



York County
Economic Alliance



DOWNTOWN YORK

Development Plan

BACKGROUND

Downtown York has experienced significant growth since Downtown Inc and the City of York published the last downtown development plan, *Vision 2020*, in 2015. While our downtown has surpassed many of the goals set five years ago and made significant progress on others, there remains work to be done. The economic impact of COVID-19 and increased awareness about the need to confront systemic racism in its many forms also present new challenges and opportunities for our downtown business community.

Our downtown's approach to economic development has also become more sophisticated. In 2018, Downtown Inc entered an award-winning strategic affiliation with the York County Economic Alliance, which has expanded the capacity and set of tools we bring to downtown development. In 2020, we finalized a 10-year economic action plan in partnership with the County of York, Downtown Inc, and the City of York and the York City Council renewed the Business Improvement District for 5 more years. The City of York is also completing a comprehensive plan update that complements the countywide plan.

This development plan does not seek to duplicate the efforts of Downtown Inc or YCEA's strategic plans; the BID business plan; the City's comprehensive plan; or the County's EAP. Rather this plan collects and summarizes goals and actions from those plans to highlight a shared scope of work for downtown development in the future.



CONTENT

This plan is organized by four overarching goals:

- Provide Strategic Support to Downtown Businesses
- Invest in Infrastructure that Complements and Encourages Development
- Encourage the Development of New Housing
- Catalyze Commercial Development Projects and Complete those Underway

Each goal is further described by related:

- Projects
- Programs
- Policies

Provide Strategic Support to Downtown Businesses

Downtown Inc continuously focuses on an economic development strategy including promotions, public safety, placemaking, and business support. In addition to Downtown Inc's holistic approach, the following programmatic goals are strategic imperatives.

PROGRAMS

- Implementation of Downtown Inc's strategic plan (DI)
- Strengthen Entrepreneurial Ecosystem & Local Sourcing (City, YCEA)
- Continue to support two businesses per year to pursue an Economic Development Liquor License (YCEA)
- Employ the Bloom Business Empowerment Center suite of services to increase the number of minority-owned and women-owned businesses in Downtown York (YCEA, DI)

Provide Strategic Support to Downtown Businesses

PROGRAMS

- Propagation of Historically Edgy and Have it Made Here brands and their alignment, including advocating for an annual public investment in tourism development (DI, Explore York)
- Leverage the York County Trail Towns program to increase trail-based tourism in Downtown York (DI, Explore York, YCEA)



Invest in Infrastructure that Complements and Encourages Development

A high-quality urban environment creates a platform for business recruitment and economic development.

PROJECTS

- Construct Phase 1 of the Codorus Creek Greenway (YCEA, RACY)
- Implement Mason Avenue Improvements (County, City, DI)
- Complete the Heritage Rail Trail Golden Spike (City, DI)



PROGRAMS

- Increase the quality and accessibility of broadband internet in the downtown (YoCo Fiber, County, YCEA, City)



Invest in Infrastructure that Complements and Encourages Development

A high-quality urban environment creates a platform for business recruitment and economic development.

POLICIES

- Support continued bicycle and pedestrian improvements (City, DI)
- Invest in Block by Block in the BID and adjoining neighborhoods to enhance clean, safe, green staffing complement. (DI, City, YCEA)



Encourage the Development of New Housing

In the last 5 years, the Downtown York market has absorbed 200+ units of market rate residential. A 2020 study by RPRG identified an unmet demand for up to 199 new units across the pricing spectrum.

PROJECTS

- Classic Caramel (Yohn Property Management)
- Pewtarex New Construction
- Homes at Thackston Phase II (YHA)
- Penn Street Corridor (Penn Market to Kings Mill YCP campus)
- Salem Square (Four Squares Development)
- Former Dentsply Campus (City)

Encourage the Development of New Housing

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PROGRAMS

- Continue to promote incremental development educational opportunities to empower small-scale developers (City)
- Utilize the Land Bank Authority and City RDA to acquire and demolish blighted properties to create opportunities for new development (City, YCEA)
- Promote the RPRG study to encourage additional residential development. (YCEA, DI)

Encourage the Development of New Housing

In the last 5 years, the Downtown York market has absorbed 200+ units of market rate residential. A 2020 study by RPRG identified an unmet demand for up to 199 new units across the pricing spectrum.

POLICIES

- Revise CBD zoning to permit and encourage the development of ADUs (City)
- Promote the use of ReTap (City, YCEA)
- Streamline sales of RDA properties to qualified developers (City)
- Encourage strategic countywide affordable housing policies and development (Affordable Housing Advocates, YCPC, YCEA)

Catalyze Commercial Development Projects & Complete those Underway

The market for commercial office space is uncertain, but the downtown is well-poised to absorb mixed-use redevelopment projects and some new construction.

PROJECTS

Promote Completion of Projects Underway

- History Center/Steam Plant
- Logos Academy Expansion
- Yorktowne Hotel
- Keystone Kidspace
- TechRev
- Northern Gateway/Station House
- YCP Knowledge Park
- New York Wire Works

Recent investment:

In the past 6 years, York has received more than **\$70M** in RACP investment which leveraged an additional **\$225M** in development.

Catalyze Commercial Development Projects & Complete those Underway

December 2020 RACP Awards

Penn St. Farmers Market (\$1.5 million)

York City Fire Stations (\$1.5 million)

CASA York (\$1 million)

YWCA York (\$1.4 million)

Keystone Kidspace (\$650,000)

Non-City of York Projects (\$9.9 million)



Catalyze Commercial Development Projects & Complete those Underway

The market for commercial office space is uncertain, but the downtown is well-poised to absorb mixed-use redevelopment projects and some new construction.

PROJECTS

Catalyze Conceptual or Pending Projects

- Ballpark Commons
- Northwest Triangle
- Pewtarex
- The Treasury
- Penn Market Revitalization
- Dentsply Campus Potential
- Philadelphia St. Post Office
- South George St. Post Office

Who is responsible?

- Private developers
- YCEA (RACP and financing)
- City of York (permits and approvals)
- Downtown Inc (promotions)

Catalyze Commercial Development Projects & Complete those Underway

The market for commercial office space is uncertain, but the downtown is well-poised to absorb mixed-use redevelopment projects and some new construction.

PROGRAMS

- Inventory available real estate opportunities as part of countywide database (YCEA)
- Utilize the Land Bank Authority to acquire and demolish properties (YCEA, City)
- Support the City RDA's disposition of key properties (RDA)
- Downtown Commercial Office Marketing (YCEA, private developers)

POLICIES

- Promote the use of LERTA (YCEA, City, County)
- Revisit the boundaries of the KIZ to maximize effectiveness (YCEA)
- Enhance our strategy to advance stalled or inactive projects (YCEA, DI, City, Developers)
- Support Opportunity Zone marketing and investment (YCEA, City)

Catalyze Commercial Development Projects & Complete those Underway

POLICIES

- Re-establish the Downtown Development Committee as a small group with a very tight focus on “white elephant” projects, the commercial office space market, and strategic marketing of the downtown
- Renamed the York Development Group
- Working closely with City of York, Downtown Inc, YCEA, and the private development community
- Jules Tolbert, YBIDA chairman and YCEA board member, chairing the committee; YCEA staffing
- Meeting monthly throughout 2021 and periodically reporting back to Better York

Catalyze Commercial Development Projects & Complete those Underway

- **Issue #1:** Focus on “white elephant” projects that have stalled or face significant obstacles that the private sector cannot resolve alone
- **Issue #2:** Consider ways to support the commercial office sector as it adapts to the post-COVID market
- **Issue #3:** Evaluate potential new tools that can address issues 1 and 2
 - Strategic Marketing
 - Access to Redevelopment Capital
 - Development Entities
 - Tax Structure
 - Others

Catalyze Commercial Development Projects & Complete those Underway

Potential Target Projects

| Property | Owner(s) | Potential Use | Issue |
|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| S. George Post Office | Hashemour & Sons | Office; event | Ownership; sale price |
| Philadelphia St. Post Office | RSDC | Office; retail; residential | Market |
| The Treasury | Landis Bros. | Bar/restaurant; event | Funding |
| Penn Market | RDA | Market; event | Funding |
| Dentsply Campus | Dentsply | Residential; retail | Ownership; funding |
| Northwest Triangle | RDA (YorkEx) | Office; retail; residential | Funding |
| Pewtarex | RSDC | Residential; office | Market; funding |
| Think Loud | Think Loud | Office; retail; event | Litigation; funding |
| Thackston Charter School | Garden Foods Inc | Office; retail; residential | Ownership; sale price |



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