Multi-Municipal Planning: Successfully Navigating Competing Interests, Shifting Priorities, and Hidden Agendas

Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Association of Planners

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania | October 20, 2015
Our objective today—Share with you our collective experiences in making a multi-municipal planning effort work, including—

- What led to the collaborative partnership?
- What were our expectations going in?
- How do our elected and appointed “bosses” perceive and participate in the study?

Our agenda—
1. We’ll start with giving you some background.
2. Then we’ll facilitate a discussion with our panelists.
3. And finally, give you a chance to ask some questions.
The Motivation

- The character and condition of the two major corridors through the community do not present a positive image to visitors and perspective residents.
- New student oriented rental housing units have been developed in White Township, creating impacts to traffic, access, and parking.
- New developments near campus have raised concerns about the appropriate scale, placement and design of buildings.
- Pedestrian and non-motorized travel overwhelms existing sidewalks and paths, and crossing the corridors is DANGEROUS!
Everybody has a Plan…
How did we get there....

1. Build a True Partnership
   - Indiana County
   - White Township
   - Borough of Indiana
   - Indiana University of Pennsylvania

2. Involve the public!!
   - A public workshop in September attended by 150 residents to define community needs
   - A 4 day workshop in October attended by 250 residents to explore ideas
   - A public open house/workshop in February attended by 120 residents to review the recommendations
   - On the street interviews with 280 residents.
Indiana Community University District

Land Use
Transportation Network
Physical Character

Analyze the Community
Preserve Enhance Transform

Campus to Downtown
Campus to Neighborhood
Suburban Corridor

Define Typological Areas

Develop Big Ideas for Each Area

Housing and Development
Mobility and Transportation
Open Space / Green Infrastructure

Establish Guidelines for Implementation
Guidelines include development parameters such as:
- Yard setbacks
- Building height
- Parking lot locations
- Maximum lot coverage

Implementation Strategies including:
- Zoning and Ordinance Amendments
- Establishing and Organizing Structure
- Funding Opportunities

Phase I Workshop
Phase II Workshop
Phase III Workshop
Identify Character Areas

- Downtown
- Campus Interface
- Neighborhood
- Campus Interface
- Suburban
- Commercial & Industrial
Finding the “Big Ideas”

Underlying Principles

• Create **complete streets** that serve passenger and service vehicles, transit, bicyclists and pedestrians of all abilities.

• Encourage development in specific nodes or **neighborhood centers** that have their own identity.

• Improve development standards to more deliberately **create “place”**

• Strengthen **non-motorized** (e.g., Multimodal Corridor) and transit connections to key destinations—campus, open spaces, retail and services.
District Wide Ideas

HOUSING and DEVELOPMENT:

• Guide new development
• Improve the 8th Street connection
• Expand and diversify the range of housing options
• Strengthen downtown as a destination
• Preserve single-family neighborhoods
• Encourage a broader diversity in retail and food offerings
**Downtown-Campus**

**Recommendations**

- Create complete streets that multiple users; focused non-motorized and transit function on 8\(^{th}\) connected to campus and Philadelphia St.
- Encourage mixed use redevelopment of underutilized parcels, creating housing opportunities for seniors and small households (consistent with Comprehensive Plan)
- Provide commercial and civic energy along 8\(^{th}\) to draw people between downtown and campus.
- Provide for new commercial development along 7\(^{th}\) as a front door to downtown.
- Create a strong link to parking deck, and improve street crossings for pedestrians.
Final Report Includes:

**Planning and Design Ideas and recommended projects:**
- Specific non-motorized and transit projects
- Corridor enhancements
- Re-development projects
- Open space and recreation projects
- Infrastructure projects

**Design Principles for physical improvements:**
- Building siting and massing
- Public roads and streets
- Parking lots
- Open Spaces
- Greenways
- Green infrastructure

**Implementation Recommendations for guiding development and public projects:**
- Policy recommendations for land use and design guidelines
- Partnerships and coordination
- Action tasks and responsibilities
- Funding mechanisms and opportunities
Key Policy Recommendations

1. Establish priorities as a group.
2. Consider amending Zoning Ordinances and Development Regulations.
3. Establish a long-term organizing structure for the group.
4. Maintain links to key resources.
5. Continue engaging the community.
6. Seek funding for implementation priorities.
Panel Discussion