

# A McCANDLESS CONVERSATION



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**ADOPTION OF THIS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The Town of McCandless Council voted Aug. 26, 2019, to adopt this plan (Resolution No. 22 of 2019.)

The resolution to adopt this plan appears on the subsequent pages of this report.

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OFFICIAL  
TOWN OF McCANDLESS  
RESOLUTION NO. 22 OF 2019

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF McCANDLESS,  
COUNTY OF ALLEGHENY, COMMONWEALTH OF  
PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING "A McCANDLESS  
CONVERSATION: IMPLEMENTABLE COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF McCANDLESS 2019" AS THE  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF  
McCANDLESS**

**WHEREAS**, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act of July 31, 1968, P.L. 805, Act 247, as reenacted and amended December 21, 1988, P.L. 1329, Act 170 (53 P.S. Section 10101, et seq.), as amended (hereinafter "MPC"), empowers municipalities to plan for their development and govern the same by zoning, subdivision and land development ordinances, as well as adoption of a municipal comprehensive plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the MPC at Section 310 provides that the municipal comprehensive plan shall be reviewed at least every ten years to provide guidance for future development; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2017, the Town of McCandless began the process of reviewing its comprehensive plan and appointed a Steering Committee consisting of Town Officials and residents to oversee the development of "A McCandless Conversation: Implementable Comprehensive Plan for the Town of McCandless 2019" (hereinafter the "Plan"); and

**WHEREAS**, the Steering Committee, along with the Town's planning consultant, developed the Plan which addresses the following five "Key Issues": active transportation & connectivity; community activities; green space & sustainability; redevelopment; and community identity & public engagement; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of McCandless received and considered comments on the Plan from the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development; and

**WHEREAS**, Allegheny County, contiguous municipalities, and North Allegheny School District have reviewed or been given the opportunity to review the Plan pursuant to the MPC; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of McCandless has made the Plan available for public review in the Town's administrative office; and

**WHEREAS**, the Plan contains all of the basic elements for a Comprehensive Plan, as mandated by the MPC; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of McCandless Planning Commission held a public meeting, pursuant to public notice, on June 5, 2019, to consider the Plan and recommended that the Town of McCandless adopt the Plan as presented; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 22, 2019, Council of the Town of McCandless held a properly advertised public hearing on the Plan and after consideration of the comments made at the public hearing, has incorporated various revisions to the Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, there have been no substantial revisions to the original draft of the Plan which would necessitate any further public hearings or public notice prior to its adoption; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council has determined that the Plan is an accurate and thorough summary of the Town of McCandless's community assets and of its vision for future community development; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council of the Town of McCandless believes that adoption of the Plan is in the best interests of the Town of McCandless and its residents and citizens.



**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Town Council of the Town of McCandless, as follows:


1. The Town of McCandless does hereby adopt "A McCandless Conversation: Implementable Comprehensive Plan for the Town of McCandless 2019" as the official Comprehensive Plan of Record for the Town of McCandless. The Plan is hereby adopted in its entirety, including all maps, charts and textual matter, pursuant to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.
2. Any Resolution or part thereof in conflict herewith is repealed to the extent of such conflict.
3. This Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication as required by law.

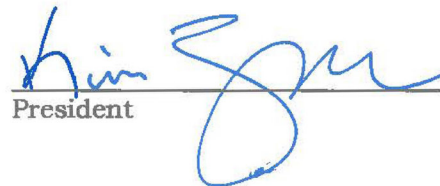
Motion made by Councilmember Walkauskas, seconded by Councilmember Mertz, and this Resolution is adopted this **26th** day of **August**, 2019.

ATTEST:

TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN OF McCANDLESS

  
Secretary

  
President

TADMS:5190682-1 024399-180511

# Acknowledgments

The preparation of this implementable comprehensive plan would not have been possible without the guidance and contributions of the Steering Committee, as well as the input given from local residents and officials. We would like to thank and recognize the following people and groups for their efforts to make the plan possible:

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Deawna Alfonsi, citizen stakeholder

Bruce Betty, McCandless Land Use Administrator

Dennis Blakley, citizen stakeholder

Toby Cordek, McCandless Town Manager

Nicole Hanson, citizen stakeholder

William J. McKim, Town Council, Ward 7

Edward (Ted) Meinert, Planning Commission

Steve Mertz, Town Council, Ward 3

Jim Radock, citizen stakeholder

Mike Rapach, citizen stakeholder

Deborah Sagan, citizen stakeholder

Robert Scherrer, NASD Superintendent

Richard Schnupp, Planning Commission

Jason Singer, Environmental Advisory Committee

Amy Steele, Northland Public Library  
Executive Director

Rene Waibel, citizen stakeholder

Kim Zachary, Town Council, Ward 1

## ALLEGHENY COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LIAISON

Andrew Hartwell, Planner

## IN APPRECIATION

The authors and collaborators for this report also wish to remember the admirable contributions made to this planning process by Brian Moreth. Brian, who died Sept. 25, 2018, served on the Planning Commission, Environmental Advisory Committee and the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

## ADDITIONAL THANKS

This report also wishes to thank the McCandless Town Council and McCandless Planning Commission, and the officials and stakeholders who participated in a research-oriented focus group to explore ideas and solve problems related to active transportation, connectivity and transit use.

"A McCandless Conversation" was prepared in collaboration with residents, professional staff, elected officials and appointed officials of the Town of McCandless, PA. Local, regional and state-level professionals in the public and private sector with specific expertise also contributed in large and small ways. This participation is explained further in the How this Plan Came Together section of the Appendix.



# WELCOME

## REPORT INTRODUCTION & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Q

McCandless' implementable comprehensive plan, "A McCandless Conversation," is rooted in the notion that change happens through discussion, conversation and working together toward common goals.

A typical conversation bounces back and forth among individuals. A community conversation involves talking and listening among individuals, groups, and the Town's elected officials and professional staff. It is rooted in striving to see each other's point of view and identifying points where people can agree. This is not always easy and not always a linear process.

It's no secret in McCandless that there have been differences of opinion in recent years among citizen groups or public officials. This may not be normal for the Town of McCandless, but it isn't unusual in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area – or anywhere, for that matter. Some communities disagree over culling deer, some over property maintenance ordinance enforcement, some over location of stop signs, and some over development patterns. In fact, few official actions make all of the people happy all of the time.

&

This plan reflects an effort to build a conversation on specific key issues, and to encourage that conversation to continue through stages of decision-making, leading to improvements in the community. The plan includes recommendations for new citizen advisory boards and other means for engaging the public and building capacity to implement the desired changes. The plan makes many recommendations for next steps on each key issue. These ideas were developed following community input and numerous conversations – even debates – among steering committee members, Town officials and the consultant.

A

- **It will be up to the community**, through its elected officials, to decide which action steps to pursue, and in what order, although we will suggest priorities for immediate action in this report.
- **It will be up to the community**, through their elected officials and after some public discourse, to determine whether to spend public funds on this priority, that priority or not at all.
- **It will be up to the community** to decide exactly what it wants to see happen, and to build coalitions and capacity for implementing those changes. Although doing nothing is always an option, we hope the elected officials will take to heart the opinions of residents reflected in this plan.

These decisions will arise through discussion, conversation and mutual understanding of each key issue. They will depend on citizen engagement, informed debate and action by the Town Council and professional staff. To guide these discussions and actions by the elected officials, we have developed a preferred vision for each key issue, specific strategies to lead toward implementation of that vision and supporting information regarding costs and schedule where appropriate.

---

It is within this context – of difficult choices, diverging opinions, a desire for more transparency, and changes in staff and in voting blocs on Council – that “A McCandless Conversation” is presented as a series of questions and answers. We ask and try to answer: Why this? Why not that? How would McCandless make it happen? Who will be responsible? How long should this take? How much will it cost? How do we overcome obstacles?

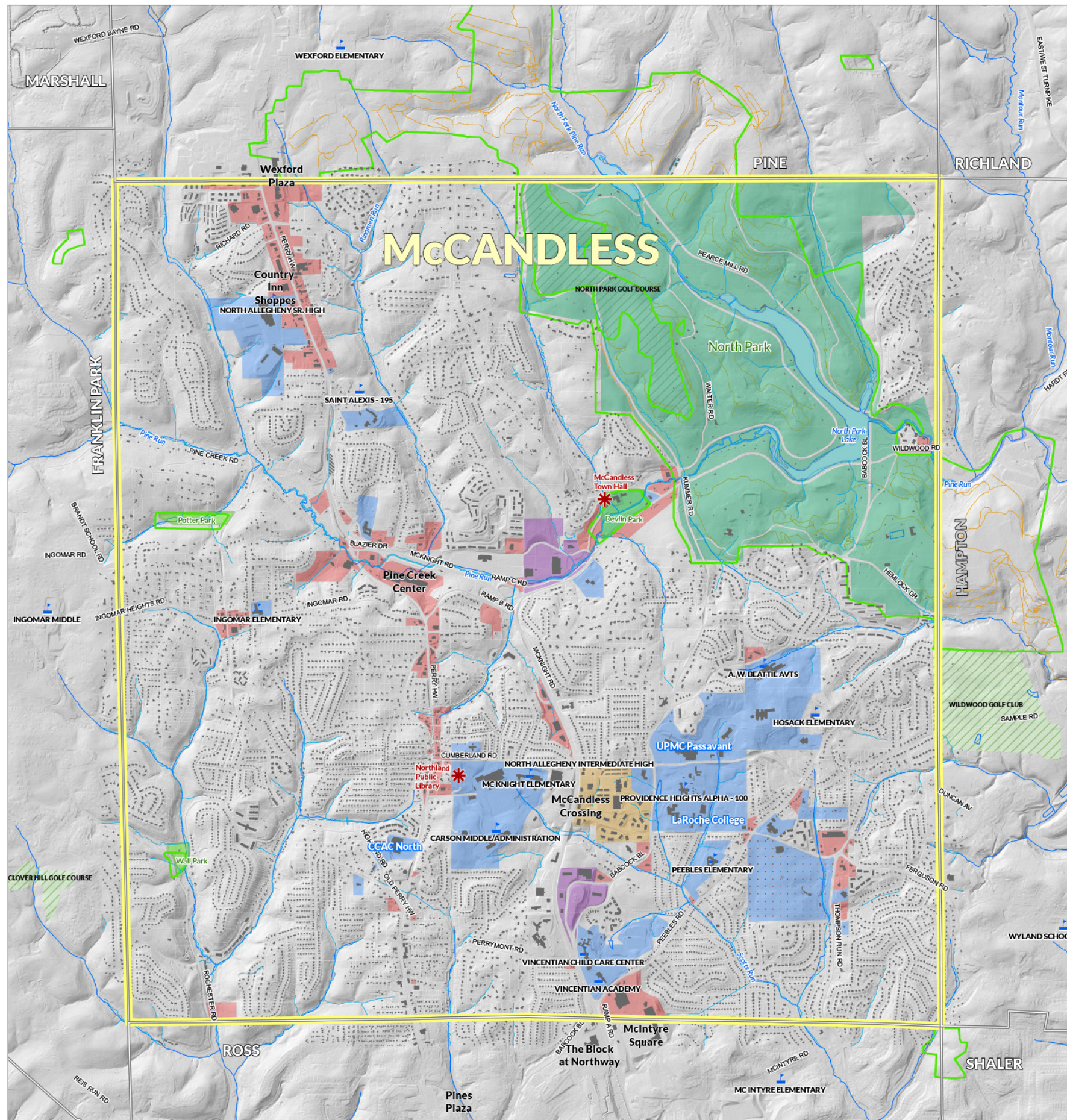
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The report may be, itself, the subject of debate and discussion. That is as it should be.

“Planning” is, by definition, a description of how and why things should be different in the future. The community’s implementable comprehensive plan should be a living process, with this report the record of the conversation so far ... and a discussion guide for the future.

**WE INVITE YOU TO OPEN ‘A MCCANDLESS CONVERSATION.’**





Town of McCandless  
Comprehensive Plan

# Community Features Map

May 2019

## Legend

- McCandless Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- ▲ School
- ✱ Public Building
- Cemetery
- Park
- Golf Course
- Park Trail
- Lake
- Stream
- Property Parcel
- Building Footprints

## Non-Residential Zoning Districts

- Commercial
- Mixed-Use
- Public or Institution
- Traditional Neighborhood Development

0 1,000 2,000 3,000 4,000 Feet  
1 inch = 1,000 feet



PASHEK MTR





# How to Use this Report

## CONTINUING A MCCANDLESS CONVERSATION

McCandless has begun, via this planning process, to pursue a number of community improvements, some large, some incremental. This report documents the discussion and suggests next steps for specific ways the Town can build on strengths and make improvements.

During this planning process, the Town initially chose six “Key Issues” as the primary focus of the implementable plan. Two that are interrelated were combined into a single Key Issue, and several other topics were captured and included in a chapter called “Other Topics.” Work to make positive changes in these areas is under discussion or already under way.

### WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

- Citizens expressed a need for some changes in McCandless and are expecting follow-through.
- McCandless can best ensure its continued success by using this plan as a policy guide as it makes decisions over the coming years.
- There are costs to making changes (time, money, effort), but also costs to doing nothing (resentment, ultimately in declining property values and less tax revenue).

## HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

After this Introduction & Executive Summary, readers will find chapters covering each of the five Key Issues and one on Other Topics. The Key Issue chapters are:

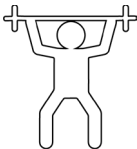
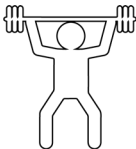
- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| • Active Transportation & Connectivity            | originally were conceived as separate topics) | • Redevelopment                          |
| • Recreation Activities & Community Center (these | • Green Space & Sustainability                | • Community Identity & Public Engagement |

Within each chapter, readers will find a brief background summary or main points about the issue, and a vision statement (Describing “where do we want to be?”) and strategies for pursuing the desired changes (“How will we get there?”).

Each strategy includes more specifics, with these identifiers:

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Vision and Goals</b>	<b>Suggested schedule and estimates of probable costs, when appropriate</b>
		 

The anticipated difficulty of each strategy is noted with one of these:

<b>Easy</b>	<b>More challenging</b>	<b>Challenging</b>
		

The report’s appendices include useful supporting information and guidance documents. As with the main report, these are recommendations that may be implemented to the extent they do not conflict with the report.

# NOW WHO DOES WHAT?

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

## ELECTED OFFICIALS

This report documents the development of the comprehensive plan. It is a policy guide that identifies the directions in which the Town plans to change, and lays out the practical next steps toward that change. Next steps, in most cases, rest in the hands of elected and appointed officials who have the role and responsibility of initiating new policies or procedures; providing funding via grants or city revenue streams; providing human and material resources; and lending oversight. Residents expect leadership from their elected officials, including anticipating future challenges before they become today's problems.

It is understood that the Town has finite resources and has responsibilities for use of those resources. Being good stewards of the finite resources, Town Council must prioritize the action steps in this plan within the larger budgetary context.

## CITIZENS

Individuals may advocate for the plan and track progress by comparing the steps listed in this report to physical changes in the community and actions taken by the Town. Citizens must attend public meetings where decisions are made. Citizens must take an active role by pressing for the actions and policies listed in this plan, which are steps toward the changes that citizens sought during the public process. Citizens also may support and propel change by volunteering for committees or for special initiatives.

## TOWN STAFF MEMBERS

McCandless employees have the responsibility of identifying successive next steps and tracking progress. They will work on a day-to-day basis to develop policies and procedures; muster resources; and assist elected and appointed officials in pushing the outcomes of the plan. Staff members are in the best position to spot obstacles to progress and propose solutions.

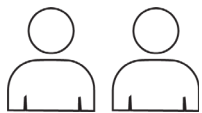
## PLANNING COMMISSION

People serving on the Planning Commission should become deeply familiar with the contents of this report. These members, along with other board and commission members, hold the responsibility of keeping the Town's "foot on the gas" for implementing the steps in this plan, anticipating what should happen next, and proposing action, and solving problems that will clear the way for progress.



# The Key Issues in Brief

## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTIVITY



### VISION

McCandless provides safe, convenient and comfortable routes for people to get where they need or want to go without the use of a motor vehicle.

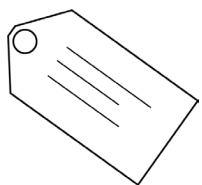
### OVERVIEW

McCandless wants to provide designated and constructed routes that make walking and biking safer and more comfortable and convenient as it seeks to serve current residents and businesses and attract newcomers. Increasingly, people want to walk or bike to get where they need to go, or as a leisure or fitness activity.

The two largest demographic generations alive today – Millennials (ages 22-37) and Baby Boomers (ages 54-74) – want access to bike and pedestrian routes for some of the same reasons: for good health, to enjoy the benefits of being outdoors and in nature, to reduce use of motor vehicles, and to create a sense of community through personal interaction. Businesses are increasingly attuned to these societal preferences (some businesses are entirely built on the idea) and are incorporating foot- and bike-traffic into their planning.

Active transportation is defined as “any human-powered mode of transportation that engages people in healthy physical activity while they travel from place to place.” It can include walking, biking, using mobility devices, roller-blading, scootering, jogging, hiking and mountain-biking.

It also includes public transit, since many transit users walk or bike at one or both ends of their rides. Therefore, walking and biking routes should, when possible, facilitate transit ridership and vice versa.



### WHAT TO DO?

STRATEGY: Develop an east-west shared-use trail along Pine Creek.

STRATEGY: Develop a north-south active transportation corridor in the Babcock Boulevard-Kummer Road area.

STRATEGY: Develop a north-south active transportation route in the Harmony Trail corridor between Wall Park to the south and Pine Township line to the north.

STRATEGY: Implement transit stop improvements.

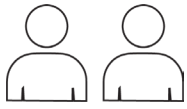
STRATEGY: Pursue transit service improvements.

STRATEGY: Build public awareness of active transportation improvements.

# COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

This chapter focuses on Town-sponsored activities, programs and events. Related material outlining a process for considering a potential community center appears in the Appendix.

## VISION



**VISION STATEMENT:** McCandless provides programs that meet community needs for existing residents and that enhance the community's desirability for prospective residents. These recreation programs, activities and events are provided at a community space that is inviting and serves as a community hub for social and cultural interaction.

## OVERVIEW

McCandless is a bustling, vibrant, safe and healthy suburban community that provides residents and businesses with high-demand services while operating with financial prudence.

It strives to meet the needs of current residents and businesses and attract newcomers. Its statement of principles state that is a place of welcome and hospitality.

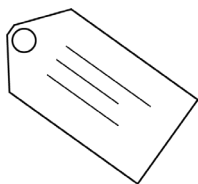
The community, as a suburb that experienced its greatest growth in the 1940s-1970s, has matured alongside its neighbors. While other North Hills communities began to offer municipal recreation activities, McCandless chose to leave this mainly to the private or non-profit sectors. Now, as McCandless and its neighbors face relatively flat population growth, the communities are "competing" for new residents and businesses. It is with this backdrop that McCandless is reviewing what it does well and how it can improve.

Some residents have proposed adding Town-sponsored recreation programs, activities and events – and there has been discussion in the community about adding community center facility.

Nearby North Hills communities of similar size and population provide recreational programming. Adding activities, programs, events is in keeping with the vision developed as part of this community planning effort: "McCandless is a vibrant and safe community that is conveniently located in the center of Pittsburgh's northern suburbs."

A first step will be to create an Activities Advisory Committee to recommend and mount programs that fill gaps in existing offerings. Over time the committee will assess whether an activities director is needed to support community programs, activities and events, and would make recommendations to Council on the matters of staffing and/or community center space. More information about this process is provided in the Appendix.

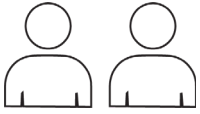
## WHAT TO DO?



**STRATEGY 1:** Create Community Activities Advisory Committee.

**STRATEGY 2:** Develop programs, events and activities for the community, beginning with those that fill gaps in existing offerings.

# GREEN SPACE & SUSTAINABILITY



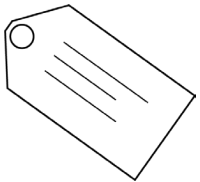
## VISION

McCandless protects and maintains natural ecological systems and strives to operate at the highest levels of sustainable practices and policies.

## OVERVIEW

McCandless wants to be a pacesetter in sustainability, and known as one of the most sustainable communities in Allegheny County. It is seeking certification as a Sustainable Community through Sustainable Pittsburgh and the Sustainable Pennsylvania community certification programs. But McCandless doesn't want the certification for its own sake. The Town is seeking certification to document its existing efforts and identify ways to improve its policies and practices so that it may truly provide leadership in the community in this arena. This chapter encourages McCandless to embrace sustainable practices.

A community that hopes to thrive in the future must sustain natural resources even as development creates pressure on natural systems that cleanse the air, slow and clean stormwater runoff, hold and refresh soils, and provide habitat for plant and animal life. It is also important to maintain green-space areas where residents can go out into nature, which enhances quality of life and community health.

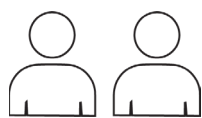


## WHAT TO DO?

STRATEGY 1: Pursue platinum certification from Sustainable Pennsylvania Communities / Sustainable Pittsburgh.

STRATEGY 2: Sustain or improve green space in McCandless.

# REDEVELOPMENT



## VISION

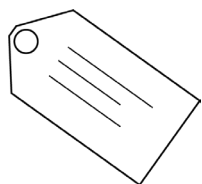
McCandless presents business owners, workers and residents with viable, diverse and attractive commercial environments, and promotes pedestrian-oriented, dense, walkable, mixed-use redevelopment.

## OVERVIEW

Some commercial areas in Town, particularly portions of the southern Route 19 corridor and the Blazier Road area north of Ingomar Road have deteriorating, vacant or under-utilized properties. Other areas of concern could emerge in the future if businesses fail to thrive, if use preferences change, or if economic conditions decline. There are several reasons to focus on redevelopment in areas experiencing stress, based on planning principles and on the stated desires of residents:

- Improved properties attract new owners or tenant businesses. This creates new or additional tax revenue for Town coffers.
- Deteriorating or vacant commercial and residential properties can drag down adjacent property values.
- Redevelopment provides opportunities for growth in a place that is largely “built out.”
- Redevelopment consumes fewer resources than new development because some or all of the existing infrastructure such as water, sewer and transportation service or even an existing building can typically be reused.
- Redevelopment opportunities on smaller-scale lots can help enhance economic and social equity by invigorating and fostering diverse opportunities in the small-business environment.
- Redevelopment at any scale can create opportunities to address issues related to environmental sustainability, such as stormwater runoff mitigation, groundwater quality, tree canopy enhancement, urban heat-island effect and night sky light pollution.

At the same time, McCandless wants redevelopment of deteriorated or underused areas to be handled with sensitivity. Redevelopment can bring additional vehicular traffic congestion and its attendant air pollution. Some fear that development may add noise or light pollution, or harm their views if the new development includes construction or sign designs that are not attractive.



## WHAT TO DO?

STRATEGY 1: Create an input process into future development at western portions of the Blazier Drive redevelopment area.

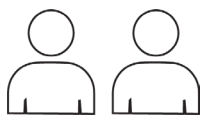
STRATEGY 2: Initiate a process for helping the community accommodate new uses along Perry Highway via ordinance changes.

STRATEGY 3: Update Town planning and zoning ordinances with revised requirements on facades, streetscapes, parking, lighting, sound and buffering to minimize commercial/residential land-use conflicts, and provide for more sustainable development.

STRATEGY 4: Encourage redevelopment by independent, locally owned businesses.



# COMMUNITY IDENTITY & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



## VISION

McCandless touts its strengths as a “Safe, convenient and vibrant community in the heart of the Pittsburgh’s northern suburbs,” and engages citizens to help build those strengths in an overall effort to improve quality of life.

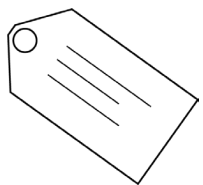
## OVERVIEW

Based on citizen input during the public process created for this comprehensive plan, McCandless residents see their community as “A safe, convenient and vibrant community in the heart of Pittsburgh’s northern suburbs.” However, participants also expressed uncertainty whether residents or outsiders have a tight grasp on what distinguishes McCandless from other North Hills suburbs. Residents proposed identifying community strengths and trumpeting them to reinforce the Town’s singularity.

At the same time, participants in the public process suggested that supporting a common understanding of McCandless and its vision for the future would make the Town stronger and more desirable – and would encourage more citizens to become actively engaged in civic life.

Having an articulated community identity to coalesce and rally around gives citizens a clearer path toward participating.

The steering committee for this comprehensive plan suggested adding ways to increase involvement and transparency. Community engagement is a fundamental goal of most municipal communications efforts: The more informed residents are, the less likely it is that they will be taken by surprise or angered by changes, decisions or issues they did not anticipate.



## WHAT TO DO?

STRATEGY 1: Strengthen McCandless’ identity as a “Safe, convenient and vibrant community in the heart of Pittsburgh’s northern suburbs” (or other statement, if a new one is written).

STRATEGY 2: Inventory and assess all communications channels the community currently participates in, and decide which to continue, which to discontinue and what to improve.

STRATEGY 3: Identify McCandless’ goal for level of public involvement and create new opportunities for citizens.

STRATEGY 4: Enhance the volunteer experience - make volunteering for McCandless more appealing and rewarding.

# Planning is a process

## UNDERSTANDING THE COMMUNITY'S NEEDS

Implementable comprehensive plans should be as deeply rooted as possible in community opinion, because residents, businesses, professional staff, elected officials and other stakeholders all contribute important perspectives on how the Town should change. Phase 1 focused on collecting information.

### COMMUNITY DAY BOOTH

At the 2017 McCandless Community Day, residents were asked to write down on white boards what they like most about McCandless and how they'd like to see it change.

### STEERING COMMITTEE

Town Council accepted applications for membership on the steering committee. The group included two members of the Planning Commission, three Council members, two from the Environmental Advisory board, the NASD superintendent of schools and some businesspeople. There are retirees and parents of young children, longtime residents and newcomers. Members participated enthusiastically, disagreed respectfully, and worked together to find common ground.

### COMMUNITY QUALITY OF LIFE QUESTIONNAIRE

All residents had access to completing a quality of life questionnaire. The Town sent a postcard to every household providing the URL for the web-based form. Some residents requested paper copies, which Town staffers entered manually. A few people attempted to "stuff the ballot" regarding a potential community center. Those responses were deleted. The questionnaire was never intended to be a statistically valid survey instrument, but stands as a rich source of ideas and opinions.

### INITIAL PUBLIC MEETING

At an open-house style meeting in January 2018, residents brainstormed ideas of what they like about McCandless and how they'd like it to improve.

### KEY PERSON INTERVIEWS

More than 25 key community stakeholders (college presidents, company CEOs or small business owners, grassroots leaders, school board members, and others) were interviewed so that the comprehensive plan could include their perspectives and ideas for how McCandless should change in the coming years.

### ICE CREAM SOCIAL

At an open-house style ice cream social (Thanks to Handel's Homemade Ice Cream & Yogurt for providing the treats!) participants viewed idea boards and provided reactions to help refine ideas.

### POP-UP COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Steering committee members held "tabling" events at the Northland Public Library and Whole Foods.

### PHASE 1 REPORT

Themes were clearly visible from the many input mechanisms. Thus, the key issues were selected. These were presented in a Phase 1 Report "Understanding the Community's Needs", which is provided in the Appendix.

# DRILLING DOWN FOR SOLUTIONS

Phase 2 of the comprehensive plan project focused on identifying the direction and goals within each Key Issue, and beginning to establish strategies.

## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTIVITY WORKING GROUP

Planning active transportation corridors is a complex process, and so a half-day workshop was created to pull together citizen stakeholders and professional transportation planners. Their ideas propelled the solutions seen in this report.

## COMMUNITY CENTER OR NO COMMUNITY CENTER?

Throughout both phases of the project, Pashek+MTR was keenly aware of a divide in the community – and on the steering committee and on Town Council – on whether McCandless needs or wants or should build a community center. With little public consensus, the consultant provided a “feasibility study life,” which appears in the Appendix. This study reviews facilities and programs currently offered in the community, and sets out a rationale for decision-making. The study includes next steps in the event that McCandless decides to build a modest size community center to house programs and offer room rental space for private events.

Meanwhile, the Community Activities chapter recommends creating an Activities Advisory Committee that will continue to review current programmatic offerings in the community, assess what McCandless may wish to provide, who would run the activities, and where they would take place.

## THE KEY ISSUES AND OTHER TOPICS

Strategies proposed in this plan were devised from national and statewide best practices and also from ideas collected from stakeholders and the steering committee during both Phase 1 and Phase 2.

## IT'S A POLICY GUIDE ...

Pennsylvania's Municipalities Planning Code recommends that communities update their comprehensive plans every 10 years. Comprehensive plans are policy documents. They are road maps that capture in words and images: Where does the community want to go, and how do we get there? Implementable plans, such as this one, emphasize ideas that arise from the community and practical, workable, implementable solutions to problems.

## ... AND IT'S A CONVERSATION

This report includes dozens, maybe scores, of ideas. This report will be an excellent tool for guiding a continuing conversation about those ideas and where they might lead the community.

# What to do first: An initial to-do list

Of the implementation steps outlined in this plan, this list suggests what to do most expeditiously.

- Create a Community Activities Committee. (Community Activities, Strategy 1)
- McCandless staff inventories all official communications channels, and evaluates for effectiveness and utility. (Community Identity & Public Engagement, Strategy 2)
- Create a Community Engagement Committee. (Community Identity & Public Engagement, Strategy 3)
- Environmental Advisory Committee and McCandless staff pursue next steps toward Sustainable Pennsylvania Communities platinum certification. (Green Space & Sustainability, Strategy 1)
- Staff reviews the suggested projects to improve transit stops and accessibility in McCandless, and chooses one to pursue first. (Active Transportation & Connectivity, Strategy 5)
- Create an Active Transportation Advisory Committee to lead next steps on the Pine Creek Trail corridor or the other high-priority routes. (Active Transportation & Connectivity, Strategy 1) The Active Transportation Advisory Committee should identify “low-hanging fruit.”
- Using chart in the Green Space & Sustainability chapter, Environmental Advisory Committee prioritizes potential improvement projects. (Green Space & Sustainability, Strategy 2)
- Plan a design charrette to illuminate future plans for the western portion of the Blazier Drive redevelopment site. (Redevelopment, Strategy 1)
- Initiate ordinance changes to guide redevelopment along the Route 19 corridor. (Redevelopment, Strategy 3)

# KEY ISSUE

## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTIVITY

**Q:** Why are Active Transportation and Connectivity important in McCandless?

**A:** McCandless wants to provide designated and constructed routes that make walking and biking safer and more comfortable and convenient as it seeks to serve current residents and businesses and attract newcomers. Increasingly, people want to walk or bike to get where they need to go, or as a leisure or fitness activity.

The two largest demographic generations alive today – Millennials (ages 22-37) and Baby Boomers (ages 54-74) – want access to bike and pedestrian routes for some of the same reasons: for good health, to enjoy the benefits of being outdoors and in nature, to reduce use of motor vehicles, and to create a sense of community through personal connection. Businesses are increasingly attuned to these societal preferences (some businesses are entirely built on the idea) and are incorporating foot- and bike-traffic into their planning, such as a new bike shop at Kummer Road and Ingomar Road.

**Q:** What is the long-term vision for change regarding Active Transportation and Connectivity?

**A:** VISION STATEMENT: McCandless will provide safe, convenient and comfortable routes for people to get where they need or want to go without the use of a motor vehicle.

**Q:** What are some main points I should know about this issue?

**A:** Here are some useful points:

- Active transportation is defined as “Any human-powered mode of transportation that engages people in healthy physical activity while they travel from place to place.” It can include walking, biking, using mobility devices, roller blading, scootering, jogging, hiking, mountain biking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.
- People want to use active transportation for many reasons, including: getting out in nature, commuting to work or school, getting





to popular destinations, running errands, exercising, walking pets, reducing auto emissions, socializing and relaxing.

- Active transportation routes are delineated or built “ways” that are planned and implemented according to nationally recognized standards.
- Since McCandless already has an established road network designed primarily to serve motor vehicles, active transportation routes may need to be retrofitted. Community awareness or education programs for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers should be part of the plan.

### **Q: What is the background for this key issue?**

**A:** Here are some points that are worth keeping in mind:

- With North Park occupying almost 20 percent of the area of McCandless, it is no surprise that Town residents consider the park to be “theirs,” although it is an Allegheny County-owned regional park. McCandless residents who make use of the park’s designated walking and biking routes have stated a desire to “not have to drive in order to walk” in the park.
- A park and ride transit lot owned by Port

Authority of Allegheny County occupies a central location in McCandless on 4.2 acres along Blazier Drive. The availability of this lot and bus routes in the central and southeastern portions of the community encourage active transportation because commuters can walk or bike to and from the bus stop, without a need to drive.

- McCandless adopted its first sidewalk ordinance (Ord. 668, §603) in 1975, and continues to add sidewalks today.

### **Q: Where should we start, since these are big projects?**

**A:** The municipality should identify projects that will provide the most benefit at the least cost. Identifying priority areas should also be considered, taking into account available right-of-way and environmental challenges. In addition to sidewalks, roadways can be assessed for their potential to connect to the proposed trail network; for example, through bike lanes and other improvements. Priority areas that will provide the most benefit should become the top priority. The goal is to implement the proposed objectives in a practical, cost-effective manner so that the entire project does not become overwhelming and never move forward due to cost.

## **Active Transportation & Connectivity Recommendations**

### **Q: What strategies will McCandless pursue to implement change to improve Active Transportation and Connectivity?**

**A:** Here’s a list. Details for each are on the following pages. These are not in order of priority. The priorities are to be treated equally and implementation will be opportunistic based on future development and the availability of grants.

**STRATEGY:** Develop an east-west shared-use trail along Pine Creek.

**STRATEGY:** Develop a north-south active transportation corridor in the Babcock Boulevard-Kummer Road area.

**STRATEGY:** Develop a north-south active transportation route in the Harmony Trail corridor from Wall Park in the south to the Pine Township line in the north.

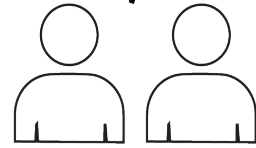
**STRATEGY:** Implement transit stop improvements.

**STRATEGY:** Pursue transit service improvements.

**STRATEGY:** Build public awareness of active transportation projects and the community’s ambition to become more bikeable and walkable.



WHAT IS THE VISION?  
THE GOAL? HERE'S AN OVERVIEW.



**Q:** What is the overall goal of this strategy? Why is this route important?

**A:** A shared-use trail will link numerous active transportation generators and destinations, including a park-and-ride transit lot, between the western portion of McCandless and North Park.

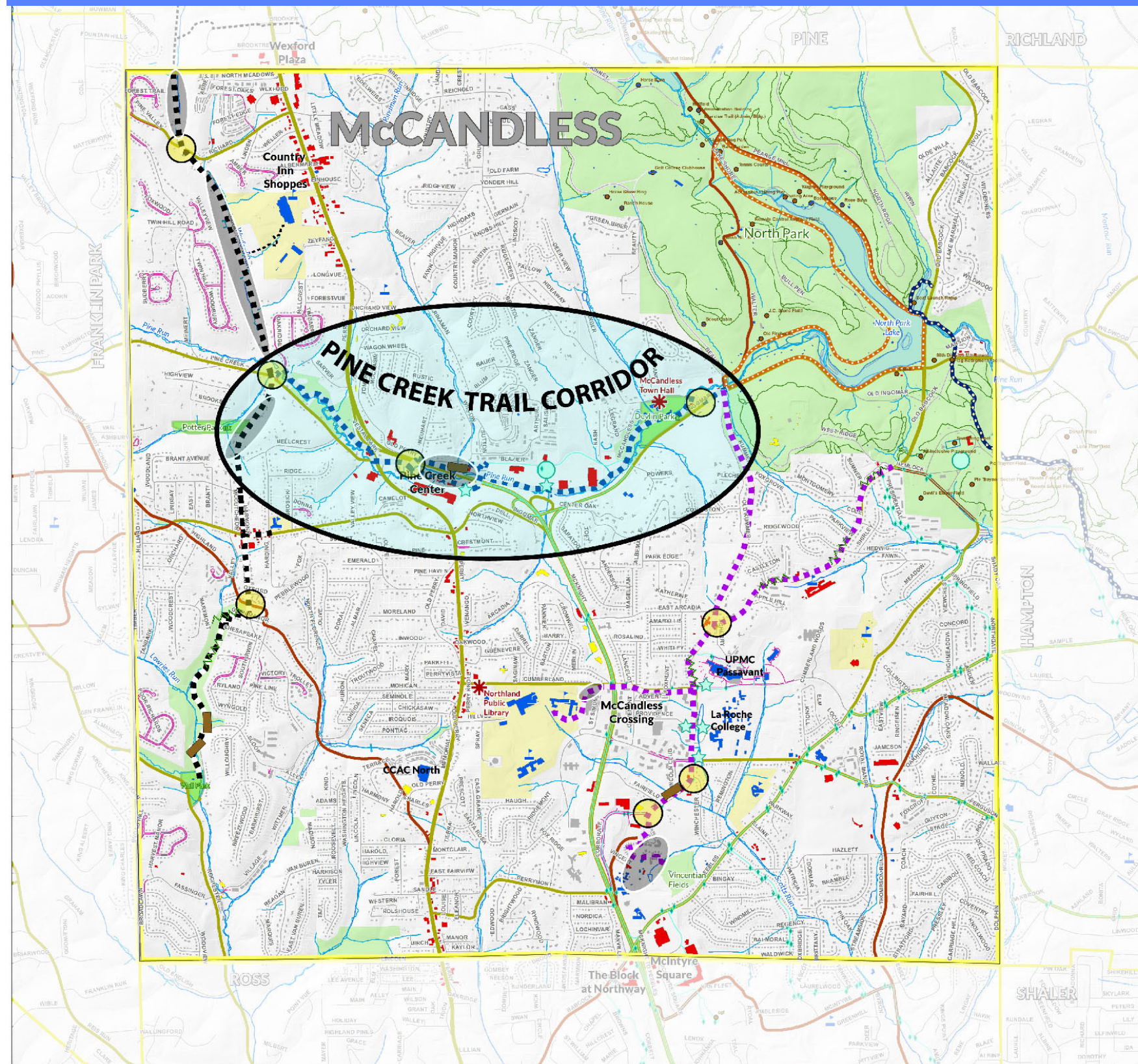
Businesses stand to gain traffic, and residents will have access to a safe, convenient and comfortable route. The Pine Creek shared use trail was one of two top priorities identified by the Comprehensive Plan steering committee.

**Q:** What is the overview of this proposed route?

**A:** The corridor explained here is intended to be constructed as a shared-use pathway, about 10-14 feet wide, for use by those who walk, bicycle or participate in other forms of active transportation. The route, including alternatives in one location, is described here from west to east and is shown on the Pine Creek concept map.



## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTIVITY STRATEGY: DEVELOP AN EAST-WEST SHARED-USE TRAIL ALONG PINE CREEK.



## Active Transportation & Connectivity Map

Draft: October 2018

### Legend

- McCandless Boundary
- Municipal Boundary

### Active Transportation Routes

- Proposed Babcock Blvd Loop
- Proposed Harmony Trail
- Proposed Pine Creek Trail
- Sidewalk
- Planned Sidewalk
- Bicycle and Walking Lanes
- Rachel Carson Trail
- Park Trails

### Roadways and Transit

- PennDOT Road
- Allegheny County Road
- Local Road
- PAAC Stops
- PAAC Park and Ride
- PAAC Route

### Places and Community Assets

- Streams
- Lake
- Community Park
- North Park (County Park)
- Park Boundary
- School
- County Park Facilities

### Trouble Spots

- Traffic Safety Issue
- Bridge or Culvert Needed
- Terrain Challenge
- Property Ownership Issue
- Potential Bus Stop Improvements

### Building Footprints

- Residential
- Commercial
- Government
- Institution, Non-Profit

### Zoning Classification

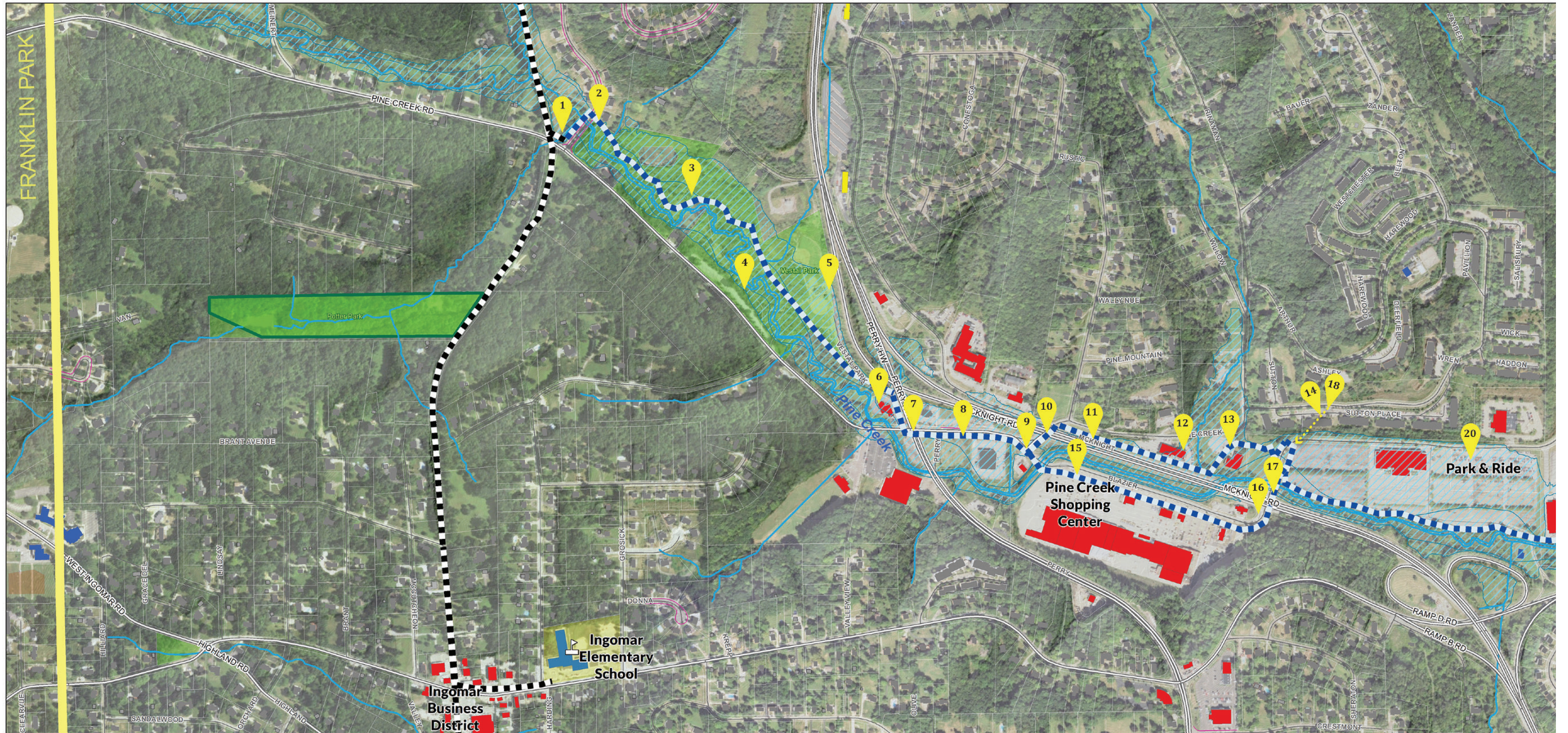
- Commercial
- Mixed-Use
- Public or Institution
- Traditional Neighborhood Development
- Tax Parcels

0 1,000 2,000 3,000 4,000 Feet



PASHEK MTR

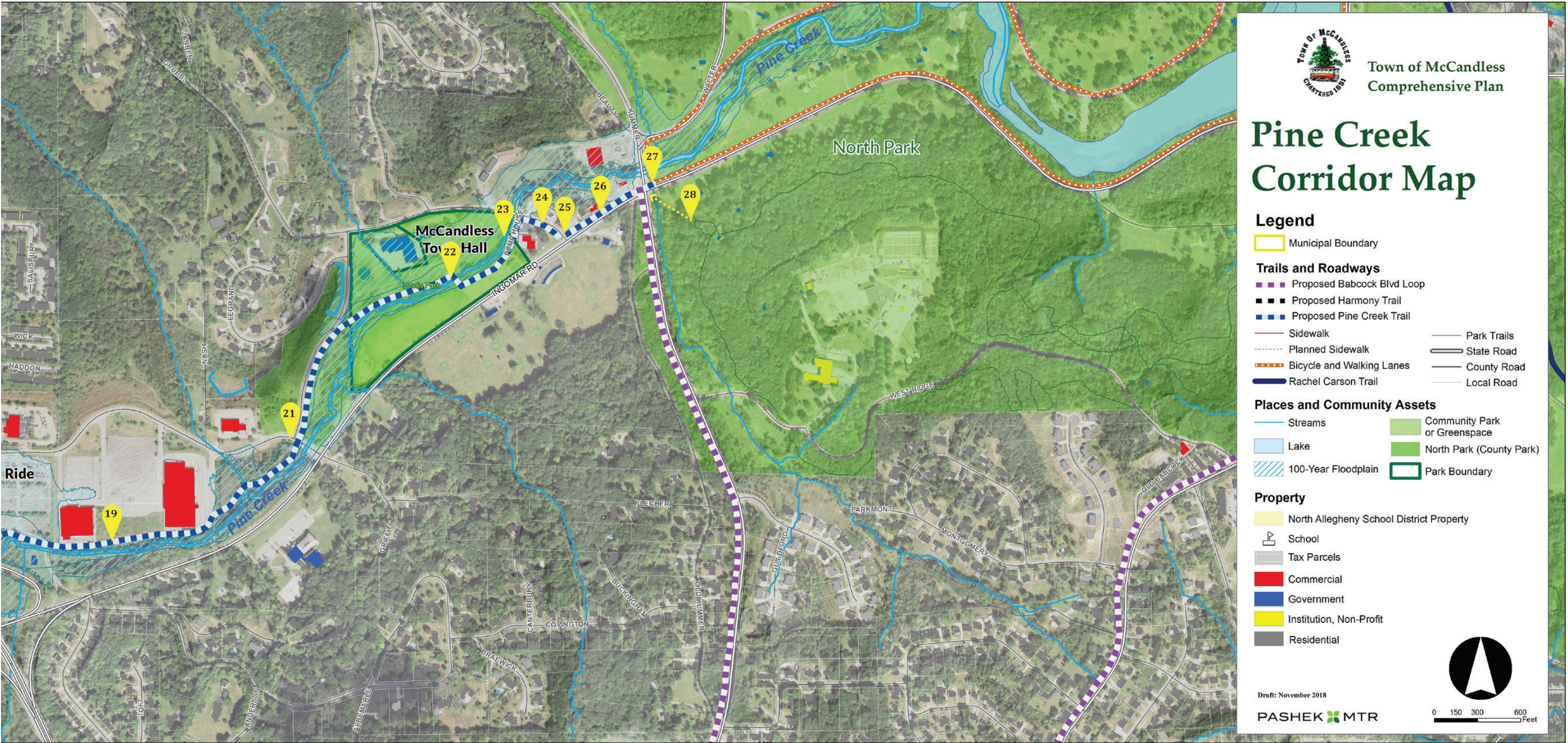




## Pine Creek Corridor Route Description

- 1 Create a small parking area at the northwest corner of Oak Ridge Drive and Pine Creek Road, which provides access to the trailhead.
- 2 Trailhead, east off of Oakridge Drive along the north side of Pine Creek.
- 3 The route continues southeast along the north bank of the stream for 0.4 miles to Vestal Park. Some of this will need to be constructed on boardwalk to protect wetlands. It will need to be constructed with understanding that it is in the floodplain and may be inundated.
- 4 At Vestal Park, an existing boardwalk-bridge provides access to a parking lot on the south bank of the river. The trail route turns northeast for 300 feet, between the ball fields, to Vestal Park Drive.
- 5 The route then turns south along the side of Vestal Park Drive to the intersection with Route 19/Perry Highway.
- 6 The route may need to go through or along the parking lot of a business at the northwest corner of the Perry Highway and Pine Creek Road intersection (easements to be acquired).
- 7 It crosses Pine Creek Road from north to south at an existing crosswalk, then crosses Perry Highway from west to east on an existing crosswalk.
- 8 The trail route then proceeds east for 800 feet on private properties (easements to be acquired) following the south side of Pine Creek Road.
- 9 At the Pine Creek Road/Blazier Drive intersection, the trail could potentially follow either or both alternate routes.
- 10 Alternate 1: The route follows Pine Creek Road, crossing McKnight Road from south to north via a new crosswalk.
- 11 The route turns east and leaves the roadside into a grassy area parallel to McKnight Road for 1000 feet. This segment of the trail will need to be constructed appropriately for its location in a floodplain where inundation is likely.
- 12 A bridge will be needed to cross a tributary to Pine Creek that flows north to south between two business/office properties (easements to be acquired).
- 13 The next segment proceeds 675 feet east then northeast to a curve on Blazier Drive.
- 14 The route crosses Blazier Drive mid-block at a new crosswalk and enters property that is intended for redevelopment, currently known as the "former Rave Cinema" (easement to be acquired).
- 15 Alternate 2: The route continues east along Blazier Drive, occupying 2000 linear feet on private property that currently is used for parking for Pine Creek Shopping Center (easement to be acquired).
- 16 At the intersection of Blazier Drive and McKnight Road, the route crosses McKnight Road from south to north on an existing crosswalk.
- 17 The route proceeds along the east side of Blazier Drive for 400 feet to a curve on Blazier Drive.
- 18 The route then enters property that is intended for redevelopment, currently known as the "former Rave Cinema" (easement to be acquired). The two alternate routes meet here.





- 19 The route continues along the north side of Pine Creek for 0.75 mile, presumably on trail that is created as part of planned property redevelopment (easements to be acquired).

20 This segment connects with the Port Authority Park and Ride location along Blazier Drive.

21 The trail crosses Blazier Drive from south to north at a new crosswalk, perhaps at the eastern boundary of the development parcels, or at the intersection with McCandless Drive.

22 The route proceeds north, following the northern bank of Pine Creek for 0.33 mile to Devlin Park.

23 The trail crosses Pine Creek from north to south via an existing pedestrian bridge at Devlin Park.
- 24 It follows Aufman Lane past the Heritage Center for 800 feet to Grubbs Road.

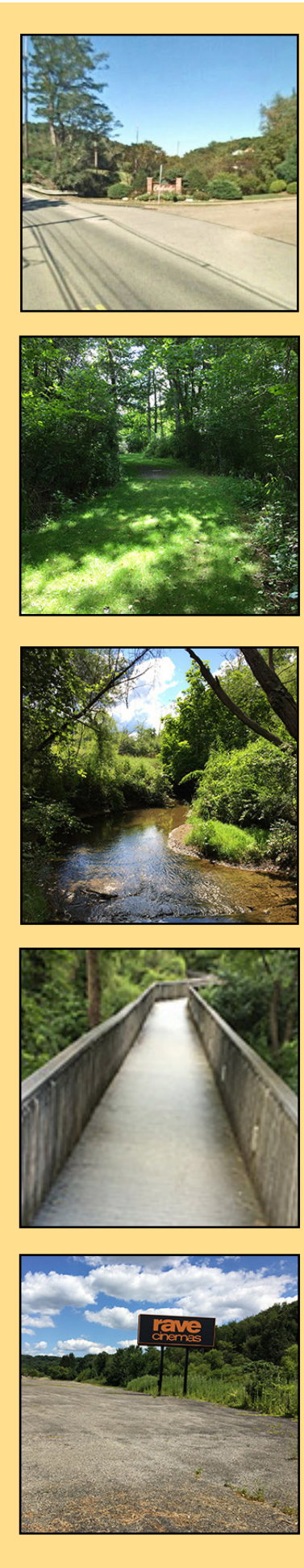
25 The route turns east along Grubbs Road for 350 feet to the intersection at East Ingomar Road.

26 The route crosses Grubbs Road at a new crosswalk, and continues for 600 feet along the north side of Ingomar Road to the intersection with Kummer Road.

27 Here the route crosses Kummer Road via an existing crosswalk and meets up with existing bicycle and walking lanes in North Park.

28 The Kummer Road-East Ingomar Road intersection is also where the proposed Pine Creek shared use trail intersects with the proposed Babcock Boulevard loop route described





**IMPLEMENTATION STEPS**

**STRATEGY: Develop an east-west shared-use trail along Pine Creek.**

**Q:** What are the specific action steps for implementing the strategy, including who is responsible? How difficult is this likely to be?

**A:** We rate the full project as a three-weight difficulty, but some specific steps should be much easier.

Here is a suggested implementation plan.

- ❑ STEP 1: The Town Council should form an Active Transportation Advisory Committee to engage in community education and outreach activities and serve as an advocate for implementing the trail initiatives outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, including the Pine Creek corridor detailed here. (The advisory committee will continue its work with other proposed corridors outlined on subsequent pages, and also consider additional projects, such as improvements along Ingomar Road.)
- ❑ STEP 2: Identify potential route impacts by parcel and ownership. Note the challenges and opportunities associated with each.
- ❑ STEP 3: Add proposed trail corridor to official Town map.
- ❑ STEP 4: Meet with representatives from PennDOT Connects and Allegheny County Department of Economic Development Transportation Planning to discuss the potential route alignment.
- ❑ STEP 5: Town staff and/or active transportation advisory committee members walk and view potential school-park routes to consider desirability, including potential obstacles that could require costly elements such as bridges, boardwalks or steep side-slope construction.
- ❑ STEP 6: Create strategy for securing funding, including Town funding, other public funding, grants and/or donations.
- ❑ STEP 7: Town staff and/or active transportation advisory committee members should meet at least twice with neighbors in the areas where this corridor is proposed to hear concerns and provide information. For the initial meeting, it is important to listen and identify concerns regarding what a trail/route will mean and how it may impact individual properties. With this information, the Town and advisory committee can tailor the concept for the routes to respond to the issues, concerns and needs of the property owners. Also, by understanding concerns people may have, the Town and advisory committee can best be prepared for a later, second meeting, described in Step 14, at which they can demonstrate what a pedestrian and/or bike route will be and do versus not be and not do. Go onto individual property (with permission) to best gain understanding of concerns. Document this request in writing by having individuals complete a form at the first public meeting. Address landowner liability issue up front at the first meeting; the Town should consider holding property owners who grant easements harmless from liability. Information at this time could also include the protection afforded by the Pennsylvania Recreation Use of Land and Water Act.



❑ STEP 8: Town staff and/or active transportation advisory committee members re-evaluate the proposed corridor/routes for viability following the first public meeting.

❑ STEP 9: Town staff initiates conversation with potential funders such as PennDOT, DCNR, including acquiring grant application schedules.

❑ STEP 10: Town staff and advisory committee members develop management, operation and security strategies for the continued operation of the Pine Creek route, in consultation with Town Council. Guidance on trail management from "Pennsylvania Trail Design & Development Principles" is provided in the Appendix.

❑ STEP 11: Town staff and/or advisory committee members begin informal dialogs with public and private landowners about potential acquisition of easements to determine likelihood of success. Supporting information will include the Model Trail Easement Agreement from the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association (provided in Appendix). Also note that the association provides commentary about successfully executing a trail easement agreement at <https://conservationtools.org/model-documents>.

Town conversations with landowners includes exploring alternate potential alignments at Pine Creek Shopping Center, Blazier Drive or the land between Pine Creek Road and McKnight Road.

❑ STEP 12: Prepare a plan that identifies the final alignment, responds to landowner issues and concerns where possible, and develops an estimate of probable construction costs as well as a financial analysis to project operating costs for the proposed routes. In consultation with Town Council, prepare a plan to show how these costs will be covered. The committee could project beneficial economic impact of the proposed shared-use trail, using data from existing comparable trails.

❑ STEP 13: Continue pursuing funding.

❑ STEP 14: The Town and advisory committee conduct a second landowner/neighbor public meeting to explain the revised concept for the routes, including responses to issues, concerns and needs of the property owners as presented in the first meeting, and to answer additional questions.

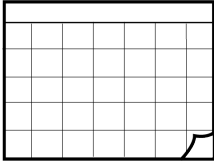
❑ STEP 15: Following agreement from Town Council, Town staff and/or advisory committee members begin formal dialog with individual landowners about acquisitions, leading to signed agreements.

❑ STEP 16: Once routes are well defined, the Town staff meets with PennDOT and Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission to begin dialog about creating crossings of any state-owned roads, such as McKnight Road or Ingomar Road.

❑ STEP 17: With approval from Town Council, complete final design, prepare construction documents, and obtain required permits for construction. It is likely that this will occur in phases as property and sections come under community control.

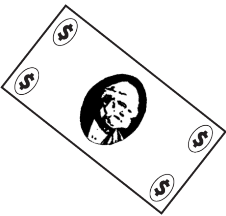
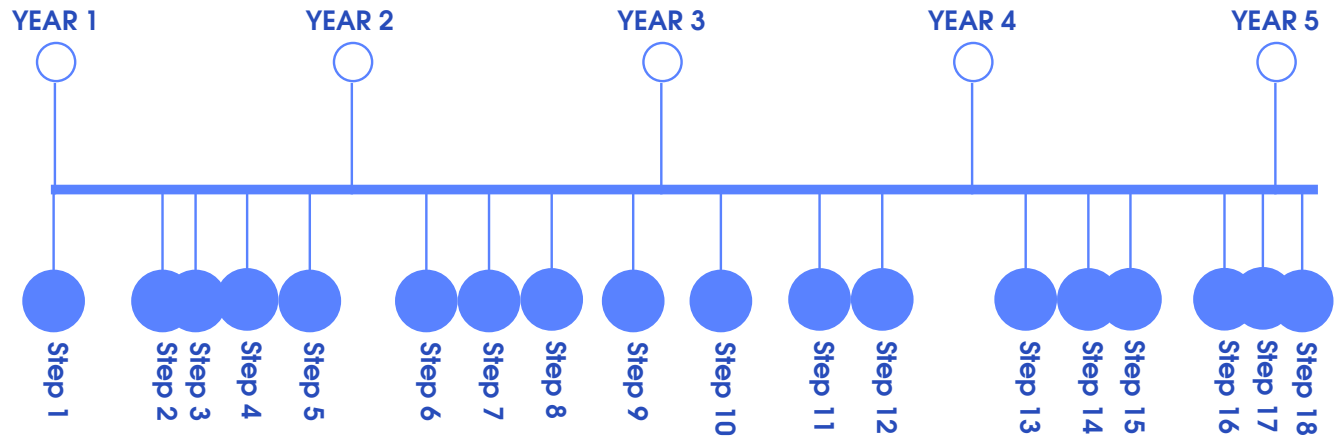
❑ STEP 18: Prepare and install appropriate signage, and update appropriate maps. Communicate with residents.





**Q:** What's a reasonable timeline for implementing the Pine Creek Corridor strategy?

**A:** Completion of a complex trail can take 5-20 years. However, the first stages, such as planning, property agreements and funding arrangements can reasonably be expected to take 5 years, with construction to follow. Some segments may be simpler to plan, allowing construction to begin sooner, and others could take 10 years to begin. Here is a timeline:



**Q:** What costs can McCandless anticipate as it implements the strategy?

**A:** Construction costs may be shared, considering that developers may be required to complete some segments, and that grants also could offset portions of the cost. Also note that most trail projects are phased. An opinion of probable construction costs is below. Summary information is provided here, with detail in the Appendix. NOTE: This is intended to provide order-of-magnitude understanding of costs. Many variables are unknown or may change, resulting in significant swings from this opinion.

Pine Creek Corridor	
Opinion of Probable Construction Costs	1-21-2019 Prepared by Pashek+ MTR
SEGMENT DESCRIPTION	SEGMENT COST
Segment I: Harmony Trail to Perry Highway (SR 19), 3,160 LF	\$1,725,383
Segment II: Perry Highway (SR 19) Pine Creek Shopping Center/McKnight Road to Kummer Road/North Park, 2700 LF	\$1,536,086
Segment III: Pine Creek Shopping Center/McKnight Road , 8000 LF	\$2,354,270
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,616,739</b>
NOTES: Opinion of Probable Construction Costs is made based on the experience and qualifications of Pashek + MTR, Ltd and represents reasonable judgment based on familiarity with the industry. Pashek + MTR, Ltd. has no control over the cost, or availability of labor, materials or equipment, or over market conditions or the provider's method of pricing. Pashek + MTR, Ltd cannot and does not guarantee that the opinion of probable cost provided the Owner will not vary from the actual cost experienced by the Owner.	



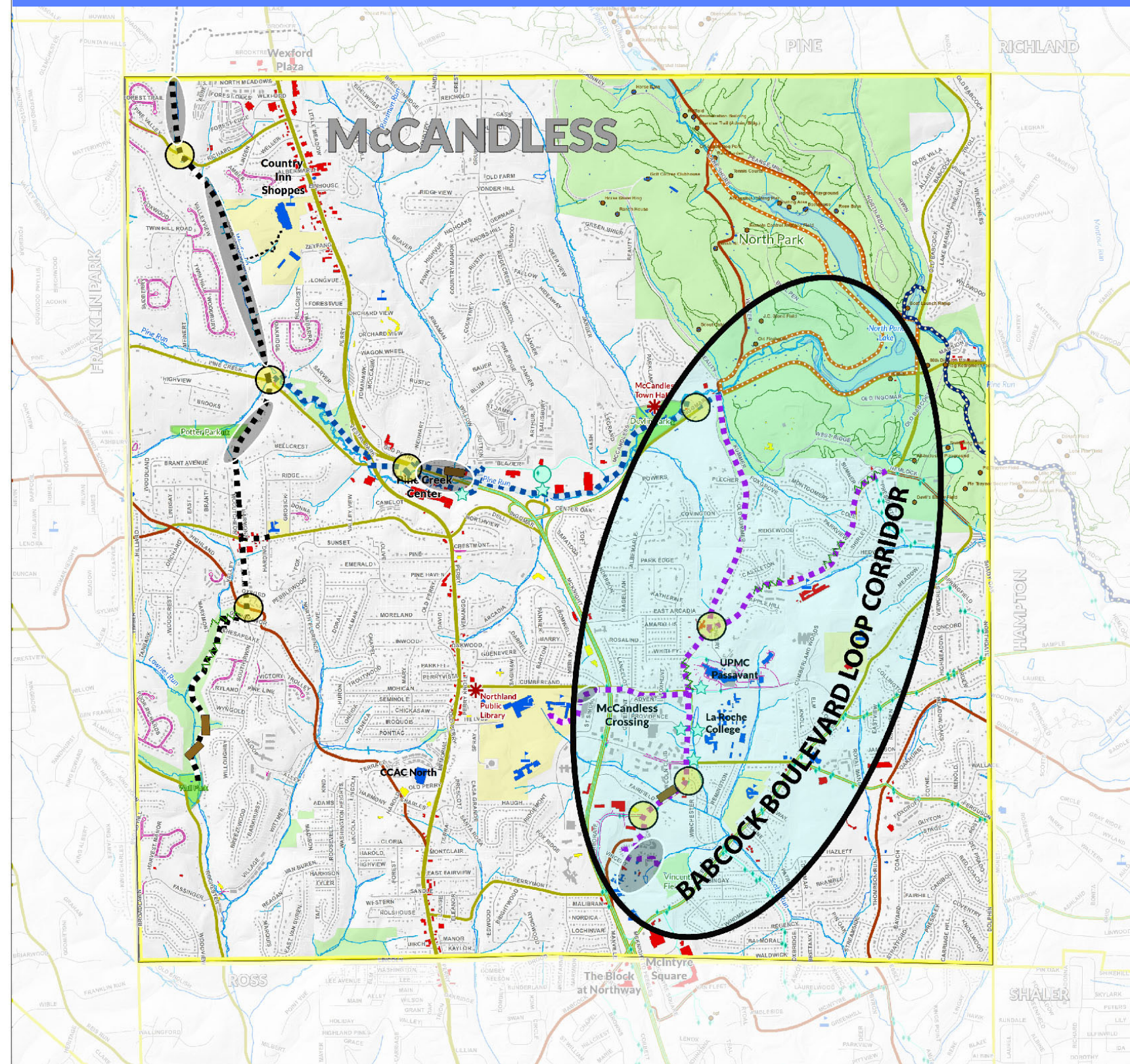
**A.** Walking and biking routes will connect residential and business areas and North Park. The Town will develop safe walking and/or bike routes in the corridor. This includes creating a plan to acquire parcel ownership or easements, construct surfaces, add crossings, signs, signals and other fixtures. Create plan for funding.

Businesses stand to gain traffic, and residents will have access to safe, convenient and comfortable routes for getting to bus stops, businesses, employment, services, schools and North Park.

**A:** The corridor explained here is intended to be constructed as a combination of sidewalks, bike lanes and shared lanes. The route is described from north to south and shown on the concept map on the following pages. It includes numerous instances where property ownership or easements will need to be acquired.

The Babcock Boulevard Loop, with spurs to additional locations, was one of two top priorities identified by the Comprehensive Plan steering committee.

**STRATEGY: DEVELOP A NORTH-SOUTH WALKING-BIKING CORRIDOR IN THE BABCOCK BOULEVARD AREA.**



**Draft: October 2018**

### Legend

- Map Legend:**

  - McCandless Boundary** (Yellow outline)
  - Municipal Boundary** (Yellow outline)
  - Active Transportation Routes**
    - Proposed Babcock Blvd Loop (Dashed purple line)
    - Proposed Harmony Trail (Dashed black line)
    - Proposed Pine Creek Trail (Dashed blue line)
    - Sidewalk (Solid pink line)
    - Planned Sidewalk (Dotted pink line)
    - Bicycle and Walking Lanes (Dashed orange line)
    - Rachel Carson Trail (Dashed blue line with stars)
    - Park Trails (Solid green line)
  - Roadways and Transit**
    - PennDOT Road (Solid yellow line)
    - Allegheny County Road (Solid brown line)
    - Local Road (Solid grey line)
    - PAAC Stops (Green diamond)
    - PAAC Park and Ride (Green circle)
    - PAAC Route (Dashed green line)
  - Places and Community Assets**
    - Streams (Solid blue line)
    - Lake (Light blue fill)
    - Community Park (Light green fill)
    - North Park (County Park) (Light green fill)
    - Park Boundary (Green outline)
    - School (Blue square with white cross)
    - County Park Facilities (Brown dot)
  - Trouble Spots**
    - Traffic Safety Issue (Yellow circle)
    - Bridge or Culvert Needed (Brown rectangle)
    - Terrain Challenge (Green zigzag line)
    - Property Ownership Issue (Grey oval)
    - Potential Bus Stop Improvements (Green star)
  - Building Footprints**
    - Residential (Grey fill)
    - Commercial (Red fill)
    - Government (Blue fill)
    - Institution, Non-Profit (Yellow fill)
  - Zoning Classification**
    - Commercial (Pink fill)
    - Mixed-Use (Purple fill)
    - Public or Institution (Light blue fill)
    - Traditional Neighborhood Development (Orange fill)
    - Tax Parcels (Grey fill)

PASHEK  MTR



## Babcock Boulevard Loop Route Description

**A** The Babcock Boulevard Loop extends along Babcock Boulevard between Kummer Road intersection and North Park at West Ridge Road/Hemlock Drive. This is conceived as a bicycle route, with bike lanes and shared lanes. As this is a hilly and windy road, the rule of thumb should be:

1. Bike lanes in each direction where feasible
2. Uphill bike lane and downhill shared lanes if two bike lanes are not feasible.
3. Shared lanes in locations where bike lanes are not feasible

**B C** The route proceeds from West Ridge Road/Hemlock Drive, south, encountering a dip and some blind curves and intersections between Montgomery Road and Parkview Drive.

**D** A tight curve south of Hedwig Drive limits visibility significantly.

**E** Additional vehicular and pedestrian activity should be anticipated at the A.W. Beattie Career Center.

**F G** The route proceeds south from Cottingham Court to the St. Conrad Friary entrance, encountering a climb and limited sight-line visibility due to S-curves.

**H** This portion of the route connects with the rest of the Babcock Boulevard Loop at the intersection with Kummer Road. It is labeled with numbers on the map and described below.

**1** This portion of the Babcock Boulevard Loop is intended to be developed as bike lanes, shared lanes and sidewalks. The northern point of beginning for this section of the Babcock Boulevard Loop is the Ingomar Road/Kummer Road intersection, which provides access to bicycle and pedestrian facilities in North Park, and where a future Pine Creek Corridor Trail will have its eastern terminus.

**2** The route proceeds south along the western side of Kummer Road as a bike lane and sidewalk. In some areas the bike lane may need to be a shared lane due to right-of-way limitations.

**3** An alternate route for shared lanes could be considered along Old Kummer Road, which has far lower traffic volumes. However, this road has steeper hills.

**4** The alternate route ends where Old Kummer Road rejoins Kummer Road, opposite Heather Heights Drive.

**5** The route continues south along the west side of Kummer Road for 1600 feet. Due to steep downhill roadside slopes, continual sidewalk may be impossible in some areas. Private property easements may need to be acquired.

**6** A new crosswalk will be needed at East Arcadia Drive.

**7** The route continues south for 350 feet to the intersection with Babcock Boulevard, with sidewalk construction already anticipated as part of development at that intersection.

**8** At the Babcock Boulevard-Kummer Road intersection, the route meets another portion of the Babcock Boulevard Loop that follows Babcock north to North Park. This part of the route is labeled with letters on the map and described above.

**9** Three-way crosswalks would be valuable at the intersection, enabling safe access to the route, to transit stops, and to UPMC Passavant Hospital.

**10** The route continues south for 840 feet along the west side of Babcock Boulevard. Some challenges in this segment include existing stormwater facilities, possible easement acquisitions for private property, and steep hillside regrading.

**11** A new crosswalk is needed at Whitley Drive.

**12** As the route continues south for 850 feet along Babcock Boulevard, challenges may include a need to acquire private property easements and to regrade a steep uphill slope at roadside.

**13** The route crosses Cumberland Road from north to south via an existing crosswalk. A sidewalk or ramp connector will be needed south of Cumberland Road from the crosswalk to existing sidewalks at Holy Trinity Church.

**14** The route continues south for 925 feet, incorporating existing sidewalks, then crosses Providence Boulevard via an existing crosswalk.

**15** Continuing for 675 feet south along the west side of Babcock Boulevard, the sidewalk portion may need to ride the top of a small hillside along the road, requiring a private property easement.

**16** The route crosses Duncan Road via an existing crosswalk, then proceeds 200 feet. At this point a sidewalk will need to occupy space in or near a restaurant parking lot for a distance of 300 feet, requiring an easement.

**17** Proceeding along the west side of Babcock Boulevard for 525 feet, challenges may include a need to acquire private property easements and to regrade a steep uphill slope at roadside.

**18** The route crosses a stream/drainageway via a new pedestrian bridge, as the roadway bridge cannot accommodate pedestrians.

**19** Continuing south along the west side of Babcock Boulevard, the route proceeds 340 feet. This section may require private property easements.

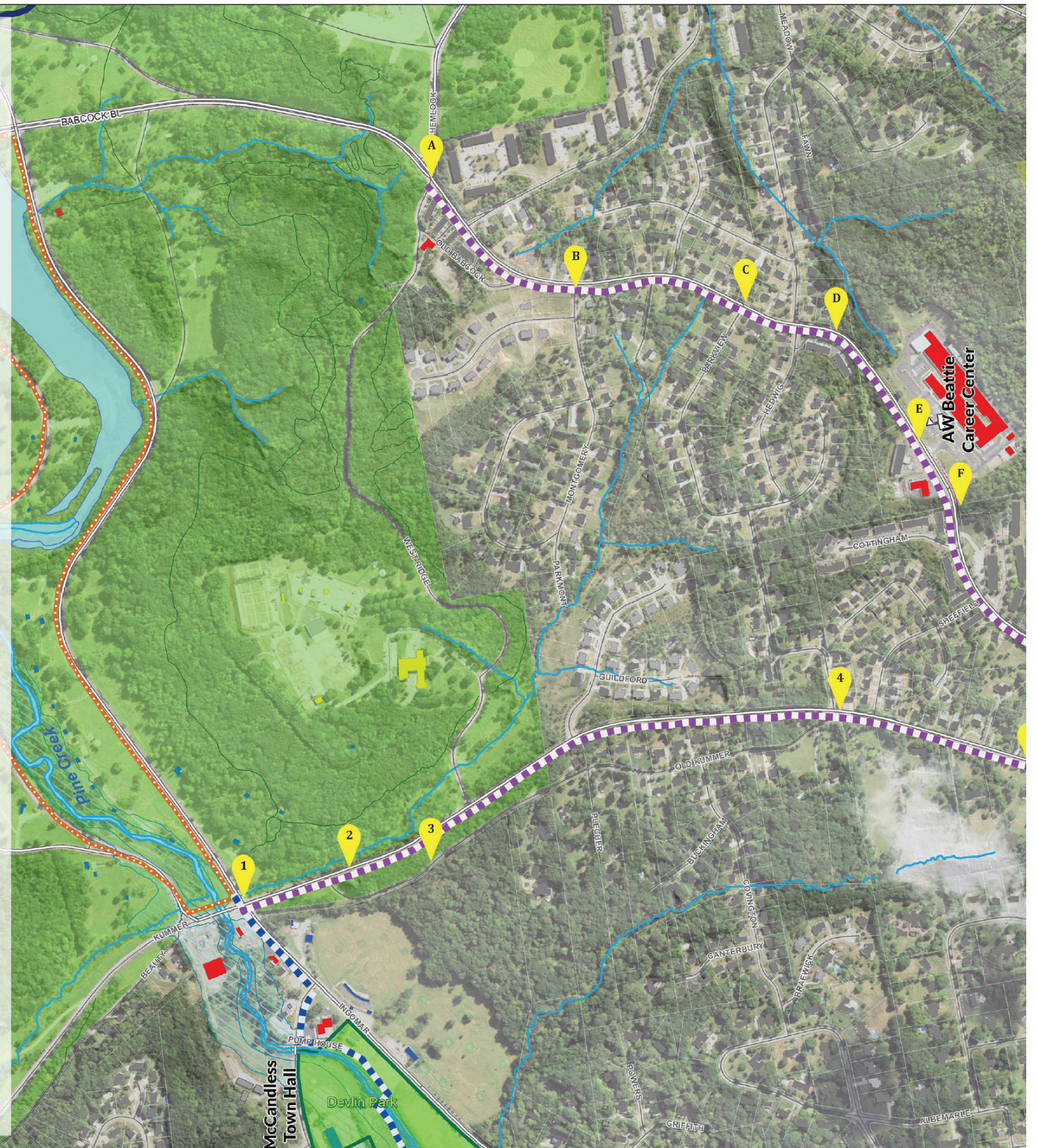
**20** A new crosswalk will be needed at Fairfield Road.

**21** The route proceeds 650 feet to Corporate Drive. Challenges in this area include a steep downhill along Babcock Boulevard that may make a sidewalk impossible, and a need for private property easements.

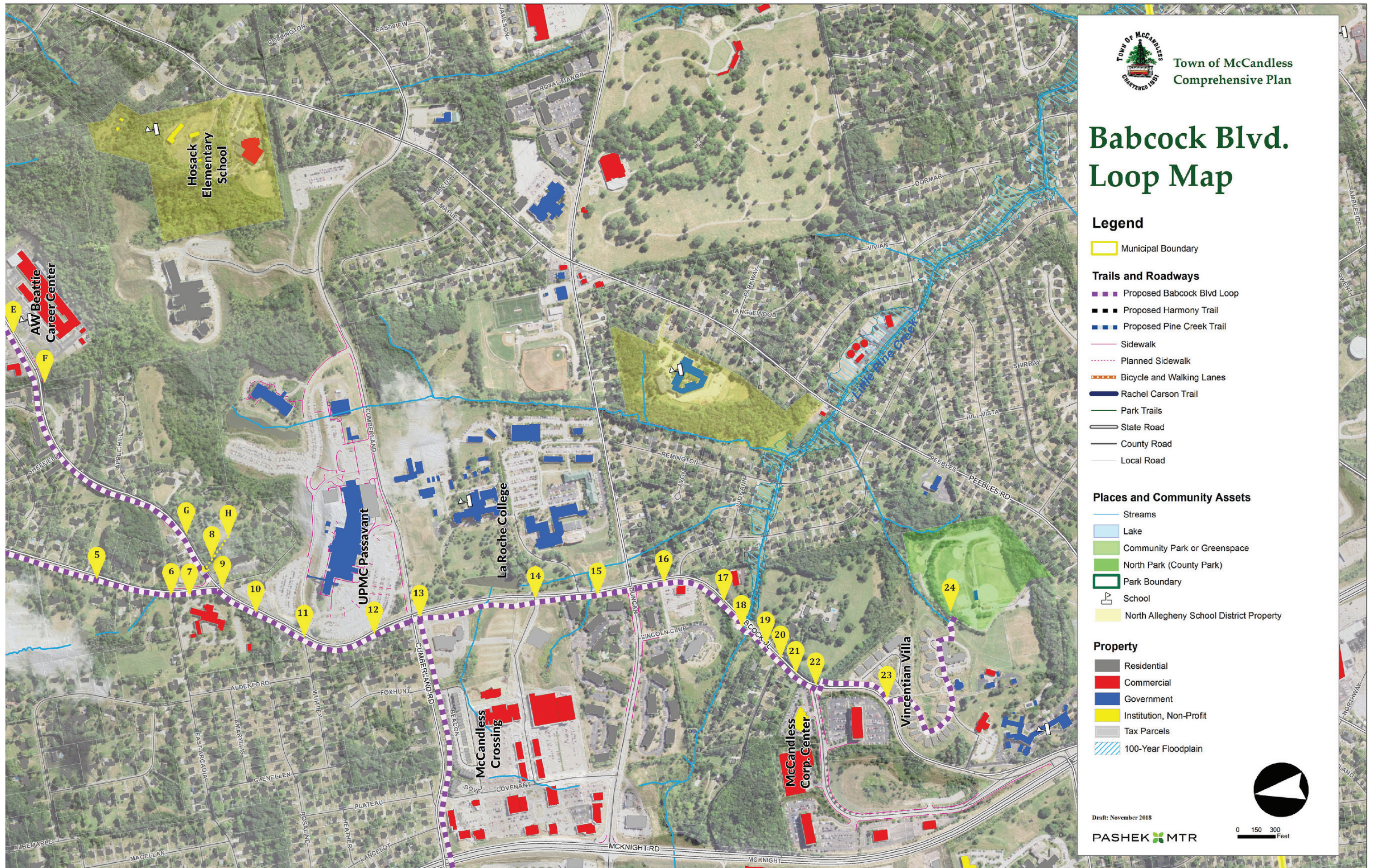
**22** At Corporate Drive the sidewalks can connect with existing sidewalks branching toward the office complex. A crosswalk will be needed across Corporate Drive. The Town should also investigate adding a crosswalk over Babcock Boulevard.

**23** The sidewalk route proceeds on the eastern side of Babcock Boulevard to new sidewalks anticipated to be constructed at Vincention Villa.

**24** The route continues via Vincention Villa to Vincention Park. Private property easements will be required.







Town of McCandless  
Comprehensive Plan

# Babcock Blvd. Loop Map

## Legend

- Municipal Boundary
- Proposed Babcock Blvd Loop
- Proposed Harmony Trail
- Proposed Pine Creek Trail
- Sidewalk
- Planned Sidewalk
- Bicycle and Walking Lanes
- Rachel Carson Trail
- Park Trails
- State Road
- County Road
- Local Road

## Places and Community Assets

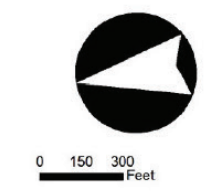
- Streams
- Lake
- Community Park or Greenspace
- North Park (County Park)
- Park Boundary
- School
- North Allegheny School District Property

## Property

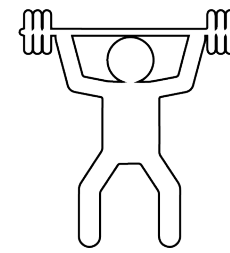
- Residential
- Commercial
- Government
- Institution, Non-Profit
- Tax Parcels
- 100-Year Floodplain

Draft: November 2018

PASHEK MTR







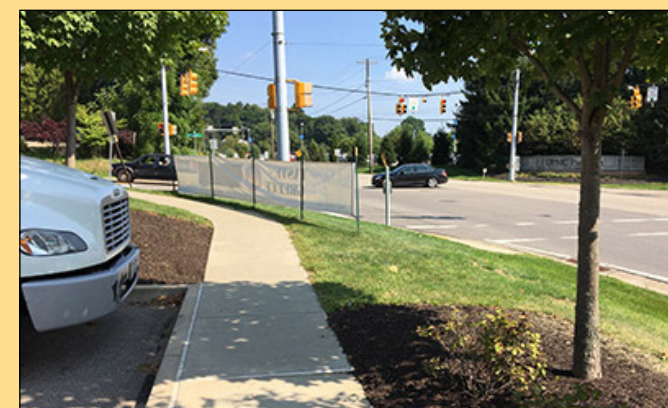
## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

**STRATEGY:** Develop a north-south walking-biking corridor in the Babcock Boulevard area.

**Q:** What are the specific action steps for implementing the strategy, including who is responsible? How difficult is this likely to be?

**A:** We rate the full project as a three-weight difficulty, but some specific steps should be much easier. The Town should follow the steps set forth in the Pine Creek Corridor suggested implementation plan. Additionally:

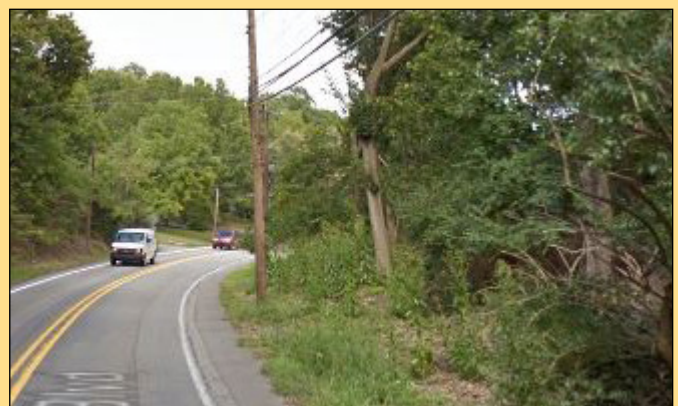
☐ STEP 1: For the Babcock Boulevard Loop routes, the Town and advisory committee should proceed with

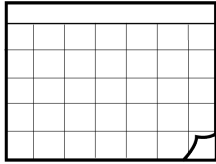




the expectation of completing specific segments as soon as feasible. Some sidewalk or bike lane segments could be added relatively quickly, per agreements with developers, landowners, or road owners.

- ❑ STEP 2: Working with Port Authority of Allegheny County, Town should improve selected transit stops along this route. (See Strategy 4 – Transit Improvements)
- ❑ STEP 3: Town and advisory committee should further develop its plans for sidewalks, bike lanes and shared-use lanes in areas with greater complexity, such as those with limited right-of-way width or challenges such as crosswalks, stream crossings, steep side-slopes or infrastructure impediments such as hydrants or utility poles.
- ❑ STEP 4: Town Council should consistently review aspects of this corridor to include line items in the Town budget.

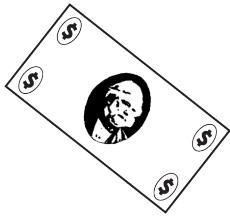




**Q:** What's a reasonable timeline for implementing this strategy?

**A:** Completion of a complex trail with multiple segments can take 5-20 years. However, the first stages, such as planning, property agreements and funding arrangements can reasonably be expected to take 5 years, with construction to follow. Some segments may be simpler to plan, allowing construction to begin sooner, and others could take 10 years to begin.

Note, too, that the Active Transportation Committee will already be in place and able to work more adroitly by the time it tackles this project because it gained experience first with the Pine Creek Corridor project.



**Q:** What costs can McCandless anticipate as it implements the strategy?

**A:** Construction costs could be shared, considering that developers may be required to complete some segments, and that grants could offset portions of the cost. Also note that most trail projects are phased. An opinion of probable construction costs is below. Summary information is provided here, with detail in the Appendix. NOTE: This is intended to provide order-of-magnitude understanding of costs. Many variables are unknown or may change, resulting in significant swings from this opinion.

<h2>Babcock Boulevard Loop</h2> <p>Opinion of Probable Construction Costs</p>	
<p>1-21-2019 Prepared by Pashek+ MTR</p>	
SEGMENT DESCRIPTION	SEGMENT COST
Segment I: North Park/Babcock Boulevard to Kummer Road, 8200 LF	\$825,588
Segment II: North Park/Kummer Road to Babcock Boulevard, 6000 LF	\$215,457
Segment III: Babcock Boulevard - Cumberland Road to Vincentian Villa, 5700 LF	\$872,381
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,913,426</b>
<p>NOTES: Opinion of Probable Construction Costs is made based on the experience and qualifications of Pashek + MTR, Ltd and represents reasonable judgment based on familiarity with the industry. Pashek + MTR, Ltd. has no control over the cost, or availability of labor, materials or equipment, or over market conditions or the provider's method of pricing. Pashek + MTR, Ltd cannot and does not guarantee that the opinion of probable cost provided the Owner will not vary from the actual cost experienced by the Owner.</p>	



WHAT IS  
THE VISION?  
THE GOAL? HERE'S AN  
OVERVIEW.

**Q:** Why develop a trail route along the western side of the Town? Why is this important?

**A:** Walking, hiking, mountain biking and other biking routes will connect parkland, residential and business areas along the western edge of McCandless. This corridor will connect with the Harmony Trail segments in Pine Township and thus to the Commodore Perry Regional Trail Network. The Town will develop safe hiking, walking and/or bike routes in the corridor. This includes creating a plan to acquire land or easements, construct surfaces, add crossings, signs, signals and other fixtures. Create plan for securing funding.

This route will provide access to nature and park amenities along this historically significant route. It will provide users access to safe, convenient and comfortable single-track off-road trails and other routes as developable. The Harmony Trail route includes some portions proposed on land already owned by McCandless; these could be readily developed.

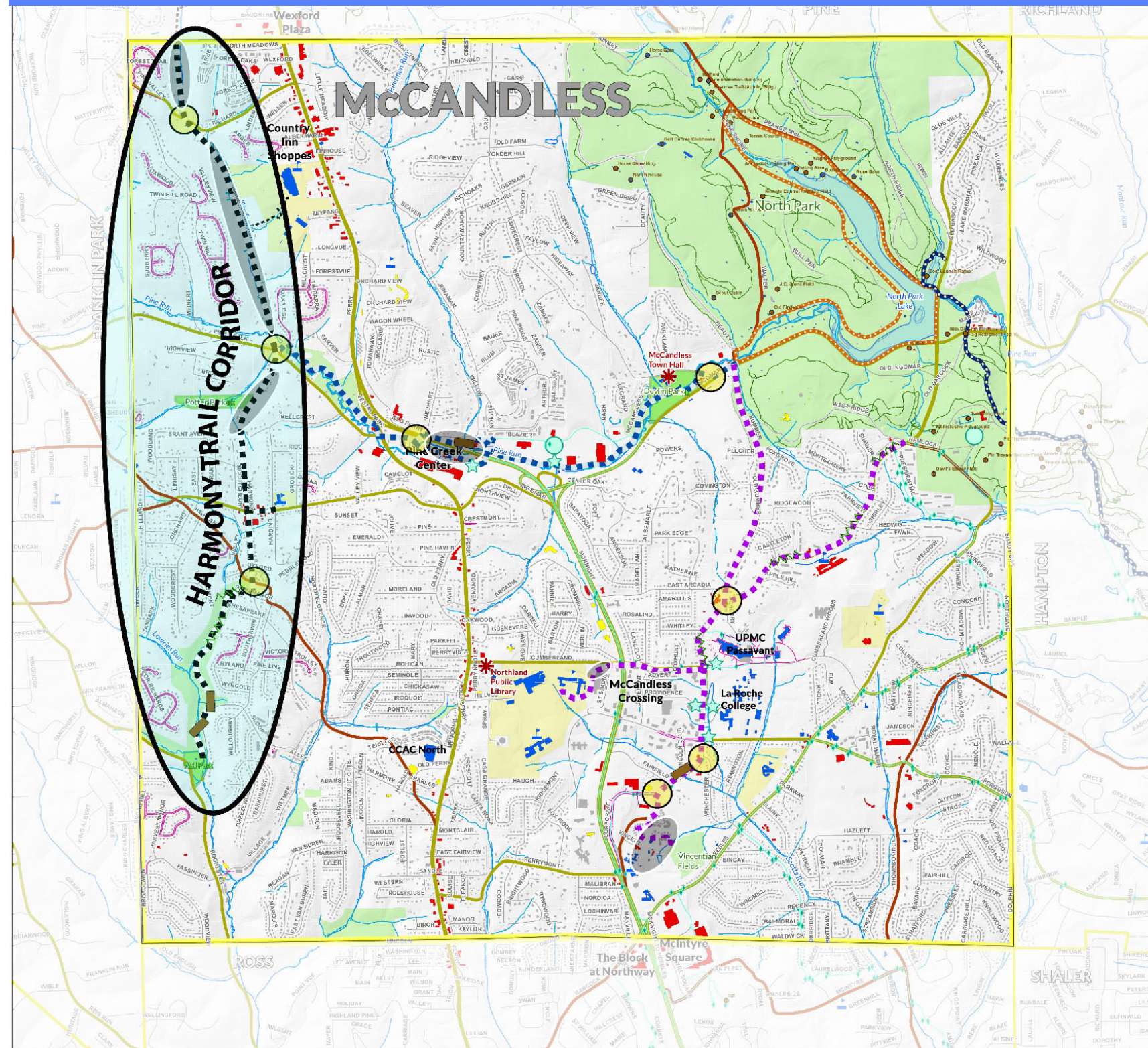
**Q:** What is the overview of this proposed route?

**A:** The corridor described from north to south on the following pages is intended to be constructed eventually as a multi-use trail. However, property-ownership issues may delay the project in some areas, the Town should proceed where feasible as described.



## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTIVITY

### STRATEGY: DEVELOP A NORTH-SOUTH WALKING-BIKING ROUTE ALONG THE HARMONY TRAIL CORRIDOR.



## Active Transportation & Connectivity Map

Draft: October 2018

### Legend

- McCandless Boundary
- Municipal Boundary

### Active Transportation Routes

- Proposed Babcock Blvd Loop
- Proposed Harmony Trail
- Proposed Pine Creek Trail
- Sidewalk
- Planned Sidewalk
- Bicycle and Walking Lanes
- Rachel Carson Trail
- Park Trails

### Roadways and Transit

- PennDOT Road
- Allegheny County Road
- Local Road
- PAAC Stops
- PAAC Park and Ride
- PAAC Route

### Places and Community Assets

- Streams
- Lake
- Community Park
- North Park (County Park)
- Park Boundary
- School
- County Park Facilities

### Trouble Spots

- Traffic Safety Issue
- Bridge or Culvert Needed
- Terrain Challenge
- Property Ownership Issue
- Potential Bus Stop Improvements

### Building Footprints

- Residential
- Commercial
- Government
- Institution, Non-Profit

### Zoning Classification

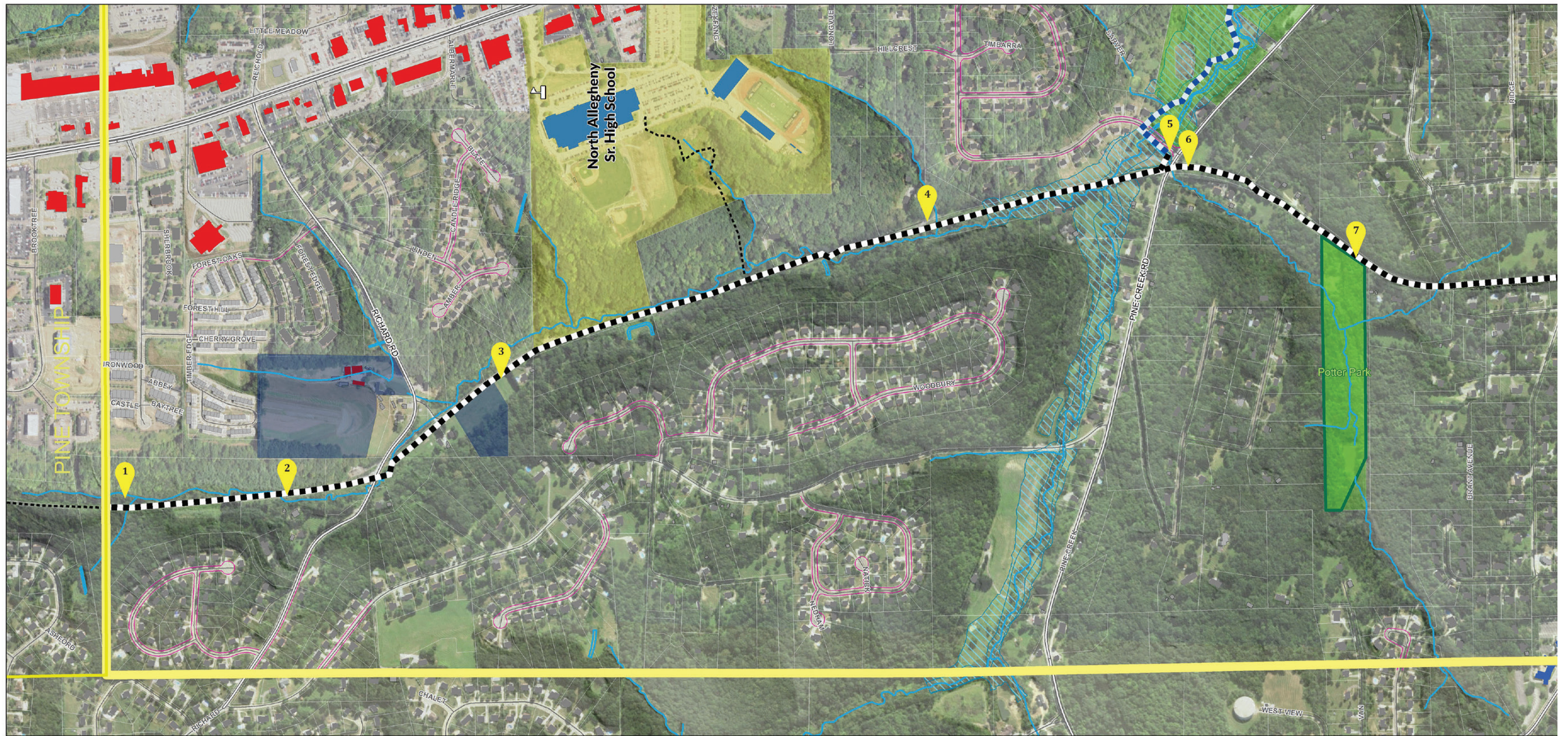
- Commercial
- Mixed-Use
- Public or Institution
- Traditional Neighborhood Development
- Tax Parcels

0 1,000 2,000 3,000 4,000 Feet



PASHEK MTR

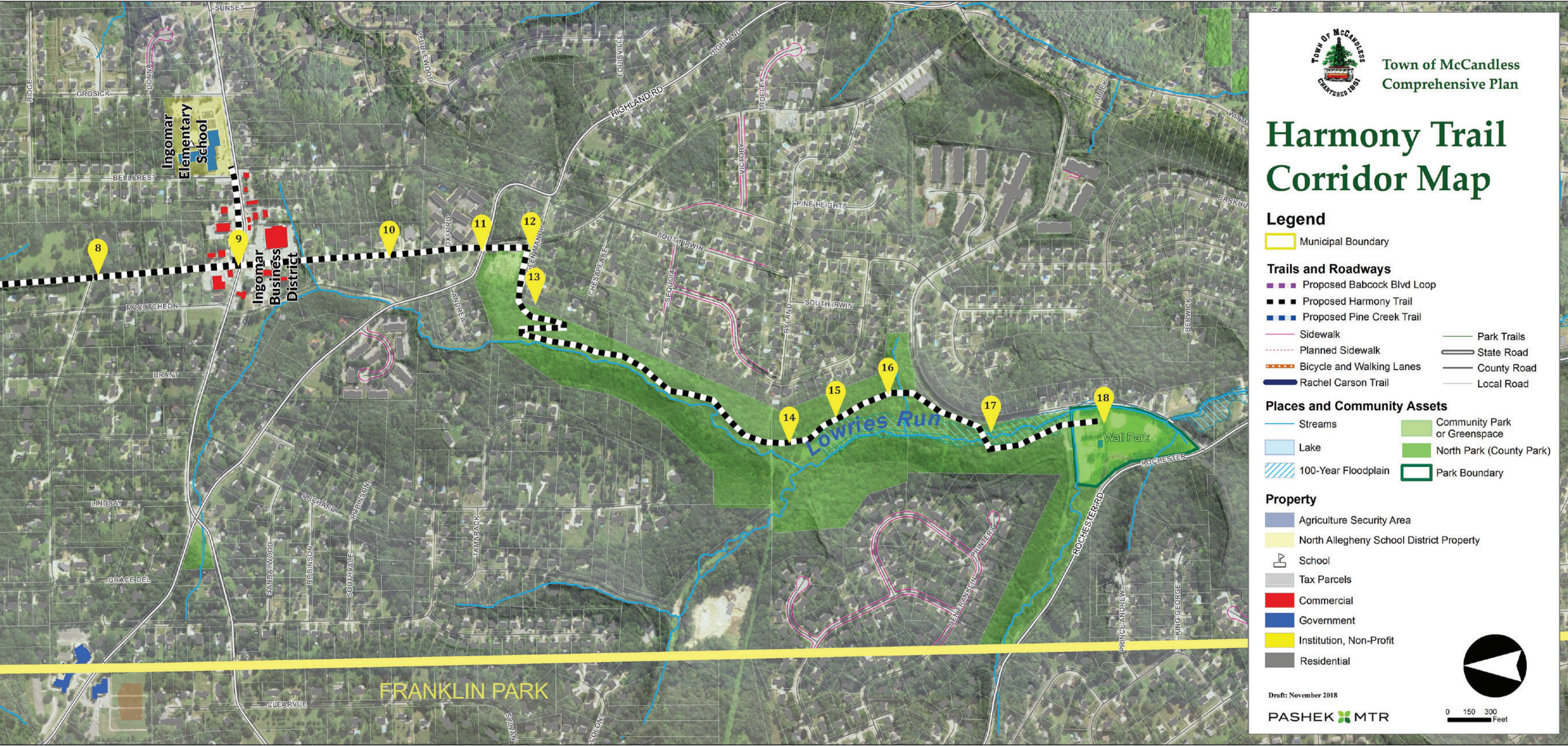




## Harmony Trail Corridor Route Description

- 1 The Harmony Trail Corridor is proposed as part of a north-south route extending into Pine Township. The McCandless portion is conceived as a multi-use trail that will likely need to be constructed in phases as property access issues are worked out. Some early phases will be created as single-track trails and other types.
- 2 From the north, the route enters McCandless along the former Harmony Line rail bed. This is partly or largely in the floodplain of Wexford Run, so this 2000-foot segment of trail should be constructed with sensitivity to the environment and to withstand inundation. A few bridges will be needed. Property rights are an issue here.
- 3 The route crosses Richard Road; a high-visibility crossing will be needed, and the route may need to follow the roadway for a few hundred feet.
- 4 Constraints of property ownership, stream crossings and floodplain preservation are likely in this 1.2-mile stretch. For 3000 feet, the route follows an existing private road from north to south. A spur heading east could connect to North Allegheny High School. The Harmony Trail route continues to follow the former rail bed another 3000 feet to Pine Creek Road.
- 5 At the confluence of Wexford Run and Pine Creek, the Harmony Trail corridor adjoins the western end of the proposed Pine Creek Trail corridor. A small parking area/trailhead is proposed at this location.
- 6 A high-visibility crossing or pedestrian bridge will be needed across Pine Creek Road.
- 7 The route follows a private segment of Harmony Drive for 3000 feet. This currently is a gravel road. Property access easements and maintenance could readily make this a viable route. This would provide far improved access to Potter Park.









## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

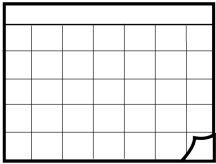
**STRATEGY:** Develop a north-south walking-biking route in the Harmony Trail corridor.

**Q:** What are the specific action steps for implementing the strategy, including who is responsible? How difficult is this likely to be?

**A:** We rate the full project as a three-weight difficulty, but some specific steps should be much easier.

Here is a suggested implementation plan.

- ❑ STEP 1: Town should consider following the steps set forth in the Pine Creek Corridor suggested implementation plan.
- ❑ STEP 2: For the Harmony Trail route, the Town and advisory committee should proceed with the expectation of completing the southernmost trail segments (on Town property from Wall Park, north) as soon as feasible. Additionally, some designated bike lanes and sidewalks could be added relatively quickly, per agreements with landowners and or road owners.
- ❑ STEP 3: The Town should open discussions with the North Allegheny School District, Pine Township and Franklin Park Borough about the possibility of additional trail spurs that could link other locations with the Harmony Trail in the future.
- ❑ STEP 4: Town should consistently review aspects of this trail to include line items in the Town budget.



**Q:** What's a reasonable timeline for implementing this strategy?

**A:** The process and timeline are similar to that shown in Strategies 1 & 2. For the Harmony Trail Corridor, however, the southern segments on Town-owned property could go faster, whereas those north of Ingomar Road, where property rights matters are known to exist, could take even longer. This plan recommends beginning talks with property owners sooner rather than later, but proceeding with the understanding that some obstacles exist.



**Q:** What costs can McCandless anticipate as it implements the strategy?

**A:** Construction costs could be shared, considering that developers may be required to complete some segments, and that grants could offset portions of the cost. Also note that most trail projects are phased. An opinion of probable construction costs is below. Summary information is provided here, with detail in the Appendix. NOTE: This is intended to provide order-of-magnitude understanding of costs. Many variables are unknown or may change, resulting in significant swings from this opinion.

Harmony Trail Corridor	
Opinion of Probable Construction Costs	1-21-2019 Prepared by Pashek+ MTR
SEGMENT DESCRIPTION	SEGMENT COST
Segment I: Pine Township to Richard Road , 1900 LF	\$324,159
Segment II: Richard Road to Pine Creek Road , 1900 LF	\$912,183
Segment III: Pine Creek Road to West Ingomar Road, 4000 LF (segment utilizes Harmony Drive)	\$31,668
Segment IV: West Ingomar Road to Wall Park, 8000 LF	\$1,397,785
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,665,794</b>
NOTES: Opinion of Probable Construction Costs is made based on the experience and qualifications of Pashek + MTR, Ltd and represents reasonable judgment based on familiarity with the industry. Pashek + MTR, Ltd. has no control over the cost, or availability of labor, materials or equipment, or over market conditions or the provider's method of pricing. Pashek + MTR, Ltd cannot and does not guarantee that the opinion of probable cost provided the Owner will not vary from the actual cost experienced by the Owner.	



# ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTIVITY

## STRATEGY: TRANSIT STOP IMPROVEMENTS



**Q:** Where are these potential improvements, and what kinds of projects are they? Why are they important?

**A:** McCandless and the Port Authority of Allegheny County will collaboratively pursue, with road owners and local property owners, transit stop improvements along proposed active transportation corridors. The potential improvements listed here were identified by the Port Authority, based on input from transit users and staff assessments.

## PINE CREEK TRAIL CORRIDOR

### McCandless Park and Ride

- Provide links from proposed Pine Creek trail to the transit stop at McCandless Park and Ride

### Pine Creek Shopping Center

- Improve bus stop conditions along Blazier Drive adjacent to the shopping center
- See stop Type #6 in attached bus stop design guidelines (if shelter is desired, contact Port Authority for appropriate dimensions)

## BABCOCK BOULEVARD CORRIDOR LOOP

### Cumberland Road at Babcock

- Opportunity to improve transit access with paving from sidewalk to curb
- See stop Type #2 in attached bus stop design guidelines

### Babcock at La Roche Driveway

### Babcock at McCandless Crossing Drive Babcock at Duncan Road

- Access to the bus stop could be improved with a sidewalk connection to a bus stop pad
- See stop Type #2 in attached bus stop design guidelines

### Babcock at Winchester Drive

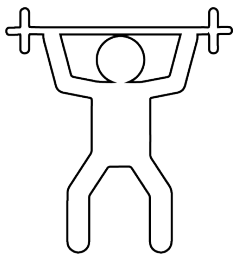
- Babcock at Winchester Drive southbound stop would be eliminated due to its poor location – there is no crosswalk and the stop itself is in a planting area with no sidewalk at all.

### Babcock at Fairfield Road

- Babcock at Fairfield Road would greatly benefit from crosswalks at this location.



## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS



### STRATEGY: Transit stop improvements.

**Q:** What are the specific action steps for implementing the strategy, and how hard is it likely to be?

**A:** We give it a one-weight difficulty. Here are the steps:

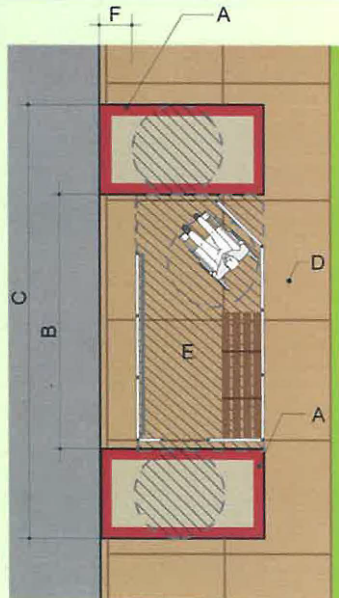
- ❑ STEP 1: McCandless selects a project to pursue.
- ❑ STEP 2: The Town initiates a meeting with Port Authority of Allegheny County representatives – specifically with the Assistant Manager for Passenger Amenities and Contract Services or the Service Manager. This should occur at the site(s) to review potential improvements. Also attending should be representatives from either PennDOT or Allegheny County, depending on jurisdiction of the road, and property owner(s) if private property is involved, as well as the Town’s selected bus shelter contractor. Everyone is to bring drawings of their facilities to this on-site meeting. The goal is to develop an understanding of existing site conditions and solidify action. Assumptions include:
  - McCandless or property owner will be responsible for site preparation enabling the bus stop improvements.
  - McCandless can involve an advertising company to prepare the site and/or erect a shelter. Port Authority also may be able to supply the shelter.



- ❑ STEP 3: Following the on-site meeting, discussions should ensue about timeline, next steps and allocation of responsibilities, including construction and future maintenance.
- ❑ STEP 4: Town creates a budget line item for work that it is responsible for, and considers pursuing other funding sources, including grants.

## TYPE 6

### STOP WITH STANDARD SHELTER



#### NOTE:

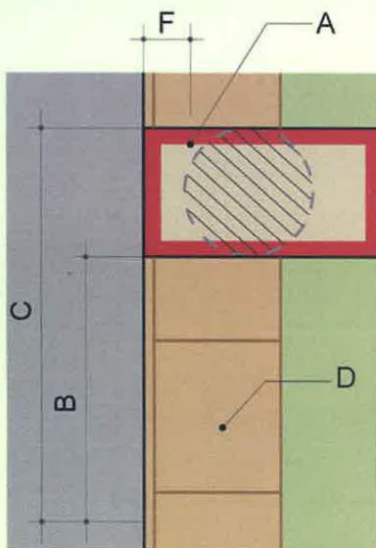
This example assumes a 12 ft. (3.6m) sidewalk. A shelter with narrower width than 6 ft. (1.8m) may be appropriate where pedestrian volumes are high. In this case, consider excluding seating to maximize capacity and preserve space for comfortable wheelchair turning.

Source: DVRPC 2012

Element		Details
A	Loading pad	5 ft. (1.5m) long x 8 ft. (2.4m) deep; pad must be firm, stable, and slip resistant, and connected to the pedestrian path. Provides a 5 ft. (1.5m) diameter clear turning radius for wheelchair users. Where possible, loading pads should be provided for both front and rear doors (as pictured here).  Sign should be located adjacent to the loading pad to clearly indicate bus stop.
B	Waiting area	16 ft. (6.1m) long x 6 ft. (1.8m) deep between doors.  After subtracting bench dimension, provides enough net area for 12 standing passengers at 7 SF (0.65m <sup>2</sup> ) per person (86.3 SF total), plus seating space for 3. Shelter design and configuration may vary.
C	Stop area	26 ft. (7.9m) long area should be kept free from obstructions along the curb edge. The length should provide free access to vehicle's front and rear doors.
D	Pedestrian path	Minimum 4 ft. (1.2m) deep pedestrian path, or wider, as called for by local sidewalk standards, along a sidewalk or walkway. Should be a firm, stable, and slip resistant surface connected to the loading pad and separate from waiting area. Keep 3 ft. (0.9m) clear around all street furniture and building elements.
E	Furniture	15 ft. (4.6m) long x 6 ft. (1.8m) wide x 9 ft. (2.7m) high shelter with lean rail, 3-seat bench, information, & ad panel. Glass panels allow view of arriving bus and weather protection. 78 net interior SF (7.2 m <sup>2</sup> ) can accommodate 10-11 standing passengers plus seating for 3.
F	Clear area	2 ft. (0.6 m) from the curb edge, 9 ft. (2.7 m) minimum height.

## TYPE 2

### MINIMUM STOP WITH CURBSIDE PEDESTRIAN PATH



Source: DVRPC 2012

Element		Details
A	Loading pad	5 ft. (1.5m) long x 8 ft. (2.4m) deep; pad must be firm, stable, and slip resistant, and connected to the pedestrian path. Provides a 5 ft. (1.5m) diameter clear turning radius for wheelchair users.  Sign should be located adjacent to the loading pad to clearly indicate bus stop.
B	Waiting area	7 ft. (2.1m) long x 4 ft. (1.2m) deep; waiting area can be accommodated in the pedestrian path if pedestrian volumes are low. Provides enough area for 4 passengers at 7 SF (0.65m <sup>2</sup> ) per person, 28 SF (2.6 m <sup>2</sup> ) total.
C	Stop area	A 12 ft. (3.7m) area along the curbline should be kept free from obstructions. The length should provide free access to the vehicle's front doors.
D	Pedestrian path	Minimum 4 ft. (1.2m) deep pedestrian path, or wider, as called for by local sidewalk standards, along a sidewalk or similar walkway. Should be a firm, stable, and slip resistant surface connected to the loading pad. Wider path is desirable to provide space for passing.
E	Furniture	N/A
F	Clear area	2 ft. (0.6 m) from the curb edge, 9 ft. (2.7 m) minimum height.





## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTIVITY

### STRATEGY: PURSUE TRANSIT SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS.

WHAT IS THE VISION FOR THIS? WHAT ARE THE GOALS?  
HERE'S AN OVERVIEW.

**Q:** Who provides public transit service, and what do we mean by service improvements?

**A:** The Port Authority of Allegheny County provides bus service in McCandless, currently via a couple of routes that enter the Town from the south and east. Transit service levels can include the frequency of buses on a route and the location of routes and stops.

**Q:** What is a transit service request, how are requests evaluated, and why are they important?

**A:** The Port Authority of Allegheny County each year revises its levels of services, routes and other aspects of service within the transit system. It has a process for collecting service requests, evaluating them, defining the transit system's budget, ranking the requests within that budget, finalizing and approving the prioritized changes, and releasing the annual service report that explains the changes.

### HOW PORT AUTHORITY EVALUATES SERVICE REQUESTS

The Port Authority evaluates service requests based on how changes would improve:

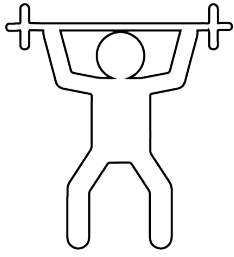
- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
- Equity

Therefore, requests for service changes in McCandless should make a strong case for improvements in all three areas.

The Port Authority explains its criteria on its website:

<https://www.portauthority.org/paac/RiderServices/ServiceRequests.aspx>

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS



### STRATEGY: Pursue transit service improvements.

**Q:** What are the specific action steps for implementing the strategy, and how hard is it likely to be?

**A:** This involves energetic pursuit of desired improvements in service, which requires some staff time and stakeholder communications, but no tremendous difficulty or expense. Therefore it has a one-weight difficulty rating. Here are the steps:

- ❑ STEP 1. McCandless should identify the stakeholders who seek improved public transit, including neighboring communities, local agencies, employers and institutions, and area residents. This group should identify a top priority, such as:
  - Extending the Perrysville bus route, which currently stops at the West View Park Shopping Center, north along Route 19 (to potentially serve CCAC-North). The Town should continue the work already done by the “Buses for Perry Highway” group in 2015-2017.
  - Extending the McKnight Road route north from the McCandless Park & Ride lot into Pine Township.
- ❑ STEP 2. Each year McCandless should lead a formal request process for its top priority service improvement, following the annual calendar and submittal process set out at the Port Authority website, recruiting stakeholders to participate. The more unique requests, the better. The more that the requests demonstrate improved efficiency, effectiveness and equity, the better.

Here is the annual timeline that the Port Authority of Allegheny County follows when determining service levels and any changes to existing services.
- ❑ STEP 3. The Town should also pursue grant opportunities such as the Smart Mobility Challenge, and other opportunities to work with neighboring municipalities, the Allegheny conference, and the Regional Transportation Alliance of SWPA.
- ❑ STEP 4. The Town should consider and investigation non-traditional or alternative transportation service solutions including cooperatively funded, private transportation options as well as private, public or quasi-public on-demand services such as Lyft, Uber and Access.

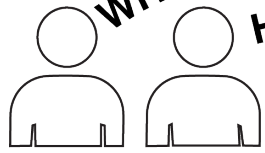






## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTIVITY

### STRATEGY: BUILD PUBLIC AWARENESS OF ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS.

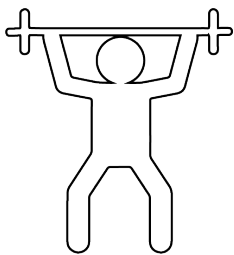


WHAT IS THE VISION FOR THIS? WHAT ARE THE GOALS?  
HERE'S AN OVERVIEW.

**Q:** Why is it important for McCandless to build awareness of new and improved active transportation opportunities?

**A:** There are many good reasons to publicize these community improvements as work progresses. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, access to walking and biking routes can make a big difference in quality of life for residents. It can improve the perceived and actual “livability” of a place and enhance a sense of community. In addition, increased physical activity is associated with improved individual and community health. Moreover, McCandless has the opportunity to let residents know “we heard you!” since a wish for additional active transportation facilities was a consistent theme in public input as part of this comprehensive plan.

### IMPLEMENTATION STEPS



**STRATEGY: Build public awareness of active transportation improvements.**

**Q:** What are the specific action steps for implementing the strategy, and how hard is it likely to be?

**A:** This involves some staff or contractor time creating maps and guides via mobile GIS applications, but can mainly rely on help and groundwork from the advisory committee. This has a one-weight difficulty rating. Here are the steps:

- ☐ STEP 1: McCandless staff should create a place on its website to host downloadable map routes, and should develop and provide interactive mobile map apps. These should allow trail users to report safety issues or other important matters to the Town.
- ☐ STEP 2: The Town should provide walking route signage to provide directions and distances.
- ☐ STEP 3: Town staff should employ communication channels for community awareness of walking routes.
- ☐ STEP 4: The Public Engagement Advisory Committee could help enlist volunteers and raise awareness.
- ☐ STEP 5: Continue to make sidewalk improvements, and promote their use.
- ☐ STEP 6: At locations where bus stops are situated near trail corridors, include information about trails at bus shelters, such as maps, informational signs or mobile links to encourage transit/trail awareness and connectivity.

❑ STEP 7. The Active Transportation Advisory Committee and/or Town staff should meet with external groups and organizations to make them aware of increased connectivity, and enlist their help. These could include:

- Walking/hiking/biking/running groups
- Special events organizations
- Local businesses
- Civic groups
- North Allegheny School District

❑ STEP 8. Working with the Town's Community Activities Advisory Committee, McCandless could designate four dates a year as Take A Walk Days, encouraging residents to try a new route in the Town, potentially meet new people, visit a new location and enjoy their community in a new way.



# KEY ISSUE

## COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

**Q:** What are the benefits to the Town of McCandless in providing recreational activities and a community space?

**A:** McCandless sees itself as a bustling, vibrant, safe and healthy suburban community that provides residents and businesses with high-demand services while operating with financial prudence.

It strives to meet the needs of current residents and businesses and attract newcomers in both categories. Its statement of principles state that is a place of welcome and hospitality.

The community, as a suburb that experienced its greatest growth in the 1940s-1970s, has matured alongside its neighbors. While other North Hills communities began to offer municipal recreation activities, McCandless chose to leave this mainly to the private or non-profit sectors. Now, as it faces flat population growth, it is reviewing what it does well and how it can improve.

Some residents have proposed adding Town-sponsored recreation programs, activities and events – and a community space where they can be held.

Surrounding and nearby North Hills communities

YEAR	POP.	% +/-
1900	1,034	
1910	987	-4.50%
1920	1,465	48.40%
1930	2,053	40.10%
1940	8,494	70.20%
1950	6,488	85.70%
1960	14,582	124.80%
1970	22,404	53.60%
1980	26,191	16.90%
1990	28,781	9.90%
2000	29,022	0.80%
2010	28,457	-2%

of similar size and population provide recreational programming and also offer community space. Adding programs, events and a community space is in keeping with the vision developed as part of this community planning effort: "McCandless is a vibrant and safe community that is conveniently located in the center of the Pittsburgh's northern suburbs."

### MCCANDLESS' MISSION

The Town of McCandless governs based upon solid core values of integrity, straightforwardness, pragmatism, and an attitude of public service and selflessness. We offer programs of service that emanate from these principles, delivered in optimal fashion.

### STATEMENT OF EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY

The Town of McCandless is a place of welcome and hospitality for all who would seek lawful residence in or visit our community regardless of their country of origin, race, native language, religion or sexual orientation and embraces empathy for all, promoting equality, diversity and inclusivity.

**Q:** What is the long-term vision for recreation in McCandless?

**A:** VISION STATEMENT: McCandless provides programs that meet community needs for existing residents and that enhance the community's desirability for prospective residents. These recreation programs, activities and events are provided at a community space that is inviting and serves as a community hub for social and cultural interaction.





# HOW TO READ THIS CHAPTER

This chapter presents and analyzes data, draws conclusions and provides recommendations on two separate-but-related sub-topics. The chapter is organized to first cover the issue of “recreation,” which includes programs, events and activities in the community.

The chapter is organized to present information in a logical way. It first provides data, then analysis of the data, then conclusions and recommendations based on the analysis.

## RECREATION

- Data: Programs, events and activities currently provided by McCandless
- Data: Comparing McCandless to other local and peer communities and to national standards
- Data: Facility types in McCandless
- Data: Usage levels of local facilities
- Analysis: Gaps in recreation program, event and activity offerings
- Conclusion/Recommendation: The Town of McCandless should provide events, activities and programs that fill gaps in recreation offerings. We present strategies for meeting community needs.
  1. Create an Activities Advisory Committee
  2. Hire Parks and Recreation staff based on needs as determined by the Activities Advisory Committee and approved by Town Council.
  3. Develop programs, events and activities that fill gaps and meet community needs

## COMMUNITY CENTER SPACE

The topic of a potential community center in the Town of McCandless is, at the very least, a “hot” topic in the Town of McCandless. In fact, during the presentation of the concept in the Implementable Comprehensive Plan by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, the Town assembly room appeared divided with regard to support for a community center.

In November 2015, Town Council determined there was a need to study the concept of a Community Center, “including addressing needs of the property, construction, staffing and operational costs.” Subsequently, Town Council directed Staff to include the community center concept as part of the request for proposals (RFP). The RFP specifically stated, “An expected key element is the individualized study of available recreational facilities. This may result in a separate feasibility study for the provision of additional recreation including a community center in the Town”.

Consequently, the community center feasibility study “light” appearing in the appendix is a result of Town Council’s request. The recommendation is that the Town, via an activities advisory committee, analyze activity needs and current resources to determine if there is a need for additional planned activities and space. If it is determined that space is needed what will be the form of that space?

Data reflecting potential community space is located in the Appendix.



# Recreation events, programs, activities

**Q:** What data is available on the recreation programs, events and activities currently provided by the Town of McCandless? How does this compare to other local municipalities?

**A:** Data is provided here and on subsequent pages. Here are some useful facts and points of comparison:

- McCandless most recently hosted 13 events annually, including 9 provided by McCandless Community Association and the McCandless Historic Society and 4 provided by the Town. This is a far smaller number than comparable communities provide. (See list, next page.)
- This comprehensive plan recommends that the Town provides additional activities that foster a sense of community and meet the needs of residents.

## COMPARING MCCANDLESS WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES

**Q:** What recreation programs, events and activities are available in McCandless?

**A:** Some programs were offered by the Town of McCandless and/or by two allied organizations, the McCandless-Northern Allegheny Heritage Center and the McCandless Community Association:

### McCANDLESS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Easter Egg Hunt  
Pumpkin Party  
Block Party  
Creepy Campfire  
Hearts and Crafts Valentine's Day  
Movies in the Park  
Senior Jingle Bell Brunch

### McCANDLESS-NORTHERN ALLEGHENY HERITAGE CENTER (2018-19)

Ghosts and Legends of Western PA  
Vintage Wedding Gown Exhibit  
This Is Pittsburgh  
Anniversary Celebrations  
Vintage Car Cruise  
Western PA Model Railroad  
Museum portable display

KDKA history  
Covered Bridge presentation  
Voices from the Attic

**TOWN OF McCANDLESS**  
Gerry Aufman Summer Recreation Program  
Clean Up Day  
Community Day

**By comparison, here is the average number of programs provided annually by local municipalities:**

Township of Pine	80
Hampton Township	50
Marshall Township	45
Ross Township	40
Borough of Franklin Park	30
Town of McCandless	19 (including those from allied groups)



**Q:** Continuing to consider available data, what are the national standards or benchmarks for community-run recreation offerings?

**A:** An organization called the National Recreation and Parks Association conducts annual performance reviews of local parks and recreation department practices. This helps communities benchmark themselves against communities with similar population sizes. McCandless has roughly 28,500 residents.

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The National Recreation and Parks Association's performance review states that "agencies serving a population of fewer than 20,000 residents typically hold 40 fee-based programs per year ... Programming spans many different types of park and recreation activities, with many touching one or more of NRPA's Three Pillars: Conservation, Health and Wellness, and Social Equality."

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A snapshot of programs and events offered by local municipalities is included in the Appendix.



**Q: Let's look at specific places. What facility types are available in or in close proximity to McCandless, and what kinds of programs are offered?**

**A:** The Town of McCandless is home to existing private and public recreation facilities. These facilities provide a variety of programs. These facilities are as varied as mega fitness centers small yoga studios, karate clubs, churches, colleges and the library.

**List of facilities:**

- LA Fitness
- Fitness 19
- INPAX
- Roth Rock Kung Fu
- La Roche College
- Northland Public Library
- CCAC-North
- Barre Code
- Camp Bow Wow
- Allegheny County, North Park
- Katie's Clay Studio
- St. Paul United Methodist Church
- St. John's Lutheran Church

**Programs provided by these facilities:**

- Variety of fitness programs including strength training, cycling, yoga ...
- Karate for youth and adults
- Confidence building
- Art classes
- Before and after school programs
- Summer nature camps
- Dog training
- Adult and youth programs

**CCAC-North and Northland Public Library currently provide the most extensive program offerings. Allegheny County offers numerous programs at North Park.**

CCAC-North provides hundreds of adult programs ranging from art, health, career development, cooking and dance. It provides approximately 50 programs designed for school age youth. CCAC-North does not provide toddler or family programs.

Northland Public Library offers over 30 varieties of adult, youth, toddler and family programming. The Northland Public Library executive director says the library would welcome additional programming space in the Town of McCandless to expand the activities and events. This outreach would be provided at no cost to the community and residents, if space is provided by the Town.

There are also program providers that do not have a facility but rent space from others. Examples of these providers include:

- Fit 4 Mom: Mom and me exercise classes that use North Park during nice weather and Northway Mall during inclement weather.
- Penn State Extension Office: Offers many gardening- and nature-related programs.
- I9 Sports: Offers youth sports programs
- N-Zone Sports: youth sports programs
- CDG Sports: youth sports programs and camps
- Athletic Associations



**Q:** Now, what is known about the usage level of the existing local facilities and programs?

**A:** Here is a summary:

To understand the feasibility of successful construction and operation of a new community center, it is important to know and analyze other facilities in the area so that the center does not compete with them. The following information provides a listing of indoor recreation facilities, their locations, what is available at each facility, and a projected level of competition. These include public providers such as the North Allegheny School District, colleges, municipal facilities, and private facilities. A comprehensive list of area facilities is in the Appendix. Evaluation of the usage of the most significant facilities located in the Town of McCandless was completed by visiting and speaking to the facility staff.

## FITNESS CENTERS

**INPAX** - An indoor range and training destination established in 2003 as a full-spectrum self-defense training academy. INPAX provides a 30,000 square-foot indoor range, a Forge training center featuring Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, self-defense and fitness classes.

**North Allegheny Baierl Center** - The 48,000 square foot center is located on the campus of the North Allegheny Senior High School and provides many amenities including:

- A 130 foot by 100 foot indoor multi-purpose activity room.
- Three furnished meeting and conference rooms totaling over 3,500 square feet.
- A 3,500 square foot fitness center equipped with cardiovascular machines and plate loaded strength equipment.
- Five furnished offices.
- An 8,500 square foot mezzanine with a one-tenth mile multi-lane rubberized, cushioned jogging/ walking track. Participants may use the large mezzanine area to stretch and warm up as well as cool down after vigorous activity.
- An extensive training room facility equipped with whirlpools, taping tables, treatment tables and a rehabilitation area (for students only).
- Four spacious locker rooms.
- ADA compliant restroom facilities meeting the needs of the Baierl Center and Newman Stadium.
- Indoor/Outdoor Concession Stand for activity room service as well as Newman Stadium events.

This facility is heavily utilized by school groups, clubs and athletics. It is closed during home varsity football games, school activities, graduation etc.. The Fitness Center is available to residents early morning from 5:00-7:00 am, and 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.. The Ponce Room is the only room open for public rental and is not available on Sundays. There are very little residential use due to lack of locker rooms and limited hours

**LA Fitness** - This facility provides residents with the following amenities:

- |                         |                     |                    |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| • Basketball            | • Kids Klub         | • Wi-Fi            |
| • Group Fitness Classes | • Personal Training | • Whirlpool Spa    |
| • Indoor Cycling        | • Racquetball       | • Juice Bar        |
| • Indoor Pool           | • Sauna             | • Physical Therapy |

Busiest times are early morning and evenings after work. There are no waiting lists for classes, equipment or pool time.

**Fitness 19** - Amenities include: Cardio Equipment, Circuit Training, Free Weights, Personal Training, Group Classes, Tanning, Kids Room, Lockers, Cycling, Hydro Massage, Kettle Bells, TRX and Red Light Therapy.

This fitness center is moderately busy. The classes are not full, and there are no wait times for equipment

## GYMNASIUMS

**North Allegheny Baierl Center** - The gymnasium is utilized by school groups and athletics. Not available for outside use. Usage among residents not associated with a school group is very limited.

**North Allegheny Schools** - The gymnasiums are utilized by athletics and school groups. Very limited availability for outside use. Usage among residents not associated with a school group is very limited.

## CLASSROOMS/RENTAL FACILITIES

**CCAC-North** - Rental facilities are first dedicated to education programming and evaluated through the school. Costly to rent for private events. Application located in Appendix.

**La Roche College** - Facilities are used for La Roche programs and events on a regular basis. Rental facilities available on a very limited basis when students are not in session.

**Northland Public Library** - Limited rental facilities available. Rentals are scheduled around Library programs and are not available weekends after 9:00 p.m.

**Holy Trinity Center** - Rental facilities range from 91' x 51' Grand Room, 120' x 18.5' Gallery, 25' x 21' Conference Room (can be divided into two 17' x 21' rooms), and 680 square foot social space. Facilities are more formal for larger events such as weddings and corporate events.

**Allegheny County, North Park Facilities** - Most facilities are three season rental facilities (pavilions) Available for rent 12 months in advance. Preferred facilities in high demand.

## PROGRAM PROVIDERS



**Northland Public Library**



**CCAC-North**

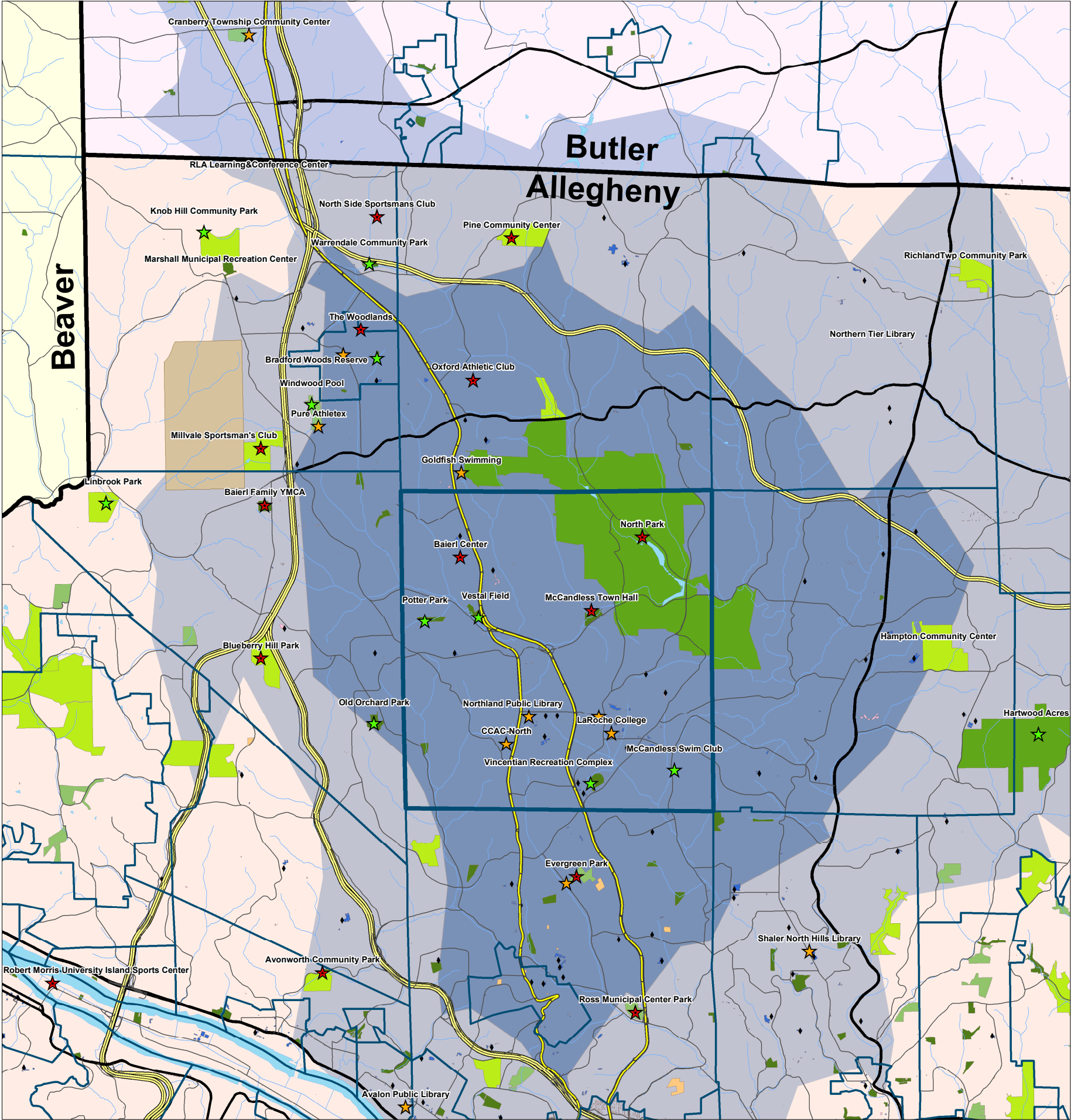
The Town of McCandless is home to many private and public recreation facilities. These facilities provide a variety of programs. These facilities range from mega fitness centers, yoga studios, karate, churches, colleges and the library. There are a wide variety of programs offered at these facilities. A comprehensive list is in the Appendix.

CCAC-North and the Northland Public Library provide the most extensive program offerings. CCAC-North provides hundreds of adult programs ranging from art, health, career development, cooking and dance. They provide approximately 50 youth programs which are designed for school age



Q: What facilities offer opportunities in our area? What is available, where?

A: This map shows the location of recreation facilities within a 10-minute drive (dark blue) and 15-minute drive (light blue) from McCandless Town Hall.



Town of McCandless  
Comprehensive Plan

Regional Assets Map

Draft: June 2018

Amenities

Outdoor Amenities

- Bradford Woods Reserve
- Hartwood Acres
- Knob Hill Community Park
- Linbrook Park
- McCandless Swim Club
- Old Orchard Park
- Potter Park
- Vestal Field
- Vincenian Recreation Complex
- Warrendale Community Park
- Windwood Pool

Indoor Amenities

- Shaler North Hills Library
- Pure Athletex
- Northland Public Library
- North Hills Art Center
- LaRoche College
- Holy Trinity Center
- Goldfish Swimming
- Cranberry Township Community Center
- CCAC-North
- Bradford Woods Borough Building
- Avalon Public Library

Indoor and Outdoor Amenities

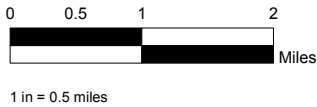
- Avonworth Community Park
- Baierl Center
- Baierl Family YMCA
- Blueberry Hill Park
- Evergreen Park
- McCandless Town Hall
- Millvale Sportsman's Club
- North Park
- North Side Sportsmans Club
- Oxford Athletic Club
- Pine Community Center
- Robert Morris University Island Sports Center
- Ross Municipal Center Park
- The Woodlands

Legend

- County Lines
- Municipalities
- Roads
- Schools
- Water
- Streams
- State Gameland
- County Boundaries
- Parks
- Buildings

Drive Time from McCandless Town Hall

- 10 Minutes
- 15 Minutes



youth. CCAC-North does not provide toddler or family programs. Northland Public Library offers a variety of adult, youth, toddler and family programming. Conversations with the Northland Public Library Executive Director indicated the library would welcome additional programming space in the Town of McCandless where the library could expand activities and events (as occurs in other communities). This outreach would be provided at no cost to the community and their residents.

Two of the most significant program providers are:

- Northland Public Library - Provides a wide variety of programs for all ages.
- Community College of Allegheny County - Provides a wide variety of adult and young adult education programs. Does not offer toddler programming

Program providers that do not have a facility but rather rent space from others include:

- Fit 4 Mom - Mommy and me exercise classes which uses North Park during nice weather and Northway Mall during in climate weather.
- Penn State Extension Office - Offers many gardening and nature related programs.
- I9 Sports - Offers youth sports programs
- N-Zone Sports - youth sports programs
- CDG Sports - youth sports programs and camps

**Q. If we analyze all the data - what is currently offered in McCandless by the Town or others; what is offered nearby; comparisons with other communities and national standards; and understanding of usage levels of existing programs - what gaps exist in facilities and programs?**

**A.** Analysis of programs provided by others and by McCandless, the historical society and the community association reveals a gap that includes:

- Inclusive programs
- Diversity programs
- Senior programs
- Parent-child meeting space
- Health and wellness programs
- Active outdoor opportunities
- Nature programs



# Community Activities Conclusions and Recommendations

1. McCandless offers fewer recreation offerings than other local Towns or, nationally speaking, than is typical for communities of its size.
2. Other private and non-profit organizations offer programs, events and activities, but yet gaps remain.
3. The Town of McCandless should provide events, activities and programs that fill gaps in recreation offerings.

**Q:** What strategies will McCandless pursue to implement change to improve recreation programs, events and activities?

**A:** Here's a list. Details for each are on the following pages.

**STRATEGY 1:** Create an Activities Advisory Committee.

**STRATEGY 2:** Develop programs, events and activities for the community.



## COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

### STRATEGY 1: CREATE COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE.



**Q:** What would an Activities Advisory Committee do, and why is this important?

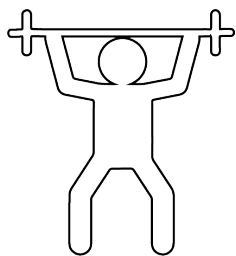
**A:** A Community Activities Advisory Committee will study parks and recreation issues and ideas in McCandless, and make recommendations to Town Council on matters of policy, practices and capital improvement priorities. This group – or an ad hoc working group formed for a specific time frame – could also be the team that explores the need for additional community space.

This step is important because:

1. A committee serves Town residents and the Town Council by conducting needed research and investigation, and providing information and either decisions or recommendations. This helps ensure that matters that come up for Council consideration have been diligently reviewed, discussed and analyzed, which puts elected officials in a better position to make decisions.
2. A committee appointed to advise on parks and recreation activities and space would provide an additional opportunity for residents to become engaged and involved in the official business of their community.

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

### STRATEGY 1: Create an Activities Advisory Committee.



**Q:** What are the specific action steps for implementing the strategy, and how hard is this likely to be?

**A:** This should cost no money, and requires little staff time. We give it a one-weight difficulty rating. Here is a guide to making it happen:

- ❑ STEP 1: The Town of McCandless must pass a resolution that determines the Activities Advisory Committee's powers as either advisory or policy-making. Sample board resolutions are located in the Appendix. This resolution should: Identify the Activities Advisory Committee, specify the number of members, and identify the powers, duties, responsibilities and organization of the committee.
- ❑ STEP 2: The committee's focus will be to assess needs for programs, events and activities, as well as facilities. Park and recreation facilities and programs should be evaluated on a periodic basis. As the demographic make-up of the municipality's population changes, so may the residents' park and recreation needs.



# DECISION-MAKING GUIDE

The Town of McCandless has been considering the possibility of constructing a community space to serve its residents. A primary concern of the discussion is whether or not there is need for such a space, and, if so, to determine if the community can support it financially.

Below are steps to guide the decision-making process. The process is also shown in a flow-chart in the Appendix. Note that the steps begin with determining programmatic needs and continue with potential space needs. Decision points along the way guide the process for stopping at any point or moving forward.

1. Form an Activities Advisory Committee that will report to Town Council with recommendations. As this committee may at some point consider the need and feasibility of the Town of McCandless constructing and operating a community space, it should be made up of residents who have experience with:
  - The needs of the community
  - Facility design
  - Site planning
  - Staffing and operation management of a non-profit organization
  - Fundraising
2. Continue a discussion started during the Comprehensive Plan process regarding gaps in the Town of McCandless programs and rental facilities.
3. Review opportunities currently available from public and private providers in the community. Provided in the Comprehensive Plan are:
  - A spreadsheet of Town and regional assets
  - A snapshot of existing programs
  - A spreadsheet of neighboring municipality programs
  - Usage data from other providers

## PROGRAMMING DECISION POINT

- A. If the Town concludes there are NO GAPS in the residents' needs for recreation activities or events, there is no need to proceed beyond this step. This plan concluded that there were gaps in services to residents. (Park and recreation facilities and programs should be re-evaluated on a periodic basis.)
- B. If the Town concludes there is A NEED FOR MORE activities and events, then the number and types of additional programs, activities, and facilities that would be needed by residents should be identified. Broad categories of programs and activities were identified in this plan. This work will further refine that list. The Activities Advisory Committee will review the need for an activities staff position.

## FACILITY NEEDS DECISION POINT

- A. Does the Town feel the desired programs and activities can/should be provided in existing, diverse locations owned by others? Is there existing facility capacity to provide new programs? If so, the Town could accept the recommendation in this plan to hire a Parks and Recreation Director to manage the programs and events, and not proceed in a more detailed Community Center investigation.
- B. If the Town feels these programs and activities should be provided in a dedicated, more centralized location that does not currently exist, then defined space requirements should be discussed.

4. If it determined that additional space is needed, then proceed with the next steps. Review and consider space needs:
  - Review Community Center cost comparison spreadsheet (Utilize \$250/sq ft for construction costs as a minimum)
  - Visit other facilities to understand size and scale.
  - Estimate staffing, operations and maintenance costs.
  - Identify potential partners/sponsors and funding sources.
  - Gather input from the public.
  - Consider the facility needs that would enable those opportunities, including:
    - Room sizes
    - Kitchen needs
    - AV needs
    - Storage needs
    - Parking needs
    - Staffing needs
    - Alcohol permitting

#### **SITE DECISION POINT**

5. Identify facility site possibilities and feasibility. Here are options:
  - Add third floor to part of Town Administration building
  - Purchase privately owned under-utilized parcel(s).
  - Execute a trade with a developer
  - Form partnerships with other agencies
  - Pursue public-private partnerships to achieve goals.
6. Develop a fundraising campaign:
  - Develop renderings with cost estimates of proposed development
  - Solicit named donors for sponsorships of major components of Community Center
  - Apply for grants and other outside sources of funding
  - Announce a capital campaign after securing at least 50 % of total goal amount. Keep capital campaign in papers and present at public meetings, other venues and community group meetings.
  - Celebrate achieving benchmarks.

Refer to the flow chart of action steps within a decision tree model that is located in the Appendix.





## COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

### STRATEGY 2: DEVELOP PROGRAMS, EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE COMMUNITY.



**Q:** What is the plan for developing programs, events and activities for the community? Why is it important to do so?

**A:** McCandless provides quality programs for residents of different ages, abilities, social or family circumstances, and tailors its overall programming to best meet the specific needs of the community. Its offerings attract new participants and keep up with changing demands or opportunities.

An ongoing conversation in the community has debated solutions to a problem that some have described as “the lack of a center” or “no sense of community.” Adding community programs, events and activities that draw people together - creating equitable opportunities and the chance to reduce social isolation and meet your neighbors - is one potential solution to that problem.

**Q:** What is an overview of this strategy?

**A:** McCandless has sought to provide programs, events and activities by tapping existing resources and partnering with allied groups. Further, it has benefited – and can continue to benefit – from the availability of additional community assets such as but not limited to CCAC-North and Northland Public Library. However, once a professional staff member is in place, the community can concertededly create and mount programs, events and activities that fill documented gaps.

These programs can fill a specialized gap of programs and events in the community which are not readily available through other providers and create new partnerships and opportunities to strengthen community engagement.

It should be noted that during the process of developing this comprehensive plan some “for and against” points were raised about adding programming, and are presented here:

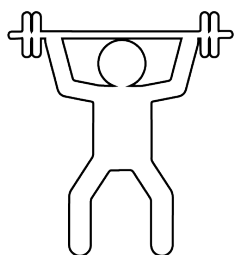
1. Northland Public Library, CCAC-North and La Roche College all are located within McCandless and offer numerous recreation, program and activity opportunities for residents of McCandless and surrounding communities. While this is true, it should be noted that surrounding communities

## PROGRAMMING GAPS

The following types of programs, events and activities were identified as under-represented or not available in McCandless in a gap analysis:

- Inclusive programs
- Diversity programs
- Senior programs
- Parent-child meeting space
- Health and wellness programs
- Active outdoor opportunities
- Nature programs

served by Northland, CCAC-North and La Roche nonetheless offer Town-run programs as well. Does the location of these three assets within McCandless suggest that programs, someone to run them and a community center is not needed? The consultant's response is no, although it does create an argument for a smaller community center space, as is reflected in this report. Numerous youth sports organizations operate in McCandless. Does this negate the need for a community center or a Parks and Recreation Director? No. Sports leagues also operate in other comparable and neighboring communities, and the communities nevertheless still need to employ a director and fill gaps in recreation program offerings.



## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

### STRATEGY 2: Develop programs, activities and events for the community.

**Q:** What are the specific action steps for developing programs, events and activities, and how difficult is it likely to be?

**A:** We give this a two-weight rating because some staff time and expenses are involved. Here is a guide for making it happen:

- ❑ STEP 1: An Activities Advisory Committee will review the material provided in this comprehensive plan as well as newer data to update the gap analysis of programs that are most highly in demand and not currently provided.
- ❑ STEP 2: The advisory committee will identify locations where programs, events and activities can be held, again, referring to resources provided in this report. This can include available indoor spaces such as community rooms at churches, retirement communities, private/public schools or other potential indoor locations and outdoor locations at Town-owned open space or, by agreement with Allegheny County, in North Park..
- ❑ STEP 3: Program space will likely not be free, so budget line items should be added to the Town budget to accommodate room rental. Over time, this will also inform Town decisions about how much activity space is potentially needed.
- ❑ STEP 4: Supplies and additional staffing may be needed for Town-run programs, events and activities, so line items should be added to the Town budget to accommodate the cost of programming, with a goal of breaking even, based on program fees. The typical program fee breakdown consists of 70% of the total fee paid to the instructor and 30% of the fee retained by the department or facility. Estimation of revenue will be dependent of the facilities used and number of programs offered. Staffing time and supplies should be figured into the per participant fee. Non-resident fees should reflect a higher fee rate.
- ❑ STEP 5: The Activities Advisory Committee will review the need for an activities staff position to support growth of programmatic offerings by the Town.



# KEY ISSUE

## GREEN SPACE & SUSTAINABILITY

**Q:** Why is sustainability important in McCandless?

**A:** McCandless wants to be a pacesetter in sustainability, and known as one of the most sustainable communities in Allegheny County. It is seeking certification as a Sustainable Community through Sustainable Pittsburgh and the Sustainable Pennsylvania community certification programs. But McCandless doesn't want the certification for its own sake. The Town is seeking certification to document its existing efforts and identify ways to improve its policies and practices so that it may truly provide leadership in the community in this arena.



**Q:** Why is green space important for McCandless?

**A:** A community that hopes to thrive in the future must sustain natural resources even as development creates pressure on natural systems that cleanse the air, slow and clean stormwater runoff, hold and refresh soils, and provide habitat for plant and animal life. It is also important to maintain green-space areas where residents can go out into nature, which enhances quality of life and community health.

**Q:** What is the definition of "green space" in McCandless?

**A:** Green space includes parks, gardens, schoolyards, playgrounds, seating areas, meadows, woodlots and vacant lots that are open to the public. Green space lands provide natural aesthetic open space within developed areas. Green space lands are a subset of open space land that is open undeveloped lands (which have no buildings or structures). Green space lands provide land and limited facilities (if any) for active and passive recreational opportunities.

**Q:** What is the long-term vision for change regarding sustainability and green spaces in McCandless?

**A:** VISION STATEMENT: McCandless protects and maintains natural ecological systems and strives to operate at the highest levels of sustainable practices and policies.

**Q:** What are some main points I should know about sustainability and protecting green space?

**A:** Here are some useful points regarding both sustainability overall in McCandless and the future of green space in the Town:

1. Sustainable Pennsylvania Communities program states that sustainability takes root close to home in the way we organize as communities. McCandless believes it has important roles and responsibilities for leading the way to quality of life and access to opportunity.
2. Sustainability takes hold where economic, social equity, and environmental needs are simultaneously addressed in decision making. This implementable comprehensive plan supports initiatives that bolster sustainable policies and practices in all three areas.
3. McCandless' Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) helps develop and recommend policies and programs to Town Council to preserve and enhance aspects of the Town's character, and address environmental issues in the Town. This implementable comprehensive plan supports EAC initiatives as well as policies adopted by the Town Council that preserve and protect green space and develop land sustainably for public use.
4. The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) created an inventory of McCandless green space in 2017. The committee identified 20 Town-owned passive recreational properties that include about 192 acres of green space lands. North Park, owned by Allegheny County, occupies about 1,790 acres of green space (less the lands occupied by buildings, roads and parking lots). North Allegheny School District owned about 150 acres of green space. The total of green space lands in McCandless is 2,132 acres, or about 20.3 percent of the Town's total acreage.





# Green Space & Sustainability Recommendations

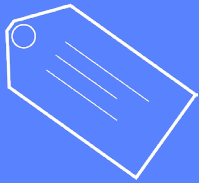
**Q:** What strategies will McCandless pursue to become a more sustainable community in terms of economic, social equity and environmental needs?

**A:** Here's a list. Details for each are on the following pages.

**STRATEGY 1:** Pursue platinum certification from Sustainable Pennsylvania Communities / Sustainable Pittsburgh.

**STRATEGY 2:** Sustain or improve green space in McCandless.





## GREEN SPACE & SUSTAINABILITY

### STRATEGY 1: PURSUE PLATINUM CERTIFICATION FROM SUSTAINABLE PENNSYLVANIA COMMUNITIES PROGRAM.



**Q:** Why is McCandless pursuing this certification, and what is the role of the comprehensive plan in the effort?

**A:** McCandless began in 2017 to consider seeking certification as a Sustainable Community. Through the certification process, the Town can document its strong points and identify ways it can improve. This challenge can also become an opportunity to engage the community in a conversation about the three pillars of sustainability: economic, social equity and environmental needs.

This comprehensive plan report supports the community's intention to attain platinum certification.

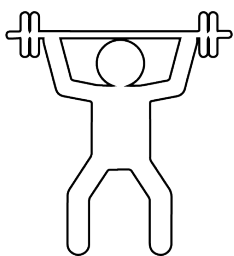
Here is a little more background:

All departments within the Town of McCandless will pursue points for the categories: Governance and Community Engagement; Healthy Communities; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Energy Use, Conservation and Green Building; Environmental Stewardship; Housing; Land Use and Transportation (which includes green space); Local Economy; and Other Sustainability Innovation.

To win platinum certification, McCandless must attain at least 203 of 300 possible points that are awarded for specific actions in each category. Pine and Shaler Townships and Bradford Woods Borough have achieved certification. Franklin Park is in the process of seeking certification.

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

### STRATEGY 1: Pursue “platinum certification” from Sustainable Pennsylvania Communities program.



**Q:** What are the specific action steps for pursuing platinum certification from Sustainable Pennsylvania Communities (and Sustainable Pittsburgh), and how difficult is this effort likely to be?

**A:** Going through the certification process is a two-weight difficulty rating. It will take staff and volunteer time to create and maintain documentation and. Implementing new policies or practices, or making capital expenditures may be more difficult; however, most will save McCandless time or money over time while also improving the community.

- ❑ STEP 1: Designate the Town's Environmental Advisory Committee as the group responsible for completing the assessment and submitting to Sustainable Pittsburgh. Recognize that there will need to



be some staff time allocated to this effort in support of the EAC work. From the Sustainable Pittsburgh Certification Criteria, the following are included as part of this plan:

- Community Engagement - See Key Issue "Community Identity and Public Engagement.
- Green Infrastructure - Continue and/or improve protections for wetlands and waterways, policies for conserving environmentally sensitive areas, and trees and woodland protection. See green space inventory for the Natural Resource Inventory required by the certification.
- Housing - In the Community Development Objectives section, note the benefits of the community improving housing choices.
- Sustainable Neighborhoods - See references in Community Development Objectives section
- Land Use - See Active Transportation and Connectivity Key Issue chapter. See also recommendations for traffic calming and complete streets policies and practices in the Community Development Objectives section.
- Green Space - Refer to green space inventory for mapping of environmentally sensitive areas, and recommendations for improvements at all green space parcels, including the idea of creating a pilot project for community garden. The Community Development Objectives section promotes maintaining open spaces. Refer to the Recreation Key Issue and Community Development Objectives for preservation and improvements of parks and recreation facilities.
- Protect the sole working farm in the Town by keeping it in an agricultural security area, as appropriate.



**Community garden at Crafton Community Park**

❑ STEP 2: Recognizing the importance of reducing the use of energy, this comprehensive plan recommends:

Switching all exterior lighting and traffic signals to LED fixtures on a rolling basis

Switching all interior light fixtures to energy-saving bulbs or tubes on a rolling basis

When the Town purchases new cars, they should consider hybrids, electric or alternative energy vehicles in every possible opportunity

❑ STEP 3: Identify and pursue one "stretch" goal in each category of the Sustainable Communities Challenge, even if the Town won't fully achieve the points.

❑ STEP 4: Working with partners in the private, public or non-profit sector, initiate the development of a community garden as a pilot project, with other gardens hoped for at a later date, preferably in each quadrant of the community. Resources might include the Environmental Advisory Committee, or two others still in the planning stages: the Community Activities Committee and a Community Engagement Committee.



## GREEN SPACE & SUSTAINABILITY

### STRATEGY 2: SUSTAIN OR IMPROVE GREEN SPACE.



**Q:** Why is it important to conserve or improve green space? And isn't there something contradictory about adding development to green spaces?

**A:** Green space can provide numerous benefits to McCandless and its residents. Some of the benefits provided through green space development are:

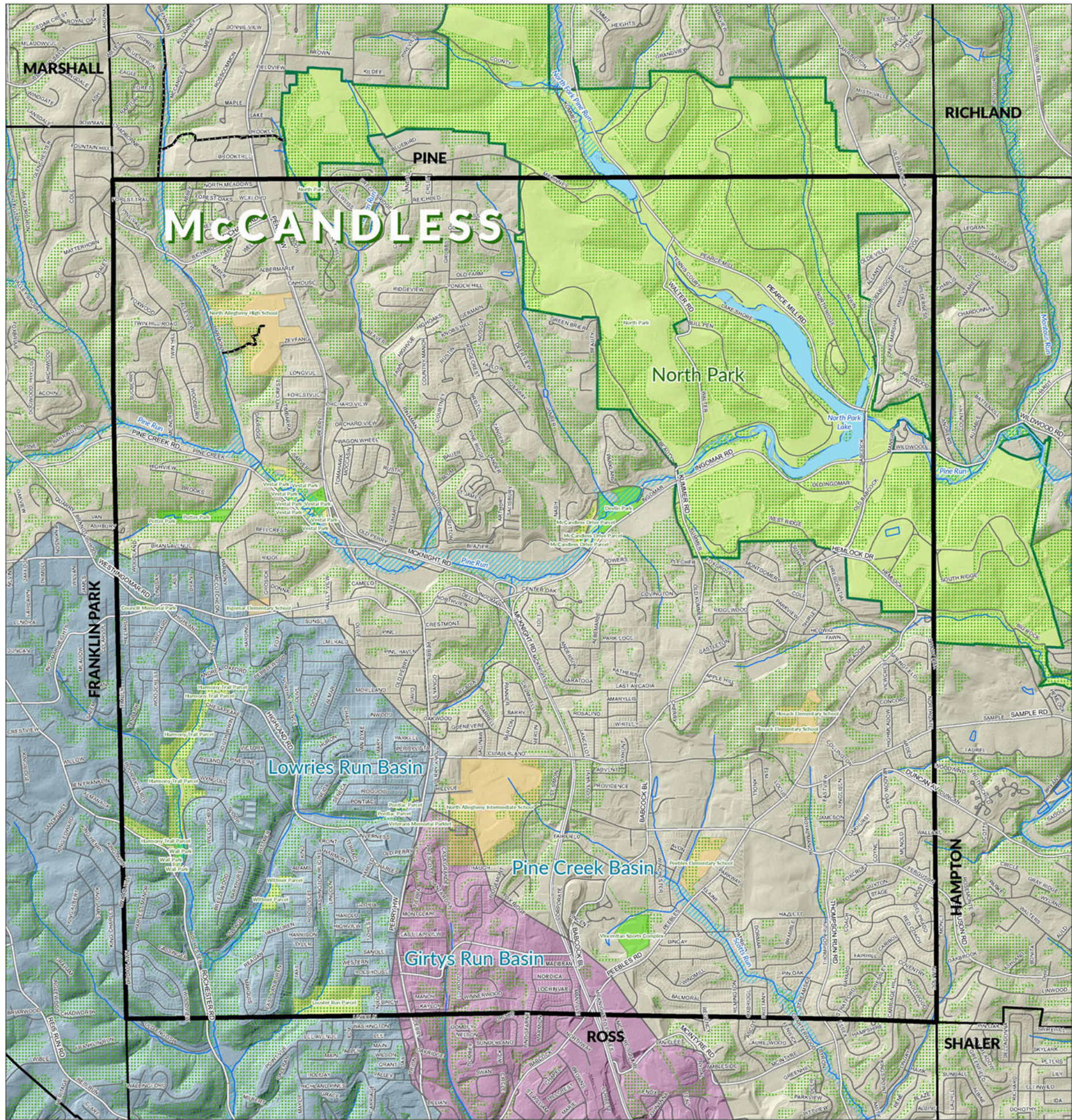
- Promoting restoration of land and water
  - a.) Consider the use of low-impact development
  - b.) Enhance existing stormwater facilities where practical by increasing capacity, rate control and water quality
- Fostering public recreation, active living, and healthy lifestyles
- Encouraging a network of non-motorized land and water transportation corridors to connect people to our resources
- Conserving natural, ecological and hydrological infrastructure resources
- Building capacity at the local level for implementation and education
- Encouraging economic development
- Promoting sustainable land development
- Preserving scenic and natural areas
- Enhancing quality of life through all of the above.

**Q:** What is an overview of this strategy?

**A:** The EAC should continue to review carefully existing green spaces, and look for opportunities to expand the current network to:

- Provide greater protection of environmentally sensitive areas including steep slopes, drainage-ways and wetlands
- Cluster green space parcels to provide better wildlife habitat and corridors for migration
- Enhance passive recreation and educational experiences for residents.





Town of McCandless  
Comprehensive Plan

# Green Space Corridors & Sustainability Map

Draft: August 2018

## Legend

### McCandless Green Space

- County Park (North Park)
- McCandless Parks
- North Allegheny School District Properties
- Publicly Accessible Private Lands
- Wooded Areas

### McCandless Watersheds

- Lowries Run Basin
- Pine Creek Basin
- Girtys Run Basin

### McCandless Waterways

- Lake
- Stream
- 100-Year Floodplain

- McCandless Boundary
- Other Municipal Boundary
- State Road
- Other Road
- Parcel

0 1,000 2,000 3,000 4,000 Feet  
1 inch = 1,000 feet

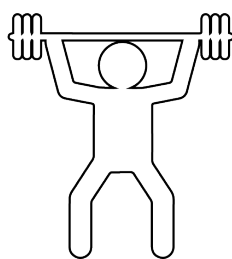


PASHEK MTR



## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

### STRATEGY 2: Sustain or improve green space.



**Q:** What are the specific action steps for sustaining or improving green space in McCandless, and how difficult is this effort likely to be?

**A:** The work on this effort will begin with volunteer and staff study and time, but could involve grant-writing, or operating or capital expenses over time. Implementing numerous projects is a “heavy lift,” so this initiative has a three-weight rating. It should start fairly easily but may get more difficult when line-item spending is required.

❑ STEP 1: An important means of achieving the Green Space & Sustainability goals and objectives is ensuring that the zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances are consistent with the vision, strategy, and steps that are outlined in the plan. The current ordinances should be evaluated and updated as soon as possible. For example, the community should prepare and adopt a Natural Resource Protection ordinance, and update ordinances to further protect green space and to promote community gardens and infill green space.

❑ STEP 2: Update the natural resources inventory (this was done as part of this comprehensive plan, and is provided on the previous page).

❑ STEP 3: Identify sustainable green space improvements that support environmentally sensitive, ecologically significant and civic/historic places in the Town.

The Green Space Corridors and Sustainability Map and the Environmental Sustainability Committee’s map of “Green Space Lands in the Town of McCandless” – on the two following pages – show green space lands owned by McCandless. This comprehensive plan provides recommendations for each Green Space location in charts on Pages 71-73. These charts begin to prioritize improvements that will create new sustainable development or support natural places. The Environmental Sustainability Committee should refine and specify the priorities and identify them on the maps.

Potential connections or linkages between these areas should also be identified. This information will be helpful when the municipality updates its zoning ordinance and the zoning map in particular. A list of priorities will also assist the municipality in working with land trusts to conserve lands, for example; and in applying for grants to expand or rehabilitate parks, develop trails, stabilize streambanks, and other such projects.

❑ STEP 4: Continue to map potential green spaces expansion, guided by the above overview strategy.

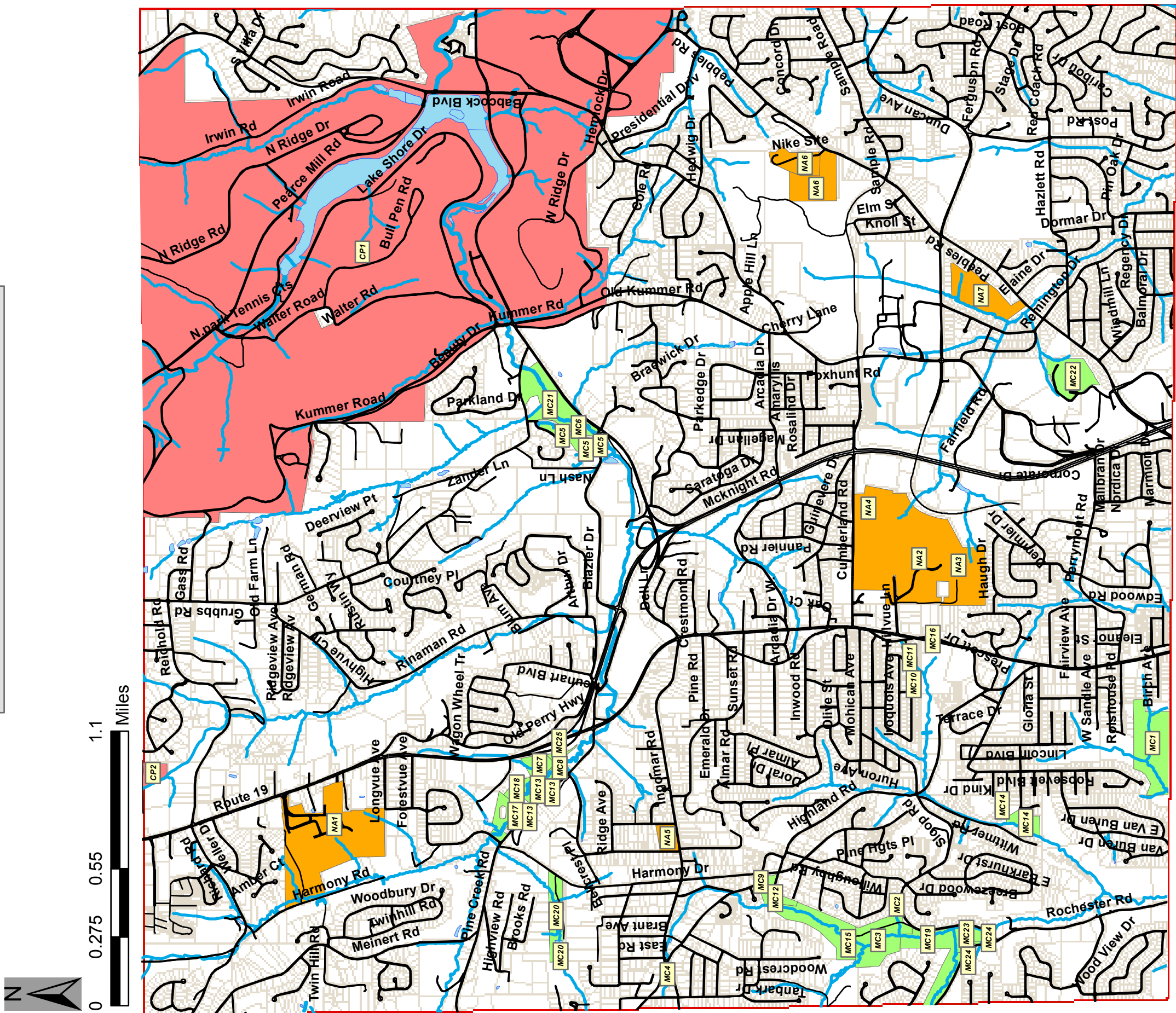
❑ STEP 5: Identify and contact willing property owners to discuss potential for acquiring conservation easements.

❑ STEP 6: Educate interested property owners on the value of native landscaping and naturalized meadows and pesticide reduction.

❑ STEP 7: Integrate new opportunities for passive recreation and environmental education.



# Green Space Lands in the Town of McCandless



Town Green Spaces

Property Type

Town Recreation Property (MC#)

Allegheny County Park (CP#)

North Allegheny School District Campus (NA#)

Turn the map over for a listing  
of the properties shown here

NOTE: The properties mapped include a small amount of buildings and parking lots that would not be Green Space Lands.  
It is the user's responsibility to check with property owners to determine if they authorize the intended use.  
Do not trespass or block driveways when accessing green space lands.

Town of McCandless Recreation Properties

Tract Name (Map ID)	Location	Number of Acres	Use/Description/Facilities
Austin-Beck-Rolshouse (Mc 1)	Nixon Road	29.9	Passive. Forest with stream. No facilities.
Brandt (Mc 2)	Sloop Road	0.5	Passive. Forest with wetlands and stream. No facilities. Near Wall Park.
Brandt (Mc 3)	Sloop Road	22.1	Passive. Forest with wetlands and stream. No facilities. Near Wall Park.
Councill Memorial Park (Mc 4)	Ingomar Heights/ Highland/ Ingomar	1.3	Passive. Memorial Garden. No facilities.
Early (Mc 5)	McCandless Drive (NW)	4.4	Passive. Field, forest and wetlands. No facilities. Near Town Hall.
Early (Mc 6)	McCandless Drive(SE)	4.7	Passive. Wetlands. No facilities. Near Town Hall.
Gahagan (Mc 7)	Vestal Field Complex	5.2	Active. Ballfields 2 & 3 at Vestal Park.
Gardner (Mc 8)	Pine Creek Road	1.6	Passive. Field and parking for Vestal Park.
Glen Manor (Mc 9)	Glen Manor Road	2.4	Passive. Field, forest and wetlands. No facilities. Near Wall Park.
Hamburg (Pocohontas) (Mc 10)	Old Perry Highway	0.2	Passive. Field. No facilities.
Hamburg (Melrose Park) (Mc 11)	Pontiac Avenue	2.4	Passive. Field, forest and stream. No facilities.
Kocan (Mc 12)	Highland Road	4	Passive. Forest and stream. No facilities. Near Wall Park.
Korvick (Mc 13)	Pine Creek Road	7.9	Passive. Trail, field, forest and parking for Vestal Park. No facilities.
Lincoln (Mc 14)	Lincoln Boulevard	9.3	Passive. Forest and stream. No facilities.
Marymont (Mc 15)	Marymont Drive	18.7	Passive. Forest and wetlands. No facilities. Near Wall Park.
Memorial Park (Mc 16)	Memorial Drive	0.1	Passive. Veteran’s Memorial garden and lawn. No facilities.
Oak Ridge (Mc 17)	Oak Ridge Drive	8.5	Passive. Trail, field, forest and wetlands. No facilities. Near Vestal Park.
Oak Ridge (Mc 18)	Oak Ridge Drive	1.9	Passive. Trail, field, forest and wetlands. No facilities. Near Vestal Park.
Petrush (Mc 19)	Sloop Road	18.8	Passive. Forest. No facilities. Near Wall Park.
Potter Park (Mc 20)	Harmony Road (Private)	12.8	Passive. Trail with benches, field, forest, wetlands and fishing lake. No facilities.
Town Hall/ Devlin Rodgers Fields (Mc 21)	Grubbs Road	12	Active. Field, forest and stream. Sports fields and courts, picnic tables, pavilion and restrooms. At Town Hall.
Vincentian Complex (Mc 22)	Peebles Road	13.6	Active. Seven baseball/softball fields with concession stands and restrooms. Some other forest and fields. Complex is leased by the Town.
Wall Park (Mc 23)	Sloop Road	5	Active. Field, forest and stream. Sports fields and courts, picnic tables, pavilion and restrooms. Part of Wall Park.
Wall Park (Mc 24)	Rochester Road	2.9	Active. Field, forest and stream. Sports fields and courts, picnic tables, pavilion and restrooms. Part of Wall Park.
Vestal (Mc 25)	Perry Highway	1.7	Active. Ballfield 1 at Vestal Park. Some other forest and fields. Part of Vestal Park.
TOTAL		191.9	
Tract Name (Map ID)	Location	Number of Acres	Use/Description/Facilities

**NOTE: It is the user’s responsibility to check with property owners to determine if they authorize the intended use. Do not trespass or block driveways when accessing green space lands.**

Recreational Parks (including North Park)

Facility (Map ID)	North Park* (CP 1 & 2)	Devlin Park & Rodgers Fields (Mc 21)	Wall Park &Adjacent Properties (Mc 23 &24)	Vestal Park (Mc 7, 8, 13 & 25)	Vincentian Recreation Complex (Mc 22)	Potter Park (Mc 20)
Location	Ingomar Road	9955 Grubbs Road	8741 Sloop Road	18 Vestal Park Lane	8200 Vincientian Lane	Harmony Road
Acres**	1790	12	7.9	18.4	13.6	12.8
Pavilions	66	1	1	Building	1	
Playgrounds	11	2	1		1	
Baseball/ /Softball Fields	3	1	2	3	7	
Dek Hockey Rink	1		1			
Volleyball Courts		1	1			
Golf Courses	18 Holes					
Basketball Courts		1	1			
Soccer Fields	1	2				
Tennis /Platform Courts	19	3	2			
Football Fields	1-Lighted					
Horseshoe Pits		1	1			
Swimming Pool	1-Lighted					
Trails	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes
Lakes	72.5 acres					0.64 acre
Fishing	Yes					Yes
Boating	Yes					

Notes:  
\* The facilities listed are within the Town portion of North Park. Additional facilities are within the Hampton Township and Pine Township portions of North Park.  
\*\* The acres listed include a small amount of buildings and parking lots that would not be Green Space Lands.

North Allegheny outdoor recreational facilities

Facility (Map ID)	High School NAHS (NA 1)	Intermediate School NAI (NA 2)	Carson Middle School (NA 3)	McKnight Elementary School (NA 4)	Ingomar Elementary School (NA 5)	Hosack Elementary School (NA 6)	Peebles Elementary School (NA 7)
Location	Perry Highway	Cumberland Road	Hillvue Lane	Cumberland Road	W Ingomar Road	Peebles Road	Peebles Road
Size (acres)*	77	60	25	14	5.5	26	20
Playgrounds				3	1	1	1
Baseball Fields	2	2	1		1	1	1
Basketball Courts			1	2	1		
Soccer Fields	1	1					
Tennis Courts	6	2					
Football Fields	1	1					
Track	1	1					
Trails		1	1	1			

Note:  
\* The acres listed include buildings and parking lots estimated at approximately one third of the acres that would not be Green Space Lands.



# Green Space Sustainable Development Charts

McCandless Green Space Sustainable Development Plan							
Tract No. on Map	Tract Name	Location	Acres	Use	Description/Facilities	Recommendations	Priority
Mc 1	Austin-Beck-Rolshouse	Nixon Road	29.9	Passive	Forest with stream. No facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Create trailhead connection via paper street from Nixon Road.</li><li>•Seek easement agreement to create additional trailhead connection via Parcel ID 0611-F-00130 on Rolshouse Road.</li><li>•Open discussions with Ross Township about sharing cost of improvements in this area while exploring additional trailhead connection via paper street extension of May Drive, Ross Township.</li><li>•Lay out trail network according sustainable trail standards, seeking expertise from a non-profit or design firm.</li><li>•Enlisting Scouts, students or other volunteers, Initiate a invasives removal program that is coupled with a reseeding/replanting program (as needed).</li><li>•Determine whether watercourse needs streambed renewal or riparian improvements, and consider applying for grants such as through the Allegheny County Conservation District's Conservaton Leadership and Innovation Program (CLIP) grant program.</li><li>•Enlist Scouts and other volunteers to build trails (or repair existing informal trails), stairways and footbridges, wayfinding signage. Trail Pittsburgh has built new single-track trails in other parks in the area.</li></ul>	3
Mc 2	Brandt	Sloop Road	0.5	Passive	Forest with wetlands and stream. No facilities. Near Wall Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•See Harmony Trail Corridor plan in Active Transportation &amp; Connectivity chapter.</li></ul>	1
Mc 3	Brandt	Sloop Road	22.1	Passive	Forest with wetlands and stream. No facilities. Near Wall Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Location of planned trail loop.</li><li>•Also, see Harmony Trail Corridor plan in Active Transportation &amp; Connectivity chapter.</li></ul>	1
Mc 4	Councill Memorial Park	Ingomar Heights/ Highland/Ingomar	1.3	Passive	Memorial Garden. No facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Open discussions with Marshall Township to explore possibility of connecting this parklet with Potter Park, possibly via Ingomar Church property, some of the paper streets near the church, and easement agreements with residential property owners.</li></ul>	3
Mc 5	Early	McCandless Drive (NW)	4.4	Passive	Field, forest and wetlands. No facilities. Near Town Hall.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•The northern portion of the site can become the location of a raingarden to capture stormwater runoff from Memorial Drive that is now going into a storm drain.</li></ul>	2
Mc 6	Early	McCandless Drive (SE)	4.7	Passive	Wetlands. No facilities. Near Town Hall.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•See Pine Creek Trail Corridor plan in Active Transportation &amp; Connectivity chapter.</li></ul>	1
Mc 7	Gahagan	Vestal Field Complex	5.2	Active	Ballfields 2 & 3 at Vestal Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•See Pine Creek Trail Corridor plan in Active Transportation &amp; Connectivity chapter.</li><li>•The trail corridor would follow the existing walkway between Fields 1 and 2 by the concession stand.</li><li>•A small area on this parcel, possibly on the western, wooded side of the walkway leading to Field 3, could be developed as a community garden. Raised beds and fencing would be needed due to deer and other animals. Locating a community garden in an active recreation park has the benefits of access to water on-site, vehicular access nearby, and the possibility of some storage space in existing building. Produce could be sold at concession as team fund-raiser. Also, there is a likelihood that people will be present during summer either to help, to harvest or to just keep more eyes on the garden.</li></ul>	1

## McCandless Green Space Sustainable Development Plan

Tract No. on Map	Tract Name	Location	Acres	Use	Description/Facilities	Recommendations	Priority
Mc 8	Gardner	Pine Creek Road	1.6	Passive	Field and parking for Vestal Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Add stormwater facilities along lower edge of gravel lot to prevent runoff toward wetland and stream, similar to work done at Devlin Park in 2018.</li> <li>•Reduce mowed area where possible by transitioning to low-mow grass (mowed 2 x year) or upland meadow.</li> <li>•Create trailhead signage for entrance to Pine Creek Trail via existing boardwalk.</li> </ul>	3
Mc 9	Glen Manor	Glen Manor Road	2.4	Passive	Field, forest and wetlands. No facilities. Near Wall Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•See Harmony Trail Corridor plan in Active Transportation &amp; Connectivity chapter.</li> <li>•Create trailhead for portion of trail that follows tributary to Lowries Run. This site should allow for trailhead amenities such as parking with stormwater facilities, shade trees, bike racks, picnic tables, benches, and auto-locking composting toilet or other restroom facility.</li> </ul>	1
Mc 10	Hamburg (Pocohontas)	Old Perry Highway	0.2	Passive	Field. No facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•See Mc 11.</li> </ul>	1
Mc 11	Hamburg (Melrose Park)	Pontiac Avenue	2.4	Passive	Field, forest and stream. No facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Consider future development of this parcel as an upland meadow and community food forest park with accessible walking trail.</li> <li>•Create small parking area (2-3 spaces) with stormwater infrastructure to keep runoff from entering stream. Enlarge existing trail to 0.2-mile loop, adding surfacing and appropriate slopes for ADA accessibility.</li> <li>•Plant groves of native fruit and nut trees, and blackberry, raspberry shrubs, etc.</li> <li>•If area residents or others are interested, this could be a location for a community garden, although the location may not be suitable because no water source appears to be available. (Could a well be dug?) Raised beds and fencing would be needed due to deer and other animals.</li> <li>•Improve trail to the stream with sustainable trail design principals so it is not a fall-line trail that erodes silt into the stream.</li> </ul>	2
Mc 12	Kocan	Highland Road	4	Passive	Forest and stream. No facilities. Near Wall Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•See Harmony Trail Corridor plan in Active Transportation &amp; Connectivity chapter.</li> <li>•This parcel will be the location of switchbacks on the single-track, sustainable trail to traverse the 60-foot change in elevation between the stream-side and the trailhead at Highland Road and Glen Manor Road.</li> </ul>	1
Mc 13	Korvick	Pine Creek Road	7.9	Passive	Trail, field, forest and parking for Vestal Park. No facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Add stormwater facilities along lower edge of gravel lot to prevent runoff toward wetland and stream, similar to work done at Devlin Park in 2018.</li> <li>•Reduce mowed area where possible by transitioning to low-mow grass (mowed 2 x year) or upland meadow.</li> <li>•Create trailhead signage for entrance to Pine Creek Trail via existing boardwalk.</li> </ul>	3



McCandless Green Space Sustainable Development Plan							
Tract No. on Map	Tract Name	Location	Acres	Use	Description/Facilities	Recommendations	Priority
Mc 14	Lincoln	Lincoln Boulevard	9.3	Passive	Forest and stream. No facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Eventual goal will be to link the Lincoln Boulevard with Nixon Road property to the south and create another trailhead at Washington Heights Avenue to the north.</li> <li>•Discuss easement acquisition with owner of continuous land Parcel ID 0611-F-00236 or owner's participation in land trust or other preservation scenario. Part of discussion could be stream and woodland preservation to be conducted on this easement property as an incentive to work with town.</li> <li>•Determine whether watercourse on this property (and the neighbor's) needs streambed renewal, and consider applying for grant. See Allegheny County Conservation District's Conservaton Leadership and Innovation Program (CLIP) grant program.</li> <li>•Create trailhead connection via Lincoln Boulevard.</li> <li>•Meanwhile, also open discussion with owner of land Parcel ID 0714-N-0024 to determine if easement can be acquired for access to town land via Washington Heights Avenue.</li> <li>•Lay out modest trail loop limited (at this time) solely to the 9.3-acre parcel according to sustainable trail standards, seeking expertise from a non-profit or design firm.</li> <li>•Enlisting Scouts, students or other volunteers, initiate an invasives removal program that is coupled with a reseeding/replanting program (as needed).</li> <li>•Enlist Scouts, Trail Pittsburgh, and other volunteers to build trails (or repair existing informal trails), stairways and footbridges, wayfinding signage.</li> </ul>	1
Mc 15	Marymont	Marymont Drive	18.7	Passive	Forest and wetlands. No facilities. Near Wall Park.	•See Harmony Trail Corridor plan in Active Transportation & Connectivity chapter.	1
Mc 16	Memorial Park	Memorial Drive	0.1	Passive	Veteran's Memorial garden and lawn. No facilities.	•The northern portion of the site can become the location of a raingarden to capture stormwater runoff from Memorial Drive that is now going into a storm drain.	3
Mc 17	Oak Ridge	Oak Ridge Drive	8.5	Passive	Trail, field, forest and wetlands. No facilities. Near Vestal Park.	•See Pine Creek Trail Corridor plan in Active Transportation & Connectivity chapter.	1
Mc 18	Oak Ridge	Oak Ridge Drive	1.9	Passive	Trail, field, forest and wetlands. No facilities. Near Vestal Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•See Pine Creek Trail Corridor plan in Active Transportation &amp; Connectivity chapter.</li> <li>•Create trailhead for western terminus of Pine Creek Trail, where it intersects with the north-south Harmony Trail Corridor. This can include trailhead amenities such as parking with stormwater facilities, shade trees, bike racks, picnic tables, benches, and auto-locking composting toilet or other restroom facility.</li> </ul>	1
Mc 19	Petrush	Sloop Road	18.8	Passive	Forest. No facilities. Near Wall Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Location of planned trail loop (grant application submitted).</li> <li>•Also, see Harmony Trail Corridor plan in Active Transportation &amp; Connectivity chapter.</li> </ul>	1

## McCandless Green Space Sustainable Development Plan

Tract No. on Map	Tract Name	Location	Acres	Use	Description/Facilities	Recommendations	Priority
Mc20	Potter Park	Harmony Road (Private)	12.8	Passive	Trail with benches, field, forest, wetlands and fishing lake. No facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•See Harmony Trail Corridor plan in Active Transportation &amp; Connectivity chapter.</li> <li>•Town should take over ownership of Harmony Lane, and pave it or maintain it to Penn State University gravel road specifications to mitigate runoff and make the park more accessible to citizens.</li> <li>•Organize the parking bump-out just north of the park entrance.</li> <li>•Open discussions with owners of large lots contiguous to the park to determine whether easements can be acquired or whether land trusts might be a future option.</li> <li>•Reconfigure the entrance to the park to eliminate the fall-line trail (which causes erosion and deterioration of the landscape) and to provide an entrance laid out according to principles of sustainable trail design. Conduct trail maintenance on other trails to improve drainage and to open them up for use.</li> <li>•Take actions that reduce runoff that carries sediments and nutrients into the pond, such as building a just-above-grade boardwalk where the main trail reaches the pond, to limit soil compaction and erosion.</li> <li>•Add a pack-in-pack-out sign at entrance to encourage park users to avoid littering and carry trash away with them. Consider an annual cleanup blitz at the park – prize for whichever kid collects the most trash in a half-hour.</li> <li>•Relocate the existing (memorial) bench and add a second bench – both on the boardwalk surface.</li> </ul>	2
Mc 21	Town Hall/ Devlin Rodgers Field	Grubbs Road	12	Active	Field, forest and stream. Sports fields and courts, picnic tables, pavilion, and restrooms. At Town Hall.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•See Pine Creek Trail Corridor plan in Active Transportation &amp; Connectivity chapter.</li> <li>•Team with one of the Pine Creek-related associations or other existing group to begin aggressive program to remove Japanese Knotweed. In the area of the park.</li> <li>•Support water quality improvements and the appearance of the area by continuing stormwater runoff mitigation practices, and replacing Knotweed with native plantings.</li> </ul>	1
Mc 22	Vincentian Complex	Peebles Road	13.6	Active	Seven baseball/softball fields with concession stands and restrooms. Some other forest and fields. Complex is leased by the Town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Add stormwater facilities along lower edge of gravel lot to prevent runoff toward wetland and stream, similar to work done at Devlin Park in 2018.</li> </ul>	3
Mc 23	Wall Park	Sloop Road	5	Active	Field, forest and stream. Sports fields and courts, picnic tables, pavilion and restrooms. Part of Wall Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Location of planned trail loop (grant application submitted).</li> <li>•Also, see Harmony Trail Corridor plan in Active Transportation &amp; Connectivity chapter.</li> </ul>	1
Mc 24	Wall Park	Rochester Road	2.9	Active	Field, forest and stream. Sports fields and courts, picnic tables, pavilion and restrooms. Part of Wall Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Location of planned trail loop (grant application submitted).</li> <li>•Also, see Harmony Trail Corridor plan in Active Transportation &amp; Connectivity chapter.</li> </ul>	1
Mc 25	Vestal	Perry Highway	1.7	Active	Ballfield I at Vestal Park. Some other forest and fields. Part of Vestal Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•See Pine Creek Trail Corridor plan in Active Transportation &amp; Connectivity chapter.</li> </ul>	1



# KEY ISSUE

## REDEVELOPMENT

**Q:** Why is redevelopment important to McCandless?

**A:** Some commercial areas in Town, particularly southern portions of the Route 19-Perry Highway corridor and the Blazier Drive area north of Ingomar Road have deteriorating, vacant or under-utilized properties. Other areas of concern could emerge in the future if businesses fail to thrive, if use preferences change, or if economic conditions decline. There are several reasons to focus on redevelopment in areas experiencing stress, based on planning principles and on the stated desires of residents:

- Redevelopment is a crucial element of economic development in McCandless. Bringing underproductive parcels back into the tax rolls in a vigorous way helps to create and maintain the community's business and commercial districts. This is a key aspect of the community's larger economic development objectives.
- Improved properties attract new owners or tenant businesses. This creates new or additional tax revenue for Town coffers.
- Deteriorating or vacant commercial and residential properties can drag down adjacent property values.
- Redevelopment provides opportunities for growth in a place that is largely "built out."
- Redevelopment consumes fewer resources than new development because some or all of the existing infrastructure such as water, sewer and transportation service or even an existing building can typically be reused.
- Redevelopment opportunities on smaller-scale lots can help enhance economic and social equity by invigorating and fostering diverse opportunities in the small-business environment.
- Redevelopment at any scale can create opportunities to address issues related to environmental sustainability, such as stormwater runoff mitigation, groundwater quality, tree canopy enhancement, urban heat-island effect and night sky light pollution.

**Q:** What are the down-sides to be aware of when striving for redevelopment?

**A:** McCandless residents voiced concerns that redevelopment of deteriorated or underused areas - especially development that has greater density or higher traffic potential - could bring additional vehicular traffic congestion and its attendant air pollution. Some fear that development could add noise or light pollution, or harm their views if the new development includes construction or sign designs that are not attractive. For those reasons, residents whose homes are near targeted commercial corridors sometimes worry that redevelopment would hurt, rather than boost, their home values.

### GUIDING THE CHANGE MCCANDLESS WANTS

**Q:** What is redevelopment in McCandless?

**A:** It is development involving underutilized sites, often built decades ago, with inconsistent land uses for today's patterns of development.

**Q:** What is the long-term vision for change regarding redevelopment in McCandless?

**A:** VISION STATEMENT: McCandless presents business owners, workers and residents with viable, diverse and attractive commercial environments, and promotes pedestrian-oriented, dense, walkable, mixed-use redevelopment.

**Q:** What are some main points I should know about redevelopment in McCandless?

**A:** Residents who provided input into this comprehensive plan named two main areas they particularly hoped to see improved through redevelopment: a section along Blazier Drive between the McKnight Road and Ingomar Road, and the Perry Highway (Route 19) corridor from Ingomar Road to the Ross Township line. Here is some information about each, with photos and maps on the following pages to provide additional context.



**Some locations on Perry Highway/Route 19**



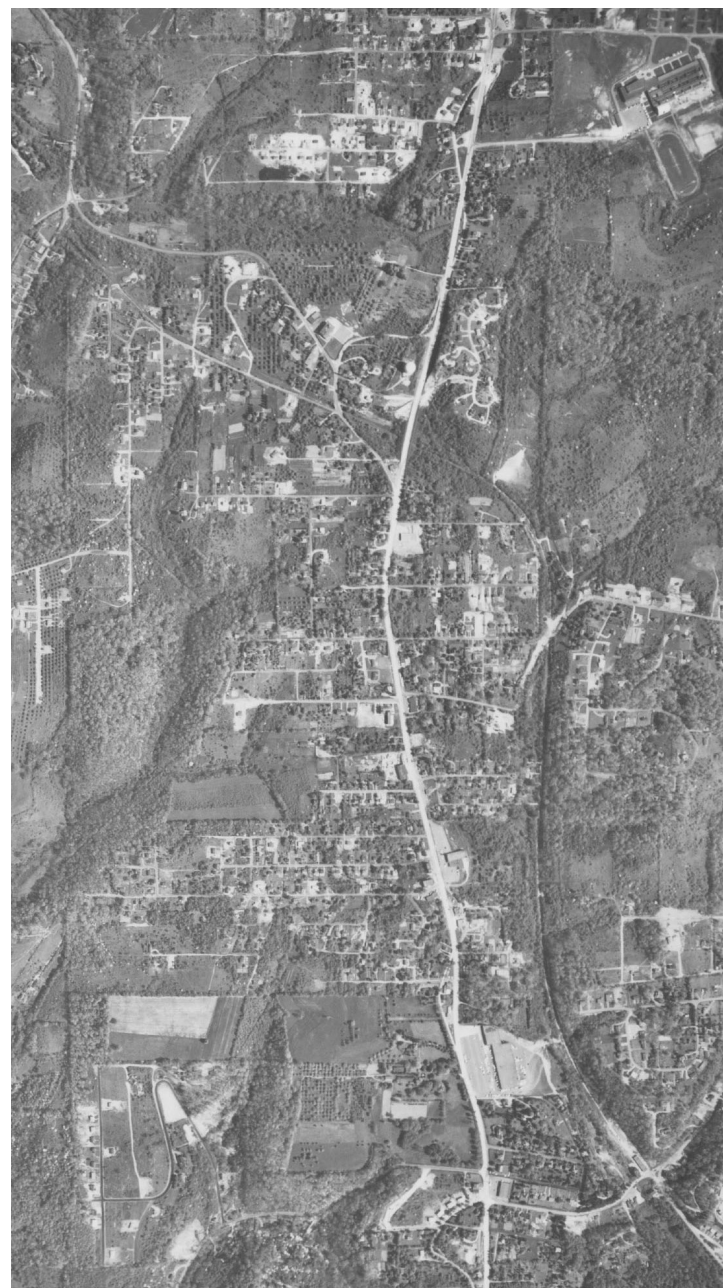
**Some views at the Blazier Drive site**

The Town should also strive to foster an active, ongoing relationship with property owners and businesses. This could include public-private partnerships and other cooperative efforts in order to implement the plan. An open, ongoing dialogue is important in order to achieve the identified objectives.

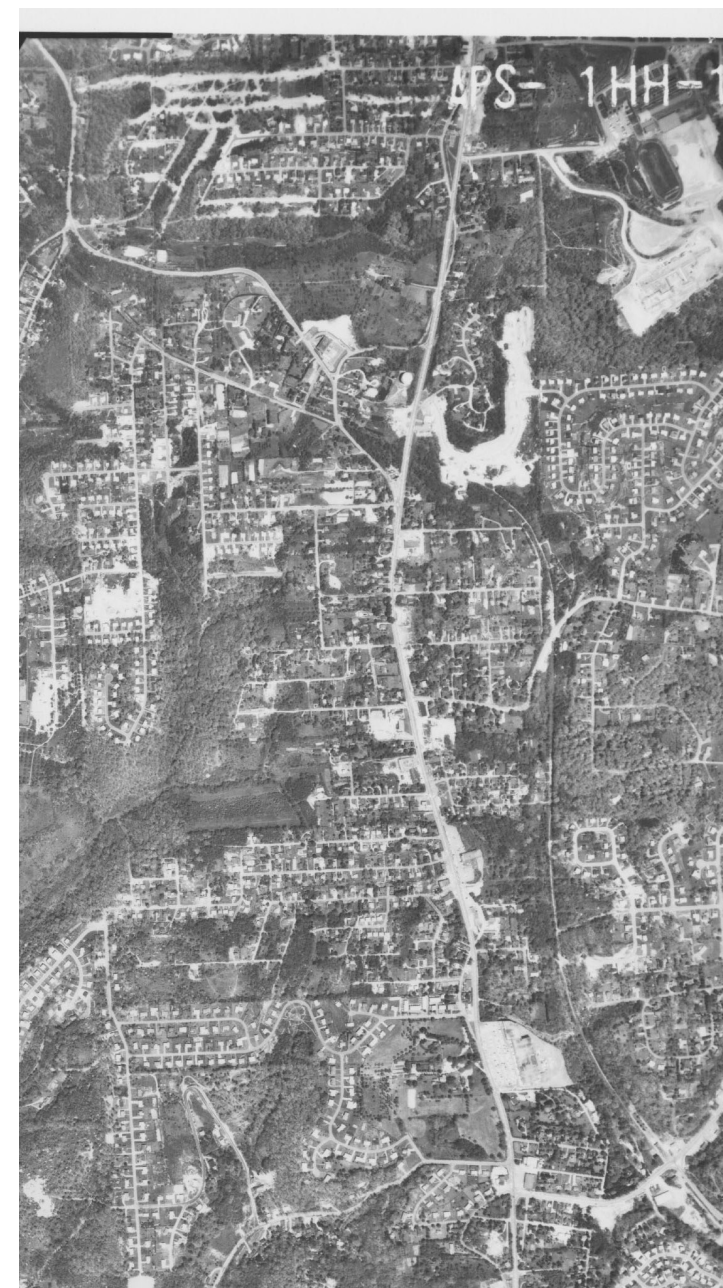




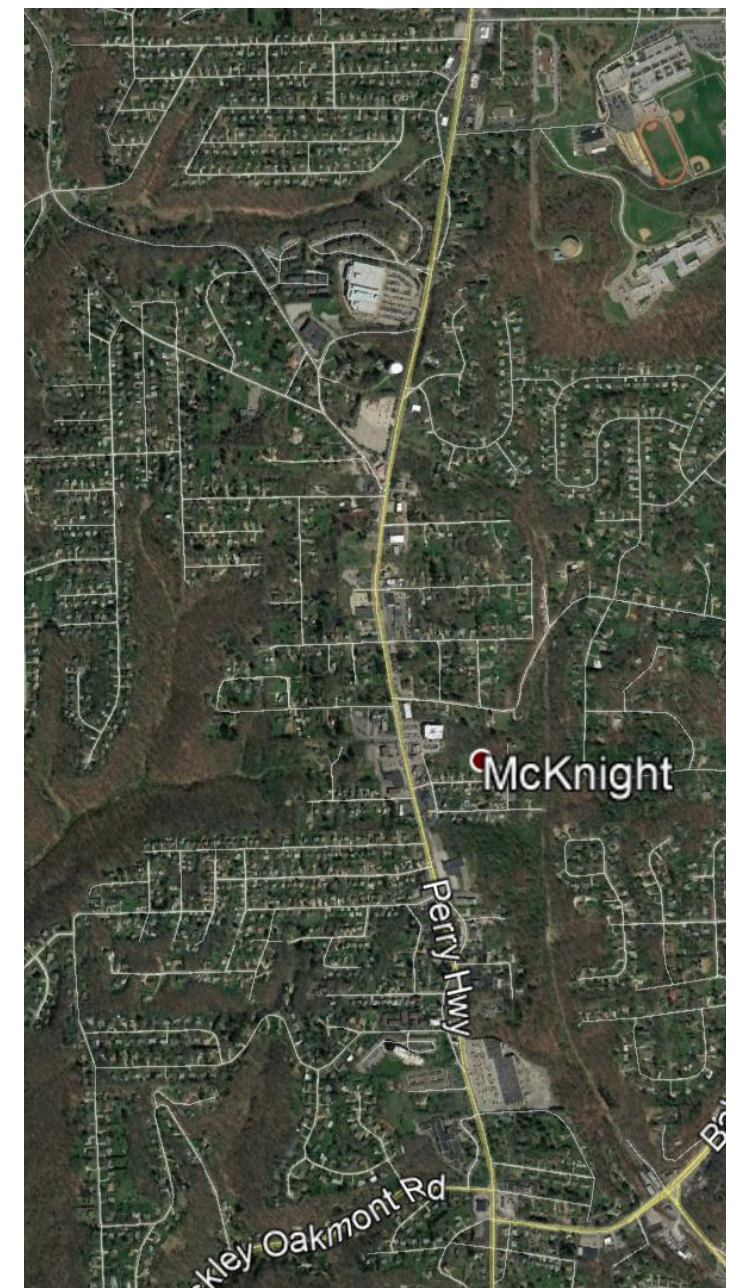
Penn Pilot Photo, 1939



Penn Pilot Photo, 1957



Penn Pilot Photo, 1967



Google Earth 2018

## PERRY HIGHWAY CORRIDOR IN SOUTHERN MCCANDLESS

This stretch of road was semi-rural in the 1930s, with the first neighborhood plans were being subdivided from existing farmland. Twenty years later, homes generally occupied frontage along Perry Highway, with a sprinkling of businesses. As traffic increased with the growth of suburbia beginning in the 1960s and intensified by the construction of I-279 in the 1970-80s, zoning designations in McCandless changed and commercial development intensified. In the ensuing years, some homes on this road were remodeled into offices, and others were torn down to make way for new construction.

The current landscape includes a few renovated buildings, some national chain stores, and several

commercial plazas with small business tenants. Some properties are vacant or deteriorating. Some are dwarfed by their own parking lots. Some are quietly holding their own or are regularly re-rented or resold while fast-paced change affects the retail, dining, service and office sectors.

Neighborhoods just off the Perry Highway/Route 19 corridor offer residents the convenience of proximity to a major north-south artery and connection to highly local or more distance commercial amenities. Some of these residents also perceive detrimental traffic congestion and light or sound pollution or fear those problems in the future.

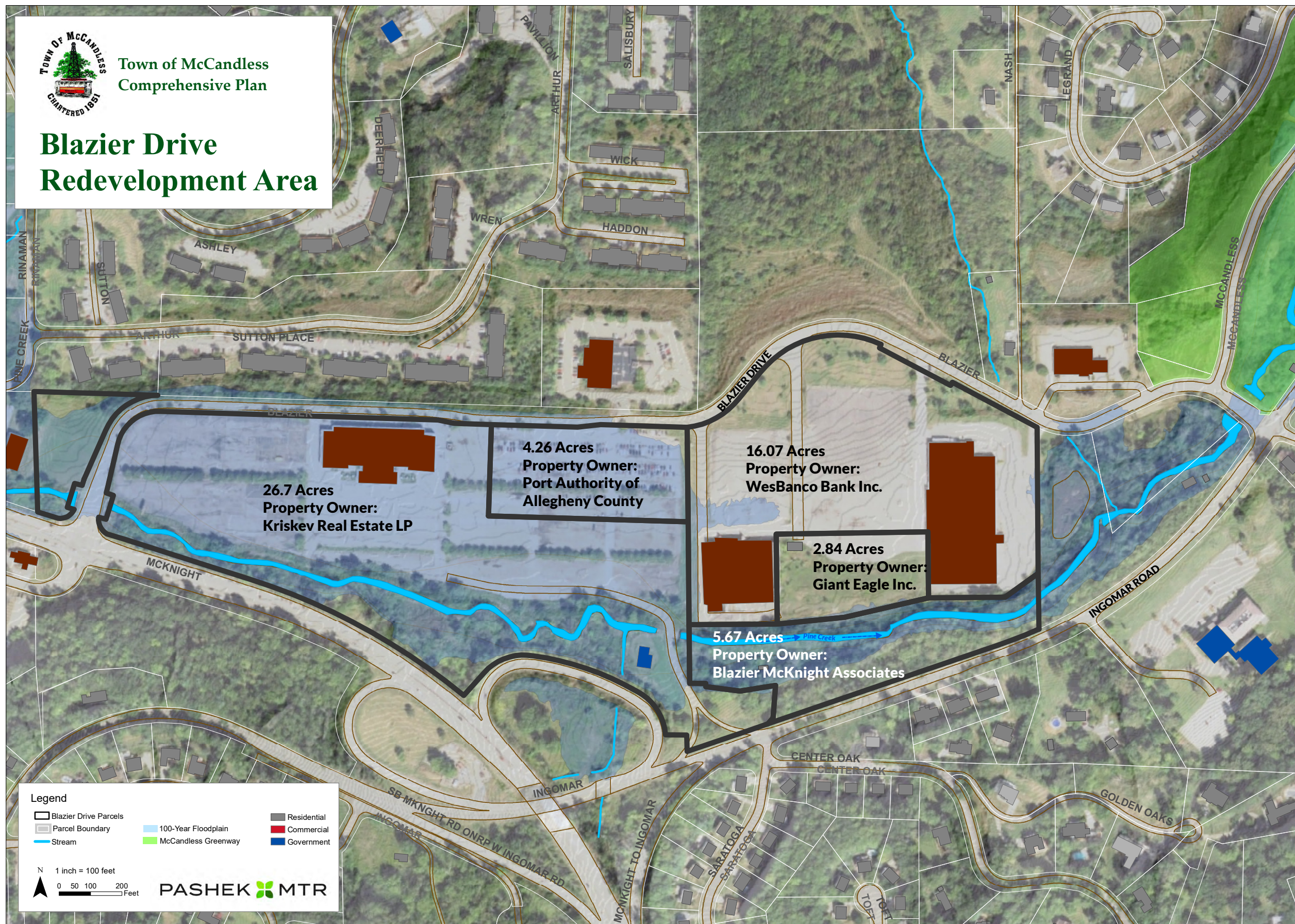






Blazier Drive is a marginal access road designed with signalized access to the intersection with McKnight Road. Blazier Drive flanks a shopping plaza on the western side of McKnight Road. On the eastern side, it traverses an area comprised of three vacant buildings, a Park and Ride owned by the Allegheny County Port Authority, a funeral home, and a medical office. The vacant former Rave Cinema building abuts this area and is currently leased by an auto dealer and is used for the storage of new vehicles. Future plans for this parcel are undetermined at this time. This eastern portion of Blazier Drive is accessed via McKnight Road, a major arterial road, and Ingomar Road, a minor arterial road.

This redevelopment section is focused on the southeastern segment of Blazier Drive. Much of this site lies within the floodplain of Pine Creek. Development within the floodplain is regulated by all levels of government. As a result, cohesive site design can be complex.





**Q:** What are the tools available to McCandless for addressing existing problems in an area or guiding future development so that it has the appearance and character that the community desires?

**A:** The nature of a community's development is governed by ordinances that specify what land use and development regulations apply in each designated zone on the Town's zoning map. Updating the municipality's land use ordinances is an important next step in ensuring the vision for Blazier Drive and other redevelopment areas can be achieved. Zoning tools such as overlay zoning and tax increment financing can be useful. To create or alter what is required when property is developed or redeveloped, McCandless may:

- Adopt new language in the planning and zoning code that articulates requirements for future development or redevelopment in a zone;
- Make changes in the zoning map by altering zone boundaries, changing zoning designations or adding new ones; or
- Changing the language *and* the map.

The Blazier Drive area parcels discussed in this chapter currently are designated D - Development District and C-5 - Commercial Residential.

The southern stretch of Perry Highway in McCandless is mostly designated RC - Residential/Commercial, with small areas of C-3 - Highway Commercial. To the east and west off Perry Highway are R2 residential zones (one- and two-family homes). This proximity of commercial and residential is not always comfortable for area residents. And while some property owners have fully embraced the intentions of the ordinance, creating attractive and inviting business environments, the general appearance of numerous businesses on this stretch of road is dated and sometimes unattractive or in disrepair.

For large-scale redevelopment projects, tax abatement programs such as Local Economic Revitalization Tax Act District (LERTA) could be used to as an incentive to promote redevelopment. However, different incentives will be needed to encourage redevelopment by independent, locally owned businesses. These business owners may not have the same financial resources and/or knowledge of the development process as a national chain. Clear and reasonable development standards with a consistent, streamlined review and approval process and helpful municipal staff may be the best way to encourage local and small-scale redevelopment.

## Redevelopment Recommendations

**Q:** What strategies will McCandless pursue to create appropriate opportunities for redevelopment at the western portion of the Blazier Drive site and along the Perry Highway / Route 19 corridor?

**A:** Here's a list. Details for each are on the following pages.

**STRATEGY 1:** Create an input process into future development at western portions of the Blazier Drive area (the "Rave Cinema half").

**STRATEGY 2:** Initiate a process for helping the community accommodate new uses along Perry Highway via ordinance changes.

**STRATEGY 3:** Update Town planning and zoning ordinances with revised requirements on facades, streetscapes, parking, lighting, sound and buffering to minimize commercial/residential land-use conflicts, and provide for more sustainable development.

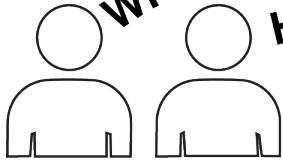
**STRATEGY 4:** Encourage redevelopment by independent, locally owned businesses.





## REDEVELOPMENT

### STRATEGY 1: CREATE INPUT PROCESS FOR DEVELOPMENT AT BLAZIER DRIVE AREA.



WHAT IS THE VISION FOR THIS? WHAT ARE THE GOALS?  
HERE'S AN OVERVIEW.

**Q:** What are some ways that the comprehensive plan can support community goals for redevelopment at the western half of the Blazier Drive site? Development at this location was the source of significant conflict within the community a few years ago.

**A:** The now-terminated effort by Walmart to build a store at Blazier Drive was indeed divisive in McCandless. Even before that, a plan to transform part of the site into a wetland park was discussed but eventually not pursued due to concerns about unknown costs.

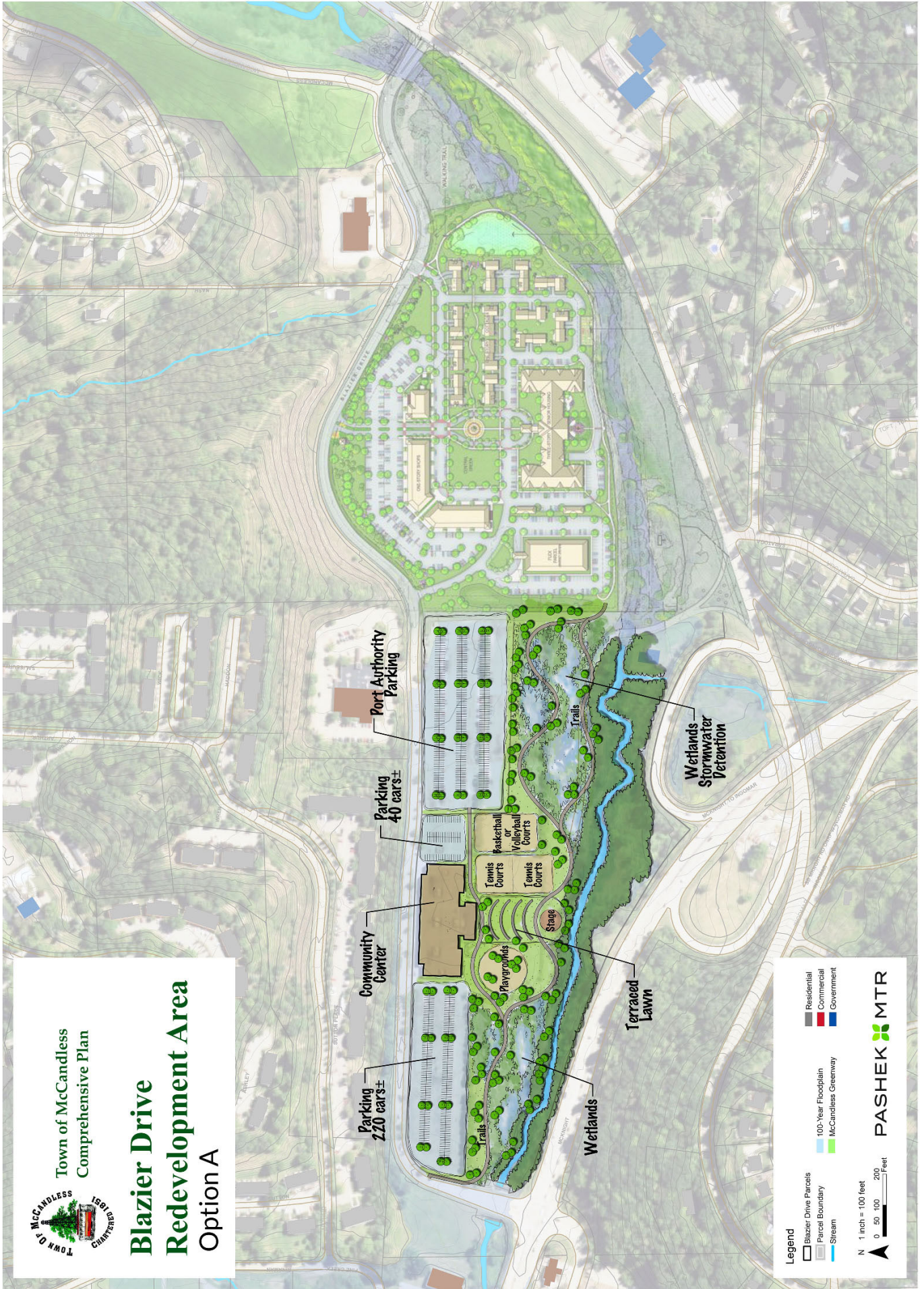
In late 2018, a developer proposed building assisted living and independent living facilities at the eastern portion of the site. This effort has proceeded through several stages of approvals. However, as the Walmart initiative demonstrated, plans – even approved plans – can change.

During the comprehensive planning process, residents spoke up about what they'd like to see happen at the location, and provided input via visual preferences selections about how they would like the area to look.

In response, Pashek+MTR provided concept sketches that conceive of different options for future development at the western portion of the area, assuming that recent plans will proceed to the east. The conceptual designs are provided on subsequent pages, along with the visual preference "character images" that were most favored by citizens at public meetings during this planning process.

Note that Option A and Option B suggest development within a designated floodplain for Pine Creek. Measures would be required to enable these options to proceed, including permitting, approvals and designs that are responsive to sensitive conditions.

















**Mixed-use development**



**Pedestrian-oriented residential**



**Wetland park**



**Commercial with amenities**



**Mixed-use development, stream as asset**

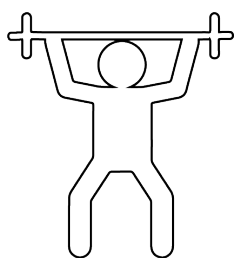


**Commercial with amenities**

These “character images,” presented at various events, were preferred over others, and thus could help inform the types and appearance of development at the Blazier Drive area. The wetland park and stream images were included in the public presentations because the Blazier Drive parcels are located along Pine Creek and in or near a floodplain.

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

### STRATEGY 1: Create input process for development at western Blazier Drive area.



**Q:** What are the specific action steps for creating an input process into future development in the western Blazier Drive area, and how difficult is this effort likely to be?

**A:** McCandless is well into a process of considering a developer's proposal for the eastern portions of the Blazier Drive area, which are largely outside the flood risk zone. The conceptual design sketches and character images convey ideas for the remaining portions of the area. These conceptual drawings and character images on previous pages are available for both the Town's professional staff

and citizens at public meetings to use as a basis of discussion. The discussion is a conversation, not action per se, so it has a difficulty rating of one weight.

Citizens and stakeholders should remember that the Town has an obligation to permit development that meets all legal requirements, so residents may expect for their input to have the most impact early in an approval process through earnest and positive conversations at public meetings on the topic.

❑ STEP 1: The Town should engage in conversations with the property owner of the Rave Cinema about future plans for the site.

❑ STEP 2: If McCandless receives any indication that the owner of the former Rave Cinema is interested in selling or would like to further discuss future plans, the Planning Department could hold a public design charrette about future use of the property. The Town could invite residents and stakeholders to participate in the charrette.

A design charrette is typically a multi-day facilitated workshop that guides participants through understanding design problems and potential solutions.

❑ STEP 3: A design charrette creates an opportunity to weigh and debate the pros and cons of various choices. The debate can inform the professional staff and elected officials as they then proceed toward decision-making. The Town should continue to make extra effort to publicize each stage of approvals and decision-making. Extra effort at community engagement is needed because of past community disagreements about the direction of development at this location.

Key to building consensus on a strategy for development is to include the potential public costs associated with various possibilities. For example, if a natural water park is preferred, that choice should be made understanding costs including potential acquisition, environmental remediation and lost tax revenues into the future.

❑ STEP 4: A potential outline for a design charrette appears on the next page.



# Design Charrette

## SCHEDULE

A charrette is a collaborative decision-making process that defines issues and problems, identifies potential solutions, and gradually refines ideas. Designers, facilitators and Town planning department will work at Town Hall throughout the charrette to create and discuss potential designs. They invite citizens to stop by on an open-house basis to offer input and keep up with progress, or to attend daily project updates. Citizens are welcome to attend any and all of the following discussion sessions, each focusing on a topic related to the Blazier Drive area, to share ideas.

### Day 1

1:00 pm Planning and land development ordinances

2:30 pm Pine Creek watershed, floodplains and stormwater management

4:00 pm Development types: Mixed-use, residential, commercial, public park

7:00 pm Public workshop 1: What is your vision?

The public workshop will feature a presentation of background information on site development for the area. It will be followed by a hands-on design session where community residents, property owners, stakeholders, and officials work together to generate a development vision for the site.

### Day 2

9:00 am Community connections: driving, transit, walking, biking

10:30 am Community character

1:00 pm History of the site and past or related development initiatives

2:30 pm Town budget and finances

5:00 pm Daily project update/design pin-up session

### Day 3

9:00 am Environment, natural resources

10:30 am Parks, recreation and green space

1 pm Land development and building process

2:30 pm Open session

5:00 pm Daily project update/design pin-up session

### Day 4

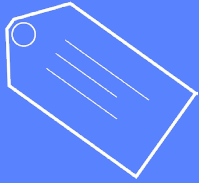
9 am Open session (ends at 12:00 pm)

1 pm Open session (ends at 5:00 pm)

5:00 pm Daily project update/design pin-up session

### Day 5

7 pm Presentation of draft plan(s) for Blazier Drive parcels



## REDEVELOPMENT

### STRATEGY 2: INITIATE A PROCESS FOR ACCOMMODATING NEW USES ON ROUTE 19 / PERRY HIGHWAY.

WHAT IS THE VISION FOR THIS? WHAT ARE THE GOALS?  
HERE'S AN OVERVIEW.

**Q:** What's the background of land uses in the Perry Highway area R-C district?

**A:** Perry Highway in southern McCandless was largely residential and rural through the 1930s. Residential growth propelled additional commercial development in the mid-1900s. By the 1970s, businesses were being constructed and homes were being renovated into business establishments in what became the R-C district. In 2000, there were still houses along this corridor; by 2018 there were few in the R-C District. Here are some photos from the McCandless/Northern Allegheny Heritage Collection:



Top left: Ken's Kabin, an early convenience store on Perry Highway at Ingomar Road. Photo from 1920-60 (undated).

Above: An Atlantic gasoline station at the corner of Perry Highway at Cumberland Road. Photo from 1950-60 (undated).

At left: Perry Highway at Pine Creek Road in undated photo (1970s?). Building in the background is Wexford House nursing home, which remains. The other buildings have been replaced.



**Q:** How can McCandless proceed with updating its land use ordinances for the Route 19 / Perry Highway corridor?

**A:** To guide the type of development that McCandless is seeking in the future, it should update some of the R-C (Residential-Commercial) zoning requirements along the southern reaches of the corridor, revise some design standards that are specific to the corridor or common to all zoning districts, and revise some ordinance language. This builds on ideas developed by UDA Architects for McCandless.

It is worth noting that the zoning designations for the Route 19 / Perry Highway corridor in communities to the north and the south enable similar or even more intensive types and levels of development as are suggested for here for the Town of McCandless.

In Pine Township the area is designated C-1 Community Service Center District, which “provides diverse commercial development along transportation corridors and neighborhoods. The district includes a mixture of uses such that serve the adjacent neighborhood and the community as a whole,” according to the ordinance.

Immediately to the south in Ross Township, the corridor is generally zoned C-1 - Regional Commercial District and C-2 - Community Commercial District. The purpose of C-1, as stated in the Ross ordinance, is “to allow an admixture of higher intensity commercial and residential uses, both reflecting existing land use patterns and projecting future development.”

## REIMAGINING THE PERRY HIGHWAY R-C ZONING DISTRICT

The illustrations shown here and on the next page depict some potential additional possible uses and design standards that are currently in place or could be considered. The illustrations depict changes in the 8400 block of Perry Highway, which includes some vacant or under-developed lots. These are depicted:

- Addition of mixed and higher-density residential uses
- Smaller front setbacks to encourage parking to rear
- Parking under the building to reduce impervious surface parking and runoff
- Incorporating buffering, particularly in light of

the fact that the lay of the land in this zoning district generally doesn’t provide topographical separation.

- Incorporating rain gardens, tree canopy, green roof elements and other stormwater green infrastructure
- Encouraging lot consolidation.
- Adding building form standards that incorporate configuration, features and functions of buildings that shape the space, including adaptive reuse, building placement and form, lot sizes, parking and allowed land uses, encroachments, frontage and building type.



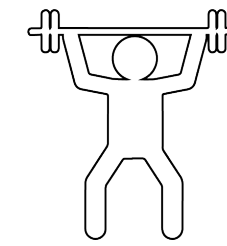




## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

### STRATEGY 2: Initiate a process to examine new uses for the R-C

#### District on Route 19/Perry Highway.



**Q:** What are the specific action steps for changing the R-C zoning ordinance for the Route 19 / Perry Highway corridor, and how difficult will this be?

**A:** Changing ordinances requires study and official recommendations by the Planning Commission, review by Allegheny County, and votes by the Town Council. Public engagement should be emphasized to provide transparency and to answer questions and address concerns proactively. Implementing this strategy will require time and expertise on the part of the staff and appointed and elected officials, and minor expenditures for legal review. It has a difficulty rating of two weights because of the likelihood that various public opinions will need to be reconciled.

❑ STEP 1: Hold separate focus group meetings with developers and property owners within the R-C zoning district. Then facilitate a meeting of representatives of the two groups to further discuss design concepts and ordinance changes.

❑ STEP 2: Update requirements and design standards for the R-C zoning district. (See also Strategy 3 on next page.)

❑ STEP 3: Make an inventory of vacant lots and abandoned buildings. Through the Allegheny County Vacant Property program, the Town (a program participant) can acquire and redevelop tax-delinquent properties, which gets the properties back on the tax rolls.



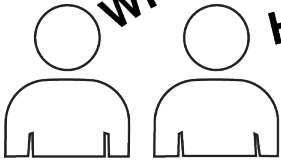




## REDEVELOPMENT

### STRATEGY 3: UPDATE ZONING ORDINANCES WITH REVISED REQUIREMENTS.

WHAT IS THE VISION FOR THIS? WHAT ARE THE GOALS?  
HERE'S AN OVERVIEW.

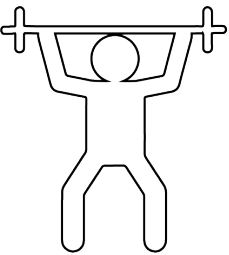


**Q:** Why is it important to revise requirements in Town planning and zoning ordinances, and what changes should be included in the update?

**A:** Planning and zoning ordinances enable the Town to guide development toward outcomes with desired characteristics, and create a means for enforcement. Requirements should cover facades, streetscapes, parking, lighting, sound and buffering to minimize commercial/residential land-use conflicts, and provide for more sustainable development.

#### IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

##### STRATEGY 3: Update zoning ordinances with revised requirements.



**Q:** What are the specific action steps for revising ordinance requirements that govern appearance and sustainability, and how difficult will this be?

**A:** Here are the steps involved. This strategy has a two-weight difficulty rating, as it should not cost a lot but will involve community discussion.

❑ STEP 1: The Planning Commission should consider adjusting the requirements applying to some zoning designations. It should consider recommending:

- Design standards, size/height limits and operating hours that continue to encourage local retail or small-scale commercial.
- Requirements that enhance walkability and bikeability, particularly connections from local neighborhoods to shops and services on Route 19.
- Setback requirements to provide more buffer depth against R-2 residential lots in the rear, while also requiring buffering that mitigates light and sound intrusion. Eliminate wood fence buffering.
- Landscaping requirements that emphasize street trees, parking-lot shade, and native/non-invasive deer-resistant plantings.
- Tight standards for facade designs and materials.
- Requirements for contemporary artful stormwater management design.
- Tight standards for signage to limit height and govern appearance. Note that McCandless' current ordinances stipulate sign regulations specifically for the northern portion (Wexford Flats) of the corridor. These could be adapted and applied to the whole corridor.
- Tight standards for any drive-through businesses due to sound and light pollution.

- Requirements that encourage shared-use road access points for contiguous properties.
- Parking lot design requirements that push lots to the rear of properties, and require fewer parking spaces in recognition of trends toward non-motorized transportation and public transit. (In tandem with this is an intention – noted in the Active Transportation and Connectivity chapter – to press for additional transit service on this corridor.)
- Density waivers in return for integral (non-surface) parking, shared parking and/or mixed uses in a single structure.
- Abatements or waivers for development meeting the requirements of Living Building Challenge or other net-zero design.
- Other adjustments (incentives) for sustainable development that includes:
  - Water conservation
  - Green infrastructure
  - Sustainable off-street parking including pervious paving and rain gardens
  - Site design principles including planting deer-resistant natives and large shade trees.

(Refer to Article V-Urban Sustainability in the Edgewood Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance)





## REDEVELOPMENT

### STRATEGY 4: ENCOURAGE REDEVELOPMENT BY INDEPENDENT, LOCALLY OWNED BUSINESSES.



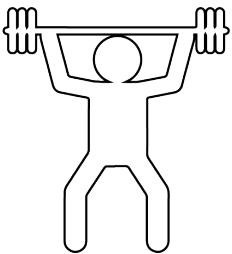
**Q:** Why is it important to encourage local business ownership?

**A:** Communities may well desire business development of any type so long as the owners comply with ordinances and pay their taxes. However, during the public input process for this comprehensive plan, residents spoke up repeatedly about a desire to see new businesses that are owned locally. Some reasons:

- Local owners may be more aware of community needs and thus be better able to identify and fill niches.
- Local owners may invest more in desirable appearance so that their business satisfies neighbors.
- With a personal reputation to uphold, a local owner may be more likely to provide levels of service to clients and employee remuneration that aligns with general community standards.
- Locally owned businesses are, by definition, not part of a cookie-cutter approach that is typical of franchise operations. Therefore, they may provide more personality, variety and distinction. (Though it should be noted that the community need not accept cookie-cutter designs on the part of chains and franchises either.)

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

### STRATEGY 4: Encourage redevelopment by independent, locally owned businesses.



**Q:** What are the specific action steps for encouraging local business ownership, and how difficult are these actions likely to be?

**A:** The main thrust of this strategy is to identify ways to make it as easy as possible for prospective business owners or developers to find properties that meet their needs. This strategy has a three-weight difficulty because while the steps won't be too expensive or involved to take initially, it will take diligence and commitment to maintain databases over time (see below for more information).

❑ STEP 1: Choose an approach that the Town feels it can or should do to assist. Some ideas from elsewhere:

- Create and maintain a database-driven digital portfolio of properties in McCandless that are suitable for redevelopment. This could, for example, include vacant properties or those in foreclosure within a specific target area. Provide photos, floor plans, owner contact information,

realistic information on possible rehabilitation. Example: <https://www.ura.org/pages/available-properties>

- Work with commercial real estate agents to create a “properties of the month” feature that appears in Town publications. This could highlight the most desirable rehabbed commercial properties. Example of an existing commercial aggregate page: <https://42floors.com/us/pa/alleggheny-county>

❑ STEP 2: Offer an annual Vacant Commercial Property Tour so that potential business owners can view properties. Example of a vacant property tour - mainly residential - in Wilkinsburg. <http://wilkinsburgcdc.org/vacant-property/available-properties/>

❑ STEP 3: Review the Town’s permitting application process to determine whether or how it might be simplified. Assess whether some of the more common and simple required applications could be made available as online forms (currently only downloadable forms are available), and whether online transactions for applications fees should be possible via the Town website in addition to in-person payments. Example: Sacramento, CA, allows registration to a portal that enables online inspection scheduling and online electronic payments, as well as online minor permit applications. McCandless could choose its own version of what could be handled online. <https://www.cityofsacramento.org/-/media/Corporate/Files/CDD/Building/Sacramento-Streamline/Citizen-Portal-Public-User-Registration-Guide.pdf?la=en>



# KEY ISSUE

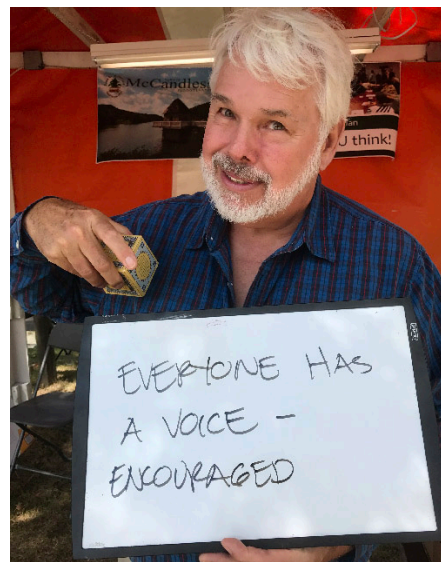
## COMMUNITY IDENTITY & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

**Q:** What does “Community Identity and Public Engagement” mean, and why is it important to McCandless?

**A:** Based on citizen input during the public process created for this comprehensive plan, McCandless residents see their community as “A safe, convenient and vibrant community in the heart of Pittsburgh’s northern suburbs.” However, participants also expressed uncertainty whether residents or outsiders have a tight grasp on what distinguishes McCandless from other North Hills communities. Residents proposed identifying and promoting community strengths to reinforce the Town’s singularity.

At the same time, participants in the public process suggested that supporting a common understanding of McCandless and its vision for the future would make the Town stronger and more desirable, and would encourage more citizens to become actively engaged in civic life.

In order to achieve many of the other objectives outlined in the plan, including redevelopment, it is important to foster and maintain this engagement. This will go a long way to negating public concerns that could be impediments to implementation of the plan.



**Q:** What is the long-term vision for McCandless’ Community Identity and Public Engagement?

**A:** VISION STATEMENT: McCandless promotes its strengths as a “Safe, convenient and vibrant community in the heart of Pittsburgh’s northern suburbs,” and engages citizens to help build those strengths in an overall effort to improve quality of life.

**Q:** What are some main points to know about this issue?

**A:** Here are some useful points:

1. Community identity includes both the physical and the non-tangible. A citizen attending the first public meeting stated it this way: “Please improve the sense of identity: from signage to community activities.”
2. Citizens also expressed a strong desire to have greater awareness of “what’s going on” in Town. Though McCandless already has many forms of communications and means for citizens to become involved, still more transparency is desired.

It is possible to work on both aspects of this at once: More engagement by citizens is one way to build on the community’s strengths.

3. When considering public engagement, a community can use the scale presented on a subsequent page to assess where it is now, and where it would like to be. This visual tool reflects different degrees of public involvement and citizen participation. It lists some communication or engagement opportunities that generally correlate with each of five levels of public involvement.

## CITIZEN INPUT

A community quality of life questionnaire conducted as part of this comprehensive plan asked residents about communications, citizen engagement and inclusion. Three hundred eleven respondents rated agreement with the following statements. These are ranked by their weighted average, with the lowest numbers representing more agreement. Anything above 3.00 would represent 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) When offered the opportunity to provide additional comments about communications, 181 respondents to the questionnaire offered suggestions. The top four were:

- 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/mailing several days in advance (14)
- More frequent emails (10)

## Community Identity & Public Engagement Recommendations

**Q:** What strategies will McCandless pursue to expand citizen engagement with the community?

**A:** Here's a list. Details for each are on the following pages.

**STRATEGY 1:** Strengthen McCandless' identity as a "Safe, convenient and vibrant community in the heart of Pittsburgh's northern suburbs" (or other statement, if a new one is written).

**STRATEGY 2:** Inventory and assess all communications channels the community currently participates in, and decide which to continue, which to discontinue and what to improve.

**STRATEGY 3:** Identify McCandless' goal for level of public involvement and create new opportunities for citizens.

**STRATEGY 4:** Enhance the volunteer experience - make volunteering for McCandless more appealing and rewarding.



# Levels of public involvement



INFORM

CONSULT

ENGAGE

COLLABORATE

EMPOWER

HOW MUCH DECISION-MAKING RESTS WITH THE TOWN?  
HOW MUCH WITH CITIZENS?

"We will keep  
you up to date"

Email blasts  
Newsletters  
Social media posts

"We  
welcome your  
ideas"

Hearings, Surveys  
Interviews  
Comments on posts

"Your input will  
be visible in the  
outcome"

Design charrettes  
Focus groups  
Advisory committees

"We all have an  
equal voice"

Straw polls  
Deliberative workshops

"We want what  
you want"

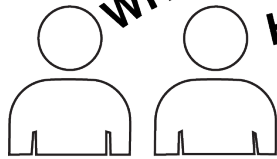
Friendly arbitration  
Town meeting voting  
Referendum



# COMMUNITY IDENTITY & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

## STRATEGY 1: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY IDENTITY.

WHAT IS THE VISION FOR THIS? WHAT ARE THE GOALS?  
HERE'S AN OVERVIEW.



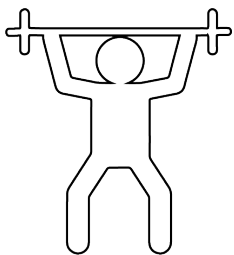
**Q:** Why is it important to strengthen the community's identity, and how would McCandless do so?

**A:** Most businesses, organizations, institutions – and communities – want to be known for their best aspects, or for some positive distinction or characteristic. Many come up with slogans, values statements or “brands.”

McCandless is in a position to build on its identity as a “Safe, convenient and vibrant community in the heart of the Pittsburgh’s northern suburbs.” This statement was distilled from hundreds of individual comments from residents, collected during the public process for this plan, on what they like about McCandless or how they see their Town. (The identity statement may certainly be revised per the wishes of the Town or implementation committee. After a revision, the following steps still apply.)

### IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

#### STRATEGY 1: Strengthen community identity.



**Q:** What steps should be involved, and how difficult is this effort likely to be?

**A:** The strategies presented here represent a

menu of possibilities, and may be undertaken in any order.

This strategy has a one-weight rating because the goal is idea generation and community involvement to produce potential steps that may later become projects. In the future, projects could have cost or additional staff time attached to them.

❑ STEP: Each Town committee will annually create a list of ideas (within each committee’s area of work) for brand development and implementation so that actions taken by the Town support McCandless’ identity in an intentional way. This would concertedly build on each strength implied by the identity. For example, if the Town seeks to uphold the identity presented in this report, it would examine the components as follows: In what ways should we make McCandless more *safe*, more *convenient*, more *vibrant*? How might we make the Town more of a vital center or *heart* of the area? What are ways we can enhance connections with *other northern suburbs*?



For example, the Environmental Advisory Committee could position McCandless as a vital heart of the area by initiating and supporting collaborations with neighboring Towns on matters of common interest, such as watersheds or green spaces.

Please note that If the Town chooses a different identity or brand statement, the self-guided questioning idea would still apply, but to different words.

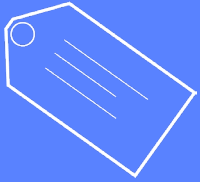
❑ STEP: Convene a volunteer group of residents who have marketing/communications/advertising expertise to brainstorm slogans and/or strategies for building community identity. This could be one or two half-day exercises, and besides the group's work product, the action would have the additional benefit of providing a new way to engage local businesspeople and residents. This also could include a new Town logo, if desired.

❑ STEP: Staff will develop a communications plan for consistently emphasizing McCandless' identity (or brand/slogan, if one is developed) in all Town communications.

❑ STEP: Staff will develop a list of tangible, visible ways the Town could emphasize its identity throughout the Town's geographical boundaries. Here is a basic list for how the Town can emphasize identifiable place-making:

- Consistent use of marker signs at the major locations of entrance to the community
- Decorative banners
- Hanging baskets or planting containers
- Light fixtures
- Street signs
- Benches
- Town vehicles
- Town color(s) used in signage and fixtures
- Consistent use of Town colors, logos and other brand identifiers in electronic media platforms.

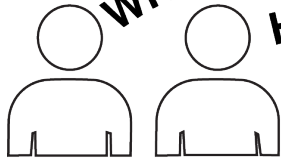
❑ STEP: Open discussions with local businesses and institutions about adding "McCandless" to their name or identifiers.



## COMMUNITY IDENTITY & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

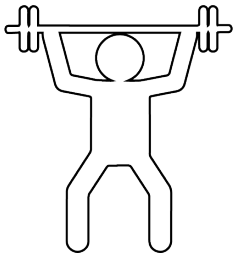
### STRATEGY 2: IDENTIFY, ASSESS AND IMPROVE OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS.

WHAT IS THE VISION FOR THIS? WHAT ARE THE GOALS?  
HERE'S AN OVERVIEW.



**Q:** Why is it important to inventory and assess communications channels?

**A:** As community demographics and digital media platforms change, the Town should regularly inventory its communications channels and consider which are most effective, and which may no longer be worth the time and expense involved. Naturally, new methods will continue to emerge.



#### IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

##### STRATEGY 2: Identify, assess and improve official communications channels.

**Q:** What steps are involved, and how difficult is this effort likely to be?

**A:** Here are the steps involved. It has a two-weight rating because new channels or communications types or additional frequency may involve cost and staff time.

- ❑ STEP 1: Create and maintain a list of all communications channels that staff members and elected or appointed officials use for Town business.
- ❑ STEP 2: Track the response or use level of each of the Town's communications channels, considering different demographics. Metrics can include page views, shares, likes, comments or phone calls. It can also include temporarily discontinuing a channel to assess whether the community misses it. Tracking responses and use *by channel* can help the Town know which are the most effective means for reaching citizens.
- ❑ STEP 3: Track the subjects that create the most responses from citizens. Tracking *by subject* can help the Town learn what topics of information the community desires the most.
- ❑ STEP 4: Cross-check channel and topic, and demographics. The Town can evaluate how the highest-trending topics were communicated, and strive to use similar channels to boost the visibility of other topics that don't seem to gain traction in the public eye.
- ❑ STEP 5: Create a Community Engagement Committee, whose responsibilities will include developing communications-related ideas, and making recommendations to Council. (Read more about the public engagement committee in Strategy 3: Add ways for residents to become involved in civic life.)



❑ STEP 6: Continue engaging the school district as a partner in communicating with residents. We realize the school district includes more communities than just McCandless. Yet, for this plan, the school district partnered with the comprehensive plan steering committee to “get the word out” for public meetings/discussions.

❑ STEP 7: The Community Engagement Committee and Town staff – working in collaboration with the Technology Advisory Committee – will review the communications mechanisms that won awards in the PA State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS) statewide contest for best practices. The best practices that other communities employ can give McCandless ideas for ways to improve its own offerings, as well as satisfaction regarding communications it already does well.

Upper Merion Township, Montgomery County, won the PSATS Outstanding Citizen Communication Award in 2017 (presented in 2018) because it placed first in two categories and second in another. Merion Township, with a population of 28,395, is similar in size to McCandless.

When viewing the communications examples provided in the box below, McCandless could consider:

- The communications channels it uses
- Frequency of each type of communication
- The content types conveyed in its communications
- Frequency and types of interactive components
- Whether, how often and when video, photo, voice are included
- Use of live-stream and live interactivity

Reviewers should be aware that when tracking responses to communications and subject matter, the communications preferred by different demographic groups could skew subject data or vice versa.

## 2017 CITIZEN COMMUNICATION CONTEST WINNERS

### Population 10,001 and over

*(PA State Association of Township Supervisors)*

**NEWSLETTER:** Upper Uwchlan Township, Chester County: [Fall 2018 Newsletter](#)

**ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER:** Moon Township, Allegheny County: [December 2018 Emailed Newsletter](#)

**OTHER PUBLICATIONS:** Plumstead Township, Bucks County, for its Constant Contact email blasts

**AUDIOVISUAL COMMUNICATION:** Cranberry Township, Butler County for “Cranberry Township Meter Replacement program”: [Meter Replacement video](#)

**CABLE TV PROGRAMS:** Upper Merion Township, Montgomery County, for Police Department Public Service Announcements

**SOCIAL MEDIA:** Upper Merion Township, Montgomery County (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram): [Upper Merion Facebook](#); [Upper Merion Twitter](#); [Upper Merion Instagram](#)

**WEBSITE:** Plumstead Township, Bucks County: [plumstead.org](#)



## COMMUNITY IDENTITY & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

### STRATEGY 3: IDENTIFY MCCANDLESS' GOAL FOR LEVEL OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR CITIZENS.



**Q:** Why is it important to set a goal for levels of public involvement?

**A:** As with any project or plan, it is very helpful to know “Where are we now” and “Where do we want to be” before deciding what actions to take and determine the page of change.

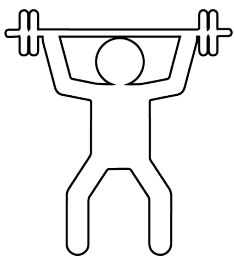
**Q:** Why is it important to add ways for residents to become involved in civic life, and what are some points to consider?

**A:** Community engagement is a fundamental goal of most municipal communications efforts: The more informed residents are, the less likely it is that they will be taken by surprise or angered by changes, decisions or issues they did not anticipate.

Engaged citizens are those who are informed about issues and also understand how local government works. Engaged citizens combine both types of knowledge, and thus have increased ability to contribute to and benefit from their community. Considering the busy and complex lives most people lead, residents may find it difficult to spare the time or energy to become engaged in civic life. And those who wish to try might not know where to even start. This strategy provides ideas for helping more citizens become more engaged.

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

### STRATEGY 3: Identify McCandless' goal for level of public involvement and create new opportunities for citizens.



**Q:** What steps are involved, and how difficult is this effort likely to be?

**A:** Here are the steps involved. It has a two-weight rating. The first steps are “just” a matter of discussion, but feelings in the community may run high, and reconciling different opinions about levels of engagement could require time and patience. Later steps require staff time.

❑ STEP 1: Using the “Levels of public involvement” graphic shown previously in this chapter, hold open discussion at Council meeting(s) to air opinions and move toward consensus on the levels of public involvement that McCandless *currently invites and enables*.

❑ STEP 2: Hold open discussion at Council meeting(s) to air opinions and move toward consensus on the levels of public involvement that McCandless *wants to invite and enable in the future*. It is worth



remembering there is no “right” place to be on the scale, but rather, the Town’s own considered goal. The goal may change over time.

❑ STEP 3: Once the Town, with input from residents, has determined a goal, it can methodically add involvement types to create new opportunities for citizens. The recommendations provided in this chapter and elsewhere in this plan represent additional involvement opportunities, including some types that McCandless may not have tried so far.

Note that the steering committee for this comprehensive plan gauged the Town’s current level of public involvement as “Consult.” The steering committee felt the Town welcomed ideas from the community and successfully involved citizens via hearings, surveys, interviews and opportunities to comment on social media posts. The steering committee’s consensus for improvement was for the Town to move toward the “Engage” level on the scale of citizen involvement. This suggests incorporating more mechanisms than enable more residents to see the results of their engagement in Town policies, initiatives and actions.

❑ STEP 4: Create a Community Engagement Committee to develop and recommend ways to improve two-way communications in the Town, enhance engagement and improve community relations. Among the committee’s responsibilities:

- Collaborate with Town staff on identifying opportunities for improving two-way communications, including inventorying existing channels, assessing their effectiveness, and planning improvements, as outlined in Strategy 2 in this chapter.
- Collaborate with or build on ideas that arise from a “community identity” brainstorming/working group that is outlined in Strategy 1 in this chapter. For example, social media posts about successful community engagement can help build the Town’s image.
- Develop mechanisms for helping residents learn about their Town and its governance, such as making volunteer applications easier, and creating a welcome guide and a “Civics Academy,” as suggested in subsequent steps here in Strategy 3.
- Serve as a resource for preventing or healing rifts among groups or residents in Town that arise out of Town policies, ordinances or actions.
- Encourage and recognize volunteerism.
- Help promote cultural, socioeconomic and age diversity and inclusion within the community.
- Continually identify ways to help the Town reach its desired position on the “Levels of Public Involvement” chart presented at the beginning of this chapter.

❑ STEP 5: Transform the Town’s downloadable volunteer board application into a form-based application to make applying for boards easier for residents, and to make the resulting database list of applicants easier for the Town staff to maintain and Town Council to review.

❑ STEP 6: Revise and maintain a New Resident Welcome Guide to McCandless, to be hosted on the Town’s website. See this [example from Cranberry Township](#) or this [example from Salem, Mass.](#)

❑ STEP 7: Create a “Civics Academy” that invites residents to become more educated, informed and engaged. The program presents an introduction to all aspects of local government and community operations. Similar programs are hosted all around the country, and University of North Carolina’s School of Government documents best practices. UNC hosts a [database](#) of these Citizen Academy programs. The Town could consult with other local communities that offer similar programs, or collaborate with a local college to mount the program. Graduates of this program will receive preference as applicants for the Community Engagement Committee; residents considering running for Town Council will also be encouraged to complete this program. A summary of a potential program, modeled off the best practices, is provided on the next page.

# McCANDLESS CIVICS ACADEMY OVERVIEW

## PROGRAM SUMMARY

Free, 10-week citizens academy to educate and inform adult residents interested in learning more about all aspects of local government.

## PROGRAM GOALS

Build community engagement by helping residents to become more familiar with Town government, Town history, the Town budget, and municipal successes and challenges, and to meet elected officials, Town staff, and other engaged residents.

## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

- Open to Town residents age 18 and older (with one spot reserved for a high school student, or a separate program could be offered for teens)
- Interactive program, with participatory activities and ongoing Q&A opportunities
- Class size limited (15-30)
- Ten weekly classes, 6:30-8:30 p.m. in February-April
- Held at rotating locations
- Graduation recognition at a regular Town Council meeting in April
- Light snacks and coffee are provided, and graduates could receive a certificate and token gift such as a Town mug.
- Costs should be less than \$500 per year outside of staff time.

## SAMPLE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: Welcome and Town History - at McCandless-Northern Allegheny Heritage Center

WEEK 2: Town Manager - at McCandless Town Hall

WEEK 3: Planning, Zoning and Economic Development - Location TBD, maybe a newly opened business?

WEEK 4: Finance and Communications - at McCandless Town Hall

WEEK 5: Bus Tour of McCandless with free-form Q&A (maybe a weekend day for this one, so it's not dark out)

WEEK 6: Public Works, Parks, Green Space and Sustainability - at McCandless DPW

WEEK 7: Police Department - at McCandless PD

WEEK 8: Panel discussion with North Allegheny School District, Northland Public Library, Allegheny County Parks - at Library

WEEK 9: Meet the Town Council

WEEK 10: Graduation at regular Council meeting

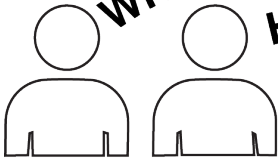




## COMMUNITY IDENTITY & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

### STRATEGY 4: MAKE VOLUNTEERING MORE APPEALING AND REWARDING.

WHAT IS THE VISION FOR THIS? WHAT ARE THE GOALS?  
HERE'S AN OVERVIEW.



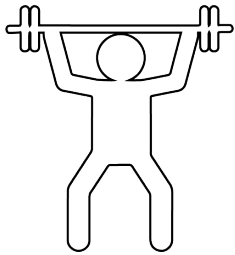
**Q:** Why is it important to enhance the appeal of volunteer opportunities? What are some points to consider?

**A:** People who volunteer for the community are among the Town's most engaged citizens. They typically join boards, help at events, work on programs or provide other services because they feel they have something to offer and "want to give back."

These energetic citizens help the Town to improve through their expertise, time and energy. Their participation should be valued and rewarded.

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

### STRATEGY 4: Make volunteering more appealing and rewarding.



**Q:** What steps are involved, and how difficult is it likely to be?

**A:** Implementation probably won't be very difficult. But the strategy has a two-weight rating because it requires some staff time and, potentially, some new expenditures.

❑ STEP 1: Create additional volunteer positions that will allow residents with special skills or expertise to work on behalf of the Town, such as new committees, advisory boards and working groups. Several such opportunities are recommended in this report. Note that some volunteer opportunities can be shorter term, handled from home, or designed to be appropriate for families, senior citizens, young adults or individuals who just have an hour here or there to contribute.

❑ STEP 2: Consider two-term "term limits" for volunteer boards, and a requirement that chairmanship changes each term. This allows for more participation by more citizens.

❑ STEP 3: Create a development program for Town officials and board members that taps expertise at the Local Government Academy (LGA), the PA Municipal Planning Education Institute, PA Local Government Training Partnership, or other similar resource. The Town's support could change from year to year, depending upon evolving needs. A development program could include:

- Training and orientation for all members of any newly convened board or committee such as those suggested in this report.

- Support new Council members, such as reimbursement for their participation in the LGA Newly Elected Officials Course or other approved course.
- Mentoring partnerships for new volunteer committee or board members
- Training for new members named to boards or committees that require specific knowledge or technical expertise, such as the Planning Commission or Zoning Hearing Board.

❑ STEP 4: Plan and develop some one-off opportunities to enlist the help of businesses, organizations and individual residents, such half- or one-day brainstorming workshops, clean-up days, tree planting days, community garden preparation, playground construction days or other events. Maybe start with one or two events a year to test not only participant interest but new ways of advertising the opportunities. These one-time events might attract the help of local businesses, organizations or high school students or clubs seeking service projects. Make the work days rewarding by providing food and token gifts such as T-shirts, hats or reusable bags.

❑ STEP 5: Develop partnerships between Scouting or other community groups and Town committees such as the Environmental Advisory Board or a Community Activities Committee. The Town committees can maintain lists of problems the Town would like to solve through volunteer help. These lists can give youths seeking Eagle Scout or Gold Award designation (or other groups or individuals) ideas or even a menu of potential projects. Publish an annual volunteer wish list.

❑ STEP 6: Provide recognition for the work that volunteers perform, such as:

- Thank-you letters and/or certificates for Scouts who complete projects that improve the Town
- Annual event or gift for members of Town committees, boards or working groups
- Townwide "Volunteer of the Year" nomination process and program
- Recognition at Town Council meetings
- Recognition during Community Day activities.



# COMMUNITY ISSUES

## OTHER TOPICS

During preparation of this comprehensive plan, the steering committee discussed additional topics that it considered important but that did not rise to the level of “Key Issue.” This section captures those topics and provides recommendations or statements of support as appropriate.

### TECHNOLOGY

**Q:** We all know technology is changing our lives and our communities. What are some tech applications that will greatly affect community life, which McCandless should consider as it sets policy?

**A:** Some technology arenas that the Town will want to track are:

- Mobile traffic, bandwidth and internet service providers/network service providers
- Tech education for residents
- Presence of cell towers and micro towers in Town
- Tech privacy and security education for residents
- 5G and IOT (internet of things), which could have implications for privacy
- Wi-Fi hot spots provided by the Town
- Device charging stations throughout Town
- Autonomous vehicles and how they will affect traffic movement and safety
- Artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality applications by businesses and individuals
- Drone delivery of goods

### IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

❑ STEP 1: Create a resolution that identifies the name, purpose, size and requirements for membership on a Technology Advisory Committee. Recommendations are:

- Model it on the Environmental Advisory Committee and to meet monthly.
- Qualifications to include range of skill sets in the technology field and preferably grant-writing, but also to include non-expert citizen stakeholders.

❑ STEP 2: Create the committee with the mission to help the Town of McCandless evaluate issues or situations, and make recommendations to Council regarding software, security, privacy, reliability, studies, ordinances and other matters.

# HOUSING

**Q:** What are ways that McCandless can encourage more people to move in and existing residents to remain in Town?

**A:** As residents age, some choose to leave their large single-family homes in suburbs like McCandless, but still want to remain living in Town. They may seek smaller, lower-cost options. Additionally, some younger individuals or families and people who grew up in McCandless and now are starting a career and/or family may want or need smaller residences. McCandless should expand housing choice.

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

❑ STEP 1: Update and implement regulations that support expanding housing choice, such as via these changes to the zoning ordinance:

- Permit accessory dwelling units (self-contained housing) on the same lot as a principal dwelling if the proposed development meets all dimensional and parking requirements, and other appropriate additional restrictions imposed by the Town. This could enable in-law or bounce-back housing for family members.
- Higher density (multi-family housing) and walkability are increasingly popular factors in residence decision-making. These factors also are more sustainable choices long-term. This plan encourages such options.
- This plan encourages inclusionary zoning that allows sufficient stock of performance residential uses and small single-family homes (800-1,000 square feet). The Allegheny Places website includes resources for developing language on inclusionary zoning. Visit: <http://www.allegheny-places.com/implementation/toolbox.aspx>, and look under Model Ordinances.

# PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

**Q:** Deteriorating properties are detrimental to communities, as they can attract pest infestations, create fire or other physical hazards, and create an environment for illicit use. In addition, they can drag down the value of neighboring properties or create a perception of diminished value. This may mean less property tax revenue for the Town. Finally, deteriorating properties have a direct costs for the Town in terms of lost tax revenue for the problem property and the costs associated with collecting fines or delinquent taxes. What more might McCandless do to improve property maintenance?

**A:** McCandless, like many communities, keeps on top of violations of ordinances but still faces intractable problems with some properties or property owners. Here are some additional steps it could take:

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- ❑ STEP 1: Hold an in-person meeting with the magisterial district justice and a Town delegation that includes professional staff, a Council liaison, and members of the zoning board or planning commission. Explain the Town's goals for improvement and plans for addressing long-standing problems.
- ❑ STEP 2: Create a rental property registry in which all rental property owners register with the Town and pay a per-unit fee. The program also lays out rules for inspections and code enforcement.



- ❑ STEP 3: Establish relationships with the Allegheny County Housing Authority and area social services providers so that if any McCandless resident is precipitously turned out of a home because of property maintenance problems, resources are available to assist that person in finding housing.
- ❑ STEP 4: Establish a data-driven process for tracking and addressing problems. Create a data-based scale that methodically rates safety and appearance factors. This data ensures that problem properties can be ranked in an unbiased way. The Town can then choose to address the worst problem first, or seek to address problem properties in areas the Town considers strategic.
- ❑ STEP 5: The Citizen Engagement Committee should maintain a registry of volunteers able to assist property owners whose capacity renders them genuinely unable to maintain their property. The committee also could help link residents in need of assistance with non-profit or government services.
- ❑ STEP 6: Embrace opportunities for a proactive approach. Ideas continually emerge for how communities can pursue their goals through policies, ordinance or practices. Here are some ideas:
  - Require long grass to be cut within five days of notice, or the Town will do it at the owner's expense. The charges for this work could be recouped in real time or accrued as a lien. Here is an [example from Green Tree, PA.](#)
  - Place a lien against property for maintenance costs accrued by the borough, with settlement occurring as part of closing costs when a property is sold.

## PLANNING AND ZONING

**Q:** In what ways will McCandless encourage the kinds of changes it wants to see happen?

**A:** This comprehensive plan strives for consistency with the Town's zoning and subdivision and land use development ordinances.

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- ❑ STEP 1: Ordinances for zoning and subdivisions/land development should be updated to implement the contents of the comprehensive plan.
- ❑ STEP 2: Comprehensive land use/development planning shall address impacts to neighboring communities and incorporate sustainability principles.
- ❑ STEP 3: Develop and adopt an official map. This can help the community implement the comprehensive plan's trails, greenways, open space and other objectives. Official maps can be an excellent resource for ensuring that future development is in line with the Town's vision.

# TRANSPORTATION

**Q:** McCandless has a plan for improving local streets, and is collaborating with Allegheny County on county road improvements. How can it plan for other improvements?

**A:** As noted in the Active Transportation chapter, McCandless is adding an intense focus on diversifying its transportation network to include multimodal forms. Other major initiatives should focus on the redevelopment areas to enhance the link between growth, land use and the movement of goods and people.

# STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

**Q:** What are ways McCandless is planning for stormwater management and flooding?

**A:** Early in the review process stormwater management was considered a part of the Comprehensive Plan. After considerable discussion, Staff suggested that stormwater management should not be included in this plan, rather it should stand alone. There are several aspects to stormwater management including detention for land development projects, conveyance systems for streets, outfall mapping, monitoring municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4), pollution reduction plans (PRP), stormwater facility inspection, maintenance of public facilities, inspection reporting for private facilities, and floodplain management. The regulations for these activities fall across different agencies and ordinances. Many are unfunded mandates from the State and Federal governments. The Town has had public meetings and public hearings to establish project priorities for streambank stabilization. The Town also has a Stormwater and Floodplain Ordinance which is mandated by Pennsylvania and Federal law. There is a capital budgeting process which establishes storm sewer replacements based on a rating system and a similar program for maintenance of public storm sewer detention systems. As these systems and budgets are in place and are continually reviewed and reprioritized, the determination was made to continue the existing processes outside of the Comprehensive Plan rather than reiterate them within the Plan.

As part of the stormwater facility inspection process, a determination is made as to whether the facility will accommodate additional volume, rate control and water quality improvements.



# STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

**Community health:** Foster individual and community health by providing opportunities for social engagement, and both indoor and outdoor recreational activities and events that reflect and support vibrant community life. Provide opportunities for residents to “get out in nature,” to participate in active lifestyles, and for access to health care.

**Transportation systems:** Provide a safe, convenient and efficient multi-modal network that enables both motorized and non-motorized options for moving people and goods, and encourages transit use and healthful outdoor activity. It includes roadways, trails, walkways, bikeways, and transit that operate within and beyond the Town, and focuses on improvements that align with redevelopment projects.

**Housing:** Provide a variety of housing choices that is attractive to residents who reflect a diversity of ages, physical ability, family type and size and all income levels, and that encourages and sustains vibrant neighborhood life.

**Commercial systems:** Preserve and enhance a mix of commercial activities in the Town to provide sustainable sources of employment, goods and services, while providing opportunities for locally owned businesses where feasible. Redevelopment plays a key role in enhancing the community’s economic development.

**Natural systems:** Promote the preservation of sensitive natural places and “green space,” including wetlands, flood plains, steep slopes, hazardous soils, erosion-prone land, riparian zones and heavily treed areas for the benefit of current and future generations through the use of best management practices and appropriate limits on development.

**People and place:** Provide high-quality facilities for common use that are accessible to all residents and meet the needs of the Town. Provide ample and meaningful opportunities for community engagement while also promoting public participation at all levels of government. Preserve historic and cultural resources within the Town for the enjoyment of future generations.

**Land use:** Guide future land development to emphasize mixed uses where feasible as well as in-fill redevelopment (defined as the process of re-developing vacant or underused parcels within an already-developed area). New development should be compatible with the form, scale, use and intensity of development in surrounding areas while protecting environmentally sensitive areas.

**Infrastructure systems:** Increasingly mitigate stormwater runoff quantity, quality and rate to protect downstream water bodies, wetlands and communities. Promote community readiness for new technology as it arrives. Ensure provision of clean water and adequate sanitary sewerage.

**Operating in the public trust:** Conduct Town business with the highest standards for ethical behavior for policing, legislative, regulatory and fiscal management. Encourage a diverse and sound economic base that generates sufficient revenue to provide sustainable high-quality services, facilities and infrastructure without imposing undue tax burdens.

# CONSISTENCY WITH PENNSYLVANIA MUNICIPALITIES PLANNING CODE

In order for the McCandless Council to approve this comprehensive plan, the proposed plan must be reviewed by Allegheny County for consistency with the county's own comprehensive plan, and the plan must meet the requirements of the state Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) Article III, Section 301. The following is a summary of those MPC requirements and a comparison of where that information is included in this comprehensive plan.

MPC requirement	Where it can be found in "A McCandless Conversation"
Statement of community development objectives	Previous page
Plan for land use	It is suggested as a part of this comprehensive plan that the Town continue the existing land use plan but include more opportunities for mixed uses via changes in ordinances.
Plan to meet housing needs	Discussion about housing needs is in the "Other Topics" chapter.
Plan for movement of people and goods	Discussion about public transit and connectivity appear in the "Active Transportation" chapter. Other priorities are stated on Page 109.
Plan for community facilities	Discussion about a potential community space appears in the Appendix.
Statement of interrelationship among various plan components.	The nature of Implementable Comprehensive Planning is to focus on major issues in the community. Each issue tends to address multiple planning elements in an integrated manner. For example, the "Redevelopment" chapter addresses land use, economic development, housing and community facilities.



Chart is continued from previous page.

MPC requirement	Where it can be found in “A McCandless Conversation”
Statement that existing and proposed development is compatible with existing/proposed development in adjacent communities and consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan	We believe that the proposals in this plan are consistent with the adjacent municipalities’ land use and the Allegheny County Plan. The county planning department staff participated actively in the development of this plan.
Plan for protection of natural and historic resources	The “Sustainability and Green Space” chapter emphasizes the goal of protecting and enhancing natural resources. The “Redevelopment” chapter emphasizes re-envisioning and improving dated or deteriorated properties, which preserves and reinvigorates older buildings when feasible.
Plan for reliable supply of water	The Allegheny County Comprehensive Plan indicates that the water supply for McCandless is adequately delivered via West View Water Authority service.



# PASHEK MTR

Landscape Architecture | Community Planning | Design

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