



DEVELOPMENT

Action Teams:



Urban Design & Development



Public Health and Safety



Housing



Business & Innovation

THE DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS REPRESENT MANY OF THE PHYSICAL PROJECTS THAT WILL ALLOW THE COMMUNITY TO THRIVE. BUILDING OFF THE WORK OF THE CLUSTER PLAN, THE NINE GOALS IN THIS SECTION SEEK TO PROTECT EXISTING RESIDENTS AND HOMEOWNERS, CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL, SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS, AND BUILD NEW, HIGH-QUALITY HOMES. THE STRATEGIES ALSO SEEK TO ENSURE THAT EXISTING COMMUNITY MEMBERS HAVE A SAY IN THE DEVELOPMENT THAT OCCURS IN THEIR COMMUNITY AND HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO BENEFIT AND BUILD WEALTH THROUGH THAT DEVELOPMENT.

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.

DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

GOAL 7: Focus on neighborhood level small business technical assistance

GOAL 8: Bring Homewood's regulatory framework into alignment with previous planning and shape Homewood's future growth

GOAL 9: Manage vacant properties comprehensively

GOAL 10: Encourage community led and driven development

GOAL 11: Renovate existing vacant housing to provide Homewood residents with pathways to homeownership

GOAL 12: Use innovative and targeted housing development to meet the needs of specific household demographics in Homewood

GOAL 13: Implement green building and energy efficiency programs and standards to reduce cost burdens for existing and future residents

GOAL 14: Prevent displacement through affordable housing development, proactive policy, and stabilization of existing residents

GOAL 15: Create Homewood-specific design standards for new development

GOAL 7: FOCUS ON NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL SMALL BUSINESS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

STRATEGY 7.1: PARTNER WITH CITY AND DEVELOPERS TO REBUILD HOMEWOOD'S COMMERCIAL DISTRICT THROUGH MIXED-USE, MIXED-INCOME OPPORTUNITIES ALONG N HOMEWOOD AVENUE

TYPE Policy

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

N/A

ACTION TEAM

Business and Innovation

As business owners and entrepreneurs work to make decisions about how to best utilize vacant properties in Homewood, access to a single point of contact at the City and URA will help make the process of property purchase more transparent and easier to navigate. This single point

of contact would have access to broader resources at the City and URA, and would be able to direct business owners and Homewood residents in the right direction to get their questions answered or fulfill their requests for technical assistance.

STRATEGY 7.2: PROVIDE EDUCATION TO RESIDENTS REGARDING COMMERCIAL PROPERTY LEASING AND OWNERSHIP, INCLUDING CREATIVE OWNERSHIP MECHANISMS SUCH AS CO-OP, RENT-TO-OWN, ETC

TYPE Policy & Project

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Cluster Plan, Equitable Development: The Path to an All-In Pittsburgh

ACTION TEAM

Business and Innovation

Commercial property leasing and ownership can be complicated, particularly when dealing with multi-use buildings and properties. Commercial leases can come with different terms about maintenance of common spaces and parking lots, buildout of the interior spaces, and other terms that can add up to thousands in additional expenses if business owners are not aware of key lease terms. Restaurants and food service establishments need especially expensive buildouts to create functioning kitchens that meet building codes and pass health inspections. Meanwhile, commercial property ownership requires expenditures and business loans that may be difficult to access for start-up businesses. Providing technical assistance to small businesses on the nuts and bolts of property ownership and leasing, and its relationship

to an overall business plan, will help local businesses thrive while taking over vacant spaces in Homewood. Live-work spaces in large homes or small commercial buildings may also be an option for some independent entrepreneurs to reduce overhead costs.

The City and URA should work with local organizations to put together an initiative to reduce barriers to commercial property leasing and ownership for Homewood businesses. This should include identification of City- and URA-owned properties that could meet the needs of various business types in Homewood; focus groups with businesses, entrepreneurs, and local technical assistance organizations to identify space needs and types of businesses to be served; and ultimate designation of one or several commercial spaces with leasing structures or affordable financing options to facilitate local property ownership.

STRATEGY 7.3: PARTNER WITH FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON SECURING FINANCING FOR COMMERCIAL PROPERTY PURCHASE

TYPE Project

TIMELINE Medium

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Cluster Plan, Pittsburgh Roadmap for Inclusive Innovation

ACTION TEAM

Business and Innovation

Local financial institutions and technical assistance providers can provide advice to business owners on securing the necessary financing and capital to purchase commercial properties. Because properties are not one-size-fits-all, these financial and technical

assistance providers will need to work closely to ensure that the property in question will further the owner's business plan, and to ensure the owner can access financing or save up for needed improvements as well as property purchase.

STRATEGY 7.4: CREATE INCUBATOR THAT OFFERS BELOW-MARKET RENTS FOR RESIDENT-OWNED BUSINESSES, MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESSES, AND CULTURAL SPACES

TYPE Policy & Project

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Cluster Plan, Equitable Development: The Path to an All-In Pittsburgh

ACTION TEAM

Business and Innovation

Homewood businesses and residents see a strong need for minority-owned businesses, local businesses, and cultural spaces to form the backbone of Homewood's commercial district. Many of these businesses have a need for below-market commercial space in order to establish themselves in the neighborhood. A business incubator that provides intentional subsidies for tenants and serves as a center for small

businesses to receive technical assistance, becomes a hub for coordinating ongoing needs with the City and URA, and houses neighborhood cultural events in a multi-purpose space would be a major asset to the neighborhood. This institution could help ensure that Homewood's revitalized commercial area continues to reflect community character and benefit local businesses first and foremost.

STRATEGY 7.5: PROVIDE ARCHITECTURAL/DESIGN SERVICES FOR REHABS OR NEW BUILD COMMERCIAL SPACE FOR HOMEWOOD BUSINESSES

TYPE Program

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

N/A

ACTION TEAM

Business and Innovation

Small businesses can benefit from pro-bono or low-cost design assistance when working to renovate or build a new commercial space. Design assistance may focus on new and formerly vacant commercial spaces, or may extend to a “facade improvement” program

that helps existing businesses improve their street presence as well.

The URA offers facade improvement programs to help commercial buildings or tenants improve their storefronts.

STRATEGY 7.6: PROVIDE PRO BONO OR DISCOUNTED ASSISTANCE FOR HOMEWOOD BUSINESS OWNERS INCLUDING LEGAL SERVICES, BUSINESS PLAN ASSISTANCE, AND MENTORING

TYPE Project

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

N/A

ACTION TEAM

Business and Innovation

Small business owners may need help reviewing leases, contracts, and other legal documents to ensure that they are receiving appropriate terms. HR issues including hiring and firing may also require legal assistance, depending on the situation. While it may be difficult to find ongoing legal assistance for a small business on a pro-bono basis, legal groups may be able to conduct workshops or seminars with Homewood small businesses to let them know what issues to look for in reviewing typical documents, structuring job descriptions, and more. The HBBA should survey

its members and Homewood residents to determine what legal questions they have, and then work with partners to schedule appropriate workshops for small business owners and entrepreneurs in the neighborhood.

Business plans are essential resources for entrepreneurs and small businesses. They serve multiple purposes; while many see them as tools for seeking investment, they also enable an entrepreneur to test their assumptions and ensure they have a path to success. Business plans encompass an operations and staffing plan, a financial plan, a marketing plan, and, most fundamentally, a “value proposition” that describes why this business will meet a need and generate revenue and sales.

Small Business Development Centers are funded by the Small Business Administration. They

provide technical assistance to small businesses for business planning, including workshops, seminars, and one-on-one assistance. Pittsburgh has multiple SBDCs at both Pitt and Duquesne University; the Carnegie Library also has a large number of sample business plans on file for businesses in different industries that can be used as reference materials.

Pittsburgh SCORE offers small-business owners the opportunity to immediately schedule a meeting with a local mentor who has experience in the needs and challenges of small businesses. HBBA should work with Pittsburgh SCORE to determine how best to structure a mentoring program for Homewood businesses.

The URA also offers a microloan program to assist with business development.

STRATEGY 7.7: FORMALIZE HBBA'S ROLE IN POLICY DECISIONS RELATED TO COMMERCIAL AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN HOMEWOOD

TYPE Project

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

N/A

ACTION TEAM

Business and Innovation

This strategy relies heavily on HBBA to take an active role in meeting the needs -- and advancing the interests -- of Homewood businesses. Formalizing HBBA's role in this process and recognizing HBBA as a counterpart in discussions with the City and URA will help ensure that Homewood has a business voice represented at

the table in discussions about commercial and business development. In order for HBBA to take on this role, adequate funding and resources will be essential, including a proposed full-time staff member.

The HBBA should organize a workshop or a series of interviews with long-time business partners in Homewood to begin the process of inventorying business development resources available to small and start-up businesses.

The interviews or workshop should focus on documenting all the resources that these partners are aware of in

Pittsburgh and the region; outreach should then continue to this "second level" of partners and resources until the HBBA has a complete inventory of available assistance for small businesses. The inventory should include the name of each institution, contact information, services available, cost (if any), and immediate opportunities for partnership. To ensure the inventory is kept up to date, the HBBA should work with interns or volunteers every 1-2 years to re-contact all the institutions on the list and confirm that they still provide the same services.

STRATEGY 7.8: IDENTIFY OR FUND FULL-TIME STAFF MEMBER (SUCH AS HOMEWOOD MAIN STREET MANAGER OR HBBA DIRECTOR) TO ACT AS LIAISON AMONG BUSINESS OWNERS, RESIDENTS, DEVELOPERS, AND CITY GOVERNMENT

TYPE Project

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

N/A

ACTION TEAM

Business and Innovation

Placing Homewood's vacant commercial properties back into productive use is a long-term and complex proposition. Many vacant buildings and vacant lots in Homewood's core commercial area are currently in the hands of the City and the URA; others are privately-owned. The expense of rehabilitating vacant properties or creating new ground-up buildings can be significant, especially when compared to the rents that are affordable to start-up and small businesses in Homewood.

A liaison between the City, URA, Homewood businesses, Homewood residents, and developers of commercial property could provide valuable coordination between these organizations; beyond coordination, however, the liaison should also be involved in seeking funding for projects that meet important community priorities for commercial space. In the immediate future, this role might include participating in the development and planning for the business incubator described in Business and Innovation Strategy 8.4.

GOAL 8: BRING HOMEWOOD'S REGULATORY FRAMEWORK INTO ALIGNMENT WITH PREVIOUS PLANNING AND SHAPE HOMEWOOD'S FUTURE GROWTH

STRATEGY 8.1: DEVELOP A NEIGHBORHOOD BUILD-OUT STRATEGY THAT INCLUDES LONG-TERM TARGETS AND INITIAL FOCUS AREAS, WITH A SUBSTANTIAL POPULATION GROWTH GOAL BY 2040

TYPE Policy

TIMELINE Long

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

African American Neighborhoods of Choice, Homewood Cluster Plan

ACTION TEAM

Urban Design and Development

Though gentrification and threats of displacement remain of significant concern to community members, in reality depopulation has been a much greater threat to the neighborhood over the previous decades.

The community's population has declined from around 35,000 people in the mid-1950s to near 6,000 today. A decline has

occurred in every decade and has not necessarily yet reached its low mark, though there are encouraging signs citywide that population loss has been stymied.

While a portion of this decline is related to the decrease in household size (i.e. people having fewer children and being less likely to live in multigenerational housing), a significant portion of this loss has been due to the loss of upper and middle class professional African-Americans choosing to live elsewhere in the city or in the suburbs.

This can be due to the availability of building stock, perception of crime or schools or any number of other

choices that make sense for individuals families, however, at a community level, this population loss causes a cycle of decline. Fewer people support fewer businesses, pay less in taxes, invest less in maintaining property and generally lowers the amount of resources available within the community.

A goal of increasing population within the community (defined further within Housing recommendation 12.3) across all incomes while grounded in retaining and growing existing households provides a baseline for community recovery that will provide more rooftops and resources to maintain and improve the community.

STRATEGY 8.2: UPDATE THE CITY’S ZONING CODE TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY’S GOALS. PURSUE ZONING CHANGES TO PROMOTE AFFORDABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ACCESS TO RENTAL INCOME FOR RESIDENTS

TYPE Policy
TIMELINE Short
CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS
 Homewood Cluster Plan
ACTION TEAM
 Urban Design and Development

The Cluster Plan details zoning changes that are key to implementing the community’s urban design goals. Recommended zoning changes addressed the following topical issues:

- Mixed-Use
- Local Neighborhood Commercial (LNC) Zone Extensions
- Hillside Preservation
- Residential Zoning Changes

The recommendations in these categories cover a variety of types of changes. In order to implement the changes details in these categories, a variety of zoning tools are needed. Recommendations include the following zoning changes:

- **Rezoning:** Rezoning is applying a different zone to the area in question. This simple change should be used when an existing zone in the City’s zoning code better meets the goals for an area or areas. An example is a situation where an area is zoned for single-family, but the community wishes for the area to contain a mix of uses in the future.
- **New Zones:** A new zone should be created when the goals for an area or

areas cannot be met by a zone that already exists in the City’s zoning code. An example is where an area is zoned for single-family uses, but all of the existing commercial zones allow much more intense activity than the community desires. In this case, a new, less-intense commercial zone should be created and applied.

- **Overlays:** An overlay zone creates a special zoning district, placed over an existing base zone or zones, that identifies special provisions in addition to those in the underlying base zone. This tool should be used when the underlying zones applied to an area meets most of the needs of the community, but needs slight adjustment within a certain area. Examples include overlay zones for environmental protection, for historical protection, and for using incentives to increase entitlements in certain areas.

Neighborhood Retail

As the Cluster Plan details, Homewood historically was home to a variety of small commercial business on the ground floor of buildings in residential areas. Since the creation of Pittsburgh zoning code in 1958, most the parcels within Homewood that have structures than can support small ground floor retail operations have been zoned for single family use, meaning

new businesses cannot inhabit these spaces. During the Cluster Planning process, the community voiced support for “Spot LNC Zoning”, or rezoning parcels with existing small commercial structures to the Local Neighborhood Commercial zone. As an alternative, the community also voiced support for creating a new Neighborhood Retail zone, that would allow a limited set of retail uses in existing small commercial spaces.

While both strategies will work towards the community’s goals of increasing neighborhood-serving commercial uses in residential areas, there are considerations for each. Using the “Spot LNC Zoning” strategy would be the most expeditious, given that the zone itself already exists and there is strong community support for making the change. A downfall to using this spot zoning strategy is that certain uses would then be allowed that may not be desired by residents. For example, in the Local Neighborhood Commercial zone banks are allowed, which do not typically provide services later in the evening, reducing many of the community benefits of small commercial uses. Other problematic uses in the LNC zone may be animal care (noise), small laboratory (dangerous chemicals), and vocational school (parking). In some case, the maximum height of three stories and 45 feet, and the 90% maximum light cover, may be to intense for surrounding residential areas. Spot zoning itself is generally considered problematic, as it does not take

into account compatibility with nearby uses, but in this case since the zones in question are so close in intensity, problems should be limited.

The other community-supported option, creating a new Neighborhood Retail zone would be more politically and administratively arduous, as the zone would be available for use through the City as part of its zoning code and have to go through proper review during its creation. However the benefits of creating a new zone include hand selecting a limited set of uses and creating specific parking requirements for the zone. An overlay is not recommended as an implementation strategy, as the underlying zoning is not conducive to the community's needs on the parcels in question.

LNC Extensions

The Local Neighborhood Commercial Zone is used selectively and inconsistently throughout the commercial areas of Homewood. Portions of North Homewood, Brushton and Frankstown Avenues are full of mixed-use buildings but

the LNC zoning district does not entirely capture all of the existing businesses along those streets.

LNC zoning along Frankstown Avenue, at the center of the community and with the most potential to form a strong commercial corridor, is especially disjointed. During the Cluster Planning process and through Business and Innovation Action Team, the community voiced support for using LNC zoning to extend and fill in gaps in the commercial corridor along Frankstown, Homewood, and Brushton Avenues in order to create a walkable and mixed use central core.

Rezoning gaps along the corridors using LNC zoning is the quickest and easiest route towards implementing the community's vision, as there is strong support from the community for these changes and is using an existing zone from the City's zoning code. Uses that may be considered problematic in residential areas as described above are less of a concern in more intense commercial areas such as along

these avenues, and maximum lot coverage is appropriate for the area.

One potential problem with LNC zoning in this area is the three story, 45 feet maximum height limit. As demand for commercial and residential units in the neighborhood increases, the neighborhood may be able to support buildings that are four stories. The Urban Neighborhood Commercial District (UNC) allows for more intense development within 1,500 feet of the East Busway Homewood Station, but this does not reach the important commercial corridors in the neighborhood. In order for the community and existing land owners to capture the benefit of new development, an overlay should be considered for this area that allows taller buildings, perhaps in exchange for providing community amenities or affordable housing. If this overlay is created, it should contain compatibility considerations for areas that directly about residentially-zoned parcels.

What is an LNC?

The LNC, or Local Neighborhood Commercial District is intended to:

- Maintain the small scale and rich diversity of neighborhood-serving commercial districts;
- Promote and enhance the quality of life in adjacent residential areas; and
- Reduce the adverse impacts that are sometimes associated with commercial uses in order to promote compatibility with residential development.¹

This zoning category allows for small ground floor retail operations in residential areas.

¹ Pittsburgh Code of Ordinances, updated 1/30/2020, "904.02. - LNC, Local Neighborhood Commercial District."

Hillside Preservation

Homewood is home to many steep and hilly areas, particularly to the north and east. These areas are difficult to service and to maintain structures on, and therefore during the Cluster Planning process the community voiced support for stabilizing and reforesting these slopes. The Hillside zoning district that exists within the City's zoning code is a designation that drastically restricts the uses allowed, and could be applied to these parcels as a way to preserve and maintain them.

While the community voiced support for this idea, they also recognized that preserving nearby hillsides is less of a priority than commercially-focused zoning issues discussed previously. One potential problem with rezoning certain parcels in this manner are any legal issues surrounding the drastic downzoning that results. However, this problem may be less of an issue if the majority of the properties are City-owned. It is also possible that the cluster plan did not fully understand the nature of the Hillside zone, in that it is actually a less restrictive residential zone.

Residential Zoning Changes

During the cluster planning process, the community relayed that the current Homewood zoning map does not match existing on-the-ground uses.

Historic single-family areas are in some cases zoned for high-density residential or mixed use, and in other cases business and industrial areas are zoned with less intensity, making it hard to develop community-benefiting uses on these parcels. The most expedient solution to this problem would be an intensive mapping effort that first maps the existing conditions in Homewood, and then rezones the parcels to match existing uses and structures. Then, changes can be considered as appropriate. Some of the changes suggested during the HCCP process included:

- Ensuring that residential zoning permits the conversion of existing large single-family structures into two-family structures that incorporate a rental and an ownership unit.
- Ensuring that residential zoning permits the construction of Accessory

Dwelling Units (ADUs) that can enable homeowners to benefit from ongoing rental income or promote multigenerational households.

If suggested recommendations are implemented to Homewood's zoning, it may increase Neighborhood Retail, LNC Extensions, Hillside Preservation and Residential Zoning. To ensure that development is equitable while increasing density and achieving community goals the Office of Mayor William Peduto created the Performance Measures "p4" metric. p4 is based on a central unifying framework: People, Planet, Place, and Performance. p4 was launched in 2015 to create a new sustainable, innovative, and inclusive model for development and design. p4 aims to establish Pittsburgh as a "city of the future." p4 has 12 Performance Measures ("the Measures"). Each Measure contains a set of metrics that together, provide a comprehensive evaluation tool for the consistent assessment of real estate development projects in the city of Pittsburgh to advance sustainable and equitable development practices.

STRATEGY 8.3: ASSESS FEASIBILITY OF A NEIGHBORHOOD MARKET OR SMALL SCALE GROCERY STORE

TYPE Project

TIMELINE Medium

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Homewood Cluster Plan

ACTION TEAM

Business and Innovation

A neighborhood market or small-scale grocery store would be a major asset to Homewood’s residents. Access to fresh food is essential for community health and well-being, and while Homewood may not be able to support a large grocery store, a small-format store might be feasible.

The Homewood-Brushton Business Association (HBBA) should work with the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) to issue an RFP for a consultant to evaluate opportunities for this type of fresh-food store to succeed in the neighborhood. The study should consider non-traditional business models including co-op ownership, incentive provision to existing corner stores to expand their offerings, and other mechanisms that could enhance fresh food accessibility in Homewood.

The HBBA may also work with the URA to contact local philanthropic institutions that could be able to contribute funding and expertise to the feasibility assessment.

If a small-format neighborhood market or grocery store is not found to be a viable option at this time, strategies including neighborhood buying clubs (Community 1.1) and situating healthy products at the front of existing stores (Community 1.5) may be alternative interim options. As Homewood grows in the future, grocery store viability should be reassessed on a regular basis.

GOAL 9: MANAGE VACANT PROPERTIES COMPREHENSIVELY

STRATEGY 9.1: REVIEW PUSH-TO-GREEN PARCELS WITH COMMUNITY IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH LONG-TERM GREENING USES WHERE APPROPRIATE

TYPE Project

TIMELINE Medium

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Pittsburgh Vacant Lot Toolkit,
Cluster Plan, OpenSpacePGH

ACTION TEAM

Urban Design and Development

A subset of vacant lots within the community should be removed from the land market and devoted to green infrastructure, food access, parks and open space and other greening activities. The Department of City Planning has evaluated these parcels to “push to green.” Criteria for selecting these vacant lots included:

- Irregular or undevelopable lots
- Sites that already house successful long-term greening projects
- Adjacent land uses that would support greening projects
- Low future development potential
- Steep slopes or undermined sites
- Creation of habitat opportunities
- Soil test results

Additionally, both the City and the URA have created Adopt-a-Lot and Farm-a-Lot programs to make vacant publicly owned lots available to community members.

Identifying properties for long-term greening will help stakeholders like community gardeners and urban farmers justify their up-front and long-term investments, but also reduces the number of vacant and underutilized lots in the community, directing investment to other areas.

STRATEGY 9.2: APPLY FOR GRANT FUNDING TO SECURE IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE MATERIALS

<p>TYPE Program</p> <p>TIMELINE Short & Long</p> <p>CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS</p> <p>Homewood-Brushton Community Coalition, Operation Better Block (OBB)</p> <p>ACTION TEAM</p> <p>Public Health and Public Safety</p>	<p>Funding is required to maintain future development of the blighted lots. Local nonprofits will need to apply to funding to help design and maintain the lots. Once money is obtained, nonprofits can work with residents to manage funding and adequately utilize it over time.</p>	<p>Potential funding sources include Love Your Block grants, as well as encouraging neighborhood-based contractors to apply for contracts through City Cut program.</p>
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STRATEGY 9.3: WHERE APPROPRIATE, TRANSFER VACANT LOTS TO ADJACENT PROPERTY OWNERS THROUGH THE SIDYARD PROGRAM

<p>TYPE Program</p> <p>TIMELINE Short, Medium, & Long</p> <p>CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS</p> <p>Pittsburgh Vacant Lot Toolkit</p> <p>ACTION TEAM</p> <p>Urban Design and Development</p>	<p>The City of Pittsburgh and the URA have developed the Sideyard program, which allow landowners to take possession of City or URA-owned vacant lots adjacent to their own properties if certain expectations are met. Another program offered is Adopt-A-Lot, which was established by City Council and implemented by the Department of City Planning to allow residents a process to access city owned vacant lots for food, flower, or rain gardens. Interested and eligible</p>	<p>homeowners will be assisted in applying for sideyards where appropriate. The City should work to transfer as many lots as feasible to homeowners who are willing and able to maintain lots adjacent to their homes. The City should consider working with a local non-profit or neighborhood organization to conduct a “blitz” that would transfer as much of this property as appropriate in order to improve the maintenance of vacant lots and reduce the City’s costs.</p>
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STRATEGY 9.4: PARTNER WITH PERMITS, LICENSING, AND INSPECTION TO PRIORITIZE PROPERTIES FOR DEMOLITION AND ENSURE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND NOTICE

<p>TYPE Policy</p> <p>TIMELINE Short, Medium, & Long</p> <p>CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>ACTION TEAM</p> <p>Urban Design and Development</p>	<p>Adopting and publishing a formal policy to categorize City or URA owned properties as well as privately-owned vacant and condemned properties in order of priority for demolition and clarifying the public notice and engagement processes will clarify the process for the demolition of properties and ensure that demolition happens in a considered, clear process.</p>	<p>The Land Bank of Kansas City Missouri and the Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation have each created specific ranking systems that take into account community preferences and ensure a transparent process for the demolition of buildings.</p>
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STRATEGY 9.5: INITIATE 311 BLITZ TO REPORT BUILDINGS AS VACANT, REQUEST BOARDING UP WHERE NEEDED, AND ATTEMPT TO CONTACT OWNERS

<p>TYPE Program</p> <p>TIMELINE Short & Long</p> <p>CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS</p> <p>Operation Better Block</p> <p>ACTION TEAM</p> <p>Public Health and Public Safety</p>	<p>Develop a protocol to contact owners of vacant land and buildings to attempt to mitigate blighted properties throughout the community. Identify contact person at the city to notify</p>	<p>owner of misdemeanor. Seek out guidance from Action Housing Inc. on how to best approach notification. Consider replicating Hilltop Alliance's Property Stabilization Program.</p>
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GOAL 10: ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY LED AND DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY 10.1: TARGET DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT SOUTH OF FRANKSTOWN AVENUE IN HOMEWOOD SOUTH AND NEAR NEIGHBORHOOD GATEWAYS TO IMPROVE DEVELOPMENT CONDITIONS AND CREATE “TIPPING-POINTS” FOR REDEVELOPMENT

TYPE Policy & Project
TIMELINE Short & Medium
CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS
 Homewood Cluster Plan
ACTION TEAM
 Urban Design and Development

In a community with significant vacancy and numerous needs, the question of where to direct investment for maximum impact can be a difficult one. Research, including work by urban designer Kevin Lynch, has shown that corner properties

can have an outsized impact on the perceptions of urban spaces. As such, extra effort should be made to promote the redevelopment of corner properties, especially those on the major roads.

Specifically, the redevelopment of the corners of Homewood and Frankstown and Homewood and Hamilton should be major priorities for the community. While this approach can be more complex for non-profit developers (developing in a linear fashion can provide certain cost savings), it has

been shown to have more impact on catalyzing market rate development and on improving the perception of investment in the community. Additionally, expanding off the recent development in Homewood South (Senior Station, Susquehanna Homes) will continue to catalyze investment. Major gateways to the neighborhood on the west (Hamilton and Frankstown at Fifth) and on the east (Susquehanna at Rosedale) also present prime opportunities for development and investment.

STRATEGY 10.2: THE URA SHOULD WORK WITH THE COLLABORATIVE TO DETERMINE A PIPELINE OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENT SITES AND REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFPs)

TYPE Program
TIMELINE Short, Medium, & Long
CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS
 Homewood Cluster Plan
ACTION TEAM
 Urban Design and Development

The City of Pittsburgh and the URA may desire to step up efforts to transfer existing inventory of vacant land to new ownership in order to meet the goals of UDD recommendation 1.1. One mechanism that has been successfully utilized by the URA is the crafting of RFPs to sell larger pieces of property. The

advantage of an RFP process over indiscriminate sales is that the RFP allows the URA and the community to define criteria for successful redevelopment, such as mixed-income housing, job generation, stormwater management and others.

STRATEGY 10.3: ENCOURAGE NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATED DEVELOPMENT OF LAND THROUGH TOOLS SUCH AS PITTSBURGH PROPERTY RESERVE AND THE LAND BANK

TYPE Program & Project
TIMELINE Short, Medium, & Long
CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS
 Homewood Cluster Plan
ACTION TEAM
 N/A

The Land Bank and Pittsburgh Property Reserve provide additional options for community lead development, or the establishment of a community land trust to ensure long term community control and affordability in the

neighborhood. The provision of land can have the dual benefit of reducing city liability on vacant land and giving the community more control over the scale of development within the community and reduces the costs of that development.

STRATEGY 10.4: REGISTER THE HOMEWOOD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE AS A REGISTERED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

TYPE Policy
TIMELINE Short
CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS
 N/A
ACTION TEAM
 N/A

A Registered Community Organization (RCO) is a formal designation given to community organizations by the City of Pittsburgh which provides additional benefits and legitimization in the eyes of the City.

In order to register, the Collaborative will need to follow a number of requirements, which are available at the City of Pittsburgh website, and include registration as a 501(c)3, bylaws, a statement of purpose, regular meetings and open elections.

STRATEGY 10.5: SET STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY BENEFITS THAT INCLUDE HIRING HOMEWOOD RESIDENTS AND UTILIZING HOMEWOOD-BASED BUSINESSES

TYPE Policy
TIMELINE Short, Medium, & Long
CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS
 N/A
ACTION TEAM
 N/A

For projects in which the public incentives or partnership are required, including the sale of land, it is legally feasible to require that developers, construction companies and other vendors to utilize a percentage of Homewood-based businesses and/or to require a certain percentage of employees are Homewood residents. Partnerships should be developed between potential employers and job training programs to ensure a pipeline of

available residents with needed job skills, including skilled labor such as plumbing, electric and brickwork.

In advance of potential development projects, the URA should provide information and capacity building opportunities to Homewood-based businesses and facilitate partnerships and mentoring between minority-owned businesses and larger corporations.

GOAL 11: RENOVATE EXISTING VACANT HOUSING TO PROVIDE HOMEWOOD RESIDENTS WITH PATHWAYS TO HOMEOWNERSHIP

STRATEGY 11.1: FOCUS ON REHABILITATING THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF VACANT HOUSING STOCK: 1) DIVIDING LARGE HOMES INTO OWNERSHIP AND RENTAL UNITS TO PROVIDE OWNERS WITH RENTAL INCOME; 2) DUPLEXES THAT CAN PROVIDE OWNERS WITH RENTAL INCOME, AND 3) SINGLE FAMILY HOMES

TYPE Project

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Cluster Plan, Housing Development Strategy: The Community of Homewood

ACTION TEAM

Housing

Homewood has numerous vacant single-family and two-family homes; many of the vacant single-family homes are large, with some reaching 2,000 or even 2,500 square feet, particularly in the northern portion of the neighborhood. While Homewood generally has a larger average household size than the rest of Pittsburgh, these extremely large single-family homes can be a burden to maintain, heat, and cool for families with a limited housing budget. Many seniors in Homewood also own large homes that are hard for them to maintain as they age and with a fixed monthly income. Large vacant homes are also more costly to rehabilitate than smaller homes, making it harder for neighborhood development groups to find adequate subsidy

and qualified buyers for these large properties if sold as single-family homes.

In order to preserve historic housing stock and serve Homewood's population, as well as new market-rate buyers, the Housing Action Team and community members agreed that the following types of vacant properties should be prioritized for rehabilitation investments.

- Divide large homes into ownership and rental units to provide owners with rental income. This strategy should be pursued when rehabilitating large, vacant single-family homes; it could also apply to owner-occupied homes where the owner is on a fixed income or having trouble keeping up with

their housing payments. This strategy should be pursued together with Strategy 11.2 to ensure that new owners are aware of their obligations as both owners and landlords; it should also be pursued together with Strategy 11.3 to ensure that potential homebuyers can secure mortgages for these new two-family properties.

- Rehabilitate duplexes that can provide owners with rental income. While

two-family homes are less common in Homewood than large single-family homes, those that exist should also be prioritized for rehabilitation according to geographic priorities established in the Urban Design and Development chapter of this report and sale to owner-occupants who can rent out the other unit in the property.

- Rehabilitate single-family homes. Vacant single-family homes should

be a third priority for rehabilitation. Because there are many vacant single-family homes in need of renovation, rehabilitation should proceed according to geographic priorities established in the Urban Design and Development chapter of this report.

STRATEGY 11.2: PROVIDE HOMEOWNERSHIP EDUCATION FOR HOMEWOOD RESIDENTS WHO ARE WORKING TOWARD BUYING A HOME OR WHO ALREADY HAVE A HOME AND NEED ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

TYPE Program

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Housing Development Strategy: The Community of Homewood, Pittsburgh Roadmap for Inclusive Innovation

ACTION TEAM

Housing

Homeownership education is important for all first-time homebuyers, and is often a requirement for homebuyers who are receiving subsidies or assistance from government or non-profit entities. Education programs help homebuyers understand how to save to meet all of their likely expenses, including mortgage costs, property taxes, and insurance, as well as maintenance expenses. Education programs can also help homebuyers understand how to conduct proactive maintenance in their homes and keep costs low by choosing energy-efficient lighting and appliances. In Homewood, these programs could also help

connect buyers with resources such as weatherization programs, mortgage lenders, and credit counseling if needed.

Renters who are seeking to purchase a home are the primary audience for these programs, but existing owners who need assistance with budgeting and maintenance, and heirs to generational homes may also benefit from these programs. Education providers should also connect existing homeowners who need additional assistance to the homeowner stabilization services that are discussed in Housing Strategy 14.1.

STRATEGY 11.3: GET BANKS' BUY-IN TO PROVIDE CLOSING COST/DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE AND APPROPRIATE LOAN PRODUCTS, AND COORDINATE WITH PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE WITH BANK FEES AND DOWN PAYMENTS

TYPE Program

TIMELINE Medium

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Housing Development Strategy:
The Community of Homewood,
Anatomy of a Neighborhood:
Homewood in the 21st Century

ACTION TEAM

Housing

The Homewood Collaborative should work with Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group to convene local banks, credit unions, and Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) to inform them about objectives for growing homeownership and rehabilitating vacant properties in the neighborhood and secure these banks' buy-in to help advance this plan. Some particular objectives of these conversations should include:

- Identify appropriate loan products for Homewood homebuyers, including credit requirements and potential housing counseling opportunities.
- Ensure mortgage products are available for two-family properties that incorporate an owner-occupied unit and a rental unit.
- Seek to work with banks that will provide closing cost assistance and/or down payment assistance to homebuyers to help defray up-front costs of home purchase.

These efforts should be coordinated with outreach to additional potential sources of financial assistance for homebuyers to supplement the assistance that banks and financial institutions are able to provide. These sources include:

- **URA:** The URA works with local developers and community development corporations to sponsor rehabilitation of homes throughout Pittsburgh through their Housing Recovery Program - Developer (HRP-D). For these HRP-D homes, developers can work with the URA to offer 0% interest "soft second" mortgages to homebuyers that do not need to be repaid until the home is sold. The amount of these mortgages varies and is worked out between the developer and the URA when the project is designed. For the URA also offers \$3,000 in closing-cost assistance to HRP-D homebuyers who earn less 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI).
- **Housing Opportunity Fund (HOF):** The City's HOF will begin making investments in housing in 2018 with \$10 million that has been committed from the City operating budget. An advisory board for the HOF has recently been appointed. While it is not yet clear what the HOF priorities will be, the

Homewood Collaborative should advocate for this funding to benefit Homewood homebuyers through potential closing cost and down payment assistance, or subsidies for rehabilitation of vacant properties to reduce the final cost to homebuyers.

- **Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America (NACA):** Participants in NACA's Housing Purchase program receive housing counseling and then have access to mortgages with preferential terms. NACA participants' closing costs and down payments are fully paid by the mortgage lenders.

GOAL 12: USE INNOVATIVE AND TARGETED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT TO MEET THE NEEDS OF SPECIFIC HOUSEHOLD DEMOGRAPHICS IN HOMEWOOD

STRATEGY 12.1: MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP QUALITY SENIOR HOUSING OPTIONS WITH A RANGE OF AFFORDABILITY AND OWNERSHIP OPTIONS INCLUDING CREATIVE SOLUTIONS SUCH AS COMMUNAL LIVING AND SERVICE PROVISION

TYPE Project

TIMELINE Long

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Cluster Plan, Affordable Housing Task Force Findings & Recommendations to Mayor William Peduto and the Pittsburgh City Council

ACTION TEAM

Housing

Seniors are approximately 20% of Homewood's population; many seniors are long-time homeowners who are confronting difficulties with maintaining large, two-story single-family homes and may need alternate housing options to stay in the neighborhood.

Some may be able to age in place with the help of home repair and adaptation programs. However, others may need additional support. Providing high-quality, affordable senior housing in Homewood will help keep elders in the community and preserve family bonds.

Residents and stakeholders want to ensure that senior housing has a home-like feel, and would like to avoid housing elders in large, impersonal high-rise developments. However, much of the funding available for senior housing favors large, multi-unit development projects. Therefore, residents and community development entities need to work with architects,

designers, the City, and the URA to come up with well-designed, attractive senior housing that remains competitive for funding.

Opportunities may include attractive mid-rise developments, groups of four-to-six unit buildings with green space and access to retail, or similar types of design that accommodate density while remaining connected to community. These housing options should be focused on vacant lots near LNC zoned properties.

STRATEGY 12.2: PROVIDE A BROADER DIVERSITY OF HOUSING TYPES, INCLUDING MORE HIGH-QUALITY MARKET-RATE AND AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING UNITS, AND OPTIONS FOR SMALLER HOUSEHOLDS. TARGET A FINAL NEIGHBORHOOD COMPOSITION OF ONE-THIRD AFFORDABLE HOUSING (<60% AMI), ONE-THIRD WORKFORCE HOUSING (60-80% AMI), AND ONE-THIRD MARKET-RATE HOUSING (OVER 80% AMI)

TYPE Project

TIMELINE Long

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Cluster Plan, African American Neighborhoods of Choice Report, Housing Development Strategy: The Community of Homewood

ACTION TEAM

Housing

As Homewood grows from its current population of 6,500, the housing stock will need to grow commensurately and offer a diversity of housing opportunities for residents. Homewood residents see opportunity for growth in three key areas: preserving and growing housing quality for existing residents and their families; attracting a portion of people who are migrating to Pittsburgh; and attracting families who have moved to the suburbs back to the city. The housing needs and desires of these populations require a diverse housing stock to successfully accommodate growth.

- Preserve and grow housing quality for existing residents and their families: Homewood’s average household size is currently over three people per household, compared to Pittsburgh’s average household size of 2.12. Also, approximately 30% of Homewood’s residents are children, compared to 16% of Pittsburgh’s residents. With larger families and more children than the city as a whole, Homewood has an opportunity to grow its population internally if the neighborhood can provide a high quality of life, good education, high-quality housing, and long-term opportunities for

today’s children. However, currently, too many families are cost-burdened and living with low income levels that make it difficult to afford quality housing. The median household income in Homewood is \$19,642, which allows for a housing payment of approximately \$500 per month.

Constructing **high-quality, deeply affordable, family-sized rental options** would benefit many of Homewood’s families at the moment -- while quality education, workforce development, job training, and homeownership education support will help families grow their current and future incomes and move into **owner-occupied housing**.

- Attract a portion of people who are migrating to Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh has seen an uptick in young workers moving to the city to take advantage of job opportunities in the growing local economy. Many of these young workers are singles or couples, ages 25-34, with no children. Providing **market-rate one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments** with quick transit access to downtown and walkable access to neighborhood amenities will help

attract these residents to Homewood. These young residents may **transition to homeownership** as they deepen their roots in the area.

- Attract families who have moved to the suburbs back to the city: A longer-term option for growth is to attract families who have moved to the suburbs, but have roots in Homewood or nearby neighborhoods, back to the city. The Homewood Collaborative

will need to work with residents, faith leaders, and other social networks to convey the progress being made in Homewood and the opportunities that come with living near jobs and services in the city. Depending on their stage in life and family size, these residents may be looking for a variety of housing options, from **apartments to homeownership options to senior housing**.

By 2040, Homewood residents would like to see housing options that include one-third affordable housing for residents making less than 60% of area median income; one-third workforce housing for residents making 60-80% of area median income; and one-third market rate housing for residents making 80% of area median income or more.

STRATEGY 12.3: SUPPORT SINGLE-PARENT HEADED HOUSEHOLDS THROUGH DEVELOPMENTS THAT INCLUDE SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AND COMMUNAL RESOURCES FOR SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES

TYPE Program & Project
TIMELINE Medium
CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS
 Affordable Housing Task Force Findings & Recommendations to Mayor William Peduto and the Pittsburgh City Council, Housing Development Strategy: The Community of Homewood, African American Neighborhoods of Choice Report
ACTION TEAM
 Housing

Single parents face numerous barriers and challenges: basic needs such as housing, food, and clothing must come out of a single income; child care needs are greater while child care remains costly; and earning an adequate income while obtaining higher education may be difficult or impossible without adequate support.

There are many examples nationally of single housing that combines with supportive services to help single parents afford housing while receiving job training, furthering their education, or looking for a new job.

For example, the Jeremiah Program, with locations in six cities nationwide, provides affordable housing for low-income single mothers who are working toward a college degree.

Young children receive on-site early childhood education, and all mothers also take empowerment and life-skills training to help them succeed. Volunteers also connect mothers to local resources and job opportunities.

Replicating a similar supportive model for Homewood's single parents will require resources to fund affordable housing development, as well as ongoing resources and partnerships to fund and administer supportive services for families and children. Partners would include child care providers, job training and/or higher education providers, early childhood education providers, and volunteers.

GOAL 13: IMPLEMENT GREEN BUILDING AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS AND STANDARDS TO REDUCE COST BURDENS FOR EXISTING AND FUTURE RESIDENTS

STRATEGY 13.1: ENSURE THAT ALL NEW DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, AS WELL AS SUBSTANTIAL REHABILITATIONS OF VACANT PROPERTIES, INCLUDE ENERGY EFFICIENCY STANDARDS THAT HELP KEEP THE PROPERTY'S UTILITY BILLS AFFORDABLE

TYPE Policy

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Pittsburgh Climate Action Plan version 2.0, Affordable Housing Task Force Findings & Recommendations to Mayor William Peduto and the Pittsburgh City Council

ACTION TEAM

Housing

As existing homes receive adaptations to lower the energy burden for residents, stakeholders also wanted to make sure that new properties being added to the housing stock are energy-efficient and that new residents have low energy costs. The Homewood Collaborative plans to adopt a set of energy-efficiency guidelines for new development that would apply for Collaborative members, and that the Collaborative would advocate for in all private developments in the neighborhood. At minimum, these guidelines would include:

- Basic weatherization guidelines for properties that ensure that the "envelope" or exterior of the home is fully sealed
- Requirements for use of energy-efficient appliances
- A potential requirement to conduct an energy audit on completed homes and report the result to potential homebuyers or tenants.

Participants in the planning process were divided on the use of more complex technologies such as solar panels, noting that these can be expensive to maintain and to fix if they break. Residents and Collaborative members also noted that incentives or funding

sources may be needed to help incentivize private developers to follow these guidelines, and to help community development organizations afford any additional costs associated with the guidelines (such as the cost of energy audits).

There is an opportunity to coordinate this strategy with training programs for Homewood students and residents in green building and green technologies.

STRATEGY 13.2: HELP EXISTING HOMEOWNERS AND LANDLORDS MAKE THEIR UNITS ENERGY- AND WATER-EFFICIENT TO REDUCE COST BURDENS ON EXISTING HOMEWOOD RESIDENTS

TYPE Program & Project
TIMELINE Medium
CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

ONEPGH: Resilient Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Climate Action Plan version 2.0

ACTION TEAM

Housing

Many Homewood homeowners and renters are currently “cost-burdened,” meaning that they pay more than 30% of their income for housing costs. High energy and water bills for homeowners and renters can contribute to this cost burden. According to a 2018 news release from the Sierra Club, “Pittsburgh has one of the highest energy burdens for low-income households of any city in the US. Nationally, 3.5 percent of a family’s income is spent on energy utilities. In Pittsburgh, that number is 9.5 percent; over a quarter of low-income families pay 16 percent of their income on energy bills.”⁸

To decrease this burden in Homewood, the Homewood Collaborative should work to connect landlords, renters, and homeowners with programs designed to improve properties and decrease utility costs. These programs include:

- Grassroots Green Homes: This program is a collaboration between Conservation Consultants Inc. and Operation Better Block to give 300 Homewood families the tools and knowledge to reduce their energy usage by up to 15%, all at no cost to the participants. Sign-up for the program began in May 2018 and is ongoing as of the writing of this plan.
- Duquesne Light Company Home Weatherization: This program, administered by ACTION Housing, offers free home weatherization services such as window caulking, furnace tune-ups, and more services that can help decrease utility bills. Households earning up to 200% of federal poverty guidelines are eligible, and renters may participate with their landlords’ permission.
- Solar United Neighbors of Pennsylvania: This organization is working to organize “solar co-ops” of 50-100 homeowners who all want solar panels installed on their homes. These neighbors can then qualify for a discounted rate on solar panel installation.
- Rain Barrel Program: As part of their work to decrease flooding and basement backups in the Nine Mile Run watershed, Operation Better Block is distributing rain barrels to Homewood residents, which capture water that can be used to water lawns and outdoor spaces. Rain barrels can therefore help residents decrease water usage and save on water bills.

8. Sierra Club, “Energy Efficiency Program Launches in Pittsburgh’s Homewood Neighborhood,” <https://www.sierraclub.org/press-releases/2018/05/energy-efficiency-program-launches-pittsburghs-homewood-neighborhood>

GOAL 14: PREVENT DISPLACEMENT THROUGH AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, PROACTIVE POLICY, AND STABILIZATION OF EXISTING RESIDENTS

STRATEGY 14.1: GROW AND FUND HOMEOWNER STABILIZATION PROGRAMS FOR EXISTING HOMEOWNERS, INCLUDING HOME REPAIRS, TANGLED TITLE SERVICES AND PROPERTY TAX ASSISTANCE

TYPE Program & Project
TIMELINE Short
CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS
 Cluster Plan, Housing Development Strategy: The Community of Homewood
ACTION TEAM
 Housing

Homewood has a high concentration of historic homes: fifty-seven percent of the housing stock was built before 1939. These aging homes often have high maintenance costs and are not often designed with concepts like Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance or energy efficiency in mind. Home repair programs help to stabilize homeowners in place by helping them afford necessary repairs to

their houses. These programs can assist seniors with aging adaptations, low- and moderate-income owners who need help with major repairs like a new roof, or other types of residents who need assistance.

Residents suggested working with and building on the efforts of Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh. Rebuilding Together focuses on Homewood as ones of its three “Impact Neighborhoods” in Pittsburgh. In 2017, Rebuilding Together was able to rehabilitate 116 homes across those three neighborhoods. In 2018, with increased funding from the Federal Home Loan Bank and ongoing corporate and philanthropic donations, Rebuilding Together anticipates repairing approximately 150

homes in total, with an average budget of nearly \$25,000 per home.

Maintaining or increasing this funding level in future years would help to ensure that Homewood residents can continue to receive significant benefit from Rebuilding Together’s work. The Housing Action Team and Homewood Collaborative should consult Rebuilding Together to determine opportunities for joint grants and funding applications that would expand Rebuilding Together’s resources to operate in Homewood.

Rebuilding Together can only complete home repairs for homeowners who are current or on a payment plan on their property taxes. Many of the homeowners who are most in need of repair work in

Homewood are also behind on property tax payments. Therefore, coordinating home repair efforts with property tax assistance as described next will be essential to ensure that residents can take advantage of repair services.

A comprehensive program to stabilize homeowners in Homewood must also deal with other challenges beyond home repair, including “tangled title” assistance for generational homes, property tax assistance for seniors, and homestead exemption awareness and sign-ups.

- **Inherited Property and Tangled Titles:** Generational properties in Homewood can have what is known as “tangled titles” if one generation of owners does not make a will specifying their intention to leave the property to a certain heir when they pass on. Without a will, a property technically belongs to all descendants of the previous owners, not just the heir or heirs who are living in the property. Occupants who face tangled title issues can be unable to receive financial assistance, home repair services, homestead exemptions, or sell their properties if they do not receive appropriate legal assistance to get the property title in the occupant’s name. Sometimes, heirs may not realize that they have inherited property or may abandon inherited

properties due to lack of resources to maintain or sell them. Providing proactive assistance to Homewood residents and absentee owners to resolve tangled title situations will help stabilize families living in generational housing, and to reduce the number of abandoned properties with tangled title situations. Currently, Operation Better Block provides tangled title services, but resources are only sufficient to help about 20 existing owners per year. Funding this program with additional resources would help stabilize more neighborhood homeowners.

- **Property Tax Assistance:** Seniors in Pennsylvania who make less than \$35,000 per year are eligible for a 30% rebate on their property taxes up to a total of \$650 per year. Ensuring that senior homeowners are aware of and sign up for this rebate can help decrease property tax burdens and keep seniors in their homes. However, homeowners who are not seniors may also need assistance paying off property tax burdens, and there is no clear program to assist with this. The Homewood Collaborative should work to create a plan to provide property tax assistance to long-time, income-qualified owners and heirs to generational properties to help stabilize residents.

- **Homestead Exclusions:** All homeowners in Allegheny County are eligible to sign up for a “homestead exclusion” for their primary residence. This exclusion exempts \$18,000 in home value from being considered in Allegheny County residents’ property taxes -- which saves each owner approximately \$85 per year. The City of Pittsburgh offers additional rebates to homestead exclusion participants that can total up to approximately \$400 per year. However, not all homeowners in Homewood are signed up for the exclusion. Conducting direct outreach to homeowners and helping them to sign up for the program will help decrease property tax burdens.
- LOOP
- Payment plans
- Tax and rent rebates
- Regional Housing Legal Services
- Increase the Utilization of the 4% Tax Credit (LIHTC) to encourage more production of mixed-income housing in the neighborhood.
- Expand the City’s Inclusionary Zoning Pilot Ordinance to Homewood so that new unsubsidized developments are also mixed-income.

STRATEGY 14.2: CREATE CHANNELS FOR EXISTING ORGANIZATIONS WHO AID WITH EMERGENCY FINANCIAL NEED TO SHARE BEST PRACTICES AND RESOURCES

TYPE Policy

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

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

ACTION TEAM

Workforce Development

Emergency financial need can become a reality for any family upon losing a job or facing unexpected situations such as medical bills or car trouble. This reality can especially affect those who are working to receive new educational credentials or job training, because many face additional tuition expenses,

or are earning less income due to time away from regular work. Creating pathways for Homewood organizations who assist with emergency financial need to address these issues will help keep residents in training or educational programs and enable them to complete their required credentials.



GOAL 15: CREATE HOMEWOOD-SPECIFIC DESIGN STANDARDS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY 15.1: ENSURE CONTEXTUALLY APPROPRIATE, SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

TYPE Policy

TIMELINE Short

CONNECTION TO PREVIOUS PLANS

Homewood Cluster Plan

ACTION TEAM

Urban Design and Development

Develop Homewood specific design standards for new development, including both commercial and residential development, and for streetscapes and other urban design elements, all tied to a community branding. Ensure the standards are flexible enough as not to constrain development, but that standards ensure the quality of construction and development that is appropriate to Homewood.

Within the Homewood Design Standards, include standards for sustainable development

requirements. Consider requiring higher building standards or LEED standards for development to ensure that costs for building maintenance and costs to owners and renters are kept reasonable over the life of building projects.

Ensure that design standards are applied to all development, both affordable and market rate, to ensure that all new development meets standards for quality.