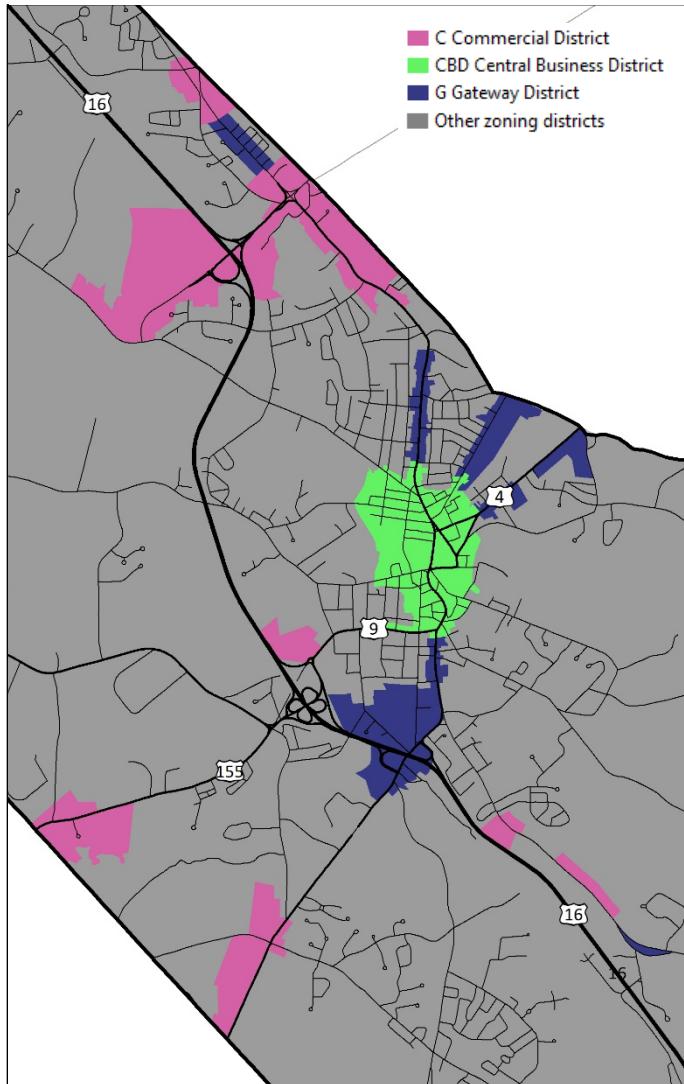
The City of Dover has 15 primary zoning districts and 9 overlay districts. Table 2 provides the details on the area covered by each zoning district. The Zoning Districts Map shows the distribution of these districts throughout Dover. Conducting a zoning and land use analysis provides helpful insight into how each zoning district is actively being used. The following subsections discuss specific zoning districts in detail and provide their subsequent land use breakdown. This analysis is conducted on the parcels within each zoning district and, thus, removes road networks and waterbodies from the calculations. Because of this, the actively used land acres – exclusive of roads and waterbodies – of each zoning district are also shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Dover Zoning Districts Source: City Assessing and GIS data						
Category	Zoning District	Total Acres	Percent of Dover	Land Acres	Percent of Land in Dover	
Core Commercial Districts	C: Commercial	608	3%	484	3%	
	CBD: Central Business District	235	1%	172	1%	
	G: Gateway	281	2%	214	1%	
Additional Commercial Districts	IT: Innovative Technology	1,457	8%	1,377	9%	
	CM: Commercial Manufacturing	700	4%	657	4%	
	CWD: Cochecho Waterfront District	102	1%	86	1%	
Low to Medium Density Residential Districts	R-40: Rural Residential	9,259	50%	8,205	53%	
	R-12: Medium-Density Residential	2,552	14%	2,098	13%	
	R-20: Low-Density Residential	2,135	11%	1,266	8%	
Medium to High Density Residential Districts	RM-SU: Suburban Density Resident	576	3%	456	3%	
	RM-U: Urban Density Residential	379	2%	314	2%	
	HR: Heritage Residential	166	1%	137	1%	
Other Districts	LBW: Little Bay Waterfront	89	0.5%	28	0.2%	
	O: Office	17	0.1%	14	0.1%	
	H: Hospital	37	0.2%	35	0.2%	
	Total	18,593		15,543		

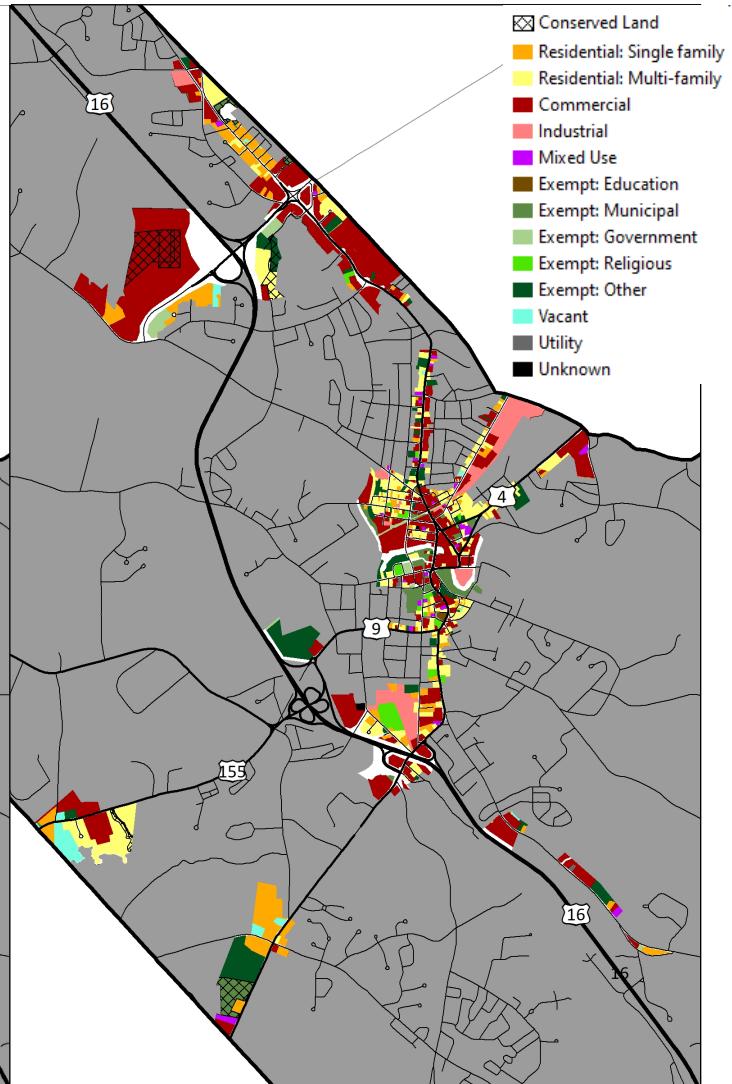
Because of the number and complexity of Dover's zoning districts, this analysis grouped districts into 5 broad categories – Core Commercial, Additional Commercial, Low to Medium Density Residential, Medium to High Density Residential, and Other Districts. These categories will be used to discuss districts with similar themes while allowing space to discuss districts individually.

**Core Commercial Districts:** Commercial District, Central Business District, Gateway District

Map 3: Core Commercial Districts



Map 4: Land Uses within the Core Commercial Districts



These three core commercial districts – Commercial, Central Business and Gateway – are the three economic drivers of Dover and are shown in Map 3. Although they represent a relatively small percentage – 6% – of Dover’s total area, significant economic activity exists in these areas. Collectively, more than half of these districts are actively being used for commercial or industrial activities, which can be seen in Table 3. The Commercial District has the highest percentage of commercial/industrial activity, which accounts of 54% of the district. The Gateway District has nearly the same total combined percentage but has noticeably more industrial uses.

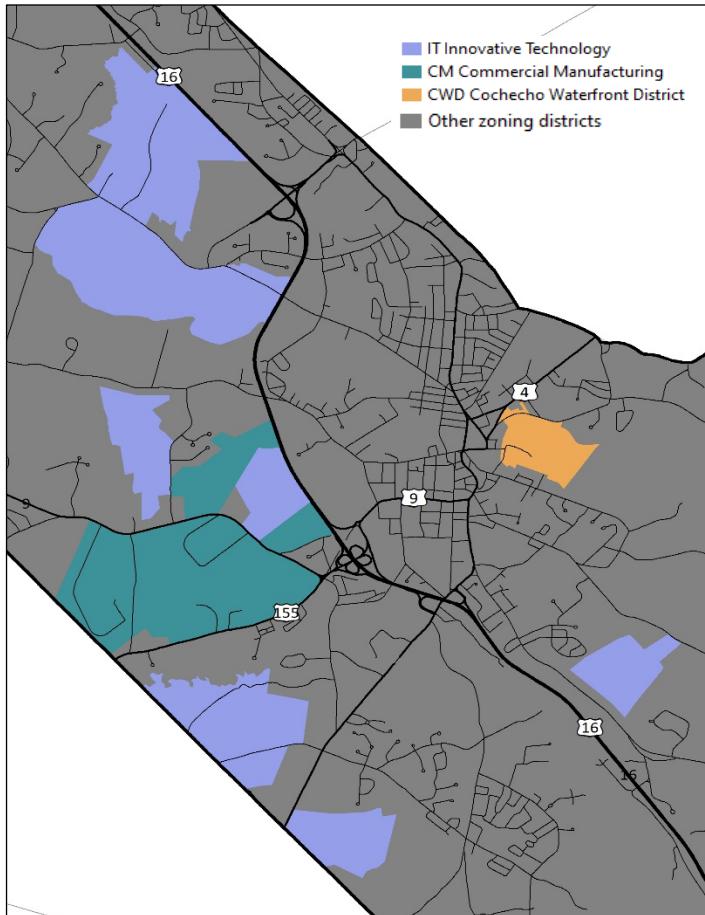
These districts also average more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the area as residential uses. The Commercial District has nearly the same amount of single- and multi-family residential uses at 12% and 11% respectively. The Central Business District has 24% multi-family residential with another 5% single-family, whereas the Gateway District has 18% multi-family residential and another 15% single-family. The relatively high percentage of residential uses in these districts shows the density of them. Equally, mixed with the high amounts of commercial/industrial uses in these districts, these downtown drivers are offering dense areas for economic and residential opportunities. Map 4 shows the land uses within these primary commercial districts. These districts contain about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the ~75 properties that support recreation in Dover. Although several of these properties are owned by the City of Dover, many of them are privately owned with different land uses.

Table 3: Core Commercial Districts  
Source: City Assessing and GIS data

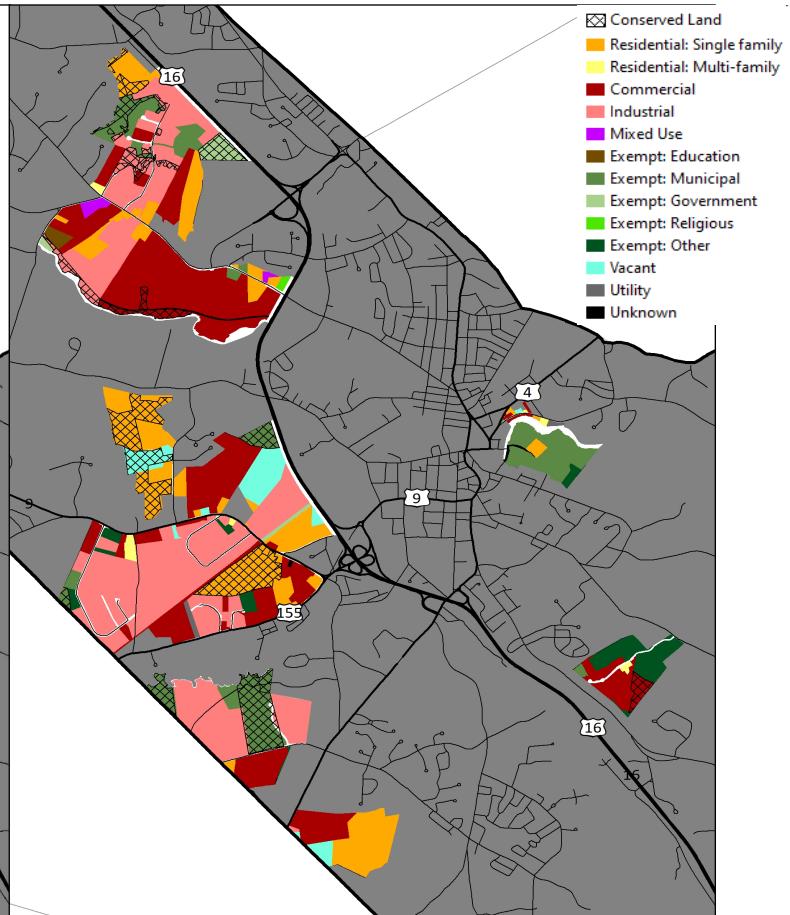
Land Use	C: Commercial District		CBD: Central Business District		G: Gateway District	
	Acres	Percent of District	Acres	Percent of District	Acres	Percent of District
Commercial	254	53%	63	37%	70	33%
Exempt: Education	-	-	1	1%	-	-
Exempt: Govt (county, state, federal)	10	2%	4	2%	-	-
Exempt: Municipal	18	4%	21	12%	1	0%
Exempt: Other	59	12%	14	8%	13	6%
Exempt: Religious	-	-	5	3%	10	5%
Industrial	4	1%	8	5%	43	20%
Mixed Use	4	1%	5	3%	3	1%
Residential: Multi-Family	55	11%	42	24%	39	18%
Residential: Single-Family	60	12%	8	5%	33	15%
Utility	-	-	1	1%	-	-
Vacant	19	4%	-	-	1	0%
Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	483	100%	172	100%	213	100%

**Additional Commercial Districts:** Innovative Technology District, Central Manufacturing District, Cochecho Waterfront District

Map 5: Additional Commercial Districts



Map 6: Land Uses within Additional Commercial Districts



While these districts have a heavy commercial/industrial emphasis, they are not broadly seen as Dover's economic powerhouse mostly because they are not part of the core downtown. Additionally, the density of activity is less than the primary commercial districts. Maps 5 and 6 show the extent of these districts and their associated land uses. Table 4 shows the land use breakdown for these three districts in tabular form.

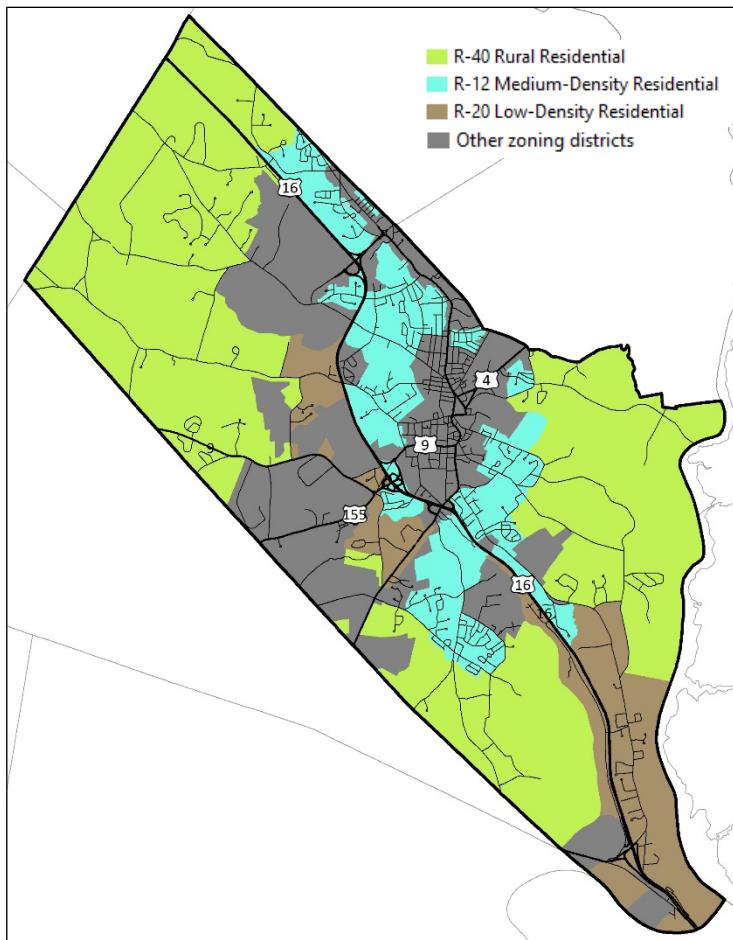
The Innovative Technology and Commercial Manufacturing Districts still have high amounts of commercial/industrial activities accounting for an average of 63% of the land area. While the land area of these activities is greater than the primary commercial districts, they are much less dense and have limited sense of place being located outside of Dover's core downtown. In contrast to the primary commercial districts, the residential uses in these secondary commercial districts are almost exclusively single-family residential. This again speaks to the lower density

found in these districts. Additionally, 3/4<sup>ers</sup> of the Cochecho Waterfront is municipally owned, which impacts the density of activity in the district.

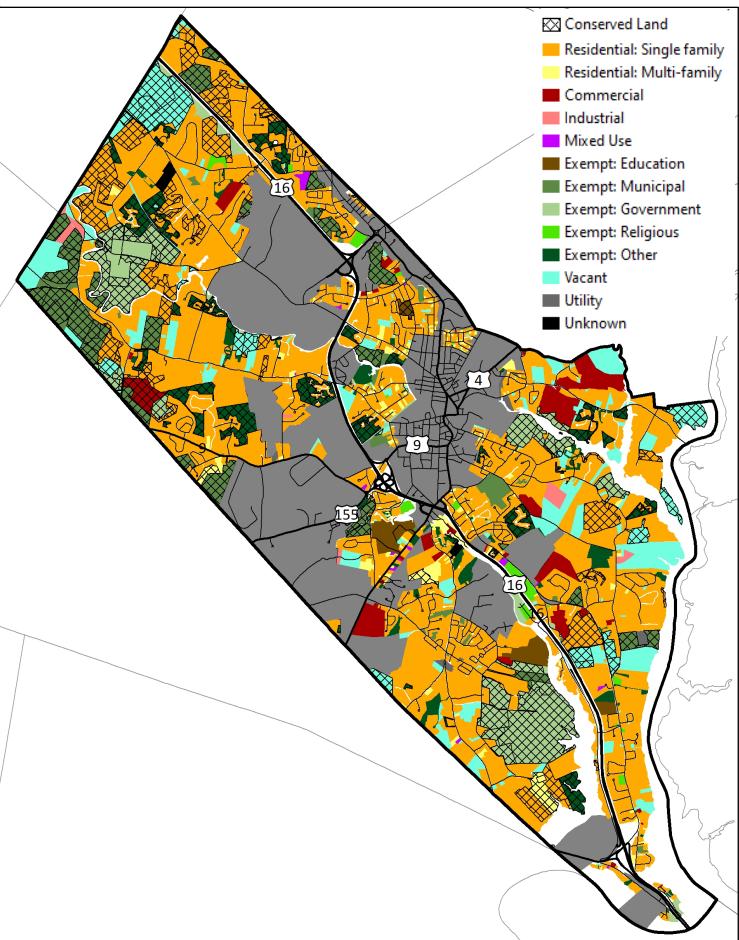
	IT: Innovative Technology District		CM: Commercial Manufacturing District		CWD: Cochecho Waterfront District		
	Land Use	Acres	Percent of District	Acres	Percent of District	Acres	Percent of District
Commercial	417	30%		177	27%	3	3%
Exempt: Education	8	1%		-	-	-	-
Exempt: Govt (county, state, federal)	23	2%		2	0%	-	-
Exempt: Municipal	137	10%		24	4%	65	75%
Exempt: Other	50	4%		19	3%	5	6%
Exempt: Religious	3	0%		-	-	-	-
Industrial	378	27%		304	46%	-	-
Mixed Use	9	1%		-	-	-	-
Residential: Multi-Family	4	0%		7	1%	2	2%
Residential: Single-Family	278	20%		113	17%	7	8%
Utility	-	-		4	1%	2	2%
Vacant	70	5%		6	1%	1	1%
Unknown	-	-		1	0%	2	2%
Total	1,377	100%		657	100%	87	100%

**Low to Medium Density Residential Districts:** Rural Residential District, Medium-Density Residential District, Low-Density Residential District

Map 7: Low to Medium Density Residential Districts



Map 8: Land Uses within the Low to Medium Density Residential Districts



These three districts represent 75% of Dover's total area; because of that, they also represent the largest residential land use by area in the City. Maps 7 and 8 show the extent of these districts and their associated land uses. Table 5 shows the land use breakdown for these three districts in tabular form.

An average of 60% of these districts are residential uses. However, in the Medium- and Low-Density Residential Districts that percentage increases to 69% and 71% respectively. With that said, most residential uses are single-family with only 2% of these total districts being used for multi-family residential. With minimum lot sizes ranging from ~1/4-acre in the Medium-Density Residential District to ~1/2-acre in the Low-Density Residential District to ~1-acre in the Rural Residential District, it's clear to see these districts as residing a large percentage of Dover's residents.

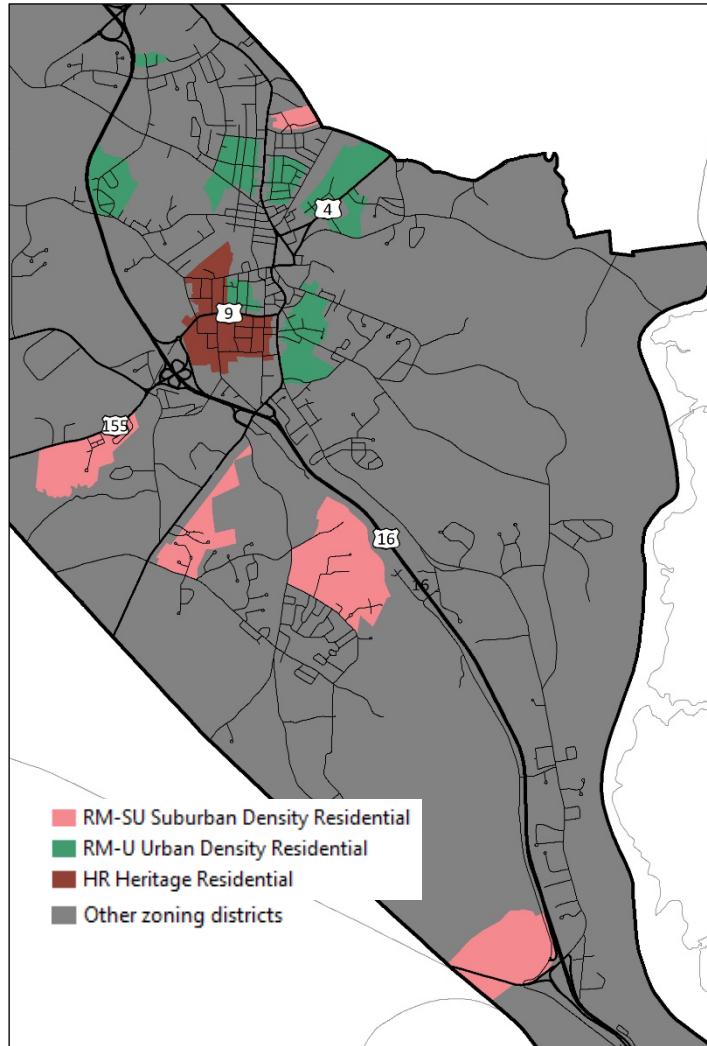
Worth noting is the nearly 25% of exempt land uses in these districts. Of the more than 2,700 acres of exempt land uses in these districts, nearly 3/4<sup>ers</sup> is permanently conserved. Another 11% (nearly 750 acres) of single-family residential uses have also been permanently conserved. There are also many properties that support recreation in these districts. Of the ~75 properties that support recreational in Dover, more than 40% found in these districts. While several of these properties are owned by the City of Dover and are likely designed primarily for recreation, there are others where the line is less clear. For example, three properties are privately owned single-family residences that allow recreation. Similarly, there are other exempt properties that are privately owned but still support recreation.

**Table 5: Low to Medium Density Residential Districts**  
Source: City Assessing and GIS data

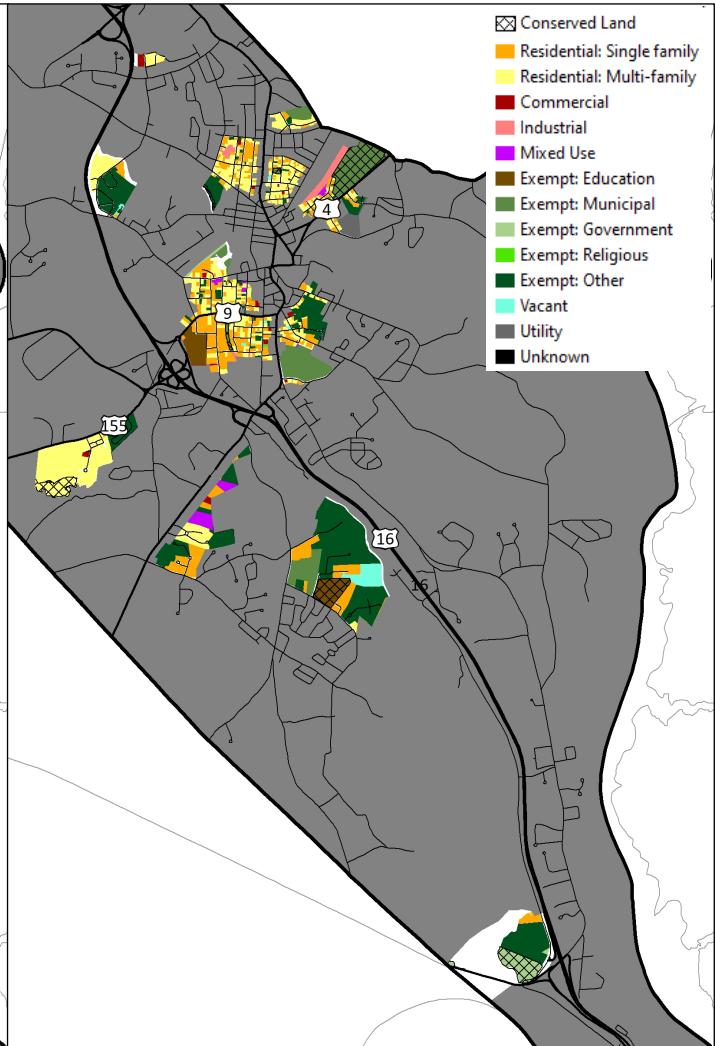
Land Use	R-40: Rural Residential District		R-12: Medium-Density Res District		R-20: Low-Density Res District	
	Acres	Percent of District	Acres	Percent of District	Acres	Percent of District
Commercial	353	4%	56	3%	12	1%
Exempt: Education	55	1%	14	1%	83	7%
Exempt: Govt (county, state, federal)	871	11%	62	3%	26	2%
Exempt: Municipal	574	7%	212	10%	40	3%
Exempt: Other	511	6%	145	7%	75	6%
Exempt: Religious	11	0%	57	3%	16	1%
Industrial	60	1%	-	-	2	0%
Mixed Use	2	0%	16	1%	8	1%
Residential: Multi-Family	96	1%	123	6%	21	2%
Residential: Single-Family	4,524	55%	1,323	63%	877	69%
Utility	26	0%	6	0%	-	-
Vacant	1,098	13%	74	4%	103	8%
Unknown	24	0%	10	0%	3	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,205</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,098</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,266</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Medium to High Density Residential Districts: Suburban Density Residential District, Urban Density Residential District, Heritage Residential District**

**Map 9: Medium to High Density Residential Districts**



**Map 10: Land Uses within the Medium to High Density Residential Districts**



Although these districts account for only 6% of the total area in Dover, they represent dense residential neighborhoods with a mixture of exempt lands. An average of 43% of these districts represent some form of residential land use. Multi-family residential accounts for between 23-28% of these districts. Single-family residential uses account for nearly half (45%) of the Heritage Residential District, while the other districts are closer to ~13%. These numbers show a residential density that does not exist elsewhere in Dover and, thus, presents a distinctly

different neighborhood feel. Table 6 shows the land use breakdown within these districts. Maps 9 and 10 show the extent of these districts and their associated land uses.

Exempt land uses are also high in these districts, representing an average of 50% of the area. The exempt uses are diverse, however, and include education, municipal or government ownership, and others including but not limited to land trusts. To that point, some of Dover's most well-known recreational and open spaces are found in these districts including but not limited to the following:

- Dover ice arena
- Dover skatepark
- Guppey Park
- Jenny Thompson outdoor pool
- Bellamy River WMA east

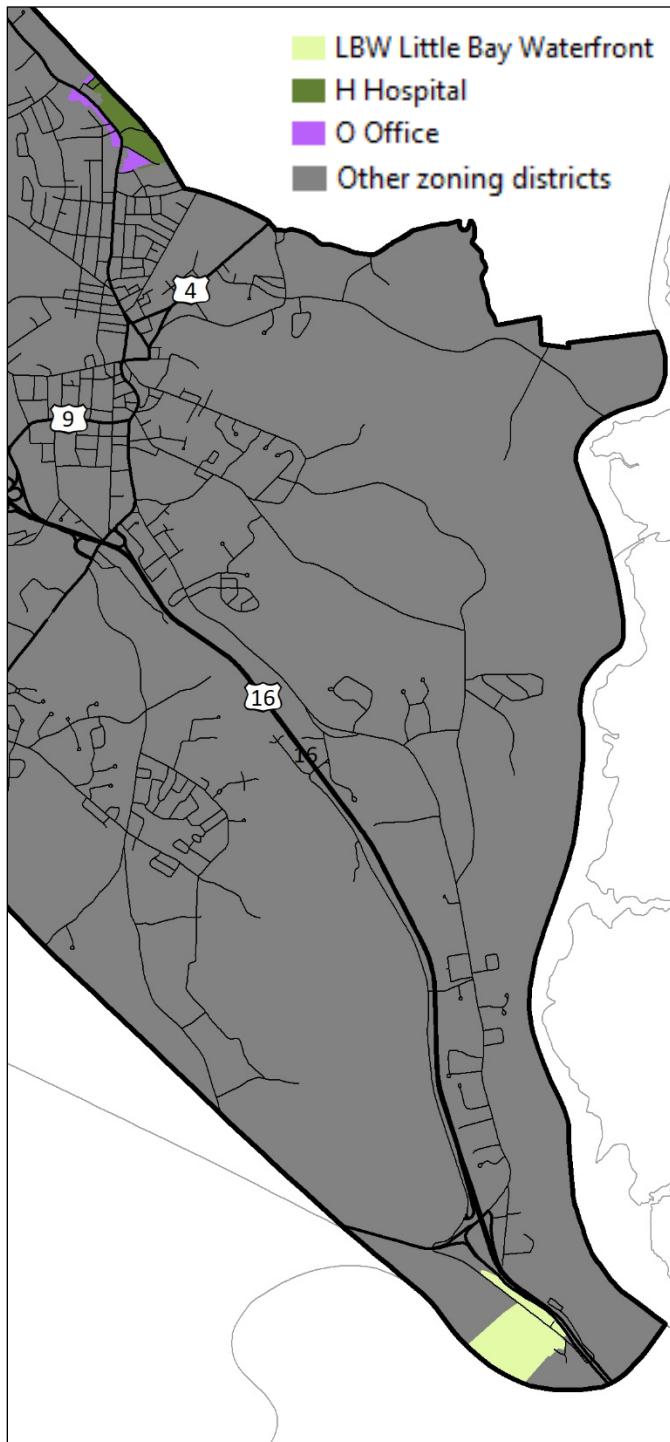
Although many of these properties supporting recreation are municipally owned and, thus, exempt, many others are privately owned. In fact, several properties are primarily classified as multi-family land uses with another being industrial.

**Table 6: Medium to High Density Residential Districts**  
Source: City Assessing and GIS data

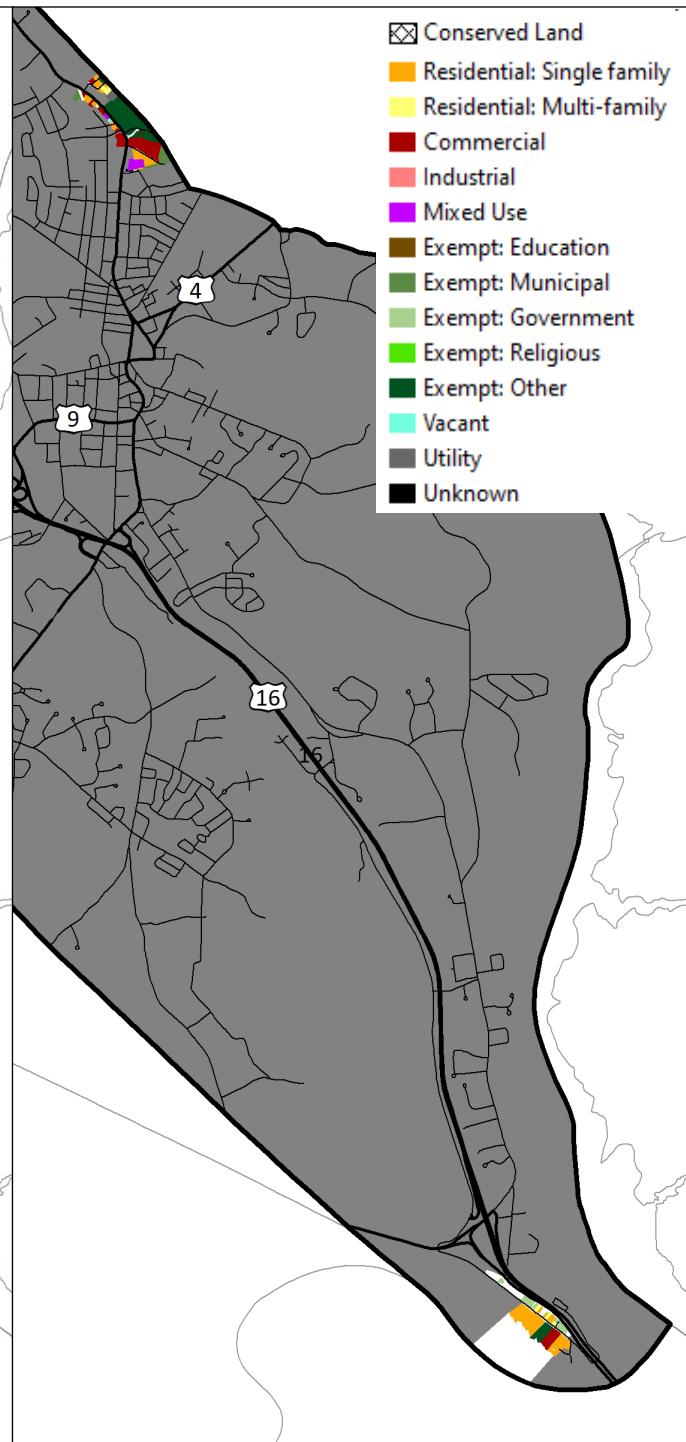
Land Use	RM-SU: Suburban Density Res District		RM-U: Urban Density Res District		HR: Heritage Residential District	
	Acres	Percent of District	Acres	Percent of District	Acres	Percent of District
Commercial	2	0%	4	1%	2	1%
Exempt: Education	18	4%	-	-	17	12%
Exempt: Govt (county, state, federal)	23	5%	-	-	3	2%
Exempt: Municipal	30	7%	75	24%	8	6%
Exempt: Other	197	43%	73	23%	6	4%
Exempt: Religious	-	-	-	-	-	-
Industrial	-	-	14	4%	1	1%
Mixed Use	11	2%	-	-	1	1%
Residential: Multi-Family	106	23%	88	28%	36	26%
Residential: Single-Family	52	11%	47	15%	62	45%
Utility	-	-	12	4%	-	-
Vacant	17	4%	1	0%	1	1%
Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Other Districts:** Little Bay Waterfront District, Office District, Hospital District

Map 11: Other Districts



Map 12: Land Uses within the Other Districts



These three districts make up less than one-half percent of Dover's total land area. Instead, more than half of the Hospital District is considered an exempt land use because the hospital functions as a non-profit organization. To a similar extent, most of the Little Bay Waterfront District is single-family residential, which gives its primary function. Table 7 shows the land use breakdown within these districts. Maps 11 and 12 show the extent of these districts and their associated land uses.

Land Use	LBW: Little Bay Waterfront District		O: Office District		H: Hospital District	
	Acres	Percent of District	Acres	Percent of District	Acres	Percent of District
Commercial	4	14%	4	29%	8	23%
Exempt: Education	-	-	-	-	-	-
Exempt: Govt (county, state, federal)	4	14%	-	-	-	-
Exempt: Municipal	-	-	1	7%	4	11%
Exempt: Other	4	14%	-	-	19	54%
Exempt: Religious	-	-	-	-	-	-
Industrial	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mixed Use	-	-	3	22%	-	-
Residential: Multi-Family	1	4%	0.3	2%	1	4%
Residential: Single-Family	15	54%	5	37%	1	3%
Utility	-	-	-	-	2	6%
Vacant	-	-	0.3	2%	-	-
Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	28	100%	14	100%	35	100%

## 2024 Dover Land Use Regulation Audit Report

An Ad-Hoc Committee to address community housing needs was created in 2023 to recommend to the City a list of actions to "encourage and incentivize thoughtful development to meet the housing needs of residents..." In support of those efforts, the Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) was tasked with completing a regulatory audit of Dover's Land Use regulations and preparing recommendations to assist the City in meeting its housing goals. In addition to the regulatory audit, SRPC conducted a developable land analysis for Dover to "establish a baseline estimate of land available to meet projected housing demand." Once certain constraints to development were removed (conserved land, steep slopes, water, wetlands, and currently developed land), about 26% of the city was "developable" (SRPC made it clear this does not mean "available for development").

With 29% developable acreage, the Rural Residential District (R-40) has the most developable area, which is by design based on the City's zoning design for less dense development and more open space. This zone provides an opportunity for "gentle infill in the form of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and two-to-four-unit structures." This exercise also identified the Urban Density Residential District (RM-U) with having 64% of the lots as nonconforming, which are lots that are smaller in area than is required by the zoning. In these areas, the City could consider "adjusting zoning standards to bring more lots into conformity to provide more opportunities for infill development."

## In Summary

Dover's land use patterns across zoning districts reflect a clear alignment with the City's planning goals. Core commercial areas like the Central Business District, Gateway, and Commercial zones successfully balance residential and commercial uses, creating a vibrant, mixed-use downtown. Other commercial districts—such as Innovative Technology, Commercial Manufacturing, and Cochecho Waterfront—appropriately emphasize non-residential activity. Residential zones also align with their intended densities, with lower-density districts dominated by single-family homes and higher-density areas supporting more multi-family housing near jobs and services. Looking ahead, it will be important for Dover to build on this foundation by continuing to balance development with resource protection, addressing ongoing housing needs, and supporting a strong, resilient economy.

# Demographics and Housing

Understanding demographic trends and housing needs is essential to guiding land use decisions that support a vibrant and sustainable future for Dover. As the city's population grows, becomes more diverse, and household compositions shift, there is increasing demand for housing that reflects a range of needs—whether that means smaller units for aging residents, affordable options for young families, or proximity to jobs and services. These changing dynamics directly influence how and where Dover plans for residential development and underscore the importance of aligning housing policy with long-term land use goals.

## Population Trends

Based on estimates provided by the US Census, Dover had a 2023 population of 33,070 representing an increase of 2,863 (9.4 percent) since 2013. Dover became the State's fifth most populated community in 2010, as well as the most populated in Strafford County, and this standing continues today. In general, the population has grown in all the neighboring communities within the region Dover is situated. Between 2013 and 2023, Dover's population has been growing significantly faster than neighboring cities of Portsmouth (2.2%), Somersworth (2.4%), and Rochester (3.9 %). Dover's rate of population growth has been higher than the county's and the state's. According to population projections from the NH Office of Planning and Development, Dover's population is anticipated to continue increasing looking out to 2050.

Community	Population		Change 2013 to 2023	
	2013	2023	Number	Percent
<b>Dover</b>	30,207	33,070	2,863	9.4%
<b>Durham</b>	9,907	10,577	670	6.8%
<b>Eliot, ME</b>	6,234	6,978	744	11.9%
<b>Madbury</b>	2,055	2,121	66	3.2%
<b>Newington</b>	798	899	101	12.7%
<b>Portsmouth</b>	21,237	22,332	1,095	5.1%
<b>Rochester</b>	29,801	32,866	3,065	10.3%
<b>Somersworth</b>	11,780	12,060	280	2.4%
<b>Strafford County</b>	123,836	133,243	9,407	7.6%
<b>New Hampshire</b>	1,323,458	1,402,054	78,596	5.9%

American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Age

Dover's median age as of 2023 was 37.6 years old, which is comparable to the median age of the county and lower than the state. The most prominent age group in Dover is the 25-34 year old age cohort, which increased by 37% between 2013-2023, while the 34-44 year old age cohort grew 8% in that timeframe. The number of youths below 19 years of age in Dover have been declining, showing a 17% decrease between 2013 and 2023. The 60-64 year age cohort has increased by 34% between 2013 and 2023, while the 65-74 year age cohort has increased by 68%, indicating an aging population in Dover which mirrors trends seen county and state wide. Dover's aging population and its growing young adult and working professional population are all seeking a range of housing

opportunities, and the community should consider the tools available to create the diverse types of housing desired.

**Table 2: Median Age**

Year	Dover	Strafford County	New Hampshire
2013	36.1	36.9	41.5
2018	36.1	36.9	42.7
2023	37.6	37.9	43.2

American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**Table 3: Population by Age Group**

Age Group	Dover			2023 % of Pop.	Strafford County			New Hampshire		
	2013	2018	2023		2013	2018	2023	2013	2018	2023
<b>Under 10 years</b>	3,432	3,564	2,850	8%	13,537	13,114	12,045	114,630	136,082	131,707
<b>10-19 years</b>	3,560	2,664	2,965	9%	17,937	17,813	17,498	176,224	165,261	166,381
<b>20-24 years</b>	3,154	2,897	3,442	10%	12,988	14,069	13,131	85,126	90,164	85,524
<b>25-34 years</b>	4,463	6,079	6,131	18%	14,767	16,252	18,018	147,022	161,541	175,865
<b>35-44 years</b>	3,966	3,541	4,312	13%	15,599	14,370	15,737	172,458	155,671	168,194
<b>45-54 years</b>	4,376	3,940	3,754	11%	18,833	17,390	15,535	222,200	200,920	177,065
<b>55-59 years</b>	2,061	2,131	2,199	7%	8,796	8,980	9,740	99,383	110,487	107,739
<b>60-64 years</b>	1,291	1,779	1,734	5%	5,994	8,087	8,268	85,046	95,512	109,834
<b>65-74 years</b>	1,872	2,590	3,160	10%	8,414	10,749	13,231	104,075	135,715	165,496
<b>75+ years</b>	2,032	2,131	2,523	8%	6,971	7,413	8,540	83,007	92,269	105,029

American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### School Enrollment

School enrollment numbers show a decrease in the population of school-age children enrolled in Dover's school system, and this matches the declining number of youths seen in the census figures. From 2019 to 2023, the enrolled school-age population decreased by 9%.

**Table 4: Fall School Enrollment Numbers**

School Enrollment	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Kindergarten</b>	264	193	247	249	244
<b>Elementary</b>	1,361	1,335	1,238	1,244	1,210
<b>Middle</b>	885	834	856	814	798
<b>High School</b>	1,204	1,244	1,242	1,199	1,123
<b>Total</b>	3,714	3,606	3,583	3,506	3,375

### NH Department of Education

### Households

The number of households continue to increase in Dover, while household sizes are decreasing. Strafford County is also seeing a similar trend, with Dover having a smaller average household size comparatively. The need for additional housing units in New Hampshire communities of all sizes is expected to continue to increase as the number of small households of one to two people increases. Older adults often look to downsize, either upon becoming "empty nesters" or when seeking more accessible, single-story-living arrangements. Young and emerging adults similarly

seek modestly sized units as “starter homes.” In some cases, both groups find they are competing for the same types of units, which often leaves out young and emerging adults who may lack existing assets/capital.

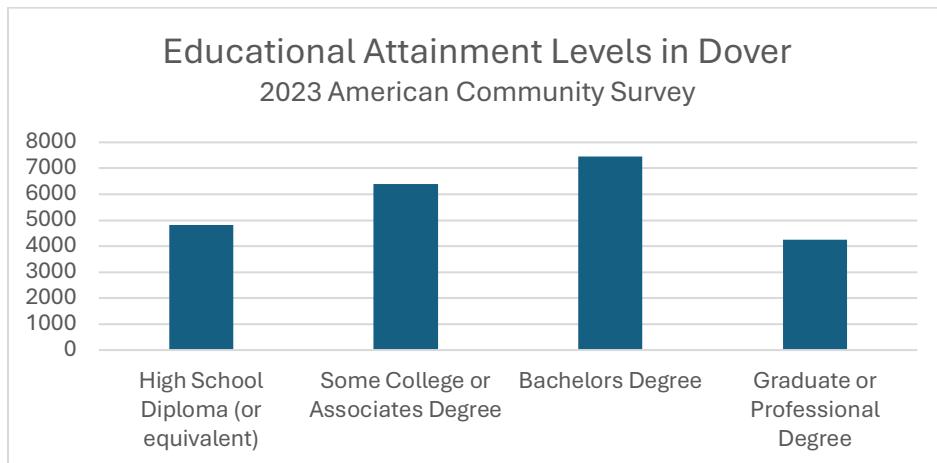
**Table 5: Household Types**

Households	Dover		Strafford County	
	2019	2023	2019	2023
Total Households	13,489	15,000	48,982	51,684
Family Households	7,429	8,087	31,210	32,061
Non-Family Households	6,060	6,913	17,772	19,623
One-Person	4,224	5,039	12,804	14,345
Multiple People	1,836	1,874	4,968	5,278
Average Household Size	2.27	2.14	2.45	2.39

American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### Educational Attainment

Dover continues to attract a more educated demographic compared to the State of New Hampshire and many area communities, and existing residents are also pursuing higher degrees. According to the American Community Survey, nearly 50 percent of Dover residents that are aged 25 and over have a bachelor’s or graduate degree. Educational attainment has a profound impact on the local economy, and the eligibility of residents for available jobs. While this level of education is difficult to guarantee, the city is looking to continue to attract jobs within the top job growth fields (health care or technology-related), which require high levels of education.



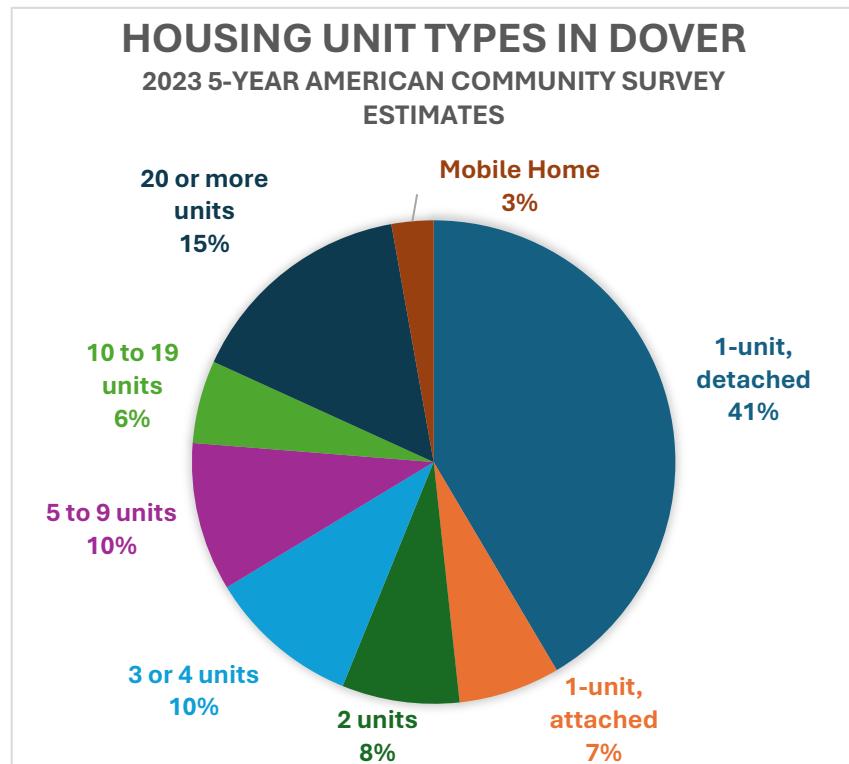
## Housing Trends

The 2024 Dover Regulatory Audit identified housing affordability as the biggest challenge facing Dover today, based on public engagement and data analysis, and homelessness and housing insecurity continue to be issues in the city. The median home sale price in Dover reached \$450,000 in March 2025, reflecting a 1.8% increase from the previous month, and rental prices have also been increasing significantly. Dover's fast population growth rate intensifies the demand for housing, further straining the already limited supply. While the city has a higher diversity of housing types and price points than some neighboring communities, the housing market remains tight with high demand for rentals and homeownership, accessible/transitional housing, and workforce housing. Such escalating prices and the lack of available units pose challenges for prospective homebuyers and renters, particularly those with moderate incomes.

## Housing Types

According to the 2023 American Community Survey, there are 15,000 occupied housing units and 439 vacant housing units. Of the occupied housing units in the city, 7,694 units are owner-occupied, while 7,306 units are renter-occupied.

Homeownership dominates the rural areas of the city, while renter-occupied units are largely in the more developed areas of Dover, closer to services and amenities. Many housing units in Dover are single-family units, making up 48% of the community's housing stock. Smaller complexes of multi-family units (range from 2-9 units), make up 28% of the city's housing stock, while larger complexes of 10 or more units make up 21% of the city's housing stock.



## Housing Construction

According to Dover's 2024 Regulatory Audit, building permit data from both Dover and New Hampshire show a sharp decline in housing production of all types following the 2008–09 Recession. However, Dover rebounded more quickly than many other Seacoast communities and saw 58 net housing units created in 2011 and more units each year after. As two of the region's more populous cities, Dover and Rochester have also seen higher levels of

**Table 6: Permitted New Buildings – 2024 Regulatory Audit**

Year	Residential			Other	Total
	Single Family	Multifamily	Manufactured Housing		
2008	31	30	0	0	61
2009	48	20	0	0	68
2010	0	0	0	0	0
2011	51	7	0	0	58
2012	71	19	1	0	91
2013	66	40	0	0	106
2014	64	18	0	0	82
2015	45	27	0	0	72
2016	61	5	3	0	69
2017	61	138	4	0	203
2018	54	212	2	0	268
2019	43	145	1	0	189
2020	32	65	4	0	101
2021	30	64	tel:0%2019%201%2018%200%205%203%20212%202%2065		
2022	41	48	0	3	92

Source: SRPC and City of Dover 2008-2022

multifamily housing development. In 2018 alone, Dover approved up to 212 multifamily units. Data from the American Community Survey indicates that between 2017 and 2022, single-family housing grew by just 11%, while conversions and new developments with 10 or more units increased by 58%. During the same period, “missing middle” housing—typically buildings with 3 to 9 units—grew by 15%. However, it's important to note that permitted new buildings is not the same as units actually built and more tracking is required to understand these patterns better.

## Recent and Pending Housing Projects

In more recent years, Dover has seen important housing developments get constructed, including the Orpheum Apartment Complex in the downtown, and a cottage court on Back River Road that responded to the need for workforce housing. Currently, about 1,440 housing units are approved to be built over the next several years. Roughly 640 of these units have been built as of March, 2025. Many more housing developments are in the works for 2026 and beyond. The 2023 Strafford Regional Housing Needs Assessment shows Dover needs an additional 2,077 homes by 2040 with an additional 250 homes needing replacement. If approximately 600 homes are expected to be built in 2025, that represents 29% of the total number of homes Dover needs by 2040.

**Cochecho Waterfront Development** - Situated along the Cochecho River in Dover, this new mixed-use development will provide 415 residential units, including 45 condominiums, 346 apartments ranging from studios to three-bedroom units, and 24 townhouses. The project also includes 30,000 square feet of retail space designed to enhance the vibrancy of the area. The first phase consists of two apartment buildings with a total of 197 units, along with a cluster of townhouses. The development is a collaboration with Cathartes, a Boston-based firm. According to Cathartes, apartment rental rates will reflect current market prices, comparable to their Orpheum property in Dover, where rents are \$2,365 for a studio, \$2,548 for a one-bedroom, \$3,312 for a two-bedroom, and \$4,350 for a three-bedroom unit.

## **Residential Development at Littleworth Business Park**

Construction of the Littleworth Business Park—a public-private partnership with the city—is progressing steadily. The project is expected to eventually deliver nearly 1 million square feet of industrial space along with up to 800 residential units. Work on the industrial component is already underway. The development spans two parcels: an 85-acre site south of Littleworth Road designated for industrial use, and a 100-acre site to the north planned for mixed-use residential and commercial development. The residential portion will offer a diverse mix of housing options, including garden-style condominiums, townhomes, duplexes, a dedicated “55 and older” area, and single-family homes.

## ***Mixed-use Development of Former Asia Restaurant Property***

A five-story, mixed-use development is planned on the former Asia Restaurant property on Third St. The project was approved by the Planning Board in October of 2024, and construction of the 58 residential units is expected to begin in 2025.

## **McIntosh West Apartments**

Construction of the McIntosh West Apartments is expected to occur in 2025 on the former McIntosh College site on Cataract Avenue. The development will include 158 housing units, 78 of which will be designated as workforce housing, with leasing anticipated to begin in late 2025. This project represents another significant step toward addressing the city's affordable housing needs. Rent for the 78 workforce units will align with the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority's (NHHFA) area median income (AMI) guidelines. To qualify, tenants must earn 60% or less of the area median income, which is currently \$131,200 for a family.

## Cost of Housing

Median purchase prices have been increasing in Dover, in the county, and throughout the state at a very high rate, especially since 2020. In just three years, between 2020 and 2023, median home purchase prices in Dover rose 36%, exacerbated by an ever-tightening housing market. Similarly, median rental prices have been increasing in Dover, in the county, and throughout the state. Between 2013 and 2023, median rents nearly doubled in Dover and are currently higher than the median average for both the county and the state. The increasing cost of homes has also shifted many potential homeowners into the rental market.

**Table 7: Median Purchase Prices** **Median Rental Prices**

Year	Dover	Strafford County	NH	Dover	Strafford County	NH
<b>2013</b>	\$248,475	\$200,000	\$220,000	\$953	\$942	1,108
<b>2014</b>	\$243,500	\$210,000	\$219,000	\$958	974	1,037
<b>2015</b>	\$228,100	\$205,000	\$221,000	\$1,026	992	1,069
<b>2016</b>	\$233,500	\$211,500	\$230,000	\$1,073	1,043	1,113
<b>2017</b>	\$268,000	\$229,000	\$240,000	\$1,143	1,108	1,143
<b>2018</b>	\$290,000	\$244,900	\$254,000	\$1,166	1,146	1,177
<b>2019</b>	\$288,000	\$255,000	\$270,000	\$1,347	1,259	1,251
<b>2020</b>	\$315,000	\$284,500	\$302,300	\$1,439	1,210	1,283
<b>2021</b>	\$365,000	\$320,000	\$350,000	\$1,470	1,356	1,373

2022	\$403,000	\$390,000	\$400,000	\$1,801	1,518	1,510
2023	\$430,000	\$390,000	\$418,000	\$1,981	1,571	1,644

### New Hampshire Housing and Finance Authority

According to the New Hampshire Housing and Finance Authority, Dover's median income for renter households is \$63,988. In 2012, the median income for renter households was \$37,533, much closer to the \$38,680 needed to afford a two-bedroom unit at that time. In the rest of Strafford County, an income of \$64,520 is needed to rent a housing unit without fear of being cost burdened. The term "cost burdened" refers to a household that spends more than 30% of its gross income on housing costs.

### Rental Vacancy Rates

A healthy rental vacancy rate is approximately 5%, and southeastern New Hampshire has not reliably seen a vacancy rate above 1% since 2019, nor a 5% vacancy rate since 2015 according to the annual rental survey conducted by NHHFA. As a result, more households than ever are experiencing the additional burden of housing costs. According to the 2024 Land Use Regulatory Audit, as many as 35% of all households, and 44% of renting households, must now pay 30% or more of their household income on housing in Dover.

### Housing Opportunity Zones

In Dover, a Housing Opportunity Zone (HOZ) is a designated area where qualifying mixed-income housing developments can receive property tax relief for up to 10 years. To qualify, a development must allocate at least 30% of its units to low-income households or meet other income mix criteria defined under state law. This program aims to encourage the construction of affordable housing by providing financial incentives to developers, thereby addressing housing shortages and promoting economic development in targeted areas. The HOZ initiative is part of New Hampshire's broader efforts to increase housing affordability and availability across the state.

### Future Housing Needs

The 2023 Strafford Regional Planning Commission Regional Housing Needs Assessment determined that the City of Dover needs at least 1,754 additional housing units by 2035 to constitute a balanced housing supply. With 1,440 units approved to be built over the next several years, including 600 expected to be built in 2025, Dover is on track for achieving – and possibly exceeding – 1,754 units by 2035. However, new units need to be a combination of rental and owner-occupied units at varying price points, as well as housing for specific populations, such as those with disabilities.

Dover recently adopted a new Master Plan Vision titled *Distinctly Dover*, which envisions:

- **Affordable and attainable housing** and support services that are accessible to, and utilized by individuals, families, and households of diverse backgrounds and needs.
- **Diversity of housing options are available**, including single-family and multi-family homes, and safe, well-maintained rental units, assisted living, and long-term care options to meet the needs of residents of all ages and abilities.

- **Low barrier shelter and support services** are available for people experiencing housing insecurity.
- **Housing types are interspersed** to foster multigenerational neighborhoods.
- **Housing in the downtown area** that is available for walkable, car-less living.

The 2024 Regulatory Audit also identified some specific actions and recommendations Dover should pursue to achieve its housing goals. These include:

- Utilizing underutilized lots and non-conforming lots for gentle infill, ADUs, and small-scale multifamily housing.
- Encouraging ADUs (removing barriers & increasing public awareness).
- Expanding Missing Middle Housing (more 2-4 unit dwellings allowed by right).
- Revising multi-family zoning (increase density, revise height & parking limits).
- Improving conversion policies (allow easier subdivision of large homes).
- Strengthening financial incentives (Housing Opportunity Zone, TIF expansion, new Affordable Housing Fund).
- Increasing disability-accessible housing (ADA incentives & emergency shelters)

# Economic Development

Dover serves as an economic hub for surrounding communities in Maine and New Hampshire. Together, the communities in the region also attract workers from other areas of New Hampshire, Maine and Massachusetts, and serve as a home for many people who commute out of the region daily. As the fastest-growing city in New Hampshire, Dover offers a dynamic environment for businesses and residents alike. The city's economic landscape is diverse, with significant contributions from manufacturing, healthcare, and educational services.

Strategic land use planning is essential for Dover to foster a resilient and thriving economy. By proactively designating areas for diverse economic activities—such as commercial hubs, industrial zones, and mixed-use developments—Dover can attract new businesses, support existing enterprises, and create job opportunities. By integrating strategic land use policies that accommodate emerging industries, foster workforce development, and enhance infrastructure, Dover can position itself to effectively navigate post-COVID-19 economic trends and ensure a robust and diversified economy for the future.

## Major Employers

Although Dover has several large employers, most businesses in the city are quite small, and there is a notable self-employed population as well. The hospital is the largest employer in the city, by far, compared to other local businesses and organizations. In 2023, Liberty Mutual, one of Dover's other large employers closed two of their campuses in Dover, consolidating activity at their Portsmouth campus, in response to the adoption of a more hybrid work model. Many employees of Liberty Mutual still live in Dover today and will likely continue supporting local businesses.

The major employers table below lists employee information by employer. The City of Dover collects this information annually by asking each large employer for their employee numbers. Not all businesses respond with their numbers, which may be why some major employers are not listed.

**Table 8: 2024 Major Employers in Dover**

Business Name	Industry	Employees
Wentworth-Douglass Hospital	Healthcare services	2,668
Lincoln Financial Group	Financial services	1,032
Community Partners	Counseling and mental health services	494
Strafford County	County government services	487
Dover Schools/SAU 11	Education	410
City of Dover	Local government services	287
Stonewall Kitchen	Manufacturing	225
Hannaford Supermarkets (combined locations)	Retail/Distribution	118
HiRel Systems/Vishay	Manufacturing	94
Rand Whitney	Manufacturing	54
Nemo Equipment	Manufacturing	38

Forward Merch	Manufacturing	37
Agility Manufacturing	Manufacturing	36
Relyco	Distribution	28
Children's Museum of NH	Arts and Entertainment	14

#### **City of Dover, NH**

#### **Dover's Central Business District**

Dover's Central Business District (CBD) serves as the city's vibrant economic and cultural hub. This area of the city features a diverse array of businesses, including retail shops, restaurants, professional offices, and personal service providers. It is a mixed-use area that also includes housing units, making it a rich and active live/work community. The district's dynamic mix of commerce and community activities fosters a lively atmosphere that attracts both residents and visitors. Strategically located with access to major highways and rail services, the CBD offers prime opportunities for business growth and redevelopment. The city's commitment to revitalizing historic mill buildings and investing in infrastructure has further enhanced the district's appeal.

#### **Median Household Income**

As of 2023, Dover's median household income was \$92,748, according to the American Community Survey, which is higher than the county's median of \$84,869. Among the five communities outlined in Table 9, Dover had relatively high growth rate between 2013 and 2023, with Portsmouth and Durham the only communities growing faster during that timeframe. The median household income for homeowners in Dover is a bit higher at \$128,734, while the median household income for renters was \$63,988. The poverty rate in Dover as of the 2023 American Community Survey was 8.1%, which is slightly lower than Strafford County's (8.8%). This number has been increasing slightly in Dover since 2019.

**Table 9: Median Household Income**

Median Household Income	2013	2018	2023	Growth Rate between 2013 and 2023
Strafford County	\$58,825	\$70,650	\$84,869	+44.2%
Dover	\$57,389	\$70,757	\$92,748	+61.6%
Durham	\$71,250	\$75,066	\$126,658	+77.7%
Portsmouth	\$64,577	\$78,027	\$105,756	+63.7%
Somersworth	\$53,223	\$64,786	\$79,677	+49.7%
Rochester	\$62,398	\$58,427	\$79,388	+27.2%

#### **2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates**

#### **Labor Force**

The civilian labor force refers to individuals who either have a job or are actively looking for a job. Dover's civilian labor force grew by 3,280 people from 2010 to 2024. In 2024, new metrics were employed so comparing the growth between 2010 and 2024 is less straight forward. Employment figures also rose during this time. Unemployment rates showed a significant decline over this period, decreasing from 5.4% in 2010 to 2.0% in 2024. A notable deviation occurred in 2020, when the unemployment rate spiked to 6.5%, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the

economy. Overall, these trends indicate a strengthening local economy with increasing employment opportunities and a growing workforce.

**Table 10: Labor Force Rates in Dover**

Year	Civilian Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
2010	17,390	16,458	932	5.4%
2011	17,411	16,583	828	4.8%
2012	17,494	16,662	832	4.8%
2013	17,600	16,846	754	4.3%
2014	17,731	17,090	641	3.6%
2015	17,854	17,338	516	2.9%
2016	18,226	17,798	428	2.3%
2017	18,297	17,871	426	2.3%
2018	18,670	18,250	420	2.2%
2019	18,991	18,581	410	2.2%
2020	18,674	17,465	1,209	6.5%
2021	18,469	17,880	589	3.2%
2022	18,606	18,239	367	2.0%
2023	18,438	18,079	359	1.9%
2024	20,670	20,260	410	2.0%

### Employment Sectors

Educational services and health care dominate the labor force in Dover. Nearly 5,000 workers are employed in this combined sector, making it the largest industry by a significant margin. This reflects Dover's role as a regional hub for healthcare and education, with institutions like Wentworth-Douglass Hospital and local schools and colleges driving employment. Professional/scientific/management services and manufacturing sectors are also strong, making up a major share of the labor force. Retail and hospitality also remain key support sectors, and finance/insurance/real estate industries are also well-represented in Dover.

**Table 11: Employment Sectors**

Industry	2023	% of Total
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining	157	1%
Construction	602	3%
Manufacturing	2,616	13%
Wholesale trade	285	1%
Retail trade	2,177	11%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	344	2%
Information	331	2%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	1,596	8%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	2,550	12%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	4,935	25%

Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food service	1,916	10%
Other services, except public administration	954	4%
Public administration	998	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,461</b>	----

#### American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

#### Recent, Pending, or Potential Economic Development Initiatives

##### ***Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2026–2029***

The Dover Business and Industrial Development Authority (DBIDA) has had an economic development strategy that primarily focused on buying and selling land for business park development. As available land decreases, the economic development strategy of DBIDA is also evolving as it recently adopted a comprehensive strategic plan on April 1, 2025, to create a conducive environment for businesses to thrive in Dover. This plan focuses on:

- **Eliminating Barriers for Businesses:** Identifying and addressing city policies or processes that may hinder business operations and proposing more business-friendly alternatives.
- **Enhancing Infrastructure:** Investing in infrastructure improvements to support business growth and expansion.
- **Promoting Workforce Development:** Collaborating with educational institutions and training programs to ensure a skilled workforce that meets the needs of local employers.

##### ***Strafford Regional Planning Commission's Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy***

The Strafford County CEDS report highlights Dover as a regional economic hub facing both opportunity and transition. The report notes that while the city experienced a setback with Liberty Mutual vacating 600,000 square feet of office space—pushing vacancy rates to over 38%—economic momentum remains strong in Dover, with Northeast Credit Union relocating its headquarters to the city and robust industrial development continuing due to demand spilling over from the Portsmouth area. Dover was the only submarket in the state to see a decrease in industrial vacancy rates in 2023, while rents rose nearly 8%. The CEDS includes multiple Dover-based priority projects—such as infrastructure investments, redevelopment of the Liberty Mutual site, downtown business incubators, and pedestrian improvements—that aim to revitalize key areas and enhance the city's economic resilience. SRPC plans to continue supporting Dover's future development through technical assistance, workforce development programs, and partnerships that align local planning with regional economic goals.

##### ***Cochecho Waterfront Development***

In partnership with the Boston-based developer Cathartes, Dover is transforming its waterfront area into a vibrant mixed-use district that includes housing, commercial space, and a riverfront park. The project encompasses 415 residential units—including apartments, condominiums, and townhouses—and approximately 30,000 square feet of retail space.

### ***Littleworth Business Park***

The Littleworth Business Park is a significant economic development initiative in Dover resulting from a public-private partnership between the city and private developers. This expansive project encompasses two primary parcels:

- **Industrial Development:** An 85-acre site south of Littleworth Road, designated for industrial and commercial use, with plans to develop approximately 700,000 to 800,000 square feet of non-residential spaces.
- **Mixed-Use Residential/Commercial Development:** A 75-acre parcel north of Littleworth Road, proposed for up to 800 residential units alongside commercial spaces, aiming to create a vibrant mixed-use community.

The project includes constructing a road connecting Crosby Road and Industrial Park Drive, along with installing essential public utilities such as water and sewer systems. Plans feature a 1.6-megawatt solar array, reflecting a commitment to sustainable energy solutions within the industrial park. The Littleworth Business Park project is envisioned as a multi-phase, decade-long endeavor, poised to significantly enhance Dover's economic landscape by attracting businesses, creating jobs, and providing diverse housing options. The mixed-use development aims to emulate the success of similar projects like Pointe Place, fostering a community-centric environment that integrates residential and commercial spaces seamlessly.

### ***Liberty Mutual Property Redevelopment***

In 2023, Liberty Mutual announced plans to vacate its Dover, New Hampshire, campus, which includes two substantial buildings: Dover East (235,000 square feet) and Dover West (350,000 square feet). This decision prompted city officials to begin exploring redevelopment opportunities for the site. In 2024, the city began exploring a potential vision to transform the property into a vibrant mixed-use community, considering ideas like elderly care, attainable housing, hotel or conference center, residential towers, schools, a shelter, and removing a floor in one of the buildings to create a manufacturing hub. With many potential new uses being considered, this could present another successful opportunity for a public-private partnership in the years to come.

### ***Economic Development Tools and Programs in Dover***

#### ***Community Development Block Grant Funding***

Dover continues to leverage CDBG funds to support a wide range of community development activities, including:

- **Revitalizing Neighborhoods:** Implementing projects that enhance the livability and aesthetic appeal of residential areas.
- **Economic Development:** Funding initiatives that stimulate economic growth and create job opportunities.

- **Improving Community Facilities and Services:** Upgrading infrastructure and public services to benefit lower-income residents

#### ***Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts***

Dover utilizes Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as a strategic economic development tool to stimulate investment in designated areas of the city. Through a TIF, the city can finance public infrastructure improvements—such as roads, utilities, and streetscapes—within specific districts by capturing the incremental increase in property tax revenues that result from development activity and the enhanced property values in those areas. Dover has established TIF districts, including the Downtown Dover TIF District and the Waterfront TIF District, which are overseen by a dedicated advisory board. The city employed TIF funds to finance essential public enhancements for the Cochecho Waterfront Development project, including the construction of a new street system to provide site access, installation of necessary utilities, and the creation of a 3.4-acre public riverfront park.

#### ***Dover Economic Loan Program***

The Dover Economic Loan Program (DELP) is designed to promote the growth and expansion of small businesses in Dover through gap financing. It primarily targets existing small businesses in Dover seeking to expand, businesses considering relocation to Dover, and new small businesses aiming to establish themselves in the city. The program offers loans to finance activities such as land and building acquisition, construction, equipment purchase, and working capital. By providing this financial assistance, DELP aims to stabilize and expand Dover's economic foundation and tax base by promoting the growth of small enterprises. The city has administered two DELP loans to local businesses in the last 10 years.

#### ***Economic Revitalization Zones***

Dover has established several Economic Revitalization Zones (ERZs) to stimulate economic redevelopment, expand the commercial and industrial base, create new jobs, and increase tax revenues within the city. These zones offer short-term business tax credits to companies that invest in infrastructure and create jobs in designated areas. Dover's ERZs include the Central Business District, Industrial Park, Locust Street, Mast Road Site, and Sixth Street Site. By leveraging this program, Dover aims to attract and support businesses, thereby enhancing the city's economic vitality.

#### ***Dover's RSA 79-E Program***

Dover adopted the Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive, known as RSA 79-E, to encourage the rehabilitation of underutilized buildings within designated areas such as the Central Business District. This program offers temporary property tax relief to property owners who undertake substantial rehabilitation projects that provide public benefits, including enhancing the economic vitality of downtown, preserving culturally or historically significant structures, and increasing residential housing in urban centers. To qualify, rehabilitation costs must be at least 15% of the building's pre-rehabilitation assessed value or \$75,000, whichever is less. Approved projects may

receive tax relief for up to five years, with potential extensions if the project includes affordable housing or historic preservation. Property owners must also enter into a covenant with the city to ensure the public benefit is maintained throughout the tax relief period. The Orpheum Apartment Complex was the first 79-E approved project in the city. The adaptive reuse of Dover's Courthouse Apartment Complex was another approved project approved through the 79-E program.

### ***Federal Opportunity Zone***

Dover features one federally designated Opportunity Zone located in census tract 33017081400. This area encompasses parts of the city with a population of approximately 2,000 residents—about 6% of Dover's total population. The median household income within this tract is around \$57,000, aligning with the state average for Opportunity Zones. Established under the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, Opportunity Zones are designed to spur economic development in low-income communities by offering tax incentives to investors. Investments made through Qualified Opportunity Funds can defer capital gains taxes, and gains from long-term investments held over 10 years may be excluded from taxation.

### **A Vision for Dover's Future Economy**

Dover's recently adopted vision for 2035, Distinctly Dover, emphasized the importance of planning for a strong and resilient economy. This vision emphasized:

- **Establish Dover as a regional economic and innovation hub** by attracting diverse industries and maintaining a strong, resilient economic base.
- **Support a skilled and inclusive workforce** by offering quality of life, housing options, and career opportunities across all sectors.
- **Foster a thriving downtown and small business environment** with clear regulations, cultural diversity, and entrepreneurial support.
- **Redevelop and reuse underutilized properties** to maximize economic potential and support strategic growth.
- **Promote sustainable and tech-ready business practices** by expanding broadband access and encouraging environmentally responsible operations.

# Transportation

Dover's transportation system is critical to land use planning because it influences how the city functions, the quality of life of residents, and the potential for new development. Access to roads, transit, and other infrastructure influences development patterns, housing choices, and economic activity. Coordinated planning of this infrastructure ensures people can reach jobs, schools, and services efficiently while minimizing environmental impacts. By aligning transportation and land use, Dover can also support more sustainable, accessible, and efficient development activity in the future.

## Transportation Today

With a vibrant and growing downtown, a strong multimodal transportation foundation, and ongoing infrastructure improvements, Dover is building toward a more connected, accessible, and resilient future. As of 2023, the average annual daily traffic on Central Avenue near City Hall was 17,015 vehicles per day. Along the Spaulding Turnpike by the toll plaza, the average annual daily traffic has grown to 42,315 vehicles per day. This is a 15% increase since 2013 when the average annual daily traffic at the toll plaza was 36,930 vehicles per day.

Dover is also home to the second-busiest Amtrak station in New Hampshire. In FY24, the Dover Transportation Center served over 63,000 passengers with five daily Downeaster round trips. This number has been increasing over the years. Compared to the other Amtrak Stations, the Durham station serviced 54,000 passengers in FY24, and the Exeter station serviced 74,000 passengers. Continued support for rail and regional transportation connections aligns with Dover's broader regional coordination goals.

Dover's commitment to multimodal transportation is also seen in its Downtown Transit Loop, which encourages intracity travel using public transportation. Initiated in collaboration with COAST in 2008–2009, the loop supports local mobility and reduces car dependency. The COAST ridership of the Dover Downtown Loop was 233,165 passengers in FY2024.

The continued expansion of the Dover Community Trail system also provides additional multimodal transportation opportunities year-round. This includes recreational access and non-motorized transportation alternatives for walkers, cyclists, and runners—further reducing vehicle trips in Dover and enhancing quality of life.

## Transportation Efficiency and Mobility

Downtown Dover is the center of land use, transportation, community, and economic activity. The compact land use pattern in the Downtown is the result of coordinated land use regulations, infrastructure investments, and private sector development activity. The result is a more productive use of land, higher land values, and a pattern that is easier to support with a variety of transportation options.

### ***What is multimodal transportation?***

Multimodal transportation includes accommodations for automobiles, public transportation, bicycles and pedestrians. Multimodal access supports the needs of all users whether they choose to walk, bike, use transit or drive. It means more connections and more choices.

This concentration of economic activity supports the case for continued investment in multimodal transportation in the Downtown, particularly walkable and transit-oriented infrastructure that reinforces the area's accessibility and performance. However, there is also a need to connect the Downtown to other areas of Dover and the surrounding region.

Efforts such as the *Downtown Pedestrian and Vehicular Access Study* (initiated in 2013) aim to enhance connectivity between the Transportation Center and central business district, as well as improve pedestrian flow between the Upper and Lower Squares. This work directly supports land use goals by enabling denser development patterns and more efficient land utilization through improved circulation.

A key challenge remains *last-mile access*—the distance between a home and the nearest transit stops. The city, in collaboration with the Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC), is currently developing a *Transit Access Study*, which evaluates Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress (PLTS) based on sidewalk quality and other walkability factors. This data will guide targeted improvements near identified transit corridors in Dover so that future investments address needed last-mile access improvements.

Electric bikes (e-bikes) are emerging as a significant component of micromobility, offering a viable and sustainable alternative for short-distance travel, particularly for "first-and-last-mile" connections to public transit and for minimizing congestion. Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure is another evolving aspect of the future of mobility within Dover and into the surrounding region. Dover has begun integrating electric vehicles into its municipal fleet and has installed several public charging stations to support EV adoption. It's also part of a broader economic strategy to attract and retain visitors to Dover's downtown, especially if they have to explore while their vehicles charge. Dover requires all private developers to either be EV charger ready or to install chargers if they want extra parking. To fully transition toward sustainable transportation, Dover is planning for the strategic expansion of public EV charging infrastructure. Prioritized locations include:

- **Downtown areas and public transit hubs**, to support multimodal use and to drive local economic activity.
- **Shopping centers**, enabling convenient vehicle charging during errands or work hours.

Proposed chargers include both Level 2 (longer duration) and DC Fast Chargers (quick turnover), ensuring compatibility with diverse trip patterns and further encouraging adoption of cleaner vehicles.

### **Multimodal Access and Investment**

Dover constructed the first complete street project in New Hampshire in 2016 when it reconstructed Silver Street. This project serves as an example of the Complete Streets and Traffic Calming Policy adopted by the City. Recent roadway and streetscape projects reflect Dover's continued efforts to modernize its infrastructure in ways that support safe, complete streets and improved land use compatibility. These projects include:

- **Court Street & Union Street Reconstruction:** New sidewalks, bike lanes, water main replacement, and improved drainage.
- **Fifth & Gove Street Upgrades:** Focused on roadway and sidewalk conditions, as well as utility modernization.
- **Whittier Street Sidewalk Improvements:** Added pedestrian access on upper Whittier Street and filled connectivity gaps.

These investments support walkability, multimodal connections, and neighborhood revitalization—and are core components of sustainable land use planning. Additionally, Pointe Place is a thoughtfully designed mixed-use community in Dover that offers a blend of residential, commercial, and recreational spaces, creating a vibrant neighborhood atmosphere. It's been noted that this area is not connected well to Dover's Downtown and improvements are needed to enhance its multi-modal connectivity.

### **Upcoming Transportation Projects**

Dover's Capital Improvement Plan identifies several transportation improvement projects planned for the next five years. These include:

- A CMAQ-funded project to reconstruct Durham Road, following recommendations that were made in a 2016 Route 108 South Corridor Study. In New Hampshire, "CMAQ" (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality) funding is a federal program, administered by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT), that provides up to 80% reimbursement for projects aimed at improving air quality by reducing congestion and promoting alternative transportation modes.
- The next phase of the Community Trail is in the design and engineering phase with potential construction occurring in 2026 or 2027. This project was referenced in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.
- Several Complete Streets projects for various roadways in town.

A pedestrian access improvement project for Chestnut Street was also just entered into the state's four-year Transportation Improvement Program.

### **Transportation Tomorrow**

Building on the work completed under the 2000 and 2016 Transportation Master Plans, Dover's recently adopted vision for 2035, *Distinctly Dover*, prioritizes a "robust transportation system" that supports:

- **Complete Streets:** Infrastructure for walking, biking, and transit to reduce congestion and reliance on personal vehicles.
- **Traffic Calming:** Managing volumes and speeds through urban design, making streets safer and more pleasant for all users.

- **Enhanced Transit:** Expanding access and improving reliability to ensure equitable mobility for all residents.
- **Multimodal Resilience:** Promoting systems that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve adaptability to climate impacts.

This solidifies transportation planning as a central pillar of Dover's land use strategy. Dover is also working on a city-wide bicycle and pedestrian plan that will identify needed transportation policy and infrastructure improvements. By enhancing multimodal infrastructure, supporting a vibrant urban center, and expanding access to sustainable transportation, the city is positioning itself to meet the demand for future growth while preserving quality of life, economic productivity, and environmental health.

# Natural Resources, Open Space, and Conservation

Dover's natural resources and network of open spaces and conserved land have influenced the city's character and development over time, while enhancing resident's quality of life. Whether it's the Cochecho River downtown, or the larger swaths of protected land in the outskirts of the city, Dover has a variety of natural resources that exist in both the developed and rural areas of the city. Dover's diverse ecosystems, including wetlands, forests, and water bodies, provide essential services to the city's residents, such as water filtration, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities. Recognizing and preserving these resources within future land use planning ensures that development respects the natural environment, mitigates flood risks, and supports biodiversity.

## Dover's Natural Resources

Currently, 22% of Dover's land area (or 3,700 acres) are permanently protected. About two-thirds of these conserved lands are northwest of Routes 4 and 155, in the more rural parts of our city. Nearly 90% of all conserved lands are within a quarter of a mile of the main stem and tributaries of the Cochecho and Bellamy Rivers. Dover's conservation lands include wildlife management areas, subdivision set aside land, and state-owned open space, among others. Notable open space resources in the city include the Dover Community Trail, Willard Pond, the Bellamy River Wildlife Management Area, and the County Farm Road Conservation Land. The Bellamy River and Cochecho Rivers also have various access points where residents can enjoy the water for boating access, fishing, and more. As part of its water resources, Dover has wetlands, vernal pools, floodplains, lakes and ponds, estuarine, and coldwater, warmwater, and tidal rivers and streams. The city also has aquifers and groundwater resources that provide drinking water to the residents and developments within the city.

### **Key Definitions**

**Open Space:** broadly refers to undeveloped public and private land offering scenic, natural, recreational, agricultural, or historical benefits. Open space lands could be developed at any time.

**Conservation Land:** refers to properties that have a legal agreement prohibiting future development protecting its conservation values including water quality, wildlife habitat, recreational offerings, scenic views, agricultural resources, and more.

**Natural Resources:** refer to the physical and ecological features of a parcel of land that provide essential services that support environmental health and human activity. These include water resources, soils, steep slopes, forests, fields, and more.

## A Legacy of Land Conservation

Dover has a long history of environmental protection, land conservation, and stewardship, with its current network of open spaces and recreational areas reflecting over 50 years of thoughtful planning and commitment by the city's residents and staff. Between 2000 and 2012, more than 1,000 acres of land were added to Dover's protected areas through conservation easements. Since 2012, the amount of permanently conserved land has grown by 22%, with nearly all of the 672 acres added since then expanding existing protected areas, much of which is now managed by the City of Dover.

The City of Dover oversees nearly half of all existing conserved lands. Other conservation organizations, such as New Hampshire Fish and Game, Society for the Protection of NH Forests, and Southeast Land Trust, oversee the remaining lands. Nearly 90% of conserved lands in Dover are protected through conservation easements and fee ownership. Other land protection tools used to conserve land in the city include flowage rights and protective easements (which help protect water supply resources), open space subdivision land set asides, and deed restrictions.

### **Regulatory Strategies**

Dover's land use regulations aim to direct development away from sensitive natural resources. They also ensure ecosystem services are produced or protected (through mechanisms like stormwater management and carbon sequestration through vegetation) during development and redevelopment projects. The city's wetland protection ordinance, stormwater management design standards, environmental review process, cluster subdivision regulations, floodplain protection regulations, and tree protection requirements are a few ways the city prioritizes natural resource protection when guiding future development.

One of Dover's regulatory strategies used to protect valuable open space, such as wetlands, groundwater recharge zones, forested areas, and farmland, is called Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). The TDR Ordinance encourages more intensive development in areas with public infrastructure but fewer conservation features, while preserving lands with significant environmental value. The ordinance currently applies broadly across the city, including in Rural Residential areas. As awareness of the TDR grows, there has been an increase in development proposals in these rural areas, raising concerns about intensification beyond the downtown's walkable limits. Periodic review of the TDR Ordinance will be necessary to balance open space protection with development needs, including the possibility of adjusting density allowances in certain areas. Examining both the open space subdivision ordinance and the TDR ordinance are high priority actions the City will be exploring in the near term and a TDR Ordinance Sub-Committee has been developed to begin this process.

### **Recreation and Accessibility**

Public access to protected lands is important. Access to nature is linked to improved community health and wellbeing and leads to a collective sense of shared stewardship and appreciation for the natural lands that sustain us. Currently, one-third of all permanently protected land in Dover allow full public access for various types of recreation including walking, hiking, skiing, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, birding, and simply being in nature. Increasing public access will allow more opportunities for community members to utilize the open space assets currently available in Dover.

Dover's recently adopted Conservation and Open Space Master Plan chapter prioritizes public access improvements as a major component of Dover's future open space planning. Accessibility improvements ensure residents and visitors can access the city's open space properties safely and easily. Examples include publicizing lesser-known locations, developing and installing appropriate signage, ensuring trails are accessible to diverse users, ensuring sufficient parking, and ensuring the properties are physically accessible to those that visit. Dover's Conservation and Open Space

Chapter also identified as a high priority for future planning the connection of Dover's open spaces and conservation lands to existing neighborhoods to ensure all residents have safe access natural land and recreation opportunities.

The Community Trail is Dover's most well-known stretch of open space and recreation resource. Following a former railroad bed along sections of the Cochecho and Bellamy Rivers, the Community Trail is a popular greenway linking conservation and open space lands with the urban downtown and other key locations such as the Transportation Center Lot. Future plans for the Community Trail are already underway and include exploring expansion of the trail into more rural parts of Dover and eventually connecting with trail networks in surrounding communities.

Dover's open space network is part of the Economic Development Department's new "Discover Dover" website and a component of its economic strategy to promote Dover's quality of life to residents and visitors.

### **Water Quality**

Dover has identified groundwater quality and quantity as a primary focus in its future planning priorities. This emphasis is articulated in the city's Conservation and Open Space Master Plan update, which identifies groundwater protection as a key conservation priority. One of the high priority actions from this chapter is to invest in additional groundwater studies to identify potential locations for subsurface wells and to inform the protection of corresponding lands.

Dover is also an MS4 community under the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) regulations. The goal of this program is to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff to the maximum extent practicable, thereby protecting and improving water quality in the city's receiving waters. This designation requires the city to manage and regulate stormwater discharges to reduce pollution in local water bodies. Dover follows a Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) and an Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) Plan to comply with these MS4 permit requirements.

Addressing nitrogen pollution is a priority for Dover to protect water quality and the health of ecosystems in the Great Bay estuary. The city is actively seeking collaborative solutions with neighboring communities to manage and reduce nitrogen discharges and collaborates with organizations like the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP) to promote a healthy Great Bay estuary system.

### **Economic Benefits of Open Space**

Conserved land is less expensive for communities to maintain than developed areas, as undeveloped open space requires a lower level of municipal services. Conserved spaces also increase adjacent property value. Conserved land can also benefit the tourism economy. A recent study referenced by The Highland Center analyzed 1,500 New England cities and towns over 25 years and found that when conservation increased, employment increased. This may be due to a burgeoning tourism economy or by investing in quality of life factors, which result in employees being attracted to the area. There is opportunity to better understand the return on investment for conserved lands in the city.

## Dover's Natural Resource and Open Space Network Tomorrow

In 2024, Dover updated its Natural Resource Inventory and its Open Space and Conservation Master Plan chapter which outlined clear directives for future open space protection efforts. This included mapping all natural resource types in the city and the development of co-occurrence maps to identify areas within Dover that have the highest concentration of important natural resources. These will serve as tools for future conservation planning and should directly inform the future land use strategy.

Dover's recently adopted vision for 2035, Distinctly Dover, and the recently adopted 2025 Open Space and Conservation Master Plan chapter envisions:

- **Accessible Open Spaces:** Ensuring Dover's open space network is accessible to the community for a variety of recreation purposes including walking, biking, and other activities.
- **An Interconnected Conservation Network:** Conserving parcels already adjacent to protected lands and connecting river corridors, trails, and green roadways to larger open spaces.
- **Protection of Critical Natural Resources:** Protecting ecosystems that provide critically important services including clean water, clean air, flood protection, and habitat. These include groundwater resources, floodplains, forests, and other resources.
- **Preservation of Rural Character:** Preserving natural resources and rural areas by focusing commercial activity in and around the urban core.

# Community Climate Resilience

As a coastal community, climate resilience is especially relevant to land use planning in Dover. This proactive planning will help the city, and its residents, adapt to and recover from climate-related challenges like flooding, heat, and extreme weather. By guiding development away from high-risk areas and investing in durable infrastructure, resilient planning protects people, property, and ecosystems. It also promotes long-term sustainability, supports the local economy, and addresses the needs of vulnerable populations by improving equity and public health. As climate impacts intensify, continuing to integrate resilience into Dover's land use decisions will ensure a safer, healthier, and more sustainable community for all.

## Dover's Resilience Efforts

As climate change increasingly affects the New England region, the City of Dover is advancing a land use approach that strengthens community resilience across environmental, economic, and social systems. This effort reflects a proactive stance guided by equity, sustainability, and fiscal responsibility, and is designed to prepare Dover for a future of climate uncertainty while improving the quality of life for all residents.

One of the key elements of this commitment is the Citywide Resilience Plan, launched in 2023. This plan defines Dover's approach to confronting climate-related challenges through collaborative governance, local innovation, and sustainable land use. The plan also supports the core goals of the City Council and highlights the integral role that land use decisions play in energy transition, ecosystem preservation, food security, and infrastructure planning. Key partners in this work include the Planning and Community Development Department, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Energy Commission, and Open Lands Committee.

## Flooding, Equity, and Adaptation

Dover's vulnerability to climate hazards—especially flooding—is well documented in the 2018 Climate Adaptation Master Plan. The low-lying areas along the Bellamy, Piscataqua, and Cochecho Rivers, as well as Little Bay, which are particularly at risk were also identified in the 2025 Conservation and Open Space Chapter as priority lands for hazard mitigation. These and other areas in the city that are most likely to be impacted by climate change may result in disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations including the elderly, disabled, and historically marginalized communities. Land use strategies that address these risks align with six guiding principles from the NH Coastal Risk and Hazards Commission (CRHC), emphasizing early action, coordinated planning, risk-informed design, and no-regrets solutions that deliver multiple community benefits. There are also financial benefits to being more resilient to natural hazards. The 2019 Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves Report produced by the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS), in collaboration with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), determined that every \$1 spent on mitigation saves \$6 on future disaster losses.

## Energy Resilience and Emissions Reduction

Dover is a founding member of the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire, and as of October 2024, Dover Community Power has provided over 91,500 megawatt-hours of energy with

estimated customer savings of more than \$2 million. While recent rate shifts have narrowed the price gap with traditional utilities, the program remains a cornerstone of Dover's transition to a more resilient and independent energy future. Other related efforts include the establishment of Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) financing to support clean energy retrofits in commercial buildings; a planned solar array at the wastewater treatment plant that could save the City up to \$16.4 million over 25 years; and a second 1.5 MW solar project now advancing through city review processes.

### **Local Food Systems and Urban Agriculture**

Land use policies also directly impact the resilience of Dover's food systems. The Resilience Plan promotes establishing community gardens, practicing urban agriculture, and supporting food waste reduction strategies that enhance food security and reduce environmental impacts.

Highlights of this work include:

- Dover Community Garden: A resident-driven initiative that promotes healthy eating and local food access.
- Municipal composting: A program operated in partnership with Mr. Fox Composting, which diverts organic waste and supports soil health.
- Zoning recommendations: To support urban agriculture, farmers' markets, and composting operations in more parts of the city.

Dover is also eligible to pursue grant funding through the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) Program, which could support new infrastructure investments for food processing, storage, and distribution.

### **Greening Urban Land and Forest Management**

Undeveloped parcels and healthy ecosystems are also central to climate resilience. Dover's urban forests filter air and water, reduce the heat island effect, and buffer storm impacts. As a Tree City USA community, Dover has embraced urban forestry through annual tree planting goals with a target of a 10% increase in canopy cover over the next decade. Implementing new strategies for invasive species management are also important to address habitat degradation. Ongoing community education initiatives and partnerships are also essential to encouraging stewardship and engaging residents in forest conservation efforts across the city.

Land use regulations will increasingly need to balance growth with habitat preservation and ecosystem function, ensuring that Dover's green infrastructure remains a fundamental component of the built environment.

### **A Resilient Tomorrow**

Dover's path to resilience is guided by science, equity, and a long-term vision for sustainability. Through land use planning that promotes renewable energy, green infrastructure, and community-scale food and mobility systems, the city is laying the groundwork for a climate-ready future that works for everyone. Resilience is not only about preparing for what is next—it is about creating

lasting value and shared prosperity through the way we shape and use our land today. It is also about the relationships and sense of community that are built in the process

To accomplish this Distinctly Dover, the city's recently adopted vision for 2035, prioritizes the creation of “resilient and environmentally focused infrastructure” that supports:

- Resilience plan goals and reducing long-term costs through climate adaptation, watershed management, and environmentally focused utilities.
- Renewable energy and innovation, with widespread adoption of solar power, community solar for public facilities, and new development designed for energy efficiency and future technologies like Electric Vehicle charging.
- Environmental stewardship and regeneration, including reducing solid waste and plastics, integrating nature-based infrastructure like stormwater infiltration and street trees, and responsibly managing the Cochecho River’s ecological and cultural value.
- Land use planning, emergency response plans, and facilities that position the city as a regional hub for climate resilience and potential climate migration.



## Future Land Use in Dover

Survey Results  
INTERIM

10/08/2025

## What do you value most about your neighborhood or area of Dover?

Walkability with side walks safely linking different neighborhoods.

Rural character, forested land, privacy

Pedestrian access to local businesses, community organizations, and city offices

Open Space

The residential character. Very few accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and small multi-family structures which is optimal.

walkability

walkable to downtown

Proximity to downtown yet surrounded by trees and large house lots. Lots of wildlife turkeys and deer etc.

Trees which are so important especially with climate change and as noise buffers. We are also within walking distance of downtown, a great asset.

We live in "Primarily Residential Area-2" on Tolend Road. We value the rural feel, the wildlife diversity, the numerous existing conservation areas (with wildlife habitat and connecting wildlife corridors), and limited future developments.

Easy access to Coast bus routes, downtown, Community Trail, restaurants, parks, Great Bay and more.

I value the walkability; sidewalks, paths, and shops and public buildings that I can access on foot.

It's safe and quiet with a good balance of land and housing. Not too dense, and close to living and work needs.

Dover of the of is getting smaller and smaller

Beautiful properties that aren't on top of each other. Field across the street with wildlife.

Single family housing

Space between neighbors

Space between houses, privacy. We live in a single family home neighborhood for exactly that reason. Not in a neighborhood full of apartment buildings or small houses squished onto tiny pieces of land. Or where it's allowed to sell your land next door and put in 20 new houses on 2 acres. That should not be allowed.

Ease of access to downtown & single family homes with long time Dover residents.

When we purchased our home the things we loved about the area was the open space and wildlife. I am saddened that this is being taken away with developers taking advantage of the TDR program and cramming in as much density as possible to increase their profits at the expense of the abutters.

Woods, spacing between houses, quiet. Not highly dense with homes.

Large lot sizes

Open space

Dense neighborhood with small lots and small houses suitable for single people and couples or families

Not a lot of traffic.

It's walkability and access to downtown/businesses.

Trees and forest land, the incredible biodiversity, from deer and foxes to birds of prey and many types of amphibians.

Open land. Conservation

Residential with proximity to downtown.

The open land

it is dark and quiet at night. There are no businesses open in the evening.

Privacy and conservation land

That it's quiet, safe, and welcoming, and that it's close to local business and the community trail (nature).

Open space and Old Dover city charm

Sidewalks and easy access to major roadways

Proximity to downtown stores & restaurants (area 1).

Near downtown. Community trail for my dog. Restaurants.

I live in the Downtown area and most value the proximity to essential community services (hospital, fire/EMS responders, public schools, restaurants/shops)

I value the proximity to downtown Dover.

## Looking across the future land use areas, what qualities or features should Dover work to preserve or strengthen?

Preserve the services available and strengthen the shopping available.

Maintain open space/forested land, minimize conflicting uses with well planned zoning, maintain diversity of min lot sizes, encourage infill higher density in core downtown area, lower density in outer regions with certain areas designated for more dense/village development (ie Pointe Place, future Littleworth Rd development, Liberty Mutual reuse).

1. Preserve the environmental buffer areas to protect the area's ecosystem including wetlands, groundwater, and habitats. 2. Continue and strengthen the plans for affordable housing for people in the service industry, public servants, educators, and first-time homeowners. 3. Preserve Dover's historic legacy throughout any expansion plans with careful consideration of building design conformity to existing structures.

Open Space

Slow down on construction of mixed use, condos and apartment complexes.

bikeability

open lands, in-fill, walkability/cyclability

Don't put houses on top of each other! We do not need to morph into a big city! Knock it off with planning board variances to increase population density!

Preserving land. Adding more crosswalks especially at community trail crossings.

Consider purchasing more conservation easement lands in the "Primarily Residential Area-2" in order to expand and connect the existing protected lands and wildlife corridors that already exist there (not just in the "Primarily Residential Area-3"...)

Construct ADA compliant wheelchair accessible intersections and street crossings. Preserve rural and urban green spaces. Construct safe bike lanes. Construct sidewalks on routes Dover public school students use to walk to and from school. Expand Dover Housing Authority and other affordable residential opportunities.

I think it is important to preserve the urban core and make sure we don't lose it to more parking lots. I also think that the Open spaces and green spaces and the more rural areas of Dover should be maintained.

We need to strengthen our sidewalks and bike lanes to make the city easier to navigate for all. Due to the large increases in our tax bills from all of the multi million dollar projects, at this time I would like to see more development and less preservation to widen our tax base. We cannot continue on this path of "build now and tax later" while trying to maintain community support. We need to focus on attainable improvements within a fiscally responsible budget.

You should leave it alone

We must preserve green space. The wildlife keeps losing habitats due to developments and its unsightly to see neighborhoods with houses on top of each other. I am very happy to see my neighborhood is in area 3.

Value historic homes with big lots

I wish Dover would stop cramming in developments on top of one another, while property taxes continue to soar. Also, stressors on our infrastructure and utilities continue to occur. I would love to see a pause on development. It is just added more traffic woes, stresses on first responders services, stressors on infrastructure and schools. Parking is horrible and so aren't the property taxes. Property developers are getting sweet heart, tax deals. Enough is enough!

Space, privacy, conservation land. Green space. Do not allow a bunch of small homes to be built on a small piece of land in a neighborhood of single family homes.

Dover should work to preserve conservation land, natural areas city wide & historical aspects of downtown.

The description for area 2 needs to be more clear. When you state that expanded housing choices without altering the overall feel it leaves this way to subjective. During a planning board meeting for 512 6th street the abutters argued that the approval of this project would not meet the look and feel of the neighborhood. A planning board member stated that he couldn't deny the project on this ground cause it wasn't like the developer was asking for a 5 story building on this lot. This project was to add 5 homes on a 1.4 lot where all the surrounding homes are 1 home per one acre so drastically different from the look and feel. This is just one example of the need for me precise wording in the regulations.

R-40 areas to keep the rural feel. Look to expand on edges of town vs rural areas. If with rural add no more than 50% increase in units

Sidewalks on sixth street extending past county farm rd toward Rochester

Open space

More density where it's appropriate - between locust and central, infill buildings etc. Keep the woods out at the edges where it can thrive.

Smartly located Commercial space to help defray tax costs.

Broadening the area of focus for mixed use development. If it's within walking distance to downtown/the transportation center, it should be mixed use. IMO, we should expand the integrated development area to include all of Horne St and beyond, as well as Dover's south end.

Wooded lots, these are least protected under zoning regulations

Open land and conservation

Preserve and strengthen a vibrant downtown.

Conservation of wilderness and open landscape

We do not need any more rental properties. Home ownership - encourage the development of Small affordable single family homes.

Save the trees and forests!!!!!! No more developments!!!

CHARM AND NATURE. Dover is quaint and welcoming, but is quickly becoming gentrified, which the residents DO NOT want and speak out against consistently in social spaces in person and online. Keeping the gentle, quaint, community feel alongside nature is what attracts actual long-term residents to the city.

Open space! Stop building new paces and revive the old, stop allowing developers to build large developments on previous long standing open spaces. And bending every rule they can to get the maximum amount of houses in, including moving wet land boundaries. The city is way too money hungry vs preserving the charm and character of Dover. I moved here 23 years ago, while some change and growth is great, it is now completely gone overboard and is extremely disappointing.

Traffic flow in downtown

Transit connectivity, more interspersed neighborhood stores outside of downtown core (i.e. Area 1)

Dog parks are very limited. General open space. Community trail connectivity through downtown is unsafe. Put a median on central ave in town. Remove the dam. The running water will be much nicer and healthier. Bike lanes

I believe Dover should emphasize pedestrian accessibility. This would mean bolstering the "Walkability" of the city by installing more sidewalks or walking paths between areas.

I think Dover should preserve or improve its affordability. Dover has great charm now and is popular with many young adults, but many are also being displaced by rising costs of living. I don't want Dover to turn into the type of town where the people who work there can't afford to live there.

## Are there places on the draft future land use map where you think *change or improvement* is especially important? What should that change look like?

Keeping development near the community trail to a minimum to preserve the natural beauty is important.

Appears to be well balanced

Pedestrian safety in all areas of future land use utilizing high visibility traffic signals/signs

Around downtown seems to offer no preserved open space. That is the heart of the most walkable area - no open space for recreation is a severe oversight.

The map primarily looks okay as long as there are no or minimal increases in accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and small multi-family structures.

correct coloring of Area 2 and Area 3 to be consistent across document. In text boxes to right of map, colors are reversed.

Traffic calming on gateway roads. Integrated Cycleways

Yes less pink areas!

There's much talk about affordable housing, but haven't seen any in the new buildings. I may be unaware.

It would be helpful to display the existing and planned city sewage lines on the map, in order to inform the residents where to expect increased density developments (e.g. TDR's, OSS's) now and 5-10 years into the future.

No

Safe bicycle passages that exists to go to places like grocery stores etc. rather than just for recreation.

In order to establish generational housing, areas 1 and 2 should have more of a mix of housing opportunities. We need smaller options. Right now the young and old are essentially stuck. The young can't afford a big house, and there are little to no options for older people to downsize. Smaller developments for home OWNERS and not renters is badly needed.

No MORE BUILDING. We d not have the infrastructure for it.

I feel there are a few spots that are very dangerous and require sidewalks. One of these places is Oak St. The road is narrow and the bridge is even narrower. I've seen kids on bikes trying to get to the skate park and nearly get hit by cars in the process. The hill makes it dangerous too as you can't see. I also feel there should be a sidewalk on Atlantic Ave. There is no where to safely walk. People park on the side of the road which leaves pedestrians no place to walk other than in the road. Many of the streets in the Oak, Atlantic, Gulf, Cocheco neighborhood have tons of poison ivy on the side of the road so you're stuck between poison ivy and cars with no sidewalk. I love the community trail and I'd love to see extensions of it. The extension to the Shell Station/ BK was a great idea! It's nice that part of the trail is paved to make it accessible to those with mobility issues. I really enjoy the Watson side too. I grew up next to the county complex on the horse farm and know there are tons of trails back there. Is there a way to connect the old rail bed that runs to Rochester to the Dover community trail? That would be awesome!! Thanks for your consideration. Courtney Murphy. 111 Gulf Road.

Draft map lacks transparency because it does not identify enough streets to allow the viewer to understand the vision.

Down town and upper Central Ave traffic flow and parking are issues. The lights are off as far as timing.

Less buildings and more green space.

Minimize the integrated development areas, expanding primarily residential areas.

i feel the TDR needs to be updated to have better guardrails on it. As it sits currently as long as a developer has enough money to pay the fee they are able to ignore current zoning regulations and drastically change a neighborhood. While i understand the need to update the land use map i feel the TDR needs to be updated first as that is the tool the developers have been using to change the look and feel over neighborhoods for their own profit.

Parts of r-40 look to not be in conservation area while others abutting it do. That should not be the case or you'll quickly lose the look and feel of why so many buy where they do. Look and feel should also include number of units being added. Does the density fit the look and feel of the neighborhood and surrounding homes should be included in consideration.

Sidewalks on sixth street extending past county farm rd toward Rochester

Less development of housing, more industry!!!!

There are a lot of parking lots along Locust, Rutland, and Central that seem prime for development. I'd like to see neighborhood scale development there, with small frontages (30-60 ft) and narrow set backs to promote the neighborhood feel. It's not necessarily the place for 4-5 story buildings, but it is the place for density.

No

The greatest development opportunity is the Central Ave Shaws plaza. So much empty space exists that could be redeveloped into mixed use housing/businesses, practically extending downtown. And those residents would get walkable access to grocery stores, gyms, the hospital, and other key amenities without needing to drive, and still be within a 5 min bike ride to downtown Dover. Of course this would require traffic calming measures to be implemented on and around Central Ave.

Dover point is tributary to two rivers that are important to the health of the bay. Areas around our rivers should be better protected from over development. Giving developers the ability to do more with less land means one home lots with many trees become 2 home lots with no trees. Look at aerial maps of Dover over time we are losing our canopy and wildlife corridors. The way we are currently building in sensitive areas is not sustainable.

Reduce number of expanding housing opportunities in areas that are open lands/ wooded. We are truncating wildlife areas. Stop giving massive tax breaks for builders creating unaffordable housing

Install traffic calming measures on Stark Avenue. Construct sidewalks on both sides of Stark Avenue to connect to downtown and Pointe Place.

The proposed integrated development between Dover point and middle road should not be allowed. It is a place a home to wildlife and has a beautiful country feel. This will change the vibe of the area and is absolutely unnecessary to add more development. There is already point place and that should suffice. I absolutely oppose this change. Instead, I urge Dover to consider conserving this important land.

The proposed development of another Pointe Place-style “city center” on Littleworth Road should be reconsidered and ultimately abandoned. Even the developer/property owner has acknowledged that Littleworth Road functions primarily as a commuter route. Introducing destination commercial businesses and high-density rental units into this quiet, residential part of Dover would cause significant disruption—not only to neighboring homeowners but also to daily commuters. The surrounding neighborhood consists entirely of single-family, owner-occupied homes. Adding a dense, commercialized development here is out of character with the area and unnecessary for the city. Dover does not need another cluster of overpriced rental units like those at Pointe Place. The ongoing Waterfront project and the proposed Liberty Mutual development already promise an ample—and arguably excessive—supply of high-cost rental and commercial properties.

Just clean up what is already here! My road needs paved  !!!

I am an advocate of keeping as much green/open/natural space as possible,

Once again stop allowing what's left of the towns open space to be build on, preserve the land.

See above

Back River Road should be considered a major road. It's currently un-served by public transit despite having medium density housing and multiple schools (key destinations).

Definitely need to connect the community trail under the train vs going into town. The green areas should connect if assuming to improve wildlife corridors. Increased public open space Replace wood on community path bridge Remove dam in town will add running water effect and better biodiversity vs stagnant river.

I believe improving sidewalk access throughout downtown areas would create a safer environment for our kids. For instance, building sidewalks on the stretch of Oak Street that connects Broadway to Route 4. This would allow better access to the public pool and skatepark for neighborhood kids.

Transportation for pedestrians and cyclists could be improved. Many people bike on busy roads such as Dover Point Rd and it would be nice to have protected bike lanes so cyclists can do so safely.

