

Harrison-Tarentum-Brackenridge Implementable Comprehensive Plan

Steering Committee No. 1 – Feb. 12, 2019, 7:00 to 8:30pm

Notes

Setting the Stage:

1. **Why we're here** – Lindsay Frazer, as project coordinator and facilitator among the communities, introduced the multi-municipal comprehensive planning project. She considers this to be a kind of key that can open doors of possibilities for the communities in terms of coordination, collaborative effort and funding applications.
2. **Everyone introduced themselves.** We have 17 people on the Steering Committee, and 15 attended.
3. **What is an Implementable Comprehensive Plan?** A plan is a roadmap for determining where the communities want to go, and how to get there. Jim Pashek described this work as a *process that results in change in the communities*, rather than an effort to create a report, which has been a more traditional approach. An *implementable* plan is driven by community input, and focuses on realistic, feasible solutions to issues that the community identifies. The first months of our work will be to identify those “Key Issues.”
4. **Other studies under way or completed?** Pashek+MTR will review previous planning efforts to see what the recommendations were and find out what has been done/not done as a result. Traditional plans have often listed pages and pages of recommendations (which is overwhelming), but this plan will be much more targeted and focused, Jim stated. Pashek+MTR has previous plans from Harrison and Tarentum. **Please send any others,** such as the 3 Rivers Heritage Trail/Active Allegheny study currently in the works to extend the rail trail.
5. **What are the key issues facing your communities today?** As a first round of striving to understand the needs of the three communities, the Steering Committee brainstormed the main issues they see as “problems to solve or strengths to build on.” Elaine Kramer provided a handout on what makes something a “Key Issue.” These can be big or small, should be real and relevant to the community, be at least somewhat within the control of the community, and lead to direct change that makes the communities better.

The brainstorming list is on the next page. Together, we will continue to revise and focus this list as we hear more input from the communities.

KEY ISSUE BRAINSTORMING LIST

- A. Blight, both commercial/residential; abandoned properties. Some on main thoroughfares. Asbestos problems complicate cleanup.
- B. Sense of community is lacking: Need events to draw people out and create a feeling that things are happening, there are things to do, and reasons to be here.
- C. Lacking good public transportation – to Pittsburgh but also to locations within the communities. A circulator/shuttle run by Allegheny Family Network operates on a limited basis.
- D. Need economic development / more businesses, including access to grocery store. Some way to show what properties are available and how businesses can find them. Natrona needs stores, and community needs transit access to stores.
- E. Infrastructure needs upgrades. Includes sewers, electric, roads/potholes,
- F. Clusters of poverty in each community. Need to make this better.
- G. Youth of the community has nothing to do. Need activities. These young people could be an important resource.
- H. Crime – mainly drug-related – is a problem. Can we address via physical changes like lighting, cleanup, police patrols?
- I. Image of the township isn't good. The entrances into the community are unsightly.
- J. Need employment opportunities, but not low-wage/no-direction jobs. Rather industrial jobs that pay living wages.
- K. Walkable communities with sidewalks. This can be promoted
- L. Bike-pedestrian network should/will provide "safe, green, accessible, attractive biking and walking corridor that connects people with recreation facilities."
- M. Rails-to-trails project from Tarentum to Harrison Hills needs to get completed.

Public Involvement:

6. **The role of the Steering Committee** will be to guide this project, and later to help implement actions. For now, Jim and Elaine will appreciate your help in understanding your communities and what kinds of practical help we can provide, in what areas. Thank you for your enthusiasm for making your communities better, and thanks in advance for propelling this project from now through implementation.
7. **Other forms of public involvement** will be:
 - Public Meetings.
 - a. The group said the first public meeting – to be in May – might best be held at Generations House of Worship in Brackenridge or First Presbyterian in Tarentum, though other ideas are Salvation Army, park in Tarentum, Brackenridge Legion, Masonic Lodge.
 - b. Channels for publicizing could include utility bills sent out by local authorities. **Please ID place and time for for first public meeting promptly** in order to get flier into the utility mailers. Other publicity via the newspaper and community-related facebook pages.
 - Stakeholder Interviews
 - a. **Please send names and contact info to Elaine.** We are looking for about about 20 people - reflecting all forms of diversity - who have particular insight and will provide thoughtful commentary or ideas. Here are some ideas of “types” of people, but we encourage you to think broadly: Social service provider, police, employer, real estate agent, developer (such as Harrison Point or Industrial park that were mentioned?), educator, activist, business owner, disability community, senior center, librarian.
 - Community Quality of Life questionnaire
 - a. This can be publicized via the same channels as listed above.
 - b. Will communities want to provide paper copies to be picked up at convenient locations? (local input into survey monkey)
 - c. POTENTIAL CONTENT for questionnaire:
 - ✓ What are problems to solve, strengths to build on?
 - ✓ Ask respondents to rank the items in the Steering Committee’s brainstorm list
 - ✓ What will attract people to the communities?
 - ✓ What is “missing” in our communities?
 - ✓ What are assets to build on?
 - ✓ What do you like about your community?
 - ✓ What keeps you living here?
 - ✓ Are you interested in volunteering/getting involved?

- d. Pashek+MTR will do a first draft of the questionnaire and send the link. You will be able to review it and provide feedback via “comment” function.
- e. Goal is for the questionnaire to be “open” for about 8 weeks in the March-April-May time frame.
- Booths/tables at community events (by steering committee).
 - ✓ Brackenridge has event on Second Sunday in August
 - ✓ Harrison has a fall festival
 - ✓ Tarentum has Independence Day fest on July 3.

What’s Next?

- 8. Pashek+MTR provided a project timeline, Feb. 2019-June 2020.
 - There was discussion about whether the timeline could be compressed from 17 months. Jim stated that the hope is to conduct the actual planning process in 12-14 months; after that, the review and approval process typically takes few months.
 - During the time before the next Steering Committee, we will collaborate to develop the questionnaire, put it out in the field, look at the responses; hold the first public meeting; and for Pashek+MTR to conduct key person interviews and tour the communities.
 - Steering Committee meeting No. 2 (June 11, 7 p.m. at Brackenridge) will then focus on what we’ve heard/learned from the public input, and on how to interpret the input.

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