

YORK COUNTY

ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN

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ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN

Adopted December 2020



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

STEERING COMMITTEE & WORKING GROUP CHAIRS

Thank you to the York County Economic Action Plan Steering Committee for sharing their time, wisdom, and expertise:

- Jane Conover, *York County Community Foundation*
- Felicia Dell, *York County Planning Commission*
- Nan Dunford, *Hanover Borough*
- Rich Farr, *rabbittransit*
- Roxanna Gapstur, *WellSpan Health*
- Kelly Kelch, *West Manchester Township/Municipal Managers Association*
- Dave Meckley, *Warehime Foundation*
- Bruce Miller, *AgChoice Farm Credit*
- Regina Mitchell, *City of York Housing Authority*
- Judy Ritter-Dickson, *York City Council*
- Joyce Santiago, *York Area Housing Group*
- Kevin Schreiber, *York County Economic Alliance*
- Barron Shaw, *Shaw Orchards*
- Jules Tolbert, *York Container / YCEA & YBIDA boards*
- Isaac Tucker, *Dillsburg Borough Council / Katapult Engineering*
- Jeff Vermeulen, *JD Brown Center for Entrepreneurship*
- Laura Wand, *Johnson Controls*
- Tim Warfield, *Pennsylvania Community Development & Finance Corporation*
- Julie Wheeler, *County of York / YCEA board*
- Bill Yanavitch, *Kinsley / YCEA board*

Thank you to the Working Group Co-Chairs, who helped bring diverse voices to the table to help define opportunities and develop strategies:

The Future of Industry

- Taylor Groff, *CEO, Groff International*
- Oliver Hoar, *former CEO, RH Sheppard*

Workforce and Economic Mobility

- Jesse McCree, *South Central PA Works*

Entrepreneurship

- Jeff Vermeulen, *JD Brown Center for Entrepreneurship, York College*
- Tim Warfield, *Pennsylvania Community Development and Finance Corporation*

Equity and Inclusion

- Councilwoman Judy Ritter-Dickson, *York City Council*
- Robin Rohrbaugh, *CEO, Community Progress Council*

Quality of Place

- Kelley Gibson, *Cultural Alliance of York County*
- Sean Kenny, *Farm and Natural Lands Trust of York County*

Infrastructure & the Built Environment

- Tom Englerth, *Board Chair, Redevelopment Authority of the County of York*
- Dave Bode and Heather Kreiger, *ROCK Commercial Real Estate*

The Rural Economy

- Bruce Miller, *AgChoice Farm Credit*
- Dave and Anne Loeffler, *Jefferson Borough*



This work would not have been possible without the contributions of the 150+ working group members who participated in nearly 30 hours of virtual brainstorming workshops and whose input formed the basis of the strategies enclosed in this plan. Thank you to these passionate and generous community leaders.

Finally, thank you to the City of York, Downtown Inc (York Business Improvement District Authority), the York County Planning Commission, and the York County Economic Alliance client team, who helped guide the planning process, and to the York County Community Foundation, Powder Mill Foundation, and the Warehime Foundation, who funded this plan.

PLAN DEVELOPED, WRITTEN, AND DESIGNED BY FOURTH ECONOMY



Fourth Economy is a national community and economic development consulting firm. Powered by a vision for an economy that serves the people, our approach is centered on principles of competitiveness, equity and resilience. We partner with communities and organizations, public and private, who are ready for change to equip them with the tools and innovative solutions to build better communities and stronger economies.



ABOUT THE PLAN

In late 2019, the York County Economic Alliance (YCEA) started the planning process for the York County Economic Action Plan (EAP). Since then, the world has drastically changed. The coronavirus pandemic has disrupted economies all over the globe, and widespread civil unrest in response to police violence against black Americans has shaken our country and our communities to the core.

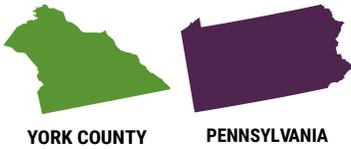
It is now more important than ever to envision a new future for our communities, one that is strong and resilient in the face of crises, and that ensures opportunities for economic prosperity are available to all. The hope is that this plan will provide a roadmap for economic recovery from the disruptions caused by COVID-19, as well as an aspirational vision for where the community would like to go in the long term.

As this plan was being developed, the community quickly rallied in response to the pandemic-driven global economic crisis. These quick actions and the leadership exhibited by a coalition of private and public partners should allow the county to avoid the lagging recovery it experienced during the last recession.

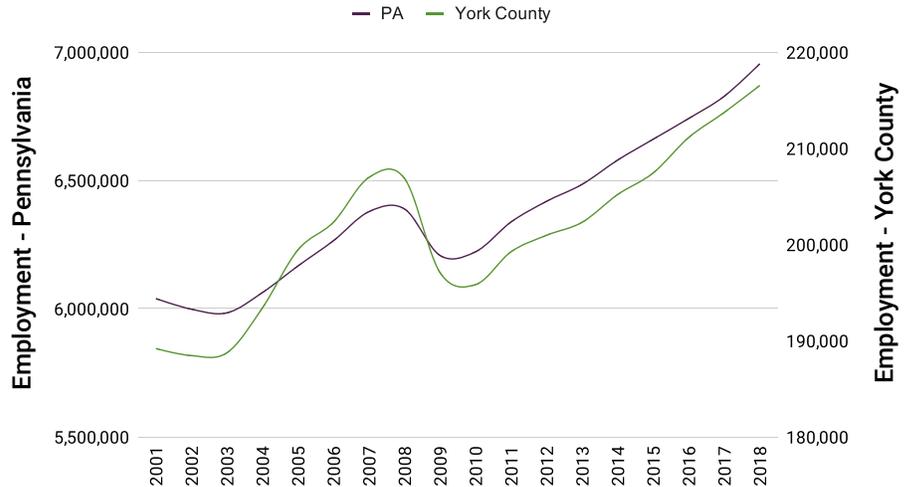
The EAP will serve as a county-wide plan to guide economic growth and development over the next 10 years. The EAP's year-long planning process has coincided with planning updates by both the City of York and the York County Planning Commission (YCPC). Staff from the YCEA, the city, and YCPC worked closely with the consulting team to ensure that the results of the EAP process align with and inform the planning components of their respective updated Comprehensive Plans. The EAP will also serve as the economic development component of York County's Comprehensive Plan.

The EAP was driven by community involvement and shaped by the issues and opportunities experienced by those who live, learn, and work in York County.

RECOVERY FROM RECESSION IN YORK COUNTY



PA employment peaked in 2008 with employment recovering by 2012. York County employment peaked in 2007 and did not recover until 2015.



NOV 2019

Steering Committee selected

20 community, business, education, and government leaders were engaged to help guide the EAP process.

JAN 2020

Baseline understanding established

Economic and demographic data analysis and prior community planning effort synthesis helped determine areas for improvement and key opportunities.

MARCH 2020

Interviews conducted

42 community members, civic leaders, and subject matter experts were interviewed to help identify strengths, weaknesses, and competitive advantages in York County.

APRIL 2020

Working Group Co-chairs nominated

14 practitioners in the 7 areas of focus were selected to bring working group members together to help develop the strategies and recommendations.

MAY 2020

Public Survey and Website Launch

300 survey responses shed light on the community's vision and goals for the future of York County.

JUNE 2020

Ideation and Build Sessions

Over 150 unique working group members participated in these brainstorming sessions to develop strategies and recommendations related to the 7 focus areas.

AUGUST 2020

Strategies refined

Review sessions were held with co-chairs, working group members, municipal officials, county authorities, and other stakeholders to refine and enhance the strategies.

DECEMBER 2020

Implementation committee formed

Those involved in the planning process were asked to sign on to commit to seeing through the implementation and tracking of the plan's progress.

The EAP is supported by funding from the York County Community Foundation's Nonprofit Management Assistance Fund, the Powder Mill Foundation, and the Warehime Foundation.



ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN

VISION & GOALS

VISION

YORK COUNTY IS KNOWN ACROSS THE MID-ATLANTIC REGION FOR ITS RESILIENT, EQUITABLE, AND DYNAMIC ECONOMY WITH ACCESSIBLE PATHWAYS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY FOR ALL.

With regional advantages such as low cost of living, a diverse economy, top notch educational system, proximity to many major markets, York County is positioned to be regionally competitive, especially as the world recovers from the economic impacts of COVID-19. York County strives to build from its strengths in healthcare and manufacturing, arts and culture, increasing diversity, and a marriage of rural and urban spaces to create pathways to economic prosperity for all.

OBJECTIVE & GOALS

YORK COUNTY STAKEHOLDERS WILL WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE EQUITABLE PATHWAYS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY FOR ALL WHILE ELEVATING YORK COUNTY'S REPUTATION ACROSS THE MID-ATLANTIC REGION AS A GREAT PLACE TO WORK, LEARN, LIVE AND PLAY.

Over the next 10 years, York County aims to:

- Exceed PA's business birth rate and investment in all categories but especially women and minority-owned businesses
- Close the income disparity gap between white and non-white residents
- Increase appreciation of and support for arts, culture, and recreational amenities by both locals and visitors
- Remove barriers to employment such as lack of childcare, transportation, and training
- Decrease the number of ALICE¹ households, with a larger number of families earning above a living wage
- Ensure that over 80% of all York County households and businesses have access to high speed broadband
- Retain, expand, and attract employers in industries offering high-paying, skilled jobs.

¹ ALICE is an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, created by the United Way as a new way of defining and understanding the struggles of households that earn above the Federal Poverty Level, but not enough to afford a bare-bones household budget.



**ACCESSIBLE • ACTIVE • AFFORDABLE • AGRICULTURAL
• BEAUTIFUL • CARING • CENTRAL • COMFORTABLE •
COMMUNITY • CONSERVATIVE • CONVENIENT • DIVERSE
• ENGAGED • ENTERPRISING • FRIENDLY • GENEROUS
• GROWING • HARD WORKING • HISTORICAL • HOME
• INDUSTRIAL • INDUSTRIOUS • MANUFACTURING •
PAROCHIAL • RESILIENT • RESOURCEFUL • RURAL •
SCENIC • TRADITIONAL • VIBRANT**

Public responses to the EAP survey's open field question: "List three words that best describe York County."



GUIDING THEMES, RECOMMENDATIONS & METRICS

GUIDING THEMES

The actions recommended for York County stakeholders to take toward these goals are guided by the following themes, i.e., the topics around which challenges and opportunities were identified, working groups were formed, and build sessions were held:

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL PEOPLE

A plan should benefit the people first and foremost, and the recommendations under this section seek to do just that. Focused on equity and inclusion, as well as workforce development and training, these actions seek to improve the experience of all York County residents seeking economic opportunity, regardless of educational or cultural background.

FUEL THE ENGINES OF PROSPERITY

Building a strong, dynamic, and sustainable economy depends on nurturing a culture where industry and entrepreneurship can thrive. York County will focus on attracting, retaining, and growing for-profit and nonprofit businesses that create high quality economic opportunities for all.

ENHANCE YORK'S SENSE OF PLACE

Every place is special, and York County contains assets that make it a truly great place to live, work, learn, and play. The recommendations in this section focus on augmenting as well as promoting the built environment to attract and keep new and longtime residents, businesses, and visitors. Whether people are in search of dense communities and vibrant business districts, or wide open spaces and areas of natural beauty, York County can enhance quality of life for all through targeted, place-based investments.

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

York County organizations can achieve these goals by implementing strategies that strive to enhance the following:



EQUITY, ACCESS, AND INCLUSION

This is core to York County's Economic Action Plan - economic success must benefit all of York's residents equitably, which means being intentional in creating accessible pathways for economic participation among groups who have been discriminated against and disadvantaged in the past.



COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SHARING

York County organizations must create new mechanisms to broadcast York's assets, both to ensure that local residents are aware of resources available to them, as well as attract people from outside of the region to experience all that makes York County a great place to be.



COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION

Organizations in York County must find new ways to work together, both across silos and within sectors, to maximize the effectiveness of existing resources and create new solutions that help all residents access economic opportunities.





CREATE OPPORTUNITIES

FOR ALL PEOPLE

Economic plans must serve the people of a community first and foremost. The EAP aims to enhance inclusion and access to current and future economic opportunities.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Create equitable pathways to economic prosperity for all York County residents.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Decrease in income disparity between white and non-white residents
- Increase in diverse leaders - CEOs, executive directors, and board members, people of color in leadership positions, and minority business owners
- All people feel valued, heard, and respected when working, learning, and living in their communities

STRATEGIES



Increase inclusion of diverse voices, perspectives, talent, and skills within leading institutions in York County



Communicate, elevate, and celebrate notable and meaningful initiatives making progress toward engaging diverse residents and driving inclusion



Institutionalize diversity and implicit bias training at major organizations and employers throughout the county to minimize bias-based barriers to economic mobility

“WE ARE TALKING ABOUT DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND EQUITY MORE THAN WE WERE A YEAR OR TWO AGO AND THAT’S GREAT. BUT WE STILL NEED TO LOOK AT THE TABLES WE’RE SITTING AT, CONSISTENTLY ASKING, ‘WHOSE VOICE NEEDS TO BE HERE AND ARE WE REPRESENTING EVERYONE IN OUR COMMUNITY? ARE PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCES INVOLVED IN DECISION MAKING?’”

*Natalie Williams
VP of Community Impact,
United Way of York County*

WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC MOBILITY

Excel in preparing a pipeline of skilled workers and connecting them to quality employment opportunities in large and growing industries.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Increase in educational attainment and exposure to career pathways
- Increase in services to remove barriers to employment (e.g., transportation, childcare, mental and behavioral health)
- Decrease in ALICE households, larger number of families earning above a living wage

STRATEGIES



Expose the workforce to quality job opportunities that have pathways to growth, by scaling proven education, training, and placement programs and innovating to reach more people



Enable better collaboration among workforce system stakeholders by helping agencies connect and holistically serve job seekers



Work with employers to remove barriers to employment in areas like transportation, childcare, and behavioral and mental health

These icons are used in the plan to demonstrate the relationship between these principles and the strategies.



“ESPECIALLY FOR MANUFACTURING, WE NEED CLEAR CAREER PATHWAYS, PROMOTION OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES, AND STRONGER INVESTMENT AND CONNECTIONS TO EXISTING TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR HARD AND SOFT SKILLS. FOR EXAMPLE, TOO MANY PEOPLE SEE MANUFACTURING AS “DARK, DIRTY, AND DANGEROUS.” BUT IT’S NOT THAT ANYMORE. YORK IS WORKING TO CHANGE THESE PERCEPTIONS AMONG YOUNGER GENERATIONS.”

*Tom Palasin,
Executive Director,
The Manufacturers' Association*



FUEL THE ENGINES OF PROSPERITY

The EAP seeks to ensure that entrepreneurs and employers in York County have what they need to be able to create the economic opportunities that drive growth and prosperity for all, now and into the future.

FUTURE OF INDUSTRY

Ensure quality economic opportunities for all York County residents by supporting employers in our targeted industries.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Increase the expansion, retention, and attraction of high-opportunity jobs in healthcare, technology, management, construction, and the trades
- Increase technology and innovation adoption by large and growing industries (manufacturing, healthcare, education, and transportation and warehousing)
- Decrease business contraction and relocation through increased succession planning and investment services

STRATEGIES



Better understand the needs of diverse and growing companies in our target industries - scale business-calling program to expand outreach to more businesses



Create and expand business-support programming to retain and grow York County businesses

"THE YORK COUNTY BUSINESS LANDSCAPE HAS RAPIDLY CHANGED. TODAY WE COMPETE IN A GLOBAL MARKETPLACE AND HAVE EXPERIENCED THE LOSS OF ICONIC BRANDS AND LEADERS. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE CONTINUE TO PROVIDE A COMPELLING CASE AND THE RESOURCES FOR BUSINESSES TO INVEST IN THE GROWTH AND ECONOMIC HEALTH OF THE COUNTY."

*William T. Yanavitch II
Chief Human Resources Officer
Kinsley Enterprises*

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Boost the number of entrepreneurs in the county and ensure assets are available and accessible to aid in their success

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Number of new business starts increases, as well as business longevity
- Increase in total investments into York County businesses
- Increased non-white participation in entrepreneurial training, investment, and mentorship programs

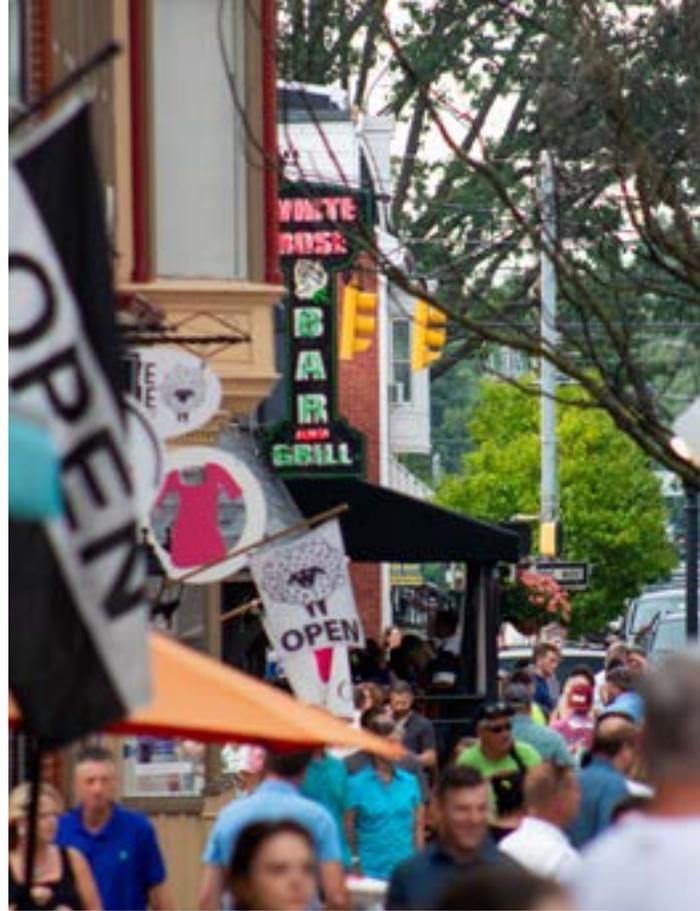
STRATEGIES



Make entry points and pathways to entrepreneurial support more welcoming and accessible to different groups



Market and further develop York County's entrepreneurial assets, such as capital, workforce, and incubator spaces



"WE NEED TO MEET PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE. START WITH COUNSELING IN THE BASICS: GETTING INCORPORATED, LIABILITY INSURANCE, WRITING A BUSINESS PLAN. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF VACANT SPACES. REPURPOSE THEM FOR SMALL MANUFACTURING. PRINT SHOPS, BUSINESSES THAT CAN REALLY HIRE PEOPLE, AND SUPPLY THE LOCAL EMPLOYERS WITH WHAT THEY NEED."

*Mark Rhodes
President
Key Learning Consultants*



ENHANCE YORK COUNTY'S SENSE OF PLACE

York County's built environment and sense of place are key ingredients to attracting business, talent, and visitors and enhancing the reputation of the community.

QUALITY OF PLACE

Foster a more connected and engaged community that supports diverse arts, culture, and recreation assets across the county.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Increase in tourism spending, asset usage, patronage, and event attendance
- Increased community pride
- Greater financial sustainability for arts, culture, and recreational assets

STRATEGIES



Improve the built environment and support infrastructure around York County's outdoor recreational assets



Create a sustainable pool of funding to support the development and marketing of all of York County's regional assets



Build organizational capacity to do placemaking and main street development in smaller boroughs and townships

"CREATIVES LIVE HERE. YORK IS WELCOMING - DUE TO THE STRONG NETWORK AND GREAT LOCATION THAT'S CLOSE TO SEVERAL BIG CITIES. ARTISTS BRING VIBRANCY AND REVITALIZATION TO YORK COUNTY. WHAT CAN WE DO TO RETAIN ARTISTS AND MAKE THEM FEEL VALUED IN THE COMMUNITY?"

*Kelley Gibson
President
Cultural Alliance of York County*

RURAL ECONOMY

Build municipal capacity and coordination to increase services and economic opportunity in rural areas and throughout the county.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Increase in assistance and funding to rural businesses
- Increase in households with dependable and affordable broadband access

STRATEGIES



Encourage public-private sector collaboration to expand broadband access throughout the county



Implement a shared staff model that splits time among municipalities, with office hours dedicated to entrepreneurial support for rural, agricultural, and community-based businesses

“YORK COUNTY HAS A GREAT AGRICULTURAL HISTORY. BUT TOEDAY IT IS HARD FOR FARMERS TO START OR GROW A SUSTAINABLE FARM ENTERPRISE AND GENERATE ADEQUATE WEALTH TO BE PASSED DOWN TO FUTURE GENERATIONS. WE NEED TO RE-THINK FARM BUSINESS MODELS AND PERMIT ADDITIONAL LAND USES FOR ON-FARM, CONSUMER FOCUSED AGRITAINMENT: SUCH AS ON-FARM EXPERIENCES, WEDDINGS, KITCHENS, WINERIES, AND BREWERIES. WE NEED TO SPEND MORE RESOURCES MENTORING SMALL AG BUSINESSES - USING INTERNET EXPOSURE AND MARKETING TODAY IS DIFFERENT THAN THE TRADITIONAL BUSINESS TRANSACTION”

*Bruce Miller
Executive Loan Officer
AgChoice Farm Credit*

INFRASTRUCTURE & THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Support economic growth through new development and redevelopment of the built environment within established growth areas.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Higher rate of development within established growth areas
- Increased visibility of York County's publicly accessible map of available parcels in growth and investment areas
- Increase in units of workforce housing that is high quality and affordable for working families and seniors in York County; Reduction in % of people paying 30% or more on housing

STRATEGIES



Encourage redevelopment and increased density to make market-rate, workforce housing more affordable



Create a dynamic and updateable inventory of all parcels that are vacant, undeveloped or ripe for redevelopment, and zoned for economic development that municipalities and developers can use as a planning tool



Increase collaboration and coordination among private and public sector stakeholders to streamline planning and support investment in York County's designated growth areas

“HOME OWNERSHIP IS SO IMPORTANT TO HELP LOW TO MODERATE INCOME PEOPLE WORK ON WEALTH BUILDING. WE NEED TO CHANGE THE IMAGE AND PERCEPTION OF WHO 'AFFORDABLE' HOUSING IS FOR - IT'S WORKING FAMILIES, AND THOSE WHO NEED ACCESSIBILITY.”

*Joyce Santiago
Executive Director
York Area Housing Group*

IMPLEMENTATION

It will take all stakeholders working together to be successful in realizing the vision and objectives that are laid out in this plan. The EAP's Steering Committee, working groups, and other partners involved in the planning process will commit to participating in implementation teams, driving forward the actions of the plan, tracking successes, and reporting progress to the public. Some of the action items rely on leveraging existing groups, such as the Pathways to Prosperity Workforce Group or the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC), while others recommend new organizations to be formed, such as the Regional Asset Coalition described in the Quality of Place strategies. Implementation teams will be responsible for monitoring implementation and measuring the impacts that are so critical to sustaining these efforts.

PARTNERS

Just as many organizations helped to shape this plan, many will be needed to implement its actions. Roles are defined throughout the plan, but generally follow the following classification:

CATALYST

The entity that drives action and leads the way for others to follow

CONVENER

The organization that brings others to the table and provides backbone support and capacity to help advance the strategy

CHAMPION

The agencies and individuals that support and amplify the strategy through their own unique but related actions

The York County Economic Alliance will serve as the convener and backbone organization to support much of this work, providing staff and capacity to keep the momentum of the implementation teams moving forward. The York County Commissioners will adopt the recommendations contained herein as the economic development component of the county's Comprehensive Plan, which ensures that York County will prioritize the

actions that were developed by the community. The York County Planning Commission is also the natural catalyst or convener for several of the strategies, as indicated throughout the plan. And the City of York's Comprehensive Plan update has many elements that overlap with and complement the strategies in the EAP. In these cases, the City will serve the role of champion, supporting and adding to initiatives to the extent possible and appropriate.

FUNDING

The EAP contains a broad multitude of recommendations intended to ensure economic prosperity for all who call York County home. For this to be realized, it is essential to identify sources of capital that can support these strategies. In conjunction with the planning effort surrounding the EAP and county-wide pandemic recovery planning, several pools of funding have been created or identified to help support the goals of York County.

YOCO STRONG RESTART FUND

\$14 Million

A new grant program developed in partnership with the York County Commissioners, York Economic Alliance, and Community First Fund. This program is designed to help small businesses and nonprofits located in York County in their efforts to recover from the devastating impact of COVID-19.

CARES ACT TRAILS FUNDING

\$200,000

York County allocated \$100,000 each to the York County Rail Trail Authority and to Susquehanna Heritage, the Heritage Area/Conservation Landscape active in our region. Trails and parks are more important than ever, having played a critical role in our ability to weather COVID-19.

CARES ACT BROADBAND FEASIBILITY STUDY FUNDING

\$300,000

York County allocated \$300,000 for feasibility studies related to countywide broadband and the creation of a countywide health department.

CARES ACT BROADBAND PILOT

\$5 million

York County Commissioners allocated \$5 million in federal funds for a 32-mile fiber broadband pilot project that will expand broadband access and help close the digital divide in York County. The pilot project will follow buried conduit in the Heritage Rail Trail alignment from the City of York to New Freedom, passing through Seven Valleys, Glen Rock and Railroad along the way. The first phase will serve as a “spine” to provide future connections to other underserved portions of the county.



BEST PRACTICES FOR FUNDING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The US Economic Development Administration provides funding to each state’s regional Economic Development Districts (EDD). There currently is no South Central Pennsylvania EDD, but the EAP might serve as the basis for developing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and creating an EDD for the region containing York County. This may include Lancaster or other nearby counties, and would allow the region to access federal EDA dollars for planning and execution of economic development projects.

Another potential funding source for the economic development priorities outlined in the EAP might be a new method of regional tax base sharing to mitigate the localized impacts of regional assets that are tax exempt. David Rusk’s famous 1996 “Rusk Report” chronicled the negative impacts of governmental fragmentation on economic growth and prosperity, and recommended regional land use, transportation and infrastructure planning, unified economic development, and regional tax-base sharing. Though the report is over 20 years old, many of these patterns and impacts still hold true today.

One option to consider is the development of a county-wide tax base sharing policy to more equitably allocate tax dollars to the highest-impact areas in the county. Today, a majority of the county’s 33,800 acres of tax exempt property sits in just 31 of York’s 72 municipalities. Those 31 municipalities contain over half the county’s population, which means that they require significant public investment to maintain and deliver services that they are missing out on due to their high volume of tax



exempt parcels. Many of these tax-exempt parcels are hospitals, libraries, parks, universities, and museums – in other words, regional assets that serve the entire county in addition to driving tourism and investment. Because property taxation is local, the municipalities where these regional amenities are housed do not receive the tax revenue that would help maintain, improve, and promote them.

Other options to fund economic development, such as the creation of an Economic Development Regional Asset Fund, should also be explored.

BUILDING THE FUTURE

As York County embarks on the next ten years, it seeks to enhance quality of life for those who call the area home. To do so, it must rely on its strengths and history while embracing a changing economic and social landscape. With a strong agricultural history that transitioned mid-century to manufacturing, York now boasts a booming modern healthcare industry that is driving employment throughout the county. York's top-notch educational institutions are preparing the next generation for these workforce opportunities, while economic development and community leaders are amplifying the best of York's urban and rural spaces. These efforts are fostering a unique community that contains ample opportunity for all to thrive.

Emerging from the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, which affected our most vulnerable residents the hardest, it is ever more apparent that there is a need for jobs that pay above a living wage and opportunities for ongoing education that adapts to evolving industry needs. Ensuring access to supports like healthcare, childcare, housing, and transportation has become even more critical for the most underserved members of our community, including low to moderate income families, immigrants, people of color, and the previously incarcerated and returning citizens. Ensuring the county grows equitably is critical – there can be no true progress if success is not shared by all.

York County organizations seek to amplify its reputation across the Mid-Atlantic region, so that York is known for its high caliber culture and community, all within a short driving distance from the amenities in Baltimore, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C. This is especially true for artists and entrepreneurs, who can make York their home and take advantage of the low cost of living, top talent, diverse culture, and slower-paced lifestyle without losing access to top markets in major cities nearby.

All of this is dependent on having strong infrastructure to support commerce, from county-wide, high-speed broadband, to road connectivity and major highways including I-83 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike, to ample and appropriate commercial and industrial spaces for companies to locate and grow into. It is critical that development and redevelopment are clustered within the county's established growth areas to respond to these needs while conserving open space and protecting natural areas.

From the Susquehanna River, to the Heritage Rail Trail, to galleries and public art, to the small businesses throughout the county's many unique town centers, there is plenty of room for recreating, exploring, and supporting local economies. Still, many people in the surrounding region – and even those who live inside the county! – are not aware of these amazing assets. More marketing, promotion, and support will go a long way to making sure both locals and visitors take advantage of all York has to offer.

York County's past makes it what it is: a uniquely industrious, historic, and ambitious community. The future, shaped by a growing diversity of peoples, cultures, and emerging occupations in growing industries, will solidify York's place in the region and provide opportunities for all to thrive.



**"YORK COUNTIANS ARE HARD WORKING, WITH GRIT,
PRIDE, AND A STRONG BELIEF THAT WE CAN MAKE THINGS
HAPPEN HERE."**

*Jane Conover
President and CEO
York County Community Foundation*

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