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The framework for Dover's systematic downtown evolution

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First the students, then the young professionals, then the money. This is proving to be the framework for Dover's systematic downtown evolution. In case you were wondering, we're now moving into phase 3 - private and public capital expenditure.

Dover, the largest city in New Hampshire's Seacoast Region, is distinguished with some serious bragging rights - one being that Dover is the fastest growing city in the state of New Hampshire. When discussing the development of Dover's downtown, I've often heard people describe it as the "new Portsmouth" or the "next Portsmouth." To be completely honest, it's kind of an injustice to Dover, as there are almost no similarities or historical congruity. Not only does Dover maintain its own historical significance, the contemporary climate of the city is outpacing Portsmouth's. Reason being: price point. Young professionals trickling out of the University of New Hampshire can't afford Portsmouth housing costs on an entry level salary. Why would they be inclined to live in Portsmouth anyway with the opportunity to reside in newly constructed apartment buildings or renovated mills in Dover?

Does this city sound enticing yet? Well hold that thought... If you find yourself wandering the streets downtown at dinner time on a Friday night, you may begin to wonder: "what are my options for dinner, I'm not in the mood for takeout again..." Don't jump in your car to Portsmouth just yet folks; there are a few hidden gems worth exploring. For the discerning pallet, the upscale eatery, Stages at One Washington, is a must-try. If you're in the market for a more casual dining atmosphere, head over to 7th Settlement for a farm-to-table dining experience. In the mood for steak? The Orchard Street Chop Shop is your best bet. One of the more recent additions to downtown is the Thirsty Moose, a Portsmouth staple that branched out to Dover for a second location. Notably, they have 70+ beers on tap.

The true distinguishing factor between the downtowns of Portsmouth and Dover is the rate of growth and improvement that Dover has experienced in a far more abbreviated timeframe. Portsmouth has always been on the map as a tourist and restaurant locale. Dover is establishing itself as a destination for young professionals to relocate, permanently.

The city of Dover is not messing around either when it comes to R&D, community development and job creation. Various city sponsored low-interest business loan programs and tax credits exist to stimulate job growth and import startup companies. The low-interest business loan program can be utilized as a supplementary source of financing to bridge the gap on bank loans. This is an excellent resource for restaurateurs, as it is often challenging to get adequate startup funds. Not to mention, Dover has an ever increasing need for new eateries. With every \$25,000 issued, the city requires that one new low to moderate income position is created within the company.

In addition to city sponsored loan programs and tax credits, the revitalization of municipal infrastructure is quickly becoming a priority. Examples of projects that are underway include the new

construction police facility and downtown parking garage. The parking garage, located on Washington St. in the heart of downtown, is expected to be up and running by November. The police station (located on the same site) is scheduled for completion in spring 2016.

With new downtown projects on the horizon, such as the proposed redevelopment of the "Robbins Block Building"(currently going through the approval process), and sites like the former Fosters Newspaper building on the market, the promise of improved street retail, restaurants and bars is surely in sight. Just take a drive down First St. if you're looking for an example of the most recent and nearly completed 'high end' housing project. The Riparia project boasts 32 upscale residential apartments and ground floor commercial/restaurant space overlooking the Cocheco River.

If your company is considering a relocation or new location in Dover, don't wait for commercial lease rates to peak - lock in today!

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