

MALVERN BOROUGH
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TASK FORCE
Zoom Conference
Malvern, PA 19355

April 21, 2021
7:30 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TASK FORCE PRESENT:

Dr. Helise Bichfskey, DO
Mr. Joe Bones
Dr. Amy Finkbiner, Ph.D.
Mr. Danny Fruchter
Mr. Fran Givnish
Dr. Dave Knies, Ph.D. (**VICE-CHAIRMAN**)
Mr. Chris Mongeau (**CHAIRMAN**)
Ms. Cathy Raymond, Esq.
Ms. Julie Raynor
Mr. Brian Walker
Dr. Zoe Warner, Ph.D.

ABSENT:

None

Staff & Professionals Present:

Mr. Christopher Bashore, Borough Manager
Ms. Meredith Mayer Braine, Brandywine Conservancy
Mr. Grant DeCosta, Brandywine Conservancy
Ms. Tiffany M. Loomis, Assistant Borough Manager & Zoning Officer
Ms. Alicia Marziani, Park & Recreation Coordinator & Administrative Assistant
Mr. Kevin Myers, Chester County Planning Commission
Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz, Thomas Comitta Associates

2. CALL TO ORDER & APPROVAL OF MARCH 17, 2021 MINUTES

Chairman Chris Mongeau called the meeting to order.

The meeting minutes for March 17, 2021, prepared by Ms. Tiffany M. Loomis, were approved by the Comprehensive Plan Task Force and will be placed on the Malvern Borough Website.

Chairman Chris Mongeau reviewed the overall Agenda for the meeting explaining that comments will be held until the end of each presentation. Ms. Meredith Mayer Braine explained that each Comprehensive Plan Committee member will get the opportunity to comment on each presentation given.

3. URBAN CENTER REVITALIZATION PLAN OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF HOUSING

Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz presented the Urban Center Revitalization Plan that was last revised in 2009 which has been referenced in many documents associated with the Borough, and is also a stand-alone document.

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The purpose of the plan is to fund revitalization projects that are to be completed in Malvern Borough in a five (5) to ten (10) year period.

Please refer to Attachment #1 to access this presentation.

Ms. Cathy Raymond, Esq. asked about design guidelines for future developments in how this works for Malvern Borough from a Zoning perspective in regards to residential housing.

Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz responded that the zoning would be addressed to ensure regulations to identify how tear downs regarding lot coverage and height would be handled.

Mr. Danny Fruchter commented that improving existing housing with regard to onsite water retention, energy conservation, and energy independence needs to be added to the goals of this plan.

Mr. Brian Walker commented that he is in agreement with reducing permit fees and inspections and providing assistance with DIY projects. He suggested residents run power lines underground and finding a way to encourage this.

Mr. Christopher Bashore confirmed that the power line placement is to the discretion of PECO and they have denied, at times, the burying of these lines.

Ms. Alicia Marziani confirmed that Willistown Township also deals with power lines in the same manner except when there is a 106 Historic review.

Ms. Julie Raynor asked about why the phrase affordable housing has not been included in this plan and document. She had not seen this phrase in the Word Cloud and this particular aspect is a major concern for Malvern Borough residents.

Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz further explained that this phrase may be included if the Comprehensive Task Force Committee recommends doing so.

Dr. Amy Finkbiner, Ph.D. commented that she likes that the goal is something that can be conceived and memorized. She suggested adding a couple words, yet cautioned not making the goal overly long and adding words that do not carry impact.

Dr. Amy Finkbiner, Ph.D. asked about the meaning of universal design that was referenced in the presentation.

Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz clarified that universal design allowed for a property owner to progress in the dwelling through their various stages of life such as incorporating safety railings, width of doorways for various kinds of access, and etc. The dwelling is made user friendly for all adult levels and/or disabilities.

Mr. Joe Bones in in agreement with Dr. Amy Finkbiner, Ph.D. that the current goal statement includes most of what individuals have commented on.

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Dr. Zoe Warner, Ph.D. commented that it is important to emphasize affordability and an ordinance update may be needed to address bulk regulations due to the size of new dwellings that are built in Malvern Borough.

Mr. Joe Bones commented that the cost of housing has risen and that a study referenced Malvern Borough is lower as a whole per cost of house in relation to Chester County statistics. He suggested staying away from a trans-oriented development that could affect the character of Malvern Borough.

Dr. Zoe Warner, Ph.D. commented that if a new development was built as multi-housing it is to include a certain percentage be work force housing.

Dr. Amy Finkbiner, Ph.D. commented that all income levels are referenced and she is in agreement that the Borough should be accessible to a range of individuals.

4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION

Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz presented the economic development presentation explaining that Malvern Borough has economic growth based on the statistics provided in the presentation.

Please refer to Attachment #1 to access this presentation.

Mr. Danny Fruchter commented that he was surprised at the amount of people coming into the Borough to be employed every day. He asked for further explanation as to why this is.

Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz clarified this information was taking from the most recent census. Many of the jobs are located on King Street, the schools, as well as Malvern Retreat House.

Dr. Dave Knies, Ph.D. commented on vacancies and signage referenced in the presentation. The work the MPC completed on this was put on the back burner. A potential Main Street Manager could really help in filling the vacancies.

Dr. Amy Finkbiner, Ph.D. commented on the business association inquired about a Main Street Manager. Borough Council will look into this matter and gather further research as the world comes out of the Pandemic. She also thinks the first of the two (2) goals is quite wordy with adjectives suggesting the following: "Promote a healthy and diverse commercial economy that supports a stable tax base".

Dr. Zoe Warner, Ph.D. commented that likes the idea of minimizing the Borough's vacancies by allowing pop-ups. The former Christopher's location could be a possibility which could be built into the plan.

Mr. Walker is in agreement with the pop-up concept. He asked if there are any other communities where this has been successfully accomplished to get a better idea how to accomplish this.

Ms. Alicia Marziani clarified that the Main Street Association typically falls under Historic Organizations and there has been some research done. Both Phoenixville and West Chester have done pop-ups. She will look further into this matter and give an update at the next meeting and/or by email.

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Mr. Christopher Bashore confirmed that West Chester Borough has one that is paid through a special tax assessment that has been completed.

Mr. Kevin Meyers clarified that West Chester Borough performs pop-ups in the business improvement district though membership that requires a membership fee. He recommending combining either both goals or rewording accordingly as discussed.

Ms. Cathy Raymond, Esq. is in agreement with Dr. Amy Finkbiner's, Ph.D comments on how the goals are currently worded. She asked about how to approach the goals in a way where Malvern Borough can achieve its goals.

Mr. Danny Fruchter on extending the pedestrian connect on King Street and suggested that a sidewalk be constructed that connects Malvern Borough and Willistown Township. He further commented on how multi-family housing would be a good fit in the industrial district incorporating an over-lay district with innovative ways to address transportation.

Dr. Dave Knies, Ph.D. commented on that a Main Street Manager was utilized in Downingtown.

Mr. Joe Bones commented that a Main Street Manager could be very effective and needs to be a priority.

Mr. Christopher Bashore clarified that staff could report back to the task force regarding a Main Street Manager. The Comprehensive Plan Task Force is in agreement and staff will provide this data.

Chairman Chris Mongeau commented that a significant population is needed to support the business community, without people you do not have businesses.

5. COMMUNITY VISIONING PREPARTION

Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz explained that the Community Visioning Session has been scheduled for May 10, 2021 and the rain date for May 12, 2021. There will be stations for everyone to participate and write comments located in Paoli Battlefield Park. She asked for volunteers for each station and hope everyone will be in attendance.

An outline will be sent to the Comprehensive Plan Task Force for further response.

Ms. Alicia Marziani has created a flyer to be sent to the public and was thanked for her work on the project by Mr. Christopher Bashore & Ms. Meredith Mayer Baine.

Mr. Christopher Bashore clarified that this information will be provide in the Community Newsletter in an effort to maximize advertising.

The time frame was agreed upon unanimously to be adjusted to 5PM to 7:30PM.

Questions and discussion ensured regarding the flyer and potential revisions. The flyer will be revised accordingly.

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6. PUBLIC COMMENT

A Land Use Committee Update will be given at the next scheduled meeting on May 19, 2021.

No public comment was made.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Chris Mongeau adjourned the meeting at 9:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Tiffany M. Loomis
Assistant Borough Manager & Zoning Officer

MALVERN COMP PLAN COMMITTEE: 4.21 MEETING OVERVIEW



Urban Center Revitalization Plan purpose and benefits



Housing

Demographics (See demographics presented in fall 2020)
Goal(s)
Objectives and considerations

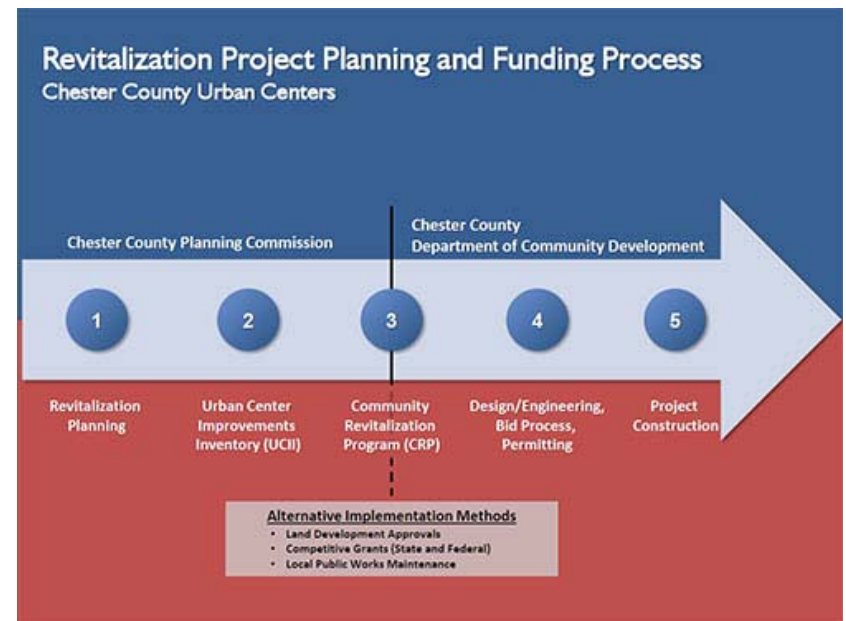


Economic Development

Demographics
Goal
Objectives and Considerations

URBAN CENTER REVITALIZATION PLAN

- **Urban Center Revitalization Plan (UCRP)**- Purpose is the planning, inventorying, and funding of revitalization improvement projects. The process begins with a Revitalization Component, which identifies specific goals and projects that promote revitalization and assist with future growth and development over a 5-10 year period.
- Last stand alone UCRP 2009 and was incorporated by reference into the 2012 Comp Plan
- This time around, we get to coordinate them holistically
- Benefits of the UCRP:
 - Precursor to the Urban Center Improvements Inventory (UCII) which is updated annually
 - Supports grant applications to the Chester County Dept of Community Development, CCPC, possibly Keystone Communities, others
 - <https://www.chescoplanning.org/MuniCorner/UCII/ViewProject1.cfm>





HOUSING OVERVIEW

- Previous Plans:
 - 2009 RP –no specific projects or recommendations
 - 2012 CP -
- Key Takeaways from Demographics:
 - Older housing stock (majority pre-date 1939) requires higher maintenance
 - Vacancy rate has remained fairly stable (5.9%) over time, but getting slightly tighter
 - Diverse housing types (1,645 units of approximately equal types)
 - Significant gap between housing costs and household incomes continues across the County creating an affordability issue and crisis.
- Housing Projections
 - Current DVRPC projected population of 4,093 in 2045 (increase of 624 from 2020)
 - With an average household size of 2.23, this translates into approximately **280 housing units**
 - *Note: Borough currently exceeds the 2030 projection from the 2012 Plan



HOUSING GOAL(S)

- **Goals from previous plans:**

- *Provide for adequate safe and diverse housing to accommodate present and future residents through building codes, zoning provisions, and other appropriate control measures and necessary services, and work to implement goals related to housing from the Revitalization Plan.*
- *Ensure Malvern's neighborhoods remain safe and desirable places to live.*
- *Maintain the overall excellent condition of Malvern's housing stock.*

- **Updated goal for consideration:**

- Support and enhance healthy, safe, sustainable and diverse housing options and vibrant neighborhoods for residents of all ages and income levels.



HOUSING CONSIDERATIONS

- Consideration: focus on aging in place
 - Accessory dwelling units
 - Encourage universal design in new development
- Consideration: keep existing housing in good repair by supporting rehabilitation and investment
 - Evaluate rental inspections and licensing ordinance?
 - Partnership with HPOCC, others for rehab assistance; Provide information to low- and moderate-income homeowners about available rehabilitation services and connect those in need to available resources.
 - Continue to enforce property maintenance codes
 - Consider reducing permit fees and streamlining the inspection processes for housing rehabilitation efforts to encourage homeowners to take on and complete projects.
 - Host a nonprofit organization to offer home maintenance and repair workshops at the municipal building.
- Consideration: ensure infill development and redevelopment is compatible with existing character
 - Create residential design guidelines aimed at preserving the character of existing neighborhoods



HOUSING CONSIDERATIONS (CONT)

- Consideration: energy efficiency
 - Amend municipal codes and ordinances to encourage energy-efficiency and green construction as applied to rehabilitation projects.
- Consideration: affordability
 - Work with the County's A+ homes initiative
 - Continue to support a wide variety of housing types
 - Consider amending the zoning ordinance to incorporate an affordability incentive or mandate into future redevelopment.
 - Encourage a variety of housing types in close proximity to services.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

- Demographic Highlights:
 - Borough is a place with a stable population and diverse housing types in the middle of a growing region
 - Workflow : Malvern Borough is a net importer of workers
 - Jobs: 31% increase in jobs in the borough since 2003; 13.3% since 2012
 - Total assessment: increase of 6.58% since 2014
- Considerations and Uncertainty
 - Pandemic has hit main streets hard
 - Work from home trends
 - E-commerce/Omni-channel marketing

REGIONAL ECONOMY MATTERS JUST AS MUCH AS THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Chester County economy prior to covid

- Fastest growing County in SE PA
- 137,000 new residents projected by 2045
- Largest increase in employment in the region: 20.8% growth in employment since 2000 (exceeding national and state averages)
- 277,000 jobs in 2018

Chester County's position going forward:

Strengths: Many high wage industries continue to grow

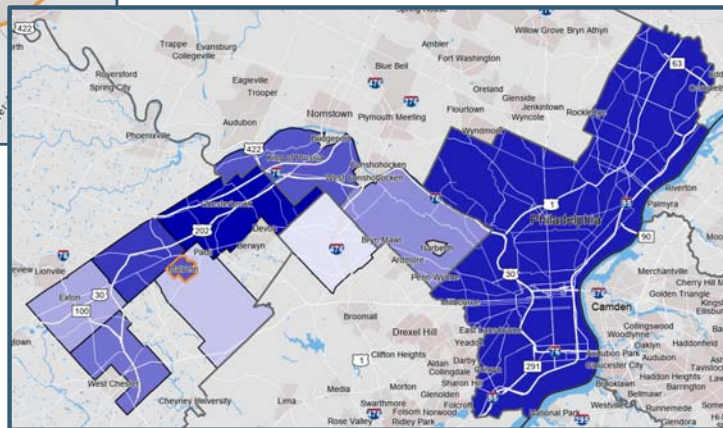
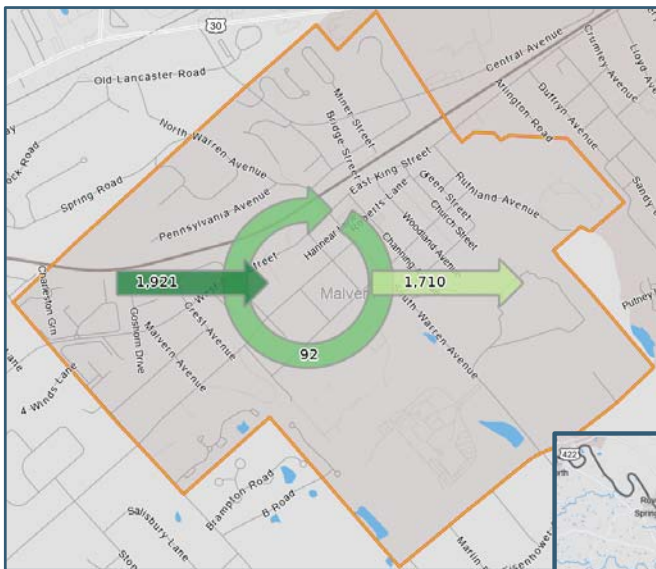
- Management of companies
- Finance and insurance
- Professional/technical
- Life sciences
- Software publishing

Weaknesses

- Higher vacancies (esp. office)
- Higher rents
- Higher housing costs
- Retail vacancy rate: 5.2%
- Industrial vacancy rate: 6.2%



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL(S)

■ Goal from previous plans:

- *Provide for continued development of commercial and industrial opportunities in a manner which complements the borough's small-town environment.*
- *Provide for the continued development of commercial and industrial opportunities in a manner which complements the Borough's small town environment, and*
 - *Promote vitality and increased business opportunity in the King Street corridor, and its enhanced development as a center of community activity.*
 - *Encourage expansion of the employment base and shopping opportunities in Malvern compatible with the community character.*
 - *Provide for continued industrial opportunities within appropriate areas of the Borough through regulatory and non-regulatory measures.*
 - *Carry out goals related to economic development and redevelopment from the Borough Revitalization Plan.*

■ Updated goals for consideration:

- **Promote a healthy, diverse, and resilient commercial and industrial economy that supports a stable tax base and provides for local employment and shopping opportunities.**
- **Reinforce the identity and vitality of King Street as a thriving main street and community center.**



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACHIEVEMENTS

- Partial list of key Achievements of recommendations from previous plans:
 - Redevelopment of Eastside Flats
 - Recruitment of Kimberton Whole Foods (even though its not in the borough)
 - Gateway improvements/Sidewalk improvements
 - Design Guidelines for infill and redevelopment along King Street
 - Farmers market
 - Improvement of the Paoli Battlefield (trail, signage, etc.)



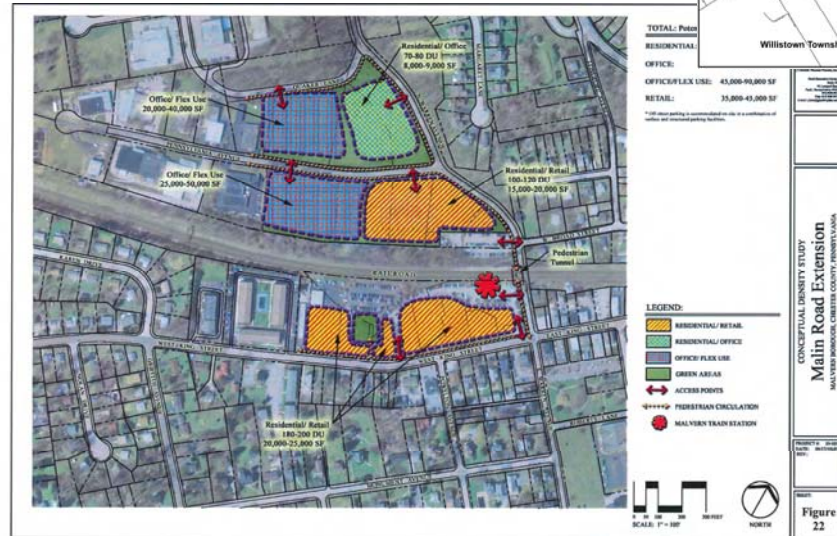
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Consideration: Pandemic Recovery
 - Support, retain, grow, and attract businesses
 - Helping customers feel and stay safe
 - Partnering to support businesses adapt and succeed in current and future conditions
 - Longevity of curb side pickup options (land use impact)
- Consideration: Focus on King Street
 - Land Use: Redevelopment opportunities
 - Previous comp plan briefly discusses transit-oriented development at the train station as a concept. Current thoughts?
 - Organizational:
 - Main Street designation/Main Street manager (part time or shared)
 - Marketing/promotion
 - Design: Façade grants
 - Address vacancies: Pop up shops; Window display program
 - Focus on the experience: (Events, ambiance, outdoor dining,
 - Zoning – (outdoor café, height in the C-1 is shorter than others)



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Consideration: Malvern Business Park
 - Improving circulation
 - 2012 FLU and the 2010 Malin Road Extension Study: Transit Oriented Development Overlay
 - “implementation of the TOD plan without the proposed roadway extensions will add to traffic congestion throughout the study area.”





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Consideration: Heritage tourism and the Patriots Path and the CVT
 - Work with East Whiteland Twp
- Consideration: Infrastructure improvements that support economic development
 - Wayfinding
 - Continue to improve pedestrian connections in and to the downtown, including key recommendations from the 2018 Multimodal Transportation Plan for:
 - Intersection of W King & Powelton
 - Intersection of Bridge St and E King Street
 - East End of King Street at Ruthland Ave
 - Sidewalk to residential areas in Willistown
 - Sewer/Water
 - Stormwater

