

## 2008 Beechview Community Plan: 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting Summary

Beechview stakeholders gathered together on February 23rd to begin their community plan. There were 137 eager participants who followed the direction of facilitator Jim Pashek. During the meeting, groups were assembled and given the task of answering the following questions:

1. What do you like about Beechview?
2. What would you like to improve in Beechview?
3. What kinds of businesses would you like to see in the business district?
4. Other issues we should be aware of that would help us to plan for the future?

Next, attendees gathered in small groups around maps of the community and brainstormed answers to the questions. A representative of each group then announced their group's answers. The high turnout and great cooperation really spoke volumes as to the dedication that the residents of Beechview have towards their community.

The next meeting will be **Saturday, March 29th at St. Catherine McCann Hall from 1pm-2:30pm**. All are encouraged to attend (children included!) At this meeting, participants will break into small groups based on the topics raised at the first meeting. In these smaller groups, participants will discuss short term and long term strategies for actions that can be taken to improve Beechview and then report back to the entire group. The goal of this meeting is to begin working together as a community to create solutions to the problems our neighborhood faces. By breaking into smaller, more focused groups, we will be able to create those solutions. For example, those participants particularly interested in public safety issues could work together to generate ways in which the community can work together to create a safer neighborhood.

The following summary was provided by Pashek Associates, the firm that has been hired for the community plan.

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## What do you like about Beechview?

- Very convenient and reliable transportation; residential homes are reasonably priced; Beechview has a good local elementary, middle and high school
- T service; supermarket; affordable rent
- The community has potential
- The people, the area
- Convenient location to town and airport
- Diversity of its members; new Vanucci field playground; accessibility to trolley; neighbors/homes; affordability
- The hills and resultant views are stunning (a fact easily missed by lifelong residents); easy access to downtown Pittsburgh; green space, playgrounds; diverse population, not so homogenous as it was a mere decade ago
- The people and how a lot of children grow up, marry and buy a home there; our business district is located in the heart of our community
- People are still interested in improving the community; the churches
- History; friendliness of people
- Senior Center
- Good restaurants
- Closeness to all the major hospitals
- Walkability
- Born here – comfort level; great library
- Long-term residents
- Lunardi's
- Topography; opportunity to establish exactly what residents need and want
- Low taxes; low crime
- Meals on wheels
- Club; The Summit

## What would you like to improve?

- After school activities for children and teens to keep them off street corners; more places to eat that are reasonably priced; satellite classes for adults/teens like they have in other neighborhoods (CCAC, YMCA, YWCA, etc.); Try to keep single family homes from being turned into rental units – quit giving so many permits; cleaner streets



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- Building and street repair
- Make grant money available to businesses on Broadway to clean up building fronts; new senior center at St. Catherine's old school
- More police
- Less Section 8/Ambrose Mgt. buyers; better cleaning of Broadway Ave.; better safeguard of the business from robbery (too easy to jump on trolley and get away); hold homeowners to the city codes on keeping up their property; better conditions at the parks; catch whoever is setting fire to empty houses
- Business district; our library needs to be bigger
- Reduce/eliminate graffiti; increase the amount of trees; bring together the community members; create a neighborhood website with email newsletters/announcements; litter pick-up; Foodland/new grocery; address the vacant/abandoned buildings
- Better, safer pedestrian byways; sidewalks are altogether absent at north end of Beechview; improved access to greenways; more businesses along Broadway corridor
- Condition of rental properties; drug dealing; condition of roads; holding the city accountable for cleaning their property; bicycle access to downtown
- Maintain zoning
- Better promotion of community assets
- Beat cop!! (to patrol parks); improve business district security; needs a better supermarket (larger, cleaner and better parking); more control over who buys properties and takes care of them (landlords need to be held accountable); bus service to Shadycrest – rush hour from T line into other areas that are not bus or T accessible for elderly on hills
- Pharmacy; clean grocery store where you can get bakery goods and deli meats
- Safety cameras at parks; rec facilities for children and others; camp activities on weekends for teens; new center for seniors; people clean up after pets
- More businesses; politicians and leaders working together to make things happen; current and future stores more appealing (inside and outside); more privately-owned businesses (not turned into apartments); snow removal, patching concrete, general maintenance
- Enforce the garbage rule; eliminate the stuff people put on their porches; enforce the County to maintain their areas





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along Crane Ave.; don't be afraid to call when you have noisy neighbors

- Infrastructure, finish senior project, less vacancy on Broadway, cooperation between community and political leaders, hope and results, research ALL buyers involved, med express
- YMCA, rental facilities
- Put a coffee shop in like Cece's in the business district; bring in farmer's market; put in businesses that are accessible and will pull in people from Dormont, Mt. Lebanon, Brookline, etc.; shuttle bus from Brookline to Beechview and Greentree
- More consideration should be given to young people – Beechview Athletic Association is an excellent program but not all kinds are sports-oriented – I would like to see an after-school program (encouraging fitness for teens and kids); law enforcement for speeding on Broadway Ave.; improved relationships among ethnic groups
- Community pride; more people involved in the welfare of the neighborhood
- Public art and spaces; park and ride lots; keep elderly population; playgrounds; "safe" spaces to catch the T; trails on the greenway; moderated Beechview Community Board; graffiti, Vets monument
- Maintain and upgrade our ballfields and parks and reopen the swimming pool (turning it into a small-scale waterpark is not acceptable); expand the businesses that serve the general needs of the community; mentors for teens – programs such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, etc.
- Personal responsibility, community outreach, more involvement of immigrant and community minorities
- More involvement of northern parts (everything happens in central Beechview); road sewer infrastructure; more trash cans
- Mayor needs to be here more often; sidewalks in disrepair; rumors that business district landowners have back taxes; need festivals
- Recycling drop-off
- The community needs to generate more income and become more self-sufficient
- Teen involvement in this process as stakeholders; after-school programming/mentors; more businesses with a touch of class (like Davio's on Broadway); safety for all and attitudes
- Motorcycle noise
- Lighting
- Wi-Fi
- Eyeglasses





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- Bring back businesses that left

## What kinds of businesses would you like to see in the business district?

- A post office sub-station; more places to eat that are reasonably priced; specialty gift store similar to the ones in Bloomfield; a drug store; Dr. offices
- Hardware/home improvement; variety store
- Professional offices (don't require as much parking as retail businesses)
- Eye Dr., pharmacy; CCAC classes in St. Catherine's
- An English video store; come type of community rec/activity hall like Brookline
- Florist, bakery, more pizza shops
- Subway/Quizno's; daycare; barber shop
- New/better grocery store, coffee shops, restaurants, dry cleaner, garden/greenery store, post office, bank (First Commonwealth), galleries, extension of East-End food co-op
- Green Grocer; Ethnic Markets (Asian, Mediterranean); book store; gallery
- Drug store/urgent care
- Law office; Panera Bread; dog grooming; ice cream store; not a business but medic and cop mini station; work with catholic diocese to merge St. Catherine's and St. Pamphilus and make one of them a rec center
- Dunkin Donuts, breakfast diner like the Door Stop
- Health food store, Aldi (food store), card shop, movie theater, civic club for teens
- Movie theater, something (besides bars) to attract outsiders
- A new grocery store or help Jack at Foodland for some improvements. We are lucky to have him and that he didn't close the store. He also employs all local people. Perhaps we could help him with a new store front and spruce it up a little. He has been a blessing to our community
- State store
- Entertainment (movies, bowling alley, jazz club)
- Small clothing store; laundromat
- Children's resale shop
- Art Gallery (develop list of local residents who are artists); tech business (repair and support)
- Coffee shop/pastry/gathering place (even Starbucks); elderly housing; keep library
- Boys and Girls Club of America
- Business Center store with faxing, email, supplies, etc.





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- Gym
- Record store, vintage clothing store, club for teens

## **Other issues we should be aware of that would help us plan for the future?**

- Long-term T system maintenance
- Keep large developers out; let individuals develop their own business and own their own building
- The rise in crime (break-ins and robberies); the fact that I now have a half-way house on my street without knowing about it; too many vacant, dilapidated houses
- Try to help businesses that are here so that they will stay
- Eventually: some form of business that would be unique enough to draw people via the T; residents need to support local business; need commercial structures that can accommodate viable businesses; good to involve the community – long-term residents have heard it before – need to show progress
- Children's activities, CDC grant money?
- Beechview gets ignored by snowstorms back areas and side streets never get touched; sidewalks and potholes need to be fixed; continue to keep our firefighters and police officers having to reside in the city
- Section 8 housing is out of control and bring the community down, especially with the Hill District renovations – we need to control who is buying up our properties and who they are renting to
- Keep moving forward so we aren't in this position again
- All should join the block watch, volunteer to help, Broadway has a lot of potential
- Restore the mini bus to northern end of Beechview – Tropical, Shadycrest, etc.
- We should have community newspaper; local politicians don't get along which prevents things from getting done
- Zoning information; awareness of cultural differences (acceptance and inclusion)
- If children have to be brought to a meetings, have a special room and baby-sitter available so as not to disturb the meeting and hearing
- Parking space/garage for visitors to business district

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- Better preparation for young children (community center, school capacity, greater activities for south/north); aid for the poor; pursue foundation funding
- Virtual community (collection of email address of residents so there can be better communication); Spanish (recognition of a Spanish community, signs in Spanish); pride of ownership (recognition of businesses that rent, recognize the landlords who do a good job with their properties)
- Remove eyesore billboards; market assets
- Meeting needs of each age group in life cycle; citizens to do the work – be invested
- Any halfway houses would kill the area; remove billboards
- Neighborhood clean-up days
- Message of real consequences if someone commits a crime
- How can we motivate more residents to be involved?; lots of dogs
- Legislation for absentee landlords
- Parking for T users