

INTRODUCTION

Two of the most important functions of public involvement in any comprehensive planning process are to establish a **mission** and **vision** for the plan. The **mission** serves to guide the work that the community does in the present – the readily available human resources, physical resources, financial resources; and the manner in which all stakeholders (residents, business owners, government officials and others who visit, work or play in the municipality) choose to use these resources to reach the final goal – identified in the **vision**. The **vision** is the multi-faceted result participants will witness and experience as a result of all of their collective efforts over time.

Many facilitators who engage the public in mission/vision exercises frequently begin by establishing the mission, and then move on to the vision. In the session designed exclusively for Tarentum, the facilitator chose to begin first with the vision. There are a number of reasons why one may choose to begin with the vision for any municipality, but for Tarentum in particular, there were several factors to consider:

- In a distressed municipality (*distress not being defined by any particular dollar amount, but merely a collective opinion that there are serious deficits in one or more areas of the community's standard of living which have been in decline for a noted period of time*) it is often difficult to first establish a mission, because assets are already perceived as low; and efforts, therefore, inversely high in proportion. The perception of the daunting nature of the overall task may inhibit investment and participation at the outset.

- Establishing the vision first gives clearer direction as to what will ultimately be achieved. This clarity of vision establishes a more grounded thought process and a more focused plan of action for what should be contained in this mission.
- A focused mission with a comprehensive list of people and resources needed to fulfill the vision requires only one additional ingredient to be successful – the determination and action of those invested in the outcome to follow through with their efforts.
- When properly compiled and constructed, a mission and vision statement comprise a two-step plan for success, and easy reference for guidance.

Residents, businesses and officials are encouraged to refer back to the following mission and vision statements whenever any question arises as to whether or not a concept is right for the community. A development that benefits another community may be an awkward or inappropriate fit for the “fingerprint” of Tarentum. Based on discussions from our public meetings, a good example of something that may work elsewhere but would not ideally fit Tarentum would be a “big box” store. However, something of the same genre as a big box store, such as a drugstore, may serve the community well if it reuses an existing building and has a selection of items most beneficial for the community's needs and financial success of the business.

Mission and vision are the compass and destination, respectively, of good planning.

Vision

A self-sustaining economy in Tarentum that draws in new businesses, supports older established businesses, and is inviting to new prospective residents

How have elements of the vision been fulfilled to this point?

- **Draw In New Businesses**
 - *The Allegheny County ALLTogether Program together with Town Center Associates, Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation and Urban Design Associates are working on redesigning the East Tarentum Main Street Business District with the intent of revitalizing the facades and attracting new businesses to the area.*
- **Support Older Established Businesses**
 - *All businesses in the East Tarentum Business District fall under the guise of the plan to be created by Allegheny County's ALLTogether program and their team members. Businesses in the West 7th Avenue Corridor will be part of a separate proposed neighborhood and commercial district.*
- **Invite New Residents**
 - *This Comprehensive Plan contains a Housing section which provides suggestions for improving housing options in Tarentum.*

Mission

To unite the input from Tarentum's residential, business, non-profit and civic organizations with gathered empirical data in conjunction with historical studies to devise a plan for Tarentum's revitalization.

How have we collectively worked to fulfill, thus far, the Mission of the Tarentum Comprehensive Planning Process?

- Residential, business, non-profit, civic and religious organizations provided input at public meetings on September 8, 2007, March 5, 2008, and July 12, 2008.
- The following empirical data was gathered, shared with residents, and used in formulating the comprehensive plan:
 - Survey completed in 2006 that analyzed the strengths weaknesses, community attributes and detriments
 - Results of the of the dot exercise conducted at the second public input meeting in 2008
 - RealStats data on Tarentum's housing demographics
 - Examination of transportation and commuting patterns
 - Review of employment opportunities and statistics
 - Study of Third Ward redevelopment and internal SWOT analysis based on data collected from the Community Technical Assistance Center (CTAC)
- The following historical studies were reviewed to determine past trends and future projections for Tarentum:
 - Most recent Tarentum Borough Comprehensive Plan, drafted in 1964
 - Parking Study completed by Skelly and Loy in 1998
 - Zoning Plan adopted by the Borough in April of 2007
 - Recent Study conducted by CTAC

