During the 20th Century, Pittsburgh was known for the steel industry and the broad middle class prosperity that was shared by many residents. Today, Pittsburgh is in the process of rebuilding its economy around new sectors, such as tech start-ups. While the city has found some success in this economic transition, and as the population has begun to grow as highly educated tech workers move into trendy neighborhoods, too many working people are being left behind. Residents worry about displacement from their homes and high housing costs, median income has stagnated, and racial disparities persist.

The good news is that there are meaningful steps the Mayor and City Council can take to lead the city into an era of fair, inclusive, democratic and economically sustainable growth. Once again, Pittsburgh can become known for a broad middle class prosperity that is shared by many. This report provides recommendations and best practices models for how to take those steps.

The vision presented in this report is one in which Pittsburgh is known as the city that rebuilt its economy into one of broadly shared prosperity and strong labor standards; with a housing market that meets the needs of long-term residents while also welcoming newcomers; that offers equitable, accessible and safe transportation choices that connect all residents to employment and other critical destinations; and that prioritizes strong community-police relations with historically marginalized communities of color and new immigrants to ensure Pittsburgh is a most livable city for all residents.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Vision: Pittsburgh becomes known as the city that extended strong labor standards to the jobs of today and into the future, just as it did for steel workers in the past.

• Leverage strong wage and benefit standards for direct City employees as an example to private employers.
• Raise job quality for contracted workers through best practices in procurement, strong monitoring and enforcement of the prevailing wage and implementation of the living wage ordinance, for services not covered by the service worker prevailing wage ordinance.
• Monitor and enforce compliance with good jobs requirements associated with economic development subsidies.
• Insert high job quality standards as requirements in voluntarily negotiated arrangements with anchor institutions.
• Ensure access to good jobs for local residents on all contracted or subsidized City projects.

Poverty Status for All People by Race 1980-2013

Poverty Wage Jobs City of Pittsburgh, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Median Wage</th>
<th>Poverty Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food service</td>
<td>$9.91</td>
<td>8,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail (both residential &amp; home health)</td>
<td>$11.66</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term care</td>
<td>$11.32</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>$22.29</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost 60% of workers in this sector
About 50% of workers in this sector
About 50% of workers in this sector
Less than 20% of workers in this sector

Source: 2011-2013 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates from Microdata
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AFFORDABLE HOUSING
Vision: A housing market that provides quality affordable housing and that meets the needs of long-term residents without displacement while also welcoming newcomers.

Share of Population by Race That is Housing Cost Burdened
City of Pittsburgh, 2012

- Strengthen tenant protections and educate tenants and landlords.
- Take steps to preserve existing affordable housing, and provide programs and resources to improve its quality.
- Identify revenue streams to dedicate to affordable housing through an affordable housing trust fund.
- Use publicly owned buildings and land to create affordable housing, especially near transit.
- Pass a strong inclusionary zoning policy.
- Strengthen and stabilize neighborhoods to prevent displacement.

CIVIL RIGHTS
Vision: To strengthen and build Pittsburgh’s community-police relations with historically marginalized communities of color and new immigrants in order to create a more livable city for all residents.

- Issue an executive order to limit local law enforcement’s participation in federal immigration enforcement.
- Collect age, race, gender, and national origin data on police interactions with Pittsburgh residents for analysis and development of City specific policies to improve community-police relations.
- Ensure that communities of color and new immigrants can live safe, healthy, and productive lives in the City by expanding access to critical services.

“Steve Kelley remembers what life was like prior to the union. It wasn’t good. For him and his wife, it was a struggle as they moved from one place to another. They simply couldn’t afford a place to stay. Sometimes they would stay with family. Sometimes they would stay at a boarding house. Kelley was earning about $8.00-$9.00 an hour at the time. He remembers the couple’s first place. It was a boarding house. He says it was a dirty, one bedroom that cost $400 a month. Kelley says they struggled to pay the bills. He says they often had to make difficult decisions. Would they pay a bill or get something to eat? Kelley says they ate potatoes every way they could be cooked to survive. They were regulars at the area soup kitchens. They would short change the landlord so they could eat. Eventually, the landlord kicked them out.

Things turned around when Kelley got his first union job. His pay increased to $12.50 an hour with raises every six months. He eventually got benefits. He says when he got his first check, he thought it was wrong. He went to the boss to make sure it was right. Kelley had never earned that much money.

“We moved from a one-bedroom shack to a 3-bedroom house. The bills are paid each month. There is always food in the refrigerator. Now, I eat potatoes because I want to, not because I have to eat them. The union has totally changed the way my wife and I live.”
“A city cannot remain viable or vibrant without a dynamic transportation system. We need transportation that services all parts of the city, connecting people to their schools, pharmacies, grocery stores, entertainment and most importantly their jobs. Good transportation is key to a world-class city like Pittsburgh.”

As a native Pittsburgher, Sherri Geyer knows first-hand how issues of affordable housing, transportation and good jobs impact her city. She’s seen the changes over the years. In 2015, she was one of more than 1,000 security officers to make history organizing and joining their first union. Now, these hardworking men and women earn a living wage and benefits. Prior to the union, Geyer says she could express her opinion on the job, but she was never taken seriously. Now, she has a voice on the job.

Geyer’s always lived in an apartment. With housing costs taking a large part of her budget, she spends a good portion of her check on rent. But, she doesn’t have to worry about being homeless because she can afford her rent. The bus is Geyer’s lifeline to her job. Working at night, she sees a lot of her co-workers coming in early because the buses don’t run late at night.

ENDNOTES
3. Each race population count was taken from non-Hispanic category, except Hispanic population totals, which are included in Other.

AUTHORS
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ABOUT COWS
COWS is a nonprofit think-and-do tank, based at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, that promotes “high road” solutions to social problems. These treat shared growth and opportunity, environmental sustainability, and resilient democratic institutions as necessary and achievable complements in human development. Through our various projects, we work with cities around the country to promote innovation and the implementation of high road policy. COWS is nonpartisan but values-based. We seek a world of equal opportunity and security for all.

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