Pittsburgh's Response to Deindustrialization: Renaissance, Renewal and Recovery, 1946-1999

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Pittsburgh’s Response to Deindustrialization: 
Renaissance, Renewal and Recovery

by

Mariel P. Isaacson

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
Abstract

Pittsburgh’s Response to Deindustrialization: Renaissance, Renewal and Recovery, 1946-1999

by

Mariel P. Isaacson

Adviser: Thomas Kessner

Pittsburgh was able to gradually ease its transition into a post-industrial economy in the second half of the twentieth century because of an elite-driven planning movement known as the Pittsburgh Renaissance. The Renaissance first addressed the physical failings of the city and sought state legislation that would support further urban redevelopment immediately following World War II. While the physical improvements were underway, Renaissance organizers began working with the University of Pittsburgh to upgrade Pitt’s educational and recreational facilities so that it would become an engine for the city’s future economic growth. City support for improved facilities, especially those pertaining to the growing medical center and scientific research programs, laid the foundation for the city’s post-industrial economy.

Evolving plans for a new municipal amphitheater also began in the mid-1940s, but merged with the federal urban renewal program in the mid-1950s. The intention was to turn Pittsburgh into a business tourism destination that would highlight the city’s cultural assets with an adjacent Center for the Arts, but the finished facility failed to meet the expectations planners set for it and constituted a transformative experience for the Renaissance movement. When Renaissance planning resumed in the late 1970s, it returned without centralized control, but it shared the goals of promoting Downtown Pittsburgh as a business center, diversifying the city’s economy away from steel, and emphasizing the city’s cultural institutions. As Renaissance continued through the next two decades, these core values continued to motivate projects and
link it to past accomplishments solidifying the importance of planning to the city’s operations.

By responding to the threat of capital flight in the 1940s, the Renaissance created a movement that could outlast any individual participants, suspend and resume operations as needed, and adapt to meet different crises that emerged over time.
Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful for the support and guidance of many people throughout this process. My sincere thanks to my advisor, Thomas Kessner, for his consistently thoughtful and challenging feedback. The members of my dissertation committee, Joshua Freeman, Gerald Markowitz, David Nasaw and Judith Stein provided invaluable comments that significantly fortified my work.

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Introduction

There are many roads that will bring a visitor to Pittsburgh, but there is only one way to properly enter the city: I-376, coming from the south, through the Fort Pitt Tunnel. It’s better when someone else drives, because there are a lot of decisions to make in a short stretch of a high traffic road, but the scene that unfurls as you leave the darkness of the tunnel and cross the Monongahela River tells the story of Pittsburgh. To the left and right you see the contemporary incarnation of Pittsburgh’s latest Renaissance: Heinz Field, PNC Park, home of the Steelers and Pirates, Point State Park, where on a clear summer day the fountain will send its jets high into the air with picnickers, bikers and strollers enjoying the misty breeze, and the old railroad complex that is now Station Square sprawls with river cruises, outdoor concerts and restaurants galore attracting visitors of all ages and backgrounds. Straight ahead are the towering skyscrapers of a revitalized Downtown Pittsburgh—a frontal assault for the driver who has to quickly choose an exit while the bulk of the city gets closer with every second. Finally, just past the first right side exit east to Monroeville, sits the stump of the old Wabash Bridge, preserved as a monument to a structure that no longer exists. This is Pittsburgh—a city that redefined itself more than once in the troubled second half of the twentieth century, that keeps its past in plain sight but obscured by banality.

This dissertation examines the evolution of Pittsburgh’s attempt to protect the city from deindustrialization, beginning in the mid-1940s through the 1990s. Aware that the city’s economy had been stagnant for some time prior to World War II, city elites organized a plan to reinvigorate the city’s businesses. The Pittsburgh Renaissance improved the city’s worst physical
problems first, helped the University of Pittsburgh become an economic engine for the future, and then expanded to reconstruct neighborhoods through Urban Renewal. A brief hiatus during the 1970s preceded the resurgence of “Renaissance II” during the late 1970s and early 1980s that focused on private investment in Downtown as well as adaptive reuse of industrial facilities and cultural development initiatives. By the end of the 1990s, Pittsburgh had clean rivers, clear skies, two brand new stadiums, a new convention center and just about half of the population it had in 1950.\(^1\) Making Pittsburgh more attractive could not prevent the tidal shift in the American steel industry that was taking place through the second half of the twentieth century, nor could a municipal improvement program alter the course of globalization set in place by World War II. Still, insulating the city against an anticipated crisis helped blunt the impact, even though it could not stop it entirely.

The long list of physical accomplishments of the Pittsburgh Renaissance somewhat belies its greatest feat—imbuing the city with the potential for future change. Not only did the Renaissance create programs and institutions that could support planning projects beyond its own lifespan, it also fostered the idea among residents that the city could change with the participation and occasional sacrifice of individuals. Although it could not stop larger trends, suburbanization, deindustrialization, or a national recession from wreaking havoc with the city’s population and economy, savvy city management could help ease the transition to a smaller city when it became appropriate to do so. Like any major urban reconstruction project, the Renaissance excelled in some areas, and faltered in others, but it tended to extend the most benefits to the most people when it crafted specific local responses to the city’s problems rather than fitting a generic solution devised elsewhere to attempt to meet the city’s needs.

The 1980s and 1990s were hard on Western Pennsylvania. The permanent closings of what seemed like an invulnerable industry left literal holes in the landscape as formerly bustling mills crumbled. The loss of 175,000 manufacturing jobs in the late 1970s and 1980s transformed people and communities in and around Pittsburgh.\(^2\) This rapid decline compromised job security, middle-class income, and industrial identity for tens of thousands of residents. Mill closings brought a loss of secondary employment in retail and manufacturing outlets that supplied mills and mill workers. As unemployment in the region reached catastrophic heights, young, able workers left in search of opportunities elsewhere, leaving behind an elderly and aging population without the skills to retrain for employment in a new, technology-based economy. Towns and municipalities lost their main tax base along with a significant portion of their population, and scrambled to provide basic services such as fire and police, paramedics, and infrastructure maintenance. Thus, even people who never worked a day in the mills suffered from the collapse of industry as schools closed, roads buckled, and municipal services disappeared.

Yet, in spite of the tremendous upheaval and volatility the steel industry’s crisis imposed on Western Pennsylvania and the Monongahela Valley, the City of Pittsburgh was prepared for an economic transition. Renaissance II brought new corporate investment, cultural development and a new civic identity to the city at the moment when its industrial foundations seemed shakiest. The shift from steel to health care, service and high-tech may have seemed abrupt and in some cases paltry substitutes for so dominant and lucrative of an industry as steel, but in fact the transition had been planned from the beginning of the first Renaissance. Pittsburgh did experience a massive population loss in the second half of the twentieth century, and the effects of the decline of steel could be felt in some areas, but it did not succumb to the devastation and

ruin that eviscerated other industrial cities. Pittsburgh weathered the storm that broke other cities with careful planning and management decades before the crisis in steel became visible. What separated Pittsburgh from Flint or Camden, and what did Pittsburgh did differently can help other cities better prepare for catastrophe as industrial capital shifts globally.

Pittsburgh history is a well-trodden field with several distinctive works that examine various aspects of the Pittsburgh Renaissance, urban planning and industrial decline. This study departs from other works in three key ways. First, the focus of my investigation is on the decision-making processes involved with Renaissance organizers, rather than a detailed study of the results of their plans. Second, many of the major works on the Pittsburgh Renaissance were written while Renaissance was ongoing or shortly after, and are therefore limited in the perspective of their analysis. Including the aftermath of Renaissance II will allow for a broader

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3 Roy Lubove’s *Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh: Volume 1, Government, Business and Environmental Change* (1965) is one of the most important histories of the Pittsburgh Renaissance available. The second volume, *Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh: Volume 2, the Post-Steel Era* was published post-humously in 1996. *Don’t Call Me Boss: David L. Lawrence, Pittsburgh’s Renaissance Mayor* (1988) by Michael Weber is also an excellent biography and general study of the David Lawrence, one of the leaders of the Pittsburgh Renaissance. John Baumann and Ted Muller’s *Beyond Renaissance: Planning in Pittsburgh, 1889-1943* (2006) provides a thorough history of planning in Pittsburgh prior to the organization of the Pittsburgh Renaissance. Joe W. Trotter and Jared N. Day’s *Race and Renaissance: African Americans in Pittsburgh since World War II* (2010) looks more specifically at the effect of the Renaissance on Pittsburgh’s African-American population. John P. Hoerr’s *And the Wolf Finally Came: The Decline of the American Steel Industry* (1988) provides a journalistic account of the union negotiations during the 1980s as steel mills were closing around Pittsburgh. *A Town Without Steel: Envisioning Homestead* (1998) by Judith Modell and Charlee Brodsky documents residents’ reactions to the changes in Homestead during the 1990s, following the closing of the US Steel Homestead Works. Stefan Lorant’s *Pittsburgh: The Story of an American City* was first published in 1964, but has been updated several times, most recently in 1999. Although it contains strong threads of booster-ism and does delve into some society boasting, it relates a clear narrative of the city’s history from the eighteenth-century to the present.

4 There are plenty of new works on the Renaissance that challenge the assertions of earlier writers (Trotter and Day’s *Race and Renaissance*, John Hinshaw’s *Steel and Steelworkers: Race and Class Struggle in Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh*, 2002, and Bauman and Muller’s *Before Renaissance*), however Lubove and Weber continue to provide a foundation for new scholarship.
and more up-to-date conclusion than was possible with earlier studies. Finally, I argue that despite the break from Renaissance planning under Mayor Pete Flaherty in the 1970s, the Renaissance was a continuous movement that extended from the late 1940s through the 1990s. Different leaders and agencies controlled the movement at different times, and some decades were more visibly productive than others, but on the whole, Pittsburgh’s leaders consistently embraced Renaissance principles throughout the second half of the twentieth century. All of this is in an effort to reconstruct the varied meanings of “renaissance” to Pittsburgh’s economic and physical recovery at different points in the second half of the twentieth century.

Chapter one begins with an overview of life in Pittsburgh before city leaders organized the first Pittsburgh Renaissance. Chapter two will examine the founding and early years of the Renaissance as planners directed several discrete planning bodies towards a uniform goal. This chapter will also consider the ways in which the Renaissance was able to accomplish reforms that had long been considered by Pittsburgh’s leaders, but had not been possible before the Renaissance consolidated municipal power under authoritative leadership. Chapter three looks at the partnership between the Renaissance and local universities, especially the University of Pittsburgh, in developing academic institutions that could serve the city’s need for economic diversity. Chapter four discusses the next phase of the Renaissance, after the initial projects to physically improve Pittsburgh were completed and planners could make use of newly available federal funds for urban renewal projects. This chapter will analyze the ways in which the switch from local to federal funding changed the intentions behind Renaissance plans. Chapter five examines the hiatus from Renaissance planning during the 1970s, as well as the national urban crisis. Pittsburgh’s cautious management during this period spared it from economic disaster and laid the foundations for the return of Renaissance at the end of the decade when the industrial
crisis loomed large over the region. Chapter six shows how the institutions and legacy of
Renaissance I continued to influence Pittsburgh through a downtown resurgence, the growth of a
regional health care system, and a stadium building boom. Finally, the conclusion examines the
broader significance of planning in Pittsburgh and possibilities for further study.

I was born and raised in a Pittsburgh without steel. My mother’s father had been a
steelworker in Erie, PA, about two hours drive north of Pittsburgh, but he died of lung cancer
when she was a child. Growing up in Pittsburgh in the 1980s and 1990s, the daughter of a lawyer
and commercial real estate manager, steel was about as distant from my daily life as the moon. I
went to private schools where my classmates were the children of university professors, doctors
and lawyers and lived in Point Breeze where we walked our dog past Clayton, the Frick family
mansion, casually and routinely. I studied the Homestead Steel Strike of 1892 in my AP US
History class in high school, but Homestead remained the place you drove through to get to
Kennywood, and little else. My peers and I had little reason to visit, observe or frankly care
about what was going on there. We were getting ready to go to college, only to return on school
breaks, and eventually, even less predictably. Pittsburgh may have been home, but it was also a
place to escape.

Even though I moved away, escaping Pittsburgh was not so easy to do. My black-and-
gold still came out on Sundays during football season, and I read the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
with my coffee every morning, not the New York Times. What happened in Pittsburgh mattered
to me, and through college and graduate school I worked to piece together a sense of my
hometown through an historic lens. What follows is my inquiry into how Pittsburgh managed to
survive the incredible disruption of the collapse of the American steel industry so that I could
grow up in the middle of this crisis and wholly ignorant of it.
Chapter 1: Life in Pre-Renaissance Pittsburgh, 1920s-1940s

From the heights of Mount Washington to the deep valleys cut by the Monongahela, Allegheny and Ohio Rivers, Pittsburgh in the 1920s was a city of contrast and contradiction. The unnatural glow of the steel mills along the rivers against the night sky illuminated the twenty-four hour work cycle of steel production. But while workers kept the furnaces raging, mill owners and managers slept peacefully, separated from steel production by miles and mountains. A night on the town, whether to a movie palace or jazz club might punctuate the rhythm of mill life—work, sleep, work—but steel reigned in Pittsburgh in the early twentieth century. Even for city residents who did not work in the mills, steel represented an inescapable part of life that provided tremendous opportunity as well as the potential for catastrophe.

Pittsburgh was known as a “steel city,” but given the distribution of steel mills outside of the city this moniker is somewhat inaccurate. Allegheny County, the county in which Pittsburgh is located, included 49,701 iron and steel workers in 1930 while the city of Pittsburgh included just over 10,644 in the iron and steel trades.¹ In 1940, Pittsburgh employed 25,970 people in iron and steel production while Allegheny County employed 89,142 iron and steel workers.² Only 21% and 29% of the county’s steelworkers resided within the city of Pittsburgh during the 1920s and 1930s, but Pittsburgh shared the steel-based identity of the region. The towns along the Monongahela, or “Mon” Valley—Homestead, Braddock, McKeesport, Duquesne, and many more—were home to some of the largest steel mills and the most modern steel making equipment available when they were built during the nineteenth century.

The structure of Allegheny County meant that Pittsburgh and the surrounding milltowns and suburbs were independent political entities. Each municipality elected its own executive and council, and provided its own services. Despite being connected to the city through transit lines as well as proximity, the milltowns and suburbs functioned independently of one another from the nineteenth through much of the twentieth centuries. Allegheny County consists of approximately one hundred and thirty independent municipalities ranging from small townships and boroughs to the city of Pittsburgh. The relationship between the city of Pittsburgh and its closest neighbors evolved as the geographic barriers between them shrank due to improvements in highways, bridge construction and increased use of the automobile. The identifying terms for the region are imprecise, and do not effectively convey the complex structure of the local government. One might casually describe oneself as being “from Pittsburgh” to an outsider if one is from a smaller milltown or suburb like Aliquippa or Munhall, but would be more precise when talking with a fellow local. Thus, there is some popular confusion about what constitutes “Pittsburgh.” Technically, “Pittsburgh” is only the 58.3 square miles bounded by the city limits. Homestead is not Pittsburgh. Monessen is not Pittsburgh. Wilmerding is not Pittsburgh. But terms like “Allegheny County” and “Western Pennsylvania” are too broad to convey information about specific places. “Pittsburgh” is recognizable even if it is not wholly accurate. For this study, “Pittsburgh” refers to only the city of Pittsburgh, and other municipalities will be named individually as appropriate. The following map shows the location of Pittsburgh and other municipalities within Allegheny County.
This map shows each municipality within Allegheny County. The City of Pittsburgh is number 89.
Popular images of Pittsburgh in the early twentieth century portrayed the city as oppressively toxic and despair-filled, but despite its gritty reputation Pittsburgh attracted immigrants and migrants in droves. Pittsburgh’s population grew by nearly two hundred thousand residents between 1890 and 1910. Despite the First World War, the city’s population grew by another fifty thousand residents by 1920. Between 1900 and 1920, the number of Polish residents of Pittsburgh rose from 11,892 to 15,537. The Italian population of the city increased even more during the same period, from 6,495 to 15,371. But the group with the most growth during this period was black migrants, whose population increased from 20,355 to 37,725. Pittsburgh began the twentieth century with the sixth largest black population in the country. Immigrants and migrants sought a life in Pittsburgh at the start of the twentieth century, even with the knowledge of the harsh conditions produced by the steel industry.

The Pittsburgh Survey, a social work project sponsored by the Russell Sage Foundation in 1908, exposed some of the hazards of industrial employment to the general public. Crystal Eastman closely examined accidents in the railroad industry, coal-mining, steel production and other miscellaneous trades in her Survey volume, Work-Accidents and the Law. She identified that within one year 526 men were fatally injured at work while over 509 men received non-fatal injuries within a three-month period. Of the 526 fatal injuries, 195 occurred in the process of

http://www.alleghenycounty.us/munimap/index.asp

One common type of steel-mill accident was a blast furnace “explosion” in which the impurities clinging to the sides of the furnace suddenly drop 90 feet into a vat of steel heated to 1000-degrees Fahrenheit. This causes a sudden release of gases strong enough to remove the top from the furnace, or in the worst-case scenario, blow apart the sides of the furnace releasing a fatal wave of liquefied steel upon bystanders. According to one superintendent of construction who narrowly escaped an explosion, these types of accidents were impossible to predict. During Eastman’s year-long study, two of these accidents occurred in two different Jones and Laughlin mills, causing a total of 19 deaths. Death by explosion accounted for only 22 out of the 195 steel-related deaths, however. Asphyxiation, railroad accidents, falls and other miscellaneous causes led to the remainder of the fatalities. However cautious one might be, there were some accidents for which no preparation was possible. Yet steel workers continued to assume these risks on a daily basis in pursuit of a decent, steady wage and opportunities for their families.

Eastman’s study concentrated on documented fatalities, but her Survey colleague John Fitch noticed conditions that led to chronic illness. The omnipresence of steel dust led to a persistent throat irritation with the potential to create favorable conditions for tuberculosis infection, but also justified a “daily glass of whiskey on the grounds that it ‘takes the dust out of [the] throat.’” Extremely high temperatures also provided reasons to drink more—water on the job, beer and whiskey after work—and led to other dangerous conditions. Drinking water to

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7 Eastman, 72.
8 Eastman, 49-50.
9 Eastman, 72.
11 Eastman writes of conditions for “rollers” in a Garrett or “looping” mill: “This work demands so much of eyes and nerves and muscles, and is done in such intense heat, that the men work in half-hour shifts, six hours of work during a twelve-hour day. Even so, it is only exceptional men who will attempt it, and with all their skill and agility, there are frequent accidents among them.” Eastman, 55.
slake a steel worker’s thirst may have seemed like a reasonable way to prevent dehydration, but the quality and safety of the water could offset its benefits. The drinking water provided to workers in Pittsburgh’s mills (steel as well as other industries) came directly from the Monongahela River, which collected the waste from all of the facilities along its banks including steel mills, glass houses and slaughterhouses. At home, women were warned by health officials to boil all drinking water to prevent typhoid, but in the mills, men could drink as many as thirty to thirty-five glasses of water per shift, unfiltered and un-boiled. Drinking contaminated water could lead to a wide range of illnesses that could render a man unable to work. The heat itself presented a physical threat. Fitch observed workers standing on “floors so hot that a drop of water spilled would hiss like a drop on a stove” for eight to twelve hour stretches, and could identify men who worked in the hottest section of the mills by their red and rough complexions. Performing intense physical labor in hot temperatures meant that men sweated profusely while working but the mills lacked facilities that would have allowed them to bathe before going outside. Workers did bring extra clothing to change into before leaving after a shift, but the meeting of cold air on overheated bodies day after day had lingering ill-effects from pulmonary issues to rheumatism. In addition to intense heat, steel workers were also subject to intensely loud noises that resulted in significant hearing loss as well as “nervous strain” that could be “more wearing on some of the men than the work itself.” These chronic conditions still did not prevent new immigrants from seeking work nor did it deter established steelworkers from performing their duties.

13 Fitch, 60-62.
14 Fitch, 58.
Companies showed little sympathy for the physical sacrifices made by steel workers in their management practices. Companies were especially vigilant in preventing union representatives from entering the mills, using espionage tactics to halt any potential organization. Steel workers became increasingly vulnerable as mechanization began to render even skilled workers replaceable, and companies sought to prevent workers from joining unions or leaving the vicinity. Steel companies throughout Western Pennsylvania promoted home ownership among their employees, offering low-interest loans on company-built houses located near their mills. Since skilled work in steel production was not readily transferrable to other industries or locales, having employees who were also homeowners in a community helped companies retain their workers’ loyalty. A steelworker with a mortgage to pay was less likely to join a union or go on strike if it would jeopardize his livelihood as well as his family’s home when he could not be certain that he could get another job in another industry or town. There were other strategies too, including stock subscription plans, bonuses for length of service, and death and injury benefits.\(^{15}\) But as David Brody wrote, “no provision against calamity ever equaled the earning power of a vigorous workman.”\(^{16}\) Companies carefully managed their liabilities to limit their responsibility for workplace accidents. Until 1907, workers assumed responsibility for the dangers inherent in their industry as well as for the negligence of their fellow workers by accepting and performing their assigned duties.\(^{17}\) Especially in towns dominated by a single industry or company, company management practices came to dominate nearly every aspect of life for steel workers and their families.\(^{18}\)

\(^{16}\) Brody, 93.
\(^{17}\) Eastman, 169-173.
\(^{18}\) While Richard Oestreicher agrees that steel companies exerted tremendous control over steel town residents, he contends that residents also exercised their powers of resistance whenever possible pointing to union organizing drives in 1895, 1899, 1901 and 1919, active Populist, Socialist and Progressive
Workers had few avenues of recourse to establish greater control over their working conditions or to separate their home lives from the work lives. Yet, despite these many obviously oppressive and potentially deadly conditions, people continued to migrate to Pittsburgh and environs in the early twentieth century seeking employment within the notoriously dangerous steel industry. They accepted less than ideal housing and made do with the hazards because life in steel offered them something they could not find elsewhere, whether they came from Eastern Europe or the American south. For residents of the mill towns in the Monongahela Valley, steady, well-paying work compensated for the discomforts and dangers therein while entertainment and leisure activities abounded for city residents of all classes and ethnic backgrounds. Whatever problems or hazards Pittsburgh and Mon Valley residents faced, the benefits of life in Western Pennsylvania outweighed the negative conditions. As long as the economy boomed in the Pittsburgh area, and workers could count on steady, decent pay and the promise of a better future for their children, Pittsburgh and its surrounding towns offered a reasonable place to make a life.

The main appeal of Pittsburgh was the high paid work in the steel industry. But there were some significant barriers to entry and promotion. Hiring inside the mills was closely associated with existing kin networks. Established steelworkers could bring newly arrived family members into their shop or department and oversee their training, thus ensuring a path to promotion to a highly paid skilled position. This resulted in ethnic divisions or concentrations within the mills. First wave Irish, English, Welsh and German immigrants maintained skilled political campaigns, and supporting an underground vice economy of which US Steel did not approve. Oestreicher argues that even though the resistance did not result in successful movements it demonstrated that mill town residents were not simply victims of company oppression and that their earlier failed efforts paved the way for the successful political mobilization of the 1930s. Richard Oestreicher, “The Spirit of ’92: Popular Opposition in Homestead’s Politics and Culture, 1892-1937” in Pittsburgh Surveyed: Social Science and Social Reform in the Early Twentieth Century, ed, Maurine W. Greenwald and Margo Anderson (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996), 190-204.
positions beginning in the 1870s. Eastern and Southern European immigrants mostly worked in unskilled positions beginning in the late 1880s. Black migrants from the American south began arriving in the 1890s, but prior to the great influx of southern migrants in 1916 most black residents of Pittsburgh worked in domestic service, small iron mills or outside of manufacturing; only very few could be found in steel mills. Those who did work in steel mills tended to be assigned to unskilled positions dispersed throughout the mill, unlike European immigrant groups who often constituted a majority of a single department and were thus able to help newcomers gain entry. Black migrants who found work in the mills may not have enjoyed the support that their immigrant counterparts did, but the impediments to securing a job in steel did not prevent the continued migration and settlement of southern blacks in search of steel work.

Ethnic settlement and chain migration also contributed to the distinct character of neighborhoods within the city. Fraternal organizations and churches provided formal and informal structures of community for newly arrived and established residents. Even if these networks were not equally effective in securing employment within the mills as was the case for black migrants, they still supported new arrivals in need of housing, jobs and social connections. The comfort of a native language, familiar foods far from home, and the support of trusted organizations strengthened ethnic bonds within neighborhoods while creating multiple cities within the city. Italian residents were most concentrated in two neighborhoods, Bloomfield and East Liberty. By 1930, Italians constituted seventy percent of Bloomfield’s population, which had previously been predominantly German. East Liberty was home to the largest number of Italians in Pittsburgh at this time as well as a growing number of black residents. In contrast

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21 Bodnar, Simon and Weber, 73.
with the ethnic divisions within steel mills, these “Italian” neighborhoods integrated as early as 1890. The Hill District, which was one of two mostly black neighborhoods, also housed Italian residents. Other neighborhoods were more starkly divided, as in the predominantly Polish South Side and Polish Hill. Taking in boarders to supplement household income was a common practice for many ethnic groups and helped ease the transition into the city for new arrivals. For Italian and Polish residents, the ability to provide a comfortable home as well as a secure job within a steel mill meant that multiple generations were able to stay close together in the same neighborhoods developing a deeply rooted community. For black residents whose parents could not guarantee them housing or employment assistance, younger generations might explore other neighborhoods or other cities in pursuit of greater economic opportunity and equitable treatment.

Margaret Byington’s 1908 Survey volume, *Homestead: The Households of a Mill Town*, concentrated on household operations and budgets in Homestead, one of the most prominent mill towns near Pittsburgh, site of the Homestead Strike of 1892. Byington determined that unskilled day laborers earned under $12 per week, with day wages ranging from $1.65 to $5 between unskilled and skilled positions. Byington’s study showed that only extraordinary household management skills allowed a family to live on $1.65 per day. Still, immigrants and migrants flocked to the mills in and around Pittsburgh with the expectation that they could work their way up the pay scale. Of the nearly seven thousand men employed at the Homestead Works in 1907, just under nineteen percent were skilled laborers and twenty-three percent were classified as

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22 Bodnar, Simon and Weber, 210-212.
“semi-skilled.” The fact that more than half of those employed in the mill were unskilled and that newer methods of production required increasingly less skill, thereby leaving fewer skilled positions open for advancement meant that the aspirations of new arrivals to rise through the ranks of the mill were often unfulfilled. Even native-born employees found themselves lingering in the ranks of the unskilled longer than they envisioned. In Byington’s sample of ninety Homestead families, thirty-two families earned less than $12 per week, sixteen families earned between $12 and $15 per week, twenty-three families earned between $15 and $20 per week, and nineteen families earned over $20 per week. Opportunities to advance within the mills may have been diminishing, and they may not have been available for everyone, but they were certainly present, as Byington’s sample suggests. Settling one’s family in a mill town expecting to earn an above-average salary was a gamble, but one that immigrants and migrants were willing to make.

Part of the gamble involved navigating the region’s housing supply that had been severely strained by the rapid early twentieth century growth. According to Byington’s study, Homestead lots averaged 20 to 25 feet wide, and in some areas still had outdoor gardens, but in other areas had been subdivided to build additional housing. The most common type of house had:

“...four rooms, two on a floor, the front door opening directly on the street. The stairway to the second story occupies a narrow hall between the two lower rooms. Some of the houses contain five rooms. In a row of such houses the dining room, back of the ‘front room,’ is lighted only by a window on the narrow passageway between houses, and is never reached by direct sunlight.”

25 Byington, 44.
Byington also studied the proportion of a household income that a “typical” working family spent on rent and determined that the newest migrant groups with the lowest incomes (Slavs and blacks) spent the least amount on rent but lived in the worst conditions. “The low expenditure for rent...goes hand in hand with overcrowding and unsanitary tenements, a fact borne out not only by the vivid impression of squalor received by the chance visitor to the courts and alleys in which many of them live, but by a scrutiny of the accommodations which they secure for themselves.”\(^\text{27}\) Overcrowding largely occurred because of economic need, and in times of financial hardship, families sacrificed space by opening their homes to boarders to generate more income.\(^\text{28}\) An inadequate supply of affordable housing helped to degrade conditions. “...[T]he under-supply enabled landlords to let unimproved dwellings at profitable rentals without having to put them in good order[.]...[T]hese sanitary deficiencies were submitted to by many people, not because they did not desire better conditions, but because they were unable to pay the higher rates demanded for improved homes.”\(^\text{29}\) Byington concludes that the $2.15 rent budget available to families earning less than $12 per week “did not provide bare sanitary surroundings.”\(^\text{30}\) The municipal divisions of the area placed the mills in the town of Munhall, and the residents in the town of Homestead, thus relieving U. S. Steel of a significant tax burden which Homestead residents carried instead.\(^\text{31}\)

The inadequacy of the housing supply was especially noticeable for black migrants in the 1910s. The existing rental housing was often dilapidated with broken windows and doors, crumbling plaster, and low, damp ceilings. Since even rental units were scarce, southern blacks also sought make-shift shelter in converted railroad cars and boathouses. The situation did not

\(^{27}\) Byington, 50-51.  
\(^{28}\) Byington 53.  
\(^{29}\) Byington, 54.  
\(^{30}\) Byington, 55.  
\(^{31}\) Byington, 20-21.
improve during the 1920s, when only about 50 percent of black housing units contained indoor toilets.\textsuperscript{32} Companies that recruited southern black workers provided either on-site accommodations for new migrants or contracted with boardinghouse owners to provide rooms with the lodging fee deducted from the worker’s pay. Black steelworkers appreciated that housing close to the mills saved time and transportation costs, and accepted dormitory-like company “bunkhouses” when they first arrived, but they sought rooms in private homes as soon as they were able.\textsuperscript{33} Poor housing led to workers’ discontent, which led to high turnover, both in housing and in the mills. Housing located far away from work also contributed to high absences from work.\textsuperscript{34} Although a few neighborhoods within Pittsburgh integrated early, ethnicity or national origin still played a significant factor in determining residential location.\textsuperscript{35} Social divisions between “old” residents and “new” migrants caused some tension both between black and white communities and within communities of established black residents.\textsuperscript{36} The degree to which different groups “got along” inside and outside the mills is largely a matter of perspective, but in spite of the obstacles to settling comfortably in Pittsburgh or a mill town, migrants and immigrants alike found and created communities that provided social support.\textsuperscript{37}

Post-World War I restrictions on immigration virtually ended the influx of new immigrants, but the smaller labor pool resulted in higher wages and greater job security for

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{32} Gottlieb, 69.
  \item \textsuperscript{33} Gottlieb, 70-72.
  \item \textsuperscript{34} Gottlieb, 76.
  \item \textsuperscript{36} Gottlieb, 221.
\end{itemize}
existing Pittsburgh-area residents. Although new immigration ended after 1924, Pittsburgh’s population continued to grow through natural increase and internal migration, expanding by over 80,000 residents between 1920 and 1930. The Great Migration of southern blacks to northern industrial cities around the WWI era contributed to the city’s growing population. By the end of the 1920s, black residents numbered approximately 55,000, or 8 per cent of the city’s total population. Workplace conditions changed to reflect the declining supply of new laborers as companies sought to retain employees and reduce turnover since they could no longer rely on a constant stream of eager job applicants in waiting. Corporate welfare programs provided insurance, stock options and mortgage assistance, as well as leisure activities like sports teams and picnics. Workplace amenities like rest rooms and health clinics offered workers protections that were previously unavailable and vastly improved some of the conditions that lead to chronic illnesses mentioned earlier. Mandatory state workers’ compensation laws also provided new security for workers injured on the job. Stock ownership plans helped to change the confrontational relationship between workers and employers after World War I to a more cooperative one. Although many of these programs were implemented primarily to stave off union organizers, greater security, safety and wages had a palpable effect on raising living standards for workers in the Pittsburgh region.

Companies provided more recreational opportunities for employees outside of the workplace. Company sponsored teams encouraged exercise and fraternization. Recreational sports promoted community inside and outside the mills while providing an enjoyable leisure

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41 Nelson, 138.
activity that refreshed workers before their return to the factory.\textsuperscript{43} Carnegie Steel’s Homestead Steel Works, in conjunction with the Homestead Library Athletic Club, (financed by Carnegie via the Munhall Library), offered semi-pro baseball and football teams, amateur wrestling and track and field teams, and an Olympic-caliber women’s swim team.\textsuperscript{44} The Homestead Works employee welfare department also sponsored company baseball and basketball teams that played nightly games and participated in industrial leagues. Black workers also participated, but in segregated teams.\textsuperscript{45} Many other companies sponsored sports and recreation programs once they realized that this resulted in a happier, more eager workforce.\textsuperscript{46}

Employment opportunities for women also expanded during this period. Working-class women in the Pittsburgh region during the nineteenth-century had few options for work outside the home besides commercial laundries. Domestic work, including running a boarding house or taking in laundry, provided the primary income for married women. Cities with a more varied economic base could better absorb a female labor force into different areas of manufacturing but in Pittsburgh, women’s wage-earning ability was severely constrained as steel mills provided few jobs for women until the last quarter of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{47} The growth of the steel industry and the modernization of office management in the early twentieth century opened new paths for unmarried women to gain an independent income and develop non-domestic skills in a city with very starkly separate and gendered spheres.

In 1869 when the Jones and Laughlin steel company opened, the office staff consisted of only six employees, but by 1919 Pittsburgh steel companies employed office staffs of more than

\textsuperscript{44} Ruck, 27-28. According to Ruck, members of the women’s swim team participated in the 1932 and 1936 Olympics.
\textsuperscript{45} Ruck, 28.
\textsuperscript{46} Ruck, 25-27.
\textsuperscript{47} Kleinberg, 24-25.
The gendered subdivision of office labor created a demand for female clerical workers, who tended to fill low-wage positions with fewer opportunities for career advancement. Office employment may have been perceived as a temporary activity for young women hoping to marry and retire from the paid-work force, but it provided women in the Pittsburgh region with more possibilities for wage-earning than ever before. Wages for female office workers varied based on occupation and company, but averaged $8.00 to $9.00 per week in the 1890s. Byington estimated an unskilled steelworker’s weekly wage at just under $12 in 1907. Even though they made less than the lowest paid steelworkers, female office workers still had the opportunity to earn an independent living.

Young men also benefited from expanded white-collar employment. City of Pittsburgh high schools provided training in clerical skills as early as 1868. The program developed into a separate “Commercial School,” free to city residents, with a $25 tuition fee for non-residents. By 1890, slightly less than half of the student body came from “manual workers’” families, while a little over a third came from families of “professionals and proprietors.” Although the school was not likely to enroll students from either “unskilled” working-class families or the

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49 DeVault, 19.
50 Women’s roles in office work remained extremely limited in the early twentieth century, but it is worth mentioning that Pittsburgh’s first (and as of this writing, only) female mayor, Sophie Masloff, began her career as a teenaged secretary, after graduating from Fifth Avenue High School in 1935, where the Commercial School began. Most female office workers did not follow Mayor Masloff’s career path, but even limited opportunities in non-domestic work could broaden future possibilities for those interested in pursuing them.
51 DeVault, 51-52.
52 Byington, 41.
wealthiest elites, it did offer students from the “elite working-class” training and job skills that would prepare them for a life away from the steel mills.\textsuperscript{54}

As white-collar work became more accessible to the working class, industrial life became less confining. Clerical work in Pittsburgh grew from 121 positions in 1870 to over 36,000 in 1920, making up 14.5 percent of the workforce within Pittsburgh.\textsuperscript{55} The increase in clerical employment suggests that Commercial School graduates would not struggle to find jobs after they completed their studies, making the investment in clerical education a sound one. Sending a child to school beyond the minimum requirements demonstrated a degree of prosperity in a working-class family. Not only could the family afford to forego the income of an able-bodied member, they could also afford to clothe the aspiring clerical worker in business attire that cost one-eighth of an average Pennsylvania family’s yearly clothing budget.\textsuperscript{56} Clerical work had its share of insecurities, prejudices and demands, but it introduced prospects not previously available to working families.

Management hierarchies expanded employment options for other white-collar workers. From the high ranks of millionaire executives through more modest middle managers, all the way down to clerks, bookkeepers and secretaries, Pittsburgh supported a wide-range of white-collar workers whose livelihoods in one fashion or another were underwritten by steel. By the late 1940s, 125,500 Pittsburghers were employed in wholesale trade, retail trade and other services compared with 65,300 employed in manufacturing.\textsuperscript{57} Between 1902 and 1932, various companies and organizations built nine skyscrapers in the downtown area. All of the buildings

\textsuperscript{54} DeVault, 45-47.  
\textsuperscript{55} DeVault, 12.  
\textsuperscript{56} DeVault, 58-59.  
\textsuperscript{57} Ira Lowry and the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association, Economic Study of the Pittsburg Region: Volume 2, Portrait of a Region, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963), 156.
were designed as office towers, and ranged from 15 to 44 stories.\textsuperscript{58} This building boom promoted the vast expansion of corporate networks and the potential for more job opportunities for executives in plush suites, for clerks in uniform rows of identical desks, for telephone operators, elevator operators, janitors, construction workers, taxi drivers, and of course, steel workers. Downtown Pittsburgh became a bustling business district where company executives could sit at a lunch counter next to mid-level bureaucrats. Glamorous restaurants, luxurious department stores, and crowded sidewalks made Downtown an exciting place to work or visit. The new high-rise buildings—the Arrott, the Frick, Union National Bank, the Keenan and the Oliver Buildings—all created a sense of drama and opulence for Pittsburgh’s surging Downtown and were built within the first decade of the twentieth century.

Downtown Pittsburgh was more than a nine-to-five business district. As exciting as the area was during the day, with crowded sidewalks, department store window displays and ornate architecture, the neighborhood also bustled at night with movie goers dressed to the nines for a premier event with celebrity performances. The new movie palaces attracted nationally renowned stars, orchestras and conductors. The Loews Penn Theater opened in 1927 at the intersection of Penn Avenue and 6th Street, in the heart of Downtown Pittsburgh. Marcus Loew spared no expense in the creation of the theater with its 50-foot high Venetian ceiling in the lobby, Grand Foyer with crystal mirrors, marble staircases, lounges, and furnishings of velvet and silk. The new theater not only included modern amenities like air conditioning and

\textsuperscript{58} \url{http://skyscraperpage.com/diagrams/?cityID=327&searchname=timeline} accessed 21 September 2011. The buildings are: Arrott Building, 1902, 19 stories; Frick Building, 1902, 21 stories; Union National Bank Building (now The Carlyle), 1906, 21 stories; Keenan Building, 1907, 18 stories; Oliver Building, 1910, 25 stories; Union Trust Building, 1917, 15 stories; Grant Building, 1928, 40 stories; Koppers Building, 1929, 34 stories; Gulf Building, 1932, 44 stories.
electrically managed theatrical effects, but was also home to the largest organ in Pittsburgh. The “mammoth Robert Morton Organ,” described as the “largest, most complete and varied instrument of its kind” promised to delight audiences with its range of effects and tones. The Loews Penn Theater provided an atmosphere of sophistication and elegance not available in a neighborhood movie house.

The Stanley Theater opened a few months later in February 1928 just a block away from the Loews Penn Theater. The new theater contained similar amenities and its opening was celebrated with a gala event, dedication from the mayor, and the Pittsburgh premier of Gentlemen Prefer Blondes. Like the Loews Penn, the Stanley Theater housed a notable organ and modern air conditioning. The refined décor created a stylish backdrop from which to regard celebrity performers and visitors while looking as chic as possible.

Pittsburgh’s Hill District, just east of the downtown business district, offered a wide array of cultural experiences from literary societies to the famed jazz clubs of Wylie Avenue to “numbers” joints and local drug stores where people gathered at all times of day and night to socialize. The Hill District was home to the Pittsburgh Courier, one of the most influential and widely circulated black newspapers in the country. Musicians Billy Eckstein, Lena Horne and Errol Garner lived in the Hill District and performed in local nightclubs. The owner of the Crawford Grill, a jazz club on Wylie Avenue, introduced Duke Ellington to local teenager Billy Strayhorn, commencing a partnership that led to some of Ellington’s most famous songs, including “Take the A Train,” and launched Strayhorn’s career. When the regular clubs closed,

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60 “Miles of Wire in Pipe Organ,” The Pittsburgh Press, 4 September 1927, 77.
61 “Prepare for Opening of New Stanley Theater,” The Pittsburgh Press, 26 February 1928, 3.
the black musicians local union hall provided an “after hours” space so the music could continue well into the night. Pittsburgh earned a reputation as a significant music city, where “a guy might jump off a garbage truck and play you off the stage.” The variety of entertainment options in the Hill District combined with those in other parts of the city meant that the action did not stop when the downtown offices closed, nor did the presence of the mills preclude strong, distinct cultural development. Despite the defacto segregation through much of the city, the Hill District was a place where whites and blacks could share a table at a nightclub and hear great music.

Faced with a population in search of more leisure activities, Pittsburgh planners in the 1920s were beginning to recognize the need for more public park space. Director of Public Works, Edward Bigelow, arranged for the transfer of three-hundred acres belonging to the Schenley family to the city of Pittsburgh for use as a park in 1890 and organized the acquisition of land that became Highland Park. In addition to Schenley and Highland Parks, Frick Park contributed another 300-plus acres to the city’s green space in the 1920s. With a Progressive’s affection for parks as a means of social control and improvement, Frederick Bigger, architect, city planner and executive secretary of the Citizen’s Committee on the City Plan, viewed green spaces as the lungs of the city. He saw connections between the urban environment and residential quality of life, and believed that improving recreation areas, decreasing traffic

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67 Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, “History of Frick Park,” Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, [http://www.pittsburghparks.org/history](http://www.pittsburghparks.org/history) [accessed 3 December 2009]. According to the website, Henry Clay Frick donated 151 acres to the city in his will in 1919. The city acquired another 190 acres in 1925, and the park officially opened in 1927. In their extensive history of Pittsburgh parks and planning, Bauman and Muller do not discuss Frick Park at length. There is no entry in the index for “Frick Park” or “Henry Clay Frick.”
congestion and increasing “urban accessibility” would boost the city economically and spiritually. Leisure activities for the working classes, pool halls, saloons, and other commercial establishments were not, in his view, entirely wholesome. Providing access to fresh air and sunlight would be a beneficial influence on workers, according to Bigger. Bigger’s philosophy influenced the six-volume “master plan” for the city titled the *Pittsburgh Plan* in 1923 that called for new playgrounds, parks, transit, railroads, waterways and highways. This comprehensive plan sought to modernize and update the basic infrastructure of the city in a way that would provide social uplift through morally beneficial recreational activities and allow traffic to flow smoothly through major “arteries.” Eliminating the city’s tangled, haphazard street system and providing a positive influence on the working classes through exposure to fresh air and nature would cure the city of its reputation for having an unhealthy environment.68 The plan reflected the optimism of the period as well as the city’s early enthusiasm for urban planning.

In contrast to the business-oriented building boom Downtown, the growth of parks, universities and cultural institutions helped Oakland, approximately two a-half miles east of Downtown, become the educational center of Pittsburgh. Schenley Park, the Carnegie Institute, and the nearby Schenley Hotel provided an impressive architectural landscape with a mix of rolling hills, lush green lawns and notable buildings. The expansion of the Carnegie Library, art galleries, natural history museum and concert hall in 1907, as well as the addition of the Syria Mosque in 1915, further solidified the position of Oakland as Pittsburgh’s “civic center.”69 Several universities (the Carnegie Institute, the University of Pittsburgh and Mount Mercy College, now Carlow University) established their presence in Oakland, making it even more of

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a center for learning and culture. The presence of the universities made Oakland a center of collegiate social life for young co-eds as well as a gathering place for local and visiting scholars. A student rushing to class could grab an inexpensive bite to eat, or revive a debate begun in a seminar with friends over beers at any number of pubs or bars catering to undergraduates. A more mature crowd might prefer to stroll the various campus grounds and enjoy the public lectures, recitals or performances the universities offered.

Oakland also provided a choice of venues in which one could enjoy high art and culture. The Carnegie Music Hall, adjacent to the main branch of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, combined an ideal audio environment with ornate detail to satisfy both concert-goers and lecture attendees. The Pittsburgh Symphony made its home in the 2,000-seat theater beginning in 1895, before moving to The Syria Mosque in 1916. The Syria Mosque, located a few blocks away from the Music Hall, was first built as a Shriner’s Temple, but soon became home to several performing groups including the Pittsburgh Symphony and the Pittsburgh Opera. It also hosted opera singer Enrico Caruso as well as political figures from David Lloyd George to Harry S. Truman. The “Syria Temple” may have lacked the more lavish features of the downtown movie palaces or the Music Hall, but the unique architecture, perfect acoustics and pair of sphinxes

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70 In addition to the Carnegie Mellon campus, Carlow University (originally Mount Mercy College, founded in 1929) is located in Oakland, and the University of Pittsburgh expanded into Oakland as well. The Chatham University campus (originally the Pennsylvania Female College, founded in 1869) is located just east of Oakland in Shadyside.

guarding the entrances made it distinctive in its own right. Between the Carnegie Music Hall and the Syria Mosque, an ample buffet of high culture fed Pittsburgh audiences.

Pittsburgh’s housing situation was starting to respond to the demand of the early twentieth century along with its cultural institutions. The growth of streetcar suburbs prompted the construction of modest, affordable houses for middle-class residents looking to own their own homes in or near the city. Architect E. B. Hulley built hundreds of these homes during the 1910s and 1920s that sold for roughly $9,000, depending on the design. Owners included members of the “emerging middle class” who held white-collar positions including policemen, stenographers and mechanical engineers. The Buhl Foundation issued a grant to build the experimental Chatham Village in 1932 to demonstrate the possibilities for a profit in renting middle-class housing. The planned community housed 197 families at rents ranging form $54 for a five-room house to $91.50 for an eight-room, two-bath house. The development added an apartment building in the 1950s, and transitioned from rental units to co-ops in 1960. The community atmosphere survives in the present day with extensive guidelines for behavior, and the “New Urban” design that combines urban density with a park-like setting has served as a model for other planned communities within Pittsburgh. Although the model of Chatham

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Village did not expand or immediately generate imitators, the development shows both that there were some housing options for working and middle class families within the city and that developers, planners and architects were starting to address the lack of affordable housing.

The Great Depression had a predictably devastating effect on steel workers in Western Pennsylvania. For residents of the Mon Valley who had come to expect a predictably decent income and opportunities for advancement from working in the steel industry, the Great Depression erased some of the previous decades’ gains. National employment in steel fell from 158,000 to 18,000 in 1932, and in the same year gross wages fell to $133 million from a peak of $469 million in 1923. US Steel operated at seventeen percent of capacity and for the first time in its history lost $71.2 million. Locally, steel towns experienced high unemployment—fifty percent in Homestead—with those still employed working drastically reduced hours. Circumstances suggested that this was the moment for a union revival, but this was a tall order in a place like Homestead, where in 1933 the Republican Burgess refused to let Labor Secretary Frances Perkins speak to an overflow crowd of workers outside of the borough hall. When Burgess Cavanaugh and the local police encircled Perkins and refused permission for her to speak to the crowd of “undesirable reds” in nearby Frick Park, Perkins found sanctuary on the federal property of the steps of the local post office. The fact that the Labor Secretary had to outwit local law enforcement to find a place to talk to steelworkers while on a national tour to gain support for the NIRA in 1933 speaks to the steep obstacles towards union organizing in Homestead. At the very least, it shows that the revival of union organization in Western Pennsylvania was not inevitable even in the early 1930s, and did not occur without extraordinary


76 Serrin, 179.

77 Serrin, 174-176.
mobilization efforts. Franklin Roosevelt’s popularity in 1932 gave local Democrats a boost against established Republicans like Cavanaugh in the steel towns. In 1937, with the support of small business owners, ethnic associations and churches the Democrats regained political control of Homestead for the first time since 1922. Many factors contributed to the electoral change such as the thwarted organization attempts during the 1910s and 1920s that laid the groundwork for the successful campaigns of the 1930s, the severity and duration of the Depression and frustration with inadequate public services. The Democratic victory meant that union organizers could work freely to recruit members, and the agreement by US Steel to recognize the Steel Workers Organizing Committee in 1937 ended the forty-five year absence of union representation within the steel industry. With the SWOC agreement in place, steel workers could look forward to an eight-hour day, a forty-hour week, guaranteed overtime pay, a seniority system and grievance procedure. The presence of a union in Pittsburgh-area steel mills did not immediately eliminate all industrial hazards or instantaneously ensure equitable treatment for all workers, but it did provide a sense of security and accomplishment for workers who no longer had to rely on voluntary company programs for their benefits.

By the late 1930s, workers’ wages increased enough that they could purchase washing machines, refrigerators, even cars, and could fantasize about buying a home in the suburbs. In the semi-autobiographical novel, *Out of This Furnace* by Thomas Bell, the third generation Slovak couple, Julie and Dobie, stroll along the main street in Braddock, window-shopping and planning for the future. As lifelong Braddock residents and children of steel workers, they were

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80 Serrin, 211-212.
accustomed to the boom/bust cycles of mill work, but in the waning years of the Great Depression, they appreciated the promise of comfort and security afforded by their position.

“Julie sighed. ‘We need so many things. Refrigerator, sewing machine, vacuum cleaner, good silverware--’
‘Sure takes a lot of machinery to keep house nowadays, don’t it?’
‘If you want to live nice.’
‘We’ll get them. It just takes time. Look at what we’ve managed to get already and we ain’t been married two years yet. Nice furniture, a radio, and now a washing machine. I think we’re doing pretty good.’
‘Do you think we’ll ever have a house of our own?’
‘I don’t see why not. Lots of other people manage it.’”

Dobie’s immigrant grandfather Kracha struggled with adapting to steel work and its rhythms and his hardworking father died in a mill accident. Dobie represented the promise of a generation born in America, raised with a sound work ethic, but privileged to enjoy the benefits of a strengthening union movement. The hardship of domestic life broke Kracha’s wife and accelerated Dobie’s tubercular mother’s demise, but American-born Julie could tackle the demands of housekeeping with the help of modern appliances. Their ancestors may have suffered, but the future was full of promise for Dobie and Julie.

Steel could be a cruel master, with unpredictable accidents, autocratic management and boom and bust cycles severely constricting workers freedom. It certainly was not the easiest way to earn a living, but for those who chose to endure its worst abuses in order to gain the comforts of elite-working-class status, it provided a means to an end. In Pittsburgh, working-class residents faced particular hardships in finding affordable housing and dealing with poor environmental conditions resulting from industrial pollution. Residents with more modest incomes, professional, white-collar workers or highly-skilled blue-collar workers, could find

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81 This scene takes place roughly between the Supreme Court declaring the NIRA unconstitutional and the organization of the Steel Workers’ Organizing Committee. Although it is a fictional work, Bell’s Out of This Furnace depicts life in Braddock, PA from the 1880s through the end of the 1930s with painstakingly accurate details. Thomas Bell, Out of This Furnace: A Novel of Immigrant Labor in America, 8th ed. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976), 337.
decent accommodations, whether in middle-class neighborhoods or in more exclusive sections within working-class neighborhoods and enjoyed some protection from the worst environmental dangers by living further away from the most contaminated areas. For residents of means, it was possible to live a life entirely separated from the hazards and grime of steel mills. Elite Pittsburghers did not want for cultural activities, social interaction or elegant homes. Not only was it possible to live comfortably in this Steel City, it was possible to live well. Workers, managers and even company owners made the choice to live in Pittsburgh because the benefits it offered outweighed the inconveniences.

Everything that made Pittsburgh attractive—plentiful and stable work within the steel industry, managerial and support occupations and vibrant cultural institutions—depended on its industrial economy. The museums, music halls, movie theaters, fine homes, modest homes, universities and Beaux-Arts skyscrapers depended on a profitable, expanding steel industry. As long as the steel industry thrived and grew, Pittsburgh could house dynamic immigrant and migrant communities, support new educational programs and develop fine arts programs of national renown. As long as steel could provide jobs at every pay and skill grade from unskilled laborer to corporate executive, then the city would not have to worry about losing residents or businesses. Even with the high mortality rates, chronic illness and poor living conditions associated with work in the steel industry, people still chose it as a way to provide for a better future.

However, by the 1920s Pittsburgh’s industries had ceased to invest significantly in new facilities within the city limits. The river valleys limited the amount of land available for expansion along the riverbanks, making distant areas where land was cheaper and more plentiful more attractive to companies looking to build new mills. Air pollution and flooding added
significantly to operating costs within the city and compromised the quality of life for residents and businesses. Frederick Bigger’s comprehensive plan for citywide infrastructure improvement was not built in its entirety, and without modern highways, adequate recreational areas and updated bridges, the city’s infrastructure remained stuck in the 1910s. Although the steel companies found ways of making do with existing plants during World War II, city leaders feared that the impediments to expansion, high operational costs and inconvenience of city traffic might drive businesses away from Pittsburgh. Residential life in Pittsburgh may have included tight-knit communities, a booming nightlife, and ethnic foods, but without its strong industrial foundation the city’s economy would be extremely vulnerable. World War II restored high employment to the Mon Valley from the nadir of the Great Depression, but Pittsburgh’s economic base was increasingly insecure.
Chapter 2: Planning and Reforms Before and After the Pittsburgh Renaissance

Pittsburgh’s strengths and weaknesses had been fairly well balanced through the first half of the twentieth century, but by the 1940s, the city’s weaknesses were starting to overshadow its strengths. With its nineteenth century layout and early-twentieth century improvements, Pittsburgh was losing its advantage over cities with more adaptable terrain and more hospitable surroundings. Companies founded in Pittsburgh were beginning to consider relocation, and without swift action the city was in danger of losing the industry that was both a major source of its working and middle class jobs as well as its corporate tax base.

A group of well-connected local business and political leaders worked together to fix the worst of the city’s problems, attract new corporate investment and secure the city’s future starting immediately after World War II. This reform program became known as the “Pittsburgh Renaissance.” Their most immediate problems were the environmental and structural issues that made the city frustrating to navigate and unpleasant to live in. Smoke control, flood control, and highway construction required cooperation and support from local, state and federal officials. Renaissance organizers made their fortunes and reputations in Pittsburgh, and saving it became both a personal mission and a means to securing their own businesses and political careers. They believed that Pittsburgh’s problems could be solved through efficient, modern planning. Improvement would remove the competitive advantages of its nearest rivals, Cleveland, Gary and St. Louis. Renaissance promised a new Pittsburgh: steel giant, corporate capital and modern metropolis.
By 1941, five years before the start of the Pittsburgh Renaissance, with the support of Mayor Cornelius D. Scully, smoke control advocates secured a powerful citywide smoke control ordinance that targeted both domestic and industrial users after decades of ineffectual voluntary ordinances. The diversion of supplies to the war effort delayed implementation until after World War II, but the new ordinance promised real change for the city. Excessive smoke plagued the city for decades, but until the 1940s, neither research nor reform could break Pittsburghers of their habitual association of smoke with prosperity. When smokestacks belched heavy clouds of black exhaust, it was a good sign; it meant that work was plentiful. Clear skies and quiet stacks meant a slowdown, strike or closing. For Pittsburghers to relinquish lifelong assumptions of pollution and security required evidence, incentives and enforcement.

The City of Pittsburgh created a Bureau of Smoke Regulation in 1911 that valued education over punishment. Smoke producing industries were the obvious target of regulation that centered around training industrial workers to build more efficient fires and retrofit furnaces with mechanisms to reduce the smoke output. Still, the smoke situation did not improve with voluntary measures concentrating on industries alone. In 1923, Mellon Institute Industrial Fellow H. B. Meller identified domestic smoke as a critical component of the smoke problem and argued for the inclusion of domestic smoke controls in future ordinances. A low supply of

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2 The cover of *Coal and Coke Operator* for 2 October 1913 was a diagram showing the value of loss through imperfect combustion. The Pittsburgh district burned 16,000,000 tons of coal valued at $20 million, with 21.7% wasted. The value of the loss was $434,000. The caption read, “Smoke shows Inefficiency not Prosperity! What Was Your Smoke Loss In 1912?” Box 5, FF 11 Records of the Smoke Investigation Activities of the Mellon Institute of Research (Pittsburgh, Pa.), 1911-1957, ais198307, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh. The association between belching smokestacks and prosperity did not break easily.

3 Tarr and Lamperes, 562-563.
natural gas and bituminous coal limited the available alternatives to anthracite use within the home. Furthermore, existing smoke regulations did not apply to private dwellings. Meller also faulted good government groups for their insufficient support of smoke controls and criticized local government for assigning too few inspectors to adequately enforce the legislation. Despite awareness of domestic smoke's role in the smoke nuisance, city government continued to focus on industrial smoke abatement as the prime cause for a blighted Pittsburgh through the 1930s.

In 1939, Pittsburgh had 154,000 domestic dwellings exempt from the city’s existing ordinance, 114,000 of which used solid fuel. Meller launched a critique of the old methods that blamed industries and railroads for the smoke problem while ignoring the impact of domestic coal users on the city’s air quality. He advocated including domestic users in smoke control legislation, but the Great Depression only heightened Pittsburghers’ associations between smoke and prosperity, and fostered an anti-regulatory position within City Council that led to the dissolution of the Bureau of Smoke Regulation. Working-class Pittsburghers objected to the potential costs involved with smoke controls, but both the Progressive, social reform minded Civic Club of Allegheny County and the pro-business oriented Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce worked to restore anti-smoke legislation. City Councilman Abraham Wolk, editor of

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7 The Civic Club of Allegheny County was a voluntary group interested in public and social improvements to benefit the city’s immigrant population. The group began as the Women’s Health Protective Association in 1890 and was reorganized as a Civic Club in 1896 by John Brashear and included male and female members. Finding aid, Civic Club of Allegheny County Records, 1896-1974,
the *Pittsburgh Press* Edward T. Leech, and the Director of the Pittsburgh Department of Public Health, Dr. I. Hope Alexander helped advance the movement by identifying smoke as a threat to public health of all city residents. Their efforts led to the introduction of the city’s first mandatory smoke control ordinance regulating both domestic and industrial users in 1941.  

If air pollution made doing business in Pittsburgh more expensive than in other cities because of the additional costs of cleaning soot-stained items, then cleaning the air was an important step toward lowering the costs of doing business in Pittsburgh. The 1941 smoke control ordinance represented a critical first step in retaining industries and expanding the city’s economic base by demonstrating its commitment to making the city more amenable to business. Having the ordinance in place, however, did not guarantee that it would be enforced once the war ended. A new mayoral administration with different priorities could let it languish, and the city would be in the same trouble it was in before the ordinance. Even if it was enforced within the city, as long as domestic smoke output remained excessive within the county, the problem would remain, but the city had no authority to impose a county-wide smoke control ordinance. Although the 1941 ordinance was a promising development in regulating domestic smoke within Pittsburgh, without a consolidated political movement behind it any plan for improvement continued to be vulnerable.

By the 1940s, Pittsburgh’s three rivers had as many problems as its air. Located at the point where the Monongahela and Allegheny rivers meet to form the Ohio, Pittsburgh had plenty of riverfront property and shores, as well as a few river islands, but the main use of the rivers and their adjacent banks was industrial, not recreational. Railroads and steel mills claimed the areas

AIS.1970.02, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh. The Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce was organized in 1874 and officially chartered in 1876. Its founding members included “leaders in the industrial, financial, commercial and professional life of the community.” *Fifty Years of the Chamber of Commerce of Pittsburgh,* (Pittsburgh: Press of Murdoch, Kerr and Co., 1924), 5-8.

8 Tarr and Lamperes, 569-570.
closest to the waterfronts, and the rivers collected the waste products of nearby industries. Accessing the water from the shore meant trespassing on private property, which thwarted public use. The industrial pollution of the rivers and the environment at large had serious consequences for business development. Pittsburgh water’s high acidity corroded delivery pipes faster than usual, which added to the operating costs of business. The Army Corps of Engineers estimated in 1910 that the Pittsburgh region spent approximately $3 million per year on the effects of acid drainage. Acidic water hurt other industries as well. Acidic water could damage steel during cooling and forced steel mills to invest in water treatment. In 1918, the railroad industry estimated the cost of acid water damage per locomotive at $1,618; almost $800,000 per year for Pittsburgh’s two largest railroads. Water pollution also added to the domestic operating budget, as acidic water damaged fabric and hard water required more soap to wash. Combined with the high atmospheric pollution, Pittsburgh’s poor environmental conditions required clothes to be washed more frequently than in other cities.

Regulating water pollution highlighted a more serious tension between the economy and public health. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled in 1886 that mining itself did not constitute a nuisance, and that any runoff or mine discharge was beyond the company’s control. The Pennsylvania Purity of Waters Act of 1905 exempted water from coal mines from pollution

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11 Casner, 95.
12 Casner, 96-97
13 Casner, 95. University of Pittsburgh Professor R. C. Benner determined that smoke damaged $500,000 of laundry items each year in the city and that lace-curtains survived approximately one-third longer in other cities than in Pittsburgh. “Quart of Soot in Lungs: Professor Finds it in a Pittsburgher’s- $500,000 Laundry Loss by Smoke,” The New York Times, 16 May 1912, 1.
Despite the known public health hazards of polluted water, the polluters represented too large a portion of the region’s economy to effectively regulate. The problem only worsened as time passed. Despite the obvious hazards of a contaminated water supply, and the attendant high rates of disease, city officials were reluctant to address the problem publicly, fearing that discussing the poor quality of Pittsburgh’s water would hinder local investment. Any attempt to regulate industrial pollution through state channels would require city officials to recognize that the issue demanded attention as well as massive political power at a state-level to break the existing links between polluters and legislators.

Until the mid-20th century, Pittsburgh dumped untreated sewage into the rivers, creating hazardous conditions for towns downstream. Sanitary engineers who discussed possible treatment options argued that a local sewage treatment system would not be effective, since other downstream communities would continue to pollute the rivers. Treating Pittsburgh’s sewage would principally benefit towns downstream of the city, and sanitary engineers argued that it was unprecedented for a city to build a sewage system for the sake of another municipality. They also argued that the primary function of rivers was to carry wastes to the sea. As a result of political debate, concerns over leadership and funding challenges, Pittsburgh did not have a fully functional sewage treatment facility until 1959.

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15 Casner, 98.
16 Casner, 98, 99.
18 Tarr and Yosie, 75-76.
19 Tarr and Yosie, 86. McKeesport native, John Hoerr, writes about the Monongahela river in his childhood: “On a rash impulse one day in about 1947 a friend and I swam across the Monongahela near the mouth of the Youghigheny. The current was swifter than it looked from shore, and it pelted me the whole way with a variety of slimy objects that, fortunately, I couldn’t identify in the muddy water. There being nothing on the other side but a weed-filled bank and a railroad track, we swam back and carried from the river a stench of sewage that didn’t endear us to our mothers.” Hoerr, 189-190. Myron Cope,
Flooding brought the dangerously polluted waters literally to city residents’ doorsteps. Between 1854 and 1963, the Army Engineers estimated that the area’s rivers exceeded flood stage 117 times. In 1908, the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce formed a Flood Commission to study causes and develop solutions to flooding. During the 1910s, the federal government had shied away from large public works construction projects, supporting reforestation and conservation measures or building floodwalls and levees instead. The federal government did not consider reservoirs and dams an appropriate use of federal funds. By the end of the 1920s, Congress reversed its opposition to flood control in part due to a 1927 flood in the Mississippi Valley that killed 250 people, left 700,000 homeless and damaged $364 million worth of property. A drought in the Ohio River Valley in the early 1930s that left rivers unnavigable prompted further policy revision.

Pittsburgh’s worst flood, on March 17, 1936, caused an estimated $94 million in damages to the region after the waters crested at 46-feet at the Point. The “St. Patrick’s Day Flood” killed 47 people and left 67,500 homeless. Following the St. Patrick’s Day Flood, Congress passed

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21 The Army Engineers credit the flood of March 1907 with bringing about the idea for flood controls, and the Pittsburgh Flood Commission was established to protect the city from major floods. Until the 1907 flood, residents accepted the risks of floods as a trade of for the convenience of proximity to the rivers. “The Army Engineers’ View on the Reservoir System of Flood Control for Pittsburgh,” 1-2. Box 274, Folder 11, ACCD Records, MSS 0285, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.


the Copeland Omnibus Flood Control Act of 1936, recognizing floods as a threat to the lives and property of people and thus federal authority to intervene. The act also authorized the construction of nine dams to protect Pittsburgh, but disputes over labor, cost-sharing, land ownership and power rights delayed the completion of the projects.24 The interruption of World War II threatened projects begun during the Depression. Since flood control projects depended on federal funding and interstate cooperation, they were even more susceptible to political change than smoke controls. Flood controls needed state support and lobbyists who could convince Congress that funding dams would protect an important sector of the national economy. Wielding that kind of federal influence was a tall order for a city wracked by political division and competing planning agencies.

Poor air quality caused long-term damage, and catastrophic flooding created emergency conditions sporadically; but traveling around the city generated immediate irritation daily. The three rivers geographically limited Downtown Pittsburgh’s central business district to 255 acres. Automobiles, street trolleys and pedestrians overwhelmed the narrow nineteenth century streets. Public streets occupied less than 60 acres downtown and only one street measured over forty feet wide before 1910. During the 1910s, the city widened streets, improved grade crossings and built an additional road link between Oakland and downtown, the Boulevard of the Allies.25 During the 1920s, the official city planners developed large construction and infrastructure projects. Frederick Bigger, architect and city planner, urged the city to develop a comprehensive city plan


24 Smith 1977, 10-14.
25 Bauman and Muller, 166.
rather than pursue piecemeal projects without consideration for the broad scope of urban life. As executive secretary of the Citizen’s Committee on the City Plan (CCCP), Bigger led a group of approximately seventy influential Pittsburghers in support of comprehensive planning. Their efforts produced the six-volume *Pittsburgh Plan*, which included reports on parks, playgrounds, transportation and traffic circulation. City Council and the Pittsburgh City Planning Commission endorsed the playground and traffic circulation plans in 1923, suggesting that the city was ready to embark on a major reconstruction effort.\(^2^6\)

As long as the plan remained within the sheltered confines of the pro-planning CCCP, Bigger’s enthusiasm for an inclusive city plan seemed sufficient to propel the project forward. Once it entered the realms of politics, however, it faced an uncertain future. The city stretched its resources earlier in the decade with a $20 million bond issue. That left the city with limited credit to borrow money to complete improvement projects. Instead of the “comprehensive” planning that Bigger hoped for, the city had to prioritize projects based on cost rather than the vision of a more orderly city.\(^2^7\)

Alliances between powerful groups did not always result in the support for necessary improvements. The Chamber of Commerce championed the revival and redevelopment of Downtown Pittsburgh taking place in the 1920s. New skyscrapers in particular helped the city seem more modern. But the new buildings added density, more people crowding the same narrow streets and limited parking facilities only added to the congestion downtown. The Chamber of Commerce welcomed the building boom, but bemoaned the lack of innovation in solving the traffic problem.\(^2^8\) Not everything could be accomplished at once, and the disruption

\(^{26}\) Bauman and Muller, 107-136.

\(^{27}\) Bauman and Muller, 165.

\(^{28}\) Bauman and Muller, 187-188.
of building construction made it difficult to organize street expansion. Also, while a new building could immediately generate revenue for the city in the form of property taxes, street improvements had a less direct payoff and inconvenienced city residents during construction. Ongoing battles between city and county planners over the centrality of the downtown business district, the value of regional developments compared with projects benefiting city residents and the continued funding strife made it difficult to execute Bigger’s comprehensive plan in its entirety. Although city and county authorities completed several highway and bridge projects during the 1920s, they represented a fraction of the comprehensive plan rather than an all-encompassing, unified approach to raising the quality of life for all city residents. ²⁹ Without adequate political and financial support to sustain a massive overhaul of the city and county road systems, a “master plan” was just a piece of paper. As much as Pittsburgh depended on planning as a solution to its many urban problems, planning alone did not guarantee implementation, nor did infrastructure improvements alone promise to solve the underlying economic weaknesses that constituted a threat to the city’s economy in the 1940s. The city needed a unified team to promote its interests at the state and national levels while also organizing local improvements that would address its worst physical conditions to prevent the further loss of businesses.

US Steel’s investment in its Gary, Indiana plant in 1906 may have represented the beginning of Pittsburgh’s loss of hegemony within the American steel industry, but large and small companies proliferated within and around Pittsburgh until the 1920s. US Steel, National Tube, Jones and Laughlin and Crucible Steel all had facilities within the city limits of Pittsburgh during this period, and many smaller companies had shops concentrated along the rivers on the South Side, the Strip District, Lawrenceville and on the North Side. But companies ceased to

²⁹ Bauman and Muller, 146-148.
expand their Pittsburgh facilities beginning in the 1920s.\textsuperscript{30} Even though the World War II production boom kept employment high during the early 1940s, it belied a decades-long lack of investment.

The lack of maintenance on existing plants combined with the city’s aging infrastructure and poor environment made Pittsburgh seem less attractive than other regions with more cooperative geography after World War II. In May 1946, \textit{The Iron Age}, a trade publication of the metal industry, declared Chicago a more promising industrial location than Pittsburgh. J. L. Perry, president of Carnegie-Illinois Steel, a subsidiary of US Steel, intimated that his company would move its facilities to a new location outside of the Pittsburgh area rather than upgrade existing plants. Perry’s suggestion extended to the older holdings of US Steel in Pittsburgh, thus threatening the future capacity of Pittsburgh steel operations if the hints accurately reflected the company’s plan. Not all steel companies in Pittsburgh were planning to leave. Jones and Laughlin steel planned a $100 million expansion of its Pittsburgh facilities, and Allegheny-Ludlum also planned to remain in the area. But these promises were not guaranteed. J&L could easily spend the $100 million on newer plants in the Cleveland area or on its Chicago properties if further investment in Pittsburgh seemed unwarranted. According to T. E. Lloyd, regional editor for \textit{The Iron Age}, Pittsburgh’s taxes were too high, its infrastructure was outdated, and its steelmaking equipment was too old to produce efficiently.\textsuperscript{31} The greatest threat to Pittsburgh was

\textsuperscript{30} This interactive map displays the location of steel mills, coke ovens and foundries throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania in the 18\textsuperscript{th}, 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries divided by pre-1850, 1850-1880, 1880-1920, 1920-1950, 1950-1980 and 1980-2010. The number of companies falls from 182 to 125 between the 1880-1920 and 1920-1950 periods. Although the numbers are for the region, the declining concentration of mills within the city limits is clearly visible on the map. “Steel Footprints: A Virtual Tour of the Pittsburgh Industrial District, 1750-Present,” Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, \url{http://www.riversofsteel.com/map/category/502/} accessed 18 February 2014.

its industrial giants moving to Cleveland, Chicago, or the South or West, lured by cleaner environments, lower operational costs and modern infrastructure.

When the St. Patrick’s Day flood filled H. J. Heinz Co.’s riverfront plant with 15 feet of water in 1936, it was the final straw for company executives whose exasperation with regular flooding and the lack of preventative measures led them to promise to invest no more in Pittsburgh.32 Rumors about the potential flight of ALCOA, (Aluminum Company of America, leading producer of aluminum) and Westinghouse Electric Company raised additional concerns. While “Big Steel’s” $900-million investment in the area was not likely to disappear overnight, the end of foreseeable expansion, and vulnerability to boom and bust economic cycles caused serious concerns about the future security of the industry and the region’s dependence on it.33 The city needed to prove that it could address the fears of its biggest companies, provide responsible environmental reforms and create a plan for future growth. Urban planning had been a staple of local government since the start of the twentieth century, but these desperate times called for a stronger consolidation of power than ever before. If Pittsburgh was going to survive as a major industrial center, it would have to dramatically change its approach to urban planning and city government. It could no longer afford to spend years developing a comprehensive plan only to have it sit on a shelf as with Frederick Bigger’s Pittsburgh Plan. City officials needed to work with each other and with the existing voluntary reform and planning organizations to

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32 “Pittsburgh cleans up for company,” Business Week, 6 January 1951, 22.
coordinate a thorough reform movement. The old ways of planning would have to give way to a new era of cooperation for the sake of the city.

Pittsburgh needed a total modernization from the streets to the skies. It needed innovative planners as well as political clout to create a legislative infrastructure that could fund and develop projects beyond a single mayoral administration. It needed the financial backing to prove to potential investors that the project was sound and could offer a decent return. Support from local business leaders with extensive personal and professional connections would also help to secure favorable public opinion when the tip to tails renovations were likely to cause some inconvenience. It needed a strong concentration of power and a commitment from political, banking and business leaders to work together towards the common goal of reviving the city.

When David L. Lawrence became mayor in 1946, he inherited a city teetering between catastrophe and reform. Mayor Scully’s 1941 smoke ordinance was set to take effect after World War II, but whether or not it would be effective in reducing pollution to the degree necessary to maintain industrial investment within the city remained unclear. As Fredrick Bigger’s experience demonstrated, having a plan for improvement did not guarantee that the plan would be executed. Born in “the Point” to an Irish immigrant family, Lawrence maintained close ties to Pittsburgh even as his career drew him to state and national office. He became mayor after serving in federal and state appointments and remained committed to his personal motto, “the best politics is good government,” throughout his career. Personally, he eschewed drinking in all forms and consoled himself with work when grieving for the sudden death of his two teenaged sons in a car accident in 1942. As chairman of the county Democratic Committee and twice chairman of the state Democratic Party, Lawrence commanded considerable political power within Western

34 Weber, 206-207.
35 Weber, 84.
Pennsylvania, but the city’s future depended on corporations as well as organized local government.

Richard King Mellon controlled over $3 billion of corporate assets located throughout the Pittsburgh region and shared Lawrence’s desire to improve the city, but the two had never met. Mellon’s assistants arranged their first meeting to talk to the new mayor about donating some of the Mellon family’s land for a new park downtown. The conversation led to a mutual understanding of the need to do something radical to revive the city.\textsuperscript{37} This first meeting between the Republican banking giant and the Democratic mayor did not blossom into an intimate personal friendship, but the bi-partisan alliance of the city’s most important business and political leaders created a lasting partnership for the burgeoning revival plan.

In its earliest days, the “Pittsburgh Renaissance” was nothing more than a general idea that something should be done to fix the problems threatening to drive away businesses.\textsuperscript{38} With the city’s two most influential figures in agreement, the plan evolved from vague conversations in boardrooms to a practical set of reforms that had to be accomplished in a precise order for the greatest effect. To ensure that the planned reforms had a sound legislative base, the group of planners, politicians and businessmen working on developing Pittsburgh’s Renaissance drafted several bills for the state legislature known as the “Pittsburgh Package.” The bills included provisions for the extension of smoke controls, flood controls, the creation of a parking authority, a city department of parks and recreation, and a traffic study commission. It also provided for the completion of a new highway system linking the city and surrounding suburbs

\textsuperscript{37} Weber, 236-237.

and allowed the city to broaden its tax base outside of real estate.\textsuperscript{39} With Lawrence’s state-wide Democratic base, and Mellon’s influence on key Republicans, eight of the ten bills passed and became law in 1947. With this legislative underpinning in place, Renaissance planners could prepare for the next stage of redevelopment.

Mellon’s prominence added credibility to the early stages of Renaissance developments. Planners wanted to build new modern office towers and add park space to the grim, congested “triangle” downtown, creating a Garden City-esque office park called Gateway Center. Mellon personally secured the commitments of several corporations to twenty-year leases in the planned Gateway Center.\textsuperscript{40} The first step was to finance the new office buildings, which would generate needed revenue for the city and the rest of the redevelopment plans. Mellon’s associates and Renaissance collaborators Charles Graham, president of the Pittsburgh and West Virginia Railroad, Wallace Richards, Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association director, and Park Martin, Allegheny Conference on Community Development President met with the president of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in New York. The meeting failed to secure funding for Gateway Center, and the three men thought about what to do next. On a whim, Graham said, “I know Thomas Parkinson of the Equitable Life Assurance Society. He is a member of the Pennsylvania Society and so am I. What do you say about our going and trying to see him?” Without an appointment, the gentlemen traveled to Parkinson’s office. After hearing their proposal, Parkinson asked what they were going to do about eliminating smoke and floods in the


Downtown Pittsburgh triangle. Satisfied with the answers, Parkinson responded enthusiastically, and Gateway Center, twenty-three acres of park and office space, had secured its funding.  

The unlikely collaboration between Lawrence and Mellon established a new set of priorities for the city’s elites organized around physical improvements and generating new investments within the city. The bi-partisan cooperation also introduced a spirit of unity to Renaissance programs that held the future of the city above personal interests and affiliations. The leaders of the Renaissance came from dramatically different backgrounds, but shared the goal of restoring growth and prosperity to Pittsburgh.

Lawrence’s reputation as a man of the people, who even as mayor sat up front with his driver and routinely offered rides downtown to cleaning women he met on the way to work, earned him the allegiance of Pittsburgh’s working classes. As much as the Renaissance would depend on remote political contests in Harrisburg and high-rise office towers downtown, it would also require popular approval from working-class voters. Mayor Lawrence had to convince his constituents that their daily contributions to the Renaissance effort through the use of more expensive “smokeless” coal at home would lead to greater job security and better opportunities once Pittsburgh’s transformation was complete. He had to ask Pittsburgh’s working classes for a financial sacrifice while simultaneously asking for their votes. The Pittsburgh Renaissance needed Lawrence both as a political heavyweight who could muster support across the state and as a charismatic local leader who could sell a promising future to a skeptical present.

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42 Weber, 174. Weber’s biography is by far the most thorough investigation of Lawrence’s career and personal life.
On the other hand, Richard King Mellon came from one of the wealthiest families in the country. Nephew of former Secretary of the Treasury, Andrew Mellon, and son of Richard Beatty Mellon, Dick Mellon was expected to join the family banking business from his youth. He became president of Mellon National Bank in 1934 at age 35, and chaired the Mellon National Bank and Union Trust Company after their 1946 merger. He represented a new generation at the helm of the Mellon family’s banking empire. The consolidated Mellon National Bank and Trust Company created Pittsburgh’s first billion-dollar bank and became the 16th largest bank in the country. He demonstrated his commitment to the region by serving as President of the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association while directing what *Fortune Magazine* described as “one of the largest working fortunes in the Western world.” Mellon represented the big-business, high-finance wing of Renaissance collaborators, but smaller, local business owners, especially those with downtown locations, also shared an interest in preserving and protecting the city against a shrinking industrial economy and overall decline.

Another important Renaissance figure, department store owner Edgar Kaufmann, expanded the Renaissance network with his business, philanthropic and community connections. Kaufmann’s Department Store moved to Downtown Pittsburgh in 1878 after successfully operating on the South Side for nearly a decade. Edgar Kaufmann, son of the store’s founder, studied at Yale University and worked for Marshall Field’s in Chicago before becoming president of his family’s store in 1913. While modernizing the business, Kaufmann spent his

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45 “Pittsburgh’s new powers,” *Fortune* 35 (February 1947), 76-77.
free time supporting various research institutions and Jewish organizations. Kaufmann was also a well-known patron of the arts. In particular, Kaufmann commissioned architect Frank Lloyd Wright to build “Fallingwater” in the Laurel Highlands, southwest of Pittsburgh as a country retreat for his family. Noted for its cantilevered structure on top of a waterfall, “Fallingwater” is one of Wright’s most famous buildings. Kaufmann supported other Wright endeavors, including displaying the “Broadacre City” model at the Pittsburgh store. Kaufmann was also a devotee of musical theater, and served as president of the Civic Light Opera Association of Greater Pittsburgh. As a downtown business owner, Kaufmann had a direct interest in securing the city’s long-term prosperity. Kaufmann brought a focus on the arts, local business connections and an extensive philanthropic experience to the Renaissance cohort.

Lawrence, Mellon and Kaufmann were more than figureheads or cheerleaders. Each took a leadership role and recruited a network of people prepared to wrestle with the organizational details of massive urban reforms. Multiple planning groups emerged, some of which predated the Renaissance but they all had to shift their individual focus to operate together harmoniously. Although other groups such as the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce participated in the Renaissance efforts, three groups in particular stand out as the primary organizations through which Renaissance leaders achieved their goals.

The Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association (PRPA) was a voluntary businessmen’s association founded in 1918 to influence planning and the urban environment. Richard Mellon served as president of the organization prior to the start of the Renaissance when it was known as

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47 “$1,000,000 Gift to City,” The New York Times, 16 April 1955, 19.
the Citizen’s Committee on the City Plan.\textsuperscript{48} Wallace Richards, former executive secretary of the federal planning project at Greenbelt, Maryland, became the director of the CCCP when it turned into the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association in 1937.\textsuperscript{49} The PRPA provided the technical planning expertise to execute the necessary reforms while other organizations handled comprehensive planning and logistics.

Another planning organization, The Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD), began when Richard K. Mellon organized a group of businessmen to “discuss Pittsburgh’s future.”\textsuperscript{50} The ACCD started on a voluntary basis intended to “stimulate and coordinate research and planning looking to a unified community plan for the region as a whole.”\textsuperscript{51} From its initial investigations into the problems facing the city at the end of World War II, the agency evolved to not only identify problems, but to propose solutions to those problems.\textsuperscript{52} Members of the organization included the presidents of Allegheny Ludlum Steel Corporation, US Steel Corporation, Consolidation Coal Company, Pittsburgh Coke and Chemical Company, Gulf Oil Corporation, and Harmon Creek Coal Corporation as well as the


\textsuperscript{49} Weber, 233.

\textsuperscript{50} Lubove, \textit{Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh, Vol 1}, 108. Lubove dates the founding of the ACCD in 1943, whereas the ACCD website cites the incorporation in 1944 as the founding date. [http://www.alleghenyconference.org/ConferenceHistory.asp](http://www.alleghenyconference.org/ConferenceHistory.asp) (accessed 11 March 2010). Weber, 233. It is possible that Mellon’s aide, Arthur Van Buskirk introduced Richards and Mellon at some point, and that Richards was responsible for convincing Mellon to start the ACCD. Weber is non-committal, saying that the association was “probably” through Van Buskirk and “likely” that he persuaded Mellon.

\textsuperscript{51} Early Executive Committee members included the presidents of the Carnegie Institute of Technology and the Mellon Institute, the dean of the University of Pittsburgh’s School of Business Administration, the Executive Vice-President of the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, the real estate manager of Carnegie-Illinois Steel, and Edgar Kaufmann. Park Martin, “Narrative of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development and the Pittsburgh Renaissance, 1943-1958,” 3-4. Box 308, Folder 11ACCD Records, MSS 0285, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

chairmen of the board from Pittsburgh National Bank and Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation and one representative from the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA). The Mellon enterprises held controlling interests in Gulf Oil, Pittsburgh Consolidation Coal Company and ALCOA, among others. The corporate composition of the group, with its close ties to Mellon, established the strong pro-business orientation of the group. The mostly Protestant, mostly Ivy League educated executive committee represented a stark contrast to Mayor Lawrence’s working-class support base. As the ACCD embraced a more active political role in redevelopment, it became one of the most powerful agencies of the Renaissance. ACCD members helped to set the Renaissance’s agenda, with conference members’ interests at the forefront of planning goals.

One final organization, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA), also played a key role in Renaissance planning. The five-member authority included Lawrence, City Councilman William Stewart, Arthur Van Buskirk, aide to Richard K. Mellon, Edgar Kaufmann, and the head of Carnegie Illinois Steel, J. Lester Perry. Van Buskirk, Wallace Richards and Park Martin, civil engineer and director of the ACCD, urged Mayor Lawrence to establish a city-led authority that would be able to work with private agencies, secure private funding and control eminent domain. The city needed a mechanism through which it could acquire private property for redevelopment. The URA was the only Renaissance organization with any official government ties.

These three organizations demonstrated the tight-knit control of the entire enterprise. Lawrence sponsored the ACCD and led the URA. Kaufmann and Carnegie Illinois Steel head J. Lester Perry worked on both the ACCD and the URA. Kaufmann was also on the board of the

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PRPA. Van Buskirk represented Mellon interests in the ACCD and the URA. Together, these three groups orchestrated the developments of the Renaissance, with the ACCD proposing projects, the PRPA providing the physical plans, and the URA acquiring property and funding for the projects.

The Renaissance organizations were management-driven groups with little to no input from representatives of workers or the many unions in the area. The goal of the Renaissance founders was to prevent companies and industries from relocating, and executives, not workers or unions, made those decisions. Also, these were voluntary organizations made up of like-minded individuals who believed that the path to Pittsburgh’s secure economic future went through appealing to companies, and that meant downplaying the region’s connections to organized labor. Gwilym Price, president of Westinghouse, member of the executive committee of the ACCD and member of the Board of Trustees of the University of Pittsburgh, concentrated Westinghouse’s corporate offices and research facilities in Pittsburgh while building new plants elsewhere in locations with a non-union workforce. Price contributed financially to Father Charles Owen Rice’s efforts to takeover United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE) Local 601. The success of Rice’s campaign led to the removal of the left-leaning UE Local 601 which represented over twelve thousand workers in Pittsburgh’s seven Westinghouse plants. In 1947, it was sound Cold War management and economic strategy for both Westinghouse and Pittsburgh to eliminate an association with an organization that had expressed political positions similar to those of the Communist Party. Without the UE, Westinghouse could accept federal defense contracts and accelerate its atomic power program, thereby securing its own economic

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55 Weber, 256-258.
The coming tide of anti-communism meant that a well-organized, radical union movement was a liability for Pittsburgh in the late 1940s. Price’s efforts to rid Westinghouse of a union that prevented the company from expanding its nuclear and defense program aligned with the Renaissance plan for economic stability and diversity. It also meant that the region’s union leaders were not likely to receive an invitation to join the ACCD.

The PRPA, ACCD and URA provided the technical, strategic and practical arms of the Renaissance, but they also represented a permanent source of power for the Renaissance ideology. Lawrence, Mellon and Kaufmann were the big names attached to the Pittsburgh Renaissance, but they recognized that if they wanted to create a reform structure that would outlast their tenure as leaders, then the power structure of the Renaissance would have to be located in organizations outside of electoral politics or the influence of any one individual. Mayor Lawrence could not be mayor forever, Edgar Kaufmann had been the president of his family’s store for over three decades, and even though Richard King Mellon would always be a member of the Mellon family, his role directing the family and company assets might change. Creating private agencies that would oversee Renaissance planning meant that the Renaissance vision could continue after the Renaissance founders moved on to other occupations or interests. Establishing the PRPA, ACCD and the URA meant that the unity of vision created by the Renaissance founders could continue with the life of the agencies rather than the life or career of individuals. The Pittsburgh Renaissance would not have the same vulnerabilities as previous comprehensive plans that were left incomplete because of political transitions and inadequate resources. The independence of the PRPA, ACCD and the URA from city government meant that they could continue to execute Renaissance plans under a different mayor and that they

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could secure financing for projects without relying solely on the city’s budget. Making sure that the Pittsburgh Renaissance would survive even if its founders did not represent a critical difference between this and any previous comprehensive planning efforts associated with a single individual.

In order to make its mark on the city, the Renaissance needed strong leaders with a clear vision of how to improve the city, a bipartisan coalition to win corporate and political support for the program, and the willingness of the general public to sacrifice convenience for the greater good of the city. Mayor Lawrence and the Renaissance cohort provided the leadership and political organization to convince the relevant legislative bodies that the Renaissance was necessary and would benefit city, state and national interests. The rest depended on the public. Herein lies the paradox of the Renaissance: in order to ensure that the planning mechanisms would not be politically vulnerable they had to be located outside of traditional channels of city government but the plans could only be achieved with citizen compliance. So the Renaissance depended on the participation of residents even though residents were excluded from the planning process. As long as Pittsburgh residents were willing to accept higher fuel costs and traffic delays then the Renaissance could proceed without restraint, but if residents started to question the legal foundations of the Renaissance, or oppose particular plans or processes, then the entire Renaissance apparatus could crumble. The Renaissance had to operate outside of existing democratic institutions to accomplish its goals but remained vulnerable to the same democratic mechanisms that could be used to dismantle it if public opinion turned against it. In its early years the Renaissance was able to win public support through visible improvements and a powerful Democratic machine because the improvements that made the city more attractive to businesses also improved conditions for residents.
Building Gateway Center depended entirely on successfully managing the smoke and flood problems because Equitable’s agreement to invest in new construction in Pittsburgh stipulated that these problems had to be solved before they would commit to the project. Improving traffic patterns also depended on controlling flooding, since it would not make sense to build a new highway along the rivers only to have it constantly under water. Renaissance leaders focused on improving the downtown business district as a first step towards broader city-wide reforms. The Renaissance goals for the year 1947 were initiating a county-wide smoke control ordinance, assisting the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh with its programs, establishing the Pittsburgh Parking Authority, developing a park at the “Point” of the downtown triangle, improving county-wide waste disposal, improving the highway system, studying the feasibility of a river-rail-truck terminal, constructing the Greater Pittsburgh Airport, formulating a long-range housing program and developing recreational facilities throughout the county along with other programs. Smoke and flood controls had to be completed first, and improving traffic flows into the business district would make the new office towers even more attractive to potential tenants.

Residents of industrial cities, including Pittsburgh, fought against smoke pollution in various ways throughout the twentieth century. Progressive era movements identified clean air as an inalienable right and necessary to a prosperous society. In the 1910s, anti-smoke campaigns moved into the domain of engineering as experts sought a technical solution to the smoke problem. World War I interrupted the national smoke control movement, and while anti-smoke activism briefly resurged during the interwar years, the Great Depression again diverted attention

away from the problem. Despite the lasting Depression, St. Louis began working towards city-wide anti-smoke legislation in the late 1930s. Boston, Baltimore, Detroit, and Cincinnati all had their own smoke abatement leagues but it was St. Louis’ league that provided the model for Pittsburgh’s 1946 law and its enforcement. Requiring the domestic use of “smokeless fuel” within St. Louis produced one of the most effective pieces of evidence in favor of establishing a similar ordinance in Pittsburgh: smokeless days. Photographs illustrating the difference between St. Louis’ sky before and after smoke controls reprinted in Pittsburgh newspapers helped convince Pittsburgh residents and politicians that domestic smoke controls could dramatically improve the city’s air quality. St. Louis’ example demonstrated to Pittsburgh the benefits of targeting fuel dealers, and educating fuel users. St. Louis enforced their ordinance by investigating distributors, rather than the users of illegal coal and inspired Pittsburgh to do the same. The women leading the Women’s Organization for Smoke Abatement in St. Louis campaigned to educate domestic coal consumers about the benefits of “smokeless coal” so they would not be tempted to seek out banned coal illegally. In addition, they connected household chores and maintaining a healthy family directly to smoke control compliance. The Pittsburgh

59 Tarr and Lampere, 564-565.
60 The Women’s Organization for Smoke Abatement in St. Louis produced a document directed at the heart of the issue. A stiff card meant to hang next to the stove listed four steps to building an efficient fire, if one must resort to using soft coal. The card suggested using anthracite or “smokeless coal” instead of bituminous or “soft” coal. The longer-lasting, more efficient anthracite coal would offset the initial higher cost compared with bituminous coal and would leave less ash, reducing the amount of cleanup required. “To the Members of the Women’s Organization for Smoke Abatement in St. Louis,” Box 5, FF 8. Records of the Smoke Investigation Activities of the Mellon Institute of Research (Pittsburgh, Pa.), 1911-1957, ais198307, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh.

An advertisement in The St. Louis Republic urged women to better care for their homes and families by supporting smoke abatement. “Every St. Louis housekeeper knows from experience the conditions of rugs, draperies, furniture and clothing after a short exposure to our smoke-laden air. Human energy, time and money must be expended to keep our houses even decently clean. Are not a blue sky and sunshine greater factors than we now realize, in raising standards of living in every community?” The organization informed women of the higher rates of tuberculosis, diphtheria, and bronchitis in St. Louis.
newspapers emphasized the domestic benefits of smoke controls just as the St. Louis Women’s Organization did. Arguments about the city’s economic health seemed to matter less to the public than arguments for raising a healthier family, easier housekeeping and saving money.

With the end of World War II, and the growing Renaissance plan, Pittsburgh was finally ready to enforce its 1941 smoke control ordinance in 1947. The biggest obstacle to the success of the ordinance was compliance within working-class neighborhoods. Purchasing smokeless coal in Pittsburgh presented a hardship to poor families. Lower income families spent a larger percentage of their incomes on fuel, and bought smaller amounts more frequently because they lacked capital and storage for large amounts. Also, poor families tended to use less efficient stoves, making their smoke output greater than necessary. In Pittsburgh’s Italian-American neighborhoods, the resistance to smoke controls was especially high, but the extremely well-organized and efficient Democratic machine ensured that there was enough compensation through patronage to secure the loyalty of the voters most adversely affected by the fuel regulations. To promote compliance, the Bureau of Smoke Prevention launched an educational campaign in poor neighborhoods to teach people how to build efficient fires, similar to St. Louis. The Bureau had twelve inspectors to investigate about 100,000 homes using coal stoves compared to cities with cleaner air. “How Many Smokeless Chimneys in Your Block?” The St. Louis Republic 4 April 1911, p. 7. Box 5, FF 8. Records of the Smoke Investigation Activities of the Mellon Institute of Research (Pittsburgh, Pa.), 1911-1957, ais198307, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh.

61 Tarr and Lamperes, 265.
64 Lawrence’s support of smoke control was controversial, and forced him to fight for re-election in the next mayoral campaign against union leader and city councilman Eddie Leonard. Leonard’s campaign was almost entirely based on an anti-smoke control platform. He emphasized the wealthy luxury of smoke control over the hardship of smoke control for the poor. He lost the election, but won working class
and furnaces. A home-by-home inspection process was not practical. Rather than inspecting individual homes of poor families, the Bureau cracked down on distributors of illegal coal. The Bureau prohibited the city’s thirty coal distribution yards from selling or delivering “high volatile,” or bituminous coal. Truckers and dealers selling illegal coal were subject to fines. According to president of the URA John P. Robin, the inspectors “deliberately went real easy on the smoke in poor neighborhoods and thought that they would get rid of that by eliminating the trucking of illegal fuel rather than by moving against poor Mrs. Murphy.”

For smoke controls to work effectively, people needed an incentive to use more expensive coal and to buy a stove that would burn it effectively. The continued presence of “bootleggers” selling high-volatile coal suggests that many low-income people resisted the change. Regulating coal distributors was only part of the battle. Educating people about building more efficient fires became the city’s best hope of reducing domestic smoke output. The Renaissance programs and the modernization of Pittsburgh rested in part on cleaning Mrs. Murphy’s fire and in part on having an organized political machine that could retain voters even when the party acted against voters’ interests. Mayor Lawrence and the ACCD provided the support for enforcement of smoke controls as well as the educational materials that promoted individual compliance and produced noticeable results within the city of Pittsburgh. But one of

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support and mounted a rare obstacle for an incumbent mayor who was also Democratic Party boss. Michael Weber, Don’t Call Me Boss: David L. Lawrence, Pittsburgh’s Renaissance Mayor (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press 1988), 247-254. According to Luconi, Lawrence still secured the votes of the anti-smoke control Italian-American population in Pittsburgh because of the patronage positions with which Democratic machine voters were rewarded. Luconi, 589.

65 Tarr and Lamperes, 574-575. John P. Robin, first president of the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh and aide to Mayor Lawrence said in an oral history interview “We did it [smoke control] with some degree of hardship, I’m ashamed to say, for working people. Because we made them buy fuel that wouldn’t burn. Damn thing. But we were saved by the institution of gas heat and the installation of gas furnaces throughout the city. That got accomplished painlessly.” 9-12, AIS 97:2 Box 2, John P. Robin Oral History 6 October 1998, Pittsburgh Region Politics and Government: 20th Century Transition, Archives of Industrial Society, University of Pittsburgh.
the most important consequences of the program was that the initial success of smoke regulation won more public support for the Renaissance reforms.66

The Renaissance next turned to the threat of Pittsburgh’s raging rivers. The damage to Pittsburgh business, property and life from recurring floods demanded attention. Further, Equitable’s investment in the Gateway Center complex in downtown Pittsburgh was contingent upon the realization of both smoke and flood controls. Without the rivers securely in their place, redevelopment could not proceed. The Pittsburgh Package of 1947 extended smoke controls throughout Allegheny County. The Pittsburgh Package also strengthened the powers of the Water and Power Resources Board of the Department of Forests and Waters in its management of flood control districts. But flood control still depended on the will of Congress to fund and manage dams outside of Pennsylvania. The economic development of Pittsburgh hinged upon the ability of local politicians and businessmen to prove the importance of the dams to Pittsburgh’s economic and physical safety.67

The Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce took the lead with a plan for convincing Congress that flooding adversely affected Pittsburgh’s economy as well as the rest of the nation. In 1947, Pittsburgh’s five congressmen learned that funding for the planned Conemaugh Dam, about forty miles east of Pittsburgh, was in danger. Congress would need a thorough explanation of the economic impact of the dam on Pittsburgh and surrounding areas. The Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce provided specific instructions on what documents and evidence of damage/loss

66 Joel Tarr, “The Metabolism of the Industrial City: The Case of Pittsburgh,” *Journal of Urban History* 28, no 5 (July 2002): 527-529. Tarr also points out that the shift to natural gas meant that the reduction in smoke pollution would likely have occurred without smoke controls. Use of natural gas in Pittsburgh increased from 17.4 percent in 1940 to 60 percent by 1950. Also, railroads switched from steam to diesel-electric locomotives between 1950 and 1960, further reducing pollution. Still, Tarr credits the Renaissance smoke controls with accelerating the shift to cleaner fuels, proving that change was possible in Pittsburgh, and earning the confidence of a formerly reluctant public (528-529).
manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, unions, veterans, women’s clubs, churches and other Chambers of Commerce should send to Congress. The Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce asked businesses to estimate the level at which flooding would cause them to cease operations and the potential damages to equipment and from lost business. They argued that Pittsburgh’s role in the national economy made it vitally important for Congress to protect Pittsburgh’s businesses and industries.

“Any stoppage of our production affects the economic welfare of the United States. Many sections of the country which are not directly concerned in the savings resulting from the construction of this dam owe a large part of their income to sales to the plants put out of operation in Pittsburgh floods. The loss of Pittsburgh steel, aluminum, glass, and innumerable other products causes great dislocations in other industries throughout our interdependent economy. As both World Wars have proved, Pittsburgh’s importance to our war production is such that everyone in America has a legitimate interest in seeing that this great industrial center is never closed by a flood.”

On 10 April 1947 Pennsylvania Congressman John McDowell wrote to Edward Weidlein, Chairman of the ACCD, that the federal budget included $3.2 million for the dam, $2 million less than the engineers requested, but added that “As it is our experience that no public estimate of expenses made in the last 15 years has been an understatement, we feel that we can have probably a million or a million and a half dollars added to the amount that is to be recommended. If this be done, it is our feeling that the Dam will continue without interruption, and the fears of Pittsburghers for future floods in that area can be eliminated forever.”

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68 “Save the Conemaugh Dam.” Box 274, Folder 9, ACCD Records, MSS 0285, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.
Commerce, along with the ACCD, effectively convinced Congress that the local and national benefits of constructing the Conemaugh Dam justified the expenditure. Congress granted the full $5.2 million appropriation for preliminary work on the dam in 1947. The following year, Congress appropriated funds for the construction of the entire dam, which opened in 1952 for a total cost of $46 million.\textsuperscript{71}

The Conemaugh Dam was the second largest of thirteen reservoirs and dams that comprised the controls protecting the city. The thirteen controls were located within twelve different states.\textsuperscript{72} Although the battle for congressional appropriations to construct the Conemaugh Dam seemed daunting at the time, the controversy surrounding the final and largest dam proved the most threatening to Pittsburgh’s flood control efforts. In 1941, because of opposition from both the Seneca Indians and New York State, the Army Corps of Engineers delayed construction on the Kinzua Dam, near Warren, PA close to the New York/Pennsylvania border.\textsuperscript{73} What began as an attempt to prevent the loss of industry due to persistent flooding in Pittsburgh turned into a fight over Native American lands held since the eighteenth century and took nearly twenty years to complete.

The Kinzua Dam represented more than a construction project or a rural consequence of urban redevelopment. For the federal government to reclaim land belonging to the Seneca Nation through eminent domain, the government had to break a 1794 treaty promising never to claim land held by the Seneca Nation.\textsuperscript{74} To the Seneca, the loss of their land was not just about the loss

\textsuperscript{71} Smith 1977, 19-20.
\textsuperscript{72} “Link Welded in Flood Control Plan,” \textit{Spartanburg Herald-Journal}, 17 October 1948, A6. Nine reservoirs were proposed in response to the St. Patrick’s Day Flood of 1936, and eight of those nine were operational by 1953. Weber, 239
\textsuperscript{73} Smith 1977, 14.
\textsuperscript{74} Although George Washington is often credited with signing the treaty, Timothy Pickering, not Washington, signed the document known as The Canandaigua Treaty of 1794 or the Pickering Treaty. Joy
of property, but the breaking of a promise, and the continuation of the federal government’s policy of Indian Removal as convenient to the white man. Contemporary editorial coverage of the debate failed to grasp this nuance and assumed that monetary compensation would satisfy the loss of property.75

When Lawrence, Mellon, Kaufmann and their associates first met to discuss ways of securing Pittsburgh’s future growth, addressing frequent flooding was an obvious point on their agenda. Their desire to stop annual floods spanned state and federal politics, but the initial goals of the project for the Renaissance cohort remained the same. Although they did not intend for flood control to become inextricably linked with “Indian Removal,” keeping the Renaissance on track remained their utmost priority no matter the consequences. Construction on Gateway Center began in 1950, with three buildings complete by 1953. H. J. Heinz Corporation and Jones and Laughlin steel were both expanding their facilities along Pittsburgh’s rivers (the Allegheny and Monongahela, respectively) by this time.76 Effective flood controls were just as important to retaining the investment in the city as they were to attracting the investment in the first place. But ensuring that all of the flood control pieces would come together as planned meant that some battles would be fought on a national stage, and that the collective political weight of Renaissance leaders would have to be employed in different ways.


75 “Well, these 250 Senecas could be resettled on lands just as good as their present holdings…just as countless thousands of landowners have been. We do not recall any great outburst of indignation about the displacement of 2500 persons to make way for the Conemaugh flood reservoir, none of whom were Indians. Nor do we believe that the government failed to compensate them adequately. Are Indian rights superior to those of other citizens?” Testimony of the Chamber of Commerce of Pittsburgh in Support of the Allegheny River Reservoir, Editorial Comment on Allegheny River Reservoir, *Pittsburgh Press* 26 March 1957. Box 247, Folder 12, ACCD Records, MSS 0285, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

76 Weber, 239, 262, 395.
President Dwight Eisenhower appointed his West Point friend and classmate, Major General John S. Bragdon, as his chief advisor on public works in 1955.\textsuperscript{77} This was a significant appointment as General Bragdon hailed from Pittsburgh and spent much of his military career working with the Army Corps of Engineers. His personal relationship with President Eisenhower and their shared military backgrounds meant that the President placed his full faith in Bragdon, expanding his responsibilities and trusting his judgment of projects. Regarding the Kinzua project, Bragdon was able to convince President Eisenhower of the necessity and popularity of the project and that the breaking of the treaty was legal and justified the displacement of the Seneca, and that the Army Corps of Engineers were investigating alternatives. In 1957, Bragdon argued in favor of a line item for the following year’s budget that provided $1 million to commence the Kinzua project. This turned out to be a pivotal point, as it was the inclusion of this line item that federal courts cited as congressional action already taken to justify the breaking of the Pickering Treaty.\textsuperscript{78} Furthermore, Bragdon’s assessment of the project depended heavily on the Corps of Engineers reports, which were tangled in their own political web.

Dr. Arthur Morgan represented the Seneca opposition to the Kinzua Dam. As an engineer and former chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority, Morgan was himself an engineering expert, and as such directly petitioned Pittsburgh Renaissance leaders in hopes of convincing them to withdraw their support for the dam in favor of his alternative Conewango plan. Morgan complained that the proposed Kinzua Dam would not adequately protect Pittsburgh from floods, that it could not be enlarged in the future if needed because of a nearby town, and would cost


\textsuperscript{78} Hauptman, 186-188.
more than his alternative proposal.\textsuperscript{79} Certainly convincing Park Martin and H. J. Heinz, II to support Morgan’s plan could have changed the outcome of the project in theory, but the real obstacle preventing consideration of an alternative plan was General Bragdon and the Corps of Engineers. The Corps resented FDR’s attempt to move it from the War Department to the Department of the Interior and introduce a resource planning board to administer its programs during the 1930s. Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, had expressed strong reservations about the Corps’ tactics and actions, making it likely that they would have lost a significant amount of power had the transfer occurred. But the Corps successfully prevented the move while remaining hostile to the TVA, which seemed to be infringing on the Corps’ territory. The Flood Control Act of 1938 set the Corps as the sole agency responsible for flood control programs, and subsequently, FDR removed Morgan as chairman of the TVA. Friction between the Department of the Interior and the Corps remained.\textsuperscript{80} The conflict over the Kinzua Dam came down to a battle between the former TVA chairman and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Unsatisfied with the Corps’ refusal to consider alternatives to Kinzua, Morgan called for an independent engineering firm to investigate other possibilities including Morgan’s Conewango plan. The Corps of Engineers hired the firm Tippetts-Abbett-McCarthy-Stratton (TAMS), and while Morgan agreed to the choice of firm, there was some doubt as to its independence from the Corps. One of the firm’s named partners, James Stratton, was a retired Brigadier General who was the director of civil works for the Corps before his retirement and had previously worked on a dam project in which there was also a conflict with Native American lands. In addition, the Chairman of the House Indian and Insular Affairs Subcommittee,


\textsuperscript{80} Rosier, 348-350.
Congressman James Haley, questioned the firm’s independence from the Corps, saying that TAMS “gets more business from the Army Engineers than from any other sources.” The study found that the Kinzua proposal would provide adequate flood protection in both winter and summer, and that both the Kinzua plan and the alternative plans would be satisfactory. Morgan’s plan was substantially larger and displaced more people, but those displaced by Morgan’s plan included a town currently endangered by recurrent flooding who would be able to relocate their communities away from the water line.\textsuperscript{81} The TAMS report stated that the alternative plans would cost 25-38\% more than Kinzua, require 51-108\% more land, and would displace 150-180\% more people.\textsuperscript{82} Given that the Conewango plan would have held three times as much water as Kinzua, this was not terribly surprising.\textsuperscript{83} Morgan claimed that the TAMS investigation failed to thoroughly examine the disadvantages of Kinzua and the advantages of Conewango due to their predisposition in favor of Kinzua.\textsuperscript{84} The TAMS report did not actually favor one plan or the other, but in conceding that the Corps’ Kinzua plan would cost less than the alternatives, it was used to justify proceeding with the project.\textsuperscript{85}

After approximately three years of debate, the Supreme Court decided in March 1960 that the federal government could use eminent domain to reclaim Indian lands provided it offered “just compensation.”\textsuperscript{86} On 23 June 1960, Pittsburgh Mayor Joseph M. Barr testified before the Indian Affairs Subcommittee of the US House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee. Barr

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\textsuperscript{81} Hauptman, 190-191.

\textsuperscript{82} Letter to Colonel R. E. Smyser, Jr. Division Engineer, US Army Engineer Division, 1 April 1958. Box 247, Folder 12, ACCD Records, MSS 0285, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

\textsuperscript{83} Hauptman, 191.

\textsuperscript{84} Arthur Morgan, “A report to those who have corresponded with me concerning the upper Allegheny River Project,” 6-7. Box 247, Folder 12, ACCD Records, MSS 0285, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

\textsuperscript{85} Hauptman, 191.

\textsuperscript{86} Smith 1977, 22.
summarized the report of the independent engineers, argued that Congress had already approved the matter and that further delay caused further damage and destruction not just to Pittsburgh, but also to boroughs, towns and cities along the Allegheny, Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Barr claimed that had the Kinzua Dam been in place in 1956, it could have prevented more than $4 million in property damages from one flood, and $5 million in damages from a 1959 flood. He closed his testimony by asking the commission to reject further delays and begin construction on the Kinzua Dam and Reservoir system.  

Mayor Barr’s testimony, along with that of other Pennsylvania flood control proponents, helped sway Congress to release the funding that would allow construction on the Kinzua Dam to begin. At the groundbreaking ceremony in October 1960, Governor Lawrence praised all who had helped the project come to fruition including the Army Corps of Engineers and the Pennsylvania Congressional delegates. Even though construction was under way by the time President Kennedy took office early in 1961, the appeals to stop the project continued. In theory, the new president could have changed position on Kinzua. But not only would that have meant


88 The lone Pennsylvania hold out was a Congressman from Johnstown, PA, John Saylor. Even though Saylor, a Republican, represented a mining area about 70 miles east of Pittsburgh, he developed a strong position as an environmentalist. He led the opposition to the construction of the Echo Park Dam, which would have flooded Dinosaur Monument in Utah in the early 1950s, and later in his career worked to prevent future dam construction. His opposition to the Kinzua project, however, came about before the “wild rivers” campaign of the 1960s, and included the rapid and high increase of the cost of the project from $9 million to over $100 million from 1936 to the late 1950s, the belief that the primary purpose of the dam was not flood control (a federal responsibility) but increasing Pittsburgh’s water supply and pollution abatement which he felt should be the domain of private industry. He also argued in favor of preserving the Pickering Treaty and made the point that it would make the US seem untrustworthy to its Cold War allies if it did not honor its existing obligations. His position did not endear him to his colleagues from Pennsylvania or the Pittsburgh region, but his lone dissent was not enough to impede the project. Ultimately, the primary controversy over Kinzua was abrogating the treaty with the Seneca, not the environmental consequences of the dam, thus it was a relatively low priority for the fledgling environmental movement. Thomas Smith, “Voice for Wild and Scenic Rivers: John P. Saylor of Pennsylvania,” Pennsylvania History 66 (Autumn 1999), 556-561.
halting a project that had already been started, it would also have meant alienating David Lawrence and without Lawrence’s support in Western Pennsylvania President Kennedy’s thin electoral victory in 1960 might have been even thinner.\(^8^9\) Thus, the project continued and eventually the 127 families displaced by the dam received more than $12 million for their land.\(^9^0\)

Pittsburgh’s precarious economic plight might not have moved Congress to action on the city’s behalf, but by connecting the construction of both the Conemaugh Dam and the Kinzua Dam to the national dependence on Pittsburgh’s industry as well as the federal savings from fewer flood emergencies, the Chamber of Commerce and the ACCD were able to convince Congress that helping Pittsburgh helped the country. General Bragdon’s position in the Eisenhower administration represented a fortunate coincidence that put a Pittsburgh-friendly voice near the ear of the President. David Lawrence’s influence in national politics also helped secure lasting support for the project once President Kennedy took office. The consequences of destroying the Seneca Nation mattered less to the Chamber of Commerce and the ACCD than keeping Equitable Assurance, HJ Heinz Corporation and J&L Steel satisfied with the progress of flood controls in Pittsburgh. Taking flood controls out of the milieu of a local reform package and placing it within the framework of the national economy and federal emergency assistance demonstrated the strength of the Renaissance leadership. Gaining support from powerful figures in key positions at the federal level also stacked the deck in Pittsburgh’s favor, as did Lawrence’s tight control over an important voting bloc. Strong political influence combined with knowing the right argument for the right audience made the Pittsburgh Renaissance an impressive force in its early years.

\(^{8^9}\) Hauptman, 195.
\(^{9^0}\) Smith 1977, 22.
Improving downtown traffic was closely related to constructing a new public park at the “Point,” where the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers meet to form the Ohio, the “triangle” of Downtown Pittsburgh. Two bridges located at the tip of the triangle created an obstacle to both traffic improvements and park construction. The Manchester Bridge opened in 1915, followed by the Point Bridge, completed in 1927 during a public works binge. The Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association hired New York’s famous city planner Robert Moses in 1939 to study traffic problems associated with the aging bridges and propose solutions. Moses’ plan suggested leaving the two bridges in place, but improving their approaches. The image below shows Moses’ new bridge approaches while adding some park space at the Point.

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91 Box 238, Folder 11, ACCD Records, MSS 0285, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.
He charged that the proposals to remove the old bridges was a ploy to get federal funding for the construction of an historic park at the Point and thought it unlikely that the government would agree on spending for such a frivolous purpose.

“The suggestion that these bridges be removed is apparently based on the assumption that this would facilitate federal reconstruction of the entire tip of the Triangle as an incident in the restoration of historical Fort Pitt. It is hard to believe that anyone would take this idea seriously even though the National Park Service has shown a polite interest in it. The game of dressing up modern public improvements as historical monuments is played out. This was a quaint and ingenious device calculated to solve local problems at federal expense. The fact is that the era of easy money and federal largesse of this kind is over and that the planners of the future Pittsburgh may as well be realistic about it.”93

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92 Cleary, 146. Image from Moses’ “Arterial Plan for Pittsburgh.”
Moses included a park design in the plan, but a smaller one nestled around the bridges and ramps that did not necessarily preserve the historic structures of Fort Pitt.\footnote{Robert Moses, “Arterial Plan for Pittsburgh.” Box 210, Folder 6, ACCD Records, MSS 0285, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.}

Moses’ “Arterial Plan for Pittsburgh” was commissioned before the Pittsburgh Renaissance united the disjointed planning interests in the city. The PRPA responded enthusiastically to Moses’ plan, but county planners were not so receptive. The Chamber of Commerce heartily endorsed Moses’ plan but failed to involve the City Planning Commission, who would pay for the improvements, in their committee to beautify downtown.\footnote{Baumann and Muller, 257-260.} Pittsburgh’s own city planner, Frederick Bigger, deeply resented the Moses proposal, claiming that the $50,000 report reiterated ideas previously discussed by local planners. Bigger criticized the report for rewriting his “Major Street Plan” from twenty years earlier, and retired shortly after its release.\footnote{Alberts, 55. Alberts quoted articles he wrote for the Pittsburgh Bulletin-Index magazine, 23 November 1939 and 11 July 1940. Bigger retired from the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association in May 1940, about six months after the release of the Arterial Plan. Bauman and Muller, 258.} Park Martin, director of the ACCD, questioned Moses’ cost estimates for several projects, and Moses’ plan to finance construction through tolls as he had done on his New York bridges was simply not practical in Pittsburgh where the geography demanded nearly constant bridge crossings.\footnote{Bauman and Muller, 256, 258.} Even as different planning agencies tried to implement parts of Moses’ plan, the lack of cooperation between city and county planners led to delays and frustration.\footnote{Bauman and Muller, 263.} Even though the various agencies involved shared the goal of improving traffic flows within the city to create a higher quality of life for residents, without the organization and influence of Renaissance leaders channeled into structured units with specific purposes and agendas, all of the money, expertise and favorable public opinion in the world could not fix Pittsburgh’s roads.
Prior to the Interstate Highway Act of 1956, funding for highways came primarily from the states. Before the Pittsburgh Renaissance, the city had to convince the state to fund its new highways or wait until the federal government expanded its commitment to an Interstate Highway system in the late 1950s. But the concentrated power of the Renaissance organizers gave Pittsburgh’s leaders greater influence within state government than the city enjoyed during previous reform periods, allowing it to develop a modern highway system locally before the federal Interstate program. The Pittsburgh Package provided the legislative foundation for the Renaissance reforms, as well as gained funding for several critical components of the city’s redevelopment through a sympathetic state government. With the state’s support of Pittsburgh’s redevelopment, and specifically the Penn-Lincoln Highway, the city could prepare and execute major construction projects that were not possible without the Renaissance initiatives.

Moses’ plan, like Frederick Bigger’s plan before it, highlighted the Downtown areas most in need of new roadways. But, before the organization of the Pittsburgh Renaissance, having a plan for improvements, even necessary improvements, was no guarantee that the plan would be implemented. The competition and antagonism between planning agencies combined with the lack of funds meant that Moses’ Arterial Plan could easily meet the same fate as Frederick Bigger’s “Major Street Plan.” Fortunately, the new era of Renaissance cooperation trumped the old rivalries and led to the passing of the Pittsburgh Package, which secured state funding for Pittsburgh’s new highways. The Arterial Plan had its flaws, especially in attempting to pay for the new roads through tolls, but it did outline some of the most significant construction projects of the Renaissance Era, including the redevelopment and park at the Point and the Penn-Lincoln Highway.

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Old buildings, railroad terminals, dilapidated housing, and elevated bridge approaches blighted the Point with congestion and clutter. The state allocated $4 million in 1945 to fund a park at the Point, but it would have to purchase the land before construction could begin.\textsuperscript{100} The Pittsburgh and West Virginia Railroad owned most of the land, but smaller owners also held property in the area, making the prospect of acquiring the land expensive and difficult. The solution presented itself when, in 1946, a fire swept through the railroad yard destroying most of the Wabash Terminal complex. The damage facilitated negotiations with the Pittsburgh and West Virginia Railroad, which led other property owners to agree to sell as well.\textsuperscript{101} With the state’s commitment to downtown redevelopment in place, other parts of the downtown improvements could proceed, including the construction of Point State Park. About four months after the fire in the Wabash Terminal, the state Department of Highways began construction on the Penn-Lincoln Parkway, a highway that would provide a connection to the city from the Pennsylvania Turnpike and to the proposed extension north west of the city.\textsuperscript{102} This new route would not only alleviate the stop-start traffic on local roads approaching downtown, but it would also improve access to the city from suburban and outlying areas.

Both the park at the Point and a new integrated highway system had been goals of Pittsburgh planners well before the Renaissance. Despite the value both projects offered the city, planners made little headway with either until the Renaissance managed to concentrate civic leadership, political power and planning expertise around a small group of individuals with shared goals for the city. Construction of the Penn-Lincoln Highway advanced in stages and required the digging of two tunnels and the building of two new bridges to connect all of the

\textsuperscript{100} Alberts, 79, 84.
\textsuperscript{101} Weber, 255.
\textsuperscript{102} Alberts, 87. Frank M. Matthews, “Turnpike’s West Route Soon Known,” \textit{The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette}, 3 July 1948, 1.
parts. The Squirrel Hill Tunnel opened in 1953, connecting the eastern suburbs with Oakland and Downtown. The Fort Pitt Bridge and adjoining tunnel over the Monongahela River opened in 1959, connecting western and southern suburban areas with the city. The Fort Duquesne Bridge over the Allegheny River was finished in 1969, providing a highway connection to the city for residents of northern suburbs.

The process was not without complication. The Fort Pitt and Fort Duquesne Bridges replaced the old Point and Manchester Bridges, but the old bridges had to be dismantled and removed in order for construction to continue on the park at the Point. City and county officials disagreed over which government should pay for the removal, and the dispute added to the cost of removal and significantly delayed construction at the Point.103 The state intervened, but frustration with the lack of progress led Robert Bartlett, Pennsylvania Secretary of Highways, to propose an alternative solution. “Someone has suggested that we burn the supports on either end of the Point Bridge, permit it to drop into the river and then ask the Corps of Engineers to take care of the dismantling. Perhaps that would be an ultimate solution that would finally get this project underway.”104 Although Bartlett seemed on the brink of granting State approval to arson as a demolition plan, cooler heads prevailed. Thus, the Renaissance was able to accomplish what previous city administrations could not—an integrated highway system that could make the city of Pittsburgh more accessible and therefore more attractive to those on the periphery. Even when it faced obstacles and setbacks, as with the demolition of the Point and Manchester Bridges, the

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Renaissance organization was still able to muster the resources available to accomplish its goals. Before the Renaissance, intra-government conflict could cripple a project, but the consolidated power of the Renaissance meant that delay did not mean death to a project deemed crucial to the city’s redevelopment. So, after more than two decades of construction, by the end of the 1960s, Pittsburgh finally had the modern highway and infrastructure system it had been planning since the 1920s.

The Pittsburgh Renaissance brought drastic but necessary changes to the city. Not only did the Renaissance produce a visible transformation of the environment by controlling smoke output and preventing flooding, but it also built new highways, bridges and tunnels that altered the landscape. Effective limits on air pollution made it practical and feasible to clean the existing soot-stains and grime off of buildings, since the new smoke controls eliminated the perpetual threat of continued exposure to airborne particulates. This façade cleaning proved how much cleaner Pittsburgh had become by transforming the appearance of Downtown and Point State Park created a central focal point showcasing a new, greener, cleaner city. The Pittsburgh Renaissance also produced a significant change in the operations of city government. The leadership of Mayor Lawrence introduced an era of Democratic-party dominance within the city, and created an institutional framework for implementing plans and reforms more effectively than any previous administration. Although planning had been a part of Pittsburgh’s voluntary and civic structure for decades, the Renaissance promoted it from an ancillary public office to a central part of city’s reinvention. Creating independent agencies to handle the majority of planning involved with the Renaissance eliminated some of the vulnerabilities of previous planning periods while ensuring that the Renaissance vision could be completed even if the
original founders ceased their involvement. The public-private coalition of the Renaissance allowed the city to enact reforms promptly that provided vital improvements to the city’s aging infrastructure and helped it remain competitive in securing renewed industrial and corporate investment.

The noticeable reduction of pollution, the calming of the rivers and the improved access to Downtown Pittsburgh from new traffic arteries as well as the construction of Gateway Center and creation of Point State Park out of the dilapidated Point, demonstrated how much the Renaissance could accomplish in a relatively short period. This first wave of Renaissance projects remade the outdated tangle of streets and choked atmosphere into a new, modern city center. These massive urban reforms not only significantly improved life within the city, but also drew attention to the Renaissance efforts and won praise for its leaders who showed their capacity for creative solutions to long-standing urban problems. They also crafted a solution specifically engineered to solve Pittsburgh’s problems. No other city in the world had the same combination of geographic obstacles, industrial operations and political alliances as Pittsburgh, so any efforts to redevelop the city would have to be specially created by those who knew its idiosyncrasies best. Each portion of the Renaissance had to operate in harmony with every other part to ensure that the whole reform package would resonate with residents and potential investors. The team of experts tasked with remaking the city from the ground up had to know every inch of it in order identify the areas most in need of attention and prepare a plan that would lead to a city-wide improvement.

While there was still much work to be done to address every point on the Renaissance agenda, by the early 1950s, Pittsburgh was a different city from what it had been in the early 1940s. The Renaissance had proved to skeptics and admirers that it could accomplish major
renovations within the city efficiently and with substantial popular support despite the inconveniences imposed on residents. But the genius of the Renaissance was not in proposing novel solutions—smoke controls, flood controls and highway improvements had been discussed for decades—it was in finding the political and economic will to execute plans that would be costly and potentially unpopular, but would dramatically enhance the quality of life within the city, thus encouraging corporate and industrial investment. By addressing the environmental and physical deficiencies of the city through the legislative foundation of the Pittsburgh Package, smoke and flood controls, and infrastructure improvements, the Pittsburgh Renaissance effectively removed the worst impediments to economic expansion within the city.

Industrial growth and corporate headquarters secured the city’s existing economic base but it needed something new to fulfill its diversification plan. The University of Pittsburgh was an eager partner in the Renaissance plan to improve Oakland as the neighborhood improvements could translate to institutional improvements that would attract a new professional population and fuel new industries, establishing a non-manufacturing economy for the city.
Chapter 3: Oakland

Physical improvements through smoke controls, flood controls and increased highway access only represented a portion of Renaissance planners vision to remake Pittsburgh. Another part of the plan hinged upon developing a new education, research and health center in Oakland. Much of this development centered around the University of Pittsburgh, but other colleges and universities in the city shared in the efforts to rebrand Pittsburgh as a center of higher learning. To accomplish this many different groups had to work together to rebuild the university’s physical campus, to merge several independent hospitals into one health center, and to build a new sports stadium to replace Forbes Field, in the center of Pitt’s campus.

From the outset, the Pittsburgh Renaissance intended to stabilize the city’s economic future both by preserving commitments from existing companies and by expanding the city’s industrial base into new sectors. For its Downtown projects, this meant building new office space in Gateway Center to attract corporate headquarters, but making the city into a health care and research center required institutional as well as physical reforms. Oakland, just under three miles east of Downtown, was home to a hodgepodge of cultural institutions and institutes of higher learning, as discussed in Chapter 1, but several changes would have to be made to turn Oakland into a world-class university research complex. To make Oakland the focus of the city’s new research economy meant first improving the reputation of the University of Pittsburgh, attracting new and prestigious faculty to its most high-profile schools, and providing them with the physical means to engage in groundbreaking research that would then attract additional faculty of great renown, along with increased research funding. Historians of the Pittsburgh Renaissance
have not typically included the Oakland hospital and university building projects in their studies, but these projects actually fulfilled the Renaissance goal of diversifying the city’s economy beyond manufacturing. Even though the various universities in the city could not be wholly administered and directed by Renaissance organizers as the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association and Urban Redevelopment Authority were, they still needed to operate in concert with the overall Renaissance plan. The success of the individual universities also depended as much on the city’s redevelopment as the city depended on the universities to bring new residents, research funding and high tech industries to the region.

The University of Pittsburgh began the post-war period with a new Chancellor, Rufus H. Fitzgerald, who inherited a university poised for growth, but in need of some housekeeping. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) had placed the University of Pittsburgh in its category of “Censured Administrations” in 1935 due to several incidents involving free speech, academic freedom and the termination of faculty. This designation constituted a black mark on the university. Fitzgerald had served as provost, then vice chancellor, and made a positive impression on his colleagues throughout the university prior to his appointment as Chancellor. More importantly, he was instrumental in removing the AAUP censure. Buoyed by the post-war rise in college admissions, Fitzgerald presided over an institution nearly without debt in a city eager to support academic expansion.

While the Oakland redevelopment may have represented a gargantuan task in other cities, Pittsburgh’s Renaissance organizations were operating like a well-oiled machine by the time the Oakland plans were underway. In 1947, the University of Pittsburgh Board of Trustees included

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Mayor David L. Lawrence, Richard King Mellon, Alan M. Scaife, and Governor James Duff, among others. Chancellor Fitzgerald told Alan Scaife, Richard K. Mellon’s brother-in-law, about some of the university’s expansion plans in April of 1947. Chancellor Fitzgerald showed Scaife renderings for a new medical center and field house, and explained what properties would have to be acquired and removed for construction to proceed. Knowing that it would take a powerful planning and development committee to realize the plans, Fitzgerald offered Scaife the chairmanship of the Board of Trustees. Scaife accepted the offer and mentioned to Fitzgerald that R. K. Mellon was also interested in the university’s plans. With the support of the Mellon family through both the university’s Board of Trustees and the organizations of the Pittsburgh Renaissance, the university’s growth became linked with the redevelopment of the city.

Of course, building a better university for the city would not come cheap. Fortunately, Pittsburgh’s companies also supported the university’s improvement efforts through contributions to the Building Fund. In 1948, the University of Pittsburgh Building Fund received sizeable donations from many Pittsburgh-based industries, including donations of $100,000 or more from Gulf Oil, Pittsburgh Plate and Glass, US Steel, Westinghouse Air Brake, and Westinghouse Electric, with significant contributions from Allegheny Ludlum Steel Company, Koppers Company, and the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. The Sarah Mellon Scaife Foundation, chaired by Alan Scaife, made a $250,000 contribution, as did university Trustee and


4 “Mr. Scaife and RHF,” April 8, 1947, box 4, folder 30. As early as 1946, Chancellor Fitzgerald identified “the crying need” of the university as “land and buildings” and worked to get the Mellons interested in the university. Report of the Chancellor to the Board of Trustees, July 24, 1946 and “Mr. Falk, by telephone, July 19, 1946,” box 4, folder 30. Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh, Rufus Henry Fitzgerald, Administrative Files, 1945-1955, UA.2.10.1945-1955, University Archives, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh.
founder of ALCOA, George H. Clapp. While many universities can thank many institutions for endowments, chairs or cash flow, two things are notable about this list. First, the fact that many of these same companies simultaneously offered their support to Pittsburgh Renaissance organizations like the ACCD, jointly sponsoring the Pittsburgh Renaissance and the University of Pittsburgh. Second, steel companies, Westinghouse and ALCOA, were identified as considering leaving Pittsburgh earlier in the decade. Although 1948 was perhaps too early to note visible changes in Pittsburgh due to the Renaissance operations, the investment of several companies with potential prospects elsewhere in the University of Pittsburgh, a resource definitively tied to the city, suggests a commitment to the city and its future as well as confidence in the city-university collaboration. At the very least, the overlap between the board of the ACCD, the University of Pittsburgh Board of Trustees and the major donors to the university demonstrates an agreement about the importance of the university’s future to the future of the city and region.

The University of Pittsburgh needed the power of the Renaissance machine to organize and execute its growth plan. The Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association worked on an “Oakland Study” that helped both the city and university identify possible sites for expansion,

6 Letter to Chancellor Fitzgerald from H. L. Giles, September 8, 1949, identifying questions about the university’s development for which consistent answers were necessary, including whether or not the University of Pittsburgh is cooperating with “various organizations which have community efficiency and growth at heart.” The following members of civic associations were identified, along with any University of Pittsburgh affiliations: Dr. Edward Weidlein, Chairman of the ACCD and member of the University Committee on Planning and Development, Richard K. Mellon, President of the PRPA and University of Pittsburgh Trustee, Dr. Rufus H. Fitzgerald, Chairman of the Pittsburgh Parking Authority, Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh and Committee on Planning and Development member, Mayor David Lawrence, Chairman of the URA and member of the Committee on Planning and Development, and Frederick Bigger, Chairman of the City Planning Commission, box 9, folder 68 part 2. Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh, Rufus Henry Fitzgerald, Administrative Files, 1945-1955, UA.2.10.1945-1955, University Archives, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh.
demolition or reconfiguration to fit everyone’s needs. A meeting called by Chancellor Fitzgerald in January 1953 convened members of the City Planning Commission, the Urban Redevelopment Authority, real estate experts and university administrators. The purpose of the meeting was to figure out how to get the university the space it needed for its Graduate School of Public Health, which the university’s Board of Trustees prioritized in the previous month. The meeting resulted in Frederick Bigger, chairman of the City Planning Commission, agreeing to help guide the university in drafting a general development plan that would help the City Council and other approving bodies understand the vision set forth therein. It was also suggested that the university organize a committee to work directly with the URA to initiate the process of acquiring land which could happen while the City Planning Commission worked on the overall plan. Chancellor Fitzgerald called the meeting, and while the university would be the most immediate beneficiary of the buildings planned, every party had something to gain from helping the university meet its goals. The university would gain the buildings it needed to improve its standing in the academic community, the URA would redevelopment more land in another neighborhood, demonstrating another dimension of the city’s Renaissance, and the City Planning Commission would get to improve and modernize another city neighborhood.

The university’s expansion involved several components. First, it needed more physical space to accommodate the surge of enrollment following the end of World War II. This required the city’s help in condemning and acquiring property, and reconfiguring streets, which it sought from the URA and the PRPA in the “Oakland Study.” It also required the improvement of the

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university’s academic reputation, both in its general undergraduate programs and its health services schools. Finally, Fitzgerald envisioned not just the construction of a fine medical school, but a broader University Health Center that would include a network of hospitals linked to the University of Pittsburgh health programs. This campaign required the merger of several independent hospitals.

The drive to improve and expand the School of Medicine began under Chancellor John Bowman in the early 1920s. The school wanted a hospital that would fall entirely under university control and believed that it could not satisfactorily fulfill its mission without such a facility. With Pittsburgh’s vast array of private, charitable and municipal hospitals, several of which were located within Oakland near Pitt’s campus, this seemed like an easy problem to solve. Several local hospitals including the Elizabeth Steel Magee Hospital, Children’s Hospital, Presbyterian Hospital, the Eye and Ear Hospital and the Falk Clinic began to partner with the School of Medicine through the 1920s, making beds, teaching facilities and the entirety of some departments available for the medical school. The affiliated hospitals retained their own boards and autonomous control over their respective institutions. This began to change under Chancellor Fitzgerald’s leadership as his administration redoubled Chancellor Bowman’s efforts to create a consolidated medical center for the university. Trustees of the Elizabeth Steel Magee Hospital strengthened their bonds with the university through an operating agreement signed in April 1947. The Woman’s Hospital Board followed suit in 1949, and an act of the state

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9 “The Relationship of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine to the Medical Profession of this Community,” June 15, 1920, box 26, folder 215. Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh, Rufus Henry Fitzgerald, Administrative Files, 1945-1955, UA.2.10.1945-1955, University Archives, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh.

10 Alberts, Pitt, 118-120.

11 Agreement between Trustees of Elizabeth Steel Magee Hospital and The University of Pittsburgh, April 23, 1947, box 26, folder 215. Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh, Rufus Henry Fitzgerald,
legislature formally transferred control over the Western State Psychiatric Institute and Clinic (Western Psych) to the University of Pittsburgh in September 1949. Thus, the university gained the consortium of hospitals Chancellor Bowman imagined.

The other component of improving the School of Medicine was to attract new faculty and consolidate programs so that laboratories, classrooms and patient access could be distributed efficiently. Most famously, Dr. Jonas Salk joined the University of Pittsburgh faculty in 1947 as an associate research professor within the School of Medicine. Prior to coming to Pittsburgh, Salk developed an influenza vaccine for use by the US Army. Applying his work on the influenza vaccine to the polio virus, Salk’s experimentation with a polio vaccine coincided with the peak of the polio epidemic in 1952, when nearly 58,000 children and adults suffered from the virus nationwide. Salk’s vaccine was available for widespread usage in 1955, after testing on local polio patients, himself and his family. Salk’s contribution to humanity through the study and prevention of contagious disease and the promotion of vaccination to combat epidemics cannot be overstated, and his presence on campus demonstrated the commitment of Fitzgerald’s administration to build a top-of-the-line program.


12 Operating agreement between Woman’s Hospital of Pittsburgh and the University of Pittsburgh, February 25, 1949, box 5, folder 32. Letter from R. H. Fitzgerald to staff and employees of Western State Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, August 10, 1949, box 54, folder 367. Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh, Rufus Henry Fitzgerald, Administrative Files, 1945-1955, UA.2.10.1945-1955, University Archives, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh. Magee and Woman’s Hospital merged in 1962, creating the Magee-Woman’s Hospital, and Magee-Woman’s affiliated with the University in 1965. Box 66, folder 549, Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh, Edward H. Litchfield, Administrative Files, 1956-1965, UA.2.10.1956-1965, University Archives, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh.

The addition of a new School of Public Health in 1949, led by former US Surgeon General Dr. Thomas Parran, also added to the prestige of the university’s medical and science programs. There were few such programs in the country at the time, and none in Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{14} Although it would take a few years for the school to grow, the need for additional facilities was clear. The city’s Municipal Hospital was an ideal building for many reasons. Most obviously, it was already equipped as a hospital, and the city had previously arranged for Dr. Salk’s laboratories to be housed there as well, which worked very well during the polio epidemic. The Municipal Hospital was also conveniently located on the university’s Oakland campus, near the other hospitals and university buildings and had plenty of room for the new School of Public Health.

It was not until after Chancellor Fitzgerald’s retirement that the city and university began working on a deal for the university to take over the Municipal Hospital building, although Fitzgerald had worked with the city to find an appropriate location in the early 1950s.\textsuperscript{15} Fitzgerald’s successor, Edward Litchfield, encountered one major problem with the university’s acquisition of the building: cost. The hospital had not been heavily used since the polio epidemic in 1952, and the city was planning to cease operating it since as of September 1956 it had 10 patients and 80 employees.\textsuperscript{16} However, the building needed some renovations to make it useable


for the university’s purposes, and the university’s resources were already committed to its new Health Professions Building, for which less money had been raised than anticipated. Chancellor Litchfield wrote to Mayor Lawrence, “What this boils down to is that I think it would be most desirable if we were able to relieve you of the building and help ourselves by acquiring it. However, I just don’t see how we can handle it financially.”\(^{17}\) In October 1956, the city hoped to sell the hospital for $2.25 million, but the university identified at least $500,000 worth of renovations and wanted the city to contribute some amount of the cost of the improvements like adding more than one operating room. In turn, city officials did not feel that taxpayers should have to pay in order to sell the hospital.\(^{18}\) As a result, negotiations stalled until the following year when the city and the university were able to work out an agreement through which the university purchased the hospital for $1.3 million in October 1957 and announced plans to rename the building “Jonas Salk Hall.”\(^{19}\)

Relations with its affiliated hospitals were not always cordial. Presbyterian Hospital had the most contentious relationship with the university, primarily over matters of funding. The disputes over operating costs, moving of facilities and conversion of vacated space into income-producing beds highlighted the shortcomings of the limited affiliation between the general care hospital and the university. Presbyterian Hospital was growing increasingly frustrated with the

\(^{17}\) Letter to David Lawrence from Edward Litchfield, October 25, 1956, box 89, folder 728. Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh, Edward H. Litchfield, Administrative Files, 1956-1965, UA.2.10.1956-1965, University Archives, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh.

\(^{18}\) “Sale or Rental Likely for Municipal Hospital,” *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 17 October 1956, 1, 4.

inexact nature of the operating and funding relationship with the university that from the hospital’s perspective seemed to be costing the hospital money without receiving the services it expected in return.\textsuperscript{20} Although both parties attempted to settle their misunderstandings and disputes amicably, the matter was not easily resolved. Tensions appeared to be mounting in the fall of 1960 but a solution emerged in February 1961 when leaders of Presbyterian Hospital and the University of Pittsburgh signed an agreement creating a new corporate body known as Presbyterian-University Hospital.\textsuperscript{21} No longer would an independent hospital board struggle against the financial imposition of the university as two somewhat adversarial institutions. Instead the university and the hospital would jointly manage the hospital, which would be incorporated into the university’s stewardship.

Tightening the links between the affiliated hospitals proved desirable for the university, which had long sought an integrated medical center. In 1965, the university organized a new corporation, the University Health Center of Pittsburgh, Inc., which included all of the hospitals affiliated with the university under one institutional unit. Edward Magee was elected as the president of the new organization.\textsuperscript{22} This is worthy of consideration because Magee was also executive director of the ACCD at the time. One of the goals of the Pittsburgh Renaissance had been to develop resources in the city that would diversify the economy away from steel and heavy manufacturing. Mellon’s overlapping interests between the city’s overall health and the

\textsuperscript{21} Minutes of organizational meeting of Presbyterian Hospital and University of Pittsburgh, February 20, 1961, box 67, folder 560. Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh, Edward H. Litchfield, Administrative Files, 1956-1965, UA.2.10.1956-1965, University Archives, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh.
\textsuperscript{22} 242\textsuperscript{nd} meeting of the Executive Committee of the ACCD, September 20, 1965, box 1, folder 10. David Leo Lawrence Papers, 1959-1966, AIS.1978.15, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh.
university’s expansion was discussed earlier in the chapter and in the previous chapter. The appointment of the ACCD executive director as the president of the University Health Center furthers the point that the alliance between organizations helped institute mutually beneficial policies for the city and university. Interlocking directorships and board appointments proved to be a useful mechanism for the Renaissance to ensure that as many organizations as possible shared similar priorities.

The UHC represented a marked improvement over the previous system, but it was not without flaws. The hospitals were more closely affiliated with each other and the university, but still maintained independent boards and occasionally competed for resources. Further improvements and closer consolidation would be the work of the future, however. The significance of the UHC is twofold. First, it fulfilled the vision of a united medical center that Chancellors Bowman and Fitzgerald imagined, and that Chancellor Litchfield worked to complete. It took several decades to accomplish, but the pieces eventually came together. Second, and most importantly, the UHC, however imperfect, became the basis of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC), which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6. Suffice it to say, for now, that UPMC became one of the most important institutions in the city’s post-industrial economic recovery during the 1980s and 1990s, and there could be no UPMC without the UHC preceding it. Chancellor Bowman’s vision was limited to creating a great medical school for the university, and an integrated university hospital was a key part of that vision. But Fitzgerald’s plan (fulfilled by Litchfield) considered the future economic development of the city outside of the university community. The University of Pittsburgh did not have the single-purpose Renaissance-oriented structure of the ACCD, the PRPA or the URA, but with the redundancies between the university Board of Trustees, the Renaissance groups and
the high corporate offices of Pittsburgh companies, the university was an important partner in the Renaissance program. From this perspective, creating the UHC-turned-UPMC provided exactly the research-oriented modern health services facility that Pittsburgh needed to thrust its economy into the next century. The UHC was as necessary to the economic revitalization of Pittsburgh as smoke controls were to the city’s physical improvement.

At the same time as the independent Magee and Woman’s Hospitals were first joining ranks with the university, the university embarked on a building campaign to construct the facilities it would need to upgrade Pitt’s standing in the academic world. The university’s Planning and Development Committee issued a report in 1948 outlining the new buildings needed to further the success of the university. Titled “A Greater Pittsburgh Needs a Greater University,” with an introduction by Alan Scaife emphasizing the importance of the university’s improvement to the city’s Renaissance, the booklet provided information about the eight buildings necessary for the university: a Nurses Home, a Medical School Building, Clinical Wards and Clinical Laboratories, a Science Building, a Library, a Gymnasium, a Student Center and a Field House. Scaife warned that the university’s work would be impaired if action were not taken soon to construct these buildings, for which plans were in blueprint form. The estimated cost for these buildings was around $19 million, with the medical buildings costing an estimated $9.5 million, the academic buildings $6.3 million and the athletic/student centers approximately $3.5 million.23 A similar booklet published around the same time titled “A Greater University…A Greater Medical Center” offered a more detailed breakdown of the costs of each

component of medical and science buildings and the library.\textsuperscript{24} In 1948 it seemed as if the university was on a path toward rapid growth.

In the fall of 1949, the building campaign passed the halfway point, having raised $7.5 million out of the $12.7 million needed.\textsuperscript{25} But it was much easier draw the plans than build the buildings. The Nurses’ Home, the gymnasium and field house were all under construction by 1950, but the science building and library took much more negotiation and returns to the drawing board, despite having the money available to build immediately.\textsuperscript{26} One controversy arose from whether or not additional buildings should be built on the grounds of the gothic-style Cathedral of Learning, a 38-story tower in the center of the university’s lower campus that was completed in 1936. Richard King Mellon was adamantly opposed to adding buildings to the Cathedral lawn, and engineered a solution by getting the A. W. Mellon Charitable Trust to buy property across the street from the Cathedral and donate it to the university, thus providing the university with three-acres for the new science building, Clapp Hall, in 1953.\textsuperscript{27} Mellon leadership clearly played as important a role in the university’s growth as it had in the city’s improvement.

As difficult as it was to find the space for Clapp Hall, the science building, the new library became entangled in several issues that prevented it from being completed until 1968, a full twenty years after the Planning and Development Committee described it as immediately necessary. The library facilities were temporarily housed in the Cathedral of Learning, but these facilities were less than ideal. University Librarian Lorena Garloch noted that for the 1953-1954

\textsuperscript{24} “A Greater University…A Greater Medical Center,” box 9, folder 68b. Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh, Rufus Henry Fitzgerald, Administrative Files, 1945-1955, UA.2.10.1945-1955, University Archives, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh.

\textsuperscript{25} Memorandum to all workers, University of Pittsburgh Building Fund Campaign, September 27, 1949, page 1, box 9, folder 68 part 2. Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh, Rufus Henry Fitzgerald, Administrative Files, 1945-1955, UA.2.10.1945-1955, University Archives, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh.

\textsuperscript{26} Alberts, \textit{Pitt}, 200-201.

\textsuperscript{27} Alberts, \textit{Pitt}, 202.
academic year, the University of Pittsburgh per student library expenditure was just under $19, based on an enrollment of about 15,000. When compared with other universities, including Harvard, Yale, Columbia and Princeton, which spent $196, $144, $51 and $155 respectively per student, the University of Pittsburgh’s library expenditure seemed minimal.\textsuperscript{28} If Chancellor Litchfield hoped to raise the stature of the University of Pittsburgh during his administration, then buying more books for the library was a clear place to start.

But in its tight quarters in the Cathedral of Learning, the library was hard pressed to store a new collection that would set it on par with Ivy League libraries. Lorena Garloch identified ways to improve the Cathedral space while awaiting construction of a new library building by using the university bookstore’s storage room, locker room and an old cafeteria for stacks. She also suggested using the Commons Room as a textbook study space but reiterated that the lack of space for the current collection endangered the library’s future growth. Chancellor Litchfield set a goal for the library’s growth at 50,000 books per year, but with the main library growing by 18,000 books per year and running out of space, it could not continue to grow without improved storage facilities.\textsuperscript{29}

Conditions in the temporary library frustrated students as well as librarians. An MA student wrote to Chancellor Litchfield in 1956 asking for extended library operating hours because as a student taking classes at night, when certain non-circulating rooms closed at 5 pm, he and his classmates were unable to use materials potentially vital to their research. This student acutely observed that “one of the first marks of a great university should be that its library


facilities are available to its students a maximum number of hours.”

A policy paper on the University Library System from 1957 echoed the importance of the library to the university, identifying that “[t]he Library System is key to the direction, quality and vitality of the University’s further development.” It was very obvious to students and administrators that the existing library was unsatisfactory. For the university to improve its standing, it needed a better library. To get a better library, it needed a new building, but to get a new building it needed state funding and more space in an already densely populated urban campus.

The state was willing to help, but needed some encouragement. Seven million dollars in funding for the new library were included in the General State Authority Bill for 1960, but came under scrutiny and possible removal from the bill when plans for the library were not clearly presented to the state Senate. Litchfield appealed to the relevant state Senators, clarifying that the funding was for one library building, not two, as had been erroneously inferred. The single library building would house both undergraduate and reference areas, and private funding to augment the state’s contribution had been obtained, but was contingent upon receiving $7 million from the state.

The money was quickly restored, with Litchfield’s notes to Senators going out at the beginning of December, and the restoration of the library funds to the General State Authority Bill by December 14. At the end of 1959, more than ten years after identifying

a new library building as “urgent,” the university had both the money and the will to begin construction, but the library was still a decade away.

The university acquired land for its new library, but the land bordered Forbes Field, whose fate was uncertain. The Pirates and Steelers both played in Forbes Field, but the Pirates owned the stadium. Rumors swirled in 1957 (the same year the Dodgers left Brooklyn) that the Pirates and Steelers might leave Pittsburgh if they were not provided with improved facilities. Moving one or both teams to Pitt Stadium or renovating Forbes Field were not viable options for either club. Pitt Stadium, though sixteen years younger than Forbes Field, was also located in Oakland, without convenient parking or highway access. Neither stadium was suited to long term mixed use, and relocating the teams within Oakland did not accomplish the city or the university’s goal of reclaiming space for university and hospital expansion. The shared goal was to get sporting events out of Oakland to rid the area of parking and traffic congestion and further its development as a Civic Center.34 Therefore, a new stadium was in order.

A citizen’s group called the North Side Civic Promotion Council and students from Carnegie Institute of Technology produced a report in April 1957 suggesting a North Side location for a new stadium.35 The following year, the ACCD heard and approved a report presenting a plan for a new stadium on the city’s North Side that would remove traffic and congestion from Oakland, allowing the University to continue to develop its educational and

health service institutions without interference from sporting events.\(^{36}\) Around the same time, the university accelerated its efforts to buy Forbes Field.\(^ {37}\) In December 1958, the purchase was complete and the university leased the stadium to the Pirates until 1963, with the option to renew if progress on a new stadium was made.\(^ {38}\) Although it had the necessary funding, the space it wanted, and the support of the Renaissance powerhouse, the university still could not begin construction on the all-important library or the rest of its planned expansion in the area occupied by Forbes Field as long as the Field was still in use by the Pirates and Steelers. Despite not participating in the construction of the new Municipal Stadium, its construction timetable directly affected the university and its ability to improve its physical and scholarly facilities. The longer the delay in getting the Pirates and Steelers out of Oakland, the longer the delay in constructing the much-needed library, and the longer the University of Pittsburgh would be identified as a second-rate institution.

As plans for the Municipal Stadium became more concrete following the release of the 1958 report, one of the most divisive issues became the funding agreement for the stadium. When the initial financing details were released in January 1963, the stadium project was expected to cost $45-million and cover 84 acres of riverfront property in the city’s North Side. The City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County would both make grants of $5,745,000 over a three-year period which would be combined with a federal urban renewal grant of $8,980,000 and a State Highways payment of $1,250,000. These funds would be used for land acquisition and development to prepare the former industrial and rail properties for construction. The


stadium itself would be financed by a $23,450,000 bond issue by the Public Auditorium Authority of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, and John Galbreath, owner of the Pirates, pledged to purchase $2 million worth of bonds. Galbreath agreed to form a Stadium Corporation which would sublease the stadium to the Pirates, Steelers and others. One proposal called for the Stadium Corporation to lease the stadium, parking areas and operate and maintain all facilities for an annual rental fee of $1,043,500 for forty years while another plan had the Stadium Corporation renting only the stadium for $627,500 per year for forty years and giving the Auditorium Authority the right to lease parking rights to another organization.\(^{39}\)

Even before the financing agreement of the new stadium became public in 1963, the project earned the ire of local resident and CPA, R. K. Conrad, who proposed a privately financed field house in place of the stadium that he claimed would better serve the seventy-five percent of Pirates and Steelers fans who attend games and are based outside of the city of Pittsburgh, and would generate revenue for the county by being privately owned and managed.\(^{40}\) Conrad presented his appeal to Governor Lawrence, Mayor Barr, County Commissioner McClelland, and Richard K. Mellon in 1965.\(^{41}\) Conrad then formed a group called the “Citizens Committee for Intelligence in Public Spending Projects” and filed a lawsuit claiming that public

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\(^{41}\) Conrad introduces his colleagues as “a group of seven ‘just plain citizens.’” Letter from R. K. Conrad to Lawrence, McClelland, Barr and Mellon, March 18, 1961, box 236, folder 2. ACCD Records, MSS 0285, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.
funds were being spent illegally to finance the stadium, but the suit was not successful in stopping the project.\textsuperscript{42}

Conrad’s small group was not the only voice of opposition to the public financing of the new stadium. Oliver M. Kaufmann, of the Kaufmann’s Department Store family, opposed the North Side location, and the urban setting of the new stadium more generally. He noted that new stadiums in San Francisco and Milwaukee were both built about thirty minutes outside of the city and argued that if Pittsburgh built its stadium between the city and the airport it could build everything for approximately $15 million, a significantly lower cost than the North Side plan.\textsuperscript{43}

The NADCO Engineering Company offered plans for a stadium over the Monongahela River that they claimed would pay for itself without any tax loss or land acquisition. The stadium would be the focal point of a bridge-type structure over the Monongahela that would also include a 600-room hotel, 4,500 parking spaces and a boat dock.

\textsuperscript{42} Minutes from 244\textsuperscript{th} meeting of the Executive Committee of the ACCD, November 15, 1965, box 1, folder 10. Letter from R. K. Conrad, November 12, 1965, box 1, folder 19. David Leo Lawrence Papers, 1959-1966, AIS.1978.15, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh

\textsuperscript{43} Letter from Oliver M. Kaufmann to Adolph Schmidt, Chairman of ACCD, June 11, 1960, box 235, folder 7. ACCD Records, MSS 0285, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.
The Stadium over the Monongahela plan had the air of fantasy about it, or at least novelty, especially when considering all of the troubles involved with the demolition of the Point and Manchester Bridges and the construction of the Fort Pitt and Fort Duquesne Bridges, as discussed in the previous chapter. But Conrad’s Field House, noticeably similar to Kaufmann’s suggested alternative, had more practical features. Still, alternative plans did not gain much traction with the ACCD, or even the most vocal opponents of the North Side stadium, whose chief complaint was not with the location, but with the financing plan.

Dr. William McClelland, Chairman of the Allegheny County Commissioners, began his campaign opposing the financing plan shortly after it was released early in 1963. McClelland believed that the estimated $45-million cost of the North Side stadium involved too much public

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Postcard of Proposed Stadium over the Monongahela, box 236, folder 5. ACCD Records, MSS 0285, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.
money to invest in a project whose principal beneficiaries were private entities. McClelland emphasized, however, that he and his fellow commissioners were not opposed to the idea of a stadium, the North Side location for the stadium, or the proposed plans for the stadium, but that they felt that the stadium was a riskier venture than the ACCD intimated, and that the Pirates and Steelers were not carrying an equal burden as the public in paying for the stadium. Mayor Barr, David Lawrence’s successor, proposed an alternative financing arrangement in which the city and county would each contribute about $5 million, with the county’s share going solely to land redevelopment costs and the city’s share would make it the sole owner of the stadium land and building. But this proposal drew more criticism from both pro and anti-stadium forces. McClelland argued that the costs of land acquisition and site clearance should be evenly divided between the city, the county and the Pittsburgh Pirates. He argued that this would compensate somewhat for the complete control over the stadium that the Pirates would have for the next forty years, and would help make up the tax loss to the city from removing the land for the new stadium as well as Forbes Field from the tax rolls. Since the Pirates would benefit enormously from having 15,000 more seats available in the new stadium than existed in Forbes Field and from the increased value of their National League franchise, then as savvy businessmen they should see the clear advantages in investing the money they earned from the sale of Forbes Field into the new stadium. McClelland posed that if the Pirates owners were not willing to make this investment, then there might be other private investors in the city who were. He specifically drew on the example of Edgar Kaufmann’s gift to the city of $1 million to construct the Civic Arena with no desire for any return on the money, but McClelland’s prime focus was in securing

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protection for the public investment the stadium required. At the very least, McClelland favored putting the issue to voters by referendum to allow them to decide whether or not to accept the public financing plan. On the other hand, proponents of the original financing plan believed that Mayor Barr’s proposal placed too great a burden on the city’s shoulders when the entire region would share in the $10 million per year visiting fans would spend to travel to the new stadium. The county would benefit from the new stadium as well, especially if visiting fans arrived via the airport, which was controlled by the county. Therefore, they argued, the county should share costs equally with the city.

The funding conversation continued for several years, in local media, rotary clubs and government offices. But costs for the stadium kept rising through the 1960s, to the point that the Stadium Authority had to change the original design of the stadium in order to keep reasonably within budget. Executive Director of the Stadium Authority of the City of Pittsburgh, Burrell Cohen, assured the public in a progress report from August 1966 that the stadium would still offer such comforts as wide aisles, armchair seats and unobstructed views of the field, and that it would be self-financing. However he also stated that the new design would deprive Pittsburgh sports fans of “a truly outstanding stadium facility” and that it was neither mediocre nor superior

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46 Stadium Proposal News Release, May 7, 1963, box 3, folder “stadium.” Dr. William D. McClelland Papers, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. The Civic Arena will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4, but it is worth noting here that even though Kaufmann donated $1 million to the cost of constructing the Arena, the total cost of the complex was approximately $22 million. True that Kaufmann placed no stipulations on his gift for a return of the investment, but neither did he contribute the lion’s share of the costs. Arguably, his insistence on a retractable, domed roof for the arena increased costs significantly more than necessary. Cusick, Patrick, interviewed November 6, 1972, box 1, page 36. Pittsburgh Renaissance Project: The Stanton Belfour Oral History Collection, 1971-1973, AIS.1973.24, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh

47 Dr. McClelland’s Statement on Northside Stadium Plan, December 9, 1964, box 2, folder “Statements and Speeches as Commissioner.” Dr. William D. McClelland Papers, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

but acceptable.49 Again, opponents of the plan questioned the idea that the stadium could be self-supporting when Pirates and Steelers home games only accounted for 84 days per year. Of equal concern was the Pirates inability to sell out or even fill half of the much smaller Forbes Field even while leading the league. Building a now $56 million, 50,000 seat stadium for a team that could only sell 17,000 tickets in its current home while playing at its best seemed folly to critics who felt it unreasonable for taxpayers to guarantee the payment of the project without equal investment from the teams.50 The argument continued without any further changes to the financing plan.

By the fall of 1968, ground had been broken on the new stadium, and McClelland’s political career was over. He ran for re-election as County Commissioner in 1967, but his opposition to the stadium cost him the support of the Democratic machine, and he failed to win both in the primary and as a third party candidate in the general election. McClelland’s position clearly earned him some important enemies within the landscape of Western Pennsylvania politics, but what is noteworthy about the issue that ended his career is his call for a referendum over public financing of the stadium. It was not a hugely trumpeted call, and was somewhat buried by the frequency with which he made such calls over other issues in his continued effort to keep taxes low for residents of Allegheny County.51 But it was a call that may have been before its time, as the public responded very differently when presented with a similar situation in the 1990s. Although the people of Allegheny County may not have wanted the power or


protections that McClelland tried to provide for them in the 1960s, the same issues generated the opposite response thirty years later.

All of this stadium business, however, was supposed to get the Pirates and Steelers out of Oakland so that the University of Pittsburgh could construct a new library and improve its reputation as an academic institution. Litchfield’s efforts to improve the quality of the school were already in evidence with student circulation in the temporary library for the first semester of the 1957-1958 academic year up thirty-two percent over the previous year.\textsuperscript{52} But there was still room to improve and better library facilities would facilitate the process. The University did acquire Forbes Field late in 1958, and leased it to the Pirates until they could move into the new Three Rivers Stadium in 1970. By 1962, Chancellor Litchfield was eager to begin construction on the new Hillman Memorial Library which would be the largest library built at once by an American university.\textsuperscript{53}

Construction did not begin until June of 1965 due to delays in demolition and changes to the library plan. When the library opened in 1968, it exceeded Litchfield’s projections by holding 2.5 million bound volumes, one million more than he predicted in 1962.\textsuperscript{54} With windows designed by Max Abramovitz, space for 2,400 readers, and collections of periodicals, government documents, rare books as well as special collections and archival materials over five floors, Hillman Library created an academic sanctuary and an anchor point for the future.


development of the Social Professions Quadrangle. Building the library spanned several university administrations and involved major reorganizations of multiple neighborhoods through the demolition of Forbes Field and construction of Three Rivers Stadium, but the cooperative action of the university, city and state resulted in a first-rate library building that the university could grow into over years to come. Although it was not completed under his tenure, it suited Chancellor Litchfield’s goals for his administration perfectly.

Edward Litchfield became Chancellor in 1955, with the specific directive to “bring the University of Pittsburgh into the forefront of American institutions of higher education.” His predecessor, Rufus H. Fitzgerald, oversaw the growth of the schools of health, but upon Fitzgerald’s reaching retirement age, Litchfield was brought in to expand the university more broadly. Indeed, Litchfield transformed both the academic culture of the university and the physical campus. Litchfield oversaw a review of faculty that resulted in the overall expansion of full-time faculty from 725 to 972 and the reduction of the student-faculty ratio to 7.8 to 1. Fifty-four percent of current full-time faculty in 1962 came to the university since the beginning of Litchfield’s administration in 1955. At the same time, the student body also improved, with two-thirds of the entering class in 1962 coming from the top fifth of their high school graduating classes, up from under one-third in 1956. Pitt students were coming from further away, with fifty-six percent coming from outside Allegheny County in 1962, compared with only thirty percent from outside the county in 1956. Consequently, more students lived on campus during Litchfield’s administration. Prior to 1956, there were dormitory accommodations for only 164

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55 Alberts, Pitt, 264, 407. The “Social Professions” or “Forbes Quadrangle” was built on the site of Forbes Field, with home plate preserved and encased in glass in the ground floor of the building. The building was completed in 1978 and became the home for the School of Education, the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, the Center for International Studies and several departments from the School of Arts and Sciences. The building had 574 academic offices and room for 3,000 faculty and staff. It cost $38.26 million to build, and was completed during Chancellor Wesley Posvar’s administration.
students, but the new dormitories set to open in 1963 were expected to house 3,400 students. To support the physical needs of the growing university, between 1956 and 1962, the university acquired buildings and property worth $107 million.\textsuperscript{56} It seemed that Litchfield had more than fulfilled the university trustee’s expectations.

The university’s expansion also had direct benefits to the city, which Litchfield extolled in a speech he gave to the Greater Pittsburgh Board of Realtors in January 1963.\textsuperscript{57} He argued that a university can contribute to the community at large through the resources the university provides, through the volume of business and trade the university conducts and finally, by acting as a general economic stimulus. According to Litchfield, fifty-two percent of the physicians in the Pittsburgh area graduated from Pitt and about a thousand people daily used the in-patient services of the University Health Center. The university’s various PhD programs sent 257 graduates to work in the local research laboratories. Between Pitt and Carnegie Tech, over 10,000 engineering alumni worked within 50 miles of the city for different corporations and 4,000 graduates of the School of Business work for local companies as well. The university also supplied a high percentage of teachers to the area’s schools, with between eighty and ninety percent of school administrators within Allegheny claiming at least one graduate degree from the University of Pittsburgh, and a third of all teachers in Allegheny County holding a degree from Pitt. All of this training provided in-demand services that help attract and retain a population.\textsuperscript{58}


\textsuperscript{57} “Litchfield in Address, Noted Economic Value of University,” \textit{Titusville Herald}, 31 December 1963, 8.

The university’s spending on its expansion and the salaries it paid its employees also benefitted the region as a whole. One common complaint about the university’s expansion was that it removed taxable property from the city’s tax rolls, essentially costing the city money. Litchfield debunked this claim by stating that the expansion allowed the university to hire more people, which resulted in the payroll taxes paid by the university exceeding the value of the property tax losses from the expansion. Of the university’s $107 million expansion since 1956, $53 million went to labor costs, resulting in employment for Pittsburgh workers. The estimated disposable income of everyone on the university’s payroll amounted to about $50,000 per day. Materials for the capital expansion came from Pittsburgh companies, US Steel, J & L Steel, Allegheny Ludlum, ALCOA, Westinghouse and many other smaller suppliers, generating income for local businesses.59

The biggest benefit, however, was in the broader economic growth the university could provide through innovation. Looking at the examples of Boston and California’s research-driven economies, the universities were well poised to transplant their new technologies into local businesses that would then hire local residents and grow.60 Although this was the least concrete component of Litchfield’s argument, the broader point that universities contribute to a local economy through operational spending, plant expansion and alumnae who reside locally upon graduation all held true for Pittsburgh. Specifically, the University of Pittsburgh’s expansion program set it on track to do exactly what Litchfield promised for the city and region.


But things were about to come off of the rails. In 1965, it became clear that Litchfield had severely overextended the university’s finances. Frank Denton, former chief executive officer of Mellon Bank, university trustee and chair of the university’s Budget and Audit Committee, along with trustee David Lawrence and Gwilym Price, Chairman of the University Board of Trustees, were charged with explaining the university’s financial distress to the state House of Representatives. Denton later said that “it was down to where they were not going to make the payroll for the following month. It was just that simple. Professors were not going to get paid unless some cash was obtained.” Denton explained that Litchfield had been using incoming research money to pay current expenses until the situation had gotten out of control and there was hardly any money left anywhere.\(^{61}\) Borrowing from one fund to pay another was not unheard of in university accounting, but it was a practice only used when the university had ample money to restore the funds promptly. Litchfield, in contrast, was doing it in a way that was becoming dangerous to the university at the same time as he had concentrated power within his own office. When Litchfield formally presented budgets to the university Trustees, he was presenting budgets that had been prepared without input of any kind from the university comptroller and treasurer.\(^{62}\)

Litchfield also consistently overestimated gift income. If a budget showed a deficit, he would balance the budget on paper by raising the anticipated gift income, resulting in the appearance of sound finances, but an increasingly precarious system. At the same time, Litchfield faulted the Board of Trustees for not doing their fair share of the fundraising and that too many gifts to the university were earmarked for the medical programs with too little money

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\(^{62}\) Alberts, *Pitt*, 305.
coming in for endowments. Litchfield’s budget director, Edison Montgomery saw this problem as early as 1961 and estimated that this practice would bankrupt the university by 1966 with an approximately $18 million deficit, but Litchfield refused to acknowledge Montgomery’s report.

Denton identified two other serious problems that stemmed directly from Litchfield’s management. First, that after the Trustees approved the budgets Litchfield presented he basically ignored them. So not only did the budgets Litchfield presented to the Trustees not accurately reflect the university’s accounts, Litchfield did not follow them anyway once they were approved. Second, based on a post-meeting conversation, Denton concluded that Litchfield was consciously and purposefully operating with a deficit with the expectation that trustees and other funders would eventually provide the money the university needed to prevent a catastrophe.

Litchfield masqueraded his financial shenanigans with charm and confidence to get from one budget meeting to the next.

In November and December of 1964, the Budget and Audit Committee held a series of meetings to evaluate and manage the crisis. To protect the confidential nature of the meetings, they left a scant paper trail. The situation was thus: Chancellor Litchfield and his staff had “borrowed” a little over $10.5 million from earmarked funds and current funds had an accumulated loss of just over $12.5 million. The university needed $23 million to balance its books alone, without addressing its debt or the current fiscal year 1964-1965.

The committee resolved to ask the state for a special appropriation and to reduce spending in such a way that would not retard the academic progress of the last ten years, but would result in bare bones

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63 He also blamed alumni for not contributing enough to the university, noting that only one out of nine alumni contribute making for “a pitiful percentage for a school with Ivy League aspirations.” Alberts, Pitt, 314, 316.
64 Alberts, Pitt, 305-306.
65 Alberts, Pitt, 306.
66 Alberts, Pitt, 314.
Isaacson

operations. Despite making cuts to student aid, library acquisitions, receptions, supply purchases, hiring and salary increases, the $1.8 million reduction to the 1964-1965 budget was not enough to bring it in balance.\(^6^7\)

Over the winter and spring of 1965, the full measure of the crisis became public, and some degree of panic ensued, both within the university community and outside of it. Chancellor Litchfield suffered a heart attack towards the end of May, and his official capacity in the proceedings diminished substantially. He was expected to make a full recovery, but while he was incapacitated Board of Trustees Chairman Gwilym Price named Stanton Crawford as acting chancellor.\(^6^8\) In late May 1965, days after Litchfield’s heart attack, Dr. F. S. Cheever, Dean of the School of Medicine, forwarded a statement signed by the Executive Committee of the Faculty of Medicine to Gwilym Price. The faculty expressed collective concern over what would happen to the medical school if the university became a “low-tuition, regional undergraduate institution” instead of the “vigorous, high-quality” school it had been striving toward. They believed that the university’s growth and improvement should not be impeded by the financial crisis, as the repercussions would reverberate throughout the city. “It is axiomatic that the renaissance of our city, for which so many have labored for so long, cannot succeed without a university which matches in its objectives the aspirations of Pittsburgh as a community of national eminence. More particularly, the School of Medicine cannot maintain its present favorable status, continue to grow and make a significant contribution to the community without

\(^{6^7}\) This was because the budget Litchfield presented, and had approved, in May 1964 predicted a $1.2 million surplus, which Denton later identified as “so inaccurate as to be useless.” At a meeting of the Budget and Audit Committee on November 17, 1964, Litchfield predicted the 1964-1965 surplus at $2.6 million, which Denton decried as “patently absurd.” The next forecast given on December 14 expected a $2.4 million deficit. The final result was a deficit of $1.1 million, $3.7 million off from Litchfield’s estimate in November 1964. Alberts, *Pitt*, 314-315.

\(^{6^8}\) Alberts, *Pitt*, 318-319.
a vigorous, first quality, and well-rounded University of Pittsburgh.”69 The uncertainty of the university’s future in the wake of the financial crisis generated even more uncertainty for the city at large.

This was felt directly by Henry Avery, president of the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce. Avery wrote a letter to Charles Simpson, Chairman of the Pennsylvania State Council of Higher Education roughly two weeks after the medical school faculty sent their statement asking for the same consideration for the city’s redevelopment. Avery made the point that the university was one of the largest individual employers in the city and that the university was serving the city community as well as its employees. “All of us know what Massachusetts Institute of Technology has done to attract industry and enhance the economic growth of Metropolitan Boston. Pitt, in cooperation with the Mellon Institute and Carnegie Tech, as well as with other community leaders, is striving to do the same here to increase our diversification through research and development and attract the industries that spin off from them.”70 It was clear to Avery that preserving Pitt’s programs would preserve the city and its redevelopment efforts.

Early in June, university trustees Gwilym Price, Frank Denton, Frank Magee, David Lawrence, Joseph Barr and state senator Albert Pechan went to Pennsylvania Governor William Scranton’s office to ask for an emergency $5 million appropriation to meet expenses.71 Scranton did not immediately agree to the request, and by the end of the month faculty were getting increasingly worried about whether they would be paid on time or at all. Avery’s letter of June

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71 Pittsburgh’s businesses, foundations, and individuals had contributed $80 million to the university since 1955, but were not likely to give money to an institution in financial crisis. Alberts, Pitt, 314.
15 urged Simpson to advise the Council to recommend the state provide the emergency funds to the university.\textsuperscript{72} On June 28, the trustees borrowed $1.25 million against the anticipated funding from the state from two local banks to meet that month’s June 30 payroll. On July 2, Governor Scranton signed the legislation giving Pitt an emergency appropriation of $5 million for the next two fiscal years.\textsuperscript{73} Litchfield resigned as Chancellor at the end of July.

To prevent further damage to the university, the Board of Trustees asked the Ford Foundation to conduct an independent study of the institution which resulted in several recommendations. First, the report chided the university for its irresponsible risk management and stated that it needed to continue to improve its accounting system and give deans greater control over the budgets of their respective schools. It suggested that the university review the economic benefits of its experiment with the trimester system, and urged the university to reconsider its shift in emphasis from undergraduate to graduate programs. It advised that graduate programs were much more expensive to operate and would require “massive private financial support.” Finally, the report recommended that the university partner with the state to offer state subsidized tuition to in-state undergraduates thus gaining much needed income while preserving the independence of the graduate and professional programs. The report hailed the unique character of the school and noted that its relationship to the community of Pittsburgh was one of its greatest assets. “Pittsburgh’s talented leaders have amply demonstrated that they can marshal resources and fashion solutions to the community’s pressing social and civic problems. With the same constructive effort, not only the University’s exigency but most of the higher

\textsuperscript{73} Alberts, \textit{Pitt}, 319-320.
educational needs of the community can be met." Pitt could be saved, but it would need the state and city to help it rebuild.

The university’s financial crisis presented a pivotal moment to the city. The plan for Pittsburgh’s regrowth focused largely on Downtown improvements, expanded corporate office space, and industrial reinvestment, but as critical as these projects were to improving Pittsburgh’s functionality and attractiveness, they were not enough to ensure the city’s future economic stability. The Oakland improvements, however, represented the city’s foray into new, developing fields with the potential to bring thousands of white-collar professionals to the city permanently. The Pittsburgh Renaissance needed Oakland, and therefore the University of Pittsburgh, to complete the city’s economic transformation. And until the university’s books were opened to the public, it seemed as if everything was on track. Famous scientific and medical researchers were joining the faculty, new laboratories were being built, even the undergraduate programs were attracting a higher caliber of students, while the hospital mergers were creating an important health services network to serve both the university and the city. Pitt successfully created the very economic engine that the city needed to transition to a post-industrial economy, but if it turned out that it was all built on sand, then the consequences for the city could be disastrous. Pioneering medical researchers and elite faculty would not stay at an institution that “borrowed” their research grants to pay operating expenses without their knowledge or the means to replace the funds, and no one wants to work for an employer that cannot meet payroll. It would not be able to maintain its academic reputation if it could not pay faculty. And with its major real estate holdings pledged to secure existing debt, Pitt would have a very difficult time raising even minimal funds without government intervention. Clearly, the

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university had expanded beyond its means, but if that expansion were to collapse, then it could potentially jeopardize the entire Pittsburgh Renaissance.

Governor Scranton signed the bill making Pitt a “state-related” institution before a crowd in his office on August 23, 1966. The bill provided the university with state funding, but Pitt retained complete control over its administration, academic policies and finances, resulting not in a state take-over, but a partnership that would rescue the university’s finances while subsidizing tuition for in-state students.75 The state would contribute funds to the university’s annual budget in order to subsidize lowering the tuition for Pennsylvania residents and support the expansion of programs in the public interest, but the state would not influence admissions policies or criteria. Pitt became eligible for state funding through the General State Authority to build new academic facilities and could issue tax-exempt bonds to finance projects ineligible for GSA funds. The Board of Trustees expanded from thirty-six to thirty-nine members, twelve of which were appointed by the governor, president of the State Senate, and the speaker of the State House of Representatives, but the state’s appointees would not constitute a majority of the university’s governing body. The university gained fiscal security with minimal changes to its operating structure and the state gained access to a new university without the massive capital required to build a public university from scratch.76

The University of Pittsburgh may have flirted with disaster, but both the university and the city came out of the financial crisis with everything each party desired. The university had no harm done to its academic reputation and secured funding that would allow it to continue to grow as needed. It could accept more undergraduate students without lowering its admissions criteria and even though in-state students would pay less to attend, the state would pay the balance. The

76 Alberts, Pitt, 343.
resolution to the crisis provided the city with an intact quality university poised to serve as an economic engine for the region while continuing to attract academics and students to the city. By 1966, trouble was successfully averted and peace was restored to the Renaissance vision.

With all of the drama surrounding the University of Pittsburgh, it is worth noting that Pitt was not the only university in town. Other schools were also eager to participate in the extension of the Renaissance ideology to university development. Duquesne University was located roughly between the Downtown business district discussed in the previous chapter and the Upper Hill District, discussed in the following chapter, in an area called “the Bluff” for its high elevation. A small, Catholic school that had been operating since the 1870s, by the 1950s Duquesne’s resources were no longer adequate for its growing student body. It could not continue to house its science laboratories in Quonset huts and expect to remain competitive as an institution. The building campaign began in the early 1950s, and envisioned both academic and physical expansions. Duquesne was just beginning to confer doctoral degrees, and would demand an increasingly talented faculty to support this effort. It immediately needed more physical space for dormitories, law and business schools and several science departments, and planned to build a new library, classroom building, student union, field house and chapel, albeit with less urgency. Based on estimates of land acquisition and construction costs, the university predicted that it would need $13.3 million to build all it desired.

Although Duquesne issued its first ever public fundraising drive to initiate its expansion, federal grant money propelled the project forward in the early 1960s. The URA received a $6.2

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77 It is also very close to the Lower Hill Redevelopment Project discussed in the following chapter.
78 Duquesne University Builds with Pittsburgh, box 175, folder 15. ACCD Records, MSS 0285, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.
79 Duquesne University Builds with Pittsburgh, box 175, folder 15. ACCD Records, MSS 0285, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.
million grant that would allow it to acquire and demolish 43 acres, of which 21 would be sold to Duquesne. The university planned to construct a new science building first. Mayor Joseph Barr spoke of the importance of education to the city’s continued renewal efforts, stating that the city needed to take an active role in encouraging educational expansion so that city residents could be better prepared for a future in which diminishing low-skill, easy-entry job are available. Not only would Duquesne’s expansion add another high-quality higher educational institution to the city, it would create 325 new jobs over five years, and its payroll and services budget would more than double, to $10 million. If universities were economic engines, as Litchfield believed, than helping Duquesne meet its expansion goals would continue to benefit the city well beyond the initial cost of land and buildings.

Both the University of Pittsburgh and Duquesne University were recognized as reputable academic institutions by the mid-1960s. Point Park Junior College, which began as a business training college in the early 1930s, wished to join their ranks. The college sought and gained provisional accreditation as a four-year school in 1966. The report issued by the Pennsylvania Superintendent of Public Instruction identified that there was a strong need for expanded four-year college facilities in the region, and that Point Park faculty, students and administrators were performing to high standards. Not only did students who transferred to four-year programs prove successful in their endeavors, but the faculty and personnel worked to raise the standards of “low potential” students. The report praised the leadership from the Board of Trustees as well as the climate of academic freedom within the school. And though it expressed concern about faculty

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80 This constituted the URA’s eleventh urban renewal project in twelve years. Although it nearly bordered the Lower Hill Redevelopment, it was a separate development. “Six-million Dollar Okay Pushes Bluff Plan,” The Pittsburgh Press, 4 November 1962, 1, 4.

pay, workloads, physical facilities and the endowment, it noted as significant the support Point Park received from the academic community including the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Tech.\textsuperscript{82}

In 1962, the accounting school known as The Robert Morris School of Business became Robert Morris Junior College. By 1969, it became Robert Morris College and continued to expand its undergraduate programs with its Downtown campus adjacent to Duquesne University.\textsuperscript{83} In 1967, Carnegie Tech and Mellon Institute merged to become Carnegie Mellon University. Both Chatham and Carlow Colleges operated in Squirrel Hill and Oakland during this time, with Chatham remaining an all-women’s college to the present day, and Carlow accepting men on the GI Bill following World War II. Pittsburgh did not lack for places of higher learning in the mid-twentieth century. And with the passage of Pennsylvania’s Community College Act in 1963 allowing the Community College of Allegheny County to open the doors of its first two campuses on the North Side and in Monroeville in 1966, virtually any degree was possible within and just outside of Pittsburgh’s city limits. If Litchfield’s beliefs about universities proved correct, then the city could revel in a job well done by successfully fostering the growth of so many diverse educational programs.

Developing institutions of higher learning was as important a part of the Renaissance plan for Pittsburgh’s improvement as smoke and flood controls, but infinitely more complex. As difficult as it was to convince Congress to fund a dam, or city residents to use a different kind of fuel, these were finite projects. Once the change was made to a new fuel source, or the dam built, the change was accomplished and the results could be measured through visible cleaner air or

\textsuperscript{82} Recommendation to the Superintendent of Public Instruction Concerning Point Park Junior College Request for Probationary Approval to Offer Four-Year Programs, pg. 1-3, box 1, folder 22. David Leo Lawrence Papers, 1959-1966, AIS.1978.15, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh.

less frequent floods. But university expansion, despite having plans on paper, was a vague and imprecise city planning tool. It required many variables far outside the control of a single governing body and substantial risk. But fostering a pro-research, pro-innovation climate was necessary for the city to shake its image as a stodgy, backward industrial town still leaning on nineteenth century technology. And there can be no doubt that bigger and more universities created more jobs, leading to more spending and more revenue for the city. It made practical sense for the city to support the growth of its academic institutions but the rapid growth and subsequent financial crisis of the University of Pittsburgh illustrates some important changes in the Renaissance model from its earliest efforts in the late 1940s to its bigger building projects of the 1950s and 1960s.

The Renaissance cohort was powerful, but it was not all-powerful. Governor Scranton, a Republican, may have been aware of the significant presence of David Lawrence, former governor and still-leader of the state Democratic party, in his office asking for a state bailout for the University of Pittsburgh in June 1965, but Scranton was certainly not cowed by Lawrence. This was a very different situation than Lawrence and Richard King Mellon faced in Harrisburg in 1947 to get the Pittsburgh Package passed. Lawrence had considerable political leverage to get the result he wanted in 1947, but there were no guarantees in the 1965 meeting. Similarly, Richard King Mellon had generously supported the University of Pittsburgh in the past, and was a strong advocate of the city’s redevelopment generally, but when approached to give money in the wake of the university’s crisis, Mellon flat out refused. As it turned out, the state benefitted from rescuing the university, but it was not obliged to do so. As the Renaissance aged, it could not assume that it would operate at the peak of its power indefinitely.

84 Alberts, Pitt, 334.
The university’s financial crisis also demonstrated the Renaissance’s need to guard against its own excesses. The Renaissance desire for a bigger, better Pittsburgh was well known locally and nationally. The University of Pittsburgh specifically hired a new Chancellor with growth in mind, and that perfectly complimented the Renaissance plan. In his early years as Chancellor, Litchfield operated with restraint. Recall that he wrote to Mayor Lawrence that the university could not afford to purchase and renovate the Municipal Hospital, and sought a solution from the Mayor. But this caution faded, and while Litchfield’s choice to deficit spend was extremely dangerous for the city and the university, it reflected the notion that the university was an important part of the Renaissance, and the Renaissance leaders would not allow a pillar of their plan to fail. Litchfield may have taken extraordinary chances with the university’s future, and he may have done all of it out of pride and ego rather than sound strategic planning, but once the state agreed to partner with the University of Pittsburgh, and as long as the medical research grants continued to come in, it didn’t really matter how Litchfield accomplished what he did, only that it was done. Denton may have blanched at the idea that Litchfield was consciously operating on a deficit as a matter of policy, but it turned out that Litchfield, not Denton, was right. The money came through. The university survived without compromising its newly acquired academic reputation and became not only a world-class medical center but the driving economic force in Pittsburgh’s post-industrial revival. Litchfield may have broken every rule of wise institutional stewardship, but his gamble paid off and the Board of Trustees got the acclaimed academic institution they envisioned while Pittsburgh Renaissance leaders got the research and medical facilities they needed to secure the city’s future. Litchfield successfully created an institution that was too important for city and state leaders to allow it to fail. Whether
this was strategy or dumb luck remains unclear. The result in this case, worked out to the benefit of all parties, but it was by no means either inevitable or replicable.

The Renaissance organization functioned most effectively and efficiently when it could apply its power and influence to measured units that would produce a distinct outcome. If households use different fuel, the air will be cleaner. If Congress approves this appropriation, this dam will be built, and this river will not flood. Abstractions like “encourage innovation,” were much more difficult for the Renaissance bodies to regulate. Once the physical improvements to the city were underway, the next projects on the Renaissance agenda demanded more abstract thought. The universities provided one means to address modernization and economic growth. As the city started thinking about bigger projects than it had previously considered and other ways of re-identifying the city on a broad scale, the Renaissance moved further away from its most successful accomplishments, small scale reforms with tangible results. At the same time as the University of Pittsburgh was acquiring hospitals and beginning its expansion in the late 1940s through the 1950s, the city was also working on neighborhood redevelopment and a large-scale urban renewal project that it hoped would benefit the city as much as smoke and flood controls.
Chapter 4- The Pittsburgh Renaissance and Urban Renewal, 1949-1970

With Pittsburgh’s worst environmental hazards under control in the late 1940s, at roughly the same time as the Oakland plan was taking shape under Chancellor Rufus H. Fitzgerald, the next phase of the Renaissance attempted to add amenities that would further redefine the city as a significant cultural center, attractive to business tourists and convention planners. The university and hospital expansion discussed in the previous chapter had the potential to introduce a new residential population to the city, and the city could aid these efforts by expanding and improving the cultural and leisure activities available within the city. Changing Pittsburgh’s image from an industrial backwater to a cultural and corporate destination, however, demanded more from citizens than previous reforms.

Part of the genius of the earlier Renaissance projects lay in accomplishing great change through simple, targeted actions. From changing the type of coal used and creating more efficient fires to building dams far outside the city limits, the Renaissance’s mundane and remote changes measurably improved city life. Every person who bought hard coal or wrote to their congressional representative asking for funding for the flood control dams played a role in transforming the city and could appreciate the positive effects. Although the University of Pittsburgh expansion in Oakland disturbed some of its neighbors, it provided the city with better hospitals and improved university facilities.

Adding cultural and corporate amenities to the city, however, changed the role of residents in the redevelopment process. With multi-block urban renewal projects in the 1950s and 1960s, quality of life concerns for residents became less of a priority for the Renaissance
than adding attractions to the city. The planning process that once required residents’ actions to make their city a better place now alienated those who sought autonomous control over their neighborhoods as projects ballooned. Still concerned with making the “Golden Triangle” and environs an appealing investment opportunity for corporations, Renaissance planners also began to explore redevelopment opportunities in residential neighborhoods outside of the Downtown and Oakland areas, which dramatically changed the relationship between residents and city leaders.

Key Renaissance collaborator Edgar Kaufmann and City Councilman Abraham Wolk both championed the Civic Light Opera (CLO), an organization dedicated to performing “light opera” productions such as *Naughty Marietta* and Gilbert and Sullivan classics, as well as more modern musicals like *Kiss Me Kate* and *The Music Man*. Kaufmann contributed financially to the organization while Wolk served as an honorary chairman. Although both men supported the organization from its inception, both found the borrowed facilities at the open-air Pitt Stadium discouraging. The organization’s opening night performance on 1 June 1946 was cancelled due to rain.1 The weather problems persisted even as the group persevered during the next decade.2

Furthermore, the Oakland location lacked adequate on-site parking facilities for the CLO audience. In many cities, it would not be a hardship for theatergoers to park a few blocks further away and walk to their destination. However Pitt Stadium was located on the “Upper” portion of

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2 After over a decade of rain-delayed or cancelled performances, a CLO report to the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD) noted that “ticket purchasers in 1958 had a 1 to 4 chance of not seeing a complete show and a 3 to 4 chance of wet, uncomfortable seats from daytime rains.” According to the report, Pittsburghers “hesitate to take further risks to comfort and health.” Civic Light Opera Association of Greater Pittsburgh Statement for Meeting with Allegheny Conference on November 5, 1958. Box 133, Folder 4, ACCD Records, MSS 0285, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.
the University of Pittsburgh campus, perched near the top of a long, steep hill nicknamed “cardiac hill” due to the intense cardiovascular activity required to climb it. While certainly possible to park elsewhere and walk up to the stadium, it was not the pre-theater activity audience members preferred. Still, Kaufmann and Wolk remained stalwart supporters of the CLO, which brought high-quality, live theatrical productions to Pittsburgh. Despite all of the high art institutions available in the city (as discussed in Chapter 1), it still struggled with a reputation as a low-brow, no-culture steel town, but the CLO had the potential to change that.

Finding a venue better suited to the organization’s needs seemed a reasonable first step toward promoting the CLO as a valuable asset to the city, as well as improving its finances. The CLO requested that the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD) begin the process of selecting a site that would be appropriate for a new amphitheater in November of 1947. In June of 1948, Abraham Wolk proposed to the City Council a city-sponsored amphitheater that could also serve as a memorial to World War II veterans. Edgar Kaufmann pledged a matching grant of $500,000 for the theater’s construction, and suggested that the structure include a moveable roof that could provide cover in case of bad weather but allow for open air viewing when not needed. Plans for the new amphitheater evolved directly in response to the problems of the Pitt Stadium site for the CLO. The retractable roof provided shelter for audiences in a proscenium orientation, and became an integral part of the project. The earliest plans for the project indicated a commitment to single use by the CLO, with a permanent stage and orchestra pit and designated prop storage, rehearsal and dressing rooms. At 9,000 seats, the

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5 “Theater Offer Wins Approval,” The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 4 May 1949, 2. “‘Convertible Amphitheater’ to House Concert Listeners,” Eugene Register-Guard, 21 December 1949, 5B.
Isaacson 124

proposed stadium equaled the seats available in Pitt Stadium with the added value of a more flexible season and inclement weather protection. This would help the organization bridge its budget deficits and guarantee that ticket holders would see a complete performance. Even before choosing a site for the project, architects included plenty of parking space in early sketches released to newspapers. The early amphitheater design had everything the Pitt Stadium site lacked to improve both performance and audience conditions for the CLO. The only thing the amphitheater lacked was a specific location.

The ACCD and the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association (PRPA) recommended a site in the neighborhood of Highland Park, a mostly residential area roughly six miles from Downtown Pittsburgh, as a location for the amphitheater. The merits of the Highland Park site were service by two streetcar lines and proximity to a “car house” that could provide more trolleys if needed, accessibility by private vehicles with adequate off-street parking, a quiet location and topography suitable to the amphitheater design. A great advantage of the site over others considered was that it was “presently unoccupied except for one house.” No major relocations or displacements would be necessary to construct the amphitheater in Highland Park.

The choice of the Highland Park site for the amphitheater illustrates the Pittsburgh Renaissance network in action. As discussed in Chapter 2, the three main bodies of the Renaissance, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD), the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association, (PRPA) and the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) each had different tasks and operational structures, but shared members and allegiance to the overall

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7 “Opera Site Put Up to Planning Body,” The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 24 August 1949, 1.
vision of rebuilding Pittsburgh. By following the ACCD and PRPA site recommendations for building the amphitheater, Mayor Lawrence essentially sidestepped the City Planning Commission and the Department of City Planning, the official planning bodies of the city of Pittsburgh, to fulfill the vision of Renaissance co-founder Edgar Kaufmann and supporter Abraham Wolk. Exercising this power may have demonstrated the integration of Renaissance leadership, but it showed a disregard for neighborhood control over development, and created a target for possible opposition by using private agencies to direct the use of city funds without city oversight. The ACCD had been guiding the Renaissance since its inception, but the opposition to the amphitheater opened a line of inquiry into the nature of the relationship between the private organization and the public funding of the auditorium that could compromise future projects. Furthermore, sidestepping the City Planning Commission with the private, non-elected Renaissance agencies flagrantly violated the democratic process since it privileged the recommendation of a private organization over the city’s official planning department. The Renaissance consolidated enough power to be able to do as its agencies advised with or without public support, but forging ahead without seeking neighborhood approval had the potential to damage both the specific project in question and the entire Renaissance model. Opponents of the amphitheater called public attention to the demerits of the plan in the local press and the scrutiny was not especially welcome by Renaissance leaders. Should the opposition mount, a legal challenge to the use of public funds or the influence of private agencies could halt the entire Renaissance program. Mayor Lawrence and other Renaissance leaders needed to strike a balance between managing residents’ desires for input into their neighborhoods and crafting a coherent city-wide revitalization program. As much as leaders relied on the private organizations to plan
the Renaissance, they also needed public cooperation with the plans to make the whole Renaissance vision come together.

In fact, there was plenty of opposition to the choice of Highland Park for the amphitheater from residents inside and outside of the neighborhood. Neighborhood residents’ objected to the site on the grounds that it would create a parking problem, bring a “carnival atmosphere” into the residential neighborhood, and generate a noise nuisance.9 Other Pittsburghers agreed that the Highland Park site was inappropriate. A Mr. Cooney, resident of Bridgeville, located approximately fourteen miles southwest of Downtown Pittsburgh, recommended McKinley Park in a letter to the editor of *The Pittsburgh Press* as a more desirable location than Highland Park. McKinley Park, just off of Route 19, about four miles south of Downtown on the south side of the Monongahela River, was better equipped with public transit options, more parking, accessible for city residents traveling through the Liberty Tunnel, and had an entertainment/concessions infrastructure already in place. Mr. Cooney argued that building the amphitheater in McKinley Park would make the surrounding neighborhood more attractive, rather than devalue property as it would in Highland Park.10

Mr. Cooney’s point about the relative centrality of his proposed south side location over the Highland Park site raises an important issue regarding the site not addressed by the planners. Highland Park is located well within the city of Pittsburgh, making it very accessible to residents who would not have to enter the city from the suburbs or cross any of the city’s three rivers. McKinley Park is also within the city limits of Pittsburgh, but much closer to the southern suburbs than Highland Park. Suburban light opera-goers, however, would have to contend with

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9 “Choice of Opera Site Here Result of Study” [*Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph* 7/31/49], Scrapbook 6, Abraham L. Wolk Papers, AIS.1969.14 Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh.
10 “McKinley Park Urged as Site for Opera” [*Pittsburgh Press*], Scrapbook 6, Abraham L. Wolk Papers, AIS.1969.14 Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh.
all of the traffic problems of the city discussed in Chapter 2, in addition to the added delays created by the ongoing construction of the new highway system, bridges and tunnels. Construction began on the new highways in 1946, but the major artery connecting Pittsburgh and the eastern and southern suburbs did not open until 1953, and even then it only opened in sections. The final section was not complete until 1969 when the Fort Duquesne Bridge opened, linking the northern suburbs with Downtown and the rest of the Penn-Lincoln Parkway (I-376/I-279). In 1948, when the Highland Park amphitheater site was under consideration, easy travel between the city and suburbs was a distant dream for the future.

The choice of Highland Park for a municipal amphitheater assumed the continued centrality of the city for all Pittsburghers. This may have been accurate at the moment of planning, but the construction of a new highway system designed to better link the urban and suburban areas had the potential to undermine that centrality. Even though it would take nearly twenty years for the entire system to be constructed, the amphitheater was meant to be an investment in Pittsburgh’s future, one that would still be useful after the highways were built. But highways that made it more convenient for suburban residents to access Downtown Pittsburgh also made it possible for city residents to move to the suburbs permanently without losing their connection to the city. If the new Penn-Lincoln Parkway and the Squirrel Hill Tunnel could significantly reduce the commuting time to Downtown Pittsburgh for residents of the East End and eastern suburbs, it also had the potential to draw city residents away from the city, to growing suburban communities with better automobile access, newer homes and less density.11

While planners may have recognized and welcomed the positive aspects this new convenience

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11 The Crosstown Boulevard, Fort Duquesne and Fort Pitt Bridges as well as the northern and southern extensions of the Penn-Lincoln Parkway (I-376 and I-279 respectively) did the same for the northern suburbs (the North Hills) and southern suburbs (the South Hills) as for the eastern suburbs (Penn Hills, Churchill, Monroeville).
would offer, if they recognized the potential threat to the city this same network represented, they did not mention it in their plans for a new amphitheater.

Other opponents of the Highland Park site, including the East Liberty Chamber of Commerce, expressed concern about the use of eminent domain to seize private property and whether or not building a theater was an appropriate use of city resources. Political opponents of Mayor Lawrence found an opportunity to criticize the mayor’s “dictatorial” tactics in signing the bill condemning the one Highland Park property in the way of the amphitheater over residents’ protests as well as the city’s financial contributions to the project. Councilman Joseph McArdle compared Lawrence to Stalin while simultaneously rebuking the mayor’s support for “recreational hobbies sponsored by a few.” The close association of Renaissance organizations and leadership became a target for political criticism. While McArdle’s comparison of Mayor Lawrence and Stalin had the ring of campaign hyperbole, the fact that Lawrence did actually sign a bill condemning private property over the owner’s staunch objection to build a publicly-funded amphitheater for a money-losing private organization to perform musicals and light opera speaks to the incautious use of political power by the Renaissance leaders and affiliated organizations. Renaissance leaders wanted to make the city a better place for residents, businesses and visitors, but showed little concern for individuals who would have to sacrifice property or convenience to achieve the lofty goals of urban reforms. Renaissance leaders would have to find a way to cooperate with citizens as they planned more and bigger projects lest they inadvertently mobilize their opponents. For the Highland Park project, the mobilization of one individual, Robert B.

King, the owner of the single house located within the proposed development site, was enough to thwart the amphitheater plans.

The King house, pictured above, was no ordinary residence. Originally named “Baywood” by owner and glass manufacturer (and grandfather of co-architect of the Pittsburgh Renaissance, Richard King Mellon) Alexander King, the 1880 house included over 8,000 square feet of living space. Alexander King’s youngest son, Robert Burns King, occupied the house at the time of the amphitheater controversy. Given the pedigree of the owners and their relationship to the top leadership of the Renaissance, it is in some ways surprising that the site was considered at all.

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King was, understandably, not supportive of the amphitheater location. In early July 1949, he offered to donate his entire property, including the mansion, to the city upon his death under the provision that he would be allowed to live out his life “unmolested” and that the city would find an alternate location for the theater. The city did not initially respond to King’s offer.

After the mayor signed a bill allowing the city to condemn King’s Highland Park property, the city hired an engineering firm to perform a topographical survey of the site. During the inspection, the engineers damaged a tree on the heavily wooded site, and King sought and won an injunction preventing further work on the property until his attorneys could file an appeal to the condemnation proceedings. Judge Thomas Marshall scheduled the hearing for August 16. On August 15, 1949, Mayor Lawrence sent a letter to Edward Weidlein, Chairman of the ACCD saying that “so much time has been consumed in discussion and legal action” that the project could not be completed within the anticipated timeframe. Since the project would be delayed anyway, Lawrence argued that the delay could be used to the city’s advantage in taking the time to reconsider possible sites. After Lawrence’s letter suggesting a reconsideration of sites for the amphitheater, the King property no longer faced immediate danger. Still, King renewed his offer of the entire estate to the city under the condition that it be preserved as

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parkland after his death.\textsuperscript{20} This time, the city accepted King’s gift, thus protecting the property from future threats.\textsuperscript{21} In less than two weeks the project went from being green-lit to being abandoned.

The power of the city to condemn land through the URA was critical to the Renaissance operation. Mayor Lawrence’s change of heart regarding the King property suggests some concern over the original plan. Whether or not this was due to the political opposition to Lawrence’s condemnation of King’s property, the upcoming mayoral election, recognition of neighborhood resistance to the project or a newfound awareness of the implications of alienating the official city planners remains unclear. Richard King Mellon’s role in this process is also unclear. Lawrence biographer Michael Weber maintains that Lawrence’s reversal on the King site was not just a reaction to public pressure, but a more calculated decision to protect the legal security of the entire Renaissance project. The legal battle begun by King had the potential to result in restricting the city’s powers of condemnation, a result Renaissance planners would have been keen to prevent.\textsuperscript{22} If the Renaissance could not acquire the land it needed at a low cost with minimal resistance, it could not complete the developments it deemed necessary to the revitalization of the city. This was true for the Highland Park amphitheater, but it was equally true in Oakland, where the University of Pittsburgh and the URA worked together to make sure that the university had access to the properties it needed to build the buildings that would improve the university and diversify the city’s economy. A legal challenge to the concentration

\textsuperscript{20} “King’s Offer Of Estate Is Renewed” [10/8/49- date unclear], Scrapbook 8, Abraham L. Wolk Papers, AIS.1969.14 Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh.
\textsuperscript{21} “Council Accepts King’s Estate for City Park” [Pittsburgh Press 10/19/49]. Although the city did use the property for many years following King’s death in the mid 1950s for art classes and a nature sanctuary, the city sold the property in 1994 to a couple willing to restore and renovate the house to its 1880s condition. It is currently occupied by owners Frank and Maura Brown. Kevin Kirkland, “Highland Park mansion takes a bow on house tour,” The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 1 October 2005.
\textsuperscript{22} Weber, 269-271.
of power, the use of condemnation proceedings, or the relationship between the organizations could compromise the entire redevelopment initiative. Planners remained committed to developing a civic amphitheater, but would have to play by the rules of city planning and avoid another confrontation like the one with King if they hoped to continue the Renaissance.

After reconsidering all of the possible sites, the City Planning Commission chose a location in Schenley Park, near the running track known as “the oval.” The site had many advantages: the city already owned the land, so there would be no acquisition costs or battles with residents. The site was in the park, so it was uninhabited, which meant no displacement costs or fights. There was enough room to provide ample parking space and the natural topography of the land suited the amphitheater design well. The main drawback of the site was that it was not near any public transit lines, but the city planned to compensate for this by providing shuttle bus service from the nearest lines on event days.

Whether or not a performance space for the Civic Light Opera met the restrictions of Mary Schenley’s grant of her family’s property for the park represented the biggest legal concern for the Schenley Park site. In 1889, when Mary Schenley gave the land to the city she did so on the condition that the park established would provide a “free, attractive and healthful resort, and open air recreation for the people of Pittsburgh and the Public and perpetually keeping and maintaining the same for such uses and purposes and for no other use or purpose whatsoever.”23 Thus, even though the planners skillfully avoided a location that would bring the same headaches as their previous site, they wound up with a legal battle anyway.

This legal battle was different from the fight over the King property. Rather than stemming from an enraged citizen defending his property against a potentially unlawful condemnation that bypassed official city planning procedures, City Solicitor Anne X. Alpern,

who helped draft the Pittsburgh Package, sought the legal challenge to the Schenley Park site, confident that the amphitheater would survive the legal scrutiny. The assumed victory would quell any resistance to the site and would ensure that the project could proceed without fear of future interruption from unexpected opposition.

The suit, filed by Ervin G. and Julius Bernstein, objected to the violation of Mary Schenley’s deed, the city payment of $500,000 to the theater using “public funds for a private purpose,” and the leasing of public property for private purposes. The court dismissed the case. The majority opinion interpreted the words “free” and “open air” to mean unrestricted access rather than “without payment.” The dissenting judge argued that the financial burden on the city was too great. Just as planners intended, the decision gave the city the right to begin constructing the amphitheater, and ultimately, the State Supreme Court upheld the lower court’s decision. In the summer of 1950, a Civic Light Opera spokesman expected the amphitheater to be ready for the 1951 summer season.

Despite the legal security, seven months after receiving approval to build the amphitheater in Schenley Park, the project stalled. Costs for the theater rose from $1 million, with half paid for by the city and half paid for by a grant from Edgar Kaufmann, to $2 million. Even though Edgar Kaufmann increased his contribution to $1 million, the city’s obligation to

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24 Weber, 240.
match Kaufmann’s grant exceeded the funds available for completion of the project. Also, the logistics of providing public transportation via shuttle buses and adequate parking facilities further delayed the project, and planners were forced to turn to a third choice, Point State Park. After previously rejecting the Point State Park location as inaccessible and undesirable, Mayor Lawrence praised the new site for its central location, access to public transportation, and parking.

Enthusiasm for the Point State Park site did not last long. The obstacles to the site were that the park was state owned, and construction would require permission from the Governor and park committee as well as a city ordinance to permit the city to build in a state park. Mayor Lawrence revealed a new plan for the amphitheater in January 1953 that put it at the center of a major urban renewal project in the Lower Hill, a mostly black neighborhood bordering the downtown area.

Changes in federal legislation made the larger, more ambitious development possible. Prior to the Housing Act of 1949, even in the early stages of the arena planning, Renaissance planners only started projects for which they had secure funding in place. Title I of the Housing Act of 1949 opened new opportunities for large-scale demolition in urban areas through federal financing. With more money available to acquire, demolish and reconstruct “blighted or deteriorating” areas, planners had new leeway in the kinds of projects they could propose. The Housing Act effectively reduced the ability of local residents to contest development while simultaneously strengthening the city’s power to demolish and rebuild by providing federal funding and legislative support. A 1954 change to federal housing legislation added $400 million

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in funding and shifted the emphasis of Urban Renewal from residential to commercial developments.32

The Lower Hill District, located just east of the Downtown business district and between the Strip District on the north and the Bluff, home of Duquesne University, on the south, was home to a mixed black and European immigrant population until World War I. As southern black migration increased and European immigration decreased during the 1920s, the population of the Hill District reflected this transition, gaining 14,000 black residents and losing 7,600 European immigrants.33 The Hill District became a city within the city for black Pittsburghers who faced discrimination and segregated facilities elsewhere in the city. The Hill District, known as “The Hill,” however, became a renowned urban community that fulfilled the needs of its diverse population. The neighborhood included forty-five churches serving different Christian denominations, as well as a growing Muslim population. Secular clubs, ranging from the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows to the National Association of Colored Women provided a variety of services to members including college scholarships and death benefits. The Pittsburgh Crawfords, one of two professional black baseball teams in the region, were owned by a local businessman and played in the Hill District while the Homestead Grays played in Forbes Field. Its nightlife earned the Hill District a national reputation and drew famous musicians from around the country to Pittsburgh’s clubs.34 During the Great Depression and through World War II, the Hill District continued to serve as the center of black political and social life in Pittsburgh.

The second Great Migration brought a new influx of black residents to Pittsburgh, with the black population of the city increasing by about twenty thousand residents between 1940 and 1950.35

34 Trotter and Day, 15-22.
1950, with another eighteen thousand arriving by 1960.\textsuperscript{35} Migrants’ experiences in Pittsburgh varied wildly, from dissatisfaction with the persistent inequality in hiring throughout the city’s industries to relief in leaving the more overt racial hostility of the south behind. Unfortunately for migrants seeking industrial employment, the second Great Migration coincided with the contraction of unskilled entry-level work in steel mills. Those who did find work were given the dirtiest, hardest jobs at the lowest wages with the least security or opportunity for advancement. Outside of the mills, in Pittsburgh’s hotels, grocery stores, universities, public schools and corporate offices, hiring practices either excluded or severely limited black employment. Unemployment for blacks in Pittsburgh vastly exceeded that of whites during the 1950s and 1960s. Even though the Renaissance helped provide over seventeen thousand new jobs in the Gateway Center complex, less than thirteen percent of Pittsburgh blacks held white-collar jobs.\textsuperscript{36} The Renaissance had not made housing or residents’ needs a priority in its developments thus far, but the Lower Hill project had the potential to provide jobs and housing in a neighborhood in need of both. It would cause upheaval, no doubt, but the promise of improvement seemed worth the risk. \textit{Pittsburgh Courier} City Editor George Barbour was optimistic about the entire Renaissance program, and encouraged \textit{Courier} readers to share his enthusiasm for the city’s Renaissance as the projects were “engendering a rekindling of the spirit, the hops, the aspirations within the minds and hearts of our citizens.”\textsuperscript{37}

Whether or not the Lower Hill Redevelopment Plan could sustain Barbour’s hopefulness among residents over a long term remained to be seen. The Lower Hill project represented a different kind of Renaissance plan. It involved more displacement than previous projects as it

\textsuperscript{35} Pittsburgh had 62,251 black residents in 1940, 82,453 in 1950 and 100,692 in 1960. Trotter and Day, 203.
\textsuperscript{36} Trotter and Day, 46-53.
Isaacson

attempted to broaden the city’s cultural offerings and enhance the city’s appeal as a business and convention tourism destination. The new availability of federal funding did not change the Renaissance immediately. Mayor Lawrence did not unveil the Arena plan until 1953, and up to that point, planners continued to consider a smaller scale amphitheater. The combination of federal funding and increased authority to acquire and demolish entire neighborhoods prompted a change in Renaissance strategy. Once the Lower Hill Redevelopment Project moved under the umbrella of Urban Renewal, planners no longer had to appeal to the public or even local officials as in both the Highland Park and Schenley Park amphitheater sites. They could rely instead on federal approval and the city’s increased powers of condemnation to develop the projects they considered integral to the Renaissance goals. But the shift to federal from local approval removed the democratic process as a tool for citizens in opposing the use of public funds. Residents could make support of a particular development project a voting issue in a local election in a way that was not practical for a national campaign. They could lobby their City Council representative or present their case in Council meetings directly. They still might not win their point, but they could at least be certain that their opposition was heard and recorded by the people making the decision whether or not to approve a project. On the other hand, once the decision-making process resided in a federal agency, citizens became further removed from the process. While theoretically possible to lobby Congress and argue broadly for or against Urban Renewal, it was much more difficult for a resident opposing a redevelopment project to speak directly to the individuals or group making the decision whether or not to fund that specific project than to present their case to the local authority. The Renaissance gained more power by using the federal funding available, but it also added a new level of risk to the whole venture.
Constructing an entertainment and cultural complex near the downtown area remained consistent with other Renaissance plans to improve the city’s business district and diversify the city’s economy but the project diverged from earlier Renaissance reforms in several key ways. The early Renaissance projects were scaled to what the city could pay for, as with smoke controls. If the city could not support a project outright, then Renaissance leaders sought some external support as with the state funding of Point State Park and Equitable Life’s funding of Gateway Center. The Lower Hill Project was the first that sought federal urban renewal funding. Previous projects, even the discarded plans for the CLO amphitheater, were funded by corporate, civic or private investment and constrained by the sponsor’s finite budget. When the Schenley Park version of the amphitheater looked like it was going to exceed the available funding, the city scrapped the project. Being accountable to an outside investor meant that planners had to indicate that the project would meet its financial expectations and provide some return on the initial investment. Private investors would not commit their money to a project that was not likely to be completed, nor would they consider a development that did not show some potential for growth. Turning to federal support under the urban renewal program eliminated planners need to prove the financial merits of the investment, but it also allowed planners to attempt developments that might not have been considered sound by private investors.\(^{38}\)

Participating in Urban Renewal also changed the way Renaissance planners approached sites and projects. Planners considered the Lower Hill twice in the course of the amphitheater site

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\(^{38}\) Senate Committee on Banking and Currency, *Summary of Provisions of the National Housing Act of 1949*, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 1949, 1-2. One example of this is the “Panther Hollow” project that was conceived by the private “Oakland Corporation”- a joint venture between Carnegie Tech and University of Pittsburgh officials to fill the ravine separating the Carnegie Tech from the Pitt campus with a massive research, classroom and office facility. As costs for the project started escalating exponentially at the same time as the University of Pittsburgh was deep in the throes of financial crisis, the project was terminated. Although the project would have helped fulfill an important portion of the Renaissance mission, improving university and research facilities, it was too big and too risky for the principal investors to pursue.
selection, but rejected it both times for being too densely populated. The cost of displacement exceeded the potential benefits, and so the city chose the King Estate site, then the Schenley Park site, where displacement and re-housing were not factors. Once the project was reconceived under the urban renewal program, the former liabilities of the Lower Hill site made it an ideal area for consideration within the parameters of urban renewal funding. The monetary costs that the city would have had to pay for the project changed, but the disruption, resettlement issues and physical limitations associated with a massive construction project in a densely populated neighborhood remained the same. Urban renewal allowed planners to approach neighborhoods that previously would have posed an unreasonable strain on city resources.

Previous Renaissance projects progressed piecemeal to ensure the success of the entire effort. The city did not begin to clean the façades of downtown office buildings until they were certain of the success of smoke controls. Also, smoke controls did not become county-wide until proven effective within the city. It was not practical to consider building highways or buildings along the waterfront until flood controls were in place. Even though urban renewal funding allowed large-scale demolition, incremental construction offered flexibility, precision and efficiency that could have benefited the development.

Finally, the amphitheater-turned-urban renewal project was designed to add luxuries, not necessities to the city. The university and hospital expansion in Oakland involved large construction projects, but the logic of improving the university to stimulate the city’s economy justified the development as something that would benefit city residents broadly. Adding a new hospital complex staffed with the world-renowned medical professionals constituted an improvement for the public good, even though some displacement occurred. A musical theater venue, convention center, symphony hall and an art museum, however, were amenities to which
not all residents would have access. They may have added to Renaissance leaders vision of the city as a center of high art and culture, but they represented very specific tastes and values rather than an objective good.

The announcement of the “Center for the Arts” in 1953 reflected the planning shift that accompanied participation in Urban Renewal. In order for the new Lower Hill arena project to be eligible for Urban Renewal money, planners had to incorporate housing into the development. Previous Renaissance plans avoided projects or sites that would require significant displacement or investment in housing. The University of Pittsburgh had to operate delicately while acquiring property for its expansion to avoid incurring the wrath of its neighbors. When the university acquired the Ruskin Apartments to use as faculty housing, Chancellor Litchfield personally assured the residents that no one would be forced to leave their homes, and the university simply waited for units to become available before proceeding with its renovations.39 Replacing or modernizing outdated housing stock remained secondary in the Lower Hill plan to the primary attraction of the new arena with a retractable dome roof. Under the “Center for the Arts” plan the arena became a multi-use facility with the potential to attract a lucrative convention and trade show business, house professional sports teams as well as the Civic Light Opera with a new art museum and symphony hall adjacent to the arena. Because the new Urban Renewal program allowed cities to condemn larger areas of land than they could previously, planners acquired more land than they needed for the arena, anticipating that they would be able to build the museum, symphony and high-rise apartments after completing the arena. Instead of finishing one portion of the project and then moving to the next and adapting the plan based on the successes and short-comings of the previous experience, they acquired everything at once on the premise

39 Alberts, *Pitt*, 244. Of course not every real estate purchase was that cordial, nor did the university always have time to wait decades to use the property they paid for. But the example illustrates the point that the university sought to avoid disturbing the peace of its neighbors when it could.
that the entire project would go smoothly from ground-breaking to ribbon-cutting. The federal policy intended to make it easier for cities to redevelop entire neighborhoods but in practice made it easier to demolish entire neighborhoods.

Residents opposed to the Highland Park site were able to mobilize enough of an opposition to the amphitheater plan that their activism, when combined with the ongoing mayoral election and the threat of a legal challenge to the Renaissance authority, prompted planners to reconsider the location.\textsuperscript{40} Despite the displacement of over 1,500 families and over 400 businesses, residents of the Lower Hill District largely accepted the demolition of their neighborhood without protest.\textsuperscript{41} In the short-term, the lack of resistance meant that the Renaissance plans could proceed practically unimpeded. However, in the longer term, if the project could not deliver the promised improvements, it could cost the city significantly more by prompting residents to organize against future developments. Lower Hill residents might be willing to inconvenience themselves once, but if the project proved unworthy of their confidence, then they would not be willing to participate again. Without residents support, any future development could be much more difficult and expensive if a well organized protest movement used the courts, the media, and existing community organizations to challenge Renaissance authority. Even though federal involvement in the project removed some points of democratic resistance, residents could mount a campaign to regain control over their neighborhood. Just as the Renaissance walked a fine line with the legality of condemnation proceedings in Highland Park threatening the future operations of the Renaissance, they had to

\textsuperscript{40} Crowley, 58-66.
\textsuperscript{41} Crowley, 80-86. George Barbour, “Word on Lower Hill: ‘Say Goodbye Next Spring,’” \textit{The Pittsburgh Courier}, 27 August 1956, 3. Barbour’s article expressed regret at the loss of landmarks, homes and neighborhood institutions but accepted the loss as part of the cost of progress. “For every gain there’s a loss, and that’s the gist of the story on the Lower Hill Redevelopment Project.” He continues, “There’s no cause for alarm, but starting next spring, ‘goodbyes’ will be in order for the historic landmarks and places many have known as ‘home.’”
maintain a similar balance regarding resident cooperation with the Lower Hill Redevelopment and support for future projects.

Providing the CLO with a permanent, weather-proof location was the initial inspiration for the project in the late 1940s, but as the project evolved, the novelty of the retractable domed roof superseded the functionality of the space. Promoters touted the adaptability of the building for everything from the Ice Capades to trade shows, and flaunted the spectacle of the roof, but practical issues like the acoustics in the auditorium configuration, the wind patterns created with the open roof, or the size and versatility of the convention facilities detracted from the quality of the finished structure. The arena was meant to be the first component of the larger complex and represented a preliminary step towards building the rest. Construction would not begin on the museum, symphony hall, or the new housing until the arena opened and attracted the conventions and business tourism that would make the new development a thriving extension of Downtown Pittsburgh’s new corporate headquarters. If the arena project underperformed, it could jeopardize the rest of the complex. The Urban Renewal component of the project stipulated that housing be a part of the completed development, but it did not require immediate construction of replacement housing for displaced residents. Since housing remained a secondary priority for the Renaissance overall, and the arena site specifically, planners concentrated their attention on completing the arena first and would attend to the rest of the development area later. Ultimately, new housing for displaced residents as well as the adjoining museum and concert facilities depended on the success of the Civic Arena.  

The Civic Light Opera was not the strongest rock on which to build the arena and arts center from the beginning. The CLO was in severe financial trouble before the opening season in 

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the new arena. CLO official Melville Ireland projected that the first season in the arena would lose around $134,000. Ireland questioned whether or not Pittsburghers would be willing to support light opera to the degree that would offset the organization’s deficits. The new auditorium’s seating capacity was just under 7,400. While the CLO drew a large audience in its early years, with over a million patrons in its first four seasons, expenses consistently exceeded revenue. Organizers expected that having a permanent home protected from the elements would reduce some of the group’s highest costs, but there was no guarantee that the CLO’s audience would continue to grow in future seasons. Considering that the city of Pittsburgh’s population peaked in 1950 at 676,806, one must assume that support for the CLO would have to come from repeat viewers. Although they produced some contemporary musicals, the CLO based its repertoire on standards, and with Gilbert and Sullivan unlikely to produce any new works in the 1960s, it is hard to imagine that the same patrons would be willing to see the same shows performed year after year indefinitely, or with increasing frequency. Yet, for the CLO to reduce its deficit, break even or make a profit, it would have to expand its audience every season. Not only would light opera and musical theater have to become increasingly popular with each season, the CLO would have to continually attract viewers away from movies, television and contemporary popular music to see The Pirates of Penzance multiple times. The CLO’s greatest champions, Abraham Wolk and Edgar Kaufmann, may have imagined light opera as Pittsburgh’s

ticket to fame, fortune and cultural significance, but box office sales suggested otherwise. Wolk and Kaufmann may have cared deeply for the CLO and its light opera and musical theater repertoire, but their tastes did not necessarily reflect those of the general public. Wolk and Kaufmann exerted enough influence among their fellow Renaissance colleagues, however, to convince them that a city-funded amphitheater for the CLO was a worthwhile investment despite the organization’s less than impressive financial record. At no point was the Renaissance ever conceived as a movement in which the public would have a voice, but to commit public resources to a project with such a limited, dwindling audience demonstrated the elite bias of the movement. The decision to construct the arena, even as a multi-use facility rather than the dedicated amphitheater originally considered, shows the extent of power that the “in” circle of Renaissance elites had over the shape of the city and the limited ability of anyone outside of the network of power to contest the Renaissance vision of the city’s future.

Compounding the CLO’s financial problems was the fact that the new auditorium simply was not built for optimum acoustic enjoyment. The retractable roof design provided the desired shelter from the elements, but severely compromised sound quality.\footnote{Again, the roof was dear to Edgar Kaufmann, and even when keeping the roof as a part of the arena design significantly added to the budget of the project, Kaufmann insisted on keeping it and increased his contribution to pay for it. But its impracticality severely compromised the functional value of the arena, leading in part to its failure as a convention, auditorium and sports venue. Cusick, Patrick, interviewed November 6, 1972, box 1, page 36. Pittsburgh Renaissance Project: The Stanton Belfour Oral History Collection, 1971-1973, AIS.1973.24, Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh. Pleasing Kaufmann meant sacrificing the usefulness of the arena to the detriment of the neighborhood and city overall.} Audiences enjoyed the protection from wind and rain, but complained that they could not hear the performers. By 1972 the CLO had moved into the newly renovated Heinz Hall (formerly the Loew’s Penn Theater), and in 1988 it moved into the Benedum Center (formerly the Stanley Theater). After waiting
thirteen years for its open-air amphitheater, the CLO left its custom-built dream home after less than ten seasons in favor of more intimate, indoor theaters.

The Civic Arena had its own problems, separate from the CLO’s. Residents of the Lower Hill District accepted the demolition of their neighborhood with minimal protest. The loss of churches, restaurants, neighbors and favorite gathering places was difficult to bear, but better housing and decent jobs could provide new opportunities and made residents willing to endure the sacrifice for the promised benefits. This optimism proved unfounded. At the dedication ceremony of the Civic Arena in September 1961, the *Pittsburgh Courier* reported on the specter of Jim Crow in the proceedings. Not only were no black political figures or businessmen included in the ceremony, but no black employees were visible during the event. “This can’t be!” exclaimed the *Courier*, “Not in the ‘Renaissance City!’ Not in the city with a Human Relations Commission and a Fair Housing Law! No Negro employees in the New Arena! Impossible!” In fact, the Arena did have a handful of “token” employees, as the *Courier* reporter discovered. “Oh, we know where we will find them—in the women’s powder room and the men’s lounge and in the maintenance crews….That’s their coat of arms…the crossed broom and mop with the dust rag rampant.” The reporter discovered a paltry number of black workers at the $22 million Arena: four ushers, two matrons of the women’s lounge, the sweeping crew leader and a few janitors, porters and cleaners, some of whom were per diem employees.\(^{48}\) This outraged local residents and national organizations. About two weeks after the dedication, Byrd Brown, president of the Pittsburgh chapter of the NAACP, met with the management of the Arena. Although Edward Freher, director of the Civic Arena, assured Brown and his colleagues that non-discrimination clauses were included in all hiring contracts, which had also been filed with the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations, employment throughout the Arena suggested

otherwise. Of eighty-six ushers, only five were black, and there were no blacks out of 25 ticket-takers, 6 engineers, 6 electricians, or on the four-person office staff or the four-person watchman’s staff. Concession owners had no black workers. The tally included “some” black janitors. For Hill District residents, this was a catastrophic failure of the Renaissance. Malvin Goode, chairman of the Labor and Industry Committee of the NAACP told Freher, “What a fine thing it would have been to show these people a new employment pattern—different from the vicious bigoted employment pattern that Pittsburgh is most guilty of—a pattern showing citizens of all races and creeds working at every level of employment based on their qualifications and not their religion or race.” The disappointing meeting led the NAACP leaders to consider further action.\(^49\) The NAACP worked with other groups including the Negro American Labor Council (NALC), the Urban League of Pittsburgh and the Greater Pittsburgh Improvement League to organized a protest march through Homewood, East Liberty and the Hill District later in the month. The protest promptly won a commitment from the Arena management to hire more black workers in skilled positions.\(^50\)

Promising to hire a few more black electricians and engineers was a step in the right direction, but that it took a protest march and the cajoling of national civil rights and labor organizations demonstrated a greater failure of the Civic Arena and the Renaissance overall. The Renaissance was never intended to be a social welfare movement. Its housing programs were developed within the context of other improvements that would meet the Renaissance goals of preventing deindustrialization by securing commitments to the city from existing businesses and industries and expanding the city’s economic base. As the Renaissance became more dependent on Urban Renewal funding for its programs, its demands of residents increased. Even when

changing the type of fuel used represented a hardship, everyone reaped the benefits of cleaner air, but under Urban Renewal residents were forced to give up their homes and community institutions in the name of civic improvement. When the very community that was displaced to construct the Arena was prevented from working at the Arena because of discriminatory hiring practices, residents were being actively excluded from the civic improvements for which they lost their homes and neighborhood. Demanding sacrifice without providing an improvement left residents increasingly hostile to Renaissance planners. The loss of citizen trust that the Renaissance would lead to improved city undermined one of the foundations of the movement.

Locally, this was an embarrassing conflict for the Renaissance to have created, but it had broader implications as well. The Courier was a national paper, and the NAACP and the NALC were national organizations. The Renaissance had worked for decades to improve the reputation of Pittsburgh from one of a dark, parochial industrial town to one of a vibrant, sophisticated metropolis. But this conflict showed Pittsburgh as a center of racial tension and highlighted citizen frustration and protest against the establishment. The images the Courier presented, the figure of Jim Crow hovering above the new arena and protestors with signs marching, were inconsistent with the type of city that Renaissance planners tried to present to the world. The Renaissance wanted companies and convention planners to look at Pittsburgh as a good place to do live and business, with nice residential neighborhoods, entertainment and modern corporate offices downtown. The image of thousands of black protestors marching through the streets of the city and demonstrating outside of the new entertainment and convention complex had the potential to undo all of the rebranding that the Renaissance had done for the city. In 1961, when the Civic Arena opened and protestors took to the streets to demand equal opportunities for employment, civil rights activism was gaining national attention.
Montgomery, Little Rock and Greensboro showed the power of organization and protest to fight injustice. Renaissance leaders surely did not want Pittsburgh included in such a list, but they seriously miscalculated the force and path of the growing Civil Rights Movement and its effect on black residents of Pittsburgh.

In addition to the discriminatory hiring issue, the Civic Arena had some functional problems. The arena included many more services than in the original amphitheater design, but not all of the features worked well together. That Pittsburgh could boast having a professional hockey and basketball arena, light opera and a convention center may have been a boon to the city’s image initially, but the building disappointed users of all types. Convention users criticized the lack of unloading space, obstructing pillars in exhibit rooms, and poor lighting. ALCOA convention planner William C. Hosking called the arena “a building for ‘show’, not for people.” About one year after the Civic Arena opened, another ALCOA planner said that the arena could not be expected to be both a sports arena and a major conventional hall, but it could handle small shows and “local activities.” Since major conventions and exhibits both plan several years in advance and expect growth from one year to the next, scheduling conflicts caused Pittsburgh to lose several potential conventions in the early years of the arena. It also had trouble securing future bookings because the site could not be expanded to increase capacity.

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Accommodating conventions during basketball season, hockey season and the CLO summer season proved more complicated than anticipated. The arena was essentially “out of business” from June through August due to the CLO season, and availability from October through March depended on the sports schedules. That left only three months per calendar year when the arena could host conventions. The arena’s convention center needed future bookings and increasingly bigger events to provide both self-sustaining income and a stable anchor for the surrounding development.

Planning for the rest of the “Center for the Arts” complex continued through the 1960s as the Civic Arena struggled to attract conventions and repeat audiences to CLO performances. The project was officially cancelled in February 1968 when an Urban Redevelopment Authority executive sent the architects their final payment and termination letter.\textsuperscript{55} Instead of an architectural showpiece at the center of an arts and entertainment destination, the Civic Arena stood alone in acres of unused vacant lots separating what remained of the Hill District from the rest of Downtown Pittsburgh. No further development of any kind in the area around the Civic Arena followed.\textsuperscript{56}

The planning process of the Lower Hill project highlights the growing conflict between planners’ intentions and the larger scale developments. For the Civic Arena, the initial intention of the project became gradually obscured by increasingly grandiose plans. The whole project began as an attempt to prevent a light opera company, patronized by two key Renaissance that rejected the arena for their conventions included the National Association of Retail Druggists, the American Dietetic Association, American Home Economics Association, Air Force Association, Retail Paint and Wallpaper Dealers, National Automatic Merchandising Association, and the National Association of School Business Officials.

\textsuperscript{55} Letter from William Farkas of the URA to Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and Carl A. Morse, 16 February 1968, Box 133, Folder 10, ACCD Records, MSS 0285, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

\textsuperscript{56} The Civic Arena was demolished in 2012 following the construction of the Consol Energy Center, new home of the Pittsburgh Penguins hockey team.
figures, from having their performances rained out and evolved into a sprawling complex with an art museum, symphony hall and convention center as plans for the new theater moved locations. The Lower Hill was a fourth choice site made feasible by the new opportunities of the Housing Act of 1949, but the availability of federal funding overshadowed all of the practical considerations which made planners reject the area earlier. Not only did the amphitheater grow from a venue specifically designed for the Civic Light Opera to a convention center-sports arena-theater hybrid, but the addition of an art museum and symphony hall within the development area along with an apartment complex ballooned the project even more.

Despite the expansion, planners continued to approach the project as if its construction would be a minimal disturbance that would be willingly embraced for the good of the city, like burning hard coal. A successful new convention center might boost the economy of the neighborhood around it but the primary beneficiaries of the “Center for the Arts” development were not neighborhood residents, approximately 8,000 of whom in 1,551 families were displaced for the project. Blatant discrimination in hiring in the new arena mobilized residents against future developments. Housing and neighborhood redevelopment were not nearly such important features of the project as were the convention and trade-show possibilities and their potential for bringing a high-volume of business tourists to the city. Yet, neighborhood improvement and the convention business became increasingly linked. The building’s flaws prevented it from attracting the convention traffic planners expected and without a vibrant neighborhood surrounding it, there were few opportunities for convention overflow to benefit local businesses.

The Civic Arena stood isolated in a sea of parking lots, separated by highways from downtown. Instead of being an integral part of the neighborhood, and giving visitors a reason to explore local restaurants and shops, pouring money into the neighborhood as well as convention

57 Trotter and Day, 56.
concessionaires, the arena remained separate from the rest of the neighborhood, and created a physical barrier between the remaining Hill District and Downtown Pittsburgh. Furthermore, without a successful convention center business to financially support the rest of the “Center for the Arts” development, the new housing that was supposed to replace units lost in “slum clearance” was not constructed. The end result deviated significantly from planners’ original intentions, and left the city without a completed arts complex or a revived residential neighborhood.

While the Civic Arena was still under construction, Renaissance planners began another project in a new neighborhood, their first outside of Downtown or Oakland, and intended to use modern planning practices to revitalize an aging business district within a residential area. Guided by the best wisdom of the moment, the East Liberty Pedestrian Mall project intended to bring customers back to neighborhood of East Liberty, about five miles east of Downtown Pittsburgh, and home to Pennsylvania’s third largest business district. East Liberty’s retail center was already losing stores and residents to the suburbs, and planners hoped that they could revive the area by constructing a modern pedestrian mall.58 Real Estate Research Corporation, the firm reporting on the shopping patterns of East Liberty residents, determined that only 15.5% of neighborhood residents made their most recent department store purchase from an East Liberty shop, and proposed that eliminating unsuccessful businesses and vacant properties would make the shopping district more efficient and therefore more attractive. According to their study, a smaller, more compact East Liberty would generate more business than a sprawling, unorganized space. In the late 1950s, East Liberty contained 3.25 million square feet of retail space and the

The plan for the new development reduced the size of the retail area to about 1.3 million square feet.  

The major changes to the existing shopping district included diverting through traffic from the main business street, Penn Avenue, and constructing a circular network of roads enclosing the shopping area. Planners intended to eliminate traffic Penn Avenue in order to create a pedestrian mall with open spaces and plazas with plants and fountains around which shoppers could congregate. Instead of on-street parking outside of popular stores, planners built off-street parking lots outside of the new traffic ring, between three and five blocks further away from shops, expecting that customers would walk from their cars to the shops as in a suburban mall. The Urban Redevelopment Authority, the agency responsible for the project, circulated a pamphlet titled “What You Should Know About the East Liberty Shopping Mall,” to address questions about the proximity of parking to the shops, funding of the project, and its possible effects. The URA predicted that a short period of disruption would occur during construction, but parking would still be available and mass transit would run continuously, and businesses should expect to operate as usual.

Small shop owners feared the damage created by construction, traffic diversions, and parking several blocks away from stores, but larger business owners like Sigmund Hahn of Hahn’s Furniture and Herbert Mansmann of Mansmann’s Department Store argued that the greater concentration of “quality” stores in a smaller area would benefit all businesses. The East Liberty Pedestrian Mall, organized by the URA, added over 2,000 parking spaces to the retail

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district, but lost an estimated 280 stores during the six-year construction process and in the
subsequent decline of the area.\textsuperscript{62}

Pittsburgh’s planners were not acting on a whim with the pedestrian mall plan, but were
following the trend in other cities for vehicle-free shopping areas. Pittsburgh Regional Planning
Association planner Al Jacobs suggested the pedestrian mall plan which was made popular in Ft.
Worth, Texas and under consideration in more than 90 cities around the country.\textsuperscript{63} Even as
planners touted the benefits of traffic-free shopping, the design was not working out as expected.
Toledo built a pedestrian mall in 1959 only to tear it out due to retailer protest by 1961. Reporter
Mel Seidenberg wrote extensively about the Pittsburgh Renaissance and Urban Renewal in
Pittsburgh during the 1950s.\textsuperscript{64} Seidenberg recognized that a pedestrian mall could not solve all of
the problems facing the district. But he was still confident that East Liberty would not repeat
Toledo’s failure because the East Liberty Pedestrian Mall was a part of a larger redevelopment
plan. New housing, bypass roads and the removal of “blighted” buildings would ensure the
mall’s success.\textsuperscript{65}

The Civic Light Opera amphitheater evolved from a pet project of local elites to a
massive arts center in part because federal funding through Urban Renewal made bigger projects
possible. The East Liberty pedestrian mall, however, began as a federally funded project

\textsuperscript{62} Dan Fitzpatrick, “East Liberty Then: Initial Makeover Had Dismal Results,” \textit{The Pittsburgh Post-
\textsuperscript{63} Dan Fitzpatrick, “East Liberty Then: Initial Makeover Had Dismal Results,” \textit{The Pittsburgh Post-
\textsuperscript{64} Seidenberg wrote for \textit{The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette} from 1946 until 1962, when he created the
Department of Community Affairs for the URA. Finding Aid, Melvin Seidenberg Papers, c. 1840-2002,
Rauh Jewish Archives, MSS#566, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John
Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. http://digital.library.pitt.edu/cgi-
bin/l/findaid/findaid-idx?c=hswpead;rgn=main;view=text;didno=US-QQS-mss566
\textsuperscript{65} Mel Seidenberg, “Pedestrian Mall Must Be A Part of Long-Range Plan to Aid Business,” \textit{The
influenced by national design trends. Unlike the earlier Renaissance period when planners and local politicians had to appeal both to private investors to approve the financing of a project and to local residents to accept temporary inconveniences in order to produce a net benefit to the neighborhood or city, approval for federally funded developments came from national, not local sources. In theory, a good idea in Texas is a good idea in Pittsburgh, Toledo or Buffalo. In practice, attention to local details proved a critical component of what had made previous Renaissance initiatives successful. Mayor Lawrence’s need to win working-class political support while improving the city’s air quality meant that he had to tread lightly with voters by organizing enforcement of smoke controls in such a way that did not penalize individuals or families but still produced measurable results. The East Liberty Pedestrian Mall lacked the soft-touch and nuance of the earlier reforms that had to negotiate between effective change and popular support.

The East Liberty Pedestrian Mall addressed the symptoms of a larger problem but did not account for the underlying cause of East Liberty’s declining sales. Instead of looking closely at suburban migration, demographic shifts, and accessibility effecting a broader transition within the neighborhood and generating a solution that directly responded to the changes, the pedestrian mall imposed a generic template over a unique neighborhood with distinct features. Local residents and business owners had much less influence over the federally supported project than they did when they organized to oppose the condemnation of Robert King’s property for the amphitheater a decade earlier.

Retailers like Hahn and Mansmann may have feared their downtown competition, but the growing suburbs presented a greater threat. Not only did the new suburban shopping centers provide plenty of parking, covered walkways and dozens of stores, thanks to the new highways
and bridges around the city, they were more accessible than ever before to city residents. Monroeville’s Miracle Mile Shopping Center, just off of I-376 (the Penn-Lincoln Parkway) and near the Pennsylvania Turnpike, opened in April 1955 with 55 retail stores and 3,500 parking spaces. At the time, it was the largest shopping center in the Pittsburgh area.66 At least two suburban shopping centers opened in 1956, Great Southern Shopping Center in Bridgeville, PA covering 274,200 square feet of retail space and North Hills Village in the North Hills, providing 375,000 square feet of retail space. Each center included plenty of parking and shelter for shoppers walking from store to store.67

New highways not only made shopping in suburban malls easier, they also made suburban living much easier. With the Penn-Lincoln Parkway (I-376, or “the Parkway”) connecting eastern suburbs like Monroeville, Churchill, Woodland Hills and Forest Hills with Downtown Pittsburgh through the new Squirrel Hill Tunnel, commuting from the suburbs became a practical option.68 The East Liberty project did include new housing and rehabilitation of older buildings. The plan added approximately 1,900 new housing units in the three sections of the redevelopment area, as well as the rehabilitation of 115 structures.69 But adding nearby housing did not translate to adding retail clientele since the new housing went predominantly to low and moderate-income residents.70 By not accounting for the national trends of urban decline

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68 Pittsburghers routinely identify I-376/I-279 as “the Parkway,” but the name does not appear on any sign within the city or on any map of the city. This can make asking a local resident for directions a frustrating procedure. GPS devices and Google maps may have eased this confusion somewhat, but visitors and newcomers without assistive technology have been stymied by this for decades.
and suburban migration (discussed in the following chapter), as well as the highway and infrastructure developments in Pittsburgh to facilitate suburban access to Downtown, the East Liberty Pedestrian Mall offered a blanket solution incongruous with the changing needs of the neighborhood and the surrounding city.

Planners meant to improve East Liberty by providing more parking, rehabilitating buildings and updating the retail district to reflect trends in suburban shopping centers, but despite the best of intentions, the plans did not meet expectations. Even with some valuable lessons learned from the Lower Hill Project—supporting reconstruction and renovation of older buildings instead of block-by-block demolition—the project failed to rejuvenate the retail district. At the start of the project, five hundred and seventy five businesses were displaced. Construction took approximately six years, and by 1970 only about half of those businesses remained. An estimated two hundred and eighty businesses closed as a result of construction, and many of the smaller businesses that were able to hang on to their locations could not afford the renovations recommended by the URA.71 Instead of invigorating the neighborhood and stimulating the business district, making East Liberty a desirable location, the East Liberty Pedestrian Mall drove local stores out of business and became a crime-ridden place to avoid. Just as with the Lower Hill Redevelopment, the project caused major inconvenience and hardship for residents and business owners without providing any positive results.

Local planners sought, applied for and won federal money to execute projects they deemed valid, but they did so on committees and through organizations that existed outside of the electoral process. Before Urban Renewal, if residents objected to a plan, they could bargain their collective voting power to mount an effective challenge, as the East Liberty Chamber of

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Commerce did when opposing the Highland Park amphitheater. In that instance, the electoral process significantly influenced events, as it took place during an election year, and Mayor Lawrence had to court voters as well as oversee Renaissance initiatives. He was subject to the political attacks of his opponents and vulnerable to public opinion. He had to operate carefully lest voters condemn the entire Renaissance for acting brazenly without regard to the democratic process. Under Urban Renewal, however, citizens could present their demands to the local agencies organizing Urban Renewal projects, and might successfully influence the plans, as they did in the East Liberty development, but citizens could not utilize their power as voters to dismiss an individual or a project entirely since the agencies were staffed with appointees rather than elected officials.

Even with federal financing and planning initiatives, the core Renaissance goal remained securing the city’s future through improvements and economic diversification. The premise behind the projects was that the city was in trouble and needed some kind of outside stimulus to put it back on a path towards growth. The pedestrian mall may not have produced the intended results, but that the project was conceived in the first place suggests that some troubling conditions existed and prompted intervention. The planners behind the pedestrian mall did not intentionally destroy the East Liberty shopping district out of malice, spite or even ignorance. They wanted to improve the city and secure its future and saw planning and Urban Renewal as the best tools with which to accomplish their goals.

The East Liberty Pedestrian Mall showed the attempt of Pittsburgh Renaissance planners to blend Urban Renewal with citizen input based on their experience in the Lower Hill District. Robert Pease, director of the URA, did indeed listen to residents’ complaints about the plans in City Council meetings as well as in over two hundred and eighty meetings with business and
homeowners in the neighborhood. And the redevelopment had the support of local business owners. Despite relying more on residents’ input than the Lower Hill project, the East Liberty Pedestrian Mall still failed to meet expectations. Even though Pease and the URA accommodated residents’ preference for rehabilitation of buildings rather than demolition, the addition of low-income housing along the perimeter of the mall transformed the neighborhood more than predicted. Similarly, the forecast that businesses would benefit from the city-provided facelift proved inaccurate. The neighborhood may have already been experiencing symptoms of decline, but the years of construction combined with the influx of new low-income residents accelerated rather than alleviated the decline of the shopping district.

Building without accounting for residents’ needs produced great dissatisfaction, as in the Lower Hill development, but community involvement was no panacea either, as the East Liberty Pedestrian Mall demonstrated. Housing had been a part of the Renaissance agenda from the outset, but remained a second tier priority while the environmental reforms were underway. Urban Renewal projects promoted housing, but with vague parameters that allowed it to remain a secondary objective in development. The larger, multifaceted projects struggled to meet their objectives and left residents frustrated with displacement and upheaval that did not result in improved neighborhood conditions. Following the Lower Hill and East Liberty projects, several programs emerged to promote neighborhood development that would serve existing residents. In response to the lack of available housing in which to settle displaced residents from the Lower Hill relocation, the ACCD helped to organize The Allegheny Council to Improve Our Neighborhoods (ACTION-Housing, Inc.) which funded housing construction and rehabilitation

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and promoted citizen involvement in neighborhood management.\textsuperscript{73} Although ACTION-Housing was founded by the same group of elite business and political leaders responsible for the developments that were threatening neighborhoods, it effectively represented the interests of predominantly minority neighborhoods in Pittsburgh. Since its creation in the late 1950s, it has continued to provide affordable housing, housing rehabilitation, and community support to Pittsburghers.\textsuperscript{74}

Strong neighborhood associations proved vital as racial tensions erupted in Pittsburgh, along with much of the nation, in the late 1960s. Following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr, on April 5, 1968, looting and violence spread through Pittsburgh’s black neighborhoods, but with more limited damage than in other cities. Historian Joe Trotter attributes the relatively effective containment of the riots to an intense police presence that kept the violence from spreading as well as strong leadership from grassroots community organizations who were able to bring some measure of calm to the situation. In addition to grassroots groups already in existence that were able to help dissipate tension during the MLK Jr. riots, many more groups emerged following the riots to address the problems unique to Pittsburgh’s black population and prevent future violence.\textsuperscript{75} The organized resistance to discrimination at the Civic Arena was only the beginning of a stronger popular movement against the Renaissance. By the end of the decade, these community-based, neighborhood-oriented groups were taking a significantly greater role in planning and development than they did at the start of the decade. The top-down management and authoritative leadership that allowed the Renaissance to accomplish so much so quickly in the 1940s and 1950s was no longer acceptable to city residents by the end of the 1960s.

\textsuperscript{73} Weber, 272, 419 note 2.  
\textsuperscript{75} Trotter and Day, 103-108.
Renaissance planners conceptualized the need for neighborhood revitalization projects as equally important to other business district-oriented Renaissance programs in attracting and maintaining corporate investment in the city. After all, new corporate employees would have to live and shop somewhere, and if city neighborhoods were not comparable with suburbs or newer cities, then Pittsburgh could not compete. But instead of redeveloping a neighborhood based on the needs of residents, planners chose “modern” and experimental plans designed to attract attention and a new population that displaced families, destroyed local businesses and created confusing traffic patterns. City residents had to endure the disturbance of construction, possible relocation or displacement, and the loss of familiar neighbors, shops and communities without the reward of amenities tailored to their distinct needs.

The early Renaissance programs were overtly intended to make the city more attractive to newcomers, but they also directly benefited the existing population. Smoke controls helped make the air cleaner and safer for residents as well as for visitors. Flood controls helped secure waterfront industrial expansion, but also protected existing business owners. The traffic projects helped both city and suburban residents access the city more efficiently than before the new highways existed. All of these projects had benefits for Pittsburghers regardless of income level. In the best-case scenario for the amphitheater/Lower Hill Center for the Arts, the amenities provided would have been luxuries, not necessities. A symphony hall, art museum, even the CLO performances would have precluded low-income residents from participating on a regular basis. The East Liberty Pedestrian Mall left existing residents with an ailing center with declining businesses and growing safety concerns. The promised returns for the sacrifice of renewal did not materialize.
Federal funding for urban planning changed the way cities around the country thought about development. Access to federal money made bigger projects possible, but as this chapter demonstrated, bigger projects did not necessarily guarantee success. Prior to the increased availability of federal funds, cities could only build what they could fund locally. The Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954 allowed city planning departments to rebuild cities according to designs laid out by planners with little recourse available to displaced residents. City planners no longer needed to organize a local consensus in support of their plans once federal authorities approved projects. Planners pitched developments to federal officials who lacked an intimate understanding of neighborhood relations and local politics. As in the case of East Liberty, what worked in Texas did not necessarily work for Pittsburgh, but federal authorities were not always sensitive to regional variations or the local habits and peculiarities of different cities.

Eventually, enthusiasm for this type of urban redevelopment waned nationwide. By 1974, the federal government had passed the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which returned control over spending to cities, allowing money previously allocated for Urban Renewal areas to be used throughout the city.76 The Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) program, introduced in 1977, required applicants to obtain private support for projects in addition to federal funds. From 1977 through 1987, $4.5 billion of federal money financed projects in 1,180 cities.77

As a result, the Renaissance had to face a new era of urban planning. The stalled development around the Civic Arena and the accelerated decline of the East Liberty shopping district cost the Renaissance residents’ confidence in the top-down planning that allowed it to

accomplish so much so quickly. As citizens voiced their reluctance to relinquish neighborhood autonomy to city officials, the Renaissance could no longer operate unilaterally without residents consent. After nearly twenty years of reinventing Pittsburgh, the Renaissance had also changed. Mayor Lawrence became Governor Lawrence in 1959 and died in 1966. His mayoral successor, Joseph Barr, was a long-time friend of Lawrence, but lacked his charisma and drive. Edgar Kaufmann, Wallace Richards, Richard King Mellon and Arthur Van Buskirk passed away in 1955, 1959, 1970 and 1972 respectively. The institutions of the Renaissance, the ACCD, URA and PRPA, continued to work on Renaissance projects, but as the inner circle of Renaissance leaders disbanded, the movement’s momentum stalled.

The Lower Hill Redevelopment and the East Liberty Pedestrian Mall did not provide the improvements planners expected, but not every Renaissance project during this period missed its mark. The Greater Pittsburgh Airport opened just outside of Pittsburgh in 1952, and was the second largest in the country, behind Idlewild in New York. Three Rivers Stadium was completed in 1970, on Pittsburgh’s North Side, giving the Pittsburgh Pirates and the Pittsburgh Steelers a new, modern venue and ensuring that both teams would remain in the city for decades. The URA also helped the University of Pittsburgh acquire land in Oakland to expand its hospitals and health services schools. The Renaissance accomplished an extraordinary amount in a relatively short period, despite the controversies discussed throughout the chapter. The improved highways and developing suburbs contributed to a population change within the city and residents became more skeptical of and resistant to city-led redevelopment at the same time as the federal government began to withdraw its support for urban planning. By the end of the

78 Three Rivers Stadium was built on the site of Exposition Park, which was built for the Pirates in 1890. The Pirates left “Expo Park” for Forbes Field in 1909, as the frequent flooding of Expo Park rendered it unusable for much of the baseball season. See Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of the development of Three Rivers Stadium.
1960s, the Renaissance needed to reconsider its approach as the city changed in ways planners had not anticipated.
Chapter 5: Crisis

The Renaissance’s emphasis on business development drew planners’ attention away from deteriorating conditions in residential neighborhoods throughout the city. The abrupt halt to redevelopment around the Civic Arena exacerbated the conditions of blight that originally prompted planners to consider the Lower Hill area, and other neighborhoods were similarly in need of repairs. Nationwide, cities were experiencing some common problems of population decline, suburban migration and the erosion of their tax bases. Changes in federal urban policies directly affected city fiscal management, leaving some cities on the brink of bankruptcy at the same time that American industries were entering a transformative period that resulted in a massive decline of manufacturing employment. Pittsburgh was not immune to these problems, but despite the previous decades of heavy spending on urban developments, the city managed to emerge from the 1970s without major financial distress. A new, non-Renaissance affiliated mayor took the helm of the city at the start of the decade and his retrenchment policy helped Pittsburgh navigate the rough waters of a national recession and coast safely into a renewed Renaissance program.

Through the late 1960s and 1970s, cities around the country faced budget shortfalls and population shifts. The onset of industrial decline during the 1970s complicated the ongoing urban problems, but the two crises had separate and distinct origins. Nationally, cities of all shapes and sizes experienced setbacks and condemnation from federal leaders who sought to punish municipal governments for mismanagement and overspending. Pittsburgh emerged from the urban crisis relatively unscathed only to face the deepening industrial crisis throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania. Improvements in global steel production, government policies that
encouraged importing less expensive foreign steel, and inefficiencies at home combined to undermine the region’s century long dependence on the steel industry. Under Mayor Pete Flaherty, Pittsburgh reduced spending and avoided major developments to ensure that the city retained control of its finances despite the various crises. As a result of these precautions, the city emerged from the decade with a balanced budget and ready to resume a Renaissance program.

Urban decline and industrial decline are separate phenomena in that they have different causes and consequences. Urban decline in the United States proceeded gradually. It played out over decades as a growing middle class population migrated to suburban areas. This lead to higher concentrations of poverty within the city and diminished the quality of civic and communal life. The causes of urban exodus varied from the attraction of private homes on generous plots of land outside of the city to the relocation of white-collar jobs to suburban office parks, to municipal neglect of blighted or run-down neighborhoods, and of course, a shrinking tax base.

Industrial decline, with the attendant economic collapse of a town or region dependent on a single industry, has a more direct impact. Although most Pittsburgh-area mills did not close their doors on a single cataclysmic day, announcing tens of thousands of lay-offs in one fell swoop, the effect of consecutive rounds of lay-offs, early retirement incentives and the elimination of managerial positions produced a similar result through the 1980s. The decline that followed left mills shuttered and towns scrambling for something to fill the void left by the departing industry. Mill closings brought economic hardship to the rest of the town, as surging unemployment meant decreased spending power in local businesses, and created a buyers’ market for home sales. Abandoned homes, closed stores and a dispersed population further
disrupted life in mill towns as the effects of the collapse of the steel industry broadened from the late 1970s through the 1980s.

But Pittsburgh’s residential neighborhoods showed signs of decline even before the steel industry buckled. Their fall only exacerbated the trend, resulting in the emergence of industrial wastelands and ghost-towns by the late 1980s. While the industrial decline throughout the region certainly aggravated conditions in Pittsburgh, it did not initiate the city’s population loss, economic instability or housing problems. Rather, Pittsburgh’s slide stems from an earlier period and corresponds with the decline of cities nationally during the 1960s and 1970s. The boosterism and high hopes of the Renaissance masked some of the city’s problems while promoting its most desirable attributes, but a gradual population shift was underway even as the planners were organizing such ambitious projects as the Lower Hill Redevelopment and Three Rivers Stadium.

Observers began to take note of Pittsburgh’s population decline in the 1950s, well before it reached crisis proportions. In that decade, the city lost 72,000 inhabitants, 11 percent of the city’s population. There was no mystery about where they were going as Pittsburgh’s urban fringe grew by 27%. The city lost another 35,000 residents from 1960 to 1963. The higher concentration of married persons in Pittsburgh’s suburbs after 1960—64 percent compared with 54 percent in the city—was even more portentous. Local suburbs gained more families with children while the city concentrated unmarried individuals and couples without children.\(^1\)

Clearly, the outskirts were providing something the city could not and families were relocating as quickly as it became possible for them to buy a suburban home. Pittsburgh lost its family appeal in the sixties and with it went a hefty share of its tax base and lower middle class striver lifestyle.

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Living conditions within the city were not competitive with those in newly developing suburbs. In contrast with the open space, green lawns and modern housing of the suburbs, 22% of the city’s housing was defined by the Pennsylvania State Planning Board as sub-standard.\(^2\) Although Urban Renewal projects promised new housing, not all of the projected developments materialized. For example, the failure of the Lower Hill Redevelopment/Civic Arena project to provide the neighborhood improvement it promised left the neighborhood with fewer housing units than it had to begin with. The cleared but undeveloped land only worsened conditions of blight in the surrounding Middle and Upper Hill Districts. In theory, the shift of residents from the city rentals to suburban homeownership should have opened more units to the rental market, but the higher costs of improved accommodations proved prohibitive to the city’s poorest residents who remained in sub-standard facilities.

The Hill District was hardly the only neighborhood in the city to suffer from unhealthy living conditions. Pittsburgh’s anti-poverty program identified eight neighborhoods in need of assistance within the city that involved 40% of the city’s population.\(^3\) In preparing Pittsburgh’s application to the federal Model Cities program in 1967 the committee determined that five neighborhoods should be included in the Model Neighborhood Area. Those five neighborhoods were Polish Hill, Oakland, the Upper Hill, Middle Hill and Lower Hill Districts, including approximately 65,000 residents. Although some controversy arose over the division of the neighborhoods, the fact that all of the neighborhoods were eventually included in a program that based eligibility on “serious housing and environmental deficiencies, and high concentrations of

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poverty, unemployment, ill health and educational deficiencies,” suggests the extent of the city’s problems.  

Pittsburgh easily met federal criteria for urban decay.

New highways and bridges facilitated easier commutes and sparked development in areas suddenly made accessible by highway. The new highway systems helped to create a regional network, but it also helped decentralize residents and corporations. The move to the suburbs had a deleterious effect on the city’s shopping districts. Chapter Four examined the relationship between East Liberty’s shopping district and suburban malls in the early 1960s. Suburban shopping centers with large parking lots located along highways drew city residents away from downtown or neighborhood-shopping districts, adversely affecting the city’s sales, which declined by $10 million from 1958 to 1963. During the early 1960s, Pittsburgh was the only urban area in Pennsylvania with retail sales in decline. The creation of the Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC) by the ACCD in 1955 was meant to secure high tech employers for the city, but as it began to develop suburban office parks, its benefits to the city became less clear. By the 1990s, Pittsburgh’s mayor actively opposed the RIDC for drawing resources away from the city and other distressed areas. While the antagonism between the RIDC and the mayor increased in the 1990s, the RIDC had been operating since the 1950s, building its first office park in 1964. Even as the city sought to secure its future by building new roads and attracting modern industries, it helped feed its own population decline by easing access to cheaper, more attractive land.

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Pittsburgh’s struggles with the growth of its suburbs and deteriorating urban core were not unique. As cities around the country experienced similar trends of suburban migration and urban decay, cities began to seem irredeemable and their decline irreversible. Despite the federal government support for cities during most of the twentieth century, by the 1980s cities were no longer seen as a funding priority. Both the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) lost 54 percent and 41 percent of their funding, respectively, during the 1980s. Economic development assistance fell by 78 percent during the same period.\textsuperscript{8} For cities also losing population and industries, the additional loss of federal support further eroded their budgets. While not all cities experienced total economic collapse or debilitating crisis, those that did came to represent the worst fears of critics.

In many ways, New York is atypical; it is the largest, richest and arguably most diverse of American cities. But despite its wealth and its role as the engine of American economic growth, New York flirted with bankruptcy in the 1970s. Decades of spending on capital development, infrastructure and services loaded the metropolis with $11 billion of debt, $3.4 billion of which was in short-term notes. A national recession, population shifts (dropping from 7.9 to 7.1 million between 1970-1980) and high unemployment (the jobless numbers rose from under 5 percent in 1970 to 12% in just five years) compounded New York’s problems.\textsuperscript{9} Appeals from city officials for assistance in 1975 were met with cold disdain. “Cities,” then-Senator Joseph Biden said, “are viewed as the seed of corruption and duplicity.”\textsuperscript{10} Treasury Secretary William Simon declared that if there was to be aid for New York it should be “so punitive, the overall experience made so painful, that no city, no political subdivision would ever be tempted

\textsuperscript{10} Freeman, 260.
to go down the same road.”¹¹ With its largest city facing financial meltdown as it edged toward riots and chaos, the federal government took a very hard stand. Only after drastic cutbacks in services and severe constraints on its budgetary powers did federal and state authorities agree to haul New York back from the brink of economic collapse. What could smaller cities with less clout expect?¹²

Newark, New Jersey, faced similar problems in this period. Newark’s problems more closely resembled those of urban areas throughout the country: suburban migration, population turnover, declining industries, corrupt leadership and racial tensions exacerbated by the effects of urban renewal. Violence and rioting captured national attention in the summer of 1967, but Newark’s troubles began well before and continued long after that turbulent event. Between 1950 and 1960 Newark’s population dropped by about 8 percent and fell another 14 percent between 1970 and 1980.¹³ But these figures do not reveal the class and racial turnover that transformed Newark from a white middle-class city into a black working-class city. Attracted by the promise of well paying industrial jobs, Newark’s new residents came to find factories closing or migrating elsewhere draining 30,000 manufacturing jobs between 1970 and 1977.¹⁴ Housing shortages accompanied by an open policy of redlining that hindered African-Americans from acquiring mortgages made a bad situation worse. In a scenario similar to the Lower Hill Civic Arena plan, Mayor Hugh Addonizio’s plan to demolish several acres of residential housing to build a hospital without providing adequate substitute housing or employment fed the notion among the city’s black residents that Newark’s largely white power structure did not have their

¹¹ Freeman, 259.
¹² See Freeman, 270-287 for a detailed discussion of the consequences of the financial crisis for working-class city residents.
interests at heart. In this environment of industrial decline, racial polarization and failed urban planning, it did not take much for long-simmering antagonisms to explode, and when a confrontation resulted in charges of police brutality, riots erupted, destroying $10 million in property and leaving 26 people dead. The riots accelerated a decline many years in the making. From 1970 to 1979, Newark lost one-fifth of its assessed property valuation, cut over one-fourth of its municipal workforce and saw more than one-third of its population decline to below poverty level. By 1979, federal and state governments provided two-thirds of Newark’s budget. At the beginning of the decade the election of Kenneth Gibson as the first African-American mayor of a major Northeastern city offered hope of change for the better. But by the time he left office, Gibson faced 132 counts of criminal corruption. For Newark, the loss of secure, unskilled industrial jobs led to long-term unemployment and poverty for residents. The non-industrial problems the city faced such as inadequate housing, corruption and a middle-class exodus compounded the city’s troubles.

In St. Louis, business officials anticipated a loss of key industries after World War II. St. Louis organized a coalition of business and political leaders who directed heavy investment in reindustrialization and designed federal urban renewal programs including a number of “superblock” public housing developments. Their plan was to clear out large sections of the inner-city residential areas and replace them with industrial projects in the city center, hoping to

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16 Span, 58.
17 Span, 55.
spark investment and redevelopment. The plan failed to stem the tide of departing companies who took 26,000 jobs with them between 1954 and 1963. For all the optimistic hopes, remaking the urban landscape proved insufficient to compete with suburban industrial parks and freshly developing regions. St. Louis then tried to attract high-tech research and development facilities and to expand university based science facilities. Civic leaders also planned an extensive riverfront development, including the construction of the Gateway Arch in 1964 to stir new pride. But for all these efforts displacement, racial distrust and hard-core unemployment marred the new city landscape. The attempt to solve the city’s urban decline through extensive redevelopment contributed to the city’s industrial decline, but the problems had been separate issues.

Residential and industrial shifts within nearby suburbs and neighboring cities exacerbated Oakland’s deindustrialization woes. The loss of ten thousand manufacturing jobs within five years in the 1960s coupled with San Francisco’s shift from a manufacturing to service sector economy complicated Oakland’s problems. Former blue-collar workers who once commuted from Oakland to San Francisco lost their jobs while service employees in entry-level or low-skilled positions earned significantly less than their blue-collar counterparts and lacked opportunities for economic mobility. Persistent discriminatory hiring practices left the African-American population of Oakland with an unemployment rate between two and four times that of

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20 Heathcott and Murphy, 164.
21 Heathcott and Murphy, 179-181.
whites. Further, the politics of home ownership, racial exclusion, industrial tax structures and municipal incorporation prompted regional competition rather than cooperation. Oakland’s struggle with deindustrialization, as historian Robert O. Self has explained, was not a straightforward tale of decline brought about by the loss of a single industry with catastrophic consequences for the remaining population. It was a story of a city continually trying to find a place within a shifting urban-suburban structure. Oakland’s post-war, post-industrial difficulties reinforced the idea that the problems facing cities in the second half of the twentieth century were not limited by region or industry.

The rapid slide of cities nationally fed the notion that the urban century was over, and with it the heyday of the American city. Robert Burchell of Rutgers’ Center for Urban Policy Research questioned the need for cities. “It may be that a function of society is to open up new settlements and new concentrations of people and capital—at a loss, of course….Why give [these nonfunctional cities] life forms that they don’t deserve? …[I]s [this] a religious place that must be preserved at all costs?” Cities were hemorrhaging residents, jobs and tax collections. As employers moved out of central cities, cities on average lost roughly 20% of their retail trade between 1958 and 1977, with proportional loses in manufacturing, while the suburbs saw population double and the number of jobs increased even more rapidly. Those who stayed behind were left with an eroded tax base and diminished services from police to schools to welfare.

A spreading fog of gloom and decline enveloped cities. Just one example of their problems: city taxes during these years were about one-fourth higher than those in suburbs and

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25 Span, 58+.
26 Morial, 38.
yet they could not balance their budgets. Urban crisis spread across the country without regard to region, industry or size. Indeed the proper question to ask is not why Pittsburgh was troubled but rather, how Pittsburgh managed to weather the urban storm as well as it did.

Following the completion of flood controls in the 1960s, Jones & Laughlin Steel invested $80 million in plant expansion on Pittsburgh’s South Side, constructing 11 new open hearth furnaces, and further invested in plant development in Hazelwood. IBM and Bell Telephone built offices in the new Gateway Center project, financed by the Equitable Life Assurance Society of New York. Even though the Civic Arena did not turn out exactly as planned, it quickly became an iconic symbol of the new modern city. During the first twenty years of the Renaissance program private investment reached $500 million and public funds contributed $155 million towards the various projects. The city had been fighting urban decline since the 1950s, with some degree of success. But the city’s fortunes were still inexorably tied to the steel industry and as the 1970s began, the fortunes of the American steel industry were about to take a turn for the worse.

Foreign steel producers gained several advantages over American producers during the 1960s and 1970s including newer facilities and equipment, technological advancements and lower labor costs. But foreign steel producers did not entirely outpace American steel. Japanese steelmakers adopted the basic oxygen furnace (BOF) earlier than American companies, but once the process was recognized as the best available, American firms quickly transitioned to the new

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27 Morial, 41-42.
29 Bessie C. Economou, Forging the Pittsburgh Renaissance: Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, Fifty Years, 1997(?) 16.
technology during the 1960s. The older, less efficient open-hearth process was only used for about one-third of American steel production by the end of the 1960s. Inefficiencies remained, however, as few American companies built new plants to house their new BOF equipment. Instead they retrofitted older facilities and lost some of the efficiency in the process, where as European companies could rely on government funding to build new plants, and Japan was able to build entirely new facilities post-World War II.\textsuperscript{30}

Foreign steel makers’ increased production capacity posed a serious threat to American steel producers. During the 1970s, West Germany improved its capacity by 28 percent, and Japan by 56 percent while the American steel industry only improved by 3 percent.\textsuperscript{31} Closing shops and reducing the workforce allowed US Steel to show greater profits at the end of the 1970s, but because the increased profitability was based on cutbacks rather than investment, the growth was not sustainable.\textsuperscript{32} The additional productivity of foreign producers meant that they had excess steel available to “dump” in other markets. The European countries imposed penalties on steel dumping and the Japanese government responded to foreign complaints by reducing their exports. The United States was the only country without barriers to foreign producers by 1977.\textsuperscript{33}

The openness of the US market became a liability for American steel producers who did not enjoy the same government protections as their foreign counterparts. Foreign companies could sell steel within the US for less than it cost to produce because their governments provided subsidies. When they needed to resolve domestic problems, like maintain employment, they


\textsuperscript{32} Hinshaw, 180-181.

could continue to produce steel rather than layoff workers as US companies might do because their government’s role in industry made it possible produce steel that would be sold at a loss. US producers could not compete with the below-cost steel, but could not win more than a voluntary restraint agreement by the government to limit the rise of imports.\textsuperscript{34} European steelmakers produced even when local demand for steel declined because they knew they could still sell their product abroad. Foreign steel became especially desirable around the time when American companies negotiated new labor contracts.\textsuperscript{35} By 1977, imported steel represented 20 percent of the US market but the federal government remained reluctant to protect the American steel industry by limiting imports.\textsuperscript{36} In the fall of 1977, the closing of the Campbell Works of Youngstown Sheet and Tube, which employed 5,000 people, illustrated the effect of imports on American steel.\textsuperscript{37} The US could no longer encourage overseas production and allow a free flow of foreign steel into the country without visibly harming its own industry. Many factors contributed to the decline of the industry, but the result was a slow-burning chaos for workers and steeltown residents trying to prepare for a future without steel.

Contradictory decisions in US Steel’s plant management made the company’s response difficult to predict to outside observers as well as industry insiders. On one hand, US Steel closed plant divisions that were losing out to foreign competition—its closing of the nail mill in the Donora plant in 1964 is one such example. In 1966 J&L closed its Aliquippa nail facilities and US Steel closed other departments that were no longer profitable, like the open-hearth departments in Donora and Clairton, and the rail mill of the Edgar Thompson Works (ET). This

\textsuperscript{34} Stein, \textit{Running Steel}, 218-219.
\textsuperscript{35} Stein, \textit{Running Steel}, 225-226.
\textsuperscript{36} Stein, \textit{Running Steel}, 233.
\textsuperscript{37} Stein, \textit{Running Steel}, 241-243.
was Andrew Carnegie’s first mill, which was built specifically for railroad production. From 1966 to 1972 investment per worker fell 6 percent a year.\textsuperscript{38}

On the other hand, some steel companies did upgrade key plants in the Mon Valley. In 1962, US Steel opened the “Dorothy Six” blast furnace in Duquesne, about ten miles south east of Downtown Pittsburgh, as well as a new Basic Oxygen Process (BOP) furnace the next year. Pennsylvania state tax policy motivated US Steel to invest $100 million in its Irvin Works in 1966 and another $100 million in Clairton’s chemical-making division the following year. ET received new BOP furnaces in 1968.\textsuperscript{39} Based on the investment in these facilities, it seemed that US Steel remained committed to its Mon Valley steel-making operations.

The steel industry had maintained low prices during the mid-twentieth century, but doing so had minimized investment in new technology. American companies had to update their equipment to remain competitive, but modernization came at a high cost for both companies and workers.\textsuperscript{40} In order to update equipment, plants or shops had to shut down for a period. When the Homestead Works shut down its Open Hearth 4 in 1960, the facility remained closed for three years, placing 500 workers on furlough. When an updated shop reopened, it utilized efficiencies and new technology that allowed it to operate with fewer workers than before. The new “Dorothy Six” furnace at the Duquesne Works required an operating crew of only seven workers, compared with the previous crew of twenty-seven.\textsuperscript{41} Historian John Hinshaw observed that only plants that received significant investments in the 1960s survived into the 1980s. Choosing to update specific plants, the companies were culling the facilities, upgrading a select

\textsuperscript{38} Hinshaw, 178.
\textsuperscript{39} Hinshaw, 178-179.
\textsuperscript{40} Stein, \textit{Running Steel, Running America}, 20-21.
\textsuperscript{41} Hinshaw, 183-184.
few while allowing the others to become obsolete.\textsuperscript{42} For example, ET was upgraded, but the Homestead Works were not. ET remains a functional mill in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, and the Homestead Works closed in the 1980s. But this is far clearer through hindsight than it was in the moment.

Unions in particular received a great deal of blame for the problems of the industry, with critics positing that if unions had simply asked for less, the companies would be profitable.\textsuperscript{43} Workers gained more benefits in the 1960s, but their wages only rose to match inflation, and during the 1970s labor costs in the American and Japanese steel industries rose at the same pace, countering the argument that high union wages put American firms at a gross disadvantage with foreign competitors. The United Steel Workers of America agreed to a national no-strike clause in 1973 in an attempt to stop the speed-ups and closings surrounding the end of a contract. Both parties expected that their agreement would eliminate the need for customers to purchase foreign steel in anticipation of a possible USWA strike, and would allow more consistent production, thus preventing layoffs. The agreement was based on the expectation that the industry would rebound soon, but neither party anticipated the rise in oil prices and high inflation of the later 1970s that compromised some of the merits of the agreement.\textsuperscript{44}

A brief boom in the mid-1970s validated the idea that American steel could remain solvent in the face of growing global competition. Nationally, the steel industry set a new record by shipping 111.5 million tons in 1974, followed closely in 1975 with 109.5 million tons. This led to the first new stock issues in twenty-five years, and plans to add 23 million tons of new capacity by the end of the decade. With high profits and 10 million tons of new capacity installed by 1977, all seemed well, but a national recession and subsequent decline of demand for steel

\textsuperscript{42} Hinshaw, 179.
\textsuperscript{43} Stein, \textit{Pivotal Decade}, 206.
\textsuperscript{44} John P. Hoerr, \textit{And the Wolf Finally Came: The Decline of the American Steel Industry}, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988), 109-115.
followed sooner than predicted. New construction seemed to signal that the boom-bust cycle was not a major cause of concern, and that American steel companies were still investing in new facilities. For the most part, steel mills conducted business as usual, buoyed by signs of improvement.

Steel companies had been investing in other industries since the 1950s, but diversification was a way to balance the normal fluctuations of the production cycle and not a cause for alarm. Steel companies began investing more heavily in non-steel endeavors such as real estate and chemicals in the late 1960s, curtailing their investment in facilities and research while acquiring companies that provided raw materials for competing steel companies, as Kaiser Steel did. Still, even US Steel’s acquisition of Marathon Oil in 1983 for $6 billion was a means of ensuring income for the company during expected lows in the cycle and not intended as a statement about the companies plans for its steelmaking facilities. Diversification protected the company bottom line, but investing money in non-steel operations created a public relations problem for US Steel and signaled a lack of confidence in steel’s future even though its intentions were the opposite.

Internal reports from long-time steelworkers showed increasingly frayed relations between management and workers, inefficiencies in job categorizations and inadequate training, all of which added to production costs over time, but casual observers continued to see a well-performing industry following a century-old cyclical pattern. Industry-wide employment fluctuations meant that even though employment in basic steel was down by about 60,000

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46 Stein, *Running Steel, Running America*, 212.
47 Hinshaw, 179-180.
workers between 1957 and 1965, the number of people working in steel in 1965 was greater than at any point in the previous eight years.\textsuperscript{50}

The simultaneous shop closings and upgrades obscured the true state of the industry, and prevented individuals and communities from preparing a response in advance of steel’s final demise. Investment in new technology suggested a long-term commitment to the region and the industry, but closing and not replacing shops suggested the opposite. This confounding behavior made it hard to brace for decline since not all of the available evidence supported the conclusion that the industry was struggling. For every shop that closed permanently, there was another example of a shop that upgraded and re-opened. Workers who could not stomach the insecurity or unpredictability of the situation saw this as a reasonable time to leave the region, but not everyone perceived the subtle differences between the standard layoff-callback cycles and the gradual contraction of the industry overall. Municipalities did not know that they needed to prepare for the worst-case scenario when one shop closed, because companies continued to voice their commitments to the area. The mixed signals left both towns and workers unprepared for the final closings of entire facilities.

After a bad experience with worker and community resistance to a planned shutdown in Youngstown, Ohio, US Steel approached shutdowns in the Pittsburgh region differently.\textsuperscript{51} Rather than announcing closings and layoffs in advance, giving workers, union leaders and residents time to mobilize opposition, US Steel promised to keep profitable facilities operating. Thus, there was no announcement notifying Pittsburgh-area steelworkers that their jobs were on the chopping block, only the fear that every callback would be the last, and the return of fewer

\textsuperscript{50} Stein, \textit{Running Steel, Running America}, 35.

workers with every reopening. In 1986, on the last day of operations at the great Homestead Works, site of the infamous Homestead Steel Strike in 1892, the crew consisted of only 23 workers. By 1987, 85 to 90 percent of former US Steel production workers had been laid off. LTV Steel (Ling-Temco-Vought), formerly J&L, closed its Southside Works in 1985 and defaulted on its pension. Overall, steel companies in the area eliminated 100,000 jobs from 1982 to 1987. One survey estimated that one-fifth of Duquesne was unemployed.

Layoffs and closings on this scale had far reaching effects, some obvious and some subtle. Those who left the region, especially in the early years of decline, were those with the most transferable skills who could potentially find work in another region or industry. The desire to leave the area quickly resulted in depressed home prices, abandonment and neighborhood “blight” as stores closed and were not replaced. For those who stayed behind, the collapse of steel spread beyond the mill buildings and residential neighborhoods in former mill towns, to affect nearly every aspect of life in the region, from schools and libraries to churches to highway maintenance. Persistent urban decline had gradually eroded the city’s population and tax base over decades; but the onset of industrial decline rapidly undermined the city’s economy.

The hope for the city’s economic survival lay in Oakland, where the hospitals and universities would lead Pittsburgh into the health care and research fields. But the University of Pittsburgh was still recovering from its financial crisis of the mid-1960s when the trouble within the steel industry first became visible. And the network of hospitals joined in the University Health Center represented progress towards creating a unified medical center, but the

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52 Hinshaw, 237, 239.
54 Hinshaw, 239-240.
55 Hinshaw, 243.
collaboration was still a work in progress during the 1970s. All of the parts for the city’s economic revitalization had been assembled but were not yet producing results.

At the same time as the toll of imports, aged plants and contentious worker-management relations were beginning to show more visibly in the steel industry, city councilman Pete Flaherty ran a campaign for mayor in 1970 that emphasized his independence from the Lawrence-dominated Renaissance cohort. Running as “nobody’s boy,” Flaherty promised to put an end to the spending of the Renaissance era, and an end to the political romance with the Renaissance interests. With a first-term agenda of stabilizing the city’s finances to offer relief from a growing tax burden for residents, Flaherty appealed to voters who wanted the city’s spending curtailed.  

Flaherty ran as an independent Democrat against a machine-endorsed candidate in the mayoral primary, and then gathered 65% of the vote over his Republican opponent in the general election. Flaherty interpreted his success as a demand for reform among voters. This reform Democrat seemed the ideal antidote to the high cost Renaissance.

To reduce the city’s budget and stop the large-scale spending of the Renaissance era, Flaherty instituted a city hiring freeze and eliminated city jobs. Between 1970 and 1976, he reduced the number of non-uniformed city workers from 4,234 to 2,675, mainly through attrition. Of the remaining approximately 200 layoffs, the mayor’s executive secretary declared that they were patronage positions that deserved to be eliminated. Reducing the size of the city’s payroll was an important step toward realigning the size of city government with the actual

size of the city. Eliminating positions that were created when government positions were an important tool of machine candidates but not actually necessary to the operations of the city was an important step that showed Flaherty’s distance from his predecessors and his commitment to reducing costs.

Under Mayor Flaherty, Pittsburgh was getting its finances under control well before New York’s financial crisis spurred other cities to re-evaluate their spending habits. Flaherty recognized that the city could not commit to the high-cost plans of the Renaissance era indefinitely. Sound management demanded that it cease funneling money into projects of questionable merit at the same time the city’s population was declining and the steel industry’s problems were becoming increasingly dire.

Still, Flaherty’s aggressive cutbacks created other problems for the city. Pittsburgh police officers complained about the lack of manpower and equipment as a result of budget cuts. For example, eliminating the city’s tow truck compromised police officers’ ability to remove illegally parked vehicles. The city had new police vehicles but they were frequently out of service due to a lack of available parts at the city’s garage. In one representative example, rather than pay the $400,000 bid of an experienced tennis court builder to build 20 courts, the city hired its general asphalt contractor whose bid of $250,000 included other projects. The cheaper, inferior courts were pitched on a slope twice that permissible on regulation courts. The contractor used coarse asphalt rather than a synthetic covering that caused increased wear on

players’ shoes, and the painted lines wore off quickly. An anonymous city official said that once the courts were in place, the only way to fix them was to tear them up and start again.\textsuperscript{60}

Bridge maintenance represented a far more serious problem than badly finished tennis courts. For forty years, Pittsburgh’s infrastructure, like many aging cities, had been poorly maintained. Although the Pittsburgh Renaissance built new bridges and highways at important junctions, it was more interested in building new bridges than restoring old ones.\textsuperscript{61} By the end of the 1970s, many of Pittsburgh’s bridges created serious liabilities. This was especially problematic for movement throughout the city since the topography of the region meant that often a single bridge was the only way to get from Point A to Point B without major inconvenience. US Steel spent an estimated $1 million annually to send trucks on a 36-mile detour to avoid a weight-restricted bridge near one of its mills.\textsuperscript{62} Flaherty left office in April 1977 to serve as a Deputy Attorney General in the Carter administration, and then ran for governor of Pennsylvania in 1978. During his gubernatorial campaign Flaherty’s opponents and \textit{The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette} held him responsible for the failure of the Bloomfield Bridge in 1978, blaming Flaherty for inadequately maintaining the city’s bridges during his tenure as mayor.

Originally built in 1914, the Bloomfield Bridge crossed a railroad junction and a rough residential area called “Skunk Hollow.”\textsuperscript{63} Flaherty’s successor, Mayor Richard Caliguiri, and City Public Works Director John Ruff closed the bridge after an inspection found it unsafe in

\textsuperscript{60} Thomas Benic, “City Tennis Courts: Quantity at Expense of Quality,” \textit{The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette}, 10 August 1976, 11.
\textsuperscript{61} As of 1995, there were an estimated 120 bridges within the city of Pittsburgh, and 521 in Allegheny County, including all highway, pedestrian and railroad bridges over eight feet long, but not including private bridges. Audrey Iacone, “How Many Bridges Are There in Pittsburgh?” \textit{Pittsburgh History}, \url{http://www.carnegielibrary.org/research/pittsburgh/history/bridges.html} (accessed 10 April 2013).
Problems with the bridge included, “fatigued metal, four deteriorated steel ‘eye-bars,’ a slightly cracked support column, some loose ‘tie-downs,’ and a crumbling deck.”65 As if losing a major link between Bloomfield and Oakland was not troubling enough, initial estimates said that the bridge would take at least five years to replace.66 Without the bridge, approximately 35,000 drivers had to add two miles of city driving to their route.67 The Post-Gazette noted that during the thirteen months of Mayor Caliguiri’s administration, the city spent more on inspection, repair and replacement of bridges than it had in the previous ten years--$8.3 million.68 Pennsylvania Lieutenant Governor and Democratic gubernatorial primary candidate Ernie Kline attributed the bridge closing directly to “the politics of false austerity” of Flaherty’s administration. Former state auditor general and primary candidate Robert P. Casey added that cutbacks in Pittsburgh’s budget had “reduced human services.”69

Flaherty’s analysis of the city’s problems demonstrated a different understanding of Pittsburgh’s situation than his predecessors or successors. The original Renaissance generation used urban planning, corporate investment and well-organized city politics to prevent the loss of existing industries and to attract new companies to the city. The deindustrialization that the original Renaissance planners imagined was based on the physical shortcomings of Pittsburgh, which the first round of Renaissance reforms addressed. As long as the threat was only a few states away, the city could rally to the cause. Whatever idiosyncrasies remained, Renaissance

66 “A Bridge Too Long,” The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 19 May 1978, 8. It ultimately took eight years to replace the bridge.
planners were confident that they could create a city that was as favorable to new and old businesses as any other American city.

But while the paint was drying on the last finishing touches of the Pittsburgh Renaissance, the scene changed, the competition was no longer Cleveland and Gary but an economy that had turned global. No amount of gilding of Downtown Pittsburgh could change the direction of the steel industry and make the 19th century mill structures, World War II-era technology, and solidly union workforce of Western Pennsylvania competitive with new steel-producing centers around the world. Flaherty understood that the changes taking place within the steel industry and consequently the region were permanent and required drastic measures to prepare for a smaller Pittsburgh through austerity budgets and penny-pinching. The city lost a quarter-million residents between 1950 and 1980 and Flaherty sought to reduce spending to keep taxes from spiraling and chasing away even more residents. In the face of declining population, problems with Pittsburgh’s core industry and lower tax collections he responded by downsizing city government.

These approaches to reducing and re-imagining government on a smaller scale, assumed that the change was not only permanent, but irreversible. None of Flaherty’s actions as mayor suggested that he had any hope for the city to recover its lost population, taxes or jobs. He made no effort to court corporations or lure new residents with affordable housing and amenities. His policies assumed that the best thing the city could do was to accurately evaluate its situation and trim all it could to fit its new status. His plan for addressing deindustrialization and decline in Pittsburgh was not to fight it or ignore it, but to make pragmatic policies to reorient city government towards life without steel’s population and taxes. It was not glamorous and it was not always politically popular, but his plan avoided fiscal disaster.

As the Bronx burned in New York City, corruption ruled Newark, and St. Louis’ industry fled, Pittsburgh survived the urban crisis with minimal civic disturbances. Pittsburgh ended the decade bruised by population decline and growing trouble within the steel industry, but with its finances intact. City leaders, rather than Congress or state appointed overseers, could shape the city’s future. The spirit of Renaissance ebbed, but did not disappear during Flaherty’s administration. Even though Flaherty had no intention of reviving the Renaissance under his watch, its agencies remained active and functional as they diverted their efforts outside of the Downtown area towards neighborhood renewal and supporting community-led redevelopment efforts. The University of Pittsburgh was poised for a new period of growth but needed to stabilize its own finances and leadership. The opening of Point State Park in 1974 marked the completion of the last outstanding Renaissance project but that did not mean that the era of Renaissance was over in Pittsburgh. The Renaissance hibernated during Flaherty’s administration, but it did not disappear. Flaherty’s conservative management of the city’s resources meant that if a new mayor chose to embark on a new Renaissance, she or he could do so without jeopardizing the fiscal health of the city.
Renaissance I was organized as a preventative measure to stop the nightmare scenario of deindustrialization from happening in the mid-1940s. Renaissance II on the other hand, was planned as the steel industry was sliding into an indisputable decline. Although there were some clear differences between the two reform movements in organization, leadership and funding, Renaissance II shared the goals of Renaissance I in diversifying the city’s economic base away from heavy industry, making the city an attractive place for new businesses and residents, and securing the existing assets of the region. The planning hiatus during the 1970s allowed the city to take careful account of its resources and revive the Renaissance ideology from a sound financial position. Despite the differences and the break between the two movements, they represent a continuous planning agenda for the city and expanding region.

Mayor Pete Flaherty’s successor, Richard Caliguiri, came into office with a plan for growth. Caliguiri ascended to the mayor’s office in April of 1977, following Flaherty’s appointment as deputy attorney general by President Carter. By November of 1977, he had won his own term, and immediately presented the City Council with a plan for a second Renaissance that had been the centerpiece of his campaign. Caliguiri’s plan focused on economic development and housing, and argued for the need to diversify the city’s economy away from the steel industry. His Department of Economic Development set out to develop light industrial use areas and to provide business loans for local startups. His Department of Housing encouraged the rehabilitation of older homes through a streamlined loan program and incentives for improving existing housing stock. Construction started on a long-delayed light-rail system and a busway.
Downtown, a new convention center was rising and in “Station Square,” laborers were putting up an office-retail-entertainment adaptive reuse complex.¹

The term “Renaissance II” evolved from Caliguiri’s 1977 mayoral campaign, but the development initiatives associated with Renaissance II did not all originate from the mayor’s office. Planning continued even under Flaherty’s austerity regime, so that when Mayor Caliguiri was ready to apply the “Renaissance II” label, he had a wide array of existing proposals from which to choose. The “Pittsburgh/Allegheny Economic Development Strategy to Begin the 21st Century,” (Strategy 21), brought together the mayor, the Allegheny County Board of County Commissioners, and the presidents of the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie-Mellon University to secure industrial and corporate investment in the region, convert the region’s underutilized land and labor resources, improve the quality of life for new and existing residents, and “expand opportunities for women, minorities and the structurally unemployed.” Their five-point agenda included the construction of a new Pittsburgh International Airport; the redevelopment of the area around Three Rivers Stadium, the Strip District, and former slaughterhouse site, Herr’s Island; brownfield redevelopment throughout the Mon Valley; county-wide transportation improvements; and building advanced university research facilities.²

The Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation organized the adaptive reuse of an old

¹ 1978 Budget Proposal to City Council, Pittsburgh Municipal Record, 14 November 1977, 591-593. At times, Flaherty’s commitment to avoid major spending caused more problems than it solved. For example, Flaherty remained staunchly opposed to the “Skybus” proposal, a kind of elevated monorail-type mass transit system between the South Hills suburbs and Downtown Pittsburgh. With the Skybus project locked in the courts, Pittsburgh was left without rapid public transit between the city and expanding suburbs. Lubove, Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh, Volume 2: The Post-Steel Era, 59-60. Without reliable, quick public transportation to the city, suburban residents had fewer reasons to depend on the city since suburban shopping malls and industrial parks could provide employment, leisure and plentiful free parking.

railroad terminal outside of city channels, and many of the new office towers (PPG, One Oxford Center, Fifth Avenue Place) that symbolized a renewal within the city originated from private interests.

Economic development within city neighborhoods continued despite the period of retrenchment in the 1970s. Both Mayors Flaherty and Caliguiri encouraged neighborhood organizations to participate in city planning and budgeting to better serve local needs. Under the Community Development Block Grant program in 1974, the city was able to organize a comprehensive neighborhood improvement strategy through the Department of City Planning. The federal funds through the CDBG were distributed to neighborhood organizations with small staffs of volunteers as well as community development corporations with more resources. The ACCD organized the creation of a Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) to assist smaller groups working with depressed neighborhoods through technical assistance, grants and loans. This allowed neighborhood groups to maintain greater control over their communities than they had during Renaissance I, while still attracting the investment necessary to improve the quality of life for residents. Support from private foundations added to the federal CDBG money while local organizations provided services to communities. Public and private investment in neighborhoods reached $76 million and $100 million, respectively, by the mid-1980s, and residents reported substantial increases in satisfaction with their neighborhoods between the mid-1970s and the mid-1980s.3 The agencies created during the earlier Renaissance, like the ACCD, along with new organizations continued to work on improving the city while major construction projects ceased. The Flaherty retrenchment period of the 1970s created the opportunity for neighborhoods to reap the benefits of federal, city and private funding, efficient planning

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organizations, and resident mobilization on a scale better attuned to the individual demands of participant groups by shifting the emphasis away from large-scale developments. The strength and persistence of Renaissance institutions allowed the ideals of the Renaissance to carry on after its original organizers departed.

The work of both old and new organizations contributed to the pro-growth orientation of the revived Renaissance period but these organizations did not necessarily conform to a uniform policy as those of the previous Renaissance did. The common desire to diversify the city’s economy away from steel and revive Downtown Pittsburgh as a central, modern and accessible business and entertainment district united these disparate planning groups, but they retained autonomy over their individual projects and philosophies. The ACCD was the center of power during the early Renaissance, but by the 1970s multiple groups including the ACCD shared responsibility for different aspects of the city’s plans to improve the city in the wake of the intersecting urban and industrial crises.4

The change from manufacturing to service could potentially help the city adjust to the larger global economic shifts occurring in the late twentieth century, but the economic change required a change in the size of the population as well. Even the most generous estimates of added employment downtown would not come close to replacing the number of jobs lost in steel and supporting industries. Nor were corporations likely to hire unemployed or retired steelworkers as executives or even secretaries. The expansion of the city’s universities, especially the University of Pittsburgh and its hospital system, was an early step towards preparing the city for a non-steel economy but one that would involve a new crop of residents

4 “Initially, Renaissance II wasn’t planned on such a massive scale [as Renaissance I]; it just seemed to evolve and boosted the image of Mayor Richard Caliguiri, who has been called a catalyst for the development.” Andrew Blum, “Another Renaissance for Pittsburgh,” United Press International, 2 December 1980.
relocating to Pittsburgh from elsewhere to staff the hospitals, medical school, graduate and undergraduate programs. Some university programs might prepare former steelworkers for work in a new field, and might provide some faculty positions for existing residents, but the universities would not be able to absorb the region’s population of displaced steelworkers onto their payrolls. The development of downtown as a corporate center was also intended to help the region’s economy transition away from steel, but it also left former steelworkers without much benefit from Renaissance II. The change away from manufacturing was necessary for the city’s survival, but the city’s survival might not include the former blue-collar workforce that remained after steel’s collapse, and survival did not assume the restoration of its peak size. In the early Renaissance, diversifying the city’s economy was an important goal, but one that existed in tandem with expanding existing industrial operations. Under the revived Renaissance, economic diversification became a top priority necessary for all endeavors.

Unlike Flaherty’s concentration on fiscal retrenchment and austerity measures to stabilize the city’s finances amidst the national urban crisis, Mayor Caliguiri actively sought economic growth to combat the decline of steel with new investment in neighborhoods, light industry, and new jobs. Businesses responded favorably to Caliguiri’s attitude. PPG Industries, a company with roots in Pittsburgh since the 1880s, agreed to build a new office tower headquarters downtown in part because Caliguiri became mayor. According to PPG chairman L. Stanton Williams, “it soon became apparent that we were going to have a receptive ear at City Hall.”

This pro-business approach led to a construction boom from the late 1970s through the mid-1980s that transformed the city’s skyline as well as its downtown commercial and entertainment district.

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The focus on office space suited the goals of Renaissance II in transforming the city’s economy due to the changing role of the steel industry on the region. At the start of Renaissance II, the downtown office occupancy rate was 99 percent. Without adding more space, companies would be unable to expand within the downtown area. To prevent the risk of losing growing companies that could potentially provide more jobs and therefore revenue to the city, the city supported the construction of new office towers and complexes by eliminating taxes on the improvements during the building process. The expansion of office space made possible by Renaissance II added enough square footage that the city predicted the addition of between seven and seventeen-thousand new office jobs. Secondary service employment in restaurants and building maintenance could add even more jobs, re-establishing the economic importance of downtown while shifting the city’s economy towards corporate headquarters and service sectors. By 1982 the combined new investment in office buildings, mass transit and other renovations totaled $1.3 billion, and the five new skyscrapers alone cost as much as was spent on all of Renaissance I.

PPG (Pittsburgh Plate and Glass Company, later PPG Industries) had been a tenant in Gateway Center, the major office complex constructed during the late 1940s Renaissance. By the mid-1970s PPG was outgrowing its existing space and commenced planning its relocation within

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8 Stewman and Tarr, 98.


Downtown Pittsburgh in 1976. After considering its options, PPG chose to build a 40-story glass neo-gothic tower with over one million square feet of office space plus an additional 600,000 square feet on the surrounding 5 acres in the heart of Downtown. The Philip Johnson-designed building opened in April 1984 and the 70,000 square feet of retail space within the complex opened in November 1984. Between 1982 and 1988 several new office buildings opened downtown as a part of Renaissance II’s commitment to expanding usable office facilities. The 46-story One Oxford Centre opened in 1982, the old Union Trust Building became Two Mellon Bank Center after renovations concluded in 1984, the 54-story One Mellon Center and Liberty Center, including a 27-story office tower and 615-room hotel, opened in 1985, and Fifth Avenue Place opened in 1988.

Although the city played a significant role in overseeing and facilitating the construction of the new corporate headquarters, a great deal of the planning for the complexes came from the corporations themselves. Unlike in Renaissance I, when the buildings for Gateway Center were planned and built before tenants were secured, the corporations that intended to occupy the new buildings designed them to their specifications. PPG, for example, analyzed what was missing from its facilities within Gateway Center, and designed its own complex to eliminate the problems of its current locations while providing room to grow. One Oxford Centre was planned entirely through private initiative. By the time it opened, One Mellon Center had evolved into a more complicated ownership situation, but the building itself was originally

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designed to be the Dravo company’s headquarters, owned by US Steel. Under financial duress, US Steel sold the building to a limited partnership based in Connecticut, and Dravo sold its leases to Mellon Bank. The building then became One Mellon Center and housed Mellon Bank’s regional headquarters. The city’s role in development concentrated more on site acquisition and coordination of different development components than on design or development, as it had in Renaissance I.

An important function of city planning for Renaissance II included providing supporting services to make downtown more accessible through the construction of a new mass transit system. In place of the thwarted Skybus plan, a light-rail system connecting the southern suburbs to downtown emerged. The system would run above ground in the suburbs and underground downtown and would be free-of-charge within the “downtown loop.” The 10.5-mile system cost $545 million, 80% of which was financed by the federal government, 16% by the state, and the remaining 4% by Allegheny County. Although many of the new office buildings included parking garages, heavy traffic and the high cost of downtown parking made the new rail system an attractive alternative for downtown commuters from the southern suburbs. The new system did not connect Downtown Pittsburgh with other parts of the city, but it became a valuable resource for suburban commuters.

17 “Skybus” was a plan for a monorail transit system that Flaherty strongly opposed and thus was not built during the 1970s.
19 Other transit developments in this period included the East Busway construction to provide faster bus service between the eastern sections of the city and downtown. The light-rail system served mainly white middle class suburban residents while the busway served a majority African-American population. The East Busway (the Martin Luther King Jr., East Busway, officially) cost $115 million in 1983 and today
The new transit system and the office buildings were complementary projects to regain some advantages for downtown offices lost to suburban office parks in previous years. Most significantly, the new transit system accepted the idea that the city’s corporate workforce would be commuting from the suburbs rather than living within the city of Pittsburgh. The transit system could not restore a lost residential population to the city, but it could ensure that the suburban middle-class remained physically and economically connected to the city. Economic diversification and downtown redevelopment would not necessarily translate into population growth for Pittsburgh, but as long as Downtown Pittsburgh remained an active business district, the private and public interests behind Renaissance II would benefit from the presence of a stable workforce. Commuters using the new light-rail lines could take advantage of “park and ride” lots, often with free parking, and could benefit from the amenities offered by the new office complexes such as retail malls and food courts. The office buildings and transit made it easier to work downtown while other developments offered more entertainment for the non-working hours. Even if downtown commuters returned to the suburbs in the evening and paid property taxes there, the city and its businesses would still benefit from a population buying a transit pass, eating lunch in restaurants, shopping in the new office-retail complexes, and enjoying happy hour or catching a show after work.

The new office buildings and mass transit helped to secure existing assets within the city and region as well as expand opportunities for corporate investment within the city. Another project that added office space and preserved a unique asset just across the Monongahela River from Downtown Pittsburgh was Station Square. Station Square grew to include offices, a retail

has an average weekday ridership of 24,000, roughly the same as the weekday ridership for the light-rail (the “T”) lines.
shopping mall and several restaurants, but the development started small, with the conversion of the old Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad passenger terminal into a high-end restaurant operated by Chuck Muer. The renovation project was developed with the support of the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation (PHLF), an organization created in 1964 in response to the loss of historic buildings in Pittsburgh. The project also received $12 million in equity capital financing from the Scaife family. Restaurateur Chuck Muer spent $2 million to restore the concourse for the main restaurant area. The restaurant opened as the largest in Pittsburgh with seating for 500 and several dining areas, along with the restored “Gandy Dancer” bar in the old baggage room. Following the successful opening of the restaurant, the 85,000 square foot freight house was renovated into a retail mall focusing on unique specialty shops not available elsewhere in the city. The upper stories of the freight house were converted to office space and a six-story building from 1916 also became office space in 1984. The Gateway Clipper fleet relocated to Station Square in 1982 to provide recreational tours of the rivers.

The complex proved extremely successful in the following years, creating jobs and repaying its debt. PHLF sold Station Square in 1994 to Harrah’s Entertainment and Forest City Enterprises, Inc for just over $25 million. The sale allowed PHLF to concentrate on preservation projects around the city rather than investing in the expansion of Station Square. The new owners were willing to invest in development and spent $71 million to expand the

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20 PHLF actually predates the NYC-LPC, founded in 1964 and 1965, respectively.
21 Lubove, 219.
24 Lubove, 221.
25 PHLF estimated that Station Square created over 3,000 jobs and generated about $6 million of tax revenue annually within its first fifteen years of operation. Lubove, 221.
complex. The centerpiece of the new development was “Bessemer Court,” built around an old Bessemer furnace that includes several restaurants, nightclubs and a 100-foot wide Las Vegas style water fountain. The significant investment both from PHLF and the private developers showed the consistent success of the project and the capacity for a multi-function complex to satisfy residents and visitors.

The PHLF project at Station Square on the south side of the Monongahela represented a significant difference from other office-retail complexes under construction in roughly the same period. The “adaptive reuse” of the old railroad buildings combined site specific features, waterfront attractions (Gateway Clipper Fleet in the 1980s, a riverfront trail and a public marina in the 2000s) and the daily presence of office workers to allow for a genuine mixed use of the facilities.

Unlike the office towers built downtown mainly for use by workers during the workweek, Station Square attracted crowds of residents and tourists on weekends as well as weekdays due to the location and activities available. Part of the success of the complex derived from the PHLF building one piece at a time, starting with The Grand Concourse restaurant. Once the restaurant proved a successful attraction, PHLF began a second phase of the project with the freight house shops and office. When further development appeared to be outside of the capacity of PHLF, they sold to a more experienced, focused developer.

Just as Renaissance I introduced smoke and flood controls before building new Downtown office buildings or highways along the rivers, Station Square progressed according to the results of each previous phase of the project. The addition of a Hard Rock Café and other

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chain restaurants may have cost Station Square some of its unique charm, but only furthered its success as a destination for different types of people at different times of day.\textsuperscript{28}

The “Strip District,” a former wholesale and warehouse district along the Allegheny River became another adaptive reuse project on the periphery of Downtown Pittsburgh. During the Railroad Strike of 1877 strikers and their supporters rioted here, destroying millions of dollars worth of railroad property. By the early 1980s, the area still had some wholesale produce vendors, but had become overrun with dilapidated buildings, broken streets and unused properties. When the Urban Redevelopment Authority purchased the Pennsylvania Produce Terminal from Conrail in 1981, the Terminal distributed produce throughout the tri-state area. The redevelopment plans preserved the wholesale function of the produce terminal, while giving a facelift to the building and providing necessary repairs. The produce terminal was only one part of a 5-block project to restore other wholesale buildings.\textsuperscript{29} As the redevelopment continued gradually through the 1980s and 1990s, the neighborhood became known as a food lover’s destination, with restaurants, bakeries, fish markets, and ethnic foods as well as an entertainment destination with bars, nightclubs and shopping. Proximity to Downtown Pittsburgh supplied the neighborhood with an after-work crowd and added to the amenities available within walking distance of Downtown.

\textsuperscript{28} The attraction of Station Square depends largely on the audience in question. Online reviews deride it as overly touristy and catering to a young, heavy-drinking, hard-partying crowd. While there are new nightclubs and restaurants, the party environment is not necessarily something new to the complex. Part of the success of the complex is that it can be many things to many people.

\textsuperscript{29} Cristina Rouvalis, “Produce Terminal Aims to be ‘Jewel’ of Strip,” \textit{The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette}, 23 November 1982, 11.
The 14-acre section of Downtown that became known as “The Cultural District” had been a vice district prior to decades of work by the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust. Replacing “Doc Johnson’s House of Marital Aids and Love Potions” with an outdoor art exhibition space removed a symbol of a degraded downtown and added to the cultural experiences available in the neighborhood. \(^{30}\) Formed in 1984, the Cultural Trust took advantage of the proximity of Heinz Hall—home of the Civic Light Opera since its flight from the Civic Arena in 1972, and home of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra—and began an ambitious program of revitalization.

Heinz Hall stood alone in the not-yet-cultural district until the opening of the Benedum Center for the Performing Arts in 1987. Formerly the Stanley Theater movie palace, the Benedum offered a new performance space to the Pittsburgh Opera (the heavier variety) and Pittsburgh Ballet companies in its renovated 2,800-seat theater. In 1990, the Trust acquired an old vaudeville theater built in 1904 and converted it into the 1,300-seat Byham Theater. In 1995, yet another old movie theater was converted and restored to become “The Harris,” named after the Pittsburgh-born inventor of the nickelodeon and home to the Pittsburgh Filmmakers organization. The O’Reilly Theater opened in 1999 as the permanent home to the Pittsburgh Public Theater, which relocated from the North Side, and the August Wilson Center for African American Culture opened in the neighborhood in 2002. \(^{31}\) The combination of venues, arts facilities and office space for arts-oriented groups satisfied Renaissance II goals of bringing more entertainment to downtown and “cleaning up” neighborhoods.


Cultural development provided high-end arts to a city trying to shake its image as gritty, industrial and uncultured. It also allowed Pittsburgh to remain competitive with other cities in the area—Cleveland had a symphony, ballet and downtown theaters, as did Baltimore. The Cultural Trust concentrated its projects in a single neighborhood downtown that had eluded redevelopment, similar to New York City’s focus on the restoration of Times Square as a tourist destination rather than a vice district in the 1990s.32

In Pittsburgh, the Cultural Trust acted carefully in purchasing buildings and providing tenants with financial support, to convert the neighborhood one building and block at a time. Instead of packing up to go home at 5 o’clock, a person working downtown could stick around, grab some dinner at any of the new restaurants in the area and enjoy an independent film, play, Broadway-style musical or symphony performance. The new office buildings addressed the needs of the city’s nine-to-five population, but the Cultural Trust and the construction of the Cultural District opened new possibilities for the five-to-nine experience downtown. The earlier Renaissance movement worked to develop the city’s cultural assets and represent Pittsburgh as a city with a significant collection of fine arts organizations. The revived Renaissance similarly sought to enhance and promote the Cultural District as a symbol of a refined and modern city that would attract a new residential and corporate population.

The creation of the University of Pittsburgh’s affiliated hospital system, the University Health Center, in 1965 and discussed in Chapter 3, marked a significant achievement for the

university in consolidating its disparate hospital holdings, and it represented an equally important step in diversifying the city’s economy. But the loose consortium of hospitals under the vague leadership of the university did not take full advantage of the potential for partnership. Dr. Thomas Detre became head of the University of Pittsburgh Department of Psychiatry and director of the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic (Western Psych) in 1973 and turned the flailing, fragmented institution into a pioneering research and clinical program. When the state legislature planned a $2.5 million cut to Western Psych’s budget early in Detre’s tenure, Detre traveled to Harrisburg and convinced legislators not only to reinstate the $2.5 million, but to raise the appropriation to $3 million. Detre also arranged for the Department of Psychiatry rather than the School of Medicine to keep the income gained from the clinical facilities of Western Psych, which provided the department with an independent revenue stream. This challenged the traditional university model but created a self-sustaining department that could fund its own expansion. Detre’s changes proved effective as Western Psych developed unique programs and won national distinctions. The Department of Psychiatry expanded from thirty-six full-time faculty in 1974 to one hundred fifty in 1982 and Western Psych’s staff grew from three hundred to twelve hundred in the same period.\(^33\) At the same time as steel mills in the Pittsburgh area were contracting, the University of Pittsburgh hospitals were on a path towards growth.

But Western Psych was only one hospital among many, and the other hospitals and health services programs within the university were still at odds with one another. Under his new appointment as associate senior vice chancellor for the Health Sciences, Detre was able to influence several departments and schools as well as outside funders. The Mellon family and their related foundations had long been supporters of Pitt and its medical programs, as discussed

in Chapter 3, and their gifts continued to reap broad rewards for the university, its hospitals and the city at large. A Mellon gift supported the hiring of Dr. Henry Bahnson in 1963, who performed the first heart transplant in Pennsylvania in 1968. In 1981, Dr. Bahnson recruited his friend Dr. Thomas Starzl to Pitt to develop a liver transplant program. Together, they assembled an interdisciplinary team of scientists to work in The University of Pittsburgh Transplantation Institute which not only made Pittsburgh a center of organ transplantation innovation, but it also created inter-departmental centers of research that promoted the kind of collaboration necessary for a first rate medical center. A cancer center followed, one which involved partnering with Carnegie Mellon University as well as Pitt’s hospitals, medical programs and academic departments.34 The centers demonstrated the university’s commitment to expanding its health care programs and made Pittsburgh a place of cutting edge medical research as well as clinical practice.

Creating a streamlined medical center for the university, however, required revising the affiliation created by the University Health Center. Detre and his associate Jeffery Romoff earned the respect of their colleagues for their management of Western Psych, but they also faced resistance from researchers of the various hospitals who feared the loss of autonomy over their departments that consolidation represented. In 1985, Detre, Romoff, counsel for Western Psych George Huber and others created the founding document for the new medical center, which was adopted in 1986. Rather than absorb one hospital into another, creating conflicts and resentment among personnel, the document created a new organization, the Medical and Health Care Division of the University of Pittsburgh (MHCD), which would manage the finances and clinical practices of the former UHC hospitals as well as the University of Pittsburgh Medical

34 Brignano, 58-59, 63.
School. Detre’s position gave him authority over the MHCD, the School of Medicine and other health sciences programs.\textsuperscript{35} Detre’s management of Western Psych demonstrated his ability to maximize profits from a hospital while creating a nationally respected, state of the art research and patient facility. Tasked with doing the same for the entire network of University of Pittsburgh’s hospitals, the MHCD could generate income for both the university and the city, attracting a new professional class, medical students and support services that would blunt the impact of steel’s decline.

During the 1990s, the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (the name changed from MHCD in 1990), became one of the largest employers in the Pittsburgh area. By 1997, UPMC was the third largest employer in the Pittsburgh area with 11,960 employees.\textsuperscript{36} In 2001, UPMC was the largest employer in the region with 21,629 employees.\textsuperscript{37} Health care became a dominant economic force for the region, and UPMC’s facilities continued to attract pioneering researchers while providing a wide range of jobs for residents.

The University of Pittsburgh partnered with Carnegie Mellon University and the city to build a new research facility on the site of J&L’s Second Avenue Works along the Monongahela River. The site allowed Pitt to establish a new biomedical research facility and CMU to move the Mellon Institute to the new campus.\textsuperscript{38} The proximity of the university research labs and engineering talent prompted Union Switch and Signal to plan a $20 million transit research center on the site.\textsuperscript{39} The URA acquired the site for $4 million in 1983 and worked to prepare the

\textsuperscript{35} Brignano, 90.
site for development with additional funding from the state. Pitt’s building was the first to open in the early 1990s, but since then the project has expanded to provide an additional one million square feet of office, laboratory and research space beyond the original buildings. Since it opened, the Pittsburgh Technology Center has created nearly one thousand jobs and developed an urban office park catering specifically to research and technology oriented businesses.

Tom Murphy became mayor in 1993 after serving as a state representative for fourteen years. Murphy had been instrumental in organizing Strategy 21, partnering city and county governments with the city’s largest research universities to develop the Pittsburgh Technology Center. As mayor, Murphy initiated a wide range of major development projects heavily dependent on city funding with a promise of benefits once the projects were completed. New projects included the construction of both a Lazarus and Lord and Taylor’s department store, two new stadiums, one for the Pirates and one for the Steelers, to replace the shared facilities of

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Three Rivers Stadium, and a new convention center to replace the old (and deeply flawed) convention center built during Renaissance II.\(^{43}\)

Hoping to draw leisure shoppers back to Downtown, Mayor Murphy believed that creating a vibrant retail experience downtown would generate other investment within the city. As long as Pittsburgh still carried the reputation of being a dirty industrial backwater, it could not attract the new businesses critical to securing the city’s post-industrial economic future. If corporations looking to move to Pittsburgh saw a bustling city center with modern offices, shops full of people and plenty of entertainment options from the symphony to the Pirates, then corporations would be more likely to settle in Pittsburgh because of the opportunities to entertain clients and executives as well as enjoy a rich urban experience. Enhancing Downtown Pittsburgh beyond the office complexes from Renaissance II with nationally recognized “high-end” shopping would add a note of sophistication and class that proved the city was thriving.

Subsidizing Lazarus and Lord and Taylor provided the basis for a larger redevelopment project around the Fifth-Forbes commercial corridor, through the center of Downtown Pittsburgh. Mayor Murphy’s $480.5 million plan to reinvigorate Downtown by creating an urban shopping and entertainment district relied heavily on nationally recognized stores including the existing downtown department stores (Kaufmann’s, Saks Fifth Avenue, Lazarus and Lord and

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Taylor) serving as anchor tenants. The PHLF responded with its own plan that would cost $470 million while preserving more of the existing architecture and featuring local businesses.\textsuperscript{44}

At a time when cities around the country were losing downtown retail stores, Pittsburgh tried to buck the national trend by investing heavily in the construction of the new Lazarus store.\textsuperscript{45} Motivated by the mayor’s belief that new development and expanding downtown retail would attract new corporate investment downtown, the city offered the Federated corporation (parent company of Lazarus) $48 million in public subsidies for the renovation of the building, including an $18 million city loan. The terms of the agreement required repayment of the loan only when the store reached $41 million in annual sales, and only required the store to stay in the location for a minimum of five years.\textsuperscript{46}

Lord and Taylor (owned by the May Department Store Company) bought the former Mellon Bank headquarters building with an $11.75 million loan from the city’s Urban Redevelopment Authority and opened in 2000.\textsuperscript{47} The city’s total cost for the development was $24 million.\textsuperscript{48} Because the old bank building was not architecturally suited for the kind of department store space Lord and Taylor wanted, they invested heavily in reconstruction. Despite

\textsuperscript{44} Patricia Lowry, “Shopping in the Shadows of History,” \textit{The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette}, 14 February 2000, B2, B3. The plan did not call for an enclosed pedestrian mall, rather it preserved existing traffic patterns but intended to provide enough retail density to attract mall crowds. Kaufmann’s, Saks, Lazarus and Lord and Taylor would stay in place while new and renovated buildings would house smaller retail operations.


the objections of the PHLF, the renovations destroyed the bank’s unique marble interior. Even more upsetting to some was the lack of public oversight of the use of public money. Although City Council had the opportunity to vote on the Lazarus project, there was no review or vote on the Lord and Taylor project despite the use of public funds distributed through the URA. Also troubling was the length of the minimum required stay for the store, five-years, just as with the Lazarus agreement, even though a twenty-year lease is more common for department stores.49

The overdependence on retail proved fatal. Lazarus and Lord and Taylor were already struggling when the Fifth-Forbes plan was introduced in 2000. Lazarus had been open for two years and Lord and Taylor was in its first year, but neither was capable of attracting enough customers to support a retail-centered development downtown. Mayor Murphy courted high-end retailer Nordstrom’s, but the company declined to locate downtown and instead opened its only Pittsburgh-area location in a northern suburban mall in October 2008. After only three years in business, the downtown Lord and Taylor’s closed as part of a company plan to close a total of 32 under-performing stores nationally.50 The downtown Lazarus store reached its sales peak in 1999, one year after opening with $21.6 million in annual sales. In 2003, the annual sales were down to $14.1 million.51 Federated closed the downtown store in 2004 without ever reaching the earnings threshold that would have required it to pay back the city’s loans. Nor did the new store

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do much to attract a post-work crowd downtown, as sales figures showed Lazarus did most of its business during lunchtime. Without the “anchor stores,” the Fifth-Forbes project ended.

During peak years, Downtown Pittsburgh supported multiple local and national department stores like Kaufmann’s and Horne’s as well as Gimbels, even Saks’ Fifth Avenue. With changes in shopping tastes and the rise of suburban malls, retail patterns in downtown shopping also changed in the latter half of the twentieth century. Free parking and discounts made bargain conscious shoppers seek a different kind of retail experience that focused more on value and less on service. “Big box” discount stores like Target and Wal-Mart offered customers low prices and convenience that department stores could not match. When a tight economy forced consumers to rethink their spending habits, the appeal of “value for money” outweighed the luxury experience of downtown retail. Consumers not concerned with bargain hunting could just as easily frequent the same downtown department stores in a suburban shopping mall without the hassles of traveling downtown.

For suburban shoppers who wanted the department store experience, the city’s major department stores all opened suburban locations. Kaufmann’s opened its first suburban location in 1961 in Monroeville, about fifteen miles east of Downtown Pittsburgh. Though smaller than the Downtown store, the new Monroeville location included a beauty salon, restaurant, and many of the same departments as the Downtown location. It also featured 1,500 parking spaces, and was open until 9:30 pm on weekdays and Saturdays to accommodate suburban shoppers. Monroeville’s population had tripled in the previous decade, and the new store was within fifteen minutes drive of 325,000 people and easily accessible from both the Pennsylvania Tumpike and

the Penn-Lincoln Parkway (I-376). Kaufmann’s expanded in other suburban areas around Pittsburgh. County Commissioner William McClelland celebrated the opening of Kaufmann’s South Hills location in 1965, and praised it as an attraction for neighboring counties and states. The department chain opened another suburban location in the North Hills on McKnight Road in 1966, which included the same features as the other stores and promoted its stroller and bottle warming services to “make baby as happy as the parents.” Kaufmann’s suburban locations also featured auto-care departments that offered official state inspection stations, tires, tune-ups and other automotive accessories. Joseph Horne’s Company (Horne’s) opened a store in Ross Township’s Northway Mall, about ten miles north of Downtown, in 1962 that also featured an automotive department. Horne’s South Hills store was located in South Hills Village Mall, about a mile south of Kaufmann’s South Hills store. South Hills Mall included Horne’s, Gimbels and Sears, making it the first mall in the country to have three different department stores occupying two levels each in an enclosed structure. The mall opened in 1965 and included parking for 5,400 cars and 85 other shops, restaurants and entertainment options. With Kaufmann’s, Horne’s and Gimbels to the North, East and South, a suburban resident had no need to travel Downtown to shop.

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54 Remarks of Dr. William McClelland at opening of Kaufmann’s South Hills, Tuesday, August 3, 1965. Dr. William D. McClelland Papers, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.
55 “This is the way to go to Kaufmann’s McKnight Road store,” *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 15 April 1966, 20.
Restoring luxury urban retail to Downtown overlooked the anti-urban biases that had developed over the previous three decades. Bringing consumers back into the city to shop demanded more than the lure of national chain department stores. Not only would suburban residents have to eliminate expectations of convenient free parking, they would also have to overcome the perception that the city was dirty and dangerous and to be avoided if possible. Previous decades of urban decline that fostered suburban migration helped create alternatives to urban centers that rendered the city unnecessary for most routine activities. At the very least, it helped to create a separation between “work” and “play.” A Downtown office worker might go shopping downtown during lunch or after work, and might even enjoy some of the many entertainment options available in the area. But to ask suburbanites to intentionally go to Downtown for the purpose of shopping at the same stores the malls offered directly challenged the suburban way of life that had emerged since the 1950s. Suburban residents willing to see a show Downtown still would not have an incentive to travel to the city to shop when the exact same stores existed in more convenient locations. The presence of cultural amenities Downtown that did not exist in the suburbs did not automatically lure retail shoppers back to the city. Bringing leisure shoppers back to Downtown Pittsburgh would require suburban middle and upper-class populations to abandon the rationale that made them choose to live outside of the city in the first place.

The problems facing Pittsburgh in the early 1990s were social as well as economic. As discussed earlier, the city experienced a steady urban decline as early as the 1960s, leading to the flight of middle-class residents to the suburbs and the subsequent erosion of the city’s tax base, a rise in crime and demand for services, and a concentration of low-income residents in in-
adequate housing. The industrial upheaval of the 1970s and 1980s spread a malaise beyond the city through the region as mill towns faced poverty and hardship previously unimagined given their former prosperity. Former steelworkers lost many parts of their identity, as workers, as union members, as bread-winners for their families. When local charities and churches could not meet the high demands of the newly unemployed and schools closed in the wake of massive population decline, the assault on the region seemed total. Institutions that previously seemed like permanent fixtures disappeared, altering the long-held identity of neighborhoods and communities. The Downtown office towers and nearby amenities of the revived Renaissance program provided the foundation for a longer-term transition away from economic dependence on steel, but it did little to ease the burdens of unemployed steelworkers and their families.

Shopping was only one part of Mayor Murphy’s plan to add amenities downtown. Professional sports, always integral to the identity and character of Pittsburgh played a significant role in this portion of the city’s redevelopment. Pittsburghers identify closely with their teams. From the days of Honus Wagner, to Bill Mazeroski’s World Series-winning home run in 1960, to the “steel curtain” defense of the 1970s Steelers and the back to back Stanley Cup championships of the Penguins in the 1990s, even during the bleak periods of losing seasons, management shake-ups and poor player behavior, professional sports have always been an inextricable part of Pittsburgh. The possibility of losing a team—any team—to a city with a newer stadium presented a new threat and added a new element to the development of downtown.

The Pittsburgh Pirates are one of the losing-est franchises in all of professional sports (twenty consecutive losing seasons as of the end of the 2012 baseball season, although they finished the 2013 season with 94 wins and played in their first playoff series since 1992), but
they are still the home team and a source of civic unity if not quite pride. Long-time residents can reminisce about the old days of going to see games at Forbes Field, watching Roberto Clemente become a star, and yelling obscenities in frustration as the Pirates blew a huge lead in the last few innings. The Pirates are as much a part of Pittsburgh as the three rivers and steel. The Pirates, and sports generally, represent an outlet or escape from the troubles of the day. Anyone can watch a Pirates game and remember “the good old days” for a few hours, when Roberto played, when the cheap seats were a nickel, and when the players cared about the sport not the paycheck. Even if the cost of a ticket to a game is too high to attend frequently, anyone can turn on their radio or television and be a winner or imagine that they could have struck out that batter, or hit that game-winning homerun if it had been up to them. If a father can’t guarantee his son the same security his father promised him with an easy entry into the mill, he can at least give his son an afternoon of baseball and the lifelong memories of a grand outing. When the steel shutdowns up-ended the world of the Monongahela Valley, few things remained constant. Professional sports endured.

That endurance might not last forever. Under Mayor Caliguiri, the city, through the URA, loaned about $20 million to the owners of the Pirates to secure the team’s commitment to the city. In late March, 1994, one of the owners, Vincent Sarni, informed Mayor Murphy that the team needed more money: an $8 million loan that the team would match through the public sector and an additional $15 million of working capital which it would acquire through additional investors. Without the aforementioned funding, the Pirates’ owners would execute an option of their lease of Three Rivers Stadium that would give the URA one hundred eighty days to find a buyer. If the URA could not find a buyer within the stated period, the Pirates’ owners
could then sell the team on the open market. The Pirates’ Board of Directors triggered the option in August 1994. The clock then started ticking for the city to find a buyer who would agree to keep the team in Pittsburgh. If the city could not arrange a deal by the end of the one hundred eighty days stipulated in the lease, then the Pirates’ owners could sell the team to any buyer of its choosing, not necessarily one who would make any effort to keep the team in Pittsburgh.

This proved challenging. The Pirates came with $60 million worth of debt and seventeen years left on its stadium lease. Three Rivers Stadium was old by contemporary standards—it opened in 1970 when large multi-use facilities were in vogue and seemed to justify the cost of construction if it could be used throughout the year. Even the director of the Stadium Authority that owned and supervised construction of the stadium recognized that its design had been compromised to accommodate the budget. A stadium building boom in the 1990s made older facilities appear even more antiquated and obsolete. And older venues like Three Rivers did not have as many economic “extras” like naming rights, luxury seating or retail shops that could generate additional revenue. When Three Rivers was built, bigger seemed better. With 50,230

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seats for baseball games and 53,280 seats for football games, Three Rivers far exceeded the capacity of the previous stadium, Forbes Field, which could hold a mere 35,000. But by the 1990s, stadium-goers wanted a more intimate experience, and new stadiums were getting smaller. Jacobs Field in Cleveland seated just over 43,000. If Pittsburgh was going to have to sell itself to keep the Pirates, a new modern stadium would have to be a part of the package.

When the January 1995 deadline for the city to find a buyer passed and no deal was in place, the future looked bleak. Even though the deadline passed, the city continued its pursuit of a new owner willing to keep the team in Pittsburgh. The owners came to a handshake deal with one potential buyer in June, but Major League Baseball did not approve the deal. Very soon after, a new buyer expressed interest, but it took another seven months to finalize the deal. New owner Kevin McClatchy was willing to keep the Pirates in Pittsburgh, but needed a loan from the city to buy the team. Common sense might suggest that investing heavily in a money-losing organization is not likely to generate a great return, but the possibility of losing the Pirates to another city propelled city leaders into action to protect the Pirates. A Post-Gazette writer urged baseball fans to show their support for the Pirates and convince potential buyers to keep the team in Pittsburgh at a home game in August. Mayor Murphy hosted a tailgate party for the “Ballot by Ballpark” event and other local politicians lent their support by buying blocks of tickets and distributing them to local Little League teams. Deputy Mayor and URA board chairman Tom

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66 Tom Barnes, “URA Approves Bucs’ Loan; City Council Hurdle Next,” The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, B1.
67 23,000 tickets were sold within 13 days of Bruce Keiden’s July 9 column asking people to come to the August 5 game. Ballot by Ballpark Media Advisory/Fact Sheet, August 5 1995, box 38, folder 2. Records of the Mayor Thomas J. Murphy Administration (Pittsburgh, PA), 1974-2005, MSS 499, Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.
Cox argued that “losing baseball would send the wrong message to the world—that we are willing to let an important community asset go.” From a national perspective, Pittsburgh was closely identified with the steel industry and its championship sports teams. Amidst the national manufacturing decline of the 1970s and 1980s, it was still the “city of champions,” thanks to the Pirates’ 1979 World Series victory and the Steelers’ 1979 Super Bowl championship. Losing the team would have signified decline on a national, popular scale.

Cleveland and Baltimore had managed to keep their teams. Even Buffalo kept its teams. If Pittsburgh couldn’t hang on to the Pirates, it would no longer be competitive with its nearest rivals. In the hierarchy of cities, Pittsburgh clearly was no New York or Chicago; even Boston and Philadelphia were in a different league. But if it couldn’t be equally ranked with Cleveland, how far could it fall? Scranton? Utica? Akron? In the mid-1990s it seemed that the threat of losing the Pirates far outweighed the high cost of keeping them in town.

The negotiations that led to McClatchy’s purchase of the Pirates involved an agreement to build a new stadium for the Pirates. Replacing Three Rivers Stadium would disrupt the Steelers’ home field, so building a new Pirates stadium would also require the construction of new facilities for the Steelers. The state agreed to provide over $350 million for the project, but demanded a local contribution as well. Mayor Murphy led a campaign to add a one half of one percent sales tax in eleven southwestern Pennsylvania counties. The proceeds from the tax would go to two funds, both of which would be managed by a Regional Renaissance Authority. The Regional Growth Fund would provide money for capital projects while the Regional Destination Facilities Fund would provide money for the Downtown cultural district, stadiums, convention center and parking. The Authority would consist of members from each county that approved the

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68 Tom Barnes, “URA Approves Bucs’ Loan; City Council Hurdle Next,” *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, B1.
referendum with additional appointments made by the City of Pittsburgh, the state General Assembly and the Governor. The Authority would own, but not operate, the stadiums and convention center.\textsuperscript{70}

The referendum issue was approved by the state House and Senate, then signed by the Governor in June to appear on the ballot in November 1997.\textsuperscript{71} The Regional Renaissance Partnership, whose members included Mayor Murphy, former Mayor Sophie Masloff, Pirates and Steelers owners, and the presidents of the Pittsburgh Cultural District, Greater Pittsburgh Convention and Visitors Bureau and Greater Pittsburgh Hotel Association, spent $4 million to promote the issue throughout southwestern Pennsylvania in the months preceding the election.\textsuperscript{72} Still, voters in eleven counties overwhelmingly rejected the proposal. The vote was closest in Allegheny County, but the issue was still defeated with fifty-eight percent of voters rejecting the tax increase. The contest was even more lopsided in the other ten counties, where “yes” voters made up no more than thirty percent of the tally in any county.\textsuperscript{73} Voters criticized several parts of the bill, citing lack of trust in politicians, the notion that people with the lowest incomes would be taxed to provide a stadium for those with the highest incomes, and the idea that the proceeds of the tax would be used for projects outside of their home county.\textsuperscript{74} Voters in the region clearly expressed their opposition to the tax increase, but without the tax increase the new stadiums could not be built and without the stadiums the city again risked losing the Pirates and Steelers.


\textsuperscript{74} “What People Are Saying About the Regional Renaissance Initiative,” The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 5 November 1997, C-12.
After the public voted “no” on a referendum proposing a county-wide sales tax that would finance the new stadiums, Mayor Murphy, two Allegheny County Commissioners and representatives of the Pirates and Steelers came up with a “Plan B.” Plan B still relied on public money but would not levy any new taxes to pay for the stadiums. The new Regional Destination Development Plan would need to raise $803 million for the new stadiums and convention center, and would acquire $305 through bond proceeds from existing tax revenues and the rest coming from federal, state and private sources. The plan still relied on taxpayer funding, but would not require taxes to be increased.\textsuperscript{75} County Commissioner Larry Dunn, who opposed his colleagues, called it “Scam B.”\textsuperscript{76} Voters resoundingly defeated the proposed tax increase to pay for the stadium, but the referendum did not ask whether or not voters approved of the use of existing tax revenue to pay for the stadiums. After several months of setbacks, the state House and Senate approved a bill that provided $320 million for new stadiums in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. It took bipartisan support from across the state to accomplish the deal, with the teams agreeing to guarantee that tax money used for the stadiums would be paid back to the state rather than given as a grant or gift. An intense week of negotiations under the threat of the Pirates halting plans for their new stadium and the Steelers looking for a new home pressured lawmakers to reach an agreement. The fear that politicians would be blamed if the teams left accelerated the urgency of the situation and helped drive the compromise efforts.\textsuperscript{77} With funding in place, the Pirates and Steelers committed to staying in their new stadiums in Pittsburgh until 2031.


The early Renaissance organizers conceived of their plans for the city with very little input from the general public. As their plans expanded, the public demanded a greater role in city planning that directly affected residents. The Lower Hill Redevelopment and the East Liberty Pedestrian Mall demonstrated the necessity of addressing residents’ needs in future renovations. During the 1970s retrenchment period, planning organizations reshaped their visions to work more closely with citizen groups. “Plan B,” however, recalled the earlier period when city leaders operated without concern for citizens interests. The referendum asked voters to approve raising a tax to pay for the stadiums and voters refused. The referendum did not allow voters to express their opinion regarding the use of any public monies for the developments, only raising the sales tax. The narrow construction of the ballot initiative provided politicians with a way to give little more than lip service to the public voice and carry on with their plans regardless of the outcome of the vote. The pursuit of public funding for stadiums after the referendum was defeated showed a concern for the letter, not the spirit of the results. The Renaissance operated with much more sensitivity to residents in its later years than in its earlier incarnation, but Plan B seemed to return city planners to an earlier period at the expense of residents’ interests and democratic rights.

As discussed in chapter 4, the Civic Arena was meant to serve as a multi-function convention center and sports arena, but it was not adequate in size or scheduling flexibility. As a part of Renaissance II, the city built a stand-alone convention center that was supposed to have solved the problems of the Civic Arena. Unfortunately, the new convention center was also inadequate for large conventions and plagued by inefficiencies. Part of the state funding for the stadiums included money to construct yet another convention center. The new David L.
Lawrence Convention Center was an experiment in environmentally friendly construction techniques that was originally estimated to cost between $260 and $280 million. The final cost of the building was $375 million.

Although the Greater Pittsburgh International Airport was the second largest in the county when it was built in 1952, planning for a new airport began as early as 1968 with the ACCD endorsing the plans in 1972. Progress on a new airport stalled during the 1970s, but revived in the 1980s when city and county leaders identified the value of making Pittsburgh a city with a domestic airline hub and international service. The new airport would require a new highway to make it accessible to all parts of the region but 6.8-mile expressway would cost $66 million, and funds were not available through existing highway funding programs. Prominent Pittsburghers were asked to write letters of support for airlines planning to add international routes to Pittsburgh. Eventually, funding and planning issues were resolved and the groundbreaking took place in 1987. A no-strike agreement with construction workers helped to

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demonstrate that Pittsburgh had peaceful labor relations and had become a hospitable business
center.\textsuperscript{84} The opening of the $700 million Pittsburgh International Airport in 1992, along with
the residential and commercial development of the region, was a part of a strategy to promote
Western Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh as a corporate and conference destination welcoming to
convention goers and business tourists. USAir leased fifty of the airport’s seventy-five gates,
making Pittsburgh a regional hub and providing direct flights to domestic and international
destinations.\textsuperscript{85}

This city-county cooperative plan promised to make Pittsburgh a more accessible
location, and combined with the new convention center, and promised to attract a wider audience
to the city and surrounding area by facilitating direct air travel, state of the art convention
services and plentiful hotel rooms.\textsuperscript{86} Making the city a desirable convention site had been a part
of previous Renaissance plans, but this one combined city and county resources to look beyond
the borders of the city and promote the region as a whole. Consistent with the overarching
Renaissance desire to expand the region’s economic base and attract new businesses and
residents to the area, the 1990s airport and convention center development served the dual
purpose of attracting regional investment and promoting the new urban core of Downtown
Pittsburgh.\textsuperscript{87}

\begin{itemize}
\item[84] Letter from Tom Foerster to Bob Pease, 21 April 1989, box 244, folder 5. ACCD Records, MSS 0285,
Thomas and Katherine Detre Library and Archives, Senator John Heinz History Center, Historical
Society of Western Pennsylvania.
\item[85] Lubove, \textit{Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh, Volume 2}, 50-51.
\item[86] The new airport was also a part of a plan to lure business travelers through efficient modern airport
\item[87] The scope of this project (through the end of the twentieth century) prevents a more thorough
discussion of the airport and its subsequent failure. When the airport opened in 1992 it was expected to
handle 40.8 million people per year by 2012. The actual number of passengers in 2012 was just over 8
million. Between the effects of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 on the airline industry, multiple
\end{itemize}
The revival of Renaissance planning in the late 1970s carried forward the mission of preparing Pittsburgh for an economy without steel that prompted Renaissance organizers to gather their resources in the 1940s. Long-term developments that began with the first Renaissance planners like the expansion of hospitals and university facilities came to fruition in the 1990s by providing the city and region with the seeds of new, growing industries. Securing the commitment of the Pirates and Steelers for three decades and working with Allegheny County to build a modern airport all echoed past Renaissance plans. But the different iterations of the Renaissance movement from the days of David Lawrence and Richard King Mellon to the retrenchment years under Pete Flaherty to the new leadership of Richard Caliguiri demonstrate the agility of the city and the deeply embedded planning ethos therein. Lawrence and Mellon turned around a city on the precipice of economic disaster while Flaherty withdrew from planning but without dismantling the Renaissance institutions so that Caliguiri could resume Renaissance initiatives that would propel Pittsburgh’s economy into the twenty-first century.

Each piece of the Renaissance had its successes and failures. Each individual project had its strengths and weaknesses, and to displaced residents, owners of shuttered or condemned businesses and properties, or those whose voice in the process was not heard, it is easy to judge any single project as a failure or success. But no single project is emblematic of the Renaissance as a whole. Nor does the tally of strengths and weaknesses lead to a useful judgment of the bankruptcy filings for USAirways (then USAir), and the withdrawal of USAirways hub operations in Pittsburgh in the early 2000s, the airport never realized its full potential. At its peak, it handled 633 flights a day to 114 destinations, but as of 2012, it operated 155 flights to 36 destinations, and used only 50 of the 104 available gates. USAirways, the airline for which the airport was built, uses only 10 gates. Mark Belko, “Pittsburgh International Airport’s Midfield Terminal at 20: A Shell of its Past Shelf,” *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 30 September 2012, online edition, [http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/news/transportation/pittsburgh-international-airports-midfield-terminal-at-20-a-shell-of-its-past-self-655513/](http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/news/transportation/pittsburgh-international-airports-midfield-terminal-at-20-a-shell-of-its-past-self-655513/), accessed 1 May 2013.
success or failure of the Renaissance movement as a whole. No individual project “saved” the city, but the many attempts to do something that would generate change in a city whose economy appeared to be stuck resulted in an overarching reform philosophy that created a mechanism for future change and a city population receptive to the idea that change was possible.
Conclusion

The Pittsburgh Renaissance did not, and could not save the city from deindustrialization. But it did prepare the city for a future economy without steel. It was simply not possible for an urban planning movement to predict, prepare and execute a plan that would mitigate the effects of Cold War foreign policy, an aging production infrastructure and the rise of developing industrial nations worldwide. But sensing that a change was in the air led to action which fortified the city against the impending crisis, even if the threat perceived in 1946 was not the same threat that brought about the city or industry’s decline.

As planners imagined it, the Oakland developments were one part of a multi-part plan to expand the city’s economic base, no more or less important that the downtown improvements or industrial investments. But supporting the University of Pittsburgh’s expansion and improvements helped introduce new economic sectors to the city. The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and the University of Pittsburgh are two of the top five largest employers in the Pittsburgh region, as of 2013, with 42,900 and 12,448 employees respectively. UPMC’s biggest competitor, West Penn Allegheny Health System, ranked sixth with 10,117 employees.1 ALCOA and US Steel were the first and second largest revenue producing companies in the region in 2013, but ALCOA employs 2,500 and US Steel employs 5,000 individuals within the Pittsburgh region.2 The transition to health care as the region’s dominant industry began to be visible with

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the hiring of Jonas Salk in the late 1940s, but it took several decades for the plan to come to fruition. The current economy of Pittsburgh exists in large part because Renaissance organizers partnered with university leaders to expand in fields that would benefit the university and the city in tandem nearly seventy years prior.

The Pittsburgh Renaissance was an elite driven movement. The city’s political, banking and business leaders forged an alliance and sought collaborators from the top of their respective fields. They did not welcome input from opponents or the middling to lower ranks of city residents. The Renaissance organizers were not concerned with debating policy or best practices or inclusion but were extremely focused on preserving the means of power for its members. Mellon’s financial empire rested largely on investing in the most profitable companies in the area. Improving corporate financial performance and expanding existing operations within the city benefitted Mellon directly. Preserving Downtown Pittsburgh as the city’s business district, with thousands of people streaming through Kaufmann’s Department Store daily enhanced Edgar Kaufmann’s company’s bottom line. Lawrence’s power came from the support of his Democratic working class base, which he earned through high employment, which he could ensure when working with companies to preserve and expand their Pittsburgh facilities. Thus, there was no significant voice of organized labor within the Renaissance movement despite the strong presence of unions throughout the city’s industries because the potential conflict between union leaders and corporate leaders would have diverted and distracted the Renaissance mission. As much as it was a mission to preserve the city, it was also a mission to preserve the status of its leaders.

Renaissance leaders willingly sacrificed the democratic process to accomplish the changes they deemed necessary to the city. This was consistent across decades and evidenced by the creation of private agencies with influence over public spending without public oversight at the start of the movement as well as by the disregard for the results of the referendum over public financing of the new stadiums in the 1990s. Lawrence needed enough popular support in the early years to win reelection, but broadly speaking, the Renaissance agenda was incompatible with public participation. Renaissance organizers wanted to avoid the aspects of the democratic process that made comprehensive planning efforts vulnerable in previous years. The kind of plan that the Renaissance imagined for the city involved very broad programs for growth over decades and across political borders that would be difficult to convince voters to embrace. Competing governments throughout the region could not agree to participate in funding a sewage treatment facility during the early Renaissance period, and the failure of the referendum over stadium funding in the 1990s illustrated the continued lack of cooperation among voters from different counties. The Greater Pittsburgh International Airport and later the Midfield Terminal were both projects designed to benefit the city but located outside of the city’s boundaries. Both airports were constructed and managed through cooperative efforts with Allegheny County, but such projects might not have been possible if they had been left to voter approval. Similarly, the investment in Oakland improvements did not provide a clear return for the city until decades after they were completed but they were necessary to foster the city’s growing research, academic and health care fields. Even smoke controls, which provided a direct benefit to residents in the form of cleaner air, caused then-Mayor Lawrence to face a close primary contest with City Councilman and president of Local 31 of the International Plasters’ and Cement Masons union, Edward Leonard, who strongly opposed the regulations. Lawrence won the
primary, but by a slimmer margin than expected for a party-boss incumbent, 77,000 to 50,000 votes.\(^3\) The Renaissance could better accomplish its goals if it could operate without seeking public approval.

To say that the Renaissance was an undemocratic movement is not to imply that planners were unconcerned with the effect of their reforms on the city at large. In fact, a deep loyalty to the city propelled the Renaissance organizers to collaborate across fields and party lines to insulate the city from potential economic ruin in the 1940s. Lawrence was born in Pittsburgh, and worked in local ward politics as a teenager. He rose through the local political ranks to state office and leadership of the state Democratic Party in the 1930s, but after a primary loss and subsequent party reorganization he returned home to Pittsburgh. Richard King Mellon served in both World Wars in posts in Harrisburg, Washington D.C. as well as on the Pacific front, but retained a commitment to Pittsburgh. When the University of Pittsburgh needed more land to avoid building on the Cathedral of Learning’s lawn, Richard King Mellon made the arrangements to have neighboring property acquired and donated to the university because he felt strongly that the quality of Pitt’s campus would suffer if buildings disrupted the Cathedral lawn. Kaufmann remained active in Pittsburgh philanthropies and arts organizations after selling the department store to the May Company in 1946.\(^4\) Each chose to contribute their time and resources to reinventing Pittsburgh because the keeping the city vibrant was a cause that mattered to them personally. Kaufmann and Mellon had sufficient resources to move elsewhere if they chose, but for most of their lives, they chose Pittsburgh. This was by no means an obvious choice. Andrew Carnegie preferred to contribute to his Pittsburgh-based institutions from a


distance. The commitment of Renaissance leaders to improving their city represented a confluence of love of place with the resources and influence to effect change.

Renaissance organizers were not just elites, they were local elites who were intimately familiar with the city’s neighborhoods and idiosyncrasies. Some of the most successful elements of Pittsburgh’s Renaissance were specific responses to distinctly local problems. Introducing smoke controls required a delicate balance between being strict enough to deliver a measurable improvement yet flexible enough to avoid antagonizing residents who might retaliate against the Renaissance at the polls. The particular geography of the city made flood controls a crucial part of the early Renaissance program. Both of these programs required resident participation, through the use of a different fuel source and through convincing Congress for flood control funding. Although the scope of the programs, improving the air quality and preventing floods, was large, the action demanded of residents was not. Through small changes like the cleanliness of the family stove or a letter writing campaign, residents could contribute directly to the city’s improvements. Even though the Renaissance was a decidedly and unapologetically elite movement, these early programs still provided a way for citizens to take action on behalf of their city.

The timing of the Renaissance made certain projects possible. The University of Pittsburgh’s expansion during the 1950s and early 1960s is an excellent example of fortunate timing. Chancellor Edward Litchfield came to Pitt to expand and improve the university’s reputation at the same time as the Renaissance was in high gear. Litchfield was able to simultaneously grow the university and link the success of the university to the success of the Renaissance, creating an institution too important to the city to be allowed to fail. The revelation of the university’s financial distress in the mid-1960s showed that Litchfield may have
consciously overextended the university’s resources because he was confident that the Renaissance would provide a safety net. Even though Richard King Mellon bristled at the presumption that he would provide the money to resolve the matter, other Renaissance leaders, David Lawrence and Gwilym Price, worked to make sure that the university got the emergency funds it needed and provided it with a secure financial future through a state partnership. Whether Litchfield’s actions were sound, moral or intentional is a separate matter, but the result of pursuing rapid growth regardless of cost with members of the original Renaissance cohort still able to exercise influence was that the university kept its newly-improved reputation, continued to expand, and ultimately fulfilled its promise of becoming an economic engine for the region. In 1965, the Renaissance organization was still powerful enough to help organize the bailout that the University of Pittsburgh needed but the window was closing on the period of Renaissance power. David Lawrence died in November 1966, only one year after the university’s crisis. Just a few years later in the 1970s, the death of Richard King Mellon, the hiatus from Renaissance planning, the growing industrial crisis, and increasing federal disdain for cities would have made the reunion of the city’s power brokers impossible. Neither Litchfield nor the Board of Trustees could have predicted the industrial crisis of the 1970s that would permanently transform Pittsburgh’s economy, but their plan for rapid growth demanded action over caution. As it turned out, a plan for slower, more moderate growth over multiple decades could have intersected with deindustrialization before the university’s improved reputation and contribution to the local economy became clear, thus jeopardizing the city’s post-industrial recovery. The university played an important role in Renaissance planning for the city’s future, but this particular aspect of the Renaissance had a strong element of chance in it that could not necessarily be repeated in a different time or place.
The composition of the Renaissance leaders also was a unique aspect of the movement not necessarily replicable in other cities. While many cities have their own class of local elites, the particular concentration of leaders in Pittsburgh made the Renaissance an exceptional movement. Mellon Bank was not just any local bank, but the lender to some of the nation’s most important industrial firms like Gulf Oil, ALCOA and Koppers. David Lawrence was not just a local politician but party boss with statewide influence. And the corporate leaders they got to join the Renaissance were executives of Fortune 500 companies as well as local residents who could enjoy the amenities they hoped to bring to the city themselves. Every city had some combination of business, banking and political elites, but the power of Pittsburgh elites at mid-century meant that its leaders represented an unusual concentration of corporate and banking wealth along with statewide political influence that was not easily reproduced.

Even though many aspects of the Pittsburgh Renaissance were unique to Pittsburgh, there are some lessons that can be drawn from its example. First, the original Renaissance leaders recognized that there was a problem within the city’s main industry despite full employment during World War II and the post-war production boom. They prepared early for an anticipated crisis and in doing so laid a foundation for an economic transition away from steel. At the same time, they did what they could to preserve existing industries in the area, readying for crisis while trying to prevent it. Second, the goals of the movement were clearly expressed and shared by all participating organizations. No matter who was at the helm of the ACCD at any given time, the purpose of the organization was constant and well-defined. Third, until the 1990s, Pittsburgh’s mayors spent money cautiously and did not drive the city into debt. Having sound finances made it possible for the city to resume developments when appropriate, instilled confidence in city managers from corporations and allowed it to borrow money if circumstances
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demanded. Mayor Flaherty made reduced spending a priority for his administration, but even during the peak of the Renaissance, projects needed to stay within or near their budgets. Three Rivers Stadium had to be redesigned to stay within budget, and the Civic Light Opera amphitheater plan was scrapped when it was going to exceed the available funds. The revived Renaissance program in the late 1970s relied on private investment and federal and state funding to build new buildings and infrastructure projects like the light rail system, but did not require the city to spend beyond its means. Mayor Murphy did not adhere to this policy and the city’s financial problems escalated during the 1990s and through the 2000s. Finally, until the 2010s, Pittsburgh’s elected leaders managed to avoid major personal or political scandals that interfered with their ability to govern. There was no part of the Renaissance policy that cautioned “avoid scandal,” but operating with the public trust limited outside scrutiny, and kept public debate focused on political issues rather than personal foibles or criminal charges.

This study has examined Renaissance efforts within Pittsburgh through the 1990s, but the field of Pittsburgh history would greatly benefit from a deeper examination of the 1990s through


the 2000s. I have maintained the position that the continuity between the two movements from 1946 to 1970 and 1977 through the 1990s constitutes a unified Renaissance movement despite the hiatus during the 1970s. While scholarship on the 1990s is emerging, it would be valuable to reconsider the periodization of the Renaissance movement. I argued that the retrenchment period under Mayor Pete Flaherty in the 1970s was not a condemnation or abandonment of the Renaissance ideology, but a necessary hiatus from spending on major development projects that allowed both neighborhood organizations to work with Renaissance agencies and the city to prepare its finances in response to the continuing urban and growing industrial crisis. This period of reassessment of the city’s spending made the resumption of planning possible under Mayor Richard Caliguiri. Thus, rather than dividing the movement into “Renaissance I,” seven years of abstention from planning followed by “Renaissance II” and an indeterminate “Renaissance III,” I view the ebbs and flows of Renaissance as integral to the movement’s duration.

Two seminal works figure prominently in the literature of the Pittsburgh Renaissance. Roy Lubove’s *Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh*, a two-volume study originally published in 1969 and 1996, provides a comprehensive overview of two periods of Renaissance. Lubove called the Renaissance an example of a “reverse welfare state” and “An Experiment in Public Paternalism.”


Lubove’s analysis condemns planners for their failure to consider the human cost of the Renaissance—the Lower Hill Redevelopment Project is a prime example—but Lubove’s study does not include an analysis of the East Liberty project which occurred shortly after the construction of the Civic Arena. Nor does Lubove consider the Renaissance support of the University of Pittsburgh’s expansion as central to the city’s revitalization. Michael Weber’s *Don’t Call Me Boss*, a biography of David Lawrence, provides a thorough recounting of
Lawrence’s political beliefs and insight into one of the driving forces behind the Renaissance. Weber acknowledged the short-comings of the Lower Hill project but disputed the notion that planners were indifferent to the needs of residents, citing Mayor Lawrence’s support of a city Fair Housing Act and pleas to Washington for additional funds for displaced residents. While the relocation process did exacerbate residential racial segregation in Pittsburgh, most residents were able to find equal or better housing than what they left in the Lower Hill. Weber softens Lubove’s “sweeping condemnation of the entire project,” while maintaining a critical disdain for the results.8 Weber’s biography, however, ends with Lawrence’s funeral in 1966.

Other works continue to explore the lasting significance of the Renaissance. Jon Teaford’s The Rough Road to Renaissance examines Pittsburgh along with eleven other Northeastern cities looking to improve their conditions over the second half of the twentieth century. Teaford viewed the results of decades of renaissance planning within older industrial cities as elusive and marginal, with leaders and boosters touting big goals but delivering only modest results. More recently, Jared Day and Joe Trotter have closely examined the racial politics of the Renaissance in their book, Race and Renaissance: African Americans in Pittsburgh since World War II. Day and Trotter’s book provides an important addition to the studies of African Americans in Pittsburgh at the beginning of the twentieth century such as Peter Gottlieb’s Making Their Own Way, John Bodnar, Roger Simon and Michael Weber’s Lives of Their Own and S. J. Kleinberg’s The Shadow of the Mills: Working-Class Families in Pittsburgh, 1870-1907. John Bauman and Edward Muller’s contribution to Renaissance scholarship involved research on the pre-Renaissance period that traced the history of planning and voluntary association in Pittsburgh in their book, Before Renaissance: Planning in Pittsburgh, 1889-1943.

Newer works-in-progress are re-examining the Pittsburgh Renaissance beyond the traditional geographic and chronological limits. Allen Dieterich-Ward’s research explores the regional significance of Pittsburgh’s Renaissance in the tri-state area. Tracy Neumann’s research on Pittsburgh and Hamilton, Ontario examines the relationship between federal and municipal urban redevelopment strategies. Andrew Simpson’s study of academic medical centers has particularly significant implications for the Pittsburgh Renaissance both in terms of the development of UPMC and the challenges presented to the city by the non-profit status of its largest employer. These projects will bring fresh insight and perspectives to the much-discussed topic of the Pittsburgh Renaissance.

Before the Renaissance began, Pittsburgh was a city of contrast in which the benefits of relatively secure, well-paying employment offset the negative features of pollution, potential workplace accidents, and crowded working-class living conditions. The Pittsburgh Renaissance proved effective in its early years by enacting city-wide reforms that led to physical improvements including smoke controls, flood controls and a new highway system to alleviate traffic congestion. Making the city more hospitable was one of Renaissance planners’ attempts to prevent businesses from relocating to other US cities. Improvements in Oakland encouraged and supported the expansion of the University of Pittsburgh which provided a platform for a new economic base for the city, completely separate from the steel industry. As more federal funding became available for urban renewal projects in the 1950s and 1960s, Renaissance planners were able to imagine and construct bigger projects, but they did not always deliver the anticipated results and cost planners dearly in public confidence. Cities around the country faced similar problems of decline in the 1970s, while the nation struggled with a deepening recession. Pittsburgh was able to avoid some of the worst problems of the epidemic urban crisis under a
reform mayor who opposed large-scale spending on development projects in favor of fiscal responsibility. This brief retrenchment period made it possible for a new mayor to resume several Renaissance initiatives in the late 1970s and early 1980s which carried forth into the 1990s.

The Renaissance produced some great and obvious physical improvements within the city as well as some less visible changes. The most effective changes came at the city and state levels, rather than the federal level. In order to effect city-wide change, and to receive state support, the impetus for change came from the highest economic and political levels within the city. The Renaissance was possible because of a voluntary elite association that did not brook opposition. Although this allowed for the city to develop a “master plan” for the Renaissance, it subverted the democratic process and reduced residents’ civic participation. Despite the occasional bulldozing of the public will, the Renaissance persisted through the second half of the twentieth century and provided multiple generations of Pittsburgh’s leaders with the tools to remake and revise the city as the circumstances demanded. The lasting legacy of the Renaissance is not any individual building or project but the capacity for continued change.
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