

Harrison-Tarentum-Brackenridge Implementable Comprehensive Plan

Steering Committee No. 3 – Aug. 13, 2019, 6:30 pm

Notes

Welcome

Introductions of two new members from Harrison Twp - Will Taverez & Michelle Goetzinger

Public input into the Key Issues

The group reviewed all the public input so far, including from the community quality of life questionnaire (605 total responses); public meeting; key informant interviews; recommendations from previous plans; and recent mini-survey outreach (counted in the 605 questionnaire responses).

The mini-survey outreach efforts were undertaken between June and August because the steering committee was concerned that some neighborhoods or populations may not be represented in citizen input. The mini-surveys were returned by 47 people, 25 of whom were age 65+. Respondents stated that their greatest concerns about the communities were drugs/crime; dilapidated buildings; lack of transportation; and school district quality. They particularly valued local businesses and neighborhoods.

Key Issue discussion

The steering committee looked over the list of potential Key Issues developed at the June meeting, and decided to add Public Transportation/Connectivity.

- Property Deterioration
- Economic and Community Development
- Community Identity and Branding
- Highlands School District
- Community Collaboration and Shared Services
- Infrastructure
- Trails, Parks, Riverfront and Recreation
- Public Transportation / Connectivity

The task for the meeting was to list components and details within each issue and to discuss feasibility of solving problems. Ratings in the second column reflect how hard the group feels this issue will be to address: easy, medium or difficult

PROPERTY DETERIORATION	
Lack of funding for demolishing abandoned commercial properties	Difficult
Common, useable inventory of blighted property	Medium
Early intervention / proactive approach for properties not yet badly deteriorated could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating with school district to take properties to sheriff's sale. • Linking investors with properties still in OK condition • Create real estate investment board • Identify properties where volunteers can make a big difference (Tarentum Action Committee volunteer group addresses problems at vacant properties or at occupied properties where need is ascertained and permission granted) 	Medium
Process for dealing with long-term abandoned properties is cumbersome: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properties demolished via Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) get caught up in red tape because of liens. • Citizens get frustrated and don't understand why it is taking so long. Education opportunity. 	Difficult
County's side-lot program (\$1800) is available. Educate public about it	Easy
Develop a strategic approach to demolition	Easy
Enforcement of existing ordinances such as landlord licensure	Difficult
Note the delicate balance and interrelationship between blight and economic development	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	
Emphasize events/programming/activities	Medium
Create community development corporation / development director to attract new businesses, assist existing businesses	Difficult
Get kids involved in cleanup	Medium
Operation Better Block reimagines places with eye on community and economic development, including tactical urbanist popups	Medium
Summarize assets to promote the communities	Medium
Develop a sports and recreation center as a focal point for the three communities, building on all the interest in youth sports and desire to give kids more things to do	Hard
Contact local businesses to determine their interest in expanding	Easy
Highlands Partnership is working on a lot of these same things – collaborate with them to be sure efforts are aligned.	

Elaine Kramer and Jim Pashek noted that this process of drilling down helps the steering committee and Pashek+MTR articulate and define the issues, and coalesce around what the Key Issues should be in the comprehensive plan. This process will continue at the next meeting with the other potential Key Issues. After the remaining issues are further developed in the same

manner, Pashek+MTR will do more analysis and research, and may suggest changes to the eventual list of Key Issues and what falls within each.

What's Next?

- Pashek+MTR asked it would be useful to provide Council updates after the Key Issues are identified, and steering committee members from each community said that would be valuable and important.
- Sen. Lindsey Williams expressed interest in learning about the communities' planning effort and goals. She is minority chair of the PA Senate's committee on Community, Economic and Recreational Development. The meeting with the senator and Megan Winters, her chief of staff, will be **Thursday, Sept. 12, 10 a.m.** Please contact Elaine if this time is even possible for you; we will probably need to hold the overall count to one steering committee rep per community to make the discussion manageable.
- **Steering Committee Meeting #4** (to complete the Key Issues list as previously described) will be **Tuesday, Aug. 27, 6:30 p.m., Brackenridge Borough building.**