



The second major summit to advance the p4 initiative, which aims to help transform Pittsburgh into a sustainable city, will focus on ensuring that all residents benefit from revitalization efforts. By Jeffery Fraser

# PREVIEWING p4: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EQUITY

**E**conomic and social equity advocate Angela Glover Blackwell was blunt in her message to cities, such as Pittsburgh, who've embraced sustainability as the path to the future.

"When you think about becoming a model for the nation and perhaps for the world, I suggest that if you don't get the inclusion agenda right, you don't have the model," the CEO of the national equity organization PolicyLink told a full house during the city's first p4 Summit last year.

Her message continues to resonate. In mid-October, the conference will reconvene with a particular focus on economic and social equity and justice—the core values of the "people" aspect of the p4 framework for advancing Pittsburgh as a sustainable city. The framework also includes strategies addressing planet, place and performance.

Pittsburgh has arrived at a moment in time when decisions will have profound bearing on shaping its future and the future of the region. Long-standing issues of economic and social equity remain as steep challenges to overcome if that future is to be built on the concepts of sustainability.

Local minorities, for example, hold one of the smallest shares of the workforce among U.S. metro regions. This is particularly the case for African Americans. Income disparities among races are sharp and persistent. And standing between African American men and economic opportunity are lingering structural barriers, such as social and geographic isolation, restrictive hiring and lending practices, and a low

homeownership rate, according to an Urban Institute study commissioned by The Heinz Endowments.

"The redevelopment of Pittsburgh hasn't reached all of its citizens and all of its neighborhoods," said Andrew McElwaine, the Endowments' vice president for Sustainability and the Environment. "More inclusive redevelopment is going to be a tough conversation."

The two-day summit sponsored by the city and the Endowments will feature a range of national and international experts and discussion around all aspects of the p4 framework. On the first day, for example, the Brookings Institution is scheduled to report on its study of local economic development issues, an outgrowth of last year's conference. The fruits of another product of that summit—indicators for measuring sustainability—also will be presented.

The spotlight falls more exclusively on economic and social equity during the second day of the conference. The day is seen as one of engaging the community with interactive sessions that look at issues such as what defines a just city, what constitutes justice for Pittsburgh, and how these ideas can be incorporated in plans and strategies for the region.

Solving such questions is at the core of Just Pittsburgh, a special initiative of the Endowments urging the redesign of the city and region to be open, inclusive and equitable for all.

"We can't continue to live with the 'two Pittsburghs' problem," insisted Endowments President Grant Oliphant. "We have to prosper together. The stakes are as high as they can be." **h**