



THE COMMUNITY-OWNED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CITY OF LANCASTER

Edition 3



Building On Strength Economic Development Strategic Plan for the City of Lancaster

Welcome!

This is the third edition of the Building On Strength Quarterly Report! At the launch of The Plan in June 2015, we pledged to provide community updates on a quarterly basis. You are receiving this communication because of your commitment to the City of Lancaster and your participation in the development of The Plan and implementation.

While Building On Strength is a fifteen year initiative, we are pleased to report that many of the 25 Recommendations under the four Plan Strategies are moving forward. The progress of each is highlighted below. We encourage you to share this information with your Lancaster friends, colleagues, and neighbors.

For more information and to view the entire Building On Strength Plan, visit:
www.lancastercityalliance.org/building-on-strength.

STRATEGY 1 | EXPANDING SUCCESS: TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT

1A - Investment Sites

Plan Recommendation: Identify key sites within Lancaster City that present short-term and long-term opportunities for investment.

Status:

- Queen/Vine RFP Release – Proposals were received on June 10th for the redevelopment of three properties at the intersection of S. Queen and Vine Streets. The properties include: the Swan Hotel and adjacent lot on E. Vine, Southern Market Center and the former printing facilities of Lancaster Newspapers. Two proposals were received and will be reviewed by a team representing the ownership of each parcel. After review and interviews, a decision will be made on the advancement of any of the proposals in August.
- Queen Street Station Air rights Request for Proposal - This Spring, RRTA released a Request for Proposals for the development of the air rights above the RRTA garage at N. Queen & E. Chestnut Street. Proposals are due in July.
- Prioritizing Investment Sites – With guidance from the Finance Squad and Steering Committee, the South Duke Street Commercial Hub has been identified as an early priority. Fueled by the progress and energy at the Conestoga River Plaza project, LCA has convened the primary commercial property owners to envision the future streetscape, needed amenities and how plans of the individual property owners merge with suggestions from the Building On Strength plan. South Duke Street is a major corridor and a primary southern gateway to our City, and the Conestoga River Plaza project brings both necessary goods and services while opening commercial space (of those moving in to the Plaza) to create significant redevelopment opportunity. This planning will be done in concert with feedback from the community meeting, which LCA engages continuously to assist in further advancing the existing momentum in the area. LCA will be taking a similar approach in reviewing the needs and opportunities with the West King Street commercial property owners later this year, again in concert with community meetings and efforts underway in the West King Street and Manor Street strategies.
- Downtown Investment Sites - As the Central Business District (Downtown) has achieved significant private sector growth, LCA will be convening the primary commercial property owners to review the investment site ideas as outlined in Building On Strength. LCA is also working together with City leadership and the Lancaster Parking Authority to assess and forecast parking needs as the area continues to develop.



Lead Organizations: Lancaster City Alliance (LCA),
Economic Development Company of Lancaster County (EDC), City of Lancaster

1E – Building the Market

Plan Recommendation: Provide a variety of incentives to tenants, investors, and property owners to help close the “gap” between achievable rental rates and the costs of new construction and rehabilitation.

Status:

High Speed Internet – The Downtown fiber was installed using micro-trenching, a technique used to bury the fiber as there are no overhead wires in the Downtown. This project is being installed in partnership with MAW communications and City workers are assisting MAW contractors to keep costs down. Fiber installation is 60% complete and Wi-fi is now available in City parks. The City expects to beta test the system in the next few months and begin selling competitively priced residential subscriptions by the end of 2016.

Lead Organizations: Lancaster City Alliance, City of Lancaster

1F - Land Bank

Plan Recommendation: Acquire individual blighted properties and prepare them for sound investment.

Status:

The City has been drafting its Land Bank Ordinance and is expected to be presented to City Council for approval in August/September of this year. The City is working on an opportunity to provide initial capital for the City Land Bank and hopes to have that agreement finalized by the time the Ordinance is approved by City Council. The City and County will be meeting with the School District to discuss the program and partnership agreements in July. The City has received \$1 million to fund the land bank from the developer of the Shoppes at Belmont, a new shopping complex along the border of the City and Manheim Township.

Lead Organization: City Redevelopment Authority

1G - Community Land Trust

Plan Recommendation: Identify key sites within Lancaster City that present short-term and long-term opportunities for investment.

Status:

Lancaster Housing Opportunity Partnership (LHOP) is currently implementing activities that define Community Land Trusts such as deed restrictions. The expansion of this effort and guidelines will be discussed in combination with the development of a Strategic Plan based on the Coalition for Affordable Housing (C4SH) led by LHOP.

Lead Organization: Lancaster Housing Opportunity Partnership

1H - Plan Funding Program

Plan Recommendation: Continue to use existing funding. Additionally, consider engaging a broad partnership of entities in establishing a fund.

Status:

- Finance Squad Traction – The Finance Squad identified thirty individual “tools” to support projects and continues to seek additional resources, with nearly twenty ancillary funding sources utilized in the first year of Building On Strength implementation. Current priorities are: legislative changes necessary to improve the usefulness of the CRIZ (see update below), increased opportunities for New Markets Tax Credits, and investigating the potential of Urban Enhancement Funds.
- Crowd Funding for Business Development - Small Change.com is a crowdfunding firm created by an entrepreneur in Pittsburgh named Eve Picker. We have been discussing establishing a similar crowdfunding site here in Lancaster to enable smaller investors to be able to invest in small companies or start-ups. However, after speaking with Eve Picker from SmallChange.com it became clear that it would be more efficient at this time to simply encourage folks here to use SmallChange.com as a crowdfunding site, though it may be advantageous for us to create a Lancaster-based crowdfunding site in the future. You can find out more about their site at <https://smallchange.com>. The SEC has just recently approved the requirements to allow small “unregistered” investors to participate in a crowdfunding opportunity. Until now only those investors that met minimum financial requirements were able to invest.
- CRIZ update – The City is hopeful that necessary changes will be made to the tax code in concert with the new State budget to make the CRIZ program an effective tool to stimulate City economic development. We continue to work with the Governor’s Office, DCED, DOR, and the General Assembly to have language changed in the CRIZ law to increase the increment that the Authority can expect to receive each year. We are cautiously optimistic that we will be successful this year. The key change would allow a project to have some certainty that whatever incremental increase in CRIZ state and local taxes the project generates would be returned to pay debt service, a certainty that does not exist today. The CRIZ Authority has closed on financing for the Conestoga Plaza project at the corner of Chesapeake and South Duke Street and construction should begin by fall.

Lead Organization: Lancaster City Alliance

STRATEGY 2 | EMBRACING THE COLLABORATIVE ECONOMY: CULTIVATING ENTREPRENEURS

2A - Entrepreneurs Forum

Plan Recommendation: Host regular forums (a minimum of two per year) to engage the entrepreneurial community, gather feedback on policies and programs, and brainstorm about ways to continue to foster the entrepreneurial climate in Lancaster.



Status:

The second Cultivate Lancaster Forum was successfully held on May 12th, with 200 registered for the event. It was hosted at Two Dudes Painting and featured remarks from owner Peter Barber, as well as Nicole Vasquez, owner of That Shuu Girl Boutique. Once again, attendees had the opportunity to discuss ideas and challenges with both peers and the many resource providers that Lancaster City has to offer. Through these connections, serious conversations are occurring surrounding Makers Spaces and Food Hub initiatives developing in several locations of the City.

Lead Organization: Lancaster City Alliance/Assets

2C - Neighborhood Healthy Food Initiative

Plan Recommendation: Establish a healthy food initiative that includes partnerships with existing entities such as Lancaster General Health and other partners, and extends into the Commercial Hubs.

Status:

Kresge Grant – New funding options are being explored as the grant proposal to the Kresge Foundation was not successful. Future funding will support the Neighborhood Healthy Food Initiative in order to develop an operational plan for the S. Duke Street food kiosks and a healthy food community in the area.

Corner Store Initiative – The Healthy Corner Stores project is awaiting funding delayed by the state budget impasse earlier in the year. The next phase of the project is to select 1-2 stores for infrastructure or cosmetic upgrades, such as shelving or refrigeration, to support healthy food options.

County Participation/Wittel Farm Produce - Hunger-Free Lancaster County launched the Wittel Farm Growing Project, a farm in Elizabethtown that runs solely through volunteers and will grow fresh produce for food-insecure people in Lancaster County. This year’s growing season will begin with 2 acres and the goal is to expand to 25 acres by next year. A successful Plant Day was held May 21st.

Lead Organization: Lancaster General Health



STRATEGY 3 | LEVERAGING THE BRAND: MARKETING LANCASTER CITY

3A – Locate Lancaster Residential Initiative

Plan Recommendation: Coordinate with current marketing initiatives and partner with the real estate and development community to profile incentives for moving to and highlighting benefits of living in Lancaster City.

Status:

Over 300 tickets were sold to the inaugural Lancaster Young Professionals (LYP) Urban Living tour, which featured 12 different Lancaster City Homes in a variety of neighborhoods and showcased the diversity of living, working, and playing in Lancaster City.



Lead Organization: Lancaster City Alliance

3B – Locate Lancaster Economic Development Initiative

Plan Recommendation: Establish a joint venture between the Lancaster City Alliance and the Economic Development Corporation of Lancaster to market the opportunities for investment in Lancaster and to provide a dedicated web portal that connects the partnering economic development entities under a single “gateway.”

Status:

Marketing the City for investment continues as Lancaster was represented at the following conferences over the last quarter. Collectively, this put our city in front of hundreds of perspective investors and has resulted in several site visits from regional real estate development companies currently evaluating several city sites.

- Urban Land Institute (ULI)
- International Center Shopping Centers (ICSC)
- Maryland Economic Development Association (MEDA)

Lead Organization: Lancaster City Alliance, Economic Development Corporation

3C - Building the City Brand for Tourism

Plan Recommendation: Continue to develop marketing materials that profile shopping, dining, events, and opportunities to explore Lancaster City, extending beyond Downtown to places “off the beaten path.”

Status:

Task Force for Priority Setting - An initial meeting was held on May 5th to discuss the current tagline and develop priorities for the City. A second meeting occurred on June 21st with constructive discussions centered around the city brand, what differentiates Lancaster City from other cities, what is necessary to successfully promote the City brand, and how to execute the marketing of that brand.

Lead Organization: Lancaster Office of Promotion & Discover Lancaster

STRATEGY 4 | QUALITY OF LIFE: REINFORCING COMMERCIAL HUBS

4B1 - Two-Way Street Conversions

Plan Recommendation: Increase safety, ease of navigation and business visibility by converting existing one-way streets to two-way as funding becomes available.

Status:

Mulberry Street construction has been underway for several months and the contractor expects to complete the project in the Fall of 2016. Currently, the green infrastructure work is being completed and includes pervious parking lanes, rain garden bump outs, and the eventual installation of trees. Mulberry will be paved and re-striped later this year. The City is in the planning phase to convert Charlotte Street to a two-way street, but will need to secure funding for the project with hopes to have it underway in 2017.

Lead Organization: City of Lancaster

4B3 - Bicycle Network

Plan Recommendation: Develop a variety of bicycle facilities including a cycling network for connectivity, accessibility to jobs and recreation through alternative transportation.

Status:

- Chestnut Street Bikeway – The temporary pop-up bike track set down in May was a success. The actual installation of the pilot bike track has not been presented to the Traffic Commission for final vote.
- City Bike Plan Consultants Underway – PennDOT has approved ALTA as the consultant for LMIC, the County and Lancaster City. There is significant value in joining together for this planning effort, both in terms of cost savings and continuity of a broader area to analyze non-motorized transportation needs.



Lead Organization: City of Lancaster

4B4 - Gateways and Streetscapes

Plan Recommendation: Fund and implement enhancements to gateway areas and commercial hub streetscapes to increase investment and economic development.

Status:

- Streetscape District Expansion - In May 2016, City Council approved amending the Streetscape ordinance boundaries. The expanded area aligns with the commercial hubs identified in the Building On Strength Plan and aims to enhance these vital corridor areas by enforcing uniform standards that allow for enhanced streetscape treatments, such as extended curbs for traffic calming, boulevard lighting, and green infrastructure to improve the City's storm water management system.



- Central Market Streetscape Update - The City has entered the final phase of the Central Market streetscape project in the Northwest quadrant of Penn Square, which began on June 6th. Reconstruction of Grant St., N. Market St. and William Penn Way were completed, which included new lighting, benches, and bike racks. This final phase has presented a few challenges and is anticipated to be completed by October 2016, dependent on weather.
- Public Art Master Plan – The city has hired Renee Piechocki and Jennifer McGregor as the consultants to prepare a Public Art Master Plan. The consultants held Community Conversations about Public Art. Over the span of the 4 events, they engaged over 100 community members and received feedback, comments, and suggestions. The consultants have already compiled the collected data and have begun to process the information, identifying themes which will guide the future of public art, here in our community. Online surveys were also utilized to reach even more members of our community and gain their perspective. The Master Plan is expected to be completed later this Fall.

Lead Organizations: City of Lancaster, Lancaster Downtown Investment District

4C - Commercial Hub Partner Organizations

Plan Recommendation: Organize advocacy groups than can spearhead "clean and green" efforts, organize events, and advocate for commercial corridor areas.

Status:

- Community Meetings - The second South Duke Street Neighborhood Hub Meeting took place on May 10th with outcomes including the desire to conduct a neighborhood safety audit and neighborhood surveys to determine grassroots priorities. LCA will format a safety audit for a neighborhood driven process and work with Millersville University to develop a survey draft.
- Northeast Neighborhood Strategy – The Northeast Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy includes deploying LCA bike ambassadors, the installation of trees and trash receptacles, and block captain recruitment. The Strategy is close to being fully funded for year one, with a potential launch of the program later this summer. LCA is currently working on a streamlined communications strategy for both the public and target area stakeholders.



- Southwest Neighborhood Initiative – The Southwest Plan has reached the final phase. This neighborhood-driven plan will be finalized by the Steering Committee in June and submitted to the funder, Wells Fargo, for comments in July. Lancaster Housing Opportunity Partnership (LHOP) intends to submit an application to Wells Fargo in September 2016 for funds to implement the Plan and will serve as the lead agency supporting the structure for implementation, which includes hiring a neighborhood coordinator, facilitating the Neighborhood Steering Committee, and being a pass-through for funding to implement the Plan.
- SACA Elm Street Application – Spanish American Civic Association (SACA) intends to apply for a grant through the PA Department of Community and Economic Development for the Southeast area. The application will pursue a Planning Grant, program designation, and a Residential Reinvestment Grant that will support community development, grassroots leadership capacity, and physical improvements that help define the neighborhood and create neighborhood pride.

Lead Organizations: Lancaster City Alliance, Neighborhood Organizations

