

Marshall Township Implementable Comprehensive Plan

Steering Committee No. 4 – April 29, 2021, 6:00 to 7:30pm, Zoom

WELCOME AND OVERVIEW

Jim Pashek thanked everyone for their time and provided a project update.

Project Status:

The project Scope is divided into two phases: Phase I – Determining the Community’s Needs and Phase II – Drilling Down for Solutions. There are 14 tasks in Phase I. After tonight’s meeting, the only tasks that remain are to provide the Board of Supervisors with an update of progress on the plan and to facilitate a public meeting. The original schedule anticipated the completion of Phase I by May of 2021, so we are on track with the project.

Background on Key Issues:

In preparation for tonight’s discussion about selecting the four key issues this plan will proceed with, Jim provided information on what constitutes a Key Issue. Characteristics include:

- A problem needs to be addressed in the community.
- The action leading to the solution for a problem is appropriate for local government to undertake (for example, the Township has little influence on market conditions)
- There has to be an impression that progress can be made on that problem in the next 5-10 years
- The problem is real and not public perception
- A Key Issue can be proposed by Township staff independent of public input (for example, there may be important infrastructure problems that need to be addressed in the plan but are not on the public’s radar and do not show up through public engagement)

Tonight our goal is to get a consensus from the steering committee as to the most important Key Issues this comprehensive plan should undertake. It is reasonable to ask why we limit ourselves to just four Key Issues. We require the community to prioritize the Key Issues because:

- Having too many recommendations can lead to paralysis and lack of focus on solving problems
- Too many recommendations and areas of focus can overwhelm the capacity of the Township staff and volunteers, who are already very busy
- The discussion around prioritizing the Key Issues can be a rich conversation that helps further define the problem and allow planners to better focus on the real issue
- Four Key Issues were included in our proposal

The four Key Issues we recommend to the Board of Supervisors at the end of Phase I may not be the final four presented in the plan. There have been instances when we have begun working on the issue only to find that there is not a lot the municipality can do about that issue and we move to another issue. We have begun working on an issue only to find out that it was more a public perception of a

problem and not a real problem. Sometimes as we begin to research the problems, we find a more logical clustering of the issues that are more interrelated than originally considered. Wording used for the Key Issues at the end of Phase I might change as that topic is informed by research, best practices and more interviews.

DISCUSSION ON KEY ISSUES

Jim briefly reviewed some of the trends analysis the steering committee has done over the past few meetings regarding Key Issue topics. Then he presented the nine Issues identified through the public engagement and through discussion with staff. The consultant and staff reviewed the issues and provided an assessment of the importance (priority) of that issue and the likelihood of success in 5-10 years. This is a subjective assessment based on a wide range of factors. From this work, six Key Issues were identified for discussion tonight and three suggested for less focus but consideration in the plan under the “Other Topics” section.

Key Issues:

- Preserve and enhance the “rural character” of the western side of the Township
- Address traffic concerns on Wexford Bayne Road from I79 interchange to Cole Road
- Encourage redevelopment at Warrendale/Northgate Drive area to be like a “town center”
- Improve access onto 910; evaluate zoning on Wexford Bayne Road from I79 interchange to Highpoint Drive
- Effectively communicate to residents and create a Sense of Community
- Connect in a non-motorized way subdivisions; and between subdivisions and commercial areas, parks and neighboring communities

Other Issues:

- Enhance a good park system and increase trails to be better
- Address housing diversity
- Consider alternative land uses for Innovative Ridge development

Jim asked each person on the steering committee to offer their observations on the Key Issues and to help in prioritizing those issues. He indicated that addressing development on the western side of the Township was already identified as a key issue, so we were asking the steering committee to identify the other three key issues. Based on the steering committee’s input, the following three rose to the top:

- Connections in a non-motorized way subdivisions, and between subdivisions and commercial areas, parks and neighboring communities
- Address traffic concerns on Wexford Bayne Road from I79 interchange to Cole Road
- Improve access onto 910; evaluate zoning on Wexford Bayne Road from I79 interchange to Highpoint Drive

There were a number of thoughtful comments offered as we went “around the table.” They included:

1. Connecting the community with trails, including trails along roadways is really important, but this person recognized the difficulty of building trails along the roadway in some areas.
2. Some thought the trail component of “Enhance a good park system and trails to be better” could be combined with “Connect in a non-motorized way subdivisions; and between subdivisions and commercial areas, parks and neighboring communities” into a key issue.
3. Several thought that “Address traffic concerns on Wexford Bayne Road from I79 interchange to Cole Road” and “Improve access onto 910; evaluate zoning on Wexford Bayne Road from I79 interchange to Highpoint Drive” were interrelated and should be combined into one Key Issue.
4. Especially in this pandemic, walking has become really important.
5. Creating a sense of community will increase the attractiveness of Marshall for future residents
6. There was concern about working on Warrendale/Northgate Drive given its small area. This idea has been discussed for 30 years and “nothing has happened.” Progress depends more on developers than the Township.
7. The Township is already working on improving communications and only needs a few more suggestions that might come from having this topic in the “other topics” section.
8. It was suggested that the Rural Character issue be reworded to “Maximizing preservation of open space, minimizing disruption and elimination of natural assets.” It was also mentioned that this idea should apply Township-wide.

NEXT STEPS

1. The update to the Board of Supervisors will serve as a report on Phase I and be the “kick-off” of Phase II. This will likely take place in late June.
2. There was much discussion about holding a public meeting as originally described in the Scope of Work. The conclusion was to:
 - A. Have a Zoom Meeting in early June that will include breakout rooms covering each of the four key issues.
 - B. Prepare an informational flyer on the key issues and include a link to a simple questionnaire that will focus on whether respondents have ideas on how to implement the Vision for each Key Issue. Township will do their robust digital outreach in late May. Responses to questionnaire will be due by June 15. Pashek+MTR will provide graphic content of material to be circulated by the Township.
3. It was noted that the trail planning update recently presented to the Board of Supervisors should be incorporated into the Key Issue on connectivity. That plan has already been transmitted to the consultant.
4. There are issues about land use, especially on the western side of the Township that need to be discussed with staff. Steve Victor is a local resource on these issues. He has been interviewed and there may be follow-up discussions with him on these topics. The Township will be hesitant to undertake major zoning changes until after the comprehensive plan is completed so those changes are informed by the recommendations of the plan.

These meeting notes were prepared on May 1, 2021 by Jim Pashek and Jenni Easton. Distributed the week of May 3, 2021.