

---

*MESSAGE FROM THE ARDMORE INITIATIVE BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*

---

For the past 30 years, The Ardmore Initiative worked diligently to deliver improvements and economic vitality to the Ardmore Business District. During streetscape revitalization projects, major construction projects, and the Covid-19 pandemic, we have:

- maintained an attractive streetscape,
- restored the district's historic facades by providing grants,
- created new jobs for low to moderate income households through our business assistance grants, and
- promoted Ardmore as a destination for residents and visitors alike.

Our efforts around economic vitality have put more feet on the street in Ardmore and have the added benefit of increasing your property's value due to our historically low vacancy rate.

We are proud of all we have accomplished and excited about our plans for the future of Ardmore. We appreciate your ongoing support as we bring our best efforts to improving Ardmore as a destination for all.

  
RYAN TOMKINSON  
Board Chair

  
NANCY SCARLATO  
Executive Director



---

*A PRESENTATION OF THE PLAN AND BUDGET FOR THE ARDMORE INITIATIVE*

---

The Ardmore Initiative's mission is to manage the Business Improvement District in Ardmore, PA, to improve the business mix, to foster the preservation and development of downtown's historic buildings, be an advocate for business and property owners, promote the downtown for the benefit of all Ardmore residents, and to partner with the Township of Lower Merion and area community organizations. Our vision for Downtown Ardmore is to create a welcoming, walkable, and inclusive downtown that offers a vibrant business mix, including family-friendly independent and national retail stores and service businesses. Our specialty food shops and restaurants build on our already robust reputation as a regional dining destination. Downtown will serve as a vital destination for all Ardmore residents and visitors, with shops and eateries to meet every budget. Our yearlong calendar of well-regarded and highly anticipated special events will make memories for generations of Lower Merion residents and shoppers.

---

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ARDMORE INITIATIVE

---

The Ardmore Initiative is a business district authority responsible for economic development, advocacy, business recruitment and retention, marketing and promotions, streetscape amenities, and oversight of façade improvement programs within Ardmore's central business district.

The Ardmore Initiative began as the Ardmore Main Street program in 1988 and was incorporated as a municipal business district authority (the Ardmore Business District Authority) by the Township of Lower Merion in 1993. The statutory authority for the BID Authority is the Municipal Authorities Act of 1945, approved May 2, 1945, P.L. 382, as amended by Act 22 of 2001, and the Neighborhood Improvement District Act, approved December 20, 2000, P.L. 949, No.130. The approval contained a sunset provision requiring periodic reauthorization, and The Ardmore Initiative was renewed in 1998, 2003, 2008, and in 2013 for a period of 10 years.

The Ardmore Initiative is a nationally accredited Main Street Program and successfully concluded a Keystone Communities Main Street Program.

**ORGANIZATION:** The Ardmore Initiative is governed by a 9-to-15 member Board of Directors appointed by the Lower Merion Township Board of Commissioners from a slate provided by The Ardmore Initiative Board. The Board is comprised of local property and business owners, residents, professionals, and representatives from Lower Merion Township. The Municipal Authorities Act requires that a majority of Board members be residents of Lower Merion Township.

The Ardmore Initiative works closely with Lower Merion Township to coordinate and maximize the provision of services. All services provided by The Ardmore Initiative are in addition to, and not in substitution of, those provided by the Township.

---

## DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

---

The Ardmore Initiative district boundaries include a one-mile stretch of Lancaster Avenue extending from Wyoming Avenue and 333 West Lancaster Avenue on the western end to 233 East Lancaster and 218 East Lancaster Avenue on the eastern end. The northern boundary follows the railroad tracks. The southern boundary proceeds along Rittenhouse Place up to and including 30 East Athens Avenue, along Cricket Avenue up to 123 Cricket Avenue, the west side of Ardmore Avenue from Lancaster Avenue to 26 Ardmore Avenue, and Greenfield Avenue to 59 Greenfield Avenue.



---

## NATIONAL MAIN STREET FOUR-POINT APPROACH

---

The Ardmore Initiative follows the National Main Street Four Point approach to economic revitalization. This approach is a comprehensive strategy that is tailored to meet local needs and opportunities. Focusing on these four areas helps to create a balanced downtown and combine to address all the commercial district's needs.

In 2022, Lower Merion Township contracted a consultant to create an Ardmore Master Plan which will articulate a community vision for the Ardmore commercial areas. *The italicized goals included in this plan highlight areas where The Ardmore Initiative is listed in the implementation of the Ardmore Master Plan.*



---

### *1. Economic Vitality*

---

Over the past 30 years, The Ardmore Initiative has strategically fashioned the Ardmore Business District into a destination that is welcoming and inclusive to businesses and visitors alike. Contributing to this success are the streetscape improvements, marketing and events promotions, and business recruitment and retention efforts.

Since 1993, almost 200 new businesses have opened in Ardmore. Moreover in 2020 and 2021, during the pandemic, a total of 26 businesses opened in the district while only 7 closed for a net gain of 19 businesses. Efforts focused around economic vitality include The Ardmore Initiative's business recruitment and retention efforts. A business recruitment plan was created in 2018 as part of our strategic plan. Using psychographics and market analysis, this plan offered three strategies for recruiting business categories deemed to be successful in Ardmore and was shared with commercial realtors during quarterly Broker Breakfasts.

The Ardmore Initiative has awarded over \$230,000 of Community Development Block Grants through its Business Assistance grants for job creation. In 2021 and 2022 these grants were awarded for job retention.

The Ardmore Initiative supports businesses in a number of ways including serving as a liaison between businesses and PECO, Aqua, and SEPTA during infrastructure projects as well as with developers during large scale construction projects. The Ardmore Initiative created a micro-grant program and awarded over \$20,000 to businesses impacted by these projects. The Ardmore Initiative also works closely with Lower Merion Parking Services to supply printed parking maps for distribution to customers, determine length of parking time in various locations and provide free parking for customers during the holiday season.

The Ardmore Initiative has issued three rounds of the Downtown Dollars gift card program which put over \$100,000 back into the business district. The card, which is only accepted at participating businesses, supports The Ardmore Initiative's Shop Local strategies.

#### **Goals for 2024-2033:**

- *Explore feasible parking solutions for employees, customers and residents of downtown Ardmore*
- *Refine business recruitment strategy through strategic planning process*
- *Attract desirable businesses using CDBG job creation grants*
- *Support and retain existing businesses through marketing activities and educational opportunities*
- *Collaborate with Lower Merion Township on potential zoning changes to improve business mix*

---

## 2. Design

---

An attractive streetscape encourages pedestrian traffic which benefits district businesses. The Ardmore Initiative has been a champion of revitalizing the downtown district through streetscape amenities for the past 30 years. In addition, The Ardmore Initiative funds sidewalk cleaning services for the business district. Cleaning and graffiti/sticker removal takes place early in the morning five to six days a week all year and every year resulting in almost 50,000 hours of cleaning time. Façade improvement grants which aid in economic revitalization also contribute significantly to the beautification of the historic downtown streetscape. Over 85 lighted A's and snowflakes have been purchased, installed, and maintained. Bike racks and benches have also been added to the downtown through fundraising and grant programs.

### **Goals for 2024–2033:**

- *Provide and maintain with Lower Merion Township streetscape amenities and sidewalks to promote a pedestrian-friendly, walkable downtown including benches, planters, seasonal décor, and pedestrian level lighting throughout the district*
- Create a public art policy with the goal of increasing beautification efforts with public art, murals, and appealing landscape architecture
- Work with township, county, and state governments to secure available grant dollars for business and property owners revitalizing properties
- Assist property and business owners with façade improvement grant applications and guide them through the Historic Architectural Review Board approval process
- Educate property and business owners and encourage use of energy-efficient, sustainable building materials and assist with grant opportunities as applicable

---

## 3. Promotion

---

The Ardmore Initiative offers in-district businesses enhanced marketing and promotional services including press, digital marketing support, grand opening support, event support, and consulting. The Ardmore Initiative communicates regularly with businesses throughout the year and its redesigned website provides easier access to information about events and promotions.

"Destination Ardmore" was created as a branding tool to increase the ability to promote Ardmore as a destination. A professional public relations firm was retained in 2017 in advance of the major One Ardmore construction project to spread the word that Ardmore was still open for business despite the closure of a large parking lot. The Ardmore Business District landed significant press including two "Best of Philly" awards in 2018. Public Relations Roundtables were held quarterly to educate and support merchants.

Events are another means of supporting downtown businesses while attracting residents and visitors to Ardmore. Our most popular events are Ardmore Restaurant Week and Fall for Ardmore/Ardmore Oktoberfest.

During 2020–2021, The Ardmore Initiative sponsored several promotions and events designed to support struggling businesses, including "Rally for Ardmore Restaurants and Retail" and "Pop-up Picnic in the Plaza."

The popular Downtown Dollars gift card, accepted only at participating Ardmore merchants, has had three releases. Downtown Dollars garnered The Ardmore Initiative a 2014 Townie Award from the PA Downtown Center, in recognition of its creation and implementation of a program that exemplifies the goals of PDC's community revitalization mission. In 2022, The Ardmore Initiative promoted a third round of Downtown Dollars in time for holiday shopping.

### **Goals for 2024–2033:**

- Expand outreach to community and businesses through social media marketing
- *Coordinate with Ardmore Business Association and Suburban Square to enhance marketing efforts*
- Produce and support events that showcase district businesses and highlight Ardmore as a destination
- Expand and upgrade Downtown Dollars local gift card program
- Explore feasibility of a farmer's market to provide additional revenue stream and engage local farming/growing initiatives

---

## 4. Organization

---

The Ardmore Initiative maintains several national and local memberships and accreditations designed to bring fresh ideas and impactful programs to Ardmore. The Ardmore Initiative regularly commits to strategic planning to ensure that its direction is appropriate and specifically targeted to business district stakeholders. The next strategic plan will create a vision for 2024–2029. The Ardmore Initiative aligns itself with the National Main Street Organization and PA Downtown Center in furtherance of its organizational objectives.

The creation of the companion organization, Ardmore Community Development Fund, which is a 501(c)3 non-profit, increases The Ardmore Initiative's access to grant funding and donors. The Ardmore Initiative regularly seeks grant funding to finance its organizational goals and endeavors to expand its operations without increasing the rate that stakeholders are billed. The organization has a healthy assessment collection rate of 95% and has recently streamlined the billing process and added an online payment option. The Ardmore Initiative has a productive relationship with Lower Merion Township serving as the liaison for the businesses within the district and Township officials.

The Board of Directors is a diverse mix of business owners and residents who use their personal connections, professional expertise and volunteer time to further the mission of the organization. The Board and staff sustain relationships with other Business Improvement District managers, are active participants in PA Downtown Center trainings and attend professional conferences for the purposes of acquiring best practices in managing business districts. The annual financial audit also serves as a tool to evaluate the overall health of the organization.

### **Goals for 2024–2033:**

- *Partner with Lower Merion Township on implementation of its Master Plan for Ardmore commercial areas*
- Maintain existing and develop new partnerships for the betterment of the commercial district
- Diversify revenue sources for expanded program funding and administration
- Advocate for business and property owners
- Seek qualified Board and committee members to advance The Ardmore Initiative's mission

---

## GOALS FOR 2023–2024

---

The Ardmore Initiative has a 30-year history of working with businesses, residents and Lower Merion Township for the betterment of Downtown Ardmore. The goals for the next 10 years are a high level overview of how the organization will achieve its mission.

### **Specific plans for 2024 are listed below:**

- Create a 2024–2029 Strategic Plan to identify future directions for The Ardmore Initiative funded by PA DCED grant
- *Work with Lower Merion Township on implementation of Ardmore Master Plan*
- Award up to \$75,000 in business assistance grants
- Brand and highlight the historic district by installing new Ardmore "A" lights funded by a Commonwealth Finance Authority Local Share Account grant.
- Work with Lower Merion Township to determine the plan for greening Schauffele Plaza
- Spearhead activities celebrating Ardmore's 150th anniversary
- Rebuild a strong base of community volunteers
- Expand the "Windows into History" poster program into additional locations
- Expand the AI Board of Directors to 15 members
- Explore opportunities to co-brand an event with Suburban Square

## TEN-YEAR BUDGET

The Ardmore Initiative's primary source of funding, and primary source of funding for the renewal term, is an assessment levied on all properties in the district. This assessment is based upon a percentage of assessed value of each property, as determined by the Montgomery County Board of Assessments. Currently, the total annual assessment on all properties is \$278,437. The median annual assessment for properties in the district is \$526. The proposed assessment rate for 2024 is 1.99 mills or 0.19928% of total assessed value. The proposed rate includes an increase of 6% over 2023. The Ardmore Initiative has not increased millage since 2016.

The Ardmore Initiative proposes to base future assessments during the renewal on budget needs, subject to approval by The Ardmore Initiative Board of Directors. Under this proposal, the rate of assessment may not be increased by more than 3% in any year. Assessments are billed and payable on an annual basis. In addition, grants and fundraising contribute approximately \$75,000 to total revenue.

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
<b>INCOME</b>										
CCDBG Business Assistance Grants (7)	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Assessment Revenue (2)	\$176,750	\$200,143	\$208,786	\$218,786	\$228,991	\$239,288	\$249,680	\$259,263	\$269,037	\$278,437
Special Assessments - Late Fee (3)	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,400
Interest Income (4)	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$211	\$219	\$230	\$237	\$245	\$256	\$268
Fundraising Events and Sponsors (5)	\$22,000	\$23,000	\$24,000	\$25,000	\$26,000	\$27,000	\$28,000	\$29,000	\$30,000	\$31,000
Fee for Service (6)	\$5,000	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Contribution LMT (1)	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Reimbursed Program Expense (8)	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$239,750</b>	<b>\$268,443</b>	<b>\$277,986</b>	<b>\$291,986</b>	<b>\$303,191</b>	<b>\$314,528</b>	<b>\$326,180</b>	<b>\$337,263</b>	<b>\$347,737</b>	<b>\$358,837</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>										
Business Support and Advocacy (9)	\$107,200	\$115,786	\$124,786	\$137,842	\$151,188	\$164,819	\$178,715	\$192,285	\$206,111	\$220,222
Economic Development & Marketing (10)	\$29,217	\$32,786	\$36,819	\$41,286	\$46,182	\$51,496	\$57,260	\$63,488	\$69,187	\$75,375
Fundraising & Special Events (11)	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$10,000	\$11,000	\$12,000	\$13,000	\$14,000	\$15,000	\$16,000	\$17,000
General & Operating Expenses (12)	\$66,707	\$65,407	\$67,210	\$69,338	\$71,679	\$74,230	\$76,987	\$79,959	\$83,155	\$86,587
Grants Awarded (13)	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Snowscape (14)	\$17,200	\$18,000	\$19,240	\$21,411	\$23,889	\$26,527	\$29,315	\$32,258	\$35,365	\$38,644
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$239,750</b>	<b>\$268,443</b>	<b>\$277,986</b>	<b>\$291,986</b>	<b>\$303,191</b>	<b>\$314,528</b>	<b>\$326,180</b>	<b>\$337,263</b>	<b>\$347,737</b>	<b>\$358,837</b>

### Notes on Budget:

- (1) This amount is both shown as income in the form of the grant but is disbursed as an expense in the Grants Awarded expense as shown below.
- (2) Based on current assessments, projected annual millage rate increases as well as periodic assessment increases. Assumes Piazza project is complete and operational in 2027.
- (3) Assessment payments not received by July 15 are subject to a 6% late fee.
- (4) Interest earned on bank account deposits.
- (5) Based on fundraising for events, associated sponsorships and implementation of an ongoing fundraising campaign.
- (6) Event vendors from outside of the business district are charged a fee to participate.
- (7) The Ardmore Initiative applies for and receives a grant from Lower Merion Township which goes toward operational expenses.
- (8) The Ardmore Initiative can apply to the township to match small capital improvement projects.
- (9) Staff salaries and payroll taxes.
- (10) Includes marketing and advertising, meeting expenses, copyprinting costs, marketing director fee, and website maintenance. Once the Piazza assessment is recognized, the budget will have revenue it can deploy into future economic initiatives. This is the reason for the increase in 2027.
- (11) Costs associated with annual fundraising events. Specifically, this is for Fall for Ardmore and Restaurant Week presently, but as events evolve will include other events as well.
- (12) These include office expenses, training, rent, insurance, utilities, accounting, auditing and other operating expenses.
- (13) As indicated in note #1 above, this is the associated disbursement of the grants.
- (14) These include beautification programs, utilities associated with the lighted "X" 's and for the snowflakes as well as cleaning and maintenance contracts for the sidewalks and plantings.

---

## *PROCEDURE*

---

A public hearing on The Ardmore Initiative's reauthorization request will be held on July 11, 2023 at 6pm in the Board Room of the Lower Merion Township Administration building, located at 75 E. Lancaster Ave. in Ardmore, PA 19003. All interested persons are invited to attend and to comment on the plan.

To object to the reauthorization plan, legal owner(s) of a taxable property in the Ardmore Business District, must, for each separate property owned, submit a signed, written objection to both the Township Manager of Lower Merion Township, (75 E. Lancaster Ave., Ardmore, PA, 19003) and The Ardmore Initiative (56 E. Lancaster Ave., Ardmore, PA 19003). The notice must contain the address of the property, the parcel number, and a written statement that the property owner(s) wish to cast a vote against the plan. If a property is owned by more than one person, all owners must sign. If owned by a partnership or by a corporate entity, the objection must be signed by all of the partners or members, or include an appropriate resolution indicating approval of the objection on behalf of the entity. Photocopies, faxes or emails are not acceptable. Objections must be received no later than 45 days after the public hearing.

---

---

## *NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING*

---

Any interested party is invited to attend a public hearing regarding our reauthorization.

July 11, 2023  
6pm  
Board Room

Lower Merion Township  
Administration Building  
75 E. Lancaster Avenue  
Ardmore, PA

