



Edition 4



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

Welcome to the fourth 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 Selection: - Two Proposals representing local and regional development teams were received 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. Initial meetings with each team occurred and conversations continue with the property owners to determine the potential advancement of either or both proposals.
- 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. A proposal is currently under review with a progress report forthcoming in the fourth quarter.
- Prioritizing Investment Sites - Guided by the Finance Squad and Steering Committee, the South Duke Street Commercial Hub was identified as an early priority. With the momentum and planned activity for the South Duke Street area, LCA convened the commercial property owners to share Plan recommendations and hear respective individual businesses plans. The Conestoga River Plaza Project will be catalytic and also opens several opportunities from the near-in businesses relocating to the Plaza.
- Downtown Investment Sites - Two community discussions, July 28th and October 12th, were held to bring the Downtown property owners, businesses and residents current on the Plan, share up-to-date implementation progress, and garner feedback on success and challenges.



Lead Organizations: Lancaster City Alliance, Economic Development Company of Lancaster County and City of Lancaster

1F - Land Bank

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

Status:

City Council has approved the Ordinance establishing the City of Lancaster Land Bank Authority. The City has reached an agreement with the developers of the Belmont Project to provide two \$500,000 contributions over the next two years to provide the initial capital for the Authority. Negotiations are underway with the School District of Lancaster regarding

policies and procedures that will create the priorities to enable the Authority to acquire properties through Tax Claim and Judgment Sales. The City will now move forward with final appointments of the two at large members of the Authority and then proceed to finalize the creation of the Authority within the City.

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 assembling a report directing the structure of a Community Land Trust (CLT). An Advisory Committee will meet to affirm the CLT research and make recommendations to LHOP guiding the formation of the CLT. The CLT will support the functions of the newly developed City and County Land Banks.



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:

- New Markets Tax Credit Application 2016 - Community First Fund will be receiving determination on their application for these Credits late in 2016.
- BB&T Request – Community Investment Fund - We were not successful with our letter of interest submitted by LCA for the Community Investment Fund. Future applications if submitted, will leverage the collective expertise of the ED Plan Steering Committee and/or the Finance Squad. Other applications in process for approval look to have characteristics similar to our request which indicates, if approved, they will have positive consequences for City projects and opportunities.
- CRIZ update
 - The State General Assembly and Governor approved legislative changes that were presented by the City, Bethlehem and Tamaqua, changing the way in which the increment is calculated each year. The increment is now calculated on a business by business basis rather than a net calculation where businesses that created a positive increment were offset by businesses that generated fewer CRIZ dollars in the reporting year.
 - The changes will enable financial institutions financing projects to have more confidence in the level of CRIZ revenues expected to be created by a project since the level of revenue is no longer influenced by other businesses in the CRIZ District.

- As a result of the changes we expect to see new projects being brought to the CRIZ Authority. One project now able to move forward is the new Marriott Hotel Tower. This project will enable the Convention Center to market to larger conferences and meetings by increasing the number of hotel rooms within walking distance of the Convention Center.
- The CRIZ Authority also approved financing for a retail project in the 1st block of North Queen Street that assisted in developing vacant retail frontage on the street. This project showed the flexibility of the program to assist smaller scale projects that look to repurpose challenging retail space in the downtown.

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:

Cultivate Lancaster - The third Cultivate Lancaster Entrepreneurs Forum is currently under development. Planned for Thursday, December 8th at the Southern Market Center, this forum will focus on connecting entrepreneurs with Resource Providers with break-out sessions based on what “stage” the attendees are in their business or idea. This is based off of feedback from previous Cultivate events.

Identify Culinary Staffing Needs - An initial meeting was held with several City food related businesses to identify staffing needs of restaurants, caterers and hospitality businesses. With the enormous growth of eateries and event spaces in the City, finding and training staff has become an issue. As a next step, an inventory of existing culinary, hospitality and education resources is being conducted and meeting with those institutions and food related businesses will be held to identify curriculum needs and create partnerships.

Lead Organization: Lancaster City Alliance and 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:

Corner Store Initiative

- Community Action Program (CAP) is hosting Nourish mobile food market every other Wednesday at their S. Queen Street building. Nourish offers local healthy fresh food for sale - cash, credit, and EBT/SNAP are accepted. This mobile market increases access to fresh foods for those who are food insecure and may not have access to transportation. CAP also recently reached their fundraising goal for Nature's Classroom, an outdoor classroom and community garden that will serve CAP clients and the neighborhood.
- Lancaster General Health is working with local restaurants to develop a Lighten Up Lancaster Healthy Restaurants program. This voluntary program will promote and celebrate local restaurants that offer a variety of healthy food options and promote these healthy choices to their customers.
- All elementary schools in the School District of Lancaster now have school gardens with at least 2 raised beds. The gardens at Price, Ross and Buchanan are the latest to be added.



Lead Organization: Lancaster General Health, Community Action Program

STRATEGY 3 | LEVERAGING THE BRAND: MARKETING LANCASTER CITY

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 as a great place to invest continues as LCA once again represented the City at the International Council of Shopping Centers at the PA/DE/NJ regional conference in September showcasing Lancaster in front of 2000 real estate professionals.
- The Economic Development Company (EDC) and the City of Lancaster represented Lancaster County at the annual International Economic Development Council (IEDC) Conference in September, joining several hundred real estate professionals from around the country.
- Outreach efforts have led to impressive results with several regional developers looking seriously at investing in the City and the number of new businesses opening or looking to move the City continues to increase.

Lead Organization: Lancaster City Alliance and 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:

The City, LCA, and Discover Lancaster have met for initial discussions on how to move the process forward to begin a branding analysis for the City. The City has committed funding to be used as a matching fund to finance this initial effort and analysis should begin early next year and be completed by the fall of 2017.

Lead Organization: Lancaster Office of Promotion and Discover Lancaster

STRATEGY 4 | QUALITY OF LIFE: REINFORCING COMMERCIAL HUBS

4B4 - Gateways and Streetscapes

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

Status:

- West King/Manor Street Lighting Funding Secured - The City has secured funding to install decorative pedestrian lighting on W. King between Prince and Mulberry/Manor and on Manor between W. King and Laurel Streets. The engineering work will begin in the last quarter of 2016 and the lights will be installed in 2017. This area is part of the Southwest Lancaster Neighborhood Revitalization target area and along with the *Building On Strength* recommendations, LHOP is seeking implementation funding for the Southwest Plan which includes a focus on Manor Street as a key City and Cabbage Hill neighborhood corridor.
- Public Art Master Plan – The Public Art Master Plan is underway and will support the momentum of *Building On Strength*. The plan will help guide how public art is developed in Lancaster. It will include research and community input to define a clear and concise mission and vision that is relevant to our City, program priorities and goals, methods to ensure underrepresented neighborhoods and community groups benefit from the program, inventory partnerships and identify new opportunities, identify potential site locations for future projects and methods to incorporate art into all facets of City planning and departments.

Lead Organizations: City of Lancaster and 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 – Corridor meetings continue to surface new contacts for the LCA team and common themes continue to be the need for case management of targeted clean and safe initiatives focused on perception of safety

to encourage a more vibrant and business-friendly environment and requests for trash cans and increased enforcement to ensure less litter, trash and debris along main corridors.

- **The South Queen / South Prince Corridor Meeting** was convened on July 28, 2016 at the Salvation Army. Next steps include a targeted quality of life focus on the 100 block of S. Queen and specific tactics and communication on additional blocks of S. Queen Street.
- **The West King Street Corridor Meeting** was convened at the Umbrella Works on July 26, 2016 and there was a large turnout of residents and business owners interested in hearing about new projects along the corridor. A key meeting follow-up occurred on September 19, 2016 with LCA facilitating a meeting with business owners in the 100 and 200 blocks of West King Street with City Police to discuss targeted enforcement of specific quality of life concerns including panhandling, drug dealing, loitering, and trash and litter.



- **Northeast Neighborhood Strategy** – The Northeast Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy was launched in partnership with grassroots organization Neighbors United in August 2016. The program includes deployment of the Lancaster City Alliance bike squad, installation of new trees and trash receptacles and technical assistance from LCA to manage the programs and funding. Neighbors United recently launched a grassroots campaign at their Annual Meeting on October 19th. To date, funding is secured for year one and the first half of year two.

Lead Organizations: Lancaster City Alliance and Neighborhood Organizations

Support to advance *Building On Strength*

LCA has hired Jeremy Young as our Community and Economic Development Manager. Jeremy's responsibilities will include helping to lead the implementation of and track progress of the *Building On Strength* Plan.

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