Aerial view of Hazelwood Green 2021

Hazelwood Green

In 2002, The Heinz Endowments partnered with the Claude Worthington Benedum, McCune and Richard King Mellon foundations as the Almono Limited Partnership (Almono LP) to collectively purchase a 178-acre brownfield site in Pittsburgh's Hazelwood and Glen Hazel neighborhoods along the Monongahela River. Once the home of Jones & Laughlin Steel, the site closed in 1998, leaving behind heavily degraded buildings and a nearly two-mile strip of inaccessible riverfront. Of the 6,000 residents who remained after the area's industrial heyday, nearly a quarter lived below the poverty line, and there were simply not enough people to sustain many nearby schools, businesses or bus routes.

The partners envisioned more: a center of global innovation and sustainability that connected to, stabilized and strengthened its neighborhood, in line with a broader shared view of the region's future. Such holistic reinvention would require a new model for economic growth and place-based development—not only for Pittsburgh but nationally—aligned with the community and grounded in principles of sustainability, equity and inclusive opportunity.

Today, the Endowments and its current Almono LP partners have channeled patient capital, extensive public-private partnership and collaborative planning to realize Hazelwood Green as the center of a reinvented mixed-use neighborhood where longstanding residents can still feel at home amid burgeoning research, culture and industry.

Hazelwood Green's transformation has included cutting-edge retrofits of industrial buildings to create offices, research and development spaces, and areas for biomanufacturing and small-scale production, which together maintain net-zero energy use. The site is now an expanding R&D hub for robotics, artificial intelligence and advanced materials, with tenants including Aptiv, Uber, OneValley's Pittsburgh Innovation Center, Advanced Robotics for Manufacturing (ARM), Carnegie Mellon University's Manufacturing Futures Initiative (MFI) and Catalyst Connection.

In 2019, Almono LP, the City of Pittsburgh and our many community partners collaborated in developing the area's first-ever master plan, a template for future sustainable development that draws from the deep history and culture that remains intact through the people and the physical fabric of the neighborhood. We established a vision for—and a path toward achieving—a thriving future where research and talent is grown and fostered within premier universities, local neighborhoods remain unique and affordable, and the real estate market demands inspire creative financial solutions.

Our ongoing investments also support affordable housing initiatives, workforce and career training, small business development, K-12 education, arts and cultural programming, youth recreation and more within the long-underserved neighborhood. Further, the Almono team has rebuilt Signature Boulevard and other major roads as "complete streets," with wide rights of way, updated safety features and sustainable stormwater management infrastructure. Partners have also sought better connections to the rest of the city, including to Pittsburgh's trail network for cyclists and pedestrians and to Oakland, Downtown, the Pittsburgh Technology Center and the South Side for bus commuters.

"We've realized that a place like Pittsburgh really does need both local and national developers driving an incremental development agenda," said Rob Stephany, senior director of the Endowments' Community & Economic Development Program. "We think that yields more authentic places."