

# HARRISON BRACKENRIDGE TARENTUM



## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## FORGING OUR FUTURE

REPORT SUMMARY 2020



# HARRISON, BRACKENRIDGE AND TARENTUM, FORWARD TOGETHER

The three northernmost communities along the Allegheny River in Allegheny County are in a position to forge a future that capitalizes on their location, assets and ambition for change.



# UMMARY OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## Forging a Future

Harrison Township and Brackenridge and Tarentum Boroughs used to be “steel towns,” but over several decades lost that identity along with a significant portion of their population. From those painful losses now arises a new ambition to forge a future. Community pride is bubbling up in the form of social entrepreneurship, small businesses, the steady presence of some larger industries, and a recognition that the communities’ location along the Allegheny River presents an opportunity to layer new personalities and character traits upon the old.

The communities have recognized, as residents repeatedly stated during public input for this comprehensive plan, that with concentrated effort, they are positioned to move forward together to accomplish the changes that can enhance the quality of life for existing residents and draw newcomers.

Harrison, Brackenridge and Tarentum hope to build on their assets, including affordable real estate, their location along the Allegheny River, well-maintained local parks and an Allegheny County Park, some anchor businesses and industries, traditional business districts and bikeable, walkable neighborhoods. They also hope to welcome and guide change through efforts springing from community planning and several concurrent initiatives.

The three communities share an identity as members of the Highlands School District, and geographically as the northernmost

communities in Allegheny County.

They share problems as well; years of declining population, job loss and business disinvestment have caused vacancies, property deterioration, and the social ramifications of poverty. The communities recognize that these problems do not halt at municipal borders but occur in all three. The communities’ best chances for pursuing solutions to these problems and to build on strengths will be to work together to foster change and forge a new future.

The four Key Issues that community stakeholders chose to address via this plan are:

- Social Enterprise, Community and Economic Development
- Property Deterioration and Blight
- Trails, Parks and Recreation
- Community Identity.

## What propelled this plan

Elected officials and staff from Harrison Township expressed an interest in using the Implementable Comprehensive Planning process to improve Harrison Township and Brackenridge and Tarentum Boroughs. They were looking for a very focused approach to solving challenges facing the three communities. Their hope was also for the planning process to investigate opportunities where the three municipalities could work together to reduce costs or increase services to residents. The three communities secured a planning grant from Allegheny County Economic Development (ACED) to partially fund the effort.

ACED and its planning division as well as the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), which oversees planning at the state level, vigorously encourage multi-municipal planning and cooperation as a way of maximizing resources and enhancing community capacity.

Joint approaches, such as collaborating on planning and projects, will better position the communities to apply for funding from private or public sources. Joint approaches also respond to DCED and ACED expectations for multi-municipal planning and cooperation as a way of better serving the communities and residents.

## Public Engagement

### STEERING COMMITTEE

The project's joint steering committee met nine times between Feb. 12, 2019 and Aug. 26, 2020. The committee's responsibilities included assistance with:

- Generating a questionnaire
- Seeking information from residents via pop-up surveying
- Interacting with residents at the public meetings to collect their input
- Distilling input and helping to generate the Key Issues
- Working in small groups to interview and discuss issues and solutions with experts from the state and region on those topics.
- Reviewing and prioritizing potential strategies to identify the most feasible and promising options
- Reviewing chapters from an earlier draft version of this report
- Initiating implementation, including property condition mapping, and enlisting a local non-profit to be a CDC
- Answering questions from their

communities' Planning Commissions and elected officials, and advocating for plan adoption.

### QUESTIONNAIRE

More than 600 people responded to the questionnaire, most via digital platform and about 30 via paper forms.

The top four areas of concern were (1) Drug issues/Crime, (2) Dilapidated Buildings, (3) Emergency Services, (4) Streets and Roads.

Several of our steering committee members conducted "pop up" events and interviewed people at the YMCA and the Library for this plan.

### PUBLIC MEETING 1

The project's initial public meeting took place June 3, 2019, at the Salvation Army gym. Approximately 80 participants generated 140 ideas on things that could be improved and 50 things they thought were positive aspects of the communities/strengths to build on.

## KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Based on contacts provided to us by the steering committee Pashek+MTR interviewed 21 people from the area. People included: developers, bank managers, non-profit directors, members of the faith community, business owners and municipal staff.

## CHECK-INS WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS

After identifying and defining the four Key Issues that the comprehensive plan would address, the consultant attended regularly scheduled meetings of the three communities' governing bodies to review the process so far and answer questions.

## PUBLIC MEETING 2

The second public meeting, held Feb. 17, 2020, at the Salvation Army gym in Brackenridge, was a check-in with residents after the Key Issues were developed and some early ideas for solutions were sketched out. This meeting also served as an additional round of input, because the format asked residents to contribute ideas toward solutions to specific problems.

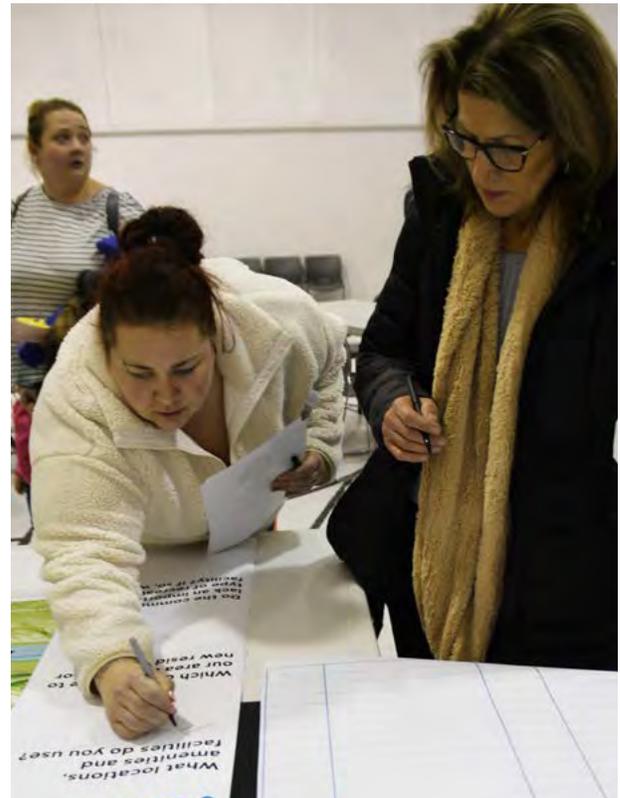
Sen. Lindsay Williams and Rep . Frank Dermody attended. Both provided supportive remarks about the comprehensive planning process and the plan's goals for community improvements.

## OTHER PUBLIC INPUT

The steering committee met with Pennsylvania State Sen. Lindsay Williams on Sept. 12, 2019, to discuss this planning process and to seek her help in identifying opportunities for public funding.



Residents at the second public meeting consider elements of a riverfront improvement plan for Natrona and add comments



Residents at the second public meeting review a recreation resources map and note what facilities they use or would like to have.

# The Key Issues

One of the important concepts of an Implementable Comprehensive Plan is to: (1) focus the plan on real issues as identified by the community and , (2) match the number and types of issues to the capacity of the communities to implement the recommendations. Too often, earlier plans identified hundreds of recommendations that simply overwhelmed even the best-intentioned municipal staff. Through careful listening and much discussion with an active steering committee, we arrived at the following key issues.

The input from residents from all sources – public meetings, a community questionnaire, steering committee guidance and key stakeholder interviews – was collated and counted by topic. The consultant categorized all the “Problems To Solve,” “Strengths To Build On,” and used frequency and degree of vehemence to begin to identify themes and priorities.

The topics that emerged as priorities are called “Key Issues.”

## *The Four Key Issues in Harrison, Brackenridge and Tarentum*

- a. Social Enterprise, Community and Economic Development
- b. Property Deterioration and Blight
- c. Trails, Parks and Recreation
- d. Community Identity

History and context lie behind each Key Issue. These matters didn’t emerge overnight as issues in the communities, and didn’t become priorities suddenly. Rather, both problems and strengths have developed over time, often over decades. The implementable comprehensive plan report delves into the complexity of each Key Issue, assessing its components.

## Considering best practices and Key Issue solutions

The Steering Committee for this comprehensive plan process divided into small groups aligned with each Key Issue. Each group researched best practices and potential solutions to gain an overview of possible next steps. This would help the group determine what strategies might best apply in Harrison, Brackenridge and Tarentum, and align with community needs and capacity.



Steering committee members meet with Jessica Trimble (center), a local government policy specialist with DCED.

- The Social Enterprise, Community and Economic Development team met with Jessica Trimble, a Local Government Policy Specialist with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). The group had an initial meeting via conference call and then hosted her for a field visit and in-person brainstorming meeting about what DCED programs might align with community goals.

- The Property Deterioration and Blight team met with two specialists affiliated with the Pennsylvania Housing Alliance: Andrea Mannino, Senior Advisor, Policy and Practice, and Winifred Branton, of Branton Strategies, which provides policy guidance in a legal context for communities working with the Housing Alliance. This team also met with Amanda Settelmaier, Executive Director of the Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments, who has developed a code enforcement database.
- The Trails, Parks and Recreation team met with Kathy Frankel, Recreation and Conservation Manager, Southwest Regional Office of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). The conversation provided an overview of how DCNR strives to support local community improvements with technical and funding assistance.
- The Community Identity and Branding team met with Brenda Armstrong and Asaka Narumi from Visit Pittsburgh, to hear how that organization seeks to reflect the character of the Pittsburgh region in strategic communications. The team also met with representatives of New Sun Rising, a non-profit organization based in the Tri-Borough area along the Allegheny River, to learn how it supports sustainable economic and community development.

Along with ideas discussed with the state and regional professionals, the consultant developed a list of potential strategies the communities could undertake. The steering committee then chose the strategies it considered to be most important and most feasible, and ranked the strategies in order of those they felt most strongly that their communities should pursue.

## The Key Issues and Strategies for Making Change

The implementable comprehensive plan report provides chapters for each Key Issue, presents history context and background, and lists the recommended strategies the communities should employ to address problems and build on strengths. The highest priority strategies include step-by-step guides for implementation.

By contrast, this summary is a condensed version of the full implementable comprehensive plan report. It presents abridged versions of the descriptions and background of each Key Issue and provides a list of the strategies aimed at solving specific problems, but does not include step-by-step detail. The idea behind this is to provide two levels of detail for readers or users of the plan who have different levels of involvement and interest.

These Key Issue summaries are provided on the following 10 pages.



# SOCIAL ENTERPRISE, COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Key Issue Overview

Business development, job growth and social entrepreneurship together create a more stable local economy, which will make the communities a better place to live. Harrison, Brackenridge and Tarentum can pursue strategies listed in this chapter that capitalize on their assets, such as some strong existing anchor businesses and industries, a local volunteer corps, interesting old buildings, traditional walkable business districts, the Allegheny River, and relatively affordable real estate.

## Looking Ahead

Social enterprise, community and economic development goals can best be met through a coordinated effort among the communities, in collaboration with existing businesses and non-profit organizations. Efforts to create development opportunities should:

- Align with community development objectives, goals, strategies, master plans and/or programmatic initiatives common to the three communities.
- Be developed jointly among the communities, sharing efforts and services to the greatest degree feasible, and including a community/economic development organization to provide leadership.
- Support the intention of creating and maintaining visually attractive communities, and align with a related multi-municipal effort to address commercial and residential property deterioration and blight. Redevelopment of deteriorated properties can interrupt a vicious cycle.
- Whenever possible, support local entrepreneurship and small business. Additionally, involve

### Vision

Harrison-Brackenridge-Tarentum thrive at individual and community scales. They address disinvestment methodically, and align continuing efforts with objectives and goals developed collaboratively among the three communities and with existing businesses, institutions and non-profit organizations. The communities continuously respond to existing community needs and capitalize on strengths.

and include existing businesses and established community institutions and non-profits, such as Highlands Partnership Network, an umbrella organization for many community groups.

- Potentially include updating the communities' zoning districts and ordinances.
- Respond to the needs of residents lacking transportation access to food, goods and services.
- Capitalize on existing assets of the communities, such as the Allegheny Riverfront, municipal parks, and a sidewalk network and other active transportation infrastructure.

## High Priority Strategies

- 1 Support a formation of a Community Development Corporation (CDC) or Economic Development Corporation (EDC) that represents all three municipalities, then methodically leverage the agency's services.**

NOTE: As this plan was being completed, Faith Community Partners (FCP Services Inc.) expanded its service in the Upper Allegheny Valley to serve as a Community Development Corporation (CDC) with a particular emphasis on Harrison Township and the Boroughs of Brackenridge and Tarentum. See Appendices 2A and 2B.

- 2 Maximize the Allegheny Riverfront as a prime community asset, as demonstrated in the concept drawings that incorporate walking and biking routes, parks, river access or views, historic neighborhoods, and connections with the traditional downtowns**

## Additional Strategies

- 3** Give people reasons to visit targeted areas in the three communities, through special events, holiday celebrations and other activities, and provide amenities.
- 4** Create and maintain a consolidated listing of commercial spaces available for the three communities, with information about "what it would take" to get the property ready for occupancy or redevelopment.
- 5** Identify and champion large sites that could have redevelopment potential.
- 6** Arrange for the EDC/CDC or the individual municipalities to provide web-hosting of the high-priority target properties for redevelopment as set forth in Strategies No. 2 and 5.
- 7** Align redevelopment and blight-fighting efforts, working from jointly developed priorities, goals and strategies. Begin with these areas in the community as revitalization targets, and leverage the services of the CDC.
- 8** Explore creating tax increment financing districts (TIFs) in specific areas of the communities to help finance redevelopment.
- 9** Working through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, create a Neighborhood Partnership Program (NPP) or Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) in Brackenridge and Harrison (perhaps the Natrona neighborhood). In Tarentum, Faith Community Partners (FCP) has initiated a Neighborhood Partnership Program.
- 10** Support a market study to determine the area's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.
- 11** Review ordinances and consider changing some zoning provisions to encourage a range of development types.
- 12** Engage in planning for the future of the Heights Plaza.
- 13** Strengthen the local food system.
- 14** Connect all residents to affordable, reliable high-speed Internet access.



# BLIGHT & PROPERTY DETERIORATION

## Issue Overview

Property deterioration is a problem that crops up in nearly every community in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area, or indeed the nation. It negatively affects quality of life, community reputation, and economic growth. Addressing the problem is not easy, but it is possible, via the proven strategies presented in this chapter. Because of economies of scale and because blight doesn't recognize municipal boundaries, the problem is best addressed on a multi-municipal basis.

## Looking Ahead

Property deterioration can best be addressed through a coordinated effort among the communities. Efforts to address property deterioration and blight should:

- Be developed jointly among the three communities, sharing services to the greatest degree feasible
- Create common definitions within the continuum of property deterioration
- Create and work from a unified, consistent and up-to-date database
- Align with jointly developed overarching strategies that include prevention and remediation as well as removal and redevelopment
- Be developed and implemented in the context of economic and community development goals and efforts
- Emphasize strategies to assist people who live in substandard housing.

### Vision

Harrison-Brackenridge-Tarentum present a low incidence of deteriorated or blighted properties. They follow a jointly developed plan to remediate, demolish and/or redevelop properties in support of quality of life, public health and economic/ community development goals.

# High-Priority Strategy

- 1** Using a multi-municipal approach, systematically pursue improvements as set forth in this chapter, overseen and driven by a multimunicipal “Blight Team.” Work on addressing blight should be framed within the goals of this plan, and especially those related to economic development.

NOTE: As part of implementation for this comprehensive plan, volunteers from the community began collecting data to map property condition. This process is undertaken in collaboration with Faith Community Partners (FCP Services Inc.).

## Additional Strategies

- 2** Revise ordinances with provisions that assist with addressing blight.
- 3** Pursue collaborative approaches within the multi-municipal framework, such as code enforcement and uniform landlord ordinances.
- 4** Explore creating a regional land bank.
- 5** Assist property owners trying to make improvements.
- 6** Research and weigh other potential avenues for addressing blight, which are likely to be more complex but may have potential: advocate for a County Tax Claim Bureau that would collect delinquent taxes; investigate creating a Demolition Authority; cooperate with utility companies.



# TRAILS, PARKS & RECREATION

## Issue Overview

Recreation facilities and programs are some of the highest priority public services that contribute to community quality of life. Being outside in nature, enjoying exercise, recreation and leisure, and socializing in the company of neighbors are factors that enhance community and individual health and wellbeing.

As more people recognize the importance of outdoor and community activities, officials are increasingly considering trails, parks and recreation to be essential facilities and services directed toward meeting basic human needs.

## Looking Ahead

Communities can benefit from increased community connectivity and the assets of river access, riverfront views, parkland and recreation. Next steps should include efforts that:

- Coordinate an approach to planning of park assets and use of parkland
- Coordinate recreation initiatives, programs, events and services
- Plan multi-municipal connectivity and trails within the three communities and with external destinations or routes. This network should include associated features such as wayfinding, promotion, programming, and connection with other community assets.
- Capitalize on river access and riverfront views, which potentially can be a factor for all three

## Vision

Harrison-Brackenridge-Tarentum residents can safely access places, goods, services, employment, and care through a connected network that includes walking/biking routes.

The communities capitalize on the recreation and leisure potential of the Allegheny River and the availability of parks and recreation. They coordinate recreation and planning efforts in order to make the most of tax dollars and grants, and to provide the greatest possible variety and quality of services for all residents.

communities as they pursue social enterprise, community and economic development goals.

- Recognize parks, greenspace, watersheds and the river as potential learning centers.
- Embrace conservation and preservation of open space, greenspace and natural systems or potential planning for an eco-district.

## High-Priority Strategy

1

**Convene a trails, parks and recreation group, and begin working on joint programs and events, and planning of public facilities and trails.**

### Additional Strategies

2

Create a unified, multi-municipal approach to trail network development within and beyond the communities.

3

Create communications and volunteer engagement mechanisms for improving parks and trails and creating programs.

4

Use the riverfront development concept plan drawings presented in the “Social Enterprise, Community and Economic Development” chapter to select potential public access improvements to help connect the three communities to the Allegheny River, one of the area’s most important assets.

5

Review land-use maps and ordinances to identify parcels that could be acquired by their home communities, potentially with the assistance of grant funding, to be conserved for open space, future park land and stormwater management or resource conservation purposes.



# COMMUNITY IDENTITY & BRANDING

## Issue Overview

Harrison, Brackenridge and Tarentum are distinctive places with rich and complex histories and an ambition to be known as convenient places to live that have a vibrant, small-town feel, affordable housing, and amenities like parks, trails, recreation options, walkability and Allegheny River views. The three communities desire to assemble a “toolkit” for communicating both to local people and to the greater Pittsburgh area as a whole. They wish to speak with one voice about the characteristics and assets they offer today and about the future the communities intend to forge.

### Vision

Harrison-Brackenridge-Tarentum attract and retain residents, businesses and investment by marketing themselves successfully through a commonly held identity or brand.

## Looking Ahead

Communities share strengths, assets and challenges, many of which this comprehensive plan seeks to address. Creating a joint “identity” or “brand” should include efforts that:

- Articulate a shared understanding of the communities as they are today and as they hope to be in the next five to 10 years
- Reflect the cultural, human, historical, ecological and built assets the three communities share or plan to develop
- Support the Harrison-Brackenridge-Tarentum vision for social enterprise, community and economic development
- Can result in official and informal marketing and promotion efforts by the communities together or individually.

# High-Priority Strategy

1

Convene a team that can pursue the Community Identity and Branding initiatives over time. The team should include the members of the Community Identity comprehensive plan working group and new volunteers with expertise in media relations, marketing and branding. Because the Harrison-Brackenridge-Tarentum area's community identity may encompass new facets or features as other elements of the comprehensive plan are implemented, the team should strive to keep abreast of other work under way in the communities.

## Additional Strategies

2

Develop a "community identity" through storytelling. This is different than creating a geographic label. A community identity articulated through storytelling is a more thoughtful and inclusive process, with a nuanced product.

3

Create a community branding campaign. Following story gathering and community outreach efforts, the Community Identity team and partners will synthesize the information gathered to identify common themes about life in the community. Focus groups can help distill meaning from a collection of individual stories.

4

Create talking points for business owners, media, faith community, neighbors, and distribute them to media outlets, Visit Pittsburgh, state and county elected officials and others who can share important stories and information about Harrison-Brackenridge-Tarentum.

5

Create a digital and printed map identifying community assets and public amenities as well as historic locations and properties. This can service as a tool for communicating the three communities' identity and brand.



## ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Implementable comprehensive plans focus their content heavily on “Key Issues” that the public process identified as the most important and most feasible to address in the coming years. Those topics typically warrant whole chapters for each. The public process also identified topics that either had less priority or were considered less feasible to address.

We include a section called Additional Topics to recognize the matters that arose during the public process but did not become Key Issues because they were viewed to be of lower priority or highly unlikely to be successfully addressed through the comprehensive planning process.

### TRANSPORTATION ACCESS

ISSUE: Lack of transportation creates and perpetuates inequity and hardship in the three communities. People in the three communities who don’t have their own cars have significant difficulty getting to grocery stores or accessing health care and other needed services due to distance, topography and a lack of public transit.

#### Statement of support

- This comprehensive plan supports increased and improved transit/shuttle services to enable residents of Harrison-Brackenridge-Tarentum to access food stores, health care, goods and services, employment and recreation.

### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MUNICIPALITIES AND HIGHLANDS SCHOOL DISTRICT

ISSUE: The three communities lie entirely within the Highlands School District, but there is arrangement for sharing information or communicating between the governing bodies. This can lead to missed opportunities at best and suspicion, competition for resources and mistrust at worst.

#### Strategy

- Begin holding liaison meetings among one or two volunteers from each elected body. These should be held semi-annually. The first meeting should discuss:
  - a. How to build collaboration among elected officials

- b. Projects or ideas to explore or undertake together, such as producing a multi-municipal public festival showcasing student achievements in art, music, robotics, voluntarism, other projects.

## CRIME

ISSUE: Some residents participating in the public process perceived crime to be an important problem to solve in the three communities. A review of uniform crime statistics showed that a spike in some forms of crime had occurred in the communities in 2016-17, possibly related to the opioid epidemic, but that no trend appeared to be continuing in 2018-2020. However, since even low statistical levels of crime can disrupt communities, neighborhoods and households, this comprehensive plan recommends the steps listed below.

### Strategies

- All three communities should join a communications service such as Savvy Citizen, perhaps recruiting a local business to support the service on an annual basis. Use this, as well as informal social networks such as NextDoor.com, to notify citizens when emergencies occur to begin to establish an understanding that crime and public emergencies are not common.
- Create a section on each website showing incidences of crime and trend lines, and crime prevention techniques.
- Partner with the two large health-care providers to help inform residents of resources to help families and individuals who need health care or mental health care, including substance use disorders. This is listed here, since some property crimes are associated with substance abuse problems.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

ISSUE: Road maintenance and improvements are crucial to all communities, and this is particularly difficult for Brackenridge, which does not qualify for some state funding due to its small size. At the same time, heavy truck traffic from local industries damages roads and is highly disruptive to the quietude of residential neighborhoods.

### Strategies

- Explore creating a road impact fee for truck use on local roads.
- Consider establishing an official truck route through the communities to divert heavy vehicles away from quiet residential areas, parks and trail routes.
- Develop a list, by community, of needed road improvements, arranged by priority and road owner. In cases where projects are on more than one community's list, create a multi-municipal plan for pursuing funding, by approaching state representatives, PennDOT, Allegheny County and Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission to elevate awareness of need.

# The Adoption Process and What's Next

## Review and Adoption

Allegheny County Economic Development reviewed this comprehensive plan for consistency with Allegheny Places, the County's comprehensive plan, and Active Allegheny, the County's Active Transportation Plan.

In addition, the draft comprehensive plan report was provided to neighboring municipalities and Highlands School District for their review and consideration.

The comprehensive plan in a final draft form was presented at public hearings in December 2020, prior to adoption by the three communities' governing bodies. Adoption resolutions are provided in the Appendix or are available at these URLs:

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### Why action is important

- There are costs to making changes (time, money, effort), but also potential costs to doing nothing (citizen resentment, declining property values, less tax revenue and overall decline).
- Citizens expressed a need for change in the four Key Issue areas, and are expecting follow-through.
- The communities can best ensure their future viability by diligently undertaking the improvements outlined in this implementable plan.

### Start-Up To-Do List

Recognizing that municipal staff members, elected officials and volunteer board members are very busy, it can help to have a summary of a summary. Therefore, this report provides a chart depicting the first things each community should do on the road to plan implementation. Work can begin on any of these in any order at any time. Some can even begin before the communities formally adopt the comprehensive plan.

This list will help guide action and focus energy. The chart appears on the next page.

## 12-MONTH START-UP TO-DO LIST

Harrison	Brackenridge	Tarentum	Start-Up Task
✓	✓	✓	Create an implementation team for this plan.
✓	✓	✓	Survey local non-profit organizations to determine whether any has the interest in and capacity for serving as an Economic Development Corporation or Community Development Corporation. <b>ACHIEVED</b>
✓	✓	✓	Harrison, Brackenridge, Tarentum governing boards each vote to support the EDC/CDC financially and institutionally, and determine how to leverage the agency's services.
✓	✓	✓	View the suggested locations for additional trees as depicted on the riverfront concept plans, and plant them.
	✓		Strive to end the difficult one-way traffic problem at the foot of Mile Lock Lane.
✓	✓		Discuss with ATI Corp. the possibility of the corporation's installing and maintaining a high-quality mural on the Brackenridge face of wall.
✓		✓	Improve the foot of Wood Street (Tarentum) and a pathway from Veteran's Way (Harrison) with seating and access to the riverfront for small-scale uses, such as fishing, bird-watching and rock skipping.
✓	✓	✓	Create and convene Meeting 1 of a blight team that will pursue funding, encourage code enforcement and DPW sharing, develop a legal definition of "blighted property," create an overarching strategy, and other steps.
✓	✓	✓	Hold Meeting 1 of a trails, parks and recreation group (including representatives from all three Recreation Boards and the comprehensive plan working group that has focused on Trails, Parks and Recreation, to start planning a joint event as a pilot project.
✓	✓	✓	The joint trails, parks and recreation group investigates state Department of Recreation and Natural Resources programs that encourage multi-municipal collaborations on recreation staffing, funding and technical assistance.
✓	✓	✓	The joint trails, parks and recreation group reviews the multi-municipal trails map and existing efforts, and identifies next steps for implementation.
✓	✓	✓	Create and distribute an illustrative map highlighting H-B-T assets and amenities, to underscore the communities' Identity and Branding.

## Now who does what?

This report can serve as a guide in the following ways:

- **ELECTED OFFICIALS** - This report documents the development of the implementable comprehensive plan. It identifies the directions in which the municipalities will change, and lays out the practical next steps that will produce the desired changes. Next steps, in most cases, rest in the hands of elected and appointed officials who have the role and responsibility of initiating policies or procedures; providing funding via grants or municipal revenue streams; providing human and material resources; and lending oversight. Residents expect leadership from their elected officials, including anticipating future challenges before they become problems.



- **CITIZENS** - Individuals will advocate for the plan and track progress by comparing the steps listed in this report to visible changes in the community and actions taken by Harrison, Brackenridge and Tarentum. Citizens take the initiative and become involved by attending public meetings where decisions are made. Citizens take an active role by pressing for the actions and policies listed in this plan, which are designed to create change in the three communities. Citizens also, by volunteering for committees or for special initiatives, support and propel change.

- **COMMUNITY OR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP.** - Once established, this organization will play a crucial role in initiating and supporting some of the recommendations set out in this comprehensive plan. A CDC or EDC that is partly funded by the municipalities can help to lead and implement.

- **TOWNSHIP OR BOROUGH STAFF MEMBERS** - The communities' employees will work on a day-to-day basis to develop policies and procedures; muster resources; and assist elected and appointed officials in pushing the outcomes of the plan. Staff members are in the best position to spot obstacles to progress and propose solutions.

- **APPOINTED OFFICIALS** - Individuals serving on the Planning Commissions will become deeply familiar with the contents of this report. These members, along with other

board and commission members, are prepared to set out an action plan, make recommendations to the elected governing bodies, and help to solve problems in order to clear the way for progress.

- **STEERING COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUPS** - A number of the members of the Steering Committee that guided preparation of the comprehensive plan have agreed to continue their efforts as members of implementation teams for each Key Issue. These groups need to be fully engaged in the contents of this report, for they will have primary responsibility for identifying successive next steps and tracking progress - keeping a "foot on the gas." These groups will be responsible for collaborating across municipal lines to help implement this plan, and for communicating with the Planning Commissions or elected bodies.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Name	Community	Working Group
Eric Bengel	Harrison	Blight
Robin Bergstrom	Harrison	Trails, Parks, Recreation
Natalie Cajka Cale	Harrison	Trails, Parks, Recreation
Lauren Cottone	Harrison	Community Identity
Chuck Dizard	Harrison	Blight
Beth Edson	Brackenridge	Development
Lindsay Frazier	Brackenridge	Community Identity
Bill Godfrey	Harrison	Trails, Parks, Recreation
Michelle Goetzinger	Harrison	Community Identity
Lou Ann Homa	Tarentum	Blight
Brad James	Tarentum	Trails, Parks, Recreation
Tim Kuhns	Tarentum	Blight
Dino Lopreiato	Brackenridge	Trails, Parks, Recreation
JP Marino	Tarentum	Development
Michael Nestico	Tarentum	Blight
Cody Nolen	Harrison	Development
Scott Slezak	Harrison	Development
Denise Sloan	Brackenridge	Blight
John Stanzione	Brackenridge	Development
Pat Walters	Harrison	Blight
John Waters	Tarentum	Development

## Funding and Collaboration



Work on this Implementable Comprehensive Plan was funded by Harrison Township, Brackenridge Borough and Tarentum Borough, and through a grant from Allegheny County Economic Development. Pashek+MTR served as planning consultant.

## PUBLIC OFFICIALS

### Harrison

#### Commissioners

William W. Heasley,  
Chairman  
Gary Meanor, Vice-  
Chairman  
Gary J. Lilly  
Charles Dizard  
Eric Bengel  
*Rich Hill, Manager*

#### Planning Commission

Cody Nolen, Chairman  
Scott Slezak, Vice  
Chairman  
Thomas Cajka,  
Recording Secretary  
Norbert Cieslinski  
Gary Kesicki  
Robin Bergstrom, Alt.  
Michelle Goetzinger, Alt.

### Brackenridge

#### Council Members

Timothy Connelly, President  
John Stanzione, Vice President  
Timothy Kolar  
Dino Lopreiato  
Verne Petz  
Randall Elliott  
*Thomas Kish, Mayor*

### Tarentum

#### Council Members

Scott Dadowski,  
president  
Erika Josefoski  
Lou Ann Homa  
Carrie Fox  
Adam Blythe  
Brian Snyder  
Jim Bonner  
*Eric Carter, Mayor*  
*Michael Nestico, Mgr.*

#### Planning Commission

Dianna Roney,  
Chairperson  
Cindy Homburg, Vice  
Chairperson  
Rosemary Martin  
Tim Rapp