COMMUNITY

Action Teams:

- Urban Design & Development
- Public Health and Safety
- Sustainability
- Education
- Culture & Recreation
- Workforce Development

COMMUNITY LIES AT THE HEART OF A NEIGHBORHOOD. FOR A NEIGHBORHOOD TO BE TRULY SUCCESSFUL, IT MUST DELIVER A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE TO ITS PEOPLE SO THAT THEY CAN THRIVE. ACCESS TO QUALITY FOOD, EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY MAKE UP THE GOALS AND STRATEGIES IN THIS SECTION. THESE SIX GOALS LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE HOMEWOOD COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN TO SUCCESS BY ENSURING THAT COMMUNITY MEMBERS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE IN THE BENEFITS OF REDEVELOPMENT.

VISION STATEMENT:

Homewood will be an African-American cultural destination where people choose to live, work, worship, and visit. It will be safe, green, healthy, and innovative. It will have quality schools. It will be a place that protects long-term and low-income residents and equips them to be engaged and informed.

COMMUNITY GOALS:

GOAL 1: Improve fresh and healthy food access

GOAL 2: Improve education quality for all Homewood students

GOAL 3: Create more and better out-of-school time options

GOAL 4: Organize community support teams that focus on public health and safety

GOAL 5: Increase career readiness and placement

GOAL 6: Promote and preserve Homewood's African American heritage and culture

GOAL 1: IMPROVE FRESH AND HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

STRATEGY 1.1: FORM FOOD ACCESS WORKING GROUP TO FACILITATE CREATION OF A BUYING CLUB OR FOOD COOPERATIVE IN HOMEWOOD THAT SELLS AFFORDABLE,

TYPE Program

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Homewood-Brushton Community Coalition Organization Strategic Plan: Charting a New Future for Homewood-Brushton, Homewood Urban Agenda Strategy: An Inner-City Model for Urban Revitalization

ACTION TEAM

Public Health and Public Safety

HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS

A lack of grocery stores in Homewood leaves residents to rely on five corner stores for quick food purchases.

Unfortunately, these local corner stores have limited capacity with a lack of fresh produce and a high concentration of unhealthy, processed food. If residents desire to go to a full scale grocery store they have to travel more than a mile.

This seemingly short distance is loaded with a magnitude of challenges. Homewood residents who do not own a car are required to bike, walk the distance to the grocery store or rely on public transportation.

Even for able-bodied persons this voyage proposes limitations in relying on public transportation outside of peak hours, carrying heavy grocery bags, and dealing with trying to find healthy affordable options that your family will consume.

This lack of access in Homewood is a clear indicator of a food desert. The CDC defines a food desert as an area that lacks affordable fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low fat milk, and other food that make up a healthy diet.[3] This inequitable lack of access often manifests in unhealthy eating habits and chronic health issues inevitably causing larger financial burdens.

Local and national organizations have taken action to address the approximately 23.5 million people living in areas throughout the U.S that are designated as food deserts.[4] In the short term Homewood can improve their local food system by completing the following:

- Connect to Food Policy Council who is doing regional work to improve access to healthy and affordable food options
- Encourage corner stores and small scale food retailers to become healthy food retailers that promote healthy food options
- Apply for grant funding to improve the local food system
- Utilize Adopt-A-Lot and Farm-A-Lot to grown healthy foods on publicly owned vacant lots

In the long term Homewood can address food insecurity by incentivising businesses that will increase healthy food.

Across the nation food access working groups are popping up to organize local buying clubs and food cooperatives that sell healthy, fresh food at a affordable rate. Buying clubs and food cooperatives are a reliable alternative to a full scale grocery store as a permanent physical location is not required and retail is determined by the organizer leading to healthier options.

Starting a buying club or cooperative creates the opportunity to buy food at a lower rate. Buyers purchase food from distributors at wholesale price which cuts out the additional cost supermarkets add to make profit. Volunteers organize distribution to members, ordering food, and keeping the books. The option to have food delivered to your house or a central location eliminates many of the mobility challenges a typically associated with a grocery store trip.

3. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (2011), "CDC Features: Food Deserts," https://www.cdc.gov/features/food deserts/
4. Feeding America, " Food Deserts Offer Little Access to Nutrition," https://www.ourcommunityfoodbank.org/food-insecurities finding-nutrition-in-a-food-desert/

STRATEGY 1.2: PROMOTE AN INCREASE IN FARMERS MARKETS AND FARM STANDS IN HOMEWOOD

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Medium**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Homewood-Brushton Community Coalition Organization Strategic Plan: Charting a New Future for Homewood-Brushton, Homewood Urban Agenda Strategy: An Inner-City Model for Urban Revitalization

ACTION TEAM

Sustainability

Farmers markets increase opportunities for community members to access fresh foods and vegetables and support local farmers. Farmers markets also provide space for local crafts and wares to be sold, supporting a local economy and minimizing unsustainable imports of goods.

Markets are social spaces that support a sense of community and provide opportunities to both disseminate information and feel connected to one another. Increasing the number of farmers markets and/or frequency would help to decrease food access issues. Additionally, adequately advertising and connecting residents is vital to this effort. Actions that may be made include increased promotion of and/or additional days for farmers markets and farm stands that are already occurring in the neighborhood.

STRATEGY 1.3: CONVENE STAKEHOLDERS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW POVERTY, INEQUITIES, AND FOOD COSTS LEAD TO FOOD INSECURITY AND HOW CURRENT INITIATIVES ARE COMBATING THIS AND COULD BE REPLICATED IN HOMEWOOD

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Medium**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Homewood Urban Agenda Strategy: An Inner-City Model for Urban Revitalization

ACTION TEAM

Sustainability

In addition to farmers markets and healthy corner store programs, many cities have utilized mobile fruit and vegetable delivery options, commonly called Green Grocer Programs. Typically, these programs utilize a refrigerated box truck that makes one hour stops at senior centers, public or senior housing on a weekly basis.

STRATEGY 1.4: EXPAND AND SOLIDIFY GARDEN SKILLSHARE PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE HOME GARDENING AND FOSTER COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Short**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Homewood-Brushton Community Coalition Organization Strategic Plan: Charting a New Future for Homewood-Brushton, Homewood Urban Agenda Strategy: An Inner-City Model for Urban Revitalization

ACTION TEAM

Sustainability

A garden skillshare program would be complementary to Strategy 1.2. Gardeners in Homewood and existing non-profits would foster a collaborative and ongoing relationship with other residents interested in learning more about gardening and assist in one-on-one and group skill building to build individual and community capacity for gardening and continue to promote raised bed installation for residents coupled with education around maintenance, food choice, and food prep.

STRATEGY 1.5: ENCOURAGE CORNER STORES AND SMALL SCALE FOOD RETAILERS TO BECOME HEALTHY FOOD RETAILERS THAT PROMOTE HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Short**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Homewood-Brushton Community Coalition Organization Strategic Plan: Charting a New Future for Homewood-Brushton , Homewood Urban Agenda Strategy: An Inner-City Model for Urban Revitalization

ACTION TEAM

Public Health and Public Safety

Healthy Corner Store Initiatives create partnerships between residents and local corner store owners to improve the healthy food retail. In Pittsburgh, Just Harvest is completing neighborhood assessments, and stakeholder meetings to identify corner store owners that are interested in improving their stores to support healthy food consumption. Interested stores can join the "Fresh Corners" network and obtain support from Just Food to obtain more healthy food options.

Since 2015, food retailers in the network have successfully provided healthier options for all shoppers; stores in network are required to supply Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) options. Revamped stores that have reorganized the interior to support healthy eating also suggest the use of mobile apps like, the Green Light Foods that explains the nutrition facts. Shoppers who frequent these stores are having an easier time understanding how much sugar, saturated fat and sodium is in the food they buy and are making healthier choices.

Just Harvest and the Allegheny County Health Department launched Fresh Corners, make it easy to get a Fresh Corner store in your neighborhood. An example of an existing healthy store includes L. A. Grocery at Larimer 511 Larimer Ave. If residents desire to learn more about initiatives nationally, many cities have toolkits for organizing to improve healthy food retail.

Lastly, expand rideshare company Lyft's Grocery Access Program to the neighborhood to provide rides to grocery stores for access to healthy food.

STRATEGY 1.6: COORDINATE ACCESS TO HEALTHY BREAKFAST AND LUNCH OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS, SENIORS AND STUDENTS, ESPECIALLY OUTSIDE REGULAR SCHOOL HOURS

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Short**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

An Inner-City Model for Urban Revitalization,Homewood-Brushton Community Coalition Organization Strategic Plan: Charting a New Future for Homewood-Brushton

ACTION TEAM

Education

Homewood schools should provide healthier breakfast and lunch options at school by eliminating the availability of processed meat and taking steps to improve school food overall, including use of more fresh and local fruits and vegetables.

Schools should also seek out funding from the USDA to provide healthy food for after school programs and over the summer, as many children depend on school food service for access to regular and healthy meals.

By contacting the Pennsylvania Department of Education or Agriculture, Homewood schools can request to become eligible sites for the USDA's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), which funds summer meals for children under 18.

GOAL 2: IMPROVE EDUCATION QUALITY FOR ALL HOMEWOOD STUDENTS

STRATEGY 2.1: IMPROVE OVERALL QUALITY OF CURRICULUM, ACCESS, AND TEACHING FORCE FOR EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS AND K-12 SCHOOLS

TYPE Program

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Welcoming Pittsburgh: A Roadmap for Change, Anatomy of a Neighborhood: Homewood in the 21st Century

ACTION TEAM

Education

Early childhood education, including preschool and pre-kindergarten (pre-K) education, has strong benefits for children's future success in school, cognitive and emotional development, health, and income later in life. State expansions of funding for pre-K have helped to increase access through providers like the YWCA, which provides care for infants and toddlers and pre-K for three- and four-year-olds.

As access to affordable pre-K expands, pre-K providers should work with other local organizations to promote enrollment among Homewood families to ensure that all Homewood children can take advantage of this resource. In addition, providers should work to ensure that when they have full enrollment, they can refer families to other providers who may have vacancies.

STRATEGY 2.2: SEEK OUT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO INCREASE QUALITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

TYPE Policy & Program

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Pittsburgh Roadmap for Inclusive Innovation. Anatomy of a Neighborhood: Homewood in the 21st Century

ACTION TEAM

Education

The Office of Child Development at the University of Pittsburgh, the City of Pittsburgh Early Childhood Program, and Working Together have access to the latest research and best practices in early childhood development and education. Homewood early childhood providers should partner with these institutions or other experts to ensure that programs are high-quality and use evidence-based practices.

STRATEGY 2.3: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT ONGOING RESEARCH AND EVALUATION METHODOLOGY FOR HOMEWOOD SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UNIVERSITIES. LINK POLICIES TO RESEARCH AGENDA

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Short**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Peace & Justice Initiative

ACTION TEAM

Education

Student "comment boxes" or "suggestion boxes" is a practice that is used in classrooms and schools across the country. These boxes offer students an opportunity to provide anonymous feedback and highlight issues that may exist in the classroom, or discuss issues of interest to the school as a whole.

To help students get used to using the comments and suggestion boxes, and to help promote critical thinking among students, it can be helpful for school administrators, teachers, and students to come up with school-wide topics of discussion that can be furthered through in-classroom discussions and through the comment box system.

These topics could include everything from ideas about school lunches, to options for commemoration of Black History Month, to discussions about school policies and procedures.

STRATEGY 2.4: ENSURE SMALLER CLASS/GROUP SIZE WITH LOWER ADULT TO STUDENT RATIOS AND WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR ONE-ON-ONE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Medium**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

African American Neighborhoods of Choice Report,Welcoming Pittsburgh: A Roadmap for Change

ACTION TEAM

Education

Homewood stakeholders are seeking ways to promote smaller student-to-staff ratios in local schools in order to decrease class sizes and improve the diversity of instruction and assistance available to students.

These goals should be advocated with the superintendent, the school board and in speaking out at the school board meetings.

Parent-teacher organizations can be also a valuable asset to school funding if they can navigate the grant-seeking world and work with local foundations, corporations, and businesses to raise consistent funding for staff and programming.

However, building this network will require capacity-building for local PTOs and building their ability to make a compelling case, connect with funders, and oversee long-term school improvements.

The Homewood Collaborative may be able to assist local PTOs with strategic planning assistance and grantwriting / fundraising training.

STRATEGY 2.5: SEEK THE INVOLVEMENT OF STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITY IN THE LEARNING AND EDUCATION DECISION MAKING PROCESS

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Medium**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Homewood: A Community Profile

ACTION TEAM

Education

College preparatory classes are an essential ingredient for academic achievement in high schools. All Homewood students should have the opportunity to prepare for college and to take classes that can potentially count for college credit, such as Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate classes.

While there is growing agreement that not all high school students need to be on a college track, holding students and schools to high standards of academic achievement signals to students that academics are valuable and that teachers and schools want to see them succeed.

In addition, many of the growing industries in Pittsburgh, such as the technology and biotechnology fields, provide well-paying jobs but require advanced education. Homewood students should have opportunities to get an education that will prepare them for college and to enter these fields of work.

STRATEGY 2.6: ENSURE A SAFE AND SECURE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL HOMEWOOD STUDENTS

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Short**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

African American Neighborhoods of Choice Report,Welcoming Pittsburgh: A Roadmap for Change

ACTION TEAM

Education

Students respond positively to speaking with members of their community who have pursued a variety of career options; speaking with these role models makes the opportunity seem possible and relatable to the students' own experiences.

Role model programs should seek out mentors with a wide variety of experiences, including small business owners, community development organizations, professionals such as lawyers and doctors, people who work in trades and construction.

Students should also be able to express interest in types of role models and mentors they would like to hear from next. For older students, these mentorship programs might evolve into job shadowing or internship placements as described in Education Strategy 4.3 and Workforce Development Strategy 2.5.

STRATEGY 2.7: CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS TO BE MORE INVOLVED IN IMPROVING SCHOOL QUALITY BY ENCOURAGING PARENTS TO CONTRIBUTE TO HEALTH ACTIVITIES, SERVICES, AND PROGRAMS AT SCHOOL

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Short**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

My Brother's Keeper: Allegheny County and City of Pittsburgh's plan

ACTION TEAM

Education

Parent involvement in school settings has a wide array of positive effects on students inside and outside of school. The American Psychological Association notes that parent involvement improves students' school attendance, test scores, and grades, as well as decreasing health risks such as substance abuse and involvement in violence.[5]

Homewood schools should create more opportunities for parents to be engaged in school activities.

Because many parents have constraints on their time and differing working hours, opportunities should include volunteering in classrooms during the day, participating in after-school events, taking part in health and wellness activities for students that could take place during evenings or on weekends, or other services that can accommodate a flexible range of times.

5. American Psychological Association, "Parent Engagement in Schools," http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/programs/safe-supportive/parental-engagement/default.aspx.

GOAL 3: CREATE MORE AND BETTER OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME OPTIONS

STRATEGY 3.1: COORDINATE AND ALIGN OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME (OST) RESOURCES TO ENSURE QUALITY AND NECESSARY RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO ALL STUDENTS. ALIGN OST PROGRAMMING TO SCHOOL DAY CURRICULUM AND INCREASE EVENING AND WEEKEND OPPORTUNITIES

TYPE Program

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Welcoming Pittsburgh: A Roadmap for Change

ACTION TEAM

Education

Out-of-school-time (OST) programs help advance student learning, health, and well-being by providing enriching programming that can include physical activity, educational support such as homework help and tutoring, healthy food and meals, field trips, and other activities. Participation in sports, summer camps, reading and math-focused programs, arts and culture-focused programs, and any other supervised and structured program for children outside of school hours qualifies as OST.

The U.S. CDC has found that OST programs can support academic achievement and reduce health disparities when implemented according to evidence-based practices.[6]

The Education Action Team recommended three key steps for OST in Homewood:

- Grow resources, funding, and quality of OST programs. OST can be expensive for many families and often it does not fully meet the schedule needs of families. Growing resources and funding to help OST meet the needs of more families, and ensuring that OST programs are following evidence-based practices, will improve outcomes for children and families.
- Create opportunities for youth to collaborate in OST programs. Having older youth such as those 13 and up serve as "youth counselors" or mentors in OST programs can provide opportunities for these students to test out child-centered work and professions, can give them a sense of responsibility, and can be a good reference for future work in child-centered fields.
- Foster better communication between OST, teachers, and parents. When children encounter issues or problems during OST, there is not an automatic notification system for teachers and parents in the same way that schools are supposed to notify parents. Ensuring that schools and parents are aware of any health or behavioral issues that children may encounter at OST will ensure that families and schools can respond and provide assistance and care.

6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Out of School Time Supports Student Health and Learning," https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/ost.htm.

STRATEGY 3.2: FUND SUPPLEMENTAL LIBRARY OPTIONS SUCH AS BUILDING A MOBILE LIBRARY THAT TRAVELS THROUGHOUT HOMEWOOD THAT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS OR RESIDENTS COULD RENT BOOKS OR TEXTBOOKS FROM, OR BUILDING LITTLE FREE LIBRARIES THROUGHOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD TO PROMOTE READING AT A YOUNG AGE

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Short**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Pittsburgh Roadmap for Inclusive Innovation

ACTION TEAM

Education

Making books as accessible as possible to Homewood residents of all ages will help promote reading and literacy for Homewood's youth. Additionally, schools have not always had sufficient numbers to textbooks for students, so having them available at neighborhood library branch would greatly benefit students.

Stakeholders suggested two options:

- In conjunction with the Carnegie Library and others, obtain or build a Mobile Library that would travel the neighborhood and enable residents to check out books or textbooks. This mobile library could also be stationed at major events, along commercial corridors, at the Busway station, at parks, and in other high-traffic locations to encourage residents to integrate reading into their daily lives.
- Building Little Free Libraries throughout the neighborhood.

Little Free Libraries are small stations where residents can donate their old and unused books for other residents to take and enjoy. The non-profit Little Free Library provides plans and installation tips to build the structures. A Homewood non-profit could sponsor "build days" where local households could build their own Little Free Libraries with donated materials, or a non-profit could actually build and distribute them in the neighborhood with residents' permission.

STRATEGY 3.3: CREATE AN AFTER SCHOOL HEALTHY COOKING CLUB FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS TO LEARN ABOUT HEALTHY EATING, AND PARTNER WITH LOCAL RESTAURANTS TO HOST COOKING DEMONSTRATIONS

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Short**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Homewood Urban Agenda Strategy: An Inner-City Model for Urban Revitalization,Homewood-Brushton Community Coalition Organization Strategic Plan: Charting a New Future for Homewood-Brushton

ACTION TEAM

Education

Learning to cook healthy, convenient, and inexpensive meals can benefit families' budget and health equally; children learn to try and enjoy a variety of healthy meals, and busy parents learn techniques for putting healthy food on their family's table on a regular basis. Parent-child cooking classes can also provide time for bonding between parents and children and promote parent involvement in school.

STRATEGY 3.4: SECURE QUALIFIED, CREDENTIALED, AND WELL-TRAINED STAFF TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME (OST) PROVIDERS COMMITTED TO CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Short**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Welcoming Pittsburgh: A Roadmap for Change

ACTION TEAM

Education

Develop community standards for training and credentialing requirements for Out-of-School Time (OST) staff and develop programs to ensure there are opportunities for Homewood residents to receive job training and employment through the OST programs. Recruit and support youth who are aging out of programs to participate as mentors, employees and volunteers in OST programs that they have benefited from. Consider incorporating credentialing and training opportunities into programs for older youth.

STRATEGY 3.5: CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH TO PARTICIPATE IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME (OST) PROGRAM DESIGN AND DECISION MAKING

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Short**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Welcoming Pittsburgh: A Roadmap for Change

ACTION TEAM

Education

The opportunity to participate in the development of (Out-of-School-Time) OST programs and decision making has the dual benefits of creating programs that will appeal to youth and meet their specific needs and in developing leadership qualities in youth.

These opportunities can be developed either through individual interactions with organizations or through the development of a sort of "youth council", which has been utilized in numerous communities. Participating youth should also be given opportunities for internships, jobs and should each be provided with one-on-one mentorship from other community leaders, and their participation should be considered a pipeline to future leadership in other community organizations. Youth participants should also be given control of a budget of their own to develop non-profit accounting and management skills.

GOAL 4: ORGANIZE COMMUNITY SUPPORT TEAMS THAT FOCUS ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

STRATEGY 4.1: WORK WITH LOCAL DRUG ABUSE ORGANIZATIONS TO IDENTIFY HARM REDUCTION STRATEGIES

TYPE Program

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

2017 Peace & Justice Initiative, Equitable Development: The Path to an All-In Pittsburg

ACTION TEAM

Public Health and Public Safety

In the public meetings throughout the Community Plan, a common public safety concern was drug activity (usage and dealing). Arrest reports show that there are a variety of substances involved in drug-related arrests in the area; heroin has been the most prominent substance in the Zone 5 weekly Community Crime Update. There is a need to work with local drug abuse organizations in Homewood to address tactics to reducing harm to both drug users and bystanders.

Additionally, drug education helps children understand how drugs affect their mind and body, how to know if they or someone they love is addicted to drugs, and the potential ways that addiction can harm them and their family. Drug education can also include counseling for those who are addicted and their family members, which could be a component of the mental health counseling. All drug education courses should be based on evidence-based practices and include specific desired learning goals to ensure effectiveness.

STRATEGY 4.2: IDENTIFY HOW YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT RESIDENTS PRIORITIZE PUBLIC SAFETY AND TO REMOVE BARRIERS TO REPORTING VIOLENT INCIDENTS

TYPE Program

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

2017 Peace & Justice Initiative, Equitable, Development: The Path to an All-In Pittsburgh, My Brother's Keeper: Allegheny County and City of Pittsburgh's plan for addressing opportunity gaps for boys and young men of color

ACTION TEAM

Public Health and Public Safety

Homewood-Brushton YMCA currently provides counseling for youth and families. Discussion around public safety for youth and young adults could be tied into existing services and programming at the YMCA.

A resident, education or faith based working group should be organized to lead discussion alongside the YMCA to ensure all voices are heard on the subject. Youth and young adults should be invited to working group meetings to understand how they feel about public safety.

Additionally, residents in Homewood need to have a plan for how to report violent incidents so that those reporting are not put in jeopardy or harm. Having consistent reporting can create ease for those reporting and those addressing the incident.

STRATEGY 4.3: BRIDGE CONNECTION WITH JAIL, PROBATION, AND COMMUNITY SO THAT RETURNING CITIZENS CAN BE CONNECTED TO EXISTING PROGRAM AND JOBS PRIOR TO THEIR RETURN AND IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARD

TYPE Policy & Program

TIMELINE Long

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Homewood Urban Agenda Strategy: An Inner-City Model for Urban Revitalization, Homewood-Brushton Community Coalition Organization Strategic Plan: Charting a New Future for Homewood-Brushton

ACTION TEAM

Workforce Development

A commonly expressed concern is that a significant number of Homewood residents were jailed following the escalation of the War on Drugs in the early 1990s. When formerly incarcerated people began returning to Homewood, the community suffered.

Formerly-incarcerated individuals often experience discrimination in job seeking, housing, and social stigma. This discrimination can easily encourage people to return to illegal activity as a means of survival.

As the prisons have generally done very little in terms of rehabilitation, it's not uncommon for formerly-incarcerated individuals to increase their knowledge of illegal activities. Creating a mentorship can help returning citizens consider viable options for personal development and employment.

Returning citizens often have difficulty finding and retaining employment; many employers conduct background checks and exclude the formerly incarcerated from job opportunities, or may be put off by gaps in employment history and education.

Creating opportunities for incarcerated people to access employment training and connect to employers during their periods of incarceration and probation can help ease the transition back into the job search, and potentially create job placements for returning citizens immediately upon their release.

Homewood stakeholders feel that it is essential to find a way to institutionalize this process to prevent recidivism and grow opportunities for the formerly incarcerated.

Currently, the Message Carriers of Pennsylvania work to assist addicted people, those in recovery, and people with mental health challenges -- including those who have been incarcerated due to drug-related crimes -- to recovery and access employment. Learning from organizations who have created these pathways will help the HCDC determine how to move forward with institutionalizing such a program. Other efforts include Ban the Box advocacy and expungement services.

STRATEGY 4.4: HOST COMMUNITY DIALOGUES AND EVENTS THAT CENTER COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES AND IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH POLICE

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Short**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Homewood-Brushton Community Coalition Organization Strategic Plan: Charting a New Future for Homewood-Brushton , Homewood Urban Agenda Strategy: An Inner-City Model for Urban Revitalization

ACTION TEAM

Public Health and Public Safety

There is little discussion about the effects of trauma and how to seek treatment for care. Trauma can be passed on through generations or experienced daily at school, home, work, and in the community. Ignoring trauma can lead to greater health risks and can cause perpetuating traumatic behavior. Learning and teaching emotionally healthy methods to deal with difficult circumstances is vital for Homewood community members who are facing financial or housing instability, have witnessed violence, have loved-ones who are incarcerated, or are facing other challenging situations.

STRATEGY 4.5: INCREASE ALMA ILLERY'S PRESENCE AND CAPACITY IN HOMEWOOD

TYPE Program

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Homewood-Brushton Community Coalition Organization Strategic Plan: Charting a New Future for Homewood-Brushton , Homewood Urban Agenda Strategy: An Inner-City Model for Urban Revitalization

ACTION TEAM

Public Health and Public Safety

The Homewood community needs to break down the negative stigma around mental health that often prevents individuals or families from seeking care.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. — 43.8 million, or 18.5% —experiences mental illness in a given year.[7]

Mental health services are not limited to individuals who have mental health disorders, services are also available to families seeking education and support about mental health, and individuals experiencing trauma or seeking substance abuse treatment.

Seeking support for mental health care is a challenging venture for families and individuals. Families or individuals can obtain education about potential care through the local National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Pittsburgh Chapter.

NAMI can supply resources about mental illnesses, related mental health conditions, 12-week educational programing for families, support groups and information about homecare.

Alma Illery Medical Center or Primary Care Health Services, Inc is a primary care provider in Homewood that offers behavioral health services as well as dental and medical services.

The medical center in partnership with Homeless Pittsburgh also provides health care and social services to the homeless population of Allegheny County. The medical enter works with other healthcare, social service and community agencies to eliminate barriers to quality health care.

Promotional material that is visually stimulating, and clearly states the services provided will help Homewood residents find the care they need. Navigating mental health services is challenging as many individuals are unaware they need help. Promotional material should provide examples of why someone should seek care, and how to obtain that care. If the promotional material is creatively made perhaps the stigma of seeking care can be lowered.

Homewood residents and families seeking care for health are often faced with obstacles in finding affordable, helpful services. Inviting a health care provider like Alma Illery to be active in community events and gatherings will provide residents with the opportunity to ask questions about their particular needs. Bolstering Alma Illery's presence in the neighborhood will make individuals or families who otherwise wouldn't seek care feel comfortable discussing options for treatment.

7. National Institute of Health, "Mental Illness," https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness.shtml

STRATEGY 4.6: WORK WITH MAIN STREET PARTNERS AND BUSINESSES TO INCREASE SAFETY THROUGH LIGHTING, CREATIVE DESIGN, AND OTHER INITIATIVES

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Short**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

2017 Peace & Justice Initiative,Equitable Development: The Path to an All-In Pittsburgh

ACTION TEAM

Public Health and Public Safety

Business owners should have community liaison to aid in addressing issues happening outside of places of work in Homewood. Having a community liaison to aid in navigating if and how to effectively report incident will help reduce overall crimes reported and improve the safety image in Homewood.

STRATEGY 4.7: FOSTER HEALTHY LIVING BY PROVIDING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMMING BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Short**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Anatomy of a Neighborhood: Homewood in the 21st Century, Homewood Urban Agenda Strategy: An Inner-City Model for Urban Revitalization,Homewood-Brushton Community Coalition Organization Strategic Plan: Charting a New Future for Homewood-Brushton

ACTION TEAM

Education

Physical activity programming should be provided to all students during the school day, but providing additional opportunities for fun and entertaining physical activity before and after school will encourage youth to be more active throughout the day.

The CDC recommends that children receive 60 minutes or more of active physical activity each day, including aerobic activities; muscle strengthening activities like gymnastics, yoga, or push-ups; and bone strengthening activities that involve impact, like jumping rope or running.

Physical activities such as team sports can also teach teamwork and cooperation, while activities like yoga can provide mental and physical tools for well-being. Offering a variety of physical activities before and after school will enhance children's health outcomes and may also enhance academic outcomes.

GOAL 5: INCREASE CAREER READINESS AND PLACEMENT

STRATEGY 5.1: DEVELOP A FRAMEWORK AND HUB SO THAT COMMUNITY PARTNERS CAN BETTER CONNECT RESIDENTS TO LOCAL EMPLOYERS AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

TYPE **Program & Project**

TIMELINE **Short**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Equitable Development: The Path to an All-In Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Roadmap for Inclusive Innovation

ACTION TEAM

Workforce Development

Operation Better Block is collaborating with other community stakeholders, local businesses, and HCDC organizations to create Homewood's Workforce Development website page. The website will include profiles of local business owners to help job-seekers and entrepreneurs better understand the variety of successful businesses in the neighborhood already. It will also connect residents who are seeking training or jobs to local, citywide, and regional resources and opportunities, including training programs through the CCAC and local agencies and universities, and services provided by City agencies. HCDC and local organizations still need to make a collaborative plan for ongoing management, updating, and funding of this website, and to integrate it into a promotion strategy.

STRATEGY 5.2: COORDINATE AND COMMUNICATE INTERNSHIP AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES TO COMMUNITY AND STUDENTS TO INCREASE ACCESS AND PLACEMENT

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Long**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Equitable Development: The Path to an All-In Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Roadmap for Inclusive Innovation, Homewood Urban Agenda Strategy: An Inner-City Model for Urban Revitalization

ACTION TEAM

Workforce Development

Homewood students, young adults, and residents looking to break into new careers can all benefit from internship opportunities. Homewood organizations can create an inventory of local internship programs by working with companies and organizations involved in target industries such as clean energy, green construction, design, health care, and more. They can also draw on the experience of existing programs devoted to connecting people with internships, like the national program INROADS, which has a presence in Pittsburgh.

The inventory of internship opportunities will need to be maintained and updated on a regular basis to ensure accuracy and replace outdated contact information; the HCDC should work with Homewood organizations to define lead and support responsibilities for this task and seek funding.

STRATEGY 5.3: CONNECT WITH REGIONAL CORPORATIONS AND PARTNERS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND 21ST CENTURY JOB FIELD PROJECTIONS AND TAILOR WORKFORCE PROGRAMS ACCORDINGLY

TYPE **Policy**

TIMELINE **Short**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Pittsburgh Roadmap for Inclusive Innovation, Equitable Development: The Path to an All-In Pittsburgh

ACTION TEAM

Workforce Development

Connecting HCDC organizations with regional employers and workforce development groups will ensure that workforce development and educational programs lead Homewood residents into well-paying careers. Some of the key sectors identified in recent planning for the Pittsburgh region's growing industries include energy, advanced manufacturing, health care, education, building and construction, and logistics and transportation. All of these industries include career paths open to employees with various levels of education and credentials.

The Allegheny Conference and Partner4Work, Pittsburgh's regional economic development agency and workforce development agency, both have strategies for building residents' credentials and training to create the workforce of the future. HCDC should coordinate with these entities to make connections to regional employers and structure programs targeted at Homewood residents.

STRATEGY 5.4: CREATE OUTREACH PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE POPULATIONS AND PURSUE SUBSIDIES, SUCH AS SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM, TO EMPLOY SENIORS

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Short & Medium**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Homewood Urban Agenda Strategy: An Inner-City Model for Urban Revitalization, 2017 Peace & Justice Initiative, Equitable Development: The Path to an All-In Pittsburgh

ACTION TEAM

Public Health and Public Safety; Workforce Development

Homewood residents represent all age groups, but the majority are women and a significant portion are 60 years or older. As of 2015, 60% are female, and 37% are 60 or over. These characteristics are important, and they differ from the average Pittsburgh numbers. An older population has unique needs across all areas, but especially health. Additionally, as the total population is majority female, there are targeted resources, information, and screenings needed to support women's health.

Seniors often face additional barriers to employment and training in new careers due to age discrimination and difficulty finding appropriate job training and education. The Senior Community Service Employment Program is a federally subsidized program that connects seniors with paid, part-time job training opportunities at community service organizations. Seniors in this program can acquire valuable skills and experience and receive payment while continuing to search for a permanent job.

Another local resource for seniors is the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at the University of Pittsburgh. This institute offers seniors the opportunity to audit undergraduate classes and access university amenities. While membership in OLLI costs over $200 on a yearly basis or $125 for one term as of 2018, scholarships are available for seniors who may have difficulty affording the membership fee.

STRATEGY 5.5: CHANGE THE SCOPE OF JOB FAIRS AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS TO BECOME CAREER + CONTINUING EDUCATION FAIRS FOR LIVING WAGE CAREER PATHS

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Short**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Pittsburgh Roadmap for Inclusive Innovation

ACTION TEAM

Workforce Development

Career pathways and continuing education opportunities that can lead residents into well-paying jobs in growing industries must be a key focus of all Homewood workforce development efforts. After forging partnerships with employers (Strategy 1.1), creating an internship strategy (Strategy 2.5), and finalizing a workforce development asset map (Strategy 3.1), Homewood organizations should integrate this knowledge into organizing career and continuing education workshops and fairs that focus on career growth. These fairs should include industry representation as well as representatives of educational institutions and job training programs. Homewood organizations should work with employers to list required credentials for employment in various industries and at various levels of responsibility to ensure that residents understand how to move up the career ladder.

STRATEGY 5.6: CREATE DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST AND EMPOWER ENTITIES TO ENSURE HOMEWOOD RESIDENTS HAVE DOCUMENTATION NEEDED TO ACCESS EMPLOYMENT

TYPE **Program**

TIMELINE **Short**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Homewood-Brushton Community Coalition Organization Strategic Plan: Charting a New Future for Homewood-Brushton

ACTION TEAM

Workforce Development

Required employment documentation often includes documents for verifying citizenship; residents who do not have a passport will need other documents including a picture ID such as a drivers' license, school ID or voter registration card, and verification of citizenship such as a Social Security card or certified birth certificate. Organizations that provide workforce development training should verify that their trainees have access to these required documents, and if not, should provide instruction on how to access copies of documents or obtain new ones.

GOAL 6: PROMOTE AND PRESERVE HOMEWOOD'S AFRICAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE

STRATEGY 6.1: PROMOTE HOMEWOOD'S PAST THROUGH INTERPRETIVE STORYTELLING, NEIGHBORHOOD BRANDING, MURALS AND PUBLIC ART AND THE REUSE OF VACANT PARCELS

TYPE **Project**

TIMELINE **Short**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

N/A

ACTION TEAM

Culture and Recreation

Interpretative storytelling, community branding, public art and wayfinding has numerous benefits. It improves the commercial environment, promotes community pride, teaches community members and visitors the history of the neighborhood and improves the pedestrian environment, encouraging healthy living.

A branding, wayfinding and storytelling master plan and a public art master plan should both be developed, potentially in coordination with each other.

Both projects should engage deeply with community members in order to incorporate local stories, memories and mementos in the final product. Local artists should be engaged to participate in the development of art, and any such development should include opportunities for participation from the community's youth. National grant opportunities, such as those from Artspace, should be pursued in order to make Homewood Pittsburgh's community of the arts.

STRATEGY 6.2: SUPPORT EXISTING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND UPGRADE THEIR FACILITIES

TYPE **Program & Project**

TIMELINE **Short & Medium**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

N/A

ACTION TEAM

Culture and Recreation

Homewood's community organizations are the lifeblood of the community. A full assessment of their program and space needs should be conducted and a grant fund should be created to ensure all of the community's organizations have the facilities necessary to elevate their work and provide for the community's needs. A grant fund could be created for community organizations to expand their programing and test innovative program delivery.

STRATEGY 6.3: INCREASE CULTURAL EDUCATION TO INCLUDE MUSIC, ART, AND BLACK HISTORY

TYPE Program

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

PreservePGH: Preserving the character of Pittsburgh and its neighborhoods, Public Art Plan

ACTION TEAM

Education

Education in the arts, including music and visual art, has a positive impact on child development by teaching motor skills and visual learning skills to young children, and promoting cultural awareness and creative thinking in children of all ages. Children of all ages are steeped in culture both inside and of school. For younger children, connecting this culture to their time in school can make learning more enjoyable. Older children can learn to evaluate TV or radio and enjoy music and art with a critical sensibility that will deepen their understanding of artistic choice and expose issues of race, gender, and class within pop culture.

Increased exposure to Black history in schools is essential, not just during Black History Month but throughout humanities and STEM classes. Traditional curricula have tended to minimize the contributions of the Black community and people of color as a whole in American and world history, literature, and science. All teachers in Homewood schools should be asked to structure their lesson plans such that there is clear representation of the contributions of Black and Brown individuals and communities. Representations should vary and include ways in which these communities have advanced knowledge, conducted research, stood up for social justice, and changed history in numerous, substantial ways.

STRATEGY 6.4: UTILIZE PRESS RELATIONSHIPS AND POSITIVE MEDIA COVERAGE TO SHOWCASE HOMEWOOD'S PAST AND PRESENT

TYPE Program

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

2017 Peace & Justice Initiative

ACTION TEAM

Public Health and Public Safety

There is a need for action in Homewood to address fear-based media and how negative stories can prey on anxieties around safety in the community.

Mass media often highlights negative crime stories in Homewood to seek higher ratings, these stories perpetuate the misconception of the actual crime in Homewood vs. the perceived crime.

Social media exacerbates this fear due to the rate at which information can be shared throughout networks. Having better media coverage in Homewood will help demystify rumored events and fear of crime.

To paint Homewood in a positive light and improve the perception of safety, the Collaborative should take the following steps:

- Create template for press releases
- Build relationships with media outlets
- Create main point of contact at media outlets

Streamlined communication with media will aid in depicting Homewood in a positive light. Consistent, clear, organized messaging to the media will help Homewood get the positive messaging that it deserves. Longer term nonprofit or faith leaders should be in charge of the template and dispersing the press release as needed. To ensure template is official and usable by media, local media should be contacted to consult on template form.

Building positive relationships with local media outlets will help foster conversations about how to present Homewood in the news. Encouraging the news to accurately depict crime in the neighborhood will reduce the potential for rumors spreading that increase feelings of fear.

The community can inquire about creating high school internships or opportunities to shadow news reporters with the intent of creating future job opportunities. If more local residents are involved in reporting about the news in their own community it will reduce the potential for miscommunication.

STRATEGY 6.5: DEVELOP A DESTINATION MUSEUM OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE THAT TELLS THE STORY OF HOMEWOOD AND THE BROADER HISTORY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN PITTSBURGH

TYPE **Project**

TIMELINE **Long**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

N/A

ACTION TEAM

Culture and Recreation

Throughout the United States, historically African-American districts are facing numerous challenges in preserving their cultural identity. In many of these districts, decades of disinvestment have suppressed land values, while proximity to Downtowns create attractive opportunities for developers, many of whom come from outside of the community.

Coupled with challenges to minority-owned businesses, the suburbanization of middle class African-Americans, the history of policy damage has made once flourishing communities throughout the country, from U Street in Washington, D.C. to the Treme in New Orleans to West Broadway in Minneapolis, not to mention Harlem and Bronzeville, places of significant change and conflict over the future of these places.

At the same time, a significant interest in African-American history, perhaps best exemplified by the incredible success of the Museum of African American History and Culture at the Smithsonian, has been emerging throughout the country.

As such, many African-American communities are taking active roles in shaping both their futures and the promotion of their past. In Pittsburgh, publications like Mark Whitaker's Smoketown have raised interest in the city's black heritage and it's influence on the country. The August Wilson Center in Downtown Pittsburgh has created one space in the City that already celebrates African-American culture and achievement, however, it is not located in a historical African-American Community.

The Homewood community should work with local museums, foundations and other funders to create a museum of African American culture and history in Homewood which can tell the stories of the neighborhood, its inhabitants, and Harambee Ujima Black Arts and culture in Pittsburgh, with emphasis in Homewood. A successful example of this approach is the National Negro League Museum and American Jazz Museums in Kansas City's 18th and Vine District. Privately funded, the museums occupy a building developed by local nonprofits and serve as a key anchor destination for redevelopment in the community, and provide meeting spaces and cultural and educational programming for the community.

STRATEGY 6.6: PARTNER WITH OWNERS, HISTORICAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND FUNDERS TO SECURE, THEN POTENTIALLY REPAIR AND REOPEN NATIONAL NEGRO OPERA COMPANY BUILDING

TYPE **Project**

TIMELINE **Medium**

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

N/A

ACTION TEAM

Culture and Recreation

The National Negro Opera Company Building is a unique asset that cannot be recreated elsewhere. Funding should be identified to stabilize, repair and reopen the NNOC building as a community asset. National organizations for the preservation of African-American history may serve as key partners in funding the building's redevelopment. Consider partnerships with high schools or universities Afro American Music Institute to program the redeveloped space.