

CHAPTER 3

VISION, GOALS, & PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Introduction

The Greensburg Comprehensive Plan is intended as a working community document. A combination of long and short-term goals, this document is intended to serve as a guideline with respect to future development decisions so that the City may realize its vision for the future. The following goals and planning principles are deliberately broad in nature and relate to a vision that answers the question, “Where do we want to go?” The objectives and action steps provided in Chapter 9, are intended to guide the day-to-day decision-making concerning more specific actions. These short-term action steps say, “given our long-term goals and changing community conditions, these are the projects and programs that we want to complete in the short-term, and this is how we plan to accomplish them.”

The following Vision, Goals, and Planning Principles were developed through a series of key stakeholder interviews and public workshops, and steering committee meetings. This Chapter serves as the City of Greensburg’s foundation as it strives to meet the needs and capitalize on opportunities relating to growth management, transportation and public facilities.

Vision Statement

Greensburg, home of the Tower Tree, will be a community whose distinctive identity as a regional employment center with small town charm is reflected in our commitment to promote managed growth while being good stewards of the land in order that we may protect and enhance the quality of life for all our residents and future generations.

Growth Management Goals

Goal

Encourage a range of housing choices, including a range in type, size, location, and quality to meet the needs of current and future residents.

Goal

Create walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods, to improve the quality of life and avoid development of isolated subdivisions.

Goal

Revitalize historic areas in the downtown and its surroundings and redevelop underutilized areas in which there is existing infrastructure.

Goal

Create a system of well-planned business corridors, each with a strong sense of place, which compliments the Greensburg community identity.

Goal

Encourage a mix of complimentary land uses while avoiding known nuisances.

Goal

Actively pursue the annexation of properties which currently benefit from the services provided by the City of Greensburg.

Goal

Promote the responsible expansion of the City's utilities into unincorporated areas.

Transportation Goals

Goal

Develop a multi-modal transportation system, including motorized, non-motorized and pedestrian infrastructure in the city of Greensburg to provide for the mobility of all citizens.

Goal

Create and maintain an interconnected thoroughfare network for the efficient movement of people, goods and services.

Goal

Employ the principles of access management and the use of architectural design and site development standards to reduce congestion, increase pedestrian activity and enhance the identity of major corridors.

Public Facilities Goals

Goal

Develop and rehabilitate public facilities as community focal points that reflect the identity and quality of life in the city of Greensburg.

Goal

Build and maintain practical, functional and well-located public facilities and spaces within the community.

Goal

Design public facilities to reflect the values of the city of Greensburg, including tradition, practicality, safety, and a forward thinking approach to the growth of the overall community.

Planning Principles

The planning principles are sound principles of community planning and development selected from a variety of sources. The principles were presented to the steering committee along with the supplementary supporting points. The planning principles were translated into the goals for the plan.

Traditional Communities:

Create a range of housing choices and opportunities in locations where the infrastructure is adequate

- An aging baby-boom population will create demand for low-maintenance, single story homes
- Young professionals and empty nesters are drawn to creative or unique spaces, such as condos or apartments above downtown retailers
- Executive housing helps keep the local management and professionals living in the community and involved
- Families tend to prefer well-designed, affordable homes (generally single family) in neighborhoods with sidewalks, parks, and access to schools and neighborhood retail
- Allow for the construction and use of live over work units where appropriate
- Provide attractive, well-designed, well-constructed affordable housing
- Integrate affordable housing throughout the community avoiding the centralization of such housing

Create walkable neighborhoods with a discernable center that is a 15 minute walk from all dwellings; connections to other neighborhoods and key places in the city

- Neighborhoods with safe pedestrian connections encourage children to play outdoors and walk or bike to school
- Neighborhood centers, such as parks, provide opportunities for people to gather and children to play without use of a car

- Safe pedestrian networks encourage people of all ages to exercise
- Neighborhoods with sidewalks and neighborhood centers foster tightly knit social groups
- Neighborhoods interconnected with curvilinear streets and pedestrian ways, relieve traffic on collectors and arterials

Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place (design aesthetics, restrictive covenants and discourage manufactured home parks)

- Public spaces that are well defined and strategically distributed contribute to overall quality of life
- Civic buildings that are prominent, attractive, and functional promote community pride and foster identity based on place
- Distinctive communities attract investment because they establish an identity that is memorable
- Architecture and site design requirements as part of special overlay districts are tools to help foster a unique sense of place and add to the value of real estate

Encourage a mix of complimentary land uses while avoiding known nuisances

- Mixed uses can reduce the number of vehicle trips and length of trips
- Residential uses in primarily commercial areas can increase the viability of commercial uses by creating additional demand
- Complimentary uses in the same district, such as residential mixed with downtown commercial adds to the vitality of the district
- Allowing uses such as residential near known nuisance uses, such as stock yards, airports, or factories can lead to future conflicts between residents and vital community assets

Encourage revitalization of the historic downtown and neighborhoods

- Growth and reinvestment in the downtown and historic neighborhoods minimizes the need for new infrastructure development by creating infill opportunities where roads, sidewalks and utilities already exist
- Redevelopment and revitalization deter areas from becoming blighted
- Downtown provides the community with much of its identity, which is lost if the downtown deteriorates significantly
- Create an identity, complete with a niche retail/service market, for downtown

- Historic neighborhoods are generally walkable, have community places such as parks, and have a mix of housing styles and types
- Infill construction should respect the form of the existing, historically significant structures without emulating their details, thus detracting from their authenticity
- Downtown is the heart of most communities and an identifiable center for government services, financial institutions, entertainment and history

Parks and Open Space:

Small playgrounds are accessible to homes

- Children can play in small groups at neighborhood parks
- There is no need to drive to a playground if parks are accessible

Promote natural resources, green spaces, and recreational resources

- Preserving and creating open space enhances the community's quality of life
- Linking parks, trail heads, urban plazas, educational institutions, etc. can create a network of open spaces and recreational areas
- Protecting critical environmental areas such as riparian corridors and flood plains adds to the green space of the community
- Enhancing natural beauty by balancing the hardscape of the built environment (i.e. parking lots, retail and commercial centers, industrial parks, downtown, etc) through the incorporation of landscaping as softscape elements can reduce some of the harmful effects of development
- Providing habitats for plants and animals demonstrates environmental responsibility for future generations
- Use of high impact, low-maintenance landscaping through the use of planting materials native to this part of the country contributes to the authenticity and natural beauty of the community

Managing Growth:

Encourage development patterns that build on existing infrastructure and population centers (infill development), including remediation and redevelopment of Brownfields

- Infill and Brownfield development use existing infrastructure (water, sewer, roads, etc.)

- Developing or redeveloping vacant or abandoned properties supports surrounding property values
- Placing active uses on vacant or abandoned sites returns them to the tax rolls or to service for the public good

Minimize the spread of low density, non-contiguous development by encouraging new development to be of an appropriate intensity and served by adequate public facilities

- Low-density, non-contiguous development is expensive to serve with public facilities and city services
- The costs to expand services, utilities and infrastructure is sometimes passed on to existing residents in older areas through higher utility rates and taxes
- Compact development minimizes the number of vehicle trips and length of trips
- Development can be directed to areas by public investment in infrastructure ahead of growth
- Directing growth to areas that are served by adequate public facilities reduces the cost of providing services

New investment along highway corridors should complement investment in existing community business centers

- Highway corridors are the first image visitors have of the community
- New development that causes existing businesses to fail harms the community by leaving empty spaces that can lead to blight
- Public investment in highway corridor improvements can spur private sector investment in businesses along the corridor

Update the City's Zoning and Subdivision Control Ordinances to provide for the appropriate retail uses which cater to resident's day-to-day needs for the purpose of eliminating unnecessary vehicle trips to the commercial centers of the community

Transportation:

Provide a variety of transportation choices

- Sidewalks, bike lanes, and multi-use paths provide safe ways for people to move around the community without using cars
- On-call, or demand responsive, public transportation systems provide mobility opportunities, particularly to the elderly and disabled

- Opportunities for non-motorized transportation can be incorporated into new road corridors and retrofitted into existing corridors
- Integrating opportunities for bicycle transportation with bicycle parking at stores, restaurants, and public buildings encourages use of bicycles. Bicycle tag programs increase the safety of parking bikes in public
- Transportation systems should be designed and operated in a way that protects the health and safety of all people
- Accommodations for movement of farm equipment in appropriate locations is vital for the safety of motorists and farmers
- Incorporating the use of traffic calming devices such as: relatively narrower streets, neckdowns, change in pavement, use of medians and roundabouts improves safety and the quality of life for residents

Streets form a connected network

- Vehicle miles can be reduced because there are direct routes to destinations
- Fire departments have direct access to homes and businesses, reducing response times
- Children can walk between neighborhoods
- Use of the traditional street grid or orthogonal street patterns and discouraging the use of cul-de-sacs reduces traffic in front of more homes while increasing the safety of the neighborhood

The number and frequency of automobile access driveways along road corridors should be minimized

- Access management improves traffic flow by minimizing the number of places where traffic slows for turning movements
- Shared driveways and connected parcels minimize short trips on the road to get from business to business

Site Layout and Aesthetics

- When parking is provided at the rear of buildings, where appropriate, buildings can be constructed closer to the road to encourage pedestrian activity
- Buildings, be they residential, commercial or industrial, should be required to address the street (not turn their back on the street and its pedestrian environment), through their orientation and façade treatments

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