

The Wilkinsburg Plan

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
2015 UPDATE

Table of Contents

The Project	3
Executive Summary	4
Introduction	7
<i>PROCESS</i>	9
Update to Plan	11
<i>HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS</i>	11
<i>COMMUNITY FACILITITES AND SERVICES</i>	16
<i>NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES</i>	24
<i>TRANSPORTATION</i>	27
<i>FUTURE LAND USE</i>	30
Update to Key Strategies	31
<i>SAFE, CLEAN, AND GREEN</i>	31
<i>LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOODS</i>	35
<i>OPEN FOR BUSINESS</i>	37
<i>ORGANIZE FOR SUCCESS</i>	40
<i>VISION TO REALITY</i>	42
Conclusion	45

The Project

The Wilkinsburg Plan is a strategic plan created to guide public policy in the Borough of Wilkinsburg. Comprised of three separate documents, The Wilkinsburg Plan was distinctly different from others previously conducted in the state of Pennsylvania. Representing the combined efforts of many stakeholders, the plan was adopted in 2010 and now is approximately half way (five years) through its intended lifespan (ten years). The three documents of The Wilkinsburg Plan include:

- 1) The Comprehensive Plan: A plan for the entire Borough.
- 2) The Business District Revitalization Plan: A focused strategic plan for the Penn Avenue and Wood Street business district.
- 3) The Five-Year Plan and Financial Management Study: Part of the Borough's Early Intervention Plan, a complete review of the Borough's financial resources and organizational capacity to deliver critical public services for the residents of Wilkinsburg.

In those five years, progress has been made through various parts of the plan. The project to update the plan was a partnership between the Borough of Wilkinsburg, the Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation (WCDC), Hosanna House, Inc. and the Coro Center for Civic Leadership (Coro). Through Coro's Fellowship in Public Affairs a Fellow was assigned to the project, spending eight weeks with each of the three Wilkinsburg partners.

Due to the limited time period, complexity of the plan, and the limitations of a one-person consulting team, the entirety of the plan was not updated. However, all pieces were reviewed and the results have been provided via four documents. For easier understanding, the hundreds of action steps identified in The Wilkinsburg Plan were the key focus of the update. This did result in parts of the plan that were not action-oriented (such as market analysis) to be excluded from the update. The goal is to provide a clear document that identifies what has been accomplished, what remains to be done, and what the priorities are moving forward. Hopefully, this aids in continuing the progress established by the creation of The Wilkinsburg Plan and prevents the original extensive input from becoming obsolete. The entirety of the Coro Fellow project has resulted in the following four documents.

- 1) The Comprehensive Plan 2015 Update
- 2) The Business District Revitalization Plan 2015 Update
- 3) The Action Plan: Recommendations and Next Steps 2015
- 4) The Health and Human Services Addendum

While the Five-Year Plan and Financial Management Study was not updated, it was reviewed and discussed with stakeholders to provide context in understanding the operations of the Borough.

Executive Summary

The Wilkinsburg Plan is a planning tool intended to increase the opportunities for Wilkinsburg's success. Funded with a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development the plan combines three usually distinct planning processes into one strategic effort. Combining a traditional comprehensive planning process (The Comprehensive Plan) with an in-depth business district review (Business District Revitalization Plan), and an internal look at the Borough's operations (Five-Year Plan and Financial Management Study as part of the Pennsylvania Early Intervention Program) the Wilkinsburg Plan was created and implemented to guide public policy in the Borough of Wilkinsburg. Although each component has its own document, all of the recommendations, strategies and actions should be implemented concurrently. Adopted in 2010, the Wilkinsburg Plan is approximately half way (five years) through its intended lifespan (ten years).

A key part of the creation of The Wilkinsburg Plan was public participation. A steering committee of residents guided the planning process in 2009, which started by reviewing previous community plans from 2006 and earlier. Throughout the creation of The Wilkinsburg Plan, public outreach meetings, interviews, press releases, web site postings, e-mail blasts and direct mailings were designed to reach all sectors and interest groups. The public outreach culminated in multiple community meetings that involved residents, business and property owners, elected officials, and stakeholders through a weeklong process of workshops, open houses and individualized interaction. Together, participants shaped the vision and goals for the community.

Although with time the market around Wilkinsburg will change, the vision identified by the community is the anchoring point for development in Wilkinsburg. While there are parts of the Comprehensive Plan that are no longer applicable, desirable, or feasible, through this update, it was found that the desire and the vision expressed in the plan is still aligns with the needs and hopes of Wilkinsburg.

However, this review process has found that the stakeholders acting within the Borough are not fully aligned with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. The first identified steps in the plan, the high-priority strategies have not seen much progress. One such step that was not accomplished is the designation of an implementation committee and implementation manager. The Wilkinsburg Plan is a dense document. It covers a lot of ground and while the Borough Manager can support movement within the plan, without designated oversight pieces of the plan are forgotten. Within the first few pages of the Comprehensive Plan it is stated:

"While there are many actions items recommended over the 10 years covered by this plan, the strategic recommendations for the next two years are of critical importance. They become the fuel for transformational change in Wilkinsburg, and without them, the other recommendations of the plan will be difficult to achieve."

Since the identified recommendations for the first two years were not completed, the structure does not exist for many of the recommendations to be identified as accomplished. An implementation plan was not created, a housing redevelopment strategy was not identified, and government organization was not reviewed.

With that being said, the Comprehensive Plan has not been ignored either. Future land use planning, community facilities and services as well as historic preservation have seen the strongest success in the Comprehensive Plan as they have seen investment of energy and capital. Additional major successes have arisen from the last five years. The fire department merger has saved millions of dollars for the Borough. The Wilkesburg Community Development Corporation (WCDC) has become a strong leader in the community and with recent Main Street designation will likely continue to build systems for progress in the business district. Borough staffing structure was rearranged providing more leadership to Code Enforcement and the Department of Public Works. The parks of Wilkesburg have seen major improvements. Historic preservation has been strong through the leadership of the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation. The Penn Lincoln Hotel could not be saved but was demolished and opens the potential for exciting development. An extensive zoning update was completed to guide land use for the future of Wilkesburg. Residents are building pride in their community through community gardens and community events. And as a whole, despite the seemingly unmanageable problem of vacant, tax delinquent and blighted buildings, many people in the community have a sense of hope for the future of Wilkesburg.

Development is not an overnight process. Many of the tasks identified in this plan will be long and tedious. Wilkesburg has used the plan as a resource and although it has not been used as effectively as possible, it has been used - parts of it, extensively. Comprehensive plans can sit on the shelf and collect dust but that is the case in Wilkesburg.

As Wilkesburg continues to develop it faces the dilemma of meeting the needs of current residents while also attracting new residents, a task made difficult by blight, limited financial resources, and an unfavorable housing market due to high tax rates. For assistance in moving forward The Wilkesburg Action Plan has been created in addition to this update and highlights key steps for moving forward.

The majority of recommendations made in the Comprehensive Plan Update are centered on realignment to the plan as it was originally proposed. A few additional recommendations were made as well based on conversations and findings through the research of this six-month process. While element specific priorities are identified in the narratives of the Comprehensive Plan Update, the top ten recommendations are identified in The Action Plan. Those top ten recommendations are

- 1) Create a plan for housing and neighborhoods
- 2) Clearly identify roles and processes to strengthen communication within Borough entities
- 3) Continue, and spread, community conversations
- 4) Continuously address the Wilkesburg School District as part of the community

- 5) Be proactive: Ensure oversight and long-term planning
- 6) Build from strong neighborhoods - stop the slide
- 7) Adopt diversity as a value
- 8) Make the Penn Lincoln Hotel location a success
- 9) Revisit the Borough's Financial Management Study
- 10) Assign oversight for sustainability

The purpose of this project and the hope of those involved is for this information to be not only be seriously considered and reviewed but also to be a starting point for conversations that will lead to implementation. The Wilkinsburg Plan was an investment in the community that deserves to see a return on investment. It is a tool and with any hope, an update the to tool will continue the already established progress happening in Wilkinsburg.

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan is a component of The Wilkesburg Plan, an all-inclusive plan to address the community's goals and vision for long-term community development. The Comprehensive Plan serves as the guide for public policy in the areas of transportation, utilities, community facilities, land use, recreation, natural and historic resources and housing. The Wilkesburg Plan includes three separate documents; the two additional pieces include The Business District Revitalization Plan and the Five-Year Plan and Financial Management Study.

The Comprehensive Plan identified five main elements of concentration:

- 1) Housing and Neighborhoods
- 2) Community Facilities and Services
- 3) Natural and Historic Resources
- 4) Transportation
- 5) Future Land Use

Within these five focuses, broad goals were identified based on the vision community members created in the public outreach. One vision in the Comprehensive Plan, for example, is "Wilkesburg residents will take pride in their community and work together to make it a safe, inclusive, and attractive place to live." Following each vision, the critical success factors needed to be in place to meet said goal were identified through two categories "We must have..." and "We must be...". Again these factors were broad. In order to meet the vision and critical success factors, goals rose to the top of each planning element. Each individual goal and the implementation strategy for that goal were listed in the plan as follows:

Create and implement a process to ensure that residents have access to clean and safe natural resources, recreation, and open spaces

Implementation Strategy

1. Work with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to include and preserve the Borough's natural and open spaces in its strategies
2. Empower the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to lead implementation efforts related to parks and open space
3. Develop a plan and provide staffing for regular maintenance of parks and green space

For the simplification of this update, the focus of the update is around the goals and their respective implementation. Therefore each section of this update will include the goal, strategies, and status updates to the individual steps of the implementation strategy. The same goal and strategy steps shown above will be in this document as shown below but with an additional column, which will display the current status of that strategy step.

2. Community Facilities and Services		
2A	Create and implement a process to ensure that residents have access to clean and safe natural resources, recreation, and open spaces	
2A.1	Work with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to include and preserve the Borough’s natural and open spaces in its strategies	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
2A.2	Empower the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to lead implementation efforts related to parks and open space	Unclear

In addition to those five elements of concentration there were also five high priority, key strategies identified for all the pieces of the Wilkinsburg Plan. Those five priorities identified specific steps to be taken soon after the adoption of the plan. Most of the steps identified in these priorities were taken from the action steps listed in the Business District Revitalization Plan, Comprehensive Plan’s five main elements and the Five-Year Plan and Financial Management Study. The five high priority, key strategies were identified as:

- 6) Safe, Clean, and Green
- 7) Livable Neighborhoods
- 8) Open for Business
- 9) Organize for Success
- 10) Vision to Reality

PROCESS

The implementation of these actions steps requires simultaneous execution with The Business District Revitalization Plan and the Five-Year Plan and Financial Management Study over the course of ten years. Approximately half way through the ten year time frame for The Wilkesburg Plan, this update is framed to provide clear understanding on **what has been accomplished, what remains to be pursued,** as well as **what is and is no longer a priority** for the Borough.

Through a process of interviewing various stakeholders, multiple opinions and perspectives were considered in the update to accomplishments and priorities. While a multitude of individuals were contacted for interviews, not every stakeholder could be reached. The breakdown of contributors includes: business owners, investors, residents, government representatives, council members, board and commission members, non-profit leaders, congregation leaders, and more. In total approximately 100 interviews were conducted as well as 20+ community meetings attended which contributed to gathering additional resident perspectives. Additionally a recent survey (June 2014) from the WCDC's Keystone Main Street application was also used - contributing the opinions of 260 respondents (including 201 written responses which were read and categorized) around the subject of perceptions of Downtown Wilkesburg.

The result of this process has led to the creation of this document including categorization of each step's current status. Unlike the Business District Revitalization Plan, the Comprehensive Plan did not assign any responsibility to stakeholders and it is not always clear who should be leading the suggestion made within the Comprehensive Plan. The strategy steps in the Comprehensive Plan are also broader than in other sections. To accommodate for this ambiguity, and categorization of "unclear" was added to account for areas where ambiguity prevented a classification.

Throughout the document the third and colored box within the charts relates to one of seven color-coded statuses ranging from “Accomplished” to “Redefined”. The statuses are arranged as follows:

Accomplished	The stated action step was completed in full and does not require updating or maintenance.
Started - on track, in process	The stated action is in the progress of being carried out. In this phase, the planning has or is taking place, funding may or may not be secured, but steps are currently being taken to reach fulfillment.
Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention	The stated action has seen some work to accomplish these actions but is unintentionally moving in a different direction, the intended outcomes for this step have intentionally changed, or it requires more attention to progress again. When under this category, the action is still applicable
Not accomplished	The stated action has not been completed.
No longer applicable	The stated action is no longer applicable or a priority due to changing needs or standards.
Unclear	The status of this action is unclear due to uncertain information, a lack of clarity in the action definition, or a lack of clarify on whose responsibility the falls under.
Redefined into smaller actions	These statements included multiple actions with varying degrees of accomplishment. For clearer understanding, the original goal was broken down into smaller steps.

Update to Plan

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Summary

The Comprehensive Plan identified three goals to reach its vision of

- 1) Being safe and attractive,
- 2) Leveraging existing initiatives to target specific neighborhoods for redevelopment,
- 3) Being attractive and livable, attracting new residents while improving quality of life for existing residents,
- 4) Eliminating blight and vacancies by turning them into green and productive spaces,
- 5) Using Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) to attract new residents and provide convenient new housing options, and
- 6) Preserving significant housing and providing inclusive mix of types for all income levels.

The three goals identified to reach those visions resolve around **strategies** for TOD implementation, neighborhood-specific revitalization, and involving the public to fight crime. Of those goals, some actions have been taken; for the most part, however, little has been done. While many stakeholders and Borough leaders see housing and neighborhood development as priority, there is no strategy in place to address current and future neighborhood needs.

Through the Comprehensive Plan, 19 neighborhoods were identified within the 2.3 square miles of Wilkinsburg. Each neighborhood was qualified as in decline, good, or transitioning. The suggested plan was to invest in nine focus neighborhoods. Each of the nine focus neighborhoods was given a strategy for redevelopment: 1) infill, 2) corridor, or 3) infrastructure. The theory behind identifying specific neighborhoods was to focus on the transitioning neighborhoods that border “good” neighborhoods. The only exception being the corridors outside of the main business district which were categorized as “in decline” but were identified due to their importance to the business district.

Some of the nine focus neighborhoods have seen investment that matches the strategies outlined in the plan. Specifically the areas closest to the busway - Hamnett Place, Singer Place, Peeble’s Square have seen infill. These investments, however, appear to be market driven and not supplemented by strategic intervention. The plan stated: “the neighborhoods and housing strategy is one of the most important strategies in the Comprehensive Plan and will require methodical, deliberate action and public and private investment”. Full implementation of a neighborhoods strategy will take years to complete but the progress should be visible to both residents and potential investors. At this time, it is unclear whether a strategy exists in Wilkinsburg, how acquisition, marketing, and vacant land uses are being considered, how streetscaping and infrastructure investments are being made, and what partners are will be brought in for support. Currently, the Borough has a strong resource and partner in the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation (PHLF), however PHLF

does not and cannot invest in all nine-focus neighborhoods. An additional resource for neighborhood improvements has been the development of block watch clubs where, when active, appear to be making strides in building community to fight crime and build relations with the police department. The involvement of block clubs, however, is not steady or evenly distributed throughout the Borough.

The topic of TOD has been discussed heavily as Wilkinsburg considers the possibility of a Transit Revitalization Investment District study and the new zoning updates include a TOD overlay. Both of these are important to the TOD strategy and yet much more work needs to be undertaken to leverage the busway and support TOD development in Wilkinsburg.

One potential roadblock for the proposed TRID study and any neighborhood-related investment is the perceived potential for investment in one section of Wilkinsburg to exclude other parts of the Borough. Wilkinsburg is distributed into three wards and three members on Borough Council represent each of these wards. Leadership should certainly equitably serve the needs all residents, however, the diversity within Wilkinsburg - diversity of wards, demographics, income - should not prevent investment in specific neighborhoods. If a strategy were in place and transparent within the community, investment could be shown to be planned targeted for all three wards, within all levels of income, within all racial populations.

Update

1A	Develop and implement a TOD strategy for areas around Wilkinsburg stations along the East Busway	
1A.1	Work with the WCDC to prepare and submit an application to DCED to conduct a Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) study for the focus areas identified for TOD in the neighborhoods and housing focus area plan	Not accomplished
1A.2	Work with the Planning Commission to update land use codes to regulate and incentivize TOD in designated focus areas, and to update zoning, subdivision and land development, and building codes as needed to encourage renovation and infill	Started - on track, in process
1A.3	Work with Port Authority to provide convenient and well-lit pedestrian walkways through parking lots and to the existing transit station from surrounding neighborhoods	Not accomplished
1A.4	Redesign and construct pedestrian links between the Wilkinsburg Station and neighborhoods to the east to provide real access and connections to transit facilities.	Not accomplished
1A.5	Meet with the Port Authority to explore the opening of the train station as an additional stop	Not accomplished
1A.6	Explore ways to leverage the access to the busway to facilitate TOD in the Singer Place and Hamnett Place neighborhoods	Not accomplished

1A.7	Develop a site inventory of available properties around the transit station and recruit developers/users for available properties around the transit stations	Not accomplished
1A.8	Explore the feasibility of designating space in the business district for convenient parking to attract transit users to the business district	Not accomplished
1A.9	Conduct a parking evaluation to focus/reduce/evaluate the number of public parking spaces dedicated to transit stop (Susquehanna to Wallace), and to consider the possibility of establishing fees for parking in this area	Not accomplished
1B	Develop a strategy for neighborhood revitalization in priority focus areas within the Borough	
1B.1	Create a subcommittee from the Implementation Committee members commissioned with the responsibility of implementing the housing focus strategy	Not accomplished
1B.2	The subcommittee should work with the Borough to prioritize neighborhood focus areas	Not accomplished
1B.3	Design and implement a program to acquire key vacant, deteriorated, and/or tax-delinquent properties for demolition, redevelopment, creative uses, or land banking, with first focus in priority areas	Not accomplished
1B.4	Identify (or create) and utilize an organizational entity to focus on the acquisition and development of vacant properties	Not accomplished
1B.5	Develop and implement a land banking program to hold acquired properties for future use, with first focus in priority areas	Not accomplished
1B.6	Work with Allegheny County and the Wilkinsburg School District to clear titles on vacant, deteriorated, and/or tax-delinquent properties to make them more attractive for private acquisition, with first focus in priority areas	Not accomplished
1B.7	Work with the Planning Commission to develop historic preservation guidelines for awareness and education purposes in historically significant neighborhoods.	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
1B.8	Develop a corridor strategy for streetscape enhancements in areas designated for corridor focus in the "Housing and Neighborhoods" section of the Comprehensive Plan, with first focus in priority areas	Not accomplished
1B.9	Develop a funding strategy to support streetscape enhancements	Not accomplished
1B.10	Conduct a study of the two neighborhood areas identified for infrastructure improvements to determine and prioritize needs, and develop plans for implementation	Not accomplished
1B.11	Develop a funding strategy to support infrastructure improvements	Not accomplished

1B.12	Develop a strategy for marketing available properties to private developers and to potential homeowners	Not accomplished
1B.13	Work with the WCDC to develop and maintain a real estate database of retail, commercial, and residential space by location, condition, ownership, jobs, units, and occupancy	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
1B.14	Identify and market incentives and resources to encourage homeownership, home maintenance, and home repairs and provide classes to teach proper home maintenance and ownership skills	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
1B.15	Update the zoning ordinance to provide incentives for developers to include a mix of affordable housing, accessible housing, and market rate housing in new development	Not accomplished
1B.16	Develop and publish a list of available resources for homeowners including available funding/loans for home repair	Not accomplished
1B.17	Infill strategies for Princeton Park -- leverage existing assets, rethink the use of older spaces, & address specific sites. Strategic demolitions, green space creation, shovel ready development. Land banking, mixed rate housing. Work with housing professionals.	Not accomplished
1B.18	Corridor strategy for Franklin and High School. Strategic investment. Structure, functionality and appearance of roads. Goal to make neighborhood look good to support business district.	Not accomplished
1B.19	Infrastructure strategy for Park Triangle and Laketon. Improving structure, functionality and appearance of roadways. Streetscape, curbs, sidewalks. Local streets.	Not accomplished
1B.20	TOD focus for Hamnett Place, Singer Place and Upper Center, Peebles Square and Kelly West. High density, residential mix with commercial, entertainment, civic and cultural uses. Contiguous parcels. TND overlay.	Started - on track, in process
1B.21	Hamnett Place: local historic district, increased density, infill options	Started - on track, in process
1B.22	Singer Place and Upper Center: build pedestrian access to area. Infill - increased density. Contiguous properties.	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
1B.23	Peebles Square and Kelly West: open pedestrian tunnel. Contiguous properties. Infill. Increasing density. Homeownership. Open Space	Not accomplished

1C	Involve the public in community efforts to fight crime	
1C.1	Develop an anonymous crime tip hotline	Not accomplished
1C.2	Implement regularly scheduled meetings with neighborhood groups and beat cops or neighborhood patrol officers	Started - on track, in process
1C.3	Work through the Weed and Seed program and neighborhood Block Club programs to build support for appropriate neighborhood involvement relative to crime watch, clean ups, and surveillance of parks.	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
1C.4	Partner with neighboring communities, including the city of Pittsburgh, to provide crime-free education programs	Not accomplished
1C.5	Inform the public through various types of media regarding opportunities for participation in public policing	Started - on track, in process

Priorities

Establishing a strategy for how and where vacant properties are addressed in the Borough is the first and primary priority. In order to accomplish this, there needs to be someone or some group to take on the responsibility of neighborhood revitalization. The Comprehensive Plan gives suggestions for development but is not easy to follow in a step-by-step basis if no one is assigned to implementation. For this reason and the high demand of housing/neighborhood concerns, it is recommended a full time staff person be added to the Borough or WCDC. This staff member could gather stakeholders to create the strategy and could be on hand to support strategy needs including guiding residents and investors through the process of homeownership.

If this staff member is not available, a small group of leaders can be identified to lead housing implementation. To establish a process, individual projects can be extracted from the plan and identified as a list. For the next few years, as one project is completed, the next can begin.

By choosing to identify a plan, investment can be distributed throughout the Borough and therefore with transparency and communication, perceptions of institutional favoritism can be minimized and investors attracted. As part of the planning, roles and responsibilities should be identified as well as other resources investigated.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Summary

The Comprehensive Plan process identified six visions for Community Facilities and Services.

- 1) Wilkinsburg residents will take pride in their community and work together to make it a safe, inclusive, and attractive place to live.
- 2) The Borough of Wilkinsburg will provide safe, well-maintained, active and passive, user-friendly green space within an urban environment.
- 3) Wilkinsburg will have gathering places for local residents and will provide community activities that transcend social barriers.
- 4) The children of Wilkinsburg will have convenient access to high-quality, affordable education.
- 5) Accountability for Borough services will be clearly assigned, and responsible individual(s) will respond to public concerns and requests in a timely manner.
- 6) Residents will have easily accessible, comprehensive information regarding existing services, both public and nonprofit, with contact information for responsible available individuals or groups.

From these six visions, seven primary objects arose. These strategies ranged from ensuring access to open spaces, to comprehensive community information, to sustainability, and volunteer services. The range of progress in these seven categories is very diverse. Very little has been done to engage local civic groups and volunteers in the implementation of the plan. Volunteer management does take time and it is unclear who would take on the coordination of volunteer groups. On the other hand, efforts around the parks have seen advancement although not always in the exact way identified in the plan. Much work remains for the park systems but the efforts made thus far have surely advanced the community facilities.

The smallest task of the Comprehensive Plan, and yet one of the most important, is the strategy to start discussion about the status of the school system. In the last five years, the school district has continued to be receive poor rankings and has acted as a barrier to families entering the community. Recently, with a new School Board and Superintendent, discussions between the school district and other Borough leaders have made progress as school board leadership looks to improve education and community leaders look to move the entire Borough forward including the school district. Continued conversations will be important to ensuring the best for community services and facilities.

The strategy around encouraging community pride to maintain a clean appearance has seemingly made progress. This progress, however, is one small piece working against the large-scale, continued blight in the community that encourages litter and dumping, mostly from non-residents but from residents as well. For true success, this strategy should be pursued for further progress.

While training is offered and provided for Borough employees, communication policies do not exist and information is not tracked which leaves room for improvement. With tracking and training in a communication process, information could be more readily available to the public and assist in identifying the needs of the community. Beyond external communication process to the public, there could also be more dedication to communication within the Borough and between Borough leadership.

Lastly, sustainability within the community is not clearly identified as a priority beyond the organizations with environmental focus. Therefore it is not surprising that many of the sustainability tasks have not seen much progress.

Update

2A	Create and implement a process to ensure that residents have access to clean and safe natural resources, recreation, and open spaces	
2A.1	Work with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to include and preserve the Borough’s natural and open spaces in its strategies	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
2A.2	Empower the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to lead implementation efforts related to parks and open space	Accomplished
2A.3	Develop a plan and provide staffing for regular maintenance of parks and green space	Accomplished
2A.4	Develop policies for use of parks and green space and plans for enforcing them	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
2A.5	Apply to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to update the Plan to be consistent with the development strategies and targeted investment identified in the Comprehensive Plan	No longer applicable
2A.6	Determine the amount of parks and/or green space needed to support Borough population, and if necessary, identify targets for reuse	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
2A.7	Work with the Economic Development Committee of Council to identify creative, environmentally friendly uses for passive parks and green space connected to redevelopment initiatives	Not accomplished
2A.8	Explore partnerships and/or multi-municipal approaches to provide parks and recreation programs, services, and maintenance	Not accomplished
2A.9	Provide new, consistent, context-sensitive park identification signage	Started - on track, in process
2A.10	Create a “friends of the park” organization focused on funding for the parks – can either be a new organization or partnership with existing nonprofit	Not accomplished
2A.11	Develop a communications network between the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and the neighborhoods where parks are located to better understand needs of the neighborhood	Accomplished

2B	Facilitate discussion among stakeholders regarding solutions to school issues and challenges	
2B.1	Identify key stakeholders for participation in discussions regarding school	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
2B.1a	a) Engage a professional facilitator through the Local Government Academy to assist in shaping and facilitating discussions and reaching consensus on mutual issues of concern	
2B.1b	b) Set meeting date(s)	
2B.1c	c) Invite participants	
2B.1d	d) Develop follow-up strategy to advance agreed-upon actions	
2C	Implement strategies that will initiate cleanup of Wilkinsburg, and encourage community pride to maintain a clean appearance.	
2C.1	Hold an annual public, large-scale cleanup within the business district	Started - on track, in process
2C.2	Clearly communicate litter control ordinances and penalties through media and signage	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
2C.3	Maintain cleanliness in the business district through regular street sweeping, litter removal, and sidewalk cleaning	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
2C.4	Evaluate number and location of existing litter receptacles and determine their adequacy for collecting litter in the business district	Accomplished
2C.5	Provide receptacles in the business district for recycling	Not accomplished
2C.6	Review frequency and reliability of current waste pick-up schedules for both the business district, parks, and for neighborhoods and make changes if necessary to ensure timely pick-up	No longer applicable
2C.7	Review resident requirements for waste pick-up and make changes as needed to regulate when and how waste is placed at curbside for pick-up	No longer applicable
2C.8	Continue regular community-wide neighborhood cleanup events	Started - on track, in process
2C.9	Organize a volunteer committee or resident groups for regular cleanup of parks and green space	Not accomplished
2C.10	Conduct large-scale clean up of Linear Park through the Borough along the busway, and develop a volunteer program to maintain	Not accomplished
2C.11	Assign paid Borough staff as financial resources permit to maintain litter-free lots	Not accomplished

2D	Create and implement a process to ensure that residents have easily accessible, comprehensive information regarding community services and events	
2D.1	Work with the WCDC to develop a media strategy to regularly communicate Borough news and events, that includes both local and regional media as appropriate	Accomplished
2D.2	Provide press releases each week after Borough Council meetings to communicate meeting summary and promote agenda for upcoming meetings	Not accomplished
2D.3	Determine key information related to Borough services that should be readily accessible to the public, to Borough employees, and to key points of public contact	Not accomplished
2D.4	Develop list of local community service organizations, services they provide, and contact information	Started - on track, in process
2D.5	Develop comprehensive list of Borough services and information, and identify or assign individual(s) responsible for each, along with their contact information	Not accomplished
2D.6	Develop list of most frequent information requested by callers to Borough offices, the owner of the information, and contact information for the appropriate person	Not accomplished
2D.7	Compile all relevant public information (as listed above) and develop a user-friendly database for efficient, timely responses to questions regarding community services	Not accomplished
2D.8	Determine process for tracking public requests for services or information and related follow-up	Not accomplished
2D.9	Create a "311" number for Wilkinsburg, or partner with nearby communities who already have one in place	No longer applicable
2D.10	Create an e-mail list and keep members apprised of good news, Website postings, and volunteer opportunities	Accomplished
2D.11	Create and distribute a publication containing Borough services and contact information, answers to frequently asked questions, and community services and contact information, both in printed form and on Web site	Not accomplished

2E	Create and implement a process to ensure that Borough staff members have appropriate knowledge, training, and guidance to effectively deliver assigned services to residents	
2E.1	Provide training for all Borough staff to ensure that staff members have the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their duties	Started - on track, in process
2E.2	Develop communication policies for staff communications and interactions with public, including time frame for returning calls, time frame for addressing requests for service or information, and follow-up	Not accomplished
2E.3	Provide training for Borough staff in communication process	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
2E.4	Develop a process for accepting requests for services or information that includes first points of contact via phone, mail, Internet, or e-mail; process for distribution to responsible individual(s); process for tracking request; and process for follow-up as appropriate	Not accomplished
2F	Implement innovative strategies that ensure the sustainability of the community for both the present and future generations	
2F.1	Engage Sustainable Pittsburgh to perform a Sustainability Assessment for the municipality and implement its recommendations	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
2F.2	Incentivize development and renovation to meet LEED standards for building and neighborhood development	Not accomplished
2F.3	Identify and promote programs for development with water- and energy-efficient fixtures, recycled materials, and energy production	Not accomplished
2F.4	Renovate the business district streetscape as a model of urban sustainability with best practices for materials reuse, energy efficiency, stormwater management, and vegetative cover	Not accomplished
2F.5	Integrate bioswales, rain gardens, and pervious pavement into municipal parking lots as grants are available and development occurs over time	Not accomplished
2F.6	Create a highly visible demonstration project to encourage reuse of vacant lots with urban agriculture, plant nurseries, or rain gardens. Harvest rainwater for plant irrigation.	Not accomplished
2F.7	Promote biodiverse, native, and drought-tolerant vegetative cover through street trees, green roofs, bioswales, rain gardens, and additional open space	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention

2F. 8	Continue to support and expand the farmers' market and enhance it with locally grown food	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
2F. 9	Actively engage in partnerships for sustainable activities/methods for protection of environmentally sensitive areas (e.g. Nine Mile Run Watershed Association, Urban Lab, Sustainable Pittsburgh, Institute for Ecological Excellence)	Started - on track, in process
2F. 10	Review existing ordinances and make necessary changes to ensure protection of environmentally sensitive areas	Started - on track, in process
2F. 11	Establish ordinance regulations to protect Nine Mile Run Watershed and implement stormwater best management practices throughout the Borough	Not accomplished
2F. 12	Engage Allegheny County or other appropriate groups in assisting with monitoring environmental compliance	Accomplished
2F. 13	Work with the building and zoning department to promote best management practices for vacant lot management following demolition of structures, to put lots to appropriate reuse	Unclear
2F. 14	Organize citizens advisory committee on shade trees, maintenance, planting and replacement both in the business district and in neighborhoods	Accomplished
2F. 15	Establish a sustainable tree replacement and maintenance program for street trees, building on work that has already been done	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention

2G	Organize and empower local volunteers and civic groups to assist with the implementation of the <i>Wilkinsburg Plan</i> , and with the delivery of ongoing volunteer services	
2G.1	Research best practice communities to find successful models of nonprofit collaborative groups	Not accomplished
2G.2	Identify ways that individual volunteers and nonprofit groups can assist in the implementation of the <i>Wilkinsburg Plan</i>	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
2G.3	Develop a database of local and regional community-based organizations that serve (or could serve) the Borough in promoting safety, unity, and community attractiveness	Not accomplished
2G.4	Develop a message statement that clearly communicates the implementation needs, with specific ways that volunteers can get involved	Not accomplished
2G.5	Meet with community-based organizations to find ways to engage their participation in recruiting and managing volunteers to meet specific implementation needs	Not accomplished
2G.6	Schedule quarterly meetings/lunches with nonprofits to understand what each is doing to make sure services aren't duplicated – gather info from groups and get the info out	Not accomplished
2G.7	Develop a collaborative strategy for community-based service that aligns with strategies in the <i>Wilkinsburg Plan</i>	Not accomplished
2G.8	Submit applications for funding to foundations and federal faith-based funding initiatives	Not accomplished
2G.9	Conduct ongoing annual leadership training designed for nonprofit groups	Not accomplished

Priorities

Continued conversations around supporting the school district in their quest for providing the best education possible should be one of the top priorities of the Comprehensive Plan. The School Board and school district were not an integral part of the Comprehensive Plan although they share the same footprint. This makes sense as the district should focus on providing education but is also a missed opportunity for support as the Borough and School District both face the weighted problem of tax delinquency and limited funds. With the School District and Borough now using the same delinquent tax collector, progress can continue in the same fashion.

NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Summary

Although natural and historic preservation are included in other parts of the plan, one goal arose from the two visions identified for Wilkinsburg's natural and historic resources. The visions include:

- 1) Wilkinsburg will preserve natural environmentally sensitive areas (e.g., steep slopes, slide-prone areas, and Nine Mile Run Watershed).
- 2) The Borough of Wilkinsburg will preserve and maintain historic structures in a way that leverages our redevelopment opportunities.

As a densely developed 2.3 square miles, Wilkinsburg does not have environmental constraints one may find in other communities (such as wetlands and floodplains). Instead, the major resource concerns within Wilkinsburg revolve around the abundant historic assets. For this purpose, historic resources are defined as historic buildings, structures, objects, sites, or archaeological artifacts that, based on their age, add historic, archaeological, architectural, social or cultural significance to the community. Settled in the 1700s, Wilkinsburg is rich in historic resources that give Wilkinsburg a unique character. The challenge is to balance the existing built environment with new development and redevelopment initiatives, when historic buildings demand maintenance and costly repairs. At this point, many of the historic buildings in the Borough have fallen into disrepair and reinvestment in said buildings may provide little to no return on investment for many years. Therefore, the resulting sole primary strategy to the planning of natural and historic resources is to create and implement a process to ensure the preservation of historic resources. Luckily the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Association (PHLF) has remained active in Wilkinsburg and has taken ownership in advancing parts of the strategy.

Since the adoption of the plan, Hamnett Place received designation on the National Register of Historic Places and PHLF is now working to study the Business District for eligibility of a national register district as well. PHLF with support from Allegheny County and others has continued investment in Hamnett Place as well as other Wilkinsburg neighborhoods. Over the years of involvement in Wilkinsburg (including the current development of the Falconhurst apartment building development) PHLF has provided over \$400,000 in loans to non-profits in Wilkinsburg, about \$20,000 in grants to historic religious institutions and have completed/pending real estate investment totally over \$23 million. PHLF is also heavily engaged with the Wilkinsburg community through the Landmarks Preservation Resource Center, an educational facility that offers workshops, seminars, lectures, and movie screenings on all aspects of historic restoration, community development, Do-It-Yourself house restoration skills, and lectures on urban planning topics.

Additional historical resource advancements have come from a partnership between the Borough, WCDC, PHLF, Allegheny County, the state, and others to find a solution for reuse of the former train station. A similar partnership between PHLF, the county and the WCDC is

working to address the redevelopment of the former Penn Lincoln Hotel site on Penn Avenue. The Penn Lincoln Hotel, while identified as a resource to be preserved, reached a point where preservation was not economically feasible; as a result, demolition was completed in 2014. The demolition of the Penn Lincoln is a point of contention among the community. While many are happy to see the blighted building, many wish it could have been saved but understand the economic reasoning while others wish the demolition had included more salvaging.

The amount of time and resources invested by PHLF has been a true asset for Wilkinsburg’s historic resources. As a successfully run organization PHLF has an internal strategy for preservation in and outside of Wilkinsburg. While PHLF has maintained good working relationships with the WCDC and Borough, it is not possible to review historic preservation in Wilkinsburg without also looking at PHLF. Additionally, since the Comprehensive Plan did not assign responsibility of the historic preservation strategy, it becomes difficult to understand who should be involved in this strategy and how. Following this review process, it appears that the majority of historic preservation action is dependent on PHLF although others in the community are interested in preservation. While PHLF’s resources, quality work, and dedication make them an extremely valuable partner there are other levels of support that could be offered for historic preservation in the Borough. Therefore, the below status updates are for the entirety of Wilkinsburg, not just PHLF.

Update

3A	Create and implement a process to ensure the preservation of historic resources within the Borough	
3A.1	Develop criteria and process for designation of buildings/properties as historic	Unclear
3A.2	Conduct detailed inventory of currently designated and potential historic structures and/or properties, along with an evaluation of cost to restore/repair	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
3A.3	Based on criteria, assess, reassess, and identify structures/properties for designation as historic	Started - on track, in process
3A.4	Identify and prioritize structures for rehabilitation or demolition	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
3A.5	Identify specific historic areas and develop design guidelines to maintain historic character	Started - on track, in process
3A.6	Engage local groups such as PHLF to assist in rehabilitation	Accomplished
3A.7	Leverage historic resources to tell the “Wilkinsburg story” and to attract visitors and new residents to the Borough	Started - on track, in process

Priorities

Based on the successes achieved thus far, it is a top priority to continue the relationship with PHLF in Wilkinsburg. However, another top priority is for other parties to identify their strategies for supporting historic preservation and to ensure the preservation efforts are inclusive and open. As continuously stated, PHLF is a tremendous asset. Other organizations, however, could also be better used for support, information, and engagement. Inviting interested community members, local groups such as the Wilkinsburg Historical Society and regional groups such as the Young Preservationist Association to the conversation on historic preservation can better support an all inclusive strategy.

Since rehabilitation of historic properties is costly, grants and additional support for homeowners should continually be pursued.

Finding ways to honor the past as well as the preservation progress should be creatively considered to leverage the historic resources in the community. A great example of this is being shaped as this report is being written. Following a project by local Carnegie Mellon University graduate students, the WCDC and the graduate student team are organizing The Wilkinsburg Vacant Home Tour; a self-guided tour, showcasing abandoned and vacant properties and leading tour participants on a journey back in time through the narratives of these homes and buildings. On a smaller scale, a Wilkinsburg resident and local artist embarked on a project to showcase the story of a nearby vacant home. Additional methods of promoting the history of Wilkinsburg should be pursued to support redevelopment.

TRANSPORTATION

Summary

The goal for transportation was identified as developing a strategy to address the efficient movement of people and goods throughout the Borough. To create said strategy the plan makes suggestions around cosmetic upgrades to busway underpasses, involving the Port Authority in implementation, taxi concerns, pedestrian connections, traffic control devices, public art and many more. These suggestions are all part of the process to reach the five identified visions for Wilkinsburg's transportation.

- 1) Wilkinsburg will use public transportation assets to leverage redevelopment opportunities.
- 2) The Borough of Wilkinsburg will capitalize on Penn Avenue as a major commuter corridor into the city of Pittsburgh.
- 3) Wilkinsburg will have a safe, efficient, and sustainable traffic circulation system that takes advantage of current technologies.
- 4) Wilkinsburg neighborhoods will be both interconnected and linked to the region, by multimodal forms of transportation.
- 5) The Borough of Wilkinsburg will proactively address challenges related to the physical, psychological, and social division of the Borough created by the elevated busway.

The suggested strategy for transportation identified many fiscal investments as well as partnership investments, and almost all the steps are not completed or on track for completion. The busway is still catered toward commuters, the Penn Avenues traffic has not been captured for local business, and dangerous-looking underpasses blight pedestrian connectivity.

Only a few recommended steps have seen progress. First, a plan was created for renovations to the Penn Avenue underpass; the borough is currently waiting on approval from PennDOT before any construction would begin. Leadership is clearly aware of the need for improvements but will also need to find funding for the task. Secondly, a traffic circulation study is currently being conducted, looking specifically at one-way street alterations including the possibility for bike lanes and parking. That traffic circulation study, however, is limited to the immediate area around the business district so any corresponding results will not be Borough-wide improvements.

Although many recognize location and access to transportation networks as one of Wilkinsburg's greatest assets little has been done to leverage this asset beyond the zoning code update. For many, it appears as if many of the transportation recommendations are not of high priority in Wilkinsburg's future. The exception to this is the recommendations for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and underpass improvements, both of which have garnered a significant amount of interest and was commonly identified as tools for Wilkinsburg's revitalization.

Update

4A	Develop a strategy to address the efficient movement of people and goods throughout the Borough	
4A.1	Make cosmetic short-term upgrades to the Penn Avenue busway underpass to improve its appearance and make it more attractive	Started - on track, in process
4A.2	Include a representative from the Port Authority on the Implementation Committee	Not accomplished
4A.3	Submit funding application to widen and replace the Penn Avenue busway crossing to open up this gateway to Wilkinsburg and capitalize on redevelopment initiatives	Not accomplished
4A.4	Schedule regular meetings with key Port Authority personnel to shape and prioritize delivery of public transit in Wilkinsburg	Not accomplished
4A.5	Explore ways to legitimize and organize a formal taxi service and/or shuttle system to service local resident needs, respecting the importance of the services to residents	Not accomplished
4A.6	Reopen the closed pedestrian connections under the busway at Ross Avenue near the Train Station and at Franklin Avenue	Not accomplished
4A.7	Investigate potential of moving overhead wires to alleys	Not accomplished
4A.8	Conduct a traffic control device inventory and ensure all devices are duly adopted and recorded as required by Borough Code	Unclear
4A.9	Request PennDOT conduct a warrant study for all traffic signals in the Borough to determine if signals are still required and eliminate unnecessary devices as appropriate	Accomplished
4A.10	Replace street and traffic signal bulbs and luminaries with LED technology to reduce energy consumption	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
4A.11	Upgrade traffic signals to implement a coordinated and interconnected timing system to improve the flow of traffic during peak periods	Started - on track, in process
4A.12	Develop a pedestrian and bike trail plan that creates a local trail system to link parks, employment centers, transit facilities, and adjacent municipalities	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
4A.13	Conduct a parking study and develop a holistic parking strategy for employees, commuters, and others including off- and on-street locations, number of parking spaces, and cost structure	Not accomplished

4A.14	Conduct a traffic circulation study to evaluate street utilization (including one-way)– the study should evaluate commuter routes, ways to channel traffic to desired routes, signage, as well as neighborhood circulation and pedestrian safety	Started - on track, in process
4A.15	Introduce public art as a way to make the connections under the busway more inviting	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
4A.16	Develop a financial investment strategy for infrastructure upgrades to the East Busway transit stop, focusing on improving pedestrian linkages	Not accomplished
4A.17	Develop the TOD strategy (see “Housing and Neighborhoods” section of plan)	Not accomplished

Priorities

The most commonly identified pieces around transportation are also pieces that could support current residents while attracting new residents. Improvements to pedestrian busway access, Transit-Oriented Development, and underpass improvements are therefore the highest priorities in transportation. As mentioned previously, TOD is a large piece of the Wilkinsburg Plan as a whole. The investments made for TOD development in housing will look differently than investments made for TOD development in transportation however both focus on the idea of using transit as a strength to build on. In Wilkinsburg, transportation (although flawed) is clearly a strength. Investing into the busway and underpasses sends a visible sign to those coming through Wilkinsburg while making transit easier and more comfortable for Wilkinsburg residents. The downside is obviously the capital investments needed to be made in order to complete such projects. The busway itself is not property of the Borough and therefore there are additional considerations and accommodations that must be made for any busway or underpass construction.

FUTURE LAND USE

Summary

Going beyond the Housing and Neighborhoods recommendations, the Future Land Use section makes suggestions around the zoning and ordinances that regulate land use. The goal in mind was to make Wilkesburg’s land use regulations more appropriate for the older urban community it is rather than the suburban-style zoning of the 1950s. With the declining population and large residential areas, challenges in residential uses have not been significant. The declining population, however, does result in the need for greening strategies with policies that address the acquisition and demolition of vacant structures. A land use policy could be designed to add asset into neighborhoods and remove (demolish) buildings that would lead to further decline. Conflicts in residential and non-residential uses did not rise as a concern, nor did the amount and diversity of housing types (single-, family-, multi-family, apartments). For residential land use the only recommendation made was to limit the conversions of single-family homes to multi-family units as it further dilutes the effective, already present, mixed neighborhoods. Most other land use recommendations relate to the business district, referring to right-sizing of businesses, “Central Business District” zoning, Traditional Neighborhood Development and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) zoning among other things.

Update

5A	Discontinue the practice of allowing the conversion of single-family dwellings into multiple units in all zoning districts	Accomplished
5B	Create a Central Business District (CBD) zoning classification to eliminate conflicts among current commercial area objectives	Accomplished
5C	Create a commercial classification around the parkway and along North Robinson in the vicinity of the proposed East Hills Shopping Center to support more auto-oriented commercial	Accomplished
5D	Increase TOD overlay district areas	Accomplished
5E	Create a TND overlay district east of Center Avenue, allowing for the transition of this area into a mixed use district supportive of the Central Business District	No longer applicable
5F	Review permitted uses, conditional uses, and special exceptions to eliminate conflicts and contradictions.	Accomplished

Priorities

With a recently completed upgrade to the Borough’s zoning, many of the future land use recommendations have been considered and implemented into the new zoning changes. Therefore, the priority moving forward is to further support these and other future land use goals through an update to the Subdivision And Land Development Ordinance (SALDO).

Update to Key Strategies

To best facilitate implementation all the suggested goals/steps were synthesized, organized, and prioritized into categories to facilitate implementation. As a result, a clear starting path was defined. The five high-priority, key strategies are:

- 1) Safe, Clean, and Green
- 2) Livable Neighborhoods
- 3) Open for Business
- 4) Organize for Success
- 5) Vision to Reality

SAFE, CLEAN, AND GREEN

The “Safe, Clean, and Green” strategies transcend the categories of the five planning elements. The three main focuses are around making changes to the police department to encourage community-policing, changing code enforcement to better address blight and litter, and implementing a sustainability plan. The steps identified for the police department have some controversy surrounding them. However, it can be said that many of the statements ring true for the police department as it stands today. The two not accomplished goals are purposeful, as leadership has determined they are not in the best interest of the community. The only yellow – “on track, in progress” task is the deployment of officers to ensure higher visibility. This is not listed as accomplished due to various responses from community members. Many voice that more visibility in the business district would be preferred but understand the limited number of officers. Some feel officers try to engage in the community; others feel the officers remain in their vehicles and are not friendly when assisting. Through all the interviews conducted, a majority of opinions did not agree on the status of police visibility improvement in the last five years, although commend the police department on the work they’ve done within the community.

In regards to code enforcement, important changes have been made to ensure successful operations. A code enforcement director was added to the department and fund allocations were increased from 1.5% of total expenditures to well over the recommended 3% of total expenditures (2015: \$565,441 = 4.8% of total budgeted expenditures). Since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, code enforcement has seen the addition of and changes in leadership. With changes in leadership, changes with the code enforcement strategy have come as well. At the time of this update, the newest code director had been in the position for less than a year. Although leadership changes are a disruption to consistency, is an opportunity to address previous enforcement shortcomings. Thus far, the new director’s strategic plan for the department aligns nicely with the Wilkinsburg Plan’s goals for code enforcement.

Lastly, the “green” strategy – to assign someone to the sustainability plan started with the Borough Manager being assigned to this task. With county and state fund assistance, energy recommendations around Borough buildings upgrades were implemented. However following those upgrades, little consideration has been given to the sustainability plan and the many of the top tier recommendations have not been implemented. Since many of the sustainability recommendations coincide with the Wilksburg Plan, integration of the two plans can still occur if appointed to the right person/group. While the Borough Manager should be aware and involved in the sustainability plan, the Borough Manager also has many other tasks to oversee. Therefore it is suggested another person/group be assigned the task to best support the Borough Manager in implementation.

6A	Make changes to the police department that focus on community policing and meeting modern standards for police operations.	
6A.1	The police chief should be required to be Act certified.	Accomplished
6A.2	The chief and all supervisors should attend the Command Institute for Police Executives, Pollex and Advanced Pollex. This will provide a broad overview of modern police standards and procedures.	Accomplished
6A.3	The Special Operations Unit (SOU) should be used only for special assignments. Officers currently in the SOU should be re-deployed to patrol activities in the neighborhoods and business district.	Not accomplished
6A.4	The chief and supervisors should deploy officers so that community-policing principles are met and there is higher visibility in the neighborhoods and business district.	Started - on track, in process
6A.6	The chief should carefully choose and train a police officer to act as the department's public information officer (PIO) who will be the sole point of contact with the media.	Not accomplished
6A.6	The Borough should hire full-time and part-time police patrol personnel in accordance with the patrolling needs guidelines calculated by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) formula included in the EIP.	Accomplished
6A.7	The Wilksburg Police Department Manual of Standard Operating Procedures and Policies should be updated to include an emphasis on community policing.	Accomplished
6A.8	The police department should initiate the process of seeking accreditation with the help of an accreditation advisor through the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association. This process will require the department to fully meet the standards for modern police operations.	Accomplished

6B	Make changes to the code enforcement department to address blight, dilapidated buildings, and litter.	
6B.1	<p>The Borough should recruit and employ a Director of Building and Codes who is knowledgeable about: 1) planning, zoning and the MPC; 2) building codes, property maintenance codes, and the Uniform Construction Code (UCC); 3) code enforcement of local ordinances under the Wilkinsburg Code.</p> <p>Furthermore, regular and comprehensive training should be scheduled and required for all employees.</p>	Accomplished
6B.2	<p>The Borough should revise and update the occupancy permit program for residential and commercial properties. The Borough should take a much firmer stance in identifying violations and having them corrected prior to the transfer of property from seller to buyer. The steps in the recommended process are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) When the Borough receives a request for a lien letter, the request is forwarded to the zoning officer and the building official in the codes department. b) The building and codes office notifies the owner, buyer, or closing agent that the no-lien letter also triggers the request for an occupancy permit and that the occupancy permit must be issued prior to the release of the no-lien letter. The requesting party can then go to the Borough's Web site and download the application for an occupancy permit. c) The occupancy permit application form, at a minimum, needs to have the following information: property address, lot and block number, zoning district in which the subject property is located, current use of the property, and proposed use of the property. With this information, the zoning officer should be able to conduct a search to see if there are any problems With the current or proposed use of the property. d) The application should be accompanied by a check for the occupancy permit. The \$ fee currently charged for this permit should be changed to reflect the cost of issuance, including research, reviews, and inspections of the property. A fee of \$ or \$ is more consistent with the fee charged by other municipalities. 	Not accomplished

	<p>e) The certified building inspector and a member of the fire department certified in the fire prevention code conduct the inspection of the property. All building codes, fire codes, property maintenance codes, and local codes are noted by the inspectors on a checklist. A letter is sent to the owner (seller), buyer, and/or closing agent for the property outlining all the violations that must be corrected prior to the sale of the property. The letter lists each deficiency and shows the corresponding code section for the violation. For example, the letter may say “PM. - Handrails required for stairs with four or more risers.”</p> <p>f) Once the owner corrects the violations, he contacts the inspector. The Inspector verifies that the violations have been sufficiently addressed. Once all violations are addressed, the occupancy permit is issued and the no-lien letter is released.</p>	
6B.3	The Borough should develop and provide turnkey packets for residents and contractors: a checklist of items required for zoning permits, special exceptions, and for subdivision and land development applications. Packets should outline the necessary approvals and timelines needed for various parts of the process. Information and permit applications should be available on the Borough’s Web site so residents be downloading and completing applications in advance of an inspection or permit request.	Not accomplished
6B.4	It may be necessary to utilize a third-party contractor to undertake some of the activities in this department.	Accomplished
6B.5	Borough Council should appoint a subcommittee and/or task force to organize and lead a widespread clean up initiative.	Not accomplished
6B.6	Increase Code Department budget to 3% of total expenditures.	Accomplished
6C	Collaborate early among Borough officials, local and regional organizations, and citizen groups to implement green and sustainable action strategies.	
6C.1	Borough Council should assign a person or group to be responsible for oversight and implementation of the sustainability plan being developed by Sustainable Pittsburgh.	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention

LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

As mentioned previously, Transit-Oriented Development and a redevelopment strategy are crucial pieces of the Comprehensive Plan. Together these two strategies were identified as one of the highest priorities, “Livable Neighborhoods”.

Of the recommendations, currently the Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) study has not been applied for and there has been no party tasked with the responsibility of advancing high-density, pedestrian-oriented housing as part of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). Recently, however, much conversation is being had over TRID as the Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group and other area parties are looking at the possibilities TRID studies can offer communities along the East Busway. Despite being introduced via the Wilkinsburg Plan five years ago, the TRID study is still a confusing subject for many. With only one approved TRID study in the state, it is difficult to understand the implications of the combined TRID/TOD and how it would benefit Wilkinsburg. Due to this uncertainty there is hesitation to make the investment in the study. Further education will be needed to support leadership in making a decision as many, both for and against TRID studies, have questions at this point.

The first task in the redevelopment strategy is assigning responsibility over the development of the priority neighborhood strategy. The failure to complete this first task was likely a contributing factor to the remaining tasks seeing little accomplishment. Of the remaining seven steps in the redevelopment strategy, only code enforcement and public investment experienced any progress. Stronger Borough allocations to code (as identified in the Management Plan) have allowed a better focus on property maintenance and code enforcement, but at the same time there are extreme amounts of work that remain to be done. Meanwhile public investments have been planned and targeted with some unfortunate events. As suggested, CDBG funds were sought but not received. Through TreeVitalize, Nine Mile Run Watershed Association and the WCDC, street trees were planted, mostly in the business district. Finally, the decorative lights were updated but are still not working due to multiple complications. Quotes were recently gathered to get those lights working once again but currently the double lighting and malfunctioning lighting is an issue the Borough would like to and should resolve in some format. Other than these steps, all other items saw little to no investment to the mentioned items. Capital investments were made through a bond issue that allowed street, lighting and sidewalk improvements among other things. Currently the Borough engineer identified streets and sidewalks to be in generally good conditions. Future capital investments will be limited by a tight financial budget that will not support the debt servicing of another bond issue. Similarly, the tight budget and the need for demolitions of properties posing a public safety threat have limited the ability to strategically plan demolition. After demolition has occurred, few have seen sustainability-focused additions.

7A	Implement TOD	
7A.1	An application for funding under the TRID Program through DCED's Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program (LUPTAP) grant program should be developed and submitted immediately to ensure timely implementation of this task.	Not accomplished
7A.2	Borough Council should task the Implementation Committee with the responsibility for developing and advancing the strategy, which must focus on high- density, pedestrian-oriented-housing opportunities as a key component of the TOD strategy.	Not accomplished
7B	Develop Redevelopment Strategy	
7B.1	Task oversight subcommittee with responsibility of developing the priority neighborhood redevelopment strategy.	Not accomplished
7B.2	An infill strategy or a side-lot strategy must be pursued. The marketing of the availability of lots adjacent to viable properties should be promoted. Incentives for making the lots more attractive to potential buyers should be explored by the economic development committee of Council in conjunction with other strategic partners.	Not accomplished
7B.3	A strong focus on property maintenance and better code enforcement must be required in this area. This emphasis is critical in order to reverse the downward transition of this neighborhood and make it more attractive for potential homeowners.	Started - on track, in process
7B.4	Homeownership should also be a key strategy, with a focus on incentives.	Not accomplished
7B.5	A master plan for priority investment areas should be undertaken to identify opportunities for open space, parks, and conservation areas to increase the attractiveness of the neighborhood and to create, preserve, and protect open space.	Not accomplished
7B.7	Public investment efforts could include curbs, sidewalks, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ramps at intersections, streetlights, street trees, and raised intersections that can serve as both decorative and traffic-calming elements. CDBG funds can be targeted to ADA sidewalk improvements, and alternative energy programs can be tapped to install or replace decorative lighting.	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
7B.7	Demolition funds should be used strategically to allow for open space, courtyards, urban gardens, public art, and other green amenities that are designed for sustainability.	Not accomplished
7B.8	Infrastructure investments should be made to support and preserve strong and healthy neighborhoods. Improvements to arterial streets should be focused on beautification and efficient traffic flow, while improvements to collector and local streets should focus on beautification and traffic calming. As with the collector roads in the corridor focus areas, the arterial roads in these focus areas are highly travelled by pass-through traffic.	Not accomplished

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

The Business District Revitalization Plan identifies many steps to take towards revitalization, growth, and economic stability. The lifespan of that business plan, however, will take time. The highest-priority implementation strategies for the business district are identified in “Open for Business”. Together this piece rises to be included in all the high-priorities strategies due to the Business District’s importance in offering strength and community to Wilkinsburg.

The highest of the business district priorities focus around the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) strategy identified in the Housing and Neighborhood section. TOD itself is one of the top recommendations in the whole of The Wilkinsburg Plan. Within the business district, preparation for TOD includes zoning ordinances, preparing physical space for potential tenants, marketing, and sustainability. As with most of the parts of the plan, some of these tasks have been started while others remain. Also like most of the plan, the unaddressed tasks are more intensive.

The second business district priority is code enforcement with a clean up strategy. Through review of code, review of zoning ordinances, and updates to code enforcement, regulatory authority is able to guide land uses and help shape the future of the Borough. With appropriate policies permits are streamlined, and preferred development is incentive. Appropriate code enforcement, when owners are present and when focused on the business district and other focus neighborhoods supports those neighborhoods to show visible improvement to the internal and external community. In the last five years, adding a code director and appropriate financial and staffing support to the code department has provided results. Almost all of the code-related items in this section have been started. Although not all steps are currently being pursued, staff is aware of needs and in time, it is believed the code related tasks will continue to see improvement.

8A	Implement TOD in Business District	
8A.1	Revise the zoning ordinance to include the TND overlay and the historic preservation design standards consistent with TOD.	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
8A.2	Prepare compliant physical space that will be attractive to potential business district tenants that could support TOD. Allegheny County economic development programs could be used to fund this activity.	Not accomplished
8A.3	Adopt a right-sizing strategy for locating existing Wilkinsburg retail, restaurant, and professional services in this area to provide for focused daytime and nighttime activity. Land use tools should be used to accomplish the gradual change in focus in order to maximize the investment of resources.	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
8A.4	Pursue marketing and recruitment strategy for attracting new businesses to the business district. This should be a top priority for the WCDC.	Started - on track, in process
8A.5	Adopt architectural design standards for business district amenities. Lighting and design standards along Wood and Hay Streets that are consistent with those along Penn Avenue within the business district focus area will help to define the core business district. Eliminating vacant storefronts and defining the core business district with brighter lighting can help to create a feeling of safety for pedestrians.	Redefined Into smaller actions
8A.5a	Adopt architectural design standards for business district amenities.	Accomplished
8A.5b	Lighting and design standards along Wood and Hay Streets that are consistent with those along Penn Avenue	Started - on track, in process
8A.5c	Eliminating vacant storefronts.	Not accomplished
8A.5d	Define the core business district with brighter lighting.	Not accomplished
8A.6	Develop and adopt a green strategy for the business district. The green strategy should include cutting-edge components that will contribute to the Borough's sustainability, as well as to its attractiveness.	Not accomplished

8B	Code enforcement and clean up strategy	
8B.1	Code review and update: A thorough review of current Borough codes should be conducted to ensure that regulations are consistent with the Borough's needs and that policies are in place to support the priorities of the Comprehensive Plan.	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
8B.2	Zoning ordinance review and update: The Borough's subdivision and land development ordinances should be updated to facilitate and encourage priority components of the Comprehensive Plan, such as TOD, historic preservation, a rich mix of land uses, and vacant property strategies. Zoning ordinances should accommodate desirable building heights, setbacks, density, inclusionary housing, and historic preservation.	Started - on track, in process
8B.3	Code inspection and enforcement: The task of inspecting properties and enforcing codes and regulations can be overwhelming, and in situations where property owners are absent and/or unresponsive, it can seem impossible. Priority areas for aggressive inspection and enforcement should be consistent with neighborhood and business district priorities. Potential approaches for consideration include the following:	Redefined Into smaller actions
8B.3a	Adding a Director and additional code enforcement staff (dependent upon financial resources)	Accomplished
8B.3b	Utilizing Borough staff from other departments to assist in reporting code violations to code enforcement officers	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention
8B.3c	Contracting occupancy inspections, commercial permitting reviews, and plan reviews to an outside entity	Accomplished
8B.3d	Volunteer programs where neighborhood groups and/or merchant groups organize to assist in conducting "windshield" observations of neighborhood conditions and reporting violations to code enforcement officers	Not accomplished

ORGANIZE FOR SUCCESS

To prepare the Borough to undertake the priority strategies, two suggestions were made to increase capacity and resources, which would allow for other investment projects. The fire department merger is the only fully completed task and is viewed as a huge accomplishment for the Borough and the Wilkesburg Plan. With better service for the Borough, cheaper costs and better benefits for the firefighters, the merger has been seen as a win-win; if the opportunity persists, Wilkesburg should and would like to continue the merger of fire serves.

On the other hand, the government organization and structure has not been altered. Over time, discussions have been raised about the Home Rule Charter and whether it should be pursued but a division of interests has prevented action. Suggested in the Comprehensive Plan, Home Rule Charters would allow the Borough the opportunity to change the structure of its local government. During the planning process consultants identified the existing structure to be a barrier to flexibility, diverse revenue generation, and effective use of resources and manpower. Specifically, the large council size (nine members) with members elected by ward, the separation of control of police operations from the general operation of the organization, and the rigid structure of the revenue collection system interfere with effectively serving the community and implementing the plan.

While this update cannot confirm that a Home Rule Charter Study Commission would be the best step to altering and improving the government organization and structure, the recommendation remains. The existing system still poses a threat to or direct barrier of flexibility and effectiveness, especially through the identified ways. Perhaps there are other ways to increase efficiency and remove the organizational obstacles but either way the government structure should be critically looked at to best support the needs of community.

9A	Government organization and structure	
9A.1	The Home Rule Charter Study Commission should be included on the ballot for the next local government election in the form of a question to the voters of Wilkesburg as stated below: "Shall a government study commission of (seven, nine, or eleven) members be elected to study the existing form of government of the Borough, to consider the advisability of the adoption of a Home Rule Charter, and, if advisable, to draft and to recommend a Home Rule Charter for the Borough?"	Not accomplished
9A.2	If supported by the voters of Wilkesburg, the Home Rule Charter Study Commission would have months to study the issue and propose a charter for consideration by the voters at the next local election. The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Governor's Center for Local Government Services provides technical assistance to work with the Home Rule Charter Study Commission during this process.	Not accomplished
9A.3	The Charter that is developed by the Home Rule Charter Study Commission is submitted as a ballot question in a local election cycle.	Not accomplished
9A.4	If approved by the voters, the Charter becomes effective for the next local government election cycle.	Not accomplished

9B	Regional approach - fire services	
9B.1	Appoint team to conduct negotiations. The team should include the Borough Manager, a labor attorney knowledgeable about all aspects of public labor law, and a fire consultant who is knowledgeable about all aspects of fire service.	Accomplished
9B.2	Continue regular meetings set up on an aggressive schedule so that negotiations don't lag with inactivity and indecision. Address issues of scheduling, coverage, locations, resources, and information exchange.	Accomplished
9B.3	Develop plan for sharing of equipment, funding formula, and the equitable distribution of costs. Execute agreement with the City.	Accomplished
9B.4	Engage in "effect bargaining" with the IAFF local to ensure that the transition activities and costs are known. Execute agreement with the IAFF local.	Accomplished
9B.5	Apply to the DCED Shared Municipal Services Program (SMSP) for financial support of transition costs associated with the merger.	Accomplished
9B.6	Implement actual merger with the city of Pittsburgh.	Accomplished

VISION TO REALITY

Based on a review of the organizational capacity and resources that were available to Wilkinsburg at the time, it was determined that the Comprehensive Plan needed to identify implementation tools in order to take the plan components from a vision of possibilities to successful implementation. Therefore four actions were identified: identify an implementation committee, hire an implementation manager, establish implementation priorities, and fund the plan. The most immediate of those four suggestions, identifying an implementation committee and hiring an implementation manager did not occur and therefore much of the planning process was unable to occur throughout the last five years. The Borough has considered hiring an implementation but the thought has never actualized. The Borough did adopt the Wilkinsburg Plan in 2010 and embraced the idea of the implementation priorities. You can see in the previous sections that progress in the high priority, key strategies has been fickle, with success in some areas and no progress in other areas. Generally, the tasks which have seen no progress are the tasks which require time, commitment and planning. Without an implementation manager or dedicated personal to coordinate such investments, it makes sense that they would not be accomplished. The exceptions (large tasks that have seen movement) were the ones adopted by a group or individual (i.e. the zoning update being undertaken by the planning commission). For the purpose of this plan, the task of “Funding the Plan” has been identified as “Not accomplished”. This does not mean, however, that nothing from the plan has been funded because throughout the last five years parts of the plan have been funded and accomplished. The Borough and WCDC have actually done well in securing funding from a variety of sources. However, since a funding plan was not developed in relation to the Wilkinsburg Plan a holistic funding strategy is not present and therefore this section was marked as such.

10A	Identify the implementation committee	
10A.1	Develop mission statement for the Committee	Not accomplished
10A.2	Identify additional Committee members as needed for implementation	Not accomplished
10A.3	Conduct organizational launching meeting for Implementation Committee	Not accomplished
10A.4	Work with Implementation Manager to identify priority action strategies to be implemented during the first year of implementation	Not accomplished
10A.5	Organize subcommittees around priority tasks for implementation	Not accomplished
10A.6	Build capacity through additional volunteer recruitment (Ongoing)	Not accomplished
10A.7	Conduct annual identification of key action strategies to be implemented in the upcoming year (Ongoing)	Started - off track, moving in different direction, or needs more attention

10B	Hire an implementation manager for The Wilkinsburg Plan	
10B.1	Submit application to DCED through the EIP Program for funding to hire implementation manager	Not accomplished
10B.2	Select individual or firm best suited to manage the implementation of the Wilkinsburg Plan	Not accomplished
10B.3	Develop work statement to describe the expectations of the implementation manager	Not accomplished
10B.4	Sign contract with implementation manager	Not accomplished
10C	Establish implementation priorities	
10C.1	Safe, Clean, & Green Strategies: Improvements to Police Operations Improvements to Building and Codes	See “Safe, Clean & Green”
10C.2	Livable Neighborhood Strategies: Implement TOD Strategy, Implement Redevelopment Strategy	See “Livable Neighborhoods”
10C.3	Open for Business Strategies: Implement TOD Strategy, Prepare Code-Compliant Space Code Reviews and Enforcement	See “Open for Business”
10C.4	Organize for Success Strategies: Home Rule Charter Study Commission, Merger of Fire Service	See “Organize for Success”
10D	Funding the Plan	
10D.1	Develop detailed plans for implementing various revitalization strategies – shovel ready projects are more attractive to funding agencies	Not accomplished
10D.2	Develop detailed budgets for each plan	Not accomplished
10D.3	Engage potential private partners early in planning processes	Not accomplished
10D.4	Evaluate various plans and determine if any can be combined to increase attractiveness for funding	Not accomplished
10D.5	For each plan (or combined plans) identify the sources of funding and/or financing available for each, and determine the amount of additional funding required to complete the project	Not accomplished
10D.6	Align projects/plans with potential funding sources based on project eligibility, and develop and implement a strategy for securing the additional funding	Not accomplished
10D.7	Work with state legislators to secure a funding authorization for appropriate revitalization project in the next Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (Capital Budget) Bill	Not accomplished
10D.8	As plans are completed and funding strategies developed, meet with state funding agencies such as DCED, DCNR, DEP, and PennDOT to discuss funding opportunities	Not accomplished
10D.9	Prioritize federal funding priorities, develop project message statement for each priority project, and submit request forms for federal earmarks to federal legislators	Not accomplished

10D.10	Evaluate federal competitive grant opportunities and submit applications for eligible projects as appropriate	Not accomplished
10D.11	Evaluate opportunities to submit applications to foundations as well for public funding	Not accomplished
10D.12	Work with the WCDC to organize a capital campaign for funding specific elements of the Wilkinsburg Plan that targets corporate donations	Not accomplished

Conclusion

Overall, it is easy to look at the long list of tasks and be deceived into thinking little has been done.

It is important to remember that development is not an overnight process. Many of the tasks identified in this plan will be long and tedious. Wilkesburg has used the plan as resource and although it has not been used as effectively as possible, it has been used - parts of it, extensively. Often comprehensive plans can sit on the shelf and collect dust but that is the case in Wilkesburg.

Major successes have arisen from the last five years. The fire department merger has saved millions of dollars for the Borough. The WCDC has become a strong leader in the community and with recent Main Street designation will likely continue to build systems for progress in the business district. The parks of Wilkesburg have seen major improvements. Historic preservation has been strong through the leadership of Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation. The Penn Lincoln Hotel could not be saved but was demolished and opens the potential for exciting development. An extensive zoning update was completed to guide land use for the future of Wilkesburg. Residents are building pride in their community through community gardens and community events. And as a whole, despite the seemingly unmanageable problem of vacant, tax delinquent and blighted buildings, many people in the community have a sense of hope for the future of Wilkesburg.

Wilkesburg does, on the other hand, have very serious and daunting problems ahead. Blight, a high tax burden, tax delinquencies, school district concerns, tension throughout the community, and safety will all be continuous and hard issues that need to be addressed in Wilkesburg. These large-scale problems will not be solved overnight but rather will be chipped away over the course of many years. With the right strategy in place, Wilkesburg can tackle these issues to reach the vision created with and for the community. Hopefully, this document and the ideas put forth assist in getting Wilkesburg to this spot.

As stated in The Comprehensive Plan, “we leave you with these words from Thomas A. Edison: ‘...The object of all work is production or accomplishment, and to either of these ends, there must be forethought, system, planning, intelligence and honest purpose, as well as perspiration.’ “