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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE ROSS PLAN LEADERSHIP

THE ROSS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WARD 1 Daniel DeMarco

WARD 2 Steve Korbelt

WARD 3 John Sponcer

WARD 4 Lana Mazur

WARD 5 Grace Stanko

WARD 6 David Mikec, Vice President

WARD 7 Paul Trilli

WARD 8 Jeremy Shaffer

WARD 9 Grant Montgomery, President

THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The Ross Township Comprehensive Plan was led by a diverse and inclusive Steering Committee that included representatives from the Board of Commissioners, the Planning Commission, Township Staff, Business Leaders, and Residents. The Steering Committee not only provided input and were involved in the decision making during the development of the Plan but they also provided support and assistance for the various Plan events.

To assist and guide the Steering Committee, a consultant team led by Delta Development Group, Grass Root Solutions, Gateway Engineers, and Brean Associates were retained by the Township. This team coordinated meetings, undertook extensive data collection, facilitated public events, and public outreach sessions, conducted stakeholder interviews, and provided professional analysis and synthesis of the information.

Barb Averell - Resident

Bob Bellan - Police Chief

Lisa Earl - Ross Park Mall

Nelson Erb - Planning Commission

Bill Grady - Planning Commission

Deborah Griffin - Planning Commission

Dan Hankins - Building Code Official

Steve Korbelt - Township Commissioner

Dawn Lane - Finance Director

Craig Linner - Business Owner

Lana Mazur - Township Commissioner

Bridget Watson O'Brien - Planning Commission

Eloise Peet - Director of Parks and Recreation

Don Rickert - Township Zoning/Planning

Doug Sample - Township Manager

John Sample - Planning Commission

Jeremy Shaffer - Township Commissioner

Natalie Thiess - Management Intern

Paul Trilli - Township Commissioner

Jim Wigal - Planning Commission

THE PLANNING CONSULTANT TEAM

David Soboslay - Delta Development

Eric Kaunert - Delta Development

Deborah Grass - Grass Root Solutions

Jen Hass - Grass Root Solutions

Karen Brean - Brean Associates

Lilly Denhardt - Brean Associates

Richard Minsterman - Gateway Engineers

Thomas Gaus - Gateway Engineers

INTRODUCTION

**History of Ross
Review of Previous Plans
Planning Process**

1



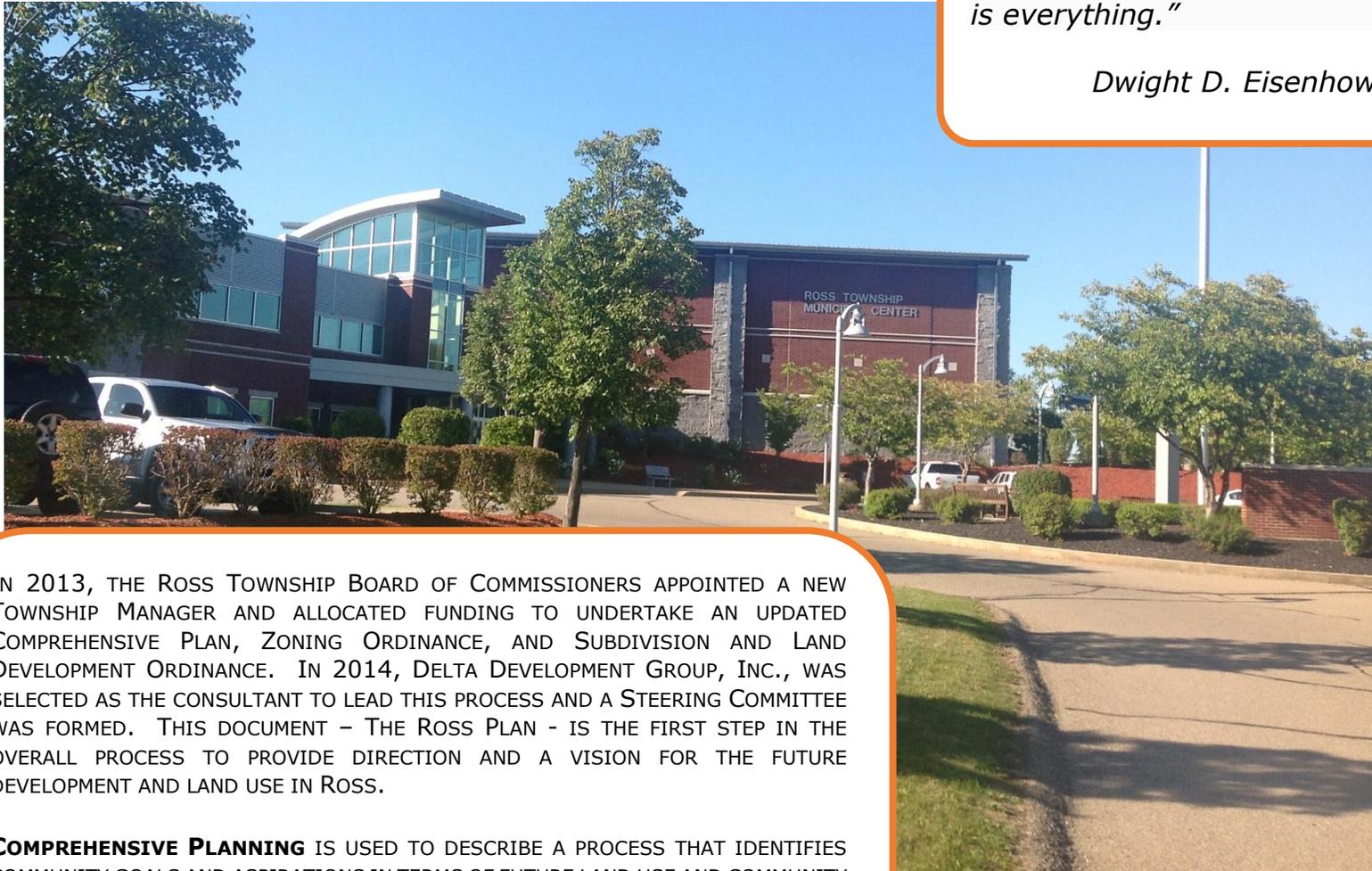
"Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now."

Alan Laekin

¹ Pictures provided courtesy of Northland Public Library.

"Plans are nothing; planning is everything."

Dwight D. Eisenhower



IN 2013, THE ROSS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED A NEW TOWNSHIP MANAGER AND ALLOCATED FUNDING TO UNDERTAKE AN UPDATED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, ZONING ORDINANCE, AND SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE. IN 2014, DELTA DEVELOPMENT GROUP, INC., WAS SELECTED AS THE CONSULTANT TO LEAD THIS PROCESS AND A STEERING COMMITTEE WAS FORMED. THIS DOCUMENT – THE ROSS PLAN – IS THE FIRST STEP IN THE OVERALL PROCESS TO PROVIDE DIRECTION AND A VISION FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND LAND USE IN ROSS.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING IS USED TO DESCRIBE A PROCESS THAT IDENTIFIES COMMUNITY GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS IN TERMS OF FUTURE LAND USE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT. THE OUTCOME OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS IS THE PLAN THAT GUIDES PUBLIC POLICY IN TERMS OF TRANSPORTATION, COMMERCE, LAND USE, RECREATION, AND HOUSING. THE ROSS PLAN FOCUSES ON A BROAD RANGE OF TOPICS AND COVERS A TEN YEAR HORIZON.

WHY PLAN

In the simplest terms, a comprehensive plan answers the question: "What do we want to be?" In Ross Township, this is a complex and highly complicated exercise and the answer is very different for different folks in the community. But great communities are born of a shared vision and the Ross Plan is a result of residents (of all age groups), businesses, elected officials, and other interested persons providing their opinions and advice. Ultimately, the Ross Plan reflects the best thinking and creative outcomes from dozens of interviews, meetings with large and small groups, and the best practices of the community planning models. It will provide a guiding vision and a sustained set of strategies for future years.

"First comes thought; then organization of that thought into ideas and plans; then transformation of those plans into reality. The beginning, as you will observe, is in your imagination."

Napoleon Hill

HISTORY OF ROSS TOWNSHIP

In every case, in every community, it is important to remember that the past shapes the future. A community needs to understand its past in order to build on it and to have a vision for its future.



Located among the northern, inner suburban communities of the city of Pittsburgh, in southwestern Pennsylvania, Ross Township (Ross) is currently home to an estimated 31,000 residents.

The community that is today's Ross Township grew along an important early trail, the Venango Path.² The Venango Path wound along the top of a series of long ridges from Fort Pitt (Pittsburgh, PA) northward on its way to Fort Venango (Franklin, PA) and on to Fort Presque Isle (Erie, PA). Profitable inns, most notably Four Mile House and Five Mile House, sprang up along the road in the early part of the nineteenth century. As the road evolved from plank to brick to macadam to concrete, travel to

² This history was adapted from "The History of Ross Township," written by Edward G. Williams and edited by Maximilian Meese. <<http://www.ross.pa.us/TheHistoryofRossTownship.pdf>>



and from Pittsburgh became easier, and the Ross community grew. The advent of the streetcar accelerated this growth even further.

Religious congregations also contributed heavily to population growth in the areas north of Pittsburgh. In 1799, a large congregation of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians crossed the river into modern-day Ross Township, holding their first services in the open air under the trees atop the hill on Franklin Road. Later they erected a tent, and in 1807, a log church was built. Families traveled long distances afoot and on horseback to attend Highland Church from present-day Allison Park, Bellevue, Emsworth and the North Side. In 1950, Highland celebrated its semi-centennial. The earliest records give evidence of worship having been held in 1799 and 1800. Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Methodist congregations followed.³



³ Pictures provided courtesy of the Northland Public Library.



From 1950 to 1970, Ross doubled in population to just under 33,000. In 1962, Ross Park Mall was built, bringing with it a major economic boost. As shoppers flocked to the new mall, new residents brought their families to live in Ross. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, as the rest of the region experienced major population decline due to the decline of the steel industry, Ross's population losses were relatively small. Population has remained quite stable and maintained a population density of around 2,500 people per square mile.

Over the next 30 years, Ross is expected to gain around 4,000 new residents.⁴

⁵The Ross economy has always been linked with the City of Pittsburgh, with many of its

residents traveling to Pittsburgh to work. Pittsburgh's two major centers of employment, Downtown and Oakland, are just 15 and 20 minutes away by car, and just under 40% of Ross workers are employed within the City. However, Ross's economic corridors serve as important employment centers for the North Hills. Ross has traditionally been home to middle-income families. This still holds true today, with lower median family incomes in the City of Pittsburgh and municipalities along the Allegheny River and higher-income families making their homes in the municipalities just north of Ross.



⁴ Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission.

⁵ Picture provided courtesy of the Northland Public Library



REVIEW OF PREVIOUS PLANS

A number of planning efforts have been undertaken over the years. The following is a summary of those efforts.

1995 STRATEGIC PLAN

Ross Township completed a Strategic in 1995 with Herbert, Grubic, and Rowland, Inc., (HRG) as the planning consultant and in conjunction with the Planning Commission and the Township Commissioners who served at that time. The Plan was divided into three Sections: Creating a Vision; Managing Growth; and Strategies for Action.



The strengths of the Township that were identified at the time included a strong commercial and residential economic base; regional transportation access and proximity to the City of Pittsburgh; spatially distributed park facilities; sewer and water facilities that had kept pace with the Township's growth; a strong school district; and overall satisfaction by the residents for public services especially police, fire, and emergency medical. It was also noted that there was strong civic group involvement.

Weaknesses that were identified included lack of growth management and overdevelopment that caused inadequate roadway capacities and congestion on McKnight Road, Babcock Boulevard, and Siebert Road. These "commerce corridors," as they were labeled, were riddled with numerous curb cuts, undefined points of ingress and egress, sign clutter, lack of landscaping and street trees, limited

pedestrian connections, and limited interconnecting vehicular and pedestrian access. Many of these conditions exist to this day and are addressed in this 2015 Plan.

Other weaknesses that were discussed were a lack of coordinated parks and recreation programs and facilities, especially a community center, and lack of hiking/biking trails and playgrounds. There was also a concern about negative visual impacts due to past development that was permitted on steep slopes and in areas that were prone to flooding.



Although public services were well regarded and generally rated high, there was concern about information sharing for residents, lack of youth programs and gathering places, and lack of proactive code enforcement in the small pockets of deteriorating neighborhoods.

A number of strategies were recommended in the 1995 Plan. Some of these included:

1. Work with Allegheny County and the Southwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission (SPRPC) to determine the feasibility of additional transit service in the Township.
2. Develop a sidewalk installation program and a tree planting program in the neighborhoods.
3. Conduct an engineering study of road transportation needs and improvements.
4. Undertake a Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space study.
5. Initiate a process to develop a centralized Community Center as indicated and supported by the Recreation Survey. Increase the budget for recreation improvements, acquisition, and services.
6. Develop and distribute a quarterly newsletter.
7. Investigate the possibility of adopting a Home Rule Charter as an updated form of government.
8. Establish a pavement management program.
9. Conduct comprehensive stormwater management studies.
10. Budget funds for training and involvement in statewide planning associations.
11. Develop streetscape plans for major corridors and update the zoning ordinance to provide overlay districts that will implement these regulations.
12. Require a site plan review as part of the building permit process.
13. Conduct an operational audit of the Building Inspection Department and hire additional code enforcement staff in order to step up enforcement activities.
14. Develop zoning regulations for "in transition" neighborhoods that will protect the community character.

Over the years, a number of these key strategies were implemented. The Township constructed a new Township municipal center that included a Community Center and currently has a full programming schedule for residents of all ages. In 2012, the Township undertook a complete Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan and continues to implement recommendations as funds are available. The Township established a transportation partnership along McKnight Road and other commercial corridors and commissioned an update of this study in 2013 that includes the Lowries Run Corridor. Great strides have been made in stormwater management. A pavement management program is underway with the Borough Engineer. The Commissioners will use the pavement management program to identify improvements to existing roadways over the next several years.

Other strategies remain to be implemented and are reinforced in the Vision and Goals section of this 2015 Plan. Some of these strategies include sidewalk installation, tree planting, and pedestrian connections that continue to be an outstanding issue. And, as development in the corridors continues, traffic congestion, lack of transit access, and lack of streetscape enhancements continue to be lacking. Residents continue to request better information from the Township about services and programs, more gathering places, and an upgraded community image. Many of these issues are addressed in this Plan and action items are provided for implementation.

Recognizing the importance of a quality Township recreation, park, and open space system, the Ross Township Commissioners hired the planning firm of Pashek Associates to assist in the development of the *Comprehensive Recreation, Park, Open Space, and Greenway Plan*. The consultant worked closely with a Ross Township Study Committee throughout the planning process. The approach used to generate the Plan included a detailed inventory and professional assessment, an extensive public input process, and the development of a vision for the future of recreation, parks, and open space in Ross Township.



Partially funded by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), the Plan serves as a tool for addressing the current and future recreation needs of Township residents and establishes a framework for the decisions that must be made in order to provide adequate recreation facilities and programs. The Plan is broad in scope, encompassing a variety of issues pertinent to parks, recreation and open space in the Township. It lays the groundwork for the continued successful planning and development of recreation, parks, facilities, and programs.

Listening to Residents

The Planning Process included many opportunities for Ross residents to provide valuable input regarding the Township’s recreation, parks, and open space, and was an important asset in developing viable recommendations for the future of parks and recreation. Public input opportunities were provided through public meetings; a study committee comprised of local residents; key person interviews; an internet based interactive blog; and separate recreation questionnaires for the general public and teens.

Assessing Existing Conditions

An inventory of existing recreation resources revealed that there are twenty-two Township-owned parks, seven school properties with recreation facilities, Bellevue Borough Park, and numerous privately owned recreational facilities located in Ross Township.

The Township’s parks system is very typical of many established municipalities. It provides community parks located in key areas throughout the Township that are supplemented by smaller playgrounds, parks, and ball fields. Local schools extend the park



system by providing additional playground and sports facilities. Regional parks in Beaver, Butler, and Allegheny counties, as well as the Pennsylvania State Parks, complement the local system by providing a variety

ROSS TOWNSHIP PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE VISION STATEMENT

“IT IS THE VISION OF ROSS TOWNSHIP TO PROVIDE SUPERB PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES TO ITS RESIDENTS AND TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE NATURAL FEATURES WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP.”

KEY GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT NEED THAT WAS IDENTIFIED DURING THE PLANNING PROCESS WAS TO UPGRADE AND MAINTAIN THE TOWNSHIP’S EXISTING PARKS AS KEY RESOURCES IN THE COMMUNITY. TWO GOALS WERE DEVELOPED, ALONG WITH NUMEROUS IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES TO MOVE THE TOWNSHIP TOWARD MEETING THAT NEED.

GOAL #1 SUSTAIN A PARKS SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE TOWNSHIP. DEVELOP EVERGREEN, ROSS, AND DENNY PARKS AS THE RECREATIONAL GEMS OF THE TOWNSHIP. MAINTAIN NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND BALL FIELDS THAT MEET LOCAL RECREATIONAL NEEDS. FOCUS ON UPGRADING AND MAINTAINING EXISTING PARKS. PROVIDE PARKS THAT OFFER A BALANCE OF BOTH ACTIVE AND PASSIVE OPPORTUNITIES.

GOAL #2 ESTABLISH A PARK MAINTENANCE SYSTEM THAT ENSURES A HIGH STANDARD OF SAFETY AND CARE IN ALL TOWNSHIP PARKS. TO ACCOMPLISH THESE GOALS, THE PLAN PROPOSES A PARKS REHABILITATION PLAN THAT IDENTIFIES UPGRADES NEEDED AT INDIVIDUAL PARKS.

of facilities and activities not otherwise available. They serve a much broader area than just the individual municipalities. Regional trails, including the Montour Trail, the Rachel Carson Trail, and other developed and proposed trails all provide part of a trail system for the entire region, bringing recreational opportunities to area residents. The combined strategies of analyzing the community, inventorying and assessing existing parks and recreation opportunities, and gathering input from the public resulted in the development of a vision statement for the future of parks and recreation in Ross Township.

A series of recommendations were made that are intended to establish guidelines from which

Township officials can move forward with upgrading the Township's parks system. Common themes throughout the parks system were to upgrade existing recreational facilities in each park; rehabilitate the infields, turf, fencing, bleachers, and other amenities at the Township's ball fields; update playgrounds to ensure they meet current safety standards; bring all parks and facilities into compliance with ADA Standards; and enhance trails for long-term sustainability. To ensure that the park upgrades are accomplished in an orderly and systematic fashion, a phasing plan was developed to assist Township officials in implementation.

The phasing plan allows for the Township to budget a like amount annually throughout the rehabilitation process. The hope is that the Township will allocate the funds for these renovations from their annual capital budget while using grant funding for implementation of the larger projects at Herge, Denny, and Evergreen Parks. The phasing plan schedules parks of the highest priority in the first three phases while ensuring that at least one park in each



Ward is completed during that timeframe. Park Master Plans have been prepared for Herge, Denny, and Evergreen Parks that propose significant long-term upgrades for each.

In **Denny Park**, a major effort is proposed to improve stormwater runoff concerns by creating a regional stormwater infiltration area to handle water coming under Interstate 279. This will result in the elimination of one of the park's baseball fields. Additionally, the upper section of the park will be expanded to include a new picnic shelter, playground, improved basketball and tennis courts, and a new pervious surface parking lot. A nine-hole disc golf course is proposed in the woodland area northeast of the baseball field.

The **Herge Park Master Plan** proposes to address safety concerns at the playground; make the park more usable by the adjacent elementary school; upgrade the baseball field; and bring the park into compliance with ADA standards.

Evergreen Park will be repurposed as a less active community park. Enhancements will improve the areas around the two ponds by making the fishing deck handicapped accessible; adding a new fishing deck adjacent to the main parking lot; and constructing a safer walkway between the upper and lower ponds. The trails throughout the park will be upgraded to make them more useful and sustainable. The parking lots will nearly double in size, and the stream that runs through the park will be naturalized by removing the gabions, laying back the banks, constructing pools and riffles, and planting riparian buffers on either side. All existing facilities in the park will be upgraded and brought into compliance with ADA and safety standards. It is also recommended that a forest and habitat plan be completed for the parks woodlands.

OTHER GOALS OF THE PLAN

Facility improvements, while certainly one of the top priorities, were not the only issues addressed. The following five additional goals, supported by numerous implementation strategies are addressed in great detail in the Plan.

1. Offer a balance of recreational programming that meets the needs of all residents of Ross Township.
2. Maintain an organizational structure that has sufficient resources to administer, program, maintain, and operate the Ross Township parks and recreation system and Community Center.
3. Provide a system of multi-use, non-motorized trails that provide for exercise, alternative transportation, and recreation.
4. Protect and preserve the natural features of Ross Township in a way that provides for their long-term sustainability.
5. Secure funding for operations, planning, developments, acquisition, and preservation through a variety of sources.

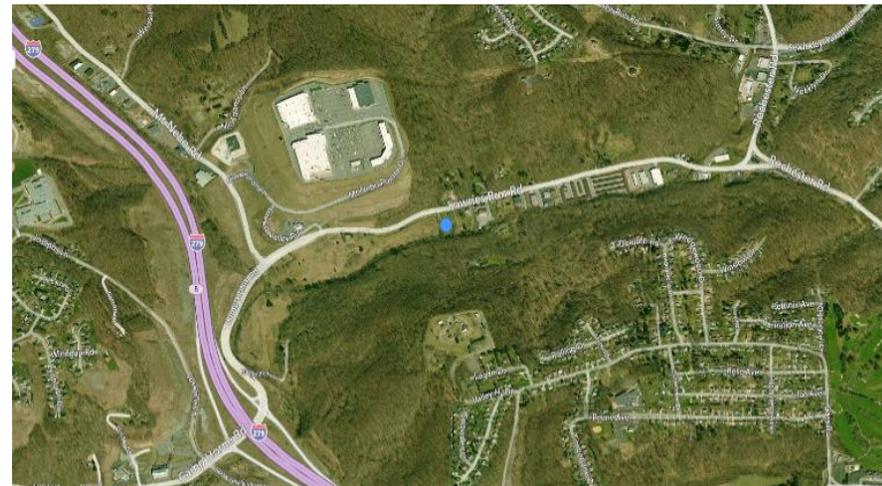
2013-2014 TRANSPORTATION IMPACT FEE STUDY

Growth in Ross Township has placed increased demands on the local transportation network. Township officials recognize that continued growth would further burden the local infrastructure, causing increased congestion and substandard roads. They are unwilling to accept a compromised transportation network incapable of handling additional traffic. Therefore, the Board of Commissioners initiated a Transportation Impact Fee Program study in November of 2012 to deal with the growth issues related to traffic. The Board of Commissioners determined that the McKnight Road Corridor and the Lowries Run Road Corridor were districts that would be analyzed as part of the Transportation Program. The roadways that were evaluated and included as part of the traffic analysis included:

- McKnight Road/US Route 19
- Lowries Run Road
- Rochester Road
- Rochester/Lowries Run Road

Various methods were used to identify projected transportation network deficiencies (i.e. intersection and roadway deficiencies). The analysis was conducted for projected growth from 2013-2033, based on building permit data, populations projections, and a parcel by parcel analysis. The analysis was based on providing a preferred operational Level of Service (LOS) "D" for intersection and roadway segments as determined by Ross Township. The use of these funds is determined by an analysis of trip generation, emergency vehicle access, highway access methods, intersection control, and connectivity and will be used for the following transportation project costs:

- Construction
- Acquisition of land and rights-of-way
- Engineering
- Legal costs for activities such as right-of-way acquisition
- Planning costs such as traffic studies and conceptual plans for design engineering
- Debt service
- Pro-rata share for preparing a Roadway Sufficiency Analysis

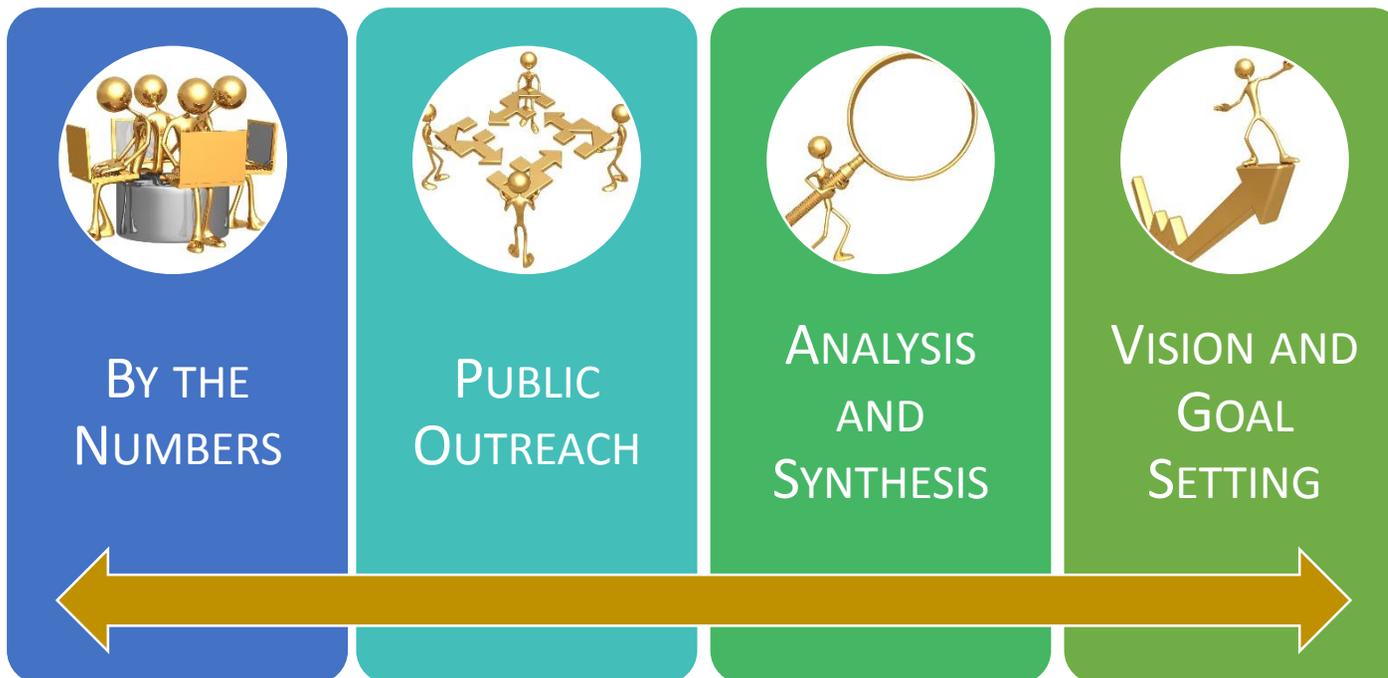


THE ROSS PLAN PROCESS

The Ross Plan relies heavily on a process that was guided by the local Steering Committee and was based on national, regional, and local information and market trends along with an extensive public outreach process. Hundreds of residents weighed in at group meetings, on surveys, in small groups, and in interviews. The information was gathered, analyzed, and reported to the Steering Committee where goals and strategies were developed. There was a final goal setting and strategy session that guided the consultant analysis in developing action plans. Below is a graphic depiction of the Ross Plan Process.

"You can always amend a big plan, but you can never expand a little one. I don't believe in little plans. I believe in plans big enough to meet a situation which we can't possibly foresee now."

Harry S. Truman



BY THE NUMBERS

People
Population
Mobility
Density
Age
Race
Households
Education
Income



"You can have data without information, but you cannot have information without data."

Daniel Keys Moran

SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS



BY THE NUMBERS

POPULATION

Ross Township (Township) doubled its population from 15,744 residents in 1950 to 32,892 in 1970 and has maintained a relatively stable population since 1970. The 1950’s and 1960’s saw the greatest increases as middle-class Americans moved out of dense urban areas in large numbers. Relatively small population growth continued through the 1970’s. Since 1980, the Township’s population has declined slightly. The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) projects that the Township’s population will increase by around 4,000 individuals between 2010 and 2040. **Table 1** shows the actual population changes between 1950 and 2010, and the SPC’s projections through 2040.

TABLE 1 - POPULATION TRENDS				
YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION	TIME FRAME	COMPOUNDED ANNUAL CHANGE	DECENNIAL CHANGE
1950 (Actual)	15,744			
1960 (Actual)	25,952	1950s	5.1%	64.8%
1970 (Actual)	32,892	1960s	2.4%	26.7%
1980 (Actual)	35,102	1970s	0.7%	6.7%
1990 (Actual)	33,482	1980s	-0.5%	-4.6%
2000 (Actual)	32,551	1990s	-0.3%	-2.8%
2010 (Actual)	31,105	2000-2010	-0.5%	-4.4%
2020 (Projected)	31,814	2010-2020	0.2%	2.3%
2030 (Projected)	33,342	2020-2030	0.5%	4.8%
2040 (Projected)	35,281	2030-2040	0.6%	5.8%

SOURCE: SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION (SPC)

Since 2000, it is estimated that the Township’s population has remained relatively stable, similar to neighboring municipalities. Between 2000 and 2020, actual population counts and projected growth rates indicate that the Township’s growth rate is the same as that of Allegheny County. **Table 2** shows the actual population in 2000 and 2010 and the projected changes in population through 2020 for Ross Township, in comparison to the neighboring municipalities and Allegheny County, as estimated and projected by the SPC.

TABLE 2 - POPULATION COMPARISONS						
	2000 (ACTUAL)	2010 (ACTUAL)	2020 (PROJECTED)	% CHANGE 2000 TO 2010	% CHANGE 2010 TO 2020	COMPOUNDED ANNUAL CHANGE 2000 TO 2020
Ross	32,551	31,105	31,814	-4.4%	2.3%	-0.1%
Avalon	5,294	4,705	4,600	-11.1%	-2.2%	-0.7%
Bellevue	8,770	8,370	8,436	-4.6%	0.8%	-0.2%
Franklin Park	11,364	13,470	16,308	18.5%	21.1%	1.8%
Hampton	17,526	18,363	20,667	4.8%	12.5%	0.8%
McCandless	29,022	28,457	29,696	-1.9%	4.4%	0.1%
Ohio	3,086	4,757	5,630	54.1%	18.4%	3.1%
Pittsburgh	334,563	305,704	305,356	-8.6%	-0.1%	-0.5%
Reserve	3,856	3,333	3,230	-13.6%	-3.1%	-0.9%
Shaler	29,757	28,757	29,590	-3.4%	2.9%	0.0%
West View	7,277	6,771	6,783	-7.0%	0.2%	-0.4%
Allegheny County	1,281,666	1,223,348	1,261,531	-4.6%	3.1%	-0.1%
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION (SPC)						

MOBILITY

Around 12% of the Township’s population in 2012 reported that they had moved into their current residence within the last year. The majority of people moving into residences in the Township between 2011 and 2012 moved from within Allegheny County. This is not a significant amount of mobility within a community and is reflective of the stability of the population. Ross Township has a high rate of owner-occupied dwellings at 70% (2012 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimate), as compared to 66% in Allegheny County. The low level of mobility and stable population growth combined with the slightly higher than average number of owner-occupied dwellings, reinforces the notion that the Township is quite stable. **Table 3** and **Figure 1** show the rate of mobility and the origin of those who moved to the Township.

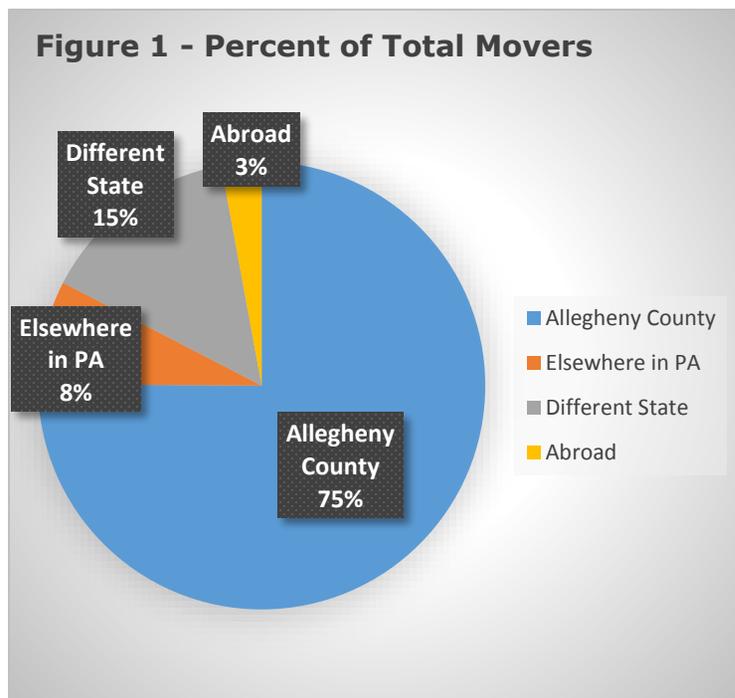
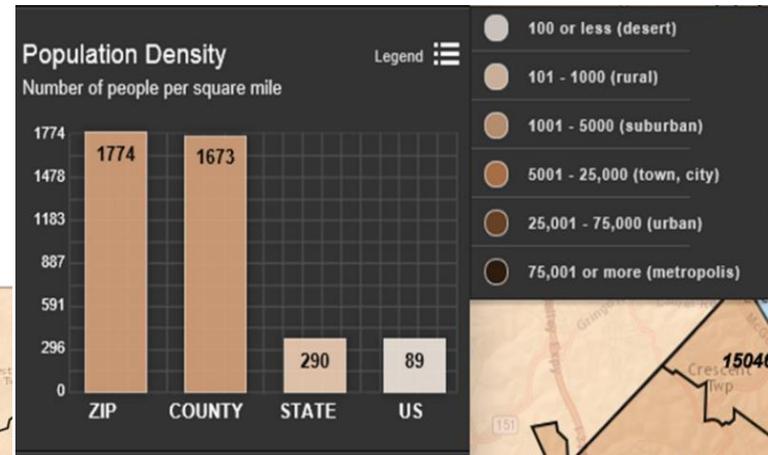
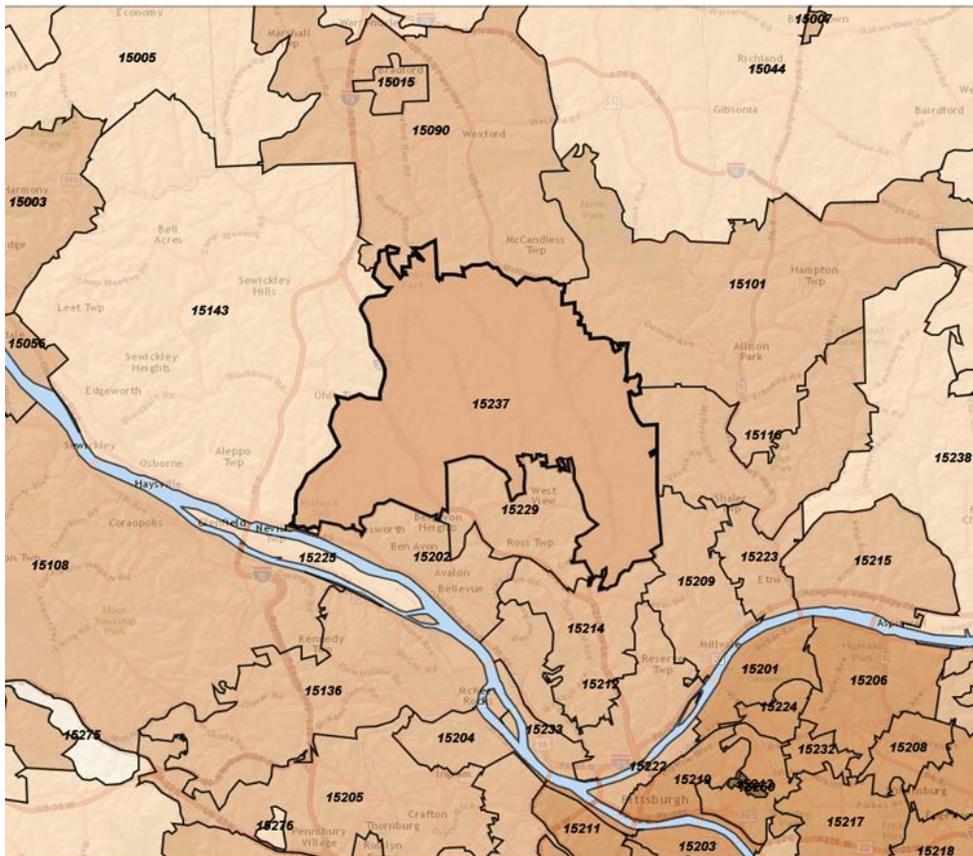


TABLE 3 - MOBILITY IN ROSS TOWNSHIP (2012)		
MOBILITY FACTORS		
Population 1 Year & Older	30,851	
Lived in Same House in 2011	27,088	
Lived in Different House in 2011	3,654	
Mobility Rate (% Movers)	11.8%	
MOVED FROM	Number	% of Total Movers
Allegheny County	2,825	75.1%
Elsewhere in PA	282	7.5%
Different State	547	14.5%
Abroad	109	2.9%
Total	8,435	100.0%
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU		

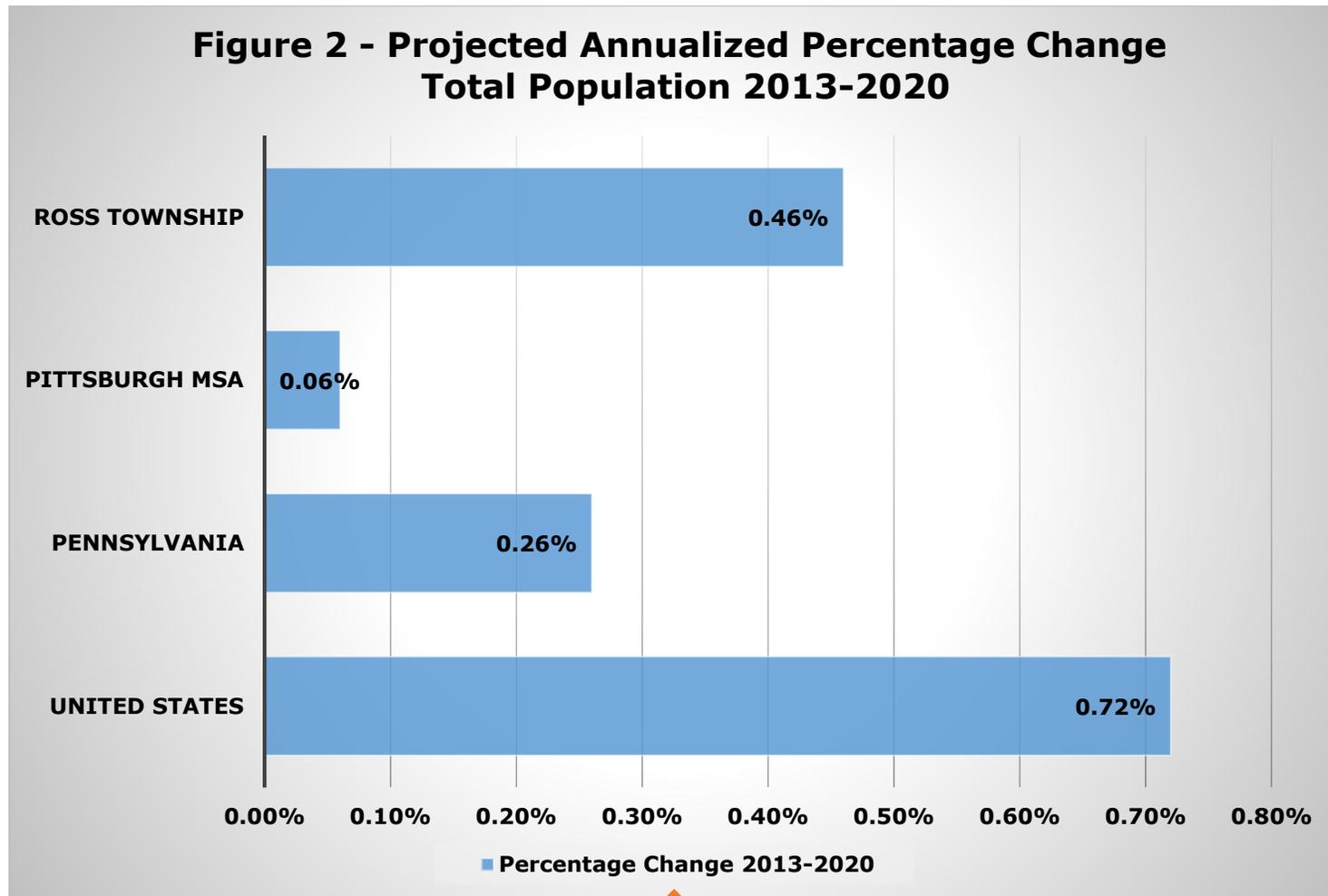
POPULATION DENSITY

Although Ross Township has a higher population density than Allegheny County, it is less dense, at 1,774 people per square mile than the City of Pittsburgh but about the same as its neighboring communities.



ROSS TOWNSHIP IS CLASSIFIED AS SUBURBAN BASED ON POPULATION DENSITY.

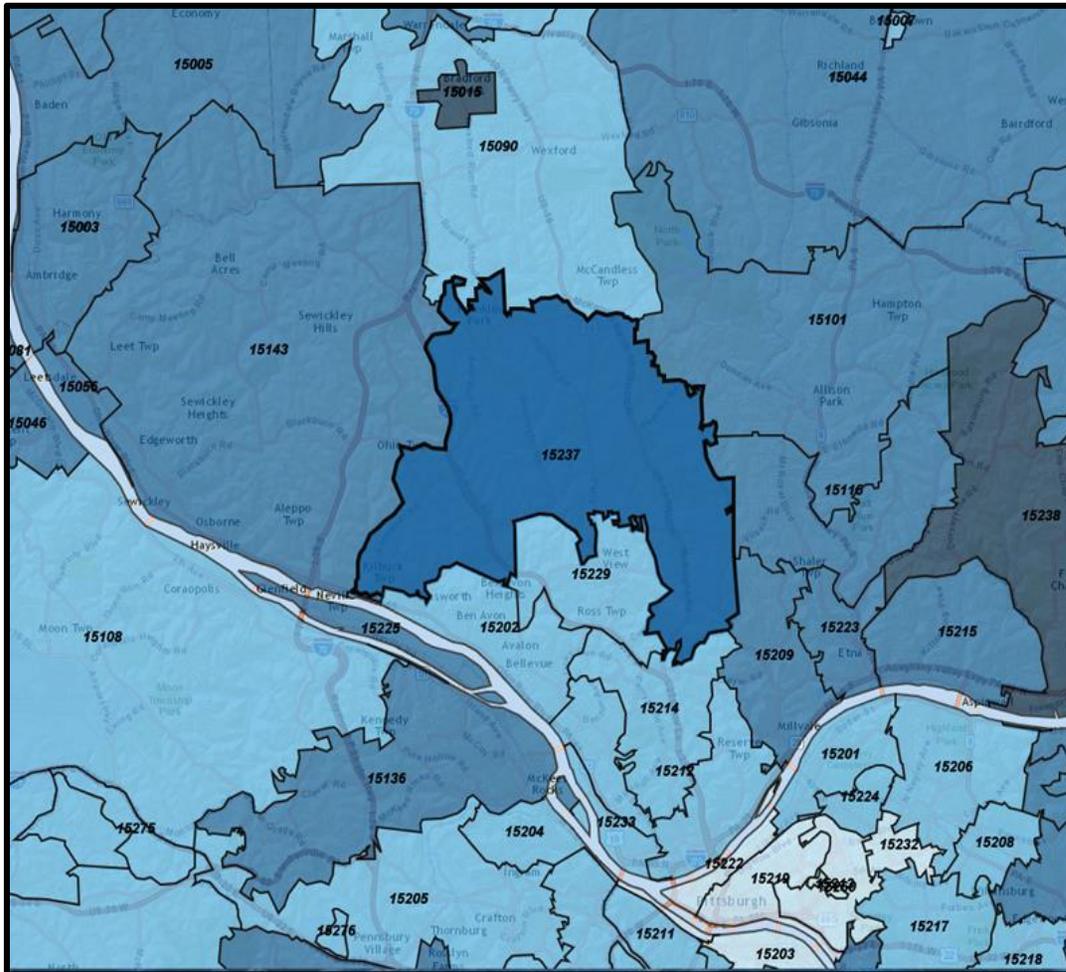
MAP 1 – POPULATION DENSITY BY ZIP CODE, ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE



Ross Township is expected to increase in population at .46% per year which is faster than both the state average and the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

AGE

The Median age of the Ross Township population is older than the county, state, US, and its neighboring communities. Only Shaler Township and Hampton Township have a median age that is the same or older than Ross Township.



An older population has its advantages because older workers are at their peak earning years and are contributors to the Township’s tax base and consumer spending base.

An older population has its challenges in that this age group typically demands more public services and may not be as interested in change, innovation, technology and environmental issues as the next generation.

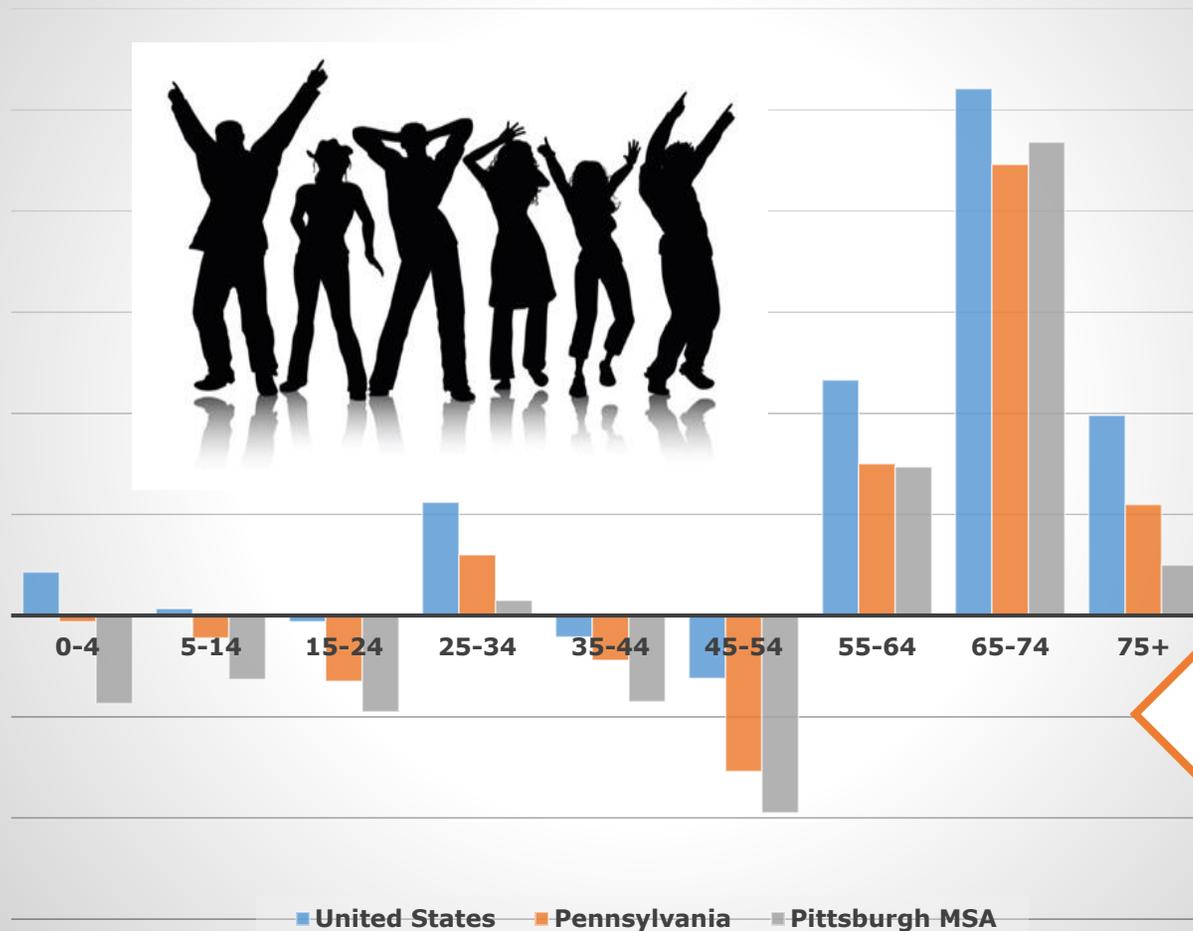
Table 4 provides the median age of Ross Township compared to other North Hills communities.

MAP 2 – MEDIAN AGE OF POPULATION – ESRI DATA

TABLE 4 - MEDIAN AGE						
	2000	2010	2012	% CHANGE 2000 TO 2010	% CHANGE 2010 TO 2012	COMPOUNDED ANNUAL CHANGE 2000 TO 2012
Ross	42.7	45.4	45.8	6.3%	0.9%	0.6%
Avalon	41.0	43.1	43.6	5.1%	1.2%	0.5%
Bellevue	36.6	37.3	38.9	1.9%	4.3%	0.5%
Franklin Park	40.0	40.9	40.2	2.3%	-1.7%	0.0%
Hampton	39.8	44.7	45.8	12.3%	2.5%	1.2%
McCandless	40.3	44.0	43.9	9.2%	-0.2%	0.7%
Ohio	39.4	38.2	38.3	-3.0%	0.3%	-0.2%
Pittsburgh	35.5	33.2	33.5	-6.5%	0.9%	-0.5%
Reserve	40.7	46.8	47.6	15.0%	1.7%	1.3%
Shaler	41.7	45.2	45.5	8.4%	0.7%	0.7%
West View	37.9	38.9	38.6	2.6%	-0.8%	0.2%
Allegheny County	39.6	41.3	41.2	4.3%	-0.2%	0.3%
Pennsylvania	38.0	40.1	40.1	5.5%	0.0%	0.4%
U.S.	35.3	37.9	37.2	7.4%	-1.8%	0.4%
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU						

Of the comparable communities, the City of Pittsburgh is trending younger than all outlying communities and about the same as the median age for the US. Bellevue and West View are also trending younger than other North Hills communities.

Figure 3 - Projected Annualized Percentage Change by Age Group



The fastest growing population in the Pittsburgh MSA is the Young Empty Nesters (55-64) and the Older Empty Nesters (65-74). The Young Workforce (25-34) age group is also expected to increase slightly.

RACE

With the exception of the City of Pittsburgh, the Township's racial makeup is quite similar to that of its neighboring communities. Only 6% of the Township's population identified as non-white in the 2010 census. It should be noted that the U.S. Census does not include those of Latino descent in race calculations, but Latinos only made up 1.1% of the Township's population in 2010.

Figure 4 illustrates the racial makeup of Ross Township, the surrounding communities, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and the United States. The Township's non-white population is evenly split between African-American and Asian residents. Although the non-white population in the surrounding area is relatively low, some neighboring communities such as Franklin Park, McCandless, and Ohio Township are home to many more Asian residents than other non-white residents. In communities like Avalon, Bellevue, and West View, which are denser and closer to Pittsburgh, the non-white population is mostly African-American.

Despite racial diversity increasing significantly in many surrounding municipalities and in the region, there is relatively little racial diversity in the Township. Ross Township's non-white population increased about 4% between 2000 and 2010. Most "first ring" communities surrounding the City of Pittsburgh experienced significantly more growth in diversity during the same time period.

Notably, while other communities, the county, the state, and the country are increasing in racial and ethnic diversity, Ross Township is remaining relatively constant. This has some planning implications for the future because it is believed that as the nation's demographic makeup changes and more young professionals are choosing an urban lifestyle, areas with more diverse populations are increasingly more attractive to young professionals. If Ross Township wants to attract and retain its young professional population, it will need to consider the demographic diversity of its population.

DIVERSITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

VIBRANT PITTSBURGH, A BUSINESS LEADERS GROUP ESTABLISHED TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY IN THE REGION REPORTED THAT ONLY 11.6% OF THE CURRENT WORKFORCE OF 2.3 MILLION WORKERS ARE MINORITIES WHICH IS WELL BELOW THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF 26.1%.

"DIVERSITY IS ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL TO ECONOMIC GROWTH . . . TO BRINGING NEW IDEAS, NEW APPROACHES," SAID SUNIL WADHWANI, CO-CHAIR OF VIBRANT PITTSBURGH AND CHAIRMAN OF IGATE CORP., A COMPUTER SERVICES AND OUTSOURCING PROVIDER. VIBRANT PITTSBURGH LEADERS HAVE A VISION FOR THE REGION OF TRUE INCLUSIVENESS.

JOE NAPSHA, TRIB LIVE

Figure 4 - Distribution of Race for North Hills Communities

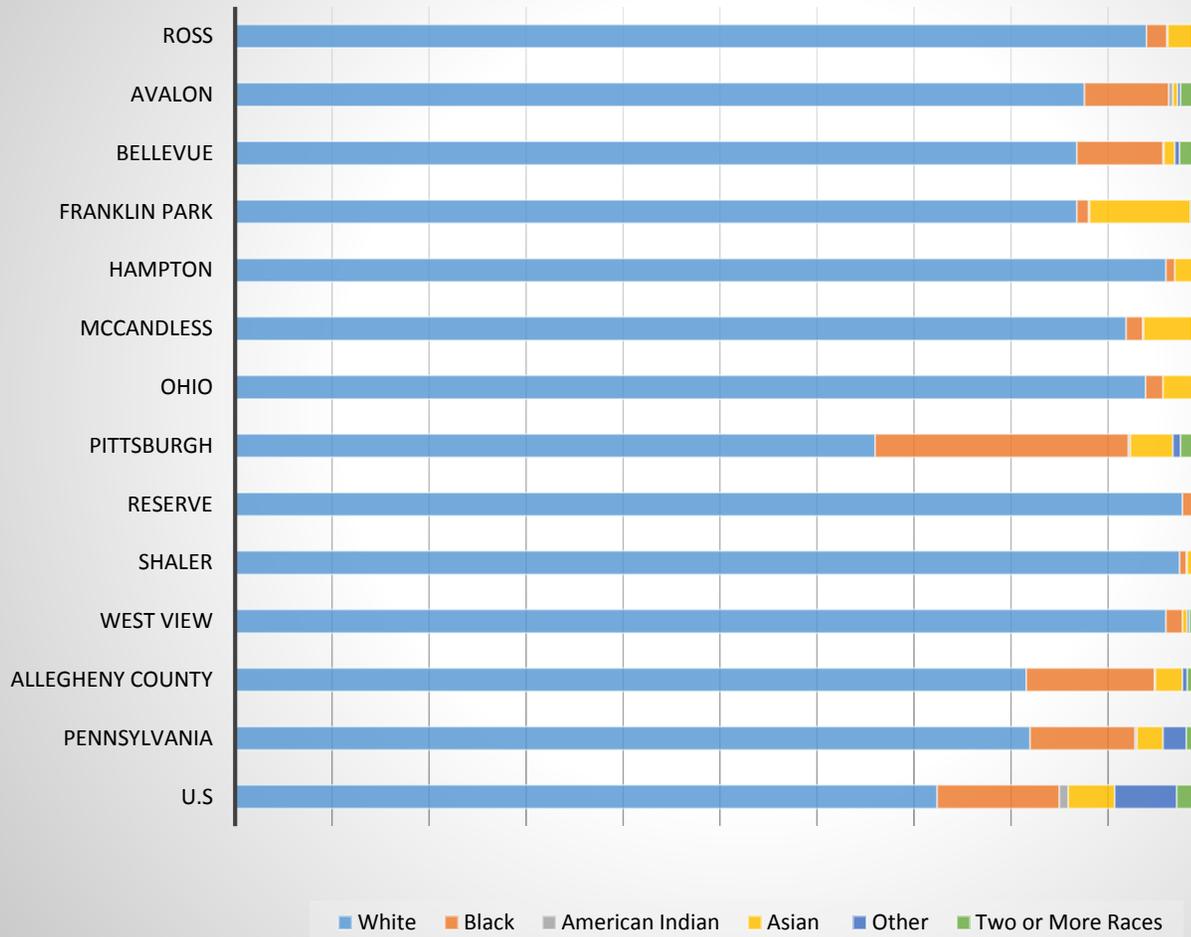




TABLE 5 - TRENDS IN RACIAL DIVERSITY*

	2000	2010	% CHANGE 2000 TO 2010	COMPOUNDED ANNUAL CHANGE 2000 TO 2010
Ross	4.1%	6.0%	46.3%	3.9%
Avalon	7.3%	12.4%	69.9%	5.4%
Bellevue	6.9%	13.2%	91.3%	6.7%
Franklin Park	5.1%	13.2%	158.8%	10.0%
Hampton	2.3%	4.0%	73.9%	5.7%
McCandless	5.7%	8.1%	42.1%	3.6%
Ohio	3.1%	6.1%	96.8%	7.0%
Pittsburgh	33.1%	34.0%	2.7%	0.3%
Reserve	2.1%	2.3%	9.5%	0.9%
Shaler	2.1%	2.6%	23.8%	2.2%
West View	5.2%	4.0%	-23.1%	-2.6%
Allegheny County	15.6%	18.4%	17.9%	1.7%
Pennsylvania	14.6%	18.0%	23.3%	2.1%
U.S	24.8%	27.6%	11.3%	1.1%
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU				
*NON-WHITE POPULATION				

HOUSEHOLDS

According to the census, a household is defined as all of the people who occupy a housing unit. The occupants may be a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any other group of related or unrelated people who share living quarters. A family household is defined as “a householder and one or more other people living in the same household who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption.” Households are further classified as “married-couple family” or “other family” which includes “male householder, no wife present,” “female householder, no husband present,” and “nonfamily household.” One person in each household is designated as the householder, usually the person in whose name the home is owned or rented. The definition for each of these household types is:

Married-couple family – This category includes a family in which the householder and his or her spouse are enumerated as members of the same household.

Male householder, no wife present. – This category includes a family with a male maintaining a household with no wife of the householder present.

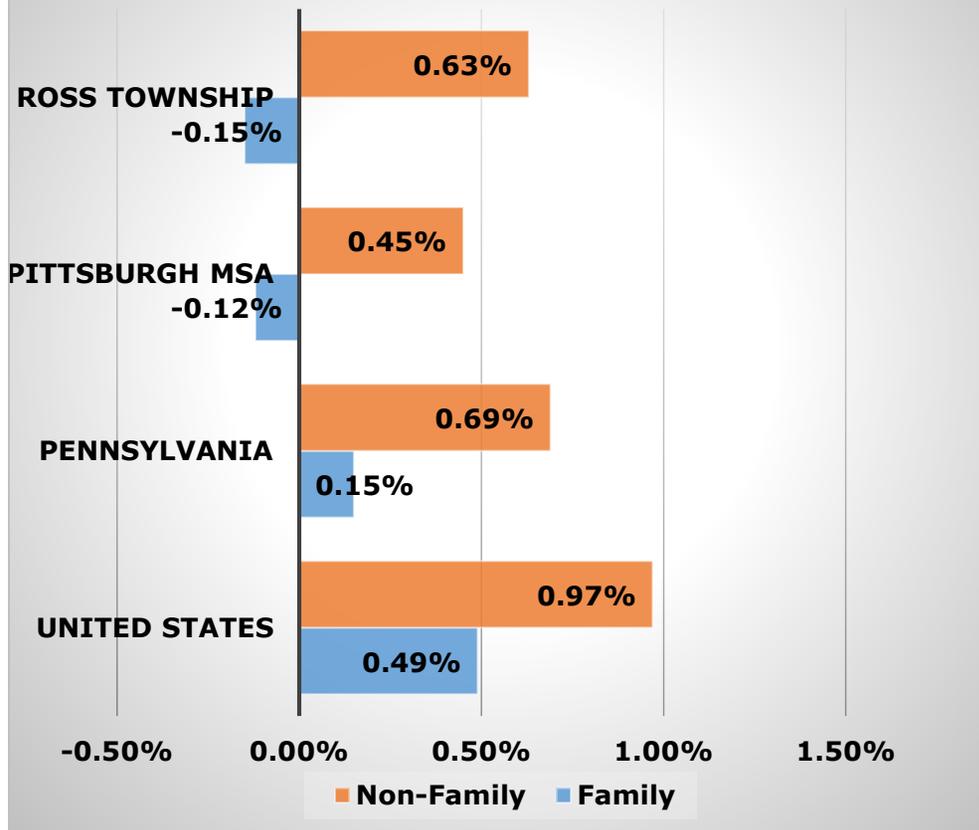
Female householder, no husband present – This category includes a family with a female maintaining a household with no husband of the householder present.

Nonfamily household – This category includes a householder living alone or with nonrelatives only.

Social characteristics related to households in the Township have changed in the past decade, with the percentage of family households declining 5 percentage points between 2000 and 2012. Similarly, family households with children under 18 have declined around 4 percentage points in the same time period. The types of families in the Township have stayed stable for the most part. However, it should be noted that married couple families decreased very slightly and female-headed households increased slightly. **Table 6** and **Figure 5** show these trends.

TABLE 6 - TRENDS IN HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS – ROSS TOWNSHIP			
TYPE	2000	2010	2012
All Family Households	63.4%	59.0%	58.3%
With Own Children Under 18	38.3%	36.1%	34.0%
Married Couples	84.2%	83.4%	83.3%
Male-Headed Households	4.1%	4.9%	4.2%
Female-Headed Households	11.7%	11.7%	12.5%
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU			

Figure 5 - Households Projected Annualized Percentage Increase 2013-2018



Non-family households are projected to outpace family households in the United States, Pennsylvania, the Pittsburgh MSA, and in Ross Township.

Non-Household Family Formation Rising

AN ANNUAL CENSUS BUREAU REPORT SHOWED THAT U.S. HOUSEHOLD FORMATION HAS BEEN SLOW WITH JUST 476,000 HOUSEHOLDS ADDED LAST YEAR. A NEW SURVEY NOW REVEALS THAT NON-FAMILY HOUSEHOLD FORMATIONS ARE ON THE RISE WITH MORE RELATIVES ADDED TO THE FAMILY HOMES. HOUSEHOLD FORMATION IS A MAJOR INDICATOR OF ECONOMIC HEALTH. USUALLY, WHEN THE ECONOMY IS SLOW, MORE PEOPLE START LIVING TOGETHER WITH ADULT CHILDREN MOVING INTO THEIR PARENTS' HOMES OR GETTING A ROOMMATE TO SPLIT THE COST OF RENTING A PLACE. THE NEW REPORT BY HOUSING ECONOMIST THOMAS LAWLER REVEALED THAT IT'S NOT JUST THE ADULT CHILDREN MOVING INTO THEIR PARENTS' HOUSE; RELATIVES AND IN-LAWS HAVE ALSO STARTED LIVING TOGETHER. LAWLER'S SURVEY, WHICH SOURCED DATA FROM THE CENSUS BUREAU HOUSEHOLD FORMATION REPORT, FOUND THAT THE NUMBER OF RELATIVES AND IN-LAWS ADDED TO FAMILY HOMES IN 2013 WENT UP TWO-FOLD. THE NUMBER OF NON-RELATIVES ADDED TO A HOUSEHOLD WENT UP AS WELL. THE YEAR 2013 SAW THE FORMATION OF 164,000 NEW NON-FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS (FRIENDS, ROOMMATES) WHEN COMPARED TO THE 65,000 RECORDED BETWEEN 2010 AND 2012.

SOURCE: REALTY TODAY
SEPTEMBER 29, 2014



- **One Person Households and Non-Family Households** are the fastest growing segments in the nation and in the Pittsburgh MSA.
- The average household size has decreased **in Pennsylvania to 2.44 persons**. In Ross Township, it is **2.14 persons**.
- The number of persons living in **multi-generational households** is increasing especially among Hispanic and Asian families.
- The **Millenials (ages 25-34)** are **more likely to live at home with their parents** for a longer period of time especially if they are unemployed and/or undereducated.

Figure 6 illustrates the percentage of family households in the Township, the surrounding municipalities, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and the United States. The Township's portion of family households ranks near the middle of surrounding municipalities and is on par with the percentage of family households in the County. **Figure 7** gives detailed comparisons of family and household types.

Figure 6 - Family Households - North Hills Communities (2012)

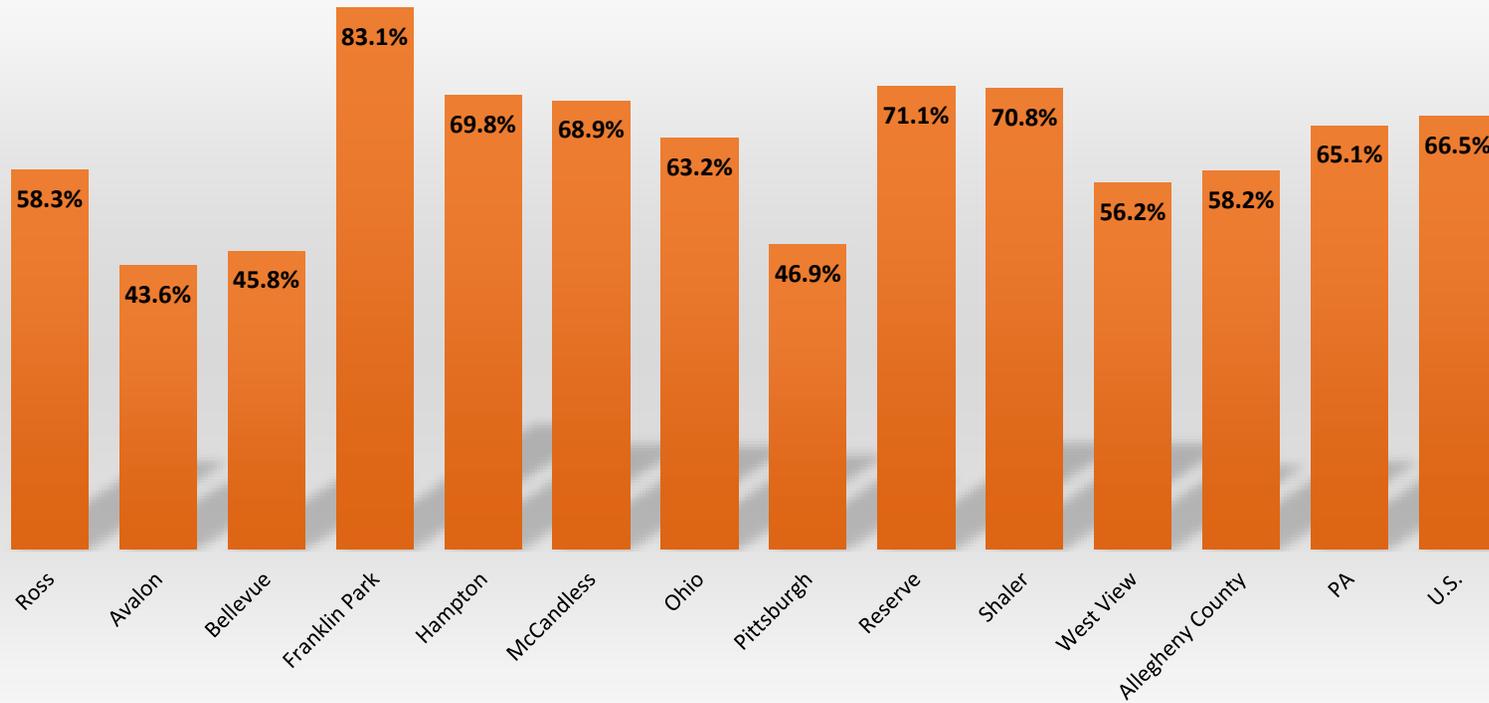
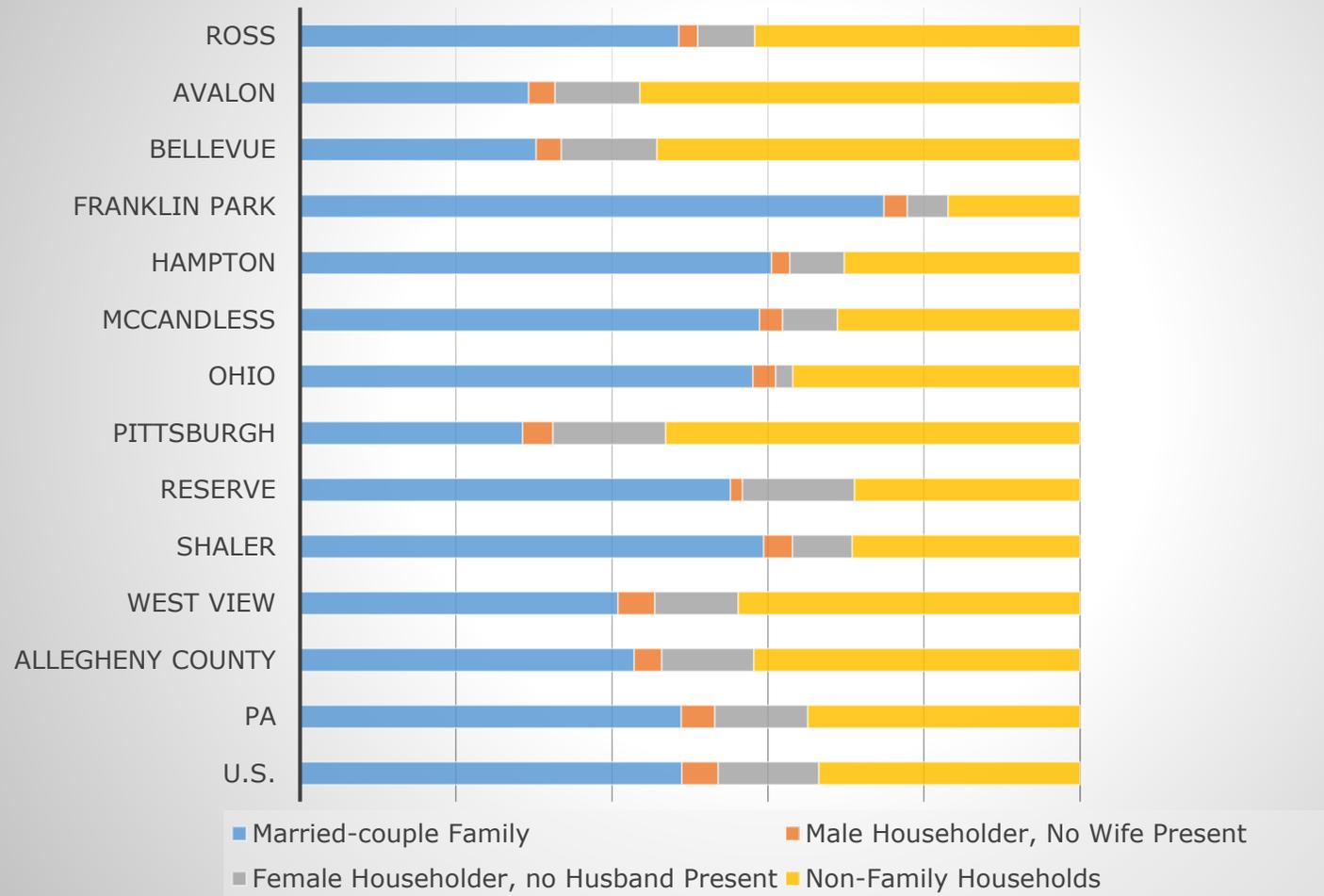
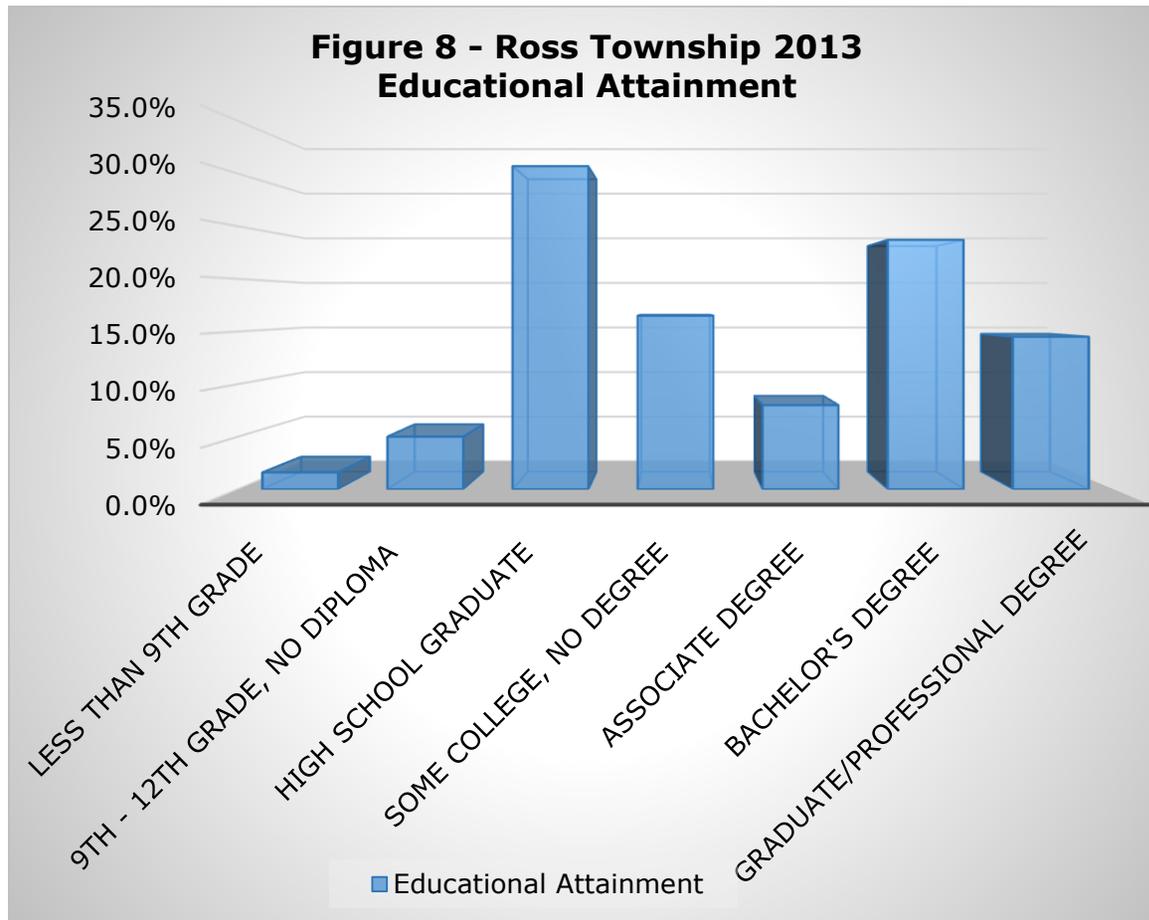


Figure 7 -Household Types - North Hills Communities (2012)



EDUCATION

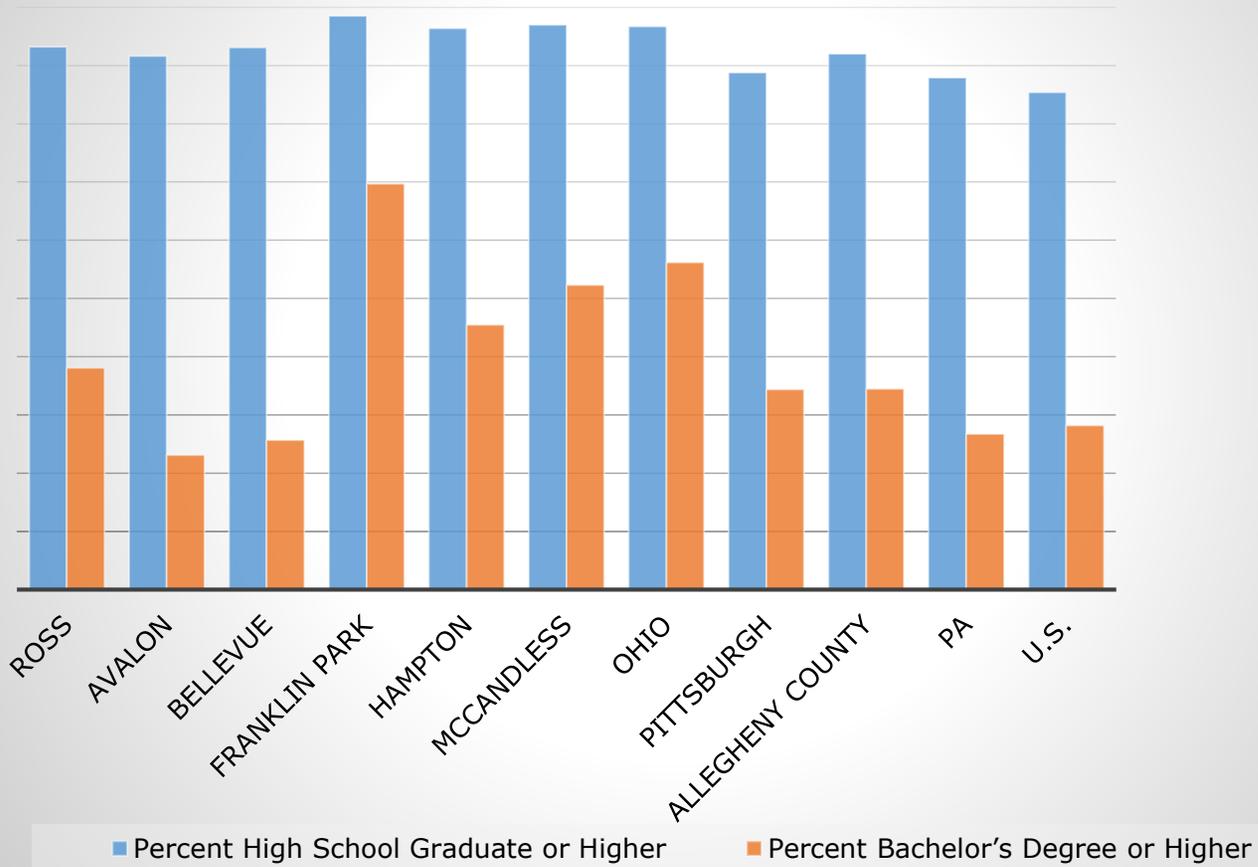
According to 2011 ACS estimates, 93.2% of the Township residents had at least a high school diploma, 54.5% had some college education, and 38.1% had received a bachelor’s degree or higher. These percentages are higher than those in Allegheny County, in Pennsylvania, and in the United States. The Township’s educational achievement levels put it near the middle among surrounding communities. **Table 7** and **Figures 8 and 9** show the Township population’s education attainment compared to neighboring municipalities, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and the United States.



Ross Township residents are well educated with 62.7% having attended some college or higher.

TABLE 7 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT – NORTH HILLS COMMUNITIES – POPULATION AGE 25+ (2011)											
	ROSS	AVALON	BELLEVUE	FRANKLIN PARK	HAMPTON	MCCANDLESS	OHIO	PGH	ALLEGHENY COUNTY	PA	U.S.
Total Population Age 25+	23,667	3,567	6,099	8,539	12,776	20,321	3,223	201,032	858,231	8,611,136	202,048,123
Less than 9th Grade	1.7	1.0	1.9	0.1	0.9	1.1	0.7	2.8	2.1	3.9	6.1
9th to 12th Grade/No Diploma	5.1	7.4	5.1	1.4	2.7	1.9	2.6	8.3	5.8	8.2	8.5
High School Grad (Includes Equivalency)	30.7	38.9	32.2	13.5	27.6	22.6	24.3	30.6	32.0	37.6	28.6
Some College, No Degree	16.4	21.1	22.5	9.9	14.1	14.9	12.9	16.6	16.9	16.3	21.0
Associate’s Degree	8.0	8.5	12.7	5.4	9.1	7.2	3.4	7.3	8.6	7.4	7.6
Bachelor’s Degree	23.5	14.9	17.9	36.0	29.0	29.4	31.7	17.5	20.6	16.5	17.7
Graduate or Professional Degree	14.6	8.2	7.8	33.7	16.5	22.9	24.5	16.8	14.0	10.2	10.5
Percent High School Graduate or Higher	93.2	91.6	93.1	98.5	96.4	97.0	96.7	88.8	92.0	87.9	85.4
Percent Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	38.1	23.1	25.7	69.7	45.5	52.3	56.2	34.4	34.5	26.7	28.2
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION (SPC)											

Figure 9 - Educational Attainment of North Hills Communities



The North Hills School District (District) provides public education for Ross Township students, as well as those in West View. With the two municipalities combined, the District serves a population of over 40,000.⁶ During the 2012-2013 school year, the District served 4,373 students. About 300 more students were enrolled in grades 7-12 than in grades K-6. Of Allegheny County’s nine northern area school districts, the North Hills School District’s residential property tax millage rate is lower (21.26) than both the Allegheny County average and the Northern Area average (23.37 and 23.31, respectively).⁷

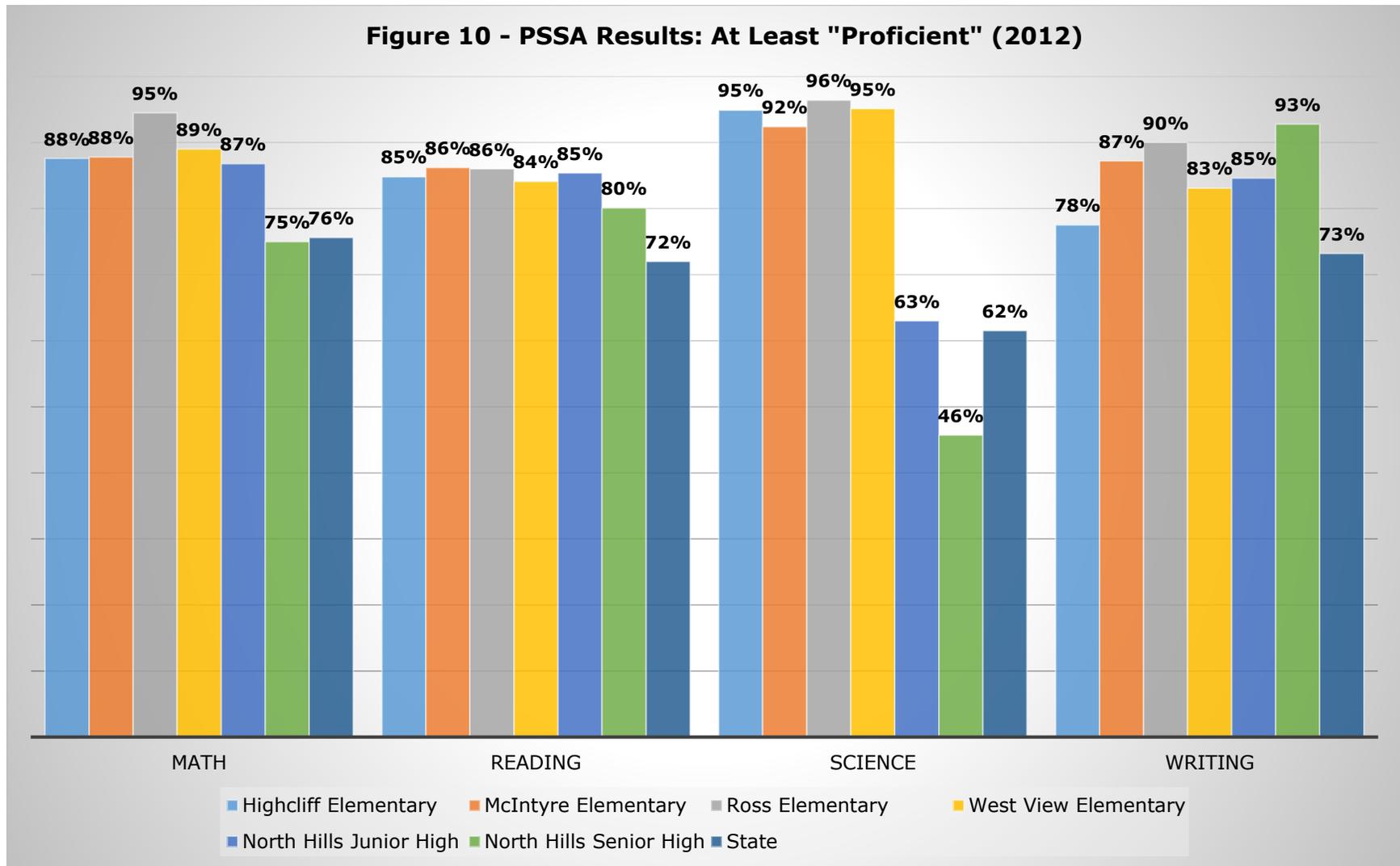
Table 8 and **Figures 10 and 11** show the 2012 North Hills School District Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) results compared to the state average. The number of North Hills elementary and junior high school students who scored either in the “proficient” or “advanced” range was higher than the state average in all four subjects: Math, Reading, Science, and Writing. Senior high students scored well above average in Reading and Writing, but fell slightly behind in Math and significantly behind in Science. North Hills Senior High students scored in the “advanced” range in “Writing” almost three times more than the state average.

TABLE 8 - PSSA RESULTS (2012)								
	MATH		READING		SCIENCE		WRITING	
	At Least Proficient	Advanced						
Highcliff Elementary	88%	58%	85%	48%	95%	63%	78%	3%
McIntyre Elementary	88%	63%	86%	53%	92%	50%	87%	5%
Ross Elementary	95%	70%	86%	44%	96%	59%	90%	4%
West View Elementary	89%	55%	84%	44%	95%	79%	83%	1%
North Hills Jr. High	87%	60%	85%	55%	63%	20%	85%	6%
North Hills Sr. High	75%	43%	80%	38%	46%	16%	93%	23%
STATE	76%	47%	72%	37%	62%	28%	73%	9%

SOURCE: PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

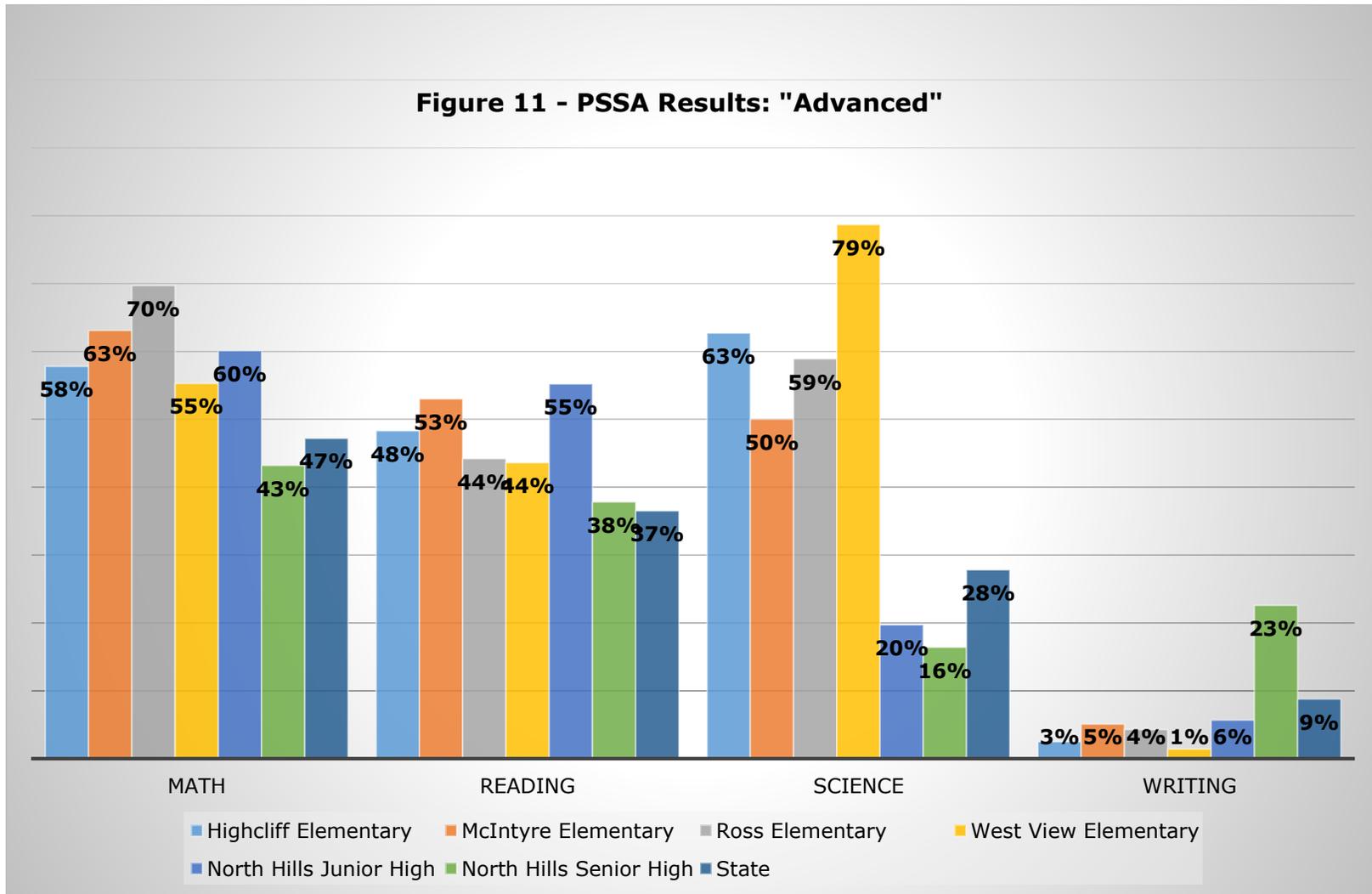
⁶ North Hills Ross Elementary School Profile 2012-2013 (<http://www.nhsd.net/files/1397784/ross%20elementary%20profile.pdf>)

⁷ 2012-2013 North Hills School District Annual Report (<http://www.nhsd.net/files/filesystem>)



SOURCE: PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Figure 11 - PSSA Results: "Advanced"



SOURCE: PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

INCOME

The median annual household income in Ross Township in 2012 was \$59,471, which is higher than the county and the state and around the middle of the range for the surrounding municipalities. While Township households' median income has remained greater than more urban municipalities (Avalon, Bellevue, Pittsburgh, and West View), several other municipalities have significantly higher medians. For example, Franklin Park's median household income is almost double that of Ross Township. **Table 9** presents a comparison of median household incomes in Ross Township to those of neighboring municipalities, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and the United States.

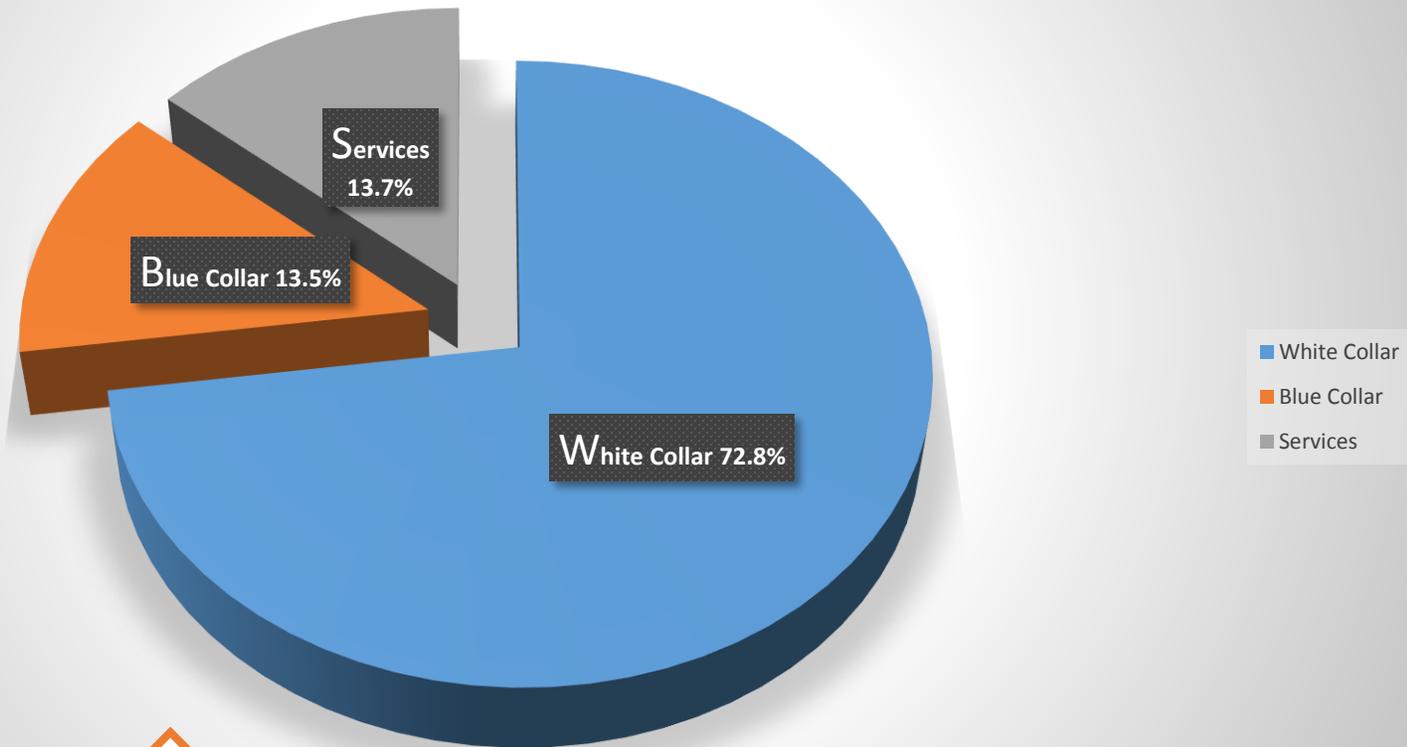
TABLE 9 -TRENDS IN MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
	2000	2000	2012	% CHANGE 2000 TO 2012	COMPOUNDED ANNUAL CHANGE 2000 TO 2012
Ross	46,542	57,354	59,471	27.8%	2.1%
Avalon	29,236	33,669	34,880	19.3%	1.5%
Bellevue	31,481	39,586	40,325	28.1%	2.1%
Franklin Park	87,627	114,981	113,828	29.9%	2.2%
Hampton	60,307	76,230	80,690	33.8%	2.5%
McCandless	62,159	75,132	80,154	28.9%	2.1%
Ohio	62,578	81,875	97,778	56.2%	3.8%
Pittsburgh	28,588	36,019	38,029	33.0%	2.4%
Reserve	39,201	51,378	56,632	44.5%	3.1%
Shaler	49,118	62,416	65,076	32.5%	2.4%
West View	38,264	50,258	53,374	39.5%	2.8%
Allegheny County	38,317	47,961	50,664	32.2%	2.4%
Pennsylvania	40,108	50,398	52,267	30.3%	2.2%
U.S	42,164	51,914	53,046	25.8%	1.9%

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Another key indicator of economic health is how income is growing in comparison to the rest of the country, as shown in **Table 10** and **Figure 12**. While more affluent communities experienced a higher rate of increase between 2000 and 2012, Ross Township households have fared better than some in neighboring communities like Avalon, Bellevue, and Pittsburgh. The 2012 household median incomes in those communities were further below the nation's median than they were in 2000.

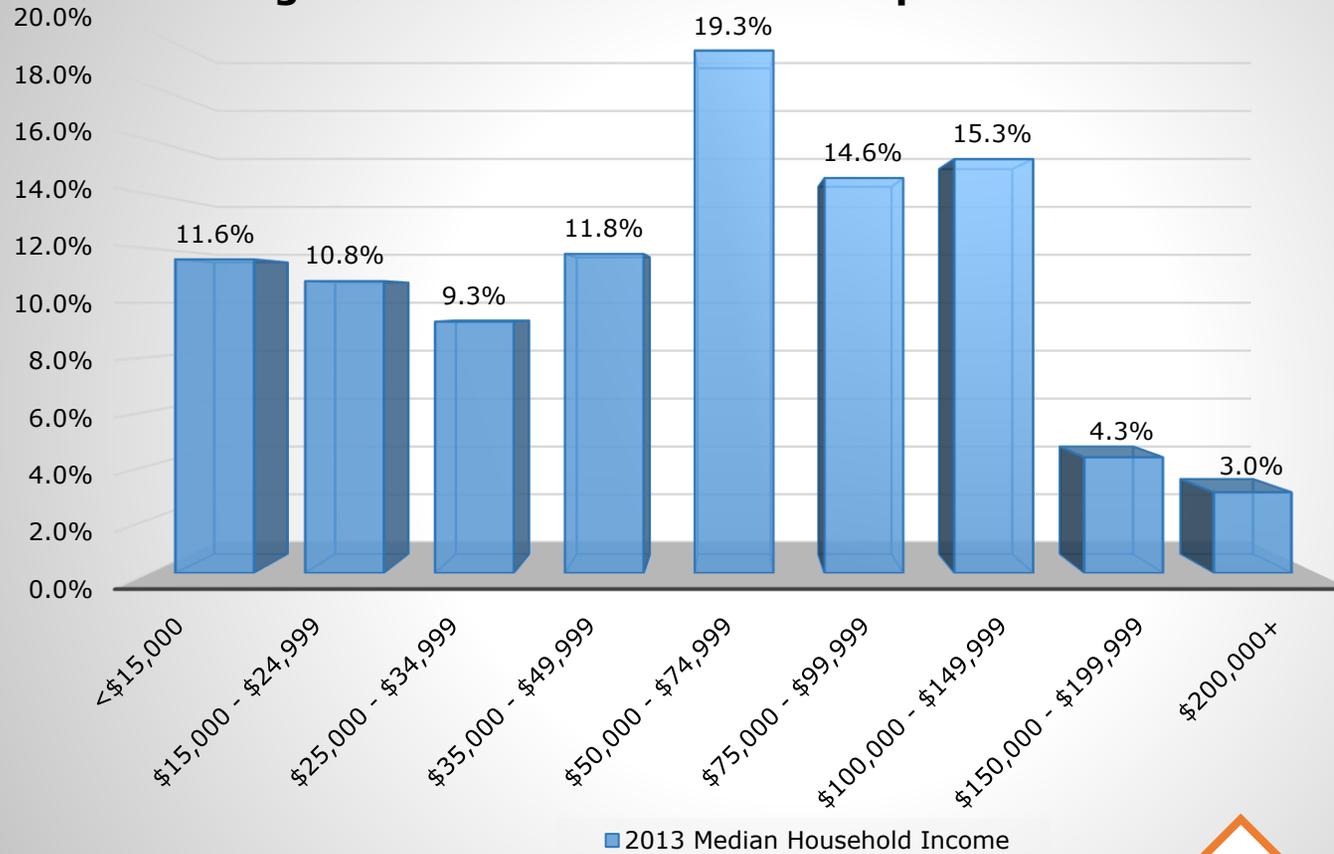
TABLE 10 - MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME AS COMPARED TO NORTH HILLS COMMUNITIES AND TO U.S. MEDIAN			
	2000	2010	2012
Ross	4,378	5,440	6,425
Avalon	(12,928)	(18,245)	(18,166)
Bellevue	(10,683)	(12,328)	(12,721)
Franklin Park	45,463	63,067	60,782
Hampton	18,143	24,316	27,644
McCandless	19,995	23,218	27,108
Ohio	20,414	29,961	44,732
Pittsburgh	(13,576)	(15,895)	(15,017)
Reserve	(2,963)	(536)	3,586
Shaler	6,954	10,502	12,030
West View	(3,900)	(1,656)	328
Allegheny County	(3,847)	(3,953)	(2,382)
Pennsylvania	(2,056)	(1,516)	(779)
United States	N/A	N/A	N/A
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU			

Figure 12- 2013 Ross Township Residents by Type of Employment



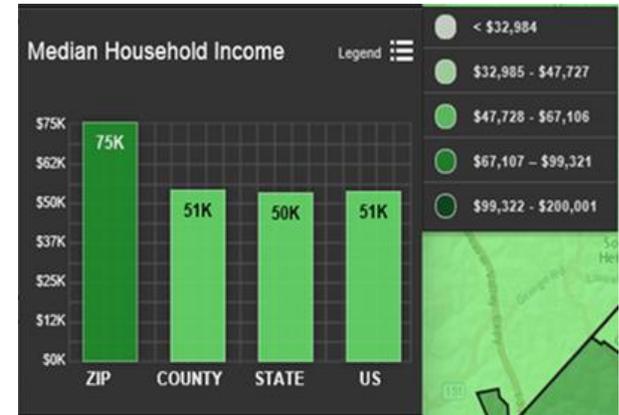
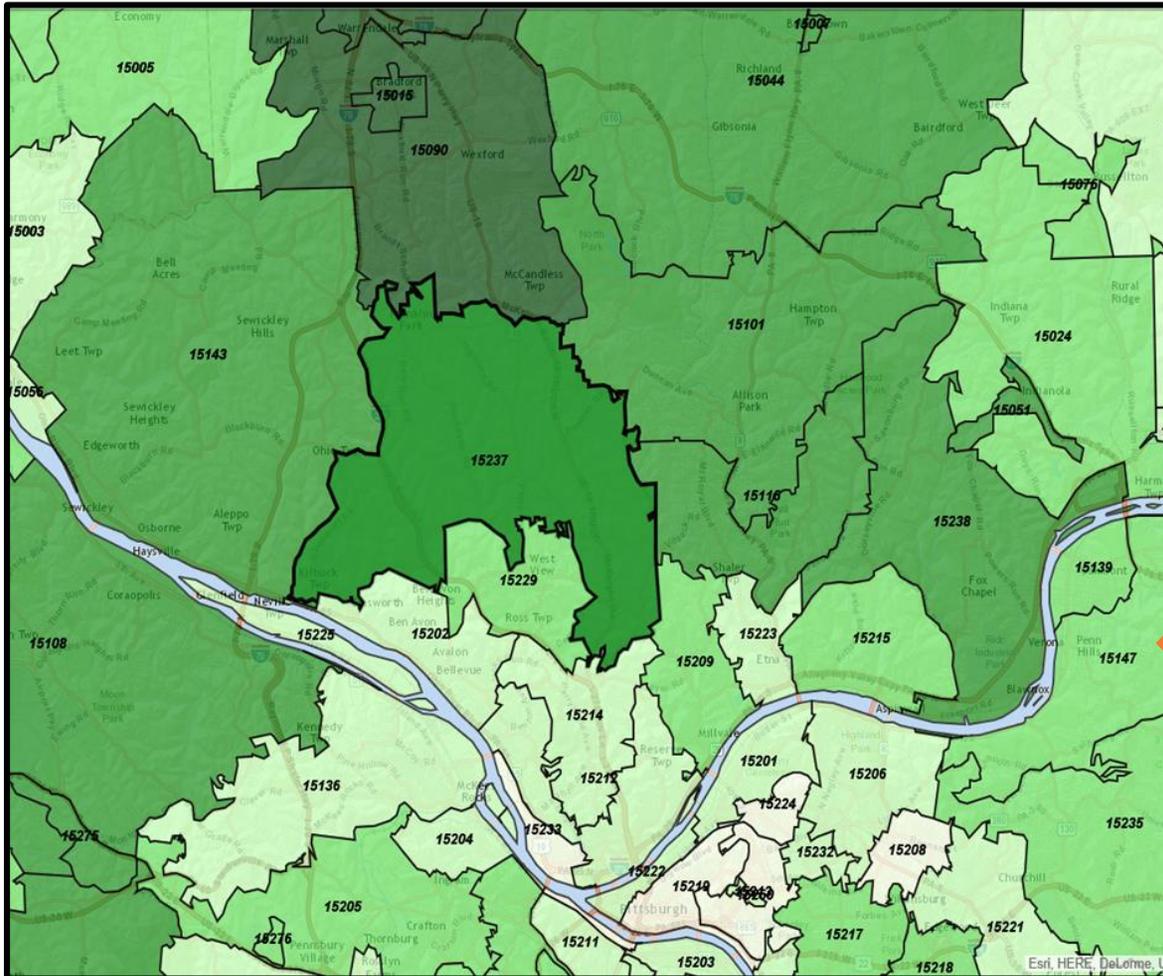
Ross Township residents are overwhelmingly in White Collar professions, with 13.7% in the Services Industry and 13.5% categorized as Blue Collar.

Figure 13 - 2013 Ross Township Median Household Income



The median household income in Ross Township in 2013 was \$72,293. This is higher than the county and state median incomes.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME – ADJACENT ZIP CODE AREAS



Ross Township median incomes are similar to adjacent suburban communities. They are higher than West View and City neighborhoods.

MAP 3 – MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

THE PUBLIC PROCESS

- Steering Committee**
- Stakeholder Interviews**
- Community Events**
- Electronic Surveys**
- Public Outreach Meetings**



"Government, in the last analysis, is organized opinion. Where there is little or no public opinion, there is likely to be bad government."

Mackenzie King



PUBLIC PROCESS

Public participation is a crucial element in developing a community's comprehensive plan because it provides key information about a community's culture and preferences. However, it can be the greatest challenge in the planning process. Effective citizen participation can bring out concerns and issues that are not always apparent to the consultant team or even the public officials. An effective public involvement process gives representation to diverse interests in the community and helps the community begin to take ownership of the plan.

An additional benefit of the public input process is that good citizen participation, properly documented, gives significant support to the plan when it is officially adopted. Plans that reflect the vision of the community through citizen participation will generally be upheld if a challenge is brought against any element of the comprehensive plan. But most importantly, public input is the basis of sound public policy.

THE STEERING COMMITTEE

At the outset of the planning process, members of the consultant team met with Ross Township staff to identify a diverse Steering Committee to shepherd the process and ensure broad involvement of Township residents, business owners, public officials and other key stakeholders. Throughout the process, Ross Township staff and public officials were briefed on the progress of the Plan.

The Steering Committee met from February through May in 2014 and then broke for the Public Participation activities over the summer months. They began to meet monthly again in October. Steering Committee meeting topics included:

- Review of project scope and schedule
- Review of existing land uses



- Public outreach plan
- Review of demographics
- Review of prior planning efforts
- Introduction of planning tools
- Preliminary market research data; and
- Plan review, including recommendations for future land use, community facilities, housing and redevelopment, and economic development

Concurrent with the work of the Steering Committee, the consultant team was engaged in a variety of public outreach activities, including:

- Focus group meetings
- Public meetings
- Electronic surveys
- Stakeholder interviews
- Meetings with Commissioners and Planning Commission.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

In addition to the two public outreach meetings, the team conducted dozens of stakeholder interviews with individuals and groups identified by the Steering Committee. These interviews represented various interests, as listed below, and added important perspectives on a diverse range of issues around housing and neighborhoods, public services, transportation, and future land use. The specific Stakeholders' input is summarized in the Key Themes section.

- Township Commissioners
- Senior Information Series (SIS)
- Ross Rompers

- Pittsburgh North Regional Chamber
- Ross Economic Development (RED)
- Perrysville Avenue Business Owners



COMMUNITY EVENTS

In order to incorporate input from the widest possible range of Ross residents, the consultant team attended as many existing community events as possible (see below). Attending already-scheduled events allowed the comprehensive planning process to be respectful of residents' time and focus public meetings and stakeholder interviews on issues that had not already been covered. Attendance at these events also helped to educate a wider public about the process that will guide the future of their community.

SENIOR FAIR – SEPTEMBER 18, 2014

Hundreds of seniors attended the annual Senior Fair hosted by Representative Dom Costa at the Ross Township community center building. Seniors were anxious to weigh in on issues generally categorized as Neighborhoods, Businesses and Transportation. Many stopped at the booth to discuss the problems created by the Port Authority's decision to eliminate bus routes throughout Ross Township, especially to the Perrysville area. Many seniors were concerned about retaining the beautiful, green areas in neighborhoods. Many long-time residents reported satisfaction with their choice to reside in Ross Township, while some noted that there is no regular programming and activities for seniors in the Township.



The seniors who attended the Senior Fair weighed in on major issues in Ross Township.

In the Neighborhoods:

Strongest support was for sidewalks and community gardens, multi-purpose walking trails,

Least support was for new townhouses, condominiums, and rental apartments.

In the Business Districts:

Strongest support was for walkable paths, public gathering places, trees and planting areas and public art.

Least support was for decorative lighting and water Features.

For Transportation Issues:

Strongest support was for improved neighborhood roads, better public transit service and improved parking in the neighborhoods.

Least support was for additional parking in the commercial district.



ROSS COMMUNITY DAY – SEPTEMBER 20, 2014

One of the biggest community gathering events of the year is the Ross Township Community Day which was held on Saturday, September 20, 2014. It was a well-attended event. The Comprehensive Planning team had a booth at the event to engage people about the Plan elements and to obtain additional input about the important issues for residents in Ross Township.

Residents who participated generally support the “greening” of neighborhoods with parks, trees, and walking trails.



Many residents expressed the need to provide pedestrian linkages from the neighborhoods to shopping areas and recreation sites. Transportation was a hot issue – with many hoping for improved public transit service and several pointing out some of the deteriorated conditions on local collector roadways. Overall, residents are happy to be living in Ross and feel that it is convenient to Pittsburgh amenities while providing a suburban feel and excellent schools – many said that it is a “great place to raise families.”

PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETINGS

*PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETING NO. 1
August 11, 2014, 7:00PM*

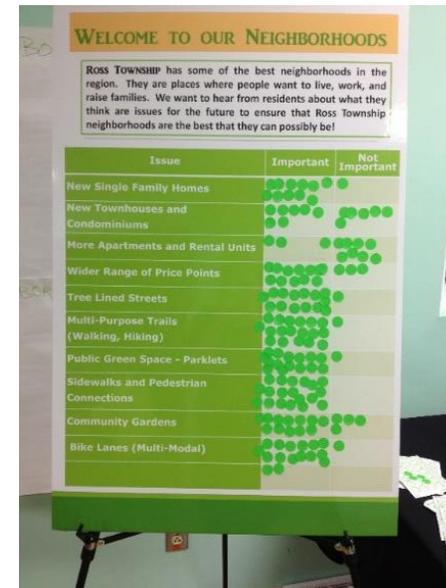


Approximately 76 residents arrived at the Evergreen Community Center to participate in the public outreach session. As part of that session participants were asked to visit several stations that were set up to express opinions and comments relative to three major categories that will be addressed in the Ross Plan: Neighborhoods, the Business District, and Transportation. The results of this exercise are tabulated and analyzed in this Section.

WELCOME TO OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

Residents of Ross Township agree that Ross has some of the best and most attractive neighborhoods in the region. They are places where people want to live, work, and raise families.

Issue	Important	Not Important
New Single Family Homes	11	1
New Townhouses and Condominiums	7	6
More Apartments and Rental Units	3	8
Wider Range of Price Points	12	3
Tree Lined Streets	14	1
Multi-Purpose Trails (Walking, Hiking)	18	1
Public Green Space - Parklets	15	1
Sidewalks and Pedestrian Connections	19	0
Community Gardens	12	4
Bike Lanes (Multi-Modal)	16	1

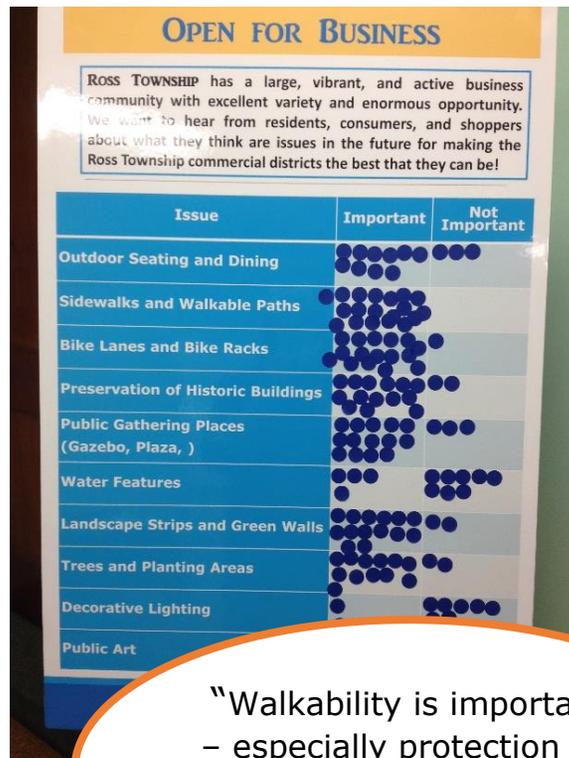


"I'm all for sidewalks and walkability – but how are we going to pay for them?"

THE STRONGEST SUPPORT WAS FOR SIDEWALKS AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS, MULTI-PURPOSE WALKING TRAILS, AND BIKE LANES. LEAST SUPPORT WAS FOR NEW TOWNHOUSES, CONDOMINIUMS, AND RENTAL APARTMENTS.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Ross Township has a large, vibrant, and active business district with excellent variety and enormous opportunity. But many of the older plazas and strip malls are tired and in need of redevelopment and updates. Many have reinvented themselves in the past few years more consistent with evolving consumer tastes, trends, and shopping habits. Meeting participants were asked to indicate what they believe are issues for the future in order to make the commercial district sustainable and an attractive destination for residents and for the region.



Issue	Important	Not Important
Outdoor Seating and Dining	10	3
Sidewalks and Walkable Paths	19	0
Bike Lanes and Bike Racks	16	1
Preservation of Historic Buildings	14	2
Public Gathering Places	14	3
Water Features	4	8
Landscape Strips and Green Walls	14	2
Trees and Planting Areas	12	2
Decorative Lighting	3	7
Public Art	5	7

“Walkability is important – especially protection for pedestrians from vehicles and motorcycles”

THE STRONGEST SUPPORT WAS FOR SIDEWALKS AND WALKABLE PATHS, BIKE LANES, AND PUBLIC GATHERING PLACES.

LEAST SUPPORT WAS FOR DECORATIVE LIGHTING AND PUBLIC ART.

Other Participant comments relative to the business district included:

1. There should be better code enforcement and better land use zoning controls.
2. Ross should have more emphasis on veterans and veterans’ memorials.
3. There should be a more diverse selection of restaurants and retail in Perrysville.
4. No more mattress stores!!
5. The Township should consider waiving mercantile tax on restaurants and start-up businesses for the first 3 years.
6. The Township should provide tax incentives for restoring, upgrading, or landscaping an existing business.

MOVING AND SHAKING

Ross Township has terrific access to employment, medical facilities, universities, dining, shopping and Pittsburgh amenities. Currently, the residents of Ross are highly dependent on automobile travel because there are limited public transit services and few walkable routes. Participants were asked to think about what things could happen in the Township to make it more multi-modal, pedestrian, and transportation friendly.

THE STRONGEST SUPPORT, BY FAR, WAS FOR IMPROVED PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE. SECOND WAS IMPROVED TRAFFIC FLOW.

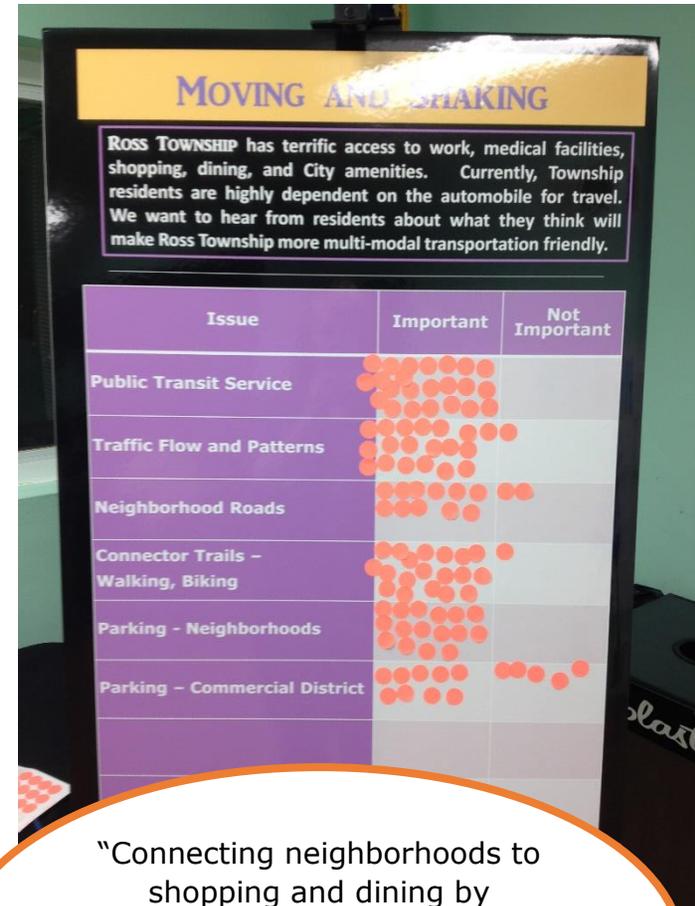
LEAST SUPPORT WAS FOR ADDITIONAL PARKING IN THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT.

Issue	Important	Not Important
Public Transit Service	23	0
Traffic Flow and Patterns	19	1
Neighborhood Roads	11	2
Connector Trails – Walking, Biking	19	1
Parking - Neighborhoods	16	0
Parking – Commercial District	9	5

By far, there were more comments and observations recorded for the transportation category than any other issues at any of the stations. Participants had strong views and opinions about the Township’s transportation needs and expressed genuine concern about the funding cuts in public transit and routes that were eliminated over the past several years. Senior citizens seem to have been especially impacted by the public transit service cuts.

The comments relative to transportation issues in Ross Township included:

1. Improve public transit and the limited bus service along Route 19 and into the neighborhoods.
2. Walking, biking, trails – walkability
3. Should be a T connector to 279 and HOV lane
4. Need local circulator into the neighborhoods along McKnight
5. Need to develop techniques for traffic calming
6. Look for funding for traffic calming and streetscapes
7. Enforcement of existing traffic signals, speed limits, and signs
 - a. Lack of pole-mounted signal on Jackson St. at Perry Highway
 - b. No sensor for left turn signal at Babcock at Roderick
 - c. 25 mph zone on Perry Highway is not enforced
 - d. Speed limit on Babcock near Three Degree Road is not enforced
 - e. McKnight Road speed limits are not enforced
8. Sign standards – need some uniformity
9. Highland “new development” – should have sidewalks and need a new road to alleviate traffic into West View
10. Don’t need any new roads – fix the ones that we have
11. No place for dog walking – need more walking trails in the neighborhoods
12. Need more ways for folks to get around
13. Lack of pedestrian access into Ross Park Mall – limits customers for the mall
14. Sidewalks, sidewalks, sidewalks, sidewalks!
15. Connecting neighborhoods to shopping and dining by trails is important. Should consider rails to trails project along old trolley tracks.
16. All new development should be walkable with sidewalks.



“Connecting neighborhoods to shopping and dining by sidewalks or trails is important. The lack of pedestrian access especially into Ross Park Mall limits potential customers.”

*Public Outreach Meeting No. 2
NOVEMBER 20, 2014 7:00PM*

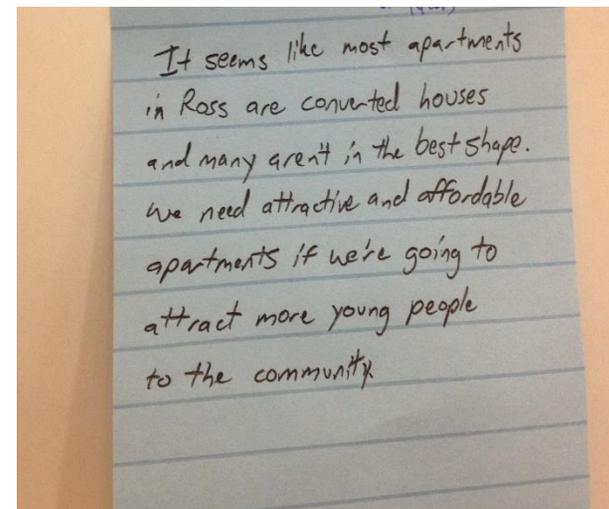


About 119 people attended the second public meeting. The meeting began with a presentation that summarized the issues that were raised most often in the resident and business surveys. Attendees then were invited to participate in two activities: **Prioritizing Key Strategies** and **Spending Your Tax Dollars**.

In **Prioritizing Key Strategies**, participants were asked to review the topics that had been identified at the first public meeting and in the electronic survey. These topics were classified as: (1) Providing Housing that Meets a Wide Variety of Needs; (2) Quality Public Services and Infrastructure Needs; (3) Supporting Business Diversity; (4) Improving Transportation and Public Transit; (5) Stronger Pedestrian Connections; (6) Preserving Natural Resources and Green Space; and (7) Branding and Identity. The results of this activity are reported below.

TOPIC #1: PROVIDING HOUSING THAT MEETS A WIDE VARIETY OF NEEDS	
When asked which types of housing were important for the future of Ross, residents identified	
Single Family Homes	8
Apartments and Rental Units	5
Townhomes and Condominiums	6
Senior Housing: Over-55 Patio Homes	12
Affordable Housing for Young Couples and Families	13
Upscale, High End Rental Units	7
For Consideration: Is it important that people are able to live in Ross Township for their entire lives "cradle to grave?"	
"Ross has a lot of older housing areas that need redeveloped or updated. Any chance of offering incentives such as tax breaks to allow homeowners to update homes and create better curb appeal?"	
"R-1 zoning should be less dense and match standards in Hampton and McCandless."	

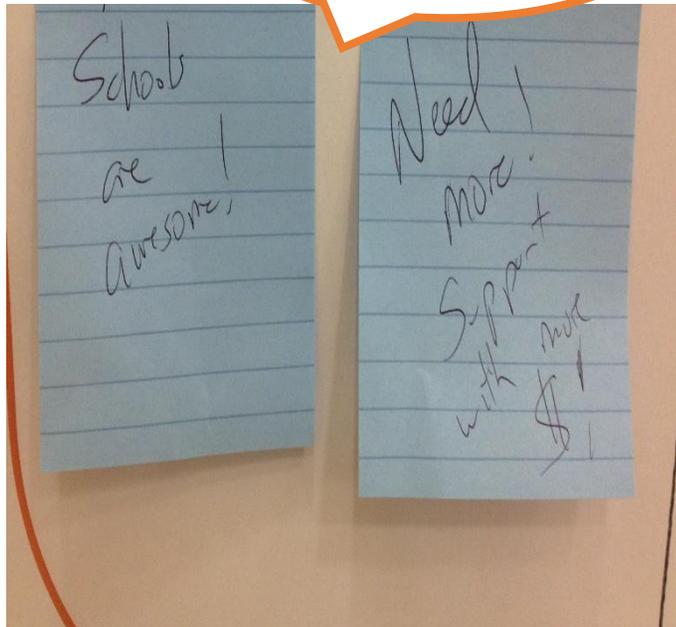
PRIORITIZING KEY STRATEGIES



MOST RESIDENTS PREFERRED SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT BUT RECOGNIZED THE NEED FOR OTHER OPTIONS FOR SENIORS, YOUNG PROFESSIONALS, AND COUPLES RAISING FAMILIES.

PRIORITIZING KEY STRATEGIES

RESIDENTS THINK THE SCHOOL DISTRICT IS AWESOME!



TOPIC #2: BALANCING QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

Residents worried about the tax burden that will be necessary in the future to pay for public services while addressing aging infrastructure.

Fire, police, and ambulance services in the Township are excellent and should be supported at the current levels.	17
The quality of our schools and education should be a high priority because it attracts new residents.	20
New development places a burden on public services.	2
New development is desirable because it increases our tax revenue.	12
Maintaining our roads and bridges is important to our future health and development.	16

For Consideration: What other concerns do you have about providing quality services in the Township for the future?

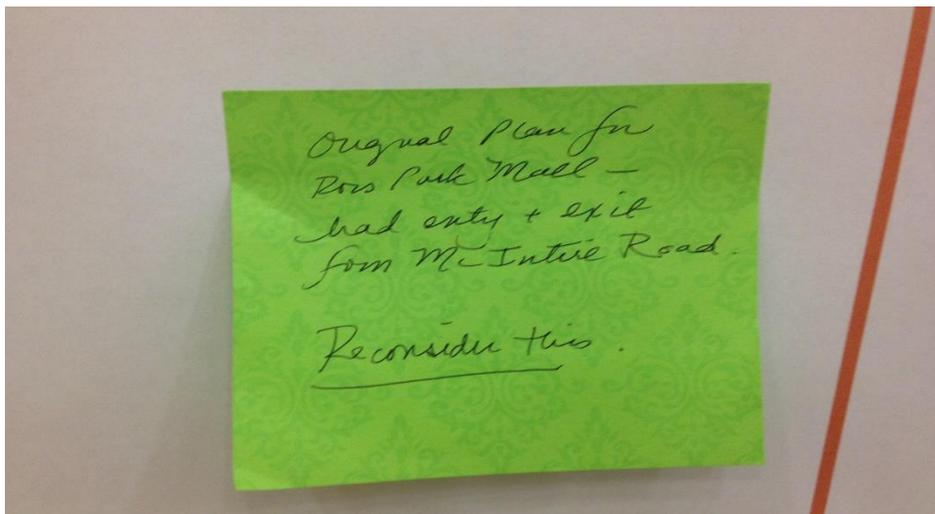
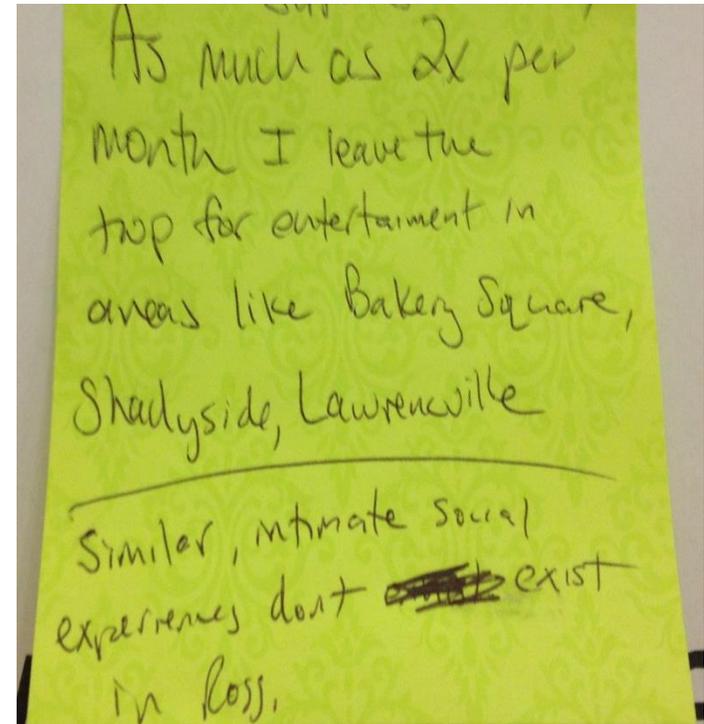
"We need more support for band, orchestra, and the arts in our school district. Funding cuts have hurt NHSD arts."

"Don't be too conservative! McCandless is making bold moves! We need to as well."

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SAFETY WERE THE TOP TWO ITEMS FOR WHICH RESIDENTS WANTED TO SPEND THEIR TAX MONEY.

TOPIC #3: SUPPORTING BUSINESS DIVERSITY	
Township residents believe that the Township should foster a community of small businesses in addition to supporting Ross Park Mall and the "big box" stores.	
Encourage and support small-scale, locally owned dining and retail through a "local commercial business designation."	14
Connect new and existing commercial development through public transit and walkable routes.	12
Create social gathering areas for dining, shopping, and entertainment.	14
Implement consistent design standards in the business corridors.	15
For Consideration: What other things can the Township do to support a more diverse business community?	
"Encourage upscale contemporary restaurants to come to Ross."	

PRIORITIZING KEY STRATEGIES



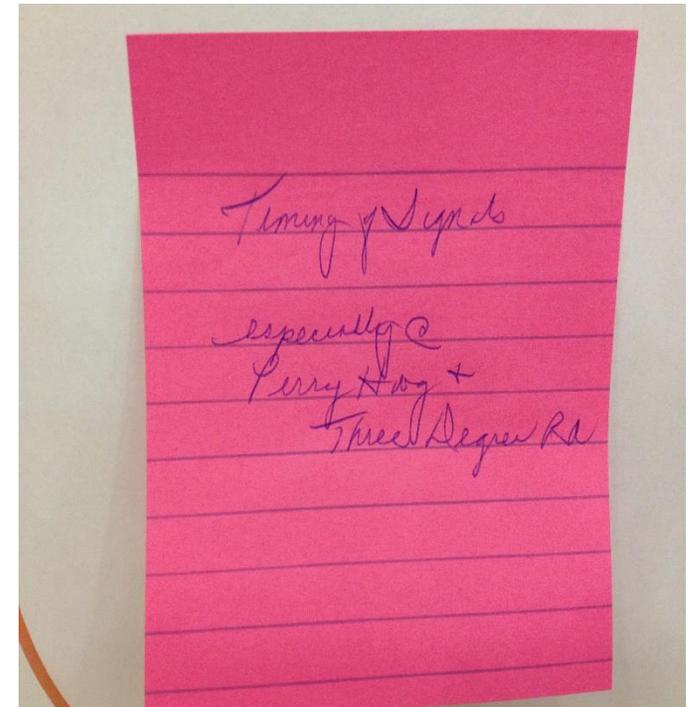
TOPIC #4: IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC TRANSIT

Township residents stressed the need for improved transportation and transit connections for both local and regional trips.

Traffic management in the corridors should be a high priority in order to reduce traffic congestion.	10
The timing of signals and the lack of turning lanes contributes to the traffic congestion.	16
Speeding and lack of traffic enforcement is a problem in the transportation corridors.	1
A local public transit circulator should be available for residents to connect to transit stops.	13

For Consideration: What can be done to improve the overall vehicular circulation in the Township?

"With all the shopping centers and restaurants spread all over Ross, a 'shopping shuttle' could reduce traffic on McKnight Road... Regular routes would be an asset for seniors and the handicapped."



Prioritizing Key Strategies

TRAFFIC CONGESTION, THE TIMING OF TRAFFIC SIGNALS, AND LACK OF PUBLIC TRANSIT OPTIONS WERE THE ITEMS MOST OFTEN IDENTIFIED AS TRANSPORTATION RELATED PROBLEMS FOR THE TOWNSHIP.

Prioritizing Key Strategies

*SIDEWALKS WERE THE
TOPIC OF THE
EVENING!*

The problem isn't just lack of connections - it's a lack of sidewalks altogether. In many areas just going for a walk or run around the neighborhood is very difficult.

TOPIC #5: CREATING STRONGER PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS	
Township residents identified sidewalks, trails, bike paths, and walkways as high priority issues.	
Walkways should be provided to connect residential neighborhoods to business corridors.	8
Sidewalks would strengthen community ties by linking neighborhoods	11
Businesses would thrive with the installation of walkable business corridors.	11
Trails and bike paths should be developed in parks and natural spaces.	12
On-street safe biking routes should be provided.	8
For Consideration: What other connection strategies should be adopted by the Township?	
"The streetscape idea (i.e. lanterns, benches, trees) should definitely be pursued on some of the main business corridors"	
"Bike lanes should be a priority as well as sidewalks."	

THERE WERE MORE COMMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS AROUND THE LACK OF PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS THAN ANY OTHER TOPIC. RESIDENTS OVERWHELMINGLY INDICATED A PREFERENCE FOR SOME TYPE OF CONNECTION (SIDEWALKS, TRAILS, BIKE PATHS) WITHIN THE NEIGHBORHOODS AND BUSINESS DISTRICTS AND BETWEEN NEIGHBORHOODS AND BUSINESS DISTRICTS. THERE IS A BELIEF THAT THIS WOULD CREATE A MORE COHESIVE COMMUNITY AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF RESIDENTIAL LIFE.

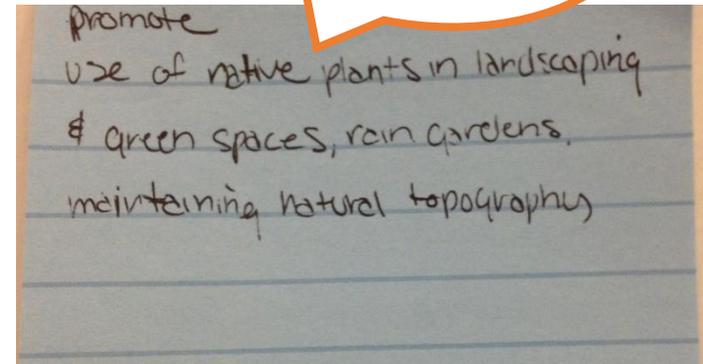
TOPIC #6: PRESERVING NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS, AND GREEN SPACE

Residents commented that they would like to see existing park resources improved and connected.

New residential development should include sidewalks, trails, green space, and parklets.	18
Neighborhoods should retain their quiet, wooded character and passive recreation space.	7
Environmentally friendly policies should be developed that include energy reductions.	7
The Township should re-establish forests, create nature preserves, and implement wildlife management.	5

For Consideration: What other strategies should be considered for long-term sustainability and preservation of natural resources in the Township?

"Promote use of native plants in landscaping and green spaces, rain gardens, maintaining natural topographies"

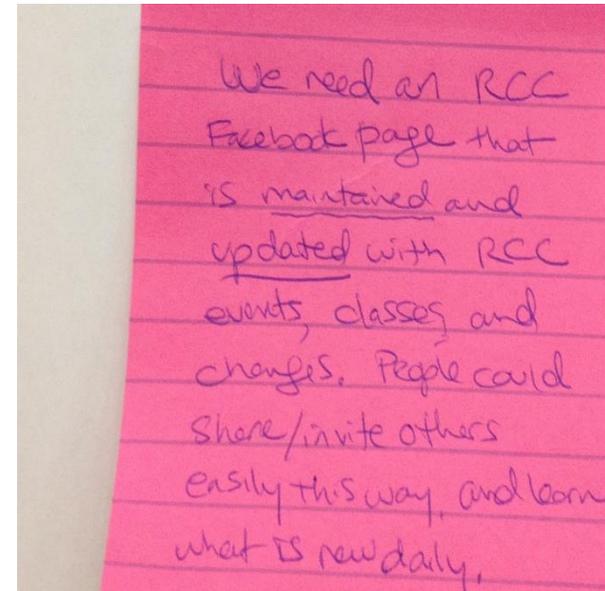


Prioritizing Key Strategies

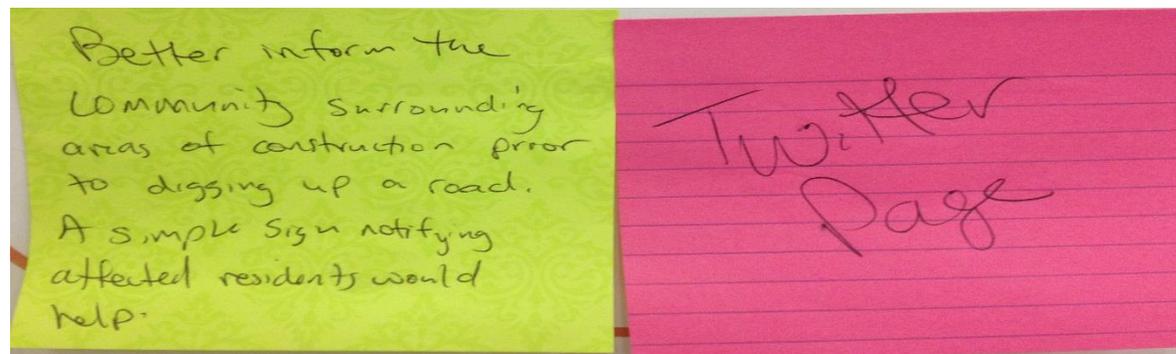
"Safe, Clean, and Green"

PARKS AND RECREATION WERE HOT TOPICS. MANY RESIDENTS FEEL THAT A COMMUNITY PARK WITH ADDITIONAL AMENITIES (EVEN A SWIMMING POOL AND WATER PARK) IS A NECESSITY. OTHERS PREFERRED PASSIVE PARKS WITH NATURE TRAILS, BIKE PATHS, AND ENHANCEMENTS OF NATURAL FEATURES.

TOPIC #7: BRANDING AND IDENTITY	
Residents agree that promoting a coherent vision of the Township is a critical part of planning for the future.	
Well-designed welcome signs, banners, and landscaping should be installed at the gateways to the Township.	17
The community center should expand its offerings to include culture, entertainment, and the arts.	12
Foster the Township's spirit of volunteerism by providing awards to "super" volunteers.	1
Enhance the website by creating a mobile version and link it to community events, activities, groups.	8
For Consideration: What other things can be done to enhance the Township's identity and promote its amenities and resources?	
"We need an RCC Facebook page that is maintained and updated with RCC events, classes, and changes. People could share/invite others easily this way and learn what is new daily."	
"In Community Magazine does this [give awards to 'super' volunteers]. Tim Burnett won in 2013 and Tom Baker in 2014."	



Prioritizing Key Strategies



Spending Your Tax Dollars

The second activity, **Spending Your Tax Dollars**, was designed to encourage attendees to allocate their tax money to eight categories of public services. Each attendee was give \$475 to spend any way that they saw fit on services provided by the Township.

The categories identified and the final tally of tax dollars spent are:

Maintenance of Roads and Bridges



\$3,555

Public Safety



\$2,658

Library Services



\$2,362

Spending Your Tax Dollars

Code Enforcement



\$1,936

Parks and Recreation



\$1,903

Sidewalks, Bike Paths, Trails



\$1,745

Planning and Community Development



Business District Streetscape



The consensus, by far, with 21% of the tax dollars, was for additional expenditures for roads, bridges, and highways. Public safety was a distant second with 16% of the dollars spent. Library services were 14% of the vote. Planning, sidewalks, and the business district streetscape were at the bottom of the spending priority list. Interestingly, although sidewalks, trails, and bike paths were identified frequently as desirable improvements in the Township, the tax dollars spent were at the lower end of the priority scale. Results by percentage are shown below:

MAINTENANCE OF ROADS & BRIDGES	21%	PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES	16%	LIBRARY SERVICES	14%
CODE ENFORCEMENT	11%	PARKS AND RECREATION	11%	SIDEWALKS, BIKE PATHS, TRAILS	10%
PLANNING, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	9%	BUSINESS DISTRICT STREETScape	8%		

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Roads
Sewers
Watersheds
Wetlands
Floodplains
Slopes
Minerals
Marcellus Shale
Public Buildings



"Design should start with a thorough understanding of the way people use spaces and the way they would like to use spaces."

Peter Calthorpe

In a comprehensive planning process it is important to examine the built environment – the roads, bridges, sewers, parks, sidewalks, and other infrastructure that support the neighborhoods and commercial districts and contribute to the basic needs of a community. These fundamental elements provide the necessary framework around which all lifestyle activities take place. Planning for the continuous upgrade, maintenance, and repair of the infrastructure is similar to ensuring that the “hardware” of a computer system is capable and in good operating condition in order to support the “software” which is the community culture, preferences, vision, and goals of its residents.

ROADS

Ross roadways consist of state, county, township and privately owned streets, with Ross Township owning approximately 111 miles of roadway. The majority of the main thoroughfares are either state or county including Interstate 279, McKnight Road, Perry Highway, Babcock Boulevard, Lowries Run Road, and Rochester Road. The Township has two traffic overlay districts along McKnight and Lowries Run which mandate traffic studies and impact fees when development is proposed.



The Township Commissioners recognize the need to maintain their streets and have a yearly budget of approximately \$1 million for their pavement maintenance program.

Beginning in the summer of 2014, Ross also began the process of rating all of the roadways using the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) system and software created by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Transportation Information Center. Once completed, this process will allow Ross to effectively review the status of all roads within the Township and implement a five year pavement maintenance plan.

IN ROSS TOWNSHIP, THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY:

- 111 MILES OF ROADS
- 26 ALLEYS
- 1 SINGLE SPAN BRIDGE

THE CURRENT ROAD PROGRAM BUDGET IS \$1 MILLION PER YEAR. \$1 MILLION ALLOWS FOR 3 MILES OF TYPICAL MILLING AND PAVING. AT THAT RATE, IT WILL TAKE 37 YEARS TO DO EVERY ROAD IN ROSS TOWNSHIP. THEN IT’S TIME TO START OVER AGAIN!

DID YOU KNOW?

SEWERS

SANITARY SEWERS

Ross’s sanitary sewer system was designed and constructed during the development of the Township over the past 200 years. The system consists of all gravity sewers with a majority of the existing pipes being terra cotta. However new development and repairs have been constructed with plastic.

Approximately half of the sanitary sewers in the Township are owned and maintained by the Girty’s Run Joint Sewer Authority (GRJSA), while the other half is owned by Ross Township. The Ross Township portion of the system serves a population of approximately 16,000 residents, utilizing 94 miles of sewer line and 2,300 structures. All of the sewage that flows out of Ross Township is treated by the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN) at the Woods Run Treatment Facility, along the Ohio River.

Ross Township has separated sanitary and storm sewer systems. However in the late 1990’s, ALCOSAN was issued a directive from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and entered into a consent order through the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to separate storm from sanitary sewer discharges. This led to Ross Township entering into an Administrative Consent Order (ACO) with the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) on May 4, 2004, in order to eliminate sanitary sewer overflows and comply with the Clean Streams Law. The Township was required to inventory it’s system, complete necessary repairs, perform



flow monitoring, dye testing, adopt a point-of-sale dye testing ordinance, adopt an ordinance to eliminate storm water connections, perform a hydraulic analysis of the collection system, develop an Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Plan, and prepare a Feasibility Study to address any collection system deficiencies to eliminate SSO’s.

WHAT IS A PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM?

A PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IS BASED ON:

- SOFTWARE THAT INPUTS ROAD MEASUREMENTS AND CONDITION ASSESSMENTS AND OUTPUTS A 5-YEAR PAVING PROGRAM
- IT’S NOT JUST A LIST OF ROADS IN THE WORST CONDITION – IT DETERMINES THE ROADS THAT IF GIVEN MAINTENANCE WILL PROVIDE THE HIGHEST IMPROVEMENT TO THE ROADWAY SYSTEM CONDITION FOR THE LEAST COST
- CAN GIVE AN ANNUAL ROAD PROGRAM BUDGET THAT WILL INCREASE, DECREASE, OR MAINTAIN THE OVERALL RATING/CONDITION OF THE ROSS TOWNSHIP ROADWAYS
- CAN PREDICT THE OVERALL CHANGE IN RATING/CONDITION OF THE ROSS TOWNSHIP ROADWAYS WITH A GIVEN SPECIFIC ANNUAL ROAD PROGRAM BUDGET

ROSS SANITARY SEWERS ARE MANAGED BY BOTH ROSS TOWNSHIP AND GIRTYS RUN JOINT SEWER AUTHORITY (GRSA). A SMALL NUMBER OF INTERCEPTORS ARE MANAGED BY THE LOWRIES RUN OPERATING COMMITTEE.

- THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 180 MILES OF SANITARY SEWER (ROSS 90, GRSA 90)
- THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 5200 MANHOLE STRUCTURES (ROSS 2,775 AND GRSA 2400)

The Township has worked to complete the requirements of the ACO over the last 10 years and will continue to address repairs and inspections of the system on a yearly basis. The required



Feasibility Study, which was completed in July 2013, showed a significant amount of storm water infiltration and inflow (I&I) into the sanitary system and recommended that the Township complete internal and multi-municipal projects totaling approximately \$50 million in capital construction costs. While the study is still currently under review by the ACHD, the Township is beginning to address the capacity deficient sewer issues.

Due to the age of the Township’s sewers the private lateral sewer system has considerable deficiencies and the Township should consider strategies that ensure the proper maintenance and repair of private lateral sewer lines. Codes should be in place clearly defining the system requirements, with the ability for the Township to impose fines for noncompliance.

While repair and maintenance of private sewer lines is the homeowner’s responsibility, a lateral sewer program could include the availability of small grants to homeowners to assist with repairs.

STORM SEWERS

Ross is located within five main watersheds; Lowries Run, Girty’s Run, Jack’s Run, Little Pine Creek and Spruce Run. The land area in Nelson Run, Little Pine Creek and Spruce Run is zoned mainly residential with limited commercial development. On the other hand, Lowries Run and Girty’s

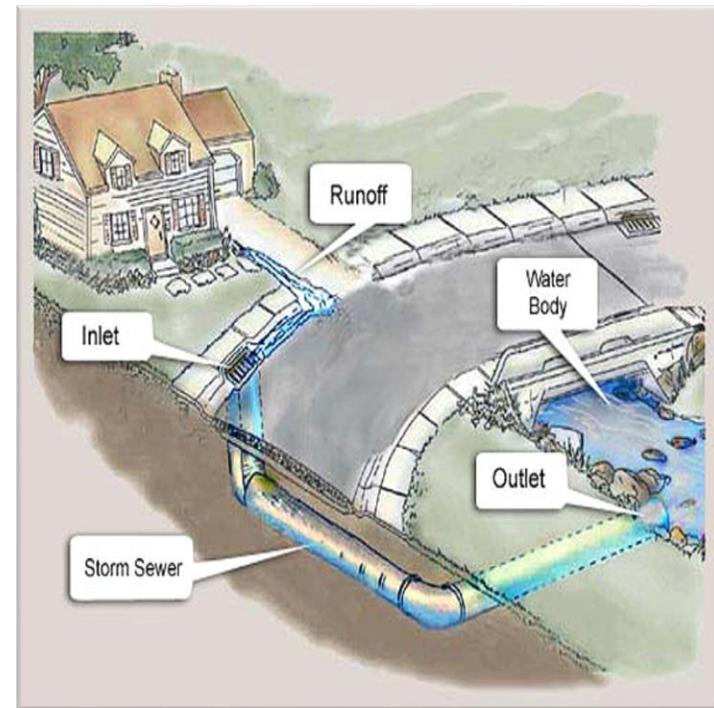
THE INFORMATION FOR ROSS TOWNSHIP STORM SEWERS IS INCOMPLETE DUE TO LACK OF INVESTIGATION AND DOCUMENTATION OVER THE YEARS.

- APPROXIMATELY 45 MILES OF STORM SEWERS HAVE BEEN MAPPED SO FAR
- APPROXIMATELY 2400 INLETS HAVE BEEN LOCATED SO FAR
- APPROXIMATELY 385 OUTFALLS HAVE BEEN LOCATED SO FAR (WHERE THE STORMWATER DISCHARGES INTO THE STREAMS)
- THE NPDES STORM WATER DISCHARGE PERMIT WAS RENEWED NOVEMBER 2013, FOR A 5-YEAR PERMIT CYCLE

Run have significant commercial and some industrial development that has led these watersheds to have the more extensive history of flooding.

The Township maintains an extensive stormwater system which includes approximately 45 miles of separate storm sewer pipe and 2,400 structures.

The Township also has 385 outfalls located within these watersheds, which are required to be maintained and inspected as part of the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Program. Since 2003 Ross has had an MS4 permit, with the last renewal in November 2013. MS4 permits allow operators of regulated small MS4's to design their stormwater programs to reduce the discharge of pollutants to the "Maximum Extent Practicable," protect water quality, and satisfy the appropriate water quality requirements of the Clean Water Act. As part of the program, Ross completes an annual progress report which is sent to and reviewed by the PA-DEP. The most recent report was dated June 9, 2014 and showed Ross to be in compliance with all activities. The Township's responsibilities for Pine Creek's TMDL, which is a calculation of the maximum amount of a



pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards, and an allocation of that load among the various sources of that pollutant, have been waived until the next permit cycle in 2018.

To continue the operation and maintenance of the extensive storm sewer system Ross purchased a Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) truck in 2014. The plan is to locate and televise all Township owned storm sewers. This will allow the Township to effectively analyze and repair any necessary deficiencies within the system.



In order to fund the maintenance of the storm sewer system and prevent/minimize future flooding, the Township should consider the creation of a Storm Sewer Authority.

GIRTY'S RUN WATERSHED

While Girty's Run is the main watershed leaving Ross, other watersheds in Ross are Thompson Run and Nelson Run. Girty's Run Watershed is a tributary of the Allegheny River and covers six municipalities including: Ross Township, Shaler Township, Reserve Township, McCandless Township, Millvale Borough and West View Borough. The watershed has a history of flooding, especially in the downstream community of Millvale. As part of the Stormwater Management Act (Act 167) of 1978; Allegheny County produced a stormwater management plan for Girty's Run, Pine Creek, Deer Creek and Squaw Run to alleviate flooding, which led to the formation of the Girty's Run Joint Sewer Authority (GRJSA). In order to control flooding the GRJSA constructed two storm water detention tanks in 2001, at a cost of \$20 million. While there was heavy flooding in both 2004 and 2007, there has not been significant flooding since.

An updated stormwater plan was drafted for Girty's Run, Pine Creek, Squaw Run and Deer Creek in 2005 and approved and implemented by the DEP in 2008. The plan requires developers in the watershed to submit stormwater management plans to prevent runoff and erosion and promote green infrastructure.



Currently there are two projects focusing on the improvement of Girty's Run. The first is a Girty's Run Stream Assessment, which is being completed by Allegheny Clean Ways through a grant administered by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. Second, Allegheny County is in the process of updating the Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan which will include Girty's Run Watershed. The county's draft phase I report was complete in spring 2014.

In 2003, the watershed was rated between poor and fair, by the Three Rivers Wet Water Ecology and Recovery Report of Allegheny County. As a community located at the headwaters of the Girty's Run Watershed, Ross's ordinances and regulations have the ability to produce a significant impact on the environmental conditions downstream. The Township must continue to review and update the stormwater management ordinance, to keep up with changing regulations and promote stormwater quality and control through green infrastructure.

LOWRIES RUN WATERSHED

The Lowries Run Watershed is a tributary to the Ohio River and covers six municipalities including; Ross Township, McCandless Township, Ohio Township, Emsworth Borough, Franklin Park Borough and West View Borough. While there has been flooding along Lowries Run, the County has determined there is no need to develop an Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan for the watershed.

In order to protect the watershed within the Township, Ross enacted a Rochester Road/Lowries Run Road Conservation Corridor Overlay District, as part of ordinance 2035 in 2002. The overlay district and ordinance promotes the protection of natural features, retainage of open space and the preservation of land area for future consideration of a pedestrian pathway. The ordinance also has strict guidelines on landscaping and street trees, which allows for additional stormwater control and quality.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT LIMITATIONS

WETLANDS

Wetlands are essential to the regulation of river flow by filtering pollutants and fertilizers, providing spawning zones for certain fish species, and providing habitat for plants, insects, amphibians, and birds. Wetlands slow and retain surface water, providing water storage and shoreline stabilization. Ross currently has one Freshwater Emergency Wetland and two Freshwater Ponds, which collect stormwater runoff from the Ross Park Mall Area. There are no significant concerns regarding wetlands in the Township, however the Township ordinance does specify a large amount of green/open space during the development of land. This will continue to ensure that Ross has natural areas of absorption in the future.

FLOODPLAINS

Floodplains also play an important role in the ecosystem. The natural floodplain is an important part of the water system. It affects storm runoff, water quality, vegetative diversity, wildlife habitat, and aesthetic qualities of bodies of water. Historically, development of communities has occurred in or near floodplains, making them highly susceptible to flooding. Approximately 150 acres of Ross Township falls within the 100 year floodplain; most of which includes businesses along Rochester Road, Lowries Run Road and Babcock Boulevard. Residential areas are also affected by the 100-year floodplain in the Northeast section of Ross, off of Thompson Run Road. The flood areas can be seen in Appendix C – Township Maps.

STEEP SLOPES

A prominent feature of Ross Township is the steep slopes of the terrain. Developing on steep slopes raises concerns about watershed conservation and the possibility of landslides. There are still areas within the Township that are landslide prone due to steep slopes and outcrops of redbed and associated rocks (as shown in Appendix C – Township Maps) that have the potential to be developed. Ross should continue to strictly enforce their grading ordinance which specifies the amount of sloped and landslide prone areas which may be disturbed on a given site.



MINERALS

The subsurface condition in Ross Township and throughout most of Allegheny County is made up of sandstone, red and grey shale, conglomerate, clay, coal, and limestone. Bituminous coal, or soft coal, is found throughout this region. Many communities throughout western Pennsylvania have experienced coal mine subsidence issues due to the extensive mining in the region. Ross Township has two areas which were previously mined, located off of Rodenbaugh Avenue and Mt. Troy Road Ext both of which have previously been backfilled. Ross has not experienced any significant issue with regard to mine subsidence and does not anticipate this to be a major concern in the near future. The same is true of most subsurface issues in Ross, with the exception of the recent phenomenon of Marcellus Shale gas drilling. The Township does not expect any significant issues with regard to subsurface conditions except Marcellus Shale. The issues and impacts surrounding Marcellus Shale are important for the community and warrant discussion in the Comprehensive Plan.

MARCELLUS SHALE ACTIVITY

In the past few years, the Marcellus Shale, which runs through much of Pennsylvania, has been explored for natural gas extraction. Also referred to as the Marcellus Formation, this is a Middle Devonian-age black, low density, carbonaceous (organic rich) shale that occurs in the subsurface beneath much of Ohio, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York. Small areas of Maryland, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia are also underlain by the Marcellus Shale. Geologists from the State University of New York at Fredonia estimate that the Marcellus Shale might contain more than 500 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

The Township's location on the Marcellus Shale deposit represents a potentially valuable natural resource. With an aggressive national focus on exploring alternative energy sources, the Marcellus Shale deposit represents significant natural gas resources. Until recently, the drilling process for Marcellus Shale was considered too expensive to be profitable; however, increased costs of oil have now made natural gas a competitive alternative. Marcellus Shale is not unique to Ross, and drilling companies are currently exploring drilling opportunities throughout Pennsylvania. Marcellus Shale gas exploration in the future, may offer Ross and its residents a number of opportunities for economic development, depending upon the market. While the Marcellus Shale deposit may present economic opportunities, Township officials should take care to proactively review current ordinances and make changes as needed to provide flexibility to take advantage of opportunities presented, while ensuring safety, quality of life, and environmental sustainability in the Township.

Overall, mineral extraction has not been an area of major concern for the Township. Recent events with regard to Marcellus Shale gas deposits raise important considerations for most communities across western Pennsylvania and

there have already been leases signed within the Township for Marcellus Shale rights. From a land use perspective, the Township must be proactive in its regulation of mineral extraction activities. In the past, municipal regulation of mineral extraction activities was a bit of a gray area, with private interests claiming that municipal regulation was preempted by the State Oil and Gas Act. The recent Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision in *Huntley vs. the Borough of Oakmont* (February 2009) makes clear a municipality's ability to regulate gas drilling activities. In the *Huntley* case, the court ruled that municipalities can regulate the location of gas drilling activities through their zoning regulations. The Township should determine the appropriate locations for gas drilling activities and amend its zoning ordinance accordingly.

The Township should continue to research and monitor activities and take policy action in the near future, in order to have an established law prior to companies attempting to drill.

FACILITIES

TOWNSHIP BUILDING

The Township's largest and most valuable asset is the Township Building, located at 1000 Ross Municipal Drive, which also serves as the Township's Community Center.

Built in 2002, it houses administration, tax collection, code enforcement, community development, the police department, a gymnasium, a full kitchen, classrooms, the Commissioners Board room and other meeting rooms. The construction of the municipal complex filled a need that residents had expressed in the 1995 Strategic Plan for the development of a Community Center.



Immediately adjacent to the Township Building are ball fields, a pavilion, a concession stand, and a playground. This area provides the perfect location for Township activities and plays host to the Township’s Community Day celebration. The Township Building is a multi-purpose facility that serves the community well for a variety of purposes. However, after over 12 years of use it is in need of a number of repairs. In 2014, the Township completely redesigned and replaced the buildings HVAC system. In future years, it will be necessary to address additional items such as the roof and interior updates.

PUBLIC WORKS FACILITY

The Public Works facility located on Cemetery Lane is an older facility that has outlived its useful life. With its two- story design and dozen truck bays, it served the Township well for over 25 years but it has deteriorated causing concern over the past several years. A study by a structural engineer revealed that the steel beams were in danger of failure and that the concrete had deteriorated to an alarming level. A decision has been made to demolish the building and to replace it with a new structure. The

location of the new facility will continue to be at the Cemetery Lane site and will house dozens of vehicles and include some storage and office space. A final budget number has not been determined but it will probably be in the \$7 to \$10 million range.



ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

Key Themes Future Land Use Implications



"Consensus isn't just about agreement. It's about changing things around: You get a proposal, you work something out, people foresee problems, you do creative synthesis. At the end of it, you come up with something that everyone thinks is okay. Most people like it, and nobody hates it."

David Graeber



ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

EMERGENCE OF KEY THEMES

Drawing from the background investigation and analysis and the public outreach efforts, certain key themes have emerged. In addition to interviews, public meetings, focus groups, and Steering Committee involvement, about 450 residents logged onto the electronic survey at the Township’s website to express their opinions. The following is a summary of the Key Themes that emerged from the entire process. The complete results from the electronic survey are provided in Appendix C.

PROVIDING HOUSING THAT MEETS A WIDE VARIETY OF NEEDS

Ross stakeholders communicated conflicting ideas about the need for diverse housing in the



Township. In discussions, stakeholders identified high-end housing (both condos and rental units) as the next step for Ross’s housing developments. However, when asked which kinds of housing were important or not important for the future of Ross, a majority of participants identified new single family homes as more important

COMMENTS FROM THE RESIDENTIAL ELECTRONIC SURVEY

“UPSCALE APARTMENTS & TOWNHOUSES SHOULD BE ADDED AROUND NEW AND SOUGHT AFTER BUSINESSES SO PEOPLE CAN WALK OR EASILY GET TO PLACES.”

“ROSS HAS A LACK OF QUALITY HOUSING FOR ACTIVE SENIORS.”

“WE NEED A GREATER VARIETY OF SENIOR HOUSING OPTIONS.”

“A CHALLENGE FOR THE TOWNSHIP IS AN AGING POPULATION TIED TO THE LACK OF ABILITY TO ATTRACT A YOUNGER DEMOGRAPHIC.”

“WE NEED TO ATTRACT PROFESSIONALS WHO WORK IN THE CITY. HOUSING SHOULD BE BUILT TO ATTRACT THESE PROFESSIONAL TYPES.”

“I THINK THE GREATEST CHALLENGE WILL BE CREATING NEW ‘SPACES’ AND A NEW TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT THAT IS WELCOMING TO FAMILIES.”

ANONYMOUS – RESIDENT SURVEY

than new townhomes or apartments/rental units. Apartments and rental units received the fewest "Important" votes. However, there were a couple recurring themes.

- Residents expressed a need for a variety of housing that addresses "cradle to grave" needs so that people can remain in the community for their entire lives.
- Senior housing, over-55 patio type housing, mixed use housing, affordable housing for young couples and families, and upscale rental units were cited as needs in the Ross community.

CONTINUING TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES AND STILL ADDRESS INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

Residents expressed concern that the Township will be able to continue to provide excellent services while addressing its aging infrastructure needs. Some residents worried about their current tax burden and the need to balance new development with the ability to pay for services.



Ross roadways consist of a mixture of State, County, Township and privately owned streets, with the Township owning approximately 111 miles of roadway. The majority of the main thoroughfares are either State or County including I-279, McKnight Road, Perry Highway, Babcock Boulevard, Lowries Run Road and Rochester Road.

The Township recognizes the need to maintain their streets and has a yearly budget of approximately \$1 million for their pavement maintenance program. Beginning in the summer of

COMMENTS FROM THE RESIDENTIAL ELECTRONIC SURVEY

"I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE AGING INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE TOWNSHIP REFUSAL TO ACKNOWLEDGE IT."

"THE CHALLENGE IS TO CONTINUE GROWING WITHOUT ADDING MORE INFRASTRUCTURE BURDENS AND WITHOUT ADDING TOO MUCH PUBLIC SERVICE RELATED COSTS."

"I WORRY ABOUT CONTINUING TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR POLICE, FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES IN THE FUTURE."

"WE NEED TO FOCUS ON OUR EXISTING ROADS – MANY OF THEM ARE IN DEPLORABLE CONDITION."

2014, Ross also began the process of rating all of their roadways using the PASER system.

Residents expressed absolute support and appreciation for their public safety services, rating police, ambulance, and fire departments as the best in the region with excellent quality. Many, however, worried about the ability of the Township to continuously maintain the quality of these services and about the demands that new growth and development can place on these services.

LACK OF BUSINESS DIVERSITY IN THE TOWNSHIP AND LACK OF STREETScape AMENITIES

Throughout the public involvement process, residents and other stakeholders stressed that they wanted to see a more **vibrant small business community**. They want small-scale or locally-owned eateries and independent retail businesses. Stakeholders told the team that Ross's current identity is tied to the higher-end Ross Park Mall and the abundance of 'big box' stores. While these resources bring outsiders into Ross to shop, they do not make up for a dearth of neighborhood-serving businesses.

Stakeholders stressed that the Township should do its utmost to foster a community of small businesses to make sure business owners have a voice in shaping Ross's future. Multiple stakeholders cited Coffee Buddha as a neighborhood asset in the Perry Highway corridor. Other specific suggestions included encouraging more farmers' markets and places for entertainment in Ross.

As a result of numerous real estate transitions, Ross stands at a crossroads in regard to development. Stakeholders cautioned the Township to make sure that Northway Mall will be developed wisely.

COMMENTS FROM THE RESIDENTIAL ELECTRONIC SURVEY

"I FIND MYSELF FREQUENTLY HEADING OVER TO OAKLAND, NORTHSIDE, LAWRENCEVILLE, ETC. FOR MANY THINGS. NO BIG BOX, I'M TALKING 'MOM AND POP' INDEPENDENT STORES."

"PLEASE ENCOURAGE SMALL BUSINESSES (E.G. COFFEE SHOPS) AND SMALL COMPANIES (E.G. SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT FIRMS)."

"WE NEED MORE FAMILY OWNED RESTAURANTS THAT AREN'T CHAINS."

"IMAGINE IF YOU PUT SIDEWALKS ALONG BABCOCK BLVD, LIGHT POSTS, LANDSCAPING, BENCHES, PARK LIKE SETTINGS. IT COULD BECOME A GREAT GATHERING POINT, AN EXTENSION OF NORTH HILLS ESTATES, MUCH LIKE MT. LEBANON. WE NEED TO CREATE A REASON FOR PEOPLE TO STAY AND SHOP."

"THERE NEEDS TO BE MANDATORY LANDSCAPING FOR ALL BUSINESSES ALONG MCKNIGHT THAT IS UNIFORM AND APPEALING TO RESIDENTS AND SHOPPERS."

"AESTHETICS – PERRYVILLE AVENUE LOOKS SO NICE WITH THE LAMP POSTS AND SIDEWALKS. CREATING A UNIFIED LOOK ALONG BABCOCK FROM THREE DEGREE TO SIEBERT OR BEYOND WOULD ADD TO A FEELING OF COMMUNITY."



- Create a design guide to promote attractive and consistent signage.

Residents also expressed concerns that current **development standards** may not protect Ross's cultural and natural resources. They made the following suggestions:

- "Go tall" with parking garages to allow businesses to expand capacity without expanding their footprint.
- Cut down on nighttime light pollution.
- Protect natural resources like forests and waterways.
- Balance new development with green space needs.
- Develop and enforce preservation regulations to encourage restoration before new development.
- Connect new and existing development to communities with transit and walkable/bikeable routes.

Residents cited not being able to shop, dine, and obtain personal and professional services in a pedestrian friendly business district that promotes connectivity. They cited McCandless, Cranberry, Hampton and other communities as examples of attractive corridors with attractive features and more inviting amenities.

Stakeholders also commented that many social gathering places ("Borders" in Northway Mall, McKnight Lanes, and others) have been lost over the years. They asked that the Plan encourage the development of numerous high-quality spaces that build on the work of current assets. Public meeting participants cited Coffee Buddha again and again as the type of space that promotes community socializing and Ross's arts community through its events. Stakeholders asked that the Plan promote a physical focal point, a gathering place, or an outdoor plaza within Ross Township to strengthen community ties.

IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT SERVICES

In planning transportation improvements for Ross's future, stakeholders stressed the need to start by acknowledging geographic barriers. McKnight Road effectively splits eastern neighborhoods from western. Street designs such as "cul-de-sac" isolate many neighborhoods from nearby communities and business districts.

Stakeholders also stressed the need for improved transit options for both local and regional trips. The reduction in Port Authority bus line routes was mentioned over and over as a real problem for many residents. Senior citizens, especially, felt that their transportation needs are not met. Businesses in the Perrysville area believe that their customers and employees can't get to them and that it has negatively impacted their business activity. Residents would like to be able to use transit services between residential neighborhoods in Ross and the McKnight commercial areas as well as to other local business districts like Perrysville and Babcock Boulevard. Some suggested creating a McKnight Road area circulator or shuttle.



COMMENTS FROM THE RESIDENTIAL ELECTRONIC SURVEY

"(WE NEED) MORE PARKING SPACES AT THE PARK N RIDE. THESE LOTS ARE OVER FILLED AND DO NOT PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE NUMBER OF SPACES FOR RIDERS."

"THE IDEAL SITUATION WOULD BE TO REPLACE THE HOV LANE WITH THE T LINE."

"WE NEED PAT BUSES AGAIN ON GASS ROAD."

"WE NEED BETTER LOCAL CONNECTOR BUS SERVICE TO MCKNIGHT ROAD."

"PLEASE WE NEED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PUT BACK ON BABCOCK BLVD. AND PERRY HIGHWAY – 2 MAJOR ARTERIES AND NO BUSES."

"MCKNIGHT ROAD, PERRY HIGHWAY, ROCHESTER ROAD, BABCOCK ALL SUFFER FROM YEARS OF NO COORDINATION AND PLANNING."

"CHANGING FROM A BEDROOM COMMUNITY TO A SHOPPING DESTINATION HAS OVER-LOADED THE ROADS. . . THE ROADS ARE NOT BUILT FOR THIS VOLUME."

Overdevelopment in the transportation corridors with no plan for traffic management was seen as a major problem. Signals, the timing of the traffic signals, and the lack of turning lanes were cited often. Speeding and the lack of traffic enforcement was also seen as a problem

Stakeholders encouraged the Township to look into funding for traffic calming improvements. Many described feeling unsafe on residential streets because of speeding and drivers disregarding traffic signals. This is especially important on McKnight Road and Babcock Boulevard as the corridors are transitioned to become more pedestrian-friendly.

STRONGER PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

Sidewalks, sidewalks, sidewalks were mentioned at least 100 times in the survey comment sections and at



every public outreach session. The issue of connectivity was mentioned over and over. Other connections mentioned were running, biking, walking, and hiking trails

One issue on which most Ross stakeholders agree is that their community needs stronger pedestrian connections that also encourage biking as a means of transportation. Stakeholders told the team again and again that Ross needs more sidewalks and safe biking routes, especially those that connect residential neighborhoods to small-business corridors.

Residents commented that more and better sidewalks would strengthen community ties by linking neighborhoods that are divided by Ross's meandering street design.

The business owners also expressed a desire for more walkable business corridors especially along Babcock Boulevard where there are sprinklings of small businesses and small local strip plazas. Sidewalks and street amenities would provide a more cohesive business environment.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE PRESERVATION OF GREEN SPACE

Ross residents see their community as an ideal place for recreation, with 22 parks, “beautiful topography,” and established forests. The future of Ross was described by many residents as relying on both active *and* passive recreational spaces. Many residents cited the need for good quality development that includes green space, pedestrian sidewalks, trails, and parklets.

Residents commented that they would like to see existing park resources improved and connected. Throughout the process, there was strong support for establishing and enhancing walking and biking trails that could connect to on-street bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.



This would enable new trails to serve both recreational users and those who would use them for transportation. Stakeholders pointed to enhancing

COMMENTS FROM THE RESIDENTIAL ELECTRONIC SURVEY

“NORTH HILLS HAS A FAIR AMOUNT OF LAND WITH TREES. THEY MAKE ME FEEL LIKE I AM LIVING IN A HEALTHY COMMUNITY THAT RESPECTS NATURE. THAT WAS A HUGE CONSIDERATION WHEN I DECIDED TO PURCHASE A HOME HERE.”

“PRESERVING GREEN SPACES FOR WALKERS AND NATURE LOVERS SHOULD BE A PRIORITY. BASEBALL, SOCCER, AND FOOTBALL FIELDS ARE NOT GREEN SPACES THAT MOST RESIDENTS CAN USE.”

“. . . WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE GREEN SPACES – BETTER AND MORE PARKS WITH HIKING AND BIKING AREAS – MORE SIDEWALKS – PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY.”

“. . . DESTROYING EVERY POSSIBLE TREE AND WOODED AREA TO BUILD HOUSES DOESN’T HELP PROTECT THE BEAUTY OF AN AREA AND CAUSES MORE PROBLEMS WITH EROSION AND OVERUSE.”

“NEED A BIG NICE COMMUNITY PARK. SOME OF THE LITTLE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS ARE NICE BUT NEED A NICE MAIN PARK.”

“WE NEED MORE THINGS FOR KIDS TO DO SUCH AS MOVIES, BOWLING, POOLS, PARKS, WATER PARKS, BETTER PLAYGROUNDS, SKATE PARK AND RINKS ”

active resources as a way to establish Ross's reputation as a place for recreation, attracting visitors and new residents.

Some specific projects suggested were a walking trail on the Old Harmony tracks, routes that would connect eastern and western neighborhoods, and more widely promoting events in Ross's many parks.

Residents love their quiet, wooded neighborhoods in what they describe as a convenient location with easy access to the City – they express concern about protecting the quality of the neighborhoods. Ross stakeholders place strong value on their passive recreational spaces. They appreciate their forests, gardens, and wildlife. In the future, they hope to preserve natural spaces by re-establishing forests, creating a nature preserve (potentially on Lowrie's Run or Girty's Run), creating and implementing a wildlife management plan, and promoting policies that would offer incentives to property owners for making environmentally-friendly improvements.

Stakeholders offered a wide range of suggestions for environmentally-friendly policies that could all be part of a "Sustainability and Green Plan" with a focus on careful, thoughtful, regulated development. They suggested:

- Encouraging LEED-certified development
- Establishing community vegetable and flower gardens
- Updating development standards to include better provisions for landscaping in parking lots and streets
- Installing LED street lights and
- Negotiating with utility companies to promote energy efficient choices.

Historic, old one-room school house in Evergreen Park.



MANAGING FUTURE RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL GROWTH

The issue of growth and development was one that caused residents to carefully consider consequences and impacts. There is a general recognition that new development provides tax revenue and helps to support a vital and healthy economic base. But residents are concerned that they will lose green space and the suburban character of the Township. They are also concerned that there will be more traffic congestion because of uncontrolled development in the future. Land use management scored high on every list and in the electronic survey.

Residents are generally supportive of development and growth but believe that the transportation system, recreation, and public services have not kept pace with growth in the past and fear that it will not keep pace with growth in the future.

**COMMENTS FROM THE RESIDENTIAL ELECTRONIC SURVEY**

"(I) DON'T WANT INCREASED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT THAT WILL CAUSE INCREASED TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND CROWDING IN SCHOOLS."

"I'D LIKE TO SEE GREATER VIGILANCE WITH RESPECT TO MONITORING AND COORDINATING DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP AND NEIGHBORING MUNICIPALITIES. THE IMPACT ON WILDLIFE, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND PROPERTY AFFORDABILITY AND VALUES IS A REAL ISSUE – ESPECIALLY WITH RESPECT TO FLOODING ISSUES."

"(I AM) JUST WORRIED ABOUT LOSING GREEN SPACE TO DEVELOPMENT WHEN THERE ARE ALREADY DEVELOPED AREAS THAT SHOULD BE REFURBISHED."

"THE TOWNSHIP MUST BALANCE THE NEED FOR BUSINESSES AND HOUSING WITH PROBLEMS THAT ARE CAUSED BY GROWTH LIKE CRIME AND TRAFFIC."

BRANDING AND IDENTITY

Ross stakeholders agree that promoting a coherent vision of the Township is a critical piece of planning for the future. When asked about Ross's identity, residents and business owners identified the following statements as important to a branding campaign:

- Ross is a multi-generational residential community.
- Residents have a strong sense of volunteerism through their churches, civic associations, and the fire department.
- There are plenty of opportunities for recreation.
- Ross Park Mall is a primary attraction to the Township.
- Though Ross is currently lacking in local arts and cultural activities, some are working to bring more activities to the Township.

Stakeholders offered some concrete projects that could be part of a branding effort. One key piece is as simple as welcoming visitors when they enter Ross. This could come in the form of a well-designed sign at the Township line. Residents and business owners suggested other ways to promote Ross's identity within the Township:

- Offer a wider variety of activities at the community center (i.e. performances, arts, festivals, lectures);
- Start a "Project of the Year" award for community projects that focus on environmentally-friendly improvements and foster Ross's spirit of volunteerism
- Create a guide to Ross and
- Improve the website by creating a mobile version and linking it to community groups' sites.

COMMENTS FROM THE RESIDENTIAL ELECTRONIC SURVEY

"ROSS IS REALLY ONLY KNOWN AS A DESTINATION SHOPPING AREA. NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT OUR HISTORY AND CULTURE."

"THE TOWNSHIP HAS A RICH HISTORY AS EVIDENCED BY ITS BUILDINGS, ITS PEOPLE, AND ITS POSITION AT THE GATEWAY TO PITTSBURGH."

"WE ARE FORMER CITY RESIDENTS AND WE ARE SO GLAD TO BE HERE. CAN'T SAY ENOUGH GOOD THINGS ABOUT ROSS."

"WE ARE KNOWN AS A VEHICLE BASED COMMUNITY – ONLY ACCESSIBLE BY CAR. THIS WILL LEAD TO ROSS BEING A "PASS IT BY" KIND OF AREA. BY CREATING A MAP OF PATHWAYS OR SIDEWALKS . . . ROSS COULD BE CONNECTED INTO A NETWORK OF ROUTES THAT WOULD GET RESIDENTS ACROSS THE AREA WITHOUT NEEDING TO RELY ON A CAR. THAT SHIFT WOULD ENCOURAGE BETTER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES, ATTRACT AFFLUENT RESIDENTS, PROVIDE A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT, HELP EASE CONGESTION, AND WOULD BE AWESOME!"

FUTURE LAND USE IMPLICATIONS

EMPTY NESTERS ARE ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING SEGMENTS OF THE ROSS TOWNSHIP POPULATION. WHAT ARE THE EMPTY NESTERS LOOKING FOR?

- An Active Life Style
- Recreation and Leisure
- Art and Culture
- Inter-Generational Living
- Smaller Houses & Apartments
- Walkable Urban Places



THE YOUNG WORKFORCE SEGMENT IS ALSO ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING POPULATION SEGMENTS IN ROSS TOWNSHIP. WHAT IS THE YOUNG WORKFORCE SEGMENT LOOKING FOR?



- Active Lifestyles
- Balance of Work & Play
- Amenities (Quality of Place)
- Arts and Culture
- Diversity
- Environmental Sensitivity
- Variety of Employment Opportunities

As it turns out, the Young Workforce Segment and the Empty Nesters are looking for many of the same lifestyle options. This has significance for housing, land use, and the business environment planning for the future.

- Consumers are all but tapped out financially based on national statistics for debt obligations.
- The growing segment of Empty Nesters along with Young Workforce Millennials have created a variety of market opportunities that include more diversity in housing options.
- Lower fertility rates, fewer children per household, more renters, higher debt, and the rise of the non-family household all have implications for future land use planning.

IN THE FUTURE, THERE MAY BE MORE SELLERS OF SINGLE FAMILY HOMES THAN BUYERS.



- **Millenials May Not Want Your House**
- Empty Nesters are choosing to downsize and consider alternative housing options.
- Young adults are averse to taking on more debt, maintenance, and expense related to home ownership.
- Young adults are looking for walkable communities with easy access to amenities.
- Young adults are looking for the flexibility that renting provides.
- Experts say that the Millennials could become career renters.

VISION AND GOAL SETTING

**Welcome to Our Neighborhoods
Open for Business
Moving and Shaking
Sense of Place**

"North Hills has a fair amount of land with trees. They make me feel like I am living in a healthy community that respects nature. That was a HUGE consideration when I decided to purchase a home here."

Anonymous Resident





VISION AND GOAL SETTING

WELCOME TO OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

Ross Township residents love their neighborhoods. They feel that their neighborhoods provide a green, welcoming, quiet suburban environment that forms a buffer to the hectic and fast paced living that is just minutes from their doors. They like the convenience of being able to get to jobs, shopping, and dining easily and quickly – and are resistant to any intrusions into their tranquil, natural environment in the residential areas. This section will provide some information and strategies for maintaining and enhancing the quality of neighborhoods and housing in the Township.

HOUSING PROFILE

Housing characteristics are perhaps one of the clearest indicators of a community's overall health. Trends in characteristics such as home ownership and tenure can alert a community to the fact that its current housing stock may not be adequate to support the needs of a particular age or income group. Housing is also typically the single

largest source of tax revenue for a community.

Between 2000 and 2007, Ross Township lost 56 housing units, but since 2007, the Township has experienced small gains. According to the 2012 ACS 5-Year estimate, the Township has about 15,000 housing units. **Table 10** and **Figure 14** show the small but steady gains in the number of housing units between 2000 and 2012 and what is projected over the next 5 years.



TABLE 10 – ROSS TOWNSHIP HOUSING UNITS		
Year	Housing Units	Percent Increase Decrease
2000	14,464	
2007	14,366	-0.4%
2008	14,641	1.9%
2009	14,725	0.6%
2010	14,909	1.0%
2011	14,908	0.3%
2012	14,943	0.2%
2013	15035	0.6%
2018	15069	0.2%

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND ESRI PROJECTIONS THRU 2018

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU



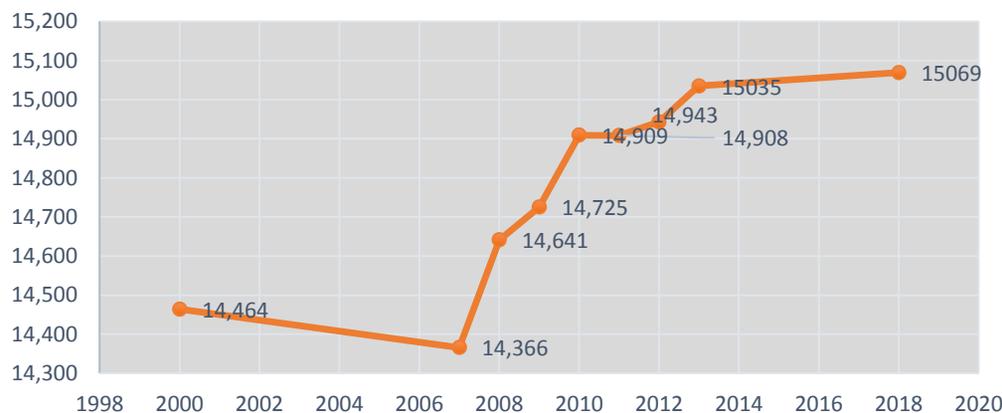
NORTH HILLS ESTATES NAMED BEST OVERALL NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE NORTH HILLS

NORTH HILLS ESTATES, FOUNDED IN 1929, WAS ONE OF THE EARLIEST HOUSING PLANS TO BE BUILT IN THE NORTHERN SUBURBS OF PITTSBURGH. TODAY, "THE ESTATES" IS COMPRISED OF 518 HOMES OVER 175 ACRES AND IS ONE OF THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER COMMUNITIES NORTH OF PITTSBURGH. WITH ITS ELEGANT HOMES, NEARBY PARK, AND YEAR-ROUND ACTIVITIES FOR RESIDENTS, IT'S NO SURPRISE THAT IT WAS SELECTED AS "BEST NEIGHBORHOOD-NORTH" IN THE NORTHWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD AWARDS FOR 2014.

"THE ESTATES" PROVIDES HOUSING FOR EVERY STAGE OF LIFE. THERE ARE SINGLES, COUPLES, FAMILIES WITH BABIES AND TEENAGERS, AND SENIOR CITIZENS WHO HAVE LIVED IN THE COMMUNITY THEIR ENTIRE LIVES. THE RESIDENT WHO SUBMITTED THE NOMINATION STATED "THERE ARE NO MANSIONS, NO CLUBHOUSE, AND MINIMAL ASSOCIATION FEES, BUT THERE ARE LOADS OF FRIENDLINESS COMBINED WITH STRONG NEIGHBORHOOD PRIDE."

IN COMMUNITY – ROSS TOWNSHIP
FALL 2014 WWW.ICMAGS.COM

Figure 14 - Ross Township Housing Trends

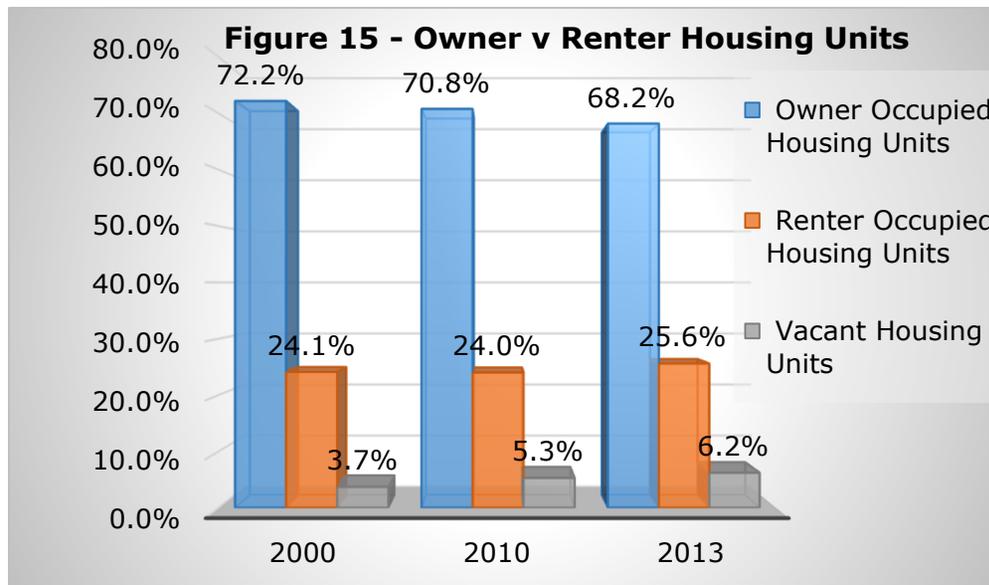


HOUSING OCCUPANCY

Similar to most of the Pittsburgh region, Ross Township has seen a slight decrease in owner occupied housing versus renter occupied housing since the 2000 census. In 2012, the ACS estimated that 69.5% of the Township’s housing units were owner-occupied. It is interesting to note that the share of both renter-occupied and owner-occupied units decreased at the same rate per year between 2000 and 2012. Vacancy nearly doubled in the same time period.

TABLE 11 - ROSS TOWNSHIP HOUSING OCCUPANCY				
	2000	2010	2013	COMPOUND ANNUAL CHANGE 2000 TO 2012
Owner-occupied	72.2%	70.8%	68.2%	-0.3%
Renter-occupied	24.1%	24.0%	25.6%	-0.3%
Vacant	3.7%	5.3%	76.2%	5.6%

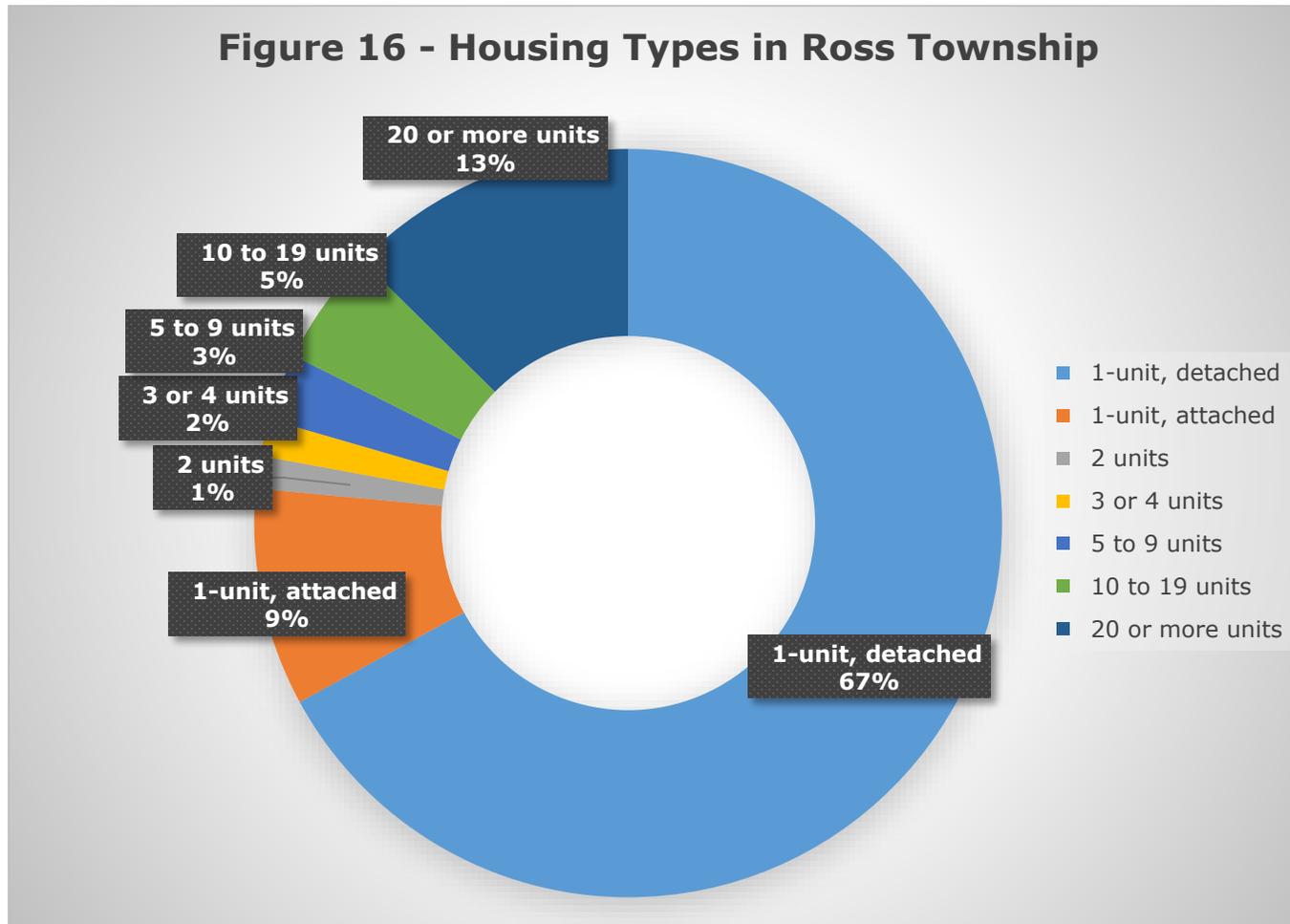
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU



AS THE NUMBER OF FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS GOES DOWN, THE NUMBER OF HOME SALES ALSO DECLINES. IN FACT, THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS REPORTED THAT THE NUMBER OF EXISTING HOME SALES DECLINED IN AUGUST OF 2014. THE ASSOCIATION ALSO STRESSED THAT CONSTRUCTION ON MULTI-FAMILY HOMES PICKED UP SHOWING THAT DEMAND IN THE RENTAL SECTOR WAS STILL HIGH. EXPERTS ADDED THAT UNTIL THE EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES SCENARIO OF THE COUNTRY IMPROVED, THE GROWTH WOULD REMAIN CHOPPY AND UNSTABLE. THERE WILL CONTINUE TO BE LESS DEMAND FOR SINGLE FAMILY HOMES AND MORE DEMAND FOR RENTAL UNITS INTO THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

HOUSING TYPES

Figure 16 indicates that over two-thirds of residential buildings in the Township are single-family detached dwellings. The next two most common housing types are buildings of 20 units or more (13%) and single-unit attached dwellings (9%).



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

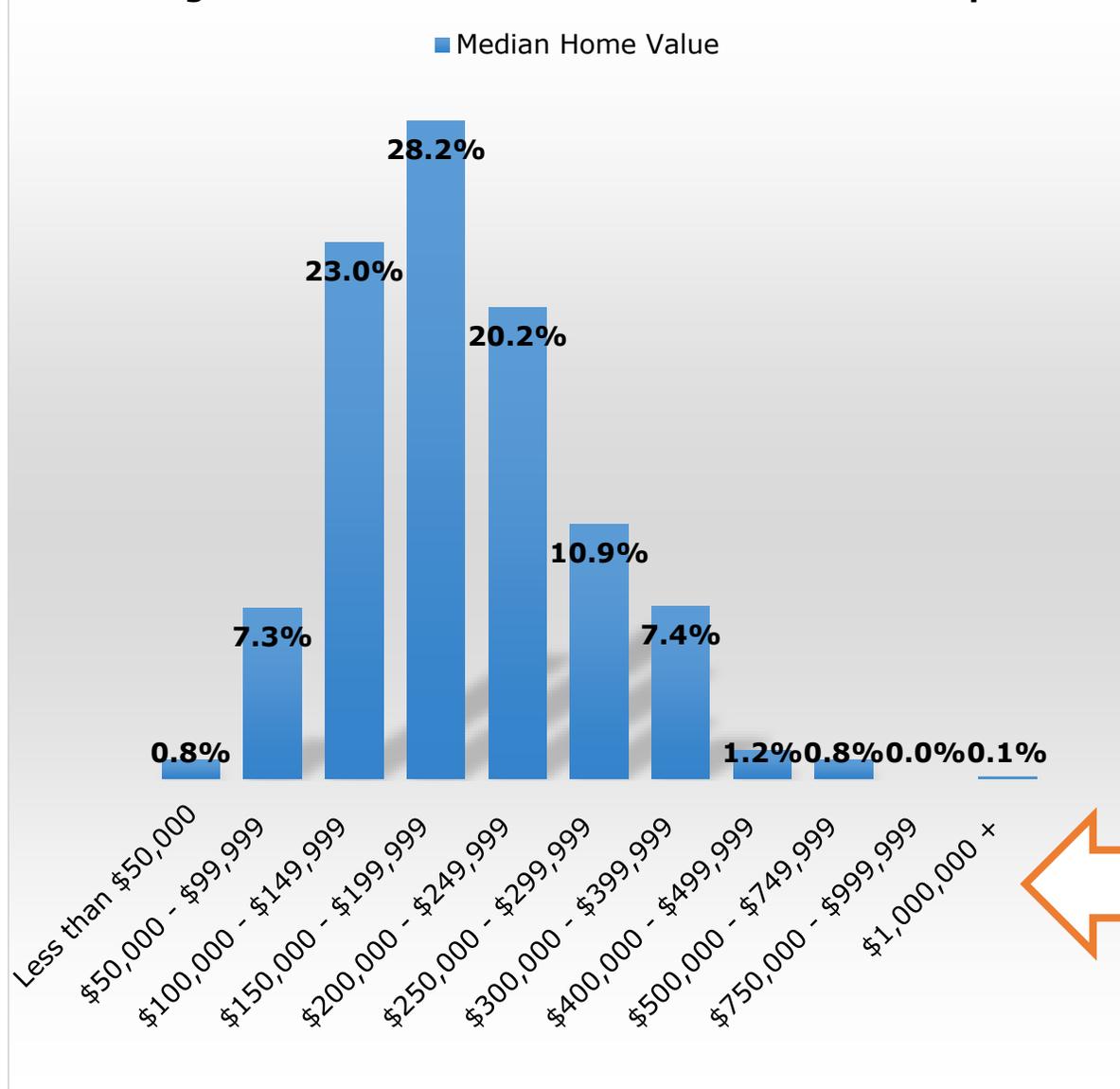
HOME VALUE

The median value of a home in the Township in 2012 was \$146,400 according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Between 2000 and 2012, median home values in the Township increased by about 5%. **Table 12** shows how these values compare to median home values in surrounding municipalities. The Township median home values and compounded annual change between 2000 and 2012 are near the middle of the range for surrounding municipalities. Nearby municipalities such as Franklin Park, McCandless and Ohio Township experienced high rates of growth, while denser municipalities such as Avalon, Bellevue, Pittsburgh, and West View did not experience the large increases that Ross Township did.



TABLE 12 - MEDIAN HOME VALUES				
MUNICIPALITY	2000	2012	% CHANGE	COMPOUNDED ANNUAL CHANGE
Ross	108,700	146,400	34.5%	2.9%
Avalon	69,500	83,300	19.9%	1.7%
Bellevue	70,500	100,400	42.4%	3.5%
Franklin Park	198,000	290,700	46.8%	3.9%
Hampton	133,700	202,800	51.7%	4.3%
McCandless	146,400	201,500	37.6%	3.1%
Ohio	144,600	239,000	65.3%	5.4%
Pittsburgh	59,700	88,500	48.2%	4.0%
Reserve	83,000	107,900	30.0%	2.5%
Shaler	100,400	141,400	40.8%	3.4%
West View	81,000	117,300	44.8%	3.7%
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU				

Figure 17 - Median Home Value in Ross Township



RECENT SALES IN ROSS TOWNSHIP

THERE ARE A VARIETY OF TYPES, PRICES, AND LOCATION OPTIONS FOR HOME OWNERSHIP IN ROSS TOWNSHIP. A RECENT SEARCH OF THE ZILLOW INTERNET WEBSITE INDICATED THAT IN OCTOBER OF 2014 ONE HOME SOLD FOR \$2.7 MILLION WHILE ANOTHER SOLD FOR \$90,000. THIS MAKES ROSS TOWNSHIP A VERY ATTRACTIVE OPTION FOR A VARIETY OF POTENTIAL HOME OWNERS AT ALL PRICE POINTS.

Most home values in Ross Township range between \$100,000 and \$300,000. This makes living in Ross affordable with a diversity of available housing stock.

AGE OF HOUSING STOCK

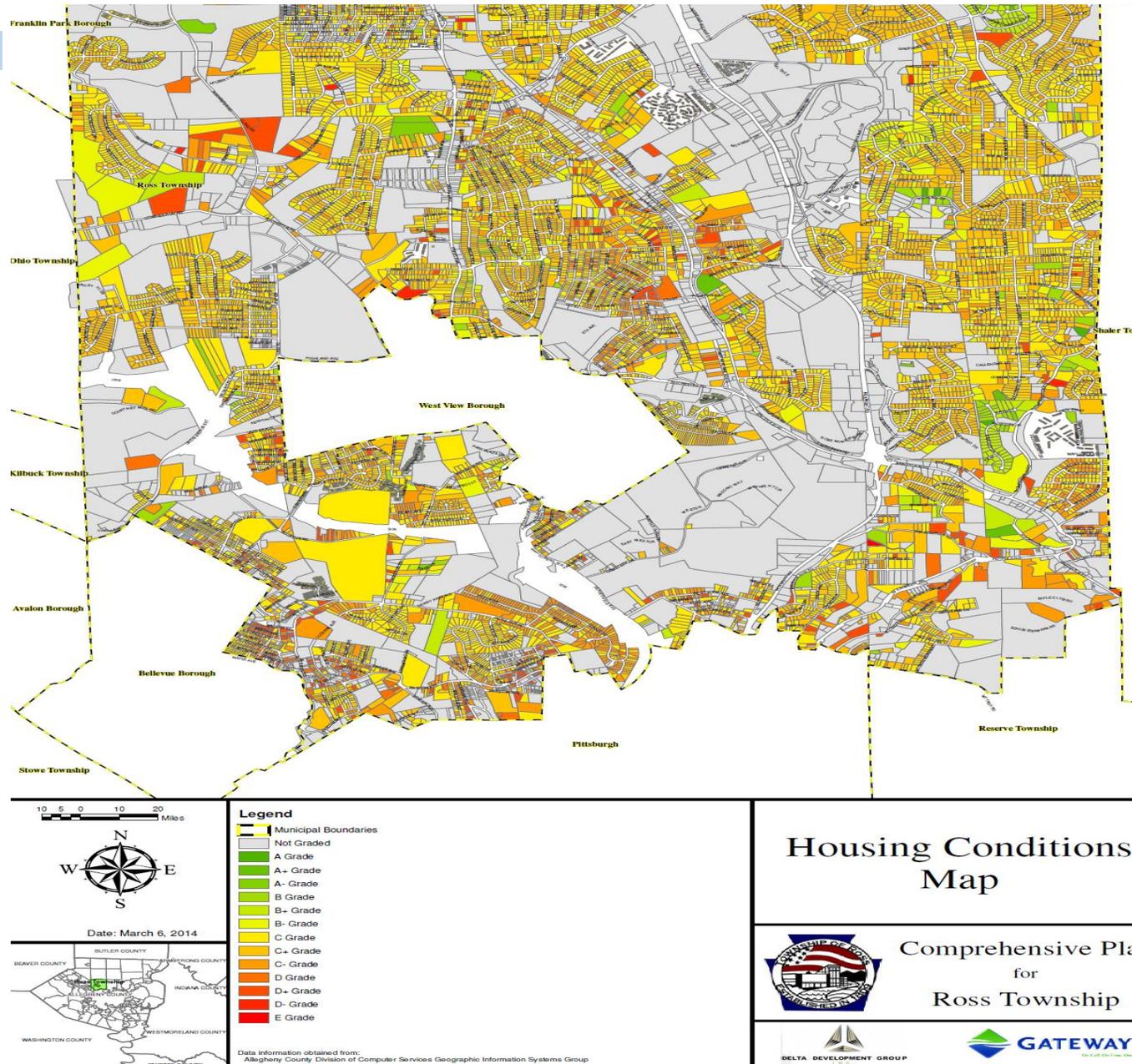
According to the 2012 ACS estimate the median year a home was built in the Township was 1963. This means about half of the homes in the Township are over 51 years old. **Table 13** compares the age of housing in the Township to the median age of housing in the surrounding municipalities, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and the United States. Municipalities with a lower median age tended to have larger increases in median home value.



TABLE 13- MEDIAN YEAR HOME BUILT		
MUNICIPALITY	MEDIAN YEAR	MEDIAN AGE
Ross	1963	51
Avalon	1950	64
Bellevue	1939*	75
Franklin Park	1983	31
Hampton	1975	39
McCandless	1972	42
Ohio	1995	19
Pittsburgh	1939*	75
Reserve	1955	59
Shaler	1959	55
West View	1943	71
Allegheny County	1954	60
Pennsylvania	1960	54
United States	1975	39
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU		
* SAMPLE SIZE TOO SMALL		

HOUSING CONDITIONS

The county assigns condition ratings to all housing in Allegheny County. **Map 5** provides the information that has been collected by the county. The county only takes into consideration the age, composition, and size of the building. It does not adjust for location, improvements, and other conditions that might make a house more or less valuable in any given location. For this reason, most Township housing was rated C or C+ on the county's rating scale.



VISION STATEMENT: Ross Township will continue to provide a wide variety of housing opportunities in stable and attractive neighborhoods in order to meet the needs of their residents and attract new residents at all stages of their lives.

OUR GOALS:

Enhance existing neighborhoods by addressing infrastructure needs and creating pedestrian connections.

ISSUE: With 111 miles of roads in the Township, Ross is hard pressed to adequately address all of the paving needs in the Township neighborhoods. Many residents cited the lack of upkeep and maintenance of streets in the neighborhoods as having a direct impact on the quality of their community life and the values of the housing stock. Residents also cited the lack of sidewalks and connections to other neighborhoods and commercial areas as a barrier to a more cohesive community life. Pedestrian access (sidewalks and trails) to community parks and shopping areas would provide more support for the local shopping districts and allow more use of Township recreation areas.

"The challenge is to continue growing without adding more infrastructure burdens and without adding too much public service related costs."

ACTION ITEMS:

- Develop a comprehensive "pedestrian overlay district" (POD) ordinance and map for the specific residential and commercial areas. An advisory committee of residents who have an interest in this issue should be appointed. The POD development should take into

MAKING COMMUNITIES WORK FOR ALL

"IT DOESN'T MATTER WHERE THEY LIVE- IN A BIG CITY, A SUBURB, OR A RURAL TOWN, THE VAST MAJORITY OF OLDER ADULTS WANT TO REMAIN IN THEIR HOMES AND COMMUNITIES FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE," SAID NANCY LEAMOND, AN AARP EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT.

THAT'S MORE LIKELY TO HAPPEN, IF THE COMMUNITY AND HOME HAVE FEATURES THAT ARE SUITABLE FOR RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES. "LIVABLE" COMMUNITIES GENERALLY HAVE SOME OF THESE: WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOODS; PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS; AFFORDABLE HOUSING; SAFE STREETS; EASY ACCESS TO SHOPPING AND GREEN SPACES; AND INDOOR AND OUTDOOR PLACES FOR ALL AGES TO GATHER AND STAY CONNECTED.

HOMES WITH FEATURES SUCH AS A STEP-FREE ENTRANCE TO THE HOUSE, LEVER HANDLES ON DOORKNOBS AND FAUCETS, AND THE POTENTIAL FOR ONE-FLOOR LIVING ARE SAFER FOR OLDER PEOPLE.

IT'S IMPORTANT WE ALL STEP UP OUR GAME," LEAMOND SAID, "BECAUSE BY 2030, 1 OF EVERY 5 AMERICANS WILL BE 65 OR OLDER."

AARP BULLETIN/NOVEMBER 2014
WWW.AARP.ORG/AGEFRIENDLY

- account the neighborhood topography, right of way areas, and existing roadway and parking patterns.
- Require any new development and redevelopment to install improvements that are consistent with the POD standards.
- Begin to budget annually for sidewalk and trails as funding permits in the neighborhoods based on the adopted POD map. Priority should be given to linkages that create connections to parks and neighborhood commercial districts.
- Supplement local funding with applications for PENNDOT transportation multi-modal funds, DCNR recreation funds, and Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) greenways and trails funding. Additional money may be available through the county’s Community Infrastructure and Tourism Fund (CITF) and Gaming Economic Development (GEDF) grant funds.

“A challenge for the Township is an aging population tied to the lack of ability to attract a younger demographic.”

Maintain and improve current housing stock

ISSUE: The Ross Township housing stock is aging – the median age of a home in Ross Township is 51 years. Many of the structures and accessory structures are in need of update and repair. A strong well maintained housing stock is the best way to increase property values and to attract new residents to the community. Aggressive code enforcement is the number one strategy that can be implemented to protect a community from a decline in its property values.



ACTION ITEMS:

- Improve and strengthen code enforcement. The Township currently utilizes one (1) part time code enforcement officer to address over 15,000 properties in the Township. With such limited manpower, this operation is primarily “complaint” driven. In order to be more proactive, this department should be upgraded with additional personnel and resources.

- Adopt the latest version of the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC). Currently, the Township operates under the 2009 IPMC. This could be a problem if the Township cites under this Code and there is a newer version with newer standards that should be used.
- Encourage investment and maintenance of properties in the Township by relying on stronger code enforcement especially for “absentee landlords” and introducing property owners to county programs that might provide funding or abatement for improvements.

Encourage More Diversity in Types of Housing Availability

ISSUE: Senior housing, over-55 “patio type” housing, mixed use housing, affordable housing for young couples and families, and upscale rental units were cited as needs in the Ross community. Regional and national trends support these needs – specifically, the “baby boomers” and the “millennials” are seeking more rental units at market price in areas that are adjacent to desired shopping, dining, and employment opportunities. Ross has an opportunity to capture some of this market by



“I think the greatest challenge will be creating new ‘spaces’ and a new type of development that is welcoming to families.”

implementing tools that will encourage this type of housing diversity, especially around transit stops.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Include additional areas that are zoned for mixed use and higher density. Currently, Ross Township residential areas are zoned primarily for single family home residential use. This has created problems and has forced “spot” zoning in the neighborhoods for higher density or small commercial areas. It is important to carve out areas for mixed use and higher density residential alternatives especially

where the character of the neighborhood is compatible to mixed use.

- Consider transit oriented development (TOD) overlays at the transit stop adjacent to the Ross Park Mall, and the Port Authority Park-n-Ride and wherever else it may make sense. The TOD should include compatible uses for apartment units, transit use, and support services such as dining, personal services, and small retail establishments.
- Incentivize development for the types of housing development that is desired by the Township through the use of LERTA, TIF, or TRID which captures the incremental value of the development in order to assist the developer with the public improvements such as parking and infrastructure.

Encourage Additional and Enhance Existing Senior Housing

ISSUE: Seniors who participated in the community survey and focus groups cited a lack of senior housing opportunities that would allow them to stay in the Ross Township community and continue to have access to the shopping, dining, medical facilities, and entertainment that they desire and with which they are familiar. Although the Township has some senior hi-rise options, the services for seniors are limited and the challenges have increased with the elimination of some of the Port Authority bus routes that previously met senior access needs. Lack of sidewalks was also cited as hindering the ability of seniors to walk to

parks, shopping, services, and dining areas.



“Ross has a lack of quality housing for active seniors. We need a greater variety of senior housing options.”

ACTION ITEMS:

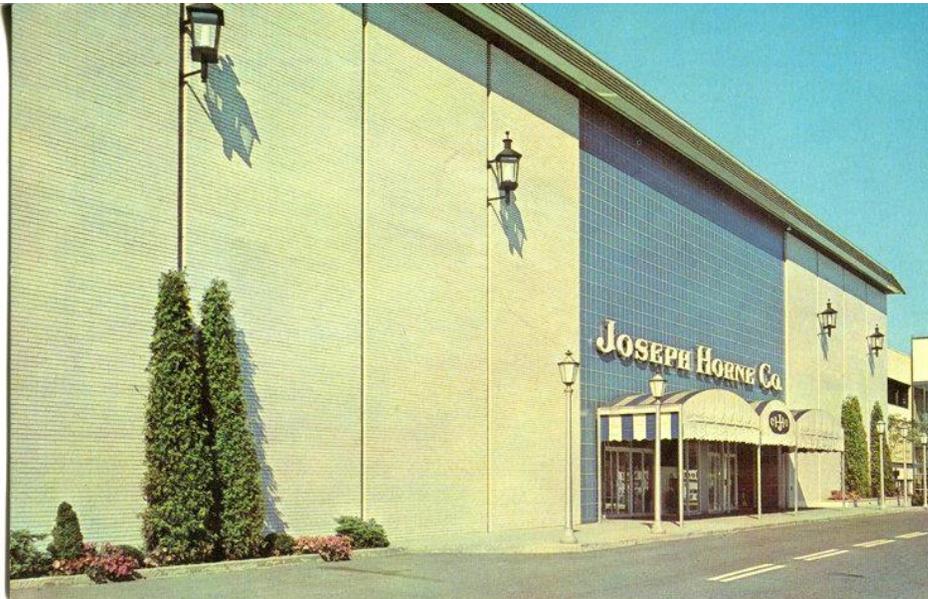
- Consider providing zoning that would allow for upscale condominium living, market apartment rental, or “quad” unit development for “early baby boomers” who may not desire the traditional senior living but may

choose to live in “over-55” developments with urban amenities. Seek developers who specialize in the “over 55” market in order to identify opportunities in the Township.

- Contact and work with supportive housing development firms (like Action Housing) to access the county programs and HUD for assisted housing for seniors with lower incomes who may be interested in continuing to live in Ross Township as they age.
- Work with senior agencies like Lifespan and ACCESS to incorporate more programming and transit opportunities for seniors especially in the Township’s recreation and leisure activities.
- Include senior representation in developing the POD in order to provide pedestrian connections to existing senior housing facilities.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Historically, Ross Township has been a destination shopping area for the entire region drawing customers from as far as



“I am generally concerned about the lack of diversity, large number of big box stores, and lack of small business, independently owned retail, upscale grocers, diners, restaurants, and specialty stores.”

Butler and Lawrence counties and even the eastern Ohio communities to the original Northway Mall and then to Ross Park Mall. Today, McKnight Road offers a full range of products and services that are attractive to shoppers throughout western Pennsylvania. But as lifestyles change, consumers shop in different ways. They shop closer to where they work, do much of their shopping on-line, and travel to large retailers and specialty retail at major outlets. Although McKnight Road and the Ross Park Mall continue to be major draws for customers in the region, many shoppers are looking for more unique shopping experiences that include specific dining destinations or entertainment experiences. Because of the importance of the commercial

business district activity to the Township’s long term health and sustainability, a market profile was conducted as part of the comprehensive planning process.

BUSINESS MARKET PROFILE

A market analysis is in essence a series of tools used to analyze current building uses, business mix, market area size, and economic and consumer data. A market profile will help to provide the foundation necessary to identify potential opportunities in different business and retail sectors for Ross Township.

DID YOU KNOW?

- RETAIL VACANCY RATES HAVE RISEN NATIONALLY AND SLUGGISH RENTS ARE AN INDICATOR THAT SUPPLY EXCEEDS DEMAND.
- NEIGHBORHOOD, LIFESTYLE, AND COMMUNITY CENTERS HAVE SHOWN SLIGHT INCREASES IN RENTS AND LOWER VACANCY RATES.
- THERE IS A NEW FOCUS ON FAMILY-ORIENTED EVENTS, TECHNOLOGY, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND ENTERTAINMENT WITHIN SHOPPING AREAS.
- SPECIALTY AND NICHE SHOPPING IS TRENDING.

In order to establish a geographic parameter for the Market Area Analysis, a Primary Market Area (PMA) has been defined as Ross Township and a 10-minute drive time radius from Ross Township. The area has been determined by availability of public transportation and the access to goods/services in this area from Ross Township. Drive times are an acceptable definition of market area and are considered an industry standard for market analysis. The 10 minute drive time is used to quantify population and competitive products in the commercial sectors.

The primary commercial districts in Ross Township are the McKnight Road corridor, Babcock Boulevard, and Perrysville, each with their own distinct shopping and dining characteristics and personality. McKnight Road is home to large scale retailers, “big box” stores, strip malls, and Ross Park Mall. Babcock Boulevard supports smaller retail and dining establishments that are primarily automobile dependent. Perrysville Avenue supports smaller personal service, retail, and dining that is primarily pedestrian oriented. Each shopping area is important to Ross Township residents and to the region and each provides a “niche” for various



types of shopping experiences. Many residents believe that Ross Township’s identity centers around the size and variety of its shopping areas.

RETAIL GAP ANALYSIS

In order to evaluate the current level of market saturation and the potential for capturing new markets, a “retail gap analysis” was performed for a 10 minute drive time from the Ross Township primary market area. In performing the “gap analysis,” the following establishments were identified.

ROSS TOWNSHIP PRIMARY MARKET AREA 10-MINUTE DRIVE TIME		
Industry Sector	# of Business Establishments	% of Total Establishments
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	281	5.2%
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	204	3.8%
Electronics & Appliance Stores	191	3.5%
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	197	3.7%
Food & Beverage Stores	606	11.2%
Health & Personal Care Stores	311	5.8%
Gasoline Stations	145	2.7%
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	559	10.4%
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	363	6.7%
General Merchandise Stores	107	2.0%
Misc. Store Retailers	886	16.4%
Nonstore Retailers	225	4.2%
Food Services & Drinking Places	1,319	24.5%
Total	5,394	100.0%

SOURCE: ESRI ANALYSIS, BUSINESS ANALYST 2014

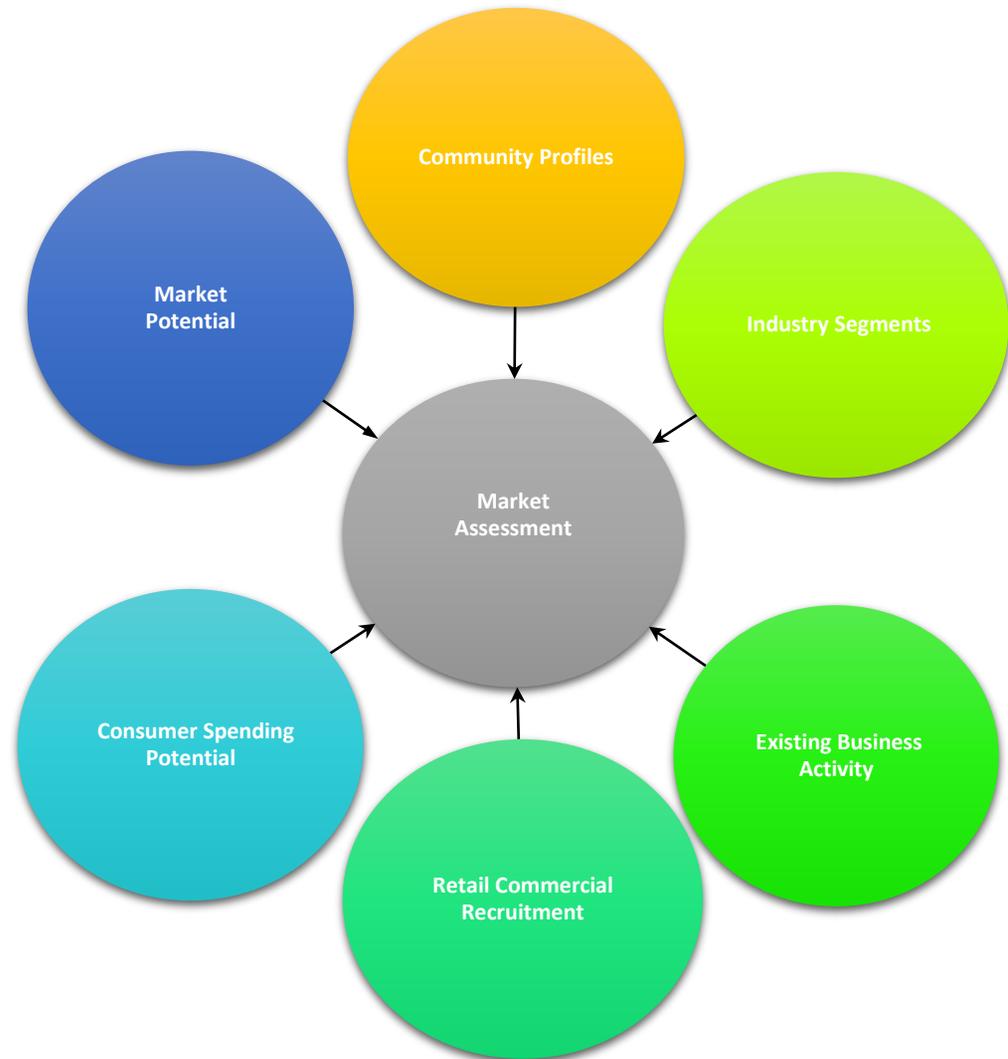
A “gap” analysis measures the dollars that are spent in a given area on specific items and then calculates how many of those dollars could potentially be captured by the Ross Township retail market. Important concepts from the “gap analysis” are retail “surplus” and “leakage.” The knowledge gained from these measurements can inform the Township about opportunities for future development.

“Leakage” means that residents are spending more for products than is currently being captured in the Ross market. Leakage can present opportunities for retail that are not currently being addressed because residents are spending their retail dollars outside of the Ross primary market area for these products.

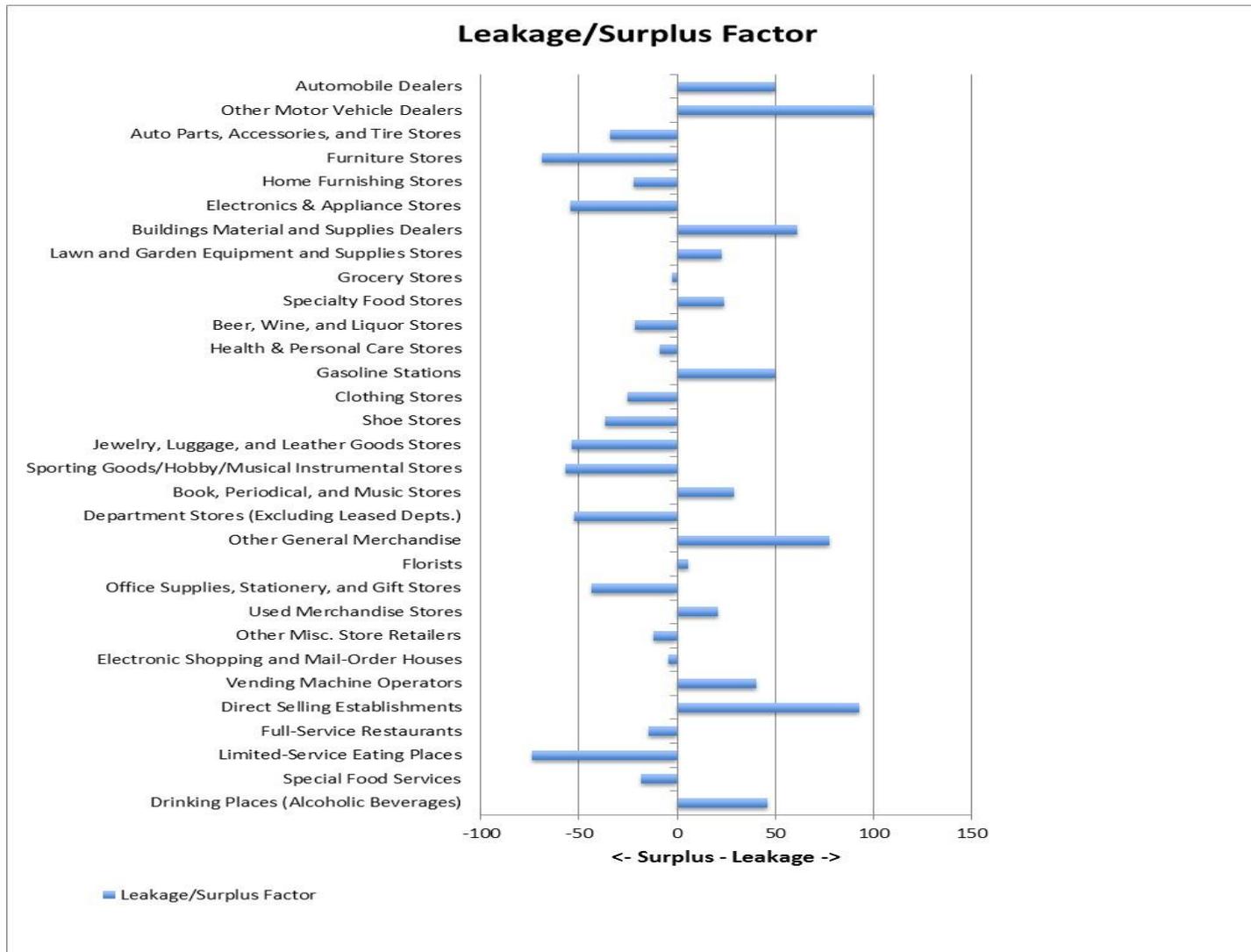
The “gap analysis” also identifies “surplus” which means that the product is attracting consumers outside of the Ross market because there are more dollars being spent for these products than exist within Ross Township. This can be a good thing because it brings outside consumers into the market who may also take advantage of other shopping and dining opportunities.

A market assessment takes into account all of the information available about the current market including but not limited to:

community demographics, the industry segments represented in the primary market area, the existing business activity, the consumer spending potential, the current market potential and the potential for additional retail recruitment. While this section of the report is not a substitute for a full blown market assessment, it does provide



some information about what retail segments are strong and what opportunities are available and can be captured in the current market.



SOURCE: ESRI ANALYSIS, BUSINESS ANALYST 2014

Retail markets that demonstrated a large “leakage” (more dollars spent for these products outside of the Ross market) are: automobile dealers, other motor vehicle dealers, building materials and supplies, gas stations, general merchandise stores, and direct selling establishments. There was also a “leakage” for drinking places (alcoholic beverages) which was echoed in discussions with residents who identified a lack of locally owned meeting/drinking/dining places and the fact that they had to leave Ross Township to find such establishments.

Retail markets that demonstrated the largest “surplus” (more dollars spent in the Ross market by consumers drawn from outside of Ross Township) are: furniture stores; electronics and appliance stores; jewelry, luggage and leather goods; sporting, hobby, and music stores; department stores; office supplies, stationery, and gift stores; and limited service eating places (fast food and chain restaurants). This also reflects the comments of the steering committee, public, and focus groups who complained that there were dozens of department stores and fast food places but very few full dining and small local retail opportunities.



SPENDING POTENTIAL INDEXES

Understanding the spending patterns and the spending potential of the targeted customer base and market is an important way to determine how much retail spending can be captured in the market areas that surround Ross Township. The table below analyzes the Spending Potential Index that reports the amount that consumers spent in specific retail markets in the 3-minute, 5-minute, and 10-minute drive time areas relative to a national average of 100. For instance, if the Spending Potential Index for computers in the local area is 50%, it means that local households spend 50% less on computers than the average U.S. household.

The table below shows that for Ross Township as well as the 3-, 5-, and 10-minute drive times, there are some industry sectors where consumers in the respective market areas are spending more than the national average. In particular, it appears that Ross Township and the 3-minute drive time market areas have larger spending potentials than the 5- and 10-minute drive time markets respectively. In particular, consumers in Ross Township and the 3-Minute Drive Time market area are spending more than the national average in industry sectors that include: Education, Entertainment and Recreation, Health Care, and Travel. See the following table for more information.

Sector	Ross Township		3-Minute Drive Time*		5-Minute Drive Time*		10-Minute Drive Time*	
	Spending Potential Index	Household Spending						
Apparel & Services	67	\$21,323,298	68	\$51,149,009	65	\$116,606,711	67	\$441,446,016
Computer & Accessories	100	\$3,490,147	101	\$8,347,436	96	\$18,905,418	99	\$71,804,226
Education	103	\$21,248,324	105	\$50,922,091	99	\$114,735,021	105	\$445,845,078
Entertainment/Rec.	105	\$48,002,565	106	\$113,898,536	101	\$258,506,435	100	\$951,785,104
Food at Home	100	\$71,023,075	102	\$170,211,471	98	\$390,844,045	99	\$1,455,769,917
Food Away from Home	99	\$44,717,073	101	\$107,014,491	97	\$243,652,778	99	\$920,576,693
Health Care	108	\$67,723,569	107	\$158,398,161	102	\$357,966,374	98	\$1,278,651,072
HH Furnishings & Equip.	89	\$22,731,358	90	\$54,013,042	86	\$122,605,023	86	\$454,966,857
Investments	93	\$27,080,436	89	\$60,927,729	78	\$127,281,549	81	\$488,780,988
Retail Goods	97	\$330,974,085	98	\$787,240,904	94	\$1,797,716,731	94	\$6,621,449,524
Shelter	102	\$232,755,934	103	\$552,233,570	97	\$1,243,359,021	98	\$4,667,184,851
TV/Video/Sound Equip.	101	\$18,409,931	103	\$44,073,136	99	\$101,226,283	100	\$377,062,079
Travel	105	\$27,080,306	105	\$63,512,784	98	\$141,418,454	96	\$516,517,936
Vehicle Maintenance & Repairs	102	\$15,698,201	103	\$37,365,250	98	\$85,006,501	98	\$313,863,661

SOURCE: ESRI ANALYSIS, BUSINESS ANALYST 2014

There are also some industry sectors where Ross Township's market areas are spending less than the national average which include: Household Furnishings and Equipment and Investments. It is particularly interesting to note that spending potential in the Apparel and Services sector is significantly lower than the national average for all market areas including Ross Township. For example, the Apparel and Services industry sector for Ross Township has a 67 spending potential index. This means that consumers in Ross Township, despite the presence of a large amount of department stores, general merchandise, clothing, shoe, and jewelry stores are spending only 67% of what the national consumers are spending in the Apparel and Services sector.

Overall, Ross Township, in most categories continues to provide a shopping and dining destination market for residents from all over the region as demonstrated by the high number of surplus categories.

The table below is a summary of the potential dollars spent (demand) and the retail sales in trade and dining that exist (supply). Overall there is a surplus of 7.4% or \$58 million in retail and 57.3% or \$103 million in food and drink that come into the Ross primary market from other markets.

Industry Summary	Retail Potential (Demand)	Retail Sales (Supply)	Retail Gap	Leakage (+) / Surplus (-) Factor	# of Businesses
Total Retail Trade	\$365,553,559	\$423,559,042	(\$58,005,483)	-7.4	297
Total Food & Drink	\$38,305,652	\$141,281,090	(\$102,975,438)	-57.3	66
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	\$403,859,211	\$564,840,132	(\$160,980,921)	-16.6	363

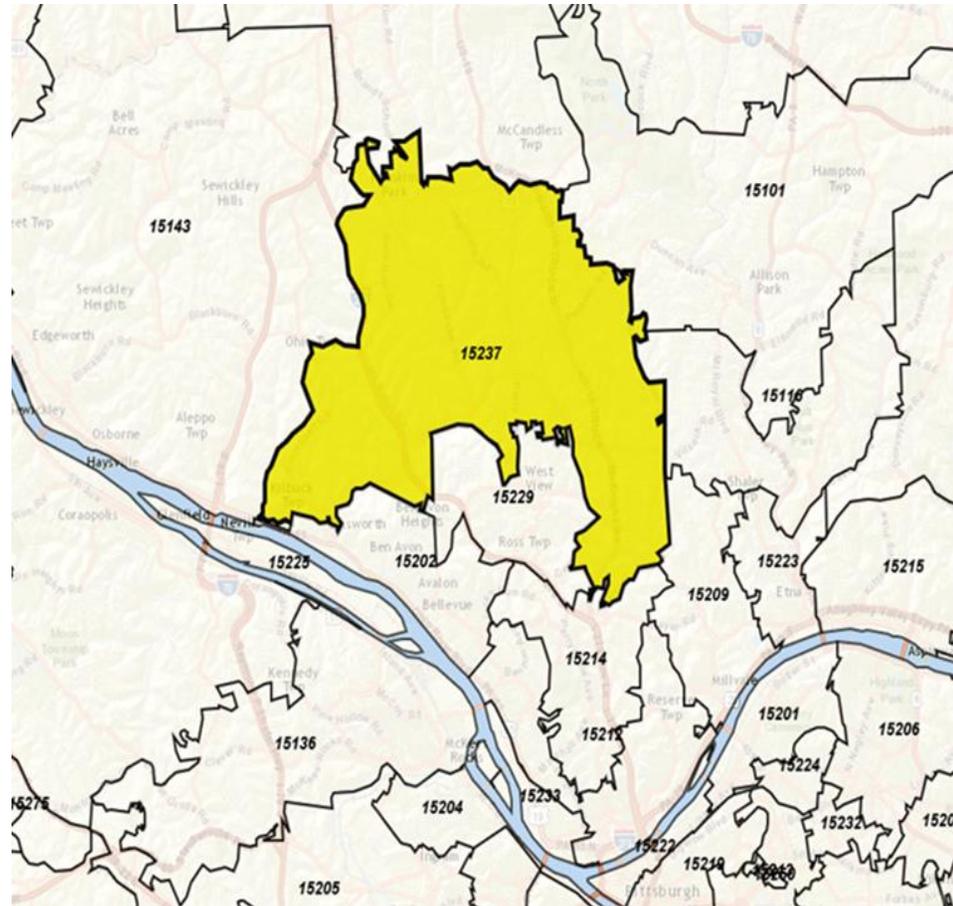
BABCOCK BOULEVARD HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE A DESTINATION SHOPPING, DINING, ENTERTAINMENT AREA BECAUSE OF ITS SMALLER LOTS, AND CONNECTIONS TO MAJOR ARTERIES. PUBLIC ART, SIDEWALKS, AND PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES WOULD HELP TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT WOULD BE INVITING TO RESIDENTS AND VISITORS. A NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPPING DISTRICT WOULD PROVIDE A METHOD TO CAPTURE CURRENT LEAKAGE FOR DINING AND SMALL RETAIL.



TAPESTRY ANALYSIS – A CONSUMER PROFILE

Another method for evaluating the consumer market in a community is the “Tapestry Analysis.” Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), founded in 1969 as a land use consulting firm, is a supplier of GIS databases and management applications. One of the products that they provide as part of their business analyst services is the ESRI Tapestry™ Lifestyle Segmentation. ESRI’s Tapestry™ classifies the US population into 67 distinct market segments based on their socioeconomic and demographic variables such as age, income, home value, occupation, household type, education, and other consumer behavior characteristics. It provides a comprehensive lifestyle description and details in order to assist planners with information about possible retail markets in the defined project area.

Ross Township falls primarily in the 15237 zip code area and the residents in this area display certain dominant characteristics. The largest 3 Tapestry™ segments identified in Ross Township are “Comfortable Empty Nesters” (28%); “In Style” (17%); and “Retirement Communities” (12%). Descriptions of each consumer type are shown below.



**TAPESTRY™ LIFESTYLE
CHARACTERISTICS FOR ROSS TOWNSHIP**

28% Comfortable Empty Nesters

**Household Type: Married Couples
Housing: Single Family**

You can find us in the suburbs and small towns of metro areas across the country. Transitioning from child-rearing to retirement those of us still working are earning a comfortable living from jobs in government, health care, or manufacturing. Financial well-being is a priority; we've invested prudently in stocks, real estate, mutual funds, and CDs throughout the years. We attend to home maintenance issues and physical exercise; we play golf, ski, ride bikes, and work out regularly. Going on-line isn't particularly important, we log on occasionally on older computers.

Segmentation systems operate on the theory that people with similar tastes, lifestyles, and behaviors seek others with the same tastes – hence the adage “like seeks like.” These behaviors can be measured, predicted, and targeted. Community Tapestry combines the “who” of lifestyle demography with the “where” of local neighborhood geography to create a model of various lifestyle classifications, or segments, of actual neighborhoods with addresses – district behavioral market segments. Understanding the lifestyle and behavior of households in the trade area is just as important as understanding their basic demographic profile and buying power.

17% In Style

**Household Type: Married Couples, No Kids
Housing: Single Family**

We're professional couples or singles with strong work ethics and no kids. We embrace our urbane lifestyles that support the arts, travel, and extensive reading. To reflect our style, we focus on home maintenance and improvement. We'll undertake remodeling projects ourselves or hire contractors. Always connected, we carry smartphones and use many of the features. Healthy investment income boosts our wages and net worth.

12% Retirement Communities

**Household Type: Singles
Housing: Multi-Units; Single Family**

You can find us almost anywhere in the US. Many of us live alone in single-family houses, independently in apartments, in assisted living, or in continuous care nursing facilities. Most of us rent. We stay informed via newspapers and magazines instead of the computer. We subscribe to cable TV so we can watch QVC, the Golf Channel, CNN, and sports. We pride ourselves in being fiscally responsible. We stay active, we go to the theater and the opera, play golf, and take vacations in the US and overseas when our budgets permit. Even if we have to pay more, we stick to our favorite brands, including medications, but make up the difference with coupons.

8

⁸ Tapestry is a trademark product of the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), <http://www.esri.com/institute> (ESRI), Tapestry Lifestyle Segmentation.

VISION STATEMENT: Ross Township will be a community that actively supports all types of commercial activity and encourages not only large scale retail development but also a diversity of small neighborhood businesses, services, dining, and entertainment with opportunities for pedestrian oriented activities and connections.

OUR GOALS:

Encourage more business diversity

ISSUE: Ross Township residents described the business and commercial districts in Ross Township as one of the most important and defining characteristics of the community. They were pleased to be in close proximity to a large variety of shopping and dining experiences. However, some residents noted that there was not as much diversity as they would like to see and not enough local shopping and dining experiences. There is a general concern about the lack of diversity, large number of big box stores, and lack of small business, independently owned retail, upscale grocers, diners, restaurants, and specialty stores. The continued use of a “central business district” or “neighborhood business district” for parts of Babcock Boulevard and Perrysville Avenue in order to encourage a diverse mix of retail, dining, entertainment and small professional and personal service establishments would help to advance this concept.

“I find myself frequently heading over to Oakland, Northside, Lawrenceville, etc. for many things. No big box, I’m talking ‘mom and pop’ independent stores.”



ACTION ITEMS:

- Create “neighborhood commercial” zoning designations with smaller lots and a variety of uses that encourage business diversity.
- Consider using a mixed use designation (MUD) adjacent to small shopping areas in order to allow higher density residential that will support the retail and dining establishments.
- Adopt a traditional neighborhood development (TND) overlay zoning district in those areas that are established neighborhood retail. A TND can protect the look, character, and integrity of a

“Please make sidewalk construction along the McKnight Road shopping corridor a high priority for Township improvements.”

- neighborhood commercial district and is more consistent with form based zoning than traditional zoning.
- Actively engage in recruiting a wider range of “niche” retail and dining services that are unique to the Ross commercial corridors and will serve as destination establishments.
- Designate transit oriented development (TOD) zoning district overlays for areas at the transit stops that service the McKnight Road corridor at the Northway Mall and Ross Park Mall.

Create Pedestrian Linkages to the Commercial Districts

ISSUE: Sidewalks, sidewalks, sidewalks were mentioned at least 100 times in the survey and at every public outreach session. The issue of pedestrian connectivity was mentioned over and over whether it was connecting with parks, neighborhoods, or business districts. Other connections mentioned were running, biking, walking, and hiking trails that encouraged people to safely move from place to place.



ACTION ITEMS:

- Develop a Streetscape Enhancement Overlay (SEO) zoning district for the McKnight Road and Babcock

Boulevard corridors. A SEO can provide regulations that require new development and redevelopment to include sidewalks, street trees, landscaping, decorative lighting, street furniture, and other pedestrian amenities. An SEO can completely transform a corridor over time.

“Perrysville Avenue looks so nice with the lamp posts and sidewalks. Creating a unified look along Babcock from Three Degree to Siebert or beyond would add to a feeling of community.”

- Explore the possibility of obtaining PENNDOT Transportation multi-modal funds for implementing the SEO for both McKnight Road and Babcock Boulevard.
- Include desired sidewalks and trails in the commercial districts in the POD map. Representatives from the three major commercial areas (i.e. McKnight, Babcock, and Perrysville) should be included in the discussions when laying out the POD and assessing the usefulness and practical application of the POD elements and standards.
- Plan and develop pedestrian connections from Ross Park Mall to the adjacent residential neighborhoods and to the transit stop and potential TOD development.
- Plan and develop pedestrian connections from Perrysville to surrounding residential neighborhoods in the form of sidewalks and trails.



“Imagine if you put sidewalks along Babcock Blvd., light posts, benches, landscaping, and created a “park like” setting. It could become a great gathering point, an extension of North Hills Estates. We need to create a reason for people to stay and shop.”

Improve the Appearance of Properties in the Commercial Districts



ISSUE: Many residents believe that there should be mandatory landscaping requirements for all businesses along the business corridors that is uniform and appealing to residents and shoppers. They noted that aesthetics are important for creating an inviting and enjoyable shopping experience. Greening of the corridor through trees, landscaping, and green infrastructure was mentioned in several survey comments. Research supports this opinion – the social life in public spaces contributes to the quality of life in a community.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Set up a mini-grant program for façade improvements, signs, landscaping, street furniture, and other pedestrian amenities on Babcock Road and Perrysville Avenue. Set up a design committee to review applications for program projects.
- Add decorative banners, planters, and holiday lighting along the major corridors.
- Adopt regulations and design guidelines for the corridors that establish recommended street trees, landscaping, signage, lighting, furniture, trash receptacles, benches, etc. Establish an advisory group to work on the development of these guidelines.
- Step up code enforcement for properties that show high grass and weeds, debris, garbage, or improper storage of supplies, equipment, or vehicles. Enforce the IPMC.
- Provide incentives in the stormwater management ordinance for property owners who are interested in installing green infrastructure in the form of permeable pavements, landscaping areas, and bio-swales that will temporarily detain some of the stormwater runoff from parking lots and buildings.

MOVING AND SHAKING – TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT

Overdevelopment in the transportation corridors with no plan for traffic management was seen as a major problem by many Ross Township residents. Signals, the timing of the traffic signals, and the lack of turning lanes were cited often. Speeding and the lack of traffic enforcement was also identified as a problem. Many residents pointed



out that the cuts to public transit have created serious issues for residents in terms of being able to get to jobs, shopping, and major institutions in the City of Pittsburgh.

ROADWAYS

Ross Township roadways consist of a combination of state, county, Township and privately owned streets, with the Township owning approximately 111 miles of roadway. The majority of the main thoroughfares are either state or county including I-279, McKnight Road, Perry Highway, Babcock Boulevard, Lowries Run Road and

“Changing from a bedroom community to a shopping destination has over-loaded the roads. . . the roads are not built for this volume.”

Rochester Road. The Township has two traffic overlay districts along McKnight and Lowries Run which mandate traffic studies and impact fees when development is proposed.

TRAFFIC SIGNALS

There are currently 41 signalized intersections within the Township that Ross owns, maintains and operates, along main roads such as; Mcknight Road, Rochester Road, Perrysville Avenue, Union Avenue, Perry Highway, Babcock Boulevard and others. A full list of all signalized intersections and permit numbers is attached in Appendix D.



BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN



Sidewalk and bicycle lanes in Ross Township are almost non-existent even along main thoroughfares such as McKnight Road and Babcock Boulevard. However, there has been increased pressure on developers to include sidewalks along at least one side of the road in new developments. The current Ross Township Zoning Ordinance dictates the establishment of a pedestrian easement for all new construction, land developments, change of uses and for building reconstructed or rehabilitated over 25 percent of tax value or for buildings expanded by 10 percent or more which front on Rochester Road, Lowries Run Road, and Sewickley Oakmont Road.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The only source of public transportation in Ross is the Allegheny County Port Authority bus system, which is limited to routes along Mcknight Road, Perry Highway, Thompson Run Road and Peoples Township Road. Residents in the northwest corner of Ross have no direct access to public transportation, without making use of the Allegheny County Park N Ride located off of Perry Highway.





VISION STATEMENT: Ross Township will have a transportation system that provides safe, efficient, and environmentally supportive access for residents. The system will include public transit, vehicular roadways, biking, and pedestrian elements that move people from neighborhoods to services, employment, recreation, shopping, and entertainment.

OUR GOALS:

Restore Transit Routes to Major Thoroughfares and High Volume Areas

ISSUE: The reduction in Port Authority bus line routes was mentioned over and over as a real problem for many residents. Senior citizens, especially, felt that their transportation needs are not met since routes have been eliminated or reduced. Business owners in the Perrysville area believe that their customers and employees can't get to them and that it has negatively impacted their businesses.

ACTION ITEMS

- Schedule meetings with Allegheny County Port Authority to explore the restoration of bus routes to Babcock Boulevard, Three Degree Road, Perrysville Highway and other high traffic areas.
- Conduct public hearings to measure the level of interest of residents in the public transit bus route issue and their willingness to commit financial resources to accomplish the goals.
- Consider methods and processes for providing a "local connector" bus route from neighborhoods to the McKnight Road destinations.
- Expand the current senior bus service to more locations and greater frequency.
- Work with ACCESS to provide greater opportunities for seniors from senior housing to medical, shopping, and dining centers.

"We need public transportation put back on Babcock Boulevard and Perry Highway – 2 major arteries and no buses."

Develop More Parking Spaces at the Park N Ride



ISSUE: Residents noted that there is a need for more parking spaces at the Port Authority Park N Ride at the Perrysville exit. More residents would use public transportation to access employment destinations if they were able to park their vehicles at the Park N Ride.

“These (Park N Ride) lots are over filled and do not provide an adequate number of spaces for riders.”

ACTION ITEMS:

- Work with the County officials and the Port Authority to acquire additional land in order to expand the current Park N Ride.
- Work with the County officials and Port Authority to encourage a transit oriented mixed use development at the Park N Ride site that will include additional parking facilities as part of the development project. Consider the use of LERTA, TIF, and Tax Increment Financing for the parking facility in order to make the public parking affordable for development.
- Update the new Zoning Ordinance to include a TOD at the Park N Ride site in order to encourage mixed use development that includes additional transit parking.

Develop a Comprehensive Funding Program for Maintenance of Roads

ISSUE: There are 111 miles of roads in the Township. The current level of annual appropriation is about \$1 million which paves approximately 3 miles of roads per year. Although on the surface, \$1 million would appear to be a large allocation, at the rate of 3 miles per year, it will take the Township 37 years to address all of the Township roads. It is necessary to design and continue to allocate a higher level of spending for roads. Beginning in the summer of 2014, Ross began the



process of rating all of their roadways using the PASER system. Once completed, this process will allow Ross to effectively review the status of all roads within the Township and implement a replacement plan.

The residents have indicated a willingness to spend their tax dollars for infrastructure and road repair. The Township residents also desire streets that include more pedestrian connections, sidewalks, bike paths and trails.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Adopt the updated Transportation Partnership District ordinance in order to establish fees for new development or redevelopment in the McKnight Road corridor.
- Consider adopting Transportation Impact Fees for the Lowries Run Corridor in order to establish and collect fees for new development or redevelopment of roadways including traffic signals and lane widening.
- Levy at least 1 mill of real estate tax that is dedicated to road improvements each year. One mill of tax should bring in approximately \$2.4 million in taxes which will reduce the time necessary to address maintenance for every road in the Township to once every 17 years. This more closely matches the useful life of pavement.

“The Township should install bike markings ‘share the road’ on Babcock and on Thompson Run.”

Create a Multi-Modal Transportation System



ISSUE: Residents noted at every meeting and on dozens of surveys that there was a need for bike paths, sidewalks, and trails throughout the Township. Healthy lifestyles and changes in demographics have created a demand for more pedestrian oriented activities and the need for more walkable communities. Enabling safe access for pedestrians and bikers will help improve the experience and help to make alternatives to car travel more attractive.

The Steering Committee mapped out a complete system of trails and sidewalks that would provide connections throughout the Township.

Ross Township streets should achieve a balance so that different users of the roadway will be accommodated while maintaining safe, inviting, and livable streets.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Adopt the policy of “complete streets” for the design, development, or redevelopment of Township roads. According to the National Complete Streets Coalition (smartgrowthamerica.org): “Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities.



“The Township should build more sidewalks to link key areas for pedestrians. Please make Ross more walkable and bikeable.”

Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from train stations.” Complete streets can also be important for creating economic activity for smaller business areas such as Babcock Blvd. and Perrysville. According to the National Complete Streets Coalition: “Building more sidewalks and striping bike lanes has been shown to create more jobs than traditional car-focused transportation projects.”

- Adopt a POD ordinance and map outlining where sidewalks will be installed. Appoint a citizens advisory group to discuss the elements of the “complete street” model that can be incorporated into design guidelines and can be the basis for a POD program.
- Recruit interested volunteers to conduct “complete street” audits of important Township connector streets in order to assess pedestrian linkages, handicap ramps, access to transit stops, opportunity for bike paths and other amenities. Have Township public works employees work with volunteers to advise what is possible and how improvements can be initiated and implemented.
- Require sidewalks and bike paths in every new development through the proposed Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO).
- Work with “Bike Pittsburgh” to commission a biking plan along major roadways in the Township with safety and connectivity as prevailing guidelines.
- Consider reducing speed limits and creating one-way restrictions on neighborhood roads.

"I have to leave the Township to find safe roads."

- Consider applications for county and state funding to install trails, bike paths, and pedestrian walkways.
- In established neighborhoods where residents support the installation of sidewalks, consider an assessment that would pay for all or part of the installation.
- Adopt a Streetscape Enhancement Overlay (SEO) ordinance that requires sidewalks and streetscape amenities in the commercial districts. Specifically, the Babcock Boulevard area between Siebert and Three Degree Road could benefit from an SEO and streetscape project that install sidewalks, lighting, and pedestrian amenities.

CREATING A SENSE OF PLACE

Ross stakeholders agree that promoting a coherent vision of the Township is a critical piece of planning for the future – in other words, creating a "sense of place." Memories of personal and cultural experiences over time make a place special, favorite objects that shape to your hand or body with use, songs or dances that emerge from the people of a place, special skills you develop to enjoy your area—these things help to define a place and anchor you in it. Through time, shared experiences and stories (history) help to connect place and people and to transmit feelings of place from generation to generation.⁹ When asked about what things contribute to Ross residents' vision of an authentic place, some of the characteristics that were identified were:

- The Township is a multi-generational residential community with housing that meets all needs and price points.
- Residents have a strong sense of volunteerism through their churches, civic associations, and the fire department.
- There are plenty of opportunities for recreation and there is a need to protect, preserve, and expand these opportunities.
- The Ross Park Mall and shopping is a primary attraction and destination for visitors to the Township.
- Though Ross is currently lacking in local arts and cultural activities, residents are working to bring more activities to the Township.



⁹ Dr. Thomas Woods, "Making Sense of Place," Importance of Place, www.importanceofplace.com

VISION STATEMENT: Ross Township will be well known as a community with outstanding neighborhoods, schools, recreation, and public services. It will also be known as one of the most diverse and inviting shopping and dining destinations in the region.

OUR GOALS:

Preserving Residential Living on Wooded Lots

ISSUE: Residents love their quiet, wooded neighborhoods and express concern about protecting the quality and character of their surroundings. Many residents cited the need for good quality development that includes green space, sidewalks, trails, and parklets.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Adopt the concept of “Livable” communities that address the lifestyle features that are desired by residents of all ages. These include: walkable neighborhoods, public transportation options, affordable housing, safe streets, easy access to shopping, dining, and entertainment, green spaces, and indoor and outdoor places for all ages to gather and stay connected.
- Use the proposed SALDO to implement the “livable” communities concepts and include provisions for

“I’d like to see greater vigilance with respect to monitoring and coordinating development within the Township and neighboring municipalities. The impact on wildlife, natural resources, and property affordability and values is a real issue – especially with respect to flooding issues.”

landscaping, street trees, and stormwater management elements including retention ponds, residential rain gardens, and bio-swales. The SALDO can be the Township’s best tool for requiring desired elements in the development of new residential and commercial areas.

- Use stormwater management best practices. Encourage the use of permeable surfaces for parking, access drives, and driveways.
- Consider adopting an Official Map for the Township that identifies areas in neighborhoods that will be preserved in the future for green space, parklets, or public trail development. An Official Map can provide the Township with the ability to acquire identified property should the property owner intend to sell it or develop it.



Go green – Implement Sustainable Best Practices

ISSUE: The parks, open spaces, and natural environments are valued by residents who were clear about the preservation of their neighborhoods and preference for “green” spaces in their business districts. The main corridors in Ross are lacking in trees, landscaping, natural elements that would make it more inviting to residents and visitors. Residents expressed a need for better open space and a commitment effort to “green streets” and better management of stormwater. Going green can benefit the local economy, improve the appearance of the Township and assist in the mandates placed on local governments to reduce stormwater and flooding.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Consider establishing a Shade Tree Commission and task them with developing a tree planting program. Hire an arborist to work with the Commission to select street and yard tree species. Promote the benefits of tree planting to residents and businesses. Organize an annual tree planting day to implement the tree planting plan.
- Implement a rain barrel program for residents so that they can disconnect roof leaders. The water can be used for gardens.
- Consider requiring some permeable areas for private and public parking areas in the proposed zoning ordinance update. Grass strips or permeable pavers can reduce the amount of stormwater that is discharged into the storm sewers.
 - Encourage the use of composting, rain gardens, and “green” streets in residential neighborhoods.
 - Consider the creation of a Stormwater Authority to coordinate stormwater management practices between residents, businesses, schools, local organization, and the Township. This can be done as a “stand alone” authority or in conjunction with surrounding communities in a joint authority. The creation of the stormwater authority provides the ability to charge a stormwater management fee to residents and



“Destroying every possible tree and wooded area to build houses doesn’t help protect the beauty of an area and causes more problems with erosion and overuse.”

businesses to pay for the planning, management, construction and maintenance of stormwater facilities.

IN JUNE OF 2013, THE PA GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTED LEGISLATION AUTHORIZING THE CREATION OF STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES TO ALLOW MUNICIPALITIES THE ABILITY TO CREATE AUTHORITIES TO OVERSEE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES. THE ACT ADDS STORMWATER PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT TO THE PURPOSES AND POWERS OF THE MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES ACT. ACTIVITIES PERMITTED UNDER THE NEW LEGISLATION ARE "STORM WATER PLANNING, MANAGEMENT, AND IMPLEMENTATION." THE ACT IS INTENDED TO HELP MUNICIPALITIES TO RESPOND TO ESCALATING COSTS OF STORM WATER MANAGEMENT AND STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS.



Maximize the Use of Ross Township Parks

ISSUE: Ross Township is 14.4 square miles in size and there are 22 Township-owned parks, seven school properties with recreation facilities, Bellevue Borough Park, and numerous privately owned recreational facilities located in Ross Township. Yet residents are not taking full advantage of the available recreation areas or programs on a regular basis. Partially this is due to the fact that there is not one community park where most of the facilities reside and partly it is because there is more attention paid to organized active recreation (football, baseball, and track fields) than to passive park opportunities. The amenities, buildings, and play areas are distributed throughout the Township.

"Preserving green spaces for walkers and nature lovers should be a priority. Baseball, soccer, and football fields are not green spaces that most residents can use."

ACTION ITEMS:

- Encourage healthy programs like running, walking biking events in the park areas in order to encourage use and create gathering events for residents. The Township currently sponsors community day,

the trout derby, Easter egg hunt and other activities but could do more with the amount of recreational space available.

- Expand information about programs at the Community Center. The Recreation staff have been doing a terrific job of expanding program and service offerings at the Community Center. They should continue to add programming, activities, and events for all age groups on a regular basis.
- Include additional programming and activities for senior citizens. In a survey completed by seniors for the Ross Township Recreation Department in November of 2014, seniors indicated a demand for planned day trips; strength, stretching, fitness and cardio classes; healthy cooking classes; gardening, movies, yoga, and dance classes.

Create Attractive Gateways to the Township

ISSUE: The boundaries of Ross Township are not easily identified on the major roads entering and leaving the Township – a traveler could easily cross the border into the Township and never realize that they are within the Township limits. “Gateways” to a community are important because they create an identity for the community and



provide an opportunity to make a positive first impression. Residents often take pride in their community when they identify with a theme, branding, or a specific identity.

ROSS TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

THE DEPARTMENT OFFERS A WIDE VARIETY OF PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGE GROUPS. THE FOLLOWING IS JUST A SAMPLE OF THE NUMBER AND VARIETY OF PROGRAMS CURRENTLY OFFERED.

- OPEN GYM TIMES
- DANCE, DANCE, DANCE
- SENIOR FITNESS, STRENGTH, AND CARDIO
- SENIOR INFORMATION SERIES
- SENIOR PICKLE-BALL
- SENIOR POT LUCK AND PARTY
- HOLIDAY PROGRAMS
- YOUTH AND TEENS BASKETBALL
- AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
- 1ST AND 2ND GRADE BASKETBALL
- PRE-SCHOOL FLOOR HOCKEY
- FUN WITH FINGER PAINT
- PRINCESS TEA PARTY
- PRE-SCHOOL OPEN GYM
- PRE-SCHOOL OPEN ART
- YOGA AND PILATES
- STEP , SCULPT, & CORE
- BASIC SELF DEFENSE
- MARTIAL WAY DEFENSE ACADEMY
- ARTHRITIS FOUNDATION EXERCISE
- ARCHERY
- ANNUAL FISHING TOURNAMENT
- ANNUAL COMMUNITY DAY

ACTION ITEMS:

- Develop attractive signage, “wayfinding”, and landscaping at the major portals into the Township – specifically along McKnight Road, Perrysville Avenue, Babcock Boulevard and other connecting corridors. Hire an architect to design a coherent and consistent theme that residents can embrace and leaders can point to for inspiration and pride.
- Install landscape buffers along parking lots that front main streets.
- Construct “street walls” in order to maintain a consistent property frontage along corridors.
- Install landscape buffers at the Park N Ride to provide a more attractive entrance into Ross Township from Interstate 279. Install appropriate landscape islands as vehicles exit the interstate and (if necessary in conjunction with PENNDOT) design and develop interesting signage, lighting, and announcements that represent the Township entrances.



- Install public art and decorative lighting at highly visible intersections or in Township rights-of-ways that clearly define the Township’s image and theme.
- Consider the commissioning of a public mural at some visible location. The mural should depict some scene or symbol of importance to the Township’s history or future.
- Explore the possibility of contracting for landscaping, wayfinding, signage, art, or murals with local artists and artisans in order to support the rich local culture and art.

Supporting an Informed and Cohesive Community

ISSUE: In today’s world, there are more ways than ever to obtain information and thousands of bits of information available. Yet people are more likely than ever to be uninformed about their local government operations and services. This is due to competing demands for attention from many different sources and all manner of distractions. Furthermore, residents in Ross Township don’t have many opportunities to gather for social interaction and connections at a central gathering place through local art, culture, entertainment, or



dining. The Township is too big, too sprawling, and completely bifurcated by McKnight Road. It is important, therefore, to create social opportunities for residents where there is a central meeting place with an identity or theme related to the local culture.



Public gathering places help to induce a sense of community and identity.

dining. The Township is too big, too sprawling, and completely bifurcated by McKnight Road. It is important, therefore, to create social opportunities for residents where there is a central meeting place with an identity or theme related to the local culture.

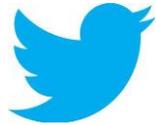
ACTION ITEMS:

- Consider identifying locations in the business district corridors for the installation of public plazas with lighting, seating, water features, landscaping, and local art. Feature entertainment, festivals, and local activities on a regular basis. By creating gathering places for residents, people are more likely to come together for social interaction and leave with a better understanding of their neighbors and the community as a social construct. “Real” places include a social experience.
- Consider scheduling Township “news updates” at local coffee shops or diners or at least creating the “coffeehouse” experience. Most people are more interested in buying a \$5 latte and sitting around with friends for conversation than coming to a public meeting or event.





- Use social media tools like Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, or Instagram to provide information to residents about social events, entertainment, concerts, local news, and alerts.



- Use a service like "Swiftreach," NIXEL, or "Reverse 911" to communicate with residents about possible emergencies or interruption of services that may affect specific areas of the Township. These services can also be used to make announcements about upcoming events or specific information that may be useful to residents.



- Continue to use "InCommunity-Ross Township" to provide articles and announcements about community activities and events. The magazine is attractive, informational, and projects a very positive and professional image for the Township.



Instagram

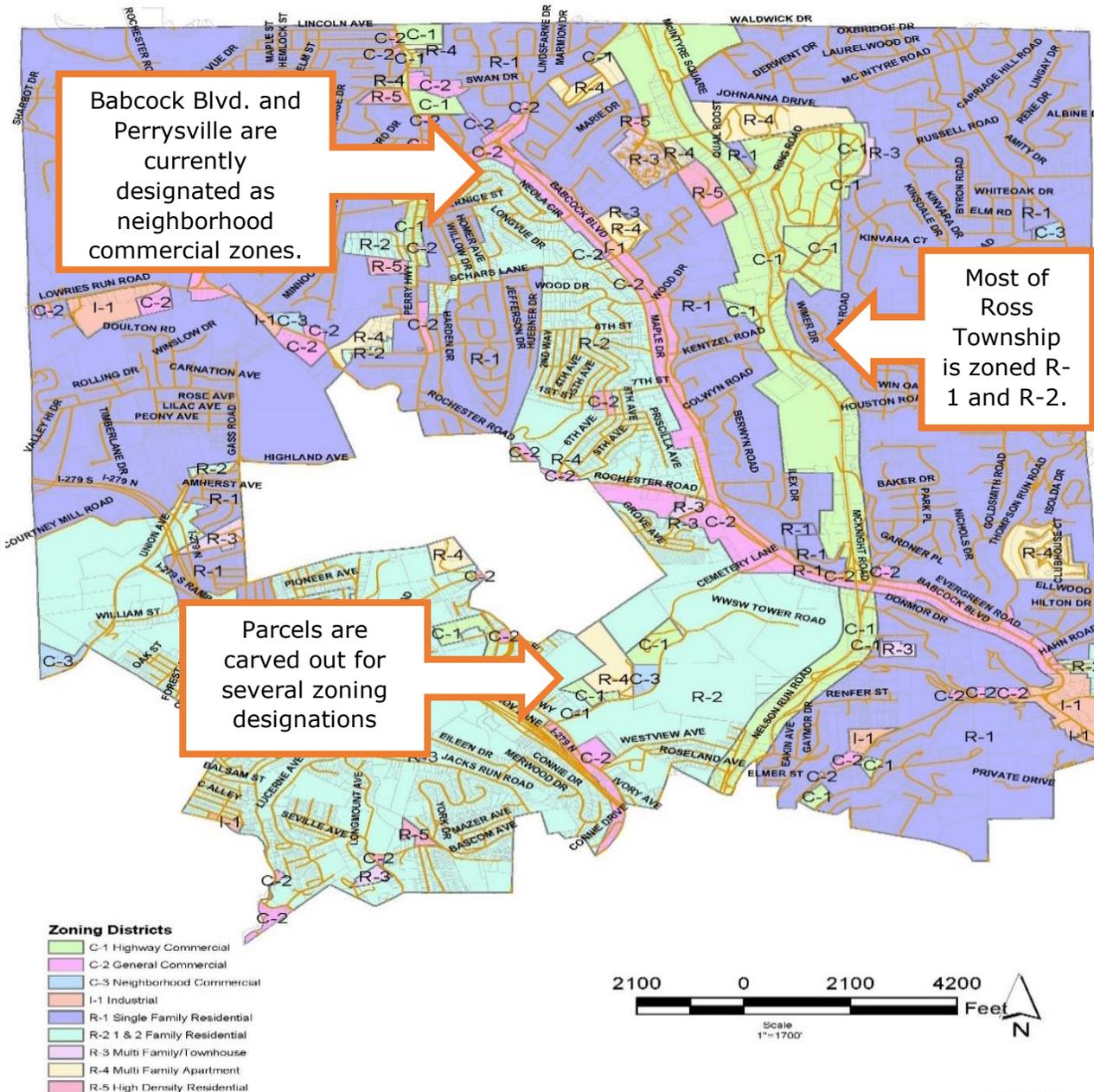
- Continue to make improvements to the Township's website that invite interaction and allow for conducting business on-line. Residents expressed a deep interest in doing business with the Township on-line. Whether it's paying taxes, applying for a permit, reading the latest news, or registering a request for service, residents want to do it on their own time at their convenience. This can easily be provided and accomplished by making enhancements to the current website.



FUTURE LAND USE

The concept of future land in the Township was introduced at one of the earliest Steering Committee meetings by reviewing the existing use map and the current zoning map to identify any clear contradictions. One of the things that became apparent is that the Township, over the years, had re-zoned dozens of parcels and properties that exist in the Residential (R-1 and R-2) zones to other zoning classifications in order to address inconsistencies within zoning districts.

During the course of the meetings and zoning exercises with the Steering Committee, a number of strategies emerged. There needed to be a simplification of the zoning designations and the map. There are currently too many designations without differentiation.



July 2006

For example, there are currently 5 different zoning designations for residential uses yet none of them includes mixed uses within the zoning district. And many include only one or two parcels of land.

There was also consensus that the Township should accommodate a wider variety of residential arrangements by moving to some mixed use designations. It was agreed that the neighborhood commercial designations should continue and that these districts could benefit from a TND overlay. As a result of the discussions and analysis, the following changes to the zoning map are recommended.

CONSENSUS ITEMS

The Steering Committee recommended that the Township's zoning ordinance and SALDO should be updated to include the following changes and updates:

- The boundaries of the existing R-1 should remain intact. In other words, the most restrictive designation - Single Family Residential - **R-1 should stay R-1.**
- Several areas along major corridors should be considered for **Multi Use District (MUD) designations.** These designations should include higher density residential, small office and retail, and specialized dining and coffee shops:
 - Along both sides of the Rt. 279 McKnight Road Exit near the Babcock Blvd. ramps
 - Along both sides of the Rt. 279 Perrysville Exit near the Port Authority Park N Ride
 - Area south bounded by Westview Borough and Nelson Run
 - Area north along North Rochester and Lowries Road
- The **Regional Commercial Designation (C-1)** should remain only for the McKnight Road corridor since the character of this corridor is very different than for any other corridor in the Township.
- The **Neighborhood Commercial Designation (C-2)** along with a Streetscape Enhancement Overlay (SEO) District should be established for:
 - Babcock Boulevard from Siebert Road to Three Degree Road
 - Perrysville from Rochester Road to Lincoln Avenue

- There should be a **Light Industrial (I) Designation** for most of Evergreen Road and parts of Lowries Road and Rochester Road.

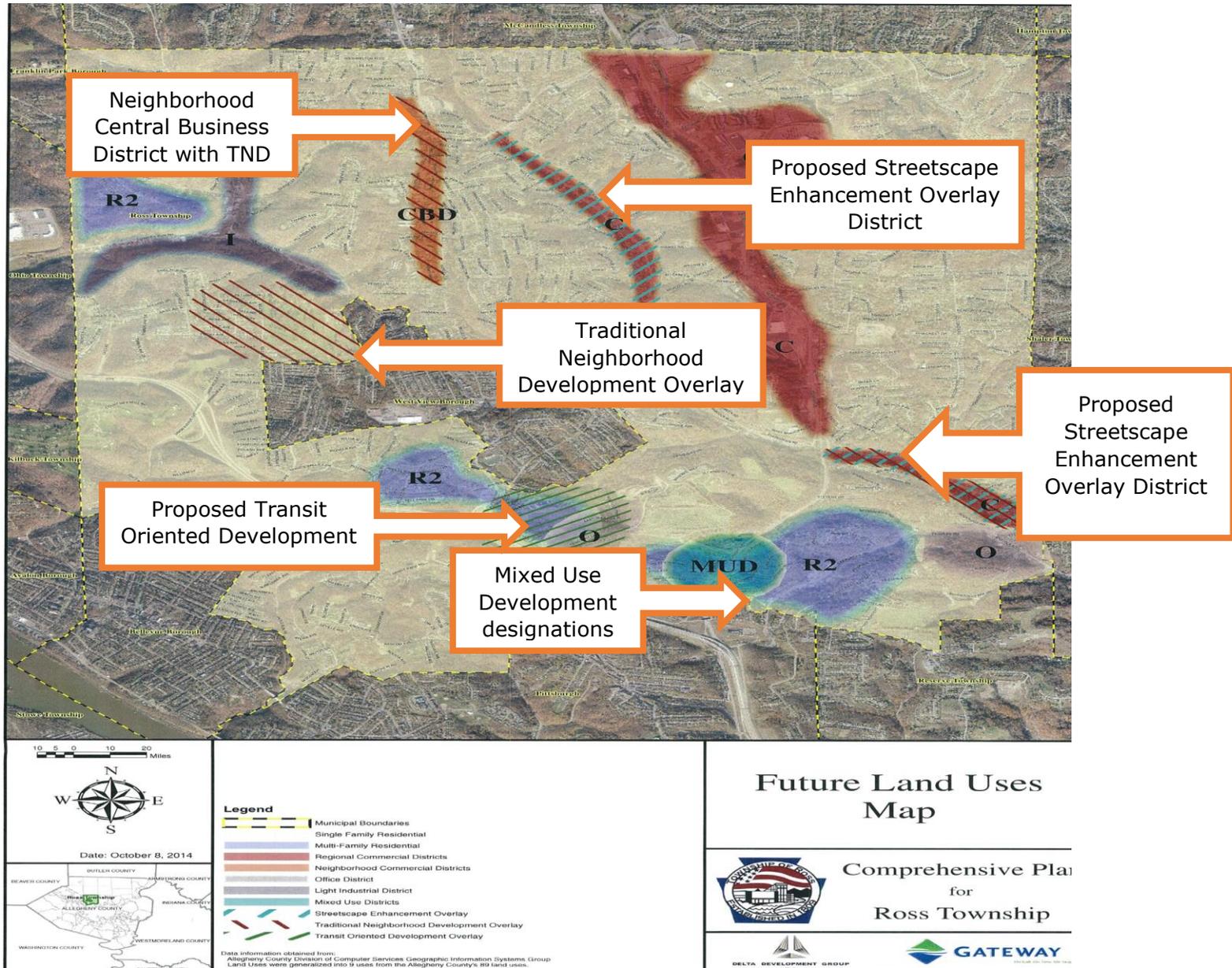


- There should be several **Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) overlay** designations characterized by pedestrian connections, decorative lighting, high density housing, and mixed uses for several areas of the Township:
 - Highland Country Club Development
 - Perrysville Corridor (Rochester Road to Lincoln Avenue)
 - Evergreen Road – Mt. Troy – Hoffman Road
- There should be several **Transit Oriented Development (TOD) overlay** designations characterized by pedestrian access to public transit, mixed uses, high density housing for:
 - Perrysville Exit Park N Ride
 - Transit Stops along McKnight Road
 - Old McKnight Road near Ross Park Mall (McKnight East, Cheryl Drive)
- A **Pedestrian Overlay District (POD)** ordinance and map should be developed that provides guidance for where mandatory construction of sidewalks is required in the neighborhoods, in the commercial districts, and between neighborhoods and commercial districts.

The Steering Committee also identified several areas that should be designated as high priority for redevelopment in terms of infrastructure upgrades, green development, and public amenities. These are areas that have declined but could be assets for the community with a commitment of public and private resources. The areas identified are:

- The McKnight Road commercial corridor
- Northway Mall
- Perrysville Park N Ride
- Rochester Road at Evergreen and at Lowries Run

Other recommendations and considerations are that, although the Conservation District Overlay is not recommended, there should continue to be sustainable practices and conservation integrated throughout the Lowries Run watershed. The green space allowances should remain intact to protect the wetlands and flood prone areas. Zoning should also include restrictions on Marcellus Shale well drilling as permitted by law.



LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY

Ross Township’s future and the implementation of this Plan will be defined by its leadership. To accomplish the goals and action items identified in this Plan, the Township leadership will be required to identify interested and vested stakeholders, raise and commit revenue, organize the Township staff effectively, and energize the local groups and volunteers. This section will provide a blueprint for the actions that will be necessary for the Township leadership to drive the implementation of the Ross Plan.

“No institution can possibly survive if it needs geniuses or supermen to manage it. It must be organized in such a way as to be able to get along under a leadership composed of average human beings.”

Peter Drucker

TOWNSHIP LEADERSHIP

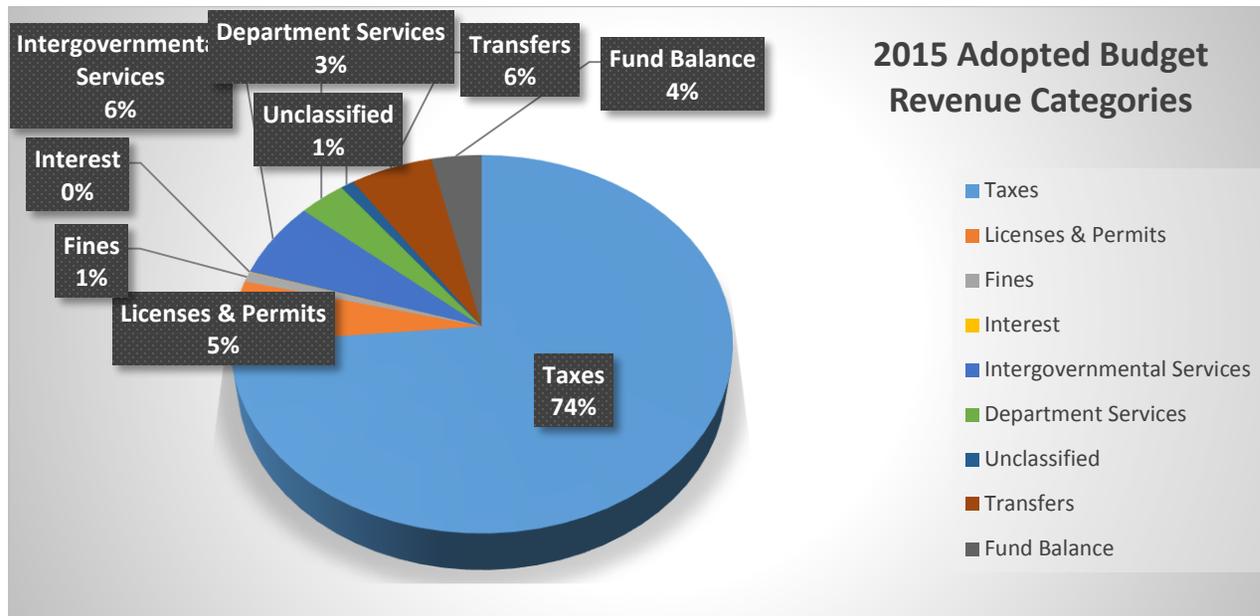
The Township is organized under the First Class Township Code and is governed by nine (9) Commissioners who are elected by Ward. The Commissioners have terms that are staggered so that some of the Board is up for election every two years. The Township Manager runs the day to day operation and is delegated the authority from the Board of Commissioners to oversee all Township departments. The Finance Director oversees the \$29 million annual budget and handles investments, grants, and overall financial management system. The elected tax collector/treasurer delegates the collection of real estate taxes to a third party collector. Act 511 taxes are collected by the countywide tax collector.

TOWNSHIP FINANCES

Revenue

The Township has a healthy and robust economic base derived from business and residential taxes that are used to support the Township services. The annual General Fund budget is about \$18 million with an additional \$8 million for the sewer operations, \$2 million for capital projects, and about \$719,000 in State Highway Aid from liquid fuels. Revenues are primarily derived from taxes (about \$13.3 million), intergovernmental services, and interfund transfers. The Township’s revenue base increases at a rate of over 3% per year which is slightly higher than the CPI.

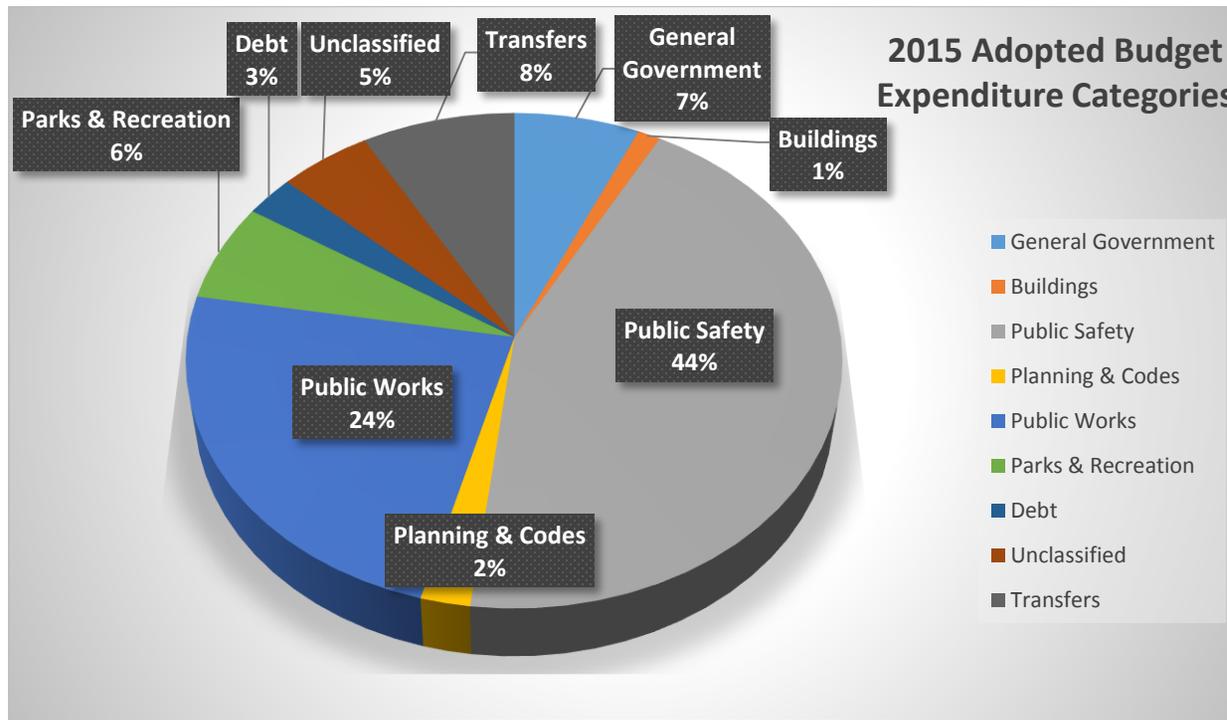
Category	Amount
Taxes	\$ 13,327,000
Licenses & Permits	\$ 979,700
Fines	\$ 158,000
Interest	\$ 8,000
Intergovernmental Services	\$ 1,180,500
Department Services	\$ 598,300
Unclassified	\$ 173,000
Transfers	\$ 1,060,000
Fund Balance	\$ 641,765
TOTAL	\$ 18,126,265



Expenses

Category	Amount
General Government	\$ 1,227,986
Buildings	\$ 221,950
Public Safety	\$ 7,967,916
Planning & Codes	\$ 405,755
Public Works	\$ 4,256,917
Parks & Recreation	\$ 1,156,476
Debt	\$ 484,956
Unclassified	\$ 904,309
Transfers	\$ 1,500,000
TOTAL	\$ 18,126,265

The largest expense for the Township, by far, is the Public Safety category with about \$6.6 million devoted to police services. The public works department which includes roads, snow removal, traffic signals, street lighting, and the maintenance of all Township facilities is the second largest category with about \$4.2 million dedicated. The Township allocates about \$1.1 million to parks and recreation much of which is recouped through fees. The Township also targets between \$1 million and \$1.5 million to the maintenance of roads in its Capital Budget and about \$229,000 for parks facility improvements.



Summary

Overall, the Township budget matches up well with the priorities that were identified by residents in the electronic survey and during the public outreach meetings. Infrastructure and public safety were the top 2 categories that residents identified as areas where the Township resources should be committed and these are the categories where the majority of the Township resources are committed. However, in analyzing the department budgets, in terms of the priority action items identified in this Plan, the only department that appears to be underfunded is the Planning and Codes department category. With only 2% of the budget and \$405,000 annually committed to this category, it will be difficult to undertake many of the initiatives that have been identified. It will be necessary for the Township to commit additional personnel and resources in the community development, planning and zoning, code enforcement, and recreation categories in order to implement the Plan. It will also be necessary for the Township to identify additional outside funding through county, state, and federal funds to supplement local funds to carry out many of the projects identified in the Plan.

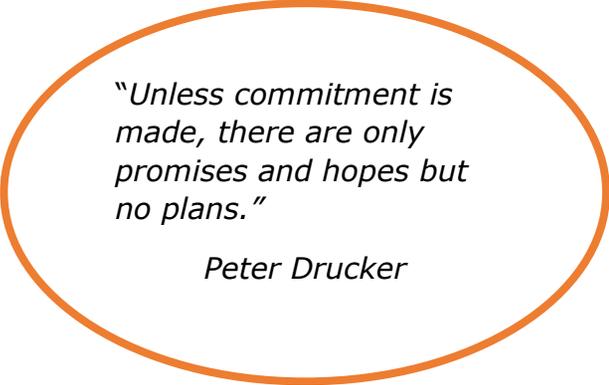
IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the Ross Plan initiatives will require commitment, effort, and experience and will need to be the focus of an individual and a Committee – especially during the early stages of implementation. With workloads that are already high, adding this responsibility to the workload of current Township staff would greatly decrease the probability of successful implementation.

For this reason, it is recommended that the City identify and appoint an Implementation Manager for the specific purpose of implementing the Plan’s action items and achieving the priority goals. Working and reporting to the Commissioners, an Implementation Manager should have a thorough understanding of the implementation initiatives and resources available and guide the effort to ensure that key action strategies are accomplished as scheduled.

In an ideal situation, the Implementation Manager would report to the Township Manager and Commissioners and work closely with the Implementation Committee to provide staff support, updates, and progress reports. The Implementation Manager would be responsible for the following items, among others:

1. Implementing action items
2. Establishing annual goals
3. Assessing organizational structure to support implementation
4. Identifying resources for implementation
5. Developing an evaluation framework
6. Measuring progress and effectiveness of implementation
7. Recommending corrective action



“Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes but no plans.”

Peter Drucker

IMPLEMENTATION MANAGER AND COMMITTEE

It is critical to the implementation of the Plan for the Implementation Manager to have a Committee with significant authority and resources with which to work to advance the action items. An ad hoc Committee made up of the Township Manager and some of the Commissioners would be an excellent way to monitor the progress of the implementation process. The Implementation Manager would work with the Township Manager and the

Implementation Committee to ensure that sufficient progress is made relative to implementation of the action items. The Implementation Manager would be responsible for providing quarterly updates on the progress of the Plan implementation. By establishing such a structure, the Plan will be a living document that provides the basis for a re-energized focus and direction for the residents and community leaders.

The Implementation Committee should consider a task force approach, whereby committee members with specific skill-sets are charged with organizing task forces as needed that could be made up of volunteer subject matter experts with the expertise and experience necessary to carry out specific actions associated with the implementation strategy. Committee membership should encompass a broad stakeholder emphasis that is competency-based in appropriate areas of community and economic development. Specific action items for the Implementation Committee are as follows:

"The greatest strategy is doomed if it is implemented badly."

Bernard Reimann

STEP 1 – Develop a mission statement, goals, and objectives for the Committee.

STEP 2 – Identify additional Committee members as needed for implementation of specific action items.

STEP 3 – Conduct a launching meeting for the Committee.

STEP 4 – Work with the Implementation Manager to

identify action items from the priority goals that should be implemented in the first year.

STEP 5 – Organize subcommittees or task forces from within the Committee to assist the Implementation Manager with the identified action items.

STEP 6 – Build capacity through additional volunteer recruitment.

STEP 7 – Conduct a regular evaluation of progress on key action items relative to the implementation success during the first year.

STEP 8 – Take corrective action as necessary to address deficiencies in order to meet target goals.

FIGURE 17 – IMPLEMENTATION PLAN PROPOSED PROCESS AND STRUCTURE



RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Resource allocation is the central activity that supports Plan implementation. Without a planned approach to resource allocation, decisions are often made based on political preferences or personal beliefs. In a strategically planned environment, resources will be allocated based on the vision, priority goals and established annual objectives and action items. The success of implementation will be directly related to the consistency of the resource allocation with the priorities that are identified in the approved annual objectives.

Organizations have at least four types of resources that can be used to achieve desired objectives:

- Financial
- Physical
- Human
- Technological



Resources in organizations are often not allocated effectively because of the reasons below:

- **LEADERS ARE OVERPROTECTIVE OF RESOURCES.** Many elected officials, in principle, are adamantly opposed to any investment of additional resources in the development of organizational capacity, especially in the areas of training and professional development. This leads to short-term savings and long-term bankruptcy.
- **THE FOCUS IS ON SHORT-TERM LIQUIDITY INSTEAD OF LONG-TERM FINANCIAL HEALTH.** Often, in order to achieve long-term sustainability, it is necessary to invest in professional staff, subject matter experts, and planning processes. In many local government organizations, these activities are not accorded the value they deserve.
- **DECISIONS ARE MADE BASED ON POLITICAL ORIENTATION.** When the resource allocation is based on the political support in the community, the proper attention is diverted from high-priority goals and projects to addressing the immediate “hot issue” items in the community.
- **TARGETS AND OBJECTIVES ARE TOO VAGUE.** Planning and annual objectives should be very specific, with performance measurements identified.

- **LEADERS ARE RELUCTANT TO MAKE CHANGES OR TAKE RISKS.** Most organizations are resistant to change. Any change in structure, technology, personnel, or practices raises anxiety levels in an organization. Change should be viewed as a continuous process and an opportunity to improve the quality of the organization and the services it provides.
- **LEADERS LACK SUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE ABOUT WHAT SHOULD BE DONE.** Because the nature of local government leadership is naturally transient, leaders are sometimes unsure or uninformed about how resources should be allocated in order to advance organizational priorities. Likewise, the priorities are often not adequately communicated to key staff in the organization who are responsible for the organization and utilization of resources.

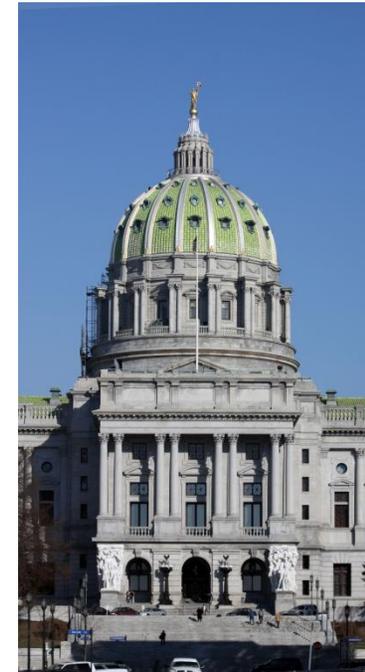
Effective resource allocation does not guarantee success, because other factors such as personnel, commitment, and effective programming must drive the implementation. However, no implementation can be successful without prudent resource allocation.

In order to identify, organize, and capture the resources necessary for a successful implementation, the Implementation Manager should prepare a preliminary funding strategy that will position the Township to capitalize on the best opportunities for securing public funds and for identifying project revenue generation. The strategy should identify short, medium, and long term initiatives and funding sources that can be leveraged to achieve the redevelopment vision for the project area. The Implementation Manager should identify public-private opportunities, grants, innovative fund-raising opportunities, sponsorships, and other revenue-generating strategies.

FUNDING STRATEGIES

The Implementation Manager should identify and analyze potential funding sources available for eligible costs associated with the Township's projects. As part of the process for identifying viable public funding opportunities, the projects should be discussed with the Township Manager, Implementation Manager, the Implementation Committee, and funding agencies. Only the most relevant funding opportunities should be targeted, based on the unique needs of the projects. Programs that should be evaluated include but should not be limited to the following:

- **FY 2015 Department of Justice (DOJ) Community-Oriented Policing Services Appropriations** – The annual DOJ development appropriations legislation provides funding for costs related to public safety improvements. This



opportunity involves direct contact with congressional staff and allows for the potential to address public safety for projects.

- **Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP)** – Pennsylvania’s RACP supports larger development projects that have a total project cost in excess of \$1 million. Competitive application opportunities are usually announced in January and June of each year but the schedule may change with the new governor taking office.
- **Business In Our Sites (BIOS)** – Pennsylvania’s BIOS grants and loans focus on infrastructure and site preparation costs that transition undeveloped sites to “shovel-ready” sites. Funding for this program is very limited.
- **Pennsylvania Infrastructure Bank (PIB)** – PIB is a program developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation that offers low-interest loans (one-half of prime) for transportation improvements. The loans can be repaid with federal funds. PIB is especially helpful in accelerating phases of transportation projects that must move at a pace that may not coincide with the timeline for delivering federal funds.
- **Pennsylvania Infrastructure Development Program** – grants and low-interest loan financing for public and private infrastructure improvements.
- **Foundation Programs/Funding** – A review of potential foundation resources should be undertaken to determine support for components of the projects that are candidates for funding. Resources such as senior centers and other public services may increase the opportunity for foundational support.
- **Pennsylvania State Energy Funding** – Energy independence programs offered through multiple agencies, including the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), DCED, and the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA), may provide potential sources of funding.
- **Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2)** – This program funds both planning and development parks and recreation grants that would support several of the recommendations in the EIP. The annual application is due in April of each year.
- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program** – Projects that could be undertaken with CDBG funds include water, sewer, and road projects; demolition of vacant and/or unsafe structures; acquisition of blighted property; handicap ramps at intersections; and handicap-accessible pedestrian walkways at parks or restrooms. The annual pre-application deadline is in May of each year.

- **Marcellus Shale Act 13 Funds** – The Act 13 funds can be used for projects such as the acquisition of key properties (land and buildings); rehabilitation of buildings; site preparation for public uses; parks and recreation projects; and other economic development projects. Applications are accepted by agencies at various times of the year.
- **PennDOT Enhancement or Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative (PCTI)** – Enhancement funds and PCTI funds are made available through PennDOT for projects that address the quality of life in a community, such as safer pedestrian-oriented linkages, traffic calming, re-signalization, and reconfiguration of intersections.
- **Community Infrastructure and Tourism Fund** – Gaming funds up to \$250,000 through Allegheny County are available for municipalities for projects that facilitate economic development through infrastructure assistance, correct existing infrastructure problems, or plan and prepare sites for buildings for the future.
- **Gambling Economic Development Funds** – Gaming funds for projects that require a minimum of \$500,000 through Allegheny County for community and economic development projects. Although these funds are solicited and reviewed by the Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County, final decisions are made by the Commonwealth Financing Authority through the PA DCED.



The Implementation Manager should provide advice and recommendations related to the following: (1) eligibility requirements related to each program, (2) assumptions regarding the proposed use of funds and consistency with program eligibility and compliance requirements, (3) structuring of funding uses and match requirements to

promote efficiency while meeting program requirements, and (4) potential to supplement funding sources.

The Implementation Manager should review, prepare, and utilize economic data contained in this Plan for the completion of funding applications. Once funding applications have been submitted for the project, the Implementation Manager should assist in securing disbursement of funds for specific project uses. It will be important to manage communication with appointed and elected officials at the local and state levels and with various agency personnel for the purpose of securing the disbursement of public funding for the project. A comprehensive master project funding schedule should be prepared, illustrating the timing of funding availability in relation to the projects' development schedules and phasing plans. Additional activities might include the following:

- Meetings with members of the federal Congressional delegation, the Pennsylvania General Assembly and county officials in support of funding requests
- Meetings with program and agency administrators to build support for the project
- Preparation of identified federal and state funding applications and appropriations requests, including all supporting documentation and post-award management
- Identification of local and private matching resources required to leverage public funds as needed

CONSISTENCY WITH REGIONAL PLANS



Consistency with Neighboring Communities

The Township of Ross completely surrounds the Borough of West View and is completely compatible with the zoning designations and uses that are adjacent to the Ross Township parcels. In addition, Ross Township shares borders with the townships of Shaler, McCandless, Ohio and Reserve, the Borough of Bellevue, and the City of Pittsburgh. The Ross Plan is generally consistent with the planning and zoning designations in the adjacent communities.

Consistency with *Allegheny Places*

The Ross Plan is generally consistent with *Allegheny Places*, the county's comprehensive plan. The

Ross Plan includes strategies around the "greening" of major corridors and the emphasis on growth management through sustainable practices such as pedestrian connections, walkability, traffic calming, and "complete streets." It includes an emphasis on creating livable places with additional park facility improvements and programming. The Ross Plan identifies development limitations based on steep slopes and flood prone





areas and recommends higher density mixed use designations for many of the potential development areas. The Plan also includes recommendations around public transportation, the improvement of local roadways, and the designation of transportation partnership districts where available. Specifically the Plan is consistent with the following county goals:

- Provide a variety of mixed-income and

affordable housing in mixed-use Places as identified on the county's Future Land Use Plan.

- Target infill housing where needed.
- Promote accessible and "visitable" housing in communities with desirable amenities.
- Develop good access to major transportation corridors and highway interchanges. Corridors are relatively intense, mixed-use hubs of office, industrial, commercial and residential uses.



- Corridor Places can accommodate high-intensity land uses that require large amounts of land such as regional shopping centers, industrial parks, and business parks.
- Require that new developments provide for pedestrians and are completely accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- Promote an efficient transit system to provide access to jobs.



APPENDIX A – SURVEY RESULTS

APPENDIX B – ACTION PLAN MATRIX

Welcome to Our Neighborhoods

Ross Township will continue to provide a wide variety of housing opportunities in stable and attractive neighborhoods in order to meet the needs of their residents and attract new residents at all stages of their lives.

Our Goals:

Enhance Existing Neighborhoods by Addressing Infrastructure Needs and Creating Pedestrian Connections

Issue: *Inadequate maintenance of roadways and lack of pedestrian connections*

- Action Items:**
- >Develop Pedestrian Overlay District (POD)
 - >Require POD for new development
 - >Budget annually for sidewalks and trails consistent with POD
 - >Supplement local funding with state and county funds

Maintain and Improve Current Housing Stock

Issue: *Aging housing stock with structures in need of repair*

- Action Items:**
- >Improve and strengthen code enforcement with more staff, resources, technology
 - >Adopt the latest version of the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC)
 - >Use aggressive code enforcement and information programs to address "absentee landlords."

Encourage More Diversity in Types of Housing Availability

Issue: *Demand for senior housing, over-55 "patio homes," mixed use housing, affordable housing*

- Action Items:**
- >Zone for mixed use and higher density residential uses
 - >Consider transit oriented development (TOD) overlays at transit stops and Park N Ride
 - >Incentivize development for the types of housing development that is desired

Encourage Additional and Enhance Existing Senior Housing

- Issue:** Lack of senior housing opportunities that would allow seniors to age "in place"
- Action Items:**
- >Zone for upscale condominium, market apartment rental, and "quad" unit development
 - >Seek developers who specialize in the "over 55" market in order to identify opportunities
 - >Contact and work with supportive housing development firms (like Action Housing)
 - >Work with senior agencies like Lifespan and ACCESS to incorporate more senior programs
 - >Include senior representation in developing the POD ordinance and map

Open for Business

Ross Township will be a community that actively supports all types of commercial activity and encourages not only large scale retail development but also a diversity of small neighborhood businesses, services, dining, and entertainment with opportunities for pedestrian oriented activities and connections.

Our Goals:

Encourage More Business Diversity

- Issue:** *Lack of diversity, large number of big box stores, lack of small business, independently owned retail, upscale grocers, diners, restaurants, and specialty stores*
- Action Items:**
- >Create "neighborhood commercial" zoning designations with smaller lots and variety of uses
 - >Consider using a mixed use designation (MUD) adjacent to small shopping areas in order to accommodate higher density residential that will support the dining and shopping
 - >Adopt a traditional neighborhood development (TND) overlay zoning district in those areas that are established neighborhood retail
 - >Supplement local funding with state and county funds
 - >Actively engage in recruiting a wider range of "niche" retail
 - >Designate transit oriented development (TOD) zoning district overlays

Create Pedestrian Linkages to the Commercial Districts

Issue: Demand for pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods and commercial districts

- Action Items:**
- >Develop a streetscape enhancement overlay (SEO) for McKnight Rd. and Babcock Blvd.
 - >Explore securing multi-modal PENNDOT funds to implement the SEO
 - >Include sidewalks and trails for the commercial district in the POD ordinance and map
 - >Develop pedestrian connections from Ross Park Mall to the adjacent residential neighborhoods
 - >Develop pedestrian connections from the Perrysville business district to neighborhoods

Improve the Appearance of Properties in the Commercial Districts

Issue: Need for aesthetics that create an inviting and enjoyable shopping experience

- Action Items:**
- >Set up a mini-grant program for façade improvements, signs, landscaping, street furniture
 - >Add decorative banners, planters, holiday lighting along major corridors
 - >Adopt design guidelines that include standards for street trees, landscaping, signage, lighting
 - >Step up code enforcement for high grass and weeds, debris, garbage, improper storage
 - >Provide incentives for green infrastructure in stormwater management ordinance
 - >Encourage permeable pavements, landscaping areas, rain gardens and bio-swales

Moving and Shaking - Transportation and Transit

Ross Township will have a transportation system that provides safe, efficient, and environmentally supportive access for residents. The system will include public transit, vehicular roadways, biking, and pedestrian elements that move people from neighborhoods to services, employment, recreation, shopping, and entertainment.

Our Goals:

Restore Transit Routes to Major Thoroughfares and High Volume Areas

Issue: Reduction of bus services has impacted seniors, commuters, and business owners

- Action Items:**
- >Schedule meetings with the Port Authority to explore the restoration of bus routes
 - >Conduct public hearings to measure level of interest in public transit
 - >Consider method for providing "local connector" bus route from neighborhoods to McKnight Rd.

- >Expand the current senior bus service to more locations and greater frequency

- >Work with ACCESS to provide greater opportunities for seniors from housing to medical, shopping, dining, and entertainment centers

Develop More Parking Spaces at the Park N Ride

Issue: *Demand for additional parking at the Park N Ride at the Perrysville exit*

- Action Items:**
- >Work with Port Authority to acquire additional land at the Park N Ride
 - >Work with the county officials and Port Authority to encourage TOD development
 - >Consider the use of LERTA, TIF, and TRID for parking facility incorporated into development
 - >Update the new zoning ordinance to include a TOD at the Park N Ride

Develop a Comprehensive Funding Program for Maintenance of Roads

Issue: *Need to allocate a higher level of funding for Township roads*

- Action Items:**
- >Adopt the updated Transportation Partnership District ordinance to establish impact fees
 - >Consider impact fees for the Lowries Run Corridor
 - >Levy 1 mill of real estate tax each year dedicated to road improvements

Create a Multi-Modal Transportation System

Issue: *Need for bike paths, sidewalks, and trails throughout the Township*

- Action Items:**
- >Adopt the policy of "complete streets" for design and development of Township roads
 - >Adopt a POD outlining where sidewalks will be installed
 - >Recruit "complete streets" volunteers to conduct street audits
 - >Require sidewalks and bike paths in every new development
 - >Work with "Bike Pittsburgh" to commission a biking plan along major roadways

Create a Multi-Modal Transportation System (Continued)

Issue: *Need for bike paths, sidewalks, and trails throughout the Township*

- Action Items:**
- >Consider reducing speed limits and creating one-way restrictions on neighborhood roads.
 - >Submit applications for county and state funding to install trails, bike paths, walkways
 - >Consider an assessment in neighborhoods where residents support the installation of sidewalks
 - >Adopt a Streetscape Enhancement Overlay (SEO) ordinance that requires enhancements

Creating a Sense of Place

Ross Township will be well known as a community with outstanding neighborhoods, schools, recreation, and public services. It will also be known as one of the most diverse and inviting shopping and dining destination in the region.

Our Goals:

Preserve Residential Living on Wooded Lots

Issue: *Protecting the green quality and character of the neighborhoods*

- Action Items:**
- >Adopt the concept of "liveable communities" with walkable neighborhoods, public transportation, affordable housing, safe streets, easy access to shopping, dining, and entertainment, green spaces, and indoor and outdoor gathering spots
 - >Use the SALDO to implement the "livable communities" concepts
 - >Use stormwater management best practices
 - >Consider the adoption of an Official Map to preserve green areas

Go Green - Implement Sustainable Best Practices

Issue: *Preservation of parks, open spaces, and natural environment*

- Action Items:**
- >Consider establishing a Shade Tree Commission - task them with tree planting program
 - >Implement a rain barrel program for residents
 - >Consider permeable areas for private and public parking areas in the zoning ordinance
 - >Encourage the use of composting, rain gardens and "green streets" in residential areas
 - >Consider creation of Storm Water Management Authority

Maximize the Use of Ross Township Parks

Issue: *Residents are not taking full advantage of the 22 parks in the Township*

- Action Items:**
- >Encourage and sponsor healthy programs like running, walking, biking events
 - >Expand information about current programming at the community center
 - >Include additional programming and activities for seniors based on the 2014 survey

Create Attractive Gateways to the Township

Issue: *"Gateways" create an identity and provide an opportunity to make a positive first impression*

- Action Items:**
- >Develop attractive signage, "wayfinding," and landscaping at major portals
 - >Install landscape buffers along parking lots that front main streets
 - >Construct "street walls" in order to maintain consistent property frontage

- >Install landscape buffers at the Park N Ride at the I279 exit
- >Install public art and decorative lighting at highly visible intersections
- >Consider commissioning a public mural at a visible location
- >Consider identifying local artists, artisans to support the local culture and art

Support an Informed and Cohesive Community

- Issue:** *Create social opportunities for residents, central gathering spaces, local culture*
- Action Items:**
- >Identify locations in the business districts for public plazas, seating, water features, local art
 - >Consider scheduling Township "news updates" at local coffee shops or diners
 - >Use social media tools like Facebook and Twitter to provide information to residents
 - >Use a Reverse 911 service to send emergency or public service announcements
 - >Continue to use "InCommunity-Ross Township" as the community magazine
 - >Expand and enhance the website that allows residents to interact and conduct business

Future Land Use

Future land use regulations in Ross Township will be simplified with fewer designations and more opportunities for accommodating a wider variety of residential arrangements by moving to mixed use zoning districts.

Our Goals:

Consensus Items

- Recommended:**
- >R-1 zoning district boundaries should remain intact
 - >Several areas along major corridors should be considered for Multi-Use District (MUD) designations
 - >Regional commercial designation (C-1) should be used only for McKnight Road
 - >Neighborhood commercial designation (C-2) should be used for Babcock Blvd. and Perrysville Rd.
 - >Light Industrial (I) designation should be used for most of Evergreen Road and parts of Lowries Run
 - >Several TND overlay designations are recommended for higher density and mixed commercial areas
 - >TOD overlays are recommended for areas around public transit, mixed uses, high density housing
 - >A POD ordinance and map should be developed that provides guidance for sidewalks installation
 - >Several redevelopment areas are designated
 - >A future land use ordinance is proposed

APPENDIX C – MAPS