

Date: December 12, 2016

To: Columbia Borough Council

From: Rebecca S. Denlinger, Rising Tide Collaborative, LLC

RE: Update on Phase I Activities | Community & Economic Development Services

Review of all recent and relevant community and economic development studies and strategies and meet with Borough leadership to develop a realistic action plan based on existing strategic initiatives and the priorities set by the Borough. This Community and Economic Development Action Plan will serve as both the work plan for RTC going forward as well as a budgeting tool for the Borough.

Work Accomplished

- Reviewed 2010 and 2015 plans
- Convened series of meetings with leadership to discuss project accomplishments and priority projects/ programs remaining on lists
- Development of initial draft of Community and Economic Development Action Plan is underway

Next Step(s)

- Finalize and deliver DRAFT Community and Economic Development Action Plan to Borough Council for discussion (and adoption) at January 2017 meeting

Meet with local partner organizations both to understand their current projects and future plans and to seek opportunities to partner.

Work Accomplished

- Convened series of meetings held with local organizations: Susquehanna Valley Chamber of Commerce, Columbia Economic Development Corporation, Susquehanna Heritage, Columbia Life Network
- Convened series of meetings/conversations with county/state organizations: Economic Development Company of Lancaster County, Lancaster County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Lancaster Housing Opportunity Partnership, Lancaster County Conservancy, and PA Downtown Center

Next Step(s)

- Continue outreach to borough-based committees, organizations, etc. to ensure sharing of information and understanding of projects and potential partnerships.
- Include action items coming out of these discussions into the DRAFT Community and Economic Development Action Plan

Develop an initial communication plan for community and economic development efforts.

Work Accomplished

- Development of initial draft of Communication Plan for Community and Economic Development is underway. Plan includes action items for both internal and external communication improvement.

Next Step(s)

- Communication Plan will accompany the DRAFT Community and Economic Development Action Plan delivered to Borough Council for discussion (and adoption) at January 2017 meeting

Secure and document information on Columbia's trade area market.

Work Accomplished

- Developed Columbia Trade Area Market Information.

Next Step(s)

- Compare Columbia Trade Area data to other/similar communities.
- Create communication piece(s) to leverage the market data for business retention and business recruitment efforts.

Prepare a focused marketing piece to highlight the key demographics and attributes of the Columbia trade area. The marketing piece will be used to introduce the Columbia Borough community to prospective developers, investors, and partners for community and economic development.

Work Accomplished

- Efforts to comb through and draw out highlights from Trade Area Market Information are underway.

Next Step(s)

- Develop a data-rich marketing piece that can be used both online and in print

Begin the development of a business and property database of the downtown (the specific downtown geographic area to be determined in collaboration with the Borough).

Work Accomplished

- Secured parcel data available from the Borough
- Developing an overall business database starting with the 17512-zip code
- Working with MU/County of Lancaster to initiate a GIS-based data collection protocol and Internship to support development of property and business database
- Development of Business Owner Survey is underway

Next Step(s)

- Continue work with MU/County Collaboration on GIS-mapping internship.
- Interview/select interns to begin work end of January 2017
- Initiate outreach to businesses, including request to participate in online survey
- Develop 2017 Borough-Business Meeting Series

Represent the Borough at local, regional, and statewide community and economic development meetings.

Work Accomplished

- Participating with the Economic Development Company of Lancaster County's Borough Collaborative.
- Secured community membership in the PA Downtown Center
- Attended Susquehanna Riverlands Visitor Readiness Summit

Next Step(s)

- Consider benefits of community membership with PA Economic Development Association (PEDA)

Work on priority community and economic development activities as discussed with and/or assigned by the Borough.

Work Accomplished

- Facilitated a planning session with the new Market House Advisory Board to develop a focused workplan
- Development of a Request for Expression of Interest for the Historic Columbia Market House is underway
- Working to secure proposals for a Hotel Market Feasibility Study
- Working to provide information on downtown parking to accommodate development

Next Step(s)

- Incorporate all projects into the DRAFT Community and Economic Development Action Plan

Regular attendance at Community Development committee meetings and attendance at one Borough Council meeting per quarter. Provide monthly written updates to Borough Council on activities

Work Accomplished

- Attended Community Development Committee, Market House Advisory Committee, and Borough Council Meetings

Next Step(s)

- Prepare template for monthly report on activity on implementation of the Community and Economic Development Action Plan