

Commercial Landscapes Planning Series

Executive Summary

2017



How do we get there?

The Chester County Planning Commission and the Commercial Landscapes Taskforce developed key strategies and recommendations to revitalize our commercial landscapes within the framework of organizational, regulatory, and physical perspectives:

Organizational Approach

- Build capacity, begin public outreach and remove barriers
- Form supportive organizations, such as BIDs to champion
- Create inventories of potential sites to develop or redevelop
- Have a clear vision and master plan
- Know the steps, tools and programs

Regulatory Guidance

- Update ordinances with desired uses and flexible standards
- Create an “expedited process” for targeted areas
- Reduce parking standards and/or ratios
- Use model ordinances and planning tools to assist with implementation

Physical Improvements

- Create a feeling of place designed at the human scale
- Improve transportation options and walkability on popular corridors and targeted areas
- Incentivize and allow for temporary or pop-up uses
- Enhance existing infrastructure to better serve larger community



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Our message to you

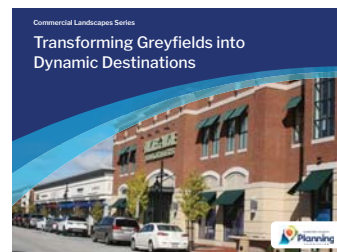
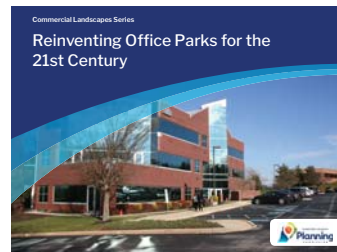
This Planning Series highlights the importance of significant commercial areas in Chester County and realistic strategies, recommendations and best practices for the following:

- [Reinventing Office Parks for the 21st Century](#) ▶
- [Building Communities with Transit Oriented Development](#) ▶
- [Stimulating Community Revitalization Through Brownfields](#) ▶
- [Transforming Greyfields into Dynamic Destinations](#) ▶

The goal is to offer guidance to municipalities, developers, real estate professionals, and property owners about how to maximize the value of these commercial areas and to better achieve municipal and county goals as identified in *Landscapes2*, the County's Comprehensive Plan and *VISTA 2025*, the County's Economic Development Strategy.

Each document provides information on the following:

- Benefits and challenges
- Existing conditions and market analyses
- Vision for each area
- Recommendations to achieve vision



What are the benefits?

Improving our underutilized and vacant commercial properties can provide a variety of benefits to both the landowner and the municipality, while responding to changing market conditions:

- **Maximize value.** Repurposing these properties allows the owner to improve value and return on their investments. These improvements will be in response to a changing retail market in which businesses are competing with internet sales.
- **Increase tax base.** Improved and reused properties can provide increased property tax revenue to municipalities. These uses will generate revenue while posing limited demands on services for both the municipality and the school district.
- **Use existing infrastructure.** Reuse of commercial properties takes advantage of existing utilities and infrastructure, reducing the demand for extension into green field areas of the county.
- **Address lifestyle changes.** The introduction of a mix of office, commercial and housing will be responsive to changing lifestyles, particularly with the millennial generation who prefers options to being auto-dependent.
- **Improve public safety.** Reducing the number of vacant and underutilized properties will improve overall public safety and the quality of life in our communities.



Office park

Chester County office parks will remain viable and competitive in the future with diverse businesses that attract talented and creative workers. These office parks will remain employment centers, but will be able to react to market forces with adaptations in land uses, additional amenities, and transportation options to meet the evolving needs of employers and workers.



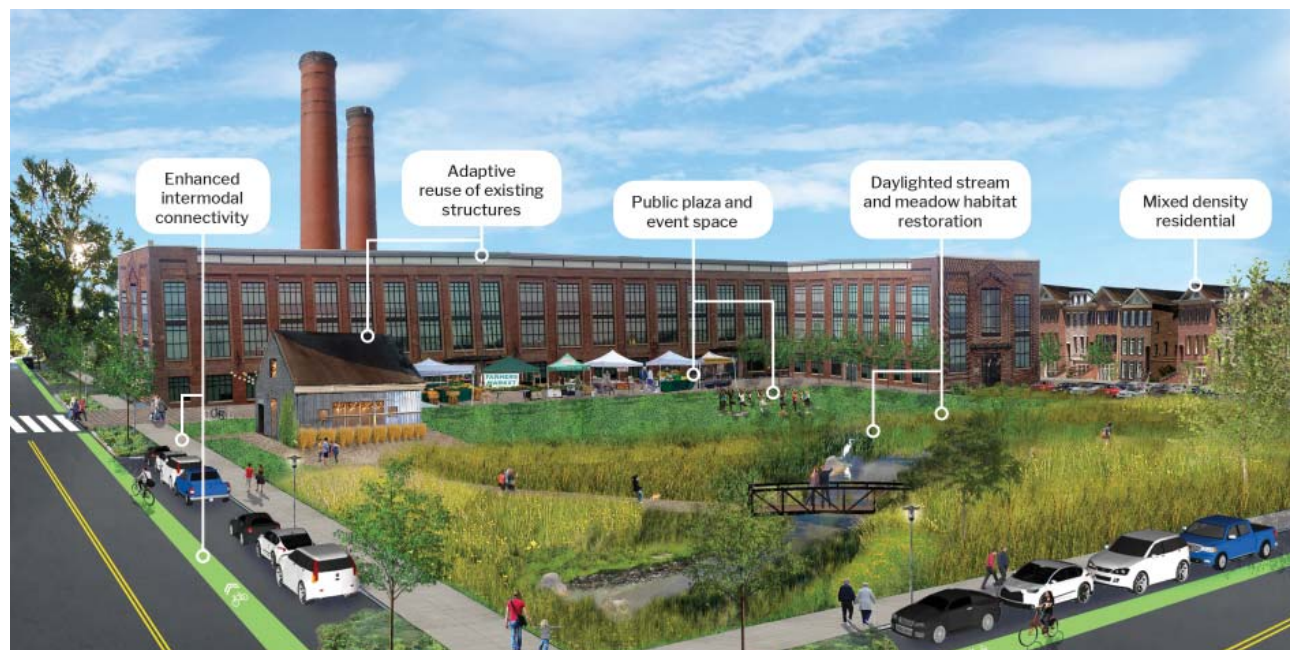
Transit Oriented Development

Development near transportation hubs will provide a mixture of land uses, create a sense of place, offer alternative living and working options, and reduce environmental impacts by improving walking, bicycling, and transit options. Transit Oriented Development will encourage investment in the county's growth areas and provide an attractive and easily-accessible destination for Chester County residents, businesses, and visitors.



Brownfields

Brownfields in Chester County will be transformed into environmentally-safe redevelopment areas that act as an economic development catalyst for the community's future vision. Streamlined processes will implement brownfield redevelopment to encourage the reuse of existing infrastructure, create a sense of place, and enhance the quality of life for residents.



Greyfields

Chester County retail areas will maintain their place as centers of commercial activity in our communities while adjusting to changes and new realities in the commercial real estate market. Underutilized or aging retail areas will revitalize by including a greater mixture of uses, creating more green space, and creating a 'third place' for residents to gather outside of the home or office environment.

