

Town of McCandless Implementable Comprehensive Plan Phase I Report

Summary of Public Input and Selection of Key Issues

Understanding the Community's needs

Please see Attachment #1 – for a Scope of Work task list distributed to the steering committee at their first meeting.

1. Meetings with the Steering Committee
2. Prepare an online Questionnaire
3. Provide information to the Town's Facebook account
4. Conduct Interviews with Town Stakeholders
5. Community Day
6. Facilitate public meetings
7. Update Council
8. Present to Planning Commission
9. Pop-up Events facilitated by Steering Committee
10. Identify Key Issues for Phase II

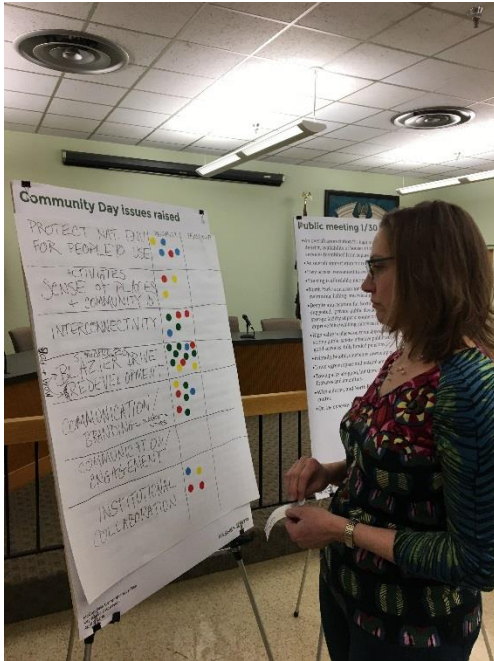
Steering Committee Meetings

Meetings were held on the following dates with annotations regarding the meeting. Please see Attachment #2,3,4 and 5 for minutes of those meetings.

December 6, 2017 – Aspirations for the plan, ideas for the January public meeting, and information that should be included in a questionnaire were discussed.

March 8, 2018 – Public input including community day, steering committee meeting 1, public meeting in January and preliminary information from the questionnaire responses were reviewed. Interviews were conducted and plans for spring “pop-up” events were planned. Results of a review of previous planning documents was presented.

April 2, 2018 – Discussion about key issues and prioritizing those issues. After ranking the topics, the top issues according to the steering committee were Infill and redevelopment and improve non-motorized transit (both with 11 votes) community branding (7 votes) and protecting the environment, enhance interconnectivity, and community center (all with 5 votes).



May 8, 2018 – Key Issues discussion continued with more information about what each issue contained. The committee ranked as the top issues this time as: Active transportation and connectivity (13 votes), community “brand” (12 votes), natural places and sustainability (10 votes), and Redevelopment of existing sites including Blazier Drive (9 votes).

Online Questionnaire

A digital community quality of life questionnaire was announced in January via a postcard sent to every household, posting on the Town Facebook and other means of letting residents know about the link. There were 1,746 tabulated surveys representing about 5,600 residents or about 20% of the population. There were a higher percentage of responses to the questionnaire from people older than 45 than the same age group as represented in the 2016 Census.

Attachment 6 is a summary of responses for each question. A digital copy of the survey results for review in an Excel spreadsheet with 67 columns and 1747 rows has been provided to the Town.

Providing information to the Town’s Facebook page

Information was provided and posted to the Town’s Facebook page throughout this process.

Conduct Interviews with Town Stakeholders

We interviewed the following people:

Andy Baechle, Allegheny County Parks Department
Jim Boltz, Pittsburgh North Chamber of Commerce
Ron Brown, Solicitor for the McCandless Township Sanitary Authority
Lydia Cessna, Manager, McCandless Corporation Center
Ed Chesmar, C&W Automotive
Daniel Cohen, Communications attorney
Grace Coleman, Crisis Center North
Michael Dillon, Allegheny County DPW
Kevin Dougherty, McCandless Crossing
Sister Candace Introcaso, Laroche University
Dave Martin, UPMC Passavant
Gretchen Mullin-Sawicki, CCAC President
Ann Ogoreuc, Allegheny County Transportation Engineer
Gordon Ott, Elder at Pittsburgh Chinese Church
Joel Perkovich, Allegheny County Parks Department
Cindy Potter, former Council member
Roger Krey, former council member
Scott Russell, School Board VP
Bob Scherrer, School District Superintendent
Jeff Thomas, CCAC Dean of North Campus (tech)
Sharon Wolf, NH Community Outreach

Attachment 7 is a summary of their comments.

Public Meetings

Community Day, 2017

On September 9, a booth was provided the consultant. As people passed the booth, we asked people what they liked about the Town of McCandless or what could be improved or was needed. Each person wrote their comment on a small white board and had their picture taken. We assembled the comments into common themes including:

Connectivity and Transportation
Recreation
Collaboration
Property maintenance/Code Enforcement
Commercial and Economic Development

Please see Attachment 8 for greater detail.



Public Meeting No. 1 – January 30, 2018

A public workshop-like meeting was held in the Powers Assembly Room to solicit input from residents. Thirty-five people signed in at the beginning of the meeting. Residents were asked to identify what they liked about the Towns of McCandless and what could be improved. From those ideas, common themes were clustered into the following topics:

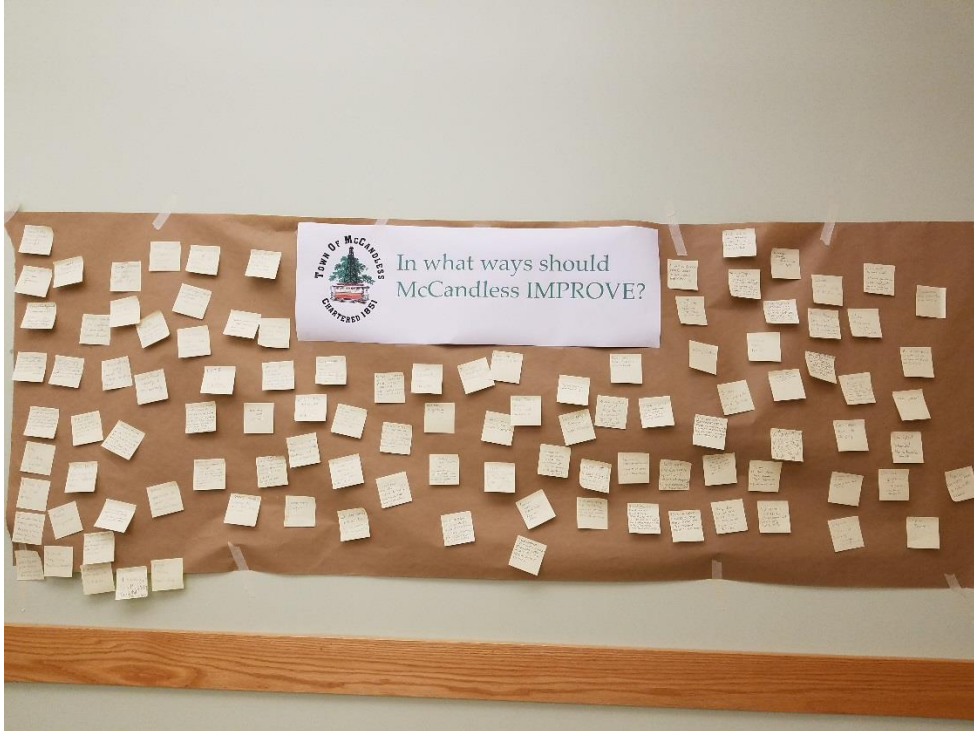
Under “What I like about McCandless....”

- Parks, Recreation, Open Space
- Community Services
- Township Government
- Family Life

Under “Things to improve about McCandless....”

- Parks, Recreation, Open Space
- Transportation, Traffic, Safety
- Government and Community Services
- Redevelopment, Zoning and Code Enforcement
- Community Center/Rec Center
- Business and Economic Development

Please see Attachment 9 for greater detail.



Public Meeting No. 2 – June 19, 2018

A public workshop-like meeting was held at Carson Middle School to report back on the ideas developed as part of this process and seek further input. Steering Committee members were stationed around the room to discuss the key issues this plan will undertake. The issues are:

- Active Transportation and Connectivity
- Community Gathering Space
- Redevelopment and infill Opportunities
- Greenway Corridors and Sustainability
- Community Identity and Public Engagement
- Recreation Programs and Special Events

42 citizens plus steering committee members and McCandless officials attended the public meeting. Citizens reported feeling grateful for the free ice cream from Handel's as well as the meeting itself.

Please see Attachment 10 for greater detail.



Council Updates

There were two Council updates provided. The first one on April 9, 2018, was after the results of the questionnaire were available and after the first public meeting. The second update was on May 14, 2018, where the formation of the key issues was addressed and input from Council provided on their preferences.

Please refer to Council meeting minutes on these updates.

Pop-up Events conducted by the Steering Committee

The steering committee was interested in building on this public process by talking to more residents about what they liked and what could be improved in the Town. They staffed a table near the entrance of the library on two occasions to talk to residents. Another table was staffed at Whole Foods. Those Steering Committee members participating in the pop-ups shared their impressions of the information with the entire Steering Committee.

Please see Attachment 11 for additional information on the pop-up events.



Review of previous planning studies

The firm reviewed previous studies involving McCandless.

Please see Attachment 12 for additional information.

Presentation to the Planning Commission of Phase I

At the regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission on July 3, a summary of the work completed to date for Phase I was presented.

Please refer to the Planning Commission's meeting minutes for this presentation.

Key Issues

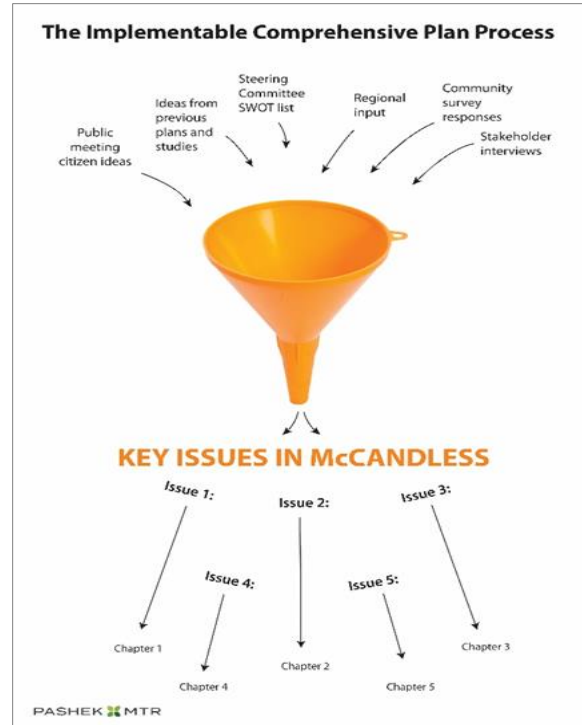
Based on the many layers of public input described above, the Steering Committee, Consultant and Council blended their thoughts on Key Issues into the following:

TIER 1:

Two Key Issues will get the most amount of planning effort in Phase II and will be referred to as Tier I Key Issues:

Active Transportation and Connectivity – walking and biking safely to destinations in the Town and beyond

Community Gathering Space - An assessment of facilities and space utilization in the area to help determine the support for and what type of facility might be proposed



TIER 2:

Four additional Key Issues will be developed in less detail than the above issues, Tier II Key Issues:

Redevelopment - focusing on Southern Route 19 corridor and to a lesser degree the Blazier Drive site

Greenway corridors - how we can protect and possibly use those sites for future generations, and other recommendations to make the community more sustainable

Community Identity and public engagement – two-pronged approach, one dealing with the Town’s image and thoughts on additional opportunities for community engagement

Recreation programs and special events - a review of services and events, and recommendations to fill gaps in offerings based on comparable communities.

TIER 3:

Additional Issues that have come up in the public input process, Tier III issues are:

Traffic congestion
Internet connectivity and other technology issues
Public transit
Property maintenance

Scope of Work Tasks

Implementable Comprehensive Plan for McCandless

Understanding the community's needs

1. Meet with steering committee for kickoff meeting/workshop
2. Prepare online questionnaire
3. Develop blog/Facebook page
4. Conduct key informant interviews
5. Review prior planning efforts
6. Tour community with staff
7. Meet with steering committee
8. Prepare presentation and facilitate public meeting
9. Update for council
10. Summarize public input
11. Meet with steering committee to review input, focus areas
12. Consolidate issues into four key issue focus areas
13. Meet with steering committee to review and affirm key issue areas
14. Update council
15. Prepare presentation and facilitate public meeting
16. Present progress to planning commission

"Drilling down" for solutions

1. Work on each area of focus:
 - A. Research background data, including mapping
 - B. Photograph the community
 - C. Review best practices
 - D. Convene focus group
2. Meet with steering committee to update/discuss focus areas
3. Develop strategies for implementation
4. Conduct more interviews related to implementation
5. Meet with steering committee to review progress
6. Continue to develop implementation detail
7. Meet with steering committee to review draft plan
8. Update council
9. Compile report
10. Prepare presentation and facilitate public meeting / celebration
11. Revise the draft plan
12. Distribute plan report for official reviews
13. Meet with steering committee to review comments
14. Present the plan to planning commission
15. Present plan summary at public hearing
16. Deliver copies of final report

Implementable Comprehensive Plan for the Town of McCandless

Meeting Notes

Date, Time, and Location: Wednesday, December 6, 2017, at 7:30 p.m., Assembly Room, Municipal Building, 9955 Grubbs Road, McCandless, PA15090

Attendees: Steering Committee, Toby Cordek, Town Manager, Andrew Hartwell, Allegheny County, Jim Pashek and Elaine Kramer, Pashek+MTR

Discussion Items:

1. Jim Pashek introduced the consulting team working on this Implementable Comprehensive Plan. Jim Pashek will be involved in all phases of the project. Elaine Kramer is project manager and will be responsible for the day-to-day activities of the project. Heather Cuyler will be involved with Park and Recreation issues and will provide planning support.
2. The traditional comprehensive plan was described and additional information was provided about the Implementable Comprehensive Plan that the Town of McCandless was about to undertake. The Implementable Comprehensive Plan:
 - i. Is developed around key issues that are important to the Town of McCandless, and not based on topics that may or may not be relevant to the needs of the community.
 - ii. The plan focuses on a few prominent issues, which allows the consultant to give further time to developing more detailed recommendations that should provide step-by-step strategies.
 - iii. The plan is a process, not a book. This process should consider ways to increase municipal capacity through volunteers.
 - iv. It is important to engage elected officials so that there is ownership in the plan.
3. Jim reviewed the Scope of Work (attachment #1). The process is divided into two phases, tasks related to "Understanding the community's needs," and the second phase, "Drilling down for solutions."
4. The Role of the Steering Committee is to:
 - i. Be enthusiastic and listen to others

- ii. Be prepared to attend all the steering committee meetings (about 10-12 over a year or so), public meetings and, if needed, additional meetings.
 - iii. Be succinct with your comments during the meeting.
- 5. Elaine provided an opportunity for each steering committee member to provide an aspiration for the plan or the community as we all consider the future. She started the discussion off by asking members to complete the following sentence: "The Town of McCandless is a place that ..." Attachments #2 and 3 list comments as originally described, along with a second list, which combines similar themes with minor adjustments to wording for consistency.
- 6. Each steering committee member then offered their thoughts on the key issues of the Town of McCandless. A list of those issues, attachment #4, is attached, along with a list that combines those issues under thematic titles, with some minor word changes and consolidation, attachment #5.
- 7. The group suggested that the initial public meeting about the comprehensive plan take the form of an "open house," rather than a sit-down-and-listen meeting. That way, more people might be able to attend, as it will take place over a longer timeframe, and will be less formal, enabling families to attend.
- 8. Jim described various means of collecting public input – public meetings, the steering committee, interviews, special-topic/research focus groups, and a community quality of life questionnaire. He asked for input regarding the types of information the steering committee would like a questionnaire to yield. See list, attachment #6. The steering committee also provided ideas for how to conduct outreach/publicity about the questionnaire.
 - i. Neighborhood associations
 - ii. Thursday "envelope" from elementary schools
 - iii. Target older H.S. students
 - iv. Make sure hard copies are available at central locations such as library
 - v. Include QR code links where possible
 - vi. Social media, North Hills Journal, postcard, Savvy Citizen
 - vii. Explore phone call blast

The questionnaire will be hosted by Survey Monkey and a link will be provided to the Town.

- 9. To keep our promise to the steering committee to end the meeting at 9pm, Jim suggested that there be additional communications between the consultant and steering committee on the following topics included in the agenda:
 - i. The date of the public meeting in January, once municipal and school board schedules are reviewed
 - ii. Listing of potential planning studies completed in the Municipality that have taken place in the past 5-10 years
 - iii. The date of the next steering committee meeting in February based on a

doodle poll circulated to the steering committee

Next Steps:

10. Pashek+MTR will begin to draft the community quality of life questionnaire next week and will send it out for feedback, probably twice, with the goal of a solid final draft before the end of the year.
11. Pashek+MTR will send out a doodle poll asking steering committee members to choose among likely dates for the next steering committee meeting.
12. Pashek+MTR will send out a meeting invitation for the first public meeting (NOTE: Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2018, was later selected based on room availability, consultant availability and no major conflicts with school district or town calendars.)
13. Pashek+MTR will work with the town to begin getting word out about the plan in general, the initial public meeting and the upcoming questionnaire.

The information contained in these minutes was recorded by Pashek + MTR and represents our interpretation and understanding of the discussions that occurred during the meeting. Please notify Pashek + MTR within one week of distribution.

Prepared by:	Jim Pashek
Date Prepared:	12.12.17
Distributed to:	Attendees, Mary Lopus, Heather Cuyler

Aspirations for McCandless

(As noted at 12/6/17 meeting)

McCandless is a place that

Is very diverse but no central identity. More cohesive, more identity. Untapped potential.

Health care, education and technology leader for the North Hills

Well-located, most affordable housing. Continue this.

Citizens of all ages and abilities are able to thrive. Attract all.

Up and coming place – appeals to all, especially younger generations. McCandless Crossing is example of way to make it appealing. Also Community Day and other events with themes.

Connected. Via all modes of transportation

Kids stay and elders return. Best Place to Live.

Improve identity. Recognize different types of areas throughout community. Keep the great things about it.

Recognize and improve assets – North Park, I-79, McCandless Crossing

Values life-long learning for everyone. Includes all forms of learning, such as past cultural learning, the bookstore, experiential learning.

Improve the visual appeal, such as at Wexford Flats. Eliminate overhead power lines and implement design standards.

Encourages structure so citizens can communicate and have an opportunity to know each other. Avoid parochialism.

Open to small business.

My kids want to come back to, with affordable housing and attractive location.

Greater sense of community. Greater quality of life via clean air, green space, clean water.

Poised to sustain quality we have – to build and improve a vibrant community.

Hub of North Hills, a destination. Bus lines help to create a stable municipality. Look at neighboring communities and find a fit.

Can live your whole life here, aided by public transit access, which also reduces pollution and consumes less gas. Consider circulator routes.

Aspirations for McCandless (Consolidated list)

COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

McCandless is a place with a strong local identity rooted in its diversity and the potential of all citizens.

McCandless is a place with a strong town identity that embraces the distinctive characters of its individual neighborhoods.

McCandless is committed to effective two-way communication to enhance engagement and a sense of community.

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING RESIDENTS

McCandless is a conveniently located place with housing choices that are attainable by working and professional people.

McCandless attracts and retains residents through all stages of life, providing both needed services and appealing amenities.

McCandless is a town that attracts citizens of all ages and abilities, and helps them to thrive.

McCandless is an up-and-coming town that appeals to all, but especially younger generations to ensure future prosperity.

McCandless is the “Best Place to Live” in the North Hills, where kids want to return and elders choose to stay.

McCandless is a place sought out by young families as affordable, attractive and convenient.

LOCATION, SERVICES AND CONNECTIVITY

McCandless is a place with well-developed connectivity for users of all modes of transportation.

McCandless is a place that builds on the strength of its location near I-79 and I-279, North Park and a thriving commercial corridor.

McCandless is a place that sustains its high-quality services and amenities by building upon and improving its vibrant neighborhoods and commercial areas.

McCandless is a stable business, residential and public transit hub of the North Hills and an important destination for people in nearby communities.

McCandless is a place that is the health-care, education and technological leader in the North Hills.

McCandless supports a thriving small-business sector.

OTHER ASPIRATIONS

McCandless is a place whose visually appealing places and spaces help to attract and retain residents and businesses.

McCandless creates a sense of community and improves quality of life through clean air, green space and clean water.

McCandless is a place that highly values and facilitates life-long learning for diverse groups of citizens.

Key issue brainstorming

(As noted at 12/6/17 meeting)

- ID assets and create partnerships – North Park OTB restaurant is an example. Public-private partnerships.
- Blighted properties – home values and aesthetics
- Walkability
- Communication to citizens
- Place to give birth in North Hills – traditional and holistic birth centers
- Tie neighborhoods and areas together, along with business corridor and park
- Community-building through community gardens, block parties, area to have parties
- Compatibility of commercial areas with residential zones
- Ingomar Road needs turn lanes – PennDOT issue
- Lack of public transit
- Eliminate power poles and overhead wires (expensive but these are eyesores)
- Figure out parking – where and how it should be
- Traffic increases during school rush hours, particularly at certain drop-off areas
- North Park is a great asset but isn't incorporated with McCandless
- No center to the community, no sense of community
- Pockets and areas are ripe for redevelopment
- Traffic safety, such as Ingomar Heights Road and Highland Road
- More recreation programming
- Value individual neighborhoods, such as Ingomar
- Lack of real, local restaurants
- Traffic roundabouts are needed at Ferguson Road and Thompson Run
- Schools and town should work together
- High-speed internet providers are limited to just Comcast and Verizon. Need more options.
- Identify town assets and communicate about them (parks, EAC, green spaces, churches). Brag!
- Bring back the flea market
- More local retailers
- Community center

Key issues brainstorming (Consolidated list)

VISUAL APPEARANCE

Blighted properties – home values and aesthetics

Eliminate power poles and overhead wires (expensive but these are eyesores)

GROWTH, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, TRAFFIC AND SAFETY

Compatibility of commercial areas with residential zones

Ingomar Road needs turn lanes – PennDOT issue

Figure out parking – where and how it should be

Traffic increases during school rush hours, particularly at certain drop-off areas

High-speed internet providers are limited to just Comcast and Verizon. Need more options.

Pockets and areas of town are ripe for redevelopment

Traffic safety, such as Ingomar Heights Road and Highland Road

Lack of real, local restaurants

Traffic roundabouts are needed at Ferguson Road and Thompson Run

Place to give birth in North Hills – traditional and holistic birth centers

More local retailers

CONNECTIVITY

Tie neighborhoods and areas together, along with business corridor and park

Walkability

North Park is a great asset but isn't incorporated with McCandless

Lack of public transit

(more)

COMMUNITY-BUILDING

Community-building through community gardens, block parties, area to have parties

ID assets and create partnerships – North Park OTB restaurant is an example. Public-private partnerships.

Communication to citizens

No center to the community, no sense of community

Value individual neighborhoods, such as Ingomar

Schools and town should work together

More recreation programming

Identify town assets and communicate about them (parks, EAC, green spaces, churches). Brag!

Bring back the flea market

Community center

Implementable Comprehensive Plan for the Town of McCandless

Meeting Notes

Date, Time, and Location: Thursday, March 8, 2018, at 7:30 p.m., Assembly Room, Municipal Building, 9955 Grubbs Road, McCandless, PA 15090

Attendees: Steering Committee; Toby Cordek, Town Manager; Andrew Hartwell, Allegheny County; and Jim Pashek, Pashek+MTR

Discussion Items:

1. Introductions:

After introductions and reviewing the Agenda for the meeting, Jim Pashek described the planning process and how tonight's meeting fits into the big picture. The process for this project involves two phases:

Phase I – Determining the Community's Needs

Phase II – Drilling Down for Solutions

Phase I includes:

- Public Outreach

- Defining and prioritizing Key Issues

- Presenting the Steering Committee's recommendations to the public

2. Review of Public Input:

A. *Community Day*

- Lots of recreation-oriented suggestions
- Interest in Community Center
- Connections to North Park
- Trees are valuable

B. *Steering Committee Brainstorming Key Issues on December 6, 2017*

- Visual Appearance of the Town
- Growth, Business Development, Traffic and Safety
- Connectivity
- Community Building

C. *Public Meeting on January 30, 2018*

- What I like about the Town of McCandless:
Parks and Recreation
Community Services
Township Government
Family Life
- Things that could be improved:
Parks, Recreation and Open Space
Transportation, Traffic and Safety
Government and Community Services
Redevelopment, Zoning and Code Enforcement

D. *Questionnaire status as of 3-5-2018:*

- 1,698 completed and submitted digitally via surveymonkey.com, a free software platform. 79 more submitted since 3-5-18, and more hard copy versions that were turned into Township have not been digitally entered (but will be by the deadline).
- School Superintendent Bob Scherrer said the North Allegheny School District would try to encourage additional responses via email blast flyer to elementary schools in McCandless and to older students via the student newspaper.
- Through a review of the responses, it became obvious that someone(s) had entered multiple times. Easy to identify. 218 identified as invalid and will be removed from the tabulation at the end. All of the invalid submissions were against the Town's getting involved in developing a community center.
- After subtracting the invalid responses and adding the responses entered since 3-5-18, we have about a 13% response rate community-wide.
- 61% of respondents have lived in McCandless for 15 or more years. The response of the questionnaire may be skewed toward an older segment of the population than is represented by Census. A more thorough review of the respondents' ages as compared to Census data will be done once the questionnaire is closed.
- Most of the responses were fairly predictable, with reasons why they like McCandless being its convenient location, School District, North Park.
- On the Community Center Question 11, as of 3-5-18, 55% thought additional room or a community center was a good idea, and 45% thought there was no need.
- More information was provided in a handout to the Steering Committee. Once the questionnaire closes on March 16, we will prepare a complete tabulation for distribution.

E. *Interviews*

- Seventeen of the people identified for interviewing have discussed McCandless with us.
- Renee Waibel provide an additional contact person at St. Alexis. Township will provide contact info interviewees at the police department and public works.
- Jim provided a few brief highlights from the interviews with more information to be provided the Steering Committee after the interviews have been concluded.

F. *Additional Public Input:*

Deawna Alfonsi volunteered to coordinate a few more public input initiatives in the

next month. She, Renee, Debbie Sagan and Nicole Hanson offered to staff a table in the lobby of the Library. They have tentatively set 9:30-12:30 on Tuesday, March 20 and Wednesday, March 21 from 5-8pm. Pashek will develop a poster for use at the table. Those representing the steering committee will be asking people what they like about the Town of McCandless and what could be improved. There was discussion about doing a similar event at CCAC. Ted Meinert will contact the appropriate person at CCAC. Renee will ask the Pine Creek Giant Eagle manager if the steering committee may solicit input in or near the store.

3. Review of Prior Studies:

A. *2005 Comprehensive Plan*

Many of the recommendations were accomplished. Most were traffic oriented. In addition to the few remaining recommendations, Jim included for reference only the 2005 Community Development Objectives.

B. *Planning efforts regarding the Harmony Trail*

Planning has been ongoing for a trail from Wall Park on the southwestern portion of the Town northward to Pine Township. Recent planning under the auspices of the Town's EAC. Bruce Betty hoped that the Harmony Trail would extend to a trail connecting into North Park eventually.

4. In closing:

- Remember to encourage residents to complete the questionnaire up to March 16.
- Review the material provided at this meeting in preparation for the next Steering Committee meeting on April 2, 2018. We will spend the entire meeting developing key issues and prioritizing them. This will be an important discussion that will form the basis for the Implementable Comprehensive Plan.
- **Please try to attend the next Steering Committee meeting on Monday, April 2 at 7:30 pm.**

The information contained in these minutes was recorded by Pashek + MTR and represents our interpretation and understanding of the discussions that occurred during the meeting. Please notify Pashek + MTR within one week of distribution.

Prepared by:	Jim Pashek
Date Prepared:	3-8-2018
Distributed to:	Attendees plus those steering committee members that could not attend, Mary Lopus, Heather Cuyler, Elaine Kramer

Implementable Comprehensive Plan for the Town of McCandless

Please note the following adjustments considered after the meeting on April 2, 2018

Key Issues were developed during this steering committee meeting. As these were broad in scope, with little detail as to what was specifically included under any one issue, the steering committee naturally found it difficult to assign levels of feasibility for each. For example, a potential community center could be part of “a Sense of Place” or part of “Parks and Recreation.” The community center could be a large facility with indoor/outdoor pools costing many millions of dollars, or a few added meeting and performance rooms attached to an existing structure like the municipal building.

Jim and Elaine suggest that we be allowed to further clarify and cluster topics – consistent with all public input and discussion at the steering committee on April 2. Then the committee could continue the conversation about the key issues at a steering committee meeting to be scheduled in May, instead of in the June-July time frame as stated at the April 2 meeting. This should better allow the committee to be comfortable with the key issues before they are discussed at a public meeting in June.

We have contacted Town staff to identify a meeting date for that fourth steering committee meeting, and will get that information out the committee as soon as possible. The following meeting notes have been modified to reflect that change in plans: moving the next steering committee meeting to May.

Meeting Notes

Date, Time, and Location: Monday, April 2, 2018, at 7:30 p.m., Assembly Room, Municipal Building, 9955 Grubbs Road, McCandless, PA 15090

Attendees: Steering Committee; Toby Cordek, town manager; and Jim Pashek and Elaine Kramer, Pashek+MTR

I. Setting the Stage:

1. Jim Pashek provided a handout showing the firm’s scope of work for the project as an illustration of how tonight’s meeting fits into the planning process. Phase 1 is almost complete. In this phase, the consultant and the steering committee have been striving to identify the community’s “Key Issues.” During Phase 2, the consultant will develop and provide strategies and specific steps for addressing the Key Issues.
2. Recapping the role of a comprehensive plan, Jim outlined how communities are expected to update their long-term plans every 10 year. Pashek+MTR roots the focus of the plan in strong public involvement and an interest in solving problems or building on strengths. While there might be many, many ideas a community could pursue, our goal with this

planning process is to narrow down the list and emphasize high priorities and what is feasible.

II. Key Issues Discussion

1. Elaine Kramer reviewed the forms of public input so far
 - a. Citizens at Community Day
 - b. Steering committee at first meeting
 - c. Public meeting
 - d. Questionnaire
 - e. Key Person Interviews
 - f. Pop-ups (one of three or more is finished)
2. The steering committee listed the issues it saw as themes that ran through many of the means of community input.
3. The steering committee then reflected which issues it felt were priorities for citizens, using dots as indicators.
4. The goal of this Key Issues discussion was to establish a baseline understanding of Issues that are high-priority and high-feasibility as a means of suggesting which issues should be addressed in the comprehensive plan. Pashek+MTR will review the list, continue grouping like topics, and add feasibility to the thought process. Concurrently, the Steering Committee should mull over the list in the next month in preparation for the next steering committee meeting in May.
5. This chart reflects the steering committee's input:

Topic	Priority (# of dots)
Protect the natural environment, and add sustainable development so these areas can be accessed and used	5
Create activities and places that foster a sense of community and cohesion	3
Enhance interconnectivity	5
Pursue infill and redevelopment, with a particular focus on Blazier Drive, South McCandless and other specific locations, and foster <i>local</i> businesses	11
Identify a community "brand," and improve communications around this brand to create sense of identity for current and future residents	7
Engage citizens in civic life through improved two-way communications	1
Improve collaboration with community institutions (private, public, non-profit, education, etc.) and neighboring communities	4
Address traffic congestion issues, particularly at specific intersections and at specific times of day	3
Add/improve transit, trails, sidewalks and bike lanes	11
Develop community center(s)	5
Add recreation programs and activities	3
Protect the highly valued mix of commercial and housing, including varied types of both	3

III. What's next

1. Group will wrap up public input in April with a few more "popup" opportunities.
2. Jim will update Council on April 9 and sometime in May-June, and will provide a Planning Commission update.
3. The steering committee will meet in May.
4. A public meeting will be scheduled as we wrap up Phase 1, possibly June 19, and possibly at a school cafeteria. The group expressed interest in conceiving this as a community ice cream social, and listed many ways it should be publicized. Several people didn't see/receive the postcards about the questionnaire, so there's doubt on the part of some about postcards' effectiveness. Other suggested means for publicizing the community meeting were: electronic sign at McCandless Crossing; yard signs; school district; houses-of-worship bulletins; robocalls; normal Town communication channels.

IV. Pashek+MTR will provide a written summary of Phase 1

The information contained in these minutes was recorded by Pashek + MTR and represents our interpretation and understanding of the discussions that occurred during the meeting. Please notify Pashek + MTR within one week of distribution.

Prepared by: Elaine Kramer and Jim Pashek
Date Prepared: 4-3-2018
Distributed to: Attendees plus those steering committee members that could not attend, Mary Lopus, John Bojarski, Heather Cuyler

Town of McCandless Implementable Comprehensive Plan

Steering Committee No. 4 – May 8, 2018, 7:30-9:00pm – CCAC Room 3024

Meeting notes

Key Issues Discussion: (50 minutes)

1. Pop-ups

1.1 Volunteers from the popup events at Library and Whole Foods reported on their discussions with residents:

- Overarching sense that residents appreciated being asked their opinion, and it was a positive experience for the volunteers. It also created good vibes for the Town.
- Some input was contradictory from one person to the next, and overall the input reiterated the themes we've been hearing. People might say, "I want a community center," but they don't really know what they wanted it to be.
- Some non-residents commented: "I wish my township would do this."
- Some residents took the opportunity to dive deeper into issues, with answers backed by additional thought.
- The volunteers were able to tout McMail, Savvy Citizen, other communications channels, and many residents were not aware of these
- The volunteers noted that many people don't seem to know what town they are in, with "Ingomar" and "Wexford" being cited as town names

1.2 These suggestions arose in reaction to the report from volunteers

- Toby Cordek suggested a "Five Zips, One Community" campaign
- Elaine said more input into Phase 1 of the comp plan isn't needed at this time, but maybe the steering committee can collect reactions to Phase 2
- Toby thought an ongoing effort would be terrific, such as a feedback booth at Community Day. He also suggested brief videos about the comp plan that could be posted.

2. Key Issues finalists lists

Jim and Elaine presented about the 6 finalists for Key Issues, with Jim showing images of how similar projects have been tackled in other communities. Please refer to attachments for details

2.1 Active transportation and connectivity

- Why isn't traffic/congestion included?
- What about public transit?
- Jim: These can be part of the "other" chapter, and dealt with in far less detail. Pashek+MTR's understanding is that the Town staff and engineer maintain constant list of trouble spots or complaints and where improvements are needed on Town-owned roads. There is a long-term plan that the Town updates and coordinates with Southwestern PA Commission, which is the clearinghouse body for PennDOT improvements, or Allegheny County for county-owned roads.

2.2 Community gathering space

- A gap analysis and survey of space utilization would be useful
- Create a kind of Air BnB for spaces, listed in one place
- This part of the plan would provide the Town with enough information for the community to make a decision on this issue.

2.3 A plan for Blazier Drive parcels

- Why just Blazier Drive? There are other places that need redevelopment
- Toby and Bruce Betty noted that the owners are developing plans/proposals for the developable areas of Blazier Drive and their work could overtake the timing of this plan.
- Previous work, including 2013 traffic study and other review by Pitt engineering students, both concluded there were insufficient incentives to make developers want to proceed.
- Make this topic “redevelopment and infill” in a more general way.
- What if the comp plan created a process to help the developer stay engaged with the community, with very public act of asking “What do you want to see happen here?”
- Jim said the topic will change to be more broadly focused on redevelopment.

2.4 Natural places and features, community sustainability

- This should build on the previous natural resources inventory.
- It could help create long-desired routes, such as the east-west linkage from Duncan Ave to North Park

2.5 A community “brand”

- Does this include strategies for implementing the brand?
- It might be good to hold random focus groups as a way to continue hearing from citizens.
- Elaine and Jim related how it worked in Jeannette.
- Make this topic include “engagement.”

2.6 Recreation programs and activities

- How is this different from Natural places and features or Community gathering space?
- Jim discussed how this is the effort to create and implement activities and “what to do,” whereas the other two topics are the locations and facilities, or the “where to do.”

2.7 Other

- What about topics that residents don’t know they should be thinking about? This could include technology?
- Jim noted that those are still important but will be covered in less depth in the “Other Topics” chapter.
- The two topics from the finalist list that do not become Key issues in the plan also get moved to the “Other Topics” chapter, and are covered in less depth.

3. Voting and discussion

The group voted with these results:

Active transportation and connectivity	13
Community gathering space	6
A plan for Blazier Drive parcels and redevelopment	9
Natural places and features, community sustainability	10
A community “brand” and engagement	12
Recreation programs and activities	2

A lengthy and thoughtful discussion ensued about a concern that “Community gathering space” is not on the Key Issues list though it has been a highly contentious and publicized issue in the community. Some key points were:

- Differentiating between what steering committee members feel is important to the community vs. what they feel the consultant should be spending time on
- Asking whether items can be combined (Jim said that both dilutes the issues but also represents more time and fee than is in the budget)
- Whether there could be 5 instead of 4 Key Issues (Jim priced another key issue at \$10,000)
- The upshot of the discussion was that the group asked Jim to attend an upcoming Council meeting on Monday 5/14 to explain the situation publicly. Jim in turn asked that the committee members to please be in attendance to help explain the situation. *NOTE: A subsequent discussion amongst Toby, Bruce and Kim Zachary yielded the decision that since “Community/Rec Center Analysis” had been part of the RFP, this should be one of the Key Issues.*

4. The group briefly discussed the public meeting planned for June 19, 6 p.m. at the Carson Middle School Lobby and Cafeteria. The meeting may be delayed due to the discussion mentioned above. When the meeting takes place, these individuals volunteers for these tasks: Amy and Deb on photos; Renee and Ted on sign-ins; others “floating. Bruce is to look into getting the ice cream.

Consultant Contacts: Elaine Kramer, Pashek+MTR
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ekramer@pashekmtr.com

Notes and observations about the questionnaire results:

1746 tabulated once invalid responses were deleted. By making a guess as to how many people the respondent represented in Q2, we estimate that the responses to this questionnaire represents about 5,600 residents or about 20% of the population.

#1 How long residents have lived in McCandless: National Average

4 years or less	12.2%	49%
5 to 15 years	25.6%	29%
More than 15 and all my life	62.2%	22%

#2 Type of person filling out the questionnaire:

Single Person living alone	15%
18+ young adult living w/parents	1%
Young adult roommates	<1%
Family w/children	36%
3 generations	1%
Adult couple	41%
Other	4%

#3: Age range of respondents 2016 Census Respondents of this questionnaire

25-44	23.4%	24.8%
45-64	28.9%	45.17%
65+	19.6%	29.5%

#4 Top 4 reasons why you are living in McCandless based on a weighted average (numbers closest to 1 = strongly agree)

1. It is a convenient location relative to places I go frequently (1.46)
2. The school district is high quality (1.46)
3. It is a safe and healthy place to live (1.53)
4. It is near North Park (1.53)

#5 Of the 311 that provided other reasons in question 5, the top three reasons were"

1. Close to major highways – easy commute
2. Close to Pittsburgh
3. Safe Communities, low crime rates, great place to raise a family

- #6 We listed a variety of services and facilities and asked respondents to express their satisfaction. The closer the weighted number is to 1, the higher the level of satisfaction. A score of 3 would be equally between very satisfied and not satisfied. The following are ranked from most satisfying.

- Fire and Emergency protection (1.36)
- Police Protection (1.47)
- Access to Library resources, programs and services (1.51)
- Access to trails, parks and green space (1.72)
- Housing types available (1.80)
- Refuse collection and recycling (1.99)
- Organized outdoor recreation opportunities; exp. parks and sports (2.08)
- Visual appearance of town (2.09)
- Road maintenance (2.14)
- Special events exp. Community day, block parties, fun run, fireworks (2.15)
- Availability of information via digital technology (2.17)
- A feeling that I can become involved in community life if I choose (2.30)
- Property maintenance requirements and enforcement (2.31)
- Ease of communications with Town staff and officials (2.32)
- Traffic management (2.42)
- Organized indoor recreation opportunities (2.57)
- Safe Routes for walking and biking (2.70)

- #7. The top 3 “Other aspects of McCandless life that were not listed in #6” included:

- Affordability of living
- Access to shopping/restaurants/entertainment
- Safety

- #8. Current issues were ranked from Very important to Not Important. They were ranked based on a weighted average with those closer to 1 being most important.

- Protect Streams and wetlands (1.71)
- Ease traffic congestion (1.72)
- Protect residential areas from commercial growth or intrusion (1.72)
- Support existing and new small businesses (1.74)
- Guide future development (1.77)
- Emphasize sustainable practices (1.98)
- Improve the appearance of commercial areas (2.12)
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity (2.23)

#9. For “other significant issues” 315 people responded with the top 3 issues:

1. Community Center/Senior Center (34)
2. Develop Trader Horn/Rave lot (32)
3. Improve traffic flow/enforce speed limits (28)

#10. We asked if a tax increase is required for a community center, how much would your household be willing to pay? 1722 respondents answered this question out of 1,746

\$0	-	41%
\$1-1,000	-	59%

#11 Regarding the need for a community center or additional room for meetings, performances or activities (1,667 responded to this question):

For additional community spaces	52%
Does not need additional space	48%

Cross tabulations between Q11 and several other questions:

	All responses to Q11	Responses who have lived >15 years in Town (Q1)	Responses who listed adult couple to Q2	Responses who listed families w/ child. to Q2	Responses to those ages 25-44 to Q3	Responses to those ages 45-64 to Q3	Responses to those ages 65-79 to Q3
For add'l space	52%	50%	44%	65%	64%	50%	45%
Add'l. space not needed	48%	50%	56%	35%	36%	50%	55%

#12 What amenities should a community center have if built in McCandless? 841 respondents answered this open-ended question with the following top 4 listed:

Meeting/activity rooms (rented)	-	207
Indoor/outdoor pools	-	139
Fitness Room	-	129
Indoor walking track	-	99

- #13 Regarding Zoning and Land Development issues in the Town, the following were ranked to their importance. A weighted average closer to 1 means the respondent strongly agrees that this issue is important. A score of 3 is equally between strongly agree and strongly disagree.
- The mix of commercial and residential land uses is about right (1.52)
 - Residential areas are sufficiently buffered from light, noise and traffic (2.42)
 - More housing types should be allowed (3.11)
 - Mixed uses (housing above shops and offices) should be encouraged (3.17)
 - Additional big box retail should be encouraged (3.64)
- #14 When given the opportunity to add other comments regarding zoning and land development, 375 entered an opinion with the following top 4 issues recorded:
- No further commercialization (56)
 - More parks and green space (43)
 - Bring Walmart/box stores (27)
 - Improve Rave/Trader Horn lot (18)
- #15 Communications, citizen engagement and inclusion have been discussed recently. The following is the level of agreement to the following statements. They are ranked by their weighted average with the lowest numbers representing more agreement and anything above 3.00 represents disagreement with the statement.
- The Town of McCandless communicates effectively about things to do (2.11)
 - The Town of McCandless communicates effectively about services provided (2.49)
 - The Town of McCandless communicates effectively about public safety issues (2.57)
 - The Town of McCandless communicates effectively about public meetings (2.64)
 - The Town of McCandless engages citizens at public meetings (2.68)
- #16 When offered the opportunity to provide additional comments about communications, 181 offered suggestions with the top 4 being:
- Better communications between council and citizens (34)
 - Town agendas/contacts for board or council members should be easier to find (29)
 - Town agenda points should be sent in emails/mailed several days in advance (14)
 - More frequent emails (10)

#17 The following are the ways respondents get information regarding what is going on in Town,
in descending order:

- McCandless website (57%)
- McMail (51%)
- The Town Calendar (49%)
- The Town Crier (42%)
- North Hills Journal (40%)
- Word of mouth (35%)
- North Allegheny communications (24%)
- McCandless official Facebook page (23%)
- Pittsburgh TV news (21%)
- Other Facebook group (19%)
- Savvy Citizen (15%)
- Other newspaper (14%)
- Town Council or other public meetings (8%)
- Nextdoor social media network (7%)
- Neighborhood Association (6%)
- Local access cable broadcasts (3%)

#18 We asked for those interested in being involved in planning for the future of McCandless to provide contact info. 219 did so.

#19 People were asked what communities McCandless should benchmark itself against. The top 3 were:

- Pine (215)
- Hampton (143)
- Franklin Park (124)

#20 Other comments? An amazing 428 offered comments. The top 2 were:

- They love McCandless (24)
- Need to develop Blazier Drive (21)

Summary of key points from interviews

1. Some supported a Community/Recreation Center, some did not.
2. The Blazier Drive Site was mentioned by a number of people, suggesting commercial and park uses.
3. Non-vehicular connection to North Park was mentioned by several although other connections were also mentioned like those between residential plans. Several talked about the need for more sidewalks.
4. Several people talked about the importance of parks.
5. The lack of bus service was mentioned by several people.
6. McCandless Crossing was mentioned as an asset to the community.
7. One leading community figure expressed concern about the disharmony and lack of civility in the community, mentioning specifically community Facebook sites that foment discord rather than constructive dialog.

Community Day comments September 9, 2018

“What do you like about McCandless? What would you like to see planned for McCandless? What Concerns do you have?”

Connectivity and Transportation

- Walkability, bike lanes and access to North Park (6x)
- Public transportation
- Well maintained roads, especially during the snow

Recreation

- Canoeing and various activities in North Park (2x)
- Disc golf
- Community Center (6x)
- Awesome playground
- Pickle Ball Courts
- Community garden
- Neighborhood parks (2x)
- More history center
- Fishing area on Pine Creek/ADA
- Kayak access near bike rental
- Indoor soccer field
- Trampoline park
- Amusement park
- Dog park
- Basketball court, Ingomar north
- Walmart property – fishing tie into North Park
- Heated outdoor pool
- Northland library meets so many needs
- Backyard small farm animals
- No smoking signs at ball fields



Collaboration

- People friendly
- Everyone has a voice - encouraged

Property Maintenance/Code Enforcement

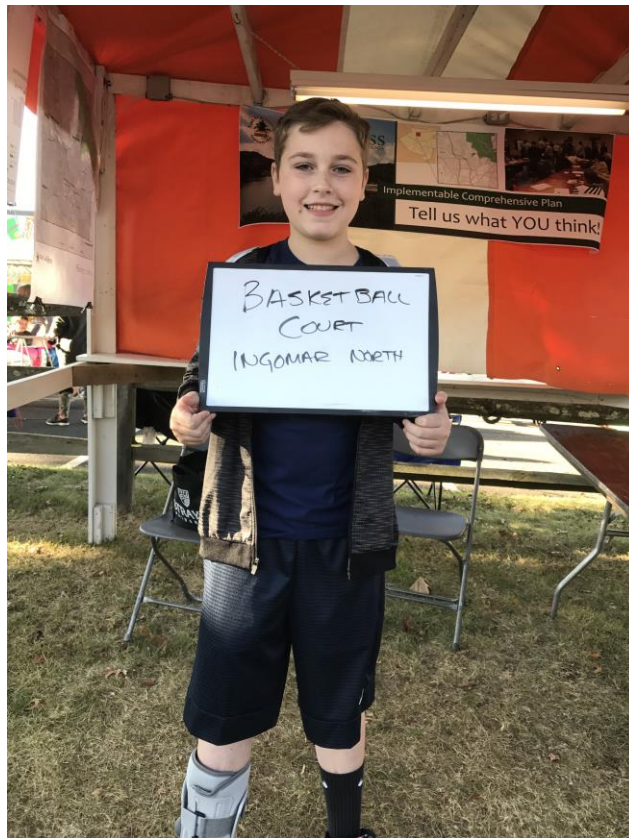
- Building codes

Sustainability

- Protect wooded areas, plant more trees, trees are awesome (3x)
- Don't pave previous surfaces

Commercial and Economic Development

- Mall
- Local restaurants, not chains
- McCandless Crossing
- Commercial redevelopment planning/policy
- Great restaurants
- Better job planning what goes where
- Blazier Drive corridor brought back to life



Citizen Input

McCandless Public Meeting for Comprehensive Plan

Jan. 30, 2018

What I like about McCandless...

Parks and Recreation

- We like the playgrounds at North Park.
- Plenty of green space.
- North Park pool.
- Trying to improve green spaces.
- North Park.
- North Park.
- North Park access and other good community parks.
- North Park is very nice.
- North Park.
- Awesome playground.
- Natural beauty.
- Basketball courts.
- Access to public recreation.

Community Services

- Great library.
- Great schools.
- Roads are well maintained.
- With a library and North Park, do not see the need for a community center.
- We have so many wonderful facilities that already provide what a community center would give.
- Nice sidewalks, good library.
- Top tier school district.
- Great library that is accessible even by walking or riding a bike.
- A great residential community with great schools and churches.
- Limited commercial businesses.
- Very good school district.
- The number of community schools.
- Ingomar Elementary school – it's a good school and they have movie night.
- Top notch school system.
- School district.
- Schools, hospital, services.
- Good mass transit.

Township Government

- Wonderful police – very helpful.
- No debt.
- The police, great public works, feel safe in a growing township.
- Good services – fire, police, etc.
- Fully funded pensions.
- Friendly, helpful, courteous town employees.
- McCandless Day
- Police that truly help residents and are not on an ego/power trip.
- Debt free.

Family Life

- Great mix of commercial and residential.
- Great schools, great neighbors – a place you enjoy living in.
- Nice quiet and safe place to live.
- Easy access to stores, recreation, healthcare – everything commonly needed for everyday life.
- Good neighborhoods.
- Affordability of housing.
- Love the heritage center!
- Residential character and proximity to downtown.
- Great place to raise a family – environment continues to improve.
- Great community for walking or biking.
- Friendly neighbors (for the most part).
- A wealth of talented residents in all areas of expertise.
- Proximity to major interstates.
- It doesn't get much better than this!
- Access to downtown.
- It has always been my home!
- Having LA Fitness in our community.
- Having Target in our town.
- One website once called McCandless a “park-like” community. So, we moved here! What happened?

Things to improve about McCandless...

Parks, Recreation, Open Space

- Nerf gun battle place where you can build forts.
- Place to see and do magic
- Soft indoor playground.
- More green space.
- Place to play Splatoon paint battles (paintball safe for the very young).
- Ninja Turtle Nerf gun play area.
- Cartoon world with mascots and rides.
- Lego building contest for all.
- Historic sites in North Park (e.g.: water tower).
- Bike storage facility in North Park so people don't need to drive their bikes to the park (as it is dangerous to ride bikes from McCandless to North Park).
- Bike and walking trails along the creek from McKnight down to the lake – beautify the trail.
- Spray for emerald ash borer – it's killing our trees.
- Upgrade/repair North Park facilities: pool and pool house.
- Make Ingomar Road through North Park a “parkway” and ban commercial traffic.
- Connect ballfield/pool with lake area.
- Deer – too many! Need to talk to Mt. Lebanon.
- Indoor bathrooms at playground by North Park pool.
- Activities for teenagers: a skate park (where Rave Cinemas were – it doesn't matter if it floods).
- Improve skating rink in North Park – it's the same as it has been for 30 years.
- Park or green space where Trader Horn is.
- The Lodge at North Park needs some TLC. Beautiful building – just needs some updates.
- Deer – let's consider a cull.
- Sidewalks to connect houses in North Park.
- Hiking and biking extensions: 1) get bikers off major two lane roads (Ingomar Rd) and 2) use Harmony Short Line (if available) to connect Pittsburgh to Pine Township through McCandless Township.
- More bike paths and sidewalks.
- More parks!
- More places to go skiing.
- Prepare a list that tells residents what indoor recreation space is available. (Schools, perhaps?)
- Need more park space – North Park is not in McCandless.
- Green space developed into a park where the old Trader Horn is located – tear those buildings down.

Transportation, Traffic, Safety

- Repair problem at Wittner and Highland.
- Intersection signal hell – please synchronize lights and get sensors working for low-traffic times.
- Red light installed at the bottom of Sloop and Highland.
- Turn Blazier Drive into a model “town center” – a social gathering place via public/private partnership.
- Bring the left turn arrow at North Park intersection by cannon and lake.
- Left turn arrow by Luciano’s Pizza off of Peebles – both directions.
- Connectivity and safety need to work hand-in-hand.
- Private, electric car chargers.
- Sidewalk on Ingomar Road around the Kuhns area.
- Need a roundabout or 4-way stop at intersection of Ingomar-Highland-Ingomar Heights Roads.
- 4-way stop sign at the intersection of Highland, Ingomar and Brandt School roads.
- Roundabout or stoplights at the intersection of Highland, Ingomar and Brandt School roads.
- The open creek on Olive St should be filled in or repaired – big water problem during big storms.
- Help Ross and PennDot synchronize McKnight signals – current “optimized” system is worse than before.
- Connectivity and class of roads – speed/safety.
- Grubb Road safety and connectivity.
- Development of Blazier Drive – commercial and/or wetlands.
- Connectivity of some of the old roads that have no room for sidewalks or bike lanes as it is hard to get from place to place outside of a car.
- Better transportation.
- Mass transit access to the City.
- Bus service for the half-day kindergarten.
- Public transportation dedicated to go from McCandless to downtown areas like the Casino, museums, sports stadiums, etc.
- Police staffed to monitor speed limits.

Government and Community Services

- Spell out the steps required to do the plan – expectations.
- Anything that would enhance the residents’ quality of life.
- More firework nights in McCandless.
- Could be a more diverse population.
- Base decisions on facts, not emotions.
- This questionnaire is not worth a damn: 1) no way to validate, 2) raw data should be available, 3) not statistically accurate and 4) can lead to the wrong conclusion
- Disaster preparedness – organizing various community resources (library, schools, NHCO, etc.) ahead of the need.

- Encourage a more diverse population.
- Improve sense of identity: signage and community activities.
- How do you benchmark the township's performance against other townships?
- Improve communications, especially on strategic projects that have long-term effects on the town.
- With the wealth of talent available, limit a person to one committee.
- Improve taxes!
- Prepare multi-year financial history vs. year over year.
- Council must give citizens legitimate opportunities to participate.
- Staffing increase for police.
- Republicans must stop the dirty politics.
- Create review process for progress on plan after 5 years.

Redevelopment, Zoning and Code Enforcement

- Zoning D-2? Start a plan to rezone "Walmart" issue.
- Concern that some people are on multiple commission bodies.
- Overdevelopment of commercial properties – policies for tax abatement or commercial development.
- Keep it green.
- Flood ways should be preserved as wetlands at the old Rave Cinema.
- Zoning changes that better deal with development of difficult-to-develop sites and redeveloped/repurposed sites.
- Parking ordinance redo/update to prevent another McCandless Crossing.
- Development comes at the price of the environment (e.g.: trees cut down for McCandless Crossing).
- Zoning laws should be reviewed and brought up to date like other townships.
- Balance opportunities for development driven by zoning.
- Better zoning – that Crossing was *never* in our last 10-year plan.
- Zoning/planning to anticipate the expansion of alternative energy sources (wind and solar).
- Control rundown homes and buildings.
- Ken Dougherty is not the only good developer.
- Green spaces in balance with buildings. Use them rather than just have them there.
- Improve neighborhood feel – tighten zoning restriction on development.
- Enforce trash laws.
- Enforce ordinances strictly.

Community Center / Rec Center Idea

- More public gathering places.
- Better utilization of the grass mall at McCandless Crossing – have each restaurant sponsor a weekend.
- Don't build a new public facility that competes with existing private ones.
- Community center.
- Community center with pool.
- Don't think recreation building is a good idea – costs and competing available facilities already exist.
- Community center modeled after Ross and Hampton.
- Ask the county to “give” us a piece of property for our community center within our border.
- Plan needs to support the township's mission.
- How does the town council measure if the plan's components are being implemented?
- Community center.
- Build a “virtual community center” cataloging all the recreational and social opportunities both private and public that exist in the town.

Business and Economic Development

- A close, safe place for women to give birth.
- A candy shop – where you can get candy.
- Disappointed in McCandless Crossing – just a big box clone – what happened to the Town Center concept?
- Keep it park-like and residential – go to the city for your entertainment.
- Too much chain development – need to encourage local businesses.
- More family friendly recreational businesses.
- A comedy club.
- Encourage independent businesses.
- Need walk-able, small business retail centers (Ingomar, Perry Hwy, Wexford Flats) with walking connections to adjoining neighborhoods.
- A plush shop (sells stuffed animals).

Citizen Input

McCandless Public Meeting No. 2 for Comprehensive Plan

June 19, 2018

The following summarizes public input at the second meeting regarding the focus of the plan.

Active Transportation and Connectivity

Walking and biking safely to destinations in the Town and beyond

- Bruce Beatty and Jim Radock got participants to draw their current and desired walking and biking routes on a map of McCandless. This can form a basis for active transportation planning that we develop further in the comprehensive plan.

- Elaine Kramer & Heather Cuyler

Community Gathering Space

An assessment of facilities and space utilization in the area to help determine the support for and what type of facility might be proposed

Amy Steele and Deb Sagan asked citizens what facilities in the region they currently use and what they feel is missing.

Existing Outdoor Amenities	
Bradford Woods Reserve	3
Hartwood Acres	17
Knob Hill Comm. Park	8
Linbrook Park	3
McCandless Swim Club	3
Old Orchard Park	1
Potter Park	6
Vestal Field	5
Vincentian Rec Complex	4
Warrendale Comm. Park	1
Windwood Pool	1
Carson Trail	5
Rachel Carson Trail	6
Wall Park	
School running tracks	
North Park ropes course	
Pie Traynor field North Park	
Concerts at Hartwood Acres	
Dog Park	

Existing Indoor Amenities	
Shaler North Hills Library	6
Pure Athletex	1
Northland Public Library	29
North Hills Art Center	4
LaRoche College	11
Holy Trinity Center	3
Goldfish Swimming	3
Cranberry Twp Comm. Center	6
CCAC-North	13
Bradford Woods Borough Bldg	3
Avalon Public Library	2

Indoor and Outdoor Amenities	
Avenworth Comm. Park	4
Baierl Center	9
Baierl Family WMCA	4
Blueberry Hill Park	14
Evergreen Park	3
McCandless Town Hall	19
Millvale Sportsman's Club	3
North Park	31
North Park Pool (duplicate?)	3
North Side Sportsman's Club	1
Oxford Athletic Club	3
Pine Community Center	3
Robert Morris Island Sports Ctr.	6
Ross Municipal Center Park	6
The Woodlands	2

Missing in McCandless	
Community gathering spaces for all	2
Teaching kids about jobs. Fireman/policeman	
Community Center	5
Bicycle paths	
Potter Park (Hidden gem!)	
Places to meet	
Gathering for home school	
Teen gathering spaces (to bring food, relax, play games, large enough for more than one group. Foosball, pool table)	2
Place for cooking classes	
Theater/amphitheater	
Moms' space - networking	
Preschool play area - playdates	
Community WiFi	
Ice skating rink	
Paint ball	

- The one thing that stood out for me was the number of folks looking for places to meet. It was interesting that as people marked the places they currently use, they were pretty passionate about them with very positive comments made, but at the same time, as they skipped over items they don't use, most were quick to pass right by them. There were some people who would stop and ask, what is that, or where is that.

North Park was hugely popular, with folks wanting to separate out the various features at the park that they use – I'm sure you saw that on the lists.

Most folks I spoke with felt that McCandless was fortunate that there was access to so many great assets in the immediate area.

A number of folks were very enthusiastic about wanting a community center. Some mentioned the meeting space, others classes/programs. Some still couldn't pinpoint what they wanted; they liked the concept of all (many) of the things on the list being available at one place. Several referenced the concept of a place to be the center of the community where folks could gather and hang out and visit with neighbors while participating in various activities.

Several commented that they were pleased that McCandless was asking for their input. They seemed to enjoy the evening.

- Amy Steele

- I tried to capture all of the comments I could on the sheets that were on the table, but I want to share one comment that I don't think I wrote on the sheet. It was about North Park being an asset particularly for those that exercise or like nature, especially in the fair-weather months. However, winter is a long season and foul weather is common here, so it would be useful to have places to gather and pursue activities out of the harsh weather too.

I did have someone who was at the Open House approach me later with a comment that “a Community Center would be the best way to develop an identity for McCandless and the citizens. Far more useful than street signs with the Town's name on them.” Thought that was an interesting point of view.

- **Deb Sagan**

- There is an over-arching interest in having a community center. I personally would like to see the plan specifically use the term “community center” because this is the exact phrase that residents use over and over again. People also seem to immediately agree and understand that not everyone shares the same definition of “community center.” They seemed more than happy to offer more specifics when asked. Along this line, people expressed the lack of opportunity for free or low-cost meeting spaces for groups to hold meetings, events and for residents to hold events for personal reasons as well (i.e. family reunions, showers, receptions, etc). People would like to have more options than just North Park—especially for inclement weather and/or wanting something less rustic/cleaner, etc. Also, people really like the Ross Community Center and that seems to be a model that people admire. I've heard that countless times.

- **Deawna Alfonsi**

Recreation Programs and Special Events

A review of services and events, and recommendations to fill gaps in offerings based on comparable communities. Mike Rapach and Deawna Alfonsi.

- Based on my time at the tables Tuesday night, I had a lot of conversations around a community center. The driving need seems to be meeting space and event space for small groups. Examples that were given to me were bridal showers, places for small parties, space for kids to work on school projects together, those types of things. It really helped clarify what the needs and interests were for me. There seems to be an opportunity to create availability of space for these types of things, and there may be ways to leverage the space that already exists through the school district, the parks, and other means.

The other thing that came across, and it may have been the audience we received, was the needs for active seniors that aren't being met currently. There seems to be a lot there, and it seems a ripe area for more exploration as well.

- **Mike Rapach**

- We also thought the Recreation/Programs board and notepad reflected an interest in community events particularly – community garden, Easter Egg hunt, car show, art fest, movie night in the park. Those types of things and, to your point, activities for Seniors.

- Elaine Kramer & Heather Cuyler

- As far as people seeming to prefer events over programs, I'm not sure I take away the same thing. I think that because the pictures themselves represented events versus programs, they gave their feedback on that. If we had offered more examples of programs, I think we would have gotten more feedback on programs as well.

As far as additional take-aways for me:

- I was surprised at the popularity of the garden. People especially like the idea of using gardens to help food banks as opposed to just gardening in general.
- Movies in the park (kid-friendly)

- Deawna Alfonsi

Redevelopment and Infill

Focusing on Southern Route 19 corridor and to a lesser degree the Blazier Drive site.

- At last night's ice cream social, I was involved with the Blazier Drive and Infill boards. The following are some comments that I heard:
 - Develop Blazier Drive site as partly natural and partly commercial.
 - No new mental health care facilities.
 - We need a modern design for whatever is built. Most buildings in McCandless look dated.
 - It doesn't really matter. Nobody really listens to the public.
 - Include bio-swales and sidewalks in whatever is built.
 - Use site for a community center, including new office and police facilities.

- Ted Meinert

Greenway Corridors

How we can protect and possibly use those sites for future generations, and other recommendations to make the community more sustainable.

- I worked with Jason on the Greenway Corridors. Jason noted to those at our station that 20% of McC was considered "Green Space". Those I talked to were very pleased and seemed glad that North Park was a major part of their lives. Many walked in the park and enjoyed the lake. We noted that the Wall Park trail was coming together and those who walked were looking forward to its completion. Many were glad that the area at Harmony

and Highland would be an area with parking for walkers and be put back to a natural site with plantings, etc.

The biggest question I had was what is the town going to do with the Blazer Drive area. Most felt it should be returned to nature, some thought that “low impact” buildings would be okay with lots of green included.

One other item that probably half of the folks mentioned to me was that their area was overrun with deer; what can the Town do to slow that growth?

- **Dick Schnupp**

- My conversations were about the same as Dick’s, but I would like to add a few other items that I talked to visitors about.
 - Most people were unsure of what to call “greenspace”. Some wanted it to be all tree’ d areas, some thought only publicly accessible (Parks) were greenspace. It was an item that people had interest in but did not understand exactly how to classify it.
 - No one personally talked directly to me about sustainability, however it was talked about in second hand efforts about preserving areas and creating trail systems; as well as recreational uses for the town owned properties.
 - One resident was concerned about ticks and the use of trails in these areas. She was concerned trails added risk to those using the areas. She wasn’t concerned about the deer, more about educating the citizens of what to look for. She was wanting the town to do more education and outreach about ticks/Lyme disease. I have also invited her to attend our upcoming EAC meeting.
 - One resident was unhappy to not see blighted and/or abandoned houses a topic of concern.

- **Jason Singer**

People did like Greenspace issues.

- 200 acres of green space in Town. 191 acres plus a 20-acre site. Open to people. Listed farms and forest reserve properties
- Parks, Town owned properties, part of school properties, not the Memorial Park cemetery or LaRoche or CCAC
- 144 acres are tax-advantage properties, including Eichner farm is reserved
- 1790 acres of North Park is in McCandless.

- **Brian Moreth**

Community Identity and public engagement

Two-pronged approach: one dealing with the Town's image and thoughts on additional opportunities for community engagement

- Brian and I manned the Community Identity and Public Engagement table. As you know we did pretty well; we had 25 comments. Brian asked everybody not to list NA schools, but most people did at least comment on the school district being a factor.

Some people might not have known how to exactly answer the question and were somewhat answering with comments of what they liked about the Town. This can be used to help form an identity. Surprisingly, there were some comments on how nice it was to have different smaller neighborhoods within the Town (Ingomar North, Breeze Wood, Indian Village, etc.). It reminded them of the city with individual districts. On the other hand, there were comments of why there isn't just one zip code for the whole Town. Why Wexford, Ingomar, Allison Park & Pittsburgh? All and all, I think the general consensus was that McCandless is a safe, well maintained area that is in the heart of the North Hills and is convenient to shopping, entertainment, health care and the city.

- **Dennis Blakley**

- Community Identity: People would stand at our station, read the list and say, "I agree with those." There was some negativity and some good ideas.

- **Brian Moreth**

The transcribed list:

1. Other than NASD and North Park – only negative things
2. Close to shopping and nice residential homes
3. Residential neighborhoods
4. Deer (too many)
5. No downtown – need a gather place other than shopping
6. Very dated visually – 1960-70 images
7. Route 19 needs a unifying identity – South Ingomar – landscape, lighting, signs, sidewalks
8. Low taxes, good public works service (leaf pickup and plowing), low crime, peaceful neighborhoods
9. Neighborhood Identities – sense of inclusion/being part of something
10. Accessible to Pgh. Some parts by PAT could be better served.
11. Very green space
12. Small-town feel in some areas
13. Community togetherness – multiple opportunities. Friendly people!
14. Great neighborhoods. Very convenient to shopping, recreation, education, medical (Wish we had a "real downtown.")
15. Great Town structure. Services, green space, convenience of amenities.
16. Smaller community with good access to city, shopping, but needs better restaurants. Like the wooded feel.
17. Beautify 19 South
18. Great utilities-sewers, and well thought out.
19. Agree with No. 16. Older demographic. Car-dependent.
20. Great schools, access to downtown and major roads, North Park

21. Convenient to all major highways
 22. Center of North Hills
 23. Has a little bit of everything!
 24. Streamlined communication/interaction with residents. Many do not know about McMail, Savvy Citizen, etc.
 25. Green spaces good.
 26. Well-kept properties
- Probably half of the folks I talked to were pleased that the Town had the open house, the other half only heard about it from friends or neighbors. We've got to continue to get the word out in some way about the communications formats that are in place!

Thanks for the great format and setup, I think the attendees were impressed, at least those I talked to!

- **Dick Schnupp**

Pop-up Event Reports

What Do You Like About McCandless

Great Schools: 8

Like it the way it is/Great place to live: 4

Great Services

Friendly people

Location – convenient to shopping, hospitals, entertainment, airport & downtown: 4

McCandless Crossing – like the restaurants there: 3

Good balance of residential & business: 2

Good place to raise a family: 2

Glad Walmart didn't go in: 3

Traffic better than Mt. Lebanon

Taxes are low- keep them low & a balanced budget: 2

Love North Park (trails): 2

Improved Kummer Rd. & Ingomar Rd.

How Should McCandless Improve

Community Center for programs, gathering, meetings: 2

Too many deer: 4

Concerned about deer ticks and disease: 2

Too many potholes (especially at Pine Creek Road & Brandt school Road) 1

Enforce residential speed limits

Better salaries for teachers to keep NA schools good – help with recruitment especially for special education teachers

Concerned about residential lawn spraying & environment (notification should be required)

Don't like parking at Rave lot or McCandless Crossing: 2

Provide ongoing education regarding Opioid epidemic & abuse and resources including help for local EMS: 2

Make green space where Park 'n Ride is (Blazier Drive)

More green space/be better with the environment

No shooting range: 2

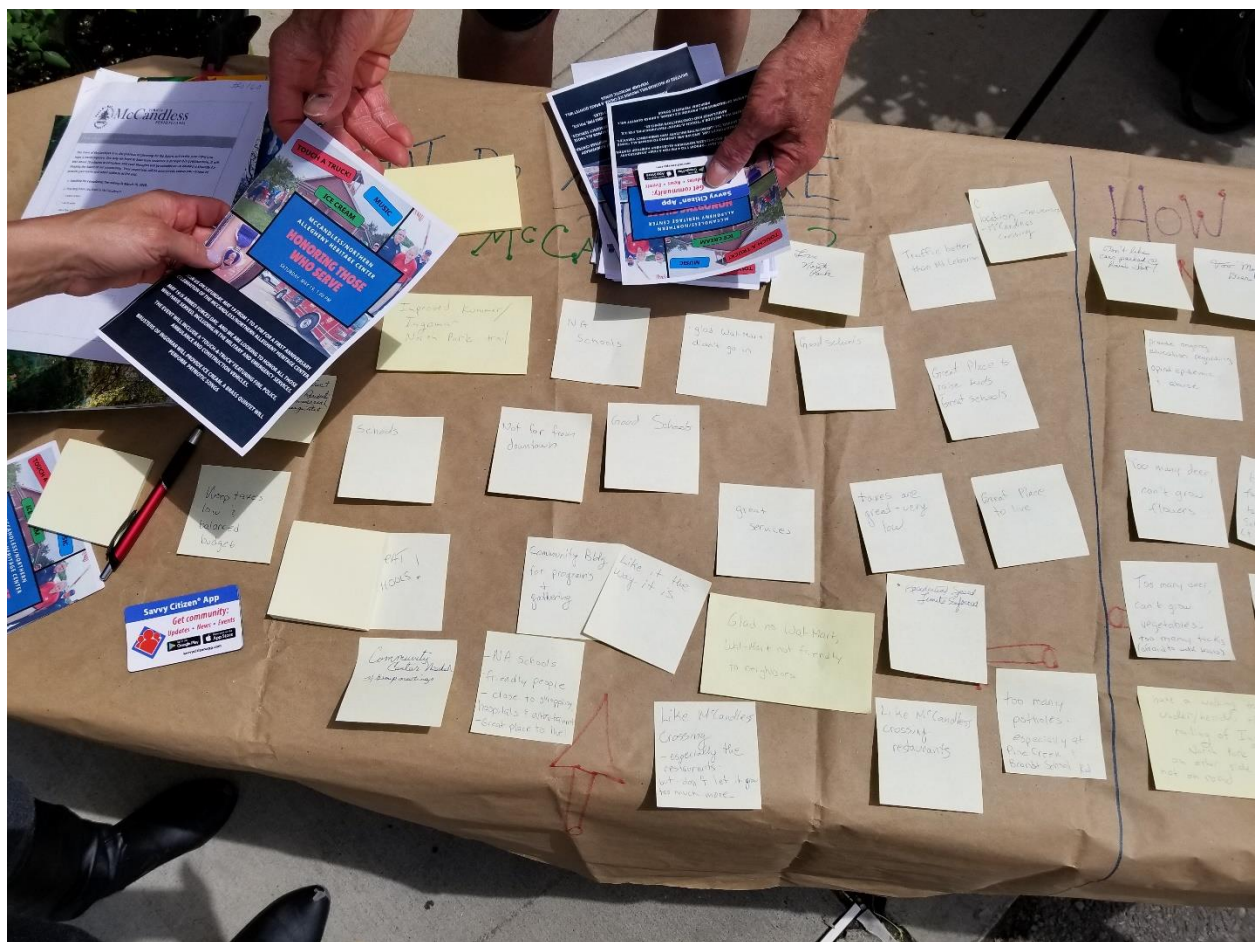
Road improvements, Need wider roads for growth, Better Traffic safety from northbound McKnight to Perry Hwy (up to Wexford Flats), synchronize Rt. 19 lights in Wexford: 2

Taxes are too high

Police sitting watching too much on Ingomar Rd. – wasteful

More resident input & transparency in big decisions (Wal-Mart)

Walking trail on Ingomar Rd in North Park improvements good, but not good enough, move trail to other side of railing (not road side.)





From Library Day #2

Improve:

It would be nice to have a community center for family activities, classes, etc.

Can we please get one more Park and Ride and more accessibility for public transportation?

No more Cell Towers! If they are necessary, please disguise them so the landscape isn't degraded, and the lights are so annoying.

More kid/toddler activities please!!

Would like for McCandless to preserve the quietness and tranquility of the environment. Limited development to preserve the suburban "feel."

It would be nice to have a family community center

Community overall is great.

Improve Leaf pickup>>more often >>hard to walk in street with leaves on edges and no sidewalks.

I wish there was more opportunity for community involvement on Town Council geared to working professionals.

McCandless is a great community as it has all good restaurants, library and all in one service for everything. I would love to have a good Community Center and kids' area too. Thanks.

I'd like to see a community center like Cranberry. Lots of activities.

A real Parks and Rec. Department that works with North Park. Provide services like a pool for seniors.

More night life and cool events for adults like shows and music.

We need a Walmart HAHA.... COMMUNITY CENTER

POSSIBLE PARK IN AND AROUND THE OLD SHOWCASE /PARK AND RIDE.

LIKES

*WHAT I LIKE ABOUT MCCANDLESS:

1. SENSE OF COMMUNITY
2. CONVIENCE AND ACCESSIBILITY
3. SUPPORT FROM TOWN COUNCIL, WARD 2 BILL KIRK
4. SUPPORT FROM MC. PD CHIEF DISANTI
5. NORTH PARK

*LOVE THE PARK, SCHOOLS & NOW SHOPPING CENTERS
CANNOT THIK OF ANYTHING FOR IMPROVEMENTS

*EXCELLENT PLACE TO LIVE 2. NORTH PARK 3. GREAT LIBRARY

*CENTRALLY LOCATED AND PARKS ARE WONDERFUL

*I JUST MOVED HERE AND I LOVE IT. VERY CONVENIENT TO ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING!!

*WE LOVE THE SCHOOLS AND THE PEOPLE. CONVENIENT TO NEW SHOPPING, FIRE AND HOSPITAL SERVICES

*WE LIKE THAT MCCANDLESS IS A REAL COMMUNITY WITH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS (LIBRARY, TOWN HALL HISTORY MUSEUM) WE ALSO LOVE MCKNIGHT.

*BUSINESSES ARE CONVENIENT TO RESIDENTS

*VERY CONVENIENT TO EVERYTHING

*GOOD SCHOOL SYSTEM

*BASEBALL FIELDS

*PERFECT BALANCE OF RESIDENCE AND BUSINESS

*LIKE OPEN SPACES—TREES AND SUCH

I LIKE THE AREA, NORTHPARK, SCHOOLS N.A.

*IT'S BEAUTIFUL PLACE TO RAISE YOUR KIDS. GOOD BALANCE OF COMMERCIAL AND SOCIAL AMENITIES

*NORTHLAND LIBRARY, NORTH PARK, VERSATILE SHOPPING, FAMILY FRIENDLY.

*GREAT PLACE TO LIVE – AWESOME COMMUNITY TO RESIDE A FAMILY (GREAT SCHOOLS!)

FROM A PERSON IN MY BOOK CLUB:

McCandless Twp. has everything one needs within 5 or 10 minutes:

good restaurants, banks, post office, fabulous school district, police dept., fire company, churches,

movie theater, safe neighborhoods, good grocery stores, quick access to (79, turnpike, downtown Pgh) and more.

We could use one high-end restaurant and one art movie theater. Other than that, can't think of a thing.

Summary of recommendations from Town of McCandless Comprehensive Plan of 2005 that should be considered during this planning cycle

1. Relatively few parcels of land remain undeveloped in McCandless, and tend to be areas of steep slope. The Town should encourage the assembly of vacant parcels in these difficult areas, to accommodate new development. The new regulations referenced above (regulations to protect woodlands and wetlands) should provide for a range of housing density alternatives and a mix of housing types in these areas.

Attention should be given to correlating these developments with the topography and environmental conditions. A **Transfer of Development Rights** ordinance should be designed to support these developments, with certain incentives, to maximize preservation of the natural environment (IX-111, section 900.1)

2. Community Development Objectives (XII-150, section 1202.3):
 - Preserving and improving the natural environment
 - Increasing property values, employment opportunities, and the economic base of the Community
 - Providing protection to life and property from fire, acts of crime and for emergency medical service
 - Providing for safe, adequate and attractive housing of all types
 - Protecting life and property from flooding and soil erosion
 - Assuring the availability of all necessary utilities
 - Providing for adequate vehicular transportation arteries and pedestrian walks and trails
 - Providing for adequate recreational and community facilities
 - Providing for ongoing community planning and for long-range growth management programs
 - Providing for safe, adequate and attractive commercial and institutional uses
 - Avoiding incompatible uses
 - Developing adequate watershed management systems, including adequate stormwater drainage systems
3. The removal of trees and excessive grading of these steep slope lands must be avoided. (XIV-173, section 1400.1)
4. Under Housing Challenges (XIV-175, section 1400.3)

- The Town should chart an inventory of vacant lots and abandoned buildings and develop programs for encouraging renovations and maintenance of these older homes to attract new families. The MPC suggests that municipalities develop such a plan for rehabilitation of housing in declining neighborhoods.
- The Town, possibly in conjunction with the North Allegheny School District, must consider strategies and activities to retain and/or attract the youthful families who are looking for good, affordable housing. This is a priority item for future planning. Emphasis on infill development will help to satisfy some of this demand.

5. Action Required (XIV-188, section 1402.2)

- Continue emphasis on developing additional recreation and cultural facilities as proposed in the budget, and as may be requested by recreation organizations
- Promoting conservation of the natural and historical resources and prime agricultural land, forests and woodlands, and providing for good forestry practices

Summary of recommendations from Studies done for the Harmony Trail in the Town of McCandless that should be considered during this planning cycle

Plans exist for developing a walking trail from Wall Park near Rochester Road in the southwestern portion of the Town, northward along a minor tributary to West Ingomar Road. Then the trail continues northward along Harmony Road and Wexford Run to the Town's north boundary with Pine.

Property has been acquired from Wall Park to Glen Allen and some of the trail has been developed.

Consider using the Official Map process to preserve the right to future development of the trail.