



## **FAQ: YCEA and Downtown Inc Announce Strategic Affiliation**

### ***What is a strategic affiliation?***

Plenty of organizations call for collaboration, but the York County Economic Alliance and Downtown Inc are walking the walk. This formal partnership effectively combines the resources of two of York County's most dynamic economic development organizations. Our goal is to bring greater prosperity to all of York County, including Downtown York, by building both organizations' capacity through a strategic affiliation.

### ***Is this a merger?***

No. In a merger, one or more identities are lost. In this strategic affiliation, Downtown Inc will keep its identity, logo, brand and its commitment to serving Downtown York. The same is true for YCEA. There is no intention to change any of the successful programming or services by either organization. Rather, the affiliation expands the capacity of both organizations. The York City Government will continue to appoint directors to the York Business Improvement District Authority, which will continue to administer BID funds and advise on downtown development activities.

### ***Why is this affiliation happening now?***

Downtown Inc and the York County Economic Alliance have considered the impact of increased collaboration for many years, and the current climate in York County lends itself to this affiliation. Initiatives such as the Brand York Project and opportunities such as the Codorus Creek restoration project have fostered stronger partnerships and comradery between the two organizations, and both want to lead in building a more connected county and city. Further, YCEA President and CEO Kevin Schreiber and Downtown Inc CEO Silas Chamberlin were both tasked with finding ways to work together strategically when hired. Both have had time to survey their organizations, and the time is ripe for action.

### ***What is the benefit to YCEA as an organization?***

YCEA is recognized as York County's expert on economic development, which is largely impacted by quality of place. That quality of place is driven by the success of Main Street programs, which are lined with small businesses. Downtown Inc is the foremost Main Street expert in York County, and this alignment will allow YCEA to strengthen small communities and small businesses. Vertically integrating these two organizations, both of which are charged with driving economic development, and bringing the Main Street experts in house will result in unified success.

### ***What is the benefit to Downtown Inc as an organization?***

This affiliation adds substantial tools to Downtown Inc's toolbox, including marketing and graphic design support, and expertise around economic development and project financings. These new tools will increase the impact of our work and add *substantial value* for our many stakeholders, including BID property owners, Downtown York merchants, individual donors, and community stakeholders. The Downtown Inc team will expand to include a Main Street Manager position, allowing Downtown Inc to maintain a focus on promotions, business recruitment and

retention, public safety and public space improvements, even as the organization begins to coordinate high-level economic development activities.

***What is the benefit to YCEA members?***

-A successful York County needs a successful City of York. The downtown is a driving economic engine where many YCEA members are located, draw their workforce, and where that workforce lives and plays. It has been proven that a vibrant city attracts a talented workforce. It is in the York County business community's best interest to have a thriving downtown.

By aligning with the Main Street experts, the YCEA can replicate that success throughout the county. We've heard from our municipal members and small businesses in Spring Grove, Delta, Dillsburg and elsewhere that this is a need. In Hanover, we launched the Main Street Hanover program which has grown to become a supportive driver of the business community.

***Does this mean YCEA will focus only on the City?***

In recent years, the YCEA has assisted with the creation of Main Street Hanover, as well as assisted with financing and project development for Legacy Athletic in Hanover, Johnson Controls in Hopewell Township, Harley-Davidson in Springettsbury Township, Fairview Crossings in Northern York County, and Wyndridge Farm in Dallastown. This partnership will allow for more county-wide touchpoints of small community, and great impact.

***I'm a member of the YCEA. Will my financial investment subsidize benefits for Downtown York businesses that are not members of the York County Economic Alliance?***

No. Funds given to YCEA will continue to support YCEA programs and initiatives.

***Will this dilute Downtown Inc's attention to Downtown York?***

No. Quite to the contrary, this affiliation expands our capacity, enhances our resources and brings more attention and focus. Current Downtown Inc CEO Silas Chamberlin will assume a more strategic role to ensure downtown initiatives are linked with economic development tools at the county levels. At the same time, the creation of a new Main Street Manager position will allow Downtown Inc to maintain, and even increase, its energy and focus on downtown issues.

***Does this pull Downtown Inc's focus away from property owners who pay the Business Improvement District assessment?***

No. We're committed to the geography that we serve. The resources allocated to Downtown York, via the BID Assessment or other allocations, will remain with Downtown Inc. The YCEA is committed to isolating those allocations and keeping resources intended for Downtown York dedicated to Downtown York. In short, the money invested from the BID will stay in the BID.

***Will donations made to Downtown Inc stay with Downtown Inc?***

Yes. All donations made to Downtown Inc will be restricted for use within Downtown York. That applies to our Business Memberships, our Friends program and any other donations made to Downtown Inc.

***If I own a Downtown York business, do I need to become a member of the York County Economic Alliance to continue to receive Downtown Inc's services?***

No. All businesses located within the Business Improvement District will receive the same services from Downtown Inc as they currently do. It is our hope that those services will improve and expand as this affiliation takes effect.

***Will Downtown Inc maintain its presence in Downtown York?***

Yes. Downtown Inc will always have a street-level and easily accessible office space within Downtown York. We believe it is important to remain available to all our constituencies.

***Will Downtown Inc have representation on the York County Economic Alliance Board of Directors?***

Yes, Downtown Inc will have two seats on the York County Economic Alliance Board.

***Will Downtown Inc events like First Friday, Go Green in the City or the Sweetest Pint change?***

No. Downtown Inc will continue to manage First Friday, Go Green in the City, Sweetest Pint and the rest of the events you have come to love. However, we expect the increased capacity gained through the affiliation will help us make these events even better.

***Will Downtown Inc continue to manage the new Downtown York tourism brand?***

Yes. Downtown Inc will remain as brand manager for the new Downtown York tourism brand.

***Will Downtown Inc staff be employees of the York County Economic Alliance?***

Yes. While both organizations will retain their own brands, this affiliation will mean Downtown Inc staff will become employees of the York County Economic Alliance, creating a fully integrated, dynamic, economic development agency.

***What are the next steps?***

As of this announcement, both the Downtown Inc and YCEA Boards have approved this strategic affiliation. The organizations will begin to integrate and resolve logistical nuances throughout the fourth quarter of 2018. We envision a fully integrated affiliation will occur by January 1, 2019, allowing both Downtown Inc and the YCEA to begin the New Year with increased momentum.