

Malvern Borough Main Street Revitalization Task Force

Research and Recommendations

Task Force Team Members

Task Force Members

Name	Role
Eric Rea	Chair
Christy Campli	Vice-Chair
Tina Corrado	Secretary
Lynne Frederick	Member
Meghan Miller	Member

Sponsors and Advisors

Name	Role
Amy Finkbiner	Borough Council President
Zeyn Uzman	Mayor
Tiffany Loomis	Borough Manager
Corinne Badman	Assistant Borough Manager
Bill Arrowood	PA Downtown Consultant
Mark Evans	Derck & Edson Consultant

Executive Summary

The Problem

Malvern Borough Council, residents and businesses alike have identified the need for an effort to revitalize Main Street, aka King Street in Malvern due to a significant loss of retail & commercial businesses after COVID-19. In addition, there is a need for a more comprehensive plan and leadership to best enhance a more vibrant downtown and untap the potential of Malvern.

After initial research on programs available, Borough Council appointed a Task Force to review the findings, perform their own assessments and make recommendations on how to move forward with the Main Street Revitalization program.

The Solution

The Task Force Recommends the non-profit economic development organization overseen by a Board of Directors.

The Board includes 8 to 12 Board Members who will hire and oversee a full time Main Street Manager.

The Main Street Manager will deliver the identified strategies to create “More for Malvern.” These strategies include: Marketing Malvern, Bridge of Business, Reducing Roadblocks, and Downtown Design.

The Task Force is asking for Borough Council’s support in establishing the non-profit organization and contributing annual funding for its continued success.

Mission and Vision

Vision:

Empowering the heart of Malvern: a resource for connectivity that promotes a thriving and vibrant business community and makes use of the character and uniqueness of the borough.

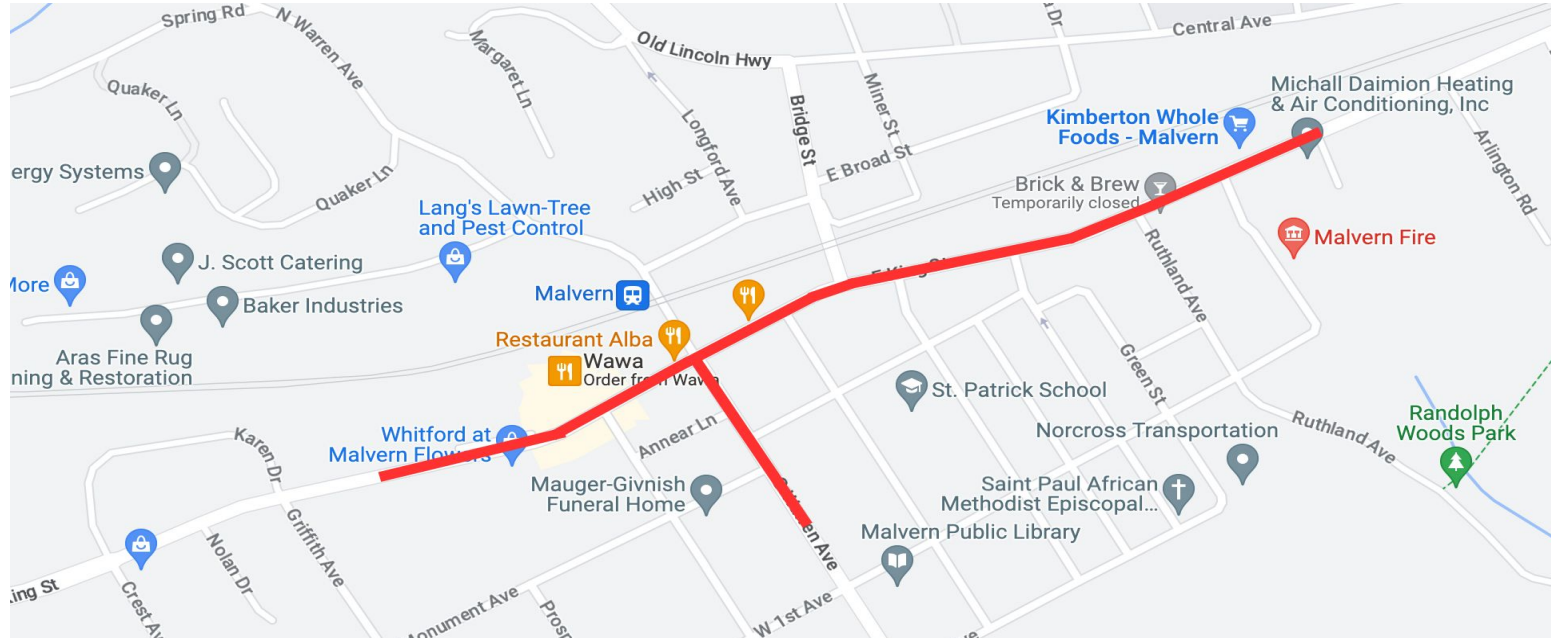
Mission:

Our mission is to lead the revitalization of Malvern's Main Street into a vibrant, thriving hub of community life. Through strategic collaboration with local businesses, residents, and the borough, we are dedicated to revitalizing the core of our town. By preserving our historical heritage and fostering a welcoming atmosphere, we aim to create a dynamic destination for commerce, culture, and connection that will inspire both residents and visitors to embrace the essence of Malvern.

Scope / Requirements

Boundaries of Main Street District:

- On King Street - 400 Block of East King St to 150 West King St



SURVEY RESULTS:

The business owners interviewed wish to transform King Street into a bustling destination with a **thriving commercial scene, improved infrastructure, and enhanced community engagement.**

Survey responses emphasize the desire for King Street to evolve into a dynamic and inviting hub that offers a diverse range of businesses and experiences while addressing **challenges related to parking, communication, and infrastructure.**

1. **Vision for King Street:** a family-friendly, vibrant, and walkable community with a thriving mix of shops, restaurants, bars, and attractions that cater to all ages. A destination atmosphere with regular events and activities that draw people to King Street.
2. **Desired Businesses:** The desired businesses include more restaurants, craft breweries, coffee shops, unique boutique shops, specialty stores like bookstores and gift shops, as well as entertainment options like escape rooms.
3. **Challenges Faced:** inadequate foot traffic, parking shortages, outdated zoning codes, excessive permits and bureaucratic obstacles, and poor communication during municipal projects.
4. **Services for Business Owners:** more streamlined communication and coordination with the borough, including a central point of contact or coordinator. They seek user-friendly marketing platforms and directories to promote their businesses and events.
5. **Municipal Improvements:** more parking options, improved street lighting, better sidewalk maintenance, enhanced signage, and the creation of public spaces or pocket parks.
6. **Target Audience:** a diverse range of customers, from families and young adults to seniors and collectors, both residents and visitors.

Malvern: where we are



Malvern: where we want to go

Our Recommendation

Short Term: The Task Force recommends creating a **non-profit economic development organization** overseen by a Board of Directors and managed by a Main Street Manager.

Long Term: DCED* Keystone Main Street designation

*PA Department of Community & Economic Development

Recommended Governance Model

Main Street Revitalization: Non-Profit with 8 to 12 Board Members*; composition includes:

- Sponsors from major employers such as Malvern Bank, Sheffields, Kimberton, Vanguard, Cubesmart and others
- MBPA Board Member
- Local businesses
- Property owners
- Resident(s)
- Additional seats for non-voting members: Malvern Borough/Willistown and East Whiteland Township
- Individuals that bring financial support

Expectations of the Board:

- **Hire a full time Main Street Manager**
 - Leads the execution of the committee recommendations including marketing, pursuing sponsorships, coordinating events
 - Develops and resides in visitor center on main street
 - Applies for grants
- **Achieve PA Main Street designation in two years gaining access to additional grants**

*Core group designated by task force - then executive board decides on further board members

Board Description

The Executive Board converts the program's vision and mission into clear goals, defines the organization's role in revitalizing main street using an approach that fits the neighborhood, and builds structure for the board and staff. The Board creates a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort through the cultivation of strong partnerships, community involvement, and resources across three major pillars:

- **Economic Vitality** - responsible for taking a proactive, collaborative approach to building and growing a diverse economic base through smart new investment, cultivating a robust ecosystem for small businesses, focusing on the unique assets of our community, and fostering equity and inclusion to create an environment to help build local wealth.
- **Design** - supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual elements of downtown while capitalizing on the unique assets that set the commercial district apart.
- **Promotion** - positions King Street as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases our community's unique characteristics, culture, history, and defining features.

Other Models Considered

The task force evaluated 3 model types in total, including the selected model. We reviewed existing community programs from Lititz, Kennett Square, Boyertown, Ambler, West Reading, Kutztown, Quakertown, West Chester, Phoenixville, etc.

Model Type	Example	Why this was not chosen
● Municipal Model	Phoenixville, PA	Don't want to rely on funding exclusively from government sources. Expands scope.
● Business Improvement District (BID)	West Chester, PA	Requires a strategic plan. Tax assessment requires approval by property owners. Could be future consideration for Malvern.
● Designated Main Street Program Model	Lansdowne, PA	Requires foundational initiative before application is submitted. This is a potential long term strategy for Malvern.

Recommended Top Strategies

Marketing Malvern

- Improve marketing with brochures, signage, and maps
- Develop a loyalty program to encourage shopping
- Refine the Malvern brand consistent with the mission
- Sponsor activities/events that draw in visitors

Bridge for Businesses

- Attract and retain new businesses
- Ensure new business align with vision for Main Street
- Establish Headquarters on Main Street

Reducing Roadblocks

- Streamline the onboarding process: regulations, permitting
- Examine current zoning and ordinances: parking, commercial/residential
- Improve communication

Downtown Design

- Redesign signage and wayfinding
- Facade and storefront improvements
- Streetscaping and amenities

King Street Headquarters

The Task Force recommends a physical space on King Street to serve as a multi-purpose location, which will drive visibility into the efforts to revitalize Main Street.

- Office space for Main Street Revitalization Manager
- Meeting space for prospective business owners
- Brochures, pamphlets, maps, history for residents and visitors

We believe this space will be an important part of the success of the program as it promotes transparency, communication and connection to the program.



Operating Budget - 3 years

Initial Operating Budget \$125k-135k first year

- Initial Funding
 - \$87,000 from ARPA
 - \$25,000 from Malvern Borough
 - Fundraising Goal
 - Board Goal
 - DCED Planning Grant
- Personnel: \$80,000 + benefits
 - Recruiting
 - Manager salary
 - Education & Training
- Marketing & Promotion: \$15,000-20,000
 - Promoting Malvern as a special, historic, family friendly destination
 - Website - "Discover Malvern"
 - Digital Marketing tools
 - Launching a signature Main Street event
- General Expenses: \$15,000
 - Rent for information center
 - Facilities fees / utilities
 - Start up 501(c)3
 - Other
- Finalize Roadmap / Consulting: \$15,000
 - Meetings & facilitation
 - Refine goals with MSM / board

Year	Funding Source	Amount	Expense	Amount	+/-
2024	Individual/Corporate donations	\$20,000	Roadmap expenses	\$30,000	
2024	ARPA grants	\$87,000	Governance and Infrastructure expenses	\$95,000	
2024	Borough Contribution	\$25,000			
2024	Main Street/Fundraising events	\$10,000			
2024	TOTAL	\$142,000	TOTAL	\$125,000	\$17,000
2025	Rollover Assets	\$17,000	Roadmap expenses	\$50,000	
2025	Individual/Corporate donations	\$50,000	Governance and Infrastructure expenses	\$97,850	
2025	Grant funding	\$40,000			
2025	Borough Contribution	\$25,000			
2025	Main Street/Fundraising events	\$30,000			
2025	TOTAL	\$162,000	TOTAL	\$147,850	\$14,150
2026	Rollover Assets	\$14,150	Roadmap expenses	\$50,000	
2026	Individual/Corporate donations	\$60,000	Governance and Infrastructure expenses	\$100,786	
2026	Grant funding	\$40,000			
2026	Borough Contribution	\$25,000			
2026	Main Street/Fundraising events	\$40,000			
2026	TOTAL	\$165,000	TOTAL	\$150,786	\$14,215

Expense Category	Expense	2024	2025	2026
Roadmap expenses (strategic initiatives)	Marketing Malvern	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Roadmap expenses (strategic initiatives)	Bridge for Businesses	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000
Roadmap expenses (strategic initiatives)	Reducing Roadblocks	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,000
Roadmap expenses (strategic initiatives)	Downtown Design	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,000
Roadmap expenses (strategic initiatives)	Consulting	\$15,000	\$0	\$0
Governance and Infrastructure expenses	Main Street Manager Salary & Benefits	\$80,000	\$82,400	\$84,872
Governance and Infrastructure expenses	Infrastructure	\$15,000	\$15,450	\$15,914
TOTAL		\$125,000	\$147,850	\$150,786

Next Steps

1. Borough Council approval to move forward with proposal
2. Establish the non-profit: requires Borough access to legal support
 - a. Appoint 4 Core Board Members (task force appoints)
 - b. Confirm Year 1 Budget and Borough funding request
3. Coordinate with Malvern Planning Commission and Malvern Historical Commission
 - a. Open communication with existing Borough initiatives that may concern the Main Street efforts

Attachments

Main Street Manager Job Description

[Word Attachment](#)

Projected Operating Budget

[Excel Attachment](#)

Fundraising ideas

- Exclusive Fundraising dinner
- Unique Festival anchored in town history
 - Root Beer Festival
- Landmark Naming Rights - annual process
- "Chester County Secret Tours" - fee for businesses to participate, people buy tickets (discount or gift)
- Malvern-themed items for sale

Appendix

Stakeholders

- Malvern Business Professionals Association (MBPA)
- Malvern Property Owners
- Malvern Business Owners
- Malvern Residents
- Other Local Residents
- Destination Visitors
- Borough Council

Malvern Buttery Case Study

Do we still want case studies on successful Main Street Businesses?

Business Overview

Part village bakery, part coffee shop, and part scratch kitchen, The Buttery is a place to get a great cappuccino, indulge in house-made pastries, and grab a delicious meal. More importantly, it's a warm and inviting place to gather and be with friends.

What Works Well

- Mission-driven
- “Craftsman approach”
- Community-driven
- Local suppliers
- Collaborative events
- Destination

Outcome

- Cult-following of loyal customers
- Strong word-of-mouth reputation
- Destination for residents & visitors
- Community favorite