

Adams County Affordable Housing Coalition

Strategic Plan

June 26, 2017

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Executive Summary

The Adams County Affordable Housing Task Force was formed by a coalition of five Adams County based nonprofits: Adams County Community Foundation, Adams County Housing Authority, Adams County United Way, Healthy Adams County, and South Central Community Action Programs, to address the ongoing issue of a severe shortage of affordable housing across Adams County. The Task Force represents a cross section of the community including government officials, nonprofit leaders, business leaders, higher education, and the community at large. The Coalition engaged CTY Consulting Group, LLC to develop a three year strategic plan to create focus on the initiatives with the most potential for payback.

Significant findings of the Task Force include:

- the lack of affordable housing impacts all socio-economic classes in Adams County
- it is the responsibility of everyone in the community to address the issue
- housing is paramount to economic development and will work best if it is a public/private partnership
- this issue is at its core a housing, wage, transportation issue across the entire County
- almost half (48%) of the working population leaves Adams County for work

In response to these findings, the Adams County Affordable Housing Initiative has three primary imperatives, (1) Increase the accessibility of affordable housing options by raising awareness of the issue, supporting initiatives to create affordable housing, and establishing mechanisms to create private public partnerships; (2) Increase transportation options by raising awareness and developing private public partnership opportunities; and (3) Increase the availability and variety of employment in Adams County by focusing on sustainable wage employment opportunities across the community.

Only through a coordinated, community-based effort will these issues be successfully addressed. The ultimate goal of the Adams County Affordable Housing Initiative is that all residents of Adams County will have opportunities to live in safe, affordable housing, find sustainable employment, and access viable transportation options.

Overview of the Planning Process

The planning process began in September 2016 with the Adams County Affordable Housing Task Force meeting to kick off the process. The objectives of the engagement, the proposed timeline with milestones, and individuals to be interviewed were identified. Interviews commenced in November 2016 and were conducted through January 2017. The following individuals were interviewed:

Scott Briggs, Knouse Foods	Ray D'Augustino, Lancaster Housing Prtnship
Lisa Duffy, Hanover Hospital	Chris Echterling, MD, WellSpan Health
Sara Edmiston, Adams County Libraries	Jenny Englerth, Family First Health
Max Felty, Gettysburg Tours	Robin Fitzpatrick, ACEDC
Yeimi Gagliardi, WellSpan Health	Harry Hartman, Gettysburg Times
Alex Hayes, Gettysburg Times	Craig Long, WellSpan Health
Bill Naugle, Cumberland Township	Jane North, Gettysburg College
John Perry, Esq, MidPenn Legal Services	Randy Phiel, President County Commissioner
Aleisa Reese, Knouse Foods	Emily Rice-Townsend, Rice Fruit Company
Nicole Sipe, Esq, MidPenn Legal Services	Dave Sites, Berkshire Hathaway
Mary Stevenson, Gettysburg CARES	Carrie Stuart, GACC
Ben Thomas, Jr, Cumberland Township	Rhodia Thomas, Esq, MidPenn Legal Services
Barbara Underwood, Cumberland Township	Jenn Vintigni, Intersection Church
Stan Wannop, New Oxford Borough Council	

The following focus groups were conducted:

Adams County School Superintendents	Gettysburg Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee
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Following interviews, a half day retreat was conducted with the Adams County Affordable Housing Task Force on March 10, 2017. The group discussed a variety of topics including, Mission, Vision, and Values, community awareness, private public partnerships, and the organizational structure moving forward. The Coalition met regularly to assess progress and make decisions as appropriate.

Mission Statement

The purpose of the mission statement is to express what the organization does day in and day out, its reason for being. The Adams County Affordable Housing Coalition has created the following Mission Statement:

The Adams County Affordable Housing Initiative is focused on coordinating resources and advocating for solutions to the most complex issues facing the residents of Adams County: safe, affordable housing, transportation, and workforce development.

Vision Statement

The purpose of the vision statement is to express what the organization aspires to be and/or accomplish, the vision has yet to be realized and can be thought of as the next horizon. The Adams County Affordable Housing Coalition has created the following Vision Statement:

All residents of Adams County will have opportunities to live in safe, affordable housing, find sustainable employment, and access viable transportation options.

Values Statement

The purpose of the values statement is to express and explain the culture of the organization, it is a way to ensure that future volunteers and staff are aligned with the values and know what to expect. The Adams County Affordable Housing Coalition has created the following Values Statement:

1. **Collaboration** – *to realize our vision, we value the unique assets and talents our partners and stakeholders bring to the table.*
2. **Mutual Respect** – *we appreciate the value of diverse opinions and perspectives and will always create a forum for everyone to have a voice.*
3. **Just & Inclusive** – *our efforts will focus on initiatives that will benefit the entire community, especially those most at-risk.*
4. **Action Oriented** – *our fact based, data driven approach allows us to be focused on making quantitative, measurable impact in our community by accomplishing what we set out to do.*
5. **Community Connectedness** – *we will constantly scan the community to ensure we understand changing needs and create venues to better understand those needs and develop solutions.*

Strategic Conclusions and Observations

The strategic conclusions and observations are the major themes that were identified throughout the planning process and used as a back drop to plan against. The following themes were identified:

1. Lack of affordable housing applies to all socio-economic classes in Adams County.
2. Lack of affordable housing does not appear to be a significant concern for those in the business community.

3. Need to develop an Initiative – the solution has to be local – and it is the responsibility of everyone to address the issue.
4. We are seeing more “modified homelessness” - people going from house to house.
5. Housing is paramount to economic development – has to be a public/private partnership.
6. People look for affordable housing, living wage jobs and good schools when deciding where to live – Adams County doesn’t offer all three.
7. Adams County is in the awareness raising stage when it comes to the lack of affordable housing and what it means for a community.
8. People in power in Adams County aren’t talking about the lack of affordable housing.
9. Low income housing is distributed in such a way that transportation becomes an issue when accessing healthy food and healthcare services.
10. Need to discuss as a systemic infrastructure issue, not any one person or group’s fault.
11. School boards need to understand the relationship between no industrial development – stagnant tax base – and the need to raise taxes.
12. Housing instability puts stress on people’s health and decreases a student’s ability to learn.
13. Development in Gettysburg Borough will need subsidies to be successful – need incentives to attract builders.
14. This is a housing/wage/transportation issue across the entire County.
15. 48% of the working population leaves Adams County for work.
16. Support for public transportation is not strong across the community.

Strategic Imperatives, Goals & Objectives

Strategic Imperative #1: Create a Sustainable Affordable Housing Initiative

To achieve a lasting impact, the work of the Adams County Affordable Housing Initiative will need to be active for years, not months. The Initiative will need to be established with a formal structure and dedicated volunteers from across the community. With the potential for a number of partnerships, initiatives, and relationships to manage, dedicated resources will need to be hired. To begin, we suggest funding be committed to support three years of administrative coordination.

Goal #1: Establish a Structure for the Adams County Affordable Housing Initiative

Objective #1

Recruit an entity to implement the strategic plan: to coordinate the initiatives, build relationships with partners, recruit members, and be the public face of the Adams County Affordable Housing Initiative.

Goal #2: Recruit 100+ People to be Members of the Initiative

Objective #2

Recruit at least 10 members of the business community per year for three years (30 total) to participate as members of the Initiative.

Objective #3

Recruit at least 10 members of the nonprofit community per year for three years (30 total) to participate as members of the Initiative.

Objective #4

Recruit at least 5 government officials per year for three years (15 total) to participate as members of the Initiative.

Objective #5

Recruit at least 8 representatives of the faith-based community per year for three years (25 total) to participate as members of the Initiative.

Objective #6

Recruit at least 8 representatives of the community at large per year for three years (25 total) to participate as members of the Initiative.

Strategic Imperative #2: Increase the Accessibility of Affordable Housing Options

The primary focus of the Adams County Affordable Housing Initiative is to increase the accessibility to affordable housing options throughout the County. To do this will require a number of parallel strategies that in certain cases will be managed by partner organizations. The need for awareness and the value of partnership are critical for any measurable progress to be made in this area.

Goal #3: Increase the Level of Community Awareness

Objective #7

Annually conduct an Adams County Affordable Housing Summit and invite the community to participate in education and workshops.

Objective #8

Develop an awareness campaign targeted to the business community.

Objective #9

Develop an awareness campaign targeted to government officials.

Objective #10

Develop an awareness campaign targeted to the general community.

Goal #4: Support Affordable Housing Initiatives Underway or Being Planned

Objective #11

On a regular basis advocate for affordable housing initiatives that are currently underway or being planned.

Objective #12

Advocate for organizations that support residents in responsible home ownership.

Goal #5: Establish Mechanisms to Encourage Private/Public Partnerships

Objective #13

Explore the feasibility of establishing a funding mechanism to allow investors to partner with the public sector to develop and own affordable housing units.

Objective #14

Explore the feasibility of establishing a funding mechanism to allow employers to develop and own affordable housing units.

Strategic Imperative #3: Increase Transportation Options

To help offset the cost of personal transportation, and thus increase the amount of household income available for housing, expanding the options available in public transportation throughout the County could have a significant impact. The current real estate market has put

housing options in the Gettysburg metro region beyond the financial reach of many Adams County residents. As such some residents have settled in other parts of Adams County. Others that work in Adams County have settled in adjacent counties. For residents to access services, employment, and shopping, personal transportation is required due to limited public transportation options.

Goal #6: Create Awareness of the Need for Expanded Public Transportation

Objective #15

Working with rabbittransit, create an awareness campaign targeted to employers explaining the benefits of public transportation and the process necessary to secure funding.

Objective #16

Working with rabbittransit, create an awareness campaign targeted to elected and appointed government officials explaining the benefits of public transportation and the process necessary to secure funding.

Objective #17

Working with rabbittransit, create an awareness campaign targeted to the community explaining the benefits of public transportation and the process necessary to secure funding.

Goal #7: Create Mechanisms to Support a Private/Public Partnership for Transportation Needs

Objective #18

Explore the feasibility of establishing a funding mechanism to allow investors to partner with the public sector to create and own transportation providers.

Objective #19

Vet and endorse as appropriate, private transportation companies that provide services at or below market rates.

Goal #8: Encourage and Promote Public Transportation in Adams County

Objective #20

Working with rabbittransit, develop a comprehensive public transportation plan for travel within Adams County.

Objective #21

Working with rabbittransit, develop a comprehensive public transportation plan for travel to and from surrounding counties (specifically York, Franklin, Cumberland, Frederick) to Adams County.

Strategic Imperative #4: Increase the Availability and Variety of Employment in Adams County

Adams County has two primary industries, tourism and agriculture. Both of these industries are low on the spectrum of compensation for workers. Other industrial growth is hampered by a lack of current infrastructure and the cost of adding infrastructure. As the population has increased, a perfect storm of low wages and high real estate demand and value has developed. Creating new opportunities for economic growth in Adams County will be critical to making progress in affordable housing.

Goal #9: Create Awareness and Encourage Advocacy for Sustainable Wage Employment

Objective #22

Working with the Adams County Economic Development Corporation and the Gettysburg Adams Chamber of Commerce develop messaging to members of the benefits of sustainable wage employment and encourage investment in these types of employment opportunities.

Objective #23

Working with Harrisburg Area Community College identify educational opportunities for apprenticeships and encourage participation to help fill needed gaps in industries in counties surrounding Adams.

Objective #24

Coordinate awareness and advocacy activities with the Gettysburg Adams Chamber of Commerce, Adams County Economic Development Corporation, Adams County, and Destination Gettysburg to attract and retain employers offering sustainable wage employment opportunities.