



Fort DuPont Redevelopment and Preservation Corporation
2023-2028 Strategic Plan

Submitted for the Board
September 13, 2023

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BACKGROUND

Fort DuPont Redevelopment and Preservation Corporation (FDRPC) is the trustee and steward of the historic Fort DuPont Military Installation and Fort DuPont State Park. Years of industrial use, along with a lack of maintenance resulted in the property and its facilities falling into disrepair. During Governor Markell's administration, there was a vision for repurposing the land and buildings to become an economic, cultural, and recreational asset for the State of Delaware. FDRPC was tasked through legislative action to redevelop the campus into a mix-use life-style community comprised of residences, historic buildings, repurposed buildings to lease for residential and commercial use, and outdoor and culture amenities. The site is located adjacent to Delaware City and sits along the Delaware River.

Since 2014, when the FDRPC was formed, a portion of the site has been redeveloped into a residential community, which is now annexed into Delaware City. A second site for residences is underway. Still to be finalized are the uses for other historic buildings. The Board and Leadership wished to embark on strategic planning with community input to help guide their priorities for the next five years. DANA, the Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement, was contracted to gather community perspectives and facilitate strategic planning with a strategic planning committee comprised of board and staff members, to assist in the planning facilitation, community feedback, and plan development.

The Board strategic planning committee is comprised of: John McMahon, Board Chair, Courtney Stewart, David Edgell, Wendy Rogers, Michael Graci, Tim Slavin, FDRPC Executive Director, and Janice Moturi, FDRPC Deputy Director-Controller.

PLAN PROCESS

This strategic planning process included the following elements:

- Review of organization and planning documents to orient DANA to FDRPC
- Community and staff input via interviews, focus groups, community town hall, and an online survey
- Outline of FDRPC's Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Desired Results (SCOAR)
- Clarity on FDRPC's primary and secondary stakeholders they serve
- A review and recommended revisions to FDRPC's vision, mission, and values
- Identification of desired outcomes for the next five years and metrics for success
- Key strategies to achieve those outcomes along with activities to support the strategies
- Resource requirements and conditions that need to be in place to make the plan successful

Input was gathered between March and June. The strategic planning committee met in July and August to take the findings, identify the strategic for the next five years. Upon the Board's approval, FDRPC will present the final plan to the community in mid-September.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM COMMUNITY AND STAFF INPUT

Forty-seven individuals provided their comments via interview, focus groups, and an in-person Town Hall. These included board members, elected officials, community leaders from Delaware City and residents of Delaware City, including those who live on the Fort DuPont campus. Sixty-two responded to the survey of which the majority (76%) lived in Delaware City or on the Fort DuPont campus. In addition, all FDRPC staff provided their perspective on strategic priorities, mission, vision, and values.

Summary of the Interviews, Focus Groups, and Town Hall:

- Overall, there is a common understanding that FDRPC is in the business of cleaning up the FDRPC campus to redevelop it for Delaware City. There is an appreciation for the interest in creating outdoor amenities, trails, and parks, as well as more residential and commercial properties.
- Though many identify FDRPC as the organization that is redeveloping/repurposing the Fort DuPont campus and its structures, there is an attitudinal difference between those who work closely with FDRPC and the leadership, and those who live in the community. Those who have inside knowledge understand the nuances of partnerships, challenges with previous leadership, and how decisions are made. They see the progress the new Executive Director has made with community relations, and in engaging others in the planning process. They are pleased with the property developments to date, and excited about future plans for restoration of the Chapel and Theatre.
- The community is also excited about the intent to renovate the Chapel and Theatre, but they don't have perspective on how the plans are materializing. For them, it is not clear who makes the decisions (or is responsible) for how FDRPC is developed/ repurposed. Promises were made, but not kept as it relates to the master plan. Individuals who bought property were given commitments for amenities that have not materialized or took much longer to complete. There is an acknowledgement that multiple entities and decision-makers are involved in the planning and execution of FDRPC work.
- From the Town Hall session, community members do not know who is on the board. There is a concern that the decisions that will impact their lives and quality of life are being made by people who do not live in Delaware City and will have to live with the consequences of those decisions.

Summary of the online community survey:

Overall, the community believes they understand the organization’s mission, but fewer understand its vision, particularly residents of Delaware City and Fort DuPont, and those survey respondents who have lived in the area less than 10 years. Community residents were not optimistic that FDRPC would prioritize community interests for living on the campus, historic preservation, protection of the environment or commercial development.

Strategic outcomes that rose to the top for most respondents included:

- Historic Building preservation
- Transparent Communication
- Development that attracts new residents and businesses.

Several write-in comments wished the FDRPC Board to consider investment in recreational and culture amenities, repairs, and water-related restoration (canal) and access.

Survey respondents were fairly consistent in ranking priority projects:

- Complete projects they have started/stabilize deteriorated buildings
- Environmental conservation and restoration
- Redevelop to create commercial opportunities
- Address access to the water

With these different perspectives, it is suggested the FDRPC Board consider which audiences are its priority for its work and clarify its identity and scope of responsibility in the redevelopment and ongoing stewardship of the property.

Summary of Staff Perspective:

The idea of “healing” and restoration were raised as important elements, in that it is more than the buildings that need to be restored. Removal of invasive species and the reintroduction of native ones are examples. They believed there is a need to sustain this restoration for the future (both buildings and land). Staff also mentioned that a lot has been done, but perhaps the community cannot see it because the change is gradual. An idea was to begin showing before & after images, or even provide visuals along the progression of the restoration.

Top outcomes from the staff:

- Ability to engage with and enjoy nature & the natural environment
- Historic buildings are restored and are in productive use
- Fort DuPont’s redevelopment is an attraction for new residents and businesses

Top 3 Activities:

- Finish what has already been started
- Stabilize deteriorating buildings until ready to work on them
- Theatre & Chapel Restoration
- Create open/honest two-way communication

Overall, there was a sense that FDRPC needs to define its purpose for the future. And then define the resources needed to accomplish that purpose.

FDRPC SCOAR ANALYSIS

From the community and staff feedback, the strategic planning committee reflected on FDRPC’s organizational **S**trengths, market and organizational **C**hallenges, **O**pportunities, its **A**spirations, and desired **R**esults. This reflection helps to identify areas for FDRPC to focus on for its strategic plan.

Fort DuPont Redevelopment & Preservation Corporation
SCOAR Analysis August 2023

Strengths	Challenges	Opportunities	Aspirations	Results
Fort DuPont Assets/ Property & its potential for repurpose	Perception that FDRPC is not a good steward of property assets (sinkholes, loose tarp on roofs etc)	Common interest to "heal" the land, historic assets, and community relations	There is a plan for campus development with new assumptions, based on new market realities, and rooted in organization's values.	Historic buildings are restored and repurposed (thus economic activity increases)
Community interest in FDRPC purpose (historic preservation/ conservation/ clean up & re-use)				
Staff expertise and commitment to both FDRPC work and community interests				
Have "rebooted" legislation, staff, and engagement.	Community concerns regarding FDRPC's motives, values when it comes to its work	Create awareness of work FDRPC has done to clean up and steward	The community (Fort DuPont and Delaware City residents) is actively engaged in the process and life at Fort DuPont.	Community supports FDRPC plans and trusts our decisions
		Can leverage redevelopment to enhance Delaware City's economy and cultural quality of life	There is a shared vision of the future of the Fort DuPont campus and FDRPC.	
		Leverage community desire for FDRPC success to engage community	There is shared trust between FDRPC and the community. There is clarity about what FDRPC can/can't and should/shouldn't do.	
Partnerships with many other organizations to develop and improve area	Lack of clarity on FDRPC's role and it's accountability to the community, relative to other agencies	Clarify the Role of FDRPC vis-à-vis partners	There is clarity about the roles and responsibility of FDRPC's partners in the use and development of the campus.	There is access to Recreational/ Cultural/ Nature amenities
Carried out enabling legislation - Progress so far developing property and renovating buildings	Funding required to raise to complete all the work necessary	Can create revenue streams to support FDRPC in the future	There are diverse funding sources to support the necessary work.	FDRPC has long-term sustainability

WHO FDRPC SERVES

Strategic planning committee members identified a list of audiences it must consider for its work and plans. They listed audiences that directly benefit from FDRPC's work and then those they need to help them get their work done. Committee members then ranked their top three audiences.

Who FDRPC Primarily Serves:

1. Current & Future Residents of Fort DuPont and Delaware City
2. The Local Economy (Employers/Business/Cultural Tourism)

Who FDRPC Primarily Needs to Partner to serve the above:

1. Private and Governmental Funders
2. Partner Agencies

Other audiences considered but are secondary when it comes to considerations for decisions: State Taxpayers, Visitors/Tourists

FDRPC DESIRED REPUTATION

With community feedback regarding uncertainty of who/what is FDRPC, the committee focused on what it wants its desired identity and reputation with those they primarily serve:

- A responsible Steward
- Repairs (heals) the damaged land, historic buildings, and environment
- Both a developer and a preservationist

FDRPC MISSION

The committee reviewed the existing mission statement of FDRPC and determined it could be refined to reflect its work more closely. The revised mission statement reads:

Building a vibrant legacy: Fort DuPont Redevelopment and Preservation Corporation is dedicated to revitalizing the Fort DuPont Campus with a focus on preserving our shared history, healing the environment, developing residential and recreational spaces, and providing economic opportunities. Together, we aim to enhance our community's charm, prosperity, and quality of life.

FDRPC VISION

The committee developed a vision statement to guide FDRPC's work:

Fort DuPont Redevelopment and Preservation Corporation contributes to making Delaware City a dynamic destination, captivating new businesses, residents, and historical and cultural tourists. With a vibrant community and historical heritage, our city thrives along Delaware's scenic byway, offering prosperity, inclusivity, and enriching experiences for all.

FDRPC VALUES

The committee believed articulating the organization's values was an important aspect of the planning. Values inform behaviors and decision-making. The following values were derived from input from the staff and strategic planning committee members:

At Fort DuPont Redevelopment and Preservation Corporation, our core values are the foundation of our vision and mission and guide every aspect of our work. With unwavering dedication, we embrace the values of honesty, stewardship, inclusion, partnership, and progress as we preserve and redevelop the unique environmental, historic, and cultural resource that is Fort DuPont.

Honesty: *Integrity is the cornerstone of our organization. We commit to conducting ourselves with honesty and transparency in our actions, communications, and decision-making processes. We value trust, and through open and candid interactions, we aspire to foster an environment in which our relationships with the community and our partners thrive.*

Stewardship: *As caretakers of Fort DuPont's land and historical and cultural heritage, we hold a profound sense of responsibility to preserve, repair, and develop this cherished campus. We champion sustainable practices that safeguard the environment, conserve resources, and honor the past while paving the way for a brighter future. With a focus on long-term sustainability, we can ensure that Fort DuPont thrives for generations to come.*

Inclusion: We believe in the power of diversity and inclusion, embracing the richness of our organization's varied voices, perspectives, and backgrounds. We seek to foster a welcoming, accessible, and inclusive environment. We actively seek input from our stakeholders with the belief that better decisions are made when diverse voices are heard.

Partnership: Collaboration lies at the heart of our approach. We recognize that true progress is achieved through the power of partnership. We rely on alliances with community members, local businesses, government entities, and other stakeholders, to forge strong and meaningful connections. By working together, we pool our collective strengths, expertise, and resources to make a lasting, positive impact on our community.

Progress: We are dedicated to continuous improvement and forward-thinking. Progress is the engine that propels us toward a brighter future for Delaware City. Embracing innovation and creativity, we adapt to evolving challenges and opportunities. By staying agile and proactive, we ensure that our efforts lead to measurable and meaningful progress for Fort DuPont's campus and the community we serve.

Through the values of honesty, stewardship, inclusion, partnership, and progress, Fort DuPont Redevelopment and Preservation Corporation remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering a vibrant and sustainable campus and supporting our community. With our collective vision and shared principles, we forge a path that honors the past, embraces the present, and creates a legacy of local and regional prosperity for the future.

FDRPC STRATEGIC PLAN OUTCOMES AND METRICS FOR SUCCESS

- Historic buildings and campus plans are updated, and progress has been made to restore and repurpose towards those plans
- There is access to Recreational/Cultural/Nature amenities (walkways/trails are safe and navigable)
- Community supports FDRPC plans and trusts our decisions

	Desired Outcomes in 5 years	Success is Measured By
Desired Outcomes	Historic buildings and campus plans are updated, and progress has been made to restore and repurpose towards those plans	x# of buildings are back in use, historic storytelling, income generated from that use, increase in economic benefit to Delaware City, recognized as a historic destination
	There is access to Recreational/Cultural/Nature amenities	bike trails upgraded, recreational courts in use, theatre and chapel are operational, Branch canal promenade renovated, walking trails, fishing and access to the canal are possible
	Community supports FDRPC plans and trusts our decisions	more volunteers, positive reputation (measured up from 2023 survey), community supports the development plan and trusts we have their interests in mind, funding is available (government/private)

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THOSE OUTCOMES

- Identify the priority for projects over the next five years.
- Stand up an affiliated entity (friends group) so that tax-deductible grants and donations can support the efforts of FDRPC, and desired historical/cultural programming could take place.
- Strengthen stakeholder trust and engagement with FDRPC based on a shared vision.
- Establish long-term financial sustainability for FDRPC.

For each of the above strategies, the committee outlined key activities, estimated financial costs, a timeframe for completion, what partners will be necessary, whether additional staff will be necessary, and any conditions that need to be in place for success.

Identify the priority for projects over the next five years

Strategy	Activity	Calendar Year Complete						\$ Estimate Cost	Partner Requirement	# New Staff	Conditions
		2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	TBD	Government/ Private Donors/ Contractors/ DNREC	1	
Identify the Priority for Projects for the next five years											
1	Complete an updated campus master plan that reflects community interests with realistic expectations										Funding comes in
2	Complete Chapel & Theatre Projects										
3	Restore 7 Rental Units										
4	Explore feasibility & prep requirements of larger spaces for commercial interests										Assessments of Conditions/Reqs for Leaseholders
5	Secure Zoning/Permit & Execute plan design for branch canal abatement & Promenade										Securing Permit/funding
7	Complete Bike Path and Walking Trails										Master Plan/State DNREC partnership/funding
8	Complete Upgrades to recreational courts (Bball/tennis etc.)										Master Plan/Marina Village - complete now even if they move later?
9	Remediate x square feet of property for future re-use purposes										Upon plan completion/regulations and costs

Stand up an affiliated entity (friends group)

Strategy	Activity	Calendar Year Complete						\$ Estimate Cost	Partner Requirement	# New Staff	Conditions
		2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028				
Stand up an Affiliated entity (friends group)								TBD	Fundraising Consultant/Experts	1	
1	Governance Structure Established										determine affiliation with FDRPC
2	Fundraising Plan Created										FDRPC seeds the costs to start fundraising
3	Historic/Cultural Program Plan Developed										based on fundraising
4	Volunteers recruited and engaged										based on historic/cultural program plan

Strengthen stakeholder trust and engagement with FDRPC based on a shared vision

Strategy	Activity	Calendar Year Complete						\$ Estimate Cost	Partner Requirement	# New Staff	Conditions
		2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028				
Strengthen stakeholder trust and engagement in FDRPC based on a shared vision								TBD		1	
1	Communicate Strategic Plan and convene regularly to report on progress to plan										based on board approval
2	Create and implement a communications plan for sustained and consistent messaging across communications platforms.										funding to support position
3	Provide visible before/after progress reports on long-term initiatives										
4	Communicate about the role/responsibility of FDRPC and its partners in the redevelopment, preservation, and improvement of the campus										clarify roles

Establish long-term financial sustainability for FDRPC

Strategy	Activity	Calendar Year Complete						\$ Estimate Cost	Partner Requirement	# New Staff	Conditions
		2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028				
Establish Long-term Financial Sustainability for FDRPC								TBD	Government, Private Donors, Leaseholders	0	
1	Diversify funding streams based on the fundraising plan identified above										Fundraising success/ lease opportunities
2	Determine annual costs for maintain common areas/determine assessment plan										
3	Develop Updated Case for Support/Advocate for Appropriate funding levels										

OVERARCHING ENABLERS TO ACHIEVE THE PLAN

Finally, the committee discussed what other key enablers needed to be in place to support the overall plan. They included:

- Approvals: Ability to secure Zoning/Permitting Requirements to complete projects
- Regulations: environmental, historic register
- Assessments: what is underground that may need to be removed or replaced to build in infrastructure for development
- Staff Retention and/or succession planning (retaining institutional knowledge)
- Board Structure: use of committees/task groups to help get the work done
- Board Engagement: leveraging expertise, networks to help achieve the plan

NEXT STEPS

The committee has prepared this plan for the Board of Directors to review and adopt. With anticipation the board will support the committee's work, a community meeting has been scheduled in mid-September to share the strategic plan.

FDRPC ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIC THEORY OF CHANGE 2023-2028

Our Vision: (DRAFT)	<i>Fort DuPont Redevelopment and Preservation Corporation contributes to making Delaware City a dynamic destination, captivating new businesses, residents, and historical and cultural tourists. With a vibrant community and historical heritage, our city thrives along Delaware's scenic byway, offering prosperity, inclusivity, and enriching experiences for all.</i>	
Our Mission (DRAFT):	<i>Building a vibrant legacy: Fort DuPont Redevelopment and Preservation Corporation is dedicated to revitalizing the Fort DuPont Campus with a focus on preserving our shared history, healing the environment, developing residential and recreational spaces, and providing economic opportunities. Together, we aim to enhance our community's charm, prosperity, and quality of life.</i>	
Our Values (DRAFT):	Honesty, Stewardship, Inclusion, Partnership, Progress	
Who we Primarily Serve & Our Partners	Our Beneficiaries	Our Partners
	Residents of Delaware City and Fort DuPont Future Residents Delaware City's Economy	Private & Governmental Funders Partner Agencies
Desired Outcomes	Desired Outcomes in 5 years	Success is Measured By
	Historic buildings and campus plans are updated, and progress has been made to restore and repurpose towards those plans	x# of buildings are back in use, historic storytelling, income generated from that use, increase in economic benefit to Delaware City, recognized as a historic destination
	There is access to Recreational/Cultural/Nature amenities	bike trails upgraded, recreational courts in use, theatre and chapel are operational, Branch canal promenade renovated, walking trails, fishing and access to the canal are possible
	Community supports FDRPC plans and trusts our decisions	more volunteers, positive reputation (measured up from 2023 survey), community supports the development plan and trusts we have their interests in mind, funding is available (government/private)
Strategies	Identify the priority for projects for the next five years	
	Stand up an affiliated entity (friends group)	
	Strengthen stakeholder trust and engagement in FDRPC based on a shared vision	
	Establish Long-term Financial Sustainability for FDRPC	
Key Enablers (conditions)	Approvals: Ability to secure Zoning/Permitting Requirements to complete projects	
	Regulations: environmental, historic register	
	Assessments: what is underground that may need to be removed or replaced to build in infrastructure for development	
	Staff Retention and/or succession planning (retaining institutional knowledge)	
	Board Structure: use of committees/task groups to help get the work done	
	Board Engagement: leveraging expertise, networks to help achieve the plan	

FDRPC STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES 2023-2028

Strategy	Activity	Calendar Year Complete						\$ Estimate Cost	Partner Requirement	# New Staff	Conditions
		2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028				
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9	Remediate x square feet of property for future re-use purposes									Upon plan completion/regulations and costs	
Stand up an Affiliated entity (friends group)								TBD	Fundraising Consultant/Experts	1	
1	Governance Structure Established										determine affiliation with FDRPC
2	Fundraising Plan Created										FDRPC seeds the costs to start fundraising
3	Historic/Cultural Program Plan Developed										based on fundraising
4	Volunteers recruited and engaged										based on historic/cultural program plan
Strengthen stakeholder trust and engagement in FDRPC based on a shared vision								TBD		1	
1	Communicate Strategic Plan and convene regularly to report on progress to plan										based on board approval
2	Create and implement a communications plan for sustained and consistent messaging across communications platforms.										funding to support position
3	Provide visible before/after progress reports on long-term initiatives										
4	Communicate about the role/responsibility of FDRPC and its partners in the redevelopment, preservation, and improvement of the campus										clarify roles
Establish Long-term Financial Sustainability for FDRPC								TBD	Government, Private Donors, Leaseholders	0	
1	Diversify funding streams based on the fundraising plan identified above										Fundraising success/ lease opportunities
2	Determine annual costs for maintain common areas/determine assessment plan										
3	Develop Updated Case for Support/Advocate for Appropriate funding levels										