

For Immediate Release

County of Berks Press Release

Planning process for new economic development plan, IMAGINE Berks, kicks off

Reading, PA— 8/30/2021 — The Berks County

Commissioners are pleased to announce the launch of the planning process for IMAGINE Berks, a new economic development strategic action plan for Berks County.



This 8-month process will include listening tours, community-driven discussions and data to craft a plan that will then guide the County’s economic development efforts for the next five years. Pamela Shupp Menet, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and Director of Economic Development, will serve as the County’s project manager and oversee the IMAGINE Berks process with the following project team: Ken Pick, Berks County Redevelopment Authority; David Hunter and Ashley Showers, Berks County Planning Commission; Jeremy Zaborowski, Berks County Industrial Development Authority and Derek Harris, Economic Development Coordinator for the County of Berks.

The County has hired Fourth Economy, an industry-leading national economic and community development consulting firm, to manage the project. Their expertise and insights, along with community feedback gathered throughout the County, will help create a plan that is inclusive, innovative and future-focused. An advisory committee made up of community leaders representing a diverse mix of businesses and demographics will also help steer the project.

“Effective economic development doesn’t happen by chance,” Commissioner Christian Y. Leinbach said. “It takes a deliberative process that includes key private sector stakeholders that reflect our diverse community. This approach results in a grassroots economic development strategy that highlights the values and strengths of Berks County.”

The IMAGINE Berks planning process will result in the development of a five-year action plan. The plan will focus on challenges and opportunities such as, encouraging sustainable land development, suggesting possible local regulatory and tax policies, and reviewing Berks' market positioning to support our existing businesses, new companies, and entrepreneurship, all with an eye to fostering a strong and resilient Berks County economy.

"This plan will help us evaluate and guide our actions and resources so that we collectively think about our economic health and building on our unique strengths and assets." Shupp Menet said. "We want our entire community to get involved so that we can fully imagine Berks County's future."

Fourth Economy will be giving a kickoff presentation for IMAGINE Berks to the County Commissioners during the Berks County Operations Meeting on Tuesday, August 31 at 9:30 a.m. The meeting will be livestreamed through Microsoft Teams. Connection information can be found on the County's [Online Public Meetings Page](#). The community can also learn more about IMAGINE Berks, take a survey and sign up for alerts at www.imagineberks.org.

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