

# COATESVILLE 2nd Century Alliance



Economic & Community Development

## DOWNTOWN COATESVILLE REVITALIZATION PLAN

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Downtown Coatesville Revitalization Plan serves to direct efforts toward improving Coatesville's downtown revitalization district. It is a component of the Coatesville 2<sup>nd</sup> Century Alliance five-year, five-goal Action Agenda to comprehensively revitalize the City of Coatesville.

Recognizing that a small, third-class City must address several variables simultaneously in order to overcome economic challenges, the Coatesville 2nd Century Alliance in partnership with City Administration and the Chester County Commissioners, employs efforts to improve the City's residential neighborhoods; bring jobs and economic opportunity to City residents; encourage development and redevelopment; improve the overall quality of life; and revitalize the downtown commercial core.

The Downtown Coatesville Revitalization Plan addresses the last of these initiatives. It works to preserve and celebrate the essence of Coatesville's rich heritage while guiding the smart redevelopment of key sites, the improvement of public spaces, the enhancement of downtown residential options, and the promotion of downtown amenities and attractions.

It will drive the community's efforts to create a vibrant destination where residents, daytime employees, and visitors can gather, and will ultimately strengthen the downtown economic base that will catalyze city-wide growth and enrichment.

It includes six objectives, each with supporting action steps to ensure a strategic, methodical approach to bring Coatesville's commercial corridor back to its vibrant splendor:

- Objective #1: Eliminate blight and improve existing property conditions
- Objective #2: Retain and strengthen existing businesses
- Objective #3: Expand upper floor and multi-family residential opportunities
- Objective #4: Attract an appropriate mix of retail/hospitality businesses
- Objective #5: Ensure a welcoming downtown environment for everyone
- Objective #6: Promote and celebrate Downtown Coatesville

This Plan provides a five-year road map for the sustainable, long-term economic recovery of downtown Coatesville. Metrics for monitoring progress include:

- Net square footage of reuse development
- New businesses, business expansions, and jobs created
- Special event attendance numbers
- First floor retail occupancy rates
- Criminal activity reports
- Number of housing units created or renovated
- Property values (real market and assessed value)
- Consumer perception survey results

## **DOWNTOWN COATESVILLE REVITALIZATION PLAN**

### **Objective #1: Eliminate blight and improve existing property conditions**

*Goal: 50% of blighted properties in Revitalization District are either demolished or rehabilitated*

*Goal: \$50,000 distributed in first floor and façade improvement grants*

*Goal: 50% of E. Lincoln Highway properties have improved first floor retail spaces and/or facades*

#### Action steps:

- Inventory properties
- Identify anchor/corner buildings
- Build relationships with key property owners
- Educate property owners on quality retail/sustainable tenants
- Identify historically significant/contributing assets
- Capitalize façade improvement grant fund for building improvements
- Conduct feasibility studies for rehabilitation/occupancy on key properties
- Work with Historic Commission to ensure historic preservation of contributing properties

### **Objective #2: Retain and strengthen existing businesses**

*Goal: Documented listing and contact information of all existing businesses in the district*

*Goal: 20% attendance at educational and support workshops*

*Goal: Conduct one person-to-person retention interview per month*

*Goal: Establish and staff-support an engaged and active merchants association*

#### Action steps:

- Inventory all operating businesses
- Conduct assessment of current business base
- Foster relationships with proprietors
- Provide access to business support resources
- Host and/or promote business support workshops
- Conduct and facilitate merchant group meetings

### **Objective #3: Expand upper floor and multi-family residential opportunities**

*Goal: All downtown residential units are inspected regularly and code compliant*

*Goal: 100,000 square feet of new or rehabilitated residential space*

*Goal: Downtown Coatesville includes a diverse and balanced inventory of housing options*

#### Action steps:

- Work with code officials to develop systemized approach to inspections
- Identify and prioritize existing upper-floor opportunities
- Identify adaptive reuse opportunities
- Engage developers and market investment opportunities
- Partner with local realtors to promote living in downtown Coatesville
- Encourage employer-provided incentives for downtown living

**Objective #4: Attract an appropriate mix of retail/hospitality businesses**

*Goal: Streamlined, user-friendly business start-up process*

*Goal: 80% first-floor occupancy on E. Lincoln Highway from First to Third Avenue*

*Goal: Create 20 new jobs (full and/or part time) in Downtown Coatesville*

Action steps:

- Work with City to ensure easy business start-up and occupancy processes
- Partner with local commercial real estate agents to build an attraction strategy focusing primarily on independent and locally owned businesses
- Encourage and support local entrepreneurs to locate downtown
- Market pending development projects, ie: train station and Coatesville Gateway
- Design and print business attraction materials
- Actively source viable prospects to redevelop vacant warehouse spaces

**Objective #5: Ensure a welcoming downtown environment for everyone**

*Goal: Systemized and sustainable downtown litter removal program*

*Goal: Complete, consistent, and enforced streetscape guidelines*

*Goal: 20% reduction in criminal activity*

*Goal: Comprehensive parking program in place*

Action steps:

- Incorporate Complete Streets policies into all new design
- Create and enforce Streetscape Design Guidelines
- Source funding and or partner programs to support ongoing clean-up effort
- Work with police department to create a secure environment incorporating principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
- Develop affordable, consistent, user-friendly parking system with easy to understand signage
- Incorporate and maintain trees and flower plantings where appropriate
- Establish and implement wayfinding signage program
- Advance all forms of public transportation within/into downtown
- Explore ways to minimize truck traffic through main corridor

**Objective #6: Promote and celebrate Downtown Coatesville**

*Goal: Build social media engagement by 50% (10% per year)*

*Goal: Increase downtown special events to one per month*

*Goal: Host bi-annual downtown updates for the general public*

Action steps:

- Engage a task force of creative and marketing professionals
- Develop a brand identity and associated messaging
- Establish audience segmentation
- Craft imaging/logo/design standards
- Build new website – City/Downtown
- Remodel social media and collateral communications to reflect new brand
- Build co-op media and promotional opportunities for downtown businesses
- Promote positive attributes of the City and its amenities
- Plan and manage special events to draw patrons and engage residents
- Coordinate a calendar of high-quality, special events that appeal to residents and visitors
- Educate downtown businesses to capitalize on special-event traffic