

An aerial, stylized illustration of the Greater Hill District in Pittsburgh. The image shows a mix of historic brick buildings and modern structures. A prominent white building with many windows and small decorative signs on its roof is in the center. To its left is a brown brick building with a curved glass extension. To the right is a red brick building with a blue roof. A yellow sign with 'NEW' is visible. A green diagonal banner covers the lower left, and a yellow diagonal banner covers the lower right. The title 'Greater Hill District Master Plan' is written in white and yellow on the green banner. The date 'September 2024' is at the bottom left.

Greater Hill District Master Plan

September 2024

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	03	Public Art	42	INFRASTRUCTURE	109
Letter from Mayor	04	Public Health	45	Stormwater Management	110
Letter from Councilman Lavelle and Marimba Millions	04	Schools and Related Programs	45	Open Space	113
Acknowledgement from Department of City Planning	05	DEVELOPMENT	47	Tree Canopy	116
Why the Hill District?	06	Equitable Economic Development	48	Habitat Restoration	117
Why a Neighborhood Plan?	13	Housing	51	Urban Agriculture	117
PROCESS AND ENGAGEMENT	22	Land Use and Zoning	55	Energy	120
Public Engagement Plan and Communications Strategy	23	Urban Sustainable Design	58	Waste Management and Recycling	120
Public Engagement Milestones	24	Commercial Corridors	61	Digital Network and Utilities	121
COMMUNITY	28	MOBILITY	78	APPENDIX	124
Community Programs, Livability, and Cultural Heritage	30	Transit Service and Stations	80		
Community Welfare	42	Pedestrian Access, Safety, and Circulation	84		
		Accessibility	89		
		Traffic Safety	92		
		Bike Infrastructure	105		

INTRODUCTION



Letter from Mayor, Councilman Lavelle and Marimba Milliones

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nulla at gravida orci, non accumsan enim. Quisque vel tortor nisl. Donec ullamcorper efficitur mauris, nec volutpat ipsum aliquam a.

Aliquam interdum diam orci, sed sodales felis hendrerit nec.

Suspendisse volutpat, magna in pulvinar fringilla, nibh massa dapibus tellus, ac fringilla ex est nec nunc. Phasellus aliquam faucibus sapien vel efficitur. Fusce mollis tortor nisl, et semper tortor ornare ac.

Sed odio tortor, scelerisque at mi ac, fringilla finibus felis. Curabitur semper ex eget faucibus ultricies. Pellentesque pharetra, orci eu finibus posuere, velit risus interdum nunc, in feugiat ante neque ac tortor.

Proin at iaculis libero.

Ut fringilla tristique ligula in tempus. In et faucibus lacus. Nunc risus purus, volutpat volutpat quam non, tempor molestie mi. Aenean tempor, leo nec convallis mattis, orci erat placerat dolor, in pulvinar nisi felis fermentum nunc.

Duis eleifend eleifend efficitur. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames

ac turpis egestas. Cras hendrerit enim sit amet iaculis consectetur. Nulla feugiat ullamcorper venenatis. Nam tincidunt sed ipsum at consectetur. Sed porta at lacus sed viverra. Duis purus elit, tincidunt vitae blandit eu, tempus quis massa. Integer sodales congue neque sed feugiat.

Nam eu nulla pharetra, sagittis elit in, porta purus. Nunc ut urna at leo auctor maximus sit amet nec diam. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Duis iaculis tortor a egestas ultricies. Pellentesque a ex molestie, varius ipsum ultrices, commodo odio. Interdum et malesuada fames ac ante ipsum primis in faucibus.

Acknowledgement Statement from City Planning

The City of Pittsburgh's Department of City Planning is responsible for:

1. reviewing development proposals and managing compliance with current land use policies, and
2. developing long-range plans that adapt and evolve the City's approach to land use to meet future needs.

Included in this mandate is the Department's role in developing neighborhood plans, such as this one. In all of its work, the Department commits to the following:

- We believe that all voices have value.
- We will foster inclusive relationships.
- We acknowledge diversity within our community.
- We believe that mutual relationships build safe and engaging communities.
- We believe that each person has agency and power.
- We believe that opportunities to learn, lead, and collaborate unleash potential.

Why The Hill District?

The Hill District is a 1.56-square-mile community perched on the hills above and directly east of Downtown Pittsburgh. As illustrated in Figure 1, the Hill District consists of the neighborhoods of Crawford-Roberts, including the Lower Hill (reclaimed in 2024); Bedford Dwellings; Terrace Village; the Middle Hill; and the Upper Hill. Historically, the original 2011 Greater Hill District Master Plan included Uptown as part of the Hill District, reflecting the shared history, cultural connections, and overlapping interests of these communities. However, for the purposes of the current planning process, Uptown is no longer included within the boundaries.

This shift stems from the existence of the Uptown/ West Oakland Eco-Innovation District Plan, adopted in September 2017, which now serves as the guiding framework for long-term planning and development in Uptown. While this plan acknowledges the 2011 Greater Hill District Master Plan, it does not fully reflect the foundational principles or community vision established in the earlier plan. This has raised ongoing discussions about the need for greater collaboration and alignment between the two plans, particularly given the interconnected histories and future of the Greater Hill District.

The current Greater Hill District Master Plan recognizes the importance of fostering stronger linkages between these communities, as outlined in the implementation strategies of both plans. A more inclusive approach could not only bridge these geographic and planning boundaries but also amplify the collective voice of these

neighborhoods to advocate for equitable development, environmental sustainability, and community-driven outcomes.

By fostering greater synergy between the two planning efforts, there is potential to strengthen the impact of both plans while honoring the historical and cultural connections that continue to link Uptown with the Hill District. These efforts aim to build on shared foundations and create a more cohesive and inclusive approach to planning for the Greater Hill District."

The Hill District is a place that is rich in legacy, ownership, resistance, and hope. The histories of this city, country, and Black America specifically all run through the Hill District. This section attempts to do its story justice.

LEGACY

Black Belt, Little Italy, Little Syria, Athens, Lower Hill, Little Harlem, Little Haiti, Minersville, Sugartop, Arthursville, Jew's Hill, Up South, The Crossroads of the World; these are all names that have been attached to the Hill District at distinct points in its long history. Together, they form a mosaic of the extraordinarily diverse people and stories that have found a home in this part of Pittsburgh, one of the city's oldest settlements, over the last 200 years.

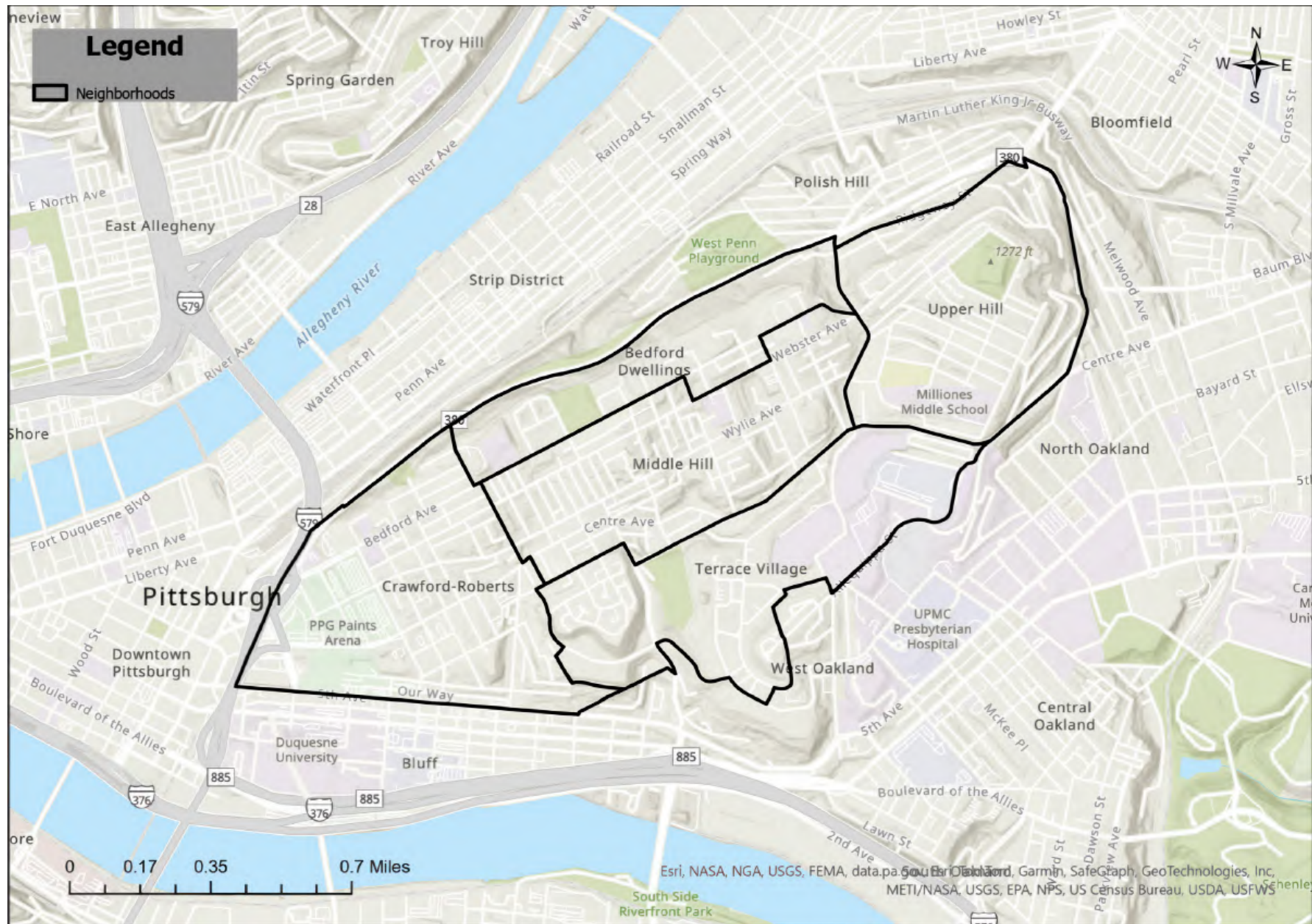
What is today known as the Hill District was first

populated in the modern era by free Black people who arrived at the beginning of the nineteenth century in the years following the Haitian Revolution. The Hill District has been a center of Black life ever since. In 1837, 110 Black families—36 of them property owners—lived in the area, making it the largest concentration of Black people in Antebellum Pittsburgh. The Underground Railroad weaved through the quarter, benefiting from a network of Black-owned homes and churches, and a community increasingly united by strong political activism in support of abolition, Black nationalism, free education, and other causes.

The area's legacy as a haven for those seeking freedom and opportunity was further cemented at the turn of the century as its population grew to 10,000 by the 1880s and then doubled by 1907, aided by the arrival of thousands of people from Eastern and Southern Europe. It is said that by 1929 the area was throbbing with life, with street market transactions being carried out in a dozen languages, and active churches and clubs representing many nationalities. People of Italian, Scotch-Irish, German, Jewish, Syrian, Greek, Lebanese, and Polish descent settled in often overlapping pockets of the Hill District during this time, forming a vibrant community whose traces can still be spotted in the place names and architecture of the area.

The Great Migration of Black people fleeing the Jim Crow South brought to the Hill District a period of rapid growth. The promise of freedom and jobs in one of the country's industrial powerhouses led tens of thousands to the

Figure 1: Hill District Neighborhoods



Source: Pittsburgh Department of City Planning

area. Between 1910 and 1960, the Hill's population grew from 25,000 to 100,000. This growth not only fed the existing base of Black organizing and community power building, but also brought with it a magnificent surge in cultural output and exchange. Music, writing, visual arts; the Hill District of the mid-20th century brimmed with sounds, sights, smells, life.

OWNERSHIP

While the Hill District was at its most populous an amalgamation of many different cultures, its sense of self has for much of its history been—and to this day remains—emphatically and proudly Black.

Jazz gave the Hill the monicker “Little Harlem.” It is the birthplace of Bebop, and it played host to the likes of Lena Horne, Billy Eckstein, Earl “Fatha” Hines, Miles Davis, Louis Armstrong, Charlie Mingus, and Max Roach, among many other greats. From the Crawford Grille to the Aurora, and the Roosevelt Theatre to the Ellis Hotel, the halls and streets of the quarter filled with sounds born in Black joy and struggle. At a storefront at the corner of Centre and Herron Avenues in the 1950s, Mary Dee—widely considered to be the first Black female disc jockey—led a pioneering radio show that combined music with current affairs and interviews for a largely Black audience, covering everything from police brutality to housing discrimination to gospel music, and taking requests from listeners and passersby.

Dee's brother Mal, who at times joined her radio show to cover news stories, was a reporter for the Pittsburgh Courier. The self-styled “America's Greatest Weekly” was the most prominent Black newspaper of its kind,

reaching, at its peak in 1947, a circulation of 357,000. The Courier was headquartered and printed at Centre Avenue and Francis Street in the heart of the Hill District, and focused on subjects of interest to Black Americans whose stories were not being covered by the mainstream white press. The Courier's chief photographer, Charles “Teenie” Harris, spent four decades capturing vignettes of Black Pittsburgh. During his time with the weekly, Harris amassed over 80,000 images, many taken on the streets surrounding his Hill District news desk.

Among Harris' subjects—most of who were Pittsburghers captured in delightfully quotidian settings—were renowned Black figures in music, the arts, politics, movement, and sport passing through the city, often during stays and engagements in the Hill District. The Pittsburgh Crawfords, an all-star Negro League baseball team that played in the first Black-owned baseball stadium in the country at Bedford Avenue and Chancey Street in the Hill District, also featured heavily in Harris' visual storybook. The Hill of this era is also immortalized in August Wilson's celebrated 1985 play *Fences*, later adapted into an award-winning film.

Woogie Harris' Crystal Barber Shop, Nesbit's Pie Shoppe, Ma Pitts' Restaurant, and Madam C.J. Walker's Leila College of Beauty Culture are just a handful of the hundreds of businesses and institutions that form a throughline of Black ownership in the Hill District's story. Over 30 locations in The Hill—many of them Black-owned restaurants and shops—appear in the Negro Motorist Green Book guide for Black travelers published by Victor Green between 1936 and 1967.

The Hill District's John Wesley AME Zion, St. Benedict the Moor, and Grace Memorial churches are among the oldest surviving Black churches in Pittsburgh. Bethel

AME, the oldest, was founded in what is now Downtown in 1808. It played host to the city's first school for Black children, The African School, and served as a nucleus of organizing for abolition, Black suffrage, and civil rights throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1862, on New Year's Eve, parishioners assembled to pray for the imminent signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, which President Lincoln did the following day. Ten years later, Bethel AME relocated to the corner of Wylie Avenue and Elm Street in the Lower Hill.

Bethel AME would remain at the foot of the Hill District until 1957. The story of its displacement that year is a testament to the limits of Black ownership in the mid-20th century, in the Hill District, Pittsburgh, and the country at large.

RESISTANCE

During the Second World War, urban segregation was in many ways the goal of official government policies throughout the country, dictating where and how Black Americans could and could not live. The Home Owner's Loan Corporation (HOLC), created by the federal government in 1933 to help homeowners refinance their mortgages, hired real estate agents in cities across the country to appraise neighborhoods for perceived investment risk and creditworthiness.¹ The “Residential Security Maps” that they prepared using these appraisals graded neighborhoods on a scale from A (shaded green, for least risk) to D (red, “hazardous”). These highly subjective assessments took the physical condition and age of buildings into account when measuring each neighborhood's “desirability” or “decline,” but they also relied heavily on appraisers' racist judgements of people

¹ <https://nextcity.org/features/redlining-race-philadelphia-segregation>

living in these neighborhoods.

A 1937 HOLC assessment of Pittsburgh grades the Hill District a “D” and succinctly offers two “detrimental influences” factored into the rating: “concentration of negro and undesirables, very congested.” Aside from a handful of other race- and class-based judgements of the Hill’s population, the assessment describes buildings as being in a mostly “poor” state, averaging 30-60 years in age, and including rowhouses, tenements, apartments, duplexes, and single-family homes. It estimates that within 10-15 years “desirability” will trend “downward fast,” and notes that “the poorest area in the territory bounded by 5th Ave., Congress St., Bedford & Erin St. has been mentioned for slum clearance.

Government leaders at all levels (local, state, federal) were during this period grappling with what they viewed as a looming crisis in need of state intervention: industrial cities whose urban cores were being “blighted” by districts replete with aging housing increasingly seen as being beyond repair and crowded with “undesirable” (often code for non-white) people. Because these neighborhoods were often rated as “hazardous” by the federal government and were “redlined” out of eligibility for financing to repair this housing stock, their inevitable decline paved the way for the sort of government-led “slum clearance” cited in the 1937 assessment.

In 1941, government leaders began citing a new reason for government intervention in addressing this perceived crisis, the war itself. The country, the broad argument went, needed to prepare its cities for the postwar economy and for the reabsorption of potentially millions of soldiers and their families. Writing in Greater Pittsburgh, one such leader, City Council Member George E. Evans, also the chairman of the Pittsburgh Housing

Authority, noted in 1943 that “One place in which the Government’s action can be effective is in remedying the interior decay of our cities, and in no other city is there greater need for such action than in the City of Pittsburgh.”² He cites the Hill District as being “one of the most outstanding examples in Pittsburgh of neighborhood deterioration.”

“It contains an area of about 650 acres, of which it is estimated that 500 acres could be reclaimed. There are 7,000 separate property owners; more than 10,000 dwelling units and in all more than 10,000 buildings. Approximately 90 percent of the buildings in the area are sub-standard and have long outlived their usefulness, and so there would be no social loss if they were all destroyed. The area is criss-crossed with streets running every which way, which absorb at least one-third of the area. These streets should all be vacated and a new street pattern overlaid. This would effect a saving of probably 100 acres now used for unnecessary streets.”

The vision that Evans lays out, a district with “ample space, air, light, playgrounds, landscaped area” housing 20,000 additional residents in “decent, comfortable homes,” in place of existing “slums” is consistent with prevailing attitudes among white government leaders and powerbrokers in cities all over the county during this time. His arguments, that there would be “no social loss”

caused by forcibly displacing an area he describes as being riddled with disease and crime, are emblematic of racist perspectives that guided the activities and investments of Pittsburgh’s white power structure in the middle of the last century, rendering totally invisible the vibrant communities that called the Hill District home during wartime and that were so beautifully captured in Teenie Harris’ photos; yes, in physical conditions made suboptimal by disinvestment and disenfranchisement.

In many ways, the stage was being set for large-scale urban redevelopment targeting the Hill District. The passage of the federal GI Bill in 1944 redirected mostly white returning soldiers and their families from returning to the cities they had left behind to instead populate new suburbs that Black Americans could neither afford or legally access. Other white city-dwellers left cities by the millions during this period in what has come to be known as “white flight,” swayed by narratives of congested and decaying cities and by federal programs facilitating their abandonment to exclusive new suburbs that felt like the future. In the Hill District, the Bedford Dwellings and Terrace Village housing developments built in 1944 to house diverse working-class families and to propose a gleaming alternative to crowded housing elsewhere in the neighborhood were by the end of the decade occupied exclusively by Black people, a symbol of the transfer of white people and capital out of cities, exacerbating the urban crisis that Evans and his peers were clamoring about. It is in this context that the private sector’s Allegheny Conference of Community Development (ACCD), initially known as the Citizens’ Committee on Post-War Planning, was founded in 1944 and was joined by the City-created Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) two years later. Both organizations led the charge in planning for Pittsburgh’s postwar

² https://web.archive.org/web/20150910130313/http://carnegielibrary.org/exhibit/neighborhoods/hill/hill_n41.html

“Renaissance” through large-scale redevelopment projects.

The tools that Evans was calling for, large-scale financing mechanisms and legal tools enabling city governments to purchase “blighted areas” and redevelop them en masse, would finally arrive with the passage of the 1949 National Housing Act which greenlit the federal urban renewal program. “Slum clearance” was now a matter of federal law, and the Hill District its most appealing local target. With the Gateway Center and Point State Park hailed as victories for the Renaissance, all made possible by the 1949 law, the ACCD and URA turned to a new project in 1951, the development of a new civic auditorium for the Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera. After a proposed site at Highland Park was met with organized resident resistance, planners set their sights on the Hill District. Where Evans had once proposed a 500-acre redevelopment project, the City offered a 95-acre plan that would replace the entire Lower Hill with an entirely new neighborhood anchored by arts venues, stadiums, residential towers, and other structures designed to serve white Pittsburgh. The Edgar J. Kaufmann Charitable Trust offered \$1 million to support the proposed redevelopment, and the City approved plans in 1955.

In all, it is estimated that over 8,000 residents and 400 businesses were displaced by the disintegration of the Lower Hill. The heart of the Black Hill District, the site of generations of history, culture, struggle, and joy was razed over the course of three short years. The Loendi Club, Crawford Grill No. 1, Local 471, and at least a dozen other sites featured in the Green Book were lost between 1951 and 1957, replaced with the Civic Arena and acres of surface parking lots in areas that had been slated for new development that never materialized. Residents

and businesses, promised compensation that scarcely flowed, were scattered across the city and region.

Bethel AME church, hub of Black life and organizing in Pittsburgh for 150 years, was the last building to be demolished. The City Charter’s prohibition on seizing private property from churches and cemeteries did not apply to the newly formed URA, a product of its innovative structure and the unprecedented power that the 1949 law gave to city governments. Church of the Epiphany, less than 430 feet away and serving a white congregation, was spared and still stands today. At the Crossroads of the World, where Mary Dee for years transmitted music and current affairs to eager listeners, parking lots have stood for decades.

By the time the Civic Arena was completed in 1961, the scale of the injustice brought upon the Hill District by local government and business leaders through this redevelopment was abundantly clear to community members living further up the Hill. Inspired by a long tradition of political advocacy with roots in the now-displaced Lower Hill, residents formed an organized resistance to other urban renewal efforts that threatened to fulfill Evans’ 1943 vision. At the intersection of Centre Avenue and Crawford Streets, the new Citizens Committee for Hill District Renewal (CCHDR) headed by community activist Frankie Mae Pace partnered with the local NAACP to erect a billboard in 1966³ demanding a halt to redevelopment creeping uphill and new low-income housing. That same year, CCHDR purchased a property on Vine Street in what was left of the Lower Hill and used it to launch a self-help-renewal demonstration project (the first of its kind) in partnership with the URA to demonstrate how property owners could renew their homes.⁴

Expressions of community self-determination and resistance abounded in the late 20th century, with pioneering models of organized community development emerging out of the aftermath of urban renewal, and protests against racial injustice regularly occurring in and setting off from the Hill District. The site of the defiant billboard, where thousands of Black Pittsburghers met to depart for the March on Washington in 1963 and where demonstrations were also concentrated following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr in 1968, was christened the Freedom Corner in 2002, where a triumphant monument now stands as a tribute to the Hill District’s history of Black struggle.

HOPE

For over 200 years, the Hill District has persevered, weathering generations of social, cultural, political, and economic transformation at every level of our society. The Hill has shaped and been shaped by the stories of people across the globe, and its people have written a collective story teeming with legacy, ownership, and resistance.

The people of the Hill District are proud of this place’s history and committed to its future. The quarter’s long tradition of advocacy and participation burns bright today in the many organizations that residents and business-owners have created to build a prosperous future for the Hill District. These include the dozens of community groups that banded together to create the Greater Hill District Master Plan in 2011, a first-of-its-kind community-led planning effort that guided the creation and content of this Neighborhood Plan. This community has articulated a clear vision and foundations on

³ Note, different sources put this at 1963, 1966, 1969.

⁴ <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/219486334.pdf> (pg. 74)

which to build this future: development principles, non-displacement strategies, and strategies for reclaiming the Lower Hill.

Longtime residents' continued commitment to community ownership is a source of hope, and it's manifested in recent promising victories. The ongoing redevelopment of the New Granada Theatre, the new addition added to the Hill House Kaufmann Center, development of August Wilson Park, and the arrival of a grocery store demonstrate the enduring power of community organizing in a district built on it.

Institutional discrimination, neglect, and displacement have left a lasting mark on the Hill District. Between 1950 and 1990, the area's population dropped from just under 54,000 to near 15,000; as of 2020, 11,500 people live in the Hill District, a 34% loss in population since 1990 that parallels but far exceeds Pittsburgh's 18% population drop during the same period. Concentrated poverty persists, and the Hill District remains disconnected from the economic strength of the Downtown and Oakland neighborhoods that's about it. Crosstown Boulevard, inaugurated in 1964, and the expanse of vacant lots that once made up the Lower Hill—including the former site of the Civic Arena which was determined to be obsolete and summarily demolished in 2011—physically separate the Hill District from Downtown's economic activity, but community members have organized to play a leading role in changing that.

The 28-acre Lower Hill redevelopment project being led by the Pittsburgh Penguins as part of an option agreement with the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) and Sports and Exhibition Authority (SEA) as part of an option agreement with the URA and SEA—currently underway—will create a mixed-income,

mixed-use development that reconnects the historic Hill District to Downtown Pittsburgh. In September 2014, the Hill District Community Development Corporation reached an agreement with the development team that secured, among other important provisions, a long-term reinvestment fund that will dedicate tax revenues from the development to meeting the goals of the Community Collaboration and Implementation Plan (CCIP), and commitments to create jobs and other workforce development opportunities for Hill District residents, provide the community with transparency in the development process, and build on the area's cultural and community legacies through urban design and programming that honors these. Further, the URA is committed to delivering on six community priorities communicated by residents:

- Affordable housing on the site.
- Investment in the Greater Hill development and connectivity to Lower Hill.
- Preservation of Hill District legacy through arts and culture.
- Access to well-paying jobs.
- Investments in Hill District youth and families.
- Wealth-creating business opportunities and MBE participation.

In April 2023, Bethel AME announced that it had reached an agreement with the Pittsburgh Penguins under which the team will transfer 1.5 acres of development rights to the historic church in the vicinity of its former site in the Lower Hill. Under Pastor Dale Snyder's leadership, the church plans to use this land to build a 128-unit housing

complex whose apartments will be accessible to Hill District residents dislocated by urban renewal. The goal of this development? Says Pastor Snyder, "We want this place to be a citadel of hope again."⁵

THE HILL DISTRICT AT A CROSSROADS

GREATER HILL DISTRICT Master Plan



SASAKI



Final Report
September 2011

The 2011 Greater Hill District Master Plan was a triumph of community-led planning, and it serves as our roadmap. This Neighborhood Plan exists to incorporate the 2011 plan into the City of Pittsburgh's neighborhood planning framework, and leverages the strength of community advocacy and ownership, and the City's commitment to equity and justice. The Hill District finds itself in a moment of unprecedented opportunity to build a future for its people that centers these principles.

This opportunity comes at a time during which the City has committed to adopting elements of the Climate Justice Alliance's Just Transition Framework, which

⁵ <https://www.publicsource.org/lower-hill-district-bethel-ame-church-pittsburgh-penguins-development/>

recognizes that there is no guarantee that marginalized communities will be significantly better off from climate-driven investments unless those investments come alongside strategies to build economic, political, social, and cultural power for those communities.

The Department of City Planning, which plays a leading role in developing and executing the city's neighborhood plans has embraced the following goals for its work throughout Pittsburgh, including in the Hill District:

○ **EQUITABLE REDISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES**

- Land use reforms and zoning policies that repair past harms.
- Removal of bureaucratic barriers that create disparities in access to city planning services.

○ **SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL WELLBEING FOR ALL**

- Holistic neighborhood planning that ensures everyone's basic needs are met.
- Environmental planning that addresses unequal social vulnerabilities.

○ **REGENERATIVE ECONOMIES & LIFE-AFFIRMING WORK**

- Development of policies and planning tools that grow an equitable green economy and a sustainable innovation economy.

○ **RETAINING CULTURAL HERITAGE**

- Urban design and a public realm that lifts up under-told stories.

○ **DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**

- Comprehensive Plan engagement and new education initiatives that democratize the planning process.

The goals stated by the community goals in the 2011 plan, which prioritize community ownership, thoughtful whole-neighborhood planning, and climate justice are further adopted into this plan:

○ **BUILD UPON THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL LEGACY**

- The Hill District has been a setting for Black history-making from the 18th century to the present. Thus, the Hill will position itself as Pittsburgh's oldest African American neighborhood and retain its cultural and historical personality, which should not be lost due to market pressures and gentrification.

○ **FAMILY FRIENDLY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT DISPLACEMENT**

- Housing developments must include an appropriate level of family housing including rental and for sale units affordable to various income levels in order to prevent displacement.

○ **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

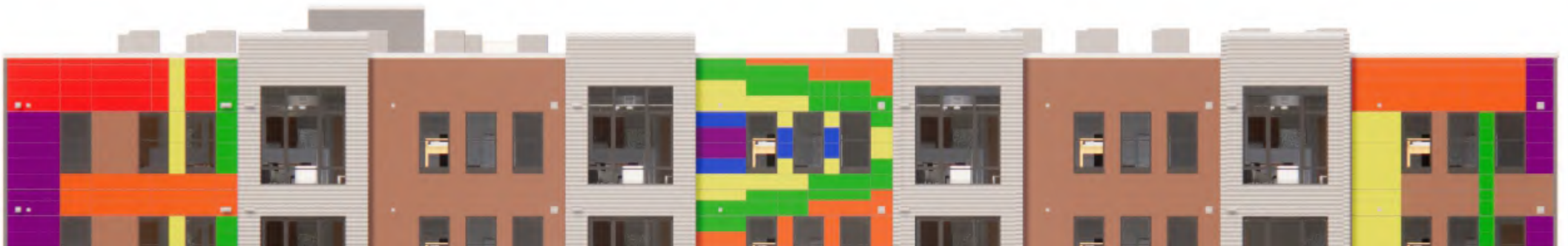
- Community residents, organizations and businesses will gain social and economic benefit from neighborhood revitalization efforts.

○ **MAKE THE HILL DISTRICT A GREEN AND WELL-DESIGNED COMMUNITY**

- The Hill District will have a comprehensive strategy for sustainability and quality design.

○ **MOBILITY, TRANSPORTATION, AND PARKING**

- Ensure viable and affordable transportation access to all members of the community.



Why a **Neighborhood Plan**?

Historically, in Pittsburgh and other major cities, municipal-led city planning has focused on designing and executing large, publicly-funded infrastructure and development projects through top-down planning and design approaches. Neighborhood planning as we know it today emerged as a direct challenge and alternative to these approaches in the mid-20th century, when the Civil Rights movement and new federal spending on community advocacy organizations led to the creation of many such organizations in cities all over the country.

Investments from local foundations nurtured community-based organizations, which took on larger and more complicated projects including community planning. These early community plans often focused on a specific issue, such as vacant land or a commercial district, rather than a comprehensive look at an entire neighborhood. In March 2020, the City of Pittsburgh created a formal Neighborhood Planning Program that builds on this well-established foundation by adding a set of standards and best practices to ensure the next generation of plans are consistent and comparable in order to lead to adoption by the City Planning Commission.

At a high level, Pittsburgh's neighborhood plans are strategies for the future of a specific community (defined as the largest possible group of stakeholder types in a community-defined geographic area), including proposals for the built and natural environment as well as the programs and activities that sustain a place and its people.

Scales of Planning Types of Plans



Under the Neighborhood Planning Program, all neighborhood plans adopted by the City of Pittsburgh contain:

- **A vision statement:** A shared description of what the neighborhood will be in 10 years if the plan is successful.
- **Goals:** Long-term outcomes that the plan will achieve. Under each goal, the following are identified:
 - **Policies:** Set a preferred direction and describe what must be done to achieve the goals.
 - **Programs:** A set of activities that seek to realize a particular long-term aim.
 - **Projects:** Discrete actions for a list of implementation partners to take on and complete.
 - **Partnerships:** Commitments by organizations to work together to advance an outcome.
- **Chapters that focus on four required topics that all communities must address:**
 - **Community:** Meeting the needs of residents, employees, students, and stakeholders.
 - **Development:** Maximizing the benefits of new development for the community.
 - **Mobility:** Making it easier, safer, and healthier for people to get around.
 - **Infrastructure:** Nourishing neighborhoods through new energy, stormwater, and open space systems.

Adopted neighborhood plans become official City of Pittsburgh policy, and guide public investments in the neighborhood, including capital budget decisions, for at least the next 10 years before they are updated. Neighborhood plans can also help guide private and institutional investments, and plans built using this guide can be formally adopted into the City's Comprehensive Plan through approval by the Planning Commission. This framework helps communities clearly and concisely capture their vision using equitable, transparent, and inclusive engagement practices.

HOW DOES THIS PLAN RELATE TO PREVIOUS PLANS?

The Hill District and its constituent neighborhoods have been the focus of over a dozen planning efforts over the last three decades. The 2011 community-led Greater Hill District Master Plan (GHDMP) stands out in its intent and perspective, focusing on the entire District and a desire to honor the community's rich history.

"The Hill District... has contributed greatly to the city's history and remains as a center of Pittsburgh's African American culture. The intent of this master planning effort is to ensure that the resulting neighborhood plan reflects the vision Hill District residents and other neighborhood stakeholders have for the revitalization of this important historic neighborhood." – Greater Hill District Master Plan Request for Proposals.

The 2011 planning process was overseen by a Management Committee led by City Councilman Daniel Lavelle and comprised of representatives from stakeholders in the community. The plan they produced was rooted in four foundations:

- **Community Goals:** Drawn from over twenty-five existing plans for various parts of the Hill and vetted by the community at a November 2010 public meeting and then revised by the Master Plan Management Committee.
 - Build Upon the African American Cultural Legacy.
 - Family Friendly Housing Development Without Displacement.
 - Economic Empowerment and Commercial Development.
 - Make the Hill District a Green and Well-Designed Community.
 - Mobility, Transportation, and Parking.
- **Development Principles:** A framework for the Master Plan and guidelines for development activities and the allocation of public resources in the Greater Hill District.
 - Address/Right Historical Wrongs.
 - Promote Economic Justice.
 - Reflect Neighborhood Driven Civic Design.
 - Promote a Green and Healthy Environment.
 - Utilize Neighborhood Strengths and Assets.
- **Non-Displacement Strategies:** Intended to govern development activities and public funding decisions

affecting the Greater Hill District, in order to ensure that existing residents of the Hill District and Uptown will enjoy the benefits of a revitalized neighborhood.

- **Economic Opportunities**

- First Source Hiring
- Enhanced MBW/WBE Commitments

- **Homeowner Support**

- Owner-Occupied Rehab
- Equity Protection Services
- Condemnation-Free Development

- **Renter Support**

- Build First
- Support for Tenants in Redevelopment

- **Preserving Affordability**

- Inclusionary Affordable Housing
- One for One Replacement

- **Community Ownership/Equity**

- Priority to Acquire Vacant and Publicly-Owned Property
- Co-Ownership Requirements

- **Strategies for Reclaiming the Lower Hill:** Intended to govern land use and development activities in the Lower Hill District and designed to ensure that the Lower Hill is redeveloped in a way that reintegrates the area into the cultural fabric of the community, provides housing and employment opportunities for Hill District residents, and serves as a catalyst for market-driven investment throughout the neighborhood.

- **Design Strategies**

- Neighborhood Design Guidelines
- Entrance

- **Housing Strategies**

- Inclusionary Affordable Housing

- Right to Return

- **Business Development Strategies**

- Inclusionary Business Development
- Neighborhood-Scale Retail

Specifically, the GHDMP lays out:

- **Program Initiatives:** Specific projects to help the community meet its goals of improving the quality of life in the Hill and taking a role in Pittsburgh's regeneration:

- **BUILD UPON THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL LEGACY**

- District Identity
 - » Signage and Wayfinding
 - » Weekly Publication
- The Hill History Center
 - » "Past, Present & Future" Trail
- Historic Preservation
 - » Hill District Preservation Plan
- Quality Education Initiative
 - » Lifelong Education
 - » Urban Fellows
 - » Youth Safe Haven
 - » Youth Arts Education
- Hill District Arts Plan
- Neighborhood Safety
 - » Neighborhood Watch

- **FAMILY FRIENDLY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT DISPLACEMENT**

- Hill District Homeowner/Tenant Support
 - » Homeowner Cooperative
 - » Homeowner Education Articles

- » Tenant Resource Center

- Housing Innovation Zone
- Comprehensive Vacant Property Strategy
 - » Hill District Land Bank
 - » Demolition Moratorium
 - » Vacant Property Maintenance Standards
 - » Temporary Uses
 - » Adopt-a-Lot
 - » Side-lot Transfer
 - » Neighborhood Clean-ups

- **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

- Hill District Workforce Development
 - » Green Building, Clean Manufacturing and "Green-Collar" Jobs
 - » Construction/Renovation/Historic Preservation
 - » Nursing/Health Related Professions
 - » Restaurant/Food Service
 - » Youth Opportunities
 - » Job Placement Resources
- Hill District Business Incubator
 - » Non-Profit Incubator Space
 - » Arts Incubator Space
 - » Small Business Incubator Space
 - » Cooperative Marketplace
 - » Small Business Support
 - » Innovation Competition

- Centre Avenue Business District

- **MAKE THE HILL DISTRICT A GREEN AND WELL-DESIGNED COMMUNITY**

- Greenprint Implementation

- Urban Agriculture
- Play Spaces
 - » Play Streets
- **MOBILITY, TRANSPORTATION, AND PARKING**
 - Neighborhood Transportation
 - » Transportation Advocacy Group
 - » Intra-Hill Neighborhood Transit
 - » Hill District Transportation Plan
 - Ride-to-Work
 - » Shuttle to Major Employers
 - » Ride-Sharing System
 - » Jitney Stand
 - Streetscape Improvements
 - “Complete Streets” Pilot
 - Comprehensive Parking Strategy
- **Urban Design Proposals:** Address opportunities to improve the physical environment and to leverage recent and near-term development activity in the Hill:
 - **Lower Hill:** Reconnect the Lower Hill to the rest of the Hill District and rebuild it as an active neighborhood with connections to Downtown.
 - **Crawford Corridor:** Improve pedestrian connections between the Lower Hill/ Crawford-Roberts and Uptown.
 - **Uptown Opportunities:** Identify strategic sites for residential infill and mixed-use, catalytic development. Explore TOD opportunities and improve multimodal transit along corridors to Oakland and Centre Avenue.
 - **Bedford Avenue Corridor:** Transform Bedford Avenue into a fully developed residential avenue that takes advantage of

the spectacular views to the north and its recreational amenities.

- **Centre View:** Reinforce Centre Avenue as the Hill’s primary retail, institutional, and cultural node as well as a strong residential neighborhood.
- **Kirkpatrick Street Recreational Corridor:** Use existing green spaces and streets to establish recreation opportunities and improve pedestrian connections such as those recommended in Greenprint.
- **Herron Avenue:** Transform Herron Avenue into a commercially viable and attractive avenue and a gateway into the neighborhood.
- **Upper Hill:** Reinforce the cohesive residential character through residential stabilization and infill development.

The Greater Hill District Neighborhood Plan is designed to formalize the 2011 GHDMF and integrate it into the framework created by the City’s Neighborhood Planning Program and to make updates to reflect the dynamic needs of the Hill, all while honoring the 2011 plan’s vision statement:

“The Hill District... has contributed greatly to the city’s history and remains as a center of Pittsburgh’s African American culture. The intent of this master planning effort is to ensure that the resulting neighborhood plan reflects the vision Hill District residents and other neighborhood stakeholders have for the revitalization of this important historic neighborhood”.

The plan area for the updated neighborhood plan includes the neighborhoods of Crawford-Roberts, Middle Hill, Terrace Village, Bedford Dwellings, Upper Hill, and the Lower Hill. While the GHDMF included all of the Hill District, Uptown, and small parts of West Oakland, the Uptown and West Oakland neighborhoods have undergone separate City-led planning processes since 2011 and were therefore not included in this process.

Previous plans reviewed by the 2011 planning team, which also inspired the neighborhood planning process, include:

- Bedford and Hill District Pattern Book (1999)
- Middle Hill Revitalization Plan (2004)
- Centre Avenue Mixed-Use Feasibility Study (2005)
- Kirkpatrick Park Project (2005)
- River Opportunity Report (2005)
- The Herron Avenue Studio (2006)
- Arcena Connections Planning Concepts (2008)
- Herron Avenue Corridor Coalition Design Group (2008)
- Uptown Community Vision (2009)
- Greenprint I: The Hill—A Village in the Woods (2009)
- Greenprint II: The Hill—A Village in the Woods (2010)
- Pittsburgh Arena District Master Development Plan (2010)
- “Pushpin” Plan/Greater Hill District Development Nodes Overview (2010)
- Herron Avenue Revitalization Planning Strategy (2011)
- Hill District Research, Analysis and Urban Design Proposals (date unknown)



Other plans and studies in this document include:

- Schenley Heights Toolkit (2011)
- Hill District Vacant Property Study (2013)
- Community Collaboration and Implementation Plan (2014)
- Formally Community Adopted Plans
 - Centre Ave Redevelopment and Design Plan (2015)
 - Choice Neighborhood Plan (Bedford Connects Transformation Plan) (2018)
 - The Great Return of the Hill: A Destination for Thriving - Black Culture, Commerce & Innovation
 - RAISE Grant Plan

Our intent for this document is to represent and fortify these previously developed and community adopted plans into the final update of the GHDMF.

HOW DID WE DEVELOP THIS PLAN?

At the beginning of this process, a Steering Committee co-chaired by Councilman Daniel Lavelle and Marimba Milliones, President and CEO of the Hill CDC was created. The Steering Committee is a collaborative group comprised of residents, representatives from community-based organizations, businesses, and institutions of the Hill District.

Over the course of this planning effort, the Committee worked with public agency staff to develop a Public Engagement Plan, reviewed the work of the Action Teams, helped to update the GHDMF, and are now working to support this plan's adoption. Representatives from 24 organizations ultimately joined the Steering

Committee and have committed to working on the plan's implementation once it is adopted. Committee members were expected to participate fully in the planning process, represent their organization and themselves, and report back to the community. The following organizations are represented on the Steering Committee:

- ACH Clear Pathways
- Amani Christian CDC
- Arts In HD
- Bridging the Gap Development
- City of Pittsburgh - City Council
- Council District 6
- Crawford Square Home Owners Association
- Dinwinddie Community Alliance
- Duquesne University
- Eat Initiative
- Energy Innovation Center
- Hill Community Development Corporation
- Hill District Consensus Group
- Hill District Collaborative
- Hill District Education Council
- Hill District Federal Credit Union
- Housing Authority of Pittsburgh
- Neighborhood Allies
- Neighborhood Resilience Project
- New Hill District Business Association
- Omicelo
- Schenley Heights Collaborative
- Ujamaa Collective
- University of Pittsburgh





- YMCA

Among the Steering Committee's first acts was to develop the public engagement plan for this neighborhood planning process. The Committee identified three broad strategies for participation:

- **Action Teams:** Topic-focused groups comprised of residents, students, employees, property owners, agencies, and professionals interested in working to develop projects and programs for the neighborhood plan. Action Teams were formed for each of the four core chapters of the plan: community, development, mobility, and infrastructure, and members were tasked with engaging the broader community on their topic, conducting studies, looking at best practices, and shaping recommendations.
- **Community Events:** Through the planning process there were multiple general and topic-based public events such as block parties, workshops, and open houses to allow more casual involvement.
- **Online Opportunities:** For those unable to make in-person events, the same materials would be posted online with ways to provide input. The central place for project information was online at <https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov/ghdmp>. A social media presence for the project extended to include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and NextDoor. And as they were developed, plan proposals were shared with the public online for feedback, as well as in person through the public events.

Separate from the Steering Committee, City staff were identified to serve as topical area leads responsible for

each of the four core topic areas in the neighborhood plan:

- **Community:** Department of City Planning and Mayor's Office, Office of Equity.
- **Development:** Department of City Planning, Urban Redevelopment Authority.
- **Mobility:** Department of Mobility & Infrastructure, Port Authority.
- **Infrastructure:** Green Building Alliance, Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority, Department of City Planning.

At the November 2020, and January and February 2021 Steering Committee meetings; priorities were identified between the 2011 Greater Hill District Master Plan and the Neighborhood Plan Guide update and adoption prioritization. In the November Community Action Team meeting, the Leadership Circle and staff conducted a workshop to explore the meaning of community resilience for the Greater Hill District. Drawing from [resilience.org](https://www.resilience.org)'s definition, resilience is described as "the ability of a system (like a community) to absorb disturbance and still retain basic function and structure." Given the Hill District's unique historical, institutional, systemic, and geographical challenges, it stands as a powerful example of resilience. This session allowed participants to reflect on the district's capacity to endure and adapt amid adversity.

Healthy and Resilient Hill District

Hill District residents have experienced a range of internal and external pressures, or stressors, that have driven changes. These stressors require resilience—the ability to withstand challenges and recover swiftly. Building resilience in a community involves strengthening both its physical and social components. The physical includes resources like schools, hospitals, and parks, while the social encompasses people, institutions, and the networks of relationships that use these resources. Together, these components adapt, transform, and shape a resilient community.

During the Community Action Team meetings, Hill District stakeholders resolved that to combat the Hill District's stressors—poor air quality, chronic illness, housing insecurity, vacancy, gentrification, inaccessible or underrepresentation in the development process, lack of access to affordable housing and capital, insurmountable institutional barriers, mental health issues from chronic poverty, poor community cohesion and cooperation, drug addiction, lack of access to quality healthcare, lack of access to healthy food, systematic racism, poor infrastructure, and lack of political involvement—the Hill District's foundations must be strengthened. Creating a thriving community means the Hill District needs to reinforce both physical and social support, through initiatives like the Neighborhood Safety Program, Hill District Workforce Development, and Streetscape Improvement. This approach envisions a vibrant, self-sustaining Hill District, where residents have access to essential services, affordable housing, healthcare, and opportunities to contribute meaningfully to their community. Appendix XX provides an in-depth overview of the unique challenges and stressors affecting Hill District residents, businesses, institutions, and infrastructure, along with further context on of

how the Community Healthy and Resilient Framework addresses these issues.

Healthy and Resilient Hill District Foundations

1. **People:** The power of the Hill District is within its people, resilience is built through comradery of Hill residents and stakeholders, we envision the future of our community.
2. **Systems Thinking:** Systems thinking. Systems thinking is essential for understanding the complex, interrelated crises now unfolding and what they mean for our similarly complex communities.
3. **Adaptable:** A community that adapts to change is resilient. But because communities and the challenges we face are dynamic, adaptation is an ongoing process.
4. **Transformative:** The Hill may have to do more than just adapt, but change, if necessary. Be the change agents.
5. **Livable:** The Hill District will be a neighborhood worth living; we are striving for a healthy and educated, and affordable community, outpacing the current metrics to calculate “most livable,” and incorporating additional social determinates that disproportionately effect residents.
6. **Co-ownership & Co-powerment:** Fostering a Hill District where residents, businesses, stakeholders, and visitors share collective ownership and responsibility for its future. Together, we will build inclusive and equitable relationships, empowering one another to confront challenges, celebrate successes, and collaboratively shape a united and thriving community.



PROGRESS AND A WAY FORWARD

Today, the Greater Hill District is in the midst of a reclamation process. Recognizing the need for inclusive development, the community embarked on comprehensive planning initiatives. The 2011 Greater Hill District Master Plan and the Community Comprehensive Investment Plan (CCIP) emerged as critical frameworks for guiding the neighborhood's future. These plans emphasized the importance of community input, sustainable development, and equitable distribution of resources. Through collaborative efforts, residents began to reclaim agency over their environment, advocating for projects that honored the past while paving the way for a prosperous future. Through the Greater Hill District Master Plan and CCIP, the residents and community stakeholders have worked tirelessly to reclaim both the benefits and the physical space that was lost. A significant milestone in the reclamation process was the Greater Hill District's inclusion of the Crawford-Roberts neighborhood, moving away from its former designation within the broader downtown area. This reclassification was more than a mere administrative change; it represented a recognition of the neighborhood's unique identity and its distinct needs. By aligning with Crawford-Roberts, the Greater Hill District gained a stronger voice in city planning, fostering initiatives that directly benefited its residents and honored its historical boundaries.

The CCIP, in particular, has become a symbol of the community's resilience and vision. It focuses on the Hill District's needs for affordable housing, cultural preservation, economic development, and equitable resource allocation, aiming to address the decades-old inequities and provide tangible benefits to residents. However, these efforts are not solely about physical and

economic regeneration. The work is rooted in healing the historical traumas and injustices experienced by the residents of the Greater Hill District. Community engagement is at the heart of these plans, and the process has required commitment to deep, ongoing collaboration between city agencies, developers, community-based organizations, and local residents.

True healing and progress depend on trust-building and long-term partnerships with stakeholders who acknowledge and address the historic harms done to the Hill District. Moving forward, the neighborhood's restoration will require honoring its past while building a future that reflects the wishes of its community members. Building trust between residents, city officials, developers, and community organizations is essential for ensuring that future developments are inclusive and respectful of the neighborhood's legacy. Ongoing dialogue, transparent decision-making, and shared goals are critical components in fostering a united community poised for growth and renewal.

The journey of reclamation in the Greater Hill District is far from complete. As the neighborhood continues to evolve, so too must the efforts to support its residents and preserve its cultural heritage. Continued investment in community programs, affordable housing, local businesses, and cultural institutions is necessary to sustain the district's vibrancy and ensure that its legacy endures for future generations.

In embracing the path forward, the Greater Hill District stands as a beacon of hope and resilience. By acknowledging its past, fostering collaboration, and committing to equitable development, the neighborhood is reclaiming its place as a vital and cherished part of Pittsburgh. The work of healing and rebuilding is ongoing, but with unwavering determination and

collective effort, the Greater Hill District is poised to continue to thrive, honoring its history while embracing a bright and inclusive future.





PROCESS AND ENGAGEMENT

Process And Engagement.

This neighborhood planning process is intended to update and enhance the Greater Hill District Master Plan (2011) with detailed input from the community, key stakeholders and local organizations. The process was interactive and included regular coordination with Registered Community Organizations (RCOs), the City of Pittsburgh, and the URA. This process was designed to be streamlined in order to update the original document and ensure it complies with the standards set by the City of Pittsburgh's Planning Commission in the [Neighborhood Plan Guide](#).

Beliefs/Affirmations:

- We believe that all voices have value.
- We will foster inclusive relationships.
- We acknowledge diversity within our community.
- We believe that mutual relationships build safe and engaging communities.
- We believe that each person has agency and power.
- We believe that opportunities to learn, lead, and collaborate unleash potential.



Public Engagement Plan and Communications Strategy.

In collaboration with the Steering Committee, and under the direction of the City's Public Engagement Guide, we developed the Public Engagement Plan (PEP) (Appendix B) and the Community Engagement Strategy (Appendix C) in June of 2021. Through the PEP and the CES, we developed the following engagement goals to guide all public engagement activities and shape the planning process in conjunction with the Steering Committee:

1. **Center Black Place/Hill-Based Expertise and Wisdom.**
2. **Build a Foundation of Trust.**
3. **Maximize Participation.**
4. **Center Equity and Fairness.**
 - a. Adjust/Right Historical Wrongs.
 - b. Promote Economic Justice.
3. **Transparency and Open Communication.**

These goals reflect our commitment to honoring the history, needs, and aspirations of the Greater Hill District community, **ensuring that our work remains focused on promoting equity, inclusion, and meaningful progress for all residents** as outlined by the Department's racial equity toolkit.

The Steering Committee was consulted to provide insights on engagement structure, highlighting the need for two primary principles in all engagement activities.

1. Diverse and interactive engagement tools should be used throughout the process.
2. Creative engagements should incorporate opportunities for open discussion/conversations.

Public Engagement Milestones.

KICK-OFF MEETING

November 24th, 2020

An initial kickoff meeting with the Core Team and Steering Committee established the foundation for the project. This meeting clarified the planning

process priorities, defined the scope for the economic development and urban design consultants, and outlined the necessary research on existing conditions.

GAP ANALYSIS

During the Steering Committee meetings held in November 2020, and January and February 2021, priorities and gaps were identified between the 2011 Greater Hill District Master Plan and the Neighborhood Plan Guide. The leadership circle, topical area leads, and staff collaboratively worked to identify initial gaps and develop preliminary information as needed. These meetings aimed to identify the necessary components to be included in different chapters of the Neighborhood Plan. The Neighborhood Plan Guide outlines four essential chapters for inclusion in every adopted City of Pittsburgh Plan: Community, Development, Mobility, and Infrastructure.

WEALTH GENERATION WORKSHOP

July 28th, 2021

At the virtual Wealth Generation Workshop, consultants presented a reputable wealth generation framework, which elevates the role of community resources that can help to stabilize households and support businesses. Participants, including community members, members of the Steering Committee, along with City planning staff and consultants from Ideas and Action, discussed the framework's seven objectives and four key pathways for generating wealth, including access to capital, real estate, education/capacity building, governance role, etc. In addition, participants discussed the successes, challenges, and gaps that exist with respect to achieving the goals of the 2011 Master Plan. This discussion

resulted in key takeaways as to how wealth generation initiatives can be tailored to the unique conditions and characteristic of the Hill District. For more details on the outcomes of this meeting, see the [Opportunities and Constraints Report](#) (Appendix A).

ACCESS & MOBILITY POP-UPS

August 2021

Project staff and the mobility leadership circle completed engagement at events across the Greater Hill District to gather feedback in the developing a transportation plan and encourage action team membership.

SPEAK AND TREAT TENT EVENT

August 21st, 2021

At the Speak and Treat event during former State Representative Wheatley's Health and Wellness Weekend the project team and steering committee members engaged Greater Hill District stakeholders regarding their Greater Hill District Neighborhood Plan, shared additional online resources and provided a sweet treat while gathering their input. The project team sent post cards to every resident of the Greater Hill District inviting them to engage in the first in-person event of the planning process, image below:

GREATER HILL DISTRICT
MASTER PLAN

SPEAK + TREAT

2114 CENTRE AVE. | AUGUST 21,
12-5 PM | 2021

In partnership with the Greater Hill District Community, the Department of City Planning is working to update and adopt the Greater Hill District Master Plan. Come be a part of the process as part of Rep. Jake Wheatley's Health & Wellness Weekend. Meet the project team & Steering Committee (co-chaired by the Hill CDC and Councilman Lavelle), learn more about the work we're doing, and give your input while enjoying a sweet treat.

Take the survey at engage.pittsburghpa.gov/ghdmp or by dialing 3-1-1



Who: Representative Jake Wheatley, The Hill CDC, Councilman Lavelle & Pittsburgh's Department of City Planning

What: Speak & Treat public engagement at The People's Office Health & Wellness Weekend

When: August 21, 2021 at 12 PM

Where: Outside the Thelma Lovette YMCA (2114 Centre Ave.)

Why: To discuss your priorities for the Greater Hill District Master Plan

#BlackWellnessWeekend
#GHDMP

TO



ACTION TEAM MEETINGS

Summer – Fall 2021

Action Teams are comprised of residents, students, employees, property owners, agencies, and professionals interested in working to develop projects and programs for the Neighborhood Plan. These forums are an opportunity for building partnerships while developing feasible action items for the Plan.

Action Teams for the Greater Hill District Master Plan began meeting during Summer 2021 via Zoom and the City of Pittsburgh's online engagement portal, Engage PGH. Regular meetings occurred throughout the fall, with Mobility Action Team meetings occurring from December 2021 to March 2022.

Greater Hill District Master Plan Action Teams were created for each chapter of the Neighborhood Plan, including: Community, Development, Mobility and Infrastructure.

Expectations for Action Teams



During the November 2021 Community Action Team Meeting, the Leadership Circle and Staff led a workshop to define community resilience in the Greater Hill District. According to resilience.org, "Resilience is the ability of a system (like a community) to absorb disturbance and still retain basic function and structure." Given the historic, institutional, systemic and topographic issues associated with the Hill District; it is a clear example of a resilient community.

Community Resilience

- Focus on growing the capacity to “bounce back” from disruptions
- Engage and benefit all community members
- Consider all the challenges the community faces
- Tells us how complex systems—like human communities—can adapt and persist through changing circumstances.

HILL DISTRICT PLANS UPDATE MEETINGS

August 2020 – February 2022

Project Staff presented at the Hill Community Development Corporation's Bi-Monthly plans update meeting to engage and update Greater Hill District Stakeholders about the status of the Neighborhood Plan.

HILL DISTRICT PLANS UPDATE MEETINGS

The Steering Committee had their final virtual meeting in March 2022. At this meeting, Steering Committee members workshopped the draft community implementation matrices and reviewed the final Cultural Legacy and Preliminary Corridors Report.

Following this meeting the Steering Committee reviewed Implementation matrixes, documents and additional correspondence via email and their steering committee EngagePGH webpage until October 2023.

PROJECT RE-LAUNCH

The Greater Hill District Master Plan process was relaunched in February of 2024 with new consultants, HR&A Advisors, in collaboration with the Urban Redevelopment Authority, with an expanded scope to complete a Herron Avenue Corridor Study, a long-term desire of the Hill District Community.

Hill Community Development Corporation



HILL DISTRICT BI-MONTHLY PLANS MEETING



**Thursday
June 22, 2023
5:30 PM - 7 PM**

**Log onto Zoom Mtg @
hilldistrict.org/live**

YOUR COMMUNITY . YOUR VOICE . GET CONNECTED

Neighborhood Planning is Underway!

► Updates

- > Transit Planning (PRT)
- > Hill District Parks
- > Freedom Corner
- > Centre Avenue Arts, Culture & Commerce
- > Master Plan Codification

► Lower Hill

- > Curtain Call Update
- > Ammon Recreation Center



Register Today at hilldistrict.org/register!

Call: 412-765-1820 | FB, Twitter, IG: /myhilldistrict

The nearly two-year hiatus resulted from mayoral, administrative, and staff transitions, as well as a lack of cohesion and sensitivity to the socio-cultural dynamics surrounding the project.

STEERING COMMITTEE RE-ENGAGEMENT

March –May 2024

Due to the lapse in time since the formal engagement of the Steering Committee, the project team re-engaged members through various methods such as email, one-on-one and organizational meetings, and other forms of outreach to rebuild momentum for the planning process.

STEERING COMMITTEE WORKSHOP

June 4, 2024

Steering Committee members were invited to provide feedback on a draft of the Community chapter implementation table. This table functions as a to-do list of actions, or strategies, that help to make the plan a reality. Of the over 80 items within the table, we selected 20 strategies to focus on during the work session. These items were selected to gather more information, particularly to identify which community partners could work on the strategies.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

August 2024

In August 2024 the Steering Committee met to review and discuss the Greater Hill Development Chapter, draft plan and finalize engagement for plan unveiling and adoption.

SMALL COMMITTEE MEETING

August 2024

The core team of the Greater Hill District Master plan met to discuss the draft plan and potentially two additional studies could be a part of the planning process: the Herron Avenue Corridor Study and the Uptown Affordability Study.





COMMUNITY

Introduction.

The Community Chapter focuses on the Hill District's existing demographics, housing affordability, education, cultural legacy and preservation, well-being, public health, and public art. The Chapter catalogs the population at present, reviews some changes the neighborhood has seen since 1990, and makes suggestions about how to improve and support existing Hill District residents while welcoming new neighbors to the "Crossroads of the World", or the "Safe Haven on the Hill".⁶

Through the neighborhood planning process, the Community Chapter builds upon the African-American contributions to our city and the long overdue effort to pay homage to the area. By engaging with residents, integrating the original Greater Hill District Master Plan recommendations, building upon sustainable and green needs of the Hill, and commemorating the past, our goal is to reignite the vivacity of the Hill District's past to fuel its future.

The Hill District community has undergone many demographic changes, experiencing steady population decline since 1990. It continues to exceed the citywide averages for number of children and number of residents over the age of 50, while having fewer adults ages 20-39 than the city's average. Black households in the neighborhood tend to have higher percentages of older couples or older folks living alone than the city as well. Households are more likely to be extremely low-income and with higher economic instability as well. Geographically, the Upper Hill neighborhood boasts the highest incomes, while rent-burdened households are most prevalent in the southern Terrace Village and Bedford Dwellings areas. For more detail on demographics in the Hill District, please see the [2022 Opportunities and Constraints Report](#) (Appendix A).

The Hill District community is grappling with stressors that affect residents' daily lives and long-term wellbeing. These must be addressed to make the community healthy and resilient. Chronic poverty remains a central issue, leading to widespread mental health struggles and fueling cycles of violence as people confront economic hardship. The impacts of the criminal justice system further intensify these challenges, often creating barriers to stability and opportunity. Another significant obstacle is the perception that some voices are being excluded and the challenge of aligning as a unified voice for the community. The trauma of white supremacy, along with institutional and systemic racism, has left scars across generations, affecting mental health and resilience. Additionally, gaps in intergenerational wellness programs, inadequate pathways for effective governance, and limited political advocacy leave the community vulnerable and underserved. Existing social services, too, often fail to include local residents in decision-making, weakening their impact. This chapter begins to address these stressors across its goals, policies and strategies that prioritize inclusion, justice, and resilience for all residents. In recent years, new development has brought both housing and economic opportunities to the Hill, sparking concerns about gentrification and the potential for displacement. The true essence of this neighborhood lies in its people—the past, present, and future residents, business owners, and stakeholders who shape its character. The recommendations in this chapter aim to preserve and strengthen the community's deep-rooted identity while ensuring its growth benefits all who call it home.

Vision Statement.

The Hill District is committed to cultivating a neighborhood that excels in livability, celebrates and preserves its rich historical heritage, and promotes the **health and resilience** of all residents. To grow as a livable vibrant community with flourishing businesses and infrastructure utilized by empathetic, engaged, and healthy residents and visitors, the Hill District must develop strong, interconnected, and cooperative physical and social components.

⁶ Legacy names that have been attached to the Hill District neighborhood through history.

Plan Topics.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS, LIVABILITY, AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Background

The Greater Hill District is a community of about 11,500 residents, encompassing the neighborhoods of Crawford Roberts (Lower Hill), Bedford Dwellings, Middle Hill, Terrace Village, and the Upper Hill. This community is adjacent to Downtown and Oakland, the area's first and second largest employment centers, and the second and third largest economic drivers in the state.

As a historically Black community with a higher concentration of young children and elderly residents compared to the rest of the city, the area has an acute need for dedicated community resources to improve overall quality of life. After years of population decline and local disinvestment, the area is now experiencing new development and increasing market pressures from neighboring areas.

The Hill District's cultural heritage, encompassing both tangible resources and intangible attributes passed down through generations, forms the foundation of its identity. This includes tangible culture (such as buildings, monuments, landscapes, books, works of art, and artifacts), intangible culture (such as folklore, traditions, language, and knowledge), and natural heritage (including culturally significant landscapes).

The Hill District has a proven legacy both locally and nationally. The original Greater Hill District Master Plan, created by the community in 2011, emphasizes the importance of continuing to "Build Upon the African American Cultural Legacy." As Pittsburgh's

oldest African American neighborhood, the Hill District boasts a rich history and culture dating back to the 18th century. Organizations such as Hill CDC and the Hill District Consensus Group have been central to community-driven planning efforts. Goals, policies, and strategies in this chapter will address the need to honor and preserve the legacy of past, present, and future generations of African American residents in the Hill. Protecting this cultural legacy from gentrification involves anti-displacement strategies, "right of return" preferences, utilizing existing neighborhood resources, fostering relationships, and ensuring community empowerment within revitalization efforts.

Public Facilities, Services and Livability

Public facilities and services are essential institutions that respond to basic human needs, providing vital support for health, education, safety, recreation, and worship within a community. Examples include churches, hospitals, schools, police and fire stations, parks, and libraries. In the Hill District neighborhood, these facilities enhance residents' quality of life, ensuring access to healthcare, learning, public safety, and spiritual fulfillment. By fostering well-being and social cohesion, public facilities serve as foundational elements of resilient, thriving communities.

Religious Institutions

In the Hill District, religious institutions play a vital role as pillars of community support and resilience. These religious institutions not only provide spiritual guidance but also address pressing social and economic needs through diverse programs and services. Many Hill District churches offer food distribution, emergency

assistance, youth mentoring, and job training programs, helping to uplift residents facing economic hardship. Churches like Bethel AME and Ebenezer Baptist also serve as gathering spaces for community meetings and cultural events, fostering social cohesion. Their strong networks and commitment to service make them invaluable community assets, offering stability, support, and hope in times of need.

Churches in the Hill District	
al-Masjid al-Awwal (Mosque)	Monumental Baptist Church
Bethel AME Zion Church	Monumental Mission Ministries, Inc.
Allegheny Union Baptist Association	Nazareth Baptist Church
Calvary Baptist Church	New Light Temple Baptist Church
Central Baptist Church	New Pilgrim Baptist Church
Church of Our Lord Jesus	Olivet Baptist Church
Divine Interventions Ministries - Central Baptist Church	Rising Star Church
Ebenezer Baptist Church	St. Benedict the Moor Church
First Emmanuel Tabernacle	St. Luke Baptist Church
Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church	Trinity AME Church
Hillcrest Seventh-day Adventist Church Pittsburgh	Warren United Methodist Church
John Wesley AME Zion Church	Wesley Center AME Zion Church
Macedonia Church of Pittsburgh	Wesley Charities

Figure 2: Religious Institutions in the Hill District



Source: XXX

Churches in the Hill District

Macedonia FACE	Zion Full Gospel Baptist Church
----------------	---------------------------------

Hospitals

Hospitals like UPMC (Oakland, Mercy, and Shadyside) and the VA Pittsburgh Health System play a crucial role for the Hill District by providing accessible healthcare, specialized services, and critical resources. They offer residents quality medical care, preventive health programs, and support for veterans. These institutions contribute to community wellness, stability, and access to essential health services.

Financial Institutions

- **Hill District Federal Credit Union:** The Hill District Federal Credit Union (HDFCU) has been a vital financial asset for Hill District residents, especially those underserved by traditional banks. Established to empower the local community, HDFCU provides accessible financial services such as low-interest loans, savings accounts, and financial education, helping residents build credit and manage finances responsibly. It actively supports local businesses through small business loans, fostering economic growth within the neighborhood. HDFCU's commitment to economic inclusion makes it a trusted institution for residents seeking financial stability and independence, ultimately contributing to the Hill District's resilience and long-term community empowerment.
- PNC Bank.
- First National Bank

Beauty Salons

Beauty Salons and barber shops have served as special spaces in the Black/African American Community. These establishments have served as not only hair care maintenance facilities but locations of vulnerability, where all people can talk about issues in the community. Over the years, these spaces have come to provide a unique social function, where community members can engage in a friendly board game, a conversation about local gossip, politics, and community affairs; and get maintenance.

Salons

[Salon XO](#)

[Big Tom's Barbershop](#)

[Butches Styles & Cuts](#)

Beauty Bar Hair Studio

Elegant Beauty Supply

Two Cousins

Education

In the Hill District, schools play a central community role beyond education. They serve as safe spaces where students and families can access resources, from academic support to after-school programs and meals. Schools like Miller African-Centered Academy foster a sense of identity and pride, while partnerships with local organizations provide students with mentorship and career guidance. These schools are vital for community stability, empowerment, and future opportunity.

Schools

Saint Benedict the Moor School of Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh Miller PreK-5

[Pittsburgh Milliones 6-12, University Preparatory School](#)

Pittsburgh Weil PreK-5

The **University of Pittsburgh's Community Engagement Center (CEC)** in the Hill District serves as a vital community hub, fostering partnerships and offering resources to support local priorities. Through educational programs, workforce training, health services, and youth initiatives, the CEC empowers residents and connects them with university resources. This center plays an essential role in strengthening community ties, promoting economic mobility, and enhancing educational opportunities, making it a valuable asset in the Hill District's ongoing development and resilience.

Other Educational Facilities

[University of Pittsburgh – Community Engagement Center](#)

Pittsburgh Weil Early Childhood Center

Martin Luther King Jr Cultural Center

August Wilson African American Cultural Center

[John Heinz Child Development Center](#)

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh – Hill District

Energy Innovation Center

Universities such as the University of Pittsburgh, Duquesne University, and Carlow University play a significant community role in Pittsburgh's Hill District by

fostering educational access, community engagement, and economic opportunity. Through outreach programs, these universities offer local residents academic support, workforce training, and health services. Their initiatives include mentorship, scholarships, and research partnerships that address neighborhood challenges. By connecting their resources and expertise to Hill District needs, these institutions enhance community resilience, educational advancement, and social mobility for residents.

Universities

University of Pittsburgh

Duquesne University

Carlow University

The Hill District's recreation centers and parks hold deep historical and cultural significance for the community. For example, **Ammon Recreation Center** has long been a cornerstone of the neighborhood, hosting sports leagues, youth programs, and community events that have brought generations together. It's known for nurturing local athletic talent, including legendary boxers like Jimmy Cvetic, who trained young boxers at Ammon. **Martin Luther King Park** honors the legacy of Dr. King and serves as a gathering place for events celebrating Black history and resilience. These spaces not only provide recreational opportunities but also preserve the Hill District's rich cultural heritage, creating places for remembrance, pride, and community solidarity.

Recreation Centers

Amon Recreational Center

Ammon Park

Recreation Centers

Kennard Park

Robert E. Williams Park

Martin Luther King Park

Frankie Pace Park

Granville Park

Albert Turk Gram Park

Social Services

Macedonia Family & Community Enrichment Center (FACE) has been a cornerstone in Pittsburgh's Hill District, addressing disparities affecting African American families and other vulnerable populations. As a faith-based nonprofit, FACE offers a range of services, including family support, early literacy programs, senior services, and HIV/AIDS support. Their initiatives, such as the Lunchbox program providing food assistance and the Active for Life Senior Center, enhance community well-being and resilience. By fostering healthy families and a thriving community, FACE plays a vital role in the Hill District's social and economic development.

The Neighborhood Resilience Project (NRP) is dedicated to creating pathways for community healing and resilience in Pittsburgh's neighborhoods. By addressing trauma, advancing health equity, and supporting community development, the NRP offers resources such as trauma-informed community spaces, mental health support, and social services. This project also fosters leadership within communities to build resilience from within, helping residents thrive in a safe and supportive environment.

Historic and Cultural Legacy

Cultural heritage encompasses the tangible and intangible legacies—such as buildings, art, folklore, and traditions—passed down through generations. The Hill District's rich African American heritage, locally and nationally recognized, is central to its identity. The 2011 Greater Hill District Master Plan emphasized "Building Upon the African American Cultural Legacy." Honoring this vision, the Cultural Legacy and Preservation area in this document upholds the Hill's history as Pittsburgh's oldest African American neighborhood. Preservation efforts address gentrification risks with anti-displacement strategies, "right of return" policies, and community empowerment. The Hill's unique topography, adjacent to Pittsburgh's economic centers, shaped its development, influencing its cultural legacy and resilience. In Pittsburgh's early development, this unique topographic relationship between the Hill District and adjacent lands influenced the development patterns of the Hill District relative to more intensively developed areas like the Strip District, larger institutional areas in Oakland, and the development of Downtown itself. Expansion from downtown first occurred in surrounding lower lying areas as shown in **Figure 3**.

As a critical request of stakeholders, it was imperative to elevate the pedigree of the Hill District. In turn, a Historic and Cultural Legacy Assessment was undertaken by Studio Zewde, on request of Hill District steering committee. The study included a site visit; archival, cartographic, and historic research; as well as discussions with community members and Hill District historians. In August, October and November 2021 Hill District stakeholders developed a Cultural Legacy Framework for a cultural legacy loop, which is a symbolic physical representation of "The Crossroads of the World." The strategies for crossroad public realm improvements are discussed under Goal C4.

Figure 3: Growth Patterns in Central Pittsburgh



Source: Historic Pittsburgh

Figure 4: Historic Businesses and Community Centers within Hill District



PRESERVEPGH Plan

PRESERVEPGH is the City of Pittsburgh's Cultural Heritage Plan, completed in 2012. The plan highlights the historic and cultural significance of Hill District, focusing on preserving and revitalizing its rich African American heritage and addressing the effects of urban renewal projects that led to a steep population decline and structural losses. The plan recommends stabilization of historic buildings, strategic infill, and preservation of remaining cultural landmarks to attract reinvestment. It emphasizes using preservation to foster community identity, prevent displacement, and drive sustainable redevelopment in alignment with the neighborhood's cultural legacy.⁷

The plan can be used strategically to guide preserving the Hill District's cultural and historic assets through documentation, commitment, appreciation, and stewardship. It is important to document cultural and historic resources by establishing a thorough and ongoing inventory, identifying structures, districts, and sites of historical value. Designation of additional landmarks, particularly Black cultural spaces, is recommended to protect the neighborhood's unique heritage. Preservation efforts include creating a demolition strategy that safeguards valuable sites, maintaining the Hill District's historic integrity.

To foster appreciation, PRESERVEPGH suggests enhancing awareness of the neighborhood's cultural legacy through educational initiatives and streetscape improvements, which together can promote heritage tourism. Stewardship is also a key priority, with the plan encouraging collaboration among stakeholders to preserve, celebrate, and sustain the Hill District's historical and cultural character. Through these collective actions, the plan envisions a thriving, historically enriched Hill District.

City Designated Historic Properties

The New Granada Theater

Centre Avenue YMCA

Schenley Farms Historic District

Herron Hill Pumping Station

John Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church

The former Tuberculosis Hospital of Pittsburgh is a National Register Historic District and character-defining area of the neighborhood.



⁷ PRESERVEPGH - https://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/PRESERVEPGH_-_Adopted_07-24-2012_%28Library_Version%29.pdf

Figure 5: Designated Historical Properties





Neighborhood Resilience Project

The Neighborhood Resilience Project (NRP) is dedicated to creating pathways for community healing and resilience in Pittsburgh's neighborhoods. By addressing trauma, advancing health equity, and supporting community development, the NRP offers resources such as trauma-informed community spaces, mental health support, and social services. This project also fosters leadership within communities to build resilience from within, helping residents thrive in a safe and supportive environment. Together, we're creating a more resilient, compassionate neighborhood for everyone.



Big Tom's Barbershop

Big Tom's Barbershop is a longstanding fixture in Pittsburgh's Hill District, serving as a community hub and cultural landmark for generations. More than just a barbershop, Big Tom's is a place where clients and haircare practitioners build meaningful connections, exchange stories, and support each other. Known as a trusted, safe space within the Black community, the shop provides a sense of belonging, mentorship, and continuity in the neighborhood. Big Tom's continues to be a gathering place that fosters pride, resilience, and unity in the Hill District, reflecting the deep-rooted significance of Black-owned businesses in the area.



Hill Dance Academy Theatre (HDAT)

Hill Dance Academy Theatre (HDAT) is a vital cultural institution enriching Pittsburgh through dance education and performance, especially within the African American community. HDAT nurtures young dancers' talent and artistic expression by offering professional training in a culturally responsive environment. Through its commitment to dance, mentorship, and community engagement, HDAT empowers youth to embrace their heritage and creativity, contributing to the neighborhood's vibrant cultural fabric and supporting a strong, inclusive community identity.



ACH Clear Pathways Arts Organization (ACH)

ACH Clear Pathways is a community arts organization that nurtures creativity and inspires personal growth by providing accessible, visual, and performing arts programs to communities. Through affordable offerings, ACH ensures that individuals from low to moderate-income backgrounds, who might otherwise lack access to artistic opportunities, are able to engage in creative expression. By fostering an inclusive environment, ACH empowers community residents to explore their potential, build confidence, and connect with their community through the transformative power of the arts.



The Hill Community Development Corporation (Hill CDC)

The Hill Community Development Corporation (Hill CDC) plays a crucial role in revitalizing Pittsburgh's Hill District by promoting social and economic development while preserving the area's cultural heritage. Committed to equitable growth, Hill CDC facilitates initiatives that empower residents, offering programs for business development, affordable housing, and homeownership support. Key projects include the restoration of the historic New Granada Theater, New Granada Apartments, Nafasi on Centre and the implementation of the original Greater Hill District Master Plan, which prioritizes community needs in redevelopment efforts.

In the restoration of the historic New Granada Theater, the Hill CDC was instrumental in transforming the theater into a cultural and economic hub that honors the Hill District's legacy in jazz and arts. This revitalization project not only preserves a key landmark but also supports the neighborhood's ongoing cultural and economic resurgences, reinforcing the community's rich history. Additionally, the CDC collaborates on the Hill District Digital History Project, a digital platform that shares stories about the people, places, and events that have shaped the Hill District. Through these programs, the Hill CDC plays a pivotal role in honoring and disseminating the Hill District's significant contributions to American history and culture.¹⁰



Historic Hill Institute

The Historic Hill Institute, based in Pittsburgh's Hill District, is dedicated to preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of the area. Under the leadership of Executive Director and founder, Dr. Kimberly C. Ellis, the institute engages in various initiatives, including educational programs, community events, and historical preservation projects. By highlighting the neighborhood's significant contributions to arts, culture, and history, the institute fosters a sense of pride and identity among residents. Its efforts not only honor the past but also inspire future generations to appreciate and continue the Hill District's vibrant legacy.⁸

One of THE Hill Institute's notable initiatives is the annual celebration of Freedom House Ambulance Services, the nation's first emergency medical service, which originated in the Hill District and was predominantly staffed by Black residents.⁹



The Hill District Consensus Group (HDCG)

HDCG is dedicated to empowering the Hill District community through advocacy, social justice, and community-led development. Focused on ensuring that residents have a central role in decision-making, HDCG works to amplify community voices in redevelopment and policy discussions that affect the neighborhood. Their initiatives include educating residents about development processes, advocating for affordable housing, supporting small businesses, and pushing for equitable investment in the Hill District. By creating platforms for residents to engage directly with policymakers and developers, HDCG fosters a community-driven approach to sustainable growth and improved quality of life.

⁸ City Lab Pittsburgh - <https://www.citylabpgh.org/person/kim-ellis/>

⁹ Celebration of Freedom House Ambulance Services - <https://triblive.com/news/editors-picks/historic-hill-institute-to-host-celebration-of-freedom-house-ambulance-services/>

¹⁰ The Hill District Digital History Project - <https://hillhistory.org/>

Goals, Policies, Strategies

C1. Goal: Ensure Hill District residents can have all their basic needs met within a 20-minute walk or roll of their home.

- a. **Policy: Promote accessibility.** New development in the Hill District should incorporate diverse uses and prioritize universal accessibility.

C1.1 Strategy – Accessible community shared spaces. Identify inclusive areas within the Hill District that are accessible and enjoyable for residents and visitors, regardless of ability.

C1.2 Strategy – ADA accessible community facilities. Evaluate community facilities based on ADA accessibility and develop a list for retrofitting priorities.

- b. **Policy: Support community activities on public streets.** Hill District public streets should be designed to accommodate both temporary and permanent functions that support various community activities.

C1.3 Strategy – Shared streets. Designate shared streets where pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles can coexist in addition to being adaptable for community events and activities.

- c. **Policy – Create age-friendly buildings.** Future building designs should be friendly to all ages and supports a universally designed, age-in-place neighborhood.

C1.4 Strategy – Universal design principles. Adopt universal design principles in new developments that promote flexible spaces that accommodate a range of preferences and abilities, minimize hazards, and are communicated effectively to individual users. Potential components could include open floor plans,

no-step entries, clear signage, wider sidewalks, and shaded paths. This should build off the existing URA design guidelines.

C2. Goal: The Hill District will focus on long-term community resilience, with self-sufficiency, equity, representative leadership and governance, and improved health outcomes as guiding principles.

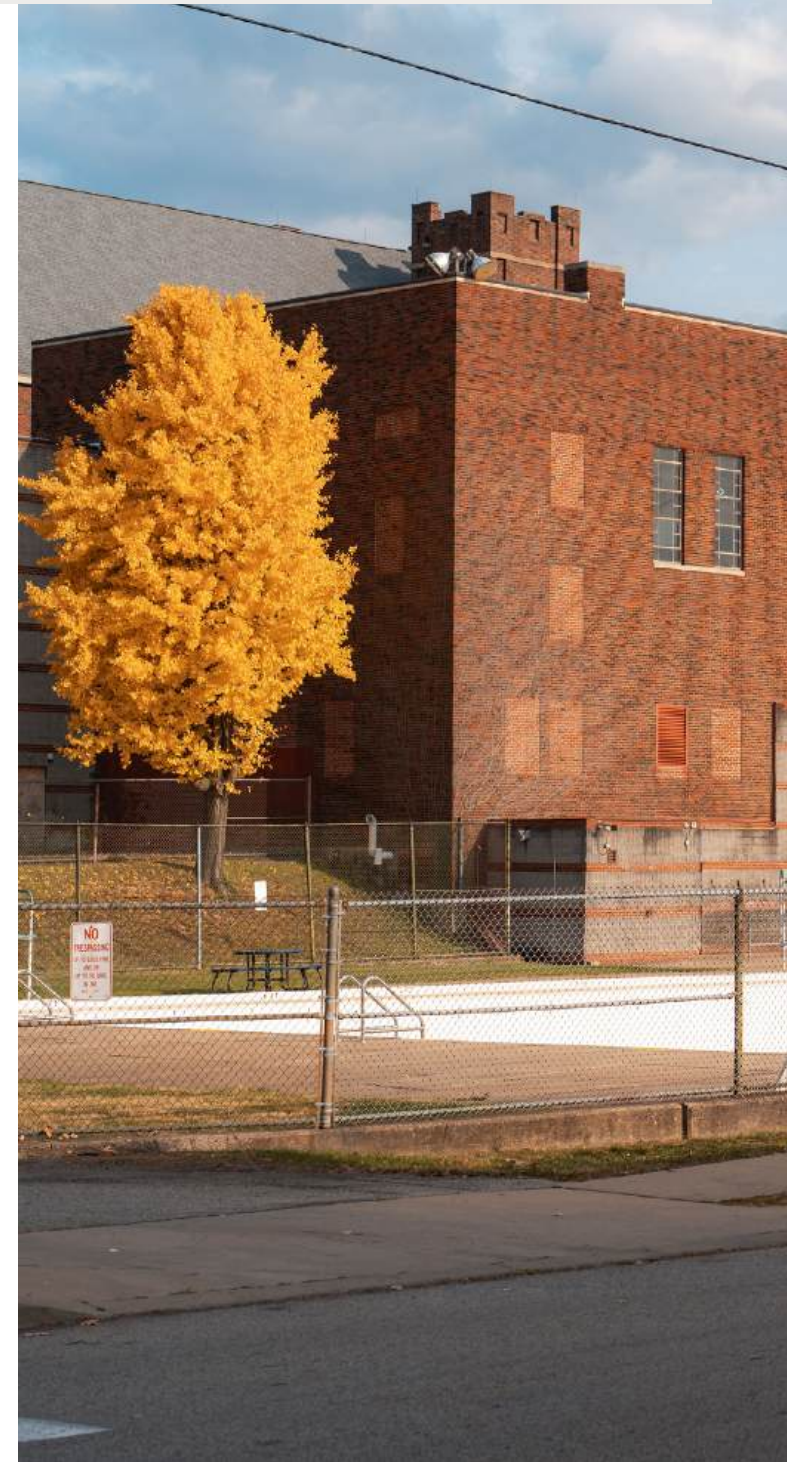
- a. **Policy: Improve health outcomes for Hill District residents.** Health outcomes in the Hill District should be improved through a blend of community-based interventions and strategic long-term planning.

C2.1 Strategy – Communal initiatives and partnerships. Address health disparities and racial bias through individual, and communal initiatives and intentional partnerships with government agencies, health institutions, and community organizations that offer awareness and solutions to the pressing health issues in the Hill District. This could include health fairs, mobile health clinics, community clean-ups.

C2.2 Strategy - Hill District Health Action Plan. Partner with the Allegheny County Health Department to develop the Hill District Health Action Plan to increase awareness around chronic health issues and address pressing health concerns in the Hill District.

- b. **Policy: Promote economic stability.** Economic stability in the Hill District should be promoted through investments in financial education, capacity-building, sustainable employment, and community ownership.

C2.3 Strategy – Entrepreneurial resources. Create, expand and collaborate with institutions and organizations, including Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and the University of





Pittsburgh Small Business Development Center, to provide resources, mentorship and capacity for entrepreneurs, small businesses, and residents seeking self-employment.
Potential new strategy: Expand incubation opportunities and coordinate access to commercial space with these resources.

C2.4 Strategy – Community ownership. Enable the community to capitalize on the opportunity and potential in abandoned and vacant properties by expanding upon the Vacant Property Recovery Program.

C3. Goal: A mix of new and rehabilitated housing will serve multiple generations of Hill residents without displacement of existing residents and reduce barriers to housing development and preservation of historic black spaces.

c. Policy: Improve housing standards. Safe, healthy living conditions should be promoted for residents in addition to access to resources to help determine the livability of a space prior to signing a lease.

C3.1 Strategy – Landlord and tenant engagement. Inform and educate landlords, tenants, and the community regarding rights and responsibilities of property managers and renters.

C3.2 Strategy – Home maintenance assistance programs. Secure additional funding and partner with local organizations to increase the ability for landlords and homeowners to maintain safe and healthy living condition.

C3.3 Strategy – Estate planning services. Connect residents with legal aid organizations that offer affordable estate planning advice and assistance.

C3.4 Strategy – Hill District Cooperative Housing & Development Guidebook. The guidebook should serve as a resource for individuals and groups interested in establishing and managing cooperative housing, providing guidance on cooperative housing models, planning and development, legal and regulatory considerations, and financial management.

C4. Goal: The future of the Hill District will build upon and further emphasize the neighborhood's African American cultural legacy and preservation.

d. Policy: Cultivate a community responsive to changing needs. The Hill District should be a resilient community that can adapt to various economic challenges while preserving its historic and cultural assets.

C4.1 Strategy – Capacity building. Increase capacity at community organizations, i.e. non-profits and institutions assisting residents access resources through technical assistance in accessing federal and state funds.

C4.2 Strategy – Public realm improvements. Establish public realm experiences that express the character and history of the Hill District community, including the Heritage Walk, Cultural Legacy Loop, Crossroads Public Realm Improvements, Kirkpatrick Crossroads pilot, Bedford Choice's Linear Park project (Coal Seam Trail) and other such efforts.

C4.3 Strategy – Adaptive reuse. Identify historical buildings and sites that are suitable for adaptive reuse and develop a plan for incorporating sites into future development. These projects should strive to preserve and incorporate the Hill District's unique character and cultural fabric.

COMMUNITY WELFARE

Background

The term “public safety” is loaded with stigmas, spatial trauma and associated with systemic and institutional biases and injustice. Hence, across this document, the term “Community Welfare” is used to describe the protection of the Hill District. Community Welfare includes the protection and wellbeing of citizens, communities, and organizations and includes emergency management, fire protection, first responders, and law enforcement.

The Hill District has a history of individuals that are visionaries and change agents in all aspects of community welfare. It is home to the first paramedics, the “Freedom House Ambulance Service.” In partnership with police zones, the Hill District has several “Community Block Watch Groups” that continue the legacy of community policing and welfare protection. These partnerships demonstrate that the Hill District residents, organizations and other stakeholders are taking a holistic approach for community welfare and health of the neighborhood.

Goals, Policies, Strategies

C5. Goal: The relationship between law enforcement and community residents should be built on trust, cooperation, and effective communication.

- a. **Policy: Mitigate conflicts with law enforcement.** Community trust should be built by reducing conflicts between law enforcement agencies and community members.

C5.1 Strategy – Community engagement with government departments. Convene quarterly meetings between community and resident

organizations and City of Pittsburgh departments to identify issues of wellbeing for Hill District Residents and establish a strategy to address them.

C5.2 Strategy – Public assembly guide. Create a public assembly and resource guide to reduce community and police conflict. The guide should provide best practices for organizing and managing events where large gatherings take place. This document should be created in conjunction with community members, law enforcement, and government agencies.

C5.3 Strategy – Hill District Crime Action Plan. Develop a Hill District Violent Crime Action Plan that offers data-driven and culturally sensitive framework for reducing and preventing violent crimes. This should include collaboration between community members, law enforcement, and social service organizations.

PUBLIC ART

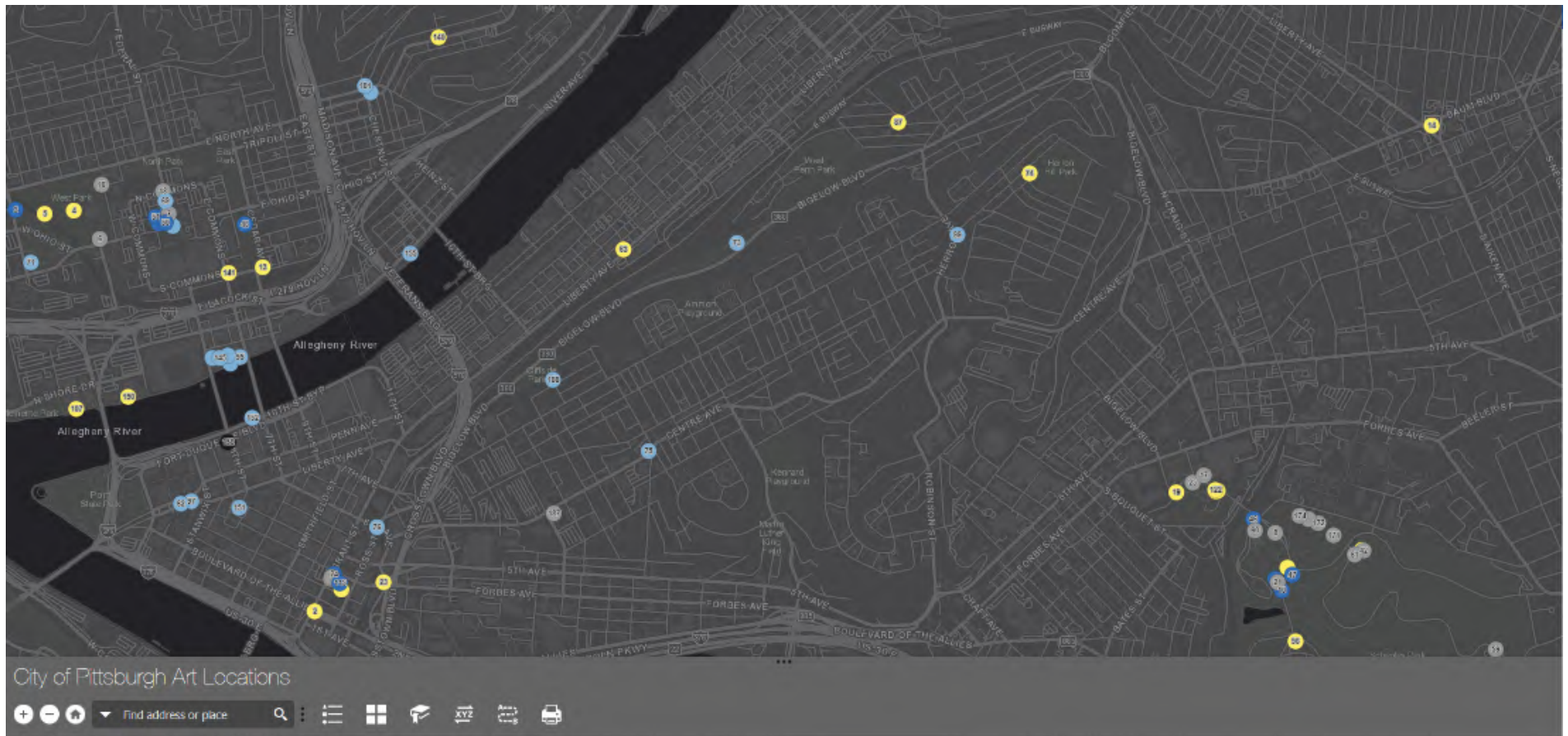
Background

Like other historic neighborhoods, public art adds value to the cultural, aesthetic and economic vitality of the Hill District community. As a well-accepted principle of urban design, public art in the Hill District contributes to the community's identity, fosters community pride, builds a sense of belonging, and enhances the quality of life for its residents and visitors. Public art is often site-specific, created in response to the place and community in which it resides. **Figure 6** captures many of the existing public artwork located within the neighborhood. The map can be accessed using the following link provided [here](#).

The Public Art & Civic Design Division of the Department of City Planning is in charge of maintaining and preserving the City of Pittsburgh's collection of monuments, memorials, and works of historical and modern art. Current City of Pittsburgh owned art and memorials in the Hill District include:

- **Freedom Corner Memorial (2001)**, by Carlos Peterson & Howard Graves. Freedom Corner, located at the intersection of Centre Avenue and Crawford Street, stands as a powerful symbol of the Hill District's rich history and enduring spirit. Established in 1960 as a hub for civil rights demonstrations, Freedom Corner was where Hill District residents gathered to protest injustices, advocate for equity, and call for the preservation of their neighborhood. It has served as a gathering place for community action, from the 1960s civil rights movements to recent protests advocating for social justice and community development.
- In 2022, Freedom Corner faced an unexpected setback when a vehicle accident caused significant damage to the iconic structure, sparking community concern over its future. However, this incident became a catalyst for revitalization efforts. Led by residents, local organizations, and the City of Pittsburgh, the restoration project aimed to not only repair the physical structure but to enhance the area's functionality and beauty. Through collaborative efforts, the renewed Freedom Corner Memorial now features improved public seating, enhanced lighting, and green space, creating a welcoming atmosphere for gatherings and reflection. Today, Freedom Corner remains a celebrated landmark, blending its historic roots with modern improvements, symbolizing both the resilience of the Hill District community and its forward-looking spirit.

Figure 6: Existing Public Artwork in the Hill District



Source: City of Pittsburgh

- **Phoenix (1979)** by Thaddeus Mosley. Phoenix, located at Centre Avenue and Dinwiddie Street was created by Thaddeus Mosley; a well-known Pittsburgh sculptor with an artistic career spanning seven decades. A self-taught artist, he works primarily in wood. Phoenix was a reaction to the urban conflict and turmoil of the 1960s, and represents ideas of hope, renewal, and new life. Its closed-wing form expresses the beginnings of movement and evokes a feeling of tension in preparation for flight.
- **We Came from the Stars (2016)** by Alisha Wormsley This piece is located in August Wilson Park on Cliff Street. Local school children helped to inspire the themes of this installation, which invites visitors to the park to look into the past, present, and future of the Hill District. The interactive viewers utilize historic images of the surrounding neighborhood.
- **Mountaintop (1987)**, by Thaddeus Mosley. This piece is located on Herron and Milwaukee. Mountaintop is dedicated to Martin Luther King, Jr., with the title referencing King's last speech, "I've Been to the Mountaintop". The City of Pittsburgh commissioned Mosley to create this piece for the new Reading and Cultural Center named in King's honor. More often creating in wood, Mosley retains his signature mark-making and preference for dramatic height in this stone sculpture, which draws its weight upward in what seems to be an effortless movement toward the sky.
- **World War I Memorial (1922)** by Frank Vittor located in – `Herron Hill Park This monument was erected by the American Legion and the Mothers of Democracy at one of the highest points in Allegheny County. The honor roll lists the names of the 1,200 individuals from the Fifth Ward that

served in the Great War. Vittor, an Italian immigrant, was the creator of over 50 monuments, sculptures, and other works of art in the Pittsburgh region.

One upcoming initiative by The Lower Hill Redevelopment includes a planned public art component known as "Curtain Call" that will be incorporated into the mixed-use destination. The public art initiatives in the Hill District celebrate and reinforce the community's cultural heritage, highlighting its identity and fostering a sense of pride and belonging among residents. The goals, policies, and strategies discussed below focus on ensuring that art continues to contribute to the neighborhood's vitality, bridging historical significance with contemporary urban design to enrich the lives of residents and visitors.

Goals, Policies, Strategies

C6. Goal: Public art in the Hill District should be reflective of the community's cultural identity and foster individual expression and while fostering economic development opportunities.

- a. **Policy: Incorporate cultural themes into public art.** The public art in the Hill District is reflective of its cultural identity, historic legacy, and the progressive social-cultural landscape.

C6.1 Strategy: Cultural programming. Develop a strategic approach to media and events that is aligned with past and current legacy of the Hill District (e.g., living legacy events).

C6.2 Strategy – Cultural and artistic markers. Install signage, wayfinding, art, and exhibits that emphasize the Hill District's historical significance.

C6.3 Strategy - Graphic identity. Create a graphic identity to foster community pride, attract local

tourism, and ensure consistent clear and cohesive messaging regarding the Hill District.

- b. **Policy: Foster economic opportunities for creative businesses.** Creative communities and businesses should have opportunities to grow and expand in the Hill District.

C6.4 Strategy: Funding for the arts. Establish funding opportunities for the Hill District Arts Collective to support existing artists and creatives communities.

C6.5 Strategy: Hill District Cultural Business Program. Launch a Hill District Cultural Business Program in support of local and cultural businesses. A Hill District Business Program would provide capital and programmatic support for legacy, local, and culturally relevant businesses and organizations.

C6.6 Strategy: Main Streets Program. The Hill District has multiple corridors that could benefit from joining the national Main Streets Program to focus on providing technical assistance to historic businesses.

- c. **Policy – Strengthen community identity.** The history of the Hill District should be preserved through placekeeping and community engagement.

C6.7 Strategy: Hill District History/Cultural legacy center. Establish a Hill District History/Cultural Legacy Center to preserve the Hill's legacy, encourage multi-generational engagement, and bring visitors to the Hill.

C6.8 Strategy: Hill District Cultural and Historic Preservation Plan. Create a Hill District Cultural and Historic Preservation Plan that would include an evaluation of existing historic and culturally significant resources as well as a variety of

strategies for maintaining and enhancing those resources.

- d. **Policy – Tie public art to the history of the Hill District.** The public art in the Hill District should be reflective of its cultural identity and cultural legacy.

C6.9 Strategy: Formal engagement framework for public art. Engage with community members to establish a selection process for local artists and secure funding and resources for public art installations.

C6.10 Strategy: Local arts programming. The City and community organizations should incorporate multiple strategies to promote arts programming including murals and public art, cultural festivals, workshops and classes, and public performances.

C6.11 Strategy: Cultural legacy walking tours. Support and formalize existing cultural legacy walking tours in the Hill District and the Cultural Loop.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Background

Promoting, protecting and improving the health and safety of the Hill District is essential for residents to thrive, where they live, learn, work and play. During the Community Action Team Resilience workshop in November of 2021, public health issues have been identified as a community stressor. With a growing number of elders in the community, the need for health services and support has never been more urgent. Care and resources tailored to the aging population will help ensure they can continue to thrive and remain vital parts of the neighborhood's heartbeat.

According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, social determinants of health (SDOH) are the conditions in people's environments that affect a wide range of health and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.

SDOH are grouped into 5 domains:

1. Economic Stability
2. Education Access and Quality
3. Health Care Access and Quality
4. Neighborhood and Built Environment
5. Social and Community Context

Good health results not only from proper medical care but also from efforts to craft and implement public policies and programs to protect and improve the health of all people. Examples of public health efforts include educating the public about healthier choices, promoting physical activity and fitness, preventing disease outbreaks and the spread of infectious diseases, ensuring safe food and water in communities, preparing for emergency, preventing injury, treating water, and creating smoke-free environments and discouraging tobacco use.

Goals, Policies, Strategies

C7. Goal: Positive health outcomes are promoted in the Hill District by providing healthy food buying/access options for residents and targeted interventions to reduce chronic illnesses.

- a. **Policy: Promote healthy and nutritional eating lifestyles.** The Hill District is committed to creating an environment that supports healthy and nutritional eating lifestyles.

C7.1 Strategy - Food sovereignty. Support and

build upon existing urban agriculture within the Hill District to provide food sovereignty.

C7.2 Strategy – Healthy Cooking Club. Create a healthy cooking club for parents and students to learn about healthy eating, and partner with local grocers and restaurants to host cooking demonstrations.

C7.3 Strategy - Food access working group. Form a food access working group to facilitate the creation of a food cooperative or buying club in the Hill District.

C7.4 Strategy - Farmers Markets. Promote an increase in farmers markets in the Hill District.

- b. **Policy: Reduce healthcare disparities.** Health initiatives should prioritize reducing disparities in healthcare and chronic illnesses, with a particular focus on asthma and mental health.

C7.5 Strategy - Asthma education and awareness. Establish management and support system for an asthma-friendly Hill District and provide asthma education and awareness programs for residents.

C7.6 Strategy - School-based harm reduction. Provide community and school-based harm-reduction programs for mental health and substance abuse issues.

SCHOOLS AND RELATED PROGRAMS

Background

Hill District residents are significantly less likely to earn a college degree compared to the broader Pittsburgh population. Only 18.5% of residents aged 25 and older hold a bachelor's degree, compared to 44.6% citywide. Additionally, Hill District residents are twice as likely to

lack a high school diploma. To address this disparity, focused efforts must improve the quality of education within the neighborhood. This includes implementing culturally relevant curricula and reassessing how suspensions are handled to foster a more supportive and equitable learning environment. **Figure 7** shows the location of all schools in the Hill District.

Goals, Policies, Strategies

C8. Goal: Educational outcomes should be improved through strong community partnerships and investments in resources that create an environment that values and promotes lifelong learning.

- a. Policy: Create comprehensive engagement in education programming.** Develop comprehensive education programs that actively engage students, families, and the community in the curriculum of local schools.

C8.1 Strategy - Hill District talent retention.

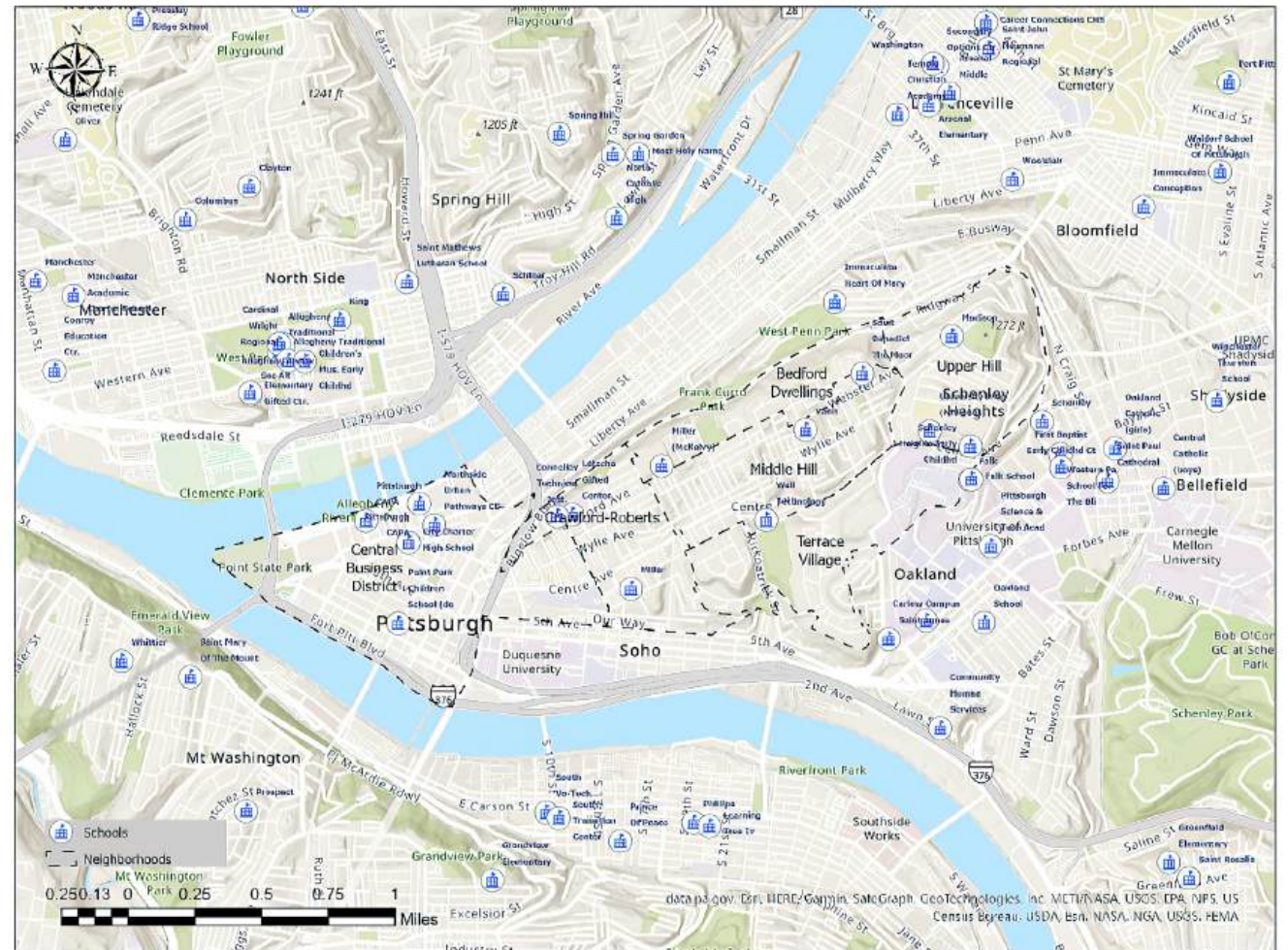
Establish partnerships with educational institutions, corporations and other organizations to improve Hill District students' quality of education and engagement to aid in the pipeline of retaining diverse talent within the City of Pittsburgh.

C8.2 Strategy - Hill District Cultural Legacy curriculum.

Develop and implement a Hill District Cultural Legacy curriculum.

C8.3 Strategy - After-school programs. Catalogue, advertise, and improve access to after-school programs and create opportunities such as fundraisers to support local organizations and help them grow in capacity.

Figure 7: Hill District Schools



Source: City of Pittsburgh

DEVELOPMENT

The background of the slide features a photograph of a brick building with a large, multi-paned window. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple gradient. A large, white, diagonal line cuts across the right side of the image, separating the building photo from a solid white area. To the right of this white area is a vertical yellow bar, and at the bottom right is a purple square.

Introduction.

The Greater Hill District neighborhood (the Hill) is at the crossroads. Undergoing years of population decline and disinvestment locally, the area is seeing new development and increasing market pressures from adjacent neighborhoods. Addressing these development-related stressors is crucial to creating a healthy and resilient Hill District. Residents face ongoing challenges with housing insecurity and the prevalence of vacant, poorly maintained properties, which highlight a need for investment in quality, safe housing options. Economic pressures, including rising costs and gentrification, are displacing long-term residents, threatening the community's social fabric and cultural heritage. The complex, restrictive process of accessing city or authority-owned land limits local development opportunities, while differing priorities within Lower Hill development processes have generated community division. To support a thriving Hill District, it is essential to increase access to capital, streamline funding for affordable housing, and remove institutional barriers that hinder community-centered development. By prioritizing these changes, the Hill District can cultivate a stable, inclusive environment that strengthens its resilience and fosters long-term health and vitality.

While new investment presents multiple risks to Hill residents, especially for a majority rental neighborhood, intentional planning may help equip residents to direct pathways to change. Residents risk being displaced either physically (from redevelopment) or economically (from increased rents). In addition, new development could contribute to a commercial core that does not serve existing residents or is not culturally relevant, making people feel less at home in their own neighborhood. This could cause existing residents to be displaced both economically and culturally, as well as miss out on needed well-paying jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities. The community, with the City's support, can choose a set of strategies that ensure that existing residents are supported through this transition, while allowing new residents to bring density and income groups which are needed to sustain local businesses like grocery stores. These strategies should aim to protect existing residents of the Hill District, create opportunities for its business owners, address the shortage of housing, mitigate gentrification and encroachment into the neighborhood, and preserve the African American cultural legacy of the Hill while providing new avenues for wealth-building, entrepreneurship, multigenerational living, and community-building to existing and

displaced residents.

The Development chapter delineates the objectives, directives, and implementation strategies aimed at guiding future development in the Hill District. The community generally supports the goals set forth in the 2011 Hill District Master Plan. They also acknowledge that conditions have changed in the past 10 years, and that the plan's goals and strategies need revisiting. Building upon the groundwork laid by the original Plan, the 10 goals outlined in this section strive to prevent displacement of current residents and businesses, foster opportunities for economic growth, facilitate the creation of new housing options, and uphold standards of quality design across all developments. Additionally, the strategies seek to empower community members by providing them with a voice in shaping the development within their neighborhood, along with opportunities to derive benefits and accrue wealth from these initiatives.

Vision Statement.

The Hill District is committed to preserving its rich African-American legacy and place keeping while continuing to become a desirable destination for living, working, and visiting. Embracing new development and economic opportunities, the master plan aims to rectify historical injustices and enhance the well-being of its current residents through equitable growth, community engagement, improved housing accessibility, and adherence to high standards of design.

Plan Topics.

EQUITABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Background

In the Greater Hill District, decades of disinvestment, market pressures from adjacent neighborhoods, and the impacts of the years-long COVID-19 pandemic have left many

Hill District residents and businesses vulnerable. The Lower Hill redevelopment and rising interests from real estate developers present uncertainty about who will benefit from anticipated large-scale investments, and who may face displacement.

Even though the goals of economic development are to elevate economic well-being and quality of life for communities by creating, retaining and expanding jobs that facilitate growth, enhance wealth and provide a stable tax base; historically, not everyone has benefitted equally from economic prosperity. The wealth resulting from growth in jobs, businesses, and real estate development is not evenly distributed in our city and Black and Brown communities bear the brunt of economic disinvestment. 60% of Black households in the Hill District make less than \$25,000 per year. Within the Hill District, incomes tend to be highest in the Upper Hill area, where the median household income is \$52,586. Across the rest of the district, median household incomes are less than half as much as those in the Upper Hill, and as low as \$12,269 in the Terrace Village area. The workforce within the Hill District is about 42% Black. This is significantly higher than the city overall. Pittsburgh's Black adult women are five times more likely to live in poverty than white adult men.¹¹

LIMITED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

While there are large employment destinations in neighborhoods directly adjacent to the Hill District, the Hill District has relatively fewer jobs per resident than other neighborhoods across Pittsburgh (0.14 jobs per resident in the Hill District versus 0.97 jobs per resident citywide). The jobs that do exist tend to pay much less than those in the rest of Pittsburgh. The Hill District has a slightly larger share of younger workers (under 29) and older workers (older than 54), compared to the City of Pittsburgh. Nearly five times as many people leave the Hill District for work as compared to those coming into the area for work. About one fifth of Hill workers also live in the Hill, while other workers commute from across the region. Overall occupational segregation by race and gender is severe in Pittsburgh, but is particularly bad for Black men, whose jobs are more concentrated in lower paying fields than in 99% of similar cities in the United States.¹²

LACK OF ACCESS TO HOME AND LAND OWNERSHIP

Historic and current practices including urban renewal, redlining (which denied access

to mortgages for Black and racialized residents), and use of eminent domain have resulted in extremely limited opportunity for Black and racialized residents to buy homes or own land. These policies are a significant cause of historic and ongoing economic inequality and relatively low rates of homeownership in the Hill District.¹³ The opportunity for land ownership within the Hill District has also declined because of the destruction of homes and businesses in the Lower Hill for the Civic Center development.¹⁴ Today, Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP), University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Board of Education, and Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) are all major landowners within the Hill District. In fact, public entities collective own about 87 acres, or 62% of vacant land in the Hill District.

LIMITED SUPPLY OF LEASE-READY SPACE

While the Hill District has a large supply of vacant property that could be used for small business development, many spaces are not in adequate condition for businesses to move in without significant renovation. The cost of repairing a commercial storefront can be prohibitive for resident entrepreneurs to move into brick-and-mortar locations, even if there are ample vacancies. Removing this barrier to entry can encourage the growth of the Hill's commercial districts and elevate emerging local enterprises. As rents are anticipated to increase for commercial space alongside new development, these strategies can also support stabilization and availability of storefront space for resident business owners.

Goals, Policies, Strategies

D1. Goal: All developments within the Hill District shall minimize the displacement of residents and businesses.

a. Policy: Limit use of eminent domain. Eminent domain should not be used to acquire occupied property in the Hill District for redevelopment; except in the case of a substantial threat to health or safety.

D1.1 Strategy – Alternative methods to eminent domain. Adopt a series of interventions to limit the use of eminent domain including mediation services, community benefits agreements, financial incentives for voluntary sells, land swaps, and community land ownership.

¹¹ (Junia Howell et al., "Pittsburgh's Inequality across Gender and Race." City of Pittsburgh's Gender Equity Commission, September 17, 2019, <https://pittsburghpa.gov/gec/reports-policy>, 40

¹² *ibid*

¹³ Bruce C. Mitchell, "Reversing the Red Lines: Disinvestment in America's Cities" March 27, 2018, <https://nrcr.org/reversing-the-red-lines-disinvestment-in-americas-cities/>

¹⁴ Civic Center is more commonly known as Civic Area, which was demolished and replaced with Mellon Arena which was also demolished in the recent past.

- b. **Policy: Provide co-ownership opportunities.** All development projects receiving public subsidy from or through the City, County, or URA should provide co-ownership opportunities for Hill District community-based organizations (CBOs) or Hill District faith-based organizations, where possible.

D1.2 Strategy – Commercial Community Land Trust. Facilitate the acquisition of land by existing community land trusts through surplus land sales to protect small businesses and organizations that could be at-risk of displacement.

- c. **Policy: Preserve space for Hill District businesses.** New development in the Hill District, and particularly in the Lower Hill where development activity is highest, should include space for Hill District businesses.

D1.3 Strategy – Commercial Space Renovation. Invest in commercial space renovation and study the feasibility of master leasing commercial spaces on publicly owned land.

D1.4 Strategy – Vacant Property Matching. Create a program that matches small businesses with property owners of vacant land or commercial buildings.

D2. Goal: All development plans should be designed to benefit existing and future community residents and businesses, while allowing for future growth of retail, residential, and commercial spaces.

- a. **Policy: Prioritize active uses in the Lower Hill.** Ground level retail and street activating uses are encouraged as supported by market demand for all new development west of Crawford Street in the Lower Hill.

D2.1 Strategy – Development standards. Establish flexible development standards that promote ground-floor retail in certain areas, including higher ground floor ceiling heights, high transparency, smaller storefronts, and street facing entryways.

- b. **Policy: Implement requirements for minority business participation in new developments.** To the greatest extent possible, implement a 30% MBE and 15% WBE requirement for all publicly funded development in the Hill District, all development requiring Site Plan Review or Planning Commission Review, as well as for residential developments in excess of one housing unit.

D2.2 – Formalize a pool of minority businesses. Create a bench of minority business organizations that will be eligible to partner in new development opportunities in the Hill District.

- c. **Policy: Include community input in future development plans.** All future redevelopment plans for the Hill District shall incorporate existing community plans.

D2.3 Strategy – Update existing neighborhood plans. Establish an inventory of existing neighborhood plans that are regularly updated for future inclusion in redevelopment plans.

- d. **Policy: Increase community ownership and participation in development processes.** Community residents should be included in all committees relating to the Greater Hill District, inclusive of development and study committees for public and municipal projects in the development stages of any plan or study affecting the neighborhood and community residents.

D2.4 Strategy – Connect new development efforts with existing community assets. Utilize the community asset map to easily identify, prioritize, and develop connections with existing assets. A list of active social service businesses, religious organizations, historical places, libraries, schools, education and research centers, public safety providers, and community organizations within the Hill should be provided for partnership consideration when proposing new developments in the neighborhood.

D2.5 Strategy – Foster community ownership of land. Hill District institutions should have access to ownership opportunities for portions of commercial land and other real estate development, prioritizing minority businesses, to the greatest extent possible.

D3. Goal: Land use, public art, and development plans should honor the historical and cultural legacy of the Hill District as a predominately African American neighborhood. Such plans should also abide by any historic preservation standards set by neighborhood preservation entities.

- a. **Policy: Remove any remnant of Civic Arena/Mellon Arena.** Land use and development plans for the Lower Hill shall preserve no physical remnant of Civic Arena/Mellon Arena and the resulting displacement of 8,000+ Hill residents and businesses.

D3.1 Strategy – Formalize community engagement. Ensure proactive engagement efforts in new development plans in the Lower Hill that establishes regular updates and clear messaging to communicate goals and benefits of new development without repeating historical mistakes.

- b. **Policy: Improve access to citywide plans for new development.** Community residents should have ready access to all developing and finalized plans, proposals and studies regarding the greater Hill District. Input from community residents must be included in the development stages of any plan or study affecting the neighborhood and community residents must have seats on development/study committees whose products will influence the greater Hill District.

D3.2 Strategy – Transparent processes. Ensure regular updates to Hill District community organizations on related plans and provide easy access to relevant materials and resources.

- c. **Policy: Incorporate neighborhood characteristics in new development.** Development in the Lower Hill District should reflect the social, cultural, and historical characteristics of the Greater Hill District, to the greatest extent possible.

D3.3 Strategy – Cultural resource surveys. Conduct and maintain cultural resource surveys to document the historical and social assets of the neighborhood, providing a reference for developers and planners.

D3.4 Strategy – Permanent art installation. Install a prominent structure, art piece, or gateway signage that honors the history and culture of the Hill District at the intersection of Centre Avenue and Washington Place, the western gateway to the neighborhood.

D4. Goal: Hill District residents should have access to secure employment and professional development opportunities resulting from new investments in the neighborhood.

- a. **Policy: Create new employment opportunities.** Local employment opportunities should be expanded through investments and partnerships with community-based organizations.

D4.1 Strategy – Community hiring preferences. Form a liaison with government, nonprofit, community-based, and private institutions to build a preference program for workers to be placed into new job opportunities within or adjacent to the Hill District in coordination with existing job training programs led by Energy Innovation Center and First Resource Center.

D4.2 Strategy – Job training. Build on existing partnerships with universities and local employers to develop catered training and curriculum that meets the needs

of Greater Hill residents.

- b. **Policy: Introduce “first source” hiring provisions.** All development plans shall include “first source” hiring provisions within the project labor agreements for all stages of work at any development site and shall provide hiring priority for Hill District residents and former residents that have been displaced by urban renewal to the greatest extent possible.

D4.3 Strategy – Pipeline for “first source” hiring. Collaborate with local workforce development organizations to create a pipeline of qualified candidates to fulfill first source hiring provisions.

HOUSING

Background

The Hill District, a neighborhood rich in the vibrant history of its African American residents, has roots stretching back to the French and Indian War, when Black soldiers served under General John Forbes. Over time, particularly after the Civil War and through World War II, the neighborhood welcomed a growing influx of African Americans, shaping its identity. Yet, this community has long been a mosaic of diverse cultures. In the 1920s, it was home to “Little Italy,” “Little Syria,” the “Black Belt,” and “Athens,” showcasing the varied European influences alongside its deeply rooted African American culture.

The commercial heart of the district thrived, especially along Center Avenue, with the Great Migration swelling the ranks of African American families settling here. The Lower Hill, during the same period, became a bustling business hub, with Wylie Avenue and Logan Street forming the pulse of commercial and cultural life.

However, as the Hill’s popularity surged, so too did its challenges. Buildings aged, overcrowding became common, and neglect set in. Unlike other communities benefiting from the post-war housing boom, the Hill District—like many African American neighborhoods—was left behind, bypassed by development funds and repair programs. As white residents departed, segregation deepened, leaving the neighborhood disinvested and isolated.

By the 1940s, the Hill District was predominantly African American, and the neighborhood’s infrastructure suffered under the weight of neglect. The government’s response was sweeping and destructive, as thousands of homes were razed, replaced by public housing projects such as Bedford Dwellings, Addison Terrace, and



Aliquippa Terrace. Though these complexes initially provided decent shelter, they soon deteriorated, trapping many families in unhealthy conditions. The displacement continued as Arthursville's residents were forced from their homes to make way for the Civic Auditorium, severing the Hill from downtown Pittsburgh. With highways and parking lots cutting through its heart, the once-thriving neighborhood became physically and socially isolated from its surroundings.

Yet, despite decades of redlining, urban renewal, and disinvestment, the Hill District endures, resilient and on the path to recovery. Longtime residents, local organizations, and community assets have worked tirelessly to reclaim its vitality, striving to prevent further displacement and ensure that growth benefits those who have long called the Hill home.

One such initiative is the Hill District 100 (HD 100), led by the Hill Community Development Corporation. This effort seeks to stabilize the community by empowering potential homebuyers, offering education and support to help residents build intergenerational wealth and contribute to the Hill's revival. Through this initiative, over 600 people—both current and former residents—have expressed their desire to own homes in the neighborhood. Insights from this effort should inform future housing policies, ensuring they reflect the needs and dreams of those who wish to plant deeper roots in the Hill District and be part of its ongoing transformation.

The Hill has historically provided rental housing to low-income families. Though the neighborhood continues to remain challenged with some of the lowest median incomes and the most deteriorating housing in the city, the quickly accelerating housing market across Pittsburgh is impacting the Hill's low-income residents as well. The neighborhood is experiencing rapid change in their household composition, rising rents, and dramatic home price increase alongside falling vacancies.¹⁵ This has amplified the risk of many of the neighborhood's most vulnerable residents experiencing a rent increase that they cannot afford, or that they might be physically displaced by a new development. The various types of pressures and the lack of strategic use of existing assets related to housing in the Hill District are discussed below:

POTENTIAL DISPLACEMENT PRESSURE ON RENTERS CREATED BY NEW DEVELOPMENT

Since 75% of Hill District residents are renters, new development activity has the potential to create displacement pressure on many current residents within the Hill District. New development is attracting a significant number of upper-income households which are moving into the city as its economy evolves.¹⁶ This has exacerbated population loss of low-income residents, having lost 5,000 residents since 1990. Since then, Black renter households have decreased across many Pittsburgh neighborhoods like the Hill District, Homewood, and East Liberty.

EXISTING COST-BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS

Almost half of Black renters in the Hill spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Within the Hill District, rent-burdened households are most common in the southern Terrace Village area, where 69% of renter households are burdened. While conditions for low-income renters have improved since 2016, this group still faces a supply gap, lack of quality affordable housing, and no strategic plans to preserve existing affordable housing.¹⁷

RISING RENTS AND HOME PRICES ALONGSIDE FALLING VACANCIES

Hill District is experiencing higher rent and home prices as the city of Pittsburgh's market-related vacancies are at the lowest rate since the 1980s. Due to reduced vacancies, coupled with poor housing conditions, low-income residents are facing high displacement in the neighborhood. While predominantly low-income neighborhoods like Hill District are experiencing displacement and growth, established high-end residential neighborhoods are not addressing their severe supply gap for low-income families, limiting the growth in total housing stock and furthering the supply gap for the most vulnerable income groups.

LACK OF STRATEGIC PLANNING TO USE UNDERUTILIZED VACANT LAND AND BUILDING INVENTORY

The Hill District's large inventory of vacant and underutilized land includes multiple

¹⁵ Pittsburgh Housing Needs Assessment, 2022, https://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/redtail/images/21887_Pittsburgh_HNA_Final_Report.pdf

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ *ibid*

vacant buildings in need of renovation as well as older structures that are functional but could greatly increase in value with renovation¹⁸. A survey of townhome¹⁹ sales from 2019 to 2021 found examples of homes that were likely sold as opportunities for renovation or recently flipped properties²⁰ in the Middle and Upper Hill. Almost all sales in the Lower Hill appeared to be newer homes that did not need significant renovation, based on their search engine description. To ensure transparency and better utilization of public funds, an inventory and existing condition analysis of these older structures is needed and currently missing.

MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

Hill District has a high percentage of single-family and multi-family housing types but has a very low percentage of “middle housing” types. “Middle housing” allows for gentle density in neighborhoods while increasing housing diversity for renting and owning across income groups and household size. It allows for a range of multi-family or clustered housing types that help meet the growing demand for walkable urban community living while being compatible in scale with detached single-family homes. With the right combination of policies, middle housing can create affordable homeownership and rental for low-income households. Policies and strategies that can help ease the production of middle housing within the Hill District are needed.

To address these pressures and to use the existing assets strategically, an appropriate mix of development, economic opportunities for existing residents, and programs that stabilize existing homeowners and renters by preserving affordability will help prevent displacement, catalyze community and economic development, and provide supportive spaces for children. The goals, policies, and strategies listed below aim to utilize local programs, resources, and neighborhood organizations efforts that are invaluable for Hill District residents to maintain their homes, overcome displacement risks, and equip renters with information and resources on their rights.

Goals, Policies, Strategies

D5. Goal: Displacement risks for existing residents should be mitigated and the return of formerly displaced Hill District residents should be facilitated.

- a. **Policy: Prioritize building maintenance and rehab in public funding.** Funding for building maintenance and rehab should be prioritized in the allocation of funds

through the Housing Opportunity Fund managed by the URA.

D5.1 Strategy – Maintenance of existing housing stock. Prioritize aging and vacant housing stock for rehab and preservation by conducting and maintaining an inventory of housing stock in need of repair.

- b. **Strategy – Mitigate displacement due to new development.** All Hill District redevelopments should minimize the involuntary displacement of residents, to the greatest extent feasible, except in the case of a substantial and imminent threat to health or safety.

D5.2 Strategy – Anti-displacement program. Adopt an anti-displacement program that prioritizes the needs of residents at-risk of being displaced from new development. This program should address the diverse needs of families and households currently residing in the Hill District. Key components of the anti-displacement program should incorporate affordable housing preservation, tenant protection, homeowner support, and community engagement.

D5.3 Strategy – Right of first offer/first refusal. Community organizations and tenants should have the right of first offer or right of first refusal to purchase affordable housing units. This could mirror Community Opportunity to Purchase Act (COPA) and Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) initiatives that have been explored in other cities.

- c. **Policy: Transition plans for tenants.** Publicly subsidized Hill District housing redevelopment plans must include a comprehensive transition plan for existing tenants and a plan preserve existing project based rental subsidy, to the greatest extent possible.

D5.4 Strategy – Implement the Bedford Connects Transformation Plan. Public agencies will coordinate with Bedford Dwellings residents on development related to the Bedford Choice Initiative and provide annual updates on the implementation of the Bedford Choice Implementation Grant Application.

- d. **Policy: Prioritize homebuying and homeowner assistance.** Public funding in the Hill District should prioritize “equity protection” solutions for homeowners.

D5.5 Strategy – Expand Hill District 100. Work with community organizations to identify capacity and funding needs to expand the number of properties that are filtered through the Hill District 100 initiative to rehab properties and resale to

¹⁸ Renovation refers to the restoration of buildings that have fallen into disrepair.

¹⁹ Townhome is a single-family home that is often two stories or more that shares one or more walls with other homes in the community.

²⁰ “Flipped properties” refers to those homes which are purchased at a low price, updated with cosmetic changes and resold at a higher price. The intention of the changes is to maximize profit rather than improve quality of housing. Flipped homes differ from renovated properties since renovations are updates which are more extensive with the intention to increase longevity of the home and reduce maintenance costs.

homeowners.

- e. **Policy: Homeowner rehab assistance.** Rehabilitation of owner-occupied homes shall be prioritized in public funding resource allocations for low-income Hill District homeowners.

D5.6 Strategy – Define criteria for homeowner rehab assistance. Create clear eligibility criteria for eligible homeowners to apply for public funding to ensure assistance is provided to those who need it the most.

- f. **Policy: Offer housing options to displaced persons.** All housing development plans for the Lower Hill District should provide an admissions preference for displaced persons to the greatest extent possible, including persons who were displaced in the Lower Hill urban renewal effort and their descendants.

D5.7 Strategy – Online housing portal. Maintain an online housing portal specifically for displaced persons to facilitate accessible housing opportunities in the Hill District.

D6. Goal: New development in the Lower Hill must include affordable housing to the greatest extent possible.

- a. **Policy: Promote affordable housing development.** New development in the Lower Hill must include affordable housing to the greatest extent possible.

D6.1 Strategy – Pathways for cooperative housing models. Reduce regulatory barriers to cooperative housing or other innovative community-owned housing models by piloting the design and development of a tenant/ownership structure for cooperative housing in the Lower Hill.

- b. **Policy: Create more opportunities for housing at different income levels.** At least 30% of housing units in all housing development plans in the Lower Hill shall, to the greatest extent feasible and subject to the regulations associated with any housing assistance resources utilized, be affordable to very-low income households (at or below 50% AMI). If public funding is used or if a project-based subsidy is available, at least 50% of the affordable units must, to the greatest extent feasible and subject to the regulations of any housing assistance resources utilized, be affordable to extremely-low income households (at or below 30% AMI). In allocating housing and community development resources, the City and URA should encourage a higher percentage of affordability and/or the use of deep subsidies to achieve deeper income targeting.

D6.2 Strategy – Housing databases. Actively maintain a comprehensive housing database for the Hill District that tracks new affordable housing units created through development plans.

- c. **Policy: Increase affordable housing through new development plans.** Hill District housing development plans should include a mix of owner-occupied and rental housing for all income levels; For Rental housing development Including ten (10) or more units (other than in the Lower Hill District), at least ten percent (10%) of all units shall, to the greatest extent feasible and subject to the regulations associated with any housing assistance resources utilized, be affordable to very low-income households (at or below 50% (AMI); For for-sale housing developments of ten (10) or more units (other than in the Lower Hill District), at least ten percent (10%) of all units shall, to the greatest extent feasible and subject to the regulations associated with any housing assistance resources utilized, be affordable to low-income households (at or below 80% AMI). In allocating housing and community development resources, public agencies, including the City and URA, should encourage a higher percentage of affordability and/or the use of deep subsidies to achieve deeper income targeting.

D6.3 Strategy – Monitoring and Enforcement. Establish clear guidelines for developers to meet affordability requirements and monitor compliance post construction to ensure requirements are met, while regularly monitoring affordability is maintained.

LAND USE AND ZONING

Background

The Hill District makes up just under 1,000 acres of land area (1.56 square miles) and consists of the five City of Pittsburgh neighborhoods of Crawford-Roberts, Bedford Dwellings, Terrace Village, the Middle Hill, and the Upper Hill. In June 2024, the City of Pittsburgh passed legislation to make the Lower Hill officially part of the Crawford-Robert neighborhood to ensure that the neighborhood boundary aligns and is in coexistence with the current Census Tract boundaries. The Lower Hill is also considered a component of the Greater Hill District and is 28 acres total.

The Hill District is, by and large, a residential neighborhood, and stakeholders who provided feedback on the Plan Update expressed a desire to keep it that way. About 168 of the 996 acres in the Hill District are used for multifamily residential, and an additional 142 acres are used for one, two, or three-unit dwellings, which adds up to

about one-third of the neighborhood being used for existing residential uses, as shown in **Figure 8**.

About 140 acres of the neighborhood are vacant, with the City of Pittsburgh or the Urban Redevelopment Authority owning most of those parcels. Institutions such as the University of Pittsburgh, the Hill House Association, Pittsburgh Public Schools, and various places of worship also make up a large proportion of the neighborhood's overall land use. The University of Pittsburgh's Upper Campus and the adjacent Veterans Administration Medical Center form the largest contiguous area of exclusively institutional uses in the Hill, lining both sides of Robinson Street Extension. Only 53 acres in the Hill District are used for commercial or mixed-use purposes, and only two acres are classified as industrial uses. These non-residential and noninstitutional uses thus make up just over 5% of the neighborhood's land area.

As a neighborhood evolves, so do its goals and aspirations for future development. However, if zoning is not updated routinely, the current zoning standards may not align with the community's vision. In many cases across the city, existing zoning has been in place for decades, and updates are likely needed.

Zoning in the Hill District is made up of a patchwork of many unique designations, some of which operate separately from traditional base zoning. First, there are many specially planned districts — the Lower Hill redevelopment site, the University of Pittsburgh's upper campus, and the Residential Planned (RP) districts making up some of the larger public housing developments — that abide by development regulations outside the framework of the base zoning district's that apply to the remainder of the neighborhood. Secondly, the hillsides and park areas that ring the neighborhood have unique zoning standards due to development limitations.

Therefore, future proposals for new zoning will likely focus on select areas at a smaller scale, rather than neighborhood-wide. This may include a corridor or section of the neighborhood, such as the case of Herron Ave discussed in this plan. Decisions around selecting zoning districts and applicable development standards should be tailored to the local context, including the character, scale, and land use of both existing and desired future development, based on the community's vision outlined by this plan.

Additionally, the upcoming citywide comprehensive plan will also include a land use strategy that will guide future development patterns across the entire city. Zoning efforts coming out of the Comprehensive Plan may overlap and influence zoning within the Hill District. An example would be if potential changes are proposed to all residential base zoning districts as a package, and applied across the city. Therefore, it is important for the Hill District community to be informed and actively engaged in all zoning efforts, both at the neighborhood and citywide levels.

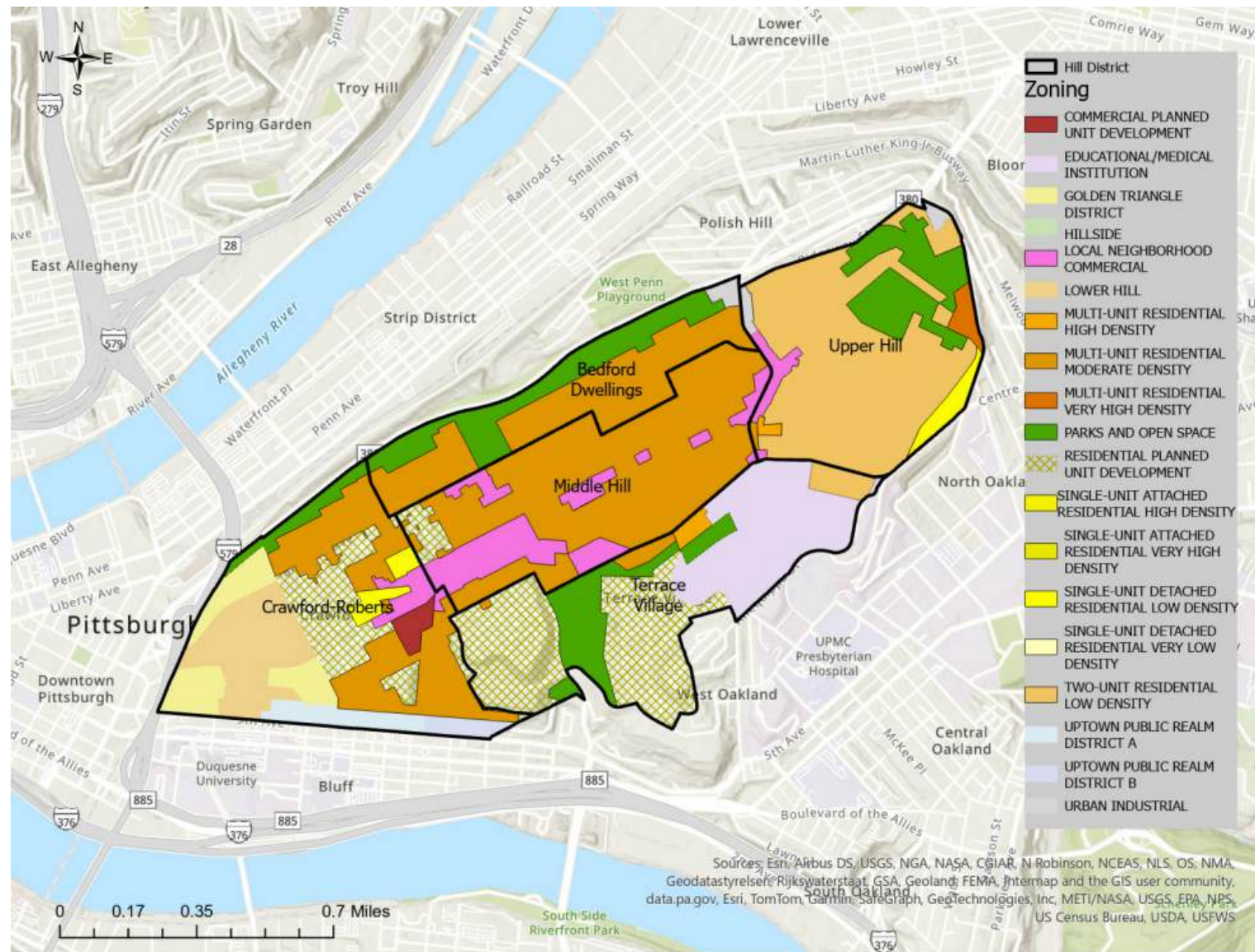
UNDERMINING OVERLAY

Like many hilltop neighborhoods in Pittsburgh, the Hill District was the site of active underground coal mines during its early history. The coal seam falls at a relatively constant elevation around 1055' - 1065' above sea level, sitting below the highest parts of the neighborhood. Areas of the neighborhood situated above this elevation are at risk should a historic mine collapse, causing the ground above to settle and shift. The higher a property sits above the coal seam the lesser the risk of serious settlement. No accurate map of actual mines is known to exist, thus undermining risk is best measured by the elevation of the property relative to the coal seam elevation. This is illustrated in Figure 9, with the highest risk shown in red, medium in orange and low in yellow. Parcels below the coal seam have no risk and are illustrated in grey.

As per the "Hill District Vacant Property Strategy, 2013", 28% of the vacant land in the neighborhood sits just above the coal seam and has a potentially serious risk of undermining. Many of these parcels are wooded hillsides that are not suitable for development, however some areas, such as the Herron Avenue Corridor, or some blocks between Wylie and Webster Avenues, are places where new development is planned. Development on undermined parcels is possible, but it calls for careful geotechnical analysis and will likely require more expensive foundations. Another 11% of vacant land sits between 25 and 50 feet and should be explored carefully prior to development. Parcels over 50' above the coal seam, or entirely below it, are of less concern.

The City is undergoing several efforts to address the concentration of vacant land in the Hill District. The City of Pittsburgh has partnered with Ethos Collaborative on a Vacant Lot Strategy. The Vacant Lot Strategy comprises a pattern book, methodology, and community engagement strategy as a comprehensive approach for the evaluation of potential end uses for vacant lots. Through a combination of advanced GIS decision support tools, thoughtful urban planning, and ongoing community input and collaboration, this work involves the evaluation of parcels relative to site suitability or feasibility for stormwater management, housing, recreational spaces, or a myriad of other potential end uses based on existing site characteristics. As a result of this work, multiple end use maps have been developed to identify vacant parcels best suited for various end uses, while also outlining the meaningful strategic planning actions needed for their ultimate reactivation. By addressing the root causes of blight and transforming these vacant properties, the City can pave the way for a brighter future, promoting inclusivity and sustainability in planning and urban development.

Figure 8: Zoning Districts in the Hill District



Source: City of Pittsburgh

The Department of City Planning has received a Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) Keystone Grant for partial funding to develop a pilot process for reuse, reinvestment, and revitalization in Pittsburgh's Hill District, with a focus on stabilization and preservation, rather than demolition, of distressed and historically overlooked structures. The City has \$50,000 in total funding available to establish a methodology for determining how vacant properties should be prioritized for stabilization, future rehabilitation and restoration. This grant will be used to explore potential funding sources for vacant property stabilization and identify potential citywide priorities for stabilizing properties including, but not limited to: historic preservation, existing conditions, and cultural/community significance. This stabilization strategy developed and piloted for implementation in the Hill District is intended to be replicated citywide.

Goals, Policies, Strategies

D7. Goal: A comprehensive land use management strategy should be developed for the Hill District, prioritizing community-driven zoning recommendations and the identified use of vacant land and buildings, with a focus on the stewardship of community stakeholders.

- a. **Policy: Engage community members in Hill District citywide zoning efforts.** Establish community participation in the future rezoning of the Hill District.

D7.1 Strategy – Draft zoning recommendations. In coordination with community organizations, draft priority zoning recommendations to be included in the future citywide update of the comprehensive plan.

- b. **Policy: Prioritize community organizations and priorities in the disposition of vacant land.** Community service organizations and groups based in the Hill District should be given priority to acquire vacant land and buildings as needed for educational, social service, and recreational opportunities to improve quality of life for Hill District residents.

D7.2 Strategy – Technical assistance to community organizations. Expand technical assistance to community organizations in partnership with existing real estate assistance providers such as Neighborhood Allies, Riverside Center for Innovation, and local universities to identify potential vacant properties for acquisition and creating proposals for redevelopment. Technical assistance should also include guidance on addressing pre-development expenses and

funding sources related to remediation of brownfield and undermine sites.

D7.3 Strategy – Vacant property stabilization. Prioritize the stabilization of vacant properties before demolition. Stabilization should include securing the property, maintenance and clean-up, structural assessments, and planning for future use.

D7.4 Strategy – Community identified uses for vacant land. Evaluate appropriate parcels that would not be suitable for commercial or residential uses and dedicate these lots toward priorities that have been identified by community organizations. This could include green infrastructure, open space, renewable energy, or other uses. This strategy should be conducted in coordination with ongoing city-led and city-wide efforts related to vacant land.

D7.5 Strategy – Comprehensive plan for vacant land. Work with the Pittsburgh Land Bank and the URA to create a vacant land strategy for all vacant land in the Hill District. This should build on existing plans while outlining the necessary steps needed to redevelop, rehab, or manage vacant land.

URBAN SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

Background









Sustainability and quality urban design involve a comprehensive strategy to shape the environment of the Hill District. Beyond parks, this section encompasses vacant land, natural features that can be leveraged for economic development, as well as opportunities for green buildings and renovations.

The Hill District's topography shapes the identity and experience of the neighborhood. Development patterns within the study area mirrored the larger patterns for the city as a whole, with more commercial and institutional uses concentrated in relatively flatter locations. Many housing types follow the natural topography, using stepped rowhouses, retaining walls and other land forming techniques, and other elements to negotiate the grade. Historically, staircases and other means of traversing steep slopes within and around the district were common, and many of these are woven into the architectural and landscape character of the area. The Hill District maintains a strong visual connection to Downtown with prominent viewpoints along many of the major avenues and open spaces. Previous plans have identified these steep slope areas as good sites for open space and recreation opportunities as many of these are vegetated and provide exceptional viewpoints of the city and region.

Challenges for achieving the goals outlined in this section include:

Figure 8: Vacant Properties and Undermining Risks



Key		Numbers	
Undermining Risk:			
	< 25' Above Coal Seam - High Risk	Elevation 1,060 - 1,085	
	Vacant Properties - High Risk (3)	434 Parcels	55.45 Acres
	25'-50' Above Coal Seam - Medium Risk	Elevation 1,085 - 1,110	
	Vacant Properties - Medium Risk (2)	329 Parcels	20.61 Acres
	> 50' Above Coal Seam - Low Risk	Elevation > 1,110	
	Vacant Properties - Low Risk (1)	511 Parcels	32.20 Acres
	Vacant Properties - No Risk (0)	1,377 Parcels	83.60 Acres
	Vacant Buildings	373 Buildings	27.83 Acres

Source: Hill District vacant Property Strategy

- **Condition and ownership status of vacant parcels.** Over 48% of the vacant parcels in the study area are owned by public or quasi-public entities. Many of these have a complicated legal status and need site remediation.
- **Additional cost and knowledge needed for home rehabilitation to incorporate sustainability and resilience features.** Incorporating features like solar, gray water systems, and more sustainable building materials into rehab and new construction projects can require additional up-front costs. Although many of these costs are recovered over time through increased efficiency or longer lifecycles and can contribute to lower utility costs and better resilience in severe weather events over the long term, the initial up-front costs can be prohibitive. Similarly, new technologies and sustainability techniques require familiarity by developers and property owners to incorporate these features into projects.
- **Distribution of small local parks and open spaces.** Previous plans, like the Greenprint, identified the significant wooded areas in the study area. While there are also several large actively programmed parks, the study area has an uneven distribution of smaller pocket parks and neighborhood-scale passive open space.
- **Limited tree canopy.** Although the wooded areas of the Hill District provide important ecosystem services, street trees are generally only prevalent in recently redeveloped areas such as Crawford Square and Skyline Terrace. Trees provide these ecosystem services, contribute to mental health and well-being, and can increase property value. The lack of tree canopy today reduces the Hill District's ability to manage storms and flooding, extreme heat days, and poor air quality.

The primary opportunities that have informed the strategies in this section include:

- **Potential for future open space.** Legal status, parcel condition, and location are all factors that should be evaluated to prioritize which parcels can be aggregated at the appropriate scale and location for small open spaces. Seek out opportunities to achieve multiple objectives with open space projects, including flood protection, health and well-being opportunities, and activating the community. This work should be done through the Hill District Parks Plan in association with this planning process.
- **Resident-led improvements.** Parcels that are not good candidates for neighborhood open spaces or new development could be opportunities for side lot adoptions and other resident-led improvements.
- **Support for green building techniques for rehabilitation.** There is community support for green building techniques that should be administered across new

development projects. Requirements or incentives for projects to align with green building practices should be advanced for both public and private-led projects.

- **Urban design opportunities in new development.** As new development continues to occur in the Hill District, the City and community have an opportunity to ensure projects are designed to adhere to the historic and cultural character of the Hill District.

Goals, Policies, Strategies

D8. Goal: All plans for the Hill District should include provisions for green and sustainable development.

- a. **Policy: Implement standards for sustainable design.** Hill District redevelopments should include ample green space, native plants and trees, parks and playgrounds and high-performing buildings (e.g.: LEED certified buildings) that incorporate high-quality insulation materials, rainwater harvesting infrastructure and renewable energy solutions that align with the goals of the proposed "alternative energy program".

8.1 Strategy – Expand open space. Create a series of pocket parks with playgrounds, benches, tables, and basketball courts on vacant lots in the Hill District where there are few nearby opportunities to access maintained green space.

8.2 Strategy – Green development. Adopt green building techniques in all new development.

D9. Goal: The design of redevelopment projects enhance the social, cultural, and historic characteristics of the greater Hill District's built and natural environment.

- a. **Policy UD 2.1: Contextual development plans.** All development plans should be designed to benefit existing and future community residents and businesses, while allowing for future growth of retail, residential, and commercial spaces.

D9.1 Strategy – Views in the Hill District. The design review process for all new proposed projects should seek to preserve the views from the Hill District in all directions. Development of the Lower Hill must not impair views of Downtown from Crawford Street.

D9.2 Strategy – Renewable Energy. Develop a neighborhood-level solar or other alternative energy program to provide clean, cheap energy to Hill District residents and businesses.

b. Policy: Acknowledge existing development patterns in the Hill District.

Recognizing the major arterials for the Hill District as identified through the corridor analyses (Webster Ave, Herron Ave, Centre Ave), the design of all new development should acknowledge that the Hill District is primarily a residential neighborhood with neighborhood business districts that are at the edge of the Pittsburgh Central Business District.

D9.3 Strategy – Context-sensitive design standards. Identify neighborhood characteristics that preserve and enhance the existing built environment and apply appropriate design standards that reflect and reinforce that character.

COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

Background

The urban structure of the Hill District reflects historic development patterns and unique topography of the neighborhood. A series of east-west corridors consisting of Bedford Avenue, Webster Avenue, Wylie Avenue, and Centre Avenue connect the Hill District to Downtown and North Oakland. These corridors feature a strong linear character, larger scale roadways, and serve as primary transit routes. These corridors also organize most of the commercial activities within the Hill District.

Streets such as Herron Avenue, Crawford Avenue, Dinwiddie Street, and Kirkpatrick Street often work against the grade of the Hill District, working through passes and valleys along the topography to connect different points of elevation. This relationship to the topography makes these streets important gateways to the study area.

The Hill District's distinct corridors have been essential to the neighborhood's past development and will be key to achieving future goals for reinvestment. Since the late 20th century, the Greater Hill District saw patterns of disinvestment, resulting in a range of neighborhood and community impacts such as lagging school performance, unemployment, families living in poverty, pervasive vacant land, and safety concerns. Major areas of focus for current and future investment include:

- **Herron Avenue:**
Herron Avenue establishes the historic divide between the Middle and Upper

Hill neighborhoods. While this chasm reflected economic disparities and social friction, the street itself was a major thoroughfare that served both neighborhoods and became a commercial core in the Hill District.

- **Webster Avenue:**

Webster Avenue in Pittsburgh's Hill District has a rich history as a cultural and economic center for the city's Black community, particularly thriving in the early to mid-20th century as a hub for jazz, arts, and Black-owned businesses.

- **Centre Avenue:**

Centre Avenue is built along the largest tributary stream in the Hill District and has always served as one of the few streets in the Hill that lead directly to Pittsburgh's downtown. Centre Avenue was also home to many landmark Black businesses but became the center of Black-owned business on the Hill after the Urban Renewal projects of the mid-20th century.

Looking forward, community members have called for a renewed investment in the Hill District's major corridors. In particular, there are myriad opportunities to convert vacant land and lacking infrastructure into a community-serving environment that builds from the assets and strengths of the Hill District.

Each corridor represents a different set of opportunities. Herron Avenue is a major transportation corridor with significant infill potential, Center Avenue at Centre-Heldman Plaza is an important urban commercial corridor, and Webster Avenue is illustrative of broadly applicable concepts that can be applied throughout the Hill District.

Encouraging new development as a means to convert vacant land into productive uses that support community goals is one of the primary needs for each corridor. This need is based both on the positive housing and economic impacts of new development, as well as the urban design contributions to the public realm that can come from new development. As part of this larger goal, there are several key factors to consider:

Housing Feasibility:

As in much of the Hill District, many housing types would currently require some form of subsidy or gap financing to be feasible, although this may not be the case as areas around the Hill continue to grow. While some of the housing types evaluated are already feasible in the market now, other types would require either additional subsidy or such changes in future market conditions to be feasible in the future. Specific



financing strategies, parcel assembly, and regulatory requirements all affect the type and scale of housing that can be effectively delivered along each corridor.

Commercial Development Feasibility

Historically, corridors like Centre Avenue and Herron Avenue were important commercial centers for the neighborhood and connections to adjacent neighborhoods such as Oakland and the East End. Many of the opportunities to restore these commercial functions will take the form of ground-floor retail in larger developments and rehab/renovation of existing structures. This can provide an important opportunity for small businesses to contribute to meeting local demand for goods and services as part of a complete neighborhood. With the Hill District's proximity to Oakland and transportation access, commercial corridors could potentially have some other types of commercial development in the future that are not feasible today as adjacent growth continues. The feasibility of including community identified businesses in future developments may require gap financing or loss-leader status within larger developments to come to fruition. Because of the importance of commercial development as both an economic opportunity and an urban design tool, commercial development should be focused on key nodes identified within each corridor.



Vacant Parcels and Corridor Activation

Each corridor includes substantial amounts of vacant parcels, often owned by public entities. Parcel assembly will likely be the most feasible path to new development along commercial corridors in the Hill District. For additional vacant or underutilized sites, a number of activation strategies can be pursued to strengthen the overall character and functioning of the corridors. **Figure 10** identifies some of these areas with multi-acre vacant parcels mostly or fully in public ownership.

Figure 10: Opportunities for Assembly of Publicly Owned Parcels



Source: Pittsburgh Department of City Planning

Spotlight: Herron Avenue

This section provides key information to support informed decision-making and identify financial resources for redeveloping Herron Avenue in the Hill District. While other corridor's like Center Avenue have benefited from past planning, Herron Avenue will benefit from dedicated attention in future commercial corridor goals.

WHY HERRON AVENUE?

Historically home to significant businesses and institutions, Herron Avenue still serves as a vital connection between neighborhoods like the Strip District, Lawrenceville, and Oakland. Over time, urban renewal, deindustrialization, and population decline have led to many vacant parcels and buildings along the corridor.

The opportunity for a revitalized Herron Ave is supported by the community's interest in the future of this corridor and stakeholders like the Urban Redevelopment Authority, which own a significant number of vacant parcels along the corridor.

HERRON AVENUE EXISTING CONDITIONS

Herron Avenue is riddled by steep terrain that creates challenges for development. The corridor's history of underground coal mining adds to the risks. Most parcels on the corridor are zoned as "undermined", meaning that getting approval for development may require careful geotechnical analysis and expensive building foundations or other remediation work.

Despite similar challenges in other parts of Pittsburgh, there are abundant examples throughout the city where remediation strategies have successfully addressed undermining conditions. A large-scale mixed-use development by HACP at Herron Ave and Wylie Avenue is an example of an undermined site on Herron Avenue where the plan to remediate the site with a specialized foundation is allowing development to move forward.

LAND USE & KEY NODES

Herron Avenue is home to a few existing neighborhood assets including churches, , restaurants and the former MLK Jr. Reading & Cultural Center that is being redeveloped as the Citizen Science Lab in 2025. But most of the corridor is lined by vacant parcels or condemned properties.

Currently 57% of land on the corridor is vacant. Most of the vacant land is on steep hills that are currently greenspace and woods. The Hill District Vacant Property Strategy suggests designating parts of the corridor for Greenways.

There are also a significant number of sites owned by the City of Pittsburgh or the Urban Redevelopment Authority. Given the adjacencies of these vacant parcels, there are many opportunities for assembling publicly owned parcels that could allow for larger developments. The City should prioritize parcel assembly that aligns with the most feasible housing and commercial opportunities, while continuing to strategically address issues related to steep topography.

COMMUNITY VISION & URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The 2011 GHDP calls for "a commercially viable and attractive avenue that benefits the Hill District while serving as a connector from Oakland to Bigelow Boulevard and the Strip District." The 2011 plan also included two guiding concepts for Herron Avenue: 1) concentrate future development near existing and planned commercial uses, and 2) establish a distinctive pedestrian identity between Centre and Bedford Avenues. Coupled with updated analysis and engagement, these concepts formed the basis for the Urban Design Framework for Herron Avenue outlined below. This framework focuses on four design principles:

- 1. Pair development with economic empowerment programs to build wealth and reinforce neighborhood identity.**

Residential and commercial development should look for ways to build wealth and reinforce the unique identity for the Hill District community through small and culturally relevant business support as well as coordinated events and programs.

- 2. Leverage Herron Avenue's connectivity into a complete mobility corridor that benefits the community.**

Today the corridor is primarily vehicular in orientation. Expanded pedestrian and cycling facilities, new transit connections, and active frontages along the corridor can connect Hill residents to regional jobs and opportunities, build demand for local businesses along Herron Avenue, and provide safe, equitable transportation choices.

- 3. Focus investment at key crossroads.**

Herron Avenue's topography and current market dynamics will require a long-term commitment to develop the full length of the corridor. To show early progress and foster a stronger sense of place, development and investments should prioritize

key nodes at important crossroads. Highlight the Hill District's unique identity and living legacy with art, wayfinding, and public realm improvements at gateways, historic places and institutions, and along the cultural legacy loop.

4. **Repair past harms and promote a Just Transition.**

Investments are necessary to repair the legacy of the extractive practices of the fossil fuel industry's presence in the Hill District. As those investments are made, they should come with a holistic approach to planning for the future of the corridor that promote economic opportunities and environmental justice for Hill District residents.

Herron Avenue Vision and Strategies

CORRIDOR WIDE STRATEGIES FOR HERRON AVENUE

- **Establishing a Remediation Fund to Cover Pre-Development Costs:** The environmental damage caused by fossil fuel industries continues to impede potential development on Herron Avenue. Addressing the corridor's undermined and brownfield sites (such as former gas stations) significantly raises pre-development expenses, driving up overall project costs. To facilitate equitable development, the URA should create a dedicated fund to finance the remediation costs of these environmentally impacted areas.

For example, for Center Avenue the URA utilized an RFP that provided technical support and raised money to help developers on that corridor. A similar funding mechanism can be applied to equip developers with any upfront costs or technical assistance required for remediation of undermined sites on Herron Avenue. A creation of such fund could be supported by legislative initiatives that help direct relevant state and federal funds at the intersection of environmental remediation and economic development to support projects in corridors such as Herron Avenue and other corridors in neighborhoods that have faced environmental and economic injustices.

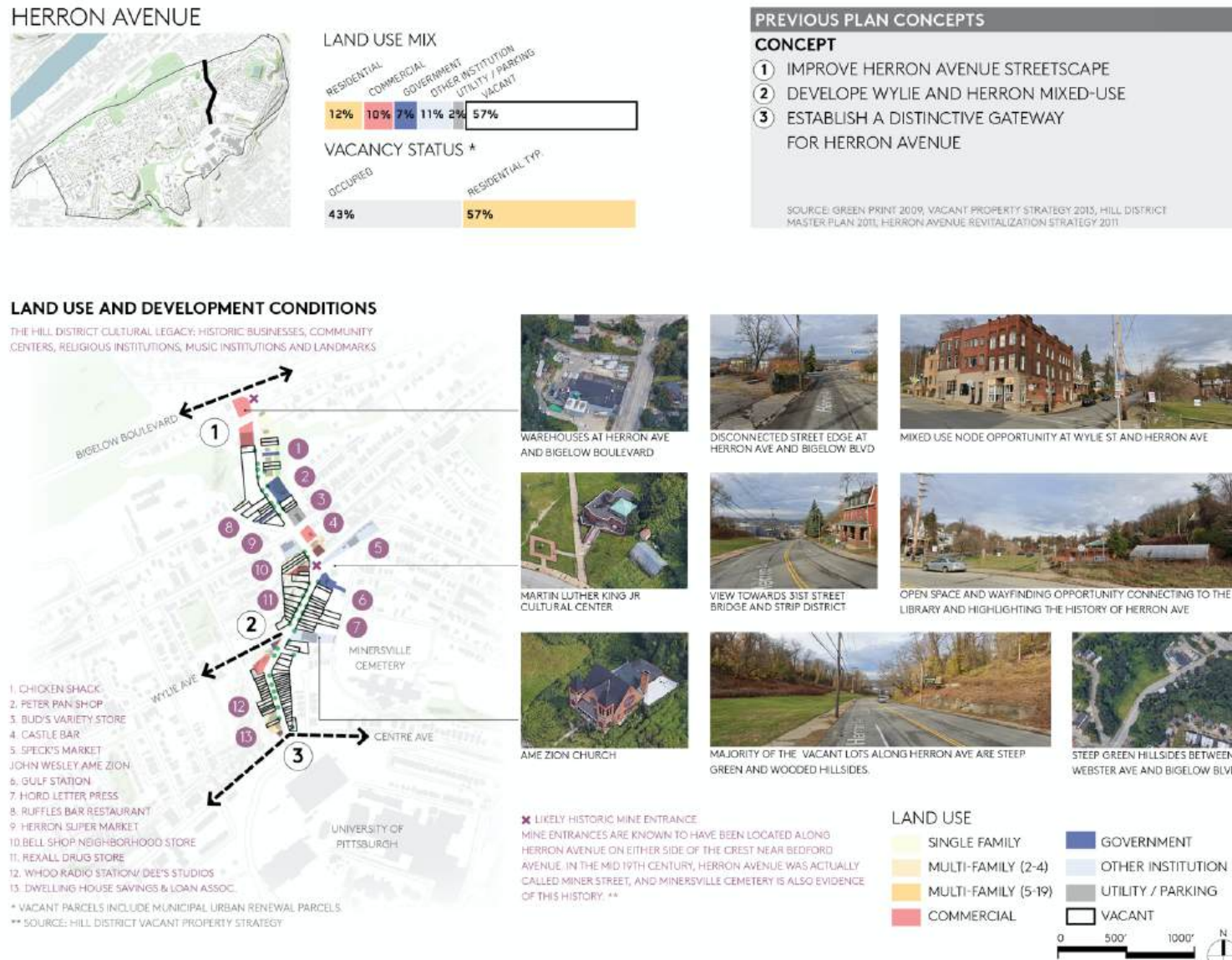
- **Renewable energy production:** Herron Avenue's challenging topography makes many vacant, publicly owned sites unsuitable for traditional development. However, these sites could support small-scale renewable energy projects, like solar photovoltaic arrays, to reduce energy costs for Hill District residents or create wealth-building opportunities. Without interrupting the continuity of the envisioned commercial district, parcels along Herron Avenue from Webster

Avenue to Bigelow Boulevard, which are difficult to develop due to geotechnical constraints, and rooftops of proposed buildings, are ideal candidates for solar energy production. The City and landowners should explore partnerships with solar energy producers for detailed site selection.

- **Streetscape improvements:** Sidewalks along Herron Avenue are narrow and often in poor condition. Streetscape improvements, such as widening sidewalks, adding street trees, lighting, and public art, can boost development, enhance mobility, and highlight the Hill District's cultural legacy. Street trees, for example, can improve air quality, mental health, business success, and reduce crime. Some enhancements can be made within the current right-of-way, while others may require easements from adjacent properties.
- **Complete street design changes:** Herron Avenue's current configuration is optimized for vehicular traffic, with inadequate cycling or transit facilities or intersection treatments. Reallocating complete street design to balance needs among cyclists, pedestrians, cars, and transit will create a safer, more active street.
- **Prioritized development sites:** While Herron Avenue has many vacant parcels, not all are equally suited for development. Targeting sites that align with housing needs, commercial opportunities, and market viability will increase success and ensure resources are used effectively. For instance, the vacant parcel at the Northwest corner of Herron and Webster Avenue, due to its size and visibility, could be ideal for a partnership with a local institution seeking a high-visibility location. Potential partners include environmentally focused organizations, higher education institutions, or mission-driven start-ups. Applying best practices from successful neighborhood developments, such as those in Homewood, can help guide these efforts.
- **Focused gathering spaces:** There are nodes or crossroads where people naturally come together that occur along Herron. There are multiple opportunities to create gathering spaces that can bring together multiple objectives of economic development, highlighting legacy and identity and supporting residents.
- **Preservation and restoration of existing buildings:** There are a number of existing buildings that are in varying levels of occupation and condition. Those at the corner of Milwaukee and Herron should be prioritized for ground-level commercial and upper-level residential.

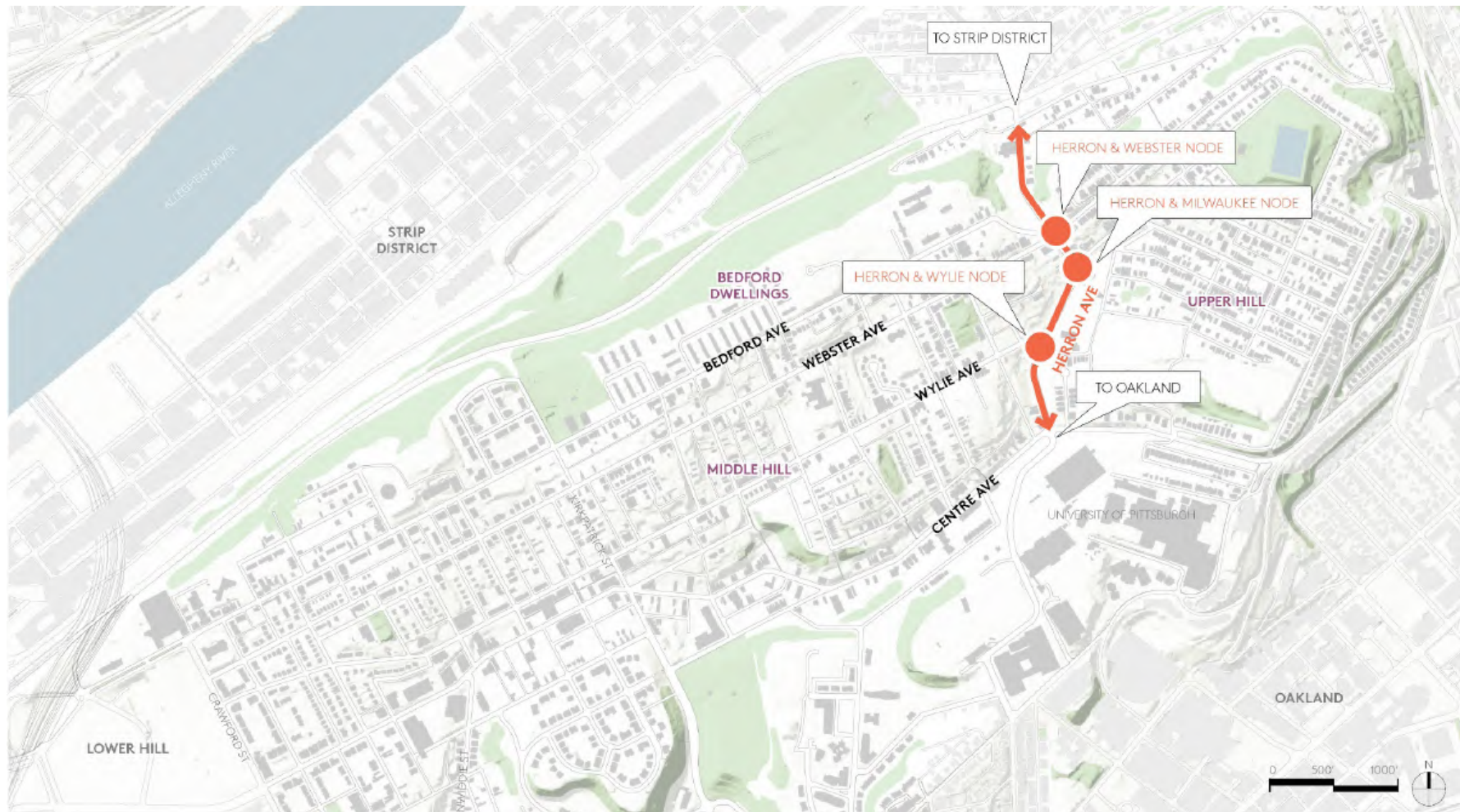
Many of these strategies have specific applications at the nodes covered in **Figure 13**.

Figure 11: Herron Avenue Design Concept Analysis



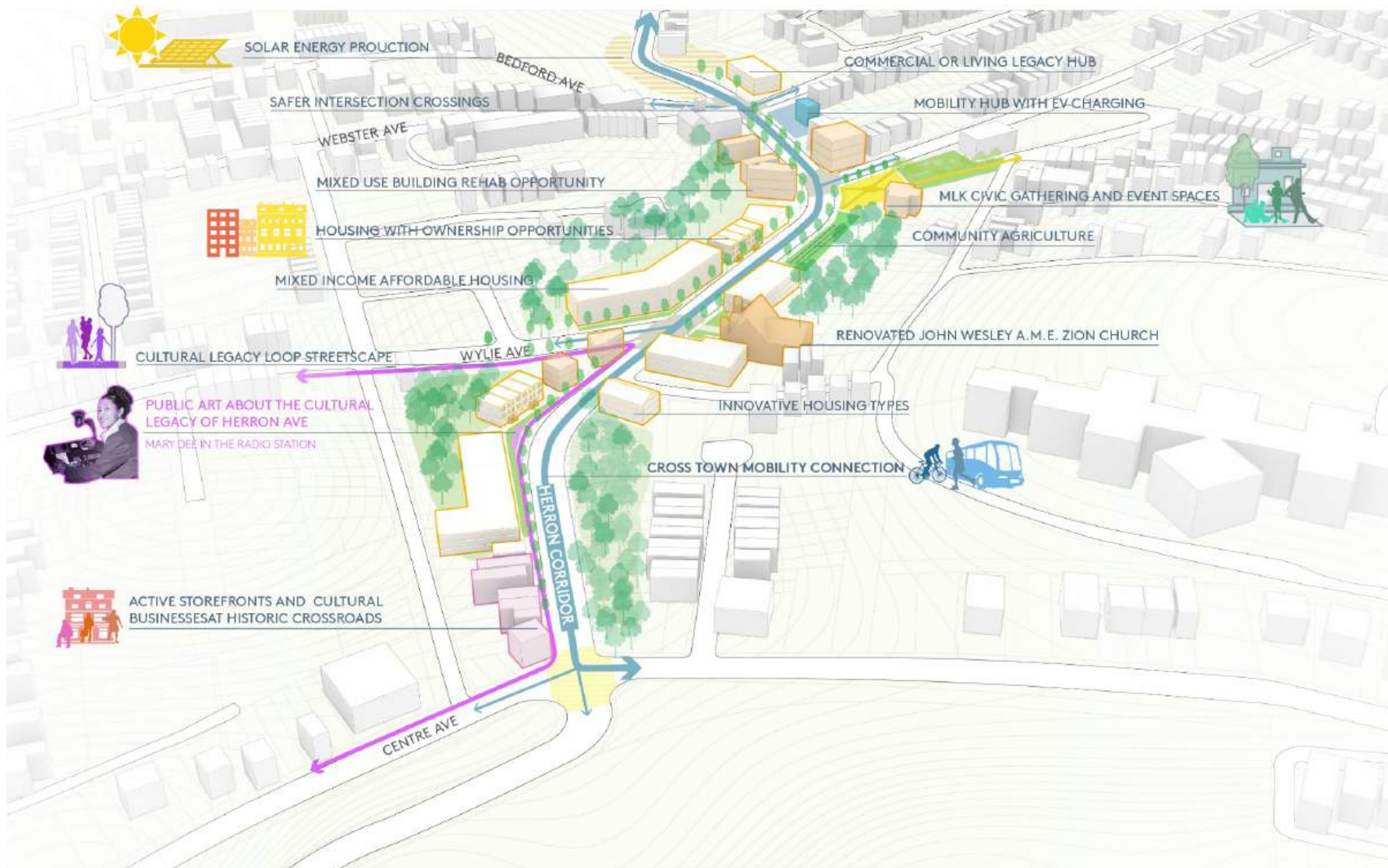
Source: EConorthwest

Figure 12: Key nodes along Herron Avenue



Source: EConorthwest

Figure 13: Corridor-wide Herron Avenue Vision & Strategies



Source: EConorthwest

CORRIDOR-WIDE STRATEGIES FOR HERRON AVENUE

- **Herron/Webster/Milwaukee/Bedford Node.** The area between Herron, Webster, and Milwaukee has several distinguishing characteristics: it is located at the high point of the corridor, and it consists of more intact and occupied historic structures than other parts of the corridor. This intersection joins several streets that stretch through a long section of the Hill District, including the terminal point of Bedford Avenue. St. Luke Baptist Church has been an anchor institution at this corner since 1929, which still holds services. Other parcels near the intersection include two vacant properties owned by the City, which are zoned as a commercial office up to two stories and garage buildings, respectively. On the steep triangular slope between Bedford and Webster there is a small pocket park and transit stop. This area could become a vibrant, walkable mixed-use area along Herron Avenue. To realize this potential, key projects and strategies should include:
 - **Create a civic plaza at MLK Cultural Center.** As a Citizen Science Lab is proposed at the MLK Cultural Center site, the location could be a gathering place that convenes residents from different parts of the larger Hill District and welcome visitors from outside the District. Its presence on Herron Avenue also increases its visibility to those passing through the neighborhood. Considering that both the open space and the cultural center itself are underutilized. A new Citizen Science Lab with a civic plaza would reactivate the area and bring new life to the cultural center building itself. This plaza could provide seating in naturalistic, quiet areas to support residents' well-being, as well as programmed locations for a small playground and spillover spaces to support events. It could also serve as a meeting place for civic events, job training events, marches, or arts/cultural programs that reflect the living legacy of the Hill District. The current sculpture could be retained and given new prominence within the new plaza. South of the plaza, a community agriculture site can be programmed to help increase productivity of the open space. These themes of food and gardening could also be an opportunity for events on the plaza, such as a market or food festival.
 - **Support mobility hub.** Herron Avenue will continue to be an important transportation connection as it becomes part of PRT's new bus rapid transit (BRT) alignment. As part of a transition to a more multimodal corridor, the two vacant parcels at Herron and Webster would be good candidates for a mobility hub. This mobility hub would combine infrastructure for multiple transportation modes in a single place with clear signage and supportive site design and land uses. Common elements of mobility hubs include shared mobility like bikeshare and scooter-share, carshare, electric vehicle charging and other EV infrastructure, transit shelters and real-time transit information, and other first/last mile services (like pickup/drop-off, on-demand services). In addition to its mobility value, this hub would also help activate that intersection and encourage additional investment.
- **Create improved, more accessible crossing at Herron/Webster/Bedford.** The current crosswalk configuration at this node has a sharply uneven topography and a stair sidewalk that limits mobility. To support a safer street, the intersection can be simplified by extending the curb that separates Webster Avenue and Bedford Avenue to create a flatter, more direct crossing. Several street configurations could accomplish this result, including pedestrian islands with a right-turn lane on Bedford Avenue to a full curb extension. This may present the opportunity to incorporate gateway art, signage, or other installations to highlight the Hill District's identity.
- **Herron/Wylie Node.** The intersection of Herron Avenue and Wylie Avenue is characterized by a number of architecturally impressive but vacant buildings and significant areas of vacant parcels owned by the URA and other public entities. In addition, there is a privately owned building that was previously the John Wesley AME Zion Church (a historic Black church founded in 1836), though its current condition has created difficulties in its renovation. New mixed-use development in large open lots can capture through-traffic that flows between Oakland to the south and the Strip District to the north by leveraging the Herron's visibility with street-facing businesses and inviting public spaces. This area has an opportunity to become an important location for housing and amenities that highlight the cultural legacy and identity of the district. Specific strategies for this area include:
 - **Assemble public land for affordable housing.** Although there is significant vacant, publicly owned land in this portion of the corridor, much of it will require parcel assembly, remediation, and other site prep to become viable for development. Land owning institutions should work with local organizations and potential developers to prioritize the most viable sites and streamline the process of assembling and preparing them for development. There is now an affordable housing plan proposed by HACP at the Herron and Wylie crossing. This project is one of the first ones on the corridor by assembling multiple parcels, proposing the construction of multi-story apartment building, and constructing a special foundation to address and remediate possible undermining issues on a previously identified for undermining high-risk location (refer to map on figure 1).

- **Focus active ground floors.** One of the greatest needs for the corridor is active ground floor uses that make Herron Avenue an attractive, inviting place once again. However, retail and other commercial active uses can be difficult to sustain along the full length of the corridor. Where possible, active ground floor uses should be focused at the intersection of Wylie and Herron Avenue and transition to more passive residential or other uses outward from the intersection. These non-retail uses can still activate the street with frequent entries, stoops, porches, and other elements. This is also an opportunity to support and encourage local and culturally aligned small businesses.
- **Encourage green infrastructure.** Green infrastructure includes a range of solutions that use natural systems to address needs such as stormwater management, heat island effect, and air pollution. As vacant parcels are developed and existing building renovated, green infrastructure such as bioswales, permeable paving, and increased tree canopy should be part of these activities. Smaller footprint solutions can be tucked into development or streetscape improvements, and larger solutions like community gardens and rain capture can be sited where site characteristics make development infeasible.
- **Adjust zoning to support housing diversity.** Most of this portion of Herron falls within the LNC zone. This zone allows for both commercial and residential development. However, adjustments to parking requirements, site development standards, and height limits can support more diverse types of housing and make challenging sites more feasible for development as housing.
- **Create a cultural legacy loop and supportive public art.** In support of Goal 1 from the 2011 GHDMP, a cultural legacy loop has been proposed. This two-mile loop along Wylie Avenue, Herron Avenue, and Centre Avenue would connect crossroads that play an important role in the historic and current cultural legacy of the Hill District. Elements of this cultural legacy loop would include cultural legacy-inspired layered streetscape, street trees, lighting, public art, and development standards that emphasize the cultural identity and legacy of the Hill District. It would include some moments of expanded public realm and open space that could be used to support gatherings, events, and programs related to the Hill District's legacy (like music, art, activism, and athletics), as well as supporting local businesses. This loop would include the portion of Herron Avenue from Wylie to Centre.



Webster Avenue

Webster Avenue extends the full length of the Hill District from Crawford Street in the Lower Hill to Blessing Street in the northern corner of the Upper Hill as shown in **Figure 14**. It runs parallel to Bedford Avenue and Wylie Avenue, although it is more residential than those adjacent streets. This residential character, punctuated by (historically) commercial uses at major intersections, makes Webster a good example of the variety of housing found throughout the Hill District. Webster Avenue has a wide range of vacant parcels with various configurations and ownership by public entities, including the Urban Redevelopment Authority.

Webster Avenue's role as a major residential corridor and the existing base of vacant land present several opportunities and barriers for creating new housing. The size and scale of vacant parcels make it an ideal location for "missing middle" housing types that can provide significant new housing, including potential ownership and wealth building opportunities, while fitting within the traditional scale of surroundings. Examples of this can be seen in recent housing that has been introduced as part of the Bedford Hill development.

Figure 15 provides an overview of existing conditions along Webster Avenue, including land use mix and vacancy status and how the 2011 Master Plan addressed the corridor. The concepts included in the previous plan focused on residential and recreational concepts.

WEBSTER AVENUE - URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The 2011 GHDM's recommendations for Webster Avenue focus on where it intersects with other streets such as the Kirkpatrick Street Recreation corridor or the Centre View connection to Bedford Dwellings. Building on those concepts, the urban design framework for Webster Avenue is grounded in its role as a residential corridor. It is based on two design principles, which the City and its partners can apply along the corridor and key nodes strategies below.

- **Encourage a diverse mix of housing:** The housing needs for the Hill District are diverse, both in physical form and financial considerations. Traditional housing types in the Hill District, like duplexes and row houses, should be encouraged along with new housing types like sixplexes and triplexes that can provide more housing and wealth-building opportunities.

Create a sense of place at key intersections: Unlike other corridors, Webster's character is predominantly residential. Intersections with important connections to other parts of the Hill District should be prioritized as places to reflect the neighborhood's character and encourage local businesses that serve the adjacent neighborhood.

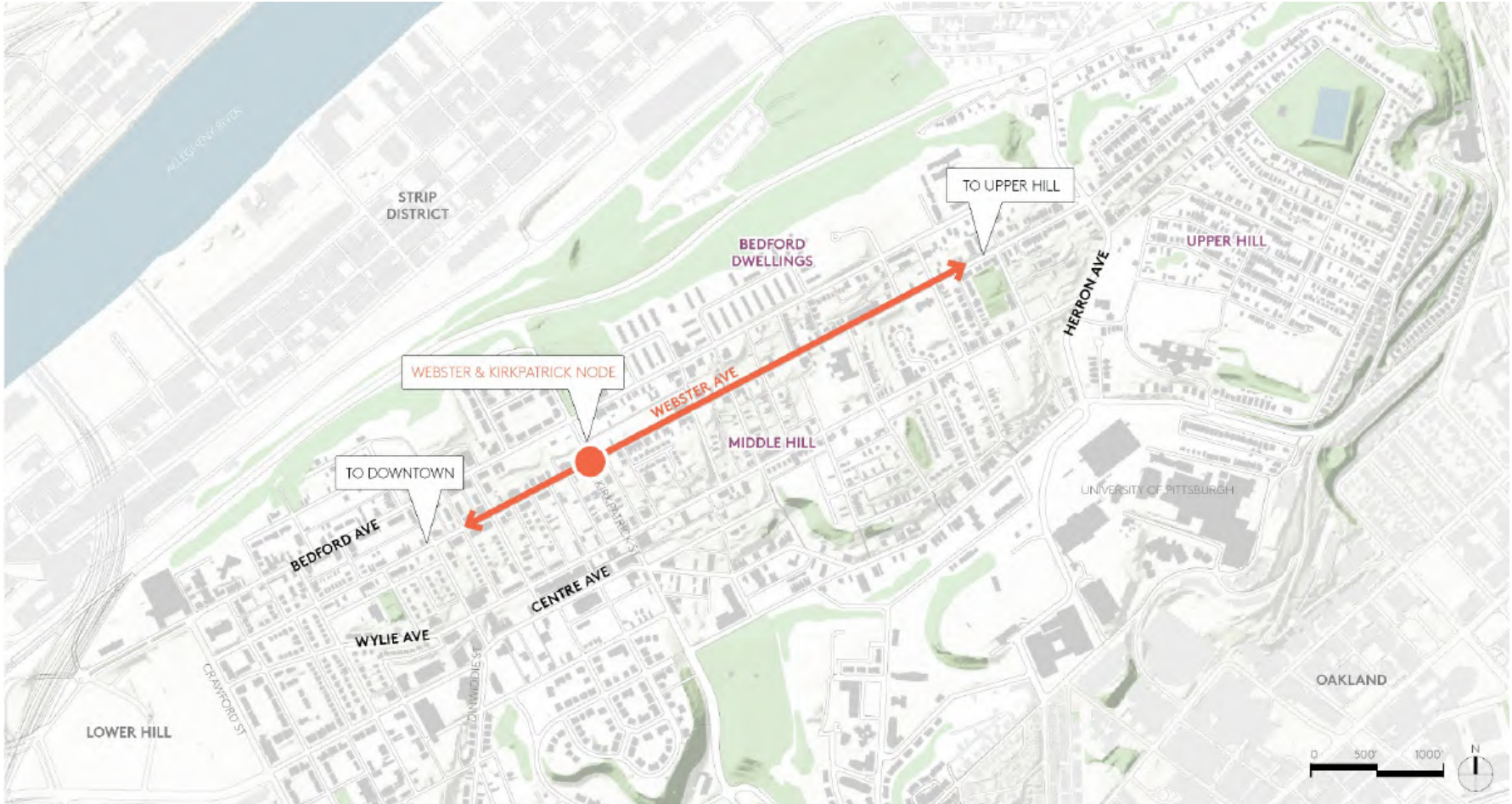
WEBSTER AVENUE - CORRIDOR STRATEGIES & KEY NODES

Table 1 and **Figure 16** provides a summary of key opportunities, barriers, and potential strategies to advance the Design Framework for Webster Avenue along the whole corridor.

Table 1. Summary of Webster Corridor-wide Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities	Barriers	Potential Strategies
Redevelop publicly owned vacant land as housing	Parcel assembly opportunities and site prep with mixed public and private ownership at Kirkpatrick and other nodes	Prioritizing sites for parcel assembly, zoning changes to support new housing, especially medium-density residential (co-ops, sixplex models)
Expand upon existing neighborhood-serving commercial at key nodes	Lack of lease-ready commercial and zoning restrictions	Zoning changes, financing strategies for commercial (home-based business flexibility, rehab of existing buildings for commercial)
Safe environment for pedestrians.	Funding and prioritization for improvements.	Improve streetscape with consistent sidewalks, improved lighting, and street trees to provide shade and tree canopy.
Establish opportunities for civic gathering along the corridor.	Resources to create civic gathering places.	Address open space needs and need for indoor gathering spaces.

Figure 14: Webster Avenue Nodes



Source: ECOnorthwest

Figure 15: Webster Avenue Existing Conditions

WEBSTER AVENUE



LAND USE MIX



VACANCY STATUS



PREVIOUS PLAN CONCEPTS

CONCEPT

- ① MIDDLE HILL RESIDENTIAL INFILL
- ② KIRKPATRICK STREET RECREATIONAL CORRIDOR
- ③ HERRON HILL PARK

SOURCE: GREEN PRINT 2009, HILL DISTRICT MASTER PLAN 2011

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT CONDITIONS

THE HILL DISTRICT CULTURAL LEGACY: HISTORIC BUSINESSES, COMMUNITY CENTERS, RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS, MUSIC INSTITUTIONS AND LANDMARKS



Source: EConorthwest

Figure 16: Webster Avenue Vision and Strategies



Source: EConorthwest

CORRIDOR-WIDE STRATEGIES FOR WEBSTER AVENUE

Many of the strategies for Webster can be applied throughout the corridor. Those strategies include:

- **Land assembly for housing:** The vacant land along Webster Avenue is a mix of privately owned and publicly owned parcels. In some cases, there are significant contiguous parcels owned by one entity with a single narrow parcel that is owned by another entity in the middle. Identifying and prioritizing these cases can highlight land swaps, strategic acquisitions, or other strategies to remove these obstacles to parcel assembly and development.
- **Zoning changes:** Missing middle housing types are an important tool for meeting the diverse needs for housing in the Hill District. Current zoning makes many of these housing types difficult to implement along Webster Avenue. Development standards such as minimum lot sizes, setbacks, and parking ratios can make it easier for individual developers to creatively deliver housing for a variety of income levels and tenure type.
- **Streetscape improvements:** Webster Avenue's sidewalks are generally narrow and often in poor repair. Improving the streetscape with uniform sidewalks, street trees, and lighting can encourage investment in new and rehab housing.
- **Crossroads investments:** Because of the residential character of much of Webster Avenue, crossroads with important connections like Chauncey Street and Kirkpatrick Street are important opportunities to differentiate from surrounding areas and provide amenities for the community. Examples of these amenities can include open space, neighborhood commercial, and public art.

WEBSTER/KIRKPATRICK NODE

Webster Avenue and Kirkpatrick is an important crossroad because of Kirkpatrick's role as a connector from Bedford Dwellings, commercial corridors at Wylie Avenue and Centre Avenue, and adjacent neighborhoods like Oakland. The intersection of Webster and Kirkpatrick has a mix of existing uses and potential opportunities for renovation projects. Active businesses include a bar called Jay's Lounge and the Teenie Harris Center, as well as a barber shop and laundromat nearby on Webster. Just downhill on Kirkpatrick, the street intersects with Centre at a cluster of institutions like the Carnegie Library, Central Baptist Church, and the future site of Sankofa Square. There are several vacant open parcels at this node, including one owned by the City of Pittsburgh and a large lot owned by Macedonia Baptist Church. The following

strategies can foster a more vibrant neighborhood hub:

- **Support neighborhood commercial:** Although Webster is unlikely to compete with Centre Avenue or other commercial corridors for major businesses, there is opportunity for smaller-scale neighborhood commercial businesses like corner convenience stores, restaurants, or local services. New development can look for opportunities to design ground floors with the flexibility to support small-scale commercial, and existing buildings with ground floor commercial can be prioritized for rehab or renovation to create lease-ready spaces.
- **Create a pocket park for neighborhood residents:** At the northeast corner of the intersection, there is a vacant parcel that is irregularly shaped and unlikely for development. This parcel, which is publicly owned, is well suited to become a small pocket park that gives residents a place for "quiet moments" to support mental well-being, as well as implementing green infrastructure. This pocket park will also activate adjacent properties and create an opportunity for public art or educational materials that celebrate the neighborhood's legacy.
- **Create a strategy for mixed parcel areas:** There are a series of parcels on the northwest corner of the intersection that are owned by a mix of institutions and public entities. Taken together, these parcels could become a key site for apartments with active ground floor uses. The relevant public property owners should begin a process to assess whether negotiating and assembling parcels for public or private development as a single larger site strategy is possible.
- **Make intersection improvements:** The Teenie Harris Community Center is an important civic anchor at this intersection. This civic identity can be extended into the intersection itself. Paint-based designs, new paving materials, and other streetscape improvements can make the intersection safer for pedestrians, draw attention to the cultural legacy of Teenie Harris, and encourage further investment at adjacent properties.

The previous sections highlight strategies that will most benefit two of the most important commercial corridors in Hill District. These efforts should focus on the following primary outcomes from investment in the neighborhood's commercial corridors should include:

- **Wealth building and sense of place:** Residential and commercial development should look for ways to build wealth and reinforce the unique identity for the Hill District community through small and culturally relevant business support as well as coordinated events and programs.

- **Mobility improvements:** Expanded pedestrian and cycling facilities, new transit connections, and active frontages along the corridor can connect Hill residents to regional jobs and opportunities, build demand for local businesses along Herron Avenue, and provide safe, equitable transportation choices.
- **New housing opportunities:** The housing needs for the Hill District are diverse, both in physical form and financial considerations. Traditional housing types in the Hill District, like duplexes and row houses, should be encouraged along with new housing types like sixplexes and triplexes that can provide more housing and wealth-building opportunities.

Goals, Policies, Strategies:

D10. Goal: A commercially viable and attractive experience should be created along Herron and the community's commercial corridors to benefit the Hill District and serve as connectors to neighboring communities.

- a. **Policy: Facilitate the streamlining of city funds and resources to reduce predevelopment cost burdens.** Since Herron Avenue has a large undermining overlay, environmental remediation costs can be very high. The City should facilitate funds that support predevelopment costs.

D10.1 Strategy – Targeted grant opportunities. Utilize federal and local funding to support developers with predevelopment costs for potential development along Herron Avenue. The City has previously used the Pittsburgh Infrastructure Grant for Center Avenue to provide funding sources to developers.

D10.2 Strategy – Technical support for local developers. Provide adequate staff time and other city resources to streamline permitting and other regulatory processes on Herron Avenue. Formalize connections between local partners and developers for navigating the development process.

D10.3 Strategy – Tailored community training for grant applications. Promote training opportunities for applying for all federal, state, regional and local grants that are relevant to environmental mitigation costs of sites. A grant application that presents the overall strategy for all land parcels will have a greater potential of winning competitive non-local grants. This would require a massing plus costs study of all projects proposed on Herron Avenue and the anticipated remediation costs for those sites.

- b. **Policy: Tailored disposition process for vacant land.** Prioritize revitalization of

vacant land along Herron Avenue using a strategic and organized disposition process.

D10.4 Strategy – Embedded community goals in land disposition RFQs. If URA considers soliciting developers for land disposition on Herron Avenue, those developers must be provided with details on available partnerships with community groups or methods to utilize existing community assets to strengthen the community ties of proposed projects to the existing community. For example, within the RFQ requirements, to enhance MBE participation rate of 30% and WBE rate of 15% consideration must be given to Hill District businesses in fulfilling these requirements.

D10.5 Strategy – Vacant land prioritization. In partnership with the Hill District land bank and community groups, a development prioritization plan should be created for parcels on Herron Avenue.

- c. **Policy: Commercial Space Along Corridors.** Offer set asides and a variety of spaces for Minority-Owned Businesses (MBE) and Hill District Businesses, and coordinate space with other resources such as financing and technical assistance.

D10.6 Strategy – Shared commercial space. New development along commercial corridors should encourage shared commercial spaces and small storefront areas compatible with a variety of uses such as retail, artisan manufacturing/workshops, restaurants, and services to encourage testing new ideas with lower operating costs.

- d. **Policy: Commercial set asides for Hill District businesses.** Prioritize revitalization of vacant land along Herron Avenue using a strategic and organized disposition process.

D10.7 Strategy – Incubator spaces. Develop incubation opportunities where entrepreneurs can access space alongside other resources such as financing and technical assistance through Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and local banks.

D10.8 Strategy – Financial incentives for commercial set asides. Provide financial incentives such as tax breaks and credits or reduced permit fees to developers that allocate commercial space to local businesses.





MOBILITY

Introduction.

A safe, integrated, convenient mobility network built around the needs of all users – and not only vehicles – is vital to the wellbeing of the Hill District community. Mobility plays a fundamental role in accessing basic needs like food and medical services, economic and educational opportunities, healthy recreation, and social, community, and cultural activities. Mobility for Hill District residents is a means to improve health, wellbeing, and self-sufficiency, and it also connects residents in shared public spaces and across distances.

The Mobility chapter delineates the goals, policies, and implementation strategies aimed at making it easier, safer, and more enjoyable to move around the Hill District and Greater Pittsburgh. The goals outlined in this chapter aim to address the challenges and stressors that the community have identified and strive to improve the transit experience, enhance pedestrian and bicycle circulation, improve accessibility, and manage parking demand. Additionally, the strategies seek to engage stakeholders and decisionmakers of the Hill District in addressing the most pressing mobility challenges in the community. This updated chapter also draws on other previous plan recommendations, input from community engagement during the 2020-2022 GHDMP planning process, and a 2020-2022 Hill District Transportation Study (Appendix D). The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant disruption to normal travel patterns. However, unless noted, the data presented in the Mobility chapter are from periods before or directly after the COVID-19 pandemic and are intended to represent non-pandemic travel patterns.

mobility challenges for residents and visitors. As the name suggests, the Hill District is comprised of several large and steep hills. The topography makes it difficult for people of all ages and abilities to navigate between the six neighborhoods and limits access to adjacent neighborhoods such as the Strip District, Polish Hill, and Oakland. Throughout the Hill District, many sidewalks and city steps that provide key pedestrian connections are in poor condition, and there are no dedicated bicycle facilities. The neighborhood is bounded by high-speed and high-volume roadways such as Bigelow Boulevard to the north and Fifth Avenue to the south. To the west, it is bounded by I-579, a result of highway construction policies of decades past that exacerbated racial segregation. For Hill District residents, improving connectivity is a matter of reversing systemic inequities.

The primary neighborhood access points to the Hill District include Dinwiddie Street, Bedford Avenue, Washington Place, Crawford Street, Kirkpatrick Street, and Herron Avenue. These streets serve as gateways that carry people to and from the Hill District. Bigelow Boulevard provides access to the Hill District from other neighborhoods. Herron Avenue, Centre Avenue, Kirkpatrick Street, Dinwiddie Street, and Crawford Street serve as the main neighborhood connector streets that facilitate vehicle and transit movement throughout the Hill District.

Transportation infrastructure projects in the Hill District should account for its unique geography and begin with the needs of pedestrians and vulnerable users. Nearly everyone at some point in their trip is a pedestrian. A safe, well-connected network of accessible sidewalks, steps, streetscapes, and bicycle paths serves the entire community and expands mobility options beyond private vehicles. Mobility services and technologies – ranging from traditional modes like public transit to new forms of

micro mobility and electric-assist bike share – can also play a big part in transforming and expanding mobility options, when implemented equitably and strategically, and thought through carefully at a system-wide level. This Plan outlines thoughtful strategies aligned with the approach above, while also exploring ways to manage parking and identifying additional elements for further parking study.

Mobility is linked closely to the other Plan chapters and is intended to work hand in hand with them in a systematic way. For example, the economic growth of the Hill District's commercial corridors relates in part to creating vibrant, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes reflective of the Hill District's unique living legacy. Finding an affordable home goes hand in hand with having access to a mobility system where transit and mobility routes are intentionally located near multi-unit residential buildings and affordable housing, also known as Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). Redeveloping vacant lots can create new eyes on the street and more chances to encounter one's neighbors, but also more people and goods moving around the neighborhood and relying on a healthy mobility system.

The Mobility Chapter is dedicated to outlining goals, policies, and strategies that reflect the community's needs and values. While some policies and strategies target specific geographic areas, others are designed as programs that encompass the entire Hill District.

Vision Statement.

The Hill District will have an improved mobility and transportation network that better connects residents to jobs, services, and amenities, creates a destination that is accessible for all, and aligns with the community's culture and legacy.

Plan Topics.

TRANSIT SERVICE AND STATIONS:

Background:

The Hill District generates resident and visitor trips with its mix of residential and commercial uses. Transit is a crucial mode of travel for many people who live and work in the Hill District, serving as a reliable, affordable, and safe transportation option. However, the Hill District transit ridership is lower than some of its surrounding neighborhoods. Fewer employment destinations within the Hill are one of the main reasons for lower ridership in the Hill District than in Downtown and Oakland. Transit service through the Hill District primarily uses Centre Avenue and Bedford Avenue as the main corridors. The steep terrain, gaps in the sidewalk network, and varying conditions of city steps present challenges for residents to walk to Centre Avenue and access the bus routes.

According to PRT's Fall 2020 Bus System map, ten bus routes travel through the Hill District; however, only Routes 81, 82, and 83 provide direct service in the neighborhood. The remaining bus routes travel along the periphery of the neighborhood and are not easily accessible for most Hill District residents because of distance and topography. A summary of the three main neighborhood routes and typical headways is provided in Table 2 and Figure 17. PRT is currently undergoing a redesign of its entire bus network to better fit the needs and new travel patterns of riders. The primary goals of the redesign are to 1) Improve service quality and reliability, 2) Prioritize equitable service, and 3) Expand transit connections. The revised network and final plan is anticipated

to be released in Spring 2025. This redesign could impact the Hill District as Route 81 could be realigned to incorporate a new route that would connect neighborhoods to the north and south.

Table 2: Summary of Bus Routes that Serve the Hill District

Route	Route Name	Route	Service	Peak Weekday
81	Oak Hill	Local	Daily	35 min
82	Lincoln	Local	Daily	20 min
83	Bedford Hill	Local	Daily	25 min

Access to Transit

Transit service is provided throughout most of the Hill District neighborhood; however, there are still pockets with limited transit access. Due to the steep terrain in the Hill District, even a short walk may be challenging for some residents. The standard Federal Highway Administration's consideration that most people are willing to walk ¼- to ½-mile to a transit stop does not take into consideration Hill District's steep slope challenges. Residents of Bedford Dwellings and those living near Chauncey Street must navigate city steps to directly access bus stops along Centre Avenue. Additionally, steep slope challenges persist in other locations, such as on Morgan Street and Junilla Streets in the Middle Hill.

Transit Stop Amenities

Lower transit ridership in the Hill District has prompted the City and Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT) to provide basic bus stop amenities in most bus stops, as described in **Figure 18**. The required and recommended amenities vary based on the type of bus stop. The majority of bus stops are City-owned, with a handful of stops owned by PRT, leading to a variety of conditions for passengers waiting at bus stops in the neighborhood. PRT categorizes bus stops into four main types: basic bus stop, bench stop, shelter stop, and station. The type of bus stop recommended is primarily decided based on ridership and physical space. In general, a basic bus stop is appropriate for stops with fewer than ten daily boardings. A bench stop is recommended for 10 to 30 daily boardings, and a shelter stop is recommended for bus stops with more than 30 daily boardings. Station stops are associated with rapid routes and the future BRT.

Figure 17: Existing Transit Service



Figure 18: Bus Stop Amenity Matrix

AMENITY MATRIX	Sign	Pad	Sidewalk	Bench	Trash	Shelter	Light	Blue Rack	Route Info	System Info	Ticket Vending	Real-Time Sign
BASIC	✓	✓	✓									
BENCH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
SHELTER	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

- Basic Requirement ✓ - Recommended Amenity

Source: Pittsburgh Regional Transit Bus Stop and Street Design Guidelines

Figure 19 displays a basic bus stop that has the recommended amenities based on the matrix in Figure 9. The bus stop includes a blue "Bus Stop" sign but does not provide any seating or indicate which routes the bus stop services.

Figure 19: Basic Bus Stop on Bedford Avenue and Roberts Street



Source (Google Streetview)

Neighborhood and area plans, such as the Bedford Connects Transportation Plan, list several transit

recommendations, including bus shelter improvements at key locations like the Bedford Dwellings Hope Center, and rerouting bus route #83 to provide more direct and frequent service between Bedford Dwellings and commercial destinations. The Bedford Connects Plan calls for rerouting the #83 to extend down Dinwiddie Street into the Fifth-Forbes corridor.

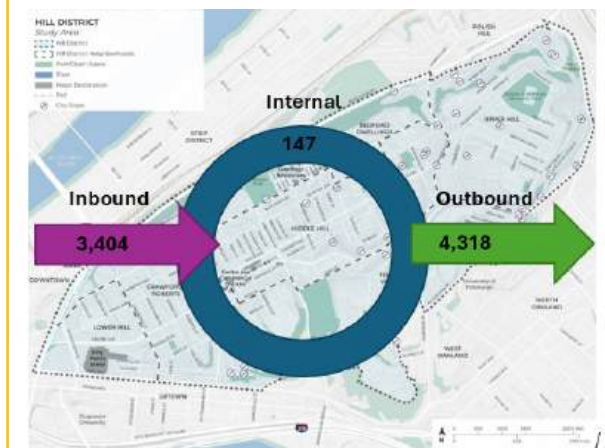
At the edge of the Hill District, along Fifth Ave and Forbes Ave, PRT and the City is pursuing construction of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, which will enhance a vital east-west connection between Downtown Pittsburgh and the Uptown, Oakland, and East End neighborhoods. It will include five planned stations along Fifth Ave that will provide connections to north-south streets to access the Hill District: at Washington Place, at Pride Street/Crawford Street, at Dinwiddie Street, at Jumonville Street/Wyandotte Street, and at Kirkpatrick Street. The stations will incorporate amenities, including shelters, seating, real-time signs, ticket vending and validations, and emergency call buttons. The 2011 Greater Hill District Master Plan recognized the potential benefits of improving connectivity between the Hill District and Uptown considering BRT, and traffic calming and streetscape improvements in this Plan align with many of the 2011 Plan's recommendations.

Commute to Work

The commute patterns of Hill District residents and employees shows that improving transit access to employment centers within the neighborhood and transit access from the neighborhood to employment centers in Downtown, Uptown, and Oakland will drastically benefit residents and employees of the neighborhood. Community surveys and transit studies of residents reveals that public transit network and alternative travel modes play a key role in the lives of

many Hill District residents. Census Bureau data from Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) was used to evaluate commute patterns to, from, and through the Hill District. The inflow and outflow of the neighborhood's employees and residents were assessed to understand commute patterns in the area and is shown in Figure 20. LEHD shows that approximately 4,300 residents work outside of the Hill District limits, and approximately 3,400 employees commute into the neighborhood for work. Approximately 150 people both live and work within the neighborhood.

Figure 20: LEHD Inflow and Outflow of Jobs



Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD)

Inbound Commutes (Employees)

According to 2018 data, of employees who work in the Hill District, 63% (2,260 people) live less than 10 miles from their Hill District job location. Many employees who work in the Hill District but live outside

the neighborhood live in adjacent neighborhoods, including Downtown, the Strip District, Uptown, and Oakland. A concentration of Hill District employees live northeast of the Hill District, in the neighborhoods of Lawrenceville, Bloomfield, and Garfield. Additionally, a large number of employees commute into the neighborhood from neighborhoods in the South Hills, including Allentown, Knoxville, Beltzhoover, and Mt. Oliver.

The data does not provide insight into the commute modes taken by employees. However, PRT transit service provides connectivity from these neighborhoods to the Hill District via Routes 81, 82, and 83.

Outbound Commutes (Residents)

According to 2018 data, 79% (3,541 people) of residents who live in the Hill District but work outside of the Hill District work less than 10 miles from their Hill District residence, 10% (439 people) work 10-24 miles away, 2% (99 people) work 25-50 miles away, and 9% (386 people) work over 50 miles away. Most Hill District residents work in Downtown, Uptown, and Oakland. Major employment in these areas includes Pitt, Duquesne University, UPMC, Carnegie Mellon University, PennDOT, and Highmark Headquarters, among various other major employers in Downtown. Almost 80% of Hill District residents commute less than 10 miles to work.

A survey of Bedford Dwellings residents during the 2018 Bedford Connects Transformation Plan asked residents “how often do you use the following types of transportation,” resulting in about 300 respondents sharing which modes they used “often.” Approximately 65% use the bus often, 49% walk often, 32% often get a ride from someone else, 32% use a jitney, and 14% use their own vehicle/car.

Gaps & Best Practices

The above information reveals that the public transit network and alternative travel modes play a key role in the lives of many Hill District residents.

Opportunities that could improve transit service and amenities, including the following:

- Focus transit shelter improvements on Centre Avenue where existing amenities do not align with required and recommended amenities outlined in the PRT Bus Stop and Street Design Guidelines, and where ongoing community feedback recommend improvements.
- Explore Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies to decrease dependency on single-occupancy vehicles.
- Encourage carpooling, vanpooling, and transit commute trips into the Hill District.

Enhancing the existing public transit and transportation network will encourage visitors, improve connectivity and access, and create more comfortable conditions for all transportation users.

Goals, Policies, Strategies:

M1. Goal: Transit connections to surrounding areas, accessibility, affordability, and efficiency are prioritized to strengthen transit’s role in overcoming systemic inequities.

- a. **Policy: Support well-informed decision-making.** Decisions about public transit service should incorporate data-driven approaches to equity that are clearly communicated to and understandable by the public

M1.1 Strategy – PRT Bus Line Redesign audit. Conduct a thorough review of the effectiveness

of the PRT Bus Line Redesign and recommend potential changes based on data collection and community feedback.

- b. **Policy: Facilitate equitable access to public transit.** Through a combination of public and private initiatives and outreach efforts, residents, employees, and visitors should be able to access public transit services, regardless of their income level.

M1.2 Strategy – Discount transit passes. Create a program that allows employers, developers, and other organizations to make transit pass purchases at a discount.
- c. **Policy – Improve neighborhood connections to public transit.** All people are within a five-minute walk or roll of local transit service and/or a 10-minute non-auto connection to rapid transit service. Topography, rider age, and other relevant factors are considered as part of improving access.

M1.3 Strategy – Transit connections. Implement PRT’s NEXTransit Project G, connecting the Hill District with the Strip District, Oakland, Hazelwood, and Carrick through new public transit service.

- d. **Policy – Reduce single-occupant vehicle trips.** All employers, venues, and attractions use transportation demand management practices to reduce single-occupant vehicle trips and associated impacts, such as incentivizing the use of public transit, walking, cycling, and carpooling.

M1.4 Strategy – Transportation demand management program. Develop a comprehensive strategy that brings together all relevant agencies, institutions, and non-profit partners to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips and congestion in the Hill District. This should include incentives

programs at institutions and major employers, updated City policies and regulations for development, a program to more efficiently utilize existing parking facilities, and informational campaigns for those coming into the Hill District as well as new and existing residents.

M2. Goal: Transit stops and station areas are attractive hubs of activity and buses provide the safest, most comfortable, and enjoyable way to get where you're going.

e. Policy – Improve the transit rider experience.

Ensure well-used bus stops have appropriate amenities for riders and meet PRT design guidelines for safety and accessibility.

M2.1 Strategy – Improve the transit rider experience. Improve transit users' access, comfort and mobility when taking transit by including weather protection, lighting, art, green features, signage, bike parking, and safe multimodal connections, in addition to minimum bus stop features, where appropriate, based on prioritization criteria. Ensure that bus stops are accessible via well-marked crosswalks and well-maintained sidewalks.

M2.2 Strategy – Safe and accessible bus stops. All bus stops meet PRT design guidelines for safety and accessibility. Additional amenities above the guidelines are incorporated at well-used bus stops.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS, SAFETY, CIRCULATION:

Background:

The Hill District is often not easy for people walking and biking. The neighborhood comprises several hills and streets that connect through the neighborhood to other parts of Pittsburgh, especially Downtown. Previous plans and engagement indicate challenges for walkability and concerns around access to key destinations such as the commercial corridor on Centre Avenue. Additionally, gaps in or poor condition of the sidewalk and bike networks, a lack of adequate sidewalks and bike facilities, deteriorating city steps, and confusing intersections contribute to concerns regarding safety and mobility. Key challenges regarding safety, walkability, and biking are summarized in **Figure 21**.

Travel between the Hill District and its surrounding neighborhoods is limited by numerous physical barriers, including high speed roadways around its edge. The neighborhood is bounded by high-speed and high-volume roadways such as Bigelow Boulevard to the north and Fifth Avenue to the south. To the west leading to Downtown, it is bounded by I-579, a result of highway construction policies of decades past that exacerbated racial segregation. More recently, this connection has been partially reestablished with the construction of the new I-579 Cap Urban Connector Project (the Cap Project) structure spanning over a portion of I-579 Crosstown Boulevard, bounded by Washington Place, Centre Avenue, Chatham Street, Bigelow Boulevard, and land to the north of Bigelow Boulevard. This Cap includes public open space with accessible pedestrian pathways and bicycle routes, among other improvements. The greatest demand for connectivity

is between the Hill District and Downtown Pittsburgh, west of the Hill District neighborhood.

Walking is an essential mode of transportation for people who live in the Hill District. However, topographic challenges of steep slopes that make street parking difficult (sometimes causing cars to park on sidewalks and creating obstacles for pedestrians), lack of cohesive multimodal network, sidewalk conditions, lack of strategic pedestrian connections, need for streetscapes, and critical gaps in existing sidewalk network are important obstacles that need attention to improve the walking experience in the neighborhood.

Centre Avenue is the heart of the Hill District and serves as the neighborhood's primary retail and cultural spine, with attractors such as the Carnegie Library, the Thelma Lovette YMCA, an incoming grocery store, apartments, Hill House, and places of worship. In some locations along Centre Ave, street trees, high visibility pedestrian signage, wide sidewalks, bus stop infrastructure, and parklets, are in place. However, challenges to realizing Centre Avenue's full potential include steep slopes that make street parking a challenge and a lack of a cohesive multimodal network.

Walkability challenges are especially pronounced in the north-south direction. The steep hills make it difficult for Middle Hill residents along Bedford Avenue and other streets to access neighborhood amenities and transit along Centre Avenue, a concern reiterated consistently in past planning and ongoing engagement efforts. Sidewalk improvements and reconstruction of the Chauncey Street Steps would help improve access. Previous plans identified this issue and recommended improvements to city steps to create better pedestrian connections.

The steep topography limits connections between the Hill District and the Strip District. However, Bedford

Figure 21: Safety and Active Transportation Summary Map



Source: Hill District Transportation Study

Avenue, Webster Avenue, and Wylie Avenue serve as east-west connections that traverse the neighborhood and provide Downtown connections. The 2011 Greater Hill District Master Plan called for streetscape and walkability improvements to Bedford Avenue as well as improvements highlighting the neighborhood's views to the north. This Plan also recommends similar measures.

Figure 22 shows the existing sidewalk network and critical gaps. Many of the local north-south streets only have sidewalks present on one side of the street. There are also gaps in the sidewalk network located primarily on east-west streets such as Bedford Avenue, Wylie Avenue, Webster Avenue, Centre Avenue, Elmore Street, Rose Street (from YMCA to Skyline Terrace), and Reed Street.

In addition to gaps in the sidewalk network and the steep grade, other conditions, including cars parked on sidewalks and a lack of ADA-compliant curb ramps, present challenges for people to use the pedestrian network and access destinations by walking. Due to a perception of a lack of parking and narrow streets, there is a persistent problem of people parking their vehicles on the curb and sidewalk. These parked vehicles restrict sidewalk access for people walking by.

An essential feature of the City's pedestrian network in Pittsburgh is the system of public city steps. Due in part to hilly terrain, most local streets have limited connections to collector and arterial streets. For instance, Reed Street is disconnected west of the Kennard Playground on Kirkpatrick Street. Disconnected streets require people walking and biking to take more circuitous routes.

The City's stairs play a crucial role in helping people traverse the hilly terrain throughout the city. Unfortunately, most of the city steps are aging and in

need of repair or, in some cases, reconstruction. The City's 2019 City Steps Plan initiated a plan to evaluate the condition, need for these steps to still provide critical connections, and populations served to help prioritize future investment. As part of the prioritization process, the City assessed each set of city steps and assigned a score based on relative usefulness. The score includes nearby population and demographics metrics, if other city steps are nearby, and proximity to schools and transit riders. The higher the score, the higher the priority. Most of the steps prioritized for investment in the Hill District are in the Middle Hill and serve as important connectors to Centre Avenue.

Gaps & Best Practices

While steep hills will always be a part of the Hill District context, there are measures that can be taken to improve walkability and address the challenges described above. Previous plans identified several corridors for pedestrian improvements, listed below. Many of these are similar to the improvements recommended in this plan.

Goals, Policies, Strategies:

M3. Goal: The Hill District should be a walkable neighborhood where pedestrians can reach destinations conveniently, comfortably, and safely, while enjoying streetscapes that support social interaction.

- a. Policy: Create spaces for community activities.** Repurpose portions of streets and intersections to create plazas and open space for community activities, micromobility hubs (defined in the Hill District Transportation Study), green infrastructure, leisure, and commerce.

M3.1 Strategy – Mobility hub at Chauncey and Centre. Widen the sidewalk at Chauncey and Centre and add a mobility hub. Explore the possible conversion of the parking area to green infrastructure and/or to a public plaza space.

M3.2 Strategy – Play Streets. Coordinate with Citiparks to create "play streets" as temporary open spaces for youth to play and socialize. A play street occurs on a local street that is closed to traffic for specific hours on a regular basis.

M3.3 Strategy – Chauncey shared street. Create a shared street on Chauncey Street from Webster Avenue to Bedford Avenue.

- b. Policy: Enhance pedestrian infrastructure.** Ensure pedestrian access in the right of way to all residences, businesses, and other destinations. Work with property owners and other agencies to prioritize pedestrian improvements that meet residents' travel needs and patterns.

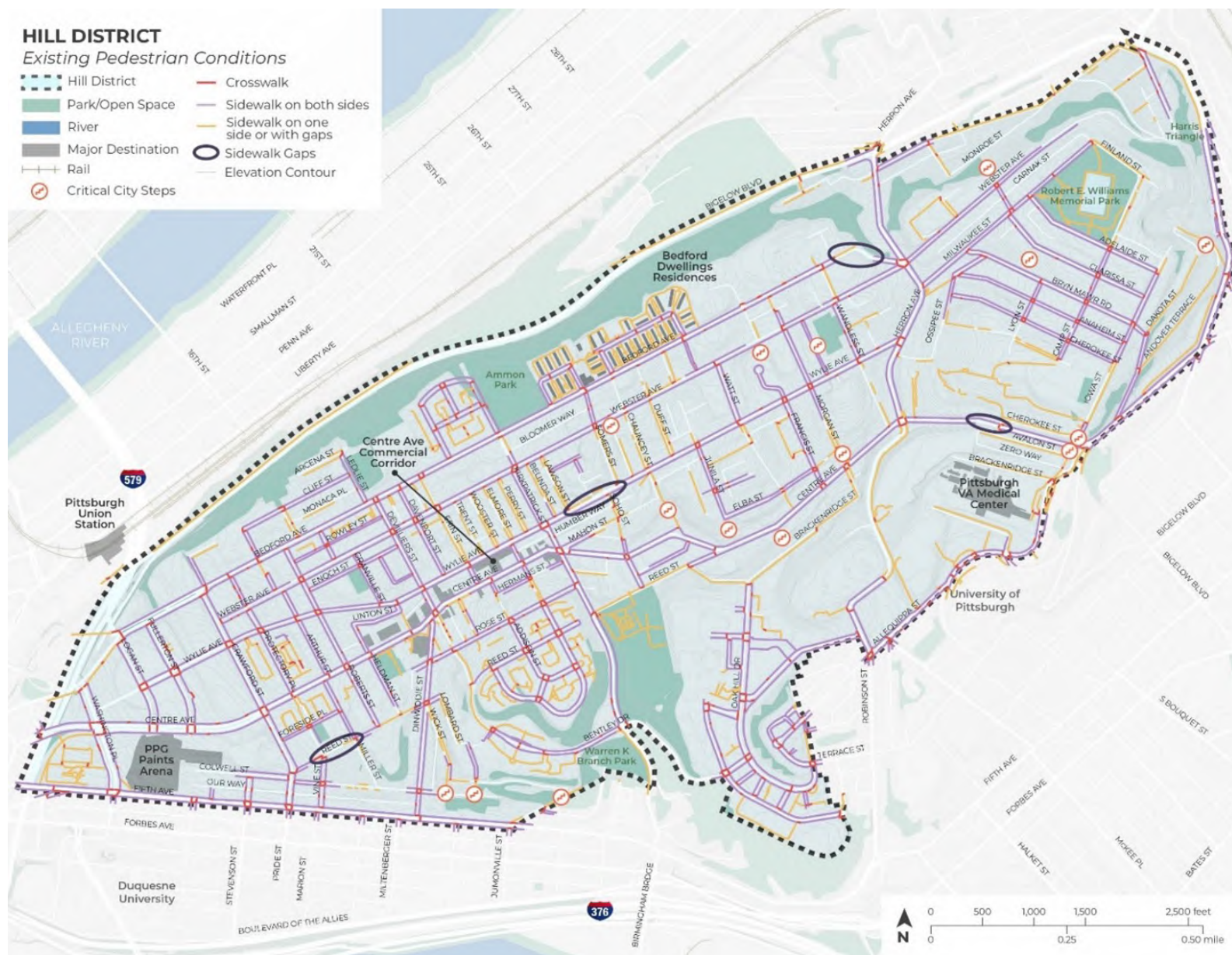
M3.4 Strategy – Accountable maintenance of pedestrian infrastructure. Develop policy and educate staff at the Department of Mobility and Infrastructure, Permit, Licensing, and Inspections and 311 to improve enforcement of sidewalk conditions for large commercial property owners.

- c. Policy: Create safe sidewalks.** Sidewalks are appropriately sized, complete, maintained, and clear of obstructions.

M3.5 Strategy – Prioritize removal of obstructions. Identify and rank pedestrian route segments for snow removal. Coordinate City crews with volunteers and homeowners to clear during weather events.

M3.6 Strategy – Sidewalk repair program. Study

Figure 22: Existing Sidewalk Network



Source: Hill District Transportation Study



the creation of a program that efficiently addresses urgent sidewalk repairs, with a minimum cost burden to qualifying homeowners and property owners.

- d. **Policy: Increase safety and accessibility along pedestrian routes.** Pedestrian routes offer safe, convenient, seamless, and accessible travel connections to key destinations.

M3.7 Strategy – Kennard pedestrian connection. Create a pedestrian connection from the dead end on Reed Street down to the intersection of Reed and Kirkpatrick. Explore additional trail connections down Kirkpatrick.

M3.8 Strategy – Kirkpatrick and Reed intersection improvements. Install pedestrian and traffic safety improvements at the intersection of Kirkpatrick and Reed. Study converting Kennard Playground's parking lot to green space, a mobility hub, and relocating parking elsewhere.

M3.9 Strategy - Lighting improvements. Inventory, rank and install lighting improvements to improve safety.

M3.10 Strategy – Coal Seam Trail. Use the Coal Seam Trail to create a connected network of green spaces along the northern ridge. Provide public access between Bedford Avenue and the trail at strategic locations. Explore the potential to make this trail a shared use path for both pedestrians and cyclists.

- e. **Policy: Create a seamless network of connected sidewalks.** Sidewalks form an interconnected network that provide pedestrians multiple options to reach their destinations despite steep slopes or other obstacles.

M3.11 Strategy – Sidewalk inventory program.

Create a program to inventory, rank, and install sidewalk and accessibility improvements and remove pedestrian obstructions. Coordinate with residents, stakeholders, and the disability community.

M3.12 Strategy – Chauncey Street Sidewalk Improvements. Fill in sidewalk gaps on Chauncey Street between Mahon Street and Webster Street.

- f. **Policy: Prioritize the maintenance of public owned steps.** The City's publicly owned steps are regularly monitored, maintained, and repaired, and are designed to accommodate bicycles.

M3.13 Strategy – Chauncey Street Public Steps Improvements. Complete the reconstruction and improve the Chauncey Street Steps as outlined in the Bedford Dwellings Transformation Plan.

ACCESSIBILITY:

Background:

An accessible mobility network is most often understood to mean it is physically accessible. It also is a network with minimal barriers of any kind and which community members can play an active role in shaping and improving. **In the Hill District, gaps in the sidewalk network, constrained sidewalk width, steep grade, cars parked on sidewalks and a lack of ADA-compliant curb ramps, present major accessibility challenges for people, especially seniors and people with disabilities, to use the pedestrian network and access destinations by walking.** Since walking is an essential mode of transportation for people who live in the Hill District, a key goal should be to create an environment where choosing alternative travel modes is more desirable.

Due to a perception of a lack of parking and narrow

streets, there is a persistent problem of people parking their vehicles on the curb and sidewalk. These parked vehicles restrict sidewalk access for people walking by. Many intersections do not appear to have ADA-compliant ramps, and some intersections have compliant ramps but no sidewalk connecting to the sidewalk network. **Figure 23** shows an example of a steep road with no sidewalk on Chauncey Street. Chauncey Street serves as an important north-south connection between the residences in Bedford Dwellings and Centre Avenue. Avenue and Wylie Avenue, and Centre Avenue.

Figure 23: Missing Sidewalk on Chauncey Street



Residents shared comments that **many sidewalks are not wheelchair accessible and so people in mobility devices sometimes are forced to travel into the roadway, exposing themselves to greater conflicts with vehicles.** One related and frequent challenge is constrained sidewalk width. The 2015 Centre Ave Redevelopment and Design Plan calls for widening the Centre Ave sidewalk area in certain locations.

The challenges of narrow sidewalks impact not only people using a wheelchair or with visual disabilities, but people walking with strollers, grocery carts, suitcases, young children, or other items. Thus, a wide variety of the Hill District's community members endure inequitable constraints to mobility where sidewalks are obstructed.

Some examples of sidewalk obstructions include utility and sign poles, traffic signal boxes, building entrance steps, overgrown vegetation, uneven sidewalk paving, trash cans, and building construction scaffolding. These issues are compounded when there are multiple obstructions in a single location.

Besides width constraints, **curb cuts for driveways or parking lots make sidewalks challenging or unwelcoming in places due to steeper cross-slopes**, vulnerability to crossing vehicles, and parked vehicles protruding into the sidewalk.

Sidewalk slope is another important factor in accessibility, and the Hill District's street slopes are visualized in **Figure 24**. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, only slopes up to 5% are fully accessible without additional facilities. Slopes of 5 to 8.33% may be made accessible with railings and other features, and slopes over 8.33% are not accessible. Several Hill District streets are steep enough to not be accessible. The plan does not propose significant changes to street slope (apart from small-scale changes that can achieve accessibility), as that is not easily changed in most locations. However, steep slope locations adjacent to community destinations and areas with high pedestrian volumes should be evaluated over time for additional infrastructure improvements that will improve the access and mobility of all pedestrians.

Historic patterns of design and investment favoring private vehicles and current land use patterns tend

to discourage alternative travel modes. This Plan outlines thoughtful approaches to managing parking and additional elements for further parking study. Cars may be a choice of convenience by some for getting around. Others may face significant mobility challenges when juggling multiple jobs, overnight shifts, childcare, eldercare, and other commitments. Public transit services face constraints due to the limited population density of the Hill District. Not all mobility options can reach residents' varied and sometimes distant destinations quickly and safely at all hours. A key goal should be to create an environment where choosing alternative travel modes is more desirable. Car-sharing and ride-sharing options can also be a complement to these alternative travel modes and are an important component of Transportation Demand Management programs. Additionally, mobility projects and programs cannot work in isolation; this Plan's Development chapter seeks to address some of the land use components of this challenge.

In the Hill District, a relatively smaller percentage of residents own vehicles compared to the city overall. If we design solely around private vehicles, that puts the pressure on residents to own or buy cars, which is a significant economic cost, and is especially burdensome and often out of reach to low-income community members. For those residents who do not use cars and rely on walking, public transportation, or other methods of travel, policies that further private vehicle use increase safety hazards on the road. Everyone also faces the effects of car pollution and congestion. Instead, designing around people first, especially vulnerable users like pedestrians, transit-dependent users, seniors, people with disabilities, and families with young children in strollers, has a stronger potential to result in a more accessible and inviting public realm for all.

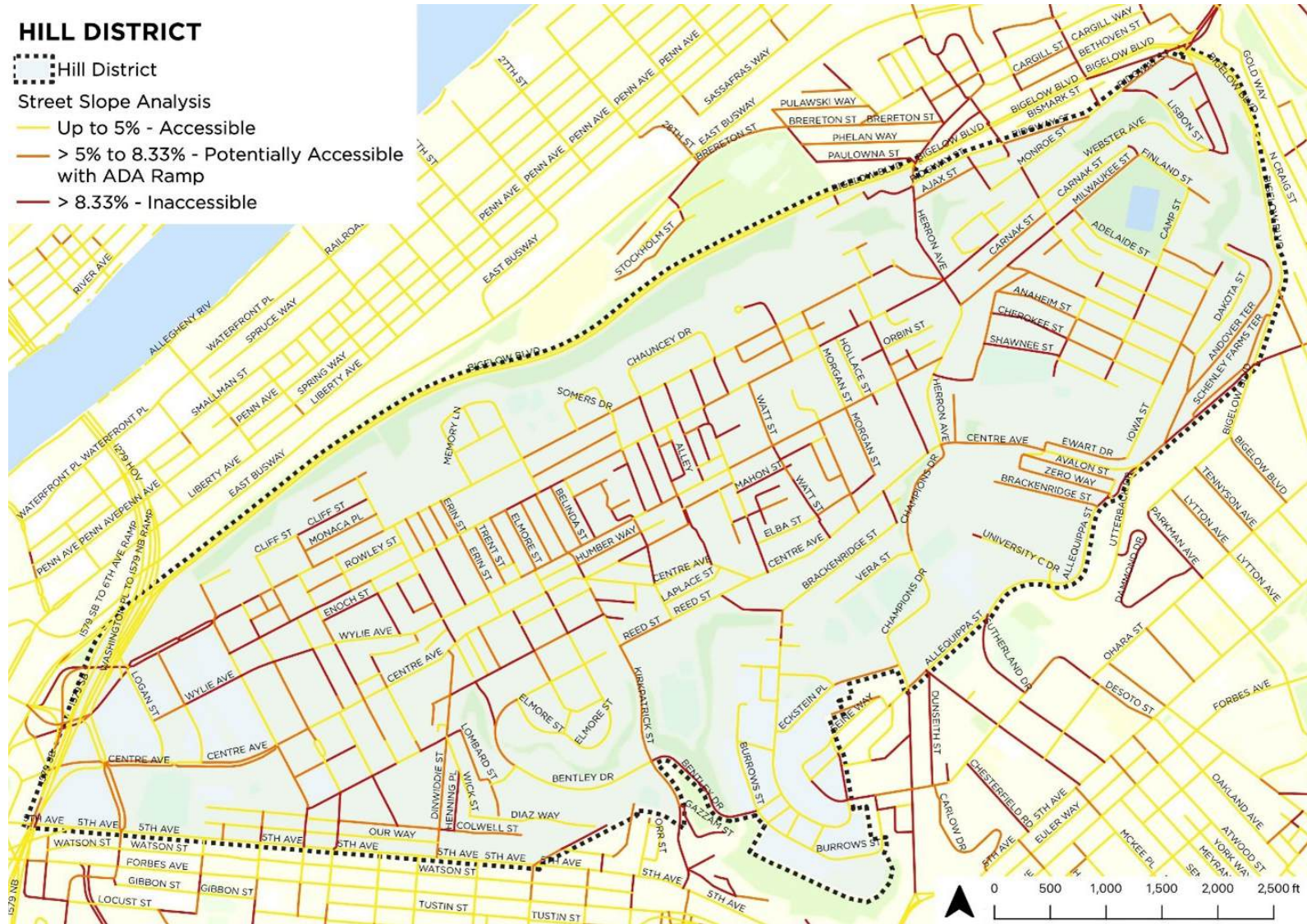
Gaps & Best Practices

To address the significant gaps in physical accessibility described above, remedial action is necessary from multiple stakeholders, including the City, property owners, and others. **A minimum 2.5-foot accessible sidewalk width is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). However, providing a four- to five-foot clear passage is essential for pedestrians to comfortably pass each other or walk abreast.**

As a best practice, it is preferable in corridors that are urban mixed-use for sidewalks to measure at least ten to sixteen feet along streets to allow eight feet of clear pedestrian width in addition to space for street trees, utility poles, bus waiting areas, bikeshare stations, benches, and other amenities. This width is generally not possible in the Hill District due to buildings or other constraints on development parcels, and the limited width of most rights-of-way, meaning that opportunities to reduce obstructions within existing sidewalks are especially important.

Funding and undertaking a comprehensive inventory is an important step to identify all hazardous and challenging pedestrian accessibility conditions, and enable a coordinated, efficient response. After the sidewalk and ADA ramp inventory is complete, the facilities in poor condition should be mapped and assigned a priority level for making improvements. Remedies and implementers would depend on the given location and issue, and may involve installing ADA curb ramps, repairing a sidewalk, a property owner moving a trash can or obstacle, adjusting a signal box that is blocking sidewalk passage, relocating/consolidating utility poles when opportunities arise, or during site redevelopment removing excessive curb cuts or removing/reconfiguring steps protruding into the sidewalk. The inventory should be reviewed by the City

Figure 24: Street Slopes in the Hill District



and interested stakeholders and residents on a recurring basis to determine which high priority locations can be addressed with available funding. Innovative opportunities should also be explored to provide funding to support low-income property owners in sidewalk repair.

Special attention should be paid to the following areas:

- Existing conditions that frequently cause pedestrians to divert into vehicle travel lanes where they are particularly exposed to danger.
- Sidewalk segments near bus stops, Pittsburgh Bikeshare stations, and mobility hubs.
- Sidewalk segments in the vicinity of neighborhood activity nodes, such as parks/recreation centers, schools, libraries, community centers, and commercial areas.
- Those readily improved by enforcement of existing requirements of property owners, utility providers or other stakeholders.
- Segments adjoining redevelopment sites where improvements may be required for permitting and incorporated into site design.
- Segments where other utility or street infrastructure projects are planned and can accommodate related sidewalk improvements.

In addition to the recommendations for physical accessibility improvements noted above, organizing a community-based transportation advocacy group would serve the Hill District in the long-run, and would help to ensure mobility projects are implemented in a manner reflective of community priorities.

Goals, Policies, Strategies:

M4. Goal - The Hill District's mobility network and its built environment are accessible to people of all ages, abilities, races, and income levels.

- a. Policy: Prioritize ADA improvements.** Collaborate with residents and the disability community to identify and implement priority ADA improvements along sidewalks and streetscapes. In cases where topography precludes full compliance, design to maximize accessibility.

M4.1 Strategy – Transportation advocacy. Identify a local community-based group or organization or collective of residents to champion mobility improvements throughout the Hill District and support implementation of proposed projects, programs, and policies.

M4.2 Strategy – Dedicated disability parking space expansion. As a part of larger neighborhood-wide parking program, convert existing spaces to accessible parking in high demand areas.

- b. Policy: Expand digital access to improve mobility services.** Work partner organizations expand residents' digital access to mobility services and trip planning information. Reduce barriers to accessing such services.

M4.3 Strategy – Hill District travel data collection. Periodically collect data on Hill District travel patterns to guide decision-making on public and private investments regarding mobility. Data is disaggregated by key demographic indicators, including race, income, age, ability, and more.

- c. Policy: Reduce barriers to mobility modes.** Design mobility programs and mobility projects to minimize barriers of access to different mobility modes.

M4.4 Strategy – Mobility rituals. Consider starting or restarting community mobility rituals and recreational activities in the Hill District.

M4.5 Strategy – Micro-mobility access. Install micro-mobility hubs and charging stations, taking into consideration factors such as bus stops, topography, one-way trips, and community input. Ensure the micro-mobility equipment is accessible to all users and implement discount and alternative payment programs to reduce participation barriers. Additionally, enhance unbiased, reward-based enforcement mechanisms to improve compliance with scooter parking requirements.

TRAFFIC SAFETY:

Background:

Street Characteristics:

The Hill District has relatively low traffic volumes overall. However, the condition of the street network in the neighborhood makes traffic safety an issue. The Hill District contains a mix of street types, volumes, and roadway classifications. Most of the neighborhood's streets have posted speed limits of 25 mph and serve as local neighborhood streets. Streets with posted speed limits of 35 mph are classified as minor and major arterials. Other street classifications include collector streets (Bedford Avenue, Devilliers Street, Washington Place), minor arterials (Herron Avenue, Centre Avenue, Kirkpatrick Street, Crawford Street), and major arterials (Bigelow

Boulevard and Fifth Avenue). The collector and arterial streets provide connectivity between the Hill District and other neighborhoods.

Excluding the Interstate, the roadways with the highest volumes are Bigelow Boulevard, Herron Avenue, Crawford Street, and Centre Avenue (east of Herron Avenue), primarily due to commuters to and from the University of Pittsburgh and other institutional commuters. Most intersections in the Hill District are controlled by stop signs. The area near the intersection of Bedford Avenue and Bigelow Boulevard has most of the electronic signs in the area to help guide drivers to the ramps for Interstate 579 and Bigelow Boulevard, including flashing warning devices on Centre Avenue between Kirkpatrick Street and Reed Street. The infrastructure and streetscape conditions in Pittsburgh's Hill District illustrate significant disparities in safety and accessibility when compared to wealthier, predominantly white neighborhoods. In neighborhoods with higher median incomes, infrastructure such as street lighting, well-maintained sidewalks, clearly marked crosswalks, and pedestrian signals are often more prevalent, reflecting prioritized investments that enhance safety and accessibility. In contrast, the Hill District lacks consistent, quality infrastructure. Insufficient street lighting means that Hill District residents experience higher risks when walking at night, a risk compounded by the prevalence of sidewalk gaps that force pedestrians onto the roadway. Crosswalks and pedestrian signals are sparser and less well-maintained in the Hill District than in wealthier neighborhoods, limiting safe crossing opportunities on high-speed, high-stress roadways.

The absence of effective traffic calming measures further exacerbates the dangers, as cars frequently speed through the neighborhood with fewer impediments than in traffic-calmed, higher-income areas. Wealthier neighborhoods also tend to benefit from greater tree canopy cover, which encourages walking and creates safer pedestrian experiences by providing natural barriers between walkers and moving vehicles. In the Hill District, however, limited tree cover makes streets hotter and less comfortable to navigate on foot, discouraging walking and increasing safety risks in the pedestrian environment.

Between 2019 and 2023, there were 520 crashes in the Hill District; this is relatively high compared to other neighborhoods given the low traffic volumes. Nearly 10% of the crashes in the Hill District involved a person walking or biking. Around 2% of the crashes resulted in death or severe injury. **Table 3** summarizes these crashes between 2014 and 2019. Crashes are concentrated in the Lower and Middle Hill areas. In the Lower Hill, crashes are concentrated at major intersections such as Centre Avenue and Washington Place and Crawford/Pride Street and Fifth Avenue. In the Middle Hill, crashes are more dispersed along Centre Avenue, Herron Avenue, Wylie Avenue,

Kirkpatrick Street, and Dinwiddie Street, as shown in **Figure 25**.

In 2022, the City was rewarded a grant as a part of the Rebuilding Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to promote investment in neighborhoods that have historically suffered from racist federal policies. Through the use of these funds, the City has created a project entitled "New Pathways to Equity" to fund the construction of multiple improvements to the public right-of-way in the Hill District. These improvements will include the reconstruction of intersections, street corridors, and city steps as well as the installation of traffic calming measures, sidewalks, and green infrastructure.

Table 3. Hill District Crashes (2014-2019)

Crash Type	Total	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
All Crashes	420	82	78	83	75	102
Fatal Crashes	2	0	1	0	0	1
Major injury Crashes	8	0	0	3	1	2
Pedestrian/Bike Crashes	27	5	14	5	6	13

The crash analysis identified three high crash intersections:

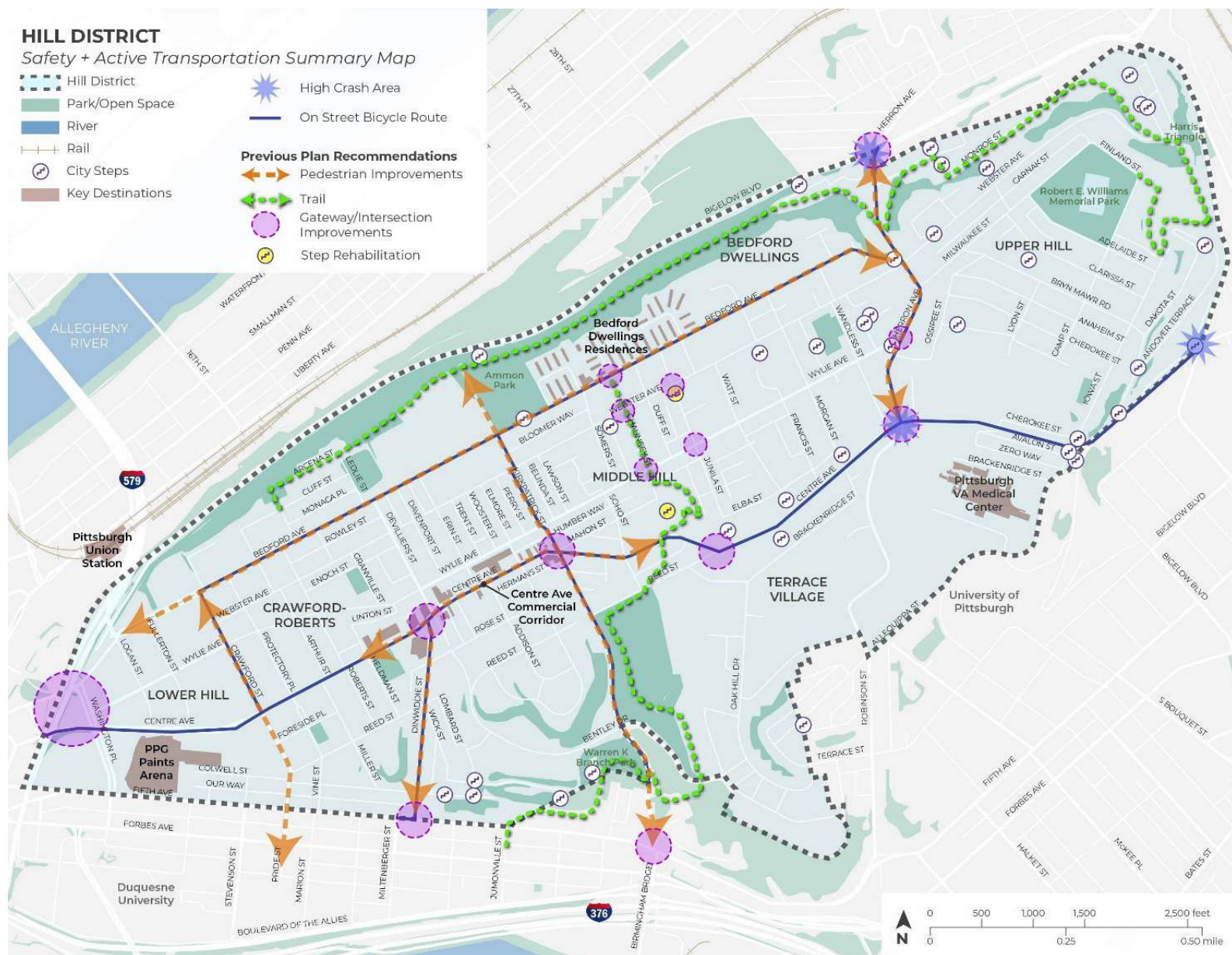
- Bigelow Boulevard & Herron Avenue (Hill gateway),
- Centre Avenue & Robinson Street/Herron Avenue, and
- Centre Avenue & Bigelow Avenue (Hill gateway).

A detailed review of the crash reports at these intersections identified contributing factors, which are summarized in **Table 4**. All three intersections have limited sight distance and intersection geometry resulting in skewed approach angles.

Table 4: High Crash Intersections

High Crash Intersection	Contributing Factors
Bigelow Boulevard & Herron Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intersection approach angles. • Limited sight distance. • Mainline median separation.

Figure 25: Safety and Active Transportation Summary Map



High Crash Intersection	Contributing Factors
Centre Avenue & Robinson Street/ Herron Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited sight distance on the southbound approach. Poor intersection lighting. Steep grade on the westbound approach.
Centre Avenue & Bigelow Boulevard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intersection approach angles. Limited sight distance. Approach grade differences.

The three high crash intersections identified through the crash analysis are not the only intersections that present a safety concern. A review of previous plans, crash distribution, and community and stakeholder input identified additional intersections that present safety concerns. Challenging intersections are shown in **Figure 26**.

Crashes are concentrated in the Middle and Lower Hill. Detailed analysis of the crash reports suggests intersection geometry and limited sight distance are the main contributing factors. The crash analysis and community and stakeholder input identified more intersections that present safety challenges, especially for pedestrians trying to cross the street. The hilly terrain and inadequate sidewalk and bike network make it difficult for people to walk and bike through the Hill District. For example, there is a desire to connect the primarily residential area along Bedford Avenue to the commercial corridor along Centre Avenue.

Gaps & Best Practices

Compared to other neighborhoods, residents of the Hill District experience disproportionately high risks of traffic-related injuries and fatalities. The Hill District's elevated vulnerability to traffic crashes is rooted in structural factors, such as limited infrastructure investment and disparities in income, that have compounded over time.

Income disparities significantly impact traffic safety risks for BIPOC residents in the Hill District, creating an environment where low-income individuals face higher rates of fatalities and serious injuries (FSIs) in crashes. The Hill District is home to many lower-income households that are less likely to own vehicles. Limited access to personal vehicles leads many Hill District residents to rely heavily on walking, biking, and public transit, which increases exposure to high-traffic areas and dangerous intersections.

This heightened exposure is coupled with a lack of safe sidewalks, bike lanes, and well-maintained bus stops, further putting residents at risk. This exposes residents to

high-traffic corridors and industrial areas, elevating crash risks compared to wealthier neighborhoods with safer streets and better pedestrian infrastructure.

The prevalence of traffic safety concerns and crashes in the Hill District highlights the vital importance of improving safety conditions at high crash intersections. Best practices to achieve this include geometric realignment of intersections that improve sightlines and reduce potential for confusion, pedestrian crossing improvements, and traffic calming treatments that slow vehicles, as well as more detailed tools to improve safety, which are explored further in this Plan.

Goals, Policies, Strategies:

M5. Goal: There are zero traffic fatalities and no serious injuries due to traffic in the Hill District.

- a. **Policy: Mitigate traffic safety risks.** Traffic calming and safety improvements are implemented in corridors and intersections with high volumes or speeds and where traffic safety risks are posed.

M5.1 Strategy – Engineering study. Conduct an engineering study to determine the feasibility of realigning the Centre/Dinwiddie/Devilliers intersection and closing the south block of Devilliers.

M5.2 Strategy – Safety improvements along Centre and Kirkpatrick. Convert Centre and Kirkpatrick to a four-way intersection. Close Mahon Street from Centre Avenue and convert part of Mahon Street to a pedestrian plaza. Install intersection safety improvements.

M5.3 Strategy – Traffic Calming. Through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant, install traffic calming treatments, reconstruct intersections, and improve city steps in areas that pose traffic safety risks, per DOMI prioritization criteria. These locations should include:

- Centre Ave between Dinwiddie and Kirkpatrick Street
- Bedford Ave
- Crawford Street and Pride Street
- Dinwiddie Street
- Webster Street

Figure 26: Hill District Crashes (2019-2023)



Source: Hill District Transportation Study

M5.4 Strategy – Modernize traffic signals. Complete the implementation of the SmartSpines project in the Hill District to modernize traffic signals along Centre Avenue and Bigelow Boulevard.

M5.5 Strategy – Traffic congestion management. Establish a coordination program with partners for managing traffic congestion during major events. Focus on maintaining bus service and accessibility to meet residents' mobility needs.

M5.6 Strategy – Safety improvements along Reed Street and Centre Avenue. Realign the intersection of Reed Street and Centre Avenue to improve safety for all users.

M5.7 Strategy – Construction coordination program. Establish a construction coordination program that connects public agencies with community stakeholder organizations to maintain a list of projects and anticipated construction schedules.

- b. **Policy: Design streetscapes for the pedestrian scale.** Streetscapes are designed for the pedestrian scale, incorporating lighting, street furniture, landscaping and elements that make streets a comfortable and attractive pedestrian environment.

M5.8 Strategy – Streetscape improvements along Centre Avenue. Install streetscape improvements along Centre Ave. that enhance safety for all users, improve the pedestrian experience, and manage parking.

M5.9 Strategy – Centre Avenue traffic calming and streetscape study. Study opportunities to calm traffic and improve the streetscape along Centre Ave between Dinwiddie and Roberts Street as part of Centre/Heldman activation. Possibilities include distinctive paving, public art, and other urban design approaches to activate the public realm in a way that reflects the living cultural legacy of the Hill District. Consider studying improvements on Centre Ave west of Roberts Street if warranted by pedestrian safety considerations. In addition, study ways to improve the streetscape, sidewalk conditions and pedestrian safety along Centre Ave between Kirkpatrick and Reed Streets.

PARKING:

Background:

Parking demand in the Hill District is much lower than neighboring communities. However, the perception of limited parking due to high demands at peak hours for commuters and the possible change in available parking due to proposed

redevelopment projects in the Lower Hill and other commercial areas across the neighborhood could lead to parking concerns in the near future.

The Hill District has a mix of parking infrastructure, including residential permit parking zones, metered parking, surface parking lots, and parking garages, as shown in Figure 19. The Hill District has a small quantity of metered parking and has a few residential parking permit areas. The residential permit parking areas are in the Crawford- Roberts neighborhood, near PPG Paints Arena, and the surface parking lots in the Lower Hill used by commuters. Metered parking is provided on a segment of Centre Avenue in front of the Hill House and throughout the Lower Hill and the totality of the Crawford Roberts neighborhood. **Table 5** summarizes metered parking locations, rates, and maximum hours. **Figure 27** summarizes existing parking services in the Hill District. The Hill District has several major destinations that influence parking demand, such as the PPG Arena, Bedford Dwellings Residences, and several commercial properties along Centre Avenue.

Table 5: Pittsburgh Parking Meters

Zone	Hourly Rate	Maximum
Centre Avenue between Heldman Street and Green Street	\$1	2
Centre Avenue between Crosstown Boulevard and Crawford Street	\$1.50	No Max
Crawford Street between Centre Avenue and Bedford Avenue	\$1.50	10
Bedford Avenue between Mario Lemieux Place and Crawford Street	\$1.50	10
Mario Lemieux Place between Centre Avenue and Bedford Avenue	\$1.50	No Max

In general, the parking demand in the Hill District is much lower than in surrounding neighborhoods. Much of the demand is concentrated in key commercial areas. Residential density is relatively low, given the predominance of single-family homes and duplexes. There is a perceived issue with parking supply due in part to peak periods with high parking demand. Additionally, the land uses and development patterns along Centre Avenue and many parts of the neighborhood depend on on-street parking, rather than providing large surface parking lots. This helps create a more pedestrian-oriented landscape; however, it also creates a perception of limited parking.

There are several parking challenges within the Hill District in addition to the potential impacts from future development. Many employees commute into the neighborhood from other areas, there is overflow parking from Downtown and University of

Figure 27: Existing Parking Services in the Hill District



Source: Hill District Transportation Study

Pittsburgh, and there is high parking demand near major destinations like the medical center and the PPG Arena. Commuter parking throughout the neighborhood adds to increased demand on the few commercial parking lots along Crawford Street and Centre Avenue, and in residential permit parking areas.

The community has voiced several concerns related to parking, including:

- Parking congestion at the YMCA on Centre Avenue,
- Need for pick-up/drop-off area and lack of parking at the Family Dollar on Centre Avenue,
- Commuter parking at the former Shop N Save lot,
- Narrow street width on Dinwiddie Street limits parking on both sides,

Data collection assessing the existing parking inventory and parking occupancy in a portion of the Hill District provides an important baseline for developing parking strategies.

The Hill District Parking Study area focused on and near Centre Ave and portions of the Crawford Roberts neighborhood, highlighted in **Figure 28**. Using Google Earth, Google Streetview, and other online aerial or street imagery data sources, the number of legal residential non-metered parking spaces (referred to as “legal parking spaces”) were identified in the parking study area. Legal parking spaces were counted by measuring the distance along the curb where parking is allowed, dividing by twenty (20) feet, and rounding the remainder down. Pennsylvania regulations were referenced to determine what was considered a legal parking space. On blocks with non-metered and metered parking spaces, the number of metered parking spaces is noted separately from the number of non-metered parking spaces in the count. **Figure 29** displays the existing legal parking supply by block.

Blocks shown in red display areas where there is no legal parking. However, cars were observed parking on several streets that did not provide legal parking spaces, which can mean safety and accessibility issues if they are parked on sidewalks or are otherwise creating pedestrian obstructions. As shown in Figure 20, Centre Avenue provides a significant amount of the neighborhood’s on-street parking supply, along with Reed Street and Wylie Avenue. The existing parking supply is clustered most densely in the center of the neighborhood, between Dinwiddie Street and Kirkpatrick Street. In addition to the neighborhood’s existing parking near commercial land uses, Morgan Street, Francis Street, Junilla Street, and Watt Street provide parking to the residential area.

Hills and drastic elevation changes make convenient parking a challenge, as people may need to walk a few blocks at steep elevations from available parking spaces to their destinations. Limited safe, comfortable, and connected sidewalks and crosswalks also limit peoples’ willingness to park further from their destinations. Parking availability is usually more prevalent in the neighborhood’s residential areas, where the demand is lower during peak times than in the commercial areas of the neighborhood. The community also voiced concerns with delivery trucks blocking the street during loading on Dinwiddie Street, and the need for dedicated delivery zones along Centre Ave. **Figure 30** displays the daytime parking availability, and **Figure 31** displays the evening parking availability.

Gaps & Best Practices

Given the neighborhood’s proximity to sites with heavy parking demand, parking strategies should be developed to mitigate future parking issues stemming from new development activity in the Lower Hill and in the Middle Hill. The neighborhood has many opportunities to control parking, including metered parking restrictions and expanding residential parking permit areas. Strategies should aim to balance supply and demand as the neighborhood’s parking supply changes.

To mitigate the effects of parkers using on-street parking in residential neighborhoods in the Hill District, the community has suggested providing shuttles to transport commuters from other lots into the neighborhood.

The following summarizes several mobility priorities related to parking within the Hill District:

- Improve parking enforcement in commercial parking lots and residential parking permit areas and ensure it is responsive to the community’s overall needs.
- Reduce the dependence on vehicle trips through Transportation Demand Management strategies that encourage non-motorized trips.
- Identify strategies to make parking more convenient on Centre Avenue.
- Identify strategies to mitigate parking overflow from redevelopment areas and the Lower Hill.
- Accommodate convenient parking, delivery, and pick-up/drop-off activities in high-demand areas.

Figure 28: Hill District Parking Study Area Data Collection



Source: Hill District Transportation Study

Figure 29: Existing Parking Supply by Block



Source: Hill District Transportation Study

Figure 30: Daytime Parking Availability



Source: Hill District Transportation Study

Figure 31: Evening Parking Availability



Source: Hill District Transportation Study

Goals, Policies, Strategies:

M6. Goal - On- and off-street parking is continuously managed as a system to meet the needs of existing and future residents, businesses, and visitors with sufficient but not excessive amounts at appropriate locations while not impeding the growth, vitality, and health of the neighborhood.

- a. **Policy: Optimize on-street parking.** On-street parking should be managed efficiently to ensure balanced usage and sufficient availability of spaces.

M6.1 Strategy – Parking study. Explore a proposed scope of work for a parking study. The study could examine the number of off-street and on-street parking spaces needed to meet current and projected parking demand based on anticipated future developments and calculate turnover. It could also consider case studies, opportunities and tools to address the Hill District's parking challenges in ways that account for the Hill District's context, including its mobility network and topography, and it could consider evaluating costs and trade-offs between available alternatives.

M6.2 Strategy – Parking meter installation. Install parking meters along Centre Avenue from Dinwiddie Street to Reed Street. Consider providing residential parking permit zones on side streets to minimize spillover parking on residential streets.

M6.3 Strategy – Demand-based pricing. . Use pricing at on-street and off-street parking sites to guide users towards the most appropriate parking for their needs.

- b. **Policy: Expand access to off-street parking.** Increase available off-street parking resources, construct temporary parking on vacant lots that serve parking needs for the near-term but which can be converted to other uses in the long-term based on the Hill District's development and needs.

M6.4 Strategy – New parking resources. Increase available off-street parking resources, construct temporary parking on vacant lots that serve parking needs for the near-term but which can be converted to other uses in the long-term based on the Hill District's development and needs.

M6.5 Strategy – Parking sharing agreements. Optimize existing off-street parking resources, identify possible locations for parking sharing agreements for land uses that have different parking demands throughout the week.

- c. **Policy: Streamlining parking in residential neighborhoods.** Adjust the Residential Parking Permit Program (RPP) as development pressure changes throughout the neighborhood.

M6.6 Strategy – Parking Enhancement District. Expand the RPP zones in the Hill District, establish a Parking Enhancement District (PED), and provide resources to address mobility and access needs.

M6.7 Strategy – Contextual parking programs. Modify the RPP program, PED program, and off-street parking zoning standards to allow parking programs to be tailored to the Hill District context.

- d. **Policy: Create a structure of unbiased parking enforcement.** Promote compliance with parking regulations while respecting the rights and needs of all community members.

M6.8 Strategy – Community informed parking enforcement approach. Parking enforcement should be guided by the needs of residents and visitors to the Hill District. Parking regulations should be user-friendly and include education along with enforcement.

M6.9 Strategy – Automated parking enforcement. Explore the potential for using automated parking enforcement as technologies are developed and permitted.

- e. **Policy: Efficiently manage curbside spaces.** Manage curbside space to provide for deliveries, pickup and drop-off, short-term loading, bike+ uses, and other needs.

M6.10 Strategy – Curbside management program. Create a curbside management program to improve the mobility, safety, and livability of the community through the proactive planning and use of curb space throughout the Hill District.

M6.11 Strategy – Curbside extensions. Install curb extensions to protect the curbside space from illegal behavior.

M7. Goal - Development projects are designed to minimize negative traffic and parking impacts on existing and future residents.

- a. **Policy: Minimize noise and pollution in new development.** Traffic and parking plans of Hill District development projects should minimize noise and pollution impacts on existing and future neighborhood residents, while maximizing resident

access to parking and the public right of way leading to their homes.

Strategy – Privately funded mobility infrastructure. Examine opportunities for the development review process to work with developers to increase pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit access, support community uses in the right of way, reduce curb cuts, site bike share and mobility hubs at new developments, and more.

BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE:

Background:

All streets with bike routes in the Hill District are considered high-stress roads. Though the neighborhood has designated on-street bike routes along key neighborhood corridors such as Bedford Avenue, Centre Avenue, Crawford Street, Dinwiddie Street, Kirkpatrick Street, and Herron Avenue, **on all these streets, cyclists are expected to share the lane with vehicles.**

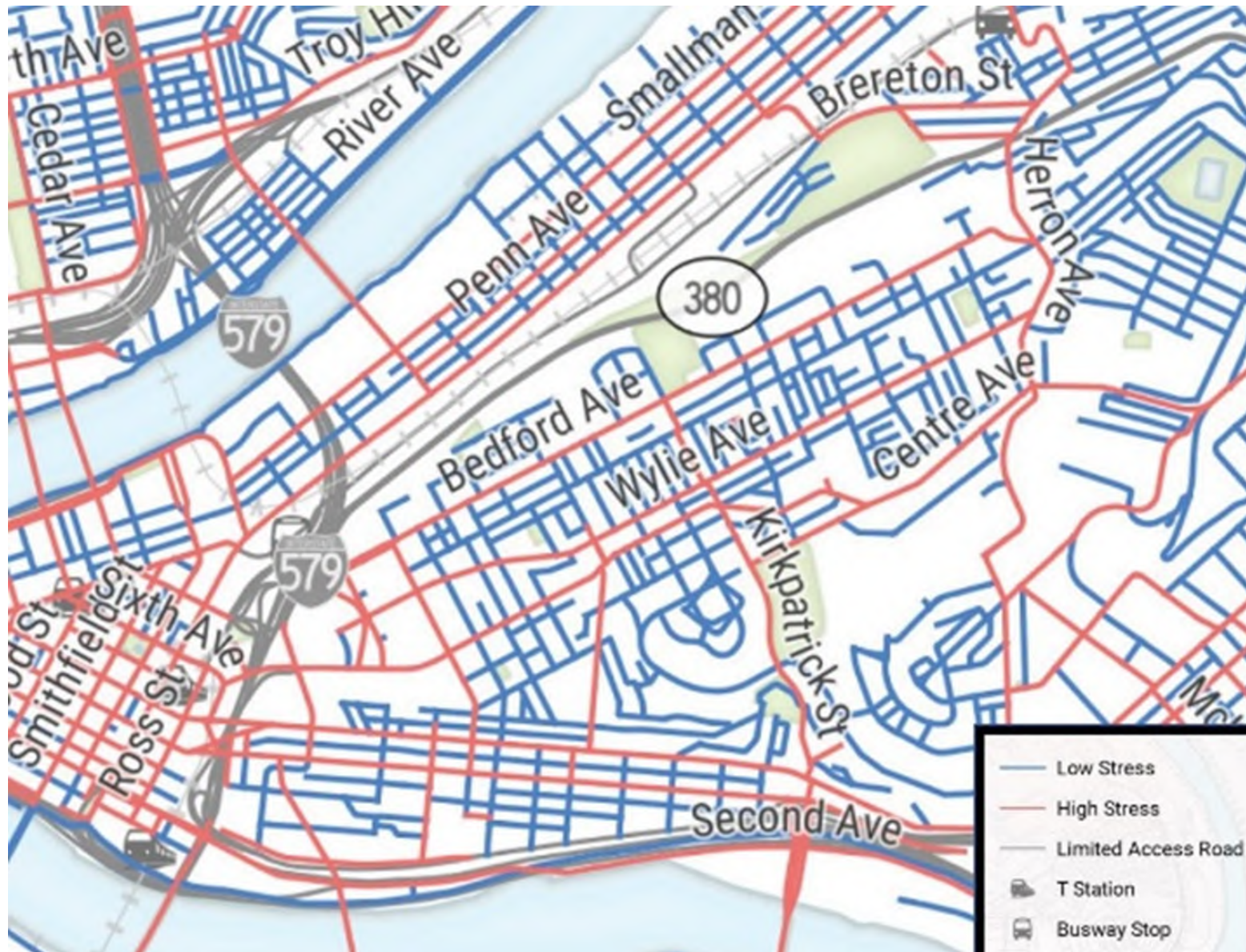
As shown in **Figure 32** and noted in the Pittsburgh Bike (+) Master Plan, all streets that currently have designated on-street bicycle routes in the Hill District are considered high-stress roads. There is no continuous bicycle route through the Hill District. Many streets in the Hill District, aside from Centre Avenue, have low vehicle volumes and may provide low-stress environments for people biking. A summary of the current conditions on the existing designed on-street bicycle routes is provided in **Table 6**.

Table 5. Current Conditions of Existing On-Street Bike Routes

On-Street Bicycle Routes	Current Conditions
Bedford Avenue	○ Typical Section
	- 36' curb to curb
	- Two lanes
	- On-Street Parking
	○ East-west connection to Bedford Dwellings and Downtown
	○ Steep grade

On-Street Bicycle Routes	Current Conditions
Centre Avenue	○ Typical Section
	- 36' curb to curb
	- Two lanes
Crawford Street	- On-Street Parking
	- Transit Corridor
	○ East-west connection to Downtown; Access to the commercial corridor
Dinwiddie Street	○ Several signalized intersections at main cross streets
	○ Typical Section
	- 42' curb to curb
Kirkpatrick Street	- Two lanes
	- On-Street Parking
	○ North-south connection to Uptown
	○ Steep grade
	○ Typical Section
	- 30' curb to curb
	- Two lanes
	- On-Street Parking
	○ North-south connection to Uptown and Centre Avenue
	○ Steep grade
	○ Typical Section
	- 36' curb to curb (varies)
	- Two lanes
	- On-Street Parking
	○ North-south connection to Uptown, South Side Flats, and Three Rivers Heritage Trail
	○ Steep grade; multiple curves; high volumes

Figure 32: Bike(+) Master Plan Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress



Source: Bike (+) Master Plan

On-Street Bicycle Routes	Current Conditions
Herron Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Typical Section <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 42' curb to curb - South of Webster Avenue – Two lanes of bidirectional vehicle travel - North of Webster Avenue – Four lanes (two northbound, two southbound) - On-Street Parking ○ Connection to Polish Hill, the Strip District, West Oakland, and Pitt ○ Multiple curves; Challenging intersections at Webster Avenue and Bigelow Boulevard

Community Concerns

The introduction of bike lanes is often associated with urban areas that are transitioning or undergoing gentrification. These changes could signal that the neighborhood is becoming more appealing to wealthier, often non-Black newcomers, which may lead to displacement of long-standing residents. There are also concerns from community members about the community's inclusion in decisions around infrastructure, particularly projects like bike lanes. The perceived lack of inclusion feeds a distrust that these developments are primarily for the benefit of outsiders rather than the community itself. The Hill District has historically faced underinvestment in vital social infrastructure, such as public transportation, housing,

healthcare, and education. Many residents feel that funding for bike lanes should instead address these pressing needs.

Community members have also noted that there is a distinction between equity (providing resources fairly) and justice (addressing root causes of inequality). The Hill District community is seeking meaningful, systemic changes that prioritize justice over symbolic actions. By pushing for justice-oriented planning, residents hope to see changes that meaningfully address structural inequalities, rather than developments that feel tokenistic or merely aesthetically pleasing. Residents want assurances that any development will promote the wellbeing of current and future community members across all ages and demographics.

The Hill District has a deep-rooted cultural history and identity, and residents wish to preserve a sense of belonging within their community. Projects that feel imposed can threaten this sense of cultural pride and continuity. Preserving cultural identity and ensuring residents feel a sense of belonging is crucial for the community. Integrating changes, such as bike lanes, becomes more attractive when they are understood as part of an inclusive, community-driven vision for the neighborhood.

Gaps & Best Practices

There are numerous opportunities to enhance biking safety in the Hill District by improving and expanding bike facilities, especially through the addition of dedicated bike lanes.

The Bike(+) Master Plan recommends several dedicated bike facilities through the Hill District. The proposed routes are listed below:



- Crawford Street between Wylie Avenue and Forbes Avenue,
- Kirkpatrick Street between Wylie Avenue and Fifth Avenue,
- Herron Avenue between Wylie Avenue and Brereton Street, and
- Ridgeway Street Bike Facilities from Bloomfield Bridge to Herron Avenue.

In addition to these routes, the Bike(+) Master Plan recommends an east-west connection through the Hill District but does not provide a specific route. It will therefore be important to ensure one of the east-west streets can be converted to a low-stress bike facility.

As part of bicycle infrastructure improvements, the Hill District could benefit from the creation of more multimodal connections to Centre Avenue, as well as enhancing neighborhood gateways and improving connections from the Hill District to Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.

Goals, Policies, Strategies:

M8. Goal - The Hill District is a safe and connected place where residents can travel within the Hill District and to nearby neighborhoods by bicycle or other means of micromobility. Bicycle infrastructure and activities reflect the Hill District context, topography, and culture.

- a. **Policy: Identify suitable bicycle facilities.** Build community consensus around what bicycle facilities are desired in the Hill District.

M8.1 Strategy – Implement the Bike (+) Plan. Build on the Bike (+) Plan's recommendations for installing bicycle facilities on Herron Ave from the northern segment of Bigelow Blvd to Wylie Ave, and explore the installation of bicycle facilities along Herron Ave and Centre Ave between Wylie and the southern segment of Bigelow Blvd. Implement traffic calming measures along Herron Ave from the northern segment of Bigelow Blvd to Centre Ave.

M8.2 Strategy – Bicycle facilities on Kirkpatrick Street. Engage the community on the design of bicycle facilities on Kirkpatrick between Reed Street and Fifth Ave. Use traffic calming elements to slow down traffic and improve pedestrian access.

- b. **Policy: Collaborate to improve the bike network.** Work with the community to create a safe, connected, and accessible network that serves users traveling within the neighborhood and connecting to other neighborhoods.

M8.3 Strategy – Wylie Avenue improvements. Convert Wylie Avenue to a neighborway that prioritizes pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-vehicular traffic. Install traffic calming elements to slow down traffic and improve pedestrian and bicycle access.

- c. **Policy: Expand access to bike share stations and mobility hubs.** Work with the community and other partners such as POGO to site bike share stations and mobility hubs. Make sure that sites are close to public transit stops and account for users' one-way trips. Work with partners to provide enough Bike Share infrastructure to accommodate neighborhood demand.

M8.4 Strategy – Bicycle supportive infrastructure. Install infrastructure that supports bicycling, including bicycle racks, bicycle parking, and other more.

M8.5 Strategy – Bike share expansions. Expand bike share stations throughout the Hill District, especially stations with e-assist bikes. Consider bus stops, topography, one-way trips, and community input when siting stations. Include e-cargo bikes and other equipment that maximize their accessibility. Incorporate discount programs and other measures to cut barriers to access.



INFRASTRUCTURE

Introduction.

The Infrastructure Chapter delineates the goals, policies, and implementation strategies aimed at improving infrastructure systems that enhance the quality of life in the Hill District. This chapter addresses critical infrastructure stressors impacting the community, including air quality issues caused by business emissions that bring smoke and foul odors into the area. The presence of varmints due to inadequate waste management further contributes to unsanitary conditions in the community. Additionally, the community faces challenges with poor infrastructure, such as deteriorating streets and sidewalks, and a lack of consistent maintenance. Through targeted goals, policies, and strategies, this chapter outlines actionable steps to improve infrastructure quality and address environmental concerns, fostering a healthier, more resilient community. It includes all non-transportation systems that nourish and maintain a district, including handling stormwater, the need for open spaces, the energy systems that serve all buildings, and how waste is reduced and reused.

Background information and existing conditions for infrastructure systems in the Hill District are consolidated below followed by overarching goals, policies, and strategies that are intended to apply to all types of infrastructure in the neighborhood.

Vision Statement.

The Hill District is committed to developing sustainable and resilient systems that embrace renewable energy and environmentally friendly building practices. These systems should also cultivate well-maintained open spaces and thriving natural habitats while also mitigating future climate hazards such as flooding, landslides, and extreme heat.

Plan Topics.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT:

Background:

The City of Pittsburgh has a history of, and continues to face, major flooding, water pollution, and basement backup issues. While some neighborhoods have had access to stormwater investments, **neighborhoods like the Hill District have historically been neglected from storm water protection and other sewer infrastructure investments.** To create more equitable flood protected places, The Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA) identifies the Hill District as part of its priority investment neighborhoods.

Stormwater comes from precipitation in the form of rain and ice/snow melt. It either soaks into exposed soil or remains on impervious (hard) surfaces, like pavement or rooftops, that negatively impact stormwater management. Stormwater also flows as runoff to other locations, which is quite common among Pittsburgh's hillsides.

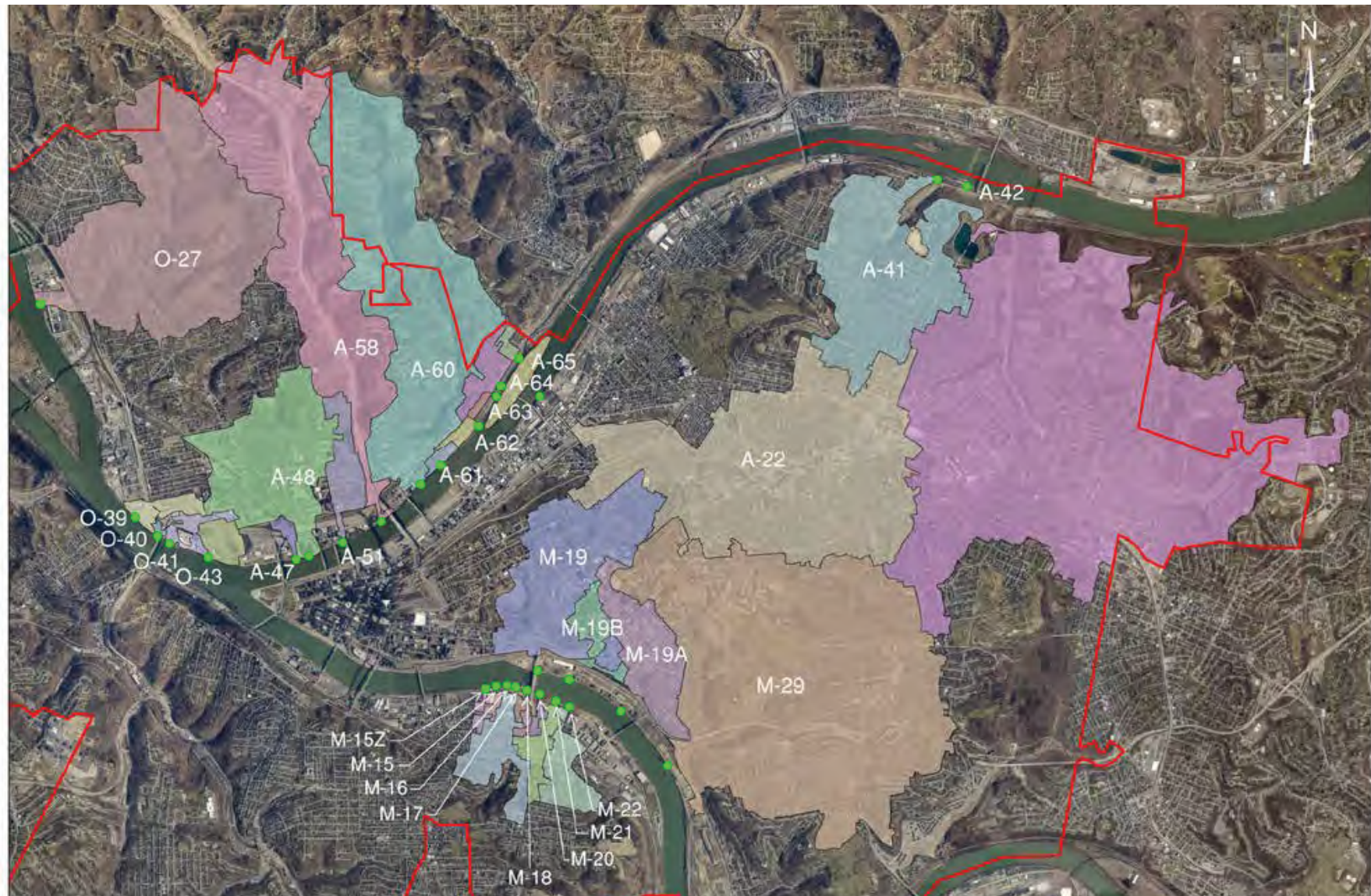
Stormwater management is how communities deal with precipitation—how water from rain and snow goes into the sewer system, infiltrates into the ground, or gets soaked up by plants. Stormwater management can impact flooding, sedimentation and erosion, water quality, combined sewer overflows, landslides, abandoned mine drainage, and more. Even a tiny amount of rain can impact our systems.

In 2021, the City of Pittsburgh adopted a new stormwater management code and the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA) implemented a stormwater fee for impervious surfaces.

The importance of stormwater investments in the Hill District is reflected by the fact that the neighborhood largely overlaps with one of the city's priority sewer sheds, M-19, as shown in **Figure 33** and **Figure 34**. The Hill District is within the Monongahela River Basin watershed and the following sewer sheds: M-19, M-05, A-12, and A-14. M-19 holds a central location between some of Pittsburgh's most significant economic centers with high density and impervious surfaces draining into the sewer shed. It also holds historic ecological significance because it matches the boundaries of the now underground Soho Run, an important tributary to the Monongahela River until the City constructed a combined sewer network.

Starting at the top of Herron Hill, Soho Run flowed through the Upper Hill District,

Figure 33: Priority Sewersheds studied in PWSA's City-Wide Green Infrastructure Assessment



Source: The Green First Plan

Figure 34: Land uses and systems within the M-19 shed

**STREETS + PARKING LOTS**

M19's street arrangement is highly compartmentalized. Middle Hill and Upper Hill are distinctly separated by Herron. Addison Terrace and Oak Hill are separated by hillsides. Uptown is connected only by Kirkpatrick St.

**BUILDINGS**

The M19 sewershed has a high vacancy rate and thus fewer impervious areas. The VA Hospital and the newer Addison Terrace and Oak Hill Developments are the most impervious.

**VACANT PARCELS**

The M19 sewershed has a high vacancy rate and thus fewer impervious areas. This will likely change as the neighborhood is redeveloped and a GI plan should acknowledge future development.

**GREEN SPACE + HILLSIDES**

Green space at Kennard Playground and steep hill sides establish distinct neighborhood boundaries between the constituent communities of M19.

**RELATIVE PROPERTY VALUES**

The Upper Hill and Uptown have rising property values, while the Middle Hill remains economically depressed. Major development by the Housing Authority, University of Pittsburgh, and Pittsburgh VA are of high value.

**UNDERMINED + LANDSLIDE PRONE**

There are steep slopes around Kirkpatrick Street and the Housing Authority's Addison Terrace and Oak Hill Developments. Much of the Middle and Upper Hill Districts are undermined.

Source: The Green First Plan

the Middle Hill District, Terrace Village, and Uptown (Bluff) before reaching the Monongahela River near the Birmingham Bridge. Understanding the unique systems and land uses of the M-19 sewer shed allows us to identify investments that connect all infrastructure systems to the community.

Gaps and Best Practices in Stormwater management

To address flooding and basement backup issues in the Hill District, it is recommended that investments should be applied for strategic use of Green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) across the M-19 sewer shed. GSI manages stormwater using plants and vegetation, soils, and other natural elements to restore the natural infiltration processes and water storage to manage water locally and create healthier urban environments. It mimic nature by absorbing, storing, removing or detaining water for slow release to a local waterway or back into the sewer system when not overloaded. These GSI systems can provide additional benefits such as habitat restoration, flood protection, and cleaner air and water. The goals and strategies under the Hill District Parks Master Plan seek to improve stormwater management through GSI investments. GSI opportunities can be incorporated into public green spaces as highlighted in **Figure 35**.

OPEN SPACE

Open Space refers to areas without buildings. Open space provides places for people to play, relax, exercise, and gather outdoors. Providing room for nature can increase the neighborhood's tree canopy and introduce habitat restoration. Generally, open space is "green" vegetated spaces and consists of a wide range of "official" or "unofficial" outdoor places such as:

- City parks, a school sports field, greenways, forested areas on a hillside,
- Trails, access, and connections between open spaces,
- Vacant lots,
- Community gardens,
- Privately owned and maintained public spaces such as plazas, cemeteries, or apartment complex green space.

The Hill District has several neighborhood parks with active programs like ballfields, courts, and play equipment. Areas in the Middle Hill and Upper Hill generally lack

smaller pocket parks and areas with passive open space, which would complement the larger, more actively programmed areas in other parts of the neighborhood. These smaller open spaces and more passive park spaces could also be places to implement some of the "crossroads" concepts outlined in the cultural legacy section of the Greater Hill District Master Plan Update 2022 Opportunities and Constraints Report (Appendix A).

The Hill District Parks Master Plan, published in June 2023, illustrates future plans for parks and open space in the Hill District as shown in Figure 36. The values of Hill District residents and their aspirations for their park system are the guiding forces for the Hill District Parks Master Plan. This report seeks to define that vision and create a framework for implementing the design goals for Kennard Park and other green spaces throughout the Hill. The Parks Master Plan seeks to honor the previous planning efforts aimed at expanding and activating green space in the Hill District. This endeavor builds upon that hard work to chart a community-led course for the parks and open space in the neighborhood. Figure 28 shows the variety of parks and open space in the Hill District and how they were evaluated and analyzed in the Parks Master Plan. Progress has already begun in improving parks in the Hill District as Kennard and Ammon Parks will be in design within the next year and Robert E. Williams Memorial Park will be under construction within the next year. The Coal Seam Trail outlined in the original will be built along the rebuild of Bedford Dwellings as a part of the Bedford Connects Transformation Plan.

Gaps and Best Practices for Open Spaces

Past plans such as the Greater Hill District Master Plan, OpenSpacePGH, and the Greenprint provide guidance for the development of the Hill District's open spaces. For example, all plans discuss the Coal Seam Trail as one of the historic sites in the Hill that could be connected by a marked interpretive trail.

The Greenprint is a visionary template for the Hill's future and outlines three core goals: establishing a healthy place with urban development that works in concert with the natural ecology; identifying projects and opportunities for leadership and innovation in the local economy; and reframing the identity of the Hill District as "A Village in the Woods" - an example of urban beauty.

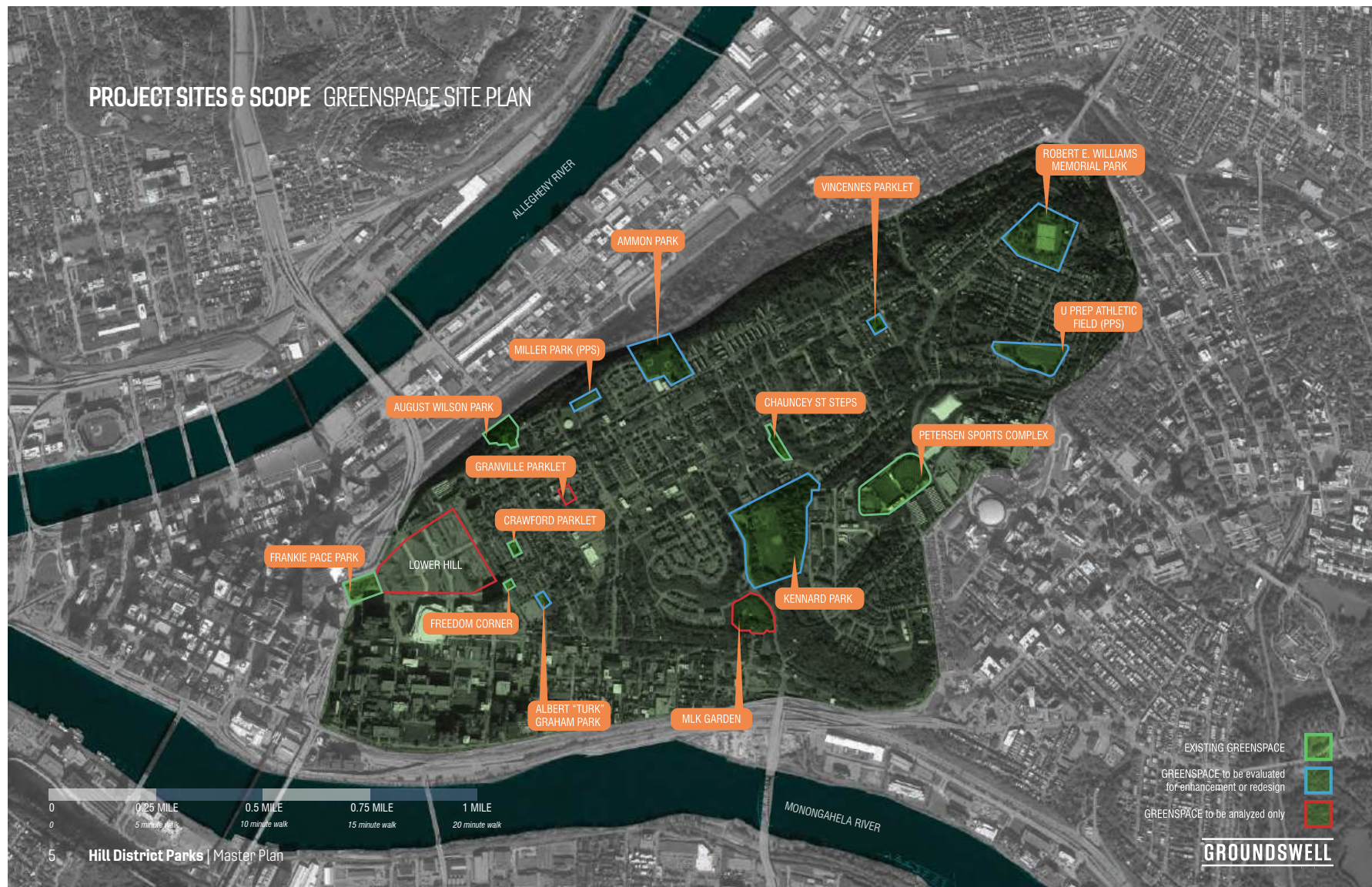
To fulfill these goals, the Greenprint also defines three distinct zones: the Woods, the Hill's outer edge, wraps the community with dense vegetation; the Village is

Figure 35: Public stormwater green space as envisioned for MLK Park



Source: The Green First Plan

Figure 36: Future Plans for Parks and Open Space



Source: The Green First Plan

a collection of diverse neighborhoods at the geographic center of the Hill; and Conveyance is the system that moves people, water, and wildlife through the Hill, highlighting historic stream paths.

The Greater Hill District Master Plan Update 2022 Opportunities and Constraints Report (Appendix A) identified the following opportunities:

- Identify parcels that are best suited for future open space. Legal status, parcel condition, and location are all factors that should be evaluated to prioritize which parcels can be aggregated at the appropriate scale and location for small open spaces. Seek out opportunities to achieve multiple objectives with open space projects, including flood protection, health and well-being opportunities, and activating the community. This work should be done through the Hill District Parks Plan in association with this planning process.
- Invest in more side lot adoptions and other resident-led improvement opportunities. Parcels that are not good candidates for neighborhood open spaces or new development could be opportunities for side lot adoptions and other resident-led improvements.
- Learning from past plans and successful efforts, implementation of any proposed parks should have a clear and cohesive plan with phasing and cost estimates.

TREE CANOPY

In the Hill District neighborhood, the uneven distribution of trees across the neighborhood and the deficiency of tree canopy, particularly in the Middle Hill and commercial areas like Centre Avenue, could become a significant constraint as climate change increases summer temperatures and shade becomes increasingly

important for pedestrians.

Tree canopy refers to the area covered by trees and their foliage. Trees are important for a wide range of environmental and human benefits, including human health, shade and cooling / urban heat reduction, air quality, stormwater uptake, soil health / erosion control, traffic calming, food and shelter for birds, insects, and other animals, beautifying our environment, and making it more walkable and appealing.

Tree canopy coverage varies widely by neighborhood as shown in **Figure 37**. In cities throughout the world, the density and health of the tree canopy in residential areas is correlated to the socioeconomic status of the people who live there. This is true of Pittsburgh. In neighborhoods with higher poverty rates and Black residents there are frequently fewer trees, private gardens, or public open space. Pittsburgh's Urban Forest Master Plan (2012) identifies several recommendations to overcome this environmental injustice by increasing access to trees so that all can enjoy and benefit.

The Hill District has many natural areas but features like parks and tree canopy are unevenly distributed within the neighborhood. Tree canopy is a critical resource: it forms important habitat areas, provides shade for pedestrians, can improve mental health and well-being, supports pervious cover that can absorb water and potentially improve air quality, and can improve property values. Previous plans such as The Greenprint (2009) identified that the study area has substantial wooded areas along the steep slopes and hillsides. These wooded areas, as well as trees on parcels throughout the district, constitute most of the tree canopy for the area as shown in **Figure 38**.

The Hill District's street tree canopy is focused on places that have seen major redevelopment over recent decades such as Crawford Square and Bedford Terrace. The deficit of tree canopy, particularly in the Middle Hill and commercial areas like



Centre Avenue, increase the risk of heat-related health complications for vulnerable pedestrians.

Tree preservation is the best way to maintain tree canopy, as mature trees take years to regrow. Tree planting and preservation will be necessary to meet the goals in the Urban Forest Master Plan, Greenprint, and other plans, and varies by land type. Several strategies in this Plan integrate greening initiatives from The Greenprint plan to address tree canopy issues.

Additionally, the Greater Hill District Master Plan Update 2022 Opportunities and Constraints Report (Appendix A) recommends focusing street tree investments in commercial areas and priority pedestrian corridors. As development occurs and mobility strategies are implemented in key corridors, ensuring that street tree investments are made will maximize the benefits for the community and environment.

HABITAT RESTORATION

In the Hill District, landslide and erosion control, abandoned mine land and drainage (AML/AMD) issues, undermined land and subsidence risk, lead and other soil and water contaminants, and invasive species can be addressed through habitat restoration strategies.

Habitat restoration focuses on improving the natural environment and has a lot of crossovers with open space, stormwater management, and tree canopy. In the urban ecosystem the balance of both the built environment and natural elements helps to keep Healthy "habitats" for people as well as animals. Neighborhood goals and strategies that make space for birds, animals, insects, and plants to coexist with development should be prioritized.

URBAN AGRICULTURE

One in five Pittsburgh residents live with food insecurity and this has significant implications as it is a social determinant of health. Local food is a crucial component in confronting the issue of food insecurity. **In the Hill District, strategies like urban agriculture have the potential to address vacant land with a productive use, help confront food insecurity and can be paired with habitat restoration.** The Adopt-A-Lot program, developed as part of the Vacant Lot Toolkit, was created to allow residents a streamlined process by which to transform city-owned vacant lots into community assets for food, flower, or rain gardens. The Development Chapter also includes relevant strategies for vacant land uses.

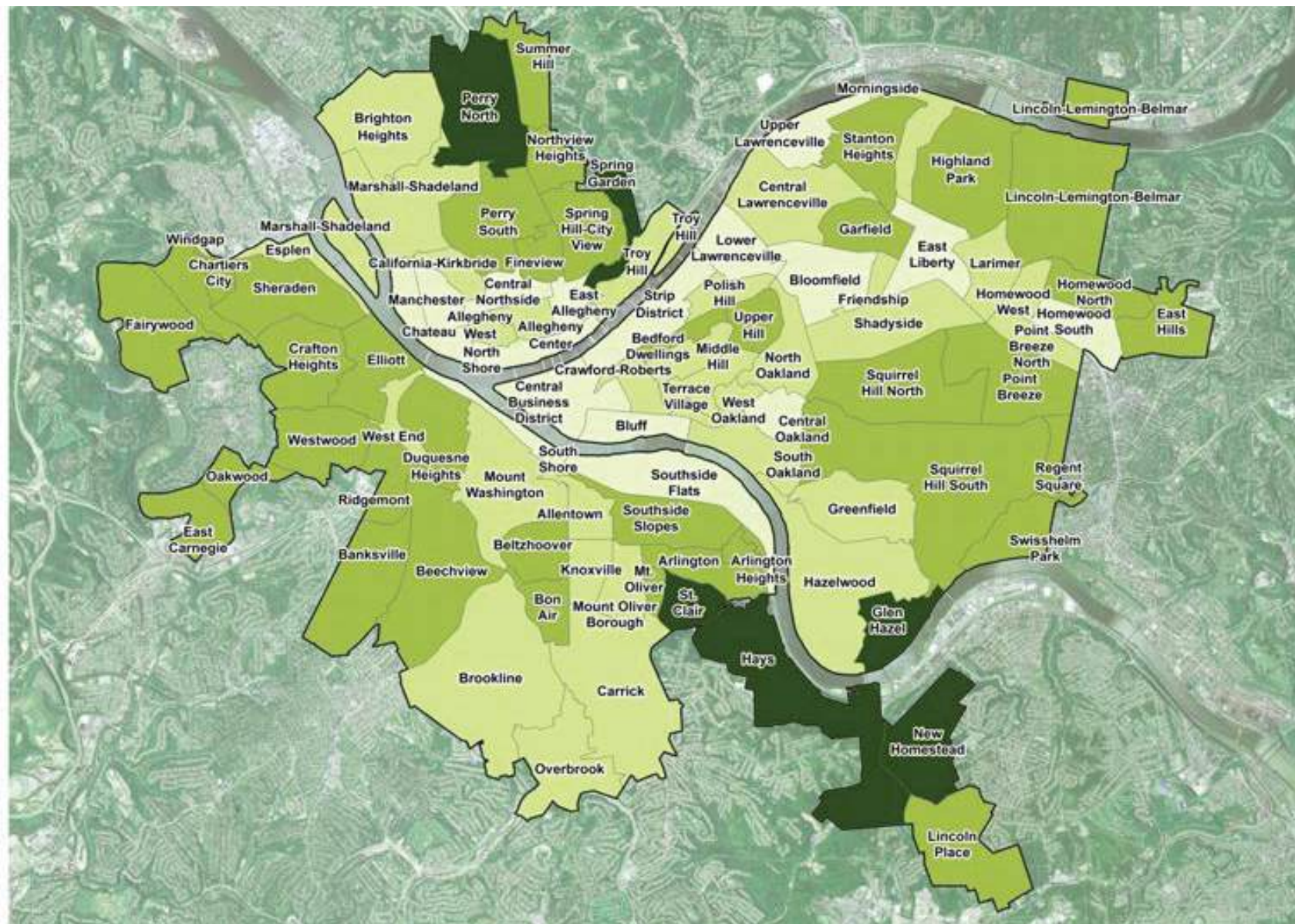
Urban agriculture is the practice of cultivating, processing, and distributing food in the urban environment, often on smaller scales than traditional farming, and is also the term used for animal husbandry, aquaculture, urban beekeeping, and horticulture. Urban agriculture has economic and social benefits of building a sense of community while addressing food security, nutrition, and income generation.

There are several urban agriculture programs to help decrease food insecurity and to stabilize the local food system including the City's Adopt-A-Lot program, Hilltop Urban Farm's Farming Incubation Program, and urban farming programs through Grow Pittsburgh and others. Two farms are already thriving in the Hill District and feeding some of the residents: Peace and Friendship Farm and Sunny's Community Garden. Grow Pittsburgh also has three flower gardens located on a vacant lot to beautify the site.

Additionally, the Department of Public Works runs a community garden plot program for city residents on the Warren K branch garden. The site is currently undergoing stormwater management modifications and is not available for gardening.



Figure 37: Tree Canopy by Neighborhoods



Source: Pittsburgh Urban Forest Master Plan

Figure 38: Tree Canopy and Vegetation

Tree Canopy



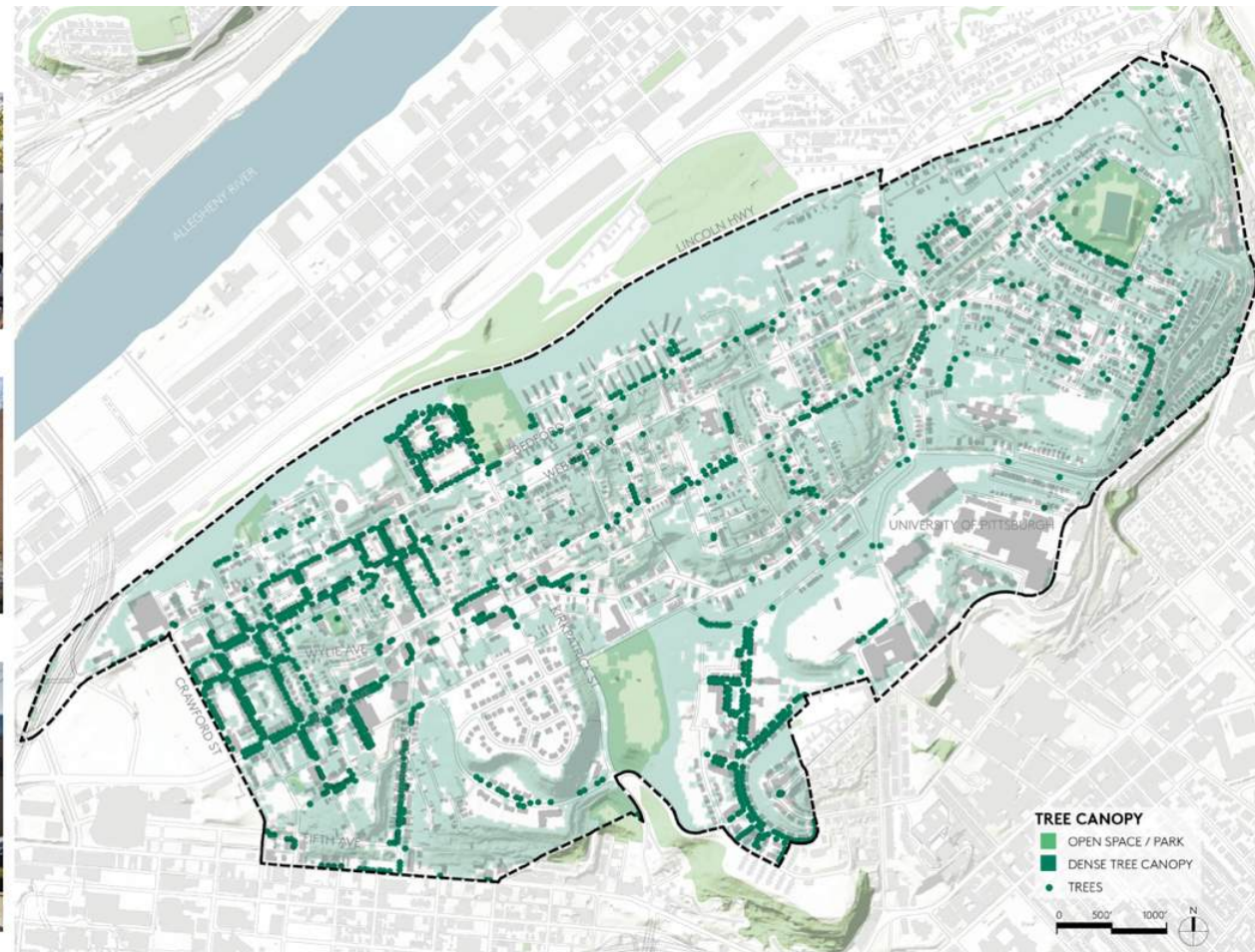
Street trees in newer redevelopments



Dense tree canopy on properties



Commercial districts without shade



Source: Greater Hill District Master Plan Update 2022 – Opportunities and Constraints Report

ENERGY

As Pittsburgh transitions to greener energy, neighborhoods like the Hill District with cost burdened residents and a larger stock of older homes should be prioritized for affordable clean energy interventions. Pittsburgh's Climate Action Plan set a goal to reduce emissions by 50% from 2003 baselines, which requires upgrades to homes in low-income communities. In the Hill District, the costs to incorporate sustainability and resilience features in homes is a major constraint.

In Pittsburgh, 61% of the housing stock is over 100 years old with aging systems that produce high energy bills year-round. Many Hill District residents living in these older homes are disproportionately financially burdened: 40% of Hill District residents live below the poverty line.

Though retrofitting homes to incorporate features like energy efficiency and solar can mean significant savings for residents on their energy bill, those upgrades require significant up-front costs and can be prohibitive for many homeowners and tenants. For new developments, new technologies and sustainability techniques require developers and property owners with the expertise to incorporate these features into projects, which is not yet a widespread practice.

In order to address this, a multiprong approach is needed to develop resources that support green building and rehabilitation techniques. This can involve a mix of financial and educational resources to encourage the adoption of green building techniques for rehabilitation as well as new construction for residential, commercial, and community-serving properties. Additionally, requirements or incentives for projects to align with green building practices, including both public and private-led projects, can lead to sustainable building systems. Strong partnerships and collaborations between governmental entities and local innovators and stewards are critical to promote a greener, more sustainable Hill District.

The Hill District has multiple local efforts underway which the City should support with capacity building assistance, funding sources, and other institutional support. Local efforts like the Energy Innovation Center located in the former Connelley Trade School has a 200,000 square foot space that acts as a "living laboratory" for energy efficiency and alternative energy and serves as an energy production education center. In 2022, US DOE awarded the Hill District a grant to develop a renewable energy plan

focused on vacant lots in collaboration with Registered Community Organizations, community stakeholders, the Green Building Alliance (GBA) and the City of Pittsburgh. This grant is from the DOE's Communities Local Energy Action Program (LEAP) and is meant to help low-income communities that have disproportionately faced the harmful effects of fossil fuel use. In addition to a renewable energy plan, funds will be used to evaluate vacant lots as potential spots for energy generation. Pittsburgh Gateway, a neighborhood nonprofit and owner of the Energy Innovation Center focuses on addressing the energy burden of residents and the larger issues of electrification and resilience of low-income communities within the neighborhood. Another Clean Energy Center facility operated by the College of Technology is scheduled to open in the Hill District in early 2025.

Greater coordination can improve how Hill District stakeholders leverage existing assets, such as the two District Plants (centralized heating and cooling energy systems) that are in proximity to the Hill. Considering the energy efficiency that District Plants provide over individual energy systems, investments should be considered to install the network of underground pipes that these systems require to serve larger-scale buildings in the Hill District, whether commercial, institutional, or publicly owned.

This Chapter creates a roadmap for activities, identifying policies that may need to change at the state level, including at the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). Following the roadmap will allow the government and community-based stakeholders to identify projects early in a way that facilitates cross-departmental coordination. For example, adding new tree pits where gas line replacements are happening. Moreover, this Plan can facilitate how stakeholders leverage investments for capital projects to promote sustainability.

WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING

Waste management and recycling addresses how to effectively manage waste by reducing waste sent to landfills, improving recycling, and providing alternatives for the management of organic waste. Waste management is an important component of creating a healthy, vibrant Hill District neighborhood. Even though waste is largely a municipal issue, the Pittsburgh Climate Action Plan offers neighborhood-level intervention strategies to help address waste throughout the City. These include strategies to improve recycling and composting, while reducing waste going toward landfills.

DIGITAL NETWORK AND UTILITIES

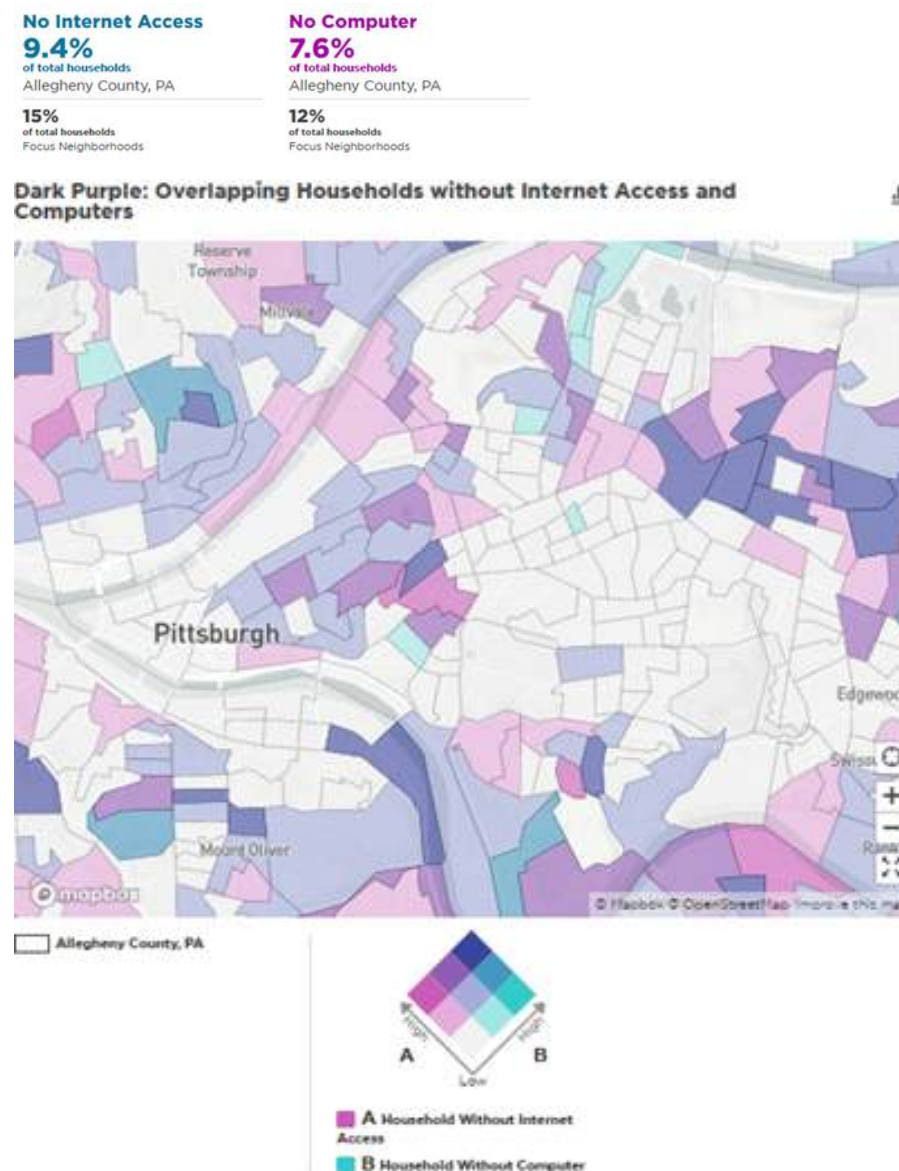
While the City of Pittsburgh grows its status as an innovation center, neighborhoods like the Hill District continue to grapple with the digital divide, as shown in **Figure 39**. The Hill District is one of the 6 focus neighborhoods across Allegheny County where this digital divide is prominent across multiple census tracts.²¹ Most of the Hill District, with the exception of the Upper Hill, have 15% or more households without internet access and 12% or more without computers. Access to the internet is necessary to access economic opportunities but is also increasingly necessary as utilities such as water and power require smart devices. Coordination of utility projects and street pavement improvements should continue to be synchronized to optimize tax-payer expenses on infrastructure construction projects. A comprehensive coordinated utility plan for planned development, utility upgrades, and lead line replacements would streamline work and minimize disruption in the right-of-way.

Gaps and Best Practices for improving the Digital Network in the Hill District

There are several opportunities to improve digital access in the Hill District, including:

- Working with university faculty to study the potential to establish internet access as a public utility similar to the Chattanooga model. The Electric Power Board of Chattanooga established a municipally owned utility in 2010 in collaboration with a new Volkswagen plant and it served as a driver in supporting revitalization of the town.
- Expanding community service hubs in the neighborhood where community centers, daycares, and free Wi-Fi can be provided in a single location.
- Leveraging involvement in the Infrastructure and Utility Coordination Working group to advance the implementation of PA One Call to streamline utility coordination.

Figure 39: The Digital Divide in the Hill District



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year 2018-2022

²¹ Report on the Digital Divide in Pittsburgh <https://beyondthelaptops.org/about/the-digital-divide/#:~:text=THE%20DIGITAL%20DIVIDE%20IN%20PITTSBURGH,proximity%20to%20quality%20internet%20service>

Goals, Policies, Strategies:

I1. Goal: The Hill District's accessible infrastructure systems (utilities, food, digital, roads, stormwater) are high-yielding and resilient.

- a. **Policy – Prioritize efficient management of stormwater runoff.** The City should manage stormwater runoff through responsible practices that enhance urban water cycles, support biodiversity, and protect public health and property.
 - I1.1 Strategy – Street level infrastructure investments.** Identify and make improvements on high-capture streets and alleys that can safely convey stormwater, improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, and add tree canopy through coordinated and intentional infrastructure. Projects should be in alignment with current stormwater code updates and include above ground green infrastructure where technically feasible.
 - I1.2 Strategy – Green stormwater infrastructure.** Amend the Hill District zoning districts to include existing incentives for stormwater management through green infrastructure. Support excellence in projects with additional resources and grants.
- b. **Policy – Design eco-friendly initiatives.** The Hill District community should adopt environmental practices that address climate change, promote sustainable development, and enhance the living conditions for all residents.
 - I1.3 Strategy – Sustainable building practices.** Engage with Hill District area organizations and developers about the Pennsylvania Commercial Property Assess Clean Energy Program (C-PACE) and other funding mechanisms to further embed high-performing and healthy building practices in commercial and multi-family projects.
 - I1.4 Strategy – Sustainable development policy guidelines.** Establish policy guidelines for sustainable development at different scales that aligns with the zoning and building code.
 - I1.5 Strategy – Clean Energy Plan.** Partnership organizations should prioritize the development of policies and programs to implement the Energy Action Plan developed in collaboration with Hill District Residents.
 - I1.6 Strategy – Energy generation on vacant land.** Identify potential projects for converting vacant land into energy generating uses through the use of grant

money from the U.S. Department of Energy's Communities Local Energy Action Program (LEAP).

I1.7 Strategy – Zoning code amendments. Amend the zoning code to address scale issues for smaller buildings and homes adjacent to larger structures to protect access to light and air needed for on-site renewables such as solar photovoltaics and wind turbines.

I1.8 Strategy – Sustainable home improvements. Promote pathways for homeowners to improve their homes while addressing the climate crisis and air pollution.

I1.9 Strategy – Litter reduction. Add litter receptacles in strategic locations in accordance with resident feedback to reduce litter in Hill District neighborhoods.

- c. **Policy: Upgrade digital network infrastructure.** The Hill District should have a robust and inclusive digital network that supports economic development and educational opportunities.

Strategy – Community Service Hubs. Provide high speed internet access at community service hubs and build on workforce development programs such as Rec2Tech to increase access to careers in innovation and technology-based fields.

I2. Goal: The Hill District contains a network of connected parks and green spaces in addition to integrated natural areas that prioritize a robust tree canopy and habitat restoration to foster environmental stewardship and social bonds.

- a. **Policy: Increase access to quality parks and open space.** Open space in the Hill District should be maintained and expanded to ensure all residents have access to natural environments for recreation, relaxation, and ecological benefits.
 - I2.1 Strategy – Hill District Parks Plan Implementation.** Prioritize improvements to existing park amenities as outlined in the Hill District Parks Plans.
 - I2.2 Strategy – Green public and underutilized spaces.** Identify and improve underutilized and vacant land such as parking lots and areas in the right of way that can provide environmental benefit such as native plant gardens. This strategy should incorporate community gardens to create a comprehensive greening strategy.

12.3 Strategy - Park and open space inventory. Maintain an inventory of open spaces, their functions, and identified resident needs. This can be used to advocate for specific functions and design features with public and private investments in open space.

- b. **Policy: Preserve and expand tree canopy.** The tree canopy in the Hill District should be preserved and expanded to improve air quality, enhance biodiversity, and promote health and well-being, including helping to prevent heat-related health complications.

12.4 Strategy – Greenway expansion. Prioritize projects such as the Colwell Trail and the Coal Seam Trail that incorporate tree retention, hillside stabilization, and habitat restorations, while allowing for preservation of views and programming opportunities.

12.5 Strategy – Comprehensive tree canopy plan. Build on the work of citywide and local non-profits to create a cohesive neighborhood-wide tree canopy strategy that recognizes trees as vital and cost-effective infrastructure. This should include preserving existing trees in planned development, funding and planting new trees in alignment with the Greenprint Plan, and maintaining trees along streets, on private property, and in open spaces.

- c. **Policy: Restore and maintain natural habitats.** The City should strive to restore and maintain natural habitats in the Hill District through strategic planning, contextual development regulations, and community engagement.

12.6 Strategy – Hillside land use . Establish a comprehensive land use and environmental management approach to hillsides, especially in landslide prone areas and undermined areas that focus on invasive species management, stabilization, restoration, and long-term maintenance.

12.7 Strategy - Pollinator conversion programs. Implement pollinator gardens where feasible as a short- to mid- range holding strategy for vacant land through the Adopt-a-Lot Program.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX E: HEALTHY AND RESILIENT HILL DISTRICT

During the workshop/Action team meeting attendees engaged in an activity to identify stressors plaguing their Hill District community, which are outlined below categorized under Community, Mobility, Infrastructure, and Development:

Community

- Chronic illnesses like asthma.
- Mental health issues caused by chronic poverty.
- Chronic poverty.
- Violence caused by chronic poverty.
- Criminal justice system's effects.
- Lack of affordable childcare.
- Drug addiction.
- Lack of access to quality healthcare, especially Black maternal health.
- Access to quality fresh food.
- Schools and the pandemic.
- Trauma caused by white supremacy, institutional and systemic racism, intergenerational wellness, pathways, and governance.
- Lack of a collective voice that involves everyone, leading to substantial community dissension.
- The need and opportunity to include more of the community.
- Social services that do not include local residents.
- Lack of good public policy to protect Pittsburgh's vulnerable population (political involvement).

Development

- Housing insecurity.
- Presence of significant vacancy and poor conditions.
- Economic factors that are pricing residents out and general gentrification.
- The arduous process to access land owned by the City/URA/HA, restricting opportunity.
- Development processes in the Lower Hill causing internal community dissension.
- Lack of development at scale that responds to the community's needs.
- Residential stressors, such as gap funding for affordable housing and debt coverage.
- Lack of access to capital from public sources due to bureaucracy and low wealth/assets limiting private capital access.
- Institutional barriers that are insurmountable for residents.
- Lack of quality and safe housing.

Mobility

- Poor infrastructure-quality streets (sidewalks).

Infrastructure

- Air quality - smoke and foul-smelling air from business emissions upwind.
- Varmints.
- Lack of maintenance.



Tel. 00.000.0000.00
Email. info@yourwebsite.com
Web. www.yourwebsite.com