Review of Community Assets and Priorities

Prepared for

Duquesne University’s Center for Community-Engaged Teaching and Research Strategic Planning Process

January 13, 2017

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# Table of Contents

- Acknowledgements 3
- Executive Summary 4
- Introduction 7
- Methods 8
- Background 9
- **Current Community Priorities and Assets** 12
  - Common Themes 12
  - Community Development 13
  - Culture and Civic Engagement 19
  - Education and Skill Development 20
  - Health and Wellness 23
  - Housing 27
  - Public Safety 31
  - Transportation 33
- **Community Snapshots** 36
  - Hazelwood 36
  - Hill District 38
  - Hilltop 40
  - Uptown 41
- Sources 43
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Thank you!
Executive Summary

Commissioned by the Center for Community-Engaged Teaching and Research (CETR) at Duquesne University, this report serves as one input to CETR’s 2016-2017 strategic planning process. As a Spiritan institution, Duquesne University is committed to a practice of community engagement which prioritizes developing authentic relationships, walking with those who have been marginalized, and being open to new perspectives and approaches. As a result, it is important for community priorities to be centered in the strategic plan. The purpose of this report is to ensure that participants in the planning process have a shared understanding of key community assets, priorities and needs across the four communities with which Duquesne has strong relationships, a shared history, and a Spiritan presence: Uptown, Hill District, South Hilltop, and Hazelwood.

Methods
The content of this report is a summary of information distilled through reviewing community plans and needs assessments, attending community meetings, interviewing key stakeholders, and analyzing publicly available data.

Findings
Each of the four communities is unique, with its own vibrant culture, assets, challenges, and resources. The communities share many of the same goals, though their methods to achieve them may differ. In this summary, we share the most prominent priorities communities hold for themselves, grouped into seven categories. For more detail about these priorities, accompanying community assets, and descriptions of each neighborhood, please see the full report.
**Community Development**

Community stakeholders welcome development that bolsters their business districts and attracts much-needed amenities back into their neighborhoods. Yet they are also concerned about gentrification and growth that is not designed to benefit existing residents. Development planning should be equitable and holistic, such that community wellbeing is promoted in all life domains and everyone can participate and benefit from the growth. This includes efforts to:

- Revive business districts to include amenities for residents
- Include employment opportunities for residents in new businesses
- Incorporate local entrepreneurs into business development efforts and incubator opportunities
- Address stormwater management issues, incorporating greenways or developing new green spaces when possible
- Identify development opportunities that benefit residents, beyond bringing in new business

**Culture & Civic Engagement**

Communities are rich with cultural assets and mechanisms for engagement. Priorities for how these assets can be leveraged include:

- Increase collaboration between organizations, stakeholders and residents
- Increase investment in youth programming
- Better utilize existing neighborhood resources when serving student populations

**Education and Skill Development**

Quality workforce development and educational opportunities are top priorities in Duquesne’s focus communities. Eighty-seven percent of residents have less than a Bachelor’s degree. Anticipating and preparing residents for the skills necessary in a changing workforce is critical to helping communities thrive. Priorities include:

- Improving the quality and equity of public K-12 education
- Attract industry and businesses that are able to employ existing residents
- Develop training pipelines for growing industries
- Increase investment in skill development programs that are individualized and responsive to the needs of changing neighborhood demographics
- Create additional programs that address recidivism, hiring previously incarcerated individuals

**Health and Wellness**

Mitigating health risks and improving access to opportunities for wellness are important to residents in all communities. Among the multitude of ways in which positive health could be promoted, the opportunities of greatest priority include:

- Addressing environmental risk factors (e.g. air quality)
- Improving access to fresh food, especially produce
- Improving access to health care
- Increasing recreational opportunities
- Addressing behavioral health needs
Housing
Ensuring that residents have access to quality, affordable housing within their neighborhoods, and that new development does not displace current residents is a primary community concern. An aging housing stock and market forces drawing high-income renters back into urban centers create real challenges that the communities are preparing to tackle. Top priorities include:

- Maintaining and growing access to affordable housing
- Improving conditions of affordable housing (and oversight of landlords, public housing management)
- Ensuring low-income homeowners are able to maintain their homes in the face of rising costs
- Preventing speculators from buying and sitting on properties
- Access to first-time homebuyer programs and credit repair services

Public Safety
Residents value public safety and would like to see relationships with law enforcement and other forms of safety improve within their communities. While safety remains a concern and stakeholders seek partnerships to develop solutions, residents also prioritize working to change the face of their community, as they feel that perceptions are much worse than the reality. Priorities include:

- Crime reduction
- Improving police-community relations
- Safer sidewalks and street safety for pedestrians and bikers
- Better lighting, particularly near bus stops
- Addressing vacant and blighted properties

Transportation
Located close to downtown, Duquesne’s focus neighborhoods experience both benefits and challenges related to access to reliable, affordable transportation. Priorities for improving transportation include:

- Addressing traffic congestion and safety concerns in street planning and design
- Increasing frequency of buses during after-school hours and non-peak hours
- Improving lighting around bus stops and T-stops
- Locating Connect Card kiosks in communities
- Diversifying private transportation options for residents

Common Themes
The following themes are embedded across all of the opportunities and priorities community members raise, regardless of the life domains which are most impacted.

- Any planning, research, programming or development efforts in the community should be equitable and be centered around community voice.
- Investments in aging public and private infrastructure are critical for community growth and for residents to thrive across all life domains.
- Community members desire investments in environmentally sustainable practices and technology that benefit not only the environment and businesses, but low-income residents as well.
Introduction

This report serves as one input to inform the strategic planning process for the Center for Community-Engaged Teaching and Research (CETR) at Duquesne University. CETR engages in this strategic planning process at an exciting time for both the University and the communities in which its members live, work, and serve. The volume and interest in community-engaged activity continues to grow at the University, and the planning process will help ensure that efforts are strategic and resources are deployed in a way that has the maximum impact in local communities. Ken Gormley was inducted as the new President of the University in July 2016, and the CETR strategic planning team kicked off its efforts in August. President Gormley is a champion of community engagement. His appointment and the planning that will accompany the transition in leadership serves as an opportunity to reconsider the best ways to embed and support community-engaged teaching and research within the University. There is also a great deal of interest from other stakeholders in the redevelopment of the communities with which Duquesne has the closest relationships. The timing is ripe to step back and revisit community priorities and concerns, and identify where Duquesne is best situated to promote and support community interests over the next several years.

The content presented here reflects a summary of the assets, priorities and needs identified within communities proximate to Duquesne, and some of the regional needs assessments and planning efforts relevant to those priorities. This information was gathered and summarized for the purpose of ensuring that CETR’s strategic planning process is aligned with community voice and vision.

The four focus communities include Uptown, the Hill District, Hazelwood, and the South Hilltop.¹ These communities were selected due to their proximity to Duquesne University (identified by a star in Figure 3), a Spiritan presence within the community, and/or the long-standing relationships that exist between individuals and organizations within the communities and Duquesne University.

From the regular distribution of fresh produce in the Hilltop to the business incubators in the Hill District and Uptown, it is clear that these communities are bustling with assets and potential that lend themselves well to finding ways to strengthening partnerships with Duquesne.

¹ For the purposes of this report, Hill District communities include: Crawford-Roberts, Terrace Village, Bedford Dwelling, Middle Hill and Upper Hill. South Hilltop communities include: Arlington, Mt. Oliver Boro, Carrick, Knoxville, Beltzhoover, and Allentown.
Methods

The process for gathering information about community assets, priorities and needs was designed to collect, understand and test information that already existed within the communities. This effort does not represent a full needs assessment process in which new tools or efforts were used (such as community surveying) for gathering new information. The findings summarized in this report are the result of distilling information from a variety of sources, and then testing those findings with a few key stakeholders in the community.

The primary means for collecting information included:
- Reviewing community and strategic plans from the four focus communities
- Reviewing city and regional needs assessments and plans related to the community’s priority areas
- Attending community meetings
- Analysis of publicly available data (e.g. American Community Survey)
- Interviews with 3-4 key stakeholders within each focus community
- Input from members of the Community Assets & Priorities Sub-Committee of the CETR Strategic Planning Committee

Please see the Sources section for a complete list of stakeholder interviews and referenced planning documents.
Background

Duquesne University

Duquesne University is located in the Uptown neighborhood of the City of Pittsburgh, just east of Downtown and along the Monongahela River. Duquesne was originally founded as Pittsburgh Catholic College in 1878 by a group of Catholic missionaries known as the Spiritans, and the Spiritan identity has remained central to Duquesne’s identity and mission, throughout the University’s history and today. Carrying out the Spiritan identity involves being of service to others by developing authentic relationships, walking with those who have been marginalized, and being open to new perspectives and approaches.

A myriad of community-oriented programs and units have found homes within Duquesne’s division of Academic Affairs. From the early 1990s, Duquesne has had an array of community-serving centers and institutes throughout its nine schools. The University hosted a HUD Community Outreach Partnership Center initiative from 1994-2003. The University Core Curriculum was revised in 2005 to include (among other curricular changes) a university-wide service-learning course requirement for undergraduates. This course requirement later evolved into a two-tiered model of community-engaged learning, which prioritizes civic learning at an introductory level and civic engagement at an advanced level.

In 2014, the Provost created the Center for Community-Engaged Teaching and Research (to replace the Office of Service-Learning) to provide University-wide support and advocacy for engaged scholarship. It is this center that is leading the strategic planning process. The Center serves as a civic incubator for faculty, students, and community partners. It supports special projects and initiatives and stewards the University’s community-engaged learning program. In addition to providing programmatic support for community-engaged teaching and research, the Center’s endowment enables it to offer faculty and their partners grant funding for demonstrated mastery of community-engaged teaching, departmental curricular planning, community-engaged research seed monies, and project support.

Communities

Uptown, the Hill District, Hazelwood, and the communities of the South Hilltop all have their own unique histories and cultures. The following summary is a very brief overview of some of their shared history since University doors opened in 1878.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, European immigrants flocked to the neighborhoods closest to the industrial cores, with hopes of employment in the steel mills, coal mines, railroads, and other similar industries. Laborers settled next to downtown in Soho (Uptown), the Hill District, and along the
riverfronts, while white collar workers and merchants moved to the more suburban communities. Immigrants who settled in the Hilltop valued the close proximity to downtown and available transportation, first through horse-drawn street cars and, later, through electric street cars.

The population grew and communities developed cultural centers, schools, and business districts - remnants of which you can still see today in the various historical buildings. The Hill District was the cultural center for the African American community, with black-owned businesses and a thriving Jazz scene. Despite the devastating impacts of urban renewal policies that displaced thousands of families during the mid-1900s, the Hill District remained a cultural and civic hub through the late 1900s and into the present day.

Community populations in the industrial centers began to decline through the 1950s and 1960s as workers moved into neighboring communities. Highways and greater access to vehicles allowed people to move further outside the city. The steel industry began to decline in the 1970s and collapsed in the early 1980s. With the collapse of the steel industry, workers left the urban core, compounding the damage incurred by urban renewal policies, forced relocation, and discriminatory housing and lending practices (such as redlining) of earlier decades. The built and social fabric of the neighborhoods continued to disintegrate over the next few decades in the face of a focus on downtown redevelopment, disinvestment in the Uptown, Hilltop and Hill District communities, poverty on the rise, school closings, high incarceration rates, and a deterioration of the building stock.

Efforts to strengthen and rebuild the communities in recent decades have been led by a diversity of strong community leaders, including residents, clergy, politicians, business owners, etc. The challenges and opportunities present in the communities today make up the substance of the following report. For additional context about the demographics of the communities and how they differ from each other and the City of Pittsburgh as a whole, see Table 1 on the next page for a sampling of key population statistics.

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Table 1. Community Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hazelwood¹</th>
<th>Hill</th>
<th>Hilltop</th>
<th>Uptown²</th>
<th>City of Pittsburgh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (2014)</td>
<td>5,383</td>
<td>9,404</td>
<td>21,897</td>
<td>1,100 (6,600³)</td>
<td>306,045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (2014)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under age 18</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and older</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (2014)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White % of total pop.</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td></td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black % of total pop.</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty Rate (2012 ACS)</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>23% (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Properties (2012)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>13% (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-Occupied Housing (of occupied housing) (2012)</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>48% (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs located in neighborhood (2000)</td>
<td>1,589</td>
<td>2,577</td>
<td>3,310</td>
<td></td>
<td>283,902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate (2012)</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Attainment</strong> (of pop. 25 and older) (2012)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than HS Diploma/GED</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No access to vehicle (2015)</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Includes Glen Hazel
² Some Census data is not reliable for this community since it includes the Allegheny Jail population
³ The 6,600 estimate includes the population at the Allegheny County Jail and students from Duquesne University.
Sources: 2010 Census (Southwest PA Community Profiles, PGH SNAP); ACS 2010-2015 5-year estimates, ACS 2009-2014 5-year estimates, ACS 2008-2012 5 Year estimates
Current Community Priorities and Assets

Just as different aspects of a person’s identity all intersect and influence each other in a way that cannot be teased apart, so too do the different aspects of neighborhoods all interrelate and influence residents’ experiences in a community. When families lack safe and affordable housing, it impacts their health, education, safety, and financial stability. And when children cannot play outside due to speeding traffic, poor air quality, or criminal activity, it impacts their growth and development.

These relationships are evident in any conversation about community assets, needs and priorities, and we highlight them here to explicitly recognize that most community challenges do not fit neatly into one category or life domain. The content of this report is grouped into the seven categories and three prominent themes (displayed in Figure 4) as a tool for organization, and we encourage you to keep this broader frame in mind when considering the potential impact of addressing some of these priorities. Each of the themes and categorized priorities are detailed below, followed by brief community snapshots.

Figure 4. Community Priority Categories

Common Themes

Themes that bridge all the categories related to assets and priorities include:

- Equity and community voice
- Investments in aging infrastructure
- Environmental sustainability

Equity and community voice reflects the demand from residents that redevelopment efforts and investments in the community be fair, equitable and just, that current residents not be displaced, and that residents are included and centered in community planning efforts. This concern is voiced most strongly related to housing and economic development, but it is relevant to all areas of community life. For example, if green technology is selected as a mechanism for building sustainability within a
community, will the technology be offered to low-income residents, or just to businesses and institutions? 

The call for fair, equitable and just treatment comes in the context of city leaders using inclusive rhetoric while other low-income neighborhoods in the city are experiencing development that caters to high-income individuals and families (the average rent for a new one-bedroom unit in the city is $1,599). These are also neighborhoods with historical legacies of discrimination and marginalization, such as unfair lending practices (redlining) and urban renewal practices that included demolishing portions of the community and forcing resident relocation.

**Investments in aging infrastructure** are critical across life domains, as the decline of public and private infrastructure impacts safe housing, economic development, public safety, flooding, water quality, and mobility/transportation. In addition to the government investment necessary to address infrastructure needs within communities, low-income homeowners also have many challenges as the housing stock in Pittsburgh is aging and low home equity or resale value serve as barriers for homeowners to make necessary repairs.

**Environmental sustainability** is top of mind for many community leaders. Across all community domains, people are interested in seeing the wise use of resources, protecting and growing green spaces, and benefiting from the financial savings associated with sustainable practices. While businesses and developers are taking advantage of newer technology to reduce their environmental impact and save money on operating costs, community leaders are seeking opportunities for low-income residents to also have the opportunity to share in these benefits.

**Community Development**

Each of the focus communities were once thriving neighborhoods with a much larger population and an active business district. With smaller populations and limited purchasing power, residents now lack access to basic amenities and job opportunities, often having to travel outside of their neighborhood for food, health care, and employment. Business corridors include vacant, sometimes blighted, storefronts. Many community development planning efforts focus on opportunities to attract new business, customers, and residents to the area, while a few are more focused on how to better meet the needs of current residents. Community development extends beyond improving the economic conditions in a neighborhood, and includes other ways in which residents come together to improve their community.

Primary goals of residents include:

- Development planning is equitable and holistic, such that community wellbeing is promoted in all life domains and everyone can participate and benefit from the growth
- Reviving business districts to include amenities for residents
- New businesses include employment opportunities for residents

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6 Stakeholder interviews
• Local entrepreneurs are incorporated into business development efforts and incubator opportunities
• Address storm water management issues, incorporating greenways or developing new green spaces when possible

There are numerous initiatives and stakeholders involved in addressing these priorities, some of which are highlighted below. In addition to these specific efforts, a common asset that the neighborhoods share is their location. Uptown and the Hill District are located directly between the two largest economic generators in the region - Downtown Pittsburgh and Oakland. Hazelwood also borders Oakland and has significant acreage of riverfront property. Commuters have convenient access to downtown via Second Avenue and the Eliza Furnace Trail. Portions of the Hilltop are situated within five miles of the Southside, Uptown and Downtown and are located within close proximity to major highways and thoroughfares.

Local Community Development Initiatives

**EcoInnovation District**
The EcoInnovation District is a planning district in Uptown and West Oakland, and it is defined as “an area dedicated to sustainability, innovative development practices and inclusive job growth.”

Focused on the goals of economic development and job growth, planning efforts deliberately incorporate environmentally sustainable practices and infrastructure that promotes healthy walkable and livable communities.

Launched in the Fall of 2015, this has been an intensive planning effort which includes ongoing collaboration among a core group of community stakeholders, as well as community meetings, surveys, interviews, focus groups and online forums to allow for resident input and feedback. The process has been very comprehensive and incorporated information from other community plans, so community members are closely watching this process as a primary driver of future development in Uptown. Characterized as a process that promotes inclusive community growth, community organizers are both wary and hopeful that the product of the process and future development activities are sustainable, fair, and equitable.

At the time of this report’s publishing, the primary information gathering activities are complete and numerous options have been identified as potential strategies for achieving four key goals in Uptown.

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9 Stakeholder interviews
The strategies are being reviewed, and an action plan will be created in early 2017. The four key goals into which planning strategies were grouped include:  
- Preserve and strengthen the existing community  
- Encourage balanced, equitable, and green development  
- Provide choice in mobility  
- Invest in sustainable infrastructure

The City of Pittsburgh’s Planning Department plays a leadership role in the project, and Uptown Partners is one of the key stakeholder groups, tasked with providing robust outreach and engagement to ensure a transparent, inclusive and community-driven neighborhood plan. Duquesne University has had representation present throughout the planning process.

**Pittsburgh Central Keystone Innovation Zone**

A program of Urban Innovation21, The Pittsburgh Central Keystone Innovation Zone (PCKIZ) describes itself as “a consortium of higher education institutions, businesses, government agencies and community organizations, collaborating to enable the neighborhoods in central Pittsburgh to realize their potential within the knowledge-based economy of the 21st century.”

PCKIZ organizes various initiatives to develop and strengthen entrepreneurs in the Hill District and Uptown neighborhoods. These include networking events, technology showcases, individualized resources for entrepreneurs, and internship programs. These initiatives share the goal of helping to promote economic sustainability while helping to make central Pittsburgh a thriving environment for all residents.

While there are 25 Keystone Innovation Zones in Pennsylvania, the vast majority of PCKIZ is located in the underserved Hill District neighborhood. This differentiates it from other programs in Pennsylvania, as those programs are not situated in underserved communities. As a result, PCKIZ is positioned to have a greater positive impact within the Hill District.

**The GreenPrint**

The Greenprint is part of the Hill District’s Master Plan. It was developed in 2009-2010 with landscape architect Walter Hood, building on community visioning that had occurred previously through Find the

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The **Greenprint** details a vision for reconnecting the Hill District and adjacent communities with each other in a way that works in concert with its natural ecology. A product that included extensive community input, the plan details numerous strategies for sustainable community development.\(^{14}\)

The **Greenprint** was honored by the AIA (2009) and was featured in the Venice Biennale (2010). It is currently featured in an exhibit at the Cooper Hewitt Design Museum titled, "By the People: Designing a Better America." The exhibition highlights 60 collaborative designs from throughout the country that challenge the country’s persistent social and economic inequality.

The first project **Greenprint** project, August Wilson Park, was completed in September 2016. The renovations to the park included: new trees, an accessible entrance path, new landscaping, updated furniture, photos from the Charles "Teenie" Harris Collection from the Carnegie Museum of Art and an overlook with quotes from each of August Wilson's plays. Commissioned artworks will be installed in 2017. The partners in the project included the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, the Cliff Street Block Club and the Hill House Association. Work is in progress to identify the next **Greenprint** project.\(^{15}\)

**Hazelwood Greenways**

Of Pittsburgh’s 605 acres of greenway, Hazelwood is home to 184 acres, or 30 percent of the total. The greenways present opportunities to draw people into the neighborhood, promote health and wellbeing, and mitigate flooding problems due to stormwater runoff. Today, much of this remains potential, as investment is required to fully realize the benefits the green space could offer. Invasive plant species are abundant, accessible trails do not yet exist to link these spaces to other parks and trails nearby, and flooding from stormwater runoff remains a problem until local authorities invest in improving the infrastructure.

**Gladstone Middle School**

The Gladstone Middle School was taken offline by Pittsburgh Public Schools in 2001. A large site, the school sits on six acres and the building is 150,000 square feet.\(^{16}\) In recent years, the Hazelwood Initiative has worked with partners such as PCRG and Center for Life to engage in community planning for how this site could be redeveloped to meet the needs of existing residents. These planning efforts have been met with enthusiasm and participation from residents. Many personally attended or have family members who attended the school in the past, and this project is community-driven development, with community leaders driving the planning rather than external developers coming in to the site.\(^{17}\) Renovations to the site will be staged over time, potentially beginning as early as 2017. Plans are not finalized for how all of the space will be used, but at least some of the site will be renovated for affordable housing, and community spaces will be made available as well.\(^{18}\)

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\(^{15}\) Terri Baltimore. Hill House Association


\(^{17}\) Gladstone School Meeting. September 13, 2016. Fire Fighters Union Hall, Hazelwood; Stakeholder interview

Second Avenue
Second Avenue is the main corridor through Hazelwood, running from Greenfield through Hazelwood to the Glenwood bridge. It is also the primary business district in the neighborhood (see zoning map) and experiences heavy commuter traffic during rush hour.

Second Avenue contains many vacant properties and blighted storefronts after decades of decline. There is active renovation occurring at multiple sites, preparing for new businesses such as La Gourmandine bakery and Pittsburgh Community Kitchen. Staff at the Hazelwood Initiative spoke to the importance of bolstering Second Avenue in advance of new development at Almono. Not only is there a need for a stronger business district within Hazelwood today, but developing the readiness to take advantage of new business opportunities as development at Almono advances is critical to the whole neighborhood benefiting from the development rather than only the new businesses that will be below the tracks.

An Agenda for Equitable Development
Equitable Development: The Path to an All-In Pittsburgh was released by PolicyLink in partnership with Neighborhood Allies and Urban Innovation21 in September 2016. The report presents the following agenda to put all of the region’s residents on track to reaching their potential.

I. Raise the bar for new development.
   1. Set equitable development goals, performance metrics, and a reporting framework.
   2. Require publicly supported projects to advance equitable development.
   3. Ensure accountability through monitoring and enforcement.

II. Make all neighborhoods healthy communities of opportunity.
   4. Implement the city’s Affordable Housing Task Force recommendations.
   5. Track and monitor neighborhood opportunity and change to continuously inform policy strategies.
   6. Develop a community land trust strategy.
   7. Use publicly owned land for equitable development.
   8. Invest in resident-driven art, culture, and enterprise.

III. Expand employment and ownership opportunities.
   10. Implement targeted racial equity strategies as part of the Inclusive Innovation Roadmap.
   11. Leverage anchor institution spending to support inclusive business development.

IV. Embed racial equity throughout Pittsburgh’s institutions and businesses.
   12. Adopt a racial equity focus within government.
   13. Advance equity, diversity, and inclusion in the business community.

V. Build community power, voice, and capacity.
   15. Ensure sustainable funding for neighborhood-based organizations and development strategies.
   16. Fund tenant organizing and resident leadership development.

The Hazelwood Initiative is heavily involved in these planning efforts, and the community has support of other stakeholders as well, particularly the Heinz Endowments and ACTION-Housing.

**Almono**
The Almono site is a 178-acre brownfield site prime for development that is located along the Monongahela riverfront in Hazelwood.

There is strong hope within the community that the development occurs in a way that complements and benefits the rest of Hazelwood, rather being separate and disconnected, as the Waterfront is within Homestead. This includes job opportunities for residents, transportation patterns that do not simply pull drivers off of and away from businesses on Second Avenue, affordable housing units, and an integrated design so that the area feels like it is part of Hazelwood rather than a separate space. As a large riverfront property, it should also include community spaces that residents feel they are a part of. In fact, just using the name “Almono” sits poorly with some residents since the land is part of Hazelwood, not something separate.19

Some of the challenges to accomplishing the vision for the space include geography and economic drivers for development. Similar to Homestead, railroad tracks run through Hazelwood, creating a physical barrier between the Almono site and the rest of the neighborhood, except for at each end of the site. No new roadways or pedestrian bridges are planned to be built at this time. Current planning for the types of businesses to attract to the area is focused on Research and Development companies, which would primarily be bringing in new people to the community, not employing current residents. The questions that remain are which types of businesses will be located alongside them, and how well residents will benefit from employment opportunities and access to services that do not exist in the community today. The Greater Hazelwood Community Collaborative and Hazelwood Initiative are focused on remaining involved in these planning efforts.

**Bedford Dwellings**
At the moment, Hill District resident concerns seem to be concentrated on the Bedford Dwellings redevelopment planning. Key stakeholders like Gail Felton are attempting to keep resident voice at the center of these conversations, but fears persist regarding the extent to which resident perspective will be carried through to the final planning draft.20 For a more detailed description of the Bedford

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19 Stakeholder interview
20 Gail Felton PGH Talk Interview. July 9, 2015. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hw-PH3-ja2M
Dwellings development process, check the Choice Neighborhood Grant feature on Bedford Dwellings located on page 28.

**Warrington Avenue**

The Hilltop is experiencing a resurgence of investment in infrastructure and new businesses, specifically on Warrington Avenue and Brownsville Road. This investment is leading to increases in small business ownership and conversions of long standing vacant storefronts.

The growing maker movement and creation of coworking spaces are finding homes in some of these neighborhoods. This infrastructure helps bolster the success of local entrepreneurs. StartUptown and Work Hard Pittsburgh (located in Allentown) are coworking spaces, and Work Hard Pittsburgh also has a business incubator component. HackPittsburgh, a community-based maker space, is also located in the Uptown neighborhood.

**Culture & Civic Engagement**

All four communities have unique practices, programs and traditions that comprise their culture, and are rich with assets and opportunities for residents and members of the Duquesne community to engage productively. Stakeholder priorities for building on existing assets include creating more opportunities for youth to engage, better utilizing the communities’ existing cultural resources in schools, and increasing collaboration among keystone organizations.

There are more than 15 active community groups in the Hill District, ranging from behavioral health to youth services and resident-led initiatives. Multiple residents asserted the need for greater collaboration among organizations to better utilize resources. Programs and organizations such as Arts HD\(^{21}\) in the Hill District and the Mt. Oliver Knoxville Partnership in the Hilltop are promoting collaboration. Hill District residents also utilize social media to a large extent when organizing activities, meetings, or initiatives. There are at least four active Facebook groups that help facilitate this, including the Hill District Consensus Group, The Hill House Association, and The Hill District Education Council.

On a micro level, residents who value collaboration often find ways to enact it informally. Some examples of the results this collaboration yields include block clean ups, loosely organized back-to-school initiatives, and holiday drives. Due to the existence of cultural resources in their communities, residents feel strongly that schools should do a better job utilizing local resources.

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\(^{21}\) Stakeholder interview
when providing support to students instead of outsourcing the support to organizations located elsewhere. In the Hill District, this often takes place at Freedom Corner, a well-known gathering place at the corner of Centre Avenue and Crawford Street.\(^{22}\)

The culture of the Hilltop is rooted in long standing community groups and organizations both informally and formally organized. These groups include keystone organizations such as the Brashear Association, the Hill Top Alliance and groups comprised of key resident leaders, like the Carrick Block Watch and the Hilltop Men’s Group. The community regularly organizes seasonal festivals and block parties to encourage residents to build relationships. These efforts are often organized and publicized through the Mt. Oliver and Knoxville Neighborhood Partnership.\(^{23}\)

A diversity of arts organizations allow individuals of all ages the opportunity to develop, nurture and promote their talents through different forms of art. Programming at organizations such as Center of Life and POORLAW in Hazelwood encourages young people to think critically from a social justice lens and to use their musical talents to give voice to the messages they want to share with their community.\(^{24}\) Uptown is home to Art on Gist Street, which is a project to expand public art on all buildings on the street. Sculptor James Simon has hosted a variety of opportunities for residents to engage in the arts over the years, including partnering with Uptown Partners to work with residents to create the sign next to the Birmingham Bridge, welcoming commuters to the neighborhood.\(^{25}\)

The Latino Family Center relocated in Hazelwood in 2015. Outgrowing two previous spaces, the center serves families with young children addressing wellness and literacy for parents, as well as helping parents understand and promote healthy child development, screen children for developmental delays, and connect families with other community resources they may need. As a center focused on serving a specific ethnic population, families benefit not only from support they receive, but also a space where they can remain connected to each other and their cultural traditions.\(^{26}\)

Hazelwood is also home to several churches, though many congregations are predominantly comprised of individuals and families who live outside of the community and commute in for services. A few churches, such as St. Stephens, St. John and Hazelwood Presbyterian are frequented by Hazelwood residents and have an active presence in the community.\(^{27}\)

**Education & Skill Development**

Skill development to help adults compete in the workforce is a priority across communities, and was voiced particularly powerfully in Hazelwood. As of the 2014 American Community Survey, the unemployment rate among residents in the four neighborhoods was 13%, compared to 9% across the

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\(^{24}\) Stakeholder interviews

\(^{25}\) Stakeholder interview


\(^{27}\) Stakeholder interviews
whole City of Pittsburgh. Among the four communities, the Hill District has the highest unemployment rate at 19% - double the city’s rate.\(^{28}\) Residents want to both benefit from and be a part of new development activities, either through employment at the actual sites being developed, or throughout the rest of the community as new business is drawn in. This includes preparation or training for, and access to, jobs in construction, food services, etc.\(^{29}\) Equally important for communities to thrive is a healthy K-12 public education system, in which achievement gaps are diminished and students are learning the skills they will need to succeed.

The top priorities related to education and skill development include:

- Improving the quality and equity of public K-12 education
- Attract industry/businesses that are able to employ existing residents
- Develop training pipelines for growing industries

Each community values high quality educational experiences for their youth, yet there are barriers to overcome. Achievement gaps exist based on race and income, and the Pittsburgh Public School District was ranked 92 out of 103 ranked districts by the Pittsburgh Business Times.\(^{30}\) Holistic improvements to curriculum design, teacher preparation, and student evaluation are necessary.

Despite what is often communicated as a bleak educational environment, schools in these communities create bright spots for their students. One example is the Mahogany Mondays initiative at Pittsburgh Miller, an African Centered Academy. Principal Dr. Margaret Starks-Ross opens the school to vendors and community organizations on Monday mornings at 7:30. The goal is to give parents and students the opportunity to connect with neighborhood resources with which they may not otherwise be familiar. In the same sense, the weekly event provides an informal educational opportunity for students to learn about the Hill District and develop relationships with key community leaders.

Workforce development programming exists in some form in all four communities, and stakeholders see opportunities for enhancement. Residents value the opportunities these programs represent, but reference aspects such as inflexible scheduling, absence of childcare, and programmatic requirements as impediments to enrolling in or completing course work. Additionally, the programming is not always flexible enough to respond to changes in demographics in the community or opportunities in the job market. According to residents, programs promoting STEM and technical training are available, but not always well-positioned, well-timed or well-implemented.\(^{31}\)

\(^{28}\) The unemployment rate excludes residents who are not employed but not seeking work, as they are considered ‘not in the labor force.’ Source: Census Bureau. American Community Survey 2008-2012 5 Year Estimates. Table B23001. Sex by Age by Employment Status for the Population 16 Years and Over.

\(^{29}\) Stakeholder interviews


\(^{31}\) Stakeholder interview
The Allegheny Conference on Community Development commissioned a report which explores the jobs and skills that are in demand in the Pittsburgh region now and over the next ten years. The findings are very relevant for informing how to increase the number of pathways available for residents to become trained and then connected to emerging job opportunities. The findings highlight opportunities available to individuals with different levels of education. Approximately 78 percent of residents ages 25 and older in the focus neighborhoods do not have a college degree. Among those that do, 41 percent (9 percent of total population) have an Associate’s degree and 59 percent (13 percent of total) have at least a Bachelor’s degree. Certifications are increasingly required to secure positions, and as technology advances, increasing automation poses a challenge for this workforce as low skill jobs are replaced or blended into other positions that also require higher level skills and certifications.

Each of the ten occupations projected to have the fastest growth are connected to the IT, energy, and health care sectors. At the Bachelor’s degree level, emerging opportunities are in the STEM field. For individuals with sub-baccalaureate qualifications, jobs in health care and customer service are high opportunity occupations. Many of these positions still require specialized training, but not at the baccalaureate level, such as nurses, radiologic technicians, and dental hygienists. Customer service skills and computer literacy are two skillsets increasing necessary in a wide variety of positions. Customer service skills present a unique opportunity for organizations engaged in skill development to consider because there are few existing training pipelines, yet these skills are needed for roles throughout the service, technology, and health care industries.

Local Organizations and Initiatives

The Brashear Association

Among multiple programs, Brashear houses a robust set of education and workforce development initiatives. Brashear partners with neighboring organizations for referral services. The Self Sufficiency Program is one example of this system at work. It provides referrals to employment and training programs, public benefits and financial literacy services. Brashear also offers a “New Artist” program, hosted after school at Philips Elementary. The program seeks to expose students to introductory lessons in visual art and encourage creative expression.

33 Stakeholder interviews
**FOCUS**

Under the leadership of Paul and Christina Abernathy, FOCUS provides free medical care to Hill District residents and donates hundreds of school supplies, lunches, and lightly used clothing items to children and families in need. FOCUS uses “trauma informed care” in the behavioral health clinic it operates, where residents can receive counseling services. More recently, FOCUS started “adopting” blocks, and providing holistic care to residents in the form of financial literacy referrals, workforce training program referrals, education services and access to nutrition.

**Hill District Education Council (HDEC)**

The mission of the Hill District Education Council is to “ensure quality and equity in public schools in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, PA and to take action on the very crucial current issues facing public education in the community, including low student achievement, parent involvement, and professional accountability.” The Council hosts open meetings throughout the Hill District where local organizations and residents can learn about initiatives, relevant announcements and events. School Board members and school administrators often attend these meetings. This provides residents an opportunity to voice concerns and build relationships with them.

**Partnerships between Pittsburgh University Preparatory High School, Miller African Centered Academy, and Weil Elementary School**

Schools are seeking to better align themselves with one another through consistent communication. Residents seem to believe that the three schools “are in better shape than they used to be,” and much more “prone to take risks” for the benefit of their students. In late September, all three principals collaborated on a march for peace. The schools are also coordinating mentoring programming that catalyzes middle and high school students to mentor students at Weil.

**Health & Wellness**

Many factors within communities contribute to the health and wellness of residents, including the environment, access to fresh foods and produce, opportunities for recreation, access to physical and mental health care, and housing conditions. Among the multitude of ways in which positive health could

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40 Stakeholder interview
be promoted, the opportunities of greatest priority identified through community planning efforts include:

- Addressing environmental risk factors – air quality, water quality, stormwater management issues
- Improving access to fresh food, especially produce
- Improving access to health care
- Increasing recreational opportunities
- Addressing behavioral health needs

The current built environment is problematic for resident health and wellbeing. There is minimal space for recreation, poor air quality, limited access to fresh food, and health hazards that result from crumbling public infrastructure and vacant lots. Many of these challenges can be mitigated through mindful redevelopment, but some will require innovative solutions and investment (e.g. air quality).

The Allegheny County Health Department completed an intensive community needs assessment in 2015 through 2016 which included synthesizing the self-assessments of hospitals located in Allegheny County, surveying residents, analyzing data, and hosting community meetings. The five priority areas surfacing from the County-wide findings included the categories listed below. ‘Health equity’ was identified as a cross-cutting theme that applies to each area:

- Access
- Chronic Disease Health Risk Behaviors
- Environment
- Maternal and Child Health
- Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders

These categories align with both the needs most pressing within local neighborhoods, as well as health issues that are important to many, though not highlighted as prominently in planning efforts, such as chronic disease management for individuals with diabetes or lung disease. For each priority, a list of strategies is identified within the Plan. These strategies could inform opportunities for communities to attract a sharper focus of resources on issues they prioritize.

RAND has a longstanding relationship with the Hill District and has spent ample time developing rapport. Their first study, “PHRESH,” studied the relationship between the Hill District’s access to a grocery store and the health of residents beginning in 2011. The study followed just under 800 residents. The study found that the presence of the grocery store was not correlated with improvements in resident health, but did have an impact on resident perceptions of access to health food options. RAND will continue engagement with the community through the next study, “Green Spaces” which will study mobility and green space in the Hill. One resident pointed out the importance of the relatability of the RAND researchers: all of them are residents of, or were born and raised in, the Hill District.


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The following sections provide more detail on the issues highlighted by community stakeholders.

**Environment**

Environmental risk factors such as exposure to air pollution, lead, asbestos, and mold present significant health challenges to residents, particularly children and seniors. Risk factors are elevated in these focus communities due to traffic congestion, poor housing conditions, the city’s topography, and crumbling infrastructure. Residents also express concerns about poor air quality in areas with extended construction or redevelopment. In the Hilltop community, Brownsville Road is one example of cause for air quality concerns. Construction efforts cause increased dust and debris to not only coat the businesses on the Brownsville Road corridor, but also extend onto resident housing as well.43

A call for viewing community development and public health through an equity lens is echoed throughout local planning efforts and the County’s Plan for a Healthier Allegheny. This lens is particularly necessary as stakeholders plan for how to address environmental risk factors and improve sustainability since low-income communities have historically experienced environmental racism and marginalization. For example, there are 19 lanes of traffic in Uptown between the Boulevard of the Allies and Fifth Avenue. Many are heavily traveled routes, and the traffic contributes to very poor air quality for residents. This area is highlighted in the map in Figure 10,44 which shows areas with poor air quality in red. When some of the highways were built, they not only cut off residents from other community assets, but no resources were put into place to mitigate the impact. New measures to improve air quality are included among potential strategies for the Ecollnovation District.45

**Fresh Produce and Grocery Options**

Residents value access to fresh produce and affordable grocery options. Both the Hill District and Hilltop have established grocery stores, but some residents expressed that the stores are inconsistent in the quality of fresh food options they provide. Uptown and Hazelwood are food deserts with significant barriers to accessing produce for individuals who do not have access to a vehicle. In these communities, urban farms and gardens are cited as assets, and residents seek to expand on what currently exists.46

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43 Stakeholder interviews
45 Ecolnnovation District. “What Are We Learning?” October 2016. Available at http://www.ecoinnovationdistrict.org/what-are-we-learning
46 Stakeholder interviews
While there is some level of programming that offers fresh food options in each of the communities, the programs do not offer access on a daily basis, and they are often coordinated through an organization or religiously affiliated group. This sometimes causes gaps in outreach and communication efforts. But there are also examples of collaborative efforts that expand access in innovative ways.

For example, in Hazelwood, Dianne Shenk operates Dylamato’s Market, whose mission it is to “partner with other locally-owned micro-businesses to create viable livelihoods and access to fresh, healthy foods in the Hazelwood community.”47 They purchase fresh produce and baked goods from local residents who are entrepreneurs or have urban gardens, and make the products available in the store on a regular basis. At the same time, St. Stephens Parish has a commercial kitchen in Hazelwood that is accessible to local organizations and entrepreneurs. Meals on Wheels operates out of the space, and so does Fishes and Loaves -- a food club through which residents with limited mobility can request items to be purchased from the Strip District two times per month, for pickup within their neighborhood.48

Access to Health Care

Access to health care remains a barrier for residents. Many are low-income and face financial barriers to accessing care, even if they have insurance. In addition to financial barriers, some communities lack local health centers (primary care, dentists, pharmacies, etc.) and transportation barriers compound issues related to access. Common health challenges within the communities include asthma and diabetes. Many older residents experience residual health problems from working in the mills before they closed.49 Duquesne’s Pharmacy program offers support to residents in partnership with FOCUS Pittsburgh, but gaps in healthcare access remain a concern.50

Recreation

Opportunities for recreation vary by community, and increasing the development of available green spaces and safe places for youth recreation is a shared priority across communities. Many recreational assets are already in place, and community stakeholders speak to the need to leverage existing resources and address the barriers and opportunities unique to each neighborhood.51 For example, Hazelwood has some excellent opportunities for outdoor recreation, but very little to offer at night or in

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48 Stakeholder interviews
49 Stakeholder interviews
50 Stakeholder interview
51 Stakeholder interviews
inclement weather. The Hill District has excellent indoor resources, but residents in Uptown with transportation barriers may struggle to access them.

Examples of existing assets within the Hill District include the Jeron X. Grayson Center, the Carnegie Library, the newly developed August Wilson Park, and the Hill District YMCA. In the Hilltop, the Warrington Recreation Center, the newly reopened Carnegie Library on Brownsville Road, and McKinley Park are excellent resources for youth. Hazelwood is home to a spray park, community center, outdoor hockey rink, community gardens, and two playgrounds. Local football teams play at Burgwin field. Uptown has the most limited options in its residential core, but there are community gardens, a playground for young children, and the potential to utilize spaces developed by nearby institutions.\textsuperscript{52}

\textit{Behavioral Health}

A common public health concern among residents is the number of individuals and families struggling with addiction and mental illness. In addition to improving access to treatment and supportive services for individuals with behavioral health needs, community organizers also spoke to the need for stakeholders to be thoughtful about how to better engage this population in community planning efforts so their needs are understood and reflected.\textsuperscript{53}

\textit{Family Support Assets}

Several community-based organizations offer support to families with children, including the Latino Family Center, Center for Family Excellence, Center of Life, Hilltop Family Care Connection, and many others. Types of assistance are varied and range from coaching new parents and helping them understand child development, to assistance meeting basic needs (e.g. bedding), to managing conflict with teenagers. These supports are vital to family and community wellbeing. They support parents in monitoring and fostering healthy development for their children, while also building social connections, strengthening family bonds, and promoting parental physical and mental health.

\textit{Housing}

As low-income communities with reinvestment potential, protecting and growing the number of safe, affordable housing options is a high priority. Maintaining access to housing within one’s own community

\textsuperscript{52} Stakeholder interviews
\textsuperscript{53} Stakeholder interviews
is important because housing is about more than a place to sleep – it is about community and stability. When families are forced to move to different areas in the region, they may struggle to maintain the connections and supports which are critical to their wellbeing, including friends, family, employment, child care, health care providers, churches, etc.

Community priorities include:
- Maintaining and growing access to affordable housing
- Improving conditions of affordable housing (and oversight of landlords and public housing management)
- Ensuring low-income homeowners are able to maintain their homes in the face of rising costs
- Preventing speculators from buying and sitting on properties
- Access to first-time homebuyer programs and credit repair services

Residents’ greatest fear is that development practices and gentrification which will result in rent and housing costs moving out of reach, the demolition or removal of subsidized or rent-controlled apartments, and unfair eviction practices, including forced relocation.

This concern is founded in a recent rise in housing costs and loss of affordable units within their neighborhoods and other areas of the city, such as East Liberty. A Housing Needs Assessment\(^\text{54}\) was prepared for the Pittsburgh Affordable Housing Task Force, and the findings quantified resident experiences with rising costs. Since 2000, median gross rent has increased by 59%, while median renter income has remained flat, at approximately $26,000 per year. During the same time, Pittsburgh has lost more than three-fifths of its low-cost rental housing (less than $500 per

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month), as high-cost rentals have increased six-fold. The average rent for a new 1-bedroom apartment today is $1,599.55

Within the City of Pittsburgh, there is a shortage of approximately 20,000 units of housing that are affordable and available to households earning at or below half of the City’s median household income. Housing is considered to be affordable if the costs do not exceed 30 percent of a household’s income. In Pittsburgh, roughly one-third of all households and 45 percent of all renter households are beyond that threshold and paying more than they can afford on housing. Approximately 23,400 households are paying more than half of their income on housing costs.56

The housing markets in each neighborhood share some similarities, as well as differences. Occupancy and homeownership rates vary by community. The Hilltop has the lowest vacancy rate at 17 percent, and Uptown has the highest rate of vacancies at 23 percent, or 1 in every 4 houses. The Hill District has the lowest rate of owner-occupied housing at 27 percent, while Uptown also has the highest rate of owner-occupied housing at 64 percent.57 The vacancy and owner-occupancy rates for Uptown are likely related, as one of the concerns within the community is that speculators have been buying vacant properties and sitting on them until the market flips and they are able to turn large profits.58 If this occurs, the rate of owner-occupied housing would likely drop along with the vacancy rate.

High vacancy rates pose challenges within communities because blighted properties create risks to public safety and reduce housing values.59 Communities are exploring a few different avenues to address these challenges. Communities are organizing their own clean-up efforts and training residents on how to combat blight. Community development organizations purchase blighted lots for rehabilitation and resale to local or low-income homebuyers, and they participate in the Vacant Property Working Group, a program of the Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group. These practices, and the ability to engage in land banking, allow communities to limit how many properties are purchased by speculators or developers who do not have the community’s interests in mind. Communities also work with local government to improve code enforcement and maintenance of city-owned lots.60

Planning and Action Grant funds will also enable activities including:

- Reclaiming and recycling vacant property into community gardens, pocket parks, farmers' markets, or land banking;
- Beautification, place making, and community arts projects;
- Homeowner and business façade improvement programs;
- Neighborhood broadband/Wi-Fi;
- Fresh food initiatives; and
- Gap financing for economic development projects.


58 Stakeholder interviews
60 Stakeholder interviews
Similarities among neighborhoods include an aging housing stock, with some homes featuring great historical attributes. Yet, many homes are in disrepair. Housing values are low, so homeowners lack equity in their homes. This makes repairs and upkeep more challenging to afford. There are ways in which community leaders are trying to actively address these issues, and multiple organizations operate small programs that are designed to reduce blight, improve the housing stock, and help residents gain and maintain homeownership in the community. Some organizations purchase blighted properties, rehabilitating them, and then selling them to low and moderate-income individuals, often existing residents of the community (e.g. Hazelwood Initiative). Other programs provide homeowners with financial assistance to maintain their homes or make modifications (e.g. Freedom Unlimited Home Repair Program). ReBuilding Together is an AmeriCorps program that provides critical home repairs for eligible residents. They have had a presence in some communities for many years. Residents also express a desire for additional homeownership programming and credit repair services located in their neighborhoods, similar to the Dollar Bank first time homebuyer program in Downtown Pittsburgh.

In the Hilltop, housing programming is focused on improving blighted properties and making it easier for residents to acquire vacant lots adjacent to their homes. Research conducted by the Hilltop Alliance revealed one reason for blighted or seemingly abandoned properties is due to residents passing away without a legally recognized process for transferring their properties to a living relative or next of kin. To combat this, The Hilltop Alliance created the Free Personal Wills Program and the Side Yard Grant Program. The Free Personal Wills Program connects residents 50 years and older with an attorney that assists with the formation of a Will that clearly states the procedure for transferring their home in the event of their passing. The Side Yard Grant programming encourages homeowners to purchase side lots by offering to reimburse costs associated with the acquisition process through the City of Pittsburgh. While both of these programs require homeowners to qualify, they offer viable options for homeowners.

Challenges related to home maintenance are not isolated to homeowners. Many renters are in substandard housing and struggle to hold their landlords and managers of public housing accountable to timely repairs that are important to residents’ health and safety, such as mold, plumbing repairs, pest/rodent control, and structural issues. Within the public housing communities, tenant councils exhibit leadership by helping residents know their rights and acting to address concerns related to inadequate maintenance (Glen Hazel, Bedford Dwellings, Oak Hill, DeRaud).

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61 Stakeholder interviews; www.freedom-unlimited.org
For residents experiencing housing insecurity, Uptown and the Hill District house several organizations that provide emergency shelter and transitional housing. These include Bethlehem Haven, Operation Safety Net, and several others.\textsuperscript{66}

In addition to advocacy within communities, there are centralized efforts to advocate for and address gaps in affordable housing within the City of Pittsburgh. An action recently taken by government officials was to create the Pittsburgh Affordable Housing Task Force. The Task Force issued its recommendations in May 2016, and they include establishing a Pittsburgh Housing Trust Fund, better utilizing the 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), incentivizing inclusionary housing, and preserving existing affordable housing.\textsuperscript{67} Homes for All Pittsburgh, a local group that advocates for affordable housing and housing justice across the city, considers the recommendations to be weaker than necessary, but a step in the right direction.\textsuperscript{68} At this time, action plans have not been developed to implement the recommendations.

The Trust Fund would include oversight by both a governing and advisory board, through the Urban Redevelopment Authority. The funds would be focused on helping those most in need by ensuring:

- 50% of the funds should be targeted to families and individuals earning at or below 30% of Area Median Income (AMI);
- 25% of the funds should be targeted to families and individuals earning at or below 50% of AMI; and
- 25% of the funds should be targeted to families and individuals earning at or below 80% of AMI.\textsuperscript{69}

Inclusionary housing refers to practices that require affordable units be included in new housing development. The recommendations include prioritizing the inclusion of affordable housing on all developments throughout the City of 25 units or greater that receive public benefits, and creating standard criteria for Affordable Housing Opportunity Overlay zones for the strongest markets for new market-rate housing development that would require inclusion of affordable units. The affordable units would be for households at or below 50% AMI for rental units and households at 80% AMI or below for home ownership.\textsuperscript{70} The Task Force did not issue a recommended proportion of affordable units to be included in each project.

**Public Safety**

Public safety encompasses many aspects of a person’s experience within a community. Residents envision a community environment in which they can live, work and play with minimal fear or risks to


\textsuperscript{68} Homes for All Community meeting. August 24, 2016. Human Services Building, Downtown Pittsburgh


their health, which includes safety from crime, safe sidewalks and streets, proper lighting, and maintained properties. Shared priorities among communities include:

- Crime reduction
- Pittsburgh Police engaging in community policing practices, including a more visible presence
- Safer sidewalks and street safety for pedestrians and bikers
- Better lighting, particularly near bus stops
- Addressing vacant and blighted properties

Improving public safety is a top priority across neighborhoods. The topic surfaces at community meetings held on various topics, and it was recently quantified in Uptown when residents were surveyed about what would make their community “a better place to live, work and study.” Students and non-student residents rated improving public safety as the top factor, accounting for 28 percent of responses. At the same time, residents across communities express concern about media coverage and public opinion, asserting that the perception of their communities is worse than the reality.

While violent crime gets media attention, Type I violent crimes (e.g. aggravated assault, robbery, homicide) only account for about 8 percent of criminal activity in the focus neighborhoods. Type I property crime (e.g. theft, burglary) accounts for about 30 percent, and the remaining 62 percent are Type II crimes, such as drug violations, vandalism, and simple assault (no weapon or serious injury). To combat these more common issues and improve police-community relationships, residents would like to see a more visible police presence (versus undercover) throughout the neighborhood, beyond when police are responding to calls. The future of community-police relations is uncertain at this point as Pittsburgh is in a time of transition with Police Chief Cameron McLay resigning in November 2016. Incoming Chief, Scott Schubert, asserts that the vision Chief McLay established for the force will continue to be carried out, which includes implementing community policing, addressing implicit bias, increasing the use of body cameras, and other recommendations of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing.

Aside from crime, primary concerns related to safety come from risks related to speeding traffic, poorly designed intersections, poor lighting, and inadequate sidewalks or other public infrastructure (e.g. stormwater grates). These issues present challenges for pedestrians and cyclists. Investments in improving street safety will be promoted by the Complete Streets policy adopted by the City of Pittsburgh in November 2016. See the Transportation section for more details.

72 Community meetings
74 Stakeholder interviews; Gladstone School Meeting. September 13, 2016. Fire Fighters Union Hall, Hazelwood
76 EcolInnovation District. “What Are We Learning?” October 2016. Available at http://www.ecoinnovationdistrict.org/what-are-we-learning; Stakeholder interviews
Finally, vacant and inadequately maintained properties bring a variety of safety risks, especially for children living nearby.\textsuperscript{77} Some risks include higher levels of drug activity if vacant buildings are not properly boarded and people are able to enter and use the space. There is also an increased risk of fire or injury if individuals are in properties that are not maintained for safe habitation.

In practice, ensuring public safety requires a multifaceted strategy that depends equally on residents, organizations and institutions to be successful. Sometimes this materializes as informal resident groups, while other times initiatives are housed within established businesses or organizations. In recent years, residents began using social media to organize public safety efforts, and continue to leverage it to spread the word about events, initiatives, marches, or gatherings taking place. Examples of this include marches for peace organized in the Hill District in the wake of increased police brutality and spreading “save the date” messages for council meetings using Facebook groups. The Hill House also encourages residents to become first responders themselves so there is more community representation in the field of public safety.\textsuperscript{78}

\textbf{Transportation}

Neighborhoods proximate to Duquesne University have both assets and challenges related to transportation. Assets include reliable access to public transportation routes that are serviced throughout the day, not just during peak traffic hours, and the presence of rideshare services. In Uptown and the Hill District, the geographic location also allows residents without limited mobility to access many essential services and amenities by walking or biking.

Challenges include the limited reach of public transportation routes (most travel in one direction toward downtown, and not into other adjacent communities), traffic congestion, safety concerns, and barriers to participating in rideshare services.

Community priorities for improving transportation include:

- Address traffic congestion and safety concerns in street planning and design
- Increase frequency of buses during after-school hours and non-peak hours
- Improve lighting around bus stops and T-stops
- Locate Connect Card kiosks in communities
- Diversify private transportation options for residents

Public transportation plays a vital role in the four communities, as 37 percent of households do not have access to a vehicle.\textsuperscript{79} Located along main arteries into the city, public buses are available with some degree of frequency along the main streets that lead into Downtown Pittsburgh (Fifth Ave, Forbes Ave, Centre Ave, Second Ave, Warrington Ave). Along with this access comes congestion, which is particularly


challenging for residents in Uptown since traffic congestion occurs outside of the typical rush hour windows when there are events at PPG Paints Arena. The congestion creates transportation challenges for residents because there are not alternative routes for them to access.

The City of Pittsburgh and the Allegheny County Port Authority are collaborating on an effort to plan for a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system that would run through the busy corridor in Uptown and Oakland. This would address congestion and rider experience for users of public transit. If BRT is implemented in the neighborhood, it would not only impact transportation, but economic development in the area as well.80

Public transit users would also like to see greater access to routes that bridge neighborhoods, an increase in the frequency of service during non-peak hours - particularly after youth leave school - and improving the ease with which users can access and load their Connect Card (fare card). While portions of the Hilltop, Uptown and the Hill District are within close proximity to Downtown Pittsburgh, none of these communities contain a Connect Card Kiosk.81 This limits access to refilling Connect Cards at the beginning of the week or purchasing monthly passes. Residents recognize that the cards can be refilled online, yet the 72-hour waiting period presents challenges.82

Improving transportation safety for all individuals, regardless of their mode of transportation, is increasingly part of the public dialogue. Streets and sidewalks within the focus communities do not have helpful safety features built into them yet, such as extended curbs, protected bike lanes, and well-designed crosswalks. Making these improvements also benefits drivers, as many of these features discourage distracted driving and speeding, thereby reducing accidents.83

Recent action in city government suggests there may be new opportunities for addressing some of these community priorities in collaboration with local government. The City of Pittsburgh is launching a Mobility and Infrastructure Department in 2017 which will be responsible for transportation planning.84 The Pittsburgh City Council also adopted the Complete Streets Policy in November 2016. This policy asserts that the philosophy of designing complete streets (road networks that are designed for everyone, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists and freight carriers) shall serve as a starting point for all transportation improvement projects in the City.85 This is an important shift that

81 Kiosk Photo: http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wesa/files/styles/medium/public/201310/ConnectCard-NegleyStation.jpg
83 EcoInnovation District. “What Are We Learning?” November 2016. Available at http://www.ecoinnovationdistrict.org/what-are-we-learning
puts the onus on planners to design safe and effective infrastructure, or justify why an exception is necessary, rather than on community members to advocate for inclusive planning.\textsuperscript{86}

Additionally, lighting improvements are included in the City of Pittsburgh’s Roadmap for Inclusive Innovation. The focus of that initiative is to replace all streetlights with LED technology to reduce energy consumption.\textsuperscript{87} To date, 15 percent of lighting has been replaced, and this effort may also present an opportunity for community stakeholders to work with city officials to identify and address lighting deficiencies due to spacing or insufficient numbers of lights throughout their communities.

Residents also utilize private transportation services in addition to public. Rideshare services such as Uber and Lyft have created new options for riders, but residents without bank accounts cannot utilize them. As policymakers address how to support an infrastructure that legitimizes automated rideshare programs, a focus on equitable access also calls for evaluating how the City can ensure that options such as jitneys are also safe and available to residents reliant on cash transactions.


Community Snapshot: Hazelwood

Hazelwood is a neighborhood of the City of Pittsburgh which is situated along the north shore of the Monongahela River, east of Greenfield and south of Squirrel Hill. Many within the community consider themselves to be part of ‘the Greater Hazelwood area,’ which includes Glen Hazel, a public housing community Northeast of Hazelwood’s formal boundary.

Once home to Jones & Laughlin Iron and Steel and about 13,000 residents,¹ the greater Hazelwood area now has about 5,400 residents, and a large brownfield site in the beginning stages of redevelopment (known as Almono).


Key Statistics:
- Population Over Age 60: 27%
- Percent People of Color: 51%
- Poverty Rate: 24%
- Jobs in Neighborhood: 1,589
- Owner-Occupied Housing: 48%
- Greenways: 184 acres

Community Priorities:
- Affordable, quality housing
- Workforce/skill development
- Public safety
- Redevelopment that benefits rather than displaces residents

Community Assets:
- Strong collaboration among community leaders
- Greenways
- Cultural organizations
- Invested residents

Who and What to Watch
- Almono site development
- Center of Life – Tim Smith
- Gladstone Middle School development
- Glen Hazel Community Council – Mike Wilson
- Greater Hazelwood Community Collaborative (GHCC)
- Hazelwood Initiative – Sonya Tilghman
- St. Stephens Parish
Strengths of the Hazelwood community include its residents and its community leaders. A few of the key leaders, institutions, and collaborative groups are highlighted below.

The Greater Hazelwood Community Collaborative (GHCC) grew out of the Duquesne University-Hazelwood Partnership, and is a membership group of about 30 agencies who meet monthly and collaborate to strengthen their individual and collective ability to address the various aspects of a healthy community. Members include organizations based in the community, as well as some who are based outside but are actively engaged in Hazelwood. Currently led by Tim Smith of Center of Life, the GHCC is preparing for a community-wide planning effort that will result in an actionable plan for Hazelwood, centered around the question ‘What will make people’s lives better?’.

The Hazelwood Initiative (HI) is a community-based community development corporation that promotes social and economic development within Hazelwood. HI leverages their relationships and partners with organizations inside and outside of Hazelwood to promote growth and revitalization that benefits residents and bolsters the community as a whole. Their primary activities include promoting responsible and equitable real estate investment and development, supporting entrepreneurs and small business owners, and promoting homeownership and home maintenance.

Center of Life and POORLAW are two community-based organizations that have a clear presence in the community. Among their varied activities, each promotes opportunities for youth to engage in the arts, with support that allows them to explore their culture and connect with their community. For example, Center of Life includes a production studio and features student-centered jazz programming where students learn about music theory and other fundamental skills as they prepare to perform. The KRUNK Movement is a youth program in which students use the elements of hip-hop to communicate positive messages to their peers about mental and physical health. POORLAW runs the Hazelwood Youth Media Justice Program, an after-school program in which youth learn to utilize the arts to document and give voice to their perspectives through a social justice lens.

The Glen Hazel Community Resident Management Corporation is comprised of residents of the Glen Hazel housing community, and their mission is to implement socially and economic development driven activities, aimed at improving the lifestyle and living conditions of the residents of Glen Hazel and surrounding areas. These activities include, but are not limited to, workforce development.

St. Stephens is particularly well-positioned within the community to support residents spiritually, physically and economically. An institution with Spiritan leadership, St. Stephens has multiple physical spaces made available to the community. Chief among them is a commercial kitchen, out of which Meals on Wheels operates, along with local entrepreneurs who run businesses from their home and benefit from use of the space.

88 Stakeholder interviews
89 Stakeholder interviews; Center of Life. Accessed October 2016. Available at http://centeroflife.net/
90 Stakeholder interviews; POORLAW. Accessed October 2016. Available at https://poorlawhazelwood.wordpress.com/
91 Stakeholder interviews; Glen Hazel Community Resident Management Corporation website. Available at https://www.facebook.com/pg/Glen-Hazel-Community-Resident-Management-Corporation-254536321228441/about/?ref=page_internal
92 Stakeholder interviews
Community Snapshot: Hill District

Key Statistics:
Population: 9,404
Population Under Age 18: 17%
Population Over Age 60: 23%
Percent People of Color: 83%
Poverty Rate: 45%
Jobs in Neighborhood: 2,577
Owner-Occupied Housing: 27%
Vacancies: 20%

Assets:
❖ Close proximity to downtown
❖ Close proximity to anchor institutions
❖ Heavy investment in redevelopment

Opportunities:
❖ Expand HD Arts Artist Residency Program
❖ Greater collaboration between neighborhood businesses and organizations
❖ Expand partnerships for behavioral health services

Who & What to Watch:
❖ Paul Abernathy: FOCUS; Trauma Informed Care
❖ Terri Baltimore & Sharnay Hearn: Hill House Association
❖ Reverend Glenn Grayson: Center that C.A.R.E.S & The Jeron X. Grayson Center
❖ Hill CDC, Hill Consensus Group & Hill District Education Council
❖ Energy Innovation Center: Bill Generett, Urban Innovation21 & Dr. Andre Samuels, The Citizen Science Lab
❖ Councilman Daniel Lavelle and Representative Jake Wheatley

Keystone Organizations & Programs
AJAPO Immigrant Refugee Services
FOCUS Pittsburgh
Center that C.A.R.E.S / HYPE
Energy Innovation Center
Hill District CDC
Hill District Consensus Group
Hill District Education Council
Hill District YMCA
The Citizen Science Lab
The Hill House Association
The Jeron X. Grayson Center
Youth Organizers for Educational Change

Featured Local Businesses
Abe’s Market
Dollar Bank
Citizen’s Bank
Family Dollar
Lavelle Real Estate
Shop n’ Save
Two Cousins Beauty Supply
Ujamaa Collective
Wong’s Market
Urban Innovation21

**Community Development & Initiatives**
August Wilson House
Bedford Dwellings Development Planning
Hill District Community Garden
Mahogany Mondays (Miller Middle School)
The Green Print” in partnership with Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy
Community Snapshot: Hilltop

Key Statistics:
- Population: 21,897
- Population Under Age 18: 25%
- Population Over Age 60: 19%
- Percent People of Color: 38%
- Poverty Rate: 23%
- Jobs in Neighborhood: 3,310
- Owner-Occupied Housing: 62%
- Vacancies: 17%

Assets:
- Close proximity to downtown
- Magee at Mt. Oliver (OBGYN)
- Collaboration between neighborhood businesses and organizations

Opportunities:
- Y-Creator Space needs investment in staffing capacity, could use students to assist with STEM related programming and evaluation
- Additional research conducted on housing and infrastructure
- Sustainability planning for neighborhood efforts like Fresh Fridays and Blight Fight

Who & What to Watch:
- Brashear High School, Philips and Grandview Elementary School programming
- Brashear Association & Hilltop Alliance
- Dr. Jamil Bey: Urban Kind Consulting & The South Hilltop Men’s Group
- Kevin McNair: 1 Nation Mentoring

Keystone Organizations & Programs
- Brashear Association
- Carnegie Library
- Hilltop Alliance
- Jewish Children and Family Services
- YMCA: Y Creator Space Program
- RE360

Featured Local Businesses
- Black Forge Coffee
- De La Soul Catering
- Spool
- Sweet Peaches
- Work Hard Pittsburgh

Community Development & Initiatives
- Knoxville Mt. Oliver Partnership
- Carrick CDC
- Fresh Fridays & Fall Fest
- Hilltop Men’s Group
- Property Stabilization Program
- Blight Fight Program
- Annual Hilltop Summit
Community Snapshot: Uptown

Uptown (also referred to as the Bluff, and includes Soho) is a community in the City of Pittsburgh located directly east of Downtown and is bordered by the Hill District to the north and Oakland to the east. Uptown has a relatively small, but growing, resident population of about 1,100 people (excluding students living on campus). It is home to Duquesne University, UPMC Mercy hospital, and PPG Paints Arena (Pittsburgh Penguins).

Key Statistics:

- Poverty Rate: 37%
- Unemployment Rate: 10%
- Owner-occupied housing: 64%
- Vacancies: 27%

Community Priorities:
- Improve public safety
- Affordable, quality housing
- Redevelopment that is sustainable, just and equitable
- Stronger business district with restaurants and amenities for residents

Community Assets
- Anchor institutions
- Location
- Arts and innovation
- Social service agencies

Who and What to Watch:
- ACTION-Housing, Inc
- Bus Rapid Transit
- EcoInnovation District
- Gist St. Arts District
- NRG (District Energy facility)
- StartUptown
- Uptown Partners of Pittsburgh
- Urban agriculture
Uptown is a unique Pittsburgh neighborhood. A significant portion of its geographic area is comprised of large institutions, it has a small but growing population, a strong startup and arts community, and an ideal location between Oakland and Downtown – the second and third largest economic drivers in PA. The community is very service-rich, with many social service organizations located within Uptown’s small geographic area. A few of the key actors in the community are described below.

The Ecological Innovation District is a planning district in Uptown and West Oakland, and the planning process has included a comprehensive review of the Uptown community’s needs and potential strategies for growth and development. A significant investment of resources from the City of Pittsburgh and many other stakeholders, this process is likely to be very influential in Uptown’s near future, and serve as a model for other City neighborhoods.

Uptown Partners of Pittsburgh (UP) is a community-based organization of residents, institutions, and business owners—working together to build a vibrant community. Primary areas of focus include promoting mixed-income housing development, encouraging sustainable development, and leading community beautification projects.

Raqueen Bey started Mama Africa’s Green Scouts to teach youth and their families about urban agriculture, sustainability, and justice. They promote the growth of farming practices and nutrition, while building community. They utilize the MLK Community Garden, along with other residents.

There are several organizations located within Uptown that help residents meet their basic needs, including shelter. Jubilee Kitchen is an agency that stands out as a strong asset for residents. Operating for 36 years, their staple service is providing meals to community members in need every day of the year, averaging about 125 people per day. Yet they offer much more than food. Bethlehem Haven, Familylinks, and Womanspace East provide emergency shelter and supportive services for individuals experiencing homelessness. Shepherd’s Heart also has a drop-in center, runs a shuttle, and engages in outreach to support veterans. Additionally, Uptown is home to many agencies that serve vulnerable populations including FamilyLinks, Center for Hearing and Deaf Services, Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh, and many others.

StartUptown and HackPittsburgh are coworking and maker spaces for local entrepreneurs.

PPG Paints Arena and Duquesne University are centers for civic activity and attract thousands of individuals to the Uptown neighborhood every year.

UPMC Mercy Hospital is located next to Duquesne University, and offers a wide variety of medical services, including care for behavioral health, cancer, nerve disorders, pediatrics, women’s health, trauma and burns, etc. The hospital operates as a Level 1 Trauma Center, and their emergency services cover both physical and mental health emergencies.

93 Stakeholder interview
94 Stakeholder interview; Jubilee Soup Kitchen website. Available at http://jubileesoupkitchen.org/
Sources

Community Plans and Needs Assessments

- Hilltop Community Plan: Brashear Association

City or Regional Plans and Needs Assessments


Interviews and Community Meetings
• Alfred DiRosa (Hazelwood Initiative) interview. October 13, 2016
• Gladstone School Meeting. September 13, 2016. Fire Fighters Union Hall, Hazelwood
• Homes for All Community meeting. August 24, 2016. Human Services Building, Downtown Pittsburgh
• Jeanne McNutt (Uptown Partners, resident) interview. October 7, 2016
• Justin Miller (City Planning) interview. September 13, 2016
• Kevin McNair (1 Nation Mentoring at Brashear High School) interview. September 28, 2016
• LGBTQ+ Working Together Meeting with Acting Chief Scott Schubert. November 29, 2016. Persad Center, Lawrenceville
• Lina Dostilio (CETR Director, Duquesne University) interview. October 14, 2016
• Mischelle McMillan (resident, DeRaud Resident Council President) interview. November 3, 2016
• Paul Abernathy (resident, Executive Director, FOCUS Pittsburgh) interview. December 6, 2016
• Raqueeb Bey (resident, Uptown Partners board) interview. November 3, 2016
• Sharnay Hearn (The Hill House Association) interview. November 8, 2016
• Sonya Tilghman (Hazelwood Initiative) interview. October 20, 2016
• Temple Lovelace (Youth Leading Change) interview. October 20, 2016
• Terri Baltimore (The Hill House Association) interview. October 25, 2016
• Tim Smith (Center of Life) interview. October 13, 2016
• UptoberFest Block Party. October 5, 2016. Gist St., Uptown

Other: Websites, Articles, etc.
• Center of Life. Accessed October 2016. Available at http://centeroflife.net/
• Gail Felton PGH Talk Interview. July 9, 2015. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hw-PH3-ja2M
• Glen Hazel Community Resident Management Corporation website: https://www.facebook.com/pg/Glen-Hazel-Community-Resident-Management-Corporation-254536321228441/about/?ref=page_internal
• Jubilee Soup Kitchen website. Available at http://jubileesoupkitchen.org/
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