

MAYOR ED GAINEY



TRANSITION REPORT

2022

www.GaineyTransition.com



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LETTER FROM THE MAYOR

On January 3, 2022, when I swore my oath of office, my commitment to you was that I would govern to make change. This will take courage, and I know that this word courage means a lot of different things to a lot of different people. But to me, courage means doing the right thing by the people, for the people, and, most importantly, with the people. No one can do it alone, but we can always do it together.



As we set out to make Pittsburgh a city in which all of us – no matter our race, gender, or neighborhood – have the opportunity to thrive, we have come together as neighbors to identify actionable solutions to our most pressing problems. We have assembled these transition committees of advocates, activists, and experts to engage with each other and the broader Pittsburgh community and help chart a path forward.

I am proud to receive the committees' recommendations and use them as the blueprint for the next four years and beyond. This plan will inform my approach to Equitable Development, Education and Workforce Development, Infrastructure and Environmental Protection, and Community Health and Safety. The recommendations in this report range from immediate operational efficiencies to launching transformational initiatives that may take a decade to realize fully. This transition plan provides an overview of both the priorities of my administration, and the ways that I intend to fulfill those priorities. I am extremely grateful to the Pittsburghers who stepped up to serve on the transition committees, participate in online engagement, surveys, and community forums, and to be a reflection of the views and perspectives of Pittsburgh.

I want to extend my sincerest gratitude to the Transition Team members who dedicated their time, energy, and resources to this process. My thanks additionally go out to the Pittsburgh Foundation and Heinz Endowment, whose financial support made this process and this document possible. I could not have done this without my staff, consultants, advisors, co-chairs, committee members, and the teams of analysts, scribes, facilitators, and interns who helped to bring this plan to life.

Sincerely,

Mayor Ed Gainey

LETTER FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

The Honorable Ed Gainey
Mayor of Pittsburgh
City Hall
414 Grant St # 512
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Dear Mayor Gainey:

We are pleased to submit this final transition report on behalf of our fellow Pittsburgh Transition Team members and the hundreds of citizens who participated in our discussions. Over the past several months, we have had the opportunity to examine some of the most pressing issues facing our city. We have heard from subject matter experts, discussed research findings and national best practices, and we have conferred with many of the City's senior administrators. We appreciate the responsiveness of the City officials and employees who provided countless documents, made thoughtful presentations, and engaged with us as we sought to develop meaningful and actionable recommendations.

Throughout our deliberations, we considered only those matters over which you have authority or direct influence and we were mindful of the financial constraints that the City currently faces. We want this document to be a roadmap for your Administration and for our community, and we understand that success will come only if we all do our part to create the change that we want to see for our city. We stand ready to assist you in the implementation of these recommendations.

The enthusiasm of the committee members and the hopefulness with which members of the public made proposals gives us tremendous optimism for the future of our city. We are honored that you chose us to lead this historic endeavor that has brought together an amazingly diverse group of citizens to offer to you our perspectives on how we can support your vision of a more equitable and inclusive Pittsburgh. We look forward to working with you in the years ahead to make this vision a reality.

Sincerely,

Angel Gober, Chair

Silas Russell, Co-Chair

INTRODUCTION



This Transition Report will be used to guide the Gainey Administration during its time in office. It is the culmination of a Transition process made possible by the dedicated efforts of hundreds of committed volunteers, staff, and consultants.

The Gainey Administration Transition Team began its work in January 2022, shortly after Mayor Gainey took office on January 3rd. The Transition Team began its work by sharing its vision for the future of Pittsburgh. From there, discussions began in earnest on what actions can be taken to achieve those visions. Several committees developed three to five subcommittees to focus their conversations in more depth. Members were particularly mindful of listening to the community, an emphasis demonstrated by their online engagement platform that launched in January and collected feedback through March. During the month of February, each committee hosted a facilitated online discussion with community members. In early March, committees consulted with local and national experts in policies they were considering. The outcome of this robust process is the set of recommendations that follows – recommendations focused on producing results.

Structure of the Transition Team

Consisting of 53 volunteer committee co-chairs, members, and advisors, the Transition Team reflected a diverse cross section of Pittsburgh, who were dedicated to the City and to supporting Mayor Gainey as he began to govern. Providing insight and advice throughout the process were community members who participated in a series of online surveys, contributed ideas through an online message board, and voiced

concerns and solutions in four Community Listening Sessions. The policy development core of the Transition Team was built around its four committees: Equitable Development, Education and Workforce Development, Infrastructure and Environment, and Community Health and Safety. Each committee was led by Co-Chairs with backgrounds and experience related to the topic of the committee. Committees were composed of community leaders and subject matter experts experienced in areas related to the committee's focus.

Professional Meeting Facilitation and Consulting Staff

An important and innovative aspect of the Transition process was the use of a team of expert meeting facilitators led by the Thomas Consulting Group and funded by the Pittsburgh Foundation and Heinz Endowments. They, in conjunction with the Transition Chairs, project managers, meeting facilitators, and policy analysts, added structure to the Transition process. This configuration freed the subcommittee members and Committee co-chairs to focus on using their expertise to generate the policy recommendations that would become the foundation for the Mayor's policy platform.

Community and Expert Outreach

During the course of the Transition, in addition to the expertise brought by the members of the Transition Team, more than 560 residents participated in Community Listening Sessions to share concerns and solutions related to each of the four committee topic areas. More than 4,000 unique users visited the online participation site more than 12,000 times to provide input. Subject matter experts from coast to coast, representing government, non-profits, and the private sector, were consulted to gather best practices to create a Pittsburgh for all.

12,597



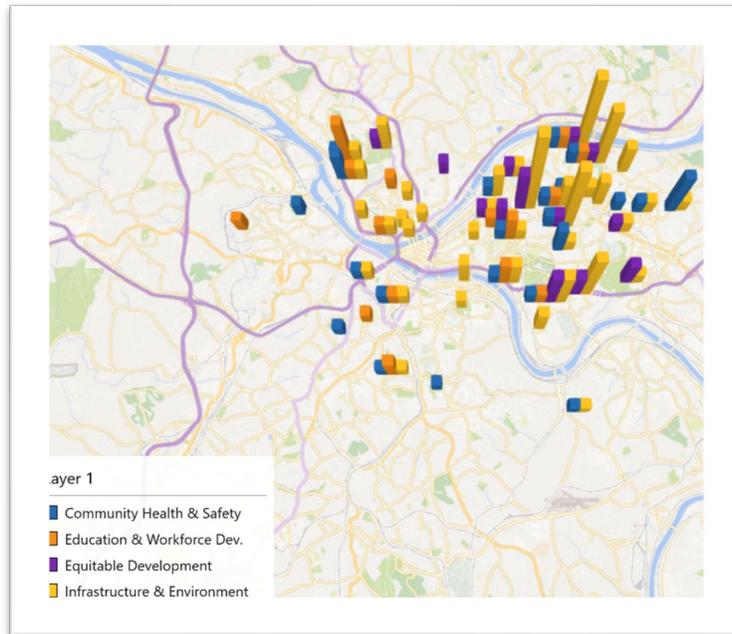
Total Visit

4,184



Unique Users

Posts by Topic per Neighborhood



Map of Community Listening Session Registrants by Zip Code



Policy Development Process

The bulk of the policy development work was conducted at the subcommittee level. Each committee was given a charge by the Mayor, which reflected his priorities in that particular area. The committees met consistently over the course of three months, during which they researched and discussed various policy solutions and worked toward delivery of a final report to the Mayor. The reports contained their policy recommendations, which now form the foundation of the Mayor's policy platform.

During the process, the committees focused on producing recommendations that provide feasible, concrete, actionable steps that can be taken to address the most pressing issues facing our communities and our City. However, it should be noted that, while the committees produced recommendations that would each be beneficial, the ability to implement them will be dependent on many factors, especially available funding. The committees recognized the possibility that unforeseen factors may develop that may make it impossible or inadvisable for some of the recommendations to be implemented.

How This Document Is Organized

This document is divided into four main sections, one for each of the Transition Committees. Each section features the committee's recommendations, grouped by theme. The beginning of each section features the committee's charge and a contextual overview that provides background information on the issues and opportunities the committees considered as they formed their recommendations. This is followed by information about members of the team and a summary of the recommendations.

Following the summary of each recommendation is the rationale for the idea, which gives additional background around the issues that made the recommendation necessary.

Recommendations Overview

The recommendations featured in this Transition Report were developed with an emphasis on bold ideas that would help transform our City. At the same time, they were developed while being realistic about the financial, political, and other constraints that exist. Many of the challenges we face were created over years—in some cases decades—and will not be fixed overnight. The recommendations featured in this report seek to strike a delicate, practical balance between investing in our long-term future and meeting our short-term needs.

As the committees met and discussed their concerns and ideas, a number of common themes consistently emerged. These shared themes eventually converged into the ideals that would inform the culture of the new administration – the values, attitude, and principles that will guide how the Gainey Administration will approach governance. Primarily, these themes are about action. Pittsburgh has developed several well-constructed plans and analysis on a wide variety of topics impacting its residents. Far too often, they have remained on the shelf. Pittsburghers are looking for results, and this plan focuses on delivering those results.



CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

Throughout the conversations at both committee meetings and Community Listening Sessions, several themes consistently emerged as important topics of discussion. These cross-cutting themes serve as a foundation on which many of these recommendations are built. Whenever possible, Mayor Gainey should use these themes as lenses through which policy and programmatic recommendations should be viewed and should make intentional strides to include elements of these themes in all his initiatives.

Equity

For a community to be successful, every resident must be provided with the tools they need to thrive. Time and time again, residents highlighted how past injustices still create inequity in their communities today. Historic inequities in infrastructure investment have created persistent disparities in the quality of city streets, bridges, and sidewalks from neighborhood to neighborhood. Environmental racism has left communities of color with higher rates of water and air pollution as well as the corresponding public health effects. Achieving real equity requires both deliberate thought and committed action. To realize the vision of an equitable Pittsburgh, equity must be considered in every new project and proposal undertaken by the City.

Practice Ongoing Community Engagement

Consistently throughout the Transition's public engagement process, members of the public who participated in the use of online tools and virtual Community Listening Sessions expressed the genuine hope that this type of engagement will continue the transition process and throughout the term of Mayor Gainey. The availability of interpretation services was noted as highly appreciated. Moreover, the opportunity to voice and be heard as residents impacted by municipal decisions was valued. Participants hope that a similar process will be used to increase the transparency of the budgeting process and provide venues for community input. Residents speaking with all committees hope that this administration will continue to provide opportunities for input and feedback as recommendations from this report are implemented.

The members of the Transition Team have invested significant time and effort into developing this set of recommendations for the Gainey Administration and stand ready to continue to engage and assist, where appropriate, with implementation. It is the desire of the Transition Team for the Mayor to create a robust and ongoing engagement process that will allow for ongoing input into implementation strategies, as well as partnerships to assist the Administration with the successful implementation of the recommendations contained in this report.

Increase Walkable Neighborhoods

Pittsburgh's citizens want to live in neighborhoods that are safe and pleasant for pedestrians. Making it easier for citizens to walk or bike would advance public health, increase residents' quality of life, reduce car dependency, and make Pittsburgh more attractive to businesses. At present, poorly maintained and impassable sidewalks make walking dangerous, especially for people with disabilities. Unsafe pedestrian

infrastructure means it is dangerous for children to walk to their community schools. Failure to maintain City Steps has resulted in more isolated and disconnected neighborhoods. Making neighborhoods more friendly to pedestrians will create a healthier, safer, and more livable city for all residents.

Improve Permitting

The responsiveness of regulatory processes has wide-reaching economic and quality of life impacts throughout the Pittsburgh community. Expanding the stock of affordable housing, improving the quality of existing dwelling units, facilitating entrepreneurial enterprises, and creating well-paying construction industry jobs all rely on permitting and licensing processes that are adequately resourced and efficient. While prior administrations made progress in digitizing processes, further work remains to fully modernize these systems. Developers and homeowners need a streamlined and predictable process for ordinary projects and repairs as well as a responsive accessible process for more complex endeavors. Small-business owners need reliably scheduled inspections and approvals to avoid incurring delay costs that can affect their bottom line. Accessibility for all residents is key to success in development, and language access must be emphasized and incorporated into the daily operations of these public-facing departments. Creating an environment that encourages growth and improvement means eliminating time-consuming legacy inspections and reorienting city processes to be services-driven with sufficient staffing to support the needs of Pittsburghers.

Of particular importance in the context of development in Pittsburgh, recommendations around an expedited permitting process were put forward by committees. The Education and Workforce Development Committee advocated for a Build Better policy that establishes an opportunity for building and construction contractors to access expedited permitting after they have demonstrated a firm commitment and ability to adhere to high standards in employment, training, and safety. The Equitable Development Committee also suggested an expedited permit and plan review process for development of housing meeting affordability criteria to be set by the City.

Support for workers

Pittsburgh workers showed up consistently and broadly as a major community of focus across areas of policy -- both in and outside of the workplace. Creation of and access to high quality jobs was a major area of discussion across committees due to the broad social and economic impacts that job quality and worker satisfaction have on our city. Strategies to improve the job quality of our existing workforce and industries that are growing in employment such as healthcare, gig work, childcare, hospitality, and education cut across several committees as resources and policies touch workers and industry in all areas of government. Data presented by the Pittsburgh Hospital Workers Survey showed Pittsburgh faces a crisis within our hospital workforce due to low wages and short staffing. But broader social issues such as housing costs and proximity to work, lack of transportation and parking, and insufficient mental health supports also impact job quality and workforce turnover. Policy recommendations include ways to incentivize and find opportunities to support worker voice and unionization, recognizing that Pittsburgh workers must be empowered and able to make improvements through direct engagement with their employers and City Government.

Avoid Issuing Summary Citations to Minors

Both the Community Health and Safety and Education and Workforce Development Committees felt that the issuance of non-traffic summary citations, to minors, has deleterious effects on the long term outcomes of youth. In January 2022, ACLU of Pennsylvania (ACLU-PA) released its report, "Student Arrests in Allegheny County Public Schools: The Need for Transparency and Accountability." The report noted that students generally enter the justice system in one of two ways: by being arrested and referred to juvenile court or by receiving a summary citation ordering them to appear before a magisterial district judge in the adult criminal justice system, usually without being arrested. The citations look like traffic tickets and students are not provided lawyers.ⁱ Anecdotally, several participants in the transition committee's community listening sessions also shared that minor citations of youths and young adults create lifelong barriers to employment. It is critical that institutions like the criminal justice system, known to have deeply seated racial biases, be prevented from affecting lifelong outcomes for yet another generation. Thus, the committees have requested that the Mayor consider enacting a moratorium on non-traffic summary citations for children under eighteen in the City of Pittsburgh.

Accelerate Land Bank Property Disposition

Several boom-and-bust real estate cycles in past decades have resulted in the City and its related entities like the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) being custodians of thousands of parcels. These parcels are often poorly maintained and contribute to issues like impassable sidewalks and illegal dumping. The current real estate landscape has created demand for these properties in general. Nonetheless, the processes for acquiring this land remains arduous and opaque, which operates to the benefit of the most resourced developers, and, the Pittsburgh Land Bank that was created to make this process more accessible has yet to be fully operationalized. However, Pittsburghers have demanded a higher use and more accessible process for disposing of these parcels based on the critical need for truly affordable housing and improved neighborhood amenities. To achieve long-term affordability, particularly for those below 50% Area Median Income (AMI), Community Land Trusts (CLT) should be grown and given first option on these publicly held properties. Cooperative ownership models need to be cultivated, and commercially zoned parcels should be prioritized for use by emerging local businesses. The City and CLTs, guided by neighborhood input, should also maximize the environmental benefits of using some of the parcels for use as green space and infill of tree canopy.

Initiate a Comprehensive Master Plan for Land-Use Policy & Comprehensive Zoning Overhaul

The absence of a comprehensive approach to land use planning in Pittsburgh has allowed for decades of piecemeal decision making driven by outside developer interests rather than community input. The prior administration's process of working with Registered Community Organizations (RCO) to create a patchwork of 90 neighborhood plans in lieu of a master plan is not structured to yield a citywide vision. Creating a Pittsburgh for all means deliberately setting standards for housing affordability, transit coordination, infrastructure improvements, and the provision of water management solutions and green space to improve the health of all city communities. Through the process of master plan development and a complementary zoning code overhaul, the City can guide how developers approach its communities by building in incentives or fee-in-lieu penalties. Creating this sort of plan is a process that requires intense community input and multiple iterations often spanning several years, but the outcome of the process is an invaluable vision for the future of Pittsburgh for generations to come.

Achieve Budget Equity Ensuring that Large Nonprofits Pay Their Share

Pittsburgh's large nonprofits must come to the table and work collaboratively with the City by investing in the people of Pittsburgh. These organizations are some of the city's largest employers, financial engines, and property owners. However, due to their tax-exempt status, they contribute little to the City and school district budgets. As the "eds and meds" economy continues to grow, the tax base of our City and schools continue to rely more on working people.

This is a call for the largest corporate citizens to show and prove they are invested in the success, prosperity, health, and equity of Pittsburgh by contributing proportionately to its bottom line, as all of our residents do. Mayor Gainey should engage collaboratively with our largest employers, land-owning nonprofits, and Pittsburgh Public Schools leadership to find an equitable path forward. If we cannot agree on that, the Gainey Administration should review the legality of the purely public charity status of larger nonprofits.



TRANSITION LEADERSHIP

The transition organization of Mayor Ed Gainey is being led by a dynamic and diverse group of citizens who were selected to review the status of various government agencies, review national best practices and develop local solutions to solve some of the more pressing problems facing our city.

TRANSITION LEADERSHIP TEAM



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Transition Chair



Silas Russell
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James Kunz, *Committee Member*

George Moses, *Committee Member*
James Fife Myers, *Committee Member*
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Adrianna Simon, *Committee Member*
Terri Minor Spencer, *Committee Member*
Lauren Stoner, *Committee Member*
Kevin C. Wilkes, *Committee Member*

EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

Committee Charge

The charge of the Equitable Development Committee is to develop actionable strategies to ensure that Pittsburgh’s development responds to our communities’ priorities. The Committee will focus on ways to accelerate affordable housing development and provide the necessary supports, especially for families whose household incomes fall between 30% and 80% of the area median income. This committee will also develop strategies to promote entrepreneurship, including using local government procurement strategies to provide equitable access to opportunities. Further, this committee will explore inclusionary zoning, neighborhood plans, the roles of Registered Community Organizations (RCO) and Community Development Corporations (CDC), and investments in support of the cultural economy.



Overall Context

Pittsburgh has a severe affordable housing crisis that is making it increasingly difficult for low-wage renter households to continue to live within the city.ⁱⁱ The absence of affordable housing in good repair is pushing low-income families, particularly Black families, outside of the city limits to meet their housing needs. Pittsburgh lost 10,660 Black residents between 2010 and 2020, a 13.4% decline.ⁱⁱⁱ Before the pandemic, rents in Pittsburgh were already increasing at a faster rate than many household incomes.^{iv} COVID has made Pittsburgh's housing affordability problem far worse. In 2021 alone, rents increased by 18.5%^v and home sale prices increased by 14%.^{vi}

The private market will not solve this problem. According to HR&A Advisors, Pittsburgh has been experiencing a multifamily housing construction boom – 7,750 multifamily units were added between 2010 and 2019, roughly the same number that were built in the previous three decades combined – but this unprecedented rate of housing development is not resulting in lower costs for working Pittsburghers. In fact, the opposite is true. Many of the City's worst affordable housing supply gaps are in neighborhoods that have seen new multifamily development. The average rent for a newly constructed 1-bedroom apartment is roughly \$1,800 per month, which is only attainable for households earning more than 120% of AMI. Not only is the market failing to meet the housing needs of Pittsburgh's low-wage working families, it seems poised to make things even worse as private equity firms – whose business model is to purchase low-rent properties and increase the rent – begin to enter the Pittsburgh market.^{vii}

Against this backdrop, delivering on Mayor Gainey's promise to make Pittsburgh a city for all will require bold action. The Mayor will need to significantly expand the supply of affordable housing while preserving the housing we have and protecting tenants from further displacement, all in the face of increased market pressures on our existing housing stock. That will not be an easy task. It will require focused attention, substantial resources, a strategic deployment of those resources, and, above all, a mobilization of the City's housing-related agencies to achieve the goals established by the Mayor. The Equitable Development Committee proposes a series of bold, interconnected housing policies designed to accomplish that.

Develop and Implement an Agenda for Change for the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh

The Equitable Development Committee feels strongly that the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) is a critical public partner to the City of Pittsburgh if Mayor Gainey is to deliver on the public mandate to improve and expand affordable housing. Further, we believe that there is a significant role that HACP should play in developing and implementing, in partnership with the City of Pittsburgh, many of the recommendations laid forward in this report. However, accomplishing that will require transformational change at HACP.

It is the consensus of this Committee that the status quo at HACP is not acceptable. Operational challenges, particularly in the maintenance of HACP-owned family housing and the implementation of the Housing Choice Voucher Program, are aggravating the affordable housing crisis in Pittsburgh. As part of our fact-finding, the Committee surveyed Pittsburgh residents and asked them to grade HACP's performance. The result was a "D" – "Pretty bad. They're competent at some things but not at others. Needs a lot of work." As a Moving-to-Work agency, HACP has at its disposal many underutilized tools and broad flexibility that could be better leveraged to benefit our most vulnerable citizens. HACP also has knowledgeable and talented staff whose skills are essential to the accomplishment of the Mayor's housing agenda. The following recommendations are designed to capitalize on HACP's strengths and ensure that the agency overcomes its operational deficiencies and becomes the lead agency in achieving the Mayor's vision of a Pittsburgh for all.

Recommendation 1:

Adopt a vision and agenda for change at HACP vision

As a first step, it is recommended that the Mayor adopt a vision for HACP's role in advancing Pittsburgh's housing goals and outline an agenda for change. A sample vision and agenda for change are available at www.gaineytransition.com.

Public housing authorities in cities across the country are on the frontlines of delivering solutions to the current housing market challenges, especially for our most vulnerable populations. It is incumbent upon the agency to align all of its resources toward the implementation of the Mayor's vision of a Pittsburgh for all, and it is imperative that HACP make the necessary changes and improvements to assist Mayor Gainey with delivering on his vision.

"[The]Gainey Administration needs to create comprehensive, city wide housing plan. This is needed to address the lack of affordable housing options including:

- *Execute partnerships with non-profit developers to rebuild and replace older HACP units.*
- *Work with lenders, CDFI's and partners to leverage public funding on the affordable housing developments.*
- *Provide RCO's with tools to negotiate Community Benefit Agreements (City Planning)*
- *Increase PLB funding."*

Chris R., Ideas Wall, 2/21/22

Recommendation 2:

Appoint an HACP board dedicated to the Mayor's vision

HACP is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors that establishes goals, approves policy and budgets, and provides general direction to the HACP Executive Staff. As the entire HACP Board is appointed by the Mayor of Pittsburgh, it is recommended that Mayor Gainey request that all existing Board members resign and be allowed to apply for reappointment. It is further recommended that Mayor Gainey appoint/reappoint members who are dedicated to the Mayor's vision, housing goals, and agenda for change.

Late term appointments and reappointments by the previous mayor have limited Mayor Gainey's options to make any appointments to HACP before 2024. It is unfair for Mayor Gainey not to have the opportunity to build his team across all departments and authorities. Time is of the essence in addressing the affordable housing crisis and implementing Mayor Gainey's vision of housing opportunity for all. As such, Board members of conscience should volunteer their resignations so the new Mayor can build a team committed to his vision.

"[The] Mayor could show his advocacy for affordable housing by simply announcing that PGH Housing Authority is going in a new direction and appoint housing advocates to the board. "

**Mark B., Community Listening Session,
2/21/22**

Recommendation 3:

Provide oversight to create organizational transformation

Organizational transformation is necessary for HACP to competently perform its most basic functions and fully leverage the entire range of options and tools provided by Moving-to-Work on behalf of vulnerable residents in Pittsburgh. It is imperative that HACP engage an experienced operational transformation consultant to evaluate the agency's operations; identify culture change opportunities through dialogue with residents, landlords, community partners, and staff; and develop organizational tools and operational plans to improve service delivery, support for residents, and ongoing communication with residents and stakeholders. Particular focus should also be given to the development of improvement plans for individual housing communities found to provide failing or substandard housing conditions for residents and to the creation of effective procedures for responding to repair requests and scheduling timely Housing Choice Voucher inspections.

"The Housing Authority of Pittsburgh in the last six or so years have been complete slum lords and no one cares. The present executive director is not from here and has no stakes in these communities. [...]The tenants feel like prisoners and the violence has tripled since his tenure. These tenants deserve respect and dignity and a safe place to live."

Anonymous, Ideas Wall, 2/18/22

The Gainey Administration should manage the new HACP Board to ensure that HACP engages such a consultant and follows through with the consultant's recommendations for transformation in line with the Mayor's vision, housing goals, and agenda for change. While engaging a consultant to help HACP achieve operational competence across all departments should occur immediately, if the existing Board is willing, the transformational change that is needed for HACP to become the lead agency in achieving the Mayor's vision should take place after the Mayor has assembled a leadership team that is committed to that vision.

HACP is in a unique position to slow the tide of displacement, but only if it is a highly functioning organization. Other housing authorities, most notably New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), have made tremendous improvements to their operations with the help of experienced third-party consultants. Outside expertise is

needed to improve operations and service delivery and make HACP a high-performing organization for low-income families in Pittsburgh.

Expand the Supply of Affordable Housing

The volatility in the local housing market requires a response that will stabilize the market for low-income-renter households. The Equitable Development committee recommends that the Gainey Administration create multiple pathways to permanently affordable housing by leveraging all publicly available land, building the capacity of community stewards, investing in and incentivizing the development of permanently affordable housing, and amending zoning policies. The committee recommends that the Mayor prioritize permanent affordability because it is a far more cost effective investment of scarce public resources.

Recommendation 4:

Set a bold achievable target and appoint staff to achieve it

The Gainey Administration should set a bold achievable affordable housing target, e.g., 1,000 units of permanently affordable housing per year with a minimum of 10,000 units over 10 years. To achieve this, Mayor Gainey should appoint dedicated staff within the Mayor's Office to drive coordination and collaboration between public partners, public resources (including land), and non-profit and private developers to achieve the City's housing production goals. The Mayor and staff should meet regularly with HACP's Board Chair and Executive Director for progress reports on the implementation of the Mayor's vision, housing goals, and agenda for change. Administrative staff should also be charged with convening a development review board consisting of the Executive Directors of HACP, URA, City Planning, Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI), and Public Works to implement the Mayor's development strategy and share information to coordinate development projects.

"How can one of the "most affordable cities" in the country also be hemorrhaging its talent pool because they afford to live here?"

**Anne O., Community Listening Session,
2/21/22**

Financing permanently affordable housing development requires significant incentives and subsidies. Collaboration and coordination among all of the city's housing-related departments and authorities is required to produce any significant number of units. Continuing the current disjointed and uncoordinated approach to development will never allow the city to meet its serious affordable housing needs. There must be a clearly stated goal and the Mayor must build the appropriate management support for the Chief Economic Development Officer to ensure that the housing production goals are met.

Recommendation 5:

Dedicate revenue for permanently affordable housing

There are existing revenue sources that could be dedicated to the preservation and production of permanently affordable rental units. The Equitable Development Committee recommends that the City dedicate the entire 1% additional Realty Transfer Tax to the Housing Opportunity Fund rather than capping it at \$10M per year. Further, the City should provide sufficient additional funds to allow the URA to issue a \$100 million bond (or an equivalent amount of flexible financing for affordable housing production) to support the development of permanently affordable housing. Finally, the Mayor should reevaluate the City's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocations and dedicate more of this one-time funding into affordable rental and for-sale housing projects that will have an enduring impact on our community.

All of these additional revenues should be directed to the Housing Opportunity Fund with a focus on creating and preserving permanently affordable housing units. The uses of this funding should include new production, a preservation fund, a tenant cooperative housing acquisition fund, a CLT acquisition fund, interim operating support for the land bank, and capacity assistance for CLTs, co-ops, and non-profit preservation buyers.

Pittsburgh is facing an affordable housing crisis, and a bold response is needed. The City has options that can provide the revenue necessary to support the recommendations in this report. By removing the arbitrary cap on the RTT and dedicating sufficient additional revenue to finance a \$100 million bond, the City could produce hundreds of new permanently affordable homes each year. Further, by reevaluating the allocations for the ARPA funding, the Mayor can realign his administration's priorities with this historic federal appropriation. The citizens of Pittsburgh have made it very clear

through forums and online feedback that affordable housing is their number one priority. That should be reflected in the allocation plan for that one-time funding.

Recommendation 6:

Use public land to create permanently affordable housing

Within Pittsburgh, there are thousands of parcels of land owned by either the City of Pittsburgh, the Urban Redevelopment Authority, the Pittsburgh Land Bank or the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh. Given the price surge in the local real estate market, these parcels are essential to achieving the goal of expanding the supply of permanently affordable housing. The Gainey Administration should use public land to create permanently affordable housing by requiring that a percentage of all housing developed on publicly owned land be permanently affordable, and by giving CLTs a preference and right of first refusal for all dispositions of publicly owned land. Washington D.C.^{viii} and Philadelphia^{ix} have provided model legislation for this.

The Equitable Development Committee also recommends that the City incorporate the Property Reserve process into the Pittsburgh Land Bank to allow CDCs and CLTs to direct real estate into the Treasurer Sale, maintain it, and acquire it for a reasonable price. To further support the Land Bank, the City should work with the other taxing bodies to create an annual income stream through future tax income from those parcels.

“The area of the Hill District - Pittsburgh, surrounded by many churches near Bethel AME Church/Trinity AME Church you will encounter the many, many vacant lots. These lots own by the URA or by the city are not even being maintain properly. In conversation with community and church leaders - it would a benefit to select/ purchase these lots to develop and plan for affordable housing that would benefit those who even not only rent but would have the advantage to purchase. Vast improvement.”

Prudence H, Ideas Wall, 3/15/22

Public land is one of the most important tools that the City has at its disposal to build – and keep – a city for all. Incentivizing the transfer of publicly owned land to CLTs will support long-term stewardship and community control of this vital community asset while facilitating responsible development. Attaching minimum permanent affordability restrictions will make the most of the city’s investment and will reduce the need to invest in preserving affordable housing assets in future years.

Recommendation 7:

Strengthen Pittsburgh's capacity to steward permanently affordable housing

The report titled “Equitable Development: The Path to an All-In Pittsburgh” summarizes the sentiments of the Equitable Development Committee best: “Residents and community-based organizations living and working in Pittsburgh’s distressed communities are central to making equitable development a reality. None of the equitable development examples shared in this report came about exclusively through top-down policy action and ideas: most began as ideas from residents and neighborhood organizations about how to address challenges, remove barriers, and build more inclusive communities. Pittsburgh’s residents are the eyes and ears of its neighborhoods and possess valuable information, insight, and wisdom critical to designing solutions that work. Residents are also uniquely positioned to be the agents and owners of neighborhood change, transforming problems like vacant lots into community assets. Experience from communities that have gentrified also reveals the importance of community ownership and control of land as well as authentic community engagement in the development process to ensure that community residents and small businesses can stay in their neighborhoods as they improve.”

“Stop tearing down existing housing in underserved community's. More housing preservation is needed instead!”

Carol H., Ideas Wall 2/17/22

“Unusable homes and vacant land can then be turned into parks and community gardens: improving quality of life, buffering neighborhoods from stormwater problems, increasing community connection, and providing access to fresh foods, practical education, healthy outdoor activities, and entrepreneurial opportunities.”

Maren C., Ideas Wall, 3/1/22

The Gainey Administration should strengthen Pittsburgh’s stewardship capacity by providing funding to enable CLTs to hire asset managers, technical assistance for tenant associations desiring to form co-ops, and staffing and/or back-office support for co-ops to ensure they will remain self-sufficient. These residents and

community-based organizations are best equipped to design the appropriate solutions to Pittsburgh’s affordable housing crisis, with support and investments from public partners.

It is also recommended that the Gainey Administration enlist HACP to acquire, operate, and subsidize mixed-income and cooperative housing. HACP could play a vital role in acquiring rental properties, managing them, and attaching project-based subsidies to a percentage of units in those properties and in non-HACP properties with permanent affordability restrictions.

In order to build and keep a city for all, Pittsburgh will need to build the capacity of our public-, community-, and resident-based housing sector to effectively steward affordable housing assets over the long term.

Recommendation 8:

Invest in permanently affordable rental, for-sale, and cooperative housing under community stewardship

“It is time for PGH to show an innovative approach to affordable housing by funding a pilot project of non-profit co-operative housing. We need to take a hard look at similar ventures in some European cities that are incredibly successful. [...] Due to historic and systemic racism, failure to address the affordable housing shortage becomes racist.”

Mel P., Ideas Wall, 3/1/22

Providing a preference and first right of refusal for the disposition of publicly owned land is only a first step toward equitable housing development. As investments are made in building the capacity of community stewards, the City must also invest in tools and instruments to help with acquisition and development costs. The Equitable Development Committee recommends that the City ensure that a substantial portion of the revenue that it dedicates for permanently affordable housing be used for an acquisition fund to enable CLTs to acquire

properties, particularly in transit-rich areas, and hold them pending development, either by the CLT or in partnership with a housing developer (ex. The Denver TOD Fund^x). A CLT acquisition fund could also assist low-income homebuyers and pay existing homeowners who agree to enroll their lands into CLTs.

Pittsburghers cannot rely on the private market to meet the housing needs of low-wage working families. As private equity firms increasingly enter the Pittsburgh market, it is critical that our social-housing sector be in a position to compete for available properties if we are to preserve the City’s diverse urban character.

Recommendation 9:

Amend the zoning code to create more housing development and incentivize more affordable housing development

The City must remove all known barriers to affordable housing development. Amending the zoning code to incentivize more housing development, combined with a strengthened and expanded set of inclusionary zoning (IZ) policies (see below), could create hundreds of permanently affordable housing units each year. The Equitable Development Committee recommends that the Code increase the allowed density in certain residential zoning districts. This would include expanding multifamily residential districts near transit stations along the Light Rail system and the East Busway, thus reducing minimum lot size per dwelling unit requirements in certain districts, particularly downtown; reducing or eliminating minimum parking requirements, especially in districts that are well-served by public transit; and allowing 2-4 unit residential and accessory dwelling units by-right in single-family residential districts. It is also recommended that the City provide for an expedited permit approval process for permanently affordable housing.

Expanding the areas where multifamily housing can be built could help Pittsburgh address its anticipated new housing needs. Transit nodes are appropriate places for denser multifamily housing. So is downtown, but current minimum lot size per dwelling unit requirements acts as a disincentive for the development of multifamily rental projects there. Many single-family residential districts have larger lots that could support the development of an accessory dwelling unit, if the zoning permitted it. Allowing 2-4-unit residential uses in such neighborhoods could increase the stock of rental housing and help expand housing choice.

Recommendation 10:

Strengthen and expand the city's inclusionary zoning policy

The implementation of the Lawrenceville Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) Overlay District has demonstrated the feasibility of specific IZ policies in Pittsburgh. It is imperative that the Gainey Administration build upon lessons learned, as well as current market conditions, to strengthen and expand the City's IZ policy.

What we have learned from the Lawrenceville model is that more has to be done to make IZ implementable. The City should develop clear and effective informational and compliance documents, finalize cooperation agreements with the URA and HACP, dedicate staff to administer IZ policies, and develop monitoring and outcome reporting procedures. The City could pay for these staff in whole or in part through application and administration fees associated with the corresponding tax incentives discussed below.

The City should align Pittsburgh’s enhanced tax incentives with the recommendations of the IZ Exploratory Committee. Further, the Gainey Administration should advocate for changes to the state enabling legislation that would allow for the City to amend local ordinances to require at least a 35-

“[We should] continue inclusionary zoning and diverse income residency requirements for large development and amend zoning to allow for more housing type diversity.”

**McLeans, Community Listening Session,
2/21/22**

year affordability commitment, with rental affordability capped at 50% AMI. In light of recent court decisions invalidating Pittsburgh’s source of income anti-discrimination ordinance, the City should also require the owners of rental properties receiving an enhanced tax abatement to accept housing choice vouchers.

In order to establish a consistent standard for affordable housing that is targeted to the greatest housing need, the City should set uniform affordability targets at 50% of AMI or less for rental housing and 70%-80% of AMI or less for for-sale housing. Studies consistently show that the city’s affordable housing gaps are at 30% and 50% of AMI and that there is no shortage of housing that is affordable to households earning 80% of AMI and above. Yet the City, the URA, and housing developers often set affordability targets at income levels that are higher than where the need is. Pittsburgh should target its affordable housing subsidies and standards to serve households that are being neglected by the private market.

Finally, the Equitable Development Committee recommends that the IZ overlay district be strengthened and expanded by increasing affordability set-asides and extending the minimum affordability periods to 99 years. The City should update the financial modeling performed by the IZ Exploratory Committee and expand coverage making Pittsburgh’s incentivized mandatory IZ policy citywide. The City should also continue to forgo the use of in-lieu fees.

This will harness the power of market-rate housing development to create affordable housing and maintain a viable economic mix in city neighborhoods that are experiencing development.

Recommendation 11:

Expand access to homeownership

“Our Section 8 program is broken. Around 80% of the families receiving a voucher are forced to return it because they weren't able to find an apartment in time. We need to start to emphasize the Section 8 Homeownership Program. Since Pittsburgh still has some affordable housing for sale, we need to support families on Section 8 to become homeowners. The voucher subsidy can be used for taxes, insurance, home maintenance, and other housing-related costs . . . and is sustainable and realistic.”

Paul O., Ideas Wall, 2/21/22

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-certified housing counseling agencies are a critical partner in preparing low- and moderate-income families for homeownership. As investments are made to increase the supply of affordable homeownership units, so, too, must investments be made to increase the capacity of HUD-certified housing counseling agencies to create a perpetually filled pipeline of ready buyers. Those buyers will need a more robust down-payment assistance program to buy down the speculative prices in today's housing market. It is recommended that the

City create a robust down-payment assistance program that is funded through home purchase grants with long-term affordability restrictions and post-purchase support for low-income buyers.

Expanding access to homeownership for low- and moderate-income Pittsburghers is required as a strategy for equitable development. In communities of color and lower income communities, homeownership is the most proven method of creating and transferring intergenerational wealth. And while homeownership programs currently exist within the city, they are not robust enough to meet the challenges and demands of the current housing market. Increased capacity to prepare low- and moderate-income homebuyers, as well as robust down-payment assistance and post-purchase supports, are necessary to ensure that all Pittsburghers have access to homeownership.

Non-Displacement and Tenant Protection

Black and low-income families in Pittsburgh are being displaced at an alarming rate. This displacement is being accelerated by the impacts of COVID-19 and a speculative real estate market. The pandemic revealed the extreme vulnerabilities of low-income families. If there is to be an equitable recovery, the Gainey Administration has to take aggressive steps to protect residents.

According to “the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, Pittsburgh is the eighth most gentrified city in America.”^{xi} The displacement of residents, too often Black residents, from affordable housing in the wake of new developments dislocates major sections of the labor pool from access to work and disrupts the overall economy. Post-HOPE VI developments of mixed-income housing often cater too closely to the higher percentages of AMI (80%+) rather than providing housing across the income spectrum. Here, again, is a role for the HACP to play – becoming more involved in the negotiation process with developers and ensuring their ability to perform on payments for tenants with vouchers.

The razing of existing affordable housing and replacement with shallowly affordable units is only one issue for Pittsburghers facing displacement. There are also far too many substandard units that impact the health and well-being of their residents and fulfill the cycle Social Determinants of Health. Tenants seeking property remediation are too frequently penalized for their complaints. The City needs to intervene and provide support for tenants in the form of responsive repair programs. The current state allows for landlords to evict tenants who complain to code enforcement, and re-rent the unit to another tenant without an improvement in conditions. As rental registration begins to be implemented, we hope to see this dynamic change. Any affordable housing that remains in Pittsburgh must be guarded and improved rather than demolished and replaced with more expensive units.

Recommendation 12:

Develop tools and mechanisms to protect residents from displacement

As a first step, the Committee recommends that Pittsburgh adopt a Tenants’ Bill of Rights, appoint dedicated tenant advocacy staff, and provide funding for tenant organizing. Patterned after Kansas City, MO.,^{xii} the Tenants’ Bill of Rights would set forth the legal rights that tenants in Pittsburgh currently have and such rights that the

City has the legal authority to create. The City should marshal all available resources to protect tenants from exorbitant rents and unfair rental practices.

The administration should also adopt fair-housing criteria for development plan approvals, as recommended by the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Task Force. The City of Boston recently adopted such criteria^{xiii} as part of its zoning code. Developers who displace members of fair-housing-protected classes should not be rewarded with public subsidies or discretionary zoning approvals.

“Properties are only being developed into condos and town houses for people that the city wants to attract and not to help people that are here. We want money to be put into our neighborhoods not on expensive high rises. Student loan debt is a barrier to access to basic needs. People are leaving the city and the county and we still have empty properties that are sitting. The criteria to qualify for affordable housing isn't easy criteria to fit into, working people need help too.”

Monica R., Community Listening Session, 2/21/22

Finally, it is recommended that the City adopt non-displacement policies and a citywide relocation plan in accordance with the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) requirements, as well as provide displaced residents who have already been pushed out of the city limits a right to return to the newly developed affordable rental units, similar to Portland, OR.^{xiv}

Pittsburgh is at risk of losing its vibrant, multicultural, working-class character. In order to build *and keep* a city for all, the Gainey Administration must fight the displacement of Pittsburgh’s Black and low-wage households on all fronts –

protect tenants, put an end to forced relocation, increase the supply of affordable housing, and provide an opportunity for residents who have already been forced out of the City to come back home.

Recommendation 13:

Improve code enforcement

The Equitable Development Committee recommends that the City create a code enforcement system that incentivizes repairs, protects tenants, and facilitates the transfer of chronically unsafe, unhealthy housing to responsible owners who will maintain it. There are four interrelated policies to achieve this:

First, the City should implement a critical repair program, like Los Angeles' Urgent Repair program, to ensure that health and safety code violations are repaired, and the property owners charged for the cost of those repairs if they are unable or unwilling to repair the problems themselves.^{xv}

Second, it is recommended that the City implement a receivership policy like Chicago's Troubled Buildings Initiative (TBI), which is a coordinated cross-departmental effort to preserve affordable housing. TBI works with existing owners and lien holders, primarily through the housing court process

"Safe and healthy housing is critical to mental and physical health. Increase inspection of homes, increase resources for home repairs for low and mod homeowners.

**Marcia B., Community Listening Session,
2/28/22**

with the use of receivers and by the acquisition of distressed notes and liens, to prevent these buildings from deteriorating into a state of disrepair that may lead to displacement, the loss of affordable housing, and unnecessary demolition. The Committee recommends assigning a City Attorney to rental code enforcement cases to assist with compliance.

Third, the Department of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections (PLI) should work with the County to improve its rent escrow policies, so that repairs are incentivized, and tenants are protected. Ideally, rent withholding could be used to reimburse the costs of correcting urgent repairs, similar to the approach used in LA.

Finally, the City should provide funding and advocate for state funding for home repair. The poor housing stock in several of the city's lowest income neighborhoods is further diminishing the availability of affordable housing. Funding to assist homeowners and landlords with home repair could preserve existing affordable housing.

Pittsburghers should not be subjected to substandard housing conditions. The City must improve its enforcement of municipal housing codes to protect the rights of tenants and must provide or secure funding for home repairs in order to stem the tide of displacement. Unsafe/unhealthy housing conditions are a leading cause of displacement from Pittsburgh, second only to skyrocketing housing costs. Investor-owned rental, single family, townhome, and 'plex units are 2.5 times as likely to be in poor condition compared to owner-occupied units of the same type. Neighborhoods where a large number of owner-occupied properties are being replaced by rentals are experiencing greater population loss as a result of deteriorating housing conditions.^{xvi} As rents skyrocket, and housing conditions worsen, Pittsburgh tenants need proactive steps to be taken to protect them from further displacement.

Entrepreneurship

The well-known work of Pittsburgh's Gender Equity Commission brought the racial and gender disparities in the City to the forefront of local and national conversations in 2019.^{xvii} While the results of the analysis were alarming, there has not been enough action taken to change this landscape. The City needs to take meaningful steps in improving the equity of the business landscape in Pittsburgh.

While the City cannot directly control how the private sector does business, the City can hold itself to a higher standard. To this end, the committee recommends that the administration perform a disparity study on its contracting practices and current requirements around minority participation in City contracting. This should include an analysis of barriers, like the absence of short-term loans to meet payroll, while the city processes invoices or speedier processes overall as well integration with business development mentors.

Recommendation 14:

Identify and remove barriers to small business development for Black and Latinx entrepreneurs

The Gainey Administration should invest in and build upon the work started by the E3 Network with a focus on developing a robust ecosystem to support the launch and growth of Black- and Latinx-owned businesses. Mayor Gainey should use his platform to advocate for and promote viable small businesses, recognizing the impact that small

businesses have on the local economy. Additionally, the City should coordinate the publication of public-facing resources that promote opportunities for entrepreneurs.

The City of Pittsburgh's procurement office should identify and eliminate barriers to doing business with the City and create initiatives to educate small businesses about the procurement process. This could include, but not be limited to identifying procurement opportunities that are of a size and scale that they could be successfully performed by local small businesses; developing mentor-protégé programs with existing contractors; developing a high-level procurement forecast so that local small businesses can prepare to compete for city contracts; and designating staff to help entrepreneurs navigate the municipal procurement and permitting processes. Further, the City should consider lowering its current \$250,000 threshold for minority participation in construction contracts to \$100,000.

"The City of Pittsburgh needs to craft a new plan for how innovation zones, small business and academia can all work together in transforming the city. Many people are left out of critical decision making, allocation of financial resources and contracts. We need to offer a more welcoming table of discussion that is outcome based and is put into action."

Lori P., Ideas Wall, 2/8/22

A recent study released by Lending Tree, an online lending marketplace, found that among the 50 American metro cities reviewed, Pittsburgh ranked lowest in the number of Black-owned businesses. Entrepreneurship is a clear path to developing personal wealth and closing the racial wealth divide. Further, Black-owned businesses in America have created over 1 million jobs and generated over \$165 billion in revenue. Pittsburgh must create an environment that supports the development and growth of Black-owned businesses.

Recommendation 15:

Improve access to commercial properties for locally owned small and minority businesses

The Chief Economic Development Officer should commission a review of all publicly owned property in Pittsburgh to identify commercially zoned properties that could serve as a home to locally owned small and minority businesses. Preference and first right of refusal should be given to these businesses in the disposition of those properties when they are disposed by the Pittsburgh Land Bank to CLTs. Further, the

Chief Economic Development Officer should consider the inclusion of small and minority-owned businesses when working with community stakeholders to plan and design commercial corridors and in implementing initiatives such as façade improvement programs.

The speculative real estate market has created an additional barrier to entry and stability for many local, small and minority-owned businesses. When implementing the recommendations on the disposition of publicly owned property through the Land Bank and CLTs, the City has an opportunity to remove those barriers by making commercial properties available at a reasonable price to local small businesses.

“This has been a real problem in Pittsburgh for entrepreneurs also. Often spaces that can accommodate our talents are costly and this inhibits growth. Artists face a tremendous amount of push back and that is unfair. Perhaps a multi-purpose area or building space would help gain further support for this initiative.”

Lori P., Ideas Wall, 2/8/22

Arts & Cultural Economy

Working hand in hand with the displacement of residents in the process of gentrification is a proclivity for marketing the “culture” of neighborhoods. This marketing would not be as problematic if the result included the retention and business growth of culture bearers within the communities. However, the culture of neighborhoods in Pittsburgh has changed rapidly with their redevelopment, leaving small businesses and local artists out while national actors take their places. This is not who Pittsburgh is. We are a city made up of diverse communities and cultures that should be cultivated and preserved.

Recommendation 16:

Create an Office of Cultural Affairs

The Mayor's Office should leverage all of Pittsburgh's cultural assets to build the city's brand as a destination for arts and culture. This should begin by establishing an Office of Cultural Affairs that focuses on building the cultural economy. Once established, this office should house the special events and filming functions that are currently in the Department of Public Safety, as well as all non-planning-related functions related to public art that are currently housed in the Department of City Planning, such as the Market Square Public Art Program and the Uptown Public Art Program. Further, the Office of Cultural Affairs should be funded with a dedicated arts funding source such as a 1% of bond sales or revenue from event and film permitting, and should develop programs and initiatives to support the work of local artists. The Office of Cultural Affairs should also oversee participation diversity in public arts festivals and prevent the provision of free City services to events that fail to involve 35% minority vendors. By housing filming permit affairs within this office, the City will also have the ability to cultivate relationships with the film unions and incorporate apprenticeships and pathways to work for Pittsburghers.

As Pittsburgh engages and nurtures its cultural economy, the City should also look for opportunities to fund arts-centric housing that integrates retail, studio, and living spaces. Examples of this can be found in Musicians Village in New Orleans and Artists Village in Detroit. By strategically leveraging philanthropic partnerships and developing supports for CLTs and cooperative housing, Pittsburgh can become a true home for artists.

"We have a thriving theater scene, but do not have many spaces for emerging companies and artists to get their start.

We need to do something to help new companies and independent performers. I'd love if we could open an arts incubator space with rehearsal spaces and performing venues for a variety of performance spaces that can be rented at reasonable rates. This will help more of our local artists stay employed. The cultural district spaces are cost prohibitive for these folks."

Caitlin Y., Ideas Wall, 2/5/22

Pittsburgh is home to a vibrant arts community, one that has often been difficult to access and navigate for artists of color. Gaining access to funding and opportunities to showcase talent has been an obstacle to many local artists of color who may not have the relationships with funding agencies. Creating an Office of Cultural Affairs could centralize resources for artists and level the playing field.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Committee Charge

The Education and Workforce Development committee is charged with identifying actionable steps to invest in the education, skills enhancement, and economic livelihood of Pittsburghers of all ages, genders, abilities, and backgrounds to match the needs of a growth economy with a thriving workforce in order to achieve shared prosperity. The committee should make recommendations to support early childhood and out-of-school investments, Community School partnerships, post-secondary education, building and construction trades, 21st century career development, achieving living wage standards, expanded unionization in growth industries, and enhancing collaboration between the City and Pittsburgh Public Schools.



Overall Context

For at least a decade, Pittsburgh has seen pervasive underfunding and inequities – namely in the areas of education and workforce development. In 2019, the City of Pittsburgh’s Gender Equity Commission released a report with the University of Pittsburgh, titled, “**Pittsburgh’s Inequality Across Gender and Race.**”^{xviii} The data captured in the report affirms the anecdotal experiences of many members of the Education and Workforce Development Committee highlighting that Black women and men lag behind in health, income, employment, and educational outcomes in Pittsburgh. The Committee believes that both the anecdotal and empirical evidence will inform four (4) major groupings of actionable steps that move Pittsburgh beyond the data and toward generational and sustainable outcomes for our most vulnerable communities.

1. Actionable Steps to Invest in **Education**
2. Actionable Steps to Invest in **Skills Enhancement**
3. Actionable Steps to Invest in the **Economic Livelihood** of Pittsburghers of All Ages, Genders, Abilities, and Backgrounds
4. Actionable Steps to Invest in the **Social and Emotional Well-being** of Pittsburghers of All Ages, Genders, Abilities, and Backgrounds

The overwhelming consensus among all members of the Committee is that everything starts with Pittsburgh’s education and workforce development systems, and the city’s progress into the future will be hindered if these systems do not work cohesively together to accelerate learning and growth throughout the community.

Actionable Steps to Invest in Education

Pittsburgh’s Inequality Across Gender and Race report found that white residents of the City are almost three times more likely to have a bachelor’s degree than their Black counterparts. This has significant consequences for not only Pittsburgh’s Black residents, but also the entire City. Those without a college degree make less income, on average, than those with a college degree. Residents without a college degree tend to become trapped in a cycle of low-wage jobs and limited opportunities that become generational when there is no metric to change the course of history for those young men and women.

While most Pittsburghers do graduate high school, 16% of the City's Black men have not finished high school, nor have they obtained a GED. Such a high percentage of an indispensable segment of Pittsburgh's population cannot be left by the wayside to continue the downward spiral of poverty, illiteracy, and utter desperation. Pittsburgh must be a place that is livable not just for some of its residents, but for all.

The report also points to a stark situation for the City's Black female residents. When comparing Pittsburgh to cities of similar size, 60% have higher college graduation rates for Black women. Additionally, Black women who obtain a high school diploma are less likely to attend college in comparison to other cities. Indeed, the most disheartening language in the report asserted, "Pittsburgh is arguably the most unlivable city for Black women."

At this point in Pittsburgh's story, it is no longer enough to ask why certain residents do not have the same educational and economic opportunities as others. Instead, we must focus our collective resources to address these circumstances by supporting and resourcing those who have been continuously and systemically left behind. Now, is the time for Mayor Gainey and the new administration to begin its attempt to solve these seemingly entrenched problems.

Recommendation 1:

The Mayor should partner with foundations and other collaborators in order to fund the creation of an 'Office of Education Opportunity' (OEO) with the mission of expanding opportunities and partnerships related to education in the City of Pittsburgh while elevating youth voice and uplifting youth-led initiatives. The OEO will focus on the following responsibilities and key priorities, including, but not limited to:

- Strategize with key partners across the city, including, but not limited to, the Superintendent of Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS), PPS Board of Directors, early childhood organizations, disability rights groups, higher education partners, trade unions, CTE programs, corporate partners, and foundations in order to assure families in Pittsburgh are aware of the many opportunities across our great City.

- Create a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Pittsburgh and PPS to pursue more authentic partnerships for our students;
- Act as a liaison between PPS and the City of Pittsburgh, coordinating partnerships and expanding facilities-sharing to provide increased opportunities for city youth;
- Convene quarterly meetings with the Mayor, Allegheny County Department of Human Services, and PPS to review data and work collectively to implement strategies, programming, and support for community schools and City youth;
- Strive to secure internships, after-school jobs, and summer job placement opportunities in City departments, boards, agencies, and other areas that will serve as a pathway to employment for youth in the City of Pittsburgh after graduation;
- Work collaboratively with PPS to expand after-school and out-of-school programming to foster excellence in youth across the city;
- Develop a mentorship program that encourages city employees to be mentors to youth at various schools at least once per month;
- Create a catalog of programming available to youth across the city from birth through the time when they are workforce-ready;
- Conduct policy research and analysis to develop best practices/policies in providing services to youth;
- Work collaboratively with the PPS, and respective lobbyists to create a legislative agenda to push for needed educational reforms at the state and federal levels;
- Uplift the role of parental involvement and create pathways that allow caretakers more authentic involvement in their child's education; and
- Convene with workforce development boards, institutions of higher education, and PPS to coordinate the creation of a workforce development ecosystem.

This office should be created and staffed by the end of the first quarter of 2023.

Education is a key issue for Mayor Gainey, as he understands how critically important good schools are in promoting the health and wellness of our children and families, as well as the vitality of the city. Through ongoing discussions with experts and community members, it was

“Mayor Gainey and Superintendent Walters have to talk. The traditional rift between the City and PPS is tired.”

Christopher F., Ideas Wall 3/1/22

determined that a much more cooperative relationship between the School District and the Mayor’s Office was necessary if those families with children in schools in the City of Pittsburgh are going to prosper. The Committee envisions the formation of a group of eleven comprised of the Mayor, the School Superintendent, and the nine School Board Members to create a new relationship of support, transparency, and partnership.

An active partnership between the City and PPS will synthesize policies and programs established by the School District and the Mayor’s Office, respectively, so that parents, guardians, and students can be assured that all of their representatives are working on their behalf to put in place the appropriate policies and programs, for children. Such a partnership will place the educational enrichment and career preparation and advancement of ALL of Pittsburgh’s students at the center of its ethos. Every day the City and PPS should be striving to ensure Pittsburgh’s children are given the tools they need to become the best students, employees, business owners, and entrepreneurs they can be.

Finally, ensuring a united front when requesting federal or state funding for services would benefit children and families in the City of Pittsburgh, and make the “ask” that much stronger when all parties are at the table.

PEER CITY: Louisville, KY

Joint Commitment to Improve Education Outcomes Through Equity

Jefferson County (Kentucky) Public Schools and the Louisville, KY, Metro Government established the **Joint Commitment to Improve Education Outcomes Through Equity**. This joint compact had the goal of ensuring that more children are ready for school, successful in school, and prepared to succeed after graduation. Each entity agreed to a specific focus: Louisville Metro Government will work every day to raise educational attainment and build a college-going and college-completing culture. Jefferson County Public Schools will focus on the goals and strategies that will best prepare all its students for college, career, and life in a globally competitive environment. Louisville considers this work to be

equity work. A focus on racial, economic, and social equity is the foundation of their collective work to improve outcomes for their children.

Recommendation 2:

The City of Pittsburgh will collaborate with PPS-Career and Technical Education Division (PPS-CTE) to create paid internships that lead to entry level career-ladder jobs for 5% of its eligible students within the next two (2) years.

The Pittsburgh Public School District is the largest of 43 school districts in Allegheny County and second largest in Pennsylvania. The District serves a little less than 20,000 students in pre-kindergarten through graduation. PPS offers students a variety of options and opportunities to help them succeed in school and prepare them for whatever comes next in college, career, and life.^{xix}

PPS-CTE currently offers 16 programs that prepare PPS high school students for careers in high-demand fields that are crucial to our infrastructure as a society, including but not limited to:



Automotive Body Repair



Automotive Technology



Business Administration
Sports & Entertainment



Carpentry



Cosmetology



Culinary Arts



Refrigeration, Heating,
Ventilation & A/C



Early Childhood Education



Entertainment Technology



Engineering Technology



Emergency Response
Technology



Finance Technology



Health Centers Technology



Information Technology



Machine Operations



Multimedia Production & Coding

The programs are designed to be relevant, rigorous, and aligned with industry standards to prepare students for high-wage, high-skill, and high-priority in-demand occupations. This technical training is provided in high school grades 10th -12th, cost-free to students. The programs not only save students/families money, but also time since they are able to jump start their careers prior to graduation. Students earn stackable industry certifications on cutting-edge equipment, dual/articulated college credits, connect with potential employers, learn and practice 21st century transferable skills, and participate in work-based learning field trips. Students also participate in job shadowing and internships. The preparation provided by PPS CTE enables students to seamlessly transition in post-secondary schooling and/or workforce. By collaborating on the above goal to provide paid internships for PPS-Career and Technical Education program students, a pipeline to The City of Pittsburgh can be created that will provide jobs for PPS-CTE students and fulfill the City's workforce needs.

There is an opportunity for the City of Pittsburgh to incentivize students to enroll in PPS-CTE programs while allowing them to earn a wage by providing young people with employment opportunities and professional development support.

Ensuring our most economically challenged citizens have opportunities for career ladder employment is essential to pulling Pittsburgh families out of generational poverty. This can and should be done by incentivizing these internships with financial support from the City and/or corporate or other sponsors.

Recommendation 3:

The City should create a citywide marketing plan to boost Pittsburgh's labor force by highlighting Pittsburgh's CTE programs, gold-collar jobs, entrepreneurship opportunities, and other partnership employment opportunities in the city's workforce pipeline.

Pittsburgh offers both challenges and opportunities when it comes to communicating its brand to current and potential residents as well as the business community. The city's great diversity is at the same time an incredible strength and a challenge that needs to be carefully handled. Pittsburgh is still a city plagued by racial inequality and environmental problems, with an unemployment rate slightly higher than the national average. That needs to be addressed and can be done with an aggressive marketing communications program.

"[We] Need to get beyond the idea that everyone needs to go to college. Many people in the trades make more than [others]."

John T., Community Listening Session, 2/23/22

In the Pittsburgh metropolitan area, close to 1.1 million residents were employed in January 2022 – roughly the same number as in the fall of 2020. Local unemployment still rose in January 2022, though. The number of people who are employed or looking for work rose by just 1,200 between December 2021 and January 2022 to 1,158,600, extending a nearly yearlong trend of little growth in labor force participation. During the same period, the local unemployment rate fell by two-tenths of a percentage point to 5.1%, but it still exceeded the national rate, which stood at 4% in January and 3.8%

"Increase access to Union jobs, and Union training and apprentice programs, esp. for Black and Brown [residents]. When construction and development is occurring in a community make and enforce community benefits agreements for local hire."

Pastor L., Community Listening Session, 2/23/22

in February. Even so, the remainder of the country has been quicker to build back its labor force. Nationally, approximately 1.1 million jobs went unfilled in 2019,^{xx} according to the U.S. Department of Labor, placing workforce development on many legislative agendas. The

U.S. Economy has 7.6 million unfilled jobs, but only 6.5 million people are looking for work and the national employment rate is 3.5%.

The composition of Pittsburgh's workforce appears to have hampered the local growth. With the presence of local universities and the long-term aging of the population, the region has an especially high concentration of younger and older workers. During the pandemic, both groups have been more likely to exit the labor force. The post-

pandemic workforce reshuffling has given cities like Pittsburgh a new opportunity – and a new mandate – to market the city.

The City should create a citywide marketing plan that must reflect how Pittsburgh revived itself by becoming a university-centered technology hub, like Austin, TX; Raleigh, NC; or San Diego – the industries of tomorrow replacing those of yesterday.^{xxi} Carnegie Mellon University, ranked 25th in the nation, has cooperated closely with industry and government to help revive Pittsburgh. Also, the school’s Robotics Institute, founded in 1979, and its National Robotics Engineering Center, which helps commercialize technologies invented on campus, have given the former “Steel City” a new reputation as Robot Town. The self-driving car industry has flocked to Pittsburgh, which now boasts a large Google campus and was the site of an Uber Technologies Inc. autonomous vehicle pilot program. Pittsburgh also has a growing startup scene, with incubators that help shepherd university graduates into the business world.^{xxii} “Gold collar” workers, or skilled workers, as opposed to white or blue-collar workers are named for their contributions to their companies and to the economy, as well for their personal earning ability. Those workers are noted for applying their knowledge to emerging technologies, and their earning potential is increasingly self-evident, but many companies are still lacking significant numbers of employees who have these necessary skills.

The Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) is a critical partner in providing training for and access these “gold collar” jobs. CCAC offers seven Trade Union partnership programs through local Trade Unions and Joint Apprenticeship Training Committees. Available union trade programs include a carpentry apprenticeship, electrical apprenticeship, heavy equipment operating engineers’ apprenticeship, ironworking apprenticeship, plumbing apprenticeship, sheet metal worker apprenticeship, and stationary operating engineer training. CCAC offers a total of 49 Career and Technical Education programs with placement rates over 90% within six months of graduation. Since 2000 alone, CCAC has served more than half a million individuals—92% of whom choose to remain in our region.^{xxiii}

The citywide marketing plan must be responsive to all of Pittsburgh’s needs – connecting more younger workers’ employment opportunities, professional development, university-centers, tech, and entrepreneurship. Through necessity and equity, these opportunities must be opened up to all residents of Pittsburgh, especially those who have been traditionally shut out of these industries.

Recommendation 4:

The City must work collaboratively with PPS and related stakeholders (including the School Board, City Council, and the State Legislature) to return the .25% of the Earned Income Tax that was diverted to the City under Act 47 back to the school district.

PPS communicated to the Committee the importance of restoring the Earned Income Tax diversion. Both the City of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Public Schools District assess an earned income tax on city residents. But 15 years ago, when the City was on the verge of financial collapse, state legislators diverted a portion of the

“We live too much in silos. There are so many programs and people that are really trying to do the right thing. But there's a separation and refusal to collaborate that holds us back.”

Christina D., Community Listening Session, 2/23/22

earned income tax assessed by the school district to the City. Pittsburgh in 2004 had entered state oversight under Act 47 to restore financial stability. In February 2018^{xxiv}, the last of the oversight was removed when the Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority officially terminated its relationship with the City. Despite the termination of the relationship between the City and the Authority, the taxes diverted during oversight were never restored. Based on PPS's 2020 budget, the district needed to address an approximately \$27 million deficit, making it difficult to cover expenses by the end of 2022. The Superintendent noted that now that the City's finances are healthier, ending that diversion would return to the district over \$20 million per year.

On this long standing challenge, the Gainey Administration must play a central role as convener, knowledge provider, and network builder to strengthen relationships among the State, City, the PPS Board, and the school district's administration.

Recommendation 5:

The City will work collaboratively with PPS to develop and implement high quality, highly accessible universal pre-kindergarten for 3- and 4-year-olds in the City of Pittsburgh.

Accessible universal pre-K has been a longstanding need in Pittsburgh. The National Forum on Early Childhood Policy and Programs has found that high quality early childhood programs can yield a \$4 – \$9 dollar return per \$1 invested. It is well researched that children who attend a high-quality Pre-K program have increased chances of succeeding in school and ultimately throughout life. There is both a need and demand to fund and develop pre-K providers.

“When Peduto was mayor, the City was given money for education, but the City was allowed to keep about \$20 million of it. Where is that money? The City apparently couldn’t meet their budget, so the State allowed the City to keep that amount that had been given to DOE. They were just told they could keep it! This needs to be looked into, as why has it never been returned if that’s not who it was actually meant to go to? It could be earmarked for mental health or Arts programming within school system.”

**Betty P., Community Listening Session,
2/23/22**

A 2016 report by The Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers said true universal pre-K in the city would cost anywhere from \$154.8 million to \$189.3 million per year, though other funding mechanisms for pre-K could cost less.^{xxv} Only 20% of the approximately 205 childcare providers operating in the City meet “high-quality” standards, which is defined by the state quality rating and improvement system Keystone STARS.

The City should work collaboratively with PPS to develop an action plan, including measurable objectives and funding timelines to ensure adequate high-quality pre-kindergarten seats throughout the City during Mayor Gainey’s term. In addition, there will be a need to work closely with public, private, and philanthropic partners to ensure that significant investments become a reality for universal pre-K.

Actionable Steps to Invest in Skills Enhancement

Cities around the world, including Pittsburgh, have been undergoing a tremendous shift in the ways in which people are employed. While service industries that were thought to be the wave of the future for highly developed nations are continuing to show growth, the need for skills in welding, pipefitting, electrical, construction, HVAC installation, and maintenance, etc., are also in demand, but hinge on having a workforce ready to build and maintain that infrastructure. Yet, Pittsburgh has a significant challenge – the median infrastructure job takes 20% more time to fill than a non-

infrastructure job.^{xxvi} Local leaders have an opportunity to make a difference in a short amount of time: 60% of infrastructure jobs require only 6 months of training or less.^{xxvii}

With federal funding for workforce development cut by nearly 40% over the last two decades, the U.S. invests less in workforce training than nearly every other advanced economy. Congress passed approximately \$20 billion for youth and adult workforce development initiatives authorized by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). However, in cities, towns, and villages across the United States, local leaders are also thinking strategically about how to get workforce programs in addition to federal workforce investments. We know that businesses can't succeed, and that Pittsburgh's infrastructure can't be built without trained, skilled workers.

PEER CITY: Buffalo, NY

Buffalo, NY, is investing more than \$42 million in workforce programs and wrap-around supports to meet infrastructure workforce needs.

The *Local Government ARPA Investment Tracker*^{xxviii} shows us that several cities are taking advantage of this allowable use and are investing their State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to prepare their infrastructure workforce. Buffalo, NY is:

- Launching a new Skills Based Job Readiness Program to match low-income residents with specific employers to improve their economic mobility;
- Providing \$2 million to the Northland Workforce Training Center to specifically engage residents of color and female students in accessing and completing training in welding, electrical construction, and related fields; and
- Investing \$20 million in wraparound services for all job training participants to defray costs related to childcare, transportation, housing, and other barriers that often force residents to exit training.

Recommendation 6:

The City will collaborate with existing workforce development partners to provide funding and resources to support existing job retraining programs for new hybrid jobs, including training opportunities for those re-entering the workforce after incarceration.

Workforce development and education leaders warn that Pittsburgh, like many places across the nation, is almost uniquely ill-equipped to help Pittsburghers gather new skills and prepare for new careers. That situation could have lasting effects both for these individuals' financial security and for the broader economy by stymieing innovation and growth and deepening economic polarization. It's also a racial justice issue, since Black and Latinx workers are more likely to have lost jobs in the pandemic than white workers.

Despite federal, state, and local increased investment, workforce groups may face challenges in providing people the right skills, given the rapid pace of technological change and the opacity of what businesses are seeking, said Joseph Fuller, a Harvard Business School professor, and a co-head of the university's Managing the Future of Work project.

"Make ex-convicts eligible for legitimate jobs and housing in Pittsburgh by making discrimination illegal for records older than 5-8 years. Too many Black men are excluded from having a real life which impacts Black families. Time has been served."

Marjorie T., Ideas Wall, 2/11/22

The City should collaborate with existing workforce development partners to provide funding and resources to support existing job retraining programs. These programs will provide retraining job opportunities for laid-off workers, unemployed, dislocated workers, and re-entry citizens in Pittsburgh. There are job opportunities with competitive pay and benefits available in Pittsburgh, but employers require a workforce with sets of skills in the areas of advanced manufacturing or information technology, project management, and others.

PEER CITY: AUSTIN, TX

Austin, TX – Workforce Solutions Capital Area launches rapid retraining program with city, county backing; Program comes with full scholarship and \$200 per week stipend

A workforce retraining program was launched in the Austin area to help several hundred displaced workers prepare for the next steps in their careers. RE:WorkNOW served 260 Austinites through a partnership with Austin Community College and other local organizations. Travis County and Austin City Council collectively set aside nearly \$3.2 million to back the program. The 12-week training focused on topics such as HVAC, plumbing, welding, and cybersecurity. The program was free, and participants received a stipend of \$200 per week. As part of the program, there was a digital platform to connect people to the training, which will be offered virtually or in a hybrid setting.

Recommendation 7:

The City should develop a One-Stop for Employment in collaboration with Partner4Work and The Allegheny Conference, which will create a repository or set of apps of available jobs, apprenticeships, internships, and associated resources within the City (i.e., childcare, transportation, professional attire, interview preparation, etc.).

There is a plethora of information supposedly at one's fingertips at any given time. However, if that information is scattered on a multitude of web pages or websites so that even a technologically proficient person would have difficulty finding it, then it is as useful as if it didn't exist at all. Throughout the process of engagement with the community via Listening Sessions, many community members said they were unaware of the programs and services available to them currently in the City of Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh Partnership^{xxix} will house the following:

- A portal where job seekers and employers can find what they need on the City’s website;
- A system for tracking the level of usage and degree of success with the generation of bi-annual reports;
- Job preparation beyond CTE – more apprenticeship programs through the Building Trades, including the pre-apprenticeship Carpenters Union program (e.g., drug free requirements’ policies preparation for things like union membership, union tests);
- Phillip Randolph Institute – 360-hour program focused on breaking the chains of poverty. Builder’s Guild program, Intro into the Trades, also runs a similar program; the issue is that these are smaller groups of 20-30; and
- Expand a larger pipeline with Partner4Work which would connect non-school aged people with programs for job preparation. Trade Institute of Pittsburgh should be there as well (service about 100 students per year)

“I think city needs more training programs to get good paying jobs also need to provide funding for existing training programs here in city. Also the job market growing areas IT, Construction, Health Careers. [It is] important to have job training opportunities to fill these positions. [...] help make good paying jobs by way of job training for all Pittsburgh citizens. Lots of new companies [are] coming to city we got have people trained and ready to fill positions they [are] looking for to fill.”

John P., Ideas Wall, 2/8/22

This program should be created by January of 2023.

PEER CITY: St. Louis, MO

St. Louis Workforce Development Ecosystem Map^{xxx}

This portal can also be expanded to include educational opportunities for City residents (such as university and community colleges, trade schools, certification programs, etc.) and associated resources (financial aid, grants, work-study opportunities).

Actionable Steps to Invest in the Economic Livelihood of Pittsburghers of All Ages, Genders, Abilities, and Backgrounds

Amid rising uncertainties, cities can provide renewed sources of growth to help improve livelihoods, drive the economy, and build a sustainable future for all. Pittsburgh urgently needs renewed sources of growth to help fight extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity. Where Black women and men lack in health, income, employment, and educational outcomes, Pittsburgh leaders must step up to the plate and take the lead on tackling the pressing economic challenges for our most vulnerable communities.

Recommendation 8:

The Gainey administration should work with key partners to re-envision the current tax abatement policies and tax exemptions in the City of Pittsburgh to ensure that benefits go to the community in which the development is happening – ensuring that those communities are truly served and benefited in exchange for much sought after tax abatements and growth of tax-exempt development.

Improving the quality of life in cities is often touted as one of the goals of economic development, but development projects often produce few tangible benefits for local residents. Many cities have embraced a development strategy that involves investing large public subsidies in big-ticket items, such as new stadiums, entertainment districts, and convention centers in downtown areas. While these projects may increase entertainment and tourism spending in one part of town, the benefits don't always reach out into neighborhoods. Such developments often create low-wage jobs while pushing up housing prices, forcing long-time residents from the area and spurring gentrification.^{xxxii}

The community benefits movement is founded on the premise that economic development should create tangible improvements for local residents, particularly those in low-income neighborhoods. Community Benefits Agreements (CBA) are legally enforceable contracts, signed by community groups and by a developer, which spell out a set of community benefits that the developer has committed to provide as part of a development project.

"Federal law requires tax-exempt hospitals to assess community health needs once every 3 years and make a plan to address needs. The city should push UPMC/AHN to meaningfully include underserved communities in the assessment process, to recognize abysmal health disparities for POC and the social determinants those disparities flow from as community health needs, and to take concrete steps (guided community leaders) to address needs ID'd by communities. They must take some responsibility!"

Mary C., Ideas Wall 2/22/22

The benefits created through a CBA can vary as widely as the needs of communities, including but not limited to:

- a) Mandating use of minority contractor(s) and local union worker(s) in construction agreements
- b) Demanding affordable housing set-asides if the development to be undertaken is residential in character (and multifamily)
- c) Including workers as communities of interest and workplace standards in CBAs.
- d) Requiring CBAs as part of EMI District Institutional Master Plans.
- e) Creating high quality apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship program partnerships to give students hands on experience in the field.

This policy should be updated by the end of the second (2nd) quarter of 2023.

Recommendation 9:

The City should consider and analyze infraction mediation to get fines reduced and reinstate drivers' licenses or expand programs like the one offered by Pittsburgh Community Services Inc. (PCSI) which pays fines if an individual goes through training/educational programs such as Education Data Solutions Inc. and Goodwill Industries.

More than half of U.S. states still suspend, revoke, or refuse to renew driver's licenses for unpaid traffic, toll, misdemeanor and felony fines, and fees. The result: millions of people are struggling to survive with debt-related driving restrictions just because they could not afford a court fine or fee – or because they missed a court hearing.^{xxxii}

In 2019, over 100 ideologically diverse organizations launched Free to Drive: a coalition united by the belief that restrictions on driving privileges should be reserved for dangerous driving, not to coerce debt payment or to punish people who miss a court appearance. In the last five years, 22 states and D.C. have passed reforms to curb debt-based driving restrictions.^{xxxiii}

Many Pittsburghers are automatically shut out of the workforce if they are unable to maintain a driver's license. They may lose their job, if employed, or may lose the ability to obtain employment at all – depending on whether they have access to reliable public transportation to get them to and from the place of work.

Driver's license suspensions cost people their livelihoods; 86% of Americans drive to work and many jobs require a driver's license. Without a license, you can't take your children to school, buy groceries, or access healthcare. Many people have no choice but to continue driving – meaning they risk more fines and fees, a criminal conviction, and incarceration.^{xxxiv}

Suspending licenses cuts economic growth. People who can't work or who lose income due to a suspended license have less money to contribute to the economy and less money to pay off their initial fines and fees – leaving them saddled with court debt for years.^{xxxv}

License suspensions undermine public safety. When law enforcement uses valuable time to cite, stop, fine, and arrest people for driving on a suspended license due to

unpaid fines and fees, they have less time to investigate and focus on crimes that endanger people's lives.^{xxxvi}

With the current rise in everything from rents, groceries, as well as gas, residents may not have sufficient income to pay for life-sustaining necessities while also trying to pay off persistent fines and/or penalties for traffic infractions. As stated earlier in this report, a driver's license gives Pittsburgh residents more than just a license to drive a vehicle, but it also gives them an opportunity to drastically improve their and their family's economic circumstances long into the future.

Recommendation 10:

The City Administration should work with the City Council to enact legislation enabling the creation of Industry Standards' Boards.

State and local policymakers are increasingly regulating workplace standards—including compensation, scheduling, training, and safety—through industry-wide councils or boards that include worker representatives. This helps create a path to improve working conditions and empower workers. Since 2018, four states and three local governments have enacted laws that include workers and employers in the process of recommending or implementing workplace standards for an entire sector.^{xxxvii}

These standard-setting bodies go by a number of names, including industry councils, workers standards boards, and wage boards. However, what unites them is that they bring together representatives from both the workforce and their employers in an official capacity to help set and enforce workplace standards that cover all workers in a particular industry and geography—for example, domestic workers in Seattle or farm workers in New York.

These boards are often empowered to make recommendations on a broad range of interrelated issues rather than focus on a single problem, such as low wages. They commonly conduct hearings and outreach activities as well as issue reports on their findings. Unlike most commissions and other bodies, their recommendations carry significant legal weight and usually trigger governmental review and action.

Standard-setting bodies can benefit both workers and employers. Worker boards can help workers come together and gain a stronger voice to advocate for themselves and help push an industry forward. Employers, meanwhile, gain a forum to discuss issues with workers and other firms in their industry; and raising standards across an industry creates a level playing field for all firms in the industry. This makes it more likely that these gains for workers will be sustainable.

The City Administration must work with the City Council to enact legislation enabling the creation of Industry Standards' Boards for the following purposes, including but not limited to:

- a) Promote productive labor, management, and government collaboration in major industries to support job growth and quality in the City of Pittsburgh;
- b) Create industry-wide councils where workers and their representatives, city government, and major employers will discuss and implement enhanced standards for job quality, workplace safety, public health, training, and worker voice in specific industries;
- c) Give Boards the ability to recommend minimum industry standards for the City to promulgate when such regulatory power is under the City's jurisdiction; and
- d) Support a path for workers to come together to increase their voice.

PEER CITIES/STATES: Philadelphia, Seattle, New York

Cities and states that have passed laws enabling workers and employers to help set industrywide standards since 2018:

Philadelphia (Domestic Workers Standards and Implementation Task Force): In 2019, the Philadelphia City Council created a task force called for in its Domestic Worker Bill of Rights to craft and recommend policy to the City council to extend better legal protections, benefits, and working conditions to domestic workers. The board includes representation from employers, government, and domestic worker organizations.

Seattle (Domestic Workers Standards Board): Since 2018, a board of domestic workers, employers, households, worker organizations, and members of the public have offered suggestions to the mayor and city council on how to improve Seattle domestic workers' working conditions.

Seattle (Transportation Network Deactivation Appeals Panel): Passed in 2019, a Seattle law allows Transportation Network Company (TNC) drivers to contest their deactivation before a panel consisting of equal members representing the interests of the TNC driver and the TNC, as well as a neutral arbitrator.

New York state (Farm Laborers Wage Board): The state of New York passed a 2019 law allowing the labor commissioner to convene a board of labor, farm, and public representatives to receive testimony and recommend whether and how to reduce the minimum number of hours a farm worker must work per week before receiving overtime.

Recommendation 11:

The City should enact a moratorium on non-traffic summary citations for youth under eighteen (18).

In January 2022, ACLU Pennsylvania (ACLU-PA) released its report, “**Student Arrests in Allegheny County Public Schools: The Need for Transparency and Accountability.**” The report noted that students generally enter the justice system in one of two ways: by being arrested and referred to juvenile court or by receiving a summary citation (non-traffic tickets) ordering them to appear before a magisterial district judge in the adult criminal justice system, where they are typically issued fines. Non-payment of these fines results in a referral to the juvenile justice system. Nearly one third of all referrals to juvenile justice in Allegheny County are due to these non-payment of fines. A summary citation conviction can limit a young person’s employment opportunities and affect their ability to get into college or join the military.^{xxxviii}

In addition, a report showing African American students in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County continue to be referred to the juvenile courts at a much higher rate than white children.^{xxxix} Pittsburgh refers its children to police for disciplinary issues 95% more than other cities.^{xl xli} This is unacceptable. The new administration must work with the School District, City Council, and the State to craft new policies to help ensure the safety of students and staff at school, while preventing unnecessary referrals of students to law enforcement.

Summary citations are another way that police discipline students. If these citations are included in the count, the number of students subjected to contact with the justice system increases substantially beyond those who are arrested. These summary citations can create an adult criminal record – even for very minor infractions. This impacts one’s eligibility for employment as well as educational opportunities.

The City needs to review, analyze, and validate the data, and will enact a non-traffic summary citations moratorium for youth under eighteen and work to develop programs and initiatives to respond and move beyond the data.

Recommendation 12:

Develop partnerships with Higher Education Institutions, Corporations, and other organizations in the region to aid in the pipeline of retaining diverse talent within the City of Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh and its partners should develop a citywide workforce development strategy designed to align workforce education and training to the needs of employers. The strategy must provide a blueprint for ensuring diverse residents across the city can build the skills needed to compete in the workforce.

“Bringing our region's health systems to the same table as our city's schools and community centers--UPMC and Highmark need to bring their mental health, social work, and healthcare resources directly to students and families in their homes and schools. The same health systems also need to participate in job training and educational development programs throughout the region and can do so in a win-win for everyone.”

Krishna P., Ideas Wall, 2/12/22

To recruit diverse talent, the City and partners will need to develop deeper relationships with the communities from which they want to hire, seek candidates with ties to diverse communities and publicize opportunities for employee advancement. Pittsburgh is a strong force in academia with the University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon University, Duquesne University,

Community College of Allegheny County, and other institutions. In addition,

Pittsburgh has a plethora of technology companies, including Google, that bring a whole host of resources for diverse talent.

It does not benefit Pittsburgh to educate and train or upskill its population for the economy of the future if it is unable to keep these residents in the City. The Gainey Administration must develop cooperative relationships with the long term and newly-settled economic friends of Pittsburgh to create a culture that garners buy-in from its residents – a culture that says that their needs, wants, and lives matter to the City.

Actionable Steps to Invest in the Social and Emotional Well-being of Pittsburghers of All Ages, Genders, Abilities, and Backgrounds

Positive social, emotional, and physical well-being are core aspects of all Pittsburghers' development. To be healthy and well, our people need to be able to develop and maintain relationships and networks, and successfully interact within their community. People also need to be able to effectively recognize, understand, and express emotions and to channel those emotions into healthy behaviors. In addition, residents need to be physically healthy and fit and able to make sound life choices.

Recommendation 13:

Provide community and school-based harm-reduction programs for mental health and substance abuse issues, which includes providing trauma triage training for educators.

Many Pittsburghers experience trauma that is often at the root of substance-abuse issues and disorders that disrupt learning. Trauma is an event that causes people to react emotionally, mentally, or physically. Individuals who are coping with trauma can do so in many unhealthy ways including substance abuse.

In the United States, approximately 38% of children reported having a traumatic experience by the age of 16. This percentage underscores how important it is for community and education agencies to identify trauma and other ACEs in order to provide support so that they do not experience inequities – specifically minoritized youth need to be understood and supported and not referred to justice systems to help them manage their experiences. marginalized communities. Equipping school-level

team members and teachers with the knowledge and skills that are needed to care for and teach a student that is exposed to trauma and other ACEs is critical. Schools and community organizations are on the frontline when it comes to confronting and addressing student-related trauma issues.

Experts can provide schools and community organizations with trauma-informed training that will focus on the adverse childhood experiences (ACE) that need support from educators and clinicians. Providing this level of support to educators and community affiliates so that they are prepared to create more equitable trauma-informed spaces to support children's social-emotional and mental well-being is essential. Research suggests that without meaningful mediation, traumatic childhood experiences can disrupt a child's developmental trajectory across all major functioning domains. These adverse childhood experiences can also present behavioral changes that can significantly impact a child's academic and long-term success.

"Many of the behavioral/disciplinary problems in our school stem from emotional problems and mental health concerns of the students, which starts very young. As a resident who sent all three of my children K-12 through PPS, I can attest that counselors in the schools are woefully lacking. In addition to the region's health systems, we need the local universities to come to the table as well. Engage the area foundations in supporting a comprehensive approach for improving youth mental health."

Anonymous, Ideas Wall, 2/13/22

PEER CITY: New York, NY

City of New York

Mayor Bill de Blasio, First Lady Chirlane McCray, Schools Chancellor Meisha Porter, and Speaker Corey Johnson launched an historic expansion in access to school-based mental health supports for school communities as they confront and heal the trauma caused by COVID-19. As part of this expansion, mental health supports are being integrated into Summer Rising, all schools will participate in social-emotional screening, and over 600 social workers, psychologists, and family support workers will be hired, totaling over 6,000 mental health workers in our schools across the city. Additionally, mental health resources and training will be made available to parents through DOE's Parent University and to early childhood educators.

Recommendation 14:

Work with City Council to prioritize equity and work to dismantle the school to prison pipeline when writing legislation, especially as it relates to potential fines or exposure to the juvenile or criminal justice system. Youth referred to the juvenile or criminal justice system face barriers to future success, with unintended long-lasting consequences.

The City must employ an equity lens as a systematic way of finding opportunities to improve equity outcomes and social determinants by embedding these principles in decision making and policymaking including, but not limited to, the work of the Council and its committees, as well as Boards and Commissions and other agencies supporting the City's budget. A report by the Allegheny County Department of Human Services found that students at Pittsburgh Public Schools who were referred to juvenile court had more school absences and suspensions throughout their time in school than those without. A first-time arrest, even for minor incidents, also resulted in a decrease in those students' grade point averages when compared to their grade point averages prior to arrest, and they were more likely (53%) than their peers (14%) to have criminal justice system involvement as young adults.^{xiii}

Employing an equity-in-all approach will help ensure that leaders and policymakers are informed about the potentially significant impacts that their decisions will have on the wellbeing and future success of youth in the city.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SAFETY

Committee Charge

The Community Health and Safety Committee is charged with developing actionable and holistic recommendations to improve the overall health and safety of our neighborhoods and community with consideration to mental health, substance abuse, public safety, gun violence prevention, and public health issues, such as chronic illness, premature mortality, and adequate responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. This committee will consider social determinants of health and approaches to eradicating health disparities.



Overall Context

The Community Health and Safety Committee (CHSC) included stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, professions, and experiences. They represent their communities through their professional accomplishments, union leadership roles, or decades of engagement in public health and safety issues in Pittsburgh. The areas of public health and safety were combined in an effort to encourage a cultural shift in recognizing that public safety is indeed a matter of public health, as it shapes the welfare of all Pittsburgh residents and visitors.

Guiding Principles

The recommendations developed by the CHSC provide actions regarding various areas of focus. As such, CHSC believes it is imperative the administration recognize each recommendation must be viewed and implemented with the lens of acknowledging the long-term effects systematic racism has had on the City of Pittsburgh and its residents. Redefining public safety, shifting the culture of the Department of Public Safety (DPS), and confronting Pittsburgh's social determinants of health should also be guiding principles when addressing the needs of the community.

- **Eradication of Systematic Racism**

Mayor Gainey, members of his cabinet, and the whole administration have critical roles to play as individual champions of equity. The new administration should begin this work by adopting a framework for how practically to address racial equity within city government, while consistently pushing back against hateful rhetoric and practices. The City should implement a multi-system, multi-department approach looking at racism as a public health crisis, and develop actionable, measurable strategies, both at systemic and intervention levels, to address historical discriminatory practices and eliminate barriers to health equity and access.

Promoting a community-wide vision of equity allows for a more meaningful collaboration between local organizations and city departments. Community members want the City to prioritize authentic, meaningful civic engagement around equity through the continued sharing of information and engaging in dialogue about equity. Establishing external accountability mechanisms that demonstrate and reinforce public engagement over equity is a necessary component in achieving these goals.

Included in the task of addressing systemic racism is the need to tackle the issue and community impact of mass incarceration; the bail, fees and fines system; the lack of alternative responses and juvenile justice system reform. The CHSC acknowledges most actionable solutions do not reside under the Mayor's direct authority; however, advocating for legislative changes in coordination with the County to address these problems does.

In addition, systematic racism in Pittsburgh cannot be addressed without accomplishing a complete shift in the current culture of the DPS. As a result, the CHSC offers the following based on the above guiding principle:

- **Expansion of alternative emergency response options for situations where an armed police response does more harm than good.**

The Committee looked for solutions to address the multiple health and safety needs of residents, while reducing the role of law enforcement and the criminal legal system to a minimum. The Committee also looked for ways to support successful community reentry of formerly incarcerated people and remove systemic barriers to reintegration.

- **Redefine Public Safety to Include Public Health**

The City must adopt a new definition of public safety that is understood to be a matter of public health and well-being for Pittsburgh residents and visitors. Public health is an essential lens that needs to be internalized and implemented across all city Departments, not just in the Department of Public Health (DPH).

The Denver Task Force to Reimagine Policing and Public Safety, tasked with creating recommendations for transforming public safety in its city, developed a definition of Public Safety this committee strongly suggests mirroring.

“Public safety ensures that all members of the community decide how to organize a social environment that provides the freedom to live and thrive with the protection and support of social, physical, mental and economic well-being. Safety is not a function of armed paramilitary forces with a proven track record of racism and violence. Public safety prevents, reduces, and heals harm.”^{xliii}

- **Improve Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)**

The Gainey administration is strongly encouraged to develop a legislative agenda, programs, and policies to specifically address SDOH. The City should invest in prevention methods that focus on intergenerational approaches to illness/wellness. In addition, the City has a responsibility to keep residents informed of all services provided by the City and invest in efforts to increase community awareness of resources available for mental health and substance abuse disorders. These programs should be implemented using an approach that keeps community voices central to all efforts reflecting the desires of the community and assuring that service delivery reflects the community in its demography, and specifically race. This demonstrates cultural awareness at its finest, as those who would implement these methods should mirror the community in which they serve.

To address the growing mental health crisis, the City must engage and collaborate with community providers in mental health and substance abuse to identify gaps in service and to plan for immediate expansion of services to residents. Likewise, the use of accurate health data is needed to highlight critical health disparities.

The Community Health and Safety recommendations are organized into four overarching themes that reflect the public health and safety priorities of Pittsburgh residents, as identified in CHSC held Subject Matter Expert roundtables, community forums, community advocacy groups and stakeholder document submissions, online Community Engagement Survey, and the collaboration with experts and advocates on the committee.

The CHSC virtual community forums and online survey provided an opportunity for CHSC to hear resident and community stakeholders' ideas for how the new administration could better respond to the needs of Pittsburgh residents. The online community engagement tool, alone, received a total of 12,597 visits, 4184 unique users, 305 comments and 374 survey comments. Participant responses were gathered and reviewed for potential themes and actionable items for Committee recommendations.

Pittsburgh, like many other cities across the nation, has a health and safety crisis built on the interconnection of other crises including poverty, racism, housing, transit, education, food access, and safety.

The themes that emerged from the CHSC recommendations echo Mayor Ed Gainey's values and priorities, including building a better Pittsburgh for all residents and visitors; investing in historically underserved and under-resourced neighborhoods impacted by systemic racism; and ensuring city government works for everyone, with transparency and accountability.

The following four (4) themes reflect areas of critical importance to the City of Pittsburgh:

- 1. Rebuild Trust between the Community and Public Safety**
- 2. Build the Workforce for the Reimagined Public Safety System**
- 3. Invest in Public Health Infrastructure – to address SDOH and promote health equity**
- 4. Coordination with Existing Human Services and Public Health Ecosystems**

Rebuild Trust between the Community and Public Safety

Creating a strong relationship between the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police (PBP) and Pittsburgh's Black, Brown, and disenfranchised communities, is a historically systematic and complex issue that can only be improved by decreasing the overreliance on PBP and by developing, with community input and transparency, a long-term, multi-faceted, culturally sensitive and coordinated strategy for a reformed PBP that includes new policies, training, and on-going initiatives.

These recommendations embrace strategies that focus – not only on the City's response to violence after it has occurred, but on addressing the root causes of violence and other threats to public health and safety. It is incumbent upon the City to take significant steps to rebuild trust between the PBP and the communities the Bureau serves.

In addition, there is a pressing need to develop and institutionalize a holistic and sustainable violent-crime reduction strategy that reduces the human, fiscal, and social costs that prevent the City from reaching its full potential. Without effective public safety, no city can thrive; but, with it, there is unlimited opportunity. The City needs to play a crucial role in advocating this reform.

Our first responders must reflect community values and needs, protect the health and well-being of the community, and recognize the dignity of everyone during every encounter. The departments must operate with transparency, compassion, and data-driven programming to reduce crime, save lives, and increase the efficiency of service delivery. This should be done while fostering collaboration with community partners and stakeholders.

A truly comprehensive approach to rebuilding the trust between the community and public safety in Pittsburgh must include expanding the capacity of community-based organizations; changing environmental and departmental conditions that contribute to violence; and ensuring transparency, compassion, data driven programming, and accountability.

DPS funds should be allocated for the following recommendations, unless recommended to be under the authority of the Office of the Mayor, which would serve as an important part of DPS's engagement strategy. It is the intent of the CHSC that these recommendations play an integral part in the reduction of law-enforcement interaction.

In pursuit of these objectives and across all city operations, the Gainey Administration must work to dismantle structural racism and reverse policies that perpetuate social, economic, and health inequities.

Recommendation 1:

Invest in and adopt a data-driven, measurable, community-based, community-led violence and gun violence prevention strategic plan, and create initiatives that address juvenile, immigrant, and equity needs.

A truly comprehensive approach to public safety in Pittsburgh must include the adoption of a data-driven, measurable, community-based, community-led violence and gun violence prevention strategic plan. One of the first steps in achieving this goal would be to create an annual, robust community review process to assess strategy and evaluate progress.

“One concept I believe would be sustainable within the City to address crime and violence as well as enhance relationships with Law enforcement would be the support of a Mother's Citywide Coalition where women, mothers, grandmothers, etc. are empowered to facilitate and host dialogues for transparency, education and structured supportive services in communities suffering from the violence and manage how these concerns are addressed by trusted, trained mothers backed by the Mayor!”

Valerie D., Ideas Wall, 2/28/22

Recommendation 2:

Adopt a plan, such as the one developed by the Council on Criminal Justice (CCJ) Violent Crime Working Group:

The CCJ created a task force to identify essential actions cities should take when combating the issue of violence. After review, the CHSC believes the 10 actions identified by the task force would provide a strong foundation in the creation of a violence/gun violence strategic plan.

Ten Essential Actions Cities Can Take to Reduce Violence Now^{xliv}

As 2022 begins, America's cities face a surge in violent crime, particularly homicide. The CCJ documented a 30% rise in murders nationwide in 2020, while police data from large cities reveal an earlier 7% increase in 2021. Policymakers and practitioners need solutions now. In response to the crisis, CCJ launched a Violent Crime Working Group in July 2021. Group members have identified Ten Essential Actions cities can immediately take to reduce gun violence in their streets.

1. Set a clear goal: commit to saving lives by stopping violence.

City leaders should commit to concrete reductions in homicides and shootings.

2. Identify the key people and places driving the violence.

In every city, violence concentrates among small sets of individuals, groups, and locations. Cities should complete a rigorous problem analysis to identify these people and places.

3. Create a citywide plan for engaging key people and places.

Addressing violence requires a strategic plan to effectively organize a multi-disciplinary response. Plans should spell out concrete assignments: for key people and places, who will do what?

4. Engage key people with empathy and accountability.

High-risk individuals and groups must be placed on notice that they are in danger of being injured, killed, arrested, and/or incarcerated. Supports and services must be offered while law enforcement makes clear that further violence will not be tolerated.

5. Engage key locations using place-based policing and investment.

A combination of place-based policing and investment can cool violent hot spots. Police are needed to disrupt cycles of violence but must be supplemented and replaced by cleaning-and-greening and other targeted enhancements to change the nature of violent micro-locations.

6. Place responsibility for violence reduction at the top.

Every city suffering from high rates of violent crime should have a permanent unit dedicated to violence reduction housed in the mayor's office, with senior leadership reporting directly to the mayor.

7. Emphasize healing with trauma-informed approaches.

Agencies working with victims and survivors of violent crime should use a trauma-informed approach. The same holds true for law enforcement officers, who also experience trauma.

8. Invest in anti-violence workforce development.

Investing in a professional, sustainable anti-violence workforce means providing adequate salaries, benefits, and prospects for upward mobility through effective training and education.

9. Set-aside funding for new stakeholders and strategies.

While most funding should be reserved for strategies with demonstrated track records of success, some portion of anti-violence dollars should be set aside to promote innovation.

10. Commit to continuous improvement based on data, evidence, and peer-to-peer learning.

Leaders should embrace a learning culture that can recognize when strategies are not working and shift course. Research partners should be engaged early to assess performance. Stakeholders can be brought together through information-sharing networks.

Recommendation 3:

Commit to a concrete goal around eliminating gun homicides and gun assaults in Pittsburgh by creating a vehicle for Group Violence Intervention (GVI) and the Office of Violence Prevention to connect with and engage participants in their programming, supporting hospital-based violence intervention programming, and engaging in robust public reporting.:

According to the Associated Press, Pittsburgh saw a 46% rise in shootings that left people injured in 2021 and a similar percentage jump in homicides over the same time last year.^{xlv} Most disturbingly, nearly one third of the victims of homicide were teens.^{xlvi} Often those involved in gun violence are closely linked socially and frequently participate in retaliatory actions. To effectively halt this cycle of violence, Pittsburgh needs to double down on efforts to interrupt the event chain.

The best known GVI program is Boston's "Operation Ceasefire," which was credited for a 63 percent reduction in youth homicide victimization. The typical impact of programs using this approach is a 35 to 60 percent reduction in community-wide levels of

homicides and a significant but sometimes lesser reduction in nonfatal shootings citywide. Replications of the Boston strategy demonstrated evidence of effectiveness in reducing serious violence generated by street gangs or criminally active street groups in Cincinnati, OH; Indianapolis, IN; Los Angeles, CA; Lowell, MA; and Stockton, CA.^{xlvii}

In addition to the Boston GVI model, which Pittsburgh has partially implemented in the past, the Committee recommends Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs (HVIP), which, rather than waiting for the patient to seek care, bring trauma-informed care to the patient while in a hospital-based setting.^{xlviii} Because victims of interpersonal violence are at elevated risk for re-injury and violence perpetration, reaching them during these “teachable moments” is key to a successful hospital-based intervention. Victims are provided links to community-based services, mentoring, home visits, follow-up assistance, and long-term case management during these interventions. HVIPs also work to identify and reduce risk factors, such as substance misuse and chronic unemployment, and promote protective factors, such as social support, job readiness, and educational attainment.”^{xlix}

Recommendation 4:

Create and convene a Sentinel Event Review Board (SERB), under the purview of the Mayor's Office, to conduct a non-blaming, all-stakeholders inquiry into the systemic causes of major public safety incidents that occur in the future.

SERBs have been an important safety and quality improvement process in the airline and healthcare industries for decades and are in the early stages of being used in policing.

When terrible things happen in a complex system, such as the larger policing environment, the cause is rarely a single act or event. More often, bad outcomes are “sentinel events.” Sentinel events are events with significant negative outcomes that:

- Signal underlying weaknesses in the system.
- Are likely the result of multiple or compound contributing factors.
- May provide, if properly analyzed, ways to strengthen the system and prevent future negative outcomes.”¹

Creating and convening a SERB, under the purview of the Mayor's Office, to conduct a non-blaming, all-stakeholders inquiry into the systemic causes of major public safety incidents, would be a significant component for a Pittsburgh violence/gun violence strategic plan. This autonomous, community-led institution of review will serve as an independent, integrated panel made up of community leaders and experts in criminology; law enforcement will run parallel to, and independent of, any disciplinary, legal, or civilian-oversight based inquiries. The SERB would not focus on individual blame, but, rather, evaluate existing public safety “systems” that result in recurring instances/incidents between law enforcement and the community of Pittsburgh. x

Recommendation 5:

Increase the use of alternative emergency response options for situations where an armed police response does more harm than good, and there is no identified threat to public safety. Reduce unneeded interactions with armed police, including unnecessary traffic stops and 311 notification and responses.)

Based on community feedback, Pittsburgh should focus on building police-community trust by engaging a model of public safety that minimizes unnecessary police interaction between armed officers and citizens. Developing new alternatives to emergency police response, and expanding those currently in place, will protect the community from harm, reduce administrative burdens, and free up law enforcement to tackle truly dangerous situations. To achieve this goal, this Administration should begin by immediately developing and implementing new standards for DPS interaction with community members, including the development of a formal departmental policy on police and community engagement.

"[We need] more counselors and mental health workers working side-by-side with police (and less police overall)."

Anonymous, Ideas Wall, 2/11/22

Recommendation 6:

Work with the community to establish a uniform service provision standard to assess and cultivate systemic change around the implementation of alternative response options.

“There are zip codes that are deliberately left out in resource distribution and others assumed to be crime-prone.”

Joshua K., Community Listening Session, 2/28/22

In the community surveys posed to the residents of Pittsburgh during the transition process, only half of respondents felt their community was policed adequately, just over 30 percent felt their community is over-policed and 20 percent felt there was not enough police presence in their

community. The Committee believes that to right-size the police presence, alternative response options must be expanded and strategically integrated into calls-for-service protocols. This will require City and County collaboration.

The City should initiate and create a matrix of initiatives, in partnership with Allegheny County, to reform dispatch services in alignment with Pittsburgh’s reimagined public safety system to improve communication between first-responding bureaus, while committing to keeping the public informed of any changes in the system. The Administration’s public safety initiatives must also tie back to accountability, for example, by ensuring PBP uses crime data to inform decisions about deployment, action, and equitable distribution of resources.

Recommendation 7:

Execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the PPS and DPS that prioritizes children’s social and emotional well-being by preventing interaction between PPD and PPS students except in limited, mandatory cases of a health or safety emergency.

The City and PPS do not currently have an MOU in place to define the relationship between their organizations. While PPS does have its own police force, the mechanism governing engagement and setting clear responsibilities and limitations on the involvement of the City’s police force is absent. While the Committee would prefer entirely police-free schools, it understands that the PPS police force is not directly under the jurisdiction of the Mayor. Much like many of the other interventions recommended by the Committee, this statistic below shows a reflection of the reactive model that children are likely to experience later in life, rather than the holistic treatment model. “1.7 million children attend schools in the U.S. where police patrols are funded, but no guidance counselors are funded”^{li}

“Where schools are concerned, I have an issue with police carrying guns in school. Issues start at home and behaviors are first learned at home. If a child continues to be disruptive, believes parents should be brought in and provided training and guidance on how to resolve issues.”

Sharlee E., Community Listening Session 2/28/22

Recommendation 8:

Prohibit law enforcement community engagement from being used as surveillance and data collection by the DPS.

When this Committee recommends community engagement with police and community policing strategies, it does not endorse the use of community engagement for the purpose of surveillance. Rather it intends community engagement to be the legitimate interaction and understanding of community needs and provision of responsive services.

“People aren’t trusting of anyone because it’s all just photo ops and just for show. They see that. They see there’s no investment in them, so they know there won’t be any investment in their community, regardless of what promises they hear. A bold idea would be to keep promises.”

Susan B., Community Listening Session, 2/28/22

Recommendation 9:

Review and evaluate DPS policy and issue an executive order to reinforce the decriminalization of cannabis and small possession of controlled substances and paraphernalia, and syringe exchange.

The Committee is excited by the Mayor's advocacy for expanding the availability of programs that reduce risks to public health like syringe exchanges.^{lii} Moving forward, the public safety model should include decriminalizing offenses that post no threat to public safety. This will free up law enforcement resources to be used in more appropriate ways, prioritize health and safety over punishment for people who use drugs, and reduce the stigma associated with drug use so that problematic drug users are encouraged to seek treatment and other support.^{liii}

Recommendation 10:

Advocate for a moratorium on youth citations and instead create a robust volunteer/apprenticeship program as an alternative and create diagnostic community centers to provide supportive and restorative services to youth accused of committing crimes and needing outside home placements.

The City of Pittsburgh is uniquely situated, with its myriad of higher educational institutions, to implement best practices like Michigan State University's youth diversion program started by William S. Davidson II, PhD. In this model, undergraduate psychology students take a two-semester course that trains them in the program's theory and practice. Students then spend eight hours a week for 18 weeks mentoring young offenders and their families on how to communicate and negotiate effectively with each other. In addition, the psychology students connect the kids with positive, community-based activities that tap their interests, such as computer labs, machine shops, dance studios and tae kwon do centers.^{liv}

A 2017 study published in the *Journal of Pediatrics* found that “cumulative incarceration duration during adolescence and early adulthood is independently associated with worse physical and mental health later in adulthood.”^{iv} Anecdotally, several participants in the transition committee’s community listening sessions also shared that minor citations of youths and young adults create lifelong barriers to employment. It is critical that institutions like the criminal justice system known to have deeply seeded racial biases be prevented from determining lifelong outcomes for yet another generation. By maximizing the practitioner training models available for university students and ending youth citations, Pittsburgh has the opportunity to dismantle structural racism by helping young people create a future instead of repeating a past that has been lived too many times.

“There needs to more resources and programs for families who have children with emotional and life skills support and needs. So often these children are pushed to side and labeled without offering resources and programs that can help before reaching [a] certain point.”

Tierra R, Ideas Wall, 3/24/22

Recommendation 11:

Funds should be allocated to increase immigrants’ access to legal services and to ensure dedicated language access resources are provided for the Office of Community Health & Safety (OCHS) to use when interacting with the public in an individual’s native language.

Every person facing deportation should be entitled to legal counsel regardless of income, race, national origin, or history with the criminal legal system. The City of Pittsburgh should allocate funding for and collaborate with immigration legal-service providers, community leaders, and advocates to develop a universal representation program that would provide public defenders for all immigrants facing deportation. The City should explore partnerships with organizations and funders who can provide resources for this initiative, such as the Vera Institute for Justice’s SAFE Initiative, but long-term, sustainable funding needs to come from the government in the future.

"It's important in some public areas been more inclusive, especially with the language barrier[...] The Latino community is a minority which has grown year by year and you must take them into account not only in Beechview or Broadway area."

Diego, Ideas Wall, 2/17/22

"At the core of community policing are partnerships and problem solving, but those essential elements can be hindered if law enforcement is not able to communicate with the growing diverse population in this country. Recognizing the need to improve communication and interaction with limited English-proficient individuals is among the next steps in advancing

community policing. By developing and implementing a language-access plan, law enforcement agencies will be able to strengthen their police community relations, increase trust, and be better positioned to address public safety problems." – Carl Reed, Director, U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.^{lvi}

While the City of Pittsburgh's Bureau of Police has an active language access plan and 311 was also adopted in 2018, it is critical that access to these resources is expanded to include the growing alternative response arm of the City, the Office of Community Health and Safety. It is fundamental to building trust in the public health response to emergency requests that those interacting with community members can communicate accurately with individuals that they serve. The Vera Institute of Justice recommends that all departments involved in emergency response educate staff about language access, notify the public about language assistance services, and pool language resources in the provision of community services.^{lvii}

Build the Workforce for the Reimagined Public Safety System

Building a workforce for a reimagined Public Safety System is connected to the guiding principle recognizing a new definition of public safety that is understood to be a matter of public health and well-being for all Pittsburgh residents and visitors. Simply put, public safety and public health are socially and economically intertwined. While there is technically only a single recommendation feature under this theme, it is by far the longest and most multi-faceted recommendation. The Committee hopes this can serve as a starting place for the administration and DPS to truly transform how public safety is approached and achieved in Pittsburgh.

Building a stable and secure workforce for the reimagined public safety system will require altering the processes for selecting the Chief of PBP; creating broader criteria on leadership promotions; staffing review, recognizing the need for first responders to be provided with training that addresses the trauma associated with witnessing and intervening in violence incidents; and collaborating with county agencies.

In pursuit of these objectives and across all city operations, the Gainey Administration must work to dismantle structural racism and reverse policies that perpetuate social, economic, and health inequities.

Recommendation 12:

Develop a robust workforce development and recruitment strategy for the new vision for public safety. This new strategy should include:

- a) Creating a community review/interview process to select the next Chief of PBP. New leadership is needed to ensure the PBP Chief is committed to the new vision for public safety and being a leader in its implementation. This process should be implemented immediately.
- b) DPS should commission an independent entity to conduct a thorough staffing and culture study of the PBP to determine current operating assignments and what functions and duties could be performed by alternative responders.
- c) Adopting a community-based policing model and organizational philosophy. This model would be embedded and supported in the PBP culture in all phases and levels, hiring, ongoing training, staffing, supervision, and senior leadership. This model would seek to create more active and positive engagement with each Pittsburgh community by opening doors for increased communication by every officer and supervisor with community businesses and residents.
- d) Exploring Community Health Worker positions and ensuring alignment with Allegheny County Department of Human Services and Health Department efforts.
- e) Staffing community paramedicine units to ensure that chronic medical and SDOH issues are addressed, with emphasis on people who have high utilization patterns of public safety services to stabilize patients, particularly

people living with disabilities and aging residents, allowing them to remain in their homes and have dignity and proper supports within a day of receiving referrals.

f) Collaboration between DPS and AHN ROOTS for co-response, provide referrals for individuals experiencing homelessness, people who use drugs, and people in vulnerable situations.

g) Redesigning a more community-based recruitment and training process for first responders. All emergency response training procedures should be developed with community involvement. Stakeholder groups should include those with lived experience of the policy being addressed.

“Study, evaluation, and reform of the criminal justice system is the issue most critical to me. That refers to all aspects of the system, from policing, to prosecution, to the defense function, to prison conditions. There is an immense opportunity for positive change in this area that, if done right, will accomplish great strides in community health and safety.”

Rob P, Ideas Wall, 3/12/22

h) Launching of a city-county collaborative co-responder academy to bring on countywide crisis-response partners.

i) DPS should hire a consulting firm to analyze the efficiency and accuracy of the current DPS systems for collecting and reporting incident/crime data, and to develop and improve information-sharing systems for EMS, PBF, and PBP services to ensure an accurate and timely sharing of data with constituency and stakeholders to better ensure transparency of all Bureaus.

j) Investing in and expanding the capacity of community-based programs for returning citizens.

k) Providing mandatory, culturally competent mental health support for EMS, PBF, and PBP responders to address the trauma associated with witnessing and intervening in violent incidents, expand local participation in HEALPA, and increase efforts to ensure city agencies and contractors are trauma informed.

l) Campaigning to increase public awareness of the effects of trauma and the resources available to the community addressing mental health and substance abuse issues

Invest in Public Health Infrastructure to Address SDOH and promote Health Equity

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged all facets of public health and safety, from the way first responders engage with residents to the strain placed on health care institutions and correctional facilities. Mayor Gainey should deliver strong, trusted, equitable leadership and communications to the community regarding current and future health priorities.

The City should advocate for and support policies inclusive of mental health, behavioral health, and substance-use disorders. A wider use of trauma-informed care should be accomplished to address addiction, community violence, mental health, behavioral health, and deaths of despair and establish and promote universal language and definitions around critical health issues.

Coordinating the delivery of community information, resources, and services to inform residents on where to go for help is essential in investing in Pittsburgh's public-health infrastructure.

In pursuit of these objectives and across all city operations, the Gainey Administration must work to dismantle structural racism and reverse policies that perpetuate social, economic, and health inequities.

Recommendation 13:

Increase investment in OCHS to expand initiatives like the AHN ROOTS program and gradually integrate OCHS into PBP as part of a transformed approach to public health and safety fashion.

The establishment of the Office of Community Health and Safety (OCHS) under the direction of the Department of Public Safety and the Office of the Mayor in 2020 was deliberate and appropriate. In the wake of national protests over police brutality; there was a clear need for the development of alternative responses to community health and safety needs. As a possible fourth bureau, OCHS should be integrated into DPS in a way that is thoughtful and ensures that OCHS initiatives, culture, and ability to innovate are not negatively impacted. Over time, as the OCHS program is able to

deliver results and expand its efficacy, its funding should be increased to a level consistent with the level of community need.

“Expand community health workers role and presence in neighborhoods, have them well trained holistically, community health workers can bring resources to households and schools, can help organize self-help groups, groups can be helpful for public health issues, e.g., depression, community health workers can provide follow-up to health care system, e.g. medication compliance.”

Ted C., Community Listening Session, 2/28/22

Recommendation 14:

Allocate funds to develop and create public health and food justice initiatives.

Investments in food security and public health programs are investments in public health and racial equity. According to the Rand Corporation, “Being black in Pittsburgh [...] means being six times more likely than a white person to go to bed hungry.”^{lviii} Nutrition issues impact development, but even for well-nourished children the distance to available healthy foods is just one more factor detracting from time that can be spent with family members or engaging in after-school or sports programs.

“[Food justice] works to ensure universal access to nutritious, affordable, and culturally appropriate food for all, while advocating for the well-being and safety of those involved in the food-production process. The movement aims to address disparities in food access, particularly for communities of color and low-income communities, by examining the structural roots of our food system.”^{lix} The quality of nutrition available, especially to Black and Brown communities, is known as “food apartheid”^{lx} and directly impacts lifelong health outcomes for members of these communities. While the food justice movement works to empower communities to engage in activities like urban farming with an emphasis on workers’ rights, its only one piece of the public health solution missing in Pittsburgh’s Black and Brown communities.

“Cut the police budget [...] shift the balance to services which actually reduce crime, like rent and food assistance, social workers trained in mediation, and mental health experts.”

Taylor, Ideas Wall, 2/11/22

There remain substantial opportunities for the engagement in research-driven and practical efforts that both expose the long-term systemic nature of food insecurity in communities of color and how their prevalent character in the makeup of said communities will have a detrimental effect on generations to come. Both a comprehensive look at the history of food

security/insecurity, an analysis of data driven research on the topic and those efforts employed in like-communities across America, should provide the necessary insight to address the nutrition deficit. To note, the aforementioned detrimental effects include such cycles of chronic illness as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity and an oversaturation of high-caloric and nutritionally lacking food in schools, built environments and homes. As mentioned, food security is not simply providing food, it is providing nutritionally dense food that promotes both mental and physical health that is paramount to the safety and well-being of our children and families.

Additionally, addressing food insecurity and apartheid is not enough, far more work must be done in the area of public-health infrastructure. This includes everything from repairs to sidewalks to better public lighting, to tree planting and steps repairs. Underserved communities are not only underserved by the food options available, but also the basic amenities that make it safe to walk to the store. All of the transition committees received very strong feedback about the negative impact the public infrastructure has on their ability to engage in health-oriented activities.

Coordination with Existing Human Service and Public Health Ecosystem

A robust health communications plan should be developed and executed to communicate with and enlist support from community stakeholders, consistently, effectively, and transparently.

There is also a need to coordinate agencies and share data more effectively. The City must dedicate resources to improve intergovernmental cooperation, identify additional public and private funding for programs that address public health issues, and work with health-care agencies to ensure transparency in data sharing throughout the existing public health ecosystem of Pittsburgh and surrounding areas.

In addition, the Office of the Mayor has a responsibility to keep the public informed about the services provided to the city and community.

In pursuit of these objectives and across all city operations, the Gainey Administration must work to dismantle structural racism and reverse policies that perpetuate social, economic, and health inequities.

Recommendation 15:

Coordinate with providers in the existing public health ecosystem to create person-centered and cross-institutional service delivery.

These efforts should include conducting an in-house evaluation of the use of and efficacy of dashboards, data, and other resources, as well as the current 311 system. Once the evaluation is complete, the City should coordinate with the existing agencies and organizations for the delivery of community information, resources, and services to residents. These recommended collaborations should encourage the expansion of outreach by providing community access to available resources and programming offered by City departments, County-owned or County-funded providers, hospitals, healthcare providers, and health related community-based organizations, while limiting duplication of public-health services.

“No one is creating community clinics, there are fewer jobs for mental health providers now because no one is investing in mental health infrastructure. It's also too difficult for mental health providers to navigate the insurance landscape, they get sued/therapy isn't covered/etc.”

Nelson H., Community Listening Session, 2/28/22

Recommendation 16:

Launch of a campaign to increase public awareness of inpatient and outpatient treatment services available in the city for mental health and substance abuse disorders to teach citizens how to support people with mental and behavioral health issues and access alternatives for behavioral health crises.

The campaign should include pointing people to County resources that the City may not provide.

Recommendation 17:

Invest in Community Anchors and Navigation Hubs to Improve Community Access to Public Health and Human Services.

The CHSC recommends that the City of Pittsburgh work to ensure that all residents can easily access public health and human services. The City should work with partners (i.e., DHS, ACHD, AHN, UPMC, etc.) to ensure that residents have:

1. A wide, welcoming, and clear “front door” that helps residents locate and access services by providing information and “warm-handoff” referrals.
2. Multiple “community anchors” staffed by providers able to give immediate assistance as well as navigators able to connect residents to additional health and social services.
3. Resource Navigators and Navigation hub(s) to aid residents in accessing resources and improve coordination among service providers. These are lower-acuity cases that do not require crisis response and are largely related to “Social Determinants of Health.”
4. Physical hubs with co-located services for the co-responders and alternative responders to utilize when dealing with people in crisis. These are higher-acuity cases.
5. A “Digital Catalog” or comprehensive database of public health and human services.

To improve resident outcomes, the City of Pittsburgh needs to better coordinate with the existing human services and public health ecosystem and invest in public-health

infrastructure. The City cannot accomplish these recommendations alone, but can ensure that the City's strengths (i.e., communications capacity, constituent affairs, data collection, physical space, etc.) are being offered in these crucial partnerships.

In addition, these low-acuity community health and safety hubs should be tasked with identifying all services and programs available to support pregnant people and infants by connecting these services through resource mapping, and work with health-care systems and community-based organizations to ensure the provisions of quality, comprehensive medical care for all pregnant and postpartum individuals and their babies.

"Community Health Centers in every neighborhood. Gym, healthcare classes, pool (optional, but could teach kids to swim), nutrition classes, access to healthy foods,..."

**Katrina R., Community Listening Session,
2/28/22**

Recommendation 18:

Strengthen/continue collaboration with Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) and Pennsylvania Health Department to foster greater access to resources and social supports for residents, such as in-home services for older adults, food access, and safe, lead- and asbestos-free housing for all. The CHSC specifically recommends the continued collaboration with ACHD and the REACH Program.

It is important to establish and maintain honest and long-term relationships across jurisdictions. Pittsburgh and Allegheny County working in partnership on shared health objectives can lead to better outcomes by expanding the pool of available program resources and local champions, and by ensuring that available government services, whether city or county-funded, are more fully accessed by eligible residents.

“Related to addressing substance use and issues of over-policing, there is a major healthcare-to-incarceration pipeline that often goes unaddressed. In short, this is when people who are accessing healthcare services are directly intercepted by the police and instead are moved in the courts and/or carceral systems.”

Aaron A., Ideas Wall, 3/1/22

The ACHD has teamed up with local and national partners to address disparities in African American communities. The REACH program, a CDC-funded initiative, aims to achieve health equity and prevent chronic diseases in the East End (East Hills, Garfield, Homewood, Larimer, Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar, Wilkinsburg), Hill District, Mon Valley (Clairton, North Versailles, Duquesne, McKeesport, North Braddock, Rankin) and the Northside.^{lxi} The CHSC specifically recommends the continued collaboration with ACHD and the REACH Program.

Recommendation 19:

Diversion of people charged with low-level offenses away from the criminal justice system.

A diversion program is a planned intervention that works to avoid the harms created by adjudication and incarceration for people who pose little risk to public safety but who could instead benefit by counseling, education, job training, or other supports. Diversion cannot only keep people out of the criminal justice system and address overcrowding in jails and correctional facilities but can also help with rehabilitation or resolution of individual issues.

The CHSC recommends the Mayor continue and strengthen collaboration with County services, and invest and advocate for the diversion of people with low-level offenses away from the justice system. These individuals who may be dealing with addictions, homelessness, or mental health problems can be directed into programs that could help them get their lives on track. Such is the intent of the Law Enforcement Assistance Diversion (LEAD) program developed in Frederick, MD, where low-level offenders are taken out of the criminal justice system and put in touch with peer case management. This initiative was established through the Frederick County Health Department, Frederick Police Department, the State’s Attorney’s Office, the Office of the Public Defender, the County Division of Parole and Probation, and the City of Frederick and Office of the Mayor.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Committee Charge

The charge of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee is to consider the opportunities to develop actionable strategies to address environmental health services and sanitation, and the improvement and maintenance of Pittsburgh's physical infrastructure, with a special focus on environmental justice and to consider how to take best advantage of the 2021 Federal infrastructure funding. Further, this committee will make recommendations to advance sustainability and better position the City to live with water, as well as strategies for accessible mobility and transportation infrastructure.



Overall Context

Designing, developing, and delivering equitable distribution of resources to/for all city residents is in our collective best interest. To advance one usually results in the advancement of many. Every Pittsburgh community should be treated equally in terms of infrastructure investment to allow for a sense of pride in each region to increase. This is a moment in time where political courage, historic levels of federal infrastructure funding, and a knowledgeable, empowered workforce are the keys to the city's bright future. Achieving this trifecta will position Pittsburgh to be a *Clean, Connected, Coordinated, and Climate Resilient City for All*.

A *Clean City* is a healthy city. Focusing on providing clean air and water as well as ecological health, leads to healthy and active neighborhoods.

A *Connected City* has the things that people need within walking and biking distance, with active and vibrant streets, and with safe and pleasant ways to travel. A Connected City provides mobility for all ages and abilities and enables people to live car-free. Given the recent bridge collapse in Fern Hollow and from the stories we have heard of people's daily experiences with broken or missing sidewalks, we have an acute need at all scales—from rebuilding our arterial infrastructure to making a safe, continuous, and accessible pedestrian and bike network.

Planning is important. Planning and *doing and assessing* are essential for a thriving city. A *Coordinated City* aligns administrative structures, plans, programs, and partners to leverage resources and accomplish more for its citizens.

A *Climate Resilient City* is not a goal for Pittsburgh, it's a mandate. Climate change poses an existential threat to our city and our rhythms of life. Local government has a responsibility to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of its residents. Climate Action Planning reduces greenhouse gas emissions and deals with climate change adaptation while also improving the resilience, health, and overall quality of life for Pittsburgh residents.

A Clean City: Clean Air, Clean Water, and Ecological Health

Recommendation 1:

Address air quality problems

To address air quality problems that are outside the City's control, we need knowledge and leadership from the City. The administration should convene city, regional, and federal leaders as well as citizens on a regular basis to discuss progress on air-quality issues. The issue is so persistent that it warrants regular meetings that need rhythm and consistency. Understanding legacy pollution issues, mapping environmental equity and environmental justice issues, and expanding remediation of air requires leadership committed to improving public health. Understanding what the City can do about the pollution originating within its control is a guide to better understanding what can be done for the issues that are outside the City's control. Policies that are within the City's control should be adopted, such as

pushing for federal railroad diesel emission reduction funding, city fleet electrification, increasing filtration requirements for buildings, rapidly expanding safe pedestrian and bicycle networks, enhancing public transit, and making sure that publicly funded projects

"We need to address the issues surrounding air pollution, our air quality (air pollution). It's an environmental health issue that we must deal with. It's affecting families, and especially those with various health issues, asthma, COPD, cancer etc."

Terri S., Ideas Wall, 2/4/22

pursue high standards for indoor air quality. Align with partners that are advancing indoor and outdoor air quality where possible, including Port Authority's fleet electrification, Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority's (PWSA) basement backup remediation as it pertains to air quality, and nonprofit organizations that are providing direct services to those who need help with mold, asthma, and other air-quality concerns. Monitor air quality near railways and freight (truck) areas to understand air quality and other possible environmental risks.

The region has been making huge strides in air quality by reducing large particulate matter, but we have done a poor job at reducing small particulate matter. The southeast part of the city is highly polluted, and people can feel it in their lungs. Black men have an 8.3-year decrease in life expectancy due to that particulate matter and pediatric asthma cases in Pittsburgh schools exceed the national average.^{lxii} Efforts have been made, but there is so much still to do.

In particular, the City can do much more to mitigate pollution from mobile sources. Cars are a huge blind spot in terms of air and water quality and climate change. Improving public transit would be a huge boon for air quality, as current underinvestment in alternatives to driving are making driving more necessary. Sidewalks are broken or do not exist in places, there are numerous gaps in the bike network, many bus stops are without shade, and buses are not given priority to move through traffic. There needs to be safe accessibility for all. Prioritizing new policies, plans, and projects that address the root causes of environmental injustice in the City; and nature-based, well-designed, green infrastructure improvements in areas with elevated levels of environmental injustice should be a priority of the administration.

Recommendation 2:

Track and report progress and threats to drinking water quality

PWSA has made significant progress on lead line replacements and in limiting the base levels of lead in the water. Pennsylvania American Water is also replacing lead lines but less is known about its progress. The City should track the progress of *both* systems through its policies and plans, as water quality in our drinking water remains at risk. The administration should collect and coordinate data on lead line replacement in all neighborhoods and include it in city metrics, including neighborhood plans and equity indexes. Articulate the need to manage unconventional oil and gas extraction effectively. The potential for water contamination is expensive to treat and requires constant vigilance. Pay attention to road application of oil and gas brine, treatment of landfill effluent, and barge transport of oil and gas wastewater.

The impacts of lead on health and child development have been known for centuries. Still, families in our city are still exposed to lead hazards, often without them knowing if or when their lines have or will be replaced. A knowledgeable public can better advocate for their own well-being. This information should be public.

Clean and safe drinking water is not only related to lead lines. Most of our drinking water comes from nearby rivers and streams. Industrial pollution, even from sources outside of the City, make their way into our water systems. It is safer and less expensive to prevent contaminants rather than to remove the pollution at the treatment plant.

Recommendation 3:

Maintain ecological health

The administration should partner with the ACCD in the completion of an urban soil survey for Pittsburgh and mandate soil health corrective actions as part of demolition permitting. Establish an equitable, denser, distributed network of compost drop off/processing facilities, with composting being considered for more than yard waste, as commercial composting of household waste would also be valuable. This could also include an increase in the number of yard/household waste collection days. Avoid mowing on city properties where appropriate and encourage the establishment of native or ecologically valuable plantings, expand upon the vacant lot toolkit, and actively plant wildflower meadows on vacant land. Assign efforts/funding to control the invasive plant species and to identify and minimize the impact of invasive insects

“Please invest in maintenance of our existing ecosystem services (e.g. our trees in parks, medians, greenways, etc.). These provide innumerable benefits but are degrading faster than our bridges.”

Robin E., Ideas Wall, 2/12/22

and other plant and animal diseases. Publicize and promote both the City’s Approved Tree Species List (2020) and the Recommended Tree Species List (2007) as a way to inform and engage the public in how they can participate in improving the city by planting and maintaining trees that are especially beneficial in our region.

Care and maintenance of our urban ecosystems are essential for urban green spaces and populations to thrive. The City can care for its property and adopt stewardship practices that create places where people will be comfortable and enjoy visiting. Ecologically healthy soils and plant communities allow for a diversity of animals, including humans, to thrive.

A Clean City: Healthy and Active Neighborhoods

Recommendation 4:

Reduce litter and blight

The administration should enforce regulations for vacant properties and structures and city landowners who do not care for their properties. Engage communities to find places in the most need of cleanup and find ways to address why these areas are consistent issues. The City could collaborate with nonprofits and neighborhood organizations to educate and empower people to care for their own neighborhoods. Assess City services to find what programs are available to address illegal dumping issues, where there may be service or enforcement gaps, and create programs to fill the gaps. Maintain City-owned properties with a consistent and well-understood maintenance program that addresses blighted landscapes and litter as well as unsafe structures.

Litter and blighted buildings and properties are a concern. Blight resulting from disinvestment leads to disenfranchisement. The City regulates the care of abandoned or nuisance properties to eliminate unsafe conditions. The City departments can work with communities to make sure that litter becomes less of a public nuisance and to eliminate unsanitary conditions.

“Vacant buildings promote shame, disengagement and crime opportunities. When does all of Homewood and East Hills get a chance?”

Jacqueline J., Ideas Wall, 3/14/22

Despite municipal trash collection, litter is rampant on vacant lots, hillsides, and in some neighborhoods and commercial districts. More resources should be directed to reducing litter in city neighborhoods. For example, this might include workers to help remove trash, more publicly available trash cans, anti-litter PSA campaigns, and providing garbage cans with lids for residences to reduce trash transfer to the streets during regular trash collection. Commercial entities’ trash management regulatory enforcement must also be a priority.

Recommendation 5:

Rejuvenate parks and active spaces

The City should establish a short-term and long-term plan for rejuvenating community and recreation centers, and the streets and paths that connect to them, to make sure that every community in Pittsburgh has access to places where they can lead a healthy lifestyle. The administration should commit to transparency in allocating and implementing the Parks Tax across neighborhoods and facilities in an equitable manner. The administration should commit to a master plan for an equitable distribution of facilities and establish the uses and amenities that can be expected in neighborhoods. Coordinate programming with nonprofit partners and make our centers a point of distinction for the city.

“The sidewalks, paths and trails throughout Highland Park are a mess. This is a RAD park that is used by a diverse set of people from throughout the area, and as such, should be prioritized for upkeep. We just passed a dedicated tax for parks, yet we have yet to see any investments in fixing the park's existing infrastructure.”

Stephanie W., Ideas Wall 3/11/22

The City has a legacy of robust community/recreation centers that have been important neighborhood anchors and access to equipment, education, and programs that promote health and wellness. The centers are not equally distributed across the city, may not have been updated in years, or may have inadequate programming.

Community/recreation centers are important to serve adjacent parks and can be affiliated with smaller neighborhood parks. Finally, Pittsburgh's largest “regional” parks do not have consistency in their staffed facilities and often have limited services for the communities they serve.

The City of Pittsburgh is fortunate to have many parks and open areas that cover a sizable portion of our city. Concerns that should be addressed are an unequal distribution of access to smaller parks, a disconnect between the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and Department of Public Works in terms of how these spaces are managed, and a general lack of consensus on what parks are for.

Recommendation 6:

Minimize resident exposure to unhealthy places

The administration should pursue funding to assist in creating lead-safe rental homes, childcare, public spaces, vacant lots, and stipulate the use of best management practices (BMP) in demolition sites. Educate homeowners, landlords, and renters on existing lead and hazardous material ordinances through community outreach and connect to job training programs to help meet demand. Establish City policy to minimize or eliminate hazardous materials in City projects and practices where possible. Develop a sewer back up check valve matching-fund program. Adopt best practices such as avoiding “red list” building materials in City projects or when attached to funding. Implement the Dark Sky ordinance so that momentum will not be lost.

In the course of a day, we are exposed to many hazardous materials and conditions and the City can help minimize resident exposure with regulations and through its own practices.

Recommendation 7:

Support and expand the healthy food infrastructure

Assess areas of the city for food scarcity and need. Inventory the services that may already be available. Support funding of projects that promote commercial access to food sources, including URA funding for corner stores, co-op grocery stores, or commercial markets that are committed to healthy food inventories. Partner with nonprofits and community groups to establish community gardens, farmers' markets, and food distribution sites on public land and in public facilities.

The City plays an important role in ensuring that all Pittsburghers have access to healthy foods. While many needs can be addressed with supermarkets, stores, and restaurants, the City can augment access with community garden programs, farmers markets, and community centers that distribute food to those in need. In addition, the houseless population has grown in recent years and food access is an important part to helping them with health and stability. The City can help ensure that all neighborhoods have access to healthy food sources, including commercial sources, nonprofit sources, and self-sufficiency through gardens.

A Connected City

In many places, Pittsburgh’s population density allows for people to walk, bike, and take public transit. However, in some parts of the city there is less density, often because of decades of disinvestment, and infrastructure and development need to be complementary solutions. We need equitable development strategies that ensure people have desirable destinations as well as the sidewalks, bus stops, streets, and vehicles they need to get there. This is the work of pedestrianizing Pittsburgh to create healthier neighborhoods for residents, improve our daily quality of life, and be an attraction for visitors. The future of cities is walkable, and Pittsburgh has an opportunity to lead that future.

Recommendation 8:

Commit to equitable transit-oriented development

The administration should regulate and incentivize equitable transit-oriented development (ETOD) through streamlined zoning and other incentives or programs. Direct public investment to prevent displacement and to build affordable housing within close proximity to high-frequency transit routes. Adopt a goal such as “[A 15 Minute City](#)”^{lxiii} or another easy-to-understand framework to communicate the Mayoral commitment to development and infrastructure that benefits all. Commit to a Walking/Transit/Biking First Approach to Mobility that includes a Pittsburgh Transit Plan, similar to the Philadelphia Transit Plan.^{lxiv} The scope and purpose of this plan should consider the City’s Bike (+) Master Plan,^{lxv} the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan, and City Steps Plan around completing transportation networks and improving each mode’s capabilities. It should similarly incorporate the safety goals of eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries, along with state authorized, automated traffic enforcement that is implemented equitably both in terms of placement and fines.

“There’s really poor transportation education here. If people understood the public transit system because they were educated on it, they’d use it more and see it as such a wonderful tool for addressing climate change.”

**Jalia F., Community Listening Session,
3/2/22**

A dense and walkable city is a vibrant city and Pittsburgh has unique tools to ensure that new development is equitable for all, and that people have mobility choices. Transit-oriented development, which will maximize the amount of residential, business, and leisure space, is essential to having a walkable connected city. To ensure equitable investment in benefit across the city, it will be essential to reinvest in business districts that may have struggled or been previously disinvested. Neighborhood plans and programs like the URA's Avenues of Hope connect community desires with businesses and investments, but the work needs to be expanded to serve all corners of the city. Too few of Pittsburgh's communities have thriving, local business districts and places where residents can find healthy food, can shop, can access institutions and services, and can find opportunities for work. We need to work together to connect physically and programmatically across historic neighborhood boundaries to achieve our desired future.

Recommendation 9:

Prioritize pedestrian dignity

The administration should implement the studies that have been previously completed, including the 2021 Pedestrian Safety Action Plan and neighborhood plans like Homewood's Mobility Plan. Formally adopt [Vision Zero](#)^{lxvi} as an official City policy and institute a [Safe System Approach](#)^{lxvii} to planning, design, and engineering streets to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries in the City of Pittsburgh by 2035.

"Too many of our sidewalks are cracked, nonexistent, or covered in snow and ice, including city-owned sidewalks. Their accessibility and maintenance should be a top priority."

Emily P, Ideas Wall, 2/9/22

Prioritize the replacement and maintenance of city-owned sidewalks and stairs, including lighting, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) upgrades, and seasonal maintenance like snow removal. Coordinate with other public agencies and owners. Have a goal of closing 90 percent of gaps in the sidewalk network over the next eight years. Connect more neighborhoods to the

Martin Luther King Jr. East Busway and other high-frequency Port Authority routes via new stairs, sidewalks, and bus stop enclosures.

Equitably enforce the ADA and City Sidewalk Maintenance Standards, with a backstop program for low-income property owners for whom sidewalk repair presents a

hardship. Create a Sidewalk Fund with grants or loans for sidewalk repair around transit stops and be used to complete the infrastructure needed for safe and accessible passage to critical amenities and services.

Establish a Sidewalk Program at the DOMI with a dedicated leader to manage a volunteer-run City sidewalk conditions audit program. The prioritization of sidewalk repairs and replacements should be coordinated with the Port Authority, other public agencies, and private owners. It should also follow up on existing work and recommendations from the Complete Streets committee.

Encourage creative and active uses of sidewalks in business districts that make space for activities and mobility, but also discourage sidewalks from being used for bicycling or scootering in business districts (per Pennsylvania state law). This may require a separate, raised facility much like a cycle track installed in the business district at sidewalk level.

Address the accessibility barriers of stores, restaurants, and businesses in neighborhood business districts, Work with the PLI to require basic access to be prioritized when businesses renovate and create a backstop funding program for improvements to prevent burdens on businesses that cannot afford improvements.

Review and implement the City's Pedestrian Safety Action Plan.

Sidewalks are essential for people to move around their neighborhoods and the city, but both publicly owned and privately owned sidewalks are in disrepair. The problem is especially dire in some neighborhoods and communities.

Pittsburgh needs to focus on pedestrian dignity, or the pride people gain in walking among their communities without the need to own a car. Many people across Pittsburgh live without a car but must sacrifice their dignity to car-centric travel. This includes poorly maintained sidewalks, drivers speeding, driving through crosswalks, and disobeying traffic laws, no access to sidewalks, land use that prioritizes cars, no access to bus lines, an incomplete bike network, and little pedestrian-centric spaces. Pittsburgh should reframe the urban plan with people (not cars) first. Pedestrian infrastructure needs to include its City steps that increase connectivity and mobility but are unsafe and become broken links in the pedestrian system. Older and disabled pedestrians need access to three critical elements of city streets: (1) curb ramps (snow removal must prioritize clearing); (2) sidewalks; and (3) access to the curb.

Recommendation 10:

Expand bicycling, mobility, and greenspace networks

The administration should fully implement the City's Bike(+) Plan,^{lxviii} which is in the second year of a ten-year plan. Formally adopt Vision Zero as a policy with a focus on Safe System Approach to engineering. Rapidly expand bike share in the City of Pittsburgh so that every Pittsburgher is within walking distance of a station that features standard bikes and electric assist bikes. Adaptively regulate micromobility systems as technologies will continue to develop. Establish consistent DOMI staffing, periodic review and transparent data collection, and regular opportunities for community input. Establish green-space mobility networks with pedestrian and bicycle networks through public parks and open spaces. More than just park trails, these can become legitimate ways to travel between places in all seasons and at times of day with lighting, safety patrols, maps, and signage, etc. Develop and implement comprehensive maintenance plans for our mobility network that includes regular maintenance (snow removal, mowing, tree care, trash collection) and long-term capital project planning (riverbank stabilization, trail repaving). Improve paved trails and bike trails in terms of surface quality and upgrade to respond to their various uses. Light trails; maintain them free of snow, leaves and ice; add connectivity; widen them to allow for more people to safely use them; and separate bikes from pedestrians whenever possible. Work with the disability community to ensure maximum accessibility networks, and to ensure that bike lanes and disability needs are coordinated. Invest in bikeway, sidewalk, and trail maintenance equipment like sweepers, small snow removal equipment, and permeable pavement vacuums, and train DPW staff on how to use them and plan for integrating them into their maintenance tasks. Keep cars from parking in bike lanes and invest in better protection for bike lanes. Paint and flex posts are not enough. Re-establish the City of Pittsburgh Complete Streets Committee.

In recent years, many parts of the City have had improvements that enable safer cycling and for new types of mobility technologies. These new technologies (scooters, e-bikes, autonomous vehicles, Personal Delivery Devices, etc.), as well as the infrastructure improvements that support them, require more effective regulation, oversight, and accountability with increased transparency regarding decision making and community involvement. Complete networks of bikeways must connect throughout the City of Pittsburgh to enhance the safety and appeal of these modes of transportation.

"I've lived in other large cities and Pittsburgh is one of the most unsafe places for walking and biking that I've lived in due to its streets that feel like highways but go through heavily populated areas (like Baum Blvd). Pittsburgh should be at the helm of pedestrian-oriented roads, and would reap the benefits (safety, less pollution, healthier citizens, enjoyment of the city)."

Christina W., Ideas Wall, 3/14/22

City streets can be crowded places, but care must be taken to make neighborhoods more friendly to bicycling and other forms of micromobility, and to get people more comfortable with the idea of using public transit. Streets should be designed for people, not just cars. While the City has recently begun this effort, there are approximately 1,300 miles of city streets, and much more must be done to build out the networks needed to make the

decision to take a bike or micromobility device easier. Primarily this can be done with streetscape interventions that use a Safe System Approach that slow down cars and carves out space for bikes and pedestrians so that it is safe, convenient, and easy to choose these modes of transportation. The City's Bike(+) Plan^{lxix} creates a detailed roadmap for Pittsburgh to pursue and complete within eight years. Other policy changes, such as rezoning to allow for more types of uses in neighborhoods, encouraging more density, the reduction of minimum car parking requirements, and even imposing parking maximums, would also greatly enhance bicycling and micromobility in the City of Pittsburgh. The bike share system that exists in Pittsburgh should also be rapidly expanded to 3,000 bikes (50% regular, 50% electric assist) to provide this affordable mobility option to as many Pittsburgh residents as possible.

Green space networks made of parks, greenways, trails, and neighborways can be important connections among neighborhoods and car-free ways to travel among major destinations. The City should invest in connecting green space throughout the city, not just the large parks. Expand and improve the trail system, welcoming signage, and provide maintenance. Further investment in the riverfront trail system would be a major boon for the City, but also connect Pittsburgh to a growing regional trail network in which Pittsburgh is the hub. Pittsburgh is fortunate to have three rivers, and it would only be a benefit (in terms of the health of our residents, and the economy) to think about our riverfronts as a riverfront mobility trail 24/7, 365 days a year with many more assets and destinations. The work being done on the US Army Corps of Engineers shoreline is an example of current good practice in this arena. Enhanced connections to the riverfront from neighborhoods will ensure that these assets are accessible to everyone.

Recommendation 11:

Forge a stronger collaborative relationship with the Port Authority for improved public transit

The administration should prioritize transit street improvements, weighing factors including transit ridership, the demographic served by bus lines in the corridor, and the level of congestion along the corridor to ensure that transportation improvements are allocated equitably and effectively, Coordinate with the Port Authority, PennDOT, and other agencies on public right-of-way planning. Renew and relocate bus shelters to give communities ample shelter and access to public transit. Coordinate shelters with sidewalk and intersection improvements. Pilot a free bus pass program that provides free bus passes to city employees and residents in certain communities (or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients). Incorporate it as zoning incentives to offset parking requirements.

Many people rely on public transportation for their livelihoods. Although the City does not control the system, through a collaborative relationship with the Port Authority, it can make its use easier and more attractive to encourage ridership. In many places, the buses are too “rare” and unreliable to be taken seriously as a car alternative or there may not be ample and dignified places to wait for transit. The City does not control the transit system, but it does control the public right-of-way where people travel and can make improvements that make public transit an appealing option for everyone. It is important in these public areas to be more inclusive, especially with the language barrier, for public transportation. There are communities that have grown year by year and must be considered in terms of proper language signage and ensuring continuous use in areas where language barriers may exist.

The absence of late-night transportation is a significant problem, particularly for workers on the late shift. People with disabilities have been calling for late-night transportation options because many job opportunities are for later hours. At the very least, the City should work with the Port Authority and other providers of transit as a service to construct late-night service for workers.

Public transportation in Pittsburgh is used by a broad range of people, some by choice and some by necessity. Twenty percent of the population uses public transit, and it is as high as 50 percent in users who go downtown. The City can make that more appealing. Dedicated bus/rail lanes would give more incentive to take public transit with the goal to take less time to get somewhere than if you were to drive. With infrastructure

improvements, transit can be faster, cheaper, and less stressful than driving your own car and not just seen as something for people who have no other choice.

Recommendation 12:

Expand and establish virtual networks: broadband, internet, and data

The administration should improve City facilities to establish a network of internet hotspots, particularly in areas with poor internet access, which would be a small step to diminishing digital divides. This would require city property managers and the department handling Information Technology to work together and purchase bandwidth and modems. This should be started as soon as possible and sustained for the foreseeable future. Provide wireless connectivity in public areas or neighborhoods.

We often take internet connectivity for granted, but some parts of the City have better access to faster connections. In addition, not everyone has access in their homes. Closing the digital divide is essential to finding a job, starting a business, or, we learned during COVID, getting an education.

Recommendation 13:

Move people and resources effectively through traffic calming and control, bridge and major infrastructure repair, and improved rail and freight connections

The administration should adaptively manage traffic with more widespread technology, such as automated enforcement. Verify that current technologies are working and, if so, expand their use. Install more speed humps and other proven traffic-calming features to slow cars to speeds that will reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities. Consider periodic or long-term pedestrian-only corridors in neighborhood commercial districts like Walnut St in Shadyside, Market Square downtown, Forbes Avenue in Oakland, and parts of Penn Ave in the Strip District. Reconsider parking requirements to ensure we are putting the right amount of parking in the right places. Price parking on-street and in City-owned garages to discourage individual car trips and encourage using other modes. Price parking according to demand.

Direct Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding to repair “poor” rated bridges and have a consistent City process to deal with their replacement. Almost all city-owned bridges have long held an official rating of “poor” condition. Leverage infrastructure projects to solve multiple issues in addition to

“Driving feels treacherous. volume of traffic, speed of traffic, design of streets. Planners don’t understand the impact bike lanes have. [I have a] fear of hitting a cyclist.”

Patricia S., Community Listening Session, 3/2/22

“fixing a bridge,” such as ecological restoration, pedestrian, and bicyclist safety, and inspiring (or at least context-appropriate design). Work across departments to create larger visions that are more likely to be funded than “patch and stitch” repairs and maintenance. Institute transparent processes that engage communities in the short-term and long-term decisions related to infrastructure. Ensure that Minority, Women, and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (MWDDBE) requirements are followed.

Improve connections between existing transit lines in Downtown connecting people to public transportation from Allegheny and surrounding counties, Greyhound, and Amtrak. The area from the Convention Center to the Amtrak station can even include pedestrians, bikes, and even kayaks in a welcoming place for residents and visitors. Encourage Amtrak to invest in its downtown Amtrak Station to make a more friendly place for its expanded service. Protect resident interests with regard to railroad crossings to establish access to neighborhood amenities and prevent rail impacts to greenspaces and fix hazardous conditions in densely occupied places. Work with the railroads to create safe at-grade crossings in order to provide better connectivity for people walking and biking. Better coordinate with the county to educate and inform the community on Emergency Response Plans and develop a mechanism and platform for continuous adaptation and education.

Much more moves through the city than pedestrians, bikes, and cars. The City manages traffic control systems, bridges, and major structures, and negotiates with other systems such as railways and freight.

A Coordinated City

Infrastructure and environmental issues take time to identify, plan for, construct, and maintain and typically outlast multiple mayoral administrations. Infrastructure can easily be dropped in political cycles, yet it remains essential to the daily experience of every resident, business owner, and visitor.

Recommendation 14:

Institute comprehensive planning and zoning

The administration should rewrite the Zoning Code. As a reciprocal document to a comprehensive plan, it will need to be overhauled to accommodate the new patterns and to prevent a patch-and-stitch approach to each novel problem. Organize a comprehensive planning process that is thorough, data-informed, and able to serve as an umbrella document for neighborhood plans, open space plans, etc. Consider compensation for community experts who have an active role in infrastructure planning. It is critical that people who represent certain community needs or perspectives, such as those with disabilities, be included in the planning and design of infrastructure. Partner with foundations and nonprofits to hold Planning Training Sessions for citizens who want to better understand the processes and to encourage informed participation in future planning processes. Continue the conversation on the following concerns: Eliminating mandatory minimum parking requirements in transit-rich areas, increased density for walkability, city-wide inclusionary housing, allowable accessory dwelling units, and smaller issues such as loosening commercial restrictions to allow for corner stores or building performance requirements. Inventory past plans to find gaps and create a public clearinghouse that clearly communicates how each plan was created and is currently being used.

“Zoning is a barrier, as are regulations. Everything is skewed to single family and doubles/triples. Not affordable for people in our community. Favoring Inclusionary Zoning. In Hill District zoning could increase the ability to develop more affordable housing. We need to find a way for low-income families to own homes in the community.”

Martin R., Community Listening Session, 2/21/22

Local government has a responsibility to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of its residents. Climate Action Planning reduces greenhouse gas emissions and deals with climate change adaptation while also improving the resilience, health, and

overall quality of life for Pittsburgh residents.

Every municipality in Pennsylvania, except for Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, is required to do a state-mandated Comprehensive Plan that provides strategy and direction for 10 years. Pittsburgh can invent its own Comprehensive Plan process, but the cost and effort for a city the size of Pittsburgh is substantial. Each administration has contributed some part or component to the planning process, but none have been able to truly undertake an all-inclusive process and today we do not have a comprehensive plan. Instead, we have a fragmented series of documents without an overall organization. This series includes historical, outdated components that need renewal before other components can effectively begin.

Despite the lack of a comprehensive plan, the plans that have been completed have informed city action. The plans that the Gainey administration has inherited were put together through the work of many stakeholders and remain valued. The administration should strive for continuity while redirecting or reinventing. Insufficient or apparent lack of investment in previous plans can lead communities toward 'planning fatigue' and loss of trust that anything will result from their participation. Clear communication is always important. Many people do not know the key role that each type of plan plays (such as a neighborhood plan, the comprehensive plan, or the climate action plan) and as a result, we reinvent the wheel.

Recommendation 15:

Improve agency/stakeholder coordination through Departmental and Agency Alignment

Departmental Alignment: Align Mobility & Infrastructure, City Planning, Public Works, and Permits, Licenses and Inspections to maximize effectiveness for residents

To better align service delivery, priorities, and workforce; and to maximize funding opportunities, the administration should evaluate the structure and funding of infrastructure departments (DOMI, DPW, Parks & Recreation, City Planning).

"[There is a] Breakdown in communication in different entities that work on water infrastructure. From community engagement to upkeep of rain gardens and other infrastructure projects, there is overlap and are gaps in coverage. PWSA, DPW, DCP...all need to be on the same page."

**Anna C., Community Listening
Session 3/2/22**

The administration should be prepared for and write for funding for more sophisticated infrastructure projects that can address integrated mobility, water, ecology, and energy solutions. Create a leadership role, such as an Office of Watershed Management or redirect the Department of Mobility and Infrastructure to manage interdepartmental projects, with accountability to the Mayor's Office. Establish community-developed criteria to guide departments in the external funding and grants that it requests to ensure that community voices are heard, their input respected, and their requests included in the

decision-making process. Use a sustainability framework like [Envision^{lxx}](#) to guide infrastructure decisions and to make decision-making criteria transparent. Offer competitive wages and fully staff DOMI, DPW, and DCP to address present and future project planning and delivery and to capture larger tranches of federal funding that may be missed if we are understaffed. Support the City's departments with technology and data to enable data informed decision making and to provide better information for public processes. Software and processes, such as visualization simulation and powerful GIS tools, should be readily available for use in project design and planning throughout the city, not just reserved for major projects. Create a leadership position solely dedicated to mobility justice and transportation access, including bicycle and pedestrian issues. This position should ensure coordination/collaboration on equitable transportation and disability-related efforts across all departments and agencies.

To collaborate at the highest level of performance, each department has specific strategic needs.

- **Mobility & Infrastructure:**

Identify a set of mobility goals that are clear and measurable and use existing plans where possible. Convene a working group to develop benchmarks and goals, and to produce a quarterly or semi-annual progress report. Coordinate DOMI projects with law, procurement, utilities and other relevant departments.

- **City Planning:**

Designate a position to advocate for health-related concerns across all planning, projects, and policies. Staff the department with expertise in housing, economics, open space and parks, and other topics that are critical to the city.

Sustainability and equity should be an umbrella over all. Neighborhood planners should be assigned smaller areas.

- **Public Works:**

Expand the Forestry Department and ensure it has the right tools and resources to address deferred maintenance of the urban tree canopy. Enable the Environmental Services Department to be proactive and not just reactionary.

- **Permits, Licenses, & Inspections:**

PLI needs to be improved and expanded to serve large and small projects in a timely manner. Decrease permit review times by 50 percent or more with additional desk staff and field inspectors. Create a Public Realm Ombudsman & Technical Assistance for homeowners and small developers. Evaluate how the Condemned Property office in PLI can better serve the community.

Coordination runs deeper than plans. While funding and adequate staffing levels are critical, silos and a lack of communication create a detrimental impact on providing and maintaining better infrastructure. Within the City agencies and authorities, there needs to be strong collaboration, leadership in coordination, and paths to accountability. This is especially important with infrastructure, where large investments are being made in projects and places that can show a united front with lofty ideas and the ability to accomplish them. Even the simple things, like coordinating road repair or getting building permits and inspections, would benefit from coordination to close the gaps and reach the goals outlined in our plans.

The coordination, exchange of data and information, and ongoing alignment with external stakeholders are essential to mayoral effectiveness. The City has made great strides in data-informed decisions, but there is still room for improvement. Change happens fast and the City must always have the data and information it needs to negotiate or leverage its position, whether on issues like affordable housing, economic investment in our neighborhoods, ecological performance, or stormwater management.

Service delivery, priorities, and workforce are currently out of alignment; and to maximize funding opportunities, the structure and funding of infrastructure departments (DOMI, DPW, DPR, DCP) must be evaluated.

Agency Alignment: align with PWSA, Allegheny County Health Department and Port Authority for increased accountability, effectiveness, and transparency.

The administration should improve the partnership with the Port Authority and increase accountability of public transit and enforcement of idling rules. Hold the County Health Department accountable for enforcing air quality regulations to protect resident health. Jointly identify barriers to cleaner air and increased tree canopy speaks by writing for grants on health infrastructure and environmental justice in disadvantaged communities. The Mayor should express a commitment to keep PWSA accountable to the 2026 lead-line replacement goal. Reach out to disadvantaged communities, small businesses, and churches that need assistance with rates. Continue to improve communication between authorities/boards and the public. Engage the community frequently.

The City does not control important infrastructure systems, including mobility, water, sewer, air quality and health regulations, and energy. City departments need to be proactive in establishing relationships and advocating on behalf of city residents to make sure that people have equitable access to these systems and services.

Recommendation 16:

Develop a public outreach/education campaign

The administration should organize a recurring Citizen's Academy to better educate the public on city responsibilities and departments. Work with the council to make sure that all districts are represented. Increase communication and launch an Infrastructure is Public Health campaign that educates the citizens on topics such as the use of 311, green infrastructure, permitting process, green infrastructure jobs, sanitation, and mobility options. Host or recruit workers for green Infrastructure jobs in areas like forestry, installing solar panels, etc. Outreach to area schools and colleges to expand the workforce. Create a campaign to improve people's perception of bicycles and other forms of public and private micromobility. Create a Green Home Education/Resources/Information to help households find sustainable options through the city or to find out more about the City's sustainability and resilience. Earn the trust of the community through an effectively run 311 line.

An informed city is an empowered city and infrastructure improvements in Pittsburgh must start with helping our residents understand our individual and shared infrastructure maintenance responsibilities and resources.

A Climate Resilient City

PGH was one of the first cities to develop a Climate Action Plan and has been on the world's stage for its progressive environmental commitments. To serve its citizens and the planet, the City needs to reify its commitment to be a Climate Resilient City.

The urban forest is an important asset to Pittsburgh's climate resiliency, yet the rate of loss of canopy continues to outpace replacement. The City's own Climate Action Plan states unequivocally, "HALT the loss of forest canopy to developers" and the City must hold to this, including its street trees. Trees and gardens help with stormwater, but also heat (which affects birth rates, asthma, heart attacks), food security, and community cohesion as they work together in gardens and meet each other in public spaces. Loss of large canopy trees affects all of us and each neighborhood should be involved in and part of the dialogue regarding removal and replacement. Removals could be a catalyst for community conversations around why trees are important and the kind of treescapes we want in our neighborhood landscapes for functional, aesthetic, and health reasons.

Losing energy to upward light pollution equates to more energy use and carbon dioxide pollution as well as less cost-effective lighting solutions. Dark Sky Ordinances will save millions of dollars, making the city friendlier for people, plants, and animals and have systemically positive outcomes, and if combined with a robust reforestation initiative that improves air and water, Pittsburgh could be a leader for other cities to follow.

Pittsburgh's parks, open spaces, and streetscapes are home to the majority of the urban forest and are sometimes working landscapes with green stormwater infrastructure. They provide public health infrastructure that is essential to human and ecological vitality. They are active elements of infrastructure and need to be managed proactively to experience full benefits.

Recommendation 17:

Align and accelerate climate action plan implementation

Accelerate the goals and strategies in the [Pittsburgh Climate Action Plan 3.0](#) and align other plans and frameworks to keep continuity. Staff and empower the Sustainability Department with a Chief or other high-level position.

The action plan set into effect by the previous administration needs to be followed with enhanced transparency and accountability. What was once considered to be proactive can quickly become reactive at current rates of change. Pittsburgh needs to continue to be a world leader while being prepared for the needs that will confront our neighborhoods.

“A climate crisis is upon us and needs to be priority and included in all city discussions, considerations, and decisions.”

Susan S., Community Listening Session, 3/2/22

The structure of the plan supports the recommendations of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee, including Energy Generation & Distribution, Buildings & End Use Efficiency, Transportation & Land Use, Waste & Resource Recovery, Food & Agriculture, and Urban Ecosystems. Similar to these recommendations, the Pittsburgh Climate Action Plan has identified significant overlap in each area and provides opportunities for greater impact through coordination across sectors. Instead of recreating this plan, our committee's recommendation is to look at our recommendations through this lens to gauge progress toward our Climate Action Goals.

Recommendation 18:

Public health infrastructure: improve stewardship of the urban forest

The administration should implement the [Equitable Street Tree Investment Strategy^{lxxi}](#) that holistically looks at trees and incorporates the policies set out in other documents, including the Urban Forest Masterplan and Equity Indicator Studies. In furtherance of the 100,000 new-tree goal, right-size (workforce, equipment, and funding) the Forestry Department to collaborate with non-profit partners to appropriately maintain trees, monitor canopy health, and update/educate the community. Study where trees are planted and enact a tree ordinance, specifying planting requirements, particularly in parking lots. Create guidance and requirements for property owners that would result in an enhanced urban tree canopy.

Improve transparency around tree planting and removals. Neighbors or arborists (depending on circumstance) should be notified in advance of the decision, and it should not be treated as an individual and adjacent issue only. Expand the areas of designated greenways to create more protected urban forest. Hold the utility companies accountable, as those served by right of ways should have some right to express how things are managed in the right of way. Improve management of vegetation and forest

in utility rights of way to enhance canopy and minimize opportunities for establishment of invasive species.

Pittsburgh's parks, open spaces, and streetscapes are home to the urban forest and are working landscapes with green stormwater infrastructure. More importantly, they should be considered public-health infrastructure that is essential to human and ecological vitality. They are active elements of infrastructure and need to be managed proactively to experience full benefits.

Recommendation 19:

Public health infrastructure: invest in green stormwater infrastructure

Stormwater is under the Mayor's control but is routed to the combined sewer systems. Staff is not empowered to take initiative on stormwater, and zoning codes do not allow things to function well. Stormwater projects have mainly been initiated at a local, community level, but to achieve greater success, projects need to be integrated into a systems approach with consistent oversight and stewardship. Watershed, stormwater, potable water supply, and sanitary sewer improvements should be considered as community revitalization and integrated with other projects for maximum benefit. The administration should leverage investment in stormwater infrastructure to have multiple benefits, including, i.e., slope stabilization, mobility trails, ecological restorations, economic return with jobs and investment, and social spaces. Institute a [Joint Benefits Authority](#)^{lxvii} as a tool that allows multiple city agencies to work together, in collaboration with local communities, to finance and deliver transformative and resilient infrastructure.

"[We need] Full, formal adoption and recognition that future climate scenarios will happen."

Alyson F., Community Listening Session, 2/3/22

Monitor flooding and landslide problems and make it easy for affected communities to navigate the different assistance offered by the City and PWSA. Create a one-stop shop for stormwater issues and designate someone in the City to develop and communicate the City's policy on the implementation of Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI). This is

especially important as PWSA is focused on flooding and issues other than GSI solutions. Ensure that the City's GSI staffing is adequate well trained. Designate someone within DPW to manage open channel streams as park resources. Collaborate with PennDOT and other agencies to make substantial and long overdue investments

in City-owned property and infrastructure. Align City regulations for easy wins, such as changes to the City's Adopt-a-Lot program, to include green stormwater infrastructure as an acceptable use alongside urban agriculture or expediting the process of getting permission for small curb-cuts to bring stormwater into rain gardens in vacant lots. Work toward more difficult regulatory changes, such as a policy for private connections to public green stormwater infrastructure

GSI, when designed correctly, can also serve as Public Health Infrastructure. GSI includes the management of rainwater and diversion of water from our combined sanitary sewer system. It requires substantial management and assessment to ensure it does not degrade public health. Research has shown that green infrastructure can create opportunities to engage with the landscape, potentially easing hospitalization costs, helping minimize health issues like diabetes and heart issues, and providing residents with more food options.

Effective GSI can also protect private property where people are suffering from flooded basements and collapsing retaining walls, if efforts are made to avoid redirecting runoff to basement seepage. Green spaces and parks are essential to critical infrastructure services like stormwater management, improving air quality, reducing extreme heat conditions, and meeting public health needs. Together with PWSA and Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN), the City controls much of the stormwater management system and, considering the increasing intensity of storms due to climate change, the City and its partners need to coordinate systems to meet the new level of service.

Recommendation 20:

Reduce energy consumption and prepare for energy shift goals from fossil fuels to electricity

The administration should adopt the recommendations of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) 3.0, including the transportation mode shift goals, net zero readiness of publicly owned buildings, and anticipation of energy transition to electricity over fossil fuels. Perform a city-wide study to identify where solar farms of 2 megawatts or greater can be hosted on public property and develop a set of guidelines and a process to enable projects to take place with public engagement and transparency. Look for partnership opportunities with the Green Building Alliance. Remove restrictions or assist homeowners with issues that prevent insulation installation. Utilities have an

obligation, by law, to reduce energy consumption for Pittsburgh. There is weatherization money and programs to assist, but they cannot find customers because there are restrictions that do not include/allow for roofing repairs and knob and tube (outdated electrical wiring) replacements in attics so insulation can be installed. Many homeowners cannot afford to make those improvements and therefore cannot receive the assistance. In line with CAP 3.0, the City can handle its buildings/energy use in terms of electricity, but it also controls the streets and what modes are prioritized. The bold mode shift goals of the plan must be kept, and its fleet of vehicles should also be electrified and even feature non-car models like e-cargo bikes, as vehicles are the number one source of greenhouse gas emissions in the US.

In order to reach Pittsburgh's climate goals, the City needs to reduce energy demand, create efficient district energy systems, decarbonize the electric grid, and convert systems from combustion to electrification. The City of Pittsburgh's Climate Action Plan^{lxxiii} has long recognized that wide-ranging action must be taken in order to meet its energy transition goals and the City can act first on its own properties and then strengthen regulations to raise the performance level and resilience of buildings throughout the City.

ENDNOTES

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ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Census 2020.

^{iv} According to HR&A, rents increased 16% from 2016 to 2019, while wages for non-college-educated workers increased only 10%. According to the Social Security Administration, SSI increased by only 5% during that time. Minimum wage, of course, has not increased at all.

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