

Town of McCandless Implementable Comprehensive Plan

Steering Committee No. 6 – Oct. 9, 2018, 7-9:00pm – Town Hall meeting room

Notes

Setting the Stage

Tonight's meeting = second check-in on Phase 2. After this meeting we will begin writing the report of the implementation strategies for each key issue. The last steering committee meeting will be in February or March to review the draft comp plan.

Active Transportation and Connectivity

Pashek+MTR presented updated concept plan. The group suggested these priorities or demo project:

- Wall Park area, where planning is under way for trails;
- Pine Creek corridor since part of it exists, developer at Blazier Drive will complete a segment, and multi-purpose by definition means that it would be used by more people;
- Any segment that is feasible and viable, or that links important assets;
- Babcock corridor, as funding is available for at least part of it, it connects with McCandless Crossing, and PennDOT is already involved;
- Connect CCAC, Northland Library, elementary school and Rt. 19/McC Crossing at Cumberland.

Consensus: Pashek+MTR will add any new ideas to the map. Will discuss priorities with Bruce Betty and provide cost estimate for a demonstration project.

Recreation Programs and Special Events

Community/Rec Center idea

Group felt that insufficient information was available to make a decision about whether more recreation programs/activities/events should be provided by the community, or how much space would be needed, or whether the town would proceed on either the programming or facilities components.

Toby Cordek noted that according to forecasts, the town could keep doing what it is currently doing with existing staff for the next five years without a need to raise taxes. Any space acquisition or development that is greater than \$500,000 to 1 million would probably result in a tax increase.

Bob Scherrer noted that the school district owns the former Nike Missile site at Hosack and is considering future uses. The site could provide space for sports fields, and if the Town wants to partner on a natatorium at the site, the school district would welcome a discussion about that.

Consensus: Bruce said the comp plan should summarize what is known so far and outline a decision-making process going forward, listing next steps. Jim Raddock offered to pull together a subcommittee of this steering committee to consider the community center further and report back via email on further comp plan recommendations, by the end of the year.

Blazier Drive redevelopment

Developers with options on the eastern parcels presented to the Planning Commission earlier in October. Using the proposal as a springboard, Pashek+MTR presented three options for what could happen with the western parcels (Rave Cinema). The goal was to create a discussion about what the steering committee feels the community wants to see happen there in the hope of influencing future development at the site. Bruce and Steve Mertz said 6 acres of developable land is available at the site.

Ted Meinert said he thought it should include commercial development. Jim R thought the community would like to see sports fields in the floodplain and development elsewhere, via a land trade with owner/developer. Several members said they thought the community wanted remediation of an eyesore with natural redevelopment only.

Several people said that the developer of the eastern parcels should donate community space in the proposed “flex space” building there.

Consensus: Show the community what the site would look like without the Rave Building there and with development on six acres.

Route 19 South redevelopment

Ted provided a brief history of the corridor: It is zoned R-C (residential commercial). 20 years ago, there were lots of houses, and the Town didn’t want the corridor to start looking like lower McKnight road where individual homes were turned into businesses. The zoning designation was intended to encourage people to buy multiple lots to create true commercial development. Now, many years later, there are almost no residences – no “R” in “R-C.”

The R-C designation requires lawn in front and parking in back, with limited curb-cuts on Rt. 19.

Ted suggested changing the designation to C-2 (neighborhood commercial), which has more restrictions on materials and other details.

Nicole Hanson asked about changing the R part to multi-family to encourage denser development and re-energize the area with people who live there. Jim R suggested incentivizing owners/developers to create shops on the first floor with residential on the second floor.

Bruce said the plan should emphasize new standards for screening and buffering requirements, and maybe should revise the setback requirements so parking in the rear isn't right up against residential areas.

Kim Zachery suggested creating a portfolio of properties in the town that are available for development. The town can shop these around to developers.

Consensus: Pashek+MTR should propose modifications to zoning ordinances to help the community achieve development that is larger than single-lot, protects nearby residential, and enables a mix of commercial and residential. Also create sample site descriptions for a property portfolio.

Identifying with the community

Pashek+MTR noted that the public process yielded this general self-identification: "A vibrant and safe community conveniently located in the center of the North Allegheny School District." This idea can be incorporated into community's communications and decisions.

The steering committee discussed what level of two-way engagement the town seeks in its relationship with citizens (Inform>Consult>Engage>Partner>Empower).

Consensus: The town is generally in the "consult" space on the continuum and would like to move toward additional engagement. Pashek+MTR will recommend the town create a working group to suggest new ways to build community engagement through improved two-way communications with citizens, and also provide some ideas.

Greenspace Sustainable Development and Sustainability

Brian Moreth was remembered as playing a significant role in the community through his knowledge about and caring for McCandless and sustainability. His ideas live on.

He hoped the plan would:

- Support existing efforts to identify opportunities for sustainable use, such as trails, viewpoints, protections.
- Assist with efforts to create a natural resources map & inventory
- Review Pine Creek Watershed plan and list ways to support it
- Assist with identifying and mapping potential conservation or land trust areas.
- Review and suggest modifications for land use regs/ordinances/MS4

Consensus: Pashek+MTR can support the community's efforts to become a certified Sustainable Community by incorporating specific information in the comprehensive plan. Shelly Sponholz from the EAC will provide information. Also, create a grid suggesting potential uses for the community's green space locations.

Other topics that came up previously in the planning process that aren't key issues but shouldn't get lost:

- Technology
- Traffic congestion
- Public transit
- Property maintenance
- Housing

Deawna Afonsi advocated for McCandless to create a Technology committee or working group to advise Council on tech matters to help the community stay in front of a fast-moving topic with many issues that directly affect citizens. Bruce also noted it could be helpful for the town to participate in a COG-wide discussion.

Consensus: Create a technology advisory group. Support the additional "other" topics in the comp plan report.