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THE MAGAZINE OF  
THE HEINZ ENDOWMENTS

Issue 1 2016

PROMISING POLICING:  
PITTSBURGH CHIEF  
TACKLES TRANSFORMING  
POLICE CULTURE

C.S. McLAY



ISSUE 1 2016

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Pittsburgh is forging ahead with development projects designed to transform sections of the city while incorporating ideas from last year's international conference on how to make urban revitalization sustainable.

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The Heinz Endowments was formed from the Howard Heinz Endowment, established in 1941, and the Vira I. Heinz Endowment, established in 1986. It is the product of a deep family commitment to community and the common good that began with H.J. Heinz, and that continues to this day.

The Endowments is based in Pittsburgh, where we use our region as a laboratory for the development of solutions to challenges that are national in scope. Although the majority of our giving is concentrated within southwestern Pennsylvania, we work wherever necessary, including statewide and nationally, to fulfill our mission.

That mission is to help our region thrive as a whole community — economically, ecologically, educationally and culturally — while advancing the state of knowledge and practice in the fields in which we work. Our fields of emphasis include philanthropy in general and the disciplines represented by our five grantmaking programs: Arts & Culture; Children, Youth & Families; Community & Economic Development; Education; and Environment.

In life, Howard Heinz and Vira I. Heinz set high expectations for their philanthropy. Today, the Endowments is committed to doing the same. Our charge is to be diligent, thoughtful and creative in continually working to set new standards of philanthropic excellence. Recognizing that none of our work would be possible without a sound financial base, we also are committed to preserving and enhancing the Endowments' assets through prudent investment management.

**h magazine** is a publication of The Heinz Endowments. At the Endowments, we are committed to promoting learning in philanthropy and in the specific fields represented by our grantmaking programs. As an expression of that commitment, this publication is intended to share information about significant lessons and insights we are deriving from our work.

**Editorial team** Linda Braund, John Ellis, Donna Evans Sebastian, Carmen Lee, Grant Oliphant, Megha Satyanarayana, Courtney Tolmer. Design: Landesberg Design

**About the cover** It may seem like a small thing, but the smile that Pittsburgh Police Chief Cameron McLay is wearing with his uniform reflects his focus on creating a more community collaborative police department. Also part of his uniform is a black ribbon across his badge as part of National Police Week, which occurs in May and includes recognition of police officers who have died in the line of duty. Photo by Scott Goldsmith.



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# A REMARKABLE LEGACY



In the weeks following the 1991 death of her husband, U.S. Sen. H. John Heinz III, in an air accident, Teresa Heinz was urged by national and Pennsylvania political leaders to seek election to the senator's seat. She declined.

Instead, she became chair of the Howard Heinz Endowment and months later a trustee of the Vira I. Heinz Endowment, devoting herself to building her family's philanthropic mission, sharpening its strategic focus and leading the process to merge the two endowments. This year, Mrs. Heinz celebrates her 25th anniversary as chairman of The Heinz Endowments as well as the foundation's accomplishments during her tenure that have had a transformative impact in the Pittsburgh region and beyond. She also has unveiled a new board leadership strategy for the organization that provides for each of her three sons to succeed her in a four-year rotation.

While continuing to serve as a member of the board and its Executive Committee, she will be succeeded as chairman by André Heinz, effective October 2016 when the full board convenes for its fall meeting. Christopher Heinz will take over the helm in 2020, and after four years, he will be succeeded by John Heinz. The leadership succession plan was unanimously approved by the Endowments' board at its spring meeting in May.

**“THIS IS AN ENORMOUSLY PROUD AND FULFILLING MOMENT FOR ME. FOR SOME WHILE, I HAVE CONSIDERED HOW OUR FAMILY’S DEEP AND EXTENSIVE PHILANTHROPIC LEGACY WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AND TO STRENGTHEN OVER TIME, AND I AM DELIGHTED THAT THE GROUND-WORK IS LAID FOR THE NEXT GENERATION TO ENGAGE IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE FOUNDATION.”**

**Teresa Heinz**, Chairman, The Heinz Endowments

“This is an enormously proud and fulfilling moment for me,” said Mrs. Heinz. “For some while, I have considered how our family’s deep and extensive philanthropic legacy will continue to grow and to strengthen over time, and I am delighted that the groundwork is laid for the next generation to engage in the leadership of the foundation.”

Endowments President Grant Oliphant, who previously worked with Sen. Heinz, commended Mrs. Heinz for her tireless dedication to the foundation’s work and her life’s investment in crucial humanitarian causes.

“Over a quarter of a century, Teresa has led the foundation with a commitment and understanding that has earned respect and acclaim locally, nationally and globally,” he said.

“This succession strategy is yet another example of her thoughtful devotion to this organization. It represents good governance at its best, establishing a planned process to broaden leadership to include her sons who are all deeply engaged in the work of the Endowments. We are indeed fortunate that Teresa’s sons share her courage, vision and passionate determination to continue to help make our community a better place for all.”

In declining the offer of candidacy for the U.S. Senate in 1991, Mrs. Heinz—an early advocate and practitioner of strategic, results-oriented philanthropy—described her desire for a keen philanthropic focus on major societal issues including the environment, education, health and human rights. “I intend to pursue them in the future with all the energy and resources available,” she wrote in a special Message to the People of Pennsylvania.

While the merger of the two endowments to create The Heinz Endowments became official in January 2007, since Mrs. Heinz began her leadership role in 1991 the foundation has awarded grants of nearly \$1.5 billion that have addressed critical community issues primarily in the southwestern Pennsylvania region. Currently, the Endowments has assets of \$1.6 billion.

During the last 25 years, Mrs. Heinz has received more than 40 major national, international and regional awards, recognizing and celebrating her work with the Endowments. One of the most recent, was the Aldo Leopold Award, the highest honor awarded by Yale University’s School of Forestry & Environmental Studies in November 2014. Only the third person ever to receive the honor, Mrs. Heinz was recognized as “one of the world’s strongest and most effective advocates” in her extensive lifelong contributions to protecting the environment.

“We live in complicated times. But I have always believed that problems are only a chance for us to find other ways forward,” she said in accepting the award. “We need to think anew. We need to be absolutely out of the box and unafraid.”

In 2003, Mrs. Heinz received the Albert Schweitzer Gold Medal for Humanitarianism “for her inspiring work in protecting the environment, promoting health care and education, and uplifting women and children around the world.” She also is the creator of the prestigious Heinz Awards, an annual program recognizing outstanding vision and achievement in the arts; public policy; the environment; the human condition; and technology, the economy and employment.

The Endowments’ achievements during Mrs. Heinz’s tenure as chairman include successfully spinning off The Pittsburgh Foundation to operate as an independent entity, establishing a grantmaking program to address environmental issues, and sharpening the focus on early childhood, which helped to make Pittsburgh a national model for the commitment to early childhood education. The Endowments also was instrumental in the stunning revival of Pittsburgh’s riverfronts, positioned the city as a national leader in sustainable design and green building, and led a major campaign called the Breathe Project to draw attention to the region’s air quality issues.

The foundation built on its legacy of support for Pittsburgh’s signature Cultural District and core arts institutions but also expanded its focus to include smaller arts organizations, neighborhood-based arts programs, arts groups representing greater racial diversity and individual artists. In education, the Endowments helped launch the Pittsburgh Promise, supported multiple programs to improve the quality of public education, and funded the region’s earliest investments in learning technology.

Through its civic design initiative, the foundation helped improve design and planning standards in the region and contributed to multiple iconic projects, including sponsoring the design competition for the Rafael Viñoly–designed David L. Lawrence Convention Center. In recent years, the Endowments has increased its focus on equitable and inclusive community development, working to ensure that Pittsburgh prospers as one city where opportunity is truly shared by all.

“Teresa has made Pittsburgh a center of the national movement to make philanthropy more agile and effective,” said Mr. Oliphant. “She has helped improve the field even while she was helping to improve Pittsburgh. It is a remarkable legacy and quite frankly hard to sum up in just a few words.” **h**

# SUSTAINED VISION

IN THE YEAR SINCE THE HEINZ ENDOWMENTS AND THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH CO-HOSTED AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE URBAN REVITALIZATION, DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS HAVE BEGUN OR MOVED FORWARD WITH RENEWED VIGOR. MOST IMPORTANT, THE MOMENTUM BEHIND INSISTING THAT THE WORK MEETS SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS HAS NOT ABATED. BY JEFFERY FRASER

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Urban sustainability experts from Chattanooga, Tenn., to Malmö, Sweden were brought to Pittsburgh last April to help the region plot a course toward a sustainable future that leverages its innovation economy and considers quality of life, environment and opportunity among the principles guiding its growth.

The p4 Summit, hosted by the city and The Heinz Endowments, focused on the themes of people, planet, place and performance, and introduced a cross-section of community leaders to sustainability practices that are transforming European and American cities, particularly those with industrial legacies. Over the past year, interest in adopting such approaches to reinvent Pittsburgh has never been greater.

New housing, office and retail developments have broken ground in the city's Strip District as part of a shared vision among developers, city officials, residents and others that includes public access to banks of the Allegheny River and green strategies to help address water quality issues.

Along the Monongahela River, preparation of the city's last great steel-era brownfield for its new role as a sustainable mixed-use community within the Hazelwood neighborhood is nearing completion, and the recruiting of tenants is underway. Improvements throughout Hazelwood also are taking place as part of an effort to retain current residents and allow them to benefit from the revitalization.

While Pittsburgh already was home to the largest district in the world to respond to the international Architecture 2030 Challenge, the city continues to pursue ambitious goals for slashing energy and water use in buildings and trimming transportation

emissions. Buildings that represent 60 percent of Downtown square footage surpassed the 2015 energy-saving goal early and are closing in on 2020 objectives.

And at city hall, a framework for future development is taking shape with urban sustainability principles ranging from social equity to environmental impact that are reflected in codes, new metrics and the city's first-ever comprehensive plan.

"p4 helped to marry growing public aspirations for such things as best-in-class architecture and the integration of new development and existing communities with an awareness on the part of the development community that this can actually pay off, that it's working around the world and it can work in Pittsburgh," said Court Gould, executive director of the nonprofit Sustainable Pittsburgh. "[p4] raised the bar for everybody."

Pittsburgh's advantages in its pursuit of a sustainable future include a substantial innovation economy anchored by major research universities, a proven capacity for public-private collaboration, and willing community and political leadership.

The city's challenges, however, are not insignificant. Racial and ethnic minorities claim only 11 percent of the region's workforce, one of the smallest shares in metropolitan America. Levels of air toxics and fine particulate pollution are among the worst in the nation. And the quality of the region's rivers and streams has long suffered from municipal sewer runoff and industrial insults.

No single project better embodies the principles of sustainable development than Almon. The 178-acre site of a former steel and coke works in Hazelwood was bought in 2002 by The Heinz Endowments and the Claude Worthington Benedum, Richard King Mellon and McCune foundations, with designs on creating a model sustainable community.

The site has been graded, and construction of the infrastructure is nearing completion. A master plan is in hand that calls for a mix of housing, commerce and transportation efficiency that not only avoids environmental harm but helps address some lingering regional problems, including an overburdened storm water and sewage network that routinely discharges into the rivers.

Meanwhile, the Endowments and others have supported improvements, such as upgrading existing



Joshua Franzos

THE SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES THAT ARE BEING WRITTEN INTO THE CITY'S NEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WILL SET THE COURSE FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.

housing stock and opening a community center and a neighborhood school. These efforts focus on shoring up Hazelwood and raising the quality of life of residents who've endured years of economic decline, so they might share the opportunities that new development presents rather than be displaced by it.

A few miles west of Hazelwood, the recent selection of a consulting team led by the Philadelphia-based urban design firm Interface Studio Architects has enabled the city to begin drawing a plan for an Uptown eco-innovation district that reflects sustainability practices in all aspects of development. It's seen as a potential innovation hub with mixed-income housing, cyclist- and pedestrian-friendly streets, and redesigned transit in a corridor that has long suffered from disinvestment, despite its strategic location.

"Two-thirds of employment in the Pittsburgh MSA is in Downtown and Oakland. Here is the connector between the two that is in need of redevelopment," said Andrew McElwaine, the Endowments' vice president of Sustainability and the Environment. "It's a huge opportunity."

The character of Downtown has begun to shift under an initiative announced last year to rethink

transportation, streets, sidewalks and other infrastructure to better accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians, ease traffic congestion, and enhance the livability of the center city. Within the past year, Penn Avenue—a main thoroughfare stretching through several

East End neighborhoods and into Downtown—has been redesigned so that half of the street through the theater district is dedicated to bicycle traffic.

The sustainability principles that are being written into the city's new comprehensive plan will set the course for future development. Work also is underway to create metrics to assess larger-scale redevelopment and the awarding of public incentives through the lenses of design, social equity, environment and public health impact, and other sustainability principles.

Just how far the city has traveled down the road to sustainability is expected to be a key topic of discussion at an encore of the p4 Summit scheduled for October, which will focus on applying the equity lens across the range of sustainability goals.

"We still want the inspiring speakers," said Mr. McElwaine. "But we also want to see some substance after 18 months." **h**

Last year's p4 Pittsburgh conference launched an initiative to promote new sustainable and inclusive approaches to design, jobs training and ways of growing the region's advanced-technology expertise.

# RIVERFRONT RENOVATION

PITTSBURGH'S STRIP DISTRICT HAS BEEN A POPULAR VISITOR DESTINATION FOR GENERATIONS, BUT NEIGHBORHOOD UPGRADES ARE LONG OVERDUE. RIVERFRONT IMPROVEMENTS AND NEW CONSTRUCTION ARE MOVING FORWARD AS ARE EFFORTS TO PRESERVE THE VITALITY OF THE STRIP'S UNIQUE SPECIALTY SHOPS AND VENUES.

BY JEFFERY FRASER

Nearly two decades after the defunct factories, mills and warehouses that crowded the banks of Pittsburgh's three rivers began to give way to bike trails, parks and retail, the liberation of the city's riverfronts from their industrial past has reached the Strip District.

New residential and commercial construction is underway that advances a vision of a public and sustainable riverfront, shared by the city, community groups and private developers, and evolved more from persuasion than regulation.

Plans include a riverfront park, which would stretch more than 20 blocks along the Allegheny River and would be the latest piece of the continuous 13-mile network of waterfront parks along the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio rivers. The park was conceived by Riverlife, a public-private nonprofit created in 1999 to develop a vision and master plan for reimagining the post-industrial riverfront of Pittsburgh. Additional office, retail and residential space also has been proposed, which would incorporate redevelopment of an iconic wholesale produce terminal.

A particular challenge in the Strip District is maintaining the eclectic mix of shops, eateries and entertainment venues that have been central to the community's appeal while upgrading the patchwork of privately owned parcels that are ripe for development. Any change requires convincing disparate property owners to support a vision of how redevelopment will unfold.

"It's a very different way of thinking of what the city will be like along the riverfront that reflects the changes in our economy, the way people want to live and where they want to live," said Vivien Li, president and CEO of Riverlife. "We shared these ideas with the property owners and they bought into the concept. They were able to think beyond today and imagine the future and the possibilities it holds."

The envisioned riverfront park, for example, would add about 15 acres of new open space, attracting more cyclists and other visitors. It is expected to generate anywhere from \$6.8 million to \$15.6 million in tax revenue for the city, which would more than offset the estimated \$3.3 million in annual loan payments for the city to finance the work, according to a 2015 economic analysis done by Sasaki Associates, a Massachusetts-based architecture and planning firm.

The blueprint for the park also includes environmental strategies, such as flood plain meadows and other green infrastructure to collect, calm and cleanse storm water before it enters municipal sewer systems. It is an issue particularly important in the Pittsburgh area, where inadequate combined storm and sewage systems routinely overflow into the rivers in times of wet weather.

"When we are talking about rivers, we are not just talking about the waterfront. We are also talking about the water and air quality and the livability of the whole area because they are interrelated," said Philip Johnson, the Endowments' program director for Science and Environment. "We have a storm water and sewage issue. Our rivers are not as clean as they deserve to be."

Because an industrial zoning designation covers much of the Strip District, the city Planning Commission is considering temporary zoning controls that better reflect a shared vision for the riverfront. It is the first step in a plan to create a specific, permanent riverfront zoning district.

"The zoning designation that is on the books was set up to allow for and encourage rapid industrialization of the river's edge. That was a long time ago," said Rob Stephany, director of the Endowments' Community & Economic Development Program. "The reality today is that the riverfront is being recaptured as a public asset." **h**

The Strip District produce terminal, which once had railroad yards with space for 660 cars, used to be the first stop for fresh fruits and vegetables arriving in Pittsburgh. Built in 1926, the 1,533-foot-long building is being renovated to include a mix of retail, offices and live-work apartments.

Late last year, a development partnership made public the broad strokes of a plan to transform the historic wholesale produce terminal into office space and mostly food-related retail. Proposals for the iconic building in the heart of the Strip District were discussed, and in April, the Pittsburgh Urban Redevelopment Authority hired Chicago developer McCaffery Interests to overhaul the 1,533-foot-long building.

McCaffery plans to renovate the structure to include a mix of retail, offices and live-work apartments. The authority will continue to own the building, leasing the property for as long as 99 years. Redevelopment of the produce terminal and related work is expected to cost \$70 million, with the developer investing about \$50 million into the project.

McCaffery Interests



**PRODUCE  
TERMINAL**

# 20 BLOCKS

Located on the edge of Pittsburgh's Downtown, the Strip District has long attracted visitors from across the city and region, even with its gritty remnants of an industrial past. For decades, people have flocked there to buy breakfast or fresh meats and produce on Saturday mornings or to listen or dance to live music on Saturday nights. And it's not unusual for visitors to spend hours walking through the wide variety of specialty shops that line the neighborhood streets. As shown here, sustainable development in the Strip District will have to balance modern environmental friendliness with historic community charm.



**PLACES OLD AND NEW  
(WE KNOW AND LOVE)**

**WHOLEY'S**

Robert Wholey & Co., known locally as "Wholey's," traces its roots back more than 100 years to a shop in McKees Rocks, a borough west of Pittsburgh, that sold meats, sausages and live poultry. The owner's son, Robert C. Wholey, opened a market in the Strip District that became known for fresh and frozen seafood as well as meat and poultry. Robert Wholey & Co. also has an international division, which sells its trademark Wholey's Whiting Fillets and other products worldwide.

**PRIMANTI'S**

Known for its multi-layered sandwiches with french fries between the bread slices rather than on the side, Primanti Brothers started back in the 1930s as a food cart and then a small storefront that sold hearty, meal-like sandwiches to truckers and shift workers. While maintaining a presence in the neighborhood where it was founded, the restaurant today has locations across Pennsylvania and in other states, including West Virginia, Ohio, Maryland and Florida.

**WIGLE WHISKEY**

Similar to some other Strip District businesses, Wigle Whiskey distillery has a family-founding origin, but one that goes back only to 2011. In addition to selling craft spirits, Wigle Whiskey has become a popular venue for social gatherings, particularly among "millennials."

The most profound feature of the envisioned redevelopment of the Strip District is a riverfront park that extends more than 20 blocks and opens the Allegheny River to the public as a green boulevard with retail, housing, public art and outdoor gathering places. It also will lend vibrancy to the bike and walking trail that runs its length.

The vision for the Strip District riverfront park evolved from the Allegheny Riverfront Green Boulevard plan, which was the product of years of community-wide conversations on how to connect people and neighborhoods to the river in sustainable ways and leverage the economic potential of riverfront development.



**3 CROSSINGS**



Oxford Development Company

Plans for the Oxford Development Company's 3 Crossings in the Strip sets the 11-acre office, market-price residential and retail development back some 95 feet from the river to accommodate the public riverfront park.

The hundreds of new apartments being built at 3 Crossings and the Buncher Company's Riverfront Landing development suggest confidence that the recent surge of people wanting to live in and around Downtown will continue, which would fuel demand for retail expansion.



# BANKING ON REDEVELOPMENT

Pittsburgh's still-evolving land bank will provide the city with an opportunity to avoid the spread of blight in struggling neighborhoods while sustaining hope for future revitalization. By Megha Satyanarayana

At its industrial height, from the 1910s to just beyond the mid-20th century, Pittsburgh was overflowing with people, all of whom needed a place to live. The population boom seeded a wave of housing development, filling in existing neighborhoods and creating new ones with charming names and welcoming porches.

Many Pittsburghers never thought that anyone would leave.

Fast-forward to the collapse of the region's manufacturing industry in the early 1980s, and neighborhoods north, south, east and west began to bear the marks of blight and abandonment. There are approximately 18,000 pieces of property in Pittsburgh that are vacant, said Bethany E. Davidson, manager for land recycling at the city's Urban Redevelopment Authority. Thousands more are habitable and maintained, she added, but they are in legal or financial trouble.

"Blight is a complicated thing," she said. "It's a multi-headed beast."

To better deal with blight, city and civic leadership are developing a Pittsburgh land bank, a legal and streamlined way of obtaining property that is in tax foreclosure so it can be put back to use. Like a financial bank, properties are deposited into the land bank after ownership has been assumed, and withdrawn when an appropriate buyer or purpose is determined. During the time the parcels are held, the land bank, in theory, maintains them to keep what value they have or monitors them as their value changes with market conditions.

The Heinz Endowments has supported land banking through the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, a statewide coalition whose advocacy for fair and affordable housing has included working on state land bank legislation. A year after the legislature passed the law in 2012, Philadelphia officials agreed to create a land bank for that city. Pittsburgh council members approved a land bank measure in 2014.

Land banking is integral to some of the Endowments' strategies for promoting sustainable redevelopment in Pittsburgh, explained Matthew Barron, the foundation's program officer for sustainability. Ideally, some bankable properties will become part of greenways and parks, while houses could be sold to buyer-occupants with a yen to remodel rather than speculate. Community groups may have first dibs to develop properties in their neighborhood for affordable housing or business space.

Community groups may have first dibs to develop properties in their neighborhood for affordable housing or business space.

Land banking "could serve as the front line to prevent displacement in neighborhoods where displacement happens," he said.

The process also is attractive because Pennsylvania, like many states, usually favors individuals rather than civic entities when it comes to property rights, said Kyra Straussman, director of real estate for the Pittsburgh Urban Redevelopment Authority. For decades, the authority has been securing non-tax-foreclosed vacant and distressed property for redevelopment.

Obtaining property is complicated because ownership is established via title, and when a building or a piece of land is passed along through sales, gifts, inheritances or even abandonment, tracing who owns it can be difficult. This is one of the ways fallow properties pile up, Ms. Straussman pointed out. People abandon them, stop paying taxes on them or can't take care of them, and over time the parcels lose value and become eyesores.

About 80 to 90 percent of low-value properties in Pittsburgh are in tax foreclosure, she said. Before land bank legislation, any government or civic entity that wanted to salvage the property had to spend long periods researching the title and then applying to have ownership transferred. The process was costly and took months to years. Land banking could cut that title transfer time down to months or weeks.

For community organizations like Operation Better Block in Homewood, where there are 2,000 vacant lots and 600 vacant structures, reducing the time it takes to assume vacant property is a game-changer. "If Pittsburgh does the land bank correctly, it could be the turning point in how we do development in the city," said Jerome Jackson, the group's executive director.

One of the next tasks is defining the rules, regulations and operating procedures of Pittsburgh's land bank, said Ms. Davidson. A board of directors, chaired by the Rev. Ricky Burgess, a city councilman, is designing the bank, which involves deciding what properties to prioritize and how to assume, manage and then dispose of them.

Another task, said Mr. Barron, is funding the land bank. The city will need help in sustaining the bank, so foundations and other funders will play a large role in ensuring its financial strength and stability. The Endowments provided about \$250,000 to support a land bank created by a coalition of communi-

ties in southwestern Pennsylvania's Mon Valley. Recently, the foundation's board approved a grant of \$200,000 to the Urban Redevelopment Authority, which includes support for the Pittsburgh land bank. The URA plans to work on the project with the Center for Community Progress, a national nonprofit that helps communities upgrade abandoned properties, and Fourth Economy, a national economic development consulting firm.

Aggie Brose, deputy director of the neighborhood improvement organization Bloomfield-Garfield Corp., helped shepherd the city's land banking laws into place. She's eager to see the policies and procedures established to get it up and running.

"One of our biggest assets is our land, next to our people," Ms. Brose said. "I think the land bank would serve us well." **h**

## LAND BANKING VERSUS EMINENT DOMAIN

Eminent domain is governmental power to take private property for public benefit, but through providing compensation to the owner. The property may be occupied, maintained and current in its taxes. Land banking assumes property that is in legal or financial distress, often due to late payment of taxes or abandonment and code-violating blight. Tax issues revert the land to ownership by a public office, such as a treasurer's department. The bank can then assume ownership through a court-ruled title transfer.

AS A FORMER MANUFACTURING HUB, MILLVALE BOROUGH HAS BIG DREAMS FOR EVOLVING INTO A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY WITH FOOD-BASED ATTRACTIONS. IT ALSO HAS ENOUGH LOCAL ENTHUSIASM AND EAGER OUTSIDE SUPPORT TO MAKE THE TRANSFORMATION POSSIBLE. BY ELEANOR CHUTE

# ECOCENTRIC MILLVALE

**P**icture this: A town once known for lumber and iron factories refashions itself into a self-reliant community, complete with solar-powered buildings and locally grown food to supply its own foodie niche northeast of Downtown Pittsburgh.

That's the vision for Millvale, a small borough along the Allegheny River with a can-do attitude.

The former mill town is in the midst of "eco-district" planning, a community-wide effort aimed at ensuring the borough's long-term viability through sustainable development. Ideas range from the imminent, such as the creation of a food hub that is scheduled to open in coming months, to the long-range, such as proposals to address air quality issues.

The plan's first three goals are summarized in these aspirational statements: "Millvale is a self-reliant urban solar village." "Millvale is a foodie paradise for everyone and is known for hyper-local production." "Millvale is part of a just watershed system known for productive and pleasurable landscapes." Additional goals were added earlier this year around air, mobility and equity.

"These are really compelling ideas," said Rob Stephany, Community & Economic Development program director for The Heinz Endowments, a supporter of the revitalization work.

Founded in 1868, Millvale covers less than one square mile, most on the northern side of Route 28, while across the highway is the Millvale Riverfront Park, which is a 20-minute bike ride from Downtown Pittsburgh. Like many communities in the region, the borough had been a bustling town

with its own manufacturing base as well as connections to southwestern Pennsylvania's thriving steel industry. But as the steel production declined over the years, so did Millvale's population. The 2010 Census counted 3,744, about 1,000 less than in 1980.

Millvale also has endured major flooding. Some of the best-known images of the borough are of water roaring down main streets from Girty's Run creek during Hurricane Ivan in 2004, engulfing businesses and homes and leaving behind mounds of debris and destruction.

But the community didn't give up after that flood or after a smaller one in 2007. Instead, Millvale supporters have used the same spirit that helped them pull together in the face of devastation to work toward becoming a sustainable community attractive to residents and businesses.

"If people can come together to respond to the flooding, can we come together for a proactive purpose? The answer we believe is yes," said Brian Wolovich, a community activist who was a leader in establishing a local library and now is a borough councilman.

Revitalization initiatives in the borough are being developed with help from evolveEA, a sustainable



The future Millvale "food hub," where fresh and affordable food can be sold in the heart of town, is still an incomplete frame with a central view of the borough. But progress in its development will be key to progress in Millvale's goal to become a sustainable community.



architecture and consulting firm. The first Millvale ecodistrict plan was developed in 2012. An updated “2.0” version was completed in April.

A key early project was Millvale Community Library, which opened in 2013 and is a center of activity. The storefront building has rooftop solar panels and gardens in the back, serving as a model for how the community can become sustainable.

The idea of a library wasn’t easy to sell to some inside and outside the borough. But Gregg Behr, executive director of The Grable Foundation, suggested that supporters begin small, gain experience and demonstrate community interest. So, instead of starting with a library building, the group established a summer reading program in 2008 with a grant of \$9,250, the first and smallest of five Grable grants.

Since then, 20 to 25 funders have signed on to some part of the community’s vision, said Mr. Wolovich. The Endowments, for example, has helped to pay for installing solar panels atop the library, building a greenhouse, and securing strategic property to develop a food hub–based town square. The foundation also has funded efforts to start an incubator for food entrepreneurs, improve bicycle safety, and create a public art piece out of the word “imagine” that has been installed near the library. In addition, Millvale participates in the Endowments-supported Solar Up PA campaign to increase solar installations in Allegheny County as a way of decreasing demand for polluting, fossil-fuel energy.

“In the big scheme, small investments have yielded huge results,” said Mr. Stephany. “There’s something humbling about that.”

The library’s success has helped to make other projects possible, said Tina Walker, a longtime resident and president of the Millvale Community Development Corporation (MCDC). “It was a catalyst in getting people united to rally around the community.”

MCDC, the borough and others are collaborating in the development of the Town Square Project, which is located at a formerly flood-damaged site in the center of town where the food hub will be placed.

“I think food is a way to build community,” said Zaheen Hussain, Millvale’s sustainability coordinator. Hussain was hired last year with a grant to the library from Neighborhood Allies, a grantmaking nonprofit that supports development in economically struggling neighborhoods. “We saw [the food hub] as a huge opportunity to start building momentum,” he explained, “both to be a space for residents to gather as well as to bring in more energy from surrounding communities into our town.”



## WELCOME TO MILLVALE

**MR. SMALLS FUNHOUSE**  
CONCERT VENUE,  
RECORDING STUDIO,  
ART GALLERY,  
SKATE PARK, BAR  
AND RESTAURANT –  
GOOD NAME

**ATTIC RECORD STORE**  
HARD-TO-FIND  
MUSIC COLLECTIONS  
MAKE THIS PLACE  
A TREASURE

**MILLVALE  
COMMUNITY LIBRARY**  
A MODEL OF THE  
BOROUGH'S  
ECOLOGICAL,  
ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL GOALS

**JEAN-MARC CHATELLIER'S  
FRENCH BAKERY**  
TONS OF CALORIES  
AND WORTH  
EVERY SINGLE  
ONE OF THEM

**GRIST HOUSE BREWING**  
LOCAL LAGER AT  
ITS FINEST

**ST. NICHOLAS CROATIAN  
CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
EXQUISITELY  
PAINTED MURALS,  
IMPORTANT  
TO PRESERVE

The food hub will have first-floor retail space for fresh produce and a cafe. Upstairs, the nonprofit New Sun Rising will have offices and offer incubator services for food entrepreneurs. Another piece of the food initiative is the Gardens of Millvale, which include vacant lots in the heart of the borough that were turned into gardening plots for community use.

Yet, water issues are still a critical challenge for Millvale. Due to its location at the end of the Girty’s Run watershed, it receives runoff from communities upstream. Dredging by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has helped, and the borough monitors the condition of the creek. Because part of the community is in a flood plain, the borough has a new ordinance setting construction standards as required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Millvale can’t solve water problems on its own, however. Its ecodistrict plan suggests establishing a Girty’s Run watershed association. But the borough has taken steps to control what it can.

With state funding, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy built two bioswales at Mount Alvernia, the 18-acre campus of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities. The larger one drains an 11-acre area and has reduced runoff there by 89 percent, said Jeff Bergman, the conservancy’s director of community forestry and director of TreeVitalize Pittsburgh. The conservancy also was involved in planting about 500 trees in the borough, which absorb water in their roots.

“I have to give them credit for understanding the stormwater issues we have and being a leader among municipalities, implementing green infrastructure and looking for creative ways to solve their problems,” said Mr. Bergman.

For decades, many people have traveled through Millvale to suburbs farther north or visited primarily to tour the Maxo Vanka murals at St. Nicholas Croatian Catholic Church or to buy chocolates, croissants, pancakes and other local specialties. Now the community is experiencing some residential overflow from the nearby, trendy Lawrenceville neighborhood in Pittsburgh where rents are higher than in Millvale.

While planners welcome new businesses and residents, the community also wants to preserve Millvale’s small-town feel and affordability.

“Millvale is an incredible place, and it’s going incredible places,” said Christine Mondor, principal for evolveEA. “So stay tuned.” **h**



Scott Goldsmith

## SOLAR VILLAGE

Part of Millvale's ecodistrict planning includes expanding solar installations in the borough as part of its involvement with the Endowments-supported Solar Up PA campaign. Solar panels have already been installed on the roof of Millvale Community Library, allowing it to generate more electricity than it uses.



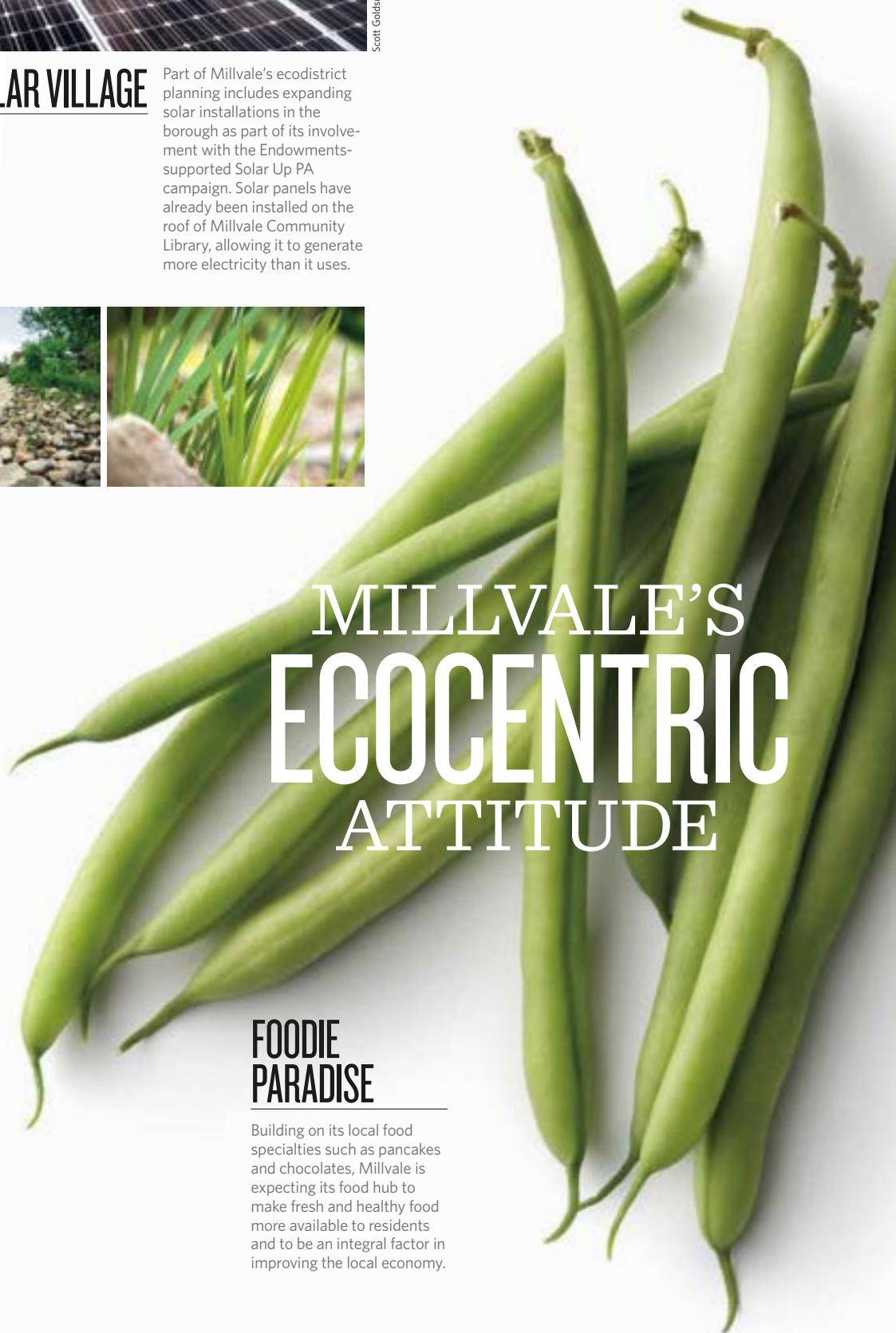
## PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPES

Millvale is working to change its image as a flood-ravaged community to being known for having the ability to integrate water into ecologically rich water parks. Completed projects include a rain garden at the local library and bioswales at the Mount Alvernia campus of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities.

# MILLVALE'S ECOCENTRIC ATTITUDE

## FOODIE PARADISE

Building on its local food specialties such as pancakes and chocolates, Millvale is expecting its food hub to make fresh and healthy food more available to residents and to be an integral factor in improving the local economy.



Shifting the office-cleaning routine from night to day at 11 Stanwix wasn't as simple as it sounds.

Cleaning routes and schedules for tending to the offices throughout the building's 23 floors had to be reconfigured without disrupting the business of its tenants. Cleaning staff needed training on how to interact with those tenants, whom they rarely encountered before. Quieter vacuums had to be purchased.

But the plan allowed the Downtown office tower to be shut down after hours. That lowered heating, cooling and overall energy demand. Energy costs fell 5.5 percent, saving more than \$100,000 a year. And the environmental footprint of Pittsburgh's buildings got a bit smaller, edging the city closer to meeting an ambitious challenge to cut it in half.

Pittsburgh was among the first cities to take up the international Architecture 2030 Challenge to dramatically reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, and promote sustainable design and practices in the built environment. Downtown was the initial focus in 2012. The city's Oakland neighborhood was added two years later with support from The Heinz Endowments, making the Pittsburgh 2030 District the largest among more than a dozen participating cities.

"The first step toward a sustainable economy is getting your buildings to use less energy and water," said Pittsburgh 2030 District Director Anna Siefken, vice president of strategic engagement at the nonprofit Green Building Alliance. "What's the use of trying to have solar run a building if the building is like a sieve? Whatever we can do in the built environment to drive use-of-less will help address the big issues we have, such as air and water quality."

The Pittsburgh 2030 District is a public-private partnership of building owners and managers; community stakeholders, including local government, advocacy and neighborhood groups; and resource partners, such as utilities, planning organizations and the Urban Redevelopment Authority.

To reach the 2030 goal of cutting aggregate energy and water use and transportation emissions by 50 percent, participants are collecting, analyzing and sharing performance data, and collaborating around finding practical ways to use less.

Some 438 buildings and over 68 million square feet of Downtown and Oakland real estate are represented in the collaborative. In Downtown, 163 buildings have signed on, representing 62 percent of the Downtown square footage. In Oakland, 274

buildings representing 84 percent of the neighborhood's square footage are involved.

The Green Building Alliance shares assessments of the energy and water use of each building with the owners, and establishes baselines and targets as a first step toward plotting reduction strategies. Building managers and others involved gather monthly to share their experiences, expertise, problems and ideas for solving them.

One idea presented through the collaboration was reconfiguring elevators in ways that save energy. The process included positioning cars at floors where the volume of riders is high to reduce the number of round trips from the ground floor, and keeping only enough cars active to meet demand while letting others sleep until needed.

Cost saving is the chief incentive for property owners and a factor that encourages them to take additional steps to reduce energy and water use, Ms. Siefken said. First projects are often straightforward and offer a quick return on investment, such as converting lighting from incandescent to LED, and installing low-flush toilets and inexpensive aerators on faucets.

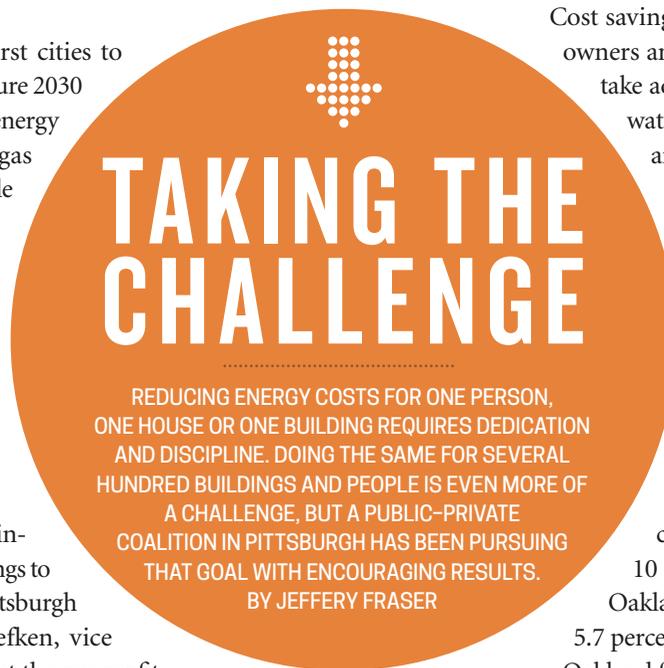
By last year, energy use among Downtown Pittsburgh buildings had dropped 20 percent below the national median baseline that had been adjusted for Pittsburgh's climate and location—well below the 10 percent reduction goal for 2015. In Oakland, energy consumption decreased 5.7 percent below baseline.

Oakland faces steep challenges due to its portfolio of buildings. Unlike Downtown, where nearly half of the properties are office buildings, university-rich Oakland is crowded with heavier consumers of energy, such as medical facilities with strict climate control protocols and laboratories.

"Not every conversation is going to be an easy one," Ms. Siefken said. "But people are taking inventory who had never taken inventory before. They have different considerations than they had before becoming part of this, and they're making different choices."

Lessons learned in the 2030 District also could inform other sustainable building initiatives, such as Sustainable Pittsburgh's Green Workplace Challenge, which in four years has led to an estimated \$8.9 million in energy savings across southwestern Pennsylvania.

"Many retrofits and modifications need not cost an arm and a leg," said Court Gould, Sustainable Pittsburgh's executive director. "What is being demonstrated throughout the 2030 District is illustrative of what can be done throughout our region." **h**



# THE PITTSBURGH 2030 DISTRICT

The district, which encompasses the city's Downtown and Oakland neighborhoods, has steadily added buildings and partners since the collaborative was formed in 2012. It also has continued to make progress toward the 2030 goal of cutting aggregate energy and water use and transportation emissions by 50 percent. The energy and transportation emission reductions exceeded the 2015 target of 10 percent below baseline.

84

PROPERTY PARTNERS

68.2  
MILLION  
SQUARE FEET

44

438

PROPERTIES  
COMMITTED TO THE  
CHALLENGE

COMMUNITY  
AND RESOURCE  
PARTNERS

## BASELINE RESULTS

The Pittsburgh district's baselines were calculated using information from different sources. The energy baseline was created by taking the Commercial Building Energy Consumption Survey's national median baseline and adjusting it for Pittsburgh's climate and location. The Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority was consulted to develop a water baseline using historic water consumption from 2009 to 2012. Currently, the transportation emissions baseline applies only to Downtown but will be expanded to include Oakland. It was created using a regional travel demand model provided by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, a regional planning agency.



TOTAL ENERGY  
REDUCTION

12.5%  
BELOW  
BASELINE

reduced by  
868,546,301 kBtu



TOTAL WATER  
REDUCTION

9.1%  
BELOW  
BASELINE

reduced by  
79,716,989 gallons



TOTAL TRANSPORTATION  
EMISSIONS REDUCTION

24.2%  
BELOW  
BASELINE

reduced by  
1,399,529 kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub>

# COMMUNITY BUILDERS

REBUILDING TOGETHER PITTSBURGH HAS MADE ITS MARK LOCALLY BY OFFERING NO-COST REPAIRS TO LOW-INCOME HOMEOWNERS. BUT THE ORGANIZATION ALSO SUPPORTS BROADER COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION THROUGH ITS IMPACT NEIGHBORHOODS PROGRAM, WHICH ALLOWS PLACES LIKE HAZELWOOD TO REAP COMMUNITY-WIDE BENEFITS. BY TAIJA PANDOLFI

Steve Hellner-Burris, executive director of Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh, is the man behind the plan that is enabling the home rehab nonprofit to help transform communities.

**F**or the executive director of Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh, a next-in-line service model wasn't enough if he wanted his housing nonprofit to help revitalize communities fighting to reverse economic decline.

"The impact of [renovation] work, while significant for an individual person, is not necessarily significant for the community as a whole," said Steve Hellner-Burris. So, he developed an initiative called Comprehensive Impact Neighborhoods, where crews focus on several projects in one area to increase the overall benefit for a community.

The difference that this deep-dive approach is making has caught the attention of both local officials and the residents who are watching their communities transform.

On a sunny July afternoon last summer, Allegheny County Chief Executive Rich Fitzgerald visited Pittsburgh's Hazelwood neighborhood to see the completion of four home-construction projects on Trowbridge Street—a steep, brick-covered hill with a clear view across the Monongahela River into the city's tree-lined South Side slopes. With sleeves rolled up for relief from the heat, one hand on a microphone and the other gesturing in the air to emphasize every other word, Mr. Fitzgerald was in his element as he thanked the nearly 40 people at the work site.

"Just look at this," he said, as he raved about the attractiveness of the neighborhood. "This right here is emblematic of Pittsburgh."

Standing among construction debris and groups of volunteers in bright blue t-shirts, Mr. Fitzgerald was flanked by James O'Connor, Pittsburgh platoon leader for The Mission Continues, a national veterans service organization, and the Rev. Tim Smith, executive director of Center of Life, a local nonprofit focused on advancing arts, health and education for children and families. The major volunteer effort organized by Rebuilding Together had brought together volunteers from The Mission Continues, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield and The Heinz Endowments along with performers from Center of Life's arts program.

"This is the ultimate community project," Mr. Fitzgerald said.

Like the national Rebuilding Together organization, the Pittsburgh affiliate receives philanthropic support from a variety of groups, including the Endowments, PNC Bank Foundation and Duquesne Light Co. This funding enables it to provide low-income homeowners with free maintenance and improvements, ranging from building new stairs to patching the roof.

Traditionally, Rebuilding Together simply answered the needs of whichever homeowner in the region was next on the list, often moving from neighborhood to neighborhood in the course of a month. When Mr. Hellner-Burris began to recognize that the success of individual projects failed to combat systemic issues in a community, he created Impact Neighborhoods in 2010, which extended work time in some areas to spread the benefit to more residents, even if they did not personally receive home improvements.

One reason this is possible is that Rebuilding Together's labor force is a mix of staff, volunteers, the occasional independent plumber or electrician, and a "work-experience" crew. The work-experience group consists of local residents with an interest in developing

**"THIS RIGHT HERE IS EMBLEMATIC OF PITTSBURGH... THIS IS THE ULTIMATE COMMUNITY PROJECT."**

Rich Fitzgerald, Allegheny County Chief Executive

skills that could translate into a steady income. Since many projects require multiple days of work that cannot be completed solely by occasional volunteer groups, the work-experience crew allows the organization to spend many days each week in a community so that improvements are completed with consistency.

#### **Hazelwood's Impact Neighborhoods story**

This approach has been applied in municipalities such as Penn Hills and Wilkinsburg as well as in Pittsburgh neighborhoods such as Hazelwood and Larimer. The organization's work in Hazelwood, in particular, exemplifies the broader effect of this strategy. Rebuilding Together is in the middle of its fourth year in the community, where it has completed nearly 110 projects. Impact Neighborhoods keeps a crew in Hazelwood every week, which enables the community to

readily see across-the-board improvements and appreciate the value that these projects bring to the area.

The nonprofit also works closely with the Hazelwood Initiative, a community development organization, to assess the needs of that neighborhood. In order to qualify, homeowners must be below 200 percent of the federal poverty line, and not behind on their taxes or enrolled in a payment plan.

“Most of our clients are older, and they have a deep sense of pride in their homes,” said Josh Nard, project manager for Rebuilding Together’s Hazelwood work. “The majority of them are lifelong Hazelwood residents.”

As a neighborhood battered economically by the decline of Pittsburgh’s steel industry, Hazelwood has become the focus of many aspirations and predictions. It also is evolving as a model of how a combination of sustainable development strategies can be used to transform a community.

Along Hazelwood’s riverfront, a 178-acre brownfield that was once the home of the LTV coke works is undergoing a redesign that will include green infrastructure and energy-efficient residential, office and light-manufacturing construction. Also planned is a multi-modal trail that will link other communities to the site, which is sometimes called Almono, in reference to the three rivers that wind through the Pittsburgh region: the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio.

Retail development and property upgrades are underway in Hazelwood’s central business district along Second Avenue. One example of the possibilities for these efforts has been how, with Endowments support, the nonprofit ACTION-Housing converted a vacant church building into a combination library and community center that meets Passive House requirements, among the most stringent energy-efficiency standards in the world.

Rebuilding Together has been charged with helping to improve and preserve the neighborhood’s existing housing stock. Given the expected economic impact of Almono and other developments, the organization aims to position residents so that market increases do not price them out of the neighborhood while allowing them to capitalize on the rising value of their homes. The strategy is meant not only to provide safety and peace of mind to those living there now, but also to prepare them for the coming market shift.

David Brewton, a business and housing consultant who works with the Hazelwood Initiative, explained that Rebuilding Together’s efforts are essential to preventing expected development from isolating the older, established sections of the neighborhood, as was seen in nearby Homestead Borough when the Waterfront retail, entertainment and residential complex was built. That development was constructed on a former steel mill site along a riverfront in the early 2000s, and many have argued that the lack of a broad plan to

consider community needs and interests left the rest of the borough abandoned. Promises that the site would bring investment and value to Homestead failed to deliver, making the development an example of miscalculated planning.

Mr. Brewton sees the Waterfront as a warning and a lesson. When a significant portion of residents is positioned to realize equity in their homes, he said, the neighborhood will retain its indigenous population. “[Rebuilding Together is] investing in homes that will be worth more tomorrow than they are today,” he asserted.

The nonprofit also has a small “rehab for resale” program in Hazelwood in which older houses are renovated so they can be sold, preferably to current residents of the neighborhood. This strategy was developed in coordination with the Hazelwood Initiative and NeighborWorks, a national nonprofit that supports homeownership. The program is designed to increase residents’ ability to buy property in the community.

Rob Stephany, director of the Endowments’ Community & Economic Development Program, described additional, less measurable effects when homes are well-maintained. “I believe wholeheartedly in visible investment,” he said. “When people care about their space, the benefits spread. It’s as viral as when a vacant house spreads blight.”

Such potential was seen during a Rebuilding Together project at the home of longtime resident Louise Seaman. Beside the railroad tracks that separate Hazelwood’s “flats” from the rest of the neighborhood, a work-experience crew crowded into the limited available shade to observe Mrs. Seaman’s reaction to their upgrades on the house that her late husband, an LTV coke factory employee, once helped remodel. The crew had given her back porch a fresh coat of paint, installed new outdoor carpet, and poured a new cement walkway connecting the porch to the driveway, replacing a wobbly brick path she used to trip over.

“The neighbor’s going to need to have hers done,” Mrs. Seaman said, stepping proudly onto the new carpet. “It looks like I’m rich.”

While pride in one’s home and neighborhood is an essential element of a higher standard of living, Mr. Brewton explained, the long-term tangible benefits are the most compelling aspect of Rebuilding Together’s housing strategy. For a community whose population and business loss are not-too-distant memories, these projects offer security and economic flexibility that Hazelwood hasn’t seen since the decline of the local steel industry.

“[These homeowners] are going to have something. They are going to own their homes, and the homes are going to be in good condition,” Mr. Brewton said. “You could say it’s the anti-gentrification strategy for Hazelwood.” **h**

# VETERAN REPAIRS

BY TAIJA PANDOLFI

Patrice Cook sat back in the metal chair and adjusted her thin-framed, black-rimmed glasses as two delicate gold necklaces rested unobtrusively beneath the collar of her pink turtleneck. Her eyes were sharp and intelligent, but she was quick to laugh, recounting stories about her siblings with a sheepish smile.

“I was a real daddy’s girl. My brothers used to poke me and call me ‘Little Princess,’” the former Army staff sergeant said during a conversation in the atrium of the Pittsburgh office building where she works. “Now they’re nice to me. They’re like, ‘You can beat us up now.’”

Ms. Cook, or “Cookie” to her military friends, joined the Army just five days after graduating from high school in 1989 and found herself in a foreign country within six months. After growing up with six brothers in Mt. Union, a “tiny, tiny town outside of Harrisburg,” she set her sights on the world outside her neighborhood.

“I was one of those kids who just couldn’t stay still,” she said. “I refused to be stuck in this little town, doing what everyone was doing—and I don’t regret that decision.”

During her Army career, Ms. Cook was stationed in locations around the globe, including Germany, Saudi Arabia, Bosnia, Iraq and several cities in the United States. These experiences widened her perspective and connected her to a “community [that] was the whole world,” which she described as an overwhelming benefit of joining the military, and something she missed when she left active duty in 2000.



As a Mission Continues volunteer, Army veteran Patrice Cook now spends a good amount of her time carrying construction tools rather than military weapons.

She moved to Pittsburgh in 2012 for a job as a transportation assistant at Life Pittsburgh, a health care organization for the elderly. But when she arrived in the city, she felt disconnected from the broader community. Her restlessness prompted a decision that would benefit many in the region's extensive veteran population.

In June 2014, through a friendship with fellow veteran and Pittsburgh resident James O'Connor, Ms. Cook helped launch the Pittsburgh platoon of The Mission Continues, a national service organization that connects veterans to community projects and initiatives in their area. She reached out to her network of local veterans to build support for the Pittsburgh chapter of the organization. After the official founding of the platoon, with Mr. O'Connor as its leader, she continued to encourage other veterans who wanted to connect with fellow soldiers and participate in community work to join the team. There are now two Mission Continues groups in the Pittsburgh region, which together have about 140 members.

"Patrice is a truly remarkable woman, and she was instrumental in creating and building the first Pittsburgh Service Platoon," Mr. O'Connor said. "She gave the platoon courage and vision as she believed it would continue to grow as a social movement. She also believed that all veterans want to continue to serve once they take off the uniform and that their civilian counterparts want to engage and support veterans as they transition but need a creative way to interact with them."

The Mission Continues platoon in which Ms. Cook and Mr. O'Connor serve focuses on physical projects that it learns about through regional partnerships with organizations such as the local affiliate of Rebuilding Together, a national home improvement nonprofit. Under the direction of Mr. O'Connor, that platoon has concentrated on ongoing projects in Pittsburgh's Hazelwood neighborhood, coinciding with Rebuilding Together's revitalization work in the community.

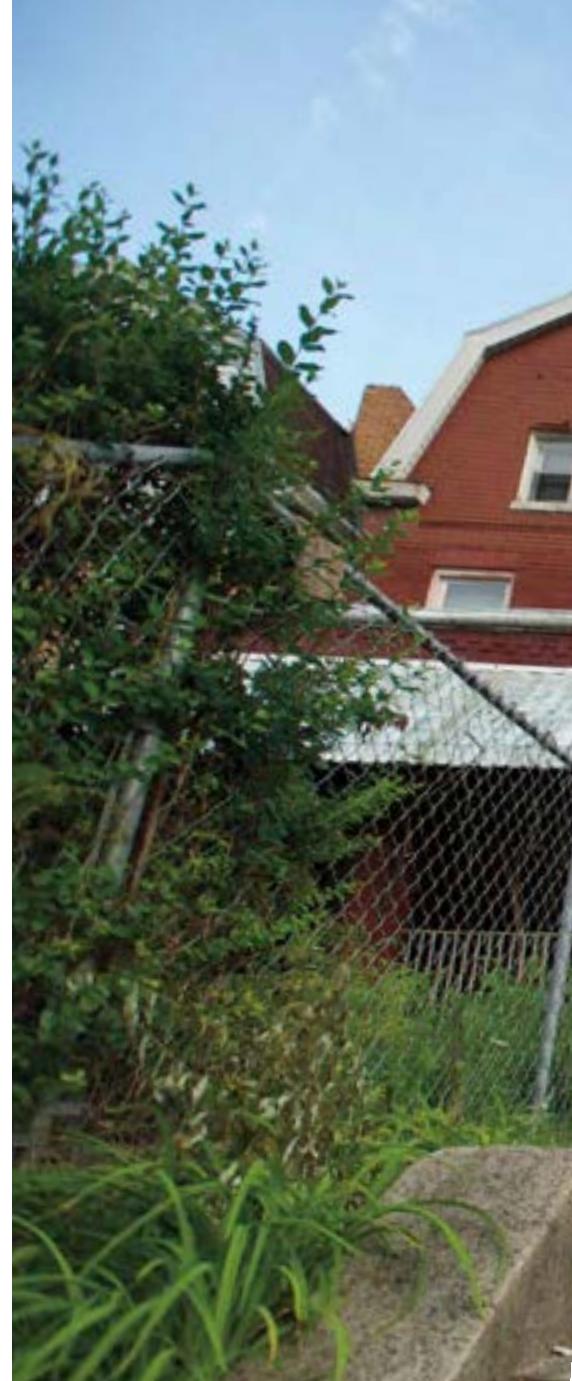


**"SHE GAVE THE  
PLATOON COURAGE  
AND VISION AS  
SHE BELIEVED IT  
WOULD CONTINUE  
TO GROW AS A  
SOCIAL MOVEMENT."**

**James O'Connor**  
platoon leader, The Mission Continues Pittsburgh

For Ms. Cook, involvement with The Mission Continues has helped boost her sense of purpose and belonging. "I used to just go to work and then come home," she recalled. "Once I got to [volunteer in] Hazelwood and started venturing out, that got me out and about in Pittsburgh."

While not usually associated with sustainability efforts, The Mission Continues' work in Pittsburgh has complemented p4, a new approach for enhancing the quality of life in the region. Launched last year by Pittsburgh Mayor William Peduto in partnership with The Heinz Endowments, p4 focuses on the themes of people, planet, place and performance, with the goal of creating a guide for innovative and sustainable development in the city. Having veterans involved in contributing to the current and future well-being of a community reflects the objectives of this initiative.





Volunteering with Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh allows veterans to bond with each other as well as help local residents improve their homes. Army veteran Patrice Cook, standing second from left, joins members of her Mission Continues platoon in taking a break from a home repair project in Hazelwood. Far left, Mission Continues volunteers paint the interior of a Hazelwood house.

Sean Means

Veterans' stories often emphasize their disabilities and needs, rather than explain how multitudes of returning soldiers are eager to repurpose their military skills in civilian life, Ms. Cook said. Although there are certainly veterans who need health care and aid, overlooking those who want to participate creates a sense of isolation, she contends. With The Mission Continues, veterans can meet others who served in the military and now perform essential work in local communities, tapping into a network that boasts nearly a quarter of Pennsylvania's veterans.

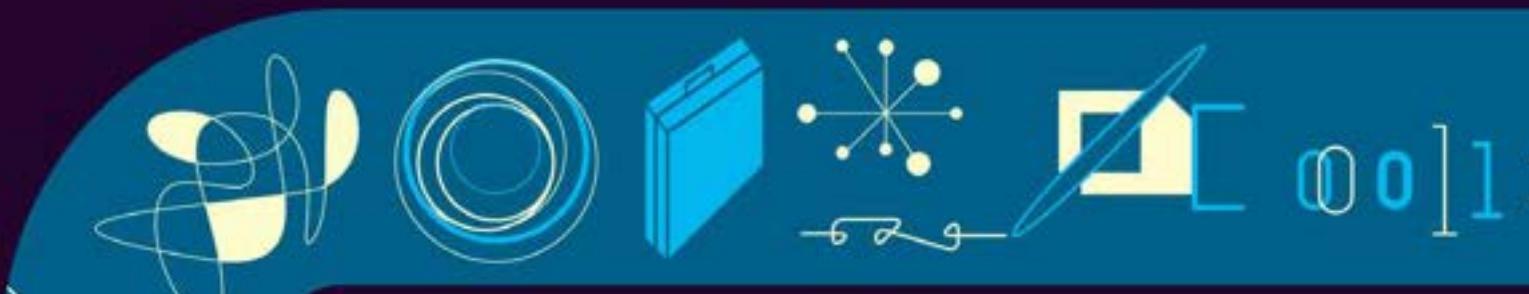
Ms. Cook has worked on housing rehabilitation projects in Hazelwood and on renovations to the third floor of the building that's home to Center of Life, a faith-based nonprofit devoted to advancing arts, health and education for children and families. Her tasks have ranged from painting to installing drywall to building fences. "When we're out there doing the physical labor, it shows the

vets are here and really trying to make the world a better place," she said. "It brings groups together in the community."

And because volunteering has taken Ms. Cook to different parts of the city, she views her experiences as recreating the global community she had established after joining the military. "When I got involved in The Mission Continues, it opened a lot of doors for me. It made my horizons broader, and I know more people."

Although she was initially unsure about Pittsburgh after she moved, Ms. Cook credits The Mission Continues with connecting her to the city in ways she did not anticipate, and she hopes to stay in the region. The network she has built has made it easier to adjust to civilian life.

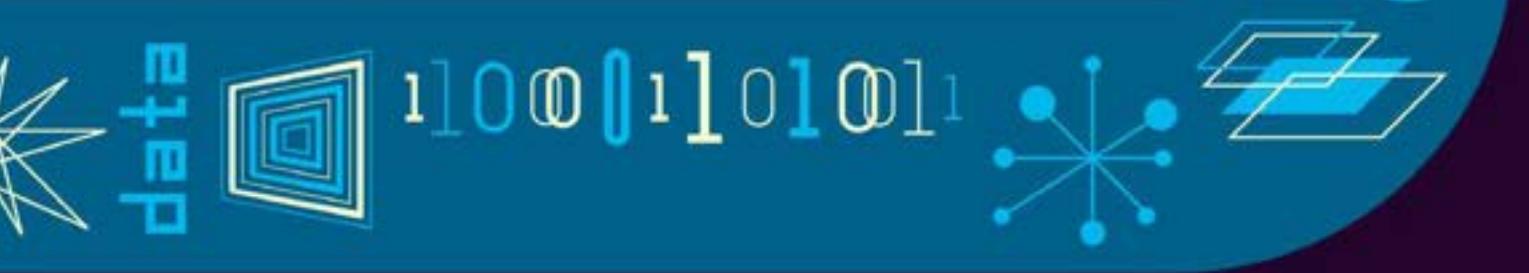
"I still miss [active duty] every day," she said. "I miss the troops, but that's why I have the fellas at The Mission Continues." **h**



The union of technology and data has taken information gathering into hyperdrive. There's so much



# BIG DATA, BIGGER POTENTIAL



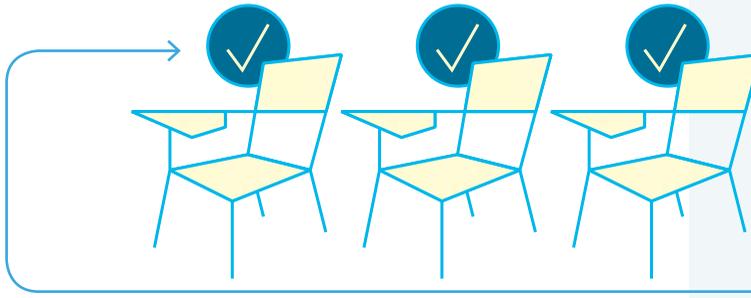
of it that can be used in so many ways that the possibilities for harnessing the power of “big data” seem endless. By Christine H. O’Toole

Until the recent revolution in mobile technologies, data was undemocratic. Big organizations collected important information on how people behaved, but rarely shared it. Public institutions were slow to realize its value.

While savvy corporations raced to monetize information, most local governments were content to collect only the bits that helped cut municipal costs or delineate election results. But the increasing availability of “big data”—the torrent of 24/7 information streaming from phones, sensors, monitors and transactions that results in billions of data points—offers a way to inform public debate and government practice about profound issues.

Illah Nourbakhsh, director of the Community Robotics, Education and Technology Empowerment Lab (CREATE Lab) at Carnegie Mellon University’s Robotics Institute, argues that data can be used to engage citizens and build community. “Citizens who have access, ask the right questions and know how to make sense of the data can make the best decisions,” he explained. He believes that now is the perfect time for cities to dive into what he calls “data fluency.”

“We’re on the cusp where massive data is becoming available,” he said. “Sensors are rapidly becoming less expensive. Municipalities are sharing air and water quality information in open data projects. Patterns of crime, corruption or mortgage defaults are all easier to find online. Data is starting to accumulate rapidly, yet tools to make sense of data are missing. So we have fantastic opportunities.”



The collection and analysis of data on student address changes, attendance records and academic performance has helped the Pittsburgh Public Schools reduce school mobility by 20 percent, enabling more children to keep up with their classmates.

To help the city and region take advantage of those opportunities, The Heinz Endowments recently awarded \$3.3 million to build two complementary projects.

A three-year grant is supporting a city–county–university collaboration that created a free data portal through which data publishers and users can share hundreds of useful sets. The Western Pennsylvania Regional Data Center, which also received funding from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, was launched at the end of last year and headquartered at the University of Pittsburgh’s University Center for Social & Urban Research (UCSUR). The center provides the legal and software architecture for the system, and technical assistance will be available from Carnegie Mellon University.

A two-year grant to Carnegie Mellon’s Metro21 project will create a huge data engine using “distributed sensing”—a technology that enables continuous, real-time measurements along the entire length of a fiber optic cable—storage and data analysis. These combined resources support initiatives such as Platform Pittsburgh, which will involve having pollution sensors cover the city’s East Liberty neighborhood and document how commuting patterns and traffic congestion affect pollution levels and residents’ quality of life, informing government actions. Metro21 also receives funding from the Hillman Family Foundations as well as IBM and Pentair corporations.

Both new projects will be open source—that is, publicly available without restriction. That commitment fosters accountability and public

As part of Platform Pittsburgh, pollution sensors will be installed in the city’s East Liberty neighborhood to document how commuting patterns and traffic congestion affect pollution levels and residents’ quality of life.

participation, with an added economic bonus. Open source data also can encourage new apps and services from the region’s burgeoning tech sector. Pittsburgh officials adopted an open data policy in 2014; Allegheny County has concurred.

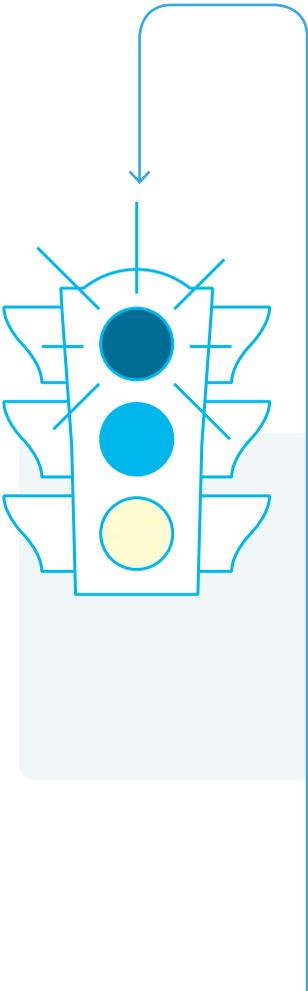
But before data can be effectively shared, it must be collected with consent, standardized, and published in digital machine-readable formats. “We are at the very beginning of the process,” Mr. Nourbakhsh observed. “Who owns the data? How do we fuse together different levels of accuracy? How do you share private data? These are issues we have not yet solved.”

Allegheny County, among the few public institutions mining data for years, has two massive data sets for human services and air quality. The Department of Human Services’ Data Warehouse, created in 1997, is a nationally praised compilation of 1.4 billion records for 1.2 million distinct clients. Integrating internal and external sources while protecting anonymity, the system yields insights that drive consumer service.

One example: When children move during the school year, school attendance can suffer. DHS analyzed data on address changes among Pittsburgh Public Schools students in the department’s system—especially children who move among foster care providers—against truancy and academic performance measures.

The result: Decisions on foster placements now emphasize school stability. Pittsburgh has reduced school mobility 20 percent in the past decade, giving children a better chance to keep up with their classmates.

The county’s extensive air monitor network updates its data hourly, while two projects launched by Mr. Nourbakhsh’s CREATE Lab engage individuals to conduct their own air quality investigations.



Images from the Breathe Cam, an interactive tool for monitoring and documenting visual pollution in near-real time, is continuously available online at the Endowments' Breathe Project website.

And Speck, a low-cost indoor pollution monitor, allows citizens to monitor fine particulate levels in their own homes, learning how changes in air quality affect family health. After a successful pilot at one local library branch, patrons can now borrow the devices throughout the city's Carnegie Library system.

"Speck's popularity tells me two things," Mr. Nourbakhsh said. "One, the desire to understand issues like air quality is universal, not just for the wealthy. And libraries are universal. That's a beautiful thing—devices and conversation to help us band together, even on hyperlocal issues like air pollution or school quality."

Citizens also play a key role in creating smaller sets of information that can become building blocks for improving municipal services.

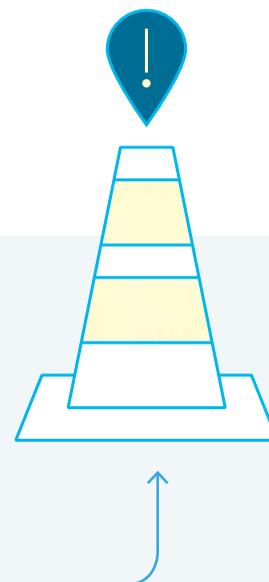
"In some ways, we are actually talking about small data," said Bob Gradeck, director of the Regional Data Center, which after just a few months already hosts 130 data sets.

In community meetings and at events like the annual Steel City Codefest, data users and publishers brainstorm promising collaborations. One recent Codefest led to the creation of PGH.ST, a mobile app that sends email and text reminders to Pittsburgh residents on their scheduled trash and recycling pickups.

When Operation Better Block wanted to quantify the toxic effect of vacant properties in the city's Homewood neighborhood in 2014, the organization created its own grass-roots data set. Volunteers fanned out through the community, taking photos and grading the condition of more than 5,000 structures and lots. The resulting list and map of 92 high-priority eyesores became an action campaign, as residents flooded the city's 311 Response Center phone line with demands for action.

"This is pretty unique," said Demi Kolke of Operation Better Block. "Neighborhood groups don't have a depth of primary, on-the-ground data." The information also allows Better Block to address issues of tangled ownership titles. To help residents without documents on their property ownership, the group is integrating its information on occupied houses with UCSUR's deed transfer and death record datasets.

Digital access to open source data combined with new software systems has made possible apps such as "MyBurgh," which was unveiled in March. The app is expected to improve efficiency in responses to Pittsburgh residents' 311 municipal service requests while keeping track of the inquiries and the progress in addressing them.



Predictive analytics, now widely applied in retailing, finance and scientific research, combine data, statistical algorithms and machine-learning techniques to identify the likelihood of future outcomes based on historical data. Using data not only to solve current problems, but also to predict future needs, is the next goal for community data use.

An example in Pittsburgh involves municipal services. Last year, the city received more than 94,000 municipal service requests. The city's 311 center tagged each one with geolocation information and one or more of 250 problem categories. The "MyBurgh" app unveiled in March now helps city residents and employees track service requests, while a Metro21 project will process past data to predict future service inquiries in the city and county.

With residents contributing data and researchers applying algorithms, "universities' transfer technologies can get cities to work better," explained Rick Stafford, Metro21's executive director and a distinguished service professor of public policy at Carnegie Mellon. The team plans to deploy an open source version of its predictive analytic software, CityScan, to target neighborhood cleanups and crime prevention.

"The corporate world is far ahead on this," acknowledged Wayne Jones, the Endowments' senior impact officer whose work includes promoting big data as part of the foundation's social change efforts. "But there is a growing interest in finding ways that data can enable innovation that serves community needs. It's time to invest in it." **h**



# leadership formation

**Pittsburgh Police Chief Cameron McLay came to the city two years ago committed to improving relations between police officers and African American communities. With support from The Heinz Endowments, he's implementing a training program to change practices and build trust so that everyone benefits. By Elwin Green  
Photography by Scott Goldsmith**



As he helps Pittsburgh police develop a more professional approach to policing, Chief Cameron McLay sets the tone by cultivating his own business-like image.

On July 17, 2014, Eric Garner died while police officers were arresting him on a Staten Island sidewalk in New York City. A cell phone video of the arrest showed that Mr. Garner was unarmed. He also was asthmatic and repeatedly gasped, “I can’t breathe,” as an officer applied a chokehold.

Outrage over his death was ignited as the video of the arrest went viral, then was overshadowed just weeks later by the police killing of another unarmed African American man. On Aug. 9, 2014, in Ferguson, Mo., 18-year-old Michael Brown was shot multiple times by an officer pursuing him as a suspected shoplifter.

The outrage at Mr. Brown’s death was heightened by initial reports that he had his hands raised in surrender when he was shot. Citizens took to the street in protest, and police responded with military force, evoking even more intense protest. “Ferguson” became a code word for police brutality, especially toward black Americans, and for civil unrest.

While Mr. Brown’s death, the ensuing protests, and the militarized police response made international news, Pittsburgh faced its own policing challenge: finding a new police chief who could restore the morale of a department after its last leader had gone to prison, and who could mend the frayed fabric of the department’s relationship with the city’s African American communities.

The case of Leon Ford, a black man who, like Michael Brown, was unarmed when shot by Pittsburgh police, was winding its way through the courts. While Mr. Ford’s shooting was non-fatal, he was paralyzed for life, and tension around his case sparked the question, “Will Pittsburgh be the next Ferguson?”

Cameron McLay was well aware of that tension as he considered applying to become Pittsburgh’s chief of police. “I analyzed what was happening in Pittsburgh, and realized that what I was trained to do was exactly what was needed,” he recalled.

What he had been trained to do was to train police officers. Having retired as police captain for Madison, Wisc., he was working as a consultant with the International Association of Chiefs of Police, training officers across the country in the association’s Leadership in Police Organizations program.

Based on a curriculum developed at West Point, the program focuses on the idea of “dispersed leadership,” which says that every officer is a leader. It also tailors modern behavioral science concepts for the law enforcement environment.

For instance, it teaches enough about how the brain works to help people become more aware of their own thought processes and emotional responses to situations. As a result, “before you reflexively react, you hit pause and analyze what you’re looking at and what you’re thinking,” Chief McLay said.

He went through the program himself while at the Madison Police Department and found it transformational. In Pittsburgh's police chief post, he saw an opportunity to transform an entire police department by sharing what he had learned. He applied for the job, got it, and began serving as chief in September 2014.

Now, after nearly two years, he is about to bring the training to the department on a scale that could provide a tipping point for organizational change.

The department will use a \$100,000 grant from The Heinz Endowments to help support a three-step process. The first step will be to hire a training consultant to overhaul all of the department's training. That process also may include visiting departments in other parts of the country to learn current best practices.

The second step will be to offer a customized version of the Leadership in Police Organizations' core curriculum, which is designed to be taught in three one-week sessions in three months. Chief McLay's goal here is to have 70 or more officers complete that training. He has stacked the deck in favor of the customized training's impact by having nearly 80 officers trained early on by staff instructors from the International Association of Chiefs of Police, giving him "change agents to help me with moving the organization forward."

The third step will be to have a group of officers complete the train-the-trainer program and then train 75 other officers in the core curriculum within the following year. Achieving the second and third goals will make a significant portion of the force, which now numbers about 840, into change agents.

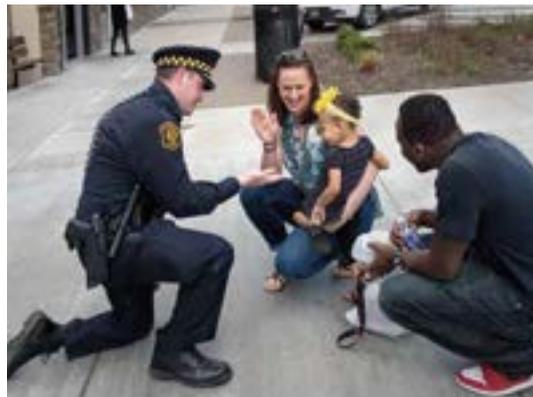
"The goal is to teach ethical decision-making as the predominant decision-making model within the organization," Chief McLay said. "You can't exercise judgment and problem-solving skills in a complex universe by operating off a rule book."

Grant Oliphant, president of the Endowments, said that the direction in which the chief wants to take the police department lines up with the Endowments' own emerging goal areas of sustainability, creativity and learning, which will form the basis for considering future grant requests.

For instance, the broad goal of learning "really is about helping adults learn skills that will make them more effective in helping the broader community," Mr. Oliphant said.

One member of that broader community who will be keeping a watchful eye on the department is Brandi S. Fisher, president and CEO of the Alliance for

Chief Cameron McLay's efforts to improve relations between Pittsburgh police and local communities has included encouraging officers to forge bonds with residents. Officer David Shifren, right center, created a chess club in the neighborhood of Hazelwood, where students like Che King, left, Christian Gonzalez, second from left, and others can hone their strategic thinking skills. Meanwhile, Officer Chris Braden offers a friendly hand and face to one of the city's youngest residents while on the beat in Pittsburgh's Brookline neighborhood.



**“The goal is to teach ethical decision-making as the predominant decision-making model within the organization. You can’t exercise judgment and problem-solving skills in a complex universe by operating off a rule book.”**

Cameron McLay, police chief, City of Pittsburgh



Police Accountability. The organization grew out of citizen response to the beating of high school student Jordan Miles by undercover police officers in 2010.

“I’m happy that The Heinz Endowments is willing to financially support the idea of [police having] better community relations and better community engagement,” Ms. Fisher said. “I’m not a fan of foundations funding organizations to fix themselves. But because I know that Chief McLay is sincere in this endeavor, I trust this process.”

Chief McLay not only wants to help his officers master such skills to make them more effective; he wants to offer similar training to community leaders to expand their capabilities. He is working to present an abbreviated version of the Leadership in Police Organizations’ curriculum to civilians in July—an ambitious undertaking, but, he believes, an important one.

“[With] a lot of the social problems that we face, there’s plenty of room for lots of people to help,” the chief said.

All of this is happening alongside the work of the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and

Justice, a program of the Department of Homeland Security designed to improve relationships and increase trust between communities and the criminal justice system.

Pittsburgh is one of the program’s six pilot cities, and in that, Chief McLay sees the potential for the impact of his department’s new training to ripple beyond the city and beyond the next two years.

“Yale, UCLA, John Jay College, they’re all studying Pittsburgh now,” he said. “We have the opportunity for the next 20 years to have the country reading about our city.”

But his question for local leaders of every stripe whom he encounters around Pittsburgh is, “What do you want them to read about us?”

If the new training program transforms the city’s police department in the ways the chief hopes it will, those future scholars from the different colleges will read that Pittsburgh found a way to avoid becoming the next Ferguson by providing, as Mr. Oliphant described, “a police force that treats people with the appropriate respect and dignity that every citizen deserves.” **h**

# BRIDGE WORK

**W**hen The Heinz Endowments released a report in November on the economic status of black men, the plan was to offer a closer look at structural barriers that stymie the advancement of black men in the region.

The 18-month study—“Barriers & Bridges: An Action Plan for Overcoming Obstacles and Unlocking Opportunities for African American Men in Pittsburgh”—was commissioned by the Endowments and conducted by the Urban Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based economic- and policy-research nonprofit. The research found that black men are not afforded the same chances to participate in the Pittsburgh region’s revitalized economy as their white counterparts.

“The initial intent of the report was to bring attention to key barriers to economic success and present a set of recommendations for consideration and implementation,” explained Carmen Anderson, the Endowments’ senior Children, Youth & Families program officer and head of the foundation’s African American Men and Boys Task Force.

“In an ideal world, it would be a call to action to implement strategies within the private and public sectors,” she said.

**A HEINZ  
ENDOWMENTS-  
COMMISSIONED  
STUDY DESCRIBES  
OBSTACLES TO  
ECONOMIC  
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IT’S UP TO  
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LEADERS TO MAKE  
THE NEXT MOVE.  
BY JAMAR THRASHER**

For some, more action—which would include implementing recommendations outlined in the “Barriers & Bridges” report—is exactly what is needed to ensure an equitable regional economy.

“The solutions require the collective will of the community to invest for the long term in a whole host of approaches,” said Melanie Harrington, president and CEO of the workforce development organization Vibrant Pittsburgh, which promotes increased employment diversity in the region.

The report itself was an outgrowth of the work of the Endowments’ African American Men and Boys Task Force, which selected the Urban Institute to conduct the study and was formed in 2007 to identify and increase educational, economic, social and leadership opportunities for black men and boys in southwestern Pennsylvania. Through those efforts, the task force recognized that more should be done to document and explain the hindrances in making such opportunities available to African American males.

Urban Institute researchers took a rigorous look at the obstacles, such as biased hiring practices and unnecessarily restrictive lending policies that tend to prevent or limit economic success among black

**BARRIERS & BRIDGES**  
AN ACTION PLAN FOR OVERCOMING OBSTACLES  
AND UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN IN PITTSBURGH



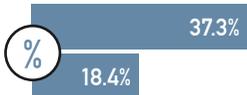
A Report from  
The Urban Enhancement  
African American  
Men and Boys Task Force  
Key Findings  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
October 14, 2015  
Presented by  
Robert C. Jones,  
Mark McDaniel, and Carolyn M.  
Hester



In the Pittsburgh region, only 36.5 percent of African American households were living in owner-occupied dwellings in 2012, compared with 73.9 percent of white households.



Nationally, for every dollar in wealth the median white household had in 2011, the median African American household had roughly 6 cents.



In 2013, the home purchase loan denial rate for black men in the Pittsburgh region was 37.3 percent, more than twice the 18.4 percent denial rate for white men.



Among men with at least a high school diploma or the equivalent, the unemployment rate from 2007 to 2011 was 12.2 percent for African Americans and 5.1 percent for whites.

## THE REPORT

Commissioned by The Heinz Endowments, the “Barriers & Bridges” report identifies persistent roadblocks in areas such as employment and lending that have been hindering many African American men from economic advancement in the Pittsburgh region and offers recommendations for addressing the obstacles. The study is an outgrowth of the work of the Endowments’ African American Men and Boys Task Force, which formed in 2007.

men in the Pittsburgh region. “Barriers & Bridges” then offered suggestions for changes in practices and policies to help remove the barriers. After distributing the report to the Endowments’ board in October, the task force hosted a community forum to discuss the research and ways to eliminate roadblocks to economic progress for local African American men. The study found, for example, that among men in the Pittsburgh region with at least a high school diploma or the equivalent, the unemployment rate from 2007 to 2011 was 12.2 percent for African Americans and 5.1 percent for whites. Researchers determined that behind those statistics were barriers for black men such as the exclusion — intentional and unintentional — from social networks that circulate information about job openings and a lack of access to training programs because of geographic segregation or lengthy time commitments without adequate compensation.

The report also elaborated on the impact of homeownership disparities. Only 36.5 percent of African American households were living in owner-occupied dwellings in 2012, compared to 73.9 percent of white households. In 2013, the home purchase loan denial rate for black men in the Pittsburgh region was 37.3 percent, more than twice the 18.4 percent denial rate for white men. Without owning a home that could be used as collateral, many African American men cannot obtain loans to start businesses or to finance further education for themselves or family members.

Among the study’s recommendations were long-term investments in community programs, particularly business-development initiatives, that help African American men improve their economic standing in Pittsburgh. The report also proposed support for and expansion of networking and peer-learning opportunities for black entrepreneurs and more inclusive hiring, promotion and business contracting practices.

“It has taken a generational commitment to transform the economy and environment of Pittsburgh,” said Ms. Harrington, referring to the region’s recovery from the loss of its steel industry as well as past and current efforts to clean up air and other pollution. “If the community can come together around big issues like those, then certainly we can come together to make a multi-generational investment in removing barriers that are contributing to the heart-wrenching challenges facing our region’s African American men.”

Tim Stevens, chairman of the Black Political Empowerment Project and the Corporate Equity & Inclusion Roundtable, said local businesses could adopt hiring practices that do not restrict individuals’ access to employment. One example is “banning the box,” a practice that calls for not including questions about criminal background on a job application. Criminal records can be barriers for some African American men when seeking employment, despite their capabilities.

When Bill Generett left Pittsburgh in 1989, he swore he would never return because of the devastating impact of the steel industry decline on local communities. “Right before our eyes, we saw communities become skeletons of themselves,” he recalled.

After going to college and law school in Atlanta and becoming a lawyer, Generett eventually returned to Pittsburgh with his family and became founder and CEO of Urban Innovation21, an economic development organization that works to connect disadvantaged communities and populations to the city’s innovation economy.

“Oftentimes black men can internalize racism and ask, ‘What’s wrong with me?’ Well, [the Urban Institute report] shows that in many cases the problem that needs to be fixed is with others, not you,” he said. “There need to be roundtable discussions led by executives in the corporate, philanthropic, entrepreneurial and government sectors to determine what they need to do on their end to tackle the structural barriers of racism that exist within their networks.” **h**



Renee Rosenstahl

**“IF THE COMMUNITY CAN COME TOGETHER AROUND BIG ISSUES LIKE [THE ECONOMY AND THE ENVIRONMENT OF PITTSBURGH], THEN CERTAINLY WE CAN COME TOGETHER TO MAKE A MULTI-GENERATIONAL INVESTMENT IN REMOVING BARRIERS THAT ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THE HEART-WRENCHING CHALLENGES FACING OUR REGION’S AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN.”**

**Melanie Harrington**, president and CEO, Vibrant Pittsburgh



## THE FOLLOW-UP

The “Barriers & Bridges” report was released to the public in November during a community forum in Pittsburgh’s Hill District neighborhood. Among the panelists was Margaret Simms, above, one of the researchers with the Washington, D.C.-based Urban Institute, which was commissioned to conduct the study. Audience participants included Sala Udin, top right, a former city councilman and former CEO of the Coro Center for Civic Leadership.

# ROLLING PIPELINES

**E**leven fiery derailments of trains carrying crude oil have occurred in the United States and Canada in the past two and a half years, and on any given day in Pennsylvania, 60 to 70 oil trains cross the state, many passing through Pittsburgh. The U.S. Department of Transportation has predicted that as many as 10 oil train derailments could occur in any given year.

The sudden appearance of these trains—more than a mile in length and hauling up to 3 million gallons of volatile crude oil—has communities across the country asking how this threat ended up so close to their schools, parks and playgrounds, and what the presence of the trains means for health and safety. Local government officials also are scrambling to find approaches for reducing the risk.

“People are mostly shocked at first to hear [about the dangers],” said Jon Kenney, a community organizer with the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, a Takoma Park, Md.-based nonprofit committed to fighting global warming. “I went to a community meeting and talked about the issue, and people didn’t quite believe it. They all knew what the trains looked like, and then were really shocked to hear how explosive they are.”

Finding ways for the Pittsburgh region to address these concerns was the focus of a Nov. 13 “Community Risk Solutions Conference,” sponsored by The Heinz Endowments. A dominant theme emerging from the daylong event was the need for greater engagement of state and local political leaders and the public.

About 200 elected officials, activists, researchers, and health and public safety experts from around the country discussed strategies to help communities counter the political strength that railroads have brandished for more than a century, exemplified by the “federal preemption.” Through the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887, the preemption has placed regulatory responsibility for the railroads in Washington, resulting in many state lawmakers keeping their hands off railroad activities. This has left communities looking for creative ways on their own to address the oil train risk, despite their comparative lack of political power.

Ben Stuckart, president of the Spokane City Council, described how, in the Pacific Northwest region, the Safe Energy Leadership Alliance (SELA) was formed to organize and lobby against oil trains. Members include 167 state and local leaders from five states as well as others from British Columbia and six Native American tribes.

“When I go to Washington, D.C., and I’m sitting with Transportation Secretary [Anthony] Foxx, I’m not just representing the citizens of Spokane,” Stuckart told participants at the Pittsburgh conference. “I say I’m representing SELA, and I give him a list of all of the members of SELA. He lights up . . . because Foxx is a former

mayor, and he understands how we act regionally.”

Until a deadly oil train derailment killed 47 people and destroyed a town in Quebec in 2013, few people were aware that some railroads had turned their tracks into rolling pipelines. The trend began in the mid-to-late 2000s, when advances in drilling technology allowed energy companies to begin pulling 1 million barrels of oil a day out of the ground in North Dakota, where little had been drawn in the past. Lacking pipelines, the oil companies turned to the railroads to move the crude to refineries on the nation’s three coastlines.

Shipping North Dakota crude oil by rail triggered a multitrillion-dollar industrial revival for oil producers, refineries and the railroads. Both the oil and railroad industries maintain that shipping crude by rail is safe, and the railroad industry has resisted releasing information about oil trains, arguing that greater transparency would increase the risk

of terrorism. Oil train opponents say the real reason is that the railroads don’t want residents knowing how much volatile crude oil is passing through their communities.

Oil trains traveling through Pittsburgh begin their journey in North Dakota oil fields, with some bound for Baltimore, where the oil is offloaded onto barges and shipped to refineries on the East Coast. The Baltimore city council reacted to news that five CSX oil trains roll through the city each week by drafting a proposed ordinance requiring a health-impact study and risk analysis. Mr. Kenney and his group have been attending town hall meetings along the Baltimore oil train route to raise public awareness of the oil trains. The proposed ordinance, which is pending, is a product of their efforts.

Peter Iwanowicz, chairman of the Expert Advisory Committee on Crude Oil Safety in Albany County, told the Pittsburgh conference group that in New York State, Albany County officials were able to use local public health laws to stop heavy tar sands oil from being shipped by rail and barge through the community. Unlike the Bakken oil traveling through Pittsburgh, tar sands oil originates in Canada and needs to be heated during transport, creating another set of hazards, he explained.

New York had “green-lighted” a railroad proposal to move tar sands through the county without an environmental impact study or other scrutiny, Iwanowicz said. “The county executive looked at public health law and said, ‘We can issue a moratorium under public health law, and the county health commissioner can actually stop this project from going forward because people might get sick and it’s a public nuisance.’”

The moratorium went into effect in March 2014 and still stands. **h**

**“OIL TRAINS” HAVE BECOME A GROWING ISSUE IN THIS COUNTRY AS THEIR NUMBERS HAVE INCREASED ON OUR NATION’S RAILWAYS. BUT IT’S THE VOLATILITY OF THEIR CARGO THAT HAS MORE AND MORE COMMUNITIES CONCERNED ABOUT RISKS.**

**BY MARCUS STERN**

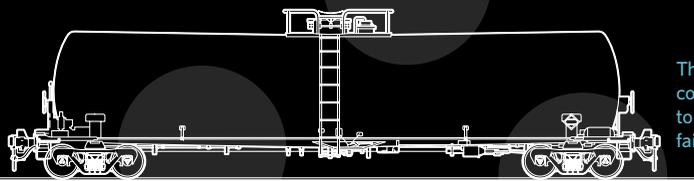
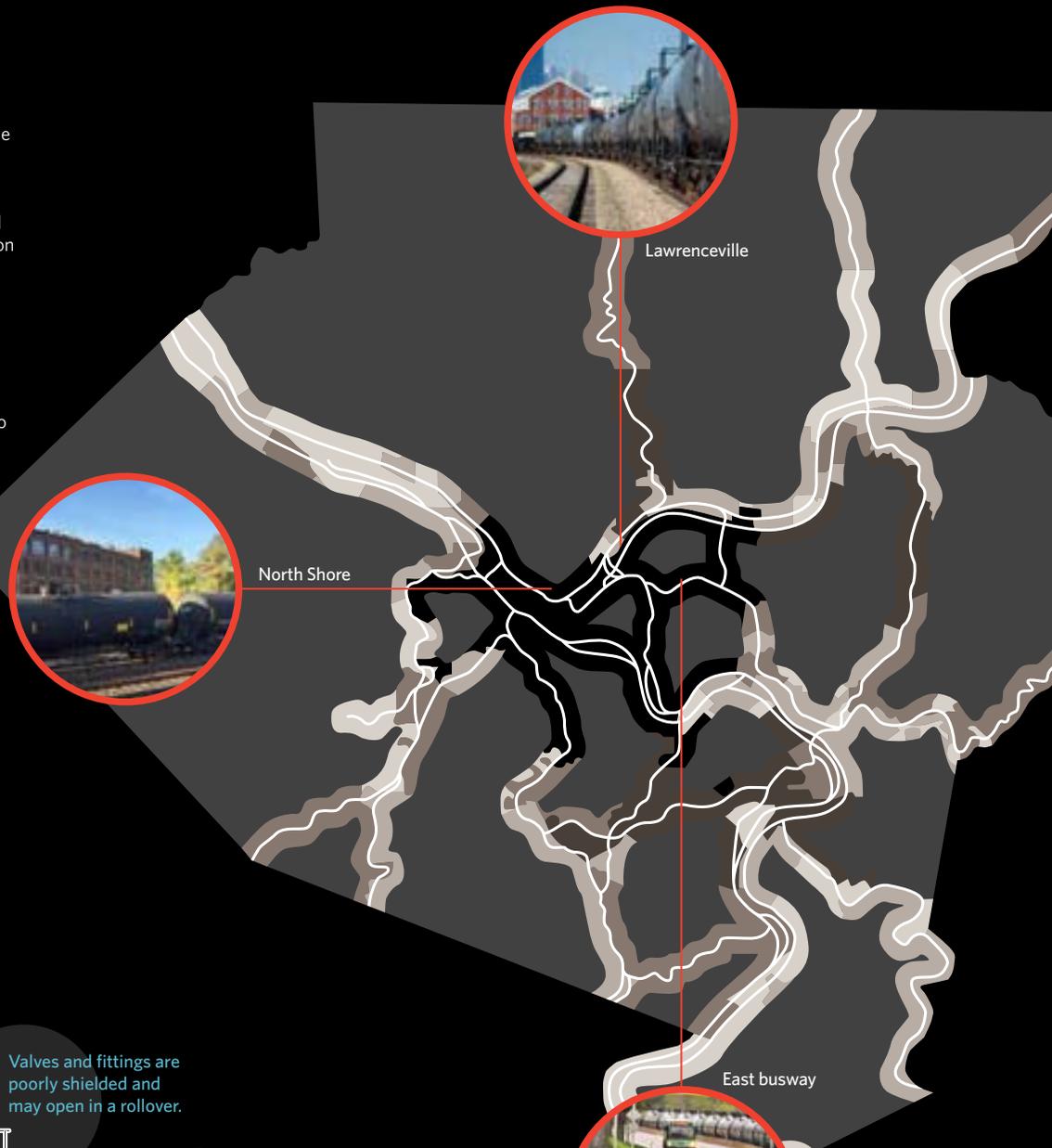
## TRACKING TRAINS

While monitoring oil train activity in the Pittsburgh region, researchers with Carnegie Mellon University's Community Robotics, Education and Technology Empowerment Lab — CREATE Lab — estimated that trains carried about 54 million gallons of crude oil through the area weekly and about 10 million gallons of liquefied "light ends" — for example, propane and butane — near the Oakland campuses of Carnegie Mellon and the University of Pittsburgh per week. The latter are "so explosive we don't let tanker trucks carry them through tunnels in the Pittsburgh area," said Randy Sargent, a CREATE Lab computer scientist, referring to federal regulations. "But we allow trains carrying 300 times the volume of a tanker truck to go through tunnels under the most populated areas in Oakland."

### POPULATION

- 0-1,871
- 1,872-4,490
- 4,491-8,287
- 8,288-13,841
- 13,842-183,456

Rail lines



The steel shell is less than ½" thick—easily ruptured in an accident.

Valves and fittings are poorly shielded and may open in a rollover.

The draft sill, connecting the tank to the wheels, may fail in derailments.

## SAFETY ISSUES

Federal transportation and safety records reflect the staggering growth in oil trains as advances in drilling technology have allowed more oil to be pulled out of the ground, and oil companies, lacking pipelines, have turned to railroads to move crude to refineries on the nation's three coastlines. The number of tanker loads — each is about 30,000 gallons — rose from 9,500 in 2008 to 435,560 in 2013, a 4,500 percent increase in seven years, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The configuration of mile-long strings of 100 or more tankers hauling up to 3 million gallons of nothing but volatile light crude oil has no precedent.



# here&there

## #JUSTPGH

In April, The Heinz Endowments launched an interactive social media campaign that asked the public to weigh in with ideas of what “Just Pittsburgh” could mean. President Grant Oliphant presented the concept in a February blog, describing a potential Just Pittsburgh as open, inclusive, equitable and creative. People in the region were invited to share their thoughts via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The first phase of the social media initiative included additional blogs and videos, culminating in a Twitter chat with Mr. Oliphant; Vice President of Sustainability and the Environment Andrew McElwaine; Senior Children, Youth & Families Program Officer Carmen Anderson; and Senior Arts & Culture Program Officer Justin Laing.

Mr. Oliphant also spoke about the implications of a Just Pittsburgh in a keynote speech during the annual conference of the American Institute of Architects’ Pittsburgh chapter on April 21. Using the theme of “Just Design,” Mr. Oliphant described how the Just Pittsburgh concept could apply to building and development projects in the region so that residents can participate in and benefit from a more equitable process.

## NAMING HONOR

In recognition of the national and international impact that Heinz Endowments Chairman Teresa Heinz has had on environmental stewardship, regional innovation and social change, Carnegie Mellon University named in her honor three recently completed areas of a major renovation at Hamburg Hall, the main building of the H. John Heinz III College. The new sections are the Teresa Heinz Rotunda, the Teresa Heinz Collaboration Space and the Teresa Heinz Classroom. In 2013, Carnegie Mellon officials proposed naming the new spaces after the Endowments chairman as part of the second phase of a \$25 million expansion of Heinz College, which was named after the late senator and houses both the university’s School of Information Systems and Management and the School of Public Policy and Management. The Endowments gave \$10 million toward the expansion’s second phase.

## SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH

**Sustainable Center** In April, Chatham University dedicated the new Eden Hall Commons Center, marking the completion of the first phase of construction at the satellite campus, which stretches across 388 acres in Richland Township, north of Pittsburgh. The Commons Center will serve as a multi-purpose hub for undergraduate and graduate students in the Falk School of Sustainability. The two-story, 23,000-square-foot building houses classrooms, a large cafeteria, and a student lounge area with seating for 250 people. It exceeds LEED — Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design — Platinum standards and is expected to produce more energy than it consumes. The Endowments has supported development of Chatham’s Eden Hall campus, which is designed to serve as a “living laboratory” offering students hands-on lessons in sustainable economics, farm-to-table food production, and green innovation.

**Breathing Problems** Recently released findings from a study funded by The Heinz Endowments’ Breathe Project indicate a high rate of asthma risk among schoolchildren in the Pittsburgh region. The results were highlighted during a half-day May conference for health professionals, “The Air We Breathe: A Regional Summit on Asthma in Our Community.” The study included 267 fifth-graders from schools in four suburban districts, a charter school and an independent school in the city. According to the findings, more than 40 percent of the participating children already have or are at risk for developing asthma. Although students and schools volunteered for the study rather than being randomly selected, the asthma risk rate, even with adjustments, is still much higher than rates reported at county, state and national levels, said Dr. Deborah Gentile, the study’s lead researcher and director of allergy and asthma clinical research for the Allegheny Health Network. The annual asthma summit was presented by the Allegheny Health Network and The Breathe Project and included asthma experts from the United States and Canada.

# 3

PRIORITY AREAS

The Endowments is realigning its grantmaking under three priority areas — learning, creativity and sustainability — while maintaining its five programs: Arts & Culture; Children, Youth & Families; Community & Economic Development; Education; and Science & Environment. The change is designed to foster greater collaboration, innovation and equity. The priorities also will promote more dynamic engagement with the region’s growing technology and data analysis sectors, and with its new field of government, university and civic leaders who are taking promising steps toward improving the region’s prospects for the future. As part of the strategic planning, Endowments staff have been meeting with grantees in forums organized by the nonprofit Art of Democracy to hear insights from the organizations that will be affected by the process.

# UP NEXT:

The next issue of *h* magazine will include two stories highlighting creative ways to invest in youth in the Pittsburgh region. One piece will look at the work of SLB Radio Productions, whose out-of-school-time success with local children and adolescents has included three nationally recognized radio projects produced by students in last year’s Heinz Endowments Summer Youth Philanthropy Internship Program. The other article will explain plans to transform a neighborhood YMCA into the Creative Youth Center, which will focus on engaging teens in technology and the creative arts in an effort to nurture their talents and expand their options for successful futures.

For daily updates on programs and issues that The Heinz Endowments supports, follow us on social media.



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## ON THE RECORD IN MARKET SQUARE

Dutch artist Allard van Hoorn turned Downtown Pittsburgh's Market Square into a record player for the 2016 Market Square Public Art installation, incorporating different sounds to explore and interpret urban landscapes. Van Hoorn, who is from Leiden, the Netherlands, is known for large-scale installations that include sound, performance and public interaction.

For this project, called "Mix-N-Match," van Hoorn created a giant silver stylus, which represented a turntable needle and served as a jukebox housing different sounds. The performance "tracks" were produced by student poets from the Pittsburgh Creative and Performing Arts School; tap dancers from Point Park University; steel drum players from Urban Pathways Charter School; members of the Downtown Clean Team; the artist-in-residence, staff and volunteers from the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh-Hazelwood; the organist from First English Evangelical Lutheran Church; and representatives of Project Silk, a support organization for minority gay men and transgender individuals.

Market Square Public Art is a program of the City of Pittsburgh's Public Art Division, with funding provided by the Endowments, the Art Works program of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Richard King Mellon Foundation, the City of Pittsburgh, and the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership.

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