



The County of Berks is excited to unveil our first economic development action plan, IMAGINE Berks. Our team spent several months engaging with stakeholders, community members and businesses to create an achievable plan with measurable outcomes.

Together, we want to IMAGINE Berks County as a place where our diverse assets are recognized, uplifted and celebrated to ensure economic prosperity for all.

The 5-year plan is organized into six economic development focus areas, which are defined by goals, strategies and desired outcomes.



## Business & Industry Growth

**Goal:** Encourage industrial and commercial redevelopment

- Invest in site development where conditions call for a public role
- Support growth in industries that offer opportunity jobs
- Support agricultural industry growth



## Small Business & Entrepreneurship

**Goal:** Support small businesses and encourage entrepreneurship to enable the creation of high-growth ventures, main street amenities, and wealth-building for residents.

- Increase government and school district spending with local businesses
- Support small business and entrepreneurial ecosystem resource mapping and strategic plan efforts that are underway
- Improve access to financial resources and market access for businesses
- Support small businesses working to scale their operations



## Talent & Economic Mobility

**Goal:** Invest in Berks County's greatest asset - its people - by supporting structures to connect residents to opportunity jobs so that they may more fully contribute to and benefit from the Berks County economy.

- Retain and add workers to Berks County, prioritizing retention and support for the unemployed and underemployed
- Invest in and support workforce readiness and upskilling initiatives
- Support businesses in recruiting talent for immediate hiring, retaining employees, and reducing the number of labor exits
- Match disconnected youth and Latino talent with opportunity jobs and pathways to prosperity.



## Placemaking

**Goal:** Invest in and highlight community assets that provide access to a variety of arts, culture, greenspace, and recreation opportunities for all residents and future residents.

- Fund enhancements to new and existing public spaces located across the county, prioritizing greenspace and inclusive gathering spaces.
- Support main street and commercial district revitalization programs
- Continue investment in the trail systems
- Develop a cohesive and collaborative Berks County message, along with shared marketing resources.



## Infrastructure & Land Use

**Goal:** Support land development that increases the tax base in Berks County

- Identify growth corridors and communities for development opportunities
- Examine existing and potential public transit and ensure it aligns with business and industry growth
- Support passenger rail expansion
- Support growth and positioning of the Reading Regional Airport as a critical economic development asset



## Housing

**Goal:** Address the county's needs for new housing and redeveloped housing that is accessible and attainable.

- Assess and address the mismatch between housing stock and housing demand, including age, price point, type, and location
- Promote adaptive reuse and redevelopment of obsolete commercial and industrial properties.

Learn more at: [www.imagineberks.org](http://www.imagineberks.org)

